

Impulse | Drag

For Violoncello and Harp

William Bolles-Beaven

Notes on the performance of *Impulse | Drag*:

Impulse | Drag was written for Jordan Bartow and Alyson Kanne, whom I thank for their friendship, humor, and daring.

My heartfelt thanks to Jordan Bartow for commissioning this work.

Instrumentation:

– Violoncello, scordatura



– Prepared Harp

In this score the violoncello part is written as it sounds.

Program Note:

Impulse | Drag explores different degrees of having or ceding control. Spatial notation, improvisation, arbitrary systems, and random numbers all play a role in this exploration.

Duration: ca. 9'15''

Explanation of Notations

General:

Coordination:

The first three minutes of music must be coordinated via stopwatch. Each player should have their own and both players should take great care to start their stopwatches at the same time.

After these three minutes, it is recommended that the stopwatch remains on to help measure the duration of other sections of the piece. Here are two possible ways to use the stopwatch:

Option 1)

After running through the piece several times, the players may find that their timing is rather consistent. In this scenario, the players can mark start and end times for each section and continue to follow the stopwatch.

Option 2)

After running the timed sections several times with a stopwatch, one player can be in charge of cueing them based on their own internal clock. The stopwatch can then serve as a supplement, particularly for the final improvisation.

Both options interact with the themes of the piece and as such, the players are encouraged to try both methods.

Time Signatures:

$\frac{5}{1''}$ $\frac{3}{1''}$ $\frac{2}{1''}$ These time signatures last five, three, and two seconds respectively. They are used for spatial notation. Beamed notes in these contexts are meant to show proportions.

$\frac{6}{20}$ This time signature lasts six quintuplet-sixteenths. It can be thought of as an extended tuplet, metric modulation, or a tempo change to $\bullet = 75$.

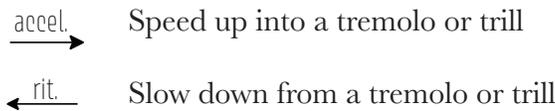
For Both Instruments:

Non-traditional Noteheads in Both Parts:

- ◦ Stemless Noteheads show relative durations of short and long. Beamed notes in the context of stemless noteheads are used to show rhythmic proportions.
- ✓ Beam Noteheads are used to indicate dragging actions with a part of the hand that is locally specified.
- × ⊗ x Noteheads are used to indicate percussive actions with a part of the hand that is locally specified.

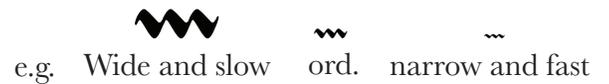
Transitions to and from Trills and Tremolos:

Trills and tremolos can be sped up into and slowed down from.



Vibrato:

The width and speed of vibrato is shown graphically.



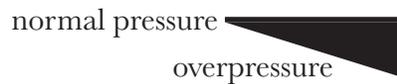
For the Violoncello:

Accidentals:

- Sharp #
- Quarter-sharp †
- Natural ♮
- Quarter-flat ♭
- Flat ♭

Bowing:

m.s.t. – molto sul tasto, m.s.p – molto sul ponticello | canceled by ord. – ordinario
 c.l.t. – col legno tratto, c.l.b. – col legno battuto | canceled by (arco) norm. – (arco) normale



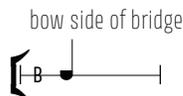
\updownarrow Vertical bowing tremolo on string(s) indicated

Non-traditional Noteheads, Staves, and Clefs:

Bowing behind the bridge on the string:



Bowing the side of the bridge



Bowing tailpiece



Indicating actions on the scroll and the front of the body

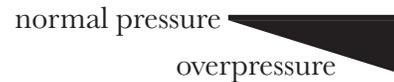


For the Harp:

Preparation:

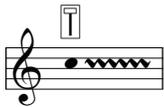
Place bow hairs (without the bow) between the F5 and G5 strings of the harp at the bottom of the bass clef. Throughout the piece, they will be used to bow the F5 and G5 strings in the typical manner of dragging the hairs along the string. The goal is to produce a sound similar to that of a bowed cello string. If after proper rosinning and experimenting that sound is not achieved, a possible alternative is a quarter-sized violin bow.

The harpist is also asked to play tremolos by bowing a string back and forth as fast as possible, and to bow with more pressure than is standard in order to distort the sound.



Playing Methods Requiring a Metal Tuning Key:

Tuning Key Vibrato



Pluck the indicated string then move the metal shaft of the tuning key up and down on the same string.

Tuning Key Buzz



Pluck the indicated string then place the metal shaft of the tuning key against the string causing it to buzz.

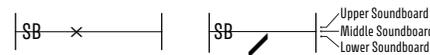
Non-traditional Staves, Clefs, and Notations:

Rubbing strings



Rub the indicated string(s) or range of strings between your fingers or with your palm as necessary.

Indicating actions on the soundboard



Harmonics:

All harmonics are notated where played.

Muting the Strings:

Different approaches to muting are marked in the score. The sections of the piece are treated as follows:

Beginning: mute only where marked

Rehearsal A: mute norm., i.e. muting is left to the discretion of the player except where marked

Rehearsal B: mute only where marked

Rehearsal C: mute often, i.e. after every cell

Rehearsal D: mute only where marked

Rehearsal E: let ring, i.e. do not mute the strings

Rehearsal F: mute norm., i.e. muting is left to the discretion of the player except where marked

Rehearsal G: any and all of the previous options

Vc. **2'14"** with fingertips **p** **< mf** **2'17"** **p** whisper [kI] **2'20"** **2'23"** **2'26"** with back of fingers **f** **f** **pp**

Hp. **2'20"** **mp** **2'24"** **mp** **f** **p**

Vc. **2'29"** with fingertips **p** **< mf** **sfppp** **2'32"** m.s.p. → ord. tap with pizz. two fingers **pp** **ff** **2'35"** pizz. **p** **2'38"** tap with two fingers **pp** **ff** **2'41"** arco **p** **p**

Hp. **2'29"** **pp** **fff** **ppp** **2'35"** **ord.** **sf** **pp**

Vc. **2'44"** **ff** **p** [kIh] **2'47"** with fingers **ff** **f** **2'50"** pizz. **pp** **2'53"** **p** sing [u] **2'56"** tap with two fingers pizz. **pp** **ff**

Hp. **2'45"** **p** **mp** **2'54"** **p.d.l.t.** **mp** **mf** **ord. #**

Turning, yet frozen

♩ = 60

B

arco - sharp attack
with knuckle

1a

Vc. *pp f mp p mf ppp f p pp mf ppp pp mp* [kI] *f*

Hp. *mp* *p p f* *mp* *f p*

SB *p ppp* *ppp p*

Annotations: with knuckle, with knuckle with fingers, two fingers and knuckle of thumb, with fingernails

4a

Vc. *f p ppp pp sf mf pp ff pp*

Hp. *f p* *mf* *ff pp*

SB *ppp pp sf mp*



Duration: 0'42"

play each unit once in any order
vary the duration of the pauses
between

If no playing method is specified the ordinary playing method is desired.

Vc. with fingers with fingertips with knuckle m.s.p.

e.l.b. e.l.b. e.l.b.

Hp. - mute often

with knuckle flick string ☺ with knuckle with knuckle

flick string ☺ flick string ☺ flick string ☺

Duration: 0'10'

play each unit once in any order

If no playing method is specified the ordinary playing method is desired.

Vc. m.s.t. → m.s.p. pizz.

tr. rit. acc. (ds) → tr. tr. rit.

Hp. - mute often

tr. rit. tr. rit.

E Attempts at coalescence

Duration: 0'13"

play each unit once in any order

If no playing method is specified the ordinary playing method is desired.

Vc.

Violin (Vc.) musical notation including:

- Staff 1: *ff* (pizzicato), *f* (with palm), *pp* (sing, m.s.t., [u]), *ff* (pizzicato)
- Staff 2: *pp* (sing, m.s.t., [u]), *fff* (crescendo), *p* (pizzicato)

Hp. - let ring

Harp (Hp.) musical notation including:

- Staff 1: *f* (short with back of hand), *fff* (crescendo), *f* (decrescendo)
- Staff 2: *pp* (long with fingernails), *p* (sing into harp, [a]), *ppp* (sing ord., [a]), *mp* (decrescendo)

Duration: 0'18"

play each unit once in any order

If no playing method is specified the ordinary playing method is desired.

Vc.

Violin (Vc.) musical notation including:

- Staff 1: *p* (pizz.), *f*, *p* (bow side of bridge), *f* (bow side of bridge)
- Staff 2: *pp*, *fff* (with fingers), *f* (c.l.b.), *p*, *pp*

Hp. - let ring

Harp (Hp.) musical notation including:

- Staff 1: *f*, *pp*, *f*, *mp*, *pp*
- Staff 2: *f* (bow hairs), *sfp*, *p* (with fingertips), *pp*

F Melting $\text{♩} = 60$

Play the following lines in any order, keep in time with one another

Vc.

* *p* < *ff* *sfz* *pp* *sfz* *pp* < *f* < *fff* *p* *f* *p* *sfz* *f* > *pp*

ord. → m.s.p. → ord. *f* < *p* *f* < *pp* < *fff* *f* *p* < *ppp* < *mf* *mp*

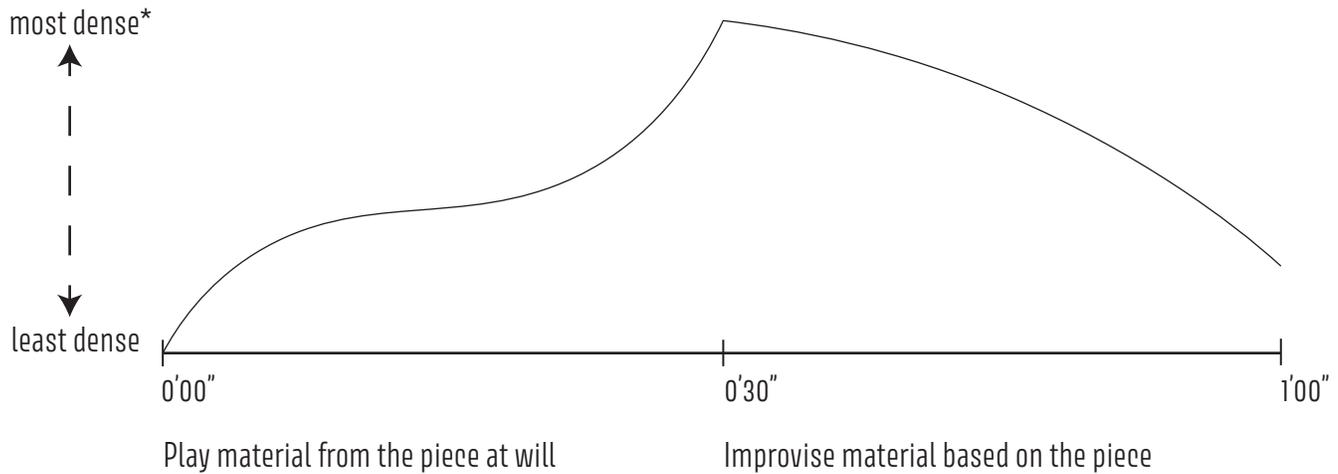
1 *p* < *ff* < *fff* *pp* < *f* > *pp* *f* *ff* < *pp* *ppp* *pp* < *f* *f*

Hp. - mute norm.

* *f* < *p* < *fff* < *pp* < *f* *p* *ppp* *sfz* *p* *pp* *sfz* *p* *p* < *f*

A *fff* *p* < *f* *ppp* < *f* > *p* *p* < *fff*

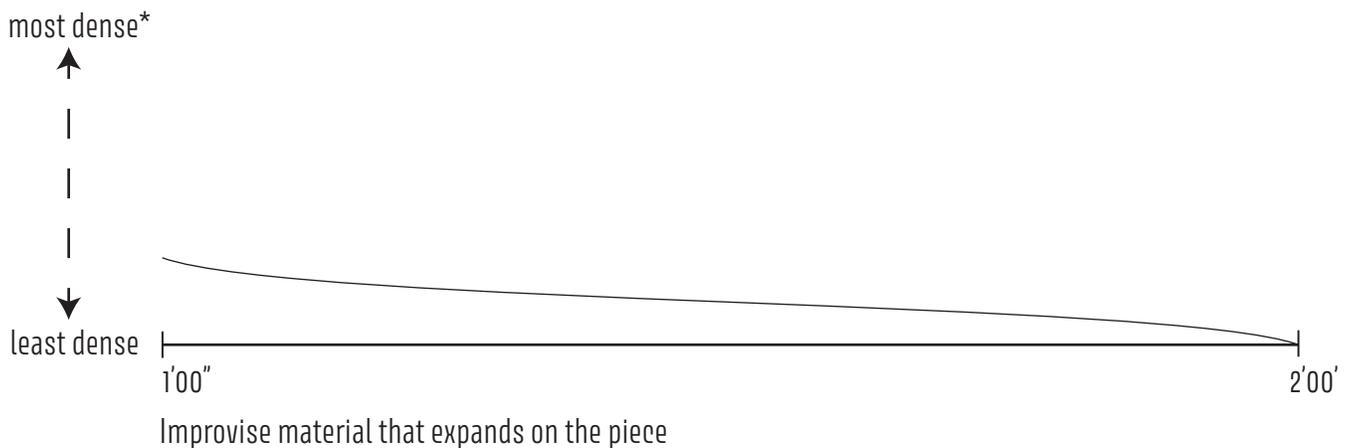
1 *mf* *p* < *fff* *pp* *f* *p* *ff* < *pp* *sfz* *p* *pp* *sfz*

G**Play material from the piece at will:**

Either by sight or from memory, play snippets of material you have played during the piece exactly as written.

Improvise material based on the piece:

Create new material that uses sounds found in the piece. This new material can strongly resemble already composed material but does not have to.

**Improvise material that expands on the piece:**

Create new material that uses sounds not found in the piece, but that are related, i.e. elaborations or variations on actions, timbres, pitch collections, rhythms, or dynamic structures found in the piece. The improvised material should sound new yet related to the piece as a whole.

*Please note that most dense does not mean most loud. Avoid creating too overt a climax.

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