

James Romig: Moving Pictures in Frames (2018)

INSTRUMENTATION

Player 1 (Metals)

Player 2 (Woods)

Player 3 (Drums)

Instrument choice is left to the performers, though each quartet of instruments (metals, woods, drums) should be of similar type/timbre, and all instruments should balance in terms of dynamic and decay.

INSTRUMENTATION VARIATION

If desired, all players may use instruments with a common timbre: 12 metals, 12 woods, or 12 drums.

PERFORMANCE VARIATION: METRONOME

The work is notated entirely in four-four time, but this meter is seldom reinforced. If desired, an additional player may provide a quarter-note metronome. This metronome part may also be performed by a member of the trio (perhaps using a foot pedal), by a conductor, or by some sort of electronic device. The metronome part may be of any sound source or timbre. If an ensemble decides to perform the work with this variation, it should make a note of doing so in the program notes or pre-concert discussion. It might be interesting to perform the work twice on a single program: once with an audible metronome and once without.

CONDUCTOR

A conductor might be useful at first rehearsals, and may be used in performance if desired.

ACCENTS

Accented notes are to be significantly louder than surrounding notes. Note that motivic patterns are constructed gradually, so there should be a smooth dynamic transition between non-accented passages and accented passages (accent notation is employed as “inner beats” are added to the patterns).

DYNAMICS

Most dynamic indications are followed by a “cresc.” or “dim.” notation. Because dynamics are always in flux (motivic patterns get louder as they aggregate and get quieter as they disintegrate), it is important that a player carefully control, and emphasize, the long-range crescendos and diminuendos.

STRUCTURE

The work is a strict circular canon, with each part starting at a different point in the cycle. Because of this, all parts are of equal difficulty and a player who has learned one part will have, in effect, learned all parts.

PROGRAM NOTE

Moving Pictures in Frames, for percussion trio, was completed in 2018. The work, which lasts approximately nine minutes, is a strict canon: all three parts are identical, but each starts at a different point on a looped continuum. It employs a large-scale formal structure identical to that of *The Frame Problem* (2003), but the music's surface detail is inspired by rhythmic motives found within the first four tracks of *Moving Pictures*, the 1981 album by the Canadian progressive-rock trio Rush. The composition is written in four-four time, but individual rhythmic cells seldom reinforce the notated meter, creating frequent shifts in the perceived pulse as different segments of music crescendo and diminuendo.