



Axegrinder

for String Quartet

ERIC C. HONOUR, JR.

Axegrinder

for String Quartet

Performance Notes

1. In mm. 70-87, the violins are given a selection of pitches and a manner of performance and are asked to repeat this material at will throughout the section. The pitches may be used in any order, but only in the octave given. Each time the player selects a pitch, they should choose a tempo (from very slow to very fast) and play a stream of 5-11 eighth notes at that tempo. The violinist should then rest for 3-5 seconds, choose a new tempo and a different pitch, and repeat the process. It is not necessary for the violinists to use all the pitches and the two performers should make no attempt to coordinate tempos; the point is for each violinist to choose his or her tempo individually. All of this section should remain in the background, behind the viola solo, and the violist will cue the end of this section.
2. In mm. 70-87, the cellist is given a selection of pitches. The pitches may be used in any order, but only in the octave given. Each time the player selects a pitch, it should be played once, pizzicato. The cellist should then rest for 5-7 seconds, choose a different pitch, and repeat the process. It is not necessary for the cellist to use all the pitches. All of this section should remain in the background, behind the viola solo, and the violist will cue the end of this section.
3. In mm. 89-92, the performers have notes marked as open triangles. This notation asks for the players to scrub the marked strings near the frog of the bow, creating a very loud, very ugly scratch tone. Each player should scrub in a circular or figure-eight pattern, inserting random pulsations or accents into the sound.
4. Accidentals follow standard practice and last throughout the measure, in the given octave only. In some cases, courtesy accidentals are given within the measure as an aid to the player.
5. The viola solo in mm. 70-87 uses microtones. Notation conventions for the microtones are given at right.

Microtonal notation:

♭ = 1/4 tone lowered

♭ = 3/4 tone lowered

♯ = 1/4 tone raised

♯ = 3/4 tone raised

Program Notes

Like many of my pieces, *Axegrinder* began as a title incorporating a play on words, instead of a purely musical idea. Musicians will immediately recognize the word “axe” as slang for “instrument,” especially string instruments. Likewise, the opening sounds of the piece not only remind me of the sound of a blade being ground on a whetstone but could be heard as grinding the instruments themselves. Beyond that, the idea of “having an axe to grind,” or of being obsessed with a certain idea, informed my choice of material, which is very limited. The entire work, with the exception of the extended viola solo – perhaps a person trapped in conversation with an axegrinder – is derived in one way or another from the opening sonority. *Axegrinder* the piece is basically ternary in form, with the opening section spinning out of control into the contrasting B section (the viola solo). The work then returns to the opening material and revs up the whetstone on the way to the conclusion.

Eric C. Honour Jr. (b. 1970) is recognized as both a composer and saxophonist. He is currently an associate professor of music and director of the music technology program at Central Missouri State University in Warrensburg, Missouri. He earned the doctorate in music composition at Northwestern University. His composition teachers have included Jay Alan Yim, M. William Karlins, Stephen Syverud, John Anthony Lennon, and Budd Udell. He has studied saxophone with Frederick Hemke, Jonathan Helton, and Kandace Brooks. Honour was a finalist in the 1997 and 1999 ASCAP Morton Gould Awards to Young Composers competitions and won the Region V (West) division of the 1999 Society of Composers, Inc. Young Composers Contest. He has performed and lectured at regional and national conferences of the Society of Composers, North American Saxophone Alliance, and College Music Society. His compositions have been performed across the United States, in London, and in Italy.

Performance rights for this piece are administered through BMI.

The composer welcomes contact at 617 NW Kay Dr., Lee's Summit, MO 64063, USA
or via email at eric@erichonour.com

Duration ca. 5:15

Axegrinder

for string quartet

Eric C. Honour, Jr.

Moderato ♩ = 108

Violin I
ff

Violin II
ff

Viola
ff

Cello
ff

Detailed description: This block contains the first four measures of the score for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The music is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Moderato' with a quarter note equal to 108 beats per minute. The dynamic is 'ff' (fortissimo). The Violin I part features a melodic line with slurs and accents. The Violin II, Viola, and Cello parts provide harmonic support with similar rhythmic patterns and slurs.

5

Vln. I
ff

Vln. II
ff

Vla.
ff

Vc.
ff

Glissando

Detailed description: This block contains measures 5 through 8 of the score for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. Measure 5 starts with a measure rest for Violin I. In measure 6, Violin I has a glissando. In measure 7, the Viola and Cello parts have glissandos. Measure 8 concludes with a final chord for all instruments, marked 'ff'. The key signature remains one sharp (F#).

2 - Axegrinder

9

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

This system contains measures 9 through 12. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The notation includes various note values, slurs, and accents. The dynamics are generally soft, with some accents and a slight crescendo towards the end of the system.

13

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

A

pp spiccato

crescendo

This system contains measures 13 through 15. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The notation includes various note values, slurs, and accents. The dynamics are *pp* spiccato, with a crescendo marking. There are four 'A' markings in boxes above the staves, indicating specific performance instructions.

16

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

ord.

ff

p

ff

This system contains measures 16 through 18. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The notation includes various note values, slurs, and accents. The dynamics are *ff* and *p*. There are three 'ord.' markings above the staves, indicating specific performance instructions. The time signature changes from common time to 3/4, then 4/4, and finally 6/4.

20

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

B

mp

f

23

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

26

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f

4 - Axeogrinder

29

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 29, 30, and 31. The music is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat. The first violin part (Vln. I) features a melodic line with accents and slurs. The second violin (Vln. II) and viola (Vla.) parts play a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The cello (Vc.) part provides a bass line with occasional rests. Dynamic markings include accents and slurs.

32

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

ff *p* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

Pizz. Arco
Pizz. Arco
Pizz. Arco
Pizz. Arco

Detailed description: This system contains measures 32, 33, and 34. The music continues in 2/4 time. At measure 32, the tempo changes to 3/4. Dynamic markings of *ff* and *p* are used. Performance instructions for Pizzicato (Pizz.) and Arco (Arco) are indicated above the staves. The first violin part has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The other parts continue with their rhythmic accompaniment.

35

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

C

C Songo groove (Latin)

mf

C

C

Detailed description: This system contains measures 35, 36, 37, and 38. The music is in 2/4 time. Measure 35 is a whole rest for all instruments. From measure 36, the second violin (Vln. II) part begins a 'Songo groove (Latin)' marked *mf*. The other parts (Vln. I, Vla., Vc.) have whole rests. Chord symbols 'C' are placed above the staves for Vln. I, Vla., and Vc. in measures 36, 37, and 38.

39

Vln. I *ff*

Vln. II *ff* sub. *mf*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff* sub. *mf*

Songo groove (Latin)

42

Vln. I *ff*

Vln. II *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

disturb the groove 5:4 sul D

disturb the groove 7:4 sul G jeté

Glissando

45

Vln. I *ff*

Vln. II *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

solo

with Vn I

Glissando

6 - Axegrinder

48

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ff

mp

f

Arco

51

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

53

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ff

ff

ff

ff

56

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

58

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ff *pp* *ff*⁺ *f*

Pizz. Arco

E = 108 (steady tempo)

E = 60-120 repeat until violin snap pizz. follow cello!

cello cue > *ff*

repeat until violin snap pizz. vary tempo each repetition

61

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

cello cue continue *ff*

continue

8 - Axegrinder

64

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. *cello cue* continue *ff*

Vc. continue *ff*

67

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. *cello cue* continue *ff*

Vc. continue *ff*

70

Vln. I see performance note 1 continue until viola cue *pp*

Vln. II see performance note 1 continue until viola cue *pp*

Vla. Slower ♩ = 72 Freely, with feeling *mp*

Vc. Pizz. see performance note 2 continue until viola cue *p*

73

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

3

n

77

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mp

3

81

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

growing more intense

mf

10 - Axegrinder

85

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f *mf* *p*

cue others to stop solo (alone) rit.

89

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ff *ff* *ff* *ff*

Arco*

accel. $\bullet = 60$ $\bullet = 72$ accel.

92

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ff *ff*

accel. $\bullet = 84$ $\bullet = 96$ accel.

*see performance note 3

Tempo I ♩ = 108

Vln. I *fff* *Glissando* *f* *H*

Vln. II *fff* *Glissando* *f* *H*

Vla. *fff* *Glissando* *mp* *H*

Vc. *fff* *mp* *H*

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Vln. I *ff*

Vln. II *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

12 - Axegrinder

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

102

f *ff* *p* *ff* +

Pizz. Arco

Pizz. Arco

Pizz. Arco

Pizz. Arco

f *ff* *p* *ff* +

Detailed description: This system contains measures 102 and 103. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. Measures 102 and 103 are marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. In measure 103, the dynamics change to fortissimo (*ff*) and piano (*p*), with a final fortissimo (*ff*) plus a fermata. Performance instructions include Pizzicato (Pizz.) and Arco for all instruments. The time signature is 4/4.

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

104

ff *ff*

Gliss.

sul G

7:4

5:4

ff

Detailed description: This system contains measures 104, 105, and 106. Measures 104 and 105 are marked with fortissimo (*ff*). Measure 106 is also marked with fortissimo (*ff*). Performance instructions include Glissando (Gliss.) for Violin I, and sul G for Violin II and Violoncello. Time signatures of 7:4 and 5:4 are indicated for the latter two instruments in measure 106. The time signature is 4/4.

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

107

jeté

with Vc

ff

solo 3

Glissando

Detailed description: This system contains measures 107, 108, and 109. Measure 107 is marked with fortissimo (*ff*). Measure 108 includes a Glissando instruction for Violin I. Measure 109 is marked with fortissimo (*ff*). Performance instructions include jeté for Violin II, with Vc for Violoncello, and solo 3 for Violoncello. The time signature is 4/4.

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

Measures 110-112. Vln. I and Vln. II parts feature glissando markings. Vln. II has a triplet of eighth notes in measure 111. Vc. has a triplet of eighth notes in measure 111.

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

Measures 113-115. Vln. I part includes an *accel.* marking. The music transitions to a 3/4 time signature in measure 114. Vln. I and Vln. II parts feature sixteenth-note patterns.

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

Measures 116-118. Vln. I part includes a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 112$. The music transitions to a 4/4 time signature in measure 117. All string parts feature sixteenth-note patterns.

14 - Axegrinder

119

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

121

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

123

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

