EDITION PETERS

No. 66304

GEORGE CRUMB

BLACK ANGELS

(Images 1)

Electric String Quartet

PERFORMANCE NOTES

1) All players read from score.
2) Each note is preceded by an accidental, except in case(s) of an immediate repetition of a pitch or a pattern of pitches. N.B.: the tonal passages are notated in the traditional manner.
3) The amplification of the instruments is of critical importance in BLACK ANGELS. Ideally, one should use genuine electric instruments (with a built-in pick-up). Otherwise, fine-quality contact microphones can be attached (by rubber bands) to the belly of the instrument. The player should find the best position for the microphone in order to avoid distortion of the tone. If the amplifier is equipped with a reverberation control, this should be set on "high" to create a more surrealistic effect. The dynamic level should also be extremely loud (for the forte passages) and the level should not be adjusted during the performance.
4) The following percussion instruments and special equipment will be needed:

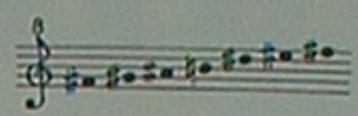
a) Violin I:
maraca
7 crystal glasses
solid glass rod (about 6 inches in length and 3/16 or 1/4 inch in diameter)
2 metal thimbles
metal plectrum (e.g. paper clip)

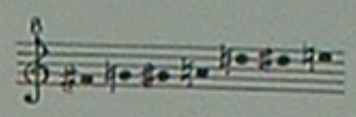
b) Violin II:
tam-tam (suspended), about 15 inches in diameter
soft beater for the tam-tam
contrabass bow (for bowing tam-tam)
7 crystal glasses
solid glass rod (about 6 inches in length and 3/16 or 1/4 inch in diameter)
2 metal thimbles
metal plectrum (e.g. paper clip)

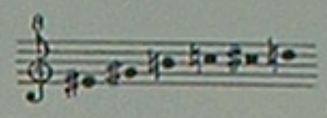
c) Viola:
6 crystal glasses
solid glass rod (about 6 inches in length and 3/16 or 1/4 inch in diameter)
2 metal thimbles
metal plectrum (e.g. paper clip)

d) Cello:
maraca
tam-tam (suspended) about 24 inches in diameter
soft beater for the tam-tam
very hard beater for the tam-tam (this should produce a percussive, metallic sound)
contrabass bow (for bowing tam-tam)

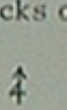
5) The crystal glasses (used for the "glass-harmonica" effect in God-music, on page 7) should be goblet-shaped (like wine glasses, with a stem). A fine grade of crystal will produce a truly beautiful effect. The glasses should be securely mounted on a board (by taping). The glasses can be tuned by adding water, although the tone loses in purity if too much water is used. The following pitches are required (N.B.: the glasses sound one octave higher than written):

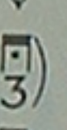
Violin I: 

Violin II: 

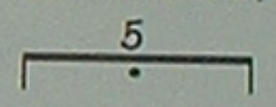
Viola: 

6) The tam-tam harmonics are variable in pitch. The player should bow the "lip" of the tam-tam with a well-rosined contrabass bow.
7) All glissandi occupy the total duration of the note to which they are affixed. Use portamento only where indicated in the score.
8) All spoken sounds (whispering, shouting) must project! The whispered passages can be slightly voiced if the acoustics of the hall require this. The tongue clicks (in "Sounds of Bones and Flutes," on page 2) are percussive clicks off the upper palate (not clucking sounds).

9)  = a quarter tone higher than written pitch

 = a quarter tone lower than written pitch

 = three seconds

 = five seconds

= fermata lunga

= normal fermata

= slight pause or "breath"

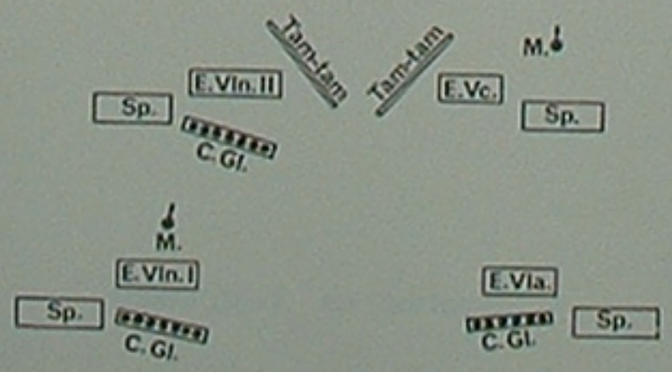
= extremely short pause or "breath"

= trill a half step above principal note

=

 =

STAGE POSITIONING



(Sp.=Speaker, C.Gl.=Crystal Glasses, M.=Maraca)

PROGRAM

I. DEPARTURE

(NUMEROLOGY)

1. [Tutti] THRENODY I: Night of the Electric Insects — 13 times 7 and 7 times 13
2. [Trio] Sounds of Bones and Flutes — 7 in 13
3. [Duo] Lost Bells — 13 over 7
4. [Solo: Cadenza accompagnata] Devil-music — 7 and 13
5. [Duo] Danse Macabre — 13 times 7
   (Duo alternativo: Dies Irae)

II. ABSENCE

6. [Trio] Pavana Lachrymae (Der Tod und das Mädchen) — 13 under 13
   (Solo obbligato: Insect Sounds)
7. [Tutti] THRENODY II: BLACK ANGELS! — *) 7 times 7 and 13 times 13
8. [Trio] Sarabanda de la Muerte Oscura — 13 over 13
   (Solo obbligato: Insect Sounds)
9. [Duo] Lost Bells (Echo) — 7 times 13
   (Duo alternativo: Sounds of Bones and Flutes)

III. RETURN

10. [Solo: Aria accompagnata] God-music — 13 and 7
11. [Duo] Ancient Voices — 7 over 13
12. [Trio] Ancient Voices (Echo) — 13 in 7
13. [Tutti] THRENODY III: Night of the Electric Insects — 7 times 13 and 13 times 7

*) This central motto is also the numerological basis of the entire work

[IMAGES I]

Commissioned by the University of Michigan and Dedicated to the Stanley Quartet
(G. Ross, G. Rosseels, R. Courte, J. Jelinek)

BLACK ANGELS

THIRTEEN IMAGES FROM THE DARK LAND

for Electric String Quartet

George Crumb
(in tempore belli, 1970)

I. DEPARTURE

1. Threnody I: Night of the Electric Insects [Tutti] 13 times 7 and 7 times 13

Vibrant, intense! ♪=60

Electric Violin I.
Electric Violin II.
Electric Viola
Electric Cello

(sempre sul pont. e glissando)
(sempre sim.)
ppp sub.
fff sub.
pp
ppp
(ppp)
piangendo (tal pont. sempre)
mp
mf
ppp sempre

7 3 4 7 7

(**) Make a continuous glissando, without dwelling on given pitches. The tremolo should be extremely rapid.

(††) The numbers under brackets indicate duration in seconds; and since quintuplet = 1 second, play 7 quintuplet groups in first bracket, 3 groups in second bracket, etc.

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(tempore sul port. e gliss.ando)

E.Vln.I.
E.Vln.II.
E.Vla.
E.Vc.

2. Sounds of Bones and Flutes [Trio]

7 in 13 Delicate and somewhat mechanical [♪=88]

Electric Violin I.
Electric Violin II.
Electric Cello

(quasi Tibetan Prayer Stones)

3. Lost Bells [Duo] 13 over 7

Remote, transfigured

(E. Vln. II e Tam-tam)

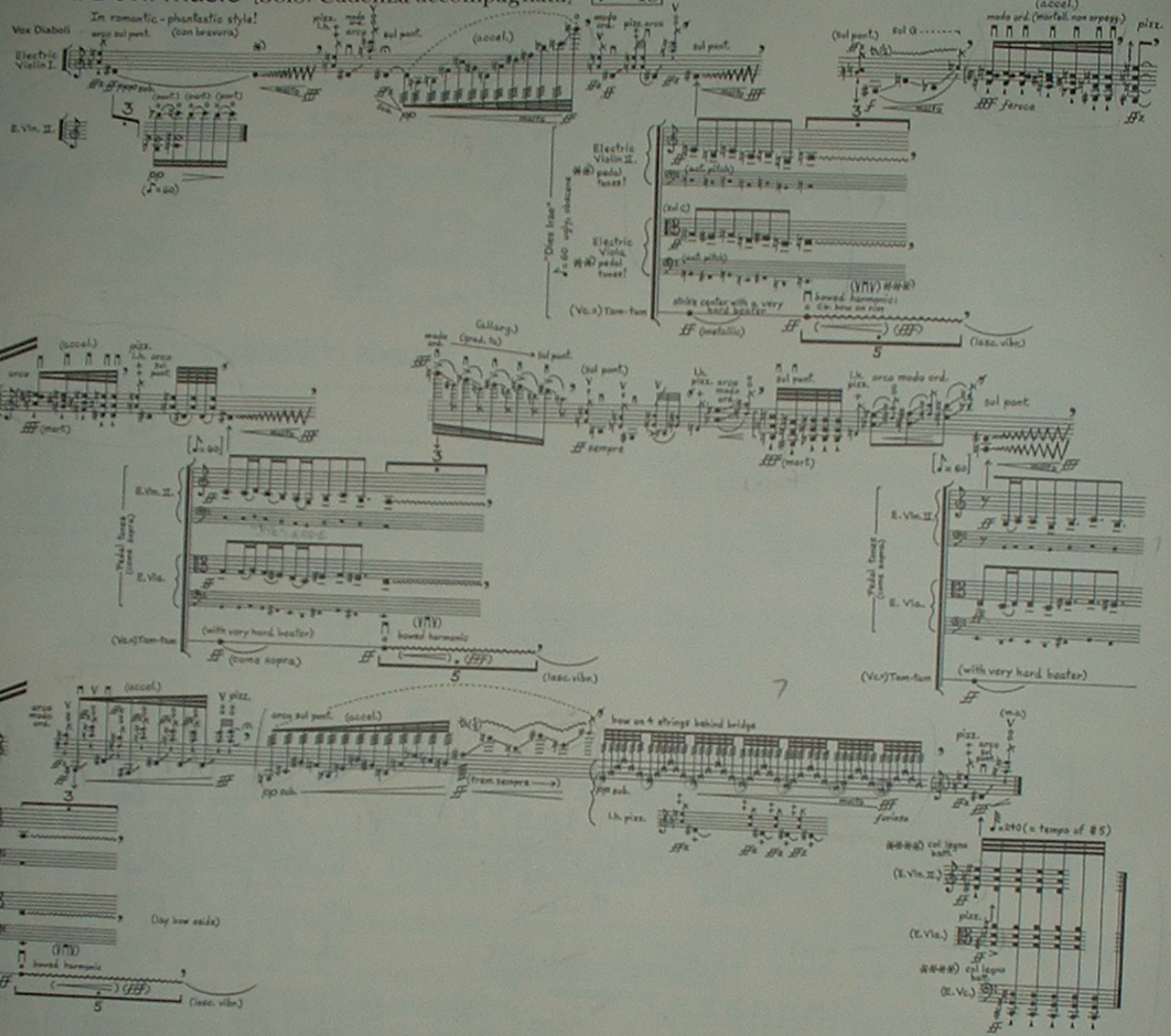
[bowed harmonic: Cb. bow on rim]

One long bow

Electric Cello

attacca subito

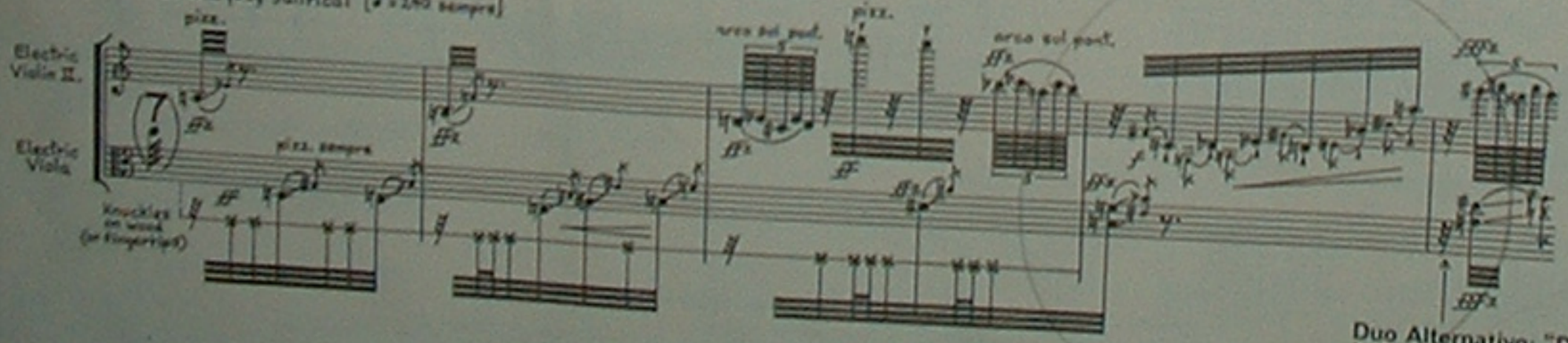
4. Devil-music [Solo: Cadenza accompagnata] 7 and 13



attacca subito

5. Danse Macabre [Duo] 13 times 7

Grotesque, satirical [♪= 240 sempre]



(*) Gradually increase bow pressure until pitch becomes pure noise.

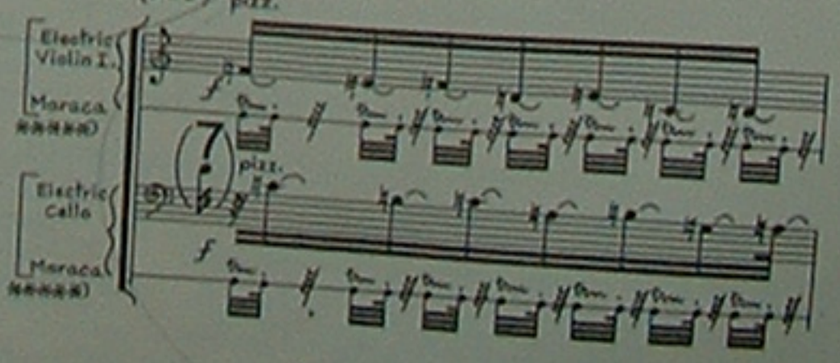
(**) Pedal tones are produced by moving bow very slowly while exerting great pressure. Since various "partials" are obtainable, the player should calculate carefully distance from bridge and bow pressure in order to produce the lower octave.

(***) Several bow changes might be needed in order to produce a powerful sound.

(****) Strike with bow near frog for a more percussive effect.

(*****) Hold maracas in right hand. If necessary, use left hand pizzicato.

Duo Alternativo: "Dies Irae"



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E. Vln. II.
E. Vla.
(sul pont.)
arco modo ord.
pizz.
arco sul pont.
sul pont.
(lay bow aside)
(pizz. sempre)
(take up bow)
arco sul pont. sempre
Electric Violin I.
Maraca
Whistle
Electric Cello
(slap)
(pizz.)
mp
(pizz. sempre)
(sul pont. sempre)
(ord.)
(sul A sempre)
(sul G sempre)
(sul C sempre)
Slow bowing behind left hand! (interpret as viola viba)
Electric Violin II. (hold like a Viol)
Electric Viola (hold like a Viol)
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Maraca
Whisper
egy kettő három négy öt hat hét
(like an incantation)
13
Begin Pavana after 13 sec. pause

II. ABSENCE

Solo Obbligato: Insect Sounds

6. Pavana Lachrymae [Trio]

(der Tod und das Mädchen)

13 under 13 — Grave, solemn; like a consort of viols (a fragile echo of an ancient music) ♩ = 30 (♩ = 60)

Electric Violin I.
(loco)
from sempre
subito più lento (♩ = 50)
ancora più lento (♩ = 40)
(al niente)
Electric Cello
Electric Violin II. (hold like a Viol)
Electric Viola (hold like a Viol)

(*) ⊳ = a percussive pizzicato (string rebounds from fingerboard)

(**) The Hungarian numerals one through seven. Pronounce: ehdy, kehtő, hárohm (trilled r), naydy, oelt (ö like German), hait, hate.

(***) The sound of viols is produced by bowing near page (on "wrong" side of left hand). All players should hold bows in the manner of viol players. Violin and viola should be held like viols. The fingering will naturally be reversed, but a little practice will ensure accuracy in pitch. The beginning pitch could be indicated by a chalk mark on the fingerboard.

7. Threnody II: Black Angels! [Tutti]

7 times 7 and 13 times 13

Furiously, with great energy! ♪ = ca. 100 (*)

Electric Violin I.
Electric Violin II.
Electric Viola
Electric Cello

sul pont.
pizz.
arco sul pont.
"trillo di diavolo"
shout ff
jū san!
(unisono)
(sempre sul pont.)
(accel.)
(rit.)
(Vla.)
molto
ord.
kuminatatu!
trinadtsat'!
(mp)
(p)
(tutta forza!)

(*) This piece should be performed in a very free manner. However, all precisely indicated durations should be approximately in tempo.

(**) ♿ = a percussive pizzicato

(***) The numeral thirteen in Japanese, Russian, and Swahili.
Pronounce: Joo-sohn, Tree-nahtʹ-saht, Koo-meᵛnahᵛtah-too
(ᵛ = slight pause between syllables)

E. Vln. I.
E. Vln. II.
E. Vla.
E. Vc.
eins shout
zwei
drei
vier speak
fünf
sechs
7
shout
dreizehn!
(Vln. II, e) Tam-tam
FFFz (soft stick)
(let vibe)
whisper f
(Vla.)
sieben
3
13

Solo Obbligato: Insect Sounds

(very slow: ♩ = ca. 3 seconds)
E. Vln. II.
E. Vln. I.
pppp gossamer
pppp sempre

8. Sarabanda de la Muerte Oscura [Trio] 13 over 13

Grave, solemn; like a consort of viols ♩ = 60
Electric Violin I. (hold like a Viol)
Electric Viola (hold like a Viol)
Electric Cello
pp
poco
(sempre ben tenuto)

9. Lost Bells (Echo) [Duo]

7 times 13
(Vln. II, e) Tam-tam
[bowed harmonic] (Ch. bow on rim)
(one long bow)
(lasc. vibe)
Electric Cello
pp sub.
E. Vln. I.
E. Vla.
E. Vc.
ppp sub.
pppp sub.
al niente

Duo Alternativo: Sounds of Bones and Flutes

E. Vln. II.
pizz.
play like guitar harmonics; tones would ring like tiny bells
(poco accel. . . rit. . . .)
mp sempre
pppp sub.
(echo)
arco
(multo rit. . . .)
(Vc. e) Tam-tam
(one long bow)
E. Vln. I (normal position)
Marasa
E. Vla. (normal position)
whisper (like an incantation)
un deux trois quatre cinq six sept
col legno battuto
col legno tratto
throw bow
Begin Orchestra after 13 sec. pause

(a) See note (aaa) on page 4.

III. RETURN

10. God-music [Solo: Aria accompagnata]

Adagio (with profound calm)

♪ = ca. 50

13 and 7

Vox Dei

Electric Cello

pp molto cantabile

mp

(Vln. I.) 7 Crystal Glasses

(Vln. II.) 7 Crystal Glasses

(Vla.) 6 Crystal Glasses

col arco, legatiss.

(tempo sim.)

più p

poco a poco più intenso e pressando il tempo

(port.)

E. Vc.

Crystal Glasses

ppp (echo)

cresc. poco a poco

tempo primo ♪ = 50

ppp sub. (tranquillo)

mf

f

(molto intenso)

fff molto

pochiss. più lento

ancora pochiss. più lento

pppp

al niente

11. Ancient Voices [Duo]

7 over 13

♪ = 60

Hold instrument like a mandolin

Electric Violin I.

Electric Violin II.

(**) "bottle-neck" technique (sul G sempre)

(slim.)

pp ma distinto

(**) martellato (with a glass rod)

(sul G sempre)

(accel. - - -)

pp

poco f

(Tempo sim.)

E. Vln. I.

E. Vln. II.

(*) The following pitches are required (glasses sound 8va higher than written):

Vln. I.

Vln. II.

Vla.

(*) The rests indicate termination of bow stroke. However, the glasses should continue to vibrate so that an overall legato effect is produced.

(**) With a glass rod (held in left hand) and metal plectrum (e.g. paper clip). Pluck string only at points marked ▼. Slide rod along string to produce pitches.

(***) This effect is produced by striking string with glass rod (by left hand at approx. normal position) at points marked ‖. Open string sounds automatically as rod rebounds from string.

E. Vln. I.

E. Vln. II.

(sempre sim.)

(accel. - - -)

(sempre sul E-A) [hold rod at an angle to produce tritone]

(ppp sempre)

(ritard. - - -)

attacca subito

12. Ancient Voices (Echo) [Trio] 13 in 7

Grazioso, flessibile [♪ ca. 60]

(glissando sempre)

"bottle-neck" technique (hold instruments like a mandolin)

Electric Violin I.

Electric Violin II.

Electric Viola

sul E sempre

sul A

sul D

ppp (echo)

Electric Cello

ppppp non vibr.

13. Threnody III: Night of the Electric Insects [Tutti] 7 times 13 and 13 times 7

Disembodied, incorporeal

col arco molto ord.

Electric Violin I.

Electric Violin II.

Electric Viola

sul pont. e glissando sempre

pppp sempre (gossamer, wafting)

E. Vc.

prod. to sul pont.

pppp e non vibr. sempre

vibrant, intense!

(sempre sul pont. e gliss.)

E. Vln. I.

E. Vln. II.

E. Vla.

E. Vc.

molto

(sul pont. sempre)

gliss. sempre

pppp (gossamer)

(quasi niente)

[♪ = 60]

(E. Vln. I♭) Maraca / whisper

ichi ni san shi go roku shichi

ppp (like an incantation)

(attach thimbles)

(echo) (like an incantation)

(attach thimbles)

begin Sarabanda at bottom of gliss. without interruption

(6) The Japanese numerals one through seven. Pronounce vowels like Italian, consonants like English.

♩= 60 Sarabanda de la muerte oscura (echo)

*) a very rapid tremolo with two thimble-capped fingers (glissando sempre)

pp delicatissimo, ghostly, phantasmal

*) a very rapid tremolo with two thimble-capped fingers (glissando sempre)

pp delicatissimo, ghostly, phantasmal

*) a very rapid tremolo with two thimble-capped fingers (glissando sempre)

pp delicatissimo, ghostly, phantasmal

Electric Cello

♩= 40

pppp (ma distinto) as from afar

pppp (sempre sim.)

pppp

♩= 54 (pochiss. più lento)

Vln. I.

ppp più delicato

al niente

ritardando (molto)

Vln. II.

ppp più delicato

al niente

Vla.

ppp più delicato

al niente

E. Vc.

♩= 36 (pochiss. più lento)

pppp

ritardando

pppp wistfully

fragile [♪= 45]

(Vln. I.)

pppp

whisper

shichi

(Vln. II.)

Crystal Glasses (choice quality with glass rod)

pppp

whisper

jū san

(Vla.)

pppp

whisper

shichi

(Vc.) Tam-tam

[Bowed harmonic] Ch. bow on rim (one long bow)

ppp (

(lasc. vibr.)

Finished on Friday the Thirteenth, March, 1970 (Media, Pa.)

*) Two distinct musical events will emerge: a faint echo of the Sarabanda and the high-pitched "insect-music" glissandos. Play on two strings (using open strings instead of 4th finger). The right hand (thimbles) must change strings exactly with the left hand. It is of utmost importance that the Sarabanda be clearly heard! Therefore, lift thimbles well off the strings in order not to choke the "fundamental" pitches. A very rapid tremolo with high finger action will produce the desired effect.

**) The Japanese numerals seven and thirteen. Pronounce: Shee-chee, Joo-sahn.

[APPENDIX]

6. Pavana Lachrymae [Trio] - *Alternate Version

(der Tod und das Mädchen)

Grave, solemn; like a consort of viols

♩= 30 (♩= 60)

Electric Cello

Electric Violin II.

Electric Viola

ppp sempre

sempre sul tasto e senza vibrato

(**) very gradually flatten pitch!

(sempre ben tenuto)

subito più lento (♩= 50)

pppp sub.

ancora più lento (♩= 40)

(al niente)

*) This version of the Pavana Lachrymae is overlaid with the Solo Obbligato: Insect Sounds (Violin I.), as in the original version (on page 4). The Solo Obbligato will cue into this version at precisely the same points. N.B. In this version the instruments are played in the normal manner, using sul tasto and senza vibrato to simulate the sounds of viols.

(**) Each successive note (of the series of notes under the arrow) should be slightly lower in pitch (in relation to the printed note) than the preceding note. The pitch falls almost imperceptibly until the last note of the series is precisely a half-tone lower than the printed pitch. In the cello part, for example, the first bar is played at true pitch; the first note of bar 2 is very slightly under a true G, the second note still slightly further under a true A, etc. This process continues until the last note of bar 3 actually sounds as E♭. Bar 4 is again notated at true pitch and in bar 5 the gradual flattening begins anew. The player thus "modulates" from g minor to f# minor to f minor. N.B. The three players must flatten pitches precisely together so that the intonation of any given chord is impeccable!