

MASS EXTINCTION

for string quartet and tam-tam

Sointu Aalto

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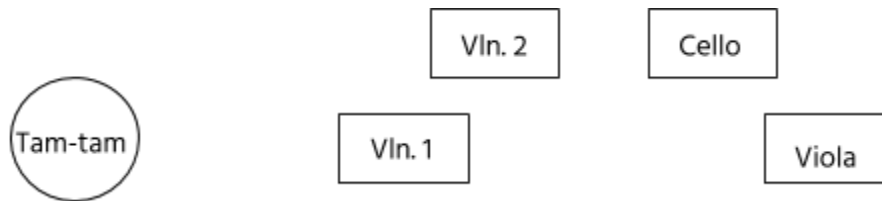
PROGRAM NOTES

We are living in the beginning of a mass extinction - right now. The U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity has concluded that approximately 150 species of plants or animals go extinct every day. This is between 1,000 and 10,000 times higher than the natural extinction rate, according to the WWF. Our climate is breaking down, and there is little time to act before a series of catastrophic, irreversible chain reactions takes place. This is all because of human activity, yet we choose to deny and ignore this existential crisis. Leaders worldwide are failing humanity by putting profits before children's lives. This piece is an introspective reflection of the frustration I feel at their inaction toward climate change.

PERFORMANCE NOTES

- An upward arrow as a note head means the highest note the player can play on the fingerboard, as this varies from person to person.
- An x-notehead means behind the bridge but not touching the textile string covering. The location of the x on the staff indicates the string to be played on.
- The marking "cross the bridge" indicates a shift between playing ordinarily and behind the bridge. Sometimes this happens while playing a note as in measure 15.
- A square notehead means crash tone. A crash tone is produced with extra pressure on the string creating a less periodic and lower pitch than usual playing.
- A diamond note head means natural harmonic. If natural harmonics and ordinary notes are alternated between quickly, a breaking sound is acceptable, even desired, as in measure 15. Harmonics are numbered with the fundamental frequency as the first harmonic and successive numbers representing its overtones.
- A horizontal arrow indicates a gradual shift between the two markings given on either of its sides.

- A widening beam indicates an accelerando and a narrowing beam indicates a ritardando (see measure 201).
- A circle with a line through it (see measure 69) indicates a snap pizzicato or a Bartók pizzicato. Pull the string upward and let it snap onto the fingerboard.
- The tam-tam player plays rests for the entire piece. They should begin the piece as if anticipating to begin playing later on, then shift their mindset to having already played their part, waiting for the end of the piece. The tam-tam player is essential to the piece, and should not be omitted from performance.
- The players should be in the following positions onstage:



although the order may be changed depending on logistics.

MASS EXTINCTION

Sointu Aalto

$\text{♩} = 120$

Tam tam

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

behind the bridge

f

fff

7

Tam.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

f cresc.

fff

f

ord.

cross bridge

ord.

ord.

ord.

ord.

14

Tam.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

cresc.

fff

fff

f dim.

crashtone

crashtone

crashtone

mf > n

mf > n

move the bow towards the bridge

cross the bridge

behind the bridge

crash tone

Tam.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Tam.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

B

Tam.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.