

A Performance Guide to Josh Oxford's *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata*:
Situating a Commission within Historical, Musical, Narrative, and Technical Contexts,
with Violin Part in Semi-Tablature Notation

by

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ABSTRACT

Josh Oxford wrote the *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata* in 2022 on commission from the violinist Esther Witherell. The piece continues in the Rosary Sonata tradition begun by Heinrich Biber while also incorporating contemporary composition styles and violin techniques, most notably the use of dynamic *scordatura*. The formidable challenges involved in realizing the written score make the provision of a performance guide with a semi-tablature notation of the violin part all but essential.

This document serves as a guide to future performers of the *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata*. The paper provides the historical background for its composition, supplies information from the composer regarding Biblical allusions in the piece, and suggests solutions to common technical difficulties. The appendix consists of the semi-tablature violin part with at-pitch notation from the composer and as-fingered notation from the author.

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PREFACE

Heinrich Biber's Rosary Sonatas (c. 1670s) hold a unique place in the violin repertoire for two reasons: they function as a type of musical Rosary, providing instrumental meditations for the traditional Rosary prayers, and they feature extensive use of *scordatura*, or alternate tuning systems, for the violin. The Catholic Rosary has had a long development. St. Dominic popularized the preexisting prayer in the 1200's, and by 1483, a Dominican Rosary book had standardized fifteen stories as the basis for meditation while praying the Rosary. These stories were later called "mysteries" and today are grouped into three sets of five: the Joyful Mysteries from Jesus' nativity and early life, the Sorrowful Mysteries on Jesus' passion and death, and the Glorious Mysteries for his resurrection and the early church. These fifteen mysteries functioned as the basis for Rosary meditations during Biber's lifetime.

In 2002, Pope John Paul II proposed five new mysteries to be added to Rosary meditations. The new Luminous Mysteries depict stories from Jesus' public ministry: 1) The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, 2) The Wedding at Cana in Galilee, 3) The Proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven, 4) The Transfiguration, and 5) The Institution of the Eucharist. These new mysteries illuminate the identity of Jesus and the message of the gospel as portrayed by the Evangelists. There is also a clear theme of transformation which runs throughout the series: Jesus' baptism sanctifies the baptismal waters, which then effect a sacramental transformation in all who follow in his footsteps. At the Wedding at Cana, Jesus transforms water into wine. As Jesus and his disciples proclaim the gospel of the kingdom, they call for an inner transformation. At the Transfiguration,

Jesus' appearance transforms in a dazzling way. And at the institution of the Eucharist, the bread and wine undergo transubstantiation to become the very body and blood of Christ.

The addition of the Luminous mysteries rendered Biber's cycle of Rosary sonatas, which until 2002 had represented all the mysteries of the Catholic Rosary, now incomplete. Therefore, in 2021 I commissioned Catholic composer Josh Oxford to write a new five-movement work, the *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata* for violin, cello, and organ. This work follows Biber's example by depicting the mysteries of the Rosary and by making dramatic use of *scordatura*.

Biber's fifteen different tuning systems give a distinctive tonal quality to each sonata, reflecting the character and atmosphere of each mystery. To perform them, the violinist retunes the violin in between each sonata. However, since a primary theme of the Luminous Mysteries is transformation, Josh Oxford and I decided to incorporate retuning into the performance itself, transforming the sound of the violin in real time. The technique of retuning while playing is called "peg glissando," and the new tuning system achieved and altered by means of peg glissando is called "dynamic *scordatura*." These techniques have rarely been utilized in the string repertoire due to the challenge of retuning accurately in a constrained amount of time and the difficulty of playing in complex and changing *scordaturas* when at-pitch notation provides little help with execution and semi-tablature notation can be disorienting.

Because of its inherent challenges, this piece deserves a performance guide that will explain the history and context for its commission, describe the scriptural allusions in the

music, provide technical suggestions for challenging techniques, and supply a semi-tablature transcription of the violin part to facilitate the execution of the at-pitch notation.

The goal of this document, as such a performance guide, is to supply the context and tools necessary to prepare meaningful and informed performances of Josh Oxford's

Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata* came about as the result of multiple historical influences, including the Catholic Rosary and its associated meditation practices, Heinrich Biber's original Rosary Sonatas, and a modern addition to the Rosary meditations. From early in its history, the Rosary has involved a popular devotional practice of meditation on fifteen sacred "mysteries," or narratives from the lives of Jesus and the Virgin Mary. These fifteen mysteries provided inspiration for Heinrich Biber's fifteen Rosary Sonatas, written for violin and continuo in the late 1600s. The devotions of Rosary confraternities in post-Reformation Catholic Austria likely provided the performance context for these sonatas, which have also become famous as the most creatively extensive example of Baroque *scordatura* writing for the violin. They are well-known today for both their varied tuning systems and for their programmatic content, and no discussion of either *scordatura* or historic violin sonatas would be complete without their mention.

After 500 years without significant alterations, the mysteries of the Rosary received an addition in 2002 by Pope John Paul II, who proposed five new "Luminous Mysteries," to serve as the basis for Rosary meditations alongside the initial fifteen.¹ Their inclusion in the Rosary made an opening in the violin repertoire for new Rosary sonatas, and in 2021 I commissioned a composer (and fellow Catholic convert) to write them. The resulting five-movement sonata takes inspiration from Biber's representation of Biblical narratives,

¹ John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* [Encyclical Letter on the Rosary of the Virgin Mary], The Holy See, October 16, 2002, sec. 19, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/2002/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20021016_rosarium-virginis-mariae.html.

his use of scordatura, and from other Baroque violin sonata procedures. However, the *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata* breaks new ground in its ambitious use of “dynamic scordatura,” as well as in its combination of classical, jazz, and popular styles of music. The *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata* builds on the musical and devotional practices of the past and recontextualizes them for a contemporary audience, making this piece both historically grounded and profoundly relevant in a modern Catholic context.

The following chapter expands upon the foregoing discussion of Biber’s Rosary Sonatas, the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary, and the decisions involved in commissioning and writing the *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata*, including the use of dynamic scordatura.

Heinrich Biber’s Rosary Sonatas

The Rosary has a long and varied history, tracing its roots back to the practice of counting beads to keep track of prayers, to Psalmody, to Marian Psalters, and to the Dominican order’s promotion of the devotional practice. A widespread legend relates that the Virgin Mary appeared to St. Dominic around 1214, giving him the Rosary to aid the conversion of the heretical Albigensians.² Although there is no contemporary evidence for the historicity of Dominic’s vision, Dominicans in the late fifteenth century *were* the most active promoters of the Rosary.³ The Dominican Alain de la Roche founded the first Rosary confraternity in Douai in 1468-70, and such confraternities became very popular

² John Desmond Miller, *Beads and Prayers: The Rosary in History and Devotion* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2002), 7, 9, ProQuest Ebook Central.

³ *Ibid.*, 10-11

due to their inclusivity and the low barriers to entry.⁴ By the early 1500's, the Rosary had become closely associated with the gaining of indulgences,⁵ and despite the Protestant Reformation sweeping across Europe, the Rosary received official promotion with Pope Leo X giving his approbation in 1520 and Pope Pius V extending official approval in 1569, not long after the Counter-Reformation Council of Trent in 1543-63.⁶ During the seventeenth century, the Rosary became the central Marian prayer, ubiquitous within Catholicism.⁷

Physically, a Rosary is a string of beads representing a set of prayers said in succession. The main portion of the Rosary consists of five sets of ten Hail Marys, and each set of ten, or “decade,” is preceded by the Our Father and followed by the Glory Be. Each decade is meant to serve as the background for meditation on a story from the life of Christ or Mary, and such a story is called a “mystery.” Before 1483, fifty mysteries for meditation were frequently associated with the recitation of the Hail Marys, but in that year a Dominican Rosary book reduced the fifty mysteries down to fifteen, and by the end of the century, a fifteen-mystery Rosary had become the norm.⁸ These fifteen mysteries are divided into three sets of five: the Joyful Mysteries which depict scenes from Jesus' early life (The Annunciation, The Visitation, The Nativity, The Presentation, and The Finding of Jesus in the Temple); the Sorrowful Mysteries which depict scenes from the Passion (The Agony in the Garden, The Scourging, The Crowning with Thorns,

⁴ Ibid., 19

⁵ Ibid., 23

⁶ Ibid., xii, 1

⁷ Ibid., 29

⁸ Ibid., xii, 19. The 15th mystery at this time was The Last Judgment, and the 14th combined the Assumption and Coronation of Mary into one. Later the 14th was divided into two and The Last Judgment disappeared from Rosary meditations.

Carrying the Cross, and The Crucifixion); and the Glorious Mysteries, which depict scenes associated with the resurrection and the early church (The Resurrection, The Ascension, The Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, The Assumption of Mary, and the Coronation of Mary).

Heinrich Biber composed his Rosary Sonatas in Salzburg in the late 1670s and dedicated them to his patron, Archbishop Maximilian Gandolf, who was both an active member of the Confraternity of the Assumption of the Virgin in Salzburg and an avid promoter of Rosary devotions.⁹ Each of the Rosary sonatas is accompanied by a copper engraving of one of the mysteries of the Rosary, and the final Passacaglia features an ink drawing of a guardian angel. These images may suggest an early performance context for the work.¹⁰ The Salzburg Confraternity met on the campus of the University of Salzburg, and all students at the school were members of this confraternity, whose primary requirement was to pray the Rosary.¹¹ The hall where they met displays a set of fifteen images depicting the fifteen mysteries along with a painting of the guardian angel.¹² The fact that Biber did not publish the sonatas in his lifetime nor include them in a collection of almost all his other instrumental works sent to his former employer, Count Leichtenstein (who appreciated both scordatura and programmatic music), may indicate that Biber intended these works to be performed specifically in Salzburg, likely in the confraternity hall bearing matching images.¹³

⁹ Roseen Giles, "Physicality and Devotion in Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber's Rosary Sonatas," *Yale Journal of Music & Religion* 4, no. 2 (2018): 80, <https://doi.org/10.17132/2377-231X.1105>.

¹⁰ James Clements, "Heinrich Biber: Solving the Mysteries?" *Early Music Review* 28 (March 1997): 8.

¹¹ Giles, "Physicality and Devotion," 80.

¹² Clements, "Heinrich Biber," 8.

¹³ *Ibid.* Clements makes this argument by building off a hypothesis by Davitt Maroney, and by considering the absence of the Rosary Sonatas from the Leichtenstein collection in the Kromeriz archive. He proposes

The Biber Rosary Sonatas utilize fifteen different tuning systems, or *scordaturas*, which give each work a different timbre and tonal quality. Only the first sonata and the final Passacaglia use the traditional G-D-A-E tuning. Most of the other sonatas are tuned to the notes of a chord (such as No. 5 with A-E-A-C#) or to a set of perfect intervals (for example, No. 10 with G-D-A-D), but there are two exceptions. The first is No. 6, where Biber colors the first of the sorrowful mysteries, The Agony in the Garden, with the dissonant tuning Ab-Eb-G-D. The second is Sonata No. 11, where Biber depicts the first of the glorious mysteries, The Resurrection, and instructs the violinist to cross the A and the D strings above the nut and below the bridge to set up the pair of octaves G3-G4-D4-D5. This also creates a “cross” in the physical body of the violin.

Biber wrote his Rosary Sonatas in a type of semi-tablature called “hand-grip notation,”¹⁴ where the music is notated based on how it would be fingered on a normally tuned violin rather than at-pitch. This enables the performer to quickly execute the correct pitches, but it can be disorienting to the performer since the pitches heard are not the pitches notated. The *scordatura* also demands adjustment of bow weight and speed to the new string tension, which requires the violinist to be extremely sensitive to the new qualities of the retuned strings. Intonation becomes exceptionally challenging when the strings are tuned in imperfect intervals because if the violin is tuned with just intonation, strings tuned in thirds will be at least twelve cents sharp or flat, which must be considered

this theory in opposition to the prevailing view that performances of these works would have taken place in the Salzburg Cathedral due to their dance-suite characteristics which he argues would have been unsuitable for a sacred or liturgical context, based on letters of contemporaries. Roseen Giles cites both the Salzburg Cathedral and the confraternity hall as possible performance contexts but does not make an argument for one over the other.

¹⁴ Giles, "Physicality and Devotion," 73.

when placing the fingers for double stops. If a performer avoids just intonation and tunes open-string thirds in equal temperament, the open strings do not resonate properly together, and the many cadences on an open string tonic chord (as in No. 5) become unsatisfying.

During the 2021-22 academic year, I performed Biber's fifteen violin sonatas on baroque violin with continuo (in most cases, the continuo consisted of an organ or harpsichord with a viola da gamba). This ensemble performed the Joyful Mysteries during Advent, the Sorrowful Mysteries during Lent, and the Glorious Mysteries during the Easter season. Drawing on what I believed to be the original performance context for these works, I performed them in local Catholic churches to accompany semi-corporate Rosary prayer. A lector (liturgical reader) first read the scripture associated with the mystery of the upcoming Rosary sonata, and then began the Our Father to initiate the first decade of the Rosary. Following this, my colleagues and I performed the sonata while those gathered prayed the ten Hail Marys and Glory Be silently on their own. In between sonatas, I retuned the violin to the new *scordatura*, and the lector read the scripture for the following mystery and the Our Father. We continued in a similar way through the five mysteries for that Rosary.

Although we do not have records of the original performance history for the Rosary Sonatas,¹⁵ it is conceivable they were performed in connection with a corporate recitation of the Rosary, especially given the likelihood they were originally performed for a Confraternity whose sole obligation was the praying of the Rosary and which met in a

¹⁵ Giles, "Physicality and Devotion," 70.

room with art depicting the mysteries of the Rosary.¹⁶ Through my own performances, I sought to recontextualize these pieces for a modern audience by bringing them back into the church and the practice of Rosary devotions.

The Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata

The Mysteries of the Rosary remained virtually unchanged from the adoption of the fifteen mysteries in the 1500s.¹⁷ However in 2002, Pope John Paul II proposed the addition of five new mysteries of the Rosary as a way of bridging the gap between the Joyful Mysteries, which leave the boy Jesus at twelve years old, and the Sorrowful Mysteries, which commence the night before his death. The Pope called them the “Mysteries of Light,” or Luminous Mysteries, and these new mysteries centered on scenes from Jesus’ intervening years of public ministry.¹⁸ They were intended to “bring out the Christological depth of the Rosary,” and to “enkindle renewed interest in the Rosary’s place within Christian spirituality as a true doorway to the heart of Christ.”¹⁹ These Luminous Mysteries are commonly known today as The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, The Wedding at Cana in Galilee, The Proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven, The Transfiguration, and The Institution of the Eucharist.

¹⁶ This is my own conclusion, based on the previous evidence.

¹⁷ The mysteries are all the same except for the fifteenth mystery, which used to be the Last Judgment, but which seems to have been gradually replaced by the Coronation of Mary (formerly combined with the fourteenth mystery, Assumption of Mary into Heaven). I have been unable to find any specific date for this change, but it seems to have been common in Biber’s time and place given his sonatas and the associated artwork.

¹⁸ John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* [Encyclical Letter on the Rosary of the Virgin Mary], The Holy See, October 16, 2002, sec. 19, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/2002/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20021016_rosarium-virginis-mariae.html.

¹⁹ Ibid.

I became aware of the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary around the time that I was taking RCIA in 2019.²⁰ I had developed an interest in Heinrich Biber's Rosary Sonatas in 2016 while preparing to perform No. 6, The Agony in the Garden, at an undergraduate recital. Having grown up as a non-denominational, evangelical Protestant, I valued the Rosary Sonatas' overt biblical allusions, but didn't understand their connection to the Catholic Rosary. Upon realizing that the Luminous Mysteries were an addition to Biber's original fifteen mysteries, I recognized that these new mysteries had no Rosary Sonatas associated with them, and I became convinced that this was a significant gap in the violin repertoire and that an additional set of Rosary sonatas were needed to fill it.

In 2021, I commissioned the composer and fellow Catholic convert Josh Oxford to write the new Rosary Sonatas. I asked him to follow in Biber's tradition by using *scordatura* extensively and to write the pieces for the same instrumentation as Biber's sonatas: baroque violin and continuo.²¹ We corresponded throughout the writing process and eventually the pieces were completed in April 2022. Originally the scoring was for baroque violin, viola da gamba, and organ, but the technical challenges of playing on the baroque violin made it impractical to continue with that instrument.²² In addition, the viola da gamba player with whom I was working at the time²³ moved away for graduate school, and I knew of no other viola da gamba player in the state who had her level of

²⁰ RCIA stands for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (in contrast to the standard sequence of sacraments in childhood) and usually comprises about 9 months of classes to aid discernment and/or preparation to join the Catholic Church. The name has since been changed to OCIA, or the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (as of 2023).

²¹ The continuo usually is usually made up of a keyboard or plucked string instrument plus a bowed lower-string instrument. My continuo at the time I commissioned Oxford consisted of organ and viola da gamba.

²² For example, the extremely high range of the violin part destroyed a new gut E string within one hour and the fortissimo sustained lines do not translate well to the physics of a baroque bow.

²³ Angelese Pepper.

skill in both historical performance and contemporary music, so Oxford rearranged the gamba part for cello instead, making it accessible to a wider range of performers. The *scordatura* writing incorporated retuning the violin to a new tuning system *while playing*, a technique known as “dynamic *scordatura*.”²⁴ Oxford chose to title this work as the singular “*Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata*” with five movements rather than calling each of the five mysteries its own sonata as we do Biber’s Rosary Sonatas. This may be understood within the broader development of the sonata as a genre, making an extensive, multi-movement tradition the norm for modern sonatas, while short, standalone works would scarcely be called sonatas today.

The extensive use of dynamic *scordatura* in this work necessitated a supplement to the score that would provide an aid to note-reading and execution, therefore I chose to make a transcription of the entire *scordatura* score in a semi-tablature variant of Biber’s “hand-grip” notation with fingering indications. Due to the complexity of the work and our desire to facilitate performer choice, Oxford and I put together a combined violin part which places my transcription in the main staff and Oxford’s at-pitch score in an ossia staff. The new violin part with transcription and at-pitch ossia staff allows future performers to see the original notation directly above a fingered realization of the same passage, enabling them to check the pitch intended by my fingerings and to make informed choices if they wish to substitute their own fingerings. This combined violin

²⁴ Nathan Cook, “Scordatura Literature for Unaccompanied Violoncello in the 20th Century: Historical Background, Analysis of Works, and Practical Considerations for Composers and Performers” (DMA diss., Rice University, 2005), 112.

I have only found this term in a couple of sources, but I believe it is preferable to the term “peg glissando” in this context, because in the *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata*, the focus is on the transformation of the instrument and how the performer makes use of the new possibilities in each changing, or *dynamic scordatura*, rather than on the sound of the pitch change itself, which seems to be implied by the term “peg glissando.”

part is found in the Appendix and represents a significant portion of the work for this document.

I premiered the work at St. Anne Roman Catholic Parish in Gilbert, AZ on May 11th, 2023, with colleagues Nathan Arch at the organ, Ilana Camras on cello, and Claire Halbur as lector/cantor. When I had performed the Biber Rosary Sonatas in the past, I chose to style them as musical meditations to accompany a corporate (though silent) recitation of the Rosary, with a lector reading scriptures and the Our Father in between each piece. Oxford had observed this performance practice and wrote it directly into the score of the *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata*. Each sonata movement begins with a chordal accompaniment to the Our Father (spoken by the lector), provides a musical meditation on the corresponding mystery while listeners pray the ten Hail Marys silently on their own, and finishes with the instrumental Glory Be melody to signal the end of that decade.

In addition to Oxford's indications, the lector also contributed to the communal experience of the performance. She invited those in attendance to join her in reciting the introductory Rosary prayers, and she read the accompanying scriptures for each mystery aloud. At the end of the Rosary Sonata, she likewise invited the audience to join her in singing the Latin chant which sets the words to the final Marian prayer of the Rosary, the *Salve Regina*.

Notes on *Scordatura*

Scordatura writing for the violin was at its height of popularity during the baroque era. Biber used the technique extensively in his Rosary Sonatas, two of his *Sonatae*

violino solo (1681), and his *Harmonia artificiosa-ariosa* (1696), while composers including Marini, Ucellini, Bonacini, and Lonati also wrote works for the *scordatura* violin.²⁵ By the mid-1700's, *scordatura* had fallen out of favor in Germany but received renewed attention in French and Italian circles, where it would be used to create new timbres, technical possibilities, and a self-accompanying bass line through lowering the G string.²⁶ In the nineteenth century, *scordatura* was often considered a nuisance, and its use was primarily confined to the raising of the G string to facilitate virtuosic *sul-G* bravura, and transcription *scordaturas*, where all the strings would be retuned by the same interval to aid technical execution or to give the violin a more brilliant timbre above an orchestra.²⁷ The 20th century provides several examples of *scordatura* within an orchestral or ensemble setting to achieve particular effects, as works by Bartok, Strauss, Saint-Saens, Mahler, and Stravinsky demonstrate.

Notational practice for *scordatura* writing may take various forms, frequently based on the preferences of the work's dedicatee, first performer, or composer (if that composer was also a violinist).²⁸ Biber and most *scordatura* composers write in the semi-tablature hand-grip notation, where the music is written as it would be fingered on a normally-

²⁵ Grove Music Online, s.v. "Scordatura," by David Boyden, Robin Stowell, Mark Chambers, James Tyler, and Richard Partridge, 2001, <https://doi-org.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.41698>.

²⁶ Ibid. For example, Lolli would write pieces which drop the G string down to D, a *scordatura* which received the designation, "in the style of Lolli." Nardini wrote similarly self-accompanying *scordaturas*, but with raised strings, as demonstrated in his *Sonate énigmatique* (example with score: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTmz5y2VrBQ>; alternate performance without score: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKDJ4UIHS24>)

²⁷ Ibid. Two examples of raising the G string include Paganini's tuning it to Bb in his Introduction and Variations on 'Dal tuo stellato soglio' from Rossini's *Mose' in Egitto* and Vieuxtemps's raising the G string to C in his 'Norma' fantasia op.18.

²⁸ Cook, "Scordatura Literature," 98. For some advice from Gabriela Lena Frank to composers on the importance of working closely with the right performer during the composition process, see pp. 116-118.

tuned violin. Eugene Ysaye's *Poème élégiaque* in D minor requires only the G string to be detuned (down to F) and he uses hand-grip notation only for the G-string notes, with square noteheads to indicate which notes will sound a whole tone lower than written. Other composers may write at-pitch, and as some performers prefer to see the correct intervallic distances and preserve the correlation of printed and sounded pitches.²⁹ Other composers write at-pitch but provide as-fingered suggestions for execution in short ossia staves at particularly challenging moments.³⁰ Composers have also chosen to write the part as-fingered and to supply a study score with at-pitch notation or a representation of both types of notation concurrently on two staves.³¹ For the *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata*, Oxford and I decided to provide both at-pitch and as-fingered parts in one document. I created a violin part with the hand-grip notation and Oxford combined this with his at-pitch violin part to create a two-staff violin part (see Appendix). Due to the modern conveniences of iPads and page-turning pedals, such an expanded violin part is not impractical as a performance score as it might have been a decade ago.

The history of peg glissando and dynamic *scordatura*, both of which involve retuning the violin while playing, is much more sparse. An early example of the peg glissando effect occurs in Haydn's Op. 60 "*Il Distratto*" Symphony, which depicts the effects of a distracted conductor, including forgetting to tune the orchestra. In the final movement, the first violins begin with G strings detuned to F, to be audibly retuned back to G in mm. 23-27, when the conductor "remembers" that the orchestra hasn't been tuned. Baillot

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 106. For example, see Henri Dutilleux's *Trois Strophes sur le nom de SACHER*.

³¹ Ibid., 107. For example, see Kaija Saariaho's *Spins and Spells*.

wrote dynamic *scordatura* into his twenty-Four Etudes for the violin (op. posth.) where No. 15 involves detuning the G string to F#³² and No. 23 brings the G string audibly down to low D.³³ The rest of each etude is then written with the resulting *scordatura*. 20th century examples of peg glissando for violin include Alfred Schnittke’s *Stille Nacht*, and Gyorgy Kurtag’s *Kafka Fragmente*, op. 24. Ulrich Suesse incorporates dynamic *scordatura* into his solo violin work “Luft” and Ton de Leeuw uses it in his String Quartet No. 2.³⁴

But perhaps most significantly for this project, Heinrich Biber himself writes dynamic *scordatura* in his *Sonatae Violino Solo*. Figure 1.1 shows Biber’s indication “Accordo” where the violinist retunes the E string down to D and continues the rest of the sonata in the new tuning system. Biber’s use of dynamic *scordatura* in one of his own works provides an important precedent for the extensive use of the technique in the work inspired by him, Oxford’s *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata*.



Figure 1.1: Heinrich Biber, *Sonatae Violino Solo* (1681) No. 6

³² <https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/6/63/IMSLP72633-SIBLEY1802.5595.4d97-39087013843844liv3.pdf>

³³ <https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/c/c7/IMSLP72634-SIBLEY1802.5595.3d45-39087013843844liv4.pdf>

³⁴ Patricia Strange and Allen Strange, *The Contemporary Violin: Extended Performance Techniques*, (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2001), 181-182.

Having provided historical background for the *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata*, I will proceed to examine the content of the work to contextualize for future performers the themes guiding its creation and the symbolism encoded within it.

CHAPTER 2

THEMES, INFLUENCES, AND INTERPRETATION

The following chapter provides helpful context for future performers who wish to understand the musical and theological content of the Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata. The information here is based on numerous personal correspondences with the composer and provides valuable insights into his intentions. The first section explains the rationale for choosing transformation as the primary theme for the work and shows specific ways that Oxford incorporates this theme throughout the work. The next section relates both of our theological and musical backgrounds and how these influenced the piece. The last section examines each movement successively, detailing the scriptural allusions and compositional strategies Oxford used to create a compelling narrative for each mystery. My hope is that this chapter provides clarity and inspiration for those who study or perform the work.

Biblical and Musical Transformations

In considering the Luminous Mysteries, Josh and I saw one idea permeating all five mysteries: the theme of Transformation. For example, in the Baptism, Catholic theology interprets Jesus' own immersion as his transformation of the baptismal waters, whereby everyone who undergoes this sacrament becomes themselves an adopted son or daughter of God.³⁵ In the Wedding Feast, transformation takes place as Jesus changes water into

³⁵ John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., (Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2011), sec. 536-537, accessed March 27, 2024, <https://www.usccb.org/sites/default/files/flipbooks/catechism/>.

wine, a transmutation with observable effects.³⁶ In the Proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus sends his disciples out to preach the good news that Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, exhorting people to repent and undergo a transformation of heart.³⁷ In the story of the Transfiguration, Jesus' own appearance transforms – his clothes become bright white, and he himself radiates light.³⁸ At the Institution of the Eucharist, Catholic theology teaches that Jesus' words over bread and wine transform these elements into his body and blood, a miracle called transubstantiation.³⁹

Each of these mysteries hinges on an act of transformation. Therefore, Oxford and I chose to incorporate musical transformations into the Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata. We agreed to use peg glissando and dynamic *scordatura* to transform the violin in a physical way, and Oxford wrote changes of mode, meter, and enharmonic notes to represent transformations in musical and theoretical ways.

Peg glissando (audibly detuning the violin) which creates dynamic *scordatura* (a non-standard tuning system achieved while playing) is the most obvious means of transformation in this piece. At “Submerging” in The Baptism (m. 56), the violinist begins detuning the G string, first to F# and then to F. The D string then comes down to Db and the A string to Ab. The violin descends in a way that mirrors Jesus' descent to the Jordan river as well as the Christian's journey down to the waters of baptism. In The Wedding Feast, after the wine has run out and Mary has spoken to Jesus, the violin is at

³⁶ John 2:9.

³⁷ Mark 1:15.

³⁸ Mark 9:3, Matt. 17:2.

³⁹ John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., (Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2011), sec. 1374, accessed March 19, 2024,

<https://www.usccb.org/sites/default/files/flipbooks/catechism/>.

The catechism quotes the Council of Trent (1551) in describing the new substance as the “body, blood, ... soul, and divinity” of Christ.

its lowest point (G string detuned to Eb3). From mm. 105 to 110, the violinist gradually tunes the G string up from Eb to F while Jesus changes water to wine behind the scenes. Just before the master of the banquet tries the newly created wine, the violinist raises the A string from A-flat to A natural (m. 128-129), creating a sense of lift and preparing for the minor-to-major modulation in the organ (m. 130).

Changes from minor to major are meant to change the atmosphere. Oxford says it gives a feeling “like a sacrament ... intangible ... like an intimation from beyond.”⁴⁰ The first example of this mode change occurs in *The Baptism* at m. 69 where, after a section of seeming chaos titled “Submerging,” the music finally settles on a Db major chord at “Baptized,” reflecting the new state of someone who has undergone the sacrament. In *The Wedding Feast*, the previously mentioned transition from d minor to D major occurs at m. 131 when the master of the banquet first tastes the water-turned-wine, setting the *Wedding Feast* theme in major for the first time. An f minor to F major change occurs near the end of *The Transfiguration* in mm. 86-87 as the violinist retunes the A-flat string back to A- natural for the violin cadenza, making the violin’s resonance more open and “elevating.”⁴¹

Metric modulations also reflect invisible changes. In *The Baptism* after “Submerging,” at m. 62 the quarter note triplet becomes the new quarter note, preparing for the triumphant “Baptized” section in Db major. In *The Wedding Feast*, when the hosts realize they have run out of wine, the music disintegrates into wildly varying meters while the instrumentalists play divergent parts; a section grouping sets of five 16th-notes

⁴⁰ Oxford Interview, August 8th, 2023.

⁴¹ Oxford Interview, August 11th, 2023

eventually modulates to a 3/4 meter with quintuplets at m. 68, just before “Mary asks Jesus to help” (Fig. 2.1). In *The Eucharist*, a change from 9/8 to 3/4 occurs in mm. 28-29 and mm. 62-63, which Oxford wrote to reflect the change inside a person as a result of receiving the Eucharist.⁴²

10 2. The Wedding Feast

$\text{♩} + \text{♩} = \text{♩}$

V

Vc.

66 21 3

9/8 3/4

mp *poco a poco cresc.*

5 5 5

3 3

Figure 2.1: The Wedding Feast mm. 66-68

Perhaps the most subtle of the transformations Oxford writes are the enharmonic pitch relationships which represent the tightest union of disparate elements. In *The Transfiguration*, mm. 76 through 80 alternate using chords written with Db and Ab and chords written with C# and G#. A Db chord (with Db and Ab) in m. 76 moves to an AM7 chord (with C# and G#) in m. 77. In the following measures (mm. 78-80), the chords GbM9, DM7#11, and Ebm11 switch between flats and sharps, and this inaudible alternation is meant to represent the Catholic belief in the human and divine natures coexisting in the single person of Christ, a duality seen most visibly in the *Transfiguration*. A related section of enharmonic changes occurs in *The Eucharist* at “A

⁴² Oxford program notes, April 2022

Little Slower” (mm. 47-52 and mm. 68-73) where the same basic chord progression Db - AM9 - Gbm9 - DM13(#11) - Ebm11 alternates the same notes (Figure 2.2) In this instance, the imperceptible change between Ab and G# and between Db and C# illustrates the miracle of transubstantiation, where the elements of bread and wine imperceptibly transform to a new substance.

A Little Slower

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 47-49) features a vocal line (V) and a piano accompaniment (C). The piano part consists of block chords. Chord labels below the piano part are: Db (measure 47), Amaj9 (measure 48), and Gbmaj9 (measure 49). The second system (measures 50-52) also features vocal and piano parts. Chord labels below the piano part are: Dmaj13(#11) (measure 50), Ebm11 (measure 51), and C+9 (measure 52). The piano part continues with block chords in the same style.

Figure 2.2: The Eucharist, mm. 47-52

Inter-denominational and Multi-Genre Influences

The *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata* draws on a variety of theological and stylistic influences. Both Josh Oxford and I are Catholic converts. Although baptized Methodist as an infant, his upbringing was non-religious, and he eventually gravitated to ideas from Eastern religions as well as the works of Edgar Cayce. After a debilitating car accident (2010), he was unable to keep up much of his performing career as a pianist and percussionist, turning instead to composition as his primary work. However, he began accompanying services at Ithaca's St. James AME (African Methodist Episcopal) Church. The hymns and Gospel music he performed there would have a strong influence on the "church music" elements of the *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata*.

I was raised in a conservative non-denominational church by a sincerely believing family. During my undergraduate at Ithaca College, I attended a Presbyterian church (PCA) and was greatly influenced by the works of Puritan authors like Jonathan Edwards and David Brainard, and modern authors in a similar tradition like John Piper, A.W. Tozer, and Wayne Grudem. Toward the end of my undergraduate degree, a crisis of faith launched me into a period of seeking a more historically-grounded faith tradition. This search eventually led me to the Catholic Church, and I received confirmation as a Roman Catholic in 2020.

During the time I was going through confirmation classes (then called RCIA, or the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults), Josh Oxford and I were both in our first year at Arizona State University. We had been acquaintances in Ithaca and now became friends, discussing many of the things I was exploring in RCIA. He became intrigued, particularly

by the Eucharist and the Catholic claim of apostolic succession.⁴³ He entered RCIA the following year and found fellowship with a local Catholic Charismatic community, City of the Lord. He found the evidence of Eucharistic miracles and his first experience praying the Rosary particularly convincing,⁴⁴ and he received sacraments in the Catholic Church at Easter 2021.

Both of us brought our Protestant⁴⁵ backgrounds into our expression of the Catholic faith, and this becomes apparent in the music of the *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata*. The most obvious holdover from our Protestant days is the wording of the Our Father (also known as The Lord's Prayer) at the beginning of each movement. The words that Oxford set to music are as follows:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven;
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
now and forever. Amen.

⁴³ Apostolic succession refers to the transmission of church authority from bishop to bishop, traced all the way back to the first apostles in the Catholic and Orthodox churches.

⁴⁴ Email correspondence with Oxford, Feb. 7, 2024

⁴⁵ I am using the term "Protestant" as a broad umbrella term for religious denominations stemming from the Reformation in the 1500's in contrast to Catholic and Orthodox churches which would trace their lineage back to the first century.

What neither of us realized was that the final doxology, “For Thine is the kingdom...” is not considered part of the prayer in the Catholic Church. Oxford and I were used to saying the final line in our Protestant churches and personal prayers, and even at a Catholic Mass, we say the first part, wait for the priest to say an intervening prayer, and then finish with the final doxology. Drawing on our Protestant experience, Oxford and I considered it all just one prayer. Not until rehearsals with a vocalist who had grown up Catholic (a month before the premiere) did we learn that Catholics do not say the final tag as part of the Rosary prayer. At that point, it seemed to be too late to change the music, and we decided to keep the final line as a relic of our Protestant backgrounds.

Other Protestant influences include musical material derived from Oxford’s time in the AME church. Each movement ends with a setting of the “Glory Be” which reads:

Glory be to the Father,
And to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning,
Is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.

For the Glory Be, Oxford used the melody sung at the St. James AME Church he attended in Ithaca, and it serves as a recognizable ending for each movement. The Proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven includes multiple chords reminiscent of his time at St. James. The chord progression at the end of the movement, bVI-bVII-I, was his traditional “joke” ending to the song “It is Well with My Soul.” In mm. 35-37, the chords F+7-Gb-Go-Ab are his “gospel walk-up,” and the Latin melody in mm. 43-66 is a tune he composed and performed at St. James. Finally, the fact that this movement is written as a

lead sheet reflects contemporary church music (stemming from Protestant church music, but now in both Catholic and Protestant communities).

Outside of Protestant church influences, Oxford incorporates musical material from jazz, folk music, and the classical tradition. Jazz harmonies can be found in every movement of the work as these are a significant part of Oxford's background writing for his group the OXtet. He evokes Latin rhythm and sound in The Proclamation as a nod to the current Pope, the Argentine Pope Francis, and he incorporates folk music modes to represent the common people to whom Jesus and the disciples would have preached the good news. The Glory Be at the end of the Wedding Feast is meant to sound like disco.

This piece is in the classical tradition and ultimately derives much of its language and technique from classical sources. Both the setting of the mysteries of the Rosary as well as the *scordatura* violin writing are directly inspired by Heinrich Biber's Mystery Sonatas. After Oxford had written most of the work, I asked if he would imitate Biber's compositional style more directly in the final movement, and he conceded by including simpler harmonies, more lyrical melodies, and allusions to Biber's binary dance forms. Oxford references other classical composers by including a Stravinsky *Rite of Spring* quote in The Baptism, a Beethoven 5th Symphony "fate" motive reference in m. 82 of the Wedding Feast and m. 73 of The Transfiguration, a cadenza at the end of The Transfiguration that is meant to sound like Wieniawski, and a short reference to Bach's *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* in m. 16 of The Eucharist.

Oxford incorporates contemporary compositional techniques and textures into his writing as well. In the first movement, the long chromatic descent of the violin line serves as a "background process," a device that unifies a section, but which is not supposed to

be noticeable.⁴⁶ Whole tone scales lend a more contemporary sound to multiple sections of the piece. The shimmering texture with a cascade of organ interjections in The Transfiguration at m. 34 is reminiscent of Messiaen. Cyclicity figures prominently between The Wedding Feast and The Eucharist, where the primary theme of the Eucharist (m. 21) is derived from the main theme of the Wedding Feast (first appearance m. 21 in organ), highlighting the connection between the trans-substantive miracles in both mysteries. Cyclicity can also be seen in the recurrence of a motive representing Jesus which appears to illustrate the narratives in The Baptism, The Wedding Feast, and The Transfiguration.

Measures corresponding to Fibonacci numbers serve as turning points in every movement of the piece except The Proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven.⁴⁷ Fibonacci numbers comprise a mathematical sequence where each successive number is the total of the preceding two. Each pair of successive numbers in the sequence approximates the proportions of the golden ratio.

Fibonacci sequence

[0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144 ...]

Oxford uses these numbers as an organizing principle throughout the Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata, writing section breaks and important narrative moments at (or extremely close to) a measure number associated with the Fibonacci sequence. Additional events occur at measures corresponding to numbers created by adding various Fibonacci numbers together, creating proportional organization.

⁴⁶ Email notes from Oxford, August 7, 2023

⁴⁷ Oxford Interview, August 8, 2023

Important Fibonacci numbers and relatives within the Luminous Mysteries Rosary

Sonata:

		$89 + 13 = 102$
$13 + 21 = 34$	$55 + 8 = 63$	$89 + 21 = 110$
$34 + 8 = 42$	$55 + 13 = 68$	$89 + 34 = 123$
$34 + 13 = 47$	$55 + 21 = 76$	$89 + 21 + 21 = 131$
$34 + 21 = 55$	$55 + 34 = 89$	$89 + 55 = 144$

Readers may wish to keep these in mind when examining the measure numbers of key moments during the rest of the chapter.

Narrative and Symbolism

In the following section I examine the symbolism in each movement chronologically, explaining the musical devices that Oxford uses to illustrate the narrative. I begin the analysis of each movement with the associated scripture for context, followed by a description of the musical elements. I hope to give future performers an understanding of what each section represents, enhancing performers' experience of the piece and enabling them to make informed decisions regarding how they convey the musical meaning to an audience.

The Baptism

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

² As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,
“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
³ the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.’”

⁴ John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. . . .⁷ He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸ I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” ⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”⁴⁸

Each movement begins with the Our Father, spoken or sung by a lector/cantor with chordal accompaniment by the other instruments. The basic rhythm and melodic motion are the same for each movement, although the key and chords vary from movement to movement. Oxford uses jazz harmonies in setting the Our Father, including extended tertian harmonies. Two moments of text painting occur on the words “heaven” and “evil,” with “heaven” receiving an octave leap down, representing the conjunction of spiritual and physical realms implied by “on *earth* as it is in *heaven*,” and with the connection between “deliver” and “evil” consisting of dissonant half-step motion upward.

⁴⁸ Mark 1:1-4, 7-11 (NRSVCE)

For each Our Father section, the final “Amen” lands on the downbeat of the next section. Any significant changes will be noted in the following discussion.

The Baptism proper begins at m. 13 with a long chromatic descent in the violin until m. 53 which alludes to Jesus’ descent - first from heaven to earth and then from earth to the depths of the Jordan river - and it serves as a background to the introductory section. At m. 22, the cello enters with a theme representing the voice of John the Baptist as a “voice crying out in the wilderness”⁴⁹ of the One to come after him. This theme is based on the whole tone scale and is meant to be symbolic of Jesus’ wholeness and perfection.⁵⁰ Oxford uses this theme throughout the *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata* to represent Jesus, and from here on I will refer to it as the “Jesus theme.” This theme is repeated three times, twice in the cello and once in the organ. When “Jesus comes for Baptism,” at m. 43, Oxford writes harmonies of stacked fourths and fifths, and the organ iteration of the “Jesus theme” involves many quartal leaps. Perfect intervals for Oxford generally represent divine perfection, and he makes extensive use of sus2⁵¹ chords and others made by stacking perfects fourths or fifths.

In m. 54, just before “Submerging,” Oxford references the opening bassoon melody from Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*. This quote is meant to represent the state of humanity before baptism. Stravinsky’s *Rite* presented a neoprimitivist depiction of Russian folk practices from before the adoption of Russian Orthodoxy. Oxford meant the quote to

⁴⁹ *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata*, m. 22, quoting Mark 1:3

⁵⁰ Oxford email, Aug. 7, 2023

⁵¹ Sus2 chords are made up of the root, second, and fifth scale degree. They can also be created by stacking perfect fifths, hence Oxford’s use of them as a symbol of perfection.

evoke naturalistic and animalistic impulses, representing the “carnal desires and impurities”⁵² which are to be washed away in baptism.⁵³

At “Submerging” several transformations take place, as discussed earlier. First, the violinist begins to detune the violin, changing the timbre and resonance of the instrument. Then the organist’s left hand sets up the quarter note triplets while the cellist plays sextuplets. At m. 59, the cellist starts accenting every four sextuplets instead of every six, matching the organ triplets. At m. 62, a metric modulation confirms the new pulse, and the quarter note triplet becomes the new quarter note (Fig. 2.3). As the violinist finishes the final peg glissando from A to Ab, Oxford modulates and resolves to Db major at m. 69 to represent the completed baptism.

The energy and brightness of this section mirrors the joy one may experience at baptism and was originally meant to portray a baptism party, a part of Latin-American culture that Josh learned about as he was writing this section. However, we know of no party that occurred after Jesus’ baptism, so the “party” section is to be taken metaphorically. In fact, from the *Rite of Spring* quote to the metric and harmonic transformations and the “party” section, the imagery stands more broadly for Christian baptism rather than simply for Jesus’ own baptism. For the rest of the movement, this joining together of the Christian experience of baptism with that of Christ enables contemporary believers to place themselves in the story in a profound way.

⁵² Oxford interview, Aug. 8, 2023

⁵³ The Catholic Church does not teach that all *inclination* toward sin will be eliminated at baptism, but that baptism does cause a spiritual rebirth and a purification from sins. See John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., (Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2011), sec. 1263-64, accessed March 27, 2024, <https://www.usccb.org/sites/default/files/flipbooks/catechism/>.

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with three staves: Violin (V), Viola (Vc.), and Organ (Org.).

- System 1 (mm. 58-59):** The Violin part has a whole note chord in m. 58 and a half note chord in m. 59. The Viola part plays a continuous eighth-note triplet pattern. The Organ part features a wavy tremolo in the right hand and a bass line with quarter note triplets.
- System 2 (mm. 60-61):** Similar to the first system, the Violin part has whole and half notes. The Viola part continues with eighth-note triplets. The Organ part maintains the wavy tremolo and triplet bass line.
- System 3 (mm. 62-63):** Labeled "Metric Modulation (quarter note triplet becomes quarter)". The Violin part has whole notes. The Viola part plays quarter notes. The Organ part has a wavy tremolo in the right hand and a bass line of quarter notes.

Figure 2.3: The Wedding Feast, mm. 58-63

At m. 103 Oxford introduces the “Voice of God” motive, a melodic figure based on perfect 5ths and proclaimed by all instruments in unison. The 5ths stand for perfection while the unison writing represents an incontestable statement, so Oxford combined these techniques to represent the authority of the Divine declaration, “You are my Son, the Beloved.”⁵⁴ This motive will reappear at a similar point in The Transfiguration.

Following a section titled “Freely, prayerfully,” a cascade of septuplets in the organ and cello herald the descent of the Holy Spirit at m. 116, and the Glory Be melody ends the movement, harmonized by jazz chords. In this movement Oxford introduces the “Jesus theme” and the “Voice of God” motive, which will show up later in the sonata to illustrate the narratives. He also sets up the harmonic language of the piece with extended jazz harmonies and stacked fourths and fifths, blending classical and popular sound worlds.

The Wedding Feast

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” ⁴ And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.” ⁵ His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” ⁶ Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.” So they took it. ⁹ When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did

⁵⁴ The character of this line doesn’t quite reflect the affect of the statement, “You are my Son, the Beloved. With you I am well-pleased,” and it was also extremely difficult to play (though Oxford eventually relented and adjusted the contour of mm. 104-105 to make it a bit more playable). This motive was one of the points of disagreement between us throughout the composition and rehearsal process.

not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom ¹⁰ and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.” ¹¹ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.⁵⁵

After the Our Father, the movement begins with an ominous-sounding dance in C# minor. The “Wedding Feast theme” appears at m. 21 in the organist’s right hand accompanied by frenetic activity in the violin part, strummed chords in the cello part, and syncopated rhythms in the organist’s left hand. The dark character of the material foreshadows the problem to come. A harmonic turn at m. 34 brings the music to F# minor (significant for Oxford as an arrival on the iv chord and as a Fibonacci checkpoint). The intensity mounts when the violinist gets the melody at m. 42, culminating at m. 48 where Oxford writes in the score, “We’re Out of WINE!!!!”⁵⁶

Panic ensues at m. 55 and the three instrumentalists diverge like three people dispersing to search for alternative sources of wine.⁵⁷ After they come back together in m. 63, the violin initiates a metric modulation, going from accented groups of five 16th notes in 4/4 to one measure of 21/16, resolving to 3/4 with quintuplets (see earlier fig. 2.1). The former 16th note now equals the 16th quintuplet, relaxing the tempo and setting the stage for Mary’s plea.

⁵⁵ John 2:1-11 (NRSVCE)

⁵⁶ Running out of wine at a wedding would have disgraced the family, and most representations of this story imply that the situation did not progress to public humiliation but was resolved behind the scenes before the lack of wine became obvious to most attendees.

⁵⁷ Oxford interview, Aug. 8, 2023

At m. 76 Oxford depicts Mary approaching Jesus. The violin part consists of a variant of the “Jesus theme” and Oxford intensifies the pleading effect with *sul ponticello* and fast, free bow. As the subdivisions of the beat increase from duples to triplets, sixteenths, quintuplets, and finally septuplets, Mary’s anxiety is palpable. He notes that this section is “impassioned” with “emotion under the surface.”⁵⁸ The cello carries Jesus’ response, another iteration of the “Jesus theme.”

The next section portrays Jesus turning the water into wine behind closed doors.⁵⁹ The organist maintains oscillating 32nd notes on an ascending progression of suspended chords, from Absus⁶⁰ in m. 100 all the way up to Esus in m. 110, creating a mystical atmosphere. The violinist begins to pluck regular left-hand pizzicato quarter notes, adding to the feeling of suspense, and from m. 102 to m. 110 gradually retunes the violin from its lowest pitch at Eb up to F. During most of these eight measures, the glissando violin line functions as the bass for the ensemble, making the gradual transitions of pitch that much more transformative. The cello continues the melodic contours and rhythms of the “Jesus theme.”

By the time the violinist’s peg glissando arrives on F in m. 110, the water-to-wine transmutation is complete, and the music returns to the “Wedding Feast theme,” now in D minor. Finally, the new wine is brought to the steward (also known as the master of the banquet), and in mm. 128-9, the violinist retunes the Ab string to A natural. At m. 130, the steward tastes the water-turned-wine, and the organ part reflects his feeling of

⁵⁸ Oxford interview, Aug. 8, 2023

⁵⁹ The following storyline is not written in the score but follows Oxford’s interpretation as related to me in interviews Aug. 11, 2023 and Feb. 6, 2024.

⁶⁰ Sus chords are made with the root, fourth, and fifth scale degrees, making them symmetrical, with intervals P4-M2-P4.

surprise at both the presence and quality of the wine by changing the chord from D minor to D major.

With that, the party is back on! The cello initiates a glissando down to start the groove for the “Wedding Feast theme” which appears now for the first time in major in the violin part while the organist supplies the syncopated rhythms and jovial 16th notes. M. 134 is the “dispersal” motive from m. 55, now sounding like laughter as the violinist strums. The cellist accompanies the final Glory Be with a bass line made up of staccato octave leaps meant to sound like disco. M. 155 shifts abruptly to Db major, which Oxford says is simply a joke modulation so the movement will end in the same key as it began.⁶¹

The Proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven

... Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God,¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”⁶²

³“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”⁶³

⁶¹ Oxford interview, Aug. 8, 2023

⁶² Mark 1:14-15 (NRSVCE)

⁶³ Matthew 5:3-9 (NRSVCE)

This movement makes extensive references to folk music and “church music,”⁶⁴ and it is intended to be more accessible to an audience without classical music training. The triadic harmonies and singable melodies represent the more “down to earth” character which Oxford imagined as the atmosphere for the disciples’ proclamation of the Good News. The opening Our Father is sung like a ballad rather than spoken. M. 13 features another joke: a B minor chord in the organ underneath a Bb in the melody. It is supposed to sound like a typical organist’s mistake, though in the end, it seemed like appropriate text painting for “lead us not into temptation.”

Measure 21 is titled “Folk pizz jam” and is open for improvisation over Db for about one minute. Measure 23 introduces a newly composed tune with text structure AA’BA’’ where B text varies from verse to verse, while A text remains the same.

A: The kingdom of heaven's at hand
Repent and believe in the Gospel

A’: The kingdom of heaven's at hand
Repent for the kingdom is near

B: V1 Blessed are those who have spirits poor
Blessed are those who are meek and mourn
/V2 Blessed are those who are comforted
Blessed are those who have hunger and thirst
/V3 Blessed are those called the Sons of God
Blessed are those who are merciful

A’’: The kingdom of heaven's at hand.
Repent for the kingdom of God⁶⁵

⁶⁴ By which Oxford means the music that he would play for AME services.

⁶⁵ Oxford, Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata program notes

For instrumental performance, this section would be repeated only once, allowing both the violinist and the cellist to play the melody. For vocal performance, the singer would take all three verses. Oxford wrote this section like a lead sheet with melody and chords, reflecting the church music he would play. The “church music” quality represents the “kingdom of heaven,” if one understands the kingdom of heaven now to be embodied by the Church.⁶⁶ The following “Latin feel” sections in A Lydian and A Mixolydian are also open for solos. The modes encourage a folk music quality to the performance, and the Latin rhythms provide a consistent groove even while the tempo picks up.⁶⁷

The final section before the Glory Be is another tune which Oxford originally wrote for the AME church, but for this piece he made it faster and more syncopated.⁶⁸ This section also includes lyrics, though they are not necessarily meant for performance. Oxford emphasizes the theme of repentance, saying that “not enough people go to confession.”⁶⁹

The kingdom's near

repent it's near

repent it's near

repent it's here

The kingdom's near repent repent; it's here

The kingdom's near

repent it's near

repent it's near

⁶⁶ Oxford interview, Aug. 11, 2023

⁶⁷ For a suggested Latin rhythm for organ, see Fig. 3.7

⁶⁸ Oxford interview, Aug. 11, 2023

⁶⁹ Oxford interview, Aug. 11, 2023. The Catholic and Orthodox sacrament of reconciliation, also known as penance or confession, is where one confesses their sins to a priest and receives God’s forgiveness.

it's near repent; it's here;
the kingdom of God; it's here!⁷⁰

The Glory Be continues the Latin samba feel, though in a more relaxed half-time.

This movement serves as a fun “ear cleanser,” providing a musical reprieve from the more intellectual writing in the other movements. The music is accessible to the listener, allows flexibility and creativity for the performers, and incorporates its message through the written lyrics. The popular styles of music reflect the gospel message’s invitation to anyone and everyone.

The Transfiguration

² Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³ and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵ Then Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁶ He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” ⁸ Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.⁷¹

The body of The Transfiguration begins with a chromatic ascent in the cello and violin which portrays Jesus and the disciples climbing the mountain. After the ascent, the moment of transfiguration occurs when the string players drop out, leaving a progression

⁷⁰ Oxford, Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata program notes

⁷¹ Mark 9:2-8 (NRSVCE)

of sus2 chords radiating from the organ in m. 34 (again symbolizing perfection). The strings re-enter with a dazzling cascade of “seagulls”⁷² which arrive on a series of harmonics which Oxford intended to reflect the radiance of Jesus’ appearance.⁷³ The organ then begins a series of ever-lengthening “bleep-bloops”⁷⁴ reminiscent of Messiaen textures.⁷⁵ At m. 55, the organist settles on a fluttering quartal vamp which lays the textural background for the next section.

Imitation between the cello and violin parts begins in m. 56, representing Moses and Elijah, with the melodic material consisting of the “Jesus theme.” At m. 63 the “Voice of God” motive returns with the perfect intervals and unison texture. After a prayerful section marked “Slower,” the violinist begins a section incorporating the bow technique of *barriolage*, alternating between fingered and open Ab, or G#. The alternation between Ab and G# in the measures from m. 76 to m. 81 is also physically depicted by the violinist alternating strings, highlighting the duality of Jesus’ personhood as both God and man.⁷⁶ The violin part reaches upward while the cello part reiterates the “Jesus theme” one more time.

The organ part depicts “running down the mountain” with a “quintessential Josh Oxford whole tone lick,”⁷⁷ arriving on F at m. 85. The violinist “elevates” the F minor to F major by retuning the Ab string back up to A natural.⁷⁸ The Glory Be consists of a solo

⁷² Artificial harmonic glissandi

⁷³ Oxford interview, Aug. 11, 2023

⁷⁴ Oxford’s term from interviews, Aug. 11, 2023 and Feb. 6, 2024.

⁷⁵ Possibly *Exotic Birds*, but Oxford didn’t link this texture to a specific work, simply saying it was “something [Messiaen] would do.”

⁷⁶ Oxford interview, Aug. 11, 2023

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

violin cadenza, which Oxford wrote out to imitate such violinistic effects as the Bach Chaconne arpeggiations. In writing this, he wanted to add a solo violin texture he hadn't used yet and to feature the adjusted open strings (here F-C-A-E) more prominently. He also encouraged a virtuosic flair, asking me to imagine I was playing a violin showpiece by Wieniawski.

The Eucharist

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." ²⁷ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."⁷⁹

When Oxford was getting ready to write the final movement of the Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata, he asked me whether I wanted him to include anything in particular in this final piece. Because this piece was initially inspired by Biber's Rosary Sonatas, I wanted to find a way to tie this new work back to its roots. Up to this point in the work, Oxford had used many contemporary composition techniques but few resembling baroque harmonies or forms, so I asked him to write a movement that incorporated binary form and a took a more traditional approach to melody. The result was a beautiful movement which is abstract rather than programmatic in its representation of the mystery story, but which conveys the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation in multiple ways.

⁷⁹ Matthew 26:26-29 (NRSVCE)

The first section after the Our Father is patterned after J.S. Bach's "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring," in both the meter, continuous 8th triplets in the cello, and the opening of the violin melody. At m. 21, the primary melody references the "Wedding Feast theme," but with new harmonization. Much of this movement involves the violin and cello strumming *alla chitarra* (like a guitar). Oxford incorporates this technique as another reference to The Wedding Feast where the cello strums to provide rhythmic framework. The references to the Wedding Feast draw a direct connection between the changing of water to wine in the second mystery with the changing of wine to Christ's blood in this final mystery. It also alludes to an understanding of the Eucharistic itself as a type of wedding feast between Christ and the church.

Measures 29, 42, and 63 involve a metric modulation from 9/8 to 3/4 where the 8th note stays the same, but the beats change from dotted quarter notes to quarter notes, and at "A Little Slower" (m. 47 and 68) the 3/4 is replaced by 4/4. Oxford writes that the metric modulations are "indicative of the change inside by taking the Eucharist."⁸⁰ In the same "A Little Slower" section, the chords harmonizing the melody alternate between those using G# and those using Ab⁸¹ (see fig. 2.2), representing the invisible change effected by transubstantiation.⁸²

Oxford gives the final Glory Be melody to the organ. Afterward, the violin begins a chromatic ascent from as low as possible to as high as possible on the G string (now

⁸⁰ Oxford program notes, April 2022

⁸¹ These are fundamentally the same chords as in the bariolage section of The Transfiguration.

⁸² Believed by the Catholic church to be the imperceptible change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ at the words of consecration.

tuned to F), “entering the spiritual realm.”⁸³ The ascent into heaven in *The Eucharist* parallels the long descent from heaven to earth in *The Baptism*.

Conclusion

My hope is that this exploration of the themes and symbolism of the *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata* provides context and inspiration to future performers. In the final chapter of this document, I will consider the purely technical aspects of the work to facilitate the learning process and overcome technical challenges.

⁸³ Oxford interview, Aug. 11, 2023

CHAPTER 3

PERFORMANCE GUIDE

The closing section of this document addresses technical issues in the Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata. I will examine several of the difficulties, offer solutions, and provide resources for future performers. The first part explores the unique challenge of this piece: the use of dynamic *scordatura* achieved by means of peg glissando. The rest of the chapter provides fingering suggestions for the repetitive chromatic passages, advice for executing challenging or composer-specific instructions, and strategies for the improvisatory sections which include *scordatura* fingerboard maps to aid personal improvisation. My hope is that this performance guide will increase the accessibility of the piece by providing technical explanations for novel techniques and resources for personal practice.

Executing Dynamic *Scordatura*

The primary difficulty in executing peg glissando⁸⁴ (detuning the violin while playing) is accuracy in adjusting the peg to a specific pitch in a short amount of time. All violinists tune the instrument this way, but there are generally no precise time constraints while tuning; if a peg is sticky or it slips, there is ample time to adjust. However, for the Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata, many of the peg glissandi must be performed within a metric framework where there is no extra time to adjust, and for that reason, making sure that each peg turns smoothly and securely is paramount. Depending on the temperature and humidity of the location, peg compound for smooth turning or peg drops

⁸⁴ The first step in achieving dynamic *scordatura*.

to prevent slipping may be required.⁸⁵ Another option is to vary the way the string is wound around each peg; for the A string one rotation to the left and the rest to the right usually prevents my peg from becoming too tight. Similar winding strategies may be employed with other strings to yield optimal results.

To make tuning time more flexible, Oxford has usually placed fermatas or repeating vamps during the moments of peg glissando. In *The Wedding Feast*, there are fermatas over the peg glissandi in m. 88 and mm. 130-31, and there are repeat signs around m. 110 and 130 to be used if needed. Oxford provides two fermatas in the beginning of *The Transfiguration* for retuning, and the final retune in mm. 86-87 occurs over two measures of repeated notes that can be extended as long as needed since the violinist performs solo for the rest of the movement. These moments enable the performer to tune carefully.

There are, however, multiple instances where there is no extra time allowed, and here I will address how the performer may choose to practice these. In *The Baptism*, the first retune occurs during the “Submerging” (mm. 56-59 and mm. 67-68). At this point there is a metric modulation occurring in the other instruments where the quarter note triplet becomes the new quarter note,⁸⁶ so rhythmic precision is necessary. For this section, I found the most effective way to practice the rhythmic and pitch material at the same time was to record the left hand of the organ (on piano) from m. 56 to the downbeat of m. 69 along with a metronome. I would then play and detune the violin along with this

⁸⁵ Erin Shrader, “A Primer on Pegs,” *Strings Magazine*, January 2006, <https://stringsmagazine.com/a-primer-on-pegs/> (Accessed June 26, 2023).

⁸⁶ If the quarter equals 96, the new quarter equals 144, or if the quarter equals 80, the new quarter equals 120.

metronome and bass track. Practicing this way enabled me to hear the chords to which I was tuning within a precise metric framework.

During the Wedding Feast, there is a quick detune from F3 to E3 which happens between m. 12 and 13. At this point, the new low E functions as the third of the C# minor chord, and the violinist has about six beats of repeated open Es which provides time to adjust the peg if needed. In mm. 105-106 the tune up from Eb3 to E3 is fairly slow and the arrival note should blend with the cello's G4 on beat two of m. 106. The subsequent tune in mm. 109-110 from E3 to F3 should eventually blend with the organ D2 on the downbeat of m. 110.

In the Eucharist, the glissando from E5 to Eb5 in mm. 7-8 is challenging due to the higher tension of the E string compared to the others and the lack of orienting pitches in the other instruments until the downbeat of m. 8 where the organ has an Ab2 in the bass and an Eb4 in the right hand. In mm. 10-11, the organ holds an F2 in the bass underneath the violinist's glissando from A4 to Ab4. There are also a few measures of rest just after these retunings which could allow time for the performer to quickly pluck to check the strings.

For this project, I installed fine tuners on all of my strings, which remained on the violin for several months during the practice and rehearsal process. There were four reasons for doing this. One reason was to allow me to correct the pitch slightly if the peg glissando was inaccurate.⁸⁷ The second reason to use fine tuners was to check and adjust the tuning slightly in between movements without drawing attention; I reserved the

⁸⁷ However, there were only two or three places in the sonata when there was actually time for me to adjust with the fine tuner.

striking effect of the peg glissando for the body of the sonata. The next two situations bring up peculiar challenges with the whole enterprise of retuning a string instrument during performance.

A string instrument is a very finely balanced combination of wood and strings with precise tensions; it takes some time for the instrument to respond to any changes, and these changes affect the whole instrument. When a string is tuned to a different pitch, it continues to adjust to the new tension for several seconds up to a few minutes. This may also be because of the variable tension behind the nut and the bridge which continues to equalize for a while after the adjustment.⁸⁸ Therefore, most of the initial retunings in the Oxford sonata could only be perfect at the first moment. Immediately, the string would begin to go out of tune again. For example, in the Baptism, the lowest string is brought from G3 down to F3, but even when my initial retune arrived at an equal-tempered F, within 30 seconds the new F would be at least twenty cents sharp as it adjusted to the lower tension and started returning to its original pitch.

My initial plan to counteract this was to document precisely how much a string would tend to change after the peg glissando, and then the next time I would retune the string that much lower or higher to compensate for the inevitable pitch shift. In the previous example, I would tune the G down to F-minus-twenty-cents. However, after practicing this for a while, I found it impractical because I had difficulty hearing what F-20 cents would sound like when playing on my own, and to listen for that pitch in the context of

⁸⁸ Ensuring that the grooves for the strings in both the nut and the bridge are well lubricated with graphite from a soft pencil should help them expand and contract more quickly.

the ensemble would be even more challenging.⁸⁹ Finally, I decided to simply retune as best I could in the ensemble context and to deal with the inevitable shifts as they occurred, either by adjusting my finger placement or by making slight adjustments with the fine tuners.

The final reason for installing the fine tuners has to do with the relationship of the strings to each other. A major change in one string's tension affects the tension of the others. In the Baptism the G, D, and A strings are lowered either a whole step or a half step, reducing the tension on the left side of the tailpiece and raising the tension on the E string. Due to this added tension, or perhaps another explanation such as a shift in the position of the tailpiece, the E string would end up at least ten cents sharp after the adjustment of the other strings. In *The Baptism* mm. 64-65 there is a moment where the performer could use the fine tuner to bring the E string down, but any adjustment will be an estimate since the performer is bowing on the open F and Db strings at this point. As I practiced this for a few weeks, I found that for my instrument, about one turn of the E fine tuner was sufficient to bring the E string down into the proper range.

My initial learning process for *The Baptism* involved many precise calculations in which I attempted to peg tune the new F string twenty cents flat and the new Db and Ab strings ten cents flat to counteract their slight return to a sharper pitch. Then I tried to fine tune the E string ten cents down (without being able to hear it) to counteract the change in tailpiece tension. However, I eventually abandoned these calculations because in a

⁸⁹ I do not have perfect pitch, and while having ultra perfect pitch would have made the retuning easier, it would likely have made the use of scordatura tablature notation disorienting. If only a condition such as selective perfect pitch existed! (though perhaps this can be trained.) In any case, in future performances, perhaps the violin could be fitted with a body-mounted tuner such as guitarists use. This could provide an objective reference point.

performance context, the volume of the ensemble and the speed needed to execute these precise peg retunes at tempo would greatly increase the challenge of performing them reliably. I finally chose simply to tune to the context around me and adjust my finger placement as the pitch shifts occurred. I also accepted that the “Baptized” section in Db major would likely end up significantly sharp and did my best to follow the joking advice of a former chamber music coach who suggested that I not focus so much on tuning the instrument but use my ears to simply to “play in tune!”⁹⁰

To facilitate note reading and execution, I created a semi-tablature transcription of the original violin part, which is similar to Biber’s original Rosary Sonatas score. However, my transcription does not simply present the notes as they would be played in first position as Biber’s does, but instead is based on my own fingering choices which require substantial shifting. The reader will find the edited violin part in the Appendix, which provides both my own semi-tablature transcription in the primary staff as well as the original pitch notation in the ossia staff for quick and easy reference. My hope is that by having both staves visible at once performers will be able to execute the fast technical passages without having to transpose mentally and may easily choose alternate fingerings if desired.

Chromatic Fingerings

Extended chromatic ascending and descending patterns appear in multiple places within the sonata. In these sections, the density of the writing can make the music cumbersome to read, but each section simply repeats a pattern. In The Baptism, the

⁹⁰ Kyle Armbrust, then viola professor at Ithaca College, whose advice was based on anecdotes from a friend of his, a famous performer whose name I forget.

passage from m. 14 to 53 is primarily composed of a measure-long unit sequenced down by a half step each measure. The unit is entirely chromatic except for the second-to-last interval (fig. 3.1), and I chose not to shift but to play [1234321] most of the way down, adding a whole step between third and fourth finger for the end.



Figure 3.1: The Baptism, m. 14 (interval pattern)

Early in The Transfiguration, the chromatic ascent repeats a quintuplet pattern from m. 18 to m. 29, when the pattern settles on its highest point. I chose to shift on the first interval of each quintuplet (fig. 3.2).



Figure 3.2: The Transfiguration, m. 18 (ossia staff)

The final ascent at the end of The Eucharist went through many updates and reductions. My initial realization of Oxford’s instruction to “Continue pattern, but slowly ascend and fade”⁹¹ was meant to be a symmetrical inverse of the beginning of the Baptism where I would ascend by only a half step each measure. This version made the last measure of the piece about two minutes long. When performing this movement by

⁹¹ Oxford, “The Eucharist,” score p. 9.

itself, this lengthy coda felt lopsided to the audience, so I experimented with initially shortening the pattern to half its length, and later to one quarter the length, crawling up by one half step every beat. However, when Oxford heard the realization, he asked that I simply ascend as high as possible on the G string, shortening the coda yet again. The final chromatic pattern can be seen in Fig. 3.3.



Figure 3.3: The Eucharist, m. 96 (ossia staff)

Technical Challenges and Suggestions

In *The Wedding Feast*, one of the most challenging spots for both personal rhythm and ensemble occurs in mm. 55-63. Oxford changes beat values and shifts motives around the ensemble in ways that frequently do not line up. The app TimeGuru helped immensely for my personal practice as well as for practicing with the cellist. Within the app, the performer can program a click track for various numbers of beats and beat lengths. The app then will loop the click track at any tempo while also providing the option to randomly mute beats up to a chosen percentage.

In *The Transfiguration*, there is a long passage of harmonics from m. 39 to m. 54. The double-stop artificial harmonics tend not to speak clearly in m. 40 and 42. To improve the sound quality and reliability in m. 40, I start the lower of the harmonics first and gradually blend the upper harmonic with the lower one. In m. 42, I start with the upper

harmonic and gradually add the lower one. I find that this allows me to achieve a clear tone on the initial harmonic, making it easier to then execute the second harmonic.

Oxford writes a unique instruction into both the violin and cello parts: “*molto sul pont./fast free bow.*” The first occurrence of this technique is in The Baptism m. 23 for the cellist and in The Wedding Feast m. 77 for the violinist. This was Oxford’s way of indicating a type of bow stroke he saw bassist Nicholas Walker⁹² frequently perform. The performer moves the bow close to the bridge while bowing very quickly with light finger pressure and wide vibrato. This brings out the higher partials and creates a sense of both suspension and intensity, but without an extremely loud dynamic.

Guitarist and longtime friend of Oxford Michael Caporizzo once said in an interview for the Ithaca Times, “[Oxford] writes for the players he has to work with; his music exploits your strengths while forcing you to face your weaknesses head-on.”⁹³ At one point in a chamber orchestra setting, Josh Oxford heard me playing a syncopated section of Brahms’ Third Symphony in a less-than-satisfactory way. Right afterward, he promised that he would write some challenging syncopations into the *Luminous Mysteries Sonata* to help shore up my rhythm. The resulting melody occurs in The Proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven during the final section before the Glory Be. The melody bounces and grooves while also tending to roll forward. This melody provides a fun challenge for performers, and it helped me (and hopefully future performers of this piece) develop more rhythmic integrity in my playing.

⁹² Nicholas Walker is the former bass professor at Ithaca College and is currently on faculty at the University of Michigan.

⁹³ Austin Lamb, “Oxford’s Odyssey,” *Ithaca Times*, June 25, 2019, https://www.ithaca.com/news/ithaca/oxfords-odyssey/article_155d2740-041e-11e9-bdbb-53b7197d3888.amp.html.

Improvisation Ideas

For the final chord of *The Transfiguration*, Oxford asks the performer to “arpeggiate across the whole range of the instrument.”⁹⁴ Initially, I imitated baroque violinists who arpeggiate the final chord of some of Biber’s *Rosary Sonatas* by simply bowing back and forth a few times over the initial chord voicing. I wanted to avoid anything more complex because the *scordatura* made finding alternate chord tones more challenging and high-range arpeggios can be difficult to tune. However, I did eventually find a way to extend the range of the final chord. The lowest two strings are tuned to F3 and C4, so I left these as open strings and simply moved my hand up to new F major chord tones on the A and E strings. My final realization of this chord can be seen in figure 3.4.

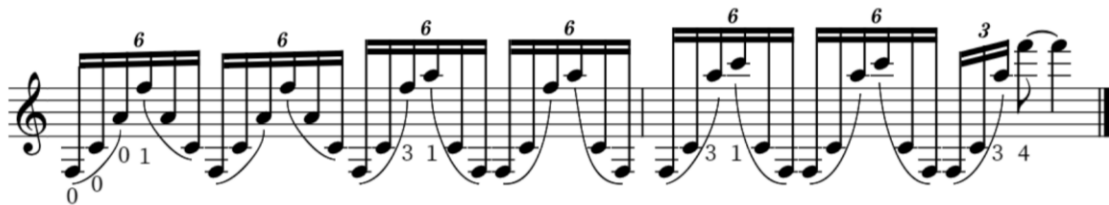


Figure 3.4: *The Transfiguration*, m. 103 realization (at pitch)

For *The Proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven*, Oxford provided multiple places to improvise. The first section is the “Folk Pizz Jam” over a Db vamp at m. 21. When discussing what he wanted for this section, Oxford suggested I use strumming patterns similar to those in Jessie Montgomery’s *Strum*.⁹⁵ In my own improvisation, I imitated

⁹⁴ Oxford, “*The Transfiguration*,” score p. 11.

⁹⁵ Possible examples for imitation occur at the opening and at 1:20 of this recording by the Catalyst Quartet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZmVRWjpNxxw>.

rhythmic elements from *Strum* for the beginning and the end of m. 21. In The Baptism mm. 54-55, Oxford had briefly quoted the bassoon solo from the opening of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, so for the middle of my pizzicato improvisation, I inserted my own *Rite of Spring* quote by playing the pizzicato and ostinato-accent pattern from the end of the introduction and the beginning of The Augurs of Spring.⁹⁶

In the following section of The Proclamation (starting m. 23) the performers have a few options. There is a melody line with chord symbols and lyrics. We chose not to perform with lyrics for this version of the piece, but we opted for the repeat. For the first time through the melody, I took the melody and the cellist strummed the chords. For the second time, the cellist took the melody and I plucked broken chords on the upper two strings, except in mm. 31-34 where I played a parallel harmony in 6ths with the cello, beginning on Db5. I avoided the lower two strings because of their scordatura, but future performers may use the fingerboard map I created (Fig. 3.5) to come up with an accompaniment of their own.

The next section of improvisation was the most fun for me. Oxford wrote mm. 39-40 as a "Latin Feel" *accelerando* leading into the final uptempo section. Being unfamiliar with Latin rhythms, I studied by listening to multiple examples of Bossa Nova, Chacha, and Samba so I could suggest rhythms for my ensemble. However in the end, Oxford wrote out specific rhythms and a harmonic realization of this section for the organist (provided at the end of this chapter as Fig. 3.7).

⁹⁶ Both Oxford's *Rite of Spring* quote and mine were dedicated to Dr. Jeffery Meyer, who greatly influenced our appreciation for Stravinsky.

For the *accelerando*, we decided that I would lead it by increasing my physical motion and stomping my feet. The stomping helped us find and maintain the groove while also pushing the tempo. Future performers may find the organist to be the most obvious leader for the *accelerando*, but for our situation, it was most effective for the violinist to lead the *accelerando* both visibly and audibly.

The first measure of this section is a vamp in A Lydian where the organ and cello repeat A and B chords while I improvise in an E major key signature. I built this improvisation from the organ accompaniment rhythm to help stabilize the ensemble during the *accelerando*. The second vamp is in A Mixolydian where the organ and cello repeat A and G chords while I improvise in a D major key signature. I incorporated whole tone runs (which work well in this *scordatura*) and took a few bowing and melodic ideas from Irish and American folk music for the improvisation. Here we didn't need to move the tempo so I was more free to play with harmony and rhythmic groupings. We kept the same accompaniment rhythm throughout the rest of the movement.

For *The Eucharist*, a long section of the violin part is written as strummed chords based off of a chord chart (mm. 55-74). I created a realization of this chord chart for the violin ossia staff which provides a playable chord voicing and suggests strumming rhythms. However, if future performers would like to create their own alternate chord voicings, they may find my fingerboard map for this section useful (Fig. 3.6).

Conclusion

At the outset of learning the *Luminous Mysteries Rosary Sonata*, performers may be intimidated by the formidable challenges. Most violinists will have little experience

playing in *scordatura* and even less experience with peg glissando. The rhythmic and ensemble difficulties make playing as a group even more challenging than playing alone. The improvisational sections demand creativity and flexibility. However, with dedication from all parties, this piece is playable. Armed with this performance guide and the accompanying violin part with ossia staff, future performers will be able to approach this piece with the tools necessary to prepare a successful performance.

F	Db	A	E
F#/Gb	D	A#/Bb	F
G	D#/Eb	B	F#/Gb
G#/Ab	E	C	G
A	F	C#/Db	G#/Ab
A#/Bb	F#/Gb	D	A
B	G	D#/Eb	A#/Bb
C	G#/Ab	E	B

Figure 3.5: Fingerboard map for The Proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven

F	C	Ab	Eb
F#/Gb	C#/Db	A	E
G	D	A#/Bb	F
G#/Ab	D#/Eb	B	F#/Gb
A	E	C	G
A#/Bb	F	C#/Db	G#/Ab
B	F#/Gb	D	A
C	G	D#/Eb	A#/Bb

Figure 3.6: Fingerboard map for The Eucharist

Score

lms mvt 3 organ chords written out

$\text{♩} = 108$

The image displays a musical score for organ chords in 4/4 time, spanning 20 measures. The score is written on a single treble clef staff. The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 108$. The music consists of a sequence of chords, many of which are beamed together in pairs. The chords are primarily triads and dyads, with some more complex voicings. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into five systems, with measure numbers 5, 10, 15, and 20 indicated at the beginning of each system. The first system contains measures 1-4, the second system contains measures 5-9, the third system contains measures 10-14, the fourth system contains measures 15-19, and the fifth system contains measures 20-21. The music concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Figure 3.7: Organ chord rhythmic and harmonic realization for The Proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven mm. 39-62

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Josh Oxford interviews and correspondence

These are the official exchanges where I documented information and quotes. Of course, Oxford and I also communicated extensively before and between these interviews as we worked closely on the writing, editing, and performance of the piece.

August 7, 2023, email correspondence

August 8, 2023, Zoom interview

August 11, 2023, Zoom interview

February 6, 2024, Facetime interview

APPENDIX A

VIOLIN PART FOR THE LUMINOUS MYSTERIES ROSARY SONATA

Violin

1. The Baptism

Freely; Prayerfully

♩ = 96

p
Our father hallowed thy kingdom Hea - ven Give

7
Forgive lead deliver evil kingdom - power - glory

Mystery 1: The Baptism

pp *sempre legato* etc...

pp *mp*

pp

pp

sf *mf* *sf*

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1. The Baptism

2
"...one voice crying out in the wilderness..."

a

loco
sub. *p* *sempre legato*

24 *mp*

26 *pp*

30

b

p

34

Musical score for measures 36-42. The score consists of four staves of music. Measures 36-37 are marked with a *mf* dynamic. Measures 38-39 are marked with a *pp* dynamic. Measures 40-41 are marked with a *poco rit.* dynamic. The music features sixteenth-note patterns with sixteenth rests, often grouped in sixteenth-note beams. A triplet of sixteenth notes is present at the end of measure 42.

c Jesus Comes Up For Baptism

Musical score for the section 'Jesus Comes Up For Baptism', starting at measure 43. The section is marked *a tempo*. The music is in 3/4 time and features sixteenth-note patterns with sixteenth rests, often grouped in sixteenth-note beams. The dynamic starts at *mp* and changes to *p* at measure 44. An arrow labeled 'increase bow speed' points to the right above the staff. The section ends at measure 46 with a double bar line and repeat dots.

1. The Baptism

4

Musical score for measures 47-53. Measure 47 is the start of a sixteenth-note triplet. Measures 48-50 continue the triplet. Measure 51 continues the triplet. Measure 52 continues the triplet. Measure 53 begins with the triplet and ends with a triplet of eighth notes.

Submerging detune D to C# detune F# to F

Actual Pitch

Musical score for measures 54-56. Measure 54 shows a detune from D to C#. Measure 55 shows a detune from F# to F. Measure 56 continues the detuning.

Metric Modulation (quarter note triplet becomes quarter) **d** detune A to Ab

Musical score for measures 62-63. Measure 62 shows a quarter note triplet. Measure 63 shows the modulation to a quarter note.

1. The Baptism

Baptized $\text{♩} = 144$

Actual Pitch

69 $\text{♩} = 144$

69

72

72

75

75

79

79

e

82

ff

f

1. The Baptism

6

85

85

87

87

89

89

91

91

93 (cello entrance)

f

f dim.

niente cresc.

gradually transform into pattern in m. 101...

VAMP

Cello cues going on

Musical notation for measures 101-102. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. Both staves contain sixteenth-note patterns with slurs and accents. The bottom staff includes sixteenth-note chords with a '6' above them.

The Voice of God

Musical notation for measures 101-103. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. Measure 101 has a whole note. Measure 102 has a half note with a slur and an accent. Measure 103 has a half note with a slur and an accent. The bottom staff includes sixteenth-note chords with a '6' above them. The dynamic marking *ff* is present at the start of measure 103.

Musical notation for measures 105-106. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. Measure 105 has a half note with a slur and an accent. Measure 106 has a half note with a slur and an accent. The bottom staff includes sixteenth-note chords with a '6' above them. The dynamic marking *accel.* is above measure 105 and *molto rit.* is above measure 106. The instruction *sul A* is above measure 105.

Freely; Prayerfully

Musical notation for measures 108-109. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. Measure 108 has a half note with a slur and an accent. Measure 109 has a half note with a slur and an accent. The bottom staff includes sixteenth-note chords with a '3' and a '5' below them. The dynamic marking *rall.* is above measure 108. The tempo marking $\text{♩} = 96$ is above measure 108.

1. The Baptism

8

Musical notation for measures 113-115. The top staff (treble clef) contains measures 113, 114, and 115. The bottom staff (treble clef) contains measures 113, 114, and 115. Both staves feature complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and quintuplets.

The Spirit Descends

Musical notation for measures 116-117. The top staff (treble clef) contains measures 116 and 117. The bottom staff (treble clef) contains measures 116 and 117. Measure 116 includes a *ff* dynamic marking. Measure 117 includes a *rit.* marking and a wavy line indicating a tremolo effect.

"Glory Be..." $\text{♩} = 96$

Musical notation for measures 122-123. The top staff (treble clef) contains measures 122 and 123. The bottom staff (treble clef) contains measures 122 and 123. The music is in 4/4 time and consists of simple, sustained notes.

Musical notation for measures 125-126. The top staff (treble clef) contains measures 125 and 126. The bottom staff (treble clef) contains measures 125 and 126. Measure 126 includes a *sul A* marking.

Musical notation for measures 128-129. The top staff (treble clef) contains measures 128 and 129. The bottom staff (treble clef) contains measures 128 and 129. The music consists of simple, sustained notes.

Musical notation for measures 132-133. The top staff (treble clef) contains measures 132 and 133. The bottom staff (treble clef) contains measures 132 and 133. Measure 132 includes a *sul E* marking and measure 133 includes a *sul G* marking.

Violin

2. The Wedding Feast

Freely; Prayerfully

$\text{♩} = 96$

The musical score is written for violin in a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first system (measures 1-7) features a melody in the upper staff and a bass line in the lower staff. A box above the lower staff indicates the tuning: "tuned Low F-Db-Ab-E". The lyrics "our father hallowed kingdom hea - ven forgive" are written below the lower staff. The first measure of the lower staff starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second system (measures 8-12) continues the melody and bass line. A box above the lower staff indicates a detuning: "detune F to E". The lyrics "lead deliver evil kingdom power glory" are written below. A *rit.* (ritardando) marking is placed above the staff at the end of measure 11. The third system (measures 13-14) is marked "Dance Tempo" with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 132$. The key signature changes to three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music consists of a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The dynamic is marked *mf marcato*. The fourth system (measures 15-16) continues the rhythmic pattern. A box above the lower staff indicates a detuning: "detune F to E".

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Musical notation for measures 17-18. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. Both staves contain eighth and sixteenth notes with various articulations like accents and slurs. A '2' is written below the first measure of the bass staff.

Musical notation for measures 19-20. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of three sharps and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. A fermata is placed over the final note of the top staff in measure 20, with the text 'x = somewhere up there' to its right. A dynamic marking of *f* is at the end of the bottom staff.

The Wedding Feast

Musical notation for measures 21-22. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of three sharps and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The bottom staff starts with a dynamic marking of *pp* and has the instruction *sul pont* above it.

Musical notation for measures 23-24. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of three sharps and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The bottom staff has a dynamic marking of *mf* and includes a crescendo hairpin leading to a *p* dynamic, followed by *mfp* and *mfp* markings. The word *ord.* is written above the first measure of the bottom staff.

2. The Wedding Feast

3

The musical score consists of two staves of music, likely for a guitar or similar instrument, in a key with three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The score is divided into several systems:

- System 1 (Measures 26-28):** The upper staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The lower staff contains a complex accompaniment with triplets and sixteenth-note patterns. Dynamics include *mf*, *mp*, and *mf*. There are also accents (*>*) and breath marks (*∨*) in the lower staff.
- System 2 (Measures 29-30):** Similar to the first system, with a melodic line and a more rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include *mp*, *f*, and *sfmp*. There are accents and breath marks.
- System 3 (Measures 31-32):** The upper staff continues the melodic line. The lower staff features a more active accompaniment with sixteenth-note runs. Dynamics include *f* and *mf*. There are accents and breath marks.
- System 4 (Measures 33-34):** The upper staff has a melodic line with slurs (*s*) and accents. The lower staff has a similar accompaniment with slurs and accents. Dynamics include *f* and *mf*. A box labeled 'b' is present above the upper staff in measure 34.

2. The Wedding Feast

Musical score for '2. The Wedding Feast' in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The score consists of two staves per system, with measures 35, 37, 39, and 41 marked at the beginning of each system. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Dynamics include *f* (forte), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *c* (crescendo). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. A 'V' marking is present above a measure in the second system. A box containing the letter 'c' is placed above a measure in the fourth system. The score concludes with a final chord in the fourth system.

"We're Out of WINE!!!!"
a tempo

poco rall.

43 45 50 54 56

f

arco

pizz.

arco

pizz.

d

2. The Wedding Feast

60

arco

gradually sul pont

p sul pont

63

sf

p

65

67

ord.

mp poco a poco cresc.

ord.

mp poco a poco cresc.

2. The Wedding Feast

7

The musical score consists of two staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music is written in a 3/4 time signature. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 69, 71, 73, and 75 indicated at the beginning of their respective systems. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, slurs, and various fingerings (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). A *rit.* (ritardando) marking is present above the first staff of the final system. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a final key signature change to three flats (Bb, Eb, Ab).

Mary Asks Jesus to Help $\text{♩} = 60$

rit.

2. The Wedding Feast

9

The musical score is arranged in systems. The first system (measures 91-94) features a melody in the upper voice and a bass line in the lower voice. The upper voice starts with a *mp* dynamic and includes a *poco rit.* marking followed by *a tempo*. The lower voice also starts with *mp* and includes a *tr* marking. The second system (measures 95-98) continues the bass line with a *pizz.* marking and includes a triplet of eighth notes. The third system (measures 99-101) shows a change in dynamics and tempo, with *poco rit.* and *a tempo* markings, and a forte (*f*) dynamic. The fourth system (measures 102-108) features a repeated melodic figure with *mp* dynamics, *poco a poco accel.*, and *accel.* markings. The fifth system (measures 109-111) continues the repeated figure with *poco a poco crescendo* and includes a *V* marking. The sixth system (measures 112-114) concludes the piece with a melodic line.

91 *mp* *poco rit.* *a tempo*

91 *mp* *tr*

93 *pizz.*

95 3

100 *poco rit.* *f* *a tempo*

100 *mp* *trco* tune Eb up to E

109 repeat if needed *mp* *poco a poco accel.* *accel.*

109 tune E up to F

poco a poco crescendo

112

112 0

2. The Wedding Feast

Musical notation for measures 114 and 115. The music is in 3/4 time and features a melodic line in the upper voice and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the lower voice. The lower voice part includes a *mp* dynamic marking.

Dance Tempo ♩ = 132

Musical notation for measures 116 and 117. The tempo is marked as Dance Tempo with a quarter note equal to 132. The music features a strong *f* dynamic and includes a repeat sign with first and second endings. The lower voice part has a *f* dynamic marking.

Musical notation for measures 118 and 119. The tempo is marked as *a tempo*. The music features a *fp* dynamic marking and includes a *sul pont* instruction. The lower voice part has a *fp* dynamic marking.

Musical notation for measures 120 and 121. The music features a *f* dynamic marking and includes a *ord.* instruction. The lower voice part has a *f* dynamic marking. There are also markings for *sul E* and a 6-measure rest.

2. The Wedding Feast

11

122 h

122 *mp* *mf*

a tempo

124 *mp* *mf*

126 *mp*

128 *f* *ppp*

128 *f* *ppp* + (if necessary)

from Ab up to A

Ab to A

2. The Wedding Feast

i

f *pizz.*

f

pizz. (strum back and forth) *arco* *f*

poco rall. *a tempo*

rit.

131 131 134 136 139

2. The Wedding Feast

13

"Glory Be..." ♩ = 132

The musical score consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system (measures 144-148) is in the key of D major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The melody in the upper staff begins with a dotted quarter note on D4, followed by eighth notes E4, F4, G4, and A4. The lower staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The second system (measures 149-154) shows a key change to B minor (two flats) starting at measure 149. The melody continues with a dotted quarter note on B3, followed by eighth notes A3, G3, F3, and E3. The lower staff continues with the accompaniment in the new key. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 154.

3. Proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven

Freely; Prayerfully
 ♩ = 96
 Tune Low F-D \flat -A-E

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It features a key signature of two flats (B \flat and E \flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Freely; Prayerfully' with a quarter note equal to 96 beats per minute. The score is divided into systems, with measures 1-4, 5-10, 11-15, 16-17, 18-19, and 20-21. Chord symbols are placed above the staff: D \flat , G \flat , A \flat , D \flat , Fm, Bm, D \flat , E1m, A \flat 7, D \flat , and D \flat . The lyrics are: 'Our fa-ther who art in hea-ven hal-lowed be thy name — thy king-dom come thy will be done on earth as it is in hea-ven Give us this day our dai-ly bread and for - give us our tres-pas-ses as we for-give those who tres-pass a-gainst us and lead us not in - to temp - ta - tion but de - Re-ver us from e - vil for thine's the king - dom and the pow - er and the glo - ry now and for - e - ver'. A section titled 'Folk Pizz. Jam' starts at measure 20, with a tempo of ♩ = 108. It includes instructions: 'with improvised cello pizz., violin can improvise either arco or pizz then, after a bit, add a tenuto/staccato quarter note low D \flat pulse in the organ'. The jam section consists of two staves of music, with a 'Vamp' section marked above the staff and a 'D \flat ' chord symbol below it.

1
 5
 11
 16
 18
 20

Folk Pizz. Jam

with improvised cello pizz.,
 violin can improvise either arco or pizz
 then, after a bit, add a tenuto/staccato quarter note low D \flat pulse in the organ

Vamp
 D \flat

22 *violin to cue going on:* 23 *improvise accompaniment on repeat*

violin to cue going on: *Sul G*

28 *E9* *Ab13* *D9* 31 *Bbm7* *Ebm7* *A9* *A°*

hand Re- pent for the- king- dom is near

sul D

Bles- sed are those who have spi- rit- s poor Bles- sed are those who are
 Bles- sed are those who are com- for- ted Bles- sed are those who have
 Bles- sed are those called the Sons of God Bles- sed are those who are

play when taking repeat don't play last time

34 *Bbm7* *Ebm9* *Ab7* 35 *D9* *F+7* *Gb* *G°* *Ab* *A* *H*

meek and mourn- ful The king- dom of hea- ven's at hand Re- pent for the- king- dom of God

sul G

Vamp accel.
Latin Feel; Medium Bossa/Chacha

$\text{♩} = 108$

39 *A* *B* *A* *G*

39 *A* *B* *A* *G*

41 *A* *G* *A*
 The king-dom's near re - pent it's - near re - pent it's - near re - pent it's here — The king-dom's near

43 *4* *0* *0*

45 *B+* *A* *G*
 re - pent re - pent ————— it's here The king-dom's near re - pent it's - near re - pent it's - near

48 *0* *4* *0*

54 *F* *G*
 it's - near re - pent it's here the king - dom of God It's here!

54 *1* *0*

58 *F* *G* *F* *G*
 Re - pent the king-dom of God King - dom of God Re - pent King - dom of God

59 *1*

Double time feel (samba) for backgrounds " *Glory Be...* "

$\text{♩} = 108$

65 *C* *G* *C* *Am7* *D* *G* *C* *Dm* *G*
 Glo - ry be to the fa - ther and to the Son and to the Ho - ly Ghost as it was in the be - gin - ning it now and e - ver

67 *4* *Sul D*

74 *C* *E7* *F* *G7* *C* *A* *B* *C*
 shall be ——— World with - out end A - men ——— ——— ———

76 *4*

Violin

4. The Transfiguration

Freely; Prayerfully
♩ = 96

detune Db-C Detune A to G#



Our father... hallowed... kingdom... hea - ven... and for - give...
lead... de - o - ver us from e - vil... kingdom... power... glory

Mystery 4: The Transfiguration

♩ = 120



12 *mp*

19

21 *Sul A*

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Musical score for measures 23-31. The top staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with slurs and fingering numbers (1-5). The bottom staff (bass clef) contains a bass line with slurs and fingering numbers (1-5).

b

Musical score for measures 26-35. The top staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with slurs and fingering numbers (1-5). The bottom staff (bass clef) contains a bass line with slurs and fingering numbers (1-5).

Musical score for measures 28-37. The top staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with slurs and fingering numbers (1-6). The bottom staff (bass clef) contains a bass line with slurs and fingering numbers (1-6).

Musical score for measures 30-39. The top staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with slurs and fingering numbers (1-6). The bottom staff (bass clef) contains a bass line with slurs and fingering numbers (1-6).

Musical score for measures 32-41. The top staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with slurs and fingering numbers (1-6). The bottom staff (bass clef) contains a bass line with slurs and fingering numbers (1-6).

“His face became as dazzling as the sun,
his clothes as radiant as light.” ♩ = 76
accel.

34 *mp* *a tempo*

34 *sul A seagulls*

42

42

49

49

c

55 *seagulls* *arco* *f marcato*

59 *sul A*

The Voice of God

61 *accel.*

63

65 *rit.*

65

67 *molto rit.* *rall.* **Slower** ♩ = 89

67

72

72

d

76

4. The Transfiguration

5

Musical score for "4. The Transfiguration". The score is written for two staves, likely representing the left and right hands of a piano. It consists of several systems of music. The first system (measures 78-79) features a melodic line in the upper staff and a more rhythmic, arpeggiated line in the lower staff. The second system (measures 80-81) continues the melodic and rhythmic patterns, with the lower staff including a section marked "sul A". The third system (measures 82-83) shows a melodic line with a fermata and a change in the lower staff's accompaniment. The fourth system (measures 84-85) is a dense, rhythmic section with a "detune Ab-A" instruction above the upper staff. The fifth system (measures 86-87) features a melodic line with a "rit." (ritardando) marking and a "6" above the notes, and a lower staff with a "6 >" marking. The score concludes with a "a tempo" marking.

Glory Be

83

89

97

92

94

94

98

98

rit.

molto rit.

a tempo

rit.

Slower

arpeggiate across whole range

F

Violin

5. The Eucharist

Freely; Prayerfully
♩ = 96

The score is written for violin in G minor, 4/4 time. It begins with a tempo of ♩ = 96. The first system (measures 1-10) features a melody with a 5th finger position and includes performance instructions: 'tune Low F-C-A-E', 'sul pont', 'detune E to Eb', and 'ord.'. The lyrics 'niente forgive... lead... deliver... evil... kingdom... power... glory... now...' are written below the staff. The second system (measures 11-15) includes a fermata and a 2-measure rest. The third system (measures 16-20) includes a dynamic change from *p* to *f* and a 'rit.' marking. The fourth system (measures 21-27) includes a 'Sul D' instruction and a dynamic of *mf*. The score concludes with a 5-measure rest.

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26

26

s.p. free bow ord.

(♩-♩)

29

29

32

32

rit.

a tempo

34

34

mf sul pont free bow ord.

38

38

4

Detailed description: This musical score is for a piece titled "5. The Eucharist". It consists of two staves of music, likely for violin and viola. The score is divided into systems. The first system (measures 26-29) features a key signature of two flats and a 3/4 time signature. The upper staff has a melodic line with a fermata over the first measure. The lower staff has a more rhythmic line with accents and dynamic markings: *s.p.* (sul ponticello), *free bow*, and *ord.* (ordine). The second system (measures 29-32) continues the melodic and rhythmic lines. The third system (measures 32-34) includes a *rit.* (ritardando) marking and a change in time signature to 3/8. The fourth system (measures 34-38) starts with a *c* (crescendo) marking and a *a tempo* instruction. It features a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic and further performance instructions: *sul pont*, *free bow*, and *ord.*. The score concludes with a 3/4 time signature and a final measure with a fermata.

Musical notation for measures 43-44. The top staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff (treble clef) contains a more complex melodic line with slurs and a fermata over the final note.

Musical notation for measures 45-46. Measure 45 features a melodic line with slurs and a fermata. Measure 46 includes a *rit.* marking and a change in the bottom staff's rhythm to a dotted quarter note.

A Little Slower

Musical notation for measures 47-48. Both staves show a melodic line in 4/4 time, with a repeat sign at the beginning of each measure.

Musical notation for measures 51-52. Measure 51 includes a *rit.* marking and a fermata. Measure 52 includes a *rit.* marking and a change in the bottom staff's time signature to 3/8.

4

5. The Eucharist

a tempo

d *sim. strumming*

pizz. alla chitarra

55

58

61 *(♩=♩)*

64 *rit.*

Musical score for '5. The Eucharist'. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff starts with a dynamic marking 'd' and the instruction 'sim. strumming'. The second staff begins with 'pizz. alla chitarra' and is numbered 55. The third staff is numbered 58 and includes the instruction '(♩=♩)'. The fourth staff is numbered 64 and includes the instruction 'rit.'. The music is written in a single treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 3/4 time signature.

A Little Slower

68

71

73 *1.* *2.* *rit.*

Musical score for 'A Little Slower'. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff is numbered 68. The second staff is numbered 71. The third staff is numbered 73 and includes first and second endings, marked '1.' and '2.', and the instruction 'rit.'. The music is written in a single treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature.

Glory Be ♩ = 88

5. The Eucharist

The musical score is written for a string instrument in 4/4 time, with a tempo of ♩ = 88. It begins at measure 76 with an *arco* marking. The first system (measures 76-83) features a melody in the upper voice and a harmonic accompaniment in the lower voice, marked *mp*. The second system (measures 84-92) continues the harmonic accompaniment. The third system (measures 93-94) introduces a technical exercise consisting of sixteenth-note patterns on the G string, with sixteenth-note groupings marked with a '6'. The fourth system (measures 95-96) continues this exercise. A text box provides performance instructions: "Continue pattern, but slowly ascend and diminuendo. Ascend as high on the G string as desired. Repeat pattern at the top as long as desired." The fifth system (measures 97-98) shows the exercise concluding with a *ritardando* and *diminuendo* leading to a final note marked *niente*.