

Sky Yang

The Master and His Emissary

—for string quartet—

2025

Instrumentation:

2 Violins, Viola, Violoncello

Performance Notes:

s.p. = sul ponticello

m.s.p. = molto sul ponticello

br. = on the bridge, pitchless noise

Boxed Cells: The boxed set of notes should be played *ad libitum*. The thick horizontal lines indicate the performer to repeat the boxed cells until the next notated section.

Program Notes:

The Master and His Emissary is inspired by a book with the same title, written by neuroscientist and philosopher Ian McGilchrist. In the book, McGilchrist analyzes the right and left hemispheres of the human brain, attempting to dispel popular psychology myths regarding the way the two hemispheres function.

McGilchrist describes the right hemisphere as the *Master*: holistic, context-aware, empathetic, and melancholic. On the other hand, the left hemisphere is characterized as *His Emissary*: irrationally calculative, egotistical, and upholds the belief that it is always right (pun intended).

I was fascinated by the way McGilchrist characterizes the left hemisphere: mechanical and uncompromising. I wanted to explore *His Emissary's* dangerous nature to the nth degree; a machine which breaks down as it affirms itself in what it believes.

The Master and His Emissary

for string quartet

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♩=132, suddenly propelled

This musical score is for a string quartet, featuring Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The tempo is marked as ♩=132, and the piece begins with a 'suddenly propelled' instruction. The score is divided into three systems, each containing four staves. The first system (measures 1-3) shows the Violin I and II parts with 'ricochet' markings and dynamic changes from *fp* to *pp* and then *mp*. The Viola part also has a 'ricochet' marking and dynamic changes from *fp* to *pp* and then *mp*. The Violoncello part starts with a *ff* dynamic and features a series of eighth notes. The second system (measures 4-6) continues the Violin I and II parts with 'ord.' markings and dynamic changes from *mp* to *f* and then *ff*. The Viola part also has 'ord.' markings and dynamic changes from *mp* to *f* and then *ff*. The Violoncello part continues with eighth notes and dynamic changes from *ff* to *f* and then *ff*. The third system (measures 7-9) shows the Violin I and II parts with 'ricochet s.p.' markings and dynamic changes from *f* to *p* and then *ff*. The Viola part also has 'ricochet s.p.' markings and dynamic changes from *f* to *p* and then *ff*. The Violoncello part continues with eighth notes and dynamic changes from *ff* to *f* and then *ff*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

11

m.s.p.

ff *p* *ff* *p* *f*

m.s.p.

p *ff* *p* *ff* *p* *f*

m.s.p.

ord.

ff

15

s.p.

18

m.s.p.

harmonic gliss on A

[illegible]

24

gliss.

fp

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

gliss.

28

ord. *gliss.* *s.p.*

ff 3 3 3 3 *f* 3 3 3 3

fff (s.p.)

fff (s.p.)

gliss. *gliss.* *gliss.*

ff *f*

31

32 33

34

ord. ff

35 $\text{♩} = 126$, with certainty

senza vib. p

ord. f

ord. f

ord. ff

br. 3 $p \text{ sub.}$

br. $p \text{ sub.}$

1 senza vib. pp

36

37

senza vib. f

ord. p

ord. ff

br. p

br. f

ord. p

ord. p

38 39

58

s.p. —————→ ord.

p —————→ *mf*

ord.

f

ord.

mf —————→ *ff*

p —————→ *f*

ord.

ff

p —————→ *f*

ord.

p —————→ *f*

59

62

f *mf* *ff* *ff* *p* *ff* *p* *f*

ord. → s.p. I, II ord. → s.p. ricochet *gliss.* ricochet *gliss.* ord. → s.p.

66

p *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

s.p. *gliss.* s.p. *gliss.* ord. → m.s.p. ord. s.p. ord. s.p. I, II

70

p *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

ord. ord. ord. ord.

76

Musical score for measures 74-77. The score is written for four staves (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 2/4 at measure 76. Dynamics include *f*, *mp*, *mf*, and *f*. There are various musical notations including slurs, accents, and ties.

Musical score for measures 78-81. The score is written for four staves. The key signature is one flat. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 at measure 78, then to 4/4 at measure 80, and back to 3/4 at measure 81. Dynamics include *f*, *ff*, *mf*, *ff*, *p*, and *f*. There are various musical notations including slurs, accents, and ties. The word "ord." appears in measure 80, and "s.p." appears in measure 81.

Musical score for measures 82-85. The score is written for four staves. The key signature is one flat. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 at measure 82, then to 4/4 at measure 83, and back to 3/4 at measure 84. Dynamics include *ff*. There are various musical notations including slurs, accents, and ties. The word "ord." appears in measure 82, and "II" appears in measure 85.

86

III

IV

s.p.

s.p.

s.p.

90

III

m.s.p.

5

95

96

ricochet

gliss.

ff

3

3

ricochet

gliss.

f

ord.

s.p.

II

ff

p

pp

ff

99

ord. $\longrightarrow$

III

ord. $\longrightarrow$

ord. $\longrightarrow$ s.p.

ord.

I, II
s.p.

ord.

f

gliss.
gliss.

104

s.p.

(h)

m.s.p.

s.p.

m.s.p.

f

f

f

gliss.
gliss.

5

3

3

109

ff

ff

ff

ff

gliss.

p

m.s.p.

fff

Musical score for measures 113-115. The score is written for four staves. Measures 113 and 114 are marked *m.s.p.* (mezzo-soprano piano) and feature rapid sixteenth-note passages in the upper staves. Measure 115 is marked *ord.* (ordinario) and features a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic. The bass staff in measure 115 has a long, low note with a *ff* dynamic.

Musical score for measures 116-118. The score is written for four staves. Measures 116 and 117 are marked *mf* (mezzo-forte) and feature triplet patterns. Measure 118 is marked *s.p.* (soprano piano) and features a *gliss.* (glissando) in the bass staff. The score includes a *keep sixteenth pulse, gliss up gradually higher following shape* instruction and a *1* marking.

Musical score for measures 119-122. The score is written for four staves. Measures 119 and 120 are marked *ord.* (ordinario) and feature fifth-note patterns. Measures 121 and 122 are marked *s.p.* (soprano piano) and feature *gliss.* (glissando) in the bass staff. The score includes a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic and a *gliss.* (glissando) marking.

130 $\text{♩} = 152$

ord.

ff

s.p.

f

ord.

ff

ord.

ff

ord.

f

s.p.

gliss up slowly following pattern

s.p.

f

s.p.

gliss.

gliss.

134

ff

m.s.p.

ord.

f

p

m.s.p.

ord.

ff

p

m.s.p.

ord.

f

p

m.s.p.

ord.

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

p

ff

138

gliss. *ord.* *s.p.*

gliss. *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

s.p. *p* *ff* *s.p.*

gliss. *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

144

142

s.p. *m.s.p., glassy*

gliss. *ff* *p* *gliss.*

m.s.p. *br.* *pp*

m.s.p., glassy *p*

m.s.p. *br.* *sub. p*

gliss. *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

147

gliss. *gliss.* *br.*

m.s.p. *br.* *f* *p*

br. *p* *br.* *m.s.p.* *br.*

br. *f* *p*

161

162

162

br.

ord. → m.s.p.

p *mf*

165

gliss on G string

ord.

ff

fp

168

m.s.p.

ord.

gliss.

ord.

s.p.

ord.

s.p.

gliss.

ord. → m.s.p.

p *ff*

173

172

ord.

ff

ord.

gliss.

ff

gliss.

176

s.p.

s.p.

s.p.

gliss.

gliss.

3

5

180

m.s.p.

m.s.p.

m.s.p.

tremolo as fast as possible

m.s.p.

3

5

3

3

3

184

186 ♩=80, sluggish

accel.

ord.

ff

ord.

ff

188 - - - - -

ff

192 - - - - - **193** ♩=138, metal

196 ord.

ff

mf

f

200

Musical score for measures 200-203. The score is written for four staves (two treble and two bass). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. Measure 200 features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed sixteenth notes. Measure 201 has a forte (*ff*) dynamic marking. Measure 202 continues the complex rhythmic patterns. Measure 203 shows a change in the bass line.

204

Musical score for measures 204-207. The score continues with four staves. Measure 204 has a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic marking. Measure 205 features a change in the bass line. Measure 206 continues the complex rhythmic patterns. Measure 207 shows a change in the bass line.

211

s.p.

208

Musical score for measures 208-211. The score continues with four staves. Measure 208 features a change in the bass line. Measure 209 has a triplet (*3*) marking. Measure 210 has a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. Measure 211 features a mezzo-forte (*ff*) dynamic marking and a glissando (*gliss.*) marking. The score ends with a final measure in 3/4 time.

212

ord.

mp

mf

mf

mf

harm. gliss on E

216

ff

220

s.p.

f

ff

ff

[illegible]

228 ♩=100, suddenly folk-like

226

as fast as possible, glissing pattern up

gliss.

ff *f* *p* *ff*

s.p. *s.p.* *s.p.* *s.p.*

3 *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3*

230

top line on D string
ord.

f
ord.

ord.
top line on G string

mf
ord.

233

mf

236

239

239

mp

top line on D string

ff

mp

ff

245

245

249

210

240 s.p.

m.s.p.

m.s.p.

mp

mf

gliss.

3 5 5

251

ff

ff

f

gliss.

gliss.

253 ♩=78, powerful, chant-like
top line on A string

253

f

f

f

senza vib.

f

255

ff

ff

ff

mf

p

258

260

ff *fp* *ff* *p* *p* *ff*

261

sul A s.p.

sul A s.p.

s.p.

mp

gliss. *gliss.*

263

harm gliss on A string

gliss. *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

265

gliss. *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

3 3 3 3 3

ord.

ff 5 3

267

ff *ff*

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

269

tremolo as fast as possible

m.s.p.

269

f 6 6

tremolo as fast as possible
m.s.p.

f 6 7

p 7 7

tremolo as fast as possible
m.s.p.

ff 3 5 5 6

ff 3 5 5 6

273

6 7 7 7 7 7

5 6 6 5 6 6

5 5 6 6 6 6

gliss. *gliss.*

→ top line on A string

275

ff

top line on A string

ff

p *ff*

p *ff*

290

top line on E string

[illegible]

298 ♩=112, folk tune re-emerges

[illegible][illegible]

303 ♪=88, dance-like

top line on A string

302

This musical score is for the song 'The Rose Tree' and consists of four staves. The first staff is the vocal melody, featuring a series of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals (sharps, naturals, and flats) and slurs. The second staff contains three-part vocal harmonies, with triplets and slurs. The third staff is a bass line with fewer notes, often using whole and half notes. The fourth staff is a piano accompaniment, featuring triplets and slurs. The score is divided into four measures, each with a time signature change: 5/8, 2/4, 7/8, and 5/8. The key signature is one flat (B-flat).

accel. .
(gradually to ♩=208)

306

ff

♩=132, getting messier
(accel.)

311

s.p.

s.p.

s.p.

s.p.

(accel.)

315

(accel.)

(accel.)
m.s.p.

319

m.s.p.

m.s.p.

m.s.p.

(accel.)
(m.s.p.)

323

(m.s.p.)

(m.s.p.)

(m.s.p.)

$\text{♩} = 208$, impossibly frantic

(m.s.p.)

327

330

(sul A)
ord.

fff
(sul A)
ord.

fff
ord.

fff
ord.

fff

332

sul D

sul G

Musical score for measures 332-337. The score consists of four staves. Measures 332-337 show a sequence of chords and melodic lines. The first two staves have 'sul D' and 'sul G' markings above them. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing rests.

338

Musical score for measures 338-343. The score consists of four staves. Measures 338-343 show a sequence of chords and melodic lines. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing rests.

344

Musical score for measures 344-349. The score consists of four staves. Measures 344-349 show a sequence of chords and melodic lines. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing rests.

350

Musical score for measures 350-355. The score consists of four staves. Measures 350-354 feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with various accidentals (sharps, naturals, flats) and accents. Measure 355 introduces a key signature change with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and continues the rhythmic pattern.

356

Musical score for measures 356-361. The score consists of four staves. Measures 356-361 continue the rhythmic pattern. Dynamic markings 's.p.' (sotto piano) are placed above the first staff in measures 357, 358, 359, and 360. The key signature remains two flats.

362

accel.
m.s.p.

Musical score for measures 362-367. The score consists of four staves. Measures 362-367 continue the rhythmic pattern. Dynamic markings 'm.s.p.' (mezzo-sotto piano) are placed above the first three staves in measures 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, and 367. The key signature remains two flats.

as fast as possible

368

The musical score consists of four staves, each containing five measures. The notation is complex, featuring many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often with accents. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The first four measures of each staff are highly rhythmic, while the fifth measure of each staff is marked with a forte dynamic (f) and a fermata. Above the first measure of the fifth measure on each staff is the marking 'ord.Λ'.

Completed October 24, 2025
Philadelphia, PA