

## Performance Notes

While all the gestures in the piece have been specifically notated, they should be rendered with an improvisatory feel. Fluidity, both in sound quality and speed, is of central importance to the character of the work.

The first five pages of the score trace a path from stasis to frenzied motion, from silence to maximum volume, and from dryness to resonance. Interpretive freedoms can be taken along the way as long as this general trajectory is projected in performance.

Sul ponticello indications:

s.p. 1 - normal sul ponticello

s.p. 2 - right next to the bridge (sempre sul ponticello). At softer dynamics the tone should be barely present.

s.p. 3 - on the bridge. There should be no tone at all, only soft white noise. Avoid scratchy high harmonic sounds by using a fast bow.

When changes in sul ponticello happen within a short space (as in the opening two lines of the piece), the "s.p." is often left off the subsequent markings to the first.

Molto sul tasto indicates a placement of the bow far up on the fingerboard, preferably several inches beyond the normal contact point. The sound should be hollow and breathy.

Arrows indicate a gradual change from one bow technique to another.

Expanding beams indicate speeding up. Contracting beams indicate slowing down. While the precise number of notes in groups with feathered beams should be observed, the exact degree of the tempo fluctuation is up to the performer.

A tenuto mark indicates that a note should be slightly emphasized and held a little longer than the notes around it.

The notation "slappy fingers" appears in conjunction with certain fast passages that use natural harmonics. The fingers of the left hand should move vigorously and quickly, using slightly more pressure than is normally called for in the production of natural harmonics (somewhere between a harmonic and fully stopped note). The purpose of this technique is to shorten the sound of the harmonics and thereby articulate the open strings which sound between them.

The cue staff above the main staff contains only the fingered notes without any of the open strings. It can be used as a reference when learning the piece to help clarify the moving lines embedded in the string-crossing figurations.

Open strings are used throughout the piece to create a halo of resonance around the moving lines. With this in mind, rocking figures between two strings need not be executed with precise changes in bow angle from one string to another, but rather with shifts in weight between two continuously ringing strings.

## Program Note

In October 2006 I visited the ancient church of Santa Sabina on Rome's Aventine Hill. I entered very early in the morning, while it was still dark, and as I listened to the morning mass I watched the sunrise from within the church. The light in Santa Sabina is breathtaking; the large clerestory windows are not made of glass but of translucent stone, and when light shines through these intricately patterned windows, luminous designs appear all over the church's marble and mosaic surfaces. As I watched the light grow and change that morning, I was struck by both its enveloping, golden warmth and the delicacy and complexity of its effects. I sketched the material for this piece soon after that unforgettable experience.