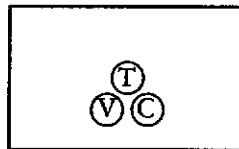


# CON VOCE

## for three mute players

MAURICIO KAGEL, 1972

- 1 Each of the three players - wearing a black suit with black bow tie - can use *any* woodwind, brass, string or plucked instrument.
  - 1.1 The performers all come outstage together, forming a tightly-knit group. They enter discreetly, not making any noise, *remain quite long in playing position* and begin just before the listeners' level of attention is in danger of crumbing.
  - 1.2 Two of the players could sit, and the third stands (or versa).  
For example: the cellist (V) and clarinetist (C) sit; the trombonist (T) stands close behind them, with the slide of his instrument gliding between the other two players' shoulders. They keep gazing forwards.



Public

- 1.3 Apart from the two chairs, the stage is completely bare. No props or music stands.  
*The piece should be played from memory.*
- 1.4 Use just one or two spotlights, either from above or with bright lightning from the side.  
The rest of the stage should be in darkness.
- 1.5 Performances with 2 or 3 trios are conceivable.
- 2 *Throughout the piece, no instrumental sound is produced, only oral events (singing, humming, whistling etc.) which are synchronised with the mute movements on the instruments (see Point 3: Playing models).*
  - 2.1 Here, the precondition for a tight interpretation is rigour and complete seriousness. It is to be expected that at first the audience will misunderstand the situation. One will counter this with an even intensive calm and concentration.
  - 2.2 Within the course of a minute, each participant can produce 0 - 3 events; their duration is ad libitum. To this end, he has at his disposal Models I-V, which he can draw upon as required and perform in any order.
  - 2.3 There is no limit on the length of a performance; it could already be over after a minute.  
At any rate: stop playing before there is any slackening of tension.

### 3 Playing models

#### 3.1 *For Woodwinds*

- I Unstable tone production; middle register; soft
- II Fluttersong; very low register; loud
- III Trills, with a slow transition to tremolo; low register; very soft
- IV Crassly overblown at first, then gradually letting the sound vibrate regularly; very high register; soft
- V Single tongue-slaps; low/medium register; very soft

#### 3.2 *For Brass*

- I With (plunger or hat) mute: (slide) vibrato, valve or lipvibrato; very slow register; loud
- II With (plunger, hat or straight) mute: rapid sequences of double- or triple-tongued entries; very low/low register; soft. The mute is to be slowly removed during the course of the action.
- III Without mute (but holding it in one's hand: chord (produced with 'b'-articulation: lips pressed together, and singing at the same time); middle register; soft. (The two-part sound can also be produced by whistling, while simultaneously singing and humming.)
- IV Tongue-slap on the mouthpiece + glissando; low register; soft
- V With (plunger, hat or straight) mute: fluttersong; very high register; very soft

#### 3.3 *For Strings*

Some of these models are also applicable to plucked instruments. Always come onstage holding the mute; put it on shortly after entering, and then hold back from starting.

- I Col legno, first at the bridge, than gradually sul tasto; low register; soft. (Imitation of the desired instrumental sound by sliding one's tongue along the gums, from the incisors back to the throat.)
- II Flautando, double trills; very high register; soft
- III Pizzicato, senza vibrato; low register; loud
- IV Stroke on body of the instrument; muffled; soft
- V Extreme bow pressure (straight sound production); low register; loud

### 4 Melodic Material

For all those kinds of articulation that involve a melodic process, a reservoir is offered below, from which the three players can take any sections they wish.

Note the following:

1. The melody can be transposed by any interval.
2. The notes are to be produced using particular playing techniques and timbres (models I-V): pizzicato, fluttersong, repeated notes, vibrato etc.
3. The melodic process can be broken off at any double bar.
4. Isolated events should predominate; these can also be repeated using varied timbres and any kinds of articulation.

### Grave (♩ = ca. 40)

First practice with appropriate instrument,  
then imitate the corresponding sounds.

long bows for strings can be changed

The musical score consists of nine measures, each on a single staff in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. Measure 1 starts with a circled '1' and contains a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. Measure 2 starts with a circled '2' and contains a half note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. Measure 3 starts with a circled '3' and contains a half note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. Measure 4 starts with a circled '4' and contains a half note D4, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note B3. Measure 5 starts with a circled '5' and contains a half note A3, a quarter note G3, and a quarter note F3. Measure 6 starts with a circled '6' and contains a half note E3, a quarter note D3, and a quarter note C3. Measure 7 starts with a circled '7' and contains a half note B2, a quarter note A2, and a quarter note G2. Measure 8 starts with a circled '8' and contains a half note F2, a quarter note E2, and a quarter note D2. Measure 9 starts with a circled '9' and contains a half note C2, a quarter note B1, and a quarter note A1. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and triplets. A box labeled 'Fermate ad lib.' is positioned below measure 9.

dynamics *ad. lib.*: **ppp** - **ff**

[Fermate  
ad lib.]