

ONYX

for Chamber Orchestra

Eleanor Hovda

commissioned by the Lake Superior Chamber Orchestra

this project was supported in part through funding from the Minnesota State Arts Board and the National Endowment for the Arts.

correcting copy
old version
new version:
sp
ab
B^bcl
hn
trp
ultr
plus II
ultr
pic
bass

General notes on the score:

STRING NOTES

ONYX is written in 30-second increments rather than metered except for reh. # 12-16 which is written in 4/4.

Rehearsal numbers correspond to page numbers in the score. Each score page is approximately 30 seconds long. Time is flexible in this piece, and should be dealt with in terms of breath lengths and by the Conductor's sense of when changes should occur.

There should be no awkward cueing places, no entrances "on a dime", and when more than one instrument in a section is playing a passage, it is not important to sound in unison, because the point of the piece is to have each instrument evolve color changes by various bowing and other changes on single "notes".



notation enclosed in a box within other notation signals a group of elements which may be used ad. lib throughout that section.

notation enclosed in braces with a line across the system refers to a set of repeating passages which should continue until the line ends.

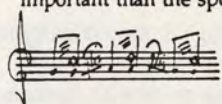
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STRINGS:

Bowings: This piece is unusually concerned with articulations of harmonics and "sounds around the sound" rather than clear fundamental pitches. The intention is for players to coax the "sound around the sound" from the instruments by use of changes in bowing and pressures of fingering. During long sections of held tones or repeating patterns, each player should bow independently, having freedom to mold the sound.

All the string parts use "quasi harmonics" a great deal. This means that a passage which is normally fingered firmly and played as clear pitch, is touched lightly as if it were harmonics and the resulting sound is "airy" and full of overtones.

Arpeggio passages, using all 4 strings, should be comfortable to play. Usually the notation anchors the primary pitch on the "TV string" and the 3 other fingers should fall comfortably on a diagonal on strings III, II and I. Since these passages are played "quasi harmonics" (touched lightly rather than firmly), exact pitches are less important than the spontaneity and fluidity of production.



fundamental/harmonic tremolos and glisses - these create a hollow, "doveline" or yodel sound. They should be played very softly, allowing the "hollowing out" around the fundamental. Bow speed should be slow and pont - ord - pont should be in continuous flux.

Summary of basic string techniques:

Fingerings: - fingers/palm moving along strings picking up harmonics ad lib.
- fingers lightly "trilling" or making appoggiaturas of upper and lower neighbors

Bowings: bow very slowly and, using a figure-of-eight or oval motion, traverse ponticello (pont), ordinario (ord) and tasto. The following bowing variations are used, ad lib, throughout the piece:

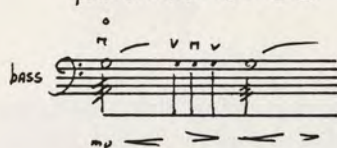
Bowing variations: change speed, pressure and angle of bow;
use full bow/partial bow/point of bow
change part of instrument where bowing takes place
- below the bridge (cello and bass)
- near the nut on the fingerboard (vlins, vlns)

VIOLINS, VIOLAS and CELLI:

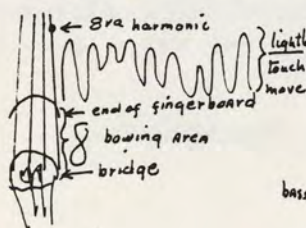
Have the section leader start any passage as a solo where there might be awkwardness if the entire section tries to enter at once. The rest of the section may then enter shortly thereafter. During the arpeggios section, (Violins, reh. 12-16), it is imperative that the Concertmaster establish the tempo for the rest of the section. It is not necessary that the entire section be in lockstep, superclean unison during this passage; just that there is a general sense of overall synchrony.

BASS and CELLI, sometimes VIOLAS:

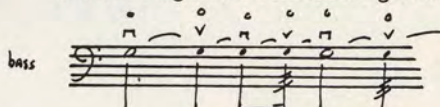
pont - ord - taste ∞ ad lib



tremolo should be made from a "dangling" bow and should vary from (narrow shake) to wider shakes ad lib. upbow and downbow strokes should also be of various lengths and have an "on the breath" impulse to them. Bowing should move in ponticello - ordinario areas primarily. This can be done by a figure-of-eight (∞) or oval (○) motion. Let overtones sing always.



Harmonic glisses on G string between the 8va harmonic and the end of the fingerboard are ad lib and are of varying widths (very short - medium - long) within the area noted. The rhythmic notation refers to upbow/downbow changes. These should be done ad lib, in flexible non-symmetrical impulses. Use the written notation as a guide, not as something to adhere to literally.



tremolos ad lib

narrow → wide
vibrato, ad lib

FLUTE NOTES

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Flute: It is important to use inhale () as well as exhale () melodically for energy flow.

- 1 - ordinary manner of tone production (modo ordinario) (happens only with lontano/subtone passages)
- 2 - traverse air sound (EXHALE) - completely relaxed embouchure. Use diaphragm to articulate energy.
- 3 - covered air sound (EXHALE) - mouth completely covers embouchure hole.
- 4 - covered air sound (INHALE) - mouth completely covers embouchure hole.
- 3 & 4 may be interchangeable in a long passage and should be alternated as needed.
- 5 - Always articulate from the diaphragm rather than from the tongue or throat

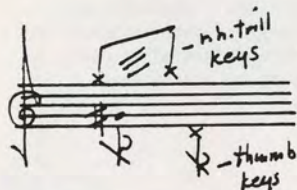
Example: (>  > > >  >>>>) = use diaphragm attacks/accents ad. lib.

@ @ @ @ (vowels)

- Vowels and consonants are used melodically to color air sounds. Air sounds work best when the tongue is behind the teeth, the embouchure is very relaxed and the

(tsch) (t) (h) (consonants)

attack is from ~~the~~ the diaphragm.



- right hand trill keys; left hand G# key and r.h. thumb key. These keys are used, ad lib, to color basic pitches. They may be combined, trilled, and used singly as appoggiaturas; can cause multiphonics as well as increasing the density of "air sounds" and altering pitch. The point is to use them as "sound around the sound". It is not necessary to control exactly what sounds are produced.



"Nohkan" sound - this is a very piercing, airy sound produced by overblowing to the 2nd partial and allowing surrounding partials to sound. The Nohkan is a traverse bamboo flute used in Japanese Noh Theater.

allow multiphonics. Use trill keys & auxiliary keys ad lib to add color

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OBOE NOTES

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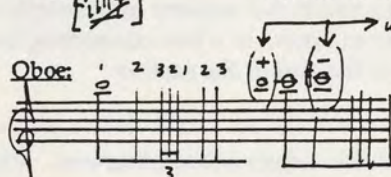
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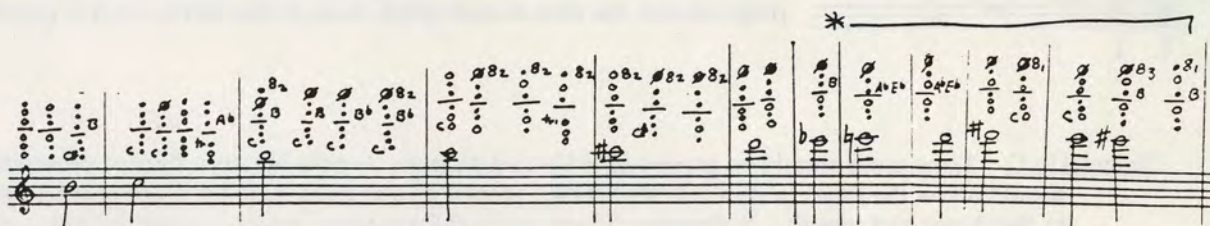
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Find 2 or 3 alternate fingerings for as many of these notes as possible. These fingerings will alter the "basic" sound microtonally and/or timbrally. Arrange these fingerings in some order which can be repeated. Ways to find these fingerings include using trill keys, auxiliary keys (such as thumb keys) and harmonic fingerings. Never use vibrato in this piece.

Always maintain as soft and sheer a sound as possible. The intensity of the sound will be greater.

Some fingerings and alternate fingerings to try for the pitches used in ONYX: (in addition to the "normal" fingerings)



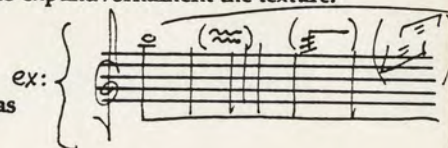
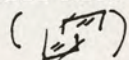
* The high register notes have many more fingerings than have been shown. Each player should find a set of fingerings which work well. Please experiment with some of the very unstable fingerings which allow for gradual entrances. It is very beautiful to hear the air sounds which precede the sounding of the note; entrances may take as much time as needed, and if the sound results in multiphonics, that is also beautiful. The goal is to allow the sound to continually evolve throughout a single breath.

NB: The following may also be used, ad lib, fleetingly, in oboe solo passages to expand /ornament the texture:

DOUBLE TRILLS (~~~~~)

FLUTTER TONGUE (flut)

TRILL KEYS and other AUXILIARY KEYS used as appoggiaturas



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HORN and TRUMPET NOTES

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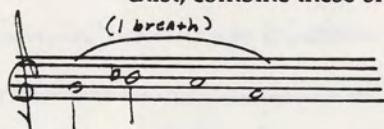


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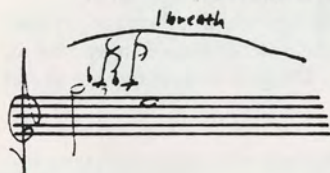
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Horns in F: Long tones should be played as softly and distantly as possible unless noted otherwise. Players should allow the tones to spin out while being shaped by impulses from the diaphragm as well as changes in the throat and mouth. If alternate fingerings, which change the notes microtonally and/or timbrally exist, combine these on long tones ad lib.



player should take a full breath to play the passage. If the notation is proportional, the time on each pitch more or less correspond in general length.

Trumpet in C: Long tones should be played as softly and distantly as possible unless noted otherwise. Players should allow the tones to spin out while being shaped by impulses from the diaphragm as well as changes in the throat and mouth. If alternate fingerings exist for a pitch, which change the notes microtonally and/or timbrally exist, combine these "melodically" on long tones ad lib (example: high "E" [reh 6]).



player should take a full breath to play the passage. If the notation is proportional, the time on each pitch more or less correspond in general length.

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn I

Trumpet

NB: Strung

Everything is harmonics
or overtones. Never
pure fundamentals.

"Air sound" - Touch B₂ harmonic & use adjacent fingers to lightly touch on either side of G; ad lib
This will mute the harmonic & also add A $\frac{1}{2}$ step
"air" trail. Bow very lightly & slowly

Sub G
upper + lower neighbor

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

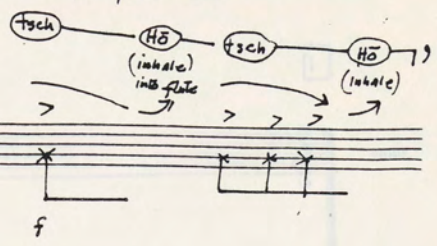
Each part works independently - timespans are ad lib

Drawings: (point $\rightarrow$ ord. $\rightarrow$ taste) continuous change ∞
Hold bow loosely so that tremolo is light & brings out harmonics
& (pizz.) are light & bring out harmonics

simile

Simile

transverse air sound" - place tongue behind teeth to prevent pitched sound. Articulate from the diaphragm. clear



2

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

ppp

(ad. lib. Simila)

3

(use trill keys *ad lib*)

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

rh. trill keys *ad lib*

6th trill key *ad lib*

H₀ ?

H₀ ?

f

trillo (bowed)

Ad lib

8va harm.

move hand lightly between 8va harmonic & end of fingerboard.

Bowings: continue light, loosely-held bowing; allow make longer tremolos, *ad lib*

past and this

smile, *ad lib*

3

articulate from the diaphragm -
piercing, airy, overblown - allow multiphonics
use trill keys to add complexity.

ca. 2'

4

"Nohkan" sound (Ad lib)

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

pp

f

fff

1. h trill key (G#) Ad lib

use alternate fingerings Ad lib

find 3 alternate fingerings for B which change timbre, pitch, weight etc.

find alternate fingerings for C# (also C# + D) And Alternate Ad lib

2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 2 1 2 3 2

3 5 3 5

sul C

* see notes for bass
p. 1 + p. 3 - each person does his/her own version
(section isn't in unison)

bowing changes, flowing, Ad lib

l. h.: move between 3rd harmon + fingerboard edge, lightly
r. h. bowing: light ∞ bowing (H + V) getting overtones
bowing changes - Ad lib, flowing, not rigid

5

simile (Ad lib rhythms, time lengths)

5

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

use microtone bends with hand in bell, ad lib, for All melodies
A single breath

$pp < p$

A single breath

$pp < p$

See violin I note p. 2
Sul G

note ppp

5 3 simile (ad lib rhythms & time lengths)

* see notes for bass p. 1, p. 3

pp ppp

3 5 simile (ad lib rhythms & time lengths)

3 5 simile (ad lib rhythms & time lengths)

6

Articulate from diaphragm
piercing, airy overblown - allow multiphonics
use trill keys to add complexity

"Mokkan" sound

(single breath)

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

Handwritten musical notation for Flute, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *fff*. Includes the instruction "r.h. trill keys ad lib" and "l.h. trill key ad lib".

use a "veiled" unstable fingering that can sneak in then alternate fingerings ad lib

Handwritten musical notation for Oboe, showing notes and rests.

PP ← P possible

"sharsh mullen"

Always use any diaphragm, mouth changes to vary sound quality + pitch microtonally

use alternate fingerings (3 if possible) to get timbre, pitch change

PP possible

touch at nut as if it were a harmonic (sense of energy of trill, not of pitch change)
slow bow (pont → ond → taste)

l.h. touch at nut

Handwritten musical notation for Violin I, showing notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pp*. Includes the instruction "l.h. touch at nut".

(written as sounds, sulG)

slow bow (pont → ond → taste)

l.h. touch at nut, as if it were a harmonic

Handwritten musical notation for Bass, showing notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *p*. Includes the instruction "l.h. touch at nut, as if it were a harmonic".

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Rhythms *ad lib*, flowing
use 3 different fingerings for "E"

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

l.h. Touch at nut

l.h. Touch At nut

30

9

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

very light, loose bow
pont and staccato bowing ad lib
Ad lib rhythmic pattern "on the breath"

niente pp

9

ca. 5:00

10

47

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

mostly *pont* $\rightarrow$ *ord.* (slightly)

slow glis

slow glis

slow glis

slow glis

pp

mostly *pont* $\rightarrow$ *ord.* (slight)

slow glis

pp

slow tremolo

(sounds as written)
very slow, light bow
pont $\rightarrow$ *ord* $\rightarrow$ *tasto*

pont $\rightarrow$ *ord*

slow glis

slow glis

pp

12

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

very light & fleet - almost "Air" harmonics
treat rpeggios as "rubber bands" - bend, stretch, contract, expand microtonally during repeats
microtonal pitch changes
constant timbre change
Allow "veiled" or airy pitch Gli Altri

ca. 72 m.m.
puncta d'arco
pont & tasto *emphasize*

Solo

Violin I

(pp < mp > pp) - throughout

Violin II

slow tremolo

pp
very slow, light bow - mostly "Air" sound
(tasto & ord & pont.) - simile

Viola

pp
very slow, light bow - mostly "Air" sound
(tasto & ord & pont.)

Cello

pp
very slow, light bow
(tasto & ord & pont.)

Bass

pp

13

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

Always change unobtrusively
mostly "air" sound
bouncing ad lib

pp

Always change unobtrusively

pp

Always change unobtrusively

pp

Always change unobtrusively

pp

2 3 4 5

14

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

15

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

Ad lib.: groups of B's → G's → B's (∞)  → to end of section
 G's = leave out repeats of top + bottom pitches



End 4 meter

46

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

Note: this note does not have to be arrived at in unison by the section.

16

17

harmonic fingering - Allow multiphonics + overtones + "Air Sounds"

7:00

Flute

mf

r.h. trill keys Ad lib

L.h. trill keys ad lib

"Airy push" - tongue behind teeth, traverse blowing, use diaphragm for accents

finger G + after it by using r.h. + l.h. trill + aux keys ad lib

r.h. trill keys

inhale when needed

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Violin I

Sul E

mp

post-ord-tailo

flowing tempo

pp

Violin II

pp

6

Viola

Sul G

pp

Cello

Sul A

pp

Bass

Sul E

flowing tempo

pp

19

Handwritten musical score for a symphony orchestra. The score is written on ten staves, each labeled with an instrument name on the left. The instruments are: Flute, Oboe, F Horn I, F Horn II, Trumpet, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Bass. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Key markings include 'niente' (faintly) and 'fairly rapidly, fleet' (boldly). The score is written in a clear, legible hand, with some corrections and annotations visible. The staves are numbered 1 through 10, corresponding to the instrument list. The notation is primarily in treble and bass clefs, with some staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, Bass) showing both clefs. The score is a single page, likely a rehearsal copy, with a focus on the first movement or section.

Flute

Oboe

as distant as possible - tempo is determined by breath lengths
change timbre during long tones if possible
by: Alternate fingerings (?), mouth shapes (?)
(1 breath) (1 breath)

F Horn I

ppp possible

F Horn II

Trumpet

(one long breath)
(Alternate fingerings - use 3 different ones if poss.)

pp possible

finger G $\rightarrow$ let other 3 fingers fall comfortably
pont ∞ *tasto*
b, b, b, b, b, b
ppp

Violin I

Violin II

(see notes for bass - except IV is also a harmonic)

Viola

(see notes below for bass)

Cello

touch lightly at (mc) position on strings I, II, III to get overtones/harmonics; IV is open
Rapid, very light bow rocking over strings I, II, III, IV; Allow "air" sounds & "glints" of pitch

Bass

pp

20

21

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

(tasto ∞ pent)

Approximate pitches

Bow near the nut

finger G

let finger fall comfortably

Approximate pitches fingered actual sounding pitches are mirror image.

move the entire hand, ad lib in slow glis as if it were harmonics.

intersperse

intersperse ad lib harmonic glisses (varying length)

sul C 4/4 G

intersperse ad lib throughout section: harmonic glisses on G string

slow glis

(a)

22

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

Bow behind hand

(ord ∞ pont bowing Ad lib)
Sul G + D

tremolo

f

Sul G + D
(ord ∞ pont)

tremolo

ff

(ord ∞ pont)

tremolo

mf

Sul C + G
(ord ∞ pont bowing Ad lib)

tremolo

mp

mf

ff

ord ∞ pont bowing Ad lib
Sul A
Sul E

tremolo

p

mf

ff sempre

22

23

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

interperse $\frac{1}{2}$ step glis ad lib

interperse $\frac{1}{2}$ step glisses ad lib

short slow glisses ad lib - varying lengths between interval of 4th. (it is fine to use only $\frac{1}{2}$ step)

move palm on strings in short glisses ad lib within the 4th range (ie: smaller & larger sweeps)

tremolo

fff sempre

vary size of glis ($\frac{1}{2}$ step - M7)

ord spont bowing ad lib

Sul C

Sul G

24

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Solo
agli Attili
 (each player is independent)

lightly Touch strings - quasi harmonics
 as fast, fleet & airy as possible
 (adjust pitches if necessary for ease in playing)

Violin I

Violin II

pp
 as fast, fleet & airy as possible

Viola

ad. li.

Cello

move palm for short glisses within the interval of a 4th.

Bass

light fast rocking bow on I, II, III, IV Below Bridge
 Below Bridge - mute at bridge with palm

pp sempre

fff possible to end - - -

25

diaphragm niente ad lib flute tongue
 "air" - traverse blowing (one breath) fluter (inhale) Hö.

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

niente < ppp mp

niente mp

use harmony muffle

(one breath)

ppp possible mp

light fast rocking bows on I II III IV |
 Below Bridge - mute at bridge with palm

pp

pp

Flute

Oboe

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Bow near the nut - behind the hand
finger G, let II I string fingers fall comfortably - tightly touch strings
so that sound is "quasi-harmonics," "airy".

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass

ppp

other fingers fall at comfortable angle - change pressure for variation from "pure pitch" to "quasi-harmonics/airy"

Bow Behind hand (at nut)

finger C

ppp possible

pitch for I, II, III are approximate adjust for concert

traverse Air sound (pitch + air mixed)

12:00

finger G - then use: G# trill key

tongue behind teeth

r.h. trill keys
thumb key

Ad. lib

r.h. trill keys
G# key + thumb key

Flute

Do not bend pitches with lips - let pitch variation occur through fingering changes.
use 3 alternate fingerings for each pitch (if possible) - goal is to get microtonal + timbre changes on one basic pitch
(normal, trill, auxiliary, harmonic fingerings)

Oboe

pp possible sempre

F Horn I

F Horn II

Trumpet

Violin I

ppp

niente

ppp

niente

Violin II

Viola

ppp possible

lift fingers/release pressure
so that the sound is muffled
"airy" - quasi-harmonics

Cello

Bass

niente - - -

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