

HOLLOWS

1985

Eleanor Hovda

For the Sylmar Chamber Ensemble
with gratitude to the McKnight Foundation

HOLLOWS

for

flute, oboe, bassoon, violin, cello

Eleanor Hovda

PERFORMANCE NOTES

This piece is a very introspective probing of "the secret life" of the winds and strings. It resonates hollow places and takes long lengths of time to excavate and articulate the "sound around the sound".

Therefore, the most important thing to remember when performing is to be willing to work with very soft to almost inaudible dynamic levels with great concentration and energy. A theatrical metaphor would be the Noh drama of Japan, where the slow unfolding of infinitesimally distilled material serves to intensify concentration.

TIMING - This piece moves in "breath" or "process" time - "the time it takes to do something". There are also a few sections for specific parts with m m, markings. These "pulse" sections are also intended to be performed in a natural, non-dogged manner once the general tempo and rhythmic shape has been worked out. NEVER should repetitions be played rigidly or "absolutely".

ENERGY COUNTERPOINTS - many instruments in the ensemble perform the same pitches with very different types of energy inherent in the nature of the instruments. Players may develop "push/pull" or balancing relationships with each other during performance.

Both **WINDS** and **STRINGS** are asked to use techniques which will result in the possibility of sounds considered "extraneous" or "wrong" by classical technique standards. Many of these sounds which include "air" sounds for both winds and strings, "escape tones" which may occur while changing fingerings, and upper partials which result from slow, slight bowing are important for the articulation of "hollows", and plenty of time should be allowed for them to become established in the texture.

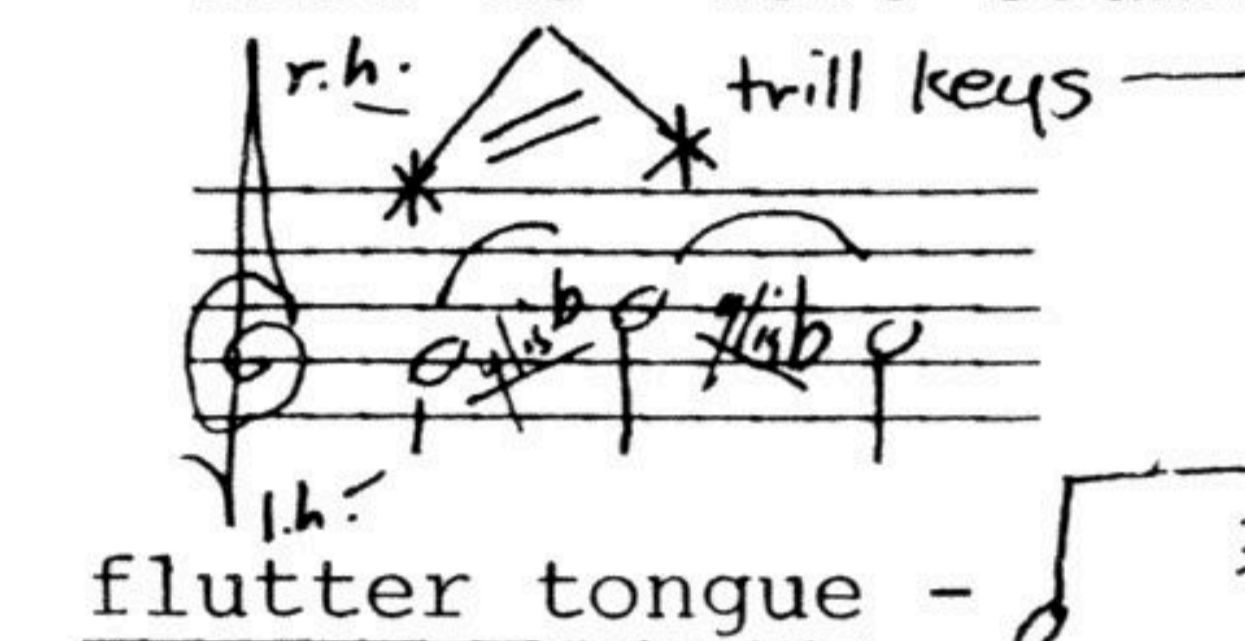
FLUTE - It is important to use inhale as well as exhale "melodically", as motion forms, to establish flow. Let both inhale and exhale modes be audible.

FLUTE (continued)

ā ē ō ū ā (vowels) used "melodically" to color air
sh, H, T (consonants) sounds & shape attacks & decays

"subtone" or "covered tone" - used in soft (m.o.) seq

also as "dove sounds":



soft, muffled playing
with trill keys coloring
and "hollowing" basic
tone. Trill keys played
with variable speeds.

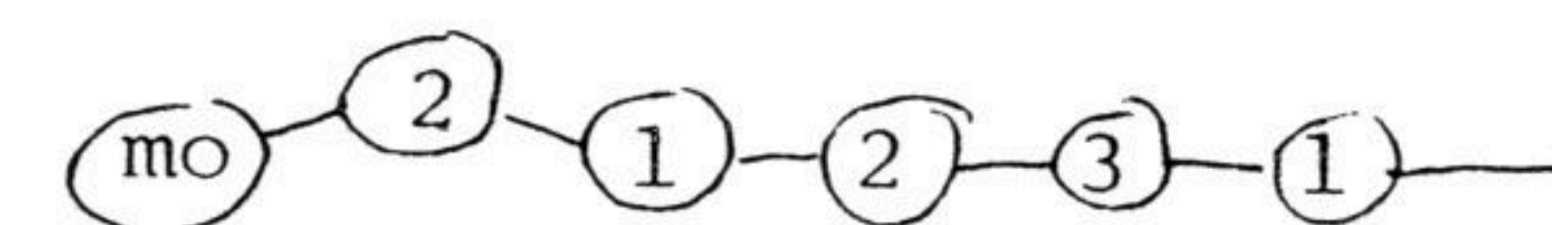
pulsed "energy" vibrato -



* **alternate fingerings** - (x), (y), (z) used to indicate different fingerings to be used to make a "timbral melody". Please select three fingerings with differences in color (pitches may vary microtonally as well). Assign each fingering a letter (x), (y), or (z) and use those fingerings when performing the piece. This will allow the player to design an alternate fingering set which works for that player.

- (m o.) - ordinary manner of tone production
- (1) - traverse air sound (½ air/½ pitch); relaxed embouchure
- (2) - covered air sound (pure air) - mouth completely covers embouchure hole (exhaled), audible
- (3) - covered air sound (pure air) - mouth completely covers embouchure hole (inhaled), audible

NOTE: (2) & (3) are interchangeable and should be used as needed (exhale or inhale). They are made audible in a phrase by use of vowels and consonants.



indicates unbroken, flowing transition from one manner of playing to another

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HOLLOWS - Performance Notes (continued)

OBOE - always maintain as soft, sheer sound as possible
The intensity of the "silence" of reed instruments played "softer than humanly possible" is of central importance in this piece

pulsed "energy" vibrato -

It is very important to have this be a controlled "energy/volume" pulsing. It is not a wavering of pitch. The notation is not to be adhered to "absolutely" or rigidly. Allow it to flow.

alternate fingerings - see FLUTE * above

ALWAYS take time to fully exhale and rest when needed

trill keys used to "hollow out" tones -

trill keys should be used at variable speeds to give a "yodel" contour to tones played ppp

BASSOON - always maintain as soft a dynamic palette as possible for this piece. The intensity of the barely audible, "coming out of the walls" quality is very important in this work. The concentration and energy of playing "softer than humanly possible" heightens listening awareness in this case. Airleaks and other "sounds around the sound" which occur when playing as softly as required, are perfectly legitimate in this piece.

pulsed energy vibrato -

It is very important to have this be a controlled "energy/volume" (small range) pulsing - not a wavering of pitch. The notation is detailed more as an example than to be adhered to rigidly. It is executed with a breath effort rather than a tonguing effort, & in a small soft dynamic range.

alternate fingerings - see FLUTE * above

trill keys used to "hollow out" tones -

trill keys should be used at gentle, variable speeds to give a "yodel" contour to tones played ppp

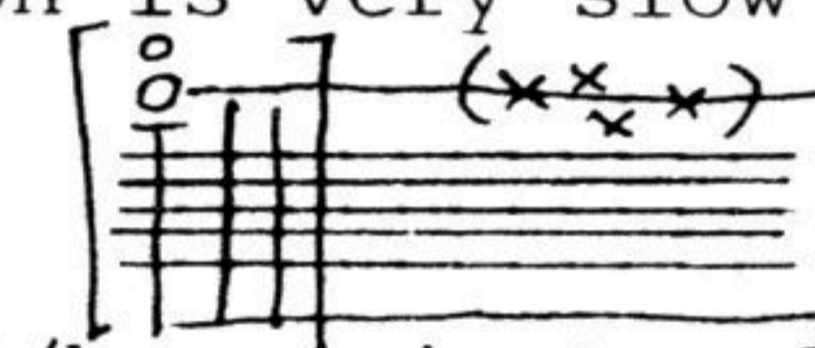
VIOLIN and CELLO (continued)

Bowings - in most cases, the strings are asked to bow very slowly and, using a kind of figure-of-eight motion, to alternate between ponticello, modo ordinario and tasto placement.

This piece is unusually concerned with the harmonics rather than the fundamentals, and the intention is that the player coax the "sound around the sound" out of the instrument by use of bowing speed, angle of bow and placement on string. The resulting sounds will be very soft and ephemeral-like particles. Be very conscious of breathflow and being centered while taking the time it takes to evoke and articulate the sounds.

adjacent finger trills - a circular type of melody created by using the fingers on either side of a notated pitch. It is not important which pitches exactly, just the motion of three pitchchanges (usually harmonics and "airy" since bow motion is very slow and in the pont - tasto areas).

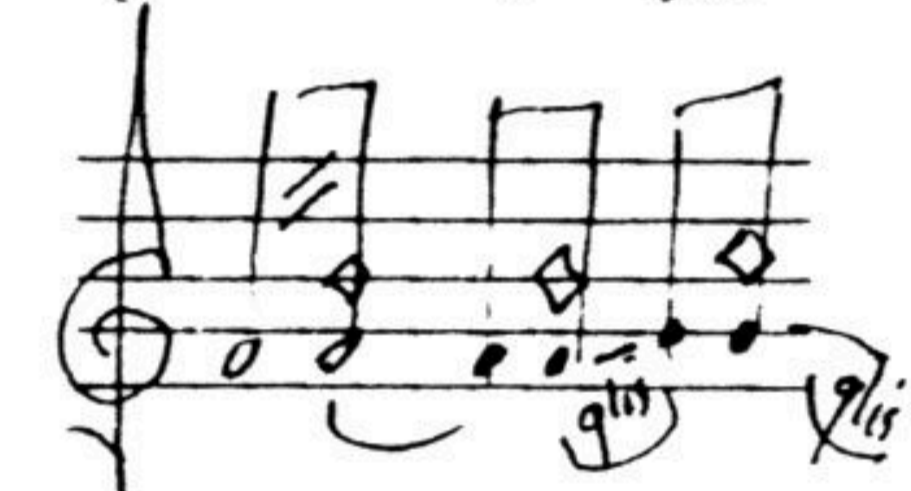
Notated:



(tasto -> pont) ∞

fundamental/harmonic tremolos and glisses -

These create a "hollow", dovelike or "yodel" sound. They should be played very softly, allowing the "hollowing" around the fundamental. Bow speed should be slow, and position on string from tasto to ponticello should take place slowly, allowing the colors to unfold.



*Alexander
Roth, MA
1985*

Commissioned by
the Sylmar Chamber Ensemble

Hollows (1985)

Glenore House

the Sylmar Chamber Ensemble

Flute

Oboe

Bassoon

Violin

Viola

Annotations:

- ca. 1 = 72
- ppp possible
- ppp sempre
- slow bowing ∞ sempre
- (falso — mo — pont) \rightarrow simile
- (Adjacent finger trills) (ad. lib sequence)
- (Adjacent finger trills) sequence shape, Ad. lib

Handwritten musical score for five instruments: Flute (fl.), Oboe (ob.), Bassoon (bssn.), Violin (vln.), and Viola (vle.). The score includes various musical notations, dynamics, and performance instructions.

Flute (fl.): Starts with a circled '3' and a note marked 'mo'. Above the staff, it says "subtone" (circular "dove" sounds, hollow, fluid, $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 160$). A bracket indicates "(use 3-2-1 as needed, Always Allow 3 to sound)". Further right, a sequence of notes is shown with vowels: $\text{H}\bar{e} - \bar{o} - \bar{e} - \bar{u} - \bar{o} - \bar{a} - \bar{u} - \bar{a} - \bar{o} - \bar{e}$, with a circled '3' and 'mo' below. A final note is marked 'sh' with a circled '3' and '4' above it. A note says "(use 3 (inhale) as needed)".

Oboe (ob.): Features a trill marked "(G#) trill key". A section of notes is marked "ca. 12" and "slow 'breath' time". A later section is marked "simile" and "energy pulsings/vibs".

Bassoon (bssn.): Includes a trill marked "trill keys". A section is marked "niente" with dynamics $(\text{PPP} < \text{P} > \text{PPP})$. Another section is marked "PPP (barely audible!)" with a note "(inhale as needed)".

Violin (vln.): A section is marked "Alternate trills + harmonic".

Viola (vle.): Starts with a note marked "tato" and "very slow bow, Allow 'sound around the sound' (pont - mo - tato) simile).". A section is marked "SulA tremolo" with dynamics $> \text{PPP}$. The score ends with a complex rhythmic figure in brackets.

5

fl.

ob.

bssn

fln

vle

(finger changes)
(use inhale as needed only)

(energy pulsings/vibs)

PPP

(use ① - ② - ③ Ad lib, + ③ when needed)

trill keys

(energy pulsings/vibs)

PPP

trill keys

PPP

(--- alternate trills & harmonics)

(pont - mo - tasto ∞)

slow gliss

gliss

PPP sempre

Handwritten musical score for five staves: *st*, *ob.*, *bssn*, *vln*, and *vle*. The score is divided into three measures by vertical dashed lines, with measure numbers 6, 7, and 8 written in boxes above the staves.

Staff *st*: Empty.

Staff *ob.*: Contains two measures of music. The first measure starts with a *PPP* dynamic marking and a series of vertical lines (pedal points) under a slur. Above the staff, there are handwritten notes: *x*, *y*, *z*, *y*, *x*, *y*, *z*, and a bracketed *1*. The second measure continues with similar vertical lines and notes: *x*, *y*, *z*, *x*, *y*, *z*, *y*, *x*.

Staff *bssn*: Contains two measures. The first measure has a *PPP* dynamic marking and a single note. The second measure features a trill marked *tr* and a tremolo marked *trem*.

Staff *vln*: Contains two measures of music. The first measure has a series of vertical lines (pedal points) under a slur, with the numbers 6, 6, and 3 written below. The second measure is empty.

Staff *vle*: Contains two measures. The first measure has a *PPP sempre* dynamic marking and a series of vertical lines. The second measure is empty.

Annotations:

- Below the *vln* staff, there is a tempo instruction: *♩ = ca. 126 (non-rigid flowing tempo)*.
- Below the tempo instruction: *use light, slow bow - allow "sound around sound" touch harmonic + release*.
- Below the tempo instruction: *slowly move (pont - tasto - mo - pont) ∞ →*.
- At the bottom of the page, there are two arrows pointing towards each other, labeled *fade out* and *fade in*.

Handwritten musical score for five instruments: fl (flute), ob (oboe), bssn (bassoon), vln (violin), and vlc (viola). The score is divided into measures by vertical dashed lines.

Flute (fl): Measure 9 contains a circular "dove" sound pattern with a "subtone" (marked *ppp*). Measure 10 contains a "dove" sound pattern with a "subtone" (marked *pp*) and a "r.h. trill keys" instruction.

Oboe (ob): Measure 9 contains a "subtone" (marked *ppp*) and a "circular pattern, use inhale/exhale pitch/non-pitch" instruction. Measure 10 contains a "subtone (maybe 8va?)" (marked *ppp*) and a "circular pattern, use inhale/exhale pitch/non-pitch" instruction.

Bassoon (bssn): Measure 9 contains a "trill keys" instruction (marked *ppp possible*).

Violin (vln): Measure 9 contains a "trill keys" instruction (marked *ppp possible*). Measure 10 contains a "fast, airy, glassy, hollow" instruction (marked *ppp*) and a "pont - ma - lasto" instruction.

Viola (vlc): Measure 9 contains a "trill keys" instruction (marked *ppp possible*). Measure 10 contains a "fast, airy, glassy, hollow" instruction (marked *ppp*) and a "pont - ma - lasto" instruction.

Annotations:

- Measure 9: *♩ = ca. 160 m.m.*, *circular "dove" sounds*, *"mo" "subtone"* (use ①, ②, ③ as needed).
- Measure 10: *"dove" sounds*, *"mo" "subtone"*, *r.h. trill keys*, *Slur*, *pp*, *ppp*, *subtone*, *circular pattern, use inhale/exhale pitch/non-pitch* (as needed), *subtone (maybe 8va?)*, *ppp*, *trill keys*, *ppp possible*, *fast, airy, glassy, hollow* (pont - ma - lasto), *ppp*, *use "A" string*.

* or some other easily fingered set of harmonics to make a circular melody (sound is so airy that each pitch is not obtrusive. Idea is circular energy shape with pitch changes of some kind)

"dove sounds" (use ①, ②, ③ as needed) →
 (mo) "Subtone" possible

14'

trill keys

(Alt. fingerings)

12'

fl

ppp < > = > (simile) →

ob

(inmate as needed)

ppp < > < > (simile) →

(use alternate fingerings, Ad. lib)

bssn

ppp < > < > (simile) →

vn

vle

pp

pp

hiente

hiente

hiente

hiente