Cold Atom
Oliver Iredale Searle
**Instrumentation:**

Viola
Accordion (free bass)

**Duration: ca.8 minutes**

In 2004, whilst looking through one of Glasgow’s free newspapers, I came across a small article that described how two scientists at Glasgow University had discovered and recreated the temperature at which atoms stop moving.

This was the world’s first super cold atom, which at 0.0000000001 degrees Kelvin, was the closest anybody had ever actually got to absolute zero. What interested me was that this point at which “all motion stops” instantly reminded me of one of my favourite heavy-metal bands - Machine Head.

There is a particular moment in one of their songs; the singer shouts the word ‘SLOW’, which the instrumentalists used as a cue to play the current riff at half the speed. In a live concert, the singer would do this many times, so that eventually, the riff was painfully slow, to the point of being almost unrecognisable.

I subsequently began to write the work with this in mind, experimenting with the number of ways in which the instruments can give the illusion of stopping, slowing down, or moving in and out of musical stasis.

“the point at which all motion stops…”

Oliver; revised version completed November 2019
Cold Atom

$J = \text{ca}.60-70$, as if at constant freezing point

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Accord.

Sudden slow down of bowing.
Keep bow on string please!

Viola

Accordion
Sustain open C as much as possible, re-bow where necessary, please!
Delicate, while hammering accents!

Vla.

 Accord.

Vla.

 Accord.

Vla.

 Accord.

Vla.

 Accord.

Vla.

 Accord.
8

Vla.

55

Accord.

59

Vla.

61

Vla.

64

Accord.

Increase bow-pressure, to scratch-tone

Freely, slowly and sustaining each note
Sounding as if sitting a different room
Chunky and thick

Vla.

Accord.

Vla.

Accord.

Vla.

Accord.

Vla.

Accord.

Vla.

Accord.

Vla.
circa 15° (re-bow note as much as required, gradually increasing pressure)

Slightly slower

(subito p – ff)

(PPPP)
Laboured, and with a sense of weariness
ord., detached

Really slowly

as smoothly as possible

(free articulation)
{\text{Brittle, slightly detached and scratchy}}

\textit{sempre} \textit{pppp}
Continue rhythm, using varying combinations of the following pitches
Abrupt stop, with no slowing, or diminuendo please!