

Performance Logistics

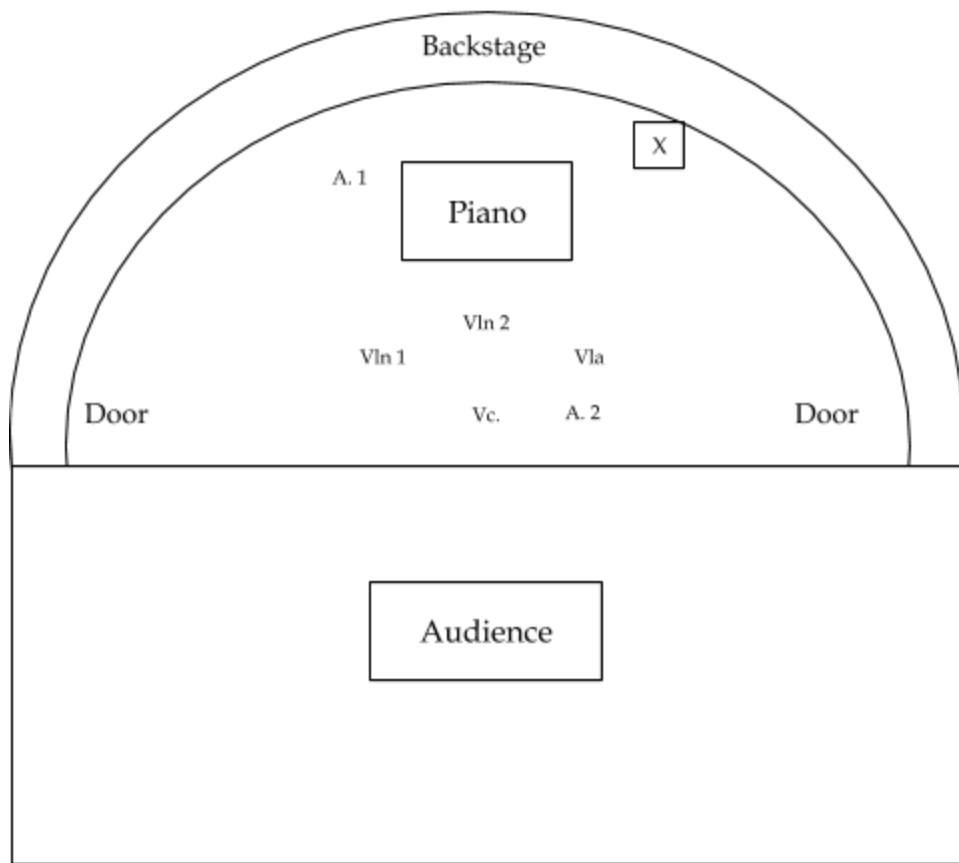
Introduction

The premise of *Concertino for Disintegrating Cello* is that the cellist plays a solo role, while the remainder of the piano quintet acts as the accompaniment. By the end of the piece, the cello is meant to have 'disintegrated' as a result of being taken apart and eventually destroyed. This process is facilitated by an assistant, who helps remove components of the cello. Just before the conclusion of the piece, the cello is shattered when the cellist stabs the body of the cello with the spike.

The cello that is destroyed will not be the player's personal cello for obvious reasons. Instead, a cheaper, disposable cello is hidden onstage behind the timpani and the assistant switches it with the original cello during the performance.

Setup

Concertino for Disintegrating Cello was originally designed to be performed in the Vallance Hall at Sydney Grammar School. Since the set up plays such an intrinsic role in the performance, any subsequent performances should attempt to recreate a scenario that is similar to the one below.



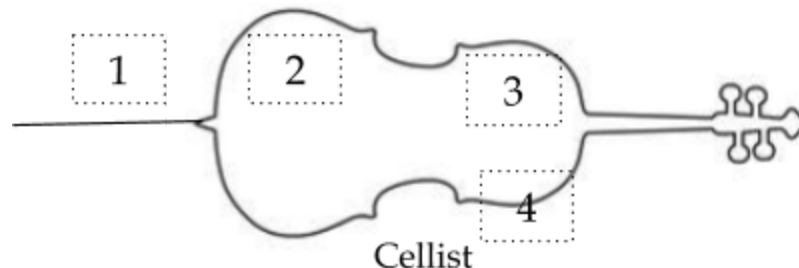
Key:

- **A. 1:** The first position of the assistant. The assistant is initially disguised as the page turner. He/she should sit next to the pianist on a separate stool.
- **A. 2:** The second position of the assistant. There should be a music stand set-up there, with the assistant's part.
- **X:** The location behind the timpani at which the disposable cello is to be kept. This must be placed here prior to the performance.

The Assistant's Role

There are several crucial parts of the assistant's role:

1. The assistant starts off disguised as the page turner.
2. When instructed, the assistant will cease being a page turner and start taking apart the cello, while the cellist is still performing. At one point during the 'disintegration' of the cello, all components of the cello are removed (strings, pegs, tailpiece and bridge) except for the spike. It then is placed on the cellist lap so that it becomes a percussive instrument. On the diagram below, the boxed numbers correspond with performance note 16.



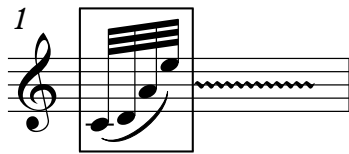
3. Once the cello becomes a percussive instrument, the assistant will help stabilise the cello by it while it is played.

Finally, the spike will be removed by the assistant and given to the cellist to stab and break the cello. It is recommended that the performer hold the cello vertically and only damage the front of the cello, preferably the area around the F holes.

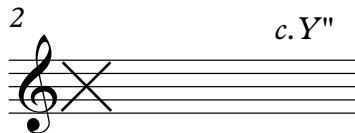
Though the performance is provocative in nature, *there should be no damage done to the venue under any circumstance*. The final destruction of the cello must, therefore, be executed carefully and precisely. The performer should also take care not to injure him/herself while destroying the cello. It is likely that wood fragments and splinters may be produced and may injure the player if caution is not taken.

Performance Notes

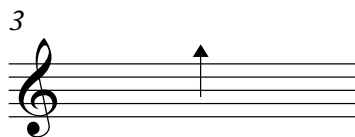
General



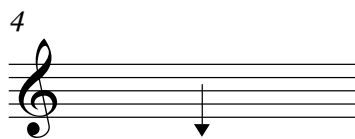
Liberamente repetition of a figure for the duration of the wavy line. Though it should work somewhat within the tempo, it does not necessarily have to fit exactly.



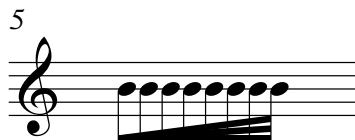
An unmetred time-period of approximately 'Y' seconds duration. The amount of seconds are only given when necessary. For example, in bar 87, strings are not given the amount of seconds, but rather rhythms within the bar (see performance note 12).



Play any high note.



Play any low note.



Gradual shortening of the notes in this case the rhythmic value transitions from a quaver to a hemi-demi-semiquaver. Note the reverse (long to short) also appears in the score. It is not imperative for the performer to play the exact amount of notes.

Strings



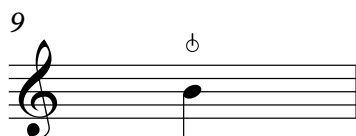
Sul tasto



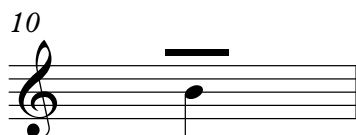
Sul ponticello



Naturale; play in the standard bow position



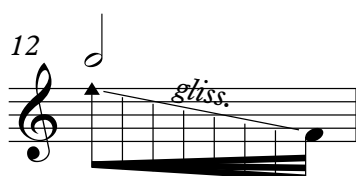
Bartok pizzicato: pull the string up vertically so that it slaps down onto the finger board to create a percussive sound.



Scratch note; play sul ponticello but apply lots of bow pressure to produce a very harsh sound.



A gradated transition from one bow position/usage to another



In places where the notation makes the durational value of a note ambiguous, the rhythm of the gesture is given above it.

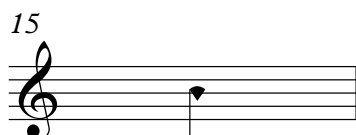


Seagull effect; place the first finger firmly on the string and the fourth finger placed lightly to produce a fourth harmonic. Then glissando down, keeping the distance between the two fingers the same.

Violonello solo

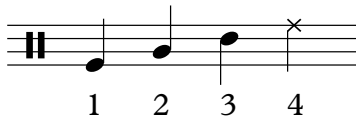


Double-stop tremolo glissando; execute the glissando with rapid bow movement. Note that the stems without heads indicate the approximate pitch that the performer should be at, in that particular part of the gesture.



When the assistant turns the turning pegs of the cello, it will no longer produce sounds at concert pitch. These notes are indicated like so.

16

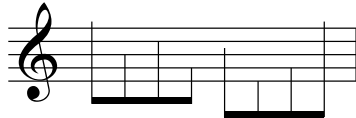


Once the cello is turned onto its back, a new percussion notation system is adopted. Notes 2 to 4 are to be played as if the cello is a drum. The location to hit is numbered 2 to 4 on the performance logistics diagram and correspond to the numbers below.

1. Slam the spike into the base of the cello.
2. Hit the lower bout.
3. Hit the upper bout
4. Hit the edge of the closest lower bout.

Pianoforte

17



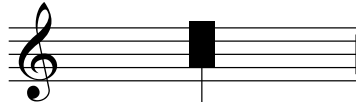
Play a pitch that approximately corresponds to where the note head would be.

18



Both pedal notations are used in the piece. However, the left is used to show specifically where pedal is to be used, while the other leaves it to the discretion of the pianist. Note that from bar 90-96, the pedal is activated so that it resonates with the strings.

20



Clusterchord; pianist should play the approximate range of the clusterchord indicated.

Assistant

The assistant is usually given written directions and is required to move around the stage. When a bar has rests, it means the assistant is either page turning or standing. When executing a direction, the bar will be left empty for the duration of the action. Below are some of the performance directions that require a bit more explanation. Note not all the performance directions are listed below.

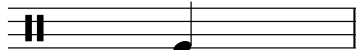
21



Change the pitch of the cello from the first note to the second by turning the tuning peg. The string that it should be performed on is indicated below the notes. The change should be executed gradually over the duration of the bar and pitches should be realised as accurately as possible.

22

Violoncello



From bar 187-191, the assistant is instructed to play the cello with the cellist. The notation system used is the same as the one in performance note 16.

Concertino for Disintegrating Cello

Alexander Lau (2018)

The Widening Gyre ♩ = 56 *sempre stringendo*

Violoncello

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Piano

Assistant

This system of the musical score includes staves for Violoncello, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Piano, and Assistant. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 56 and the performance instruction is *sempre stringendo*. The Violoncello staff is empty. Violin I and Violin II play pizzicato (pizz.) at mezzo-piano (mp). The Viola also plays pizzicato at mezzo-piano. The Piano part features a complex texture with sustained chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, including an 8va (octave up) marking. The Assistant staff is empty.

Vc.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Pno.

Assis.

This system of the musical score includes staves for Vc. (Violoncello), Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla. (Viola), Pno. (Piano), and Assis. (Assistant). The Vc. staff begins at measure 6 and plays arco (arco) at mezzo-forte (mf) with triplets. Vln. I and Vln. II continue with arco at mezzo-piano (mp). The Vla. part also plays arco at mezzo-forte (mf) with triplets. The Piano part continues with sustained chords and a bass line, including an 8va marking. The Assis. staff is empty.

The Falcon Cannot Hear the Falconer ♩ = 88

2

sempre stringendo

10

Vc. *f* *sempre cresc.*

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II *mp* *arco* *gliss.* *gliss.*

Vla. *mf* *sempre cresc.* *mp* *gliss.* *gliss.*

Pno. *mf* *sempre cresc.*

Assis.

15

Vc.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Pno.

Assis.

19

Vc. *gliss. gliss.* *molto cresc.* *ff*

Vln. I *mp* *molto cresc.* *sfz pp*

Vln. II *mp* *molto cresc.* *sfz pp*

Vla. *mp* *molto cresc.* *sfz pp*

Pno. *as fast as possible* *sfz pp cresc.* *sfz una corda*

Assis.

24

Vc. *sfz* *sfz* *gliss. gliss. gliss.*

Vln. I *mp* *sfz pp* *fp*

Vln. II *mp* *sfz* *fp* *pp*

Vla. *sfz pp* *fp*

Pno. *mp* *sfz pp* *tre corda* *una corda* *tre corda*

Assis.

29

Vc. *fp* *fp* *fp* *f* *fp* *fp* *fp*

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II *f*

Vla. *f*

Pno. *sfz p* *mf* *sfz*
sfz una corda

Assis.

36

Vc. *sfz*

Vln. I *p spicc.*

Vln. II *p spicc.*

Vla.

Pno. *fmp*
8vb

Assis.

42

Vc. *sfz più mf* *sempre cresc.*

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Pno. *fp*

Assis.

47

Vc. *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *pizz.*

Vln. I *mf* *f*

Vln. II *mf* *f*

Vla. *mf* *pizz.*

Pno. *tre corda* *mp*

Assis.

60

Vc.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Pno.

Assis.

mf cresc.

sfz

sfz f

pizz.

arco

mf cresc.

p

65

Vc. *sempre cresc.*

Vln. I

Vln. II *mf cresc.*

Vla. *mp cresc.*

Pno.

Assis.

71 **Meno mosso** ♩ = 168

Vc.

Vln. I *sfz*

Vln. II *sfz*

Vla. *sfz*

Pno. *sfz*

Assis. 4/4

[illegible]

80

Vc.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Pno.

Assis.

sfz

gliss.

84

Vc.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Pno.

Assis.

sfz

The Blood-Dimmed Tide is Loosed ♩ = c.66

10

87

Vc.

gliss.

s.p.

nat.

gliss.

s.p.

nat.

gliss.

s.p.

nat.

Vln. I

gliss.

s.p.

nat.

gliss.

s.p.

nat.

gliss.

s.p.

nat.

Vln. II

gliss.

gliss.

s.p.

gliss.

nat.

Vla.

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

c. 12

Pno.

f cresc.

Assis.

Put piano lid on full stick

88

Vc.

Vln. I

sfz

Vln. II

sfz

Vla.

sfz nat.

Pno.

release fingers one by one
and release pedal gradually

Ped.

Assis.

The Ceremony of Innocence is Drowned ♩ = c.66

11

accel. A tempo accel. A tempo

91 *più mp* *con sord.* *sim.* *c.7* *s.t.*

Vc. *p* *p* *p* *p* *s.t.*

Vln. I *p* *p* *p* *p* *s.t.*

Vln. II *p* *p* *p* *p* *s.t.*

Vla. *p* *p* *p* *p* *s.t.*

Pno. *p* *p* *p* *p* *s.t.*

Assis. *p* *p* *p* *p* *s.t.*

poco rit. A tempo

95 *nat.* *fp* *s.p.* //

Vc. *fp* *s.p.* //

Vln. I *nat.* *fp* *s.p.* //

Vln. II *nat.* *fp* *s.p.* //

Vla. *nat.* *fp* *s.p.* //

Pno. *una corda e con ped.* *p* *Return piano lid to original position* *Return to page turning*

Assis. *5/4* *4/4* *5/4*

99 **accel.** **A tempo**

Vc. *pizz.* *mf* *arco* *pizz.* *p*

Vln. I *nat.* *pp* *nat.*

Vln. II *pp* *nat.*

Vla. *pp*

Pno. *8va* *mf* *mp metric* *mf cantabile en dehors* *accel.* *p*

Assis.

105

Vc. *rit.* *cresc.* *en dehors*

Vln. I *cresc.* *dim.*

Vln. II *cresc.* *dim.*

Vla. *dim.*

Pno. *cresc.* *dim.*

Assis.

A tempo

108

Vc. *più mf* *dolcissimo*

Vln. I

Vln. II *s.t.* *3* *6* *3*

Vla. *pp* *molto espress.* *s.t.* *5*

Pno. *p* *R.H.* *L.H.* *L.H.*

Assis.

111

Vc.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Pno.

Assis.

mf *p*

meno p *Red.* * *Red.* *

S. L. 6

112

Vc.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Pno.

Assis.

mf *mf*

Red. * *Red.* *

1. * Walk off stage to get second cello and bow

1. * The second cello refers to the disposable cello stored offstage. See performance logistics for setup.

molto rit.

113

Vc. *dim.*

Vln. I *p dim.*

Vln. II *p dim.*

Vla. *p dim.*

Pno. *dim.*

Assis. *Ped.* *

2/4

115

Vc.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Pno. *p cresc. poco a poco* **molto accel.**

Assis. *Swap cellos and bow* *Take first cello and bow offstage*

2/4

3

tre corde

sempre stringendo

117

Vc. *senza sord. e nat. pizz. mp* *più mf* *arco sfz mf*

Vln. I *senza sord. e nat. pizz. mp* *arco sfz mf*

Vln. II *senza sord. e nat. pizz. mp* *arco*

Vla. *senza sord. e nat. pizz. mp* *arco*

Pno. *mf* *mp* *mf* *p*

Assis. *8^{va} con ped.* *8^{va} Return on stage*

122

Vc. *sfz mf* *f sempre cresc.* *sfz f*

Vln. I *arco*

Vln. II *p sempre cresc.*

Vla. *p sempre cresc.*

Pno. *mf sempre cresc.*

Assis. *6/8*

♩ = 88

(C string)

126

Vc. *gliss.*
sfz ff

Vln. I

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Pno. *as fast as possible*

Assis.

129

Vc. *fff sfz sfz*

Vln. I *ff*

Vln. II *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Pno. *ff*

Assis.

Things Fall Apart ♩ = 176

134

Vc. *ff*

play violently and break as many bow hairs as possible

Vln. I *sfz ff sfz*

Vln. II *sfz ff sfz*

Vla. *sfz ff sfz*

Pno. *sfz mf sfz*

Assis. *Remove C string and peg*

(C string)

139

Vc. *gliss. gliss. ff*

Vln. I *fmp*

Vln. II *fp*

Vla. *fp*

Pno. *mf*

Assis. *8^{vb}*

(G string)

145

Vc.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Pno.

Assis.

mf

fp

f

8^{vb}

Remove G string and peg

(G string)

151

Vc.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Pno.

Assis.

sfz più f

sempre cresc.

pizz.

mp

pizz.

mp

fmp

fpp

fpp

(8)

156

Vc. *Let assistant take bow pizz.* *fff*

Vln. I *mf* *f*

Vln. II *arco* *sub. mp*

Vla. *arco* *sub. mp*

Pno. *(8).....*

Assis. *2*. Take bow from cellist* *(D string)*

2. * Physically remove the bow from the cellist; the assistant may snatch the bow if so desired.

161 *Remove both strings, bridge and tailpiece* *3*. Place cello on lap*

Vc. *ff*

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II *f*

Vla. *f*

Pno. *mp cresc.* *sfz*

Assis. *4*. Snap cello bow in half*

3. * Once all parts have been removed from the cello, it becomes a percussive instrument. In order to play it, the cellist must place the cello on its back so that it rests on their thighs. A diagram can be found in the performance logistics.

4. * Snap the cello bow in half using both hands and the knee. The snap has been written so that it occurs on a specific beat.

166

Vc. *sfz*

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II

Vla. *f*

Pno. *f*

Assis. Discard bow on the floor *sfz*

172

Vc. *ff*

Vln. I *fmp* pizz.

Vln. II *f* *fmp* pizz.

Vla. *fp*

Pno. *sfz mf*

Assis. Tear previous four pages of the cello part, one per bar

178

Vc. *mf cresc.*

Vln. I *f* *arco*

Vln. II *arco* *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Pno. *sempre cresc.*

Assis. 5. * Stabilise cello

183

Vc. *ffpp* edge ----- c. 6 -----> centre

Vln. I *sfz*

Vln. II *sfz*

Vla. *sfz*

Pno. *sfz*

Assis.

5. * When the cello is played as a percussive instrument, it may become unstable. Stabilise the cello by holding the edge of the back or some place that won't disturb the cellist or the resonance.

187 *edge*

Vc. *più fff* *passionate intensity*

Vln. I *più fff* *passionate intensity*

Vln. II *più fff* *passionate intensity*

Vla. *più fff* *passionate intensity*

Pno. *più fff* *passionate intensity*

Violoncello *Stabilise cello*

Assis.

190

Vc.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Pno. (8)

Assis. *Stabilise cello*

194 *Meno mosso* ♩ = 168

Vc. *Take spike from assistant*

Vln. I *sub. mp tranquillo poco dim.* *sfz sfz violent*

Vln. II *sub. mp tranquillo poco dim.* *sfz sfz violent*

Vla. *sub. mp tranquillo poco dim.* *sfz sfz violent*

Pno. *sfz sfz*

Assis. *Remove spike from cello Give spike to cellist* *sfz sfz*