



Just a Theory  
Press

N. TESLA.

APPARATUS FOR TRANSMITTING ELECTRICAL ENERGY.  
APPLICATION FILED JAN. 18, 1902. RENEWED MAY 4, 1907.

MATT BROWNE

Patented Dec. 1, 1914.

# GREAT DANGER, KEEP OUT

## FOR STRING QUARTET



WITNESSES:

*Th. Lawson Dyer*  
*Benjamin Miller*

*Nikola Tesla*, INVENTOR,

BY *Kear, Page & Cooper*,  
*his* ATTORNEYS.

## **Program Note**

This piece was written for my good friends of the Tesla Quartet. And (not coincidentally) it is meant to be a musical portrait of the famed scientist, Nikola Tesla. Tesla was famous for many inventions and discoveries, including alternating current, wireless radio transmission, and even a fabled death ray. The title “Great Danger, Keep Out” is a variation on a sign that was posted outside of his Colorado Springs laboratory, which housed an fifty-seven-foot *tesla coil* (one of Tesla’s more famous inventions) that reportedly generated the largest manmade lightning bolts to this day (and was also the cause of a citywide blackout). The music is greatly inspired by the following account of the phenomenon by Tesla biographers, Hunt and Draper:

"The crackling and snap repeated and then came a tremendous upsurge of sound as the power built up. There was a crescendo of vicious snaps above. The noises became machine-gun staccato, then roared to artillery intensity. Ghostly sparks danced a macabre routine all over the laboratory. There was a smell of sulfur that might be coming from hell itself. A weird blue light spread all over the room. Flames began to jump from the ball at the top of the mast- first a few feet long- then longer and brighter- thicker, bluer. More emanations until they reached rod like proportions thick as an arm and with a length of over 130 feet. The heavens reverberated with a terrific thunder that could be heard 15 miles over the ridge to Cripple Creek."

While the programmatic “electrifying” essence of the work is clearly evident, I also wanted to include a few “easter eggs” about Tesla’s life, in order to more faithfully represent the famous inventor. These include things like his lifelong obsession with the number three (many of the melodies are based off of thirds; the tritone features prominently in harmonic and melodic material) and the opening tempo indication (“With vigor and vitality”), which is a direct quote spoken by Samuel Clemens upon experiencing some of the therapeutic vibrations caused by one of Tesla’s oscillators.

This piece was written for and is dedicated to the Tesla Quartet.

Duration: c. 4 minutes

**[www.mattbrownecomposer.com](http://www.mattbrownecomposer.com)**

# Great Danger, Keep Out

for String Quartet

Matt Browne

**With vigor and vitality** ♩ = 152

X noteheads indicate unspecified pitches. Use only one finger for gliss.

Violin I: *sul E*, *pp* → *ff*, *fff*

Violin II: *sul E*, *pp* → *ff*, *fff*

Viola: *sul A*, *pp* → *ff*, *fff*

Violoncello: *sul A*, *pp* → *ff*, *fff*

**A**

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*pizz.* *f*

*pizz.* *f*

**B**

*ff* dance-like

*arco*

*ff* dance-like

*ff* dance-like

*arco*

*ff* dance-like

19

19

pizz. *f*

arco. *p* *f*

*sub. p* *f*

*f*

Measures 19-23. The score is in 2/4 time, changing to 3/4 and back to 2/4. It features four staves with various articulations and dynamics. The first staff has accents and triplets. The second staff has pizzicato and arco markings. The third staff has accents and triplets. The fourth staff has pizzicato and dynamic markings.

24

24

*ff*

pizz. *f*

arco *ff*

arco *ff*

Measures 24-28. The score is in 2/4 time, changing to 6/8 and back to 2/4. It features four staves with various articulations and dynamics. The first staff has accents and dynamic markings. The second staff has pizzicato and arco markings. The third staff has accents and dynamic markings. The fourth staff has arco and dynamic markings.

29

29

sul pont. *sub. p*

ord. *pp* *ff*

sul pont. *sub. p*

ord. *pp* *ff*

sul pont. *sub. p*

ord. *pp* *ff*

sul pont. *sub. p*

ord. *pp* *ff*

Measures 29-33. The score is in 3/4 time, changing to 4/4 and back to 3/4. It features four staves with various articulations and dynamics. The first staff has sul ponticello and dynamic markings. The second staff has ord. and dynamic markings. The third staff has sul ponticello and dynamic markings. The fourth staff has sul ponticello and dynamic markings.

33 **C**

sub. *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff*

37

*mf* *ff*

41 **D**

*ffp* *fff* *mf* *fff* *mf* *fff* *fff* *fff*

46 **E**

sub. *p* sub. *fff* *mf* *fff* *sub. mf* *pizz.* *sub. mf* *mf* *mp* *pizz.* *arco* *sub. p*

52 *accel.*

*arco* *mp* *cresc. poco a poco* *ord.* *mp* *cresc. poco a poco* *ord.* *mp*

**F** Wild ♩ = 168

*ff* *fff* *fff* *fff* *fff* *fff*

**molto rit.** ..... **accel.**

63

pizz. heavy

8va short

8va short

ff

pizz. heavy

ff

pizz. heavy

short

ff

pizz. heavy

short

ff

**G** Brisk and playful ♩ = 156

69

arco

p light

arco

ffp light

arco

sf

p light

73

p light

sf

sf

sul pont.

p light

f

ord. p

ord. sf

pizz. arco

p

pizz. sf

arco

p

77

Violin I: *f*, *ord.*, *mp*, *ord.*  
Violin II: *pizz.*, *arco, sul pont.*, *p*, *f*, *mf*  
Viola: *f*, *p*, *mf*  
Cello/Double Bass: *f*, *mf*

81

Violin I: *f*, *ff*, *sul pont.*  
Violin II: *f*, *ff*, *sul pont.*  
Viola: *f*, *ff*, *sul pont.*  
Cello/Double Bass: *f*, *ff*, *sul pont.*

84 **H**

Violin I: *ord.*, *mf*, *f*  
Violin II: *ord.*, *sf*, *sub. mf*, *sf*, *sf*  
Viola: *pizz.*, *sub. mp*, *sf*, *sf*  
Cello/Double Bass: *pizz.*, *ff*, *sub. mp*, *sf*, *sf*



88 *spicc.*

*fp*

*mf*

*sf*

*sf*

*sf*

91 *f*

*f*

*spicc.*

*sf*

*sf*

*sf*

95 **I** *ord.*

*ff* *p* *ff* *f* *ff* *p* *ff* *f*

*p* *ff* *f* *ff* *p* *ff* *f*

*arco* *col leg.* *Vord.* *arco* *col leg.* *Vord.*

*p* *ff* *f* *ff* *p* *ff* *f*

*arco* *col leg.* *ord.* *arco* *col leg.* *ord.*

*p* *ff* *f* *ff* *p* *ff* *f*

99 *col leg.* *ord.*  
*ff mf*

103 **J**

*fff* *As before.* *sub. p* *sf*

107

*sf* *sf* *f* *ff* *ff* *sf*

110

Musical score for measures 110-112. The score is written for four staves: two treble clefs (top two) and two bass clefs (bottom two). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 2/4 and back to 4/4. Dynamics include *sf* and *ff*. There are accents (^) and breath marks (V) over notes. The first two staves play chords, while the last two staves play a rhythmic pattern.

113

Musical score for measures 113-115. The score is written for four staves: two treble clefs (top two) and two bass clefs (bottom two). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 4/4. Dynamics include *sf*. There are accents (^) and breath marks (V) over notes. The first two staves play chords, while the last two staves play a rhythmic pattern.

116

Musical score for measures 116-118. The score is written for four staves: two treble clefs (top two) and two bass clefs (bottom two). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 and back to 4/4. Dynamics include *ff sub. p*. There are accents (^) and breath marks (V) over notes. The first two staves play chords, while the last two staves play a rhythmic pattern.

**K** Gliss. with "shaky" vibrato sul. E

119 *fff* violent

Gliss. with "shaky" vibrato sul. A

*fff* violent

(C#)

*fff* violent

$\Delta$ (D#)

*fff* violent

122

*sub. p* *ff* *fff*

*sub. p* *ff* *fff*

*p* *sub. ff* *fff*

*p* *sub. ff* *fff*

**L** Long, slow gliss.

125

*p*

*sub. p*

*p*

128

*f sub.p* *f* *ff*

133

M

*>mp* *short* *sub. ff* *f dance-like pizz.* *mf dance-like*

138

*sub. ff* *arco* *f* *pizz.* *mf*

143

Musical score for measures 143-146. The score is written for four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The key signature has one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature changes from 6/8 to 4/4. Dynamics include *ff* and *mf*. Performance markings include *arco* and accents (*v*).

147

Musical score for measures 147-151. The score is written for four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The key signature has one flat. The time signature changes from 6/8 to 2/4. Dynamics include *p* and *p* *sweetly*. Performance markings include *pizz.* and accents (*v*).

152

Musical score for measures 152-155. The score is written for four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The key signature has one flat. The time signature changes from 2/4 to 3/4. Dynamics include *f* and *cresc. poco a poco*. Performance markings include *arco* and accents (*v*).

157

Musical score for measures 157-160. The score is written for four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. There are several dynamic markings, including accents and hairpins. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

161

accel.

Musical score for measures 161-164. The score is written for four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. There are several dynamic markings, including accents and hairpins. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

165

Musical score for measures 165-168. The score is written for four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. There are several dynamic markings, including accents and hairpins. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

168

171

**O**  $\text{♩} = 84$  ( $\text{♩} = 168$ ) Driving



175  $\text{♩} = 168 (\text{♩} = \text{♩})$   $\text{♩} = 84 (\text{♩} = \text{♩})$   $\text{♩} = 168 (\text{♩} = \text{♩})$

*pizz.* *arco* *pizz.*

*pizz.* *arco* *pizz.*

*pizz.* *arco* *pizz.*

179 **P**

*P* *arco* *garish*

*arco* *arco* *arco*

Musical score for measures 182-185. The score is written for four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. Measure 182 features a triplet of eighth notes in the Violin I part, marked with a 'v' (accents) and a '3'. The Violin II part has a similar triplet. The Viola and Cello/Double Bass parts have a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measures 183-185 continue the accompaniment with some melodic movement in the upper staves.

Musical score for measures 186-189. The score is written for four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. Measures 186-188 are marked 'sul pont.' (sul ponticello) and feature a melodic line in the Violin I and II parts. Measure 189 is marked 'ord.' (ordine) and features a sixteenth-note tremolo in the Violin I and II parts, indicated by a '6' and a 'fff' dynamic marking. The Viola and Cello/Double Bass parts continue with their accompaniment.