

Benjamin Pritchard

Composition 002 with Dr. James Wilding

Composition Report

Fall 2023

Introduction

Fall 2023 was my first semester back to U-Akron since I started my education here circa 1997 as a prospective piano and composition major. (In the meantime, I had worked full-time as an engineer, attended the **Nada School of Traditional Yoga** in Rishikesh India, and studied music privately with a previous piano instructor from U-Akron named Nicholas Constantinidis.)

For my first semester back, I took **Composition 002** and worked with Dr. James Wilding on developing as a composer.

This semester, I made progress on the musical settings of two mantras: **Om Nama Shivia**, and the **Maha Mantra**.

In this end-of-semester composition report, first I will present information on my settings of the two mantras.

Then, in an appendix, I will include some of my ancillary (fragmentary) compositional output, along with poetry and other material from this semester – which will be incorporated into subsequent works in future semesters.

Om Nama Shivia

Om Nama Shivia

Benjamin Pritchard

The musical score is for the piece "Om Nama Shivia" by Benjamin Pritchard. It is written for Soprano and Accordion in 4/4 time. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The Soprano part features a descending diatonic melody: G#4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D#4 (quarter), C#4 (half). The lyrics are "Om Na ma Shi vi ia Om Na ma Sh vi". Above the staff, the chord progression is indicated: C#m, F#m, B, and C#m. The Accordion part provides harmonic support with chords: C#m (first measure), F#m (second measure), and B (third and fourth measures). The bass line consists of a single note, G#2, in the first measure, followed by rests in the subsequent measures.

The musical setting above is personally very significant because it is my first wholly original composition. Creating it along with Dr. Wilding's help, while also getting it successfully notated into Musescore was actually my primary achievement this semester.

I am very proud of this composition. In a sense, it is my first “real” [original] composition.

It consists of an original simple descending diatonic melody, an original chord progression (**C#m, F#m, B major, C#m**), and an original rhythmical motif (long, short-short, long long) repeated in a 2 measure sequence.

Maha Mantra

The second mantra that I made progress on is a “quasi-original” setting of the **Maha Mantra**, which is a major mantra associated with Vishnavism.

Although what I produced is obviously a “work in progress”-style rough draft, it also represents considerable compositional growth for me as a concretely scored representation of my musical conception.

I consider it a “quasi-original” composition in the sense that I am borrowing the chord progression from an existing performance (Krishna Das), while also adding original form, structure, and material.

(As someone famously said: good composers, borrow; great composers steal.)

Fantasy on the Maha Mantra for Piano and Voice

after Krishna Das

♩ = 120

The musical score is written for four parts: Leader, Chorus, Piano, and cordon. It is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 120 beats per minute. The Leader part features a melody in the treble clef with lyrics: "Ha Re Krishna Ha Re Krishna Krishna Krishna Ha re". The Chorus part is a single staff with a treble clef, containing six measures of rests. The Piano part consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with six measures of rests. The cordon part is a single staff with a bass clef, featuring a series of chords (triads) connected by a slur, with six measures of rests.

My setting of the Maha Mantra consists of an 8 bar chord progression: **A-A-C-C-F-C-G-G**.

The melodic material used is also probably “quasi-original” in the sense that I listened to an existing recording, and intuitively “sang along” with what I was hearing.

I think I am actually singing **in harmony** with what I hear, while even just partially ‘making up’ my own melody as I go. The fact that I did this, made a recording of it, and then worked out (i.e. figured out how to notate) the melody after-the-fact actually makes a lot of sense in light of the fact that much of Kirtan is an “in-the-moment” improvisation reworking of existing material.

One particular thing that I liked working on with Dr. Wilding was the chord voicings.

At first he showed me how to utilize inversions in the notated chords... which ultimately will help me utilize similar arrangements in the realized piano configurations of those chords. (However, actually reworking the piano part to utilize better chord voicings in the arpeggiated accompaniments has to be saved for a subsequent semester.)

The scoring of my setting was done for voice, piano, and “chord instrument.” (The chord instrument in the actual score was an accordian.)

In practice, a composition like this would be played with whatever instruments are available. Therefore, the “chord instrument” part – if played at all – could be played on a harmonium, or even a regular piano or keyboard instrument. (Additionally, as explained in the appendix to this report, ultimately I am

planning for this composition to be scored for my own-original keyboard instrument, which is called the **Kundalini Piano**.)

Another aspect of kirtan-style music that I wanted to capture in my composition was a call-and-response feel.

To achieve this, two different vocal parts are notated: one for a “leader”, and one for a “chorus.”

The chant being set – which obviously is the maha mantra – consists of two verses:

*Hare Krisna, Hare Krishna,
Krishna Krishna
Hare Hare*

*Hare Rama, Hara Rama
Rama, Rama,
Hare Hare*

Trying to work out how the call and response aspect of the composition would work was an initial challenge.

What I ultimately decided to do was to have the leader chant the entire first verse, and then have the chorus chant it back.

An additional way I wanted to capture the “call and response” style in my composition was to have the leader play simple chords while he is doing his chanting... then while the audience (chorus) is chanting back the verse, the leader plays the chords in more advanced piano arrangements.

At this time, only simple piano realizations are provided. However, in subsequent semesters, I will be able to score more virtuosic realizations (derived from my own improvisations) as I progress as a composer.

Additionally, because a more finalized version of this composition will be scored for **Kundalini Piano**, many non-traditional keyboard realizations (utilizing non-traditional tunings, transpositions, and symmetrical-inverted arrangements) will be notated.

Appendix: Ancillary Compositional Output

To understand how the progress I made compositionally this semester fits into the broader context of my overall growth as a composer, additional information is provided here.

The mystical poetry, spiritual writings, and AI-generated art work that I produced this semester are being included in this composition journal because they are all part of my own creative-output; my compositions do not do not consist of music only!

Instead my intention is for my compositions to consist of all of these elements being “all tied together” via original audio-visual settings, ultimately presented in participatory kirtan-style concerts featuring me playing a keyboard-style instrument of my own creation called the **Kundalini Piano**.

However, getting to that kind of a point is a journey of a thousand steps!

But for sure my intention as a composer is not to “just” write music; instead I intend to create PERFORMANCES of my music, which as mentioned I want to include audio-visual content.

Further, several of the piano exercises I wrote this semester are also included, because developing the novel ambidexterity-based piano pedagogical materials I am creating is a pre-prerequisite for performers to be able to develop the background required to play a **Kundalini Piano**. (Additional information regarding this will be worked out in subsequent semesters.)

Obviously composition is a non-linear process, where-by composers often “jump around” from composition to composition, setting on thing aside to pick back up later, work on multiple things at once, etc. Therefore, what is presented here in this appendix is a “hodge-podge” of in-progress material, some of which will be incorporated into a more finalized form in subsequent semesters.

MAHA MANTRA

("Hare Krishna Mantra")

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna
Krishna, Krishna
Hare, Hare

Hare Rama, Hare Rama
Rama Rama
Hare, Hare

* NADA
Yoga

* KIRTAN
↳ "Jamming"

* "CALL-AND-
Response"



Lead
Sheet

"Supreme
Gift
from
God
For the
Ultimate
Benefit
of All
people
everywhere"

Vaishnavism

Vocabulary & Topics

* Sanskrit

* "Maha"

* Mantra

* Hinduism

* A.C. Bhakti-Vedanta Swami Prabhupada

* Maya

* Krishna

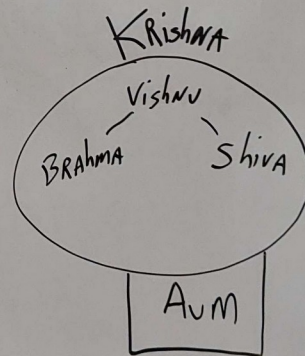
* Rama

* Kali Yuga (table)

* Kali-Santarana Upanishad

* George
Harrison

* Beatles



The Phone Slaves, a poem by me, Benjamin Pritchard:

"Do you look up at the stars? / Can you see a Tree? / Or is all you do / is shout: ME ME ME? / Can you hear the music ? Can you make some too? Or is all you think: YOU YOU YOU. / If all sounds bleak / and indeed for you / what I say here is: TRUE TRUE TRUE... / then please take heed / hear my advice / and take your actions / away from vice. / Instead of that , find something to do / that allows your spirit / to grow anew / and that lets your soul / shine: THROUGH THROUGH TROUGH "

2nd Phase

"GRAND FANTASY ON the MAHA MANTRA for Voice AND PIANO"

Movement 3, Finale
In the Reggae style
(After C.C. White)

1st Phase

C minor I

F minor IV

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32

+ 4 more

1 measure shown

voice

He re ksh na He re ksh na etc.

etc.

etc.

HARE KRISHNA
HARE KRISHNA
KRISHNA KRISHNA
HARE HARE

HARE RAMA
HARE RAMA
RAMA RAMA
HARE HARE

Always Produce Pitch of: Cm, Em, Bb, G7

Kundalini Piano Mirror .LVA

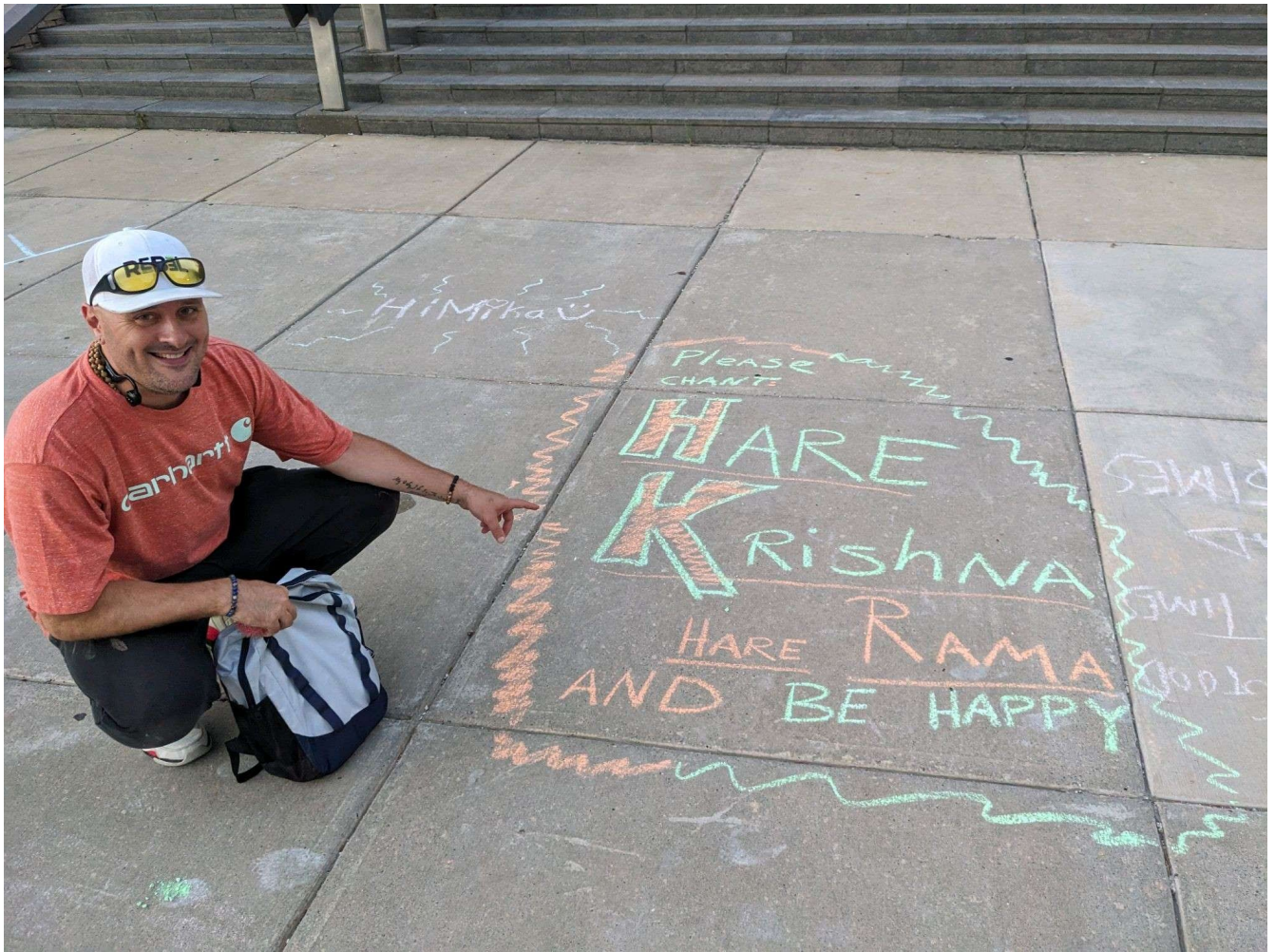
```
Script:
local count = 0
local offset = 0
function CurrentTransposition()
  count = count + 1
  if call Count % 32 == 0
    count = 0
    offset = offset + 1
    return offset
  else
    return offset
```

Played on Keyboard

I	II	III	IV
Cm	Fm	Bb	G7
Cb	Fb	B	A7
Dm	Gm	C	A7
D#	G#	C#	
E			
F			
F#			
Gm			
G#m			
A#m			
Bm			

ETC.

Means: performance is practically more interesting than it seems. This is the opposite of "showing off"



d

“Lucky Camel #3: The Nectar of Devotion”, a prose poem by me, Benjamin Pritchard:

“Three camels were waking through the desert, bearing heavy sacks of sugar on their backs which was laced with LSD as part of a covert CIA operation to interfere with a democratic election in the middle east. The 3 camels trugged along. The first one was complaining about the state of affairs in the world, pessimistically commenting on western imperialism. The second camel went on endlessly about religion and philosophy and how to attain an eternal afterlife in heaven someday. The third camel was not very smart, but was a simple devotee of Allah... a camel who believed in dutifully offering his labors unto God under the expectation that God would provide him his daily bread. But at this moment, the 3rd camel was not really thinking about all that. He was just blissfully enjoying eating the bugs who by some good fortune flew into his mouth after having gorged themselves on the LSD-laced sugar on his back.”



"An ode to my brain, and homage to my mind", new poem by me, Benjamin Pritchard:

"Do I mind you ask? / Well no, I don't! / 'cuz I have no mind to mind. / My mind simply comes / and simply goes.. / like the wind! / My mind? / It is not my master! / It is just my friend "

"Too High", a new poem by me, Benjamin Pritchard:

" i got too high / and saw too clear / through sick facade / and thin veneer. / An ugly truth / ugly to say / but held in silence / does not go away. / So please let me go. / Please let me be. / I am a whole new me / that you cannot see.

(In subsequent semesters I want to set these poems to music)

Handwritten musical notation on a staff. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in a series of eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff, there are fingerings: 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4. The text "octave down" is written below the first measure. The text "P." is written to the left of the staff. The text "8va" is written above the staff in the final measure.

Handwritten musical notation on a staff. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in a series of eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff, there are fingerings: 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4. The text "Bb" is written below the first measure. The text "Bb" is written below the second measure. The text "G" is written below the third measure. The text "G" is written below the fourth measure.

Simple
Chord Progression
"realization", 3rd
movement
Maha Mantra
Fantasy

ToDo: To add to

Handwritten musical score for "Hare Om" in 4/4 time, featuring vocal lines and a bass line with fingerings.

Vocal Lines:

- Top Staff:** Hare Om (first measure), Hare Om (second measure), Hare Om (third measure).
- Second Staff:** Ha-re - Om (first measure), Ha-re - Om (second measure).

Bass Line (Third Staff):

- Measure 1: 1 2 3 4 (Fingerings)
- Measure 2: 1 2 3 4 (Fingerings)
- Measure 3: 1 2 3 4 (Fingerings)

Chord Progression (Bottom Staff):

- Measure 1: A MINOR
- Measure 2: A MINOR
- Measure 3: F MAJOR

A large arrow points from the bottom staff towards the right side of the page.

d

Double 3rds + Motif from Winter wind

dd

ORIGINAL context: A minor melodic scale, similar motion,
end of Winter Wind

Etude Op. 25, No. 11 - chopin

DERIVED Idea: A minor melodic scale, contrary motion, 3 vs. 4

8 - - - - - 15 - - - - -

Kundalini' → "maha shakti"

Extk.

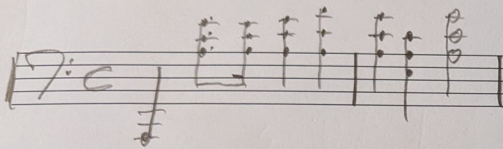
Int.

vision intuition

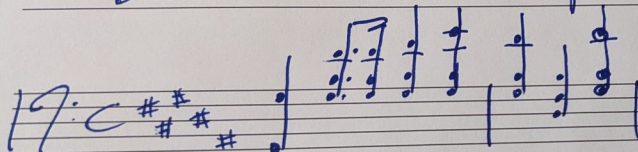
Int. Med

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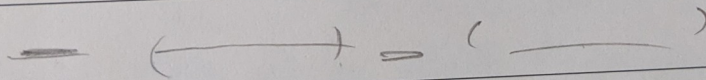
ORIGINAL context: A minor chord, rhythmic motif (winter wind)



Derived Idea: same pattern in G# minor



(for use in
op. 25 # 6)



ORIGINAL Context: Right hand melody in top notes
Op. 25, No. 1

Left-Hand quote of same melodic motif

Derived Idea:

D'Addario
ARCHIVES

B12S-48

Maha Mantra Fantasy, 3rd movement (First 8 BARS)

Handwritten musical score for the first 8 bars of the 3rd movement of the Maha Mantra Fantasy. The score is written for Voice, Chorus, Piano, and Harmonium.

Voice: The melody starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The notes are: Ha (quarter), re (quarter), krish (quarter), NA (quarter), Ha (quarter), re (quarter), krish (quarter), NA (quarter). The lyrics are: Ha re krish NA Ha re krish NA.

Chorus: The chorus part starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The notes are: Ha (quarter), re (quarter), krish (quarter), NA (quarter), Ha (quarter), re (quarter), krish (quarter), NA (quarter). The lyrics are: Ha re krish NA Ha re krish NA.

Piano: The piano part starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The notes are: Ha (quarter), re (quarter), krish (quarter), NA (quarter), Ha (quarter), re (quarter), krish (quarter), NA (quarter). The lyrics are: Ha re krish NA Ha re krish NA.

Harmonium: The harmonium part starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The notes are: Ha (quarter), re (quarter), krish (quarter), NA (quarter), Ha (quarter), re (quarter), krish (quarter), NA (quarter). The lyrics are: Ha re krish NA Ha re krish NA.

Chords: The chords are written below the piano and harmonium staves. The chords are: C minor, C minor, F minor, F minor.

B12S-48

* To Do: have voice do 8 BARS, followed by 8 BARS of chorus..

D'AC
ARC

Handwritten musical notation on a staff. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes and half notes. The lyrics are written below the staff: "Om NA MA Shi vi i A om NA MA Shi vi". Below the staff, there are handwritten notes: "C#m", "F#m", "B", and "C#m".

28-Nov-2023

d

Maha Mantra Fantasy. 2nd Movement,

Call: 4 measures: Em, 4 Dmaj, 4 Emaj
Response: 4 measures: Em, 4 Dmaj, 4 Cmaj

Voice

Chorus

Piano

Harmonium

E minor

Ha

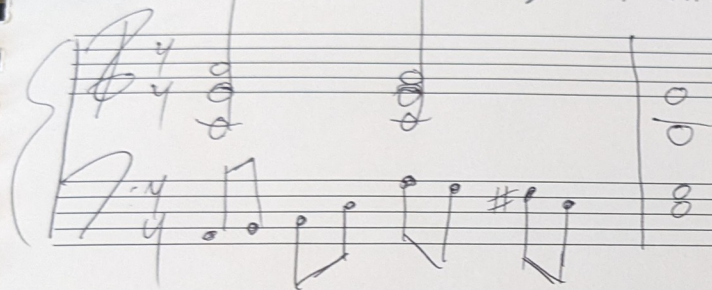
Re

Krish

NA

D MAJ

~~Chords to A~~ A minor to E minor

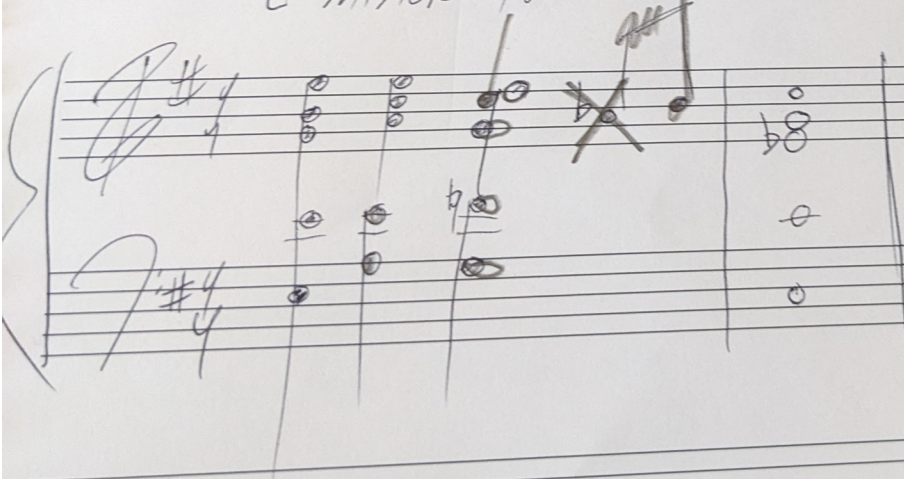


(1st movement)

second

slow →

E minor to C minor



2ND movement

3rd

Modulation Bridges

