

Jim Casella

# Scuttlebutt

for percussion ensemble



**Scuttlebutt** by Jim Casella  
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TSPCE14-009

# Program Notes

*Scuttlebutt* is my third in a series of groove-based pieces for intermediate and developing percussion ensembles. It follows *Technology* and *Stormbreak*, both of which rely on similar basic limited instrumentations, 8 players, and syncopated, repetitive patterns to which younger ensembles effectively relate.

The primary feel of *Scuttlebutt* has the drive of electronic dance music with half-tempo backbeat. Frequently bursts of four offbeat sixteenth notes are interjected to answer the primary melody. Through repetition, these bursts are designed to train young players to become familiar with the feel of rhythms common in funk music. Also, at various times triplet figures are overlaid in contrast to the more duple-based groove. While these may not be immediately intuitive for younger players, figures like these aren't uncommon in percussion ensemble and other forms of chamber music. They're introduced here in a way that's relatable to the groove with the goal of making them feel comfortable despite their momentary rhythmic dissonance.

A series of solos feature the concert tom, snare drum, and timpani players, with smaller solo interjections from the rest of the ensemble as well. Near the end of the piece the half-time groove becomes a driving disco beat that can involve the audience clapping along before ultimately ending in a high-energy recap of the main theme.

– Jim Casella, November 2014

# Performance Notes

The glockenspiel player is occasionally called upon to play on the upper register of the xylophone. Consider this when setting up so the player can make quick and easy transitions between instruments.

Feel free to be creative with the disco section at letter G. When the groove changes here, try to get the audience involved by clapping along – particularly during letter H. Feel free to vamp on the 4-bar phrases of G and H longer if involving the audience or other elements like lighting effects, dancers, or even crazier, dropping some confetti or balloons above the audience. Players who have quick changes from hand clapping to instrumental parts can substitute stick clicks for hand claps. These clapping parts should be raised and visible to the audience with an energetic spirit. Aim to make it feel like a festive party by the time the piece has concluded!

Consider having the hi-hat player use a double-sided stick (regular stick on one end, hard felt on the other) so that quick transitions to temple blocks can be played with felt rather than using wood sticks on the blocks (which could potentially damage the instrument).

The timpani part should be played with hard mallets (but not wood).

The concert tom and triangle players both need access to a suspended cymbal and vibraslap. Position them so that these instruments can be shared between them.

If a cabasa is unavailable, the opening part can be played using bundle rods on closed hi-hats.

The snare drummer is often the holder of the ever-important backbeat. Be sure the rhythms surrounding the backbeat don't overshadow it. For example, at rehearsal A, count 3 should be very clear and strongly played, while the other notes are more of a groovy undercurrent.

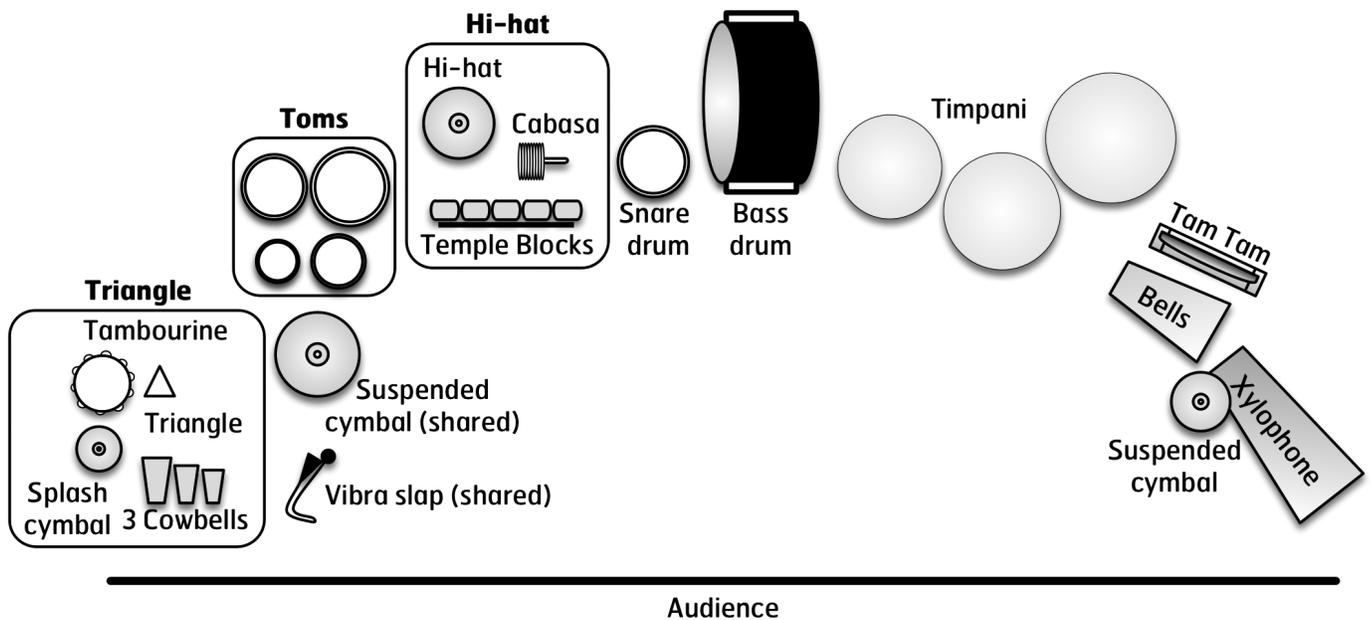
The bass drum should be equipped with a towel on the playing head to dampen it while it's being played. Notes marked with a staccato should be muffled. Notes without staccato should be played without dampening. Dampened notes should imply the sound of a kick drum. Undampened notes should sound more like a resonant concert bass.

# Players and Instrumentation

*Scuttlebutt* requires **8 players** with the following instrumentation:

- 1 xylophone
- 1 glockenspiel
- 2 suspended cymbals
- 1 tam tam
- 3 timpani
- 1 bass drum
- 1 snare drum
- 1 set of 5 temple blocks
- 1 cabasa
- 1 hi-hat
- 1 set of 4 toms
- 3 cowbells
- 1 tambourine
- 1 triangle
- 1 splash cymbal
- 1 vibra slap

## Suggested Setup



Level: Med-Easy  
Approx. playing time: 4'30"

# Scuttlebutt

Jim Casella

Funky half-time groove ♩ = 140

Glockenspiel

Xylophone

Triangles

Hi-hat  
*CABASA*  
tap beads w/fingers  
*mp* (4)

Snare Drum

Concert Toms  
*on rim*  
*mp*

Bass Drum

Timpani  
*G, C, Eb*

5

G

X

Tri.

HH (8)

SD  
*on rim*  
*mp*

CT 2 2

BD

T  
*mp*

Sample  
Image

15

**XYLO (shared)**  
*mp*

*mp*

**TRIANGLE**  
*mf*

(16) (20)

(12)

**CT**  
*2*

**BD**  
*2*

T

21

**GLOCKENSPIEL**  
*f*

*f*

**SPLASH** /v

**HI-HAT**  
*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

Sample  
Image



37

Guitar (G): *ff*

Xylophone (X): *f*

Triangle (Tri.): *f*

Hi-Hat (HH): *f*

Snare Drum (SD): *f*, *mf*, *f*

Conga Tom (CT): *f*, *mf*, *f*

Bass Drum (BD): *f*

Tenor Drum (T): *f*, *mf*, *f*

Percussion labels: **SUS CYM BELL**, **SPLASH**

**B**

Guitar (G): *mf*

Xylophone (X): *mf*

Tenor Drum (T): *mf*, *mp*

Percussion labels: **TAM TAM** (strike edge w/mallet), **SUS CYM** (scrape w/coin), **SUS CYMBAL** (w/mal), **3 COWBELLS**, **TEMPLE BLOCKS**, **TOMS**

Techniques: *cross stick*, *R R R etc.*

Sample Image

**C** Tom solo

50

50

G

X

Tri.

HH

SD

CT

BD

T

*solo*

*f*

2

2

2

2

2

2

56

56

G

X

Tri.

HH

SD

CT

BD

T

GLUCOSPIEL

XYLO

TAM TAM

SUS CYM  
scrape w/coin

*f*

*f*

*f*

2

2

2

2

2

2

Sample Image

**D** Snare solo

Musical score for measures 62-67. The score includes parts for G, X, Tri., HH, SD, CT, BD, and T. The SD part features a snare solo with dynamics ranging from *f* to *mf*. Other instruments like Tri., HH, CT, BD, and T have rhythmic accompaniment, including triplets and rests.

Musical score for measures 68-73. This section introduces new percussion instruments: GLOCKENSPIEL, TAM TAM, and SUS CYM. The score shows complex rhythmic patterns for these instruments and continues with the snare and other percussion parts. Dynamics include *f*, *mf*, and *p*.

Sample Image

Scuttlebutt – Casella

**E** Timpani solo

74

G

X

Tri.

HH

SD

CT

BD

T

2

3

3

3

2

2

2

(4)

(4)

2

2

2

2

*solo*

*ff*

*mf*

*ff*

80

G

X

Tri.

HH

SD

CT

BD

T

**F**

GLOCKENSPIEL

*f*

XYLO

*f*

LAS

2

2

3

3

3

3

*f*

Sample Image

86

**SPLASH**

**COWBELLS**

*cym bell*

**HI-HAT**

*solo*

*solo* *L.v.*

**TEMPLE BLOCKS**

*snares off*

*snares on* *solo*

*p < f*

**VIBRASLAP**

*solo*

*f*

*solo*

*ff*

*solo*

*solo*

*solo*



**G** Disco!

93

*L.v.*

**HAND CLAPS** (4)

*signal audience clap along*

**HAND CLAPS** (4)

*signal audience clap along*

**AMBOURINE**

*p* *f*

*signal audience clap along*

**TEMPLE BLOCKS**

*loose HH*

*(rim)*

**2**

**HAND CLAPS** (4)

*signal audience clap along*

Sample Image

100

G (8)

X *XYLO*  
*f*

Tri. (8) (12)

HH *HAND CLAPS*  
*signal audience clap along* (4)

SD 2 2 2 2

CT *HAND CLAPS*  
*signal audience clap along* (4) (8)

BD (8) (12)

T *TIMPANI*  
*f* 2 2 2

108 *XYLO (shared)*

G *f* 8va

X

Tri. (16)

HH *HI-HAT*

SD

CT *CYM BE!*

BD

T 2 2

Sample Image

**H**

1. | 2. *to glock*

**G** *f*

**X** *f*

**Tri.** *f* **HAND CLAPS** (4)

**HH** *f* **STICK CLICKS** (4) **HI-HAT** *mp* *f*

**SD** (4) *p* *f*

**CT** *f* **STICK CLICKS** (4) *p* *f*

**BD** *f* 2 2

**T** *f* **HAND CLAPS** (4)

**I** **Half-time groove**  
**GLOCK**

**G** *f*

**X** *f*

*bell*

*f* *mf* *f* *f*

Sample Image

126

Musical score for measures 126-130. The score includes staves for G (Guitar), X (Xylophone), Tri (Triangle), HH (Hand Drums), SD (Snare Drum), CT (Cymbal), BD (Bass Drum), and T (Tuba). Dynamics include *mf* and *f*.

131

Musical score for measures 131-135. The score includes staves for G (Guitar), X (Xylophone), Tri (Triangle), HH (Hand Drums), SD (Snare Drum), CT (Cymbal), BD (Bass Drum), and T (Tuba). Dynamics include *f*.

Sample Image

136

G *ff* *f* *ff*

X *ff* *f* *ff*

Tri. *f* *f* *ff*

HH *f* *ff*

SD *f* *ff*

CT *f* *ff*

BD *f* *ff*

T *f* *mf* *f* *cresc.* *ff*

SPLASH *f* *bell* *crash on sus.*

G

X

T

VIBRASLAP

SPLASH *f* *pp*

Sample  
Image

146

Musical score for measures 146-148. The score includes staves for G (Guitar), X (Xylophone), Tri (Triangle), HH (Hi-Hat), SD (Snare Drum), CT (Conga), BD (Bass Drum), and T (Tom). The CT part features a *solo* section with *ff* dynamics and triplets. The Tri part has a *p* dynamic and a *f* dynamic. The HH part has a *f* dynamic. The SD part has a *f* dynamic. The BD part has a *f* dynamic. The T part has a *f* dynamic. A *ff* dynamic is also present in the G part.

Musical score for measures 150-152. The score includes staves for G (Guitar), X (Xylophone), Tri (Triangle), HH (Hi-Hat), SD (Snare Drum), CT (Conga), BD (Bass Drum), and T (Tom). The G part has a *ff* dynamic. The Tri part has a *SPLASH* marking. The HH part has a *ff* dynamic. The SD part has a *ff* dynamic. The CT part has a *mp* dynamic. The BD part has a *ff* dynamic. The T part has a *ff* dynamic.

Sample Image