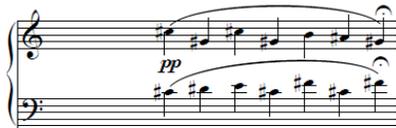


## Brief Analytical Discussion of *Percussion Quartet*

*Percussion Quartet* is written for two pianists and two percussionists in four movements, following a slow-fast-slow-fast model. The first movement introduces the primary melodic and harmonic compositional materials. The second movement twists these materials through rhythmic and contrapuntal frameworks. Acting as a brief hiatus from the principal melodic motives, the third movement introduces new material while exploring mirror images, symmetries, and the timbral palette of the percussion. Finally, the fourth movement recalls the original motives, briefly recapitulates the other movements, and closes with a final harmonic twist. The following commentary aims to illuminate several of my compositional tools.

The first bar of the *Grave* Movement I serves as a germinal element for many of the ensuing compositional ideas. The first piano plays the principal melody in the right hand, while the left hand plays the same melody in reverse down a perfect fifth:

### *Movement I, Bar 1*

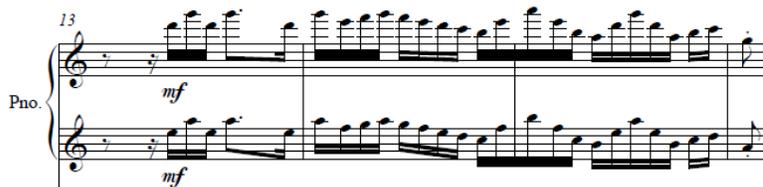


Later, in the *Allegro* Movement II, the same motive is reworked contrapuntally a half-step higher. Bar 13 reflects the subject, bars 18 – 22 reverse it, and bars 54 – 65 harmonize it backward and forward simultaneously.

### *Movement II, Bar 1: Subject*



### *Movement II: Reflection*



*Movement II, Bars 54 – 65: Harmonization; backward and forward*

roll all chords from bottom to top

Pno. *p*

*espressivo e rubato*

*dim.* *p*

Symmetries abound in the *Largo* Movement III at the local and global level. Structurally, the movement's form is ABA, with an auxiliary introduction that also functions as the codetta.

*Movement III, Bars 1 – 2 (introduction)*

Cymb scraped w/  
Triangle beater

Percussion *f*

Cymb scraped w/  
Triangle beater

Percussion *f*

*Movement III, Bars 71 – 72 (codetta)*

Cymb scraped w/  
Triangle beater

Percussion *p*

Cymb scraped w/  
Triangle beater

Percussion *p*

Locally, the principal melodies are mirror images, and the percussionists' rhythms are symmetric. Indeed, the physical act of playing the percussion parts is symmetric when the instruments are positioned accordingly.

*Movement III: Mirror images, two examples*

12 *p misterioso*

27  $\text{♩} = 60$  *ff*

Perc. *p*

The *Vivace* Movement IV serves to reintroduce the germinal motive and tie the other three movements together.

*Movement IV: Germinal motive (Xylophone)*

14 *p*

Xyl. *mf*

Timp. *mp*

Bars 76 – 100 act as a microcosm of the whole piece. In the musical example below, the colored rectangles correspond to different motives from the previous three movements. In order: the red Xylophone rectangle is the germinal motive of the piece, the blue piano rectangle is the arpeggio finale of Movement I, the green piano rectangle is the opening subject of Movement II, and the purple Xylophone rectangle is an accelerated version of the mirror melody of Movement III.

12

76

Pno. *mp* *cresc.*

Pno.

Xyl. *mp*

Timp.

Perc.

13

85

Pno. *cresc. poco a poco*

Pno. *mf*

Xyl.

Timp.

Perc.

The musical score for page 14 consists of five staves: Piano (Pno.), Xylophone (Xyl.), Timpani (Timp.), and Percussion (Perc.).

- Piano (Pno.):** The upper staff has a treble clef and the lower staff has a bass clef. The first three measures of the upper staff are circled in green and contain sixteenth-note triplets. The lower staff has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. A *ff* dynamic marking appears in the final measure of the upper staff.
- Xylophone (Xyl.):** The staff has a treble clef. It is silent for the first three measures, then plays a sixteenth-note triplet in the fourth measure, which is circled in purple. A *f* dynamic marking is placed below this measure.
- Timpani (Timp.):** The staff has a bass clef and contains a single note in the final measure, marked with *ff*.
- Percussion (Perc.):** The staff is a simple line with vertical tick marks indicating rhythmic pulses.