

jeffrey ryan

poison wind

for harp and percussion

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through the Toronto Arts Council

Programme note:

The Arabic word *simoom* translates as “poison wind” and is the name given to a small local wind in Arabia and the Sahara. This wind is so hot (up to 55°C) and dry (with less than 10% humidity) that it has a tendency to cause heatstroke. Today, though, the high levels of urban air pollution have created another kind of “poison wind,” affecting both local environments and the global ecosystem.

This work for harp and percussion finds its inspiration in the power of nature to fight back as the Earth struggles to balance and repair itself. It is in three connected movements. After a majestic opening, the first movement looks to the *simoom* in its evocation of the swirling, rising winds. The second movement is more spacious, becoming more introspective and contemplative. The third movement brings the music to our modern industrial times with vigorous drumming, propulsive energy and driving rhythms.

Poison Wind was written for the Gemmell/Wassmansdorf Duo and was produced with the support of the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council.

Performance notes:

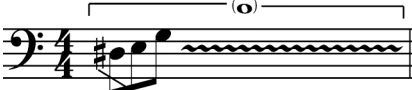
General:

1. The three movements are intended to be performed without interruption. Total performance time ca. 11:15.
2. An air of ceremony, reverence and ritual should surround the performance. All motions by the performers should be slow, deliberate and, where appropriate, somewhat exaggerated to reflect this. The percussionist should organise the setup so that everything is within a comfortable reach and he/she will not have to make a mad dash across the stage.
3. Allow all notes to ring unless dampening is specifically indicated. Where it is expected that sounds will ring through empty measures, those measures are left blank, rather than containing a whole rest (this occurs primarily in the first two movements).

Harp:

1. Low D = D
Low C = C
High G = G# (if harp has no mechanism for this string)

2. A rubber mallet is also required.

3. Free patterns:  Repeat the notated figure as fast as possible for the indicated duration.

4. Harmonics: All harmonics are written as *played*, sounding one octave higher.
5. Glissandi: All glissandi begin immediately upon sounding the initial pitch. Glissandi of duration longer than a quarter note are notated with an opening eighth note and the total required duration.
6. Rustling glissando (mm. 120-122): play with open hand, fingers spread apart; gradually move upward and downward (approximately within the indicated range), creating a rustling sound.
7. Other special playing techniques are explained within the part.

Percussion:

1. Instrumentation (listed by movement; some instruments overlap)

- I large tam-tam
large bass drum
sistrum
marimba
2 roaster pan lids suspended by handles
(or similar resonant metal lids in two different size to sound approx. m3 apart)
vibraphone
glockenspiel
finger cymbals (pair)
- II glockenspiel (same as in I)
large suspended cymbal
4 metal pots suspended by handles, pitched high to low (see note 5 below)
conga (or tumbadora) (must have a low sound)
bass drum (same as in I)
vibraphone (bowed) (same as in I)
high claves (may substitute concussion blocks)
kalimba (preferably without bottlecaps or metal attachments) (see note 6 below)
large tam-tam (same as in I)
- III riq (small Egyptian tambourine) (may substitute modern concert tambourine)
bass drum (same as in I)
4 plastic buckets (high to low) (see note 7 below)
marimba (same as in I)
suspended exhaust pipe (or other large steel tube; must produce a fairly low pitch)
medium woodblock
2 (differently-sized) prepared brake drums (see note 8 below)
large suspended metal pot (same as in II)
large tam-tam (same as in I)
bell tree

2. Trill/tremolo notation
(keyboard percussion):



For clarity and ease, trills and tremolos are written with a main note and a secondary note. Both notes are to be played as equal throughout; always start from the main note.

3. Free patterns:

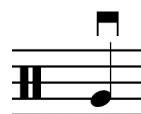


Repeat the notated figure as fast as possible for the indicated duration.

4. Conga notation:



= Regular stroke



= Finger stroke near edge

5. Metal Pots: Four resonant metal pots (such as roaster pans or stock pots) are required. They should be suspended by their handles and are played on their bottoms. The pots should be chosen to produce four different pitches, and arranged high to low. If necessary, four other metals that produce a similar resonant gong/bell-like sound may be substituted.

6. Kalimba: Pitches are written as approximate. The interval pattern should be maintained but the *precise* pitches are not required. An instrument *without* bottlecaps or metal attachments is preferred. If a kalimba is unavailable, glockenspiel may be substituted; in this case, play pitches as written in the given octave.
7. Plastic Buckets: Four sturdy, resonant buckets of varying sizes and/or thicknesses are required, arranged by pitch high to low. They must be open-ended, and inverted so as to be played on the bottom. The buckets must be set up on stands as in a tomtom array (or in some other arrangement to leave the open end free). If satisfactory buckets are unavailable, regular tomtoms may be substituted.
8. Brake Drums: The brake drums are prepared with nuts/bolts/washers/etc., and played with hammers to produce a medium-high metallic clattering sound.
9. Other special playing techniques are explained within the part.

dedicated with thanks and appreciation to
lori gemmell and steven wassmansdorf

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I

$\bullet = 54$ *Maestoso, ritualistic*

LARGE TAM-TAM
soft mallet

BASS DRUM

TAM-TAM

B. DR.

TAM-TAM

B. DR.

1

f *f* (but don't completely cover harp)

pedal gliss.

ff *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

D# C# B#
E# F# G# A#
Low D = D#
Low C = C#
High G = G#

8vb-----
loco

SISTRUM

TAM-TAM

B. DR.

SIST.

TAM-TAM

MARIMBA
soft mallets

6

n. *f* poss. *f* *f* *n.* *f* poss. *f* *let fade*

ff *ff* *ff* *p* sempre

loco

8vb-----
loco

A

13

pp *f* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf*

(repeat pattern fast as poss.)

f sub. *p* *f* sub. *p*

poco rit. - a tempo

17

pp *(pp) < mf > pp < mf > pp < mf > pp < mf >*

pp *f sub.*

20

pp *f* *(mf)* *(p)*

pp *f* *(mf)* *(p)*

24

pp *(p)* *(mf)*

pp *(p)* *(mf)*

26

pp *ffp*

f *ff*

B = 81

poco rit. --- a tempo

28 *f* *p sub.* *f*

f *(mf)* *p* *mf sub.*

(harmonics sound 8ve higher)

31 *p*

SUSP. METAL LIDS
struck on edge with wooden shaft

pp sub. (very delicately) *f sub.*

pp p.d.l.t. *pp p.d.l.t.*

D C^b B[#]
E^b F G^b A^b

34 *pp sempre* (hold pedal down with block if necessary) *let fade (senza cresc.)*

VIB. motor on med.
soft mallets

pp sub. *mf* *cresc. poco a poco*

ord.

37 *f*

BASS DRUM
rub drumhead with wetted finger
to create a low groaning sound

f *gl. G while trilling to Ab*

C ♩ = 108 sub. *più mosso*
Insistently

VIB. motor on slow
medium mallets

39

ff *p*

n. (release block) *ped. ad lib.* *f*

D♯C♯B♯ | E♯F♯G♯A♭

44

pp (*pp*) *sempre*

ff sub. *mf sub.* *n.*

49

ff *mf sub.* *ff* *mf* *n.* (*pp*) *f*

ff *mf* *p*

53

p sub. *f* *p sub.* *mf* *p* *mf*

ff *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

D

57

p *ff* *p*

p *ff* *p*

D#
E

61

(white notes) *(mf)*

(mf)

D

E ♩ = 132 sub. Dancelike 2 FINGER CYMBALS (handheld, struck together on edge)

65

f *ff* (until faded) *f*

f *ff*

70

pp *ff* *pp*

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

75

f *ff*

F

78

f

83

f *p* *mf* *pp*

LARGE TAM-TAM
soft mallet

D \flat C \flat B \flat | E \flat F \sharp G \sharp A \flat

GLOCK.
(brass mallets)

87

ff

gl. *ca. 4"*

ff

f poss. ⊕

(attacca)

II

G ♩ = 60 *con poco rubato*
Dark and mysterious

GLOCK. (hard yarn mallets)

90

pp *mp* *p*

mf *p* *p*

D \flat C \sharp B \flat
E \flat F \sharp G \sharp A \flat

slap palm in
lowest register

93

pp *mp* *pp*

mf *p* *p*

LARGE SUSP. CYMBAL
(medium yarn mallet)

4 SUSP. METAL POTS
strike on bottom with hands (fingertips)*
(let all ring)

95

mf *p* *mf* *p*

gl. *gl.* *gl.* *gl.*

p *p* *p*

p

*if the particular metals do not produce a sufficient or satisfactory sound with the hands, use medium yarn mallets

CONGA (with hands) *sim. 3* *3*

mf *p* *f sub.*

99 *knock most resonant part of sounding board with knuckles* *ord.*

pp *p* *mf* *pp*

mf fast fingernail scrape up string *p.d.l.t.*

gl. *8va*

sim. *sim.* *p*

103

strike string with rubber mallet *p*

8vb

H $\bullet = 120$ *sub. doppio movimento*
BASS DRUM (with fingers)

rit. poco a poco to -----

106 *n.* *mf*

gushing chord (l.v.) (as grace note) loco *f*

(rit.) ----- $\bullet = 60$

VIB. (bowed) motor on slow

109 *pp* *p*

3 *p* *p* *3*

- harp -
HIGH CLAVES

112 *f* (keep vib. pedal down)

mf 5 5 5 *n.*

3 3

gl.

J

116 *f* (vib.)

mf 5 *pp* p.d.l.t. (whispering)

ord. mf (l.v.) *p*

8vb

KALIMBA
(pitches approx.)

120 *mp* *p* rustling gliss. *ord. gl.* *pp* *p*

loco *poco rit.* *a tempo*

LARGE TAM-TAM
(moderately slow circles near
edge with metal beater)

125 *pp* *pp* *gliss with back of nail, gradually descending* *n.* *f* *p*

loco ***

let fade

*exhale on "hoo" into the hole in the back of the soundboard (breath sound will be amplified by the harp) (attacca)

III

K ♩ = 54 *Maestoso*
 (strike *riq* against hip, then raise slowly in a gesture of defiance) (with fist) *ff* *sim.* *ff* (against hip each time, and raise as before)

MED. BUCKET *ff* (hard rubber mallet) *ff* *ff*

130

D#C#B# | E#F#G#A#

(with fist, keep raised) *ff* *raucously!* (with fist) *f* *poss.*

138 (bucket tacet) (to bass drum) *ff* *loco* *f* *poss.*

L ♩ = 150 *Driving*
 BASS DRUM (hard rubber mallet) 4 PLASTIC BUCKETS (hard rubber mallets)

144 *ff* *f*

mf

149 *f* *f*

M

(strike edge of bucket
with shaft of stick)
rim shot

154

sf *mf* *p* *ff*

158

mf sub. *ff* *mf sub.* *p*

ord. rim shot ord.

162

ff *sfp*

knock soundboard
with knuckles

N

166

ff strum with back of nail
(both hands) - - - - -
RH ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ *sim.*

LH 1 1 1 1
ff

170

MARIMBA
(VERY hard mallets) *f* *8va*

p

173

(*8va*)

176

(*8va*)

O

(8va)

179

(RH continues strum)

p

sim.

(LH ord.)

(8va)

182

(8va)

185

P

ff

f

p sub.

SUSP. EXHAUST PIPE
(with hammer)

188

f

ord. >

f sub.

p sub.

192

f

f

f

p

p sub.

196

f

f

Q

199

f

mf

p sub.

203 (perc. tacet)

206 R

211 S

BUCKETS
(wood sticks)

215

l.v. sim.

220 T

225 *f* 5:3 *sfp* *f* 5:3 *sfp* *f* *p* *f*

230 *sfp* *f* *mf* *U* MED. WOODBLOCK (wood stick) *brittle* *f sub.* *f* *f sempre*

234

238 *p sub.*

2 PREPARED BRAKE DRUMS
(with hammers)

241

ff

ff

3 3 3 3 3 3

V

245

sempre legato

ff

3 3 3

BUCKETS
(hard rubber mallets)

248

p < f *p < f* *p* *f*

f *(mf)*

BASS DRUM
(hard rubber mallets)

W

251

n. *mf*

p

254

LOWEST SUSP. METAL POT
strike on bottom with soft mallet

rit. poco a poco to

257

pp
(no accent)

ppp

(rit.)

LARGE TAM-TAM
soft mallet

259

pp

(rit.)

(molto rit.)

$\bullet = 36$
BELL TREE (with fingernails)
(single stroke low to high)

261

pp

n.

pp
let fade

8vb