

ben smith

destroyed autumns, talking

(cello, piano, tape)

Performance Notes

Accidentals refer only to notes they immediately precede. (Nevertheless, natural signs are occasionally employed for ease of reading.) Quarter tones should in general should be treated as tempered pitches. However, when employed chromatically - and especially when marked *legato* - intonation may be considered more flexible (inflectional).






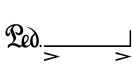
The numerous silences which punctuate the work should not be considered in any way 'rests'. They can, however, convey absence of material; whether it be obscured, or imagined as shifting between realms of perceptible and imperceptible (*inécoutable*). Either way, a sense of a concentrated *will* to sound/hear should be maintained throughout these passages.

Though the work is not intended to be explicitly 'dramatic', the ritualistic aspect of the physical gestures in performance (especially within the intended stillness of any silent passages) should be carefully considered. That is, rests should ideally not be 'cluttered' with preparations for upcoming gestures, page turns, and the like, and although a certain 'muscularity' of gesture is called for at times, this should never become overly agitated or distracting.




The vocalizations should be calmly executed and somewhat machine-like in intensity (always blended with the general musical context). Sounds are to be whispered/unvoiced throughout, with the exception of the sung cello line in m. 47. Take care not to rush or shorten any sound, so that a palpable sensuality is communicated. The symbols follow standard IPA conventions. **N. B.** The arrow notehead in m. 52 indicates a synchronised inhalation.

The performers should be situated at either sides of the stage, as far apart as possible; so that methods of communication and synchronization between players is rendered more difficult than usual. This is further complicated by the obstructive placement of a speaker emitting radio noise (see Tape instructions below) between the players, at the centre of the stage




Piano

-  depress the key silently, *except* where the note is a harmonic, in which case the upper, diamond-headed note indicates the resultant pitch, the lower note being struck on the key
-  harmonics lying in between the standard boundaries, producing faint multiphonics - the closest principal harmonic is shown, and the accompanied 'ghost' pitch is notated in parentheses
-  second-escapement action
-  a sharp, percussive sound. The specific execution is dependant on context, and the performer is free to find the most suitable method of realization. A combination of tapping or flicking the keybed with the fingertip /nail, or slapping the fallboard is recommended.
-  catch some resonance with the sustain pedal
-  depress /lift the sustain pedal forcefully - there should be a clear gradation of attack between soft depression, *poco accent.*, and more heavily accented 'slam' depressions /lifts

Cello

- flaut.* flautando - to be played sul tasto and *non vib.* (unless specified otherwise) the sound should be hazy and with a significant loss of pitch-content
-  *molto vibrato* - somewhat exaggerated
- non vib. (n.v.)* without vibrato
- poco vib. (p.v.)* very slight vibrato, like a old phonograph
- vib. largo* slow vibrato, microtonally inflected
-  half-harmonic pressure (always combined flautando bow pressure)
-  overpressure 'crescendo' - moving towards scratch tone

Cello (cont.)

- pst/mst *poco/molto sul tasto* (the latter bowed or plucked as near to the left hand as is practical)
- psp/msp *poco/molto sul ponticello* (the latter bowed as near to the bridge as possible, or with the bow hair partly on the bridge; the resulting sound should be slightly airy and almost entirely devoid of the fundamental pitch)
- clb/clt *col legno battuto /col legno tratto* - for the latter a very small proportion of hair should be retained
½cl *½ col legno tratto* - bowed partly by the hairs, partly by wood of the bow
- gett.* (gettato) a single, rapid bouncing bow action
gett. poi sost. a throw bow action transistioning smoothly to sustained pitch
-  Bartók pizz, m.49 (all strings completely choked, so that only a sharp 'rebound' attack is heard)
-  toneless 'air noise' - bow along the bridge at a sharp angle (all strings completely choked) dynamics in inverted commas signify the intensity of the physical gesture
-  dampen the strings

Tape

The pre-recorded tape parts (radio noise, radio interference (heavily muffled talking), and a single sine tone) should be played through an upward-facing loudspeaker, placed on the floor at the centre of the stage. The general amplitude should be sufficiently quiet, that - initially at least - the sound source is not obviously identifiable, but rather emerges as if from the acoustic resonances.

The tape generally can be considered a 'ground' or fundamental noise floor, which only occasionally actively obstructs or obscures the acoustic instrumental figures (care should be taken by a dedicated controller at a mixing desk to maintain this balance throughout).

The performers should aim for exact rhythmic synchronisation with the tape (materials are available from the composer).

Programme Note

秋の夜を 打ち 崩したる 咄かな

akino yowo uchikuzushitaru hanashi kana
- Matsuo Bashō (1694)

autumn night
struck-broken
talking

Bashō wrote this poem on the 21st of the ninth month (November 8), at a friend's house in Osaka, not long before his death. This piece is more or less an attempt to make some sense of it, in the form of a meditation on three images: the ephemerality of the moment, the inherent failure of communication, and how translation makes an art of deterioration.

for Lucy and Robert
destroyed autumns, talking

Ben Smith

meditativo preciso (shards, ephemeral shadows)

$\text{♩} = 38$

accel.

$\text{♩} = 48$

Cello

$\text{IV } \circ^{11}$

$\text{msp II } \circ^5$

II V

$\text{III } \frac{1}{2}\text{cl}$

ppz (poco retorico)

p possibile (eco adombrato)

ppp

ppp instabile

Piano

pp bianco eziolato

sempre una corda

$\frac{5}{4}$

$\frac{5}{4}$

p possibile (quasi inudibile)

quasi impercett.

ppz

$\frac{5}{4}$

$\frac{5}{4}$

p possibile

Red. poco accent.

rall.

$\text{♩} = 42$

Cello

$\text{IV } \circ^{11}$

II pizz.

III (arco) (non port.)

II clb

$\text{IV } \circ^7$

II

ppz (meno accent.) (poco marcato)

sppp

ppp

pp *poco ten.*

ppz

pp

p possibile

ppp

pp *più sfocato*

ppp

pp *doloroso*

pp - marc. sim. pizz. vib. largo

Red. poco accent.

Sost. Red.

pppp sempre tenebroso al fine

accel.

$\text{♩} = 48$

poco accel.

Cello

$\text{III } \circ^7$

II

$\text{III V } \circ^5$

mf IV clb (ord.)

II pizz.

III (arco)

$\text{III } \frac{1}{2}\text{cl}$

II

III

p. v.

p. v.

p. v.

ppp poco malsicuro

pp fragile

mfz (shining)

ppp *eco fragile*

mpz

mfz malsicuro

molto

mpz

spp

ppp *privato*

pp *più risoluto*

ppp

ppp *privato*

ppp *doloroso tremante*

ppp *dolciss.*

pp *sotto cello*

mp *quasi pesante*

Red.

subito poco meno mosso

♩ = 42

poco rall.

♩ = 38

accel.

subito n. v. (pst) → mst

spz quasi senz'altezza

ord. 1/2 cl III

7:4

sppp quasi elettronico

ppz

smp

pz (poco marcato)

spp

p.v. (flaut.)

II pizz.

III

mst n. v.

(eco)

3

II III

1/2 cl

ppz fragile

pp — pochiss.

pp poco ten.

ppp sfocato

pppp

(diffuso)

3

ppp

pz

mfz

(Ped.)

Sost. Ped.

Ped.

poco accent.

Sost. Ped.

Tape

radio noise

pppp [no fade in - synchronize with piano pedal release]

(radio noise cont.)

pst → psp

3

5:4

rall.

♩ = 42

accel.

♩ = 48

II ord. 5:4

III 5

1/2 cl gett.

II pizz. n. v.

III psp (poco flaut.)

clt

flaut. p. v.

p

(non cresc.)

pst

psp

II/III 3

(II) 5

pizz. vib. largo

pp fragile

mpz

p

mp

smpz

mfz

pp bianco (sotto cello)

mf brillante

pp

pppp

ppp sfocato

mfz

pp

pppp

(Ped.)

Sost. Ped.

Ped.

8

III ord. → psp

p.v.

clb

n. v.

gett. poi sost.

II

salt.

rall. poco a poco

p.v. (toneless)

clb

p

smpz

p (più risoluto)

poco

p

mpz 3

spp

pochiss.

"smp" (sempre non espress.)

ppp

7:4

5:4

7:6

ppz

pp

3

mpz più marc.

pp

pochiss.

pp marc. lontano

poco

p

ppp eco fragile

(Ped.)

Sost. Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

poco accent.

meditativo simile (canons pierce the surface)

♩ = 34

accel.

♩ = 48

*tuplet applies to upward stem only

31 (ord.) IV
 flaut. II, III, V, 11
 pzp
 mpz
 mp
 arco IV 7
 clb
 psp
 ppp
 sfz
 pp
 pzz - marc.
 III flaut. (n.v.)
 III
 p poco maliscuro
 ppz
 ppz
 ppz
 ppz
 mp
 p
 smfz
 pp diffuso
 (in rilievo)
 poco
 sPPP sfocato
 Ped.
 Sost. Ped.
 Sost. Ped.
 Ped.
 Sost. Ped.
 Ped.
 Sost. Ped.
 Ped.

radio noise cont.
crescendo poco a poco [bring fader very slowly up]

36
 flaut. II, III, 5
 p.v. (maliscuro)
 psp
 p
 mfz
 mp
 p
 p (poco lontano ma sonore)
 ppp
 mp
 p
 ppp
 p
 p (poco lontano ma sonore)
 ppp (eco)
 pp
 pz
 (dampen with finger)
 p (poco lontano ma sonore)
 ppp
 mp
 sPPP
 radio interference
 (radio noise)

poco accel. sub. ♩ = 48

rall. ♩ = 42

5

accel. ♩ = 48

rall. ♩ = 42

sf

sfz (biting)

*tuplets apply to downward stems only

41

(n.v.) → p.v. n.v. msp

III pizz. 5

II

II/III 4

II salt.

pizz. vib. largo

III pizz. 5

II 1/2 cl

ord

n.v.

IV pizz.

5:4 molto fragile morendo

psp

p

mp

pp

mfz

fz

p

più sonore

sfz

mfz

p

più p ma sonore

poco

molto

ff

poco lontano

pp

pp più lontano

quasi impercett.

ffz

ffz risonante

pppp

sine tone

Ped.

Sost. Ped.

Sost. Ped.

46

(hold as long as possible)

II

clb I II

IV pizz. 7

fz

p

molto

fz

molto

ffz

spp

mfz

(finger bounce on node)

spp

(release note with cello)

Sost. Ped.

Sost. Ped.

ffz risonante

pppp

pppp 8 8

ppp

pp

pp più lontano

quasi impercett.

ffz

ffz risonante

pppp

pppp 8 8

molto accel. ♩ = 52

molto rall. ♩ = 38

ppp

pp

pp più lontano

quasi impercett.

ffz

ffz risonante

pppp

pppp 8 8

51

pp assoluto non. espress

pp dolce

(pitch completely muted)

ppz

pp assoluto non. espress

rall.

ppp

ppp *lontano* *dolciss.*

ppppz

p possibile (segreto) *kl*

(hold bow in final position, utterly still)

(remain frozen over piano, utterly still)

ppp *lontano* *dolciss.*

ppppz

London - March 2017

Detailed description of the musical score: The score consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a treble clef staff (mst III n.v.) and a grand staff (ppz). The second system has a grand staff (ppz) and a bass clef staff (Red.). Measure 51 starts with a 7/8 time signature and a *pp dolce* dynamic. A bracket above the first staff indicates a 7:6 ratio. Measure 52 changes to 11/16 time and includes a *ppp* dynamic and a *pochiss.* marking. Measure 53 changes to 5/8 time and includes a *ppp* *lontano* *dolciss.* dynamic. Measure 54 changes to 7/8 time and includes a *ppppz* dynamic and a *p* possibile (segreto) *kl* marking. A *rall.* marking spans from the beginning of measure 52 to the end of measure 54. Performance instructions include '(pitch completely muted)', '(hold bow in final position, utterly still)', and '(remain frozen over piano, utterly still)'. The score concludes with a double bar line.