

Jim Casella

Joaquin on Sunshine

for percussion ensemble and rhythm section



Joaquin on Sunshine by Jim Casella
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Program notes

Joaquin on Sunshine was originally written in 2008 under the working title “El Ritmo Adentro.” In the early stages of my writing, the rhythms started developing an Afro-Cuban flavor, and before I knew it, I was writing my first songo-inspired piece. This wasn’t my original intent. I set out to write something where syncopation dictated its energy and the downbeats were rarely the dominant part of the pulse, melody, or phrasings. (El Ritmo Adentro translates to “The Rhythm Inside.”)

As the piece solidified, it took on a festive quality that turned out to be a lot of fun. However, I could never quite come up with a title that reflected this in addition to its Latin flavor. So while the title didn’t come around until after the piece was finished (with inspiration from my friends Murray Gusseck and David Reeves), I love that our friend Joaquin has something to smile about. Fans of the band Katrina and the Waves may not appreciate the dangerously corny wordplay, but it makes me happy.

Written for a large ensemble, the piece uses a fairly typical array of percussion instruments as well as a rhythm section including bass guitar, piano, drumset, timbales, bongos, congas, and shekere. A recurring motive of 2+3 rumba clave appears regularly, though it isn’t meant to be a constant key to the groove. Aside from the inherent challenges imposed by the syncopation, the often dense scoring can be difficult for players to navigate within. This becomes a great way for ensembles to rehearse awareness so that accompaniment doesn’t become heavy and for more melodic parts to relate their off-beat phrasings to the groove supplied by the accompaniment. When performed well, the phrasing feels precise and fluid while weaving around the strong beats, with the various instruments finding a comfortable balance with each other.

Joaquin on Sunshine was written for the Foster High School percussion ensemble from Richmond, Texas, under the direction of Mr. Daren Jordan.

–Jim Casella

Instrument/Parts list

This piece calls for **15–17 players** with the following instrumentation:

Glockenspiel part

glockenspiel, splash cymbal, finger cymbals

Xylophone part

xylophone, crotales

Chime part

chimes, mark tree, triangle

Vibraphone 1 part

vibraphone, sizzle cymbal

Vibraphone 2 part

vibraphone

Marimba 1 part (ideally doubled)

4.3-octave marimba (low A), suspended cymbal, sizzle cymbal

Marimba 3 & 4 part (ideally doubled)

4.5-octave marimba (low F)

Timpani part

4 timpani

Piano part

piano

Bass Guitar part

electric bass guitar

Drumset part

5-piece drumset with, ride, 2 crashes, hi-hats, splash, and china cymbals

Bongo part

bongos, guiro

Conga part

2 congas, cabasa, djembe

Timbale part

standard timbale set (2 drums with 2 cowbells and cymbal), concert bass drum

Shekere part

shekere, triangle, suspended cymbal, tam tam, bell tree

Performance notes

If performed well, this piece should sound like a festive celebration that makes you want to dance. It'll be most successful if players have a natural feel for playing syncopated 16th-note parts, where notes aren't being literally read from the page. This is the sort of thing in which "feel" dictates technique. These rhythms should be infused into players' muscles so that they can mostly listen to other players while fitting their own part into the mix. If the groove isn't solid and natural, it will be an unfortunate time for the audience.

Rhythm section percussionists: This includes drumset, bongos, congas, timbales, and shekere. These parts are intended to provide an underlying groove for the piece. While there are parts that are written out, these are often just suggested patterns that fit well with the Afro-Cuban flavor of the piece. It's okay to alter these as long as the phrasing and accents still fit.

All percussionists should be mindful of volume and how it affects the overall ensemble. If percussion parts are played at full "party volume," it will most likely drown out the mallet keyboards and turn into a noisy mess. It's a busy piece, so be careful not to let the high activity create volume problems - particularly instruments that easily overbalance, such as drumset, cymbals, and cowbells.

Percussionists may also encounter "slash notation" which simply indicates to continue the same groove or feel that was established in the previously written bar. During these times you may encounter notes above the staff which indicate points at which accents should be added.

Vibraphones: Pedal markings are not indicated in the music. This is left to the discretion of the performer as they interpret the stylistic phrasing of each part. Parts are often written with full note lengths in mind, which would imply pedaling. Since the piece is so driven by 16th notes, players will have to work to ensure a good balance between sustained tones and articulation. Some faster, more syncopated lines may include moments where the bars aren't ringing. Staccatos usually imply notes to be either completely dry or pedaled with a very short duration.

Marimbas: While there are only two marimba staves in the score, these parts are ideally intended to be doubled by two players, each on their own instrument, which will help these parts to be in balance with the rest of the ensemble.

Notation guides

Percussion parts use different noteheads to indicate specific sounds. Sometimes these are simply noted in the music. The examples below are the most commonly used.

The notation guides show four percussion staves with various noteheads and labels:

- Drumkit:** crash cymbal, china (indicated w/text), splash (indicated w/text), hi-hat, bell of ride cym, snare drum, ghost note, snare rim shot, high tom, mid tom, low tom, kick drum, hi-hat w/foot.
- Bongos:** muted (heel/finger), open, w/finger (higher pitch), muted (heel/finger), open, w/finger (higher pitch). Labeled LOW BONGO and HIGH BONGO.
- Congas:** (heel/finger), open, open slap, muted slap, (heel/finger), open, open slap, muted slap. Labeled LOW CONGA and HIGH CONGA.
- Timbales:** low cowbell, high cowbell, cymbal (crash), cymbal (ride), regular stroke, dead stroke, rimshot, on shell, regular stroke, dead stroke, rimshot, on shell. Labeled LOW TIMBALE and HIGH TIMBALE.

Level: Advanced
Duration: approx. 4'50"

Written for the Foster High School Percussion Ensemble, Richmond, TX – Daren Jordan, Director

Joaquin on Sunshine

Jim Casella

Festive and Soulful ♩ = 126

The musical score is written for a percussion ensemble. It includes staves for Glockenspiel, Xylophone (with Crotales), Chimes, Vibraphone 1, Vibraphone 2, Marimba 1, Marimba 2, Timpani, Sus Cym, and cowbells. The tempo is marked as 'Festive and Soulful' with a quarter note equal to 126 beats per minute. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 1 through 12. The second system covers measures 13 through 24. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and dynamic markings like *mf* and *f*. Specific performance instructions are provided for the Xylophone (I.v. Xylophone), Chimes (Chimes w/xylo mallet on tube), Timpani (medium mallets), Sus Cym, and cowbells.

Glockenspiel

Xylophone *mf* Crotales I.v. Xylophone *f* Chimes w/xylo mallet on tube *f*

Chimes *f*

Vibraphone 1 *f*

Vibraphone 2 *f*

Marimba 1 *f*

Marimba 2 *f*

Timpani *f* medium mallets

Sus Cym *mf* *f*

cowbells *f*

Sample
Image

9

A

G

X^{lv.}

Ch

Reg. hammer
f

V1

V2

M1

M2

T

Pno.

Bos

Drumkit

Kit

Bon

Con

Timb

Timbales

cr. ride

ff

p

f

ff

p

f

Shekere shaken (in/out)

f

bass tone

Sample
Image

Sample Image

23

C

D

G

X

Ch

Triangle

mp

(4)

(8)

V1

V2

M1

M2

T

mf

Pho.

mf

Bas

mf

Kit

Bon

mp

f

mp

Con

mp

(4)

Timb

mp

f

Shek

mp

(4)

Sample
Image

[illegible]

Sample Image

47

G

X

Ch

VI

V2

M1

M2

T

(med plastic or rubber)

mf

mp

Crotales (w/med plastic)

mf

mp

I.v.

mp

WChimes

p

Chimes

mp

Sizzle Cymbal

mp

mf

mp

(sizz cym)

mf

mp

soft mallets

mp

soft mallets

mp

soft mallets

p

china (w/mallet)

mf

china

mp

Cabasa (tap w/fingers)

p

(shell)

pp

p

ff

p

mp

Sample Image

Sample Image

62

G

X

Ch

V1

V2

M1

M2

T

P

Finger Cymbals

mp

p

WChimes

feather pedal

mp

feather pedal

mp

Sizzle Cymbal

pp

pp

pp

soft mallets

p

tight h.h.

mp

Quiro

short

long

taps

Djembe

bass tone

slap

low taps

mp

low taps

mp

Concert Bass Drum (w/warm mallet)

mp

mp

2

(muted slap)

Sample
Image

72

G

Xylo

Triangle

Glöckenspiel

mf

p

mp

f

(4)

2

2

T

Pno.

Bas.

Kit.

Bon.

Con.

Timb.

Shek.

mp

Sample
Image

80

J

G

X

Ch

VI

V2

M1

M2

T

SusCym

mp

p

f

mf

2

4

Tam Tam

mp

p

Sample Image

K 90 dead strokes

G *mp*

X

Chimes *mf*

V1 damp *mf*

V2 damp *mf*

M1 add in to current marimba(s)

M2 *f*

T gliss effect (pitch is unimportant) *mf* gliss *sfz*

Pno. *mf* *ff*

Bos

Kit *mp* *f*

Bon Bongos *mf*

Con

Timb Timbales *mp*

Shek Bell Tree w/brass mallet *f*

w/marimbass *mf*

minimal ped *f*

minimal ped *f*

f chir

Sample
Image

L

[illegible]

Sample Image

Sample Image

M 106 Drum solo

N

Triangle *mp* (4)

mf

mf

ff

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp

f (4)

f (4)

mp

Shekere

mp

f (4)

mp

Sample
Image

118

G

X

Ch

V1

V2

M1

M2

T

Pno.

Bas

Kit

Bon

Con

Timb

Shek

mp

mp

mp

(8)

(4)

(8)

(8)

v *sp*

Sample
Image

124

G

X

Ch

VI

V2

M1

M2

P (play first note on repeat only)

ff

mf

Chimes

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

mf

Splash

2

ff

mf

2nd time only = crash on downbeat

(Fill)

(4)

(4)

(4)

time = crash on downbeat

sfz *sfz* *sfz* *p*

(4)

Sample
Image

Sample Image



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