

Boštík

for piccolo (doubling flute), horn, violin, cello, and contrabass

Jennie Gottschalk

PROGRAM NOTES:

In November, 2007, I spent a day at the Veletržní Palác, a building of the Czech National Gallery that displays 19th, 20th, and 21st-century art. That evening, I realized that one painting in particular was most present in my memory. I returned to the museum the next day to try to discover why. As I wound through the large space leading up to this piece, I began thinking about the coexistence of clarity and obscurity. In particular, I was thinking of statements that are fundamentally simple but complex or variable in execution. I turned the corner and found *Velké Ryhování* (Large Grooves, 1978), by Václav Bostík. It was described as a "light-modelled construction of parallel planes." I have not yet found a reproduction of this work, though I will include a few links to related works by Bostík.

http://www.woxart.com/aukce_img/9/large/121.jpg

http://www.artnet.com/Artists/LotDetailPage.aspx?lot_id=9001B61DE6EEB2797634854F289E0000

<http://www.bienale-plzen.cz/fotogalerie/symposium/full/5.jpg>

At that time, I was trying to formulate an idea for a new piece. This painting brought my compositional intentions into focus. The planes of the painting are similar to each other, and yet distinct in their spontaneity of execution. The form of each plane is clear and simple, and yet it is unique in its texture. Each of the five sections of *Bostík* contains one chord, which is treated as a set of planes. Each instrument conveys a distinct plane: one note of the chord. The instructions to each player are designed to generate instabilities of rhythm, pitch, and audibility. The written pitches are anchor points, String players are often asked to perform the same action simultaneously, making the textural and/or rhythmic instabilities of the performance technique more apparent.

Each action within a section receives a box of the same size, regardless of the duration it is likely to fill. The durations of and proportions between actions are open to the immediate circumstances of their performance.

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

General:

The blocks represent complete motions, rather than units of time. Sounds are continuous whenever boxes are adjacent. When sounds overlap, the placement of the second box reflects the placement of the overlapping attack within the initial gesture.

Each section is numbered in the top left corner. Allow a break between each numbered section for the new set of players to prepare. (Allow a short break between 1a and 1b, 5a and 5b.)

Conductor:

Instructions are in gray, vertical boxes.

Only the attacks are to be synchronized between string instruments. The internal rhythms and release points of motions which occur in the same time-block will vary. When release points are different, cue the next entrance at the first release point.

In section 5, circular bowing is simultaneous between all strings. Show this motion visually, so that the violin, cello, and bass play with a similar, simultaneous bowstroke.

Horn:

Sounding pitches are written.

In section 3, the singing will gradually destabilize the tone. It is not important that the E be reached, or that the F be heard after the entrance, but rather that a complex series of multiphonics be produced.

Strings:

Duration is determined by bow length and bow speed. Do not limit duration by using too small a portion of the bow.

All harmonics are natural harmonics. Play at the highest node, so that a stopped pitch would match the harmonic.

Circular bows begin and end at the star.

Bass: Sounding pitches are written.

In sections 3, 4, and 5, left finger and bow move proportionally.

Piccolo/flute:

Piccolo notes are written an octave below sounding pitch.

Flute sounds as written.

1a

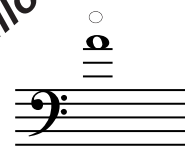
piccolo



violin



cello



coordinate the starting points of motion, not of sound

*enter without attack,
using weak air pressure*

*place and draw bow
slowly and lightly
(indistinct attack)*



*place and draw bow
slowly and lightly
(indistinct attack)*



let all three sounds meet

cue start of releasing motions, and wait for sound to dissipate

*very slowly pull mouthpiece
from playable range*

slowly pull bow from string

slowly pull bow from string

1b

piccolo



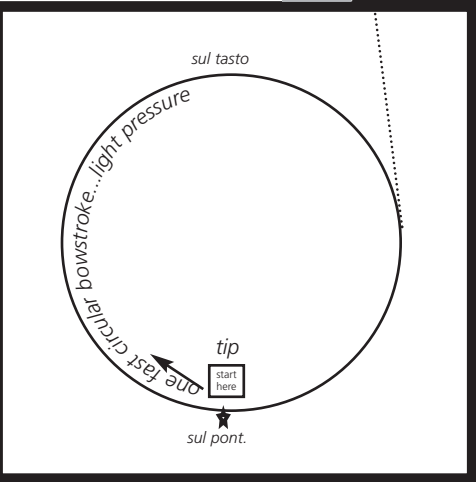
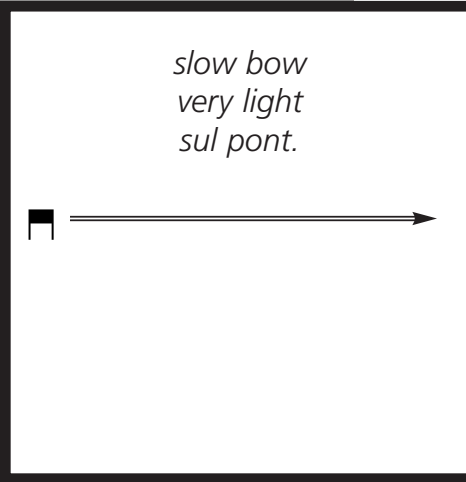
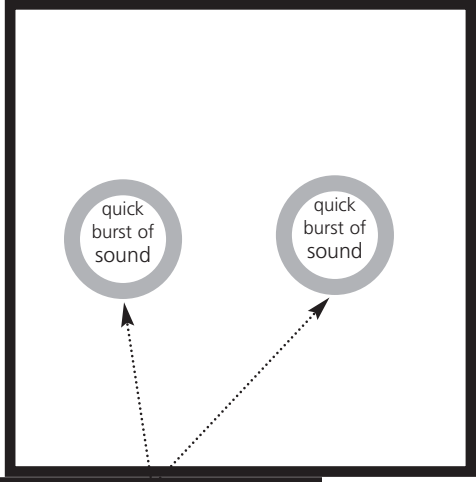
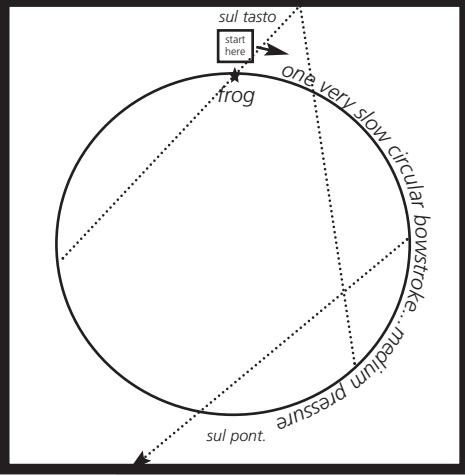
violin



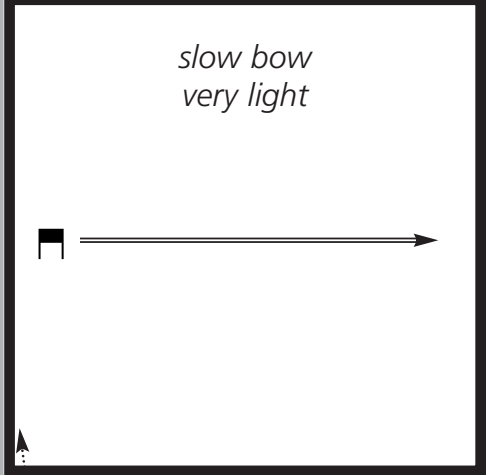
cello



cue piccolo and cello entrances according to violin's position in circular bow



cue violin according to cello position



2
flute

one full breath
whisper tone

violin

cello

bass

synchronize the first attack only

very fast bow

ricochet



very fast bow

ricochet



very fast bow

ricochet



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very fast bow

ricochet



very fast bow

ricochet

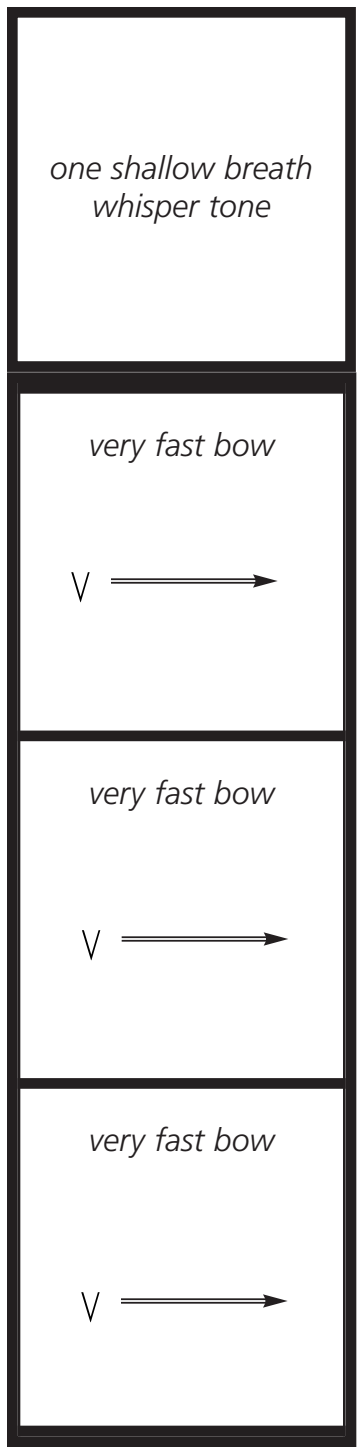


very fast bow

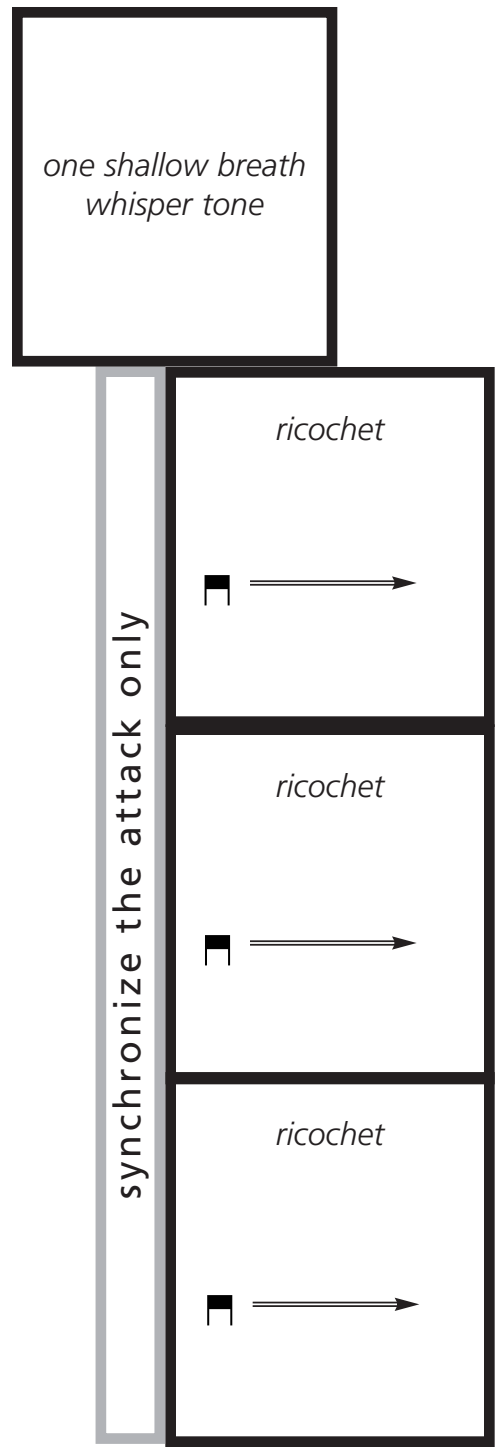
ricochet



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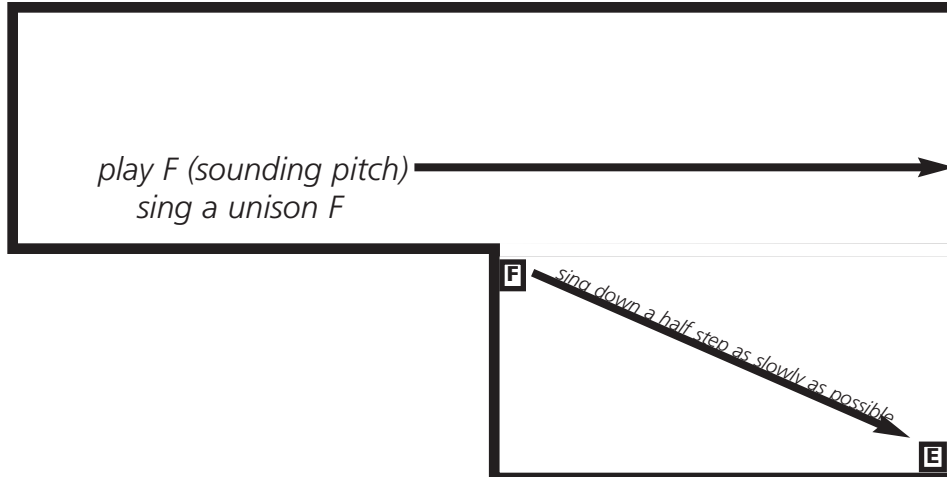


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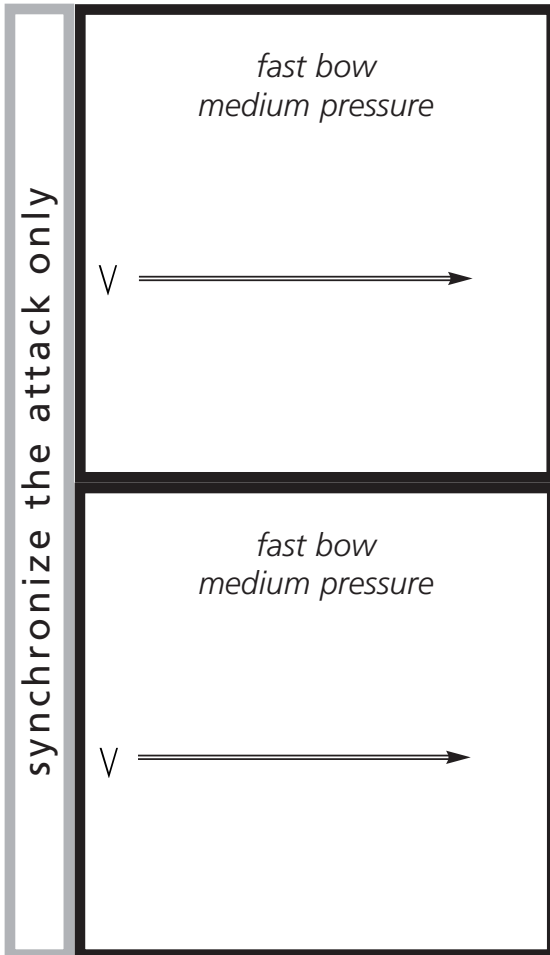
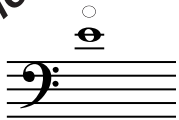


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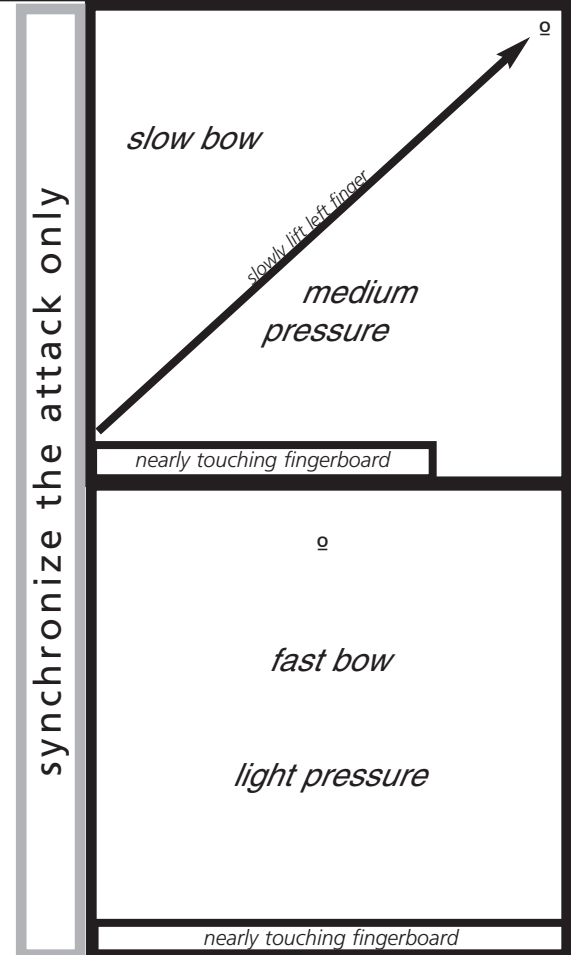
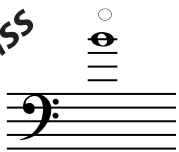
horn



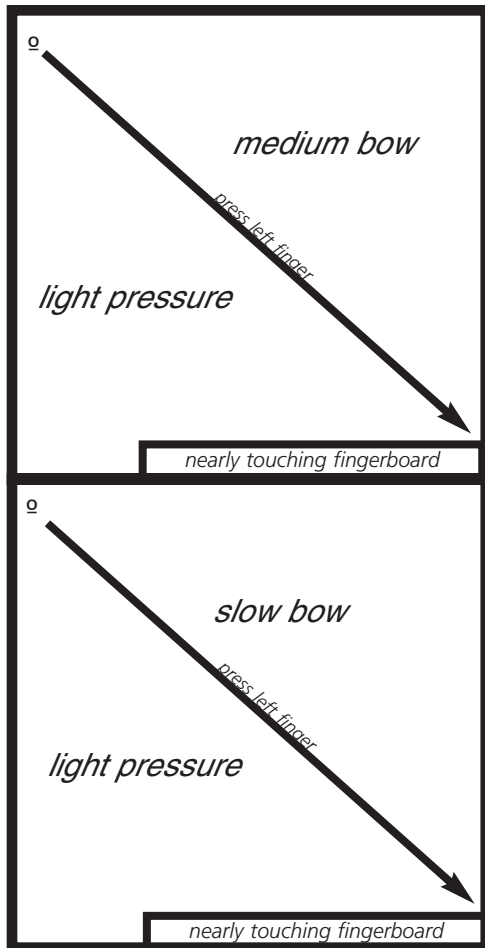
cello



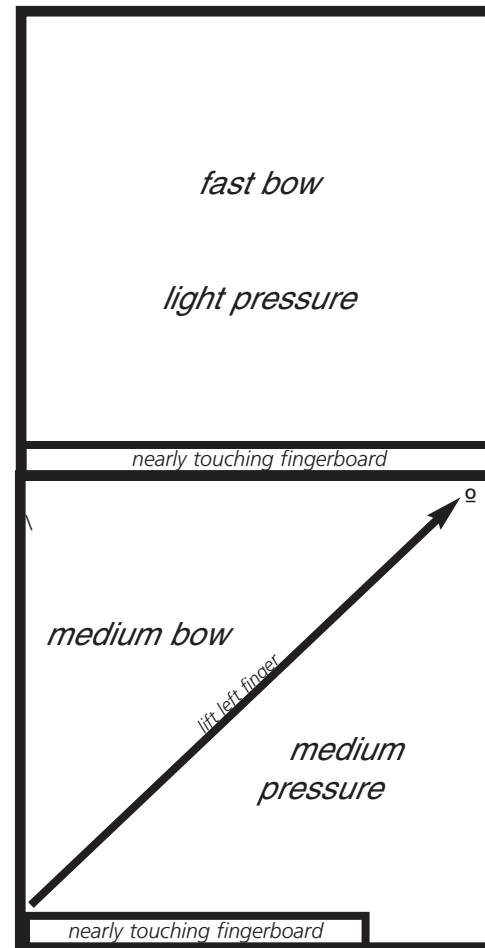
bass



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4
piccolo

one shallow breath,
rapidly exhaled

one shallow breath,
rapidly exhaled

horn

cue when violin finishes

rapid crescendo

let the note break

violin

synchronize the attack only

ricochet

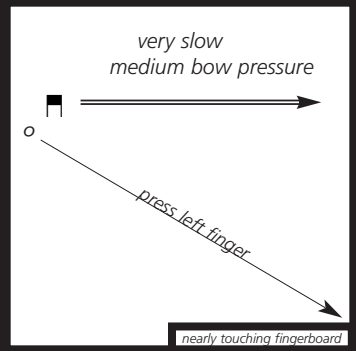
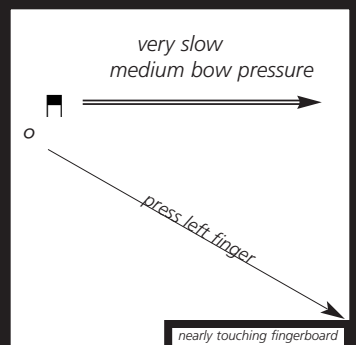
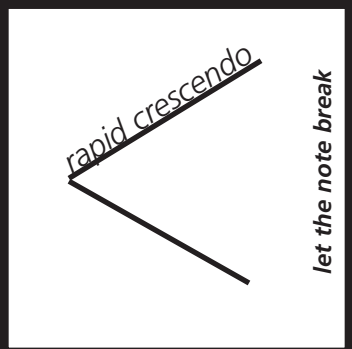
ricochet

synchronize the attack when horn note breaks

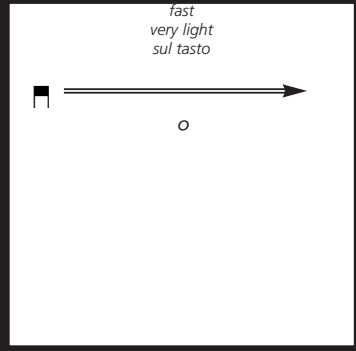
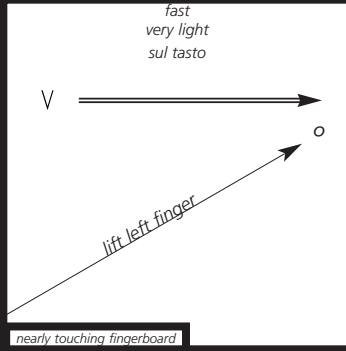
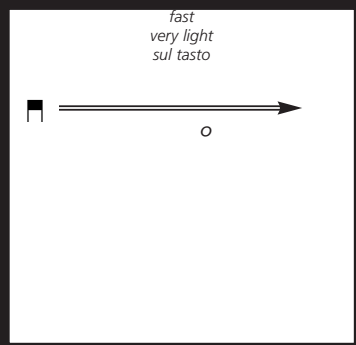
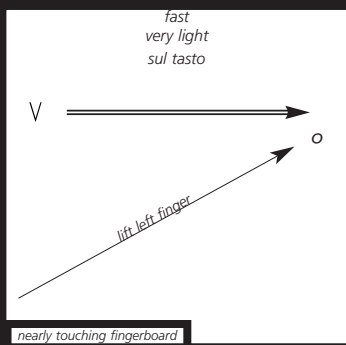
very fast
very light

very fast
very light

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synchronize the attack when horn note breaks



5a

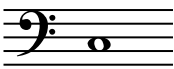
horn



violin



cello



bass



coordinate the starting points of motion, not of sound

*enter without attack,
using weak air pressure*

*place and draw bow
slowly and lightly
(indistinct attack)*

*place and draw bow
slowly and lightly
(indistinct attack)*

let all three sounds meet

cue start of releasing motions, and wait for sound to dissipate

*very slowly pull mouthpiece
from playable range*

slowly pull bow from string

slowly pull bow from string

5b

horn



weak air pressure

cue at halfway point

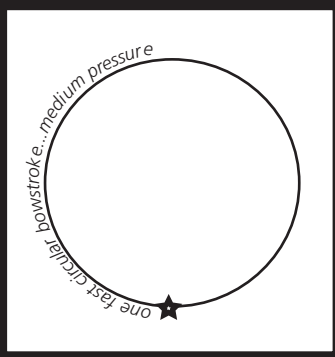
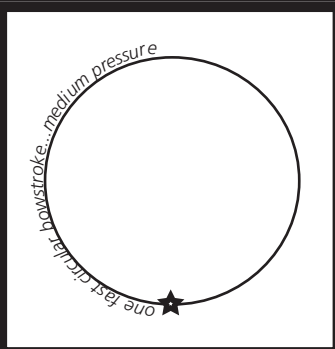
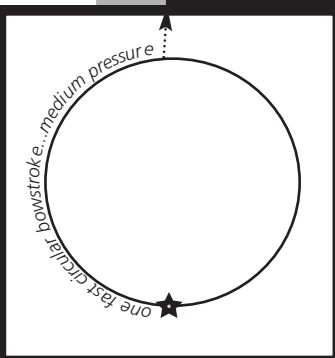
weak air pressure

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violin



draw circle in the air for all strings to follow



synchronize the attack only

