VOIR DANS LE SECRET

for bass clarinet, electric guitar, percussion, three totem électrique instruments and electronics



MICHAEL EDWARDS

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programme note

voir dans le secret is for three musicians playing Jean-Francois Laporte's Totem Électrique instruments along with three musicians from the Cairn Ensemble playing electric guitar, bass clarinet, and percussion. In addition, electronics consist of six-channel sound files derived from processed samples from the Totem Électrique instruments along with speech recordings made by each of the six musicians.

As this was written to be performed by musicians from France and Quebec, at the very outset I was attracted to using the speech rhythms and sounds of readings by the two groups of musicians from these very different French-speaking countries/regions. I chose a text from Derrida's *Donner La Mort* which begins with the question "Voir dans le secret. Qu'est-ce que cela peut vouloir dire?"

Though a philosophical work, *Donner la Mort* is also poetic in both its content and means of expression. It speaks to perception via various senses and in particular of the penetration of open secrets by paying attention not to what is before one's eyes but rather to what one can hear. In our media-saturated world, where image dominates, it is refreshing to turn to eternal mysteries that may be penetrated only by careful listening.

The text is superimposed in various ways onto the playing techniques of each of the six musicians. Some may 'speak' the text into the instrument, draw a drum stick across a drum head in the rhythm of the text, or move the *whammy bar* of the guitar in the rhythm of the text. Along with the recordings of each musician's reading of the text—cut and spliced into the electronic texture—the 'secret' of Derrida's work is present at many different levels of the performance: in the foreground and in the background, at times clearly perceivable, at other times hidden.

instrumentation

Commissioned for members of the <u>Cairn Ensemble</u> and <u>Totem Électrique</u>, voir dans le secret has the following instrumentation:

Cairn

- Bass Clarinet (in B flat, with low C)
- Electric Guitar (with whammy bar and FX, in particular distortion, and needing a bottleneck)
- Percussion:
 - vibraphone (F3-F6, where middle C is C4)
 - crotales (one octave: written C4-C5, sounding two octaves higher than notated)
 - cow bells (G3-C5)
 - two suspended cymbals (optionally cymbal one with 'sizzles')
 - tam-tam (size not as important as the spectral characteristics: high/light/noisy)
 - bass drum

The score is **not** in C: bass clarinet sounds a major 9th below written

Totem

- Siren organ with six horns (numbers 4 and 6 without pedal), two "aigue" without pedals, and two plastic tubes for glissandi etc.
- Two babel tables each with two bols plus mouthpieces, 8 insects, 4 membranes, and one pipe with 'cable tie'.

Pitches

- bols: two lowest lines (E4, G4 in treble clef), left, right
- insects: ascending from the middle line (B4 in treble clef), also including spaces
- membranes: four spaces (F, A, C, E in treble clef)
- siren horns: 6 spaces (D, F, A, C, E, G in treble clef)
- siren aiguë: line and space above staff (A, B above treble clef)
- pipe: notated as D immediately below treble clef
- NB each appearance of these instruments at their respective pitches is also accompanied, for clarity, by their number e.g. (#1) to indicate insect or membrane number 1, or e.g. (#2+3) to indicate siren horns 2 and 3 together.

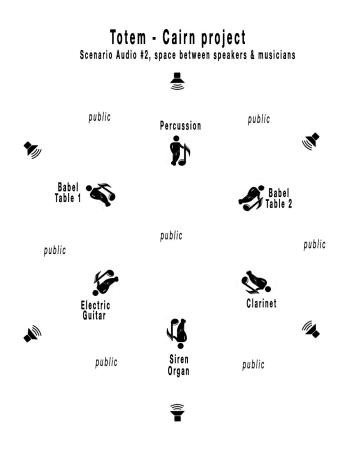
text

Text from Derrida's Donner La Mort occurs throughout the electronic score (but not in the PDF/ paper score). The snippets of text are to be interpreted or performed in a variety of ways, depending on the instrument/context. In any case, the rhythm of the French text is superimposed onto the notated structures, for instance by 'writing' the text on the bars of the vibraphone, a cymbal, or the membrane of a bol; or 'reading/speaking' the text through the bass clarinet. Reading and writing are indicated according to whether the act with the given instrument seems to be more one or the other, but the intention and effect is approximately the same in both cases.

score

- In addition to the digital image files for presentation in MaxMSP, the full score is available along with two other parts: the three Cairn Ensemble parts and the three Totem Électrique parts
 - these maybe useful for those players who prefer to play/practise from a paper printout

ensemble/loudspeaker positioning



software

- MaxMSP version 8 or above is required
- The main patch is _voir-main.maxpat
- It is envisaged that the musicians will read their parts from iPads using the MIRA App (cycling74.com)
- The MaxMSP performance patches will automatically sequence the piece, playing and routing the sound files and click track, and turning the pages of the parts for the musicians so that even if they can't see or hear each other, they cannot lose their place
- The performance software presents two systems of music: the current and the next, so that the musicians are aware of what is coming
 - this demands certain aspect ratios and space on the iPAD screen
 - this has been optimised with the musicians taking all things into consideration.
- NB The playback tempi are exact to within one decimal place; in the score these are rounded to the nearest integer

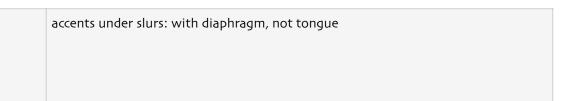
electronics

- Sample rate is 48khz
- 6-channel electronics from MaxMSP plus one or more subwoofers as needed

- a stereo downmix of the 6-channel sound files is also available for practise/familiarisation purposes
 - this is in the main folder and named voir-sndfiles-stereo.wav
- 6 speakers placed around the audience at clock positions 12 (channel 1), 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 (see below)
- Suitable microphones/amplification for all the instruments are required
 - these should be routed exclusively to the speaker behind the musician
- an optional click track is sent via MaxMSP via channel 7
 - this is of course available for practice purposes either via the MaxMSP patch or directly by playing the sound file voir-click.wav which can be found in the max folder

Bass Clarinet

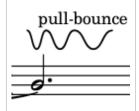
***************************************	growl/sing a pitch which combines to make a rough sound
***************************************	growl/sing pitch with glissando in direction of line
# <u>*</u>	quick growl gliss. down then up (or up then down when V is inverted)
***	slap tongue
##	slap tongue followed by tone
#~	very airy but some pitch
	breath tone, no audible pitch



Electric Guitar

11:431211	irregular fretboard glissando to new fingering/chord
10	heavy distortion
	tremolo with bottleneck in right hand, or without tremolo beams, moving left and right ad lib., reading. An accent with the bottleneck means a percussive downward attack onto the strings.
whammy reading	a wild vibrato with the whammy bar in the spoken rhythm of the text
₩	arpeggiate chord downwards, or with up arrow, upwards
<u>•</u>	fingernail tremolo, or single pluck if no tremolo marks
slide	push the bottleneck along the strings towards the fretboard (with arrow direction as indicated here) or towards the bridge (arrow opposite direction). Unless indicated otherwise, the sound should be left to resonate (l.v.) rather than being damped.
plect.slide plect.slide	plectrum slide: push the plectrum along the strings to create a distorted glissando (distortion is integral to this sound). With a right-pointing arrow, move from the bridge towards the nut, creating a glissando rising in pitch; with a left-pointing arrow, move from the nut to bridge, creating a glissando descending in pitch. The pitches indicate merely the open strings along which the plectrum should slide.

Percussion



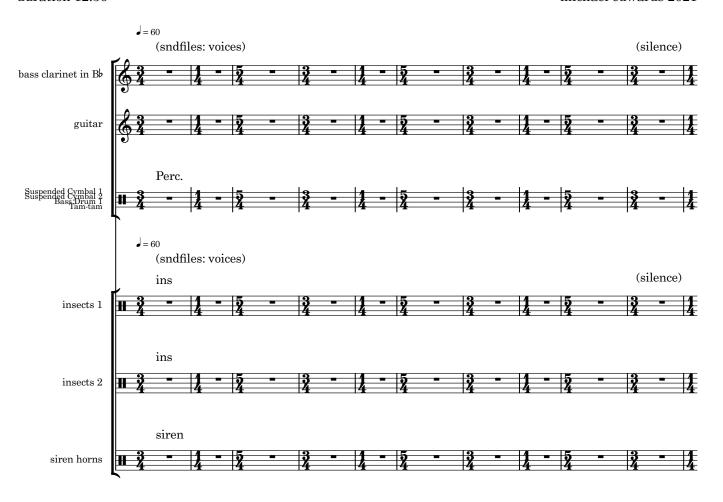
Particularly in combination with superball sticks, pull-bounce means to pull the stick across the drumhead with a speed and pressure that causes the head bounce a little and create a stuttering effect.

Totem

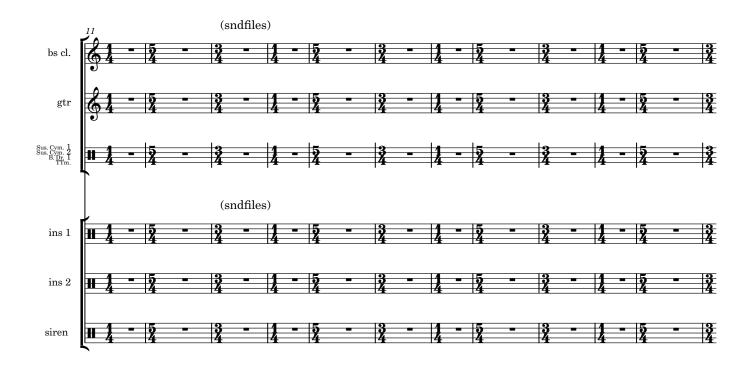
† †	finger presses on membranes or gradual pushing in of pulling out of tubes, depending on the context/indications. In each case a form of glissando is to be expected but the extent and range of this effect is left to the discretion of the players.
	membranes: short finger press in then out (extent and duration ad lib. but generally significant but short).
	membranes: `finger vibrato' (fast)

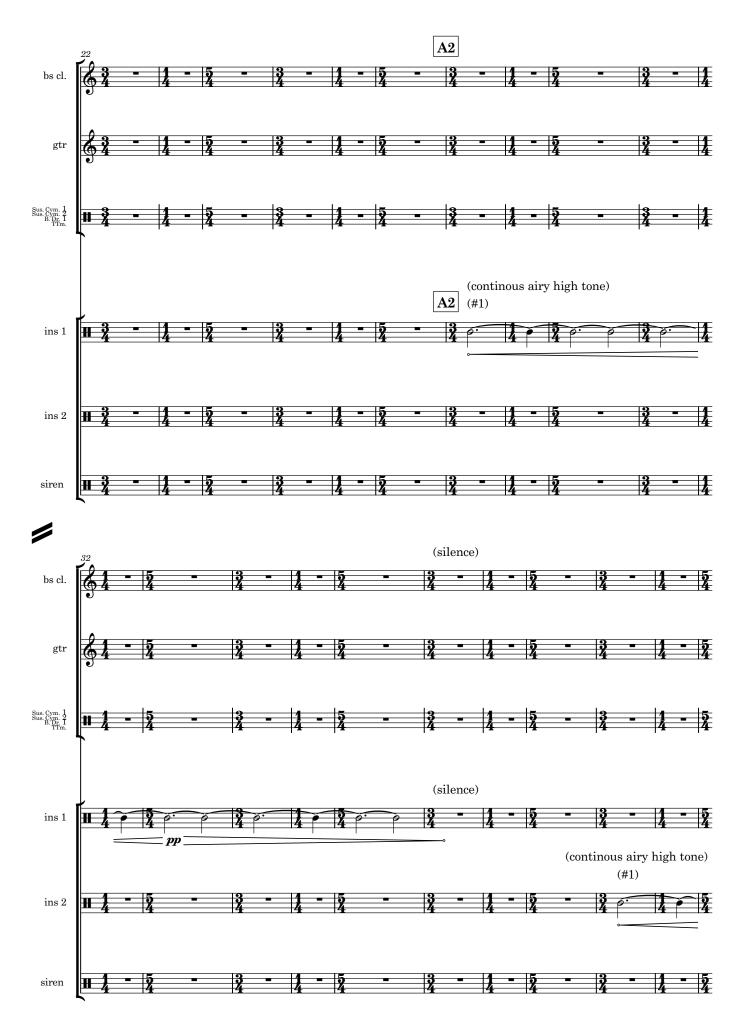
voir dans le secret

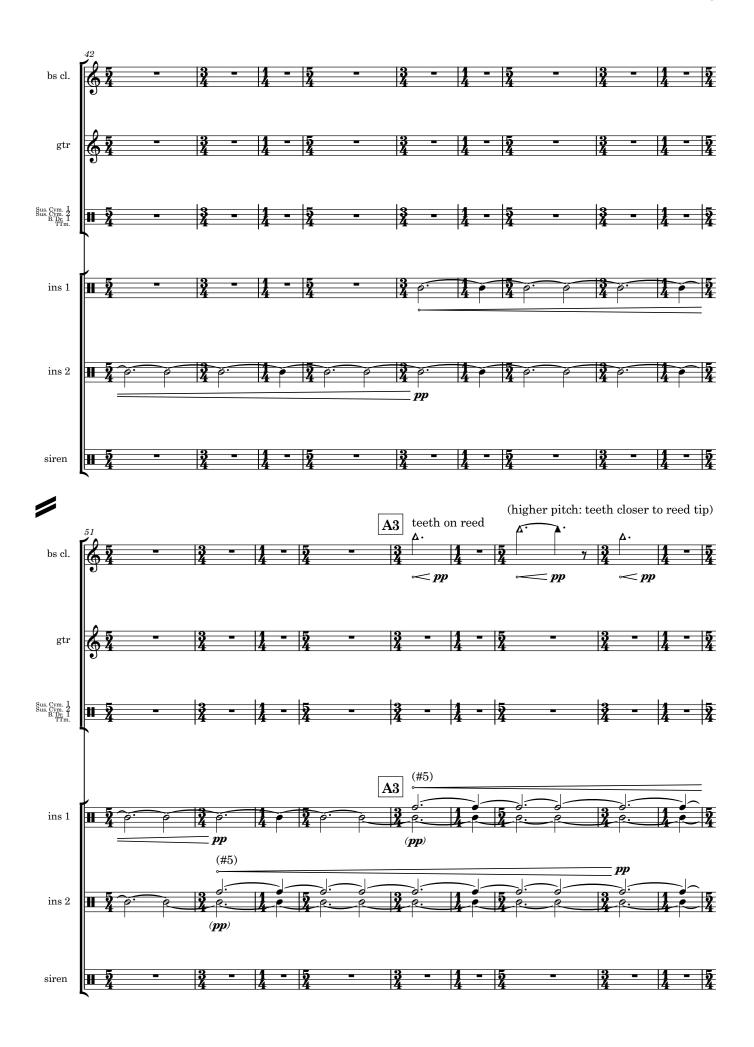
duration 12:36 michael edwards 2021

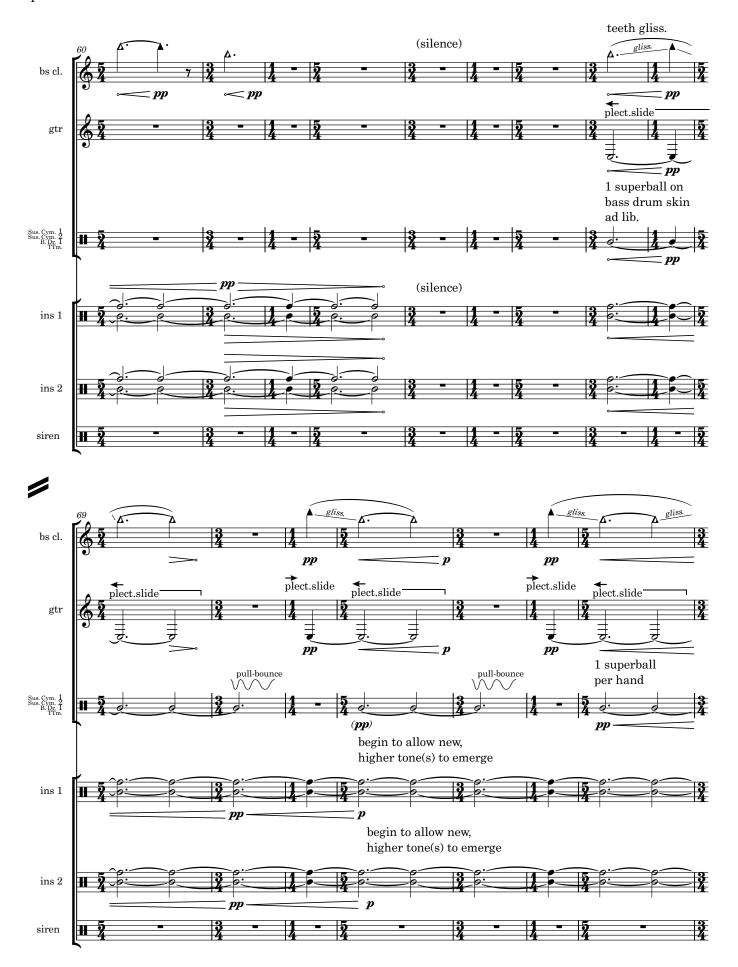


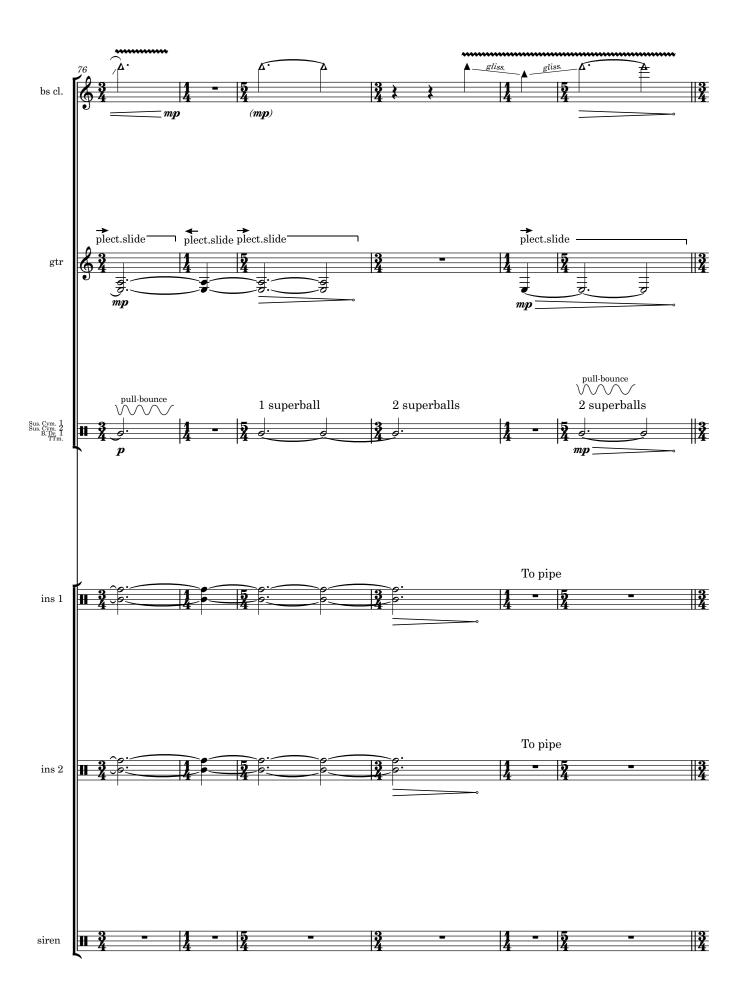


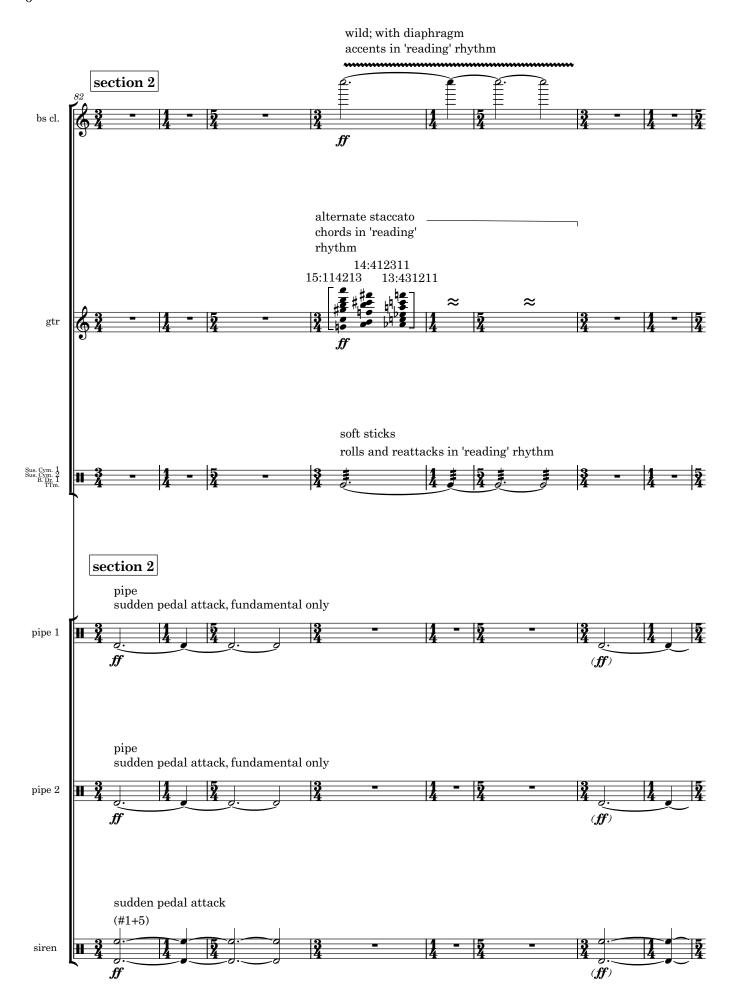


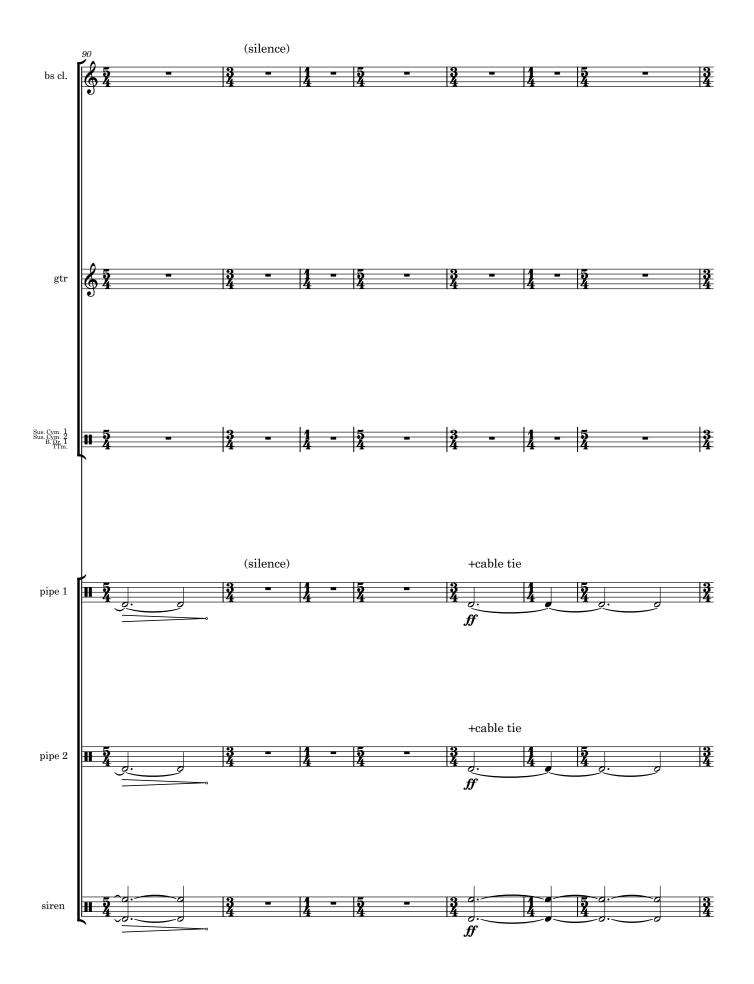






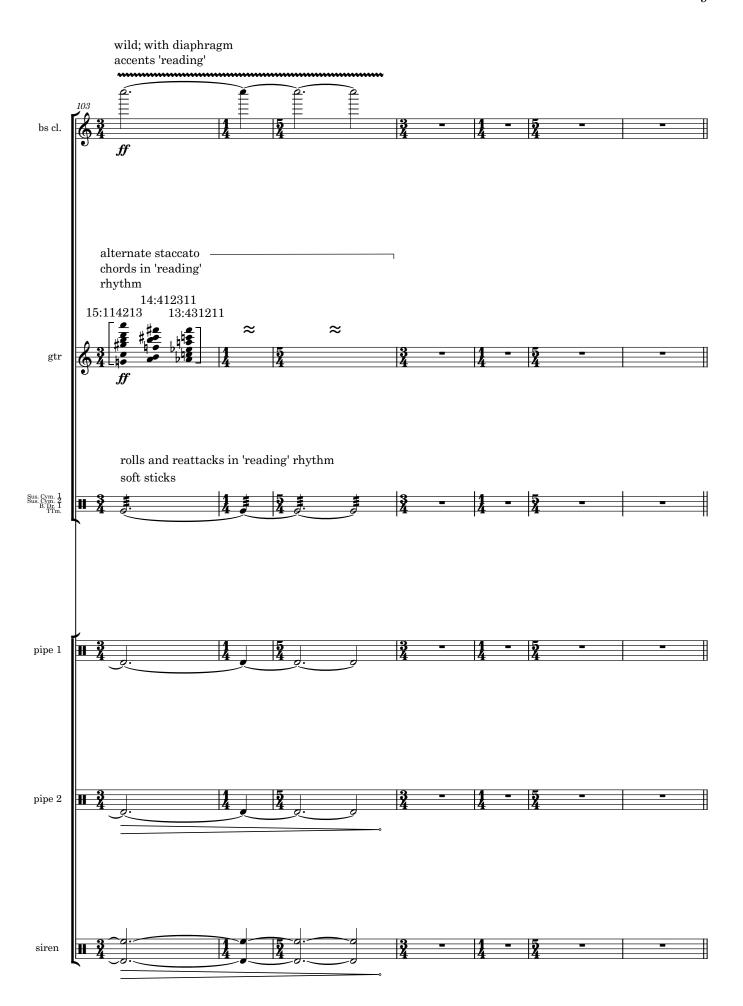


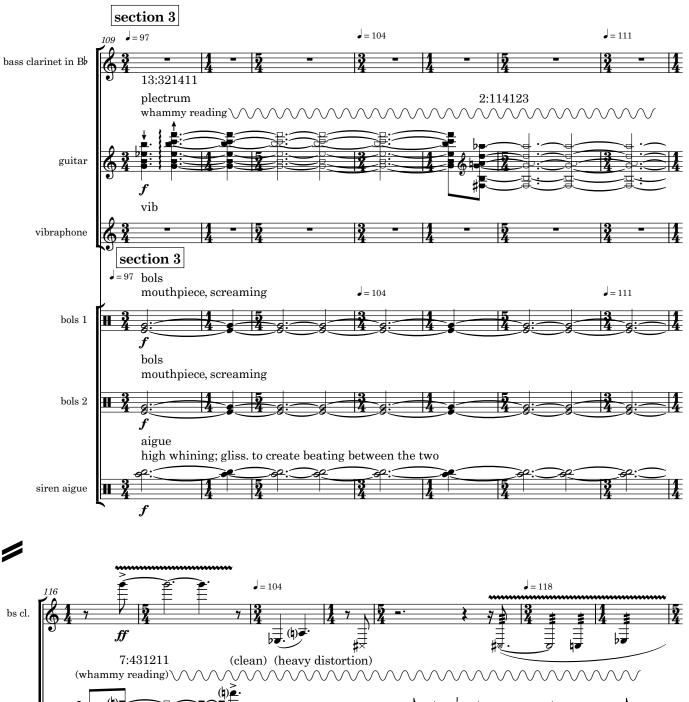


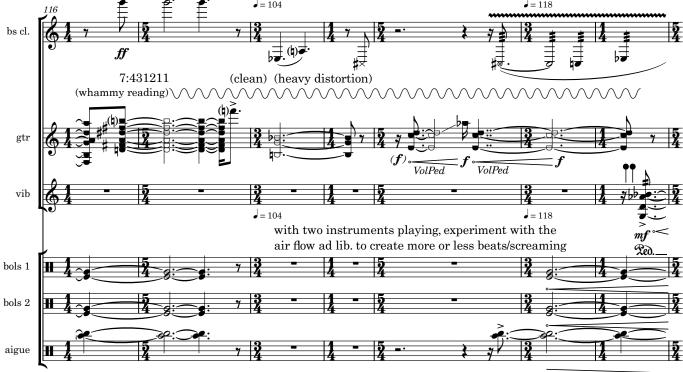


random high notes as fast as possible with ascending gliss on sung note and diaphragm accents in 'reading' rhythm











_*mf*

 $bols\ 2$

aigue

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