

adam groh

hawthorn

multiple percussion solo

2012

Program Notes

During the summer of 2012 I spent three weeks at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA, as it is affectionately referred to) participating in the Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival. Besides providing the obvious opportunity for musical growth, the festival also exposes its faculty and fellows to some of the greatest modern visual artists in the world. Those familiar with MASS MoCA know that one of their most treasured collections is the world's largest display of Sol Lewitt wall drawings. Housed in a three-story gallery, the collection chronicles the entire career of Lewitt, from his earliest sketches and experiments, to the bold and vibrant works of his last years. Personally, I was struck by the way in which Lewitt could create an entire work using only a few basic elements or a set of simple instructions. Despite their almost elementary nature, Lewitt's works are absolutely astonishing, and their effect is remarkable, especially when realized in true MASS MoCA fashion... BIG! However, that wasn't the only aspect of Lewitt's work that resonated with me. All of his pieces are conceptual, meaning that a Lewitt work isn't bought and hung on a wall. You buy the instructions, and then you follow them in order to make the work yourself. This offers a great deal of freedom to whoever is realizing the piece. They can choose whatever shade of colors they prefer. They can choose the size of the surface upon which they will display the work. And the list of possibilities goes on... I couldn't help but see the obvious connection to music, in which a composer provides a score to be realized by a performer. Pieces are not often performed only one time, in one setting, much the way that priceless works of art live in the same gallery for generations. Music is interpreted and performed all over the world, by many different artists. It is always changing. *hawthorn* was written using the same principles that Lewitt used to create his "Wall Drawing 422," except rather than using bands of color, I chose to use small musical fragments that I derived from numbers that are significant to me.

Setup/Notation Considerations

hawthorn is scored for five drums. The drums should have a similar timbre (for example, all double-sided tom-toms or all single-headed "Latin drums," such as bongos and congas), but each drum should have a distinct pitch so that the voices remain clearly separated. Because of this, the drums will likely cover a relatively wide range of pitches. The drums are numbered 1-5, from low to high, meaning that the lowest drum (on the bottom line of the staff) is number 1, and the highest (on the top line of the staff) is number 5. The performer is free to set the drums up in any configuration that they think facilitates the easiest performance.

hawthorn

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♩ = 138-144

aggressive, driving

5 Drums

5 Drums

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