



A LINE IN THE SAND

for Advanced Percussion Ensemble

Written & Arranged by:
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A Line in the Sand by Hunter W. Davis & Zachary L. Brumfield
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OVERVIEW

PERFORMANCE NOTES

Take a trip across shifting dunes and windswept horizons with this advanced percussion ensemble. Rooted in the exotic resonance of the double harmonic major scale in D major, the piece captures both mystery and energy, blending subtle atmospheric gestures with bold rhythmic drive. Written originally as a fragment in 2018 and completed years later, it unfolds like a rediscovered journey—familiar yet renewed.

“A Line in the Sand” opens with a quiet, mysterious atmosphere in alternating 2/2 and 3/2 meters, establishing a desert-like stillness through soft mallet textures, bowed vibraphone, and metallic timbres. Here, the central motif is introduced subtly—an idea that reappears in transformed ways throughout.

The energy soon shifts with a fast 208 BPM, where the battery introduces the original sketch conceived back in 2018. A drumset groove anchors the texture, weaving with mallet runs and expanded double-harmonic sonorities. A transitional breakdown in 3/4 follows, giving way to an implied tenor feature accompanied by syncopated mallet writing and more angular, “wonky” rhythmic figures. This eventually contrasts with a driving 6/8 groove, as the battery locks into layered ostinatos beneath metallic and wooden keyboard melodies.

At the midpoint, the tempo relaxes to 144 BPM, and the tonal center shifts into C minor. Later on, the motif is reframed against a triplet grid, supported by drumset and groovy battery backbeats that transform the earlier ideas into a new rhythmic language. From this groove, the piece surges back into the high-energy 208 section, reintroducing earlier motifs with added force.

The final segment spotlights the battery and unpitched percussion, bridging into a bold key change to F# major, driving the ensemble toward a climactic conclusion.

Opening Atmosphere

Maintain absolute control of dynamics — the opening should feel fragile, almost like sound emerging from silence. Encourage performers to “place” notes gently, listening across the ensemble for blend, especially between bowed vibraphone, crotales, and chimes.

Motif Introduction

Directors should ensure the motif is heard clearly, even in its subtle first statement. Mallet players should treat this as a guiding idea, phrasing it with shape so that it can be recalled later in transformed versions.

Fast 208 BPM Transition

This shift requires precision and confidence — the battery and drumset drive the tempo, while mallet runs need to articulate cleanly without rushing. Directors should rehearse this transition in layers (battery alone, then keyboards, then together) to keep clarity intact.

Breakdown in 3/4 and Tenor Feature

The 3/4 breakdown is a moment to reset and refocus the energy. Tenors should bring out clarity of articulation while mallets lean into their angular lines, embracing the “wonky” character without losing pulse.

Contrasting 6/8 Groove

This section works best when the groove feels dance-like and buoyant. Encourage battery players to lock into their ostinato while metallic keyboards carry the lyrical thread — directors can balance this by placing the groove slightly under the melody.

144 BPM Tempo Change and C minor Key Shift

Here, the motif in a triplet grid can easily feel heavy — think “forward motion” rather than dragging. Directors should emphasize the backbeat from the battery and drumset while letting marimbas and vibes soar above with expanded melodic phrasing.

Return to 208 BPM and Build to Feature

This is where endurance and stamina are tested. Battery voices should balance power with precision, avoiding overplaying so the ensemble doesn’t lose clarity in the density. Mallets should stay rhythmically tight against the percussion feature to keep cohesion.

Final Section in F# Major

The ensemble needs to project brilliance and excitement here — metallics, cymbals, slapsticks, and tam-tam provide the sparkle, but must be coordinated carefully so as not to blur the harmonic arrival. Directors should rehearse balance and pacing, saving the strongest dynamic and emotional impact for the very end.

OVERVIEW

INSTRUMENTATION

MALLET PERCUSSION

- **2 Marimbas (One 5-Octave & One 4.5-Octave)**
Four soft and medium-hard mallets
- **2 Xylophones (One 3.5-Octave & One 3-Octave)**
Two rubber and medium-dark mallets
- **2 Vibraphones (3.5-Octave)**
Four soft and medium-hard mallets
- **1 Glockenspiel (2.5-Octave) & Crotales (2-Octave) Combo**
Two medium plastic mallets
- **1 Chimes (2-Octave)**
- **4 Timpani**

BATTERY PERCUSSION

- **3-9 Marching Snare Drums**
Two standard marching drum sticks
- **2-4 Marching Tenor Drums**
Two standard marching drum sticks
- **5 Marching Bass Drums**
Two standard marching mallets
- **2-3 Marching Cymbals**
Recommended: three cymbal players to cover occasional split parts

UNPITCHED PERCUSSION

- **1 Drumset**
Recommended: six-piece kit, or optional four/five-piece drum kit with three to four cymbals & hi-hat
- **Auxiliary Percussion #1**
Wind chimes, slapstick(s), claves, suspended cymbal, zil-bell(s), splash cymbal, hi-hat, and crash cymbals
- **Auxiliary Percussion #2**
Triangle, tambourine, wind chimes, brake drum(s), hi-hat, zil-bell(s), castanets, crash cymbals, suspended cymbal, and slapstick(s)
- **Auxiliary Percussion #3**
Concert snare drum, concert bass drum, bell tree, concert toms, tam-tam/gong

12 **13** 14 15 16

Mar. I *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

Mar. II *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

Xylo. I

Xylo. II

Vib. I *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

Vib. II *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

Glock. *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

Chim. *mp*

Timp. *pp* *p*

Drums

I *p* *ppp*

Aux. Perc. II *mp* *p* (4) (4)

R R L R

Snare

Tenors

Basses

Cym.

36 37 38 39 40 **41**

Mar. I II

Xylo. I II

Vib. I II

Glock. Glockenspiel

Chim.

Timp.

Drums

Aux. Perc. Slapsticks ff Swish Knockers ff Tam Tam f SusCym Concert Bass Drum Tambourine f

Snare

Tenors

Basses

Cym. siz./suc. p hi-hat mf siz./suc. mf

57

58

59

60

61

62

63

64

Mar. I *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Mar. II *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Xylo. I *mf* *pp* *p* *f* *p*

Xylo. II *mf* *pp* *p* *f* *p*

Vib. I *mp*

Vib. II *mp*

Glock. *p* *mf*

Chim. *mp*

Timp. *ff* *pp* *f* *mp* *p* *mf* *ppp*

Drums *ff* *p* *mf* *p*

Aux. Perc. Swish Knockers *ff* Claves *f* *pp* Triangle *p* *mf* *p* Tam Tam *ff*

Snare *ff*

Tenors *ff*

Basses *ff*

Cym. *ff* full crash

86 87 88 89 90 91

Mar. I *mf mp* *mf*

Mar. II *mf mp* *mf*

Xylo. I *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* 3 3 3 3

Xylo. II *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* 3 3 3 3

Vib. I *mf*

Vib. II *mf*

Glock. *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* 3 3 3 *p*

Glock. Crotales Glockenspiel Crotales Glockenspiel

Chim. *mf*

Timp. *pp* *mf*

Drums *pp* *f*

SusCym *mf* *pp*

Aux. Perc. WChimes *mf* *pp*

Snare *fp* *f* *p* *f* *p* *mf* *p* *f*

Snare center to edge 4:3 to center 5

Tenors *p* *f*

Basses *p* *f*

Cym. *f* *f* crash-choke

♩ = 144

98 99 100 101 102 103 104

Mar.
I *ff* *pp*
II *ff* *pp*

Xylo.
I *ff*
II *ff*

Vib.
I *ff* *pp*
II *ff* *pp*

Glock. *Crotales* *ff* *pp*

Chim. *ff* *pp*

Timp. *ff* *pp*

Drums *f* *pp* *f* *p*

Aux. Perc.
Zil-Bells *p* *f* *SusCym*
WChimes *mp* *pp* **Triangle**
Concert Snare *f* *p* *mf* *pp* *p*

Snare *f* *p* *f* *p* *mf* *pp* *f* *p*

Tenors *f* *p* *f* *p* *mf* *p* *f* *p*

Basses *f* *p* *f* *p* *p* *p* *f* *p*

Cym. *p* *f* *mp* *p* *f* *p*

to edge *to center* *to halfway* *to edge* *to center* *to edge* *to center*

tap-choke *siz./suc.*

6 *6*

111 **112** 113 *w/ 4 mallets* 114 115

Mar. I *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *f*

Mar. II *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *5:6* *p* *5:4* *f*

Xylo. I *mp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *p* *f*

Xylo. II *mp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *5:6* *pp* *p* *5:4* *f*

Vib. I *mp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *p* *f*

Vib. II *mp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *5:6* *pp* *p* *5:4* *f*

Glock. *mp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *p* *f*

Glockenspiel *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *p* *f*

Chim. *mp* *mf*

Timp. *mp* *mf* *5:6* *pp* *mf* *5:6* *pp* *f* *ppp* *6*

Drums *f* *p* *f* *mf* *pp* *f*

Aux. Perc. *mp* *pp* *Zil-Bells* *mp* *Slapsticks* *ff* *Brake Drums* *p* *f*

Snare *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *pp* *mf* *pp* *f*

Tenors *f* *p* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *mf* *pp* *f*

Basses *f* *p* *pp* *f* *pp* *pp* *mf* *pp* *pp* *f*

Cym. *f* *mf* *f*

to edge *to center* *4:3* *4:3* *3* *3* *5:6* *5:6* *5:4*

siz./suc. *ding* *5*

w/ puffy mallets *w/ puffy mallets*

146 147 **148** 149 150 151

Mar. I *ff* *p* 3 3 3 3 3 *f*

Mar. II *ff* *p* 3 3 3 3 3 *f*

Xylo. I *ff* *p* 3 3 3 3 3 *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *f*

Xylo. II *ff* *p* 3 3 3 3 3 *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *f*

Vib. I *ff* *p* 3 3 3 3 3 *f*

Vib. II *ff* *p* 3 3 3 3 3 *f*

Glock. Glockenspiel *ff* *p* 3 3 3 3 3 *f* Crotales

Chim. *ff* *f*

Timp. *ff* *f*

Drums *ff* *mf* *f*

SusCym

Aux. Perc. *ff* Castanets *f* Concert Bass Drum *f*

Snare *ff*

Tenors *ff*

Basses *ff*

Cym. *ff* full crash

♩ = 208

159

160

161

Mar. I II

Xylo. I II

Vib. I II

Glock. *mp* *mf*

Chim. *p*

Timp. *fff* *mp* *ppp*

Drums *mp* *p*

Aux. Perc. CrCym 18 Viennese *ff* WChimes *p* SusCym

Snare *ff*

Tenors *ff*

Basses *ff*

Cym. *ff*

166 167 168 169 170

Mar. I II

Xylo. I II

Vib. I II

Glock.

Chim.

Timp.

Drums

Aux. Perc. Zil-Bells Tambourine Concert Bass Drum

Snare edge to center

Tenors

Basses

Cym. crash-choke

pp *f* *ppp* *f* *mf p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *f* *p* *f*

193

191 192 194 195

Mar. I II

Xylo. I II

Vib. I II

Glock. Crotales

Chim.

Timp.

Drums

Aux. Perc. Slapsticks Swish Knockers Claves Triangle

BD and Tam Tam Concert Toms

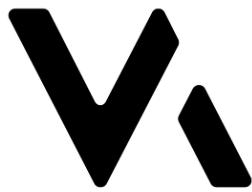
Snare

Tenors

Basses

Cym. full crash full crash siz./suc.

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a percussion ensemble. It is divided into measures 191, 192, 194, and 195. The instruments listed are Maracas (Mar.), Xylophone (Xylo.), Vibraphone (Vib.), Glockenspiel (Glock.), Chimes (Chim.), Tom-toms (Timp.), Drums, Auxiliary Percussion (Aux. Perc.), Snare, Tenors, Basses, and Cymbals (Cym.). The score includes various dynamics such as *ff*, *f*, *mp*, and *mf*. There are also articulations like accents and slurs. The time signature changes from 9/8 to 4/4 between measures 192 and 194. The key signature is D major. The score includes specific instructions for different types of cymbals and tom-toms, such as 'full crash' and 'siz./suc.' (size/succession).



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