

Katharina S. G. Mueller

Slivers (2023)

for String Quartet

Notes on the Piece

"Slivers" is an experiment in unmetred gestures and textures coordinated through the relativity of sonic events. The four members of the quartet are meant to follow each other through cues, like iron filings pulled by a magnet, making a larger shape in their collective orientations. The music transforms itself gradually through a number of extended techniques, simulating electronic processing, to the effect of blending disparate motions into one sound. This piece was composed as a partner piece to the miniature "Ghost II" by Ana Sokolovic, from her *Commedia dell'arte* for string quartet. As a complementary piece, "Slivers" shares much of its musical DNA with "Ghost II", expressing that material in interwoven exchanges and cascading developments, saving the security of unison for the end; "Ghost II" is intended as the postlude for this piece.

Performance Notes

Dotted barlines indicate unmetred sections. Approximate time in seconds is indicated in a box above each measure. These are set up so that one instrument in the quartet cues the change into the next unmetred measure.

six seconds

6

minimum time plus time as needed

2+''

Solid barlines indicate metered sections.

Double barlines indicate a change from unmetred to metered

For sul pont, create an airy, fuzzy effect in the articulation of trills and tremolo, and the overtones that result are preferred and encouraged for the piece. Increased volume in sul pont sections should be achieved with bow pressure and not with adjustment of the bow's placement relative to the bridge, to achieve more overtones with more volume.



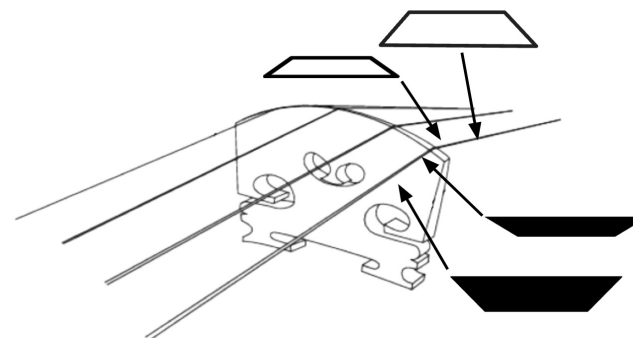
Molto Sul Pont - place bow directly on top of bridge, with slow bow speed, to produce a ghostly sound like a heavily aspirated breath.

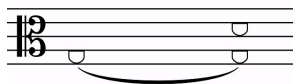


Sul Pont Above - Bow on *other* side of bridge, gradually moving laterally away from the bridge, to produce an overtone growing out of the Molto S. P. noise. Aim to find and then sustain a stable overtone before receding and merging back into the Molto S.P.. Height shows distance in relation to bridge.

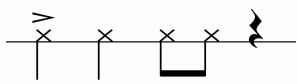


Sul Pont Below - Bow on *ordinary* side of bridge, gradually moving laterally away from the bridge, to produce an overtone growing out of the Molto S. P. noise. Avoid the pitch of the open string speaking. Aim to find and then sustain a stable overtone before receding and merging back into the Molto S.P.. Depth shows distance in relation to bridge.

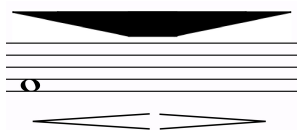




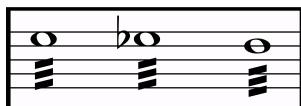
Other side of bridge - produce undetermined high harmonics by placing the bow between the bridge and the tailpiece to play, across one or more open strings as indicated on staff.



Percussive taps (Cello) - tap with four fingers against the body of the instrument, on the open space to the left of the fingerboard. Produce a resonant knocking sound, and control dynamics by the force of the taps and their placement on the cello face (edge for piano, center near F holes for forte).



Bow Overpressure - Produce a grating, gritty sound like a creaking, strained wood by digging the bow heavily into the string. Experiment with the lateral angle of the bow to produce a sound that stutters but does not completely stop. On cello, reducing the vibrations of low strings by placing the left hand lightly across them (near the middle) may be necessary to keep the strings from speaking clearly through the overpressure. Thickness of line above staff refers to amount of pressure.



Boxed Notation - Perform pitches in the box in the order they appear. Perform pitches with variable durations, for the total duration of the box in regards to seconds or metered time. 16th note passages within boxes can be repeated ad lib to fill in the total indicated time.

Slivers

for string quartet

Katharina S. G. Mueller

Suspended, Timeless

change bows subtly as needed

Violin I: open D bow on bridge, 6", 2+", 6", 8", 10", 7", s.p. below, mp, p

Violin II: open G bow on bridge, pp, s.p. below, p, mp

Viola: open C bow on bridge, wait for dynamic to settle, then cue*, s.p. above, p, p, mp

Cello: open A bow on bridge, pp, fast bow, s.p., pp, p, pp, p

*solid vertical measure line shows which instrument should cue the next measure

Violin I: 7, 6", 5", 6", 5", 4", ord., pp, p

Violin II: 8^{va}, ord., Sul A, on bridge, open G, pp, p

Viola: ord., Sul G, on bridge, open C, pp, mp

Vc.: ord., on bridge, open A, p, pp, mp, Sul A, ord. (A5), s.p., p, mp

3" 2" 1" 4" Cello Cues 5' 6"

ord., Sul A → to bridge

Vln. I 12 on bridge open D *pp* *mp* *p*

Vln. II *ord.* on bridge open G *p* *mp* *p*

Vla. *ord.* *p* *mp* *pp* *mp* *p* → to bridge

Vc. *Sul C, fast bow, s.p.* *p* *mf* *p* *ord.* *fp* lift finger gradually to transform to harmonic (should not result in a clear pitch) *fp*

open D *p* *f* *p* *f*

open C *p* *f* *p* *f*

4/4 4/4 4/4 4/4

6" 4+ " Vln 1 Cues ♩=120!

do not change notes at even intervals

Vln. I 18 *f* *p* *Sul D* *fp* sudden drop *ff* G.P.

Vln. II *f* *f* *p* maintain pitch until cue *fp* sudden drop *ff* G.P.

Vla. *f* *p* *f* *p* maintain pitch until cue *fp* sudden drop *ff* G.P.

Vc. (D5) *fp* maintain pitch until cue *fp* sudden drop *ff* G.P.

4/4 4/4 4/4 6/4 5/4

♩=60 Ghostly, Ominous

23

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Solo, break free of fog ord., Sul A

p

p

gritty

p

f

s.p. -----> ord.

p

f

f

3 Cues from Vla

8"

Attacca!

30

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Sul A, fast bow, s.p.

Sul D, fast bow, s.p.

go back and repeat sixteenth note gestures as needed

f

ff

Sul D, fast bow, s.p.

go back and repeat sixteenth note gestures as needed

f

ff

overpressure

other side of bridge

f

ff

f

fast bow, s.p.

ff

♩=120 Sharp and Digging

31

Vln. I *ord.*
ff

Vln. II *ord.*
f

Vla. *ord.*
ff *f*

Vc. *ord.*
ff *f*

37

Vln. I *poco a poco cresc.*

Vln. II *poco a poco cresc.*

Vla. *poco a poco cresc.*

Vc. *poco a poco cresc.*

40

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

subp *ff*

subp *ff*

subp *ff*

subp *ff*

(♩=120) Aggressive!

poco accel.

accel.

Take Cue from Previous Entrance

4+''

G.P.

G.P.

G.P.

G.P.

wait for previous sound to settle

G.P.

10/4

10/4

10/4

10/4

mf *ff* mf

ff

sustain until next attack, have attacks become increasingly closer together

♩=60 Solemn

Cello Cues

53

Vln. I *pp*

Vln. II *pp* *Sul E*

Vla. *pp* *gradually leave fundamental, introduce more overtones*

Vc. *pp* *ord.* *s.p.*

♩=80 Shifting, Particulate

travel bow closer and farther from bridge ad lib

*Sul A**Sul D*

57

Vln. I *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *f* *p* *mp* *pp*

Vln. II *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *f* *p* *mf* *p* *mp* *pp*

Vla. *p* *mp* *p* *fp* *fp* *p* *mf* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *pp*

Vlc. *f* *p* *mf* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *mf* *p* *p* *pp*

with four fingers tap resonant center of cello face

Sul D

64

Vln. I

fp *fp* *fp* *fp* *f* *ff* *mf*

gradually change to harmonic pressure

ord. (F7) *mp* *pp*

Sul G

Vln. II

ff *ff* *f* *fp* *ffp* *fp*

ord. (F#6) *mf* *mp*

Sul C

Vla.

ff *subp* *f subp* *f subp* *f*

s.p. *mf* *mp* *p*

Vlc.

ff *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff* *p* *f* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *s.p.* *mp*

70

Vln. I

s.p. *mp* *p*

Vln. II

s.p. *pp* *p*

Vla.

ord. Sul C *p* *s.p.* *p*

Vc.

p

♩=60 Ghostly

♩=120 Aggressive

Take Cue from Previous Entrance

accel. drive forward into next measure

76

Vln. I *ord.* *pp* *sfz*

Vln. II *ord.* *sfz* *ord. echo, minimal vib.*

Vla. *ppp* *sfz*

Vc. *ord.* *sfz*

Attacca!

♩=80

♩=120 Seething, Roiling

87

Vln. I *Sul D, s.p.* *gliss down maintaining trill* *f* *p* *f* *p* *ord.* *mf* *f*

Vln. II *Sul G, s.p.* *gliss down maintaining trill* *f* *p* *f* *p* *ord.* *mf* *f* *mf*

Vla. *other side of bridge, overpressure* *mf* *fff* *ord.* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

Vc. *apply over-pressure* *(V)* *f* *fff* *(V)* *fff* *ord.* *f* *mf* *f*

91

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ff *mf* *f* *mf* *p*

ff *f* *ff* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *p*

f *ff* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

f *ff* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *p*

95

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf *p*

p *mf* *p*

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

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

G.P. 6/4

G.P. 6/4

G.P. 6/4

G.P. 6/4

11

100

Vln. I

Sul D

pp

Vln. II

Sul A

pp

other side of bridge

pp

Vla.

Sul G

pp

Sul C, gliss maintaining halfstep trill

pp

Vc.

pp

go back and repeat sixteenth note gestures as needed

♩=120 Sharp and Digging

103

Sul A

p

Sul E

p

f

mf

Sul A

p

Sul A

p

f

mf

Sul G

p

Sul G

p

f

mf

p

p

f

mf

♩ = 120 Sharp and Digging

110

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f *ff* *f* *mf* *f*

f *f* *f*

f *f* *f*

f *f* *f*

117

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p *ff* *ff*

subp *ff* *fff*

subp *ff* *fff*

subp *ff* *fff*

accel.

124

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ff *f* *fff* *f* *fff* *f* *fff*

131

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

♩=152

Take Cue from Previous Entrance

f *f* *ff* *fff* *f* *ff* *fff* *fff*