AsCent

Composed for the Key Stage Two or Key Stage Three Classroom by

Keir C. Crawley
‘AsCent’

Notes from the Composer

‘AsCent’ is the culmination of a number of ideas and experiences, first of which was the need to compose exciting and challenging music for the classroom. This piece attempts to put the Key Stage 2 or Key Stage 3 budding musician into the musical world of the Marvel Cinematic Universe or other similar big budget sci-fi action adventure films. Combining motor ostinati with contextually more adventurous accompanying harmony my aim is to move the musical learning away from the sometimes twee and undemanding into something with a little more musical bite. As such ‘AsCent’ should be playable by students from Year 6 upwards, either in its entirety as written live or to a backing track.

The title comes from a recent ‘flight’ on the British Airways i360 on Brighton seafront. This is an almost hard sci-fi sky-tether-esque oblate ellipsoid viewing pod that majestically raises its passenger’s 453 feet above the Sussex coastline revealing a magnificent 360 degree panorama. The capital A and C also represent the main tonal centres found in the piece. Finally the majority of the melodic contours rise in some way.

‘AsCent’ is composed to be adaptable; there are parts in C and Bb. I hear this as flute and trumpet but with careful octave transpositions these could equally be for violin and clarinet. There are also straightforward parts for bass guitar (also notated in tab) and keyboard/synthesiser aimed at students who have taken lower end ABRSM or similar exams. The piano part is aimed at the teacher.

Glockenspiels and xylophones – after 15 years of music teaching I have a love hate relationship with these particularly the former! There’s nothing better for creating an immediate access, inclusive sense of ensemble but nothing worse than the headache inducing sound of 28 pupils simultaneously preparing their own line for even 5 minutes. ‘AsCent’ has 2 glockenspiel and 2 xylophone parts, which stay within a relatively small range and on the ‘white’ notes. This should help facilitate as many students as possible joining in.

The percussion part could be shared by two students but is also just about playable by one. Please feel free to use whatever comes to hand, if you don’t have a bass drum try a surdo. No snare drum, perhaps a djembe? The body percussion part as well as being fashionable at the time of writing is another useful way of including as many as possible in the music making. Again please feel free to adapt what’s written or better still encourage your young musicians to compose their own in response to the piece.
In my own teaching I would divide up the parts for ‘AsCent’ roughly as follows:

- **C Part**: 1 or 2 players doubling
- **B♭ Part**: 1 or 2 players doubling
- **Glockenspiel 1**: 5 players
- **Glockenspiel 2**: 5 players
- **Xylophone 1**: 5 players
- **Xylophone 2**: 5 players
- **Body Percussion**: 4 or 5 performers
- **Percussion**: 1 or 2 players
- **Keyboard/Synth**: 1 player or 2 players sharing, 1 on each hand
- **Piano**: 1 player, probably but not necessarily, the music teacher

Rhythmically ‘AsCent’ is based around alternating time signatures of three-four and six-eight (representing the 3 and 6 of the i360) with a middle section (bar 57, letter D) in four-four. Quaver equals quaver throughout. I would therefore suggest, from a teaching perspective, that this pattern is introduced first. Teach your performers to clap on the strong beats and then move to the body percussion patterns. This way what might at first seem an intimidating score from the rhythmic perspective with its ever changing time signatures will soon become second nature. This approach will also help with bars 33-35 where a two-four bar is also introduced.

A recording of ‘AsCent’ can be found at: [www.soundcloud.com](http://www.soundcloud.com) – Keir C. Crawley – AsCent, a piece for the classroom. [https://soundcloud.com/keir-c-crawley/ascent-a-piece-for-the-classroom](https://soundcloud.com/keir-c-crawley/ascent-a-piece-for-the-classroom)

‘AsCent’ is dedicated to all music teachers everywhere – never forget you do an amazing and vital job in schools throughout the country and beyond.

Keir C. Crawley
London, December 2016

Mayor of London’s Music Award 2015

Fellow, Teach Through Music
Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance
2015 – 2016

Music Teacher Advocate
Music Excellence London
2016 – 2017
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C Part – suggesting flute or violin
Bb Part – suggesting trumpet or clarinet

Glockenspiel 1
Glockenspiel 2
Xylophone 1
Xylophone 2

Body Percussion
Percussion – Bass Drum, Snare Drum & Suspended Cymbal

Bass Guitar

Keyboard/Synthesiser – String Sound, Synth & Pad Sound

Piano

SCORE IN C

Duration – 2:06
AsCent
For KS2 or KS3 Classroom Ensemble

Keir C. Crawley

Score in C

Fast and rhythmical \( \dot{=152} \)

C Part

B♭ Part

Glockenspiels 1

Glockenspiels 2

Xylophones 1

Xylophones 2

Body Percussion

Percussion

Bass Guitar

Keyboard/Synth.

Fast and rhythmical \( \dot{=152} \)

String Sound

Piano

Con Ped.