

2021.3 (for Mairéad Hickey)

S. Adams (2021)

To Mairéad Hickey, commissioned by Kaleidoscope

**Commissioned by Kaleidoscope Night, with funds from the Arts Council of Ireland.**

Written August - October 2021.

Duration: c. 5 minutes

*This version of the score exported from Dorico on October 13, 2021 at 01:12.*

### **Performance note:**

In general, the piece alternates between “frozen ornaments” and motifs taken from the tune *Little Mairéad*, which was written for Mairéad Hickey by her father when she was a child.

The frozen ornaments should be played with one extremely long, slow down-bow, unless specifically noted otherwise: the idea is to keep each one as a single gesture, transforming the momentary colours of Mairéad Hickey’s trad playing into glacial gestures which are full of artefacts and instabilities. The ornaments are drawn from ones played by Mairéad in a phone recording of *Little Mairéad*.

The tiny motifs interspersed within the frozen music are also gestures in their own right. Their brevity and slightness is supposed to stand as a big contrast with the other material, and this should be emphasised in performance.

Each event in the piece is numbered, and each should only be played once, with the exception of number ①⑩. They should all be played in order, as they appear in the score.

There should be a space (silence) between each numbered event - the duration of this space is at the discretion of the performer, whatever supports the structure and energy of the piece in a particular situation.

Durations, where marked, should always be treated as a guide, including all rhythmic notation. The text descriptions and the instincts of the performer should both take precedence in those decisions.

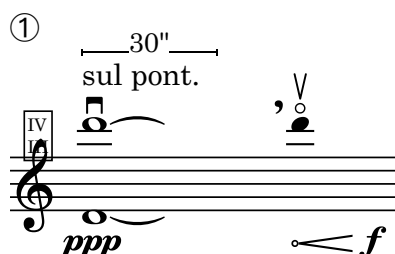
The most important thing in the piece is to use the physicality of each gesture (the massively drawn-out bows) to reveal beautiful, overlooked things on the instrument. Where the score falls short, alternatives could be created with or without consulting the composer, as long as they are in the spirit of that idea.

### **Note specifically for Mairéad:**

The piece is designed to “never get going”, in a way - it’s a kind of deconstruction or distillation of the gestures in your tune (or at least in the recording of it that you sent me). What I want it to do is to serve as a way to open up the music that follows it, and to activate the space you’re playing in. A suggestion would be to follow this piece directly with a performance of the tune *Little Mairéad*, without letting the tension collapse (i.e. without applause) between the two - but this is up to you.

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version: 13 October 2021



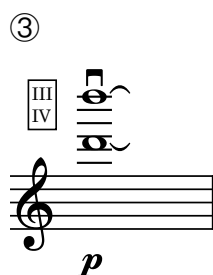
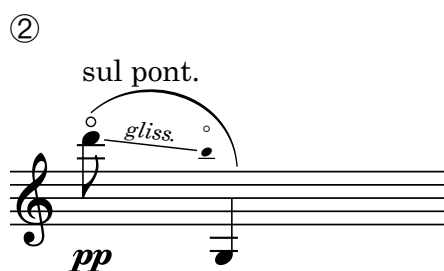
Unstable, sul pont.

Balance so that the open D is no louder than the high note. Allow pitch to disintegrate and distort. Allow pressure sounds to emerge.

Bow speed: start at the slow end of conventional bowing and get gradually slower and slower, to an almost ridiculous extent. (suggested length: 30 seconds)

Then, a tiny silence.

The up-bow is much shorter, fast and resonant. Allow distortion and extra harmonic to sound on this note. When the bow leaves the string, let ring until silent.



One long bow, very slow.

The notes are natural harmonics located above the fingerboard:

Sul D: 3 octaves above open string;

Sul G: an octave lower.

Bow super slow from the start. Gradually move towards the fingerboard (from pont.) until the bow is touching your left-hand finger. Allow the sound to gradually transform til it is nothing but bow noise.



Play normally, but with a whisper of a harmonic gliss. coming off the first note.

Healthy sound, but very slow bow. Allow the sound to destabilise near tip of bow - more with each bow.

The up-bow at the end is almost colourless.

⑦

molto sul pont.



*ppppp* *ppppp*

A very long bow. At first, allow a little graininess in the sound.  
Gradually reduce the amount of pitch.  
Bring in the octave almost imperceptibly after 3/4 of the bow.

8

IV

*poco f*

*gliss.*

*poco f*

\* There is a harmonic C in here, but almost impossible to play. It's the 21st overtone.  
You could try it out, as trying and failing to play it is also an interesting sound.

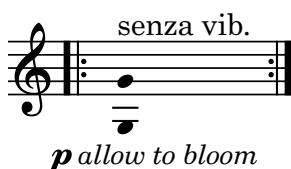
⑨

m.s.p. &gt; suddenly m.s.t



A reversed version of 7. Finish with a resonant, well-tuned octave, albeit still ppp.

①⑩

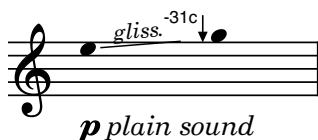


Repeat ad lib. (Possibly for a disproportionately long time, but not necessarily). Play full bows each time, separated by small gaps. Vary the speed and duration of the bow.

Also vary the tuning of the top note: search for microtonal dissonances which produce difference tones that excite the room. Each note should be a single expressive gesture with its own meaning/intention, which should be drawn from the tuning

A more resonant room may be more interesting for this passage and so in a dead room it is probably best not to dwell on it for long.

①①



A very long bow - but always a stable, plain, pitched sound.

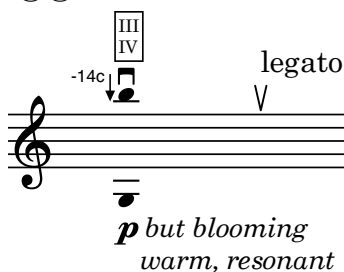
Unexpressive: the idea is that the earlier gliss. (5) is revisited but almost devoid of any meaning here.

①②

Tacet

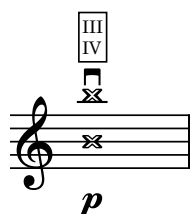
Silence: c. 5 seconds (make it into an important moment)

①③



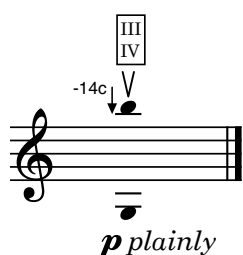
A long, warm chord over three generous bows. The B tuned to the overtone series of the G. The B hangs on slightly longer at the end of the chord (i.e. take off the G earlier).

①④



A single, very very long bow. Only bow and incidental noise, no pitch whatsoever.

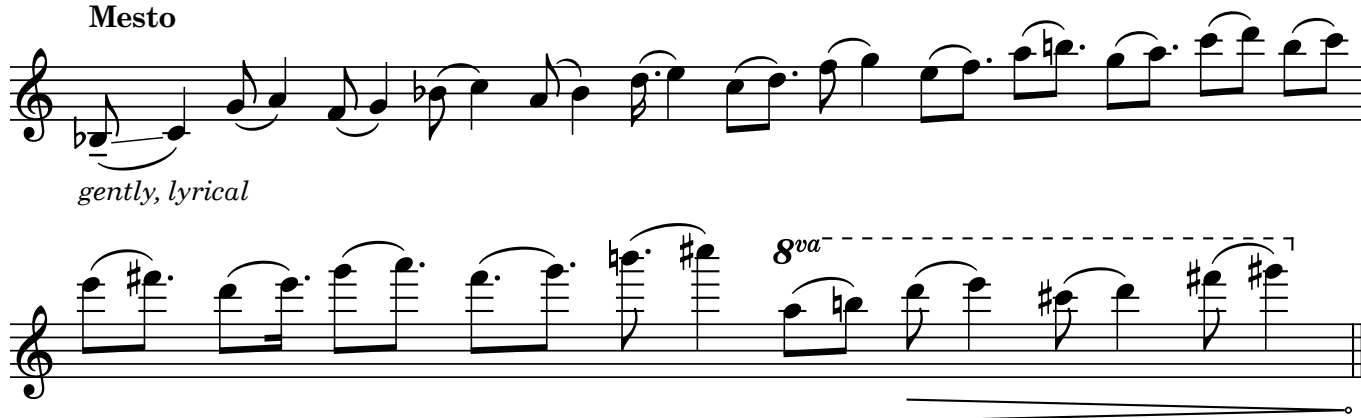
①⑤



A short fragment answering (13), plainly; only a few seconds.

①⑥

Mesto



Every shift with a little bit of portamento.

Go all the way up (perhaps stay on the A string when you get there, without going onto E) gently, lyrical, becoming more wistful and rhapsodic near the top before fading completely. Allow the final notes to blur into unstable harmonics/noise.