

Vera Ivanova

MBIRA



or

In Cage with Adams

for piano (with optional retuning)

Dedicated to Aron Kallay

Duration: 3-4 minutes

2012

Program note

Mbira (or *In Cage with Adams*) was composed in 2012 for the pianist Aron Kallay, the first performer of the piece. It was inspired by the subtle resonance of the traditional African percussion instrument, *mbira*, and by the piano music of the two great American composers, two Johns - John Cage and John Adams.

The reference to the instrument *mbira* is in the use of limited piano range (only treble clef is used in the piece) and selected number of repeated pitches (30 pitches), based on pentatonic scales, and also in microtonal retuning of each of the pitches sounding in the piece (by 5-35 cents).

The piece is meditative in character and uses minimalistic techniques, recycling the same pitches in different order, until it gradually comes to its natural end, like a burning candle.

Performance notes

This piece can be performed on any piano, but it was conceived as a piece for a retuned digital piano, and should be performed on retuned piano (digital or not) whenever possible.

The dynamic of the piece is prevalently quiet; the passages are played *legato* or *semi-legato*, unless other articulation is indicated. The right pedal should be used to create slightly dreamy mood.

The beaming of eighth notes corresponds to the phrasing; slurs show the melodic lines which should be heard slightly above the texture, but should not be emphasized too strong.

The tuning chart is below:

The tuning chart consists of two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains 12 notes with the following cent adjustments: +20 cents, +20c, +30c, +30c, +15c, +35c, +35c, +35c, +35c, +20c, +20c, +10c. The bottom staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It contains 12 notes with the following cent adjustments: +10c, -5c, -5c, -35c, -35c, -12c, -12c, +20c, +20c, +30c, +30c, -5c, -5c, -10c, -5c, -10c.

Mbira

In Cage with Adams

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$\text{♩} = 126$

Piano

pp *poco cresc.*

3 *mp*

4 *f* *ff* **x4** (repeat 4 times)

6 **see footnote*

*Dynamic here (*diminuendo*) and in all repeated bars (throughout the piece) carries through the entire length of the repeated fragment.