

Dharma Pops

For Violin Duo

Michael Fiday



Program notes

POP – American (non-Japanese) Haikus, short 3-line poems or “pomes” rhyming or non-rhyming delineating “little Samadhis” if possible, usually of a Buddhist connotation, aiming towards enlightenment. BOOK OF POPS.

Jack Kerouac

Dharma Pops for violin duo are musical reflections of various American-style haiku by Jack Kerouac. In addition to Kerouac’s definition above, “pops” can be taken to mean spontaneous written observations – thoughts that “pop” into mind. The musical reactions to each play out in a flash – none are more than a page long. In addition to the texts employed herein, I was equally struck by Kerouac’s ode to the music of Charlie Parker, which begins with the line “Charlie Parker looked like Buddha.” I found it fascinating how this one brief line seems to conjure the stark juxtaposition and synthesis of seemingly opposed elements – the sacred with the vernacular, the pastoral with the urban, meditation with high velocity, etc. I liked to imagine that, though Kerouac’s haiku may have been written in a meditative state high on a mountain somewhere in the Pacific Northwest, the buzz of 52nd Street was never that far behind.

Dharma Pops was composed for Sweden's Duo Gelland.

MF

Performance Notes

- 1) Several movements of *Dharma Pops* contain extensive use of “extended techniques” for the violins. Directions on how to execute these effects are explained in the movements to which they pertain.
- 2) The texts to Kerouac’s haiku should be made available to the audience, as they are an important aspect of the piece.
- 3) The prescribed order of movements works well, but they may be played in any order.
- 4) *Dharma Pops* need not always be played in its entirety – performing selected movements as part of a smaller set is also a possibility.
- 5) *Dharma Pops* is often performed with a narrator, in the following fashion:
 - 1) Jack Kerouac’s ode to Charlie Parker, which appears on the following page, is read as a prologue, followed directly by the first movement.
 - 2) for the first 9 haiku, the music is played, then followed directly by a reading of the haiku to which it pertains (i.e. music for haiku #1/text for haiku #1, music for #2/text for #2, etc.).
 - 3) In the final haiku (#10), the text is read along with the music, as specified in the score.

Dharma Pops

for Violin Duo
for Cecilia and Martin Gelland

Michael Fiday
2006

quick, bopish: ♩ = 120

1

mf
f
fz
pizz.
(lay bow aside) snap fingers
rude, abrupt

mf
f
fz
pizz.
rude, abrupt

rapid-fire: ♩ = 144

9

fp
f
fz
f
(pick up bow!)
arco
marcato
(keep steady, despite vn. 2)

12

ff
ff
feroce
feroce

1

Snap yr finger

stop the world!

- Rain falls harder

♩ = 80
sautillé

2

ff driving, electric

ff driving, electric

p

p

f l.v.

mf

fz

mf

mp

mf

f l.v.

fz

mf

p

ff sub.

sul pont.

p sub.

sul tasto

ff sub.

p sub.

sul pont.

sul tasto

f ord.

fp

fz

mf

f ord.

fp

fz

mp

mf

* Slap l.h. fingers across fingerboard, dampening all strings, resulting in sharp, non-pitch percussive sound.

** All "triangle" notes = tap on body of instrument:
 -top note ("f"): tap wood to right of fingerboard with l.h. (dampen strings with index finger, tap with 1 or 2 others)
 -middle note ("b"): tap wood to right of tailpiece with thumb or index finger of r.h. (continue holding bow)
 -bottom note ("e"): tap tailpiece with thumb or index finger of r.h.

2

Rain's over, hammer on wood

- this cobweb

Rides the sunshine

♩ = 120 (all pizz. harmonics: clear, like a small bell) *bold*

3

♩ = 100 (a bit slower)

3

♩ = 120 (tempo I)

5

♩ = 132 (quick, scherzando)

7

3

The raindrops have plenty

of personality –

Each one