

# Across a clear blue sky

(after Seamus Heaney's poem *Horace and the Thunder*)

Ian Wilson  
(2009)

for string quartet, two portable analogue  
radios and four wind-up drummer toys

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Turn on and slowly increase volume of radio (pre-tuned to white noise) to maximum (10"-15"). Then tune in and out of stations by scrolling across the FM bandwidth back and forth, not too fast. Sound should be mostly white noise with the occasional burst of speech or music, not lasting more than a second. Vary volume noticeably but keep generally high. After 40" or so decrease volume slowly to zero (10") and switch radio off.

20"- 30"

30"- 40"

30"- 40"

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2

♩ = 40

non vib. poco sul pont. II slow gliss.

non vib. poco sul pont. II slow gliss.

*p*

*p*

*p*

*p*

6

(ord.) poco vib. sul II *mp* espressivo

*p*

*p*

*p*

*p*

*poco*

**A** Poco più mosso

♩ = 60

Musical score for measures 10-13. The score is in 7/8 time and consists of four staves. The first two staves are for the violin and viola, and the last two are for the cello and double bass. The music features a melodic line in the upper staves and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the lower staves. Dynamics include *p*, *mf*, *mp*, *ff*, and *p*. A tremolo effect is indicated on the bridge for the lower strings in measures 12 and 13.



Musical score for measures 14-15. The score is in 7/8 time and consists of four staves. The first staff is for the violin, and the other three are for the cello and double bass. The violin part features a rapid sixteenth-note pattern. The lower strings provide a steady accompaniment. Dynamics include *ff feroce*, *p*, and *ff*. A tremolo effect is indicated on the bridge for the lower strings in measure 15.



Musical score for measures 16-19. The score is in 7/8 time and consists of four staves. The first staff is for the violin, and the other three are for the cello and double bass. The violin part features a rapid sixteenth-note pattern. The lower strings provide a steady accompaniment. Dynamics include *p*, *ff*, and *p*.

18

*p* poco sul pont. *ff*

*ff feroce*

*ff* *p*



20

*ff* poco sul pont. *ff*

*ff feroce*



22

*ff* poco sul pont. *ff*

*ff feroce*

Musical score for measures 24-25, featuring four staves (treble and bass clefs). The music consists of dense, rhythmic patterns with frequent slurs and accents. A key signature change from one sharp to one flat occurs between measures 24 and 25. The time signature is 3/4.

Musical score for measures 26-27, featuring four staves. Measure 26 is marked with a box containing the letter 'B'. Performance instructions include 'détaché (non spiccato) ord.', 'pp sub.', and 'ord. II III'. The music features a mix of rhythmic patterns and rests.

Musical score for measures 28-29, featuring four staves. The music continues with rhythmic patterns and slurs, maintaining the 3/4 time signature.

Musical score for measures 30-31, featuring four staves. The music concludes with rhythmic patterns and slurs.

32

Musical score for measures 32-33. The system consists of four staves: Treble, Violin, Bass, and Bass. Measure 32 features a complex rhythmic pattern with sixteenth notes and slurs. Measure 33 continues the pattern with some rests.

34

Musical score for measures 34-35. Measure 34 continues the rhythmic pattern. Measure 35 includes a pizzicato (pizz.) instruction and a piano (p) dynamic marking in the Violin staff.

36

Musical score for measures 36-38. Measure 36 starts with a C-clef and includes a pizzicato (pizz.) instruction and a piano (p) dynamic marking in the Violin staff. Measures 37 and 38 continue with complex rhythmic patterns in all staves.

39

Musical score for measures 39-41. Measure 39 continues the rhythmic pattern. Measure 40 includes a forte (f) dynamic marking and the instruction "col legno battuto sul tasto" in the Violin and Bass staves. Measure 41 includes a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic marking and the instruction "col legno battuto sul tasto" in the Violin and Bass staves.

41

col legno battuto  
sul tasto  
II III

*mp*

43

45

**D** arco

*ff*

arco

*ff*

arco

*ff*

arco

*ff*

48

52

*fp*

*fp*

*fp*

*fp*



57

**E**

*fp*

*fp*

*mp espress.*

*fp*

*mp espress.*

*fp*

*mp espress.*



\* this mute, if possible, should be lighter than a practice mute but heavier than a normal mute

64

con sord. (metal\*)

*ff feroce*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

69

*mf*

*mf*

72

*f*

*mp*

*f*

*f*

74

*mp*

*mp*

76

**F**

trem. poco sul pont.

*pp*

*mp*

*pp*

trem. poco sul pont.

*pp*

79

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mp pp mp pp mp pp mp pp mp

trem. poco sul pont.

pp mp pp mp pp

mp pp mp pp mp pp mp

86

senza sord.

*p* espress.

ord.

*p* espress.

*pp*

*mp*

ord.

*p* espress.

*pp* *mp* *pp*

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92

*mp*

pizz.

*p*

97

*mp* *p*

*mp* *p*

*mp* *p*



100

Wind up drummer toy and let it run till it stops →

con sord.  
middle of bow

Repeat as necessary but STOP and wind up drumming  
toy as soon as cellist's drumming toy is playing

*ff*



102

Wind up drummer toy and let it run till it stops →

Wind up drummer toy and let it run till it stops →

*pp*



104

Wind up drummer toy and let it run till it stops →

When last toy has stopped turn radio off (slowly) ☺

When last toy has stopped turn radio off (slowly) ☺