

# skitter

for solo percussionist

Thomas J. Dempster (BMI)

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# skitter

for solo percussionist

Thomas J. Dempster

West Columbia, SC

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***skitter*** (2016) – Duration: ca. 1:00

for Adam Scott Neal and Terminus Ensemble

## Program Notes

Glancing the surface of a lot of percussion instruments, *skitter* is based on a number of small, recurring patterns, assisted with the performer making various phonetic sounds as an extension of the limited percussion array. The performer lands some glancing blows against herself as the phonetics and woody instruments battle for supremacy, dancing around jumping in and out of silences.

## Performance Notes

The (low) bongo requires an occasional “rub,” or similar to playing/swirling with brushes. Drag the stick just inside the rim in circular patterns to create a constant pink-noise-esque timbre. This never gets loud, nor is it supposed to be; it’s merely a nice sustained texture.

The woodblock must occasionally be played on its sides. This is designated by a solid-square notehead in the woodblock part and verbally by “sides of woodblock.” Play one side or both!

“Sticks” refers merely to slapping the snare sticks together.

The performer must make unvoiced syllables throughout:

ssa – pitchless, unvoiced raspy s eliding with a forceful exhalation with mouth in shape of “hah”

kah – hard k with exhalation with mouth also in shape of “hah”

t – t (breathy, though), as though saying “tip”

tah – t plus “hah” harshly exhaled

k – k (also breathy), as though saying “kitten”

rrr – good ol’ tongue roll – rather harsh

If the performer is soft-spoken, or otherwise nonplussed about making vocal noises, please reinforce with a dynamic-type mic at close range or a (hyper)cardioid lavalier at 30-40% gain. In general, though, particularly with “k” and “t” against bongos or woodblock, the voice will likely be underbalanced, and that’s probably okay and half the fun.

Composed in Nebraska City, NE, January 2016.

- Percussion:
  - o Wood block (higher pitch preferred)
  - o Bongos (lo and hi)
  - o Voice (no pitches necessary)
  - o Sticks (good strong snare ones)

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Driving, Reckless ♩ = 132+

Voice (unpitched) 4/4  
 Sticks  
 Wood Block  
 Bongo - Hi  
 Bongo - Lo

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

5 (Vox.) *ssa* *ff* 3/4

Perc. *f* *ff* 3/4

8 (Vox.) *ssa* *f* *ssa* *ssa* 3/4

Perc. *mf* 3/4

11 (Vox.) *ssa* *p* *kah* *tah* *fp*

Perc. *mp* *p* *ff* *f* *mf*<sup>5</sup>

*p* "rub" -- see performance notes

sides of woodblock

(Vox.)

20 K T K T K K T K T K T K

*f sempre*

Perc.

*fp* *f* Rim *ff*

(Vox.)

24

ssa K T K T K T K T K

*ff* *mf*

Perc.

*f* *ff* *mf*

(Vox.)

28

K

*ff* *mp* *ff*

Perc.

*f* "rub" *p* *ff*

(Vox.)

32

*ffz* *n.*

Perc.

*ffz* *n.*