

Schegge (Chippings)

The form of the piece is already suggested in its title. It aims to achieve a formal unity by juxtaposing fragments of different kinds. Each fragment is like a chipping coming from a glass whose colour is different from the others; that is to say that it belongs to a different expressive atmosphere, to different harmonics (or to very high pitches). The whole is organized so as to result in a musical kaleidoscope. The principles of similarity and juxtaposition regulate the relationship among the different chippings, which are controlled at a higher level by a narrative will.

None of the fragments dialogues with the others: they are autonomous and autoreferential entities, which do not bend to any phraseological or interactive needs. They are rather subject to micro-variation processes; each of which should be considered on its own, independently of other chippings. This results in a contrast between different structural levels: at the higher level we have a narrative unity, while at a lower, microstructural level, we have a fragmentation which is pursued and achieved without mediations.

However an encompassing unity is guaranteed by the choice of a common sound atmosphere (horizon) for all the chippings. In fact, each of them is produced by means of harmonic sounds obtained using one hand to stop the strings in specific locations while the other presses the keys normally. They are to be understood as reflections, that is to say chippings of the full sound. Only one fragment is not produced by using harmonics; however, since it must be played beside the bridge it can be also understood as a reflection of the ordinary sound, but in a organological rather than a timbral perspective.

Legend

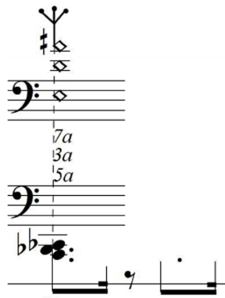
Before starting the piece the performer has to silently press the keys corresponding to a cluster, and then press the resonance pedal so as to release the dampers. The pedal should remain pressed during the whole piece. To this purpose the use of a weight is recommended.

With one exception only, one hand should be used to press the strings so as to produce harmonics while the other plays on the keyboard. In case of single-note harmonics the fingers should be raised immediately after the percussion of the string, so as to let the string vibrate more freely. The degree of pressure necessary to play different harmonics depends on the instrument, the kind of harmonic and the note pitch. However, it is not necessary to achieve a complete equilibrium since the composition aims at timbre and intonation variety. It is likely that not all the indicated harmonics reach the same dynamic level, as it is also possible that some of them do not go beyond a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic, or rather tend to produce the fundamental note. Moreover, depending on the specific characteristics of each instrument (shape of the frame, position of the dampers, location of the strings crossings etc.), some harmonics could be impossible to produce. Should it be the case, the interpreter will look for alternative solutions.



For instance, the E flat harmonic can be played in at least five different ways

N.B. The intonation will not be constant: the E flat whose fundamental note is a F will be 31 cents low, that whose fundamental is a B will be 14 cents low, while that whose fundamental is a A flat will be 2 cents high.



The first chord is written on three staves. The lowest one indicates the rhythm figure with which it should be repeated. The middle one indicates the notes on the keyboard. The highest indicates the outcomes, obtained by pressing the strings. The E is the fifth partial frequency of the A, the D is the third partial of B flat, the flat A is the seventh partial of B natural. The tree shape indicates that, together with them [the desired harmonics], other harmonics can be clearly heard, on account of the rich resonance of the lower strings.



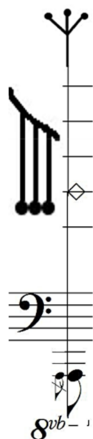
The system consists of two staves: the lowest indicates the key to be pressed, the highest the harmonic to be obtained.



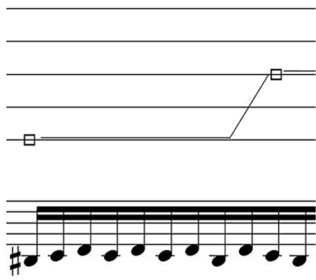
This clef indicates that the strings should be played either with the finger pads or the nails (the interpreter is free to choose depending on the requested dynamic level) beside the bridge. It is clear that, since not all the strings will be reachable in that position, only those having the bridge close enough should be played (that is to say the two higher octaves). Since the strings beside the bridge do not present a tempered, and then precisely predictable intonation, the notation is to be considered indicative and not prescriptive. Should it be impossible to play the strings beside the bridge (for instance, if the velvet is present), the performer will use the normal position (between the dampers and the bridge) in the highest octave.



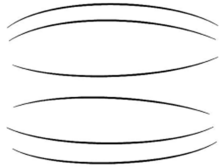
This clef refers to a five-lines system and indicates the position of the hand on the string. The five lines indicate five hypothetical harmonic positions (those positions in which the desired harmonics sound best and with the least superimposition of undesired high harmonics). Looking bottom up they indicate the harmonics of major third, fourth, fifth, major sixth, minor seventh (according to the terminology used among violinists). It is up to the interpreter to find and annotate the right positions for each note.



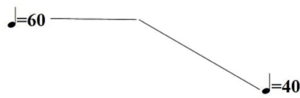
The *acciaccatura* indicates that the key should be pressed immediately before the string is stopped in the indicated location (this with the right pedal pressed down). In this way a richer resonance is obtained, because the initial vibration of the low note provokes the sympathetic vibration of a larger number of strings.



While one hand plays the indicated notes, the other presses the strings in correspondence with the positions of the harmonics. Each position should be kept as long as possible, and released immediately before the following, in order to maximize the transposition effect (the shift in the perceived pitches). Since there are four notes, all close to each other, each finger will go to a couple of strings corresponding to one note (thumb excluded). Keep in mind that, because of the inclination of the wristplank in the low register and the different length of the strings, the hand too should be rotated in order to guarantee the same position for each string.



Resonance only



Linear tempo decrease



Non-linear tempo decrease. The decrease is described by the curve: in this case the metronome is set to ca. 60 for a quarter note for a moment, it slows down a little bit at the beginning, and much more at the end.

Fluttuante ♩=120 - ♩=160 - - -

Fluctuating metronome



In these passages the tempo is expressed in seconds and the internal duration is proportional (the larger the distance between each note, the longer they are).



Wait for ca. three seconds.



Instable dynamic: the two extreme dynamic levels are indicated in parenthesis