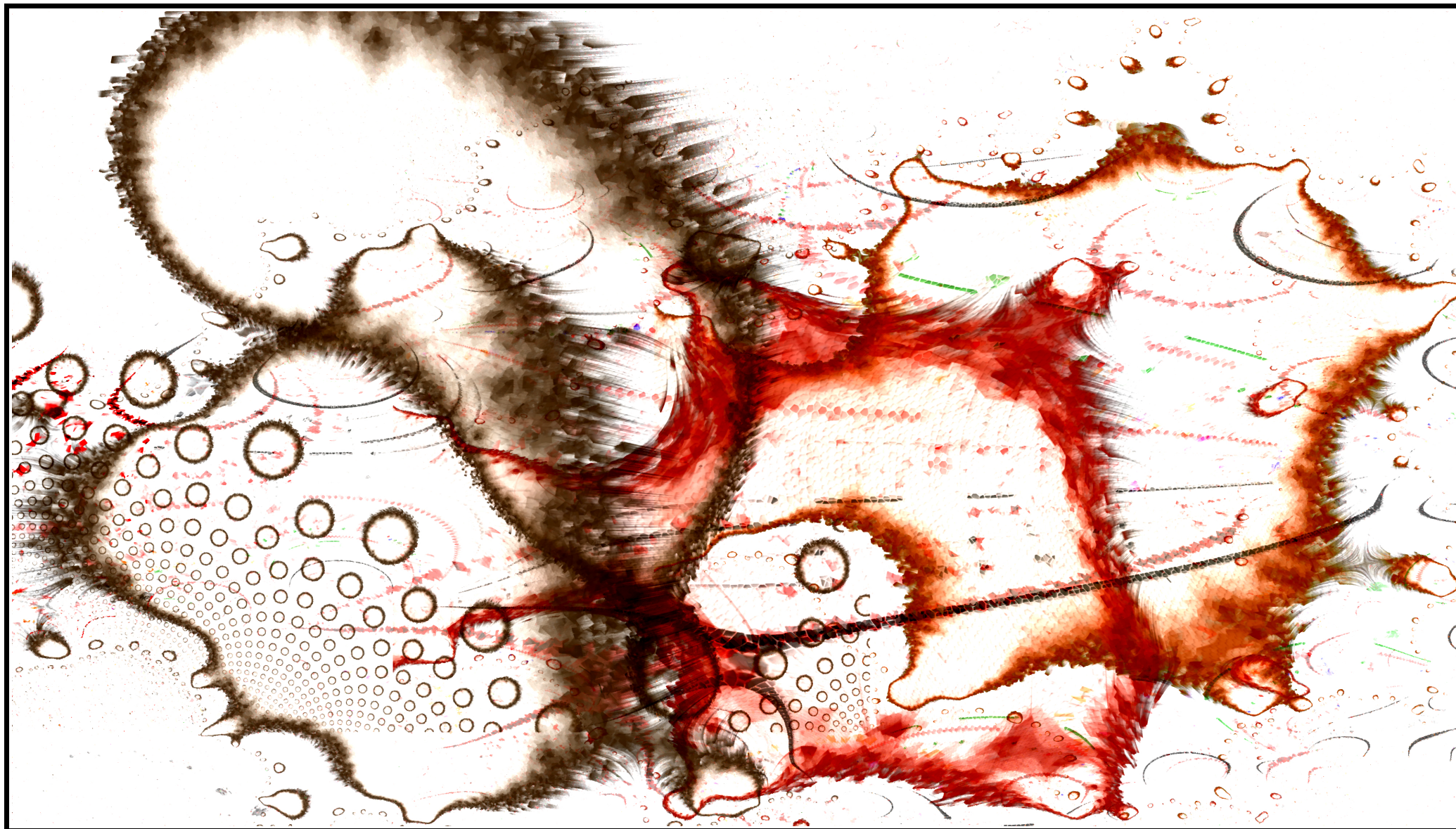


# CYPRESSES AFTER FIRE (2014)

*for percussion duo*



ANDREW A. WATTS

COUNTERPOINT  
PRINTWORKS

CP-029



Program Note

*Cypresses After Fire* was written in the fall of 2014 for Radical 2 (Levy Lorenzo and Dennis Sullivan) and their residency at Stanford University. The genesis of this work can be traced to this year's project with the Graduate Composition Seminar led by Mark Applebaum entitled *Theme in Search of Variations*. Here, each of the DMAs composed several movements based (strictly or loosely) on Applebaum's original theme. As a collection these were then performed by the Los Angeles Percussion Quartet in early December. In one of my variation movements I experimented with the transformation of standard notation to proportional events; erasing bar-lines, note stems, time signatures, and any other inked feature musicians typically give specific metrical meaning to. This concept of stripping a preexisting work down to just the event-hits over time then re-orchestrating these dots for new instruments and techniques became the basis for *Cypresses After Fire*.



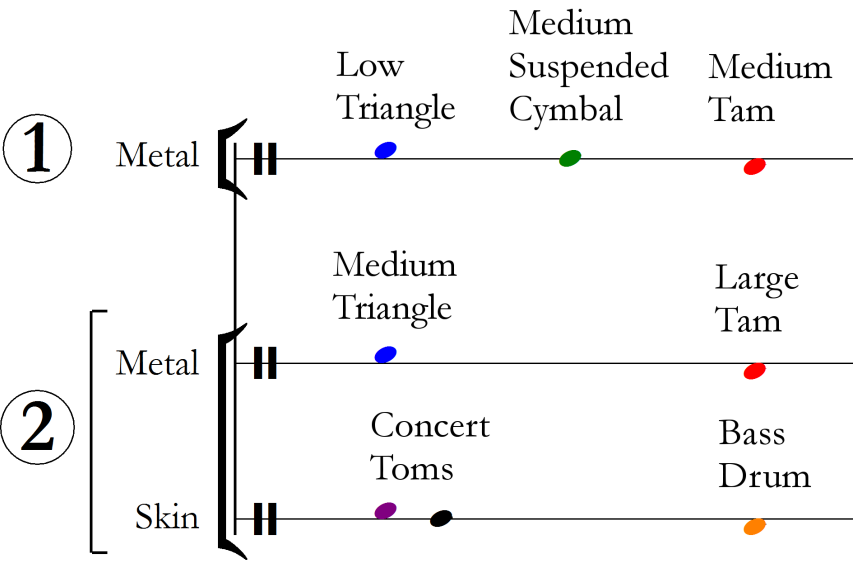
The title is an indirect result of moving to California after spending most of my life based in Northeastern states. Though I am usually not very perceptive of the natural details that make up my environments, I became intrigued by the presence of cypress trees in the San Francisco Bay Area. After a casual walk one day I decided on a whim to look up cypress trees on Wikipedia. In the article about Cupressus sempervirens, the Mediterranean cypress (also known as Italian, Tuscan, or graveyard cypress, or pencil pine) one bit of information at the end stuck out to me.

In July 2012, a forest fire devastated for five days, 20,000 hectares of forest in the Valencian village of Andilla. However, amid the charred landscape, a group of 946 cypress trees about 22 years old was virtually unharmed, and only burned 12 cypress. Andilla cypresses were planted by the CypFire European project studying various aspects of the cypresses, including fire resistance.<sup>1</sup>

Among the other factoids this was quite a surprising entry, however, what I found most fascinating was how the images were captioned: “Cypresses After Fire”. Not, *a patch of cypresses trees after the forest fire in Andilla...not, the charred aftermath of a fire which mysteriously left a group of cypress trees nearly untouched...*just the blunt message: “Cypresses After Fire”. The poetic simplicity and power of this caption stuck with me.

The cover page image was designed by Andrew A. Watts.

Instrumentation



Player 1  
Low Triangle  
Medium Suspended Cymbal  
Medium Tam

Player 1 Mallets  
Medium Yarn  
Triangle Beaters  
Double Bass Bow

Player 2  
Medium Triangle  
Large Tam  
Two Concert Toms  
Bass Drum

Player 2 Mallets  
Wood Sticks  
Triangle Beaters  
Double Bass Bow  
Superball Mallet  
(for friction on  
bass drum and toms)

In the case of instruments that are repeated among the ensemble (triangles and toms) care should be taken to choose contrasting but compatible sounds.

Miscellaneous Items (to be provided by the composer):  
Wooden Dowel Rod (approx. 2' long)  
Metal Chain Segment (with heavy links)

Performance Notes

Duration (approx.):  
I. 6'45"  
II. 7'45"  
Total: 14'30"

There are no separate or individual parts. Both players should read off of their own copy of the full score.

*Diminuendo al niente / Crescendo da niente*



Change gradually from one sound or one way of playing (etc.) to another.







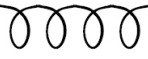


*Col legno battuto*— strike with the wood of the bow or bounce the wood of the bow. A much more percussive sound than traditional bowing is desired.




*Col legno tratto*— bowing with the wood only. A whispery white noise effect is desired.

1 Gil, Joanquin. "El Enigma De Los Cipreses Ignífugos." *Sociedad*. El Pais, 12 Aug. 2012. Web. 24 Dec. 2014. <[http://sociedad.elpais.com/sociedad/2012/08/12/actualidad/1344804535\\_438591.html](http://sociedad.elpais.com/sociedad/2012/08/12/actualidad/1344804535_438591.html)>.

Performance Notes (cont.)

-  Use the indicated mallet or implement to strike or sound at the center of the surface.
-  Use the indicated mallet or implement to strike or sound at the bottom edge of the surface. This is often intended to be at or on the rim of the instrument.
-  *Scrape*– I imagine scraping and rubbing to be the same motion, only applying to different instruments with different beaters. The metals (cymbal and tam) should be scraped with the triangle beater(s), often in a circular motion on the instrumental surfaces. For the skins (tom/bass drum), I notate it as a "scrape", but it is rubbing the surfaces with a superball mallet. The lines for rubbing with the superball mallet are intended to be the duration of motion, and not necessarily the duration it "speaks" (as it is somewhat unpredictable when the friction will catch on the surface and sound).
-  Circular motion (slow)  (fast/aggressive)
-  *Mute*– for the tam it may be necessary for the player to use the side of his or her leg to stop the vibration. For the suspended cymbals an ordinary “choke” is best when possible.
-  *Open*– allow to vibrate/resonate fully without any dampening.

Stems connected to *glissandi* lines are used merely as guides to help indicate the meter (i.e. where the beat is in relation to the slide). Please do not accent these. Rather, re-articulate freely and staggered according to the demands of the phrase.

-  For the tam, tom, and bass drum the "x" notehead always means to strike the rim of the designated instrument with the mid-section (wood) of the hard yarn mallet. So for the passage on the second system in movement III it would mean to strike the rim of the tom with the yarn mallet wood then rub the surface of the tom with the superball mallet. The only time when the "x" notehead means otherwise is for the triangle. The "x" notehead for the triangle means to mute and strike, producing a deadnote. If this is in a section where two beaters are required per hand, then try and mute the triangle with the ring/pinky fingers with the palm of the hand not striking it. At the end of the piece this deadnote strike vs. ord. strike of the triangle becomes a feature, so the other beaters could be put down before this point.

I have added the ties and *ln* indication at the end of phrases just to emphasize that even through there is not any further action for a while, the instrument (often the triangle) would still be ringing/sounding here. There is no difference in attack.

The timeline at the bottom of each system is there as a visual guide for approximating how long each of the gestures should take. You do not need to use a stopwatch or anything of the sort unless you feel more comfortable doing so. The occasional dashes within the systems are points where I would like the events/gestures to line up. There will be no electronics or video element.

Additionally, there are timed page turns indicated as fermatas. Please try to keep these without any extraneous noises and appearing as motionless as possible.

MOVEMENT I

The wooden dowel should be positioned on the bass drum surface with the bottom end of the rod making contact with the center of the skin and the top end of the rod being held/steadied with the left hand. Bow the dowel with right hand. Also, approximate the pitch gestures by gently(!) A subtle, nuanced change in pitch is desired. Again, please apply pressure with extreme care. The bass drum dynamics for this movement are the resultant sounds. This is often not the amount of force necessary to produce such volumes, especially with bowing. Lastly, lay the metal chain on the surface of the bass drum in a section from the center to the edge opposite the performer.

MOVEMENT II

- Beaters at the beginning of the piece:  
Player 1 will need two triangle beaters for scraping on the surfaces of the metal instruments and playing the triangle. Additionally, two hard yarn mallets will be needed for striking the tam rim and playing the setup normally later on.
- Player 2 will need a triangle beater for scraping on the surfaces of the metal instruments and playing the triangle. Also, a superball mallet and hard yarn mallet will be needed. The superball for rubbing on the tom/bass drum surfaces, and the yarn mallet for striking the tam rim and playing the setup normally later on.

At the beginning, when indicated to scrape tam, focus on the center of the surface. As II. progresses the gestures should spread outward on the tam. The final instances should scrape the instrument's outer rim. A gradual change in timbre is desired throughout this movement.

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# CYPRESSES AFTER FIRE

## I.

Andrew A. Watts (2014)

1 Cymbal Tam

2 Toms Bass Drum

3 Cymbal Tam

4 Bass Drum

Dynamic markings: *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *sfz*, *ppp*

Articulation: *choke*, *l.v.*, *quickly bow tam on rim*, *damp center w/L.H. while bowing rim*, *col legno tratto*, *bow ord.*

Performance instructions: *bow wooden dowel on bass drum surface*



The musical score is presented in three systems, each consisting of two staves: Cymbal/Tam and Toms/Bass Drum. The notation is color-coded: green for Cymbal/Tam and orange for Toms/Bass Drum. Dynamic markings include *mp*, *ppp*, *sfz*, *mf*, *p*, *f*, *pp*, and *sub p*. Performance instructions are written in red and green. The score is marked with measure numbers 4, 5, and 6, and a 4'' time signature at the end of the third system.

**System 1 (Measures 4-5):**

- Cymbal/Tam:** Measures 4 and 5 feature green notes with upward strokes. Dynamics include *mp* and *mf*. Instructions include *col legno battuto* (red) and *bow ord.* (green).
- Toms/Bass Drum:** Measures 4 and 5 feature orange notes with upward strokes. Dynamics include *mp*, *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, and *mf*. A note in measure 5 is marked with a circled 'x' and the instruction *\*(bow tom rim)*.

**System 2 (Measures 6-7):**

- Cymbal/Tam:** Measures 6 and 7 feature red notes with upward strokes. Dynamics include *mp*, *sfz*, and *mf*. Instructions include *col legno tratto* (red), *battuto* (red), and *col legno battuto-tratto* (red).
- Toms/Bass Drum:** Measures 6 and 7 feature black notes with upward strokes. Dynamics include *p*, *f*, and *mp*. A note in measure 7 is marked with a circled 'x' and the instruction *\*(bow tom rim)*.

**System 3 (Measures 8-9):**

- Cymbal/Tam:** Measures 8 and 9 feature red notes with upward strokes. Dynamics include *p*, *mp*, *pp*, *mf*, and *p*. Instructions include *col legno battuto-tratto* (red) and *quickly bow tam on rim* (red).
- Toms/Bass Drum:** Measures 8 and 9 feature orange notes with upward strokes. Dynamics include *pp*, *p*, *sfz*, *sub p*, and *mf*. A note in measure 9 is marked with a circled 'x' and the instruction *\*(bow tom rim)*.

\*Bowing the top of a music stand will produce a nearly equivalent tone, and may be substituted for this gesture as necessary if the performer is able to execute with a greater consistency. \*\*Similarly, the bowing of the higher tom rim may be substituted with bowing the music stand. Please ensure the stand is securely taped to the ground.

7

Cymbal  
Tam

Bass Drum

col legno battuto

bow ord.

col legno battuto

bow ord.

quickly bow tam on rim

*pp*

*ppp*

*pp*

*p*

*pppp*

*p*

*sffz*

*pp*

*pppp*

*sffz*

8

Cymbal  
Tam

Toms  
Bass Drum

col legno battuto

tratto

*p*

*sffz*

*sffz*

*sffz*

*sffz*

*ff*

*p*

*f*

*pp*

*f*

*pp*

9

Cymbal  
Tam

Bass Drum

bow ord.

*p*

*mp*

*p*

*ppp*

*pp*

*p*

*4"*



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## II.

**1**

Triangle  
Cymbal  
Tam

scrape

pp

mp

pp

ppp

p

pp

ppp

p

ppp

sfz

ppp

mp

sfz

pp

strike rim with handle

**2**

Triangle  
Tam

Toms  
Bass Drum

strike rim with handle

sfz

sfz

sfz

pp

pp

pp

pp

mp

pp

mp

scrape w/  
superball  
mallet

Triangle 2  
Cymbal  
Tam

Triangle  
Tam

Toms  
Bass Drum

*mp*  
*mp*  
*ppp*  
*p*  
*pp*  
*ppp*  
*p*

*p*  
*mp*  
*pp*

*pp*  
*mp*  
*pp*  
*mf*  
*mp*  
*mf*  
*pp*

Triangle  
Cymbal  
Tam

Triangle  
Tam

Toms  
Bass Drum

3

2"

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*mf*

*pp*

*mf*

*pp*





Cypresses After Fire (2014) II. - Andrew A. Watts

Triangle Cymbal Tam

Triangle Tam

Toms Bass Drum

*pp* *pp* *f* *pp* *sfz* *mp* *pp* *f* *sub p*

Triangle Cymbal Tam

Triangle Tam

Toms Bass Drum

*p* *mp* *p* *pp* *pp* *mp* *p* *mp* *sfz* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *sfz* *p* *mp*

UNISON

UNISON

Triangle Cymbal Tam

Triangle Tam

Toms Bass Drum

*mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *pp-sfpp* *sfpp*

6"



Triangle  
Cymbal  
Tam

Triangle  
Tam

Toms  
Bass Drum

Triangle  
Cymbal  
Tam

Triangle  
Tam

Toms  
Bass Drum

Triangle  
Cymbal  
Tam

Triangle  
Tam

Toms  
Bass Drum

4"

Triangle 13  
Cymbal  
Tam

ord. (not scraping)

pp cresc. mf

pp cresc. mf

Toms  
Bass Drum

ff

Triangle 14  
Cymbal  
Tam

ord. (not scraping)  
UNISON

mf mf

ppp

ppp

ppp

Toms  
Bass Drum

ff

Triangle 15  
Cymbal  
Tam

(ppp) pp

pp

Toms  
Bass Drum

5"



December 29, 2014  
New Freedom, PA

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