
Silounds

Benjamin D. Taylor

2009

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percussion and interactive electroacoustics

Commissioned by Ellery Trafford

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many thanks to Ellery Trafford

Instrumentation

small concert bass drum (laid flat on stand)
suspended cymbal

Duration

6-8 minutes

Program Note

David Cope coined the term "silounds" to refer to quiet sounds that are only heard when we are trying to be silent. This composition focuses on many "normally unheard" delicate sounds made by traditional percussion instruments as well as exploring the awe-inspiring, bone-rattling acoustic power of those same instruments.

Performance Note

This piece is designed to be a structured improvised solo. The score reflects the general shape of the piece and shows when the pedal should be pressed by the performer. The actual amount of time between pedals is open to the interpretation of the performer; however, an effort should be exerted to maintain the relative proportions of length of time as indicated on the score. The only strictly notated event occurs at the beginning of the piece when the percussionist strikes the cymbal bell and simultaneously presses the pedal.

Technical Requirements

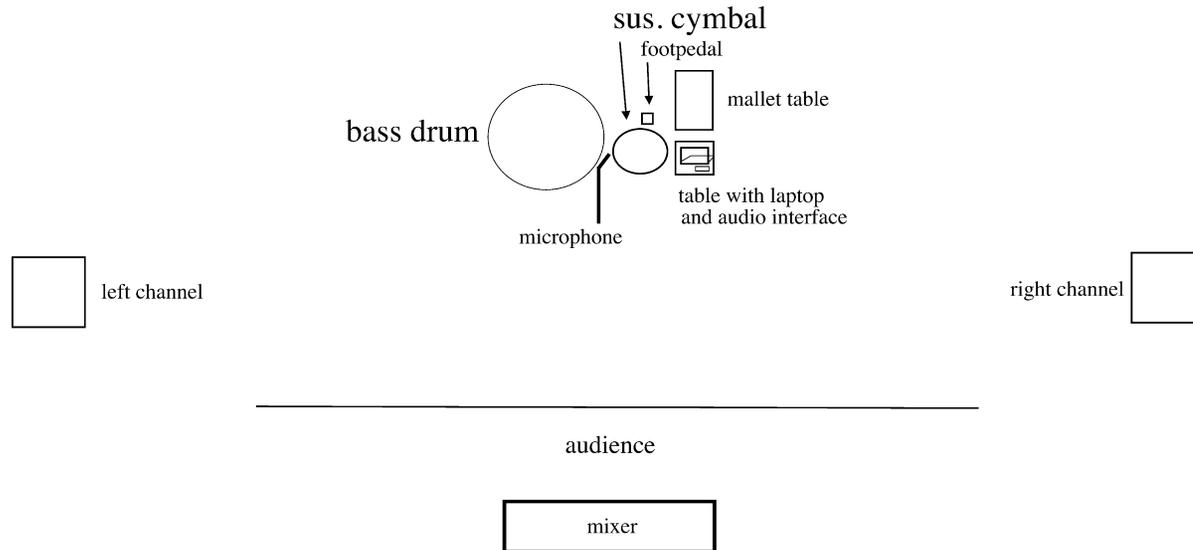
- A laptop computer with Max/MSP Runtime installed (free program download at <http://cycling74.com>)
- The max patch and all related files/programs for "Silounds." (Can be obtained at no charge by contacting the composer at benjamintaylormusic.com)
- An audio interface such as a Motu 828
- A microphone
- A USB footpedal set to spacebar (ASKI 32)
- A mixer
- A stereo diffusion system

Setup

The microphone should be placed directly between the bass drum and suspended cymbal so that soft sounds from each will be picked up. The sound from the microphone goes into the input of the audio interface. The interface is then connected via USB to the laptop in order for Max/MSP to get the audio signal from the microphone. The interface main outputs 1 and 2 are then cabled to the mixer to where it will be sent to the left and right speakers. The footpedal is connected to the laptop in a USB port. It is preferable to have the laptop sitting on a short, small table or podium so that

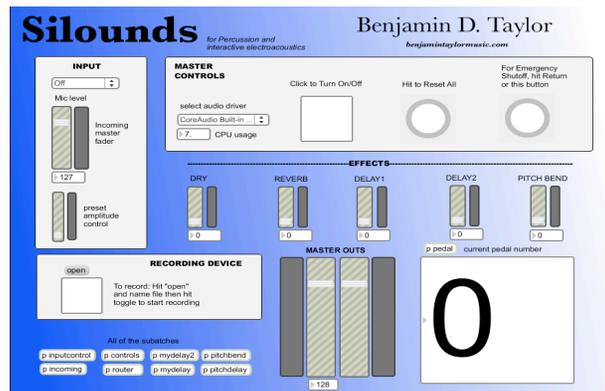
the placement of the laptop does not hinder the audiences ability to see the performer. The performer will need to be able to view the laptop screen in order to see that pedals are correctly triggered. Alternatively, the laptop may be offstage, or at the mixing station if the performer feels comfortable enough with the piece that they do not need to see the pedal numbers.

A diagram of a typical performance setup is shown below.



Instructions for Max Patch

Once Max/MSP Runtime is installed, open the max patch titled "SiloundsPatch." The following picture is a screenshot of the patch.



- 1.) Select an audio driver from the drop-down menu.
- 2.) Select microphone from input
- 3.) Click the center button to turn on the audio
- 4.) Hit the footpedal (or press the spacebar) to trigger pedal 1

SCORE

Silounds

Percussion and Interactive Electroacoustics

Benjamin D. Taylor (1983)
ASCAP

