

BEN ARAUJO

Four Cranes
for string quartet
(2026)
version 2026-04-14

PERFORMANCE NOTES

Cells

Each cell (material enclosed in repeat signs) contains varying amounts of pitches from the harmonic series of whichever string the performers play on. Freely oscillate between these pitches with as little glissando as possible, with irregular up-and-down movements within the indicated range of harmonics. When only the top and bottom of these ranges appear with glissando lines in between, this indicates to perform a moderately paced, and freely fluctuating, glissando in between the indicated harmonics. In both cases, changes of pitch should not coincide with changes in bow direction, so as to create an unpredictable, free-flowing texture.

When changing from a cell to any material not enclosed in repeat signs, immediately switch to that material when indicated regardless of what is played previously.

Timings and cues

When performing the piece, a single stopwatch should be used that all of the performers can see, to ensure that they are synchronized as accurately as possible. In order to achieve this, all performers must play from the full score.

Each system lasts a different length of time, therefore the sizes of the bars are proportional to the durations of each system.

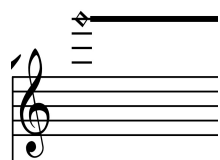
Dotted barlines with time codes above them serve the purpose of orientation, and are used to indicate when a performer (or, in some cases, more than one) begins either playing new material, changes dynamic, or stops playing altogether.

Natural harmonics

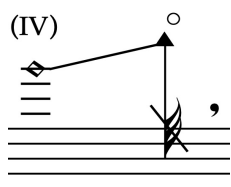
Accidentals with downward arrows are used for the seventh harmonic, which sounds about 31 cents lower. Quarter-tone accidentals are used for the eleventh harmonic, which sounds about 49 cents lower. (These cent deviations are also indicated in the score.) Since these harmonics naturally sound this way, do not attempt to tune them.

Unstable sounds may occur while bowing the harmonics; allow these instabilities to shine through, and take them as they come.

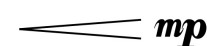
Symbols and explanations



sustain the indicated pitch, with as slow a bow speed as possible



(IV) , glissando up to the highest possible harmonic



mp

irregular oscillations between a series of extremely high natural harmonics in a close range on all four strings, very close to the bridge, alternating between each string in any order, at a moderate bow speed; the resulting sound should have a shimmering, celestial quality (use Horațiu Rădulescu's composition for solo viola "Das Andere" as a reference point)



short pause

PROGRAM NOTE

"Four Cranes" took its main source of inspiration from a notebook cover, without a doubt the most peculiar of places. This particular cover, on the front and back of a notebook given to me as a birthday gift, contains an illustration from a Japanese wedding outer kimono fabric, which depicts a group of four red-crowned cranes flying in different directions against a bright red background decorated with flowers and leaves. I immediately fell in love with the cover's elegance and beauty, and especially so with the detail of the cranes in flight in the foreground, their wings fully spread against the red atmosphere, clearly appearing to fly someplace, but where? It was this element of the illustration (and the mystery hidden within it) that I made manifest in the resulting composition, where the strings/cranes slowly fly down towards the ground (experiencing several interruptions in their flight paths along the way), pause to rest for a while, then gradually lift off again into the stratosphere, continuing their journey towards the unknown.

This piece is dedicated to the Zilliacus Quartet, for whom it was written, as well as to Ellinor Heldt for giving me the notebook that allowed the piece to come into being.

written for the Zilliacus Quartet, and dedicated to Ellinor Heldt

Four Cranes

for string quartet

Senza misura

BEN ARAUJO (2026)

0:00 0:09 0:18 0:25 (0:30)

IV
light, airy (flautando)

Violin I

pp

IV
light, airy (flautando)

Violin II

pp

IV
light, airy (flautando)

Viola

pp

I
light, airy (flautando)
-31 c.

Violoncello

pp

A 0:30 0:42 0:51 1:05 (1:15)

(IV) -31 c.

5

(IV) -31 c.

(IV) -49 c.

(I)

B

1:15

1:19

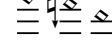
1:26

1:33

(1:35)

9

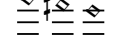
(IV)

*(pp)*

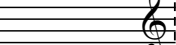
(IV)

*(pp)*

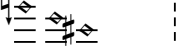
(IV)

*(pp)*

(IV)

*mf*

(I)

*(pp)*

1:35

1:40

1:46

1:50

1:54

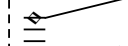
1:56

(2:00)

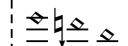
13

*p**pp*

(IV)

*mp*

(IV)

*pp sub.*

(IV)

*pp sub.**p**pp**p**pp*

The musical score for "The Rose Tree" is presented in four staves. The first three staves represent vocal parts, and the fourth staff represents the piano accompaniment. The score is divided into measures by vertical dashed lines, with time markers at the top: 2:25, 2:28, 2:30, 2:32, 2:37, and 2:45. The key signature changes from G major to D major at 2:37, indicated by a large 'D' in a box. The piano part features a prominent bass line with a strong rhythmic pattern, including a double bar line and a repeat sign at 2:37. The vocal parts are written in treble clef and include lyrics in German. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano) and *pp* (pianissimo) and a key signature change to D major at 2:37.

2:45 2:50 2:52 2:55 3:00 (3:05)

30 (IV)

pp

pp

pp

pp

(IV)

(IV)

(I)

3:05 3:11 3:17 3:21 3:24 (3:30)

35 E

(IV)

pp

(IV)

pp

(I)

p

pp

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' features four staves of piano accompaniment. The score is divided into measures by vertical dashed lines, with time signatures (3:30, 3:35, 3:39, 3:43, 3:47, 3:49, 3:51, 3:53, 3:55, 4:00) indicating specific points in the performance. The music is written in treble clef and includes various musical notations such as chords, accidentals, and articulation marks. The dynamics are marked as *pp* (pianissimo) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The score includes a key signature change to one sharp (F#) at the 3:55 mark, indicated by a box containing the letter 'F' with a sharp sign. The music is in 3/4 time, as indicated by the time signatures and the notation. The score includes a variety of musical notations, including chords, accidentals, and articulation marks. The dynamics are marked as *pp* (pianissimo) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The score includes a key signature change to one sharp (F#) at the 3:55 mark, indicated by a box containing the letter 'F' with a sharp sign. The music is in 3/4 time, as indicated by the time signatures and the notation. The score includes a variety of musical notations, including chords, accidentals, and articulation marks.

The musical score for 'G' (4:00) consists of four staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The third staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The fourth staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is divided into measures by vertical dashed lines. Time markers are placed above the staves: 4:00, 4:05, 4:10, 4:15, 4:22, 4:25, and (4:30). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines. The first staff has a measure starting at 4:15 with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff has a measure starting at 4:05 with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The third staff has a measure starting at 4:10 with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The fourth staff has a measure starting at 4:00 with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score ends with a double bar line at 4:30.

H

4:30

4:34

4:40

4:45

(5:00)

55

(*pp*)

(IV)

(*pp*)

(IV)

(*pp*)

(*pp*)

5:00

5:04

5:10

5:14

5:18

5:20

5:23

(5:25)

59

(IV)

mf

(IV)

mf

(IV)

mf

(I)

(*pp*)

mf

I

5:25 5:28 5:30 5:38 5:40 5:45 5:47 5:51 (5:55)

66 (IV) *mf non dim.* *p* *mp* *pp*

(IV) *mf non dim.* *p* *mp* *pp*

(IV) *mf non dim.* *p* *mp* *pp*

(I) *mf non dim.* *p* *mp* *pp*

Detailed description: This musical score block contains section I, measures 66 through 73. It consists of four staves. The first three staves are marked with a Roman numeral (IV) and the fourth with (I). The first staff has a melodic line with a crescendo from 5:25 to 5:28, then a series of peaks and valleys, and a final crescendo to 5:45. The second staff has a similar pattern, with a crescendo from 5:30 to 5:38 and a final crescendo to 5:47. The third staff has a crescendo from 5:30 to 5:38 and a final crescendo to 5:51. The fourth staff has a crescendo from 5:30 to 5:38 and a final crescendo to 5:55. Dynamics are indicated by *mf non dim.*, *p*, *mp*, and *pp*. Time stamps are provided above the staves: 5:25, 5:28, 5:30, 5:38, 5:40, 5:45, 5:47, 5:51, and (5:55).

J **K**

5:55 6:01 6:05 6:10 6:15 6:22 6:29 6:35 (6:40)

74 (IV) *ppp* *pp*

(IV) *ppp* *pp*

(IV) *ppp* *pp*

IV *ppp* *pp* -31 c.

Detailed description: This musical score block contains section J and K, measures 74 through 80. It consists of four staves. The first three staves are marked with a Roman numeral (IV) and the fourth with IV. The first staff has a melodic line with a crescendo from 6:01 to 6:05, then a series of peaks and valleys, and a final crescendo to 6:22. The second staff has a similar pattern, with a crescendo from 6:05 to 6:10 and a final crescendo to 6:29. The third staff has a crescendo from 6:05 to 6:10 and a final crescendo to 6:35. The fourth staff has a crescendo from 6:05 to 6:10 and a final crescendo to 6:40. Dynamics are indicated by *ppp* and *pp*. Time stamps are provided above the staves: 5:55, 6:01, 6:05, 6:10, 6:15, 6:22, 6:29, 6:35, and (6:40).

82

88

N

7:30 7:34 7:40 7:43 7:52 (8:00)

93

(IV) *gliss.* (IV) (IV) (IV)

pp *mp* *pp* *mf* *pp*

O

8:00 8:08 8:14 8:20 (8:30)

98

(IV) (IV) (IV) (IV)

-31 c. -31 c. -49 c.

P

Q
9:00 9:12 9:22 9:27 9:31 9:38 10:00

107

(IV) *pp* *ppp* oscillate around high natural harmonics (shimmering, celestial)

(IV) *pp* *ppp* oscillate around high natural harmonics (shimmering, celestial)

(IV) *pp* *ppp* oscillate around high natural harmonics (shimmering, celestial)

(IV) *pp* *ppp* oscillate around high natural harmonics (shimmering, celestial)