

James Weeks

Joy
(2016)

for two violins and percussion

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Joy

Two violins and percussion (2 suspended cymbals, rice grains, tambourine)

Duration: 10'

Performance notes

Joy is in 4 sections (I-IV) that play consecutively without a pause. The three performers play independently of each other throughout the first 3 sections (moving from one section to the next in their own time), until the start of the 4th section, which should be coordinated and played (as far as possible) in the same tempo with a common tactus.

The material for each section is notated in circles. The two violins (A and B) play off the same music, but have different starting-points on each circle (marked A and B). In the first two sections, the percussionist has a choice of two different positions at which to begin each circle (marked A and B).

Each circle should be played round clockwise (that is, each piece of material should be played through left-to-right as normal, and the player then moves to the next piece of material in clockwise sequence). When one full revolution of the circle has been played, the player moves directly onto the next circle.

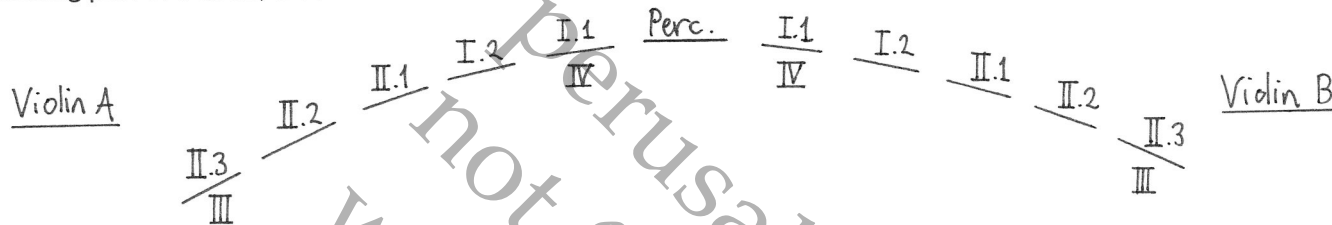
The approximate lengths of each section are:

- | | |
|-----|------|
| I | 3'00 |
| II | 2'30 |
| III | 2'30 |
| IV | 2'00 |

Although the players are not coordinated rhythmically, the violins play the same music, and both the violin and percussion parts have been calculated to take nearly identical amounts of time at the marked tempi. It is crucial that players individually keep to tempo as far as possible, so that each section will begin at roughly the same point.

Set-up

The percussionist is in the middle, with the two violins flanking. Each violinist has 5 music stands, which are arranged in a curved line projecting from the percussionist, forming part of a circle, thus:



On the violinists' 5 stands are section I (2 pages) and section II (3 pages), as shown above. Section III is placed under the last page of section II, and section IV is placed under the first page of section I. The violinists move around the circle in different directions, away from the percussionist in the middle. In the rests between the five phrases of section III they move back, a stand per rest, to the first stand, close to the percussionist, to play Section IV. It is therefore necessary to memorise the sequence of section III or to recopy it on the page in front of which it will be played.

Section IV

The percussionist should end Section III first, and then pick up the tambourine while the violins are still completing their material. Once the violins are in position for Section IV and are ready to continue, Section IV begins together, led by the percussionist in the marked tempo, and should attempt to keep as rhythmically together as possible. The material is played 4 times. Each time the percussionist reaches the Start phrase again s/he should increase the tempo a notch, so that the fourth and final playing is at the limit of playable speed. The violins should increase their speed to keep up with the percussionist; this will be somewhat messy, as will all the coordination in this section: this roughness and lack of mechanical precision is intentional, though it should not be exaggerated – the players should be attempting to stay together even when it is scarcely possible.

To finish the piece the percussionist raises the tambourine and prolongs the final jingle shake, cutting all three instruments off at the end of the shake, wherever the violins have got to (they may be midway through a phrase). The cut-off should be together.

Joy was commissioned by the inaugural Brundibár Arts Festival, Newcastle-Gateshead, and first performed by Alexandra Raikhlina and Gordon Bragg (violins) and Jan Bradley (percussion) at the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle University, on 2nd February 2016.

I
♩ = 132; f-f molto ritmico

①

A

B

②

A

Violins

B

⑤

A

B

③

A

B

④

A

B

⑥

A

B

⑦

A

B

⑩

A

B

⑧

A

B

⑨

A

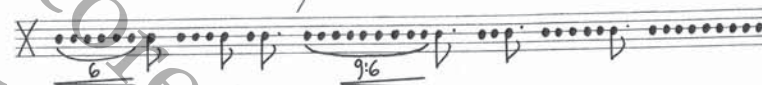
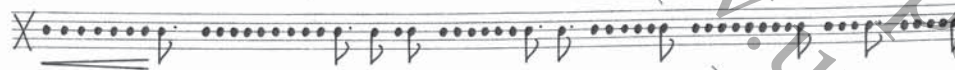
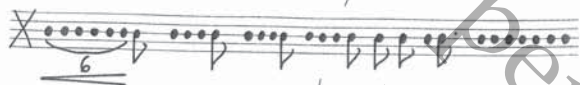
B

I
♩ = 132 Hard sticks (♩ = ♯)

①



Suspended Cymbal (1)



②



③

A X mp mp 6 mp(sim.)

B X mp mp mp(sim.)

④

A (Sub)mp f f f f f f f

B (Sub)mp f f f f f f f

II

pp subito; leggero molto (♩ = 132)
 • = very fast note

①

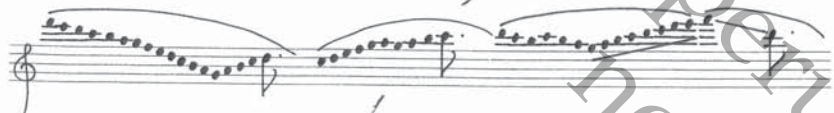
Violins

The musical score for Violins, Part II, consists of ten staves of music. The notation is written in treble clef and features a series of rapid, slurred notes, often marked with a '*' symbol. The notes are connected by long, sweeping lines, indicating a continuous, flowing melody. The tempo is marked 'pp subito; leggero molto' and the time signature is '♩ = 132'. A large, diagonal watermark 'www.uymmp.co.uk' is overlaid across the center of the page.

* = half fingered scale, half glissando (losing definition)

②

pp sempre
lighter bow and finger pressure



③

pp sempre
even lighter bow and finger pressure
(indistinct)

not for perusal score
www.uymp.co.uk

A

*Vn A → III

B

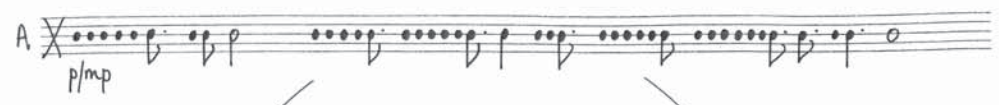
*Vn B → III

The image displays a handwritten musical score for two violins, labeled A and B. The score is composed of multiple staves, each containing musical notation with various notes, rests, and slurs. A large, diagonal watermark reading "not for perusal score" and "www.uymp.co.uk" is superimposed over the entire page. The notation includes dynamic markings such as "pp sempre" and performance instructions like "even lighter bow and finger pressure (indistinct)". Specific annotations for the violin parts are marked as "*Vn A → III" and "*Vn B → III". The staves are interconnected by a series of lines, suggesting a complex, non-linear arrangement of the music.

II
(J=132) Hot rods

①

Suspended Cymbal (2)

A X  p/mp









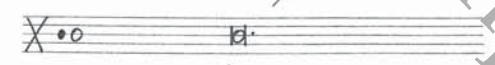




B X  p/mp

②

A X  p

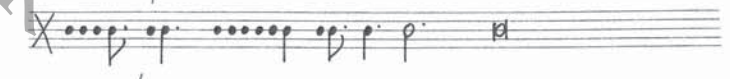
















B X  p

Vidins

III

$\text{♩} = 60$

pp sul tasto*

perusal score
not for performance
www.uymp.co.uk

The musical score consists of five staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The staves are labeled A, I, III, and B. The notes are written in a stylized, handwritten manner, with some notes having a 'p' (piano) marking. A large, thin-lined circle is drawn around the central part of the score, encompassing the staves labeled I, III, and B. The text 'perusal score', 'not for performance', and 'www.uymp.co.uk' is written diagonally across the center of the page, overlaid on the circle.

* Bow and finger pressure as light as possible. Each phrase begins with the LH muting the pitch with 3 fingers to produce almost toneless (white) noise, then during the course of the note move gradually between faint pitch and noise, very slowly and irregularly. Bow changes imperceptible.

III

Percussion (rice grains, cymbals)

Letting the second cymbal continue to ring from the end of section II, position the first cymbal so that the rice grains can cascade from one to the other (they should also be at different heights for this section).

Take a bowl of uncooked rice grains (larger grains such as Arborio are preferable) and gently pour over the first cymbal. The grains should cascade onto the second cymbal and then onto the floor.

Do this very slowly, using your free hand to control the release of the grains. Aim for a smooth pour, beginning as a trickle and then opening into a more consistent flow; allow the flow to increase and decrease naturally, but do not allow it to become a flood.

The process should take about 2'30 to complete (it would be best to use a timer for this); put down the bowl when it is empty and pick up the tambourine for IV.

Lead the beginning of IV, checking that the violins have completed their section III and are ready to begin in time for section IV.

IV

♩ = 132
 f-ff molto ritmico
 Play c.4 times,
 each time faster
 (see Performance Notes)

Violins

perusal score
 www.uymp.co.uk

The musical score is written for Violins and consists of 18 staves. The notation includes treble clefs, eighth and sixteenth notes, and triplets. The score is marked with 'A' and 'B' at the top, and '(II)' and '(III)' at the bottom. A large diagonal watermark reads 'perusal score www.uymp.co.uk'.

IV

♩ = 132

f-ff molto ritmico

Play 4 times,
each time faster
(see Performance Notes)

tr = thumb roll
≡ = jingle shake

Tambourine

perusal score
www.uymp.co.uk

The score is a circular sequence of 16 measures. Each measure is on a single staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notes are mostly eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. Trills (tr) and jingle shakes (≡) are indicated above various notes. The first measure is marked with '[A]*' and 'Start tr'. The last measure is marked with 'tr tr'. The score is designed to be played 4 times, each time faster.

*[A] last time only