

Directions for Performance

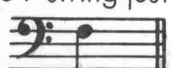
Passages and chords in *Sinister Resonance* are marked by means of numbers, which refer to the methods of playing described below. The method indicated by the number should be followed until another number is reached.

No. 1—On the lowest string of the piano press firmly with the third finger of the right hand, cutting off the string at the point toward the middle which



A string sounds the indicated tone F. Then run the finger along the same string, cutting it off to produce the other tones. The whole passage indicated by number 1 is played on the same string. The tone is made by playing the key (the lowest A on the piano) over and over with the left hand, and obtaining the pitch by cutting off the distances with the left hand on the string. To obtain higher tones along the string, cut off closer to the performer, and vice versa.

No. 2—With the right hand, press firmly on the strings of the **indicated notes** just at the bridge, and then play these same tones with the left hand. This will give a muted quality, and bears the same relation to the ordinary open piano tone that a muted violin or trumpet does to an open violin or trumpet. Take plenty of time to press the strings, don't hurry the rhythm or make it mechanically exact. Use the sostenuto pedal to hold the sustained tones through the melodic passages, as indicated.

No. 3—The same method as No. 1, except that it is applied on the F string just one octave below the written tones  the written tones are the ones which must be sounded, and are obtained by cutting the F string off just in the middle for the first tone; the succeeding tones are obtained by shifting the finger along the same F string toward the performer for the higher tones.

No. 4—The same method as No. 2, except that the string, instead of being damped right at the bridge, is damped a little away from the bridge near the dampers, which gives a drier tone, and brings out high overtones.

No. 5—These are harmonics, or overtones, played by pressing gently with the finger of the right hand just in the middle of the string of the note an octave below that which is written. Each of these harmonics is therefore played on a different string. The tone is produced by striking the keys (an octave below where written) with the left hand, while they are partially cut off exactly in the center by a gentle touch of the right hand finger. Owing to the different lengths of the strings of the piano, the middle of the different strings will not be in a straight line from each other, but lie comfortably close in position so that they are easily reached.

General Observations:

The plan of notating this work is that the notes as written are those which should be sounded. In the cases of methods Nos. 2 and 4, the notes that are written are also those which are played on the keyboard; but in the cases of methods Nos. 1, 3, and 5, the written notes are produced on other strings than those written, either as harmonics or as tones which represent cut-off portions of other strings, and the above directions must be followed in order to produce the tones as written, in sound.

This work must be played on a "grand" piano, it cannot be performed on an upright. Different makes and models of grand pianos have the strings arranged in different positions, both in regard to crossing each other, and in reference to the metal bars which cross between portions of the strings. While on most standard makes and models it is practical to perform *Sinister Resonance* just as written, there are to be found makes and models on which it is impractical, in which case it is always permissible to make such adjustments in the work as may be necessary. It is almost always possible to perform by transposing certain passages to another octave. The sustaining open fifths may be performed an octave lower than written if impractical in the indicated register.

SINISTER RESONANCE

Henry Cowell

Slow, with rhythmic freedom

① *p*

② *p* *sva* *sost. Ped.*

sva * *mf* *sva* *sost. Ped.* * *sva* *sost. Ped.*

* *mp* *sost. Ped.* * *pp*

② ** *p* *mf* *sost. Ped.* * *sost. Ped.* * *sost. Ped.*

④ *ff* *mp* *sf* *sost. Ped.* ①

⑤ *pp* *sf* * ④ *sost.* * *p* *pp₈...*

* May be played an octave higher if impractical in this register.

** May be played an octave lower *ad lib.*