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you are embodied air, afloat

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# you are embodied air, afloat

*for solo viola and pre-recorded track*

2020

## Rylan Gleave

(b.1997)



## Program notes

*you are embodied air, afloat* was written specifically for Rufus Isabel Elliot, as a means of gratitude for its friendship and support.

The original recordings came from time spent in Cornwall in the south of England, and were exclusively recorded on Mother Ives and Constantine Bay. Whilst The Merope Rocks cushion Mother Ives Bay from wind, in gales swimmers can be swept out. I happened to be recording the sounds from the beach when my cousin Kia was pulled out of his depth\*, and although too far away to pick up any speech, there is a (perhaps imagined) dark and brooding atmosphere captured by the recordings, especially as the track progresses.

\*N.B. the Coast Guard was alerted in time to pick him up. He has since made many jokes about the sea being 'a cruel mistress', and is relatively unscarred by the incident.

*Score sketch by Rylan Gleave.*

## Performance notes

There are several gradations of bow position in the viola part; in addition to the conventional *sul tasto* (s.t.) and *sul ponticello* (s.p.), *molto sul tasto* (m.s.t.) and *molto sul ponticello* (m.s.p.) are specified. Arrows between these indicate a gradual shift to that position, and the term *pos. ord* indicates a return to ordinary bowing. An arrow pointing up notehead is to indicate the highest pitch that you can make the instrument produce.

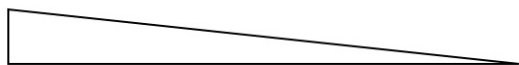
Bow pressure is notated above the stave by solid wedges to indicate intensity.



add bow pressure to produce a scratching sound; replace pitch with noise



as above but move back from noise to pitch again

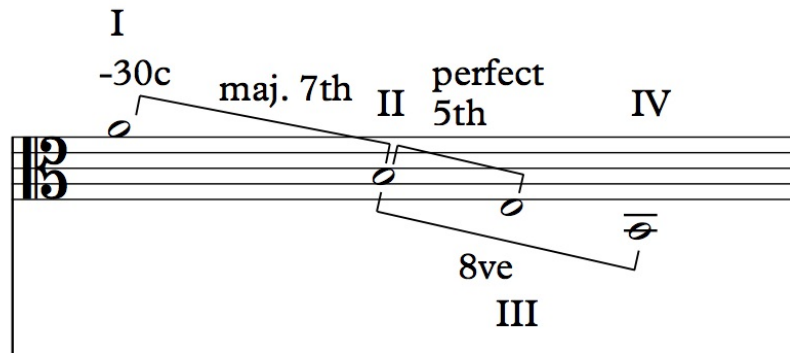


decrease bow pressure to create soft, airy sound



as above but move from airy sound to normal bow pressure

Scordatura tuning notated below.



Boxes around music indicate one (1) phrase. Any phrases may be repeated, adapted, fragmented, or developed at the player's leisure. Boxes may run into other boxes with no issue, and the material can be arranged to the player's comfort, whether that be mostly following the given material, or only very loosely. Whilst not every pitch is specified, observe the length of the note stems as a rough guide pertaining to where a headless pitch might sit. Sounds that you may pick up from the track could inform your choice of pitches, or you may choose to disregard them. N.B. the score spacings are not durational.

The violist should cue the track themselves with a foot pedal, if possible, or signal another (offstage) to cue the track when they are ready to move to the second section. The track lasts around 10'40", but there is no pre-determined stopping point for the performer.

The violist should be amplified with a contact microphone, with the option of a small amount of reverb, to blend better with the tape and bring out small details.

### **A note on the pre-recorded track**

All of the recordings were taken in Mother Ives, Cornwall in 2019, with the only editing being noise reduction for heavy wind. The track moves from recording to recording with overlaps as follows;

00:08-01:06 soft, gentle rain, occasional footsteps

00:54-02:28 the sea lapping gently, some louder splashes

02:18-03:07 wind, an exclamation, the trickling of seawater into a rockpool

03:03-06:17 wind, the sea crashing faraway, seagulls crying

05:54-07:50 the sea swirling close by, occasional footsteps

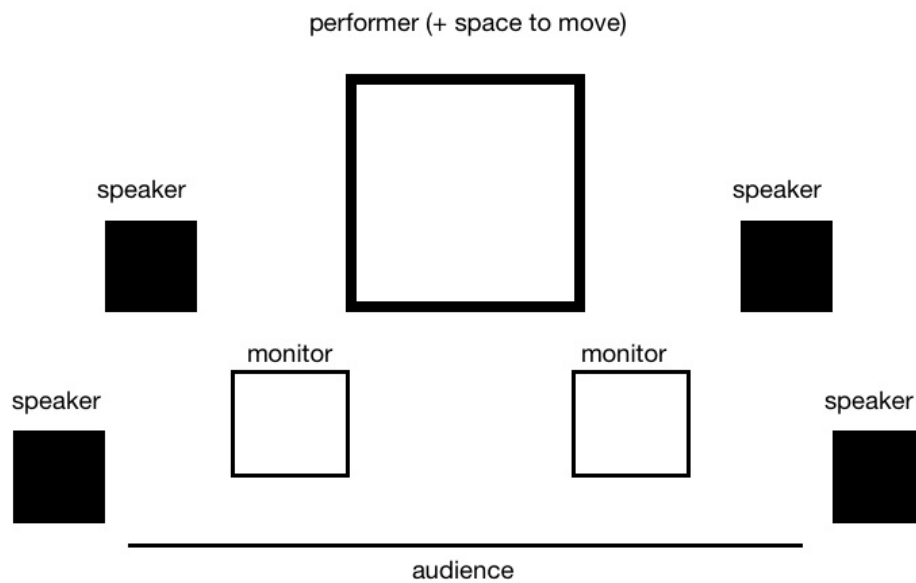
07:50-08:04 silence

08:04-08:22 seagulls crying

08:21-10:40 wind, the sea crashing faraway

There is no need for a digital timer or stopwatch unless the performer feels more comfortable with one. The pre-recorded track matches the piece at any point, and whilst the performer may wish to be aware of when the recordings change, there is no obligation to move to a new phrase, or to rush through the movements when these do occur. The performer may also choose to cue the track in a place they feel is more suitable to match their playing, as opposed to the one notated.

### Stage setup



*Demo recording by Rufus Isabel Elliot, Glasgow, 2020.*

# 1. The body floats better

Terrifyingly still c. ♩ = 56 (or as slow as you can bear)

sounding pitch

written pitch

and/or

m.s.p., senza vib sempre (very light trem)

m.s.p., senza vib sempre

*pppp* barely there

*pppp* barely there

Detailed description: This system shows two musical staves. The top staff is labeled 'sounding pitch' and the bottom 'written pitch'. Both are in 12/8 time. The first measure contains a melodic line with a tremolo indicated by a dashed line above it. The second measure contains a similar melodic line with a trill-like tremolo indicated by a dashed line above it. Below the staves are two boxes, separated by 'and/or'. Each box contains a written pitch staff with fingerings II, III, and IV. The first box is labeled 'm.s.p., senza vib sempre (very light trem)' and has a dynamic marking of *pppp* barely there. The second box is labeled 'm.s.p., senza vib sempre' and also has a dynamic marking of *pppp* barely there.

2

s.p. → bow on bridge

white noise

*p* hesitant > *pp*

s.p. → bow on bridge

white noise

*mp* gentle < (*mf*) > *ppp*

Detailed description: This system is marked with a '2'. It shows two staves. The top staff has a glissando (gliss.) leading to a series of notes. The bottom staff has a glissando (gliss.) leading to a series of notes with fingerings I, II, I, II and a 'sim.' marking. Above the staves are two boxes. The first box is labeled 's.p. → bow on bridge' and 'white noise', with a dynamic marking of *p* hesitant > *pp*. The second box is labeled 's.p. → bow on bridge' and 'white noise', with a dynamic marking of *mp* gentle < (*mf*) > *ppp*.

4

s.p. → bow on bridge

white noise

II III II III sim.

*p* < (*mf*) > *ppp* < *p*

s.p. → bow on bridge

white noise

II gliss.

*p* hesitant > *pp*

Detailed description: This system is marked with a '4'. It shows two staves. The top staff has a series of notes with a glissando (gliss.) at the end. The bottom staff has a series of notes with fingerings II, III, II, III and a 'sim.' marking. Above the staves are two boxes. The first box is labeled 's.p. → bow on bridge' and 'white noise', with a dynamic marking of *p* < (*mf*) > *ppp* < *p*. The second box is labeled 's.p. → bow on bridge' and 'white noise', with a dynamic marking of *p* hesitant > *pp*.

6

and/or

m.s.p., senza vib sempre  
very light trem

*pppp* barely there

m.s.p., senza vib sempre

*pppp* barely there

## 2. Toss away what may sink

Gently rolling c. ♩ = 44

7

s.p., on one string

I

*p* *(mp)* *pp* *p* *(mf)* *p*

PLAY TRACK

13

s.p., over two strings  
I, II

hold for as long as you exhale

take a breath s.t. → m.s.t.

*p* *(mf)* *p*

IV *mp* niente

19

s.t., on one string  
II

hold for as long as you exhale

take a breath s.t. → m.s.t.

*p* *(mf)* *p*

*mp* niente

26

s.t., on one string

*p* *(mp)* *pp* *ppp* *pp* niente



32

take a breath

hold for as long as you exhale

s.t. → m.s.t.

take a breath

III  
IV

*pp* < (*mp*) > *ppp*

The score for page 32 features a string section with a breath-taking exercise. The first staff is a treble clef with a 12/8 time signature. The second staff is a bass clef with a 12/8 time signature. The exercise is contained within a rectangular box. It begins with a whole note on the second line of the bass clef, marked with a fermata and the instruction "take a breath". This is followed by a section labeled "hold for as long as you exhale", which contains a whole note on the second line, marked with a fermata. Above this section, the instruction "s.t." (sustentando) is written, followed by an arrow pointing to "m.s.t." (more sostenuto). Below the note, the fingering "III" and "IV" is indicated. The dynamic markings are *pp* (pianissimo), *(mp)* (mezzo-forte), and *ppp* (pianississimo). The exercise concludes with another whole note on the second line, marked with a fermata and the instruction "take a breath". The bottom staff shows a continuous, wavy line representing a tremolo or sustained sound.

36

m.s.p., on one string

bow on bridge

white noise

IV

*p* ————— (*mf*) ————— *p*

The score for page 36 features a string section with a bridge-bow exercise. The first staff is a treble clef with a 12/8 time signature. The second staff is a bass clef with a 12/8 time signature. The exercise is contained within a rectangular box. It begins with a whole note on the second line of the bass clef, marked with a fermata. Above this section, the instruction "m.s.p., on one string" (mezzo-sostenuto, on one string) is written. This is followed by a section labeled "bow on bridge", which contains a whole note on the second line, marked with a fermata. Above this section, the instruction "white noise" is written. Below the note, the fingering "IV" is indicated. The dynamic markings are *p* (piano), *(mf)* (mezzo-forte), and *p* (piano). The exercise concludes with another whole note on the second line, marked with a fermata. The bottom staff shows a continuous, wavy line representing a tremolo or sustained sound.

### 3. Signal

With a little more bite  $c. \text{♩} = 58$

39

m.s.p., senza vib. sempre

*p* barely noticeable

m.s.p.

never more than *mf*

*p*

40

pos. ord.

*f* sub.  $\text{5:4}$  *p* *f* sub.

m.s.t., molto poco lento gliss

*pp*

m.s.p.

*f*

42

m.s.p.

III IV

*pppp* barely there

m.s.t.

never more than *pp*

niente

43

m.s.t., molto poco lento gliss

sim., bring out quarter-tones

*pp*

*ppp* like whistling

II I

I IV

gliss. gliss.

45

m.s.p.

m.s.t.

pos. ord.

*f*

*mf*

*f sub.* *p* *f sub.*

5:4

47

m.s.p.

*p*

*fff*

molto cresc. poco a poco

# 4. The need for supplemental oxygen

Lilting c. ♩ = 44

48

and/or

over four long bow strokes \*

I, II  
m.s.t. → ord. *tr*

*p* ————— *(mf)* ————— *pp*

keep A sul II sounding throughout, move I

\*gestural shape or improvised melody optional

over four long bow strokes \*

II, III  
m.s.t. → ord. → m.s.t.

*p* ————— *mf*

keep D sul II sounding throughout, move III

\*gestural shape or improvised melody optional

---

50

III IV  
ord. ————— II, III \*

*p* ————— *f* ————— *ff* ————— *ppp*

keep E sul III sounding throughout, move II

\*gestural shape or improvised melody optional

s.t. III \*

*p* ————— *(mp)* ————— *p*

\* N.B. *port* not *gliss*

---

53

and/or

bow ad lib.

*mp*  $\leftarrow$  *f*  $\rightarrow$  *p*  $\leftarrow$  *mf*  $\rightarrow$  *pp*

\*gestural shape or improvised melody optional

bow ad lib.

*mp*  $\leftarrow$  *f*  $\rightarrow$  *p*  $\leftarrow$  *mf*  $\rightarrow$  *pp*

\*gestural shape or improvised melody optional  
\*\*drones optional, any open string(s)

### 5. So that your eyes can look up at the sky

With hope c. ♩ = 56 (or as slow as you can bear)

58

pos. ord.

IV III III

*p*  $\rightarrow$  *pp* *p*  $\leftarrow$  *mp*

pos. ord.

IV III III

*mp*  $\rightarrow$  *p* *mp*  $\leftarrow$  *mf*

s.t. → ord.

*mf* < *f*     *p* sub. < *mf* > *p*

s.t. III \*  
IV

*p* < (*mp*) > *p*

\* N.B. port not gliss

s.p.

*p* < (*mp*) > *p*

\* N.B. port not gliss

s.p.

*p* < (*mp*) > *p*

\* N.B. port not gliss

pos. ord.  
III

*p* > *pp*     *p* < *mp*

s.p.

*mp* > *p*     *mp* < *mf*

m.s.p.

*pp*     *pppp*