

Percussive Notes

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Nessun Popolo Oppresso 2

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“Nessun Popolo Oppresso 2” (“No Overwhelmed People”) is a concerto for percussion soloist available with three different accompaniments (full orchestra, string orchestra and piano reduction), each using the same solo part.

The percussion soloist instrumentation includes tam-tam, gong, djembe, darbukke, two temple blocks, two woodblocks, three suspended cymbals, one bass drum with a pedal and one without, hi-hat, six tom-toms, snare drum, two bongos and two ice bells.

The piece lasts approximately 11 minutes, with four main sections that moderately relate to each other. In the opening, the soloist weaves in and out of time playing all instruments with bare hands while the strings hold long and slow-changing harmonic colors. After a short transition to increase the momentum, the strings play through several dissonant ostinatos while the soloist plays written-out djembe and darbukke solos.

The cadenza suddenly appears, containing cascading sextuplets on the toms with varying accent patterns. A brief variation of the opening theme is then followed by an unexpected style change: funk. The last section combines a funk drumset groove played by the soloist with layered counter-melodies in the strings and brass (left and right hands in the piano). Once again, repetition is used at length in all parts, including the soloist, who plays the same basic pattern for the last three minutes of the piece. The work concludes with a sudden *piano* dynamic then *accelerando* from the soloist, building to one quick, loud statement of the closing material.

—Brian Zator