

Matthew Shlomowitz

Popular Contexts, Volume 8

Five soundscapes for a contemporary percussionist

For midi pads and assorted acoustic instruments

Written for Håkon Stene

Composed: 2015-2016

Duration: 24 minutes

Commissioned by Håkon Stene with funding from the Norwegian Programme for Artistic Research.

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Five soundscapes for a contemporary percussionist

For midi pads and assorted acoustic instruments

1. *Drummin' in the Rain*
2. *Comfortably Glock*
3. *Session Drummer*
4. *Exotic tourism in recorded sound history*
5. *Royalty Free*

Programme note

Popular Contexts is a series of pieces that combine pre-recorded sounds with live instrumental music to investigate aspects of everyday and popular culture. *Volume 8* was written for Håkon Stene, who made many suggestions that shaped the composition. The work was commissioned by the Norwegian Programme for Artistic Research and first performed by Håkon Stene at Heimathafen Neukölln in the Ultraschall Festival (Berlin) on 22 January 2016.

Instrumentation

- Vibraslap
- Crotales (one octave — upper octave)
- Glockenspiel
- Gong
- 15 note Alto Kalimba (Thumb piano), two octaves from G to G (9 paper clips are also needed)
- 9 pad MIDI drum kit: hi-hat, kick, snare, 3 toms and 3 cymbals
- MIDI percussion controller (4 pads minimum, 7 ideally)
- MIDI percussion pad
- Turntable, with crackling record

Equipment

- Microphone for glockenspiel
- Microphone for kalimba
- Computer operated sampling software
- 3 loudspeakers

Routing

- channel 1 → speaker 1 (left)
- channel 2 → speaker 2 (centre)
- channel 3 → speaker 3 (right)

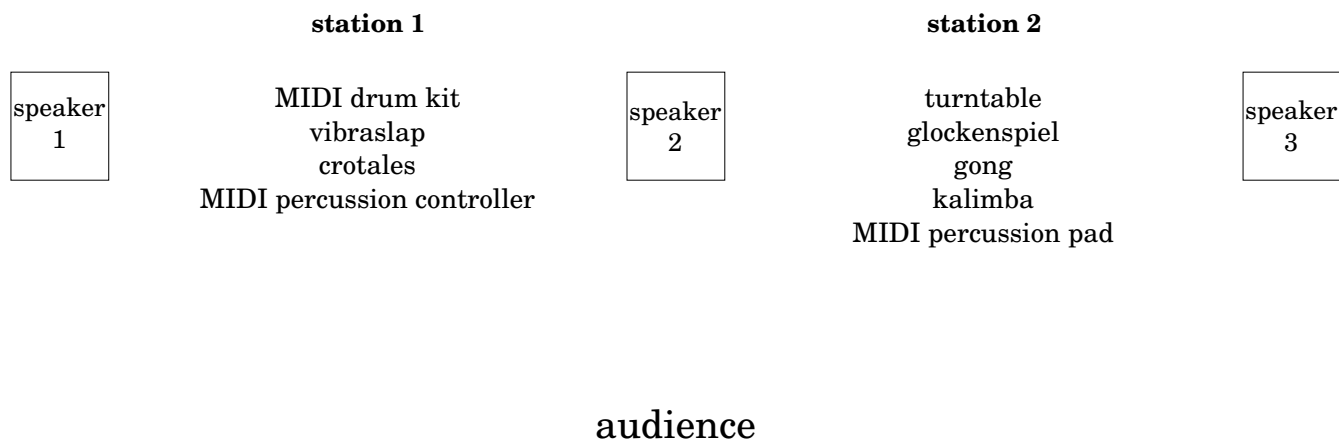
Routed to channels 1 and 3:

- Glockenspiel
- MIDI percussion controller

Routed to channel 2:

- Kalimba
- Turntable
- MIDI drum kit
- MIDI percussion pad

Stage set up



Performance instructions

Movements 1, 3 and 5 are performed from **station 1**; movements 2 and 4 from **station 2**.

Samples

Samples can be obtained from the composer. Performers are free to make substitutions to certain samples in movements 2 and 5 (see below).

Glockenspiel

The amplified sound of the glockenspiel should be equal to the acoustic sound, with the amplified/acoustic combination filling the concert hall.

Kalimba

15 note Kalimba: Two octaves from low G to high G (e.g. Hugh Tracey Alto Kalimba). NOTE: paper clips are attached to some notes to create a buzzing sonority.

Crackling record

The record should sound as a dusty and somewhat scratched empty record. This can be achieved by taking a blank record and physically degrading it, or by pressing a recording of a degraded record onto a new vinyl, as was done at the first performance.

MIDI drum kit

The MIDI drum kit is used in movements 1, 3 and 5.

Movement 1 *Drummin' in the Rain*

1. Electro dance kit (6 pads used): hi-hat, kick, snare, rim-shot, electronic noise 1, electronic noise 2.

All sounds short and dry. Not samples of an acoustic instruments, but rather the kind of electronic representation of percussive sounds commonplace in electro dance music.

Movement 3 *Session Drummer*

1. 80s rock ballad 'gated reverb' kit (9 pads used): hi-hat, kick, snare, high/mid/low toms, splash/crash/ride cymbals.
2. Lo-fi kit (5 pads used): hi-hat, kick, snare, hand-clap, cymbal.

Movement 5 *Royalty Free*

1. Rock kit, with reverb and extreme phaser effect (9 pads used): hi-hat, kick, snare, high/mid/low toms, splash/crash/ride cymbals.

MIDI percussion controller

This controller is used in movements 1, 3 and 5. A minimum of four pads is required; with seven pads everything can be set in advance, without changes required during performance. Four pads are used in movement 1; one pad in movement 3; and two pads in movement 5.

Movement 1 *Drummin' in the Rain*

4 samples, 4 pads: each sample assigned to a pad.

pad	sample	dynamic	duration	action
1	Rain falling	<i>mf</i>	1'00"	Toggle
2	Car engine driving, as heard from inside car	<i>mf</i>	0'10"	Toggle
3	Windscreen wipers	<i>mf</i>	0'10"	Toggle
4	Lightning strikes	<i>mf</i>	0'10"	Toggle

- **Toggle** action: successive strokes turn the sample ON and OFF. In the score a normal note head indicates the onset of a sample and the 'cross' note-head indicates when the sample is stopped.
- All samples continue regardless of whether other samples are activated.
- Each time a sample is activated it begins from the start of the sample.

Movement 3 *Session Drummer*

1 recording is assigned to 1 pad.

sample	dynamic	duration	action
<i>Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune</i> backing track (alternating between MIDI realised version and orchestral recording)	<i>f</i>	3'00"	Plays until end

Movement 5 *Royalty Free*

Pad 1: 84 samples are assigned in a 227 item sequence.

Pad 2: 16 samples are assigned in a 16 item sequence.

Pad 1 samples

stroke	sample	duration	stroke	sample	duration
1-44	44 'library samples'	2" each	201	G major orchestral chord	3"
45	Gong	6"	202	Car rev 2	3"
46	Sci-fi effect 1	5"	203	G major orchestral chord	3"
47	Sci-fi effect 2	5"	204	Car rev 3	3"
48	Sci-fi effect 3	5"	205	G major orchestral chord	3"
49	Sci-fi effect 4	10"	206	Car rev 4	3"
50-93	44 'library samples'	2" each	207	G major orchestral chord	3"
94	Gong	6"	208	Car rev 5	3"
95	Drum beat 1	5"	209	G major orchestral chord	3"
96	Drum beat 2	5"	210	Car rev 6	3"
97	Drum beat 3	5"	211	G major orchestral chord	3"
98	Drum beat 4	10"	212	G major guitar chord 1	3"
99-142	44 'library' samples	2" each	213	G major guitar chord 2	3"
143	Gong	6"	214	G major guitar chord 3	3"
144	Telephone ring sample 1	5"	215	G major guitar chord 4	3"
145	Telephone ring sample 2	5"	216	G major guitar chord 5	3"
146	Telephone ring sample 3	5"	217	G major guitar chord 6	3"
147	Telephone ring sample 4	10"	218	G major guitar chord 7	3"
148-191	44 'library samples'	2" each	219	G major guitar chord 8	3"
192	Gong	6"	220	G major guitar chord 9	3"
193	Tennis recording	18"	221	G major guitar chord 10	3"
194	Table tennis recording	12"	222	G major guitar chord 11	3"
195	Drum beat 5	5"	223	G major guitar chord 12	3"
196	Drum beat 6	5"	224	G major guitar chord 13	3"
197	Drum beat 7	5"	225	G major guitar chord 14	6"
198	Drum beat 8	5"	226	Gong	3"
199	G major orchestral chord	3"	227	G major orchestral chord	3"
200	Car rev 1	3"			

- All samples should be set at the dynamic ***fff***, matching the midi drum kit.
- Samples always start from the beginning of the sample each time they are activated.
- Samples sound until another sample is triggered on pad 1, at which point they are cut. Additionally, four strokes on Pad 1 also cut the sample sounding on Pad 2:
 - Stroke 50 on Pad 1 cuts the previous sample on Pad 1 and the sample sounding on Pad 2 (the 4th sample).

- Stroke 99 on Pad 1 cuts the previous sample on Pad 1 and the sample sounding on Pad 2 (the 8th sample).
 - Stroke 148 on Pad 1 cuts the previous sample on Pad 1 and the sample sounding on Pad 2 (the 12th sample).
 - Stroke 199 on Pad 1 cuts the previous sample on Pad 1 and the sample sounding on Pad 2 (the 16th sample).
- Each of the 8 drum beat loops is in a different tempo, with each going ‘against’ the 160 BPM tempo of the live drum part.

44 ‘library samples’

stroke	sample	stroke	sample
1	Dog barking	23	Crickets (from mvt 2)
2	Toilet flushing	24	Machine gun fire
3	Sneeze	25	Bicycle bell
4	Rain (from mvt 1)	26	Electro Music (from mvt 2)
5	Rooster crowing	27	Baby crying
6	Radio static	28	Radio announcement
7	Door bell	29	Car horn
8	Wolf Whistle	30	Slap bass musical fragment
9	Crowd applauding	31	Bubbles (from mvt 2)
10	Children screaming	32	Cash register closed
11	Explosion	33	Basketball bouncing
12	Spoken word: “Golf”	34	Internet dial up sound
13	Electric saw	35	Computer game sounds
14	Morse code	36	Match being lit
15	Plane (from mvt 2)	37	Windscreen wipers (from mvt 1)
16	Horse galloping	38	Blues harmonica fragment
17	Ragtime musical fragment	39	Cartoon spring sound
18	Sobbing	40	Train crossing signal
19	Ocean waves	41	Electric Tool (from mvt 2)
20	Air raid siren	42	Cartoon ‘crash’ sound
21	Step in a puddle	43	Orchestral hit
22	Electric device (from mvt 2)	44	Door opening

Performers are free here to substitute their own set of 44 samples. In this case, the 44 samples should feature a wide range of subjects, including human, animal, natural, musical and mechanical sounds. All samples should be clearly identifiable. The samples should be edited to sound immediately.

Pad 2 samples

stroke	sample	cut by
1	Synth pad 1	next stroke on pad 2
2	Synth pad 2	next stroke on pad 2
3	Synth pad 3	next stroke on pad 2
4	Synth pad 4	next stroke on pad 1
5	Saxophone phrase 1	next stroke on pad 2
6	Saxophone phrase 2	next stroke on pad 2
7	Saxophone phrase 3	next stroke on pad 2
8	Saxophone phrase 4	next stroke on pad 1
9	Turntable scratching lick 1	next stroke on pad 2
10	Turntable scratching lick 2	next stroke on pad 2
11	Turntable scratching lick 3	next stroke on pad 2
12	Turntable scratching lick 4	next stroke on pad 1
13	Trumpet phrase 1	next stroke on pad 2
14	Trumpet phrase 2	next stroke on pad 2
15	Trumpet phrase 3	next stroke on pad 2
16	Trumpet phrase 4	next stroke on pad 1

- samples 4, 8, 12 and 18 are cut by strokes on Pad 1; all other samples are cut by pad 2.
- the samples overlap when the two pads are played in alternation

For example, in the passage from m3 to m7:

measure	pad 1	pad 2
m3 (×1)	Sci-fi sample 1 activated	
m4	Sci-fi 1 continues	Synth pad sample 1
m3 (×2)	Sci-fi sample 2 activated	Synth pad 1 continues
m4	Sci-fi 2 continues	Synth pad sample 2
m3 (×3)	Sci-fi sample 3 activated	Synth pad 2 continues
m4	Sci-fi 3 continues	Synth pad sample 3
m3 (×4)	Sci-fi sample 4 activated	Synth pad 3 continues
m4	Sci-fi 4 continues	Synth pad sample 4
m5 and m6	Sci-fi 4 continues	Synth pad 4 continues
m7	'Library sample' 1	Synth pad 4 cut

MIDI percussion pad

This pad is used in movements 2 and 4. 21 samples are assigned in a 119 item sequence. Each time the pad is struck the next sample in the list is activated whilst also stopping the previous sample (two samples never sound at the same time). Strokes 1-117 are performed in the 2nd movement, and strokes 118 and 119 in the 4th movement.

stroke	sample	stroke	sample	stroke	sample
	Movement 2				
1	Device 1	41	Device 1	82	Device 2
2	Crickets 1	42	Device 2	83	Device 1
3	Device 1	43	Device 1	84	Gong 1
4	Crickets 2	44	Device 2	85	Device 1
5	Device 1	45	Device 1	86	Gong 2
6	Crickets 3	46	Device 2	87	Device 1
7	Device 1	47	Bubbles 1	88	Gong 3
8	Crickets 4	48	Device 2	89	Device 1
9	Device 1	49	Bubbles 2	90	Device 2
10	Device 2	50	Device 2	91	Gong 1
11	Device 1	51	Bubbles 3	92	Device 2
12	Device 2	52	Device 2	93	Gong 2
13	Device 1	53	Bubbles 4	94	Device 2
14	Device 2	54	Device 2	95	Gong 3
15	Device 1	55	Device 1	96	Device 2
16	Device 2	56	Device 2	97	Gong 1
17	Electric Tool 1	57	Device 1	98	Device 1
18	Device 2	58	Device 2	99	Gong 2
19	Electric Tool 2	59	Device 1	100	Device 1
20	Device 2	60	Device 2	101	Gong 3
21	Electric Tool 3	61	Device 1	102	Device 1
22	Device 2	62	Electro music 1	103	Gong 1
23	Electric Tool 4	63	Device 1	104	Gong 2
24	Device 2	64	Electro music 2	105	Gong 3
25	Device 1	65	Device 1	106	Gong 1
26	Device 2	66	Electro music 3	107	Gong 2
27	Device 1	67	Device 1	108	Gong 3
28	Device 2	68	Electro music 4	109	Gong 1
29	Device 1	69	Device 1	110	Gong 2
30	Device 2	70	Gong 1	111	Gong 3
31	Device 1	71	Device 1	112	Gong 3
32	Plane 1	72	Gong 2	113	Gong 2
33	Device 1	73	Device 1	114	Gong 1
34	Plane 2	74	Gong 3	115	Gong 1
35	Device 1	75	Device 1	116	Gong 2
36	Plane 3	76	Device 2	117	Gong 3
37	Device 1	77	Gong 1		
38	Plane 4	78	Device 2		Movement 4
39	Device 1	79	Gong 2	118	Hugh Tracy speaking
40	Device 2	80	Device 2	119	Applause
		81	Gong 3		

- The 2 ‘Device’ samples sound as machines being switched on.

Movement two begins with recordings grouped by subject matter in sets of four:

1. four recordings of grasshoppers;
2. four recordings of electric drills;
3. four recordings of airplanes; and
4. four recordings of bubbles.

Performers are free to substitute these recordings with four different subjects, e.g., sets of recordings of ambulance sirens, Morse code, whale song and exhaust fans. It is important that each subject is clearly identifiable; that the subjects contrast; that the recordings have a pitched aspect that interacts with the resonance of the glockenspiel chords in an interesting way; and that they are played extremely softly.

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Drummin' in the Rain

Pad Controller ||-----|| MIDI Kit ||-----||

- Rain (pad 1)
- Windscreen wipers (pad 3)
- Car engine, driving (pad 2)
- Lightning strikes (pad 4)
- Snare (pad 2)
- Electronic noise 2 (pad 4)
- Rim shot (pad 6)
- Kick (pad 1)
- Hi hat (pad 3)
- Electronic noise 1 (pad 5)

Crotales

15 $\text{♩} = 82$
Always let ring
mp

Pad Controller

MIDI Kit

MIDI Kit throughout

5 15

crot

pads

mk

mf (sempre)

8

pads

mk

11 15

crot

mp

pads

mk

16 15

crot

pads

mk

2

19 ¹⁵

crot

pads

mk

mp

24 ¹⁵

crot

pads

mk

28 ¹⁵

crot

pads

mk

32 ¹⁵

crot

pads

mk

36 ¹⁵

crot

pads

mk

Drummin' in the Rain

39 ¹⁵

crot

pads

mk

43 ¹⁵

crot

pads

mk

46 ¹⁵

crot

pads

mk

48 ¹⁵

pads

mk

50 ¹⁵

crot

pads

mk

52 ¹⁵

crot

pads

mk

55 ¹⁵

crot

pads

59 ¹⁵

crot

pads

62 ¹⁵

crot

pads

mk

64

mk

66 ¹⁵

crot

pads

Move immediately to 'station two' as crotale resonates and windscreen wiper sample continues. The offstage sound engineer mutes the volume of the sample at the moment movement two begins.

Comfortably Glock

Tam Tam $\text{♩} = 120$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Pad Controller $\frac{4}{4}$

Glockenspiel $\frac{4}{4}$ *Hard mallets*

Cricket 1 *f* *pppp*

Cricket 2 *f* *pppp*

Cricket 3 *f* *pppp*

Cricket 4 *f* *pppp*

Electric tool 1 *pppp* *f* *pppp*

Electric tool 2 *f* *pppp*

Electric tool 3 *f* *pppp*

Electric tool 4 *f* *pppp*

Plane 1 *pppp* *f* *pppp*

Plane 2 *f* *pppp*

Plane 3 *f* *pppp*

Plane 4 *f* *pppp*

mp

The score is written for three parts: Tam Tam, Pad Controller, and Glockenspiel. The tempo is 120 beats per minute, and the time signature is 4/4. The Glockenspiel part uses hard mallets. The score is divided into four systems, each with a 'Cricket' or 'Electric tool' section for the Pad Controller and a 'Plane' section for the Glockenspiel. Dynamics range from fortissimo (f) to pianissimo (pppp). The Pad Controller part consists of rhythmic patterns of eighth and quarter notes. The Glockenspiel part features complex chordal textures with many notes beamed together. The final measure of each system includes a melodic flourish for the Glockenspiel marked mezzo-piano (mp).

* Dampen at the end of the beat. Damping always fast and clinical.

70 pad **Bubbles 1** *pppp* *f* *pppp* **Bubbles 2**

glock 15 *f*

83 pad **Bubbles 3** *f* *pppp* **Bubbles 4** *f* *pppp* *f*

glock 15 *mp*

94 pad **Electro 1** *pppp* *f* *pppp* **Electro 2**

glock 15 *f*

107 pad **Electro 3** *f* *pppp* *f* *ppp* **Electro 4**

glock 15 *mp*

Comfortably Numb backing track (♩ = 63)

C G A A^{sus2} A G/B

118 *♩ = 63 †*
C^{sus2} G D (sample continues)

glock 15 *ppp*

123 15 *mp*

glock 15

† Glockenspiel out of tempo with sample until last beat of m118
‡ Glockenspiel now in tempo with sample

♩ = 120

128
pad
glock

Device 1 Gong 1 Device 1 Gong 2
f *ff* *f* *ff*

138
tt
pad
glock

Tam Tam
Device 1 Gong 3 Device 1 Device 2
f *ff* *f*

150
pad
glock

Device 2 Gong 2 Device 2 Gong 3

162
tt
pad
glock

Device 2 Device 1 Gong 1 Device 1 Gong 2
ff

173
tt
pad
glock

Device 1 Gong 3 Device 1 Device 2
ff

A little faster

183 pad **Gong 1** **Device 2** **Gong 2** **Device 2** **Gong 3** **Device 2** **Gong 1** **Device 1**

glock ¹⁵

191 pad **Gong 2** **Device 1** **Gong 3** **Device 1** **Gong 1** **Gong 2** **Gong 3**

glock ¹⁵

198 pad **Gong 1** **Gong 2** **Gong 3** **Gong 1** **Gong 2** **Gong 3**

glock ¹⁵

204 tt **Gong 3** **Gong 2** **Gong 1** **Gong 1** **Gong 2** **Gong 3** **ff**

pad **Gong 3** **Gong 2** **Gong 1** **Gong 1** **Gong 2** **Gong 3**

glock ¹⁵

211 tt **p**

glock ¹⁵ **mp** **pp** let all notes ring

219 glock ¹⁵

Move to 'station one' as gong 3 sample continues, and acoustic gong and glockenspiel decay.

Session Drummer

Pad Controller II

Debussy backing track (pad 5)

80s Rock Ballad Kit

Lo-fi Kit

Snare (pad 2)

Toms (pads 4-6)

Crash (pad 8)

Hand clap (pad 5)

Kick (pad 1)

Hi hat (pad 3)

Ride (pad 7)

Splash (pad 9)

Kick (pad 1)

Hi hat (pad 3)

Cymbal (pad 4)

Pad Controller

Debussy sample

Drum Kit

80s Rock Ballad Kit

Play in time with the backing track throughout.

$\text{♩} = 96$

4

(sample continues)

dk

Big, 'Fat'

ff

7

dk

11

dk

13

dk

15

dk

16 dk H

17 dk H

20 dk H

23 dk H

26 dk H



27 dk H

29 dk H




Move to turntable whilst backing track continues. As the backing track fades away, start crackling record and then move to 'station two'.

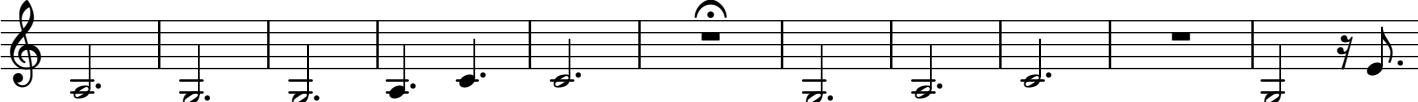
§ Play in time with playback
¶ Match rhythm of flute on playback

Exotic tourism in recorded sound history

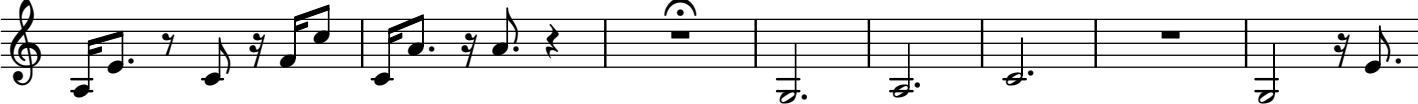
Pad Controller  Kalimba tuning 
 pad 1
 Paper clips are attached to notes marked +

$\text{♩} = 132$
 Hugh Tracy speaking

Pad Controller  
 Kalimba 
 Begin playing after "Nowadays, we know they can get them"
 Always let ring unless noted

11 kal 

22 kal 

29 kal 

37 kal 
mf *p*

43 kal 
mf *p*

48 kal 
mf *p*

54 kal 
mf *p*

12
60
kal *mf* *p*

65
kal *mf* *p*

70
kal *mf* *p*

74
kal *mf*

78
kal *f*

82
pad **Applause**
kal *p*

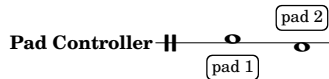
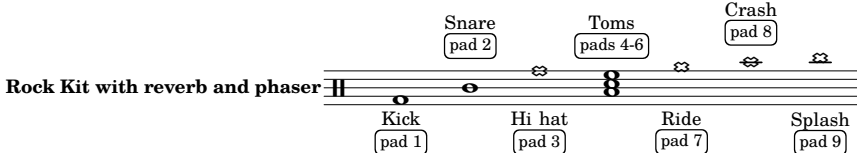
Begin playing after
applause sample dies away.

87
kal

92
kal


Move to 'station one'. The cracking record continues playing until the moment the final movement begins, when it should be muted by the offstage sound engineer.

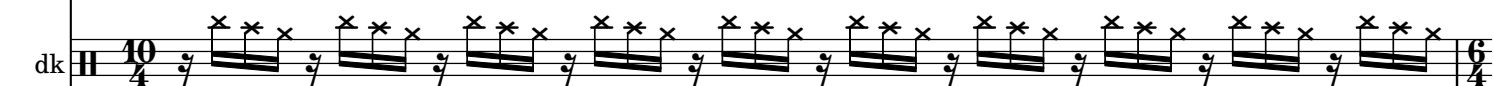
Royalty Free


Pad Controller  Rock Kit with reverb and phaser 

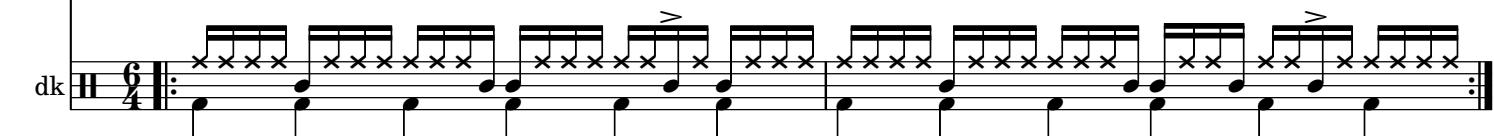
Pad Controller  :|| 10/4

Drum Kit  :|| 10/4

pads²  10/4 | 6/4

dk  10/4 | 6/4

pads³  6/4 :||

dk  6/4 :||

pads⁵ (samples continue)  10/4

dk  10/4

pads⁸  10/4 | 6/4

dk  10/4 | 6/4

9 pads $\times 4$ Drum beats

Sax samples

dk

11 pads (samples continue) $\times 22$ Library samples

dk

14 pads Gong

dk

15 pads $\times 4$ Phone samples

Scratching samples

dk

17 pads (samples continue) $\times 12$ Library samples $\times 10$

dk

21 pads **10** **4** **Gong**

dk **10** **4**

22 pads **3** **4** **Tennis** **2** **4** **6** **4** **Table tennis**

mf **5** **5**

(1st time only, sample continues) (1st time only, sample continues)

mf **5** **5**

mf **5** **5**

mf **5** **5**

25 pads **4** **Drum beats** **Trumpet samples**

fff

27 pads **13** **Brass chord, car rev, guitar chord samples**

(sample continues)

30 pads **Guitar chord** (sample continues) **10** **4**

dk **10** **4**

32 pads **10** **4** **Gong** **6** **4** **Brass chord**

dk **10** **4** **6** **4**