

ME105

MA BELL

for percussionist and computer

$\text{♩} = 120$

$\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{5}{8}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

percussion

woods
metals *f*
drums
plates

Sampler

Bass Sampler

$\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{5}{8}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

www.michael-edwards.org

MICHAEL EDWARDS

MA BELL

for one beautiful bell and
four percussion groups consisting of six
objects each of wood, metal, drum, and plate
plus computer

MICHAEL EDWARDS

michael edwards
ma bell
for percussionist and computer

m@michael-edwards.org
www.michael-edwards.org

programme note

ma bell was written for Michael Pattmann. It is a re-working of *ma bel* which in turn was written for Jean-Francois Laporte and his composite compressed-air instrument, the *Babel Table*. The titles' connections to the Old Testament myth explaining the origin of the world's different tongues is clear.

The title *ma bel* transposes merely one character of *ba-bel*. *ma bell* goes one step further in merely repeating a character but in doing so connects to a key percussion instrument. These simple elaborations offer several meanings to speakers of different languages: as a homonym in French (*ma belle*) it could refer to *my beautiful (wife, daughter, belle-sœur, etc.)* or imply the more complete *ma belle vie*; in English it could be misheard as *marble* (the stone but also the child's toy) or refer to *Mabel*, the woman's name; but in Arabic *ma bel* means *what but*, after which I particularly enjoy question marks and perhaps even a *why?*—good things to ask about a piece such as this.

So then: so few symbols, and even fewer syllables, but so much meaning and context. And *Babel* connects back beautifully to this in that, obscured from its mythological context, it refers more generally to a confusing mélange (as in mixture, not the Viennese coffee :): a *mêlée*, in the non-violent sense, of sounds and voices or a noisy, confused scene in general. Such is *ma bell*: a plethora of unrelated samples mixed with the potent sounds of varied percussion, all driven by a score which is digital yet conventionally notated.

What you see or read, however, is by no means what you get (I'm referring now particularly to the score). The symbols need even more translation, interpretation, and *making sense of* than usual. And that's not just the musician's job but the audiences' too (as always), given the sound structures on offer.

And further: *ma bell* integrates strongly emotive vocal utterances from a certain Austrian female; samples that are prelingual but often guttural (synonyms perhaps here: *before the tongue*, as in before language as well as the muscle)—even guttural in both senses: articulated in the throat and perhaps unpleasant or strange—and most definitely communicative, in a nonsensical way, *bien sûr*.

This is what music is: by no means a language but nevertheless able communicate or rather provoke a wide variety of experiences, and transporting meaning (or not) to individuals formed both collectively and uniquely. (*Ahh... ma bel(l)(e) musique!*)

ma bell :: technical and score notes

Duration

c. 8:30, depending on the tempo scaler set in the Max patch (see below).

Percussion

1. There are four groups/families of six percussion instruments, the exact instrumentation of which is left to the preference and discretion of the performer:
 - (a) woods: e.g. wood blocks, temple blocks, slit drums
 - (b) metals: e.g. brake drums, iron pipe, triangle, cowbells
 - (c) drums: e.g. roto-toms, tom-toms, bongos, bass/kick drum, congas, timbales
 - (d) plates: e.g. sizzle and other cymbals, gongs, tam-tams, bell plates.
2. Required in addition to these are
 - (a) chains suitable for drawing across the plates and drums
 - (b) additional metal plates which can be placed on drums
 - (c) a nicely resonant metal bell, for use exclusively at the very end of the piece.
3. The left to right disposition of the six instruments in each group is from low to high in pitch/spectral energy, most probably therefore also from large to small.
4. The notation for the four groups of six instruments is as follows:
 - (a) two staves are used, with two groups per staff
 - (b) the six-note range, with one instrument per note, is from D4 (middle D) to B4 and C5 to A5, thus:
 - i. upper staff
 - A. woods: C5 to A5
 - B. metals: D4 to B4
 - ii. lower staff
 - A. drums: C5 to A5
 - B. plates: D4 to B4
 - (a) N.B. pitches in the percussion part are relative, with no definite pitch being implied by the mapping of notes to instruments.

5. The percussion instruments should be amplified and panned to the front speakers only according to their stage position.

Max

1. Sampling rate is 48khz.
2. Max version 8 is required.
3. You will need the ICST Ambisonics package: launch the MaxMSP package manager and download it from there.
4. As a lot of samples are pre-loaded by the *ma bel* patch, even on fast computers it takes quite a while to load.
5. Once the patch is loaded, press the big X toggle (or press the space bar) and the video score playback will start along with the MIDI sequence after the user-selectable count-down.
6. At the start of each section new samples and processing parameters will be loaded/routed automatically.
7. The video and sample playback speed can be changed with the horizontal slider.
8. During rehearsal you can jump to different sections of the piece using the given drop-down menu. This skips to predetermined points in the video and MIDI sequence.
9. Tempo can be changed by using the speed slider: this is a scaler for the tempi indicated in the score.

Output configuration

1. Output is to be selected from a range of loudspeaker configurations: simple stereo up to octophony and beyond (3rd order ambisonics-configured half/full domes).
2. Stereo performances are not optimal with the current ambisonic setup, but may be useful for rehearsal purposes.
3. Ambisonic movement types and parameters are set for each of the six sections of the piece, along with sample sets, etc.
4. Saved along with the ambisonics settings is the speaker configuration. This should be selected from the drop-down menu and saved in the preset object (shift click on the respective rectangle). This must be done for each of the 6 sections otherwise the outputs may be mis-configured on section changes.

Balance

1. The performance will need someone on the mixing desk to balance levels.
2. Overall sound level is consistently high (but not dangerously so).
3. Maximum impact should be retained throughout, especially for the more percussive sounds/samples.
4. The samples in the computer part must be in equal balance to the amplified percussion.

Score

1. The A4 score is for rehearsal purposes: during the performance it will be read from the video presentation in the Max patch.
2. The pitches in the computer parts are mapped to a sampler banks so there is not usually a relationship between the perceived and notated pitches.

Symbols

1. Sounds should always be left to decay undamped (i.e. always l.v.) unless the damp symbol is explicitly used.
2. + sign over note: deadstick/stopped: either with the hand or by holding the stick on the striking surface: whichever is preferred or most appropriate in the context.
3. Glissando lines in combination with tremolandi mean rolls are played over the intervening instruments between the start and end notes.
4. Circle with X over or next to a note: strike the drum rim.
5. Circle with an arrowhead over a note: scrape rather than strike the surface of the plate.
6. Mallets: standard notation is used here where black circle mallet heads (e.g. in bar 1) indicate hard mallets; half black, half white circle heads indicate medium hard; and completely white heads indicate soft;
 - (a) in addition, brushes will be needed, as indicated at letter B
 - (b) the choice of which variety of hard/medium hard/soft mallets is of course left to the discretion of the performer, as these will need to be chosen to work well with the chosen percussion instruments.

for Michael Pattmann

ma bell

Michael Edwards 2020

$\text{♩} = 120$

2
4

5
8

2
4

3
4

2
4

percussion

woods
metals *f*

drums
plates

Sampler

Bass Sampler

2
4

5
8

2
4

3
4

2
4

6

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system includes a percussion part with a treble clef and a Sampler part with a treble clef. The percussion part features a sequence of notes in 2/4, 5/8, 2/4, 3/4, and 2/4 time signatures, with a dynamic marking of *f*. The Sampler part has a bass clef and includes a five-measure phrase marked with a '5' and a slur. The second system includes a Bass Sampler part with a bass clef and a Sampler part with a treble clef. The Bass Sampler part has a bass clef and includes a five-measure phrase marked with a '5' and a slur. The Sampler part has a treble clef and includes a five-measure phrase marked with a '5' and a slur. The time signatures for the second system are 2/4, 5/8, 2/4, 3/4, and 2/4. A measure number '6' is indicated at the beginning of the second system.

12 **2/4**

p sub. < f

18 **3/8** **2/4**

p sub. < f

24

5/8 just 2 2/4 5/8 2/4 3/4

ff *mf*

31

3/4 2/4 5/8 2/4

f

ma bell

38

p *f*

just 1

45

p cresc. *f*

52

5/8 2/4 3/4 2/4

mp *f*

b

59

5/8 2/4

p *f*

ma bell

2
4 ♩ = 150

66

73 ♩ = 120

ma bell

5/8 2/4

80

88

2/4 **A** ♩ = 124

5/8 2/4 3/4 2/4

ma bell

93

2/4 **5/8** **2/4** **3/4** **2/4**

f > < *f* > < *f* < *ff*

5

99

2/4

pp *ff* *f*

5

ma bell

118

3/4 2/4 5/8 2/4

p *f* *p* (*p*)

125

3/4 2/4

p *f* *p* *f*

ma bell

132

f

5

5

138

p

5

2

3

2

5

ma bell

145

f *p* *f* *p*

3/4 2/4 3/4 5/8

152

(p) *(p)*

5/8 2/4

ma bell

159

Musical score for measures 159-165. It consists of three staves: a top staff with a treble clef, a middle staff with a treble clef, and a bottom staff with a bass clef. The top staff contains a melodic line with a five-fingered scale-like passage (marked '5') and some grace notes. The middle staff has a vocal line with a few notes and rests. The bottom staff has a bass line with some notes and rests. There are plus signs above some notes in the top staff.

166

Musical score for measures 166-172. It consists of three staves: a top staff with a treble clef, a middle staff with a treble clef, and a bottom staff with a bass clef. The top staff contains a melodic line with three five-fingered scale-like passages (marked '5') and a dynamic marking '(p)'. The middle staff has a vocal line with a long note and some rests. The bottom staff has a bass line with some notes and rests.

ma bell

B ♩ = 129

173

8/8 2/4 3/4

introduce chains

pp (*p*)

180

3/4 2/4 8/8 2/4

pp

ma bell

186

3/4 **2/4**

Musical score for measures 186-192. The score is written for three staves. The top staff (Grand Staff) has rests. The middle staff (Treble Clef) contains a melodic line with triplets and a five-fingered scale. The bottom staff (Bass Clef) has a bass line with eighth notes and rests. Time signatures 3/4 and 2/4 are indicated above the first two measures.

193

$\text{♩} = 150$

3/8

Musical score for measures 193-199. The score is written for three staves. The top staff (Grand Staff) has rests. The middle staff (Treble Clef) contains a melodic line with triplets and a five-fingered scale, marked with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The bottom staff (Bass Clef) has a bass line with eighth notes and rests. A tempo marking of quarter note = 150 and a 3/8 time signature are present.

ma bell

199

5/8 2/4 $\text{♩} = 129$ 5/8 2/4

f

remove chains

205

2/4 3/4 2/4

f (*f*) (*f*) *f*

mp *pp*

213

5/8 **2/4** **3/4**

mp

221

3/4 **2/4**

f *p cresc.*

ma bell

227

♩ = 150

5

5

♩ = 129

f

f

mf

3

3

233

3

4

2

4

♩ = 150

3

4

mp

p

f

f

(f)

240 **3/4** **2/4** $\text{♩} = 129$ **3/4** **5/8** **2/4**

(f)

246 **2/4**

p *cresc.* *mf* *p* *f*

ma bell



♩ = 135

252

introduce chains onto lowest drums and move these ad lib.
(one-handed roll/bounce)

p *pp*

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 252 through 258. It features three staves: a top staff with rests, a middle staff with a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and triplets, and a bottom staff with a melodic line. The middle staff includes dynamic markings *p* and *pp*, and a performance instruction: "introduce chains onto lowest drums and move these ad lib. (one-handed roll/bounce)".

5 **2** **3** **2**
8 **4** **4** **4**

259

poco *poco*

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 259 through 265. It features three staves: a top staff with rests, a middle staff with a melodic line and dynamic markings *poco*, and a bottom staff with a melodic line. The middle staff includes performance markings for accents and dynamics.

265

5/8 **2/4** **3/4** **2/4** ♩ = 150

poco

273

poco

poco

ma bell

279

5/8 **2/4** $\text{♩} = 135$ **5/8**

(one-handed indeterminate number of bounces)

poco poco poco poco poco

285

5/8 **2/4** **3/4** **2/4**

gradually remove chains (roll)

poco f

292

5/8 2/4 3/4

move around drumhead

p *f* *mp* *ff* *mf*

300

3/4 2/4

f ord. (chains off) *p* *f(f)* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

307

f ff dim.

p f ff

5/8 2/4

314

p p < f

3/4 2/4 3/4

ma bell

320

3/4 2/4 3/4 5/8 2/4

(f) p f p f mp f

5

327

5

ord. →

f > p f > p p f

3 3 3 3

5

ma bell

332

(one-handed indeterminate number of bounces)

p *f*

338

pp *ff* *p* sim.

345

5/8

2/4 **D** ♩ = 142

5/8

2/4

3/4

place metal discs on the drum heads
and include strikes on these ad lib.

351

3/4

2/4

5/8

ma bell

357

5/8 2/4 3/4 2/4 $\text{♩} = 150$

mp fff *p < fff* RH: *p* LH:

363

fff *p* *fff* *fff* *fff > p < fff*

ma bell

368 **2**/₄ ♩ = 142

p sub. *fff* *fff* *p* *ff* *mp* *fff* *p* *ff* *mp* *p* *f* *p*

373 **2**/₄ **3**/₄ **2**/₄

ff *p* *f* *mf* *mp* *p* *ff*

5 2

379

(rim for A5 only)

p *f* *p* *f*

3 2

386

p

ma bell

391

Musical score for measures 391-397. The score consists of four staves. The first two staves are for the right hand, and the last two are for the left hand. Measure 391 has a treble clef. The first staff contains rests for the first four measures, followed by eighth notes in measures 5 and 6, and a quintuplet of eighth notes in measure 7. The second staff contains a quintuplet of eighth notes in measure 1, rests in measure 2, eighth notes in measure 3, a piano (*p*) dynamic marking in measure 4, eighth notes in measure 5, and a quintuplet of eighth notes in measure 6. The third staff contains eighth notes in measure 1, a half note in measure 2, eighth notes in measure 3, and rests in measures 4, 5, and 6. The fourth staff contains rests in measures 1, 2, and 3, followed by eighth notes in measure 4, and a half note in measure 5.

398

Musical score for measures 398-404. The score consists of four staves. Above the first staff, the time signatures 5/8, 2/4, 3/4, and 2/4 are indicated. The first staff contains rests for the first four measures, followed by eighth notes in measure 5, and eighth notes in measure 6. The second staff contains rests for the first four measures, followed by eighth notes in measure 5, and eighth notes in measure 6. The third staff contains rests for the first four measures, followed by eighth notes in measure 5, and eighth notes in measure 6. The fourth staff contains rests for the first four measures, followed by eighth notes in measure 5, and eighth notes in measure 6. The instruction *cresc. poco a poco* is written below the second staff. The lyrics "ma bell" are written below the fourth staff.

ma bell

3/4 2/4

407

Musical score for measures 407-413. The score is written for a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The top staff contains a melodic line with eighth notes and slurs. The middle staff contains a bass line with a 5-fingered scale and slurs. The bottom staff contains a bass line with a sharp sign and slurs. Above the first two staves, the time signatures 3/4 and 2/4 are indicated. There are also some circled 'x' marks and a circled 'r' mark in the top staff.

414

Musical score for measures 414-420. The score is written for a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The top staff contains a melodic line with eighth notes and slurs. The middle staff contains a bass line with a 5-fingered scale and slurs. The bottom staff contains a bass line with a sharp sign and slurs. The dynamic marking *mf* is present in the middle staff. There are also some circled 'x' marks and a circled 'r' mark in the top staff.

ma bell

421

(scrape plate and drum)

sim.

mf poss

5

b

#

introduce chains onto plates
and move these ad lib.



♩ = 150

428

remove plates from drums

fff

3

5

fff

b

fff

ma bell

436

5/8 2/4 3/4 2/4

Musical score for measures 436-441. The score consists of three staves. The top staff contains rests. The middle staff contains chords and melodic lines, with a fermata over the final notes. The bottom staff contains a bass line. The time signature changes from 5/8 to 2/4, then 3/4, and back to 2/4. A five-fingered scale is shown in the middle staff starting at measure 439.

442

5/8 2/4 3/4 2/4

Musical score for measures 442-447. The score consists of three staves. The top staff contains rests. The middle staff contains chords and melodic lines, with a fermata over the final notes. The bottom staff contains a bass line. The time signature changes from 5/8 to 2/4, then 3/4, and back to 2/4. A five-fingered scale is shown in the middle staff starting at measure 445.

ma bell



448

Musical score for measures 448-453. The score consists of three staves. The top staff is a grand staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a series of chords and melodic lines, with a *fff* dynamic marking and accents. The middle staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp, featuring a complex melodic line with many accidentals and a five-fingered scale run. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb), containing a simple melodic line with rests.

454

Musical score for measures 454-459. The score consists of three staves. The top staff is a grand staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a series of chords and melodic lines, with a *fff* dynamic marking and a five-fingered scale run. The middle staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp, featuring a complex melodic line with many accidentals and a five-fingered scale run. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb), containing a simple melodic line with rests.

ma bell

460

2/4 **3/4** **2/4**

Musical score for measures 460-466. The system consists of three staves. The top staff has a treble clef and contains complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and five-note runs. The middle staff has a treble clef and contains a melodic line with a key signature change to one flat. The bottom staff has a bass clef and contains a simple bass line. Time signatures 2/4, 3/4, and 2/4 are indicated above the top staff.

467

5/8 **2/4** **3/4**

Musical score for measures 467-473. The system consists of three staves. The top staff has a treble clef and contains complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and five-note runs, marked with *fff*. The middle staff has a treble clef and contains a melodic line with five-note runs. The bottom staff has a bass clef and contains a simple bass line. Time signatures 5/8, 2/4, and 3/4 are indicated above the top staff.

ma bell

475 **3/4** **2/4**

fff

5 + 5 + + +

b 5 5

#

481 **5/8** **2/4** **3/4**

fff

5 + 5 + + +

b b

ma bell

488

p *fff* *p* *fff*

494

p *ff* *fff*

ma bell

501

Musical score for measures 501-504. The top staff contains a complex melodic line with many slurs and accents. The middle staff has a simpler melodic line. The bottom staff is mostly empty with a few notes at the end. There are triplets and a quintuplet indicated by brackets and numbers 3 and 5.

505

3
4

2
4

Musical score for measures 505-508. The top staff has a melodic line with glissando markings and dynamic markings. The middle staff has a melodic line with a slur. The bottom staff has a melodic line with a dynamic marking. There are time signature changes from 3/4 to 2/4.

mf-p < fff *pp* ————— *fff* ————— *p fff*

gliss. *gliss.* *gliss.*

fff

ma bell

tremolo wildly
across all
instruments
ad lib.

512

p *fff*

fff

♩ = 186
Bell

517

fff

p

ma bell

524

p

1500

2/4

5

ma bell