2016

Anasi

Kevin Michael Olson

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Score

ANASI
for found percussion & electronics

by
Kevin Michael Olson

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ANASI

for found percussion and electronics

Duration: 10-12 minutes

Instrumentation:

Percussion: Propane tank, steel beam, metal rod, assorted auxiliary metal found objects

Metal Bowls, Djembe: four metal bowls that are high pitched than the primary percussion objects. Djembe of any style/type.

Ableton Live: Ableton Live with a Push or other pad-based controller.

SuperCollider: SuperCollider with 25 or more keys and 16 or more dials/faders.

Program Notes:

This work was inspired by the idea of blurring the lines between real-world objects and their electronically-produced doppelgangers. Each object, often found in the corner of a spider-infested garage, was recorded and analyzed for its spectral properties. A synthesis system was created to produce organ-like sounds based on these analyses. The sustained nature of the synthesized sounds is used to contrast the sharp percussive nature of the found objects.

This piece was originally conceived as absolute music, meaning that it was not based directly on a narrative. However, the work took on its own life and evolved to become a creation myth of deity that we may only perceive, in our limited way, as a spider. The name Anasi is based on my incorrect memory of the African folktale of Anansi, who represents the spirit of knowledge of all stories. I kept this new name, as the work involves the creation of a new entity, not Anansi himself.

The graphical score utilizes a mix of standard notation, shapes, and colors to give the performers a framework to improvise and interact. Extra-musical elements such as light and dance are encouraged. Each unique performance should lead to the creation of a distinct and varied version of the deity Anasi.

The result is sometimes meditative and sometimes violent, and often exists outside of our standard perception of rhythmic time.

- Notes from the composer
Colorado, February 2016
Performance Notes for Percussion and Metal Bowls/Djembe

The **Percussion** part is made up of found metal objects including
- Half of a Propane Tank
- a Steel Beam
- a Metal Rod
- a brass fireplace tool
- a roaster pan and lid
- a small assortment of toy percussion such as water bottles, pans. These are not notated, but are used for timbral color as the performer sees fit.

Beaters include:
- Rubber beater. This may be a percussion mallet or a medium-rubber found object. The beater should minimize attack sound.
- Drum stick. A sturdy branch or piece of wood may be substituted.
- Metal beater. This may be a percussion mallet or an object such as a hammer. This beater should give a loud (but not painful) attack and resonance.

Please note that caution should be exercised with the found objects, as they have the potential to have sharp or unfinished edges.

The **Metal Bows/Djembe** part consists of
- 4 metal bowls, pitched from low to high. These map to the four lines of the shown staff.
- Djembe. This is used as a “heartbeat,” which the performer can interpret as they wish.

The bowls are to be played with wooden pencils or sticks.

Note that for both the percussion and bowl/djembe parts, the performers may choose to augment the given rhythms and add color notes at will.
Performance Notes for Ableton Live with Push

The Ableton Live patch named “Anasi Stereo.als” should be loaded for headphone use or for stereo performance. “Anasi Surround.als” should be loaded for 5 or 5.1 channel surround sound performance.

When starting Live and the Push, only the bottom left quadrant of pads will be lit. Press the NOTE key on the right side of the Push to activate all four quadrants.

Note that the colors shown here are for convenience of organization. All active pads on the Push will be lit with a yellow color. Blue indicates the last pad used.

The pads are velocity-sensitive, so they can be used to control dynamics. A master volume control is available via the top right rotary dial.

The effects parameters including Grain Wet/Dry, Frequency, Pitch, Spray and Reverb are available to change via the top rotary dials. The screen below shows the parameter names and values.
ANASI
for found percussion & electronics

Kevin Michael Olson

Very Freely

Percussion

Metal Bowls

Ableton Live

SuperCollider

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1: propane synth

Bell towards audience
slowly pan bell back and forth (left to right)

Propane tank with rubber beater
let ring

Perc.

f

24" let ring

SC

fade out all OTs except 3,6
OTs 3,6 only

3: large metal bowl synth
Floating and Timeless

B

Perc.

Bowls

metal bowl pads
reverb wet = 127

8"

8"

4"

roaster lid pad

Live

20"

20"

Add OTs back in *ad lib.*

SC

brass sifter

roaster body

Grain Wet=0
Freq=0 Spray=0
Pitch=127

Grain Wet=50

Continue without pause

Perc.

Bowls

10"

12"

3"

8"

5"

on sides with wooden pencil

8"

4"

on rim

5"

4"

8"

roaster lid

Live

10"

15"

15"

12"

8"

4"

4"

4"

4"

16"

16"

5"

5"

Perc.

on sides

on rim

inside bowl

on rim

Grain Wet=0
Freq=0 Spray=0
Pitch=127

Grain Wet=50

all OTs
Cue all players

Propane tank with rubber beater

Metal rod with rubber beater

Rotate palm on metal bowl pads

Metal rod pad
Perc.
Bowls
Live
SC

grain level

mp

\[\text{sparsely ad lib.}\]

\[p\]  \[\text{propane pads}\]

\[\text{ad lib. with increasing density}\]

mf
Like a heartbeat

20-30"

ad lib. all notes & parameters in smooth manner

pp

metal rod

steel beam with butt of drumstick

mf

20-30"

ad lib. somewhat more actively

mp

mf
Pushing ahead, in time $\frac{4}{4} = 112$

*ad lib. on all instruments in given rhythm*

\[ \text{Perc.} \]
\[ \text{Djembe} \]
\[ \text{Live} \]
\[ \text{SC} \]
molto accel.

*ad lib.* on all instruments in given rhythm

Propane tank with metal beater

Fade out overtones high to low

Live

Perc.

Djembe

SC