

**Dieter Mack 2008**

**J O N I C O**

**For Two Percussionists**

**„Jonico“ - for two percussionists  
Mack 2008**

**Dieter**

**Dedicated to Johannes Fischer & Domenico Melchiorre**

**When Johannes and Domenico (the percussion duo “eardrum”) asked me to write them a duet, I was excited at once. Yet, at the same moment I was afraid as well to compose for percussion only, because I feel too comfortable with percussion instruments. Almost every piece of mine uses percussion instruments. Therefore I had to think about a peculiar compositional concept, where I would not use percussion instruments in my usual way for rhythmical counterpoint or colotomic devices. Furthermore I did not want to repeat certain “patterns” of my percussion writing. On the other hand, I did not intend to leave completely my world of musical expression.**

**After all, it was Domenico’s ongoing research on a new type of metal instrument, the “nicophone” that gave me some basic ideas for the composition, which in this case means that I would focus on a limited sound world, namely metal sounds. A limitation caused by the peculiar material has not yet been an element of my compositional considerations.**

**A second point was - and here I am again in concordance with my usual approach and aesthetics - I tried to analyse the styles of percussion playing of Domenico and Johannes, who astonishingly are quite different characters and personalities. Finally “Jonico” was born as a piece with some “functional virtuosity”, but also including an attempt to compose with different fields of playing energy, causing - beside others - various levels of spacial depth.**

**For the set-up I suggest that the players face each other. The nicophone should be slightly above the vibraphone in front, and the tamtams should hang above it. Basically from one playing position, every instrument should be reachable as easy as possible.**

## **Set-up**

**1<sup>st</sup> player: 1 vibraphone, 1 smaller nicophone with eight different sounds, 3 Chinese Tamtams**

**2<sup>nd</sup> player: 1 vibraphone, 1 bigger nicophone with eight different sounds but in a similar sound range, 3 Chinese Tamtams with different sounds than those of the 1<sup>st</sup> player.**

**Please do not use Chinese opera gongs, but small Tamtams with flat surface and a 90 degree bowed rim of about 2 - 3 cm, available at [www.asiansound.de](http://www.asiansound.de); the range should be in the lower region with three distinct different sounds. Please note that a bigger one in size is not necessarily lower than a slightly smaller one. According to my experience, in this case the instruments should vary between 25 and 35 cm in diameter.**

## **The Nicophone:**

**This instrument, constructed by Domenico Melchiorre (Email: [d.melchiorre@hotmail.de](mailto:d.melchiorre@hotmail.de) ) and his father has in this case eight different “tongues” to be played. The non-harmonic overtones make it difficult to define the actual pitch of these sounds. Basically I prefer low and rich or “fat” sounds, while two or three “tongues” (in this case Nr. 6, 5 and 7) are more noisy (almost similar to white noise). The original instruments can always be purchased or rented from Mr. Melchiorre.**

## **Notation:**

**- an accidental is only valuable for the immediate following note**

**- Mallets can be adjusted, the signs indicate smooth, middle, hard marimba mallets and mallets with plastic head**

- **A cross above the head of a note indicates a muted sound (normally done manually, or by pressing the mallets like in bar 12 ff)**
- **Note: the Chinese Tamtams are written with smaller notes. That does not mean anything and has only to do with the graphic limitations of the notation program.**
- **The nicophones are notated on a four-line system, beginning with No. 1 below the lowest line and then going gradually up until the upper line like in normal notation.**