

Håkon Thelin

Solen

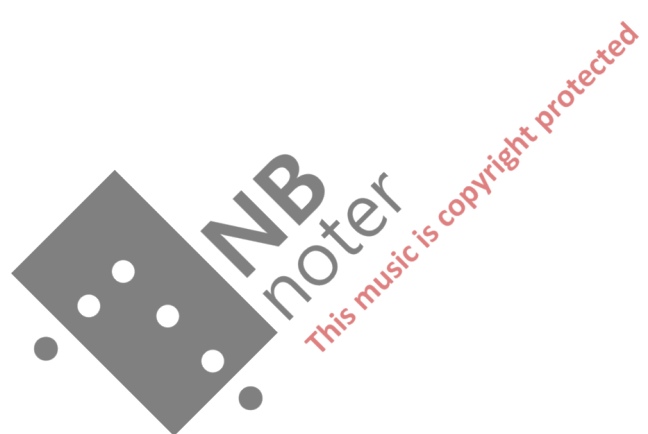
for string quartet

2013



Commisioned by Faust Quartet. Supported by Arts Council Norway.

First performed by Faust Quartet at the Munch Museum, Oslo, August 2013.



Solen

The string quartet "Solen" (The Sun) is inspired by Edvard Munch's motif of the same name. Rising from the coastline of Kragerø, on Norway's south coast, Munch's image of the blazing sun was intended to communicate both *"the specifically Norwegian, and the universally human"*. The image marks an approach to more popular themes in Munch's art, while it probably also illustrates his own awakening from the dark, and very grim expressionistic style that had preoccupied most of his earlier works. The compelling image of the sun, and Munch's approach to a more popular style, led me to the poem "Die Sonne" by the German writer, dramaturge, Dadaist (etc.) Hugo Ball. The poems poetic everyday description of the sun rays neatly into what I envision as Munch's own experience of life when he painted "Solen". In the string quartet, featured words and phrases from the poem form the basis for rhythmic patterns, which, combined with construction details from a medieval Norwegian stave church, shape the structure of the piece. Ball's text is further used for the alteration of pitch sequences that originates from a traditional Norwegian *slått* called "Nordfjordhallingen" (from the county of Sogn og Fjordane). Some of the words also appear as timbral melodies, sung faintly by the musicians. In contrast to the transformed (and unrecognizable) "Nordfjordhallingen", the 1.violin emerge in an act of a traditional fiddler, playing an approximate rendition of "Kjempehallingen", also a traditional *slått*, but from the county of Telemark. Where the musicians in the first part of the piece perform solo and in groups of two, the quartet in the second part emerges as a more homogeneous group. Again, the structural sequence is composed on the basis of "Nordfjordhallingen", but this time as a continuous move towards a collectively united sound inspired by spectralism and timbral overtone structures.

Nature is viewed in the quartet in the context of my personal musical building material, which in particular consists of flageolets (overtones), and in the creation of narrative and rhapsodic phrases formed through an interchanging of ordinary tones and flageolets. The real sounds are consistent and have a distinct presence, flageolets, instead, are gentle and more distant, almost like memories or echoes of the instruments' resonance. But the overtones can also be experienced as sparkling and shiny melodies: They may flash as the reflection of light in the water, or they may, as in the string quartets coda, be the sound of the intense and glowing surface of the sun. Furthermore, flageolet "squeaks" are easily associated to bird songs or calls.

"Solen" is part of a project where I through contemporary music work with reflections on folk culture. I wish to examine how concepts that define folk culture also pass into, and possibly characterises elements of contemporary art music. In my compositions, I try to transmit aesthetic and practical characteristics of folk culture both to the formal structure of the piece and to the sounds themselves. I am also experimenting with specific conceptual subjects such as the adaptation of storytelling and performance characteristics in folk music.

Håkon Thelin

"Solen" is composed with support from the Arts Council Norway and Norsk Komponistforening



KULTURRÅDET
Arts Council
Norway

NORSK
KOMPONIST
FORENING

Die Sonne (Hugo Ball)

Zwischen meinen Augenlidern fährt ein Kinderwagen.
Zwischen meinen Augenlidern geht ein Mann mit einem Pudel.
Eine Baumgruppe wird zum Schlangenbündel und zischt in den Himmel.
Ein Stein hält eine Rede. Bäume in Grünbrand. Fliehende Inseln.
Schwanken und Muschelgeklingel und Fischkopf wie auf dem Meeresboden.

Meine Beine strecken sich aus bis zum Horizont. Eine Hofkutsche knackt
Drüber weg. Meine Stiefel ragen am Horizont empor wie die Türme einer
Versinkenden Stadt. Ich bin der Riese Goliath. Ich verdaue Ziegenkäse.
Ich bin ein Mammuthkälbchen. Grüne Grasigel schnüffeln an mir.
Gras spannt grüne Säbel und Brücken und Regenbögen über meinen Bauch.

Meine Ohren sind rosa Riesenmuscheln, ganz offen. Mein Körper schwillt an
Von Geräuschen, die sich gefangen haben darin.
Ich höre das Meckern
Des großen Pan. Ich höre die zinnoberrote Musik der Sonne. Sie steht
Links oben. Zinnoberrot sprühen die Fetzen hinaus in die Weltnacht.
Wenn sie herunterfällt, zerquetscht sie die Stadt und die Kirchtürme
Und alle Vorgärten voll Krokus und Hyazinthen, und wird einen Schall geben
Wie Blech von Kindertrompeten.

Aber es ist in der Luft ein Gegeneinanderwehen von Purpur und Eigelb
Und Flaschengrün: Schaukeln, die eine orangene Faust festhält an langen Fäden,
Und ist ein Singen von Vogelhälsen, die über die Zweige hüpfen.
Ein sehr zartes Gestänge von Kinderfahnen.

Morgen wird man die Sonne auf einen großrädigen Wagen laden
Und in die Kunsthandlung Caspari fahren. Ein vielköpfiger Neger
Mit wulstigem Nacken, Blähnase und breitem Schritt wird fünfzig weiß-
Juckende Esel halten, die vor den Wagen gespannt sind beim Pyramidenbau.

Ich kann mich nicht halten: Ich bin voller Seligkeit. Die Fensterkreuze
Zerplatzen. Ein Kinderfräulein hängt bis zum Nabel aus einem Fenster heraus.
Ich kann mir nicht helfen: Die Dome zerplatzen mit Orgelfugen. Ich will
Eine neue Sonne schaffen. Ich will zwei gegeneinanderschlagen
Wie Zymbeln, und meiner Dame die Hand hinreichen. Wir werden entschweben
In einer violetten Sänfte über die Dächer eurer
Hellgelben Stadt wie Lampenschirme aus Seidenpapier im Zugwind.

Solen - explanation of playing techniques

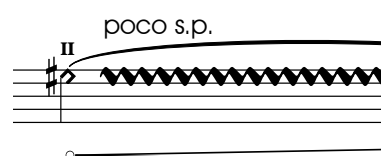
All instruments:



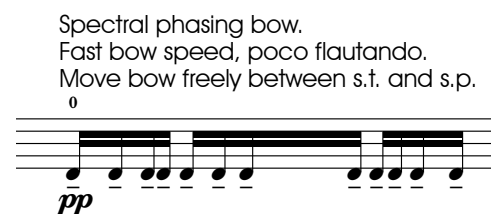
Grace notes with oblique stroke through the stem are played **ON** the beat.



Grace notes without oblique through the stem are played **BEFORE** the beat.



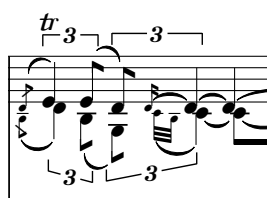
Make a wide and very quick hand shake around the notated harmonic to bring out a shimmering sound.
In the “Coda”, exaggerate the effect more than in the other parts of the piece, with an even wider and more intense shake, and with extreme sul ponticello bow placement.



Spectral phasing bow.
Fast bow speed, poco flautando.
Move bow freely between s.f. and s.p.

Spectral phasing bow. The ultimate sounding result should be two consecutive attacks for each bow shift. Play with very light pressure and use as much as possible of the length of the bow for each stroke.

Violin 1:



As shown in the example, there are 3 types of trill-ornaments for violin 1 when playing the tune “Kjempehallingen”: grace notes played **BEFORE** the beat, normal trill, and grace notes played **ON** the beat. These ornaments as well as the tune as a whole, should be interpreted freely and in the style of Norwegian folk music.

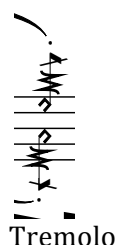
Youtube (Nordfjordhallingen): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQyr5DHidIY>

Deezer (Kjempehallingen): <http://www.deezer.com/de/track/26418341>

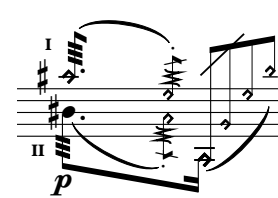
Violin 2 and viola:



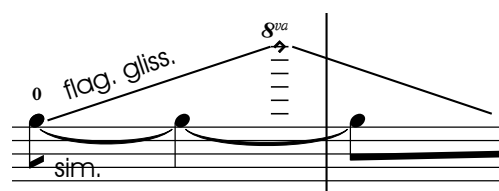
Jeté à la Salvatore Sciarrino.
Let the bow bounce very quickly and controlled on the strings.



Tremolo



Youtube example of the above figure:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6m7rDBv-8Tw>
(from S. Sciarrino “Sei Capricci”. These particular techniques occur at the end of the 6th movement)



Vla: Open string harmonics glissando.

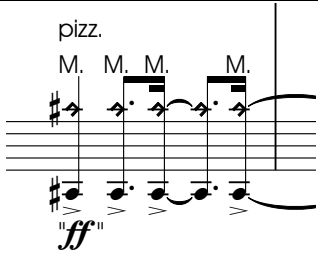


Move the finger in a quick and sweeping fashion in the indicated area between the two harmonics. The sound should be vivid and sparkling and full of overtones.



Vla: Left-hand pizzicato (played mostly on open strings) with col legno battuto on damped IV string (play close to the frog for better control) moving slowly between sul ponticello and sul tasto.

Cello:



Right hand pizzicato multiphonics. Place the right hand thumb lightly on the side of the harmonic (harmonics from the 3rd-6th partial are being used) and pluck energetically with index finger (play as loud as possible). Release the thumb from the string as the string is plucked. The result should be a complex sound of multiple overtones.



Hit the string on the indicated note (left-hand pizzicato) and immediately after play arco multiphonics on the notated harmonic node. For a stable multiphonics, play with constant bow pressure and speed (relatively high pressure and slow speed) and experiment in finding the precise bow position for each multiphonics.

Remark to the CODA: here, the sound is generally intended to be extremely shimmering and bright, almost like the surface of the sun. Use extreme dynamics, hand shake and sul ponticello bow placement to bring out the sparkling harmonics.



Solen

1. Kjempehallingen

4/4 $\text{♩} = 57$

sub. meno mosso sub. Adpo

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

mf *p sub.* *mf*

pp *s.p.* *ord.* *t*

p *Sing** *pp*

Zwi - schen

mf *p sub. 3* *mf*

p *Sing** *pp*

Zwi - schen

Underlying rhythmic structure

4 3 4 3 2

4

sub. meno mosso

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

gliss.

tr.

p

f

pp

s.p. → ord.

tr.

aus

Ho-ri-zont

3 6 3 5 3 16 3 3

8

sub. Atpo

Vln. 1

ord. tr

Vln. 2

pizz. arco s.p. ord. tr

(tr)

(tr)

Vla.

ord. tr

pizz. arco s.p. ord. tr

(tr)

(tr)

Vc.

ord. tr

pizz. arco s.p. ord. tr

(tr)

(tr)

Zie - gen - kä - se

Rie - sen - mu - scheln

Zie - gen - kä - se

Rie - sen - mu - scheln

5 5

5 5

* Singing is optional throughout

12 **15**
16 (4+4+4+3) rit. **4**
4

Vln. 1 *gliss.*

Vln. 2 *mf* 3

Vla.

Vc. *tr* IV *mf* 3

3 13 11 3

4
4 Atpo

Vln. 1 *p* *poco s.p.* *p* *gliss.* *p*

Vln. 2 *p* *tr* *p* *gliss.* *p*

Vla. *p* *gliss.* *p*

Vc. *p* *tr* *p* *gliss.* *p*

4 3 4 3 2 3 6 3 5

16 sub. meno mosso

Vln. 1 *tr* *gliss.* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

Vln. 2 *tr* *gliss.* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

Vla. *ppp* *aus* *Ho - ri - zont* *Zie - gen - kä - se*

Vc. *tr* *gliss.* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

3 16 3

29

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

mp

mp

pp

gliss.

3 4 5 6 7 13

31

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

gliss.

p

mp

sim.

11 3 3 5 3

33

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

gliss.

p

mp

sim.

3 7 3 6 3 4 3 3

35

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

gliss.

p

f

pp

mf

sub. meno mosso

arco s.p. → ord. tr

pizz.

Go - li - ath Ra - gen

10 5 5 2

42 sub. meno mosso sub. Atto

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Au - gen - li - dern

Au - gen - li - dern

This music is copyright protected

[illegible]

[illegible]

sub. Atpo

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

61

mf

tr

gliss.

mp

sim.

sim.

sim.

6 8 3 6 5 6

sub. meno mosso

sub. Atpo

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

63

pp

pizz.

arco s.p.

ord. tr

f

pp

mf

ppp

pp

f

pp

mf

ein

O - ran

ge - ne

poco s.p.

ein

O - ran -

ge - ne

3 3 3 4 3 6 3

sub. meno mosso

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

66

pp

pizz.

arco s.p.

ord. tr

f

pp

f

pp

f

pp

f

pp

Viel - kö - pfi - ger

Ju - cken - de

Men - ge - blut -

Viel - kö - pfi - ger

Ju - cken - de

Men - ge - blut -

5

70

sub. Atpo

sub. meno mosso

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

bun - - ten

Rips - schlei - fen - kra -

mf *f* *pp*

pizz. arco s.p. ord. tr.

9 3

73

sub. Atpo

(4th string scordatura)

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

wa - - tte

wa - - tte

mf *poco f*

poco s.p. *sim.*

6 9 5 3 4 4

76

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

4 5 3 5 4 9 6

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

4/4

4

13

16

(4+4+5)

mp

sfz

sim.

mf

ppp

p

arco

s.p.

ord.

(r.f)

Violin 1 (Vln. 1) and Violin 2 (Vln. 2) parts are shown in treble clef. Viola (Vla.) is in alto clef. Violoncello (Vc.) is in bass clef, with left-hand (l.h.) and right-hand (r.h.) parts indicated. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, glissandos, trills, and dynamic markings like 'molto' and 'mp'.

Violin 1 (Vln. 1) starts at measure 30 with a melody in the treble clef, marked *mp*. It includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 31 and a half note in measure 32. The second system continues the melody, marked *mf sub.* and *molto*.

Violin 2 (Vln. 2) starts at measure 30 with a melody in the treble clef, marked *molto*. It includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 31 and a half note in measure 32. The second system continues the melody, marked *mf sub.* and *molto*.

Viola (Vla.) starts at measure 30 with a melody in the alto clef, marked *molto*. It includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 31 and a half note in measure 32. The second system continues the melody, marked *mf sub.* and *molto*.

Violoncello (Vc.) starts at measure 30 with a melody in the bass clef, marked *mp*. It includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 31 and a half note in measure 32. The second system continues the melody, marked *mf sub.* and *molto*.

The score is divided into two systems. The first system starts at measure 30 and ends at measure 41. The second system starts at measure 42 and ends at measure 53. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamics. A large watermark 'noter' is visible across the center of the page.

[illegible]

4/4 38

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

17/16 (5+4+4+4)

13/16

tr

pizz.

arco s.p.

f

mp

cl.b. (close to frog)

s.p.

cl.b.

s.t.

IV (damped)

(move bow slowly between s.p. and s.t.)

Violin 1 (Vln. 1) and Violin 2 (Vln. 2) staves are shown. The Viola (Vla.) and Violoncello (Vc.) staves are also present. The score is for the first system of 'The Great Wall of China' by John Williams. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into four measures. Measure 1 (47) has a 3/4 time signature and a 'ord.' marking. Measure 2 (13) has a 13/16 time signature and a 'poco s.p.' marking. Measure 3 (16) has a 4/4 time signature and a 'ord.' marking. Measure 4 (3) has a 3/4 time signature. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, trills, triplets, and dynamic markings like 'p' and 'mp'. There are also performance instructions like 's.p.' and 's.t.'.

51 **3/4** **4/4** **13/16** $(4+4+5)$ $(5+4+4)$

sempre marcato

Vln. 1 *mp* *f* *mp* *f*

Vln. 2 *mp* *f* *mp* *f*

Vla. *s.p.* *arco* *p* *mp* *p*

Vc. *f* *p*

56 $(4+4+5)$ $(5+4+4)$ **5/8** $(2+3)$ $(3+2)$ $(2+3)$ $(3+2)$ **4/4**

Vln. 1 *p* *f* *mp* *p*

Vln. 2 *p* *f* *mp* *p*

Vla. *mp* *f* *p* *f*

Vc. *f* *mp* *p*

62 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **5/8** $(2+3)$

CODA *Alto* $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 60$

molto rit.

Vln. 1 *p* *f* *p* *poco s.p.*

Vln. 2 *f* *p* *poco s.p.*

Vla. *mp* *f* *mp* *p* *ord.* *poco s.p.*

Vc. *f* *mp* *p* *pizz.* *M. M. M. M.* *arco* *molto s.p.* *f*

68 **13/16** $(4+4+5)$ **4/4**

Vln. 1 *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr*

Vln. 2 *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr*

Vla. *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr*

Vc. *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr*

[illegible]

 r_{eff}

108

5 (2+3)

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

l.h.

Vc.

r.h.

gliss.

6

tr

3

mp

II

III

IV

M.

112

4

3

4

Fine

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

l.h.

Vc.

r.h.

gliss.

8

p

5

p

IV

II

MP

M.

MP

M.