

CHROMATIC FIELDS 71 TO 80

FOR PIANO AND VIOLA OR VIOLIN

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Chromatic Fields 71 to 80 are:
Chromatic Fields 71 to 74 and 76 to 80 for piano and viola or violin and Chromatic Field 75 for piano solo

Notation of rhythm is basic stemless notation:
Closed notes are one beat - Open notes are four beats

Overall performance direction: Soft, fluid, gentle.
The speed is c.70 bpm (or up to 10 bpm faster or slower). The pulse is gentle and a little flexible. Dynamic level – pp to mp

Piano part: Pedal every bar, throughout the bar, changing pedal at the beginning of each bar. Occasionally, the pedal is changed in the middle of a bar and this is indicated by a chevron pedal mark.

This is not a composition for soloist with piano accompaniment: The instruments need to be balanced so that together they create a single texture. This applies to both performance and recording.

Order of Chromatic Fields 71 to 80 for performance or recording:
71 to 74 - 4 pieces selected from the set in any order (viola/violin and piano)
75 (piano solo)
76 to 80 - The remaining 5 pieces, in any order (viola/violin and piano)
The Chromatic Fields for viola/violin and piano are not numbered. When the performance order is decided the first becomes Chromatic Field 71, the second 72 and so on working through the numbers as above.
75 retains its title and takes its place in the sequence. For the purpose of identification, each page of the score includes a small identifying numeral: i, ii, iii and so on.
(These identifiers were allocated to the finished set at random – there is no significance to the number order – and do not indicate the order of composition).

Chromatic Field 75 is for solo piano and is based on Chromatic Field 70. It began life with the pitches of Chromatic Field 70 and involves a commentary of additional pitches, ornaments and arpeggios.
Performance note:
Slow. Soft. Fluid. Gentle. Rubato.
Pedal every bar, throughout the bar, changing pedal at the beginning of each bar. Occasionally, the pedal is changed in the middle of a bar and this is indicated by a chevron pedal mark.
For the sake of interest and comparison the score of CF 70 is included in the set.

If viola (violin) pitches seem to form into linear sequences or phrases, allow them to emerge without (over)stating them. Allowing them to become apparent to the listener – or not.

Always with bow and always sustained through full length of bar. Each bar is a discrete event and so needs a fresh attack at the beginning of each bar. This is particularly appropriate when consecutive bars contain the same pitch.

Make regular use of varied timbre through free choice of string, or open string, for any one individual note. Sometimes without vibrato. Open strings may sometimes be laissez vibrer.

Make less regular, discreet and strategic use of these other timbres:
Harmonics, natural or “artificial”, or a closely related stopped note without vibrato
sul tasto

Make rare use of:
sul ponticello
A (slightly!) exaggerated vibrato – In my head this starts off pronounced and fades
Portamento, ascending or descending (only after a full count of four on last note of bar)

Again, a change of timbre might be considered particularly relevant when consecutive bars contain the same pitch, although this is by no means essential.
It may well go without saying that, considering the pitch range of the pieces, there are more opportunities for using open strings on the violin and for harmonics on the viola.

Never with tremolo. Never col legno. Never pizzicato. No change of timbre within a bar.

The effect of all of this is to tend towards a focus on the vertical and onto the specific character of an individual bar. On the other hand this is all about balance and each individual Field doesn't need to be a catalogue of available timbres.

Directions specific to the viola/violin were developed in consultation with Patrick Harrex.

Alternative version for piano and synthesizer:

My first recording was for Yamaha P-150 electric piano and Novation K-Station synthesizer. If playing a version for synth then ensure it sounds at notated pitch (no octave transpositions). The sound needs to be dynamic but held back in some way.
A higher end electric piano might well produce a more appropriate sound than acoustic piano in this context. My recording uses a K-Station patch based on preset 105 with ADSR altered to D = 108 and R = 97 and Octave set to +1.

Jamie Crofts 2011

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