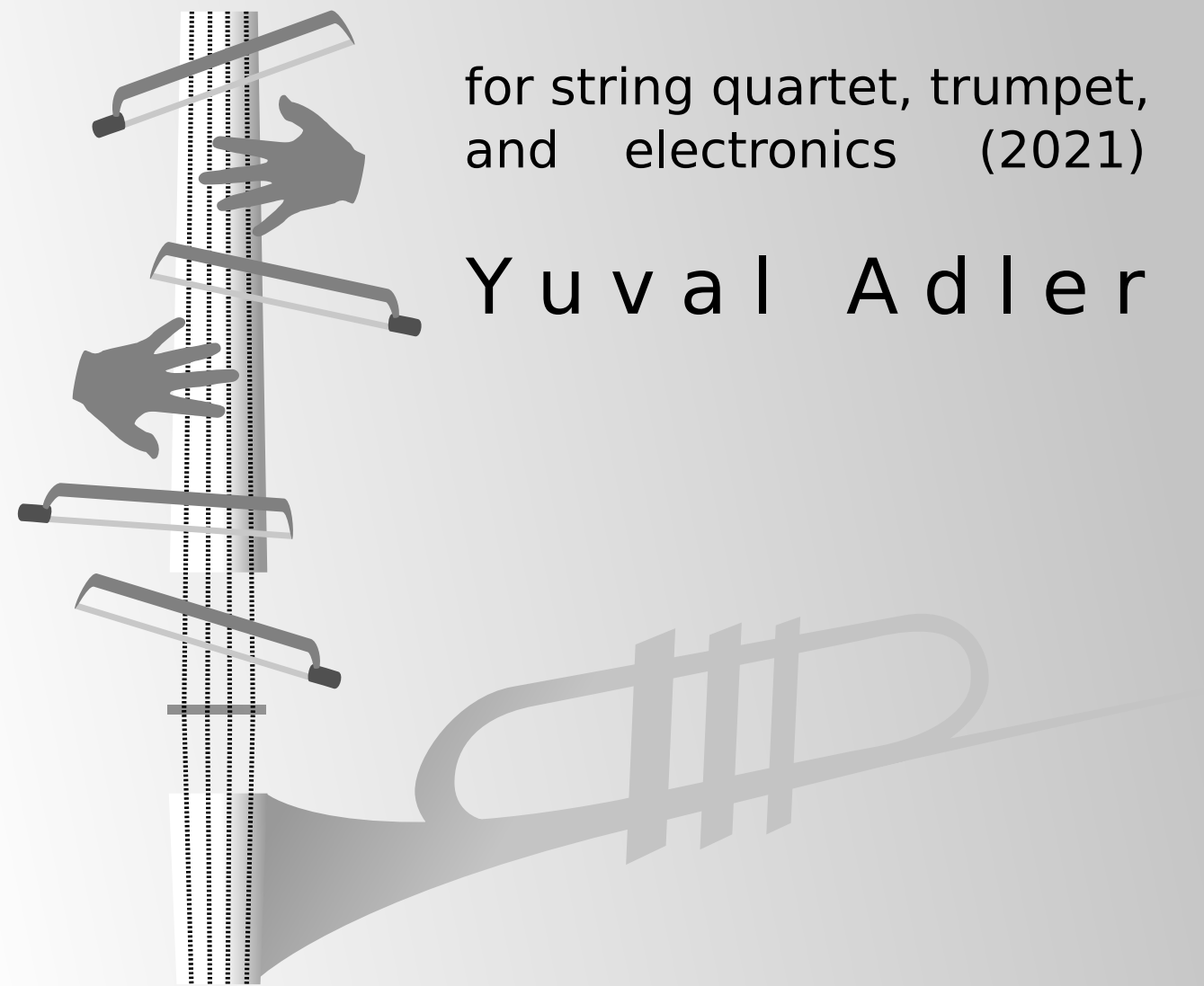


four strings and other



for string quartet, trumpet,
and electronics (2021)

Yuval Adler

instructions

This work is to be performed by a string quartet or a similar ensemble of four string players, with each player using their own bow, but all playing on one cello. Additionally, a transducer is fixed to the cello body, through which a trumpet part is played.

The trumpet part (detailed in a separate page to the quartet) should be performed offstage or be prerecorded. Its four sections - T.a through T.d - are played before each corresponding string quartet section - S.a through S.d.

Different bow and hand positions are required from the players throughout the piece, so careful consideration should be given to stage arrangement. Fix the cello to a table to allow free movement of all players around the instrument. Find a transducer placement on the cello body that allows for the necessary loudness but does not interfere with the performers' actions.

Since bowing is done over the fingerboard at times, dynamics should be scaled to what is achievable when bowing this way (others should play softer). It might be useful to clean the cello strings from finger grease to allow for more effective bowing over the fingerboard. If played in conjunction with other works, use of a separate cello should be considered. (This will also help with the rosin that might be left on the strings after the performance.)

The bows are depicted to show position and orientation of the bow. Circles mark which strings the bow is in contact with.

Around the hands are brackets to show the general range of the fingerboard that is used in that part and section.

Each section will require a rearrangement of the players around the cello body, and the order of the staves in the system is also changed.

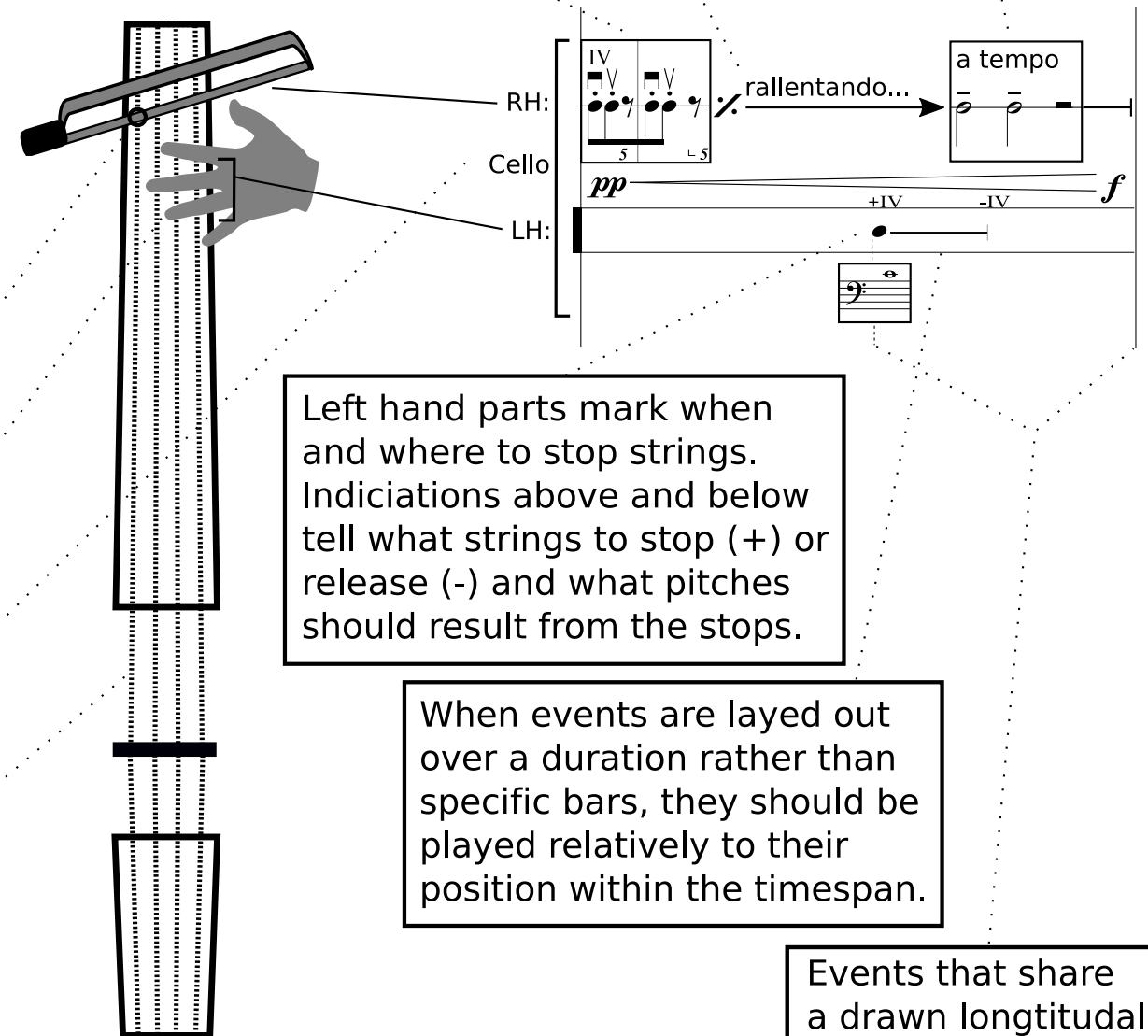
The diagram of the cello's strings is marked with the relative placement of the hands and bows required for each section.

This piece is an expansion and update of *Four Strings*, which was originally written in 2018 after workshopping segments of it with the St. Lawrence String Quartet. This revision came about following a performance in 2021 by Latenz Ensemble, incorporating their feedback as well as adding new material.

If line is an arrow a process is indicated above the line that should be applied to the boxed material, and the boxed material that follows the arrow is the target form after said process. The process should be gradual.

Boxed material should be repeated and played for the duration the line following it is drawn.

In this example the material starts at an initial tempo and then slows down to the later form, here presented as an elongated figuration in the initial tempo again.

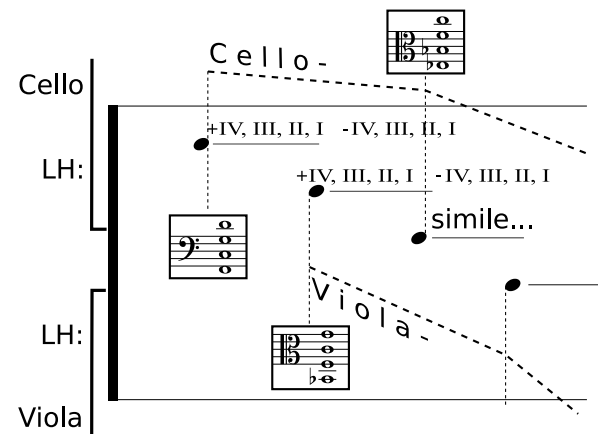


Left hand parts mark when and where to stop strings. Indications above and below tell what strings to stop (+) or release (-) and what pitches should result from the stops.

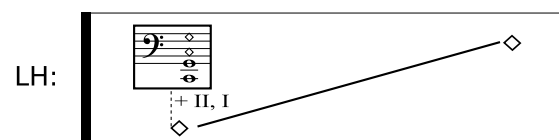
When events are layed out over a duration rather than specific bars, they should be played relatively to their position within the timespan.

Events that share a drawn longtitudal line should happen in sync.

In this section both players share the fingerboard, alternating who stops the strings for all the bows. The dotted beam shows which stop is performed by which player.

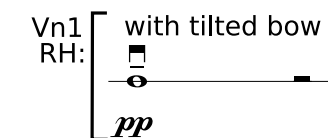


A diamond notehead in the left hand part indicates a flageolet rather than a normal stop. The indication above it, instead of resultant pitch as before, shows what flageolet to perform.

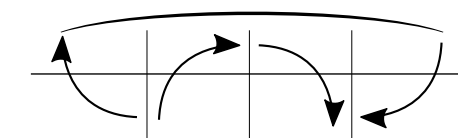


A diagonal line between two stop marks indicates that over the duration of the line a glissando should be performed. If it does not end on a clearly marked pitch then it should cover the approximate range within the fingerboard range shown by the bracket for the left hand on the positioning diagram at the beginning of the section.

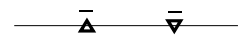
Bow should be tilted to use less hair for contacting string from this moment on.



A triangle notehead is normal in length (empty and without stem is equal to a whole note, etc.) but indicates moving the bow up or down the string according to the direction of the triangle instead of bowing, i.e. acting as a moving stop on the string instead. The range of movement available to each player should be considered carefully and used in full over the duration of the note. Playing with the bow tilted is important to achieving this effect.



Each curve here indicates a gesture that begins with the bow moving up/down (as with triangle notation discussed to the left) or left/right (regular bowing motion) at the beginning of the measure and gradually changing to the direction of the end of the arrow. Each gesture should fill up its entire measure, and the gestures should flow from one another to create a circular motion.



While the theatricality of this piece is unavoidable, all such elements should be put into the context of trying for intimacy among the ensemble members, and between them and the cello, achieved through an intense focus rather than quirky showmanship.

To help achieve this and to allow for the softer details to be heard well, an intimate seating arrangement for the audience around the ensemble should be considered. If such an arrangement is not possible, close micing the cello may be considered as an alternative if the need arises.

trumpet

Each of the four segments detailed here (T.a - T.d) should be performed off-stage or prerecorded, and heard on stage only through a transducer attached to the cello's body. Output levels should be set to match the quartet's overall playing dynamics, and can be adjusted between the segments. Try to get the loudest parts to cause the cello strings to resonate. Position the transducer so that it does not obstruct the string players, but that it can be heard well.

The trumpet's first piston slide should be removed before part T.c, and be returned before part T.d.

T.a

Play this section as the quartet is gathering around the cello. Comfortable tempo, ad lib.

Trumpet

breath sounds with articulations

t t t^{ka} t t t t t t k t t t t t t t k t^{ka} teeh...

p pp ppp p pp ppp pp p

nails on bell t t^{ka} k t teeh... naturalistic breathing

pp p t p mp mf f<

relaxed ... sharp!

release... Quartet starts playing S.a...

mf p f

T.b

Begin this section right after S.a ends.

Tpt

somehow fast, slowing down... long and relaxed

mf pp p pp f<

uvular flutter rrr t

big, fast, leading to... Quartet starts S.b immediately.

T.c

Start immediately at the end of S.b. Panicked. Use left thumb to block airflow out of the first piston. Slide should be removed ahead of time.

♩ = 120

unnatural rhythmic breathing

pistons pressed:

Tpt

f

(blocks breath)

add voice, strained

Quartet starts S.c immediately.

T.d

Start at end of S.c. Relaxed tempo ad lib. First piston slide should be back in place.

Tpt B_b

natural overtones (notated pitches approximate)

p > mf f

Quartet starts S.d with slight overlap.

S.a

Start a little after T.a ends. Match overall dynamic range among the players based on limits to given maximum dynamics due to bow positions.

accordatura:

$\text{♩} = 100$

00" 27" 30" 57" 60"

5/4 5/4

RH:

LH:

RH:

LH:

RH:

RH:

Rearrange for next part while T.b is playing, suppressing any noises that arise.

S.b

Start immediately after T.b's ending sharp inhale gesture. Agree on the possible maximum for dynamics and tremolo as an ensemble and lead to it, maintaining the energy gained with each cumulative gesture.

a tempo $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

00'' 15'' 18'' 28'' 31'' 41'' 44''

RH: Cello *pp* *ff* *sp* *ff* *sp* *ff* *sp*

LH: Cello

RH: Viola *pp* *ff* *sp* *ff* *sp* *ff* *sp*

RH: Violin 2 *pp* *ff* *sp* *ff* *sp* *ff* *sp*

RH: Violin 1 *pp* *ff* *sp* *ff* *sp* *ff* *sp*

accelerando... *accel...* *accelerando...* *accel...*

simile...

(dim. to match clo. + vla.)

(dim. to match clo. + vla.)

Rearrange for next part while suppressing any noises as T.c plays.

S.C

Start immediately after T.c. Here each string is bowed by two players. At first this will result in a grating sound, but as bow pressure is relieved, bows become tilted, and use of one bow of each string as a moving stop is employed - flageolet-like sounds should result in the later section instead of the initial grating.

a tempo

Violin 2 RH: $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Violin 1 RH: $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Cello RH: $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Viola RH: $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Vn2 RH: $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Vn1 RH: $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Clo RH: $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Vla RH: $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Rearrange carefully for next part while making sure to make as little noise as possible while T.d plays.

S.d

Start with slight overlap of last note of T.d.

The diagram shows a top-down view of a string quartet instrument with two hands positioned on the strings. Lines connect these hands to the corresponding staves in the musical score. The score is divided into two sections: 00" and 60".

00" Section:

- Cello RH:** III+II, *ppp*
- Cello LH:** + II, I
- Viola LH:** + IV, III
- Viola RH:** IV+I, *ppp*
- Violin 2 RH:** IV+I below bridge, *ppp*
- Violin 1 RH:** III+II below bridge, *ppp*

60" Section:

- Cello RH:** bow increasingly closer to the bridge
- Cello LH:** try successively higher overtones... ...remain on highest
- Viola LH:** try successively higher overtones... ...remain on highest
- Viola RH:** bow increasingly closer to the bridge