MATTHEW GROUSE

CLIPPING

for 4 timpani and audio playback

(2019)

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Matthew Grouse

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Instruments and accessories:

. A standard set of 4 timpani are required: roughly **I** = 32 inches (81 cm), **II** = 29 inches (74 cm), **III** = 26 inches (66 cm), and **IV** = 23 inches (58 cm) in diameter. The lowest timpano needs to be able to reach a low C# (first below bass clef stave). If addressing the timpani, the allocation of I, II, III and IV should be read from the furthest left timpano to the further right.

. Felt timpani mallets and hard flannel mallets are required.

. A string of connected paperclips. Enough are required to be stretched across the diameter of the head of timp. **I**. Clip either end of the paperclip chain onto 2 opposite tuning pegs and ensure there is enough slack to allow for the paperclips to rattle when the timpano is struck.

. A large ride cymbal (20") is required to be placed upside down (bell touching the timp. head) on timp. **II.** If a 20" ride cymbal is too heavy for the skin, use a smaller cymbal with a sound as similar to a dark ride cymbal as possible.

Audio / Laptop setup:

. The soloist will use the following on stage: laptop running Pro Tools 12 or newer (waveform is used as score); audio interface

. Separate 'master' mixer in the middle of hall OR in the middle of audience, controlled by separate engineer. This is for overall balance.

. Light amplification of timpani is optional and should only be used to assimilate the live timpani and the digital distortion of the field recording if a performance space requires it.

. A minimum of 2 PA speakers is required (with power enabling amps). These should be positioned appropriately to create a convincing stereo image of the playback for as many audience members as possible. Additional on stage monitors for soloist should be organised if useful.

. The composer will provide a copy of the Pro Tools file complete with all relevant audio files and markers for cues.

Composer's Note:

Clipping takes disturbance or interference of everyday moments of tranquillity as its starting point. The field recording was made without foam windscreens on the microphones and the recording device's input level was set high enough to enable any significant gust of wind to cause the recording to distort digitally (a sound almost exclusively associated with ugliness or poor audio practice). This results in harsh interruptions to the ambient environmental sounds. The performer has to react to, mimic and compete with the contours of these interruptions. The extracted ten minutes of audio are unedited and provide the fixed temporal framework for the timpanist's actions.

Duration: 10'30"

Clipping was written for Glasgow based collective, **noise.pocket** and given its first performance by Joshua Dunbar at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, 11.02.2019

Cues: responding to the waveform and score:

. In performance, the timpanist should be guided by the contour of the audio waveform (in Pro Tools). Cues are shown above the waveform as coloured markers as seen below:

The performer can zoom in on the waveform and display as little or as much of the 10 minutes of audio as they desire, at any one time. The default (recommended) is provided in the Pro Tools session and displays approximately 20 seconds periods of audio across the horizontal span of the screen.

Purple cues:

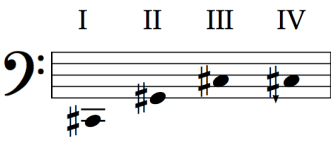
Cues indicated by purple markers denote sections where the ambient environment is free from significant gusts of wind. Therefore, the performer should not play the timpani during these sections. Instead, they are reserved for adding or removing preparations to the timpani heads; the sympathetic resonances of preceding sections; preparing tuning with the pedals for the following sections; and whistling with the mouth. These events will be explained in further detail in the score. The performer must not obstruct the audibility of the audio playback during these sections.

Yellow Cues:

Cues indicated by yellow markers denote sections where the performer will respond in semi-improvised bursts to the contours of the audio interruptions (wind gusts). Occasional prescriptions are given for pitches / tunings, preparations to timpani heads and playing techniques, however, for the majority of these sections the speed, intensity, dynamics and regularity of playing, and pitches (controlled with the pedals) are at the discretion of the performer. These should be organic responses to the visual stimulus of the waveform and the corresponding aural stimulus of the recording.

Sympathetic resonance:

A significant exploration in the piece is sympathetic resonance based around 3 'fundamental' pitches: C♯, E, D (these are also the whistled pitches throughout). The timpani always need to be tuned with the same intervallic distribution, as shown below with C♯ as the 'fundamental'. IV will need to be tuned marginally flatter than III (usually around a quartertone) to maximise the sympathetic resonance (adjust accordingly, as the interval is not exact between each transposition).



Starting setup:

I = paperclip chain across the diameter of the timp. head

II = ride cymbal placed upside down (bell touching the timp. head)

III & **IV** = tuned to the pitches in the graphic above (C♯ and slightly flatter than C♯ respectively).

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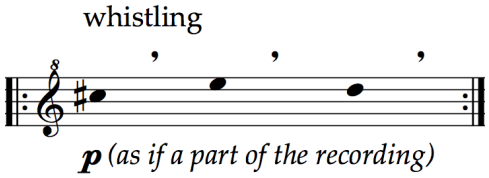
Matthew Grouse (b.1996)

Cue 1: (0′00″-0′24″)

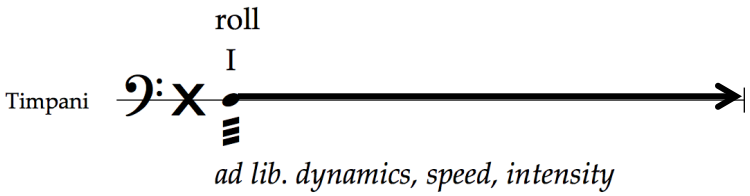
(If you cannot whistle in this octave, choose your closest comfortable octave. If you cannot whistle, hum instead)
Decide on a slow, regular speed for the whistled notes
Leave pauses between each note (rests should be half the length of the chosen speed)



Keep cycling until the end of the cue and regardless of the pitch you're currently on, stop the whistling very abruptly as soon as the next cue starts. During any purple cue, if you see noticeable fluctuations in the waveform (wind gusts), momentarily and abruptly stop your whistling and then continue where you left off when the gust has passed (keep your lips in position whilst paused).

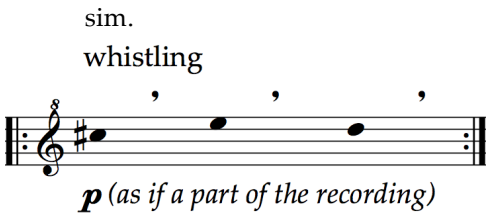
Cue 2: (0′24″-1′21″)

With felt mallets, paperclip chain on timp. head
Always improvising with the pedal and reacting to spikes in the waveform

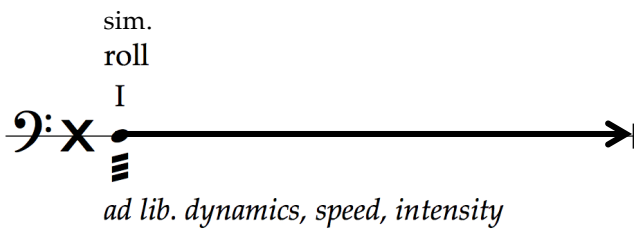


End the cue on a C# to give yourself the tuning for cue 3

Cue 3: (1′21″-1′32″)

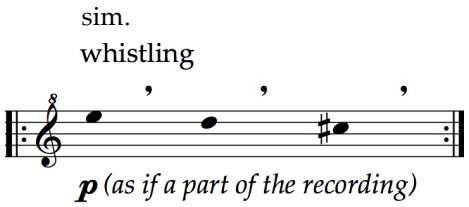


Cue 4: (1′32″-2′02″)



End the cue on an E to give yourself the tuning for cue 5

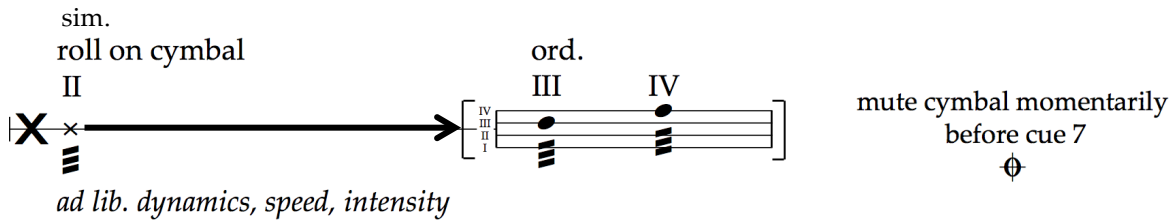
Cue 5: (2′02″-2′40″)



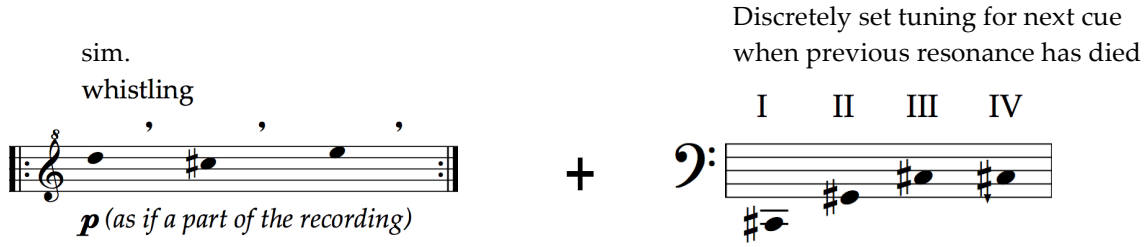
Simultaneously to whistling, inconspicuously remove the paperclips from **I**

Cue 6: (2′40″-5′09″)

Occasionally deviate from the cymbal with short interjections of the material in square brackets (this can include single strokes)
Only ad lib. with pedal (pitch) on III. Leave the tuning of IV constant (slightly flatter than C#)



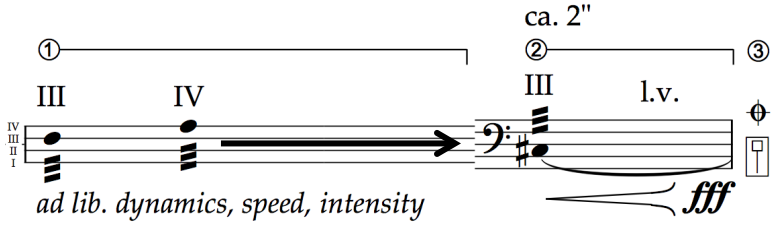
Cue 7: (5′09″-5′26″)



Simultaneously to whistling and tuning, inconspicuously remove the cymbal from **II**

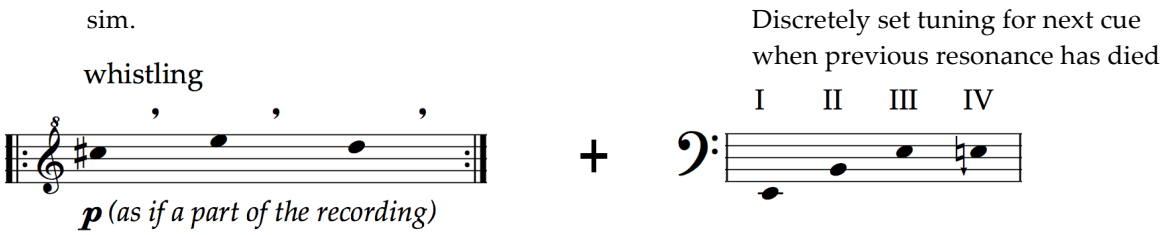
Cue 8: (5′26″-6′11″)

Gesture 1: freely between III and IV but only ad lib. with pedal (pitch) on III. Leave the tuning of IV constant (slightly flatter than C#)
Gesture 2: this gesture should happen in the last moments of the cue
Gesture 3: smoothly mute III with mallets so only the sympathetic resonance of the other timpani remains at the start of cue 9



Cue 9: (6'11"-6'28")

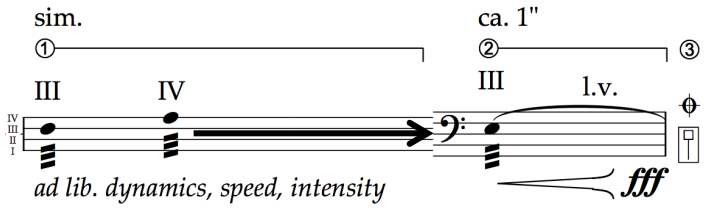
Sympathetic resonance of previous cue ringing



Cue 10,11,12,13,14,15: (6'28"-7'03")

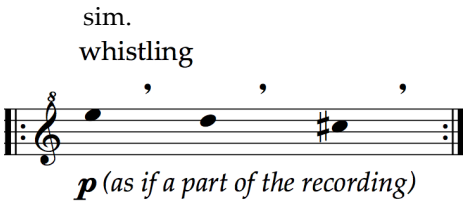
Yellow cues change to purple cues frequently, so for the sake of digestibility, the following cues will be explained as an amalgam. Only ad lib. with pedal (pitch) on III. Leave the tuning of I, II and IV constant
Gestures 2 and 3 always in the final moments of each cue.

Yellow cues (10,12,14):



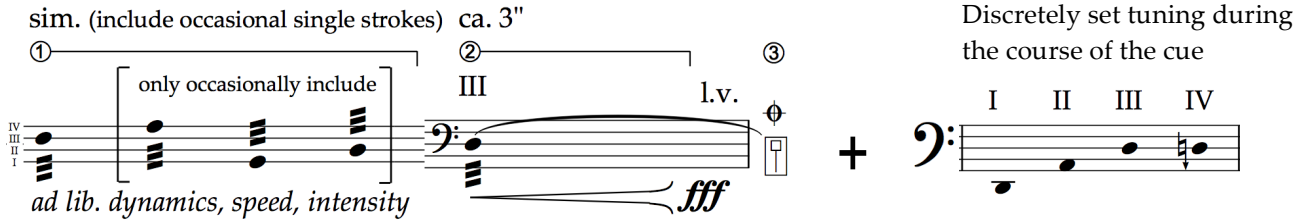
Purple cues (11,13,15):

Sympathetic resonance of previous cue ringing



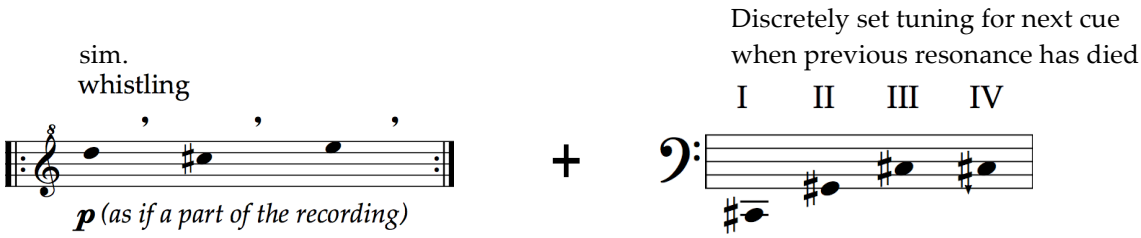
Cue 16: (7'03"-8'00")

Only ad lib. with pedal (pitch) on III. Leave the tuning of I, II and IV constant once they have been set to new tuning shown below.
Gesture 2 and 3 happen in the final few seconds of the cue.



Cue 17: (8′00″-8′11″)

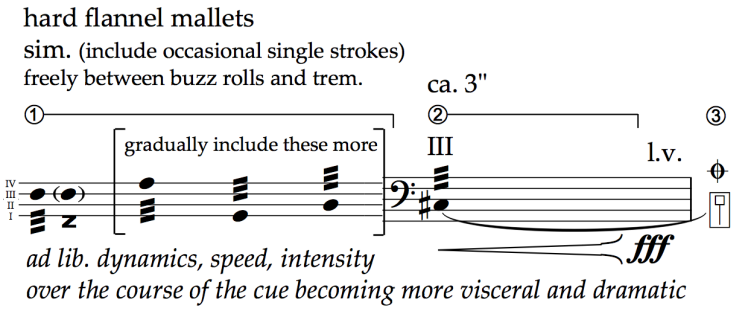
Sympathetic resonance of previous cue ringing



Simultaneously to whistling and tuning, inconspicuously change to hard flannel mallets

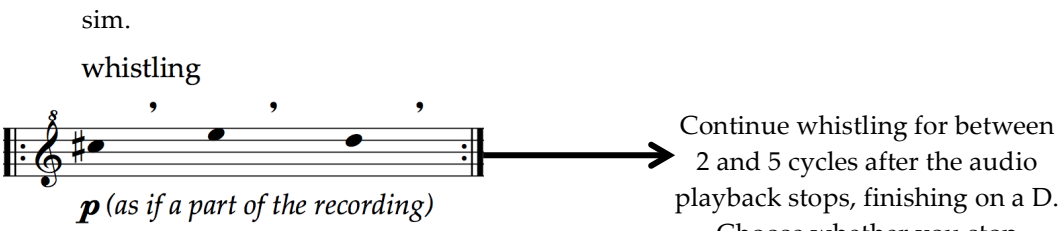
Cue 18: (8′11″-9′40″)

Freely between timpani but predominantly on III
Only ad lib. with pedal (pitch) on III. Leave the tuning of I, II and IV constant
Gesture 2 and 3 happen in the final few seconds of the cue.



Cue 19: (9′40″-10′08″)

Sympathetic resonance of previous cue ringing



Glasgow, February 2019