

Hugo Bell

Between The Smallest Of Spaces

for Viola and Prepared Snare Drum

2019/23

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2019, rev. 2023

10 minutes

- **Viola**
- **Prepared Snare Drum**
 - **Wooden drum sticks**
 - **A plastic guitar pick (thick gauge)**
 - **Bow**

Snare Drum Preparations

The snare drum is to be prepared as shown in the image. One of the wooden drum sticks should be tightly secured underneath the wire snares at an acute angle to create a 'third bridge' setup. The wire snares should be as tight as is possible and should produce a clear pitch when plucked. A drum with no more than 24 strands of snare wires is ideal. The sound of the plucked snare wires should be clean and clear - extraneous buzzing sounds should be avoided at all costs.



Both sides of the snare drum are used in the piece, and the percussionist may find it more convenient to place the drum on a foam mat rather than a traditional drum stand.

Amplification

It is recommended that the piece is amplified due to the extreme dynamics and unorthodox playing techniques which often result in very quiet and detailed sounds. If the piece is being performed without amplification, then great care should be taken during rehearsals to ensure that neither instrument overpowers the other at any time.

Performance & Technical Notes

Viola Performance Notes

Many of the techniques in this piece use the wood of the bow, so the performer may wish to use a cheaper, student bow to perform with. At no point in the piece is a 'classical' viola sound required. Similarly, the performer should consciously avoid 'contaminating' the sound-world with traditional sounds at all costs.

Most of the piece requires the strings to be damped with the left-hand. It is nearly impossible to completely eradicate the pitch of the strings, so the player should endeavour to do so as best as possible.

Rebowings are generally at the discretion of the player unless specified.

In sections B, C and D, the performer should ensure a clear, rhythmic attack to every note in order to create the desired 'mechanical' sound-world. Many of these techniques produce very quiet sounds, so the '*f* sempre' marking should be interpreted as a performative intention rather than a resulting dynamic. Particular attention must be paid to the balance between the two instruments above all else.

Snare Drum

The piece begins with the drum placed upside-down with the wire snares facing up. In Sections B, C and D, the drum must be turned the 'correct' way up, and then from E onwards turned back again. It is essential that the turning of the drum does not produce any unwanted sounds so this action should be rehearsed carefully by the percussionist.

The percussionist is free to choose which side of the 'third bridge' (i.e. the wooden stick under the snare wires) to play on for any techniques which require plucking or tapping. It is recommended that the stick is positioned at such an angle as to generate a wide variety of different pitches.

The pitched arco techniques require a well-rosined bow. The material of the stick underneath the snare wires is important; a lightweight, untreated wooden stick works best, but the percussionist may choose a different material as long as it creates the desired result. The stability of the pitch is dependent on bow pressure and speed, and the performer is encouraged to explore a variety of different pitches at their own musical discretion.

Close attention should be paid to whether gestures should be damped with the free hand or not.

General Notation

Noteheads The following conventions apply to all noteheads throughout the score:

Regular notehead = pitched sound



Square notehead = unpitched sound



Crossed notehead = percussive sound

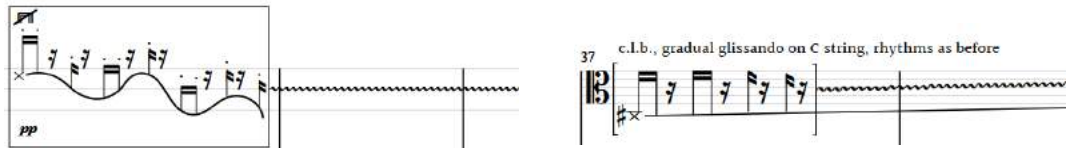


Damping A circle with a cross through it indicates damping, whilst a circle without a cross indicates an open sound. An arrow underneath a damping symbol indicates that all sounds should be damped until further indication.



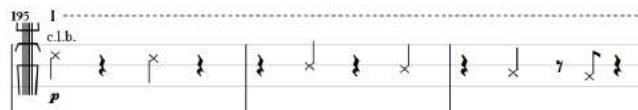
Viola Notation

Boxes & Brackets Boxes indicate that a gesture or technique should be improvised upon continuously in a specified way. This should continue for the duration of the wavy line. A bracket indicates that only the rhythmic parameter should be improvised.

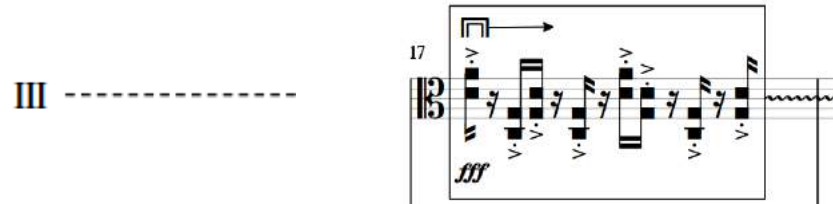


Bridge clef

A bridge clef is used to indicate the position of the bow relative to the bridge (top line) and the start of the fingerboard (middle line). Notes below the bottom line of the staff extend down the fingerboard.



String designation Strings are designated either through use of Roman numerals where IV is the lowest string and I is the highest string, or through the pitch of the open string.

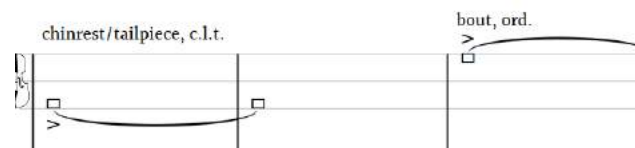


"c.l.b." Shorthand for *col legno battuto*, striking the string with the wood of the bow.

"c.l.t." Shorthand for *col legno tratto*, bowing using the wood of the bow.

"ord." Shorthand for *ordinario*, cancels prior instructions and indicates the use of bow hair.

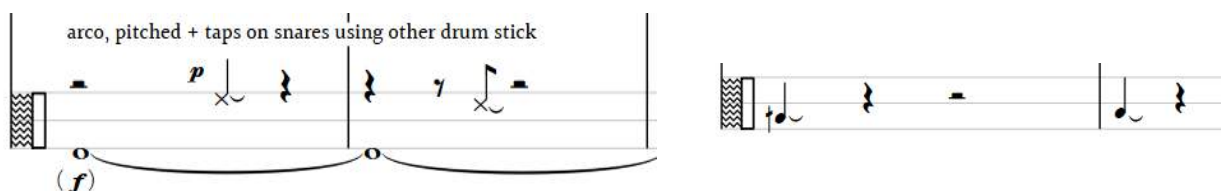
Viola Clef The viola clef is used to indicate the position of various unpitched actions on the body of the instrument. Notes above the top line of the staff relate to the scroll and pegboard.



Snare Notation

Snare clef The snare clef is used to indicate the position of an action relative to the snare wires on the underside of the instrument. The angled placement of the drum stick under the wires means that each wire will have a different pitch. The top line of the snare clef staff indicates the shorter, higher pitched wires whilst the bottom line indicates the longer, lower pitch wires. Notes outside of the top and bottom lines indicate actions that do not occur on the snare wires themselves.

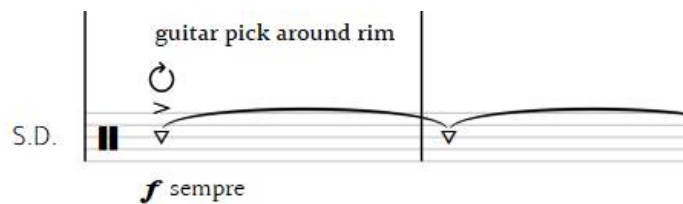
The middle line indicates the centre of the wires, and is generally used to show lateral drags along the wires. The clef should not be viewed as a precise topography of each individual snare wire, and serves a more general purpose. The only exception to this is from bars 26 - 43, where each individual snare wire should be plucked from low to high, as specified in the score. 8th tone accidental symbols are used to denote a step up in lieu of a 20-line staff to represent each individual snare wire.



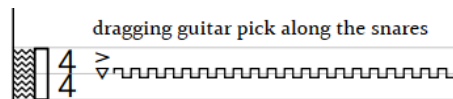
Percussion clef A regular percussion clef is used to indicate techniques that should be played on the skin of the drum, turned the traditional way up.



Triangle Notehead Triangle noteheads indicate the use of a guitar pick on the drum as specified in the score. In sections B, C and D, the percussionist may find it more convenient to use their fingernails instead, which is fine, provided that the resultant sounds are very similar.



"Castle" line Castle lines are used to indicate a lateral drag along the length of the snare wire



Arrows 3 types of arrows are used to indicate the patterns of various actions:

A circular arrow indicates a circular motion



A figure-of-eight arrow indicates a figure-of-eight pattern across the drumhead



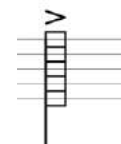
A straight up or down arrow indicates a straight motion from one edge of the drumhead to the other



Diamond notehead A diamond notehead indicates that the palm of the hand should be used



Square notehead chord A 5-note chord of square noteheads indicates that the fingertips should be used



Viola Techniques with Demonstration Videos

Bar 1	Aggressive, damped attacks across the strings in dyads	LINK
Bar 9	c.l.b. using similar rhythms across strings ad. lib.	LINK
Bar 25	c.l.b. using similar rhythms down each string	LINK
Bar 51	c.l.t. - should always be on open strings in this context. The bow should also move laterally along the string, creating a dynamic and evolving timbre	LINK
Bar 56	The wood of the bow should be positioned so that it makes contact with both the upper edge of the chinrest and also the tailpiece when bowed, creating a soft, grainy sound	LINK
Bar 63	The wood of the bow should be positioned so that it makes contact with both the stem of the peg and the edge of the pegboard	LINK
Bar 73	The hair of the bow should be in contact with the upper edge of the viola body, producing a white-noise sound	LINK
Bar 81	The wood of the bow should be resting on the top side of the tuning pins	LINK
Bar 126	The 'mid-tasto' position is located directly in the middle of the length of the fingerboard, approximately where the top edge of the body meets the neck	LINK
Bar 130	The lateral 'wipe' tremolo is performed by moving the bow 'obliquely' like a windscreen wiper, along the string	LINK
Bar 140	A compound gesture, comprising of a c.l.b. ricochet which is dragged part of the way up the string, quickly transitioning to a lateral wipe and stopped on the bridge	LINK
Bar 146	c.l.t. glissando along the middle two strings	LINK
Bar 158	Playing the short length of string as indicated by the open pitch, behind the bridge. This sound should always be incredibly fragile and wispy, balancing with the sound-world of the section. At no point should a clearly-voiced and stable pitch be heard	LINK
Bar 239	The fast c.l.b. ricochets should always sound in groups of three, as quickly as possible, like a short burst of machine-gun fire	LINK
Bar 270	The overpressure from J until the end of the piece should be extremely forceful, resulting in a completely unpitched sound, similar to creaking wood. The arpeggiated figures should be equally heavy and noisy	LINK

Snare Techniques with Demonstration Videos

Bar 1	The pick drags along the snare should always be slow and heavy, as rhythmically even as possible, with the pick at a perpendicular angle to highlight each small grain of sound	LINK
Bar 10	Plucking the individual snares with guitar pick	LINK
Bar 45	The palm should be flat against the skin to produce a smooth, continuous white noise sound	LINK
Bar 51	Guitar pick around the rim of the drumhead	LINK
Bar 56	The figure-of-eight gestures should traverse the full surface area of the drumhead	LINK
Bar 59	The straight-line gestures should reach each edge of the drumhead.	LINK
Bar 63	Fingertips around the rim of the drumhead	LINK
Bar 90	Rubbing the drumhead with the fingers, like a tremolo	LINK
Bar 140	Pitched arco, bowing the attached drum stick	LINK
Bar 164	Unpitched arco, bowing the same part of the drum stick but too little pressure to produce a pitch	LINK
Bar 173	As before, but using the wood of the bow on the drum stick	LINK
Bar 184	Bowing the rim of the drum to produce a soft, white noise	LINK
Bar 203	Pitched arco + tapping snares with drum stick	LINK
Bar 239	Fast ricochets on snare wires using drum stick, damped	LINK

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frenetic, noisy, aggressive attacks,
irregular and syncopated

♩ = 120

Viola

fff

BEGIN WITH DRUM SNARE-SIDE UP

dragging guitar pick along the snares

Snare Drum

fff



5

Vla.

S. D.

sfz



c.l.b., similar rhythms, irregular and syncopated,
across random strings ad. lib.

9

Vla.

pp

'flick' at the end of the stroke

plucking the individual snares with pick

S. D.

pp

13

Vla.

S. D.

as before

17

Vla.

S. D.

fff

fff

21

Vla.

S. D.

sfz

A

I -----

c.l.b., rhythmic style as before, gradually descending down the string

25

Vla.

S. D.

pp

p

plucking each snare, ascending wire by wire

II -----

sim.

29

Vla.

S. D.

III -----

33

Vla.

S. D.

37

c.l.b., gradual glissando on C string, rhythms as before

pp cresc. poco a poco

○

Vla.

S. D.

extreme rit. -----

(like a string being tightened)

41

Vla.

S. D.

TURN DRUM SKIN-SIDE UP

B

A Tempo, with a mechanical precision, clearly articulating the beginning of each sound

45 harmonic pizz., l.v.

Vla. *f*

S.D. palm on drum head *f*

51 c.l.t.

Vla. *f* sempre

S.D. guitar pick around rim *f* sempre

56 c.l.t. along chinrest & tailpiece

Vla. *f*

S.D. fingertips, figure of 8 pattern

c.l.t.

S.D. guitar pick, straight lines across drum head

61 c.l.t. along pegs and scroll

Vla. *f*

S.D. fingertips around rim

67

Vla. *c.l.t., slow glissando*

S.D.

73

Vla. *bout, ord.* *c.l.t.* *pegs/scroll, c.l.t.*

S.D.

78

Vla. *c.l.t.* *tuning pins, c.l.t.* *c.l.t.*

S.D.

83

Vla. *chinrest/tailpiece, c.l.t.* *bout, ord.*

S.D.

88

Vla. c.l.t. pegs/scroll, c.l.t.

S.D. fingers rub (trem.)

93

Vla. c.l.t. bout, ord. D c.l.t.

S.D.

98

Vla. tuning pins, c.l.t. c.l.t. chinrest/tailpiece, c.l.t.

S.D.

103

Vla. c.l.t. bout, ord. pegs/scroll, c.l.t. bout, ord. c.l.t.

S.D.

108

Vla. *bout, ord.* *c.l.t.* *bout, ord.* *chinrest/tailpiece, c.l.t.* *c.l.t.*

S.D.

113

Vla. *bout, ord.* *c.l.t.* *chinrest/tailpiece, c.l.t.* *tuning pins, c.l.t.* *c.l.t.*

S.D.

118

Vla. *bout, ord.* *c.l.t. trem* *c.l.t.* *chinrest/tailpiece* *c.l.t.* *bout, ord.*

S.D.

123

Vla. *c.l.t.* *pegs/scroll, c.l.t.* *c.l.t.* *c.l.t. trem mid-tasto* *pont.*

S.D.

128 c.l.t. chinrest/tailpiece c.l.t. c.l.t., lateral 'wipe' trem. bout, ord. c.l.t.



134 pegs/scroll c.l.t. pont. → mid-tasto molto rit. II c.l.t. trem., transitioning to circular bowing

swipe

TURN DRUM SNARE-SIDE UP



E

A Tempo, less mechanical than previous section

c.l.b. ricochet + 'wipe', choking final note

140

ff

arco pitched, bowing the attached drum stick

f sempre

146

II -----
III -----
c.l.t.

Vla. *f*

arco sim.

S. D.

152

bout, ord.

Vla. *f*

S. D.

158

ord., behind bridge

bout, ord.

Vla. *p* sempre, always wispy and fragile, balancing with the character of other sounds in this section

f

S. D.

164

ord., behind bridge

Vla. *p*

arco, unpitched

arco, pitched

S. D.

170

Vla. *f*

S. D.

arco c.l.t., unpitched

II
III
c.l.t.

ord., behind bridge

176

Vla. *p*

S. D.

arco ord., pitched

bout, ord.

182

Vla. *f*

S. D.

arco ord. on rim, unpitched

ord., behind bridge

188

Vla. *p*

S. D.

arco, pitched

F

195 I ----->

Vla. c.l.b.
p

until J

S. D.



199 I ----->

Vla.

S. D.



203 II----->
III----->

Vla. *mp*

arco, pitched + taps on snares with drum stick

S. D. (*f*)



207 II----->
III----->

Vla.

S. D. *mp*

II
III

211

Vla.

S. D.

III
IV

215

Vla.

S. D.

mf

mf

III
IV

219

Vla.

S. D.

G

across random strings, double stopped c.l.b., moving bow position up and down the string freely in wave-like gestures, increasingly chaotic and energetic towards H

223

Vla.

S. D.

f

ad. lib. across random snare wires

c.l.b. ricochet & lateral wipe

sim.

sim.

f l.v. sempre

227

Vla.

S. D.

231

Vla.

S. D.

drag stick along snares

mp *ff*

235

Vla.

S. D.

mp *ff* *mp* *ff* *fff*



239

Vla.

S. D.

c.l.b., fast ricochets

sub. *pp*

fast ricochets using drum stick on snares, mimicking the c.l.b. viola technique, damping the resonance with the other hand

sub. *pp*



243 I

Vla.

S. D.

with guitar pick

f

247 II

Vla.

S. D.

p

251 II IV

Vla.

S. D.

f

p

255 IV

Vla.

S. D.

I

across random strings, ad. lib.

259

Vla. *p*

S. D. *f p*

cresc. poco a poco to J

263

Vla. *(f)*

S. D. *(f)*

J

Aggressively

extreme overpressure so that the original pitch cannot be heard

267

Vla. *fff* until the end

S. D. *fff* until the end

271

Vla. *sim.*

S. D.

275

Vla.

S. D.

sfz *ffff* *sfz* *ffff* *sfz* *ffff*



279

Vla.

S. D.

sfz *ffff* *sfz* *ffff* *sfz* *ffff*



283

Vla.

S. D.

sfz *ffff*



287

Vla.

S. D.

scrape & damp