



The *Guerrilla Fanfare* is a captivating public art event created on a commission from MakeMusicNY. Although designed for the urban density of Brooklyn and Manhattan, *Guerrilla Fanfare* is appropriate for any open public space.

Scored for 16 brass and 4 percussion, the musicians begin the *Guerrilla Fanfare* each alone on a street corner or similar location, 3-5 blocks from their ultimate destination. In New and Chicago, these are iconic meeting places, such as Grand Army Plaza, Battery Park, and the “bean” sculpture in Millennium Park. Using a smart phone app synchronized with an atomic clock to assure absolute rhythmic unity, the musicians slowly make their way, walking toward the center point while performing isolated, provocative fragments and, like pied pipers, drawing audience members in their wake, from the tourist throngs to strolling families to hat-wearing after-church coffee clubs. Meanwhile, at the central location, approximately a quarter mile from the closest musician, a conductor perched atop a ladder begins conducting the as-yet-unheard-and-unseen ensemble. Over the course of 15 minutes, the musicians arrive at the periphery of the space and coalesce into 4 small groups, finally gaining a sight line with the conductor, while the percussionists gather at the center near the conductor to provide a rhythmic anchor to the music.

By this time audience members, whether following the musicians, or gathered for upcoming events, or simply enjoying the day, will recognize the musical unity of each individual grouping. But depending on proximity, the groups who are still as much as 150 feet from the conductor, may sound as though they are out of sync with one another by more than a quarter second (to those at the periphery), or not at all (to those near the center).

Once under the baton of the conductor, though, each small group takes occasional, measured steps toward the center, until the musicians, like the lens of a camera very slowly being brought into focus, become a single large ensemble.

Musically, the work is a raucous, engaging and ambitious opener. Although by no means a standard fanfare, the work includes requisite bravado, a softer chorale-like middle segment, and a rousing jump-up-and-down-and-cheer ending. Along with its more experimental spatial effects, the work seeks a connection to “the street” and the sensibility of its title through the general musical content, i.e. a propensity for crescendi marked by sforzandi, fast and combative runs, elephantine glissandi, driving rhythms, and the use of found objects in the percussion.

Ultimately though, it’s the purpose of the *Guerrilla Fanfare* to both create and embody the energizing and inspiring effect of diverse communities slowly drawing together in a unity of purpose and a celebration of their shared humanity.

For more information, please contact the composer, Kevin James:

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