

# **Dig Absolutely**

for string quartet

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Christopher Fisher-Lochhead



## **Dig Absolutely [2010]** for string quartet dedicated to the Laurel Borden

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*Dig Absolutely* explores musical flux and the ability of dynamic systems to manifest stable states. One way it does this is through the treatment of underlying pitch structures as attractors instead of identities, making it possible for the musical surface to be nuanced and complex while remaining grounded in large-scale harmonic motions. Equally important to the creative process was a concern for string technique, especially in regard to the expressive use of idiomatic and non-idiomatic writing to achieve gestural immediacy and/or fragility.

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*Dig Absolutely* was premiered by the Spektral Quartet (J. Austin Wulliman and Aurelien Pederzoli, violins; Doyle Armbrust, viola; Russell Rolen, cello) at Northwestern University's Lutkin Hall on December 5th, 2011.

A full recording is included on the Spektral Quartet's album "Chambers" (Parlour Tapes+, 2013)

## Notation/Techniques



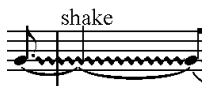
**Glissando** is indicated by a solid line. A grace note at the end of a glissando merely indicates the endpoint of the glissando. It should not be sustained at all.



The small, parenthesized notehead to the right of a **trill** indicates the second note of the trill.



A circle at the beginning or end of a hairpin indicates **niente**, or as close to **niente** as possible while sound is still being produced.



A **shake** is a string technique employed most often by non-classical string players. It is somewhere between a very wide vibrato and a rapidly oscillating glissando around a single pitch. The effect is achieved by rapidly moving the left hand back and forth.

The indicated pitch should still be perceptible.




**Brushing** is indicated by a Z-shaped tremolo symbol on the note stem. The effect is achieved by rapidly moving the bow back and forth between *sul pont* and *sul tasto*.



All **tremolos** are fast and unmeasured. They are indicated by three diagonal slashes for notes without flags or beams, and two diagonal slashes for all others.



**Left hand pizzicato** is indicated by a small cross above the note. In this piece, left hand pizz. only occurs in passages played *arco*. In such cases, the left hand pizz. should not replace the *arco* note, but coincide with it. In the example to the left, the grace note would be played *arco*, just as normal, but the finger used to stop the string would then be used to pluck the string for the next note as the bow continues.

 = **Jeté**

SP = *sul pont*

pSP = *poco sul pont*

mSP = *molto sul pont*

ST = *sul tasto*

pST = *poco sul tasto*

mST = *molto sul tasto*

OP = *overpressure*

pOP = *poco overpressure*

mOP = *molto overpressure*

## Rhythm

The rhythm in this piece requires a certain amount of freedom. The ubiquitous use of “tuplets” is not meant to achieve precise metrical subdivisions but rather to effect a rigorous not-lining-up of parts. It is the approximate rational relationships between rhythmic units that is important, not some ideal metronomical exactitude. For example, what is important in playing septuplet 16<sup>th</sup> notes is that they are faster than triplet 16<sup>th</sup> notes, slower than duple 32<sup>nd</sup> notes, and approximately twice as fast as septuplet 8<sup>th</sup> notes. The tempo must be similarly free, expanding and contracting as the music demands.

for Laurel Borden  
Dig Absolutely

Chris Fisher-Lochhead

♩ = 56-72

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

Violin 2 dynamics: *mf*, *mp*, *mf*

Viola dynamics: *mf*, *mp*, *mf*, *mp*

Violin 2 articulations: *pSP*

Viola articulations: *tr*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Vln. 1 articulation: *3*

Vln. 2 dynamics: *mp*, *mf*, *sf*, *mf*, *mp*

Vln. 2 articulations: *ord*, *pST*, *ord*, *tr*, *SP*, *ord*

Vla. dynamics: *mf*, *mp*, *mf*

Vla. articulations: *pSP*, *ord*, *pSP*, *ord*, *ST*, *ord*

Musical score for measures 5-7. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 5 and 6, and the second system covers measures 6 and 7. The instruments are Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.).

- Vln. 1:** Measure 5: Rest. Measure 6: *mp* (measures 6-7), *mf* (measures 7-8). Fingerings: 3, 5.
- Vln. 2:** Measure 5: *mf* (measures 5-6), *p* *molto* (measures 6-7). Fingerings: 7, 3. Measure 6: *mf* (measures 6-7), *mp* (measures 7-8). Fingerings: 5, 7, 7. Measure 7: *mp* (measures 7-8). Fingerings: 5, 7, 7.
- Vla.:** Measure 5: *mp* (measures 5-6), *mf* (measures 6-7). Fingerings: 5, 3. Measure 6: *mf* (measures 6-7), *p* *molto* (measures 7-8). Fingerings: 7, tr. Measure 7: *p* (measures 7-8). Fingerings: 7.
- Vc.:** Rest throughout.

Performance markings include *pST*, *ord*, *ST*, *pSP*, and *ord*.

Musical score for measures 7-9. The score is divided into three systems. The first system covers measures 7 and 8, the second system covers measures 8 and 9, and the third system covers measures 9 and 10. The instruments are Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.).

- Vln. 1:** Measure 7: *p* (measures 7-8), *mf* (measures 8-9). Fingerings: 7, 5. Measure 8: *mp* (measures 8-9). Fingerings: 7. Measure 9: *mp* (measures 9-10). Fingerings: 3, 5.
- Vln. 2:** Measure 7: *mf* (measures 7-8). Fingerings: 7, tr. Measure 8: *mp* (measures 8-9), *f* *molto* (measures 9-10), *mp* (measures 10-11). Fingerings: 7, 5, shake. Measure 9: *p* (measures 9-10), *mf* (measures 10-11), *mp* (measures 11-12). Fingerings: 7, 5, 3.
- Vla.:** Measure 7: *mf* (measures 7-8). Fingerings: 5, tr. Measure 8: *mf* (measures 8-9). Fingerings: 7. Measure 9: *f* (measures 9-10), *mf* (measures 10-11). Fingerings: 5, tr. Measure 10: *mf* (measures 10-11). Fingerings: 5.
- Vc.:** Rest throughout.

Performance markings include *pOP*, *ord*, *ord*, *pOP*, *ord*, *ST*, *ord*, *pST*, *IV ST*, *ord*, *SP*, and *ord*.

10

Vln. 1

*mp* *mf* *mf* *mp* *p* *molto* *f*

ord pST ord pSP ord

Vln. 2

(bow and finger tremolo)

*p*

Vla.

pST ord pOP ord III pSP

*mp* *mf* *f* *mp* *p* *molto* *f*

Vc.

13

Vln. 1

*mf* *f* *p* *molto* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp*

pOP ord pSP ord

Vln. 2

*molto* *mf* *f* *p* *molto* *molto* *molto* *mf*

Vla.

ord III mVib

*mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Vc.

Musical score for measures 16-17, featuring Violin I (Vln. 1), Violin II (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.).

**Measure 16:**

- Vln. 1:** Starts with a trill (tr) and a 5th fingering. Dynamics: *sf*. Includes a 7th fingering and a 7th measure bracket.
- Vln. 2:** Starts with a 7th fingering. Dynamics: *mf*. Includes a 5th fingering and a 7th measure bracket.
- Vla.:** Starts with a 7th fingering. Dynamics: *mf*. Includes a 5th fingering and a 7th measure bracket.
- Vc.:** Rest.

**Measure 17:**

- Vln. 1:** Includes a 3rd fingering and a 3rd measure bracket. Dynamics: *mp* and *mf*. Includes a trill (tr) and a 4th measure bracket.
- Vln. 2:** Includes a 5th fingering and a 5th measure bracket. Dynamics: *sf*, *mp*, and *mf*. Includes a trill (tr) and a 7th measure bracket.
- Vla.:** Includes a 5th fingering and a 5th measure bracket. Dynamics: *mf* and *sf*. Includes a trill (tr) and a 7th measure bracket.
- Vc.:** Rest.

Performance markings include *pOP*, *ord*, *III*, *IV*, *mVib*, and *molto*.

Musical score for measures 18-19, featuring Violin I (Vln. 1), Violin II (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.).

**Measure 18:**

- Vln. 1:** Starts with a trill (tr) and a 5th fingering. Dynamics: *f*, *sub. mp*, and *mp*. Includes a 5th measure bracket.
- Vln. 2:** Starts with a trill (tr) and a 5th fingering. Dynamics: *mf*. Includes a 3rd fingering and a 3rd measure bracket.
- Vla.:** Starts with a 3rd fingering and a 3rd measure bracket. Dynamics: *mf*. Includes a 5th fingering and a 5th measure bracket.
- Vc.:** Rest.

**Measure 19:**

- Vln. 1:** Starts with a 5th fingering and a 5th measure bracket. Dynamics: *mf* and *sfp*. Includes a trill (tr) and a 3rd measure bracket.
- Vln. 2:** Starts with a 3rd fingering and a 3rd measure bracket. Dynamics: *mp*. Includes a 5th fingering and a 5th measure bracket.
- Vla.:** Starts with a 3rd fingering and a 3rd measure bracket. Dynamics: *mf*, *f*, and *mp*. Includes a trill (tr) and a 3rd measure bracket.
- Vc.:** Rest.

Performance markings include *pSP*, *ord*, *mST*, *mSP*, and *molto*.



20

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

5 3 5 3 5

(tr) *mf* *p* *mp* *mf* *ff* *mf* *molto*

ord 3 5 IV non vib. 5 3

Solo V III mVib ord

*p* *molto* *mf* *f* *mp*

22

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

pSP ord 7 7 5 5 7 7

*mp* *molto* *ff* *mp* *mf*

5 3 3 7 (just finger tremolo) 3

pOP ord SP ord 7 3 5

*p* *mf* *f* *mf* *p* *f*

24

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

SP

ord

OP

ord

5

tr

7

7

7

7

3

*f*

*mf*

*f*

*sf*

*mp*

5

tr

5

5

5

5

5

*mf*

*mp*

*mf*

*f*

*sf*

*p*

pOP

ord.

III

5

mVib

(end solo)

OP

pSP

ord

ord

pOP

ord

*mp*

*f*

*f*

*mf*

*molto*

*mp*

26

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

pOP

ord

ST

5

3

5

7

*f*

*mf*

*f*

pOP

ord

3

5

3

5

*mf*

*molto*

*sf*

*mp*

*mf*

*p*

ST

ord

3

5

tr

3

*mf*

*sf*

*p*

*mf*

*sf*

*mp*

28

Vln. 1

ord

*molto*

*mp*

*f*

*mf*

*f*

*p*

*ff*

*f*

Vln. 2

*mf*

pOP

ord

*mp*

*f*

*mf*

*f*

*mp*

Vla.

mSP

ord

OP

SP

pOP

ord

ord

pST

*pp*

*molto*

*f*

*sf*

*f*

*molto*

Vc.

30

Vln. 1

*f*

*ff*

Vln. 2

*f*

*ff*

Vla.

ord

pSP

ord

ST

sempre

II

III

II

II

III

II

*f*

*ff*

*p*

poco

poco

Vc.

*p*

*molto*

Musical score for measures 33-35, featuring Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.).

- Vln. 1:** Measures 33-35. Dynamics: *p*. Techniques: *pSP*, *ord*, triplets (3), and 7ths (7).
- Vln. 2:** Measures 33-35. Dynamics: *p*, *mp*, *p*, *mp*, *p*. Techniques: *SP*, *ord*, triplets (3), and 7ths (7). Fingerings: III, IV, III.
- Vla.:** Measures 33-35. Dynamics: *pp*, *p*, *poco pp*, *pp*, *p*. Techniques: *mST*, *ST*, triplets (3), and 7ths (7). Fingerings: II, III, II, III, II, II, III, II, II, III, 7.
- Vc.:** Measures 33-35. Dynamics: *pp*, *p*, *p*, *p*. Techniques: *ST*, *ord*, triplets (3), and 7ths (7).

Musical score for measures 36-38, featuring Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.).

- Vln. 1:** Measures 36-38. Dynamics: *p*, *poco*, *mp*, *p*. Techniques: *pSP*, *ord*, triplets (3), and 7ths (7).
- Vln. 2:** Measures 36-38. Dynamics: *pp*, *pp*. Techniques: *mST*, *ord*, *SP*, triplets (3), and 7ths (7). Fingerings: III, IV, IV, ST.
- Vla.:** Measures 36-38. Dynamics: *mp*, *p*. Techniques: *pSP*, *ord*, *SP*, triplets (3), and 7ths (7).
- Vc.:** Measures 36-38. Dynamics: *pp*, *mp*, *p*, *pp*. Techniques: *pSP*, triplets (3), and 7ths (7).

39 *short* *p* *mf* *mp* *p* *mf* *ord* (brushing)

Vln. 1 *Solo* *SP*

Vln. 2 *ord* *short* *p* *mSP* *f* *ord*

Vla. *ord* *short* *p* *mSP* *ord*

Vc. *pST* *ord* *short* *p* *mSP* *f* *ord* *mp*

42 *molto* *f* *mp* *p* *ord* *III* *IV* *SP* *ord*

Vln. 1 *II* *III* *ord* *III* *3*

Vln. 2 *mp* *p* *3* *3*

Vla. *mp* *mf* *5* *3* *pST* *ord*

Vc. *p* *mp* *mf* *5* *3*

senza misura, play 4 times

Vln. 1  
*p* *mp* *pp*  
pST, glassy

Vln. 2  
*p* *mp* *pp*  
pST, glassy

Vla.  
*p* *mp* *pp*  
pST, glassy

Vc.  
*p* *mp* *pp*  
pST, glassy

in tempo, ♩ = 56-72  
whimpering  
mST → ord

Vln. 1  
*pp* *p*  
ST pST ord

Vln. 2  
*pp* *p* *pp*  
whimpering ord pST → ord ST → ord

Vla.  
*pp* *p*  
whimpering (pST) mST ord → pST

Vc.  
*pp* *p*  
whimpering ord → pST ord pST → ord

*molto*

54

Vln. 1: pST, ord, pST → ord

Vln. 2: p, pST → ord, pST tr, molto

Vla.: ord, p, 3, mp

Vc.: mST → ord, ST → ord, ST, mp

56

Vln. 1: mp, pST → ord, 3, tr, ff, brutale

Vln. 2: ord, mp, 3, tr, 3, pOP ad lib brutale, ff

Vla.: p, 3, mp, p, mp, mf, molto, f, ff

Vc.: ord mVib, p, mp, pST, ord, molto, sub. ff

58 *pOP ad lib*

Vln. 1 *sf* *p* *molto* *f* *mf*

Vln. 2 *sf* *sf* *ff* *f* *mf*

Vla. *f* *ff* *sf*

Vc. *f* *sf* *molto*

Annotations: *ord*, *tr*, *3*, *5*, *7*, *pOP*, *pSP*, *IV*, *III*, *tr*, *3*, *5*, *7*

60

Vln. 1 *sf* *mf* *f* *mf*

Vln. 2 *f* *mf* *mp* *mf*

Vla. *ff* *f* *sf* *sf*

Vc. *f* *mf* *f*

Annotations: *ord*, *tr*, *3*, *5*, *7*, *Solo*, *pOP*, *shake*, *mVib*, *tr*, *3*, *5*, *7*



62

Vln. 1

*molto f* *mf* *f* *mp* *f*

Vln. 2

*molto* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

Vla.

*mp* *f* *f*

Vc.

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

7 *tr* 7 *tr* 7 *tr* 3

5 *tr* 7

III 7 *tr*

7 *mVib* 7 *tr* 7 *tr*

64

Vln. 1

*f* *mp* *mf*

Vln. 2

*ff* *mf* *f*

Vla.

*brutale* *ff* *pOP* *ord* *mSP* *sf*

Vc.

*mf* *ff* *pOP* *ord* *f*

7 *mVib* 7 *tr* 7 *tr* 3

3 *tr* 5 *tr* 5 *tr* 5

7 3 *brutale* 7 *pOP* *ord* 5 *mSP*

3 3 5 5 *pOP* *ord*

66

Vln. 1

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

*brutale mSP* *ord* *tr*

Vln. 2

*sf* *ff* *sf* *ff* *fff*

Vla.

*ff* *mp* *fff*

Vc.

*mp* *fff*

In bars 68-72, every fluctuation in dynamics is compensated for by a commensurate fluctuation in the opposite direction. The overall effect should be that there is no decrease or increase in the total sound. Bow changes should have no perceptible articulation.

68

Vln. 1

*f* *sf* *ff* *mp* *fff*

*ord* *tr*

Vln. 2

*f* *sf* *ff* *mp* *fff*

Vla.

*f* *sf* *ff* *mp* *fff*

Vc.

*f* *sf* *ff* *mp* *fff*

71

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

*fff*

*brutale*

*fff*

*fff* *sf*

*fff*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 71, 72, and 73. It features four staves: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. Measure 71 shows a melodic line in Vln. 1 with a five-measure slur and a dynamic of *fff*. Vln. 2 and Vla. play rhythmic patterns with triplets and slurs. Vc. provides a bass line with slurs and a dynamic of *fff*. Measure 72 continues these patterns. Measure 73 features a *brutale* section with rapid sixteenth-note passages in Vln. 2 and Vla., and a dynamic shift from *fff* to *sf* in the Viola part.

74

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

*brutale*

*mf* *ff*

*sf* *ff*

*sf* *brutale* *mf* *ff*

*sf*

*ff*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 74, 75, and 76. It features the same four staves as the previous system. Measure 74 begins with a *brutale* section in Vln. 1, characterized by rapid sixteenth-note patterns. Vln. 2 and Vla. also play complex rhythmic figures with slurs and dynamics of *sf* and *ff*. Vc. provides a steady bass line with a dynamic of *sf*. Measure 75 continues the *brutale* texture. Measure 76 shows a dynamic shift from *mf* to *ff* in Vln. 1 and from *mf* to *ff* in Vla., with Vln. 2 and Vc. maintaining their respective parts.

77

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

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

*f* *ff*

*f* *ff*

*f* *ff* *f*

*Solo espressivo*

80

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

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

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

*f* *ff* *f* *f*

*f* *f*

*Solo espressivo*

83

Vln. 1 *ff* *brutale, without restraint* *fff*

Vln. 2 *mf* *brutale, without restraint* *fff*

Vla. *mf* *f* *brutale, without restraint* *fff*

Vc. *cresc.* *fff* *brutale, without restraint*

86

Vln. 1 *pp* *long* *ST*

Vln. 2 *ppp* *mST* *long*

Vla. *pp* *long* *pST*

Vc. *pp* *long* *ST*

Musical score for measures 89-93, featuring Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.).

- Measures 89-90:** Vln. 1 and Vln. 2 play *ppp* with *mST* (middle string technique) markings. Vln. 2 has a *5* (fingering) marking.
- Measure 91:** Vln. 1 and Vln. 2 play *ppp*. Vln. 2 has a *5* marking. Vc. has a *5* marking.
- Measure 92:** Vln. 1 and Vln. 2 play *p*. Vln. 2 has a *short* marking. Vc. has a *short* marking.
- Measure 93:** Vln. 1 and Vln. 2 play *p*. Vln. 2 has a *short* marking. Vc. has a *short* marking.

Additional markings include *ord* (order) and *SP* (sordano) in measures 92-93. Dynamic markings include *ppp*, *p*, and *mp*. Fingering markings include *3*, *5*, *7*, and *3*.

Musical score for measures 94-98, featuring Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.).

- Measure 94:** Vln. 1 and Vln. 2 play *mp*. Vln. 1 has a *3* marking. Vln. 2 has a *7* marking.
- Measure 95:** Vln. 1 and Vln. 2 play *pp*. Vln. 2 has a *(brushing)* marking.
- Measure 96:** Vln. 1 and Vln. 2 play *p*. Vln. 2 has a *short* marking.
- Measure 97:** Vln. 1 and Vln. 2 play *ppp*. Vln. 2 has a *short* marking.
- Measure 98:** Vln. 1 and Vln. 2 play *p*. Vln. 2 has a *3* marking.

Additional markings include *ord* (order) in measures 94-95. Dynamic markings include *mp*, *p*, *pp*, and *ppp*. Fingering markings include *3*, *5*, *7*, and *5*.

The viola solo in bars 100-111 should be performed with absolute rhythmic freedom. In the viola part, the transition between techniques (jeté to tremolo, for example) should be executed in as fluid and lyrical a manner as possible.

98

Vln. 1  
 pp mp p mp ppp pp

Vln. 2  
 ppp p mp ppp pp

Vla.  
 pp mp p p p mp p p ord 5 3 pSP (brushing) molto mf pp

Vc.  
 ppp p

Annotations: mST, pST, Solo, ad libitum

102

Vln. 1  
 pp p

Vln. 2  
 ppp

Vla.  
 ord → pOP → ord mSP ord → ST I II III pSP mSP ord → OP → ord I II sf mf pp f ppp mp

Vc.  
 pp pp

106

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

ST

pSP ord

pp

mf

mp

mf

pp

ppp

109

c. 9'30"

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

ST

ord

pSP

ord

ppp

mp

p

mf

pp

mp

p

pp

Chicago, September-December 2010  
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