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**common ground**  
(2016)

For string trio

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perusal score  
not for performance  
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# common ground

string trio

(2013-14)

Duration: 10'

## Set-up

The three players should be situated anywhere in the performance area at some distance from each other, each facing any direction other than directly towards or away from the audience (i.e. sideways or at a diagonal to the audience). There should be no visible connection or communication between the players.

## Performance Note

The material of this piece ('the ground') is divided into 14 short, numbered segments. Each player independently chooses an ordering of these segments, beginning with one of the three entry-point segments (nos. 1-3, marked \*).

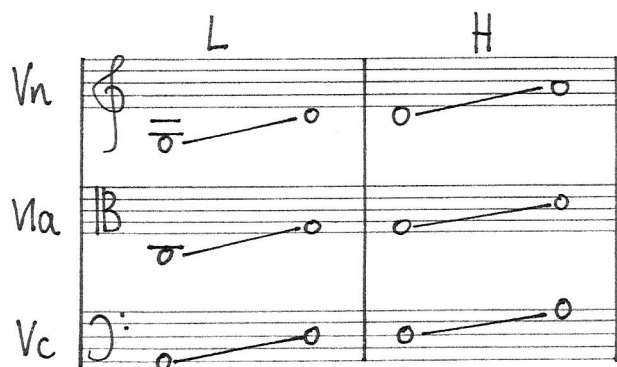
Each player plays through their individual sequence of the 14 segments, with short gaps of 1-4 secs between each segment. In addition, one longer gap of around 20 secs should be inserted by each player.

One player should begin alone, followed by the second and third players at 10-15-second intervals.

During the whole piece, each player should act completely independently of the others: avoiding synchronising pulse or aligning tuning.

## Pitch

Each segment is designated High (H) or Low (L), corresponding to the following pitch areas:



For each segment, the player selects (in advance) any point in the given pitch area, remaining on this pitch for the whole segment. They should not gravitate towards standard chromatic pitches: all microtonal points between the given pitches are available. There should be a good spread of pitches across each pitch area overall.


As well as remaining on the chosen pitch for the whole segment, the player should also maintain a subtle, irregular rotation of the fingertip touching the string. The aim is to create small but discernible inflections of the central pitch, very gently destabilising the drone without drawing attention to the changes of pitch (they should have an accidental quality). For No.14 (long held tone) the rotation should be slower to achieve this. Thus it follows that that piece should not use conventional vibrato.


#### Rhythm and dynamics

The material should be played with lively, sprung rhythms at the exact tempo given, gently accenting the beginning of each note.

The dynamic should be a natural, relaxed *mp*, not too soft or restrained but allowing for intricacy of sound detail to emerge.

All segments are *arco* except no.11 (*pizzicato*).

No. 12 is marked 'brushed' with the sign , indicating a light, diagonal stroke with extra hair in the sound. The stroke should be lifted out of the string (*poco staccato*), so the note sounds for about a quaver in total.

No.13 is to be played as a short ricochet close to the point of the bow, ending in a staccato (  ) – again, the total duration of the sound will be about a quaver.

\*\*\*\*\*

*common ground* describes a scenario in which three people move across an imaginary, shared space, each quite independent of the other, with their own route, purpose and thoughts.

$\text{♩} = 104$

L



H



L



H



L



6. <sup>L</sup>

Handwritten musical notation for exercise 6, labeled 'L' for left hand. It consists of two staves. The first staff contains a sequence of notes and rests, including eighth, quarter, and half notes, some with beams. The second staff continues the sequence with similar note values and rests.

7. 

8. 

9. 

10. 

11.  $\text{H}$   
pizz.

Exercise 11 is a three-staff musical piece marked 'pizz.' (pizzicato). The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests. The second and third staves provide harmonic accompaniment with similar rhythmic patterns.

12.  $\text{L}$   
brushed (arco)

Exercise 12 is a three-staff musical piece marked 'brushed (arco)'. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is composed of quarter and eighth notes. The second and third staves provide harmonic accompaniment.

13.  $\text{L}$

Exercise 13 is a three-staff musical piece. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The second and third staves provide harmonic accompaniment.

14.  $\text{L } 45''$   
 $\text{H}$

Exercise 14 is a three-staff musical piece. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The second and third staves provide harmonic accompaniment.