

Three Pieces for Bass and Psalterion

- I. funquitood
- II. Dismission
- III. doofunquitood

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Three Pieces for Bass and Psalterion

for Richard Myron and Elisabeth Seitz

I. funquitood and III. doofunquitood

Any tempo, any dynamic. Phrasing and expression are free, left to the performers. The score is to be treated as a template, in that only pitches, durations, and a few other indications (fingerings, accents, dotted notes) are given. The tempo (and measure length) should be constant: avoid accelerandi and decelerandi. **I** and **III** might have completely different “feels.”

There are two notations for each piece. The first contains specific rhythms. The second lacks stems and beams, and should be treated as spatial notation (though tempo and measure length should still be constant).

The bass may play arco or pizz. at any time. In general high pitches marked as harmonics should be played as artificials, anywhere that is convenient. A roman numeral is given under a harmonic, indicates that a natural harmonic is to be played on that string. These can be high harmonics (2-8).

In mm. 20-21 of **III**, complex double-stop fingerings involving the 11th harmonic (1/4-tone flat G# on the II string, available at 10 different places on the string), and 5th harmonic (F# on the II string), are notated. If these prove too difficult (especially at a fast tempo), leave out a note of any or all of these double stops.

tuning

In **I**, the bass should first be retuned to (C-G-D-G). Next, each string should be detuned slightly, and randomly, so that in general no conventionally fingered pitch on one string matches its cognate pitch on any other. For example, an Eb played on any string in the usual position should be out of tune with all other conventionally fingered Ebs on different strings. In **III**, the bass should be tuned normally, but the psalterion should quickly, and without premeditation, detune as many of the strings as possible by a small amount (up or down). If necessary, take a few minutes to do this. The psalterion tuning in **III**, like the bass tuning in **I**, should create as many different pitch classes as possible.

solo and accompaniment

In **I**, the bass is the solo part, the psalterion the accompanimental part. In **III**, the opposite is the case. The accompanimental part should be much softer than the solo part. The bass might use a mute in **III**. The accompanimental part should be thought of as a kind of “commentary” on the solo part.

In **III**, the psalterion has two kinds of pitches: accented and not. Accented pitches are the solo part, non-accented pitches part of the accompaniment. The unaccented pitches, notated as smaller notes, should be much softer. In **III**, any accented psalterion pitch may be tremoloed until the next note (even through rests), or for any part of that time.

Dotted pitches in the psalterion part may be played simply, or in various ways of the performer's choice (stopped, bent, different hammer, muted, etc.). This may vary over the course of the piece. The psalterion may sustain any notes at any time by tremoloing. In III, the bass may interpret dotted pitches similarly: as tapped, batuto, snapped, or some other timbral variation.

II. Dismission

There are two versions of the score. Either one may be played. In the first, all measures are of equal duration. In the second, the duration of measures expands and contracts over the course of the piece.

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