

Alan Keown

Festival of the New Sun

for percussion ensemble



Festival of the New Sun by Alan Keown
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Program Notes

Festival of the New Sun (sometimes referred to as the “Unconquered Sun”) was not originally an official festival but was celebrated by adherents to Mithraism as the birth of the new sun. The Emperor Aurelian was devoted to a single sun god (Sol Invictus), and during his reign it became a public festival complete with chariot racing in the Circus. He erected a temple to Sol Invictus in A.D. 274.

From an astrological standpoint, the sun is at its lowest aspect at the winter solstice. The earth is cold, most plants are dead, and it was believed that the sun might also be approaching death. The Romans celebrated the sun overcoming the power of Winter, with the hope of Spring when life would be renewed. Thus, the Feast and Festival of Sol Invicta, the Unconquered Sun, on December 25.

Performance Notes

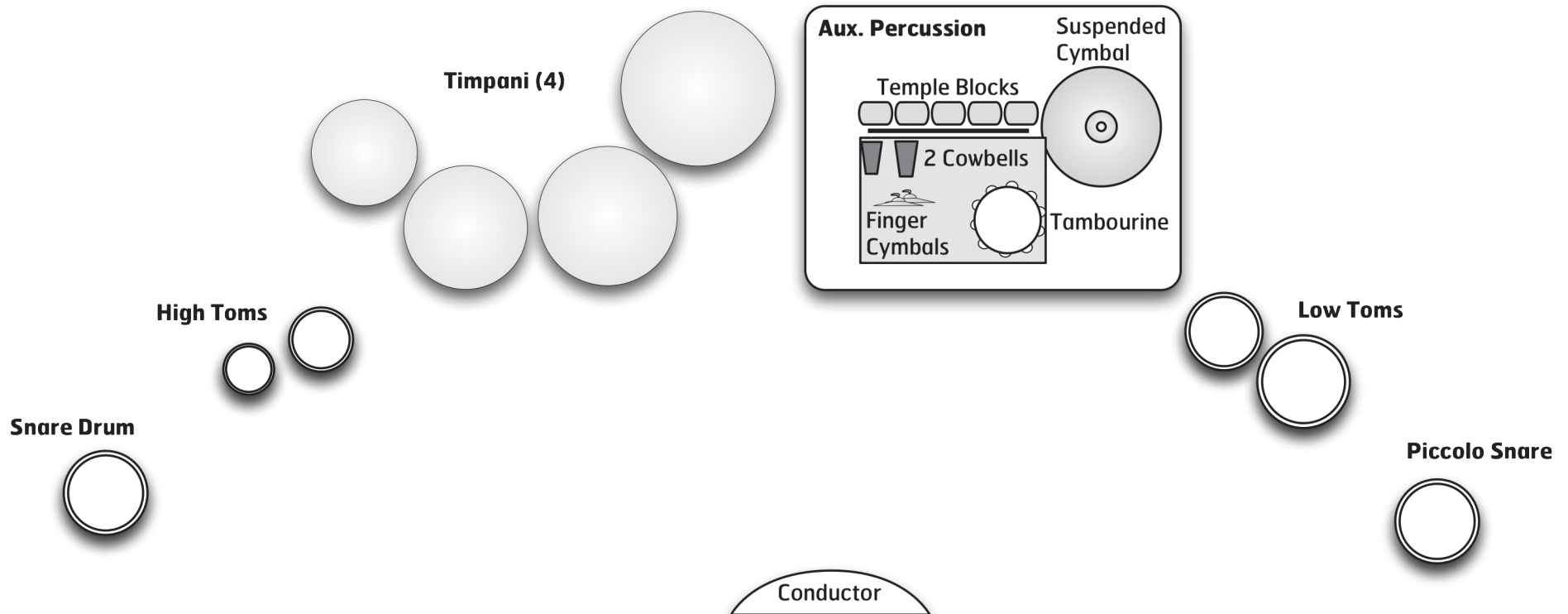
- 1) The mallets for the timpani should be a hard felt-type mallet.
- 2) The cowbells should be mounted to allow maximum resonance.
- 3) The recommended setup should create a slightly antiphonal effect. This may make it more difficult to line up the rhythms player to player, but the effect will be worth the extra effort.
- 4) Dynamics should be strictly adhered to, especially the lower dynamics so the piece is not just loud throughout.

Players and Instrumentation

Festival of the New Sun requires **6 players** with the following instrumentation:

- 1 snare drum
- 2 toms (high)
- 2 toms (low)
- 1 piccolo snare drum
- **Auxiliary percussion** (finger cymbals, 2 cowbells, tambourine, suspended cymbal, temple blocks)
- 4 timpani (32", 29", 26", 23")

Suggested Setup



Approx. playing time: 3'20"

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Musical score for percussion instruments. The score is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 100. The instruments listed are Snare Drum, 2 High Toms, 2 Low Toms, Piccolo Snare Drum, Percussion (finger cym, tambourine, temple blocks, 2 cowbells, suspended cymbal), and Timpani. The score includes various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, and dynamic markings like 'p' (piano).

Sample Image

44

Duet w/piccolo snare
rim

SD

f

Toms H

Duet w/low toms

f

Toms L

Duet w/high toms

f

Pic SD

Duet w/snare
rim

f

Tamb.

(12)

(16)

p

Timp.

(12)

(16)

p

B

53

SD

(4)

f

Toms H

(4)

f

Toms L

(4)

f

Pic SD

(4)

f

Tamb.

(4)

f

Timp.

Sample
Image

[illegible]

[illegible]

93

SD

Toms H

Toms L

Pic SD

Sus Cym.

Timp.

p

(4)

p

The musical score for measures 93-97 includes the following details:

- SD (Snare Drum):** Measures 93-95 are silent. In measure 96, there is a series of sixteenth-note runs starting on a high pitch, marked with accents and a *p* dynamic. This continues in measure 97.
- Toms H (Tom-High):** Measures 93-95 are silent. In measure 97, there is a single note on a high pitch, marked with an accent and a *p* dynamic.
- Toms L (Tom-Low):** Measures 93-95 feature a rhythmic pattern of a quarter note followed by an eighth rest, marked with a *p* dynamic. This pattern continues in measure 97.
- Pic SD (Piccolo Snare Drum):** Measures 93-97 are marked with a slash and a cross, indicating a sustained or continuous sound.
- Sus Cym. (Suspended Cymbal):** Measures 93-97 are silent.
- Timp. (Timpani):** Measures 93-97 feature a series of quarter notes on a low pitch, marked with a *p* dynamic.

100

SD
f *fp* *ff*

Toms H
f *p* *ff*

Toms L
f *p* *ff*

Pic SD
f *fp* *ff*

Sus Cym.
f *fp* *ff*

Timp.
f *fp* *ff*

Cowbells

Suspended Cymbal

Sample
Image



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