

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 0.000000001 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

♩ = ca.60-70, as if at constant freezing point

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

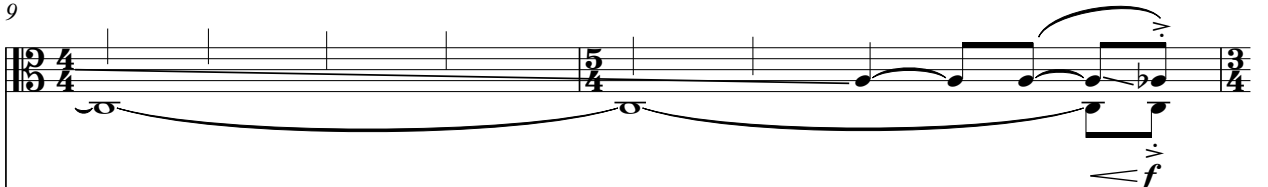
The musical score is divided into four systems, each featuring a Viola and an Accordion. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *ff*, *pp*, *f*, and *p*, along with performance instructions like "Sudden slow down of bowing" and "Keep bow on string please!".

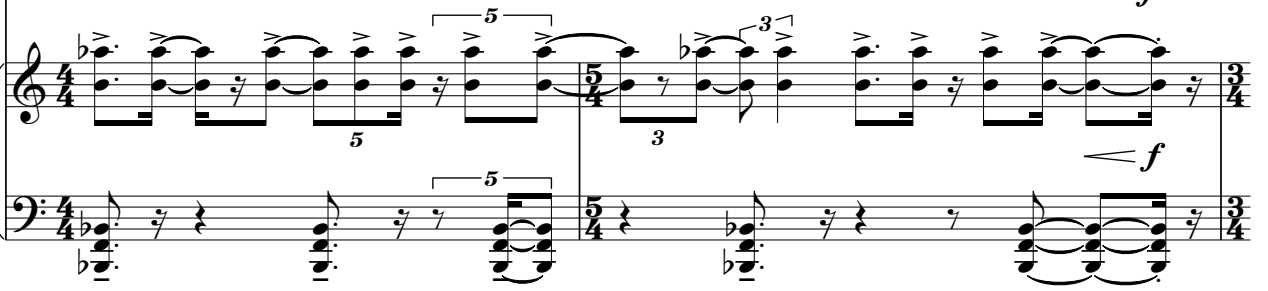
System 1: Viola part starts with a *ff* dynamic, followed by a *pp* section, and ends with a *f* section. The Accordion part also begins with *ff*, moves to *pp*, and then *f*. Both parts feature a five-measure rest in the first measure.

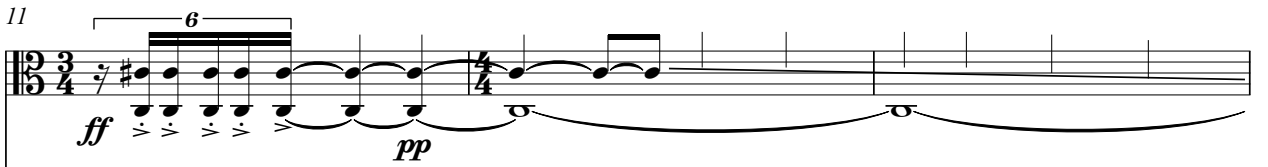
System 2: The Viola part is marked "(sim.)" and "(Sudden slow down of bellows)". It starts with *pp* and ends with *f*. The Accordion part also starts with *pp* and ends with *f*. There are triplets in both parts.

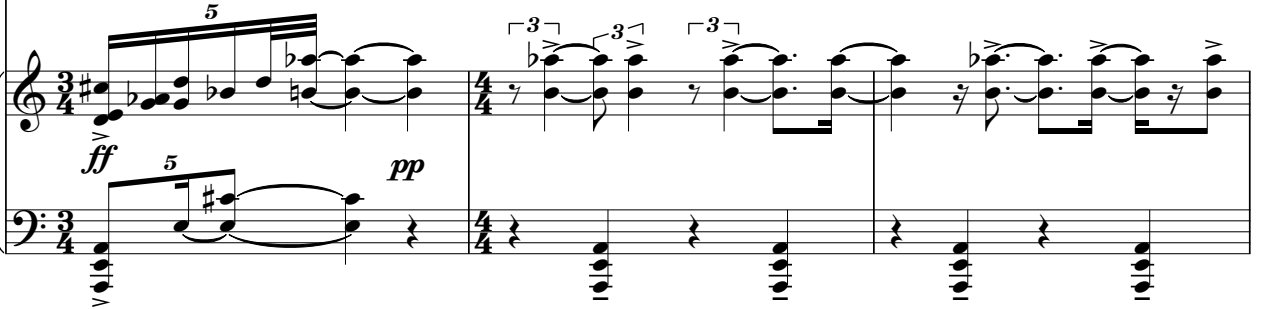
System 3: The Viola part starts with *ff* and ends with *pp*. The Accordion part starts with *ff* and ends with *pp*. Both parts include triplets.

System 4: The Viola part starts with *f* and ends with *pp*. The Accordion part starts with *f* and ends with *p*. Both parts include triplets.

Vla. 

Accord. 


Vla. 

Accord. 

Vla. 

Accord. 

Vla. 

Accord. 

21

Vla.

Accord.

Sustain open C as much as possible, rebow where necessary, please!

24

Vla.

Accord.

27

Vla.

Accord.

30

Vla.

Accord.

33

Vla. *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

Accord. *ff* *f* *p*

36

Vla. *f* *pp* *f* *ff* *pp*

Accord. *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

Delicate, while hammering accents!

38

Vla. *f* *p* *sfz* *ff*

Accord. *f* *p* *mf* *ff*

41

Vla. *pp*

Accord. *pp*

44

Vla.

Accord.

47

Vla.

Accord.

51

Vla.

Accord.

53

Vla.

Accord.

55

Vla. *f* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Accord. *f* *p*

59

Vla. *f* *fp*

Accord. *f* *p*

61

Vla. *f*

Accord. *p* *f*

64

Vla. *f* *pppp*

Accord. *pppp*

Increase bow-pressure, to scratch-tone

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

Chunky and thick

66 nat.
Vla. *f*
Accord.

68
Vla.
Accord. (changes appximate)

70
Vla. 5 6
Accord.

72
Vla.
Accord.

74
Vla. 5
Accord.

76

Vla.

Accord.

78

Vla.

Accord.

80

Vla.

Accord.

82

Vla.

Accord.

84

Vla.

Accord.

circa 15" (re-bow note as much as required, gradually increasing pressure)

86

Vla.

Accord.

subito *p* *ff*

6

88 ord.

Vla.

ff

Slightly slower

pppp

3 3 5

91

Vla.

Accord.

3 5

94

Vla.

Accord.

3 5 3 3 3 3

(moving to over-pressure) **Laboured, and with a sense of weariness**

Vla. 97 3 3 5 ord., detached *fff*

Accord. Really slowly *pppp*

Vla. 101 3 3 3 3

Accord.

Vla. 104 3 3 3 3

Accord.

Sweet and unaware as smoothly as possible

Vla. 109 *ppp*

Accord. *ppp* legato

114

Vla.

Accord.

119

Vla.

Accord.

124

Vla.

Accord.

130

Vla.

Accord.

135

Vla.

Accord.

Brittle, slightly detached and scratchy

sempre pppp

sempre pppp

Continue rhythm, using varying combinations of the following pitches

137

Vla.

Accord.

138

Vla.

Accord.

139 Sim.

Vla.

Accord.

140

Vla.

Accord.

141

Vla.

Accord.

142

Vla.

Accord.

143

Vla.

Accord.

145

Vla.

Accord.

146

Vla.

Accord.

147

Vla.

Accord.

Abrupt stop, with no slowing, or diminuendo please!