

**Jay C. Bartzner**

**Knott's**

**(2012)**

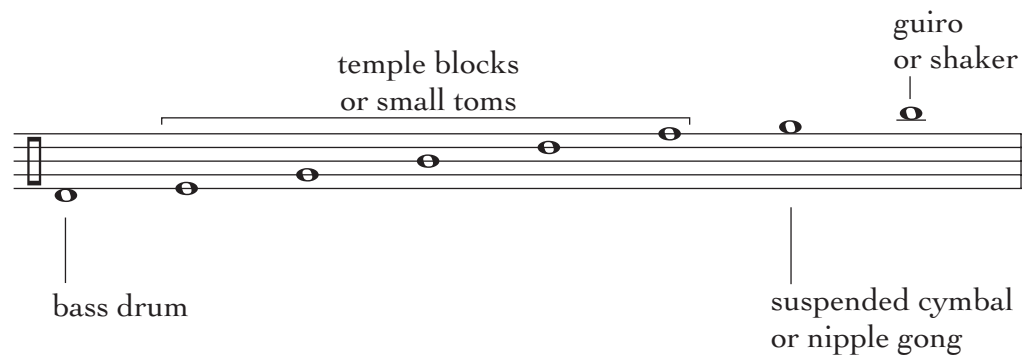
**for speaking percussion soloist**

**UNSAFE BULL MUSIC**

### Instrumentation

bass drum  
5 temple blocks or small toms  
vibraphone  
suspended cymbal or nipple gong  
guiro or shaker/maracas

### Key



### Program Notes

For Christmas in 1992, my future in-laws gave me a poetry collection from the Pitt Poetry Series. A few of Bill Knott's poems were in this collection and I've been a fan of his work ever since. When Kevin Keith asked me to write a work for him, we talked about a lot of possibilities of how to incorporate his interest in drama with his interest in performing. I thought merging Knott's poetry with a percussive commentary would be the perfect opportunity to give the performer the kind of music he wanted and to finally write a piece that shares some of the poetry I hold dear.

# Knott's

for speaking percussionist  
*composed for Kevin Keith*

music: Jay C. Batzner  
poetry: Bill Knott

## 1. Lifer

(AKA "Happy Birthday")

Steady, solemn ♩=60

With natural declamation

Spoken

our prisoner has received a package

Percussion

*mf*

sempre l.v.

7

containing a cake which of course he thinks must conceal a

on rim

12

file or a hacksaw blade and starts to dig down in - to

*p*

2

17 **senza misura**

(each measure = approx. 5 seconds)

Set beater aside.  
Sweep hands over the drum head with long, overlapping gestures.

Increase intensity

*p*

19

Change to "claw hand."  
Scrape drum head with fingernails, still using long gestures.

Change to vigorous, short scratching strokes.  
Grow into frenetic, panicked motions.

*mf*

21

**a tempo**, ♩=60

"claw pop"      scrape - pop      "claw pop"      scrape - pop      actually      however      his salvation

take beater

*ff*      *mf*

27

his way out      his escape route      has been      in      brightcolored frosting      over

carefully laid out

*mf*

31

darker frosting

the crucial message

the delicate pinkly lettering

"claw pop"

w/ hands

finger roll

*fp*

*f*

*fp*

38

ov-er - looked

un - heeded

falls shredded apart now  
by his hopeful search

finger roll

thrum with fingertips

*f*

*p*



2. At the Crossroads

Spoken

$\bullet = 120$

The wind blows a piece of paper to my feet

5

I pick it up.

13

$\bullet = 60$

21

$\bullet = 120$

It is not a petition for my death.

### 3. (Poem)(Chicago)(1967)

♩=60

Vibraphone

*mp*

*ped.* → (minimal changes ad lib.)

9 With natural declamation, keep playing while speaking

If you remember this poem

after reading it

Vibes

18

Please go to  
Lincoln Park

the corner of  
Dickens Street

and sit on the bench where M. and I  
kissed one night for a few minutes

Vibes

24

It was wonderful even if you forget

Vibes



# 4. To X

Slowly, as a ritual ♩=72

sempre l.v.

mf

4/4

Somewhere in history

Somewhere in untold ages

9

accel.

Somewhere in the sands of time

Somewhere in the vast seas

of eternity

14

There is one person

Only one

Who could understand me

and love me

And you're it

So get with it

ff

pp

ff

# 5. How I Lost My Pen-Name

♩=60

I wrote under a pen-name      One day I shook the pen      trying to make the name come out

*mf*      *sfz*      *fp*  $\rightrightarrows$  *ff*

Gliss with stick end      *increase activity!*

8

But no      it's like me      prefers clinging to the inner calypso

*mp*      *sfz*      *sfz*

Stick gliss.      dead 3  $\blacktriangle$       Stick gliss.

16

So I tossed the pen to my pet      the wastebasket to eat      It'll vomit back the name      names aren't fit for unhuman consumption

*fp*      *fp*      *fp*      *mp*      *sfz*

l.v.      Stick gliss.

dead  $\times$

The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a grand staff. It begins with a tempo marking of ♩=60. The first system (measures 1-8) features a 4/4 time signature, a 2/4 time signature, and a return to 4/4. Dynamics range from mezzo-forte (mf) to fortissimo (ff). Performance instructions include 'Gliss with stick end' and 'increase activity!' with a wavy line. The second system (measures 9-15) starts with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic and includes 'Stick gliss.' and a triplet of eighth notes marked 'dead' with a triangle symbol. The third system (measures 16-22) begins with a forte-piano (fp) dynamic and includes 'l.v.' (lento vivace) and another 'Stick gliss.' instruction. The score concludes with a treble clef.

22

But no again It stayed down

Vibraphone

*p* *f* *p*

*And.* →

30

I don't use a pen-name anymore I don't use a pen anymore I don't write anymore

*And.* →

39

I just sit looking at the wastebasket With this alert intelligent look on my face

*And.* →