

Kory Reeder

Conditional Discourses on Poetics and Narrative

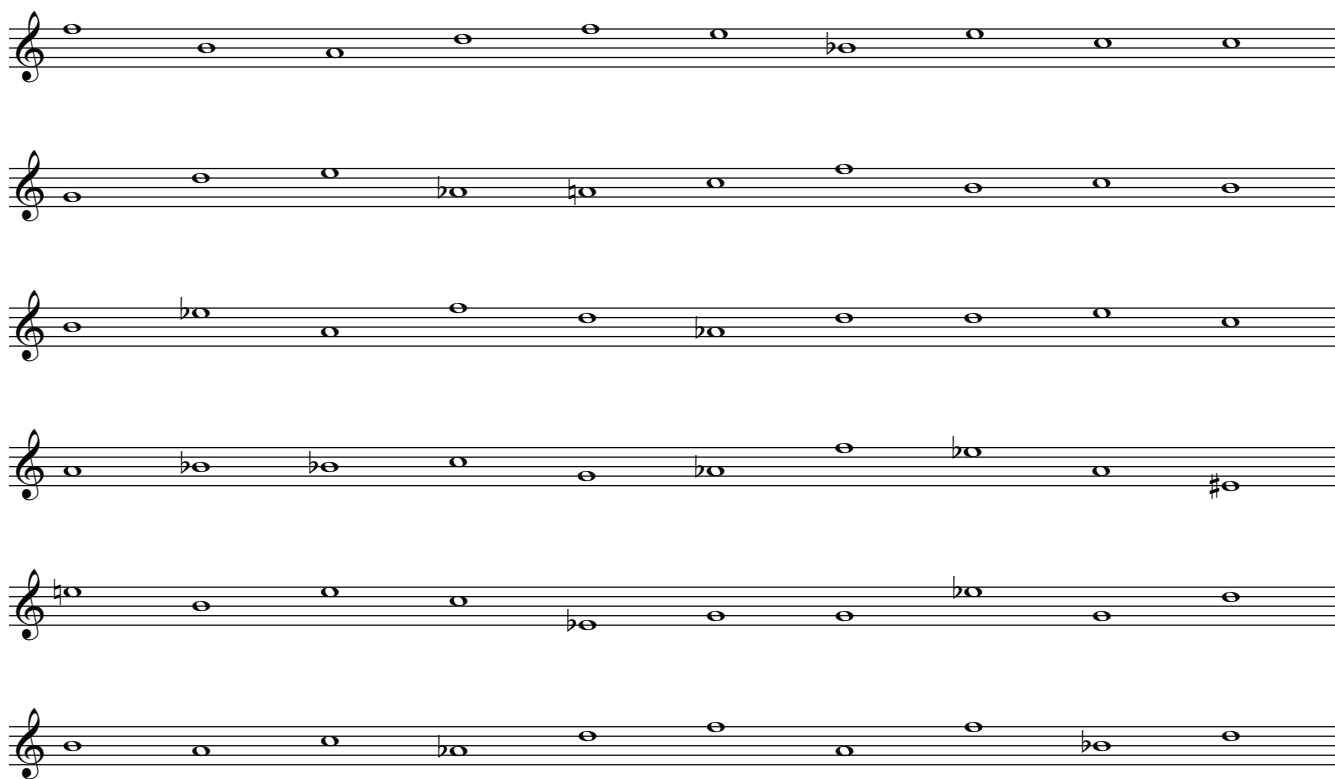
For flute, bass clarinet, vibraphone, piano, violin, viola, and cello
(2024)

Part 1

Vibraphone, Piano, Cello, and Violin
Start at the same time – a downbeat
Do this for some time

Piano

Grid: slowly, but steadily (each tone about 2-seconds long). Start anywhere, move in any direction (up, down, diagonal, etc.), +/- an octave, pedal down (always).



Violin

Sporadically, unpredictably, with 2-5 seconds of silence between: short gestures of no more than 7 notes. Feathery; lightly, like wind – like dust – motion, gesture, utterance. “Like birds” is close but what would that actually mean? Like murmurs! Like secrets – like the sublimation of intense energy; each moment a revelation. Not an explosion, but a caressing of velvet. *Molto sul tasto – molto flautando*

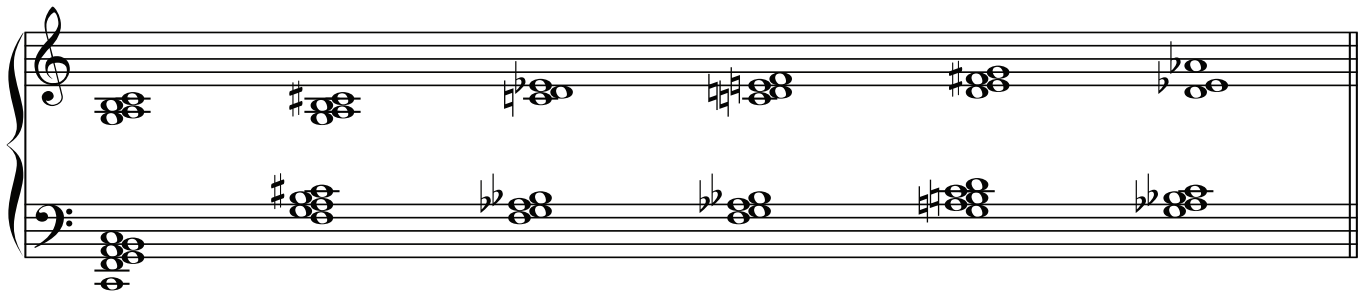
Cello

Quietly, a long tone; 4 seconds long. Then: listening. Perhaps then, a pizz (with the side of the thumb, please). Perhaps then, a shorter tone, arco – the next pizz is closer. I think this is all you need. Somehow in an interstice; not so much off in your own world, but with, or being-in the world of the others. Not quite mechanical; not quite sporadic; sounding the importance of a middle, or an inner voice and pulse. If you have everything you need, play around with it for a while. Just keep the register low, please.

Vibraphone

Rarely (and rather discreetly), I think there should be low chords. Here and there – feel it out but wait a bit longer than you think you should. Not so much a marked moment; not a bell tolling, but a nod – an affirmation of the continuity, and of being present.

Violin, Cello, Vibraphone: here are your pitches. Left to right, at your own speed.

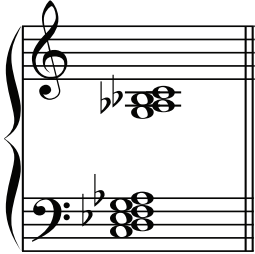
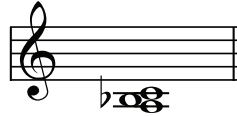


Transition 1

Viola joins, playing *with* the Violin.

As things continue

Then, Vibraphone rolls these two pitches:



Violin and Viola drift away from each other: no longer together

Then the Cello begins much the same as the other two strings

Now 3 in gestures and revelation.

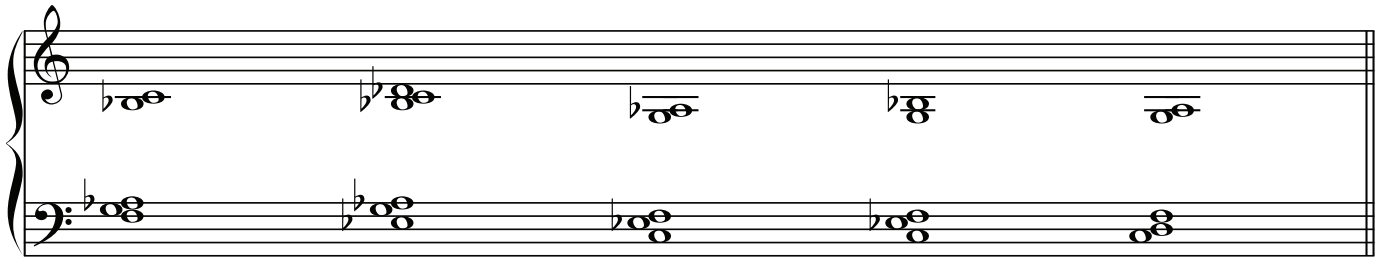
Piano stops

Vibraphone changes to this chord:



Part 2

From the transition, continue, but here are new pitches:



Violin

Patiently – seriously, take your time, but then play a long tone. Specifically, your open G. Now, when I say “a long tone,” I mean a very long tone – several bow lengths – like, way longer than you think they should be. Then rest for a moment, then repeat. Was it long enough? Did anyone look at you and raise their eyebrows? Did you smile back and then bashfully at the page? This is serious business now, this music thing.

Cello and Viola

Always *sul* C or G – more *ord.* than before – full bodied but soft, still somewhat feathery, and velvety. Not too fast, now; we have a long way to go – break it apart with long tones but avoid silences. Look at each other, move, dance, play together – at times entwined; at times in two clear roles.

Vibraphone

Much like the violin, these rolls are very long. Like, this whole section, long. But, not the same pitch the whole time. What I thought I would do is, I thought I might have you tray and gradually move your mallets around: quite slowly now. In fact, is there a way to play so that one mallet is playing two keys? I'd like to hear that for a while in the transitions. Hopefully they are big enough? Maybe that will change the timbre a bit? Wouldn't that be interesting if it had to be a different mallet selection than before? Maybe not *crazy interesting* but something there. Anyway, when you get to the next chord/cluster, hang out on it and roll for a while, moving ever slowly in the lowest register (octave?) of the instrument.

Transition 2

Violin

Now you might actually want folks to look at you

Playing a little gesture, an utterance

A short G (open string) and then a very long A.

Perhaps cue this?

Yeah, cue it, play it a few times.



Viola and Cello

When you hear that violin gesture I mentioned to them above, start slowing down.

Not too fast, now; where are you going?

Becoming long tones.

Not too long, though, you want the transition to the next part to be smooth.

Light

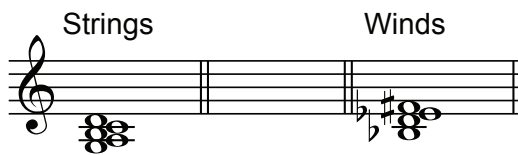
It's softer than it is bright, no?

Violin cues the next part, at which point the Vibraphone (finally) stops rolling.

Part 3

Strings

Each of you at your own tempo; something like Renaissance polyphony. Not too fast, but long threads of tones; each tone themselves modest in length, with the occasional tone of a longer length. Now, I don't mean to make each tone the same length, but the collective sound of all three of you could sound more like a kaleidoscoping consort, slowly turned around on this collection of pitches.



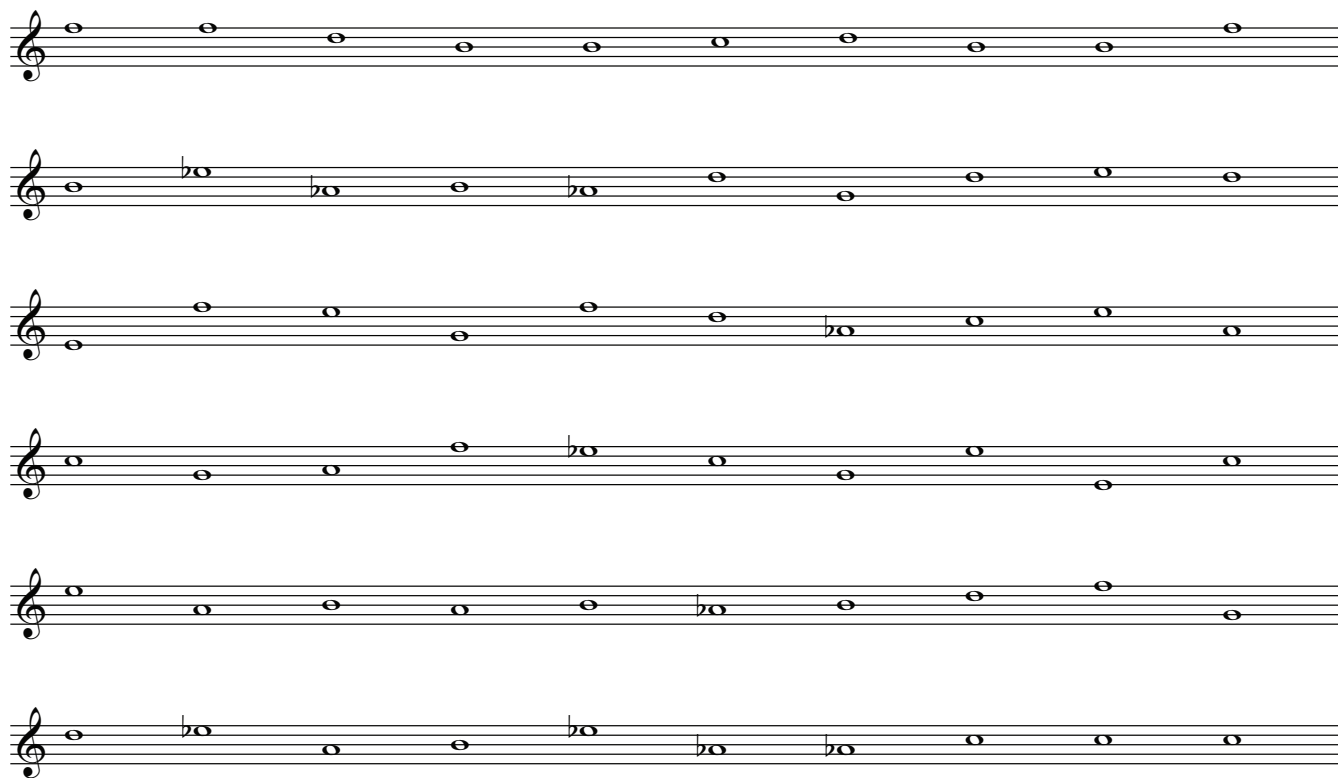
Winds

Rarely, discreetly, patiently – how many ways can I express the quality of active silence? Waiting for the right moment to play a [very] long tone. When does a tone break? Is it the breath? I'm not entirely convinced by that. I guess circular breathing is one option – but I don't really want to ask you to do that; you can, but it's up to you. Wait... can you do that on a flute? Anyway, your role here is one of highlighted color and support rather than the focal point, so I think it's fine if "long tone" has breaks in it for breathing. Perhaps a few. Perhaps 3? More importantly than the number is surely the way of getting in and out of it: no articulation, sneaking in and out, etc. Oh, I forgot to mention this, and it's rather important: stay in the lowest register, please.

Piano and Vibraphone

Do you see what I wrote above for the winds? This bit is similar, but by “long” I guess I really mean “sparse” in the case of how a piano and vibraphone actually works. It’s not like you can circular breathe. Not too often, but somehow often enough that you feel like you’re talking to one another.

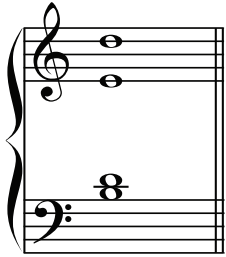
This is another grid; maintain the written register.



Stars are air holes for us to breathe...

Transition 3

Everyone: listen for the piano to play this chord:



They are going to play this chord many times.

Like... a bunch.

Long enough that you'll lose track.

Maybe.

Probably.

Maybe they won't even count how many times they've played it.

Anyway, keep doing you were doing in Part 3

Start becoming Part 4

When the piano plays a new chord, we're in Part 4

Vibraphone

Don't stop playing the occasional high note

Part 4

Two Groups

Violin
Cello
Piano

Flute
Bass Clarinet
Vibraphone

Sorry Viola, see below

Group 1

Lead by the piano, playing these chords together. Repeat ad lib. I guess rather stately? That sounds pompous... cordially together. I'm actually really interested in warmth here, as well as decay. So not too loud of firm, and I reckon the strings could follow the envelope of the piano – heads up: that decay is a lot longer than you think. Hang out on the very edge of silence for a while when you get to the tail end. I keep forgetting details: strings play these tones but revoice the chord. In other words, you can change the register of the indicated pitches, but I think it would be best to stay and stay within the range of the chord itself... Does that make sense?

Group 2

Hopefully you've read this in advance, but essentially you are now doing a slower version of what the strings were doing in the last section. You remember, right? However, let's ornament some of the tones. Not too much, be subtle. But a tone here and there, a little 2-4 note gesture. Subtle, subtle, subtle.

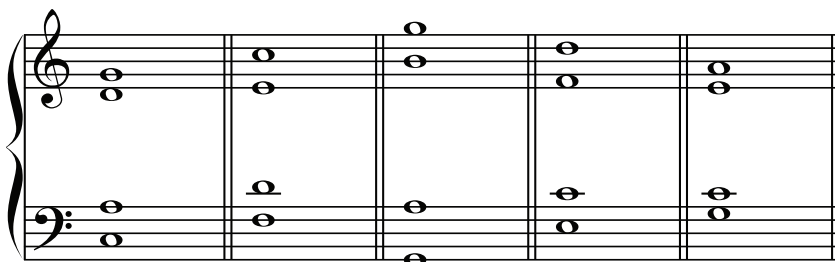
Vibraphone

Again, keep up that high note stuff – a little twinkle here and there.

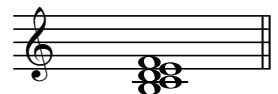
Viola

Your open C. Quietly. For, like, a whole minute. Steady and sustained. A minute is longer than you think, so be careful. Then: pause for less than a minute. Recover. Then repeat. We're going to do this at least 3-6 times.

Group 1



Group 2 (occasional B $\flat$ and E $\flat$)



Transition 4

Everyone starts speeding up

Breaking apart

But not getting louder

Part 5

There probably isn't going to be an sort of "downbeat" for this part.

I've been thinking a lot about bird nests and fibers.

This idea of blending together: "exceedingly blended" is the phrase I use in so many of my scores, and that's what this part is, really.

The fast part. The noodly bit. I wouldn't say this is any sort of a "climax" or anything like that, but a place to dwell, a place to rustle.

No one is particularly standing out; everyone doing their own thing together. Something of a multiplicity. A bop. A jam. It should be fun, shouldn't it?

Occasionally, piano or vibes arpeggiates up one of these chords

Occasionally a long swell: surfacing and then being subsumed back into the noise.

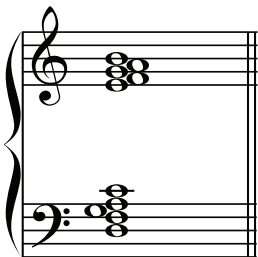
You're reading a typed version of this piece, but I'm currently writing it by hand. My mind moves faster than my hand can. Is something missing? Is the writing just a field recording of my mind/ What makes it onto the page is just the unmarked items, the important stuff. What am I missing? As soon as you have an idea, you try and put it down and something is lost – the thought evaporates.

Just keep going, I suppose. Don't, like, phone it in or anything. I'm trying my best to recall the sounds, but right now it's images.

Webs, noodles, rat nests.

That's not a positive or a negative, but I'm worried I'm writing too fast and won't be able to read my own handwriting.

Maybe it should sound like that.



Transition 5

... slowing down...

Tones become longer

Maybe it gets quieter

This should take a while

Don't go too fast

Quite slow now.

Part 6

Vibes take a break, you've been doing a lot today.

By now, we should be playing long tones.

Add spaces between them.

Not always tutti.

But stay focused: it should never be silent either.

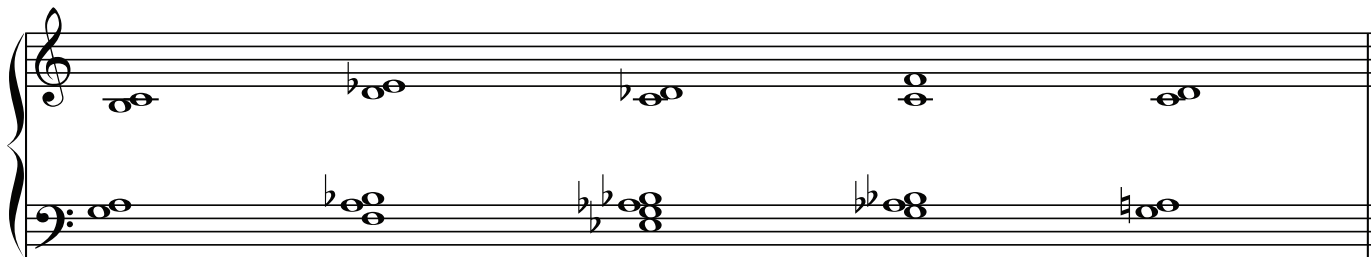
Now I'm over-thinking "silent"

Don't over-think it, but support the sound and the space.

Piano

Mid-register chords.

Again and again...



Part 7

Piano

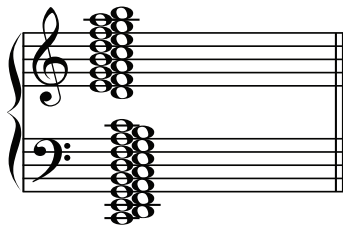
Keep playing the chords like the last part.

Everyone

This one doesn't really have a transition, I guess. It just kind of starts happening – not all at once, but one at a time.

Pulses: different speeds, but long, swelled pulses on the same note.

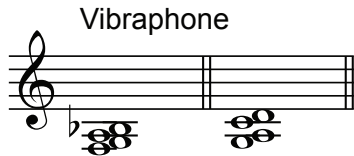
Everyone



It's like several recordings of *Music for 18 Musicians* happening at the same time – and at slightly different speeds.

Like I said, not all at once, but that's where want to go.

Once everyone is doing it: Vibraphone plays chords between the piano's



After a while, the vibe cues and everyone pulses at ♩ = 80. Some on ¼ notes, some on 8th notes, some on 16th notes.

You can change pitches through this.

Look ahead to Part 8

Part 8

We're been pulsing together for quite a while.

Now, let it break down a bit.

Like Part 5 but with that = 80 internalized

God, what does that even mean?

Drifting away.

It doesn't mean it's particularly loud, just rather chaotic.

Watch the viola: they'll cue the end.

Everyone stop together,

But let it ring.

Piano

Don't wait too long to do the coda...

Part 9

Something of a coda...

Slowly, alternating pitches, about 4 seconds each (it ebbs and flows)

Piccolo

Piano

Everyone Else

Long tones, overlapping

ppp

The musical score for Part 9 consists of three staves. The Piccolo staff (top) contains a series of eighth notes, alternating between two pitches (F# and G#) in a descending sequence. The Piano staff (middle) contains a series of eighth notes, alternating between two pitches (F# and G#) in a descending sequence. The Everyone Else staff (bottom) contains a long note marked *ppp* (pianissimo) with a long horizontal line above it, indicating a long tone. The text 'Long tones, overlapping' is written above the Everyone Else staff. The score ends with a double bar line and a fermata symbol.