

1.	<b>Three Brothers (1951)</b>	4:03
	<b>Percussion Music (1952)</b>	5:43
2.	I	1:39
3.	II	1:26
4.	III	1:25
5.	IV	1:15
6.	<b>Chamber Piece for Percussion Quintet (1954)</b>	7:29
	<b>Inventions on a Motive (1955)</b>	8:54
7.	Motive	0:44
8.	Invention 1	0:44
9.	Invention 2	1:03
10.	Invention 3	1:29
11.	Invention 4	1:17
12.	Invention 5	1:44
13.	Invention 6	0:38
14.	Finale	1:19
	<b>Variations for Four Drums and Viola (1957)</b>	18:08
15.	Introduction: Quasi Recitative	2:15
16.	Variation No. I: Adagio	3:20
17.	Variation No. II: Allegro	1:48
18.	Variation No. III: Lyrical	3:27
19.	Variation No. IV	2:45
20.	Variation No. V	1:29
21.	Finale	3:07
	<b>Conversations with Michael Colgrass</b>	32:39
22.	<i>Three Brothers</i> and the inspiration for becoming a composer	7:57
23.	<i>Percussion Music</i> : Bach, Max Roach, and Baroque drumming	2:57
24.	<i>Chamber Piece for Percussion Quintet</i> : Mozart and Beethoven for percussion	3:22
25.	<i>Inventions on a Motive</i> : thanks Rosemary!	2:44
26.	<i>Variations for Four Drums and Viola</i>	9:11
27.	Music for Percussion and Paul Price	0:45
28.	Drum tone quality	1:12
29.	Toy Drums, tunable tom-toms, and the development of the roto-tom	4:35

**TOTAL TIME** 76:55

## About Michael Colgrass (b. 1932)

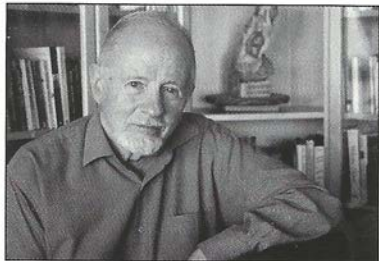
Michael Colgrass began his musical career as a Jazz drummer in the Chicago area before entering the University of Illinois In 1950 where he studied percussion under Paul Price.

... I was a bad student. I was primarily a Jazz musician and didn't take my studies in general seriously. I missed lessons, I missed classes, I didn't practice mallets because I didn't think that was important to me as a Jazz player, and I didn't attend percussion ensemble. I went on scholastic probation within the first six weeks, somehow got off during the next grading period, and then went back on again. Price and I were lined up head-on for a blowout.

Finally one day, exasperated with me, he cornered me and demanded I attend a percussion ensemble concert. Reluctantly I did, and afterward he asked me what I thought of it. I said, "Do you really want to know?" When he said yes I said, "Well, I admired the way the percussionists played, especially the way they could go from instrument to instrument with such proficiency. But frankly, I thought the music was terrible." The music, by the way, included some of the classics of percussion literature, but to my taste, Cowell, Cage and Harrison didn't "swing."

Price stared at me calmly and asked, "Why don't you try your hand?" I asked him what he meant and he said, "If you don't like what you heard why don't you write what you'd like to hear?" I describe this moment as "the thunderbolt." The feeling of excitement I got throughout my body was overwhelming. Aside from arranging, I had always thought you had to be dead to write music. Now the idea was seriously being proposed that I actually compose something of my own.

Price took me down the percussion room and showed me some classic percussion scores, which I was seeing for the first time, and I was overwhelmed. Here I had been working for years to create improvisations with two hands, and now it occurred to me for the first time that with a pencil I could have as many hands as I wanted. Imagine what I could create! I literally ran to my rooming house and started writing "Three Brothers," the title inspired by Jimmy Giuffre's Jazz arrangement for Woody Herman called "Four Brothers." I carried the piece with me wherever I went and had it finished within two or three weeks. Price performed it on a concert on 8 May 1951 with me playing the bongo part. The premiere was a success and I was transformed. I walked out of the music building that beautiful spring day and said to myself almost in disbelief, "I'm going to be a composer!" -Michael Colgrass



In 1954 Michael Colgrass graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in music performance and composition. His studies included training with Darius Milhaud at the Aspen Festival and Lukas Foss at Tanglewood. After serving as the timpanist in the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra in Stuttgart, Germany, he spent eleven years supporting his composing as a freelance percussionist in New York City where his wide-ranging performance venues included the New York Philharmonic, American Ballet Theater, Dizzy

Gillespie, the Modern Jazz Quartet, the original West Side Story orchestra on Broadway, the Columbia Recording Orchestra's Stravinsky Conducts Stravinsky series, and numerous ballet, opera and Jazz ensembles. He organized the percussion sections for Gunther Schuller's recordings and concerts, as well as for premieres of new works by John Cage, Elliott Carter, Edgard Varèse, and many others. As a percussion soloist he premiered many of his own works including the *Variations for Four Drums and Viola*, which he also recorded for MGM Records with Emanuel Vardi. During this New York period he continued to study composition with Wallingford Riegger (1958) and Ben Weber (1958-60).

Colgrass has received commissions from the New York Philharmonic and The Boston Symphony (twice). Also the orchestras of Minnesota, Detroit, San Francisco, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Washington, Toronto (twice), the National Arts Centre Orchestra (twice), The Canadian Broadcast Corporation, The Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, the Manhattan and Muir String Quartets, The Brighton Festival in England, The Fromm and Ford Foundations, The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and numerous other orchestras, chamber groups, choral groups and soloists.

He was awarded the 1978 Pulitzer Prize for Music for *Déjà vu*, which was commissioned and premiered by the New York Philharmonic. In addition, he received an Emmy Award in 1982 for a PBS documentary “Soundings: The Music of Michael Colgrass.” He has been awarded two Guggenheim Fellowships, A Rockefeller Grant, First Prize in the Barlow and Sudler International Wind Ensemble Competitions, and the 1988 Jules Leger Prize for Chamber Music.

Among his recent works are *Crossworlds* (2002) for flute piano and orchestra commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and premiered with soloists Marina Piccinini and Andreas Heafliker. *Pan Trio* was commissioned and premiered by Soundstreams Canada in 2005 and premiered by them with Liam Teague, steel drums, Sanya Eng, harp and Ryan Scott, percussion. *Side by Side* (2007) for harpsichord and altered piano with Joanne Kong as soloist, was commissioned by the Esprit Orchestra, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP) and the Richmond Symphony Orchestra. *Zululand* (2010) for wind ensemble was commissioned and premiered by the University of Wisconsin at River Falls.

As an author, Colgrass wrote “My Lessons With Kumi,” a narrative/exercise book, outlining his techniques for performance and creativity. He lectures on personal development and gives workshops throughout the world on the psychology and technique of performance, in which participants do exercises from this book. His newest book, “Adventures of an American Composer,” is published by Meredith Music and distributed by the Hal Leonard Corporation. See book website and blog: [www.colgrassadventures.com](http://www.colgrassadventures.com).

He lives in Toronto and makes his living internationally as a composer. His wife, Ulla, is a journalist and editor who writes about music and the arts.

## About The Music

Michael Colgrass's very first composition, *Three Brothers* (1951) is essentially a four-minute Jazz drum solo based on ideas and drum "licks" he had been developing for several years as a Jazz drummer and soloist. The fact that the work is still performed regularly in leading schools and universities over 60 years later is a true testament to the genius and raw talent of Michael Colgrass as a young drummer. The work is centered on the three soloists - the "three brothers" - bongos, snare drum and timpani who provide rhythmic momentum, trade two and four-bar solos and pass motives back and forth throughout the work. The Jazz influence can be heard clearly in the cymbal part that plays a traditional ride cymbal swing pattern to accompany the 8-bar tom-tom solo.

The Towson University Percussion Ensemble had the opportunity to perform *Three Brothers* for Michael Colgrass in October 2010 while he was in residency at Towson University. This recording captures the spirit and energy of a live performance and incorporates suggestions that he made during the one-hour coaching session. The changes include: an added ritard and fermata before the final *Tempo Primo* of the last four bars which Mr. Colgrass also wanted played very delicately – down one dynamic level from what was in the printed score. Also, at letter "A" the maraca player was told to ignore the diminuendo and just play the part like a "tough guy downtown maraca player." The maraca part should make lots of noise and should not be played delicately. At letter "E" the tom-tom solo should start softer than Forte to allow the soloist to build and the accompanying cymbal part should be louder at "E" with variations to the printed part similar to the ride cymbal time a Jazz drummer would play.

*Percussion Music* (1952) was written while Michael Colgrass was a sophomore at the University of Illinois. After using up all of his Jazz drum solo ideas in *Three Brothers*, he decided to look to the music of J.S. Bach for inspiration. As a music student walking the halls, he frequently heard the music of Bach coming from practice rooms.

I wanted to stretch myself and enter new areas of music. This piece is Baroque in character and was inspired by J. S. Bach in that it has contrapuntal voices but without specific pitches. I asked myself: "How would Bach-like counterpoint sound on drums?" So I set up a "keyboard" of sixteen sounds, from low bass drum ascending to temple blocks, and divided this "keyboard" into four players. Since Bach's music is non-percussive, a gentle form of drumming was the result. This piece also served the psychological comfort of giving me-a Jazz musician entering the domain of classical music, and a percussionist feeling inferior to string, wind and brass players who were referred to at that time as "real musicians"-the feeling of musical equality and respectability.

Colgrass, Michael. "Small Essay on My Early Percussion Music."

*Percussive Notes* 34 n4 (Aug. 1996): p. 70.

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The Towson University Percussion Faculty Quartet performed *Percussion Music* in a concert at Towson University on October 14, 2010. During rehearsals, Mr. Colgrass suggested that the ensemble play the third movement using only fingers, which is how it is performed on this recording.

*Chamber Piece for Percussion Quintet* (1954) was written in sonata form with an introduction, theme, development section and recapitulation. Colgrass had studied sonata form with Lukas Foss at Tanglewood and was profoundly affected by its logic and power. He wanted to write an elegant piece for percussion in a style similar to Mozart or Haydn.

*Inventions on a Motive* was written in 1955 while Colgrass was in Germany performing with the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra.

Inventions on a Motive was written in 1955 in a hotel room in Kassel, Germany while I awaited a phone call that never came from a girl I was crazy about. I can, therefore, thank her for the piece, since I wouldn't have written it had she responded. This is a light piece, and in some parts a satire—probably making fun of my ridiculous self at the time. It is based on a single motive stated right at the beginning from which all the sections are created. This is an extension of the classical idea of developing a motive, which I learned from Beethoven... through my first and best composition teacher, Eugene Weigle. Gene had an excellent sense of how to milk a motive to develop all its possibilities. So these movements are variations, in reality, but since variations are usually on a theme as opposed to a motive, I called these developments “inventions,” since they were based only on a motive. My “what if” question here was something like, “How might Beethoven have written a little suite for percussion if he had only a rhythmic motive and no pitches?”

Colgrass, Michael. “Small Essay on My Early Percussion Music.”  
*Percussive Notes* 34 n4 (Aug. 1996): p. 71.

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During the preparations for the recording, the ensemble coached with Mr. Colgrass through online video-audio discussions where the composer made suggestions about stick and mallet choices as well as tempo directions and overall stylistic considerations.

### ***Variations for Four Drums and Viola***

While Colgrass was freelancing with the NBC Orchestra in New York City in 1957, violist Manny Vardi, then principal violist with the orchestra, suggested that he write a piece for viola and percussion, specifically for tuned drums and viola. The work is a virtuoso show piece for both the violist and the percussionist intended to show that a percussionist can shape a melodic line as well as any other instrumentalist and that musicianship is a way of thinking that is not dependent on the sophistication of the instrument. This recording is based on Mr. Colgrass's personal score and includes a new drum part to Variation III, as well as cuts and corrections to the published score.

A very thorough examination of each of these works can be found in the doctoral thesis by James Broadhurst written in 2005.

## About the Recording

The toy drum part in *Percussion Music* was written for cardboard-shelled toy drums with calf heads that Paul Price had acquired from the Walberg and Auge drum company in Massachusetts. These toy drums or “timp-toms” had a very clear pitch and a long decay and inspired Colgrass to write for drums with specific pitches in *Chamber Piece*, *Inventions on a Motive*, and the *Variations for Four Drums and Viola*. In this recording, the toy drum and tuned drum parts are played on roto-toms—an instrument based on a rotary-tuned drum created by percussionist Al Payson of the Chicago Symphony for Michael Colgrass’s performance of *Rhapsodic Fantasy for 15 drums and Orchestra* with the Danish Radio Orchestra in Tivoli in 1964.

At the time that these pieces were written, natural calfskin drumheads were the only option for drummers. The modern plastic drumhead was invented in the late 1950s and virtually replaced all calfskin drumheads by the late 1960s largely due to their imperviousness to weather conditions. Michael Colgrass, however still prefers the warmth and richness of calfskin heads to the sound of plastic drumheads. On this recording, the performers use calfskin drumheads for the high and medium tom-toms, bass drum, and timbales, Remo® Renaissance™ timpani heads, and medium weight Aquarian® Modern Vintage™ drumheads for the roto-toms and the medium and low tom-toms.

To enhance the richness of the drum tone of the roto-toms, a strip of adhesive moleskin was added to the underside of the counter hoop so that the metal flesh hoop does not directly contact the metal counter hoop. In addition, the custom-made mallets used for the roto-toms were lighter and shorter than standard timpani mallets to allow the head to sing. The length and weight of a standard set of timpani mallets are too much for the smaller-sized roto-toms and deaden the sound.



### **Three Brothers (1951) ASCAP**

Towson University Percussion Ensemble

Dr. Patrick Roulet, director

Kyle Flens: 2 bongos

Sam Balcom: snare drum

Katie Kilroy: timpani in F and C

Matt Dupree: 3 tom-toms

Corey Hewitt: suspended cymbal

Michael Ohlinger: tambourine

Steve Malecki: maracas

Alec Trumble: cowbell

Kellen McKay: timpani in C and D

### **Percussion Music (1952) ASCAP**

Michelle Humphreys: 4 temple blocks

Mark Craig: 4 toy drums

N. Scott Robinson: 4 high tom-toms

Patrick Roulet: 4 low tom-toms

### **Chamber Piece for Percussion Quintet (1954) ASCAP**

Patrick Roulet: 4 timp-toms in A#, B, C, and Db; 5" tambourine

Roger Braun: 3 high-pitched tom-toms, medium suspended cymbal

Anthony DiSanza: 3 medium-pitched tom-toms, xylophone, triangle

Mark Craig: 3 low-pitched tom-toms, tambourine, finger cymbals in F

Greg Herron: bass drum, 2 timpani, tam-tam

Mike Harrison: conductor

### **Inventions on a Motive (1955) ASCAP**

Patrick Roulet: 4 high drums (tunable), small cowbell, 2 woodblocks

Roger Braun: 2 bongos, 3 cowbells (graduated)

Anthony DiSanza: 2 timbales, large cowbell, cymbal

Greg Herron: 3 timpani

### **Variations for Four Drums and Viola (1957) ASCAP**

Megan Yanik: viola

Patrick Roulet: four tuned drums

## About The Performers

**Patrick Roulet** is a dedicated percussion artist and educator with over 18 years of college teaching and professional performance experience. He currently directs the percussion program at Towson University in Maryland – a position he has held since 2008.

As a freelance percussionist in Seattle for over ten years, he performed regularly with the Seattle Symphony and Seattle Opera Orchestras, the Pacific Northwest Ballet Orchestra, the American Sinfonietta, the Seattle Chamber Orchestra, and the Pacific Rims Percussion Quartet. His performances as the principal timpanist of the Bellingham Festival of Music have frequently been broadcast on National Public Radio's *Performance Today*, and his performance of Joseph Schwantner's *Concerto for Percussion* was praised by critics as "utterly in control and inspiring."

Roulet left Seattle in 2004 to accept a full-time tenure-track teaching position at Southern Utah University in Cedar City, Utah where he directed the percussion program, taught music history, music appreciation, American popular music, and directed the Jazz ensemble.

Roulet's scholarly work reflects his many interests within the broad field of percussion including classical, Jazz and world music. His research on the life and music of Jazz vibraphonist Milt Jackson was selected for presentation at the Percussive Arts Society's International Convention and featured as the cover article for the February 2003 publication of *Percussive Notes*. In 2006, he received a grant from the Larson Legacy to study traditional drumming and xylophone playing at the University of Ghana in Accra.

He earned degrees in percussion performance from the University of Washington (DMA), Boston University (MM), and the University of Michigan (BM).

As a Yamaha Performing Artist, Roulet continues to inspire students of all levels through clinics and masterclasses throughout the United States. During the summers he teaches and performs at the New England Music Camp in Maine where he also chairs the brass and percussion area.



**Mark Craig,  
Patrick Roulet,  
N. Scott Robinson,  
and  
Michelle Humphreys**



Violist **Megan Yanik** enjoys a multifaceted career as both a performer and teacher. She has performed with orchestras throughout the United States, including the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Toledo Symphony and Richmond Symphony. As a chamber musician she has collaborated with Ida Kavafian, Andres Cardenes, Mack McCray, Paul Katz, Yang Wei of the Silk Road Ensemble, percussionist Joe Gramley, and performed on numerous occasions with the Michigan Chamber Players presented by University Musical Society (UMS) and National Public Radio. Her festival appearances have included the American-Romanian festival, Zephyr Chamber Music Festival, Tanglewood Music Center, Aspen, Spoleto USA, and Blossom. She has won prizes in several competitions, including first prize in the National ASTA solo competition.

Dr. Yanik's educational outreach has included teaching for the Young Audiences program "Bring Back the Music" (Dorchester, MA) and consulting for NPR's "From the Top". Dedicated to the education of young people, she also has taught at the Dana Hall School (Wellesley, MA) and served as faculty at New England Music Camp, Phoenixfest!, and the Zephyr Chamber Music Festival in Courmayeur, Italy.

Dr. Yanik holds degrees in viola performance from the University of Michigan (DMA), New England Conservatory (MM), and Rice University (BM), where her teachers have included Karen Ritscher, Martha Katz and Yizhak Schotten. She received her Suzuki training from Ronda Cole. Formerly on faculty at Bowling Green State University, Dr. Yanik currently resides in Washington, D.C. with her husband, saxophonist Jonathan Yanik, and lab-terrier mix Hannah.



**Roger Braun** is Professor of Percussion at Ohio University. His prior teaching appointments include the University of Michigan-Flint, Albion College, Interlochen Arts Camp, and the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Braun's diverse performance career has led him throughout the United States, Europe, Japan, Korea, and Cuba, including collaborations with musicians such as Keiko Abe, Lyle Mays, Bob Mintzer, and Bernard Woma. Braun has performed with the Lansing, Flint, Ann Arbor, and Saginaw Symphonies, the ProMusica Chamber Orchestra, the Detroit Chamber Winds, and in the Broadway touring shows *Beauty and the Beast*, *Titanic*, and *Ragtime*. Currently, he performs with the Biakuye Percussion Group, the Ohio Valley Symphony, Los Viejos Blancos, and the

Unprepared Music for Keyboards and Percussion, and Galaxy Percussion. He can be heard on



**Greg Herron** has played with numerous orchestras and Jazz ensembles around the world under such conductors as Marin Alsop, Robert Spano, Enrique Batiz, and Christopher Hogwood. He is the former principal percussionist with the Monterey Symphony Orchestra in Monterey, Mexico, and he is currently the principal timpanist with the Mid-Atlantic (MD) Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Herron has performed with such groups as the Baltimore (MD) Opera Company, National Philharmonic - Washington, DC, Annapolis (MD) Opera Orchestra, Concert Artists of Baltimore (MD), Baltimore (MD) Chamber Orchestra, New Hampshire Symphony, Annapolis (MD) Chorale, Alexandria (VA) Symphony

Orchestra, New Bedford (MA) Symphony Orchestra, West Palm Beach (FL) Opera, and the Everyman Theater. He is a member of the Sonora Ensemble and was a soloist for their 2007 tour of Northern France. He is active as a clinician, and has been featured in the Percuba International Percussion Festival in Havana, Cuba as well as in both the Maryland and Virginia Days of Percussion. Mr. Herron is currently the percussion instructor at Mount Saint Mary's University and Frederick Community College. He is an Artist Educator for Vic Firth Drumsticks.

**Mike Harrison** holds a Bachelors degree in Music Education from Towson University where he studied percussion under Dr. Patrick Roulet and Mr. Mark Craig. Mike is the Director of the Chamber Percussion and Marimba Ensembles at Centennial HS and a percussion instructor with the United States Naval Academy Drum and Bugle Corps. He lives and teaches privately in Frederick, MD, where he also composes and arranges for several marching bands and indoor percussion ensembles.

**Michelle Humphreys** is principal percussionist with Opera Lafayette of Washington, DC. Other current performing affiliations include Washington Bach Consort, National Cathedral Baroque Orchestra, Tempesta di Mare of Philadelphia, Handel Choir of Baltimore, Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra, Chesapeake Orchestra at St. Mary's College of Maryland, and Washington Bach Sinfonia. She has performed on several recent Naxos recordings with Opera Lafayette, including the modern-day premiere of Rebel's Zelindor, Roi de Sylphes. Dr. Humphreys teaches percussion at Shepherd and Towson Universities, and is a mentor for the National Music Festival. She is also a proud member of the Vic Firth Education Team and an endorser of Grover Pro Percussion.

**N. Scott Robinson** is an internationally recognized percussionist specializing in world music. Currently teaching world music as well as American and popular music at Towson University and Goucher College in MD, he has performed with a long list of instrumentalists, composers, vocal artists and ensembles, including Benny Carter Big Band, The Cleveland Orchestra, Glen Velez, Marilyn Horne, Paul Winter Consort, John Cage, George Crumb, Annea Lockwood, Howard Levy, Malcolm Dalglish, Gerald Alston, and Jeanie Bryson, among others. Robinson's music has been released on 2 CDs by the German label United One (*World View-1994 & Things That Happen Fast-2001*), his instructional video was published by Wright Hand Drum (*Hand Drumming: Exercises for Unifying Technique-1996*), and 13 scores of his compositions have been published by HoneyRock Publishing (2003-2010). He earned his BA degree in music at Rutgers University and graduate degrees in ethnomusicology at Kent State University.

## Credits

**This recording was made possible through a grant from the Faculty Development and Research Committee of Towson University.**

Executive Producer: Michael W. Udow

Producer: Patrick Roulet

Recording and Mixing Engineer: Matt Everhart

Mastering Engineer: Eric Wojahn (Solid Sound, Inc.)

Graphic Production and Audio Duplication: World Class Tapes, Ann Arbor, MI

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*Percussion Music* recorded February 2011 in the Recording Studio of the Towson University Department of Music, Towson, MD

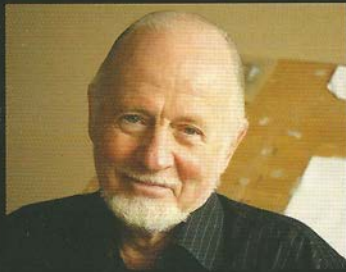
All other works recorded April-June 2011 in the Towson University Center for the Arts Recital Hall, Towson, MD

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Permission to record these works granted by Colla Voce Music.



## Michael Colgrass Percussion Music 1951-1957

The works contained in this project reflect an important period in the musical development of composer Michael Colgrass from his first composition, *Three Brothers* written in 1951, to one of his most popular chamber pieces, *Variations for Four Drums and Viola* written in 1957. During this six-year period, Colgrass studied percussion and composition at the University of Illinois, spent two years as the timpanist in the Seventh Army Symphony

Orchestra in Germany, and became a successful freelance percussionist in New York City. This recording documents the evolution of Michael Colgrass as he absorbed classical music forms, broadened the musical and expressive possibilities of percussion and developed his concept of the drum as a melodic instrument.

While the project has historical importance, it is also much more than a collection of venerated relics preserved as though they were objects in a museum. This recording is a contemporary interpretation shaped by the composer's collaboration with the performers. This is particularly evident in the *Variations for Four Drums and Viola*, which includes corrections and cuts to the published score as well as a new drum part to Variation III taken from Michael Colgrass's personal score.

