Valanche

For two percussionists, Rhodes electric piano, and piano

A Dissertation Presented

by

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For the past few years, my creative research has centered on the concept of modules—
independent sound-worlds, with durations of seconds or minutes, that are linked together to create a form. *Valanche*, for two percussionists, Rhodes electric organ, and piano continues the exploration into the construction, articulation, and formal application of modules.

*Valanche* begins with high-registered, short (circa 1 to 2 seconds long) musical gestures separated by long silences. As the piece continues, the silences become shorter and shorter until the gestures coalesce into a complex sound mass. Once the contraction process reaches this “solid state” (about three minutes into the piece) I repeat the process but this time expanded from the three minutes (consisting of 72 gestures) to 20 minutes (consisting of 72 *expanded* gestures—the modules). The first, shorter version of the process functions as 3-minute introduction to the body of the piece which is itself the expanded version.

The main body of the piece falls into three sections and a coda. These are clearly delineated by changes in energy and activity level. The first section explores the bass register in the piano and Rhodes in an animated context. The narrative continues in the second section with a relaxed, expansive landscape characterized by a static, registrally-frozen texture of trills and tremolos. The energy level rises to its peak level in the third section with a blizzard of sound propelled by a super-saturated pitch-space driven by terraced dynamics. Finally the coda interrupts the madness of the third section with distant tremolos and twinkles in piano and Rhodes and dies out in the distance.
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Instrumentation ................................................................. v

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instrumentation

percussion 1
- mini chimes
- triangle (mounted on Miller Machine)
- 3 suspended cymbals
  - 6” splash, 10” splash, 20” ride
- 5 temple blocks
- 5 toms
- crotales (higher octave)
- marimba (5-octave)

percussion 2
- triangle (mounted on Miller Machine)
- 3 suspended cymbals
  - 8” splash, 12” splash, 20” ride
- log drum (4 pitches)
- 3 toms (higher than percussion 1)
- crotales (higher octave)
- vibraphone (motor off)

Cymbal Rule: Cymbals should always be heard in the background. Care should always be taken so that the cymbals never overpower any other instruments. This overrules any written dynamics. Valanche is written for three cymbals. However, I encourage the percussionists to experiment with different cymbals and sizes just as long as your choices make the "cymbal rule" possible and you preserve relative high/low relationship between the two splash cymbals.

All sustaining instruments (except vibraphone) are l.v. unless otherwise indicated.

Fender Rhodes electric piano (88 keys)
It is perfectly acceptable to substitute the Rhodes with a keyboard with a Rhodes setting. Depending on the sensitivity of the keyboard used, the player may find it necessary to use a volume pedal.

Duration= c.20 minutes
With great concentration

Valanche

Sebastian Armoza
(2009)
Agitated

T. T.
Mrb.
Cym
L. Dr.
Vib.

accel. to

Relaxed

\( \text{\textit{Agitated}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Relaxed}} \)
Agitated  accel. to  \( \frac{3}{4} \)  \( \mathit{m}=80 \)

T. Bl.  Mtb.

Tr.

Crtls  (\( \sqrt{ } \))
\( \dot{=} 60 \) Smooth and relaxed

M.C./Tri

Cym

T.T.

Mh

Cym

L. Dr.

T.T.

Vib
More energetic
Relaxed

Dreamy
Trills in mm. 166–231 should always be smooth and delicate. The trilled jump should create their own separate level and be kept out of the way of the more angular structures. Unless otherwise indicated, the trills in this section should begin and end inaudibly.

(a tempo)

Very lightly but moving

(a tempo)
Slightly more animated

[Sheet music image]

[Sheet music image]
Abruptly mechanical

Cym

Cym

cymbals

choke cymbal with free hand
Increasingly wild
[Sheet music image]
Wild but precise
Wild but precise
Abruptly light and gentle
Slightly more animated

Tri

Cym

Crl

Vib.