

Dave Riedstra

# Common

*for concert bass drum and three players*

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Dave Riedstra  
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duration: 10–15 minutes

Three people interact with a common surface, resonating and interfering.

### **Overview**

This score describes a very quiet performance by three players on one horizontal concert bass drum (36" or greater). All players read from the same part. The performance proceeds episodically over an open duration (10–15 minutes). All players start each episode together, and each chooses which material to play independently in real time. During each episode, players attempt to find and sustain emergent moments of coherence by repeating sections of the material. The interactions between the players and the skin of the drum are challenged by the quiet volume of the performance, which in turn reveals common social and acoustic media shared by the ensemble, audience, and space.

## Performance notes

### **Staging**

The drum is set horizontally, the skin face up like a table. The three players stand on one side of the drum, comfortably spaced and facing the audience. (If the players have memorized the score and the performance situation permits, they may stand around the drum facing each other.) The shared score is set on music stands or, if the drum is large enough, on the skin of the drum. The players are able to comfortably read the score and make eye contact and are not obscured to the audience.

### **Dynamic**

The performers play so quietly that it is difficult (but not impossible) for the audience to hear them. To someone in the middle of the audience, a sustained note is no louder than the sound of someone in the front of the audience shifting in their seat. The players' percussive articulations are played only a little more forcefully than setting down a finger.

The performance is sometimes given on a venue's stage and sometimes in closer proximity to the audience. The closer the audience is to the performers, the quieter they must play and the more difficult the performance becomes.

### **Notation**

All material is played with fingertips on the drum skin; beaters are not used. The staff represents a player's reach toward the centre of the drum, with lower being closer to the rim and higher being as close to the centre as the player can comfortably reach.



The finger runs lightly along the surface of the skin in smooth patterns at the indicated position, producing a sustained white-ish noise. Talcum powder may be used to prevent fingers from sticking. When no articulations are present, the finger is placed onto and removed from the drum skin with a minimum of sound.



The finger moves to the indicated position over the indicated duration.



The finger is placed on the drum with a minimum of sound and held there to manipulate the surface tension.



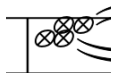
The finger makes a tap sound by abruptly contacting the drum skin.



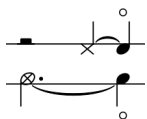
The finger "plucks" the skin by rapidly increasing pressure then abruptly removing from the drum skin. (l.v. throughout.)



Successive fingers tap and remain on the surface until the end of the gesture.



Two or more fingers perform the indicated action.



Different hands play the different voices, it doesn't matter which hand plays which voice.

## Tempi and Repeats

The performers use any of the following tempi, optionally switching at  $\downarrow = n$  indications and otherwise remaining  $\downarrow = \downarrow$  throughout.

- $\downarrow = 72$
- $\downarrow = 96$  ( $\downarrow^{\text{tr}} = 72$ )
- $\downarrow = 108$  ( $\downarrow = 72$ )
- $\downarrow = 144$  ( $\downarrow = 72$ )

The players take repeats and 1st / 2nd / 3rd endings in any order and for any number of repetitions (including none).

## Performance Process

The performers make all their decisions non-verbally and independently, responding to the unfolding performance in real time.

All players independently choose an entry point from any fragment (A, B, C, or D) at any tempo marking ( $\downarrow = n$ ) or repeat beginning. They play for one to five minutes, then end independently at any repeat ending, producing ragged edges. After a pause of about ten seconds, they begin the next episode with the same decision process.

These episodes comprise the duration of the performance, about ten to twelve minutes. Near the end of the performance, the players discretely signal to each other that they won't perform another episode. When one or two players miss the signal, they continue playing the accidentally begun episode as usual, ending the performance afterward.

Throughout the performance, the players listen for moments when their sounds cohere into rhythmic, timbral, structural, or other patterns. When they stumble on such a moment, the players try to maintain its coherence for a while by repeating or sustaining the sounds they heard. After the moment eventually dissipates, the players play out the episode as usual, continuing to listen for further cohesions. Each ensemble to perform the piece has a different taste for these moments: some might be drawn to sustained textures, others gravitate toward counterpoint, still others search for incidental phrases.

Common

1  $\text{♩} = n$

**A**  $\parallel$   $\frac{11}{4}$   $\frac{9}{4}$

3  $\parallel$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{10}{4}$   $\frac{12}{4}$  1.  $\text{♩} = n$

7  $\parallel$   $\frac{8}{4}$   $\frac{12}{4}$   $\frac{8}{4}$

10 1.  $\text{♩} = n$   $\parallel$   $\frac{8}{4}$   $\frac{6}{4}$   $\frac{8}{4}$   $\frac{6}{4}$   $\frac{9}{4}$

14  $\text{♩} = n$   $\parallel$   $\frac{9}{4}$   $\frac{12}{4}$   $\frac{6}{4}$   $\frac{12}{4}$   $\text{♩} = n$

18  $\parallel$   $\frac{12}{4}$   $\frac{9}{4}$   $\frac{12}{4}$   $\frac{6}{4}$   $\frac{12}{4}$

22  $\parallel$   $\frac{12}{4}$   $\frac{9}{4}$   $\frac{6}{4}$   $\frac{9}{4}$   $\frac{12}{4}$   $\text{♩} = n$

26  $\parallel$   $\frac{12}{4}$   $\frac{6}{4}$   $\frac{8}{4}$   $\frac{9}{4}$

29  $\parallel$   $\frac{9}{4}$   $\frac{6}{4}$   $\frac{9}{4}$   $\frac{12}{4}$  **Da Capo**

The musical score is written on a single staff with a treble clef. It begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The first measure is in 11/4 time, followed by a measure in 9/4 time. The score then moves to measure 3, which is in 5/4 time, followed by 10/4 and 12/4. A first ending bracket spans measures 3 through 7. Measure 7 is in 8/4 time. The score then moves to measure 10, which is in 8/4 time, followed by 6/4, 8/4, and 6/4. A second ending bracket spans measures 10 through 14. Measure 14 is in 9/4 time, followed by 12/4, 6/4, and 12/4. The score then moves to measure 18, which is in 12/4 time, followed by 9/4, 12/4, 6/4, and 12/4. The score then moves to measure 22, which is in 12/4 time, followed by 9/4, 6/4, 9/4, and 12/4. The score then moves to measure 26, which is in 12/4 time, followed by 6/4, 8/4, and 9/4. The score then moves to measure 29, which is in 9/4 time, followed by 6/4, 9/4, and 12/4. The piece ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

**B** 1  $\frac{6}{4}$   $\text{♩} = n$

5  $\frac{8}{4}$   $\text{♩} = n$

9 1. 2 1.  $\frac{8}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{8}{4}$

16  $\frac{8}{4}$   $\text{♩} = n$

20  $\frac{6}{4}$   $\text{♩} = n$

25  $\frac{3}{4}$  3

30  $\frac{4}{2}$  3 3 3 Dal Segno

Common

The musical score is written on a single staff with a 'C' time signature. It consists of six systems of music, each starting with a measure rest (||). The first system (measures 1-4) has a tempo marking  $\text{♩} = n$  and a first ending bracket over measures 3 and 4. The second system (measures 5-8) features a 5/4 time signature, a whole rest, a 6/4 time signature, and a 9/4 time signature. The third system (measures 9-13) has a first ending bracket over measures 9-13. The fourth system (measures 14-17) has a first ending bracket over measures 14-17. The fifth system (measures 18-22) has a tempo marking  $\text{♩} = n$  and a first ending bracket over measures 18-22. The sixth system (measures 23-26) has a tempo marking  $\text{♩} = n$  and ends with the instruction 'Da Capo'.



**D** 1

5

12

17

23

29

32

Da Capo (after endings)