Concerto for Steelpan and Wind Ensemble (2011)

David MacDonald

solo steelpan

Performance notes:

The soloist plays three pans: tenor and double seconds, arranged in whichever manner works best. If a particular set of tenors and double seconds cannot reach the full range required, an extra instrument may be used. The soloist will have to determine the best places to change pans based on the peculiarities of the instruments being used.

The improvisation at the end of mvt. 2 is optional. The soloist may improvise, compose a new cadenza, play the written cadenza, or any combination of the three. However, it is important for the structural balance of the piece that mm. 120-132 not last more than 45 seconds at the longest. Whatever the soloist chooses to play during that section, he or she must return to the written music at the roll on G#5 at the end of movement (marked "return").

Program notes:

Steelpan, the national instrument of Trinidad and Tobago, is not an obvious choice for a concerto instrument. However, there are many composers and players working to build a classical repertoire for pan. There are many chamber works that include pan, and even a small handful of concerti, notably, by Jan Bach (1994) and more recently, Libby Larsen (2004). My research leads me to believe that this is the first concerto for steelpan with wind ensemble.

Pan has a sound profile unlike any other instrument I know. For that reason, I open the concerto with a timbre sampling of the ensemble, punctuated with the pan for comparison. The melody presented by the pan beginning in m. 15 of the first movement is only the first statement of a theme that informs nearly all of the melody, harmony, and counterpoint of the concerto. Of the three movements, the first pits the pan most strongly against the ensemble, emphasizing the uniqueness of its sound. This movement also focuses most strongly on the relationship between the pan and the percussion section.

The second movement is more texturally dense. The pan floats over a bed of loosely imitative counterpoint, which thickens throughout the movement. The soloist has the opportunity to "stretch out" over cadenzas, including an optional improvisation. Because the range and layout of steelpans are not completely standardized, the improvisation allows the soloist to exploit the peculiarities of the instrument being used.

The final cadenza of the second movement, which includes the optional improvisation, connects directly to the final movement of the concerto. In m. 5, the pan presents the clearest statement of the theme on which the whole work is based. This movement is the shortest of the three, a succinct and groove-based wrap-up to the complete concerto. The rhythms and textures refer to jazz, a familiar genre to many steelpan players. The pan concludes with a virtuosic flourish (mm. 88-94) before a cool and casual exit.

Duration: approx. 18'30"

Solo Steelpan

Concerto for Steelpan and Wind Ensemble

1

David MacDonald

unmetered 6" 2" 7" 5" 2"

6 6" freely *mf*

8 7" 6" 4" 4" 3"

13 **A** comfortably (♩ = 108ish) 2 *p*

18 2 *f*

24 **B** *p*

29

32

34 **C** *f*

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39

42

44

p

47 **D**

51

mf *mp*

57 **E**

f

60 **F**

mf

63

f *mf*

66

70 **G**

mf *cresc. gradually*

73

76

78 **H**

ff

85 **I**

87

mp

89 **J**

91

93

95 K

102 L M

113

119 N

122

126 O

130

137 P

139

145 **Q**

mf

147 **R**

f

149

150

ff *fff*

S **unmetered**

7-8"

152

fff

Repeat this figure as fast as possible until the next figure.

7-8"

7-8"

154

7-8"

4"

156

abrupt cutoff, silence

slow and free, as a cadenza

pp *mp* *pp* *mf*

3

p *ff* *p* *mp*

4 **A** gently, ♩ = 72

p *mf* *mf*

12 **B** **6** **C**

p

23

mf *mp*

28

34 **D** **3**

43 **E**

mp

46

mf

49

F

f *n*

3

58

mp

2

63

mp *mf* *mp* *f*

66

f

69

G

mf *ff* *mp*

f *mf*

74

ff *f* *fff*

79 **H** **cadenza 1 (unmetered)**

slowly gradual accel.

p *f*

gradually slow down roll

fff *pp*

mf

81 **I**

3 3

p *mp*

89 **J**

2

mp

93

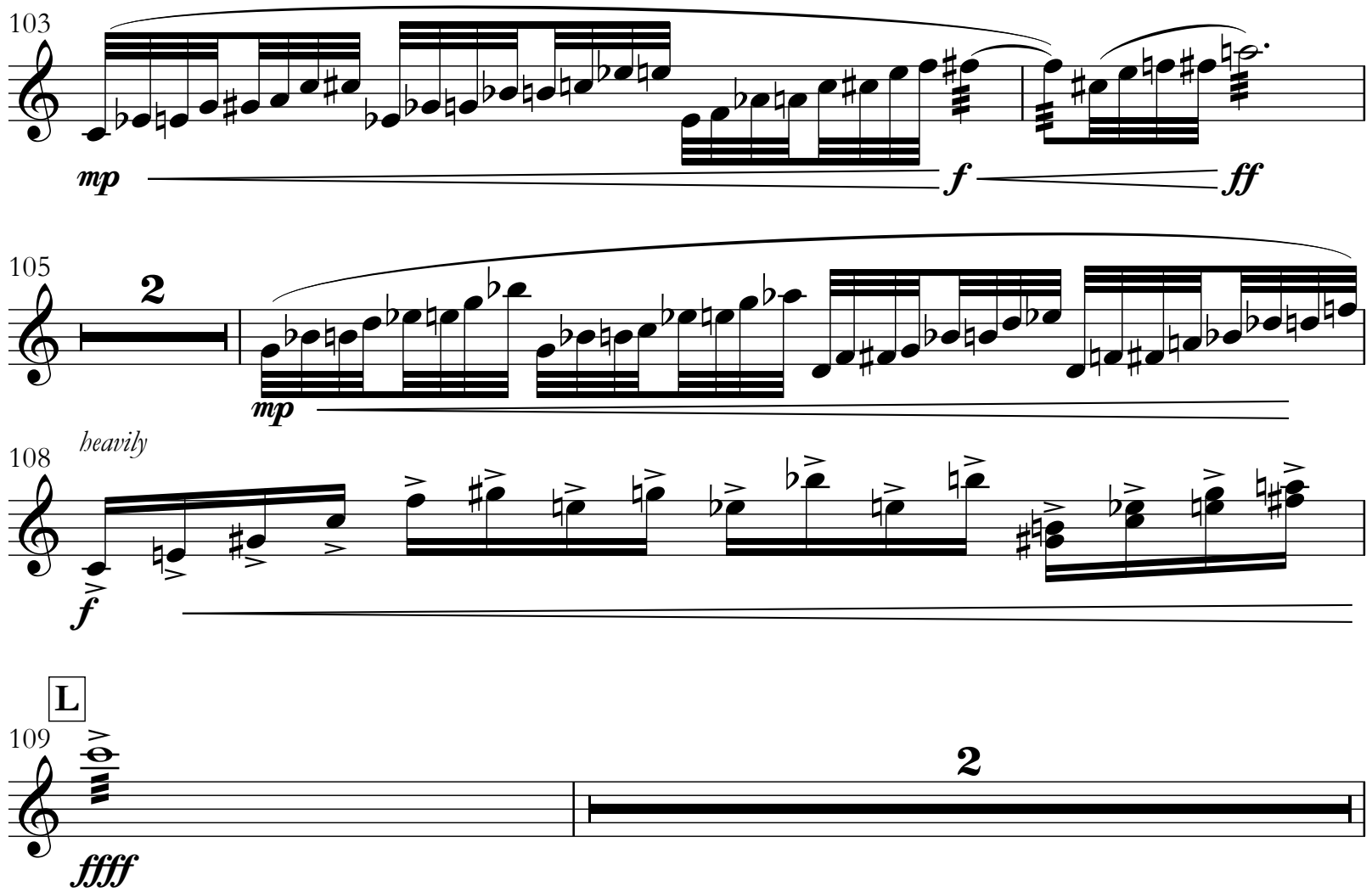
mf *f*

95

3

f

100 **K**


103
mp
f
ff
105
2
mp
heavily
108
f
L
109
2
ffff

112 **M**

cadenza 2, unmetered

open for improvisation

fff

p

ff

p

return

fff

attacca mvt. 3

mp

attaca from cadenza
relaxed, but steady (with implied groove)
♩ = 80

mp

3

f

mp

6

8

mf

10

f

mf

12

A

15

f

17

B

mp

ff

22 **C**

f

26

ff

30 **D**

mf

ff

35 **E**

f

38

40

41

42

43 **F**

ff *f*

47

ff

51 **G**

p

54

56

ff

60 **H**

mp

66 **I**

mp

68

f

71

mf

73

J

77

79

fff

81

83 **K**

f

84

85

86

88

90 **L**

93

fff

96 **M**

98 *mp*

100 *mp*

102

104 *p* long in tempo