

IMPULSE CONTROL

concerto for drum set and wind ensemble

by

Evan Ziporyn

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TRANSPPOSED SCORE

2 movements (segue), approximately 18 minutes

Impulse Control was funded in part by the MidAmerican Center for Contemporary Music, Kurt Doles, director, and the Bowling Green State University Wind Symphony, Kenneth Thompson, Director, at the College of Musical Arts of BGSU. Additional funding was provided by a consortium of percussionists and university band programs.

Consortium Members:

Roger Braun & Andrew Trachsel, Ohio University
Ian Ding, University of Michigan
Lee Hinkle & Michael Votta, University of Maryland
Ricardo Flores, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Kenneth Thompson, Bowling Green State University

First performance:

October 17, 2019, 7:30 pm – Kobacker Hall, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio
40th Annual Bowling Green New Music Festival
Dan Piccolo, soloist; BGSU Wind Symphony, Kenneth Thompson, Director

INSTRUMENTATION

Solo drum set (kick, snare, 5 toms, 3 cymbals (ride, crash, Chinese), hihat)
3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo; 1 doubling alto flute)
3 oboes (1 doubling English horn)
4 Clarinets in B-flat
1 Bass Clarinet in B-flat
2 Bassoons
1 Contrabassoon
4 Saxophones (soprano, alto, tenor, baritone)
4 Horns in F
3 Trumpets in B-flat
2 Euphoniums in B-flat
2 Trombones
1 Bass Trombone
1 Tuba
1 Electric Piano
1 Harp
1 Double Bass (amplified)
5 Percussion (see percussion list)

PROGRAM NOTE by Evan Ziporyn

Drum set players are the only musicians who regularly sit on a ‘throne’ – a small, adjustable 3-legged stool. The drum set gets its own room in a recording studio, usually airless and cramped, with a window just big enough to see the other musicians, aka the ‘isolation booth,’ but private real estate nonetheless. In other words, the singular status of the drum set – in every musical setting– is unquestioned, certainly by drummers. And I agree with them. Like many composers nowadays I write drum set parts into any and everything I’m allowed to, in orchestra pieces, wind ensemble works, even two operas. If the drummer rocks, the piece rocks, or, more precisely, if the drummer doesn’t, the piece cannot.

A drum set (drum-set? drumkit? trap set? can we come to consensus here?) is – literally and by lineage – a one-man percussion ensemble, and yet that very lineage – the ongoing innovations and virtuosic advancements of 20th and 21st century drum gods and goddesses, who collectively inspired *Impulse Control* – has gradually but unquestionably established the drum set as its own instrumental species, or at least genus: not just a set of drums and cymbals, different from a particular percussion set-up: a *drum set*, played from a *throne*.

More than an extremely efficient configuration, the drum set is the embodiment of time, groove and cycle – 3 good things to center a piece of music around. In *Impulse Control* the soloist is backed by five fellow percussionists, whose parts are generated by his initial Big Bangs: doubling, echoing, replicating, transforming, gradually coalescing into more orderly solar systems of polyrhythmic harmonies, from which a heterophony of melodies emerge. The cycles begin to interrupt themselves, and eventually the interruptions themselves become the cycles.

‘Impulse control’ is a very ambiguous phrase, from two words that themselves have multiple, contradictory meanings. Is an impulse by definition that which we *cannot* control, an urge, a desire, whether we act on it or not? Or is it the thing that controls us, the motivating force behind it all? In physics the impetus is irrelevant: an ‘impulse’ is anything that forces a change in momentum. In audio engineering ‘impulse response’ (IR) is an indispensable tool in acoustic design and recording production, but the impulse itself – that which generates the IR is, as it turns out, an impossibility, an idealization, an infinite set of frequencies over an infinitesimally short span of time. Drums and cymbals – ‘non-pitched,’ because they have *too much* pitch content – do a good job of functioning as all of the above.

Impulse Control is a companion piece to *Mumbai*, a tabla concerto I wrote for Sandeep Das in 2009, and which Dan Piccolo performed brilliantly for his doctoral recital in Ann Arbor in 2015. Dan is the real ‘impulse’ behind the piece; he is also ‘Control,’ in all senses and meanings of the words. My deep gratitude also to the Kurt Doles, Kenneth Thompson, MACCM, BGSU Wind Symphony, and all the Consortium members.

Impulse Control

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Evan Ziporyn

♩ = 140

SOLO Drumset

PERC 1

PERC 2

PERC 3

PERC 4

PERC 5

SKINS & B.D.

BRAKE DRUM & SM. B.D.

FIELD SNARE & TEMPLE BLOCKS

TIMPANI

SURDO

SKINS

CASTANETS

W.B.

PICCOLO SNARE

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

fff *f* *p* *f*

ff *f* *ff* *f*

f *ff* *ff* *f*

ff (full stroke but damp immediately) *simile* *f*

8

SOLO Drumset

PERC 1

PERC 2

PERC 3

PERC 4

PERC 5

SKINS & SNARE

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

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

ff *f* *p*

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

SOLO Dr. *fff* *ff* (no resonance)

Picc.

Fl. 2

Fl.

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Eng. Hn.

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Cl. 3

Cl. 4

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Cbsn.

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

Hn. 1.2

Hn. 3.4

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2.3

Euph. 1.2

Tbn. 1.2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

E. Piano

Hp.

Db.

Perc. *fff* *ff* (no resonance)

Perc. *fff* *ff* (no resonance)

Prc 3 *fff* *ff* (no resonance)

Prc 4 *fff* (no resonance)

Timp. *fff* (no resonance)