

AMERICAN**VIOLA**SOCIETY

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**THREE DUOS  
ON PERSIAN DASTGÂHS**

FOR TWO VIOLAS

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Jon Jeffrey Grier  
(b. 1953)



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**AVS PUBLICATIONS 075**

# Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

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for Two Violas (2021)

## Program Notes

The concept of *dastgâh* in Persian classical music is not directly analogous to the Western concept of scale or mode, though they can – within limits – be written in Western notation as such. The system more resembles other ancient musics of Greece, Arabia, and India, and Persian music includes significant influences from all of these. Much like an Indian *raga* or Arabic *maqam*, each *dastgâh* is a pitch set with a lot of musical baggage: a finalis, a secondary ending tone (*ist*), a starting pitch (*âqâz*), an established set of melodic motives used in improvisation (*guša*), and rules of modulating to other *dastgâhs* or related sub-modes (*âs*). Some of the *dastgâhs* have generally agreed upon expressive modes for which they are considered appropriate, and several include pitches that are a quarter-tone flat (*koron*) in Western measurement; these can be varied somewhat by the performer. Some *dastgâhs* are much more distinguished by their *gušas* than by their pitch content. Persian melody tends to be busy, with much improvised ornamentation. Meters are variable, with much use of 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 5/8, 6/8, and 7/8 in various beat groupings.

This music is admittedly more Western than Persian. The *dastgâhs* are treated essentially in the Western manner, as scales offering limitless options. Quarter-flats are treated as Western half-step flats. The melodic lines do not always have the character of improvisation and there is plenty of counterpoint not typical of Persian music. Many musical choices have been made for only their inherent appeal. On the other hand, the pitch content of the modes has been adhered to rather strictly and each movement strives for a mood that would be considered appropriate to that mode in Persian musical thinking. Also authentic is a penchant in melodic lines for repeated notes, repetitions of short motives, and general busy-ness. Frequent *glissandi* and emphases on dissonant pitches are loosely analogous to Persian practices.

**I. Lamentation Homâyûn** – The *dastgâh Homâyûn* in Persian music is used to elicit feelings of deep mourning or pathos in the listener. It is generally spelled G - A $\frac{1}{4}\flat$  - B - C - D - E $\flat$  - F - G; here the A is a  $\frac{1}{2}$  step flat, yielding a scale sometimes called phrygian dominant. Some common Persian meters are used. Here I imagine a state of deep sorrow alternating between quiet but obsessive brooding and convulsive outbursts.

**II. Reverie Navâ** – The *dastgâh Navâ* is generally spelled D - E $\frac{1}{4}\flat$  - F - G - A - B $\flat$  - C - D. With E $\flat$  as the *ist*, F as the *âqâz*, and G as the finalis, implications of lydian, mixolydian, and aeolian modes are possible. In Persian music the *dastgâh Navâ* is expressive of serenity and introspection, which is the intent here. This movement is the most thoroughly Persian in character; many melodies begin on F (*âqâz*) and have an insistent, ornamented character reminiscent of the Persian singing style. Most lines cadence on G (*finalis*) or E $\flat$  (*ist*), and it has a typical A-B-A' form. Much of the outer (A) sections are in typical rhythm - nearly meter-less - and are designed to project the impression of two players improvising at once.

**III. Cajun Mâhûr** – The *dastgâh Mâhûr* is considered to be generally energetic and cheerful. It is typically spelled G - A - B - C - D - E - F - G - A - B $\frac{1}{4}\flat$ , with the B a quarter step lower in the upper octave; here of course the B is a full  $\frac{1}{2}$  step flat, making Western mixolydian and dorian modes on G possible. Many Persian compositions in *Mâhûr* include a modulation to *Delkaš*, a contrasting mode that adds A $\frac{1}{4}\flat$ ... which accounts for the occasional A $\flat$ 's employed here. This movement adheres to the cheerful stereotype of *Mâhûr*, with the frequent use of uninhibited figures & gestures reminiscent of Cajun or bluegrass fiddling, including a brief fiddlers' duel in bars 55-58.

## Interpretive Suggestions

**I. Lamentation Homâyûn** – Maintain a steady, unwavering and motoric pulse throughout. *Glissando* indications that connect only to the second note are *portamenti*, swooped up (or down) at the last instant. In bars 5, 8, and 39, make the *sul ponicelli* as thin and raspy as possible, even to the point of the fundamental disappearing. Many dynamic changes are stark and sudden; be sure to execute these precisely.

**II. Reverie Navâ** – In this movement the exact rhythms are less important than the general effect of highly ornamented chanting. The sense of pulse will be appropriately faint in the outer sections; bars 19-35 should sound more of a steady pulse. To imagine singing the melodic lines should help in effective performance; coordinating the parts may be facilitated by reading from the score. Be sure to make the most of dynamics and colorful effects; further improvised ornamentation is encouraged.

**III. Cajun Mâhûr** – Play in rock-steady meter throughout, with a let's-all-have-a-party enthusiasm. Energy is valued above elegant tone. Improvised *glissandi* and other ornamentations typical of the style are encouraged. The lead line trades off frequently between the parts, so take care to observe the dynamics that support this.

## About the Composer...

Jon Jeffrey Grier holds a B.A. from Kalamazoo College, where he studied composition with Lawrence Rackley, an M.M. in Composition from Western Michigan University, studying with Ramon Zupko, and an M.M. in Theory and a D.M.A. in Composition from the University of South Carolina, where he studied with Jerry Curry, Dick Goodwin and Sam Douglas. Jon taught Advanced Placement Music Theory and Music History at the Greenville Fine Arts Center, a magnet school of the arts in Greenville, SC from 1988 to 2019, where he was named Teacher of the Year three times. Awards include grants from ASCAP, the Surdna Foundation, the South Carolina Music Teachers Association, the Metropolitan Arts Council, and the Atlanta Chamber Players. Jon has also been a writer/keyboardist in various jazz & fusion ensembles since 1984. He lives in Greenville with wife Marion and Carolina dingo Roxanne.

**I. Lamentation Homâyûn**

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**Misterioso**  $\text{♩} = 100$ 

*pizz.*

*mp*

*p*

*arco*

**A.**

*f*

*mp*

*tr. fade to ---- sul pont.*

*ord.*

*pizz.*

*p*

*f*

*mp*

*tr. fade to ---- sul pont.*

*ord.*

*pizz.*

*p*

*f*

*p*

*arco*

*pizz.*

*mp*

*arco*

*f*

*p*

*f*

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

## I. Lamentation, p.2

11

13 B.

15

17

*f appassionato*

20

*f*

*p*

*f*

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

## I. Lamentation, p.3

[25]

[31]

[33] C.

[35]

fade to ----- sul pont.

[37]

fade to ----- sul pont.

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

## I. Lamentation, p.4

**D.**

40 *pizz.*

*p*

*pizz.*

*pp p*

43

*arco*

*pp*

*pizz.*

*arco*

*pp*

46

*p*

*pizz.*

*arco*

50

*f*

*pp*

*p*

*arco*

**E.**

54 *f*

*f*

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

## I. Lamentation, p.5

56

ff

p ff

58

59

60

pizz.

pp

strum

mp let open string ring

pizz.

pp

strum

mp let open string ring

about 3:25

## II. Reverie Navâ

**Molto rubato; about  $\text{J}=46$**

The musical score consists of five systems of music for two voices. The top system starts with a dynamic of  $p$  and instructions "espressivo e molto legato". It transitions through  $mf$  and  $ppp$ . The second system also begins with  $p$  and "espressivo e molto legato", followed by  $mf$  and  $ppp$ . The third system features eighth-note patterns with grace notes, starting with  $p$ , transitioning through  $mp$ ,  $ppp$ , and  $p$ . The fourth system continues with eighth-note patterns, starting with  $p$ , transitioning through  $mp$ ,  $ppp$ , and  $p$ . The fifth system, labeled "7", begins with  $tr$  (trill) and  $mp$ , transitioning through  $ppp$ ,  $p$ ,  $3$  (triplets),  $mf$ ,  $p$ ,  $f$ , and  $ppp$ . The sixth system continues with eighth-note patterns, starting with  $mp$ , transitioning through  $ppp$ ,  $p$ ,  $3$ ,  $mf$ ,  $p$ ,  $f$ , and  $ppp$ .

**10 A.**

The score continues with two systems of music. The top system, labeled "A.", begins with a dynamic of  $p$ , followed by  $mf$ ,  $p$ ,  $mf$ ,  $p$ ,  $f$ , and  $p$ . The bottom system follows a similar pattern of  $p$ ,  $mf$ ,  $p$ ,  $mf$ ,  $p$ , and  $f$ .

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

## Reverie, p.2

**13**

*p* ————— *mf* ————— *p*      *mf* ————— *ppp*

**15**

*pp* < *mp* > *pp* < *mp* > *pp*      *mf* ————— *f*

*pp* < *mp* > *pp* < *mp* > *pp*      *mf* ————— *f*

**17**

*p* ————— *mp* ————— *ppp*      *mp* ————— *pizz.*

*p* ————— *mp* ————— *ppp*      *mp*

**B.**

**20**

————— *ppp* ————— *ppp* ————— *ppp* ————— *ppp*

————— *ppp* ————— *ppp* ————— *ppp* ————— *ppp*

## Reverie, p.3

**22** *ritard...* **C. a tempo**

**23**

**24**

**26**

**28** *ritard...* **D. a tempo**

## Reverie, p.4

30

32

34

E.

36

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

Reverie, p.5

39

42

44

about 3:45

### **III. Cajun Mahur**

**Con spirito ♩=100**

The image shows six staves of musical notation for a solo instrument, likely cello or bassoon, arranged vertically. The music is in common time (indicated by 'C' with a '4'). The first two staves begin with dynamic *f*. The third staff features a melodic line with a dynamic *p* indicated by a horizontal line. The fourth staff continues the melodic line with a dynamic *p*. The fifth staff begins with a dynamic *f*, followed by *p*, *f*, and *f*. The sixth staff begins with *f*, followed by *mf*. The music includes various slurs, grace notes, and rests. Measure numbers 8, 11, and 14 are visible in the top left corner of their respective staves. A section labeled 'A.' is marked above the fifth staff.

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

## III. Mahur, p.2

17

f

mf

20

mf

f

23

f

f

27

p

pizz.

mp

30

f

p

arco

f

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

## III. Mahur, p.3

33

36

39

43

46

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

## III. Mahur, p.4

**49**

**52**

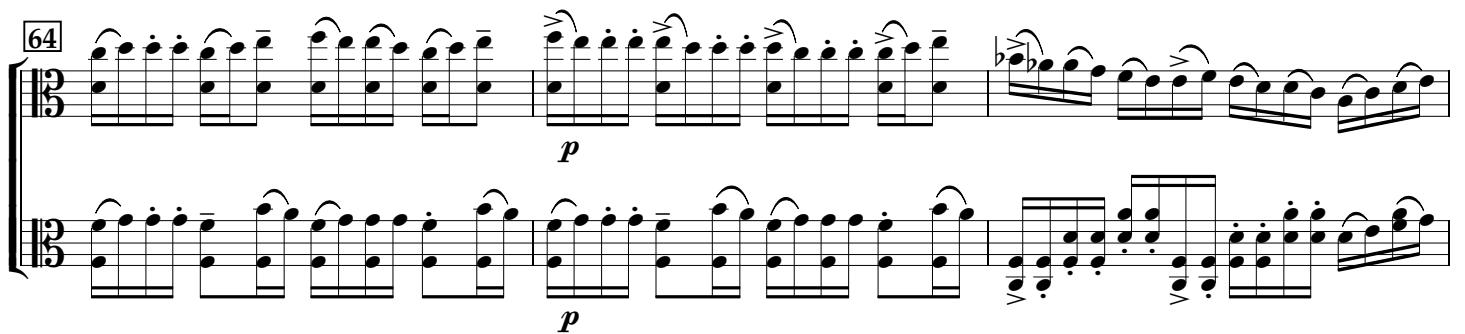
**55**

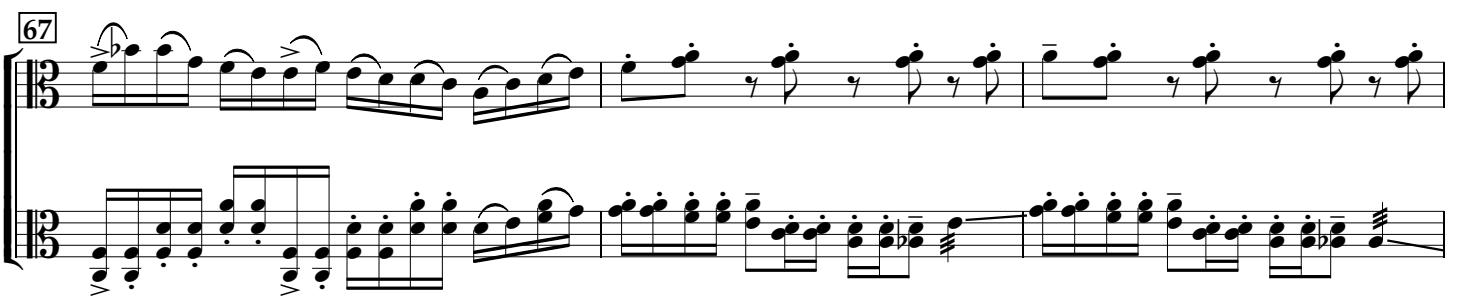
**58**

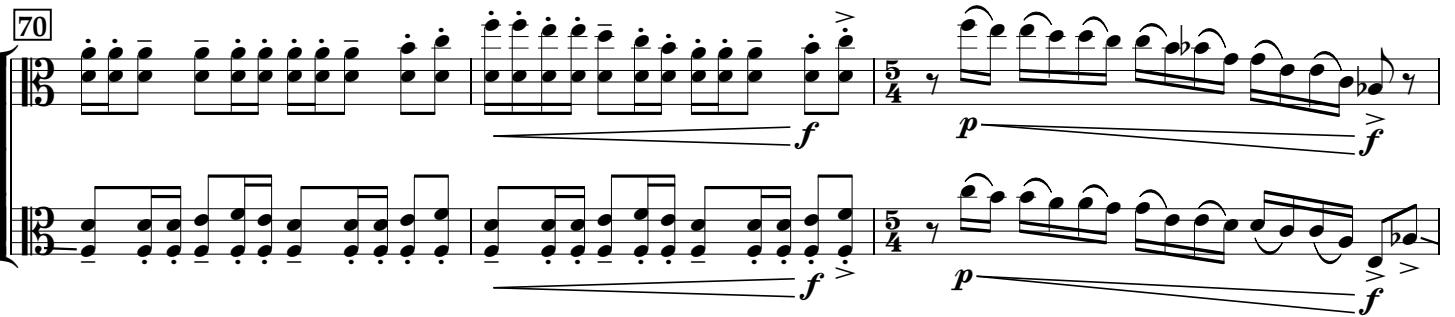
**61**

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

## III. Mahur, p.5

[64] 

[67] 

[70] 

**A1.**

[73] 

[76] 

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

## III. Mahur, p.6

79

82

85

88

91

*ritard...*

about 3:45

**Viola I****I. Lamentation Homâyûn**

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**Misterioso**  $\text{J}=100$ 

*pizz.*

**A.**

*arco*

*tr* *fade to ---- sul pont.* *ord.*

*pizz.*

*tr* *fade to ---- sul pont.* *ord.*

*arco*

*f*

*mp*

*f*

*p*

*f*

*pp*

*pp*

*3*

*9*

*11*

*13*

*15*

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

## Viola I, I. Lamentation, p.2

[17]

*f appassionato*

*p*

*f*

*p*

*f*

*p*

*f*

*C.*

*f*

*p*

*fade to ----- sul pont.*

*f*

*pp*

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

## Viola I, I. Lamentation, p.3

**D.**

[40] *pizz.* **D.** *p*

[43] *pp* *arco*

[46] *pizz.* *arco*

[50] *f* *pp* *p* *arco*

**E.**

[54] *f*

[56] *p* *ff*

[58]

[60] *pizz.* *strum* *mp* *let open string ring*

**Viola I****II. Reverie Navâ****Molto rubato; about  $\text{J}=46$** 

**1**

**p espressivo e molto legato**      **mf**      **ppp**

**2**

**p**      **mp**      **ppp**      **pp**      **p**      **mf**      **p**      **f**      **ppp**

**7**

**tr**      **mp**      **ppp**      **p**      **mf**      **pp**      **tr**      **p**      **f**      **ppp**

**10 A.**

**p**      **mf**      **pp**      **p**      **mf**      **pp**      **p**      **f**      **pp**

**13**

**p**      **mf**      **pp**      **p**      **mf**      **pp**      **p**      **ppp**

**15**

**pp**      **<mp>**      **pp**      **<mp>**      **pp**      **mf**      **pp**      **f**

**17**

**p**      **mp**      **pp**      **pp**      **mp**

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

Viola I, Reverie, p.2

[19] **B.**

Musical score for Viola I, Reverie, page 2, section B. The score consists of two staves. The top staff shows a series of eighth-note patterns with grace notes and slurs. The bottom staff shows a similar pattern with a different rhythmic scheme. Measure 19 ends with a fermata over the second note of the first measure of the next section.

[21]

*ritard...*

**21**

Musical score for Viola I, Reverie, page 2, section B, ending and section C. The score continues from the previous section. Measure 21 ends with a fermata over the second note of the first measure of section C. The tempo is marked *ritard...*. The section begins with a dynamic **f**, followed by **pp** and **mp**.

**23** **C. a tempo**

Musical score for Viola I, Reverie, page 2, section C. The score consists of two staves. The top staff shows a series of eighth-note patterns with grace notes and slurs. The bottom staff shows a similar pattern with a different rhythmic scheme. The section is marked **a tempo**.

**25**

Musical score for Viola I, Reverie, page 2, section C continuation. The score consists of two staves. The top staff shows a series of eighth-note patterns with grace notes and slurs. The bottom staff shows a similar pattern with a different rhythmic scheme.

**27**

*ritard...*

Musical score for Viola I, Reverie, page 2, section C ending and section D. The score continues from the previous section. Measure 27 ends with a fermata over the second note of the first measure of section D. The tempo is marked *ritard...*. The section begins with dynamics **ppp**, **f**, and **p**.

**29** **D. a tempo**

Musical score for Viola I, Reverie, page 2, section D. The score consists of two staves. The top staff shows a series of eighth-note patterns with grace notes and slurs. The bottom staff shows a similar pattern with a different rhythmic scheme. The section is marked **a tempo**. The section begins with dynamics **mf**, **tr**, **tr**, **ppp**, **mp**, and **pp**.

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

Viola I, Reverie, p.3

[31]

[33]

[36] E.

[39]

[42]

[44]

**Viola I****III. Cajun Mahur****Con spirito**  $\text{♩} = 100$ 

**3**

**6**

**9**

**A.**

**11**

**14**

**17**

**20**

**23**

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

Viola I, III. Mahur, p.2

[26]

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

Viola I, III. Mahur, p.3

[56]

[59]

[62]

[65]

[67]

[70]

A1.

[73]

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

Viola I, III. Mahur, p.4

75

76

77

78

83

86

88

91

**Viola II****I. Lamentation Homâyûn**

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**Misterioso**  $\text{J}=100$ 

Jon Jeffrey Grier

1 

2 

3 

4 

5 

6 

7 

8 

9 

10 

11 

12 

13 

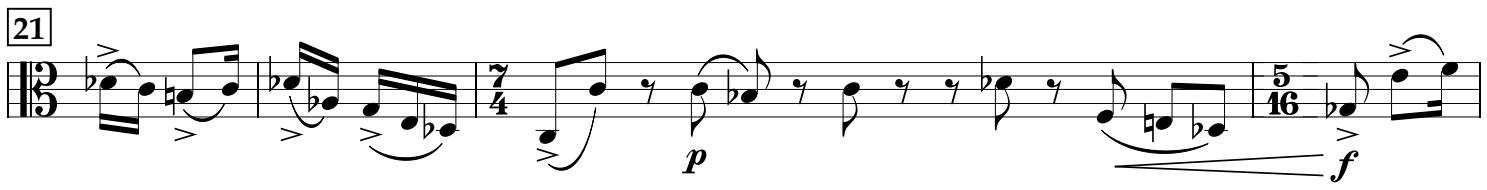
14 

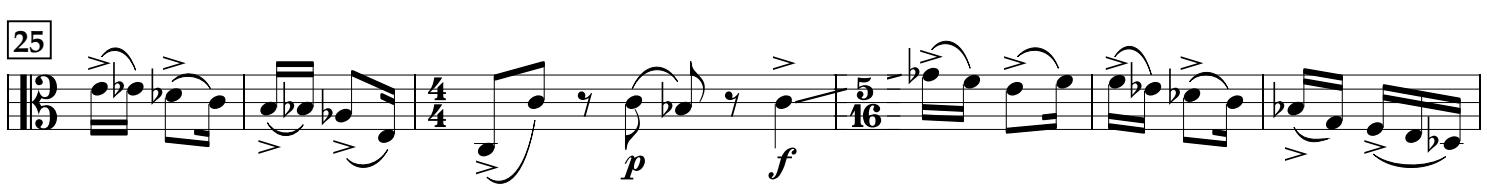
15 

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

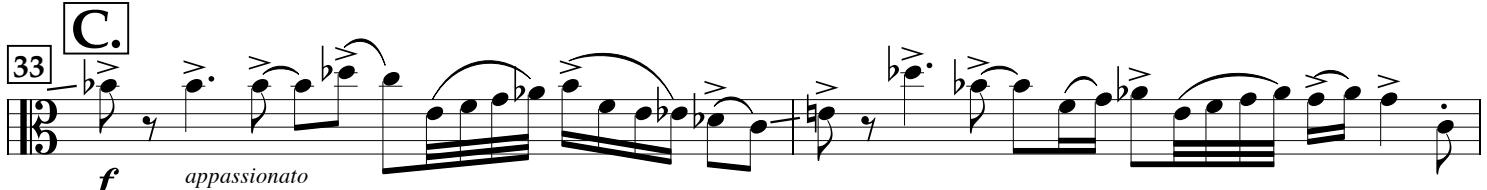
## Viola II, I. Lamentation, p.2

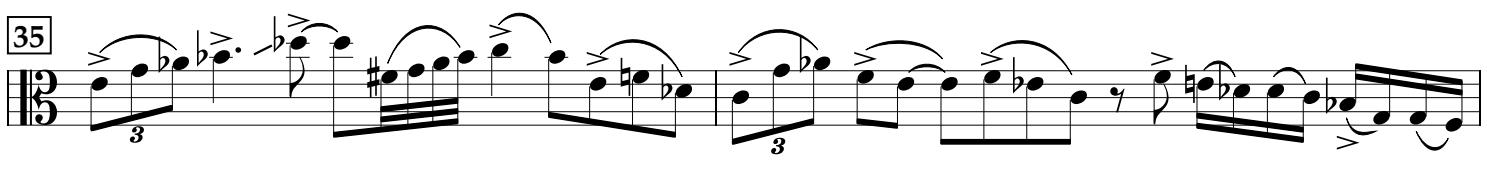
[17] 

[21] 

[25] 

[31] 

[33] 

[35] 

[37] 

[39] 

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

## Viola II, I. Lamentation, p.3

**41**

**44**

**48**

**51**

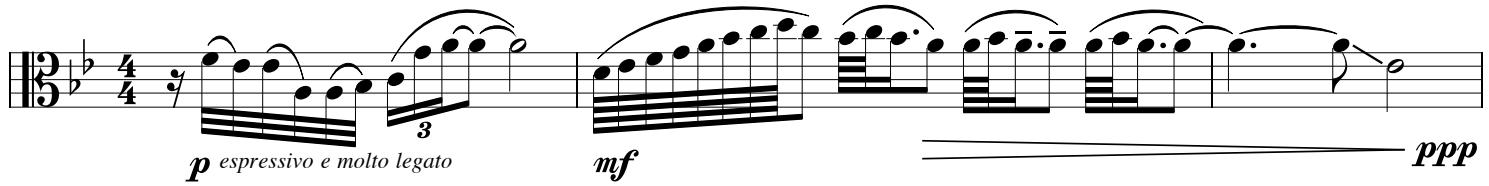
**54 E.**

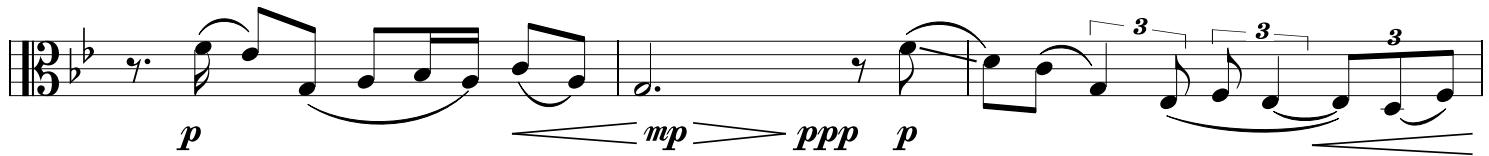
**56**

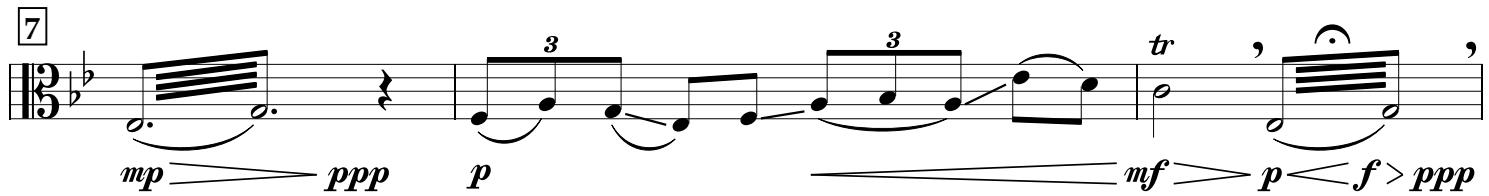
**58**

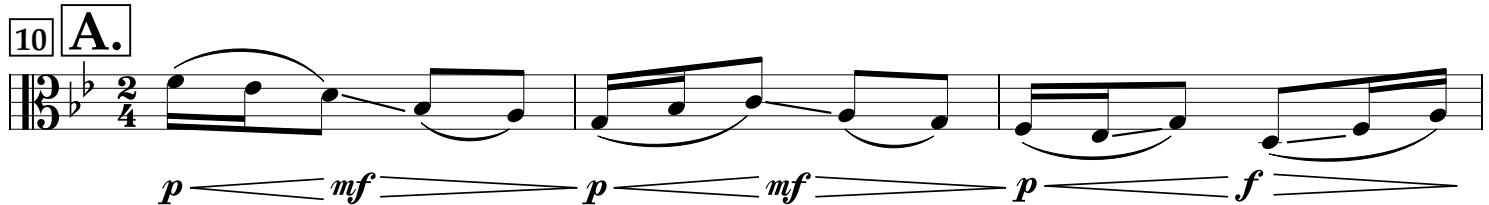
**60**

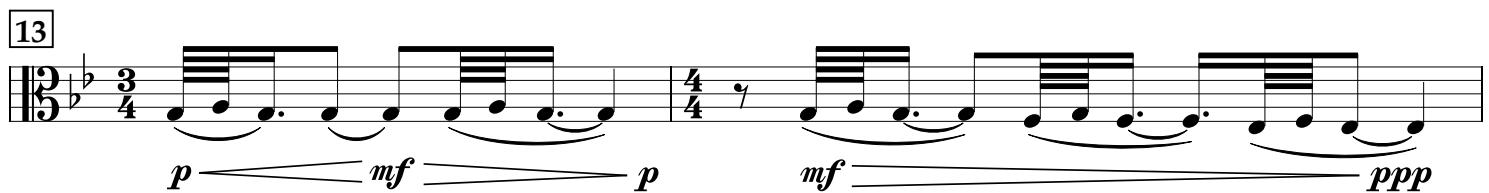
**Viola II****II. Reverie Navâ****Molto rubato; about  $\text{♩}=46$** 

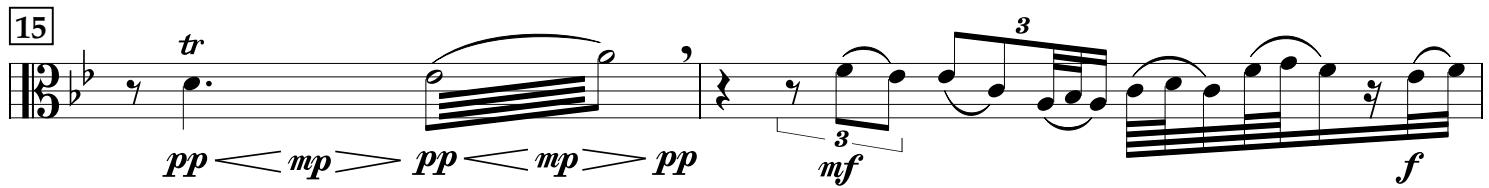
**3** 

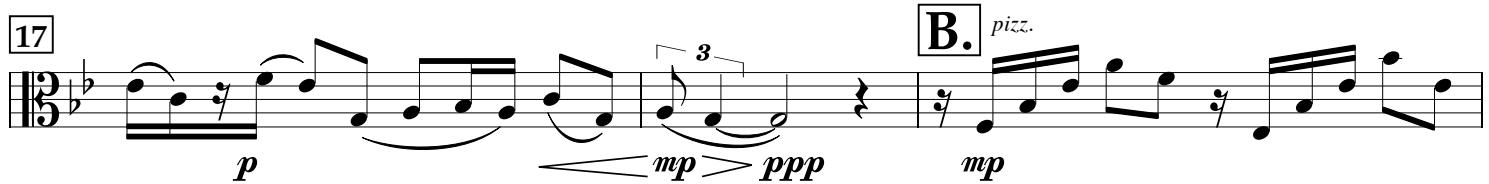
**5** 

**7** 

**10 A.** 

**13** 

**15** 

**17** 

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

## Viola II, Reverie, p.2

[20]

3  
f ————— pp  
mp

[22]

3  
C. pizz.  
f ————— pp  
mp

[24]

3

[26]

3  
p

[28]

3  
f ————— p  
mf ————— ppp

[30]

3  
mp ————— pp  
mp

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

## Viola II, Reverie, p.3

[32]

32

[34] *arco*

f ————— p

E.

34

[37]

mf

————— ppp

37

[39]

p ————— mf ————— p ————— mf ————— p ————— f —————

39

[42]

p

————— ppp

f appassionato

3

42

[44]

mf

————— pp

44

**Viola II****III. Cajun Mahur****Con spirito**  $\text{J}=100$ 

**3**

**6**

**9**

**A.**

**12**

**15**

**18**

**21**

**23**

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

Viola II, III. Mahur, p.2

[26]

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

Viola II, III. Mahur, p.3

[57]

[60]

[62]

[65]

[68]

[71]

A1.

[74]

## Three Duos on Persian Dastgâhs

Viola II, III. Mahur, p.4

[77]

Bass clef, common time, key signature one flat. Measures 77-79 show eighth-note patterns with grace marks. Measure 79 starts with a bass note followed by sixteenth-note patterns.

[80]

Bass clef, common time, key signature one flat. Measures 80-81 show eighth-note patterns with grace marks. Measure 81 ends with a bass note followed by sixteenth-note patterns.

[82]

Bass clef, common time, key signature one flat. Measures 82-83 show eighth-note patterns with grace marks. Measure 83 ends with a bass note followed by sixteenth-note patterns, with a dynamic 'p' at the end.

[85]

Bass clef, common time, key signature one flat. Measures 85-86 show eighth-note patterns with grace marks. Measure 86 ends with a bass note followed by sixteenth-note patterns, with a dynamic 'f' with a '3' overline at the end.

[88]

Bass clef, common time, key signature one flat. Measures 88-89 show eighth-note patterns with grace marks. Measure 89 ends with a bass note followed by sixteenth-note patterns.

[91]

Bass clef, common time, key signature one flat. Measures 91-92 show eighth-note patterns with grace marks. Measure 92 ends with a bass note followed by sixteenth-note patterns. A tempo change 'ritard...' is indicated above the staff.