

Thomas Feng | 2014

# **A Flame Out of Focus**


for cello and piano

# Performance Notes | Explanation of Symbols

Both the cellist and pianist read from a score, as alignment between parts is approximate. Because the piano part is in time, the cellist must follow the pianist.

A practice mute must be attached to the cello for the duration of the entire piece. The desired effect is one of detachment and distance – even in the cello’s most intense, *fortissimo* moments, the resulting sound should be easily upstaged by the piano.

For the cello:

- In general, the execution of the gesture is more important than the exact sounding of the pitches.
- There are no indications of time; the noteheads and stems indicate disposition of fingers on the strings (i.e. tremolo is happening on which string, etc.).
- All glissandi are to be executed slowly and evenly. Each glissando is executed with the articulation of the gesture immediately preceding it (i.e. if there is a fingered tremolo immediately before the glissando on that string, the glissando is also trilled; if there is a bowed tremolo before the glissando, the glissando is also tremolo’d; if the notes preceding the glissando are harmonics, the glissando is executed with the finger pressure of a harmonic, etc..)
- Material in solid boxes is to be repeated ad libitum.
- Material in dashed boxes is to be interspersed freely with the prevailing material (from the previous solid box).
- Upon arriving at a new solid box or unboxed material, drop the previous material.
- Material following a dashed bracket (with an arrow pointing to a bar in the piano part) is played once, and must happen sometime in the indicated bar. After that, go back to repeating the prevailing material.
- N = ordinary bow position
- S. P. = sul ponticello
-  = extreme bow pressure
- All other unusual indications are explained in the score.

For the piano:

- Cue-sized notes are to be played *sotto voce*.

to Niall Ferguson

# A Flame Out of Focus

Thomas Feng (2014)

**Very free; flickering, inchoate**

N → S. P. → N, ad lib.  
(asynchronous with bowstrokes)

Violoncello  
(with practice mute)

*mf* *pp*

continue to vary speed  
of the fingered tremolo,  
at leisure

Piano

Vc.

**Poised, contemplative** ♩ = ca. 54

*mp* always with restraint;  
relaxed, but not too freely

Pno.

Vc.

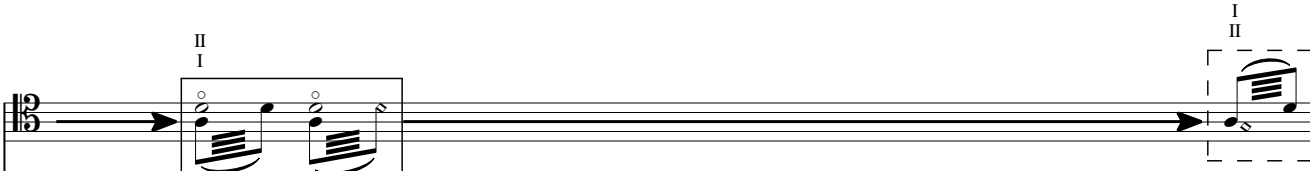
... → N

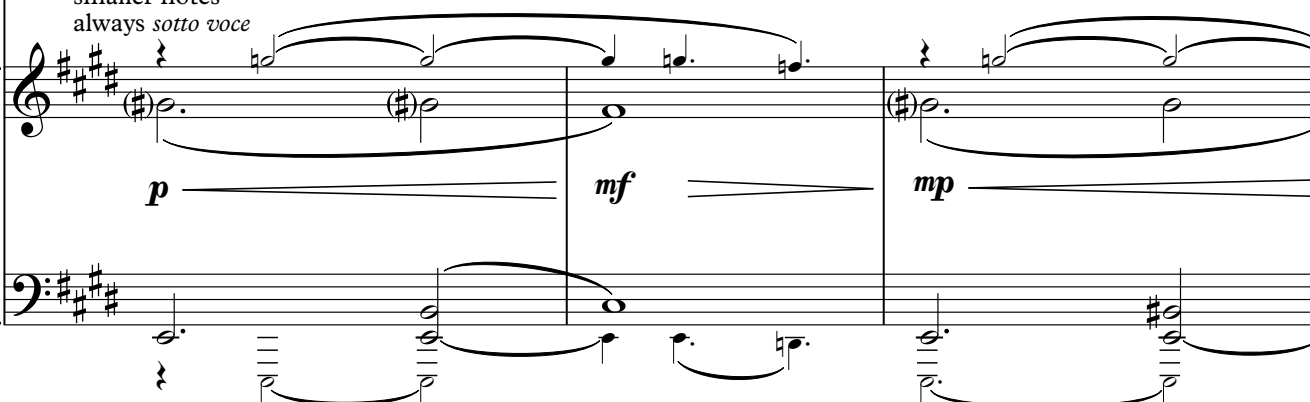
II  
I


*mf*

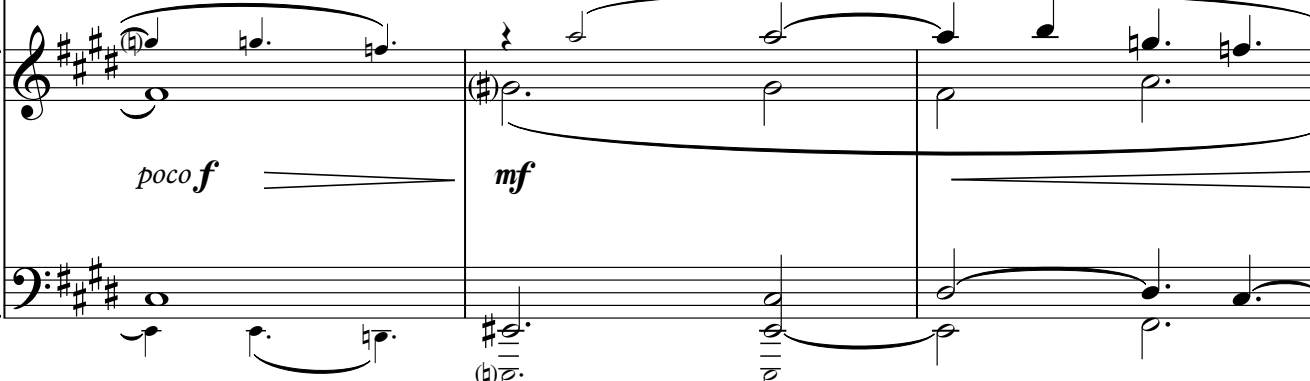
Pno.

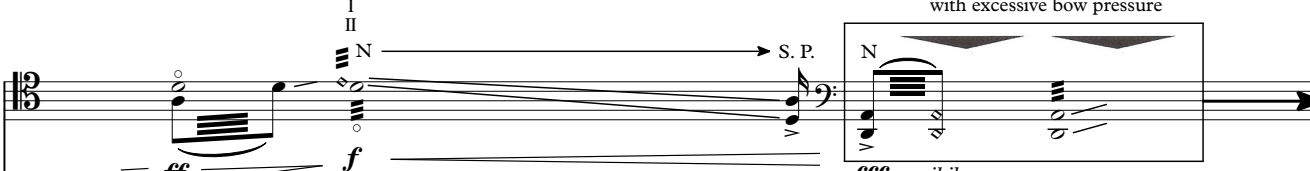
2


Vc.  *p cresc., poco a poco; in crests*  $\langle \rangle \langle \rangle \langle \rangle$  etc. (mf)

Pno.  *smaller notes  
always sotto voce* *p* *mf* *mp*

Vc.  *f* *mf*

Pno.  *poco f* *mf*

Vc.  *ff* *f* *fff possibile* *S. P.* *N*

Pno.  *ff* *poco f* *mf*

not "actual" harmonics;  
noisy, indistinct overtones  
should result, especially  
with excessive bow pressure

Vc.

II I III

*sempre fff, ma cantabile; dim. poco a poco*

*(ff)*

3

Pno.

*p*

*mf*

*p*

Vc.

N S.P. N

*f*

*poco f*

*p*

Pno.

*poco f*

*p*

Vc.

*(sempre dim., in crests)*

*mf*

Pno.

*poco f*

*p*

*mf*

*p*

4

**Roughly in time** ( $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 54$ )  
**molto rall.**

slow tremolo to circular bowing;  
 slow circular bowing, into a very  
 broad pulse, before proceeding to  
 next system (as if it were a large  
 downbeat at the end of a long rit.)

Vc.

Pno.

*p*

**Very free, once again**

Vc.

*sub. mf*

*pp*

**A tempo**

*mf non dim.!*

as high on the strings as possible;  
 no audible pitch is expected,  
 just the sound of bow  
 rubbing against the string

Vc.

*mp*

*ppp*

**poco rall. al fine**

Pno.

*mp*

*p*