

Niels Rønsholdt

THE MERMAN

for chamber ensemble, audio playback, electronics and video
2008


INSTRUMENTS

- Flute
- Clarinet (B \flat) - normal and contrabass
- Tenor Saxophone (B \flat)
- Trombone
- Percussion
- Guitar
- Piano
- Violin
- Viola
- Cello


PERCUSSION

- Gran cassa
- Thunder blade or a steel plate
- Guiro
- Some dry leaves on a table or the like (amplified).
Touched, moved, squeezed etc. with the hands (softly)
- Large suspended cymbal (soft mallets)
- Glockenspiel (soft mallets)


WOODWINDS



Bowing 'outwards' (from pont. to tasto) / 'inwards' (tasto to pont.) without bowing in the ordinary directions (unless where indicated)




The bow (col legno) slides over the bridge and hits the tailpiece (still with the wood) where the strings are attached. Then slides back in the opposite direction (cello). The grace note is on-beat.




Left hand 'lift-off pizz.' or 'flageolet tapping': The strings are not plucked but the fingers are simply lifted off the strings. While bowing ordinarily, flip the bow until the wood of the bow hits the string. First in one direction and then immediately in the other. The Tempo (32nds) should be regarded as approximate. The sound of the phrase is somewhat chaotic which is intended.

PIANO




slide up / down the white keys with the fingernail (no toneproduction)




slide up / down the white keys with a guitar plectrum (hard) or the like (no toneproduction)

The exact starting and ending keys of glissandos are meant only as guidelines. The keys of the piano are amplified with 4 microphones each routing to different loudspeakers (see 'Amplification, Electronics & Audio Playback')

WOODWINDS

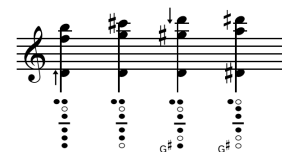


Inhale / exhale audibly through the clarinet.



Growl tones

Suggested fingerings for the multiphonic chords in the third movement:



AMPLIFICATION, ELECTRONICS & AUDIO PLAYBACK

4 loudspeakers are surrounding the audience in a traditional quadrophonic set-up.

The live electronics consist of signal processing through maxMSP (4 channels). Audio files are played back in 4 channels.

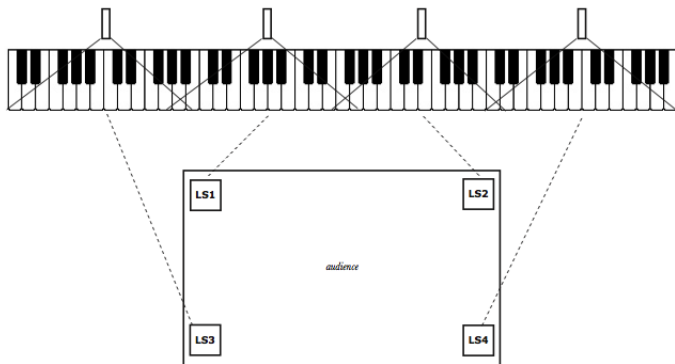
Notes in the score describe the nature, starting and end points of electronic manipulation and audio playback.

All instruments are amplified

The following instruments are processed real time in maxMSP as well:

Contrabass clarinet, Trombone and Cello

The keys of the piano are amplified with 4 microphones each leading to a different loudspeaker:



VISUALS

- Video projection controlled by the interactive video software Isadora. Alternatively, a simple slide / keynote software can be used.
- Ability to fade in/out all stage lights

'The Merman' consists of five short movements. After each movement the lights (preferably all lights, including note stand bulbs) fade out and a small video sequence (still photos) is projected.

In the last movement, lights fade out / video begins in the beginning of the horn solo (m. 44 ff.)

Visuals are optional.

The Merman (2008)

'The Merman' is a visual and musical story for chamber orchestra about a merman that crawls onto land in order to meet a mermaid, which turns out to be a sculpture. This dark and somewhat sarcastic paraphrase of 'The Little Mermaid' is musically more playful and wide ranging than Rønsholdt's other works. The dramaturgical move from a to b is shown visually as still images: The Merman's rise out of the North Sea and movement across the land to the meeting with the Little Mermaid at Langelinie in Copenhagen. The music freely throws light on the story from various points of view in the five movements. Determination in Rønsholdt's works often ends brusquely and this is no exception: The bittersweet mood of the work culminates in the final movement with a citation of the German poet Heinrich Heine's The North Sea : "Happy is the man who has reached harbor and leaves the storm behind him". This is however not how it turned out for the merman for whom land meant death and a woman who turned out to be of bronze.

The Merman was commissioned by TRANSIT Festival and Champ d'Action and premiered October 2008.

This version for 10 instruments is made in 2013 and premiered by SCENATET

www.nielsroensholdt.dk • www.edition-s.dk

The Merman



Niels Rønsholdt 2008

♩ = 60 [energetic]

Flute

Clarinet in B \flat
Contrabass clarinet (in B \flat)

Tenor Sax

Trombone

Percussion

Guitar
p

Piano
key gliss. (†)
(finger nail)

Electronics,
playbacks,
amplification etc.
actions,
descriptions
Piano keys amplified.
Playback: GROOVE 1 (grooves follow measures)

Violin
ord. *mf* 9
scord. simile: ord. *mf* 9
(†) (†)

Viola
jeté *mf*

Cello
col legno hitting tail piece
pont. [simile]

17
 Fl.
 Cl.
 T. Sx.
 Tbn. *gliss.*
 perc.
 Gtr. *p*
 Pno.
 Electr.
 VI.
 Vla.
 Vlc. *(ord.)* *p*

27

Fl.

Cl.

T. Sx.

Tbn. *gliss.*

perc. **Guiro**

Gtr. *mp*

Pno.

Electr.

ord.

VI. *(mf)* energetic

Vla. *mf* *jeté*

Vlc. *mf*

27 28 29 30

31

Fl.

Cl.

T. Sx.

Tbn.

perc.

Gr.

Pno.

Electr.

Vi.

Vla.

Vlc.

mp

p

cresc.

gliss.

Gran Cassa

9

10

p

43

Fl. *mf* espr.

Cl.

T. Sx.

Tbn. *f* *mf* espr.

perc. Guiro

Gtr. *mp*

Pno. 8-1

Electr.

Vl. *f* 10

Vla.

Vic. (col legno) *f*

48

Fl.

T. Sx.

Tbn.

perc.

Gtr.

Pno.

Electr.

Vi.

Vla.

Vlc.

mp

mp

mp

[arco: bow on the rim]

8¹

8¹

8¹

8¹

8¹

8¹

10

10

10

10

bow on the body of the violin

"f"

bow on the body of the viola

"f"

bow on the body of the cello

"f"

II

4 $\text{♩} = 56$

Fl.

Cl. *p* Clarinet (in Bb) *p* *espr.*

T. Sx.

Tbn. *p*

perc.

Gtr. *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *ppp* *ppp*

Pno. *p* *ppp* (ped.)

Electr. Bass clarinet and contra bassoon: Realtime buffering/manipulation

Vi. $\text{♩} = 56$ *p* *espr.* *port.*

Vla. *pizz.* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *p* *arco* *espr.*

Vlc. *pizz.* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *p* *arco*

Damp strings lightly with right hand near the bridge while striking

19

1. 2.

Fl.

Cl.

T. Sx.

Tbn.

perc.

Gtr.

Pno.

Electr.

Vi.

Vla.

Vlc.

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

Glockenspiel
[soft mallets]

p

pp

(white key gliss.)

port.

espr.

p

mf

mf

port.

port.

8

8

8

36
Fl.

36
Cl.

36
T. Sx.

36
Tbn.

36
perc.

36
Gtr.

36
Pno.

Electr.

36
Vi.

36
Vla.

36
Vlc.

port.

p

pp

pizz.

pp

III

4 $\text{♩} = 56$ [pesante]

Fl.

Cl. Contrabass clarinet (in Bb)

T. Sx.

Tbn.

perc. Dry leaves (slowly/variable) *pp*

Gtr.

Pno. δ^{-1} key gliss. (†)

Electr. Playback: Ambient chord ("F minor"), accelerating breathing etc.
Piano keys amplified (4 mics)
Cello (str. q. A) amplified and realtime pitchshifted/"harmonized"

VI. arco *con sord.* *ff* heavily, non staccato !

Vla. *con sord.* *ff* heavily, non staccato !

Vlc. *con sord.* *ff* heavily, non staccato !

14

Fl.

Cl.

T. Sx.

Tbn.

perc.

Gtr.

Pno.

Electr.

Vi.

Vla.

Vlc.

35

Fl. *pp*

Cl. (Clarinet (in Bb))

T. Sax. *pp*

Tbn. *pp*

perc. Gran Cassa *pp*

Gtr. *pp*

Pno. *pp*

Electr. Ambient chord: B^b minor

Vi. *ff* *pp*

Vla. *ff* *pp*

Vic. *ff* *pp*

top note played, bottom note sung

Left Hand: slide (without striking) up A and D strings in a way so that the nails hit the frets

IV

10 ♩ = 60 [energetic]

Fl.

Cl. **Contrabass clarinet (in Bb)**

T. Sx.

Tbn.

perc. **Metal plate/ thundersheet**
Gran cassa

Gtr.

Pno.

Electr.

♩ = 60 [energetic]

ord. **simile:**

Vi. **9**

Vla.

Vlc. **(col legno)**

Left hand
"flageolet tapping"

Fl.

Cl.

T. Sax.

Tbn.

perc.

Gtr.

Pno.

Electr.

Vi.

Vla.

Vlc.

pp

p

ord.

simile:

(7)

9

10

(ord.)

(end of groove)

V

10 $\text{♩} = 42$ [murmuring]

Fl. *ppp*

Cl. Clarinet (in Bb) *ppp*

T. Sx. *ppp*

Tbn.

perc.

10 $\text{♩} = 42$ [murmuring]

Gr. *ppp*

Pno. *ppp*

Electr. Playback: very deep ambient noise.
Cello (st) q. A: real time pitch shifted + delay
Horn: Real time buffering/manipulation

10 $\text{♩} = 42$ [murmuring]

VI. Con sord. (tonwolf) *ppp*

Vla. Con sord. (tonwolf) *ppp*

Vlc. solo; rubato e espr.
con sord. *pp*

3 3:2 3:2 6

35

Fl.

35

Cl.

35

T. Sx.

35

Tbn.

perc.

35

Gtr.

35

Pno.

Electr.

35

Vl.

Vla.

Vcl.

3

3

3:2

3

Large suspended cymbal
very soft mallets
ppp

Trombone:
real time buffering/manipulation.
1. setting 1
2. setting 2

Strings: Play and hum (unison or octave)
the melody simultaneously
ppp molto vibrato

ppp molto vibrato

ppp molto vibrato

ppp molto vibrato

59

Fl.

Cl.

T. Sx.

Tbn.

perc.

Gr.

Pno.

Electr.

Vi.

Vla.

Vlc.

p *espr.*

damp slowly