

# 4 KOANS

*for violin and viola*

Brendan Faegre

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*Raven Feather Music*

*commissioned by the Aspen Music Festival*

**Duration:** ca. 6 minutes

**Performance Notes:**

Harmonics

Hollow diamond noteheads are to be played by lightly touching the string where notated, which produces the sounding harmonic indicated above by a small notehead in parentheses (except for harmonics one octave above the open strings, which sound at the same pitch as lightly touched). In the first movement, the string on which to play a given natural harmonic is indicated by a cue-sized notehead on the same stem. Artificial harmonics are notated with a regular-sized notehead indicating a normally fingered note, and a hollow diamond notehead on the same stem, a P4 above, to be touched lightly on the same string.

Intonation

† = quartertone sharp (halfway between natural and sharp)

♭ = quartertone flat (halfway between natural and flat)

Bow Position

**bridge** = play ON the bridge

**pont** = sul ponticello

**tasto** = sul tasto

**ord** = modo ordinario

Trills

Trills are to be played between the starting note and the note immediately following in parentheses.

**Program Note:**

*4 Koans* is an exploration of the Zen Buddhist koan concept in a musical context (perhaps the widest known koan—poorly translated—is “what is the sound of one hand clapping?”). I have always loved these irrational statements, stories, and questions designed to foil the logical mind and allow for an intuitive and spontaneous type of comprehension. I have composed these four short movements with the aim of stimulating similar mental faculties in the performers and listeners.

# 4 Koans

for violin & viola

## I. Glass-covered Canyons

Brendan Faegre  
(b. 1985)

**Smooth** (♩ = 50)

harmonics throughout

Violin

*mf* sempre

Viola

*mf* sempre

8

15

19

*pp* *f sub.*

*pp* *f sub.*

22

29

Musical score for measures 29-34. The system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is in 4/4 time. Measures 29-34 are marked with dynamics *mf* and *mp*. The notation includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together. There are also some rests and accidentals.

35

Musical score for measures 35-41. The system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is in 4/4 time. Measures 35-41 are marked with dynamics *p* and *mp*. The notation includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together. There are also some rests and accidentals.

48

42

Musical score for measures 42-47. The system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is in 4/4 time. Measures 42-47 are marked with dynamics *mf*, *f*, and *p sub.*. The notation includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together. There are also some rests and accidentals.

49

Musical score for measures 49-54. The system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is in 4/4 time. Measures 49-54 are marked with dynamics *mp* and *mp*. The notation includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together. There are also some rests and accidentals.

56

4 4 4 *mf* 4 4

*mf*

64

62

4 4 *f* 5 5 *ff* 5

*f* *ff* *sempre* 4 4 4

67

5 5 *p ff sub.* 5 5 *p ff sub.* 5

4 4 *p 4 ff sub.* 4

74

72

5 5 *p* 4 4 4 *f sub.* 4

*p* 4 4 *f* *sempre*

6

78

Musical score system 1 (measures 78-84). The system consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a sequence of six chords, each marked with a '4' below it, indicating a four-measure rest. The lower staff contains a sequence of six chords, each marked with a '4' below it. The dynamic markings are *p* (piano) for the first three measures and *f* (forte) for the last three measures.

85

88

Musical score system 2 (measures 85-91). The system consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a sequence of six chords, each marked with a '4' below it. The lower staff contains a sequence of six chords, each marked with a '4' below it. The dynamic markings are *p* (piano) for the first three measures and *mf* (mezzo-forte) for the last three measures.

91

98

Musical score system 3 (measures 91-97). The system consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a sequence of six chords, each marked with a '4' below it. The lower staff contains a sequence of six chords, each marked with a '4' below it. The dynamic marking is *mp sempre* (mezzo-piano sempre) for the last three measures.

97

Musical score system 4 (measures 97-103). The system consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a sequence of six chords, each marked with a '4' below it. The lower staff contains a sequence of six chords, each marked with a '2' below it. The dynamic markings are *mp* (mezzo-piano) for the first three measures and *mf* (mezzo-forte) for the last three measures.

105

110

7

*mp* unmeasured tremolo (as fast as possible)

*mp* unmeasured tremolo (as fast as possible)

113

118

poco rit. . . . . (♩ = 40)

*p*

*pp*

*pp*

[2'30"]

## III. Ever-Ascending Spiral

## Flowing (♩ = 108)

Musical score for "Flowing" in III. Ever-Ascending Spiral. The score is in 3/4, 4/4, 2/4, and 6/4 time signatures. It features a violin part and a cello/bass part. The violin part includes dynamics like *pp*, *ff*, *p*, *mf*, and *mf*, and techniques such as *pizz.*, *muted pizz.*, *arco vertical scratch-tone*, and *trills*. The cello/bass part includes dynamics like *ff*, *p*, and *mf*, and techniques like *pizz.*, *muted pizz.*, and *trills*. The score is marked with "tasto" and "pont" sections. A large "PREVIEW" watermark is overlaid on the score.

\* throw the bow onto the string, producing naturally accelerating rebounds for the duration indicated in parentheses above.

\*\* wedge a finger between III & IV at about 3rd position, press into the fingerboard and lightly towards IV, and *pizz.* This should produce a resonant, unpitched "thud".

\*\*\* with extreme bow-pressure and slow speed, bow vertically (as opposed to the normal horizontal bowing motion) moving from over the fingerboard to the bridge, playing about 1 in. away from the frog the whole time.

\*\*\*\* finger trilled note as hard as possible, so as to produce an audible pitch (like a guitar "hammer-on").

19

IV *ff* *p* *mf* *p* *ff*

tasto → pont ord (ord) *p* *ff*

3 6 3 6

23

ricochet *ff* *f* imitating rhythm of ricochet *mf* arco vertical scratch-tone

pizz. muted pizz. *f* imitating rhythm of ricochet

ord ricochet muted pizz.

26

bridge scratch-tone behind the bridge *f* sharp cutoffs hold still *mp* bridge (all noise, no pitch) poco a poco → (pont)

scratch-tone arco behind the bridge \* muted snap pizz. hold still

*f* sharp cutoffs *ff*

32

pont *ff* ord *mf* *p* stop bowing, continue fingering trill

arco *tr* *tr* *tr* stop bowing, continue fingering trill

*mf* *p* *n*

\* play behind the bridge on the string indicated by the "x" notehead, bowing on the string wrapping with extreme bow-pressure and slow speed.



60

ord pizz. muted pizz. arco vertical scratch-tone

tasto -----> bridge

*ff* *f* imitating rhythm of ricochet *mf* *f*

ricochet (o) muted pizz. muted snap pizz.

*ff* *f* imitating rhythm of ricochet *ff*

65

muted snap pizz. 66 arco

tr

arco scratch-tone behind the bridge

bridge (all noise, no pitch) poco a poco -----> pont ord

tr

*ff* *mf* *mf* *ff* *mf*

*f* *mp* *ff* *mf*

71

(tr) stop bowing, continue fingering trill 74 vertical scratch-tone

tasto --> bridge sim.

*p* *n* *p* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

(tr) stop bowing, continue fingering trill vertical scratch-tone

tasto -----> bridge sim. gliss. sim.

*p* *n* *p* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

77

pizz. use tuning peg to tune IV down to E arco

gliss. with tuning peg

*mf* *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f*

III II II

*ff* sempre

use tuning peg to tune IV down to A

12 (if needed, repeat 2-3x)\*

82

tune down 1. *sim.* 2. *poco a poco --*

gliss. with tuning peg

tune down

*ff* sempre

88

bridge

*p*

*n*

bridge

*n*

[3'15"]

\* in order to end the movement with violin and viola IV-strings perfectly in tune, take the first ending 2-3 times if necessary. Please do not retune between movements III and IV.