

Elegy in Memory of Bill Colvig

for Javanese gamelan and violin

Bill Alves

Performance Notes

- If the violinist elects to tune to the gamelan, which I often recommend, the A string should be tuned to pitch 5, the D string to pitch 1, the G string to pitch 4, and the E string to pitch 2.
- To be consistent between the two forms of notation, the rehearsal letters fall on the second beat of the measure in the string part. Gongs fall on the first beat of the measures just before the rehearsal letters (and the first beat of the very last measure).
- Keteg (beats) in the gamelan notation correspond to quarter notes in the soloist part so that a single measure is four keteg.
- In practice, I have asked instruments in sections B and B' to play gembyangan (bonang) or gantungan (panerusan instruments) in such a way as to *follow* the balungan tones rather than to anticipate them. Though this practice is clearly contrary to traditional Javanese style (and more akin to Western harmonic style), I have found that it works well with the soloist, and, after all, I'm a Western composer. Thus a ringing slentem tone 6, for example, will not be constantly set against bonang gembyangan on pitch 5 or vice-versa.
- At the very end, the instruments should die away around the last balungan pitch, leaving the violin soloist to play the "hiking up the mountain" theme alone, followed by only the gong.
- Bill Colvig was a wonderful musician, instrument designer and builder, mountain climber, and collaborator with his life partner Lou Harrison. Like many, I was charmed by Bill's energy, good humor, love of the earth, and his puns. Upon learning of his death in March of 2000, I was moved to write an elegy in his honor for gamelan, the same sort of orchestra that he was famous for designing and building.

Elegy in Memory of Bill Colvig

for violin and Javanese gamelan pelog

By Bill Alves

Balungan

Violin solo. Gong on cue from violinist. *mf* (3)

A - very slow throughout (irama II),

P N

6 . 5 2 6 . 5 3 . 2 3 5 6 . 5 3

6 . 5 2 6 . 5 3 2 3 6 5 . . . (3) violin enters just before gong

A' *p*

6 . 5 2 6 . 5 3 . 2 3 5 6 . 5 3

6 . 5 2 6 . 5 3 2 3 6 5 . . . (5)

B — bonang gembyangan, panerusan gantungan

. . . 6 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . 5

mf

. . . 6 . . . 5 6 5 2 (3) low 5 and 6 if available

C

. . 5 6 3 2 . . 5 6 5 3 2 5 3 2 5 3 1 2 . . 6 5 2 3

. . 5 6 3 2 . . 5 6 5 3 2 5 2 3 5 3 6 5 . . . (3) optional repeat
back to A

A' *p*

6 . 5 2 6 . 5 3 . 2 3 5 6 . 5 3

6 . 5 2 6 . 5 3 2 3 6 5 . . . (5)

B' — bonang gembyangan, panerusan gantungan

. . . 6 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . 5

. . . 6 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . (5)

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Pelag Bem

Violin

Bill Alves

Notes: It may be desirable to tune the open violin strings to match the gamelan thus: D string = pitch 1, A string = pitch 5, E string = pitch 2. The rehearsal letters fall on the second beat of the measure for consistency with the balungan notation. Also, rehearsal letters indicate different musical material in the balungan, and so there are two letters A', each with a different violin part, but distinguished in this part with "first time" and "second time." Likewise, A' is different from A and B' different from B. The solo violin introduction is slow but rhythmically free. The durations given here are only meant as a general guide. The gamelan enters at the gong before letter A on a cue from the violinist.

Rhythmically free solo (bawa).

The solo introduction consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a *pp* dynamic and features a triplet of eighth notes. The second staff has a *mf* dynamic followed by a *p* dynamic. The third staff starts with a *pp* dynamic. The fourth staff begins with a *mf* dynamic and ends with a *f* dynamic. The music is characterized by long, flowing lines with various articulations and slurs.

Slow
Cue gamelan on downbeat

A

$\text{♩} = 48$

(if repeating) Balungan

pp

This section is marked "Slow" and begins with a rehearsal letter **A**. It includes a tempo marking of a quarter note equal to 48 beats per minute. The music is in a simple, steady rhythm. A dynamic marking of *pp* is present. The text "(if repeating) Balungan" is written below the staff.

A' First time

mf

This section is marked with a rehearsal letter **A'** and the text "First time". It begins with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The music consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, some with slurs.

B

p

C

p *mp*

Optional repeat to first letter A

A' (second time)

mf

B'

p

Bill hikes up the mountain

dim. *ppp*

*Optional harmonic

Detailed description: This page of a violin score contains eight staves of music. The first two staves are part of section B, marked with a dynamic of *p*. The next two staves are section C, starting with *p* and moving to *mp*. The fifth staff begins with an optional repeat sign and a dynamic of *mf*, leading into section A' (second time). The sixth and seventh staves continue the piece, with the seventh staff marked *p*. The final staff concludes with the text 'Bill hikes up the mountain', a *dim.* marking, and a *ppp* dynamic. A final note is marked with an asterisk, indicating an optional harmonic.