



Balint Bethlenfalvy

Zugzwang

from The Luzhin Defense by Vladimir Nabokov

for string quartet

Luzhin. His life and mind having been wholly consumed by the game since childhood, Nabokov's chess master suffers a breakdown when he cannot manage the pressure of finding a defence against his arch rival. With chess banned, instead, pieces of his fractured life appear to take on its design, and along with his past he discovers that elusive defence to complete the chess game. Yet it also seems to substantiate that he can live neither with, nor without the game.

Construction and Destruction. While the first half of the piece, until bar 63, is strictly constructed, with metric modulations structuring the rhythm, the second half, using arpeggiated harmonics requires some flexibility for the aural impressions to be clearly delineated and even more so where they come together, which may, e.g., also mean quicker more spaced-out events in a wet acoustic environment.

Strokes of the adjacent open string at bow changes in the first half outline and multiply the rhythmic layers established by the pulses modulating through the section, they do not need to be held for the duration of each note: they punctuate the phrases with light stress. The open string remains the same until bar 63 for all but the first violin and on one occasion the viola, who alternate open strings from bar 53 onwards. The dynamic diminuendo of the phrases also remain the same throughout.

The arpeggiated **bariolage** of chords - made up of artificial or natural harmonics and stopped or open string notes - requires freedom, indicated by the *ad libitum* and dashed beam, but coordination as well to bring the events together. It needs to be handled freely (unevenly) both to balance the wildly differing volume of the more and less easily sounded harmonics and other notes, as well as to allow the performers to integrate the disparate material.

This piece is 5'40" at the tempi indicated.

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♩=96

Violin 1 *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

Violin 2 *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

Viola *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

Violoncello *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *pp* *p* *pp*

* stroke open D string on every phrased bow change, need not be held for full duration.

* stroke open A string on every phrased bow change, need not be held for full duration.

7

The musical score is arranged in a system with three main parts: Violins (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). Each part consists of two staves. The Violin parts are in treble clef, the Viola part is in alto clef, and the Violoncello parts are in bass clef. The time signature is 2/4. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score begins at measure 7, indicated by a '7' above the first staff. The music is characterized by a dense, rhythmic texture with frequent accidentals and fingerings (5) throughout. The Violin parts play a complex eighth-note pattern with many flats. The Viola part plays a similar eighth-note pattern. The Violoncello parts play a more melodic line with many flats and fingerings (5). The score is divided into three measures by vertical bar lines. The time signature 2/4 is repeated at the end of each measure.

$\text{♩} = 120$

10

Vln. *p* sim. dynamic and stroke on the open D string at the beginning of each phrase until bar 62

Vln. *p* sim. dynamic and stroke on the open D string at the beginning of each phrase until bar 76

Vla. *p* sim. dynamic and stroke on the open D string at the beginning of each phrase until bar 64

Vc. *p* sim. dynamic and stroke on the open D string at the beginning of each phrase until bar 76

13

Vln. Vln. Vla. Vc.

This system contains measures 13 and 14. It features four staves: Violin I (Vln.), Violin II (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 3/4. Measures 13 and 14 are marked with a repeat sign. The Violin I and II parts play a melodic line with eighth notes and slurs. The Viola and Cello parts play a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes with slurs.



15

Vln. Vln. Vla. Vc.

This system contains measures 15 and 16. It features four staves: Violin I (Vln.), Violin II (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 3/4. Measures 15 and 16 are marked with a repeat sign. The Violin I and II parts play a melodic line with eighth notes and slurs. The Viola and Cello parts play a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes with slurs. The Viola part includes a triplet of eighth notes in measures 15 and 16, indicated by a '3' below the notes.

17

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

This system contains measures 17, 18, and 19. The Violin I and Violin II parts consist of continuous eighth-note patterns with slurs. The Viola and Violoncello parts feature triplet patterns, with a sextuplet (6) in measure 17. The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 3/4.



20

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

This system contains measures 20, 21, and 22. The Violin I and Violin II parts continue with eighth-note patterns. The Viola and Violoncello parts continue with triplet patterns. The key signature and time signature remain consistent with the previous system.

23

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Detailed description: This system contains measures 23, 24, and 25. The Violin I and Violin II parts consist of continuous eighth-note triplets. The Viola and Violoncello parts also feature eighth-note triplets. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat).

26

$\text{♩} = 72$

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

3/4 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

3/4 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

Detailed description: This system contains measures 26, 27, 28, and 29. At measure 26, the time signature changes from 3/4 to 3/4. The Violin I and Violin II parts play sextuplets (groups of six notes). The Viola and Violoncello parts play quintuplets (groups of five notes). The key signature remains two flats. A tempo marking of quarter note = 72 is present above the first measure of the new section.

29

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

This system contains measures 29, 30, and 31. The Violin I and Violin II parts feature sixteenth-note runs with slurs and fingerings of 6. The Viola and Violoncello parts feature sixteenth-note runs with slurs and fingerings of 5 and 6.



32

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

This system contains measures 32, 33, and 34. The Violin I and Violin II parts feature sixteenth-note runs with slurs and fingerings of 6. The Viola and Violoncello parts feature sixteenth-note runs with slurs and fingerings of 5 and 6.

35

Vln. *6*

Vln. *6*

Vla. *6*

Vc. *5*

38

Vln. *6* $\text{♩} = 144$

Vln. *6* $\text{♩} = 144$

Vla. *6* $\text{♩} = 144$

Vc. $\text{♩} = 144$

12

42

Vln. *p*

Vln. *p*

Vla. *p*

Vc. *p*

11

46

Vln. $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

Vln. $\frac{3}{4}$

Vla. $\frac{6}{8}$

Vc. $\frac{3}{4}$

50

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.



54

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

14

57

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.



61

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

p
pp *p* *mp* *p*

sul D sul G sul D sul G
sul D sul G

66 *sul D* 5:6 5:6 5 *sul G* 5 *sul D* 5:6 5 5 5 15

mp
p
p
pp
p

3 3 3 3 3 3 5 5 5 6 6 6 *sim. until bar 76*

p

♩ = 96 (*♩* = 72)

69 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 *sul G* 5 5 5

p
pp
p
p

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

16

72

Vln. *5*

Vln. *5*

Vla. *6*

Vc. *6*

||

74

Vln. *5* sul D *5*

Vln. *5*

Vla. *6*

Vc. *6*

p

p

ppp

III

$\text{♩} = 60$

Vln. 76 $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ *ad libitum** $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Vln. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ *ad libitum** $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Vla. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ *ad libitum** $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Vc. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

ppp *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

*ad libitum**

93

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ppp *pp* *ppp*

detaché

8va

IV

III

II

I

III

IV

III

I

III

6

6

3

0

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 93 to 97. It features four staves: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The Violin I and II parts are marked *detaché* and include fingerings (IV, III, II, I) and an 8va (octave) marking. The Viola part is also marked *detaché* and includes fingerings (III, II, I) and a '6' marking. The Violoncello part begins with a triplet of eighth notes marked *ppp*, followed by a long, sustained note marked *pp* and *ppp* across the measures. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

97

This musical score page features four staves: Violin I (Vln.), Violin II (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.).

- Violin I (Vln.):** The top staff contains two measures of music. Each measure begins with a first finger (I) barre and ends with a natural (0) finger. The notes are slurred and have a dashed line underneath, indicating a glissando effect.
- Violin II (Vln.):** The second staff contains one measure of music starting with a third (III) and fourth (IV) finger barre, followed by a natural (0) finger. The notes are slurred and have a dashed line underneath, indicating a glissando effect.
- Viola (Vla.):** The third staff is mostly silent, marked with a double bar line and a wavy line. It begins with a measure of music featuring a glissando (gliss.), a triplet (3), and a dynamic marking of *p*. This is followed by a measure with a glissando (gliss.), a triplet (3), and a dynamic marking of *mp*. The next measure has a glissando (gliss.), a triplet (3), and a dynamic marking of *f*. The following measure has a triplet (3) and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The next measure has a triplet (3) and a dynamic marking of *mp*. The final measure has a triplet (3) and a dynamic marking of *p*. The staff concludes with a fourth (IV) finger barre and a trill (tr).
- Violoncello (Vc.):** The bottom staff contains two measures of music. The first measure is a long, sustained note with a dynamic marking of *pp*. The second measure is a long, sustained note with a dynamic marking of *pp*. Above the staff, there is a fourth (IV) finger barre and a trill (tr).

101

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

alternate fingers

IV

pp

alternate fingers

8va

I

mp

pp

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for measures 101-106.
- **Vln. I:** Mostly rests. A fingering diagram shows an alternate fingering for a note in measure 4.
- **Vln. II:** Starts in measure 4 with a trill on a whole note, followed by a slur over a half note and a quarter note. A *pp* dynamic marking is present.
- **Vla.:** Features a continuous trill throughout the passage, starting with a *(tr)* marking.
- **Vc.:** Features a continuous trill throughout the passage. A *mp* dynamic marking is at the start, and a *pp* dynamic marking is at the end. A fingering diagram shows an alternate fingering for a note in measure 1.
- **Other:** A *8va* marking is present in measure 5, and a *I* marking is present in measure 6.

112 *pp* III 3 3 8^{va} II I 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 *p*

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Detailed description: This page of a musical score, numbered 112, features four staves: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The music is in 4/4 time and begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The Vln. I part includes fingering (III), triplet markings (3), and a section with sixteenth-note patterns marked with '6'. The Vln. II part features similar sixteenth-note patterns. The Vla. part has a dynamic shift to *p* and includes sixteenth-note patterns marked with '6'. The Vc. part starts with a triplet (3) and includes sixteenth-note patterns marked with '6'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. A key signature change to one sharp (F#) is indicated by a double bar line. There are also some ledger line markings for the Vln. I and Vc. parts.

rit.

Flashback 2

116

Vln. *mp*

Vln. *p* *mp* *p*

Vla. *p* *mp*

Vc. *p* *mp* *f* *mf* 3

I II

I II

I II III

5

♩=44

119

Vln. *p* *pp*

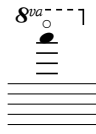
Vln. *pp*

Vla. *mf* *mp* *pp*

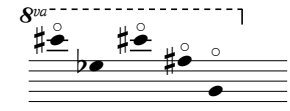
Vc. *mp* *pp*

♩=120

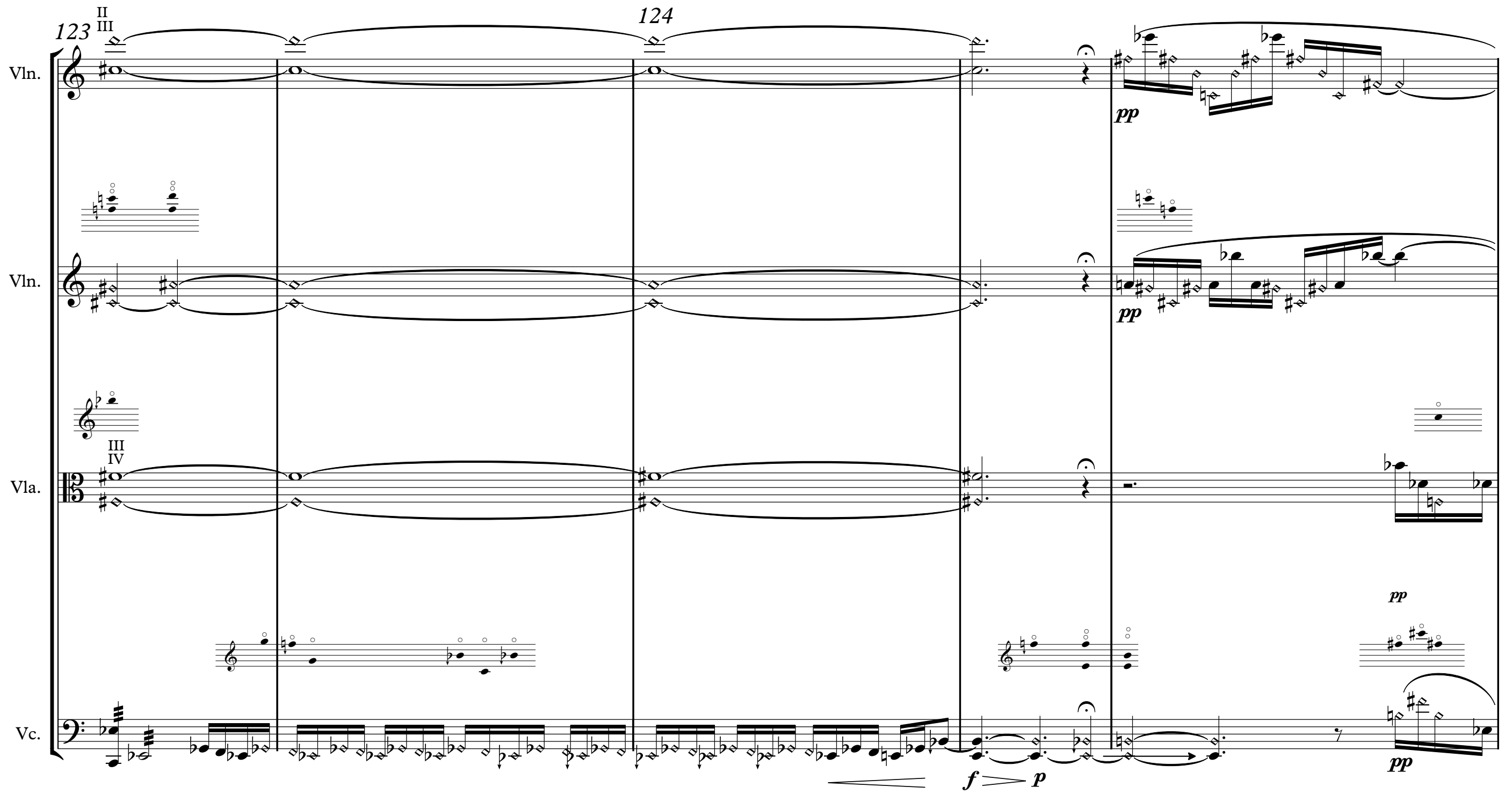
♩=60



8^{va}



8^{va}



123 II III 124

Vln. *pp*

Vln. *pp*

Vla. III IV *pp*

Vc. *f* *p* *pp*

This musical score page contains five staves: two Violin (Vln.) staves, one Viola (Vla.) staff, and one Violoncello (Vc.) staff. The music begins at measure 128. The Violin parts feature melodic lines with slurs and accents, while the Viola and Violoncello parts play a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. A dynamic shift from *f* to *p* occurs at measure 133. The score includes various performance markings such as *f*, *p*, *15^{ma}*, and *8^{va}*. The bottom right of the page shows a *p* dynamic marking.