TWELVE BULLS

Finn Endries

for

String Quartet

and

Live Electronics

Partial score



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Cow of the old world…
half dead and half stone
roared like two centuries
tired of treading the dirt

Excerpt from *Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías*

By Federico García Lorca

First performance by the *Invictus Quartet*

Approximate duration of 11 minutes

Perusal score

Cover image curtesy of Adam Marguglio

Composition notes

Twelve Bulls is a composition centred around the concept of tension. This idea was founded in my exploration of flamenco rhythms, which play a significant role throughout this piece. I found that a tension, a push and pull between two rhythmic patterns, was at the core of many the *Palos* (a traditional flamenco form) I enjoyed. They also happened to structured around twelve beats per cycle.

After studying how flamenco rhythms were structured, I devised a method treating certain rhythms as one would a modal scale, shifting its starting point to accentuate different characteristics. This was done by using the *Soleá Palo* as the core rhythmic pattern (our rhythmic ionian scale). This rhythmic pattern, or *Compás* as it is traditionally known, is one of the oldest known flamenco styles. While the idea treating the *Compás* as one would a modal scale remains, to my knowledge, unexplored in the greater context, this idea is not completely novel. *Siguerillas* and *Bulerías* are *Palos* that can be seen as a mode of the *Soleá,* starting on the eighth and twelfth beat respectively. Tempo also plays a large part in how these rhythms are perceived. For example, at a high tempo the *Soleá* begins to sound like a *Bulería,* because our ears perceive the accent on the twelfth beat to be the “one”.

Electronics are used throughout the piece to heighten rhythmic and harmonic tension. The performances of the quartet will doubled and sent to a delay, which will at points play back to create counter-rhythms to what the quartet is presently playing. The goal is to build tension and push the quartet’s sound into a new direction, in a simple, yet impactful manner.

The title *Twelve Bulls* came to me early in the writing process, and while it may be an allegory to its rhythmic structure and influence, throughout my writing it slowly began taking a greater shape. I imagined these creatures lazing about on rolling hills, flicking their tails in boredom. I imagined them chasing down down bullfighters in a final stampede, before eventually succumbing to their wounds. Therein lies this piece - both extremes side by side, each threatening to assume control.

Perusal Score

Electronics

An electronics performer is required for a live performance of this piece.

The quartet must be amplified through the use of clip on microphones (or any other method that provides isolated audio), and this signal must be sent to a main mixing desk. The signal is then doubled through the use of a send, and is sent to the electronics performer, whose setup consists of an audio interface, a computer, and a small mixer.

The electronics performer requires an audio interface with at least four inputs (one for each instrument in the quartet). The individual instrument sends are then received within the preferred DAW of the electronics performer. The signal will run out of the DAW into a small mixer, going through either the aux out of the computer or the interface.

A slapback delay (with no feedback) is placed on these tracks collectively. Throughout the performance of the piece, the electronics performer is required to blend the sound of the delay with the sound of the live quartet, using the small mixer. The blending of these two sounds is the crux of the electronics players performance. The piece calls for the different instruments to be played through different delay times, and it is recommended to create delay presets, so to switch delay times with ease.

The delay signal is sent out of the small mixer to the main front of house mixer, which is then sent to an amplification system.

The quartet requires in-ears to play along to a click track. It is up to the performers to determine how this click is set up, a seperate device may be used, or it may be played off the electronics performers computer. While it may be helpful, the electronics performer does not require to play to a click - it is to ensure the delay lines up with what the quartet is playing.

Perusal score

Performance notes

All harmonics are natural. String indications have been provided where appropriate.

Espressivo markings have been used to indicate melodic phrases where the player is to emulate flamenco singers; specifically in regard to intensity, vibrato and expression.

In bars 24 - 29, the viola's triplets are abbreviated, as shown by a dotted quaver with a single tremolo line. They are not to be confused for semiquavers.

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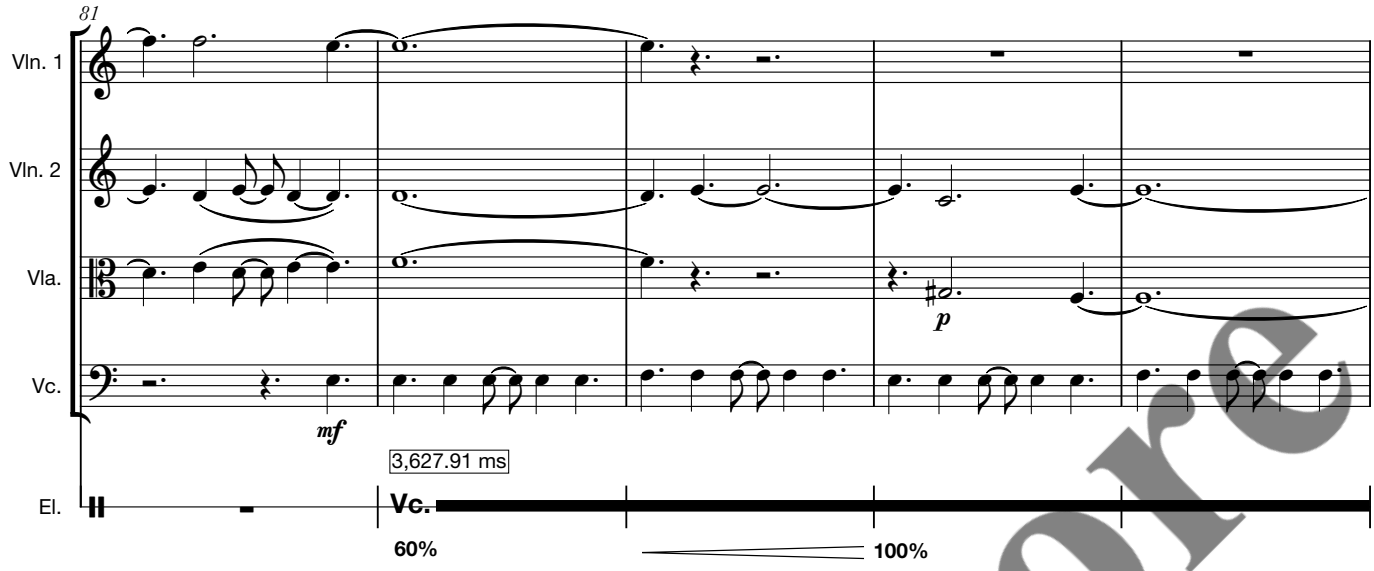
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