

The Slow Splintering

for string quartet and electronic sounds

Jacob Gotlib

Program Notes:

The Slow Splintering loosely follows the sonic and physical trajectory of glass shattering -- an initial explosion, a cracking and fissuring, a breaking apart into shards, and the settling of those shards -- in slow motion, taking place over 12 minutes and 24 seconds.

Technical notes:

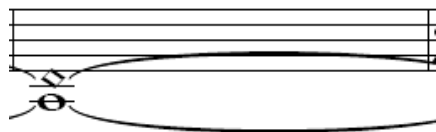
The electronic part may be played back from either a CD player or computer. So that the ensemble may have relative freedom in sections where the electronics are absent, the playback is divided into three tracks: the first track starts at m. 1 and stops at m. 114 (just after rehearsal letter "J"); the second track starts at m. 123 and stops at m. 128; the third track starts at m. 155 and stops at 161. The precise start and stop points are indicated in the score.

Performance Notes:

The string parts contain a copious amount of extended techniques and nontraditional sounds. For this purpose, many of the directions for sound production are indicated verbally in the score (e.g. "col legno battuto" or "arco ord.").

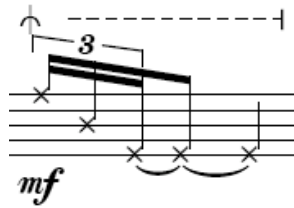
Particular bow placement on the string is important in much of the work. "SP" means *sul ponticello*, "ST" means *sul tasto*, and "N" means *normale*. For *sul ponticello* passages, play as close to the bridge as possible to produce a very metallic but still pitched sound. Arrows between bow placement indications (SP → N) signify moving the bow gradually from the first position at the beginning of the passage to the second position at the end of the passage.

Harmonics are notated in the following manner:

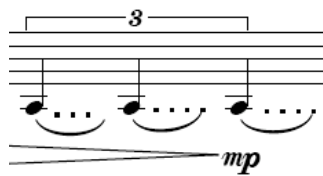


where the bottom note indicates either the pitch to be stopped or the open string on which the harmonic is played and the top note indicates the harmonic to be fingered. If the bottom note corresponds to an open string, play natural harmonics whenever possible.


X-shaped noteheads signify playing behind the bridge on the open strings indicated:




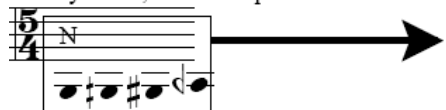
Ricochet or *jeté* bowing is used extensively throughout the work. Passages that employ ricochet bowing are notated as follows:




In passages such as the one above, the durations indicate where the attack should occur temporally, not the length of the bounce. Allow the bow to bounce as long as possible before the next attack.

Noteheads with an arrow, e.g.  signify playing the highest note possible on the instrument.

 indicates striking the open strings with the palm and allowing them to vibrate freely.
sfz

any order, as fast as possible  indicates repeating the passage in the box until the arrow stops.

arco
 triangular noteheads indicate striking the body of the instrument with the palm of the left hand.
p



indicates erratic, nonspecific glissandi originating from the starting pitch.

In mm. 164-167, the cello is instructed to drop coins into a bowl. If possible, use metallic or “singing” bowls, but any bowl that is resonant will suffice. This will create metallic, slight bouncing and rolling sounds. Use small coins such as pennies or dimes.

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$\text{♩} = 60$ **A**

Violin I *ff*

Violin II *ff*

Viola *ff*

Violoncello *ff*

Tape [start playback track 1] electrical buzzing *fff* dense, explosive texture becoming gradually sparser... low rumbling

Vln. I *mp* *f*

Vln. II *mp* *f*

Vla. *mp* *f*

Vc. *ff* *mp*

Tape *fff* (cont. explosive texture)

13

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Tape

The musical score for measures 13 and 14 is as follows:

- Vln. I:** Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Measure 13 contains a jagged, sawtooth-like line. Measure 14 contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked *ff*.
- Vln. II:** Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Measure 13 contains a jagged, sawtooth-like line. Measure 14 contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked *ff*.
- Vla.:** Alto clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Measure 13 contains a triplet of eighth notes marked with 'x' symbols. Measure 14 contains a triplet of eighth notes marked with 'x' symbols, marked *ff*.
- Vc.:** Bass clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Measure 13 contains a jagged, sawtooth-like line. Measure 14 contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked *ff*.
- Tape:** A thick horizontal line with an arrow pointing right. Measure 13 is labeled "(cont. rustling texture)". Measure 14 is marked *ff* and contains a triplet of eighth notes. The final note of the triplet is marked with a downward-pointing arrow and the word "thud".

15

Vln. I *mf* *mp*

Vln. II *mf* *mp*

Vla. *ff* *sfz* *mp*

Vc. *ff* *sfz* *mp*

Tape *p* *mf*

col legno battuto irregular rhythms

col legno battuto irregular rhythms

bouncing texture

rustling cont.

arco ord.

SP

SP

SP

3

3

3

3

6

6

6

6

B

22

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Tape

ff *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp*

(silence) *mp* bouncing marbles hollow, wind-like sound *p* *mf*

ff

27

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Tape

strike strings with palm *sfz*

strike strings with palm *sfz*

p *sfz*

strike strings with palm *sfz*

bouncing & texture

sizzle clink

30

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Tape

scratch tone

ff

sfz

p

pp

sul II

explosive texture

(texture cont.)

increasing density...

f

mf

The musical score is arranged in five staves. The first four staves are for string instruments: Vln. I (Violin I), Vln. II (Violin II), Vla. (Viola), and Vc. (Violoncello). The fifth staff is for Tape. The score begins at measure 30. The Vln. I and Vln. II parts feature a 'scratch tone' marked *ff* in measure 31, followed by a *sfz* dynamic in measure 32, and a *p* dynamic in measure 33. The Vla. part has a 'scratch tone' marked *ff* in measure 31, followed by a *pp* dynamic in measure 32. The Vc. part has a 'scratch tone' marked *ff* in measure 31, followed by a *pp* dynamic in measure 32, and a *mf* dynamic in measure 33. The Tape part is marked '(texture cont.)' and 'increasing density...' with an arrow pointing to a diagram of an 'explosive texture' in measure 31. The diagram shows a dense cluster of notes with a *f* dynamic. The Tape part continues with a *f* dynamic in measure 32 and a *mf* dynamic in measure 33. The Vln. I and Vln. II parts have a *p* dynamic in measure 33. The Vla. part has a *pp* dynamic in measure 33. The Vc. part has a *mf* dynamic in measure 33. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic hairpins.

40

Vln. I *f* *col legno batt.* *sfz*

Vln. II *f* *col legno batt.* *sfz*

Vla. 3 *pp* *ST*

Vc. 3 *pp*

Tape *sfz* bounce *mp* *p* *mp* digging sand

43

Vln. I *col legno batt.* *p* arco ord.

Vln. II *col legno batt.* *p* pizz. arco ord.

Vla. *col legno batt.* *p* arco ord.

Vc. *col legno batt.* *sfz* *p* arco ord.

Tape *pp* paper crumpling low rumble

45

Vln. I *mp* *p* *ppp* *mp*

Vln. II *pp* *ppp* *mp*

Vla. *pp* *p* N SP

Vc. *mp* *p* *pp* N SP c.l. batt. arco ord.

Tape *mp* rustling electrical buzzing *mp* buzz

pizz. slap body w/ LH palm arco ord.

49

Vln. I *mp* *p*

Vln. II *p* *pp* arco ord. ST SP

Vla. *p* *pp* arco ord. N SP

Vc. SP col legno batt. ST arco ord. N 3 3

Tape clink sizzle marbles *p* rumbles

pizz. arco ord.

51

Vln. I

arco

pizz.

arco

mp

p

3

3

3

SP

Vln. II

pizz.

arco

mp

p

3

3

3

tr

SP

SP

p

Vla.

col legno batt.

ST → SP

arco ord.

mf

3

sul I

SP

p

Vc.

arco ord.

mf

3

N → SP

p

Tape

sizzles & clinks

drone

mf

p

marbles

f

p

D

The score is divided into four measures. Measure 1 (5/4 time) features Vln. II with a *mf* dynamic. Measure 2 (4/4 time) is mostly silent. Measure 3 (4/4 time) features Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., and Vc. with *pp* dynamics and *SP* (Sustained Pedal) markings. Vln. I has a triplet of notes. Vla. and Vc. have *ST* (Sustained Tremolo) markings. Measure 4 (5/4 time) continues the *pp* dynamics and *SP* markings. The Tape part at the bottom includes: *rolling resonance* (5/4), *rustlings* (4/4), *low drone* (*pp*, 4/4), and *bell-like sounds* (8va, 5/4).

57

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Tape

SP → N

ST → SP

pp

mf

sizzle

low rumbling swells

61

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Tape

N

pp

ppp

p

sfz

sul IV

sul III

arco sul IV

arco sul II

pp

rustling

marbles

thickening texture

E

65

Vln. I *mf* *mp* *f*

Vln. II *mf* *mp* *f*

Vla. *mf* *mp* *f*

Vc. *mf* *ppp* *f*

Tape *p* *mf*

bass drum

low noise

low rumbling swells

bouncing texture

68

Vln. I *f* *mf* N →

Vln. II *f* *sfz* *mf* *sfz* arco ord. N → *p*

Vla. *sfz* *mf* arco ord. N →

Vc. *sfz* sul IV arco ord. ST *mp* → SP

Tape $\frac{5}{4}$ (cont. bouncing texture) *p* thud (cont. bouncing texture) *sfz* texture thickening

74 **F**

Vln. I *mp*

Vln. II *pp* ST

Vla. *pp* ST

Vc. *f* 3 SP → N pizz. 3 5

Tape *pp* low rumbling swells *p* rustling *mf*

78

Vln. I sul I sul II sul I sul II sul III

Vln. II any order, as fast as possible *mf* N

Vla. any order, as fast as possible *mf* N

Vc. arco 3 3 3 3 sul IV

Tape (cont. rustling) thud (rustling texture thickening...) *sfz*

80

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Tape

high metallic clangs

(thicker still...)

clangs mp

ff

f

sul III, sul IV, sul II, sul I, sul III, sul II, sul I, sul III, sul II, sul I

sul IV, sul III, sul III, sul IV, sul II, sul III, sul II, sul II

3, 3, 3, 3

The musical score is for page 18, starting at measure 80. It features five staves: Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vc., and Tape. Vln. I has a melodic line with various sul ponticelli (sul) markings (sul III, sul IV, sul II, sul I) and triplets. Vln. II and Vla. have sustained notes marked *ff*. Vc. has a bass line with sul markings (sul IV, sul III, sul IV, sul II, sul III, sul II) and triplets, marked *f*. The Tape part includes 'high metallic clangs' (represented by a wavy line) and 'clangs mp' (represented by 'x' marks in boxes).

82

Vln. I

sul I
sul II
sul III
sul III
sul IV

ff

Vln. II

Vla.

ff

Vc.

sul I
sul II
scratch
ff

Tape

ff *fff*

85

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Tape

G

arco ord.
ST

high, crystalline drone

metallic ringing

pp *pp* *pp* *sfz* *p* *pp*

90

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Tape

H

ppp *mf*

ppp *mf*

ppp *mf*

ppp *mf* *pp*

rustling

pp metallic ringing

95

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Tape

col legno batt.

pp

pp

ST

pp

pizz.

arco norm.

mp

p

pp

percussive texture

98

Vln. I *p*

Vln. II *p*

Vla.

Vc.

Tape

thud

99

Vln. I

Vln. II ST *mp*

Vla. *p*

Vc. *mp*

Tape

extremely soft clicking/rustling *pppp*

noise low, wind-like drone *pp*

arco ord. N *mp*

arco ord. N *mp*

SP *mp*

I

103

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Tape

pizz.

pp

mp

ST

ppp

electrical buzzing

low rumbling swells

low drone

mp

107

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Tape

pizz.

pp

pizz.

pp

clicking texture

p

(low drone cont.)

111

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Tape

sfz

arco

ppp

spiccato

sfz

sfz

thud

[stop playback]

building up of noisy, buzzing textures...

116

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

col legno batt.

pp

arco ord.

ppp

col legno batt.

pp

arco ord.

ppp

col legno batt.

pp

col legno batt.

pp

tap on body

121 -----|

Vln. I: Treble clef, 5/4 time signature. Measure 121: whole note, fermata. Measure 122: whole note, fermata.

Vln. II: Treble clef, 5/4 time signature. Measure 121: eighth notes, *col legno tratto*, *pp*. Measure 122: eighth notes, *ppp*. Fingerings: 6, 3, 6, 5, 3, 5.

Vla.: Treble clef, 5/4 time signature. Measure 121: eighth notes, *col legno tratto*, *pp*. Measure 122: eighth notes, *ppp*. Fingerings: 5, 3, 6.

Vc.: Treble clef, 5/4 time signature. Measure 121: eighth notes, *col legno tratto*, *pp*. Measure 122: whole note, fermata. Fingering: 5.



123

Vln. I: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 123-126: whole notes, fermatas.

Vln. II: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Measure 123: eighth notes, *pp*. Measure 124: eighth notes, *pp*. Measure 125: whole note, fermata. Measure 126: whole note, fermata. Fingerings: 6, 3, 5, 3.

Vla.: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Measure 123: eighth notes, *pp*. Measure 124: eighth notes, *pp*. Measure 125: whole note, fermata. Measure 126: whole note, fermata. Fingerings: 5, 6, 3, 5.

Vc.: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Measure 123: eighth notes, *pp*. Measure 124: eighth notes, *pp*. Measure 125: eighth notes, *pp*. Measure 126: eighth notes, *pp*. Includes "scratch tone" annotation.

Tape: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Measure 123: eighth notes, *pp*. Measure 124: eighth notes, *pp*. Measure 125: eighth notes, *pp*. Measure 126: eighth notes, *pp*. Includes "low rumbles" and "[start playback track 2]" annotations.

127

Vln. I *col legno batt.* *pp* arco ord. ST

Vln. II *col legno batt.* *pp* arco ord. ST

Vla. *col legno batt.* *pp* arco ord. ST

Vc. *col legno batt.* *pp*

Tape [stop playback]



K

131

Vln. I arco ord. *pp* N

Vln. II arco ord. SP *ppp* N

Vla. SP arco ord. *ppp* N

Vc. SP arco ord. *pp* N

136

Vln. I *mp* *ppp* *col legno tratto*

Vln. II *mp*

Vla. *mp* *pp* N SP

Vc. *mp*



141

Vln. I arco ord. SP *pp* *p*

Vln. II SP *pp* *p*

Vla. *p* norm scratch

Vc. *pp* *p* detune until slack

L

146

scratch tone sul IV

pizz.

arco norm.

col legno batt.

spiccato

col legno batt.

col legno batt.

pizz.

col legno tratto

p *mf* *pp* *ppp* *p* *ppp* *p* *pp* *pp*



150

tap on body with fingertips

arco ord.

col legno tratto

arco ord. SP

col legno tratto

slap strings with palm

pp *pp* *pp* *pp* *sfz* *sfz*

Tape

click

low, windlike drone

ppp

[start playback track 3]

157

Vln. I *col legno tratto*
ppp

Vln. II *col legno tratto*
ppp

Vla. *col legno tratto*
ppp

Vc. *col legno tratto*
ppp

Tape

thud
3

clicking & rustling texture

[stop playback]

162

Vln. I *col legno batt.*
ppp

Vln. II *col legno batt.*
ppp

Vla. *ppp*

Vc. *pp*
ppp

drop small coins into bowls

167

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.



170

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

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