

directions please!

for string quartet (c. 5.40')

SHAUN DAVIES,
2018.

directions please!

INSTRUMENTATION:

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello

DURATION:

c. 5.40'

REQUIREMENTS:

1 stopwatch per player

STAGING:

Players to be spaced as far out as the performance space will allow, in a square formation. Audience is positioned in the centre of the space, however they feel comfortable. The space should not be very reverberant, neither should it have a dry acoustic.

PITCH:

Pre-performance, players collectively decide on a pitch between concert A₄ and C₅. This pitch becomes the "pre-determined pitch", the subject of [B].

PERFORMANCE DETAILS / STRUCTURE:

Follow score with timings dictated by stopwatch, from A, through B, C + D to the end. Stay as tight as possible to the timeline. However, if something takes slightly more/less time, get back in time with stopwatch ASAP.

NOTATION:

- = staccato, as short as possible.
- — = sustained note; duration = horizontal line against timeline. Never apply vibrato.
- white space = rest.
- ⋮ = instruction lining up with position on timeline.

 = use sounds within.

⊕ = add these sounds to your palette.

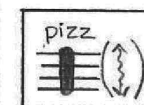
(M)SP = (molto) sul ponticello.

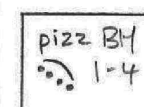
(M)ST = (molto) sul tasto.

◇ = harmonic (natural or artificial unless stated "NH"/"AH")


⊖ = double stop.

CL = col legno battuto.


 = either strumming or plucking (with 4 fingers of right hand), a chord across all 4 strings.


 = pizzicato with all 4 fingers of right hand, use all 4 fingers on left hand to hammer-on / pull-off.

 = tapping body of instrument with bow / ricochet onto body.

 = knock on body of instrument with hands.

 = bow across music stand.

 = bow across tailpiece.

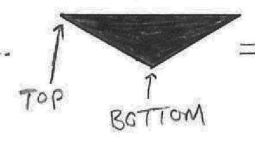
 = bow across tuning pegs.

SLAP = slap strings with either hand, or both hands.

TAP = tap strings.

SCRATCH = scratch strings with fingernail.

FP = a full amount of overpressure.

 = gradient of overpressure. TOP = normal bowing, BOTTOM = maximum overpressure.

V-I-O-L-I-N-I

A (+sim.)

Frequently and frantically move between sounds. Insert pauses (max. 5 secs) at your discretion.

ADD THESE SOUNDS (+sim.)

SEAP pizz TAP
pizz BH 1-4

0:00 0:50 1:15

PPPP (poss.) with <p (max.) pppsub. (max 1 sec.) (INSERT PATTERN) AT WILL

PP with <f (max.) ppsub. (max 1 sec.) (INSERT PATTERN) AT WILL

Fast, high energy "rustling" sounds. Imitate with voice. Combine many sounds.

B ON YOUR PRE-DETERMINED PITCH (sul III):

1:15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 2:00 05 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45

(REPEAT CYCLE)

min. 5 secs, max 15. Choose fixed cycle duration. Duration of timbre changes equal.

Gradually ascending gliss. CROSSING STRINGS

Sul I, Eb7-G7

Perform multiple cycles; no 2 the same.

Microtonal inflections; no wider than 1/4 tone.

ff

V-I-O-L-I-N-I-I

A (+sim.)

Frequently and frantically move between sounds. Insert pauses (max. 5 secs) at your discretion.

ADD THESE SOUNDS (+sim.)

SEAP pizz TAP
pizz BH 1-4

0:00 0:50 1:20

PPPP (poss.) with <p (max.) pppsub. (max 1 sec.) (INSERT PATTERN) AT WILL

PP with <f (max.) ppsub. (max 1 sec.) (INSERT PATTERN) AT WILL

Fast, high energy "rustling" sounds. Imitate with voice. Combine many sounds.

B ON YOUR PRE-DETERMINED PITCH (sul III):

1:20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 2:00 05 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45

(REPEAT CYCLE)

min. 5 secs, max 15. Choose fixed cycle duration. Duration of timbre changes equal.

Gradually ascending gliss.

Between Gb5-Bb5

Perform multiple cycles; no 2 the same.

Microtonal inflections; no wider than 1/4 tone.

ff

V-I-O-L-A

A (+sim.)

Frequently and frantically move between sounds. Insert pauses (max. 5 secs) at your discretion.

ADD THESE SOUNDS (+sim.)

SEAP pizz TAP
pizz BH 1-4

0:00 1:00 1:25

PPPP (poss.) with <p (max.) pppsub. (max 1 sec.) (INSERT PATTERN) AT WILL

PP with <f (max.) ppsub. (max 1 sec.) (INSERT PATTERN) AT WILL

Fast, high energy "rustling" sounds. Imitate with voice. Combine many sounds.

B ON YOUR PRE-DETERMINED PITCH (sul III):

1:25 30 35 40 45 50 55 2:00 05 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45

(REPEAT CYCLE)

min. 5 secs, max 15. Choose fixed cycle duration. Duration of timbre changes equal.

Gradually descending gliss, with microtonal inflections no wider than 1/4 tone.

Between A3-C#4

Perform multiple cycles; no 2 the same.

ff

C-E-L-L-O

A (+sim.)

Frequently and frantically move between sounds. Insert pauses (max. 5 secs) at your discretion.

ADD THESE SOUNDS (+sim.)

SEAP pizz TAP
pizz BH 1-4

0:00 1:00 1:30

PPPP (poss.) with <p (max.) pppsub. (max 1 sec.) (INSERT PATTERN) AT WILL

PP with <f (max.) ppsub. (max 1 sec.) (INSERT PATTERN) AT WILL

Fast, high energy "rustling" sounds. Imitate with voice. Combine many sounds.

B ON YOUR PRE-DETERMINED PITCH (sul I):

1:30 35 40 45 50 55 2:00 05 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45

(REPEAT CYCLE)

min 5 secs, max 15. Choose fixed cycle duration. Duration of timbre changes equal.

Gradually descending gliss, with microtonal inflections no wider than 1/4 tone. (crossing strings)

Sul IV, lowest M3

Perform multiple cycles; no 2 the same.

ff

V I O L I N I

C H = HIGHEST (at the bridge, sul I). L = LOWEST (open string IV).

2:45 50 55 3:00 05 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 4:00 05 10 15 17 19 21 4:34

(in unison with others)

MSP gliss. (#)

pizz.

arco

close intervals; dissonant.

INTENSE ACTIVITY (+sim.)

SLAP, pizz, KNOCK, SEARCH, pizz BH 1-4, arco, pizz

FINGERBOARD

ARCO (nut)

c. 1 SEC. PAUSES BETWEEN GESTURES

c. 1 sec.

Ascend gradually, repeating gesture but stretching both the duration (by c. 1 sec) and distance travelled up the fingerboard. Always return to same start point. Aim to finish up beyond fingerboard.

mf fp PPPP < PP f:pp mp < f:fff > mp:ppp < ff PPP < f > P < PP < ffff

V I O L I N I I

C H = HIGHEST (at bridge, sul I). L = LOWEST (open string IV).

2:45 50 55 3:00 05 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 4:00 bridge 05 10 15 17 19 21 4:32

(in unison with others)

MSP gliss. (#)

ricochet/CL

arco

tr A.H.

pizz.

gliss.

ricochet

increase activity

SLAP, pizz, KNOCK, TAP, pizz BH 1-4, arco, SEARCH, pizz

FINGERBOARD

Arco, MSP, lightly touching strings.

mod. gliss.

c. 1 SEC. PAUSES BETWEEN GESTURES

c. 1 sec.

Ascend gradually, repeating gesture but stretching both the duration (by c. 1 sec) and distance travelled up the fingerboard. Always return to same start point. Aim to finish up beyond fingerboard.

mf P PPP:P fp > f PP ff PPP < ff PP < f nut PPP PP < ffff

V I O L A

C H = HIGHEST (at bridge, sul I). L = LOWEST (open string IV).

2:45 50 55 3:00 05 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 4:00 bridge 05 10 15 17 19 21 4:37

(in unison with others)

MSP gliss.

SP

pizz.

Arco

increase activity

SLAP, pizz, arco, KNOCK, SEARCH, pizz BH 1-4, TAP, pizz

FINGERBOARD

mod. gliss. fastest

Arco, MSP, lightly touching strings.

c. 1 SEC. PAUSES BETWEEN GESTURES

c. 1 sec.

Ascend gradually, repeating gesture but stretching both the duration (by c. 1 sec) and distance travelled up the fingerboard. Always return to same start point. Aim to finish up beyond fingerboard.

mf mp fp PPPP < PP mp < f ff:ppp < ff PP < f nut PPP PP < ffff

C E L L O

C H = HIGHEST (at bridge, sul I). L = LOWEST (open string IV).

2:45 50 55 3:00 05 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 4:00 05 10 15 17 19 21 4:45

(in unison with others)

pizz.

To MSP gliss.

MSP

ricochet/CL

arco

gliss.

tr A.H.

gliss.

increase activity

SLAP, pizz, arco, KNOCK, SEARCH, pizz BH 1-4, TAP, pizz

FINGERBOARD

mod. gliss. fastest

Arco, MSP, lightly touching strings.

c. 1 SEC. PAUSES BETWEEN GESTURES

c. 1 sec.

Ascend gradually, repeating gesture but stretching both the duration (by c. 1 sec) and distance travelled up the fingerboard. Always return to same start point. Aim to finish up beyond fingerboard.

mf < mp > fp > PP p < mf ff PPP < ff:ppp < ff > PPP PP < ffff

V
I
O
L
I
N
I

D

4:34

5:40

pp throughout ; SP/MSP throughout.
Perform a harmonic that is moderately high, but not
ever close to your highest. Sustain for c. 10 seconds.
Then spend c. 10 seconds moving upwards, through
multiple harmonics, reaching your highest possible
harmonic. Sustain this sound for remainder of duration.

V
I
O
L
I
N
I
I

D

4:32

(SAME AS VIOLIN I)

V
I
O
L
A

D

4:37

pp throughout ; SP/MSP throughout.
Perform your highest possible harmonic, sustaining for c.
20 seconds. Realise you cannot reach the pitches performed
on violins and begin to seek alternative ways of doing so.
Try various sounds - bow behind the nut, behind the bridge,
and other high-pitched sounds that resonate. Spend c. 20
secs searching before deciding on your highest discovered
sound. Sustain for the remainder of duration.

C
E
L
L
O

D

4:45

pp throughout ; SP/MSP throughout.
Perform your highest possible harmonic, sustaining for c.
10 seconds. Realise you cannot reach the pitches played
by others and begin to seek alternative ways of doing so.
Try various sounds - bow behind the nut, behind the
bridge, bow the spike at shortest length etc. Spend 30
seconds searching before settling on your highest sound
discovered. Sustain this for remainder of duration.

END