



The American Viola Society

SPEED ETUDE
FOR VIOLA AND PIANO

Quincy Porter
(1897-1966)



AVS Publications 007

Preface

In 1947, the American composer Quincy Porter (1897–1966) received a commission from Juilliard president William Schuman to “compose a work of moderate difficulty, with piano accompaniment, for each of the following instruments: violin, viola, cello, and contrabass,” as well as a string quintet.¹ These pieces were intended to remedy a situation in which a student was forced “to devote his skills to music largely of inferior quality, until he reached the degree of proficiency necessary to perform the masterpieces of the literature,” while also serving to “acquaint the younger student with the techniques and styles of the contemporary idiom.”²

A violist himself, Porter was well-suited for such a commission. For his viola selection, Porter composed the swift and nimble *Speed Etude*, a *perpetuum mobile* that appropriately flies by in about two and a half minutes. Completed in 1948, *Speed Etude* was “written for and dedicated to Paul Doktor with gratitude for the glorious first performance of my viola concerto.”³

This AVS edition is made possible by the generosity of the Quincy Porter estate. Please see the Critical Comments for additional details on the sources for this edition.

David M. Bynog, editor
February 2017

2017 Revised Edition

The first AVS edition of this work was published with a copyright date of 2010. In addition to changes in layout, this revised edition incorporates the following note correction:

m. 118: The sixth note in the viola part should be a c, not an e.

Notes

1. Willard Kent Hall, “Quincy Porter: His Life and Contributions as a Composer and Educator (1897–1966)” (DMA diss., University of Missouri–Kansas City, 1970), 81. In this section, Hall is citing a letter from William Schuman to Quincy Porter, July 2, 1947.

2. Ibid.

3. Program notes to ASTA-MTNA Joint Contemporary String Music Forum concert, *American String Teacher* 2, no. 1 (January 1952): 6. Dedicated to William Primrose, Porter’s Viola Concerto was premiered by Paul Doktor on May 16, 1948, at Columbia University’s Festival of Contemporary American Music.

To Paul Doktor

Speed Etude

VIOLA

Commissioned by the Juilliard Musical Foundation

Quincy Porter

Edited by David M. Bynog

$\text{♩} = 108$

p (*ffp* second time)

mp *cresc.*

f

dim.

p *pp* *cresc.*

ffp

(to m. 102)

cresc.

32 *f* *dim.*

36 *p* *cresc.* *f*

40 *dim.* *mp* *cresc.*

44 *ff*

48 *ff* *mf* *f*

51 *mp* *p* *cresc.*

54 *f*

58

62 *dim.* *p*

*φ = thumb

66 *pp* *cresc.* 3 3 2 0 2 2 3 1 3 2 0 1 3 4 3

70 *f* 1 3 2 0 2 3 4 0 4 2 0 3

102 0 2 3 1 3 2 1 3 4

105 *poco rall. al* *Poco meno mosso* $\text{♩} = 96$ *f* *ff* 1 4 2 0 4 2 0 4 0 1 4 0 1 4 0 1 0 1 4 0 1 0 4 0

109 *accel. al* *Tempo I* $\text{♩} = 108$ *dim.* 1 0 1 4 0 1 0 1 4 0 1 0 4 0 3 0 2 0 3 0 2 0 3 0 2 0 3 0 2 0

113 *mf* *f* 3 0 1 3 0 3 0 2 0 2 0 1 0 3 0 3 1 3 0 1 3 1 4 1 4 4 1 3 4 1 3 0

117 *Sul IV* *p* *cresc.* 2 0 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 4 2 0 2 2 4 0 2 0 4 2 0 4 2 0 4

121 *ff* *mf* *cresc.* 1 0 1 3 1 3 1 0 1 3 1 3 4 0 2 0 3 1 4 2 0 4 2 0 4 2 0

125 *ff* *fff* 1 3 2 2 4

To Paul Doktor

Speed Etude

Commissioned by the Juilliard Musical Foundation

Quincy Porter

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$\text{♩} = 108$

Viola

p

Piano

4

8

mp *cresc.*

f

cresc.

mf

12

Musical score for measures 12-15. Treble clef with fingerings (1 0, 0 1 0, 0 1 0, 0 1 0, 0 1 0, 0 3 0 3, 2 0 3 0, 2 0, 3 0, 2 0 3 0, 2). Includes a 'V' marking above measure 14. Grand staff with piano accompaniment.

16

Musical score for measures 16-19. Treble clef with fingerings (3 0, 2 0 3 0, 2 0, 2 0 1 0, 3 0, 2 0, 2 0, 1 0 0, 1 0, 2 0 1 0, 0). Includes 'dim.' and 'p' markings. Grand staff with piano accompaniment.

20

Musical score for measures 20-23. Treble clef with fingerings (1 0, 4 1 4 1 4 1 3, 3 1, 0 0 4, 0 4, 0 4, 4 0). Includes 'pp', 'cresc.', and '8va' markings. Grand staff with piano accompaniment.

24

ffp
(8va)⁻¹

fp

8vb

28

cresc.

cresc.

(8vb)

31

f *dim.*

mf *dim.*

(8vb)

34

p *cresc.*

p *cresc.*

(8vb)

38

f *dim.*

f *dim.*

(8vb)

42

mp *cresc.* *ff*

p *cresc.* *f*

(8vb)

46

0 3 1 4 0 1 3 2 0 0 2 0 3 2 0 1 3 2 0 0 3 2 0

ff *mf*

ff *mf* *p*

(8^{va})

50

1 3 2 0 3 2 4 3 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 0 0 1 3 2 0 0

f *mp* *p* *cresc.*

mp *più p* *pp* *cresc.*

54

1 3 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 0 1 0 0 1 0 0 1 0 0 1 0 0 1 0 0 1 0 0

f

8^{va}

mf

* ♯ = thumb

58

8va

dim.

62

dim.

p

p

66

pp

cresc.

pp

cresc.

70

Musical score for measures 70-73. The system includes a bass clef staff with a treble clef (likely for guitar), a grand staff (treble and bass clefs), and a bass line. The bass clef staff contains a melodic line with fingerings (1, 3, 2, 0, 2, 3, 4, 0, 0, 4, 2, 0) and a dynamic marking of *f*. The grand staff shows arpeggiated chords. The bass line has four measures with chord diagrams: $\begin{matrix} || \\ 6 \\ || \end{matrix}$, $\begin{matrix} || \\ 6 \\ || \end{matrix}$, $\begin{matrix} || \\ 6 \\ || \end{matrix}$, and $\begin{matrix} || \\ 6 \\ || \end{matrix}$.

74

Musical score for measures 74-77. The system includes a bass clef staff with a treble clef, a grand staff, and a bass line. The bass clef staff has a melodic line with fingerings (2, 0, 0, 0, 4, 0, 0, 0, 0, 4, 0, 0, 0, 0, 4, 0) and a dynamic marking of *ffp*. The grand staff shows arpeggiated chords with dynamic markings *p* and *mf*. The bass line has four measures with chord diagrams: $\begin{matrix} || \\ 6 \\ || \end{matrix}$, $\begin{matrix} || \\ 6 \\ || \end{matrix}$, $\begin{matrix} || \\ 6 \\ || \end{matrix}$, and $\begin{matrix} || \\ 6 \\ || \end{matrix}$.

78

Musical score for measures 78-81. The system includes a bass clef staff with a treble clef, a grand staff, and a bass line. The bass clef staff has a melodic line with fingerings (0, 0, 4, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 4, 0) and dynamic markings *mp cresc.* and *cresc.*. The grand staff shows arpeggiated chords with a *cresc.* marking. The bass line has four measures with chord diagrams: $\begin{matrix} || \\ 6 \\ || \end{matrix}$, $\begin{matrix} || \\ 6 \\ || \end{matrix}$, $\begin{matrix} || \\ 6 \\ || \end{matrix}$, and $\begin{matrix} || \\ 6 \\ || \end{matrix}$.

82

f

mf

86

dim.

dim.

90

p

pp

cresc.

p

pp

cresc.

94

8va

ffp

fp

98

8vb

101

cresc.

8vb

105

poco rall. al

Poco meno mosso $\text{♩} = 96$

Musical score for measures 105-108. The top system features a single melodic line with dynamics *f* and *ff*, and a tempo marking of **Poco meno mosso** $\text{♩} = 96$. The bottom system shows piano accompaniment with dynamics *f* and a tempo marking of **Poco meno mosso** $\text{♩} = 96$. The score includes various fingering numbers and articulation marks.

(8^{vb})

109

accel. al

Tempo I $\text{♩} = 108$

Musical score for measures 109-112. The top system features a single melodic line with dynamics *dim.* and a tempo marking of **Tempo I** $\text{♩} = 108$. The bottom system shows piano accompaniment with dynamics *dim.* and a tempo marking of **Tempo I** $\text{♩} = 108$. The score includes various fingering numbers and articulation marks.

(8^{vb})

113

mf f

Musical score for measures 113-116. The top system features a single melodic line with dynamics *mf* and *f*. The bottom system shows piano accompaniment with dynamics *p* and *mp*. The score includes various fingering numbers and articulation marks.

*This note is not preceded by a sharp sign in the first published edition. For details, see the commentary.

117

Musical score for measures 117-120. The top staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a continuous eighth-note melody with various fingering numbers (2, 0, 2, 4, 2, 2, 4, 0, 2, 0, 4, 2, 0, 4) and dynamic markings *p* and *cresc.*. The middle and bottom staves are in bass clef, with the middle staff marked *pp* and *poco a poco cresc.*. The bottom staff consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

121

Musical score for measures 121-124. The top staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a continuous eighth-note melody with various fingering numbers (1, 0, 1, 3, 1, 3, 1, 3, 4, 3, 2, 0, 2, 0, 3, 1, 4, 2, 0) and dynamic markings *ff* and *mf cresc.*. The middle and bottom staves are in bass clef, with the middle staff changing to a treble clef for measures 122-123. The bottom staff features a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

125

Musical score for measures 125-128. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a continuous eighth-note melody with various fingering numbers (1, 3, 2, 4) and dynamic markings *ff* and *fff*. The middle and bottom staves are in bass clef, with the middle staff marked *f* and *fff*. The bottom staff features a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

Critical Comments

In preparing this edition, several sources were consulted from the Quincy Porter papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University: a holograph manuscript piano score (HM), dated 1948; a transparency of an undated holograph fair copy piano score and viola part (HFC1); a transparency of a holograph fair copy piano score and viola part (HFC2), dated March 1950; and the Valley Music Press edition piano score and viola part (VMP), bearing a copyright date of 1950. The HM contains no extraneous markings (dynamics, articulations, bowings) and includes changes in pencil, most of which were incorporated into the published edition. The VMP edition contains the most extensive set of bowings and fingerings (including Porter's innovative use of the thumb in measures 54–55), and those are reproduced here with a few additional fingerings from the other sources. In instances of substantial discrepancies among the sources, editorial decisions are indicated below, with the final source in bold and explanations of alternate readings:

MM. 14–19, 87–92: **HFC1**. The VMP viola part contains no dashes in these measures, though the VMP score includes them on the first notes of beats 2 and 4 in measures 14–18 and measures 87–88. The HFC1 and HFC2 viola parts contain dashes on the first notes of beats 2 and 4 in all of these measures (87–92 as part of the da capo), and the HFC1 score also contains the dashes in all of these measures.

M. 28 and M. 101: **HFC (1 & 2)**. The HM, HFC (1 & 2, score and part), and VMP score all indicate a c' as the upper note. The e' published in the VMP viola part appears to be a transcription error.

MM. 42–43: **HFC (1 & 2)**. The HFC (1 & 2) score contains a slur in the left hand piano line beginning on beat 2 of M. 42 and extending to M. 43. This slur was likely omitted in the VMP edition owing to a transcription error.

M. 43: **HFC (1 & 2)**. The HFC (1 & 2) score and part and the VMP viola part indicate *mp* as the dynamic in the viola line; the VMP score indicates *mf*.

M. 64–65: **HFC (1 & 2)**. The HFC (1 & 2, score and part) and VMP score all use the diminuendo symbol (\rightrightarrows) in the viola line, while the VMP viola part uses the abbreviation *dim.*

M. 64–65: **HFC1**. The HFC1 (score and part) and the HFC2 and VMP scores all include dashes on the fourth and tenth eighth notes in the viola line for these two measures.

M. 105: **HFC (1 & 2)**. The VMP viola part includes a marcato accent (>) on the first note of this measure, which is absent in all other sources. The viola line in M. 105–106 contains the same notes as the viola line in M. 72–73, which begins with a marcato accent in all sources, so the inclusion of the accent in M. 105 likely was a transcription error owing to the close proximity of M. 72 and 105 in the HFC (1 & 2) parts.

M. 105–106: **HFC (1 & 2)**. The HFC (1 & 2, score and part) and VMP score all use the crescendo symbol (\lessdot) in the viola line, while the VMP viola part uses the abbreviation *cresc.*

M. 110: **HFC (1 & 2)**. The HM has a later pencil addition of a sharp to the first note (c') in the right-hand piano line as well as to the C's (c'') in the viola line for measures 109–110. Porter apparently decided against the sharps in the viola line, as the scores and viola parts for both fair copies contain none, but both copies of the piano scores clearly retain the C-sharp (c#') in the piano line. While Porter may have altered this note prior to the publication of the VMP, it is likely that the omission of the sharp sign in front of the first note of the VMP edition was merely a transcription error.

M. 115: **Piano scores—HFC (1 & 2) and VMP**. The HFC (1 & 2) and VMP piano scores all contain a marcato accent on the seventh eighth note in the viola line, but none of the viola parts contain this accent.

M. 116: **Piano scores—HFC (1 & 2) and VMP**. The HFC (1 & 2) and VMP piano scores all contain a marcato accent on the sixth eighth note in the viola line, but none of the viola parts contain this accent.

David M. Bynog, editor



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