



Vicious Children

Wally Gunn

Vicious Children for percussion quartet
Written for Mobius Percussion

Wally Gunn . June 2014

Mobius Percussion

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Instrumentation

Percussion 1:

Voice (whispering, voiced and unvoiced, singing and shouting)

Almglocken, F4

Snare drum, snares off

Floor or low tom tuned to a note in D natural minor

Timpani mallets

Percussion 2:

Voice (whispering, voiced and unvoiced, singing and shouting)

Almglocken, E4

Snare drum, snares off

Floor or low tom tuned to a note in D natural minor

Timpani mallets

Percussion 3:

Voice (whispering, voiced and unvoiced, singing and shouting)

Almglocken, D4

Snare drum, snares off

Floor or low tom tuned to a note in D natural minor

Timpani mallets

Percussion 4:

Voice (whispering, voiced and unvoiced, singing and shouting)

Almglocken, C4

Snare drum, snares off

Floor or low tom tuned to a note in D natural minor

Timpani mallets

Setup

The players are set up in a circle (or rather a square, since there are four players), facing the center of the circle. The player designated Player 1 should be upstage, facing the audience. Going clockwise, Player 2 should be to Player 1's left around the circle. Player 3 to Player 2's left. Player 4 to player 3's left. So that Player 1 is clearly visible to the audience, and not obscured by Player 3 directly opposite, gently skew the rotation of the circle on the stage so that Player 1 is slightly stage right of center, and Player 3 is slightly stage left of center. The percussion setup upstage is designated as the 'station' Percussion 1. Going clockwise around the circle, stage left is Percussion 2 station. Downstage is Percussion 3 station. Stage right is Percussion 4 station. The players will circulate around the four stations throughout the piece.

Drum Key

On the drum stave, from lowest to highest, the following notations represent the corresponding sounds:

Treble clef G line: floor tom

Treble clef C space, regular notehead: snare drum, snares off

Treble clef C space, cross notehead: hit rim of snare drum

Treble clef C space, triangular notehead: hit shell of either snare drum or low tom, depending on whichever hand

Treble clef A on ledger line above stave, cross notehead: click sticks together

Performance Notes

All snares should be tuned the same, to D or A if possible.

All toms should be tuned differently: toms should be tuned to sound as well as possible, and in pitches that are part of the D natural minor scale (NB: If the players are performing the singing part, and a key other than D natural minor is preferable, simply transpose the almglocken pitches to match this new key, and similarly, tune the toms to match this new key).

The tom at the station designated Percussion 4 should have the lowest pitch, Percussion 3 should have next lowest tom, Percussion 2, next lowest tom, and Percussion 1 should have the highest pitch tom.

Timpani mallets seem to work best; in the first half of the piece, held with the mallet heads toward the player, the solid wood sticks make a robust click, and the mallet butts function as good drumsticks. In the second half of the piece, the woolly mallet head makes a mellow sound on the almglocken and the low tom.

Vicious Children

Was an old woman who had three sons
Jerry, James and John
Jerry was hanged, James was drowned
John was lost and never was found

I may shoot yon carrion crow
Shot it right through the head, head, head
When she came back the dog was dead
House is on fire, children all gone
All but one and her name is Ann
Gave them broth without any bread
Whipped them all soundly and put them all to bed
When the bough breaks the cradle will fall
Fought and they fit and they scratched and they bit
Cut off their tails with a carving knife
Whipped him, slashed him, rode him through the mire
Tripped up his heels and he fell on his nose
Took him by the left leg and threw him down the stairs
I will dig his grave with my spade and trowel

Cry baby cry put your finger in your eye
Tell your mother it was not I

For every evil under the sun
There is a remedy or there is none
If there be one, seek till you find it
If there be none, never mind it

There will be an end of you

– Mother Goose, collected nursery rhymes

Vicious Children

A**Boldly** ♩ = 108**PLAYERS ENTER PLAYING
AND CIRCLE SETUP**

2

3

4

The musical score is arranged in four systems, each containing a Voice part and a Percussion part. The Voice parts (Voice 1, Voice 2, Voice 3, and Voice 4) are written on treble clef staves with a 7/8 time signature and contain whole rests throughout the piece. The Percussion parts (Percussion 1, Percussion 2, Percussion 3, and Percussion 4) are written on percussion staves with a 7/8 time signature. Each Percussion part begins with a 'Stick Click' instruction and a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic marking. The Percussion parts feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes, with asterisks (*) indicating specific rhythmic values or accents. The score is divided into four measures, with measure numbers 2, 3, and 4 indicated above the Percussion staves.