

Dave Riedstra

# Pith

*for violoncello solo*

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Dave Riedstra  
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duration: ca. 7 minutes

*The skin is a variety of contingency: in it, through it, with it, the world and my body touch each other, the feeling and the felt, it defines their common edge .... I mix with the world and the world mixes with me. Skin intervenes between several things in the world and makes them mingle.*

Michel Serres, *The Five Senses*

This score describes a very quiet solo cello performance for a small audience. Settling at the lower threshold of audibility, the performance should weave in and out of salience and lyrical cohesion. Pith is the white fibre joining the “meat” of a citrus fruit with its skin—“that’s where all the good stuff is.”

# Performance directions

## **General**

This work is written for cello in standard tuning (CGDA). A bow is not required.

Each system comprises two staves. Play the upper staff on the strings alone. Play the lower staff by lightly tapping on the fingerboard or the tailpiece. The dynamics of all of these sounds should be roughly equal and very quiet.

## **Upper staff**

Play X-shaped noteheads by lightly tapping on the given string at the specified pitch. Tap at harmonic pressure, do not attempt to fully stop the string.

Play diamond-shaped noteheads by tapping on the given string at the specified pitch and allowing the harmonic to ring.

In both cases, always use the same string for a given pitch—that is, E is always played on string I, B is always played on string II, and F is always on string III.

## **Lower staff**

Play notes on the top line by lightly tapping the shoulder of the instrument. Play notes on the bottom line by lightly tapping the instrument top near the foot of the bridge. The top line sound should be distinctly higher in pitch than the bottom line sound.

## **Dynamic**

Perform the entire piece at a dynamic that requires listeners to exert some effort to hear. The sound of the performance should be quieter to a listener than the sound of their neighbour shuffling in their seat and comparable to the sound of the room or to the listener's own breathing.

## **Staging**

Stage the performance situation such that listeners are close to the performer and are as close to equidistant as possible. Position seating in a semicircle around the performer with as few rows as necessary to accommodate all listeners. Try to ensure that the dynamic is similar in each row.

# Pith

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tap string at pitch      tap and let harmonic ring

♩=84      II      I      III      ca. 5"

Left hand

pp

upper line: tap inst. shoulder

pp      lower line: tap inst. near foot of bridge

10

16      ca. 10"

22      ca. 10"

29      ca. 5"

35      ca. 5"

41

47

ca. 10''

54

61

69

78

*slow down a little but without dying out*