Surfacing

for percussion quartet

written for Max Riefer and his students at UiTM

Peter Ivan Edwards

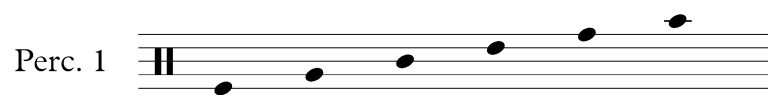
About *Surfacing*:

This work deals with the emergence and re-emergence of musical material. The opening section yields a melody (of sorts) through dynamics applied to toms, each a unique pitch. In another section, something similar happens with crotales. There are patterns, melodies (of sorts), and rhythmic cycles that we hear in part, but never in full. They are covered by other material, other instruments, and mostly through shifting frames through which we are only permitted to see a piece of the whole. The material, in a way, fights for space as well. This is particularly the case in the last several minutes. Technically, the work derives from a series that includes all possible permutations of 4 elements. That, in itself, is not musically interesting, but through assigning one reading of the series to a particular element of a passage (like pitch or note value), then a rotated or reversed reading of the series to another (like instrument or dynamic), and so on, interesting "starter" material can result. It was with such material that I formed the composition.

Performance Instructions

Notation of instruments on the staff. From top to bottom (note names given correlate to treble clef):

Cymbal (A)
PVC Guiro (F)
Crotale (D)
Almglocken (B)
Woodblock (G)
Tom (E)



IMPORTANT: Each tom, woodblock, and crotale must be a unique pitch. I would suggest starting with 4 woodblocks that have unique pitches. Then, tune the 4 toms to 4 unique pitches. The remaining 4 pitches (of the chromatic, tempered scale) can then be added through the crotales. Use a mixture of registers for these 12 pitches rather than attempting to keep all in one register. For each player's almglocken, the pitch should be the same as the crotale; however, the register can be (purposefully) different.

The PVC guiros should be cut to a length so that they are in tune with the tom of each player. Registers of guiros will also likely be different from the toms. The formula for determining length of pipe for frequency is: L = 344 / (4 x F). For example, if you want A (440Hz), then the pipe length is: 344 / (4 x 440) = 19.54cm. Diameter of the pipe determines amplitude. Choose a diameter similar to a guiro (approx. 8-12cm). Once you have the desired pitch, gouge out the ridges to simulate a guiro.

Toms are the only instruments in this setup that allow for low pitches; therefore, use a mixture of tom sizes. However, don't use only low toms. One low, one mid-, and two high/high-mid toms is recommended.

Experiment with dampening the toms (and almglocken, perhaps) to balance their resonance with the woodblocks and almglocken. This will be particularly important from m. 111 to the end. In fact, perhaps use this section to test out and set the resonance of these 3 groups of instruments.

In general, use one pair of mallets consistently – perhaps a hard plastic or cord mallet (like Balter yellow or green), depending on how you want to balance attack and fullness of the sound.

Please note that in the section at rehearsal letter A, the notated duration of cymbals, crotales, and guiros is the sounding duration. Cymbals and crotales should be dampened once they have sounded the notated length. One guiro scrape should last the notated duration. A cross (x) notehead is used to indicate striking the instrument (crotales/cymbals) while dampening it with the other hand (rather than after it has been struck). Bits from this section reappear toward the end of the work. There, too, the notated durations for cymbals, crotales, and guiros should be observed. You will gradually (and increasingly) see the use of l.v. ties on noteheads. (The first is in m. 61, percussion 2.) These indicate that the rule about notated duration does not apply to them.

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A

27 ♩ = 92

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

* *In this section (m. 27-59) as well as later sections that use this material, guiro, crotale, and cymbal should sound for exactly the indicated duration. Cymbals and crotales should be muted when duration ends. Guiro should sound for full duration with even iterations.*

34

41

49

** *Dampen before continuing on to next bar. Same at m. 58.*

54

59

B ♩ = 84

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

67

♩ = 92 ♩ = 84

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

73

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

79

♩ = 92 ♩ = 84

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

86

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

93

= 92
= 84

99

= 92
= 84
non trem.

105

C

♩ = 92

111

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

116

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

121

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

125

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

130

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

D

136

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

143

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

★ *Regardless of notated duration, let ring until faded.*

150

E

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

157

rit. ♩ = 62

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

163

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

F

168 ♩ = 92

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

fff *dim.*

173

pp

177

ff

184

189

G

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

196

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

201

H

rit.

♩ = 78

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

206

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4