

Luke Dahn

Sul Ab

for unaccompanied violin

Date of Composition: May – June 1, 2009

Location: Orange City, IA

Premiere: Piotr Szewczyk

Performance Notes:

- Scordatura is called for: the G string must be tuned to Ab.
- Tempo is flexible throughout, and the performer is encouraged to take liberties. Horizontal arrows above the staff indicate accelerandi (→) and ritardandi (←).
- Measures 42-50: The performer is required to play Ab/A-natural double-stops on the open IV and II strings by depressing the III extremely high on the neck, even off the fingerboard if necessary, in order to prevent the string from being bowed.
- Measures 50: On the downbeat, let the Ab octave resonate as long as possible. Before the low Ab (open IV string) dies away, the performer must begin humming the Ab (in the same octave) and sustain the Ab as long as possible in one breath throughout the coda. Cut off humming when necessary.
- Only natural harmonics are called for in this piece, and sounding pitches are given in reduced-size notes above indicated touched nodes.

Program Note:

Sul Ab was written for violinist Piotr Szewczyk and his Violin Futura project. *Sul Ab* is a free fantasia, a kind of misplaced cadenza separated from an imaginary original context. As the title may suggest, the piece calls for scordatura, a process in which one or more of the strings are detuned prior to beginning. In this case, the lowest string must be raised from G to Ab. Many unique possibilities that are opened up by this new tuning are explored throughout the piece, including the wider array of natural harmonics that the alteration provides. Other prominent features of *Sul Ab* include the opening Ab-G-E motive which reappears numerous times, many double-stop octaves which often serve as emphatic points of reference or points of resolution, and a fleeting coda of arpeggiating natural harmonics.

Duration: ca. 3 minutes

Sul Ab

for Piotr Szewczyk

Luke Dahn
2009

Forceful; with rhythmic flexibility throughout ♩ = c. 92

Violin
scordatura =
A \flat D A E

ff

ff fff

ff f

Meno mosso
delicatissimo

Tempo I

p pp

Meno mosso

as a distant echo

espr.

♩ = 60; ♩ = 120

pp p

p

Espressivo; with motion ♩ = c. 60 *moving ahead*

29 *mf* *mf* *f* *poco cresc.*

33 *piu f* *ff* *p* *dolce*

A Tempo *dolce*

37 *p* *mf*

Slow *accel.*

41 *mp* *pp*

Forceful ♩ = c. 104

44 *fff* *f* *fff* *ff*

47 *fff* *ff* *fff fp* *gliss.* *molto* *ffff*

p *"Hmmm..."*
Hum Ab & sustain as long as possible through coda

as loud as possible
let strings resonate

* Measure 42: See performance instructions in preface.

Coda ♩ = c. 92

(Ossia: slow & accel. ♩ = c. 92)

51

"Hm m..."

p

6

6

53

morendo (number of repetitions approx.)

55

ppp

June 1, 2009. Orange City, Iowa.