

Spasm

For String Quartet

Alejandro Ivan Arreola

Duration: ca. 11'

Performance Notes and Explanations of Symbols and Notations

ca. 2"

intense, chaotic improv., all strings, as fast as possible

The boxed material consisting of stemless noteheads is the contour for players to follow approximately. The roman numerals, I and IV, are the string numbers.

trill as fast as possible

tr

s.p.

The solid line also indicates the contour for the fourth finger during the trill. The line is also approximate.

ca. 5"

Diamond notehead boxes are approached the same way as the boxed material with black noteheads, but with incidental harmonics.

Program Note

For this piece, I was compelled to explore the various physical and psychological characteristics of Benign Fasciculation Syndrome (BFS). Most people experience or know about muscle twitching, however, BFS happens consistently in various parts of the body. I observed the different rhythmic characteristics and translated them into sound while taking the psychological effect into consideration.

String Quartet

Spasm

Sporadic, aggressive, and chaotic

Alejandro Ivan Arreola (2019)

Violin I

ca. 2"

(♩=60)

f

ca. 3"

intense, chaotic improv., all strings, as fast as possible

ff

Violin II

ca. 2"

intense, chaotic improv., all strings, as fast as possible

ff

ca. 3"

ff

Viola

ca. 2"

intense, chaotic improv., all strings, as fast as possible

ff

ca. 3"

ff

Violoncello

ca. 2"

intense, chaotic improv., all strings, as fast as possible

ff

ca. 3"

ff

f

This musical score is for a four-staff ensemble, likely a string quartet or a similar instrumental group. The notation includes piano dynamics, articulation, and performance instructions.

Staff 1 (Top): Features a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 60$. The first measure is marked *ff* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 3". The second measure is marked *f* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 2". The third measure is marked *ppp* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 2". The fourth measure is marked *ff* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 3".

Staff 2: Features a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first measure is marked *ff* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 3". The second measure is marked *ff* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 3". The third measure is marked *ff* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 3". The fourth measure is marked *ff* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 3".

Staff 3: Features a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first measure is marked *ff* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 3". The second measure is marked *ff* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 3". The third measure is marked *ff* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 3". The fourth measure is marked *ff* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 3".

Staff 4 (Bottom): Features a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first measure is marked *ff* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 3". The second measure is marked *ff* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 3". The third measure is marked *ff* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 3". The fourth measure is marked *ff* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 3".

Performance Instructions: The score includes several performance instructions: *ff* (fortissimo), *f* (forte), *ppp* (pianississimo), and *poco* (a little). The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 60$. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 5/4. The score is divided into four measures by vertical dashed lines. The first measure is marked *ff* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 3". The second measure is marked *f* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 2". The third measure is marked *ppp* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 2". The fourth measure is marked *ff* and contains a triplet of eighth notes, with a bracket above indicating a duration of "ca. 3".

6

The image displays a musical score for four staves, organized into two systems. The first system (left) contains two staves, each with a piano part marked *ff* and a duration of *ca. 3"*. The second system (right) contains two staves, each with a piano part marked *ca. 2"* and a string part marked *ca. 2"*. The string parts are written in 3/4 time and include triplets and dynamics such as *p* and *pp*.

Staff 1 (Piano): *ff*, *ca. 3"*

Staff 2 (Piano): *ff*, *ca. 3"*

Staff 3 (Piano): *ff*, *ca. 3"*

Staff 4 (Piano): *ff*, *ca. 3"*

Staff 5 (String): *ca. 2"*, 3/4, *p*, triplet, *p*

Staff 6 (String): *ca. 2"*, 3/4, *pp*, triplet, *pp*

10

ff

ca. 4-5"

ca. 2"

mf

ff

ca. 4-5"

ca. 2"

ff

ca. 4-5"

ca. 2"

mf

ff

ca. 4-5"

ca. 2"

3
mp

14

mp

ff

ca. 5"

ca. 3"

ff

ca. 5"

ca. 3"

ff

ca. 5"

ca. 3"

ff

ca. 5"

ca. 3"

5/4

3/4

3/4

3/4

[illegible]

21

ca. 4"

(s.p.)

ppp

mf

ord.

ca. 2.5"

ff

ca. 4"

ppp

ca. 4"

s.p.

ppp

ca. 4"

ppp

2/4

ca. 2.5"

ff

ca. 2.5"

ff

ca. 2.5"

ff

ca. 2.5"

ff

2/4

ca. 2.5"

(s.p.)

*as loud as possible

ppp

*mf

ca. 2.5"

ff

ca. 2.5"

ff

ca. 2.5"

ff

ca. 2.5"

ff

25

ca. 2"

fff

ca. 2"

fff

ca. 2"

(s.p.)

fff

ca. 2"

(s.p.)

fff

ca. 3.5"

fff

ca. 3.5"

(s.p.)

fff

ca. 3.5"

(s.p.)

fff

ca. 3.5"

(s.p.)

fff

trill as fast as possible
(s.p.)

ff *ppp* *ff*

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a four-staff instrument, likely a harp. The score is divided into two main sections by a double bar line. The first section contains four staves, each with a box of notes and a dynamic marking of *fff*. The second section also contains four staves, with the first three having *fff* dynamics and the fourth having a trill instruction. A central staff with a treble clef and 3/8 time signature shows a melodic line with dynamics *ppp* and *mf*. The score includes various performance markings such as 'ca. 2"', 'ca. 3.5"', '(s.p.)', and 'trill as fast as possible'.

33

ca. 3''

ca. 5''

ca. 2''

ca. 8''

with growing energy

ff

mf

m.s.t.

(m.s.t.)

s.p.

ff

ca. 10''

ca. 4''

ca. 4''

s.p.

mp

ff

ca. 6''

ca. 6''

ca. 6''

unimposing and playful

mf

m.s.t.

s.p.

ca. 4''

ca. 6''

ca. 8''

frantic bursts growing louder

ff

mf

mf

m.s.t.

p

ff

s.p.

36

ca. 5"

ca. 5"

ca. 6"

ff

$\text{♩} = 60$

ord.

mp

ca. 3"

ca. 5"

ca. 6"

ff

ord.

mp

ca. 3"

ca. 5"

ca. 6"

ff

ca. 3"

ca. 5"

ca. 6"

ff

swift bursts

ord.

mp

13

38 *jeté* *mp* *ca. 5"* $\text{♩} = 72$ *pp* *s.p.* *p* 7 6 7

ca. 5" *jeté* *s.p.* *mp* *p* 7

col legno tratto 3 *p* *ca. 5"* *pizz. (snap)* 3 *arco s.p.* *p* 3 3

pizz. *p* *ca. 5"* *arco s.p.* 3 *f* *mp* 5 *mp* *pizz.* 3

bounce the bow vertically

42 *ca. 5"* *ca. 2"* *ca. 5"* ($\text{♩} = 72$) *steadfast and frantic*

pppp *mp* *pppp* *ord.* 7 *p*

ca. 5" *ca. 2"* *ca. 5"* *ord.* 6 *p*

pppp *mp* *pppp* *col legno tratto* *pp*

ca. 5" *ca. 2"* *ca. 5"* *pizz.*

pp *pppp*

46

6 *fp* *f* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *ff*

6 *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *ff*

pizz. *fp* *ff*

arco *fp* *ff*

49

$\text{♩} = 60$

mf

*fast, free bowing
harmonic gliss. *ad lib.*

pp

col legno tratto *pp*

s.p. *p* *pp*

$\text{♩} = 72$

s.t. *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp*

s.p. *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp*

arco *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp*

ord. *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp*

ca. 3-4"

ca. 3-4"

ca. 3-4"

ca. 3-4"

54

ca. 2"

ca. 2"

ca. 2"

ca. 2"

59

6 5 6 6 5 6 6 5

fp *fp* *ff* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp*

6 6 6 5

fp *fp* *fp* *fp*

s.p. 6 6

fp *fp* *fp*

6 5 6 6 5

fp *ff* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp*

s.p. 6 6

fp *fp* *fp* *fp*

6 5 6 6 5

fp *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp*

s.p. 6 6

fp *fp* *fp* *fp*

6 5 6 6 5

fp *fp* *ff* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp*

s.p. 6 6

fp *fp* *fp* *fp*

[illegible]

68

fff

7

7

7

7

f

f

f

f

72

ff

7

7

7

7

f

f

f

f

long

long

long

long

Play each box at your own pace chaotically, aggressively, and asynchronously

76

highest pitch possible

ff

f *ff* *fp* *ff*

s.p. → m.s.p.

pizz. (snap)

mf *ff*

pizz. (snap)

f

as aggressive as possible

pizz. (snap)

f

(pizz.)

f

3

3

(♩=66)

repeat once before continuing on

s.p.

6 6

ppp *ff* *ppp*

pizz. (snap)

f

aggressively

pizz. (snap)

arco m.s.p.

p *f*

pizz.

ff

The musical score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a box of notes marked *ff*, followed by a box with a melodic line marked *f*, *ff*, *fp*, and *ff*, with a note marked 'highest pitch possible'. This is followed by a box with a triplet marked 'pizz. (snap)' and *mf* *ff*, and another box with a triplet marked 'pizz. (snap)' and *f*. The second staff starts with a box marked *mf* *ff*, followed by a box marked 'pizz. (snap)' and *f*, then a box marked '(pizz.)' and *f*, and ends with a box marked '3'. The third staff begins with a box marked *ff*, followed by a box with a 3/4 time signature and a melodic line marked 's.p.', '6', '6', and *ppp* *ff* *ppp*, with a note marked '(♩=66) repeat once before continuing on'. This is followed by a box marked 'pizz. (snap)' and *f*. The fourth staff starts with a box marked *ff*, followed by a box with a 13/8 time signature and a melodic line marked *mf* *ff*, then a box marked 'pizz. (snap)' and 'arco m.s.p.' with *p* *f*, and ends with a box marked 'pizz.' and *ff*, with a note marked 'aggressively'.

78

*strum all open strings with thumb in motion indicated

arco ord. p ff

pizz. mp 3 ff

*mute all strings, strum with nails of four fingers

fff p f arco pp ff p mf pizz. 3

*strum all open strings with right hand fingers in motions indicated

arco ord. ppp f m.s.p.

scratchy with increased bow pressure (m.s.p.) pp ff pizz. 5 (pizz.) mf

*mute all strings, strum with nails of fingers

arco ord. pp ff pizz. (snap)

(pizz.) f ff mf f arco behind the bridge f p mf

Repeat wild, chaotic, but quiet improvisation in bold box until everyone is synchronized for 10 seconds

The musical score is written for four staves, each representing a different instrument: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The score is divided into two main sections by a vertical dashed line.

Section 1 (Left of dashed line):

- Staff 1 (Violin I):** Starts with a measure marked *ff* (fortissimo) and a fermata. This is followed by a bold box containing a sequence of notes (half note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note) with the instruction "m.s.p., at the frog" and *ppp* (pianissimo).
- Staff 2 (Violin II):** Similar to Staff 1, starting with *ff* and a fermata, followed by a bold box with "m.s.p., at the frog" and *ppp*.
- Staff 3 (Viola):** Starts with a measure marked *ff* and a fermata, followed by a bold box with "m.s.p., at the frog" and *ppp*.
- Staff 4 (Cello/Double Bass):** Starts with a measure marked *ff* and a fermata, followed by a bold box with "m.s.p., at the frog" and *ppp*.

Section 2 (Right of dashed line):

- Staff 1 (Violin I):** Starts with a measure marked *mp* (mezzo-piano) and a fermata. This is followed by a sequence of notes (half note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note) with the instruction "long" and a fermata.
- Staff 2 (Violin II):** Starts with a measure marked *pp* (pianissimo) and a fermata. This is followed by a sequence of notes (half note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note) with the instruction "long" and a fermata.
- Staff 3 (Viola):** Starts with a measure marked *pp* and a fermata. This is followed by a sequence of notes (half note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note) with the instruction "long arco ord." (long arco ordinario) and a fermata.
- Staff 4 (Cello/Double Bass):** Starts with a measure marked *pp* and a fermata. This is followed by a sequence of notes (half note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note) with the instruction "long" and a fermata.

Annotations:

- ca. 10"** (approximately 10 seconds) is written above the first measure of each staff in Section 2.
- 80** and **81** are measure numbers.
- 3** indicates a triplet of notes.
- long** indicates a long note.
- arco ord.** indicates arco ordinario (normal bowing).
- pizz.** indicates pizzicato (plucked).
- ff** (fortissimo) and *ppp* (pianissimo) are dynamic markings.
- mp** (mezzo-piano) and *pp* (pianissimo) are dynamic markings.

As fast and quiet as possible, shuffling, with sporadic and sudden bursts to *f* back to *ppppp*

take 10 seconds to transition to s.p.

con sordino

s.t. → s.p.

ppppp

ca. 3"

ca. 2"

take 10 seconds to transition to s.p.

con sordino

s.t. → s.p.

ppppp

ca. 3"

ca. 2"

take 10 seconds to transition to s.p.

con sordino

s.t. → s.p.

ppppp

ca. 3"

ca. 2"

take 10 seconds to transition to s.p.

con sordino

s.t. → s.p.

ppppp

ca. 3"

ca. 2"

84 $\text{♩} = 72$

senza sord.
pizz.

f

p

senza sord.
pizz.

f

p

senza sord.
pizz.

mp

ppp

senza sord.
pizz.

pp

mf

ppp

mp

long

89

ca. 3"

ca. 3"

ca. 3"

ca. 3"

ca. 3"

(snap)

accel.

f

p

mf

f

p

93 ♩=81

s.p. col legno tratto

mf f pp mp pp

mp mf f mp

f mf ppp f arco s.p. ppp <mf ppp.

97 pizz. f p ppp

f p p

f pp f p mf ppp

arco s.p. ppp.

arco jeté p ppp

arco s.p. p ppp

107

pp sempre ³

pizz. ³ *p* arco *pp*

arco ord. *pp* sempre ³

arco *pp* sempre pizz.

ca. 3-4''

ca. 3-4''

ca. 3-4''

col legno tratto

ca. 3-4''

*jeté all players, all throughout with varied dynamics between pp-as loud as possible

110

ca. 8-9''

(♩=72)

mp *pp*

pizz. *f* arco *pp*

col legno tratto s.p. *pp* *pp*

s.p. *ppp* *f* pizz. *mp* *p*

ca. 8-9''

ca. 8-9''

arco ca. 8-9''

ca. 8-9''

Asynchronous improvisation with varied dynamics from **pp** to as loud as possible, as if fighting for attention.

*jeté all players, all throughout with varied dynamics between pp-as loud as possible

113

col legno tratto
s.p.

pizz.
p

f

ppp

ff

f

f

III

III

III

2

ca. 8-9"

*

I

IV

arco
ord.

ca. 8-9"

*

I

IV

ord.

ca. 8-9"

*

I

IV

ca. 8-9"

*

I

IV

28 $\text{♩}=72$

124 *s.p.* *pp* *mf* *ff* *mp* *as loud as possible sempre*

s.p. *pp* *ff* *mp* *pizz.* *arco s.p.* *mp*

pizz. *ff* *f* *mp* *arco s.p.* *mp*

s.p. *pp* *fpp* *mf* *pizz.* *arco s.p.* *a sudden, aggressive, and surprising swell* *ppp* *f* *mp*

127 *ca. 3"* *ord.* *weightless and unnoticed* *s.p.* *pp* *ff* *p* *7*

ca. 3" *pp* *3* *mp* *pp* *3*

ca. 3" *ord...* *weightless and unnoticed* *s.p.* *pp* *7* *pizz.* *arco s.p.* *mf* *3*

ca. 3" *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *mf* *pizz.*

131 ♩=81

arco
ord.
pppp p f ppp

pizz.
ff mf ff

f f ff f ff

pizz.
mp ff pppp³ f ff

f ff ppp p f ppp ff

134

arco
s.p.
ppp f

pizz.
mp

f

ord.
arco
ppp p

p p gradually intensifying fff

f mp 3 3

arco
s.p.
ppp ff

ord.
ppp f

ppp

intrusive and aggressive
pizz.
ppp ff

arco
ppp f ppp

increase bow pressure
mp ff

137

mf *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *ppp* *p* *mf* *ppp* *ppp* *f* *ppp*

pizz. arco

ca. 5'' ca. 5'' ca. 5'' ca. 5''

140

ff *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp* *ppp* *f* *mp*

pizz. pizz. pizz. arco s.p. pizz.

ca. 5'' ca. 5'' ca. 5'' ca. 5''

143

arco s.p. *p* 3

ord. 6

arco *ppp* *mf* *ppp*

arco *ppp* *mf* *ppp* 3 pizz.

(s.p) arco *p* 3 *mf* *p subito* 5 m.s.p

ca. 2ⁿ

ca. 2ⁿ

ca. 2ⁿ

ca. 2ⁿ

*fast, free bowing

harmonic gliss. *ad lib.*

147

pp

ppp *p* *ppp*

*fast, free bowing

harmonic gliss. *ad lib.*

pp

*fast, free bowing

harmonic gliss. *ad lib.*

pp

*fast, free bowing

harmonic gliss. *ad lib.*

pp

arco *ppp* 3

$\text{♩} = 72$

151

<f> ppp *pp* *mf* *ppp* *fppp*

pizz.

arco *pp* *mf* *ppp* *fppp*

arco *pp*

arco ord. *(z)* *(z)* *pp* *mf* *ppp* *fppp*

s.p. *pppp* *<f>*

155

(tr) *s.p.* *gradually slow down*

(tr) *(z)* *(z)* *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *mf*

(tr) *(z)* *(z)* *ppp* *<p>* *ppp* *mf* *ppp*

(tr) *gradually slow down*

159 ca. 2" $\text{♩} = 60$

pp *s.p.* long

pp *s.p.* long

pp *s.p.* long

pp *s.p.* long

163 *pp*

pp *legato* let incidental harmonics ring if possible
I $\diamond$ $\diamond$ $\diamond$ $\diamond$ $\diamond$
IV *pp*

pp *staccato* I $\diamond$ $\diamond$
IV *pp*

let incidental harmonics ring if possible
I $\diamond$ $\diamond$ $\diamond$ $\diamond$ $\diamond$
IV *ppp* *legato* let incidental harmonics ring if possible
I $\diamond$ $\diamond$ $\diamond$ $\diamond$ $\diamond$
IV *ppp*

165

The musical score consists of four staves, each containing a series of exercises. The exercises are grouped into boxes with duration labels and dynamic markings.

Staff 1:

- Box 1: *ord.*, *ca. 2"*
- Box 2: *ca. 5"*
- Box 3: *ca. 4"*, *ff*
- Box 4: *ca. 5"*
- Box 5: *ca. 9"*, Bounce the bow vertically

Staff 2:

- Box 1: *ord.*, *ca. 5"*
- Box 2: *ca. 3"*
- Box 3: *ca. 2"*, *mf*
- Box 4: *ca. 3"*, *ff*
- Box 5: *ca. 7"*, Bounce the bow vertically
- Box 6: *ca. 5"*

Staff 3:

- Box 1: *ord.*, *ca. 4"*
- Box 2: *ca. 3"*
- Box 3: *ca. 3"*
- Box 4: *ca. 8"*, *ff*
- Box 5: *ca. 7"*, Bounce the bow vertically

Staff 4:

- Box 1: *ord.*, *ca. 3"*
- Box 2: *ca. 7"*
- Box 3: *ca. 7"*, *ff*
- Box 4: *ca. 8"*, Bounce the bow vertically

