

—Shirish Korde—

—RASA—

music from a chamber opera for soprano, chamber ensemble,
choir, computer generated tape and ten actors

Libretto: Lynn Kremer Babcock, Shirish Korde

Director: Lynn Kremer Babcock

Performers:

Maria Tegzes, Soprano

Jean DeMart, Flute, Alto Flute, Piccolo

Geoff Burleson, Piano

Dean Anderson, Percussion

Carol Lieberman, Violin

Patrick Jordan, Viola

Jan Pfeiffer, Cello

Choir:

Amy Brogna

Maria Ferrante

Elissa Gotha

Sylvia Irving

Jonathan Barnhart

Matt Cavanaugh

Ray Lustig

Mel Ona

Jared Skowron

Pete Sweeney

Tony Wolf

Justin Wolosz

Voice over: Jennifer Kaplan

Pianist on Tornado Dance Tape: Kathleen Supove

—TENDERNESS OF CRANES—

Jean DeMart, Flute

— RASA —

1.	PROLOGUE	5:53	9.	LIGHT	1:44
	*Ensemble, Tape			Soprano Solo	
2.	THE DARKNESS OF NIGHT	3:16	10.	O DEATH!	3:16
	Soprano and *Ensemble			Soprano, *Ensemble, Tape	
3.	WHEELCHAIR DANCE	0:52	11.	YAMA (THE MURDER)	1:17
	Flute/Piccolo, Piano, Percussion			Soprano, *Ensemble	
4.	LULLABY	1:57	12.	KRURARI	3:07
	Soprano, Piano, Vibraphone			Soprano, Choir	
5.	WE MURDER OURSELVES	3:28	13.	I WANT THEE	2:41
	Soprano, Tape			Soprano, *Ensemble	
6.	THE CLAY PITCHER (RIVER)	3:21	14.	TORNADO DANCE	3:50
	Choir, Piccolo, Piano, Vibraphone			Piano, Tape	
7.	THE DAY IS NO MORE	1:57	15.	EPILOGUE: WONDERS OF FLOWERS	6:48
	Soprano, Flute, Piano, Percussion			Soprano, Flute, Piano, Percussion	
8.	PRAKASH	5:38	16.	TENDERNESS OF CRANES	9:59
	Piano, Percussion, Tape			Jean DeMart, flute	
Total Playing Time					59:01

***Ensemble:** flute (alto flute, piccolo); violin, viola cello, piano, percussion (vibraphone, marimba, 3 tam-tams, antique cymbals, 3 suspended cymbals, 6 tom toms, 2 tablas, woodblocks)

Rasa is an Indian word, derived from Sanskrit, that refers to the experience of ecstasy in art—to the feeling performers seek to rouse in their audience, and the emotional intoxication they themselves attain in the process. According to Indian aesthetic theory, there are nine *rasas*, or emotional states: love, courage, loathing, anger, mirth, terror, pity, surprise and compassion. Shirish Korde's *Rasa*, adapted from Bharati Mukherjee's 1989 novel *Jasmine*, chronicles the odyssey of a young Indian woman, an émigré to America (like Mukherjee herself), who discovers her capacity—the capacity in all of us for a wide variety of states of feeling, roles, identities.

The first full-scale production of the opera, directed by Lynn Kremer Babcock, used four elements, music, dance, text and projections, to cut across the expanse of Mukherjee's amazingly compact novel. Mukherjee moves from the Punjab village of Hasnapur to New York's Upper West Side to Baden, Iowa, as her heroine, Jasmine, moves from life to life, identity to identity; the opera's libretto (by Babcock and Korde), dense, non-linear, juxtaposes shards of the narrative to reflect the evolution of the protagonist. Musically and visually, *Rasa* completes the collage effect of the text: Korde and Babcock borrow from a range of styles, both eastern and western, to reflect Jasmine's personal and cultural passage from her Indian roots through the urban and rural landscapes to her adopted country, America. The score of *Rasa* calls for soprano, chamber ensemble, choir and tape. The composer includes fragments of a Vedic chant and a traditional Tuva song from central Asia, both manipulated with computers; and (in musical segments not included on this recording) a Balinese Arja melody, a North Indian drum composition, Dizzy Gillespie's "Night in Tunisia," and "Awara Hoon," an amiable slice of nonsense pop by The Three Moustaphas. The influence of Balinese music can be heard in some of the instrumentation (particularly the use of percussion), and a range of avant-garde European and American musical styles are filtered throughout the opera. Babcock's direction evoked, at different moments, Balinese, Javanese and Filipino movement; Japanese Suzuki technique, the American director Robert Wilson, and the Québécois theatre troupe Carbone 14; and (in the projections) the work of such artists as Anish Kapoor, Jasper Johns,

Ellsworth Kelly, Morris Louis, Rothko, and Kandinsky. Other voices resonate through the text: the Indian poet and novelist Rabindranath Tagore, the American poet Robert Bly's translation of *The Kabir Book*, a Sanskrit poem by Magha.

Rasa is faithful to the story Mukherjee tells in *Jasmine*. In Hasnapur, an old astrologer tells seven-year-old Jyoti that her fate is widowhood and exile; the girl scorns his predictions. Then, at fourteen, obedient to her strict Hindu upbringing and the wishes of her family, she marries Prakash, who renames her Jasmine to sever her connection with her old-world traditions and bring her into the modern world. The Astrologer's words echo when Prakash, who is preparing to study in the United States, is gunned down by a terrorist. Jasmine decides to complete his mission and travel to America, where she plans to kill herself. But her rape by Half-Face, the captain of the ship which carried her out of Europe, brings her in touch with a violent side she never suspected in herself. She murders him in revenge. Then suddenly the destination of her journey alters. She's bound now, no longer for a death that will align her fate with Prakash's, but for a series of explorations of other roles, other women she finds lurking within her. As she has already discovered, Jasmine was hidden inside Jyoti, and Kali (the vengeful goddess she calls on when she stabs Half-Face) was hidden inside Jasmine.

First she becomes Jase, the nickname bestowed on her by Taylor, the Columbia University professor who hires her to take care of his wife's adopted daughter. Taylor falls in love with Jase, but when she sees Sukkhi, Prakash's killer, selling hot dogs on a New York street, she runs far away to Baden, Iowa. There she becomes Jane, the last of her identities. Jane lives with a middle-aged banker named Bud, whose fate eerily echoes Prakash's: both are victims of gunfire. Bud has survived though, and is confined to a wheelchair. Madly in love with Jane, Bud gets her pregnant and pleads with her to marry him. But the man she ends up with is Taylor, who leaves his wife, finds Jase in Iowa, and restores her to the happiest of her multiple identities. Having found the means within herself to adjust to the crazily varied circumstances of her life, having swung from preordained destiny to self-determination, Jase leaves Iowa with Taylor, "greedy with wants and reckless from hope," in love with him and with the "adventure, risk, transformation" through which she has redefined herself as a twenty-four-year-old American woman.

(1) PROLOGUE

A bowed vibraphone note played pianissimo, much like a drone, opens the opera, followed by fragments of a Vedic chant for one voice (the singer is Subhalakshmi) but transformed by computer to suggest a multiplicity of voices. The prologue music, which combines computer-generated tape, instrumental interjections and choral exclamations, introduces the musical material for the entire work. On stage, the protagonist is represented by three performers—a



Prologue: "The new geometry...."

singer, a dancer, and an actress. She is also represented by a puppet (which is manipulated at different times by the singer and by members of the ensemble) which depicts the seven-year-old Punjabi child who has become a medium for the Astrologer's predictions and out of whom so many identities are pulled. The

Prologue introduces us first to the ensemble. Emerging from a tunnel of smoke, they float across the stage, figures from some ancient Indian tapestry come to life. The singer Jasmine is wheeled on stage, immobile. She has not yet been animated by the several identities that will spring up from inside her; she's the raw material of the opera, awaiting her first aria. A voice-over quotes the epigraph to Mukherjee's novel (from James Gleick's *Chaos*): "The new geometry mirrors a universe that is rough, not rounded, scabrous, not smooth. It is a geometry of the pitted, pocked, and broken up, the twisted, tangled, and intertwined."

As the music shifts from Sanskrit to Mongolian styles (the sampled voices of a Tuva choir) the Astrologer appears, twirling a temple umbrella, under a banyan tree impersonated by half a dozen actors, projections playing on their bodies like tattoos. The child Jyoti receives his words, and rejects them.

(2) DARKNESS OF NIGHT

*The darkness of night is coming along fast.
The shadows of love close in the body and mind.
Open the window to the west and disappear in the air.
Near your breastbone there is an open flower.
Drink the honey that is around the flower.
Waves are coming in:
There is so much magnificence near the ocean!
Listen: Sound of seashells! Sound of bells!*

Jasmine stands at a window, suggested by a frame suspended in space, like the open landscape of her future. She holds a daisy, the hopeful lover's simple means for telling her fortune. At the end of the aria the lights dim and now it is she who seems to be suspended, dropping into her own inner darkness. Four fortune tellers appear—four men, each plying his trade with a different set of instruments (taro cards, dice, joss sticks, a mobile), each representing one of the four men in Jasmine's life. (The actors who play the fortune tellers will reappear in the roles of Prakash, Half-Face, Taylor and Bud.)

(3) (4) WHEELCHAIR DANCE AND LULLABY

*You know that the seed is inside the horse-chestnut tree;
And inside the seed there are blossoms of the tree,
And the chestnuts, and the shade.
So inside the seed there is the human body again.*



The Wheelchair Dance

"Bud's a small-town banker," Jasmine explains. "He's not allowed to do impulsive things." The saucy tone of the Wheelchair Dance, a wildly unconventional pas de deux for a dancer and an actor in a wheelchair, mischievously undercuts these words: she whirls him around, hooking herself onto him and the chair, at one point lying prone across his stooped shoulders, her hands ringed around the handlebars like those of an athlete on the parallel bars. Evidently Bud

has allowed himself an impulse or two—she's carrying his baby.

Jasmine sings the Lullaby to the puppet, both recalling her own childhood lullabies and anticipating those she will sing to her own child. The beautiful lyrics of the song remind us of the major theme of the opera: within each of us is contained the seed of all the selves we will ever become. The image of the unborn child, the secret hearer of her lullaby, echoes the image of the seed of the future the astrologer glimpsed in Jyoti, and the other futures, the other Jyotis he failed to see: Kali, Jase, Jane.

The music of the Wheelchair Dance returns after the Lullaby, restoring the playful mood.

(5) WE MURDER OURSELVES



We Murder Ourselves

On nights like this, the farmers say you can practically hear the corn and beans ripping their way through the ground. This night I feel torn open like the hot, dry soil, parched.

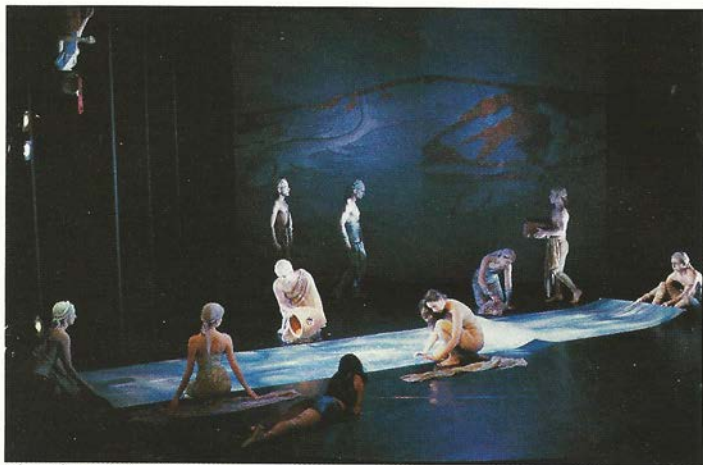
There are no harmless, compassionate ways to remake oneself. We murder who we were so we can rebirth ourselves in the images of dreams.

Jasmine says that, as a child, she always felt protected by she-ghosts, the faces of old women she saw in the ancient, gnarled trees of Hasnapur. The steamy Iowa nights recall these specters to her: draped in veils like ghostly brides, as inward-gazing and otherworldly as the women in a Delvaux painting, they weave across her path. (Here the staging alludes to the moment in Robert Wilson's *Alceste* where the multiple images of the dead Alceste appeared, drifting up from the underworld.) The she-ghosts are both reminders of Jasmine's Hindu past and suggestions of the selves that have streamed out of her in her post-Punjab existence. "My grandmother may have named me Jyoti, Light," Jasmine says, "but in surviving I was already Jane, a fighter and adapter." As we hear "We murder who we were so we can rebirth ourselves in the images of dreams," Jasmine takes a razor to her hair, lopping off the soft, traditional Indian image and adopting a New Wave style better suited to both her new life in the west and her discovery that inside the obedient girl from Hasnapur lies a guerrilla fighter, an instinctual survivor, a cultural adapter.

(6) THE CLAY PITCHER (RIVER)

*When a clay pitcher breaks
You see that the air inside is the same as outside.
Take a pitcher full of water and set it down on the water -
Now it has water inside and outside.
We mustn't give it a name
Lest silly people talk about the body and soul.
Inside the clay jug there are canyons and pine mountains,
And the maker of canyons and pine mountains!
All seven oceans, and hundred million stars.
The acid that tests gold is there*

And the one who judges jewels.
And the music from the strings no one touches,
And the source of all water.



The Clay Pitcher (River)

Visually and musically, *The Clay Pitcher (River)* is possibly the most exquisite moment in *Rasa*. The Vedic chant returns here, considerably altered. The setting is the river in Hasnapur where the women of the village wash their hair and bring their pitchers to be filled. Two actors spread a silk across the stage diagonally, rippling it gently into the light to suggest the sun-dappled river. Jasmine, moving in slow motion, winds her way downstage, below the silk, kneels, unwraps the sarong that circles her like a winding sheet, loosens her hair, and leans into the silk, her hair cascading onto her hand. Meanwhile other villagers have taken their stations around the river, completing their own daily tasks. This extraordinarily sensuous image suggests an Indian variation on a Breughel painting—though we

know we're watching a communal activity, the figures are private, closed off from each other in the mysterious intimacy of their individual tasks.

The lyrics concern the puzzle of the self: "When a clay pitcher breaks, you see that the air inside is the same as outside." Each of the roles Jasmine adopts is more than just a mask she puts on, camouflaging her true nature so she can survive in unfamiliar circumstances. Every time she shifts identities, she locates a new self inside. The outside and the inside are in sync—the body and the soul are two manifestations of the same essence. The pitcher contains entire worlds yet to be revealed, like the seed inside the horse-chestnut tree, like the untutored child who hears the astrologer's words. "If you want the truth, I'll tell you the truth," the text continues after this piece is over. "Listen to the secret sound, the real sound, which is inside you."

(7) THE DAY IS NO MORE

The day is no more; the shadow is upon the earth.

I go to the stream to fill my pitcher.

The evening air is eager with the sad music of the water.

In the lonely lane there is no passerby;

The wind is up; ripples are rampant.

I know not if I shall come back.

I know not whom I shall chance to meet.

There at the fording in the little boat

The unknown man plays his lute.

Still in Punjab, her future unknown, Jasmine contemplates the open path before her as she dips her pitcher in the river. The water with which she fills the jug suggests the new lives, new identities that will flow from and around her.

(8) PRAKASH

Prakash marries Jyoti, gives her a new name, and teaches her independence and self-reliance. But Jasmine has not yet learned how to murder her old selves; she feels, she admits, "suspended between worlds . . . Jyoti, Jasmine, I shuttled between identities." The words of the astrologer are still in the back of her mind, but they've faded; he slips upstage, ominous beneath his parasol, repeating the

prophecy, but this time his words are garbled. When Prakash reveals his plan for emigrating to America, Jasmine rejoices: "If we could just get away from India, then all fates would be canceled. We'd start with new fates, new starts." But then Sukkhi appears, disguised as a street vendor, and kills Prakash before Jasmine's astonished eyes. And thus the first of the Astrologer's predictions, widowhood, abruptly comes true.



Rooster Dance

(9) LIGHT

*Light, my light, the world-filling light, eye-kissing light.
The night is dark, and long . . .
Hours go by . . .
Fear goes through me . . .*

Prakash is followed by a classical Javanese dance, choreographed to a Balinese melody which stylizes Jasmine's mourning for her murdered husband. *Light*, the subsequent piece, is a transitional aria for Jasmine, who searches in the darkness of her grief and fear for the inner light that will guide her to the next station in her life. It turns out to be America (exile, the astrologer's second prophecy). She arrives on Half-Face's ship, and once there, he rapes her.

(10) O DEATH!

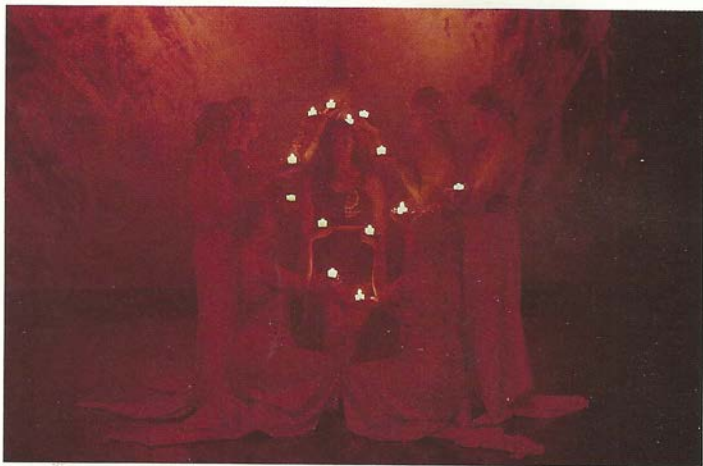
*Death, death, the last fulfillment of life,
Death, my death, come and whisper to me!
The flowers are woven and the garland is ready for the bridegroom.*



The Murder

*After the wedding the bride shall leave her home
And meet her lord in the solitude of night.*

Another transformation of the Vedic chant links this piece to *Clay Pitcher*, reminding us of the commonality of inside and outside, of the integrity and completeness of each of Jasmine's identities. In *O Death!* she locates Kali, the avenging goddess, inside her. While Half-Face lies asleep, she slices her own tongue with a knife and then cuts her assailant's throat. The red blood streaming from her mouth, symbolized here, as it often is in Asian theatre, by a red ribbon, both allies her with Kali (who is typically represented with a crimson tongue) and underscores her identification with the violence she inflicts on Half-Face.



Yama—Candle Dance

(11) YAMA (THE MURDER)

*I said my prayers for the dead, clutching my Ganapati.
I thought: the pitcher is broken.
Yama, the lord of death,
Who had wanted me,
Who had courted me,
And whom I'd flirted with,
Had now deserted me.*

Members of the ensemble perform a candle dance; as Jasmine begins to sing, they frame her with their candles. Having immersed herself in violence, she is now surrounded by death; she is "walking death. Death incarnate." The broken pitcher reveals what we've already learned - that inside and outside, body and soul, are one. Once more we hear the Vedic chant.

(12) KRURARI

*Krurari-kari kor eka-
karakah karika-karah
korakakara-karakah
karirah karkaro 'rka-ruk*

As in *The Clay Pitcher*, we hear a variation on the Vedic chant from the Prologue. Figures parade across the smoke-filled stage. They look like a procession of the dead, the casualties of some unidentified war, dragged and piggybacked by survivors. But in fact they are the half-world of the realm of travel, emigrants who creep in shadow from the cultures they still cling to into new and frightening ones. The text, Jasmine's voice-over tells us:

We are refugees and mercenaries and guest workers; you see us sleeping in airport lounges, you watch us unwrapping the last of our native foods, unrolling our prayer rugs, reading our holy books. We are the outcasts and deportees, strange pilgrims visiting outlandish shrines, landing at the end of tarmacs, ferried in old army trucks where we are roughly handled and taken to roped-off corners of waiting rooms where barely wakened customs guards await their

bribe. We are dressed in shreds of national costumes. We ask only one thing: to be allowed to land, to pass through, to continue. We pass through wars, through plagues. I phantom my way through three continents.



Krugari: The Procession of the Dead

(13) I WANT THEE

*That I want thee, only thee—
Let my heart repeat without end.
All desires that distract me, day and night,
Are false and empty to the core.
As the night keeps hidden in its gloom the petition for light,
In the depth of my unconsciousness rings the cry:
That I want thee, only thee.*

The Taylor section of the opera begins with Dizzy Gillespie's *Night in Tunisia*, a raucous and invigorating setting for Jasmine's (now Jase's) love affair with the world she identifies with her New York employer. "I liked the name he gave me: Jase," she tells us. "Jase was a woman who bought herself spangled heels and silk chartreuse pants." The ensemble swings Jase in her new American gear on a moving clothes rack. Suddenly the rack turns into the revolving door of a department store, framing each new consumer. This idiosyncratic entrance reflects a unique way of existing in the world. Jase is enthralled by the infinite variety of America, by the idea of options, which echoes her own experience of pulling role after role out of herself. She's enchanted by the revolving door of American popular culture.

Jase adores Taylor, but she sees Sukkhi on the street and, terrified ("He knows me . . . he knows I'm here"), makes her plans to move far away, into the heartland. Taylor begs her to stay with him, serenading her ("If you are in love, then why are you asleep?/If you have found him, then give yourself to him"), and Jase responds with "I Want Thee." It is the declaration of her love for him, but it remains a cry hidden in the depth of her unconsciousness. She flees.

(14) TORNADO

Tornado is a whirling dervish dance. Taylor has tracked Jasmine down in Iowa. The postcards he sends her anticipate his arrival ("Taylor's car is gobbling up the highways"), while Bud begs her, his Jane, pregnant with his child, to marry him.

Which path should she take? She sees herself as a tornado, bringing confusion and leaving destruction wherever she goes. "How many more shapes are in me," she wonders, "how many more selves, how many more husbands? . . . I cry through all the lives I've given birth to, cry for all my dead."

(15) EPILOGUE

As last Jasmine embraces Taylor and California as her next fate, and Jase as her chosen self. Taylor promises her they'll be an unorthodox family—a unit that fits the structure of a new world operating on new geometric principles ("The new geometry mirrors a universe that is rough, not rounded . . ."). Jasmine acquiesces;

she accepts the waywardness and unpredictability of her life. "Time will tell if I am a tornado, rubble-maker, arising from nowhere and disappearing into a cloud," she decides; for the moment, she can be at peace. The Epilogue begins with a flute solo that gradually takes on an additional layer (the soprano voice). The ensemble executes a delicate ritual, a flower dance in which each dancer fills a clay bowl



Epilogue: Wonders of Flowers

with petals from a pitcher downstage, then Jasmine glides up, sarong trailing behind like the train of a wedding gown, to join the others in carpeting the stage with the blossoms. We hear, in voice-over:

In the morning I woke up and found my garden full with wonders of flowers. At last the notes of his flute come in, and I cannot stop from dancing around on the floor . . . Something inside me has reached to the place where the world is breathing. The flags we cannot see are flying there. This tune has truth in it.

New life, new hope, new freedom have arrived with Jasmine's decision to return to Taylor. The final words of the text, spoken live by Jasmine, are "Where else have you heard a sound like this?" The mysterious quaver of the flute and the soprano voice convey the sound deep inside Jasmine, the sound of the self that, after the turmoil of her many lives, brings her the first fulfillment she has ever known. It is the song of her essence, which Taylor's love has permitted her to reach at last.

—*Steve Vineberg*

—MUSIC FROM RASA—

Shirish Korde's music from *Rasa* represents, in musical form, the most concise synopsis of both the narrative of *Rasa*, as well as the musical and dramatic experience of the opera.

The six main arias are scored for soprano, flute (alto flute/piccolo), piano, percussion, violin, viola, violoncello, choir and computer generated electro-acoustic sound. The first song, *The Darkness of Night*, follows the opening prologue. It is important to note that the pitch, rhythmic, timbral, and dynamic sources of the entire opera are contained in the opening prologue. Furthermore, Korde is masterful in his melding of timbre, rhythm, and harmony. The electro-acoustic part reinforces the connections between the harmonic and rhythmic complexities of the work by pointing to the spectral components of specific sonorities as they are transformed and incorporated into timbral and, or, rhythmic elements in the parts of the traditional instruments as the composition develops. The sensitive listener will immediately hear connections between the opening harmonic materials of the prologue and those contained in *The Darkness of Night*, an all interval set. Jasmine's song, replete with wide registral leaps and great dynamic fluctuations bases its material on a linearization of harmonic material previously introduced. The progressively increasing complexity of the vedic chant harmonization first heard in the prologue is continued through *The Darkness of Night*. In addition, throughout the opening aria we hear the alto flute cutting through the rich harmonic texture of the other instruments. It fractures rhythmic elements of the chant and, as the other instruments of the ensemble become progressively more active, a Boulezian texture results reminding us of the instrumental accompaniment of the chant during the opening prologue.

The *Wheelchair Dance/lullaby* follows *The Darkness of Night*. Its regular tala-like rhythms of two's and three's sharply contrast the preceding song. The opening chordal texture emphasized by percussion receives more emphasis through the gamelan-like orchestration which reinforces those rhythms. We hear a very traditional sounding composition in rounded binary form. Tonally it is equally traditional, beginning in g minor with the contrasting middle section in c minor. This c minor section constitutes the lullaby Jasmine sings to her still unborn child. That lullaby, signaled by the piano solo, states the entire premise of the opera in as

succinct a manner as possible—a seed inside which begets the blossom which becomes the individual—at which time the process begins all over again. The seeds and the blossoms are metaphors for the reincarnation of the individual who appears again and again, each time slightly altered, new. The tonal framework of the movement is a reinterpretation of the all-interval set. The metaphor is carried out musically, as well as in the story.

The River is again a parody and another transformation of the opening vedic chant. This time a G “overtone” chord is suspended throughout the scene while the piccolo and percussion parts intone musical fragments from the chant four octaves apart. The piano then begins doubling both parts and the surreal medieval quality of the composition prepares us for the Orff-like entrance of voices. This entire part of the composition is based on the repetition and reorchestration of the opening instrumental part.

We hear alternations between instruments, individual actors and instruments, actors and choir, and actors, instruments and choir, while the drone continues on. Finally, the repetition is broken by the entrance of Jasmine declaring “the day is no more.” We are returned to the dream-like atmosphere of *The Darkness of Night*. We are reminded of the fragility of our lives as the texture of the song grows slowly more regular and what was a twelve-tone tonality, created from the original all interval set, becomes a succession of polytonal chords fading into the distance as the song ends. The semitone voice leading of these chords is a premonition for the next aria in the cycle.

Oh Death and *Yama*, which are played “attacca,” represent an obvious conflation of the eastern and western musical influences in this work. While *Oh Death* can be heard as an alternation of sources derived from the vedic chant and the all-interval set which permeates the composition, *Yama* becomes a synthesis of the two. The recurring vedic influenced rhythm continues to be a forceful element but instead of its usual monodic or modal harmonization Korde harmonizes it initially in *Yama* with the tetrachord B^b-E^b-E-A, a subset of the original hexachord. This is particularly interesting at this stage of the composition as it emphasizes the symmetric structure of the collection as a metaphor for the next “reincarnation” of Jasmine. We can hear the collection as two perfect fourths symmetrically divided by the minor second or two tritones symmetrically divided by the minor second (A-E^b-E-B^b), the seed within the tree. *Yama* ends with a linearization of the all-

interval set and the vedic chant in the lowest register of the piano reminding us of the source from which all the tonal diversity of this composition has been derived.

I Want Thee, returns to the vocabulary and textures of the opening aria in the collection. Like the *The Darkness of Night* it sets up a distinctly mysterious modern tone as the soprano returns to the jagged lines and wide leaps so indicative of that style. Yet, there is something very different about what takes place here. The rhythm is more directional, the yearning of the vocal part is reflected in each of the instrumental parts. The harmonic rhythm of the work moves at a faster pace too and the imitation among the different parts becomes more secure. While this aria completes the Kabir cycle, a cycle of six arias within the whole opera, the opera is not over. The sense of completion here is only contextual. Musically, however, we have come full circle and we can appreciate these arias as a collection from the whole of *Rasa*.

Technically, it is important to recognize that any operatic undertaking of this magnitude calls on its composer to be as versatile as possible. Shirish Korde has exploited this aspect of opera and more. He has told us the story of Jasmine, ordered his musical materials in such a way as to allow him to seamlessly move from culture to culture, medium to medium, and style to style. He has done this with elegance and grace. Most of all Shirish Korde has done all this with musical excitement and integrity while being absolutely faithful to the libretto of *Rasa*, allowing us to experience each of the different rasas within *Rasa*.

—Noel Zahler

晨鶴
之醒
如笛之音
如揮之心



Morning Crane (*inspired by Tenderness of Cranes*)—Yin Peet (1994)

—TENDERNESS OF CRANES—

(1990)

Tenderness of Cranes was commissioned by flutist Jean DeMart who has not only mastered the demanding techniques of contemporary flute playing, but has also incorporated many special techniques derived from the Japanese shakuhachi. It was inspired by a traditional Japanese piece: *Tsuru No Sugamori*. The techniques utilized in the piece are derived from the techniques traditionally used in shakuhachi playing: breathy sound, pitch bending, variation of vibrato speed, and flutter-tonguing, in combination with contemporary flute techniques such as the use of special fingerings for microtonal and timbral variations and multiphonics. The piece works on two levels: fragments of the traditional shakuhachi melody alternate with the commentaries which sometimes precede, follow, or parenthesize motives from the Japanese melody. The two strands converge into a single complex layer at the concluding moments of the piece when air sound, pitch fragments, and multiphonics are brought together to form a complex continuous texture.

—SK

Tenderness of Cranes was a winner in the Lee Ettelson Composer's competition, sponsored by Composers, Inc., and in the 1992 National Flute Association New Music Competition.

SHIRISH KORDE'S compositions, which include works for solo instruments, voice, chamber ensembles, electronic media and music theatre, have been performed at festivals and concerts throughout the United States, Europe, Australia, and South America. Recordings of his compositions including *Constellations*, for saxophone quartet, *Spectra* for trombone and tape and *Goldbach's Conjecture* for flute are available on the Spectrum label. The *Chamber Piece for Six Soloists* and *Goldbach's Conjecture* (version with tape), performed by Pierre-Yves Artaud is recorded on Neuma compact discs. His recent solo flute piece, *Tenderness of Cranes*, which won the Ettleson composition prize and the National Flute Association award for New Music for Flute, has been recorded by flutists Pat Spencer, Jean DeMart, and Claudia Anderson. *Time Grids* for guitar and computer generated tape, performed by David Tanenbaum will appear on a recording of contemporary solo works for guitar.

He has received commissions from soloists and ensembles specializing in new music and has been the recipient of grants and awards for his compositions from the Fuller Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Massachusetts Council on the Arts, Artists Foundation, Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, Meet the Composer, Holy Cross College, Composers Inc., and the National Flute Association. His chamber opera **RASA**, commissioned by the opera program of the National Endowment for the Arts and the New England Foundation for the Arts was performed in the Boston Area and in Fort Worth, Texas in the spring of 1992. Performances of his works have been presented at: The International Computer Music Conference, Glasgow; Concerts TransAtlantique and the Montanea Festival, Geneva; Composer's Forum, San Francisco; The New Hampshire Music Festival-Composers Conference; Radio France, Paris; and Collaborations - Contemporary Dance and Music Festival, Washington D.C.

Currently, he is Professor and Chair of the Music Department at the College of the Holy Cross where he also co-directs the Tri-College Group for Electronic Music, a collaborative program of Clark University, Worcester Polytechnic Institute and Holy Cross, and co-directs the Holy Cross Chamber Players.

LYNN KREMER BABCOCK's works have been performed in Minneapolis, Boston, Fort Worth, Chicago, Washington D.C. and Ireland. As a director and librettist she is particularly known for the development of new plays. Representative productions include a work titled *Journeys Through Imaginary Landscapes* which was inspired by the sculpture of Isamu Noguchi, the prints of Hiroshige and by Haiku poetry. *Journeys* was granted two month-long residencies at the Smithsonian Institute and several performances at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

Babcock has received grants and awards for her work from the National Endowment for the Arts, The New England Foundation for the Arts, the Massachusetts Cultural Commission, the Worcester Arts Lottery, the Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center and Holy Cross College. Recently, Babcock returned from Micronesia where she directed a video program on the chant/dance traditions of palau which was funded by the National Endowment for the Arts/Dance Program. She has also conducted research on Javanese classical dance and Balinese *wayang topeng* (mask/dance/drama), where she studied with acclaimed mask dancer I. Gusti Ngurah Windio. She has also traveled extensively and studied the performing arts traditions of Nepal and India.

Babcock's first collaboration with composer Shirish Korde was as director of the video for *Tenderness of Cranes*, performed by Jean DeMart. Since then they have collaborated on the chamber opera *Rasa*, and presently are working with the composer on a new music-theatre piece titled *Bhima's Journey*.

Lynn Kremer Babcock is associate Professor and Chair of the Theatre Department at Holy Cross.

MARIA TEGZES, soprano, has an extensive background in the performance of opera and chamber music. She has performed with The Boston Musica Viva, the Princeton Ensemble of Princeton University and the ACCESS Chamber Ensemble, NYC. Known for her performances of contemporary music, she has sung works of Milton Babbitt, Robert Cogan, Pozzi Escot, Vivian Fine, Betsy Jolas, Earl Kim, and Jean-Claude Risset. Tegzes has received critical acclaim in the U.S. and Europe for her interpretations of contemporary music as well as opera. Her New York City appearances include performances at Merkin and Carnegie Recital Halls, Town Hall, the Miller Theatre, and CAMI Hall. Tegzes has recorded for NEUMA Records and National Public Radio.

JEAN DEMART, flutist, has consistently earned critics' praise as a versatile, imaginative, and innovative musician. Her solo performances in the United States and abroad have been centered around recently composed pieces, many of which have been written for her. Ms. DeMart, a featured soloist and chamber musician in artists' series and festivals throughout the United States, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Greece, and Holland, was first prize winner of the 1989 NACUSA Performer's Competition in Los Angeles. She has been artist/teacher for the Montanea International Chamber Music and Composer's Festival in Switzerland, the New Hampshire Summer Music Festival, and the International Music Festival at Walnut Hill in Massachusetts. Ms. DeMart has recorded Shirish Korde's *Goldbach's Conjecture* on Spectrum Records and *Chamber Music of William Grant Still* on New World Records CD. Ms. DeMart, flutist for *ALEA III* and *Lumen* in Boston, is on the faculty at Clark University and at College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, where she also performs with the Holy Cross Chamber Players.

Recording Engineer • Toby Mountain
Digital Editing • Northeastern Digital Recording, Inc.
Producer • Shirish Korde
Cover Art • Tantric Art—
symbolizing the fertilized world-egg
Design • Susan Calkins
Photography • Gayle Gleason, William G. Rynders
Notes • Steve Vineberg, Noel Zahler
Zen Drawing • Yin Peet

Actors in first production of Rasa:

Mary McGoldrick	Chris Connolly	E.J. McAdams
Maria C. Jimenez	Brian Gunn	Jen Kaplan
Mark P. Diaz	Barney Murphy	Mary C. English
Mark Gunn	Mary Sheridan	Mark Queirolo
Maryellen Gruszko	Tom Lynch	

*This project has been supported by grants from
the National Endowment for the Arts Opera Program
and the New England Foundation for the Arts.*

— Shirish Korde —

RASA a chamber opera for soprano, chamber ensemble,
choir, computer generated tape and ten actors

— Maria Tegzes, Soprano —

and

TENDERNESS OF CRANES

for solo flute

— Jeani DeMart, Flute —

Total Playing Time — 59:01



NEUMA Records

71 Maple Street, Acton, MA 01720 U.S.A.