

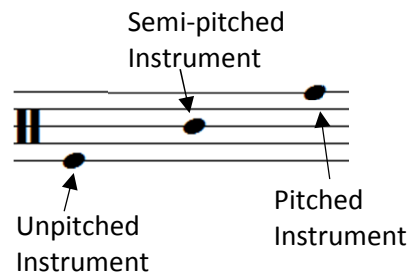
# River Echo

*By Aidan Gold*

For 4 Percussionists

## Instrumentation

All 4 players play a pitched instrument, semi-pitched instrument, and unpitched instrument. They all use the following key:



Each player can choose their own pitched, semi-pitched, or unpitched instruments.

Examples of pitched instruments: a single bar of a mallet instrument, a single crotale, a crystal glass struck with a mallet, timpani struck in normal position, a metal pipe, almglocken, piano string struck with mallet, tuned gong, etc. etc. etc. (anything that has a clear, discernable pitch).

Examples of semi-pitched instruments: timpani struck in the center or edge, bell plate, tam-tam struck in center, singing bowls, rice bowls, a well-tuned bongo, brake drum, etc. (anything that has a pitch, but may be somewhat difficult to distinguish that pitch)

Examples of unpitched instruments: snare drum, bass drum, many other types of drums, cymbal, tam-tam, woodblock, log drum, shakers of various types, etc. (anything where it is very difficult to impossible to discern a pitch)

The lines between these categories are blurry- many percussion instruments, including those given above, could fit into several of these categories depending on many factors. In these cases,

whether an instrument fits in to one category or another is up to the performer choosing the instrument.

*NOTE: for the pitched instruments, the performers should consult one another as to the pitches they choose for their pitched instruments. I do not specify any specific chord or collection that these pitches should come from, but instead I would request that the performers should choose their pitches with the pitches of the rest of the ensemble in mind, and the resultant harmony, whatever it may be, should be a deliberate choice of the whole ensemble.*

No matter the instrument chosen, it is important that they have a clear attack (for example, no bowed percussion instruments). In sections B and C of the piece, quicker rhythms are used. For these sections, it is important that the semi-pitched and unpitched instruments of each performer are very articulate and can play fast rhythms clearly. If necessary, a more resonant semi-pitched or unpitched instrument (like a bass drum or tam-tam), could be muted and played with hard mallets in sections B and C to achieve this, while it can be unmuted in the other sections.

Another option is to have two of the same instrument in different setup positions (for example, if a tuned gong is used as the semi-pitched instrument, a suspended gong played with a gong beater may be used in the other sections, and a different gong laid flat on a table played with smaller yarn mallets could be used for sections B and C). The performer is free to use different mallets in different parts of the piece to achieve maximum clarity as well as the best possible sound.

A final consideration for the instrumentation is that all the players must be able to produce a *combination sound*: a sound produced using two (or more) of their instruments in which one instrument affects the sound of the other. Here are a few examples of possible combination sounds that could be used:

A player is using a crotale as a pitched instrument, and a timpani as a semi-pitched instrument. The performer creates a combination sound by placing the crotale on the timpani head, striking it, and then pedaling the timpani.

A player is using a marimba bar as a pitched instrument, and a snare drum as an unpitched instrument. The performer creates a combination sound by placing the snare right next to the marimba, turning on the snares, and then playing the marimba bar so that the snares buzz sympathetically (if this is done, a marimba bar should be chosen that can cause maximum sympathetic buzzing in the chosen snare drum)

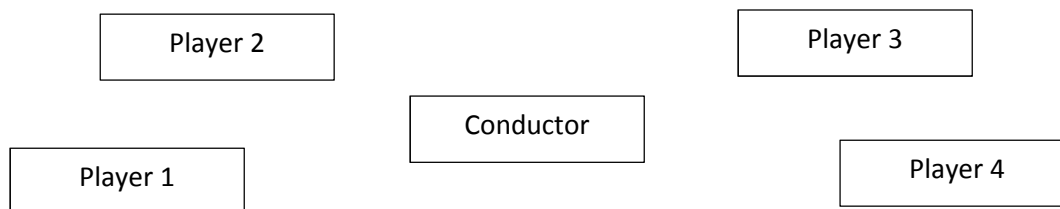
A player is using a crystal glass struck with a mallet as a pitched instrument, and a water gong as an unpitched instrument. The performer creates a combination sound by scooping up some of the water from the water gong's bucket using the glass, and then striking the glass as normal, but resulting in a lower pitch due to the addition of water.

A player is using a potlid as a semi-pitched instrument, and a tam-tam as an unpitched instrument. The performer creates a combination sound by striking the tam-tam with the potlid.

The performers are encouraged to be as creative as possible with their instrument choices and combination sounds.

## Setup

The musicians should be positioned around the conductor as follows:



## Performance Instructions

The piece is divided into sections using rehearsal letters.

At rehearsal A, the musicians have a ? in their box as oppose to a number. The number in this box is determined on the spot by the conductor, who holds up that number of fingers in their left hand (thus, the number is restricted to between 1 and 5). The conductor can change their number each time the measure is repeated, or when the musicians move on to the next measure. The conductor should not let the musicians know beforehand what numbers they will choose, and the musicians should react in the moment. For a description of what the boxes with numbers mean, see Special Notation.

In section B, the conductor conducts players 1 and 2 at a given tempo with their left hand, while conducting players 3 and 4 at a different tempo with their right hand. All of these tempos are in simple relationships with one another (3:2 or 3:4).

In section C, all the performers play at different tempos. The exact points of entrance and exit notated in the score do not need to be followed. The musicians should instead as soon as they are comfortably feeling the tempo that they should enter at by listening to the other musician that has just entered. The score here more or less provides a “roadmap” and visualization of what should occur, not the exact duration of each occurrence. As an example, take the first system of this section:

C

The score shows four percussion staves (Perc. 1, Perc. 2, Perc. 3, Perc. 4). Perc. 1 and Perc. 2 are silent. Perc. 3 and Perc. 4 play complex rhythmic patterns. Perc. 3 has a tempo of  $\text{♩} = 96$  and dynamics  $mp$  and  $ff$ . Perc. 4 has a tempo of  $\text{♩} = 128$  and dynamics  $f$  and  $mf$ . The patterns consist of eighth notes and triplets.

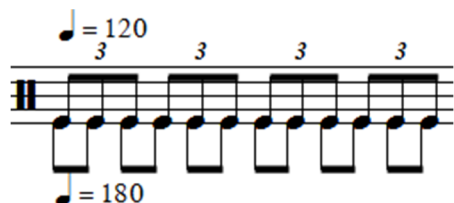
Here, player 4 begins playing eighth notes at 128. At some point soon afterward (not necessarily 8 beats as is indicated in the score), player 3 enters with eighth note triplets at 128. Next, player 2 listens to player 3, but reinterprets their stream of notes as sixteenth notes at 96. As soon as they can comfortably feel the new 96 tempo, they enter with eighth note triplets at 96. The entire section continues following this general pattern. Dynamic shifts are all triggered by various entrances.

## Special Notation



= perform X notes randomly chosen from the figure given in the box. X is always a number between 1 and the number of notes in the figure in the box. For example, if the box contained 6 quarter notes and the number in the upper left was 4, then the musician would randomly choose 4 of those quarter notes to play. If the number in the upper left is a ?, then the number of notes that the performer must randomly choose to play is determined on the spot by the conductor.

∅ = niente.



= a constant stream of notes, at 360 notes per minute. The stem-up beaming and stem-down beaming demonstrate two different ways of grouping the steady stream of notes that are being played. For example, the performer playing the steady stream of notes could be interpreting it as eighth notes at 180, while a different performer listening to the rhythm could interpret it as eighth note triplets at 120, in order to facilitate that performer playing a different rhythm at 120 bpm.



= perform a *combination sound*. For examples of possible combination sounds, see Instrumentation.

**X 5** —————

= perform a gesture 5 times during the duration of the solid black line. The performer should randomly distribute the 5 occurrences of the gesture throughout the duration.

# River Echo

Aidan Gold

~10 sec. Moderato ♩ = 80

Percussion 1  
*pppp poss.*

Percussion 2  
*pppp poss.*

Percussion 3  
*pppp poss.*

Percussion 4  
*pppp poss.*

5

Perc. 1  
*pp*

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

*pp*

*mp*

*pp*

*mp*

*pp*

accel. poco a poco

Musical score for Percussion 1-4, measures 10-13. Percussion 1-3 play rhythmic patterns with fingerings 5, 4, 3, 4, 3, 4, 4. Percussion 4 plays a pattern with fingerings 1, 4, 4. Dynamics include *mp*, *pp*, and *mf*. A triplet of eighth notes is marked *p* in measure 13.

Musical score for Percussion 1-4, measures 14-16. Percussion 1-4 play rhythmic patterns with fingerings 6, 4, 4, 6, 6, 6. Dynamics include *mp* and *pp*. Triplet markings are present in measures 14 and 16.

**A** Piu mosso ♩ = 108

Musical score for Percussion 1-4, measures 17-19. Percussion 1-4 play rhythmic patterns with fingerings 3, 3, 3, 3. The number of notes in each box is indicated as 10x, 6x, and 4x. The tempo is Piu mosso (♩ = 108).

# of notes played in boxes determined by CONDUCTOR (they hold up # in fingers of left hand)

# River Echo

**B** ♩ = 108 (with the conductor's LEFT HAND)

Perc. 1 *mf* 3

Perc. 2 *mf* 3

Perc. 3 *mf* 3

Perc. 4 *mf* 3

♩ = 144 (with the conductor's RIGHT HAND)

Perc. 1 3

Perc. 2 3

Perc. 3 3

Perc. 4 3

Perc. 1 3

Perc. 2 3

Perc. 3 3

Perc. 4 3

$\text{♩} = 96$  (with the conductor's LEFT HAND)

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

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

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



Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

$\text{♩} = 128$  (with the conductor's RIGHT HAND)

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

C

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

*f* *mp* *ff* *mp*

♩ = 128 *mp* *ff* *mp* ♩ = 96

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

*ff* *mf* *ff* *mp*

♩ = 144 *ff* *mf* *mp* ♩ = 108

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

*mf* *mp* *ff* *mp*

♩ = 108 *mp* *ff* *mp* ♩ = 180

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

*mf*

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

*mp* *ff*

*mf*

*mp*

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

*mf*

*mp* *ff* *mf*

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

$\text{♩} = 150$

$\text{♩} = 120$

*ff*

*mf*

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

$\text{♩} = 120$

$\text{♩} = 160$

*mp*

*ff*

*mf*

*mp*

ALL: accel. independently to as fast as possible

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

*mf*

*cresc. poco a poco*

*mf*

*cresc. poco a poco*

*mf*

*cresc. poco a poco*

*ff*

*mf*

*cresc. poco a poco*

D

~15 sec.

Perc. 1  
*fff* *dim. poco a poco*

Perc. 2  
*fff* *dim. poco a poco*

Perc. 3  
*fff* *dim. poco a poco*

Perc. 4  
*fff* *dim. poco a poco*

E

~30 sec.

Perc. 1  
combination sound  
(play the sound 5 times within the given timespan)  
*mp* *dim.* *ppp*

Perc. 2  
combination sound  
(play the sound 5 times within the given timespan)  
*mp* *dim.* *ppp*

Perc. 3  
combination sound  
(play the sound 5 times within the given timespan)  
*mp* *dim.* *ppp*

Perc. 4  
combination sound  
(play the sound 5 times within the given timespan)  
*mp* *dim.* *ppp*