

Béla Fleck

Big Country

for percussion ensemble and rhythm section

arranged by Olin Johannessen



"Big Country"
Written by Béla Fleck
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Performance notes

Marimbas: Marimba parts are frequently marked with tenuto articulations, particularly in mallet 3. These indicate the “lead” notes which should be brought out a bit. The left-hand part during these moments is more for harmonic accompaniment so keep those down a bit. Also, in the chorus sections where the vibes take the melody, play these parts as smoothly as possible with a legato touch. Think of this part as accompanimental texture during these moments. Marimba players should use medium yarn wrapped mallets and may consider a graduated mallet setup with a slightly softer mallet for mallet 1 (i.e., Vic Firth M113 for mallet 1, and M114 for mallets 2, 3, and 4).

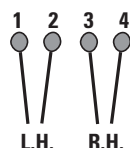
Marimba 1: This part should be played on a 4.5 octave (low E or F) marimba. If this is not available, the part will still work fine on a 4.3 octave instrument (low A). If using a 4.3 octave marimba, play the low G# (rehearsal B and F) up an octave as indicated in parenthesis.

Marimba 2: This part uses the lower range of the instrument and requires an instrument that extends to a low E.

Xylophone/Glockenspiel: The xylophone player should use a medium-soft rubber mallet so as to blend with the marimba voice (i.e., Vic Firth M155 or M130). For the Glock part, use a medium-hard plastic mallet (i.e., Vic Firth M140 or M141). These two parts are written separately for two players, but can be performed by one player if desired.

Vibraphones: During the verses, your primary job is to provide comping beneath the melody. Strive for a well-blended sound between all parts of these chords. Once the verses really start to get louder (as the piece goes on), give special emphasis to the dominant chord, then lead into the tonic (V – I) with forward motion. On the choruses, you take the leading role. Bring out the half notes that extend over the barline. Vibraphone players should use medium-hard cord wrapped mallets (i.e., Vic Firth M207, M31, or M187).

Mallet sticking suggestions: In some parts, stickings have been suggested, however you are welcome to use whichever stickings feel most comfortable. For reference, the sticking numbers indicated use this numbering formula.



Bass: Stay light and delicate in the upper tessitura of the instrument, and keep a solid foundation to the feel during the verses. Exaggerate the accented quarter notes that lead into the repeats of phrases. That’s the “country” side of this part.

Percussion: As you’ll see, there aren’t many literal parts written out in the music. This is primarily a “groove” part that serves to add support to the two-step feel of the drumset voice. For an example, check out the recording posted on the Vic Firth website (on the “Features” page, click “Concert Features” and find the “UMass Marimba Band” feature. In general, a nice articulate metal shaker will do, and weighted triangle beaters using the Alan Abel 3”, 6”, and 9” triangles will achieve the desired sounds. The triangle part should essentially enhance and outline the melody coming from vibraphones and glockenspiel.

Drumset: Like the percussion part, there’s not much in the way of literal parts on the score. This part is groove based, and is important to lay down a solid foundation with a country/two-step feel. For an example of a live performance, check out the UMass recording mentioned above. I would recommend using light bundle rods or for more articulation on the cymbals, wire brushes (i.e., Vic Firth RUTE 505, or Heritage Brush).

Optional Parts: I’ve included a couple optional parts in case you have the players to utilize them. The original recording by Béla Fleck has a soprano sax as the lead voice, and this part is included here in case you’d like to feature a guest player on soprano sax. This is merely an extra part and is not required.

Also included is an optional marimba part which can be handy if there are extra players in your ensemble that could play them. These two-mallet parts are secondary to the main arrangement however, and are not required. This optional marimba part would be ideal on a 5-octave marimba (low C), and is designed for two players to share the same instrument (one player per staff), although it’s possible one player could cover most of the parts by him/herself.

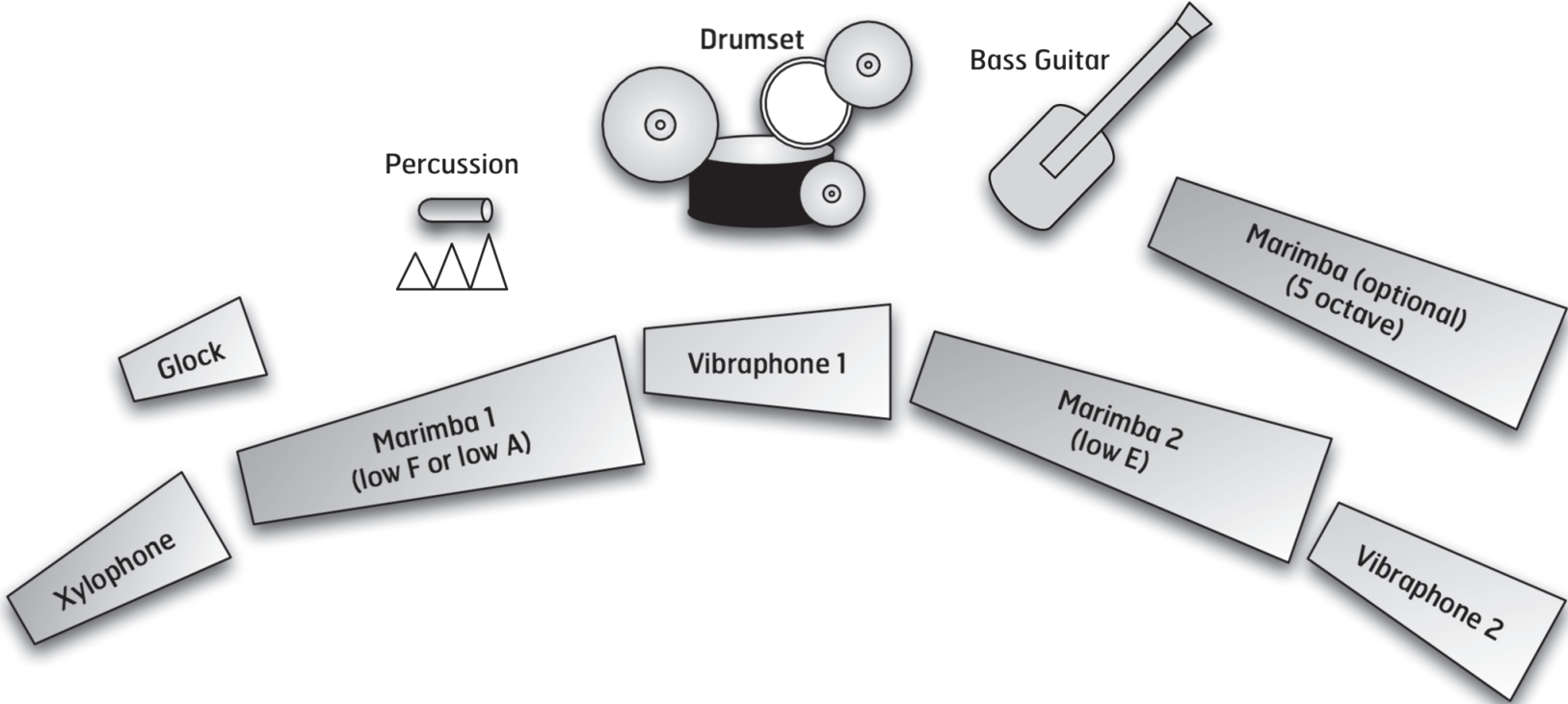
For Everyone:

This piece is about making people feel good! It’s a fun piece, and the best way to convey that energy to the listener is to learn your parts, get your chops up, and make this thing sound fun and not like a workout! Engage your audience by making it sound effortless, and of course, have a good time onstage!

Enjoy!

~Olin Johannessen

Suggested Setup



Level: Med-Advanced
Duration: 3'00"

Big Country

for percussion ensemble and rhythm section

Béla Fleck
arr. by Olin Johannessén

Sample Image

Sample Image

“Big Country” Written by Béla Fleck
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10

MAR. 1

MAR. 2

MAR. (OPT)

BASS

3 2 3 1 2 3 3 1 3 1 4 1 2 3 4 2 3 2 4 1 2 3 3 2 3 2 3 2 (sm)

3 2 3 2 3 1 2 3 3 1 3 1 4 1 2 3 4 2 3 2 4 1 2 3 3 2 3 2 3 2 (sm)

1 1

20

XYL

MAR. 1

MAR. 2

MAR. (OPT)

BASS

A

pp

pp

pp

Sample
Image

30

XYL

MAR. 1

MAR. (OPT)

BASS

DR

"TWO-STEP FEEL" (SLIGHTLY SWUNG, LILTING)

ppp CRESC. (FADING-IN GRADUALLY)

39

XYL

MAR. 1

MAR. (OPT)

BASS

DR

SHOULD BE AUDIBLE AND "IN-THE-MIX" BY NOW.

Sample
Image

48 8

SAX (OPT) *mf*

GLOCK *mf*

XYL

Vis. 1 *mf*

Vis. 2 *mf*

MAR. 1 *mf*

MAR. 2 *mp*

MAR. (OPT) *f* *mf*

BASS *mp*

PERC *mp*

DR *mf*

3" 6" & 9" TRIANGLES - DOUBLE MELODY.

FILL... (AD LIB)

Sample
Image

63

SAX (OPT)

GLOCK

XYL

Vib. 1

Vib. 2

MAR. 1

SHAKER (METAL CANZAS)

WOO-STEP)

mf

f

HOEDOWN!

Sample Image

74

SAX (OPT)

GLOCK

XYL

Vis. 1

Vis. 2

MAR. 1

MAR. 2

MAR. (OPT)

BASS

PERC

DR

Sample
Image

84

SAX (OPT)

GLOCK

XYL

ViB. 1

ViB. 2

MAR. 1

mf

mf

mf

f

p

p

Sample Image

96

SAX (OPT)

GLOCK

XYL

Vis. 1

Vis. 2

MAR. 1

MAR. 2

MAR. (OPT)

BASS

PERC

DR

Sample
Image

110

SAX (OPT)

GLOCK

XYL

Vib. 1

Vib. 2

MAR. 1

TRIANGLES

FILL...

(AD LIB)

mf

f

mp

3 2 1 3 1 2 3 2 3 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 3 1 3 2 1 3 2 1

E

Sample Image

123

SAX (OPT)

GLOCK

XYL

Vis. 1

Vis. 2

MAR. 1

MAR. 2

MAR. (OPT)

BASS

PERC

DR

F

mf

3 2 3 1 2 (sim)

3 2 3 1 2 (sim)

Sample
Image

136

SAX (OPT)

XYL

ViB. 1

ViB. 2

MAR. 1

Sample Image

The musical score is written for a 12-piece band. The instruments are: Saxophone (optional), Xylophone, Vibraphone 1, Vibraphone 2, and Maracas 1. The score is in 4/4 time and features a mix of melodic lines and rhythmic patterns. A large, stylized map of the United States is overlaid on the bottom left of the score.

146

SAX (OPT)

XYL

Vib. 1

Vib. 2

MAR. 1

MAR. 2

MAR. (OPT)

BASS

PERC

DR

Sample Image

153

G

SAX (OPT)

XYL

Vib. 1

Vib. 2

MAR. 1

SUBITO *mp* CRESC. *f*

SUBITO *p* CRESC. *ff*

SUBITO *p* CRESC. *ff*

CRESC. *f*

CRESC. *f*

CRESC. *f*

(AD LIB.) 3

Sample
Image



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