

vinayak variations (2020)

variations on a tune by Vinayak Netke

Jimmy Bunch

For Vinayak, of course. And for Karen.

Prog notes:

This is a set of variations on a theme by my friend Vinayak Netke, a brilliant tabla player I met at the South Asian Music Residency. SAMUR is hosted by the Goethe Institute Chennai, and KM Music Conservatory, where I teach. The program brings together musicians from all over India and the countries of central Asia (Nepal, Bangladesh, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka), and Germany. We collaborate for two weeks and put together a concert of work influenced by our experiences as musicians of various forms of classical, popular, jazz, experimental, and folk musics.

Vinayak wrote this melody for us, I helped him translate it into Western notation to make things easier for the members of the group that work that way. For one reason or another, we weren't able to work it into the final concert. So about a month into the lockdowns here, I asked Vinayak if I could create a set of variations on his tune. He kindly agreed.

The result is a set of 10 variations that try to embody the tune in different ways. Its genre is an artefact of my recent attempts to re-connect with the violin as an amateur player (looking back again at lots of old repertoire – variation sets by Paganini, pieces by Sarasate, Wieniawski, etc.).

Because of all of this, it's impossible to deny that whatever my intentions, attempts of depoliticized intercultural exchanges live uncomfortably in the contested and fraught interstices of (Western) tradition, modernity, and Other. I'm not unaware of this. Still, this piece is really not an attempt at "fusion," or a conscious exercise in "compositional ethnomusicology." Ultimately, I present it as nothing other than my own response to Vinayak's melody. I offer it to him and to whoever will hear it as a token of friendship, and a way of keeping alive the memory of two magnificently sweet weeks of personal engagement and music making that I will hold dear for a very long time.

Performance notes:



IV Hammer-on! Slap your fingers down on the string without plucking or using your bow. Just the sound of your finger hitting the string percussively at the indicated pitch level.



L.H. Fingernail pizzicato. Unlike a traditional fingernail pizz., I'm asking you to pluck the string with the back of your LEFT fingernail, almost like you flicking the string, rather than plucking the string with your RIGHT hand fingernail. You only need your left hand for this.



RH. Same as above, but with the back of one of your RIGHT hand fingernails. Again, like you are flicking the string, rather than pulling it.



Generally, tremolo. In variation 2 = pizzicato quasi una chitarra.

Generally, you should feel free to push / pull tempos and phrase things in a musical way (the tempos need not be treated overly strictly).

Var. 8: Bow changes are free, but try to make the sound feel as continuous as possible. Think of the sound of a harmonium.

Var. 9: This variation features a lot of fixed shifting positions where fingered notes rapidly alternate with open strings. Economize shifts / keep hands into position as much as possible.

RECAP: The notes displaced by an octave (small noteheads with slashes) are visual cues only. Continue to bow on the G string the entire recap. Extremely flautando the whole time.

harmonics:

Ambiguously suspended between the triplet pulse from the previous section, and the new mental framing in groups of 16ths.

1. All natural harmonics are indicated by the note you should lightly touch, with the string number listed above.
2. This is a double artificial harmonic.
3. This is a double natural harmonic (a pair of touch-M3 harmonics on the III and IV strings).
4. An open string paired with an artificial harmonic (G string + touch-4 artificial harmonic on the D-string).
5. Metric modulation: The new 16th-note is equal to the previous triplet 8th note.
 - a. In variation IV, there are two spots where metric modulation occurs. For a brief moment, it should sound like the accent pattern is in ambiguity/conflict between the natural division of the melody, and the implied groupings of the metric modulation's framing shift.
6. Open string + natural harmonic (Open D + touch-4 natural harmonic on the A string, here).

bow pressure:

vinayak variations

jimmi bunch
on a tune by: vinayak netke

VINAYAK'S TUNE

Lively, flowing, clear ♩ = 126-130

solo violin

v.

v.

v.

place bow on stand
[or auxiliary desk]

VARIATION I ****

rit. → *moderato [ma non troppo]* ♩ = ca. 90

v.

v.

v.

*** Perform pizzicato here if you have put your bow down and are able to do so. Perform LH pizz if you need a little extra time.

**** In general, let all notes ring until they are interrupted by the necessity to finger the next note.

30

V. III II IV

33

V. RH. RH. III III IV III

37

VARIATION II

V. IV III II IV III II *f*

40

V. IV I III IV RH. IV III

43

V. IV I IV III *sfpp*

46

V. III IV RH. RH. *f*

49

V. RH. III IV RH.

52

take up the bow
vamp / improv as necessary

V. III IV

VARIATION III

3 Darkly flowing, richly expressive ♩ = 72

arco

[legato]

56 *mf*

58 very slight rit.

60 a tempo

62

64 *f*

66 very slight rit.

68 a tempo

70

VARIATION IV floating, always bouyant ♩ = ca. 72

Off the string. Light, but a bit noisy.
sul pont.

V.

V.

Ambiguously suspended between the triplet pulse from the previous section, and the new mental framing in groups of 16ths.

V.

V.

Securely thinking and playing in groups of 16th-note pulses now.

V.

V.

Ambiguously suspended between the quintuplet pulse derived from the previous section, and the indicated mental framing in groups of 16ths.

On the string. Light, large bows.

V.

89

V. *jete*

91

V. *Off the string rit.*

93

V. *ca. 72*

VARIATION V
 Careening *ca. 120*
 arco

97

V. *sfpp mf pp sfpp mf pp*

99

V. *sfpp mf pp sfpp mf pp*

100

V. *p mp p mf p*

102

V. *come sopra sfpp f sfpp f*

103

V. *sfpp f sfpp f*

104 V *sfpp* *f* *sfpp* *f*

105 V *sfpp* *mf* *sfpp* *f* *sfpp* *f*

106 V *sfpp* *f* *sfpp* *f* *sfpp* *f*

107 V *p* *mp* *pp*

hold back 9 a tempo 9 poco ritenuto

Not too long before you move to the next var.

VARIATION VI
scorrevole ♩ = ca. 90

ESP → ORD

108 V *sfpp* *cresc.* *f*

[jete] 6 6 6 9 4 0

109 V *sfpp* *cresc.* *f*

simile 6 6 6 9

110 V *sfpp* *cresc.* *f*

ORD 6 6 6 9

111 V *sfpp* *cresc.* *f*

ESP → ORD 6 6 6 9

ORD
passionately grotesque

V. 112 *f* 6 6 6 9 IV

V. 113 *p* *f* 6 6 6 9

V. 114 *sfpp* *cresc.* 6 6 6 9 IV *f*

V. 115 *sfpp* *cresc.* 1. ESP 6 6 6 9 ORD

V. 116 *sfpp* *cresc.* 2. simile 6 6 rit. 6 9 *attaca*

VARIATION VII
Brutal, like a warped waltz ♩ = ca. 112
at the frog

V. 117 *ff* sim.

V. 119 IV

V. 121 *simile* V V V V

V. 123 *simile*

Musical staff 123-125: Treble clef, 2/4 time. Chords are indicated by Roman numerals (IV, V, VI) and accidentals. The staff contains a series of chords with stems pointing downwards, some with accents.

V. 125

Musical staff 125-127: Continuation of the previous staff, showing chords and stems.

V. 127 *simile*

Musical staff 127-129: Continuation of the previous staff, showing chords and stems.

V. 129 *simile*

Musical staff 129-131: Continuation of the previous staff, showing chords and stems.

V. 131 *mf*

Musical staff 131-133: Continuation of the previous staff, showing chords and stems.

VARIATION VIII [harmonium]

tranquillo ♩ = ca. 90

...as if to contain the whole in a single bow stroke...

melody Sul III throughout

V. 133 *spp* *f* *mf*

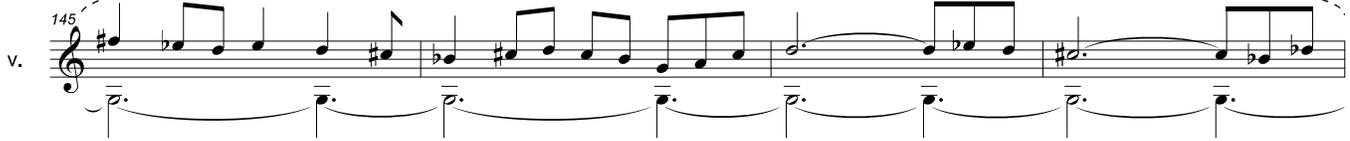
Musical staff 133-137: Treble clef, 3/4 time. Features a melody of eighth notes with a dashed line above it indicating a long bow stroke. Dynamics include *spp*, *f*, and *mf*.

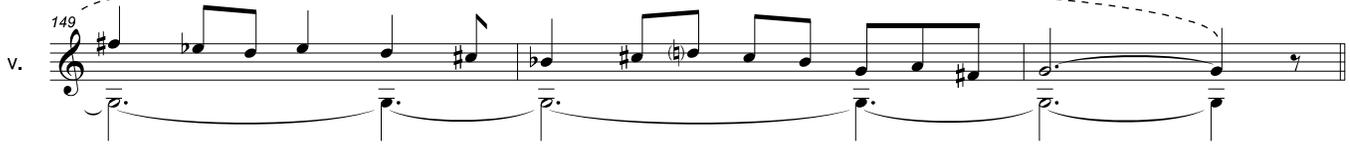
V. 137

Musical staff 137-141: Continuation of the melody from the previous staff, with a dashed line above it.

V. 141

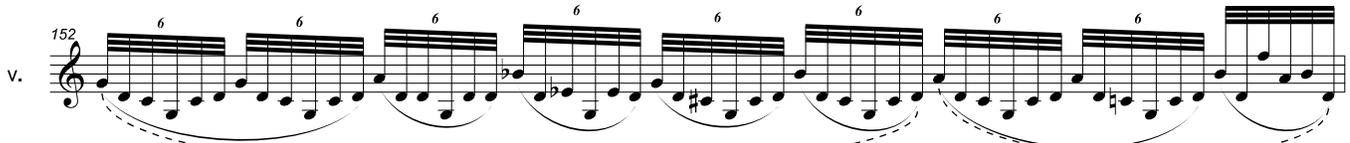
Musical staff 141-145: Continuation of the melody from the previous staff, with a dashed line above it.

V. 

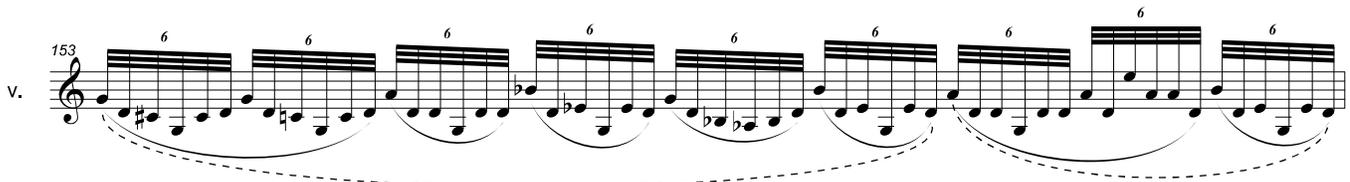
V. 

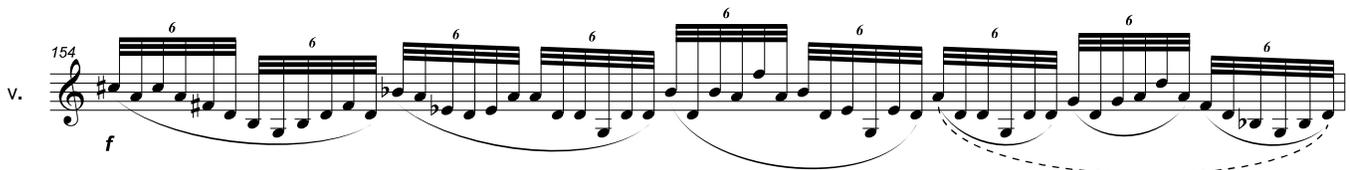
VARIATION IX [die schmetterlinge] ***

hovering ♩ = ca. 120

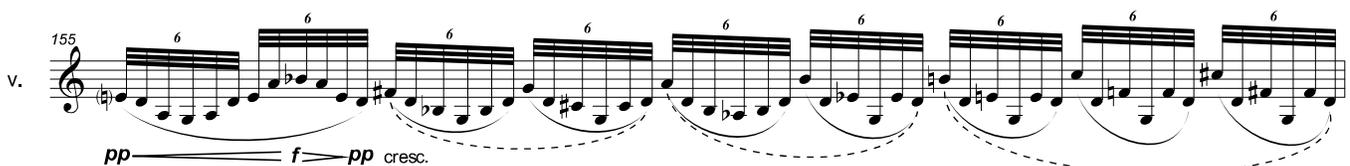
V. 

p cresc.

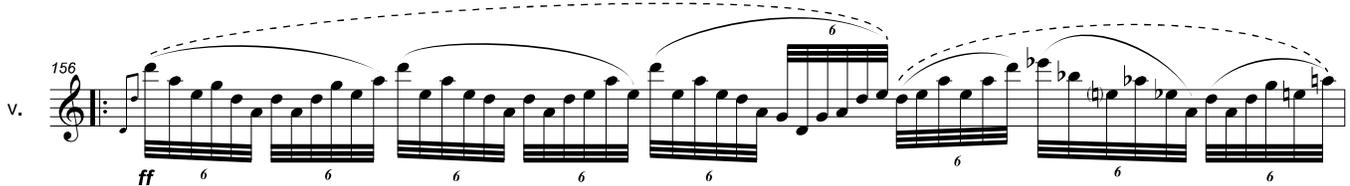
V. 

V. 

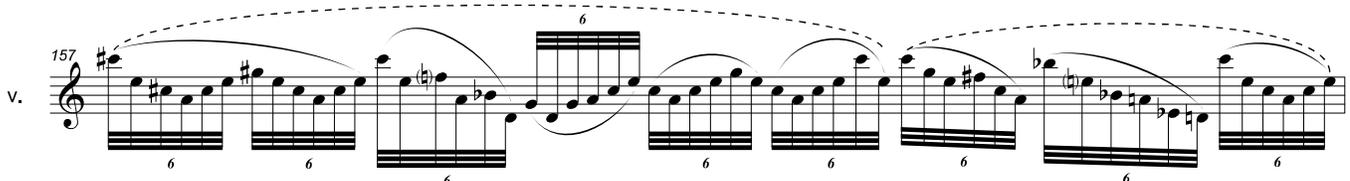
f

V. 

pp — *f* — *pp* cresc.

V. 

ff

V. 

*** This variation features simple shifts alternating with open strings. You should be able to hold your hand positions in most measures.

158

V.

6

6

6

pp

f

pp f

6

6

1.

159

V.

6

6

6

6

6

6

2.

160

V.

6

6

6

6

6

6

poco ritenuto

7

5

6

attaca

VARIATION X [...mit zerschlagenen flugeln]

Grotesque, often ugly and guttural

Tutti Sul III / IV

161

V.

f

163

V.

III

IV

III

IV

165

V.

10

167

V.

arco
Sul II / III

169

V.

Sul I / II

V. 171 172 173

with force

Sul III / IV

Sul II / III

III / IV II / III

V. 173 174

Sul III / IV

V. 175 176

VARIED RECAP [vanishing act]

L'istesso tempo [very slow]

Always on the verge of disappearing into silence.

The weight of the bow always threatening to crush the sound.

177

sul pont. Extremely flautando

pp ppp

V. 177 178

181

V. 181 182 183 184

185

V. 185 186 187 188

189

V. 189 190 191 192

193

V. 193 194 195 196

*** Continue to bow on the G string. Silently depress the indicated notes so that they are visual representations of the absented notes.