

Jim Casella

Cyclone

for percussion ensemble



Cyclone by Jim Casella
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Program notes

Cyclone is an ambitious work for percussion ensemble featuring a quartet of marimbists (sharing two facing instruments) who are accompanied by piano and 7 multipercussionists. The piece was commissioned by Lewis Norfleet, director of the Union High School percussion ensemble from Camas, Washington, to be premiered at their performance at the 2010 Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago, Illinois.

Cyclone was inspired by events encountered by my close friend Ryan Dahlem and his father John during their expedition to summit Mount Everest in the spring months of 2010. During this time I found myself somewhat obsessed with their journey, fascinated by the determination required and the physical toll high altitudes inflict on these dedicated souls. It's not just a trip to Nepal and up the mountain with a tour guide, but rather months of rigorous training, several weeks of acclimatization and conditioning on numerous climbs to median camps (and back down), and ultimately hoping for an ample window in the weather at the 29,029-foot summit before monsoon season arrives.

During the days leading up to their summit bid, Cyclone Leila was gaining momentum over the Bay of Bengal and threatening weather conditions for Himalayan climbers. It was during this time of optimism and excitement that climbers were conditioning and methodically preparing their bodies for the task of walking to the highest point on earth, unaware that the jet stream could bring conditions rendering their attempt futile. Amid some unusually dangerous conditions that even led their Sherpas to advise against continuing the expedition during their final ascent, Ryan and John prevailed in summitting and descending safely. Above 25,000 feet (known as the "death zone"), climbers are at great risk, even in optimal conditions, so making it back alive despite the storm was a real victory. They were so badly beaten by the weather, exhaustion, and altitude sickness that they are unable to recollect blocks of time during their descent, a time during which 80 percent of the deaths occur. Incidentally, John and Ryan became the oldest father/son team ever to summit Everest.

Without intending to be literal or programmatic, *Cyclone* primarily consists of two parts. The first part represents the optimism and determination inspired by the goal of climbing the world's highest peak. First and foremost, the marimbas introduce the main device of circular motion by way of quick, repetitive 6-note figures which overlap between the facing marimbists. Frequent echo effects are meant to imply a grandeur and spaciousness to the environment. A driving rhythm and structured melody comprise this section, with perhaps a slight sense of uneasiness to the harmonic structure - hope mixed with some anxiety.

As part two takes over midway through the work, the tonality changes leading to a much more vulnerable and unpredictable energy that doesn't relent. The marimbas generally remain the focal point throughout, but the accompaniment becomes even more active, utilizing a variety of fast-switching and frenetic colors from each multipercussion setup. As the intensity increases toward the final climax, the four marimbists embark on a relentless flurry of contrapuntal 16th-note activity. During this time, they each continually ascend the instruments, volleying with each other's positions, as well as physically running around the instruments as their ascension persists within the circular and violent roundabout.

-Jim Casella

Personnel/Instrument List

This piece calls for **12 players** with the following instrumentation:

Marimba 1 (Player 1)

Low A marimba, shared with player 2

Marimba 1 (Player 2)

Low A marimba, shared with player 1

Marimba 2 (Player 3)

Low A marimba, shared with player 4

Marimba 2 (Player 4)

Low A marimba, shared with player 3

Glockenspiel

glockenspiel, suspended cymbal, low zil-bell, bell plate, low tom tom, anvil

Xylophone

xylophone, crotales (2-octaves), suspended cymbal

Vibraphone

vibraphone, suspended cymbal, opera gong

Piano

Timpani

timpani, suspended cymbal

Percussion 1

snare drum, 3 cowbells, splash cymbal, hi-hats, ride cymbal, tam tam, trash can lid, floor tom, 3 roto toms

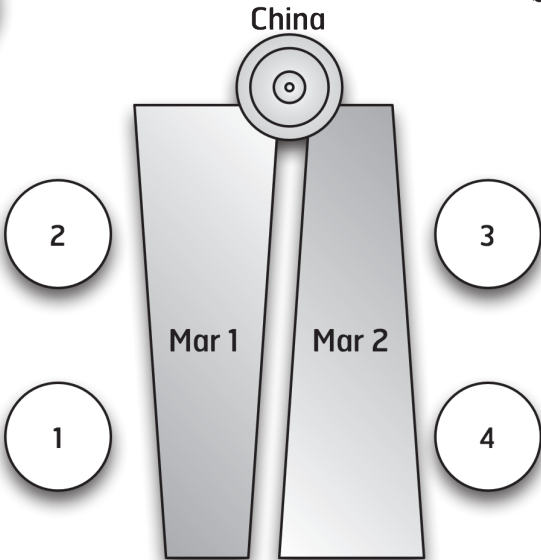
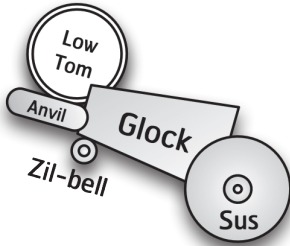
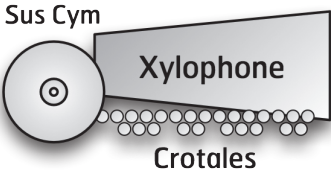
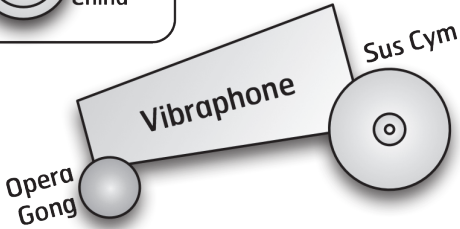
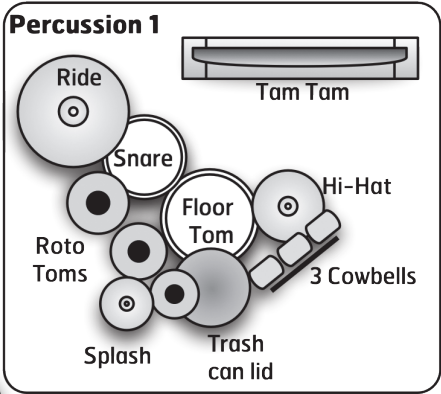
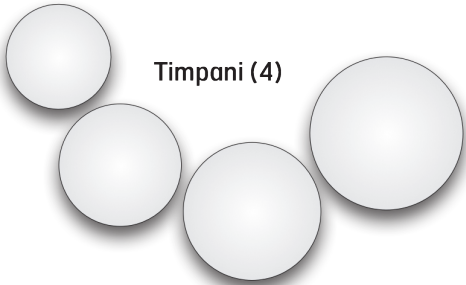
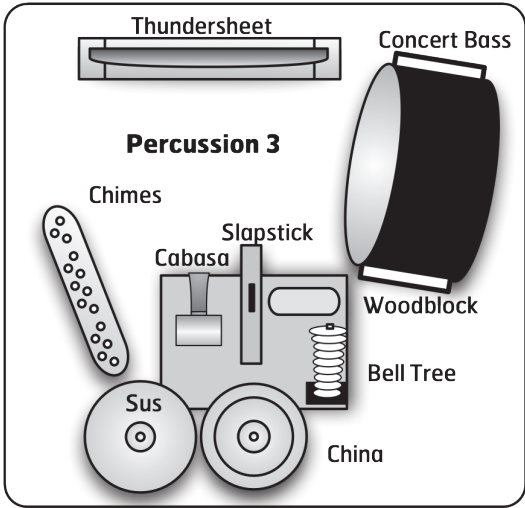
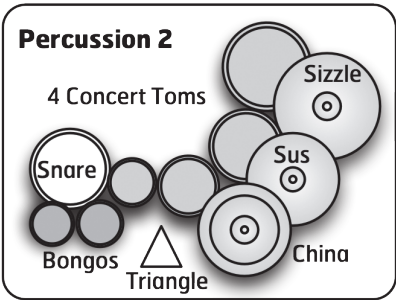
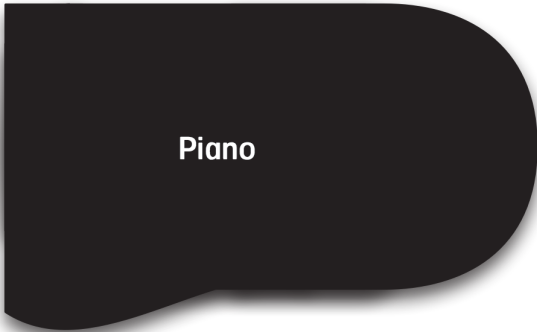
Percussion 2

snare drum, sizzle cymbal, triangle, 4 concert toms, suspended cymbal, China cymbal, bongos

Percussion 3

chimes, thundersheet, concert bass drum, bell tree, woodblock, cabasa, slapstick, suspended cymbal, China cymbal

Suggested Setup



Level: Advanced
Duration: approx. 4'40"

Commissioned by the Union High School percussion ensemble, Camas, WA – Lewis Norfleet, director

Cyclone

Jim Casella

♩ = 160

Marimba 1 (Player 1)

Marimba 1 (Player 2)

Marimba 2 (Player 3)

Marimba 2 (Player 4)

Glockenspiel

Xylophone

Wire brushes)

Bracket indicates playing on opposite marimba

f *p* *ppp* *f* *p* *ppp*

Sample
Image

A

9

M1 *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

M2 *f* *p* (blend w/M4) *f* *p*

M3 *f* *p* *f* *pp*

M4 *f* *pp* *mp* (don't attack release) *f* *pp*

G *mp* med-plastic

X xylo (rubber mallets) *mp*

V *mf*

Pn *mp* *mf*

T mysterious gliss roll on low drum *p*

P1

P2

P3 bell tree (ad lib descending strikes w/brass mallets) *f* concert bass drum (heavy soft mallets) *mp*

Sample
Image

16 (s)

M1 *f* *pp* *sfz*

M2 (blend w/M4) (don't attack release) *f* *p* *sfz*

M3 (s) *f* *p* *pp* *sfz*

M4 (don't attack release) *f* *p* *p* *sfz*

16

G

X *p* *p* *mp*

sus cym

sizzle cymbal *mp*

thundersheet (shaken, ad lib ala storm brewing)

Sample
Image

B

23 (8)

M1 *ff*

M2 *ff*

M3 *ff*

M4 *ff*

G 23 (don't choke, but taper L.V. decay quickly)

X *ff*

V *p*

Pn *ff*

T 23 *ff*

P1 *p*

P2 *mf*

P3 *mp*

mf + = dead stroke

mf + = dead stroke

mf + = dead stroke

mf + = dead stroke

mf glockenspiel (brass mallet in RH plastic in LH)

mp crotales (aluminium mallet)

p LH crossover if playing reh. B w/RH

f RH if more comfortable

mf sus cym scrape

p SD with wire brushes

mf triangle

mp woodblock (w/rubber mallet)

Sample
Image

C

31

M1

M2

M3

M4

G

X

2

2

2

2

sus cym (yam)

Sample
Image

w/yarn

bell tree woodblock

mp

39 **D** **E**

M1 *f* *mf*

M2 *f* *mf*

M3 *f* *mf*

M4 *f* *mf*

39 glockenspiel (med-hard plastic) *mp* *sf*

X *mp* (alum.)

V *mp*

Pn *mp*

39 timpani (med-soft mallets) *mp*

P1 (exaggerate side-to-side dynamics w/P2) (almost inaudible) *p* *mf* *ppp*

P2 snare drum with wire brushes (exaggerate side-to-side dynamics w/P1) (almost inaudible) *p* *mf* *ppp* *mf*

P3

Sample
Image

54

G

M1

p *mf* *f*

M2

mp *f*

M3

p *mf* *f*

M4

mp *f*

H

(exaggerated dynamics)

(exaggerated dynamics)

(exaggerated dynamics)

(exaggerated dynamics)

54

G

glock (hard plastic)

mp *ff* *f*

X

Xylo

p *p* *f*

V

p *ff*

Pn

p *ff*

54

T

damp

p *ped.* *natural* *ped.* *ff*

P1

cowbells (w/SD sticks)

mp *f*

P2

mp

P3

(cabasa)

Sample
Image

63

M1

M2

M3

M4

63

G

X

mp *f*

ped. *ff* *ped.* *ped.* *ped.*

splash

R.S.

2

4

2

4

snare

Sample
Image

75

M1 *fmp* *ff* *f* *p* *pp* *f* *p* *pp*

M2 *fmp* *ff* *f* *p* *pp* *f* *p*

M3 *fmp* *ff* *f* *p* *pp* *f* *p*

M4 *fmp* *ff* *f* *p* *pp* *f* *p* *pp*

G *mp* *ff* *pp*

X *mp* *ff* dampen

V *mp* *ff* *p*

Pn *mp* *ff* *p* *io* approximated rhythm is okay

T *mp* *ff* Retune to E, G, C, E

P1 *ff* SD wit. *mf*

P2 *ff*

P3 woodblock *p*

Sample
Image

85 K

M1 *f* *p* *pp* *f* *pp*

M2 *pp* *f* *p* *pp* *f* *p* *pp*

M3 *pp* *f* *p* *pp* *f* *p* *pp*

M4 *f* *p* *pp* *f* *pp*

G 85

X

cym scrape xylo (rubber mallets)
mp *p*

85

warm/soft mallets
mf *pp*

tam tam
mp

concert toms (w/soft mallet)
mp

concert bass drum (warm)
mp

Sample Image

93 med-soft mallets *mf* Bracket indicates playing on opposite marimba

M1 *mf*

M2 med-soft mallets *mp* mind your neighbor *mf*

M3 med-soft mallets *mf* Bracket indicates playing on opposite marimba

M4 med-soft mallets *mp* mind your neighbor *mf*

93

G *mp*

X *mf* sus cym scrape

V *mf*

(8)

Pn

93

T *mf* *pp*

P1 *mf*

P2 *mf* cym scrape *mp* *mf*

P3 *mf*

L

Sample
Image

Sample Image

M $\text{♩} = 170$

109

M1 *molto cresc.* med-hard mallets *f*

M2 *molto cresc.* *ff* mute med-hard mallets *f*

M3 *molto cresc.* med-hard mallets china mute *ff*

M4 *molto cresc.* med-hard mallets *f*

G 109 bell plate *ff*

X mute xylo (medium plastic) *f*

V *molto cresc.* *ff* low tom *p* *ff* crotales damp *p* *ff*

Pn *ff* SusCym *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff*

T 109 *fff* *C to D $\flat$* *pp* *fff* *pp*

P1 *molto cresc.* trash can lid *f* floor tom *f* snare

P2 *ff* *ff* slapstick

P3 *molto cresc.*

Sample
Image

The image displays a complex musical score for a percussion ensemble, organized into multiple systems. The instruments and parts are as follows:

- M1, M2, M3, M4:** Four melodic lines, likely for mallets or similar instruments, featuring intricate rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings such as *f*, *ff*, *p*, and *pp*.
- G:** Glockenspiel part, starting at measure 117, with dynamic markings like *f* and *ff*.
- X:** Xylophone part, featuring a *sfz* (sforzando) marking.
- Dampened:** A part with a *ff* marking.
- Cym Chokes:** A part with a *f* marking.
- Opera Gong:** A part with a *f* marking.
- Low Tom:** A part with a *p* marking.
- Vibes:** A part with a *p* marking.
- Roto Toms:** A part with a *ff* marking.
- Lid:** A part with a *p* marking.
- Floor Tom:** A part with a *p* marking.

The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings. A large, stylized silhouette of a person is overlaid on the left side of the score, partially obscuring the lower staves.

Sample Image

Sample Image

This image shows a page of a musical score for a percussion ensemble. The score is written for 13 parts, labeled M1 through P3. The notation includes various percussion instruments and their dynamics. The instruments and their corresponding parts are:

- M1, M2, M3, M4:** Melodic lines with dynamics *pp*, *ff*, and *f*. M2 and M3 have the instruction "mind your neighbor".
- G:** Gong part with dynamics *ff* and *ff*. It includes the instruction "zil-bell" and "anvil".
- X:** Xylophone part with dynamics *ff* and *ff*. It includes the instruction "xylo".
- V:** Vibraphone part with dynamics *ff* and *ff*. It includes the instruction "opera gong".
- Pn:** Piano part with dynamics *p* and *fff*.
- T:** Tom part with dynamics *p* and *fff*. It includes the instruction "damp".
- P1:** Splash cymbals part with dynamics *p* and *fff*. It includes the instruction "roto toms".
- P2:** China and concert toms (sticks) part with dynamics *p*, *fff*, and *sfz*. It includes the instruction "china" and "bongos".
- P3:** Sus cym and crashes part with dynamics *ff* and *sfz*. It includes the instruction "crashes".

The score is written in 4/4 time and includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A large watermark "Sample Image" is visible on the right side of the page.

Sample Image

Q

152

M1 *sub. mp* *ff* *f*

M2 *sub. mp* *china* *ff* *f*

M3 *sub. mp* *ff* *f*

M4 *sub. mp* *ff* *f*

G 152 *low tom* *mp* *ff*

X *sub. mp* *ff* *vibes* *f* *mp*

ff

ff *A♭, B♭, D, E♭*

f *lid* *f*

fff

thundersheet (fairly aggressive) *ff* *f*



Sample
Image

Swap positions w/M2 player
(spin 360 clockwise, w/back to M2 player)

160

M1

Swap positions w/M1 player
(spin 360 clockwise, w/back to M1 player)

M2

Swap positions w/M4 player
(spin 360 clockwise, w/back to M4 player)

M3

Swap positions w/M3 player
(spin 360 clockwise, w/back to M3 player)

M4

160

G

low tom

ff

X

V

p

opera gong

f

Pn

p

ff

160

T

ff

P1

(balance under timpani)

f

P2

P3

molto cresc.

Run to low position
on opposite marimba

Sample
Image

Sample Image

172

M1 Run to low position on opposite marimba

M2 Run to low position on opposite marimba

M3 Run to low position on opposite marimba

M4 Run to low position on opposite marimba

172

G

X

V half pedal

Pn

172

T ped. ped.

P1

P2 bongos cr. cr. mp ff mp ff mp

P3 bell tree (struck) f

low tom

Sample
Image

178

Run to low position on opposite marimba

Run to low position on opposite marimba

Run to low position on opposite marimba

Run to low position on opposite marimba

178

zll-bell

cym bell

f

sus cym

Red

snare

f

L.V.

ff

Sample Image

R

184

M1 *ff*

M2 *ff* China

M3 *ff* (8)

M4 *ff*

G *f*

X *ff*

V *ff*

Pn *ff*

T *ff* L.V. *ped.* *sim.* L.V.

P1

P2 *ff* china (l.v.)

P3 *ff* chimes

Sample
Image

193

S

M1

M2

M3

M4

G

X

zill-bell

crash

opera gong

f

f

E♭ clusters

ff

R.S.

china (l.v.)

roto toms

ff

lid

cowbells

woodblock

3

Sample
Image

200

M1 *fff* *p* *fff* *fp* *fff*

M2 *fff* *p* *fff* *fp* *fff*

M3 china *f* *fff* *p* *fff* *fp* *fff*

M4 *fff* *p* *fff* *fp* *fff*

200

G low tom *pp* *fff*

X

V sus cym *ff* mute

Pn *pp* *fff*

200

T *pp* *fff* L.V.

P1 *pp*

P2 *pp*

P3 thundersheet (shaken)

Sample
Image