

Alex Stephenson

BLOOM

(2019, rev. 2025)

for string quartet

Commissioned by the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival for the Flux Quartet

First performed by the Flux Quartet
New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico
August 2, 2019

DURATION: 10 minutes

PERFORMANCE NOTES

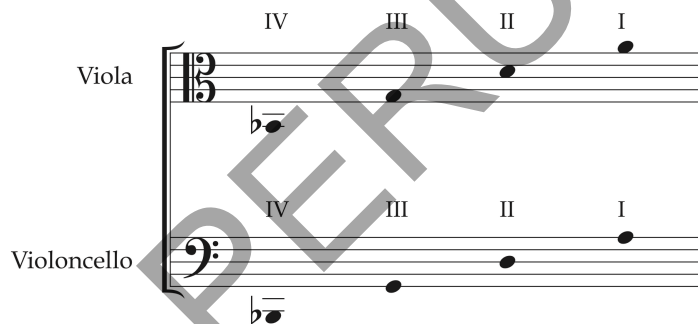
General

∅ Niente.
s.t. Sul tasto.
s.p. Sul ponticello.
m.s.p. Molto sul ponticello.

Scordatura

The violins should be tuned normally.

The C string of both the viola and cello should be tuned down one whole step to B-flat, with the other strings tuned normally. This tuning remains in effect for the entire piece:



When the retuned strings are needed, the score gives fingered pitches on the principal staff, with resulting pitches indicated on a small ossia-style staff above. Only fingered pitches are shown in the parts.

TO CONTACT THE COMPOSER

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PROGRAM NOTE

The title of this composition, *Bloom*, is partly an homage to the magnificent spring 2019 “superbloom” of wildflowers in the Anza-Borrego Desert in Southern California, which I visited shortly before starting to write the piece. Yet it also refers to a question I often asked myself as I worked, and which eventually gave rise to the piece’s final form: what conditions does a musical idea need to fully establish its identity... to, in other words, metaphorically come into bloom? *Bloom* was composed with gratitude for the Flux Quartet and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival.

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

Bloom

Alex Stephenson
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$\text{♩} = 120$

Violin 1
ff ruvido, sulla corda
ff ord.-s.t. sub.
senza vib.

Violin 2
ff ruvido, sulla corda
ffpp
Tune IV down one whole step to B $\flat$ prior to start of piece

Viola
ff ruvido, sulla corda
ff
Tune IV down one whole step to B $\flat$ prior to start of piece

Violoncello
ff ruvido, sulla corda
ff

5

ff ord.

vib.

ff *ffpp*

5

5

5

1

2

8

s.t.
senza vib.

mfpp

mfpp

IV

mfpp

mfpp

12

ord.

ff

ord.-s.t. sub.
senza vib.

ffpp

sub. non arm., vib.

ff

ff

ff

3

25

2025.08.16.1

28

Musical score for measures 28-30. The score is written for five staves. The first staff is in treble clef, and the other four are in bass clef. The music features a series of chords and melodic lines. The dynamic marking *mfpp* is present in measures 28, 29, and 30. A large diagonal watermark reading "FOR PERUSAL ONLY" is overlaid on the score.

31

Musical score for measures 31-34. The score is written for five staves. The first staff is in treble clef, and the other four are in bass clef. The music features a series of chords and melodic lines. The dynamic marking *mfpp* is present in measures 31, 32, and 33. The instruction "senza vib." is written above the fourth staff in measure 31. A large diagonal watermark reading "FOR PERUSAL ONLY" is overlaid on the score.

35

Musical score for measures 35-37. The score is written for four staves. The first staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 3/4. The second staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 3/4. The third staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 3/4. The fourth staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 3/4. The score includes dynamic markings: *mfpp* (mezzo-forte pianissimo) and *ff* (fortissimo). A performance instruction "sub. non arm., vib." is present. A large diagonal watermark "FOR PIRUSAL" is overlaid on the score.

38

Musical score for measures 38-40. The score is written for four staves. The first staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 3/4. The second staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 3/4. The third staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 3/4. The fourth staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 3/4. The score includes dynamic markings: *ff* (fortissimo) and *ffpp* (fortissimo pianissimo). Roman numerals III and IV are used to indicate fingerings. A large diagonal watermark "FOR PIRUSAL" is overlaid on the score.

41

mfpp

senza vib.

(ord.) → s.t.

mfpp

mfpp

senza vib.

vib. sub.

ff

mfpp

mfpp

45

ff

ord.

ff

m.s.p.

p sub.
scherzando

ff

ffpp

ff

48

m.s.p. 5

p scherzando

pizz.

ff pizz.

arco m.s.p. 5

p

ffpp

vib.

ff

ff

51

5

pizz.

ff

pizz.

ff

ffpp

arco vib.

pizz.

arco vib.

ff

ff

ff

59

fff

pizz.

arco m.s.p.

p

5

5

5

5

6

fff

pizz.

arco m.s.p.

p

5

5

fff

ffpp

IV

pizz.

arco (ord.) vib.

s.p.

f

62

ord. (vib. norm.)

ff

ord. (vib. norm.)

ff

(vib. norm.)

ff

ord. (vib. norm.)

ff

[illegible]

68

ord.

ff

fff

ff

ord.

ff

fff

ff

ff

fff

ff

ord.

0

ff

fff

ff

71

71

75

75

fff *ff*

fff *ff*

fff *ff*

fff *ff*

78

arco vib.

vib.

sub. non arm., vib.

ffpp

ff

ff

81

ff

ff

ff

ff

ffpp

p

m.s.p.

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90

mfpp *ff* *ff sost.* *ff sost.* *p* *ff sost.*

sub. non arm., vib.

ff *ff sost.*

93

m.s.p. *p* *5* *5* *5* *5*

pizz. *arco m.s.p.* *p* *5* *5*

vib. *ffpp* *ff* *ff* *pizz.* *arco (ord.) vib.* *s.p.* *mf*

gliss. arm. sul IV (rhythms approximate)

II *ffpp* *p*

III.
ord.

mf *p*

gliss. arm. sul IV
(rhythms approximate)

ord.

p

II
vib.

ff

pizz. arco

ff *mf* *p*

ff

ord.
(III / trem. sul IV)

ffmf

pizz. arco vib.

ff *ff*

II

ffpp *ff*

100

Musical score for measures 100-102. The score is written for four staves. The first two staves are in treble clef, and the last two are in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 2/4 to 3/4. The score includes dynamic markings *ffp* and *ff*, and a crescendo hairpin. A large watermark 'FOR PERSUSAL' is visible across the page.

103

Musical score for measures 103-106. The score is written for four staves. The first two staves are in treble clef, and the last two are in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 2/4 to 3/4. The score includes dynamic markings *ffp* and *ff*, and a crescendo hairpin. A large watermark 'FOR PERSUSAL' is visible across the page.

106

Musical score for measures 106-107. The score is written for four staves. Measures 106 and 107 are marked with a 3/4 time signature. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes. Dynamics include *fff*, *ff*, *ffp*, and *ff*. A large diagonal watermark 'FOR PERUSAL' is visible across the page.

108

Musical score for measures 108-109. The score is written for four staves. Measures 108 and 109 are marked with a 3/4 time signature. The music continues with complex rhythmic patterns. Dynamics include *(non dim.)*, *fff*, *ff*, *mf sub.*, and *f*. A large diagonal watermark 'FOR PERUSAL' is visible across the page.

lots of bow (change freely and rapidly)

lots of bow (change freely and rapidly)

lots of bow

110

5/4

5/4

5/4

5/4

fff

fff

fff

fff

113

5/4

3/4

3/4

5/8

5/16

ffpp

fff

p

fff

fff

5/4

3/4

3/4

5/8

5/16

5/4

3/4

3/4

5/8

5/16

III

120

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123

jété 0

IV → senza vib.

f *pp* *mf*

jété 0

pizz. 0 arco III at the tip

mf *pp*

vib. norm.

lirico, espr. *f* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

126

ff *mf* *pp*

ff *mf* *mf*

at the tip

pizz. 0 arco III

ff *ffpp* *mf* *pp*

pizz. arco IV

ff *f* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

129

vib. → IV senza vib.

III flaut.

s.t.

0

pp

f *pp* *f* *mf*

pizz. arco

mf *pp* (non arm.)

f *p* *f* *p*

(poco)

132

ord. senza vib., flaut.

accel. s.t.

vib. → IV senza vib.

mf *pp* *mf* *pp* *pp* *f* *pp*

mf *pp*

pizz. 0 arco II

mf *pp*

f *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

$\text{♩} = 60, \text{rit.}$

ord.
senza vib., flaut.

136

mf pp

vib.

espr.

pizz.

arco vib.

f p

f p

gliss. arm. sul III (rhythms approximate)
legato sempre (bow changes ad lib., not coinciding with repetitions of pattern)

$\text{♩} = 54$

139

f pp

vib.

IV
senza vib.

gliss. arm. sul IV (rhythms approximate)
legato sempre (bow changes ad lib., not coinciding with repetitions of pattern)

at the tip

(ord.)

f pp mfpp

142

vib. → senza vib.

IV

s.p. → ord. (ord.)

f

143

vib. → senza vib.

IV

s.p. → ord. (ord.)

f

The musical score consists of two systems, measures 142 and 143. Each system has five staves. The first staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a 7-measure rest. The second staff is a single treble clef staff with a 7-measure rest. The third staff is a single bass clef staff with a 6-measure rest. The fourth staff is a single treble clef staff with a 6-measure rest. The fifth staff is a single bass clef staff with a 6-measure rest. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A large watermark 'FOR PRACTICE ONLY' is visible across the page.

149

(ord.)
senza vib.

mfpp

ord.
vib.

IV
senza vib.

pp

mf *pp*

at the tip
(arm. 7)

non flaut.

mf *pp*

II
flaut.

p

I
flaut.

mf

p

[illegible]

poco rit. $\text{♩}=48$ $\text{♩}=60$ sub. 27

154

I at the tip

(ord.) senza vib.

s.t. senza vib.

ord. vib. norm.

II non flaut.

flaut. at the tip

mf *mfpp* *mf* *pp* *pp*

poco a poco più appassionato

156

vib. norm.

vib. norm.

f *p* *f* *p*

f *p* *f* *p*

(ord.) s.p. ord. s.p. ord. s.p. ord. s.p.

159

5 *fp* 6 *f* *p* 6

f *p* *f* *p*

3 *f* *p* 3 *fp*

ord. → s.p. → ord. vib. norm.

p *f* *espr.* *f* 3 *fp*

161

f *p* 5 *f* 3 *fp* 5 *f* 5

3 *fp* 3 *f* 5 *p* *f*

(ord.) → s.p. 3 *f*

poco pressando a tempo

166

f *mf* *ff* *p* *fp* *ord.*
(non trem.)

168

ff *sulla corda*

ff

ff *sulla corda*

ff *sulla corda*

ff *sulla corda*

170

$\text{♩} = 120$

pizz.

gliss. arm. sul IV (rhythms approximate)

ff *p* *ff*

ff *pizz.*

p

ff *pizz.*

ff *pizz.*

ff *pizz.*

ff *p* *ff*

ff *III*

ffpp

arco
0
(ord.)

173

arco vib.

s.p. → ord.

mf p

sub. non arm., vib.

ff

176

ff

ord.-s.t. sub. senza vib.

ff ffpp

ff

III pp

ff

180

ord.-s.t. sub.
senza vib.

mfpp

(s.t.) -> ord.

ffpp

senza vib.

pp

mfpp

ffpp

183

mfpp

ff

ff

ffpp

senza vib.

ffpp

sub. non arm., vib.

ff

ff

ffpp

186

Musical score for measures 186-189. The score is written for five staves. The first staff is in treble clef, and the others are in bass clef. The time signature is 3/4. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The dynamics are marked *mfpp* in measures 186, 187, 188, and 189. A second ending bracket is indicated in measure 188. A large diagonal watermark "FOR PERSAL ONLY" is visible across the score.

190

Musical score for measures 190-193. The score is written for five staves. The first staff is in treble clef, and the others are in bass clef. The time signature is 3/4. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The dynamics are marked *mfpp* in measures 190, 191, and 192, and *ff* in measures 190, 191, 192, and 193. The instruction "senza vib." is present in measure 190, and "sub. non arm., vib." is present in measure 191. A large diagonal watermark "FOR PERSAL ONLY" is visible across the score.

193

Musical score for measures 193-195. The score is written for five staves. The first two staves are in treble clef, and the last three are in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. Dynamics include *mfpp* and *ffpp*. A large watermark "FOR PERSAL ONLY" is visible across the score.

196

Musical score for measures 196-200. The score is written for five staves. The first two staves are in treble clef, and the last three are in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 3/4 to 2/4 in measure 199. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. Dynamics include *mfpp* and *ff*. A large watermark "FOR PERSAL ONLY" is visible across the score.

203

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208

The image shows a page of a musical score for the song "The Rose Tree". The page number "208" is in the top left corner. The score is written for six parts: four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and two piano accompaniment parts. The vocal parts are in 2/4 time and feature a melody with various dynamics including *ffp* (fortissimo piano) and *ff* (fortissimo). The piano accompaniment parts are in 2/4 time and feature a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, triplets, and dynamic markings. A large, diagonal watermark "FOR PAPER" is visible across the page.

212

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217

$$\equiv fff$$

♩=48
(norm.)
senza vib.

220

fff *ffpp* (norm.)
senza vib.

fff *ffpp*

mf *pp*

ff *pp*

vib.

at the tip

Occasionally, at irregular intervals, and for very brief durations (just long enough for it to speak), touch the open IV string ad lib. for a harmonic. This may be done whenever the open IV string is bowed from here to the end of the piece.

ff *pp* *mf* *pp*

223

mf *pp*

vib.

IV
senza vib.

pizz.
0

arco

mf *mfpp*

jété
0

(senza vib.)

mf *mfpp*

III
senza vib.

vib.

mfpp *mfpp* *mf*

vib. norm.

pp *mf*

(ord.) → m.s.p.

mfpp

225

0

mf *pp*

jété
0

mf *mfpp*

0

pizz.
0

arco

mf *mfpp*

arco
senza vib.

vib.

ord.
(vib. ad lib.)

(ord.) → m.s.p.

227

pizz.
0

arco

mf *mfpp*

0

jété
0

senza vib.

vib.

ord.
(vib. ad lib.)

ord. (ord.) → s.p. ord. → m.s.p.

mf *mfpp* *mf* *mf*

mfpp *mf* *mf*

mfpp *mf* *p* *mf*

230 0

mf

mfpp

mf

mfpp

pizz. 0 arco

mf *mfpp*

mfpp

arco senza vib.

vib.

mf

mfpp

mfpp

mf

(ord.) → s.p. → ord. → m.s.p.

mfpp

mfpp

231 0

mf

mfpp

pizz. 0 arco

mf *mfpp*

mfpp

senza vib.

vib.

mf

mfpp

mfpp

mf

(ord.) → s.p. → ord. → m.s.p.

mfpp

mfpp

233 pizz. 0 arco

mf

mfpp

mfpp

senza vib.

vib.

mfpp

mfpp

ff (!)

ord. (ord.) → s.p. → ord. (ord.) → m.s.p.

mfpp

mfpp

236

senza vib., flaut.

3

5

mf

IV

mf

II ord. flaut.

5

mf

non flaut. senza vib.

ff

molto vib.

May 28, 2019
La Jolla, California