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If Only We'd

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Been Taller

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for

n e x b l o o m

G u n t e r G a u p p

2022

WRITTEN

Summer 2022
Memphis, TN

commissioned by

nexbloom

violin, trombone, piano

6.5 minutes in duration

* * NOTES

If Only We'd Been Taller is a piece about ambition and fatalism inspired by Ray Bradbury's "If Only We Had Taller Been". Bradbury's piece was written to commemorate the landing of the Mariner 9 spacecraft on Mars in 1971 and speaks to a sense of optimism in space exploration and celebration of human achievement. As I'm rapidly approaching 30, though, I feel more emptiness than celebration at the idea of trying to go further and do more. My own ambition feels so hollow and self-important that it's difficult to see Bradbury's desire to "stand really tall across the void" and not ask "why?" or "who cares?". I don't know if that is self-loathing or a desire to celebrate my life as it is, but in either case I don't want to spend any more time trying to be taller.

* * Performance Notes:

* * Violin

Bow Pressure

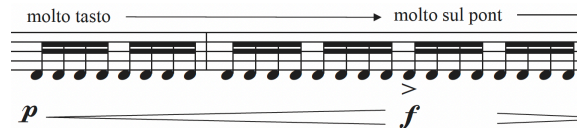


indicates an increase from normal to heavy bow pressure

indicates a slow bow with heavy bow pressure resulting in a distorted scratch tone with little pitch

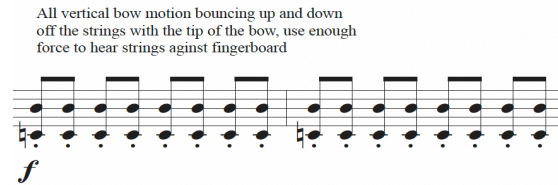
Bow Position

One section of the piece asks the player to move the position of their bow continually over the course of a phrase. In these instances, an arrow is used to demonstrate the approximate speed of movement between two bow positions. For example:



Bow Bounces

Another section calls for vertical bow movement bouncing up and down on strings. Here, the desired effect is a percussive chopping sound with some pitch

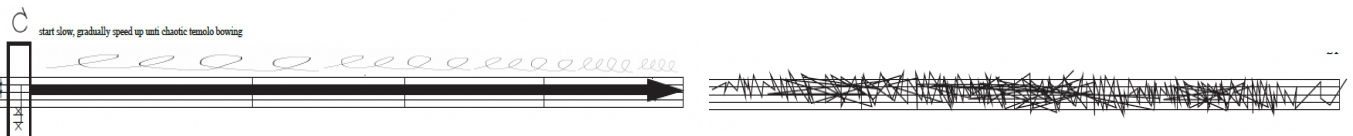


Circle Bowing



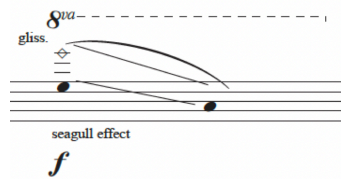
indicates a harsher swirling sound produced by scraping the bow down and across muted strings in a circular, clockwise motion. This gesture requires a fair amount of pressure to ensure the desired swirling, scraping effect

Here, the performer is also asked to gradually increase the speed of their circular bowing until it becomes a noisy, unwieldy tremolo effect. Here, graphic notation is used above the staff to demonstrate the relative changes in speed and the areas where noise is desired.



Seagull Effect

The piece borrows Crumb's "Seagull Effect" harmonic glissando wherein the player maintains the notated interval while moving through the gliss, producing rapidly moving harmonic pitches



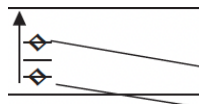
White Noise



indicates a light, constant background noise with no specified pitch generated from lightly bowing directly on the bridge

Highest Possible Pitches

One effect asks the performer to use the highest possible harmonic fingerings at the start of a glissandi. Here, an upward facing arrow is used next to the notated effect



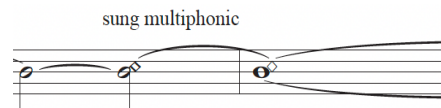
* Trombone

Windtone / Air Sounds

Air sounds are used at the very beginning of the piece and notated with triangle noteheads (Δ). This section is largely improvisatory and the performer is encouraged to deviate from the written material as much as desired.

Multiphonics

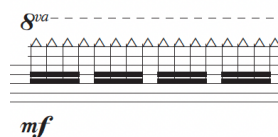
A prolonged section of the piece asks the performer to use sung multiphonics. Here, the played pitch is given in normal notation with a diamond notehead representing the desired sung pitch. Should any sung pitches be uncomfortable or impossible, the performer is encouraged to embellish sung pitches within a comfortable range.



* Piano

Muted Strings

Triangle noteheads (Δ) are used to demonstrate notes that should be played while muting the strings inside the piano with a free hand. The desired sound is mostly percussive with some pitch.



Improvising Inside the Piano

The beginning and ending sections of the piece ask the performer to improvise inside the piano by scraping, plucking, and hitting strings. These sections are left intentionally open ended such that the player may experiment with gestures that they feel most comfortable with. Any extra tools for these gestures (guitar picks, metal objects, etc.) are welcomed should the performer wish to incorporate them.

If Only We'd Been Taller

Gunter Gaupp

♩ = 144

slightly towards the bridge

Violin

Trombone

Piano

Vln.

Tbn.

Pno.

Improvise inside piano, scraping, slapping, and plucking strings

A

7

Vln. *p* *sfp*

Tbn. continue similarly, embellish as desired *f*

Pno. *f*
ped.

10

Vln. *mp* *sfp* *f*

Tbn. *f*

Pno. *f*

13

Vln. *sfp* *sfp*

Tbn. *mp*

Pno. *mp*

16

Vln. *mp* *sfp*

Tbn. *mp*

Pno.

19

Vln. *mf* *p* *sfp*

Tbn.

Pno. *mf*

22

Vln. *mf* *p* *f*

Tbn.

Pno.

25

Vln. 

Tbn. 

Pno. 

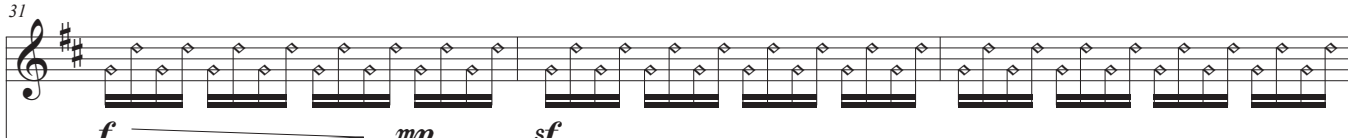
28

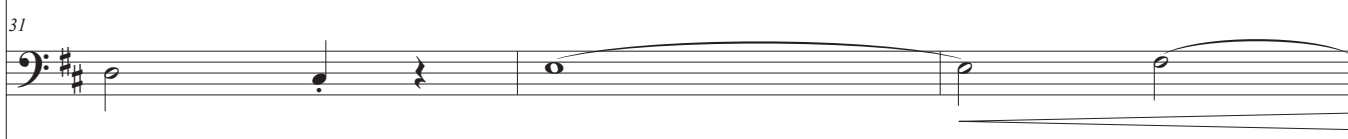
Vln. 

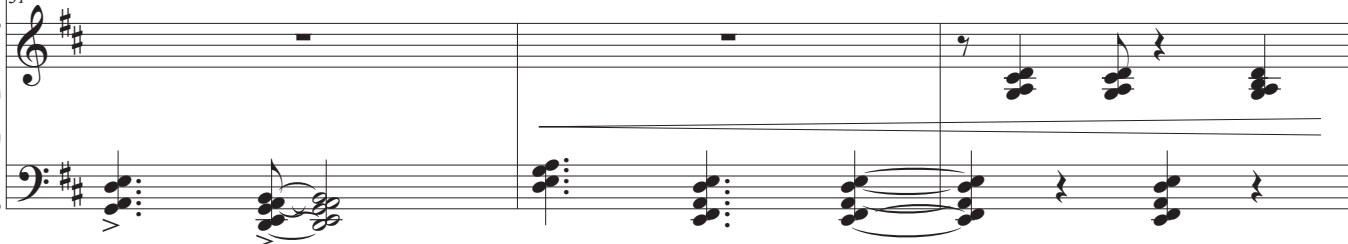
Tbn. 

Pno. 

31

Vln. 

Tbn. 

Pno. 

34 *molto tasto* *molto sul pont*

Vln. *p* *f*

Tbn. *f* *ff*

Pno. *ff* *f* *ped.*

37 *ord.* *m.s.p* *ord.*

Vln. *p* *f* *p*

Tbn. *mf* *f*

Pno.

40 *m.s.p* *ord.* 3 3 3

Vln. *f* *ff* *mf*

Tbn. *ff* *f*

Pno.

43 Vln. *8va* gliss. seagull effect *p* *f*

43 Tbn. *mp*

43 Pno. *mf* ped.

46 Vln.

46 Tbn.

46 Pno.

49 Vln.

49 Tbn. *ff*

49 Pno. *ff*

B

♩ = 120

Vln.

Tbn.

Pno.

51

stagnant, reflective

p

Vln.

Tbn.

Pno.

55

White noise: lightly bow on bridge while muting strings.
Occasionally, allow the bow to move off the bridge to
add random noise

p

Vln.

Tbn.

Pno.

59

p

8va -----

ped. -----

III Painfully slow. Thin and noisy, almost pitchless.
IV Very slow bow, m.s.p. Crescendo and decrescendo as desired.

Vln. 63 *pp*

Tbn. 63

Pno. 63

(8^{va})

Detailed description: This system covers measures 63-66. The Violin part starts with a box containing fingerings III and IV, with a long hairpin crescendo line extending across the staff. The Tuba part has a single note in measure 63. The Piano part has rests in measures 63-65 and a single note in measure 66. An 8va line is indicated below the piano part.

Vln. 67

Tbn. 67 *mp* *f*

Pno. 67 *p*

(8^{va})

mute with hand

Detailed description: This system covers measures 67-70. The Violin part has a long hairpin crescendo line. The Tuba part has a note in measure 67, followed by a crescendo line from *mp* to *f*. The Piano part has a *p* dynamic and a series of notes with 'pizz' markings, with a 'mute with hand' instruction above. An 8va line is indicated below the piano part.

Vln. 71 *mf*

Tbn. 71 *pp*

Pno. 71

(8^{va})

improvise sporadic snap pizz on muted string

Detailed description: This system covers measures 71-74. The Violin part has a box with fingerings III and IV, a note in measure 71, and a long hairpin crescendo line. The Tuba part has a note in measure 71 and a *pp* dynamic. The Piano part has a series of notes with 'pizz' markings, with an instruction 'improvise sporadic snap pizz on muted string' above. An 8va line is indicated below the piano part.

75

Vln. *p*

Tbn.

Pno.

79

Vln.

Tbn. *mp* *mf*

Pno. *p* *8va*

83

Vln. *f* *pp* III as before IV

Tbn. *ff* *pp*

Pno. *f* *pp* *8va*

87

Vln.

Tbn.

Pno.

91

Vln.

Tbn.

Pno.

All vertical bow motion bouncing up and down off the strings with the tip of the bow, use enough force to hear strings against fingerboard

95

Vln.

Tbn.

Pno.

III as before
IV

99

Vln.

Tbn.

Pno.

pp

p

p *f* *pp*

103

Vln. sul pont

Tbn. sung multiphonic

Pno.

mf

f *mp*

107

Vln. Bow bouncing as before

Tbn.

Pno.

f

p

ped.

111 *ord.*

Vln. *mf* *f*

Tbn. *f*

Pno. *f* *pp* *f* *p* *mp*

115 *sul pont.*

Vln. *mf*

Tbn. *mp*

Pno. *ped.* *f* *mp*

119

Vln.

Tbn. *f*

Pno.

123

Vln. *ord.*

Tbn. *mp*

Pno.

126

Vln.

Tbn. *f*

Pno.

130

Vln.

Tbn.

Pno. *mp*

18

133 [redacted] ord.

Vln.

Tbn.

Pno.

136

Vln.

Tbn.

Pno.

mf

f

139 [redacted] ord.

Vln.

Tbn.

Pno.

f

f

mp

142  ord.


Vln.

142

Tbn. *mf*

142

Pno. *f*

145  ord.

Vln.


145

Tbn. *f*

145

Pno. *f*

Improvise using this pitch sequence. Freely vary the order of pitches and rhythmic value.
Not necessarily in time with the ensemble until reaching the arrival point at measure 164

148  ord.

Vln.

148

Tbn.

148

Pno. *mf*

Musical score for measures 151-154. The Vln. part features a long note with a hairpin crescendo starting at measure 151. The Tbn. part consists of a rhythmic pattern of diagonal slashes. The Pno. part has a rhythmic pattern in the bass line and chordal textures in the treble line, with a dynamic marking of *f* at measure 152.

Musical score for measures 155-157. The Vln. part has a long note with a hairpin crescendo, marked "ord." at measure 155. The Tbn. part consists of diagonal slashes. The Pno. part features a rhythmic pattern in the bass line and rests in the treble line, with a dynamic marking of *mf* at measure 155.

Musical score for measures 158-161. The Vln. part includes a circled "C" and the instruction "start slow, gradually speed up until chaotic tremolo bowing" above a long note with a hairpin crescendo and a wavy line indicating tremolo. A box with "X" marks is present at the start of the note. The Tbn. part consists of diagonal slashes. The Pno. part has chordal textures in the treble line and a rhythmic pattern in the bass line, with a dynamic marking of *f* at measure 158.

162

Vln.

Tbn.

Pno.

ff

C

166

Vln.

Tbn.

Pno.

ff

Pedal down through end

8va - - - - -

8va - - - - -

fff

p

170

Vln.

Tbn.

Pno.

p

174 *poco sul pont*

Vln. *p*

Tbn. 174

Pno. 174

177

Vln.

Tbn. 177

Pno. 177

Improvise inside piano, scraping, slapping, and plucking strings

mp

181

Vln. *mf*

Tbn. 181 *p*

Pno. 181

improvise sporadic snap pizz on muted string

185

Vln. *pp*

Tbn. *mp*

Pno.

III
IV as before

189

Vln.

Tbn.

Pno.

193

Vln.

Tbn. *p*

Pno.

197 *poco sul pont*

Vln. *p*

Tbn. *p*

Pno.

201

Vln. *pp*

Tbn.

Pno.

205


Vln.

Tbn. *p*

Pno.


209

Vln.



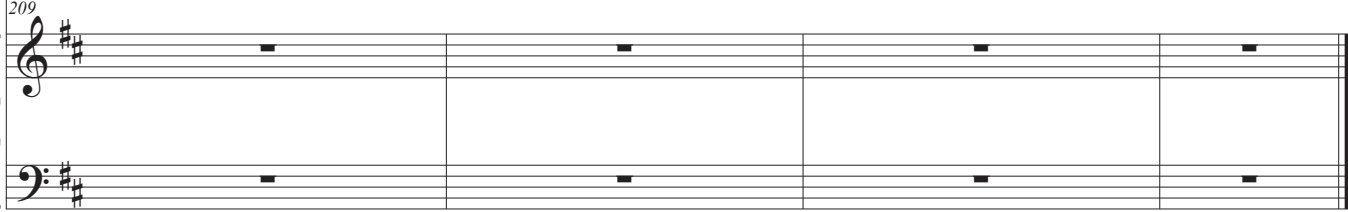
209

Tbn.



209

Pno.



Detailed description: This musical score page, numbered 25, contains three staves for measures 209-212. The Violin (Vln.) staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and plays a melodic line of eighth notes, starting on G4 and moving stepwise up to D5. The Tuba (Tbn.) staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and plays a sustained low note, likely G2, with a long slur over the first three measures. The Piano (Pno.) grand staff consists of two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one sharp (F#). Both hands play sustained notes, with the right hand on G4 and the left hand on G2, indicated by short horizontal lines in the first three measures.