

You Have to Fill a Room with Sound

for String Quartet

7'30"

Music by
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Legend and Performance Notes

Ctd. -- --: This indicates to continue playing, improvising using the previous measure as a 'model' to base the new measures on. The rhythms should be similar but not exactly the same, and during portions where multiple players have similar 'models' happening at the same time, the notes should never be too in sync with each other.

X note heads indicate to mute the fingerboard with multiple fingers (ideally four) in the left hand. When the notes are on the open strings, it indicates that the exact placement of the left hand does not matter, and what matters is which string is being played. When the notes are not on an open string, it indicates the specific position where the highest finger of the hand should be resting (muting the string), with the other fingers further down on the fingerboard.

Molto sul tasto, underpressure: Play with the bow well over the fingerboard, using less pressure than what is necessary to get a full pitch. Should be an airy, whispery sound.

Molto sul pont., underpressure: Play just in front of the bridge, using less pressure than what is necessary to get a full pitch. Should also be an airy sound, this time with more high artifacts.

Muted pizz: Mute the fingerboard with the left hand, and pizz the strings as normal. Should give a short muted sound without any recognizable pitch.

On bridge: Bow directly on the bridge. Should be an airy sound without any strong pitches.

Behind bridge, near tailpiece, poco underpressure: Bow behind the bridge near the tailpiece, but still on the main part of the string. Use a light enough pressure to get a scratchy and airy texture that doesn't have a clear pitch.

Behind bridge, near bridge, poco overpressure: Bow behind the bridge as near to the bridge as possible without touching it. Use enough pressure to get a scratchy sound with a lot of high artifacts, but no clear pitch.

Behind bridge, near tailpiece, molto overpressure: Bow behind the bridge near the tailpiece, but still on the main part of the string. Use as much overpressure as possible to create a very distorted sound that should be somewhat deep.

Behind bridge, near bridge, molto overpressure: Bow behind the bridge as near to the bridge as possible without touching it. Use as much overpressure as possible to create a very distorted sound that should have a lot of high pitched artifacts.

Quickly lift all pressure from bow before continuing: While bowing behind the bridge with molto overpressure, lift all bow pressure while speeding up to quickly hear a high pitch. Continue with the molto overpressure behind the bridge after. Should create a short loud high squeak.

Transitions such as "to molto sul pont. -- --" should be executed smoothly, gradually moving from the initial state to the new texture. Once the transition is completed the new texture stays unless explicitly notated.

Repeats should be taken as many times as feels appropriate and any written durations need not be rigidly adhered to.

Glissandos should be played as smooth portamentos, and they should always start from the beginning of the starting note, and end at the beginning of the destination note.

For each extended technique, you can also reference the attached video files or email me at dylanneedleman@brandeis.edu for any further questions.

Program Notes

You Have to Fill a Room with Sound started with a question: during a brief moment of pure, unaffected feedback, like when you hold a microphone too close to a speaker, what does the signal go through in the nigh imperceptible time before it lets out its final tone? This journey informs the structure of the piece, as it goes through its own journey, starting from pure chaos and winding its way down to a place of pure order. In order to achieve this position of chaos, the piece makes extensive use of extended techniques: ways of playing each instrument outside of the standard ways the players are used to. Within these extended techniques, the players are given a large degree of freedom of what exactly they will play. This is combined with stretches of time where the players decide how long a texture will last, creating a piece that will change every time it is played, though it will always resolve to the same point, like feedback starting with a random input, but marching on its inevitable path towards equilibrium.

You Have To Fill A Room With Sound

for String Quartet

Dylan Needleman

Carefully (♩ = 72)

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

on bridge

pp

muted pizz.

pp

ctd. -----

3

behind bridge
near tailpiece
poco underpressure

to near bridge
poco overpressure -

molto sul tasto
underpressure

to molto sul pont. --

pp

6

muted pizz.

ctd. -----

(ctd.) -----

behind bridge
near bridge
poco overpressure

(to near bridge, poco O.P.) -----

to molto overpressure -----

near tailpiece

p

f

(to molto sul pont.) -----

on bridge

behind bridge
near tailpiece
molto overpressure

Gradually increase frequency and length of notes and slowly crescendo to forte about 30"

23 about 30

ctd. - - - - -

(ctd.) - - - - -

(ctd.) - - - - -

(ctd.) - - - - -

f

f

f

ctd. - - - - -

ctd. - - - - -

ctd. - - - - -

keep notes continuous

ctd. - - - - -

continuous

27

Keep texture going about 15"

ctd. - - - - -

(ctd.) - - - - -

keep notes continuous

keep notes continuous

ctd. - - - - -

sul tasto
drowned out by the other instruments

pp

32

ctd. from mm. 31 - - - - - to near bridge - - - - -

ctd. - - - - -

fff

ctd. from mm. 31 - - - - - to near tailpiece - - - - -

ctd. - - - - -

fff

behind bridge, near tailpiece
molto overpressure

to near bridge - - - - -

ctd. - - - - -

fff

ctd. from mm. 31 - - - - - to near tailpiece - - - - -

ctd. - - - - -

fff

fff

ff

38

Quickly lift all pressure from bow before continuing

ctd. - - - - -

Keep texture going about 10"

Quickly lift all pressure from bow before continuing

ctd. - - - - -

(ctd.) - - - - -

(ctd.) - - - - -

(ctd.) - - - - -

molto sul pont.
ord. pressure

42

ff
(ctd.)

(ctd.)

(ctd.)

(ctd.)

molto sul pont.
ord. pressure

ff

49

molto sul pont.
ord. pressure

ff

(ctd.)

(ctd.)

molto sul pont.
ord. pressure

ff

54

to ord.

to ord.

to ord.

to ord.

ff

60

f *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

65

mp *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

69

mp *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

72

5

ff

ff

ff

ff

76

to sul tasto

f *mp* *n*

f *mp* *n*

f *mp* *n*

f *mp* *n*

83

(to sul tasto) - - -

f *n* *f* *n*

f *n* *f* *n*

f *n* *f* *n*

f *n* *f* *n*

