

Kite Flying and Other Mishaps

for

Solo Double Bass

Francis Heery

SCORDATURA

The instrument should be retuned to: E, B, D, G#, *ie.* the 'A' string tuned up a whole tone and the 'G' string tuned up a semi-tone, with the 'E' and 'D' strings remaining unchanged.

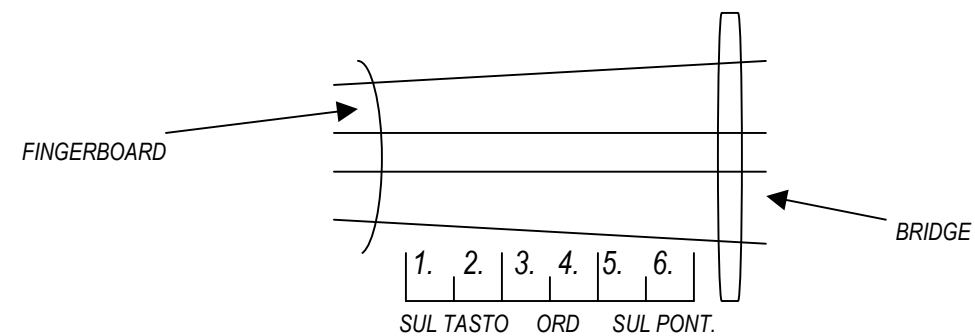
HARMONICS NOTATION

In sections A, C and E the harmonics are notated so that the bottom note is the string to be played and the top note is the pitch at which the string should be touched to produce the harmonic. All the harmonics in other sections are played on the 'E' string.

BOWING TECHNIQUE

Throughout the piece the main concern is to highlight the partials of the notes played, with a shimmering effect intended. Given the nature of the instrument an effective way of achieving this is by bowing technique. Swift, lightly bowed strokes are very effective and as a rule of thumb a degree of lightness of touch should be employed throughout this piece. This applies, to some extent, to fortissimo passages as well as to quieter ones (unless heavy bowing is specifically called for). So, although great contrast is still called for between loud and soft passages, dynamic intensity shouldn't come at the price of a murky sound. Essentially, loud dynamics are relative to the harmonic timbral character achievable.

Another effective technique is playing in varying positions between the fingerboard (*sul tasto*) and the bridge (*sul ponticello*). In the score numbers are used to show where between these two points the bow should sound, with 1 representing *sul tasto*, 6 representing *sul pont* and the numbers in between representing the gradations in between. A line joining two numbers means that a smooth transition should take place between the positions indicated (*see diagram below*).



SECTION A

BARS 1-17

Notes should be plucked close to the bridge with the top of the finger or fingernail if possible to produce a clear harmonic. On the left hand, the finger that touches the string to produce the harmonic should lift away from it as soon as the note has sounded to ensure no damping occurs and the notes can ring out.

SECTION B

BAR 18

A combination of lightly bowed *flautando* technique and *tremolo* should give a bright shimmering tonality that, as the bow moves toward the bridge and with the changing dynamics will highlight the partials of the fundamental 'E'. The player should be careful control the bow so that a pronounced *saltando* effect is avoided. However if the bowing occasionally borders on this effect it is acceptable. Overall a 'halo' of overtones of varying intensities is the intended result.

BARS 43-45

With the (initially intermittent) introduction of harmonics it is intended for the pitch of the open string 'E' to appear to be destabilising somewhat. From this instability emerges the slightly flat 'D' harmonic, the 7th partial. The arrow indicates that the string should be touched at a slightly flat 'G' to obtain this partial, as conventional notation implies that touching the string at a natural 'G' would produce the 6th partial, 'B'.

The player should linger slightly on these touched notes, as indicated by the *tenuto* markings.

BARS 61-72

The harmonics notated in this section are quite unstable, particularly those situated around the lightly stopped 'F#'. However this can add an element of unpredictability to the sonorities created there, which is acceptable should it occur.

SECTION D
BARS 89-123

From the 5/8 bar 89 a virtuosic quasi-rhythmical explosion of partials and scratch tones is the intended result after an initial *crescendo*. Here a good deal of freedom is given to the performer in terms of the exact harmonics and rhythms played. In fact taking into account that the passage should be played 'as fast as possible' some taking of liberties in relation to these aspects is expected to some degree. This is especially true of the pitches notated which act more as a contour guide than as a line to be followed precisely. With regard to this the pitched activity sometimes quite clearly takes place in certain registers which should be noted by the player. Texture and timbral colour are all important here. As such the player should certainly strive for accuracy where the *dynamics* are concerned.

With regard to the bowing positions between 1 and 6, the initial piano bars should be played *sul tasto*, bow position 1. From bars 94-123 however the player should freely distribute the bow to all areas, in an erratic, vehement manner. The exception to this approach occurs where the four open strings chord are played, with each of these to be played at the bow position indicated.

BARS 123-134

At bar 123 the player should be careful to take note of bowing and rhythm. The pitches too are to be played more accurately with the highest and lowest notes in each bar taking priority over the others which again act more as a guide for the contour.

At bar 129 the final upper pitch is deliberately left undefined but the player should attempt to repeat the first glissando played from bar 129, as accurately as possible as it fades out to nothing.

Kite Flying And Other Mishaps

Solo Double Bass

Francis Heery

A $\text{♩} = 60$
PLUCKED CLOSE TO THE BRIDGE
WITH THE TIP OF THE FINGER.

IV *mp* III III II IV III I II III III

IV III I II II IV III II III II III

B ARCO.
RAPID FLAUTANDO TREMOLO
AT THE FINGERBOARD (1)

pp *pp* *p* *pp* *mp* *p*

mf *mp* *mp* *f* *mf* *fff*

GRADUALLY CHANGING TO WIDE BRIGHT TREMOLO

AT BRIDGE. WIDE BRIGHT TREMOLO (still relatively light bow pressure)

fff *f* *mf* *f*

GRADUALLY CHANGEING TO DENSE NARROW TREMOLO

AT BRIDGE. DENSE, NARROW TREMOLO

SOUND 4TH PARTIAL OF 'E' STRING, ie. 'E', 2 OCT. ABOVE

SOUND 7TH PARTIAL OF 'E' STRING, ie. 'D', 2 OCT. AND MIN 7TH ABOVE.

ARCO [FREELY]

SOUND 6TH PARTIAL OF 'E' STRING, ie. 'B', 2 OCT. AND A FIFTH ABOVE.

p *ff* *ff* *sfz* *mf* *fff*

TREM. BOW HEAVILY INTO STRING.

NORMAL PRESSURE

BOW VERY HEAVILY INTO STRING

LIGHT PRESSURE

105 CREATE HARMONICS AGAIN

sfz ff sfz mf fff f

112 HALF-STOP THE NOTES. VERY HEAVY BOW PRESSURE

CEATE HARMONICS AGAIN

f mf sfz ff fff mp sfz mp ff f

120

f ff

124 GRADUALLY SLOW TEMPO TO ♩ = 60 AT BAR 129

f p

129 GLISS TO ABOUT MIDWAY BETWEEN FINGERBOARD AND BRIDGE

♩ = 60

6 SUL PONT.

f p

135 **E** 6 PIZZ. SUL PONT

pp ppp