

Andrew McIntosh

Transgressions

for violin and viola

(2018-19)

PLAINSOUND MUSIC EDITION

commissioned by andPlay and Aperture Duo

Performance notes:

Transgressions uses scordatura on the lowest strings of each instrument. The viola C-string is tuned as a septimally raised B, a just seventh (plus an octave) below the violin A. One method of doing this precisely is to tune the 7th-partial harmonic of the viola C in unison with the 2nd-partial harmonic of the violin A. The violin G-string is then tuned to a septimally raised F#, a perfect fifth above the viola C-string.

Tuning:

The image shows two musical staves: a violin staff in treble clef and a viola staff in bass clef. A dashed line labeled '3/2' connects the 7th partial harmonic of the viola C string (indicated by a vertical dashed line) to the 2nd partial harmonic of the violin A string. Another dashed line labeled '7/2' connects the 7th partial harmonic of the viola C string to the 2nd partial harmonic of the violin G string.

The piece uses the following microtonal accidentals from the Helmholtz-Ellis JI pitch notation, designed by Marc Sabat and Wolfgang von Schweinitz.

	alteration of a syntonic comma: 21.5 cents from tuning in pure fifths (for intervals related to just major and minor thirds and sixths)
	alteration of a septimal comma: 27.3 cents from tuning in pure fifths (for intervals related to just minor sevenths)

The first section of the piece uses a technique of rhythmically dampening sympathetic resonance on unplayed open strings that are ringing in unison or an octave with a fingered pitch. This rhythmic dampening technique is written on an additional upper staff that is for the left hand only (not to be played with the bow), with diamond noteheads notating the most effective left hand location for dampening the string. Harmonic pressure is all that is needed for the effect.

The first two sections of the piece are musical games to be played, each with its own set of rules. These sections are written only in part form, with no score showing vertical alignment, since coordination will differ from performance to performance. The final section is through-composed, but in proportional notation. Each system represents approximately 30 seconds of music. Intervals are occasionally written in parentheses for tuning clarity. Major thirds/sixths should be slightly narrow, so they are just, and minor thirds/sixths should be slightly wide to be just.

Duration: 10-13 minutes

Transgressions

Violin

Andrew McIntosh

I. First Game (3-4 minutes)

Begin after or while an A is played by the viola (not a G).
Introduce each cell after the given timing, but after a cell is played once it can be returned to at any time in this section.
Timings are meant to be felt, not counted.
All cells can be extended, reduced, or looped at any time.
After beginning, the sound should be mostly continuous, with only occasional silence between cells.
Dynamics should swell and fluctuate organically.
Tempo can also fluctuate between cells, but each cell should remain strictly in its own tempo.
Tenutos indicate dampening with the left hand for the exact duration of the rhythm, while staccatos indicate a quick tap.
As the section goes on, the articulations of the dampening can become more varied - as long as the rhythm is steady.

$\text{♩} = 80$
wooden mute

IV (l.h. only)

1. (20-40")

III

mf (resonant)

II (l.h. only)

2. (50-70")

III

$\text{♩} = 50$

III (l.h. only)

3. (90"-2')

IV (sounding:)

II (l.h. only)

4. (2'-2'45")

IV (sounding:)

$\text{♩} = 80$

I (l.h. only)

5. (2', play only once)

II

Viola

I. First Game (3-4 minutes)

Begin first.

Introduce each cell after the given timing, but after a cell is played once it can be returned to at any time in this section.

Timings are meant to be felt, not counted.

All cells can be extended, reduced, or looped at any time.

After beginning, the sound should be mostly continuous, with only occasional silence between cells.

Dynamics should swell and fluctuate organically.

Tempo can also fluctuate between cells, but each cell should remain strictly in its own tempo.

Tenutos indicate dampening with the left hand for the exact duration of the rhythm, while staccatos indicate a quick tap.

As the section goes on, the articulations of the dampening can become more varied - as long as the rhythm is steady.

$\text{♩} = 90$
wooden mute
 III (l.h. only)

1. (0-10")

mf (resonant)

$\text{♩} = 90$
 I (l.h. only)

2. (10-15")

$\text{♩} = 55$
 IV (l.h. only)

3. (60-80")

4. (80-100")

$\text{♩} = 90$
 III (l.h. only)

5. (2-3')

IV (sounding:)

$\text{♩} = 55$
 II (l.h. only)

6. (2', play only once)

IV (sounding:)

Violin

II. Second Game (3-5 minutes)

Either player may move to this section first. Begin anywhere in the section.

The other player joins when it feels appropriate to do so.

Cells may be played in any order, and they can also be looped, with or without silence between iterations.

Any cell can be modified or varied, particularly as it is repeated.

Allow for an amount of silence that feels appropriate between cells, from none at all up to 10-15 seconds.

Allow for an organic ebb and flow of momentum throughout the section. It is a game of listening.

Measures without a metronome mark should be played in the tempo that feels most satisfying in the moment.

Dynamics should develop and fluctuate organically.

Techniques apply only to the cell where they appear.

The text cells are meant to be treated the same as notated cells. They are simply an option available to play.

(sounding)

(playing)

pizz.
I
l.v.
mf

II
III
IV

pp

jeté

III
IV

(7/6) (P4)
ord. *pont.*
mp *p*

(M10)
♩ = 92
sul pont.
mf

sul pont.
II
III
p

II (M10)
III
p

III
IV
gliss.
mf

(M6) (P12)
poco pont.
ppp

jeté
III
pppp

Musical notation on a treble clef staff. It starts with a half note on G4, followed by a series of eighth notes ascending to G5. The first half note is marked *vib.* and the last eighth note is marked *non vib.*. The tempo is marked *accel.* with a dashed line. The dynamic is *mp*. The fingering is III. The phrase ends with a *l.v.* (left hand) instruction.

Diagram of a violin fingerboard showing the first four strings. The first string has a *jeté* exercise marked with a slur and a series of vertical lines representing notes. The fingering is III. The dynamic is *pp*.

Diagram of a violin fingerboard showing the first four strings. The first string has a *jeté* exercise marked with a slur and a series of vertical lines. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 80$. The fingering is IV. The dynamic is *mp*.

Musical notation on a treble clef staff. It features a glissando marked *gliss.* with a slur and a wavy line. The dynamic is *mf*. The exercise is labeled (M10).

Diagram of a violin fingerboard showing the first four strings. The first string has a *pizz.* exercise marked with a slur and a series of vertical lines. The fingering is IV. The dynamic is *mf*. The phrase ends with a *l.v.* instruction.

Diagram of a violin fingerboard showing the first four strings. It features two *white noise* exercises marked with a slur and a series of vertical lines. The first is marked *"f"* and the second is marked *different white noise*.

Musical notation on a treble clef staff. It features a *bow on bridge* exercise marked with a slur and a series of vertical lines. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 110$. The dynamic is *"f"*.

Diagram of a violin fingerboard showing the first four strings. The first string has a *pizz.* exercise marked with a slur and a series of vertical lines. The fingering is II. The dynamic is *mf*. The phrase ends with a *l.v.* instruction.

Diagram of a violin fingerboard showing the first four strings. The first string has a *jeté* exercise marked with a slur and a series of vertical lines. The fingering is III. The dynamic is *pp*.

Diagram of a violin fingerboard showing the first four strings. The first string has a *jeté* exercise marked with a slur and a series of vertical lines. The fingering is II. The dynamic is *pp*.

Musical notation on a treble clef staff, consisting of a blank staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp.

Find a sound that hovers between pitch and noise and sustain it.

Imitate the viola.

Loop one cell and gradually transform it until it becomes another.

Viola

II. Second Game (3-5 minutes)

Either player may move to this section first. Begin anywhere in the section.

The other player joins when it feels appropriate to do so.

Cells may be played in any order, and they can also be looped, with or without silence between iterations.

Any cell can be modified or varied, particularly as it is repeated.

Allow for an amount of silence that feels appropriate between cells, from none at all up to 10-15 seconds.

Allow for an organic ebb and flow of momentum throughout the section. It is a game of listening.

Measures without a metronome mark should be played in the tempo that feels most satisfying in the moment.

Dynamics should develop and fluctuate organically.

Techniques apply only to the cell where they appear.

The text cells are meant to be treated the same as notated cells. They are simply an option available to play.

(sounding)
 (playing)

IV
 (P8) (7/6)
 IV
f

(M6)
molto sul tasto (by l.h.)
pppp *pp* *pppp*
pizz.
 IV *l.v.*
mp
jeté
 I
pp

jeté
 II
pp
 II III
sfz
mp
 ♪ = 148
bow on bridge
"f"

III *tasto, slow bow*
IV
ppp

II = 104
III *sul pont.*
mp

III
IV
pp

IV
p

white noise different white noise
"f"

jeté
III
IV
pp

jeté
II
III
pp

jeté
I
II
pp

(M10)
sul pont.
pp

pizz.
III *l.v.*
mf

pizz.
II *l.v.*
mf

p

Find a sound that hovers between pitch and noise and sustain it.

Imitate the violin.

Loop one cell and gradually transform it until it becomes another.

III. Descent (apr. 4 minutes)

Viola moves to this section first and holds the first chord until the violin joins.

Violin continues section II until it feels like the right moment to join.

Find the location for the bow over the fingerboard where all three notes can sound simultaneously.

This may require fast bowing that produces some fluctuation and instability.

As the descent progresses, the bow will need to move further *tasto* in order to maintain the triple stop.

Each system is approximately 30 seconds.

1

Vln. *tasto, constant sustain*
(2 oct. above IV)
III \sharp
II \sharp
gliss. (M6 above II)

Vla. *tasto, constant sustain*
(2 oct. above IV)
III \sharp
II \sharp
gliss. (M6 above II)
IV \sharp
mf (rich and intense, but not too aggressive)

2

Vln. *gliss.* (P5 above II)

Vla. *gliss.* (m6) *gliss.* (M10)

3

Vln. (P5 above II) *very long* *gliss.*

Vla. *gliss.* (P5 above II) *very long* (P5) (M3 + 2 oct.)

4

Vln. *gliss.* (P12 above IV)

(maintain P5)

Vla. *gliss.* (P12 above IV)

5

Vln. (M3) *gliss.* (m3 above II) *f*

pp

Vla. *gliss.* (M3) (m3 above II) *f*

6

Vln. *gliss.* (2 oct.) (P5) (P4)

Vla. *gliss.* (2 oct.) (P5) (P4)

7

(extreme molto *tasto*: leave finger on III so that only II and IV sound) (tasto, as before) *gliss.*

Vln. (M6)

Vla. *gliss.* (P5) (P4)

8

Vln. *gliss.* (P8 above IV) *molto tato* *pppp*

dim. to end

Vla. *gliss.* (P8 above IV) *molto tato* *pppp*

dim. to end