

Mathew Fuerst

Broken Cycles

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Program Note

Broken Cycles was written during the summer of 2014 for Stacey Jones and Brad Blackham, who gave the premiere at Hillsdale College in October of that year. The title refers to the compositional technique used to organize the piece. The work is essentially a chaconne, although I decided to experiment with the traditional design of a chaconne. Instead of presenting the chord progression clearly at the beginning, I combined a chaconne and the minimalist method of additive technique. In *Broken Cycles*, the first “variation” or section presents only the first chord, then the second presents the first two chords of the progression, the third section presents the first three chords, and so forth. In writing this work I was also inspired by fractal images, such as the self-similarity of the Mandelbrot Set. In fact, the work was originally titled *Mandelbrot Variations*. The influence of fractal images is found within each section such that in the second section the two chords are presented twice in two keys related to the two chords, the third section presents the three chords in three keys related to the harmonies, and so forth. The influence of fractal art played a roll in the large scale construction of the work as well. Each section is begun on a new tonal center that relates to the chaconne progression so that if one were to look at the tonal center of each section the result would reveal the chaconne progression. This was to be the organizing principle for the work as the progression and variations expand until reaching all the harmonies in the progression.

In order to have some aural logic to the piece, the percussionist plays a variety of instruments to the halfway point, and after a pause presents them in the reverse order. The percussionist starts on the marimba, then proceeds to the temple blocks, then to the tom-toms, the vibraphone, and finally some suspended cymbals and a large tam-tam. After the pause, the percussionist plays each instrument in retrograde starting with a bowed vibraphone, and ending with the marimba with a kick drum.

The problem with this plan in combination with the organization of the chaconne was that as material returned, it was so extended that there was a serious imbalance to the entire work with the later sections far longer and extended than in the initial sections. In order to have greater formal balance, I realized I had to break apart the formal plan, and this happens in the later sections.

The final section, which acts as a sort of coda to the work presents the formal idea of additive technique, but with a more rapid harmonic rhythm yet starting always on E, the tonal center that begins the work. The work ends with the cycle literally breaking apart into pieces.

The work lasts approximately 9 minutes.

-Mathew Fuerst

Percussion:

Marimba

5 Graduated Temple Blocks [hard rubber mallets]

5 Graduated Tom-toms [hard rubber mallets]

Vibraphone

2 Gongs (one high, one low) [soft mallets]

Suspended Cymbal (SC) [soft mallets]

Tam-tam (TT) [heavy gong beater]

Kick Drum

Performer's Note: The mallet preference is only a suggestion, and can be altered as the performer sees fit.

Written for Stacey Jones and Brad Blackham

Broken Cycles

Mathew Fuerst

Allegro misterioso (♩ = 138)

Marimba

p

Allegro misterioso (♩ = 138)

Piano

p

8

Mar.

Pno.

12

Mar.

mp

Pno.

mp

16

Mar.

p

Pno.

p

20

Mar. **A** *f*

Pno. *mf* *sub p* **A**

Ped.

23

Mar. *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Pno.

26

Mar. *p* *mf* *sub. mf*

Pno.

29

Mar.

mf

p

mf

Pno.



32

Mar.

p

f

B

To T. Bl.

Pno.

mf



35

Pno.

dim.

C
 Temple Blocks
 hard rubber mallets

38

T. Bl.

p

Pno.



40

T. Bl.

Pno.



43

T. Bl.

cresc.

Pno.

cresc.



D
 5 Tom-toms
 Do not overpower the piano

45

Tom-t.

mf

Pno.

f

8vb

48

Tom-t.

Pno.

(8)-----



51

Tom-t.

Pno.

(8)-----



54

Tom-t.

cresc.

Pno.

cresc.

(8)-----



58

Tom-t.

To Vib.

Vibraphone

ff

ff sub. p

Pno.

8va-----

Ped.

(8)-----

65

Vib.

Pno.



72

Vib.

Pno.

8va



80

Vib.

Pno.

F extremely delicate

mf *sub. più p*

F extremely delicate

mf *più p*

85

Vib.

Pno.



90

Vib.

Pno.



94

Vib.

Pno.

99

Vib.

Pno.

G



103

Vib.

Pno.

dim.



106

Vib.

Pno.

rit.

H
109 **Meno mosso** (♩ = 112)

Perc. TT LG SG SC
soft mallets

Vib. *ppp* *pp*

Pno. *pp*



Perc. 116

Vib.

Pno.

8^{vb}-----|



Perc. 123 **I**

Vib.

Pno. *p* **I** 8^{va}-----|

8^{vb}-----|

130

Perc.

Pno.

ppp

8^{va}

8^{vb}



137

Perc.

Pno.

dim.

pppp

8^{vb}



146

Perc.

Vib.

Pno.

G.P. J

bowed

ppp

ppp

Red.

Red.

156

Vib. *ord.* *accel.*

Pno. *accel.*



164

Vib. **K** *p*

Pno. **K** *p*



168

Vib.

Pno.

Vib. **L** Tempo primo (♩ = 138) *mp*

Pno. **L** Tempo primo (♩ = 138) *mp*

Vib. 177

Pno.

Vib. 181

Pno.

Vib. 185

Pno.

189

Vib. *dim.* *pp* **M**

Pno. *dim.* *pp* **M** *8vb*

196

Pno. *pp* (8)

203

Vib. *pp* **N**

Pno. **N**

207

Vib.

Pno.

210

Vib.

Pno.

p *f*

O



215

Vib.

Pno.

O



218

Vib.

Pno.

O



221

Vib.

Pno.

O

8vb

224

Vib.

Pno.

227

Vib.

Pno.

231

Vib.

Pno.

235

Vib.

Pno.

239

Vib.

Pno.

(8)



243

Vib.

To Tom-t.

P

ff

Pno.

P

ff



246

Vib.

Tom-toms
hard rubber mallets

Do not overpower the piano

f

Pno.

8vb

249

Tom-t. *mp* *f* *mf* *f*

Pno.

(8)

252

Tom-t. *mp* *f* *mf* *mp*

Pno.

(8)

255

Tom-t. *f* *sub. mp*

Pno.

(8)

258

Tom-t. *f* *mf* *cresc.*

Pno.

(8)

262 R To T. Bl. Temple Blocks

Tom-t. *fff* *f*

Pno.

265

T. Bl.

Pno.

268

T. Bl.

Pno.

270

T. Bl.

Pno.

271 *poco rall.*
To Marimba

T. Bl. *piu f*

Pno. *poco rall.*



Subito A tempo

Mar. *f*

B. D. *f*

Pno. *f*

8va



276

Mar.

B. D.

Pno.

278

Mar. {

B. D. ||

Pno. {



280

Mar. {

B. D. ||

Pno. {



282

Mar. {

B. D. ||

Pno. {

284

Mar. $\frac{13}{16}$

B. D. $\frac{13}{16}$ $\frac{7}{16}$

Pno. $\frac{13}{16}$ $\frac{7}{16}$

(8)

286

Mar. $\frac{13}{16}$ $\frac{7}{16}$

B. D. $\frac{13}{16}$ $\frac{7}{16}$

Pno. $\frac{13}{16}$ $\frac{7}{16}$

(8)

T (piano in 3+3+3+4+3+4)

288

Mar. $\frac{5}{4}$ *ff* *sub. mf*

B. D. $\frac{5}{4}$ *sffz* *mp*

T (3+3+3+4+3+4)

(8)

Pno. $\frac{20}{16}$ *ff* *sub. mf*

289

Mar. {

B. D. ||

Pno. {

⑧



290

Mar. {

B. D. ||

Pno. {

⑧



291

Mar. {

B. D. ||

Pno. {

⑧

292

Mar. *cresc.*

B. D. *sfz* *mp*

Pno. *cresc.*



293

Mar.

B. D. *sfz* *mp*

Pno.



U

294

Mar.

B. D. *sfz* *mf*

U

Pno.

295

Mar. *f*

B. D. *sfz* *mf*

Pno. *f*

(8)



296

Mar. *f*

B. D. *sfz* *mf*

Pno. *f*

(8)



297

Mar. *f*

B. D. *sfz* *mf*

Pno. *f*

(8)

298

(piano in 3+3+3+4+3)

Mar. *cresc.*

B. D. *sfz f sfz f*

(8) *cresc.*

Pno.



300

Mar. *ff*

B. D. *sfz f*

(8) *ff*

Pno.

The player should play any note as quickly as possible in the direction of the arrow. The gesture should sound as though the music has snapped broken and disintegrates into thin air.

302 **molto accel.**

Mar. *sub. mp* *ff*

B. D. *sfz* *sub. mp* *ff*

Pno. **molto accel.** *sub. mp* *ff*

Ped.

The player should play any note as quickly as possible in the direction of the arrow. The gesture should sound as though the music has snapped broken and disintegrates into thin air.