MIMESIS
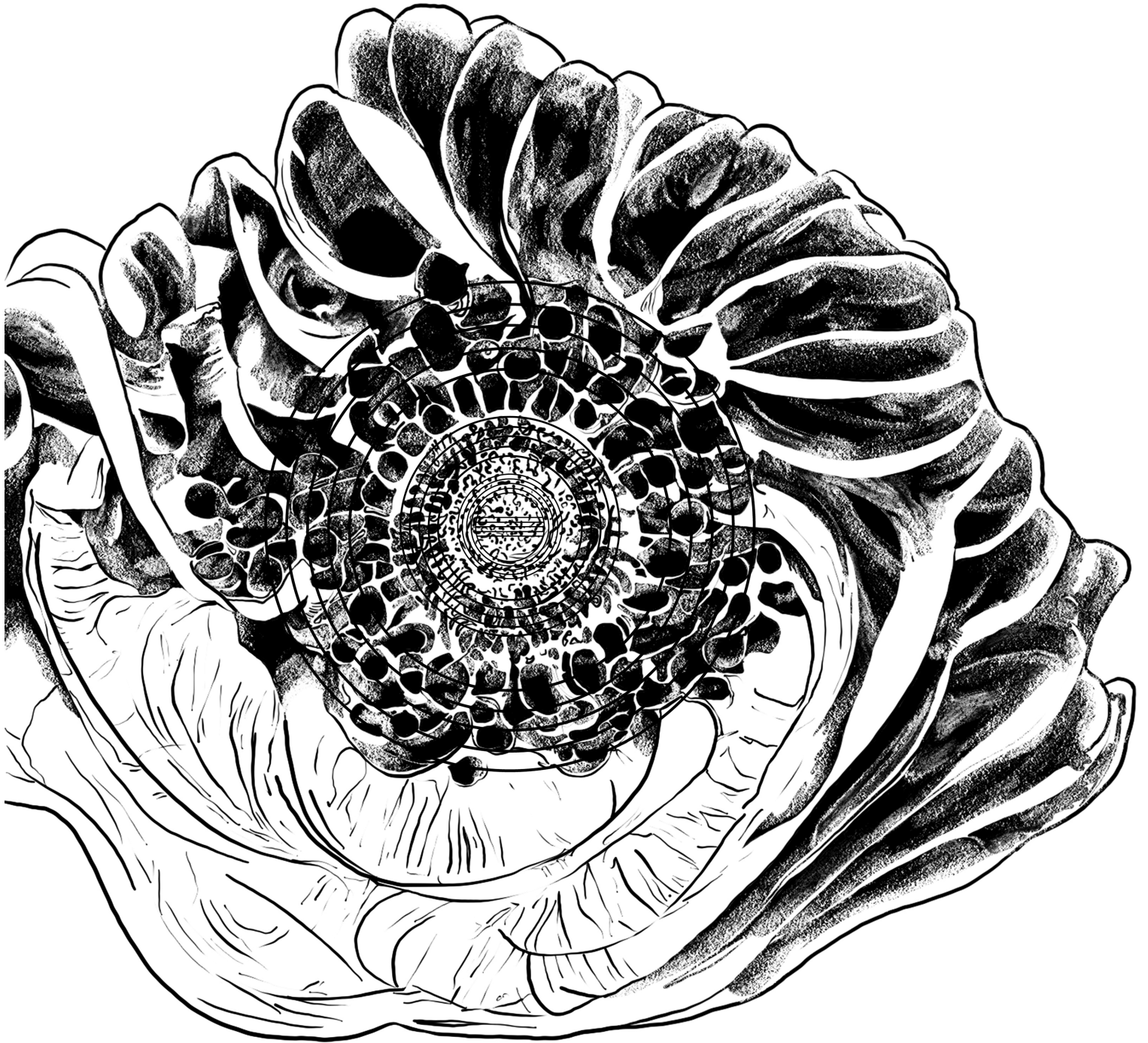
For large spatialized percussion ensemble
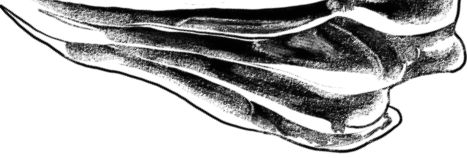
Music by Kara Gibbs
Images by Charissa Wall & Midjourney

Dedicated to Jennifer Butler

MIMESIS

Mimesis is a spatialized work for large percussion ensemble that takes sonic inspiration from a set of photo-realistic renderings of fantastical objects, created by composer Kara Gibbs using the AI text-to-image software Midjourney. Modeled after the detailed spirals and self-similar natural fractal patterns of coral, shells, bone and tentacles—and rendered by machine-learning technology—these newly-created mythological "creatures" mimic the natural world yet occupy an uncanny space that sits between machine art and nature photography. There is an inherent tension not only in the way they look: photorealistic but somehow unreal; but in the way they were created: through artificial intelligence.

Collaborating with visual artist Charissa Wall, the patterns and shapes within one of these images has been reimagined into a graphic musical score. Starting at the core and moving outwards, the composers' sonic interpretations of these blooming patterns employs improvisation and interpretation by members of the percussion ensemble.

The term mimesis refers to the imitative process through which artists across genres interpret and represent the world through their art. In the context of this work, it references the repeating echoes of art imitating nature, artificial intelligence imitating art, and the artist reinterpreting it yet again. Derived from the same Greek verb as mime, mimic and mimicry, the title embraces the mildly sinister and mocking connotation of these terms as it brings into question the shifting power dynamics between the natural world, humankind, and the increasingly intelligent machines we have created.

SCORE A	Glockenspiel, triangle	
	Percussionists 1, 4, 6, 9, 16, 23, 26	
	One improvising soloist	
SCORE B	Xylophone and/or Crotales and/or Temple Bowls	
	Percussionists 2, 5, 12, 14, 18, 20	
SCORE C	Vibraphone	
	Percussionists 3, 8, 11, 15, 19, 22, 25	
	One improvising soloist	
SCORE D	Marimba	
	Percussionists 7, 10, 13, 17, 21, 24	
SCORE E	Bass Drum, Timpani, Tam-Tams, Toms, Brake Drum, Sus Cymbals, Gongs	
	Percussionists 27, 28, 29, 30	
	One improvising soloist	

PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS

- The piece is 8 minutes long, and players are coordinated by stopwatches. Pages are read from top to bottom, roughly following the indicated time markings.
- Sonic gestures are divided in 12 different 40-second segments. Players are given instruction as to the approximate frequency of gestures to be performed in any given section, however the choice, order and interpretation of gesture remains flexible and at the discretion of the player.
- The timestamp at which performers move from one 40-second segments to the next does not need to be exact. In fact it is preferred if the movement is staggared causing sections to blend into one another organically.
- Gestures may be introduced and played in any order within each 40-second segment, and may be repeated.
- Scores A through E are assigned from between 4 and 7 percussionists each. Players should aim to stagger entries with others reading from the same score.
- Accidentals carry throughout gestures. The exception to this is in the solo parts, where—due to the length of the gestures—all accidentals are indicated.
- Type of mallet or beater is up to the performer if not indicated

RHYTHM & TEMPO
- Gestures should be played using a range of rhythms and tempos, with players refraining from syncronization with one another.
- The length of any sustaining gesture is at the discretion of the performer and should be varied throughout the piece

INTERPRETING GESTURES
- The number of notes present in gestures such as these is meant to represent the minimum number of notes desired. Performers are encouraged to increase the duration and density of gestures to give the effect of gentle swells in both volume and speed:

- Rolled gestures and tremelos such as these should smoothly fluctuation in speed, duration and density at the discretion of the player:
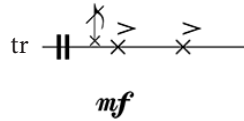
0:00
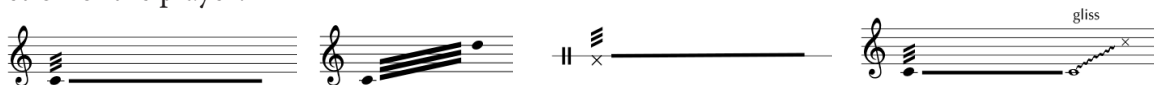
1. CENTRE

Sparse texture with sounds like bright sparkling points of light

Enter in a staggered manner between 0:00-0:10. Take a 10-12 second pause between each gesture.
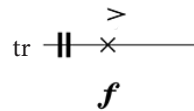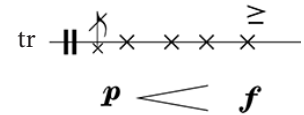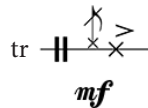
gl *mf*

tr *mf*

0:40

tr *mf*

Percussionist 26 only (play once)

chimes *mp*

gl *mf*

gl *f*

1:20

gl *p* < *f*

tr *p* < *f*

gl *f*

tr *f*

2:00

gl *mf*

tr *mf*

gl *mf*

gl *mf*

gl *mf*

2:40

2:40

2. INNER RING

*Increasing density with warm
and softly shimmering sounds*

Take an 8-10 second pause
between each gesture

Play all bowed notes with pedal and let ring

Bowed

Bowed

Bowed

mp

mp

Bowed

Bowed

Bowed

mp

mp

mp

mp

3:20 --

Bowed

Bowed

Bowed

mp

mp

Bowed

mp

Bowed

Bowed

mp

Bowed

mp

mp
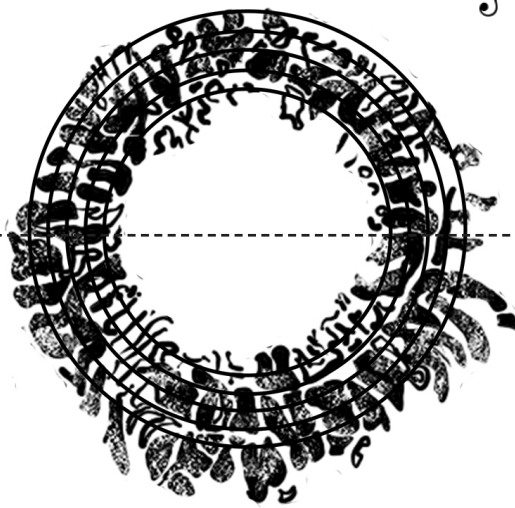
4:00 --

Take an 5-7 second pause
between each gesture

Bowed

Bowed

mf

mf

Bowed

Bowed

Bowed

mf

mf

mf

4:40 --

Bowed

Bowed

Bowed

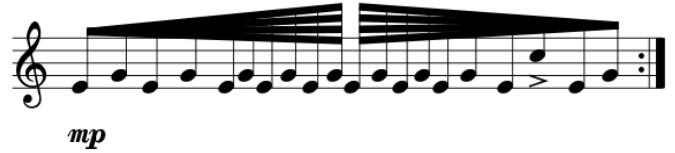*mf*

Bowed

mf

Bowed

Bowed

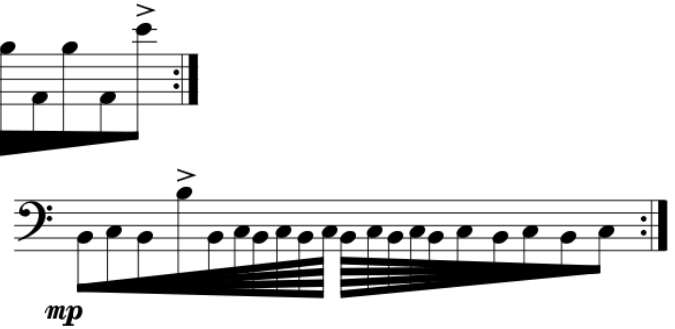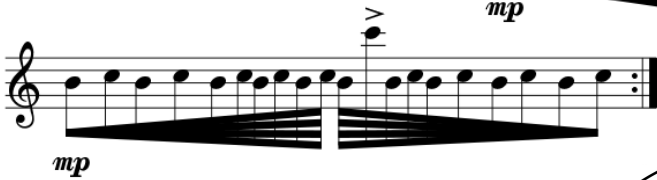*mf*

mf

Bowed

Bowed

mf

mf

mf

5:20

3. OUTER RING

5:20

Richly dense with actively thrumming, bubbling sounds
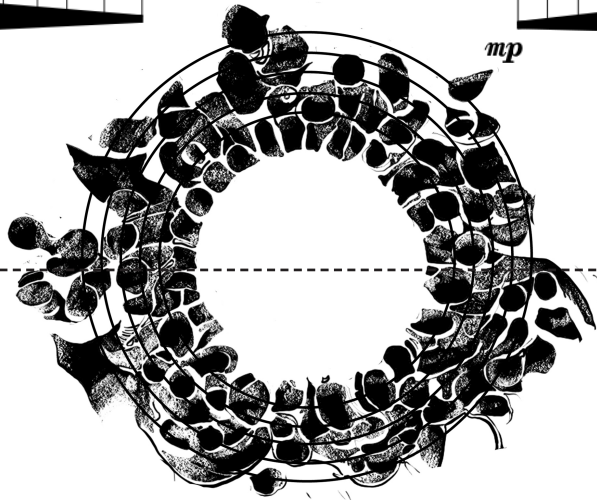
Play continuously, switching
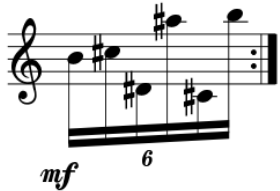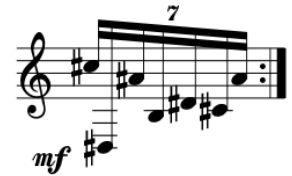gestures every 8-10 seconds

mp

mp
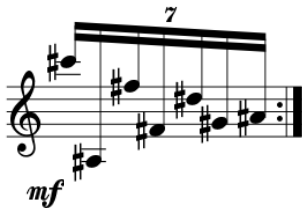
mp

6:00

mp

mp

mp

6:40

Play continuously, switching
gestures every 5-8 seconds

7

mf

5

mf

Approx tempo range
for tuplets ♩ = **55-90**

6

mf

7

mf

8va
5

mf

6

mf

7:20

7

mf

6

mf

6

mf

5

mf

7

mf
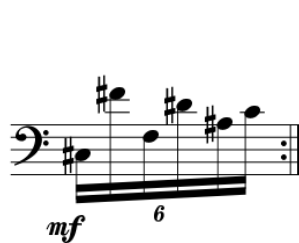
Increase volume and density to crescendo at end

5

mf

END

8:00

Performed by a single
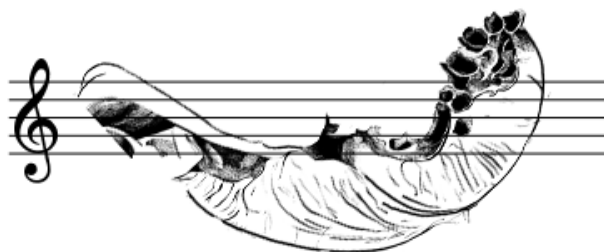member of the ensemble in
conjuction with Score C

VIBRAPHONE SOLO

Blooming or unfurling

2:10

5:10-5:50 Improvisation 40 seconds:
feathered, fluttering

Trace a sonic interpretaion of
this image using both bowed
and struck notes

6:50

7:30-8:00 Improvisation 30 seconds:
blooming, unfurling, climatic

Trace a sonic interpretaion of
this image that leads the piece
to a climatic finish