

करुणा

# k a r u n a

for a trio around one listener

**doublebass** with mute

—

**listener**

(seat towards the open space)

**alto flute** \

/ **violoncello**  
with metal practice mute

**rafael nassif**  
[2014-15; 2017]

commissioned by SNIM-Wien  
for „das kleine symposion“ in „echoraum“, Vienna

thanks to the support of  
Bundeskanzleramt Kunst und Kultur  
Österreich (Austria)

insight/concept: 2014-15, Berlin

composition: 2017 (Saalfelden am Steinernen Meer, Helsinki,  
Delhi Airport, Bodhgaya, Graz, Kalapa/Garanas 41, Wien)

ISWC: T-803.830.914-8

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karuṇā (Sanskrit):  
Mitgefühl, nicht Mitleid

(when printing/copying, reduce the solo pieces to ca. 68% and print every one in a single horizontal A5 format;  
for the performance place all of them at two music stands, so that no page turns are necessary)

## form & instructions for performance

There is no „score“ for this work.

Each musician receives these instructions and four „solo“ pieces: O, M, P, H

All pieces can be played in any order but may not be repeated.

The four (or three) phrases of each piece are articulated by pauses (fermatas) and can be presented in any order but without repetitions.

When playing a piece which has four phrases, one phrase may be omitted, but must not.

The three instruments play their solo pieces simultaneously; the resultant dynamic should be quite soft, between **pppp** and **mp/mf** maximum.

The beginning of the first and fourth set of pieces are coordinated, the beginning of the second and third set of pieces are not.

Each piece should last at least ca. 30" and maximum ca. 60"; in this way their ends are not coordinated.

After one piece, wait a pause of ca. 15"-30", so that in total the work will last ca. 5'.

The graphic below demonstrates (just) one of the many possible combinations; it is displayed here just for clarifying the form:

	1 <sup>st</sup> set of pieces (starting coordinated)	2 <sup>nd</sup> set of pieces (starting not coordinated)	3 <sup>rd</sup> set of pieces (blending with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> set)	4 <sup>th</sup> set of pieces (starting coordinated after ca. 15" silence)
<b>alto flute</b>	piece O _____	piece M _____	piece P _____	piece H _____
<b>cello</b>	piece M _____	piece P _____	piece H _____	piece O _____
<b>double bass</b>	piece P _____	piece H _____	piece O _____	piece M _____

A concert hall is not necessary for the performance, which can take place at any silent space, preferable just with the musicians and the listener alone (in this case the others listeners may wait their turn outside, or in a waiting room). Almost no artificial light should be used; for practical reasons, if necessary turn on a light after the final pause.

Ideally, after some performances the players might be able to play all pieces by heart and perhaps also to know quite well the pieces of the others, so that she/he can preview some combinations along the performance. The musicians are encouraged to present always a new combination of pieces/phrases.

Alto flute and cello can exchange their places between themselves (see cover page). For recording, a binaural equipment is desired.

## intonation & scordatura

The tones are written in just intonation.

The tone "A" (tuned freely between 430Hz and 443Hz) was elected as a fundamental tone and it is present both in the cello's I. string and in the contrabass's III. string.

The other strings need a scordatura according to the inverted overtone series. Fingerings are notated, followed by the real sounding tones specified in cents (except for the IV. string of the doublebass, whose fingerings are notated one octave below than usual!). For the alto flute, all tones including tongue rams and humble tones are transposed notated.

Small deviations of cents are written in order to determine exactly the relationship to the fundamental tone: in some circumstances they may not be feasible to perform, and of course approximations are in those cases accepted. Specifically in the case of the flute, small deviations are notated between parentheses.

All "accidentals" are valid for one entire phrase (in some cases they are rewritten, e.g. in passages which include many notes).

### cello

(I. string/**A**), II. string/**D<sup>b</sup> -41** cents, III. string/**G -4**, IV. string/**C<sup>b</sup> +31**

For tuning without a tuner, make the follow harmonics in unissono with the I. string:  
13<sup>th</sup> partial harmonic (II.), 9<sup>th</sup> partial harmonic (III.), 7<sup>th</sup> partial harmonic (IV.)

### double bass

I. string/**G -4** cents, II. string/**D<sup>#</sup> +49**, (III. string/**A**), IV. string/**E +2** (IV. one octave below than usual!)

For tuning without a tuner, make the follow harmonics in unissono with the III. string:  
9<sup>th</sup> partial harmonic (I.), 11<sup>th</sup> partial harmonic (II.), 3<sup>rd</sup> partial harmonic (IV.)

piece **P**  
alto flute

whistle tones  
aeolian  
w. tones  
poco cresc.  
dolciss.  
4

ossia:

4  
flt.g (guttural)

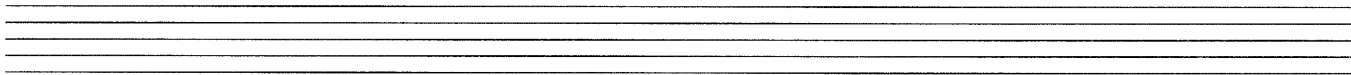
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**karuṇā**  
[2014; 2017]  
for three musicians  
around one listener

w. tones  
flt. (tongue)  
flt.  
flt.g  
ord.  
5  
2  
(Key)  
4

ossia:

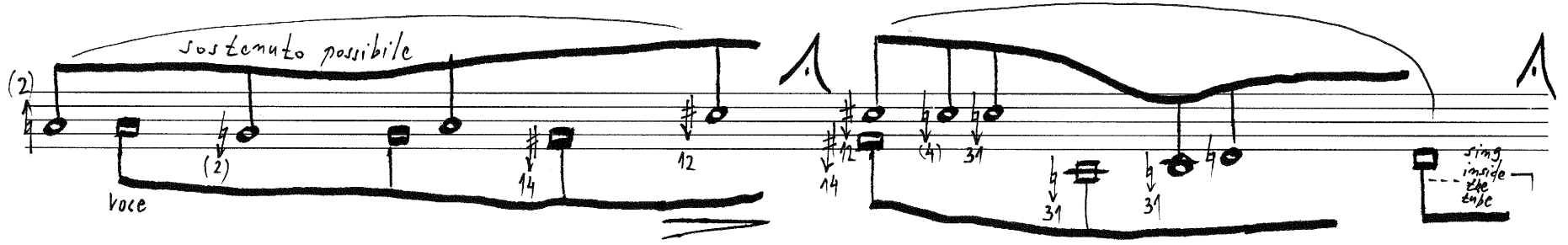
39  
25  
39  
flt. (tongue)  
sim. (come sopra) (follow as above)

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piece   
alto flute

*sostenuto possibile*



voce

(2)

(2)

12

14

14

(4)

31

31

31

31

sing inside the tube

(from)  
**karuṇā**  
[2014; 2017]  
for three musicians  
around one listener

*fluido*

*bisbigl.*  
(at least 4 different fingerings)

fl.t.g.

49

28

49

20

voce:

(3)

(2)

(4)

(4)

overblow

(f.t.g.)

sing inside the tube

ossia:



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piece  
alto flute

Handwritten musical score for alto flute. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a series of notes with various fingerings indicated by numbers in parentheses (e.g., (2), (4), (6), (8)). Performance instructions include "ord." (ordinario), "bisbigliando" (pizzicato), and "un poco marc." (un poco marcato). There are also dynamic markings like "8. flt. s." and "flt." with accents. The score is divided into sections by a wavy line and a large upward-pointing triangle.

(from)  
**karuṇā**  
[2014; 2017]  
for three musicians  
around one listener

Handwritten musical score for three musicians. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a series of notes with various fingerings indicated by numbers in parentheses (e.g., (2), (6), (4), (5)). Performance instructions include "com moto", "longue rim (airy)", and "less airy, secco". There are also dynamic markings like "8. flt. s." and "flt." with accents. The score is divided into sections by a wavy line and a large upward-pointing triangle.

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Handwritten musical score for rafael nassif. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a series of notes with various fingerings indicated by numbers in parentheses (e.g., (2), (4), (2), (4)). Performance instructions include "sostenuto" and "voce". There are also dynamic markings like "8. flt. s." and "flt." with accents. The score is divided into sections by a wavy line and a large upward-pointing triangle.

piece H  
alto flute

Handwritten musical notation for alto flute. The score includes several measures with notes and rests. Annotations include: "(only key)", "pizz.", "smorzato (lips)", "whistle tones", "trilo", "w. tones", and "(2) tongue ram. 'secco'". Fingering numbers like (14), 41, and 14 are written above notes. A wavy line under the notes indicates a specific articulation or breath control. A large upward-pointing triangle is present at the end of the first section.

(from)

# karuṇā

[2014; 2017]

for three musicians  
around one listener

Handwritten musical notation for alto flute. The score includes several measures with notes and rests. Annotations include: "(3-4 fingerings)", "bisbigliando", "leggero, molto fluido ma tranquillo", "fl.", "tenuto", and "(4)". Fingering numbers like (4), 41, and (2) are written above notes. A large upward-pointing triangle is present at the end of the first section.

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piece  
cello  
(metal mute)

Handwritten musical notation for cello, featuring a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various fingerings (I, II, III, IV), bowing directions (up and down bows), and dynamic markings such as *sim.* (sforzando) and *legato*. A section is marked *vibrato d'arco*. The piece concludes with a *legato* marking.

Annotations include:  
- *multi-phonic: (D-29 - 21st partial)*  
- *A<sub>b</sub>39*  
- *F+44 - 13th*  
- *A - 8th*  
- *C#14*  
- *Just (one bow)*  
- *F+30*  
- *A*  
- *C#41*  
- *E+46*  
- *E+46*  
- *E+2*  
- *Bb+5*  
- *C#14*  
- *G-31*  
- *E+2 (I)*  
- *(ev.) vibrato d'arco*  
- *(legato)*

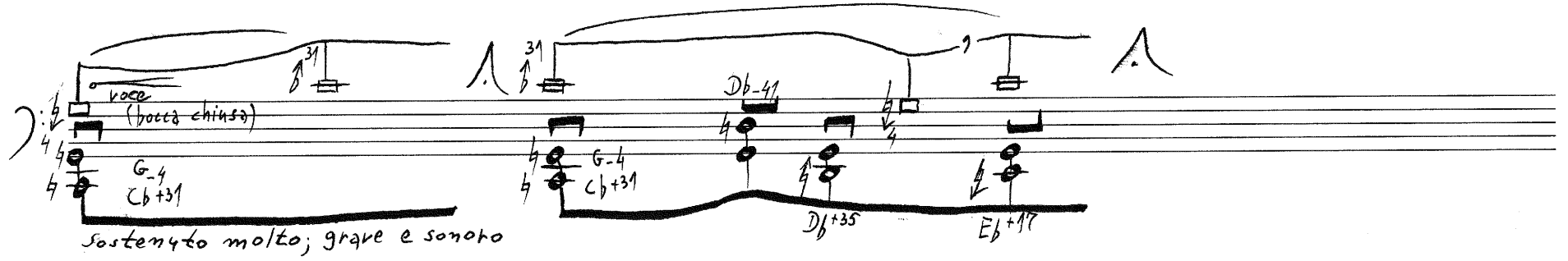
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[2014; 2017]  
for three musicians  
around one listener

Handwritten musical notation for cello, featuring a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various fingerings (II, III, IV), bowing directions, and dynamic markings such as *sim.* (sforzando) and *f/agg. molto* (fortissimo/agitato molto). The piece concludes with a *f/agg. molto* marking.

Annotations include:  
- *Db-41*  
- *C#14*  
- *G-4*  
- *Db-41*  
- *G-4*  
- *D#17*  
- *B-18*  
- *B+31*  
- *D-2*  
- *sim.*  
- *f/agg. molto*

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piece   
cello  
(metal mute)



voce  
(bocca chiusa)

G-4  
Cb+31

Sostenuto molto; grave e sonoro

31

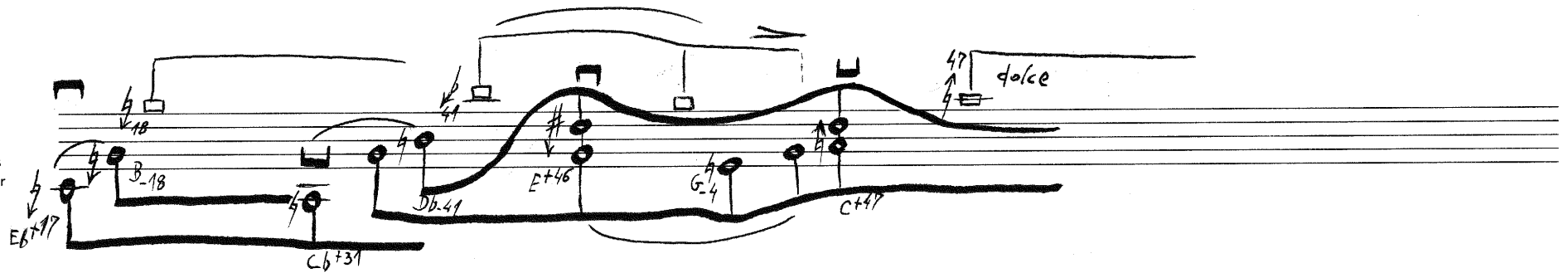
Db-41

G-4  
Cb+31

Db+35

Eb+17

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[2014; 2017]  
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B-18

Db-41

E+46

G-4

C+47

Eb+17

Cb+31

47 dolce

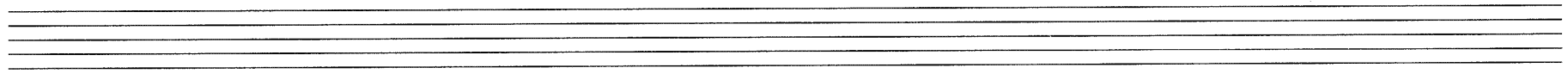
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piece  
cello  
metal mute

*sempre*  
**Pizz II**

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[2014; 2017]  
for three musicians  
around one listener

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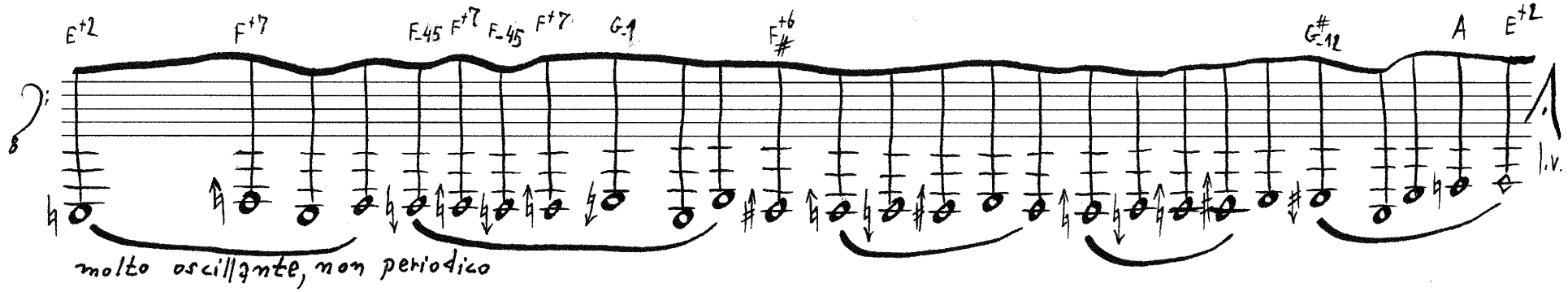


piece  
cello  
metal mute

(from)  
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[2014; 2017]  
for three musicians  
around one listener

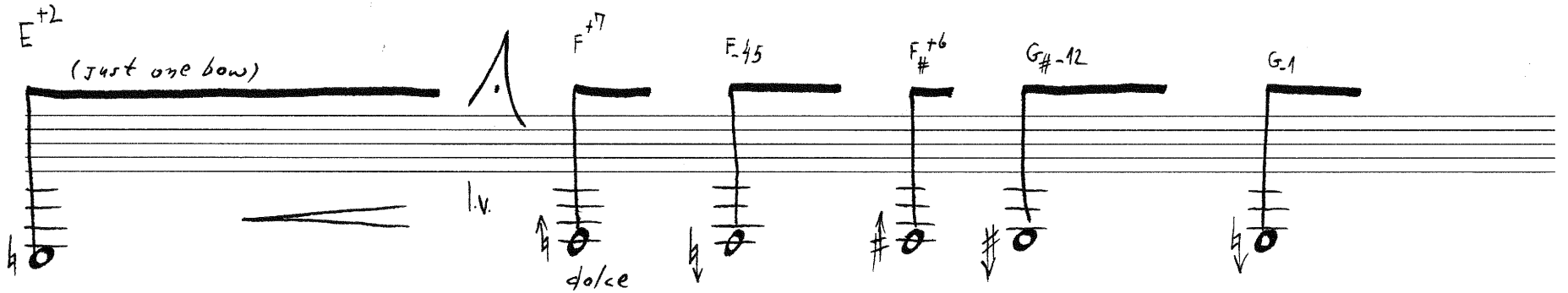
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piece   
contrabass



*molto oscillante, non periodico*

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for three musicians  
around one listener



*(Just one bow)*

*dolce*

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piece  
contrabass  
(mute)

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around one listener

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piece  
contrabass  
(mute)

gliss.

C# +18 (7th partial)

F# -47 (9th partial)

A (11th partial)

E+2

IV E+2

(4th partial)

(from)  
**karuṇā**  
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around one listener

IV

B+4

+voce (B+4) (bocca chiusa)

vibrato d'arco

(3rd partial)

E+2

Su/ta

III

A

senza arco "ethereal tremolo"

2nd thumb/3rd finger (right hand) (just touch, do not pluck)

dolcissimo

+voce (A)

D+49

F# -47

G+35

A

IV

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piece  
contrabass  
(mute)

senza arco  
B $\flat$ -1 "hammer on" (l.h.)  
vibrato  
II I C $\sharp$ 49  
III  
nail pizz. / ponticello (r.h.)

pizz + voce (bocca chiusa) (voce) dim.  
(C-6)  
C-6 "hammer on" vibr.  
D $\sharp$ 49  
G $\sharp$  +47  
B $\flat$ 18 "hammer on" (I)  
molto vibrato ---- poco  
ca/mo, appreso accompagnando  
» Zinger" (r.h. nail)  
l.v.

(from)

### karuṇā

[2014; 2017]

for three musicians  
around one listener

III pizz. secco  
F $\sharp$ 41  
D $\sharp$ 2  
A  
G $\sharp$ 4  
B $\flat$ 49  
D $\sharp$ 2  
(mute)

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**obras de música de câmara instrumental do mesmo autor**

**noturno** (2006)  
para cordas

**esboço de pavana** (2008-9)  
violoncelo solo

**a desvelar caminho** (2009-10; 2011)  
clarinete, viola e piano

**caminho a desvelar** (2009-10; 2011)  
clarinete, violoncelo e piano

**um vitral no tempo** (2009-10)  
para oito músicos com taças de cristais ao redor do público

**quinteto radiante** (2010)  
para quinteto de metais ao redor do público

**silhuetas de uma dança imaginária** (2009-10)  
quarteto de violões

**floresta anônima** (2010-11)  
para oboés e fagotes ao redor do público

**esboço de monumento** (2011-12)  
para sopros (e percussão opcional)

**ainda que sob véus** (2010-12)  
piano solo

**musica d'incanto** (2011-13)  
para oboé e um trio de instrumentos graves distribuídos no espaço

**suonare, ascoltare, trasfigurare** (2011-13)  
trio com piano

**present, without expectations** (2009/2010/2011/2015-16)  
quarteto de cordas

**empty-forms** (2016)  
cravo

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**instrumental chamber works by the same author**

**noturno** (2006)  
for strings

**esboço de pavana** (2008-9)  
solo cello

**a desvelar caminho** (2009-10; 2011)  
clarinet, viola and piano

**caminho a desvelar** (2009-10; 2011)  
clarinet, cello and piano

**um vitral no tempo** (2009-10)  
for eight performers with crystal glasses around the audience

**quinteto radiante**(2010)  
for brass quintet around the audience

**silhuetas de uma dança imaginária** (2009-10)  
guitar quartet

**floresta anônima** (2010-11)  
for oboes and bassoons around the audience

**esboço de monumento** (2011-12)  
for winds (and optional percussion)

**ainda que sob véus** (2010-12)  
solo piano

**musica d'incanto** (2011-13)  
for and oboist and a trio of very low instruments far apart

**suonare, ascoltare, trasfigurare** (2011-13)  
piano trio

**present, without expectations** (2009/2010/2011/2015-16)  
string quartet

**empty-forms** (2016)  
harpsichord

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