

# Percussive Notes

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## **Variations for World's Children (per Marching Drums)**

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Morleo Editore

**Instrumentation (4 players):** 2 snare drums, cymbal, bass drum

This theme-and-variations composition begins with a repeated four-measure theme that acts as a unifying rhythmic element throughout the piece. At the end of each of the first seven variations, the theme is restated before the next variation is introduced. The two snare drums play in unison through the initial theme and first variation before splitting into independent parts. The bass drum and cymbal parts are used sparingly throughout and, aside from the first half of the sixth variation, are used primarily for providing metric landmarks or accentuating an accent pattern with the two snare drums.

The first thing you'll notice when looking at this piece is that the notation is a little unconventional. At first, it looks very similar to Scottish pipe-and-drum sticking notation, with each hand being differentiated by a different stem direction. If that is how the composer intended the sticking to be done, the marked tempo (dotted quarter = 120) coupled with the constant sixteenth-note pulse, makes that sticking virtually impossible. No key is given at the beginning of the piece, so I had to ascertain that the stems-up notes were single strokes, and the stems-down notes were doubles, which still wasn't consistent, but it worked more often than not. I received the electronic version of the piece, so the actual print music may have more information. Also not indicated is whether this piece is meant for a specific snare head type (Kevlar, Mylar, Ambassador, etc.) and the resulting sound.

Overall, the piece has a nice feel, with a hint of traditional rudimental drumming mixed with a contemporary splash of rhythmic propulsion. The use of only one bass drum and one cymbal player, while it balances the quartet, gives the composition a bit of the traditional Scottish feel and sound, rather than the tonal bass drums and multiple cymbal players in corps-style marching ensembles.

—Marcus D. Reddick