ISOMETRIC

for Woodwind Trio & Mallet Percussion Ensemble

Written & Arranged by:
ALEX J. LOPEZ AND HUNTER W. DAVIS

Isometric by Alex J. Lopez and Hunter W. Davis
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OVERVIEW

PERFORMANCE NOTES

Isometric is a minimalist-style composition that challenges performers through frequent meter changes and interlocking arpeggiated patterns, making it a strong choice for ensembles looking to strengthen their comfort in odd meters and modern styles.

The piece begins with a repeated arpeggiated idea that gradually expands across the mallet section, each instrument mirroring and reshaping the figure in its own way.

In the first variation, players encounter constantly shifting rhythmic patterns layered against each other, creating a dense and ever-changing texture.

The second variation slows the pace and leans into a more lyrical mallet texture. Here, the original arpeggio evolves into a broader, modal progression that evokes a Middle Eastern/ Egyptian character. Flute and metallic percussion rise to the surface, carrying a haunting melodic line that unifies the ensemble and gives this section its unique color.

In the third and final variation, the piano establishes a repeated grounding part, while the marimbas echo it with other subtle variations. Above this, the flute and metallics return once again to weave the melody, leading the ensemble toward a sustained and resonant final resolution.

Isometric blends accessibility with challenge—its shifting time signatures, layered textures, and stylistic variety offer younger ensembles a way to explore minimalist-style idioms while developing independence, rhythmic security, and ensemble awareness.

Establishing the Motif: Begin early-phase rehearsals by isolating the opening arpeggio figure. Have each mallet player practice it slowly and evenly before layering other parts on top. The key is clarity and consistency — the motif will serve as the anchor that the rest of the piece builds from.

Managing Shifting Meters: The frequent meter changes can be disorienting, especially for younger players. Break down tricky passages by clapping or counting through the rhythm first, without playing. Once secure, reintroduce the notes. Encourage performers to feel the pulse internally rather than rely on bar lines.

Balancing Layered Textures: In the first variation, multiple independent patterns occur simultaneously. Stress the importance of balance: marimbas and xylophone should not overpower the vibraphone or glockenspiel. Directors may need to assign “primary” and “secondary” voices within the ensemble to ensure clarity.

Creating the “Middle Eastern/Egyptian Color”: In the second section, focus on the modal inflection and sustained tones. Metallic percussion (glockenspiel, crotales, chimes) and flute must blend smoothly without becoming harsh. Bowed vibes should be used to add shimmer and resonance. Aim for a mysterious, floating quality rather than a heavy articulation.

Highlighting the Melody: When flute and metallics carry the melodic line, remind performers that accompaniment should step back dynamically. Mark clear dynamic contrasts in rehearsals so the melody remains in the foreground. Woods/low-end primarily maintain a soundscape that supports the melody.

Rehearsing the Piano Foundation: In the final section, the piano repeats a grounding figure that supports the ensemble. Directors should ensure that this part remains steady and does not rush — marimbas and others take their cue from it. Encourage the pianist to “play like a metronome with expression.” When the multi-bar accelerando begins, the piano acts as the anchor for the ensemble as the tempo increases.

Final Resolution: The piece ends with a sustained ensemble sonority. Stress breath support in winds and resonance in percussion. Metallics should let the sound bloom naturally rather than cutting it short. Encourage the ensemble to listen across sections for blend and intonation as the music fades to its final chord. Metallics tend to cut through during the final chord, dynmaic control is crucial.

General Performance Goal: Emphasize to performers that this piece is about precision within complexity. By mastering the repeating motif, navigating meter changes, and balancing textures, they will gain greater rhythmic independence and ensemble awareness.

OVERVIEW

INSTRUMENTATION

WOODWINDS

- 1 Piccolo
- 2 Flutes

MALLET PERCUSSION

- 2 Marimbas (One 5-Octave & One 4-Octave)
  Four soft medium-hard and hard mallets
- 2 Xylophones (3.5-Octave)
  Two medium-dark mallets
- 2 Vibraphones (One 3-Octave & One 3.5-Octave)
  Two bows and four medium-hard mallets
- 2 Glockenspiel (3-Octave)
  Two bright plastic and two medium-plastic mallets
- 1 Chimes (2-Octave) & Crotales (2-Octave) Combo
  Two bright plastic mallets, two medium-plastic mallets, one bow, and one hammer
- 1 Piano/Keys
  with Optional playback via MainStage/ other live playback
- 4 Timpani
  Two medium-hard and hard mallets, with Optional fifth drum

A recommendation for the woodwinds.
For best projection and clarity in performance venues, we recommend lightly microphoning the woodwinds. This not only helps balance them against the naturally louder percussion ensemble, but may also ensure that their melodic material carries clearly through the full texture of the piece.

Full Score

ISOMETRIC

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Alex Lopez & Hunter Davis

Adagio (♩. = 64)

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 **poco rall.** 9

Piccolo

I
Flute
II

dolce
mp
mf

I
Marimba
II

Xylophone
I
II

Vibraphone
I
Bowed Vibes
II
Bowed Vibes

Glockenspiel
I
w/ bright plastic mallets
II

Chimes
& Crotales

Grand Piano

Timpani

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14

15 16 17 18

Picc.

Fl. I II

Mar. I II

w/ soft mallets

w/ soft mallets

Xylo. I II

w/ medium-dark mallets

w/ medium-dark mallets

Vibes I II

Glock. I II

Crotales

w/ bright plastic mallets

Chim. & Crot.

Piano

Timp.

23 **A tempo** **24** 25

Picc.

I

Fl.

II

I

Mar.

II

w/ medium-hard mallets

w/ medium-hard mallets

I

Xylo.

II

Vibes

w/ medium-hard mallets

I

Vibes

Vibes

w/ medium-hard mallets

II

w/ medium-plastic mallets

I

Glock.

w/ medium-plastic mallets

II

Chimes

Chim.
& Crot.

Piano

Timp.

w/ hard mallets

30 31 32 33 34

Picc.

I
Fl.
II

I
Mar.
II

I
Xylo.
II

I
Vibes
II

I
Glock.
II

Chim.
& Crot.

Piano

Timp.

w/ medium-hard mallets

41

42

43

44

Picc.

I

Fl.

II

I

Mar.

II

I

Xylo.

II

I

Vibes

II

I

Glock.

II

Chim.
& Crot.

Chimes

Crotales

Piano

Timp.

50 51 52 53 54

Picc.

Fl. I II

Mar. I II

Xylo. I II

Vibes I II

Glock. I II

Chim. & Crot.

Crotales

Piano

Timp.

f *mp* *f* *pp*

Ped.

8vb

60 61 **62** 63 64

Picc.

Fl. I II

Mar. I II

mf *mp* *mp* 3 3

Xylo. I II

Vibes I II

mp *mp*

Glock. I II

Chim. & Crot.

pp

Piano

mp

Timp.

70

71

72

73

74

Picc.

play on first time only

play on both times

mf

Fl.

I

II

p

Mar.

w/ medium-hard mallets

Xylo.

Vibes

Glock.

Chim.
& Crot.

play on second repeat only.

Piano

Ped.

8vb

Timp.

80 81 82 83 84 85

Picc.

Fl. I II

Mar. I II

Xylo. I II

Vibes I II

Glock. I II

Chim. & Crot.

Piano

Ped. Ped. Ped.

8vb

Timp.

91 92 (♩ = 204) 93 94 95 96 97

Picc.

2.

I

Fl.

II

I

Mar.

II

w/ hard mallets

w/ hard mallets

I

Xylo.

II

I

Vibes

II

I

Glock.

II

Chimes

Chim. & Crot.

Piano

Ped.

Timp.

w/ hard mallets

103 104 105 106 107

Picc.

I
Fl.
II

I
Mar.
II

I
Xylo.
II

I
Vibes
II

I
Glock.
II

Chim.
& Crot.

Crotales

Chimes

Piano

Timp.

114

113 115 116 117

Picc.

Fl. I II

Mar. I II

Xylo. I II

Vibes I II

Glock. I II

Chim. & Crot.

Piano

Timp.

127 128 **129** 130 131 132

Picc.

Fl. I II

Mar. I II

w/ soft mallets

w/ soft mallets

Xylo. I II

Vibes I II

Glock. I II

Chim. & Crot.

Chimes

Piano

Timp.

139 140 **141** **molto accel.** 142

Picc.

Fl. I II

Mar. I II

w/ medium-hard mallets

Xylo. I II

Vibes I II

Glock. I II

Chim. & Crot.

Chimes

Piano

Timp.

147 148 **149** ♩. = 165

Picc.

Fl. I II

Mar. I II

Xylo. I II

Vibes I II

Glock. I II

Chim. & Crot.

Crotales

Piano

Timp.

158

156 157 159 160 161 162 163

Picc.

Fl. I II

Mar. I II

Xylo. I II

Vibes I II

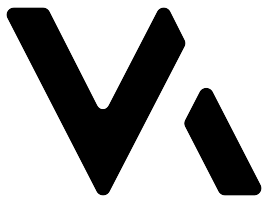
Glock.

Chim. & Crot.

Chimes

Piano

Timp.



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