Beyond the Aural

Towards an Intermodal Framework for the Creation and Analysis of Performed Music

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Abstract

A music performance is an environment inhabited by an ecology of modalities, and music composed for performance should be discussed in terms of the various modalities and their interdependencies. Composition and analysis have traditionally prioritised the aural and the formal and tended to ignore performance space politics, corporeality, architecture, the objecthood of instruments and the subjecthood of instrumentalists, and other non-aural elements which contribute to the concert experience. This exegesis outlines a framework for the intermodal discussion of multimodal music for performance: Post-Aural Music. In Post-Aural Music the hierarchy of elements becomes fluid, the 'aural' no longer being the assumed authority. The framework is modelled after Hans-Thies Lehmann's *Postdramatic Theatre*, an examination of modern theatre tendencies resulting from the dethroning of 'drama'. It looks to Matthias Rebstock and David Roesner's book *Composed Theatre*, an observation on how 'compositional thinking' is being applied to these other disciplines; and is illustrated by an analysis of Helmut Lachenmann's *Pression* from the Post-Aural perspective. I reflect on the process and presentation of my own performance event *Fish in Pink Gelatine*, a 'performed installation and staged concert', as the creative project this exegesis supports.

Manifesto for Post-Aural Music Creation

As a collaborative artist, my primary engagement with art is in the creating process. From this perspective, and as a critically minded witness[1] at art events of many types, my sense of boundaries between forms has weakened. Sculpture is not not-literature, music is not not-theatre, origami is not not-dance. Though my background is in music, so my output is in conversation with traditions of music, I am uncomfortable with the suggested disciplinary boundaries, so prefer the more general *art*.

Composer-performer. Creator-disseminator. The hyphen divides the artistic action into two stages which align with the experiences of those who create and those who witness, so I discuss them separately. But to be clear: this delineation is a syntactic tactic and these stages do not necessarily exist separately. Their inclusion here should not be taken as a denial of the witnesses' role in creating or the creators' role in witnessing, nor as confining creation to a pre-dissemination position, nor as ignoring found art or art that is never witnessed, nor as a suggestion that witnesses and creators can be separated.

This manifesto is built on the axiom that engagement with art is an event. The interaction between the witness and the art piece that occurs at a time, for a time, in a place. In some cases, the piece defines the beginning, duration and location (as with an 8:00pm, 90-minute dance performance in a venue), in other cases the witness defines it (as with an image viewed on a portable screen). The art event is the container that houses the created art piece. What follows is a distillation of my ideas and ideals around creating art pieces for the art event.

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[1] See page 4 for discussion on my use of 'witness'.

It is an environment

To witness an art piece is to spend time in an environment where the art piece is a constituent part. The experience of the art piece only occurs as part of the experience of the environment. The art piece can be thought of as the art 'climate' of the space, generally taking some charge of what witnesses see and hear, how they interact, how time passes, and other parameters defined by and for the specifics of the art piece in question. And though the art climate is the intended focus, it coexists with other types of climate (temperature, humidity, time of day; witnesses' previous activities, other art pieces; international, national, local, familial, personal politics; and so on). Art creators must recognise this multidimensional environment as their medium, understand which parameters can be controlled, which can be framed, which need to be acknowledged and which need to be simply allowed to be present.

Recognise the *vestigial*, the *redundant*, and the *baggage*

Art creation has a *point-of-inception* which undergoes a process of *examination* and *transformation* and winds up *finished* or *presented*. The transformation can remove the purpose or context of the point-of-entry (and any material developed in previous periods of process) rendering it *vestigial*—a trace of how-we-got-here but not a necessity to where-we-are. The *vestigial* is a cotton flour sack baked into a loaf of bread, a stack of ingots in a bank robber's jail cell, foliate branches sprouting out of a cello, a potato in a vodka bottle.

In an art piece it is possible to signify or express equivalent *somethings* (information, mood…) simultaneously or at different times in different perceptual modes. This opens the possibility of the *redundant*: saying the same *something* several times within the same piece. The *redundant* is a magician constantly verbalising where you think the card is, American comics' penchant for rephrasing punchlines, a list of colours beside a painting, eating a red velvet cake after eating a red velvet cake. The creators must know when this is occurring.

Any art form comes with a set of accepted tropes. They can be as specific as a punky piercing or the rectangular shape of a frame, or as vague as that-there-are-instruments-present or that-there-was-free-wine-when-it-opened. These tropes indicate discipline and genre, and are powerful and useful artistic manoeuvres developed over time by artists in conversation within the form. As they become assumptions, they become historical, disciplinary *baggage*. This *baggage* must be examined anew with each specific art piece to ensure that it is not detrimental to the efficacy of the piece, that it is still aligned with the efforts of the creators.

Creators must constantly reassess the creation-in-process to recognise when an element has become *vestigial* or *redundant*, or when it is disciplinary *baggage*, and question the meaning of these conditions on the art piece. From here they can accept, reject, alter, or reframe the element accordingly. To be clear: all three conditions are effective tools and should be used, but a creator must constantly make the choice to keep them.

Ignore intentionally

A creator does not need to control every element surrounding the event and cannot. But they must be aware of which elements they are controlling and which they are leaving to luck and circumstance, and to what degree. It must be an artistic decision to ignore an element, and that decision must be made consciously and intentionally.

Commonly ignored elements are the non-art elements of the environment and disciplinary baggage, and include temperature, types of seating, where witnesses are located in the space, the route to the venue, scent, attire, 90° angles, external political climates, and so on.

Include out of necessity

The goal is to make every element present an indispensable part of the art piece. Given the personal contexts contributing to individual witnesses' environments, the art event is already filled with non-sequiturs. To include the superfluous in an art piece is to dilute an already diluted solution. If there is material in the ecosystem that is not vitally supporting and being supported by other material, and could be eradicated from the ecosystem without repercussion, the creators should either do so or change the ecosystem to make it indispensable.

… But sabotage the effort. If the art is becoming too clear and defined, the creator should introduce something to confound the logic. If a piece is becoming too clean, it needs a few specks of irrational mud thrown across it. The creators and witnesses are engaged by the effort to reconcile the confusion. It doesn't need to be clear why there are fish.

Create with collaborators

The myth of the isolated genius is at best irrelevant, and at worst paralysing and exclusionary. A creation is a conversation between many creators. Most immediately, this can be the family of people working in the same room on the same thing (for example a band). Or the collaboration can be temporally removed (a living actor delivering the words of a dead playwright). Or, at its most removed, in response to the past (a collaboration with the artists that established or worked within the field) or other disciplines (the influence of chemistry, zoology, plumbing). An artist should know who the collaborators are, know their skillsets and comforts, and value them as vital co-creators.

Make it easy

It is easy to do something pleasurable. It is easy to draw on pre-existing skills, to make them crucial by reframing them. It is easy to do the work then there is enough time. The learning of a challenging new skill from scratch can be pleasurable. It might be easier to access emotional effort than physical or intellectual. Easiness is a personal matter which honours the individuality of creators and defines who can work within the art piece and who is excluded. Make it easy, know who it is easy for.

The creation process should not be directed as a quest for the Best art (the concept of Best is a damaging lie), nor by the future ambitions of the creators involved. It should be directed by what is pleasurable, by the skillsets at hand, by the time limitations. By what is possible. What is easy.

Create for collaborators

The witness's experience might last a few hours, and it is the duty of the creators to make this event some concoction of interesting, challenging and amusing. But the collaboration process can last days or decades, even transcending the boundaries between projects. The creators owe it to each other to make their part of the interaction engaging; they should create for each other. If this isn't happening with an element, it should be adapted. If this isn't happening with an aspect of the work that is dictated, say by a commissioning party or the expectations of an eventual audience, that aspect must be customised to fit the collaboration, to allow the collaborators to create for each other.

It is political to be together

A piece of art constructs a demographic twice: first in the creation process, then again with the dissemination. These can be simultaneous or not and can be separate or overlap somewhat or completely. Those involved in the creation process work within a collaborative hierarchy which can follow various models, from the totalitarian auteurship which operates smoothly when all underling subjects—we can still call them collaborators—are well compensated for their technical service, to the well-oiled social anarchism of a jam band, whose functionality is contingent on the flimsy state of all members continuing to want the same thing.

The dissemination can include creators (performers, for example) and witnesses. These two groups can overlap. Here, where one group *does* and the other *receives*, there is a dichotomous hierarchy. On one hand the doers have the power in that they, as representatives of the full creative team, dictate the artistic climate while the passive receivers meekly acquiesce; on the other hand, the doers are rendered desperate jesters by the controlling violence of expectation from the powerful receivers.

Creators must critically examine both demographics they are constructing. Who is invited, who is excluded? Who is confident, who is uncomfortable? Why? Art is an expresser, reflector and builder of culture: who is expressing it, and for whom?

It is political to be in a place

The period of time spent together is also a frame for the period of time spent inhabiting a place. In the ugly legacy of colonialism, where the fact of land ownership has intentionally and unintentionally effected genocide; in the vicious climate of capitalism where land ownership is increasingly unreachable for increasing numbers of people, and where the concept of land ownership is bizarre anyway; in the reality of overpopulated cities incentivising unethical farming, mining, forestry and travelling practices, we have to continually ask:

Who and what has been in the space before? What is it to commandeer the environment of the space for art? That is, why is art a good use of the space? In commandeering the space for art, what is removed, and what is disinvited? What is the art piece to those people and activities who would like to use the space? What was the process of securing the space for art? Who was asked and how? Where are they? Who was not asked, and where are they?

1. Introduction

I am writing as a composer. I have a body of notated compositions for a range of standard Western art music ensembles: orchestra with and without soloist, percussion ensemble, string quartet, solo instruments with piano accompaniment, choir, art song and so on. I have created electroacoustic music with and without live musicians, and compositions for recorded media intended for home listening. I have an interest in co-creative methods for collaborative composition. My practice extends to song-writing, arranging and producing a variety of pop genres for the stage and studio.

I am writing as a performer of music. Primarily I am a viola player, classically trained but with a special interest in new music, especially that which is driven by timbre. I have also found a place for my viola in pop music, sometimes within standard icing-on-the-cake string arrangement idioms, occasionally as a more integral voice. Beyond the viola I perform regularly as a singer and guitarist, occasionally as a pianist, accordionist and percussionist. Beyond traditional music performance, I have some background in theatre and performance art.

And I am writing as a fan of music. I attend concerts with a critical mind and for pleasure, and keenly consume recorded music, seeking the new and revisiting the old. Again, my tastes run the gamut from punk to field recordings to soundwalks to top-40.

What I want out of music is something that appeals to these three engagements with music—to be well-conceived, gratifying to work on and gratifying to witness. It is as a collaborator within other disciplines that I have encountered my most satisfying artistic experiences and created work that feels vital in fulfilling these desires. Working within experimental theatre and dance processes I have been exposed to perspectives, practices and priorities around the creating, the creation and the dissemination that I do not find in music projects, that I find markedly lacking when I return to my 'home discipline', especially when dealing with Western art music.

Introduction

This exegesis theorises how wisdom and attitudes around intermodality can be fostered in the field of music, and how the field needs to be adapted to accommodate this. It supports *Fish in Pink Gelatine*, a creative project which constitutes the research undertaken. The event is represented here by the appended videos and scores.

The Post-Aural research and thought contained in this exegesis is confined to performed music, the music that most resembles dance and theatre performance, where the lessons of those areas are most immediately applicable. The concert innately contains the materials that are the domain of other disciplines: instruments are sculptural objects; musicians are corporeal presences executing physical tasks; there is a stage area, whose animation is witnessed by an audience, who are oriented in a set way, whose behaviour is highly regulated. Where performed music customarily ignores these elements, they are well addressed in the disciplines of theatre and dance.

This Post-Aural research is also confined to the world of Western art music, an area that tends to treat the non-aural modalities naïvely. In this musical field the 'work'-worshipping austerity of the 19th century is codified. We privilege the aural to the point where other elements of the event and environment—the visual, the tactile, the social—can become dull or even unpleasant. As witnesses, this is a situation where we are discouraged from interacting with our neighbours, where there is often a music stand blocking the sightline, where our autonomy is subdued.

The concert is an event and an environment, home to an ecology of sensory modes. I will discuss the nature of this intermodality, outlining three intermodal relationships I have identified as important to Post-Aural Music: *concurrence*, where modes affect one another minimally; *friction*, where the art occurs in the intermodal dissonance; and *incidentality*, where one mode is the result of another. I also theorise two impossible, hypothetical intermodalities: *pure multimodality*, in which the modes do not interact at all; and *transdisciplinarity*, where the constituent disciplines dissolve into one another, creating an unrecognisable synthesis.

The primary literature sources are *Composed Theatre* by Matthias Rebstock and David Roesner and *Postdramatic Theatre* by Hans-Thies Lehmann. The former describes the emerging field of performance creation where compositional thinking is applied to the materials of theatre. The latter is a survey of avant-garde theatre that outlines the demise of the primacy of drama within the discipline, providing a model for discussing the ramifications of de- and re-hierarchizing an art form.

From here I will describe Post-Aural Music, a framework for the discussion of the music performance as an event, environment and ecology of disciplines. Post-Aural Music takes a holistic view of the concert event, considering every element, taking no traditions unthinkingly. Why do we come together? Why do we sit? Why is there an instrument there? The aural mode is considered one of many elements, equal in importance to any other element, and equal in importance to the relationships between elements. I will apply this framework in an analysis of Helmut Lachenmann's *Pression* for one cellist, showing how it presents some priorities of Post-Aurality.

Finally, I will report on my own *Fish in Pink Gelatine*. I will describe the materials of this 'performed installation and staged concert', analysing how Post-Aural principles inform the aesthetics, processes, concepts and structures of the piece.

Some brief notes on terminology

Witness[2]

Rather than *spectator*, *listener*, *consumer*, *viewer*, *audience/audient* or *receiver*, I have settled on *witness* to refer to those attending the art event.

I prefer it because:

- *Witness* is singular, acknowledging the individual nature of experiencing art.
- *Witness* recognises the consumption of art as an event.
- *Witness* does not have strong associations with any one artistic discipline or tradition, so is equally suitable for all media.
- The etymological root *wit* means 'to know', and therefore does not privilege either seeing or hearing as many terms do.[3]
- *To witness* is more vital than *to receive* and less ugly than *to consume*.

Piece, not 'Work'

I will use *art piece* to describe the created object that is witnessed. The phrase is not particular to any discipline or format. It intentionally avoids the noun *work*, which is contained and historically, suggesting a mastery, fixity and sovereignty which must not be assumed! Additionally, it is foundational to my understanding of the art object that it is considered one element among many involved in the event, and that it is part of the growing constellation of all art ever, so I like the supplementary definition of *piece* as 'fragment'.

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[2] There is no allusion here to Theatre of Witness, the performance model which gives voice to marginalized stories, though I encourage the reader to understand this model by seeking out performances and reading this:

Teya, Sepinuk. 2013. *Theatre of Witness – Finding the Medicine in Stories of Suffering, Transformation, and Peace*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

[3] This is a lie—*wit* is cognate to *vid*, as in *video* and *visual*. This puts *know* next to *see*, but at least this connection is more obscured in English in 'witness' than in the other options.

2. Intermodality: An Ecology

A concert encompasses many modes of perception. A trombone player is generating sound which shapes time; in addition, they are wearing clothes (or conspicuously not), inhabiting an area in space, their visibility is ensured by a lighting state (or conspicuously not), they are feeling the texture, temperature, size and shape of parts of the trombone, and they are moving their body with great specificity. Traditionally the aural mode dominates, but the visual, spatial, olfactory and tactile are innately present. Witnesses can choose to consider some of these other modalities as consciously as they consider the aural. Creators can embrace these non-aural modes as materials, and borrow from the toolkits of disciplines that work more directly with them, thinking as choreographers, architects, directors and so on.[4]

Post-Aural Music lives in intermodality: the relationships between sensory modes. The tacit assumption that the aural mode dominates is not appropriate here—the hierarchy is fluid, allowing the interactions to be complex and dynamic, each modality responsively adjusting to the others. This is the ecology metaphor: the elements of the piece fulfil their own function, but they affect one another in a tangled web of inter-reliance.

The second part is a taxonomy of interactions between sensory modes. I will present *multimodality-intermodality-transmodality* as a continuum, from more separate to more entangled interactions. This taxonomy will be useful for the general discussion of the ecology of intermodality. I have also identified some more specific categories of intermodal relationship that are useful for analysis of Post-Aural Music:

- *Concurrence*, where the contributing perceptual modes appear in parallel, temporally aligned but minimally interacting;
- *Friction*, where artistic interest lies in the dissonance between contributing modes;

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[4] See page 27 of this exegesis

- *Incidentality*, where the modes are so inter-reliant that one cannot occur without the other(s); that one mode reads as the by-product of another.

Beyond these I have extrapolated two hypothetical, impossible categories at either extreme of the continuum:

- *Pure multimodality*, where the present modalities have no effect one another whatsoever. This is impossible because the witnesses will inevitably create meaningful relationships out of the information presented to them.
- *Pure transmodality*, a synthesis of input modes resulting in a gestalt effect such that they are no longer parsed into individual contributions.

To precis these ideas the first part of this chapter briefly looks at some key historic and current music-centric theories and disciplines that address intermodal thought. I will discuss Richard Wagner's Gesamkunstwerk concept and praxis, film sound theory, pop music performance and embodiment in aurality. Alongside theatre (examined further in the following chapter), these form the body of artistic multidisciplinary and intermodal thought that informs Post-Aural Music.

2.1 You Can't Talk About Transmodality in Music Without Talking About…

Gesamtkunstwerk

In 1849, in exile from Germany after the revolutions of 1848, Richard Wagner wrote two influential essays, *Die Kunst und die Revolution* (Art and Revolution)[5] and *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (The Art-Work of the Future).[6] *Die Kunstwerk und die Revolution* looks back at history, extolling the ancient Greeks' concept of art—the reverence for drama, and the subjugation of the various artistic media to drama's service—as ideal. Through the rise of Christianity, specifically the rise of independent wealth through Christianity, art became the commodity Wagner saw proliferating at that time, bereft of philosophical value. Along with then-contemporary art's moral inferiority to Grecian drama, it also suffered a technical shortcoming in the division of disciplines into separate artforms. If a play lacks the emotional influence of music, how can it create and reflect a culture? How can flashy, virtuosic dance be a moral guide without the contextual authority of narrative literature? It is in describing the Greek drama, in observing the harnessing of music, literature, dance, visual art and architecture, that Wagner proffers the influential term 'Gesamtkunstwerk', meaning total art-work.

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[5] Wagner 1849 (1)

[6] Wagner 1849 (2)

The term also features in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*. Inspired by the status of, and informed by the aesthetics of, ancient Greek art, Wagner turns his attention to describing the conditions that would allow a contemporary realisation of these ideals. The grand operas of the time were the best effort at reuniting music, poetry and dance, but their basic function (and Wagner saw it as *very* basic) was superficial entertainment for the wealthy. The way forward was for the common people to overthrow this concept of art as luxury, decoration, and to refashion the Gesamtkunstwerk as a reflection and expression of the masses.[7]

So the Gesamtkunstwerk is a public art-work subsuming performance of music, poetry and dance, as well as visual art and architecture into a dramatic expression of culture and morality. Wagner is a significant figure in establishing a theoretical concept of multidisciplinary performed art, and with his Ring Cycle, its practice.

In seeking to bring the various disciplines together to form a unified expression, the Gesamkunstwerk is an obvious forebear to current ideas on intermodality, but the priorities are antithetical to those of Post-Aural Music: the hierarchy between disciplines is exaggerated with drama being the ultimate purpose of Gesamkunstwerk; having been exposed to the perspectives of the postdramatic, that the dominant mode is drama is limiting and does not recognise the unique powers and relevances of the other elements; and while there is some cross-disciplinarity (singing, for example, intimately links music and poetry), the various artforms are generally allowed to function in parallel, the total art-work being a collection not an invention.

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[7] Wagner published his anti-Semitic invective *Das Judenthum in der Musik* (Jewishness in Music) the following year, 1850, making clear who he thought the good public were and were not. It is evident from his writing on the history and future of Gesamtkunstwerk that Wagner's artistic conceits are inseparable from his politics, and the fact that his politics contain such brazen racism casts a heavy shadow on his creative output and philosophical ideals.

Film

Film is an area where audio, video, and their interrelation has been explored in depth. Film sound theorist Michel Chion offers some applicable terms that are useful to the Post-Aural lens of the witness/analyst. 'Synchresis', a portmanteau of *synchronise* and *synthesis*, refers to the tendency to associate simultaneous aural and visual events and experience them as one.[8] This is easy to understand in cases like speech, where the image of a moving mouth matches the sound of a voice, or naturalistic Foley like the image of a slamming door matches the concurrent 'bang'. The tendency is strong enough that we accept wildly non-naturalistic pairings. Chion exemplifies this with Tarkovsky's *Solaris* presenting the sound of breaking glass with the image of a convulsing woman.[9] While the concurrence of image and sound is manufactured and neither mode causes the other, the observation that synchronisation is a powerful intermodal adhesive is profound for all intermodal artforms.

Chion uses the phrase 'added value' to refer to 'the expressive and informative value with which a sound enriches a given image'.[10] The audio affects how the video is seen, the sound defining the image, or at least how it is received—exemplary intermodality. This can be the emotional effect of the image, as when a hyper-romantic music track is used, or the facts of the scene. Chion describes a shot in Tati's *Hulot's Holiday* where joyless beach vacationers are seen while the sounds of laughter and playing are heard.[11] This exemplifies frictive intermodality, the humour prominent between the audio and video tracks rather than contained in one, the other, or both.

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[8] Chion 1990/94, pp63

[9] Ibid., pp 39

[10] Ibid., pp 5

Pop Music

Where Western classical concert music reveres The Work, and is wary to cheapen the genius of The Composer and (to a lesser extent) craft of The Performer/s with non-aural distractions, pop music tends to enthusiastically incorporate disciplines that focus on other modalities. The band Nine Inch Nails, for example, embraces cutting edge lighting and projections in concerts. Footage of a 2013 version of their song 'Copy of A' shows the stage transform from a warm, glowing rock venue to a clean, hard-edged, digital space. Band members abruptly disappear and reappear, shadows change as screens are shifted about. All of this is rhythmically synchronised to the music. Only through light can we see such large shapes shift this abruptly, and this enhances the determined snappiness of the music.[12]

Anecdotally, I remember going to a punk show in a basement many years ago. The loud, fast, poorly executed music was exciting. The atmosphere was the smell of teenage sweat and cigarettes and the wet warmth of the room. We lifted a couch above our heads and gave each other rides, inevitably putting a corner of the couch through the gypsum. Those playing instruments and those not were equal in our creation of the environment. The physical, reckless, destructive *togetherness* was the overwhelming experience of that concert, the sound being a necessary supportive element.

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[11] Chion 1990/94, pp 4

[12] Nine Inch Nails 2013

Embodiment in Aurality

It is self-evident that the creation of sound is an embodied act for the creator of the sound, and the Post-Aural exploits this. Noë writes that 'the domain of music is action. We *make* music; we do so by vocalizing; we do so by hitting, banging, scraping, plucking and bowing. And the contours of musical soundscapes are shaped by what we do—by the energy, power and delicacy with which we act. Music, like speech, shoots forth from us and reflects our energetic and embodied presence in the world.'[13] To vocalise is to push and shake air with the body. To strike a table with the fingernails is to generate an impulse physically, and to scrape it is to create a continuous tone.

This is challenged when we start considering musicians at increasingly mediated interfaces: a guitarist or harpist is physically involved in setting the string in motion, but they are typically passive (though not always) in the sound's sustain, just as a bell can sound well after the player has left the scene of the chime. More mediated, a pianist does not touch the string but presses a key which pushes a lever which pushes a lever which throws a hammer against the string and a pipe organist presses a key which opens a valve through which air, activated by a pump, may flow. The action of stopping the sound, releasing the key, is equal in effort and size as the action of starting it. Most mediated, a laptopist might press the space bar to trigger a sample, an action which could as easily lead to results that are deafening or inaudible, long or brief, sustained or rhythmic, immediate or delayed by seconds, minutes, months. The relationship between sound and action is mediated in the extreme, so indirect that it can be a matter of faith that the action catalysed the sound.[14]

In the decreasing directness of relationship between action and sound, we see the musician approaching the condition of a listener. A listener is not physically active in the creating of the music, but the experience of music remains an embodied one. Arnie Cox writes of the listener's tendency to imagine themselves executing the action they are hearing, dubbing it *mimetic motor imagery*.[15] This mimesis takes three forms: intramodal (e.g. perceived finger movements mimicked in the fingers); intermodal (e.g. subvocalization); and amodal ('[a]bdominal exertions that underlie limb movements and vocalizations').[16] That is, as the performer translates corporeal effort to aural results, the witness decodes them, subtly reproducing the corporeal modality.

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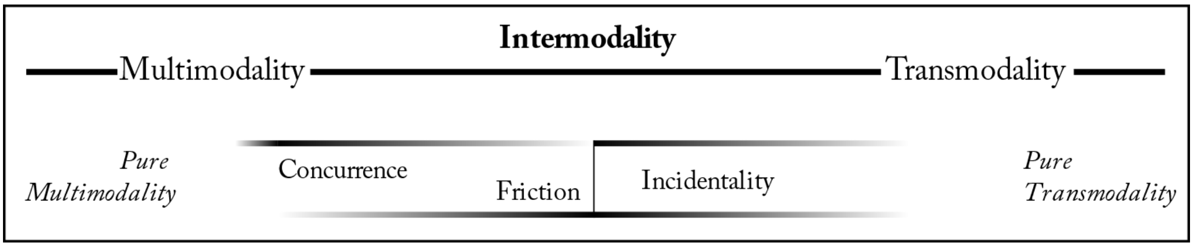
[13] Noë 2012

[14] The acculturated knowledge that the tap of a computer key is significant, and that multiple outcomes are possible, means that this is not strange.

This covers some of the key background around inter- and multi-modality and -disciplinarity. I will now move on to discuss the specifics of intermodality as it applies to Post-Aural Music.

2.2 In search of a Pure Transmodality

In order to discuss the various types of intermodal interaction pertinent to Post-Aural Music I have developed some vocabulary. The chart below maps my taxonomy along a continuum, with less interaction between modes on the left to more inter-affecting relationship on the right. I intend to continue to populate this chart as I continue to think in Post-Aural ways. For now, here are the terms useful for this exegesis:



The upper portion, multimodality-intermodality-transmodality, is not art-specific and can be applied to any discipline that engenders modes. In his influential article on determining the richness of interdisciplinary collaboration, Moti Nissani uses fruit as a metaphor for three levels of disciplinary integration that is useful to communicate this part of the chart.[17] The fruits, representing disciplines, can be placed alongside each other, a whole pomegranate beside a whole pear, in their full integrity, complimenting but not affecting one another. Else they can be hacked apart and mixed as a salad, pieces of banana identifiably separate from pieces of cantaloupe, but consumed in the same mouthful. Or they could be blended into a smoothie, the fruits inseparable, though each contributes flavour, texture and body to the result. The whole fruits are to the left of the above chart, salads in the middle, and smoothies to the right.

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[15] Cox 2016, pp 12

[16] Ibid., pp 45

The lower portion of the chart is specific to intermodal art analysis and creation. This is the language used throughout this exegesis when discussing the intermodality of Post-Aural Music. Below I attempt to define and illustrate the terms on the chart.

Intermodality

Intermodality is the over-arching term used to describe perceptual modes interacting.

Multimodality

Multimodality is the least co-affective form of intermodality. The modes co-exist without markedly altering each other. There is a sound, there is an image, and there is a scent. Relationships between the pure modes are guided by *that* they are presented together and *how* they are presented together, and connections are ultimately made by those who witness. My art-specific term for this is ‘concurrence’.

Concurrence

In a concurrent intermodal relationship the elements are presented in relation to one another, but do not strongly alter one another. Modalities are presented in proximity, and the witnesses are charged with interpreting the interaction.

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[17] Nissani 1995

John Cage and Merce Cunningham's collaborations are located at the left edge of concurrence in the chart. The composer and the choreographer worked completely independently of one another on shared projects, their efforts presented together. The music and dance were independently conceived and prepared, and placed in relation to one another only come performance. The corporeal and the aural interact, but the terms of this interaction are left to chance rather than consciously designed.

This exemplifies Brecht's principle 'separation of elements'. With elements separated, none is subjugated to another. Each has its own artistic presence. They do not fuse as they contribute to the overall outcome. The phrase directly counters Wagner's Gesamkunstwerk[18] which idealises the integration of elements in a rigid hierarchy where everything serves the drama. Normally when dealing with the separation of elements the job of the lead creator is to compile and compose the materials of the various elements, though in the case of Cunningham and Cage the 'creative director' is chance.

In such a cross-disciplinary collaboration there is a practical function to keeping the disciplines separate. Each has its own process for generating and realising material, and these processes can be incompatible without substantial compromise. Theatre's devising process will not wait for a programmer to code, test and re-code even quick and simple ideas,[19] just as an improvising band will not wait for an actor to memorise lines, a 16mm film animator to burn each frame, or a backdrop painter's paint to dry. It is sensible for at least portions of the process to be separate, and logical that this should lead to separate pieces for concurrent presentation.

Each discipline has its own specialist, private language, tailored to the communicative needs of practitioners, learnt over years of dedicated study. Ruedi Häusermann finds artistic merit in intentionally *not* sharing codes, instead allowing one discipline to maintain its mystique and individuality in the face of the others, thus fostering a respectful non-communication in terms of practitioner knowledge and exchange.[20] This can help ensure a healthy working environment in which each artist retains ownership of their domain, collaborators recognising and respecting one another's knowledge and deferring to each other's expertise. Just as the disciplines themselves form a co-supportive ecology, so the social hierarchy in the creative team is allowed to be a complex, lively, shifting condition.

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[18] See page 7 of this exegesis

[19] Rebstock 2012, pp197

Further to the right edge of concurrence is Arnold Schönberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw*.[21] The composer created the poetic text and instrumental music at the same time, custom-made for each other. Schönberg designed the way the text subjects the music to a significant rhythmic and dynamic gravity, and how the instrumental music holds a strong influence over the emotional interpretation of the poetry. These two elements inform one another in the creating process and are tethered by tight rhythmic, emotional and dynamic synchronisation in the performance process, but each is essentially intact.

Pure Multimodality

In pure multimodality the pertinent modalities not only do not interact, but no relationship is found between them in the minds of the witnesses. This is impossible as any witness will draw connections between materials presented within the context of an art piece. But it is a useful hypothetical idea for the creator who, in striving for the impossible, might generate the unexpected. This was not the attitude Cunningham and Cage brought—they intended strong (but uncontrolled) links to emerge between their artforms. To work towards pure multimodality might be to work separately in their manner, but to challenge their co-presentation by asking How can a witness gain knowledge of a sound and a motion within the same piece without connecting them? An impossible challenge, but a potentially fruitful one.

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[20] Rebstock 2012, pp348

[21] Schönberg 1947

Friction

In a frictional relationship between sensory modes, the art emerges from the dissonance between the two parallel streams. Two fingertips touch and a deafening explosion is heard. A jangly, manic, cartoon-like music with slide whistles and a laugh track sounds as six grim figures walk slowly as if carrying a coffin. Where the separation of elements seeks to grant each discipline its autonomy, frictive intermodality seeks to rub them against each other—the art is not *in* the sensory modes, it is *between* them. In both examples, neither the movement nor the sound needs to be interesting unto itself, and it would be missing the point to analyse them separately.

In the former example the sound and the movement express the same action, collision, but at very different scales. The friction exists in this mismatch. This recalls synchresis[22]—the sound and the image fuse such that the fingers coming together seem to cause the boom; the sound gives the delicate gesture tremendous force. The synchretic fusion makes the disagreement between the modes significant, which is how the friction emerges for the witness.

In the latter example above, the friction is the emotional incongruity between the music and the image. If the two expressed more compatible emotions, if they were simply concurrent, the image would subjugate the music to a simple underscoring role or the music would render the image as merely illustrative; when sensory modes agree, one tends to support the other, a hierarchy is formed. But the frictive relationship puts them in intermodal conversation, empowering both.

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[22] See page 9 of this exegesis

Transmodality

Transmodality is the intermodal interaction where one mode affects the very nature of another. More than the aural (say) providing a context for the visual, it is the aural decidedly transforming how the totality looks.

Incidentality

A clever Scrabble word scores many ways: once for the word itself, and several more times if it builds additional words out of the existing board. These smaller words, while conscious and intentional, are *incidental* to the longer word played, but they can be where the points lie. Polyphonic music generates 'vertical' harmony as the *incidence* of 'horizontal' melodic lines, and the artistry of polyphony is the control of this harmony.

Similarly, striking material in one mode can occur incidentally as the result of efforts towards another. Mode A follows a performer's agency and logic, and mode B also results. When an instrumentalist plays sounds (A), a movement (B) also occurs. This incidentality becomes compositional when mode B holds interest unto itself, for example in Lachenmann's *Pression*, where the cellist's posture, motions and object manipulations are unusual, varied, and artfully compiled over time, but are always incidental to the sound-generating techniques.[23] To be clear: the composer and performer are acutely aware of the gestures, and the piece has been carefully crafted to capitalize on them. But the cellist is not executing two tasks at once (moving *and* sounding)—this layering of modes would be concurrence—but a single task (moving-sounding).

With incidentality, the perspective can often be flipped. Because it is presented as a participation in the tradition of performed music, I characterise *Pression* as sound-making which incidentally causes artful movement. But it can equally be seen as movement which incidentally results in artful sound being made (as performance of any cello music can). This co-incidental intermodal relationship is common enough in music performance that it seems obvious and we lose track of its complexity. Revealing and examining this innate co-incidentality is a primary tool and priority of the Post-Aural attitude.

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[23] See page 38 of this exegesis.

The power of incidentality is easily subverted when a frame is placed around mode B. Imagine a dance work with no musical score accompanying it, just the incidental sounds of the dancer forming a compelling score composed of breathing, floor noise, and brushing fabric and flesh. The incidental sound score could be beautifully, musically, intentionally crafted. But if the sound is framed as music, by amplification for example, it brings a calculated focus that denies it its status as incidentality. Similarly, genres such as tap or flamenco where the sounding element is framed by the performer for musical effect are no longer dealing with incidental sound. The aural and corporeal modes are concurrent, albeit tightly linked by the single performer.

Another example from my own work serves to illustrate. *Shiny Skeleton* for clarinettist ends with the performer slowly drawing the barrel and mouthpiece across their torso and down their leg to the ground. The reed acts like the stylus of a record player, ‘reading’ the micro- and macro-textures of the clothing and producing broadband noise with haphazard rhythmic animation, amplified and filtered through the joint of clarinet. The trajectory of the reed across the body requires a physical motion, starting with the hands and arms, moving through the spine, waist, legs as the mouthpiece approaches the ground. The sound is incidental to the clothing and the movement (or, the movement is incidental to the sound production), and it is not possible to produce the sound without the movement and vice versa.[24]

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[24] See Appendix 1, *Shiny Skeleton (standalone)*

Pure Transmodality

In pure transmodality the modes transmute, resulting in a new form which is impossible to consider in terms of the contributing modes. This model of interaction is hypothetical, but aspirational for the Post-Aural creator. The closer a piece of art comes to pure transmodality, the more it feels like an invention, the more vital and arresting I find it. I consider this state a goal in my own creation.

Pure transmodality is a tricky concept to exemplify because it is a practical impossibility.[25] Nevertheless, here is an example from my own work that starts to speak to pure transmodality:

At the end of *Fish in Pink Gelatine* I hook the viola by its scroll onto a long, hanging rope. I spin the instrument, twisting the rope, winding up the assemblage. Upon releasing it, I hold the bow against the instrument such that we hear each string and the puff of hair against the bouts and across the back as it unwinds. A light is angled up such that it smears the distorted shadow of the twisting instrument up the wall, warping and pulsing with the motion. Whether the viola is a sculpture or a puppet or an instrument or not is unclear. Whether I am active or passive becomes unclear. While the object, action and sound do not dissolve and re-combine to form something new, they approach the condition of the transmodal alloy insofar as the languages of movement and music are insufficient to discuss the effect.[26]

The intermodal relationships described above are materials of the Post-Aural. They draw on and complement existing intermodal art theories from opera, film, pop music listening-related studies of embodiment, and they will be the language that I draw on as I get to discussing analysis and creation with the Post-Aural perspective. But first I will unpack two books from the field of theatre that are key precursors to the Post-Aural attitude.

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[25] Or perhaps I have not received or recognised examples of transdisciplinarity as I am defining it, or perhaps language is categorical, making *discussion* of transdisciplinarity impossible.

[26] See Appendix 1, *The Thick Now*, 6:50. This was documented before the lighting was refined, but demonstrates other elements of the moment.

3. Theatre/Literature

This chapter delves into two key books that have shaped the Post-Aural thinking. The first is *Composed Theatre* by David Roesner and Matthias Rebstock, an identification and discussion of an emerging field of performed art creation of the same name. After a brief definition of that field, I will summarise the historiography that Post-Aural Music takes from Composed Theatre and address the similarities and points of distinction between the two ideas. I will also bring Jennifer Walshe's *The New Discipline* into the discussion, another closely related practice. This will demonstrate the need for the specifics this discussion of Post-Aural thinking.

The second book is *Postdramatic Theatre* by Hans-Thies Lehmann. Though this is another highly related area of intermodal performed art, I am looking to this book more as a model for writing about a discipline after it has moved beyond its traditional priorities. I will interpret how Lehmann is using 'post-', 'dramatic' and 'theatre', preparing these ideas to be transliterated into 'post', 'aural' and 'music'.

3.1 Composed Theatre (or, Liberating Music from The Aural)

In 2009, David Roesner and Matthias Rebstock organised two symposia at Exeter and Hildesheim. The participants were practitioners and theorists of an emerging field of performance creation, especially in Europe, which they dubbed 'Composed Theatre'. The symposia were to examine the work and working methods, build a terminology, and develop a framework by which Composed Theatre could be analysed and critiqued, and they resulted in the book *Composed Theatre: Aesthetics, Practices, Processes*.

Composed Theatre is the application of compositional thinking to theatrical materials. Compositional thinking is the set of tools used in creating temporal art out of formal patterns and structures: repetition, fragmentation, minimalist processes such as phasing, rhythm and so on. *Compos-* here is about putting together, constructing. This contrasts, for example, literary thinking which might create structure with character, narrative and drama; or directorial thinking, which might structure with image, interpretation and space. 'Theatrical materials' has an elastic definition here to incorporate or drop elements according to each creator's approach, but a typical inventory will include lighting, architecture, staging, physical gesture and locomotion, set pieces, props, garb, and text.

Historiography

Rebstock traces the family tree of Composed Theatre through the theoretical and practical histories of music and theatre. I am not aware of equivalent work within music, so I am drawing heavily on this for Post-Aural Music's historiography. Here are some key figures to both areas:

- Richard Wagner, for his Gesamtkunstwerk concept.[27]
- Arnold Schönberg, for his 'composing with the means of the stage'.[28] That is, the inclusion of theatrical elements as materials to precisely compose, as in *Die glückliche Hand*,[29] where moments of lighting and staging are included in the score with characteristically effective invented notation.
- Igor Stravinsky, specifically *L'Histoire du Soldat*,[30] for separating the theatrical elements. The textual, musical, and physical performers play on three separate stages. This is antithetical to the operatic performer who executes all three of these elements simultaneously. Stravinsky notes that this also points to the importance of the musicians' corporeality: 'If music is to be fully grasped it is

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[27] See page 7 of this exegesis

[28] Schönberg quoted in Rebstock 2012, pp 30

[29] Schönberg 1910–13

[30] Stravinsky 1918

also necessary to see the gestures and movements of the human body by which it is produced.'[31]

- John Cage, for the many important movements his praxis and discourse made towards the theatrical: the 'opening [of] music to any kind of action, with or without sound';[32] the non-division of sensory modes 'music (imaginary separation of hearing from the other senses) does not exist';[33] the de-hierarchization of elements within a piece; the de-hierarchization of disciplinary collaborators; the prioritisation of the process of creating over the result. It is also clear that the immense influence of Cage's procedures and aesthetics permeate the Composed Theatre field.

- Total Serialism, for the revelation that methods of organisation can be applied to various materials (dynamics, rhythms and timbres as well as pitch), allowing for the small step to non-aural materials.

- Mauricio Kagel, whose own branch of music theatre, 'Instrumental Theatre,' is an obvious and direct ancestor to Composed Theatre. He incorporated stage sets,[34] facial expressions,[35] costume[36]—the stuff of theatre performance—into his instrumental compositions and exemplified the attitude that music could be made of 'sounding and non-sounding materials, actors, cups, tables, omnibuses and oboes.'[37]

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[31] Stravinsky quoted in Rebstock 2012, pp 32

[32] Cage quoted in Rebstock 2012, pp 33

[33] Cage 1955/1973

[34] Kagel 1965, 1973

[35] Kagel 1977

[36] Kagel 1970

[37] Kagel 1982, pp 121

- Dieter Schnebel, for composing rehearsal processes that guide the performer/s towards a piece, rather than composing a piece per se;[38] composing performed movement with or without aural results;[39] and for his term 'visible music'.[40]

Other musical influences on Post-Aural Music not mentioned in *Composed Theatre* include Meredith Monk for her multidisciplinarity, Jennifer Walshe for making composition a physical undertaking,[41] Helmut Lachenmann for re-acquainting sound with its method of production,[42] Alexander Schubert for his visual bombast, Laurie Anderson for connecting performance art and performing music, Harry Partch for building theatricality into instruments themselves, and Gordon Monahan for *Speaker Swinging*,[43] to name just a few.

Four Theses

The book leads to four theses of Composed Theatre. It is in these that the similarities and points of difference between this field and the Post-Aural are clear.

'Thesis 1: Composed Theatre becomes a field, when looking at process behind process'[44]

Composed Theatre pieces are not linked by aesthetic markers nor by related creative processes. The area is unified by the application of compositional thinking to theatrical materials. Pieces of Composed Theatre can be identified by 'a conscious engagement with a particular kind of transference: from music to theatrical performance.'[45]

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[38] Schnebel 1974, 1980

[39] Schnebel 1989

[40] Schnebel 1962 (1, 2)

[41] See page 27 of this exegesis

[42] See page 38 of this exegesis

[43] Monahan 1982

[44] Rebstock 2012, pp 353

[45] Ibid.

The nature of the process behind the process is a difference between Composed Theatre and Post-Aural Music. Rather than taking elements of theatre as materials for composition, the Post-Aural strives to recognise the theatrical elements native to musical performance (visual, tactile, corporeal modalities) and reveal them. It does not transfer the toolkit of music to theatre (or vice-versa); it illuminates the innate theatre that already exists in the music. Music *is* theatre, and should be witnessed and created with theatrical wisdom, even while remaining in music's traditional domain.

'Thesis 2: Composed Theatre requires a continuous reflection and working through the ontological conditions of music and theatre, often including a profound questioning of these ontologies and their usefulness or validity' [46]

To create within Composed Theatre is to constantly re-evaluate the nature of music and of theatre. The two disciplines are applied to each other as tools of interrogation. In this, Composed Theatre strives for new forms of authorship, production methods, understandings of 'skill' and professional identities. It also 'seeks to re-negotiate relations of spatial, sonic, performative, visual, atmospheric, notational and conceptual aspects of music theatre and experiments with new causalities, simultaneities and interferences.'[47]

This desire to challenge the definition of roles and the edges of music as a discipline is shared by Post-Aural Music.

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[46] Rebstock 2012, pp 353

[47] Ibid., pp 355

'Thesis 3: Composed Theatre stems from incentives of distancing, from a notion of **différance**'[48]

Composed Theatre is defined by what separates it from related areas such as music, theatre and music-theatre. Where those areas may explore new topics or materials, Composed Theatre is more concerned with 'the tools, the conditions, the mindsets and ideologies of music and theatre themselves'.[49] Practitioners often arrive at Composed Theatre as an intentional distancing of themselves from the traditions and current state of their home discipline. They are not questioning what can be done *within* music or theatre or music-theatre, they are questioning the formats themselves. It is Composed Theatre precisely because it is *not* music, theatre or music-theatre.

In one sense I am distancing myself from music, my home discipline, adopting a critical attitude by which to question the edges of the form. But the distance is to gain insight into what is there that is often ignored, to understand music's Post-Aural potential. This attitude comes from a place of recognising more facets of music and celebrating them as music. Post-Aural Music is fundamentally music and any challenge the Post-Aural seems to level at traditional music is an attempt to honour the form.

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[48] Derrida's term *différance* normally refers to the discrepancy in meanings between written and spoken language. Roesner takes a more general reading: 'being defined by how it differs from other, similar or related things.' Rebstock 2012, pp 355

[49] Rebstock 2012, pp 355

'Thesis 4: Composed Theatre engages in a complex process of meaning-making, social interaction and political significance by employing the 'detour' of musical thinking as a means of abstraction'[50]

Where theatre is semiotic,[51] music is fundamentally not. So, to apply the 'abstract' structures and principles of music to the 'semantic' ore of theatre retains the symbols but detaches them from their function. That is, an image is treated as an aesthetic object rather than as a coded message, and this sets the code adrift. It is still laden with meaning but it is not in service of a statement.

Post-Aural Music prefers to find meaning in the concrete, real-world situation of people sharing a space and experience, rather than containing it within the art piece. Music's abstract nature is important not as a device to complicate or liberate meaning, but as a lack of facade. We *present*: we are people undertaking a task as a means of fostering a particular environment to share. We do no *represent*: there is no symbolism or metaphor or story. Witnesses and performers spend time together in a place, and this is a social, political, concrete, meaningful act.

The New Discipline

The New Discipline is the name Jennifer Walshe gives to an embodied, multi-modal, expressly current approach to composition, outlined in 2016 in a manifesto of the same name.[52] In The New Discipline, all types of performance are available from dance to video to stand-up comedy and composers bring directorial and choreographic methods to compositional problems. It takes Fluxus for granted 'in the same way it takes harmony and the electric guitar for granted'.[53] Like Composed Theatre, The New Discipline is adamantly *not* traditional music theatre—it is music from the point of view that all music must be understood as theatrical. Key to The New Discipline is the engagement with the fact that music creators have/are physical bodies, and that those bodies are inextricable from the music.

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[50] Rebstock 2012, pp 356

[51] Lehmann might disagree (see the next section). I do.

[52] Walshe 2016 (2)

[53] Ibid.

The New Discipline expresses the twin desires to extend the materials of music beyond that which sounds and the processes of composing music beyond the traditional models. In this Walshe is aligned with Composed Theatre. She describes a music 'where physical, theatrical and visual elements are as important as the sonic.'[54]

Post-Aural Music differs from The New Discipline in two key ways. First, where Walshe is especially focussed on artist corporeality, I am looking at the space, the objects and the social constructs as part of music, alongside corporeality and aurality. And where The New Discipline, like Composed Theatre, sees non-aural elements as material to shape and control, Post-Aural Music sees them as something to *allow*. This attitude reconciles practical and aesthetic considerations. The domain of the instrumentalist is instrumental ability, and to ask them to deliver text, execute pas de bourrées, or scuba dive neither respects nor exploits their skillset. The Post-Aural composer should primarily ask the musicians to play music, but craft circumstances that forefront the theatrical elements of the discipline.

3.2 Postdramatic Theatre (or, A Model for Understanding Baggage)

> "Postdramatic theatre […] liberates the formal, ostentatious moment of ceremony from its sole function of enhancing attention and valorizes is for its own sake, as an aesthetic quality, detached from all religious and cultic reference. Postdramatic theatre is the replacement of dramatic action with ceremony, with which dramatic-cultic action was once, in its beginnings, inseparably united. What is meant by ceremony as a moment of postdramatic theatre is thus the whole spectrum of movements and processes that have no referent but are presented with heightened precision; events of peculiarly formalized communality; musical-rhythmic or visual-architectonic constructs of developments; para-ritual forms, as well as the (often

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[54] Walshe 2016 (2)

> deeply black) ceremony of the body and of presence; the emphatically or monumentally accentuated ostentation of the presentation."[55]

Hans-Thies Lehmann's book *Postdramatic Theatre* is a survey of avant-garde theatre from the late 1960's to 1999 (the date of the book's German publication), especially in Europe and the USA. Lehmann identifies trends that emerged in theatre during that period, and theorises them as tools for, and results of, the repositioning of *drama* within the modal hierarchies of *theatre*.

I draw heavily on this book as a model for theorising Post-Aural Music, evident in the term itself. Lehmann writes about the discipline of theatre as it has shifted from being only a vehicle for drama towards being an open-ended form of many equally viable elements. This is essentially how I am thinking of performed music—it is no longer exclusively a servant of sound, but an ecology of many sensory modes. Below I summarise the elements of the term Postdramatic Theatre (*post-*, *dramatic* and *theatre*) as they contain the pertinent factors I carry into the ensuing discussion of Post-Aural Music.

Post-

Drama (as defined below) has previously been the purpose of theatre and the assortment of other disciplines present—literature, carpentry, acting, smoke machine—were subjugated as tools for the expression of drama. But in separating drama from theatre it is recast as a component, equal in importance and purpose to a poem, a set, an actor's presence, hazy air. Drama has been resituated in the hierarchy of modalities and priorities that form theatre. It is no longer the cake on the plate. We now have a delicious, edible plate.

Each discipline comes with its history, canon and priorities, and so has its own legacy to honour as it moves forward, which I am calling 'baggage'. In

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[55] Lehmann 2006, pp 69

Postdramatic Theatre the baggage being addressed is the primacy of 'drama', especially via text, in traditional Western theatre. 'Post-' is not a removal of the baggage but a recategorization. Postdramatic Theatre is not a revolution, it is newer theatre, free to explore its myriad modes, with a healthy relationship to the drama-dominant history of theatre.

Dramatic

So what is the 'drama'? The form of drama is representation: a person (actor) representing another person (character) in a situation (stage) which represents another situation (setting and scenario). Drama's material is a narrative of tension between two actants—a hero versus her nemesis; lovers versus the situation that cannot allow them to be together; a journey versus tough terrain. For Lehmann it is expressed through text; it lives in the script.[56] Thus it is the moralizing, philosophizing storytelling Wagner sought,[57] and it reveals important insight into our world: ' 'Drama' [...] carries with it essential epistemological and social implications: the objective importance of the hero, of the individual; the possibility of representing human reality through language, namely through the form of stage dialogue; and the relevance of individual human behaviour in society.'[58] The dramatic has historically been the purpose of theatre, the authority to whom all other modes (in a deeply multi-modal field) are subjugated.

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[56] This is the baggage of theatre's literary history. A representational image, for example, can be equally dramatic as can a novel or gesture.

[57] See page 7 of this exegesis

[58] Lehmann 2006, pp 48

Theatre

So what is gained once the Dramatic has been removed from a position of authority? What is created in the act of dethroning it? The other elements of theatre are empowered to be artistic ingredients in their own right:

- The presence of the performer undertaking a task for its own sake. If a performer in dramatic theatre is *representing*, in Postdramatic theatre they are simply *presenting*. For example, Lehmann describes a performer not acting a limp but actually limping 'because a cane shoved down his trousers is forcing him to limp.'[59]
- The presence of the audience in the space. The being together, the passing of time, the witnessing of what is presented whilst witnessing the witnesses. I think often of *Eternal*, a single-shot durational film in which two actors repeat a single scene for three hours.[60] The experience is guided by the film, but the behaviour of the audience becoming in turn bored, uncomfortable, naughty, angry, amused, tired… provided a compelling component of the experience.
- The space itself. Rather than being confined to theatres, events may take place in very small, intimate venues; immense outdoor venues; houses, warehouses, labyrinthine stairwells; or the events may roam. I was once involved in a theatre event that was a formal long table dinner on the beach as the tide came in, the water eventually reaching our chests.[61] Here, the space *is* the event.
- The voice freed from the tyranny of semantics. In addition to delivering decipherable text, it can wail; speak in languages the audience does not understand; structure the text differently, for example copious repetition or fragmentation; form a chorus, in unison or for texture; and so on.

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[59] Lehmann 2006, pp 135

[60] Fish 2013

[61] Hill et al 2013

- A light is enough. *Flimmerskotom* is a performance piece for theatrical lighting equipment.[62] Watching it I determined four main categories for using lights. It begins with a tall bank of lights facing the audience flickering a rhythmic, pointillistic texture. We see the glowing bulbs (1). This intensity increases, and as it reaches a blinding climax the warm glow in the bulb become a bright shaft blasting towards us (2). The bank moves to expose the black cylinders that are the light-tools (3). The bank is lit by a separate light—a light can be used to illuminate *something* (4)! I would never notice this in dramatic theatre, but here it is (literally) a revelation

This chapter has discussed the intermodal transference of Composed Theatre and the corporeal and culturally embedded practice of The New Discipline, two areas which share significant territory Post-Aural Music. It also introduced the language and methods of *Postdramatic Theatre*. The following chapter transliterates the above definitions to their musical counterparts, endeavouring to theorise Post-Aural Music as a framework for analysis and creation.

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[62] Glogowski et al 2017

4. Post-Aural Music

Post-Aural Music is the term I have made up to encapsulate performed music that considers the aural mode equal to the multiple other perceptual modes that performed music engenders. It has two distinct forms: the Post-Aural of the creator, where the art piece is built with specific and careful consideration of the intermodality as a material; and the Post-Aural of the witness, who observes the art piece with a critical attitude (or manufactured naïveté) towards the multiple present modes, refusing to give in to the custom of overlooking the other modalities to favour the aural.

Like Lehmann in *Postdramatic Theatre*, I will not endeavour to offer a tangible definition for Post-Aural Music. Rather, this exegesis is peppered with claims and examples to construct a panorama of Post-Aurality. This chapter serves to focus these, defining some key terms, discussing some key priorities, and demonstrating the attitude by analysing Lachenmann's *Pression*.

4.1 Definitions

The attitude of Post-Aural Music is that the sound presented is not the totality of the art experienced. The various corporeal and sensory modes inherent to music performance are all considered vital elements for creative exploitation. The Post-Aural Music creator must draw on the toolkits of the existing disciplines that work with them: the lighting designer, the architect, the choreographer, the social scientist, and so on. These non-aural elements are considered *alongside* the aural in a fluid hierarchy, with the dominant element constantly shifting.

What is The Aural?

The Aural is that which is heard. It is the acoustic properties of the sound and the cultural codes which are heard in it: timbre, rhythm, harmony, loudness, frequency, register, instrumentation, genre, form, social function and so on. Here I am also using it as a shorthand for non-aural modes that suggest traditional music: the presence of instrument, the seating arrangement, performer attire, the venue's history, to name a few.

How is it Music?

Question: If music is a sound-driven artform and the Post-Aural refuses to privilege sound, what makes it music? Answer: Because it follows the lineage of music. It is derived from music, it is primarily informed by music, and it is always in relationship to the baggage of music. Music is constantly being defined and redefined in response to shifting attitudes about its materials, processes, and reception. Below I will outline three definitions: the traditional Western art music idea of sound-with-purpose as described by Roger Scruton; John Cage's liberation of sound from functional purpose; and the promotion of concept above sound, which Seth Kim-Cohen terms Non-Cochlear Sonic Art. A trajectory can be discerned through these examples that moves away from the primacy of the aural, and this is the trajectory that leads to Post-Aural Music.

Conservative philosopher Roger Scruton provides a working definition of the priorities of Western art music: it is the grammar of pitch relationships as they exist in the perception of the listener. This understanding is illustrated in Scruton's description of Nathan Davies' *Echeia* as performed at Donaueschingen in 2016. In this live-electronics piece, Davies filtered white noise to make tones. Scruton sees this purification as a step towards music, '[b]ut until those tones are used, and used in melodic and harmonic structures, the result will remain […] outside the reach of our musical affections'.[63] Scruton rejects 'sound effects and acoustical experiments'[64] as legitimate ingredients of music. He identifies the most 'salient features' of music as rhythm, melody and harmony.[65] The grammar of music lives in the push and pull of pitch relationships as they change through time. These tools of music are reminiscent of the tools of drama described in the previous section on Postdramatic Theatre: a representation of emotional tensions between actants.

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[63] Scruton 2016

[64] Ibid.

[65] Scruton 1999

As theatre moved to question the primacy of drama, the field of music sought a similar coup against pitch-based grammar. John Cage was an effective general and figurehead for the campaign. Cage replaced the organisational principles that had been previously assumed in music, rejecting the 'grammar' and celebrating the sounds *per se*: 'I don't want them to be psychological. I don't want a sound to pretend that it's a bucket or that it's president or that it's in love with another sound. I just want it to be a sound.'[66] He did this by employing chance operations rather than making musical decisions, thus also questioning the authority of the composer. For Cage, 'music' is a frame for listening to sound, an attitude towards hearing, which can be applied to any noise or lack of noise. He challenged the materials of music, the processes of creation, and the constructs of reception elegantly. But these efforts ultimately strengthened the primacy of the aural: 'sound' remained the main purpose of music.

Seth Kim-Cohen, recognising the need for a term for sound art driven by concept rather than aesthetic, offered 'non-cochlear sonic art'.[67] This directly references Marcel Duchamp's use of 'retinal art' to address art which is primarily visual, a necessary delineation at a time (the 1910's) when art 'in the service of the mind' was taking hold.[68]

For Scruton, sound is a medium for art; for Cage, sound *is* art; and for Kim-Cohen, sound is evidence of conceptual art. In the first two cases (both of which call the art 'music') sound is at the top of the hierarchy. In the last, the concept is promoted to replace sound as the objective. The baggage of the primacy of the aural is questioned, but hierarchical structure remains.

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[66] Cage 1992

[67] Kim-Cohen 2009, pp xxi

[68] Duchamp quoted in Arnason 1998, pp 274

4.2 Priorities of the Post-Aural

Post-Aural Music, lacking an aesthetic or processional definition, is best described as a set of priorities. These are shared by the creators and witnesses, though they can manifest differently.

The terms of the creators' encounter with an art piece are different to the terms of the witnesses' encounters. An instrumentalist—a creator—deals immediately with the tactile and corporeal modes as they interact physically with their instrument, and this encounter might occur repeatedly, evolving over weeks or even years. These physical modes reach the witnesses as visual information and are typically only experienced once, for up to a few hours total. A 'lead creator' has the double responsibility of facilitating two experiences: a pleasurable/lucrative/otherwise rewarding art-making experience for their collaborators, and a compelling art-witnessing experience for those who attend. Here are some key priorities of Post-Aural Music with respect to witness and creator experiences:

- To operate with a broad definition of 'music' that strives to recognise every non-aural and aural element present. Through the Post-Aural lens, the witness pays attention to every mode—the tactile and corporeal modes by mimesis,[69] spatial, tactile and visible aspects of the room, the social environment—and considers its function as a part of the art. The Post-Aural creator considers the physical tasks of the players, how it operates in the venue, and how it translates visually and aurally to the witnesses.

- To consider all these elements for their artistic potential. In the Post-Aural, non-aural elements become potential artistic materials. An analyst can discuss the visual success of the piece alongside the aural and the experience as an event. The creator has many modalities to exploit for creative merit.

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[69] See page 11 of this exegesis

- To understand these elements within a fluid ecology. The network of relationships between the perceptual modes constantly changes such that any element can dominate and be served by the others at one moment, and act in service of another element the next. The witness's focus will shift between modalities, re-affirming the artful presence of multiple perceptual modes.
- To work with the intermodality itself as a medium. The fluid ecology of modalities can itself be a material, and its artful manipulation can carry the structure of the piece.
- To work with the 'concert situation' as a material. The concert situation includes the space, the behaviour of its inhabitants—the performers and witnesses—and the expectations set by the history of concerts. The performed material is in conversation with this concert experience; they influence each other.
- For creators to reconsider the hierarchy of creative roles, just as we have reconsidered the hierarchy of disciplines. Collaborators have different areas of expertise and these are honoured in a fluid working hierarchy. If there is a lead creator, much of their job is to facilitate the ebbing of the hierarchical structure.

In the following section I will observe these priorities 'in the wild' as they operate for the witness by analysing—for an analyst is an expert witness—Lachenmann's *Pression*.

4.3 Pression

Helmut Lachenmann's *Pression* is a piece 'for one cellist' written in 1969. Alongside *Guero* for piano (1969) and *Dal Niente (Intérieur III)* for clarinet (1970) it is a foundational piece in establishing the concept the composer later dubbed 'musique concrète instrumentale', in which 'sounds are experienced as the immediate results of their production rather than mediated by a historically loaded space of listening conventions and metaphorical meaning'.[70] *Pression* does this by discarding traditional cello technique and replacing it with an array of invented techniques, including brushing and scratching the strings, drawing different formants out of the bow by squeezing the hairs, and the touching the wood of the bow to the vibrating open strings. The piece is interesting to consider as Post-Aural Music as its focus is the co-dependency between the performer's gesture, the object that is the cello, and the sound.

I will respond to two articles that offer insights: '*Pression* – A Performance Study' by cellist and academic Tanja Orning, which analyses the piece through performance theory 'as a live object, as performance, action and embodiment'; and 'Time-Space Experience in Works for Solo Cello[…]' by theorist Christian Utz, which compares the proportions and durations of several recordings of *Pression*., including a calculated 'accurate' score reading.

The Post-Aural *Pression*

This piece is particularly interesting through the Post-Aural lens as it is founded on some rich intermodal relationships but is intended for traditional presentation as Western concert music.

Visual

Visually, one of the first things we notice about the piece is that there is a cello there. The cello's presence is loaded—it means Bach and Dvořák, romance, wealth, European history. Orning writes that 'the cello as a traditional instrument with all its connotation and history is on one level erased […] we can say that Lachenmann has liberated not only the sounds but also the instrument and the performer from the weight of the history of the cello.'[71] At least from the visual perspective this is an exaggeration: the cello looks identical to the cello in Elgar, held upright with its endpin in the floor, four strings and a curly wooden scroll. And when the playing technique deviates from the traditional it draws our attention exactly because we are familiar with the traditional instrument. That the bow is held at both ends plays off our knowledge that the bow is normally held only in the right hand; that performers often play *Pression* standing would be unremarkable except that we know cellists normally sit. The claim is that *Pression* transcends the cello's history, but in the Post-Aural context it *contains* the cello's history, its baggage, and one strength of the piece is that tension.

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[70] Utz 2017 paraphrasing Lachenmann 1996

[71] Orning 2012

Physical

Orning is not writing about the look of the cello, she is discussing the performer experience—gesture. The physical engagement with the instrument deviates significantly from traditional technique. This is as clear in the prescriptive score as in the player's hands: 'the notation of this piece does not indicate the sounds, but the player's actions'[72]. *Pression* is driven by a physical logic, with aural results, and the piece is to be discussed in terms of this co-incidental intermodality.

Form

To analyse the form through gesture, the piece divides into sections defined first by locations on the cello for left hand and bow (which never leaves the right hand), and second by manners of articulation. This is an analysis of documentation of Eric Maria Couturier's 2015 performance.[73]

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[72] Orning 2012

[73] Couturier 2015

1	LH rubbing up and down along the strings, bow at the bridge.	**0:09**
2	LH along the bow, joined soon by the bow moving up and down the strings.	**1:27**
TRANSITION	*LH pinches string, pulls it away from the fingerboard. Bow slightly ascends and descends.*	**2:23**
3	Bow, held at either end by both hands, grinds left and right below the bridge.	**2:28**
TRANSITION	*LH slaps fingerboard, rubs along the strings, slaps cello body.*	**4:36**
4	Bow, inside the square below strings between fingerboard and bridge, bounces and brushes in a variety of ways.	**4:38**
5	LH rapidly rubbing along the fingerboard and Bow rapidly rubbing beneath the fingerboard alternate.	**6:25**
6	LH rubs, echoes from section **5**. Bow, at the tailpiece, moves back and forth.	**6:40**
7	LH touches string from below near the bridge, sporadically untouching, like the opposite of pressing a button. Bow moves back and forth in the same position, but above the strings.	**7:25**
TRANSITION	*LH rubs slowly down then up the strings. Bow continues.*	**9:13**
8	LH fingers a tone. Bow continues.	**9:37**
9	…same as section **7**.	**10:32**
10	LH rubs jerkily along strings. Bow occasionally strikes strings.	**10:56**
TRANSITION	LH plucks all strings. Bow rolls over them col legno.	**11:56**
11	Bow smoothly ascends strings, then bounces back down.	**12:00**
12	Body relaxes. End.	**12:28**

Utz analyses the form three times. First through a hierarchy of saliencies: he identifies two events as most salient by nature of their loudness—the sustained grinding behind the bridge and the sustained D♭—and the long *saltando* section in the middle as slightly salient. He deems the materials surrounding these events variations of them. Second, the form is 'a constant and audacious variation on D♭, which is repeatedly distorted and blurred but always resurfaces.'[74] The overall procession is unpitched noise transforming to pitched tone for the bulk of the piece, then a noisy coda. Utz's third analysis renders the piece a series of disjoint fragments with some timbral connections. From these considerations he creates a table which divides the piece into four sections and thirteen subsections.

I have mapped the timings of these sections (as realised by Couturier) to a timeline alongside my own gestural observations as charted above.

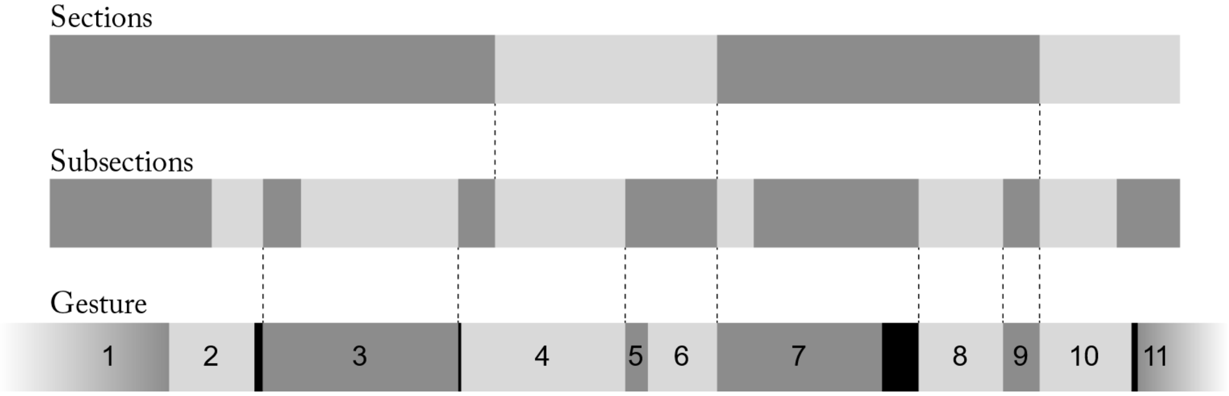

Figure 1: Comparative divisions of Lachenmann's 'Pression': Utz's aural sections and subsections, and my gestural observations.

We can see there are seven points where the subsection/gesture boundaries align, examples of the gesture and the aural effect coupled. These include the beginnings and endings of Utz's most salient aural moments: the long grinding, **3**; the saltando, **4**; and the D♭, **8**. In each of these places the relationship between the gesture and the sound is such that one could not happen without the other. Either mode can be considered incidental to the other: the cellist executes movements which result in sounds, or the cellist creates sounds which force them to move in a specific way. This is not surprising—traditional cello music has the same relationship and we are accustomed to it—but it is complicated and Lachenmann foments artistically rich art from the co-incidental relationship. The other two coincidences are when the bow moves from tailpiece to bridge, into 7, where the presence of fine-tuners enforces a clunky repositioning of the bow; and the beginning of 10, a recapitulation of sorts.

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[74] Utz 2017

There are also moments where *Pression* decouples the modes, complicating the link between the visual and aural. These moments are significant in exposing the co-incidental intermodal relationship:

- Between 1 and 2 the left-hand changes plane and moves along the bow. This is visually salient moment as it is both a break of an established pattern within the piece and a physically subtle yet technically radical break from traditional playing. This kind of inventiveness, a hallmark of Lachenmann's music, is also symptomatic of Post-Aural Music. As the non-aural elements are explored seriously, fascinating incidental aural results are uncovered.

- Between 5 and 6 the bow moves to the tailpiece but it cannot be heard over the unchanging left hand. The sound being too quiet to hear but its means of production being visible is a typical feature of musique concrète instrumentale. It also exemplifies the fluidity of modal hierarchies that Post-Aural Music seeks: the significant visible shift does not immediately have an audible result. In this case it does make the intermodal promise that we will soon hear what we already see which reduces the primacy afforded the visual, creating form through the intermodal tension (visual promise) and release (decoupled audible result).

  At the beginning (not shown in the video) and end Couturier and his cello are present and moving but most sound is generated by the witnesses. With the Post-Aural attitude, the customs and cues around starting and ending a piece are challenged. How can it be finished if the performer and instrument's very presence are part of the piece? For all the dalliances with Post-Aural principles within

Pression, Couturier chooses here to maintain the traditional Western art music concert frame.

For the analyst, the expert witness, Post-Aural Music is not a genre or criteria by which a piece of music can succeed or fail; it is a lens through which performed music can be observed, a perspective which can be applied to any performed music. It focusses on the complex network of relationships within the intermodal ecology inherent to music performance. It is a particularly appropriate perspective to bring to *Pression* as that piece deals with a conscious exploration of multiple modes of cello music: the physical objects of the cello and bow, the physicality and gesturality of the cellist, the visual spectacle seen, and of course the aural aspect heard.

What then are the implications of this lens for creators? What is it to make music that expressly attempts to satisfy these priorities? The following chapter reflects on a performance event of my own composition, crafted with the priorities of the Post-Aural in mind, as an example of these ideas in a creative praxis.

5. Fish in Pink Gelatine

Fish in Pink Gelatine (hereafter FIPG) is the creative expression of this Post-Aural research. It is a 70-minute performance event for clarinettist, bassoonist, percussionist-lighting operator, violist and cellist which I composed and directed in accordance with the Post-Aural attitudes. First presented in the Adam Art Gallery in January 2019, FIPG exists in two halves.

The first half, a 'performed installation', sees the five musicians spread across the three levels of the gallery, independently undertaking artistic tasks. Witnesses are invited to chat quietly and share the specially prepared snacks as they move about the performance environment at their own pace. The idea is to create a social atmosphere where people exercise autonomy in getting to know the artistic climate of the event and be comfortable in the space. The first half introduces a set of objects, timbres, people and ideas in an unstructured and often playful way that transform and recombine in the second half in controlled ways. The second half is a 'staged concert'. Witnesses are seated in a traditional arrangement, performers playing composed, directed music. The music is a series of instrumental solos, which I call *Fish*, and simple text scores, *Waters*, which incorporate timbre and structuring principles. The waters are used to create a rich soundscape to hold the Fish, which is responsive to the Fish. Beyond these theoretical constructs, FIPG addresses themes of location, descent, atmospheric medium and expanse.

In this chapter I will report on the creative process and describe the material of the two halves explaining and reflecting on the aspects of Post-Aurality addressed. This sort of environmental work is a challenge to document. While the chapter includes several performance photographs, and Appendix 1 of this exegesis is a set of links to videos of second half material to be viewed alongside the reading of this chapter (there is no footage of first half material), the ephemeral performance event is necessarily lost.

5.1 Process

There were four major phases in the creation of FIPG. Each concentrated on a different aspect of Post-Aural Music creation: music making as a physical practice; as a social, collaborative practice; as a practice that is concerned with witness experiences; and as a practice that generates art that is flexible to the performance situation (in this case I discuss the space).

Physical Practice: Improvisation

Throughout the year spent working toward FIPG I would source instruments and improvise on them. This was about finding simple, physical instrument-instrumentalist interactions which resulted *incidentally* in appealing aural and non-aural material. This is most clearly exemplified in *Shiny Skeleton*,[75] where the stroking of the clarinet's trill keys results in a timbrally, rhythmically, harmonically complex figure, with the precarious register and timbre coupled to dynamics such that dynamic phrasing also gives shape to these other aural aspects. The piece also includes a sibilant-heavy poem initially drawn from improvising text into the mouthpiece, and ultimately inspired by the oral and digital tactility of playing the instrumental (I am not a woodwind native, so there is a novelty to the instrumental technique for me). I attribute the formal construct of 'Fish' solos to this improvisational practice.

Social Practice: July Workshops

In July 2018 I held two full-day workshops with a small group of musicians to explore ensemble materials (which would become the *Waters*), physical and spatial concepts, and to workshop constructions that would become the performed installations. These workshop borrowed the devising process from theatre, a method of ensemble creation in which participants are given limited time (say, 15-minutes) to create compositions in response to a provocation from the director. Such workshops are collaborative, social situations which generate a lot of rough material in a condensed period—material which tends to put modalities into inseparable relationship. *Tank Ritual*[76] and *Surface*[77] come directly from this phase, as did major elements of *Dealing with the Past*[78] and *Illustration of Process*.[79] The mark of these workshops is also heavy on all staging, the Fish-Water structuring principle, all text and the eventual personnel.

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[75] See page 61 of this exegesis, and Appendix 1 *Shiny Skeleton*.

Audience Experience: Fish in a Vivisection

In August 2018 I performed a 35-minute work-in-process/progress staged concert called 'Fish in a Vivisection'. This was about trying out some of the composed Fish material, and physical, spatial and lighting ideas before witnesses. It came to function as a draft towards the second half of FIPG. Witnesses received questionnaires after the performance asking 'what did you see?', 'what did it remind you of?' and 'what was successful/unsuccessful?'. The critical and interpretive responses were important to provide me with an outside perspective on my work (for me as both performer and composer this is a very difficult perspective to obtain), and especially to get external feedback on the integration of non-aural modes into New Music performance.

Responding to the Space: 12 Hours of Rehearsal

Over the week leading up to the performances of FIPG we had 12 hours of rehearsal in the venue. Such rehearsal for Post-Aural Music is a process of discovering and solving artistic problems with the idiosyncrasies and constraints of the space as it meets the material, rather than polishing the material itself. This resembles tech week in a theatrical production (where the performers are not rehearsing scenes but fitting the blocking to the space, repeating transitions for the technical team to set light levels, build cues and so on) more than it resembles a concert music rehearsal.

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[76] See page 52 of this exegesis

[77] See page 59 of this exegesis

[78] See page 53 of this exegesis

[79] See page 51 of this exegesis

It is normal in such a process that last minute decisions become integral to the art piece. For FIPG it became clear that *Simpering Propulsions / NO LOCATIONS* [80] could not be memorised in time.[81] This was solved by affixing the notation to the wall in a single line. Illuminating this was solved by giving the bassoon player a headlamp, an image that brings to mind underwater caves (Figure 2). The notation and its illumination were formally elegant, the Post-Aural thinking contributing to the characteristic *inventiveness* of FIPG.

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[80] See page 57 of this exegesis and Appendix 1 *Simpering Propulsions / NO LOCATIONS*

[81] I wrote *NO LOCATIONS* theoretically, on paper from multiphonics charts as I was unable to source a bassoon to improvise on. As such the piece does not follow the interactive/physical logic mentioned above, which contributes to the difficulty of memorisation.

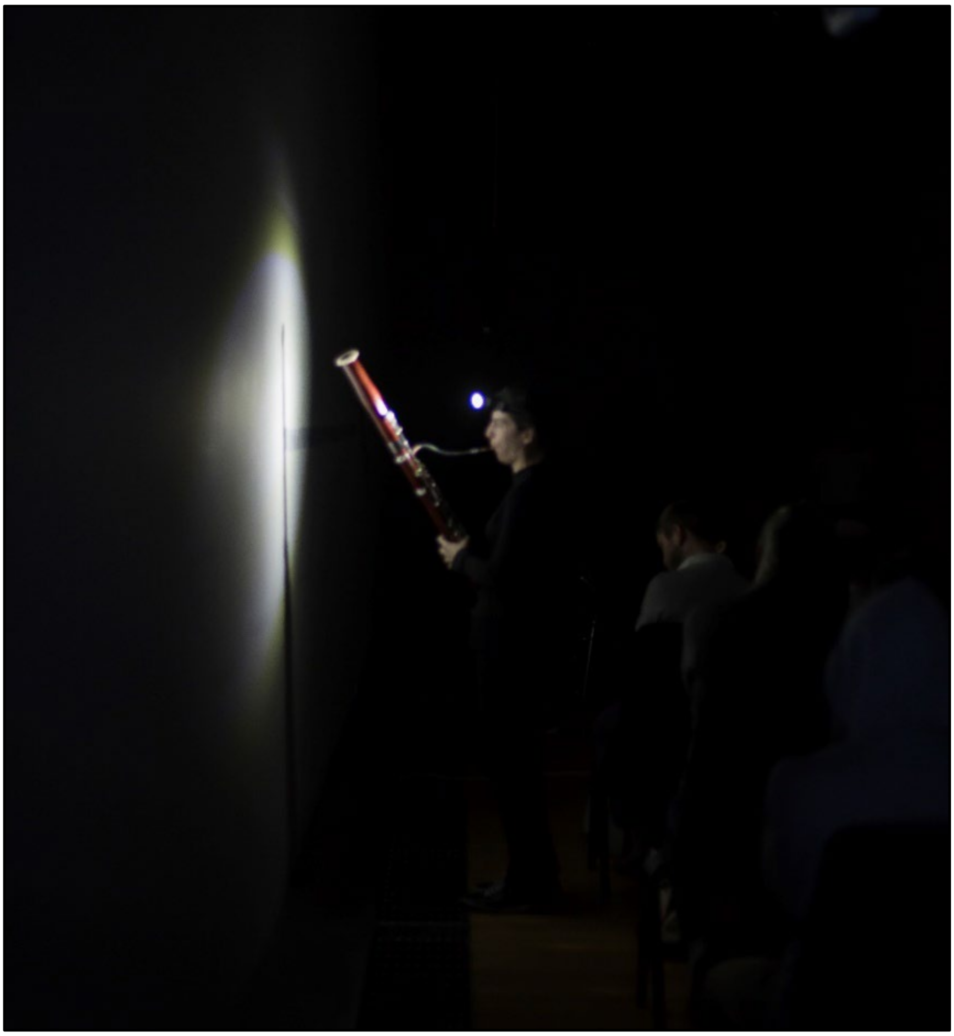


Figure 2: Leni Mäckle in 'Simpering Propulsions / NO LOCATIONS'. Photograph by Callum Mallet

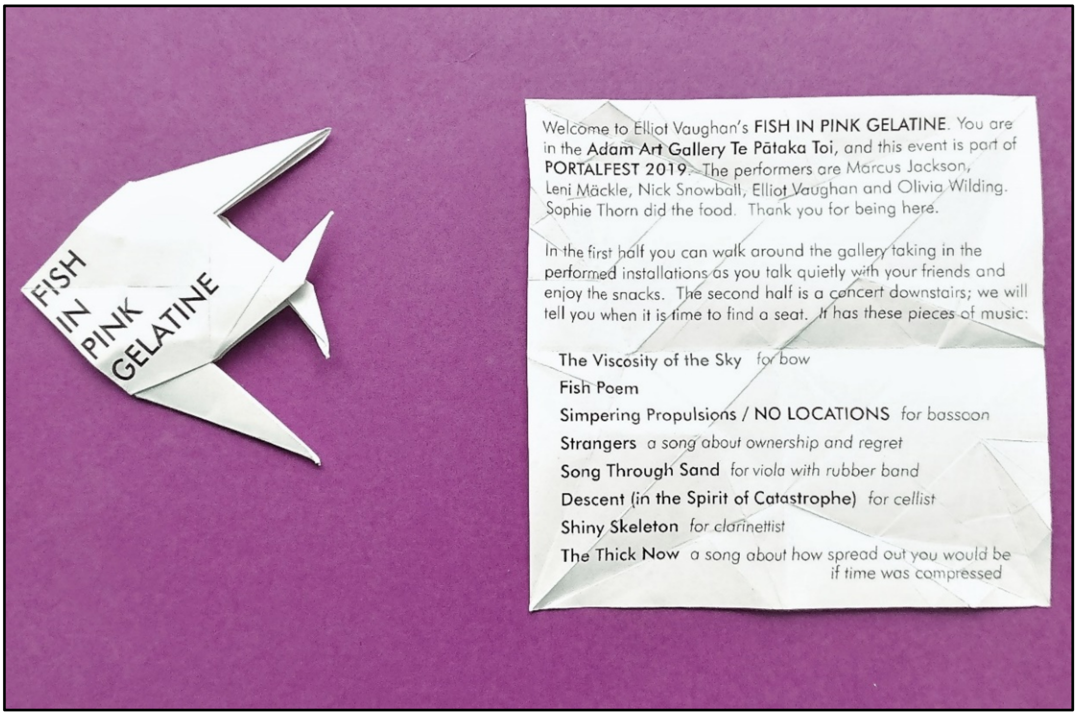
5.2 First Half: Performed Installation

The first half of FIPG comprises a different set of tasks for each of the five musicians. Some of these tasks were quite complete after the preceding workshops, others had some preparatory thought prior to rehearsals but were developed in the few days or rehearsal before performance. I will describe the tasks here as they existed in the Adam Art Gallery, and reflect on how they might change with a different ensemble, in a different space and so on.

Lobby/What Will Happen

Witnesses are greeted individually upon entering. I welcomed people and handed them the programme, an origami fish (Figure 3). The task of unfolding emphasised the tactile aspect of the customary sheet, recalled and extended in *Dealing with the Past*,[82] and suggested a kind and playful tone right away. I then explained the rules of the space (that they could chat, snack, wander about for the first half) and shape of the show (and that I would let them know when to head down for the second half). The idea was to let them be comfortable with the proceedings, to not have to wonder how to encounter the unusual event, what they were permitted to do, or worry about what might occur. With all perceptual modes considered, the art piece is not confined to the frame formed between the auditorium going quiet for the first sound, and applause afterwards. It extends beyond, and the experience can be guided the moment a witness enters (if not before).

Once all witnesses had arrived, I was free to help with *Carrying/Preparing*.



Welcome to Elliot Vaughan's **FISH IN PINK GELATINE**. You are in the **Adam Art Gallery Te Pātaka Toi**, and this event is part of **PORTALFEST 2019**. The performers are Marcus Jackson, Leni Mäckle, Nick Snowball, Elliot Vaughan and Olivia Wilding. Sophie Thorn did the food. Thank you for being here.

In the first half you can walk around the gallery taking in the performed installations as you talk quietly with your friends and enjoy the snacks. The second half is a concert downstairs; we will tell you when it is time to find a seat. It has these pieces of music:

The Viscosity of the Sky *for bow*
Fish Poem
Simpering Propulsions / NO LOCATIONS *for bassoon*
Strangers *a song about ownership and regret*
Song Through Sand *for viola with rubber band*
Descent (in the Spirit of Catastrophe) *for cellist*
Shiny Skeleton *for clarinettist*
The Thick Now *a song about how spread out you would be if time was compressed*

Figure 3: FIPG programme folded and unfolded. Photograph by Elliot Vaughan.

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[82] See page 53 of this exegesis

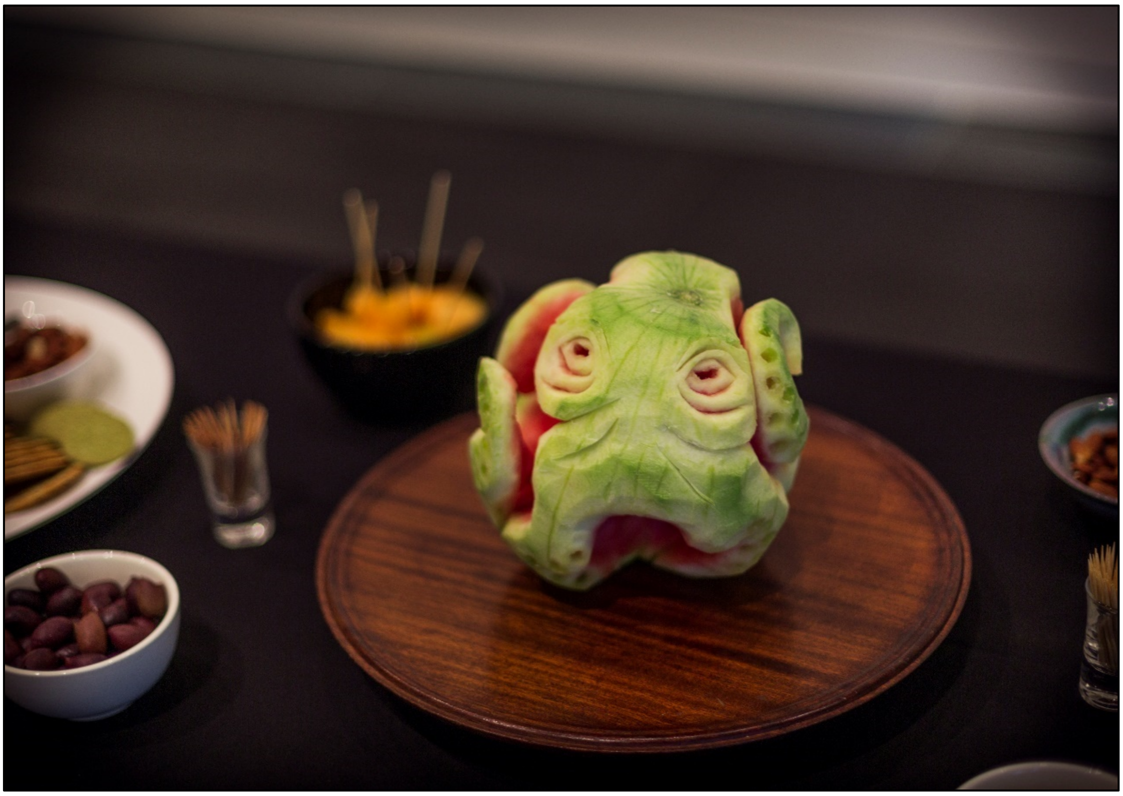

Figure 4: Watermelon carving in the lobby by food designer Sophie Thorn. Photograph by Callum Mallet.

Carrying/Preparing

The percussionist-lighting operator was tasked with moving instruments from the far end of the top level to the far end of the bottom level. This was an act of time-keeping, as the upper level empties and the lower accumulates, lasting the first half's full 30 minutes. It was an act of preparation, the percussion being organised for the second half. It was an act of descent. It was an occasionally difficult physical task, the tam-tam and large bass drum being especially awkward, to rather playful effect. The most interesting Post-Aural function of the task is as a revelation of space. As objects were gently drawn across the surfaces of the gallery they translated the physical textures to sound, revealing details of the gallery (Figure 5). The aural mode is incidental but carries information, the timbre partially defined by the architecture, and entirely shaped by moving through the architecture.

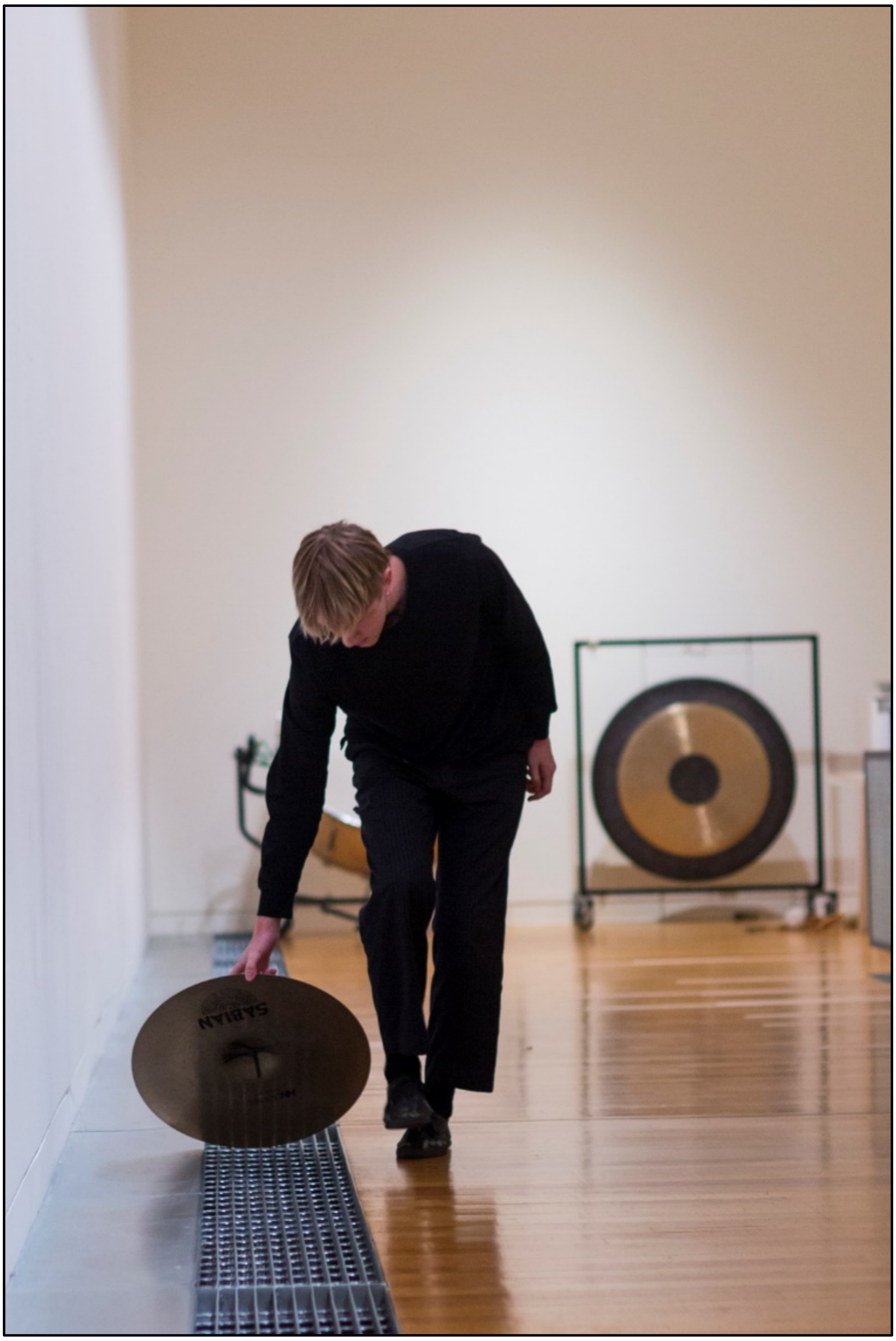

Figure 5: Nick Snowball in 'Carrying/Preparing'. Photograph by Callum Mallet.

Illustration of Process

The bassoonist sat in an area with a pile of books about marine ecology, river systems, aquatic life and so on. She would alternate between reading random sections of books for a time and playing her instrument into the space, imitating or otherwise responding to what she was hearing from elsewhere. This demonstrated elements of my process for writing some of the poetry to be heard in the second half, which is reorganisations of text drawn from these same books.

This is the least fleshed out element of the first half with the least effective intermodality. The instrumental material has a weak concept ('to imitate or respond'—my verbal instruction to the player—is lazy) and the reading needs to be couched better, either aestheticized or explained, to be effective. Though the elements alternate, they can be considered weak concurrence: both are present, but neither affects the other. To make the task more satisfying as Post-Aural Music the elements either need to interact or refine the concurrence to make it meaningful.

Tank Ritual

The clarinettist invites a single witness into a dimly lit room. A glass tank is standing on its end with a small pillow inside. Nearby is a bowl of pebbles. The performer asks the witness to lie on their back with their head inside the tank with their palms up (Figure 6). Constantly explaining what they are about to do, the performer places a handful of pebbles in each of the witness's hands, asking that they feel even. The witness's voice inside the tank booms, an aural contrast to the delicate rattling of pebbles. The performer gets another handful of pebbles and scatters them over the window of glass directly above the witness's face, obscuring their eye contact. Once there is a good pile on the tank, the performer pushes their open palms into it, spreading the pebbles to cover the window. Quiet squeaks and grinds replace the rattling, and the visual swirling is captivating. The performer guides the witness to drop their handfuls of pebbles back into the bowl, helps them up, and sees them out.

Tank Ritual is a corporeal, tactile, visual, social, and aural experience for the witness. No one mode leads. In workshops we found that the piece completely hinges on this integration. As soon as one mode was allowed to lead, the piece lost its power. That is, we experimented with 'performing music'—tapping and rubbing the glass and pebbles expressly for aural effects—and it felt forced and boring despite interesting sounds being well organised.

This ritual is the only part of FIPG that requires the one-performer-one-witness dynamic. The dynamic between the two is intimate. There is space for easy conversation, without pressure or expectation. It takes several minutes to complete, so it is not possible for more than ten or twelve people to experience the piece. The cost of intimacy here is exclusion.

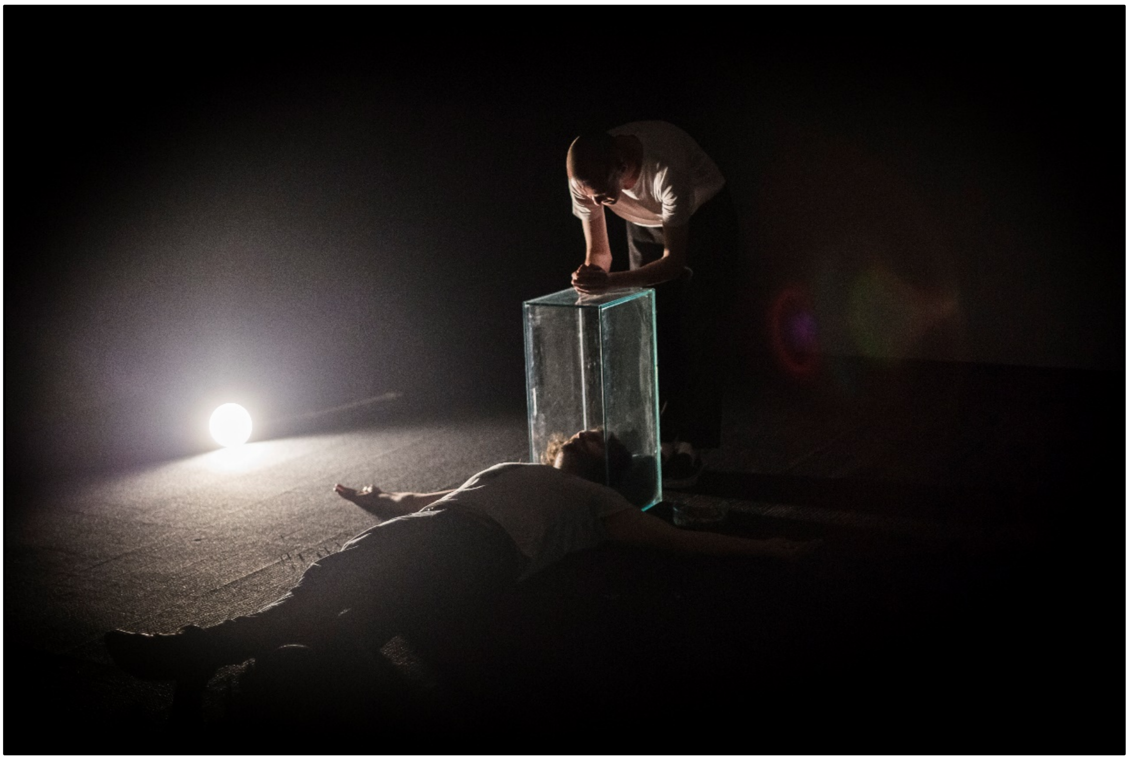

Figure 6: Marcus Jackson in 'Tank Ritual'. Photograph by Callum Mallet.

Dealing with the Past

The cellist was to play pieces she had learnt as a youth and verbalise any memories brought forth. Upon finishing or abandoning a piece (this is a challenging task designed to cause mistakes) she would either tear out or fold a paper fish. This fish would be threaded between the strings alongside any previous fish, distorting the tone (Figure 7). The paper used was draft sheet music of pieces in the second half and drafts of this exegesis. This interaction between paper and string demonstrates the objecthood of both elements.

Post-Aural Music is not a rejection of music, it is an addition to and a celebration of what performed music has always offered. *Dealing with the Past* addresses the presence of the baggage of music by acknowledging the history of the classical instruments that carry FIPG. This is an effort to incorporate the repertoire and associations the cello carries and to honour the player's training (and by extension all the players' trainings), and to present it playfully and as part of a progression towards the second half.

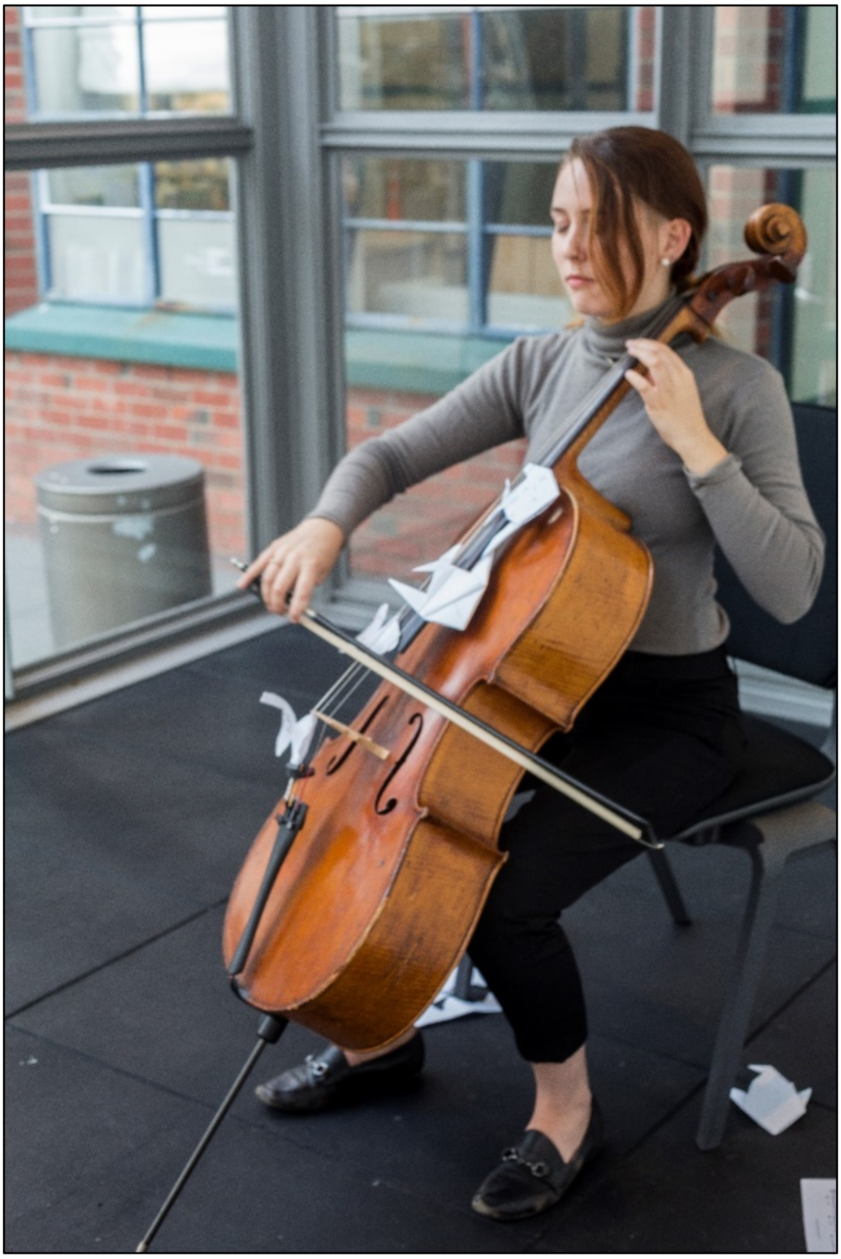

Figure 7: Olivia Wilding in 'Dealing with the Past'. Photograph by Callum Mallet.

5.3 Second Half: Staged Concert

The materials of the second half of FIPG fall into three categories of composition. The 'Fish' are a series of three- to ten-minute notated compositions for solo instrumentalist, which explore a variety of ways to exploit the non-aural modes of music performance. These form the setlist along with two songs, which have chamber ensemble accompaniments. The 'Waters' are a set of ensemble textures and structuring principles outlined in brief text scores. They are for use in rehearsal to devise a dynamic sound-movement-light-scape, responsive to the Fish they support.

Fish: The Viscosity of the Sky

This piece is for violin or viola bow alone. It is used primarily by being whipped through the air, generating whistling tones in the disturbed air and buzzing sounds as the air disturbs the hairs. I think of this as 'proving the atmosphere'. The instrument is very inefficient; these sounds are quiet, and the movements required are large and fast. This mismatch forefronts the gestural over the aural, very appealing for Post-Aural performance. The multidisciplinarity here is Incidentality as the effort to make the sound incidentally causes a rather bold dance.

It should be noted that we did cut *The Viscosity of the Sky* from FIPG after making and folding the programmes. It was effectively replaced by *Salt*, one of the Waters.

Water: Salt

> Each player has a small light in their mouth. Positioned near the rear wall, facing it, they open and close their lips. Unison, canon, individual short flashes at various densities, text.

With these parameters we created a short piece of visual music for four players driven by rhythm, timing, texture and locations (Figure 8). The bassoon, above and behind the witnesses, added two aural moments. Some keyclicks concurred with a section of rapid textural flashing, temporally coupled by synchresis but frictive for the spatial detachment. A single snarling multiphonic swell underscored the four bodies turning to display glowing red mouths; a self-aware genre reference that acknowledged the associations some witnesses would have with the stark lighting and distorted timbres that typify FIPG.

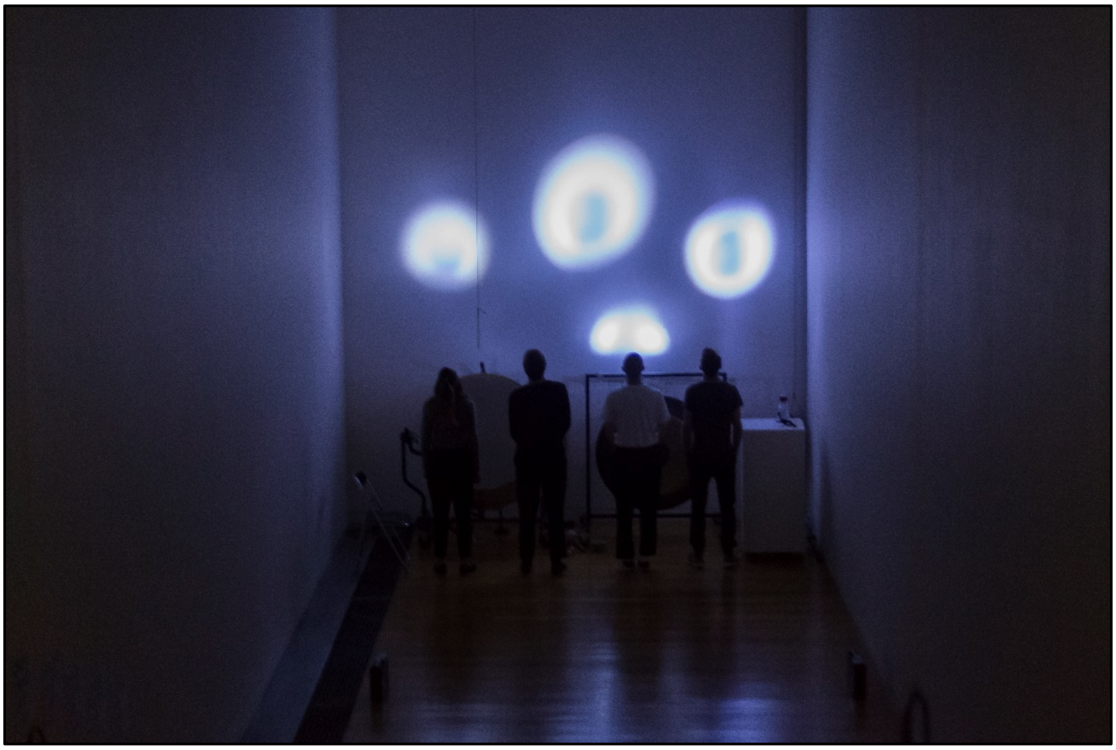

Figure 8: 'Salt'. Photograph by Callum Mallet.

Fish: Fish Poem

I read *Fish Poem* as I moved from the stage, past the witnesses in into the depths of a stairwell. With the distance, the words were lost to the reverb, the architecture crossfading with the performer, another disclosure of the gallery's materiality in the aural domain. The three left on stage responded to each line, the lights still in their mouths. The objecthood of the lights interacted with the language hampering the comprehensibility. More strikingly, this caused an incidental lighting effect, a messy but near-unison partner to the *Salt* lights. This effect was given formal trajectory through spatial trajectory: the dots of light increased in size and diminished in intensity as the performers backed away from the wall.

Fish: Simpering Propulsions/NO LOCATIONS

The notation for this Fish was affixed to the wall in a single, continuous line (Figure 9). This line was a temporal form of the piece mapped to space and a countdown to the next piece. The visual aspect of the sheet music is normally reserved for the player, and considered unimportant to the witness experience. Here it is a key visual element. *NO LOCATIONS* was lit with a single headlamp worn by the bassoonist, ensuring the visual attention is on the notation and its arrangement rather than focussing on the player. The notation's presence also dictated the bassoonist's locomotion through the room, from directly beside the witnesses into the stage space.

The opening several phrases were not included here but heard during *Song Through Sand* [83] to help stitch the Staged Concert together.

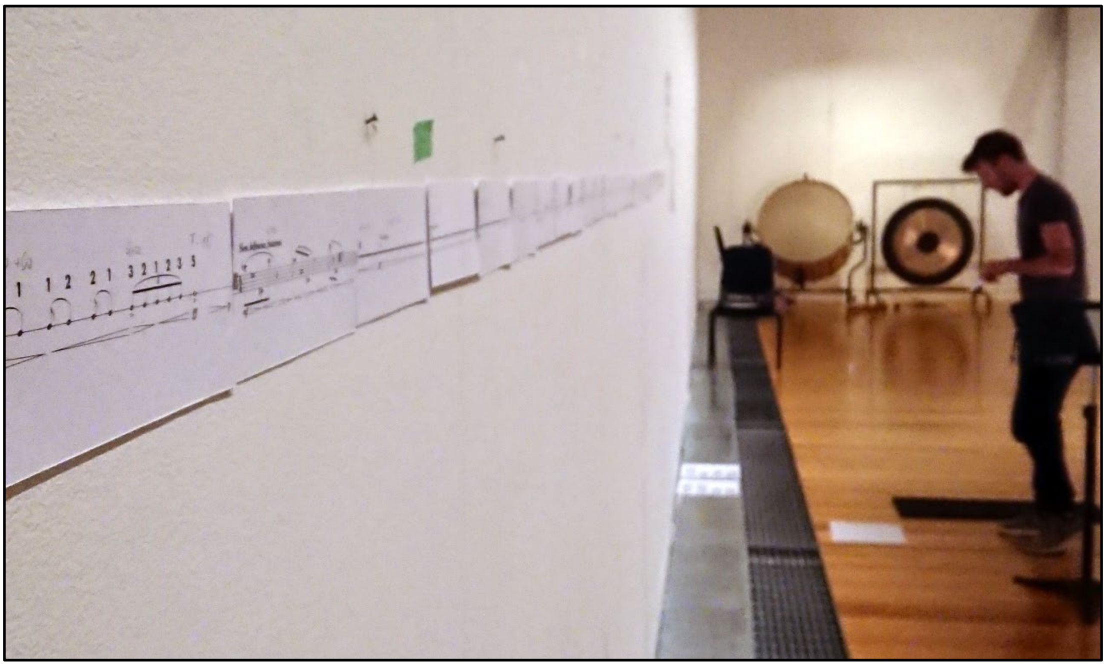

Figure 9: Elliot Vaughan preparing the space, showing 'NO LOCATIONS' notation. Photograph by Reuben Jelleyman.

Song: Strangers

A simple song with chamber accompaniment, *Strangers* was staged to reference a traditional concert (Figure 10). With the witnesses attuned to considering the multiple modalities present, the staging is an effort to present the innate intermodality of standard music performance and pragmatic, communicative beauty it engenders. Following some unusual and potentially challenging material, *Strangers* also served to ground the music-loving audience and to renew FIPG's relationship to music's baggage.

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[83] See page 58 of this exegesis

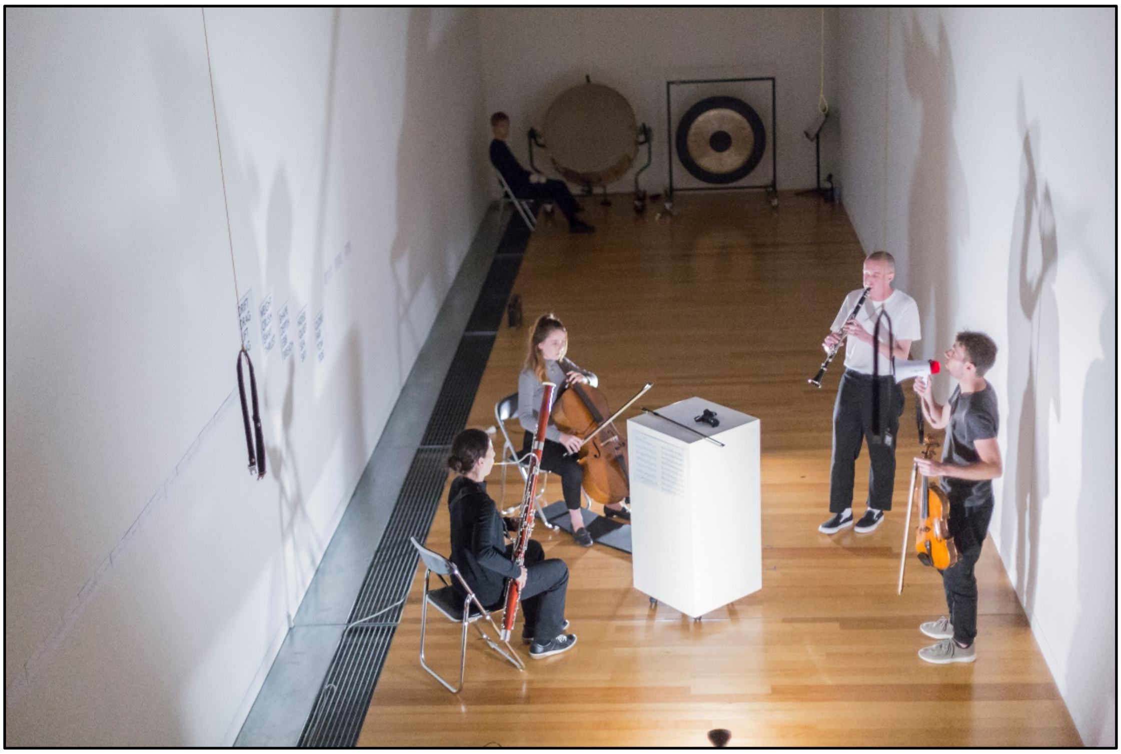

Figure 10: The FIPG ensemble in 'Strangers'. Photograph by Callum Mallet.

Fish: Song Through Sand

Song Through Sand is a four-way conversation between the third movement of *Constriction Tones* for viola with rubber band, two mono cassette players, the poem *Surface* (one of the Waters) and the remaining material from *NO LOCATIONS*. The cassette players were brought forward, suspended from ropes and lit from below. In the light spill I prepared the viola with a rubber band. The four elements occupy discrete areas within the space, and the conversation pushes the witness focus around the stage.

The piece maps the development process of FIPG:

- I wrote *Constriction Tones* as an interrogation of the physical object of the viola in March 2018, during the early stages of thinking about what would become FIPG.

- In June the third movement was workshopped and staged with two taonga puoro players, my first experiment in applying processes from devised theatre to music. We used two poi awhiowhio and two purerehua, whirling instruments, selected for the elevated physicality they require of the player. The small audience were at one end of the hall, with the viola player quite close. The taonga puoro players filled the expanse of the rest of the venue, a striking image.[84]

- I mapped the taonga puoro parts to two electroacoustic tracks for August's *Fish in a Vivisection*.[85] The two tracks were recorded to two cassettes because it was important to see the object that is the loudspeaker and to see it operated on stage, a Post-Aural prioritization that has incidental ramifications for the sound quality. The tapes also incidentally provided another type of countdown, playing until they automatically stop themselves 30-minutes later.

- *Surface* was conceived in the July workshops, and written the week before performance. Words were selected from books on marine ecology and arranged on the page according to their sibilance.

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[84] There is a strong political angle to incorporating indigenous instruments in the artistic idiom of the settlers. In working collaboratively with the taonga puoro players I tried to sidestep the composer-down hierarchy of Western music, and considered the rehearsal process the art piece, the performance essentially a necessity of the workshop structure.

[85] More complicated than incorporating the indigenous voice is *removing* it. But I do not consider that losing the timbre and physical presence of the taonga puoro to be a complete removal. The players' methods, timings and tastes remain. Rather than incorporating Māori instruments into a fundamentally Western process and format, I have had taonga puoro players inform my Western teleology and ontology of music.

- The first several phrases of *NO LOCATIONS* overlapped the whispered poem, and idea that came up in rehearsal days before the performance.

Fish: Descent (in the Spirit of Catastrophe)

Descending is a recurring theme in FIPG. In the first half the percussion descends; between the halves the witnesses descend; and this Fish is built on the gesture of repeatedly pushing the bow down the strings from nut to bridge. Simple choreographic variations of this motion develop the idea: only one end of the bow descending, the bow held vertically rather than horizontally as it descends, variations in pacing, variations in beginning and end-points, and so on. At one moment the left-hand fingers a glissando, an interesting dissonance where the physically descending hand causes 'ascending' pitch. The accompanying Water, *Depth*, is a gradual and continuous descending glissando, the players located within the cellist's shadow.

The most striking element of *Descent* is the lighting. The cellist is seated sideways and a single front light projects her shadow to fill the large back wall (Figure 11). This is designed to enhance the physical focus of this piece by expanding the visual. It is a good example of capitalising on the innate modes of the traditional concert: the players are nearly always lit somehow, and that lighting is normally subservient to the player. Here, the shadow is the visual focus.

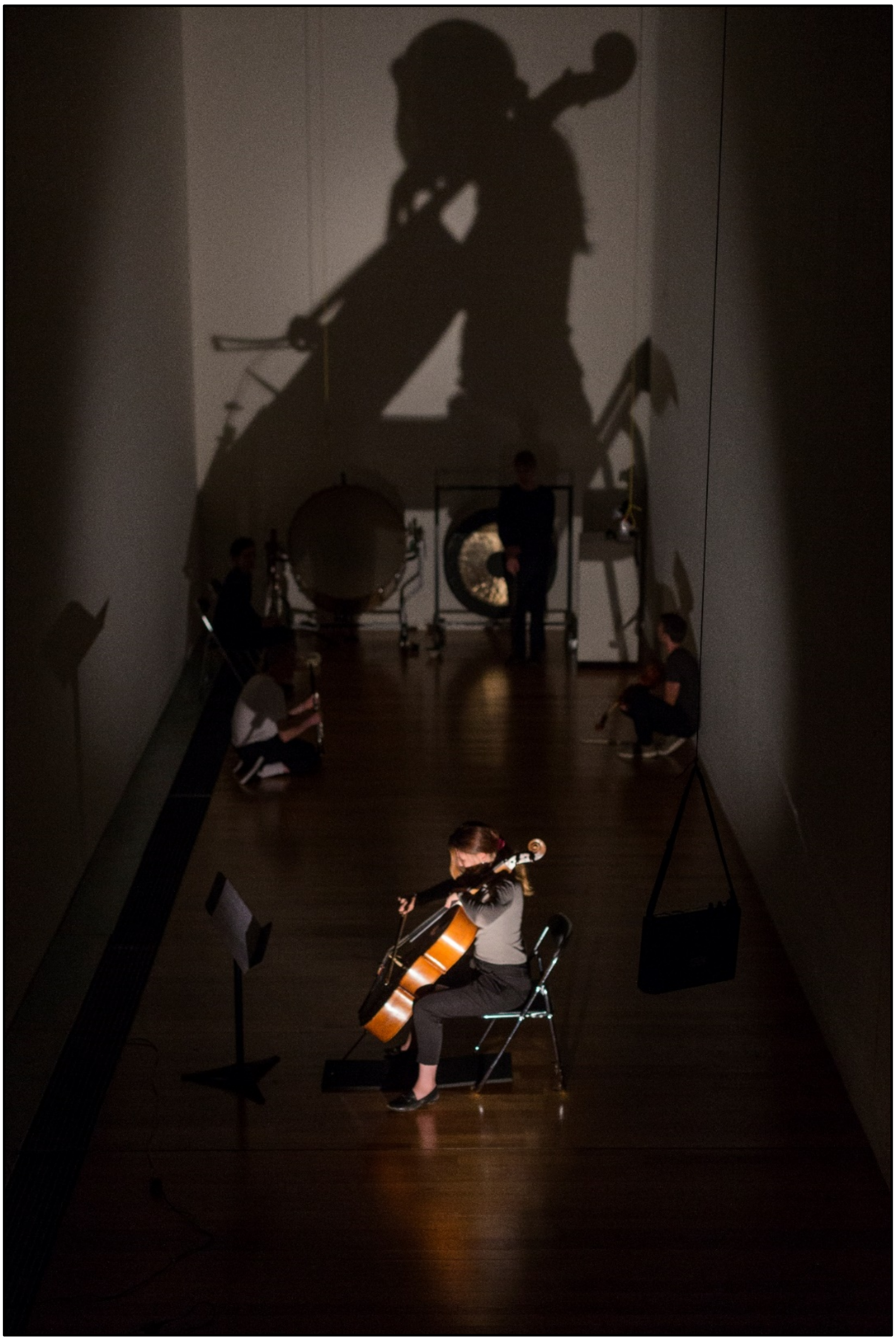

Figure 11: Olivia Wilding in 'Descent (in the Spirit of Catastrophe)'. Photograph by Callum Mallet.

Fish: Shiny Skeleton

Shiny Skeleton addresses the relationship between the clarinet and the clarinettist, especially the ways they touch. The piece begins with the clarinettist gently, repeatedly stroking their index finger down the four trills keys—a simple physical caress, a miniature descent, with a complex aural result. At a later point the clarinettist flicks the reed up and down with the tip of their tongue, an intentionally sexual gesture for the performer, a quiet, rapid scraping the only aural evidence for the witnesses. There is a poem spoken line by line over the course of *Shiny Skeleton* which dramatizes the instrumentalist-instrument touch as sexual and/or violent. The poem begins with a lustful, almost predatory tone, which objectifies the instrument. This objectification, ordinarily un-noted, is accepted in standard music performance. But it is active here, and the uncomfortable act of objectification in *Shiny Skeleton* seeks to prove the subjecthood of the clarinet. This is exemplified when the player, frightening in their quiet patience, begins to dismantle the instrument, removing first the bell, then the second joint, then the first. Each segment is placed carefully in a 'sculpture' of the player's choosing. In FIPG, the segments were placed atop a white plinth and lit, the museum-like act of displaying the artefacts a justification of the dismantling. The player talks of the clarinet as a corpse.

The standalone *Shiny Skeleton* ends with the player very slowly drawing the mouthpiece along their arm and down their body, the reed acting as the stylus of a record player, audifying the wrinkles and textures of the clarinettist's garb—an amplified self-touch, the acoustic illustration of dry sedimentary fossil environments, and the inevitable completion of the sculpture. This can be seen in appendix 1, *Shiny Skeleton (standalone)* but was ineffective in the large space, so I cut this from FIPG.[86]

Song: The Thick Now

A repetitive song, the lyrics ruminate on what it is to inhabit a space. If you consider your location not as momentary and changing, but over the course of a day or a lifetime, then you become spread out over a large area. The staging responds to this idea by having the dangling cassette players swing wildly over the heads of the witnesses. All lights are on, though they are directed at the walls, players lit mainly by the spill (Figure 12). The instrumentalists are finally allowed to let loose, playing pitched material at volume, honouring the engineering of the instruments. Stark, three-dimensional and visible, the space, filled with the ghosts of FIPG and all other events, responds.

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[86] This moment is the clearest and most compelling compositional implementation of Post-Aural thinking. Cutting this and *The Viscosity of the Sky* were decisions that placed a good witness experience over conceptual integrity.

The Thick Now ends with the cello and viola suspended on more ropes, joining the dismantled clarinet. The cassette players, now playing the sound of the ocean, slow and come to rest, eventually stopping as the tape side ends. The viola is spun, twisting the rope. As it unwinds, I hold the bow to the instrument, an instrument-human sculpture set up to create an always-withering movement, a diminuendo-ing sound. As discussed in the transmodality section of this exegesis, page 19, this is my most successful effort toward pure transmodality. FIPG ends when everything reaches a stasis.

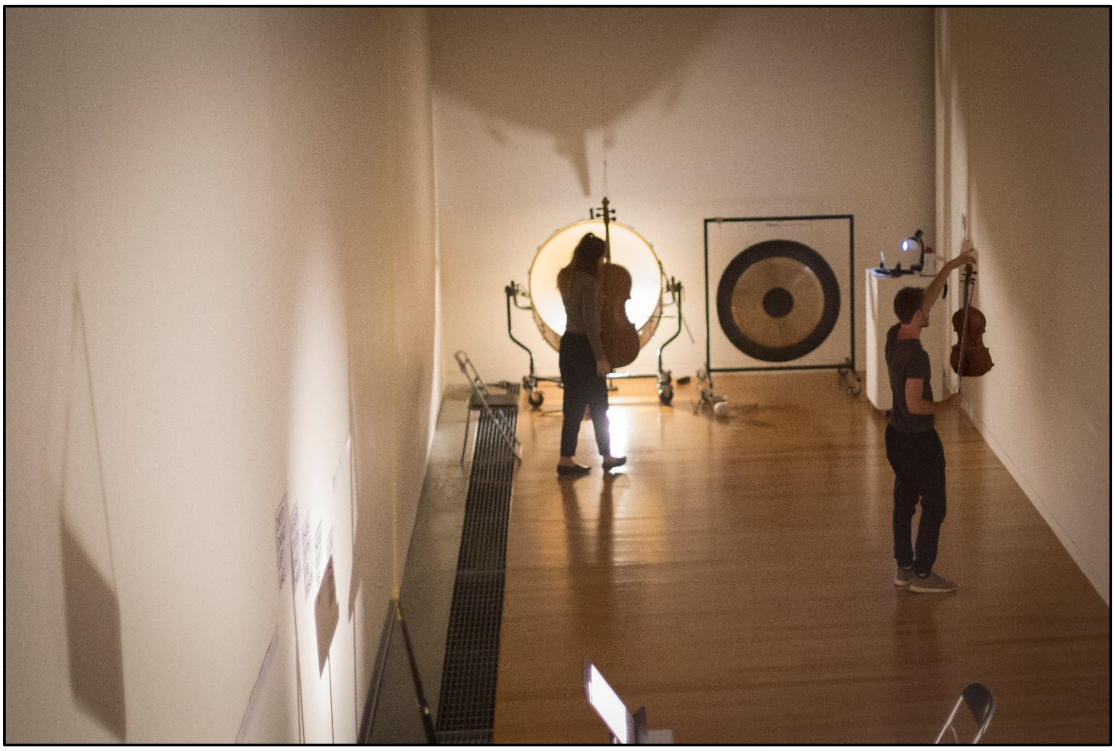

Figure 12: 'The Thick Now' coming to an end. Photograph by Callum Mallet.

6. Endthoughts

This chapter is a set of closing reflections on topics that were major elements of the work I did towards FIPG but which did not fit in the body of this exegesis. They point to further creative and theoretical Post-Aural exploration.

Composer-Director-Performer

There is an increasing number of composers who are inserting themselves into their music not just as skilled performers but as an artistic statement integral to the piece. For example, Jennifer Walshe's *EVERYTHING IS IMPORTANT* for voice, string quartet and film (with sound) is created for herself and the Arditti Quartet.[87] Beyond the vocal composing, Walshe's personality and presence are artistic materials. The piece takes on a quality of baring the soul. Or consider Alexander Schubert who, in appearing on screen in his piece *Hello*,[88] presents himself for visual and performance scrutiny; the art piece is 'an invitation into the personal world of Alexander Schubert.'[89] In both cases the composers must incorporate elements of directing in order to hold the multiple modalities actively at work in the piece.

I place my own work in this category. The directing, which complements the composing, allows me to access the intermodality I seek. These two stages also rely on my performing presence, which foments collaborators' trust. As I ask them to do unusual or potentially uncomfortable things, they know I am not requesting anything I will not be doing myself. As I continue working within this practice I am keen to investigate its implementation in acousmatic music, the pop realm, and in projects with non-musician performers.

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[87] Walshe 2016 (1)

[88] Schubert 2014

[89] Schubert n.d.

Notation

Traditional Western notation is a powerful tool that allows musicians to perform a huge amount of material at a high level with minimal rehearsal time. Compare this to theatre, which is expected to be memorised, requiring relatively enormous rehearsal processes. Notation also allows composers to create without the musicians present. Compare this to dance, which is normally put together with the bodies that will perform it.

But it comes with major drawbacks. Standard notation defines the musical parameters available for explorations: pitch (with reference to 12-TET), some rudimentary rhythm, and some crude articulation. These are bolstered by text and diagrams, but a score becomes unwieldy when it starts to specify too many details not carried by the traditional Western parameters.

Musics driven by other priorities might be better suited to prescriptive notation, which signifies what the players should do rather than what sound should result.[90] Lachenmann's score for *Pression* is an example which, given the piece's gestural logic, is necessarily prescriptive. The drawback to prescriptive notation is that trained musicians become so accustomed to the familiarity of descriptive notation that a prescriptive score can seem alienating.

FIPG was composed with the intention of touring, drawing the ensemble from local talent. As such I created the most practical, user-friendly scoring I could, trying to balance the tensions and contradictions between making the sheet music approachable for a musician, how appropriate the notation is for the material, and how easy it is to memorise. This is often at the expense of the most conceptually sensical notation, and it sacrifices detail.[91] The FIPG scores are mainly descriptive with some prescriptive elements, most heavily *Descent (in the Spirit of Catastrophe)*.[92]

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[90] Kanno 2007

There are many elements that I simply did not notate, such as stage position, movement and lighting, preferring to leave them to the directing. The traditional compositional attitude would be that I should create a 'complete' score after the performance, including all details that I consider salient. But with the Post-Aural attitude I prefer to re-devise such elements with a sensitivity to future venues, performers and equipment. A 'complete' score may have value as documentation, but not as a useable tool, and other forms of documentation (including the appended videos and included descriptions) are more appropriate.

Resources

Assisted by the practicality of notation, the art music rehearsal and performance schedule is fantastically streamlined. Professional ensembles regularly perform with minimal rehearsal. A complete gig, rehearsal and performance might be one afternoon and one evening. In theatre or dance a gig is likely to be several 40-hour weeks. A show like FIPG wants the longer rehearsal period of these other disciplines, but it is tricky to secure enough funding in a field that is not accustomed to such a process, and it is tricky to ask that time commitment from performers who are used to being able to show up on the day and sight-read, or spaces which are not accustomed to hosting long processes.

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[91] The attitude exists that an artist should not make compromises, that the artist's complete vision is important, and thus a composer should notate in as much detail as they imagine the music. This attitude does not sit with my ideals around 'working with' rather than 'working for'. It perpetuates a hierarchy I find damaging and, in a climate where the identity of the artist is important to the ontology of their creation, deeply arrogant.

[92] See Appendix 2

Roesner and Rebstock note that, though the field of Composed Theatre has a clear history and well respected practitioners, creators find almost no support from music/opera presentation companies and festivals, limited support from theatres, and very few institutions.[93] The course of my own research ran up against a barrier between music, theatre and design schools even within the same institution. The curriculum is structured such that individuals are encouraged to work on their own craft, with no curriculum-based encouragement to collaborate or even converse, even within a single school. Though I forged rewarding collaborative situations in FIPG and several other projects throughout the year, I found many more were desired but impossible in the face of the current systems. Institutions, including my own, must re-structure to not only allow but actively encourage discourse and collaboration within disciplines and between disciplines, and create an environment of enthusiastic cooperation.

Why music?

After some performances I am left wondering: Why was there music there? I do not understand why the person sang rather than spoke, or why an object was a guitar rather than a dog. The answer tends to be 'because the creator's background is music'. This is not a satisfying justification. Such pieces seem like intermediate steps in a process where the essence of a piece is uncovered/developed from the starting point of music. The essence of the piece now apparent, the musical baggage is vestigial, and the justification for 'why music?' is lost.

I can answer the question after a performance of jazz or classical music, where the aural is the priority, or in a piece like Walshe's *unbreakable line. hinged waist*,[94] where the pianist plays Mozart on the raised lid of the piano, or Cage's silent piece which uses the concert context as a frame for silence.[95] These pieces are profoundly

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[93] Rebstock 2012, pp 50

[94] Walshe 2002

[95] Cage 1952

about music. They are in conversation with the history of performed music, the players' training and the concert setting are irreplaceable tools. This is also the case in Post-Aural Music, including FIPG.

Why Music *for Me*?

Music creation is social. Music performances are political. I want to create art that requires people to be together. Music is my background, my main skill, my main passion. Open ears can happen alone, and solo experiences are important, but my creative work, this exegesis, and my continuing development of the concepts of Post-Aural Music is not about that. My desire to extend the definition of music beyond the aural is about fortifying the elements that ensure the social and political nature of the music—its existence as event and environment. Music performance is the most potent path to the richest shared experiences available to me as a creator and as a witness.

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Appendix 1: Video Documentation

Below are links to video documentation of Fish in Pink Gelatine second-half material. The footage is a window into a particular point in the rehearsal process: the Fish are learnt and staged, but the transitions between are only roughed in, and we are not running it as a show yet. These videos are intended to give the viewer a sense of the visual and aural environment at the event.

Salt: https://youtu.be/y-MUHEbieQk

Fish Poem and NO LOCATIONS: https://youtu.be/vZ-xY1jE0lg

Strangers: https://youtu.be/dsjM7oxgzy8

Song Through Sand: https://youtu.be/0xYM2vyO-PY

Descent (in the Spirit of Catastrophe): https://youtu.be/YpXIbRFR8T8

Shiny Skeleton: https://youtu.be/lppPGk7sDA0

The Thick Now: https://youtu.be/Puj80ijNZOU

All FIPG videos as a playlist:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAoc1r7CqaCrZQgFXC9pgHcDWsB4PuLnS

Shiny Skeleton (standalone): https://vimeo.com/310426206/a998fbdb6f

Appendix 2: Scores

Let me be clear: *Fish in Pink Gelatine* is not a fully scored piece. The following is the notation I prepared to be encountered by the musicians as they entered the FIPG process. These scores are included here to represent the collaborators' Post-Aural experience. Although most of them are intended to be able to stand alone as concert pieces, in the FIPG context they are intended as materials to dismantle, cut, undermine and direct.

Contents:

- *The Viscosity of the Sky* for violin or viola bow
- *Simpering Propulsions / NO LOCATIONS* for bassoonist
- *Strangers* song with clarinettist, bassoonist, violist and cellist
- *Constriction Tones* for viola with rubber band
- *Descent (in the Spirit of Catastrophe)* for cellist
- *Shiny Skeleton* for clarinettist
- *The Thick Now* song with vocalising clarinettist, bassoonist, violist and cellist

ELLIOT VAUGHAN

The Viscosity of the Sky

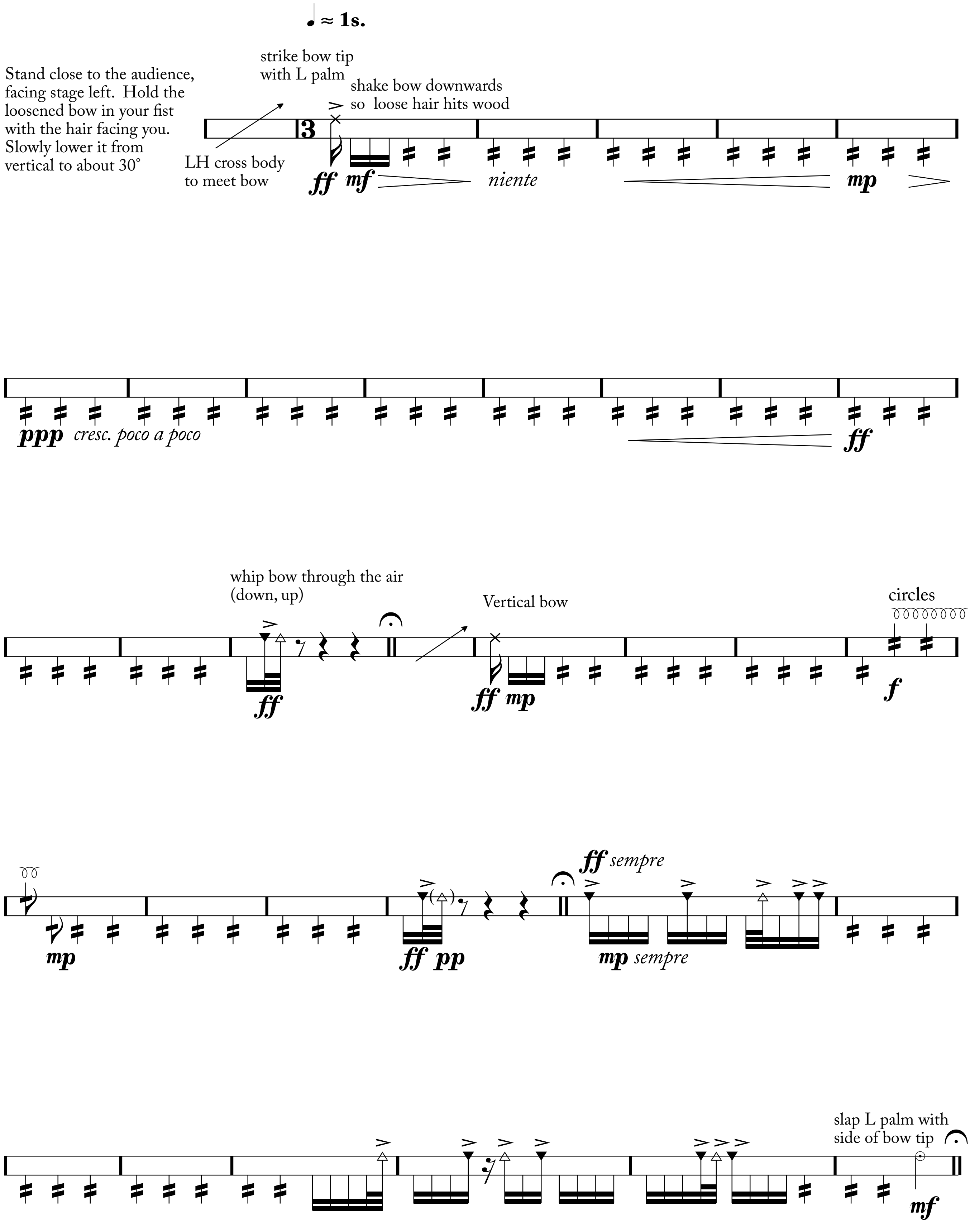
for Violin or Viola Bow

2018

The Viscosity of the Sky

for violin or viola bow

ELLIOT VAUGHAN



Stand close to the audience, facing stage left. Hold the loosened bow in your fist with the hair facing you. Slowly lower it from vertical to about 30°

LH cross body to meet bow

strike bow tip with L palm

shake bow downwards so loose hair hits wood

whip bow through the air (down, up)

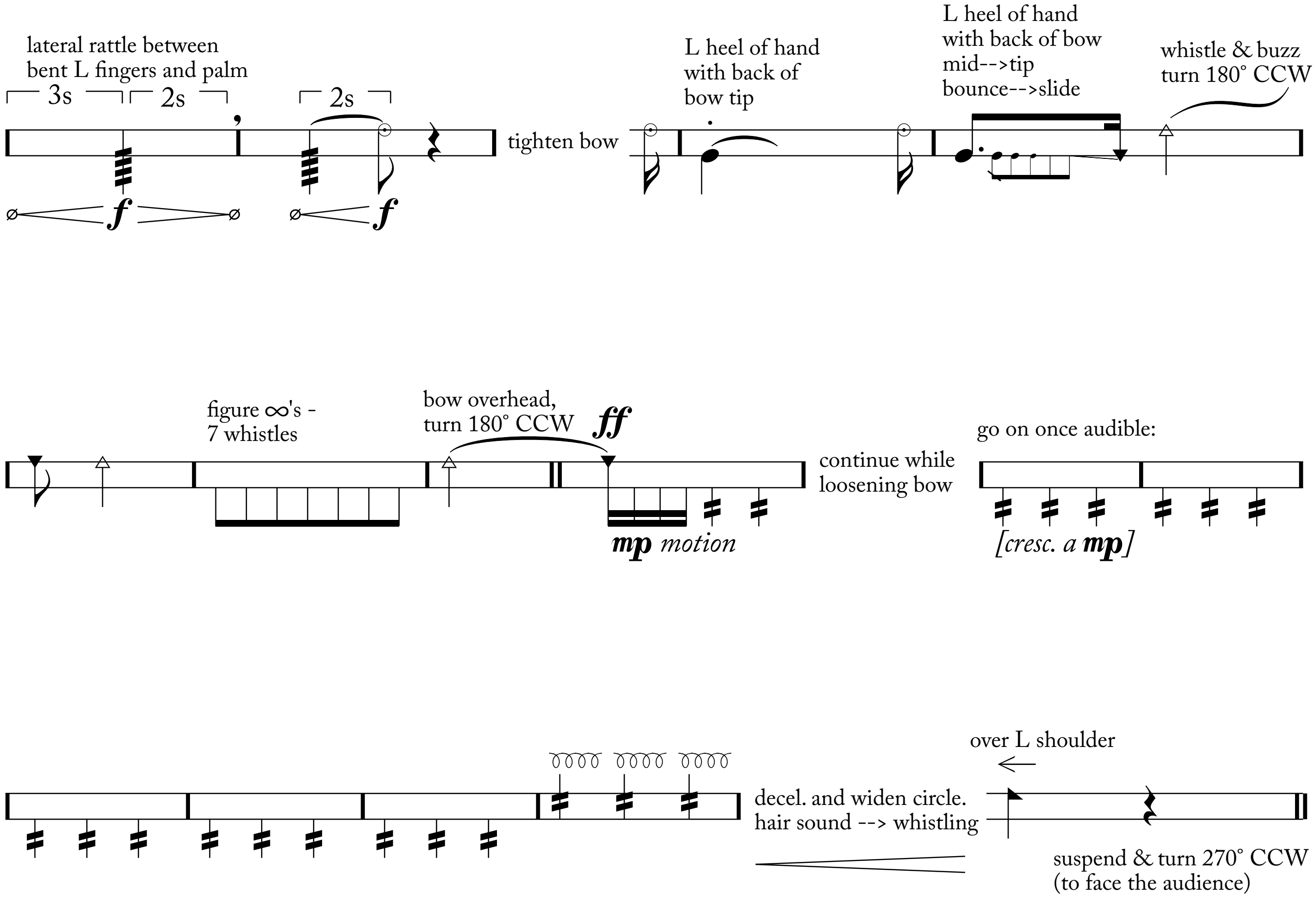
Vertical bow

circles

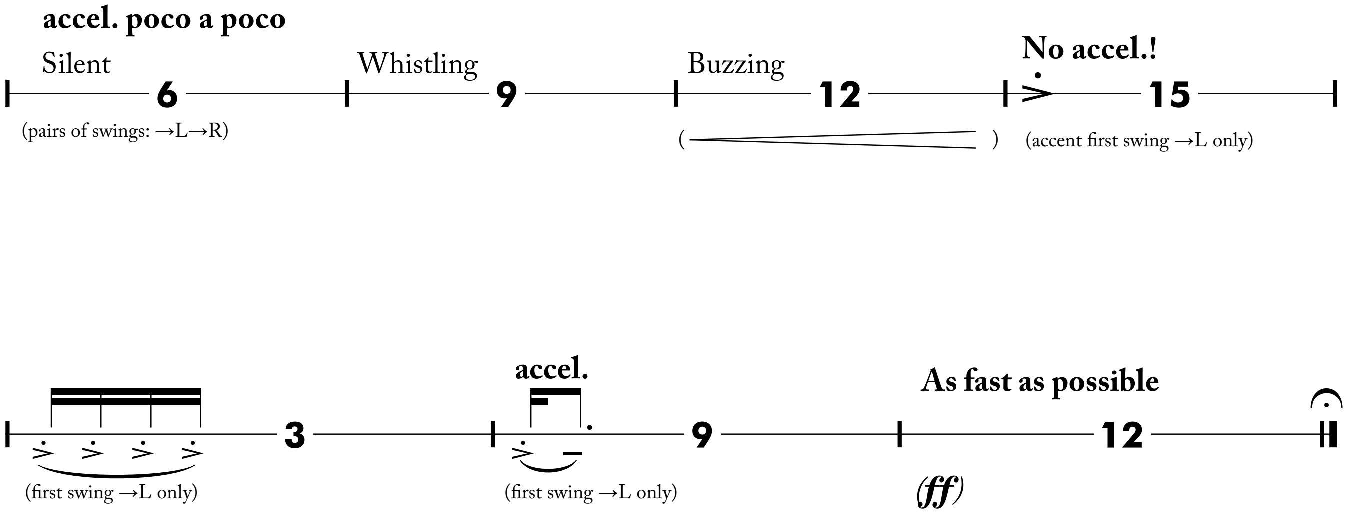
slap L palm with side of bow tip

♩ ≈ 1s.
3
ff
mf
niente
mp
ppp
cresc. poco a poco
ff
ff
ff
mp
f
mp
ff
pp
ff sempre
mp sempre
mf

© Elliot Vaughan 2018


lateral rattle between
bent L fingers and palm
3s
2s
2s
f
f
tighten bow
L heel of hand
with back of
bow tip
L heel of hand
with back of bow
mid-->tip
bounce-->slide
whistle & buzz
turn 180° CCW
figure ∞'s -
7 whistles
bow overhead,
turn 180° CCW
ff
mp motion
continue while
loosening bow
go on once audible:
[cresc. a mp]
decel. and widen circle.
hair sound --> whistling
over L shoulder
suspend & turn 270° CCW
(to face the audience)

Swing bow over the spectators' heads, R-L and back. Your whole body should twist, the bow travelling as far as possible, and your left arm should counterbalance the right even before it needs to. Begin slowly: about 1 swing per 6 seconds, and start the accel. immediately. Once the bow begins producing sound it should be as sustained and even across the swing as possible. This section should last 2½ - 3 minutes.


accel. poco a poco
Silent
6
Whistling
9
Buzzing
12
No accel.!
15
(pairs of swings: →L→R)
(accent first swing →L only)
3
(first swing →L only)
accel.
9
(first swing →L only)
As fast as possible
12
(ff)

ELLIOT VAUGHAN

simpering propulsions
NO LOCATIONS

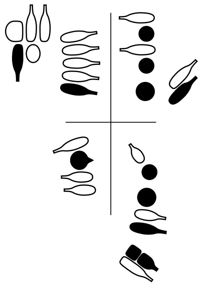
for Bassoon

2018

Multiphonics key

Feel free to change these fingerings to make the most reliable and effective multiphonics. The goal is to produce a range of timbres, almost like each fingering is a different instrument. Pitch is not a concern, except that it should not seem static between neighbouring multiphonics.

1



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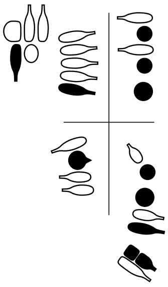

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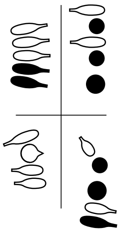

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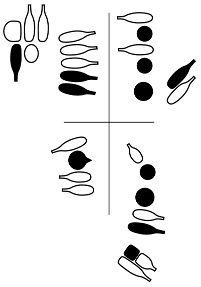

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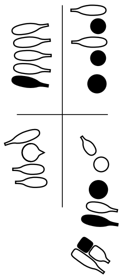

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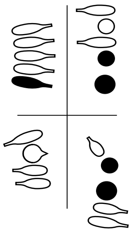

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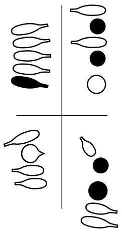

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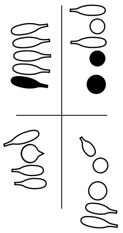

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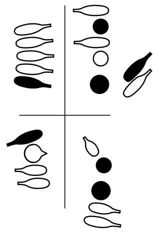

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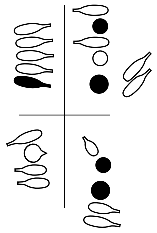

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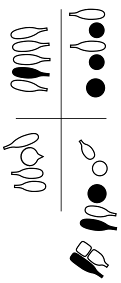

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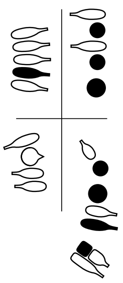

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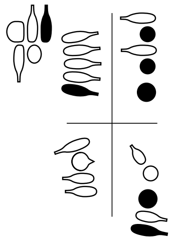

simpering propulsions / NO LOCATIONS

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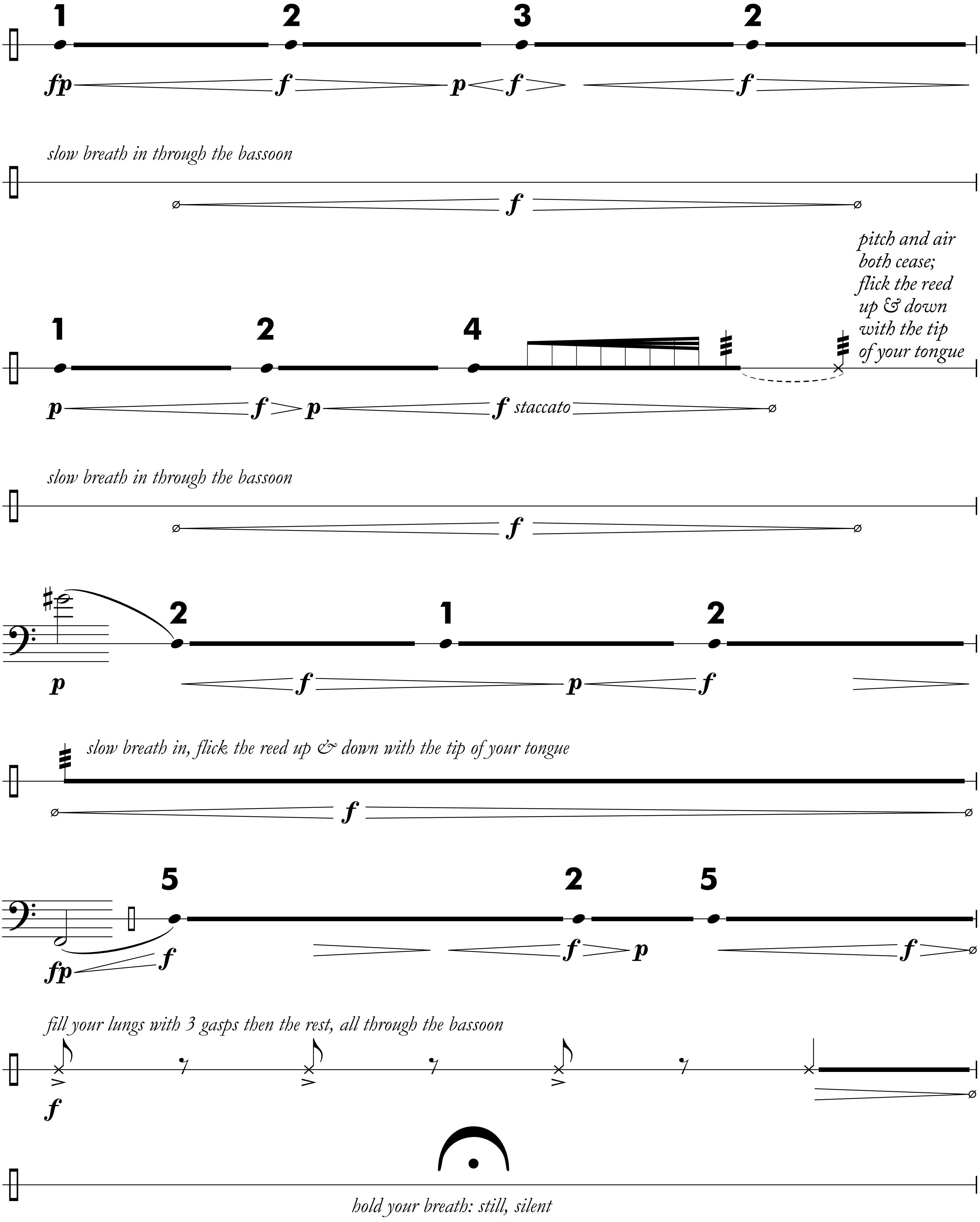
One long breath per system, 8–12 seconds.


1
2
3
2
fp
f
p
f
f
slow breath in through the bassoon
f
1
2
4
pitch and air both cease; flick the reed up & down with the tip of your tongue
p
f
p
f staccato
slow breath in through the bassoon
f
2
1
2
p
f
p
f
slow breath in, flick the reed up & down with the tip of your tongue
f
5
2
5
fp
f
f
p
f
fill your lungs with 3 gasps then the rest, all through the bassoon
f
hold your breath: still, silent

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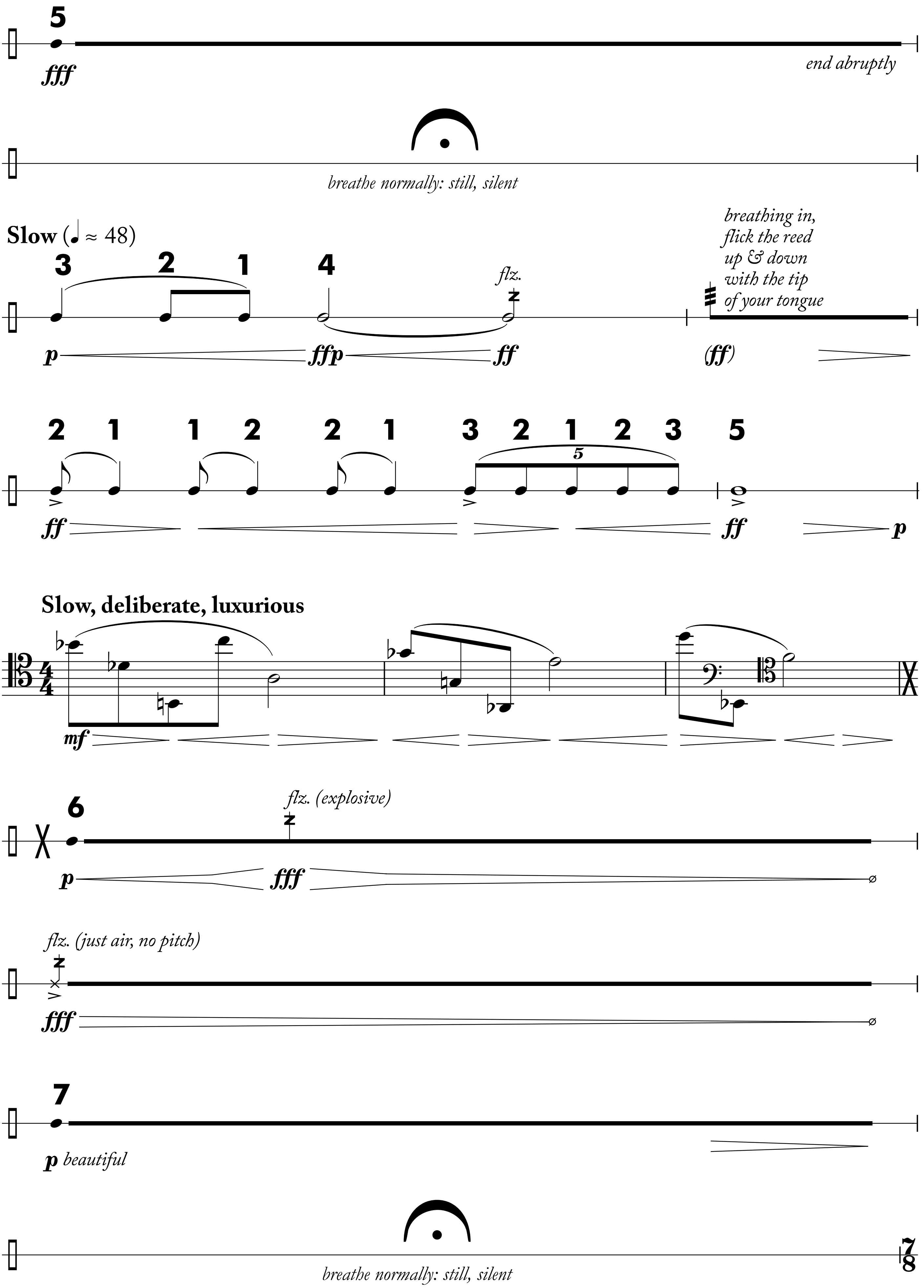
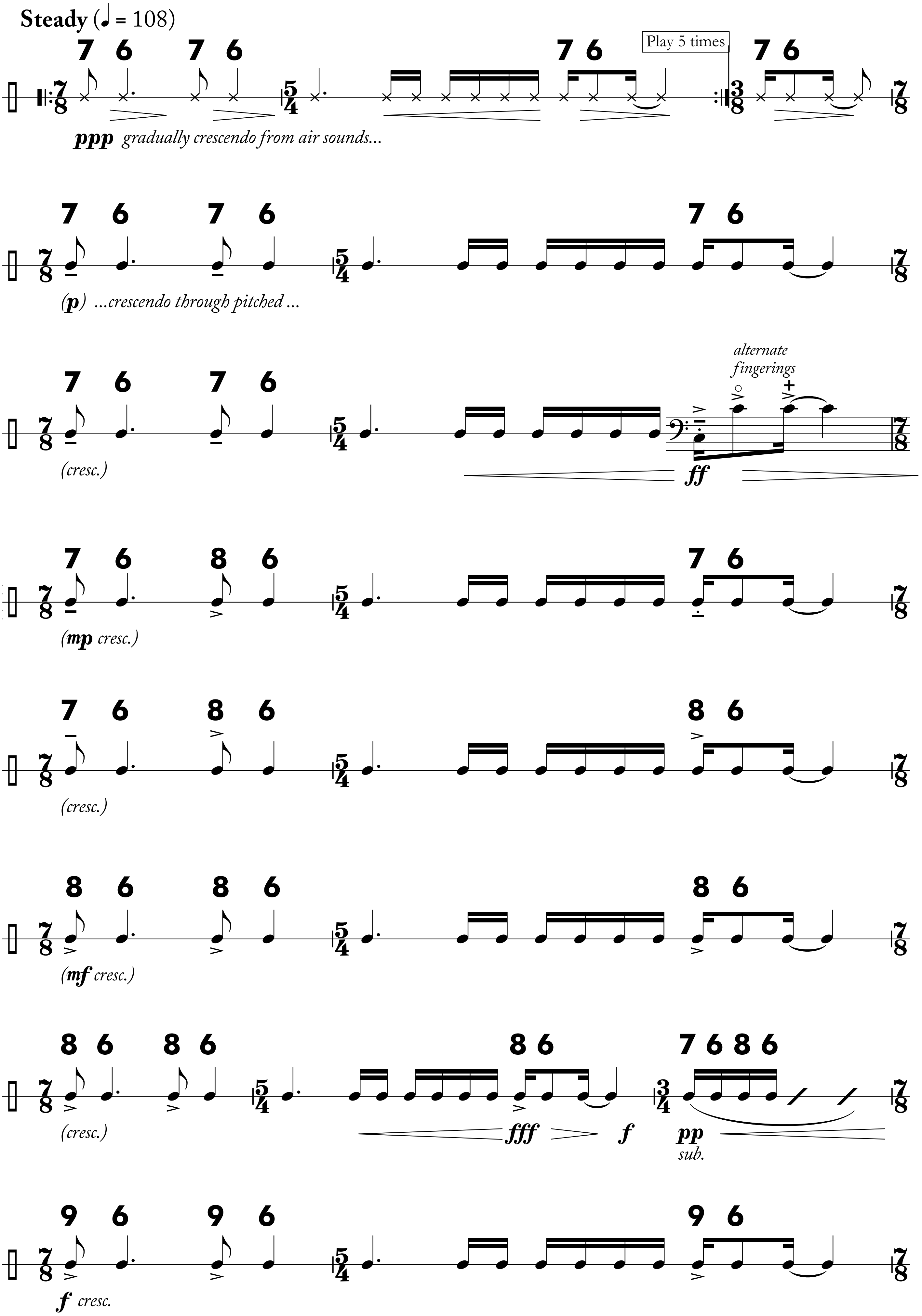
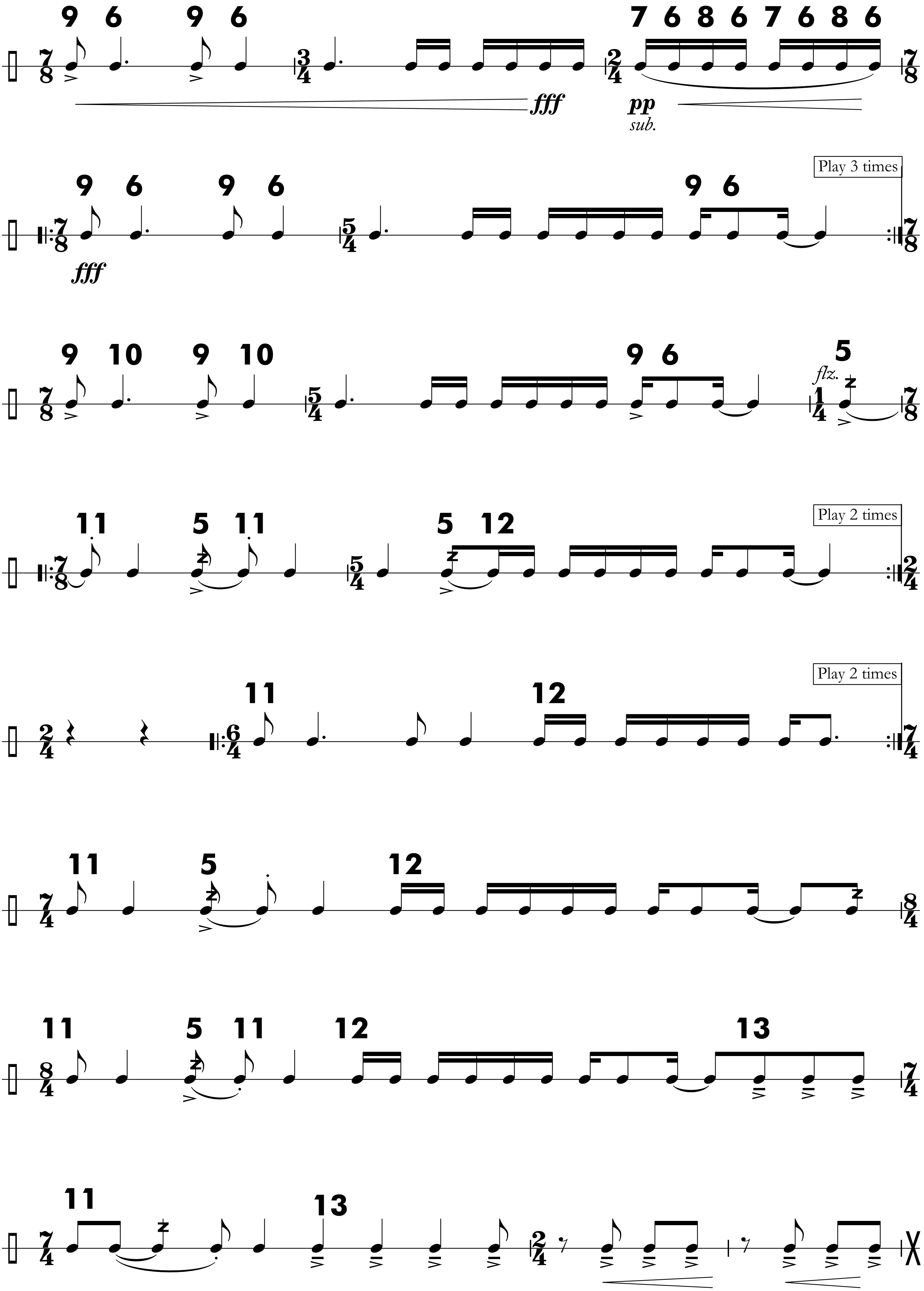
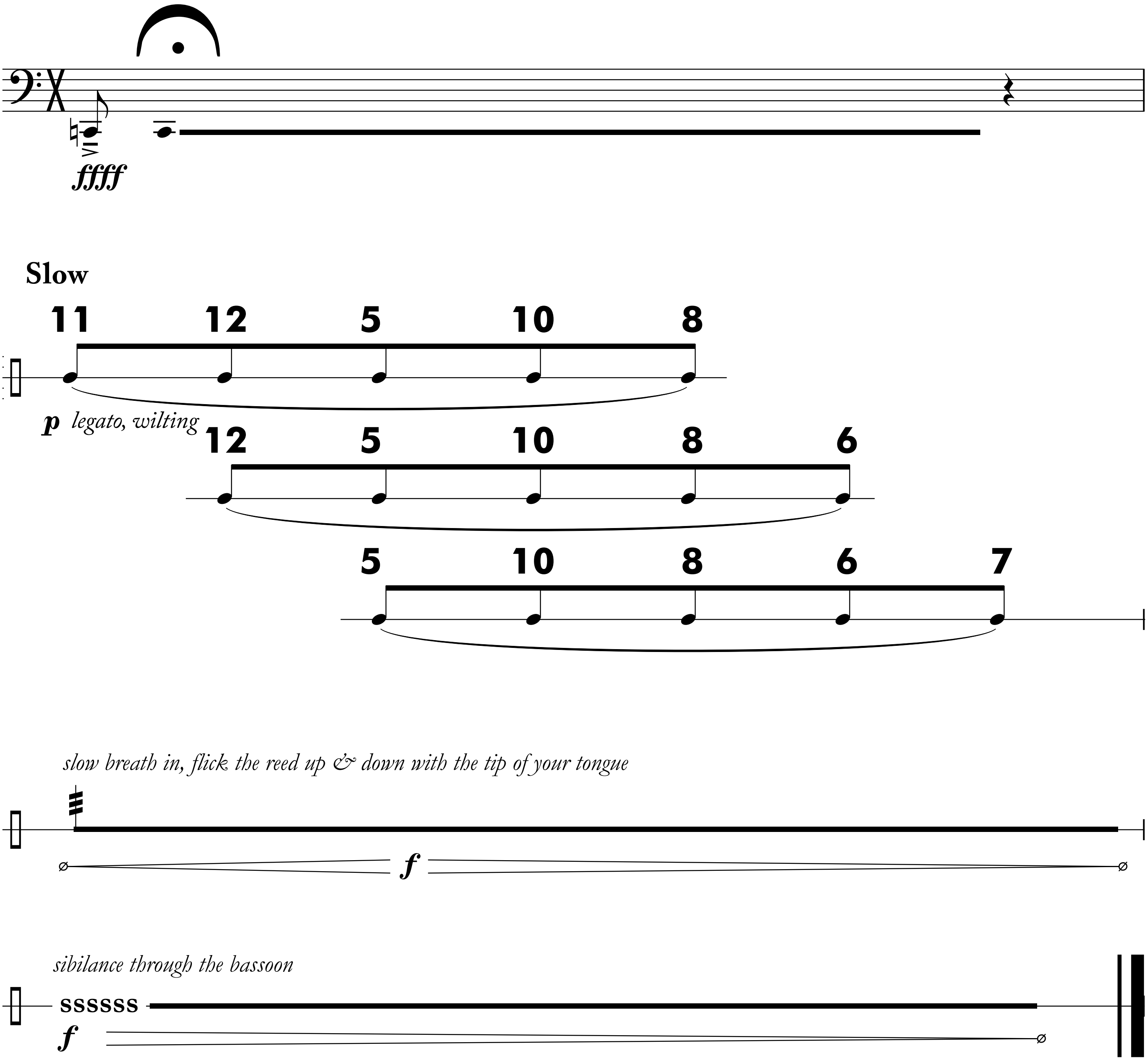

5
fff
end abruptly
breathe normally: still, silent
Slow (♩ ≈ 48)
3 2 1 4
flz.
breathing in, flick the reed up & down with the tip of your tongue
p
ffp
ff
(ff)
2 1 1 2 2 1 3 2 1 2 3 5
5
ff
ff
p
Slow, deliberate, luxurious
mf
6
flz. (explosive)
p
fff
flz. (just air, no pitch)
fff
7
p beautiful
breathe normally: still, silent
7/8


Steady (♩ = 108)
7 6 7 6 7 6 7 6
Play 5 times
ppp gradually crescendo from air sounds...
7 6 7 6 7 6
(p) ...crescendo through pitched ...
7 6 7 6
alternate fingerings
(cresc.)
ff
7 6 8 6 7 6
(mp cresc.)
7 6 8 6 8 6
(cresc.)
8 6 8 6 8 6
(mf cresc.)
8 6 8 6 8 6 7 6 8 6
(cresc.)
fff
f
pp sub.
9 6 9 6 9 6
f cresc.


9 6 9 6
7 6 8 6 7 6 8 6
fff
pp
sub.
9 6 9 6
9 6
Play 3 times
fff
9 10 9 10
9 6
5
flz.
11 5 11
5 12
Play 2 times
11
12
Play 2 times
11 5
12
11 5 11
12
13
11
13


ffff
Slow
11 12 5 10 8
p legato, wilting
12 5 10 8 6
5 10 8 6 7
slow breath in, flick the reed up & down with the tip of your tongue
f
sibilance through the bassoon
ssssss
f

Strangers

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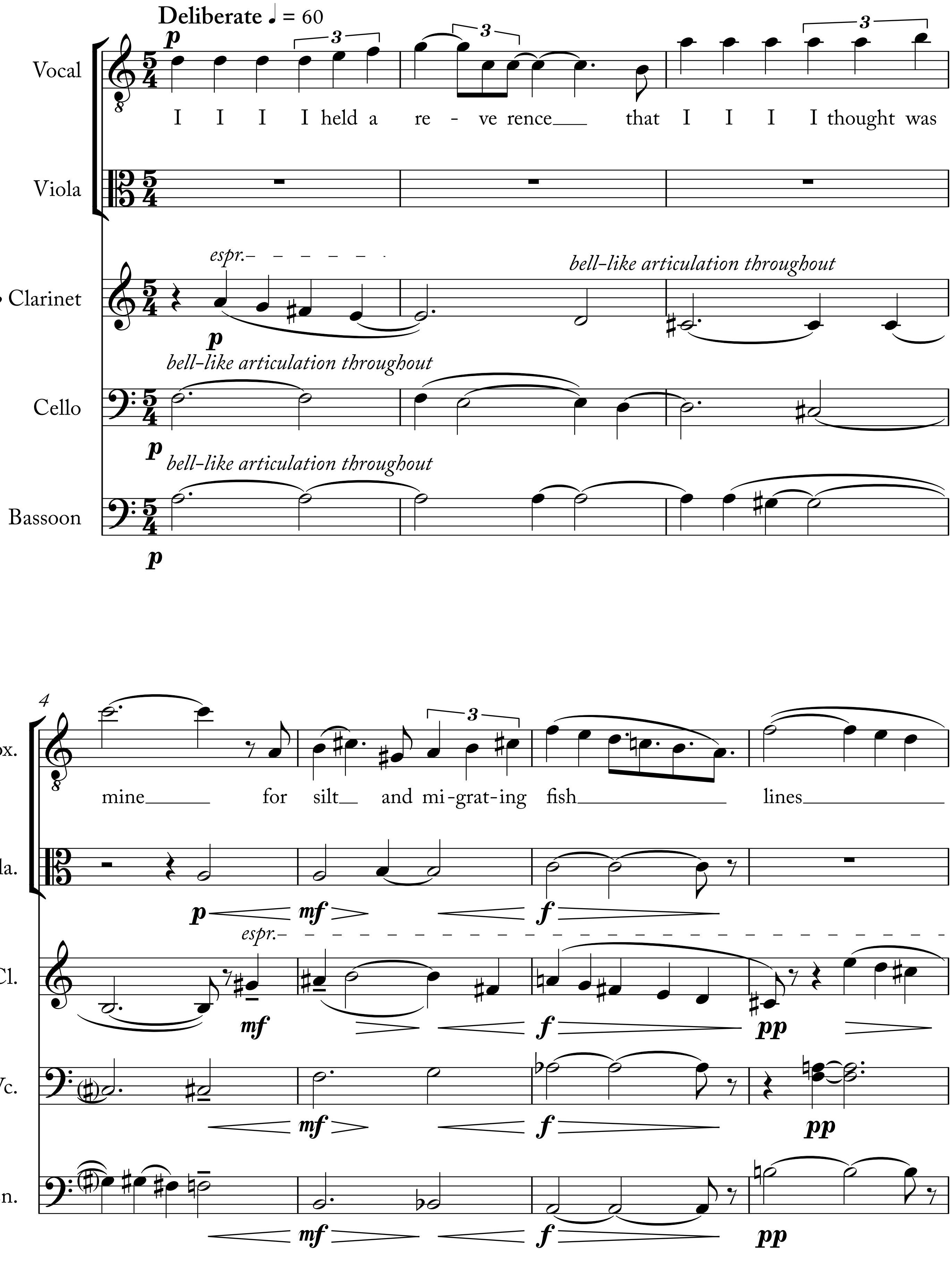
Deliberate ♩ = 60
Vocal
Viola
B♭ Clarinet
Cello
Bassoon
p
I I I I held a re - ve rence that I I I I thought was
espr.
bell-like articulation throughout
bell-like articulation throughout
bell-like articulation throughout
p
p
p
3
3
3
4
Vox.
Vla.
Cl.
Vc.
Bsn.
mine for silt and mi-grat-ing fish lines
p
mf
f
espr.
mf
f
pp
mf
f
pp
mf
f
pp
3

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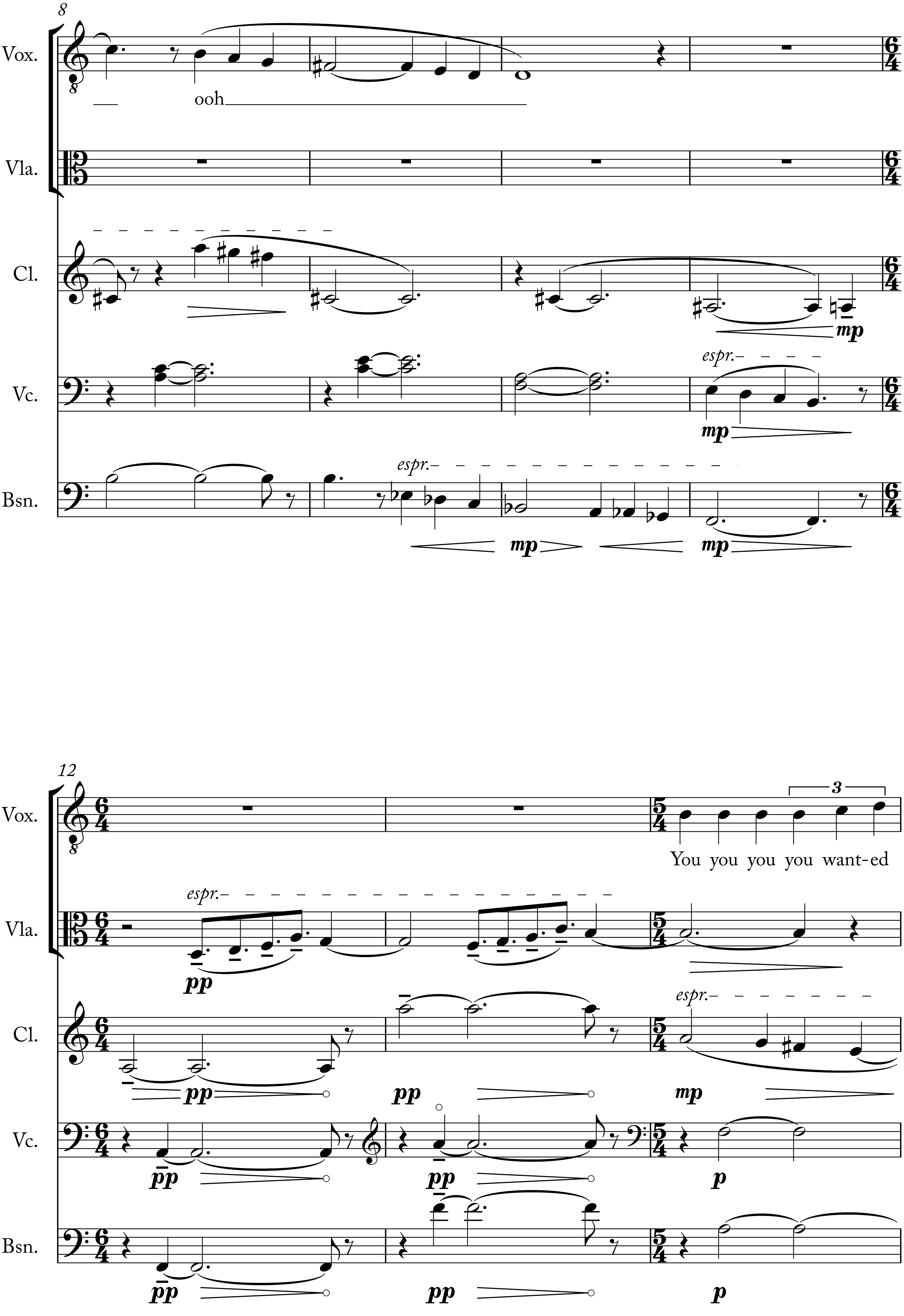
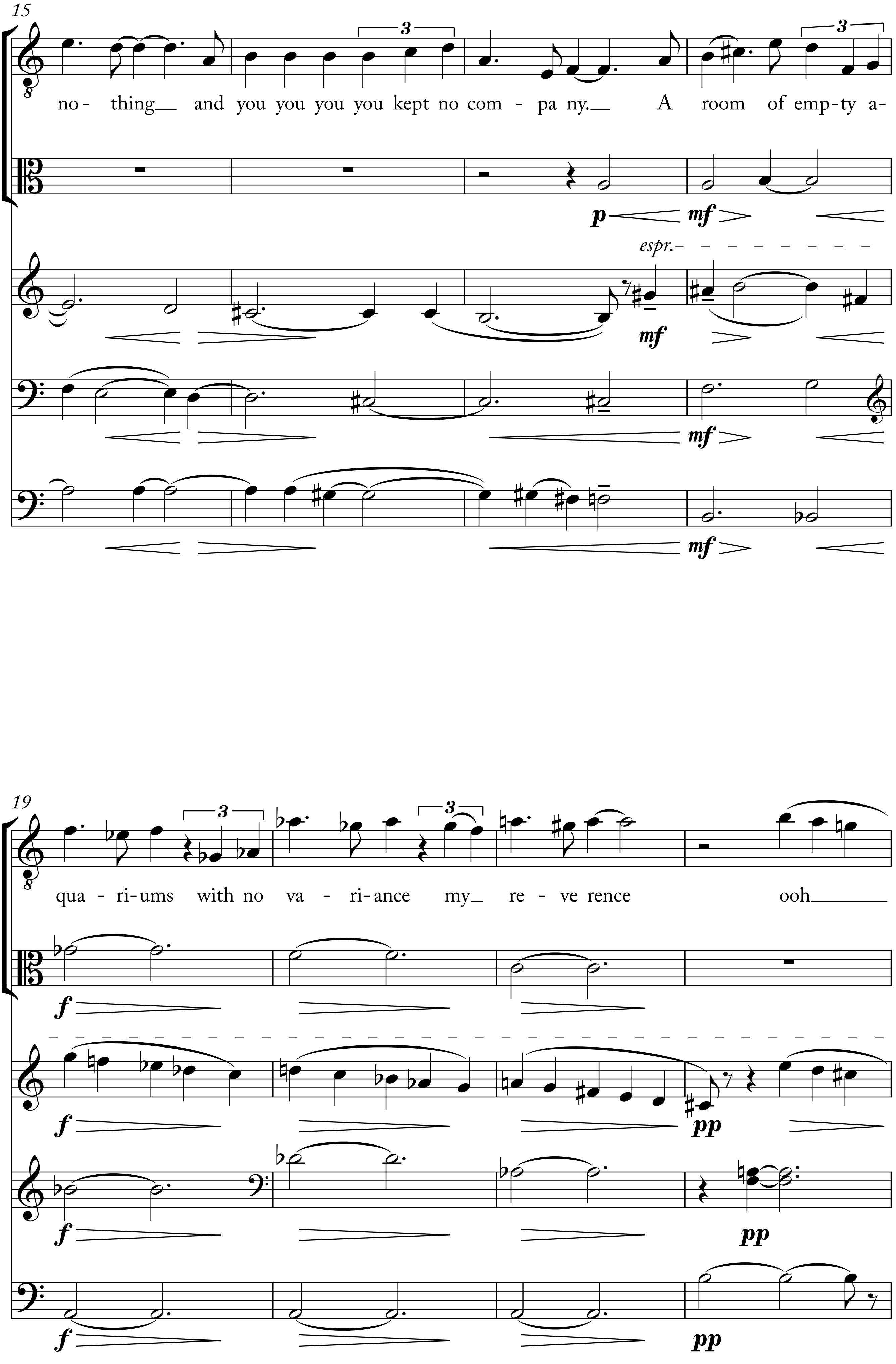
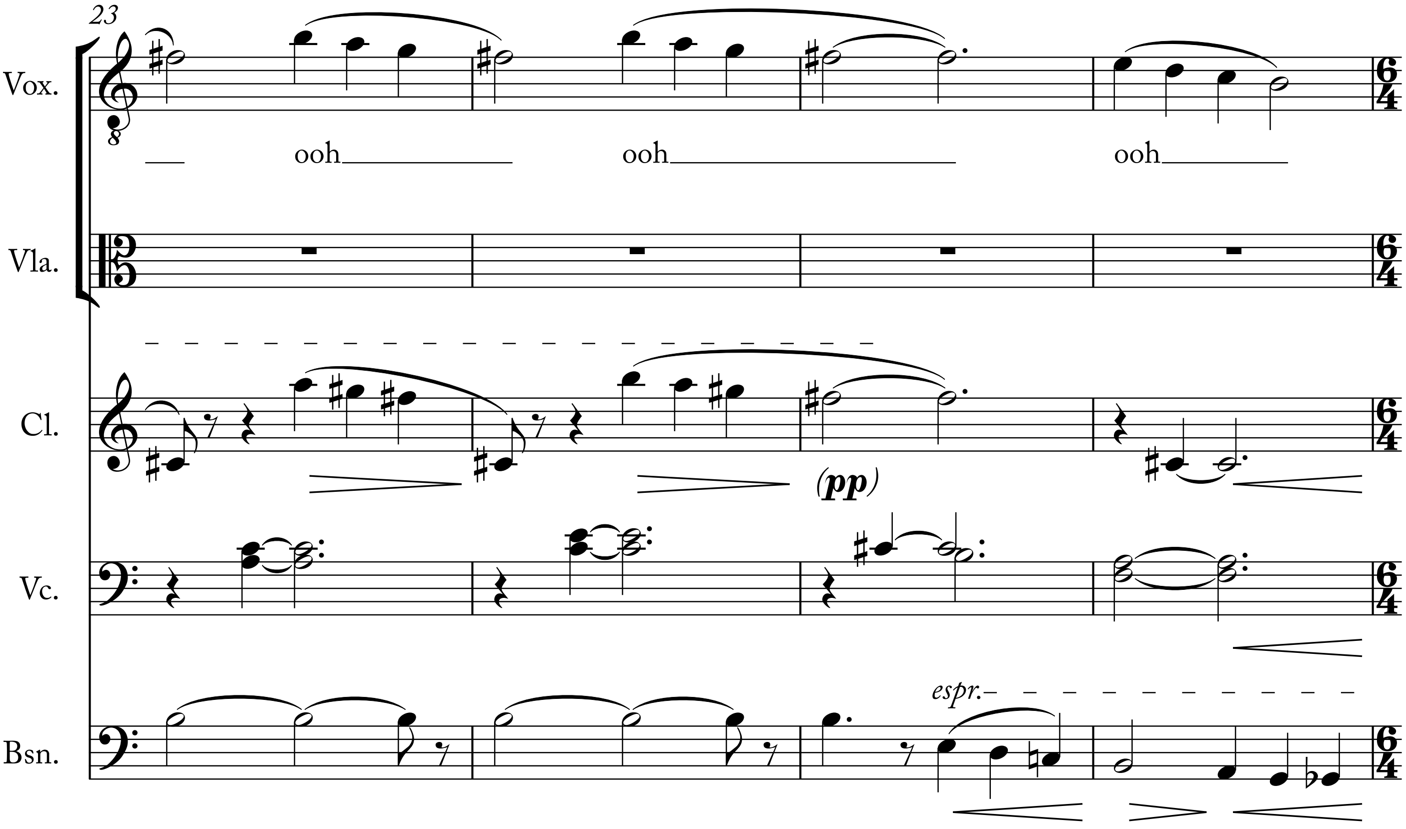
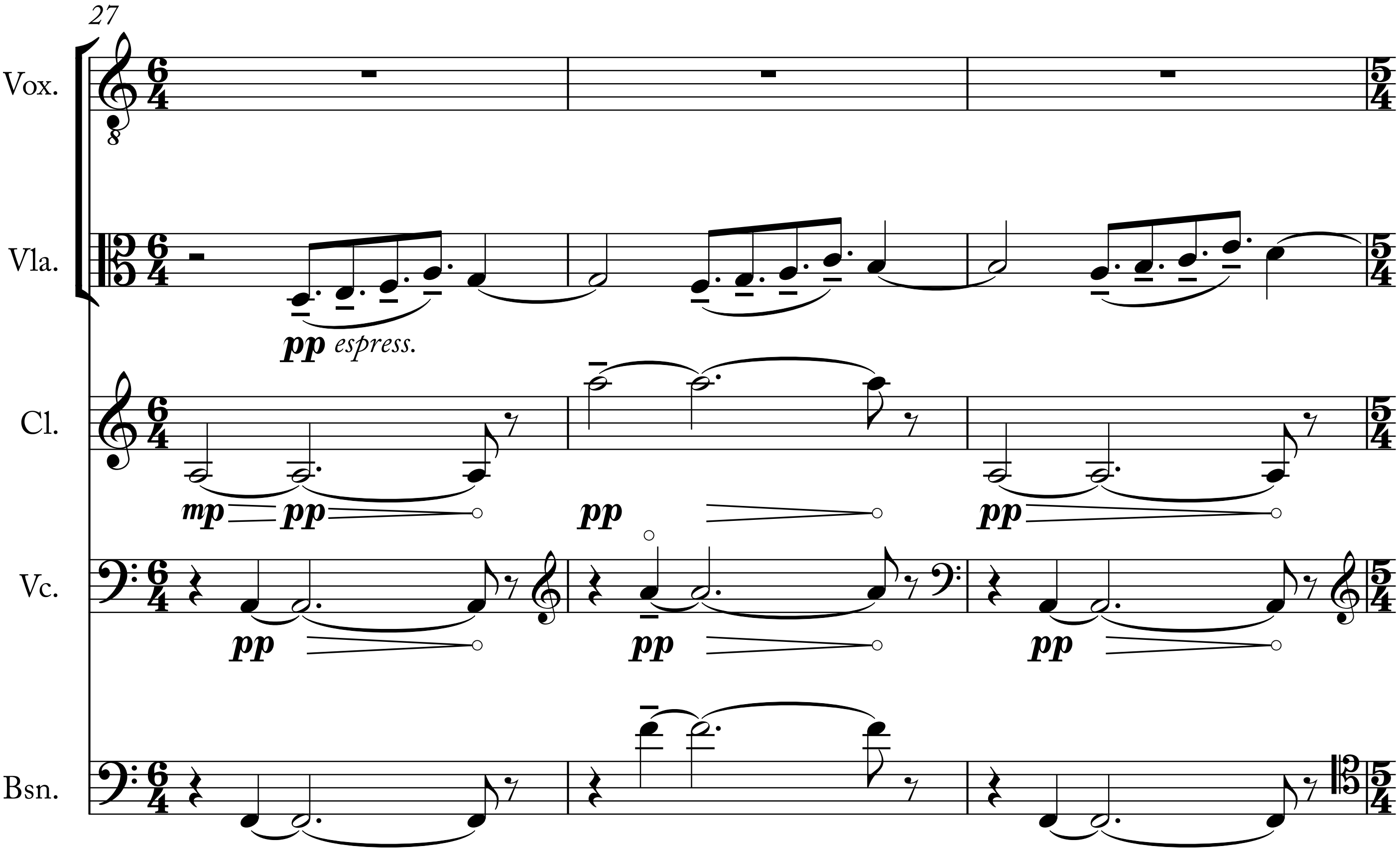
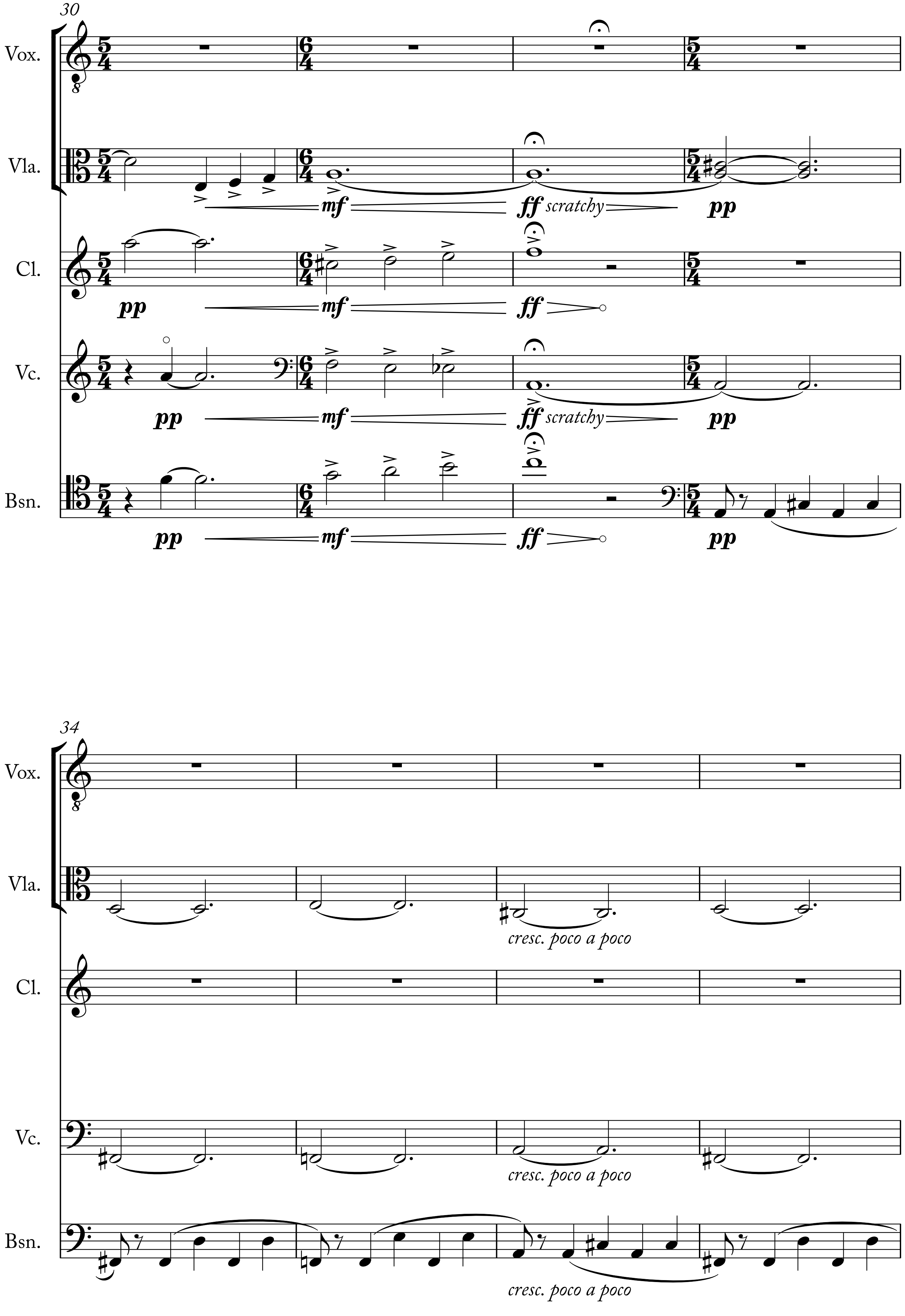
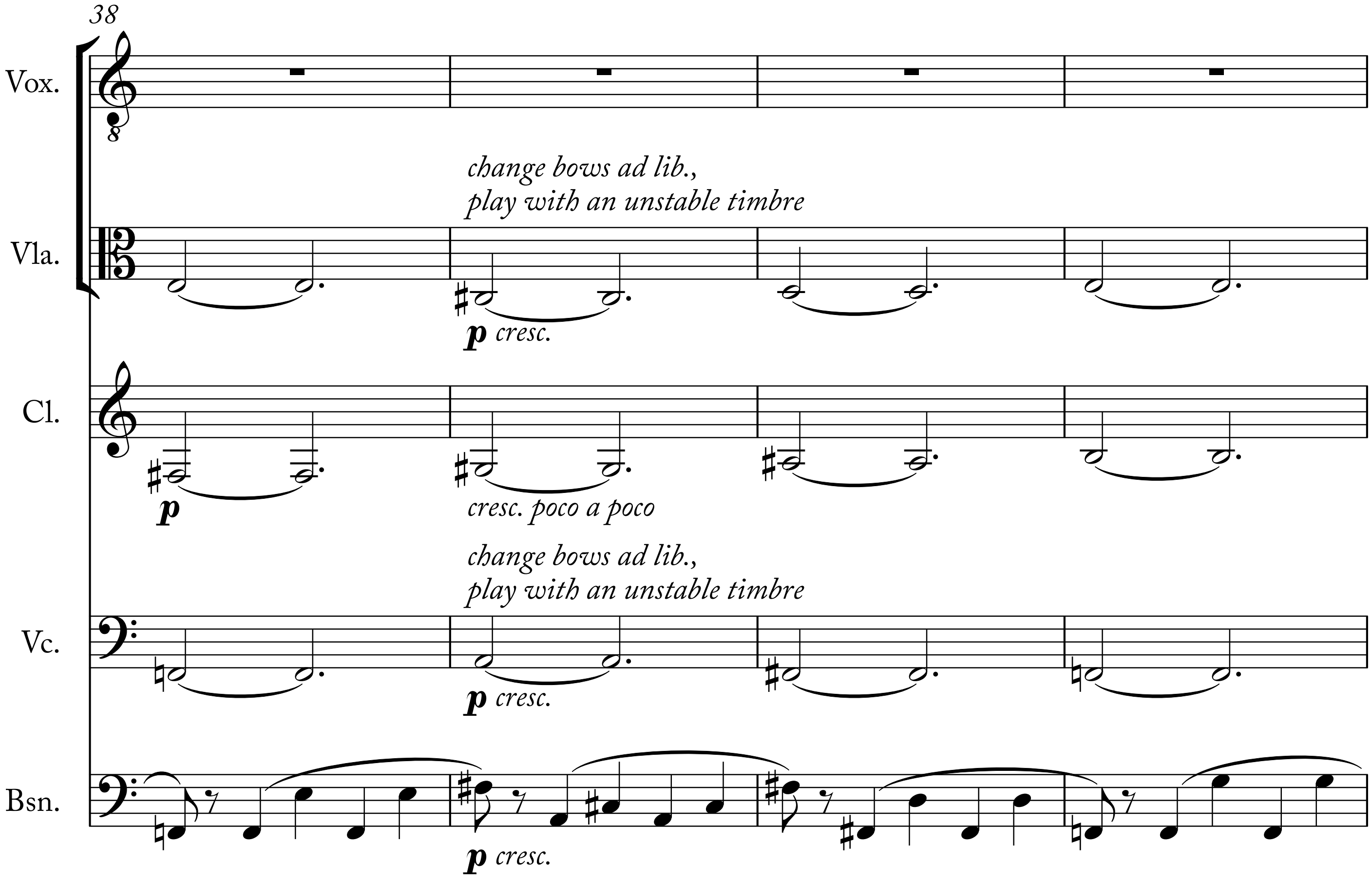

8
Vox.
ooh
Vla.
Cl.
mp
Vc.
espr.
mp
Bsn.
espr.
mp
mp
12
Vox.
3
You you you you want-ed
Vla.
espr.
pp
Cl.
pp
pp
espr.
mp
Vc.
pp
pp
p
Bsn.
pp
pp
p

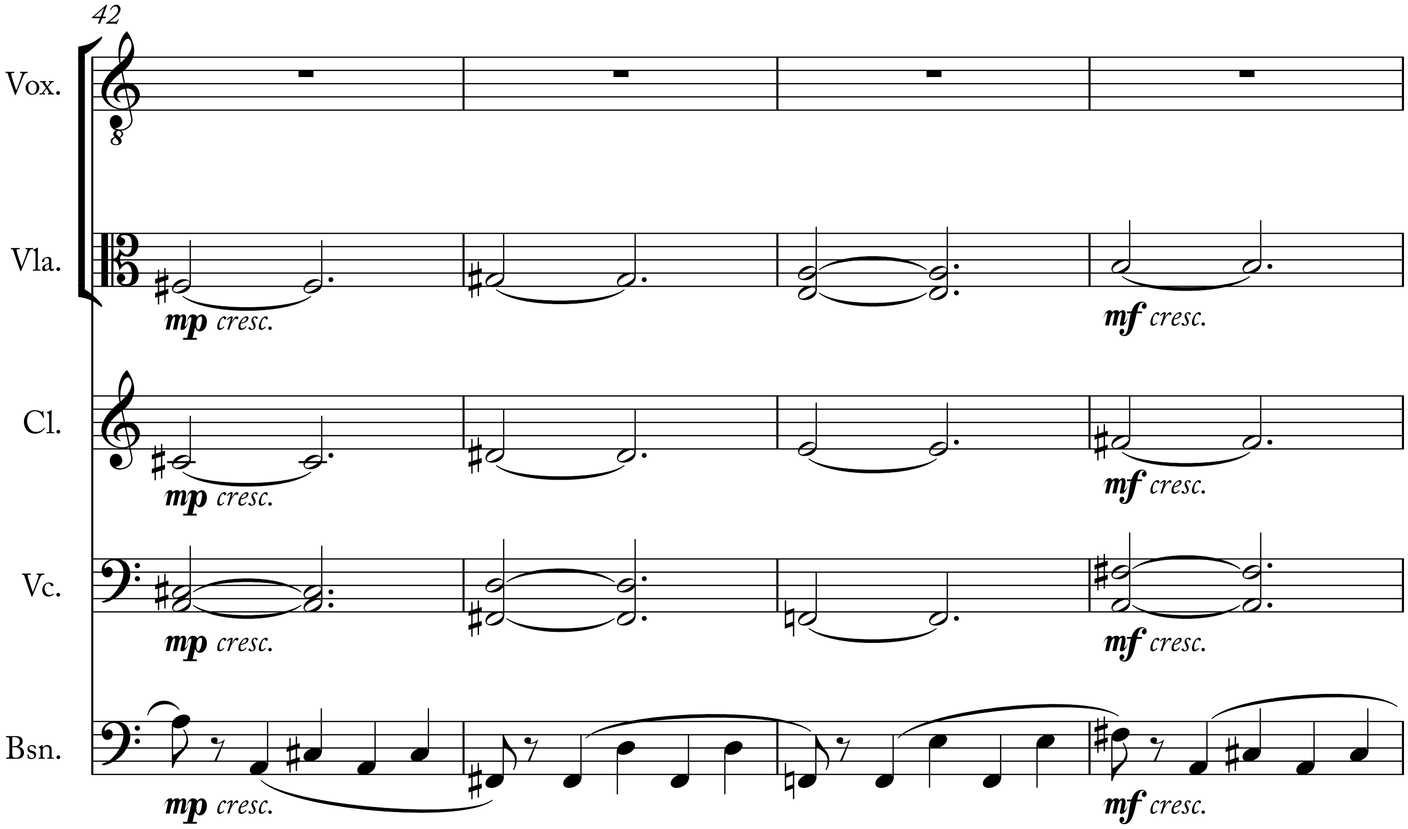

15
Vox.
no- thing and you you you you kept no com - pa ny. A room of emp-ty a-
Vla.
Cl.
Vc.
Bsn.
p
mf
espr.
3
19
quа - ri-ums with no va - ri-ance my re - ve rence ooh
f
pp

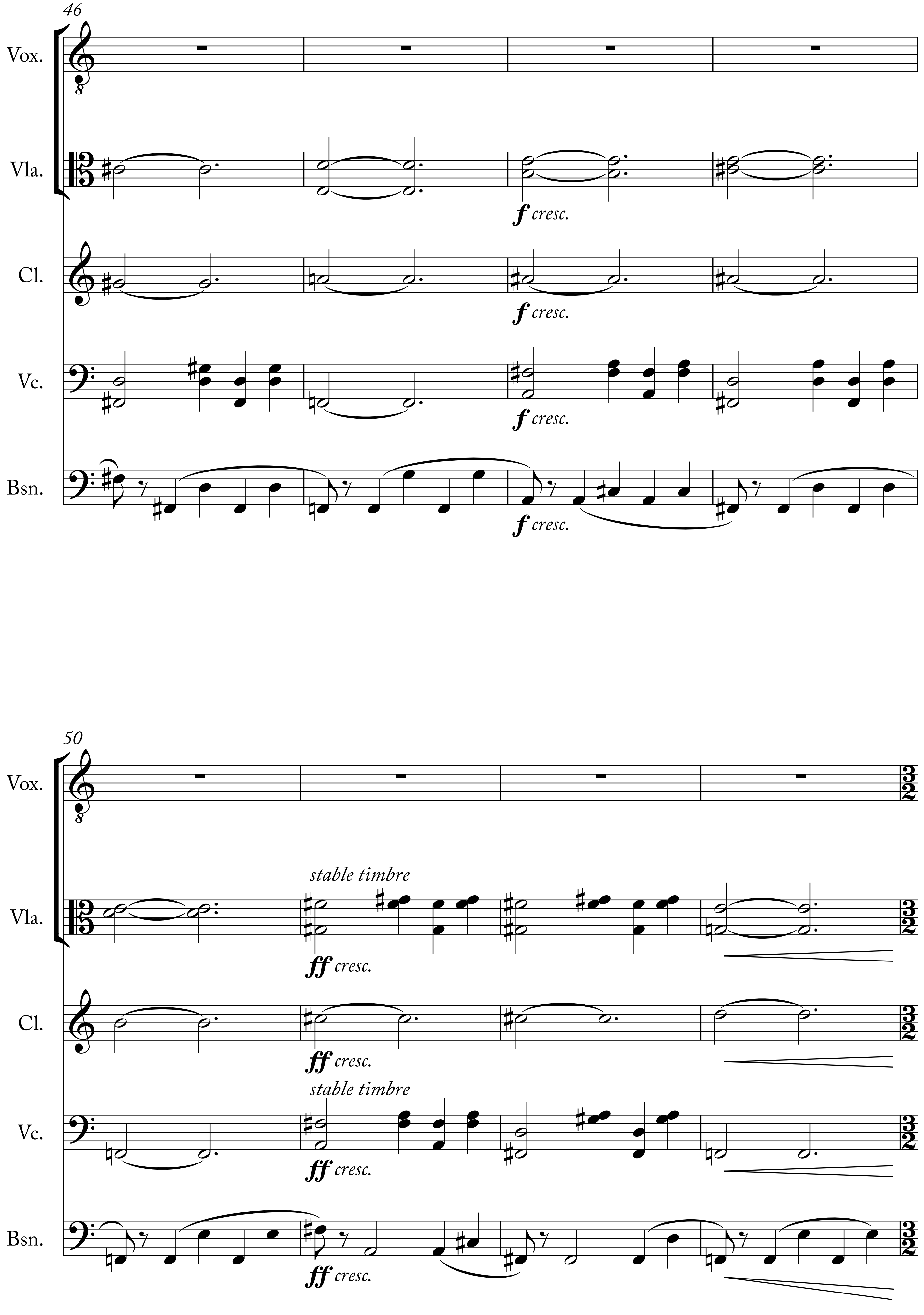

23
Vox.
Vla.
Cl.
Vc.
Bsn.
ooh
ooh
ooh
(pp)
espr.

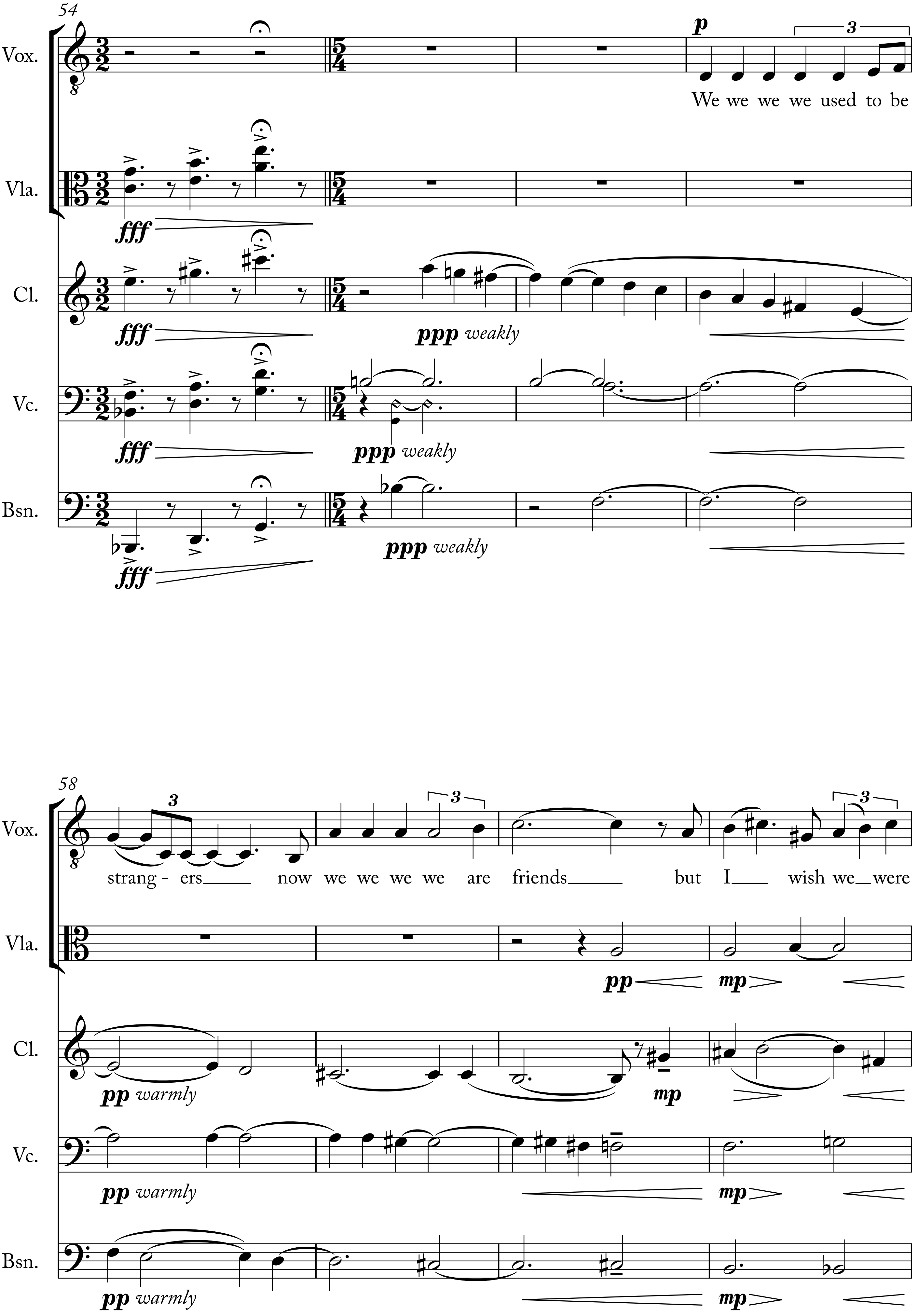

27
Vox.
Vla.
Cl.
Vc.
Bsn.
pp espress.
mp
pp
pp
pp
pp
pp
pp
pp
pp
pp

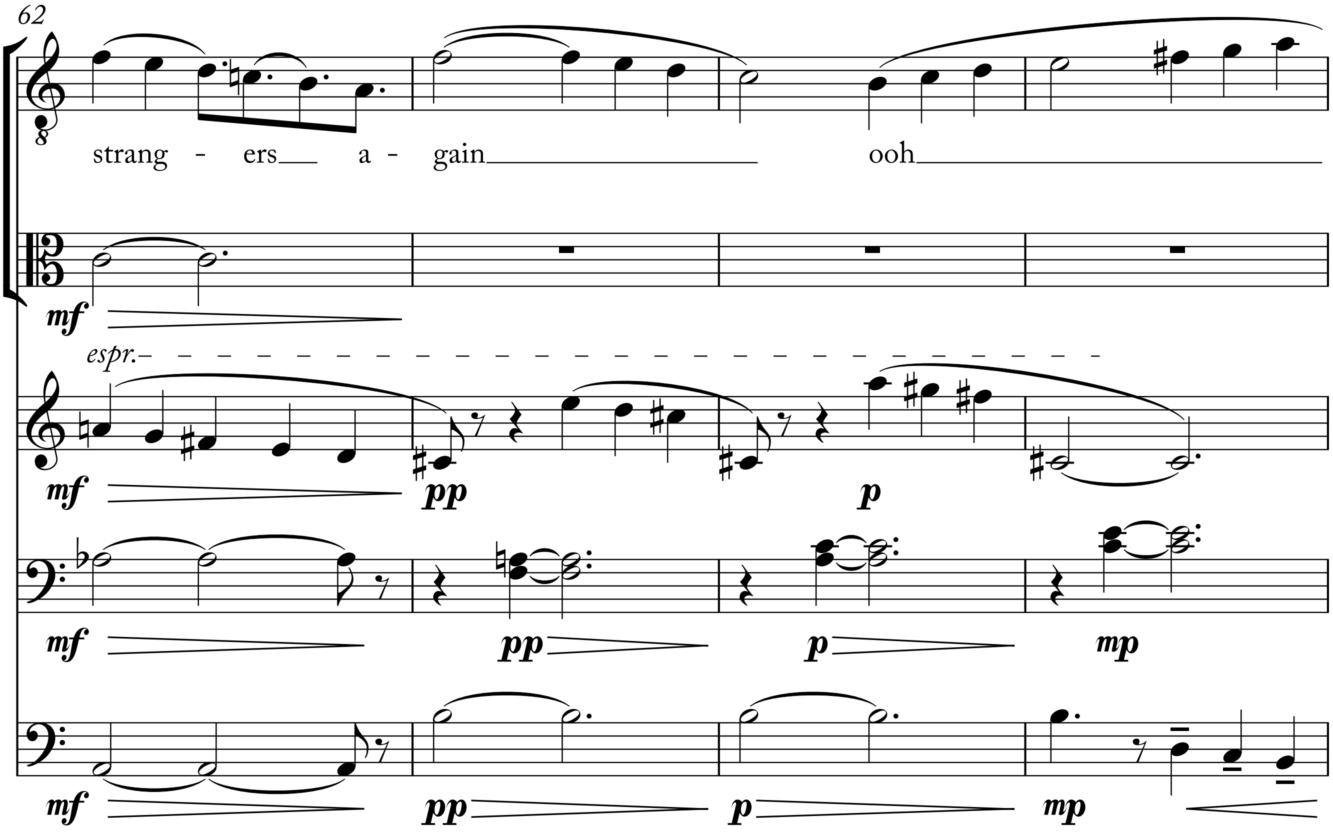

30
Vox.
Vla.
Cl.
Vc.
Bsn.
pp
mf
ff
scratchy
pp
34
Vox.
Vla.
Cl.
Vc.
Bsn.
cresc. poco a poco
cresc. poco a poco
cresc. poco a poco

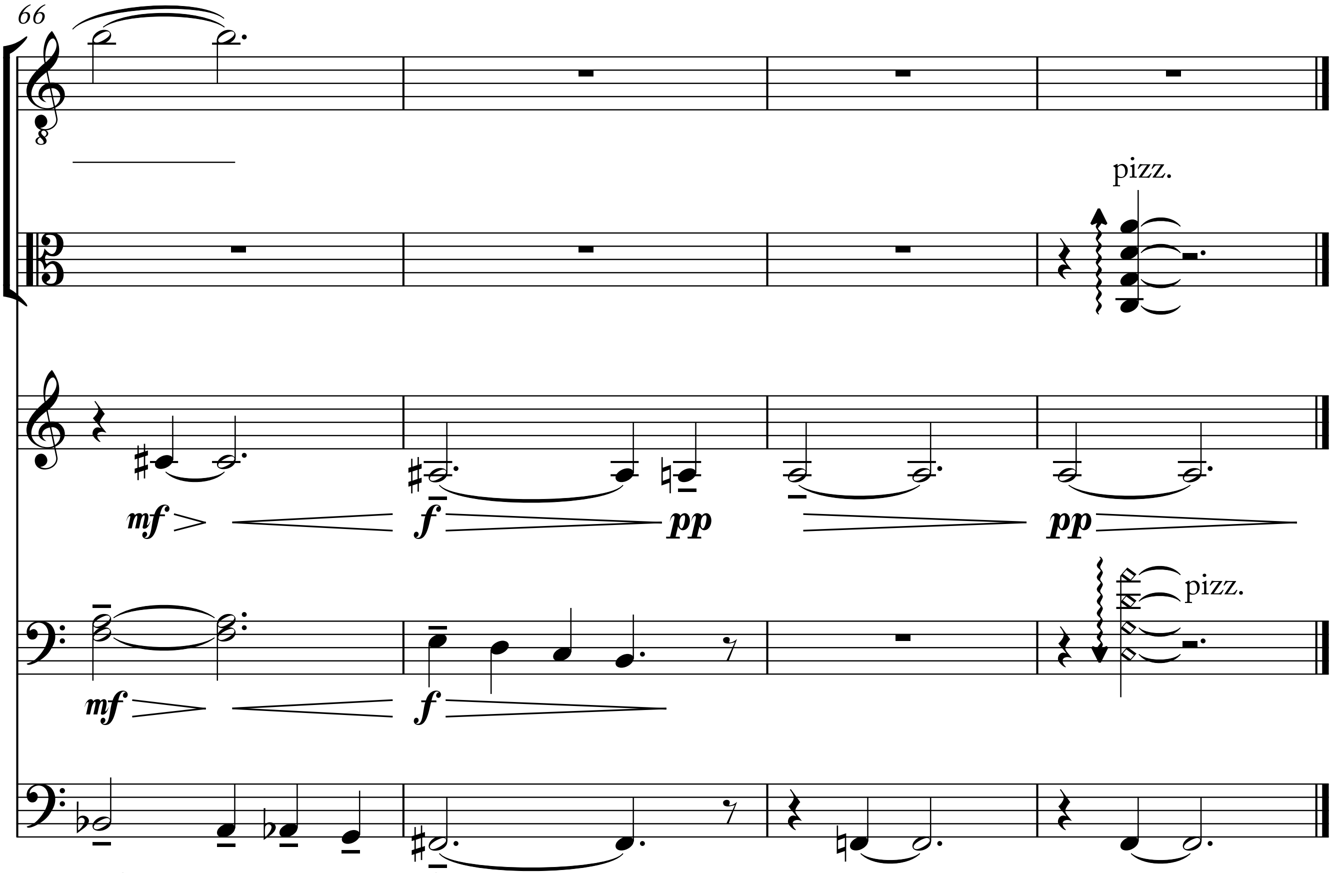

38
Vox.
Vla.
Cl.
Vc.
Bsn.
change bows ad lib.,
play with an unstable timbre
p cresc.
p
cresc. poco a poco
change bows ad lib.,
play with an unstable timbre
p cresc.
p cresc.


42
Vox.
Vla.
Cl.
Vc.
Bsn.
mp cresc.
mf cresc.
mp cresc.
mf cresc.
mp cresc.
mf cresc.
mp cresc.
mf cresc.


46
Vox.
Vla.
Cl.
Vc.
Bsn.
f cresc.
f cresc.
f cresc.
f cresc.
50
Vox.
Vla.
Cl.
Vc.
Bsn.
stable timbre
ff cresc.
ff cresc.
stable timbre
ff cresc.
ff cresc.
3
2


54
Vox.
Vla.
Cl.
Vc.
Bsn.
fff
p
We we we we used to be
ppp weakly
58
strang - ers now we we we we are friends but I wish we were
pp
mp
pp warmly
3


62
Vox.
strang - ers a - gain
ooh
Vla.
mf
espr.
Cl.
mf
pp
p
Vc.
mf
pp
p
mp
Bsn.
mf
pp
p
mp


66
Vox.
Vla.
pizz.
Cl.
mf
f
pp
pp
Vc.
pizz.
mf
f
Bsn.
mf
f
pp
pp

ELLIOT VAUGHAN

Constriction Tones

for Viola with Rubber Band

2018

Foreword

In *Constriction Tones* a rubber band is stretched around the viola, across the strings. With this preparation, the normal motion of the string is constricted, and some characteristics of sound production and control are obstructed: a smooth arco tone is not possible, the timbre is unruly, intonation is affected. But when ordinary behaviours are denied, new behaviours emerge in their place. This elasticity can be observed in the customisations uniformed school children make to their clothes, the secret music ceremonies of indigenous nations when colonisers make a culture illegal, and the shape of water. In *Constriction Tones* the new behaviours of the plucked and bowed string lead to a rich new range of timbres and playing techniques.

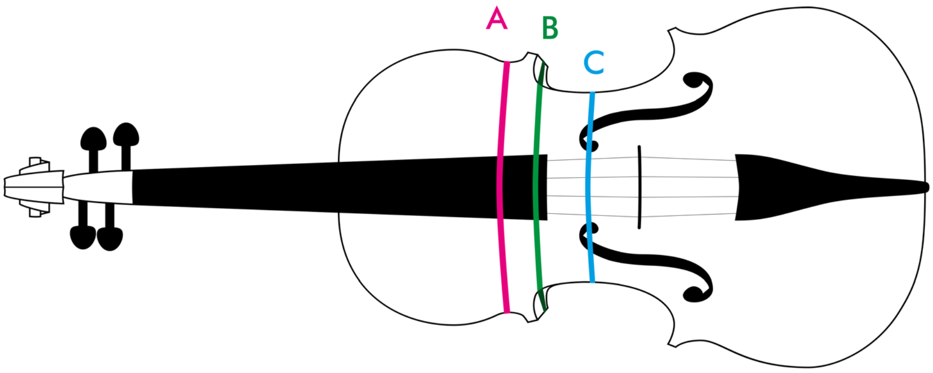
Depending on the method of articulation, there are several possible modes of interaction between the rubber band and the viola string. In the first movement, the rubber band introduces a chaotic interference ("buzz tone" and "grind tone") and clear harmonics ("whistle tone"), treated as the two extremes of a continuum. The plucked string also features, to be further explored in the second movement. Here the rubber band effectively adds weight to a portion of the string so it responds non-linearly, creating inharmonic overtones; a metallic, bell-like tone. The rubber band also couples the four strings, transferring vibration from one to another, further enhancing the inharmonic timbre. In the final movement the instrument is bowed on the fingerboard side of the rubber band. Here the interference is even and controllable, giving the tone has a husky, veiled texture, and the silhouette of melody is discernible.

Performance Notes

I encourage you to try different rubber bands of different thicknesses, lenghts and elasticities. I use a rubber band about 2mm wide, 20cm in circumference which stretches easily.

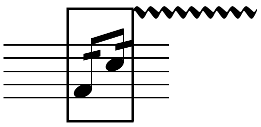
Spend some time exploring the effects that bow position, dynamics and fingered pitch have on the timbre.

Below are three positions where the rubber band can cross the strings and remain stable. I have found position **B** most effective for the 1st and 3rd movements, and position **A** for the 2nd. Different instruments and different rubber bands may respond to other positions. A diagonal arrangement is also posssible.

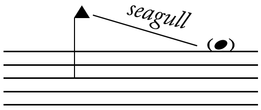


1 |

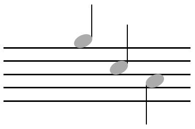
☐——	whistle tone	Bow sul ponticello such that clear harmonics sound.
▨——	buzz tone	Bow nearer the rubber band such that pitch is apparent but textured.
■——	grind tone	Bow near the rubber band with extra bow pressure; pitch need not be discernible.
▨→☐		An arrow between timbre boxes denotes a gradual transition between tones.



The bowed articulation continues for the duration of the squiggly line. Change of pitch will be in square brackets below.

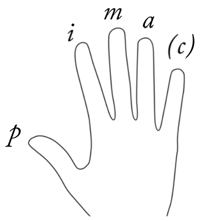


A slow glissando which, with whistle tone, will give a gull-like call. It may be necessary to finger the string II to keep it out of the way.

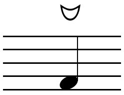


Grey noteheads are barely bowed, acting only as a distortion to the other notes.

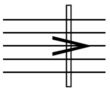
2 | The viola is held like a guitar for most of this movement



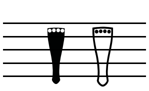
The digits of the right hand. Note that *c* is not used in this work



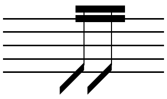
Strike the string with the nail as if it were a plectrum.



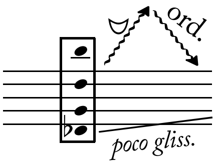
Pull the rubber band back and release it to slap against the strings; the fingering of the previous chord remains.



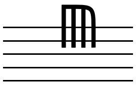
Plucked tailpiece. Press the finger to the tailpiece and let it slide off the side, slapping the body of the viola. The tone of the tailpiece should be heard over the slap. The white tailpiece has a longer duration, as with standard noteheads.



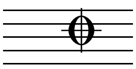
Pluck the rubber band beside the C string.



The boxed pitches indicate the left hand starting position. The glissando should cover less than a semitone unless marked otherwise. The right hand fingers (*ami*) drag across the strings nail first (rasgueado), and return with the flesh as usual.

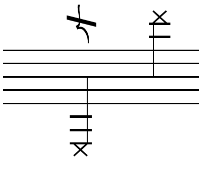


Dampen all string with the left hand such that no articulated pitch is heard.



Audibly dampen all string with the right hand.

3 | Bow on the fingerboard side of the rubber band throughout this movement.



Bow the body of the viola in the corner beyond the waist of the instrument,
C string side and A string side.

1 | bridge side

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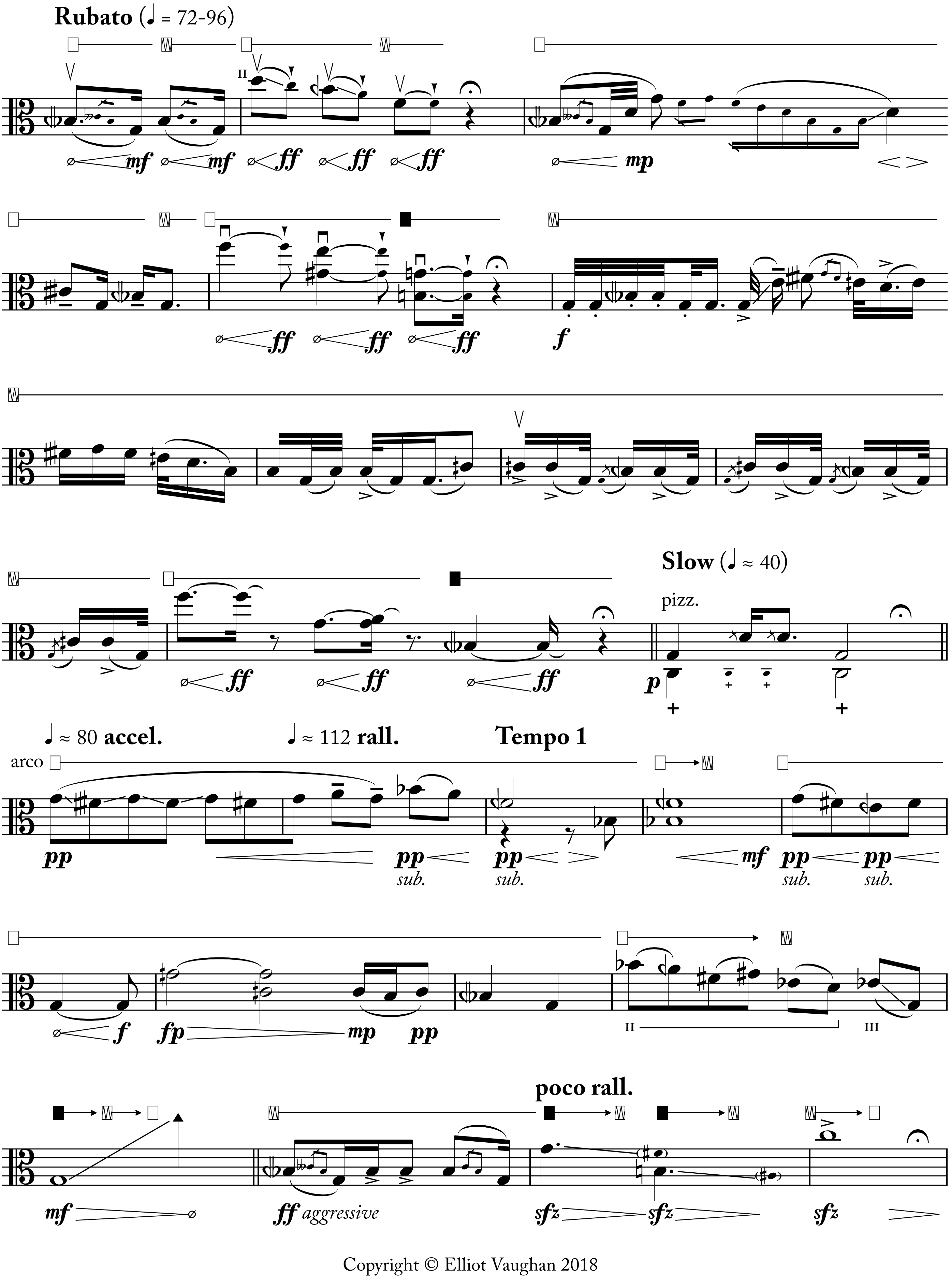
Rubato (♩ = 72-96)
mf
mf
ff
ff
ff
mp
II
ff
ff
ff
f
Slow (♩ ≈ 40)
pizz.
ff
ff
ff
p
+
♩ ≈ 80 accel.
♩ ≈ 112 rall.
Tempo 1
arco
pp
pp sub.
pp sub.
mf
pp sub.
pp sub.
f
fp
mp
pp
II
III
poco rall.
mf
ff aggressive
sfz
sfz
sfz

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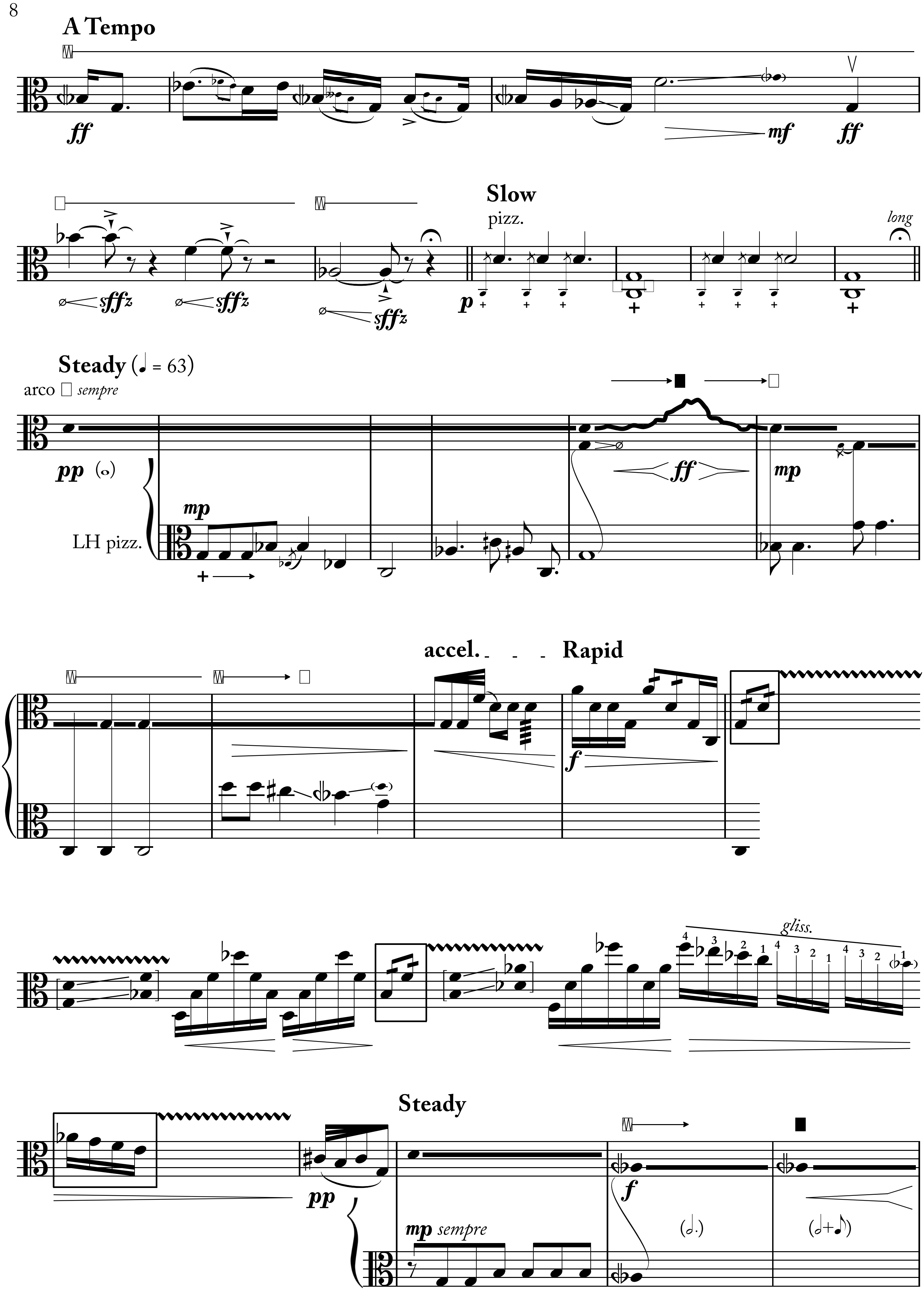
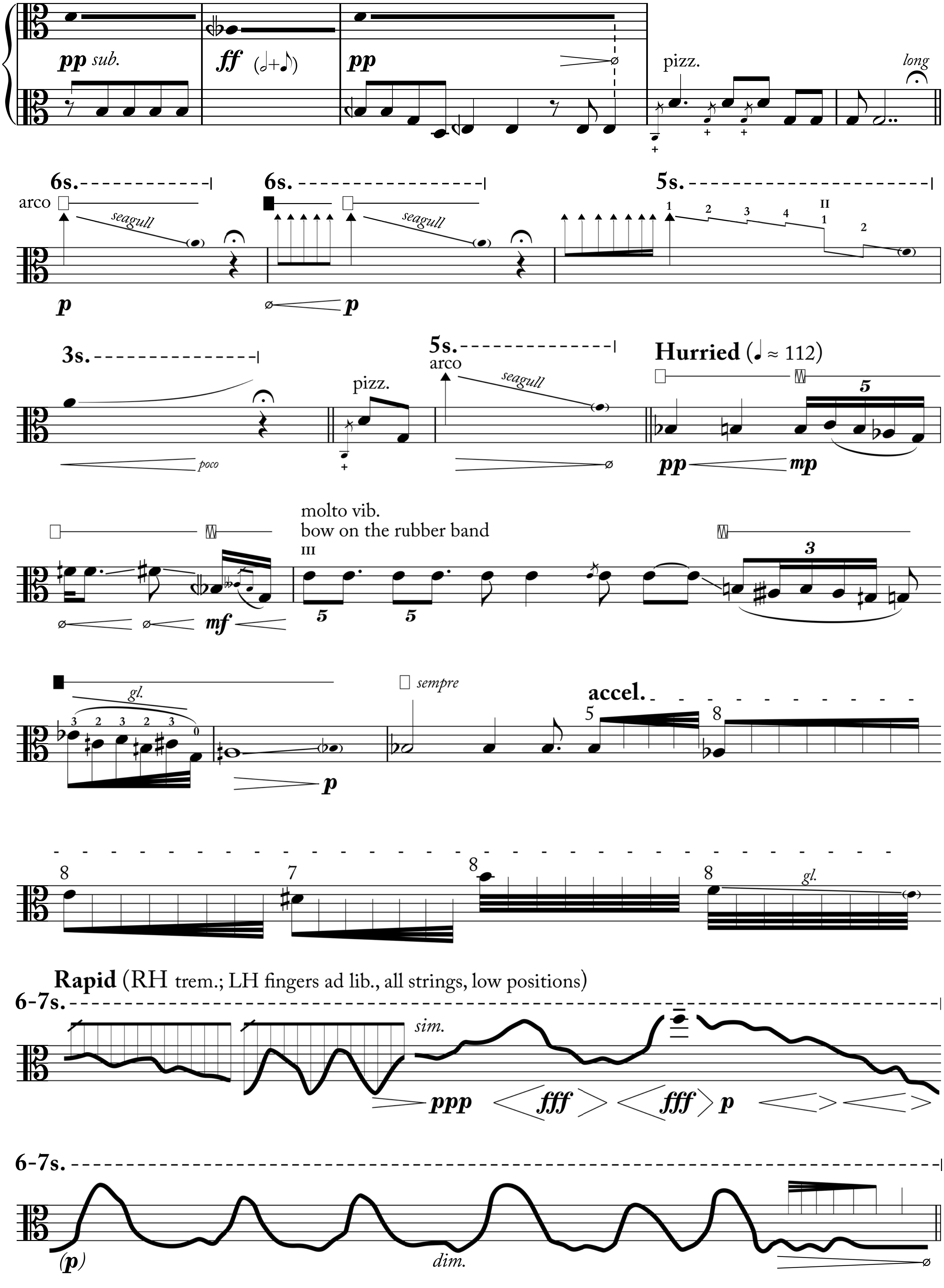
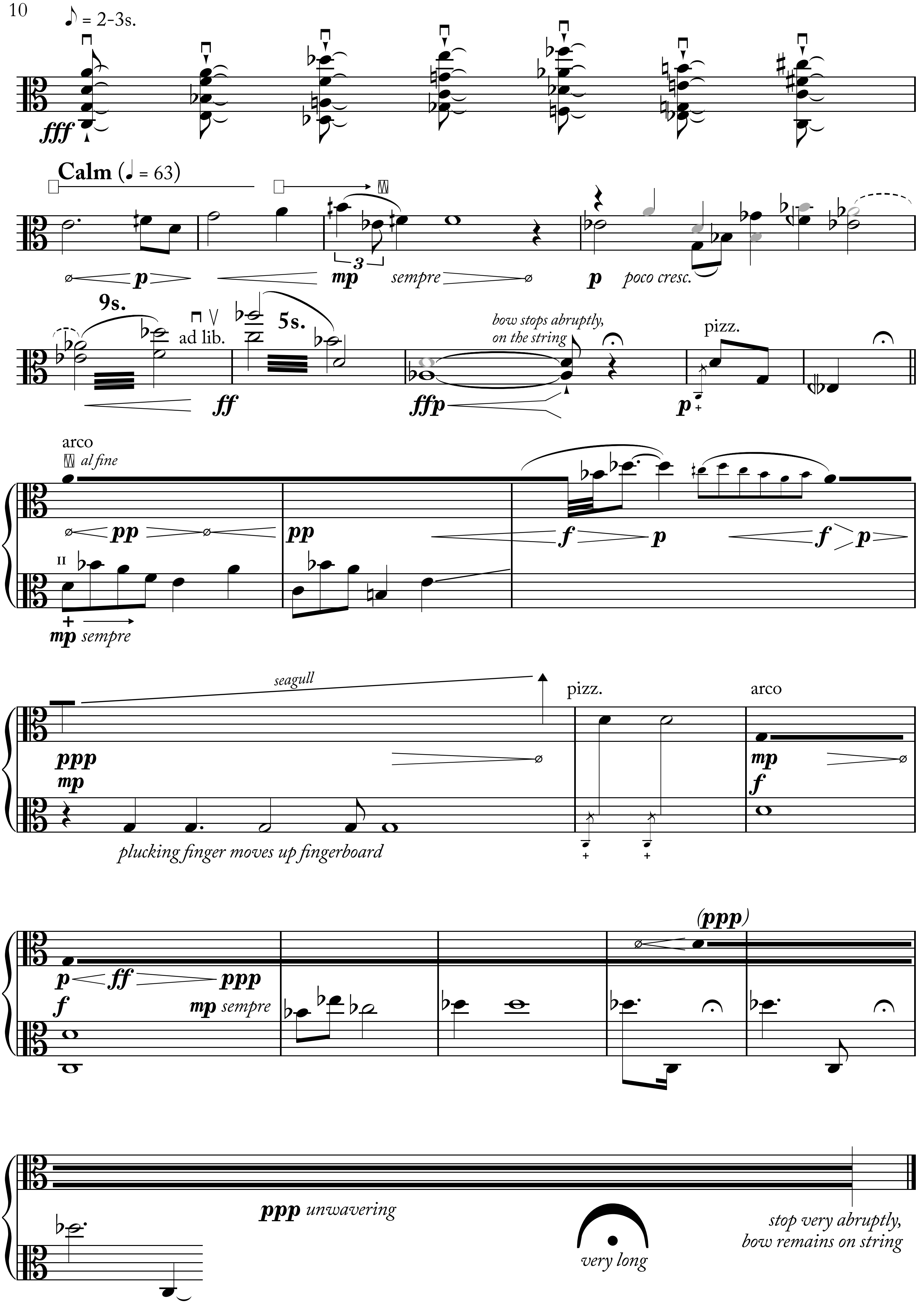
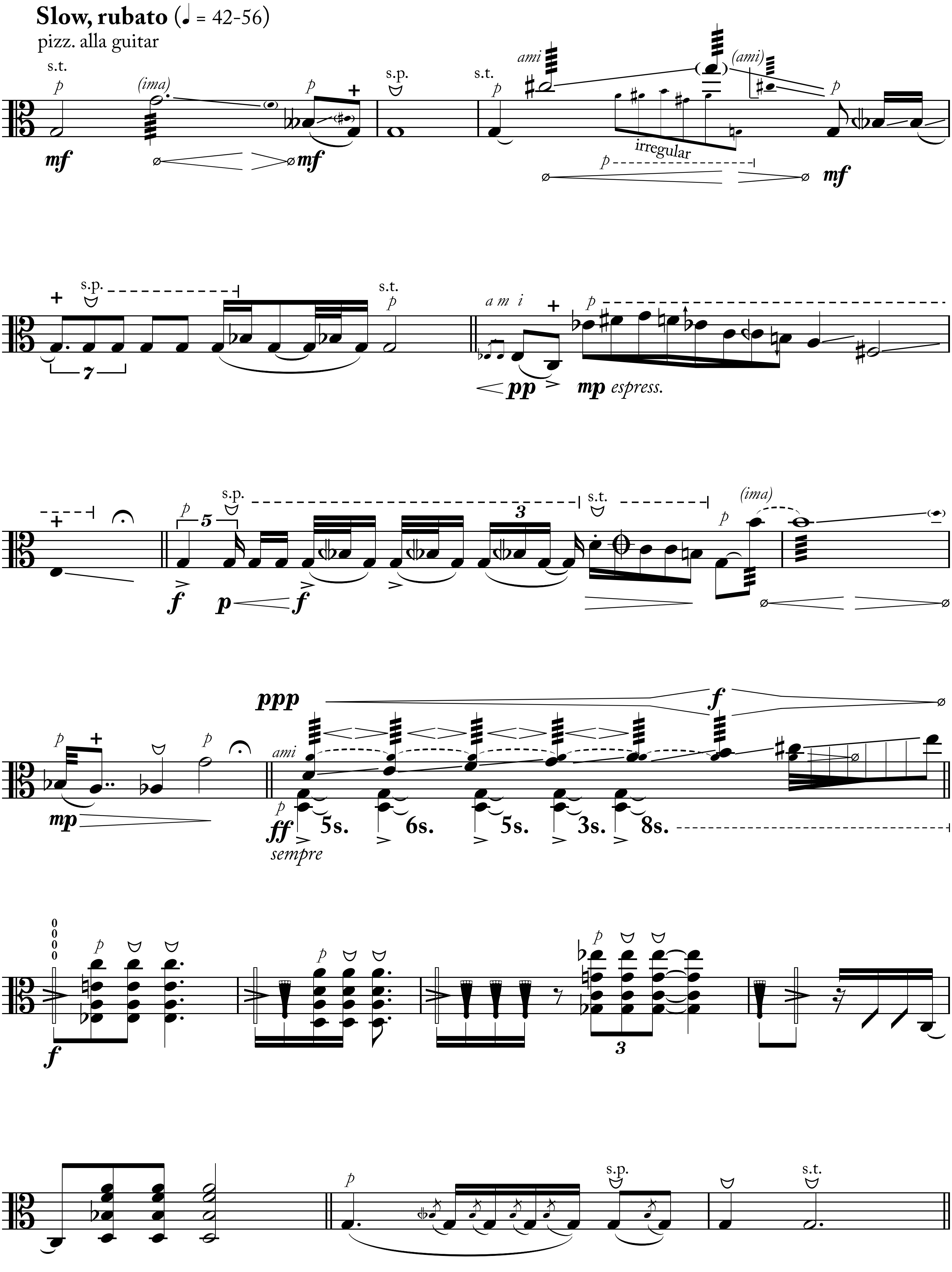

A Tempo
ff
mf
ff
sffz
sffz
sffz
Slow
pizz.
long
p
Steady (♩ = 63)
arco sempre
pp
mp
ff
mp
LH pizz.
accel.
Rapid
f
gliss.
4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1
Steady
pp
mp sempre
f
(𝅗𝅥.)
(𝅗𝅥+♪)

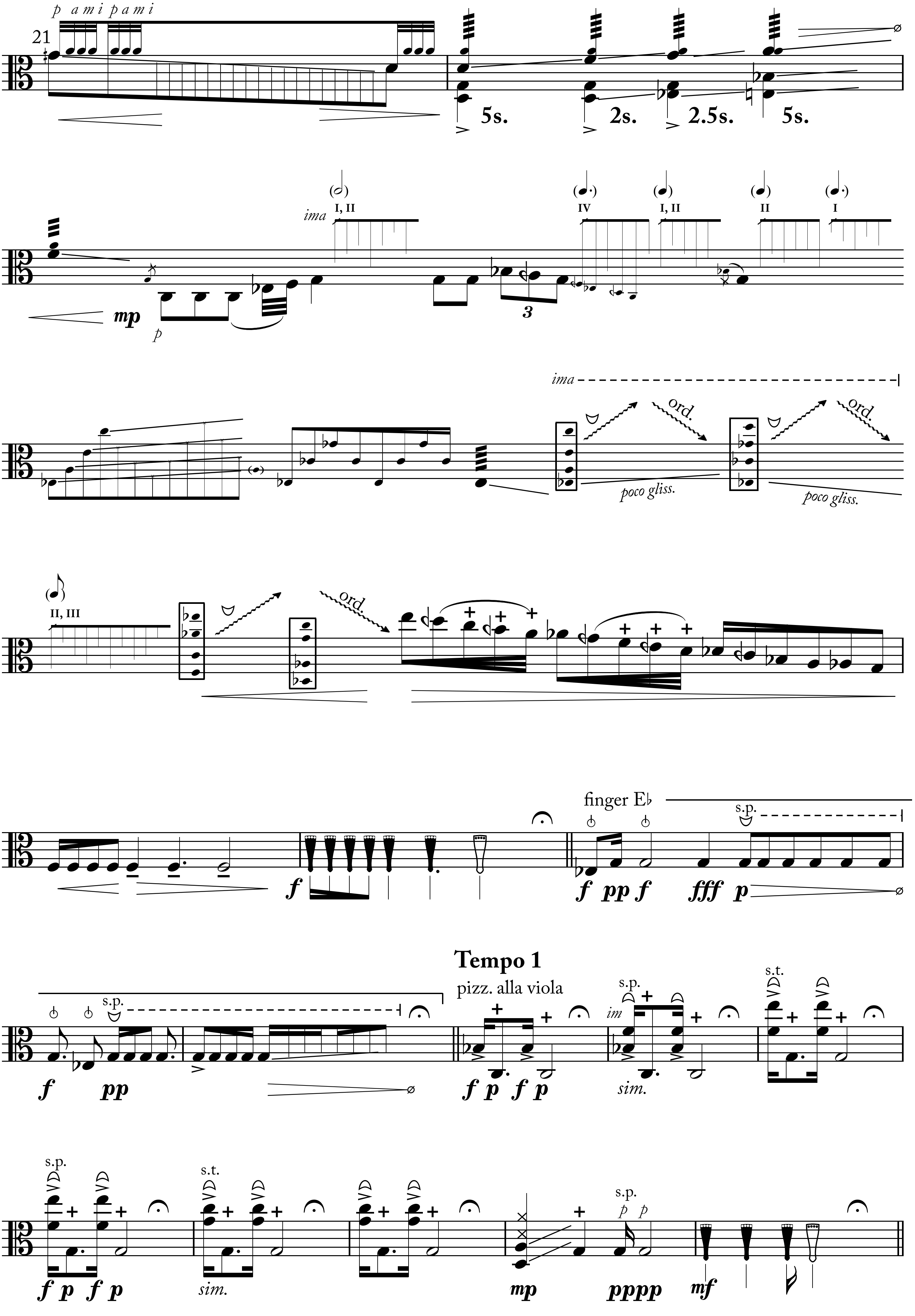

pp sub.
ff (𝅗𝅥+♪)
pp
pizz.
long
6s.
arco
seagull
p
6s.
seagull
5s.
1 2 3 4 II 1 2
3s.
poco
pizz.
5s.
arco
seagull
Hurried (♩ ≈ 112)
5
pp
mp
mf
molto vib.
bow on the rubber band
III
5
5
3
gl.
3 2 3 2 3 0
p
sempre
accel.
5
8
8
7
8
8
gl.
Rapid (RH trem.; LH fingers ad lib., all strings, low positions)
6-7s.
sim.
ppp
fff
fff
p
6-7s.
(p)
dim.

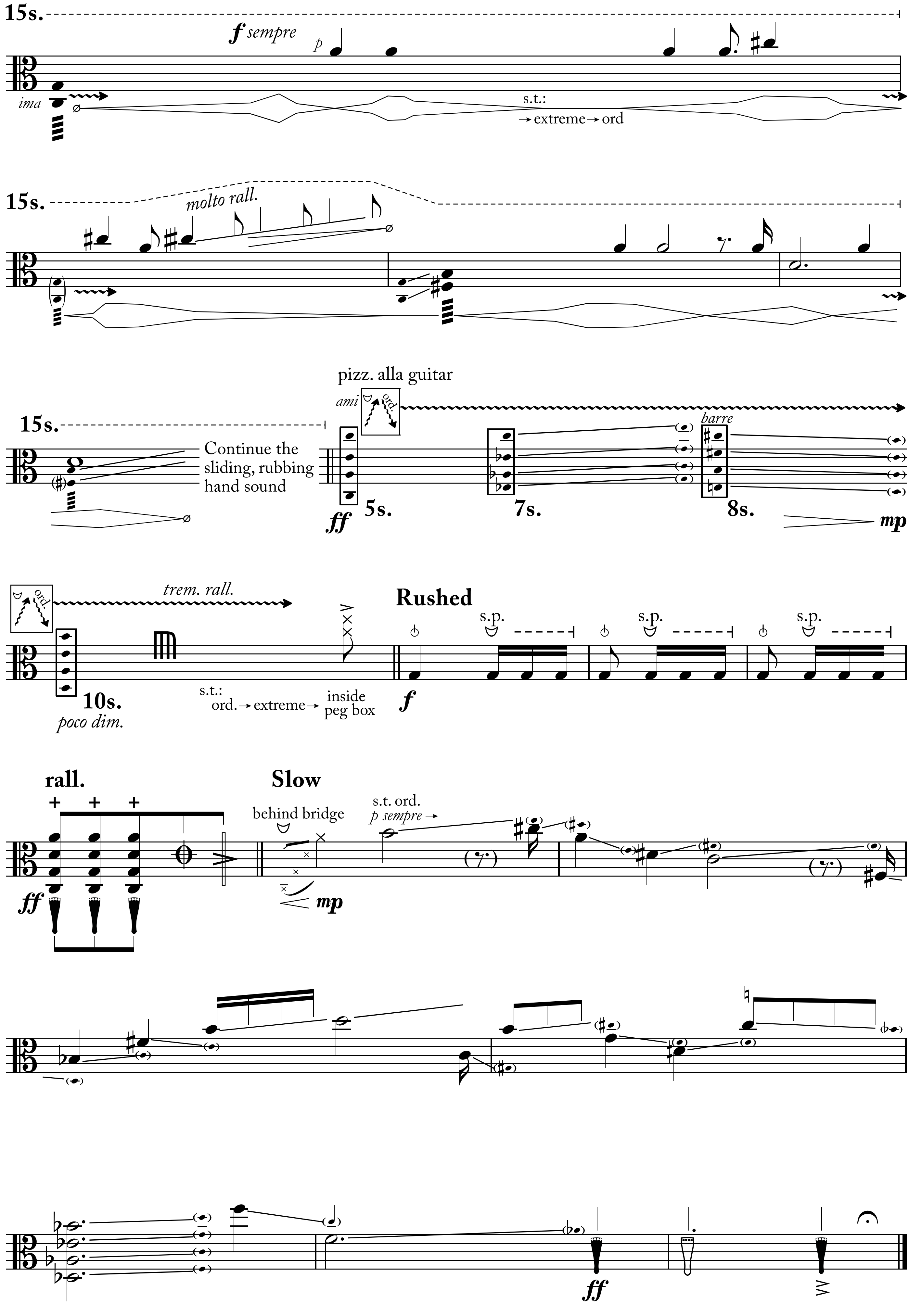

♪ = 2-3s.
fff
Calm (♩ = 63)
p
mp
3
sempre
p
poco cresc.
9s.
ad lib.
5s.
ff
bow stops abruptly, on the string
ffp
pizz.
p
arco
al fine
pp
pp
f
p
f
p
II
mp sempre
seagull
ppp
mp
plucking finger moves up fingerboard
pizz.
arco
mp
f
p
ff
ppp
f
mp sempre
(ppp)
ppp unwavering
very long
stop very abruptly, bow remains on string

2 | pizzicato

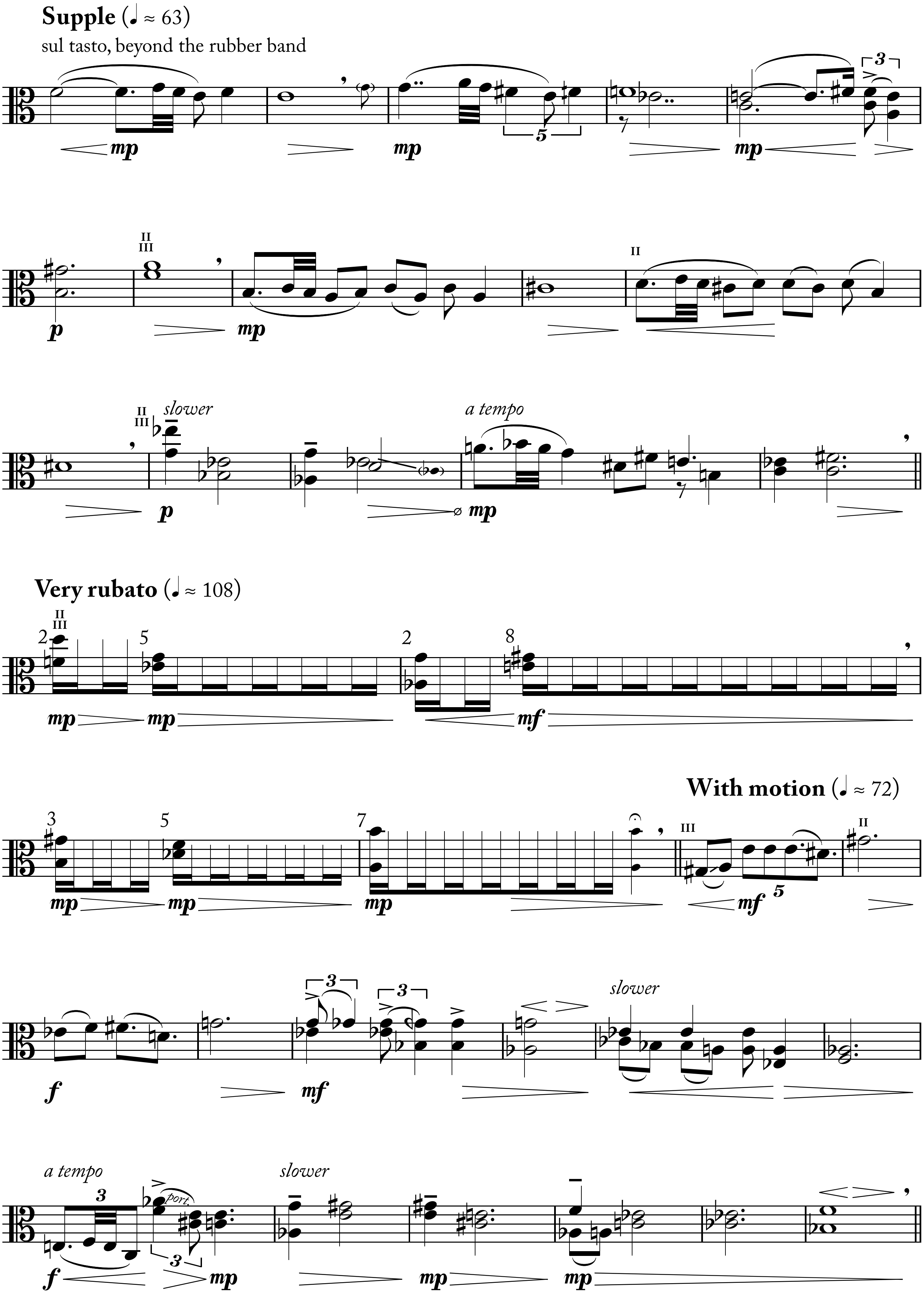

Slow, rubato (♩ = 42-56)
pizz. alla guitar
s.t.
p
mf
(ima)
mf
s.p.
+
ami
(ami)
irregular
7
a m i
pp
mp espress.
5
3
(ima)
f
ppp
sempre
ff
5s.
6s.
3s.
8s.
0
0
0
0
mp

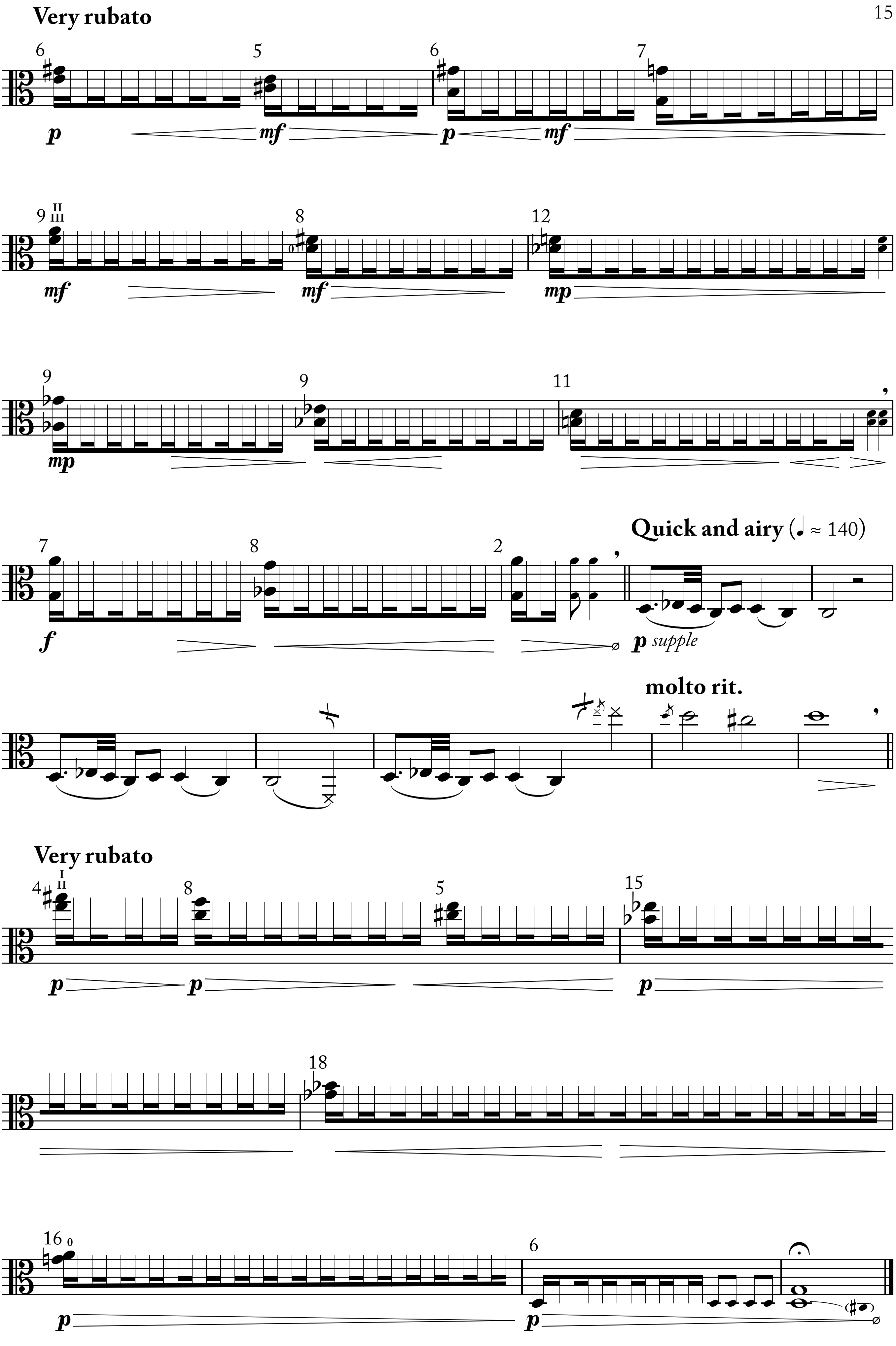
Brisk, always uneven (♩ = 69-120)


p a m i p a m i
21
5s.
2s.
2.5s.
5s.
ima
I, II
IV
I, II
II
I
mp
p
3
ima
ord.
poco gliss.
ord.
poco gliss.
II, III
ord.
f
finger E♭
s.p.
f pp f
fff p
f
pp
s.p.
Tempo 1
pizz. alla viola
f p f p
s.p.
im
sim.
s.t.
s.p.
f p f p
s.t.
sim.
mp
s.p.
p p
pppp
mf


15s.
f sempre
p
ima
s.t.:
→ extreme → ord
15s.
molto rall.
15s.
Continue the sliding, rubbing hand sound
pizz. alla guitar
ami
ord.
ff
5s.
7s.
barre
8s.
mp
ord.
trem. rall.
10s.
poco dim.
s.t.:
ord. → extreme →
inside peg box
Rushed
s.p.
f
rall.
ff
Slow
behind bridge
mp
s.t. ord.
p sempre →
ff

3 | fingerboard side


Supple (♩ ≈ 63)
sul tasto, beyond the rubber band
mp
mp
5
mp
3
II
III
p
mp
II
slower
p
a tempo
mp
Very rubato (♩ ≈ 108)
mp
mp
mf
With motion (♩ ≈ 72)
mp
mp
mp
III
mf
5
f
3
3
mf
slower
a tempo
3
port.
3
f
mp
slower
mp
mp


Very rubato
6
p
5
mf
6
p
mf
7
9
II
III
mf
8
0
mf
12
mp
9
mp
9
11
7
f
8
2
Quick and airy (♩ ≈ 140)
p supple
molto rit.
Very rubato
I
II
4
8
5
p
p
15
p
18
16
0
p
6
p

ELLIOT VAUGHAN

Descent
(in the spirit of catastrophe)
for Cellist

2018

Performance Notes

Descent (in the Spirit of Catastrophe) is built on a physical logic. Each motion should lead easily to the next. Exaggerate the abrupt stops and starts, and aim for fluidity between gestures where possible.

The main gesture is the lowering and raising of the bow along the strings of the cello. You perform this motion in a few different ways: with a horizontal bow near the frog; with a horizontal bow near the middle (these two positions should produce quite different timbres); with only the tip moving, your right hand acting as a pivot, turning the bow diagonal; and the movement from diagonal back to horizontal. These movements either ease in and end abruptly or begin abruptly and ease out, as suggested by the graphic.

Whenever there are open strings they should be gently dampened by the left hand.

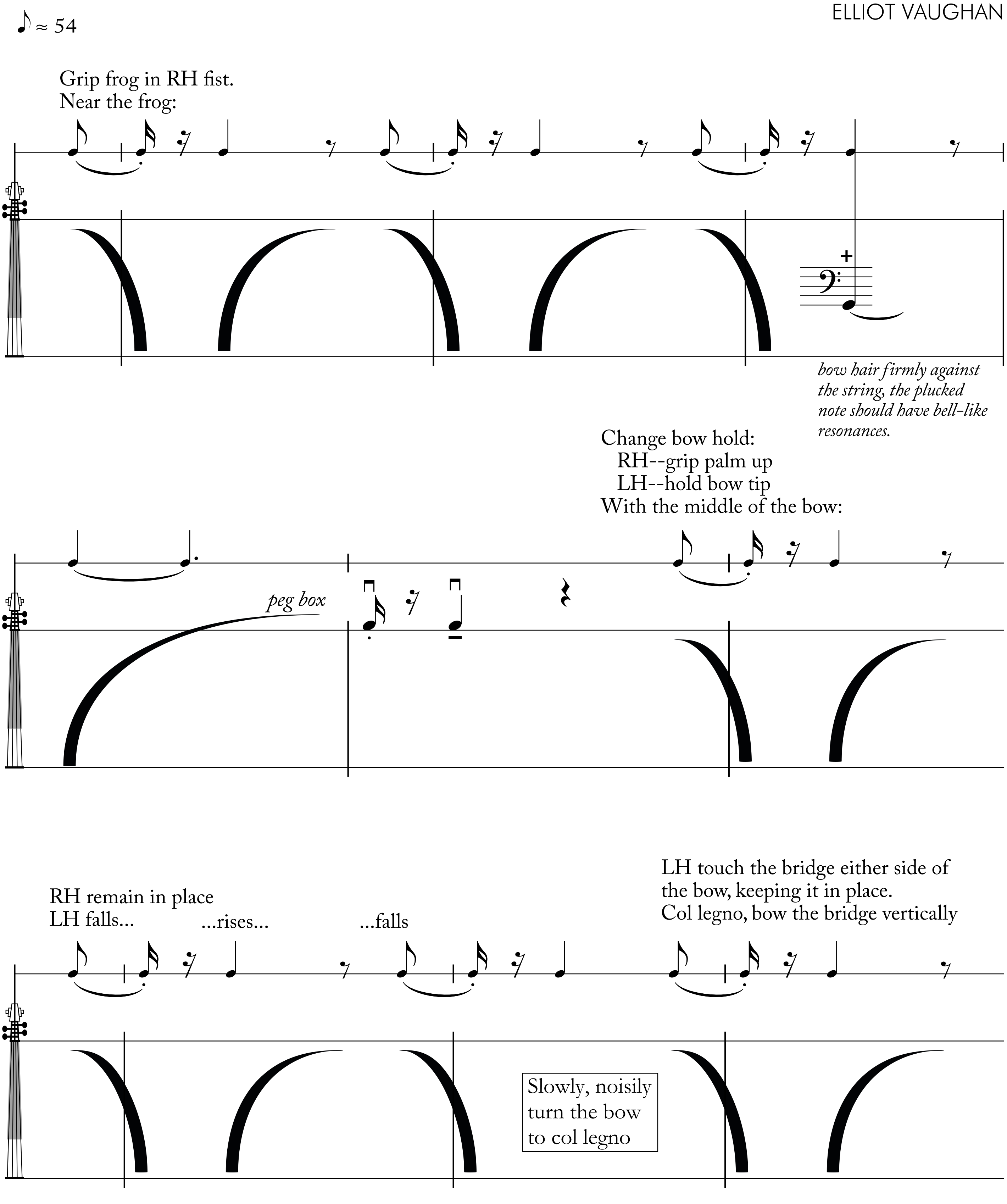
Dynamics are dictated by the speed of the motion. These are not loud sounds, but project as best you can.

The top staff gives a rhythm, but it is not important to hear that rhythm clearly and accurately articlated. It is approximate, only included only to suggest bow speed.

Except where specifically noted, the bow sits on strings II and III.

Descent (in the Spirit of Catastrophe)

ELLIOT VAUGHAN


♪ ≈ 54
Grip frog in RH fist.
Near the frog:
bow hair firmly against the string, the plucked note should have bell-like resonances.
Change bow hold:
RH--grip palm up
LH--hold bow tip
With the middle of the bow:
peg box
RH remain in place
LH falls...
...rises...
...falls
Slowly, noisily turn the bow to col legno
LH touch the bridge either side of the bow, keeping it in place.
Col legno, bow the bridge vertically

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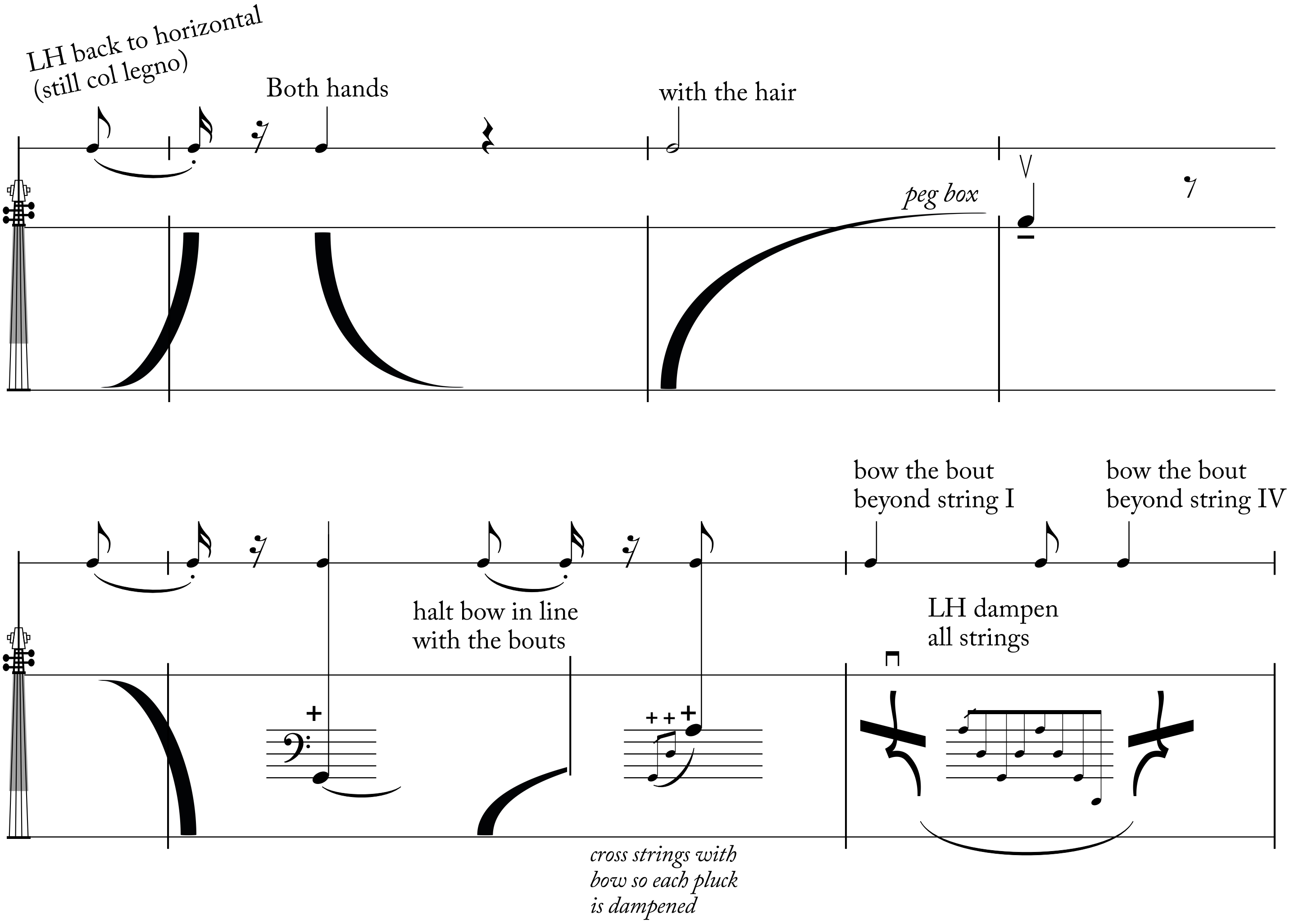
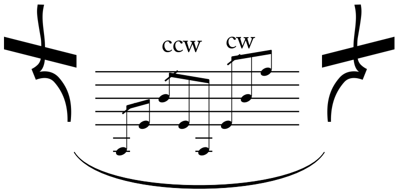
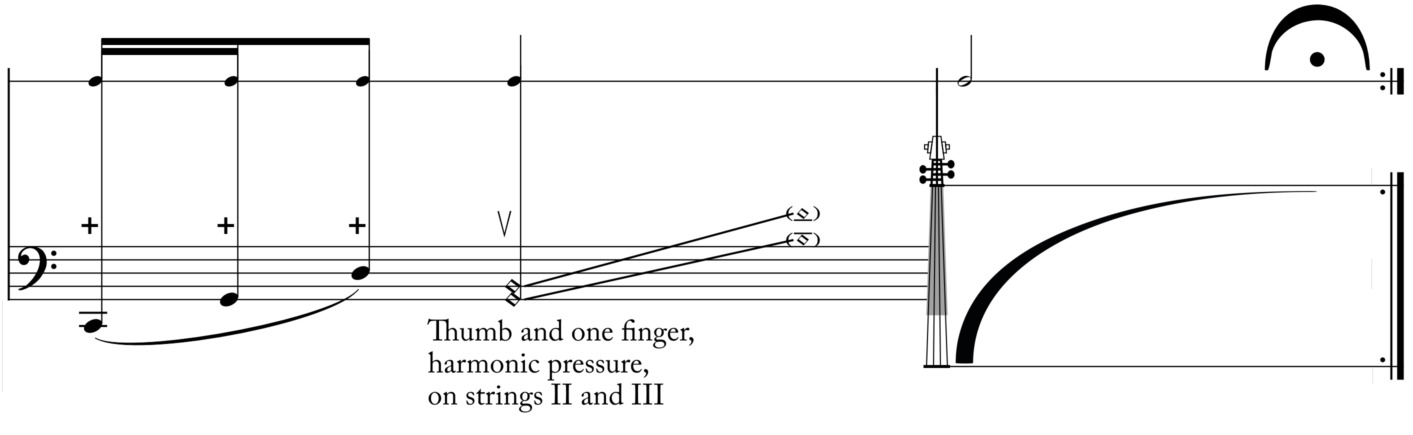
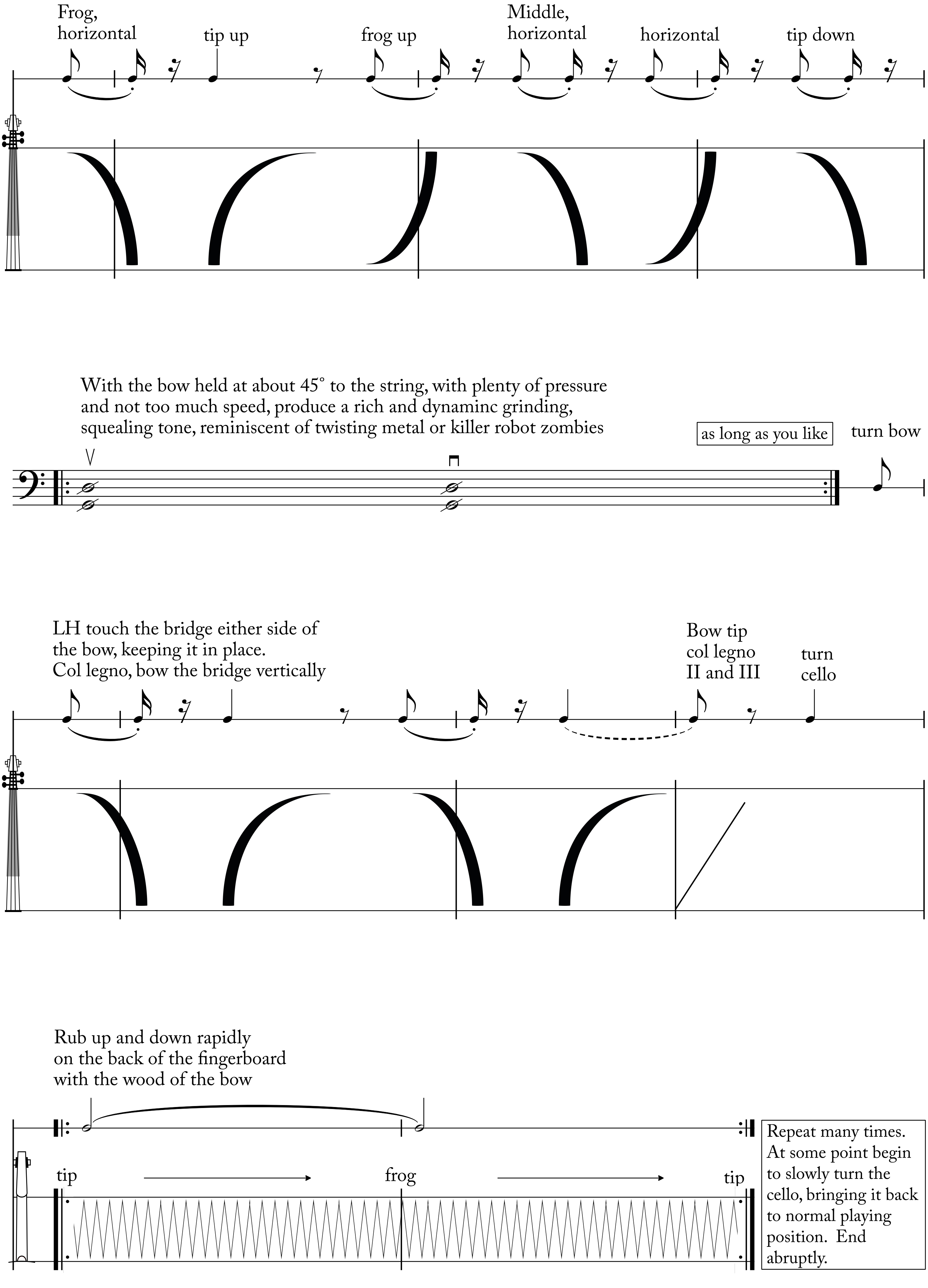

LH back to horizontal
(still col legno)
Both hands
with the hair
peg box
halt bow in line
with the bouts
cross strings with
bow so each pluck
is dampened
bow the bout
beyond string I
bow the bout
beyond string IV
LH dampen
all strings

Hold the bow against the cello. Turn the cello, beginning clockwise, to produce:



Continue the clockwise turn until the cello is facing the standard direction. Allow the bow to move forward slightly.


Thumb and one finger,
harmonic pressure,
on strings II and III


Frog,
horizontal
tip up
frog up
Middle,
horizontal
horizontal
tip down

With the bow held at about 45° to the string, with plenty of pressure and not too much speed, produce a rich and dynaminc grinding, squealing tone, reminiscent of twisting metal or killer robot zombies

as long as you like
turn bow

LH touch the bridge either side of the bow, keeping it in place.
Col legno, bow the bridge vertically

Bow tip
col legno
II and III
turn
cello

Rub up and down rapidly on the back of the fingerboard with the wood of the bow

tip
frog
tip

Repeat many times. At some point begin to slowly turn the cello, bringing it back to normal playing position. End abruptly.

ELLIOT VAUGHAN

Shiny Skeleton

for Clarinettist

2018

Performance Notes

For clarinettist with A or B♭ clarinet.

Five-note figures like that in the first bar are played by stroking the right index finger down the trill keys while fingering the pitch with the larger notehead. The rhythm may be a little stilted, and you should not try to even it out—it is the physical motion that should be smooth. High grace notes may appear and some multiphonics will sound, especially at louder dynamics, and this should be embraced. The gesture will produce key clicks. At your liberty add a small *rit.* on the final stroke when a phrase ends *niente*.

Pitches in brackets are fingered but not heard.

You can shift your right hand up and use the middle- and ring-fingers on the holes and the index fingers for the trill key in the first bar of the sixth system on the first page (♩ ≈ 80), and especially the fourth system on the second page ("the shelf the shelf the shelf...")

Unless otherwise marked, text should be whispered and brisk with the reed touching your bottom lip such that the instrument colours the sibilants.

Predetermine an arrangement for the disassembled clarinet on the ground at the end of the piece.

A performance should last about 6 minutes.

Shiny Skeleton

That's a shiny little fish skeleton you got there, fishy
Whatcha gonna do with them slippery, glistening bones?

I think it's a
    cover it in a silt scarf and soft rest
    before the shelf the shelf the shelf the shelf the shelf the shelf the shelf the shelf the shelf the shelf the shelf

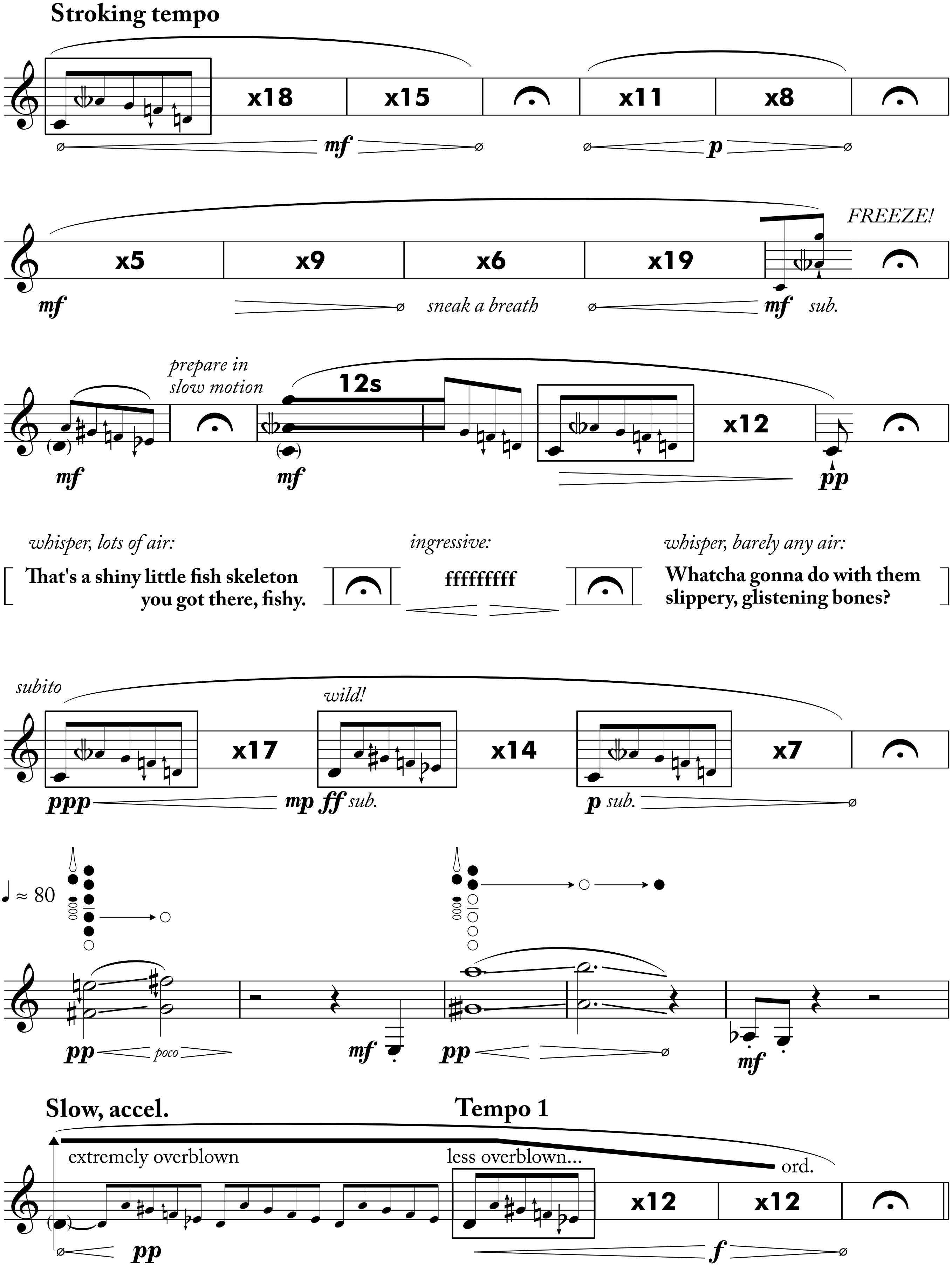
It's an artifice
A possession
A summary
Falsified, fossilised, the lingering whiff of---

---lay your iridescent sharps in order
Press them like petals in the leafs of a sedimentary tome

This fish is a fish corpse
This fish is a fish corpse
Sfishy's a fishy corf
Might as well ossify

Shiny Skeleton

ELLIOT VAUGHAN


Stroking tempo
x18
x15
mf
x11
x8
p
x5
x9
x6
x19
FREEZE!
mf
sneak a breath
mf sub.
prepare in slow motion
12s
mf
mf
x12
pp
whisper, lots of air:
That's a shiny little fish skeleton you got there, fishy.
ingressive:
ffffffff
whisper, barely any air:
Whatcha gonna do with them slippery, glistening bones?
subito
wild!
x17
x14
x7
ppp
mp ff sub.
p sub.
♩ ≈ 80
pp
poco
mf
pp
mf
Slow, accel.
Tempo 1
extremely overblown
less overblown...
ord.
x12
x12
pp
f

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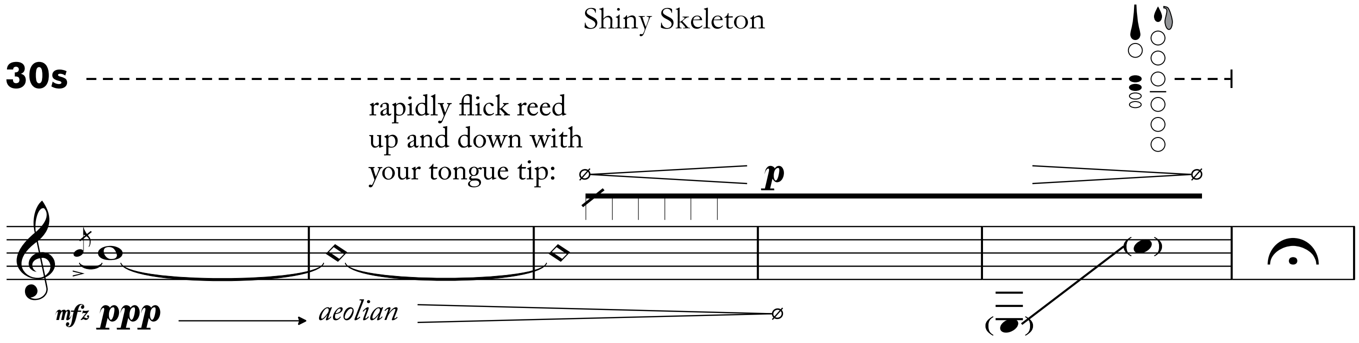
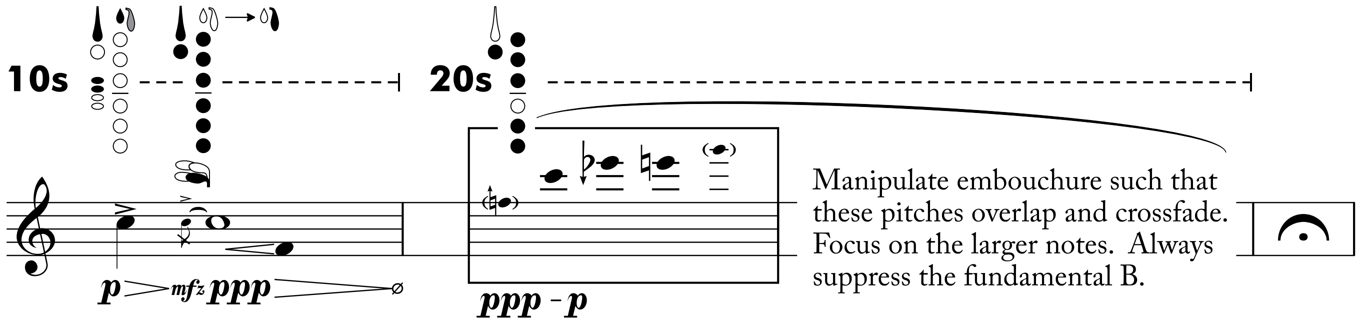
Shiny Skeleton

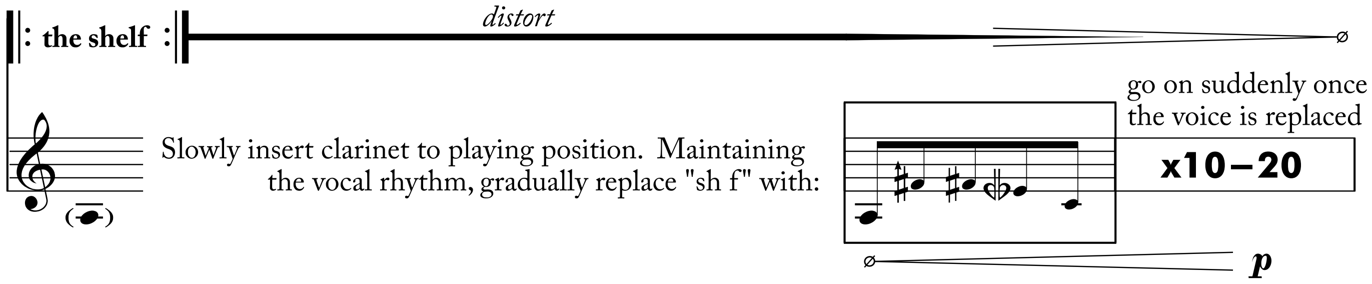




Manipulate embouchure such that these pitches overlap and crossfade. Focus on the larger notes. Always suppress the fundamental B.

whisper:

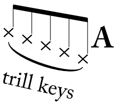
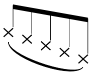
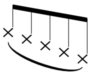
I think it's a cover it in the silt scarf & soft rest before it's the shelf the shelf the shelf the shelf the shelf →



Slowly insert clarinet to playing position. Maintaining the vocal rhythm, gradually replace "sh f" with:

go on suddenly once the voice is replaced

spoken loudly, confidently, without affect:

It's an artifice  **A possession**  **A summary**  **Falsified, fossilised, the lingering whiff of---**

suddenly whisper:

---lay your iridescent sharps in order
Press them like petals in the leafs of a sedimentary tome

Whisper slowly and dismantle your clarinet: Bell, second joint, first joint. Place them on the floor in the sculpture. Keep the barrel & mouthpiece together in your hand.

whisper:
This fish is a fish corpse

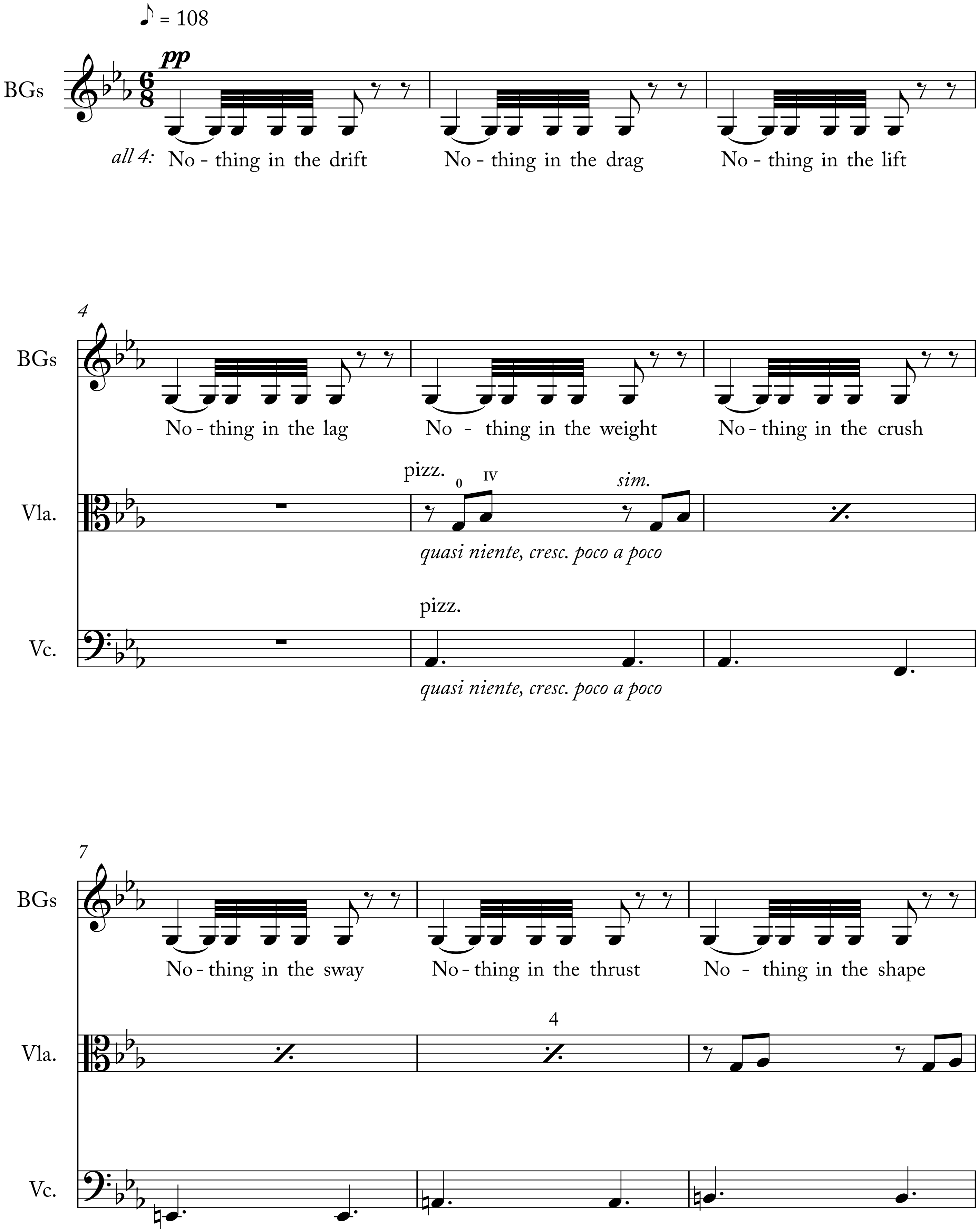
identically:
This fish is a fish corpse

as identically as possible:
Sfishy's a fishy corf

Slowly stretch out your left arm. Using the reed in the right hand, starting at the left hand, trace along your arm, diagonally across your torso and down your right leg. Adjust to keep your left hand in place as you bend down. Reach the floor with the barrel and leave it there.

The Thick Now

ELLIOT VAUGHAN


♪ = 108
pp
BGs
all 4: No - thing in the drift
No - thing in the drag
No - thing in the lift
4
No - thing in the lag
No - thing in the weight
No - thing in the crush
Vla.
pizz.
0
IV
sim.
quasi niente, cresc. poco a poco
Vc.
pizz.
quasi niente, cresc. poco a poco
7
No - thing in the sway
No - thing in the thrust
No - thing in the shape
4

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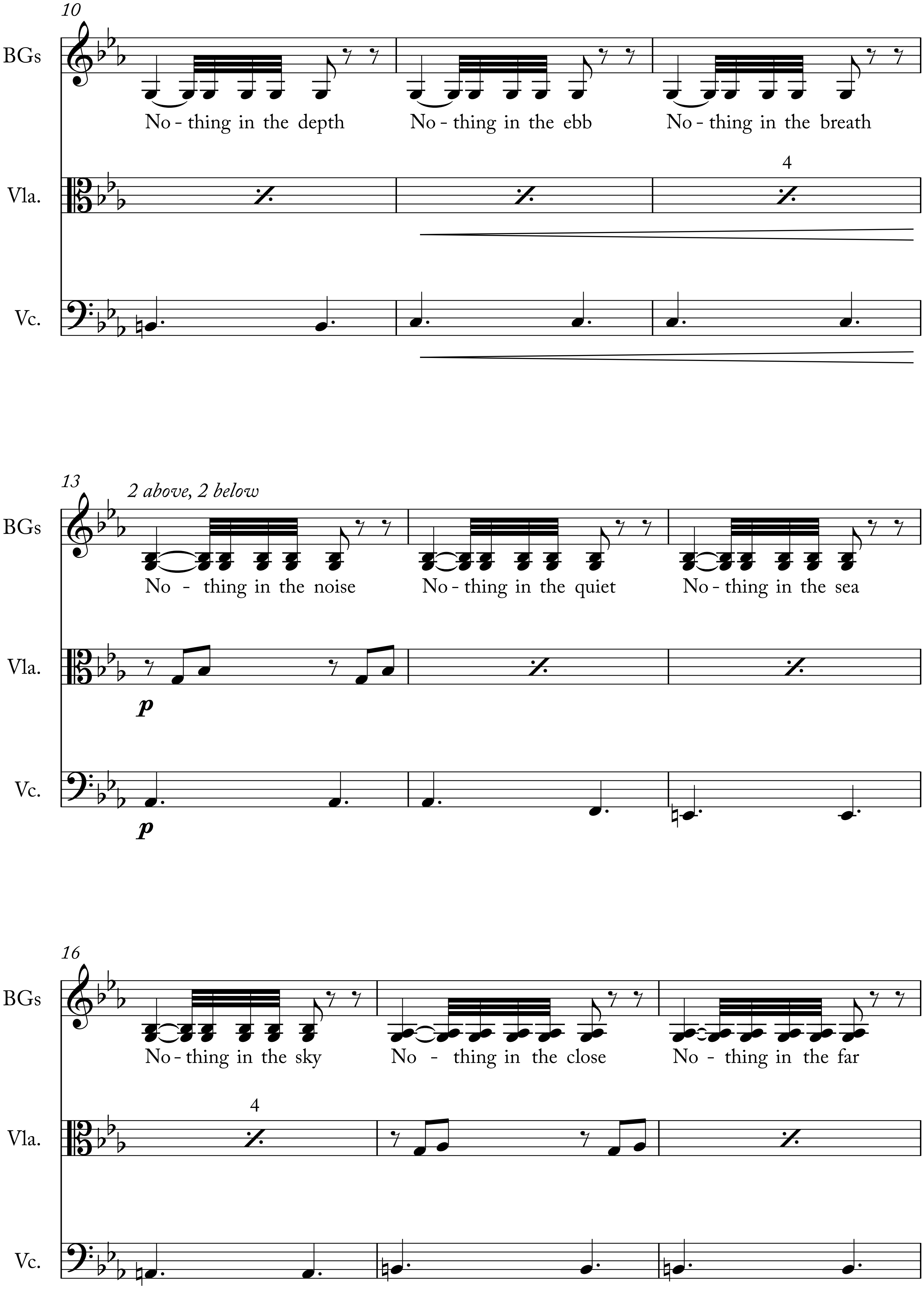
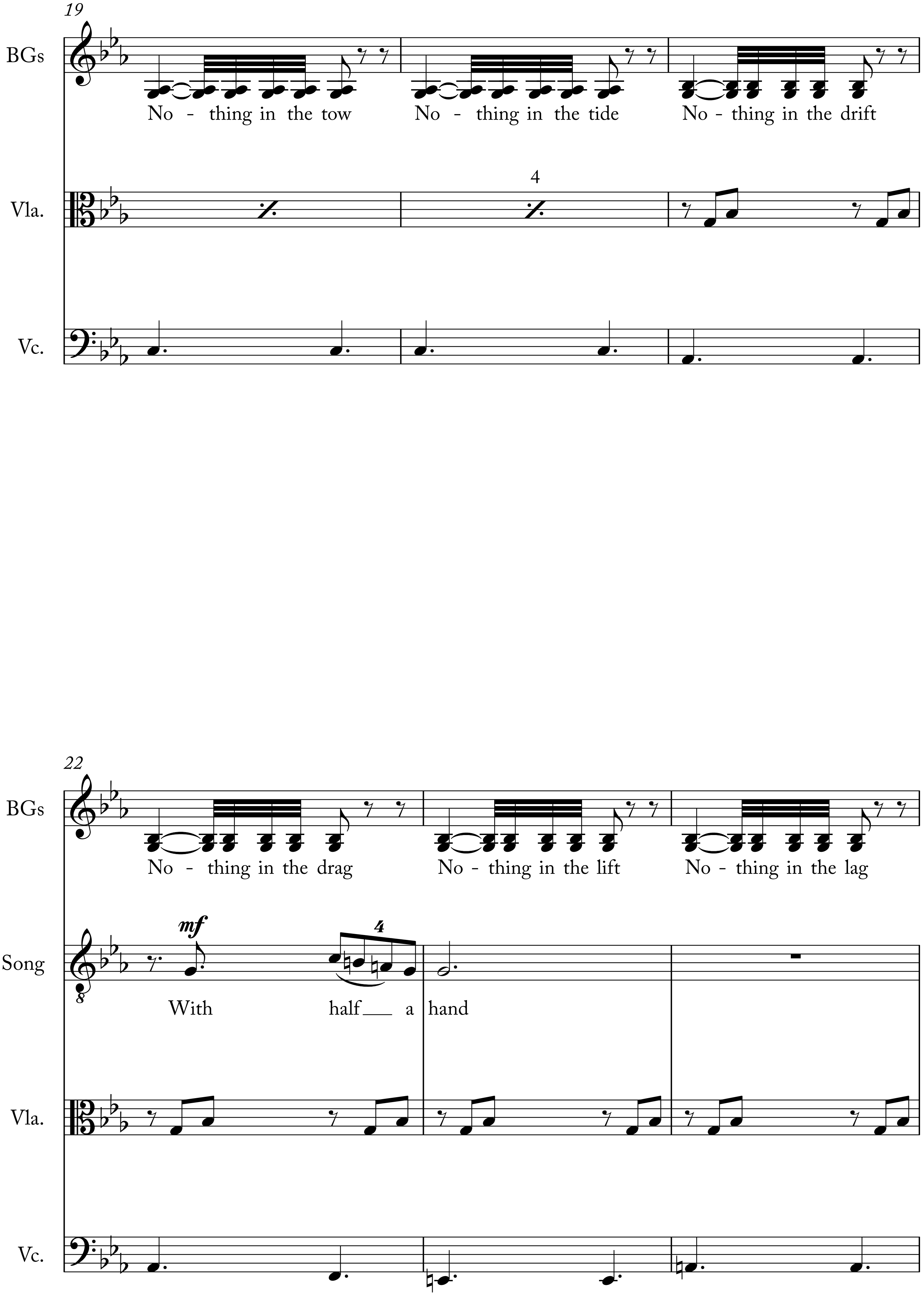
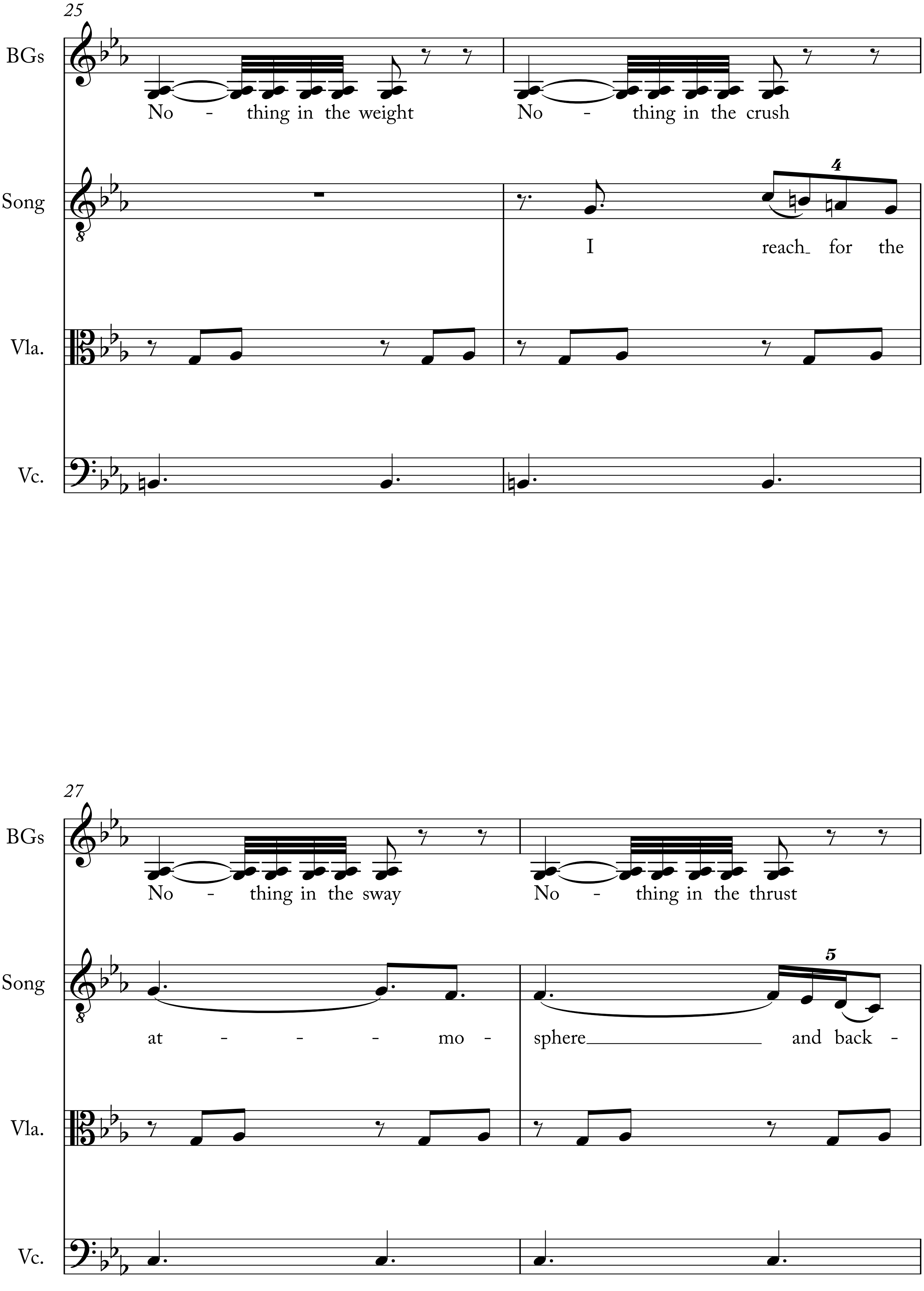
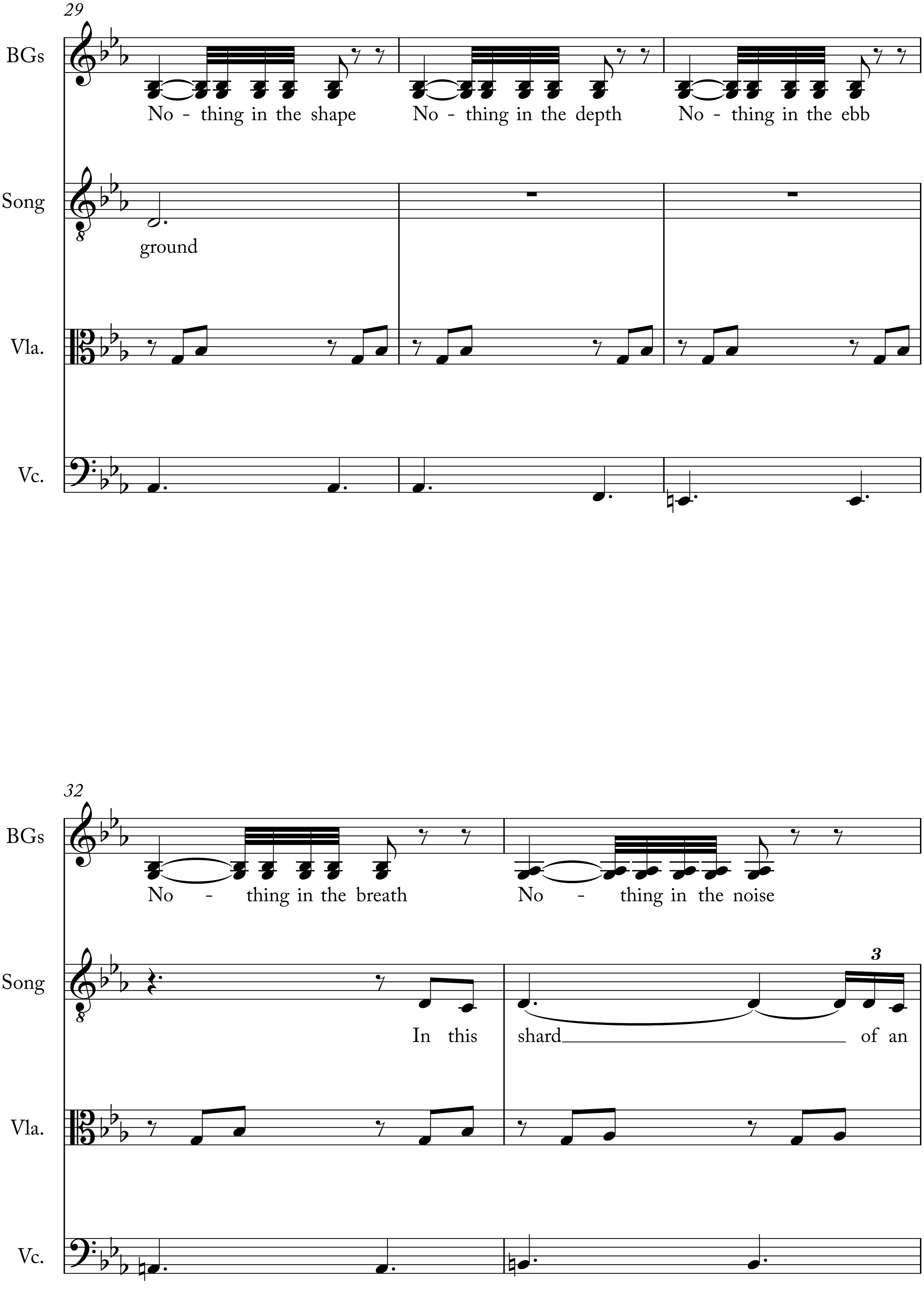
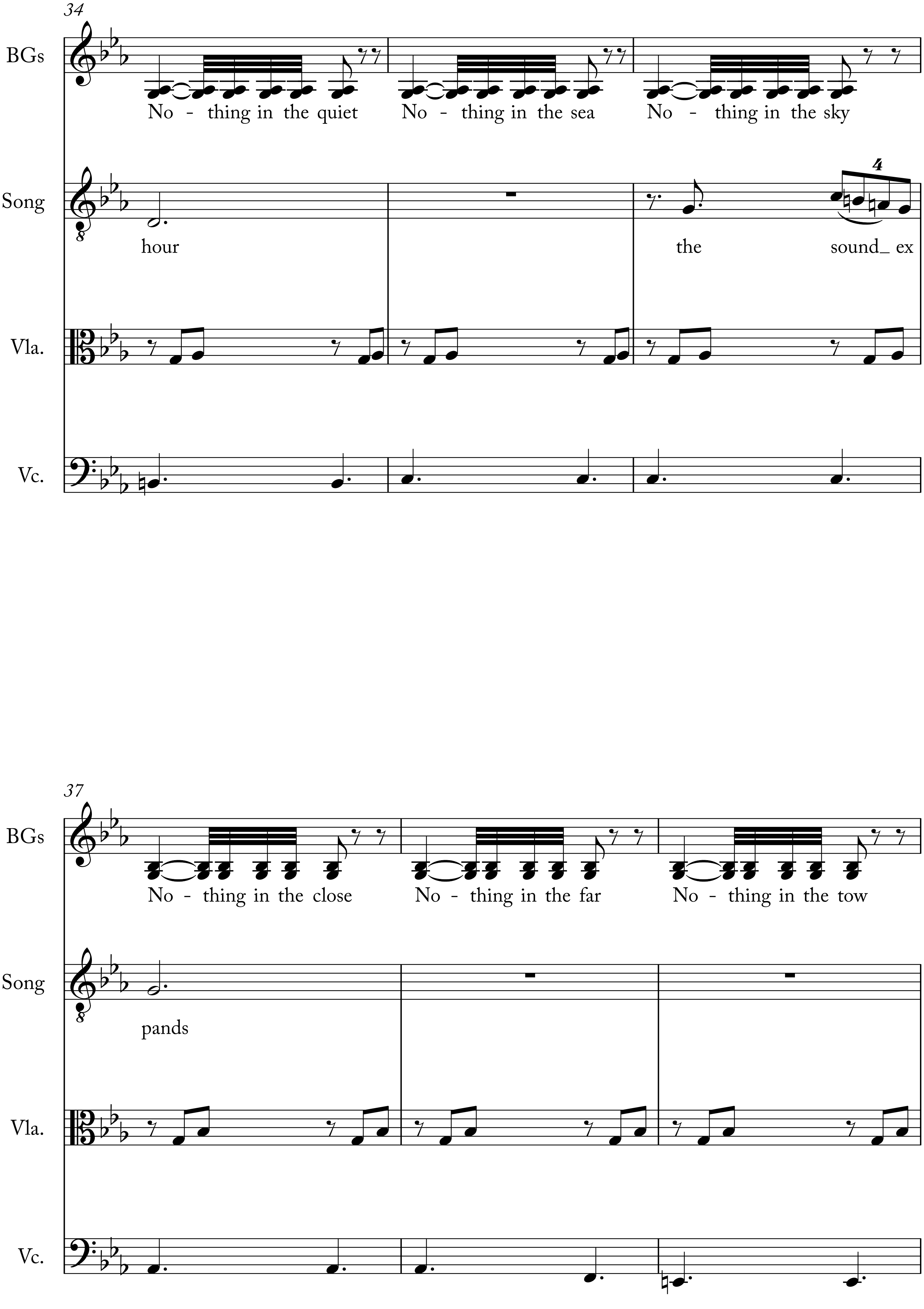
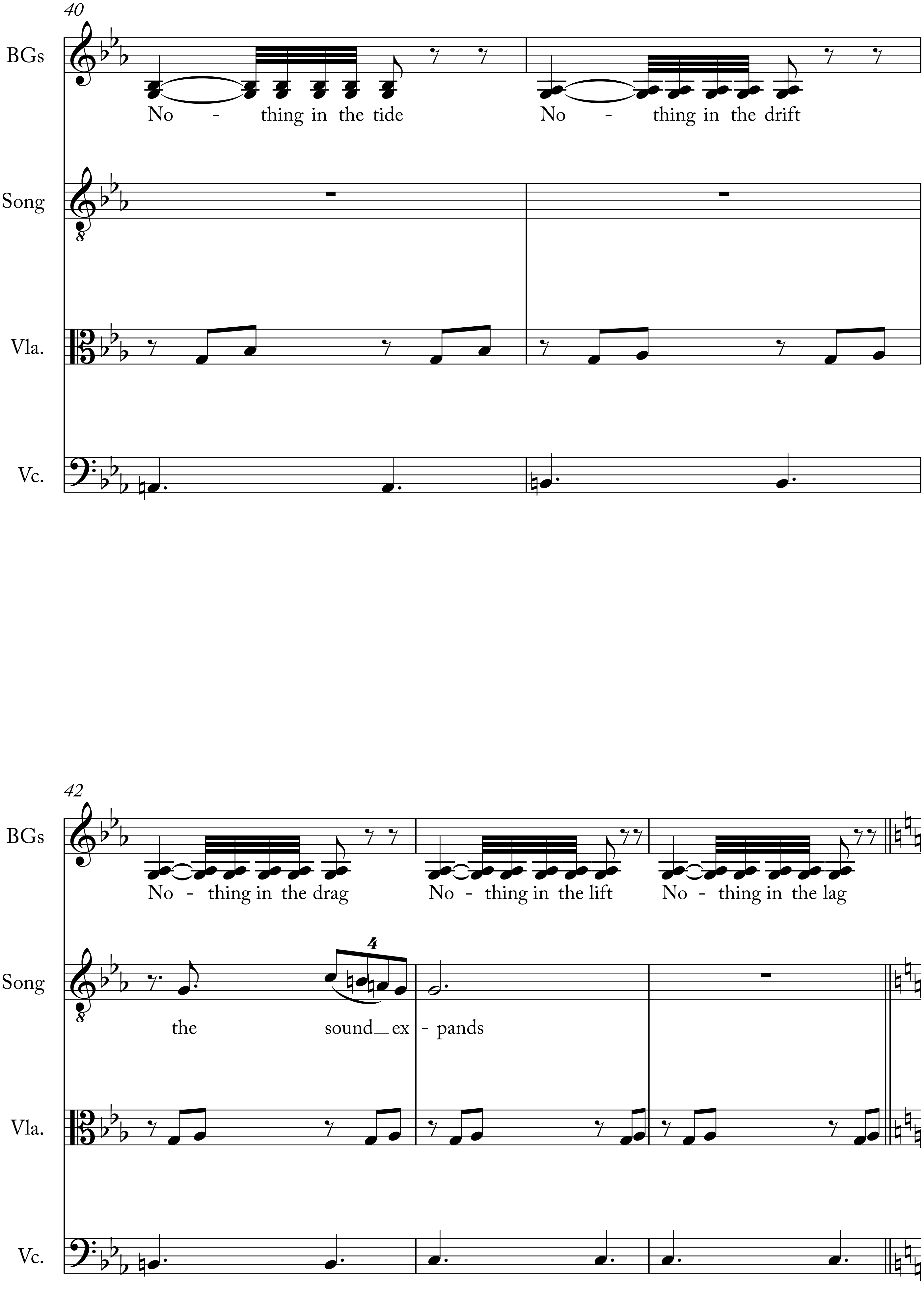

10
BGs
No - thing in the depth
No - thing in the ebb
No - thing in the breath
Vla.
4
Vc.
13
2 above, 2 below
BGs
No - thing in the noise
No - thing in the quiet
No - thing in the sea
Vla.
p
Vc.
p
16
BGs
No - thing in the sky
No - thing in the close
No - thing in the far
Vla.
4
Vc.


19
BGs
No - thing in the tow
No - thing in the tide
No - thing in the drift
Vla.
4
Vc.
22
BGs
No - thing in the drag
No - thing in the lift
No - thing in the lag
Song
mf
4
With half a hand
Vla.
Vc.


25
BGs
No - thing in the weight
No - thing in the crush
Song
4
I reach for the
Vla.
Vc.
27
BGs
No - thing in the sway
No - thing in the thrust
Song
5
at - - - mo - sphere and back -
Vla.
Vc.


29
BGs
No - thing in the shape
No - thing in the depth
No - thing in the ebb
Song
ground
Vla.
Vc.
32
BGs
No - thing in the breath
No - thing in the noise
Song
In this
shard
of an
3
Vla.
Vc.


34
BGs
No - thing in the quiet
No - thing in the sea
No - thing in the sky
Song
hour
4
the sound_ ex
Vla.
Vc.
37
BGs
No - thing in the close
No - thing in the far
No - thing in the tow
Song
pands
Vla.
Vc.

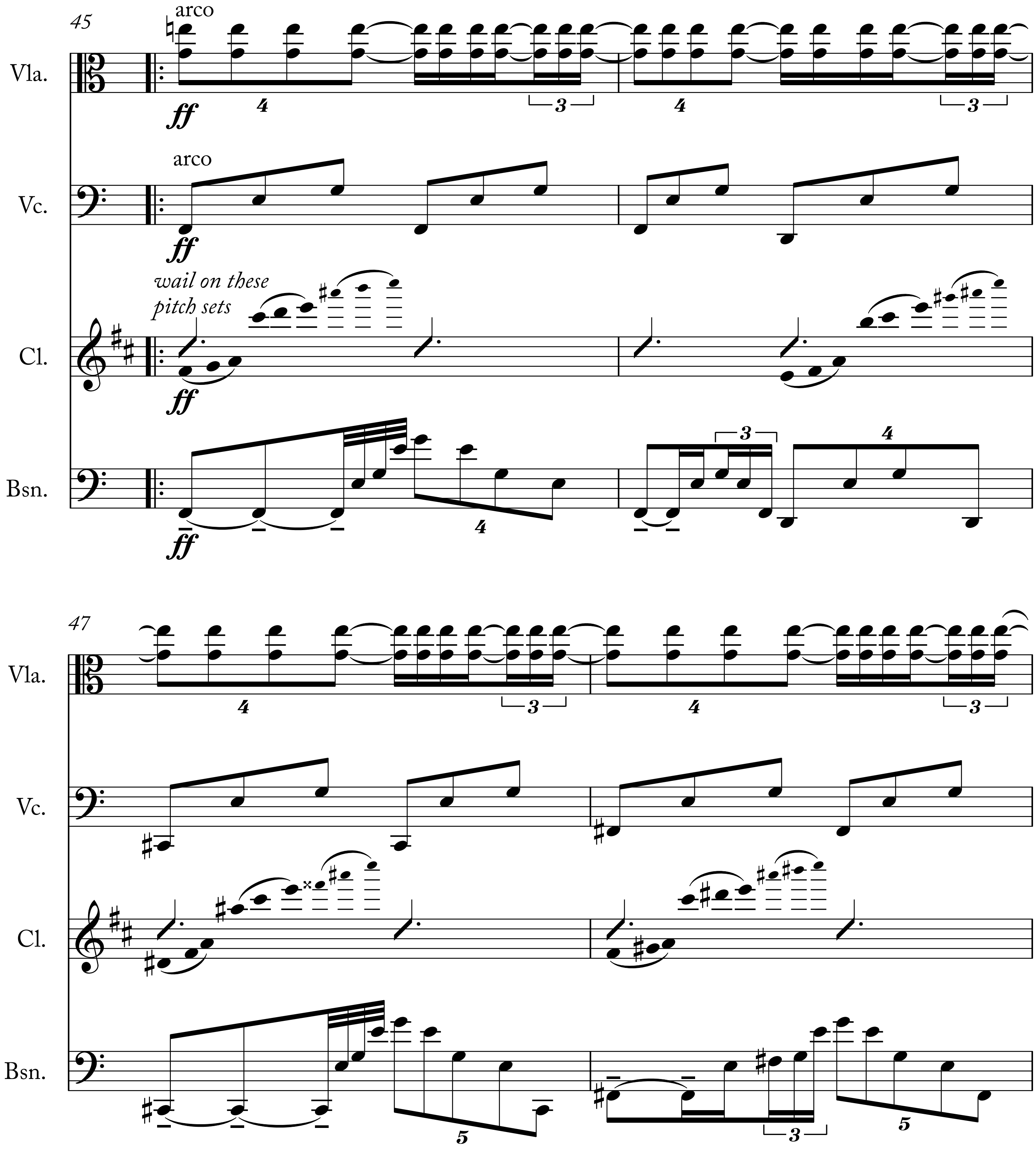

40
BGs
No - thing in the tide
No - thing in the drift
Song
Vla.
Vc.
42
BGs
No - thing in the drag
No - thing in the lift
No - thing in the lag
Song
4
the sound_ex - pands
Vla.
Vc.

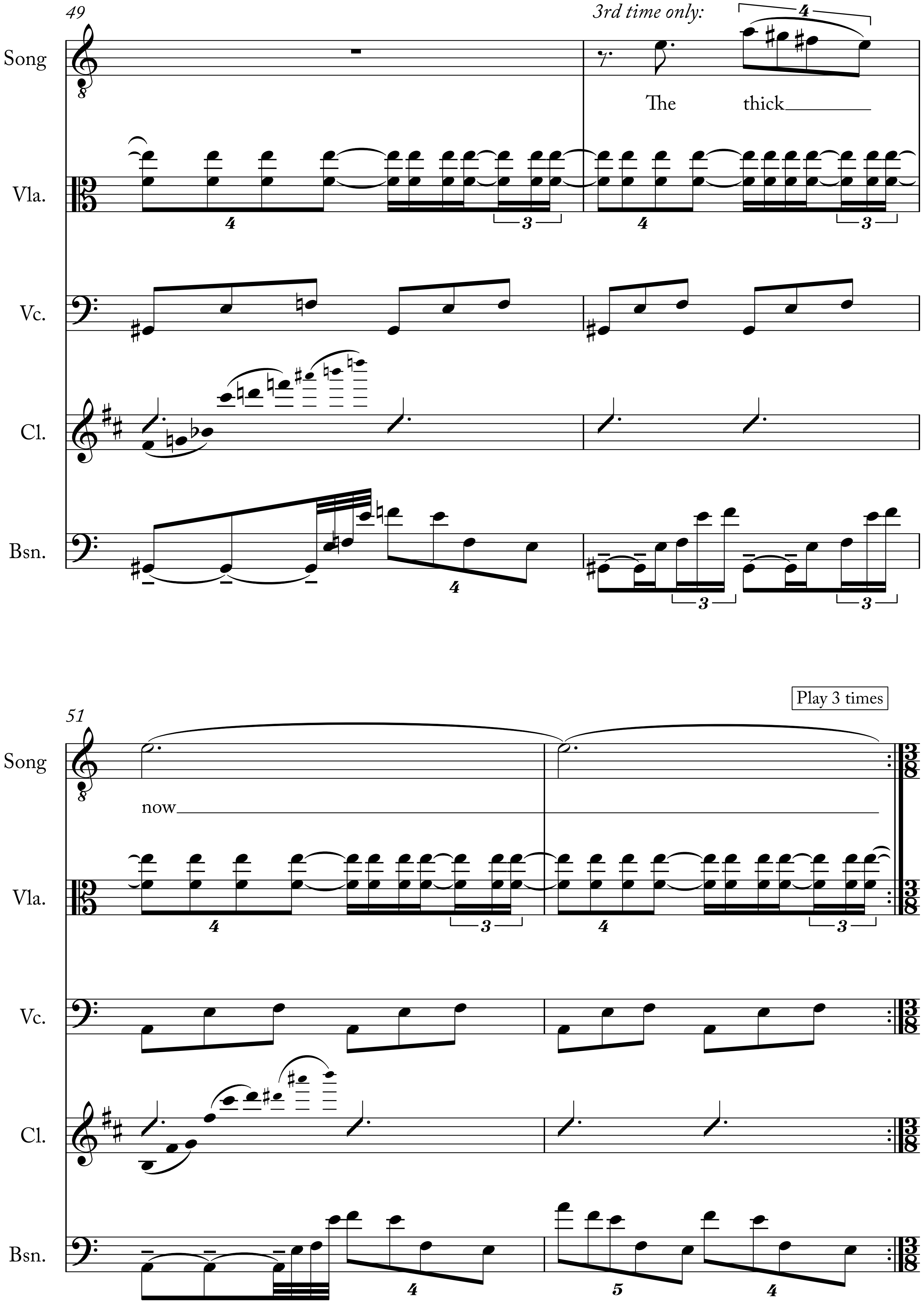
SPOKEN:

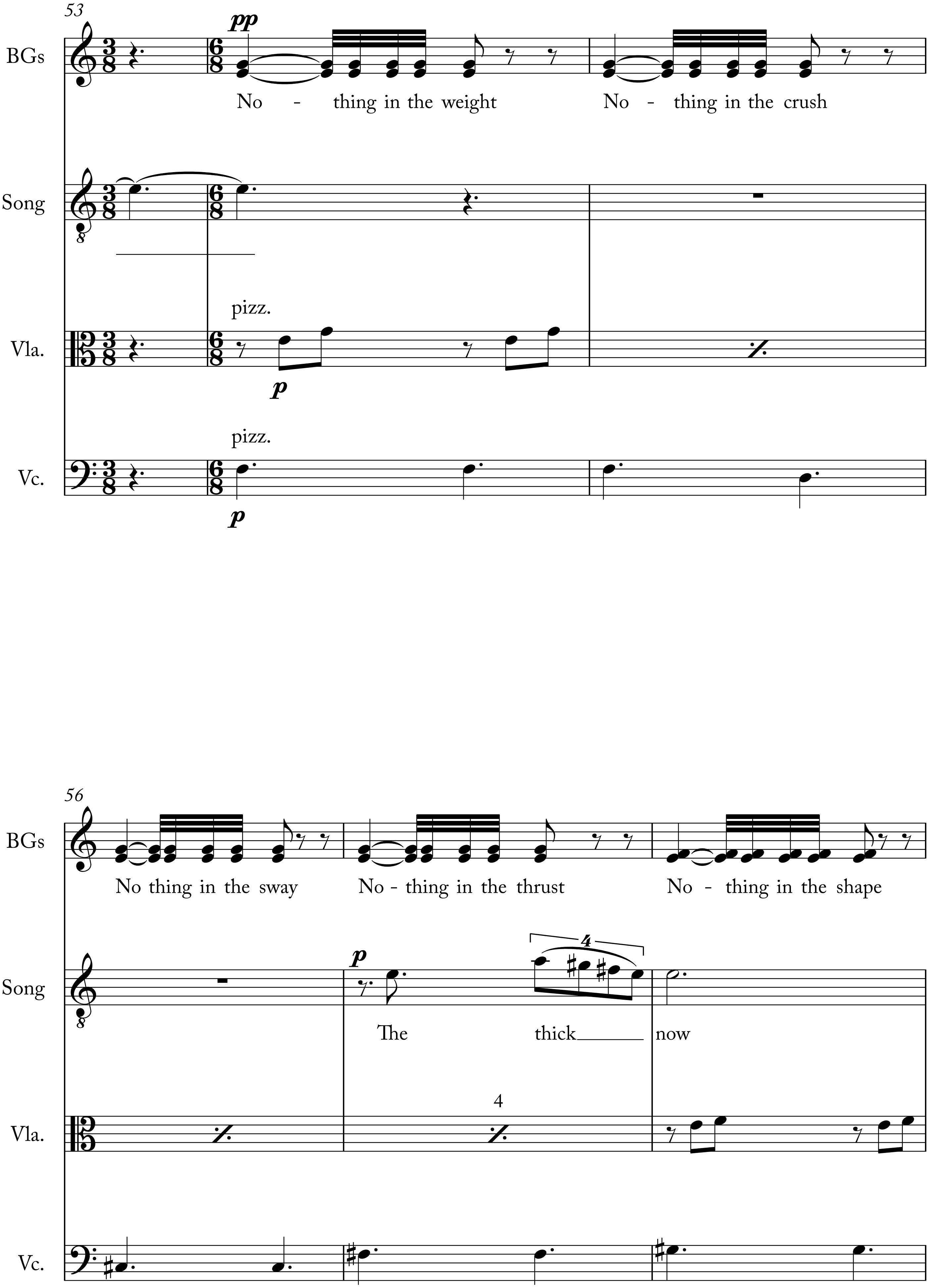
Not quite trace evidence
The smear of an echo left hung
    in the thirty-year weather
A million mile animal only breathing in
A homeopathy of a being thrown into
    a homeopathy of the ghosts
    of innumerable moon jellyfish

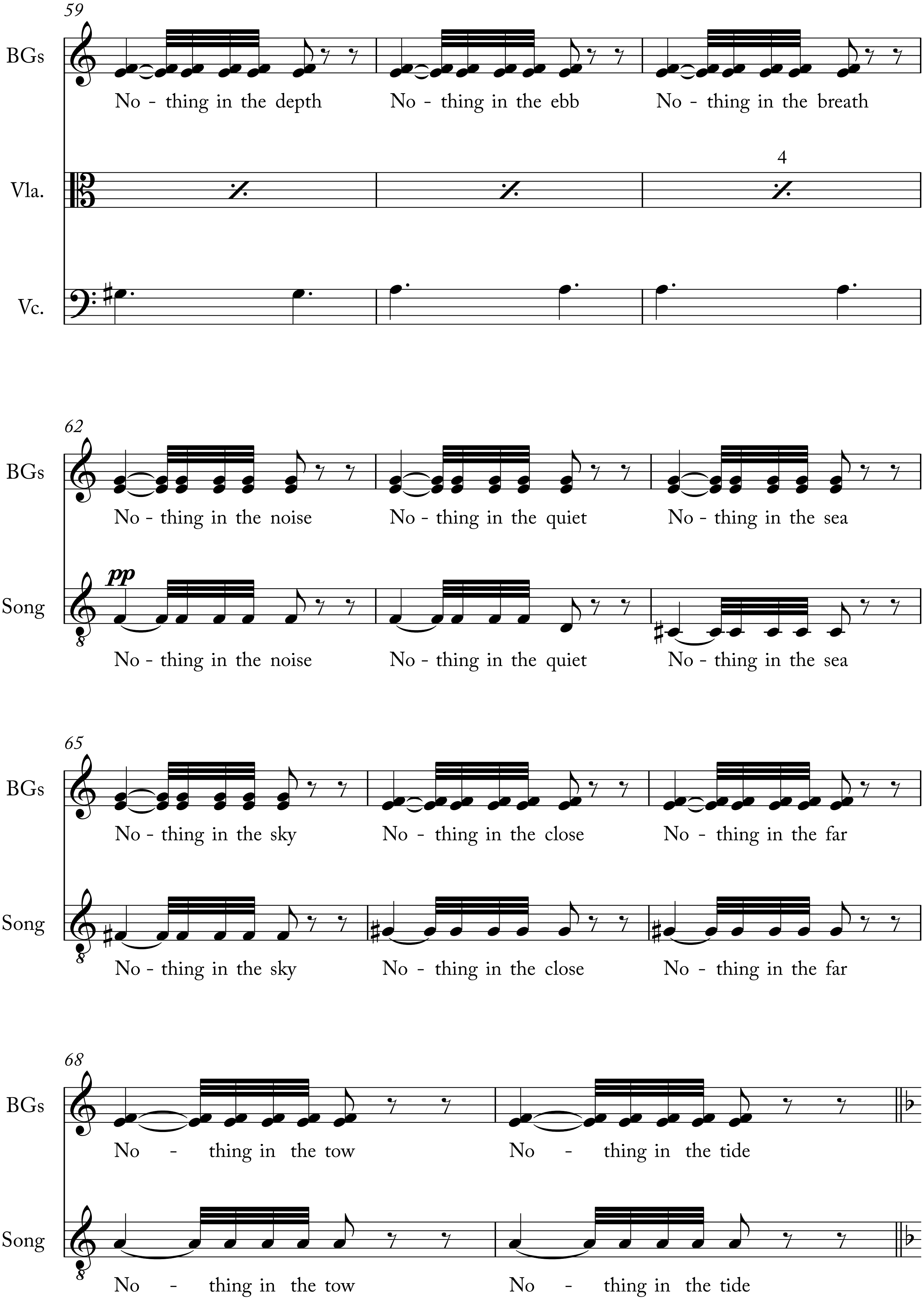
where are you most concentrated
what are your most persistent collisions

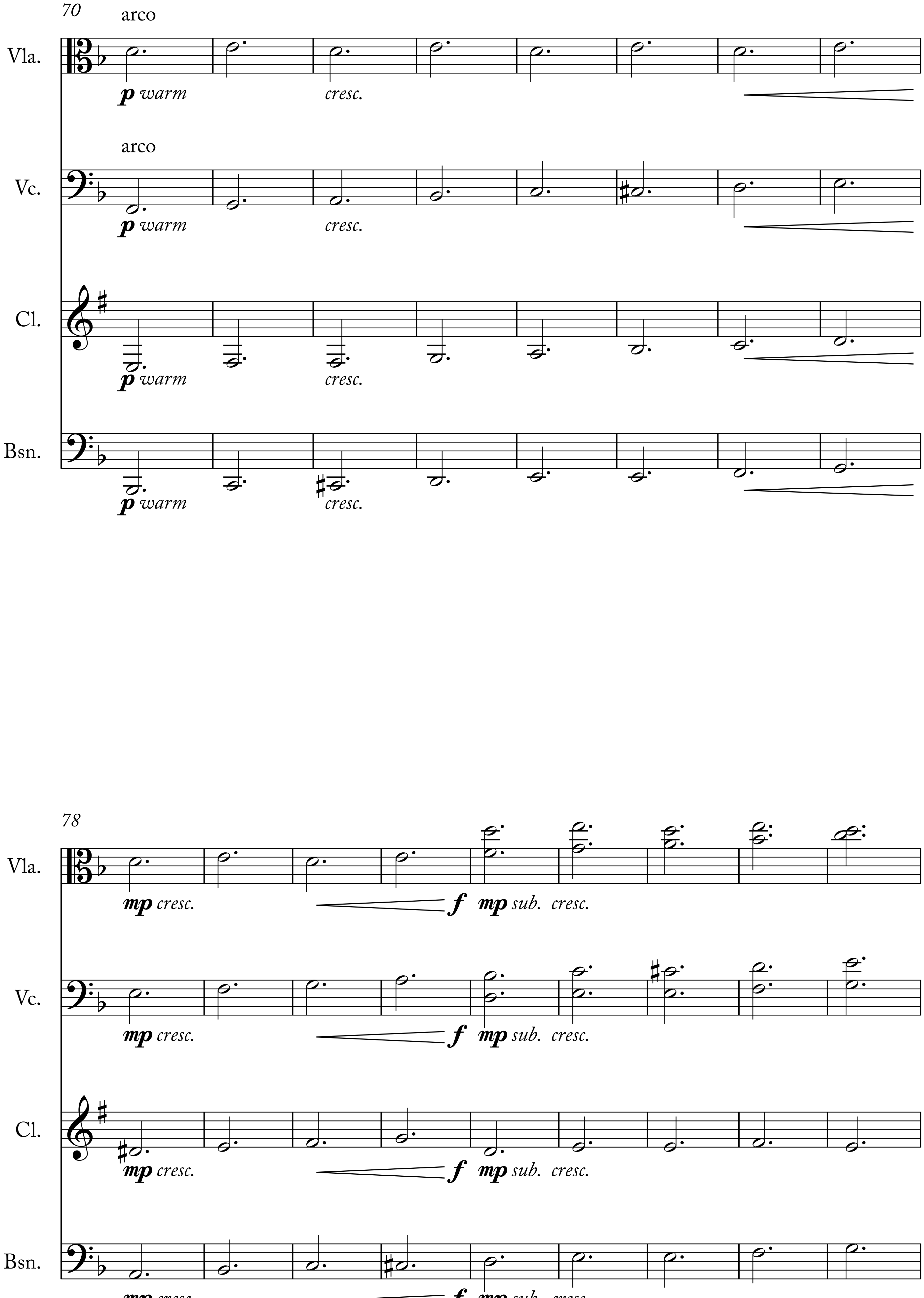
Shed the slivers.
Moult that skinny husk of moment and instance
Where are you in the thick now

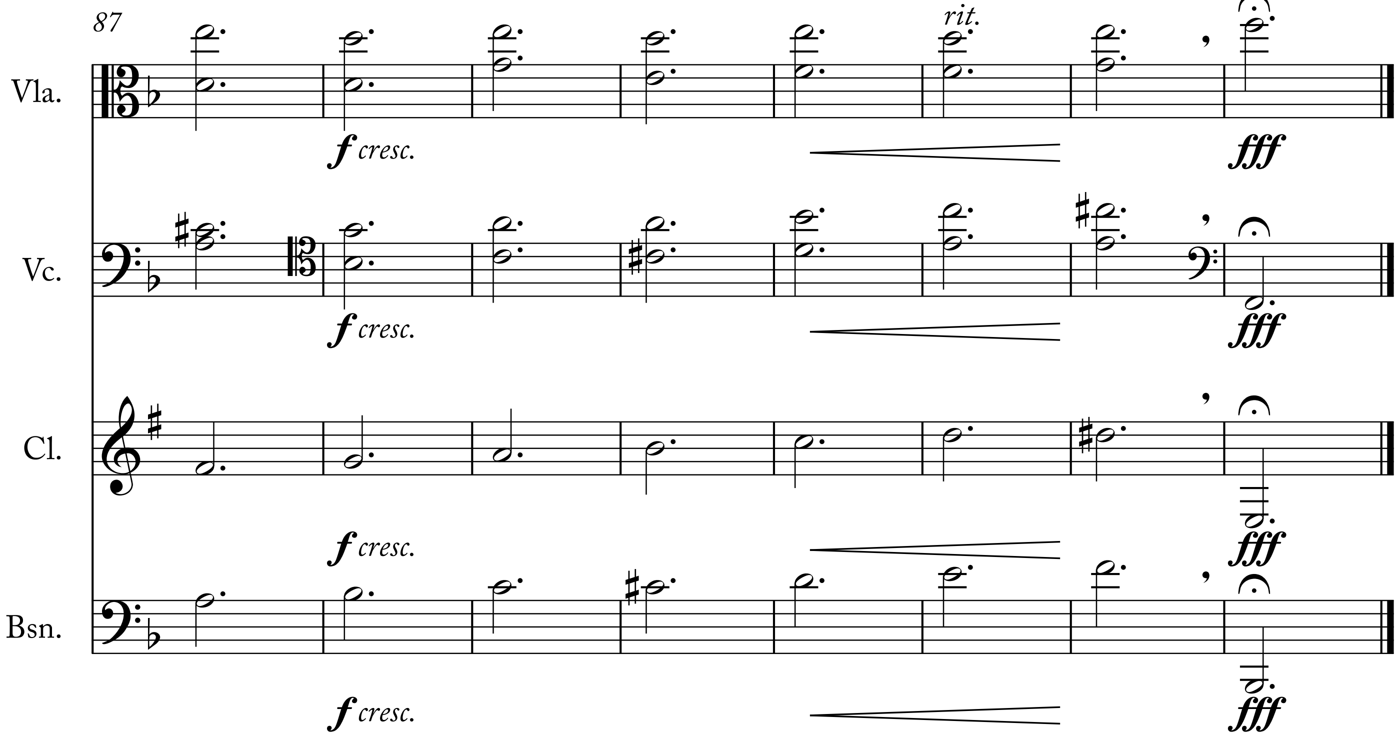

45
Vla.
arco
ff
4
3
Vc.
arco
ff
Cl.
wail on these pitch sets
ff
Bsn.
ff
4
3
4
47
5
3
5


49
3rd time only:
4
Song
The thick
Vla.
4
3
Vc.
Cl.
Bsn.
4
3
51
Play 3 times
Song
now
Vla.
4
3
Vc.
Cl.
Bsn.
4
5
3
8


53
BGs
Song
Vla.
Vc.
pp
No - thing in the weight
No - thing in the crush
pizz.
p
pizz.
p
56
No thing in the sway
No - thing in the thrust
No - thing in the shape
p
4
The thick now
4


59
BGs
No - thing in the depth
No - thing in the ebb
No - thing in the breath
Vla.
4
Vc.
62
BGs
No - thing in the noise
No - thing in the quiet
No - thing in the sea
pp
Song
No - thing in the noise
No - thing in the quiet
No - thing in the sea
65
BGs
No - thing in the sky
No - thing in the close
No - thing in the far
Song
No - thing in the sky
No - thing in the close
No - thing in the far
68
BGs
No - thing in the tow
No - thing in the tide
Song
No - thing in the tow
No - thing in the tide


70
arco
Vla.
p warm
cresc.
arco
Vc.
p warm
cresc.
Cl.
p warm
cresc.
Bsn.
p warm
cresc.
78
Vla.
mp cresc.
f
mp sub. cresc.
Vc.
mp cresc.
f
mp sub. cresc.
Cl.
mp cresc.
f
mp sub. cresc.
Bsn.
mp cresc.
f
mp sub. cresc.


87
rit.
Vla.
Vc.
Cl.
Bsn.
f cresc.
f cresc.
f cresc.
f cresc.
fff
fff
fff
fff