

Niki Zohdi

Flumina

2025

for violin, cello, percussion & piano (with e-bows)

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c. 6 minutes

Flumina is the Latin word for 'rivers'. This piece does not necessarily attempt to evoke the sounds or imagery of a river, but, otherwise, refers to the compositional style of 16th century Franco-Flemish composer, Nicolas Gombert. For most of my life as a musician, I have been drawn to Franco-Flemish polyphony, especially the music of Gombert, whose fluid yet dense style is, to my eyes, very unique for the time. Seminal recordings of Gombert's works by ensembles such as *Beauty Farm*, always seem to develop my interest in Gombert's music more and more and I seem to continually find deeper nuances in his music.

Gombert's lack of extended homophony, high amount of false relations, deceptive cadential points, and lower-voice textures are all points from which *Flumina* is based upon. I find similarities between the complexity and constant continuity of flowing river networks and Gombert's compositional style and approach. This piece, therefore, uses the material of Gombert's motet, *Super flumina Babylonis* (tr. by the rivers of Babylon) with the original source material continually flowing in and out of focus and obscuration as the piece progresses. Gombert's preference for lower voice textures is shown, in *Flumina*, through the de-tuned strings and reluctance to use extended passages of higher registers, creating that sense of dense homogeneity within complex polyphony as exhibited in Gombert's music.

This piece was completed in May 2025 and premiered in Bled, Slovenia in June 2025 as part of the Bled Contemporary Music Festival.

Percussion

Instruments

Bass drum
Tibetan Bells (C-sharp & E)
China Cymbal
Vibraphone

Mallets/objects

Superball
2x Soft mallets
2x medium mallets
Crumpled newspaper

General

Arrows signify a gradual change between states

All **grace notes**, **tremolandi** & **trills** are as fast as possible

Grace notes always on the beat, not before

ord. - cancels previous direction

Dotted slurs between noteheads are to be assumed as gradual changes between states
Changes without dotted slurs are to be assumed as sudden changes between states

All other directions are noted on the score

Accidentals are valid only for the note they precede unless that note is immediately repeated

Score is **untransposed** and in C

Strings

BB: behind bridge

 : bow on the bridge

MSP: molto sul pont.

SP: sul pont.

ord.: bow in normal position

ST: sul tasto

MST: molto sul tasto

SFin: bow as close to fingers as possible (sul finger)

CLT: col legno tratto

1/2 CLT: 1/2 col legno tratto

a.ord: arco ordinario (cancels col legno indications)

 : heavy bow pressure (between normal and extreme);
1/2 scratch tone (little pitch)

 : extreme heavy bow pressure; scratch tone (no pitch)

 : normal bow pressure (cancels previous pressure indication)

 : harmonic pressure (left hand)

 : 1/2 harmonic pressure (left hand)

 : vibrato

 : uneven vibrato

 : non-linear glissando

 : violin scordatura (tuning changes in b. 32)

 : cello scordatura

Piano

Objects

2x e-bows

2x soft mallets

Any heavy object that will fit on top of low register coil strings

Directions

Pedal stave: pedalling is to follow the contour of the line on the stave.

Top line = sustain pedal up

Bottom line = sustain pedal down

Middle space = 1/4, 1/2 & 3/4 pedal

E-bows (x2) are to be used on the strings signified by the pitches on the upper ossia staff

Square noteheads signify a cluster using palm of hand

Flumina

1

Niki Zohdi

♩ = 45

Violin

CLT (IV) → a.ord → MST → 7:6 → 3 → ord. → MST

pp → *mf* → *pp* → *mp* → *pp* → *mp* → *pp*

Violoncello

CLT (IV) → a.ord → MST → 7:4 → 3 → ord. → MST

pp → *mf* → *pp* → *mp* → *pp* → *mp* → *pp*

Percussion

Tibetan Bells *p*

Bass drum *ff*

superball

(superball) *ff*

p

e-bows

e-bows

Piano

Sustain pedal

up 1/2 full

5

Vln.

Pitches

ord. → MST

III

5:4

6:5

5:3

MSP

ff

pp

mp

Vc.

Pitches

(non vib.) ord. → MST

5:4

7:6

III

7:6

ord. → MSP

mp

pp

ff

mp

Perc.

p

ff

(superball)

pp

e-bows

Pno.

take soft mallets inside: use mallets on low register piano strings

soft mallets sim.

pp

mp

pp

Ped.

[illegible]

This musical score page contains measures 17 through 46 of the piece. The instruments and parts are as follows:

- Vln. (Violin):** Measures 17-46. Includes dynamic markings *pp*, *mp*, and *pp*. Features a 5:4 ratio and a triplet in measures 17-19.
- Pitches:** A staff showing pitch contours for the Violin and Viola parts.
- Vc. (Viola):** Measures 17-46. Includes dynamic markings *ff*, *pp*, *mp*, and *f*. Features a glissando in measure 19 and a fermata in measure 45.
- Perc. (Percussion):** Measures 17-46. Includes a note in measure 19 and a note in measure 45. A text instruction "place crumpled newspaper on bass drum" is present in measure 45.
- e-bows:** A staff for electric bows, with a note in measure 19.
- Pno. (Piano):** Measures 17-46. Includes dynamic markings *pp*, *ff*, and *pp*. Features a trill in measure 17 and a 15mb (15-measure block) in measure 46.
- Ped. (Pedal):** A staff for the piano pedal, with a note in measure 17.

The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. A tempo marking "MST, 1/2 CLT" is present at the top. A text instruction "ord. → MST" is also present.

20

Vln.

mp *pp* *mp*

Pitches

Vc.

pp *mf* *pp*

Pitches

Perc.

2x soft mallets on top of newspaper

pp *mp* *pp*

e-bows

Pno.

pppp *mp* *pp* *pppp* (almost inaudible; like a rumble)

Ped.

7:4 6:5 5:4 5:4

3 3 3 3 3

2/4 2/4 2/4 2/4 2/4

22

Vln.

Pitches

Vc.

Pitches

Perc.

e-bows

Pno.

Ped.

pp *mp* *pp* *mp* *f* *pp* *sf*

sim.

pppp

7:4 7:6

3 3 3 3 3

24

Vln.

behind bridge; no pitch

ff *pp*

11:6

pp

Vc.

3 5:3

>pp

"tonlos" place palm of hand over all strings and glissando following line contours; no pitch; across all four strings

light LH pres.

mp

Perc.

mf

sim.

ff

e-bows

15mb until b. 40 →

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

pppp (almost inaudible; like a rumble)

Pno.

Ped.

The musical score for 'The Great Wall' by David Lang is presented in a multi-staff format. The staves are labeled as follows:

- Vln. (Violin):** Features a melodic line with a 5:3 ratio indicated. Dynamics include *ff* and *pp*.
- Pitches:** A staff showing pitch contours for the violin and viola parts.
- Vc. (Viola):** Features a melodic line with a glissando (*gliss.*) and dynamics including *mp*, *ff*, *pp*, and *pp*. A performance instruction 'remove newspaper' is present.
- Pitches:** A staff showing pitch contours for the viola and cello parts.
- Perc. (Percussion):** Features a melodic line with a 4:4 ratio and a performance instruction '(2x soft mallets)'. Dynamics include *pp*.
- e-bows:** A staff for electric bowing, marked with a 4:4 ratio.
- Pno. (Piano):** Features a complex rhythmic pattern with a 4:4 ratio and a performance instruction '(pppp)'.
- Ped. (Pedal):** A staff for the piano pedal, marked with a 4:4 ratio.

The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (*mp*, *ff*, *pp*, *pppp*), articulation (*gliss.*), and performance instructions (*remove newspaper*, *(2x soft mallets)*). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto' and the time signature is 4/4.

30

(LH pressure trem.)

Vln.

Pitches

Vc.

Pitches

Perc.

e-bows

Pno.

Ped.

ord.

fff

fff

fff

32

Vln.

de-tune string IV to G2

Pitches

Vc.

MST → ord. → MST

blend with bass drum

sim.

Perc.

superball

e-bows

Pno.

pppp

Ped.

de-tune string IV to G2

MST → ord. → MST

blend with bass drum

sim.

superball

pppp

Ped.

34

Vln.

Pitches

MSP

pp

Vc.

MST

ord.

MST

sim.

3

fff

Perc.

fff

e-bows

Pno.

Ped.

34

35

36

37

37

Vln.

Pitches

MST 3 → MSP

mf *pp*

Vc.

Pitches

III MSP

3

ord. 11:8 → MSP

mf *pp*

Perc.

Vibraphone

soft mallet; without motor

3

ppp

China cymbal/bass drum

place China cymbal on bass drum skin

soft mallets on china cymbal

f

e-bows

Pno.

f *pppp*

Ped.

This musical score is for the piece "The Great Wall" by John Adams, specifically the section from 40 to 44 measures. The score is arranged for Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vc.), Percussion (Perc.), and Piano (Pno.).

Violin (Vln.): The Violin part begins with a melodic line in the first measure, marked *mf*. This is followed by a series of chords and arpeggiated figures, with dynamics ranging from *pp* to *sf*. The part concludes with a sustained chord marked *mf*.

Viola (Vc.): The Viola part features a melodic line in the first measure, marked *mf*. This is followed by a series of chords and arpeggiated figures, with dynamics ranging from *pp* to *sf*. The part concludes with a sustained chord marked *pp*.

Percussion (Perc.): The Percussion part includes a melodic line in the first measure, marked *ppp*. This is followed by a series of chords and arpeggiated figures, with dynamics ranging from *ppp* to *mf*. The part concludes with a sustained chord marked *ppp*.

Piano (Pno.): The Piano part features a melodic line in the first measure, marked *mp*. This is followed by a series of chords and arpeggiated figures, with dynamics ranging from *pp* to *mf*. The part concludes with a sustained chord marked *pp*.

Other details: The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. The tempo is marked "mod." (moderato). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The time signature is 4/4.

The musical score for 'The Great Wall' by David Lang is presented in a multi-staff format. The staves are labeled as follows:

- Vln. (Violin):** The top staff, starting at measure 44. It features a melodic line with various dynamics including *pp*, *mf*, and *pp*. There are also performance instructions like 'MSP' and 'ord.' with arrows indicating specific techniques or effects.
- Pitches:** A staff below the Violin, likely indicating pitch bends or specific pitch classes.
- Vc. (Violoncello):** The second staff, featuring a melodic line with dynamics such as *mf*, *pp*, and *sf*. It includes performance instructions like 'MSP', 'ord.', and 'MST'.
- Pitches:** A staff below the Violoncello, likely indicating pitch bends or specific pitch classes.
- Perc. (Percussion):** The third staff, featuring a rhythmic line with dynamics like *mf* and *ppp*. It includes performance instructions like 'sim.' and 'superball on skin'.
- e-bows:** A staff below the Percussion, likely indicating electronic bowing techniques.
- Pno. (Piano):** The fourth staff, featuring a melodic line with dynamics like *mf* and *ppp*. It includes performance instructions like 'sim.' and 'superball on skin'.
- Ped. (Pedal):** The bottom staff, featuring a melodic line with dynamics like *mf* and *ppp*. It includes performance instructions like 'sim.' and 'superball on skin'.

The score is written in 4/4 time and includes various musical notations such as dynamics, articulations, and performance instructions. The notation is complex, with many notes and rests, and includes a variety of musical symbols and markings.

48

Vln.

Pitches

Vc.

Pitches

Perc.

e-bows

Pno.

Ped.

ord. → MSP

5:3

mf

pp

sf

pp

6:4

mf

MST

5:4

IV III IV III IV

mf

pp

ord. → MST

MSP → ord.

3

pp

mf

soft mallets on china cymbal

mf

ppp

ppp

mf

8^{vb}

8^{vb}

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for measures 48 to 51. It features six staves: Violin (Vln.), Pitches, Viola (Vc.), Pitches, Percussion (Perc.), Electric Bows (e-bows), Piano (Pno.), and Pedal (Ped.). The Violin part starts with a 5:3 ratio, followed by a 6:4 ratio, and ends with a wavy line. The Viola part has a 5:4 ratio and includes fingerings (IV, III, IV, III, IV). The Percussion part uses soft mallets on a china cymbal. The Electric Bows part has a wavy line. The Piano part has a wavy line. The Pedal part has a wavy line. Dynamics include mf, pp, sf, ppp, and 8^{vb}. Performance instructions include 'ord. → MSP' and 'MST → ord.'.

52 $\text{♩} = 45$

Vln. *ord.*

Pitches

Vc. *MST* *ord.* *5:3* *11:6*

Pitches

Perc. *11:6* (soft mallets on china cymbal) *ff* *ppp*

e-bows

Pno.

Ped.

56

Vln.

Pitches

Vc.

Pitches

Perc.

take soft mallets & superball to piano

Soft mallets/piano

soft mallets tremolo on bass coil strings inside of piano behind the hammers

mf *mf* *sempre.*

e-bows

Pno.

Ped.

ppp (almost inaudible; like a rumble)

mf *pp* *ff* *pp*

58

Vln.

Pitches

Vc.

Pitches

Perc.

e-bows

Pno.

Ped.

ff

ff *p* *ff* *p* *ff* *p* *ff* *p*

ff *mf* *ff*

5:4 5:4

ord. → MST

take superball

swipe superball on frame inside piano

ff

ff

2/4 7/8

This musical score is for the piece "The Great Wall" by John Adams. It is a multi-staff score for a chamber ensemble. The instruments and parts are:

- Vln. (Violin):** Features a melodic line with a sawtooth-like vibrato, dynamic markings of *ff* and *p*, and a glissando at the end.
- Pitches:** A staff showing the pitch contours for the Violin and Viola parts.
- Vc. (Viola):** Features a melodic line with a sawtooth-like vibrato, dynamic markings of *ff* and *p*, and a glissando at the end.
- Pitches:** A staff showing the pitch contours for the Viola and Percussion parts.
- Perc. (Percussion):** Features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes.
- e-bows (Electric Bows):** Features a melodic line with a sawtooth-like vibrato, dynamic markings of *ff* and *p*, and a glissando at the end.
- Pno. (Piano):** Features a melodic line with a sawtooth-like vibrato, dynamic markings of *ff* and *p*, and a glissando at the end.
- Ped. (Pedal):** A staff showing the pedal point for the Piano part.

The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (*ff*, *p*), articulation (*ord.*, *MST*), and performance instructions like "tonlos" (dampen all strings using light pressure with palm of left hand; no pitch) and "MSP slow bow III/IV".

The musical score for "The Great Wall" by John Adams is presented in a multi-staff format. The staves are labeled as follows:

- Vln. (Violin):** The top staff, starting at measure 66. It features a melodic line with dynamic markings *ff*, *p*, *ff*, *p*, *ff*, *f*, *fff*, *f*, *fff*, *mp*, and *f*. A 7:4 time signature change is indicated above the staff.
- Pitches:** A staff showing the pitch contours for the Violin and Viola parts.
- Vc. (Viola):** The second staff, featuring a melodic line with dynamic markings *ff*, *pp*, *ff*, *pp*, *ff*, and *pp*. It includes performance instructions: "ord. fast bow", "MSP slow bow", "ord. fast bow", "MSP slow bow", "ord. fast bow", and "MSP slow bow". A 3-measure rest is also present.
- Pitches:** A staff showing the pitch contours for the Viola and Cello parts.
- Perc. (Percussion):** The third staff, featuring a melodic line with dynamic markings *mf*. A text instruction reads: "soft mallets tremolo on bass coil strings inside of piano behind the hammers".
- e-bows:** The fourth staff, featuring a melodic line with dynamic markings *p*.
- Pno. (Piano):** The fifth staff, featuring a melodic line with dynamic markings *p*. It includes a 7:4 time signature change and a 3-measure rest.
- Ped. (Pedal):** The bottom staff, featuring a melodic line with dynamic markings *p*.

The score is written in 3/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked "Adagio". The score is for a full orchestra, including strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion.

accel. $\text{♩} = 60$

69

Vln.

Pitches

Vc.

Pitches

Perc.

e-bows

Pno.

Ped.

fff *mf* *f* *gliss.* *fff* *f*

ord. fast bow *ff* MSP slow bow *pp*

p *fff*

73

Vln.

Pitches

Vc.

Pitches

Perc.

e-bows

Pno.

Ped.

with practice mute

pp

s.fin; slow bowing; CLT

74

75

76

Detailed description: This page contains a musical score for measures 73 through 76. The score is arranged in a system with seven staves. The first staff is for Violin (Vln.), the second for Pitches, the third for Viola (Vc.), the fourth for Pitches, the fifth for Percussion (Perc.), the sixth for e-bows, and the seventh for Piano (Pno.) and Pedal (Ped.). Measures 73 and 74 are in 2/4 time, while measures 75 and 76 are in 4/4 time. The Violin part begins with a measure rest in 2/4, followed by a half note in 4/4 marked *pp* and *with practice mute*. A long slur covers measures 75 and 76, with the instruction 's.fin; slow bowing; CLT' above it. The Viola part begins with a measure rest in 2/4, followed by a half note in 4/4 marked *pp* and *with practice mute*. A long slur covers measures 75 and 76, with the instruction 's.fin; slow bowing; CLT' above it. The Percussion part has a measure rest in 2/4, followed by a half note in 4/4 marked *pp*. The e-bows, Piano, and Pedal parts have measure rests in 2/4, followed by whole notes in 4/4. The Pedal part has a long line across measures 75 and 76.

78

Vln.

Pitches

Vc.

Pitches

Perc.

e-bows

Pno.

Ped.