

LOOP STUDIES

for violin & loop pedal
(or two violins)

KARIM AL-ZAND

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program note

Loop Studies was written during the COVID-19 pandemic. Chamber music performances during the pandemic have often relied on asynchronous multi-tracking as a necessity. *Loop Studies* is a duet, but is playable in real-time by a single musician with the aid of a loop pedal. Each of its four studies uses an idiosyncratic musical fragment that is played, recorded and repeated. The first study, *Berceuse*, is a lullaby based on a gentle, rocking, cross-string figure. *Lines* is short set of variations on a fragment by Luigi Dallapiccola, an improvisatory fantasy over a chromatic accompaniment drawn from the composer's *Quaderna Musicali*. *Straw Man Parade* has the violinist using in turn various coloristic effects: pizzicato, harmonics, bowing near the bridge of the instrument—all heard over a bouncing figure performed with the wood of the bow. *Tone Up/Tone Down* features a syncopated, irregular groove underlying a vigorous and “athletic” foreground part.

—Karim Al-Zand

performance note

Loop Studies may be performed by a single violinist with a loop pedal, or by two violinists. The individual studies may be performed singly or as a set in the order indicated. The loop segment should be recorded with a microphone (as opposed to an attached pick-up) and broadcast via speakers at a normal performance volume (i.e., with a resulting level similar to the acoustic volume). The “live” violin part is not otherwise amplified in performance. If performed as a duo, the two players alternate parts as indicated in the score and no recording or amplification is required.

duration

1. Berceuse	5:45
2. Lines	2:15
3. Straw Man Parade	2:30
4. Tone Up/Town Down	3:00
Total	ca. 13:30

Loop Studies was written for violinist Natalie Lin Douglas.

for Natalie Lin Douglas

LOOP STUDIES

FOR ONE OR TWO VIOLINS

1. BERCEUSE

Violin 1

Loop (Violin 2)

Slowly; gently rocking ♩ = 80 (but in ♩)

senza sord. √ sul IV

con sord. (if performed solo)

p

p

LOOP ON

5

mp

(III)

9

cresc.

sub p

lightly floating above the meter

13

mp

mf

This work may be played in one of two ways: by a solo violinist with the use of a looping pedal (or other digital recording method), microphone and playback or, alternatively, by two violinists. When performed as a solo work, the performer first plays and records the ostinato, shown within repeat bars in the lower staff at the beginning. The ostinato is then broadcast immediately (in time) through the playback device, as a repeated loop. The ostinato should be heard at least twice (i.e., the live performance plus one iteration of the playback loop) before the soloist begins to overlay the “free” part in the top staff (which is not amplified). If played with two violinist, no other equipment is needed. Each performer begins playing one of the staves (the ostinato should still be played at least twice), but players may swap parts at certain places, as indicated by the \sphericalangle symbol.

17

cresc.

21

scherzando, dancing

sub.p

25

mp *mf cresc.*

29

mf

33

flashing brightly

sim.

35

Musical notation for measures 35-36. The upper staff features a complex rhythmic pattern with sixteenth notes and beams, while the lower staff has a more melodic line with some rests.

37

cresc.

Musical notation for measures 37-38. The upper staff continues the rhythmic pattern, and the lower staff has a melodic line. The word *cresc.* is written below the first staff.

38

Musical notation for measures 38-39. The upper staff continues the rhythmic pattern, and the lower staff has a melodic line.

39

poco f

Musical notation for measures 39-40. The upper staff continues the rhythmic pattern, and the lower staff has a melodic line. The word *poco f* is written below the first staff.

40

(as duo)

Musical notation for measures 40-41. The upper staff continues the rhythmic pattern, and the lower staff has a melodic line. The word *(as duo)* is written at the end of the system.

41 II I, II, etc.

sim.

43

44

45 wispy, airy

sub p 13:

46

47

27: ♩

48

49

delicately
II & I

53

mp *mf*

57

carefree

60

decresc.

63

p *decresc.*

67

71

ritenuto rit. -----

[if played as solo]

[if played as duo]

LOOP OFF 

2. LINES

[improvisation on a theme of Dallapiccola]

Tranquillamente mosso ♩ = 132 poco rit.

Violin 1

Loop (Violin 2)

3+2+3

p

5 a tempo poco rit.

3+2+3+2

3+2+2+2

p

9 a tempo (poco) > poco rit.

mp sostenuto

p LOOP ON

13 a tempo

mp intenso

7+3

espr.

p

più p

16 poco rit. a tempo

p *mp*

p

19 poco rit. a tempo

p *mp*

p

22

warmly

mf *poco f*

24

poco rit. *sul IV with energy* *a tempo*

poco f *p*

26

pp *mf*

28

poco rit. *delicately* *a tempo*

p *mf* *p*

30

cresc.

32

poco rit. *a tempo*

p *p*

34

mp *mf* *cresc.*

36

f *poco rit.* *a tempo* *playfully* *mp* *p*

38

p *p*

40

fading away *poco rit.* *a tempo* *rit.* *[omitted if played as duo] decresc.* *pp*
[if played as duo] decresc. *pp*

LOOP OFF 

13

decresc.

15

shallow men: light, transparent
arco quasi gliss. *sim.*

mf

17

19

21

(accel.)

decresc.

23

iron men: steely, volatile slow → fast
sul pont.

p *f* (*fp*)

25

sfz *p* *f*

27

29

sfz *p* *f* *p* *cresc.* *f* *p*

31

cresc. *f* *col legno*

33

decresc. *niente* *niente*

LOOP OFF (as duo)

* maintain the same fingered pitch, but gradually move bow position to create an ascending effect

4. TONE UP/TONE DOWN

Funky; intense, rhythmic ♩=152

Violin 1

Loop (Violin 2)

poco f

f

LOOP ON

mf groove!

cresc.

fast, very wide vibrato; like an electric guitar

The musical score is divided into systems. The first system (measures 1-4) shows the initial setup with a 7/8 time signature and a key signature of one flat. The second system (measures 5-8) introduces a 4/4 time signature and a key signature change to two sharps. The third system (measures 9-12) continues in 4/4 with two sharps. The fourth system (measures 13-16) continues in 4/4 with two sharps. The fifth system (measures 17-20) continues in 4/4 with two sharps. The sixth system (measures 21-24) continues in 4/4 with two sharps. The seventh system (measures 25-28) continues in 4/4 with two sharps. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and vibrato markings.

29 *lively, jubilant*

f

3+3+2

33

3+3+2

37

41

3+3+2

45

3+3+2

49

53

57

61

65

69

73

77

81

mf

cresc.

f

sul IV

Detailed description: This is a musical score for guitar, consisting of seven systems of two staves each. The first system (measures 57-60) begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 7/8 time signature. The second system (measures 61-64) changes to a 4/4 time signature. The third system (measures 65-68) continues in 4/4. The fourth system (measures 69-72) continues in 4/4. The fifth system (measures 73-76) continues in 4/4. The sixth system (measures 77-80) continues in 4/4. The seventh system (measures 81-84) continues in 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as chords, single notes, slurs, and dynamic markings. A wavy line indicates a tremolo effect in the right hand. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

85

89

ff *increasingly intense and frenzied to the end*

93

97

101

8^a (duo)

105

ad lib: wild, huge, vibrating glissandi

(8^a)

*3x** *ferocious!* *cresc.*

(continue the build-up, ad lib.)

LOOP OFF

110

*3x** *cresc. molto*

(vln. 2)

long *poco a poco sul pont.* *fp* *fff*

* in the duo version, the parts alternate: (m. 109) vln 1→vln 2→vln 1; (m. 110) vln 2→vln 1→vln 2

