aux Eppes
for string quartet

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aux Eppes is, as its title suggests, dedicated to the Eppes String Quartet, of whose ingenuity and artistry this work is but a mere reflection.
Preface

aux Eppes is, above all, playful. Part of this playfulness is created by a host of extended string techniques, some of which are described below.

Col legni

All col legni are, unless otherwise stated, battuto. Most col legno markings use a diamonded notehead to indicate the specific location where the performer should strike the string.

This convention is borrowed from artificial harmonics - just as a performer would stop a string at the diamonded note to produce an artificial harmonic, so too must the performer wrap the string with the wood of the bow at the diamonded note to produce the appropriate col legno. Note that this bow placement is almost always above the fingerboard, which will require a knowledge of stops that venture into the extreme register.

When possible, all col legni should be executed so that the wood does not inadvertently wrap the fingerboard (save situations where such an effect is in fact desirable). Any col legno passages lacking this upper diamond will provide ample amounts of text describing how they should be played. Do not confuse col legni with harmonics - all harmonics are represented by open diamond noteheads, irrespective of the duration of the note. Furthermore, all col legni are surmounted or prepended with a col legno marking, and there are no points during the piece at which the performer will be expected to play a col legno while stopping a harmonic. Thus, the functions of the diamonded noteheads (col legno vs harmonic) should always be clear.

Harmonics

All natural harmonics are represented by a diamonded notehead indicating the appropriate stop coupled with an instruction sul X to indicate the appropriate string.
Artificial harmonics follow the standard convention of indicating the fundamental below the diamonded harmonic.

Very rarely, the resultant pitch will be parenthetically indicated above an artificial or natural harmonic (ie where there is ambiguity about which harmonic to produce).

Here, the parentheses are used to show a subtle change in the resultant pitch material that could not be captured by common-practice notation.

Jeté vs spiccato vs ricochet

As per standard string-playing technique, jetés are executed without changing bow direction whereas spiccato playing changes bow direction at each note. Ricochet is the same as jeté but is a passive process (ie drop the bow and let it bounce) rather than an active process (ie forcefully bounce the bow across the string).

Extreme pressure

Some people (meaning myself before I wrote this quartet) erroneously confuse extreme pressure with “scratch tone.” Notes played using extreme pressure can be scratchy depending on a variety of factors (amount of pressure, proximity to the bridge, glissandi), but they can be so much more! Rather than writing “scratch tone”, I write xp to indicate extreme pressure and various qualifiers to indicate the amount of pressure to be applied and/or the sonic result (ie undertone). As a result, you will see phrases like poco xp. This is admittedly a ridiculous construction as far as proper Italian is concerned (both in that something “extreme” cannot really be poco and that xp, in Italian, should read ps for pressione estrema). That said, poco sul pizzicato is just as absurd a construction, but this has not impeded composers from fastidiously using it during the contemporary era. Not to say that others’ bastardizations of the Italian language allow me to justify my having done the same, but rather that I hope this construction is sufficiently musical to be understood on the fly.
Rates of trills, *vibrati*, and *tremoli*

Every trill and *vibrato* marking will have an explicit indication of the rate at which said trill/vibrato should be played. *Tremoli*, by contrast, should be played as fast as possible unless there is an explicit instruction to the contrary.

Local *stringendi* and *rallentandi*

In addition to the various *stringendi* and *ritardandi/rallentandi* that apply to the quartet at large, there are several points in the score at which an individual instrument must perform what I call a “local” stringendo or ritardando. These function effectively like feathered beams at locations where beaming is impossible (ie a series of eighth notes). Make sure to adjust your timing accordingly so that the gesture being tightened/slackened ends at its prescribed place in the score.

*Ordinario* = reset

Often times, you will see a marking in the score such as “ord. sul pont.” This does not mean “play sul ponticello in an ordinary fashion”, but rather that the previous playing instruction no longer applies. For example, in a section of extreme pressure, “ord sul pont” means to cease playing with extreme pressure and play sul ponticello. A regular *sul pont* instruction in this context, by contrast, would mean “play sul ponticello with extreme pressure.”

*Glissandi*

Aside from the standard *glissandi* that occur throughout the work, a variety of *glissandi* are executed in conjunction with other playing instructions that are, often times, mutually exclusive. Consider the following two bars of music:

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col legno ricochet
col legno
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In the first, I intend for the col legno to be played ricochet over the span of the glissando. In the second, I call for two *col legno* icti with a connecting *glissando* (thus the lack of a *glissando* marking between the diamonded noteheads). In both scenarios, the action of the left hand (*glissando*) and the action of the right (*col legno, or pizzicato*) are clearly defined.

For most *glissandi*, the space between their instantiation and terminus points will be demarcated by notehead-less stems. However, in certain instances, the *glissando* must traverse specific pitches without articulating them as individual notes (ie a pitch bend after a Bartok *pizz*). When this happens, the appropriate intermediary pitches will be indicated parenthetically.
Accidentals

My notation for quarter tones is as follows:

To avoid clutter in an already-dense score, I have opted not to use courtesy accidentals except in situations where there is a diminished or augmented unison (or octave).

That said, whenever possible, I have endeavored to use seconds and sevenths instead of imperfect unisons/octaves. This stands in contrast to double-stopping the same pitch on two different strings, an action that is always accompanied in the score with a parenthetical reminder.

Pizzicati sotto ponticello on the cello

My favorite sound in the world is the cello’s pizzicato sotto ponticello. Simply thinking about this sound is one of the most moving musical experiences I know. On the particular cello with which I’m most familiar, the resultant pitches for pizzicati sotto ponticello are as follows:

That said, there are notable differences between the resultant pitches of pizzicati sotto ponticello on various makes of cellos, especially between older instruments. Thus, do not worry if the resultant pitch of a pizzicato sotto ponticello does not comport 100% with that demarcated in the score. Rather, go by the guide in this preface: every time you see a high C sotto ponticello, play it on the A string. That said, strive to tune the under-the-bridge portions of your cello strings as close as possible to the pitches listed above.
Parting Shot

All this is admittedly cumbersome and technical. The author implores you to allow your performance of aux Eppes to be as pregnant with joy and insouciance as the written score’s notation is complex and meticulous. Have fun!

v
over the course of the trill, progressively accelerate and decelerate the rapidity, never surpassing the boundaries of

Moderato, ca. \( \mathcal{J} = 86 \)

Allegro, ca. \( \mathcal{J} = 120 \)

dolce con missura

dolce con espressione
più mosso, ca. \( \text{\textsc{d}} = 90 \)

Andante ma non troppo, ca. \( \text{\textsc{d}} = 85 \)
Andante esplosivo, \( \text{ca.} 70 \)

\( \text{col lento, stopping the strings just below the diamonded point of bow contact} \)

\( \text{col lento, stopping the strings just below the diamonded point of bow contact} \)

\( \text{subtly and slowly let the upper note gliss} \upupdowndownquad \text{up and down a quarter tune} \)

\( \text{subtly and slowly let the upper note gliss up and down a quarter tune} \)

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\( \text{subtly and slowly let the upper note gliss up and down a quarter tune} \)
Naively and tragically, the last dodo performs its mating ritual.

Put: jeté
Allegro leggero $J = 110$ accel. (ca. $J = 120$)

Moderato, ca. $J = 100$

col legno

col legno ricochet

like a persistent annoying fly

like an annoying fly buzzing about ovì, sul pont, portamentos ad lib

$P < f \rightarrow P < f < P < f$

spiccato

col legno

col legno ricochet

col legno

col legno

col legno ricochet

col legno

stop the C string just above the neck, all the while effectuating an increasingly wide vibrato

ppp
Allegro, ca. 140

allow the sustain to be performed by weak pressure

like an annoying fly buzzing about

slightly sloppy portamento ad lib

like a cat call

ord, poco stridento

ord, poco stridento

slightly sloppy portamento ad lib

lacking confidence

like an annoying fly buzzing about

slightly sloppy portamento ad lib

lacking confidence

ord, poco stridento

Allegro, ca. 140
Adagio, ca. \( \frac{d}{4} = 72 \)

Tempo I, ca. \( \frac{d}{4} = 86 \)

Andante sensato, ca. \( \frac{d}{4} = 74 \)

poco più mosso, ca. \( \frac{d}{4} = 76 \)

poco più mosso, ca. \( \frac{d}{4} = 76 \)
Adagio maestoso, ca. $\frac{3}{4} = 68$

Adagio con moto, ca. $\frac{3}{4} = 76$

weak and timid, even ashamed  
sul pont

Adagio con moto, ca. $\frac{3}{4} = 76$

like 1983`s dialup modem
arco, molto risoluto, tremolo ornato!

in addition to the written-out glissandi,
allow the D to freely bend slightly up and slightly down.
That said, never bend it too fast!
With the bravado of a tutti violin
passage from Der Rosenkavalier
motto legato

stutter at this rhythm
allow the xp to force stuttering at random

smoothing out xp, adding mordant

a shrinking gull

poco accelerando

poco vibrato, progressively retarding the rate of the tremolo

pizzicato sostenuto
III.

N.B. The cello must loosen its bowhares
between movements two and three.
poco piú mosso, ca. $\frac{d}{2} = 62$

for this glissando, use extreme pressure
at a point on the bow where the bowhairs are loose
to suppress the pitch of the vibrating string,
all the while moving the bow at a steady rate closer
to the bridge to produce a high and rattly noise

accel.
molto legato

Moderato agitato, ca. $\frac{d}{2} = 70$
Adagio tragico, ca. $\frac{4}{4} = 66$

poco più mosso, ca. $\frac{4}{4} = 70$

meno mosso, ca. $\frac{4}{4} = 60$

senza tempo, quasi cadenza

Lento, ca. $\frac{4}{4} = 58$

ancora Lento, ca. $\frac{4}{4} = 58$

senza tempo, quasi cadenza
Andante gioioso, ca. $\frac{4}{4}$ = 86

poco meno mosso

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{rit.} \\
\text{Andante, ca. } \frac{4}{4} = 74 \\
\text{subito largo e molto pesante, ca. } \frac{4}{4} = 70
\end{array} \]

 accelero poco a poco