

PARTITA

for 8 voices
by Caroline Shaw



for Roomful of Teeth

Partita is a simple piece. Born of a love of surface and structure, of the human voice, of dancing and tired ligaments, of music, and of our basic desire to draw a line from one point to another.

notes on the score

Most of *Partita* is wordless, but a careful consideration of vowel color has been indicated in standard IPA. The occasional spoken and sung text pulls from wall drawing directions of Sol Lewitt, square dance calls, found phrases from an urban environment, and original writing by the composer.

The indications xöömei, kargyraa, and sygyt, which appear throughout the score, refer to traditional Tuvan vocal practice.

The familiar tune in the middle of the third movement, *Courante*, is from the 1856 hymn “Shining Shore” by Mr. George F. Root.

Voices are indicated 1 through 8 — essentially SSAATTBB. In the original Roomful of Teeth configuration, 1-4 were women and 5-8 were men. The top two and bottom two voices are specialists in the extreme upper and lower ranges. The middle four tend to be wide-ranging and flexible — or in soccer terms, sweepers.

The 2012 recording by Roomful of Teeth can be considered an essential part of the score. Many sounds and gestures cannot be notated in a conventional way, and the composer encourages drawing on a variety of sources available with today’s technology to realize this piece with other ensembles in the future. However, no single document should ever be treated as ultimately prescriptive. Be free, and live life fully.

A few notes on the less-usual notes . . .

e.g.s.

“eat your sound”

a multi-step tongue filter developed by Roomful of Teeth



This is one example of a yodel break. The diamond notehead indicates the use of head voice. The comma stroke just confirms the differentiation from the chest voice that precedes it.

These are textured breaths, related to the Inuit throat singing tradition. They are featured primarily in Courante.



Audible exhale. Typically on “ah”

Audible inhale. Typically higher in pitch, and on “oh”

An inhale-exhale gesture, as in Inuit throat games. These can be more or less “noisy” depending on the dynamic context.



A gentle, natural close-mouthed sigh, glissing up to the pitch that follows. It is an abstraction of a P’ansori articulation.



stretch pitch slightly in either direction,
drawing from the intonation of Georgian singing



an expressive P’ansori gesture,
involving diaphragm accentuation and pitch inflection

IV. Passacaglia

♩ = 48

1-2
3-4
5-6
7-8

p C



A chest head *sim.*

mf a

mf a

mf a

mf a

p C



B *all:* belt semi-pitched exhale if possible *sim.*

ff æ

ff æ

ff æ

ff æ

p C

poco piu mosso

C

1 *plainchantish improv on these two pitches*

2

3

4 *plainchantish improv on these two pitches*

5

6 *xöömei*

7 *xöömei*

8

D

floaty head voice

1

2

3

4 *floaty head voice*

5 *floaty head voice*

6

7 *e.y.s.*

8 *e.y.s.*

dim ...

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp

1 *mix*

2 *mix*

3 //: The sixty-fifth point is located where two lines would cross if one were drawn from the sixty-fourth point to the lower

4 *mix* //: The fifty-ninth point is located

5 //: The eighty-ninth point is located halfway between the midpoint of the left side and a point halfway between a point halfway between the

6 *humming to yourself* *mp* //: The eighty-sixth,

7 *p* *mf dim.*

8 *p* *mf dim.*



1 *bright nasal mix* //: The forty-first point is located halfway between the fortieth point and the midpoint of the bottom side. :// //

2 //: The sixty-sixth point is located at a distance from the twenty-seventh point toward the middle sprinkler pipe equal to the distance between the ninth and the forty-fourth points. :// //

3 right corner and a second line were drawn from the twenty-eighth point to a point halfway between the midpoint of the right side and the lower right corner :// //

4 halfway between the eighth point and a point halfway between a point halfway between the midpoint of the bottom side and the lower right corner and the lower right corner and the midpoint of the right side and the midpoint of the right side :// //

5 center of the wall and the midpoint of the left side and the lower left corner, and the lower left corner. :// //

6 eighty-seventh and the eighty-eighth points are located symmetrically across the central vertical axis of the wall from the forty-fifth, the twenty-eighth, and the sixty-fifth points, in that order. :// //

7 //: The forty-fourth point is located where a line drawn from the thirty-fourth point through the first point would cross a line from the thirty-fifth point to a point halfway between the midpoint of the right side and the lower right corner :// //

8 "The eighty-fourth point is located above the fifth and the twenty-sixth points by a distance equal to the distance between the fifth and the twenty-sixth points and the twenty-sixth points :// //

G

Note for all:

At cue, restart your text from the beginning and ramp on it through this next section.

Speak clearly and naturally.

Each bar should last around four seconds and can be cued either by a conductor or just by ear among the singers themselves. (The harmony changes on each bar; it is the same harmonic progression stated at the beginning.)

The spacing of pitches throughout the bar, for each part, is approximate. Don't feel too tethered to it, but maybe use it as a guideline.

(All speaking)



Note for all:

All speaking descends to vocal fry. Big fat crescendo. Try to maintain the fry crackle as much as possible, without an overdramatic gliss.. (Microphones will help.)

H

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8

f æ *p* u



I

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8

fff æ *pp* u *e.y.s.*