

Hannah Caroline Firmin

Sound Translations

cello and piano (2019)

full score

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Composer's Note

The piece consists of three main and contrasting sections, each containing textures where the two instruments strive to blend and sound alike as each instrument tries to play the other's material or techniques, as well as textures where the cello and piano are completely identifiable as individual timbres. I was interested in how the varied timbres of the piano can be mapped to the timbral differences of the cello using the inside of the piano as well as its keys. For example in the opening of the work the piano tries to execute the cello's smooth glissandi by using a combination of a metal wall bracket and superball mallets. In the third section (see bars 214–218) and parts of the second, the piano and cello explore their differences or at other times switch roles (see bars 162–168) where the cello tries to simulate the attack and immediate decay that strongly characterises the sounds created by the piano.

Performance Directions

General Information

- Instrumentation: the piece is written for Cello and Piano
- Duration: 7'45" to 8' approx.

Noteheads, Symbols and Notations

● = pitched note

X = un-specified/approximate pitch

Cello

Symbols and Notations

 = Bartok pizzicato

 = scratch tone: gradually apply more bow pressure to create distortion, the thinner end indicating less and the thicker implying more distortion

↓ = ordinary bow pressure

↓ = distorted bow pressure

~~~~~ = wide vibrato

~~~~~ = oscillating vibrato – exaggerated uneven vibrato (uneven in timing and in extremes of intervallic width)

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ = sideways bowing – bow arm vibrato – shake bow sideways (lengthways on string) while applying pressure

Bowings

M.S.P. = molto sul ponticello

M.S.T. = molto sul tasto

P.S.P. = poco sul ponticello

C.L.B. = col legno battuto

P.S.T. = poco sul tasto

C.L.T. = col legno tratto

*The discrete bow changes during the long glissandi passages are to be decided by the performer

Piano

Symbols and Notations

Glissandi: piano glissandi are executed in multiple ways throughout the work (e.g. use of a metal bracket, superball mallets or fingernail/plastic card/plectrum)



= slide object towards you on the indicated string to create a downward gliss.



= slide object away from you on the indicated string to create an upward gliss.

*Please note that where there are continuous glissandi passages (see bars 24–36, for example) the final pitch of the gliss. is indeterminate

*Superball improvisation (bars 78–88): where the oscillating line curves are smaller, execute short and fast strokes towards/away from you on the low ‘A’ string. Where the curves are larger, execute long and slow strokes.

*The cross noteheads in the glissandi passage at bars 191–194 show the length/rhythm of the glissandi and not the actual pitches



= slide fingernail back and forth on string like scratching

*Section B: during the relative pitch sections where the piano is divided into high, middle and low try to use pitches which match the cello but in the specified range

Items needed for inside the piano



1) Metal wall bracket (must cover the width of three piano strings in the middle range)

- 2) X2 superball mallets – these may be used for the accelerando gestures also (see bar 99, for example), for ease, as opposed to using a separate beater
- 3) Fishing rod/bow hair (whichever works best) for the bowed piano passage in bars 209–212. *The fishing rod/bow hair must be prepared prior to the performance

- 4) Guitar plectrum or plastic card: either of these items may be used as an alternative method to using fingernails to pluck/strum strings where the performer wishes

Sound Translations

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Violoncello

♩=60
as little attack as poss.
M.S.P. → P.S.P. → P.S.T. → ord.

ppp

Piano

♩=60
attack string with metal bracket and then slide it towards you on string; loud attack and then immediately quiet

mf > pp
mf > pp
sim.



5

Vc. $\rightarrow$ M.S.P. $\rightarrow$ ord.

Pno. $mf > pp$ $mf > pp$ $mf > pp$ slide away



9

Vc.

P.S.T.

P.S.P.

M.S.P.

M.S.T.

M.S.P.

P.S.P.

Pno.

mf > *pp*

mf > *pp*

sim.

13

ord. M.S.T. PS.T. ord. PS.T.

Vc.

Pno.

mf > *pp* *mf* > *pp*



17

P.S.P. M.S.P. pizz. arco, P.S.T. ord.

Vc.

Pno.

mf *ppp* *mf* > *pp* *mf* > *pp*



21

M.S.P. ord. M.S.T. M.S.P. pizz.

Vc.

Pno.

mf > *pp* *mf* > *pp*

25 arco. M.S.T. → M.S.P. → M.S.T. → ord.

Vc. *ppp*

Pno. as little attack as poss. *mf > pp* *mf > pp* *ppp* sim.



29 → P.S.T. pizz. arco. M.S.P. → P.S.P. pizz.

Vc. *mf* *ppp* *f*

Pno. as little attack as poss. *mp > pp* *ppp*



33 arco. M.S.P. pizz. arco. M.S.P. → M.S.T. pizz. arco. M.S.T. → M.S.P.

Vc. *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *ppp*

Pno. as little attack as poss. *mp > pp* *ppp* as little attack as poss. *mp > pp* *ppp* sim. as little attack as poss. *mp > pp* *ppp* take superball

Vc. 37 *M.S.T.* *(e)*

Pno. slide superball towards you on string

A $\text{♩} = 80$ *M.S.P.* *ppp*

A $\text{♩} = 80$ *ff* *Red.*

15^{mb}

==

Vc. 41

Pno. 3 slide superball

ff *Red.*

15^{mb}

==

Vc. 45 *ord.* *ppp*

==

Vc. 49 *ppp*

Pno. slide superball

ff *Red.*

15^{mb}

53

Vc.

Pno.

slide superball

ff

Red.

57

Vc.

M.S.P.

pizz.

arco.

ppp

Pno.

(f5)-----

61

Vc.

Pno.

slide superball

slide metal bracket on the specified strings;
as little attack as poss.

ppp

Red.

65

Vc.

Pno.

pizz.

ff

65

66

67

68

69

Vc.

Pno.

arco.
ord.

ppp

sim.

ppp

Ped.

69

70

71

72

73

Vc.

Pno.

73

74

75

76

77

Vc.

Pno.

mf

mf

slide superball towards you on string

slide superball up/down string as continuous as poss.

15^{mb}

ff

Ped.

[illegible]

85

Vc.

Pno.

sim.

mf

(f5)

The image shows a musical score for Violoncello (Vc.) and Piano (Pno.). The Violoncello part is in the upper staff, and the Piano part is in the lower staff. The Violoncello part features a series of eighth notes and a triplet of eighth notes. The Piano part features a series of eighth notes and a triplet of eighth notes. The Piano part also includes a section marked 'sim.' (simile) and 'mf' (mezzo-forte). The score is numbered 85 at the beginning.

89 **B** ♩=90
(pizz.) arco
Vc. *f* *mp* *pp* *ff* *ff* *p* *f* *pp*
ricochet
exaggerated vib.
pizz.

High
Pno. Middle
Low
Hit bass strings with hand *mf* > *pp* *mf* > *pp*
strike string with metal bracket and slide away from you *sim.*
scrape string towards you with fingernail *f*
cluster tremolo using hands *p* *f* *mf*
fingernail
plucked *pp*

93 ♩=80
arco
Vc. *mp* *ff* *mp*
3 pizz.
Pno. ♩=80
attack string with metal bracket then slide *mf* > *pp* *ppp*
as little attack as possible *sim.*

97 ♩=90
arco
Vc. *f* *ff* *mp* *f* *ppp* *ff* *ppizz.*
Pno. ♩=90
High
hit string repeatedly with beater *f*
Pno. Middle
Low
plucked *f* *p* *pp*
superball *f*
fingernail *mf*
plucked *p*

113

Vc. $\text{♩}=80$

High. $\text{♩}=80$ 5 pluck at different points of string

Pno. Middle *superball* *mp*

Low.

p *f* *ppp* *p* *mf* *pp*

Ped.

117

Vc.

High. 5

p *mf* *pp*

121

Vc. $\text{♩}=90$ > ricochet

High. $\text{♩}=90$ strum across strings

Pno. Middle *hit strings* *mp*

Low. *mf* *pp* *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *pp* *ff* *p*

pizz. *arco* *pizz.* *arco*

superball *plucked*

125 $\text{♩} = 80$

Vc. *pizz.* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *ff*

High. *plucked* *pp*

Pno. Middle *f*

Low. *f* *p* *f* *p*

pluck at different points of string

129 $\text{♩} = 90$

Vc. *pizz.* *p* *arco* *ff* *pp* *mp* *ff* *pp* *f* *plucked* *pizz.* *p*

High. $\text{♩} = 90$ *beater* *f* *metal bracket* *mf > pp* *fingernail* *p* *f* *(exaggerated vib.)* *strum across strings* *p* *mf*

Pno. Middle *f* *mf > pp* *fingernail* *p* *f*

Low. *mp* *f* *f* *mf > pp* *fingernail* *p* *f*

133 *arco* *mf* *ff* *p* *f* *pizz.*

Vc. $\text{♩} = 80$ *arco* *ppp* *attack string with metal bracket then slide* *mf > pp* *mf > pp* *mf > pp*

High. *hit strings* *f*

Pno. Middle *fingernail* *ff* *hit strings* *f*

Low. *p* *ff*

137

Vc.

Pno.

mf > *pp* *mf* > *pp* *mf* > *pp* *mf* > *pp*

141

Vc.

ff *f* *f* *p* < *f* *f* *p* *f*

High

Pno. Middle

Low

fingernail *f* *pp* *ff*

plucked *f* hit strings *ff* plucked *f* *p* *mf*

arco *f* *p* *f* *pp* *f*

pizz. *ff* *pp* *mp*

145

Vc.

ff *mf* *p* *ff* *f* *pp* *mp*

High

Pno. Middle

Low

superball *mp* hit strings *mp* fingernail *p* *f*

plucked *f* hit strings *ff*

arco *f* *pp* *mp*

pizz. *ff* *pp* *mp*

149

Vc. pizz. f arco ppp $\text{♩}=80$ strummed $\text{♩}=80$

High

Pno. Middle metal bracket $mf > pp$ plucked ff

Low

153

Vc. arco p f p ff mf ricochet

Pno. ppp p plucked $\text{♩}=90$ High

Middle ff fingernail

Low f mp Ped.

157

Vc. f mp p f p f ff f pizz. arco. ricochet pizz.

High

Pno. Middle hit strings with hand mp metal bracket hit strings with hand mp plucked mp

Low f p f f mp ff p

161 $\text{♩} = 80$

Vc. *f* *mf* *mf* *f* *pp* *mf*

High *f* *p* *mf* *f*

Pno. Middle *f*

Low

hit strings with hand

8va keyed

165

Vc. *mf* *pp* *f* *f*

Pno. *p* *f* *pp*

169 $\text{♩} = 90$

Vc. *ff* *mf* *pp* *f* *f* *mp* *f* *p*

High *p*

Pno. Middle *f* *mf > pp*

Low *ff* *f*

finger nail

hit strings with hand

metal bracket

plucked

arco.

pizz.

arco.

173

Vc. *pizz.* *f pp* *ff* *p* *f* *mp* *pizz.* *arco. ricochet* *mf* *pp* 15

High

Pno. Middle *beater* *f* *plucked* *mf*

Low *fingernail* *p* *ff* *hit strings with hand* *f* *pp* *f*

177

Vc. *ff* *p* *f* *pp* *pizz.* *ff* *arco.* *p* *ff*

High *strum across strings* *p* *mf* *plucked* *f*

Pno. Middle *beater* *f* *fingernail* *hit strings with hand* *f* *f* *pp*

Low *f* *f* *f* *pp*

181

Vc. *C* *M.S.P.* *ppp* *ppp* *mf* *ppp*

alternate between ord. and distorted bow pressure where indicated M.S.P.

Piano *hit string with beater* *mf* *tremolo on string (plectrum)* *ppp* *p* *ppp* *pppp*

185

Vc. *mf ppp f ppp mf ppp mf* *ff* *ppp mf ppp mp ppp f ppp*

Pno. *p ppp* *Del.* *5 mp 5 mf mp 5 p 5 mf p 3 pp p 5 ppp* *15^{mb} pp*

strummed (finger)

slide fingernail back and forth on string like scratching

M.S.P. → M.S.T.

189

Vc. *f pp* *f ppp mp ppp mf pp f ppp f pp f p f mp*

Pno. *(f5)* *mp pp mp mf pp p* *Del.* *mf > p mf > p mf > p mf > p mf > p*

C.L.B. C.L.T. C.L.B. C.L.T. C.L.B. C.L.T. C.L.B. C.L.T. C.L.B. C.L.T. C.L.B. C.L.T. C.L.B. C.L.T.

slide metal bracket back and forth on the 'A' string while attacking it at specified moments

193

Vc. *ff* *ppp mf ppp ff ppp mf ppp mf ppp f ppp ff ppp mf ppp mf ppp*

Pno. *mf > p mf > p mf > p mf > p mf > p* *pp* *Del.* *3 p 3 ppp 3 pp 3 ppp 3 p 3 ppp*

C.L.B.

shake bow sideways and apply pressure - alternate between this technique and ord. bowing

M.S.P.

plucked; different place on string each time

213

P.S.T. 3

M.S.P. 3

P.S.P. 3

M.S.P. 3

scratch tones; gradually increase bow pressure for the specified durations and then immediately release pressure on harmonics

mf pp mf pp mf pp ff pp mf p mf pp f pp ff mp

keyed 5 3 5 3 5 3 3 3 3

pp mf p pp f p mf ff pp f

Violoncello (Vc.) and Piano (Pno.) score. The Violoncello part features a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) marked with a black box and a downward arrow, followed by a long note (C5) and a final note (D5). The Piano part features a triplet of eighth notes (G3, A3, B3) marked with a bracket and a downward arrow, followed by a long note (C4) and a final note (D4). Dynamics include *fff*, *pp*, and *f*.