

STRINGS

violin and piano

1989

Eleanor Hovda

for Stephanie Chase
commissioned by the Schubert Club

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STRENGTHS was commissioned by the Schubert Club for violinist Stephanie Chase. I used
relationships from multidimensional string theories, where energy is conceived as infinite
"strings" in space/time, and the Universe is said to have extra hidden dimensions. I
have been working, for some time, on articulating relationships (figure-of-eight
strings) as sonic metaphors. I'm also intrigued by an often unexplored lateral
movement of stringed instruments: the "sound around the sound" of overtones,
harmonics.

I visualize the piece as sound choreography, where the violin spins "strings"
and the piano is resonant, affecting or "shadow universe". The piano structures in
the piece derive from the harmonic series, and are shaped by bending, twisting and
stretching those basic relationships as much as possible without "breaking".
Lines, or moving lines into something like a "string" function as an accumulating
movement that throughout the piece.

STRINGS

1989. The piece is written originally for the violin and piano, as a challenge for the
violinist to play in a way that will give an intuitive
impression of movement to the piano.

violin and piano

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There are several related movements in this piece, where the violin is asked to move as
a "string" in the piano. It is not necessary to physically follow the string
in the piano, but the violinist should feel the "pull" of the piano, the goal is to
move in a way that is in tune with the piano. It is important that the
violinist be aware of the piano's movement, and respond to it in a way that is
in tune with the piano's movement. In other words, the violin and piano work in unison.

STRENGTHS - In my opinion, the relationship between the violin and piano is the key to
understanding this piece. The violinist should feel the "pull" of the piano, the goal is to
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STRINGS was commissioned by the Schubert Club for violinist Stephanie Chase. I used metaphors from multidimensional string theories, where energy is conceived as infinite "strings" in space/time, and the Universe is said to have extra hidden dimensions. I have been working, for some time, on articulating lemniscates (figure-of-eight ribbons) as sonic sculpture. I'm also intrigued by an often unexplored timbral resource of stringed instruments: the "sound around the sound" of overtones, harmonics.

TIME: The piece is notated metrically, for the most part, as a scaffolding for the performers to use in early rehearsal. Ideally, performers will work with an intuitive "breathflow" interaction in performance.

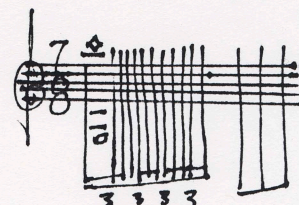
There are several extended sections where the piano alters its chord field to serve as an "afterimage" for the violin. It is not necessary to rigorously follow the violin each time it changes (even though such changes are notated for piano). The goal is to subtly add resonance to the violin when feasible. It is important that the violinist be free to work somewhat ad.lib. in those section, with respect to exact numbers of repetitions and order of pitch sequences. In these sections, the piano and violin are heterophonous. In "Chant" sequences, the violin and piano work in unison.

BOWINGS - In many cases, the violinist is asked to bow very slowly and, using a figure-of-eight motion, to traverse pont.-ord.-tasto.

Timbral changes: fundamental/harm. register
 pont-ord-tasto string selected

HARMONICS - get as clear and "floating" a tone as possible for long-tone harmonics. Image of "sound coming out of the walls".

OPEN G/OVERTONE RHYTHMIC PATTERN - touch an overtone/harmonic quickly and release in the rhythmic pattern noted. Use figure-of-eight bowing, point of bow/larger sweep, and work in the pont-tasto areas. Bow VERY SLOWLY to allow overtones and "airsounds" to unfold.



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Strings

Eleanor Horda

A ambiguous
AM

near 12
(C#)

E9

Harp

Violin

Ambly
♩ = ca. 40 mm
+ x x - x - 8

piano

ppp

una corda
ped sempre

101

vn

pno

vn

pno

ball-like, "floating"
non vib

ppp

ppp

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A (F#m)

A4M

A m 3/4

F#m

20

tasto - end - point - end

them

A m

very light open sounds w/ overtones
touch harmonic & release to establish rhythm
= mm 126 (non-rigid, flowing tempo)
use light, slow bow - allow "sound around the sound"
(tasto - end - point ∞ ad lib throughout)

30

D → G#m

AM - A9m

Handwritten musical score for the first system. The upper staff (violin) contains six measures of music, featuring rapid sixteenth-note passages in measures 1, 3, and 5, and rests in measures 2, 4, and 6. The lower staff (piano) contains six measures of music, with notes in measures 1, 3, 5, and 6, and rests in measures 2 and 4. The piano part is marked with *ppp* in measures 1, 3, 5, and 6. Handwritten annotations include "GM" above measure 1 and below measure 3, and "DM FA" below measure 5.

40

Handwritten musical score for the second system, starting at measure 40. The upper staff (violin) contains six measures of music, with rapid sixteenth-note passages in measures 1 and 5, and rests in measures 2, 3, 4, and 6. The lower staff (piano) contains six measures of music, with notes in measures 1, 3, 5, and 6, and rests in measures 2 and 4. The piano part is marked with *ppp* in measures 1, 3, 5, and 6.

50

Handwritten musical score for the third system, starting at measure 50. The upper staff (violin) contains six measures of music, with rapid sixteenth-note passages in measures 1, 3, and 5, and rests in measures 2, 4, and 6. The lower staff (piano) contains six measures of music, with notes in measures 1, 3, 5, and 6, and rests in measures 2 and 4. The piano part is marked with *ppp* in measures 1, 3, 5, and 6.

60

vn

pno

ppp

ppp

ppp

ppp

70

vn

pno

ppp sempre

ppp sempre

ppp

very slow bow
♩ = 50 MM (ca.)
tasto, non vib., "weightless"

8va

in the manner of
Gregorian Chant

(change notes ad lib)

8va

vn

pno

80

pont. (totally diff timbre)
Bva

1. ca. 72 mm
use point of bow
tasto pont (very light & fleet) } timbral shaping throughout -->

90

9 9
A m A m G

Handwritten musical score for Violin (vn) and Piano (pno) systems. The system is divided into measures 3, 4, and 5. The Violin part features a melodic line with slurs and ties, and a final measure with a sharp key signature change. The Piano part provides harmonic support with sustained chords and moving lines in both staves.

100

Handwritten musical score for Violin (vn) and Piano (pno) systems. The system is divided into measures 2, 3, 4, and 5. The Violin part includes a melodic line with slurs and ties, and a final measure with a sharp key signature change. The Piano part provides harmonic support with sustained chords and moving lines in both staves.

110

Handwritten musical score for Violin (vn) and Piano (pno) systems. The system is divided into measures 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. The Violin part features a melodic line with slurs and ties, and a final measure with a sharp key signature change. The Piano part provides harmonic support with sustained chords and moving lines in both staves.

Handwritten musical score system 1. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music, each followed by a double bar line and a repeat sign. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains two measures of music, each followed by a double bar line and a repeat sign. The first measure of the bottom staff has a circled note. The second measure of the bottom staff has a circled note. The system concludes with five measures of rests, numbered 2, 3, 4, and 5 above the staff.

Handwritten musical score system 2. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. It contains four measures of music, each followed by a double bar line and a repeat sign. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains four measures of music, each followed by a double bar line and a repeat sign. The first measure of the bottom staff has a circled note and the marking *ppp*. The last measure of the bottom staff has the marking *ppp*.

120

Handwritten musical score system 3. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. It contains four measures of music, each followed by a double bar line and a repeat sign. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains four measures of music, each followed by a double bar line and a repeat sign. The first measure of the bottom staff has a circled note. The second measure of the bottom staff has a circled note. The third measure of the bottom staff has a circled note. The fourth measure of the bottom staff has a circled note. The system concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

8va
very slow
unpulsed

mp

ppp

mf

8va

Bell-like (non-vib)
∞ bowing

mp

pp

125

very fast, circular energy
pont.
glassy as possible

pp

126

∞ bowing ad lib

127

128

→ about 27 repetitions

meute

ppp

Highest "floating" harmonics and lib (clear, weightless)
gliss in air

129

130

ppp

132

133

in the manner of distant chant

131

ppp like distant chant

ppp

Clara Schumann 1789-1829