

When Joy Became Mixed With Grief
for Solo Violin

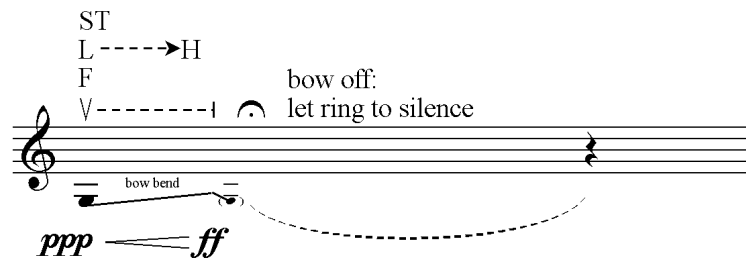
Christian Mason (2007)

Performance Techniques:

Bow/Right-Hand Directions

- ◆ Position (P): 1. Molto Sul Tasto = MST
2. Sul Tasto = ST
3. Normal = P. ord.
4. Sul Pont = SP
5. Molto Sul Pont = MSP
- ◆ Pressure/Weight (W): 1. Very Light = VL
2. Light = L
3. Normal = W. ord.
4. Heavy = H
5. Very Heavy = VH
- ◆ Speed (S): 1. Very Fast = VF
2. Fast = F
3. Normal = S. ord.
4. Slow = S
5. Very Slow = VS
- ◆ 'Bow bend' is an upward pitch bend (of less than a quarter-tone) achieved on the G string by using a full bow length, progressively increasing the pressure of a fast, sul tasto bow stroke, and then releasing suddenly:

Light —————▶ Heavy —▶ Release (let ring)



- ◆ -----▶ = Gradual transition
- ◆ ◀-----▶ = Vary continuously between two indicated poles (ad lib.)
- ◆ ~~~~~ = Let ring to silence
- ◆ -----| = Full bow length
- ◆ Where accents appear within a slur this indicates an emphasis of pressure rather than an attack.
- ◆ When drone pitches appear within a slur they should NOT be re-articulated (e.g. bar 7). Ties have been avoided for the sake of visual clarity in such cases.

- ◆ I/II/III/IV = Strings E/A/D/G
- ◆ Z = 'Buzz': trem. as fast as possible.

Finger/Left-Hand Directions

- ◆ Always Senza Vibrato unless indicated by wavy lines attached to specific notes:

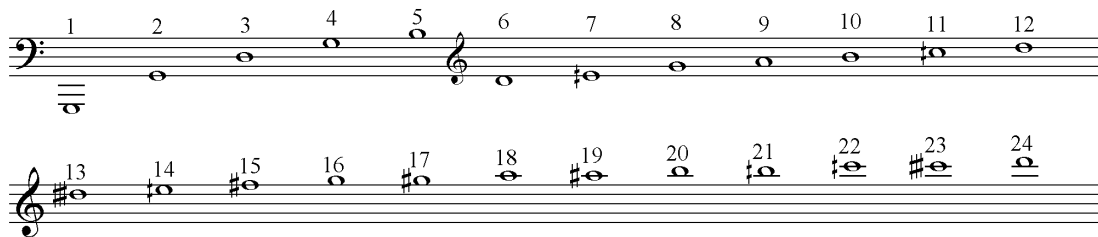


- ◆ Narrow vibrato should always be fast to create a 'shimmering' timbre.
- ◆ In some cases of wide vibrato the pitch to 'vibrate' to is indicated in brackets. Wide vibrato should convey a sense of instability and barely-contained energy.
- ◆ + = Left-hand pizzicato. Sometimes, such as bars 30 or 35, it is a 'pull off' which means that the finger stopping the previous note is pulled off sideways, plucking the string.
- ◆ $\boxed{+}$ = 'Hammer on' which means that the finger should hit the string percussively to make the note sound. This will always be fairly quiet, but has a distinctive timbre. It usually occurs shortly after an ordinary pizz and so takes some of the resonance of the earlier note.
- ◆ Ordinary trills should always be fast and intense (unless otherwise indicated), especially when microtonal.
- ◆ Trills between ordinary notes and harmonics should have a more relaxed/organic quality, growing and fading, with speed depending on the context and performers intuition.
- ◆ Glissandi always occur continuously for the duration of the pitch to which they are attached, so glissando speed is proportional to note duration.

Duration: c.7 minutes

Note on Repeats: The Timeless Fragments

- ◆ Bars 14, 27, 29, 45 and 66 all employ repeating fragments. The musical function and meaning of these is to create an ‘eternal’ quality: stasis, timelessness, stability and memorability, amid the flux and transformation of the main sections.
- ◆ The *Kaleidoscopic* sections (b.14, 45, 66) should NOT feel ‘metrical’ or ‘rhythmic’, but ‘smooth’. The equality of note values, like the repetition of the bar, is used precisely to draw attention away from the articulation (and existence) of time. They should be repeated until the feeling of a single continuous and sustained chord/sonority is achieved. The extent of the repetition should increase each time (see the mythical text below to understand the directions ‘period of countless years’ and ‘ocean of years’). The timbral transformations simply reveal different perspectives on this timelessness.
- ◆ Because the harmonic series - having a theoretical basis in immutable numerical reality - is a conceptually eternal phenomenon, the *Kaleidoscopic* sections are based on partials 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 15, 17, 19, and 21 of a low G spectrum:



- ◆ The *Ritual Repetitions* (b.27, 29) at the heart of the piece, recall the opening and are themselves recalled as ‘distorted memories’ in the final section (e.g. b.47). They are not exact repetitions because of their indeterminate element, but each should have essentially the same quality. I call them ‘ritual repetitions’ because they should be treated as if they have always happened, and will continue to happen *ad infinitum* (even though they do not occur again in the piece). In the imagination they could be seen as church bells, for example, because they ask us to remember eternity. Like the *Kaleidoscopic* sections they are based in the G spectrum (partials 4, 6 and 14), though they do also contain foreign notes.

Origin of the Title

The title is taken from the final line of a Jainist account of declining beauty (India, 6th century BC)¹. Though the language is mythical, the ideas are resonant with contemporary environmental and aesthetic concerns...

'This age, known as Very Beautiful, Very Beautiful, lasted 400 trillion oceans of years*, and gave way to that known as Very Beautiful, which - as the name suggests - was exactly half as fortunate as the former. The wish-fulfilling trees, the earth and the waters were only half as bountiful as before. Men and women were only four miles tall, had only 128 ribs, and lived for only two periods of countless years... This period lasted 300 trillion oceans of years, declining gradually but inevitably to the stage called Sorrowfully Very Beautiful, when joy became mixed with grief.'

(*An 'ocean of years' is one hundred million times one hundred million palyas. Each palya is a 'period of countless years'.)

This piece was written for Mieko Kanno, for performance at York and Durham Universities in February 2007.

¹ Quoted in 'The Clock of the Long Now: Time and Responsibility' by Stewart Brand, 1999.

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Christian Mason (2007)

Ritualistic $\text{♩} = c.66$

ST
L → H
F
V ----- () let ring to silence

ST
L → H
F
V ----- ()

ST
L → H
F
V ----- ()

ord.
I +
II

Violin

bow bend

ppp < *ff* *ppp* < *ff* *ppp* < *ff* *sfz*

Very delicate $\text{♩} = c.54$

4

pp *ppp* *p* *ppp* *pp* *fp*

tr SP

Delicate/Violent **Stringendo**

7

SP -----> ord.

MSP ord.

(always open E) grad. -----> SP

H

pp *f* *sfz* *pp* 3 *fp* *p* *f* 5 *ff* *pesante* 7

$\text{♩} = 60$

9

ST

III II I II etc.

II
MST
VL

ord.
I II
I

sfz *pp* 6 5 *p* 3 *p* 3 *sfz*

11

II
I

l.v. 3 II I II I etc.

sfz *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *pp* *p* *mf* *f* *ff*

accel.

**Kaleidoscopic:
as fast as possible!**

MSP ← shift freely between → MST

L
F

14

pp *sempre*

Repeat ad lib. for what feels like a 'period of countless years'. Move on after any group of 8: the last pitch should be B

Fluid and fluctuating

♩ = 50 - 60

SP/ST
L F Arhythmic trem. ad lib.

Pos. ord. ST -----> SP

P/W/S ord.

15 *pp* *mf* *pp* *fp* *f*

17 ST III II III II III II ord. 3 grad.-----> SP II (slow----->fast) *pp* *mf* *pp* *fp*

19 ord. H 3 MST II L III ord. 3 III II *f* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *p* *mp* *sfz*

21 5 H 3 5 *sfz* *pp* *mp* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *ff* *pesante*

23 III II 7 SP ord. *p* *pp*

25 *pp* *pp* *pp*

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is written on a single treble clef staff. It consists of six systems of music, numbered 15 to 25. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 50 - 60. The score includes various performance instructions such as 'Arhythmic trem. ad lib.', 'Pos. ord.', 'ST', 'SP', 'MST', 'L', 'H', 'III', 'II', 'I', '5', '3', '6', '7', 'grad.', 'slow', 'fast', 'P/W/S ord.', 'ff', 'pesante', and dynamic markings like *pp*, *mf*, *fp*, *f*, *p*, *mp*, *sfz*, and *ff*. There are also fingering numbers (1-5) and articulation marks (accents, slurs, hairpins). The piece ends with a double bar line and a 4/4 time signature.

Ritual Repetitions

♩ = c.66

27 SP VL] ord. I II

Place notes once each on any semiquaver pulsation... x3

f *pp* *ff* *f* *pp*

...vary on each repetition

MSP H S] L F

28

pp *f* *ppp*

Ritual Repetitions

♩ = c.66

29 SP VL] ord. I II

Place notes once each on any semiquaver pulsation... x2

f *pp* *ff* *f* *pp*

...vary on each repetition

Incessant inner pulsation (feel semiquavers)

♩ = 72

30 pizz. arco SP pizz. 'pull off' arco SP pizz.

ff *ppp* *f* *pp* *ff*

32 IV III arco ord. IV pizz. 'hammer on' IV II

p *f* *pp* *ff* *f* *l.v.* *mf* *p* *f*

34 l.v. arco SP pizz. III II III III

pp *ff* *f*

36 II arco ord. SP

p *pp* *f* *sfz* l.v.

38 slow → fast narrow → wide

pp *ff* *sfz* *ff* *p* *f* *sfz* *ff*

40 arco pizz. arco

f *ff* *f*

42 rall. . . . ♩ = 54

p *ff* *p* *pp* *pp*

Without Metre: Very Freely

44

fppp *ff* *ppp* *ff* *p*

**Kaleidoscopic:
as fast as possible!**

MSP ← shift freely between → MST

VL
VF

Repeat ad lib. for what feels like an 'ocean of years'.
Move on after any group of 8: the last pitch should be B

45

ppsempre

MST -----> MSP

♩ = c.60

46

pp ----- *ff*

With wild abandon!

♩ = c.180

47

ord.

sffz > *p* ----- *fff* *sffz* > *p* ----- *fff*

49

sffz *sffz* *sffz* *sffz* *sffz* > *p* ----- *fff*

51

sffz > *p* ----- *ff* *p* ----- *SP*

53

ord.

rall. -----

sffz *sffz* *sffz* *sffz* > *p* ----- *fff* *psub.*

♩ = c.120

55

ff *psub.* *f* *psub.* *f* *psub.*

57 **accel.** ♩ = c.180

f ppsub. *ff* *sffz* *sffz*

59 **rall.** ♩ = c.120

MST *ff* *pp* *mf* *pp* *ord.*

61 **grad.** → MSP

f p *fff* *f*

♩ = c.180
ord. **Freely (a little slower)**

SP *sffz* *sffz* *sffz* *sffz* *sffz* *p* *p* *p* *sffz* *ord.* → MSP II

**Kaleidoscopic and quasi-eternal:
as fast as possible!**

MSP ← shift freely between → MST
VL
VF

Repeat ad lib. for what feels like an eternity, then stop suddenly!

66 (1)

ppsempre