



AURORA BOREALIS

a Duet for Two Performers

Written & Arranged by:
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Aurora Borealis by Hunter W. Davis & Zachary L. Brumfield
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"Aurora Borealis" is a duet for marimba and multi-snare drum that strives to capture an ethereal, luminous atmosphere—much like its namesake, the northern lights. Through frequent metric modulations, fluid tempo shifts, and a series of ongoing key changes, the music creates a constantly evolving soundscape that mirrors the unpredictability and beauty of natural light phenomena.

The marimba part demands refined control over phrasing, with passages marked by rubato rolls, molto accelerandi, and sudden ritardandi, requiring the performer to balance clarity with expressive nuance. Changes in mallet hardness—from soft to hard across different sections—add another timbral layer that shifts the color of the ensemble's sound. Meanwhile, the snare drum part is equally advanced, weaving together intricate rudimental figures such as triple-stroke ruffs (explicitly marked as R-L-L stickings), accented rolls, and dynamic contrasts that range from barely audible pulses to explosive fortissimo bursts. At several points, the duet locks into complex polymetric textures, such as overlapping triplet and quintuplet figures, heightening the sense of shimmering motion.

Formally, Aurora Borealis builds in waves: delicate, atmospheric passages dissolve into moments of rhythmic intensity before receding again. The Presto section marks one of its most demanding climaxes, pushing both performers to execute virtuosic passages at the limits of control and endurance.

This piece sits firmly on the advanced side of percussion repertoire, requiring a high level of technical fluency, rhythmic independence, and ensemble awareness. Yet for performers willing to take on the challenge, Aurora Borealis offers a uniquely rewarding opportunity to translate the spectacle of the northern lights into sound.

Fun fact.

This duet was originally composed for the Percussive Arts Society Composers' Competition in 2020, though it was never formally submitted. Even so, the call for unique instrumentation inspired us to think outside the box and explore new creative possibilities for this pairing.

OVERVIEW

INSTRUMENTATION

PLAYER NUMBER: ONE

- **1 Marimba (5-Octave)**
Four soft, medium-hard, and hard mallets

PLAYER NUMBER: TWO

- **1 Piccolo Snare Drum**
Two wooden piccolo/thin-tip drum sticks
- **1 Field Snare Drum**
Two standard marching drum sticks
- **1 Marching Snare Drum**
Two standard marching drum sticks

AURORA BOREALIS

a duet for two performers by Hunter Davis & Zach Brumfield

molto accel.

1A w/ soft mallets

Solo Marimba

pp

poco rall.

1B

mf *pp*

molto accel.

2A

poco rall.

2B

mf *pp*

11 **A tempo** **12** 13

p *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

Piccolo Snare
nearly inaudible—slow pulse, but consistent.

pp *pp* *n*

14 **molto rit.** 15

mp *p* *mp* *pp* *p*

pp *pp* *n*

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

p *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *pp*

mf *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *pp*

R L R L R L R L ... R L L R L R L L L R L R L R L R L ...

L R L R B B R B R B B L B L R R L B R L B R L

B L B L R R L B R L B R

R R R

45 46 47

f *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

f *mp*

R R B R L R B R L R B R L R B R R L ...

48 49 50

molto rit.

pp *ff* *p* *mf* *p*

f *pp* *ff* *p*

R R L ... R L ... L L R L ... R

61 62 63 64 65

mf *pp*

B R L R L R B R L R L R B R L R L R B L R ...

66 67 68 69 70

ff *f* *p*

R R L R L R L R L ...

80 81 82 83 84

p *mp* *p*

pp *mp* *pp* *mp* *mf* *pp*

R L R L R L L R L R L R L ... R L ... R L ... R L L

85 86 87 88 89

mp *p* *p* *ff* *f*

mp *pp* *mp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mf* *pp* *f* *p*

R L R L L R L R L R L R L L R R L ... R R L R L

104 105 106 107 108 109

pp *pp*

p *n*

6/4 6/4 6/4

110 Moderato (♩ = 122)

w/ soft mallets

Moderato (♩ = 122)

w/ soft mallets

111

5

5

3

pp mp mf pp mf pp

112 113 114

mf *pp* *mf* *pp*

mf *pp* *mf* *pp*

123

124

125

p

pp p

pp p

pp p

3

3

3

3

126

127

128

pp p

mp

pp

ppp

pp

ppp

3

5:6

3

molto rit.

3/4

3/4

129 Allegro vivace (♩ = 168)

130

131

ppp

142 143 144 145

pp *f* *p*

R R L ... R L ... R R L ... R L

146 147 148 149

mf *p*

R L ... R L L R R L R R L L R R L R L R L ... L R R L

poco rall. 150 151 152 153

mf *ppp*

R ... R ... R ... R

164 165 166 167 168

to center to edge to center

p *mf* *p* *mp* *pp* *f*

R L R R L R L R L

169 170 171

f *mf* *ff* *f*

p *f* *p* *f* *p*

R R L R L R L R R L L R L R L R L R L R L R L ...

5:6 edge to center edge to center



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