

USQUE

violin and viola duet

for Marc Sabat and Thomas Nicholson

(2018)

USQUE is a piece of music written in just intonation that lives within a 5-limit harmonic space: a method of tuning musical intervals using the third and fifth overtones of the harmonic series.

This piece requires that the A (II) string of the violin be tuned down 133 cents. The remaining three strings are tuned in pure fifths (Pythagorean) from A 440 (E5 + 2 cents [660 Hz], D4 - 2 cents [293.34 Hz], and G3 - 4 cents [195.56 Hz]). The strings of the viola are tuned traditionally in pure fifths (as above) with the addition of the fourth string (C3 - 6 cents [130.37 Hz]).

Ratios using a solidus (e.g. 2/3) indicate harmonic intervals and those using a colon (e.g. 2:3) indicate melodic intervals. Each of these will be followed by their interval in cents.

Natural harmonics are notated with diamond noteheads at the harmonic touch-point with an indication of which string to play on and which harmonic should sound. (e.g. IV³ indicates the third harmonic on string IV). Artificial harmonics are notated with normal noteheads indicating the stopped note and diamond noteheads indicating the touch-point.

This work is calmly paced, with a sense of directionality towards the stronger dynamic markings.

Slurs indicate phrasing rather than bowing.

Glissandi are notated as diagonal lines preceding the note they affect and should be executed smoothly and directly before the goal note (in the time of a grace note).

Bowing is free and smooth throughout, changes may occur during long notes as well as between tied notes.

The piece must be played *senza vibrato*.

This work is notated in the *Helmholz-Ellis JI Pitch Notation* devised by Marc Sabat and Wolfgang von Schweinitz.

More information regarding this notation can be found at <http://www.plainsound.org/>

