

Harry Partch

**The Potion Scene
from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet**

*for intoning voice and adapted viola
(1931)*

*edited and notated by Andrew Nathaniel McIntosh
(2010)*

PLAINSOUND MUSIC EDITION

A note about the edition

I have put together this edition of Harry Partch's Potion Scene as something of a reconciliation between the two versions that Partch himself made. The first version (from 1931) is nearly illegible, scored only for adapted viola and voice, and has no notated rhythms. The second version (1955) has the adapted viola part played by a cello, with the addition of several instruments and two female voices. Here I have used the 1931 version for most of the material, but the rhythmic language comes from the 1955 version.

There are a few places in which whole blocks of material are either added or removed in the later version. In these cases I have used the pitch material from the 1931 version and notated the rhythm as much in keeping with Partch's own rhythmic choices as possible. Also, there are several sections in the 1931 version that use triple stops (mm. 50, 61, 63, and m. 69 to the end). However, they are in the margins or on separate pages, so Partch presumably rewrote those sections after developing the flat bridge. In all instances (except m. 50 and m. 75 to the end) I used the earlier scratched out ratios with only one or two notes as this edition is for a viola with a standard round bridge. In m. 50 the scratched out ratios are indecipherable, so I picked two of the three double stop notes. From 75 to the end there is a page of the earliest version missing, so I left the later 1931 rendition unchanged and included the triple stops.

Also, there are many places where Partch approximated pure ratios with other notes from his system of pitches related to "G". In the original 1931 version he has different kinds of commas marked *a*, *b*, or *c*, for the approximations. Here I have corrected many of them. However, I also left some of them as they were originally or made a note about them underneath the staff, depending on context and subjective taste. I have also added cents deviations from equal temperament underneath the staff and many melodic intervals in cents above the staff. These are phased out by the middle of the piece as most of the intervals are repeated.

Lastly, I put the piece in the Helmholtz-Ellis II notation as I believe it is the best notation system currently in use for just intonation. Partch was writing (especially in 1931) in a notation that was not quite as developed. That being said, this edition probably includes more information than is actually necessary for performance. The natural cadence and drama of the spoken word should govern the music more than precise cents deviations. I also encourage the performer to keep in mind that the original version was very free regarding rhythm.

-ANM

The Extended Helmholtz-Ellis JI Pitch Notation

microtonal accidentals designed by Marc Sabat and Wolfgang von Schweinitz, 2004

3-LIMIT (PYTHAGOREAN) INTERVALS

bb b ♮ # x

FUNCTION OF THE ACCIDENTALS

notate untempered perfect fifths ($3/2$) $\approx \pm 702.0$ cents

perfect fifth (3/2); perfect fourth (4/3); major wholetone (9/8)

5-LIMIT (PTOLEMAIC) INTERVALS

↓ ♮ ↑ ↕ ↗ ↘

notate an alteration by one syntonic comma ($81/80$) $\approx \pm 21.5$ cents

major third (5/4); minor third (6/5); major sixth (5/3); minor sixth (8/5)

7-LIMIT (SEPTIMAL) INTERVALS

↳ ↯

notate an alteration by one septimal comma ($64/63$) $\approx \pm 27.3$ cents

natural seventh (7/4); septimal wholetone (8/7); septimal diminished fifth (7/5); septimal tritone (10/7); septimal minor third (7/6)

↪ ↴

notate an alteration by two septimal commas ($64/63$)·($64/63$) $\approx \pm 54.5$ cents

11-LIMIT (UNDECIMAL) INTERVALS

† ‡

notate an alteration by one undecimal quartertone ($33/32$) $\approx \pm 53.3$ cents

undecimal augmented fourth (11/8); undecimal diminished fifth (16/11)

The Potion Scene

from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet

Harry Partch

Helmholtz-Ellis notation by A.N. McIntosh, March 2010

slow, but constantly changing tempo

voice

adapted viola

[whole of accompaniment up to double stops near end to be played on the G string]

p *p*

4

p *p* *p*

7

Fare - well!

God knows when we shall meet a - gain.

p *p*

10 **Slower**

I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins, That al - most

p

12 **rit. Faster**

freez - es up the heat of life: I'll

p

14

(+37) (-20) 5 (+70) 3 (-37) (-39)

call them back a - gain to com fort me!

(+39) (-124) (+36) (+49) 5 (+70) (-31) 3 (-71) (-53)

+14 -47 +29 -35 +14 -16 +82 +29

15

(+49) (+112)

Nurse! What should she do here?

5 (-27)

mf *p*

16

(-36) (-49) (-31) (-39) (-27) 3 (-32) (-53)

My dis-mal scene I needs must act a - lone.

(+49) (+31) (+39) (+49) (+36) (+27) (+39) (+49) (+36) (+27) (+53) (+31) (-27) (+66) (-37) (-36) (-49)

-33 +31 -18 -49 +12 -15 +53 +/-0

-33 +16 +47 -14 +35 -29 -2 +47 -14 +35 -29 -2 +51 -18 +33 -2 -29 -63 +35 -14

p

19

(+49)

Come, vi - al.

(+31) (+36) (+84) (+49) (+34) (+32) (+31) (+22) (-85)

+18 +16 -14 +35 +47 +51 -18 +18 +16 +/-0 +49 -15 +19 -49 -18 +4

p *p*

21

Faster

(-84) 3

What if this mix - ture do not work at all? Shall

3 (+36) (+49) (-85) (+31) (+39) (+31) (+49) (+36) (+49) (+31) (+39) (+49)

+2 +18 +31 -33 +16 +47 -14 -18 +31 -33 +16 +47 -14 +35

p

23 **Quickly**

I be mar-ried then to-mor-row morn-ing? No, no;—

25 **Much slower** **Faster**

this shall for-bid it; lie thou there...

27

What if it be a poi-son which the fri-ar

29

Subt-ly hath min-is-ter'd to have me dead, Lest in this marr-iage

31

he should be dis-hon-our'd Be-cause he mar-ried me be-fore to Ro-me-

33

Slower

(-32) (-49) 3 3 3

+37 0? +33 p -16 +35 +16 -14 +83

I fear_ it is;_ and yet, me-

(-81) (+63) (+49) (+39) (+31) (+49)

+2 -35 +14 -47 -16 +33 p (+18)

35

(-81) 3 (+49) (+36) 3 (+81)

-63 +18 +16

thinks, it should not, For he hath still been tried a ho - ly man.

(-81) 3 (+39) (+81) (+33)

-63 +18 +51

37

Faster

(+36) (-36) 5

-33 +16 +19

I will not en-ter-tain so bad_ a thought.

(+33) (+36) 5

-18 +18 p

39

3

-18

How if, when I am laid in - to the

(+35) (+67) (+36) (+36) (+36)

+65 p (5/3 above bottom note)

41

(+32) (+18)

-82 +35 +83

tomb, I wake be - fore the time that Rom-e-o come to re - deem me?

(+49) (5/3 below top note) (+32) (+18) (-31)

+31 +47 -82 -66 +35 +51 (5/3 above) +67 +83 -79 -63

44

there's a fear-ful point! Shall I not then be sti-fled in the vault, To

46

whose foul mouth no health-some air breathes in, And there die stran-gled ere my Rom-e-o comes?

48

Much slower beat
[sotto voce]

Or, if I live, is it not ver-y like the

50

hor-ri-ble con-ceil of death and night, To- geth-er with the ter-ror of the place,

52

As in a vault, an an-cient re-cep-ta-cle, Where, for these man-y hun-dred years, the

contrary glissado from 2/1 to 11/7

54

bones of all my bur-ied an-ces-tors are pack'd; Where

contrary glissado from 2/1 to apr. 11/7 2/1 contrary glissado from 2/1 to apr. 11/7 *f*

55

blood-y Tyb-alt, yet but green in earth, Lies fes-ter-ing in his shroud;

contrary glissado from 2/1 to 11/7 2/1 contrary gliss to 3/2 *sf* contrary gliss from 5/3 to 3/2

57

Where, as they say, at some hours in the night spir-its re-sort: A-

pp parallel 5/4, upper voice apr. parallel 4/3 with soprano *ff sub.* parallel apr. 5/3

58

lack, a-lack! is it not ver-y like that I, So

2/1 parallel 12/5

59

ear-ly wak-ing, what with loath-some smells, And shrieks like man-drakes torn out of the earth, That

lower voice parallel 3/2 with soprano (2/1) upper voice gliss.to 15/8 parallel apr. 12/5

61 **Suddenly slow** [attack, suddenly softly] [return to former intensity]

liv - ing mort - als, hear - ing them, run mad: *P*O! If I wake, - shall

p parallel 5/3 *f* 12/5

63

I not be dis - traught, En - vir - oned with all these hid - e - ous fears, And

gliss from 12/5 to 32/15 apr. 12/5 apr. 5/2

65

mad - ly play with my fore - rath - ers' joints, - And

parallel apr. 5/2

66

pluck the man - gled Tyb - alt from his shroud? - And,

67

in this rage, - with some great kins - man's bone, -

cresc.

68

Slow

As with a club, dash out my des - per - ate brains? — O

ff *p*
gliss from apr. 5/2 to 18/7
3/2

70

look! me thinks I see my cous-in's ghost Seek-ing out Rom-e - o, that did spit his

14/9

72

bod-y up-on a ra-pier's point. Stay, Tyb - alt, stay!

parallel 8/5 *3* *3/2* 9/5

75

Slow!

Rom-e - o, I

2/1

78

come! — this do I drink to thee. —