

Rūta Vitkauskaitė

# **Buried Chants**

for bass drum solo

**commissioned by the Royal Academy of Music, London 2019**

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Joanne Chiang for advice, and the first performance of the piece  
Jude Carlton, Jake Brown, Josh Dunbar for advice and demonstration



## **Programme note**

Buried Chants for bass drum solo emerged from my need to explore tonal and melodic potential in this grand instrument, which in classical scores often being seen as just 'one sound'. I personally associate bass drum with shamanic drumming, altered states of consciousness, sensing sound vibrations. The piece itself represents that – it is one person's ritual for themselves, they approach drum like a crystal ball, like a 'witchcraft soup', and, most importantly – like a powerful tool for producing indestructible energy of sound.

## EXPLANATION PAGE

### General

The piece is for one player only. The bass drum should be placed horizontally, performer should be standing. Music stand and mallet stand should be placed in a way that performer could walk the whole circle around the drum while playing.

Hand indications (Hand 1 and 2) are flexible: performer can choose between right and left hand, and swap if needed throughout the piece. The interchange between hands is preferred when written in two lines, although when both hands are written on one line the interchange is up to performer's choice.

**Ad Libitum** tempo and rhythms can be interpreted freely, however should reflect the pulse of the whole piece. Precise tempo indications can be adjusted to a slower speed if needed.

### Mallets

Mallet indications are suggestions only. Performer can choose their own mallets for the best effect.



Medium bass drum mallet x 2.



Medium rubber rattan handle (rattan handle is important for ricochet gestures) x2.



s.b. Super ball x1.



Soft yarn mallet with wooden handle x2.



bow Double bass bow x1.



Finger thimbles x2. Performer should wear them on one hand throughout the piece. Alternatively, could use longer nails.



Palm. This sign is used for both palm hit (with ordinary note-head), and palm damp (square note-head). Palm hit should be replaced for fist or inner wrist hit to achieve louder dynamics. Palm damping throughout the piece is optional (notes in brackets), except in bars 39-46 where it is required as part of notation.

### Noteheads

The notation shows two staves, H. 1 and H. 2, with various performance techniques indicated above and below the notes:

- H. 1:**
  - edge (middle)
  - middle palm hit
  - palm damp
  - middle dampened
  - rim
  - rim ricochet (shaft)
  - side of the drum
  - frame of the drum
  - elbow press (slide) - pitch change
  - arm slide (sleeve) - wind sound
- H. 2:**
  - thimbles, edge (alternatively - nails)
  - palm hit, then hold to damp
  - super ball, sides or more gentle (high tune-like pitch)
  - super ball, hit then drag, middle (low and full pitch)
  - bow on shaft (lower pitch)
  - bow on shoulder (higher pitch)

\*press mallet into the middle of the drum holding at the tip, and drag bow on handle to produce pitch-like scratchy sound. If you drag along the shaft, it will be lower pitch, than if you drag on the shoulder.

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## Ad libitum

arm/hand slide - wind sound,  
take as much time as you feel right

Hand 1

Hand 2

*poco cresc.*

thimbles *tr*

*ppp*

up and down the membrane

*ff*

Hand icon

♩ = 106

Very resonant, majestic, stable

6 TAKE:

H.1

H.2

medium bass drum mallets

medium rubber rattan handle

rim (shaft)

13

H.1

H.2

ONLY: gradual palm damping

*mf* edge

*f*

18

H.1

H.2

*mf*

*f*

*mf*

*f*

21

H.1

H.2

mid.

side frame

rim

*f*

*mf*

palm damp



51 *poco dim.*

H.1  
H.2

**Ad libitum** TAKE: super ball

54 *mf*

H.1  
H.2

s.b. *mf*

Voice

improvise singing and wispering, vary material suggested in boxes

mmm...

58

H.1  
H.2

Voice

uuu... (slide into pitch)

64

walk anti clock-wise around the drum, circle once

H.1  
H.2

s.b.

Voice

aaa...

a - a - a - a

a\_ a\_

TAKE: medium rubber  
 rattan handle  
 bow

68

stand still

H.1&2

Voice

a - a ash... ash... ash...

4

**Ad libitum**  
bow on handle\*

72

H.1&2

Voice

sha - si - fa -

78

H.1&2

put down:

(thimbles)

*mp*

tr

Voice

sha - si - fa sh

83

H.1&2

(on rim/frame, improv.)

soft yarn x2

TAKE:

*mf*

87

H.1&2

$\text{♩} = 162$  vary colours and dynamics

*f*

(hand to hand)

90

H.1&2

*f*

elbow pitch change

$\frac{6}{16}$



95

H.1  $\frac{6}{16}$   $\frac{8}{16}$   $\frac{10}{16}$   $\frac{12}{16}$   $\frac{10}{16}$

H.2  $\frac{6}{16}$   $\frac{8}{16}$   $\frac{10}{16}$   $\frac{12}{16}$   $\frac{10}{16}$

*f*

☼ wood but

99

H.1  $\frac{10}{16}$   $\frac{8}{16}$   $\frac{6}{16}$   $\frac{4}{8}$

H.2  $\frac{10}{16}$   $\frac{8}{16}$   $\frac{6}{16}$   $\frac{4}{8}$

*ff*

head ☼

104

H.1 *poco cresc.*

H.2

109

H.1 *fff*

H.2 *fff*

112 *molto rall., take your time and repeat if needed*

H.1

H.2