This PDF contains excerpts from the score. For the complete score, please contact the composer directly at www.mark-barden.com

Diese PDF enthält Auszüge aus der Partitur. Für die vollständige Partitur, bitte kontaktieren Sie den Komponisten direkt über seine Webseite www.mark-barden.com
Mark Barden

aMass
aMass for amplified ensemble

Commissioned by SWR for the Donaueschingen Musiktage 2015

composed: 2015
duration: 15 minutes
premire: Ensemble Mosaik, 17 October 2015,
Strawinskysaal, Donaueschingen, Germany

Instrumentation (all amplified):
• 3 metal music stands (any musicians can play these parts)
• 1 percussion
• 1 electric guitar
• 1 violin
• 1 viola
• 1 cello
• 1 sound engineer

Amplification & Sound Projection
• All players amplified. Music stands: high-quality contact mic, e.g. Schertler DYN. String trio has two microphones per instrument and a volume pedal (high-quality bridge contact mic, e.g. Schertler STAT + inexpensive contact mic on body). Cuica: high-quality contact mic on drumhead. Bass drum: large membrane condenser mic underneath bottom drumhead. Piano: standard amplification of interior. Guitar uses own amp.
• Sound projection: 2 large frontal stereo speakers. This outputs signal from strings, music stands, percussion, piano interior, and piano MIDI samples. 1 medium floor speaker outputs from the pianist's mixer. Guitar has amplifier onstage.

Performance Notes—General
• Many explanations of sounds and techniques appear directly in the score & parts.
• After m. 156, the "CORE" of the piece begins attacca and lasts roughly 7 minutes. At the end of the "CORE" begin CODA attacca.
• crescendo dal niente / diminuendo al niente
• exponential dynamics: cresc. with sudden explosion at end / dim. with sudden implosion at start
• exponential dynamics dal / al niente
• dynamics in quotation marks correspond to effort. sounding result is sometimes given in parentheses.
• vary dynamic within given range (+/- means small variations within written dynamic)
• octave-transposing clefs: sounds 15ma, 8va, 8vb, 15mb
• electric guitar clef: sounds an octave lower than written
• cancels previous octave-transposing treble clef
• unpitched clef. Often, clef changes are omitted for this.
• quartertone notation: ⅛ flat ⅛ flat ⅛ natural ⅛ sharp ⅛ sharp
• arrows indicate slight microtonal deviation
• pitch may vary microtonally in either direction
• unpitched air sound (or as close to unpitched as possible)
• a sound with indefinite pitch or other special technique (various means of execution, explanations appear in score)
• Strings: ½ depressed
• various meanings depending on instrument/context (explanations in score)
• a very low indefinite pitch
• cluster, always chromatic
• smooth transition from one timbre/technique to the next

air
• Air sound. Minimize any pitch content.
tone
• Clear pitch is audible.
shadow
• Between air and tone. Very airy sound with faint hint of pitch. Find the moment just before pitch speaks. Explanations in score.
RH / LH
• One bass bow is required for the guitar and each of the metal music stands players.
• Two bass bows are required for the percussionist.
• Cello bows may be substituted if bass bows are unavailable.
hilt → tip
• metal music stands: chopstick tip = thinnest part (bright timbre), hilt = thickest part (dark timbre)
Vp
• volume pedal
amp
• amplification level
Performance Notes—Conductor

- The string trio has a soloistic function for most of the piece. Afford them considerable independence when possible.
- During “CORE”, the conductor moves his arms smoothly and continuously like the arms of a clock or stopwatch.

0’00 Left arm begins above the head with palm inward. (Palm faces ceiling as arm descends.)
0’15 Flip palm down to face floor. This signals the 15-second mark to the musicians.
0’30 Right arm overtakes movement of left arm. Palm faces floor.
0’45 Flip palm to face ceiling. Left arm rises slowly and inconspicuously to overtake movement at 1’00.
1’00 Left arm overtakes movement of right arm. Right arm descends inconspicuously. RH fingers can show the minute if desired. etc.
5’00 Slow down tempo very gradually over these final two minutes. End at approximately quarter = 45 M.M.
7’00 End of CORE. Begin CODA attacca.

Performance Notes—Metal Music Stands (MMS)

- These three musicians form a sort of second Streichtrio, and imposter that stands in relief to the actual string trio. Blend with and complements where possible.
- Music stand must have smooth metal surface with no holes. Another music stand holding the notated music is required per player.
- Play standing up with music stands at similar height if possible.
- It must be possible to lock the surface of the stand into a horizontal position parallel to the floor.
- Each musician requires a place to store objects within easy reach. Ideally another music stand at half-height with the surface locked into a horizontal position.
- Composer must demonstrate numerous techniques in person.
- Required objects: soft sponge (1 cm thick), roughly A4 piece of foam rubber (3 mm thick, Moosgummi), 2 metal rulers (30 cm), palm-sized cork block (sold at hardware stores, since it is often used for sanding by wrapping sandpaper around it), square wooden chopstick (round tip, square hilt), plastic scrubber (like steel wool but made of plastic), steel wool, medium-hard plastic brush, hard plastic brush, hard metal brush (25 mm bristles or longer), large superball (mounted on nail file or knitting needle), small superball (mounted), metal nail file (15 cm or longer), fine sandpaper (600 grit, strip of 21 cm x 25 mm), medium sandpaper (320 grit, same size strip), coarse sandpaper (120 grit, same size strip), bass bow (or cello bow), 3 small metal alligator clips used for connecting wires (sold in electrical supply stores; must be bow-able. some have a hollow round grip attached to one side which is perfect for this).
- Notation of five-line staff:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sponge</th>
<th>plastic</th>
<th>chopstick</th>
<th>sandpaper</th>
<th>rubber</th>
<th>cork</th>
<th>slide cork</th>
<th>underlip</th>
<th>foam rubber</th>
<th>surface</th>
<th>top/sides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
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Performance Notes—Percussion

- Cuica is amplified with a contact mic. Careful to avoid extraneous sounds when moving between positions. A slightly damp cloth (not as damp as used for normal cuica playing) is required. Never all cuica pitch to fully develop. Keep it as a shadow sound right at the point just before the pitch sounds.
- Bass drum: lower head is amplified. Note that it is unamplified at two points. Long deadstroke section should be hypnotic, ritualistic.
- Sounds and techniques are described in score.

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soft bass drum mallet  bass bow (two required)
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Performance Notes—Piano

- Grand piano with third pedal (sostenuto).
- Requires MIDI keyboard (minimum 20 keys) connected to main speakers. Either rests inside piano or on table beside mixer.
- Requires 1 mixer with digital effects, 1 volume pedal, 1 speaker, 3 transducers, 2 inexpensive contact mics (one on piano sounding board, one on frame within reach of pianist).
- Even though only one transducer is used, two backups are required since the transducer is likely to burn out during performance. If this happens, be prepared to use a backup immediately and minimize disruption to the existing sonic texture as much as possible.
- Mixer requires the following digital effects: Chorus 1, Chorus 2, Phaser, Wah.
- Feedback sounds are the primary sound material. Much experimentation is required and these sounds are not wholly possible to control; for this reason, the part is quite freely notated. This feedback is generated by connecting two inexpensive contact microphones to a transducer. These are connected to a mixer, volume pedal, and on-stage speaker.
- LH operates transducer. RH operates mixer. Left foot operates right piano pedal (sustain). Right foot operates a volume pedal. Turn the body 45° to the right, with respect to normal posture.

Performance Notes—Electric Guitar

- There is a lot of freedom in this part. Respond musically to the other instruments without becoming too dominant.
- Most sounds are described in score. Effects settings are given in all capital letters inside boxes.
- Bass sound 1 and Bass sound 2 can be performed in several different ways. Find a sound that blends well without clear pitch. For instance, whammy tremelo with reverb, bowed whammy bar, or the double MBN technique in m. 22 ossia.
- Required effects: distortion, pitch shifter, two octaver pedals chained together for a total of 4 octaves up or down
- Required objects: ebony, threaded metal rod, bass bow, chopsticks (or thin metal strips, Flachstahlbräth) for third-bridge effect, soft foam or sponge to weave between and mute strings.
Performance Notes—Strings

• The string trio has a soloistic function for much of the piece.
• Some strings prepared and retuned. See first page of score/parts.
• N.B. Fingered pitches written on scordatura strings except for harmonics, which are written at sounding pitch.
• Cello requires a large superball (ca. 6 cm diameter) mounted on a nail file or knitting needle.

I II III IV the strings. I = highest string

III 5 IV 7 for natural harmonics, the string and partial are sometimes given. here, the 5th partial on III and the 7th partial on IV.

SPx SP ½SP N molto sul pont (distortion & harmonics dominate completely), sul pont, poco sul pont (clear pitch with some SP color)

½ST ST STx poco sul tasto, sul tasto, molto sul tasto

FLUTE / FL bow exactly one octave above fingered pitch (STx). result is hollow, dull sound like a wooden flute. (quasi sine tone)

BRIDGE / BR bow on bridge

behind BRIDGE / bBR bow behind bridge

SPx|N SPx, then subito N

FINGER bow at finger (bow touches finger)

@PREP / BEHIND PREP bow at preparation / behind preparation

( deep) change bow as necessary

m / w mute on / mute off

+ LH pizz

down

down

vertical scrape scrape bowhair vertically along strings for scratch tone, the more complex the better. if possible, hold bow with both hands.

ord. to wild vibrato (vibrating finger remains centered, i.e., no glissando unless notated)

expressive vibrato pulse on beat. molto vib on beat, then subito non vib.

begin tone with heavy bow accent deep in the string. always downbow and usually SPx.

unpitched pizz. on all strings (left hand mutes all strings with light pressure and flat fingers)

white burst of complex high partials. very aggressive. violent heavy bow accent and very fast, almost inaudible glissando. maximum distortion to obscure pitch.
Add high harmonic on string or finger tip.

* Slow bow, high spectrum with shadow of low tone.

If desired to enrich sound, *Hold transducer up in air, facing audience. Begin max. treble, then adjust EQ, white noise.*

FI: chaotic pedal, leggero furioso

FI: percussive tremolo, leggero furioso

LH MBN near XXIV non-tremelo, neck PUP on OCTAVER: 15ma + low-pass

RH MBN trem. behind LH (near bridge)

2x MBN

MIDI

Alter sound for gradual, subtle timbral changes. Possibly OCTAVER 8va.

* Don’t play anything on guitar. Imitate piano sound, adjust EQ or other parameters to pure distortion*

DISTORTION + OCTAVER 15ma

28

Quietly prepare next playing position on cuica.

24

Transducer white noise*
forms a single legato phrase with all three metal music stands.

Prepare next position – chopstick (LH) – slightly inserted. Finger tips or end of stick (orpheg, nervous)

Hold both notes for full length and cut off precisely on each rest.

Avoid any clear pitch caused by feedback.

Dialogue with electric guitar

Transcribed as three heavy voices. Very high pitches, > 3r each with each of 3 voices. Attempts to
find balance and pitch by reducing movement and fluctuation of material. Pressure controls
depending (volume pressure for tone) keep in mind: Dialogue with e-guitar.

Strings: Tremolo as fast as possible for very anxious, almost alarming, atmosphere. Notation: lower line
gives rhythm for Volume Pedal. Rest = off, note = maximum volume, staccato = short as possible.
Prepare 2nd metal ruler on lip with 23 cm protruding.

Prepare 2nd metal ruler on lip with 21 cm protruding.

Prepare 2nd metal ruler on lip with 5 cm protruding.

RH cloth (only slightly damp) on stick.
LV Ø on nub (pressure controls timbre), shadow (High, thin sound. No clear pitches!)

Pull cloth, (fingered, not harmonic. Pitch is slightly approximate)

Pull cloth, (fingered, not harmonic. Pitch is slightly approximate)

Pull cloth, (fingered, not harmonic. Pitch is slightly approximate)
\[59\]

**STRINGS** Possible outburst gestures (play on Body and/or Strings): (1) tremolo, very fast, nervous, and irregular; (2) crosshammer (not col legno!), press bow for fast repetitions, alternate strings rapidly and irregularly during stroke; (3) brief, explosive crescendo dal niente al "forte", always very with very little pitch.

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**LH gliss.**

- Leggiero furioso outbursts
  - Explosive, frantic, improvised sequence of air/shadow gestures for given duration, at least 2 different gestures per outburst! Almost no pitch, sempre ppp. See boxed text above.
  - Vp simile (OFF during outbursts, otherwise ON)

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**Midway OFF during outbursts, otherwise ON.**
Hold box vertically with tip facing floor (pull up for downbow) col legno (on chopstick)

Rhythmic unison with violin until m.92!

max. amp.

(on foam rubber)

(on sponge)

(on ruler)

(on chopstick)

(on sponge)

(on cork)

(finger on foam rubber)

(very high pitches)

(on plastic scrubber)

(on sponge)