

Piano Mechanics

Performance Notes

Piano Mechanics is a catalogue of actions and activities which approach the production of isolated acoustical resonances at the piano.

All pitches should be considered fixed unless the piano has more or less than 88 keys, or unless the shape of the harp demands a change in pitch. To this end, the pianist is free to make necessary adjustments in order to accommodate this score to any structural or idiosyncratic peculiarities of the piano at hand.

The 'space equals time' principle applies to the notational layout. However, each *Solitary Wave* section should be played twice as long as it appears on the page, i.e. play twice as many consecutive notes than are indicated. (These notations have been abbreviated for the sake of page functionality.)

All *Solitary Waves* are to be played with two hands, alternating note-by-note. The tempo of a *Solitary Wave* is determined by the mechanical capabilities of the piano action. In high registers, the tempo should be as rapid as possible; in low registers, the vibrational displacement of the string affects the rebounding efficiency of the hammer, and a slightly slower tempo is necessary in order to prevent the piano action from 'tripping over itself'.

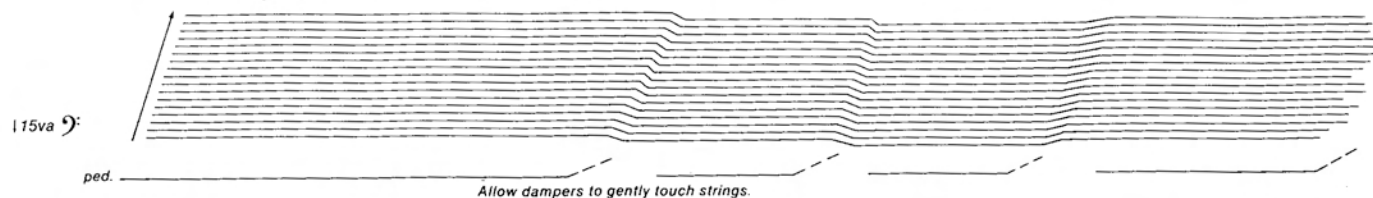
In *Far Away Sounds* and at the end of the first two brief *Solitary Waves*, the damper pedal is activated at a precisely co-ordinated point immediately following the attack of the sound. This pedalling should sustain the harmonic aftersound without sustaining the initial pitches.

All timings are approximate ($\pm 20\%$).

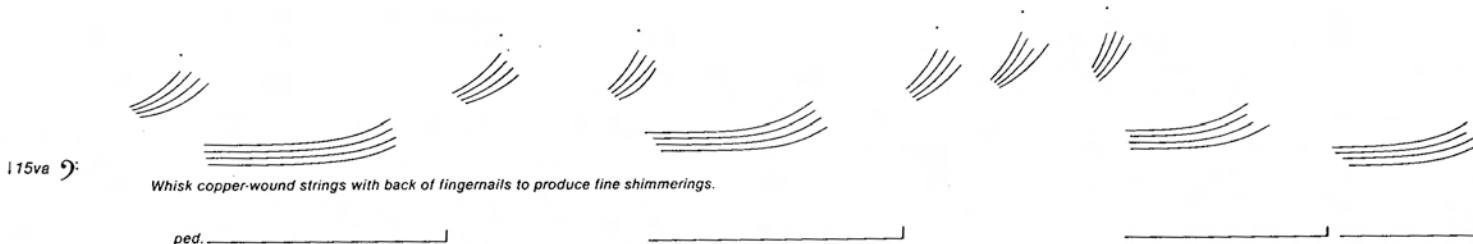
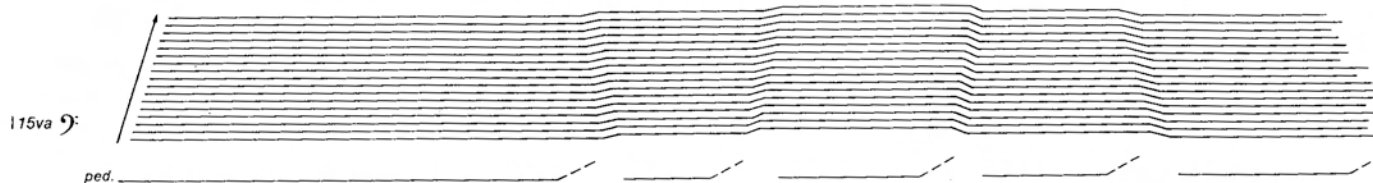
Gordon Monahan
Toronto (1981-86)

1. Voices Emerging Along High Tension Wires

Grab strings and sweep across low register, left to right.

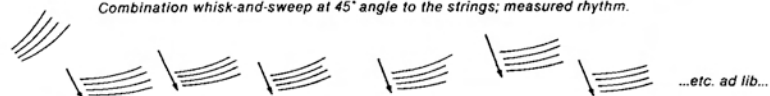


Allow dampers to gently touch strings.

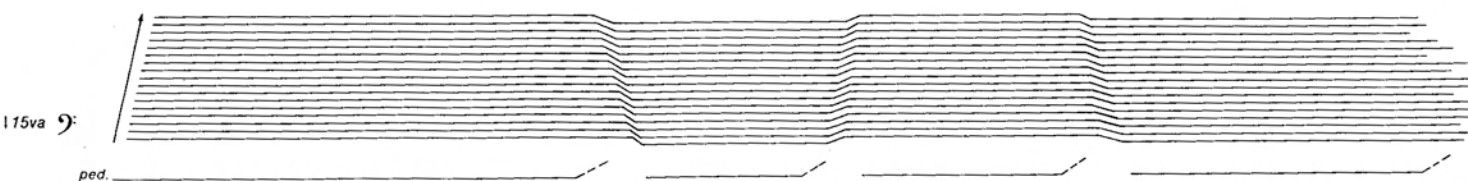


Whisk copper-wound strings with back of fingernails to produce fine shimmerings.

Combination whisk-and-sweep at 45° angle to the strings; measured rhythm.



...etc. ad lib...



2. Abrupt Stops

Moderate

moderate

ad lib. harmonics

l.h.

r.h.

Left hand plays single keys and clusters; right hand stops string resonance abruptly.

ped.

ped.

ped.

ped.

3. Solitary Waves and Far Away Sounds

As fast as possible

ped. *ff*

115va

18va

sfz

As fast as possible

ped. *ff*

115va

18va

mf

Moderately fast

18va

ped. *ff*

18va

18va

18va

18va

18va

18va

ped. *ff*

18va

18va

18va

18va

fff

18va

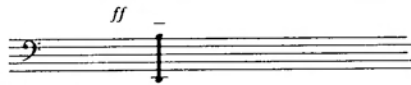
18va

18va

18va

Allow dampers to briefly touch strings.

4. Far Away Sounds



5. Trill with Hand Controlled Pitch Release

Moderately fast; con rubato

mf

Right hand plays trill while left hand stops string resonance.

Slide fingers along strings to give varying harmonics.

Lift hand off strings to allow single pitches to sound.

ped.

(Simultaneities.)

6. Solitary Waves

As fast as possible

15va

una corda

mp *crescendo* *ped.*

15va

ped. *f* *u.c.* *ped.*

15va

u.c. *ped.* *ped.* *ped.*

15va

ped. *u.c.* *u.c.* *ff*

15va

ped.

1'30"

attacca

7. Melody Concealed by a Tremolo

As soft as overtones.
ppp

sft *ff* tremolo throughout.
ped.

ppp

ff

ppp

ff

Fade out tremolo while high trill from the next movement is introduced.

8. High Trills Becoming Combination Tones

Moderately fast

The musical score consists of two staves, both labeled 15va. The first system shows a trill on the upper staff with a *tr* marking and a *mp* dynamic, and a trill on the lower staff with a *tr* marking and a *cresc.* dynamic. A *una corda* marking is present at the beginning of the lower staff. The second system features unmeasured trills on both staves, marked *mf*, with *ped.* and *u.c.* markings below. The third system shows interlocking trills on both staves, with *u.c.* and *ped.* markings. The fourth system features a trill on the upper staff and a trill on the lower staff, marked *f* and *Trilling together.*, with *u.c.* and *ped.* markings. The fifth system shows a trill on the upper staff and a trill on the lower staff, marked *ff*, with *ped.* and *u.c.* markings. The sixth system shows a trill on the upper staff and a trill on the lower staff, marked *ff*, with *ped.* and *u.c.* markings. The seventh system shows a trill on the upper staff and a trill on the lower staff, marked *ff*, with *ped.* and *u.c.* markings.

15va

15va

una corda

mp

tr

cresc.

15va

15va

Unmeasured trills.

mf

ped.

u.c.

ped.

15va

15va

Interlocking trills.

u.c.

ped.

15va

15va

f Trilling together.

u.c.

ped.

rallentando

15va

15va

ff

ped.

u.c.

ped.

u.c.

9. Fingers and Arms Becoming Four Hands

Moderate; Blurred articulation.

The musical score consists of several systems of staves, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate staff for the right hand (RH) and left hand (LH). The notation is highly complex, featuring dense clusters of notes and rests, often with a 'ped.' (pedal) marking below the staff. The dynamics range from *ppp* (pianississimo) to *fff* (fortississimo), with a crescendo and a subito *p* (piano) marking. The tempo is marked 'Moderate' and the articulation is 'Blurred'.

System 1: *ppp* *cresc.*

System 2: *una corda* *ped.*

System 3: *u.c.* *ped.*

System 4: *Rapid finger movement; Continuously moving between pitch boundaries; no glissandi. Additional pressure applied by left hand throughout.* *mp* *mf* *f*

System 5: *ff* *fff* *ped.*

System 6: *fff* *subito p* *crescendo molto*

As fast as possible

115va

fff

ped. Flutter pedal. //

115va

115va

115va

ffff

Arms.

Arms.