

# **Twisted Variations**

for violin / viola, cello, piano, accordion and percussion

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## Instrumentation

Duration: c. 8 mins

- Violin or viola
- Cello
- Piano
- Accordion

- Percussion: **4 METAL** – ideally 2 cowbells + 2 brake drums. However this is just a suggestion and any metal “found objects” can be used – anvils, metal stands, furniture etc. as long as the basic format of 2+2 instruments is preserved. Do not, please, use cymbals or gongs or anything too resonant.  
**4 WOOD** – 2 temple blocks + 2 wooden “found objects”: these may include other wooden percussion, tables, or hitting the side of a wooden drum, etc. Anything with a sound that is not too dead, relatively hollow, and preferably reasonably colourful will do, but please do not use marimba or xylophone.  
**1 SIZZLE CYMBAL**  
**1 SLIDE WHISTLE** – as loud and as penetrating as possible!  
**1 LOW DRUM**  
**MARACAS**

Soft sticks should be used most of the time, except with the 4 wood, for which hard sticks are required.

## Performance notes

- Violin or viola – the entire part (notated in treble clef) is playable on either instrument, and is much easier to play on the violin. However the greater resonance of the viola is helpful in the opening pizzicato passage, and the more desperate, straining timbre of the viola gives the whole piece a different colour which performers may wish to explore. Where the violin / viola is asked to play in “guitar position” at the beginning, the reason is that the most resonant pizzicato possible is obtained when the string is plucked by the thumb.
- During many parts of the piece it will be noticed that instruments play at different speeds from each other. Each part has the other parts cued in so that it is possible to see how this works. Vertical arrows denote cues, pointing from the instrument that gets the cue to the instrument that gives the cue. Please note that the score does not attempt to line up music of different speeds exactly as parts should coincide, though it does attempt to show this fairly precisely. At times it was necessary in the score to break bars at the ends of lines in certain parts, so watch out for this. In general instrumentalists should be stubborn, and stick to their tempo, never adjusting tempo audibly to fit in with the alignment of the score.
- Piano harmonics: strike the bottom note as indicated, stopping the string so as to get the harmonic shown by the cross.
- Commas are often used to show very short, non-metric breaks in the music. Clearly three commas call for a longer break than two commas, which call for a longer break than one comma. There are no rules as to the exact length of commas, and two commas in one part of the score may not be exactly equal to two commas elsewhere. Similarly a double round pause is longer than a single round pause, and a square pause is the longest of all. Be careful where long pauses are involved that the long term trajectory of the piece is not lost.
- It is important that each thematic idea is strongly and definitively characterised.

## Programme note

*Twisted Variations* consists of a series of blocks, which are closely related, which are subjected a number of intuitively conceived processes: they overlap, interrupt one another, form counterpoints, etc. and often instrumentalists are asked to play simultaneously at different speeds. The piece can be thought of as a set of variations which does not behave properly, or as a collage of different interpretations of the same material. *Twisted Variations* was first performed by Ensemble Aleph in their 2<sup>nd</sup> Forum for Composers.

# Twisted Variations

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**A**

♩ = 50

Steady, strict tempo

pizz: guitar position (for maximum resonance)

Violin / Viola: gliss. *f* (1) (2) vib. (3) (4) (vib.) (5) (6) (vib.)

Violoncello: *mfppp* *mfppp* *mfppp* *mfppp* *mfppp* *mfppp* (vib.) (vib.) (vib.) *f*

Percussion: II

Pianoforte: {

Accordion: {

**B**

Vn / va: *f* (7) (8) (vib.) (9) (10) (vib.) (11) (12) (vib.) (13) *p*

Vc: *mfppp(sim.)* (vib.) (vib.) (vib.) (vib.) (vib.) (vib.) *f* *fp* *fp* *fp* (sim.)

Perc. (13) 4 METAL (14) *p* 5 5 5 5

Pno. (13) (with strings, ♩=50) *ppp*

Vn / va (14) (vib.) (15) (16) (vib.) (17) *mf* (18) (vib.)

Vc

*p*

Perc (15) (16) (17) (18) 4 METAL (19) (20) (21)

*pp* *f* *pp* *p*

SIZZLE CYMB.

Pno (14) (15) (16) (17) *sempre mp* (18) *f*

*(ppp)* *sub. mp* *pp* *legatissimo*

*p*

Vn / va (19) *p* (20) (vib.)

Vc *sub. p*

Pno (19) *sub. p* (20) (21) *pp* *legatissimo*

Interlude 1

Slow, reflective, as if improvising

Acc (20) (21) (22) (23) (24) (25) (26) (27) (28) (29)

*pp* *ppp* *pp* *f* *p* *pp* *p* *mf* *pp* *p* *ppp* *sub. f* *ff*

*poco*

**C**  $\text{♩}=76$   
**Scurrying**

Vn / va (33) arco *p* *tr* *vib.* *mf* *vib.* *sub. p*

Vc *p* *jeté* *p* *5* *mf* *p* *5* *5* *5*

$\text{♩}=50$   
**Tempo I**

Pno (31) *p* (32) *mp* (33) *mf*

Acc (30) *pp* (31) *ppp*

Perc (35)  $\text{♩}=72$  4 WOOD  $\uparrow \uparrow$  *p* *5*

**D**

Vn / va (36) *tr* *vib.* *pp* *mf* *p* *tr* *vib.* *f* *gliss.* *vib.*

Vc *p* *5* *vib.* *pp* *mf* *p* *tr* *vib.* *f* *gliss.* *vib.*

Perc (36) (37) (38) (39) *ppp* *mp* *ppp* SIZZLE CYMB. (40) *ppp* if necessary hold until cello entry L.V.

$\text{♩}=140$   
**Suddenly much faster**

Pno (39) *pp* with shape with  $\text{Ped.}$  (40)

**E** **Faster than before**  $\text{♩} = 88$

Vn / va (45) *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* gliss. gliss.

Vc pizz., sempre gliss, quasi legato *f* vib. vib.

Pno (41) (42) (43) (44) with pno,  $\text{♩} = 140$

Acc *ppp* *pp* *mf*

$\text{♩} = 80$

Pno (46) (47) *f* senza ped.

Vn / va (47) *ff* *fp* *fp* (sim.) (48) gliss. (49) *ff* *fp* (sim.) (50) gliss. (51) *ff* *fp* (52)

Vc vib. vib.

Perc (49) 4 METAL  $\text{♩} = 72$  (50) (51) (52) **STOP!!**\*

Pno (48) (49) (50)

\* Percussion must stop as soon as the strings reach this point, no matter where he / she has got to

**Interlude 2**

Fast, but with constant "hiccups"; full of nervous energy;  
should feel improvised, yet rhythmic and highly syncopated.

The score is divided into three systems.   
The first system (measures 53-57) features a Piano accompaniment with a "secco" marking and a Violin/Viola part with a "secco" marking. Dynamics range from *ff* to *f*.   
The second system (measures 58-60) features a Violin/Viola part with a "loco" marking and a Piano accompaniment with a "pp *lontano*" marking. Dynamics range from *ff* to *fff*.   
The third system (measures 61-63) features a Violin/Viola part with "arco, sul pont." and "pizz." markings, a Violoncello part with "dark and passionate" and "nat." markings, and a Piano accompaniment with "legatiss." and "martellato" markings. Dynamics range from *f* to *fff*.   
An Accordion part (measures 63-64) is also present, marked "Acc" and "p".

(53) (c. 1sec) (54) (55) (56) (57)

*ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *f* *f*

*sub. pp (non cresc.)*  
*lontano* *sub. pp*

(58) (59) (60)

*ff* *mf* *fff* *fff* *fff* *ff* *mf* *fff*

*loco*

*pp lontano* *ff* *mf* *fff* *fff* *ff* *mf* *fff*

(61) (62) (63)

*arco, sul pont.* *pizz.* *arco* *ff* *martellato* *fff* *dark and passionate* *nat.* *grinding* *1.5 secs*

*ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

*f legatiss.* *ff* *mf* *ff* *martellato* *fff*

*ff* *p* *ff*

(63)

Acc



(almost interrupting cello)

Vn / va (64) *ff* *fff*

Pno (64) *ff* *fff*

Vc (65) *ff* *ff* 1.5 secs grinding

Acc (65) *p* *f* *mp* *ff*

Vn / va (66) *sfz* *p* *ff* *f* *mf* *p* *molto vib.* *normal vib.*

Vc (67) *ffp* *ff* *f* *p* *molto sul pont.* *nat.*

Acc (67) *p* *ff* *p non dim.*

*(Trying to bring about order)*  $\text{♩} = 100$

*(Trying to halt momentum)*  $\text{♩} = 80$

*(interrupting cello!)*

*(legato)*

*(don't start until vn / va rest has started)*

Vn / va (68) *f* *ff* *mf* *p* *pp flautando*  $\text{♩} = 60$  *molto vib.* *normal vib.* *no vib.*

Vc (69) *pp\** *ppp\** *pp flautando* *no vib.*

Perc (70) LOW DRUM *ppp*

Acc (70) *ppp*

\* This chord must be carefully balanced so that the open D sounds no louder than the stopped G#