String Quartet No. 2

Átractos

2019
String Quartet No. 2, Átractos (2019)
---------------------------------------

Written for the 6th edition of the Quatuor Diotima Academy 2019

The inspiration for String Quartet No. 2, is to be traced in the Myth of Er, described at the very end of Plato’s Republic (10:614). Within the narration, Plato depicts cosmological sceneries from afterlife taking place around the ‘spindle of Necessity’; ideas, which have profound associations to earlier Pythagorean teachings on the alleged music of the spheres and the movement of the celestial bodies. On a first level of interpretation, a spindle, is the spike used for twisting, spinning and intertwining fibres into a yarn. The string quartet attempts to reproduce these spinning procedures with several sound ideas / gestures, which symbolise the fractures of memory. The fractures are scattered in time and space throughout the piece, evolving around a spiral formation. The whole process may well be envisioned poetically as a platonic átractos (spindle) that attempts to wrap them up in one.

-Andreas Tsiartas, March 2019

Duration: 11:15 min.

© Andreas Tsiartas/ GEMA 2019
www.andreastsiartas.net

All rights reserved. No part or whole of this publication may be reproduced without the prior permission of the composer. Any broadcasting, publicizing, editing and publishing of the specific work that bears not the author’s legal permission may be prosecuted. All of the above actions are under the creator’s (thus the composer himself) decision.
General glossary (structure)

The score is structured with the following layers of notation (from bottom to top layers):
- Vibrato indications often leading to trills;
- Bow pressure indications (see below);
- Ponticello and sul tasto indications;
- Tempo indications.

‘Slur-like’ symbols above arrows, indicate the beginning and ending of a non-metrical passage. The crossed sign cancels the previous one, returning thus, to metric notation.

Sound specific glossary

Drag the hair of the bow on the middle part of the violin, on the wooden side curve.
Non-metric tremolo (of short duration).

Drag the bow on the tailpiece of the instrument (cello ONLY).

Extreme bow pressure.

Bow pressure (increase/ sustain max. pressure/ decrease). For viola and cello: to achieve max. pressure, apply sul tasto and NOT sul ponticello.

Figures crossed diagonally with a line: To be performed rapidly, despite tempo indications.
Intensifying vibrato, from medium vibrato (MVibr) to extreme vibrato (XVibr).

NB: Intensifying speed NOT amplitude

A rapid harmonic gliss. upwards and downwards on the open string indicated.

Circular bowing:
- Dampen strings with left hand (high position).
- Bow circularly with a slow to medium pace on all 4 strings.
- For sfz: bow near the left-hand fingers/ on the higher part of the bow.

NB: Dynamics in this passage suggest noise intensity and NOT velocity of bowing.

Note-head used for non-pitched/ noise passages.
Note-head pointing upwards: indicating highest pitch range.
The reversed arrow pointing downwards:
indicating the lowest pitch range (poss.).

Feathered figures indicate a relative number of pulsating beats and are not to be taken literally.
The culmination of each feathered figure usually lies in the centre and it matches with a respective dynamic marking.
This kind of pulsation should be performed vividly and in a fast speed, independently from the passage’s tempo.

Mute on/off: practice mute (sordina da studio), ideally a metallic one, which will create the desired timbre for the passages required.

From the last regular note-head given, start a rapid gliss.
towards the highest range of the instrument (unless range indicated).
Within this highest range perform small non-metric, yet rapid gliss. (with the left hand, NOT the bow).
Use two fingers (left hand) to achieve glissando tremolando, when in the higher positions. Use the bow only for non-metric tremolo (Z).
Similar to above, small non-metric, yet rapid glissandi within the lowest (limited) range of the cello.

‘Scratching sound’: starting on the pitch indicated in brackets, gradually apply pressure to more than two strings with left palm, while applying extreme pressure on the bow in rapid non-metric tremoli; glissando until the end upon the indicated dynamics.

Acute ‘percussive’ sforzando and subito piano (quasi pp) with gradual crescendo to the next acute sforzando:

**Suggestion:** Use rapid down- and up-bow change to achieve this effect (upper half of the bow).

*sfz p degrees:* while achieving the acute/percussive attack, the subsequent dynamics may vary from *pp* to *ff*, depending on the context of the dynamics of the passage.
(senza) → SP → MSP → XSP

From ordinario (senza pont.) to poco ponticello (SP), to medium pont. (MSP), to extreme ponticello (XSP).

**NB:** for passages indicated XSP prior and after max. pressure effects, the XSP is lost by nature, yet implied to continue when normal pressure recurs, unless otherwise indicated.

**MFL → XFL (XST)**

From medium flautando ‘sul tasto’ (MFL), to extreme flautando ‘sul tasto’ (XFL).

**senza vibr. → Vibr → MVibr → XVibr**

From senza vibrato, to some vibrato (Vibr), to medium vibrato (MVibr), to extreme vibrato (XVibr)

---

**General notes**

- Each instrument alternates between two kinds of staves: one for the regular five-line stave and the other one, a single line for (white) noise.
- Rests: the smallest rest in the piece is the single caesura (like a breathing rest).
- Accidentals apply for a single bar.
- Trills throughout the piece as fast as possible.
- Two kinds of slurs: regular and dashed slurs. The dashed slurs implying musically binding the indicated pitches, i.e. phrases.
String Quartet No. 2
(Átractos)

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

\[ \text{\textcopyright Tsiartas 2019 All rights reserved.} \]
m con sordina
\[ C \quad \mathbf{\dot{\mathbf{\cdot}}} = 70 \]

Noise

\[ \text{\footnotesize *= on the tailpiece (for cello only)} \]

\[ \text{sfz} \quad \text{mf} \]

\[ \text{\footnotesize *= no pitch: intense sound} \]
accel. \( \rightarrow \) \( \frac{\ddot{\varepsilon}}{\varepsilon} = 100 \)

\( \text{pp} \rightarrow \text{sfz} \rightarrow f \rightarrow \text{sfz} \rightarrow \text{sfzp} \rightarrow \text{sfz} \rightarrow \text{sfzp} \rightarrow \text{sfz} \rightarrow \text{sfzp} \)

\( \varepsilon \rightarrow \text{ORD.} \rightarrow \text{XSP} \rightarrow \text{MSP} \rightarrow \text{senza} \rightarrow \text{Vbr} \)

\( \dot{\varepsilon} \rightarrow \text{ORD.} \rightarrow \text{Vbr} \rightarrow \text{XSP} \rightarrow \text{MSP} \rightarrow \text{senza} \rightarrow \text{Vbr} \rightarrow \text{XSP} \rightarrow \text{MSP} \rightarrow \text{senza} \rightarrow \text{Vbr} \)

\( \dot{\varepsilon} \rightarrow \text{ORD.} \rightarrow \text{Vbr} \rightarrow \text{XSP} \rightarrow \text{MSP} \rightarrow \text{senza} \rightarrow \text{Vbr} \rightarrow \text{XSP} \rightarrow \text{MSP} \rightarrow \text{senza} \rightarrow \text{Vbr} \)

\( \dot{\varepsilon} \rightarrow \text{ORD.} \rightarrow \text{Vbr} \rightarrow \text{XSP} \rightarrow \text{MSP} \rightarrow \text{senza} \rightarrow \text{Vbr} \rightarrow \text{XSP} \rightarrow \text{MSP} \rightarrow \text{senza} \rightarrow \text{Vbr} \)

\( \dot{\varepsilon} \rightarrow \text{ORD.} \rightarrow \text{Vbr} \rightarrow \text{XSP} \rightarrow \text{MSP} \rightarrow \text{senza} \rightarrow \text{Vbr} \rightarrow \text{XSP} \rightarrow \text{MSP} \rightarrow \text{senza} \rightarrow \text{Vbr} \)

\( \dot{\varepsilon} \rightarrow \text{ORD.} \rightarrow \text{Vbr} \rightarrow \text{XSP} \rightarrow \text{MSP} \rightarrow \text{senza} \rightarrow \text{Vbr} \rightarrow \text{XSP} \rightarrow \text{MSP} \rightarrow \text{senza} \rightarrow \text{Vbr} \)
$E = 50$ Meno mosso - Sospeso
circular bowing (see glossary)

Circular bowing (for cello only):
position left palm towards close
to the bridge, dampening the strings. Bow
(as much circularly as possible) within the
space (between palm and bridge). This
produces a better sound for the desired
effect, on cello.
Choose any of these 8 figures in any order to repeat, within the repetition bars - duration of 10 sec., by overlapping and interacting with each other, in rapid, dense responses. General remarks, such as dynamics, cib process and tempo apply to the whole of this passage.
accel. \[ \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \quad J = 80 \]

\[ J = 40 \quad (J = 80) \text{ Molto meno mosso} \]
accel. \[ \dot{=} 50 \]

\[ \dot{=} 60 \]
\[ \text{\( \downarrow \)} = 120 \]
Choose any of these 7 figures in any order to repeat, within the repetition bars - duration of 6 sec, by overlapping and interacting with each other, in rapid, dense responses. General remarks, such as dynamics and tempo apply to the whole of this passage.
Choose any of these 8 figures in any order to repeat, within the repetition bars - duration of 10 sec, by overlapping and interacting with each other, in rapid, dense responses. General remarks, such as dynamics and tempo apply to the whole of this passage.
$\frac{\text{oct} = 140}{\text{e} = 70}$
Circular bowing (for cello only):
as before