Permutation City

for percussion duo

commissioned by, and
for **Speak Percussion**:
Eugene Ughetti & Peter Neville
with respect and affection

Into a mute crypt, I
Can't pity our time
Turn amity poetic
Ciao, tiny trumpet!
Manic piety tutor
Tame purity tonic
Up, meiotic tyrant!
I taint my top cure
To it, my true panic
Put at my nice riot
To trace impunity
I tempt an outcry, I
Pin my taut erotic
Art to epic mutiny
Can't you permit it
To cite my apt ruin?
My true icon: tap it
Copy time, turn it; a
Rite to cut my pain
Atomic putty? ***Rien!***

He muttered the password, 'Abulafia'...

—from *Permutation City*, Greg Egan, 1994

for two players sharing:

upper octave of crotales
five-octave marimba
vibraphone
four-octave-marimba
lower octave of crotales

AUDIENCE

players I & II

duration: approximately 20'

Synopsis

Greg Egan's novel concerns a virtual "place", called by it's uploaded inhabitants *Permutation City*, not subject to the normal rules of real geography. This is therefore an *urban* music, and as such it belongs in the line of descent of such artefacts as Mondriaan's *Broadway Boogie-Woogie*, Stan Kenton's *City of Glass*, and John Alden Carpenter's *Skyscrapers*. While a certain phraseological "swing' is appropriate, it is NOT JAZZ, and all rhythms should be performed as precisely as possible. My concept while composing the piece was of the imagined and idealised city beloved of Renaissance artists (perhaps updated as in Japanese Animé, for instance—this thought provided by Richard Haynes), with the outer sections metaphorically suggesting gradual approach to and departure from the CBD (how could I not characterise it as Melbourne city centre?) through the increasingly busy streets. The severe black and white colours of marimbas and vibraphone/crotales emphasise the unreality of the locale, it's nowhereness.

Performance notes:

1 Accidentals only apply to the notes they immediately precede.

2 The A3 version of the score is notated at 3 cms = 1 second throughout.

3 There are nine steps of dynamic:

pppp—ppp—pp—p—mf—f—ff—fff—ffff

4 Instrumental layout should approximate to that given above; the players being able to communicate is more important than the exact layout, however.

5 The music should not be rushed, even in the hectic middle sections. If appropriate play slightly below marked metronomic tempi. The moments of rest between each lettered section should be considered as respites between the bursts of activity. An image: pausing on a street corner before setting off along another busy street.

5 If wished the work can be performed accompanied by an on-screen projection, from a PC, of the poem ("Into a mute crypt, I/Can't pity our time/Turn amity poetic/...," etc), with each line being added onscreen as the sections unfold—for instance, using Powerpoint. The bracketed sections ["(Remit not paucity)", etc] should be entered as '**Prologue**: Remit not paucity', '**Interlude**: Rip, tie, cut toy man', '**Epilogue**: Can't you time trip?'; preferably, these lines should be laid out offset, to indicate that they are not part of the poem proper.

Performers interpretative guide—[NOT to be reproduced as program notes]

Approach

Prologue: (remit not paucity)
This line opens a number of the chapters of the novel from which the poem is excerpted. The Prologue introduces a basic idea of the piece, suspended metal dyads, accompanied by the simulated sound of beads swishing across abacus rods.

A **Into a mute crypt I**
Continues and expands the metal dyads soundworld, *mute* implied by the soft attacks on metal, *crypt* by the chorale-like harmonies.

B **Can't pity our time**
The slightly maudlin vibraphone line is reproved by the hard-edged 'espressivo' of the marimbas.

C **Turm amity poetic**
In contrast to **B**, the marimba takes up a bow and blends—*amity*—with the luxuriantly lyrical—*poetic*—vibraphone line.

D **Ciao, tiny trumpet**
The bowed marimba, then vibraphone, is matched by bowed crotales to provide a semblance of a high-pitched, but valedictory, brass fanfare.

E **Manic piety tutor**
Manic because of the demented marimba flailings, *pious* because of the plainsong-like vibraphone melody.

F **Tame purity tonic**
The extremely limited compass of the material suggests that it is *tame*, the wholetone harmonies imply *purity*. It is perhaps a tonic for the section that follows...

G **Up, meiotic tyrant!**
A military pseudo-march.

H **I taint my top cure**

I **To it, my true panic**
An emotional state that anticipates the *nice riot*.

CBD

J **Put at my nice riot**

Interlude: (Rip, tie, cut toy man)
A slighty manic vibraphone line is 'attacked' by even more rabid marimba melismata—the *riot* continues.

K **To trace impunity**

L **I tempt an outcry, I**
I imagine the complex and tricky 4-marimba cadenza as an *outcry* against the paleness of section **K**.

	M **Pin my taut erotic** Combines the two sexiest sounds the line-up can produce: bottom octaves of the 5-marimba, and the lower octave of crotales. It is *pinned* by the aggressive *sforzati*. **N** **Art to epic mutiny** A pun: the section is fairly mutinous in itself, consisting of wild, tessiturally-expanding but carefully crafted marimba lines. Also the section is a transition from controlled rhythmic precision to... **P** **Can't you permit it** The rhythmically decoupled bravura of this section is the *epic mutiny* referred to by section N.
Departure	**Q** **To cite my apt ruin?** This section should give a sense of erosion, of the gaps in the sound being due to weathering. **R** **My true icon: tap it** The *true icon* here is the composer's name in (unrecognisable) Morse Code—it is *tapped* using extremely hard sticks. **S** **Copy time, turn it; a** *Time* is *copied* by the repetitive crotales rhythmic pattern, against which the vibraphone begins as a similar pattern but gradually changes—*turns*—into a marimba melodic line that progressively rises in pitch. **T** **Rite to cut my pain** The chant-like harmonically simple crotales melody is intercut by anxious chromatic bursts, culminating in a climactic duet-cadenza which rapidly passes through all the harmonic fields of the next section: **U** **Atomic putty? *Rien*!** Of course, part of the the *putty* of *atoms* is the wave/particle duality. Here, the struck/bowed crotales are the "waves", and the marimba the "particles". The section ends with a **GP**—the *rien*? **Epilogue: (Can't you time trip?)** Recapitulates in miniature several earlier sections of the piece.

PROLOGUE

MOLTO LEGATO

(REMIT NOT PAUCITY)

I CR.OT. VI

II 5 MAR.

VERY SOFT STICKS

♩=65

pp

DRY, (ABACUS-LIKE SOUND)*

STICK

BOW

mfz

RH STICK HARD
LH BOW + STICK HARD
(OR VICE VERSA)

[*NB THE BOW 'SWISH' SOUND IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE ACTUAL PITCH]

CU

5M

mfz

mfz

mfz/p

sfz

sfz

(sim.)

V

(NO PED)

pp

p

(poco)

2

A INTO A MUTE CRYPT, I

CU

5M

V

(p)

(move)

(STILL NO PED)

(DROP BOW)

(CANTABILE BUT SLIGHTLY DETACHED)

(SLIGHT PEDAL ON EACH ATTACK)

CU

V

(more)

mf poco

5:6

V

VIBES STICKS VS

I TAKES

SLOWER ♩= 56

B CAN'T PITY OUR TIME

ESPRESSIVO

V

CROT L.

ESPRESSIVO

V

AM

AM

CL

(½ p)

(Ab)

ppp

pp

fz

fz

AM

AM

CL

½

p

fz

AM

AM

CL

fz

fz (ALLOW TO RING INTO NEXT SECTION)

SHORTEST POSSIBLE PAUSE

(TAKE BOW) QUICKLY

4C TURN AMITY POETIC FASTER: ♩= 65 AGAIN

CU

5M

V

STICK BOW

Smoothly

REVISED PITCHES:

8

5m

V

D CIAO, TINY TRUMPET!

CU

BOWED

5m

V

TAKE BOW

CU (BOWED)

5m (BOWED)

TO VIBES (BOW)

PED

Cl (BOWED)

V (BOWED)

---PED---

MANIC PIETY TUTOR

(SLOWER, IF NECESSARY)

DU

4 STICKS

STACC.

5M

TAKE 2 STICKS

(BELL-LIKE)

PED

PLAINSONG-LIKE

from E=1.4

MARTELLATO

(SIM.)

LESS STACCATO

6

F TAME PURITY TONIC

(LEGATO)

5M V

4M V

RH

LH

(TACET NEXT LINE)

8va

(WARM ATTACKS)

IV

RH V

LH 4M

5M V

RH V

LH 4M

G UP, MEIOTIC TYRANT!

STRIDENTLY! VERY STACCATO ATTACK:

NO FASTER — MARCH-LIKE

7

5M

V

mfz

SUBITO!

ff

mf ff mf e sim...

(½ PEDAL EACH QUINTUPLET)

mfz!

4M

(pp)

(NOTE I TAKES PEDAL)

(FUNKILY)

(NB 8VA)

mf

ff mf ff mf e sim.

TACET NEXT LINE

(IF TAKES PEDAL)

(ff)

(NO PAUSE)

ATTACCA!

8 H I TAINT MY TOP CURE

(DRILY)

CU

5M

V

4M

mf (LOCO) DELICATELY (8VA) p pp mfz (ff) (8VA) mf DELICATELY (LOCO) mf mfz (8VA) mf

CROT. 16 5M (LOCO)

CROT. 16 5M (LOCO) (8VA) (8VA)

I TO IT, MY TRUE PANIC

CU 16 5M 5M 2 4 5M

(pp)

Cl.

5m

5m

(Cl.)

(Cl.)

MENO

I

5m

II

II TO 4m

NON TROPPO

I

5m

II

4m

ATTACCA!

10

J PUT AT MY NICE RIOT

♩=52 DRY, OBSESSIVE, MERCURIAL

CU

5M

4M

CL

mfz

(mfz)

(sim.)

fff

f

mf

(mf)

ff

p

CU

5M

4M

CL

(Rip, tie, cut by man)
(Same tempo) BRING OUT TEXTURES

VL

= PEDAL POINT:
EMPHASISE.
FILIGREE BARELY AUDIBLE.

12

VL

PED.

AM

sfz

(poco)

(BOTH STICKS)

(pesante)

(ch)

(Eb)

TO CL

(RETAIN MH STICKS)

♩= 88/SLOWER TO TRACE IMPUNITY

VL

AM

PED.

CL

V

PED.

CL

V

AM

PED.

CL

14

(sfz) 5(E) (sfz) 7:6 (E) 7:8 (E) pp (pp still) RALL ♩=48 x15

V

4M (RH) mfz pp p (LH TAKE BOW)*

PED. ppp (delicato) mfz

9/32 5/8 5/32 2/8 9/32

4M (5) (5) (5)

16 5(E) pp mf 5(E)

Cl (7) (7)

mfz mfz pp mfz

mfz (poco)

*TO MAKE THESE LARGE PLATES SPEAK

BUT SEEMING MARKEDLY FASTER I tempt an outcry, I

♩=88 AGAIN (BOWED)

PERHAPS USE TWO BOWS FASTENED TOGETHER. IF NO BOWING WORKS PERFORM LH SUSTAINS AS A GENTLE PULSING:

ETC.

B

5M

PED. (TO SILENCE)

V

9/32 5/8 9/16 4/8

4M 7:8(E) 5(E) 3

*ALL PITCHES ON SYSTEM) fz in p 5(E) pp fz in p 5(E) 5(E) 3(E) 5(E) Loco fz in p pp/fz in p 5(E) 3(E)

DELICATELY, IRONIC

(RH STICK) mf 7:6 = 5C

B

5M (ppp)

4/8 5/8 15/16

4M 5(E) 5(E) 3(E) 7(E) 5(E) 7:6(E) 7(E) 3 3

mfz/pp mfz

(STICK) mfz mp mf (pp) mf 5:6 (pp) (E) mf pp mfz

B

5M

15/16 (ppp) SUDDENLY CANTABILE 11/16

4M 3 3(E) 5:6(E) mf 3 3 mf

9:8(E) 3(E) 5:6(E) 5 7(E) 5

sfz mf f pp

5M

4M

B

(ppp)

mfz

(pp)

5(E)

9(E)

7:6(E.)

9/16

mf

9(E)

5(E)

3(E.)

7:6(E.)

9/8

RALL.

=69

pp

x5

RH:
STICKS:

(BOWED)

5M

4M

CL

B

(ppp)

9/8

5(E)

7:6(E)

5(E)

p

pp

16

(ppp)

5(E)

(ppp)

TAKE BOW

3(E)

6/8

(ppp)

STICKS

5(E)

5(E)

ppp

M

=96

Pin my taut erotic

5M

CL

VU

B

5(E)

5(E)

9(E)

RH

5(E)

(LH)

9(E)

9(E)

5:6(E.)

3(E.)

3(E)

mfz

(LH: STICKS)

(EXPRESSIVELY)

p

mfz

9/32

(p)

7/16

mfz/pp

mfz

sfz

6/8

16

7:8(E)

5(E)

7:8(E)

5(E)

11:8(E)

11:8(E)

7:6(E.)

mfz

p

mfz

p

mfz

(mf)

p

mfz

7(E)

3(E)

11:8(E)

7(E)

5(E)

ff

p

3(E)

mfz

p

mfz

PED.

6/8

5/8

11/16

16

5(E)

5(E)

9(E)

5:6(E.)

mfz

p

mfz

p

(fz)

5M

Vu

(PED.)

CL

(RH TAKE MARIMBA BEATERS)

(RH)

(LH)

(LH TAKE MARIMBA BEATERS)

N ♩= 108 Art to epic mutiny

LEGATO E GRAZIOSO

5M

V

(PED.)

(TO SILENCE)*

4M

CL

LEGATO E GRAZIOSO

e poco a poco cresc. ...

mfz/pp e poco a poco cresc.....

(*LEAVE PEDAL DEPRESSED)

5m

4m

(pp)

poco

...p cresc. ...

5m

V

(p) e crescendo ...

... mfz/mf e crescendo ...

(PED.)

mfz (molto)

poco

4m

(p) e cresc. ...

... mfz/mf e cresc. ...

5m

... fe cresc. ...

sfz/f...

sfz/f...

V

(PED.)

5fz (molto)

4m

.... fe cresc. ....

sfz/f...

... ff

18

5M

V

(PED.)

4M

... sffz e cresc. ... sffz sffz/ff...

sffz/ ff...

...(fff)

[DESYNCRONIZED]

BOTH PLAYERS: poco rubato BUT COUNT CAREFULLY THROUGH TREMOLANDI*

Can't you permit it

(TO SILENCE)

*ALL TREMOLANDI AS FAST AS POSSIBLE AT START, BUT SLOWING GRADUALLY AS SECTION CONTINUES.

5M

4M

CU

5M

4M

CL

5M

4M

CL

20

Cu

5M

AM

CL

(p) pp pp p mf mfz pp p

mfz/p mfz pp

mf (poco) p

Cu

5M

AM

CL

pp p pp p

mfz/pp p

pp

mf (poco)

Cu

5M

AM

CL

mfz pp p mfz/pp p

pp

mf (poco)

TO 5M

cu

5M

5M

× 5*

poco a poco accel...

poco a poco rall...

× 5*

* EACH PLAYER REPEATS FIVE TIMES — ARRANGE FOR THE FIRST ATTACK OF 15/4 BAR TO BE SIMULTANEOUS, UNISON.

RESYNCRONIZED

♩ = 100 (♩ = 50) HALF TEMPO

QUIETLY

5M

LEGATO E CANTABILE

5M

V

(PED.)

5M

(NON TROPPO)

V

(PLAINTIVELY)

(PED.)

22

Q TO CITE MY API KUIN ?

BOWED

Cl

5m

mf

DROP BOW

VERY SOFT STICKS — MINIMUM OF ATTACK

5:4

7:6

pp

mfz

SOFT STICKS

9:8

5m

BOWED

V

mf

mf

[PUT WEIGHT ONTO PEDAL]

(STICKS)

(CANTABILE)

5:4

7:6

(V)

(Eb)

pp

mf

3:2

BOW

pp

mf

(PED.)

5:4

5:4

pp

9:8

mf

f

p

(NON TROPPO)

3:2

mf

7:8

7:8

f

p

(V)

BOW

(PED.)

CU
5m
V
16
5:4
mf
7:8
7:8
mfz
6/4
BOW
3:2
(PED.)
17/16
7:8
5:4
pp
9/8
sfz
/mf
5:6
5:4
15/8
SUBITO
7:6
PED.

24

CU

5M

V

AM

R MY TRUE ICON: TAP II (VERY LIGHT, VERY HARD STICKS)*

NORMAL STICK

3:2

(5M HAS ALSO ONE NORMAL MED/SOFT STICK)

ff (MARCATI sffz)

(PED.)

(8VA LOWER)

11:8

ff (MARCATI sffz)

NORMAL STICK (E SIM.)

(ff)

7:8 9:8 3:2 7:8 7:8 7:8 7:8

(GHOSTLY) (MARCATI IN pp)

9:8 9:8 5:4 5:4 5:4 3:2 9:8

(ff) (GHOSTLY) (MARCATI IN pp)

(pp) 7:8 7:8 3:2

(NORMAL STICKS)

(PED.) ppp

9:8 3:2 5:4 11:8 (pp) 5:4 5:4 3:2 3:2 5:4

7:8 7:8 7:8 3:2 7:8 7:8

(PED.) (NORMAL STICKS)

3:2 5:4 3:2 (pp) ff (MARCATI sffz) 3 5:4

* HEAVY ENOUGH TO PRODUCE FUNDAMENTAL, BUT LIGHT ENOUGH TO PRODUCE A LOT OF IMPACT TONE AND PARTIALS — QUASI "COL LEGNO"

S COPY TIME, TURN IT; A

CU

5M

V

4M

16

7:8 (ff)

7:8 7:8 3:2

5/8

9/8 pp

5:4 5:4

(NORMAL STICKS; SOFT) p

(8VA LOWER)

5:4 (ff)

11:8 pp

(NORMAL STICKS: SOFT)

(LOCO) (PED.) pp

CU

V

16

5:4 (p)

4/4

5:4 (pp)

25/16

(PED.)

CU

V

16

(p)

5/4

5:4 (pp)

(PED.)

CU

V

AM

16

(p)

9/16

9/8

5:4 5:4

(pp) 5:4

(PED.)

(SAME STICKS AS Q)

CANTABILE

7:8

5/4

CU

AM

CU

AM

CU

AM

CL

AM

II

CL

AM II CL

(PLAYER ONE: BE REMOVING WEIGHT FROM Y PEDAL)

(SEMPLICE)

CL

CL

(SEMPLICE)

I CU

(SAME STICKS AS PLAYER TWO)

(CANTABILE)

CU

CL

CU

CL

(MOLTO)

(MOLTO)

* (= 5:4 / 3:2)

28

CU

CL

ATOMIC PUTTY? RIEN!

SLOWER (♩ = 40)

CU

5M

("PARTICLES")

(NB 8VA)

[GRACENOTES: AS FAST AS POSSIBLE]

("WAVES")

BOW

(TAKE BOW QUICKLY)

(STICK)

CL

(NB 8VA)

5M

BOW

STICKS

BOW

STICK BOW

STICK BOW

CL

(NB 8VA)

5M

(BOW)

CL

(NB 8VA)

5M

(DO NOT DAMP!)

CL

EPILOGUE: (CAN'T YOU TIME TRIP?)

V

AM

CL

9/8

ENTER BEFORE END OF CROTALES RESONANCE

TAKE BOW

sfz mf

mfz p mfz

5:4 5:4 BOW

pp pp fz/p

TAKE BOW

5:4

DROP BOW

7:8 5:4

5/8 5/4

3:2 3:2

BOWED

mf p mf p

DROP BOW

mfz

sfz

9:8

5m

V

(PED)

pp* (pp)

5:4 7:8 3:2 3:2

7/8 15/16

AM

CL

9:8 9:8 5:4 7:8

sfz ff p/ff

mfz

*IF INAUDIBLE, PLAY A LITTLE LOUDER

30

* = 9:8

5m

V

4m

CL

DELICATO

DELICATO

LOCO

(PED)

(ONLY HALF RELEASES)

TAKE BOW (KEEP STICKS!)

BOWED

DROP BOW

(STICKS)

CROTALES

*PLAY LOUDER IF LARGE PLATES DO NOT SPEAK