Kala Pierson

Broadloom I

unconducted open ensemble and open duration:
8 or more performers – 6:00 or longer

Broadloom I

Kala Pierson
(b. 1977)

♩ = 60

unconducted, open ensemble, at least 8 pitched instruments and/or voices
open duration, at least 6 minutes • **transposition welcome**

STRUCTURE OF THE PIECE:

1) Overlapping phrases begin: one **Role 2** phrase, then one **Role 3** phrase, then one **Role 5** phrase; [This trio continues for a short while];

2) [All other performers enter, one by one]; [Everyone performs for at least several minutes]; [All performers drop out, one by one];

3) Last performer left is a **Role 5** performer; piece ends (*non rit. sempre*) at the end of his/her final phrase. ***See Performance Notes, p. 2.***

Role 1

(For anyone who can perform these sounding pitches in this octave. ***At least three people, ideally more, should be performing Role 1 at all times.****)*
(Note: if desired for a lower-range ensemble, Role 1 can be performed an octave lower than notated, as long as everyone who performs it stays in that lower octave.)

very long   *long*   *long*

mp < *mf* > *ppp*   *mp* < *mf* > *ppp*
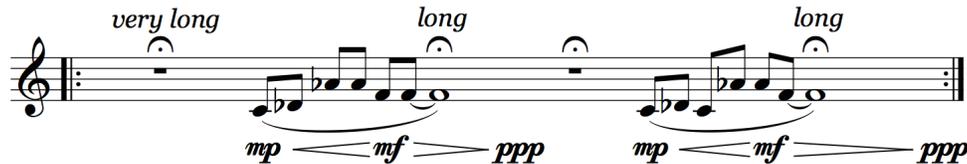
Role 2

(For anyone; especially good for polyphonic instruments.
At least one person should be performing Role 2 at all times.*)*
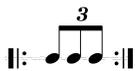
PITCH(ES): ANY/ALL OF [Bb, C, Db, Ab] IN ANY OCTAVE. REPEAT SAME PITCH(ES) FOR A WHILE, FOLLOWING OVERALL DYNAMIC SHAPE BELOW; PAUSE AS LONG AS DESIRED; BEGIN AGAIN (WITH SAME OR DIFFERENT PITCH CHOICES).

ppp < *f* > *ppp*

Role 3

(For anyone; especially good for polyphonic instruments.
At least one person should be performing Role 3 at all times.*)*

PITCH(ES): ANY/ALL OF [Bb, C, Db, Ab] IN ANY OCTAVE. REPEAT SAME PITCH(ES) FOR A WHILE, FOLLOWING OVERALL DYNAMIC SHAPE BELOW; PAUSE AS LONG AS DESIRED; BEGIN AGAIN (WITH SAME OR DIFFERENT PITCH CHOICES).

ppp < *f* > *ppp*

Role 4

(For anyone who can sustain and crescendo on a note.)

ppp < *f* > *ppp*

SUSTAIN ONE NOTE [Bb, C, Db, OR Ab], IN ANY OCTAVE, FOR A WHILE (A LONG BREATH OR A FEW BOW LENGTHS), FOLLOWING INDICATED DYNAMICS; PAUSE AS LONG AS DESIRED; BEGIN AGAIN (ON SAME OR DIFFERENT PITCH).

Role 5

(For anyone; lower instruments are especially valuable in this role.
At least one person should be performing Role 5 at all times.*)*

PITCH CLASS: Bb, IN ANY OCTAVE BELOW MIDDLE C. REPEAT SAME PITCH FOR A WHILE, FOLLOWING OVERALL DYNAMIC SHAPE BELOW; PAUSE AS LONG AS DESIRED; BEGIN AGAIN (ON SAME OR DIFFERENT Bb).

ppp < *f* > *ppp*

Role 6

(For anyone who can sustain and crescendo on a note; lower instruments are especially valuable in this role.)

ppp < *f* > *ppp*

SUSTAIN THE NOTE Bb, IN ANY OCTAVE BELOW MIDDLE C, FOR A WHILE (A LONG BREATH OR A FEW BOW LENGTHS), FOLLOWING INDICATED DYNAMICS; PAUSE AS LONG AS DESIRED; BEGIN AGAIN (ON SAME OR DIFFERENT Bb).

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Broadloom: Performance Notes

CHOICES TO MAKE IN ADVANCE:

1) Will the piece be performed at pitch or transposed?
The piece can be globally transposed to fit a group's tessitura or other preferences (for example, an SSA chorus might take it up a 4th or 5th).

2) Who will perform which role?
In larger groups, try to keep roughly a third of performers on Role 1 and others freely distributed among Roles 2-6.

3) Will each performer stick with the same role throughout the piece, or will there be some alternating?
Alternating should not happen fast or in a steady pattern (each person should perform at least several consecutive phrases in each role and should not steadily alternate back and forth between two roles). If any alternating within a small group: performers should ensure the specified minimum number of performers for roles 1, 2, 3, and 5 by observing in the moment.

4) Will performers instinctively decide when the piece is nearing its end, or will someone signal this point?
(If an audible signal is needed in a larger group, feel free to experiment with giving one relatively loud performer this solo: *Start on an A flat, and gliss [or move if you can't gliss] to the B flat a step above. Start **pp** and slowly cresc. to **ff** or 'loud enough for everybody else to hear.')*

5) Is it possible to perform the piece in the dark, and/or (for a larger group) with performers surrounding the audience?
Neither is a must, but these options are very effective, especially together – audiences describe the effect as 'big,' mysterious, and moving.

NOTES FOR ALL PERFORMERS:

• **Where possible (especially in a smaller group), everyone is keeping the quarter-note pulse (and the 2:3 rhythm) steady throughout the piece, but avoiding broader/global downbeats.** Work against suggesting any regular 'measure' lengths. Performers are always individually floating – either playing a phrase that will end when they choose, or listening for an interesting place to start their next phrase.

• **In a larger group and/or resonant space, it's okay for everyone to let the pulse go and float**, but the rest of the note above applies.

• Regardless of role or instrument, no one should be purposely going for an especially dry or harsh sound. All gestures are *legato poss*.

• Try not to start phrases – especially Role 1 phrases – in unison with anyone else.

• **In Roles 2 and 3, making your entrances and exits as quiet as possible is most important**, not playing big clusters. In other words, don't play so many notes at a time that it's hard for you to play quiet dynamics while staying precisely in rhythm. (Keyboard/guitar/mallet players should avoid big stretches and awkward clusters; string players should avoid *arco* double stops.)

• Instruments that can play either a sustained note or rearticulated notes are free to choose any role; when they choose a role with rearticulated notes, they can choose any type of attack (other than purposely dry/*secco*), as long as they use that same type of attack throughout that phrase.

• **In a smaller group,** it's fine if there are 'thin' moments. The goal is not to keep the fabric always densely filled in. The goal is for all performers to listen to the whole and make interesting relationships happen among various performers' phrases.

• **In a larger group,** try experimenting sometimes with close canons in Role 1, such as three or more performers each staggered by one 8th note.

• **Amplification and reverb are very welcome, if you keep a natural feel** (don't perform this piece with big artificial buildups or effects).

NOTES FOR SPECIFIC PERFORMERS:

• **Singers:** Choose one consonant you'll use for starting notes and one vowel for sustaining them (different singers can choose different phonemes, but each singer sticks with the same choices for the entire piece).

• **Instruments with a sustain pedal:** Keep pedal down throughout the piece (even through the breaks between your phrases).

• **Mallet players:** You're welcome to change instruments and/or change mallets if desired, if you change just a few times during the piece (don't change in a fast rhythm or in a steady pattern. **Vibes:** Motor off.

• **String players:** If there aren't many sustaining instruments in the group, default to playing mostly *arco*. Otherwise, play either *arco* or *pizz*. for any full phrase (but don't change in a fast steady rhythm; for example, don't play an *arco* phrase, then a *pizz*. phrase, then an *arco* phrase).

• **High instruments that can't play Role 1 in its sounding octave:** Play any of Roles 2-5.

• **Low instruments/voices that can't perform Role 1 in its sounding octave:** You're valuable in Roles 5 and 6 but can play any of 2-6.

• **Instruments that play through an amp:** No artificial envelopes. You must be able to physically/naturally sustain and crescendo a note in order to play Roles 4 or 6. (For example, electric guitarists can't hit notes with the amp down and then gradually turn the amp up and down to shape the phrase – instead, they must choose among Roles 1, 2, 3, and 5.) **Synth voices and electronic instruments** must be able to blend with the group, **crescendo and decrescendo via touch or natural rearticulation** (not via slider/knob/etc.), and squarely hit exact pitches (unlike theremin or similar instruments). Most important for this piece is that no instrument should harshly stand out when it plays.

*end of Performance Notes – **for any questions, feel free to contact** kp@kalapierson.com*