

Sinuiju

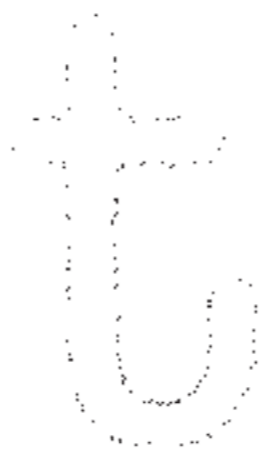
Eric Skytterholm Egan

May 2017/January 2022 | Tynemouth

Viola and Piano

with Clarinet (optional)

around 5 Minutes



I follow you father,
Your translucent trail of blood
On the Ocher road...
Where you died wrapped in a burlap sack.

황톳길 | Chiha Kim

A score following the outlines of craters in a rice paddock outside the city of Sinuiju (North Korea), made by US Air Force bombs in October 1950.

Performance Notes

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Amplification:

In very intimate and resonant settings the piece can be fully acoustic. In medium, large, and/or dry spaces, the piece should be amplified. The amplification of the piano (and clarinet) should be more subtle than the amplification of the viola part.

Reading the Score | Piano:

The piece should be played with pedal throughout. The 12 harmonics should be marked on the strings (with permanent marker if possible) and should be played as accurately as possible. The radius of the circular 'crater' determines the dynamic of the attack, from mf (largest) to pp (smallest).

Coordination:

The viola player must follow the bow-line throughout. The pianist should insert their harmonics according to where they fall on this coreographed path. Some occur in the middle of the viola player's gestures, others between them. The coordination of this must be agreed upon during rehearsals.

In places where the overall direction of the bow is a up-bow, the music must be read from right to left.

Techniques | Viola:

In order to fit in all of the material, the bow speed is likely to be very slow in the passages with a thick line. This is intended; the performer should attempt to avoid altering bowing in order to make it more "natural" to perform. As each fragment of material contains of a complex bowing gesture, the sounding result should be a combination of bow-noise, finger tapping, and occasional fleeting pitches and harmonics. Where the line is at it's thinnest (or dotted), the bow-pressure must be decreased. Where the line becomes thicker, the pressure should be increased again. The performer should always have the bow on the string that the LH is fingering (if at all possible). Accordingly, the bow should move back and forth from string to string whilst at the same time following the complex patterns notated. If the pattern cannot be followed exactly, whilst playing on the notated string, the latter is more important than the former. However, a general sense of the shape should nonetheless be attempted.

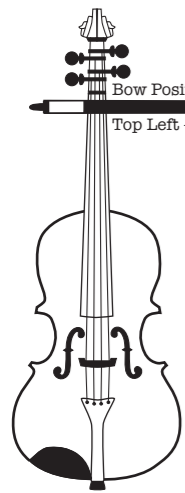
Fingerings:

The LH pressure in the piece alternates between harmonic fingering (open diamond noteheads), half-pressure (filled diamond noteheads), and full pressure (normal noteheads). Occasionally the performer is asked to move gradually between different degrees of finger pressure as well as from nod(/t)e to nod(/t)e.

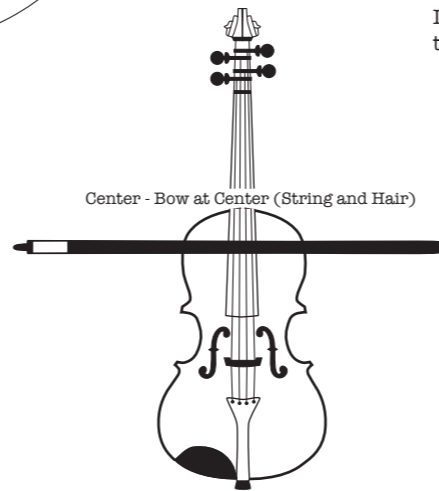
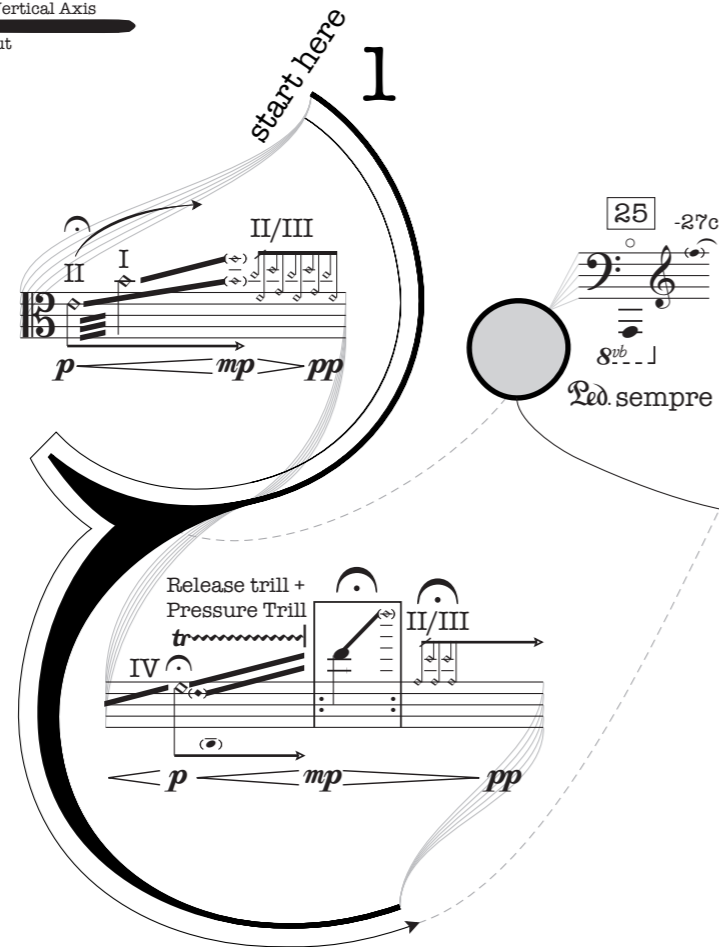
Release trills are trills between the fingered node/note (with light pressure) and the open string. Pressure trills are trills between different degrees of pressure (and occasionally but not always pitch) in the Left Hand.

Reading the Score | Viola:

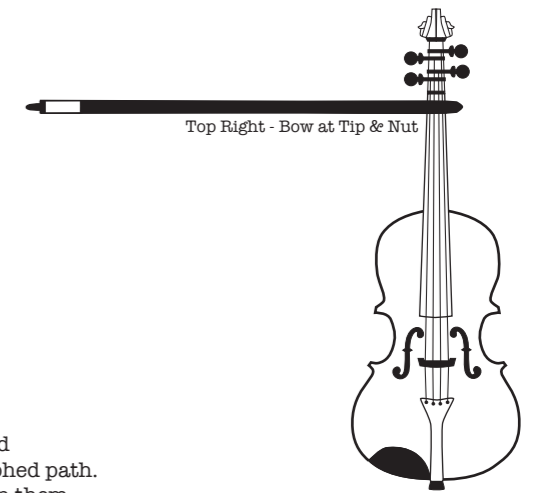
The pieces are notated spatially according to the position of the bow, as outlined by the instrument diagrams on this page. The placement of the black bow-line on the page corresponds to the desired position of the bow on the string. Accordingly, the material above (1) is played with the heel of the bow, near the nut, with the LH behind the right. The performer should think like a painter, drawing out the patterns of the bow-line on/across the string(s). The thickness of this line determines the speed (and to a lesser degree the pressure) of the bow. Where the bow-is at its thickest, the speed should be so slow that pitches are not really heard - the bow should almost judder to a halt. Any movement with a thin dotted line in the piece (connecting each gesture) should be traced almost silently on dampened strings; the duration of these dotted lines should be noticeably faster than the other material but should also reflect the distance on the page. Bowing movements other than those that result from the notated movement should be kept to a minimum. The dynamics determine the pressure of the LH and phrasing.



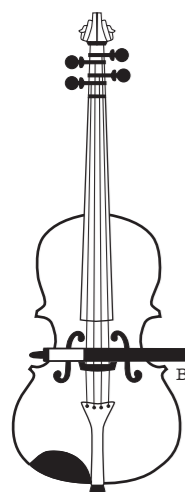
Bow Position: Horizontal/Vertical Axis
Top Left - Bow at Heel & Nut



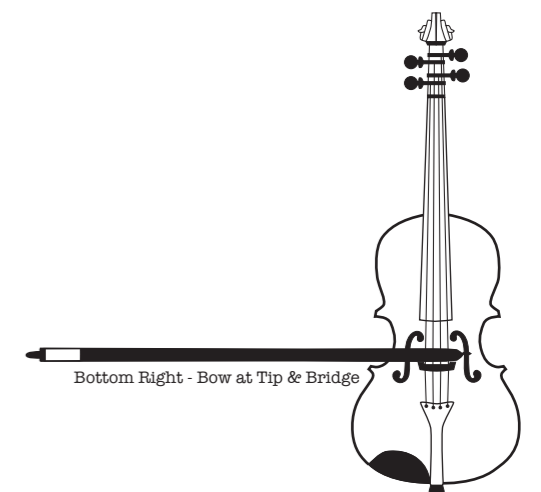
Center - Bow at Center (String and Hair)



Top Right - Bow at Tip & Nut



Bottom Left - Bow at Heel & Bridge



Bottom Right - Bow at Tip & Bridge

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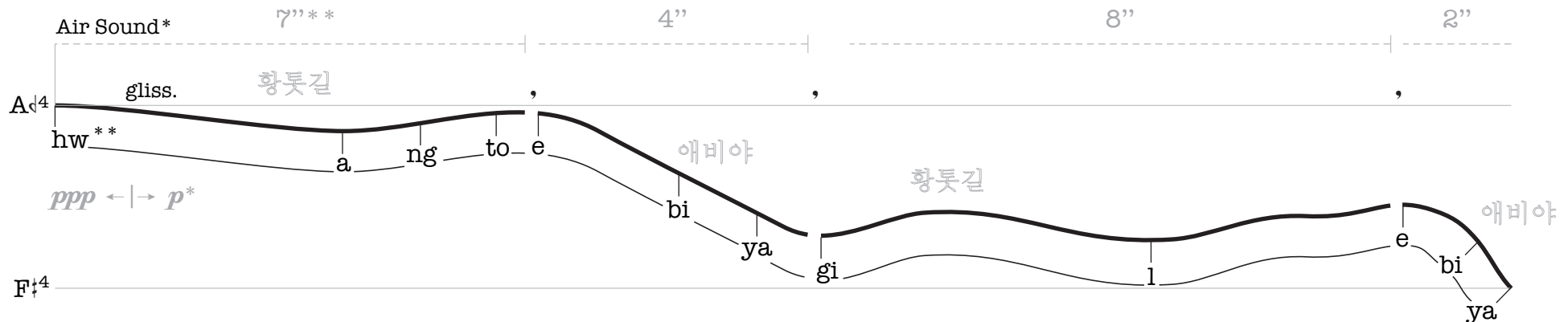
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Optional Clarinet Part
At Pitch
any size

* Free, flowingly changing dynamics within these levels.

** Durations are to be considered a guideline only.



* There should be equal amounts of pitch and air in the sound.

** Attempt, as far as possible, to make the shape of the text with your mouth, as if speaking whilst playing through the instrument.

Begin the passage above when you hear a relatively sustained and clear (un-distorted) pitch/harmonic in the viola part. This should occur at least twice in each rendition of the piece; however it may happen in different places each time. Play the material in its entirety every time you begin playing it. The pauses between the iterations can be long or short - this is entirely down to what you hear.

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