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The Night Before Christmas

Poem by Clement C. Moore / Music by Dan Moore
Medium - 6:17 - 7 Players (*plus narrator*)

Instrumentation

**Bells, Xylophone, Vibes, (1) 4 1/3 oct. Marimba, Chimes,
Wind Machine, Suspended Cymbal, Small Glass Wind Chimes,
Small & Medium Triangles, Timpani, Slapstick, Concert Snare Drum,
Crotales, Ratchet, Claves, Finger Cymbals, Tenor Drum, Concert Bass Drum,
Wood Block, Dry Leaves, Toy Piano, Sleigh Bells, Bell Tree, Small Shaker, *Narrator***

The Notes Before Christmas...

In 1822, Clement Clarke Moore wrote “A Visit from St. Nicholas” to recite to his children on the night before Christmas. The poem vividly describes the jolly old elf, and even names his eight tiny reindeer. From its first appearance in print in 1823, Moore’s narrative went on to become one of the most beloved and recognized of American poems. It is a Christmas tradition around the world and has inspired many artists and composers (including at least one percussionist).

Dan Moore’s “The Night Before Christmas” for percussion ensemble is a subtle setting of Clement Clarke Moore’s classic poem. It is loosely based on the theme from “Up on the House Top,” borrows a brief quote from “The Nutcracker,” and includes special and musical effects throughout.

Performance Notes:

- Special effects should be slightly understated, and musical effects should be performed tastefully.
- The narrator should read in a natural pace, except at rehearsal mark “J” where the notated rhythms should be observed as closely as possible. At rehearsal mark “P” the narration should fit within each 8-measure phrase. Slow down the tempo at this section as needed.
- Several players should have a small box of dry tree leaves to rustle gently. Don’t overdo it. It should be a subtle effect.
- At rehearsal mark “W,” one player can make a boisterous horse whistle after the line, “to his team gave a whistle.
- If a toy piano is unavailable, a toy xylophone or the highest octave of a piano is a suitable substitute.
- If necessary, the marimba part may be split between two players.

The Night Before Christmas

for percussion ensemble and narrator

Poem by Clement C. Moore
Music by Dan Moore
ASCAP

♩ = 126

The score is written for a percussion ensemble and a narrator. It consists of seven staves, each with a 4/4 time signature and a key signature of three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 126. The music is divided into five measures, with measure numbers 1 through 5 indicated above the Bells staff. The Bells part consists of quarter notes on the same pitch in each measure. The Xylophone part features a glissando (spanning 3 octaves) in measures 1 and 2, followed by eighth notes in measures 3 and 4, and a melodic phrase in measure 5. The Vibes part plays a rhythmic eighth-note pattern in measures 1-4, and a melodic phrase in measure 5. The Marimba part plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment throughout. Percussion 1 plays chimes on the first beat of each measure. Percussion 2 plays a sustained low note with a diamond-shaped symbol. Percussion 3 plays a suspended cymbal in measure 5. Dynamics range from piano (p) to mezzo-forte (mf).

p ————— *mf*

The Night Before Christmas

A **B** **C** **D**

Bells *pp*

Xylophone *pp*

Vibes *pp*

Marimba *p*

Narrator

Percussion 1

Percussion 2

Percussion 3 *pp*

small glass wind chimes

'T WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS
AND ALL THROUGH THE HOUSE,
NOT A CREATURE WAS STIRRING,
NOT EVEN A MOUSE.

THE STOCKINGS WERE HUNG
BY THE CHIMNEY WITH CARE
IN HOPES THAT ST. NICHOLAS
SOON WOULD BE THERE.

THE CHILDREN WERE NESTLED
ALL SNUG IN THEIR BEDS . . .

WHILE VISIONS OF SUGAR PLUMS
DANCED IN THEIR HEADS . . .

The Night Before Christmas

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P

101 102 103 104 105 106 107

Bells

Xylophone

Vibes

Marimba

Narrator

Percussion 1

Percussion 2

Percussion 3

mp

mp

HIS EYES HOW THEY TWINKLED! HIS DIMPLES HOW MERRY! HIS CHEEKS WERE LIKE ROSES, HIS NOSE LIKE A CHERRY.

The Night Before Christmas

AA

Accel. poco a poco

Bells

Musical staff for Bells, featuring a treble clef and a melody of eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present. Measure numbers 170, 171, and 172 are indicated above the staff.

Xylophone

Musical staff for Xylophone, featuring a treble clef and a melody of eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present.

Vibes

Musical staff for Vibes, featuring a treble clef and a melody of eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present.

Marimba

Musical staff for Marimba, consisting of two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present.

Narrator

Musical staff for Narrator, showing a series of horizontal lines representing a vocal line.

Percussion 1

Musical staff for Percussion 1, featuring a treble clef and a melody of whole notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present.

Percussion 2

Musical staff for Percussion 2, featuring a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present.

Percussion 3

Musical staff for Percussion 3, featuring a dynamic marking of *mf* and a series of diamond-shaped symbols with a wedge-shaped accent above them. A crescendo hairpin is shown below the staff, transitioning from *p* to *mf* and back to *p*.

The Night Before Christmas

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Getting Faster

Bells

Xylophone

Vibes

Marimba

Narrator

Percussion 1

Percussion 2

Percussion 3

mf

p

173 174 175 176

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for 'The Night Before Christmas', page 32. The score is for measures 173 through 176. The tempo is marked 'Getting Faster'. The instruments are Bells, Xylophone, Vibes, Marimba, Narrator, Percussion 1, Percussion 2, and Percussion 3. The Bells part has notes at measures 173, 174, 175, and 176. The Xylophone and Vibes parts have melodic lines. The Marimba part has a rhythmic pattern. The Narrator part is empty. Percussion 1 has notes at measures 175 and 176. Percussion 2 has a rhythmic pattern. Percussion 3 has notes at measures 175 and 176. The dynamic markings are mf and p.