

Michael Kimber

# *Violas on Fire!*

for viola quartet



Commissioned by Angela Baucom and the Firewood Quartet

If you thought nothing could follow *Violapalooza* or the infamous *Viola Fight Song*, consider *Violas on Fire!* Inspired by the Firewood Quartet and what makes a viola different from (better than?) a violin (it burns longer!!!), this outrageous concoction of sounds will leave your audience screaming (for more?!). Duration 3-1/2 scary minutes.

Also available in a version for viola solo with string orchestra (if you dare!).

**Please do not photocopy this music!**

Additional copies, as well as the orchestra score and parts,  
are available promptly and at a ridiculously reasonable price  
from the composer:

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SCORE

For the Firewood Quartet

(See note at end.)

# Violas on Fire!

“You’ve got to be kidding! You really don’t know the difference between a violin and a viola?”

“No, honest, I don’t! What is it?”

Michael Kimber

“The viola *burns longer!!!*” [Segue subito!]

Aggressive ♩ = 112

Viola 1  
Viola 2  
Viola 3  
Viola 4

Vla. 1  
Vla. 2  
Vla. 3  
Vla. 4

(Pt.)

Violas on Fire!

6

Measures 6-7 of the score. The music is in 4/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The first system (measures 6-7) features four staves for Violas 1-4. Measure 6 contains triplets of eighth notes in all staves. Measure 7 continues with various rhythmic patterns and dynamics. Dynamics include *mf*, *ff*, *f*, *mf*, *sfz*, and *ff*. There are also accents and hairpins throughout.

8

Measures 8-10 of the score. The music is in 3/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The second system (measures 8-10) features four staves for Violas 1-4. Measure 8 has a *ff* dynamic. Measure 9 has *fp* dynamics. Measure 10 has *sfz* and *mf* dynamics. There are accents and hairpins throughout.

11

Measures 11-12 of the score. The music is in 3/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The third system (measures 11-12) features four staves for Violas 1-4. Measure 11 contains triplets of eighth notes in all staves. Measure 12 continues with various rhythmic patterns and dynamics. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, and *ff*. There are accents and hairpins throughout.

Violas on Fire!

13

Vla. 1 *mf* 3 3 3 3 3 3

Vla. 2 *f* *p* *f*

Vla. 3 *f* *p* *f*

Vla. 4 *f* *p* *f*

15

Vla. 1 *f* *ff* *pp*

Vla. 2 *sffz* *ppp* *p*

Vla. 3 *sffz* *pp*

Vla. 4 *ff* *p*

Suspended, austere  $\text{♩} = 40$

19

Vla. 1 *pp* *ppp*

Vla. 2 *pp* *ppp*

Vla. 3 *pp* *ppp*

Vla. 4 *pp* *ppp*

Slower

Violas on Fire!

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vla. 3

Vla. 4

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vla. 3

Vla. 4

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vla. 3

Vla. 4

Violas on Fire!

You may either play what's written or improvise wildly from here to m. 37.

30

Vla. 1  
Vla. 2  
Vla. 3  
Vla. 4

*ff*  
*f* *mf* *f*  
*fp* *f*  
*fff* *wild!* *f*  
*sf* *mf* *sf* *mf* *f*

33

Vla. 1  
Vla. 2  
Vla. 3  
Vla. 4

*f* *sf*

35

Vla. 1  
Vla. 2  
Vla. 3  
Vla. 4

*f* *sf*





Violas on Fire!

43

Vla. 1 *ff* *f* *ff*<sup>3</sup>

Vla. 2 *f* *mf* *sffz* *sffz* *mf*

Vla. 3 *f* *mf* *sffz* *sffz* *mf*

Vla. 4 *sf* *mf* *sffz* *mf*

45

Vla. 1 *ff* *mf*

Vla. 2 *mf*

Vla. 3 *mf*

Vla. 4 *mf*

47

Vla. 1 *ff*

Vla. 2 *ff*

Vla. 3 *ff*

Vla. 4 *ff*

Violas on Fire!

49

Vla. 1 *f* 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Vla. 2

Vla. 3

Vla. 4 Solo *ff* wild! 3

51

Vla. 1 *ff* *f* *mf* *mf* (Pt.) *mf*

Vla. 2 *f* *mf* *mf* *sffz mf* *ff*

Vla. 3 *f* *mf* *mf* *sffz mf* *ff*

Vla. 4 Tutti *sffz mf* *sffz mf* *sf* *mf*

54

Vla. 1 *<ff* *mf* 3 3 3 *ff* *f*

Vla. 2 *f* *mf* *sffz* *f* *f* *mf*

Vla. 3 *f* *mf* *sffz* *f* *mf*

Vla. 4 *sf* *mf* *sf* *mf*

Violas on Fire!

56

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vla. 3

Vla. 4

*sf* *mf* *mf* *ff* *fp* *f*

*sffz* *mf* *ff* *f* *mf* *f* *fp* *f*

*sffz* *mf* *ff* *f* *mf* *f* *fp* *f*

*sf* *mf* *sf* *mf* *sf* *mf*

59

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vla. 3

Vla. 4

*mf* *ff*

*sfz* *mf* *mf*

*sfz* *mf* *mf*

*sffz* *mf* *sf* *mf*

61

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vla. 3

Vla. 4

*mf* *p* *f*

*p* *f*

*p* *f*

*p* *f*

Violas on Fire!

Vla. 1 *f* *ff*

Vla. 2 *ff*

Vla. 3 *sffz*

Vla. 4 *ff*

Suspended, austere ♩ = 40

Vla. 1 *pp*

Vla. 2 *ppp* *p*

Vla. 3 *pp*

Vla. 4 *p*

Aggressive ♩ = 112

Vla. 1 *pppp* *mf*

Vla. 2 *pppp* *mp*

Vla. 3 *pppp* *mp*

Vla. 4 *p* *pppp* *mp*

*Violas on Fire!*

The musical score consists of four staves, labeled Vla. 1 through Vla. 4. The first staff (Vla. 1) is in treble clef and begins with a wavy line above it. The second, third, and fourth staves are in bass clef. The score starts at measure 70. The music is highly rhythmic and repetitive, with dynamic markings of *f* and *fff*. The piece concludes with a 'Freeze!' instruction and a fermata over the final note of each staff.

A message from the composer:

I'm sure this music looks and sounds scarily difficult, but here are some reassuring thoughts to keep in mind:

- 1) There's a lot of repetition, so once you get a lick down, you'll usually have several more times to play it.
- 2) If everything isn't 100% in tune, it probably isn't the end of the world. In a wild piece like this, I sometimes think of the notation as nothing more than an approximate guide. (I'm usually so picky about intonation, I can't believe I'm saying this!)
- 3) The glissandos should begin and end more or less on the indicated pitches, but again, precision of pitch is not the main thing.
- 4) The Viola 4 ostinato should keep things together, so just aim to meet on the downbeats, and all will be well.
- 5) In mm. 13-14, 23-24, 61-62, and 69, notice that each group of three semitones is repeated at successively higher pitch levels. Again, precision of pitch is not the most important thing; just try to keep the bow changes and shifts in time.
- 6) Enjoy the "suspended, austere" moments, spooky time to cool down and recharge.
- 7) At mm. 32-37 Viola 2, 3 and 4 should be rock-solid steady. If Viola 1 can't keep up, let the 4th beat of m. 38 be the cue to rejoin the group at m. 39. You may also improvise, if you're into that sort of thing.
- 8) Mm. 47-49 are short licks that should be playable in tempo. In m. 50, it's okay to fake the pitches, just keep the bow changing in time. If you don't land exactly on a C in m. 51, it's okay!

Can you handle it? I bet you can!

I hope you have a wild, fun time!!

—Michael Kimber  
May 2, 2015, Iowa City

# Violas on Fire!

“You’ve got to be kidding! You really don’t know the difference between a violin and a viola?”

“No, honest, I don’t! What is it?”

“The viola *burns longer!!!*” [Segue subito!]

Michael Kimber

Aggressive ♩ = 112

Measures 1-15 include dynamics such as *f*, *mf*, *ff*, *fp*, and *f*. The score includes triplets, slurs, and accents. A 'Pt.' (Pizzicato) marking is present in measure 10. The piece concludes with a 'V.S. (quietly)' instruction.

Violas on Fire!

Suspended, austere  $\text{♩} = 40$

Slower

17 *pp*

Aggressive  $\text{♩} = 112$

23 *mf*

25 *ff* *f* *mf* *mf* *ff*

(Pt.)

28 *mf* *ff* *f* *mf* *mf* *ff*

31 *fp* *f* *fff* wild!

You may either play what's written or improvise wildly from here to m. 37.

34

36

39 *mf* *ff* *f* *f*

42 (Pt.) *f* *mf* *mf* *ff* *f* *ff*<sup>3</sup>

Violas on Fire!

45 *ff* *mf*

47 *ff*

49 *f*

51 *fff* *f* *f* *mf* *ff*

(Pt.)

55 *mf* *ff* *f* *mf* *mf* *ff* *fp* *f*

59 *mf* *ff* *mf*

62 *f* *ff*

Suspended, austere ♩ = 40

65 *pp* *pppp*

rit.

Aggressive ♩ = 112

69 *mf* *f* *fff*

Freeze!



Don't burn...

**FREEZE!**

# Violas on Fire!

“You’ve got to be kidding! You really don’t know the difference between a violin and a viola?”

“No, honest, I don’t! What is it?”

Michael Kimber

“The viola *burns longer!!!*” [Segue subito!]

Aggressive ♩ = 112

Measures 1-4: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Dynamics: *fmf*, *fmf*, *fmf*, *mf*, *sfzmf*, *ff*.

Measures 5-8: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Dynamics: *fmf*, *sfz*, *f*, *fmf*, *mf*, *sfzmf*, *ff*, *fmf*, *f*.

Measures 9-11: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Dynamics: *fp*, *f*, *sfzmf*, *mf*.

Measures 12-14: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Dynamics: *f*, *p*, *f*.

Measures 15-18: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Dynamics: *sfz*, *ppp*, *p*.

Suspended, austere ♩ = 40

Measures 19-24: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Dynamics: *pp*, *ppp*.

Slower

Aggressive ♩ = 112

Measures 25-28: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Dynamics: *fmf*, *mf*, *sfzmf*, *ff*, *fmf*, *sfz*, *f*, *fmf*, *mf*.

Measures 29-32: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Dynamics: *sfzmf*, *ff*, *fmf*, *f*, *fp*, *f*.

34 *mf* *f* *ff*

39 *mf* *ff* *fmf* *mf* *fmf* *mf*

42 *sfzmf* *ff* *fmf* *sfz* *sfz* *mf*

45 *mf* *ff*

49 *fmf* *mf* *sfzmf* *ff*

54 *fmf* *sfz* *f* *fmf* *mf* *sfzmf* *ff* *fmf* *f*

58 *fp* *f* *sfzmf* *mf*

61 *p* *f* *sfz*

Suspended, austere ♩ = 40

*rit.*

65 *ppp* *p* *pppp*

Aggressive ♩ = 112

69 *mp* *f* *fff* Freeze!



Violas on Fire!

37 *mf* *f* *ff* *mf* *ff*

40 *f mf* *mf* *mf* *sffz mf* *ff*

43 *f mf* *sffz* *sffz* *mf* *mf*

46 *ff*

51 *f mf* *mf* *sffz mf* *ff* *f mf* *sffz* *f*

55 *f mf* *mf* *sffz mf* *ff* *f mf* *f* *fp* *f*

59 *sfz mf* *mf* *p*

62 *f* *sffz* *pp*

Suspended, austere ♩ = 40

66 *pppp* *mp*

rit. Aggressive ♩ = 112

70 *f* *fff*

Freeze!

VIOLA 4

For the Firewood Quartet

# Violas on Fire!

“You’ve got to be kidding! You really don’t know the difference between a violin and a viola?”

“No, honest, I don’t! What is it?”

“The viola *burns longer!!!*” [Segue subito!]

Michael Kimber

Aggressive ♩ = 112

4

8

13

18

24

28

*sfz mf* *sfz mf* *sfz mf*

*sfmf* *sfmf* *sfmf* *sfmf*

*sfmf* *sfmf* *sfmf* *sfmf* *sf*

*f* *p* *f* *ff* *p*

*pp* *ppp*

*sfz mf* *sfmf* *sfmf*

*sfmf* *sfmf* *sfmf* *sfmf*

Suspended, austere ♩ = 40

Slower

Aggressive ♩ = 112

32 *f* *V*

37 *mf* *f* *ff* *mf* *ff* *V*

40 *sffzmf* *sffzmf* *sfmf* *sfmf*

44 *sffzmf* *mf* *ff* *V*

49 *ff* *wild!* *Solo* *Tutti* *sffz mf* *sffz mf*

53 *sfmf* *sfmf* *sfmf* *sfmf*

57 *sfmf* *sfmf* *sffzmf* *sfmf* *p*

62 *f* *ff* *Suspended, austere* *p* *♩ = 40*

67 *rit.* *Aggressive* *Freeze!* *p* *pppp* *mp* *f* *fff*