

DANIEL LEWIS

TREIL

solo for violin plus freeze pedal & gravel box

2019

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written for Lilit Hartunian

12 or more minutes in duration

Instrumentation: amplified violin, freeze pedal, a shallow box filled with fine gravel

TREIL is a retreading of footsteps after an amnesia - we have been here before. The climb is steep, and though we are unhurried, something (maybe more than one thing) haunts the journey. We feel its gravity; we hear its injunction.

Performance Notes

Repeat Signs

The repeat signs in TREIL indicate an extrapolation rather than a repetition. Each system contains a number of sounds, and each repeat allows you flexibility to play with its components. The first time through a system should be performed as notated, however each repeat should offer something new based on the written material. You might extend certain ideas or shorten others. You might repeat certain notes or phrases several times, or skip others entirely. You might play the material in a different order, or you might decide to play it all exactly the same way each time. You might mash technique instructions from one idea together with pitches from another. You are free to make whatever choices you think are possible within the system, but there are two constraints. First, nothing outside of what is notated should enter the system – you are only free to play with what is present. Second, you should be deliberate about the choices you make. Let the written material, and the sounds that come out of it, inform your decisions. This piece is not an improvisation, it is an exploration, and a revelation of hidden possibilities within the notation. It is up to you to learn the sounds that define each system, and to decide what you want to reveal from within it.

Duration & Tempo

TREIL should be at least twelve minutes in length, but can be (and maybe should be) longer. This can be accomplished either by changing the pacing through each system, or by changing the number of repeats, or by changing your conception of what counts as a repeat. A performance using the written number of repeats, with each repeat being about 30 – 40 seconds long, would result in a roughly twelve minute performance.

The tempo of TREIL is flexible and intentionally vague, but generally slow. Page 1 should be at an unhurried pace, page 2 should be quicker and busier, and page 3 should slow down again but also become unsteady.

Inserts

Bold encircled letters A and B occur on page one and two, respectively. When they occur, consult the yellow-bordered box at the top of the page. Choose any one of the phrases contained therein, and play either its whole or any part of it. Then return to the measure below.

Page Turns

At the end of each page, take time to turn to the next page. A little pause is okay. At the end of page two, let whatever the freeze pedal has captured sustain through the page turn.

Notations

Each system contains up to four staves: bowing; pitch & rhythm; left hand percussive; and feet.

Bowing Staff

While reading the bowing staff, anything notated above the 'sul tasto' line at the top indicates 'molto sul tasto' - bowing very close to the fingers. Anything notated below the 'sul ponticello' line at the bottom indicates bowing 'sur ponticello' - directly over the bridge.

A sine wave notation indicates circular bowing, the size of the circle dependent on the height of the curve.

A dashed line indicates a very light bow pressure producing a hazy and/or unstable tone. A thick line indicates heavy bow pressure, but not so heavy so as to completely distort the sound of the string.

Pitch & Rhythm Staff

All 'x' note heads indicate a toneless sound akin to white noise produced by dampening the string as it's being bowed. Some pitch may sneak through - this is okay. The unpredictability is intentional.

Three dots appearing next to each other over a note head indicate a multiple attack, like a flam or a ricochet.

Any time two or more pitches are bound by brackets, you should choose up to two of them (if possible) in any combination. You don't have to make the same choice every time.

Left Hand Percussive Staff

The left hand staff contains two lines, one representing a higher-sounding percussive sound, the other a lower. You can use whatever means you see fit to produce the sound, for example left hand pizzicato or striking the body of the violin. Whatever methods you choose, the sound should be entirely unpitched.

Feet Staff

The top fo the feet staff indicates a louder, busier sound, and the lower indicates a slower, quieter sound. A dotted line indicates a walking motion - rolling steps from heel to toe. A thick, irregularly dashed line indicates an irregular twisting motion on the ball of one foot. The thick solid line indicates a dragging of the foot, flat-footed, across the surface of the gravel.

Amplification & The Freeze Pedal

The Freeze Pedal is a guitar effects pedal produced by Electro-Harmonix. It has one input and one output, three modes, and an effect level knob.

The violin microphone should go into the input on the pedal, and the pedal's output should go to the speaker or PA. Whether the pedal is on or not, the violin's sound will pass through the pedal to be amplified by the speaker. You should turn the effect level knob on the pedal to 100%, and the output volume from the speaker or PA should come out equal to the natural volume of the violin.

The freeze pedal has three modes, FAST, SLOW, and LATCH. This piece does not use the FAST mode. In SLOW mode, the pedal behaves like a piano pedal which must be held down. It captures whatever sound is coming from the violin at the moment it is first pressed, and sustains only that sound until you release it. In LATCH mode, the pedal captures the moment it's pressed, and sustains it until you press it again, at which point it captures a new sample. Sometimes the previous sound will 'echo' in the newly captured sound due to the proximity of the speaker - this is okay (and sometimes really interesting!)

When you change the pedal from LATCH to SLOW, whatever sound was captured in LATCH mode is released.

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Play any one, or any portion of one, once, then return

A

mp sempre

1

2

aimlessly forging an altitudinous path, full of purpose, unknowingly retreading
unhurried; take time

A

3

4

Play any one, or any portion of one, once, then return

B

at great range, a grayed, effaced recollection

moving forward; with greater urgency

5

switch pedal to LATCH mode

B

6

B

B

7

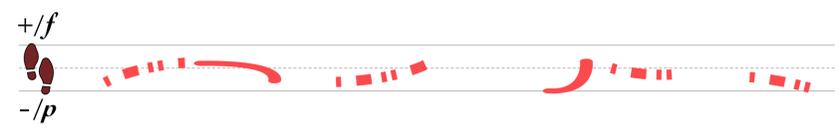
At end of repeat, let pedal continue into page 3

2x

8



switch pedal to SLOW mode



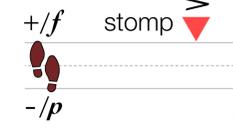
9

a glimpse, but fleeting; an eruption

ST
N
SP

mf *poco* *ff*

tr



10

resuming a desolate perambulation

unsure and unsteady

ST
N
SP

pp *p* *p* *pp* *p* *mp* *pp* *mp* *p*

ii [] iii []

5x

FINE

Pedal *ad lib.*, up to two freezes per repeat. Hold for any duration. You may interrupt the walking notated below to do so.

