

STRING ALTERNATIVES SERIES

Chopagroove

(A Rhythm Fantasy for Strings)

By Darol Anger

INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor Score	1
Violin I	8
Violin II	8
Viola	5
Cello	5
String Bass	5

Program Notes

Vernacular violinist Darol Anger, who has developed and popularized the percussive “chopping” technique that has transformed contemporary string playing all over the world, wrote *Chopagroove*. Darol and his colleagues in the Turtle Island Quartet and The Republic of Strings have opened up a new percussive world for string instruments with this technique. This piece was developed by Darol over countless string coaching sessions all over the world, and reflects his interest in Latin-rock styles, such as those of Carlos Santana and his various collaborators. More of Darol’s work can be heard on his website, www.darolanger.com.



Notes to the Conductor

Chopagroove is a simple Latin-rock groove piece with opportunities for building pizzicato skills as well as making string students aware of groove. This piece is actually playable without the chop technique, and students can either play the patterns with the bow slightly off the string or attempt the actual chop technique. A good approach is to divide each section into 2 groups: one group chops, and the other sustains the indicated notes. This thickens the harmonic texture and allows players to move forward at their own pace, minimizing rhythmic confusion within the group.

To play any kind of contemporary music within a drum-less string ensemble, one must consider the role of drums and percussion as a driving force, supplying the dynamic groove feeling through which the melodies and harmonies entwine. If string players study modern fiddling styles, they can discover techniques that enable a fuller participation in an ensemble, reaching far beyond the choice of melody or counter-melody. In nearly all contemporary popular music, rhythmic emphasis is placed on the backbeat, which in a bar of 4/4 corresponds to the second and fourth beats. This gives the rhythm a forward motion and propulsive lift. Particularly in bluegrass music, the fiddle will often emphasize the backbeat by making a “chop” sound on the second and fourth beats. The bow is brought down on the string next to the frog and bounced off, making a ‘chop’ sound, not a clear note. (Ex. 1 Backbeats)

Since the Turtle Island String Quartet depended on bowed string instruments for all rhythmic and harmonic elements, we expanded the “chop” into a combination rhythm and harmony sound. We combined the “chop” with integrated up and down bow strokes using double stops and individual notes. This conveys the effect of a guitar and percussionist, or even bass and rhythm guitar, supplying a rhythmic and harmonic basis for the melodic lines.

Basic technique:

1. Grip bow normally, then “roll” thumb out to opposite bend position (Photos 1 & 2). This frees up the wrist to attack within 1–2 inches of the frog. The stick should be rolled out slightly to the outer knuckles so that the bow hair is on the “far” side of the stick.
2. The bow is brought straight down on the string using mostly wrist motion, making a no-note “chop” sound. Elbow is slightly down, arm relaxed. The bow rests on the string. Don’t pick up the bow! (Photo 3)
- 2a. The bow is “popped” off the string with a slight up-bow motion. (Photo 4)
3. Do (2) and (2a) again. (Ex. 1)

Further technique:

A small array of bow strokes has evolved which are combined into patterns to form various grooves. Here is a notation key for the main strokes. (Chop Nomenclature)

1. On the upstroke, hold the fingers down on two strings and produce a note. (Ex. 2)
2. Try a soft down stroke alternating with a hard down stroke. (Ex. 3)
3. Example 4 shows a simple but effective groove pattern alternating between a C chord and an F chord. To maintain the groove, the up-down pattern is continued even through rests, using small bow retakes.

A step-by-step in-depth video instruction and performance of the piece is in my instructional DVD, *Chops And Grooves*, on Homespun Tapes, DCR-FI21. It is available on my website, www.darolanger.com, or at www.homespuntapes.com.

Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3

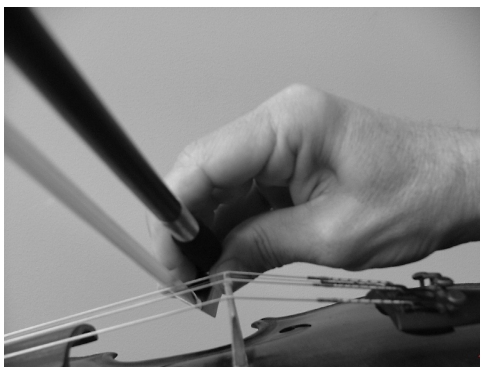
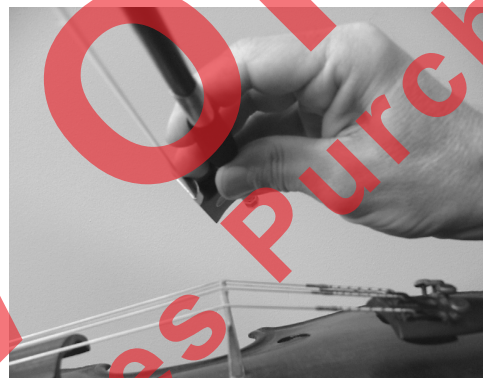


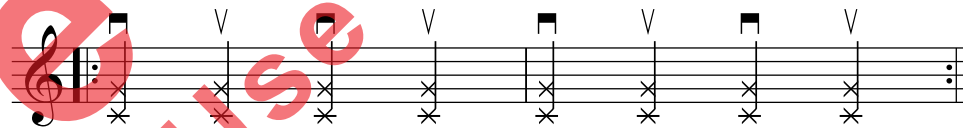
Photo 4



Ex. 1 Backbeats

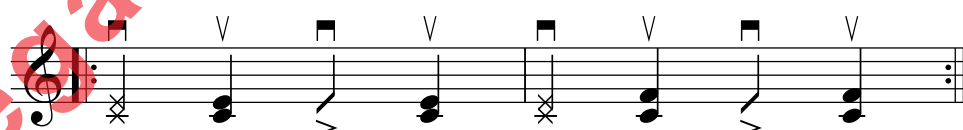


Ex. 2



damp strings with left hand

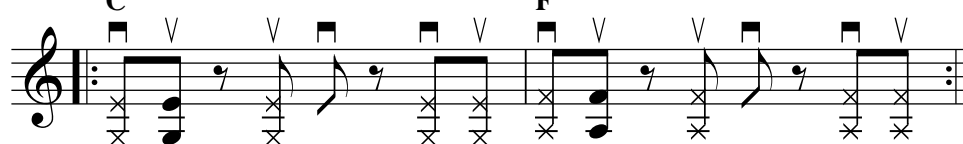
Ex. 3



press left hand fingers down on upstroke

Slash notation indicates to hit multiple strings at once

Ex. 4



Darol Anger

Latin Feel (♩ = 96)

Violins I and II: *ff* (measures 5-6), *mp* (measures 7-8)

Viola: *ff* (measures 5-6), *mp* (measures 7-8)

Cello: *ff* (measures 5-6), *mp* (measures 7-8)

String Bass: *ff* (measures 5-6), *mf* (measures 7-8)

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

9 10 11 12

mp

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

13 14 15 16

f

arco

pizz.

Score for measures 17-20, featuring Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Cello, and String Bass (Str. Bass).

Measures 17-20 show the following instrumentation and dynamics:

- Vlns. I:** Treble clef, key of D major. Measure 17 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 18 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 19 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 20 has a half note D4 with an accent (>).
- Vlns. II:** Treble clef, key of D major. Measure 17 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 18 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 19 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 20 has a half note D4 with an accent (>).
- Vla.:** Alto clef, key of D major. Measure 17 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 18 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 19 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 20 has a half note D4 with an accent (>).
- Cello:** Bass clef, key of D major. Measure 17 has a half note D2 with an accent (>). Measure 18 has a half note D2 with an accent (>). Measure 19 has a half note D2 with an accent (>). Measure 20 has a half note D2 with an accent (>).
- Str. Bass:** Bass clef, key of D major. Measure 17 has a half note D2 with an accent (>). Measure 18 has a half note D2 with an accent (>). Measure 19 has a half note D2 with an accent (>). Measure 20 has a half note D2 with an accent (>).

Measures 17, 18, 19, and 20 are marked with measure numbers 17, 18, 19, and 20 respectively.

Score for measures 21-24, featuring Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Cello, and String Bass (Str. Bass).

Measures 21-24 show the following instrumentation and dynamics:

- Vlns. I:** Treble clef, key of D major. Measure 21 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 22 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 23 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 24 has a half note D4 with an accent (>).
- Vlns. II:** Treble clef, key of D major. Measure 21 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 22 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 23 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 24 has a half note D4 with an accent (>).
- Vla.:** Alto clef, key of D major. Measure 21 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 22 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 23 has a half note D4 with an accent (>). Measure 24 has a half note D4 with an accent (>).
- Cello:** Bass clef, key of D major. Measure 21 has a half note D2 with an accent (>). Measure 22 has a half note D2 with an accent (>). Measure 23 has a half note D2 with an accent (>). Measure 24 has a half note D2 with an accent (>).
- Str. Bass:** Bass clef, key of D major. Measure 21 has a half note D2 with an accent (>). Measure 22 has a half note D2 with an accent (>). Measure 23 has a half note D2 with an accent (>). Measure 24 has a half note D2 with an accent (>).

Measures 21, 22, 23, and 24 are marked with measure numbers 21, 22, 23, and 24 respectively.

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

25 26 27

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

28 29 30 31

arco

mf

f

mp

f

f

f

f

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

32 33 34 35

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

36 37 38

mp

Score for measures 39-41, featuring Vlns. I & II, Vla., Cello, and Str. Bass. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The Cello part begins with a *mf* dynamic marking.

Measures 39, 40, and 41 are shown. The Cello part begins with a *mf* dynamic marking.

Score for measures 42-44, featuring Vlns. I & II, Vla., Cello, and Str. Bass. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The Cello part begins with a *mf* dynamic marking. Measure 43 is marked with a box containing the number 43.

Measures 42, 43, and 44 are shown. The Cello part begins with a *mf* dynamic marking. Measure 43 is marked with a box containing the number 43.

Violins I

Violins II

Viola

Cello

Str. Bass

45 46 47 48

Violins I

Violins II

Viola

Cello

Str. Bass

49 50 51 52

Vlns. I
 Vlns. II
 Vla.
 Cello
 Str. Bass

53 54 55 56

Vlns. I
 Vlns. II
 Vla.
 Cello
 Str. Bass

57 58 59 60

Score for measures 61-64, featuring Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Cello, and String Bass (Str. Bass).

Measures 61-64 show a rhythmic pattern in the strings, with the Violins and Viola playing a melodic line. The Cello and Str. Bass provide a steady bass line. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f* (forte) and *p* (piano), and articulation marks like accents and slurs.

61 62 63 64

Score for measures 65-68, featuring Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Cello, and String Bass (Str. Bass).

Measures 65-68 continue the rhythmic pattern in the strings. The Violins and Viola play a melodic line, with the Viola featuring a triplet in measure 66. The Cello and Str. Bass provide a steady bass line. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f* (forte) and *p* (piano), and articulation marks like accents and slurs.

65 66 67 68

Vlns. I
 Vlns. II
 Vla.
 Cello
 Str. Bass

69 70 71 72

Vlns. I
 Vlns. II
 Vla.
 Cello
 Str. Bass

73 74 75 76

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

77 78 79 80

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

81 82 83 84

ff

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