



Miggy Torres

*Syadrada*  
सयाद्वाद

for string quartet

## Performance Notes:

### General

- All trills are semitone trills unless otherwise indicated.
- All accidentals apply only to the note they precede EXCEPT in the case of tied notes and immediate repetition.
- Many passages in the piece are quite quiet. Depending on the venue, the work may require light to moderate amplification.
- Dashed vertical lines between figures on staves denote events occurring simultaneously.
- Explicit tempo markings and time durations should be approximated as accurately as possible.
- Grace notes should be played as fast as possible, and always before the “downbeat” of the note they precede.

### I. In some ways it is

- There should be no discernible pitch in the air noises. The *rauschen* on the higher strings will simply sound brighter.
- I hesitate to give an explicit tempo here because it should be played as fast as possible. However, I will suggest at least ♩ = 136 as a starting point. ♩ = 180 or faster would be *ideal*.

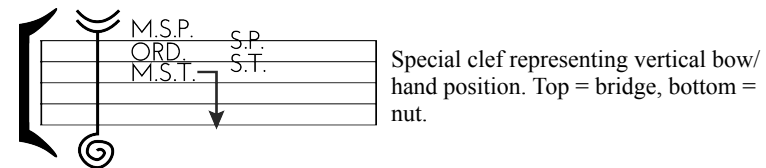
## Explanation of Symbols:

s.p., m.s.p. sul ponticello, molto sul ponticello  
 s.t., m.s.t. sul tasto, molto sul tasto  
 ord. default bow position (cancels out sul pont., etc.)

c.l., c.l.b. col legno, col legno battuto  
 norm. bow with the hair (cancels out col legno)

o.p. overpressure  
 n.p. normal pressure

l.v. let vibrate



**ORD** default bow position

### II. In some ways it is not

- All notes with headless stems in this movement should be articulated.

### III. In some ways it is and it is not

- The notes with headless stems in this movement should NOT be rearticulated. They're just there to represent the decay of of the pizzicati and the duration of the glissandi.
- The parenthetical notes at the ends of glissandi represent general target pitches. They don't need to be exact.

### IV. In some ways it is and it is indescribable

- The strange clef in this movement represents the vertical bow position on the strings of each instrument (see below).
- Letter A in the violin part denotes circular bowing. Apply pressure at upbows and downbows, flautando as you go up/down the neck. Sound should be present throughout the gesture with a slight accent each time the bow changes direction.
- For the sake of rhythmic clarity, the quarter-note diamond noteheads have been colored in. Treat them as normal diamond noteheads, representing a light touching of the string.
- Tremolandi in this movement ARE measured 16ths.

### V. In some ways it is not and it is indescribable

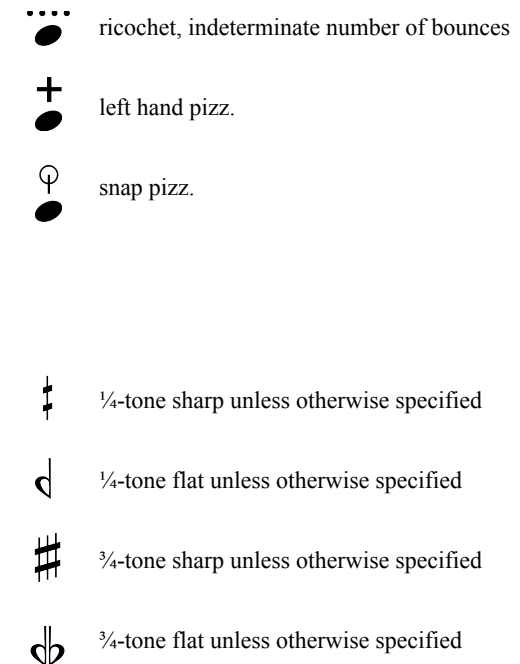
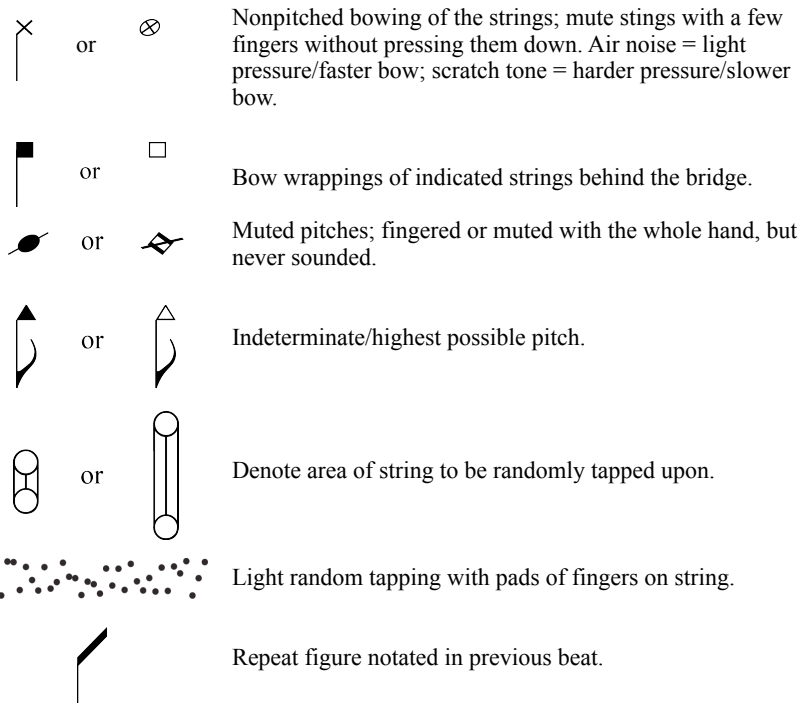
- Though parts are provided, players may choose to read from score due to the intense interlocking nature of this movement.
- **LARGE** dynamic/technique markings ABOVE the staff apply to ALL instruments. Dynamic/technique markings in *small* font-size apply only to the staff with which they're associated (as normal).
- There should be small accents at the beginning of each beamed group. Accent articulation marks denote even greater accents.

### VI. In some ways it is, it is not, and it is indescribable

- The number of cents sharp or flat specified for each microtone are given relative to even temperament. Perhaps this is slightly pedantic; you don't need to count exact cents, per se. The notes given are part of the overtone structure of whatever note the cello is playing. The cents sharp/flat are provided to give you a rough idea of HOW sharp or flat a note should be (e.g. about a quarter-tone, about a sixth tone, etc.). In the end, however, it will be best to listen carefully for the notated pitch in the overtone structure of the cello and tune to that.

### VII. In some ways, it is indescribable

- Put the bow down and use only your fingers. The vertical clef here represents where you're touching/fingering the string(s) indicated on the staff below.
- The provided time durations in this movement are only *approximate minimum* durations. The movement should be played very freely, the performer taking each section longer, if they so choose.



## Special Techniques

- ① Create a gravelly, granular sound as the wood of the bow scrapes slowly against the rosin/string. Like a yeti screaming in a snowstorm on an AM radio.
- ② Fully depress fingered string, allowing bow to touch adjacent open strings. Fingered string should not be bowed.
- ③ While bowing *sul tasto* scratch tones, carefully bring the left hand around to the other side of the finger board, preparing to barre a touch-5th harmonic across all the open strings. It is okay if during this transition, a little bit of tone is heard from the strings as they will be briefly unmuted. Still, bowing higher up on the fingerboard and applying a bit more pressure/slow bow should minimize the amount of tone. After the short section using the touch-5th harmonics, return the left hand hand to the normal side of the fingerboard and re-mute the strings by letter B.
- ④ *Col legno battuto* ricochet on the given pitch and when the bow stops bouncing continue bowing *col legno tratto* to get a gritty, granular sound as the wood scrapes against the rosin.
- ⑤ Slowly rotate the bow from *col legno* to *norm.* (wood to hair). In roughly the middle of this action, you will be bowing with BOTH the wood and the hair touching the strings simultaneously.
- ⑥ Slowly rotate the bow from *norm.* to *col legno* while bowing. As stated above, during this transition you will briefly be bowing BOTH with the wood and the hair. Continue bowing *col legno* to get a gritty, granular sound as wood scrapes against rosin.
- ⑦ Put down the bow. There should be a fair amount of rosin on your fingers by now, but if there's not, get some rosin on your fingers. Tap the indicated string with the indicated hand extremely lightly creating micro-puloffs. The notes in boxes represent a repeated rhythmic regular tapping on the G string with a single finger. The rest of the tapping should be extremely quick and random.
- ⑧ Tap lightly and rapidly on the string as described above, but this time with fingers 1-4. There should NOT be a definite pulse as in the section immediately prior, rather it should sound like a constant random tapping, as rain on the roof of a car. The motion should be similar to that of someone typing rapidly on a computer keyboard. Always quiet—try to hear the beauty and kaleidoscopic changes in the color of each tap as you play.
- ⑨ Bring the left hand around to the other side of the fingerboard for a barre harmonic glissando.
- ⑩ Return the left hand to the normal side of the fingerboard. Lightly mute the indicated strings; don't press them all the way down.

## Composer's Note

*Syādvāda* is a kaleidoscopic journey through the multiplicity of perception.

The concept of *Syādvāda*—or *qualified assertion*—is a branch of a part of Jain philosophy called *Anekāntavāda* or non-absolutism. *Anekāntavāda* teaches that, though a single point of view can reveal some truth, one can only have a proper perception of reality if one considers it from many points of view. Moreover, one can never hope to have a total and absolute understanding of something, as objects bear an infinite multiplicity of qualities, which then in turn behave with infinite modes of existence. *Anekāntavāda* is often illustrated though the parable of The Blind Men and the Elephant.

Three blind men touch an elephant to learn what kind of creature it is. One touches its leg and says, “Ah! An elephant is like a tree!” Another touches its tusk and says, “Ah! An elephant is like a spear!” The last touches its trunk and says, “Ah! An elephant is like a rope!” All of them understood partial truths about the elephant, but none of them had the complete picture. Only with their descriptions combined could a more accurate depiction of the elephant be painted.

In the same way, we as humans have evolved to possess an extremely narrow and specific set of senses, helpful to the survival of our genes in a very specific place in the universe. In other words, we see the world in ways that were useful to us in the past, and—despite building other tools that aid our perception: telescopes, seismometers, microphones, etc.—we cannot hope to create a complete description of reality (at the time of writing this, for example, physicists have yet to reconcile gravity as described by general relativity with quantum mechanics, though both points of view give very accurate descriptions of how the world otherwise behaves).

*Syādvāda*, a offshoot of *Anekāntavāda*, aims to help people cultivate ultimate empathy with the world around them by qualifying every assertion with the Sanskrit word “*syāt*” which translates roughly as the phrase “in some ways.” This gives rise to a sevenfold method of evaluating something in regard to its qualities of being—and modes of existence therein. These seven propositions, or *saptibhaṅgī*, are:

- I. In some ways it is.
- II. In some ways it is not.
- III. In some ways it is and it is not
- IV. In some ways it is and it is indescribable
- V. In some ways it is not and it is indescribable
- VI. In some ways it is, it is not, and it is indescribable
- VIII. In some ways it is indescribable

It is important to state that “indescribability” in this case refers to a contradictory simultaneous affirmation and negation of an idea (i.e., in some ways it *at once* is and it is not), as opposed to the third of the *saptibhaṅgī* which affirms and negates a quality *consecutively*. In some ways, the fourth, fifth, and sixth *saptibhaṅgī* can be viewed as nested forms of the others, with the indescribable component referring to the affirmation or negation itself of whatever one is evaluating; things get complex very quickly.

This piece, *Syādvāda*, seeks to explore this complexity through cyclical yet non-repetitive metamorphic textures and modular fractal forms. The piece draws upon a wide range of “vantage points” such as the Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) phenomenon, the Spectral movement, and the techniques of composers as diverse as Franco Donatoni and Charlie Parker, among others. In addition, different parts of this piece were composed in different parts of the world: Valencia, Spain; Ithaca, NY; Williamstown, MA; West Hartford, CT; and my home in South Windsor.

—MT





II. In Some Ways It's Not

Violin II **Always kaleidoscopic** ♩ = 400 *con sord., sul pont.*

Viola *con sord., sempre sul IV, sul pont.* **pp** *delicato, dolce*

**p** *choppy, guttural*

Vln. II **A**

Vla. **I**

Vln. II **B**

Vla. **I** **pp** *delicato*

**pp** *guttural* **p**

IV, excessive zig-zagging portamento  
ord. → s.p.





III. In some ways it is and it is not

Chaotic, aggressive, noisy, abrasive, ♩ = 120

senza sord., sul pont., non vib.

let cello fade

Violin II

tr

gliss. (#)

sfz

7

3

n subito

mute strings quickly with hand

Viola

tr

gliss.

sfz

n subito

mute strings quickly with hand

Violoncello

bow wrappings of indicated strings

3

3

3

3

gliss.

ff

ppp



3.5"

let cello fade

5"

A

B

Vln. II *sfz* *n subito* *tr* mute strings quickly with hand  
 Vln. I *sfz* *n subito* *tr* mute strings quickly with hand  
 Vla. *sfz* *n subito* *tr* mute strings quickly with hand  
 Vc. arco *sfz* l.h. pizz., gliss up as before, let sound die away *ff* *ppp* *sfz non dim.*



Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*mf* (*mp* *p* *pp*) *mf* (*mp*) *p*

*mp* *p* *mf* (*mp*) *p*

*mf* (*mp*) *p* r.h. finger/ pluck/slide *mf* (*mp*) *p* *f* pizz. normale

**G**

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

arco, sul pont. *sffz* ord. *sfp* *tr* harmonic trill continue trilling touch-fourth artificial harmonic whilst sliding upward to an indeterminate pitch *ppp*

arco, sul pont. *sffz* ord. *sfp* *tr* harmonic trill continue trilling touch-fourth artificial harmonic whilst sliding upward to an indeterminate pitch *ppp*

arco *sffz* pizz. *pp* *tr* arco, ord., harmonic trill continue trilling touch-fourth artificial harmonic whilst sliding upward to an indeterminate pitch *ppp*

# Syadvada

IV. In some ways it is and it is indescribable

MIGGY TORRES

Granular, freely with each gesture

15-20" 2" 15-20" 2" **A**  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\text{♩} = 50$  *accel.*  $\text{♩} = 240$

① col legno tratto, long, use whole bow

Violin I

ppp mp ppp

ppp mp ppp quasi jet-engine passing overhead

p

mute all other strings, col legno battuto, ricochet

Violoncello

p (ppp)

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$  (new  $\text{♩} = 120$ )  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\text{♩} = 240$   $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$  (new  $\text{♩} = 120$ )  $\frac{2}{4}$  **B**  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

12 *accel.*

Vln. I

mf

mf ppp

ppp mf ppp

Vc.

ORD

III arco, norm.

III II

IV III

ppp mp ppp mf ppp mf ppp

28  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\boxed{C}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{2}$   $\frac{5}{4}$

Vln. I

Vc.

mf ppp mf ppp mf f mf

III II

II III

III

II, c.l.b., ricochet

arco, norm.

mf (>) (ppp) ppp mf

② f mf

② f mf

40  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{2}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

Vln. I

Vc.

f p pp ppp

f p ppp

c.l.b., ricochet, mute other strings

mf ppp

Toccata preciso ♩ = 360

Violin I  $\frac{3}{4}$  scratch tone, sul tasto  $\frac{9}{16}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{9}{16}$  (5+4)  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{15}{16}$  (3+4+5+3) (non stacc.)  $\frac{3}{8}$  (stacc.)  $\frac{16}{16}$  (4+3+4+5) (s.t.)  $\xrightarrow{\text{tr}}$  m.s.p.  $\frac{3}{4}$

Violin II scratch tone, sul tasto  $p$  (non stacc.) (stacc.)

Viola scratch tone, sul tasto  $p$  (non stacc.) (stacc.)

**A**  $\frac{3}{4}$  ③ s.t.  $\frac{17}{16}$  (4+4+4+5)  $\frac{4}{4}$  III II I IV (s.t.)  $\xrightarrow{\text{tr}}$  m.s.p.  $\frac{11}{16}$  (4+3+4)  $\frac{9}{16}$  (5+4)  $\frac{9}{16}$  (4+5)  $\frac{8}{16}$  (2+6)  $\frac{7}{16}$  (3+4)  $\frac{12}{16}$

Vln. I  $mf$  (mf)  $pp$   $mf$   $pp$   $f$   $mp$   $f$

Vln. II  $mf$  (mf)  $pp$   $mf$   $mp$   $f$

Vla.  $mf$  (mf)  $pp$   $mf$   $mp$   $f$

③ While bowing sul tasto scratch tones, carefully bring the left hand around to the other side of the fingerboard, preparing to barre a touch-5th harmonic across all the open strings. It is okay if during this transition, a little bit of tone is heard from the strings, as they will be briefly unmuted. Still, bowing higher up on the fingerboard and applying a bit more pressure/slow bow should minimize the amount of tone. After the short section using the touch-5th harmonics, return the left hand to the normal side of the fingerboard and re-mute the strings by Letter B.

**B**  $\frac{12}{16}$  (5+5+2)  $\frac{11}{16}$  (4+4+3) ord.  $\frac{9}{16}$  (5+4)  $\frac{12}{16}$  (3+4+5)  $\frac{7}{16}$  (3+4)  $\frac{10}{16}$  (4+4+2) **C**  $\frac{17}{16}$  (4+4+4+5) s.t.  $\frac{12}{16}$

Vln. I  $pp$  dolce ord.  $pp$  dolce (s.t.)  $\xrightarrow{\text{tr}}$  m.s.p.  $pp$   $f$

Vln. II  $pp$  dolce ord. (s.t.)

Vla.  $pp$  dolce ord. (s.t.)  $\xrightarrow{\text{tr}}$  m.s.p.  $pp$   $f$





VI. In some ways it is, it is not, and it is indescribable

Refractive, prismatic, iridescent, ♩ = 52

Violin I **31**  
**32**

Violin II **31**  
**32**

Viola **31**  
**32**

Violoncello **31**  
**32**

Violin I: *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp* *ppp* *f* *mp* *ppp*

Violin II: *mf* *p* *pp* *ppp* *ppp* *f* *p* *ppp*

Viola: *f* *p* *p* *pp* *ppp* *f* *p* *ppp*

Violoncello: *ff* *ppp* *f* *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *f* *ppp*

Annotations: *II, sempre non vib.*, *sempre non vib.*, *l.v. don't snap*, *(ord.)*, *s.p.*, *ord.*, *bow the actual bridge (air noise)*, *G = 7th partial of cello's A (-31 cents)*, *D = 11th partial of cello's A (+51 cents)*, *F = 7th partial of cello's G (-31 cents)*

Vln. I **8**  
**4**

Vln. II **8**  
**4**

Vla. **8**  
**4**

Vc. **8**  
**4**

Vln. I: *pp* *non cresc.* *ancora pp* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *pp* *f*

Vln. II: *pp* *non cresc.* *ancora pp* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *pp* *f*

Vla.: *pp* *non cresc.* *ancora pp* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *pp* *f*

Vc.: *pp* *non cresc.* *ancora pp* *ppp* *ppp* *pp* *pp* *f*

Annotations: *slow gliss.*, *punta d'arco, gritty and granular*, *C = one octave + 11th partial of cello's G (+51 cents)*, *G = 11th partial of cello's D (+51 cents)*, *III IV*, *II, l.v.*, *(ord.)*, *s.p.*, *m.s.p.*

**3/4** **4/4** **4/4** **2/4**

**Vln. I**  
 mute all strings quickly with hand  
*ff*  
 D#  
E  
 C = 7th partial of cello's D (-31 cents)  
 B = 13th partial of cello's D (-59 cents)  
 press bow hard against strings at the frog, twist slowly while bowing slightly vertically for granular sound.  
*p*  
*mf*

**Vln. II**  
 mute all strings quickly with hand  
*ff*  
 B = 13th partial of cello's D (-59 cents)  
 C = 7th partial of cello's D (-31 cents)  
 press bow hard against strings at the frog, twist slowly while bowing slightly vertically for granular sound.  
*p*  
*ppp*

**Vla.**  
 mute all strings quickly with hand  
*ff*  
 G = 11th partial of D (+51 cents)  
 press bow hard against strings at the frog, twist slowly while bowing slightly vertically for granular sound.  
*p*  
*ppp*

**Vc.**  
 mute all strings quickly with hand  
*ff*  
 G = 11th partial of D (+51 cents)  
 I  
II  
 press bow hard against strings at the frog, twist slowly while bowing slightly vertically for granular sound.  
*p*

**4/4** **4/4** **4/4** **3/4** **6/4**

**Vln. I**  
 (ord.) → m.s.p. ord.  
*pp* *ppp* *pp*  
*f* quasi throat-singing *p*  
 F = 11th partial of cello's C (+51 cents)  
 Bb = octave + 7th partial (-31 cents)  
 m.s.p., highest possible pitch

**Vln. II**  
 3 3  
*ppp* *pp*  
 (ord.) → s.p. ord.  
*f* quasi throat-singing *p*  
 A = 13th partial of cello's C (-59 cents)  
 m.s.p., highest possible pitch

**Vla.**  
 pizz., IV, l.v. arco  
 (ord.) → s.p. ord.  
*mf* *ppp* *pp*  
*f* quasi throat-singing *p*  
 6 3  
 m.s.p., highest possible pitch

**Vc.**  
 (ord.) → s.p. ord.  
 IV, harm. gliss  
*ppp* *pp*  
*f* quasi throat-singing *p*  
 bow the actual bridge (air noise, no tone)  
*ppp* *mf* *ppp*

VII. In some ways it is indescribable

Delicate, fragile

Become aware of sounds

c. 13"

give silence space

c. 10"

c. 10"

c. 13"

Right Hand

Violin I

Left Hand

7

8

9

pp

ppp

pp, no definite pulse

"gliss."

barre harmonic gliss.

♩ = c. 69

c. 10"

c. 10"

c. 15"

c. 10"

c. 7"

move up and down strings freely

mp

pp

ppp

pppp

slide normally to indeterminate pitch

10

muted, lightly

mute with one finger but continue tapping with other fingers of left hand

10

mp

pp

ppp

pppp

slide normally to indeterminate pitch

muted, lightly

mute with one finger but continue tapping with other fingers of left hand