

# Vocalise

-violin solo with drone-

Taylor Brook  
2009

# Performance Instructions:

## Microtonal notation

This composition uses just intonation. In order to indicate as precisely as possible the exact tuning of the notes, cent deviations from 12-tone equal temperament (piano keys) are written above or below the notes to which they apply. For example, in the tuning of the open strings given below, the low F# is tuned 14/100ths of a semitone lower than the F# on a piano.

The following accidental nomenclature is also used to approximate exact pitches:

♭ - ♯ Approximately 1/4 tone flat or sharp.

↓ - ↑ Approximately 1/6 tone flat or sharp.

♭ - ♭ - ♯ - ♯ - ♯ - ♯ Approximately 1/12 tone flat or sharp.

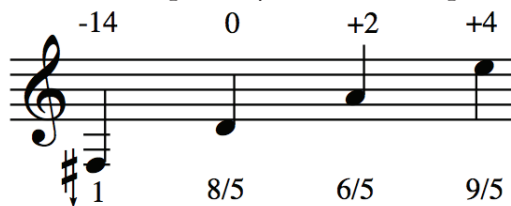
This precise microtonal notation is best viewed as a stepping stone to hearing the just intonation harmony; because the entire work uses only one tonic note, which is constantly heard as a drone, and a fairly constrained gamut of pitches, one can quickly internalize the tuning of the microtones and perform with accuracy in that way.

## Drone

The solo violin must be accompanied by a drone tuned 14 cents flat of F#, in perfect unison to the fourth string of the violin. This drone can be played by any instrument or group of instruments, preferably offstage and out of sight of the audience. The drone should be as continuous as possible for the entire duration of the piece, so wind instruments can only be used in a group, allowing the drone to continue through pauses taken for breathing. An ideal setup would be four or more instruments surrounding the audience from offstage locations. The drone should be present, but not so loud that it covers the quiet passages of the soloist.

## Scordatura

The open strings of the violin should be tuned as follows: The fourth string should be exactly 3 octaves lower than the fourth harmonic of the open D on the third string. The second string is a just fifth (2nd harmonic) above the third string. Lastly, the first string is a just fifth above the second string.

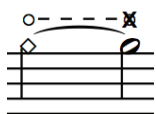


## Harmonics

Harmonics are notated as diamond noteheads with the appropriate string in roman numerals written above.



Diamond noteheads for harmonics.



Press finger down gradually, going from a natural harmonic to a fingered note.

## Accidentals

Accidentals apply only to the notes they proceed with the exception of repeated notes. Sometimes a “friendly reminder” accidental is given on these repeated notes, depending on the context.

# List of technique indications

**ord** - ordinario

**st** - sul tasto - (Bow over the end of the fingerboard.)

**ast** - alto sul tasto - (Bow 5-7 centimetres up the fingerboard.)

**sp** - sul ponticello - (Bow close to the bridge.)

**asp** - alto sul ponticello - (Bow very close to the bridge.)

**nv** - non vibrato

**pv** - poco vibrato

**cv** - con vibrato

**mv** - molto vibrato

**f.bow** - fast bow (Use as much of the bow as possible, causing variable bow speed on short notes of different rhythmic values.)

**frog** - (Use the portion of the bow close to the frog.)

**tip** - (Use the portion of the bow close to the tip.)

**scratch** - scratch-tone (Apply extra bow pressure with a slow bow speed to get a thick scratchy tone.)

**flautando** - like a flute (Bow half way (at the first harmonic) between the fingered pitch and the bridge with light bow pressure and a quick stroke.)

Notes with a “3” attached to the stem have a duration as if they were in a triplet.

## Concert Notes:

*Vocalise* is dedicated to the violinist Mira Benjamin.

This composition is largely influenced by my exposure to Hindustani (Classical North India) music. The title, *Vocalise*, refers both to the long lyrical sections performed on a single violin string, as in the famous *Vocalise* of Rachmoninov, as well as the singing style of Hindustani music with its long sweeping lines and heavy use of glissandi.

In the Hindustani tradition all instruments aspire to the qualities of the voice, relating the playing techniques on the instrument to vocal production. For example, the act of plucking a string may correspond to the act of the tongue enunciating a consonant; minor variations of the angle and speed of the pluck slightly alter the timbre in a way similar to the timbral variations elicited by slight changes in the movement of the tongue. In this composition, I approach the violin in this spirit, calling for a variety of playing techniques in order to achieve a richness and variety of timbre rather than taking the unified “classical” timbre associated with standard orchestral violin technique for granted.

Formally, *Vocalise* consists of a single movement with several internal sections, each focusing on different strings of the violin. Furthermore, each section has a faster pulse than the previous one, giving the work a sense of large scale acceleration. The entire work is accompanied by a slightly flat F# drone, to which the fourth string of the violin is also tuned. This drone functions as the tonal centre throughout the composition as the solo violin plays in a just intonation mode in relation to it.

# Vocalise

- for violin solo with drone -

Taylor Brook

$\text{♩} = 42$

10-15" -16  
IV V

5-7"

*nv*-----*pv* *f.bow*  
*nv* -14

(I) *nv*-----*pv*-*nv*

*pp* *mp* *p* *mp* *fff* *mp* *mf*

-14 *pv*-----*nv* *f.bow* -10 *nv*-----*pv*-*nv* *f.bow* -10

*f* *mf* *pp* *mp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *p* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

(*f.bow*) -14 *nv*-----*cv*-----*nv* -14 +37 -12

*pp* *mp* *fff* *p* *mp* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *pp* *mp* *fff*

$\text{♩} = 48$

-16 -14 -12 -10 -28  
4:3 (vii) I II III IV  
4:3

II → V ----- *sp*-----*ord* +37

*mp* *poco* *p* *mf* *pp* *mf* *p*

*nv*-----*cv*-----*nv* (II) *poco sp*-----*ord* -28 *poco sp*-----*sp*-----*ord* *f.bow*  
+37 -28 *nv*-----*cv* (II)

*mf* *fff* *mf* *fff* *f* *mp* *f* *mp*

(*nv*) -28 +37 *f.bow* +37 -12

*p* *mf* *mf* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

f.bow

+37 -12

-28

(II)

f.bow

-14 ord

*mp* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *f* *f* *mf* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

(f.bow)

sp

ord

-45

I II I II

I + V

*p* *mp* *p* *mf* *mf* *p* *mf* *lll*

-16 -14 -12

-10

-28

IV III 4:3 II I II III IV 4:3

IV III II III IV III II etc

-14

3 III 3-4"

*mp* *poco* *mf* *p* *mf*

$\text{♩} = 56$

III → V

pv--nv

+50 -45

mf

I +

pv--nv

-14

nv---cv

f

*lll* *mf* *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

(III)

poco sp

nv

-10

f

f.bow

-14

(III)

-14

*mp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *p*

st

I IV

f

III →

pv--nv

+50

-12

mf (III)

I +

-12

+37

*lll* *mf* *p* *mf* *mfp* *mf* *p* *mf* *pp* *mp* *p* *mf*

ord-----sp mp ord  
 nv-pv--nv I+ IVV -12

III II I II III IV  
 4:3 4:3 -12

-14 -10 -14 -12

4:3 4:3

lll ll f ll mf mp poco mp

♩ = 64

ord-----14 sp-----ord -14

tr tr tr tr tr I II V

mf ord-----sp-----ord

(f) sf sf f mf I 3 +37 mf mp

(II)

poco p

mf +37-12 mf +37-12 sf +55 mf +55

mf p mf +37-12 +55 p mf I mf mp -12 +37 f

(+2) -12

III IV II

-26 -14 (3) -10 ord-----ast

f.bow

poco RIT-----A TEMPO (♩=64)

mp sf f mf ll mp +37 -12

st

poco 3

f.bow -14

sp (I) (sp) (II) (sp)

sp-----ord I+ II V

2-3"

ff mp +37 -12 f mp mf (+4) +55 ll mp lll



$\text{♩} = 80$

IV -28 III -14 II I II III ord IV → V 0-----x 3 ~3- I II+ IV → -28 0-----x fbow

*mp* *mf* *f* *mf* *ff* *f* *mp* *f* *mp*

(f.bow) -14 -45 nv---mv I nv -10 f.bow -14 nv---pv---mv

3 3 6 3

*f* *mp* *ff* *mp* *f* *f* *p* *f* *ppp*

(nv) -28 +37 -14 sp nv---pv---mv

ord -28 +37 -14 sp nv---pv---mv

IV → -45 -14 6 3 3 3 3

*mf* *fp* *f* *pf* *p* *f* *p* *f* *mp*

pr-nv ord-----sp

IV (IV) I II IV -14 (o) I II III I IV etc → 6 3-4"

*f* *mf* *f* *mp* *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *ff* *mp* *ff*

-14

$\text{♩} = 88$

-10 (o) IV → -45 -30 III IV -12 st-----sp

sp-----ord-poco sp 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

*mp* *ff* *p* *ff* *p* *mf* *p* *f*

f.bow -14 (-12) pr-nv

st st---ord III IV sp---st 3-4" 3-4"

6 3 ord st sp ord 3 sp 3 3

*mp* *p* *mf* *p* *mp* *f* *p* *mp* *ppp*

-12 -12 +37 -12

gliss harmonics -12 -14 -12 -14 -45  
 III II I II I II I II III IV  
 4:3 (d) 4:3 3  
 gliss harmonics Random harmonics (slowly)  
 -12 -3

*mf mp f*

$\text{♩} = 96$   
 3-4" -12  
 IV → V  
 nv--cv--nv ord nv--mv--nv flautando (ord) pv--nv  
 -3 -3 +37  
 pp ff mp ff pp f mp

(II →) 0---x V nv--pv--nv  
 III (+2) +37 f.bow st -3  
 mp f mf mf f mp ff mf

-14 (0) 3 st---ord -28 pv--nv +37 -10 f.bow  
 0---x 3 3 3 6  
 f sffz p fp f ff p mf

$\text{♩} = 102$   
 (f.bow) -45 4-6" I II III IV V sp---ord  
 3 3 3  
 mp fp ff ff mp ff

I II III n v n v ord---asp---sp scr---norm---scr---norm SP  
 3 3 3  
 f ff (d) fp (d) ff ffp fff fmp

ord gliss harmonics

I II III IV

ord I A II III IV → -14

ord s. bow

3

*fp* — *fmp* — *mf* — *mp*      *ff*      *f* — *fff* — *f*      *mf* — *fff*

(0) +50

-14

3-4"

III IV 5 6

I II III

SP -28

-14

*f* — *mp*      *f* — *ff*      *ffp*

-14 +37

fast as possible (irregular)

ord

-14

III I II I

-10

-12 -16 -28 +37 -45

IV →

*ff*      *mf* — *f*

Frog Detaché

3 6 3

st cv --- nv -10

sp --- ord

*ffmp* — *ff*      *mf* — *f*

Flautando

-14 -10

st --- sp --- ord

trun trun

V -10

3 3 3

*mf* — *ff* — *mp*      *mf* — *ff* — *mf* — *f* — *mf*

-14

3

ord -14 -sp -45

7:4

-14

sp --- ord

trun ≥ ≥ ≥

2-3"

*f* — *mp* — *f*      *f* — *ff*      *fp* — *fff*

*sp* ----- *ord*  
 I II III IV I II III IV etc.  
 -45 (-14) -14 (-14) 5 -14

*f* *mp* *f* *ff* *ff*

*slow gliss harmonics*  
 III high as possible (Harmonics)  
 IV V III -14 -28 II II

*ff* *sfz* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *mp*

$\text{♩} = 144$   
 8va -28 +37 -28

*ff* *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf* *mp* *ff* *mf*

*gliss extremely slowly, pausing briefly on each pitch.*  
 (8va) -26 -14 -10 -10 I → *cv* *nv*

*ff* *pp* *ff* *ff*

-14 -12 *ord* ----- *sp* II → +37 -14 -10

*mf* *f* *mf* *f* *fff*

-12 +37 -12 +37 -28 I III I III I III I III I III I III I III

*mp* *f* *mf* *ff*

