

Richard Barrett

absences

2022-24

violin and percussion

performance score

absences

(2022-24) for violin and percussion

commissioned by ELISION

to Harry Ward and Peter Neville

duration: 7 minutes

percussion instrumentation:

steel drum
3 frog gueros (different sizes)
2 long gueros (different sizes)
flexatone (for bowing only – strikers removed)
styrofoam block(s) to produce 4 distinct sounds when bowed (within each of which some variation should be possible)
bows
4 steel drum mallets
2 superball mallets
vibrator
magnet and small piece of cloth to cushion it from the steel drum

violin notations:

psp, *msh* = poco and molto sul ponticello respectively, the former already being noticeably different in timbre from *nat.*, the latter being as extreme as possible consistent with the fundamental pitch remaining audible. *pst*, *mst* = poco and molto sul tasto (similarly) *clt* = col legno tratto

] = audible bow- stop at the end of a sound. A *legato* slur before a notehead indicates that the sound is to be played with no discernible attack.

∨ ∨ ∨ ∨ = ascending degrees of bow pressure: *flautando*; “normal”; exaggerated and distorted (pitch only just discernible); completely pitchless scraping. *flautando*: sometimes a transition to *flautando* might involve an increase in dynamic level – this implies a speeding up of bow movement as a change of timbre.

-----> = a smooth gradual transition between two states (for example bow position and/or pressure)

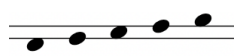
● = normal left-hand fingerpressure ◆ = “harmonic” fingerpressure

12343432123... = rapid exchange of fingers on a single pitch or glissando  = vibrato (otherwise no vibrato!), sometimes also applied to a glissando

percussion notations:

The intention is that four standard steel drum sticks are used throughout (thus also for the gueros), except for those places where other exciters are specifically required.

The gueros should be placed so that they can be played without being picked up. In particular the three frog gueros should be placed in a line so that a “glissando” can be played by scraping across them from low to high or high to low. A staccatissimo mark on a guero sound indicates that the stroke should be as short and rapid as possible (according to the notated dynamic level), almost like a spiccato attack on a bowed string instrument.

The gueros are notated on a two-line stave in order of descending size, thus:  - the two long gueros and then the three frogs.

The four “pitches” of the styrofoam block(s) are notated thus: 

The technique of producing a glissando on the steel drum by sliding a magnet across the note was developed by Hamish Upton, to whom many thanks.

 = dead-stick] = damp sound

general notes:

absences for violin and percussion is a component of the conglomerate composition *PSYCHE* for ensemble and electronics, in whose 160-minute duration it begins exactly at the halfway point. One way of describing the unifying concept of *PSYCHE* is as an exploration of the relationship between musical experience (and thus by extension phenomena experienced through other sensory pathways) and different states of consciousness. The materials and structure of *absences* emerge from a contemplation of the boundary between wakefulness and dreaming, as trains of thought might disintegrate into ungraspably nebulous percepts and then reform, although of course *absences* isn’t an attempt to embody these liminal states directly in sound. Its form consists of nine components which alternate between three kinds of musical behaviour. In components 1, 3 and 7, a violin part marked “as fast as possible” is shadowed by percussion sounds which create a more or less noise-centred aura around it, and increasingly interrupted by silences until in component 9 these silences acquire a sound of their own in the form of a duet between violin and bowed flexatone. In the central component 5, the violin and a set of five gueros form a single instrument, a generator of complexly rhythmical stridulation. In each of the even-numbered components, a fragment from another part of *PSYCHE* (a brief duo for violin and steel drum which occurs within *elsewhen* for contrabass and ensemble) forms the beginning or ending point for a sequence of 2, 4, 6 and 8 iterations whose original contents are increasingly erased or increasingly reconstituted respectively.

absences

Richard Barrett
2020-24

as fast as possible



1

steel
drum

ppp sempre
psp sempre

vn

ppp sempre

steel
drum

vn

steel
drum

vn

steel
drum

vn

steel
drum

vn

steel
drum

vn

attacca!

♩=90

2

steel drum

8 (allow to ring unless otherwise indicated)

8:7 3:2 4:3 3 8 9:7 5:4 4 8

ppp mp fff f mf ff p ff mp

bow pos

(msp) (mst)

vn

9:7 5:4 7:6

ppp ff fff mf ppp ff pp

4

steel drum

8 8:7 3:2 4:3 3 8 3:2 9:7 5:4

ppp fff f mf ff p mp pp ff pp

bow pos

vn

9:7 4:3 6:5 3:2 5:4 7:6

ppp fff mf f mp ff p ff pp

violin as fast as possible (percussion *colla parte*) - rests in tempo ♩=90

2 superballet mallets drawn over the surface of the pan, left and right hands (simultaneously!) across the indicated pitches, varying the rate and extent of movement through the pathway of each superballet independently so that the result is an indistinct but constantly changing texture without any emphasis on (single) pitches

6

steel drum

LH RH

mp pp

nat sempre - legatissimo, concealing all bow changes except on accents

I* II III IV III II III IV III II III IV III II I II III II I II III 4 0 1 3 2 4 3 0 4 0 3 0 0 3 1 4 0 0 4 3 1 0 2 1 2 0 4 3 0 1 4 0 0 4 1

vn

mp pp

* of course it isn't obligatory to use the notated fingerings, but the way they imply an extreme legato through constant string-crossing should always be borne in mind

(continuing...)

steel drum

sim.

p pp

IV III II I IV III II I II 3 2 1 4 4 1 3 2 1 0 4 1

I II I II III II III IV III II III IV III II 0 1 4 0 2 4 3 4 0 2 4 3 0 1 4 2 3 2 1

I II I II III II III IV III II III IV III 4 3 1 0 2 0 3 4 1 0 2 3 0 1 0 4 1 2 3 0

vn

p pp

7 3 8 4 8

steel drum

bow pos

vn

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

mf *fff* *mp* *p* *f* *p* *fff*

4:3 4:3 5:4 7:5 3:2

3:2 4:3 3:2 7:5 3:2

The musical score for "The Wind" by John Williams is presented in three staves. The top staff is for the steel drum, the middle staff shows the bow position, and the bottom staff is for the violin. The score is divided into two systems, each with a key signature change indicated by a double bar line and a key signature change symbol (one flat for the first system, two flats for the second system). The first system is marked with a 4/8 time signature, and the second system is marked with a 3/8 time signature. The steel drum part features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests, with dynamic markings ranging from *f* to *ppp*. The bow position part is a simple line graph showing the movement of the bow across the strings, with arrows indicating the direction of the bow. The violin part is written in treble clef and includes a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests, with dynamic markings ranging from *f* to *ppp*. The score is a high-quality musical score, likely a professional edition, and is presented in a clear and readable format.

11

steel drum

5:4 7:5 3:2 4 3:2 4:5 3

f mp f mf f mp f p

bow pos

vn

7:5 3:2 4:5 7:5

f p mp ff f mf mp pp mf ff

13

steel drum

3 4:3 4:3 7:5 3:2 4

f ff p mp f

bow pos

vn

3:2 4:3 4:3 7:5 3:2

p mp f pp p mp

15

steel drum

4 6:4 3:2 4:5 3

mp ppp f

bow pos

(rapid random movements of bow position)

vn

3:2 4:5 3:2 4:3

f mf mp fff

17

steel drum

7:5 4 5:4 3:2 4:5 4:3 5

mp f mp pp

bow pos

vn

3:2 4:5

p f mf mp

19

5 16 7 16 6:5 6:7 2 8 4 8

steel drum

gueros

ff f p ff mf f mp pp mf

bow pos

vn

ff f mp f ff f fff mf ff mp ppp

22

4 8 3:2 5:4 9 16

steel drum

gueros

ff f ff mf ff f mf f

bow pos

vn

mf fff mp f fff mf f fff f ff fff

25

10:7 3 8 4:5 3:2

steel drum

gueros

ff mp f fff mf ff p ff mf f

bow pos

vn

mp f fff ff p f ff mf

28

3:2 4 8 10:8 7:5 9 16

steel drum

gueros

p ff mf f mp ff

bow pos

vn

p mp f f mp mf f

6 31 9 16 6:7 12:9 7 16 5 8

steel drum

gueros

mf *fff* *mf* *p* *ppp* *ff* *mf* *f* *fff* *f* *mp* *ppp*

bow pos

clb arco pizz arco clt

vn

fff *f* *ff* *fff* *mf* *ff* *fff* *mp* *ppp*

33 5 8 12:10 2 8 4 8 6:4 3 8 3:2

steel drum

gueros

ff *f* *ff* *f* *p* *pp*

bow pos

vn

fff *mf* *f* *p* *mp* *fff* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mp* *pp*

36 3 8 8:9 5 8 6:5 7 16

steel drum

gueros

mf *ff* *fff* *mf* *f* *fff* *f* *fff* *ff* *mf* *f* *p*

bow pos

arco

vn

f *ff* *mf* *fff* *mf* *f* *ff* *fff* *mf* *gettato*

39 7:8 5 16 3 8 5:4 5 16

steel drum

gueros

mf *f* *ff* *fff* *f* *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf* *fff*

bow pos

vn

123432123... *pp* *mf* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *mf* *fff* *ff* *mf*

42

5/16 3/8 4/8 5/16

steel drum

gueros

fff

mf

bow pos

vn

ff

fff

p

45

5/16 6:5 7/16 6:7 4/8

steel drum

gueros

f

fff

mf

ff

mp

f

fff

bow pos

vn

fff

ff

f

ff

mp

ff

IV/III

47

4/8 3:2 4:3 5:6 3/8

steel drum

ff

f

mf

ff

mp

bow pos

vn

fff

f

mf

fff

p

ff

ppp

49

3/8 2/8 3:2 3:2 4/8 5:4 4:3 4:3 5:6

steel drum

mp

ppp

mp

pp

p

f

mf

bow pos

vn

mp

p

mf

ppp

pp

mp

52

steel drum

pp f p

3 8 2 8 4 8

7:6 3:2 3:2 4:3

bow pos

vn

f pp ff f mf

3:2 7:6 6:5 5:4 6:5

55

steel drum

pp mp p mf f fff

4 8 3 8

5:4 4:3 10:8 3:2 3:2 4:3

tr

bow pos

vn

pp p mf f

5:4 11:8 432123432123.... 5:4

57

steel drum

mf ff pp fff p ppp mp mf f

3 8 2 8 4 8

10:9 6:5 7:6 5:4 4:3 3:2

strike skirt of steel drum (vary position each time)

bow pos

vn

fff mp p f ppp mf p pp p fff pp mp mf

6:5 6:4 3:2 9:8 3:2 5:4 5:4 4:3 6:4 IV III 3:2

60

steel drum

ff ppp mf ff p mf ppp f fff mp

3 8 2 8 4 8

6:4 3:2 3:2 5:4 10:9 6:5 3:2 7:6 3:2

bow pos

vn

ff p ppp ff mp f pp mp p ppp f fff p

3:2 3:2 5:4 6:4 6:5 6:5 3:2 7:6 5:4

321234321234....

63

steel drum

4/8

5:4 4:3 4:3 5:6 6:4 3:2 3:2 4:3

mf f mp ppp p mf

bow pos

vn

5:4 6:4 3:2 4:3 7:6 3:2 6:4 3:2 5:4

mp mf fff p ff mp f ppp p

65

steel drum

3/8

6:5 10:9 4:3

fff pp mf pp mp f

2/8

3:2 3:2 6:4 5:4

p ppp mf

bow pos

vn

6:5 4:5 5:4 3:2 5:4

f ppp f mp ppp mf p fff

67

steel drum

4/8

5:4 5:4 4:3 4:3 5:6 6:4 3:2 3:2 4:3

pp mp mf f mf ff mp ppp p mf fff

bow pos

vn

5:4 4:3 6:4 3:2 4:3 7:6 3:2 3:2 5:4

pp mp mf fff p ff mp f p ppp mf

69

steel drum

3/8

10:9 6:5 4:3

pp mf ff p f

2/8

3:2 7:6 3:2

p ppp f fff mp

bow pos

vn

6:4 6:5 4:5 3:2 5:6 3:2 5:4

ff mp fff f p ff pp mf p fff

violin as fast as possible (percussion *colla parte*) - rests in tempo ♩=90

produce continuous sound using vibrator, lowering the pitch by sliding a magnet (damped with a soft cloth) across the note from edge to (almost) centre

71

steel drum

bow pos

vn

fff

mf

mf

sim.

72

steel drum

bow pos

vn

ff

p

fff

73

steel drum

bow pos

vn

f

mp

2
8

74

steel drum

bow pos

vn

pp

mp

fff

mf

ff

p

ppp

pp

p

mp

ppp

4:3

4:3

tr

5
16

7:5

4:3

7
16

3:2

3:2

5
16

77

5/16 3:2 4:5 4:5 7:5 3/8 5:4 2/8

steel drum

mf mp ff p fff ppp ff

bow pos

vn

f ff mp p fff ppp ff

I II III IV

80

2/8 4:3 4:3 5/16 7:5 4:3 7/16 4:3 5/16

steel drum

pp mp mf p ppp

bow pos

vn

pp mp fff f ff p ppp pp p

432123432...

83

5/16 3:2 4:5 3/8 4:5 7:5 5:4 2/8

steel drum

mf mp p f ff mf p fff mp ff

bow pos

vn

f pp ff mf p f ppp ff

86

2/8 5/16 7:5 4:3 7/16 3:2 3:2 5/16

steel drum

mp fff mf pp p ppp pp p mp mf

bow pos

vn

mf p fff f pp mp ppp pp

89

5/16

3:2 4:5

4:5 7:5

3/8

steel drum

bow pos

vn

ppp mp < f

p fff

91

3/8

4:3 7:6

2/8

4:3 4:3

5/16

steel drum

bow pos

vn

ff mf ff pp

93

5/16

7:5

tr 7/16

3:2

5/16

3:2

steel drum

bow pos

vn

ff ppp p mp

p ppp mf ff f

96

4:5 7:5

3/8

2/8

4:3 4:3

tr 5/16

7/16

steel drum

bow pos

vn

f p fff ff pp mp

p mp > ppp ff mf pp mp

100

7/16 5/16 3/8

steel drum

ppp *mf*

bow pos

vn

p *mf* *f* *mf* *p*

wide vibrato with rapid alternation between normal and "harmonic" fingerpressure, together with rapid but irregular bowed tremolo

103

3/8 2/8 5/16 7/16

steel drum

f *ppp* *mp* *fff* *ff* *pp* *fff*

bow pos

vn

ppp *ff* *pp* *p* *mp*

106

7/16 5/16 3/8

steel drum

mf *fff*

bow pos

vn

pp

109

3/8 2/8 5/16 7/16

steel drum

ppp *pp*

bow pos

vn

ppp *ff* *fff*

112

7/16 5/16 3/8

steel drum

bow pos

vn

3:2 3:2 4:5 7:5

mp ppp p

clt

3:2 6:5 3:2 6:5 3:2

ppp mp ppp p pp mp

115

3/8 2/8 5/16 7/16

steel drum

bow pos

vn

4:3 4:3 tr

pp mp

arco

ff mf f ff

7:5 3:2 3:2

118

7/16 5/16 3/8 9/8

steel drum

bow pos

vn

3:2 4:3

ppp pp

4:5 7:5

p

122

9/8 (sounds an octave higher!)

flexa tone

bow pos

vn

7:5 7:5

ppp

8:6 3:2 6:4

ppp

constant variation within the four different "itches" which between them should cover as wide a range as possible
(keep flexatone in hand!)

123

styro-foam blocks

bow pos

vn

124

flexa tone

bow pos

vn

125

flexa tone

bow pos

vn

126

styro-foam blocks

bow pos

vn

127

flexa
tone

mf

6:4

mp

bow
pos

3:2

8:6

4:3

vn

mf

mp

128

flexa
tone

pp

p

bow
pos

7:5

4:5

vn

pp

p

129

flexa
tone

pp

ppp

5:6

8:6

bow
pos

8:6

5:4

vn

pp

ppp

130

flexa
tone

ppp

4:5

bow
pos

vn

ppp

131

styro-foam blocks

bow pos

vn

ppp *mf* *fff* *pp* *f* *mf* *pp* *ppp* *ff* *p* *fff* *pp* *f* *fff*

132

flexa tone

bow pos

vn

ff *f*

5:6 9:6 3:2 3:2 4:3

133

flexa tone

bow pos

vn

mp *mf*

9:6 4:3 6:5

134

flexa tone

bow pos

vn

mp *p*

3:2 5:6 3:2 4:3

135

flexa tone

pp

7:5

3:2

p

bow pos

vn

pp

p

136

flexa tone

pp

5:6

ppp

bow pos

vn

pp

ppp

137

flexa tone

ppp

9:6

6:4

pp

bow pos

vn

ppp

pp

138

flexa tone

ppp

5:6

9:6

bow pos

vn

ppp

7:6

139

flexa
tone

4:3

4:3

3:2

ppp

bow
pos

3:2

3:2

3:2

3:2

vn

ppp