

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

The score is written for four violas (Viola 1, Viola 2, Viola 3, Viola 4) and is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1, 2, and 3. The second system contains measures 4, 5, and 6. The music is in 4/4 time and features a variety of dynamic markings and articulations. The first system starts with a tempo marking of 'Aggressive' and a quarter note equal to 112. The second system begins with a measure rest and a 'Pt.' marking above the first staff. The score includes a variety of dynamic markings such as *f*, *mf*, *sfz*, and *ff*, along with articulations like accents and slurs. The piece concludes with a 'Segue subito!' instruction.

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 staff (Vla. 1) features a triplet of eighth notes starting on G4, moving up to B4, with dynamics *mf*, *ff*, and *f*. The second staff (Vla. 2) has a half note G3, then a quarter note G4, with dynamics *f* and *mf*. The third staff (Vla. 3) has a half note G3, then a quarter note G4, with dynamics *f* and *mf*. The fourth staff (Vla. 4) has a half note G3, then a quarter note G4, with dynamics *sf* and *mf*. The music transitions to 2/4 time at the end of measure 7.

8

Measures 8-10 of the score. The music is in 3/4 time. The first staff (Vla. 1) has a half note G3, then a quarter note G4, with dynamics *ff*, *fp*, and *f*. The second staff (Vla. 2) has a half note G3, then a quarter note G4, with dynamics *f*, *mf*, *f*, *fp*, and *f*. The third staff (Vla. 3) has a half note G3, then a quarter note G4, with dynamics *f*, *mf*, *f*, *fp*, and *f*. The fourth staff (Vla. 4) has a half note G3, then a quarter note G4, with dynamics *sf*, *mf*, *sf*, *mf*, and *sf*. The music transitions to 3/4 time at the end of measure 10.

11

Measures 11-12 of the score. The music is in 3/4 time. The first staff (Vla. 1) features a triplet of eighth notes starting on G4, moving up to B4, with dynamics *mf* and *f*. The second staff (Vla. 2) has a half note G3, then a quarter note G4, with dynamics *mf*. The third staff (Vla. 3) has a half note G3, then a quarter note G4, with dynamics *mf*. The fourth staff (Vla. 4) has a half note G3, then a quarter note G4, with dynamics *sf* and *mf*. The music transitions to 3/4 time at the end of measure 12.

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 ♩ = 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

(Pt.)

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

33

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

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

35

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

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

37

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

mf *f* *ff*

39

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

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

41

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

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

(Pt.)

Violas on Fire!

43

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vla. 3

Vla. 4

ff f ff³ mf sffz sffz sf mf sffz mf

Detailed description: This system contains measures 43 and 44. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4, which changes to 4/4 at the start of measure 44. Four staves are shown, labeled Vla. 1 through Vla. 4. Vla. 1 has a melodic line with accents and dynamic markings ff, f, and ff³. Vla. 2 and Vla. 3 have accompaniment with dynamic markings f, mf, sffz, and mf. Vla. 4 has a rhythmic accompaniment with dynamic markings sf, mf, sffz, and mf. There are hairpins and slurs throughout.

45

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vla. 3

Vla. 4

ff mf mf mf

Detailed description: This system contains measures 45 and 46. The time signature is 5/4. Vla. 1 has a melodic line with accents and dynamic markings ff and mf. Vla. 2 and Vla. 3 have accompaniment with dynamic markings mf. Vla. 4 has a rhythmic accompaniment with dynamic markings mf. There are hairpins and slurs throughout.

47

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vla. 3

Vla. 4

ff ff

Detailed description: This system contains measures 47 and 48. The time signature is 5/4, which changes to 4/4 at the start of measure 48. Vla. 1 has a melodic line with accents and dynamic markings ff. Vla. 2 and Vla. 3 have accompaniment with dynamic markings ff. Vla. 4 has a rhythmic accompaniment with dynamic markings ff. There are hairpins and slurs throughout.

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!

70

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vla. 3

Vla. 4

f *fff* *f* *fff* *f* *fff*

Freeze! Freeze! Freeze! Freeze!

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!]

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Aggressive ♩ = 112

(Pt.)

1 *f*

5 *ff* *mf* *ff* *f* *mf* *mf*

8 *ff* *fp* *f* *mf* *f*

12 *ff* *mf*

14 *f* *ff* V.S. (quietly)

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 *f* *mf* *mf* *ff* *f* *ff*³

(Pt.)

Violas on Fire!

45 *ff* *mf*

47 *ff*

49 *f*

51 *fff* *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

1 *fmf* *fmf* *fmf* *mf* *sfzmf* *ff*

5 *fmf* *sfz* *f* *fmf* *mf* *sfzmf* *ff* *fmf* *f*

9 *fp* *f* *sfzmf* *mf*

12 *f* *p* *f*

15 *sfz* *ppp* *p*

19 *pp* *ppp*

Slower Aggressive ♩ = 112

25 *fmf* *mf* *sfzmf* *ff* *fmf* *sfz* *f* *fmf* *mf*

29 *sfzmf* *ff* *fmf* *f* *fp* *f*

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“No, honest, I don’t! What is it?”

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

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Aggressive ♩ = 112

4

7

10

13

17

Suspended, austere ♩ = 40

Slower

22

Aggressive ♩ = 112

27

31

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!

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*