

Exigencies of Inner Rhythm *for Edgard Varèse*

I dream of instruments obedient to my thought and which with their contribution of a whole new world of unsuspected sounds, will lend themselves to the exigencies of my inner rhythm.

- Edgard Varèse

There are many unsuspected sounds in large drums and timpani, which get used in almost all instances with cliché and with only a limited view of their potential sounds. Among these sounds are very soft, gentle, and resonant tones; the harmonics and pulses which occur from repeated strokes on a large vibrating drumheads; and the microtonal deviations of pitch on pedal timpani which occur from repeated and increasingly louder play.

Exigencies of Inner Rhythm is composed for this wider range of low drum sounds. It is intended for a large, very resonant space, in which an audience can be surrounded by the performers, and be able to hear extremely soft and resonant tones.

The work is for four performers with one pedal (non-ratchet) timpani each.

Performance Instructions

Four players (A, B, C, D) with one timpani each, using two 31-32" and two 28-29" (distributed at the discretion of the performers). Calfskin or synthetic skin-imitation (e.g. Remo Renaissance) drumheads preferred. One performer in each corner of the performance space with audience in the center.

There is no score but a Pulse Template and four parts. Each performer has a chronometer for reference, which all start together on cue. The Pulse Template lists 27 durations/rhythms numbered (1-27) which are used in the piece at quarter note = 60. Each performer's score notes which Pulse is to be played at any given moment, with changes occurring only exactly on the minute or at 15-second intervals as indicated (e.g., all performers begin with Pulse #1, but at 1'00" Player A moves to Pulse #2, Player B moves to Pulse #3, etc.)

A variety of mallets may be used and switched to during the work to maintain maximum resonance at various volumes and densities, but should lean to medium and never be too hard. A tuning gauge should be set with the pedal at its lowest point and with intervals marked at the quarter-tone to a fifth above. Each player should start the piece near the bottom of his/her range, and during each iteration of a particular pulse, should migrate up or down to an adjacent quarter-tone. This migration should be scaled gradually whether one plays a particular pulse for 0'15" or 1'00". The lowest point of the pedal for each drum should be different and in microtonal relationship to each other, and specific pitch should be ignored.

The performers should endeavor to emphasize the potential of large drums to very resonantly sing gradual change.

- John Kennedy, Brooklyn, 6/97