

STILL SKY BELLS

For large ensemble

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Stef Conner

STILL SKY BELLS (2010)

For large ensemble: flute/alto flute; oboe/cor anglais; clarinet/bass clarinet; percussion: vibraphone/tam-tam/glockenspiel/rin (C4 - C5)/Chinese war drum/Thai gongs (C4 - C5)/bamboo sticks and newspaper in a wooden bowl; harp; piano; mandolin; guitar; violin; viola; violoncello and contrabass.

Premiered at Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival in November 2010, by The Nieuw Ensemble. Composed as part of the HCMF Yorkshire Young Composers' Professional Development Programme.

Duration c. 20 minutes

Notation Key

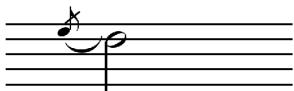
General

Senza Misura

Senza Misura passages in this piece use approximate spacial notation and are not strictly proportional. Conductor cues are given, within which performers judge the duration of their material individually (approximate timings are sometimes indicated). Accidentals apply only to the notes they precede. When individuals play un-metered material, barlines are shown if it is necessary to continue to follow the conductor (in order to resume metered material at a particular point); barlines are hidden when it is possible for the player to ignore the conductor for a significant period of time.



Appoggiatura: play the grace notes on the beat, thus within the duration of the note they precede.



Acciaccatura: play the grace notes before the beat, thus within the duration of the note or rest before the note they precede.



As high/low as possible

Gradual change from one state to another. Thus, if an arrow appears between two notes, performers should arrive at the new state by the second, having transitioned gradually.



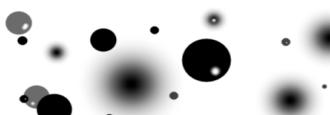
'Extender': spacial representation of note length. In measured passages, duration is indicated by the number of bars the extender covers, unless it is extended by a duration of less than a bar, in which case note values are shown above the stave. In *senza misura* passages, durations are spacial and approximate.



As above, but indicates the length of time taken by a motive, rhythm and/or pitch collection.

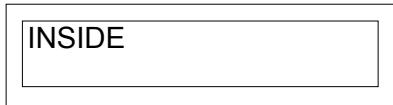


Performers repeat given notation in their own independent tempo. Required parameters (e.g. pitch in this example) are given and others are left to performers' discretion. Extenders are used to show duration. Accidentals apply only to the note they immediately precede.



Each player is given a bell and stick. When this graphic is shown, players strike their bell in any irregular rhythm, beginning with dense, frequent hits and gradually subsiding. Usually, these gestures follow percussion events, which the bells should seem to rebound from. Players should listen to each-other, passing gestures around the ensemble and responding to ideas.

Piano

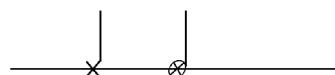


Play inside piano, striking or plucking the strings as directed.



Play piano strings with percussion sticks.

Percussion



Damped, un-resonant stroke.



Scrunched up newspaper, manipulated to create a rustling sound. Duration of effect is shown on a hidden stave. And speed is indicated by 'moderate', 'fast' or 'slow'.



As above, but combined with bamboo sticks, placed in any non-metallic bowl and moved around, to create a rustling, clicking texture.



As above, but without the newspaper.

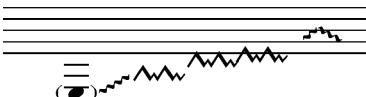
Plucked Strings



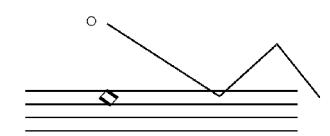
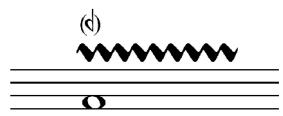
Applies to harp only. All notes should sound for their written duration only and are damped immediately afterwards, with whichever hand is available. Continues to apply until the direction 'ord.' is given, although reminders are sometimes used.



Rustling texture, with as little audible pitch as possible, created by scraping multiple wound strings with fingernails in fast, erratic and interrupted movements. Duration of effect is shown on a hidden stave. And speed is indicated by 'moderate', 'fast' or 'slow'.



Bowed Strings

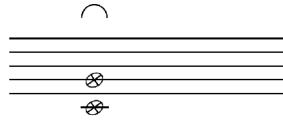




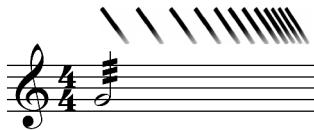
Artificial harmonic glissando, maintaining 4th interval (rather than distance) between fingers and thus creating a pitch bend from one note to another. Do not re-articulate the final pitch.



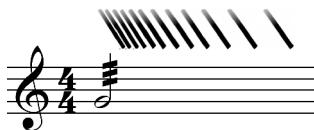
Artificial harmonic glissando, maintaining the same space between fingers on the string, creating a 'seagull' effect in which pitch slides and leaps.



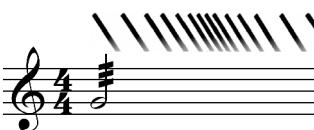
Bow indicated strings behind the bridge.



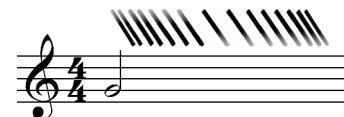
Bowed, non-measured tremolo, which accelerates from relatively slow repeated notes to a tremolo played as fast as possible.



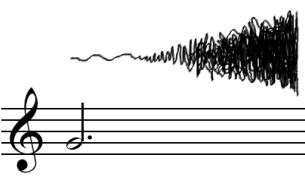
Bowed, non-measured tremolo, which begins as fast as possible then decelerates dramatically.



Bowed, non-measured tremolo, which begins slowly, accelerates and then decelerates.



Bowed, non-measured tremolo, which begins fast, decelerates and then accelerates.



Gradually apply more bow pressure to create an increasingly coarse tone.

Abbreviations (plucked and bowed strings)

p.s.p.	<i>poco sul ponticello</i>	p.d.l.t.	<i>Prés de la table</i>
s.p.	<i>sul ponticello</i>	b.n.	play with bottle neck.
m.s.p.	<i>multo sul ponticello</i>	bisb.	<i>bisbigliando</i>
s.t.	<i>sul tasto</i>		

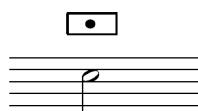
Woodwind



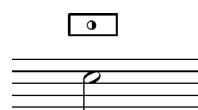
Breathy but pitched notes.



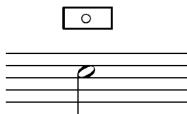
Un-pitched breath sounds into instrument without any leakage, unless directed. Pitches indicate preferred fingering, which changes the timbre of the breath sound.



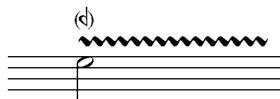
Mouthpiece completely sealed by mouth.



Mouthpiece half open, allowing some leakage.



Mouthpiece open (normal playing position).



Exaggerated vibrato (combined with either 'lip vib.' or 'm.p.b.') creating a rapid alternation between a note and a quarter-tone higher or lower.



Breath glissando, created by adding or removing fingers as fast as possible. N.b. all pitched glissandi involve bending notes and are never fingered in this way.



Change fingering rapidly and randomly.



Strong attack without tonguing

Abbreviations

m.p.b.	mouth piece bend
d.a.	diaphragm accent
l.b.	lip bend
lip vib.	lip vibrato
fl.	flutter tongue
l.	lip tremolo
n.t.	not tongued

Phonetic Symbols

[ɑ]	'a' as in 'father'
[i]	'ee' as in 'see'
[u]	'oo' as in 'boot'
[ɔ]	'oor' as in 'door'
[ʃ]	'sh' as in 'shoe'
[ɸ]	blowing - lips pursed

Still Sky Bells

For The Nieuw Ensemble

Stef Conner

J = c. 50

Flute

Clarinet in B \flat

Vibraphone

Harp

Guitar

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

5 m.p.b. (d) n.t. tr. rall.

Fl. Ob. Cl. Vib. Hp. Pno. Gtr. Mand. Vln. Vla. Vc. Cb.

Bass Clarinet in B♭

Tam-tam

ord.

sost. ped. Ped.

A = 56 Grim, sluggish and evil

(n.) -----> m.s.p.

Ord. vib.

Fl. 9 - 3 b° 3 fast
 Remove reed
 Ob. [u] $m\text{f}$ $m\text{p}$
 B. Cl. 3 5:4 7:4
 very slow \rightarrow fast \rightarrow slow
 Perc. Bamboo Sticks (and paper) in non-metallic bowl
 pp mp pp
 slow \rightarrow fast \rightarrow slow
 fast \rightarrow slow \rightarrow fast \rightarrow slow
 very slow \rightarrow fast \rightarrow slow
 Tam-tam
 pp mf pp
 Hp. $m\text{p}$
 Pno. INSIDE (ppp - mp ad lib.) scrape with nail
 Gtr. 5 mp ppp p f mp
 Mand. b.n. mp
 Vln. norm.
 (n.) \rightarrow m.s.p.
 Vla. Ord. vib. s.t. norm.
 Vc. Ord. vib.
 Cb. 3 5:4 7:4
 pp mp pp
 B

22

Fl. m.p.b. 3 m.p.b.

Replace reed Remove reed

B. Cl. 5 mp

Perc. Thai Gongs Rin pp mf

Hp. f

Pno. p

Gtr. pp mf

Mand. mp p b.n. 5 pp mf

Vln. p

Vla. 3 3 pp mf > pp mp 5 3 5 (n.)--->m.s.p. norm. mf

Vc. 5:4 3 3 mp 5 pp f (n.)--->m.s.p. norm. mf

Cb. 5:4 3 3 mp p mp mf mp

C (middle C fingering with G sharp key) ff [i] fast → very fast → fast [o] mp ff = mp moderate Bamboo Sticks (and paper) in non-metallic bowl Rin pp mf

INSIDE

Harmonic glissandi ad lib. (sul D)

fast

Alto Flute []

Senza Misura: c. 7-10"

D

Fl.

Ob.

B. Cl.

Perc.

Hp.

Pno.

Gtr.

Mand.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Flute

Tam-tam

Thai Gongs

punctuate with sporadic accents
(>) (>) (>)

INSIDE []

8vb

s.p.

p.p. < (p.p. - f ad lib.)

p.p. < m.f. = p

p.s.p. → m.s.p.

p

norm.

Begin with conductor then accel. into independent (only slightly faster) tempo.

Begin with conductor then accel. into independent tempo.

45

Fl. Cor Anglais C. A. B. Cl. T-t. Vibraphone Hp. Pno. Gtr. Mand. Vln. Vla. Vc. Cb.

Fl. Cor Anglais C. A. B. Cl. T-t. Vibraphone Hp. Pno. Gtr. Mand. Vln. Vla. Vc. Cb.

E ♩ = 43 Hideously indulgent

Alto Flute

Cor Anglais

Tam-tam

Glockenspiel

ord.

Ped.

norm.

ff

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

rall.

mf

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Vib.

Hp.

Pno.

Gtr.

Mand.

Alto Flute

Cor Anglais

Tam-tam

Glockenspiel

ord.

Ped.

norm.

ff

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

rall.

mf

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Vib.

Hp.

Pno.

Gtr.

Mand.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

54

m.p.b. 5

d.a. 3 5

m.p.b.

A. Fl.

C. A.

Cl.

Glock.

Rin

Hpr. sec. 3 5 3 sec. 5 3 ord. punctuate trem. with sporadic grace notes (ord.)----->p.d.l.t.

Mand. mp ff mp mp p

Vln. s.t. pp mp

Vla. s.t. f pp mp

Vc. s.t. f pp mp

Cb. f pp mp

rit. norm.

norm. 5 3 3

mf mp

A tempo ($\downarrow = 43$)

A. Fl. m.p.b. d.a. 5 m.p.b. 3 m.p.b.

C. A. f = p p

Bass Clarinet in B \flat

Cl. 5

Rin. ff Tam-tam Rin. l.v. pp ord. sec. fff ff f mf

Hp. ff

Pno. ff

Gtr. ff

Mand. ff

A tempo ($\downarrow = 43$)

(n.) s.p. norm.

Vln. f = mp = f

Vla. f = p mp

Vc. f = p

Cb. f = p mp

F

fl. 5 6 3 mf f = f mp f ff f 5 3 f f f fff f mf

F

norm. 5 3 f f p f fff ff f p f f p mp 3 f f p ppp p

Musical score for orchestra and piano, page 10, system 64. The score includes parts for Flute (A. Fl.), Clarinet (C. A.), Bassoon (B. Cl.), Rin. (Rin.), Hp. (Horn), Pno. (Piano), Gtr. (Guitar), Mand. (Mandolin), Vln. (Violin), Vla. (Viola), Vc. (Cello), and Cb. (Double Bass). The score features complex rhythmic patterns, dynamic markings like *ff*, *mf*, *p*, and *pp*, and performance instructions such as *Tam-tam arco*, *Rin.*, *p.d.l.t. sec.*, *s.t.*, *s.p.*, *norm.*, *(norm.)*, *Harmonic glissandi ad lib. (sul E)*, and *f*, *mf*, *pp*. The piano part includes sustained notes and dynamic markings like *ff*, *p*, *mf*, *pp*, and *f*.

G

70

A. Fl.

C. A.

B. Cl.

Rin.

Chinese Drum

Thai Gongs

(p.d.l.t.) (sec.)

ord.

Hp.

Pno.

senza ped.

8vb

ff

mp

p

mf

ff

mp

ff

l.v., as long as poss.

Gtr.

Mand.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

rit.

s.p.

s.t.

norm.

f

mp

p

pp

mp

p

A tempo ($\text{♩} = 43$)

77

A. Fl.

C. A.

B. Cl.

Gongs.

Hp.

Pno.

Gtr.

Mand.

H

Chinese Drum

A tempo ($\text{♩} = 43$)

s.p. → norm.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

H

s.p. → norm.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

H

I ♪ = c. 56 Languid

Musical score for orchestra and piano, page 85. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (B. Cl.), Clarinet in B \flat , T-tambourine (T.-t.), Glockenspiel, Tam-tam, and Piano (Pno.). The piano part features a box labeled "INSIDE" with specific dynamics and performance instructions.

The score consists of six staves. The top four staves are for the orchestra: Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, and Clarinet in B \flat . The bottom two staves are for the piano. The piano staff has a box labeled "INSIDE" containing performance instructions:

- Measure 1: Dynamics: p , mp , mf , f , fff .
- Measure 2: Dynamics: pp .
- Measure 3: Dynamics: mp , $sim.$, mf , f .

The score also includes various dynamic markings such as ff , fff , ff , f , pp , mf , mp , and ppp . Performance instructions include "etc.", "Ped.", and "INSIDE". Measure numbers 1 through 5 are indicated above the staves.

I ↳ = c. 56 Languid

A musical score for four string instruments: Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Cello (Cb.), and Double Bass (Vc.). The score consists of two systems of music. In the first system, the Vln. has three short rests. The Vla. and Vc. play sustained notes with grace marks. The Cb. also plays a sustained note with a grace mark. Dynamic markings include *ff*, *fff*, and *f*. The second system begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. The Vln. has a dynamic *ff*. The Vla. and Vc. play sustained notes with grace marks. The Cb. has a dynamic *fff*. The score includes performance instructions such as *3* over a group of three notes, *f*, *mp*, and *mp*.

J

Fl. *p* 5 *mp* *p* *pp* *p* Remove reed *m.p.b.*

Ob. *pp* *p* *pp* alternate fingering *3* *3* *mf*

Cl. *p* *ppp* *p* *p* *ff* *mp* *ff*

Vibraphone *mp* *pp* *mp* arco *Glockenspiel* *f* *p* *f* *p.d.l.t.*

Hp. *f* *mp* *ffff* *p* *ppp* *ord. 5* *5* *ff* *f* *ff*

Pno. *pp* *pp* *p* *ppp* *mp* ad lib. Improvise with given pitches, in order. Retain rhythmic character of previous 2 bars. Begin to incorporate occasional, subtle E 'punctuations'.

Gr. *f* *mf* *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *s.p.*

Mand. *f* *ff* *f* *ff*

J

Vln. *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *p* *mf* *p* *p* (sub.)

Vla. *pp* *mf* *ff* *p* (sub.) *mp*

Vc. *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* (n.) *s.p.* *norm.*

Cb. *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* (n.) *s.p.* *norm.*

Harmonic glissandi sul C.

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Vibraphone

Hp.

Pno.

Gtr.

Mand.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

112

K

Fl. (fast) Replace reed

Ob. ff

Cl. f

Vibraphone

Hp.

Pno.

Gtr.

Mand.

Vln. (n.) p.s.p. norm. m.s.p.

Vla. p.s.p. norm. s.p. m.s.p.

Cb. p ppp

m.p.b.

121

Fl. *f* = *p* *ff* = *mf*

Ob.

Cl. *fast* *ff*

m.p.b. *5* *b*

Perc. *pp* *5* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp*

Hp. *mp* *p* *pp* *mp* *p* *mf* *5* *pp* *p* *pp* *mp* *pp* *5* *mp* *mf*

Pno. *p* *pp* *5* *p* *pp* *mp* *pp* *5* *ppp* *pp* *5* *pp* *p* *pp* *5* *mp*

Gtr. *mf* *pp* *pp* *p* *mp* *pp* *5* *pp* *pp* *mp* *mf* *pp* *6* *p* *mf*

Mand. *mf* = *mp* *f* = *p* *mp* *f* *p* *mp* *f* *p* *mf*

Vln. *7* *b* *5* *pp* *p* *pp*

Vla. *m.s.p.* *norm.* *3* *3* *m.s.p.* *5* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*

Vc. *mf* = *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*

149

Fl. m.p.b. m.p.b. m.p.b. (E fingering with G sharp key) tr. accel. m.p.b. m.p.b. m.p.b. m.p.b. m.p.b.

Ob. 5 mp mf

Cl. 5 mf f

Perc. (Glock.) Chinese War Drum rim centre mp ff ppp p Bamboo sticks (and paper)

Hp. 5 mp

Pno. pluck string mp

Gtr. 8

Mand. mp

Vln.

Vla. 3 4 m.s.p. pizz. arco mp

Vc. 5 pp f m.s.p. pizz. mf arco mp

Cb. 5 p

Musical score page 156, section N, featuring parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Percussion (Perc.), Bassoon (Hb.), Piano (Pno.), Guitar (Gtr.), Mandolin (Mand.), Violin (Vla.), Cello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Cb.). The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *mp*, *f*, *ff*, *mf*, *fast*, *moderate*, *very slow*, *norm.*, *s.p.*, *s.t.*, and *ad lib.*. Performance instructions like "Remove reed" and "fast" are also present. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines and includes rehearsal marks "N" and "I.".

Musical score page 182 featuring ten staves of music. The instruments include Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Vibraphone, Percussion (Perc.), Harp (Harp), Piano (Pno.), Guitar (Gtr.), Mandolin (Mand.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Cello (Vc.), and Bass (Cb.). The score is in common time (indicated by '4'). The Vibraphone part includes a note: "Play vib. part with one hand; hold t.-t. stick in the other". The score shows various dynamics such as *p*, *pp*, *mp*, *mf*, and *fff*. The piano part has a dynamic instruction: "Senza vib unless marked". The violin part includes a dynamic instruction: "Senza vib unless marked". The bassoon part includes a dynamic instruction: "Senza vib unless marked". The score concludes with a dynamic instruction: "Senza vib unless marked".

186 m.p.b.(d) tr rall.

Fl. Ob. Cl. Perc. Vibraphone

Hp. Pno.

Gtr. Mand.

Vln. Vla. Vc. Cb.

188 tr. accel.

Q

Fl. (8) ff mp pp ppp pp

Ob. ff mp pp ppp pp

Cl. 5 f mf ff mp fff pp pp p

Vib. 6 5 p mp pp pp ppp p

Hp. 8 3 ff mp p pp mf

Pno. 11 pp ff mp ff pp pp

Gtr. 8 3 ff ff 5 mp ff mp ff p pp

Mand. 9 11 mp ff

Q ff 3 mp 6 tr 5 3 tr 3 3 pp mp mf mp mf pp

Vln. 5 6 mp mp 3 6 3 mp 5 mp mp mp mp pp

Vla. 5 6 mp mp 3 6 3 mp 5 mp 9 3 mp mp mp pp

Vc. tr 3 (b) 3 3 5 (b) 3 5 (b) 5 3 9 ppp < p

Cb. 8 ff mp f p < mf fff 5 mp tr 5 (b) 3 5 7 pp

