

Christopher Best

Still Beating
Op.52

for Scottish Lever Harp (Clarsach)

2006
(Revised edition 2020)

PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS AND SYMBOLS

SET-UP:

- Initial tuning Ab Major.
- Tune down approximately 35 cents: Db2, G2, Db3, Ab3, Db4.
- Pre-set levers as follows:



KEY:

A3-♯ Lever change information is based on the naming convention that C4 = Middle C. Levers are changed with the left hand except where marked.

[E4-♭ D4-♭] Where two or three lever changes can be made simultaneously due to their proximity and common direction they are bracketed together and shown one above the other.

⊘ This symbol means damp all ringing notes other than the current note (e.g. bar 1), or damp everything if occurring at a rest (e.g. bar 13) or over a bar line (e.g. bar 27).

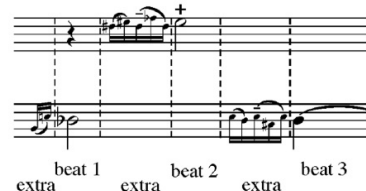
⊕ The cross symbol means damp the note to which it is attached as soon as the *next* note is played (e.g. bar 6) or at the next rest (e.g. bar 13).



The circle with a black cross inside indicates to damp the *specific* marked pitches (left ringing from notes previously played) at the precise moment at which this should happen. If this is in order to effect a silent lever change then a dotted arrow joins the circle with the relevant lever change symbol.



Smaller notes, without a cross-slash and with stems pointing the **correct** way (or correct in the lower stave in the case of cross-stave notation – e.g. bars 14 or 354), occupy a duration taken neither from the previous beat nor from the subsequent one. Rather they are *additional* to the surrounding music and thereby effectively push that music apart slightly (see example below). Single beams (e.g. bar 333) are a little slower than double (e.g. bar 1), which in turn are slower than triple (e.g. bar 57). If marked *accel* or feathered, the player should shape the ornamentation accordingly.



This example (bar 53) shows how this ornamentation adds to the duration of the bar, thus making the two minims longer than they would normally be (the crotchet rest in beat 1 and crotchet in beat 3 are unaffected).



Grace notes, with stems pointing the **wrong** way and with a cross-slash (e.g. bars 70 or 203) follow the common practice of taking their duration from the *preceding* beat.



The arrow between two notes joined by a slur means do not pluck the second note but let the lever change alone effect the pitch change.

Harmonics are written at string pitch, therefore sounding an octave higher than written (e.g. bar 168).

COMPOSER'S NOTE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

'Still Beating' was written for the harpist Ruth Wall, who plays a 33 string lever harp built by Mark Norris. The project was instigated by the S.P.N.M. for a performance on 6th March 2007 at Wapping Power Station in London. I am grateful both to Ruth for her enthusiasm and invaluable guidance and to the S.P.N.M. for giving me this opportunity.

The 2020 revision recognises that the number of lever changes originally required was prohibitively large. The new version has allowed the changes to be reduced in number, re-grouped or given more time to be affected. It has also afforded the work more breathing space, being around a minute longer than the original 2006 version.

Duration: 14' 30"

Still Beating

for lever harp

Christopher Best

Largo Poco Rubato (quasi cadenza)

♩ = c.54

Musical notation for measures 1-6. The piece begins in 3/4 time with a bass clef. Measure 1 starts with a half note G2 (marked *p*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 2 has a half note G2 (marked *mp*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 3 has a half note G2 (marked *p*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 4 has a half note G2 (marked *mp*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 5 has a half note G2 (marked *p*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 6 has a half note G2 (marked *mp*) and a quarter note A2. Above the staff, there are markings for 'Accel' and 'A tempo' in measures 2 and 4. There are also fermatas in measures 1 and 3.

Poco Più Mosso

♩ = c.66

Musical notation for measures 7-11. Measure 7 has a half note G2 (marked *p*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 8 has a half note G2 (marked *mp*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 9 has a half note G2 (marked *p*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 10 has a half note G2 (marked *mp*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 11 has a half note G2 (marked *p*) and a quarter note A2. Above the staff, there are markings for 'Accel' and 'A tempo' in measures 8 and 10. There are also markings for 'l.v.' (lento vivace) in measures 9 and 10. There are fermatas in measures 7 and 11.

12

Morendo

Musical notation for measures 12-17. Measure 12 has a half note G2 (marked *mp*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 13 has a half note G2 (marked *p*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 14 has a half note G2 (marked *p*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 15 has a half note G2 (marked *p*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 16 has a half note G2 (marked *p*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 17 has a half note G2 (marked *p*) and a quarter note A2. Above the staff, there are markings for 'Morendo' in measure 12. There are also markings for 'A2-b' in measures 12, 13, and 14, and 'F3-b' in measure 15. There are fermatas in measures 12, 13, 14, 15, and 17.

18

A Tempo

Morendo

A Tempo

Musical notation for measures 18-22. Measure 18 has a half note G2 (marked *pp*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 19 has a half note G2 (marked *mp*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 20 has a half note G2 (marked *p*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 21 has a half note G2 (marked *p*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 22 has a half note G2 (marked *p*) and a quarter note A2. Above the staff, there are markings for 'A Tempo' in measures 18 and 22, and 'Morendo' in measure 20. There are also markings for 'B2-b' in measure 18, 'A3-b' in measure 19, and 'A2-b' in measure 21. There are fermatas in measures 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22.

23

Musical notation for measures 23-27. Measure 23 has a half note G2 (marked *mp*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 24 has a half note G2 (marked *p*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 25 has a half note G2 (marked *pp*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 26 has a half note G2 (marked *pp*) and a quarter note A2. Measure 27 has a half note G2 (marked *mp*) and a quarter note A2. Above the staff, there are markings for 'A Tempo' in measure 23 and 'Morendo' in measure 25. There are also markings for 'F3-#' in measures 24, 25, and 26, and 'A3-b' in measures 24, 25, and 26. There are fermatas in measures 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27.

p

Tempo Primo

♩ = c.54
Accel

29

F3-b *p*
G3-b B3-b *mf* *pp*
C4-# *p*
D4-b B2-b *ppp*
A3-b E3-b

Poco Più Mosso

♩ = c.80

35

p *ppp*
G2-b E3-b C3-# A2-b
p *mp* *pp* *p* *mp*

39

p *mp* *mp* *p* *p*
G2-# A3-b E3-b A2-b G3-# D3-b

46

mp *p* *pp*
A3-b F4-b E4-b D4-b C4-b B3-b F4-# E4-b

Meno mosso

A tempo

♩ = c.80

52

p *mp* *p* *mp* *mf*
F3-# E3-b B3-b A3-b D4-b C4-# E4-b

57 *mp* *mp* *p* *pp* *p*

Accel A tempo Accel A tempo rall. $\text{♩} = c.96$

F4- \flat E4- \flat D4- \flat C4- \flat B3- \flat A3- \flat F4- \sharp E4- \flat C4- \sharp B3- \flat

64 *pp* *p* *pp* *p*

Adagio $\text{♩} = c.64$ (sempre *mp*)

B3- \flat F4- \flat E4- \flat B3- \flat B4- \flat RH: E5- \flat

69 *p* *p* *pp*

F3- \flat F3- \sharp B4- \flat

73 *pp*

$\text{♩} = c.96$

E5- \flat

76 *p* *mp* *mf*

accel. *mp* *mf* Più Mosso $\text{♩} = c.104$

E5- \flat

80

E4-# E5-#

86

F4-# E4-# E5-b B4-b

91

mf E4-#

96

B3-b G3-# *p* *mp*

101

E4-b C4-# F3-# *p* *mp* D4-#

105 *mp* (*mp*)

B3-4 D3-4 G2-4

p *mp*

110

F2-4

mp

115 *mf* *f* *mp*

G3-# F3-# D3-b D4-b

mp

120

G2-#

mp

125 *molto rall.*

C4-# B3-4 E4-b B4-4 E3-b

molto rall.

A Tempo
♩ = c.104

129

mp
E3-♯ E3-♭

p

F3-♯
E3-♯

Detailed description: This system contains measures 129, 130, and 131. The music is in a key with two sharps (D major or F# minor) and a 6/8 time signature. Measure 129 starts with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic. The bass line features a descending eighth-note pattern. A dynamic hairpin leads to a piano (p) dynamic in measure 130. A circled 'X' is placed over the F3-♯ chord in measure 130. Measure 131 continues the piano dynamic with a similar eighth-note pattern.

132

F3-♯

Detailed description: This system contains measures 132, 133, 134, and 135. The music continues with the piano (p) dynamic. The bass line maintains the eighth-note descending pattern. A circled 'X' is placed over the F3-♯ chord in measure 132. The treble clef part features a melodic line with eighth notes and slurs.

136

f

(mf)

E5-♯

mf

Detailed description: This system contains measures 136, 137, and 138. The music transitions to a forte (f) dynamic in measure 136. The bass line features a descending eighth-note pattern. A mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic is indicated in measure 137. The treble clef part has a melodic line with slurs. A circled 'X' is placed over the E5-♯ chord in measure 137.

139

Detailed description: This system contains measures 139, 140, and 141. The music continues with the mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The bass line features a descending eighth-note pattern. The treble clef part has a melodic line with slurs.

142

B3-♭

mf

mp

Detailed description: This system contains measures 142, 143, 144, and 145. The music continues with the mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The bass line features a descending eighth-note pattern. A mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic is indicated in measure 144. The treble clef part has a melodic line with slurs. A circled 'X' is placed over the B3-♭ chord in measure 142.

146 *mp* *rall.*

B3-4 B4-b

mf *pp* *mp*

150 *mf* *Andante*
♩ = c.92

E4-4

(*mp*)

153 *mp*

E4-b

mp

157 *mf* *p* *mp*

E4-4

p *mp*

drag L.H. tempo to gradually become triplets

160

E5-b B4-4

mp

162

E4-b

164

> drag L.H. tempo to gradually become quavers —

166

rall. l.v.

mf *f*

A3- \sharp D4- \sharp E5- \sharp F4- \sharp E2- \flat B2- \flat [G3- \sharp E3- \flat]

169 l.v.

Poco Meno Mosso (Andante)

$\text{♩} = \text{c.}80$

mf *ff*

A5- \sharp C2- \sharp [A2- \sharp G2- \sharp A3- \flat]

mf *p*

B2- \sharp D2- \sharp G2- \sharp

Adagio

176 $\text{♩} = \text{c.}56$

pp *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*

E3- \flat F3- \sharp E3- \flat E3- \sharp F2- \sharp F4- \sharp F2- \flat F2- \sharp [E3- \flat C3- \sharp]

214

Musical score for measures 214-217. The system consists of two staves. The right hand (RH) starts with a treble clef and a 6/8 time signature. It features a melodic line with a *pp* dynamic and a *p* dynamic. The left hand (LH) has a bass clef and a 6/8 time signature, with a *B3-♭* label. The key signature has one flat. The system ends with a double bar line and the label "RH: A4-♯".

218

Musical score for measures 218-220. The system consists of two staves. The right hand (RH) starts with a treble clef and a 6/8 time signature. It features a melodic line with a *p* dynamic and a *pp* dynamic. The left hand (LH) has a bass clef and a 6/8 time signature, with a *B3-♭* label. The key signature has one flat. The system ends with a double bar line.

221

Musical score for measures 221-223. The system consists of two staves. The right hand (RH) starts with a treble clef and a 6/8 time signature. It features a melodic line with dynamics *p*, *mp*, and *p < mp*. The left hand (LH) has a bass clef and a 6/8 time signature, with a *pp* dynamic. The key signature has one flat. The system ends with a double bar line.

224

Musical score for measures 224-226. The system consists of two staves. The right hand (RH) starts with a treble clef and a 6/8 time signature. It features a melodic line with dynamics *p < mp* and *p*. The left hand (LH) has a bass clef and a 6/8 time signature, with an *E3-♯* label. The key signature has one flat. The system ends with a double bar line.

227

Musical score for measures 227-230. The system consists of two staves. The right hand (RH) starts with a treble clef and a 6/8 time signature. It features a melodic line with dynamics *mf* and *pp*. The left hand (LH) has a bass clef and a 6/8 time signature, with a *B2-♯* label. The key signature has one flat. The system ends with a double bar line.

231

RH: E4- \flat

mp *p* *mp*

pp

E2- \flat

237

Andante
♩ = c.74 ♩ = c.148

pp *rit.*

C4- \sharp

l.v.
p

9/16

243

C2- \sharp F2- \sharp C3- \sharp

G3- \sharp F3- \sharp

9/16

247

B3- \flat F4- \sharp

p *mp* *p*

pp

pp

251

mp *p* *mp* *p*

pp

255 *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

258 *mp* *p* *mp*

261 *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

264 *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

267 *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

269 *p* < *mp* *p* < *mp* *p* < *mp* *p* < *mp*

271 *mp* *p*

E5-b D4-b

274 *p* *mp*

E3-b D3-b G4-# G5-#

278 *p*

281 *mp* *p*

285 *p* *mp*

289

293 *p*

297 *mp* *p*

301

305 *p*

E4-b

p

This system contains measures 305 through 308. It features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature is 3/4. Measure 305 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The bass line has a chord marking 'E4-b' in measure 306. The system concludes with a repeat sign in measure 308.

309

This system contains measures 309 through 311. It continues the grand staff notation with the same key signature and time signature. The bass line features a series of eighth-note patterns. The system ends with a repeat sign in measure 311.

312

E4-b

This system contains measures 312 through 315. The time signature changes to 2/4. The key signature remains one sharp. The bass line has a chord marking 'E4-b' in measure 312. The system concludes with a repeat sign in measure 315.

316 *mp*

p

3

This system contains measures 316 through 319. The key signature changes to two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 2/4. Measure 316 starts with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The bass line has a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' in measure 319. The system ends with a repeat sign in measure 319.

320

p

3

This system contains measures 320 through 323. The time signature changes to 5/4. The key signature remains two sharps. Measure 320 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' in measure 321. The system concludes with a repeat sign in measure 323.

324 *mp*

p

328

p

332

p

D2-b

336

p

340 *mp*

p

rall.

344

Measures 344-346. Bass clef, 5/8 time signature. Measure 344 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The music features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, both with eighth-note patterns.

347

Measures 347-350. Bass clef, 5/8 time signature. Measure 347 starts with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The time signature changes to 2/4, then 3/4, and finally 4/8. The music continues with melodic and bass lines.

Largo

♩ = c.54 ♩ = c.108

351

Measures 351-354. Bass clef, 4/8 time signature. Measure 351 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 354 starts with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. The music features melodic lines in both hands. Chord markings E3-♯ and D3-♯ are present in measure 354.

355

Measures 355-357. Bass clef, 8/8 time signature. Measure 355 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 357 starts with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. The music features long melodic lines in both hands. Chord markings D3-♭ A2-♭ and A2-♯ are present.

358

Measures 358-361. Bass clef, 7/8 time signature. Measure 358 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 359 starts with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. Measure 360 starts with a pianissimo (*ppp*) dynamic. Measure 361 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The music features melodic lines in both hands. Chord marking A2-♭ is present in measure 360.

...unique sonorities and an engaging sound world... a major opus in terms both of its evocative musical content and its duration, ...representing an important contribution to the body of music for low flutes...

Will Sleath (flautist) **'Fragilities'**

... 'How Great, How Fall'n' created a lot of interest from both audience and performers alike. [It] was exactly the type of new music that JAM prides itself on supporting...

Edward Armitage, Chairman John Armitage Memorial Concert Series

...An idiosyncratic blend of stylistic types- Gamelan/folk...the music comes across vividly...

SPNM Reading panel **'Dolya Nash Krai'**

... 'Playfall' is a mature and powerful work, able to portray the dark shadows of loss that can unexpectedly creep into even the most joyful moments in life...

Dance Europe

... 'Night Walking' impressed me because it combined lightness and warmth. Here was proof that contemporary music can succeed on all fronts; it required concentration but was also exhilarating....

Artistic Director SPNM

... 'Another Kind of Air' is courageous in its simplicity and deserves to be heard...The sharp focus of the thematic material combines with the transparent medium to make for a piece that proclaims an unambiguous space...

SPNM Reading panel

...This is lovely music for dance and it develops in a delightful way... I particularly liked the pizzicato section...

(composer Howard Skempton) **'Life Before Birth'**

...The piano command is impressive... the pieces make a satisfying arch in terms of mood...

SPNM Reading panel, **'Then Again...'**

... 'Triaphony' showed competence in the handling of a difficult medium... the climax to the third movement was highly effective...

Cambridge Evening Telegraph

...Best has previously written, with verve, for traditional forces... ['Cue-Play-Review'] seemed so clearly bound up with human responses... but the finale to this concert was his electronic tape 'From Steel to Stone'. In the darkened studio, its shifting layers made a shapely and animating effect.

Nottingham Evening Post

Christopher Best is a freelance composer based in the South West of England. Major works have been commissioned by 'Emilyn Claid and Co', 'Scottish Dance Theatre', 'Bimba Dance Theatre', 'Jamaican National Dance' and the 'SPNM'. Works have been especially written for ensembles including 'Aquarius', 'Jane's Minstrels', 'Kokoro', the choir of Selwyn College Cambridge and 'Onyx Brass', plus a host of distinguished soloists. His compositions have received considerable critical acclaim and been performed all over the world.

Recent output includes; 'Scending' for flutes and accordion and 'Fragilities' for flutes and cello (both commissioned by William Sleath, generously funded by the Britten Pears Foundation), 'Terra al Sol' for voices, string trio and accordion (commissioned by the Fisarchi Ensemble of Florence), 'How Great, How Fall'n' (orchestral version premiered by the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra in 2011 at the Teatru Manoel, Valletta, original version for brass, voices and organ given by JAM in 2004), 'Echoes of a Lost Music' for electric guitar (UK tour 2011-12, New Zealand tour 2009), 'Still Beating' for Clarsach harp (premiered by Ruth Wall in 2007 at Wapping Power Station, London) and 'Panaura' for orchestra (premiered by the Kokoro ensemble in 2006 at Dartington Hall).

Since 2010, Chris has held a senior lectureship in music composition at Falmouth University, having formerly been Reader in music composition at Dartington College of Arts in Devon. He has taught extensively abroad, and co-directed residential music and dance exchanges in Devon, London and Madrid.

Further information, scores, parts and recordings of music by Christopher Best can be obtained from the composer.

Christopher Best

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