

John Pax
Air burnt dry
for reinforced violoncello

(2022)

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first performance

Harvard University, May 21st, 2022

Pieter Matthyssens, *violoncello*

John Pax, *live amplification*

NOTES

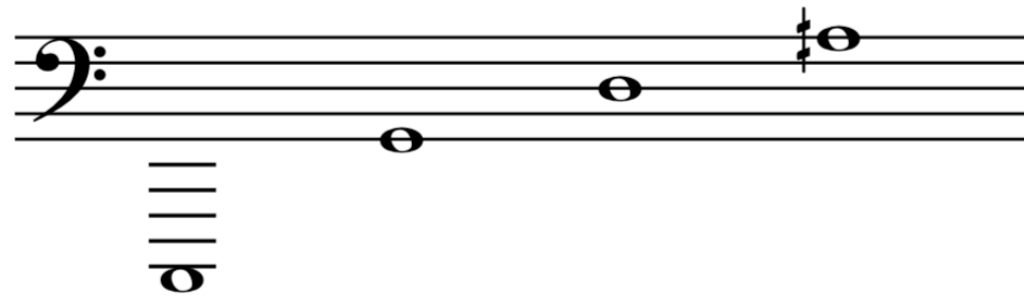
REINFORCEMENT

The work must be reinforced in some way, for example an exceptional reverberant acoustic, or electronic amplification.

In the case of electronic amplification, a single loudspeaker should be placed in front of the live performer. The reinforcement should combine the voice and instrument into one sonority (additional reverberation is encouraged).

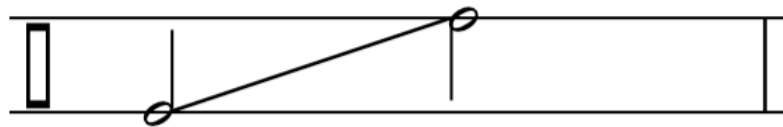
VIOLONCELLO

SCORDATURA



NOTATION

Playing behind the bridge, glissandi from lowest to highest pitch.



‘tasto’ – away from the bridge (toward the tailpiece)

‘pont.’ – toward the bridge

wide, fast vibrato



bowing on the bridge



half-harmonic finger pressure



harmonic finger pressure (n.b. not always a harmonic node)



TECHNIQUE

The bow is often moving from one position to another, almost always over the bridge. Except for a few moments, the result should appear as a single sonority; the work is best approached as a series of continuous lines. Accentuate changes in timbral structure through these shifts (harmonics, etc).

Behind the bridge

Always play with a tilted bow (little hair), light bow pressure (flautando but ordinary speed), and very sweetly; avoid harsh ‘squeaks’. Pitch change (and vibrato) is achieved by pulling the string away from the fingerboard.

On the bridge

Thought of as a transitional space between playing ordinario, and behind the bridge. Aim for a thick, rich sonority during the ‘solo’ passages.

Ordinario

Always play with a flat bow.

Vocalisations

Always combine with the violoncello sonority, hidden. The vocalizations should be performed uneventfully, plainly as if emerging from the violoncello itself; intelligibility of the text is *not* desired. Text in parenthesis ‘()’ is inhaled. Arrows up or down indicate a change from dark to bright timbre.

TEXT

מֵאֲרָץ קוֹלֶךָ וַיִּמְעַפֵּר אֶמְרֹתַיךָ תִּצְפָּצֵף:
καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἔδαφος ἡ φωνή σου ἀσθενήσει
and your voice shall whisper out of dust

Book of Isaiah

