

Max Hats for Alvin

for hi-hat cymbals, solo

A pair of hi-hat cymbals with good harmonic character are mounted on a hi-hat stand. A player excites the top cymbal with a pair of light wooden (jazz-type) drumsticks while very slowly opening and closing the hi-hats by means of the stand's foot pedal. During the course of the performance, the acoustic characteristics of the cymbals, under continually changing conditions, are explored.

Tempo, location of strike, and angle of strike are fixed, leaving the player to vary only the dynamics and the amount of closure between the two cymbals.

- **Tempo:** The player maintains a tempo of ♩ = 112 BPM, playing a straight, unembellished R-L pattern of sixteenth notes throughout the piece.
- **Location & angle of strike:** Ahead of the performance, the player should identify the top cymbal's sweet spot, where playing produces the richest harmonics. All playing throughout the piece should occur in this spot.
- **Dynamics:** Playing should begin in silence, gradually rising through the first minute(s) of the piece until it stabilizes around *mf* or *f*, where it remains until the final minute(s) of the piece.
- **Amount of closure:** Using the stand's foot pedal, the player gradually, imperceptibly increases and lessens the amount of closure between the top and bottom cymbal, varying the amount of resonance and noise.

The player begins with the hi-hats very tightly closed, beginning at *ppp* and gradually raising the dynamic to *mf* or *f*.

Beginning from the first moment, the player gradually, imperceptibly releases pressure on the foot pedal, widening the amount of closure between the cymbals from very tightly closed to fully open. During this first half of the piece, the unvarying playing technique reveals first the pressurized sound of the enclosed cavity between the two cymbals, then the pink-noise qualities of the rattling cymbals, then the harmonic content of the top cymbal and sympathetic resonances of the bottom cymbal.

Once the hi-hats are in their fully open position, the player may explore the top cymbal's sound until satisfied, then begin gradually, imperceptibly re-applying pressure to the pedal, eventually bringing the cymbals back to very tight closure. Once the player has explored the sounds of the closed cymbal cavity to his or her satisfaction, s/he slowly fades the dynamics back to *ppp*, ending in silence.