

DAVID SIMKINS

GAMELAN STORM
(2022)

FOR ORCHESTRA

INSTRUMENTATION

FLUTE 1, 2

ALTO FLUTE, PICCOLO

OBOE 1, 2

COR ANGLAIS

CLARINET IN A and Bb 1, 2

BASS CLARINET IN Bb

BASSOON

CONTRABASSOON

HORN IN F 1, 2, 3, 4

TRUMPET IN Bb 1, 2, 3

TENOR TROMBONE 1, 2

BASS TROMBONE

TUBA

TIMPANI (22", 24", 26", 28", 32")

CLASH CYMBALS

HI-HAT, SNARE DRUM

VIOLIN 1,2

VIOLA

VIOLONCELLO

CONTRABASS

DURATION: c. 7 MINUTES

PROGRAMME NOTE

“Gamelan Storm” fuses Balinese Gamelan idioms with twentieth century serialist technique and minimalist influences. Inspired by ritual Lelambatan structure, the music follows the passing of a violent storm over the Indonesian island of Bali. An Alto Flute solo sets the scene before cascading raindrops of strings, windy winds and percussive lightening bursts flurry into the music. This creates a seismic effect on the original five-note Pélog based tonality, which is left thoroughly overturned by the time the storm disappears.

Gamelan Storm

Broad and expressive ♩ = 40 **A** **Fast, capricious and persistant** ♩ = 200

ca. 60" **ca. 60"**

Flute 1, 2

Alto Flute (+Picc.) *Alto Flute*
p *solo: singing, gentle, distant*

Oboe 1, 2

Cor Anglais

Clarinet in A 1, 2

Bass Clarinet in B♭

Bassoon 1, 2

Contrabassoon

Horn in F 1, 3

Horn in F 2, 4

Trumpet in B♭ 1, 2

Trumpet in B♭ 3

Trombone 1, 2

Bass Trombone

Tuba

Timpani [E, A, C#, F#, G#]
p

Clash Cymbals

Hi-hat (+ Snare Drum) *Hi-hat*

Violin 1 *col legno*
f

Violin 2 *pp col legno*
f

Viola *f*

Violoncello

Contrabass

20

B

Fl. 1, 2 *pp* 1. tr

A. Fl. *p agitated*

Ob. 1, 2

C. A.

Cl. 1, 2

B. Cl. *p* tr

Bsn. 1, 2

Cbsn. *pp* tr

Hn. 1, 3

Hn. 2, 4

Tpt. 1, 2

Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1, 2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp. [A-G#] *p* [G#-A] *mf* [A-B] *mf*

Cym.

H.h. *p* Hi-hat

B

Vln. 1 *p*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

Cb. *pp*

4

51 (tr)

D

Fl. 1, 2
A. Fl.
Ob. 1, 2
C. A.
Cl. 1, 2
B. Cl.
Bsn. 1, 2
Cbsn.

Hn. 1, 3
Hn. 2, 4
Tpt. 1, 2
Tpt. 3
Tbn. 1, 2
B. Tbn.
Tba.

Timp.
Cym.
H.h.

Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

f, *mf*, *p*, *sf*, *f*, *nat. spiccato*

63

Fl. 1, 2

Picc.

Ob. 1, 2

C. A.

Cl. 1, 2

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1, 2

Cbsn.

Hn. 1, 3

Hn. 2, 4

Tpt. 1, 2

Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1, 2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Cym.

H.h.

f

To Snare Drum
To S. D.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

spiccato

f

mf

6

75

Fl. 1, 2

Picc.

Ob. 1, 2

C. A.

Cl. 1, 2

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1, 2

Cbsn.

Hn. 1, 3

Hn. 2, 4

Tpt. 1, 2

Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1, 2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Cym.

H.h.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

F *Violently*

f

sf

ff

To Clarinet in Bb

[D-Db, A-B]

Snare Drum

87

Fl. 1, 2

Picc.

Ob. 1, 2

C. A.

Cl. 1, 2

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1, 2

Cbsn.

sf

ff

a2

ff

G

f

Clarinet in Bb

Clarinet in Bb

7

Hn. 1, 3

Hn. 2, 4

Tpt. 1, 2

Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1, 2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

sf

ff

ff

Timp.

Cym.

S. D.

sf

fff

sf

[B-F#]

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

G

f pizz.

f pizz.

f pizz.

f pizz.

arco, *spiccato*

arco, *spiccato*

arco, *spiccato*

arco, *spiccato*

arco, *spiccato*

f

Fl. 1, 2 *100*

Picc.

Ob. 1, 2 *a2*

C. A.

Cl. *100*

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1, 2 *a2*

Cbsn.

Hn. 1, 3

Hn. 2, 4

Tpt. 1, 2 *a2 senza sord.*

Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1, 2 *a2 senza sord.*

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp. *ff* *gliss.*

Cym.

S. D. *sfz*

Vln. 1 *marcato*

Vln. 2 *marcato*

Vla. *marcato*

Vc. *marcato*

Cb. *marcato*

H With fire

Fl. 1, 2

Picc.

Ob. 1, 2

C. A.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1, 2

Cbsn.

Hn. 1, 3

Hn. 2, 4

Tpt. 1, 2

Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1, 2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Cym.

S. D.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

fff

sfz

gliss.

With fire

1. To Clarinet in A

I Majestically

J Sweetly, dying away

Fl. 1, 2

Picc.

Ob. 1, 2

C. A.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1, 2

Cbsn.

Hn. 1, 3

Hn. 2, 4

Tpt. 1, 2

Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1, 2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Cym.

S. D.

Hn. 1, 3

Hn. 2, 4

Tpt. 1, 2

Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1, 2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Cym.

S. D.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

141

Fl. 1, 2

Picc.

Ob. 1, 2

C. A.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1, 2

Cbsn.

Hn. 1, 3

Hn. 2, 4

Tpt. 1, 2

Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1, 2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Cym.

S. D.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

mf

mf

mf dim.

p dim.

p

151

Fl. 1, 2 *p*

Picc.

Ob. 1, 2

C. A.

Cl. *p*

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1, 2

Cbsn.

Hn. 1, 3

Hn. 2, 4

Tpt. 1, 2

Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1, 2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Cym.

S. D.

Vln. 1 *pp*

Vln. 2 *pp* *dim.* *ppp*

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Notes on “Gamelan Storm”

Gamelan Storm fuses Balinese Gamelan idioms with twentieth century serialist technique and minimalist influences.

The harmonic and tonal centre of the piece is the *tembung* mode (A-B-C-E-F), which is a five-note derivation from the Balinese Gamelan *Pélog seven-note system*.¹ I develop this mode using serial rotations, retrogrades, inversions and retrograde inversions, as well as through creating a tone row. Tenzer notes that the contrasting angular and conjunct intervals within a mode create distinctive tonal character, so my row balances this movement to reflect the agitation and unpredictability of the storm.² Furthermore, my use of overlap between these rows represents the Gamelan technique of ‘Beating’, where pairs of instruments are tuned slightly apart to create an agitated tonal effect.³

Lelambatan is a family of Balinese classical instrumental compositions performed primarily in the temple to entertain visiting deities.⁴ “*Gamelan Storm*” takes these structures to shape the form of the piece.

The first minute of the music (written using proportional notation) is influenced by the traditional austere and meditative introduction for the *trompong*. I write for solo Alto Flute, which introduces the melody of the ‘Bali’ motif, varied with different length pauses alluding to the free time feel of the music.

In traditional *Lelambatan*, this is then followed by the drums. However, in my music, these are represented by the *col legno* strings, which portray raindrops and paint the picture of a dry landscape. The row is introduced by the minimalist technique of note addition:

- Violin 1 begins in bar 2, following the pattern 1742635.
- Violin 2 begins in bar 9, following the reverse pattern 53624671 but metrically displaced forwards by 1 quaver beat.
- Viola begins in bar 16, following the original pattern but metrically displaced forwards by 3 quaver beats.
- Cello begins in bar 41, following the original pattern but metrically displaced forwards by 5 quaver beats.
- Double Bass begins in bar 49, following the reverse pattern but metrically displaced forwards by 2 quaver beats.

Hi-hat semiquavers later add to this pulsating rain feeling (bar 37), representing a steady *kempli* beat in Gamelan.

As is traditional, the original melody re-emerges, but is developed by cycling through the different rotations (1, 2, 3, 5), with some ‘windy’ trills in accompaniment.

At C, the original row is transposed and augmented, with the different durations of the motif layered on top of each other, underneath a haunting fanfare, to signify the main section

¹ Michael Tenzer, *Balinese Gamelan Music* (Singapore: Tuttle Publishing, 2011), 36-7.

² Tenzer, *Balinese Gamelan Music*, 37.

³ Ibid, 38.

⁴ Ibid, 62-4.

(*pengawak*). The fanfare is developed imitatively in a manner suggestive of *kotekan*, interlocking parts in the Gamelan style.⁵

Up until this point, the timpani have been striking every 7 bars in the manner of *Gongan*, a regenerative gong which marks the renewal of the Gamelan musical cycle.⁶ At C, this expands to 8 bars, then is lost altogether at D by a stormy interruption.

D is marked by flashes of 'lightening', punctuated by the Piccolo, Oboes and Horns, which interrupt the *moto perpetuo* of the continuous raindrops. This is also reminiscent of the Gamelan syncopated accent called *angsel*.⁷ The strings move from *col legno* to *spiccato*, grading this transition to a fuller *arco*. These fuller textures are contrasted with 'breakdown' textures where the fanfare theme develops melodically and rhythmically, passing around the orchestra in the style of *Klangfarbenmelodie*. This has parallels with the telescoping of the musical energy in *Lelambatan* which follows the progress of the rituals.⁸

E signifies a percussion break, with the Timpani and Snare in an increasingly heated dialogue of cross-rhythmic imitation over snarling Horns based on rotation 5 and a diminished version of the row in rotation 3 (transposed up by a tone).

At F, a tremendous lightening sequence bursts this texture open, creating a Stravinsky-esque asymmetric pattern with thunderous Bass Trombone and Tuba underneath.

At G, the string raindrops return based on a rotation 4 transposition, cascading from *pizzicato*, through *spiccato* and finally to *marcato*. This transposition then proceeds to shift up and down according to the movement at the end of the 'Bali' motif (down a tone, up a tone, up a semitone), this quickened harmonic rhythm alluding to the build-up of this violent storm. 'Windy' flute and clarinet bursts of the row in rotation 5, the returning fanfare also herald the climax and asymmetric lightening also herald a climax.

Finally, at H, the Bali motif bursts in forcefully scored for full brass, Oboes and Bassoons. The original rotation forms a vertical harmonic function, determining the chords which sit on top of this motif's bassline.

The eye of the storm (coincidentally at I) gives us a suspenseful pause before bursting into the full glory of rotation 4 transposed to G#. The strings re-enter, this time with full legato bowing, a retrograde inversion of the original row and their metrical displacements also reversed. This represents that we have reached the backside of the hurricane. Eventually, the string parts begin to wane according to the minimalist technique of note subtraction and following the opposite pattern of their entry at the beginning. The brass and Bassoons briefly allude to former motifs in retrograde too, but the texture quickly evaporates to focus on the Alto Flute and Clarinet in A, which play the original Bali motif in retrograde before the end.

The storm finally disappears without a trace.

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⁵ Michael Tenzer, *Balinese Gamelan Music* (Singapore: Tuttle Publishing, 2011), 54.

⁶ Tenzer, *Balinese Gamelan Music*, 48-9.

⁷ *Ibid*, 60.

⁸ *Ibid*, 62-4.

Bibliography

Tenzer, Michael. *Balinese Gamelan Music*. Singapore: Tuttle Publishing, 2011.