SANDEEP BHAGWATI

RACINES EPHEMERES

MUSICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF RASAS

VIRA (HEROIC) →best example: Theme (Claude Vivier)

TEMPO CONTOUR: no feeling of timeflow, isolated moments

RHYTHM CONTOUR: iambic and anapaestic rhythm with final accent - many fast notes – accented long note.

PITCH CONTOUR: many pitch repetitions, plus jumps > fourth , no melodic movement as such, small fast notes move always first down then up

TIMBRE: clear and crisp

REGISTER: middle to highest, each phrase stays in same register or rises up, never down.

PHRASING: 2- max 6 main (long) notes, with many short fast notes between.

DYNAMICS: ***mf-ff,*** no dynamic expression beyond phrasing needs (fast attack, long sustain,slow decay)

INTERACTION: lead, exhort, summarize. Do not listen to anyone else“s playing.
Establish your tempo, dynamics and contours independently but in the flow of the music around you.

EXAMPLE:

KARUNA (COMPASSION)

TEMPO CONTOUR: medium, pleasant tempo, occasional ritardandi

RHYTHM CONTOUR: regularly flowing eights and/or quarter notes, almost no break in the flow, occasionally expressive triplets or quintuplets, sometimes expressive rests (to separate breaths)

PITCH CONTOUR: small step melodies (2 and 3) gravitating around the central pitch (→ Interaction), no pitch repetition, occasional jumps (one note up/down to go to a new level, or a longer breakout note (a sigh (up) or as a breather (down))

TIMBRE: soft and mellifluous, occasionally breathing or plaintive

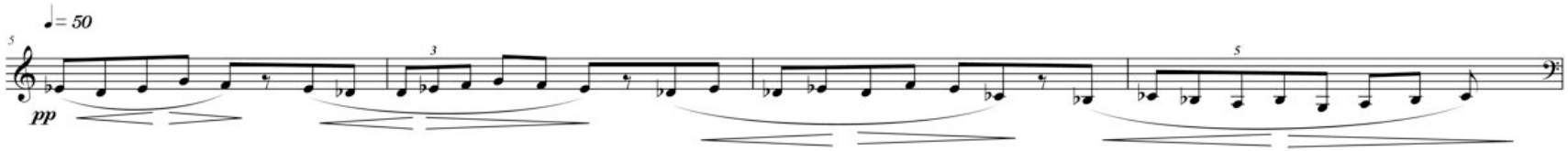
REGISTER: medium to low

PHRASING: subphrases of 4-8 notes, occasional single notes. After 4-8 subphrases a perceivable silence before a new phrase.

DYNAMICS: ***pp-mf***

INTERACTION: sooth, caress, straighten, flatten, even out. Your central pitch follows the most audible and aggressive part you hear and tries to „soften its impact“.

EXAMPLE:



BHAYANAKA (TERROR)

TEMPO CONTOUR: slow pulsating attacks with fast and/or pulsating attack and/or decay.

RHYTHM CONTOUR: either: slow iambic and anapestic agglomerate-pulse with accents (***heartbeats***), or: fast non-pulsating agglomerates (***shrieks***)

PITCH CONTOUR: Heavy use of „distorted“ and multipitch sound throughout.
in ***heartbeats***: scale buildup (ascending), sudden jumps to new starting pitch.
In ***shrieks***: fast microtonal and/or distorted sweeps up or vertical/lateral swerves.

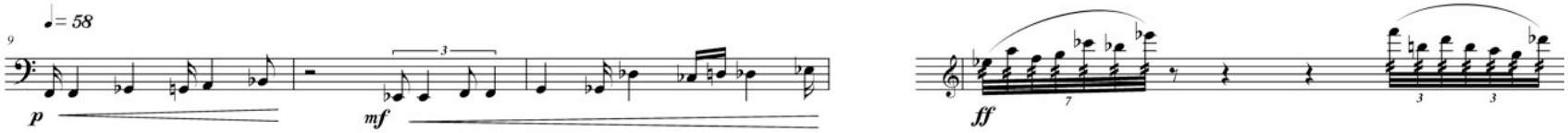
REGISTER: ***heartbeats***: lowest, ***shrieks***:high to highest (always ascending)

PHRASING: ***heartbeats***: continous relentless building of 8-13 „pulses“,
shrieks: initially isolated timeless events, gathering momentum and cohesion over the course of a section.

DYNAMICS: ***pp-fff,*** always crescendo, both per pulse and per phrase.

INTERACTION: ***heartbeat***: support the others, sync with dominant pulses and accents, and phrases. ***shrieks***: surprise everyone, one should not hear it coming !

EXAMPLE:



SHRINGARA (LOVE/EROS)

TEMPO CONTOUR: each phrase accelerando, stable pulse, morendo

RHYTHM CONTOUR: complex pulsation, repeated amphibrachic rhythms

PITCH CONTOUR: jubilant jumps up, then slow descent in small jumps and steps

TIMBRE: dirty and sweet, breathy, lots of vibrato, raunchy

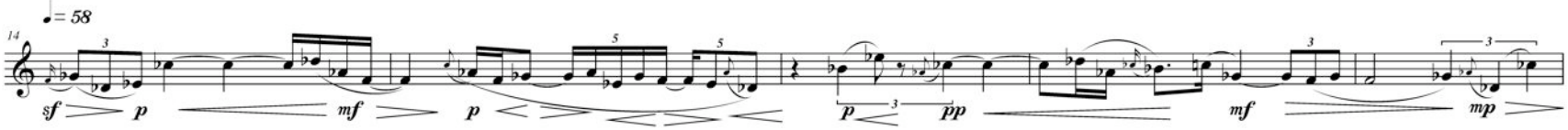
REGISTER: middle to high

PHRASING: never-ending seesaw of waxing and waning phrases, breathless, timeless

DYNAMICS: ***pp-mf,*** crescendo and decrescendo in rapid succession

INTERACTION: always try to play with someone (your pick), even if their music does not fit to yours, react to it, follow their movement.

EXAMPLE:



SHANTA (BLISS)

TEMPO CONTOUR: timeless, slow, meditative

RHYTHM CONTOUR: long irregular sounds. count them as lenghts between 6 and 11 and never directly repeat one length e.g. 10, 6, 7, 9, 11, 8 etc.. Take slightly shorter breaths between the notes

PITCH CONTOUR: isolated pitches, high and low, multiple and complex sounds

TIMBRE: complex, rich sounds with good foundation, slow vibrato,

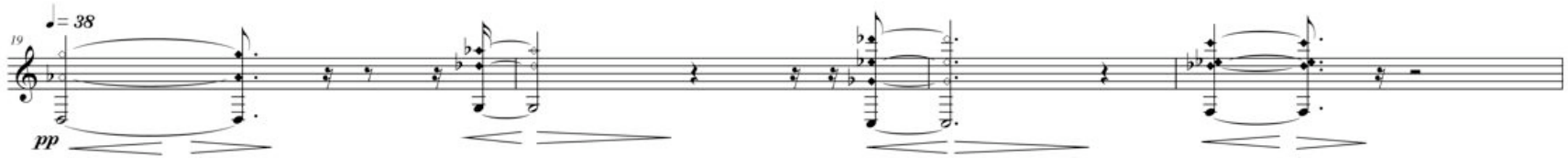
REGISTER: all

PHRASING: single notes, with breaths in between. no sense of phrasing

DYNAMICS: ***pp-p,*** dal niente al niente

INTERACTION: try to go with the flow of the music – when it grows, grow, when it dies, die.

EXAMPLE:



HASYA (COMIC)

TEMPO CONTOUR: always double the conducted tempo, play in time with swing

RHYTHM CONTOUR: syncopic, unbalanced jazzy rhythms, always end phrase or subphrase with a quick little appogiatura or sharp, short accent(s).

PITCH CONTOUR: go from extreme to extreme, use off-notes, glissandi, portamenti and noises to comic effects

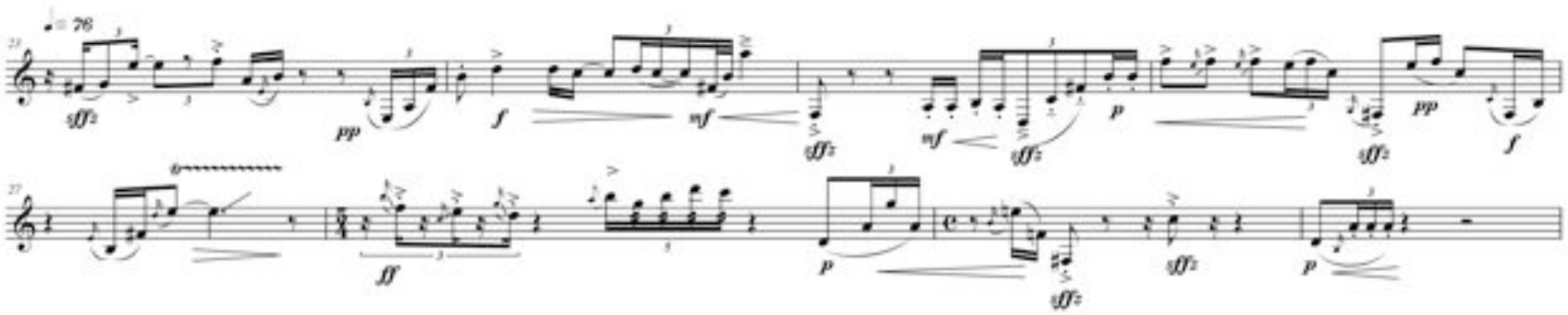
REGISTER: all, change often and abruptly

PHRASING: build longer phrases and destroy them unexpectedly, make small isolated phrases almost like a dialogue, tell funny stories

DYNAMICS: ***pp-ff,*** but do not be too loud all the time, vary your delivery

INTERACTION: comically mimic the music of other players, comment on it, make fun of it

EXAMPLE:



BIBHATSA (DISGUST)

TEMPO CONTOUR: play in a tempo that is irrationally different from what the conductor conducts.

RHYTHM CONTOUR: halting pulsation (leaving out a note now and then and „stumbling“ a lot. No discernible „nice“ movement, jerky uncomfortable rhythm

PITCH CONTOUR: always a microtone too high or low, as if avoiding the right pitch, even though you hit it sometimes.... the pitches are contiguous in groups of 2 to 5, but then the center of the phrases just slides a jump down or up. Pitches wander around drunkenly.

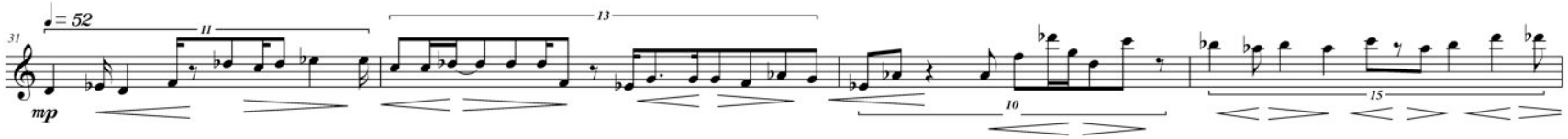
REGISTER: all, but with a preference on high and unpleasant.

PHRASING: phrases are always too long or to brief, intermittent, unexpected pauses, no coherence

DYNAMICS: ***pp-mf,*** totally unstable dynamics, both within each note (which can be loud and soft irregularly, as if played by a drunkard) and within a phrase

INTERACTION: avoid the others, barge into their music, destroy any beauty they may develop.

EXAMPLE:



ADBHUTA (WONDER)

TEMPO CONTOUR: Play in conducted tempo, with slight rubato

RHYTHM CONTOUR: quarters (their triplets) and eights (+triplets), with sparsely used one and two note appogiaturas.

PITCH CONTOUR: each phrase uses the same pitches in ascent and descent (or vice versa), the music being essentially slow up and down arpeggii. In choosing the pitches you can use wide or close chords. Microtonal pitches in are welcome, but must be used consistently. Important notes can be introduced by a slow ornamentation (preferably slowed-down standard diatonic baroque ornamentations).

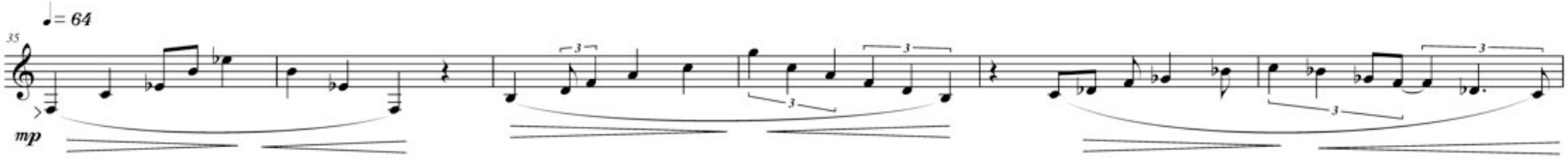
REGISTER: low to middle

PHRASING: each phrase consists of one ascent and one mirrored descent or vice versa. Phrases are separated by rests that are long at the beginning of each section and get shorter as the section progresses

DYNAMICS: ***pp-mf,*** the phrases are always at their softest in the middle

INTERACTION: support the other instruments, like a harp or a continuo

EXAMPLE:



RUDRA (AGGRESSIVE)

TEMPO CONTOUR: always strictly on the conducted beat, as in rock music

RHYTHM CONTOUR: short fast bursts alternating with aggressive impulses on the beat, isolated events placed irregularly within and held together by the beat. Once beat is clear, quintuplets and heptuplets can be used as an irritating device.

PITCH CONTOUR: wide jumps (more down than up) and excessive repetition

REGISTER: highest and lowest, avoid middle as far as possible

PHRASING: establish beat and then challenge it, phrases build on each other to climax

DYNAMICS: ***ff-mf,*** always heavily accent first note of any phrase

INTERACTION: interrupt, destroy, go against one other player and pursue him.

EXAMPLE: