Three Monk Tunes

for tap dancer and percussionist

for Anita Feldman

Larry Polansky
1983
revised edition, 1993
Performance Notes
The three pieces should be performed in the score order without a break. Either *Bemsha Swing* or *I Mean You* might be performed individually, but never two of the pieces without a third.

*Bemsha Swing*
(for David Rosenboom)
The beginning tempo is between \(mn = 80\) and \(mn = 92\). The accelerando over the entire piece ends in a final tempo of about \(mn = 152\), or as fast as possible.

Non-pitched sounds, notated as \(x\)-noteheads, are played on a different instrument than the pitched sounds. 3 temple blocks (non-pitched) and marimba has been the most common instrumentation for performances of this piece. The non-pitched sounds, should, however, be “high-middle-low.” The notation:

![Non-pitched notation]

indicates a cluster, or indefinite chord centering around C-natural and F-sharp. This chord may be distinguished timbrally as well (perhaps by some sort of damping).

The tap notation is as follows:

![Tap notation]

The vocalizations “unh” are low and guttural, but not overly theatrical. The dancer and percussionist should take great care to balance their dynamics.

The notation \(^*\) over a beat indicates that the “replacement” (or “morphing” process) which structures this piece, has begun on that particular beat (quarter-note). This process occurs independently in the tap and percussion parts. The notation is more a compositional one than performance, although the performers might in some way emphasize those beats slightly to make the process a bit more obvious.

*Round Midnight*
(for Ann Rodiger)
The instrumental part may be played by vibraphone (as percussionists Gary Schall and William Winant have done), electric piano, jazz guitar, or some other soft instrument. The dancer may somehow muffle his feet (perhaps by dancing on sand, in sneakers, jazz shoes, placing socks over his taps, etc.), or simply, as Anita Feldman has done, by using the taps themselves for the soft timbre. The tap part may be thought of as a kind of “rudimental drum,” and one possibility is that the dancer move very little in this piece. All of the dancer rolls should be thought of as “crushed rolls.”

The notation for the complex grupetti includes small vertical “hash-marks” for the main quarter-note beats (\(mn=60\)) of the measure, as well as numerical indications, in
hundredths of a beat, which show where notes fall in relation to the main pulse. Those numbers can be used to check “before/after” rhythmic coordination between the two parts. Dashed lines between parts indicate simultaneity’s and non-simultaneity’s.

It is very important that the grupetti sound like grupetti. For example, a 17:11 rhythm should feel like a simple rhythm, with its own coherence, but one which is related to the main pulse and the other part in complex ways. In fact, a 17:11 pattern could just be considered as a simple one with a different metronome marking (in this case about 92.7) which relates to the underlying mm =60 pulse. The parts should be lined up accurately with relation to each other; and each part should articulate its own pulse evenly.

I Mean You
(for Jody Diamond)
The percussion part is played by three tuned roto-toms. The melodies (marked kb.) may be played on toy piano, glockenspiel, mandolin, some sort of toy synthesizer, or other similarly “small” instrument. Different instruments may be used for different variations. A second player may be used for this part, or the percussionist may do it all himself. In general the tap dancer should be motionless while humming and whistling.

Tempi may vary at the performers’ discretion, but in general, the unison sections should be as fast as possible. Both the roto-toms and the tap can be amplified.

Acknowledgments
Anita Feldman, for whom the pieces were written and who has been the only tap dancer to perform them, has been essential in all phases of the composing and editing of the score. She has my deepest gratitude for her commitment to these difficult works, as well as for her beautiful choreography and performances of them. Performers who have made important contributions to the evolution of these pieces include David Pate, Gary Schall, and William Winant. Ann Rodiger played a valuable role in the piece’s inception. David Fuqua recopied this current edition.

The Three Monk Tunes were written in 1982-3, and premiered in March, 1983. A slight revision to I Mean You (Variation XIII) was made in 1987. This current score is a recopied edition (1992-3).

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Lebanon, NH
March 13, 1993