

# *Pretty Polly*



*A Setting of an Olde English Murder Ballad for  
Solo Double Bass/Untrained Voice  
(Single Performer) and Live-Processed Video*

*by  
Jackson Volman*

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## Pretty Polly

(British/American/Traditional c. Britain 1750)

Oh Polly, pretty Polly, come go along with me  
Polly, pretty Polly, come go along with me  
Before we get married some pleasures to see.

I rode her over hills and valleys so deep  
I rode her over hills and valleys so deep  
Pretty Polly mistrusted and then began to weep.

Oh Willie, oh Willie, I'm afraid of your ways  
Willie, oh Willie, I'm afraid of your ways  
The way you've been acting, you'll lead me astray.

Oh Polly, pretty Polly, your guess is about right  
Polly, pretty Polly, your guess is about right  
I dug your grave the best part of last night.

She knelt down before me, pleading for her life  
She knelt down before me, pleading for her life  
Please let me be a single girl if I can't be your wife.

I stabbed her in the heart and her heart's blood did flow  
I stabbed her in the heart and her heart's blood did flow  
And into the grave Pretty Polly did go.

He went to the jailhouse and what did he say  
He went to the jailhouse and what did he say  
I killed pretty Polly, and tried to get away.

Oh gentlemen and ladies, I bid you farewell  
Gentlemen and ladies, I bid you farewell  
For killing pretty Polly my soul will go to hell.

## Notes to performer for playing *Pretty Polly*

Vocal Range: Written for untrained female voice, though could be transposed an octave down for male voice.

### Folk-style, Broken Grace Notes in the Vocal Line

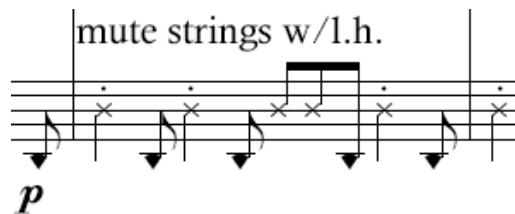
Example, mm. 204-205



Grace notes, which appear often throughout the piece, are to be sung *on* the beat of the primary note that follows. For instance, the A grace note in the second bar of the example is sung on the downbeat of the bar, not before. Grace notes should all be quickly articulated, with a slight accent, and slurred unto the following primary note. They are meant to mimic the broken grace note common in English, Irish and Bluegrass folk singing.

### \*Tap Expression, mm. 103-128

Example, m. 104

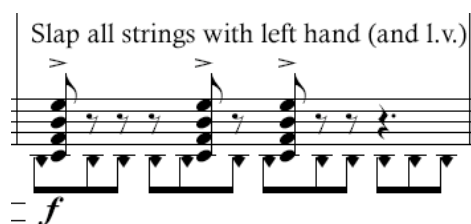


For this tapping effect, place your right hand horizontally, palm down, on a resonant part of the front wood of the bass, near the fingerboard and above the f-hole. The lower symbol with the wedge-shaped note head indicates a light bump with the fleshy, heel of the palm on the front of the bass that causes resonant thump on the resonating box of the instrument. The higher, x-shaped note head indicates a sharp tap on the wood with the tips of the fingers. Alternating between the palm thump and the finger tap should create a comfortable wave-like motion in the hand.

→ Either mute the strings with the left hand while tapping, or do not, as indicated on the score.

### Tap/Slap Expression, mm. 124-128

Example, m. 124



In this instance, bump bass with right palm as described above, and slap all open strings in a comfortable place on the end of the fingerboard, and let vibrate. (Slap chord is notated slightly to the right of the tap, but occurs on the same beat).

# Pretty Polly

Jackson Volman

**Dark, Bluesy, Loose Tempo**

**Around ♩ = 100**

Voice

Double Bass

arco

*f*

*gliss.*

(l.v. while bowing upper notes)

Voice

Db.

*sub p*

*f*

*mp*

(grad.)

*gliss.*

(continuous gliss.)

(smear!)

*l.v.*

*3*

Voice

Db.

*f*

*mp*

(harmonics sounding 8va)

*3*

**Quasi-rubato Tempo**

**Flourish, Dying Away**

*rit.*

Voice

Db.

*f*

*3*

*5*

*3*

*3*

*3*

**A Tempo**

**♩ = 100**

Voice

Db.

*mf*

*mp*

*p*

*poco*

*gliss.*

*l.v.*

19

Voice

Db.

*l.v.*  
*sfz*

*mf*

*gliss.*  
*gliss.*

*f*

**A** Exclamatory, Bluesy but with Steady Pulse

Swing 8ths  
*mf*

23

Voice

Oh Polly\_ pretty Polly\_ come go along with me

Db.

*Straight 8ths*

*(molto.)*

*p*

*mf*

29

Voice

Oh

Db.

*f*

34

Voice

Polly\_ pre\_ ty Polly\_ come go along with me Be

Db.

*mp*

*mp*

*p*

*mp*

*gliss.*

*(off string)*

lowest notes breathy and pitch-approximate

**B**

Flirtatious, Teasingly, Quasi-Cadenza...

39

Voice

fore we get\_ mar-ried some plea-sures for\_ to see.

Db.

*a niente*

*mf*

*3*

*gliss.*

*sub p*

**C**

Steady Tempo (non-rubato)  
accel. . . . .

44

Voice

Db.

3 *sf* *mp* 3 *pp* *p* l.v. l.v. (grad.)

50

Voice

Db.

54

♩ = 140

Voice

Db.

*f*

59

*Straight 8ths* *mf*

Voice

Db.

(continuous gliss.) (short, but on-string)

*sub.mp* *sf* *mp*

**D**

63

Voice

Db.

rode her o - ver hills and va - lleys so deep I

>*p*

68

Voice

rode her o - ver hills and va - lleys so deep

Db.

*mp*

(detached but non-staccato)

*gliss.*

73

Voice

Db.

*f*

75

**E**

Voice

Pre - tty Po - lly mis - trus - ted and then be - gan

Db.

*f* *sub.mp*

*fp* (*p*) *pp*

79

Voice

to weep

Db.

*mp* *mf* *sfp*

*a niente*

(continuous gliss.)

*gliss. (e)*

Spastic

83

Voice

(Page Turn)

Put bow away (on stand or in holster)

Db.

*ff* *l.v.*

**F** Mocking Jazz Caricature  
A Tempo ♩ = 140

**Cruelly Mocking, In a High Voice (itches approx.)**  
*Swing 8ths* **mf**

84

Voice: pizz. Oh

Db. *mp*

87

Voice: Wi - llie, oh Wi - llie I'm a - fraid of your

Db.

Make fainting gesture on face with right hand across neck while plucking with left

90

Voice: ways. Oh Wi- llie, Wi- llie, Wi - llie! I'm a - fraid of your\_

Db. (l.h. pizz at neck) ord. pizz *mf*

**Low, Breathy Voice, Lowest pitches = as possible**  
*mp*

94

Voice: ways. The

Db. Jazz jam, or similar ad. lib of similar length over Emin

98

Voice: way you've been ac- ting, you'll lead me a - stray.

Db. (l.v. possibile) *mp* *gliss.* (e.) (continuous gliss. don't re-articulate) **ff**



**G** Piu mosso  
♩. = 112

103

Voice

\*See Intro Notes for explanation of tap expression

Db.

mute strings w/l.h.

*p*

*a niente*

Somber, Foreboding, Breathy,  
Lowest pitches = as possible

107 (brief pause) *mp*

Voice

Oh Po lly\_ pre - tty Po - lly\_ your guess\_ is\_ 'bout\_ right

Db.

111

Voice

*mf*

Oh Po - lly\_ oh

Db.

let strings vibrate

*p*

*a niente*

115

Voice

Po - lly\_ your guess is 'bout right\_

Db.

*p*

**H**

Dark, Breathy  
*mp*

Full Voice

119

Voice

I dug your gra\_ ve the best

Db.

122 *f* *mp*

Voice: part of last night .

Db. *mf* *f*

Slap all strings with left hand (and l.v.)

125

Voice: (sim.)

Db. (sim.)

127

Voice: **I**  $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$  ( $\text{♩} = 168$ )

Db. *f* sub. *p* *fff* *ff*

Get bow with rt. hand while slapping stings w/l.h. arco

130

Voice:

Db. *f* *mp*

135

Voice: **J** Bluesy

Db. *f*

141

Voice

Db.

sub.p

3 3 3 3 3

f

*l.v.*

146

Voice

Db.

**K** Driving, Pushing Ahead

*mp*

(tr)

152

Voice

Db.

6/8 4/4 3/4 7/8 4/4

157

Voice

Db.

4/4

162

Voice

Db.

accel. . . . .

(harm. sounding 2 8va)

f sub.mp

168

Voice

Db.

**L** Urgent Piu mosso (♩ = 200) mf

She knelt down - be - fore me -

f sub.p mf p

gliss.

174

Voice: plea-ding for her life

Db. *mf*

179

Voice: Please uh let me be uh uh a sin-gle girl. if I can't be your wife.

Db. *f* **Stuttering** **M** *mp*

184

Voice: [Silence]

Db. *mf* *f*

188

Voice: [Silence]

Db. *mp* *sf* *f* *sub.p*

192

Voice: [Silence]

Db. *f* *gliss.*

197

Voice: continuous gliss. throughout (while bowing 8th notes)

Db. *pp* *gliss.* *8va* *gliss.*

**O**

202 launch from gliss/cresc into vocal line: **Exclamatory**  
*ff*

Voice: I stabbed her I stabbed her!

Db. (8) *ff* *f*

206 *mf*

Voice: and her heart's blood did flow.

Db. *mp*

210 **More Subdued**  
*mp* *mf*

Voice: I stabbed her, I stabbed her, and her

Db. *p* *mp* *pp*

215

Voice: heart's blood did flow.

Db. (A string harm.) *sub.f*

218 **Articulated, quick blues lick (lowest pitches = as possible)** **Brief Pause (Page Turn)**  
*ff* *mp*

Voice: And in to the grave did Pre-tty Po - lly go. - pizz. *lv.*

Db. *ff* *p*

**P**

222

Voice

Db. *arco*  
*mp*

227

*poco accel.* . . . . .

$\text{♩} = 142$

**Cooly Maniacal**  
*mf*

Voice

Db. *f* *mp*

**Q**

230

Voice  
went to the jail - house and what did I say.

Db. *mf*

233

Voice

Db. *f* *mf*

236

Voice  
I went to the jail - house and what did I say.

Db. *mp*

239

Voice: I killed \_\_\_\_\_ Pre - tty Pol - ly I

Db. *p*

242

Voice: killed - Pret - ty Po - lly I said I killed \_\_\_\_\_ Pre - tty

Db.

245

Voice: Po - lly and tried to get - a - way

Db. *f*

Quasi-cadenza, rubato temp but not too slow

248 **R**

Voice: [Silence]

Db. *mp* *f*

252

Voice: [Silence]

Db. *mp* *f*

*Rubato temp: slower, stately, but still driving*

257

Voice

Db.

*gliss. gliss.* (quick gliss.) *gliss.*

261 **S**

Voice

Db.

Slightly separated, still on string

(etc.)

*p* *f* *sub p*

265

Voice

Db.

**Violent**

*f* *ff*

*molto vibrato (not harmonic)*

270

Voice

Db.

(Subdued Echo)

*mp* *mf* *f*

harmonics gliss. = lightly touch strings through gliss.

*gliss. gliss.*

275 **T**

Voice

Db.

Slower, solemn

(touch harm.)

*mf* *pp* *mf*

281

Voice

Db.

*p* *mf*

*gliss. gliss.*



poco rall..

289

Voice

Db.

sub.*p* *mf*

**U** Driving, Intense  
 A Tempo  
 ♩ = 213

296

Voice

Db.

*p* (sim.)

303

Voice

Db.

308

Voice

Db.

*mf* *sfz* *mp* *sfz*

313

Voice

Db.

*>mp* *f* *mf*

317

Voice

Db.

V

Solemn

*mf*

322

Voice

Oh gen - tle - men and la - dies

Db.

> *mp*

327

Voice

Oh gen - tle - men and la - dies I

Db.

332

Voice

bid you I bid you fare - well.

Db.

337

Aggressively

Voice

Db.

*f*

Rubato Tempo, but Driving  
Ad. lib. brief pauses at breath marks

341 **W** **f** Forceful Moaning Sing pitch slightly flat  
, = raunchy

Voice: *Brief Pause* For kill - ing for kill - ing

Db. *p* *f* pizz

348

Voice: Pre - ty Po - lly

Db. *ff* *pp* very hard strum, let strings buzz very light plucking

Calm, Steady, Slower  
(♩=200)

353 *mp* poco **X**

Voice: my soul my soul my soul

Db. *mp* *p*

359 *mf* *mp*

Voice: my soul - my soul will go

Db. *mf* *p*

365 *a niente*

Voice: to hell.

Db. *mp* *l.v.* Bluesy