

In art, a triptych is an altar piece meant to look over a congregation to inspire and contextualize the sermon at-hand. Found originally in Christian contexts, the art format of three related panels has since spread into many other faiths. This sense of communion and spirituality is integral to David Macbride's aesthetic.

*Triptych*, with its three tableaux performed continuously, totals over twenty minutes of music for solo marimba. Furthermore, its opening minutes consist of the same harmonic material repeated over and over again; a harmonic material so simple it threatens the listener with boredom. At any point throughout its performance, it seems rational for the listener to become disinterested.

And yet, many do not.

In my conversations with Macbride he admits that he has often written music with the intention for it to listen just as much as it is listened to. With this poetic expression in mind, *Triptych* really is a piece that seems self-aware. Macbride's lexicon is one where when the music becomes soft, delicate, and verging on disinteresting, one finds that those are the moments where one must listen most intensely and come to understand what might be being said. "If you listen to something for 2 minutes and do not find it interesting, listen to it for 4..."

With this in mind, the simple, repeated notes of the first movement become endlessly fascinating. As each iteration changes in register, dynamic, rhythmic structure, something new is heard and felt. What was once boring is re-contextualized as profound. It becomes a study in the seemingly endless complexity of simple things.

I find that *Triptych* is not so much interested in silence as it is in stillness. Stillness of mind and body and whether it's possible to achieve them both congruously. Each tableau experiments with this concept of stillness in different ways: loud shouts thrown collage-like together with humming chorales, rigorously notated lines interrupted by placid landscapes. It is as if Macbride is taking a microscope to something seemingly peaceful and still, revealing the chaos that makes up that stillness.

*Triptych*'s harmonic material is taken from a set of wind chimes that Macbride knew to echo over a field near his home in Connecticut. When performing *Triptych* I envision this meditative expanse of grass and hear the song of the chimes as the wind excites them and everything in the field. The piece opens with this chime song, and over twenty minutes later closes with its echo. To watch the process, one sees only soft shiver of grass. To listen to this stillness, the way Macbride listens to it, is to hear something surprisingly effervescent.