

Steven Juliani

NOVEMBER 25, 1963

2019

for Violin and Percussion

for study only

Version: 9/28/19

Duration: ca. 9 minutes

This work was created under the aegis of the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music and premiered by Sasha Callahan, violin and Haruka Fujii, percussion, in Oakland, California on September 3, 2019.

November 25, 1963. A woman sits in the front room of her home overlooking Pennsylvania Avenue, in Washington D.C. She is overwhelmed by the events of the previous days and begins playing her violin as she waits for the coffin of her president to pass by.

The first memory of my life is watching the funeral procession of President John F. Kennedy on a black and white television, in the front room of our home in San Francisco. My mother watched with me. When Gabriela Lena Frank assigned me to write a piece for violin and percussion, this memory came to mind.

My composition process usually starts with a story of some kind. Some memory or imagination that triggers a feeling. With that story comes a world that I can hear. When thinking about writing for one percussionist, I remembered the sound of the muffled drums playing a funereal cadence as the drummers walked behind JFK's hearse. If you search "muffled drums" on YouTube, one of the first hits is a video of that moment. The sound is unusual. Dark and deep, not at all the bright peppy sound associated with marching drums.

The story I imagined for this piece is that of a violinist waiting for and watching JFK's funeral procession pass by. The piece starts with her anticipating the arrival of the cortege. She wonders if the social and political structures she took for granted are disintegrating. She is devastated by the loss of the young president who offered so much hope for the future. She is heartbroken for his elegant wife and young children. Under the violin the distant approach of the drums can be heard. As the drummers and coffin get closer and pass by, she plays a somber march. As the procession moves away the drums fade and she reflects on what she saw.

This music also speaks to my reverence for our Constitution and my concern for damage currently being done to our democracy.

This music is clearly drawn from the unusual, mournful sound that the muffled drums made and how they made a profound impression on me as a three-year-old boy. There must have been something about that moment too that struck me. I can't ask my mom about it, she died many years ago. But, I imagine she was absolutely grief stricken by the assassination. She grew up in a political family. Her father, an Italian immigrant, had been a delegate for Harry Truman at the 1948 Democratic convention. I have a Christmas card that a young senator Kennedy sent to him. I imagine that as the little me stood next her watching the funeral, she had tears streaming down her face as she explained to me what was happening. I imagine the reason I remember the moment so clearly is because it had such a profound impact on her.

As I work, I find myself over and over in that moment with my mom watching the funeral on tv. I can feel her next to me and I remember my young impression of how important this thing was.

And I realize that the violin in my piece is my mother.

Percussion:

Glöckenspiel

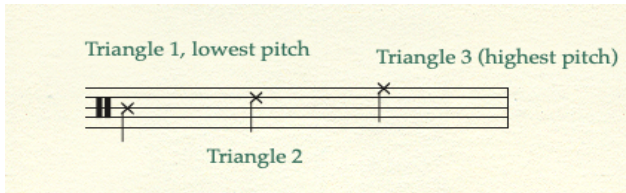
Crotales

Vibraphone

Field Drum

Kick Drum

3 Triangles, notated like this:



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Composed by
STEVEN JULIANI
(2019)

Slow, ethereal and rubato, ca. ♩=52

start senza vib, gradually add vibrato as you move to the A

Violin

Percussion

Field Drum

Triangles

Kick Drum

let all ring

ppp

p

pp

p

slower roll this time

1

a deep, dark thuddy sound, felt more than heard

start senza vib, gradually add vibrato as you move to the A

Violin

Percussion

Field Drum

Triangles

Kick Drum

Vibes

let all ring

pp

mp

ppp

p

p

p

p

vib. and warmer

5

accel. *ritard* **A tempo**

sempre vib.

p *p* *f* *p mf* *f*

Glock. and Crotales

Triangles

Vibes

let all ring

11

pp *p* *f* *ff*

rit.

Vibes

slower roll

15

Slower *sul G rit.* *long even gliss., within one bow* **A tempo**

p *pp* *f* *ff*

Vibes

19

Senza misura, ca. ♩=60

very delicate, not strictly in time
start slowly, then slight accel., very free

p

5 seconds

Triangles start ca. 2" after Violin, not synchronized with Violin, random, light, not frantic rhythm

Vibes wistful, let all ring

A tempo ca. ♩=52

p < *mf*

24

26

f

sub p

f

pp

A tempo

broader, more forceful

f

p

slight rit.

Vibes *mf*

Field Drum

Kick Drum

p muffled to match Field Drum

30

Faster, ♩=60

ff

mp

p

34

A tempo

Field Drum

Kick Drum

mp *pp* *pp*

molto rit.

A tempo

ff *mf* *ff* *f*

mf *f* *mf* *mp* *f* *p*

accel.

firm, not sustained, but always under Violin

A tempo

ff *f* *ff* *p* *pp*

f *mp* *ff*

accel. *molto rit.* long hold *sul G*

Vibes wistful again

A tempo

f

f

slight rit.

as full and warm as possible,
soulful but also march-like
norm. sul G

A tempo

53

Field Drum closer now, as if passing by

Kick Drum

57

Kick Drum

61

65

69

sul tasto rit. **A tempo** norm.

Kick Drum

Field Drum

norm. *slight accel.* **A tempo**

Field Drum

Kick Drum

f *pp* *mf* *pp*

molto port.

f *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

78

mp *p* *pp* *f*

f *n*

82

f *pp*

norm.

ppp *p* *ppp* *p*

Glock. and Crotales

Vibes

Triangles

pp *p* *pp* *pp* *p* *pp* *mp*

85

pp *p* *pp* *pp* *p* *pp*

molto port. **A tempo**

Vibes

Triangles light, sparse tinkling

f *p* *f*

90 *mp*

molto port. *molto rit.*

pp *ff* *pp*

sul G

94

Faster ♩ = 63

Kick Drum

Vibes warm

f *n* *mf* *f* *mp*

98

accel. *rit.* **A tempo**

f *p* *f* *p*

104

Musical score for measures 110-114. The top staff is a treble clef with a 5/4 time signature change at measure 114. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a 5/4 time signature change at measure 114. Dynamics include *f*, *p*, *pp*, and *mp*. A large slur covers measures 111-114 in the bass staff.

Musical score for measures 115-118. Both staves are treble clef. Time signatures change from 4/4 to 3/4 at measure 116, to 5/4 at measure 117, and back to 4/4 at measure 118. Dynamics include *ff*. A large slur covers measures 115-118 in both staves.

Musical score for measures 119-124. The top staff is a treble clef. The bottom staff is a bass clef. Dynamics include *f*, *ff*, and *pp*. A large slur covers measures 119-124 in the bass staff.