

STAGGER

version for string quartet with video

from *Musique de chambre noire*

Taylor Brook (music)

Nathalie Bujold (video)

2012-2013

Scordatura:

Quatuor de quatuors uses the following tuning for the string quartet, which is used for the suite of pieces from *Musique de chambre noire*. Due to the scordatura, there are two staves provided for to live instrument. The bottom staff is transposing (tabulature) and the top staff is non-transposing (sounding). Cent deviation are given on both staves along with 12th-tone accidentals. When a fingered note is played on a retuned string, cents are not provided.

	7:4/3:2	1:1	3:2	5:4/7:4 (12:11)
	-29	0	+2	-45

Violin I

	5:4	15:8	3:2	9:8
	-14	-12	+2	+4

Violin II

	7:4	6:5	1:1	3:2
	-31	+16	0	+2

Viola

	7:4	11:8	1:1	3:2
	-31	+51	0	+2

Cello

microtonal notation and transposed staves

Due to the scordatura, there are two staves provided for each instrument. The bottom staff is transposing (tabulature) and the top staff is non-transposing (sounding). Cent deviation are always given on the sounding staff and 12th-tone accidentals are used throughout. The transposing staff is also given cent deviations when the resultant pitch is the same as the notated pitch.

The following accidental nomenclature is also used to approximate exact pitches:

♭ - ♯ approximately 1/4 tone flat or sharp (50 cents)

↓ - ↑ approximately 1/6 tone flat or sharp (33 cents)

♭ - ♭ - ♯ - ♯ - ♯ - ♯ approximately 1/12 tone flat or sharp (17 cents)

Video, Notation, and Synchronization

The uppermost staff in the score shows a reduction of the music in the video part. This is a transcription of a remixed improvisation by Mira Benjamin filmed by Nathalie Bujold and recorded/produced by Taylor Brook. Timing in seconds is also provided in the score. The synchronization should be done without any type of click track and need not be extremely precise. However, the player should make their best effort to approximately play in time with the video transcription staff. In composing the written line, I purposely left the necessary level of synchronization somewhat mutable so that the performer may engage musically with the video/tape part, in ways that may even differ from performance to performance.

Technique Indications:

bow placement indications:

ord. - ordinario position

s.t. - sul tasto - (Bow close to the end of the fingerboard.)

a.s.t. - alto sul tasto - (Bow over the fingerboard.)

p.s.t. - poco sul tasto - (Bow slightly towards the fingerboard from ordinario position.)

s.p. - sul ponticello - (Bow close to the bridge.)

m.s.p. - molto sul ponticello - (Bow so that part of the hair is on the bridge and part is on the string, thereby producing a quiet but harsh sound. This technique will often silence or obscure the fundamental pitch of the string.)

p.s.p. - poco sul ponticello - (Bow slightly closer to the bridge than ordinario position.)

bowing technique indications:

norm. - Use a normal bow technique.

flautando - Fast, low pressure bowing.

scr. - scratch - (use overpressure to produce a scratch tone that obliterates the pitch)

p.scr. - poco scratch (use overpressure to produce a scratch tone while retaining some of ordinary pitch)

vibrato indications:

vib. - with vibrato

s. vib. - with no vibrato

m.vib. - with a lot of vibrato

About *Stagger* (quartet version):

Stagger was written for Quatuor Bozzini as part of the *Musique de chambre (noire)* project developed through a collaboration between Nathalie Bujold (video artist), Quatuor Bozzini, and myself.

The video/tape portion in *Stagger* consists of remixed/rearranged recordings of Mira Benjamin improvising on the violin in a pre-designed scordatura (retuning of the violin). A similar solo with video/tape was written for each of the members of the Quatuor Bozzini, comprising a set of four short pieces. This version of the score has been expanded to use the entire quartet, although the second violin still retains the most important part. In the framework of the larger project of *Musique de chambre (noire)*, these half-improvised pieces represent the deep collaboration between myself and the string quartet. Through this compositional method I attempt to blur the boundaries between improvised and written music as well as between composer and performer.

There is a video part that only appears in the last three minutes of the piece, which features the image of a raven on a wire, superimposed so as to in dialog with its own reversed image. This footage was taken on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, and this particular raven was well-known as “Barky”, since he would bark like a dog. In the recording session with Mira, she made scratch-tones on the violin to impersonate the sound of barky the Raven, which were then used throughout the piece.

In working with an Mira’s improvisation I wanted to make a piece that was deeply informed by the performer, allowing the performer to integrate their own musical sensibilities and improvisational ideas into the score. Additionally, the workflow shakes up my usual method of composing and puts the techniques that I often rely upon into question. Working with an improvisation means that so much of the musical work is given to me and my role becomes reactionary to this found object.

33 -14

some scratch

2:08 2:12 +12 2:16 2:20 2:24 2:28 -11 -11 -10 -10 -11

2:32 2:36

Vln I (snd)

Vln I (tab)

Vln II (snd)

Vln II (tab)

Vla (tab)

Vcl (tab)

ppp mp ppp mf ppp mp

8^{va} ord. m.s.p. ord. s.p. ord. -28

III II I II IV III II I II I

f p ff p mf p ff mf ff

s.t. -11 +12 -11

s.t. -12

pppp p pppp

pppp p pppp

-28 -45 -28 -12 -26 +16 -14 -50 -28 -12 -29 -26 +16 -14 -50 -45 -43 -43 -26

-28 -28 -12 -26 +16 -14 -50 -28 -12 -29 -26 +16 -14 -50 -45 -43 -43 -26

II III I II I II I II I

pppp p pppp

s.t. -12

pppp p pppp

41

Tape

scr. -24 -26 -33 -16 -45 scr. scr. scr. scr. scr. -33

2:40 2:44 2:48 2:52 2:56 3:00 3:04 3:08 3:12 3:16

f *pp* *mf*

Vln I (snd)

Vln I (tab)

pppp *f* *pppp*

Vln II (snd)

Vln II (tab)

scr. norm. ord. s.t. ord. m.s.p. ord. II III

pppp *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *ff* *p* *ff* *p* *f* *p* *mp* *ppp* *mp* *ppp*

Vla (snd)

Vla (tab)

IV *pppp*

Vcl (tab)

ppp *mp* *ppp*

Detailed description of the musical score: This page contains five systems of musical notation. The first system is for 'Tape', showing a melodic line with various dynamics (f, pp, mf) and performance markings (scr., -24, -26, -33, -16, -45, scr., scr., scr., scr., scr., -33). Time stamps are provided for several measures. The second system is for Violin I, with separate staves for sound (Vln I (snd)) and tablature (Vln I (tab)), featuring dynamics like pppp and f. The third system is for Violin II, also with sound and tablature staves, including dynamics like pppp, mf, p, ff, and mp, along with performance instructions such as 'scr.', 'norm. ord.', 's.t.', 'ord.', and 'm.s.p.'. The fourth system is for Viola, with sound and tablature staves, including a dynamic of pppp and a fingering instruction 'IV'. The fifth system is for Violoncello, with a tablature staff and dynamics like ppp, mp, and ppp.

51

Tape

Vln I (snd)

Vln I (tab)

Vln II (snd)

Vln II (tab)

Vla (snd)

Vla (tab)

Vcl (snd)

Vcl (tab)

scr.

ord.

norm.

s.p.

3:20 3:24 3:28 3:32 3:36 3:40 3:44 3:48 3:52

-45 -16 -35 +26 -24 -14 -15

-10 -43 -43 -12 -28 +30 -45 -14 -31 +26 -24 +26

f *pppp* *pppp* *f* *pppp*

f *p* *f* *ff* *pppp* *pp* *mf* *p* *f* *p* *ff* *p* *f* *p*

f *pppp* *pppp* *f* *pppp*

pppp *mp* *pppp*

II I II

II I II

II I

Video Appears

Tape

70

4:36 4:40 4:44 4:48 4:52 4:56 5:00 5:04 5:08 5:12 5:16 5:20

pp *p*

some bending and scratch

-27 -36 -20 -16 -34 -20 -34 -20

make scratch tones that follow the mouth of the raven onscreen
scr.

Vln I (tab)

p *ppp* *mf* *pppp* *f* *mf*

-28

Vln II (snd)

pp mp *pp mp* *pp* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *f* *ppp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp mp* *pp mp* *pp*

flautando → norm.

s.t. -33

-33 -31 -43 -31 -12 -12 -31 -12 +16 -28 -45 -12 +16 -10

Vla (snd)

p *ppp* *mf* *pppp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp*

p.s.t. -33

-33 -12 +16 -33 -12 +16

Vcl (snd)

p *ppp* *mf* *pppp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp*

ord. -33

s.t. -33

-33 -12 +16 -33 -12 +16

Vln II (tab)

pp mp *pp mp* *pp* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *f* *ppp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp mp* *pp mp* *pp*

flautando → norm.

s.t. -33

-33 -31 -43 -31 -12 -12 -31 -12 +16 -28 -45 -12 +16 -10

percussive scratch

91

6:00 6:04 6:08 6:12 6:16 6:20 6:24 6:28

some scratch

scr. sounds should follow the mouth of the raven on the left

scr.

mp mp mp p f p p f p

-12 -10 -26 -28 -12 -10 -12 -26 -28 -12 -14 -12 -12

8va - 3 5 5

III III III IV II I II III II I II III IV p.scr. norm. II I II III IV III IV III II III m.s.p. → scr. → s.t. m.s.p. → s.t.

p p p p ppp mp f mp f mp mp f ppp mf > mp mf > mp

scr. sounds should follow the mouth of the raven on the left

scr.

pp f pp p f p

-12 -43 -45 +16 -12

I IV⁷ IV¹⁰ +16

bow as needed

pp p mp mp mp pp

