

inside the cardboard box

by Joel Tan



Disclaimer:

Contains topics that some may find disturbing, including suicide.

Preface

The *cardboard box* is a metaphor for the space where we safekeep our soul and emotions. Some of us are unwilling to open this *cardboard box* — refraining from letting others into their lives, while others are more open with the people around them; sometimes the *cardboard* is thick and durable, while other times flimsy and weak.

As we take a peek *inside the cardboard box*, we see the emotions that one goes through in life. This work explores the feelings of someone experiencing an existential crisis or nihilism, initially approaching life with an enthusiastic and jovial attitude, but eventually coming to the conclusion that life is meaningless.

What's in your cardboard box?

Performance notes

The “death timer” from bar 160 requires players to find out their estimated lifespan through the suggested website below, or other means they prefer.

Players are to perform for the duration equivalent to the remaining estimated lifespan they have, and to sustain (briefly) and *diminuendo al niente* the last note they play. If the last note is a pizzicato, this need not be applied and the player may stop playing after the last pizzicato note. One year is equal to half a bar.

Any player that stops at bar 160 should be taken seriously.

Samaritans of Singapore:

24-hour hotline: 1-767 or email pat@sos.org.sg.

Website for life expectancy:

<https://www.blueprintincome.com/tools/life-expectancy-calculator-how-long-will-i-live/>

E.g.

A 21 year-old violist has an expected lifespan of 80 years. Their remaining lifespan is 59 years, hence they will play until they complete the first half of bar 189:

Notated (part score):

188

last note
to be played

ppp

Performed:

188

1

Notation remarks

Bar 84 is approximately 4 to 6 seconds long, allowing the second violin player to slowly morph a repeated quaver into a note of shorter value, and eventually a tremolo. Once the tremolo is produced, the viola and cello players are to play a glissando over approximately one second.

8

85

~3" - 5" ~1" ♩ = 120 subito accel.

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

mp *ff* *ff* *ff*

Bars 142 to 146 denote the shape of a $y = \frac{1}{x}$ graph and requires the glissandi to be consistent in its descent:

142

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

145

Vln.

Vln.

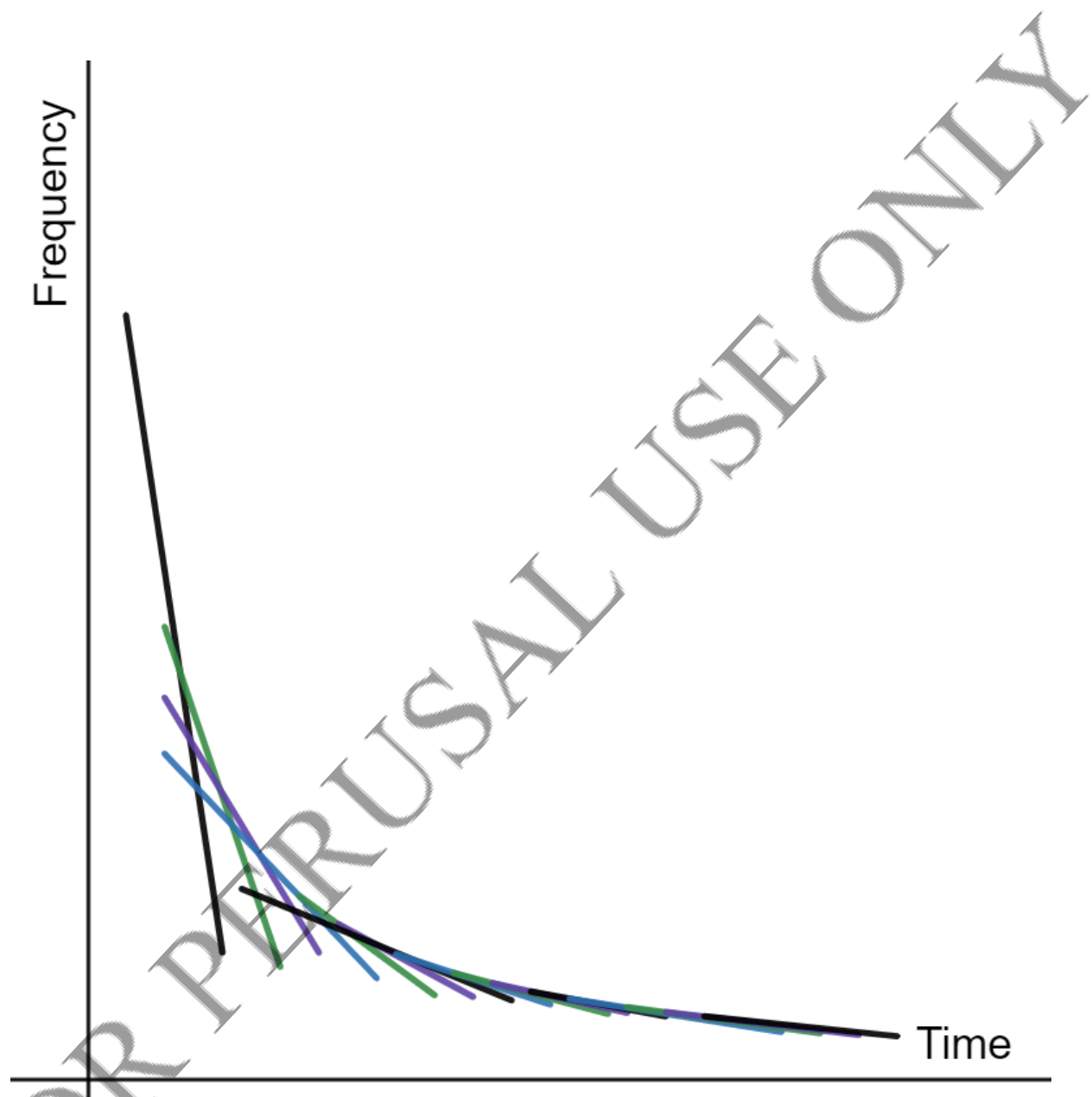
Vla.

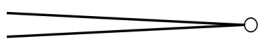
Vc.

senza vib.

senza vib.

mf > *pp* < *mf* > *pp* <





Al niente; crescendo from/diminuendo to silence



Tied tremolos are to be played
without restriking the tremolo note

FOR PERUSAL USE ONLY

inside the cardboard box

Joel Tan

Moderato ♩ = 100

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

détaché

mp

mf

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

5

9

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

13

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

17

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

21

Vln. *mp*

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

25

Vln. *mf*

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

29

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

33

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

f

37

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

mf

f

mf

mp

41

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

f

mf

45

Vln. *fp* *mf*

Vln. *fp* *mf*

Vla. *fp* *f*

Vc. *fp* *mf*

50

Vln. *fp* *mf*

Vln. *fp* *mf*

Vla. *fp* *f*

Vc. *fp* *mf*

54

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

58

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

f

62

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

(mf)

(mf)

(mf)

67

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

71

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

75

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

79

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

mp

mp

ppp

mp

mp

85 $\sim 3'' - 5''$ $\sim 1''$ $\text{♩} = 120$ subito accel.

Vln. *ff*

Vln. *ff*

Vla. *mp* *ff*

Vc. *mp* *ff*

89 $\text{♩} = 140$ Panicked

Vln. *ff*

Vln. *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

94 $\text{♩} = 130$

Vln. *ff*

Vln. *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

98 $\text{♩} = 140$ $\text{♩} = 120$

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

103 $\text{♩} = 140$

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

108

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

rit.

112

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

116

$\text{♩} = 100$

mf

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

mf

mf

4

120

arco

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

arco

scratch tone

4

4

4

4

124

→ sul pont. nat.

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

128

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

131

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

accel.

134

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

138

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

$\text{♩} = 130$

$\text{♩} = 80$

ff

ff

ff

ff

142

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

145

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

senza vib.

mf \rhd *pp* \lhd *mf* \rhd *pp* \lhd

Excruitatingly slow ♩ = 60

149

Vln. *mf* *mp*

Vln. *mf*

Vla. *p* *mf*

Vc. *mf* *pp* *mf* *f* pizz.

155

Vln. *f* sul tasto

Vln. *mp* *pp*

Vla. *ff* *mp*

Vc. arco sul pont. *pp*

death timer begins

5 years

160

nat.

mf

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

pp

mf

mp

mf

10 years

15 years

164

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

mp

f

20 years

25 years

169

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

f

mp

mf

mp

9

30 years 35 years

174

Vln. *pp*

Vln. *mf* *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

40 years

178

Vln. *mf* *p* *f*

Vln. *mf* *mp*

Vla. *mp* *p* *f*

Vc. *mp* *p*

45 years 50 years

182

Vln. *f*

Vln. *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc. *mf*

186

55 years

60 years

17

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

ppp

f

ppp

f

ppp

mp

mp

f

192

65 years

70 years

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

mp

f

196

75 years

80 years

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.