

Syzygy: Five Elisions for String Quartet

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performance notes:

- durational markings apply to all parts, unless specified otherwise. m = minutes, s = seconds
- transitions between elisions should be continuous, that is, there should be no breath or space separating each passage from one another
- transitions between each cent deviation are gradual and durational, not sharp and static (think very slow micro-glissandi)
- transitions between different pitches are articulated normally, unless specified otherwise
- cent deviations are localized to each individual pitch. pitches not marked with cent deviations are played normally as in 12TET
- cues marked on cent deviations serve only to unify the ensemble, and do not call for re-articulation of the pitch, unless specified otherwise

I. ideation

(approx. 2m)

(approx. 1m)

0 ----- > + 10 cents

Vln. 2

ppp - barely audible

-10 cents

Viola

ppp - barely audible

(cue Vln. 2)

(Cello cue to next page)

II. continuum and consonance

(each measure = approx. 30s)

Vln. 2

pp - slightly more energy

+20 cents

-30 cents

+10 cents

gliss.

(cue Viola & Cello to end of page)

Viola

pp - slightly more energy

-10 cents

+20 cents

-40 cents

gliss.

Cello

pp - slightly more energy

-10 cents

-40 cents

(Vln. 1 cue to next page)

III. a compendium

(each measure = approx 15s)

Vln. 1

(cue all parts to end of page)

-40 cents

-20 cents

gliss.

-40 cents

0 - - > -20 cents

-40 cents

^played freely - take as much time as needed for this gesture

p - calm

Vln. 2

-40 cents

gliss.

-40 cents

p - calm

Viola

+10 cents

-10 cents

p - calm

Cello

+20 cents

p - calm

(Viola cue to next page)

IV. cathect the consort

-total duration of page = approx. 1.5m

-play freely through the pitch groups below, each instrument at its own pace, using plucked articulation.

-repeat this once, then improvise with the given pitches in any order desired for the remaining duration of the passage.

-gradually transition from normal plucked articulation to a light, quick brushing of the side of the finger parallel along the string for each pitch, so that each one is barely audible. diminish into nothing.

The image shows musical notation for two instruments: Violin 2 (Vln. 2) and Viola. Both parts are marked with a dynamic of *mf* - explosive. The Violin 2 part is written on a treble clef staff and includes pitch group labels: +30, -30, -40, -10, +40, +10, -30, -40, -10, and -50. The Viola part is written on a bass clef staff and includes pitch group labels: -20, -40, -40, +10, -30, and -40. Both parts end with a double bar line and the instruction "--> improv.". The Violin 2 part has a final double bar line with repeat dots, while the Viola part has a final double bar line with repeat dots.

(Vln. 1 cues cutoff to next page)

V. parsing: granularity

Vln. 1 solo: play with the most gentle, brittle tone possible, so that each pitch intermittently cuts in and out many times over its duration

(approx. 1m)

(as long as desired)

-20 ----- > -40 cents

0 ----- > +20 cents



ppp - barely audible