

Alex Temple

Ah yes, the three genders  
(2019, r. 2020)  
for percussion duo

commissioned by Spectrum Ensemble  
and the following consortium members:

Brian Calhoon

Scott Charvet & Elayne Harris

Emily Durocher

Beth Gunderia

Carla Lackey

Modern Marimba

Kathleen Rieken

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The Up:Strike Project (directed by Dr. Matthew Lau & Karen Yu)

Gloria Yehilevsky

# Instrumentation

## Percussion 1:

- vibraphone (F3–F6)

## Percussion 2:

- desk bells (C6–C7, chromatic)
- 2 cymbals with different timbres
- thick metal chain
- 2 wooden shakers
- 3 wooden temple blocks (ideally with the approximate pitches E, F# and A#)
- 2 toms + kick

# Program Notes

"Ah yes, the three genders." The meme started as a joking response to things like a trio of airport signs labeled "Men," "Women" and "Telephones," or an application form whose options are "Male," "Female" and "Business." Over time, it was extended to refer to any group of three things. In the case, the three genders are metal, wood and skin – the three materials that pair with the vibraphone in the piece's three movements. The title is also a playful nod to my and the performers' queerness.

"Metal" (featuring cymbals, bells and chains) consists of three versions of the same tune, in three wildly different styles: haunted music-box lullaby, chill-out jazz, and Very Fake Early Music. "Wood" (featuring woodblocks and shakers) is a perpetuum mobile with a habit of getting stuck. "Skin" (featuring drums and mouth sounds) is the longest and maybe the strangest, with dissonant, sensuous chords that keep getting diverted into blurry polyphony or staggering polyrhythms.

# Performance Instructions

All non-standard notation is explained in the score.

Exaggerate the stylistic and dynamic contrasts! "Good taste" is nothing but a means of social control!

# 1. Metal

$\text{♩} = 88$   
hard mallets  
motor: off

*p* *sim.*

Desk Bells

Cymbals brushes

*p* like a haunted music box

8

*mp* *minimal pedal*

Cymbals brushes

Desk Bells

*mp*

14

$\text{♩} = 92$

*mf* *f* *p*

Cymbals  
loop end of brushes;  
hit sides of cymbals

*f* *precise, like a ceremonial act* *p*

**A**

soft mallets  
roll chords ad lib

20

*sensuous, rhythmically free*  
use pedals to bring out the melody  
while the chords sustain

normal end of brushes  
improvise: quiet, dense, rhythmically  
irregular, lots of reverberation

*mf*

*fp*

24

*pp*

*pp*

28

*f* *p*

pedal as before pedal every measure

*mf*

33

♩ = 100

*f*

loop end of brushes;  
hit sides of cymbals

*p*

**B** ♩ = 94

hard mallets

39

*regal, fanfaric, processional*  
pedal every note

**Chain**  
pick up slowly and then suddenly drop

**Desk Bells**

*mf*

43

♩ = 88

*mp*

**Chain**

**Desk Bells**

*mp*

48

*p*

53

♩ = 104

(silent on repeats)

**Cymbals**  
loop end of brushes;  
hit sides of cymbals

repeat 3-4 times  
while fading to silence

*f*



19 B ♩ = 120

*ff* *p* *a gentle waltz* *mf*

Wooden Shakers

*ff* *p* *mf*

24

*mp* *f* *pp* *hushed*

*mp* *f* *fp* *fp*

28

*fp* *fp*

slow down shaking  
and let it peter out

C

34  $\text{♩} = 180$  soft mallets

*p*

*pp* *p*

39

*ff*

Temple blocks

*mf* *ff*

D

43

*f* *mf* *mp*

*f* *mf* *mp*

48

*p* *pp*

*p* *pp*

52

Musical score for measures 52-56. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals.

57

Musical score for measures 57-61. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The music includes a section for "Wooden Shakers" starting at measure 59.

*mp*

Wooden Shakers

*mp*

62

Rit ----- **E** ♩ = 120  
(♩. = ♩, not counting the rit.)

Musical score for measures 62-66. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The music includes triplets and a ritardando section.

*mf*

*(mf)*

*mf*

*(mf)*

67

Musical score for measures 67-71. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The music includes triplets and dynamic markings.

*f*

*mp*

*f*

*pp*

*f*

*mp*

*f*

# 3. Skin

$\text{♩} = 80$   
motor: slow  
hard mallets

*p*

let ring until almost silent

*leg.*

pickup on repeat only

$\text{♩} = 84$

6

*mf*

*leg.*

$\text{♩} = 76$

*p* (in time)

Drums hands

*pp*

11

$\text{♩} = 84$

*mf*

*mp*

♩ = 88

sing on "da"; informal, almost absent-minded;  
blend timbrally with the vibes as much as possible;  
transpose up or down an octave if necessary

15 A

*p* mysterious and reverent  
pedal just enough to keep the line legato

*pp*

20

♩ = 96

gradually shift from /a/ to /ŋ/

*f* startling

*mf*  
(pickup in new tempo)

27 **B** ♩ = 92  
 motor: fast  
 soft mallets

*pp* minimal pedal

unvoiced percussive mouth sounds  
 (e.g. a bilabial or retroflex ejective);  
 control the contour via embouchure

*p*

brushes

30

35

*p*

39 **C**

*ff* broad, lyrical

like a series of rapidly fading echoes

*mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf*

43

*mf* *mf* *mf*

48

**D** ♩ = 80  
motor: slow  
hard mallets

*p* *n*

54

♩ = 84

*p* *mf*