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Handledare: Ronny Lindeborg

Lauri Ahone

Djentophonic Project

*A Meeting Point of Classical and Metal Music
Through Percussion Ensemble*

Skriftlig reflektion inom självständigt, konstnärligt arbete

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Innehållsförteckning

Part I

About Djentophonic Ensemble Project

What is "djentophonic"?	5
Choosing the topic	6
My background as a drummer and percussionist	7
A short summary on the history of heavy metal	8
Notation	9

Part II

The Arrangements

My first arrangement	10
The next pieces	10
Solo pieces	
<i>Animals As Leaders</i> - "Modern Meat"	12
Duos	
<i>Animals As Leaders</i> - "David"	12
<i>Periphery</i> - "Ow My Feelings"	13
<i>Periphery</i> - "Zero"	14
<i>Deftones</i> - "Feiticeira"	15
Trios	
<i>Plagueround</i> - "The Alchemist"	16
<i>Periphery</i> - "Have A Blast"	16
<i>Textures</i> - "Burning the Midnight Oil"	17
<i>Metallica</i> - "Nothing Else Matters"	18
<i>Circles</i> - "Eye Embedded"	18
<i>Meshuggah</i> - "Spasm"	19
<i>Argo Vals</i> - "Tsicier"	20
Quartets	
<i>Led Zeppelin</i> - "The Rain Song"	21
<i>Sybreed</i> - "I Am Ultraviolence"	22
<i>Plagueround</i> - "Already Alive"	23

The Quintet	
<i>TesseracT</i> - "April"	25
Part III	
My master concert	26
Future plans	28
Other topics and conclusion	28
Appendix	29
Reference list	31

Abstract

The writer of this master thesis was acquiring an education in classical percussion and deeply respecting the music genre named djent. He was so impressed by metal music that he taught himself how to use the notation programme Sibelius 7 and arranged a number of his favourite songs for the percussion ensemble so he would be able to play them. The following text supports and describes the process. A short analysis of 16 arrangements is included as well.

Keywords

Djent, percussion, arranging, percussion ensemble, metal music

Part I

About Djentophonic Ensemble Project

What is "djentophonic"?

I had a dream. I wanted to bring my favourite songs to the repertoire of the classical percussion so I could play them to the classical music audience. With this I wanted to prove that there are some great pieces in the genre that they probably are not yet familiar with as well as to bring metal-listeners closer to the classical world, using a percussion ensemble. I am sure that many have had a similar wish. However, I might be the first one to transcribe and arrange *such* music for percussion since this genre, unofficially called "djent", is relatively young itself. It started in the mid-2000's when a community of guitar enthusiasts began exchanging recorded material online. They put together a few bands which reached larger audience by the turn of the decade. Djent refers to a particular section of metal music which is incorporating low tuned, open note syncopated riffing and/or heavily palm-muted metallic-sounding power chords. It is regarded as a new sub-genre of metal by many, but this statement is controversial. (got-djent.com)

The word "djent" is an onomatopoeia for the distinctive high-gain, distorted palm-muted guitar sound most notably employed by bands like *Meshuggah*. Typically, the word is used to refer to music that makes use of this sound, to the sound itself, or to the scene that revolves around it. *Meshuggah* is considered the originator of the djent technique with their heavily digitally processed power chords. However, the scene itself developed from an online community of home recording guitar enthusiasts including Misha Mansoor whose success with the band *Periphery* brought djent "from the virtual world into the real one." (Thomson, 2011) Other important bands in the development of the style have been *Animals As Leaders*, *Tesseract* and *Textures*. The scene has grown rapidly during the recent years and members of the original online community have gone on tour and released albums commercially with bands like *Chimp Spanner* and *Monuments*.

The word "djentophonic" is my own invention. It combines two words: "djent" and "symphonic". Ever since the beginning of my work I knew I needed a good name for the project. It had to be something that reflects on what I am doing. Also, I knew that I wanted to continue with the project after graduation so it would be useful to introduce the name already on my master concert. After long decision making I discussed with a close friend who studies Hungarian literature and he pointed out that "phonic" can also regard to the word "phonetics" which is a branch of linguistics that comprises the study of human speech, pronunciation and other small details of words. There is a slight similarity with what I am doing – taking djent songs into small pieces and putting them back together in a classical way to make them more understandable for the classical audience. In this way I could say that I am teaching them a new language, "djent", as well as showing the metal fans that the old "classical" language is not at all boring. So "djentophonic" suited perfectly for the name of my master project and the headline of my concert.

Choosing the topic

In the lecture “Introduction to the Master Thesis” in autumn 2012 at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm the lecturers Karin Hjertzell and Ambjörn Hugaradt shared some information that inspired me greatly. The first idea was this: The subject you choose must be personal, it must reflect on who you are. I, Lauri Ahone, have been a great fan of metal music since an early age. To prove this I have all *Metallica* albums on my shelf on cassettes. Secondly, Karin mentioned that throughout the years people have presented all kinds of master thesis's. Some have taken videos, others taught children, some reflected on their musicianship, others written arrangements. The latter sounded very interesting to me. I had had wonderful solfeggio teachers in Tallinn Music High School and thanks to this I may consider myself pretty good at writing down music by ear. In my childhood I even had a sound producing program called SoundClub 95 on my Windows 95. I transcribed *Blink 182* and *Green Day* songs on it and even composed some of my own pieces at the age of twelve. I enjoyed it!

It all led to the idea of combining these two – my personality of a metal-listener with the ability to transcribe music. Plus I had already started notating “Modern Meat” by *Animals As Leaders* for marimba in the summer of 2012 with the intention of playing it as an encore someday. So these three categories were filled:

1. It was personal
2. I am good at transcribing
3. I wanted to be able to perform my favourite songs

I became determined a few weeks later. On Thursday the 29th of November 2012 the percussion class of the Royal College of Music in Stockholm hosted a seminar of Roger Svedberg. He is working as a co-principal percussionist in the Royal Swedish Opera Orchestra (in Swedish *Kungliga Hovkapellet*) since 1999 and also is an established jazz vibraphonist. In 2006 Roger presented a book called “Opera Meets Jazz” where he has arranged his favourite opera themes for solo vibes. In the introduction of the book Roger writes:

In my work as a percussionist at the Royal Opera of Stockholm, I'm exposed some truly great music. [sic!] [...] Unfortunately many of the “good spots” are off limits for the percussion, and we are only listeners most of the time. Since I was denied to participate by the score I started to take actions on my own. I looked up some of my favourite places and transcribed it in its simplest form – melody and harmony. To my great surprise these orchestral pieces worked beautifully on solo-vibes, and I started to make my own versions of this music. (Svedberg, 2006, s. 3)

After the seminar with Roger Svedberg I made my decision – the main subject of my master thesis will be searching for the connection between classical and metal music by arranging some of my favourite metal songs for percussion ensemble. Roger had had a similar idea when he started and his success proved that it is possible to really make a difference. The following master thesis will compliment my arranging process and describe some of the stages more thoroughly.

My background as a drummer and percussionist

I have never listened to classical music in my leisure time. When I was still young I thought it was just plain boring which is supposedly a rather typical opinion amongst teenagers. When I became older I had gotten used to the alternative styles that my friends had introduced me to. However, this did not mean that I would not have liked to play classical music in the symphony orchestra.

I started to study percussion in Tallinn Music High School at the age of 10. My percussion teacher fixed my first freelance jobs in professional orchestras already when I was 16. In the beginning I did many mistakes but I learned fast and people began to offer me more and more work. By the time I graduated high school in 2008 I was an established freelancer in Estonian orchestras. I decided to continue my studies in two schools simultaneously: in the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre on classical percussion and the Georg Ots Music School on drum set. At the same period I was also actively freelancing in three major orchestras: The National Opera, The National Symphony Orchestra and The Nordic Symphony Orchestra. In addition I played in a black metal band called *Leek*, my own progressive metal group named *Plagueround* and co-operated with a composer Jakob Juhkam in his progressive rock band. All of this at the same time.

Working in the classical field had a great influence on my drumming in the bands. In *Plagueround's* music for example I composed rather complex drum parts. As an extra I very often used classical percussion instruments in our songs: a tam-tam, a glockenspiel, tuned gongs, a triangle, gran cassa etc. My classical background was evident technically, too. By having practiced a lot of xylophone tremolo I noticed that my single stroke roll was quicker than other drummers of the same age.

The swift single strokes became especially handy in *Leek* which was a black metal ensemble where I participated from 2003 until 2011. Black metal utilises a technique called "blast beat" which basically means hitting the cymbals, the snare drum and the bass drum simultaneously and in a very fast tempo for long periods of time. In classical percussion I had worked hard on getting the single strokes even on the xylophone. Now, playing black metal, I used a similar approach on the drum set – getting the semiquavers sound even on the snare drum, hi-hat and bass drum. Just like in *Plagueround*, I brought some classical music aspects into the music of *Leek* such as dynamics and a progressive structure in the songs.

Performance synergy in a band can not be compared with the one in a symphony orchestra. First of all the sizes are very different. A band regularly has 4-6 members while the smaller chamber orchestras start from around 30. Secondly the way they function. A band delivers the energy that is usually created between the players on stage as a collective inspiration from each others' playing. The symphony orchestra, on the other hand, is subject to follow the conductor and the musicians gain more energy from music itself. As there are so many people on stage everyone becomes slightly more anonymous than in a band where each member has their individual roll. And of course the acoustics, concert venues, the average age of the ordinary audience, the cultural background, repertoire - everything seems to be different between an orchestra and a metal band. But people are still able to actively participate in both genres simultaneously. However, I myself, despite playing a lot of classical music as a teenager, did not start listening to it.

A short summary on the history of heavy metal

Heavy metal music has derived from earlier music genres such as rock, blues and psychedelic rock. (Weinstein, 2000) The first song ever to be called "metal" was released in 1964 by *The Kinks* – "You Really Got Me". (Weinstein, 1991; Walser, 1993) It uses the distinctive power chords plus is the bass playing in unison with the guitar which hints clearly to nowadays metal music. Power chords are chords that consist of a root note and a fifth above it, usually played on distorted electric guitars. In the 1970's, the first metal bands like *Led Zeppelin*, *Deep Purple* and *Black Sabbath* attracted large audiences while also receiving strong criticism, a status which is common throughout the whole history of the genre. *Judas Priest* and *Motörhead* brought new influences into metal in the mid-70's, respectively blues and punk rock. Slightly later *Iron Maiden* began and the heavy metal music fans became known as "metalheads" or "headbangers".

Since the 1980's metal music started to divide and produce sub-genres. While glam metal bands like *Poison* and *Mötley Crüe* attracted plenty of commercial attention an array of more aggressive styles were created in the underground scene by bands like *Metallica*, *Anthrax* and *Slayer*. In the 90's metal genres expanded even further. Besides hard-core styles like death metal and doom metal, a number of bands had incorporated elements from lighter genres such as hip-hop or grunge and became very popular, for example nu metal (*Limp Bizkit*, *Korn*, *Slipknot*).

Although metal has a four-decade-long history and enduring popularity on a global scale, scholarly interest in metal has been modest when compared to that devoted to most other major and long-standing popular music cultures. (Brown, 2003) Scholarly interest in metal has, however, increased markedly during the past decade, although the field remains fragmented and lacking in any coherent terminology. (Kahn-Harris, 2007) Moreover, wider awareness of both earlier and more recent contributions to this field, as well as general knowledgeability about metal music and culture on the whole, sometimes varies considerably between individual commentators.

Although the field of "metal studies" has remained small, there has nevertheless been an uneven flow of scholarly explorations of metal music and culture since the early 1990s. These include book-length works such as Deena Weinstein's seminal work *Heavy Metal: A Cultural Sociology*, Robert Walser's *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*, Jeffrey Arnett's *Metalheads: Heavy Metal Music and Adolescent Alienation*, and Keith Kahn-Harris's *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge*.

Part Two

The Arrangements

My first arrangement

The first piece I ever arranged was "Modern Meat" by the band *Animals As Leaders*. It is originally a piece for an 8-string guitar which I arranged for a 5-octave marimba. "Modern Meat" is performed by Tosin Abasi, the band's lead guitarist. In my opinion most of the songs of *Animals As Leaders* would probably sound wonderful on percussion but with its minimalistic simplicity and delicacy "Modern Meat" seemed just perfect to begin with. I transcribed it in the summer of 2012 with a pencil and some music paper by the piano at my home in Saue, Estonia. Looking back it was difficult and rather time-consuming to do. Now I'm using Sibelius 7 at school which is easy, quick and fun.

The next pieces

Some pieces are much more complicated to arrange than others. Although, sometimes the problem also lies in me. It is easy to get carried away, especially in proportions. The number of instruments and the players both have a strong tendency to increase if I don't notice to halt them. When this happens I shortly run into a dead end and have to take a small pause from this particular arrangement for a while. This is why I always have several projects at work simultaneously. It helps me to clear my mind and gain motivation from success with other pieces to work further with the ones that are stuck.

The first printed work-in-progress scores date back to January 2013. For about two years the final part of my day at school was to go to the library, log on to Sibelius 7 and arrange. According to a tale Heino Eller, the teacher of Arvo Pärt, had told his students to write at least one note every day. I thought it was a good idea to follow and it got me quite far.

Thanks to the solid solfeggio basis I received from Tallinn Music High School I hardly ever had any problems with transcribing. I could even say I enjoyed it when the song was a bit difficult and challenging. The analysis of rhythms, form, the harmony, the time-changes, the hidden sounds behind the music – all very exciting! Another part I enjoyed was the editing. When I had reached the final bar of a piece I printed out the score and played through all the parts on the actual instruments. This was a really fun experience because the acoustic instruments sound different, usually much better than the Sibelius midi-file. I liked noticing my mistakes and learning from them. Often they created bigger problems than I expected! For example, when I had written to change from soft mallets to hard ones but there was not enough time to change. Or the one person playing the drum was also supposed to scrape the tam-tam, but there was no opportunity to pick up the metal stick. It

was thrilling to find a solution to such problems. Luckily, as I had written all the music, I did not need to ask anyone's permission to make changes in it.

I tried to write everything down as clearly as possible: the remarks, the dynamics, the stick changes etc. However, some remarks are deliberately written in Italian and the others in English. In the end it is still classical music and the traditional language for the remarks is Italian. Only for clarity reasons some things were kept in English, for example: "4 mallets", "Wood tom-toms", "Dead stroke" etc. There's a fascinating time-gap between the origin of Italian to be used in music and the invention of percussion ensemble as a genre. Contemporary remarks are clearest in English and therefore make it simpler to learn the piece. This is the reason why I can't write all the remarks in Italian. But in my opinion every self-respectful musician should still know the basic musical vocabulary in Italian. And in the end I think it just looks better to write "Sempre leggiero" instead of "Lightly throughout".

For personal use I have headlined my scores "Track n " with n being the chronological number of the piece. This list is keeping the arrangements organised as well as anonymous. By not showing the real names of the pieces I am concealing the whole concept so people who accidentally see the scores do not understand what is going on. This allows me to elaborate the pieces to absolute perfection before presenting them publicly. Also, if someone should find my scores and think it is a good idea to arrange metal for percussion ensemble they might steal my idea. That would make me very sad. Every tenth score is originally an Estonian song (1, 11, 21 etc) which is good for reminding myself where I come from. In addition this might help me in the future when I am asking the Estonian government for financial assistance – you see, I have popularised Estonian music as well!

I want to write percussion music that would be fun to play which often means that it has to be comfortable. Musicians frequently become stressed because of pieces that are so difficult it takes them months to study a single line. And in many cases it is totally unnecessary - it sounds just as it would when written down a lot easier. The same applies for playing techniques. Why to write something too complicated when you can for example divide the music between two players? Or instead of writing complex rhythms let the musician interpret the given material freely? It still sounds the same, or even better because the musicians then feel comfortable and relaxed while performing. Which makes it fun to listen. So in order to make sure it is comfortable to play I always go through all the parts myself before handing them over to someone else. In this way I eliminate the flaws and learn to do better in the future.

In the following part of my master thesis I will describe some of the arrangements with included musical examples. The arrangements are first divided by the size of the ensemble from smallest to the largest: solo to quintet. Inside these groups the bands are listed in the order I started arranging them chronologically. All the hyperlinks inside the text are typed out in the reference list for readers who are using a paper copy. There are also the YouTube links to all the original pieces in the reference list. All of these links are presented to bring the attention to some great music that the reader has perhaps not yet heard and give them the opportunity to do so.

Solo pieces

Animals As Leaders - "Modern Meat"

The first track I ever arranged still remains to be the only solo piece. The premier of my marimba version of "Modern Meat" took place in Tallinn, Estonia 7th March 2013. I wanted to be able to play this as an encore on solo concerts. People have, however, recorded it on all kinds of instruments – the piano, vibraphone and even ukulele which is proof that "Modern Meat" is very adaptable and can be played on almost anything. Perhaps one of the reasons for such popularity is that it does not pose much technical difficulty. However, it is very demanding in other ways. As the material is simple and easily understandable, so are missed notes. In my marimba version there is quite a wide chord in the opening section (C-C-F-F over three and a half octaves) which requires careful practice before striking it correct every time. But when you eventually succeed it rewards you with a massive contrast between the narrow triad preceding the extensively wide interval.

YouTube link to the original song [here](#).¹

In order to get some nice juicy bass tones "Modern Meat" is transposed a half-tone higher on the marimba. This lets me use the lowest C-bar which would otherwise be out of range of the instrument.

YouTube link to my marimba version available [here](#).

Duos

Animals As Leaders - "David"

"David" is the final song from the second album by *Animals As Leaders* - "Weightless". For me the release of "Weightless" was a special occasion since it was the first record that I really knew to look forward to. Most of the djent I listened to had come out long before I heard about it but by "Weightless" I had educated myself enough to be able to share the excitement with other fans.

In my chronological list "David" bears the name "Track 4". As the first few arrangements before it had already revealed the marimba was going to be the dominating instrument throughout the whole project. I felt a slight resistance to that. In "David" I wanted the focus to be on the vibraphone instead because it is a wonderful percussion instrument as well. As long as I did go, I could not exclude the grand marimba entirely.

In the first version I tried to create the ambient street noise in the original song by improvising on some unusual percussion instruments such as flower pots and a super ball on the bass drum. However, I noticed in the pre-rehearsal that this will not work and had to remove it. It is very inconvenient if not impossible to play the marimba and flowerpots at the same time in a manner that both would sound good.

¹ All hyperlinks can be found typed in the reference list.

Tosin Abasi, the lead guitarist of *Animals As Leaders* is using a loop-pedal to play the main theme of the song. This pedal enables him to record the first phrase and then engage the electronics with the pedal so the material is looping while he is playing the second phrase on top of it. I could not do that on the vibraphone so I just wrote two parts inside each other as seen below. Beginning from bar 5, all the added notes would otherwise be played on top of the looping phrase at bar 1-4. The 12/8 measure is intentionally divided 4+3+2+3 so the opening passage receives an unusual kind of folkloric swing feeling when you count it in a long three (then divided as 4+3+5 quavers) as the pedalling in the vibraphone part suggests.

The image shows a musical score for two parts: Vibraphone and Vib. (Vibraphone). The score is in 12/8 time and begins with the tempo marking "Con moto" and a quarter note equal to 150 (♩ = 150). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The Vibraphone part starts at bar 1 with a dynamic marking of *p* and includes a "Ped" (pedal) marking with a line and a triangle symbol. The Vib. part starts at bar 5 with a dynamic marking of *mp*. Both parts feature a melodic line with a repeat sign at the end of the first four bars, followed by a four-measure rest, and then a final four-measure phrase. The score is written on two staves, with the Vibraphone part on top and the Vib. part on the bottom.

Animals As Leaders - "David" music video [here](#).

The video of the same piece on my master concert [here](#).

***Periphery* - "Ow My Feelings" (Instrumental)**

After "David" it took about ten pieces until my next duo. I was learning how to use Sibelius and how to arrange. In the beginning it felt easier to use a bigger ensemble for my arrangements since like this I had more sounds to work with. However, the urge to play "Ow My Feelings" grew in me as it is one of my favourite songs ever. So at one cold autumn night in November 2013 I could not take it any longer – I needed to start arranging it immediately! The piece is musically very powerful and I wanted to bring that power to stage as soon as possible.

Periphery has two versions of this song – one instrumental and one with their singer Spencer Sotelo. The previous singer and *Periphery* parted ways just a few months before the initial album release in 2010. Rather than release the album with the old singer's material the band decided to rerecord all the vocals with Spencer Sotelo. In the end *Periphery* released two albums: the instrumental album as well as the one including vocals. In my opinion the one without Spencer is better. The music is pure, clean, the ingenious guitar melodies of Misha Mansoor come forward more easily. That's why I've chosen to arrange the instrumental version of the song which can be enjoyed by clicking [here](#).

The percussion version of "Ow My Feelings" is quite demanding. The rhythmical complexity in djent is often challenging, but somehow this marimba part turned out to be really difficult. I would even say that it is comparable with nowadays contemporary marimba music. The vibes part is somewhat simpler. Both the parts feel equally excellent to play, though.

A short intro of my percussion version can be viewed [here](#).

Periphery - "Zero"

At one point I wanted to test myself how fast am I capable of arranging. I have heard that it is one of the most frequent questions professional arrangers receive: "How quickly can you do it?" So when *Periphery* released the EP "Clear" I decided I will arrange one song from it as fast as I can. I did not even spend that much time on choosing between all the six splendid tracks on the EP but took "Zero" where I thought I heard the percussion version in my head directly after the first listening. A month later the preliminary arrangement was ready. Looking at the score now I understand I was rushing a little bit and could have been more exact in my writing but at least it is playable. As I have discussed with a fellow Estonian composer, the piece usually becomes ready *after* the first performance anyway.

Just like "Ow My Feelings" the percussion duo of "Zero" is technically rather demanding. There are a lot of notes that all have to be correct. I did not manage to include this song to my master concert but when I eventually will perform it I know that it needs a good deal of rehearsing as well as individual practice.

Djent as a style utilises a special sound palette and complex rhythms but very often also something that could be interpreted as polyphonic material. In "Zero" the harmony in a couple of passages is hidden in long semiquaver lines as seen in the vibraphone part in the excerpt below. This is a composition technique that baroque composers used.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Vibraphone (Vib.) and Maracas (Mar.). The first system starts at measure 39. The Vib. part features a complex, fast-moving line of eighth notes, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The Mar. part consists of a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents. The second system starts at measure 41. The Vib. part continues with a similar fast-moving line, marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The Mar. part features a rhythmic pattern with accents, marked with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4.

Periphery - "Zero" link [here](#).

Deftones - "Feiticeira"

My arrangement of "Feiticeira" received great feed-back after the master concert but it was actually a coincidence that I arranged it in the first place. Since *Deftones* has had an enormous effect on both me and the development of nu metal I felt the need to share their music with the classical music fans. So I started to work with the very famous "Digital Bath". After just a few phrases I realised that it will be extremely difficult to get "Digital Bath" sound interesting in the percussion setting because a crucial part in the original song lies on the drum set which I did not want to use in my arrangement. I took a break from *Deftones* and when I returned I had some fresh ideas. I decided to arrange "Feiticeira" from the same album "White Pony" instead. This song suited much better for the percussion ensemble and was an immediate success.

The guitar sound in the song is occasionally quite trashy. I turned these indistinct notes into my favour and interpreted them rather liberally. Sometimes adding an interval, sometimes omitting one, also they can be used to create an illusionary tonality which might not be there. For example in the opening passage one might hear different notes instead of the upper "A" and the dominative "E" is neither not that clear all the time.

In order to explain what I mean I have included a link to the original song by *Deftones* and an excerpt of the beginning of my arrangement. To get the best idea I recommend looking at the music while listening to the piece which is available [here](#).

The image shows a musical score for a percussion ensemble. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system is for the Vibraphone (Vib.), with a tempo marking of quarter note = 74. The Vib. part starts with a forte (f) dynamic and transitions to piano (p). The second system includes Vib. and Maracas (Mar.). The Vib. part continues with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The Mar. part starts with a forte (f) dynamic and ends with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The third system also includes Vib. and Mar., with the Vib. part continuing at a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The Mar. part continues with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The score is written in 4/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamics.

The performance of "Feiticeira" on my master concert available [here](#).

Trios

***Plagueround* - "The Alchemist"**

Plagueround is the band that I played in for many years in Estonia. It was my own band. We composed the pieces collectively and I have noticed that all our songs suit brilliantly for percussion ensemble! I suppose I was subconsciously composing them like that because already when we were still in the process of putting the songs together I was very influenced by classical music. I had the concept of sound, form and character of a classical percussionist. Now I have the opportunity to bring my ideas from my band's music into reality by arranging these pieces for percussion.

The image shows a musical score for three staves. The top staff is a drum part with a series of 'x' marks representing hits, starting with a box labeled 'A' and the instruction 'On the nod'. The middle staff is a marimba part with a triplet of sixteenth notes marked '3' and a dynamic of 'mp'. The bottom staff is a piano part with a dynamic of 'mp'. The score includes dynamic markings 'p' and 'ped.sempre'.

As it was one of the very first pieces I arranged I remember all the enthusiastic ideas I had. For example, the middle staff in the extract you can see above is the marimba part. In "A" there is a sixteenth-note *legato* passage. However, in the first version I had thought one can play this material in octaves. Sixteenth-notes in octaves!?! When I then printed it out and took it to the marimba I immediately understood how optimistic I had been - it was completely impossible to play.

***Periphery* - "Have A Blast"**

When the idea of my master thesis had settled at the end of 2012 *Periphery* had just come out with their second album which djent fans had been looking forward to for many years. Although the album in it's entirety was a little weaker than expected there are some terrific songs on it. "Have A Blast" is one of them.

Supposedly the name "Have A Blast" refers to the "blast beat" technique that is utilised in the opening passage of this song. This kind of drumming is usually present only together with extreme amounts of input. I can say that I have never experienced so much energy in any classical percussion ensemble piece so far. This is why I wanted to arrange "Have A Blast".

With "Have A Blast" I was rather fortunate in many aspects. Firstly it fit exactly to the range of the instruments that I had imagined it for – a vibraphone and two marimbas. This meant that I did not need to transpose it which could have been

complicated considering that it was one of the first pieces I ever arranged with Sibelius. Secondly, the extremely complex guitar solos have been explained in the video "How to play Have a Blast" on YouTube where a random guitar enthusiast is playing through the whole song in a very slow tempo. His video was a big part of my success. Thirdly, as it turns out, "Have A Blast" sounds brilliant on a percussion ensemble! It made it easier to continue with the "Djentophonic Project" after the premier of "Have A Blast" when hearing words like "virtuoso", "well-balanced" and "super" as feed-back.

The YouTube link to performance on my master concert is [here](#) and to the original by *Periphery* [here](#).

Textures - "Burning the Midnight Oil"

When the Dutch band *Textures* performed in Tallinn in 2009 *Plagueround* had the honour of being one of the warm-up groups. I was acquainted with the music of *Textures* before but this concert took my interest of djent to another level, mainly because of the impressive drumming of Stef Broks who is known for using plenty of polyrhythms and having spectacular drum set co-ordination skills.

Arranging "Burning the Midnight Oil" was easy. It is a straight-forward song with all the musical layers drawn out clearly throughout the piece. I took advantage of this simplicity and used this piece to work with when some other arrangement didn't go so well. There are a few things to point out, though. Just like with "Modern Meat" I lifted the tonality up half a tone to get the juicy low C to the range of the marimba. The C is there only for a few bars but it is worth it. Secondly, in the very first printed version I had the opening passage played on a marimba but later I changed it to a vibraphone. The problem is, the notation programme Sibelius has a little echo when it plays back the scores so it sounded lovely in the computer. But on the real marimba it is hard to get such a long tone high up in the register. However, I wanted the beginning notes to ring longer which meant I needed to choose another instrument for the whole piece.

♩. = 100

ppp

4

7

YouTube link to *Textures* - "[Burning the Midnight Oil](#)" and to the performance on my master [concert](#).

***Metallica* - "Nothing Else Matters"**

Metallica was my first and perhaps the most important interaction with metal music. When I had insisted my mother buy the *Metallica* cassette "Black Album" I was about eleven years old. I listened to it in a closed room with the highest possible volume from beginning until the end twice before I came out again. With my arrangements I knew that I wanted to show the classical audience that the global success of *Metallica* derives not only from of their looks so I decided to arrange something from their repertoire that almost everyone knows - "Nothing Else Matters".

There are often simple ideas behind ingenious songs, here as well. Just with brilliant musicianship, a rather basic chord progression and great talent "Nothing Else Matters" has become one of the most successful songs of *Metallica* and is very popular both among the audience and other bands who frequently play cover versions of it.

The arranging of "Nothing Else Matters" was quite easy. Mostly because I could write it down largely by heart without even listening to the original which again shows how deep my personal connection with this song is. An interesting fact, though, is that when I eventually double-checked with the original many details sounded differently. I suppose the original "Nothing Else Matters" had started to live it's own life in my sub-conscious and now I simply notated it as if I were a transforming device for the splendid music which had formed it's own self inside of me.

The video of *Metallica* - "Nothing Else Matters" has received over 50 million clicks on YouTube and the link to it is available [here](#).

***Circles* - "Eye Embedded"**

When I first heard the Australian djent band *Circles* I was stunned. If I had had the chance to play in a band I would have done everything exactly the same! It was precisely the type of music I liked the most at that time. Besides, I thought it would be great to involve some bands from other areas of the world to my master project than U.S. and Europe, so Australia was a great place of origin to include.

As said, all *Circles'* songs are in my opinion brilliant so it was difficult to choose which one to arrange. In the end took the one that I thought was the simplest. "Eye Embedded" which you can listen by clicking [here](#) has a clear form, catchy melodies, a nice quick tempo and some great rhythmical passages that seemed perfect for execution on percussion instruments. By the way, all of these four characteristics are, in my opinion, the exact opposites of most of today's contemporary classical music.

On my master concert we performed it *attacca* after an Estonian piece by *Argo Vals*. These two arrangements contrasted each other very well with the first being calm, slow and sound-based while the latter jumps in your face with the dominative percussion entrance. But also "Eye Embedded" has it's melancholic passages. In the centre part, for example, there is a section for two vibraphones. I was happy to use such a combination since two vibraphones do not often occur simultaneously in nowadays music. Link to the performance on my [concert](#).

Meshuggah - "Spasm"

Meshuggah has created something new in music and I have great respect towards them. The fact that they have kept with their original idea over 25 years and not turned to the commercial music industry makes them even more special to me. I sometimes compare *Meshuggah* with Arvo Pärt - they both have invented something extraordinary, something so symmetrical and have an impact on almost everything that comes after them.

With such respect in mind it took me a long time to gain the courage to approach a *Meshuggah* song for arranging. The songs sound majestic to me, like the massive columns of the temples in Ancient Greek. You would not like to destroy one just to see what's inside, would you? Another thing is the sound. *Meshuggah* processes their guitars digitally to a large extent. To receive a similar sound on a marimba I was pondering of laying bouncing objects on the bars to get a kind of a distorted effect. This idea originated from the Swedish composer Jesper Nordin's piece "Diffusing Grains" where he orders to fix rattling drumsticks on top of the bars. This adds a short buzz to the tone but I was not so sure if I wanted that. I preferred a thinner and a longer sound (the sticks also muffle the bar quite a lot). Plus it damages the marimba in the long run. Also, when performing this piece somewhere else I have to spend extra time on preparing the instrument which I could use for warm-up instead. So I decided to play "Spasm" on just the regular acoustic, unprepared instruments and gain the effect by playing more aggressively.

"Spasm" is probably the lowest sounding song I have ever heard. For this song the lead guitarist of *Meshuggah* Fredrik Thordendal usually tunes his 8-string instrument down to B flat, which is the second lowest B flat on the piano. At first it sounded just like a very low *Meshuggah* piece to me. But in the summer 2013 I noticed that towards the end it gets even a half tone lower from it's main tonality. I could not believe I was hearing this. So much power and force, these hypnotically repetitive rhythms, so much music out of such minimalistic material! How can this be excluded from the repertoire of classical percussion?!

In the middle section there is a snare drum solo. It is played and written in a 4/4 measure but it sounds really nothing like 4/4. I dare the reader to listen to the original and see if you can follow the first beat in the excerpt below that starts around 2:34. Link to *Meshuggah* - "[Spasm](#)" and to my percussion [arrangement](#).

91 **K** Solo

mf

94 **L**

mp

Argo Vals - "Tsichier"

Argo Vals has many fans including the president of the small Estonian republic mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves who has shared Argo's music several times on Twitter and other social media. In addition Argo is a very nice person which makes playing his music extremely pleasant. I wrote a percussion ensemble arrangement of his song "Tsichier" to introduce this talented young man to the classical world as well.

Just like with a number of other pieces, the most difficult part of this arrangement was to achieve the right sound. There is little musical material so I had to use another method to make it interesting. A strong merit of percussion instruments is that there is plenty of them. So I began by just adding a glockenspiel to my marimba and two vibes ensemble. It worked, but also posed a problem of range since the glockenspiel has a range of only 2.5 octaves (G-C) which in "Tsichier" is not even enough to play one phrase. Therefore I took the liberty of composing some extra notes between. And I was certain that Argo would not mind me doing so. Another issue that I had to solve concerned the long bass notes which in the original song are recorded by another good friend of mine Jakob Juhkam on a bass synthesiser. These long tones should be executed as tremolo on the marimba but I did not want to hear any individual strokes. During the process of editing "Tsichier" I added and omitted the tremolos in the marimba part a number of times. In the end I the wonderful marimbist Simon Halvarsson solved my problems by just playing the long notes with good tremolo so that the individual strokes were inaudible.

A link to *Argo Vals* - "[Tsichier](#)"

Andante ♩ = 100

Vibraphone *mp*

Vib. *mp* **A**

Mar. *mp* **A**

Vib. *mp* **A**

Mar.

A percussion version of this song can be found [here](#).

Quartets

I see the *Djentophonic Ensemble* in the future as a quartet. However, I can not force every member to play in every piece since it would not be considerate on human resources neither our time planning. On the other hand, four people on stage is visually and musically a nice experience. So in the end, I think I will be arranging some more quartets in the future.

Led Zeppelin - "The Rain Song"

The oldest song in the programme of my master concert was released in 1973 on the album "Houses of the Holy" which was certified eleven times platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America.² I arranged the live version of "The Rain Song" which appears on "The Song Remains the Same" from 1976 for three reasons. First, as the live version is played a tone higher (in A major) it sounds wilder and more energetic. Secondly, the timpani sound is awful on both the studio version and the live one so I wanted to make it clear for everybody that John Bonham is playing a kettle drum. And thirdly, when I continue with *Djentophonic Ensemble* in the future it is a good excuse to ask the sponsors for financial support for purchasing some timpani. By now, though, "The Rain Song" is the only arrangement I have utilised kettle drums in.

It was very enjoyable to arrange the song because of all the good memories I have connected to it. However, at one point in mid-2013 I took a longer break from it because I thought it sounded boring and did not progress fast enough. But as I had done quite a big job already I did not wish to give up entirely either. Then I met a friend who said I seemed 100% committed and she is certain that I will be successful one day. These words inspired me and by March 2014 the score was complete.

My arrangement of "The Rain Song" incorporates a large multi-percussion set up with four tom-toms, a snare drum, an orchestral bass drum, one timpani, a tam-tam and a suspended cymbal. This is due to the extremely melodic drumming of *Led Zeppelin's* deceased drummer John Bonham who often accompanied Jimmy Page's guitar passages on tom-toms in this piece. Bonham played with timpani mallets which in my opinion produces a lovely mellow tom-tom sound and adds a special soft character to the drum set. In the live version from 1976, on the other hand, he plays timpani with drumsticks since there is no possibility to change the mallets and this is not a very nice sound.

YouTube link to *Led Zeppelin* - "The Rain Song" [live version](#).



YouTube link to my [version](#).

² <http://www.riaa.com/goldandplatinumdata.php?artist=%22Houses+of+the+Holy%22>

***Sybreed* - "I Am Ultraviolence"**

Sybreed is a Switzerland-based act that tries to mix groovy yet aggressive metal with industrial music, creating a vision of futuristic metal.³ The band uses electronics quite extensively and their style is therefore frequently referred to as "cyber-metal". Despite the extreme facade on the outside the music of *Sybreed* often hides multiple layers of fantastic melodies, beautiful harmonies and sophisticated rhythmic material on the inside. The latter is, furthermore, sharpened to the very limit by digital editing thus creating a fascinating experience when heard for the first time – usually people have never heard so precise rhythms. Therefore, the music of *Sybreed* has some qualities that are extraordinary and this is what makes it brilliant! Now I have put this very intense music into a "softer" package so the classical audience could get acquainted to something this ingenious as well.

The triggering force for me to arrange "I Am Ultraviolence" for percussion ensemble was the passage in the second half of the chorus. The drum part is executed in a tempo that is almost inaudible. The single strokes in the section are sharp thanks to digital remastering, but just a little too fast to actually register all the beats by ear (semiquavers in 240 beats per minute). Just like in "Spasm" by *Meshuggah* that had the lowest note I ever had encountered, *Sybreed's* song had the fastest tempo. In the percussion ensemble version this passage is played with double strokes on a muffled snare drum. It is not extremely clear either but probably the closest one can get with acoustic instruments.

The piece was generally easy to set for percussion. As I had listened to the original plenty of times the sounds had formed in my sub-conscious so I had no problems with choosing the correct instruments – only the ones that could deliver my ideas into reality were picked. However, on the tubular bells for example, I needed to make adjustments and take away some intervals because in Sibelius they sound nicely in tune but in the real life the overtones between two tubular bells do not function together well at all. I decided it is better to leave just one note. I also omitted some 16-notes from the marimba and vibraphone parts since they sounded unclear (or inaudible) and the artists would have had too much stress getting them together. In fact, we removed some more semiquavers during the rehearsal period to eliminate the danger of not being able to execute them in case the tempo gets too high in a concert situation. It was a good solution since the snare drum is playing 16-notes at the same place anyway and is much more accurate, percussive and loud than a marimba or vibraphone.

YouTube link to *Djentophonic Ensemble* - "I Am Ultraviolence" performed on my master concert is available [here](#).

YouTube link to *Sybreed* - "I Am Ultraviolence" available [here](#).

³ <http://sybreed.com/band/>

The image shows a musical score for a percussion ensemble. It consists of four staves: Vibraphone, Marimba, Percussion, and Drum Set. The tempo is marked as 120. The key signature has two flats. The Vibraphone part starts with a melodic line in the right hand, marked *ff*, followed by a fermata and then a melodic line in the left hand marked *mf*. The Marimba part has a rhythmic pattern in the left hand, marked *f*. The Percussion part includes markings for Crash, Splash, and Muffle!. The Drum Set part includes markings for Snare drum, Rim, and Splash. The score is divided into two systems, with the second system starting at measure 4.

***Plagueround* - "Already Alive"**

Ever since November 2012 when I first got the idea to arrange metal music for classical percussion I knew that I wanted to involve my own band *Plagueround* to the process greatly. We were active from 2004 until 2011 and created some of the best music ever but we never made it to the big stages. Partially thanks to lack of money and time, partially because we were so young and partially because we were often changing vocalists. We sometimes rehearsed long periods without a singer at all which made the instrumental group function very well with each other. We also become good friends. As a token of that friendship and a bow to our music I have made a plan to arrange all the pieces of *Plagueround* for percussion ensemble in the future. While *Plagueround's* song "The Alchemist" bears the name "Track 1" in my list, "Already Alive" comes as "Track 11".

On my master concert I had written a short introduction text before "Already Alive". It said:

All the *Plagueround's* songs were composed collectively so everyone had their input. Now, six years after "Already Alive" was recorded by *Plagueround* Lauri has finished the percussion version of it. Being deeply influenced by classical music when playing in the band, these songs suit remarkably well for percussion ensemble. Maybe Lauri had the idea of playing them on percussion in his head already then?

I was thinking "classically" when we were composing new material with *Plagueround* so now it is wonderfully easy to transcribe the music for percussion almost directly – the ranges fit perfectly, there are clear musical layers all the time and even if the recordings of our songs did not reach a very high quality I can still bring out the best and leave out the worst. And no one can tell me I am wrong since I composed the original.

The same issue I had with "I Am Ultraviolence" occurred in "Already Alive". After playing the score through I omitted some demisemiquavers in the marimba and vibraphone. They were indistinct to the listener and caused extra stress for the musicians. However, the biggest problem in the arrangement were the stick changes. It took nearly two years to arrange "Already Alive". As I mentioned earlier, Sibelius 7 plays back absolutely anything you write. This meant I had gotten used to hearing some impossibly quick stick changing places over time. When I eventually took the score to the instruments I did not want to accept that I needed to change the music in order to enable stick changes. I had gotten so used to hearing the impossible version. But there had to be a compromise. So in the marimbas, for example, I transferred half a bar to the Marimba 2 while the Marimba 1 player is switching from the bass drum to his instrument. Looks like this:

The image shows a musical score for two marimbas, labeled Mar. 1 and Mar. 2. Mar. 1 is written on a single treble clef staff with a 5/8 time signature. Mar. 2 is written on a grand staff with both treble and bass clefs, also with a 5/8 time signature. Both parts begin with a rest in the first measure, followed by a melodic line in the second measure. The dynamic marking *mf* is present in both parts. The score is divided into two measures, with a change in time signature from 5/8 to 6/8 occurring at the start of the second measure.

"Already Alive" is one of the very few pieces where I added some material after trying the original score. In the version by *Plagueround* there are a few guitar riffs played in unison. An unison in a percussion ensemble, however, sounds quite dull. Therefore I had left these passages *tacet* to one player. When we started rehearsing this piece for my master concert I soon realised that it is still better to support the group there (the bars are in 13/16 measure) and also it looks visually nicer when everyone is engaged during an intense passage rather than three percussionists having to deliver extensively while one is just counting bars. So I added some extra material to the vibraphone that now plays in unison with the marimba.

You can listen to the demo version of the fantastic song

Plagueround - "Already Alive" [here](#).

And the percussion version performed on my master concert is available [here](#).

The Quintet

Tesseract - "April"

The way "April" grooves is amazing. The moment when the distorted guitars enter is astonishing. The repetitive expanded harmonic progression gives a meditative experience just like the long high notes of the singer Daniel Tompkins. Plus the magnificent guitar and drum sound, so overwhelming yet very precisely controlled. Ruthlessly simple but works every time. Link to the original [here](#).

The British band *Tesseract* came with some fresh views on djent, for example the idea of a concept album (an album where all the songs are connected to a unifying theme lyrically, musically or both ⁴) or to record all the instruments in the studio live. This means that when other bands usually record every instrument separately then *Tesseract* released a version of their album "Concealing Fate", for example, where the whole ensemble is recorded simultaneously for 28 minutes when they perform this concept record in the studio. Such a method gives the album a live concert feeling which is otherwise very rare among today's pop music recordings.

I started to arrange "April" with great motivation as I was pretty early in the overall arranging process. I wanted to have a massive bass sound on the marimba but not to use the lowest C because most of the pieces were already using that note. As the original song is in a different tonality anyway (Bb minor) I decided to transpose it to C# minor. This way I could avoid the C and still get a great sound from the instrument. However, the sound was not enough because *Tesseract* uses such a fundamental bass frequency in their music that I needed to double the lowest marimba tones. I added an extra marimba that only plays octaves in the low range. "April" is the only ensemble for five percussionists I have arranged so far and it utilises two 5-octave marimbas, two vibraphones and a large multi percussion set-up.

The arrangement that eventually reached the paper is a mixture of the studio version of "April" and an acoustic one with Amos Williams, the band's bass player as a soloist. I took the best portions of each and blended them together.

The musical score is for the piece "April" by Tesseract. It is written for five percussionists: Vibraphone 1 (Vib. 1), Drums (Dr.), Vibraphone 2 (Vib. 2), Marimba 1 (Mar. 1), and Marimba 2 (Mar. 2). The score is in C# minor (three sharps) and 4/4 time. It begins at measure 17, marked with a 'B' in a box. Vib. 1 plays a melodic line of eighth and quarter notes. Dr. features a 'Splash' followed by a 'Ride' pattern of eighth notes. Vib. 2 plays a sustained note with 'Con arco' and 'p Motor off' markings. Mar. 1 plays a melodic line with a 'p' marking. Mar. 2 plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with a 'mp' marking. A second 'B' in a box is placed at the beginning of the Mar. 2 staff.

⁴ Shuker, 2002, s.5

My Master Concert

On Saturday, 2nd May 2015 I had my master concert at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. I performed ten of my arrangements with the help of a percussion ensemble consisting of Maarja Nuut, Simon Halvarsson and Claes Malmberg. The concert was headlined "Djentophonic Ensemble Project - Master Concert of Lauri Ahone" and the program looked as follows:

- 1. Periphery - Have a Blast**
Slagverksarrangemang av Lauri Ahone, uruppförande
- 2. Textures - Burning the Midnight Oil**
Slagverksarrangemang av Lauri Ahone, uruppförande
- 3. Sybreed - I Am Ultraviolence**
Slagverksarrangemang av Lauri Ahone, uruppförande
- 4. Animals As Leaders - David**
Slagverksarrangemang av Lauri Ahone, uruppförande
- 5. Led Zeppelin - The Rain Song**
Slagverksarrangemang av Lauri Ahone, uruppförande
- 6. Argo Vals - Tsihcier**
Slagverksarrangemang av Lauri Ahone, uruppförande
- 7. Circles - Eye Embedded**
Slagverksarrangemang av Lauri Ahone, uruppförande
- 8. Deftones - Feiticeira**
Slagverksarrangemang av Lauri Ahone, uruppförande
- 9. Meshuggah - Spasm**
Slagverksarrangemang av Lauri Ahone, uruppförande
- 10. Plaguaround - Already Alive**
Slagverksarrangemang av Lauri Ahone, uruppförande

The concert lasted for 60 minutes and there were about 40 spectators. After the event I asked some members of the audience which song did they like best. Most of the people replied they liked all the songs, whereas many pointed out "David" and "Already Alive" as their personal favourites. The few who had heard the original songs before stated that they would have never believed that these rough metal songs could sound as melodic as this.

I had written short texts to be read between the pieces while the percussionists were setting up the instruments for the next one(s). These texts introduced the bands' backgrounds and the songs that we were performing as well as took the attention away from the artists who were rolling the instruments. The texts were read in English by Liisi Metsvahi and are included to this master thesis as an appendix.

The concert in general went well. Of course, everyone missed some tones but it always happens. Anything catastrophic did not occur. However, I made some observations considering the on-stage arrangement. The transport of the instruments between the pieces always took longer than expected and in the spot where we had to roll the most I had not written any text. Now I know I should never underestimate the time needed for instrument set-up and rather prepare longer texts than too short or none at all.

By the time the concert arrived I had lived with the idea of performing this programme for nearly two and a half years. I was not nervous but pleasantly excited and glad that it is finally here. I knew that there can only be two types of listeners in the hall. One is the group of people that has never heard any of the pieces. They would listen to the concert as a nice rhythmical and powerful program of percussion ensemble music. The second type, however, would be significantly smaller in size but they would know some the original songs. This group then could enjoy some of their familiar music delivered in an exquisite arrangement and discover new sounds in classical percussion. I was confident that my arrangements would receive a positive reaction from both groups and I was correct.

On the 10th November 2014 I had sent an inviting e-mail to some 30 friends around the world who would be interested in hearing my concert. In order to allow as many Estonians as possible to attend, the date Saturday 2nd May 2015 was chosen. They would be able to take the 2-day boat cruise from Tallinn to Stockholm. As Friday 1st May was a holiday, people could get on the boat from Estonia, travel overnight, arrive to Stockholm in the morning, have lunch, see my master concert at 15:00 and then get to the boat to travel back. Of course, Tallink, the ship company who is operating the route knows how to make money and the cruise ticket on this particular day was five times more expensive than on any other day. In the end, only two of my Estonian friends undertook the journey but I am very happy that they did. Both of them are former members of *Plagueround*.

While the audience was entering the hall I had prepared a CD to be played in the speakers. The music file was a compilation of all the ten original songs that we were about to perform in a percussion ensemble arrangement. Every excerpt was about 30 seconds long so the overall playback time of the CD was around six minutes.

Future plans

As mentioned earlier I would like to continue with *Djentophonic Ensemble* and make it my own percussion ensemble. I would like to tour around the world and have many contacts in the djent scene as well as the classical music scene. I conceive of my ensemble as a kind of a connection between these two genres. I also want to publish my music so that every pupil, student and professional percussionist could play metal music on marimbas and vibraphones. However, there are many problems. For example, the question of copyright. I have collected information about the publishers of most of the songs I have arranged but this does not mean they will allow me to perform my arrangements without their permission. Also there is the issue of instruments and a rehearsal room. Even if we manage with our own private instruments it would be a hassle to transport them to a rehearsal room and back every time. But many people believe in me and that gives me strength to go on. I just need to keep on doing what I love most – arrange and play percussion.

Other topics and conclusion

In this master thesis the main focus lies on my arrangements. There are, however, a number of topics that I will not go further into but could still offer a great deal of research for those who are interested. For example notation, percussion ensemble interpretation, genre meeting/crossover, technical and aesthetic expressions, contemporary playing methods on the percussion, cultural bonds between classical and metal music, religion and metal music, dividing music into genres, record labels, electronics used in classical and metal music etc. I have, however, focused more thoroughly on the writing and performing of my own arrangements.

This master thesis has described my master project which attempted to show the musical connection between classical music and djent with an aim to bring the classical music audience closer to djent and vice versa. The text is divided into three parts. The first one opens the background of both the writer and the topic. The second section presents the material that I have created and the final part is mainly reflecting on my master concert. The idea has been to bring my favourite genre "djent" closer to the classical music listener as well as to show metal-fans that classical music, percussion ensemble in particular, is very expressive and not boring at all compared to metal.

Appendix

The text read by Liisi Metsvahi between the pieces during my master concert 2nd May 2015.

Hello and welcome to Lauri Ahone's master concert! Today we will hear a selection of songs that Lauri enjoys listening to very much and has therefore decided to arrange for percussion ensemble. It is an attempt to show to the classical music audience that great music is written in the genre that they perhaps are not that familiar with as well as to show metal fans that classical music - percussion ensemble in particular - is very expressive and not boring at all compared to metal.

Today's concert is titled "Djentophonic Ensemble". The word "djentophonic" is a combination of two words: "djent" and "symphonic". Djent is a sub-genre of metal music that came to existence in the mid 2000's. It started from a community of guitar enthusiasts who exchanged recorded material online. The first band to bring djent from the virtual world into the real one was *Periphery* who's song called "Have a Blast" you just heard.

The next two pieces prove that great music does not only come from the United States. When the Dutch band *Textures* performed in Tallinn in 2009 Lauri had the chance to play in one of the warm-up groups. "Burning the Midnight Oil" can be found on *Textures'* album "Singularity". After that you will hear music of *Sybreed* from Switzerland.

When Lauri first came up with the idea of arranging metal music for percussion he was greatly influenced by the band *Animals As Leaders*. Lauri's first ever arrangement was "Modern Meat" by *Animals As Leaders*. Today we can hear another piece from them: "David" from their second album "Weightless". After "David" we jump back in time to 1973. One of the epic groups that definitely made it's mark in the history of metal music is *Led Zeppelin*. "The Rain Song" appears on their fifth album "Houses of the Holy" which was certified eleven times platinum.

Argo Vals is a guitarist and a composer in Estonia who can proudly present the country's president as one of his biggest fans. Argo's music is so creative and yet minimalistic that Lauri decided to include one of his songs in the program of his master concert. After some Estonian music it is again time to travel, this time 13000 km to Australia. Lauri has arranged "Eye Embedded" from the Australian djent pioneers *Circles*.

Deftones was a very popular alternative band in the mid 2000's whose song "Digital Bath" made it to the top of the charts all over the world. On the same album "White Pony" there is a song "Feiticeira" that Lauri has arranged for percussion duo. This album has influenced the development of metal rather throughly and Lauri also listened to it a lot in his teenage years.

The Swedish band *Meshuggah* from Umeå has been titulated "the fathers of djent". The band's guitarist Fredrik Thordendal was actually the one to coin the word "djent" in an interview regarding the sound of the guitars: "it sounds like djent-djent-dje-dje-djent".

By now *Meshuggah's* sound is what is considered the essence of the whole genre. Next in the program is "Spasm" from their record from 2002 called "Nothing". Some interesting facts: the whole song is written in 4/4 measure whilst all the three ensemble members play phrases in different measures than that. Also, it took Lauri 8 months to write this piece down for percussion, mostly because of the difficult rhythmical passages in the middle of the song.

The last piece of the program is an Estonian one.

From 2004 to 2012 Lauri was a member of *Plagueround*, a band he liked to call his own. All the *Plagueround's* songs were composed collectively so everyone had their input. Now, 6 years after "Already Alive" was recorded by *Plagueround* Lauri has finished the percussion version of it. Being deeply influenced by classical music when playing in the band, these songs suit remarkably well for percussion ensemble. Maybe Lauri had the idea of playing them on percussion in his head already then?

After the last piece the pub is open in Lilla salen! Follow Lauri down the hall to find the right place.

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After <https://www.youtube.com> type in the line starting with /watch.

Animals As Leaders - "Modern Meat" - /watch?v=GGex1RWM7jo

Djentophonic Ensemble - "Modern Meat" - /watch?v=eW912Ve5kY8

Animals As Leaders - "David" - /watch?v=1No7I5tDNYM

Djentophonic Ensemble - "David" - /watch?v=-0s90KbK2Wo

Periphery - "Ow My Feelings" (Instrumental) - /watch?v=RRXSOBXIauA

Djentophonic Ensemble - "Ow My Feelings" - /watch?v=BhY4b2sZGMk

Periphery - "Zero" - /watch?v=Zb6mdz1QH_E

Deftones - "Feiticeira" - /watch?v=Ft5c4sAJ_gI

Djentophonic Ensemble - "Feiticeira" - /watch?v=2XoiaJrQ1Lk

Periphery - "Have A Blast" - /watch?v=L6c8Cl3Hka0

Djentophonic Ensemble - "Have A Blast"- /watch?v=NnvLlkf4XHM

Textures - "Burning the Midnight Oil" - /watch?v=SQLliTaC-Wg

Djentophonic Ensemble - "Burning the Midnight Oil" - /watch?v=XGQ65qpOJHs

Metallica - "Nothing Else Matters" - /watch?v=Tj75Arhq5ho

Circles - "Eye Embedded" - /watch?v=0hKOp-kKDhE

Djentophonic Ensemble - "Eye Embedded" - /watch?v=12PkA6fYV6k

Meshuggah - "Spasm" - /watch?v=YMfbr7BO3Bg

Djentophonic Ensemble - "Spasm" - /watch?v=Oon45ir1hGQ

Argo Vals - "Tsichier" - /watch?v=PyMAxb2t6xg

Djentophonic Ensemble - "Tsichier" - /watch?v=mXsC55Dk5I0

Led Zeppelin - "The Rain Song" (live) - /watch?v=vc1PjR1-uf8

Djentophonic Ensemble - "The Rain Song" - /watch?v=gJ7NjLbyYuA

Sybreed - "I Am Ultraviolence" - /watch?v=Fi1fCPDt0q8

Djentophonic Ensemble - "I Am Ultraviolence" - /watch?v=PXRQXEWxT_E

Plagueround - "Already Alive" - /watch?v=dujii5tuhjA

Djentophonic Ensemble - "Already Alive" - /watch?v=gd4SZOVJ8Q0

Tesseract - "April" - /watch?v=T2qGopLzYVs