

Putrefaction is for 4 violins and 4 violas. It is about 20-25 minutes in length.

There are three parts with no breaks in between. The piece is set up to work without a conductor. There is no score. It would misrepresent how the piece actually works to have one. Ideally, for the first and third parts, the players start in unison but feel comfortable enough with their parts to play with flexible tempos. Part of the idea behind the piece is that occasionally another person's part might sound to you like it's establishing the beat or meter. You should feel free to follow that person's beat or not.

The players should stand in this order: viola iii, violin iv, viola ii, violin i, viola i, violin ii, viola iv, violin iii. Originally, I wanted the players to surround the audience; then I realized that the premiere was taking place in a venue set up differently than what I had envisioned. In any case, the players should either surround the audience with violin i in the back, or they should stand in line with a slight arch, in front of and as close to the audience as possible, spread out to the width of the venue. In all cases, the players should be able to see one another; use risers/podiums/platforms/amplification as you see fit.

The first part: The violas start in unison eighths, which set the tempo; however they soon break off from this unison. Each individual is responsible for maintaining their own tempo; do feel free to experiment with rubato, especially in passages that are more melodic and less percussive or 'atmospheric.' You are not responsible for lining up with anybody, but if by chance you do or want to, that's fine, too.

The violins' entrance is cued by the second viola, which is marked in their parts.

The violas are the more important 'choir,' whereas the violins function more as percussionists providing textural color.

At the end of the first part only violin i goes on immediately to part ii; everyone else should wait for their cue to begin the second part.

The second part: Violin i begins with a solo melody and will cue viola i to join. The rest will be cued to join in this order: viola iii, violin iii, violin iv, viola iv, violin ii, viola ii. In this section, unlike the first, you are expected to be together. Everyone should sing along with their part until indicated to stop. Your singing doesn't have to be beautiful or even in tune, but do your best and always sing with conviction. Experiment with consonant and vowel sounds; if inspired to sing actual words (yes, even ones that mock the piece or composer – I can't stop you), go for it. Once everyone is in, the parts gradually become more polyphonic and complex and eventually give way to part iii.

The third part is similar to part i (but shorter) and involves more overbowing and the violas detune their lowest string down to a flabby octave below its normal pitch.

notational particulars:

- a triangle notehead indicates to play on the designated string behind the bridge.
- an x notehead or an x on the stem indicates to overbow, creating that lovely scratchy sound.
- a diamond notehead indicates a hammer-on (think eddie van halen or stanley jordan, but not as flashy...): The string to hammer is shown as an open notehead. The point of hammering is shown above with a closed notehead. There will be a multitude of sounding pitches when you press down and when you release. The written dynamic is forte, but we all know that's more of an attitude marking than an actual volume indication. Try to produce as much sound as you can.

putrefaction

violin ii

part I

violas will play for appr. 28.5 measures of 4/4 incl. cues

♩ = 80

viola ii cues:

Musical staff for Viola II cues. It begins with a whole rest. The first cue is marked *pizz* and *p*. The second cue is marked *f* and includes a triplet of eighth notes. The third cue is marked *arco* and *pp*. The staff concludes with a 13/16 time signature and a melodic line.

viola ii has a 15/16 time signature

(violins i & iv enter on downbeat)

(behind the bridge)

Musical staff for Viola II in 15/16 time. It starts with a melodic line marked *ff*. After a few measures, there is a whole rest. The staff ends with a melodic line marked *mp*.

Musical staff for Viola II in 15/16 time, continuing the melodic line with various dynamics and articulation marks.

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violin ii

The image displays a musical score for the second violin (violin ii). It consists of ten staves of music, each beginning with a treble clef. The notation is dense, featuring a continuous stream of eighth notes across all staves. The music is characterized by frequent slurs and dynamic markings, specifically 'v' (piano) and 'f' (forte), which are placed below the notes to indicate changes in volume. The overall texture is highly rhythmic and melodic, typical of a string section's accompaniment in a classical or romantic era work.

violin ii

The image displays a musical score for Violin II, consisting of ten staves of music. The notation is primarily rhythmic, featuring a series of eighth notes and sixteenth notes. The first five staves show a consistent rhythmic pattern. The sixth staff includes dynamic markings: *ff* (fortissimo) and *p* (piano), with a slur over the notes. The seventh staff begins with a time signature change from 16/8 to 4/4 and includes a *f* (forte) marking. The eighth staff continues the rhythmic pattern. The ninth staff features a time signature change from 4/4 to 5/4, followed by a 12/16 section. The tenth staff concludes the piece with a final rhythmic flourish.

violin ii

The image shows a musical score for violin II, consisting of ten staves of music. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, slurs, and dynamic markings. The first staff begins with a *ppp* marking. The second staff features a *f* marking. The fifth staff has a *p* marking. The seventh staff is marked *ppp*. The eighth staff includes the instruction *(hammer-on)*. The bottom-most staff is labeled *1.h.* and contains a series of notes with diamond-shaped accents. The score concludes with a *f* marking.

violin ii

1.h.

1.h.

1.h.

1.h.

1.h.

violin ii

1.h.

1.h.

1.h.

1.h.

1.h.

violin ii

1.h.

1.h.

1.h.

1.h.

1.h.

1.h.

putrefaction part ii

after finishing part i, wait for
viola ii to cue your entrance.

violin i -- may play this section twice.

viola i

viola iii

violin iii

violin iv

viola iv

246 **viola ii** **37** *viola ii* **sing along (pref. in unison)**
expressive

289

296

302

308

314

321

328

violin ii

334



340



347



354



361



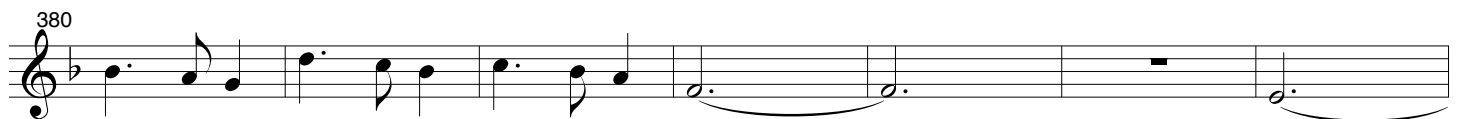
368



374



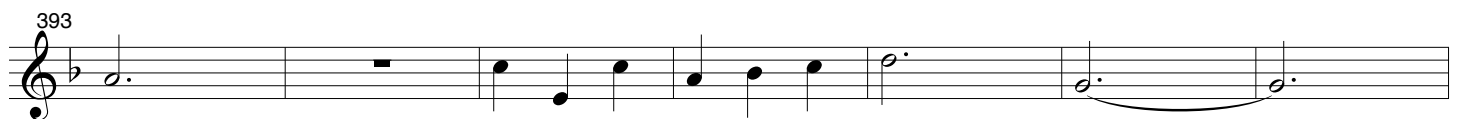
380



387



393



violin ii

466

472

478

484

492

499

505

511

518

525

violin ii

596

603

609

putrefaction
part iia

pizz.

ff

*optional improvisation

*optional improvisation: should last for at least two minutes. Begin with pizz and overbowing, in the style already established, gradually moving to other material (freely), then move back to pizz and overbowing. Once everyone is ready to move on, violin i will cue part iii. There should be no obvious breaks. If group chooses not to improvise, then everyone should go immediately onto part iii (violin i, violas i & iii should not improvise during the rest).

putrefaction

violin ii

part iii

The musical score for violin ii, part iii of 'putrefaction' consists of eight staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a *fff* dynamic marking. It features two triplet markings over the first six notes. The second staff continues with a *ppp* dynamic marking. The third staff starts with a *f* dynamic, followed by an *expressive* marking and a *ppp* dynamic, and includes a triplet. The fourth staff begins with a *f* dynamic and another triplet. The fifth staff starts with a *f* dynamic and changes the time signature to 5/4. The sixth staff begins with a *p* dynamic and ends with a *f* dynamic. The seventh staff starts with a *f* dynamic and includes a 9/16 time signature. The eighth staff begins with a *ppp* dynamic and ends with a *f* dynamic. The score is filled with various rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and rests.

violin ii

ppp

ppp

f

f

ff

f

ff

ff