

# A PINT OF PLAIN

- for quintet and conductor with staff -

*in memory of Brian O'Nolan*

2012

Eric Skytterholm Egan





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Conductor

Flute

Piano

Percussion

Violin

Violoncello

Eric Skytterholm Egan

11 Minutter

When things go wrong and will not come right,  
Though you do the best you can,  
When Life looks black as the hour of night -  
A PINT OF PLAIN IS YOUR ONLY MAN.

Flann O'Brien - At Swim Two Birds

“A PINT OF PLAIN” was premiered by Curious Chamber Players at  
Kunstuniversität Graz on 19th February 2013.



## Amplification:

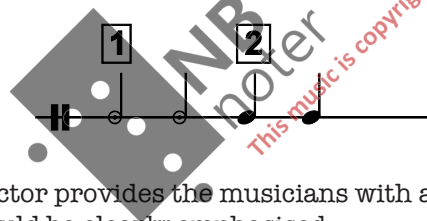
Ideally the Musical Hourglass (Sand Dispensing Instrument) should be amplified with contact microphones on each of the four objects it is played with. This will allow the technician to achieve a balanced sound. If the technician can be present to switch off the signal when the objects are picked up/put down this is the best option as some of the materials resonate better than others. If this is not possible to use contact microphones, a single directional microphone may be used. This should be placed so that it picks up the sound of the sand directly above where it is played. If the ensemble chooses this option, the percussionist must take great care to choose objects that resonate with approximately the same dynamic. It can often be the case that the cardboard is much louder than the other objects. This must be avoided!

## Performance Notes:

### Conductor:

Equipment: • 1 Large Staff, long enough to reach the floor from a standing position. Ideally this should be a thick, relatively straight branch. The most important thing is that the branch is dry and solid; it cannot have decomposed or the conductor risks it breaking during performance. It should reach the conductor to the head, or thereabouts, and should feel comfortable in his/her grip.

The conductor's part is notated throughout. It should be performed with the staff, in the manner of Lully. In some places, including the opening of the piece, the conductor beats silently [1], in others he/she must beat the stick against the floor [2] (if it is not wooden, a different wooden surface must be provided). This should be done convincingly, as if it is the normal way to conduct. The stick is held in one hand only; the conductor is free to use the other hand as he/she chooses to lead the ensemble.

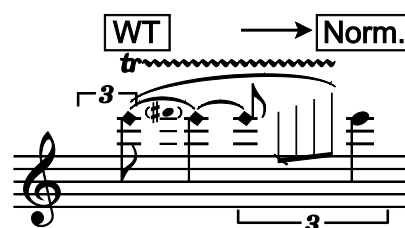


It is important that the conductor provides the musicians with a strict sense of metre; to this end, the downbeat for each bar should be clearly emphasised.

It is essential that a clear and sombre sense of ritual is manifested throughout. To set the right atmosphere it is essential that the composer enters the stage to applause after the ensemble is seated. He/she must bring the staff with them as if it were the standard conducting implement.

### Flute:

The opening of the piece is played without the head joint. The player holds the flute vertically and blows across it, as if playing a bottle. The piece employs Whistle Tone quite a lot. In section C, the player is asked to move from WT to Normal embouchure over whilst playing. This should result in sound moving through some of the higher harmonics of the initial pitch – this has been indicated by using grace notes without a head.



## Piano:

### Equipment:

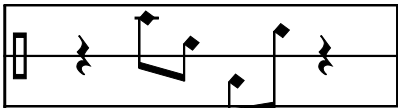
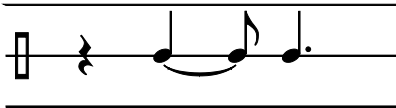
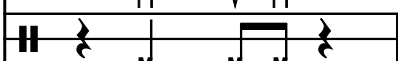
- 1 large Metal Bowl or Pot. This needs to be quite light and big enough to cover the strings between B3 and G4 but small enough to fit between the beams. It should have a sharp edge (i.e. it cannot have a curved edge or ledge). This is necessary in order to allow it to resonate when bowed.
- 1 Bow. A violin bow works well. This should be properly rosined.
- 1 Mbira or another type of thumb piano.
- [A] The piano is prepared by placing the bowl inside the piano so that it covers the strings from B3 to G4 (it may extend below, but not above this range.). If the bowl is too small, a metal tray or another type of metal object that exerts pressure equal to that of the bowl may be used.
- [B] The Mbira should be placed inside the piano, resting between the frame and the tuning pegs.



In addition to the regular 5-line staff, the piano part consists of two additional types of staves.

- [1] a large three line staff is used where the player uses the inside of the instrument. The Mbira gestures are performed gently and should follow the contours outlined on the page. The bottom and top lines represent the extremes of the instrument's range.
- [2] The pedal staff indicates where the pedals are used as musical material. The lowest line of the staff is used for the sustain pedal, the middle line for the third pedal and the top line for the una corda pedal. Up- and Down-bows are used to indicate engaging and releasing of the pedal. The dynamics indicate the degree of percussive attack on the damper. A loud attack should make the metal bowl resonate.

**Mbira**

<p><b>1</b>    <b>RH</b>    <b>LH</b>    <b>RH</b></p> 	<p><b>3</b>    <b>Bow Rim of Bowl</b></p> 
<p><b>2</b></p> 	

- [3] The bow is used on the rim of the bowl - it should be played by drawing the bow towards/away from the performer. It should be done loudly enough to allow the bowl to resonate

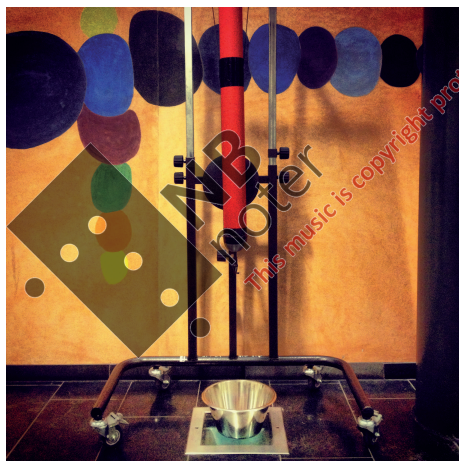
## Percussion:

Equipment: • 3 crotales of any pitch from the lower octave.

- 1 Bass Drum (large).
- 1 Musical Hourglass.
- 1 Tam-tam or Gong stand.
- Sand - enough for 15-20 minutes drainage from the Hourglass.
- 1 Large Metal Bowl.
- Plastic Brushes.
- Metal Brushes.
- 4 Sound Objects made off glass, metal, cardboard, and plastic.

The Musical Hourglass should be constructed from a long tube of any cardboard or plastic. This must be smooth and dry on the inside. A plastic or metal funnel should be taped to one end to ensure an even flow of sand. If the funnel is too wide, a second funnel or tube can be taped to the end of the first. To stop the flow of sand, a square piece of gaffer-tape should be used to cover the hole. The Hourglass should be suspended from the stand by a loop of string taped around the top end, and stabilised by a bracket or cushion. There must be enough room underneath for the percussionist to play the sand comfortably. In order to minimise spillage, it is a good idea to place the metal bowl on a box or stand.

The Sand must be dry and free of debris. Fine beach sand is ideal. To prepare it for use, the sand must be baked in an oven (at ca. 100-120° C) so that it is bone dry. After it has cooled it should then be sieved thoroughly to remove any extraneous matter such as grass or pieces of shell.



- [1] Crotales are notated at the top of the percussion staff. The three pitches, below, on, and above the top line, can be chosen by the performer. They are played with metal brushes throughout; the tremolos are achieved by rubbing the side of the brush against the edge of the disc.
- [2] The bass drum is notated on the bottom line of the staff. The end of the plastic brushes should be traced across the surface of the skin, in a circular pattern. The first symbol indicates which section of the skin should be used.
- [3] The sand is played by inserting the Sound Objects into the falling sand. The objects are arranged as follows: Plastic [P] Left Hand - Card [C] Right Hand - Metal [M] LH - Glass [G] RH. They should be inserted into the stream of sand for the durations notated [3]. The objects should all be held at the same time, in both hands; stems down are used for Left Hand objects, stems up indicate Right Hand objects.

1 (Metal Brushes)

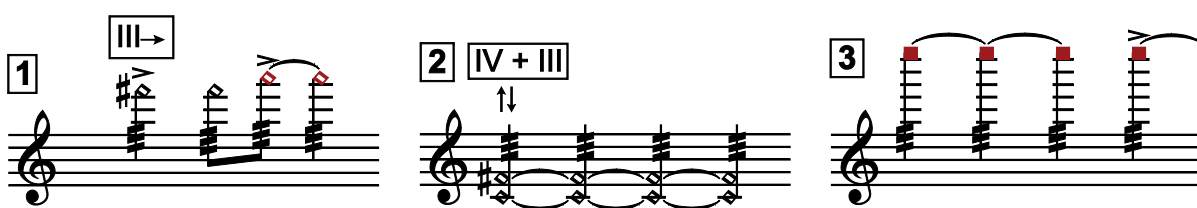
2 Plastic Brushes

3 P C M G

## Violin:

For the duration of the piece, the performer plays harmonics or pitched noise, without pressing the string down against the fingerboard

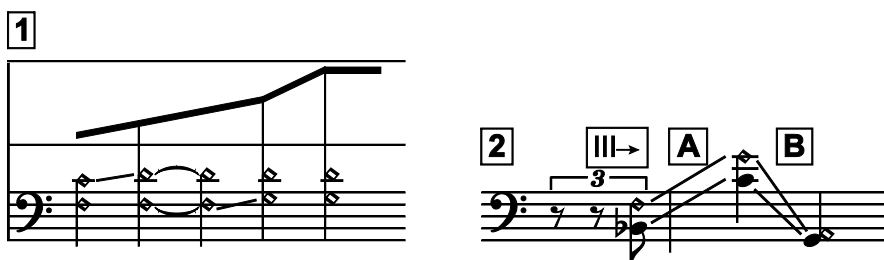
- [1] The finger placement and string number is notated and should be followed throughout.
- [2] The vertical tremolos are performed by moving the bow up and down the string, without using too much pressure, and within a relatively small range, as that covered by poco sul ponticello to poco sul tasto.
- [3] Bars 141-144 should be played by placing a finger on the string directly beneath the bow (normal bow placement) and bowing on top of it. This should produce more noise than pitch.



## Cello:

Like the violin, the cello part mostly consists of sounds produced without pressing the strings against the fingerboard. For a lot of the piece, the cello part is written on two staves.

- [1] The top staff indicates bow placement: the top line is the bridge, the bottom line is the finger-placement in the LH. Consequently, if the thick line is near the top of the staff, the bow should be near the bridge – if it is near the bottom, it should be close to your left hand. In places, the player is asked to place two fingers on the same string. This will result in a much less pitched sound. When the bow-direction is indicated, the sound should move from noise to occasional (unpredictable) pitches.
- [2] There are two different types of artificial harmonic glissandi in the piece:
  - [A] Fixed Interval Glissandi, where the interval should remain the same (the distance between the fingers will increase and decrease).
  - [B] Fixed Distance Glissandi, where the distance between the fingers is constant, and the sounding harmonics change.





# A PINT OF PLAIN

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Score

Eric Skytterholm Egan

$\text{♩} = 60$  Somber - Seriously Throughout

Cond.  $\text{♩} = 60$  4/4  
*silently (do not touch the ground)*

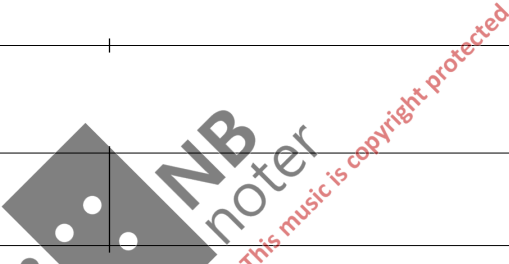
Fl.  $\text{♩} = 60$  4/4  
 With Head Joint Removed

Pno.  $\text{♩} = 60$  4/4  
 Mbira and Metal Bowl Staff  
 With Metal Bowl on Strings  
 Pedal Staff

Perc.  $\text{♩} = 60$  4/4  
 Crotales  
 Hourglass  
 Bass Drum

Vln.  $\text{♩} = 60$  4/4

Vc.  $\text{♩} = 60$  4/4  
 Bow Placement Staff



Cond.  $\text{♩} = 60$  4/4

Fl.

Pno.

Perc.  $\text{♩} = 60$  4/4  
 Release Sand Valve

Vln.

Vc.

A1

7

Cond.

Fl. *Play Vertically, Without Head Joint*

Pno. Mbira RH LH RH LH

Perc. Crotales (Metal Brushes)

Vln. CLT III→

Vc. (Two Fingers on IV) pizz. Aroco Bow Placement

*mp mf mp mf mp*

*mf*

*mp*

*mf*

*mp*

*mf*

*mp*

*mf*

10

Cond.

Fl.

Pno. RH LH RH

Perc. III ped. v

Vln. CLT IV→

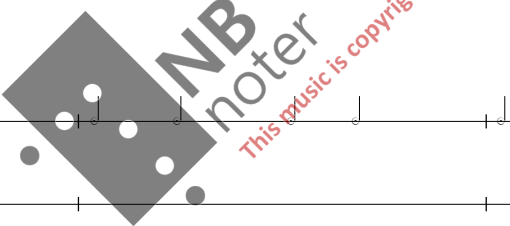
Vc. pizz.

*mp p mp mf*

*p mp p*

*p mp*

*p pp mp*



15

Cond.

Fl.

Pno.

Perc.

Vln.

Vc.

*mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

*mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

*mf* *pp* *mf*

*mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mp* *f* *mp*

RH LH RH LH RH LH RH LH

III CLT IV

16

Cond.

Fl.

Pno.

Perc.

Vln.

Vc.

*mp* *mf* *mp* *f* *mf*

*mf* *mp*

*p* *mf* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp*

*mp* *pp* *mf* *p*

*mp* *mf* *p* *pp*

RH LH RH LH RH LH RH LH

III

19

Cond.  $\frac{3}{4}$

Fl. *mf* *f* *mp*

Pno. *mp* *mf* (RH LH RH) (RH LH RH)

Perc. *mf* *pp*

Vln. *ppp* *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* (CLT + a little hair) (II-)  $8^{va}$

Vc. *mf* (pizz.)

22

Cond.  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

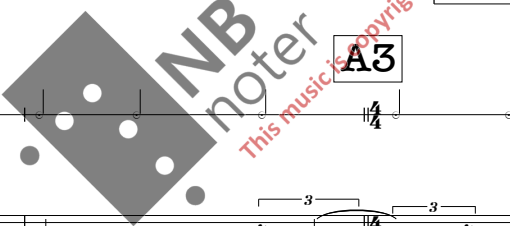
Fl. *mf* *f* *p* *mp* *mf* *mp* *f* *mf* (trill) (3) (3) (3) (trill)

Pno. *mp* *mp* *mf* *mp* (RH LH) (RH LH)

Perc. *mp* (3)

Vln. *p* *mf* (CLT) (III-)

Vc. *mp* *mf* (Arco) (5) (5)



25

Cond.

Fl.

Pno.

Perc.

Vln.

Vc.

*CLT + a little hair*

*(gliss.)*

*p*, *mp*, *mf*, *f*, *pp*

28

Cond.

Fl.

Pno.

Perc.

Vln.

Vc.

*LH*, *RH*, *LH*

*CLT*, *III*

*p*, *mp*, *mf*, *f*, *ppp*

A4

31

Cond.  

Fl. 

Pno. 

Perc. 

Vln. 

Vc. 

34

Cond.  

Fl. 

Pno. 

Perc. 

Vln. 

Vc. 

37

Cond.

Fl.

Pno.

Perc.

Vln.

Vc.

sim.

mp

mf

mp

5

3

3

3

3

3

mp

mf

mp

p

III

mp

40

Cond.

Fl.

Pno.

Perc.

Vln.

Vc.

3

3

3

3

tr

3

mp

mf

mp

f

mf

3

p

mf

5

3

mp

3

mp

CLT + a little hair

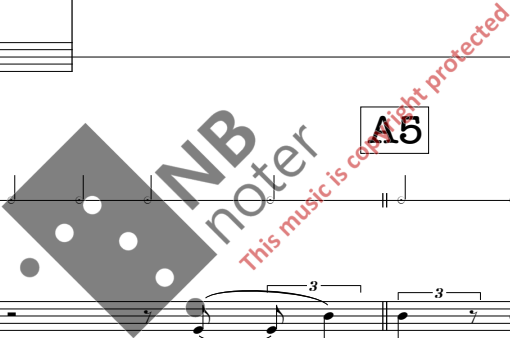
III+

II+

Arco

mp

mf



A6

43

Cond. *pp*

Fl. *mp* *mf* *mp* *f* *mf*

Pno. *mp* *mf* *f*

Perc. *mf* *p* *mp* *mf*

Vln. *p* *f* *mp* *f* *mf*

Vc. *p* *pp* *mp* *f*

RH LH RH LH

Arco

46

Cond. *mp* *f* *p*

Fl. *Insert Head Joint*

Pno. *mp* *mf*

Perc. *f* *p* *mp*

Vln. *mp* *f* *mp*

Vc. *p* *pp*



B1

49

Cond. *mf mp mf mp mf mp*

Fl. **Whistle Tone (WT)** *mp f poss. mp* **Norm.** *mf p*

Pno. *mp mf mp*

Perc. **Bass Drum**  
**Edge of Brush (Plastic Brushes)**

Vln. **III + IV** **CLT - Brush String Vertically with Bow - Fast** *p mp mf mp*

Vc. **III -** **CLT - a Little Hair** *mp f mp f mp* **Slow Wide Vibrato** *mf*

52

Cond. *mf mp mf mp mf mp*

Fl.

Pno. **Bow Rim of Bowl** *mf*

Perc.

Vln. **III+IV** **Brush - CLT+ a Little Hair** *mp f mp mf mp*

Vc. *mp f mp mf p*

B2

55 >

Cond.  $f$   $mp$   $mf$   $mp$   $mf$   $mp$

Fl. **WT**  $mp$   $f$  *poss.*  $mp$  **Norm.**  $mf$   $p$

Pno.  $mp$   $mf$   $mp$

Perc.

Vln. **III + IV** **CLT + a Little Hair**  $p$   $mp$   $mf$   $mp-$

Vc. **III → sim.**  $mp$   $f$   $mp$   $f$   $mp$

B3

58 >

Cond.  $mf$   $mp$   $mf$   $mp$   $mf$   $mp$   $f$

Fl. **WT**  $mp$   $f$  *poss.*  $mp$  **Norm.**  $mf$   $mp$   $f$  **in one breath!**

Pno.  $mf$   $mp$   $mp$   $f$   $mp$   $f$   $mp$

Perc.

Vln. **IV + III** **sim.**  $p$   $mp$   $mf$   $mp-$

Vc. **III → sim.**  $mp$   $f$   $mp$   $f$   $mp$

*Ped. (silent)*

B4

61

Cond.  $\frac{4}{4}$  *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Fl. *mp* *f poss.* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *mf*

Pno. *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Perc.

Vln. *p* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Vc. *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *mf*

WT

sim.

(Fixed Distance Gliss)

64

Cond. *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Fl. *mf* *mp* *mf* *mf* *mf*

Pno. *p* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Perc.

Vln.

Vc. *mp* *mf*

Slow Gliss to Bow

67

Cond. *mf mp mf mp mf mp silently*

Fl. *mp mf mf*

Pno.

Perc.

Vln.

Vc.

70

Cond. *mf*

Fl. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

Perc.

Vln. *mp mf*

Vc. *p mp*

CLT + a Little Hair

III+IV

Norm.

II→

75

Cond. *p* *silently* *mf*

Fl. *mf* WT

Pno. LH *mp* RH *p* *mf* *mf* *mf* *p* *mf*

Perc. *mf*

Vln. Norm. III+IV *p* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *p* II→ III+IV

Vc. Both on II *mf* *fp* *mf* *p*

76

Cond. *silently*

Fl. *p* *mf* *mf* *f* *fp* WT Norm.

Pno. *mf* *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Perc. *p* C P C

Vln. IV→ *mf* *mp* Gliss. to Bow

Vc. *mp* *mf* *p* *pp*

79

Cond.

Fl.

Pno.

Perc.

Vln.

Vc.

Gliss. as Far as You Can Stretch

82

Cond.

Fl.

Pno.

Perc.

Vln.

Vc.



85

Cond.

Fl.

Pno.

Perc.

Vln.

Vc.

88

Cond.

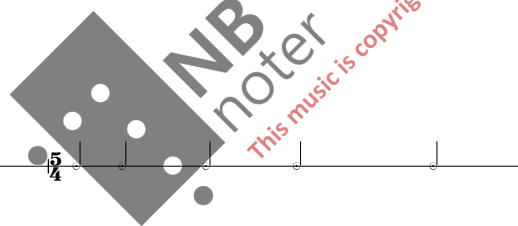
Fl.

Pno.

Perc.

Vln.

Vc.



91

Cond.  $\text{H } \frac{4}{4}$

Fl.  $\text{H } \frac{4}{4}$

Pno.  $\text{H } \frac{4}{4}$

Perc.  $\text{H } \frac{4}{4}$

Vln.  $\text{H } \frac{4}{4}$

Vc.  $\text{H } \frac{4}{4}$

94

Cond.  $\text{H } \frac{4}{4}$

Fl.  $\text{H } \frac{4}{4}$

Pno.  $\text{H } \frac{4}{4}$

Perc.  $\text{H } \frac{4}{4}$

Vln.  $\text{H } \frac{4}{4}$

Vc.  $\text{H } \frac{4}{4}$



97

Cond.  $\text{H } \frac{7}{8}$  | 6 | 15 | 16

Fl.  $\text{H } \frac{7}{8}$  | *p* | *mp* | *f* | *mp* | 16

Pno.  $\text{H } \frac{7}{8}$  | *mf* | *f* | *mf* | *p* | 16

Perc.  $\frac{7}{8}$  | G P | C P C | M | C M C P G | 16

Vln.  $\text{H } \frac{7}{8}$  | *f* | *mf* < *f* | *p* | *f* | *mf* < *f* | *mf*- | 16

Vc.  $\text{H } \frac{7}{8}$  | *f* | *mf* < *f* > *mf* | *f* | *mp* | *mf* | 16

Gliss. to the Bow

101

Cond.  $\text{H } \frac{16}{8}$  | 15 | 16

Fl.  $\text{H } \frac{16}{8}$  | *mp* | *mf* < *f* | 16

Pno.  $\text{H } \frac{16}{8}$  | *mp* | *mf* | *mf* | 16

Perc.  $\frac{16}{8}$  | P G M G P C | M G | C G | M G M G P | 16

Vln.  $\text{H } \frac{16}{8}$  | *f* | *mf* < *f* | *mp* | *p* | *pp* | 16

Vc.  $\text{H } \frac{16}{8}$  | *mp* | *f* > *mp* < *f* | *mf* | *mp* | 16

104

Cond.  $\text{H } \frac{11}{16}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{11}{16}$

Fl. *mf*  $\rightarrow$  *f* *mf* *f*

Pno. *mf*

Perc. C M C M P G P C

Vln. *mf* *p* *mp*

Vc. (Two Fingers on G String) *p* *pp*

107

Cond.  $\text{H } \frac{15}{16}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{15}{16}$

Fl. *mf* *mp* *mf* *f*

Pno. *mf* *f* *mf* *pp*

Perc. G C P C M G M C P G M P C G M C P M C P C

Vln. *p* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

Vc. *p* *mp* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

110

Cond. *f* *mf* *f* *f* *mf*

Fl. *mp* < *mf* *f*

Pno. *mf* *f*

Perc. M C P C

Vln. *f* *mf* *f*

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

113

Cond. *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

Fl. *mf* *f*

Pno. *mf* *f* *mf*

Perc. M C P C G M C

Vln. *f* *mf* *f* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

Vc. *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mp* *mf* *mp*

116

Cond. *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

Fl. *mp* < *mf* < *f*

Pno. *mf* *f* *mp* *mf*

Perc. [M] [C] [M] [C]

Vln. *f*

Vc. *mf* *f* *p* *mf*

[RH] [Bow Rim of Bowl]

119

Cond. *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

Fl. *mf* < *f* *mf* < *f*

Pno. *mf* *f*

Perc. [M] [C] [P] [C] [M] [C] [P] [C]

Vln. *f* *mf* < *f*

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

122

Cond. *f* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

Fl. *mf*

Pno. *mp*

Perc. [G]

Vln. *mp* *f*

Vc. *p* *f*

125

Cond. *f* *p* *mp* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

Fl. *mf* *f*

Pno. *mf* *mf* *f*

Perc. [P] [M] [C] [P] [C]

Vln. *f* *mf* *f*

Vln. *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

128

Cond. *silently* *mf* *p* *mf* *f*

Fl. *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

Pno. *pp* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

Perc. [P] [C] [P] [C] [P] [C]

Vln. *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

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

131

Cond. *silently*

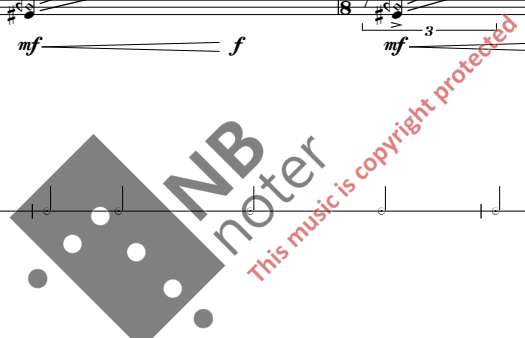
Fl. Whistle Tone *mp*

Pno. [RH] [LH] [RH] [LH] *mf*

Perc. [G] [M] [P] [C]

Vln.

Vc. *mp* *p*



134

Cond.

Fl. *mf* *mp* *p* *mf* *mp*

Vln. RH LH

Perc. M C G C

Vln. CLT + a little hair I II III *mp* *mp*

Vc. Stretch as Wide as Possible → Move bow onto Bridge *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *mp*

137

Cond.

Fl. With some Residual Air (Whispery Sound) *p* *mf*

Vln. RH Bow Rim of Bowl *p* *mp* *p* *p*

Perc. G M P G M G C

Vln. IV → *p* *mp* *pp* *p*

Vc. *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

140

Cond.

Fl.

Pno.

Perc.

Vln.

Vc.

Annotations: [C], [P], [C], [Gliss to Bow], [Thumb Dampens String Under Bow], [CLT]

Repeat until the Material Becomes Tense and the Atmosphere Electric (ca. 8 - 15 times)

143

Cond.

Fl.

Pno.

Perc.

Vln.

Vc.

Annotations: [Crotales (Metal Brushes)], [III+IV], [SLUTT]

Remain in downward position.



