IN HER FROWN

for two amplified sopranos

Simon Steen-Andersen 2007
Staging:

Each singer sits at a table with a headset microphone (plus a microphone on the table if possible) and a volume pedal to control the signal.

There should preferably be 3 metres or more between the 4 positions.
Notation:

Each singer has 2 systems:

- 1) Actions: (see below).

- 2) Volume pedal: The upper line means pedal down forward (max volume), the lower line means pedal down backwards (no volume). When a sound is performed the pedal should already be in the indicated position. A glissando line means gradually changing the degree of amplification. This should be done in accordance with the sounding result so that the crescendo/diminuendo or spatial movement is equally distributed (the sensitivity of the volume pedal is in this sense not linear).

Amplification: The singer should wear a very sensitive headset microphone. A separate microphone for the table actions is preferred, and if played without it, the singer has to move her head close to the table actions in order to amplify them through the headset microphone. The amplification should be rather extreme turning a *ppp* into a *forte*, when the volume pedal is set to max. For avoiding "accidents" (making a *forte* sound when the amplification is on max) a limiter could be used in the setup.

Dynamics: The basic idea is, that the soft sounds are amplified and the loud sound are unamplified. Often the soft sounds will result louder than the unamplified sounds performed with maximum energy. At places, where the volume pedal changes quickly, it may be an advantage to just read the dynamics, where fx *ppp* actions always mean amplified and *mf* actions always mean unamplified.

Objects: On the table there should be a pen, a writing block, a piece of A4 paper with 8 holes in it (an "air-guiro"), and soprano 1 should also have a normal piece of A4 paper (for rattling extremely soft close to the microphone). The writing block should be positioned horizontally and it is used for scribbling with the pen and for ripping off slices of paper. Soprano 1 should prepare 28 slices and soprano 2 should prepare 31 slices for ripping off the first and second sheet of the block, by ripping a couple of cm. and bending the paper upwards.

"Air-guiro": A piece of A4 paper is folded 4 times (on the long length), and a triangle with sides of 1-1,5 cm. is cut into the folded side, approx. 5 cm. from one of the ends. When folded out the paper has 8 holes. The air-guiro is played by blowing on a the holes while moving the paper sideward. When blowing, the distance between the mouth and the paper decides the colour of the sound. The distance will be indicated as either approx. 3 cm. or 0 cm. or there will be indicated a gradual transition between the two. In *fff* (as loud as possible) the focus of the air stream should be adjusted to give the loudest possible sound. When breathing in through the air-guiro is indicated, the mouth position should be found, where the sound of the holes is heard the most. The air-guiro paper is also used for other sounds, such as a whistle tone produced by blowing a very soft and focused air stream on the paper edge or simply a noise sound by blowing less focused and a bit harder.

The text: The text is never performed in a way where it is completely understandable, but nevertheless there should be put a big effort into trying to make it understandable (although it won't be no matter the effort). There are two basic ways of performing text: 1) Speaking with completely closed mouth (mainly soprano 1). 2) Speaking without air, doing an exaggerated mime, where only the consonant-clicks and other attacks are left (mainly soprano 2). There will also once be normal speaking, but covered by a loud tone (the tone of censorship in the american talk shows). Also isolated phonemes are used. The text will be printed in the program and when knowing or reading the text, one should be more or less able to follow (this doesn't mean though, that there should be a special lightning for the audience being able to read – the text can also be read before or after).
Notation continued:

Action areas:

- Air-guiro paper actions
- Nose actions
- "Inside/outside scale"
- Mouth actions
- Table actions

"Inside/outside scale":

- "lungs" "glottal click" "palate click" "vacuum T" "teeth" "vacuum B" "nails" / "finger tips"

- "Lungs": Breathing sound coming from the lungs or deep from the throat.
- "Glottal click": Single glottal click without any air, with the mouth/throat pos. like saying “ha”.
- "Palate click": The very first part of a “g” sound without any air. A normal “g” sound is written with a capital G to avoid confusion.
- "Vacuum T": Same tongue pos. as when say T, but simply performed by moving the tongue away from the palate. A normal “t” sound is written with a capital T to avoid confusion.
- "Teeth": The sound of the teeth coming together – only used in very soft dynamics.
- "Vacuum B": Moving the lips slightly apart with the position of a B and with a slight sub pressure. The normal “b” sound is written with capital B to avoid confusion.
- "Nails": The clicking sound of one nail sliding over another nail (performed with one hand). The sound should be performed close to the microphone. The nail sign is also used in combination with the teeth meaning to slide the thumbnail over an upper front tooth also producing a click sound.
- "Finger tips": Let the thumb tip and middle finger tip hit each other rather hard just outside the mouth (being open) producing a soft resonance in the mouth.

Signs:

- Pitch  
  Spoken with closed mouth
- Percussive sound  
  Spoken normally
- Noise sound  
  Spoken without air (exaggerated)
- Whistle / whistle-tone  
  Move air-guiro in the direction of the arrow
- Highest possible tone  
  Gradual transition
- Lowest possible tone  
  Breath in / out
- Used for whistle-tones  
  Hyperventilation / rapid panting
- produced inside the mouth  
  Tenuto pos. – quasi legato to the next sound
  - Staccato always as short as possible
In Her Frown

To convey information about; make known; impart: communicated her views to the office.

To reveal clearly; manifest: her disapproval communicated itself in her frown.

To become aware of, know, or identify by the means of the senses: I perceived an object looming through the mist.

To recognize, discern, envision, or understand: I perceive a note of sarcasm in your voice.

This is a very nice idea but I perceive difficulties putting it into practice.

www.dictionary.com, communicate/perceive
In Her Frown was written for Royaumont 2007

Dr. Klemann gewidmet

Duration: Approx. 11 minutes.
In Her Frown
for two amplified sopranos

Simon Steen-Anderson 2007

PAPER WITH HOLES
blow while passing all 8 holes with a sideward movement
blow 2-3 cm. away from paper,
breath in in every pause

\( \text{snd.} \quad \text{x}20 \)
\( \text{\textit{fff}} \quad \text{(poss!)} \)
\( \text{(=} \text{unamplified}) \)

PAPER WITH HOLES
blow 2-3 cm. away from paper, breath in in every pause

\( \text{\textit{fff}} \quad \text{\textit{fff}} \quad \text{\textit{fff}} \)
\( \text{(poss!)} \)
\( \text{(=} \text{unamplified}) \)

(blow while passing all 8 holes with a sideward movement)
(only 4 holes when playing 16th notes)

(use up all air!)

catch breath... (audible because of amplification)

(breath in naturally - as before)

(breath in naturally - as before) \( \downarrow \)
("rattle" a (new when possible later on) piece of paper very close to the microphone - so soft that only a deep rumbling effect is sounding)
S.1

S.2

whistle tone by blowing a soft focused airstream on the edge of the paper

PEN ON PAPER

(scribble up and down)
(transform to air sound by focusing less and blowing more)

(whistle tone on paper edge - left side)

(whistle tone on paper edge)

(whistle tone - left side)

(whistle tone)

(NOSE)

(generative transition from air-noise to a whistled pitch)
to convey information about

hyperventilation/rapid panting

(never vibrato)

(pat mouth)

("glotal click")

(never vibrato)

("glotal click")

("glotal click")

(rattle paper->)

(sing while making a whistle tone on the paper edge, resulting in kind of distortion of the tone)

(pen on paper)

(pen on paper)

(hyperventilation/rapid panting)


\[
\begin{align*}
\text{to convey information about} & \\
\text{(hyperventilation/rapid panting)} & \\
\text{(never vibrato)} & \\
\text{(pat mouth)} & \\
\text{("glotal click")} & \\
\text{("glotal click")} & \\
\text{("glotal click")} & \\
\text{("glotal click")} & \\
\text{(rattle paper->)} & \\
\text{(turn page)} & \\
\text{(never vibrato)} & \\
\text{("glotal click")} & \\
\text{("glotal click")} & \\
\text{(turn page)} & \\
\end{align*}
\]
S.1

118

(pltrgs*)

h' h' g' t

Convey

ppppp

ppp

S.2

118 (lungs*)

PEN ON PAPER

S.1

123

"quasi exaggerated mime"

S.2

123

"quasi exaggerated mime"

S.1

129

S.1

129

("quasi exagerated mime")

("quasi exagerated mime")

But I Per

g' g' t g' h'
("e" as in "the")

S.1
157

(th)e th

pppp

Com Mu Ni Ca

S.2

(fingers)

b b

ppppp

S.1
157

(fingers)

b b

(ppp)

S.2

(fingers+)

(m) (resonance)

b b

ppppp

S.1
163

to convey in formation about

TeD'heViev S To

PPPPP

S.2

PPPP

PEN ON PAPER

(as fast as possible)

(ppp)

(b)

PPPP

S.1
163

to convey in formation about

TeD'heViev S To

PPPPP

S.2

PPPP

PEN ON PAPER

(as fast as possible)

PPPP

(b)

PPPP

S.1
167

(whistle highest possible tone)

PPPP

(b)

PPPP

S.2

(whistle tone produced inside mouth)

PPPP

PPPP

But I Per Ceive Dif Fi Cul Ties
(rattle paper)

(pppppp)

im part make known

(pent/o/r)

(PEN ON PAPER)

']].

"quasi exagerated mime"

ComMuNi CaTedHer

S.1

S.2
(breath in)

(beat paper strip)

(breath in)

(blow on edge of paper strip)

(blow on edge of paper strip)

(breathe in)

(rattle paper)

(this is a very)

nice idea

but I perceive

difficulties putting it into
(should be spoken just so soft, that it is still not quite understandable because of the loud tone of S.2)

("sinus-like" - so loud that the text spoken by S.1 is barely audible and understandable - not unlike the beep tone of talk-show censorkship...)

(whistle inward)

(turn page)
*) Next 5 measures: try to make the resulting sentence “I perceived an object looming through the mist” as understandable as possible.

") Next 5 measures: try to make the resulting sentence “I perceived an object looming through the mist” as understandable as possible.
S.1

pppppp

S.2

pppp

S.1

ppp

S.2

ppp

S.1

pppppp

S.2

But I perceive

But I PerCeVe

S.1

pppppp

S.2

ppp
cover mouth with 1 finger
to change the colour of the
noise - as if a slow melodi
cover mouth
with 1 finger — uncovered

cover mouth with 1 finger
to change the colour of the
noise - as if a slow melodi

PutTingIt In To PEN

PutTingIt In To PEN
increase the force with which the fingers are pressed against the mouth to let less and less air in, and at the same time increase the force of breathing in, until the maximum force is used and practically no air is passing.