

Percussion Concerto

- i. Sec Cymbals
- ii. Good Vibes
- iii. Drummer Queen

Commissioned by Symphony Australia as part of a Composer Attachment with The Queensland Orchestra with assistance from the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

duration: approximately 23 minutes

premiere performance: 6 March 2006

soloist: Evelyn Glennie OBE

conductor: Takao Yuasa



The Queensland Orchestra



Australian Government



Programme Notes:

When writing a work for percussion, and particularly for a soloist of the calibre and versatility of Evelyn Glennie, a composer is presented with a multitude of options. There is such a wide range of instruments from which to choose, unlike other concertos which are almost exclusively for the single instrument (i.e. a piano, violin or so on). Such an extent of choice can be quite daunting and yet opens so many possibilities.

My Percussion Concerto has been structured in three continuous parts, and each movement is based upon a distinct instrumental family within the theatre of percussion instruments. Cymbals form the basis of the first movement, including a number of hi-hats. As cymbals do not have distinct pitches other than a general sense of high and low, rhythmic and colouristic concerns are paramount in this movement for the soloist, including stopped cymbals (which are traditionally indicated by the word "sec"). This movement concludes with an improvised tam-tam cadenza.

In 2005, the Queensland Orchestra presented a concert of my music, and in between pieces, Vincent Plush and I had a dialogue about composing. I made the comment that "we all need more beauty in our lives", upon which the audience burst into spontaneous applause. This enthusiastic response provided the starting point for the second movement of this work. It is scored for solo vibraphone with a predominantly string-based accompaniment. The vibraphone is an instrument capable of great subtlety and grace, as well as having a very rich and mellow sound. It is unashamedly slushy in character.

However we cannot live on beauty alone: after a rich repast some may feel the necessity to work off those syrupy kilojoules with a more vigorous activity, such as dancing. The percussion soloist certainly must work hard in the third movement, Drummer Queen, which as the title suggests is based upon a variety of drum patterns. There is a strong influence of popular dance music in this movement ranging from the repetitive rhythmic phrases in the solo and orchestral parts through its the harmonic language and layers of instrumental textures.

Instrumentation

Piccolo
Flute
Oboe
Cor Anglais
2 Clarinets in Bb
2 Bassoons
4 Horns
3 Trumpets in C
2 Trombones
Bass Trombone
Tuba

Timpani
2 Percussion
Harp
Percussion Soloist
Strings

Percussion Concerto

for percussion and orchestra

by Matthew Hindson, 2005
revised 2008
<http://www.hindson.com>

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