

KOLOKOL

FOR TWO PIANOS AND ELECTRONICS

NINA C. YOUNG

KOLOKOL

two pianos and electronics ("tape")

duration: 11:03

January 2010

Premiered March 19, 2010 – Yuxi Qin and Wensi Yan, Montreal, QC

PROGRAM NOTES:

The inspiration for *Kolokol* comes from a study of traditional Russian Orthodox Church Bells. This piece is based on the seventeen Danilov Bells that hang at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. The original bells were returned to Russia during the summer of 2008. Today, seventeen new Russian Orthodox bells (replicas of the original Danilov Bells) hang in the bell tower of Lowell House. I traveled to Harvard University in the Fall of 2009 to make field recordings of these bells. The recordings I made are featured both directly and indirectly in the composition. I performed an analysis of the bells in *Audiosculpt* to determine their frequency and amplitude characteristics. From these analyses I was able to fix the harmonies of the piece. There are seventeen harmonies which represent the seventeen bells. These harmonies, which feature pitches outside of standard piano tuning are made possible by electronics and recordings of detuned pianos created using physical modeling. The bells are also featured directly as triggered soundfiles (raw and processed). The piece consists of four movements to be played without pause:

- I. Blagovest - Converging
- II. Trezvon - Red (Beautiful) Chime
- III. Perebor - Funeral Chime
- IV. Trezvon - Jubilant Chime

These movements are my own take on a "fantasy" approach to traditional Russian Orthodox ringing practice. The core for each movement comes from a traditional ringing style (after which it is named) and is then developed and embellished to create my own impressionistic take on a journey within the ringing of the bells.

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

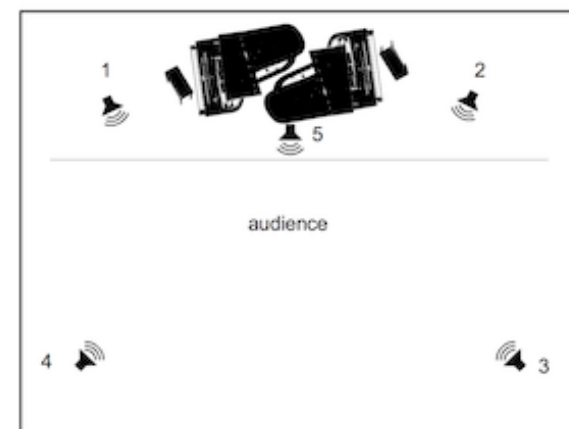
The piece calls for two pianists playing on opposing pianos: player 1 on the left, player 2 on the right.

The electronics are in the form of a tape part consisting of sound recordings (raw and manipulated) of the Danilov Bells, recordings of alternatively tuned pianos, and pre-recorded real-time processing of the live piano material. The tuned piano samples are tuned to the spectra of the individual Danilov Bells. The tape part comes with a click track to be sent to each pianist through headphones. Each pianist can also receive a mix of the electronics with this.

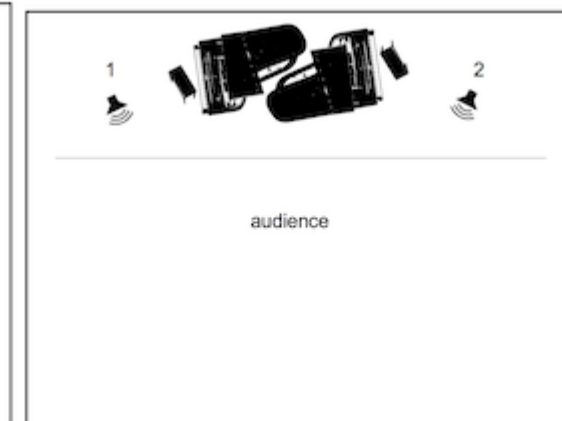
The piece can be performed in 5.1 Surround or in Stereo. The performance of the work requires playback of a soundfile with click tracks sent to the performers. Any system can be used to playback the files. I have provided a Max/Patch playback system for both 5-channel and 2-channel versions. Both versions are available in the folder and run off of Max/MSP Runtime, a standalone program that can run on a laptop (program included in the folder with the piece). An audio interface should be connected to the laptop. For 5.1 mode, the click track comes from Channel 7. For Stereo mode, the click track comes from Channel 3. The patch includes a text file, INSTRUCTIONS.txt, which details how to use the patch and run the piece.

Take-home practice parts (with electronics and click tracks) are available. It is suggested that the performers put these audiofiles on an mp3 player, and practice with it using a single headphone in one ear.

STAGE SET-UP:

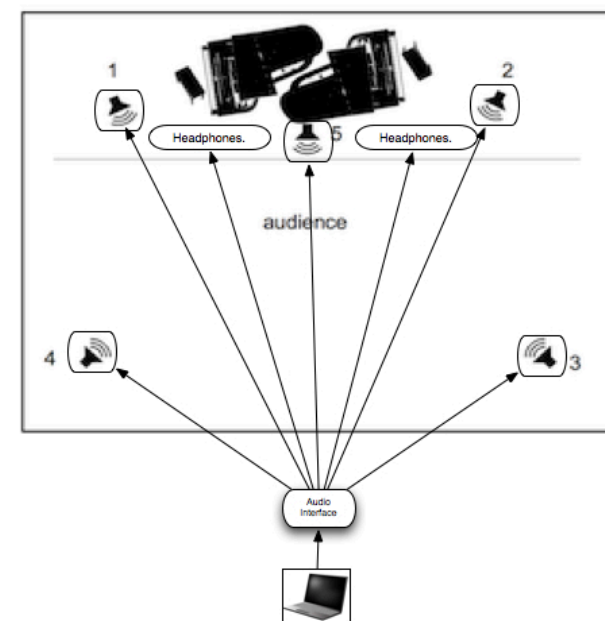


5-channel set-up

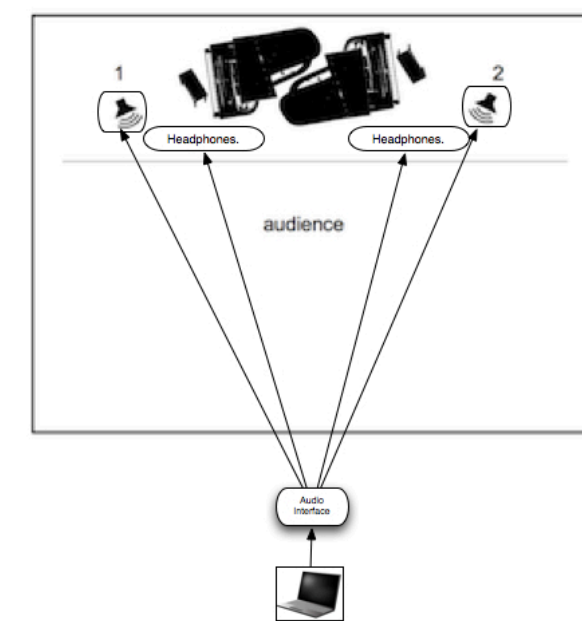


2-channel set-up

TECHNICAL SET-UP:



5-channel set-up



2-channel set-up

KOLOKOL

I. Blagovest - Converging

NINA C. YOUNG

♩ = 72

Piano 1

Piano 2

Electronics

Alternate Tuning Piano Samples

p *f* *p* *mf* *mp* *mf* *psub.* *ff*

f *p* *f* *p* *mf* *mp* *mf* *psub.* *ff*

spectral resonance from pianos begins Bell 13 granular synthesis soundfile Bells 16&17 more granular synthesis and faded chimes

11

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

Elect.

P.S.

fff *fff*

accel. *rit.*

♩ = 160 *rit.* ♩ = 72

Bell 01 Bell 01 diffused Bell 01 spectral disintegration Bell 02 shimmer Bell 14 spectral resonance from pianos

56

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

Elect.

pp *mp* *mp* *mf* *f*

pp *mp* *f* *f* *ff*

high shimmer fades in

68

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

Elect.

ff

ff

Bell 08 Bell 07

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

Elect.

79

ffff

ffff

freeze of pianos fades into recorded pianos playing half-note bell drones (gesture crescendoes through measure 97)

Bell 09

high shimmer fades out

high shimmer fades in

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

Elect.

89

listen for 4 beats pick-up to measure 100 of click track

listen for 4 beats pick-up to measure 100 of click track

high shimmer cascades into measure 100

136

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

Elect.

P.S.

Bell 13

Bell 12

Bell 13

Bell 13 spectral resonance from pianos begins

Bell 16

Bell 13

Bell 09 reversed

Bell 02

mp

p

mp

p sub.

pp

p

mp

mp

p

p sub.

pp

p

mp

150

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

Elect.

P.S.

Bell 16&13

Bell 02

Bell 03

Bells 01,06,12

mp

p

mf

f

ff

fff

p sub.

ff

p sub.

mp

mf

f

ff

fff

p sub.

ff

p sub.

accel.

accel.

(accel.)

♩ = 120

161

Pno. 1 *ff* *mp* *mf*

Pno. 2 *ff* *dim. poco a poco* *p*

Elect. Bell 04 Bell 06 - filtered Bell 14 Bell 14

P.S.

177

Pno. 1 *f* *p*

Pno. 2 *mf* *pp* *p* *pp*

Elect. Bell 16 Bell 16

P.S. freeze of piano bell drone until measure 211