
Monkey in the Middle

for percussion quartet

Jake Berran

(2025)



Monkey in the Middle

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by Jake Berran
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Full Score

Instrumentation

Player 1: 3 graduated triangles

Player 2: 3 graduated metal pipes (lower-pitched than triangles on average)

Player 3: 3 graduated wood blocks (mid- to high-pitched)

Player 4: 3 graduated drums (tom-toms or 2 congas + bongo)

Performance Notes

- The beaters indicated are meant to achieve the following sound qualities:
 - Triangles:** plastic mallets = inarticulate & ringing; thin beater = articulate & less ringing; medium beater = articulate & ringing
 - Metal Pipes:** rubber mallets = clear & less bright; plastic mallets = brighter; metal mallets = brightest
 - Wood Blocks:** rubber mallets = less bright; plastic mallets = brighter
 - Drums:** yarn mallets = sustained; sticks = articulate
- Let ring unless damping is specified (+ over a note or ϕ after a note).
- Rolls should always be single-stroke.
- Aleatoric notation is explained each time it occurs.
- In mm. 1–4, each player may want to hold one of each specified beater.
- In mm. 95–96, the dotted-line arrow indicates to gradually dampen the instrument.
- It is ideal to perform from the score given the subtle dynamic and rhythmic differences between players.

Program Notes

Just as three kids can endlessly entertain themselves with a ball, I sought to play with my own limited setup: four players, each with one type of instrument in three sizes. Like the game "Monkey in the Middle," the players initially exchange one-on-one with the occasional mediator, and the low and high pitches hog the metaphorical ball from the middle pitch. The music intensifies until the middle pitch takes hold and runs with it, starting a series of more abstract games and permutations of pitches and players.

Duration: 6 minutes

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♩ = 60 - declarative

3 Triangles

med. triangle btr. 3 plastic mallet

3 Metal Pipes

plastic mallet 3 rubber mlt.

3 Wood Blocks

plastic mallet 3 rubber mlt.

3 Drums

drum stick 3 yarn mallet

(l.v. unless specified otherwise)

med. btr. 3 plastic mlt.

ϕ (low & high) ϕ (middle)

f *p sub.* *pp* *mf* *p sub.* *ff* *p sub.* *mf*

A ♩ = 80 - conversational

W.B.

Dr.

12

M.P.

W.B.

Dr.

fp *pp* *ppp* *f* *p* *ppp* *f* *p sub.* *f*

[illegible]

D ♩ = 135 ($\overset{\frown}{3}$ → ♩)

Tri. *f* *p* *f* *p*

M.P. plastic mlts. *f* *p* *f*

W.B. plastic mlts. *f* *p*

Dr. sticks *f* *p*

48

Tri. *mp* *f* *f* *f* *f*

M.P. *p* *f* *f* *f* *f*

W.B. *f* *p* *f* *f* *f*

Dr. *f* *f* *f* *f* *f*

53

Tri. *f* *p* *p* *p*

M.P. *f* *p* *p* *p*

W.B. *p sub.* *f* *p* *p*

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

57

Tri.

M.P.

W.B.

Dr.

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

3 5 3 5 3 5 3 5

E

61 ♩ = 80 - conversational

Tri.

M.P.

W.B.

Dr.

p *p* *f* *(f)* *p* *f* *(f)* *p*

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

all

65

Tri.

M.P.

W.B.

Dr.

f *f mf* *f* *f mf* *f* *f*

3 5 3 5 3 5 3 5

71 $\text{♩} = 60$ - meditative **F** plastic mlts.

(l.v.)

Tri. *ff* *mf* *p* *ppp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

M.P. *ff* *mf sub.* *p* *f* *p* *mp*

W.B. *ff* *mf sub.* *p* *f* *p* *mp*

Dr. *ppp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

rubber mlts.

yarn mlts.

76

Tri. *ppp* *p* *pp* *ppp* *ppp* *p* *ppp* *mf*

M.P. *p* *f* *p* *mf* *f* *mf*

W.B. *p* *f* *p* *f* *mf*

Dr. *ppp* *p* *pp* *ppp* *pp* *p* *ppp* *mf*

dense roll with fingers

hands

81

Tri. *p* *fp* *mf* *p*

repeated ornamented rolls in any order; gradually shorten the rolled notes from ♩ to ♩

similarly; shorten rolled notes from ♩ to single stroke

2 beats

M.P. *f* *fp* (now these two)

repeated ornamented rolls in any order; gradually shorten the rolled notes from ♩ to single stroke over the two measures

W.B. *f* *fp*

repeated ornamented rolls in any order; gradually shorten the rolled notes from ♩ to ♩

similarly; shorten rolled notes from ♩ to single stroke

Dr. *fingers* *sticks* *p* *ppp* *fp* *mf* *p*

repeated ornamented rolls in any order; gradually shorten the rolled notes from ♩ to ♩

similarly; shorten rolled notes from ♩ to single stroke

G ♩ = 90 - declarative

Tri. *f* *f* *f* *f*

M.P. *f* *f* *f* *f*

W.B. *f* *f* *f* *f*

Dr. *fff* *f* *fff* *p* *pp* *f* *mf* *f*

3 3 5 3

$\text{♩} = 135$ ($\overset{\text{3}}{\text{♩}} \rightarrow \text{♩}$)

[illegible]

93

Tri. $\text{F}\sharp$ $\frac{3}{4}$ *p* *pp* to "+" all

M.P. $\text{F}\sharp$ $\frac{3}{4}$ *p* *f* *p* *p* to "+"

W.B. $\text{F}\sharp$ $\frac{3}{4}$ *p* *f* *p* *p* to "+"

Dr. $\text{F}\sharp$ $\frac{3}{4}$ *p*

99 rit. $\text{H} = 120$ accel. $\text{H} = 128$

M.P. *pp* *p*

W.B. *pp* *p*

Dr. *p* *pp* *p* *mp* *p*

accel. $\text{♩} = 140$ rit.

105 thin btrs.

Tri. mp p p

M.P. mp mf p

W.B. mp mp mf mp

Dr. p

dense roll with fingers
(sticks ready in hand)

110 $\text{♩} = 120$ accel.

Tri. p pp p mf p

M.P. p p mf p

W.B. p pp p mf mf

Dr. p sub. pp mf p mf

114 $\text{♩} = 128$ accel. $\text{♩} = 136$

Tri. mf f p mf f ff

M.P. mf f p f p mf f ff

W.B. p f p f p mf f ff

Dr. f p (p) f p mf f ff

I ♩. = 108 - dancing

Tri. med. btrs.

M.P.

W.B.

Dr.

ff *mf* *p*

f *mf* *p*

125

Tri.

M.P.

W.B.

Dr.

f *mf*

129

Tri.

M.P.

W.B.

Dr.

p up-stem notes through m. 134

f *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

mp *mf* *mp* *mf*

fp *f*

133

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

M.P. *p* *f* *p* *f* *p sub.*

W.B. *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *p* *fp*

Dr. *ff* *mf* *mf*

♩. = 144 (♩⁴ → ♩)

137

Tri. *f* *p*

M.P. *f* *mf*

W.B. *f* *mf*

Dr. *f* *p*

142

Tri. *f*

M.P. *f* *ff*

W.B. *f* *ff*

Dr. *f*

J ♩ = 144 (♩ → ³♩)

Tri. *p sub.*

M.P. *p sub.* *mf*

W.B. *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Dr. *n*

fast, erratic, unmetred rhythms,

any drums, erratic accents

152

Tri. *mf* *p sub.*

M.P. *p* *mf* *p sub.*

W.B. *p* *mf* *ad lib. in triplets*

Dr. *p* *mf* *ad lib. similar beat*

(4)

158 accel.

♩ = 160

Tri. *f* *ffp*

M.P. *f* *ff*

W.B. *f* *ffp*

Dr. *f* *ff*

(as written)

K ♩ = 160 (♩ → ♩.)

Tri. M.P. W.B. Dr.

metal mts.

ff *f*

167

Tri. M.P. W.B. Dr.

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

mf sub. *p sub.* *f*

mf sub. *p sub.* *f*

mf sub. *p sub.* *f*

173

Tri. M.P. W.B. Dr.

fff *fff* *fff* *fff*