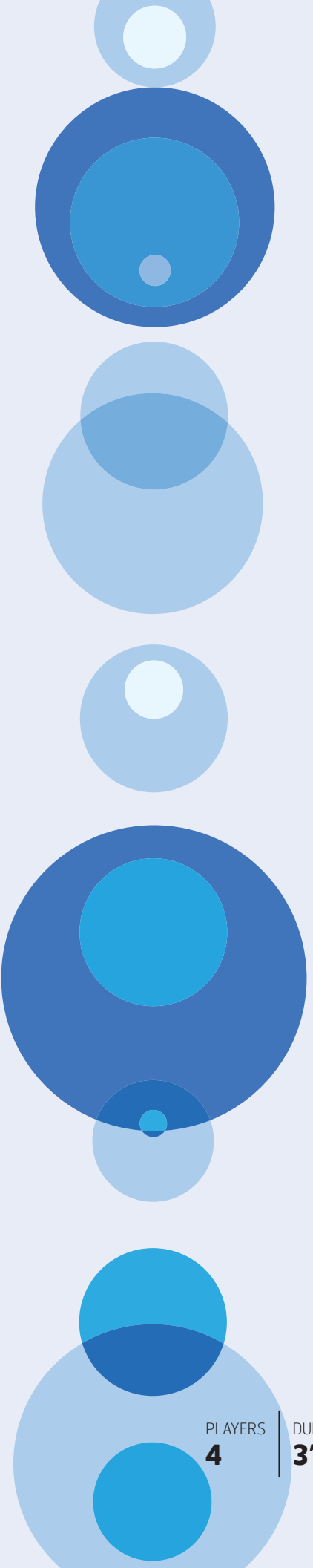


BRIAN BLUME

BLACK RACER

ENSEMBLE



PERCUSSION QUARTET



PLAYERS
4

DURATION
3'25"

SKILL LEVEL
MEDIUM



BRIAN BLUME
BLACK RACER
for percussion quartet



Black Racer by Brian Blume
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Program Notes

The southern black racer is a relatively small species of snake found in Florida and the southern regions of the United States. They can move very quickly (hence the name), but are generally harmless to humans. I learned of this species because I had to free one of these snakes from a sticky insect trap in my garage, and I wanted to confirm the snake was not venomous before handling it. While the concept of this piece has little to do with an actual snake, my encounter with a black racer occurred as I was nearing the end of writing and provided a great title!

—Brian Blume

Performance Notes

Each performer has a large tom-tom (13"–16" floor toms work well, or large concert toms) played with drum sticks. There is no need to have all the toms the same size or have them tuned the same, but it would be ideal if they were tuned in a similar range. Each performer also has a cymbal, and these should be graduated in size if at all possible—from low (player 1) to high (player 4).

Stickings

Several sticking indications are notated in the score in order to 1) provide students guidance in choosing a practical sticking, and 2) help make the piece visually more appealing to the audience by having unison parts played using the same stickings. Any time a rhythmic pattern recurs, assume that the sticking should be the same as earlier notated.

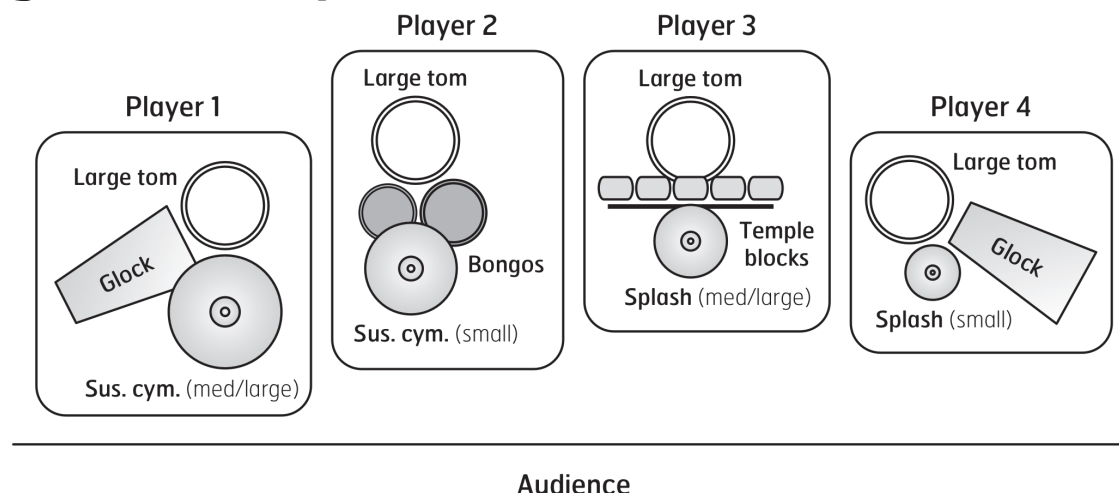
At letter E, players 1 and 4 begin an antiphonal glockenspiel texture. This should be atmospheric, using the timbral and rhythmic properties of the instrument more than the melodic, essentially treating it as a multi-percussion instrument. Both glockenspiel parts are identical (until measure 110) but offset by a quarter note. One might play this section entirely with alternating sticking (though large leaps might be difficult), or more likely using a combination of single and double stickings. Here are just two examples of sticking patterns players 1 and 4 might use at letter E:



More alternating: L L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R R

More doubles: L L R R L R L L R R L L R R L L R R

Suggested Setup



Players & Instrumentation

Black Racer requires **4 players** with the following instrumentation:

Player 1:

- Large tom-tom
- Suspended cymbal (med/large 17"–20")
- Glockenspiel w/ bright mallets

Player 3:

- Large tom-tom
- 5 temple blocks w/ sticks
- Splash cymbal (med/large 10"–12")

Player 2:

- Large tom-tom
- 2 bongos* w/ drum sticks
- Suspended cymbal (small 14"–17")
(plus a coin or triangle beater to scrape cymbal)

Player 4:

- Large tom-tom
- Splash cymbal (small 6"–8")
- Glockenspiel w/ bright mallets

**The performer must use caution when playing bongos with drum sticks, as it is possible to damage or break a head. Using synthetic heads (as opposed to animal skin) and using drum sticks with a smooth, round bead will decrease your chances of damaging one or both heads.*

Notation Key

The diagram illustrates the notation key for four players, each with a musical staff. Annotations above the staves indicate specific instruments and techniques:

- Player 1:** Large Tom (Head, Rim), Sus. Cymbal (med/large) (Choke, Let ring)
- Player 2:** Large Tom (Head, Rim), Bongos (Low, High, Rimshot), Sus. Cymbal (small) (Choke, Let ring, Scrape)
- Player 3:** Large Tom (Head, Rim), Temple Blocks, Splash Cym. (med/large) (Choke, Let ring)
- Player 4:** Large Tom (Head, Rim), Splash Cym. (small) (Choke, Let ring)

Approx. playing time: 3'25"

Black Racer

Brian Blume

With excitement! ♪ = 168

Player 1
Large tom
Large crash cymbal
Glockenspiel

Player 2
Large tom
Small crash cymbal
Bongos

Player 3
Large tom
Splash cymbal
Temple blocks (5)

Player 4
Large tom
Small splash cymbal
Glockenspiel

LARGE TOM
w/ drumsticks

LARGE TOM
w/ drumsticks

LARGE TOM
w/ drumsticks

LARGE TOM
w/ drumsticks

BONGOS

TEMPLE BLOCKS (w/ stick shoulder on lip of blocks)

ff

ff

pp ff

f

10

P1

(rim)

R L R L R L R

(rimshot)

R L R L R L R

pp *ff*

P2

P3

P4

(rim)

R L R L R L R

19

P1

pp ff

R L L R L R

P2

R L L R L R

P3

R L L R L R

p

P4

R L L R L R

p

Sample Image

A

P1

ff

P2

ff

P3

ff

P4

ff

R L R

R L L R L R

R L R L R L

R L R L R L

36

CYMBAL

P1

p

P2

CYMBAL

P3

f

CYMBAL

P4

p

2

2

p

f

2

Sample
Image

52

P1

P2

P3

P4

mp *f*

f *p* *f* *p*

C

P1

P2

P3

P4

p *f*

f

CYMBAL

69

P1

P2

P3

P4

D

Music score for section D, measures 1-4. Four staves (P1, P2, P3, P4) are shown. The tempo is marked *ff* (fortissimo). The notation includes rhythmic patterns with accents and dynamic markings. P1 and P2 have *ff* markings, P3 has *ff*, and P4 has *ff*. P2 has a *pp* (pianissimo) marking at the end of the section.

E

Music score for section E, measures 86-90. Four staves (P1, P2, P3, P4) are shown. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 84$. The notation includes rhythmic patterns with accents and dynamic markings. P1 and P4 have *mf* (mezzo-forte) markings. P2 has a *mf* marking. P3 has a *pp* (pianissimo) marking. P1 and P4 have *GLOCK (w/ bright mallets)* markings. P2 has a *(scrape w/ triangle beater)* marking.

Sample
Image

[illegible]

101

P1

P2

P3

P4

mp

pp

w/ tip

(4)

Sample Image

G

104

P1

P2

P3

P4

pp *mf* *pp* *ff*

(4)

f

R L R R L R R

R L R R L R R

f

107

P1

P2

P3

P4

(4)

f *mf*

w/ tip

ff *mf*

4 CYM

(glock.)

mf *mp*

3/4

3/4

3/4

3/4

Sample
Image

H ♩ = ♩ = 168**TOM** (w/ drumsticks)**2**

Score for Percussion 1 (P1), Percussion 2 (P2), Percussion 3 (P3), and Percussion 4 (P4) for the section marked **H**. The tempo is 168 beats per minute. The time signature is 3/4.

P1: Starts with a 2-measure rest, then plays a pattern of eighth notes: R R L R R L L. Dynamics: *p* (first), *mp* (second), *mf* (third).

P2: Starts with a 2-measure rest, then plays a pattern of eighth notes: R R L R R L L. Dynamics: *pp* (first), *p* (second), *mp* (third), *mf* (fourth).

P3: Starts with a 2-measure rest, then plays a pattern of eighth notes: R L L L R R L R. Dynamics: *mp* (first), *mf* (second).

P4: Starts with a 2-measure rest, then plays a pattern of eighth notes: R L L L R R L R. Dynamics: *pp* (first), *mf* (second).

TOM (w/ drumsticks): Indicated for P3 and P4 in the second measure.

I

Score for Percussion 1 (P1), Percussion 2 (P2), Percussion 3 (P3), and Percussion 4 (P4) for the section marked **I**. The tempo is 168 beats per minute. The time signature is 3/4.

P1: Plays a pattern of eighth notes: R R L R R L L. Dynamics: *ff*.

P2: Plays a pattern of eighth notes: R R L R R L L. Dynamics: *ff*.

P3: Plays a pattern of eighth notes: R L L L R R L R. Dynamics: *ff*.

P4: Plays a pattern of eighth notes: R L L L R R L R. Dynamics: *ff*.

J

Score for Percussion 1 (P1), Percussion 2 (P2), Percussion 3 (P3), and Percussion 4 (P4) for the section marked **J**. The tempo is 168 beats per minute. The time signature is 3/4.

P1: Plays a pattern of eighth notes: R L L R R L R. Dynamics: *mp* (first), *ff* (second).

P2: Plays a pattern of eighth notes: R L L R R L R. Dynamics: *mp* (first), *ff* (second).

P3: Plays a pattern of eighth notes: R L L R R L R. Dynamics: *mp* (first), *f* (second).

P4: Plays a pattern of eighth notes: R L L R R L R. Dynamics: *mp* (first).

**Sample
Image**



