

Is This / This Is It

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2022

WRITTEN

Spring 2022
Memphis, TN

for
String Quartet
2 vln, viola, cello

6.5 minutes in duration

NOTES

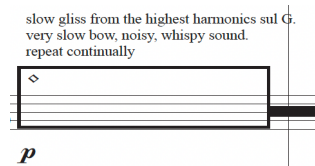
| Is This/This Is It is a tone piece dealing with feelings of malaise and dissatisfaction while dealing with grief and mortality.
| The perspective of the piece repeatedly looks out to ask “is this it?” while attempting to shock itself into new appreciation
| by answering resolutely “this is it”.

Violin Ostinato

| The Violin 1 part features a bluegrass mandolin-style rhythmic ostinato. Here, the player should strum muted strings either
| with a guitar or mandolin pick or with the back of their fingernails. The player is encouraged to hold their violin like a guitar/
| mandolin to achieve the desired effect. Improvisation and embellishment on the given rhythm is very much encouraged.

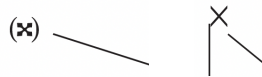
High Harmonic Fingerings

| There are multiple moments in the piece where an instrument is asked to play a glissando from or noodle around on the
| highest possible harmonics of a given string (see below). In these moments, a diamond note head is given above the staff
| but this notation is not intended to notate a specific pitch. Rather, the player should look for a generally high position with
| a light, harmonic fingering. The desired effect of these gestures is a thin, noisy sound containing some pitch material



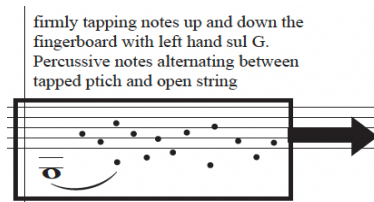
Glissandi

| The piece makes frequent use of glissandi. All glissandi are open for interpretation in terms of their relative starting pitch and
| speed unless otherwise mentioned. Noisier glissandi are always encouraged. Glissandi are notated with X or (X) noteheads to
| demonstrate relative duration.



Hammer-On Effect

| The Violin 2 part features a gesture where the player is asked to firmly tap notes at random up and down the fingerboard
| on the G string. The desired effect is a rhythmic fluttering between the open G string and any random pitches. If the player
| prefers, they are welcome to tap one note repeatedly or play the tapping gesture as a glissando.



Is This/This Is It

♩ = 104 strum muted strings like a guitar/mandolin
optional: use guitar pick

Violin I

Violin II *mf*

Viola

Cello

5

Vln. I

Vln. II *mp*

Vla. *p* *f*

Vc. *p* *f*

9 continue similarly, embellish as desired

Vln. I

Vln. II *p* *ff*

Vla. *p* *ff*

Vc. *p* *ff*

13

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f

fff

fff

16

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

muted harmonic glissando, light bow pressure, thin, noisy sound

III
IV

p

p

p

p

20

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

pizz.

mf

sustain highest harmonics sul C and G, include slight variations of bow pressure and finger position for random additions of noise

mp

muted harmonic glissando, light bow pressure, thin, noisy sound

III
IV

mp

6
24

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

mp

slow gliss.

A *looking for optimism, not finding it*

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mp

mf

mf

mf

pizz.

pizz.

looking for optimism, not finding it

32

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mp

mp

mf

mf

arco sul pont.

ord.

arco indeterminate gliss. sul G

(x)

(x)

continue similarly, embellish as desired

36

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

arco

mf

40

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

sul pont.

indeterminate gliss. sul G

mf

mf

indeterminate gliss. sul G

mf

detached and aggressive but groovy

f

44

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

sul pont.

sul pont.

8
48

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ord.

p *f* *f*

fast upward gliss. sul G to any random pitch

52

by this point, allow playing to become more unweildy, not necessarily in time with the ensemble

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f

II
III

55

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

fast upward gliss. sul C to any random pitch

painfully slow downward gliss beginning from the highest possible harmonics sul G and D. Thin and noisy, almost pitchless. Repeat continuously. Very slow bow, very close to the bridge. Crescendo and decrescendo as desired 9

B

frustrated, incessant

58

Vln. I *ff*

Vln. II *pp*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

62

Vln. I

Vln. II *pp* *mp* sul pont.

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

very slow gliss. sul C and G with slow bow and minimal bow pressure- mostly white noise

66

Vln. I

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf* *p*

10
70

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

mf

mp

sul pont.

74

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

mp

sul pizz on muted string sul G. Percussive

muted harmonic glissando, light bow pressure, thin, noisy sound

III
IV

77

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p

mf \rightarrow *ff*

mp

mp

firmly tapping notes up and down the fingerboard sul G. Percussive notes alternating between tapped pitch and open string

ord.

sul pont.

While noodling on highest harmonic fingerings sul G and D, tremolo bow with heavy bow pressure.

Retrun to slow gliss gesture, increase to extreme bow pressure and speed seldomly to incorporate more noise

81

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

sul pont.

mf

sul D.

Percussive

mf

p

mf

3

p

85

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

(x)

mf

mf

mf

muted harmonic glissando, light bow pressure, thin, noisy sound

III

IV

ord.

pp

mp

mp

89

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

mf

firmly tapping notes up and down the fingerboard with left hand sul G. Percussive notes alternating between tapped pitch and open string

3

3

3

3

mf

mf

12
93

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

97

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ord.
lyrical, expressive

100 increase volume and instances of noise by this point

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

104

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

f

108

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

While noodling on highest harmonic fingerings
sul G and D, tremolo bow with heavy bow pressure.

112

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

ff

f

indeterminate gliss. sul G

While noodling on highest harmonic fingerings sul G and D, tremolo bow with heavy bow pressure.

116

Vln. I *f* *p* *ff*

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

120

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

gliss. from a random high note sul G, play repeatedly, vary speed

124

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

While noodling on highest harmonic fingerings sul G and D, tremolo bow with heavy bow pressure.

fff *p* *ff*

III
IV

128 *rit.* ♩ = 96

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

C

reserved, resigned
rhythmic strumming on muted strings

continue similarly, embellish as desired

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p

136

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p

slow gliss from the highest harmonics sul G.
very slow bow, noisy, wispy sound.
repeat continually

noodling on highest harmonics sul G
occasionally, improvise glissandi gestures
and experiment with bowing noises

140

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

improvise sporadic snap pizz on muted string sul G

mf

144

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

pp

148

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

152

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

improvise sporadic snap pizz on muted string sul G

mf

156

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

improvise sporadic snap pizz on muted string sul G

mf

p

160

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

163

Vln. I

Vla.