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"Musical Biodynamics" a new way of play

Alessio Monti.

Abstract

"Musical Biodynamic", a new approach to the instrument.

(With "musical Biodynamic" I mean the study of the dynamics of the body in connection with the movement that determines musical expression, a research on how to obtain a genuine and heartfelt interpretation and a great variety of sound)s.

"Musical Biodynamic", the new technique of Monti, consists in a correct participation of the body to the musical event, understanding the relationship and harmonization between the gesture and the music and how to transfer in sounds the feeling hidden within the notes that we are performing. With "A new way of playing" Monti means that is not enough to play the correct notes with a good sound and a correct dynamic, but the musician need to participate with all the body, not only with the fingers, to create the expression of the music he is playing. The problem of the great part of the guitarist is that they only pay attention to not mistake the notes first, to make a good sound and to play fast for show their technique, but they don't care about the most important thing, that is to communicate the energy of the music, to arrive to the heart of the audience, and for this need the correct knowledge of the movements of the body, not only of the fingers, because we play with all the body and is very important to know exactly how make a correct movement, because the correct sound start from the perfect knowledge of the movements.

Furthermore, I created a performance method aimed not only at guitarists but at musicians in general, which can be named "Musical Biodynamics": this interpretative technique, based on the psycho-physical relationship between Tempo, Pulse, Breathing and Gesture, increases awareness of the body and its natural emotional energies and attunes contact with the instrument in a more intimate and complete participation in the musical performance; it also facilitates spontaneous integration with the different situations occurring in theatres and concert halls, promoting a sensitive and harmonious relationship with the audience.

Monti is sure all this will be very useful for all the students, for those who are interested about new musical languages or would like to play and to understand his compositions, as well as those who want to reach, with this new technique, a deep way of expression. This want to be also an encouragement for the composers to continue the

exploration of the instrument and look for new way of communicate. This new technique of Monti can solve many problems the student normally can encounter, now take a

look how to play this new technique:
starting from the position on the chair:

the student must feel the contact with the chair and the contact with the foots on the ground, andimportant is to feel not only to think, and when he really can receive these sensations, he will feelstrong and sure. If the guitarist does not sit and move properly is unthinkable that can be able to transfer true emotions to the audience. This feeling remembers the essential of martial arts, the warrior, or in this case the guitarist, brings the energy from the points of contact of his body, and from this fix point he can make things that otherwise can seems impossible.

The shoulders need to be relaxed and with the arm hug gently the guitar, feeling it like a part of thebody.

When the student reach the correct posture, he is concentrate and can feel with the body the movements to do and, after that, can put the necessary emotion in this movement. For example, if we speak soft there is a reason: or someone is sleeping and we don't want the wake him up, or we are speaking something sweet to our partner, or...anything we can imagine for let us pronounce our words soft, but, any way of that, is a different way of speak "Piano", because there are different situations that suggest us this way of speaking.

The same can imagine when someone speaks strong: a people is far away and he thinks if speak not loud cannot listen, or he is angry with someone, or he speaks with a people who cannot listen good; all these are different way of speak, also if with the same volume, the emotion who let us speak is different. So for a true interpretation we need to play in the same way we speak, with the same emotion that suggest us to speak Piano or Forte, and, for be able to make this, we cannot think only to move the fingers and press Piano of Forte the strings, this will produce a robotic sound without soul, without a true participation, the guitarist will only fake the audience, but we need to feel the emotion inside and apply this emotion to the gesture, the sound will exit from the instrument automatically like the words when we speak and will be your right sound from your soul.

All this techniques can apply to all the instruments, not only guitar. This technique is studying the body in its movements, is similar to Yoga, need to be free from tensions and concentrate only in what we are doing "here" and "now". Every art is expressed by the

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gestures, first the dance, and this gestures need to be deeply studied in every part: from which part of the body start the movement, which quality and quantity of energy we apply and in which direction goes.

After that correct posture of the body, one of the most important things is the quality of the sound, the new technique of Monti teach how to produce the maximum variety of sounds, and all that can be possible through the knowledge of the hand and the fingers, their movements, articulations, the shape of the nails of the right hand and how press correctly with the left hand.

The nails must cut in different ways, it depends from the form of the fingers, how much the phalanx can relax when touch the strings, and the shape of the nails

(see exemple n. 1)

Exemple n.1

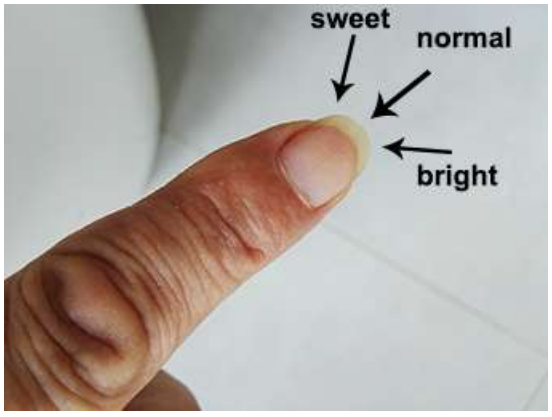


(different shape of the nails: index more high on the right, medium almost round and ring more high to the left) Normally until now the teachers don't say nothing about the shapes of the nails, and don't pay attention to the different shape of the fingers of the students.

Here an example of the sounds can be produced with different point of impact of the nail

(see exemple n. 2):

Exemple n. 2



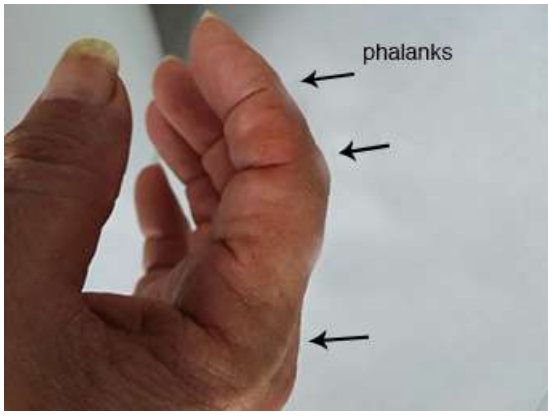
If try to touch the strings in these different positions can easily listen different quality of sounds also touching in the same way.

For produce the sound wanted, need to take note of that:

The point of impact of the nail, how much the phalanx will relax, there are three phalanges in thefingers, if the guitarist relax all them the sound will be more sweet if he don't relax at all , more brightand dry.

(see exemple n. 3)

Exemple n. 3



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Another important thing is how the finger arrive to touch the string, this is a gesture, that need to have areason like all the gestures people e make in every day, because this determines the quality of the sound.

The left hand need to have some trick: what need to be strong is only the first phalanx, never flat the others, send all the power needed only to the first phalanx. The finger need to press on the right size and the thumb on a parallel size, without going in the same direction of the finger.

(see exemples n. 4, 5)

Exemple n. 4



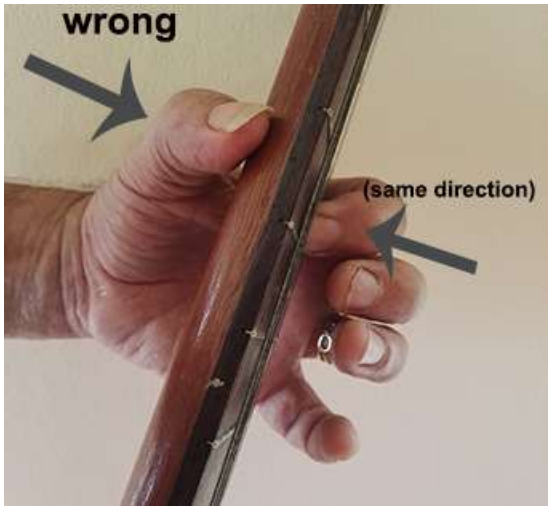
exemple n. 5



The thumb of the left hand don't press the neck, only a little and in some cases, it only holds the neck from the pressure of the fingers, but don't makes any opposite action.

(see example n. 6)

Exemple n. 6



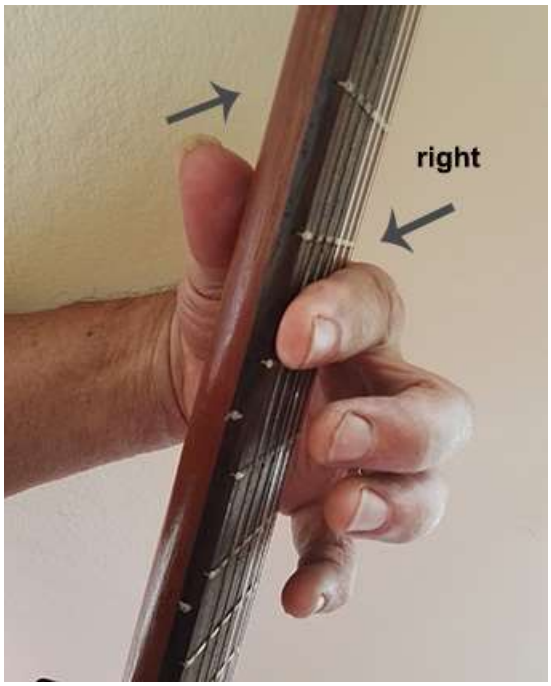
If the thumb press the in the wrong way, means on the right of the neck, can easily feel the other fingers change direction of pressure, instead press on the right they press on the left and the dilatation of the fingers is compromised.

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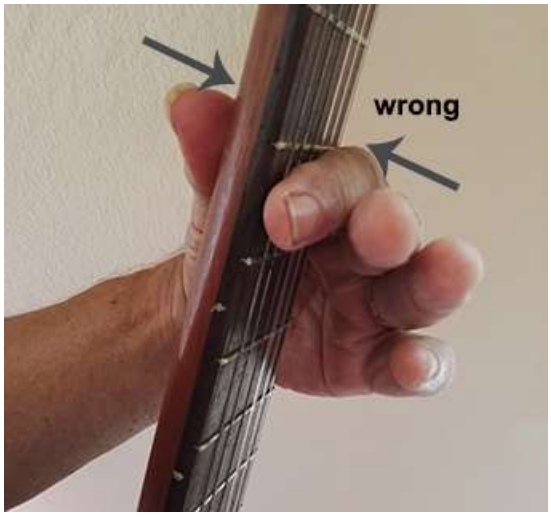
When the index press more than one string that is called “barre’” and the rules are the same, the directions of the pressure between index and thumb must be parallel, never opposites.

(see exemple n. 7, 8)

exemple n. 7



exemple n. 8



For all this things is required a correct posture, the chair and the guitar become a part of the body, the feet give the feeling of having roots in the floor, all that make the guitarist strong from this position and relax for start to play.

Also the breath has an important role in the music, specially in a difficult passage. Like in otherdisciplines that use the body like Yoga, the breath helps concentration and the fluidity of the movements. It means that when there is a difficult passage you have to take a look to the breath that have not to stop but continue fluently, or there will be tensions.

So the main purpose of this paper is to communicate to the students this research of a new way of express through the music, the new technique of Monti, "Musical Biodynamics", that can allow to play using the appropriate gestures of the body, without any tension that can damage the interpretation and the feeling of the player, introducing also new sounds surely never heard before. If the guitarist plays with tensions the phrasing is not fluid, the sound is not what he want inside of him and he don't enjoy when he play, but wait to finish and hope to not make mistakes: otherwise who can play free of any tensions let people enjoy of his music because he first can enjoy and his playing id fluid and his phrasing let clearly understand his vision of the song; he is playing, like a good cable that ensure a good connection, he ensure his true connection with the music.

The benefit will be also for the audience who can listen for the first time new sonorities and receive from the guitarist a true interpretation of his musical feeling. In order to better apply my technique Monti wrote many compositions with his own new musical language, he will analyze one of them, explaining how is possible to realize these new sounds easily with the correct technique (see at the end a composition of Monti: "The Forest of Gokarnath").

For have the possibility to express himself through the music, first the guitarist must know his body, like a good driver know his car, he should to know exactly what happen inside him when he make the movements and the gestures necessary for play.

When the guitarist move the fingers for play he makes movements and every movement should to have a reason, should be generated by an emotion, which will assign to the gesture the right energy. Is very important to take conscience of the several phases of the gesture: from where start the movement (from the arm, the hand or the finger), in which

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direction goes, and with which kind of “emotion” is produced, which the energy quality is assigned.

The dynamic symbols we usually find in a score like “pp, p, mf, f, ff” have no meaning if they are not associated to a true feeling: performers have to play like when they speak, can be loud or soft but always with a reason. The voice change timbre according the feeling, also if the volume remain the same, so when the musician plays with the dynamics have not only to press the strings with the volume indicated, but he has to perceive what kind of emotion generates this dynamic, the emotional reason for which he want to play strong or soft.

All these gestures come by the real emotion which that can be suggested by the music. So the exact sequence is: first take conscience of energies of the body, take contact with the instrument, with the chair, with the ground, then the music let us feel an emotion which send an input to the brain that order to the body to make the right movements with the right energy.

This is the purpose of my new technique: make the gestures using the right energy for play with the feeling that the music let us perceive.

For having the correct control of the gesture need to take conscience of the parts that produce the gesture, assigning them the right quality and quantity of energy and in the same time control the other parts of the body that don't participate to the movement, but "like only look" (the arm, the hand and the finger) that have to play, without make any opposite tension. Like a battery who has the two poles “plus” and “less”, in the body need to perceive the active parts who move and also the passive who have to remain relaxed, so the gesture is harmonic, is realized more easily if any other parts don’t contrast with opposites energies.

Have technique” so don’t means only play a difficult piece with the right speed and with the right notes like many people think, this is only “mechanics”, but means the ability to let exit from the instrument the sound with the timbre, the energy, the intensity and the character that we feel inside; let the notes become “words”, with the rhythm and the phrasing we want to communicate, and all the body must participate to this event, so can be realized the miracle of the music.

The rhythm should be the vehicle in which the sounds can move. The rhythm is not only the speed, but “speed with energy”; in every beat of a bar there is a different quality of energy, who precedes and prepare the following beat, everything is connected and form a chain that is the foundations of the composition. And the performer must feel that and transmit this energy to the audience.

Finally, my technique consists in take conscience of the body (because we play with all the body not only with the fingers or the mind), and pay attention to make every movement with the right energy that comes from the feeling who is suggested by music.

A performing artist is a composer who creates what has been suggested to him, and forgetting what has been suggested. Being a performer I have therefore been led as a composer to think highly of the function of human gesture and their intimate relationship with music it where flowering of the human body in the wholeness.

In such context, the page written by the composer become a graphic representation of gestures which has been perceived and planned in order to translate mood in sound events capable of explain the music.

Extensive research and long experience as a guitarist, teacher and composer have enabled me to enrich my technique and develop this personal approach to teaching the instrument.

If on the one hand long personal and didactic practice of “Musical Biodynamics” had influenced the manner in which Monti perceived and performed music (now experienced as a “flowering” of the human body, in which gestures, rhythms and heartbeats, together with breathing, are integrated in a rich and constantly changing synthesis, generated by emotion and evolving feelings), this inner dimension had its effect on the way I writes music: thus atonal and twelve-tone roots were fused, as in a crucible, with the images/archetypes of many composers of any genres. In my more recent and idiomatically freer compositions, modality, melisma, tonality, atonality and serialism, with citations of many different styles, reappear in a language, in which these vestiges, transfigured in a dreamlike manner, surface as though from an undersea world.

Some years ago the famous guitar teacher Abel Carlevaro , known in all the world as founder of a new technique, invited Monti in his University in Montevideo (Uruguay) for play a concert (with his own compositions) and for explain to his students his new innovative way of play and understand the body and the music, and in that occasion he wrote : “Monti discovers in the guitar the universal language”. Carlevaro’s technique is almost the best

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efficient and modern one, but it doesn't consider how important can be to take conscience of the body for be able to make the right gestures with the right energies, how important can be to feel us relaxed when we play and be able to "live" our interpretation, as an actor live his personage. With Monti's technique the guitarist knows exactly how to use his body for make the gestures necessary for play, he can surely concentrate his attention to receive the feeling from the music and he can transmit it easily to the audience, with true emotive participation and using the right energies.

Monti is very happy that he could open to all his students a new world, a new possibility to expression, he always like to collaborate everywhere with everyone, sharing and spreading his experience and his knowledge, fruit of an ongoing research of a way of better communicate with the guitar.

This way to play, taking conscience of the body and his energies, is not only a technique for the guitar, but, those who will practice that, can also have benefits in the daily life, because can finally feel their body.

Too many times people forgot the body because "too much busy to think".

The function of the body is to receive the sensations that send us the outside world, but often people don't pay attention to receive these sensations, they only live in the mind not in the body, and this is the opposite who need for be a good performer, a real musician. Almost every art uses the movements for express a feeling, like dance, painting, and also music so is very easy to understand that the technique has the primary role to explain how to make the movements of the body with the right energy.

During one of Monti's concert tours in India, one man, maybe a Guru, told him a story, and this story inspired him to write this composition: "La Foresta di Gokarnath". In Nepal, at the edge of the Forest of Gokarnath, stands a temple that is sourrounded by an enormous stairway dedicated to the Goddes Parvati, the bride of Shiva.

Legend recounts that the wayfarer is sometimes conceded a vision of the Goddess (the Truth that reappears) as she climbs the temple stairway with her court, a nocturnal event that repeats itself throught time, for all eternity.

This composition describes the forest with its resonances,at times sweet and murmured, at times sudden and disturbing, as well as the immense temple stairway, the Goddes with her court, and the formation of musicians that accompany the Goddes in her dance before Shiva.

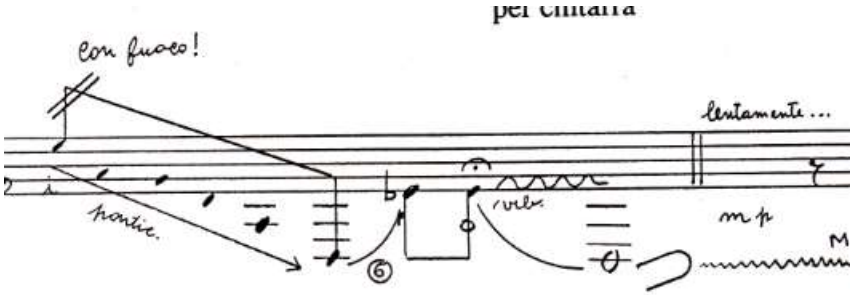
The aesthetic of indian music acquires a new dynamic: the effect of sitar is produced on the guitar by inserting a bamboo reed or a certain height of layered wood slivers under the three lower strings which, when hit, produce a vibration similar to that of the indian instrument.

The tuning of the guitar is varied in such a way as to acquire a sort of “open tuning” as is found in the Indian Raga, permitting a full expression of the sonority of the instrument: sixth string is lowered in D and second in A.
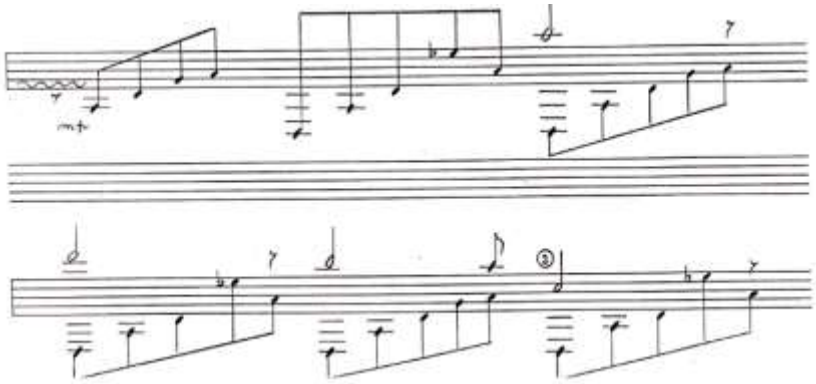
The imitative percussive sounds of Tablas drum are realized by triking different points of the belly and the sides of the instrument with the finger-tips and nails of the right hand, sometimes implemented in sincrony with harmonic chords plucked by the left hand.

In this compositions are used many different sounds and need to know how to produce this variety with the appropriate positions of the nails and the hands. In addition you have to go from a meditative state to a sudden strong “rasgueado”

The composition starts with a sfzz "chord “arpeggiato” (con fuoco), followed by a backtone (playing the string on the left part of the neck) and producing a vibration like “Sitar” obtained grazing just a little the sixth string with the nail of the thumb. The nail plays the string with the right size fr a brighter sound.

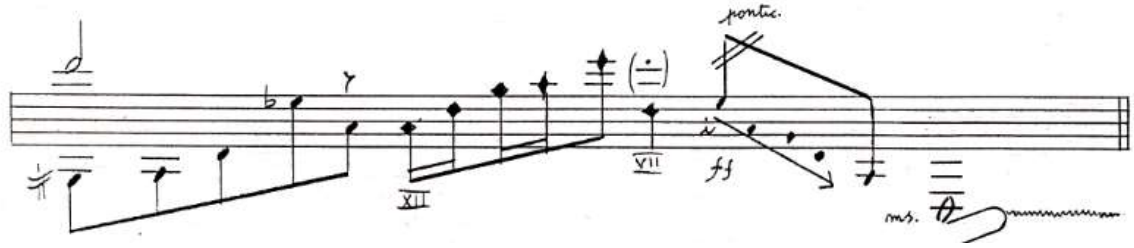


After a slow sweet arpeggio presents a delicate melody, nail now plays on the left for a sweet tone,

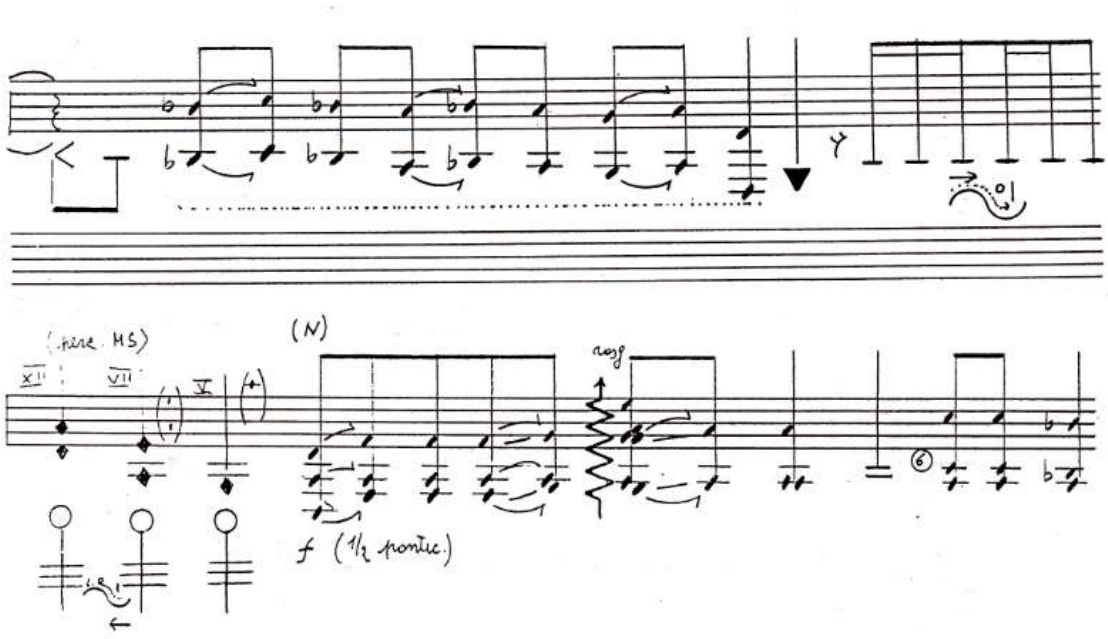


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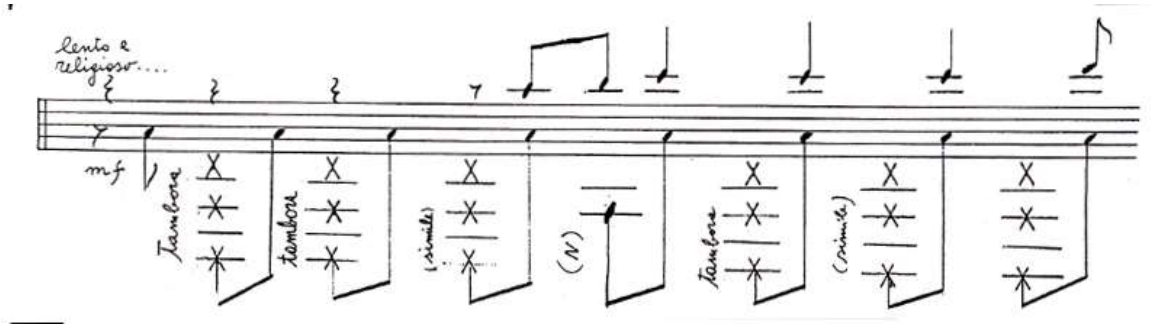
followed by a sfzz “rasgueado” with percussions, who introduce in a section in which the bass strings open another part.



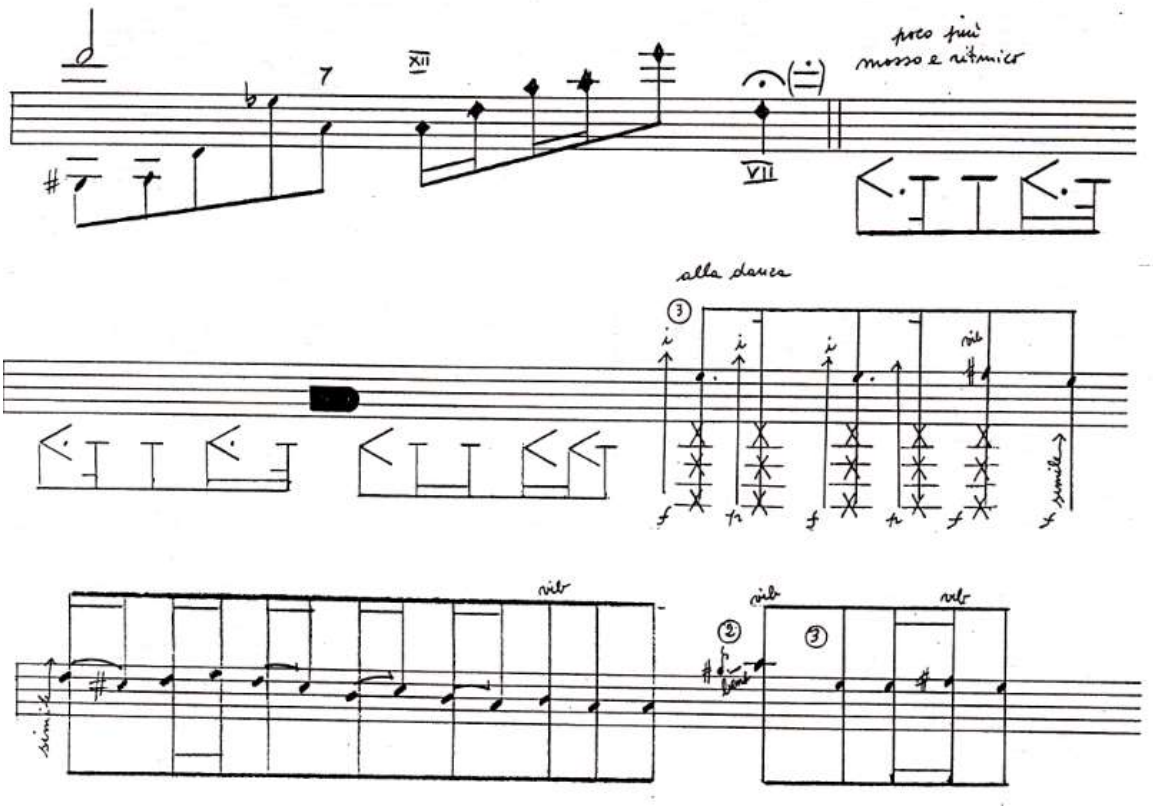
This section starts softly , with a continue crescendo ending with rasgueado chords played at the bridge and percussions mixed with harmonics chords.



who take to join to the middle part in which appear the sound of the sitar who like a drone accompany a soft delicate melody.



The composition resumes the first melodic episode, and with some variations takes to the final, in which percussions, sitar drone and an half improvised melody , played also in the little strings, conclude the composition.



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First execution Roma,(Italy) Palazzo Barberini, 1992

In this paper Monti explained the principles of his new technique “Musical Biodynamic ”, the benefits that can obtain the performer, every performer, not only the guitarist.

This way to play, taking conscience of the body and his energies, is not only a technique for the guitar, but, who will practice that, can also have benefits in the daily life, because peoples can finally feel their body.

This technique teaches how express what the performer can feel from the music, his interpretation, his idea of the composition, his fantasy in create the phrasing, and that can be not every time the same...but cannot create an artist, the teacher can show some examples of interpretation and the right technique to realize that, after is the performer who must show what he has inside, his musicality, his art, so for be a great artist need....to born with the gift of the music inside.

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First execution Roma,(Italy) Palazzo Barberini, 1992
The composition is edited by “Berben” Italy This composition is included in CD “PANJIM” edited by“Musicaimmagine Records”, Italy and “LIVE IN JAKARTA” edited by CCT Records, Italy





The composition is edited by “Berben” Italy

