

*it teaches us that it doesn't exist*

for cymbal and feedback  
by Ted Moore

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approx. 11 minutes

commissioned by and dedicated to  
percussionist Jeremy Johnston

autumn 2016

“Everything is repeated, in a circle. History is a master because it teaches us that it doesn't exist. It's the permutations that matter.”  
-Umberto Eco from Foucault's Pendulum

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### **Performance Notes:**

This performance requires a suspended cymbal (crash or larger; preferably ride-sized) with an audio transducer attached to it (I have used the Dayton Audio DAEX25). For best results attach very near the edge of the cymbal. This transducer needs to be driven by a small amplifier (I have used the Stellar Labs 50-10145 Compact 30W). The signal that is sent to the amplifier comes from a microphone (I have used an SM57 Beta). The microphone is gained through a small format mixer and then sent to the amplifier. The mixer must have a classic 3-band British-style EQ (or something similar) with the high and mid knobs turned all the way down on the microphone's channel.

**In order to perform this piece, one must spend a considerable amount of time exploring the timbres and pitches present on the specific cymbal to be used.** Any given cymbal will produce different pitches and timbres depending on where the microphone is placed above the cymbal, how high above the cymbal it is placed, what angle it is at, and even, what tones and/or timbres are present when moving to a new location in this multidimensional space.

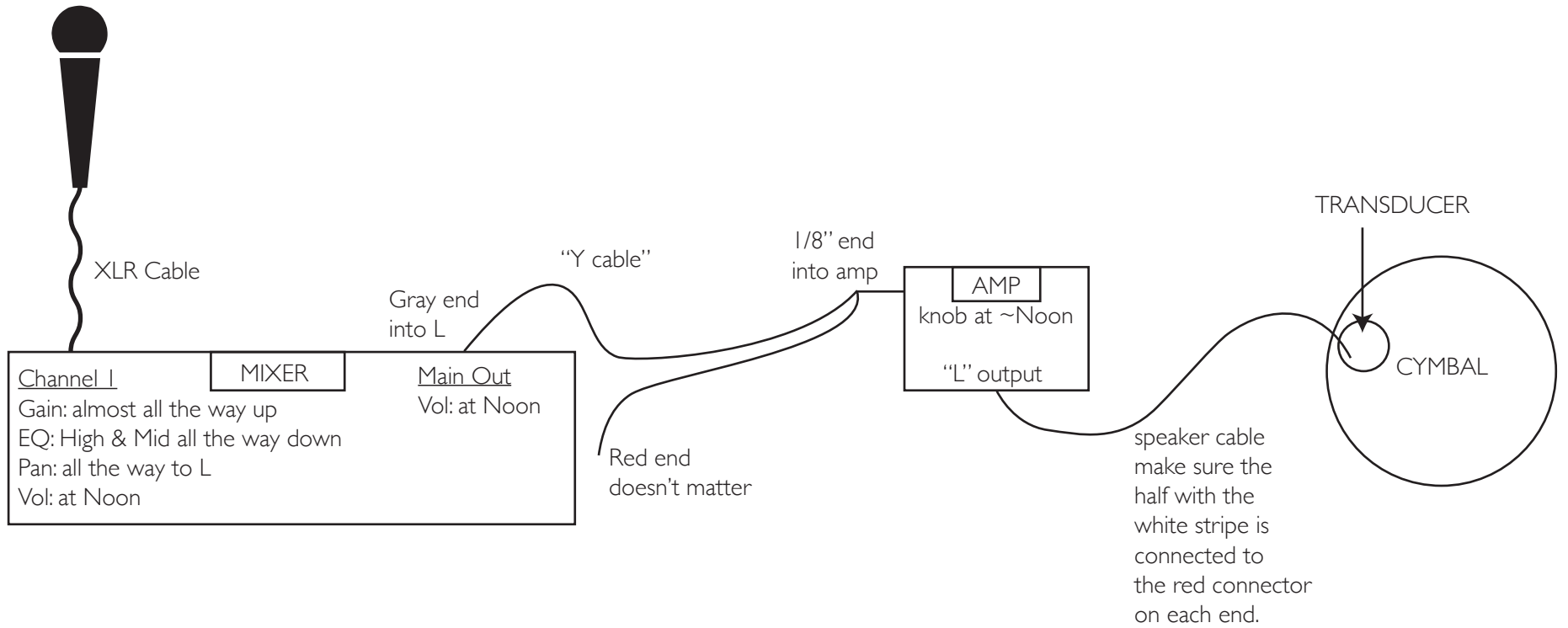
Prior to performance, one must discover, catalog, and rehearse a few specific sound objects:

- **Specific tones (A, B, C & D, E, F); measures 1-3, 22-24, & 48-49:** Find specific tones on the cymbal that are in the range specified. Tone E must be included in *Timbral Line I* (more info below) in order to elide measures 24 & 25. Without being too specific, I encourage the performer to choose tones that sound nice together. During performance, it may be difficult to hit these precise tones; be as accurate as possible.
- **High mic placement and high notes; measures 19, 54-55, & 64:** Holding the mic high above the cymbal (~12 inches) can produce very quiet high pitches. Find the location above the cymbal that works best for this. Move the microphone every few seconds to find a new tone.
- **Timbral Line I & II; measures 25-27 & 56-59, respectively:** Find two different paths to trace on the cymbal to designate as *Timbral Line I* and *Timbral Line II*. They should take about three seconds to trace, but they don't have to be long—these should be traced much more slowly than the improvised paths in other measures. I have used a straight line radius from the edge to the top of the bell as well as a similar sized path that curves more like tracing an aspen leaf. These paths should be designated after fully exploring the cymbal and choosing two that are satisfying in the diversity of timbres and tones produced. For *Timbral Line I*, choose a path that works well with the added brush gesture in measure 27. Try this gesture on multiple different options. For *Timbral Line II*, choose a path that includes one of the lowest (or the lowest) tones you can produce on the specific cymbal for use in measures 56-57 (this is likely to be found somewhere near the edge).

**This piece is intended to have a very ritualistic performance aspect; every gesture should be performed with great care. The focus and energy of the performer must be focused on the cymbal as though it is a sacred object. One should consider spotlighting the cymbal, leaving the rest of the hall in darkness.**

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**Tech Set-up:**



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**Key:**



Small swell created by hovering mic over cymbal at a predetermined location until desired pitch crescendos. Once at desired volume, lift mic up and allow pitch to decrescendo.



Any curvy lines like this indicate to wave the mic over the cymbal for the time indicated. It is important to not move too quickly so that a number of different timbres and tones emerge.



Hold the brush perpendicular to the cymbal and slide the bristles around the edge slowly.



Play an accelerando followed by a ritardano over the duration indicated. Maximum tempo should be near the golden ratio of the duration. It should range from  $\sim \text{♩} = 60$  to almost as fast as possible, unless indicated to be "slower".

*off*

When using the mic, end the phrase or tone by waving the mic off the edge of the cymbal (as opposed to lifting it up). Try to get one last timbre or pitch to sound in that motion. When using a different tool, slide it off the edge dramatically.

*up*

End the phrase or tone by lifting the mic straight up in the air so that the current sound fades out and doesn't change pitch.



Open; cymbal is not muted in any way.



Muted; to be achieved by putting edge of cymbal in the hand between the thumb and pointer finger and gradually grabbing it.



Partially muted; to be achieved by pinching the cymbal a little way in from the edge. Also, tip the cymbal to an angle for sonic and visual effect.



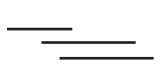
Use the microphone for this passage.



Use the brush for this passage.



Either by starting a new tone, or using one already present (as indicated), bring the microphone closer to the cymbal and allow it to crescendo. Then release the sound with either "off" or "up".



Horizontal lines indicate sustaining tones or timbres. In measures 19, 54-55, & 64, hold the microphone high above (~12 inches) the cymbal so that very quiet, high pitched tones begin emerging. Move the microphone every few seconds to find a new tone.

20"                                          16"                                          9"

Cymbal **ii** 3 different pitches, medium to high in register, designated A, B, & C

from sound B, go straight into next measure

*mp*                                          *mf*                                          *mp*                                          *mf*                                          *mp*                                          *mf*                                          *mp*                                          *mf*

trace any path on the cymbal, medium pace, must get a variety of pitches and timbres

trace same path

half-mute; to let one pitch ring out

choose new path

trace same path

half mute, keep one high note ringing into next measure

*p*                                          *f*                                          *p*                                          *f*                                          *p*                                          *f*                                          *mp*                                          *f*                                          *ff*

take the high note from previous measure

choose new high note

choose new high note

move microphone freely in paths around the cymbal

19  
 (L.V. from previous measure)

**ppp**  
 move immediately to high mic placement and high notes

25" 2" 6" L.V.

off **f**

take one of the high notes

12"  
 D E F  
 (sim. dynamic shape)

< **mp** up (L.V.)

3 different pitches, low to medium in register, designated D, E, & F (E must be in *Timbral Line I*)

23

10" 8" 3" continue repeating for 38"

D E F (sim.)

< **mf** up (L.V.) (sim.)

F D E (sim.)

< **f** up (L.V.)

**ff**

as imperceptibly as possible, pick up brush for measure 27

trace *Timbral Line I*; accessing many tones along the path is more important that sticking to 3" per repetition

(i) continue repeating for 42" more

27 continue tracing *Timbral Line I*

brush pressure: *light*

apply brush flat on cymbal near edge, somewhere on *Timbral Line I*

mic up

9" L.V.

(brush pressure will cause decrescendo)

**p**

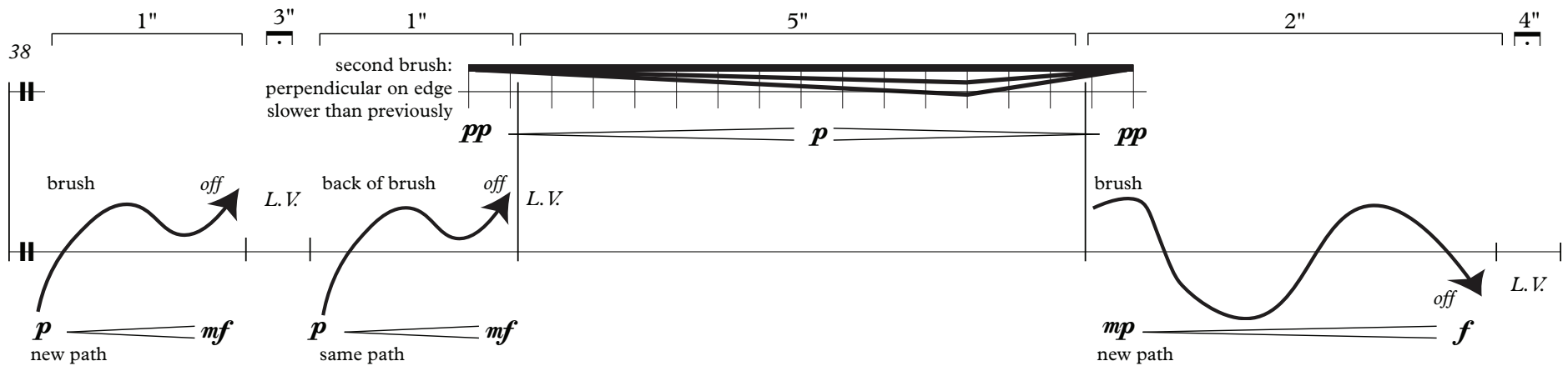
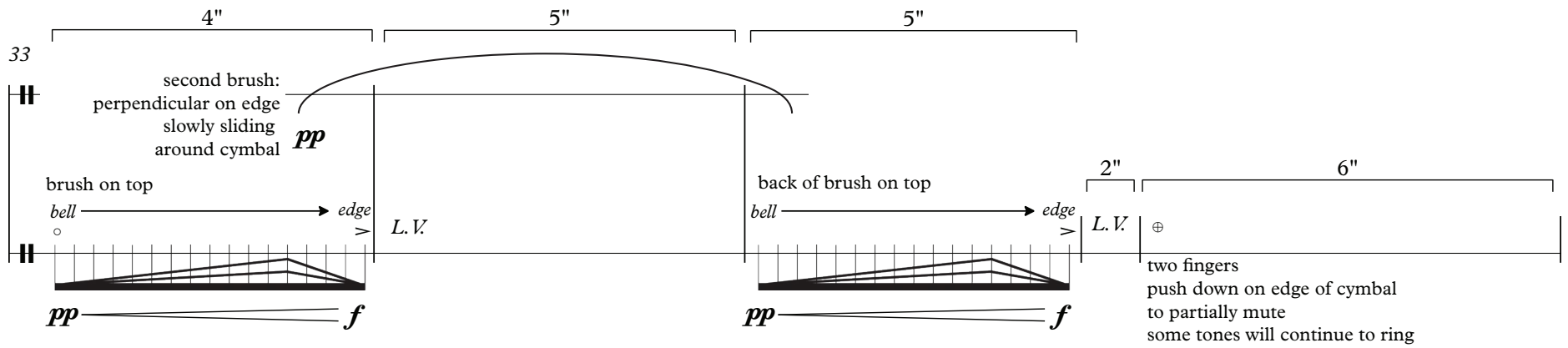
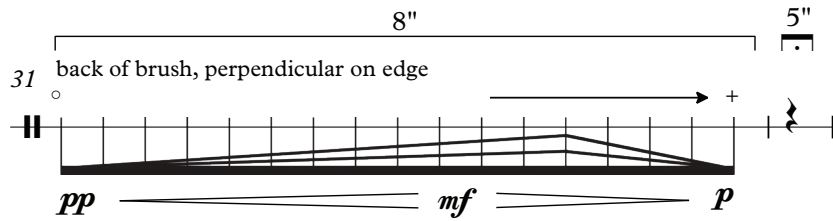
maximum slide brush off edge forcefully

no mic

7" 5"

**pp** **mf** **pp**

brush only, perpendicular on edge





44

2" 4" 2" 7"

second brush: perpendicular on edge slowly

back of brush

mic:

*pp* *p* *pp*

*mp* *f* *mp* *f*

same path

L.V.

48

15" 15" 2" 6"

A B C A B C

*< mf up (L.V.)* (sim. dynamic shape)

sim, but with back of brush at:

bell edge

pull off the edge before it stops rattling

*off* *p* *f*

L.V.

52

20" 28"

perpendicular on edge transition to top strike brush randomly all over top, about ♩ = 150, swelling in tempo and dynamics

*pp* *f* *ff* *mf* *f* *mf* etc.

*p* *mf* *f* *ff*

contant motion; not in a pattern; find many pitches and timbres

(L.V.)

54

perpendicular on edge; different spot each repeat; slowly

10" 3" 4" 6" repeat phrase 3x

repeat brush phrase 3x  
mic is oblivious to repeats

*pp* *p* *pp*

*L.V.*

(*L.V. from previous measure*)

*ppp*  
move immediately to high mic placement and high notes

*mf* *f* *ff* *mf*

low tone from *Timbral Line II* move to add/find more (higher) pitches

58

continue repeating for 60"

3" 10"

*ff*

trace *Timbral Line II*; accessing many tones along the path is more important than sticking to 3" per repetition

*mf*

find and hold a sustained timbre: medium to low in pitch with no dissonant beating  
continue into next measure

61

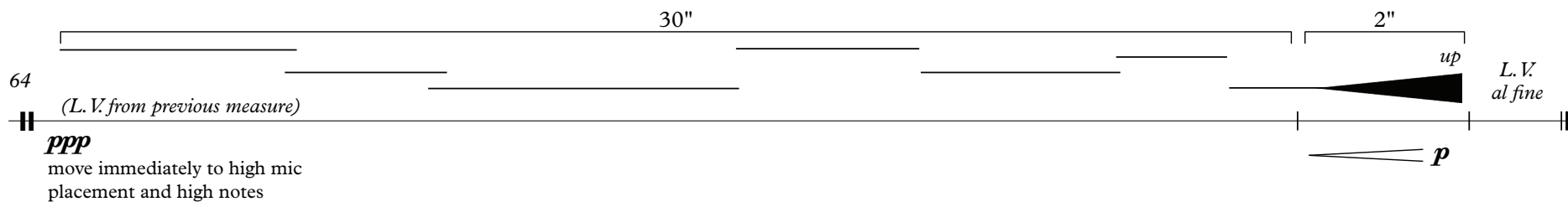
continue repeating for 40"

6" 15"

back of brush resting on:  
*bell* *edge*

gradually slow repetition to about 12" each stop and hold wherever rattles the most

continue sustaining tone from previous measure



performance duration c. 11 minutes