

STEVEN SNOWDEN

TAKE THIS HAMMER

STRING QUARTET

TAKE THIS HAMMER

STEVEN SNOWDEN

Program Notes

This piece was inspired by work songs from the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola recorded by John and Alan Lomax in the 1930's.

Performance Notes

Glissandi:

Glissandi are indicated with a dark black line. The slide from one pitch to the next should be executed evenly over the entire duration of the first note. Rather than a melodic embellishment, glissandi in this piece should be treated more as an effect.



In this example, each glissando should evenly traverse a tritone through each beat of the bar except for beat four, where it will traverse a sixth.

In many cases, glissandi cross bar lines or take place over more complex rhythmic values. When this occurs, simple rhythmic values serve as departure and arrival points.

In this example, the glissando begins on the *and* of beat two and arrives on the *and* of beat four. The next glissando begins on the downbeat of the next measure and arrives on the *and* of beat two.

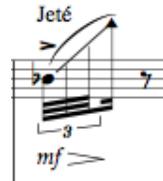
A musical staff in common time (C) with a treble clef. It shows a glissando starting on the second beat (indicated by a vertical bar line) and ending on the fourth beat. The dynamic sffz is at the start, and mf is at the end. The next glissando begins on the downbeat of the next measure (indicated by another vertical bar line) and ends on the second beat of the next measure. The dynamic fff is at the start, and ff is at the end.



A triangle note head at the arrival point of a glissando simply indicates that the pitch should slide up as high as possible. In this example, the glissando begins on a G on beat three and rises as high as possible over the course of the next three and a half beats. This should produce a kind of "rapidly evaporating" effect.

Jeté with glissandi:

The use of Jeté technique in tandem with a glissando is utilized as a kind of jangling percussive effect in this piece. While the rhythmic placement of the beginning of this gesture is of primary importance, the rhythmic accuracy or number of successive bow bounces does not have to adhere strictly to the rhythm that is notated.



Scratch tones:

Scratch tones are used as a percussive effect in this piece and should contain little to no discernible pitch. In order to facilitate this, the left hand should lightly mute all strings over the fingerboard when this technique is used.

From measure 21 to 33 scratch tones are to be played behind the bridge. X note heads indicate which strings should be bowed. In this example, the C and G strings are bowed on beat one, the G and D strings on beat two, and the D and A strings on the last 16th of beat two.



From measure 34 to 39, scratch tones do not have to be played behind the bridge. Bowing can take place wherever is most comfortable for the player as long as the resulting sound contains little to no discernible pitch.

If you have any questions about performance techniques or any other aspects of the piece, feel free to email, text or call me any time.

Steve
stevensnowden@gmail.com
417-343-0377

TAKE THIS HAMMER

STEVEN SNOWDEN

Revving up ♩ = 100

Steady, Energetic

Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Cello

[6] Sinister

Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.

8

Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.

13

Vln. 1 ff p ff p ff f
Vln. 2 ff p ff p ff f
Vla. ff p ff p ff sffz mf
Vc. ff mf ff ff sffz mf

Pesante

16 **Violent**

17

Vln. 1 fff f 6 fff pp
Vln. 2 fff f 6 fff pp
Vla. ff sffz mf ff p tap viola's body
Vc. ff sffz mf ff mp seagull effect

21 **A quirky groove**

sul G scratch tones behind the bridge ord bow behind the bridge ST Jeté ST
Vln. 1 ff > p f p mf p mf > p
sul G scratch tones behind the bridge strum behind the bridge with fingernail ST strum behind the bridge with fingernail
Vln. 2 ff > p mf p mf p
scratch tones behind the bridge molto sul pont very wide and fast vibrato
Vla. f p mf p mf
Vc. mf f

25

Vln. 1 ord bow behind the bridge ST mf p ord bow behind the bridge ST mf p Jeté ST mf p ord bow behind the bridge ST f p

Vln. 2 arco p mf p f p p mp

Vla. pp mp

Vc. scratch tones behind the bridge p mf f p mf f p mf f p mf

29

Vln. 1 mf p mf > p ord bow behind the bridge ST f p mf p ord bow behind the bridge ST mf p Jeté mf >

Vln. 2 ord bow behind the bridge ST mf p p f p mf

Vla. p mp

Vc. f p mf f p mf f p mf f p mp

Gradually add bow pressure and vibrato to distort tone

34

Vln. 1 molto sol pont. ST* gradually shift from molto sul pont to ord

Vln. 2 molto sol pont. ST* gradually shift from molto sul pont to ord

Vla. Gradually add bow pressure and vibrato to distort tone

Vc. ord.

* X noteheads still indicate scratch tones.
However, bow position can be the same as all other notes in this passage.

41

Musical score for orchestra, page 10, measures 39-40. The score includes parts for Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., and Vc. Measure 39 starts with a dynamic ***ff***. Measures 39-40 feature various dynamics including ***ff***, ***ord.***, ***cantabile***, ***f***, ***mf***, ***ffp***, ***pp***, and ***p***. The strings play eighth-note patterns, sixteenth-note patterns, and sustained notes throughout the measures.

Musical score for orchestra, page 10, measures 45-50. The score includes parts for Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., and Vc. Measure 45 starts with a dynamic of *f*. Measures 46-47 show sustained notes with dynamics *mf* and *f*. Measure 48 begins with a dynamic of *f*, followed by a measure with a dynamic of *mf*. Measures 49-50 show sustained notes with dynamics *ff* and *p*.

50 With hushed intensity

54

With growing anticipation

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc. pizz.

58

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

62 Violent

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc. sffz
mf
ff
arco
sffz
mf
ff

70 Menacing, grotesque

66

Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.

72

Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.

75

Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.

79 Sinister

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2 *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf* $\underline{\underline{3}}$ $\underline{\underline{3}}$ $\underline{\underline{3}}$ $\underline{\underline{3}}$ $\underline{\underline{3}}$ $\underline{\underline{3}}$

Pesante

Vln. 1 *ff* *p* *ff*

Vln. 2 *ff* *p* *ff*

Vla. *ff* *p* *ff*

Vc. *ff* *mf* *ff*

89 Violent

Vln. 1 *f* *fff* *f* *fff*

Vln. 2 *f* *fff*

Vla. *sffz* *mf* *ff* *sffz* *mf* *ff*

Vc. *sffz* *mf* *ff*

93

Vln. 1

f 3 6 fff ff

Vln. 2

f 3 6 fff ff

Vla.

sffz p fff ff

Vc.

sffz p fff ff

97

Vln. 1

p rit..... fff

Vln. 2

p ff

Vla.

p ff

Vc.

p ff