

# 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'.

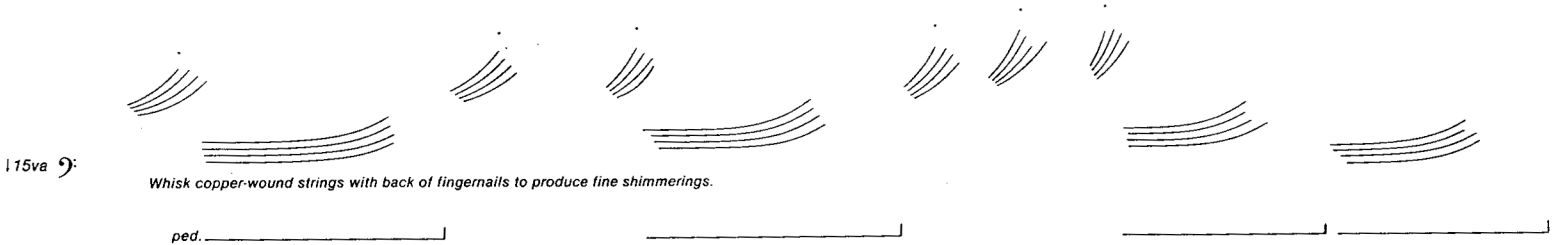
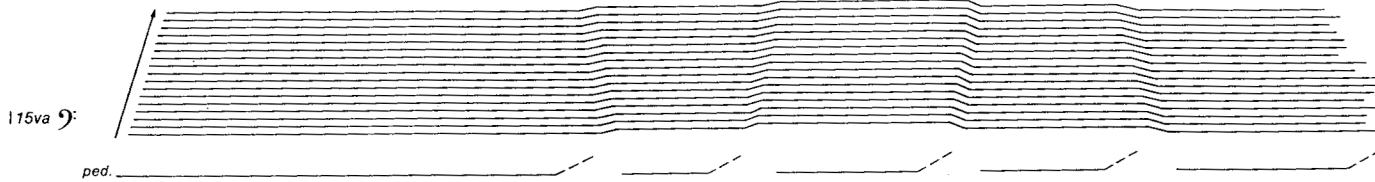
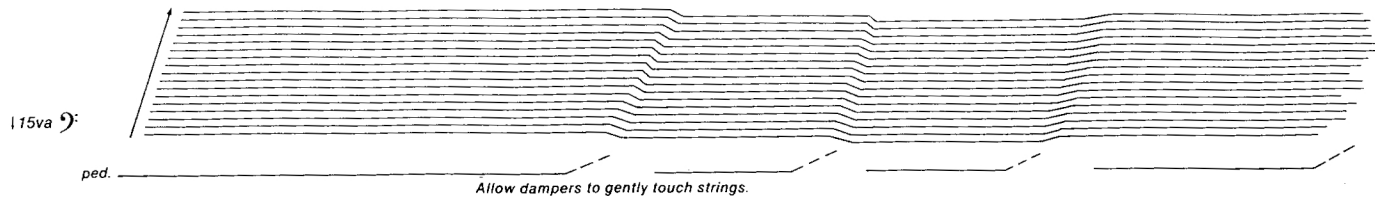
In *Far Away Sounds* and at the end of the first two brief *Solitary Waves*, the damper pedal is activated at a precisely co-ordinated point immediately following the attack of the sound. This pedalling should sustain the harmonic aftersound without sustaining the initial pitches.

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

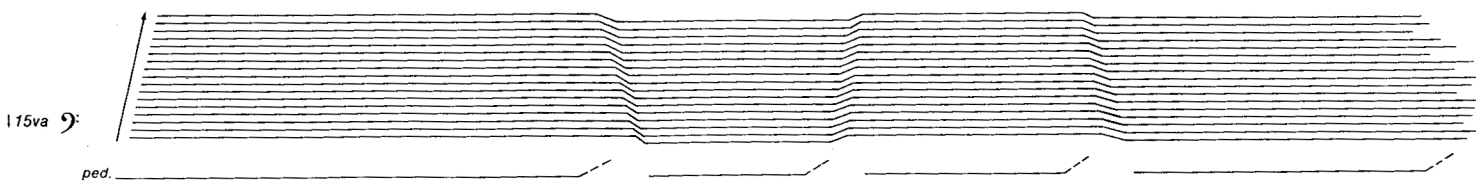
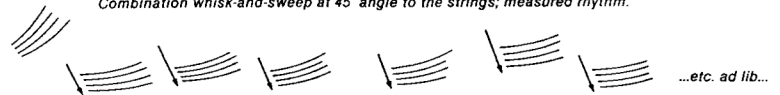
Gordon Monahan  
Toronto (1981-86)

# 1. Voices Emerging Along High Tension Wires

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



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



2. Abrupt Stops

Moderate

*ad lib. harmonics*

*r.h.*

*l.h.*

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

*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

ped. *ff*

18va

18va

18va

18va

18va

18va



18va

ped. *ff*

18va

18va

18va

18va

*fff*

18va

18va

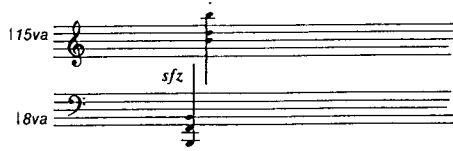
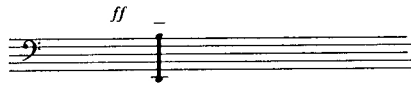
18va

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

*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 exercises are as follows:

- Exercise 1:** The first staff begins with a trill on a whole note, marked *tr* and *mp*. The second staff has a whole rest marked *una corda*. The first staff continues with a trill marked *cresc.* and *tr*.
- Exercise 2:** The first staff has a trill marked *Unmeasured trills.* and *mf*. The second staff has a trill marked *ped.* and *u.c.*
- Exercise 3:** The first staff has a trill marked *Interlocking trills.*. The second staff has a trill marked *ped.* and *u.c.*
- Exercise 4:** The first staff has a trill marked *f Trilling together.*. The second staff has a trill marked *ped.* and *u.c.*
- Exercise 5:** The first staff has a trill marked *ff*. The second staff has a trill marked *ped.* and *u.c.*
- Exercise 6:** The first staff has a trill marked *ped.* and *u.c.*

## 9. Fingers and Arms Becoming Four Hands

Moderate; Blurred articulation.

The musical score is divided into four systems, each featuring three staves labeled 15va, 8va, and 15va from top to bottom. The notation is dense and abstract, consisting of continuous lines of notes and clusters of dots. The first system includes dynamic markings *ppp* and *cresc.*, and a *ped.* line. The second system includes *una corda*, *ped.*, and *u.c.* markings, along with a *ped.* line. The third system includes *mp*, *mf*, *f*, and *fff* markings, and a *ped.* line. The fourth system includes *fff* and *subito p* markings, and a *ped.* line. A *crescendo molto* marking is also present. The score is characterized by rapid finger movement and continuously moving between pitch boundaries, with no glissandi. Additional pressure is applied by the left hand throughout.

15va *ppp* *cresc.*

15va *una corda* *ped.*

15va *u.c.* *ped.*

Rapid finger movement; Continuously moving between pitch boundaries; no glissandi. Additional pressure applied by left hand throughout.

15va *mp* *mf* *f*

15va *u.c.* *ped.*

8va *fff*

15va *fff* *subito p* *crescendo molto*

*ped.*

As fast as possible

115va

*fff*

ped. Flutter pedal. //

115va

115va

115va

*ffff*

Arms.

Arms.