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Playscapes for Piano Trio

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Abstract

Playscapes is a piano trio of an approximate duration of 43 minutes. It is in three movements: Playscape I, II, and III. The top range of the piano (G7-C8) is prepared in such a way that these notes become essentially a percussive effect. *Playscapes* explores a concept of “Musical Activity” – areas of music where simple rules are established and create a context wherein anomalies can occur. Playscape I is a series of these musical activities. In Playscape II, one musical activity goes on for a long time. In Playscape III, two musical activities alternate. In addition, a general trend towards noise occurs throughout *Playscapes*.

Acknowledgments:

Thank you to Dr. Omar Daniel for being an excellent supervisor throughout this process and Dr. Catherine Nolan for her insightful comments as a second reader.

A big thanks to Annie Castillo, Robin Howe, Aysel Taghi-Zada, Wesley Shen, and Amahl Arulanandam for performing the first recording.

Thanks to Annie Castillo for providing guidance with piano writing and generally providing emotional and editorial support.

Thanks to all my friends who show up to my contemporary music concerts, go with the flow, and remind me how fun and crazy all this contemporary music stuff really is.

Thank you to Dr. Andrew Staniland, Martin Arnold and Linda Catlin Smith who have all provided me with guidance that allowed me to write this piece.

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An aerial photograph of a tropical resort. A large, white, multi-story building with a balcony is situated on a hillside. A swimming pool is visible in the foreground, and a slide is seen extending from the building down to the pool. The surrounding area is lush with greenery and palm trees.

PLAYSCAPES

For Piano Trio

James Lowrie

Playscapes for piano trio

Ca. 43 Minutes

Each movement has an alternate title if played alone

Playscape I – Ca. 21 minutes

Alternate title: Playscape

Playscape II – Ca. 14 minutes

Alternate title: Possessing a weapon has made me bashful in this economy of self-awareness

Playscape III – Ca. 8 minutes

Alternate title: Small Museum

Program note:

I remember in my teens, growing up in Belleville, I hung out on playscapes because there was nothing better to do.

When I moved to Toronto for university I figured there would be no more playscapes. But, I was wrong. There were playscapes all around the downtown if you knew where to look. On summer nights, I would head out very late, with an audiobook to lay around in a playscape. Sometimes I ran into other adult playscapers (that's what you call them), who were usually couples. That annoyed me because I liked to think I was the only person who did this, also I didn't like that they were turning playscaping into some sort of couple's retreat. We had to keep the playscape sacred. On the other hand, when I did see someone by themselves, it was worrying, like, what's that guy's problem? Sometimes, the comedians and I would go hang out on playscapes and that was okay, they understood the spirit of the activity.

At some point in my thirties, it just got weird. I figured I would have to wait until I had my own children, who I would use as an excuse to build a playscape in the backyard, assuming I ever made enough money to have a backyard.

When I turned 50, I had to face the reality that I probably wouldn't have kids. Even still, I built a playscape in my backyard.

Even now, in my retirement, I still head out on summer nights with an audiobook (which I can barely hear over the damn tinnitus) and stare up into the night sky and think about what's left to be done.

Notes for performers:

b. dynamic

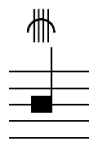
The *b.* dynamic is for when an instrument is to balance, in terms of psychoacoustics, with another instrument. This is used to account for the vagaries of dynamics when it comes to mixed modes of playing with extended techniques or pizzicato. For example, the cello is playing pizzicato starting at bar 188 to the end of Playscape I. The piano and violin are given the "*b.* Vc." instruction. This means, "the piano and violin are to play at a dynamic level so that the listener perceives them equally to the cello". As the cello is playing forte pizzicato, this will likely be around mezzo-piano.

Accidentals: Accidentals sustain through bar on selected pitch. Courtesy accidentals are sometimes included. These are presented without parentheses.

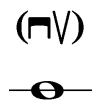
Piano

Required Preparation: The G7 -C8 range of the piano is to be blocked out with masking tape in order to create a sound that is about 25% pitch and 75% noise. Whenever these notes are played the sustain pedal should be down, unless otherwise specified. The making must be done accurately so that the F#7 should sound normally. This will NOT be notated in the score in any way.

Strings



Bow bridge: This should be a quiet noise effect without any pitch. This can also be moved in and out of imperceptibly from regular bowing, as if the pitched material is being subsumed into the noise. The main example of this being the noise in the violin in bars 70-71.



Noise on the strings: This should be a quiet noise effect without any pitch. Cover all 4 strings high up with your palm, and then bow III and IV with a fast speed and light bow pressure (flautando). This effect can be combined with tremolo.



Ghost flautando: A technique that sounds 80% noise and 20% pitch. Closely related to the “noise on string” technique. Finger the written pitch at half pressure (like a harmonic), while also placing the other fingers behind that pitch to block any harmonic from being produced. Light bow pressure and fast speed should create the sound of a “ghost” note. Likely this will involve playing even lighter than you would think. It is an extremely quiet effect.

Bow Positions

MSP: Multo Sul Ponticello, almost on the bridge.

SP: Sul Ponticello

norm. or N: Normal bowing position

ST: Sul Tasto

MST: Multo Sul Tasto

Playscape I

James Lowrie

♩ = 66 Getting ready for a long walk

Violin

Cello

Piano

f loud but not dramatic

Vc.

mp

Vc.

Vc.

6

11

16

mp

3

3

Playscape I

2
20

Vc.

♩ = 132 Maybe this is building to something, maybe it's just a place of rest

24

Vln. arco

Vc.

30

Vln.

Vc.

36

Vln.

Vc.

41

Vln.

Vc.

47

Vln.

Vc.

52

Vln.

Vc.

57

Vln.

Vc.

4
61

Playscale I

Vln.

Vc.

pp

pp

pp

8^{va}

pizz.

66

Vln.

Vc.

f

8^{va}

b. vln.

70

♩ = 104 A Morton Feldman thing

arco, con sord.

Vln.

Vc.

pp

arco, con sord.

pp

8^{va}

8^{va}

75

Vln.

Vc.

8^{va}

8^{va}

79

Vln.

Vc.

8va

83

Vln.

Vc.

pizz.

arco

pizz.

arco

8va

87

Vln.

Vc.

arco

(8va)

(8va)

91

Vln.

Vc.

Playscape I

6

95

Vln.

Vc.

99

Vln.

Vc.

103

Vln.

Vc.

106

Vln.

Vc.

95

99

103

106

p

mp

pp

8va

p

pp

110

Vln.

Vc.

p *pp*

8va

114

Vln.

Vc.

p

8va

118

Vln.

Vc.

arco

pp

via sord.

8va

122

Vln.

Vc.

8va

Playscape I

126

Vln. *via sord.*

Vc.

8^{va}

130 ♩ = 104 Mercurial

Vln. *Senza sord.*

Vc. *Senza sord.*

p

ppp

f

p

8^{va}

135

Vln. *rit.*

Vc.

a tempo

ppp

8^{va}

139

Vln.

Vc.

8^{va}

143 rit. a tempo

Vln. Vc.

(8^{va})

♩ = 128 Intricate but relaxed, like someone building a watch as a hobby

147 pizz. f

Vln. Vc.

8^{va} b. vln.

154 pizz. ppp ff ppp

Vln. Vc.

(8^{va})

159 ppp ff ppp ppp ff ppp

Vln. Vc.

(8^{va})

Playscape I

10
164

Vln.

Vc.

ppp \leftarrow *ff* \rightarrow

(8^{va})

169

Vln.

Vc.

ppp \leftarrow *ff* \rightarrow *ppp*

(8^{va})

174

Vln.

Vc.

ppp \leftarrow *ff* \rightarrow *ppp* \leftarrow *ff* \rightarrow *ppp*

(8^{va})

179

Vln.

Vc.

ppp \leftarrow *ff* \rightarrow *ppp*

(8^{va})

183

Vln.

Vc.

8^{va}

♩ = 148 - 160 It's light and fun but it becomes hard work over time

188

Vln.

Vc.

arco

b. Vc. (mp)

pizz.

f

b. Vc. (mp)

193

Vln.

Vc.

8^{va}

198

Vln.

Vc.

8^{va}

203

Vln.

Vc.

208

Vln.

Vc.

f

b. Vc.

p

213

Vln.

Vc.

216

Vln.

Vc.

220

Vln. *pp* *b. Vc.*

Vc. *pp* *b. Vc.*

225

Vln.

Vc.

230

Vln.

Vc.

sva

235

Vln. *p* *b. Vc.*

Vc. *p* *b. Vc.*

239

Vln. 

Vc. 



244

Vln. 

Vc. 



248

Vln. 

Vc. 

8va 

253

Vln. 

Vc. 

(8va) 

258

Vln.

Vc.

f

b. Vc.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 258 to 262. The Violin (Vln.) part starts in 6/8 time, then changes to 4/4, and finally to 3/8. The Violoncello (Vc.) part follows a similar pattern. Dynamics include a forte (*f*) marking and first/second ending (*b. Vc.*) markings. The piano accompaniment is shown in grand staff with treble and bass clefs.

263

Vln.

Vc.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 263 to 267. The Violin (Vln.) part features a complex rhythmic pattern with time signatures of 8/8, 4/4, 8/8, and 4/4. The Violoncello (Vc.) part mirrors this complexity. The piano accompaniment continues in grand staff.

268

Vln.

Vc.

b. Vc.

b. Vc.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 268 to 272. The Violin (Vln.) part has a 4/4 time signature. The Violoncello (Vc.) part includes first/second ending (*b. Vc.*) markings. The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand and rests in the left hand.

273

Vln.

Vc.

b. Vc.

Red.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 273 to 277. The Violin (Vln.) part has a 4/4 time signature. The Violoncello (Vc.) part includes first/second ending (*b. Vc.*) markings. The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand and rests in the left hand. Performance markings include *Red.* and ***.

278

Vln.

Vc.

8va

b. Vc.

283

Vln.

Vc.

(8va)

288

Vln.

Vc.

293

Vln.

Vc.

298

Vln.

Vc.

302 (♩=♩) Minimalista!

Vln.

Vc.

lots of pedal to end of section

308

Vln.

Vc.

313

Vln.

Vc.

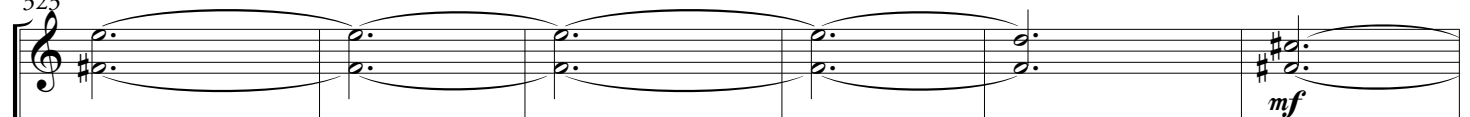
318


Vln. 


Vc. 



323

Vln. 

Vc. 



mf

329

Vln. 

Vc. 



mp

334

Vln. 

Vc. 



339

Vln.

Vc.

p

mp

p

345

Vln.

Vc.

350

Vln.

Vc.

p

355 Continuing...

Vln.

Vc.

f

b. Vc.

360

Vln.

Vc.

365

Vln.

Vc.

8va-

369

Vln.

Vc.

8va-

374

Vln.

Vc.

(8va)

8va-

379

Vln.

Vc.

384

Vln.

Vc.

389

Vln.

Vc.

394

Vln.

Vc.

399

Vln.

Vc.

(8va)

404

Vln.

Vc.

(8va)

408

Vln.

Vc.

(8va)

413

Vln.

Vc.

418

Vln.

Vc.

423

Vln.

Vc.

428

Vln.

Vc.

433

Vln.

Vc.

438

Vln.

Vc.

p *f* *p*

8^{va} 8^{va'} 8^{va}

443

Vln.

Vc.

ff *pp* *b. Vc.*

8^{va} *ff* 8^{va} 8^{va}

448

Vln.

Vc.

8^{va}

453

Vln.

Vc.

p *pp*

like you just decided to add these in

458

Vln.

Vc.

8va

Detailed description: This system covers measures 458 to 463. The Violin part (Vln.) is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The Viola part (Vc.) is in alto clef. The Viola part includes an 8va marking above the staff. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals.

464

Vln.

Vc.

8va

Detailed description: This system covers measures 464 to 468. The Violin part (Vln.) is in treble clef. The Viola part (Vc.) is in alto clef. The Viola part includes an 8va marking above the staff. The music continues with similar rhythmic patterns and accidentals.

469

Vln.

Vc.

(8va)

Detailed description: This system covers measures 469 to 473. The Violin part (Vln.) is in treble clef. The Viola part (Vc.) is in alto clef. The Viola part includes an 8va marking above the staff. The music features more complex rhythmic figures and accidentals.

474

Vln.

Vc.

8va

Detailed description: This system covers measures 474 to 478. The Violin part (Vln.) is in treble clef. The Viola part (Vc.) is in alto clef. The Viola part includes an 8va marking above the staff. The music concludes with various rhythmic patterns and accidentals.

479

Vln.

Vc.

8^{va}

484

Vln.

Vc.

8^{va}

489

Vln.

Vc.

8^{va}

495

Vln.

Vc.

8^{va}

ff

500

Vln.

Vc.

p

ff

505

Vln.

Vc.

pp

b. Vc.

f

ff

510

Vln.

Vc.

f

b. Vc.

515

Vln.

Vc.

520

Vln.

Vc.

8va

525

Vln.

Vc.

530

Vln.

Vc.

535

Vln.

Vc.

p

540

Vln.

b. Vc.

Vc.

8va

545

Vln.

Vc.

(8va)

3

549

Vln.

Vc.

8va

554

Vln.

Vc.

(8va)

8va

559

Vln.

Vc.

(8va)

f flat expression

564

Vln.

Vc.

3 *3*

573

Vln.

Vc.

pp

pp

8va

cantabile

pp

579

Vln.

Vc.

mp

pp

ppp

dddd

Rea.

584

Vln. *b. Vc.*

Vc. *f*

8^{va}

589

Vln.

Vc.

594

Vln.

Vc.

8^{va}

599

Vln.

Vc.

8^{va}

604

Vln.

Vc.

(8^{va})

loco

8^{va}

609

Vln.

Vc.

(8^{va})

614

Vln.

Vc.

8^{va}

619

Vln.

Vc.

(8^{va})

624

Vln.

Vc.

8va

8va

629

Vln.

Vc.

8va

634

Vln.

Vc.

8va

mp

mp

mp

639

Vln.

Vc.

f

b. Vc.

perverse

perverse

b. Vc.

perverse

645

Vln.

Vc.

no longer perverse

650

Vln.

Vc.

p

655

Vln.

Vc.

ff

8va

660

Vln.

Vc.

8va

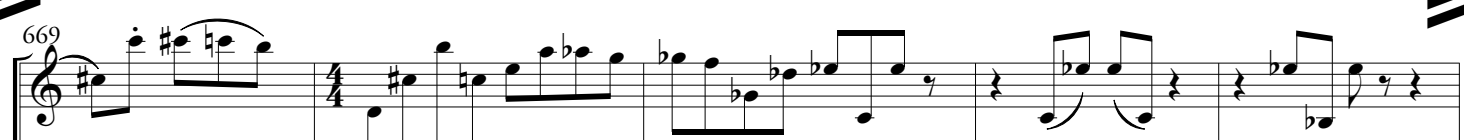
664


Vln. 

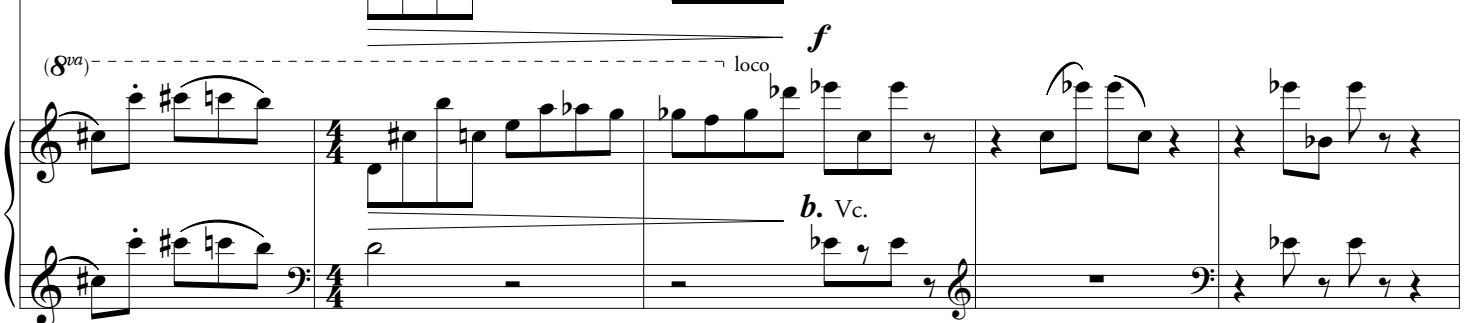
Vc. 

8va 

669

Vln. 

Vc. 

b. Vc. 

f *loco*

674

Vln. 

Vc. 



680

Vln. 

Vc. 



685

Vln.

Vc.

691

Vln.

Vc.

696

Vln.

Vc.

701

Vln.

Vc.

706

Vln.

Vc.

711

Vln.

Vc.

717

Vln.

Vc.

722

Vln.

Vc.

Playscape II

♩ = 56 Flexible, rubato, cantabile, patient

Violin

Cello

Piano

mp

Some melodic fragments suggested throughout with slurs, these are just a starting point for shaping ideas. Dynamics are to be employed subtly. Feel free to add in more dynamic shaping and articulations throughout. Subtle pedaling is also encouraged.

7

pp mp mf p

13

mp p

19

mp pp f mp

25

31

37

pp sub.
8va
Ped.

43

mp
p
pp
mp
8va

48

8va
mf
p
mp

53

8va
pp
mp
pedal all As until bar 64
becoming a bit more urgent, push forward
Ped.

59

8va
Ped. *

64

Vln. *pizz.*
f (sounding in volume closer to an *mp*)
col legno

Vc. *f* (sounding in volume closer to a *p*)

p reestablish a calm patience
Ped. *

Playscape II

70

Vln.

Vc.

pp *mp*

pp *mp*

pp *mf* *p*

76

Vln.

Vc.

pp *mf* *p*

81

Vln.

Vc.

ppp *mp* *pp*

15^{ma} *15^{ma}*

ppp *mp* *pp*

And. *

86

Vln.

Vc.

mp *pp* *mp*

mp *pp* *mp*

92

Vln.

Vc.

8va

98

Vln.

Vc.

pizz.

ppp

mp

8va

104

Vln.

Vc.

col legno

f

mp

p

mf

8va

110

Vln.

Vc.

8va

mp

116

Vln.

Vc.

121

Vln.

Vc.

arco

mp

f

mp

126

Vln.

Vc.

col legno

ppp

p

pp

ppp

p

pp

ppp

p

pp

p

15^{ma}

132

Vln.

Vc.

pizz.

f

f

15^{ma}

p

ppp

mp

mp

ppp

137

Vln.

Vc.

arco norm.

mp *p*

p *mp* *p*

142

Vln.

Vc.

MSP → MST

ppp *mp* *ppp* 15^{ma}

147

Vln.

Vc.

(15^{ma}) 15^{ma} arco norm. *mp*

pp *mp* *pp*

pp *mp* *pp*

152

Vln.

Vc.

8^{va} *mp* *pp*

pp *pp*

♩ = ~72 subito

158

Vln. *pp*

Vc.

pp *8va* *8va* *pp*

mp *pp* *mp* *pp*

164

Vln.

Vc.

8va *15ma*

170

Vln.

Vc.

15ma *8va*

♩ = ~56

175

arco

Vln.

Vc.

8va *f* *f* *p*

179

Vln.

Vc.

f

gva

p

184

Vln.

Vc.

f

gva

189

Vln.

Vc.

mp

pizz. l.v.

15^{ma}

pp

col legno

leg.

194

Vln.

Vc.

15^{ma}

15^{ma}

200 ghost-flautando

Vln. *ppp*

Vc. *ppp*

206

Vln.

Vc.

pp *p*

211

Vln.

Vc.

216

Vln.

Vc.

mp

*

Playscape III

James Lowrie

$\text{♩} = 72$ *Reserved, exacting, somewhat cute*
Con sord, non vib.

Violin

Cello

p

5 vib. non vib.

Vln.

Vc.

n *p*

10

Vln.

Vc.

vib. non vib.

n *p*

f

2do.

(♩ = ♩)
♩ = 80

15

Vln.

Vc.

ESP

pp

15^{ma}

mf 5

6

20

Vln.

Vc.

ESP

ESP

ESP

20

(15^{ma})

5

3

p

25

Vln.

Vc.

N

N

p

n ————— *p*

25

(15^{ma})

f

ff

p

*

(♩ = ♩)
♩ = 72

31

Vln.

Vc.

fp *n*

n *p* *n* *p*

36

Vln.

Vc.

p

41

Vln.

Vc.

vib. → non vib.

46

Vln.

Vc.

n *p* *mf*

46

ff

sc.
(♩.=♩)

52

Vln.

Vc.

p 8 8

♩ = 80

4/4

52

4/4

55 (♩V)

Vln.

Vc.

55

15^{ma}

p *f*

6

58

Vln.

Vc.

ESP

rit. tremolo

3

15^{ma}

n *f*

3

62

Vln.

Vc.

ESP

pp

ESP

pp

62

(15^{ma})

mp

67

Vln.

Vc.

n

(FV)

n

(FV)

n

67

15^{ma}

ff

p

p

15^{ma}

Red.

*

Red.

71

Vln.

Vc.

ff

ff

(15^{ma})

71

f *p* *f*

3 *5* *5*

(♩ = ♩.)

75 ♩ = 72

Vln.

Vc.

n *p*

p

75

ff *p*

*

80

Vln.

Vc.

80

80

85

Vln. *vib.* *non vib.* *pizz.* *arco*

Vc. *n* *p*

*

90

Vln.

Vc.

90

93

Vln.

Vc.

93 *gva*

96

Vln.

Vc.

n *f*

f

ff

Ped.

100

Vln.

Vc.

♩ = 80

4/4

15^{ma}

mp

104

Vln.

Vc.

ESP

(NV)

(15^{ma})

*f*³

107

Vln. (M) ESP

Vc. *pp*

(15^{ma})

110

Vln.

Vc.

(15^{ma})

f sub. p 6 7 7 7 7 *ff*

112

Vln. ESP (M)

Vc. *n* *pp* (M) ESP

(15^{ma})

pp *ff*

117

Vln. (M)

Vc.

(15^{ma})

f 6 5 6 6

119

Vln. *ESP* 6 6 *pp*

Vc. *ESP* 5 5 *pp*

(15^{ma})

119 *p* 7 6 *f*

121

Vln.

Vc.

(15^{ma})

121 *p* 6 *p*

124

Vln. *ESP* 6 6

Vc. *ESP* 5 5

(15^{ma})

124 *f* *mp* *f*

126

Vln.

Vc.

(15^{ma})

8^{va}

15^{ma}

ff 5

pp 5

ff 5

129

Vln.

Vc.

♩. = 72

ESP

ESP

n *mf* *ppp* *f*

129

pp

133

Vln.

Vc.

N

n *p* *mp* *f*

133

p *f* *p*

137

Vln. *p*

Vc. *p*

Musical score for measures 137-140. The Violin (Vln.) and Viola (Vc.) parts are marked piano (*p*). The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 12/8. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with some rests.

141

Vln. pizz. arco

Vc. pizz. arco

Musical score for measures 141-144. The Violin (Vln.) and Viola (Vc.) parts include markings for pizzicato (*pizz.*) and arco. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 12/8. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with some rests.

145

Vln.

Vc.

Musical score for measures 145-148. The Violin (Vln.) and Viola (Vc.) parts. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 12/8. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with some rests.

149

Vln.

Vc.

n

n

149

Piano accompaniment for measures 149-153.

154

Vln.

Vc.

f

f

f

154

Piano accompaniment for measures 154-156.

157

Vln.

Vc.

ff

pp

p

ff

pp

pp

pp

mp

mp

157

15^{ma}

Piano accompaniment for measures 157-161.

Curriculum Vitae

Name: James Lowrie

Post Secondary Education:

University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
2009-2013 BMus

University of Western Ontario
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2017-2019 MMus

Related Experience:

Soundstreams Emerging Composer Workshop
Soundstreams, Toronto, 2019

Array Music Young Composers Workshop
Array Music, Toronto, 2018

Tuckamore Young Composers Workshop
Memorial University, Toronto, 2018

Montreal Creative Music Lab
Montreal, 2018

Conferences:

2019 North American Saxophone Alliance
University of Western Ontario, 2019, Presentation of New Work

The 21st Century Guitar
University of Ottawa, 2019, Presentation of New Work

Related Experience:

Graduate Teaching Assistantship
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