

# Ruins

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Performer: Mark Molnar\*

## Legend

### General

Play the piece as fast as possible. The general impression should be fast, punchy events. While events pass by quickly, each must be absolutely clear and focused. In addition, there *must* be a constant “feeling” of moving forward. Performers are asked to create accelerandos *wherever* the piece “feels” as though it’s being dragged along, i.e. slow and boring *This piece must be kept “alive” at all times* through a mixture of energy and temporal creativity.

All dynamics are *relative* to specific techniques being used. Most of the piece is very loud (*fff*) but this does not mean that all material will sound at the same intensity. Such relative differences are in fact the soul of dynamic variation throughout the piece. An indication of *fff* always means “as loud as possible” regardless of what technique performer is using.

Unless material is connected aesthetically, contrasting events must maintain sonic independence. For example, mm1 (the  $\frac{1}{4}$  bar) is a single compound event. This idea must be clear and focused to the ear. The  $\frac{2}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{8}$  bars that follow (mm2–3) consist of a two event split that is instrumentally doubled, i.e. violoncello I and II play on the thread behind the bridge while violoncellos II and IV play grinding sounds on damped strings. These events *must* be heard as two separate entities. Although the rhythm of the event played

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by II and IV is different, the material is the same and therefore considered a compound event which they (performers II and IV) have been momentarily allied to play. Likewise, in mm4, there are again two events doubled: I and II play bartok pizzicato 16<sup>th</sup> notes simultaneously with scratchtones on open strings, while II and IV play a low C one quartertone sharp, sul ponticello, with a single upbow. In mm 6–7 we have violoncello IV soloing with a grind against another event played by the other three instruments (high sounds behind the bridge). This is, more or less, the rhetoric of the piece: micro events either performed as solos or compounded with other instruments. This creates varying densities through sonic allegiances and/or divisions within discursive events.

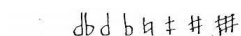
Play all sounds and events with conviction, focus, ferocity, brutality and intensity. Do not shy away from brutal noise; the overall work is vary “noisy”. The work is about ruins, things that have fallen apart. There is, perhaps, beauty and, certainly, an aesthetic quality that can be found within decayed forms. Although rough, they are consistent and contain the seeds of varying possibilities.

“Detuned” and “retuned” sections may not be exact. Get as close to the target pitch as possible. You are, in a sense, destroying the fixed state of the violoncello therefore unpredictable sounds are welcome.

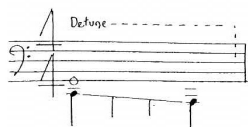
At the very end of the work performers are asked to, once again, to detune their low C string. This detuning, which is attached to a glissando, must be performed as continuous a line as possible, gradually reaching a very low sound. Intensity will lessen as the string goes lower. Treat this as a sort of “de-crescendo” to end the work. Hold the final compound sound for 5” or more.

This composition is not to be played with any traditional techniques such as “nice” tone, vibrato, or meter stresses. I want the piece to sound more like early electronic music than a string quartet.

## Intonation

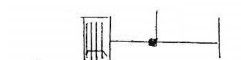


### Order of quarter tones

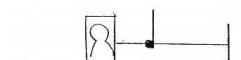


During certain sections, performers are asked to “de-tune” and “re-tune” their instruments. It’s ok if the target pitch is not exact (mm135 cello III).

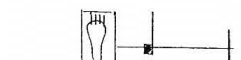
## Clefs/Bow Placement



Behind the bridge. Play on strings behind the bridge (mm2 cello I and II). Strings will be indicated. Performer will be asked to play one of two ways: on bare string or on the threaded section.



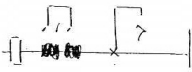
Bridge. Play on bridge generally with the addition of strings on both sides of the wood so as to create two sounds: the wood being bowed and the high pitched squealing of the strings (mm113 cello I). Use as much hair as possible.



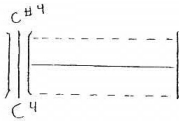
Tailpiece. Play on most resonant section of tailpiece with well rosined bow. Performer must create as much sound and volume as possible whenever playing the tailpiece (mm16 cello III and IV).



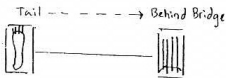
Indicates where bow is to move physically over the instrument between the fingerboard and bridge, or over bridge (mm89 cello IV). Dotted line indicates bridge and is included to aid orientation.



Clef used for bridge grinding and wood knocking.



Microtonal oscillation clef. Strictly follow the shape of graphic and *only* between given interval. In this example (mm108 cello III) performer plays between interval C-C# in the fourth register of the instrument (counted up from the low C). In addition, performer is asked to play this note as an artificial harmonic.



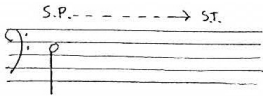
Movement of bow over the instrument. Create as much sound/noise as possible wherever the bow may be at any time (mm85-87 cello IV).

S.P.

Sul ponticello

S.T.

Sul Tasto



Move bow, continuously between Sul tasto and Sul ponticello. Dotted arrow *always* means gradual change over the given period of time so the sound modulates.

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