

Tautologies and Contradictions

Francis Heery

for

Viola and Cello

Tautologies and Contradictions- Performance Notes.

For the most part the piece consists of a texture of trills, which employ the half-stopping of the notes and specific bowing techniques. The intention is to create a dense mesh of chromatic pitches that are unstable and, to a large extent, unpredictable in terms of timbre. Below are details regarding playing technique. However it might be helpful to bear in mind that a loose (perhaps 'sloppy') approach to both bowing technique and intonation is likely to create the most interesting results.

Trills

All trills are between notated pitch and a semitone higher, *unless specifically indicated*.

Bowing Technique

Bowing should be energetic and use as much bow length as possible

A vital aspect of the piece is bow pressure and throughout the score the player should play with either particularly light or particularly heavy bow pressure. In general no 'normal' bow pressure should feature in the piece. With very light bow pressure, the intended effect is to create a sonority rich in overtones that obscures the fundamental to a very large degree, if not completely. When very heavy bow pressure is called for (eg. where **sfz** accents occur) a bright scratch-like sound is the desired effect.

Light bow pressure can still facilitate loud dynamics and so even when **forte** is indicated a lightness of touch should be used.

As a rule of thumb where **f** or quieter appears the bowing should be light (while still retaining the contrast between 'loud' and 'soft') and where **ff** is indicated the bowing should be heavy.

Bowing Position

Bowing position between fingerboard and bridge is a vital aspect in changing the timbre. Except for a couple of instances no indication is given in the score for bowing position. The Bow should largely concentrate on the *sul pont* area but the player is encouraged to experiment and ad lib as far as the details are concerned.

MSP: Stands for Molto Sul Pont. Player should play with the bow practically on the bridge. The fundamental should be obscured to a very large degree (if not completely) when playing in this position and nothing but upper partials should be heard.

MST: Molto Sul Tatso. Player should play with the bow two inches or so over the fingerboard.

ORD: Ordinary playing position

Accents

There are two types of accent used in the piece. Where the normal accent symbol is used then a 'normal', relatively subtle accent is required. When an accent is accompanied by an **sfz**, then a particularly pronounced accent is required. This will entail an exaggerated amount of both bow length and bow pressure to create a sudden, bright flash of sound.

Left Hand Technique

Another key feature is that of half-stopping the notes to create an indistinct, unstable but still faintly discernable pitch. These half-stopped notes are indicated by a square note-head. The finger pressure used should be greater than the pressure needed to create clear harmonics but not enough to allow the string to touch the fingerboard. The pitch should become unstable to some extent. This instability should be even more pronounced when combined with trills and the abovementioned bowing techniques, to create a very vibrant, somewhat unpredictable sonority, rich in short-lived, transient partials.

Tautologies And Contradictions

Viola and Cello

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♩ = 80

Viola

Violoncello

(Harmonic finger pressure)
Bow half on Bridge

MSP

5

Vla.

Vc.

Gradually increase finger pressure

Half-stop the notes

M.S.T

10

Vla.

Vc.

MST

MSP

ORD

(Half stop notes again)
(Harmonics finger pressure)

14 (tr) (Harmonics finger pressure) (Half stop notes again)

Vla. *mp* *mf* *mp* *f* *mp* MSP (Harmonics finger pressure) MST

Vc. *mp* *sfz* *mf* *mp* (Half stop notes again)

18 Trem

Vla. *mp* *mf* *mp* *f* *mf* *mf* *ff* *p*

Vc. *sfz* *mp* *mp* *f* *mf* *mf* (III) *ff* *p*

23

Vla. *p* *pp* *sfz* *sfz* *pp* 5

Vc. *p* *pp* *pp* *mf* *pp* 3 *sfz* *pp*³

27 (tr) A slight accent

Vla. *pp* *mp* *p* *sfz p* *p* *mf* *p*

Vc. *pp* *mp* *p* *p* *mf* *p* *MSP*

31 (tr) *sfz p* *sfz p* *p* *ff*

Vc. (Trill between B and C) *sfz* *sfz* *p* *ff*

35 *ff* *p* *p* *mf* *p*

Vc. *ff* *p*

38

Vla. *(tr)* *p* *f*

Vc. *(tr)* *p* *f*

41

Vla. *f* *sfz* *f* *ff* *f*

Vc. *f* *ff* *f*

MSP (Harmonics finger pressure) MST

(Half stop notes again)

44

Vla. *sfz* *f* *ff*

Vc. *f* *ff*

MSP

48 *tr*

Vla. *p* *5* *3* *3* *p* *5* *3* *pp* *3* *pp* *mp* *pp*

Vc. *p* *5* *3* *5* *p* *3* *3* *5* *5* *pp* *3* *5* *3*

51 MSP

Vla. *5* *3* *3* *pp* *Bow half on bridge*

Vc. *MSP* *3* *5* *3* *p* *pp* *Bow half on bridge* *3*