Asphalt Cocktail

(2009)

John Mackey

Commissioned by Howard J. Gourwitz as a gift to Dr. Kevin L. Sedatole and the Michigan State University Wind Symphony

Instrumentation

Piccolo

4 Flutes

2 Oboes

2 Bassoons

Contrabassoon

Clarinet in Eb

4 Clarinets in Bb

2 Bass Clarinets in Bb

Contrabass Clarinet in Bb

Soprano Sax

Alto Sax

Tenor Sax

Baritone Sax

- 4 Trumpets in Bb
- 4 French Horns
- 4 Trombones (minimum of 3 Tenor, I Bass; additional players may be added)

Euphonium (2 preferred)

Tuba (2 or more preferred)

Piano

Harp

Percussion (7 players)

Timpani (4 drums, 5 if desired) Player I:

Xylophone, Marimba, Whip Player 2:

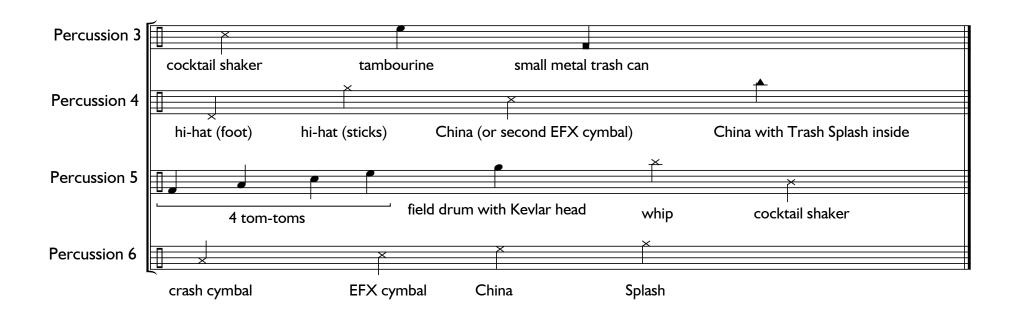
Tambourine; metal cocktail shaker with nuts, etc. inside; small metal trash can filled with metal, taped shut Player 3: (will be slammed to floor, sounding like a controlled crash of chains)

Hi-hat; China cymbal; upside-down 14" mini-China with 13" Trash Splash cymbal stacked inside

Player 4: 4 Tom-Toms; field drum with Kevlar head; whip; metal cocktail shaker with nuts, etc. inside Player 5:

Player 6: 4 Cymbals: crash, Zildjian 16" ZHT EFX (or comparable), China, Splash

Player 7: Bass Drum



Note: **All trills** are 1/2-step trills. All glisses last entire duration notated.

Program Note

Several years ago, when I was living in Manhattan, I was walking down Columbus Avenue with my good friend (and fellow composer) Jonathan Newman. Somehow, the topic of titles for pieces came up, and Newman said a title that stopped me in my tracks there on the sidewalk: "Asphalt Cocktail."

I begged him to let me use the title. "That title screams Napoleonic Testosterone Music. I was born to write that!" I pleaded. "No," was his initial response. I asked regularly over the next few years, and the answer was always the same: "No. It's mine." In May 2008, I asked him once again, begging more pathetically than I had before, and his answer this time surprised me: "Fine," he said, "but I'll be needing your first-born child." This was easily agreeable to me, as I don't like kids.

Around this same time, my wife and I were talking to Kevin Sedatole about his upcoming performance at the CBDNA National Convention. It was my wife who suggested to Kevin, after coaxing him with cocktails ourselves, that I write a piece to open his CBDNA concert, and that piece should be "Asphalt Cocktail." Kevin told his friend Howard J. Gourwitz about the idea for the piece, and Howard generously agreed to personally fund the commission as a gift to Kevin Sedatole and the Michigan State University Wind Symphony. The piece is dedicated to Jonathan Newman, because without his title I'd have written a completely different piece, like "Bandtastic! : A Concert Prelude."

"Asphalt Cocktail" is a five-minute opener, designed to shout, from the opening measure, "We're here." With biting trombones, blaring trumpets, and percussion dominated by cross-rhythms and back beats, it aims to capture the grit and aggression that I associate with the time I lived in New York. Picture the scariest NYC taxi ride you can imagine, with the cab skidding around turns as trucks bear down from all sides.

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"Asphalt Cocktail" was commissioned by Howard J. Gourwitz as a gift to Dr. Kevin L. Sedatole and the Michigan State University Wind Symphony.

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Performance materials available for hire directly from the composer:

John Mackey 7401 Mesa Drive Austin, TX 78731

requests@ostimusic.com

WWW.OSTIMUSIC.COM































































