IN COMPETENCE

for saxophones, piano/keyboard, percussion, electronics



MICHAEL EDWARDS

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michael edwards in competence for baritone/alto/sopranino saxophones (one player), piano/keyboard, percussion, electronics

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programme note

The word *competence* appeared in the English language in the 15th century. As far as we know, its antonym *incompetence* first appeared in 1595 and had the meaning of being not legally qualified. Late in the same year, the first performance of William Shakespeare's *Richard II* was given in London. Some of its scenes play at Flint Castle, a few kilometres from where I grew up:

ACT II SCENE III, A camp in Wales, Captain: 'Tis thought the king is dead; we will not stay. The bay-trees in our country are all wither'd And meteors fright the fixed stars of heaven; The pale-faced moon looks bloody on the earth And lean-look'd prophets whisper fearful change; Rich men look sad and ruffians dance and leap, The one in fear to lose what they enjoy, The other to enjoy by rage and war: These signs forerun the death or fall of kings. Farewell: our countrymen are gone and fled, As well assured Richard their king is dead.

It can be argued that, amongst other things, *Richard II* thematises competence in its opposition of a King's *Divine Right* with his mundane human weaknesses, as well as his strengths. Some commentators have made a connection between the play and Queen Elizabeth the I's reign in England—she was old when the play was written and sentiment amongst some was that she was perhaps incompetent and needed to be replaced. These are timeless issues and thus also clearly of our time (think of Boris Johnson, Prince Andrew, Elizabeth II in the UK, but also the still recent antics of Trump in the US, Modi in India, or Bolsonaro in Brazil).

Competence is, of course, of vital importance in many fields. The question of a musician's competence is fundamental, as technical competence on a musical instrument is the very least we expect from professionals, even students. But musical and artistic competence begins where instrumental competence is mastered and assumed. The public's expectations and estimations of competence are often a diversion, mired in myths surrounding virtuosity, artistic vision, even measures of sanity. In the arts, there is cultural capital in both insanity and technical wizardry. Artistic merit is often overshadowed by an audience's, or perhaps more apt here, a consumer's preference for short-lived, faddish qualities, often utterly unrelated to art. On the other hand, a concept of *competence* is not something that is usually thematised explicitly in musical compositions, yet in this piece it plays a central role, not least in the title, with its deliberately confusing conflation of *in competence* and its homonym *incompetence*.

What would or could it mean to examine *competence* musically? Do we question the musicians' competence? Question the composer's competence? Question technical, in particular music-technological competence? Question the listeners' competence even? (Think of that that lovely

story of Beethoven's anger when his secretary Ries criticised the horn player's entrance ("too early") at the recapitulation of the Eroica's first movement during its premiere.)

More concretely, can we present musical structures multiple times, with different 'competence levels' required of both the musicians and listeners? If so, to what effect? And what is the role of *noodling*? Is that itself an example of incompetence, i.e. an inability to come to the point? How can we explore and perceive seemingly impossible hocketing in the context of deliberately overstretched manual dexterity? Or the playing of chords tightly together, and perhaps failing? Or juxtaposing impossible sequences of, e.g. fast saxophone slap-tongues against the comparable ease of playing the same from a sampling keyboard? Or music-technological failures against the supposed perfection of sound-file playback, and the perception, in some quarters, of the latter's musical-expressive poverty?

All of these questions and more are interrogated in this through-composed work lasting approximately one hour, where the durations and structure—alternating instrumental (+/- electronics) with solo electronics interludes—are derived and scaled from an old recording of the Captain's speech given above, with all of its competently-delivered tonal shadings and expressive pauses at the ends of, or in the midst of, its eleven lines.

N.B. All sounds recorded/processed/synthesised/mixed by the composer except for some commercial synths and one highly processed sound made by freesound.org user *stormpetrel* of an iceberg recorded in Antarctica in 2009. Thanks for making this freely available.

programmtext

Das Wort *competence* tauchte in der englischen Sprache im 15. Jahrhundert auf. So weit wir wissen, wurde sein Antonym, *incompetence*, erstmals im Jahr 1595 mit der Bedeutung, rechtlich nicht zuständig zu sein, verwendet. Ende desselben Jahres fand in London die erste Aufführung von William Shakespeares *Richard II* statt. Einige der Szenen des Stückes spielen in Flint Castle, wenige Kilometer von dem Ort entfernt, an dem ich aufgewachsen bin:

ACT II SCENE III, A camp in Wales, Captain: 'Tis thought the king is dead; we will not stay. The bay-trees in our country are all wither'd And meteors fright the fixed stars of heaven; The pale-faced moon looks bloody on the earth And lean-look'd prophets whisper fearful change; Rich men look sad and ruffians dance and leap, The one in fear to lose what they enjoy, The other to enjoy by rage and war: These signs forerun the death or fall of kings. Farewell: our countrymen are gone and fled, As well assured Richard their king is dead.

Man kann behaupten, dass *Richard II* auch den Komplex der Kompetenz thematisiert, indem er das göttliche Recht eines Königs mit dessen weltlichen Schwächen sowie seinen Stärken konfrontiert. Manche Kommentatoren haben eine Verbindung zwischen dem Stück und der Herrschaft von Königin Elizabeth I. hergestellt: Sie war bereits sehr betagt, als das Stück geschrieben wurde, was manche dazu veranlasste, über ihre Zulänglichkeit und einen vorzeitigen Thronwechsel nachzudenken. Eindeutig handelt es sich hierbei um zeitlose und sehr gegenwärtige Themen (man denke an Boris Johnson, Prinz Andrew und Elizabeth II. im Vereinigten Königreich ebenso wie an die noch jungen Eskapaden von Trump in den USA, Modi in Indien oder Bolsonaro in Brasilien).

Kompetenz ist natürlich in vielen Bereichen von entscheidender Bedeutung. So ist die Frage nach der Kompetenz eines Musikers von grundlegender Bedeutung, denn die technische Beherrschung eines Musikinstruments ist das Mindeste, was wir von Fachleuten und sogar von Student:innen erwarten. Musikalische und künstlerische Kompetenz beginnt jedoch dort, wo die instrumentale beherrscht und vorausgesetzt wird. Die Erwartungen und Einschätzungen des Publikums hinsichtlich der Kompetenz haben oft den Charakter von Ablenkungsmanövern, angetrieben von Mythen die sich um Virtuosität, künstlerische Vision und sogar den Grad der Vernunft ranken. In der Kunst liegt kulturelles Kapital sowohl im Wahnsinn wie in technischer Zauberei. Künstlerischer Wert wird oft von der Vorliebe des Publikums oder, hier wohl zutreffender, der Verbraucher für kurzlebige, modische Qualitäten überschattet, welche nicht selten einen Bezug zur Kunst vermissen lassen. Andererseits wird die Idee der *Kompetenz* in musikalischen Kompositionen nur selten explizit adressiert. In diesem Stück hingegen spielt es eine zentrale Rolle, nicht zuletzt im Titel mit seiner bewusst irritierenden Verquickung von *in competence* und seinem Homonym *incompetence*. Was würde oder könnte es bedeuten, Kompetenz musikalisch zu untersuchen? Stellen wir die Kompetenz des Musikers in Frage? Oder jene des Komponisten? Hinterfragen wir die technische, insbesondere die musiktechnische Kompetenz? Bezweifeln wir gar jene des Zuhörers? (Man denke an die schöne Geschichte von Beethovens Entrüstung, als sein Sekretär Ries den Einsatz der Hornisten in der Reprise des ersten Satzes der Eroica bei deren Uraufführung – "zu früh" – kritisierte.)

Konkreter gefragt: Ist es möglich, musikalische Strukturen mehrfach zu präsentieren und dabei den Musikern wie den Hörern jedes Mal unterschiedliche "Kompetenzniveaus" abzuverlangen? Wenn ja, mit welchem Resultat? Und welche Rolle spielt das *Klimpern*? Ist dies ein Beispiel von Inkompetenz, der Unfähigkeit, zum Beispiel, auf den Punkt zu kommen? Wie können wir einen scheinbar unmöglichen Hoketus im Kontext vorsätzlich überbeanspruchter Fingerfertigkeit untersuchen und wahrnehmen? Oder das Spiel eng beieinanderliegender Akkorde und möglicherweise das Scheitern? Oder die Gegenüberstellung von unmöglichen Sequenzen–beispielsweise schneller Saxophon-Slap-Tongues–und der Leichtigkeit, werden diese auf einem Sampling-Keyboard gespielt? Oder jene von musiktechnologischem Versagen und der mutmaßlichen Perfektion der Wiedergabe von Klangdateien sowie derer mancherorts unterstellter musikalisch-expressiver Dürftigkeit?

All diese Fragen und weitere werden in diesem etwa einstündigen durchkomponierten Werk untersucht. Die Dauern und die Struktur des Stückes–alternierend zwischen instrumentalen Passagen (+/- Electronics) und elektronischen Zwischenspielen–sind von einer alten Aufnahme der oben abgedruckten Rede des Kapitäns abgeleitet, mit all den kompetent gesetzten tonalen Nuancierungen und ausdrucksvollen Pausen an den Enden, oder inmitten, der elf Verse.

Notabene: Alle Klänge wurden vom Komponisten aufgenommen/bearbeitet/synthetisiert/gemischt, mit Ausnahme solcher einiger kommerzieller Synthesizer sowie eines stark bearbeiteten Klangs eines Eisbergs, den der freesound.org-Benutzer *stormpetrel* 2009 in der Antarktis aufgenommen hat. Vielen Dank für die freie Veröffentlichung dieser Arbeit.

(Übersetzung vom Englischen: Ruben Philipp)

1 performance notes

The complete performance lasts a little over an hour and is through-composed. Only the pauses/silences indicated in the score should be observed. Creative lighting choices are encouraged and some suggestions are given at the end of this score. Some sections/pieces could be extracted for incorporation into programmes including other works; these could be with or without electronics, depending on the piece.

2 instrumentation

- Baritone, alto, and sopranino saxophones
- Piano, including
 - 1. a percussion mallet (medium soft) suitable for the soft striking of low strings
 - 2. e-bow
 - 3. cassette tape inserted around the C#2 string, for exciting by pulling with the left and right hands
 - 4. metallic preparations for placing on bass strings
 - see 10a. farewell improvisation
 - 5. MIDI keyboard (see below)
- Percussion:
 - 1. Crash cymbal
 - 2. Tibetan cymbal high
 - 3. Tibetan cymbal low
 - 4. Chinese gong small
 - 5. Chinese gong large
 - 6. Korean gong small
 - 7. Korean gong large
 - 8. Ride cymbal
 - 9. Small tam-tam
 - 10. Wind gong
 - 11. Two brake drums with different pitches/characters
 - these should definitely have 'dissonant' spectral characteristics, so if they're too harmonic, substitute a metal hinge, pipe, or something similar to deliver high dissonant spectra.
 - 12. Crotales (2 octaves)
 - 13. Thai Gongs: C5, A3
 - 14. Almglocke: G#5
 - 15. Plattenglocken: F#2, A#2, D#4, D4, C#4
 - 16. Glockenspiel
 - 17. Vibraphone
 - 18. Large bass drum

- At least one computer running MaxMSP and capable of high-quality multichannel sound output
 - an extra computer or two for running the sampler patches (keyboard and percussion) may be desirable,
 depending on the MIDI interfacing capabilities (e.g. cable run lengths vs. MIDI over network)
 - the sound files are in higher-order (5th) ambisonics format so the number and position of the loudspeakers is flexible
 - * however an immersive experience is, if perhaps not essential then at least highly desirable, with loudspeakers surrounding the audience as well as placed above and centre, if possible
 - the sound files are triggered by the pianst so, in theory at least, just one musician sitting on the mixing desk could control all amplification and balancing, including the sound files/electronics
 - the following MaxMSP packages must be installed via the File Menu->Package Manager:
 - * ICST Ambisonics (Zurich)
 - * spat5 (IRCAM: used only for the spat5.sfplay~ object for better handling of 36-channel sound files)
 - * MIRA (with the MIRA app on an iPAD if desired: this is used for visual feedback to the pianist)

3 MIDI keyboard

- 1. the keyboard's function is divided into two: sound file triggering and sample playback
- 2. the lowest octave (notated as C3-B3) is used for sound file triggering and the middle octave (C4-A4) for sample playback
- 3. thus a minimum size of 2 octaves could accommodate all functionality
 - but the mapping of MIDI notes might need to be changed in the MaxMSP patches to accommodate the pianists' wishes, e.g. to clearly separate the sound file octave from the sample octave, if so desired
- 4. sound files triggered by the notes of the lowest octave are organised into banks of 10
- 5. the score indicates when a *bank change* occurs; indeed the required bank is indicated at least once per page, for clarity
- 6. banks are changed by pressing low C# (C#3) to ascend and low C to descend
- 7. thus only the ten chromatic notes D₃-B₃ trigger the respective sound files
- 8. for safety, when the *bank* is 0, then the samples can be triggered but no sound files; conversely when *bank* is 1 or greater, no samples can be triggered
- 9. changing *banks* does not affect sounds already playing and in contrast to the sample playback it doesn't matter how long the notes are held for as MIDI 'note off' messages are ignored in the lowest octave (as is velocity); thus the score duration is whatever is convenient or simplest and may be ignored
- 10. the triggered sound file may contain any or no pitches, may start immediately or not, and may be short or long, i.e., the indicated rhythms and pitches merely show when the trigger happens, not the triggered sound file's duration or pitch

4 percussion MIDI pads

- 1. in piece 10b, six MIDI drum pads are required for sample playback
- 2. these should be velocity sensitive and are mapped to MIDI notes 60 63 64 65 68 69 in the MaxMSP software (the midi-pad-mapping subpatch in sndfiles.maxpat)

5 inside piano playing

Pieces no. 5 and 6 require touching of harmonic string nodes, plucking, e-bow, light soft mallet rolls on the strings, and cassette tape pull-rubbing of strings.

Piece 10a requires placement of light metallic objects on the bass strings and plucking/stroking of these. As this is improvisational, there is a lot of scope for variation in approach.

Piece 11b requires the use of light metallic brushes on the high strings, string plucks, and e-bow.

6 lighting

Lighting, including (LED) coloured lights, are not essential but highly desirable. See the lighting summary in the addendum at the end of the score for details. Throughout the score the boxed text *Lights* occurs to indicate when a pre-programmed lighting change should occur.

7 lines, proportions, pauses

The structure of this work is derived from an old recording of the Captain's speech in *Act II Scene IV* of Shakespeare's *Richard II*. Most lines in the recording are followed by pauses. Correspondingly, this work mostly alternates instrumental plus electronics sections (speech) with just electronics/sound files (pauses). There are some exceptions of course, e.g. the very first section is an electronics-only introduction and the bass drum enters, unobserved, during the *pause*; between lines 7 and 8, where the speech becomes more emphatic, there is no pause; there are also dramatic, mid-line pauses in the last two lines.

The actual durations of the lines and pauses were analysed and scaled from the old recording's c. 42 seconds duration onto the hour-long duration of this work. Details are given below, though of course some timings were modified here and there during the composition process (in particular L2, L7, and L8 became significantly longer than the duration indicated below):

Line	Info
1:	start: 0.000, duration: 4:07.752
	pause: start: 4:07.752, duration: 3:19.051, (total 7:26.804)
~	Tis thought the king is dead; we will not stay.
2:	start: 7:26.804, duration: 3:30.346
	pause: start: 10:57.149, duration: 1:03.519, (total 4:33.865) The bay-trees in our country are all wither'd
3:	start: 12:00.669, duration: 4:26.185 pause: start: 16:26.853, duration: 1:52.853, (total 6:19.038
	And meteors fright the fixed stars of heaven;
	start: 18:19.706, duration: 3:45.164
4:	pause: start: 22:04.870, duration: 41.563, (total 4:26.727)
	The pale-faced moon looks bloody on the earth
5:	start: 22:46.433, duration: 4:09.379
2.	pause: start: 26:55.812, duration: 1:18.066, (total 5:27.445)
	And lean-look'd prophets whisper fearful change;
6:	start: 28:13.878, duration: 3:43.447
0.	pause: start: 31:57.325, duration: 59.363, (total 4:42.810)
	Rich men look sad and ruffians dance and leap,
7:	start: 32:56.688, duration: 2:38.663
,	no pause
	The one in fear to lose what they enjoy,
8:	start: 35:35.351, duration: 3:00.077
	pause: start: 38:35.428, duration: 1:01.803, (total 4:01.879)
	The other to enjoy by rage and war:
9:	start: 39:37.231, duration: 4:52.749
	pause: start: 44:29.980, duration: 1:48.155, (total 6:40.904)
	These signs forerun the death or fall of kings.
10A:	start: 46:18.134, duration: 45.087
	mid-line pause : start: 47:03.221, duration: 2:19.056, (total 3:04.143)
	Farewell:
10B:	start: 49:22.277, duration: 2:48.782
	pause: start: 52:11.059, duration: 1:49.329, (total 4:38.112)
	our countrymen are gone and fled,
11A:	start: 54:00.388, duration: 1:33.246
	mid-line pause : start: 55:33.635, duration: 1:16.621, (total 2:49.867)
_	As well assured
11B:	start: 56:50.255, duration: 3:09.745
	Richard their king is dead.

for Trio Abstrakt

in competence

1. 'tis thought the king is dead; we will not stay

michael edwards 2020-22

The audience lights go down to black or at least the lowest possible. The performance begins with a completely dark stage [light cue]. Each player enters in darkness, as unobserved as possible, and remains in the dark until indicated below. The pianist is at her performance position. The other two players are seated or standing either just offstage or at the back/side of the stage, where they are not visible. A spotlight appears focussed on the pianist [light cue]. She is holding her triggering arm up, pointing to the ceiling with her triggering finger. After some time she brings her finger down and triggers the first sound file: **Bank 1, low D**. The lights cut to black [light cue]. Thus sound files alone begin the piece.

At about 4:10 a dark throbbing sound file begins. At this point the percussionist is at the bass drum. In her own time she starts a soft-stick roll, imperceptibly at first, but as she explores the instrument and the amplification is raised, she becomes more clearly distinguishable from the sound files. At the same time a little light is projected onto her, just enough to clarify the source of the bass drum sound [light cue]. As the throbbing sound file becomes more rhythmicised, the light goes down to darkness again [light cue], the bass-drum decrescendos to zero, and the percussionist then takes her position unobserved at the cymbals.

At around 6:35 a spotlight appears gradually on the percussionist [light cue], similar to the pianist earlier. She raises her arm and points to the ceiling with her mallet, poised to play. Between 7:26 and 7:29 she interrupts the sound files and brutally starts piece no. 2 (the bay-trees in our country are all wither'd). On her first attack the lights are cut and then go back up to maximum over a few seconds [light cue].

2. the bay-trees in our country are all wither'd

michael edwards

From F5 stepwise down: crash cymbal, Tibetan cymbal high, Tibetan cymbal low, Chinese gong small, Chinese gong large, Korean gong small, Korean gong large, ride cymbal, small-tam-tam. N.B. Rests do not imply damping: sempre .l.v.













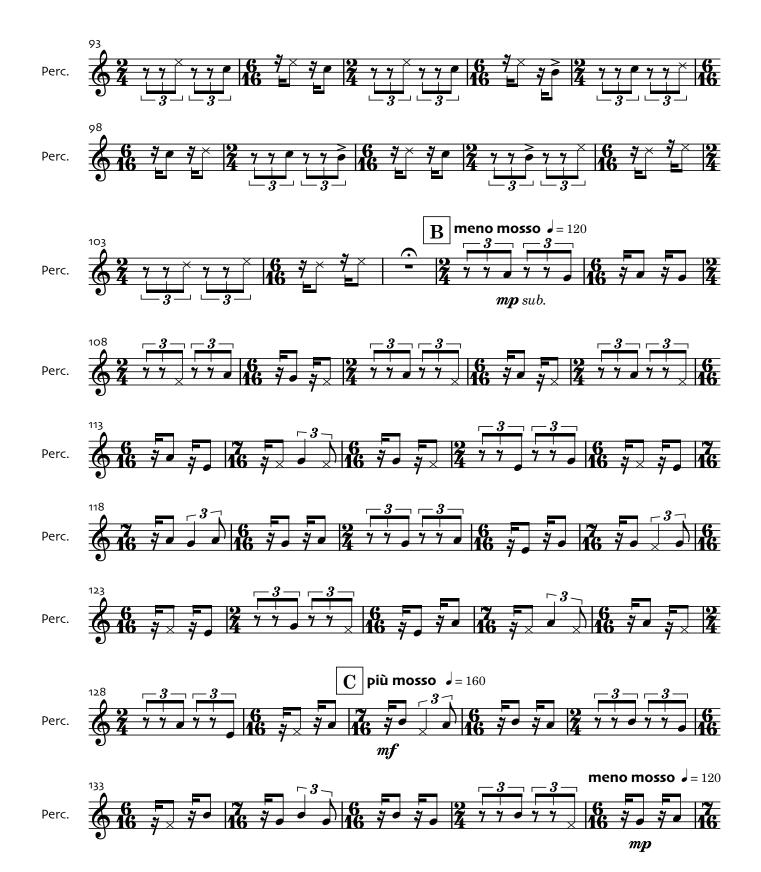






















































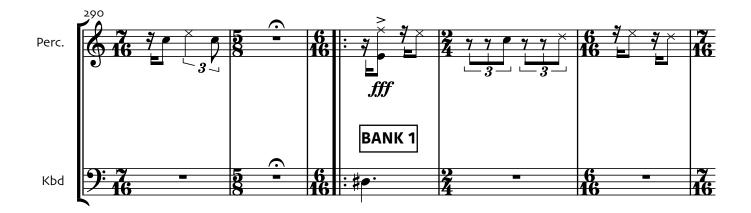


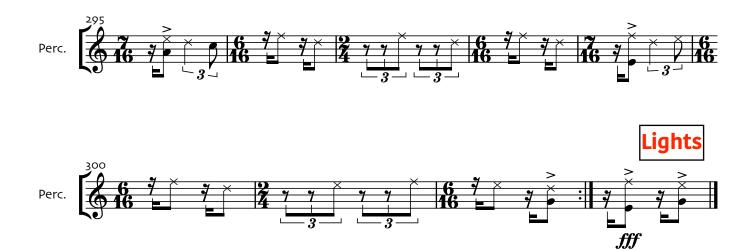












Triggered in bar 292 is a sound file of 63.5 seconds duration preceded by 10.8 seconds silence. During the sound file the saxophonist may improvise (e.g. air sounds, teeth on reed, similar to the sound files) in order to warm up his instrument for the sudden attack of the next piece--perhaps improvises into the attack even. The next trio piece interrupts the sound file towards its end, just as it begins to fade.

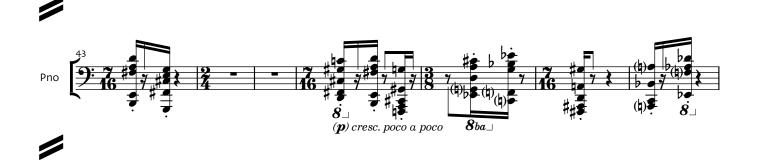
3. and meteors fright the fixed stars of heaven

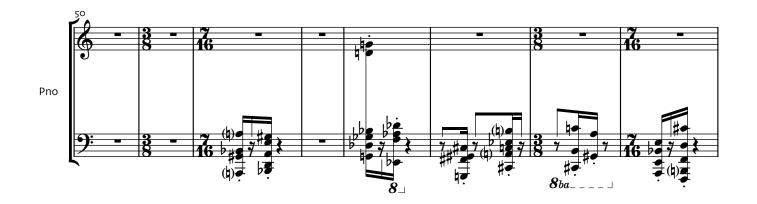




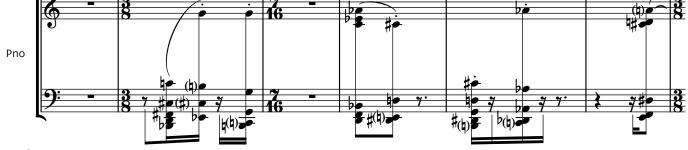


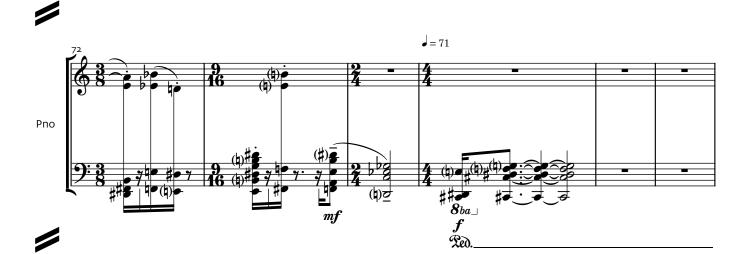


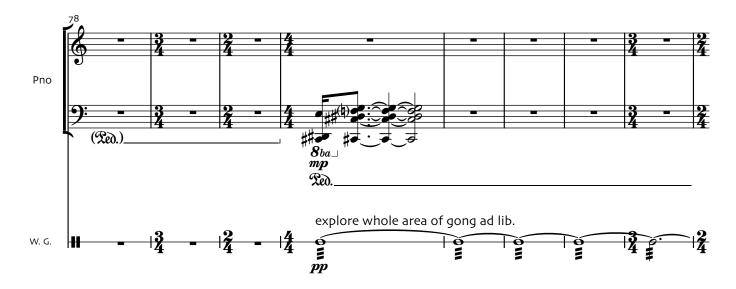




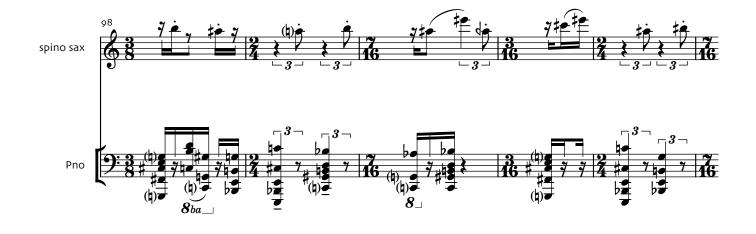


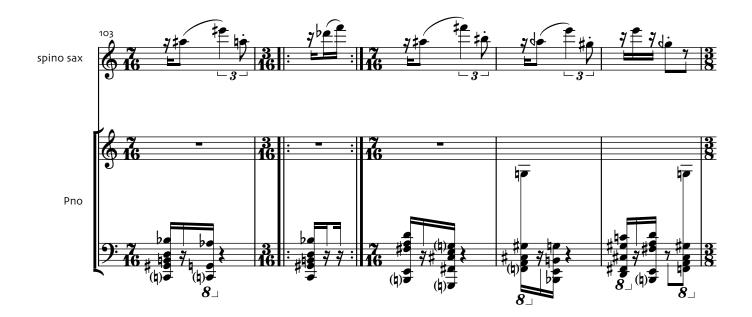


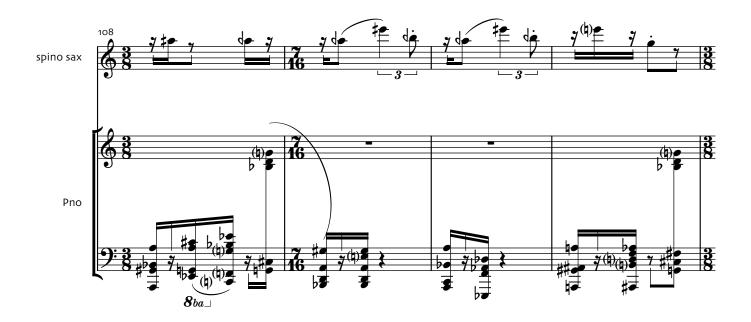












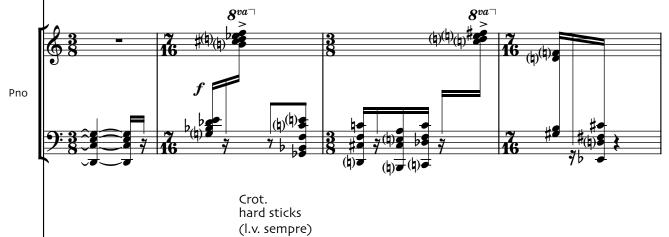


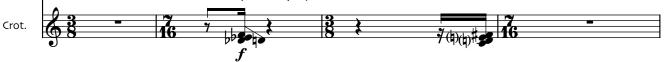
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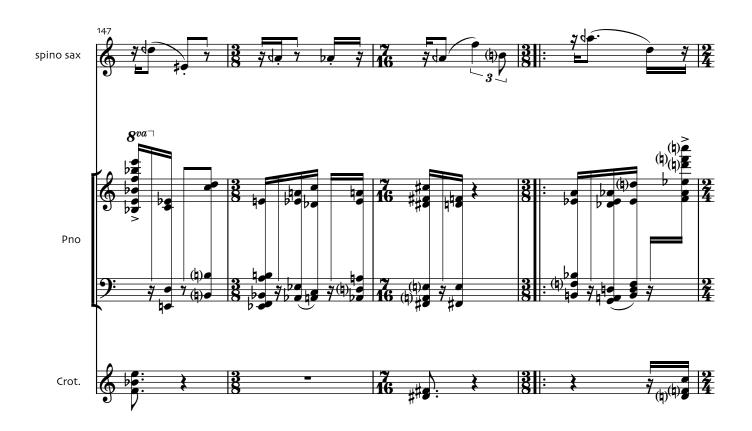




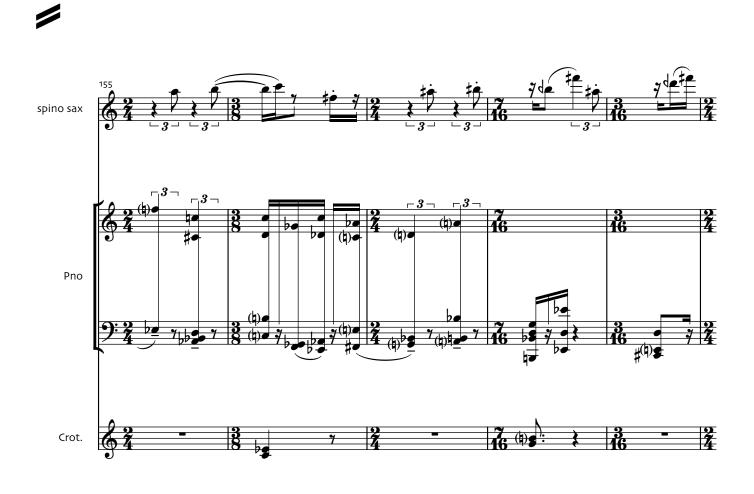


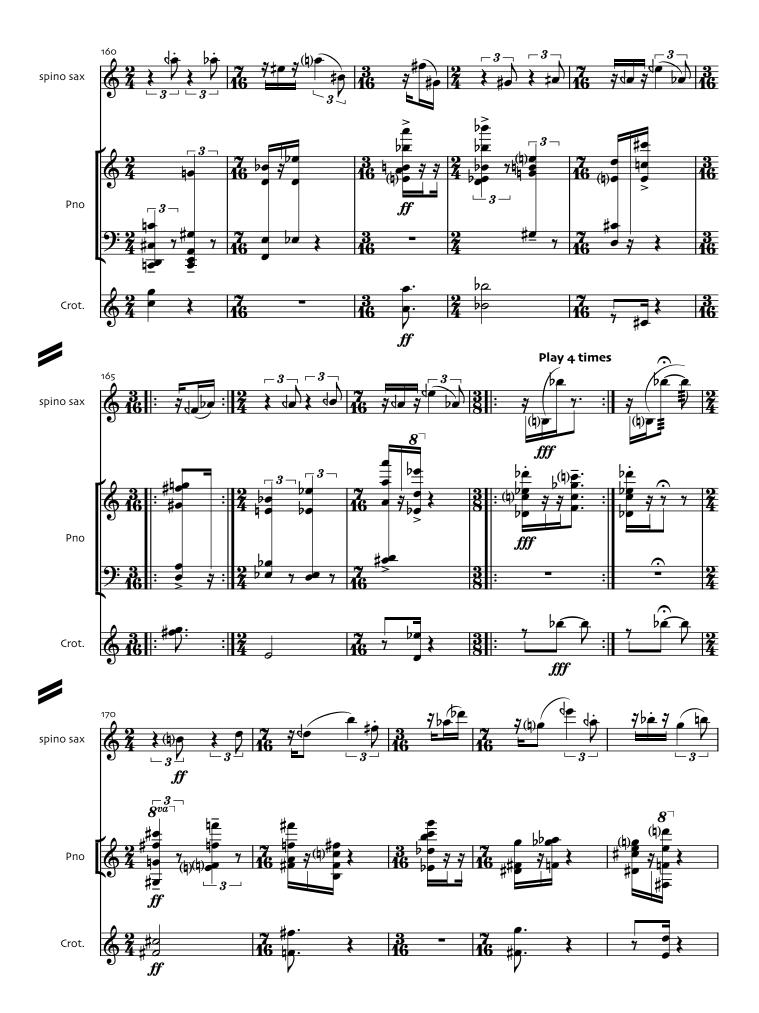




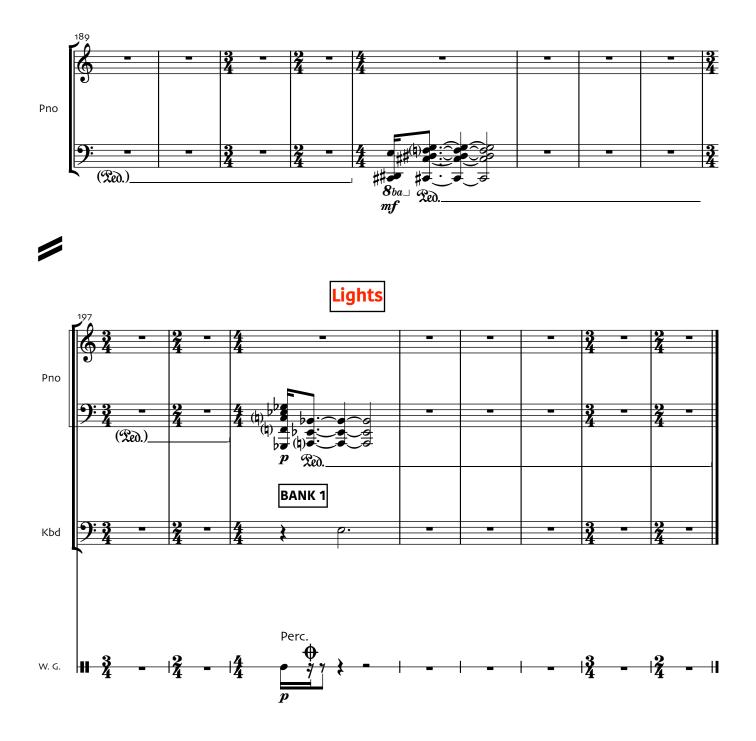










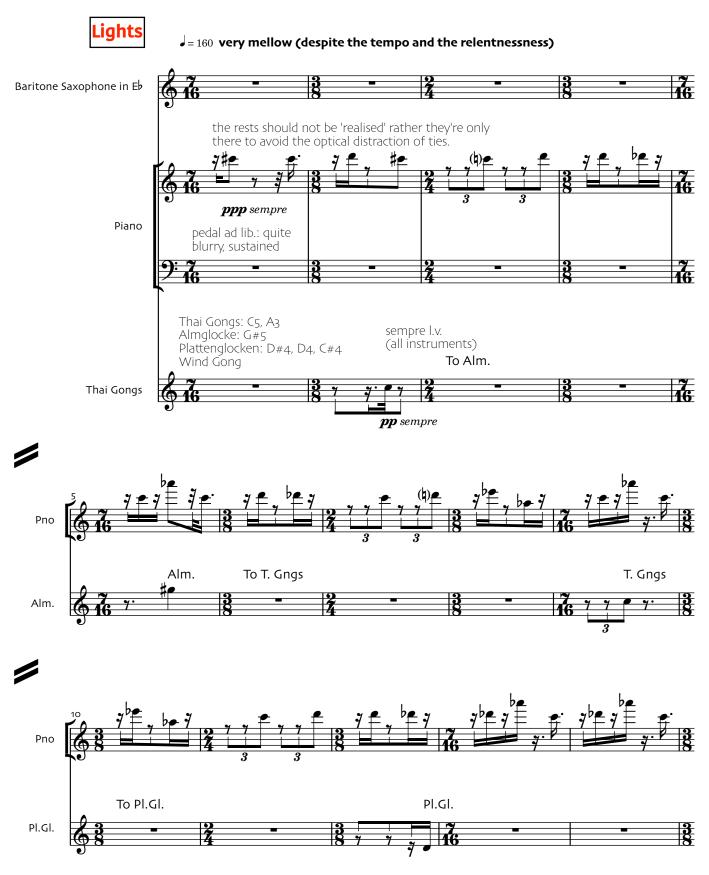


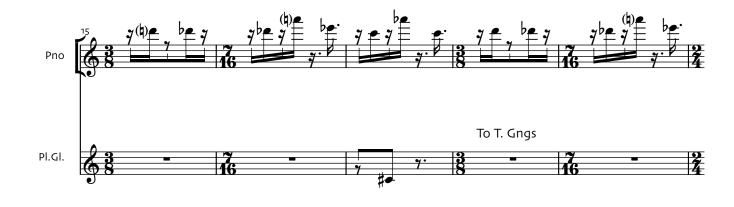
Triggered from bar 199 is a sound file of c. 3 minutes duration.

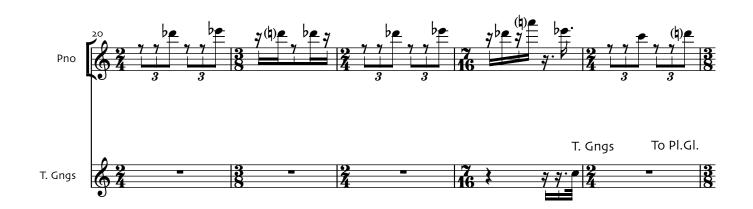
4. the pale-faced moon looks bloody on the earth

michael edwards

Allow the previous sound file to fade out completely, hold silence for a few seconds, then begin this piece

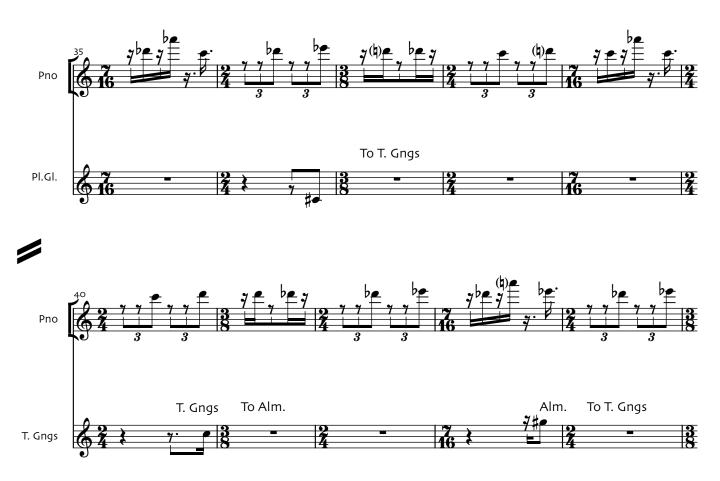










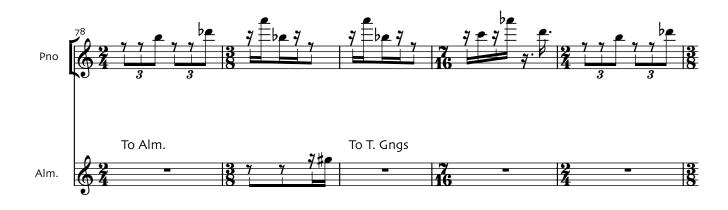






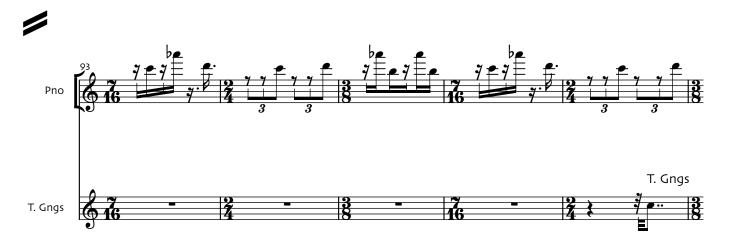




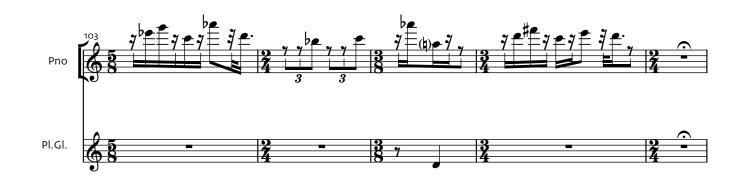




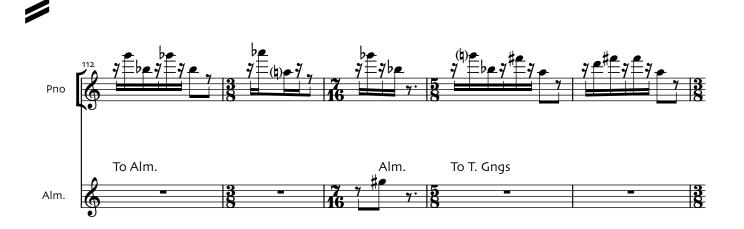




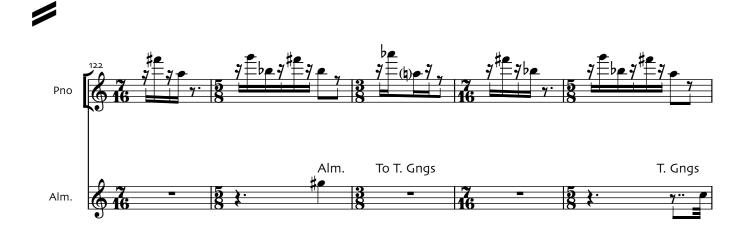




















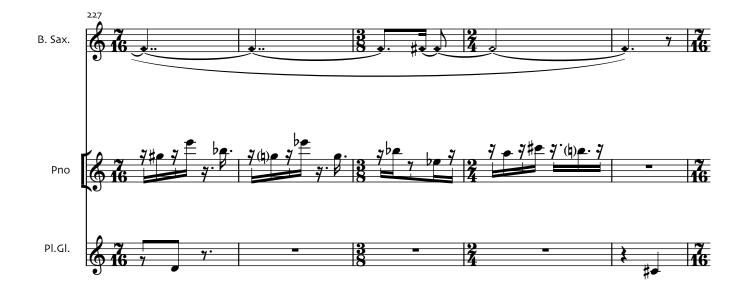


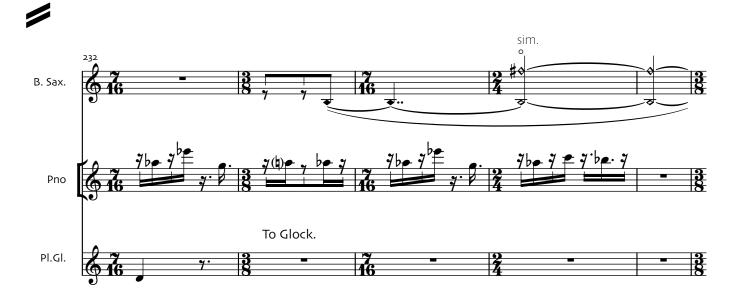


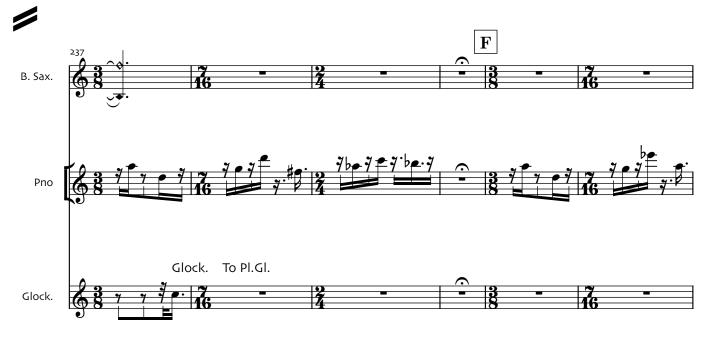












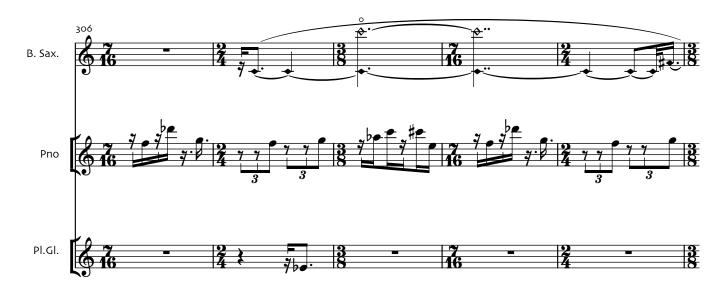




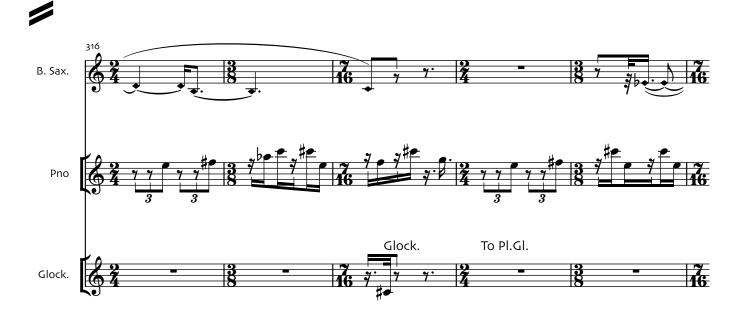






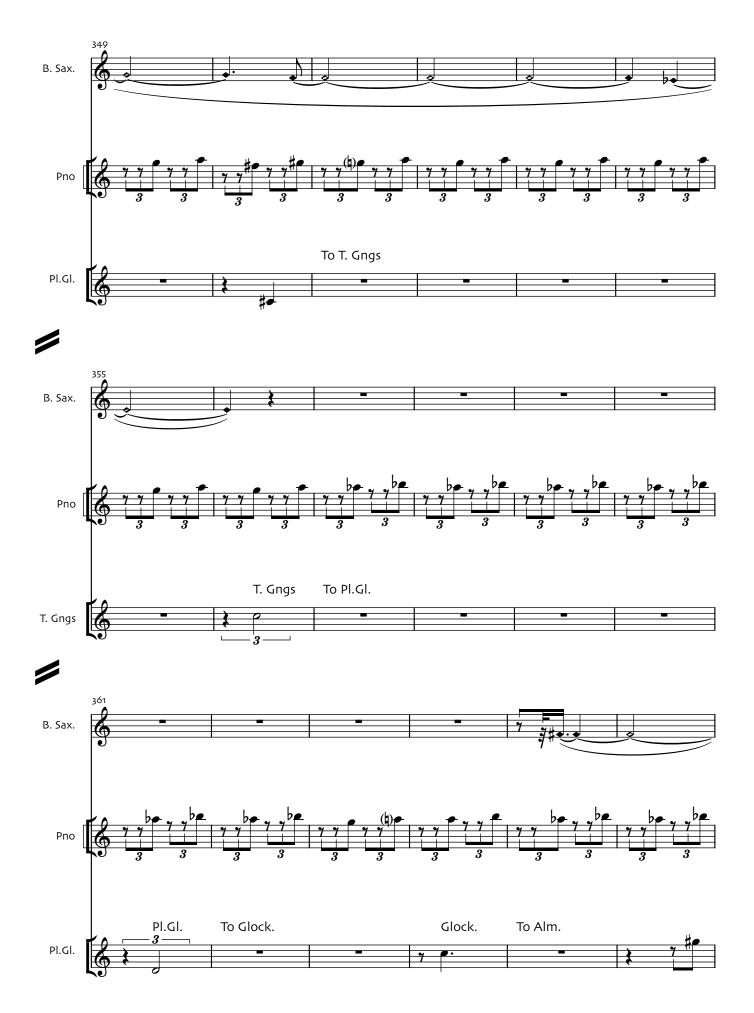




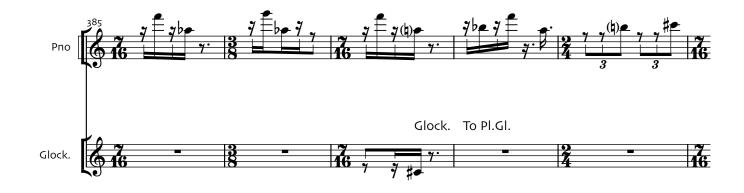






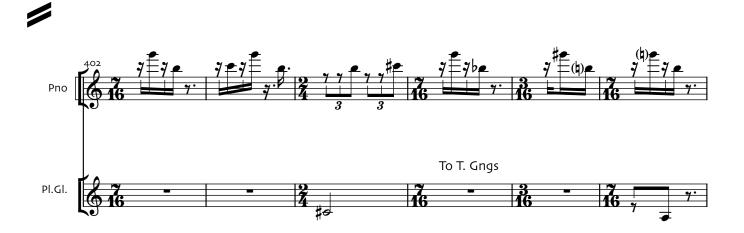












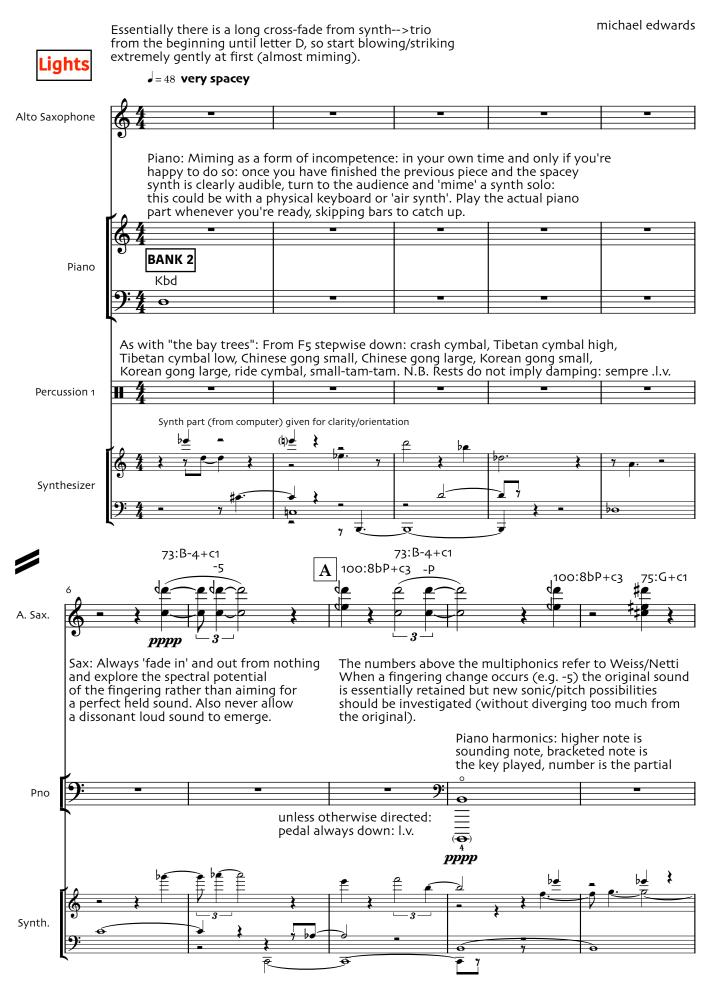








5. and lean-look'd prophets whisper fearful change

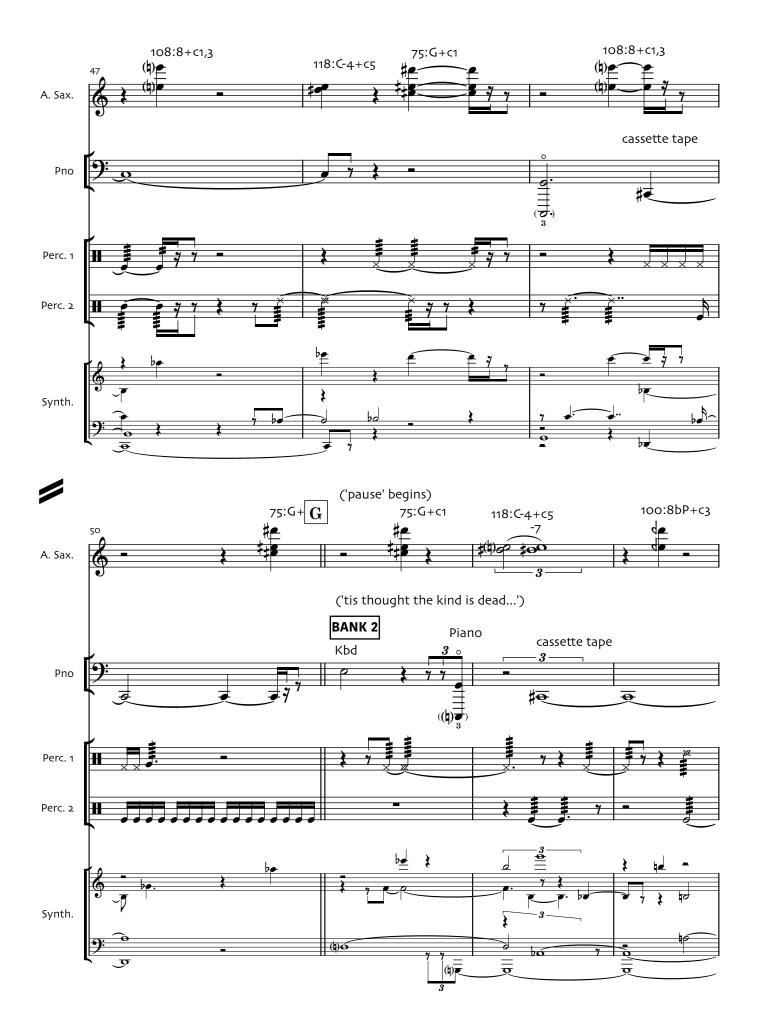










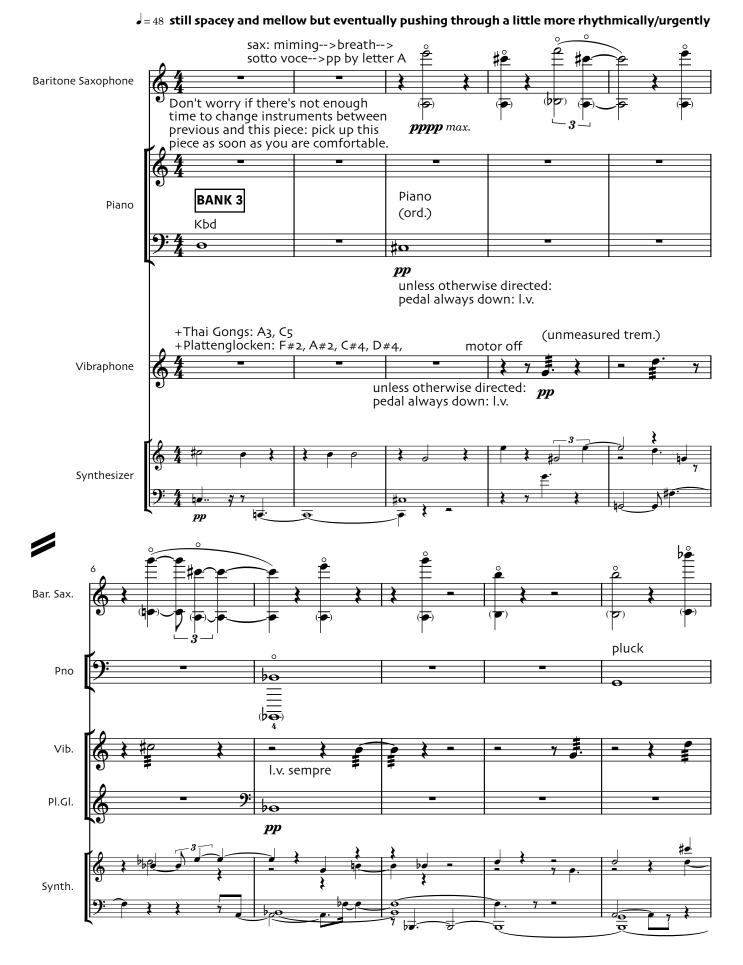






6. rich men look sad and ruffians dance and leap

michael edwards



Depending on the performance space and acoustic it might be a good idea for the saxophonist to move towards the back of the stage and/or turn his back to the audience to play 'into the walls' thus creating a more spacey and diffuse sound that potentially mixes better than the direct sound from the normal playing position.











This piece is followed by a sound file of c. 1 min. duration

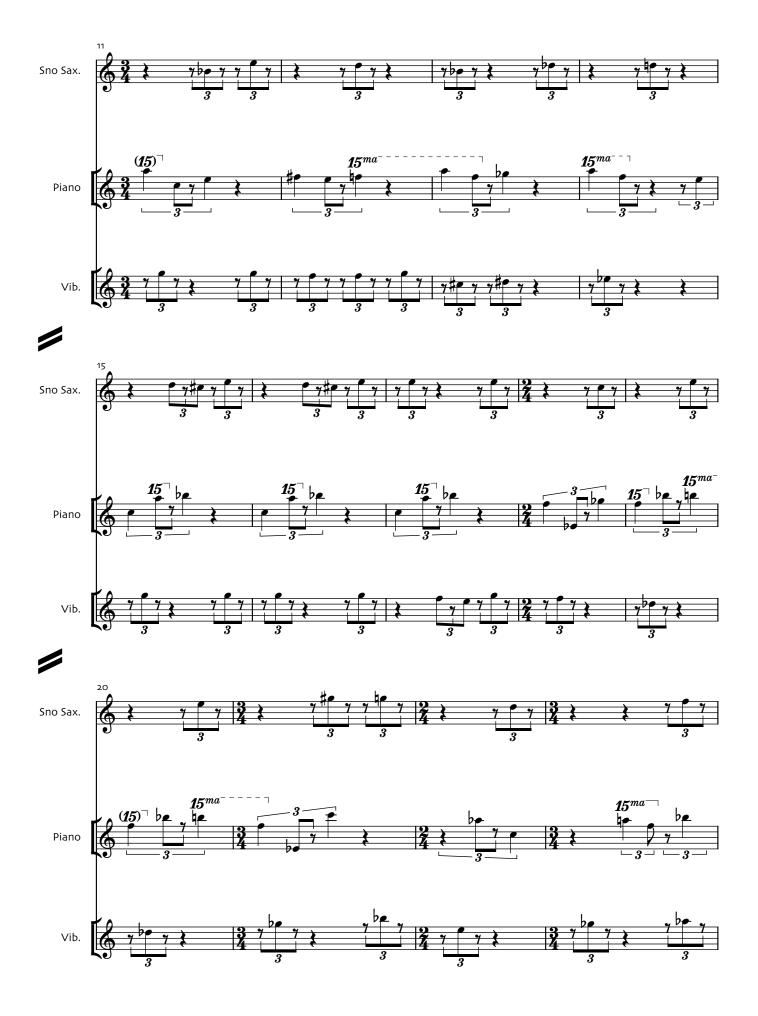
7. the one in fear to lose what they enjoy

michael edwards

take a lengthy(ish) fermata between the previous electronics and the beginning of this piece



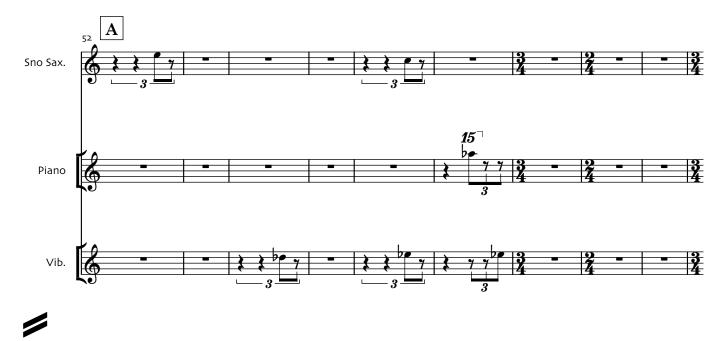






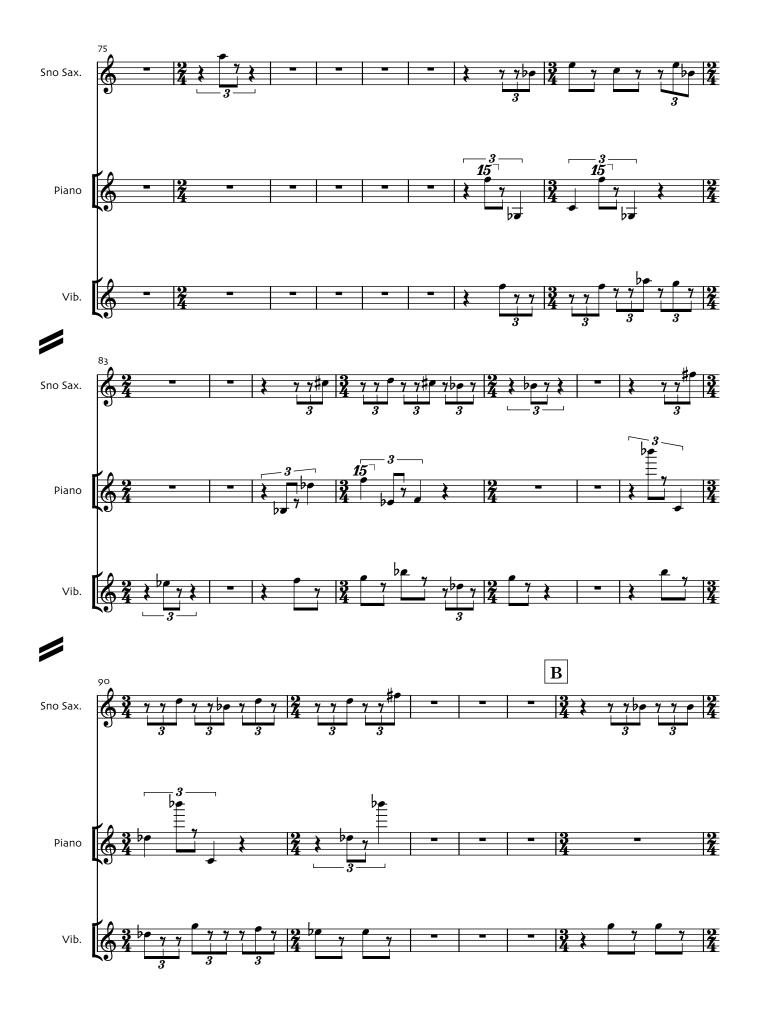
7. the one in fear to lose what they enjoy

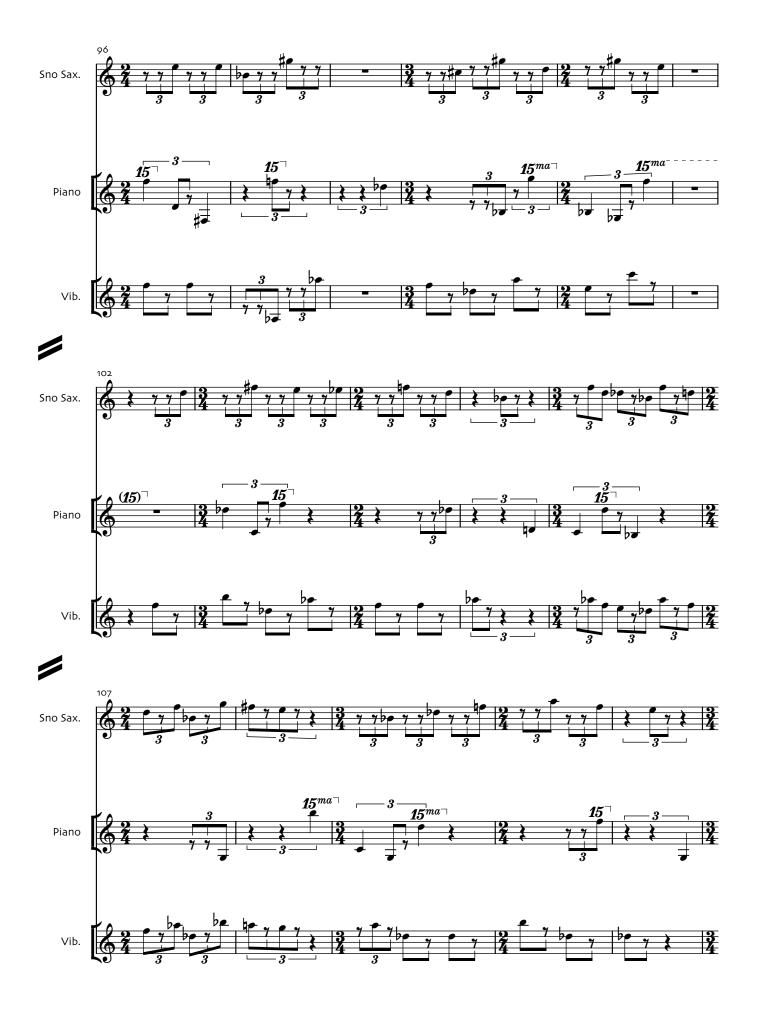


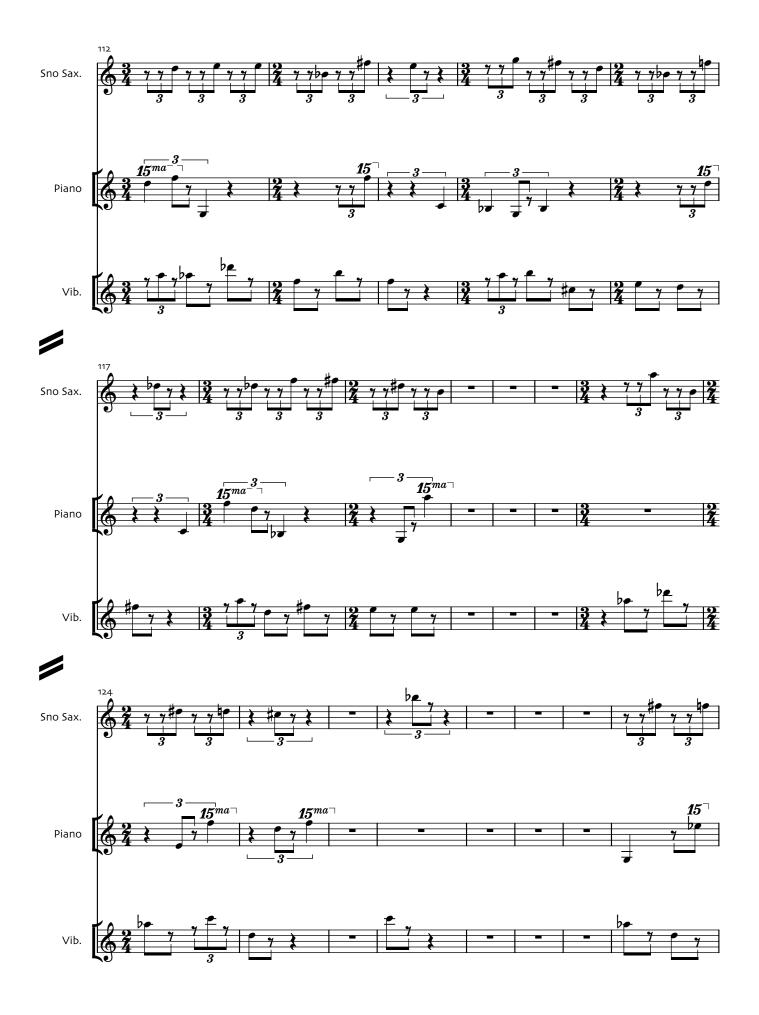




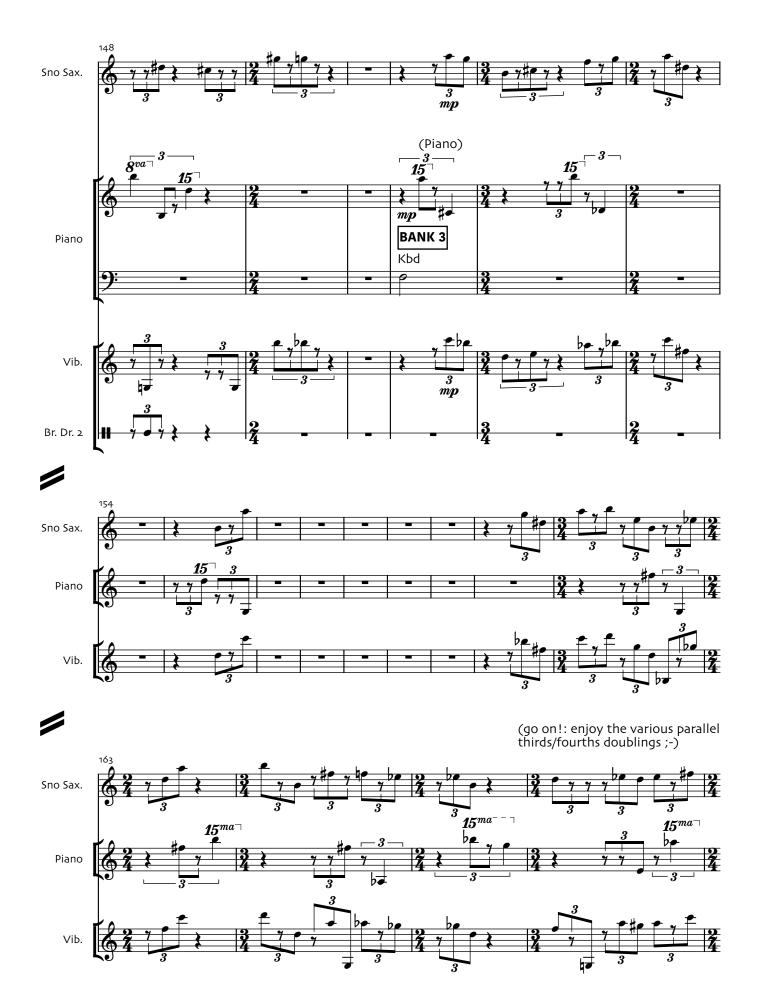




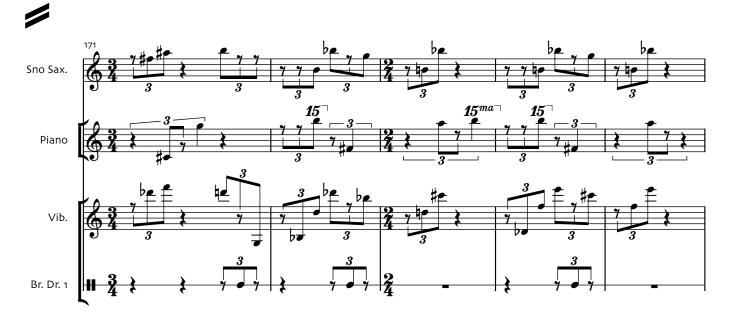








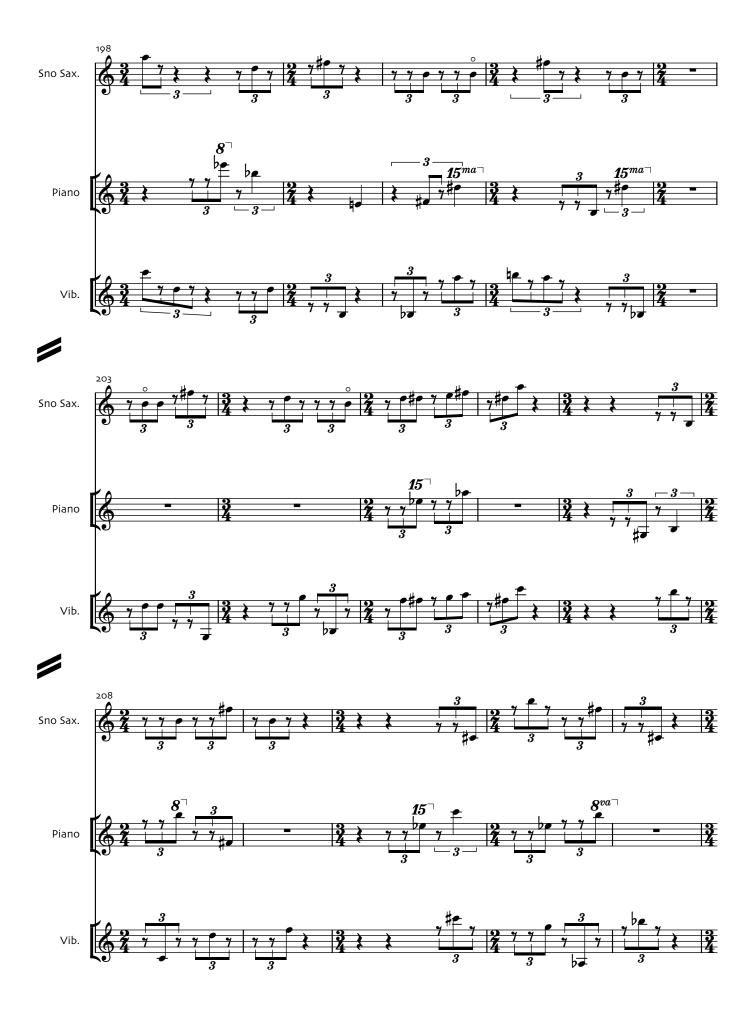


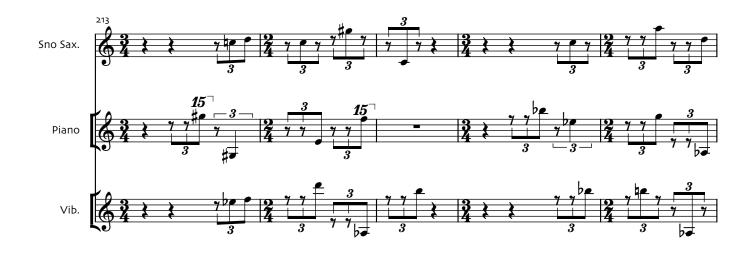




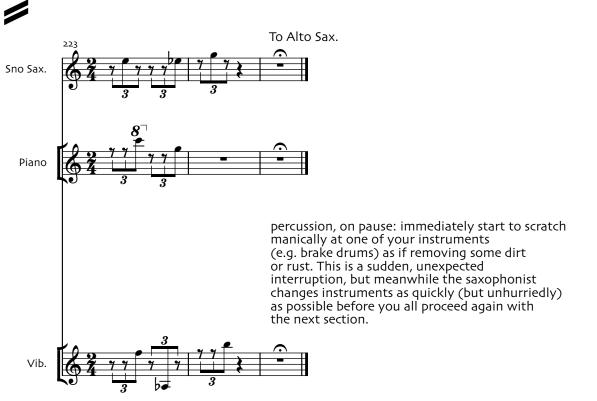






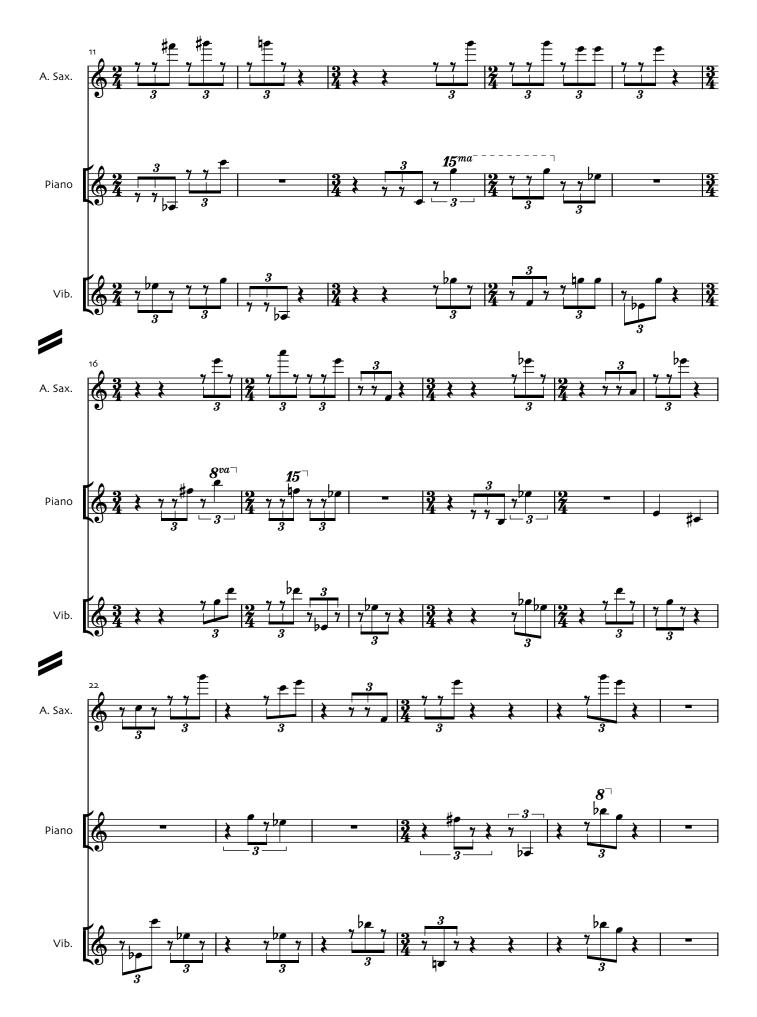


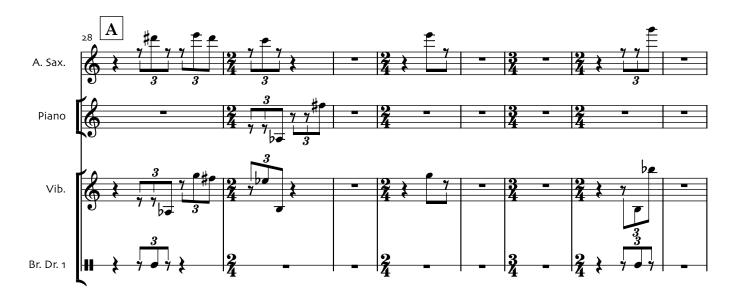


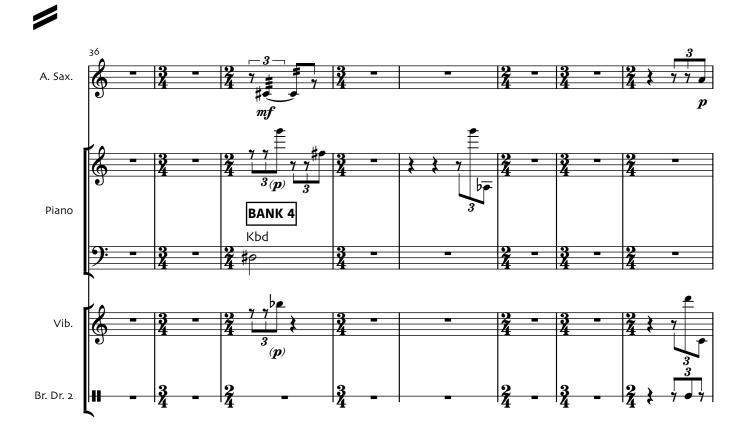


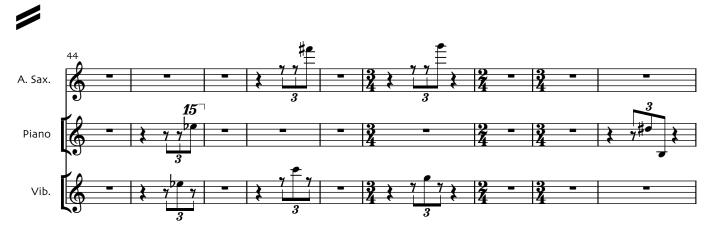
8. the other to enjoy by rage and war

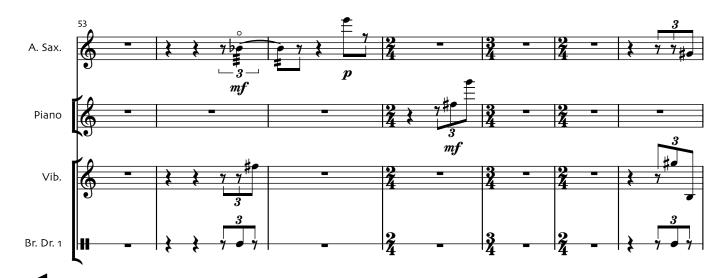






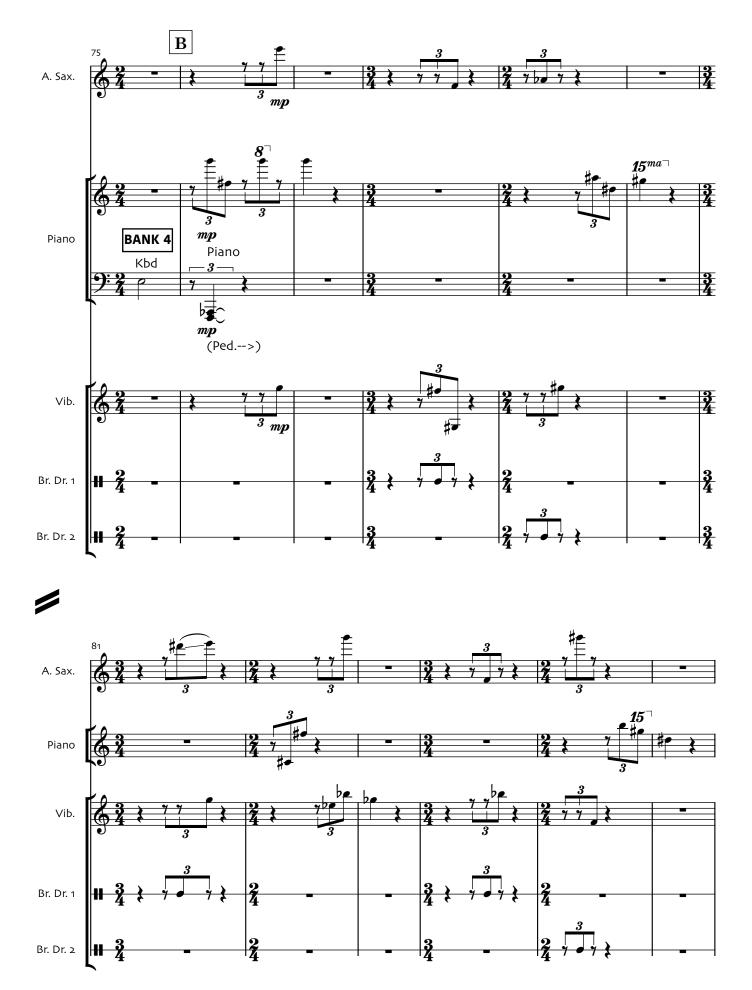


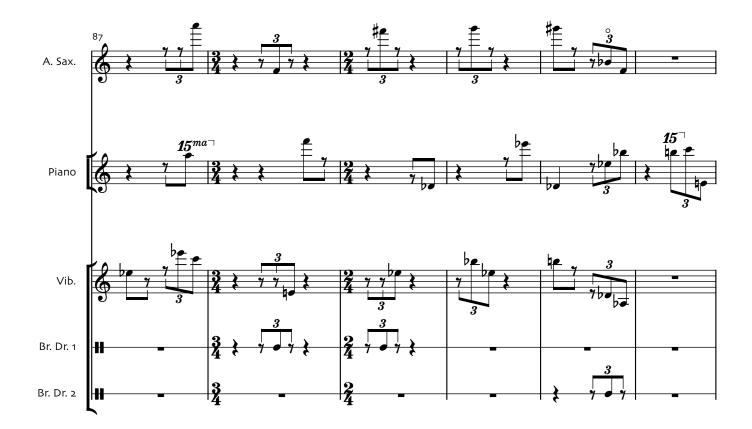






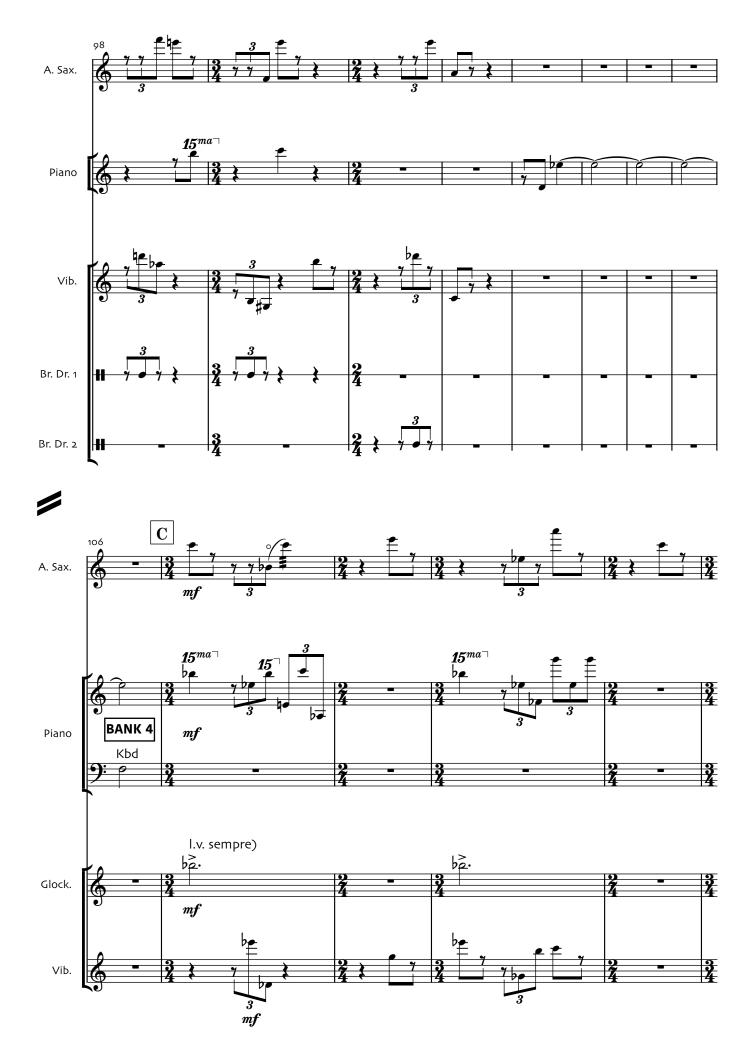


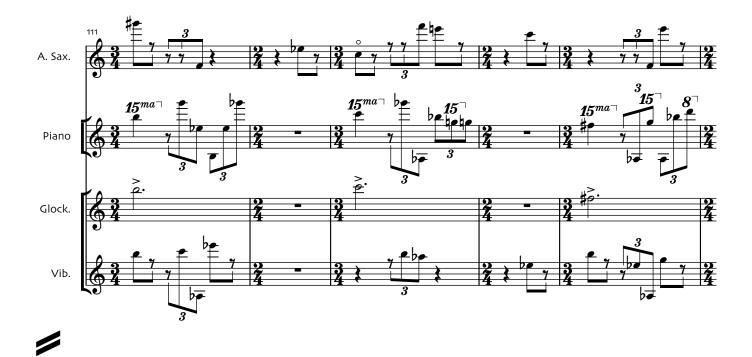


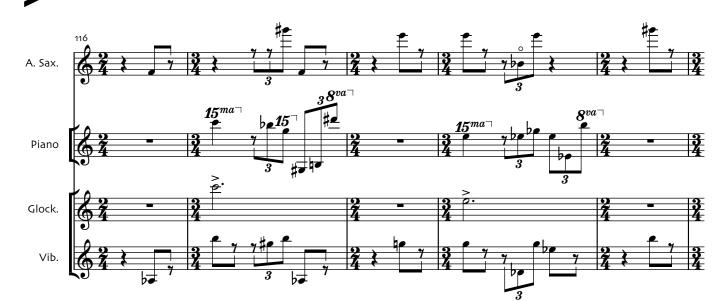




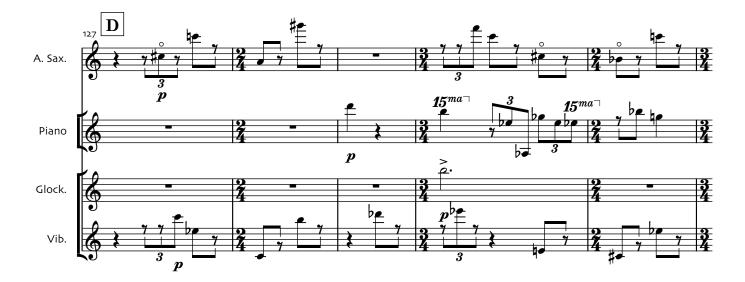




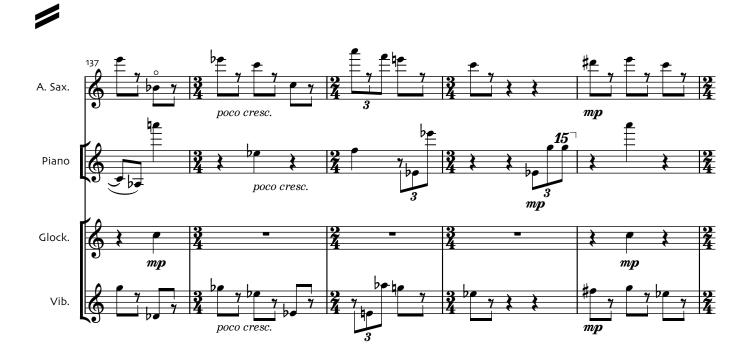






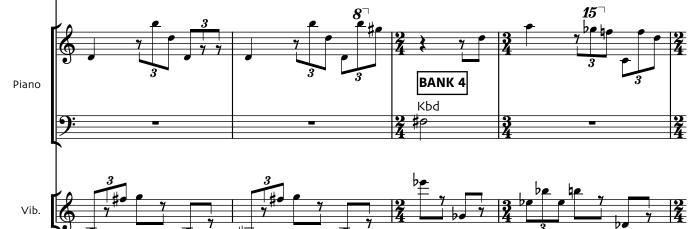


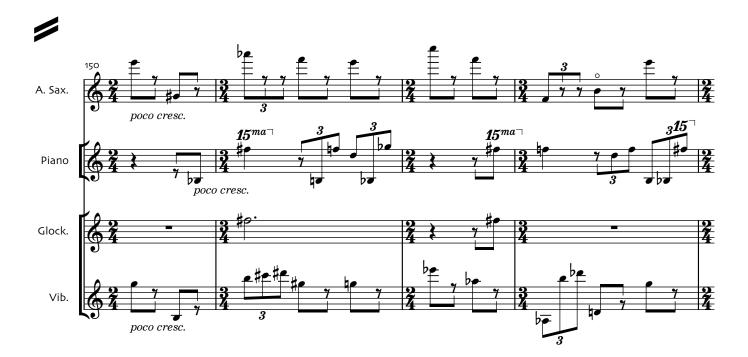




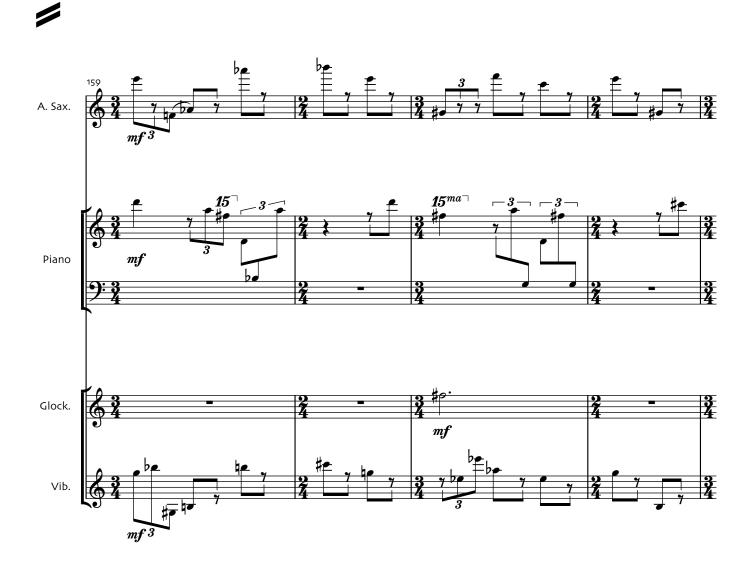


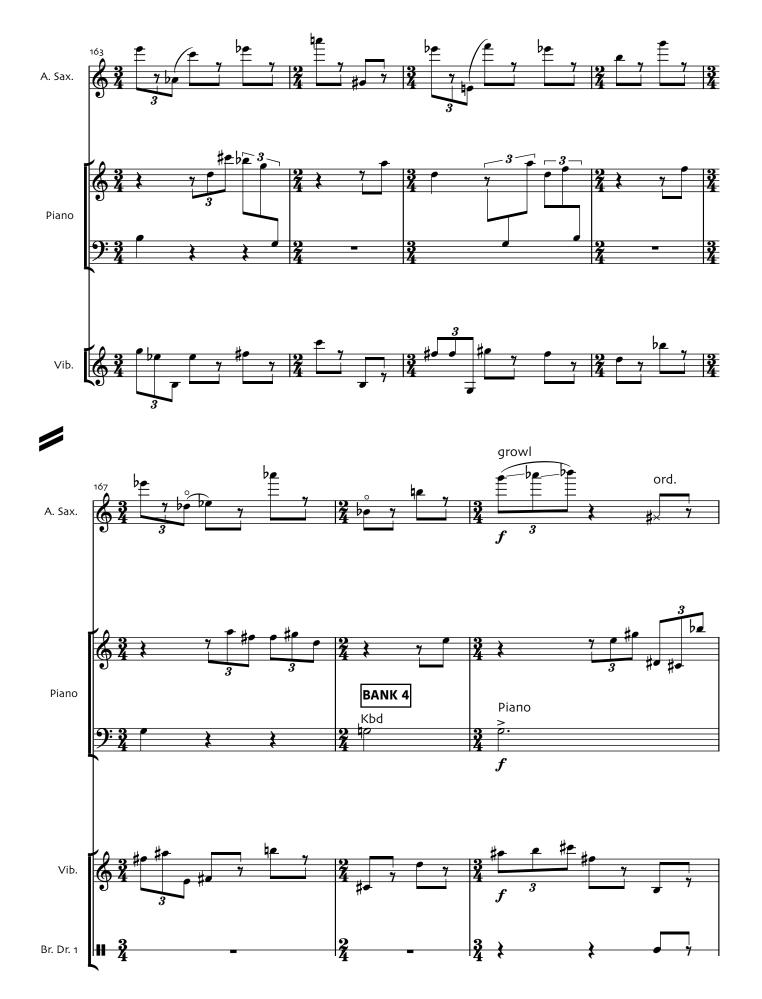




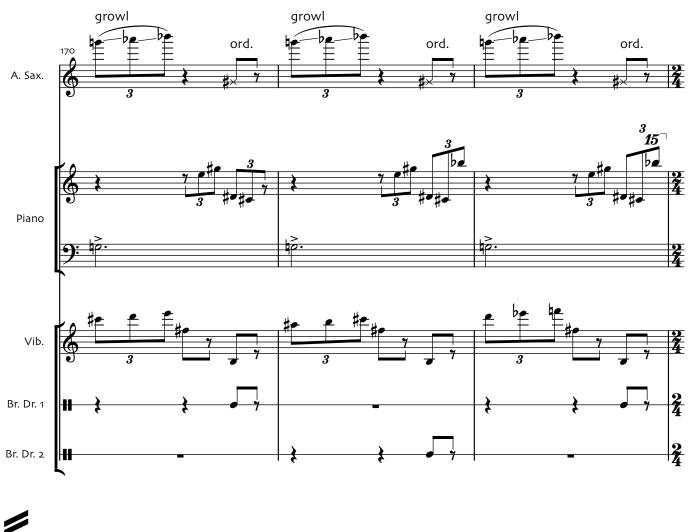








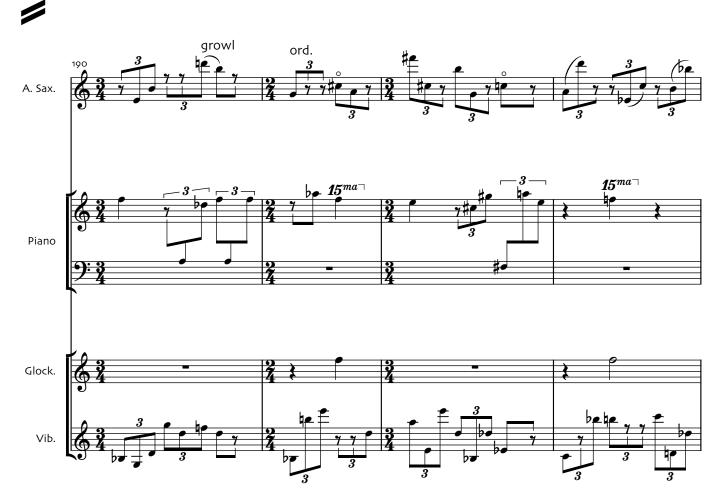
8. the other to enjoy by rage and war



















ff

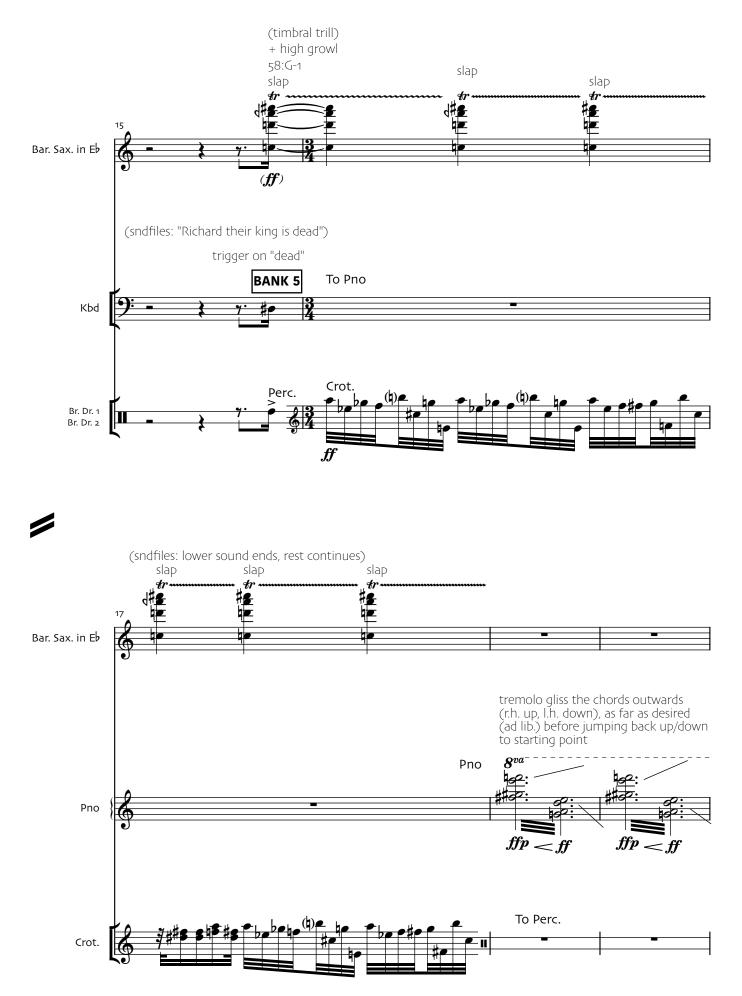




The last sound file triggered lasts c. 1:25 at the end of which the next piece begins seemlessly

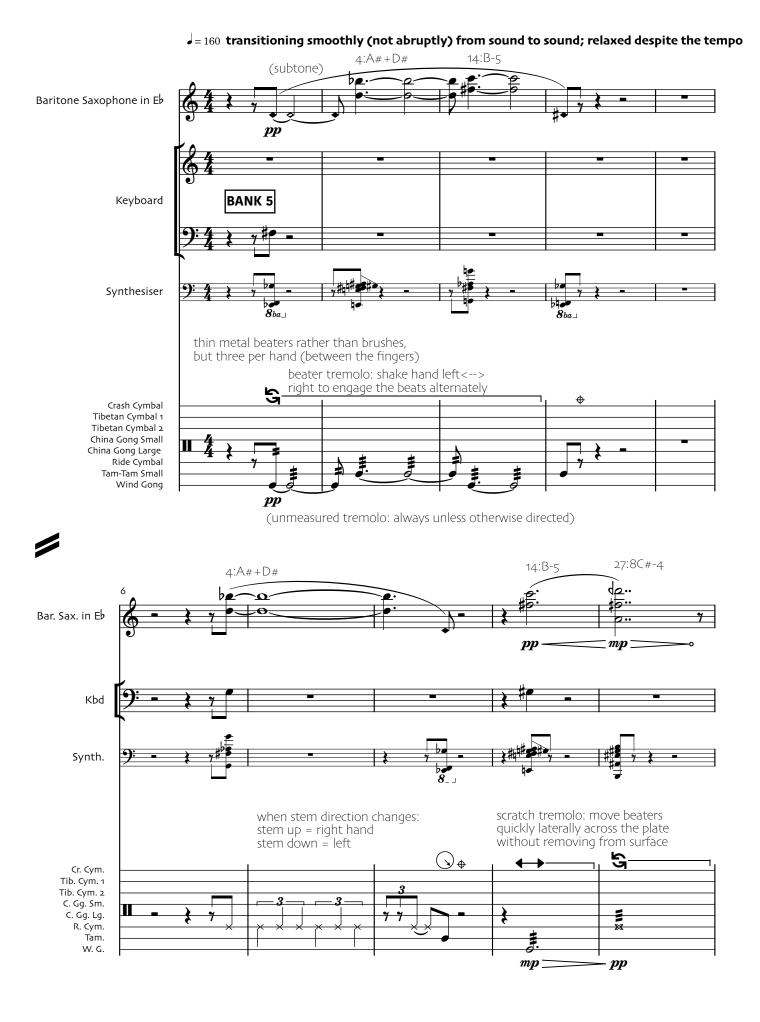
9. these signs forerun the death or fall of kings



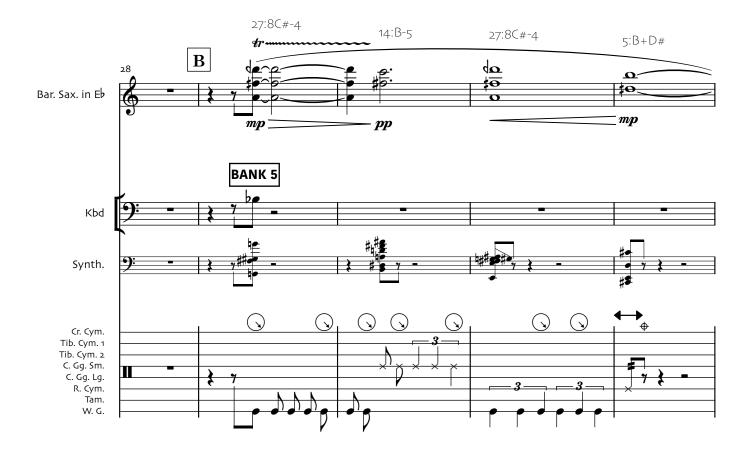


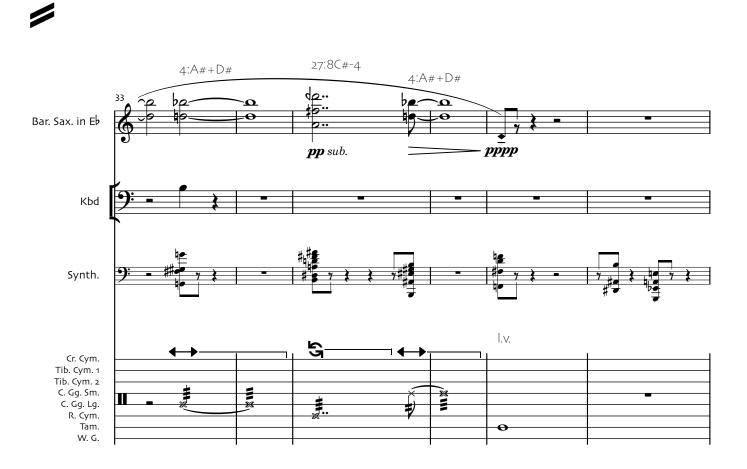


these signs: part 2: jabby chords



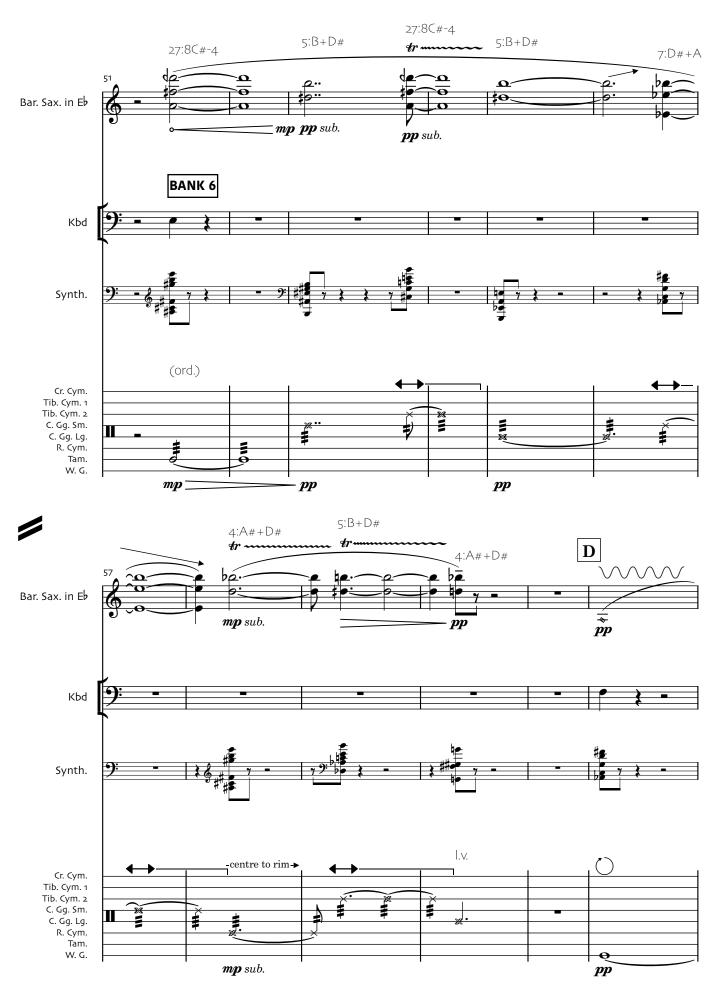




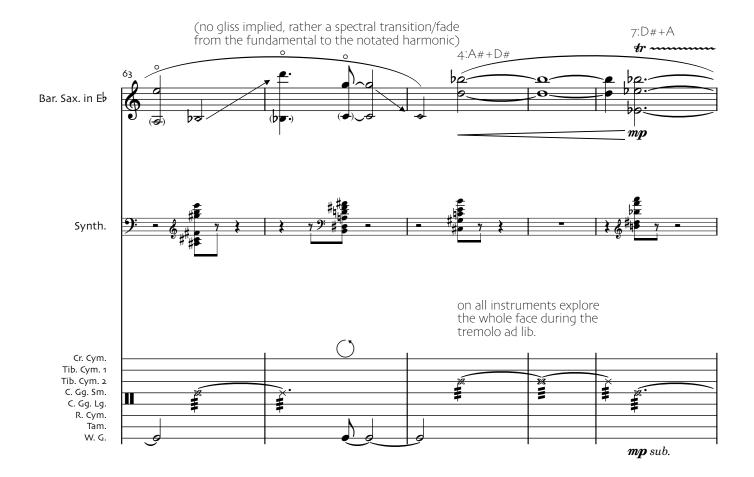


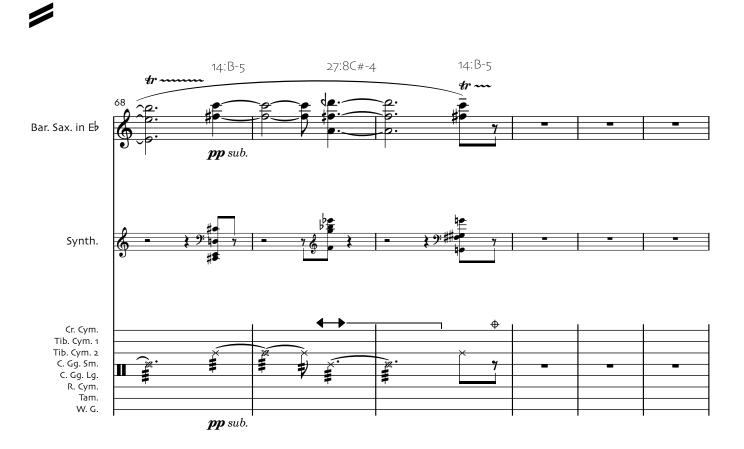


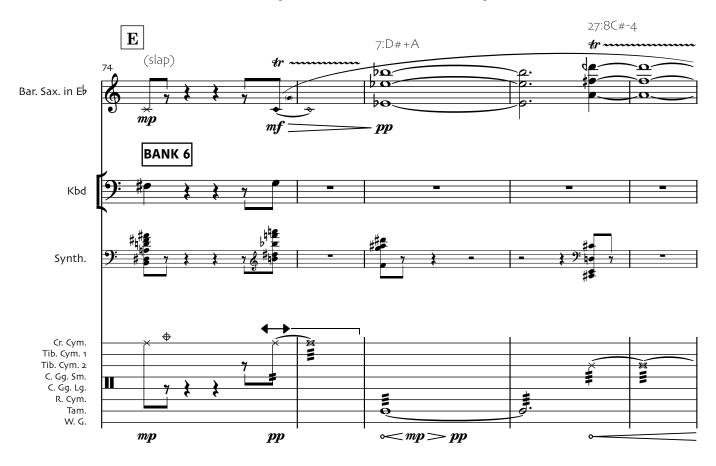


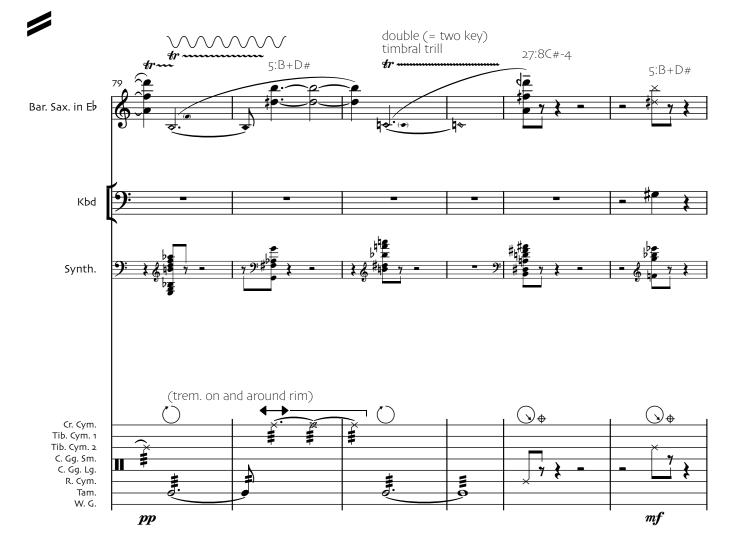


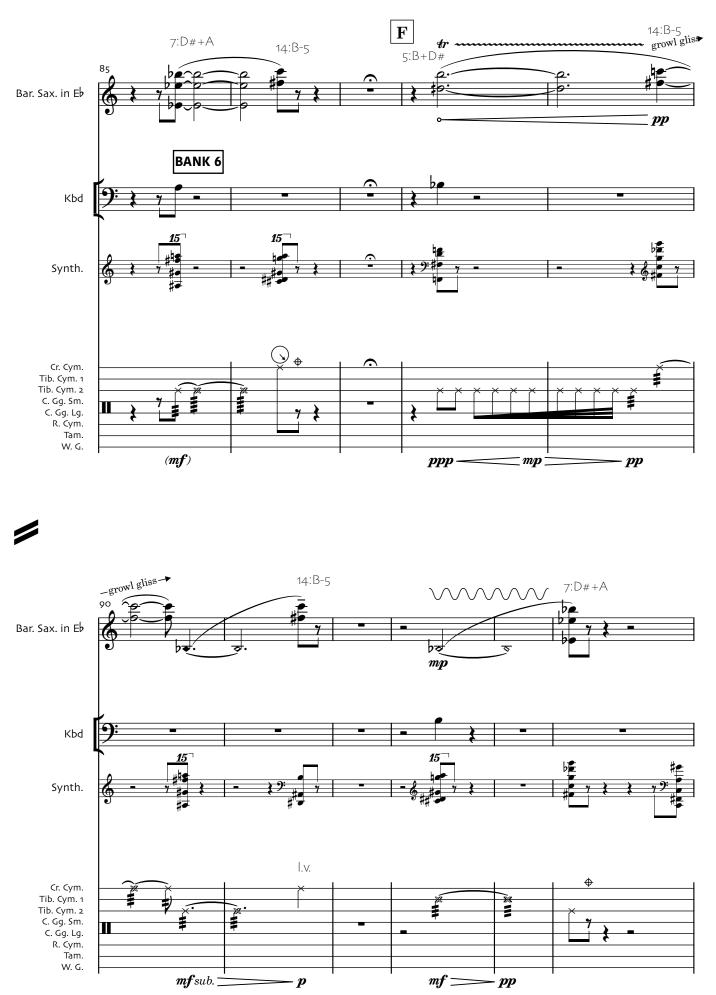
9. these signs forerun the death or fall of kings



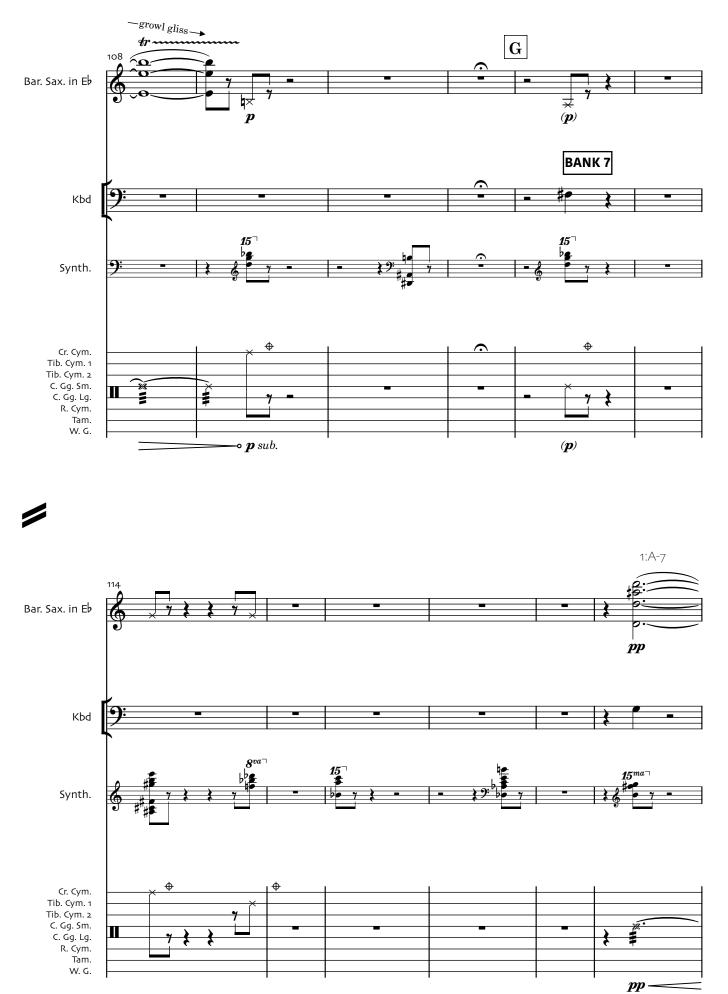


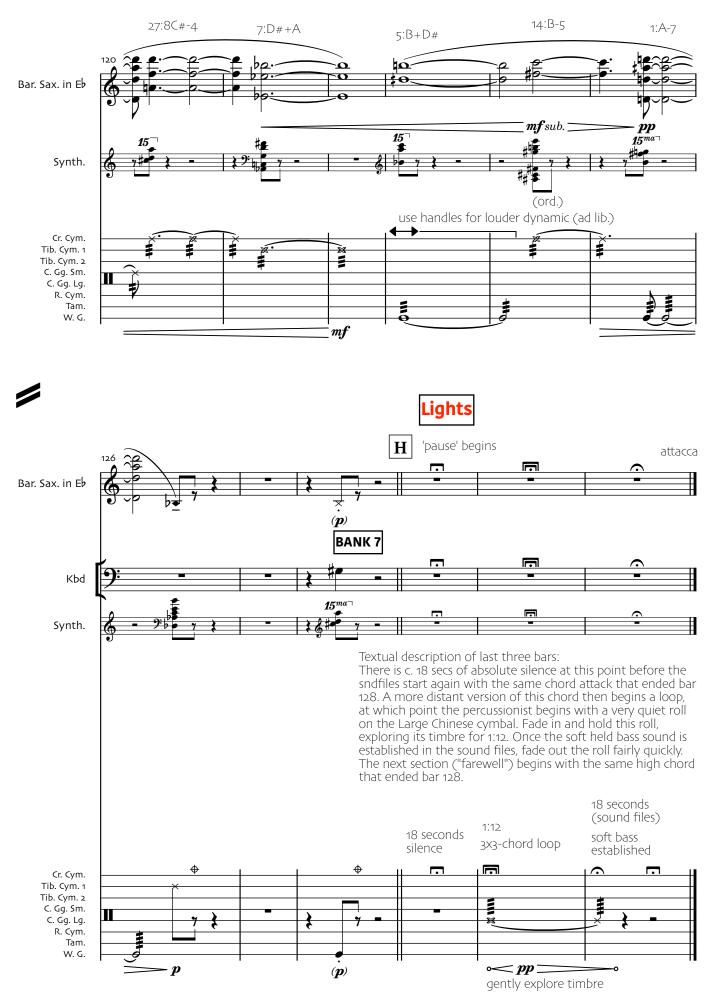








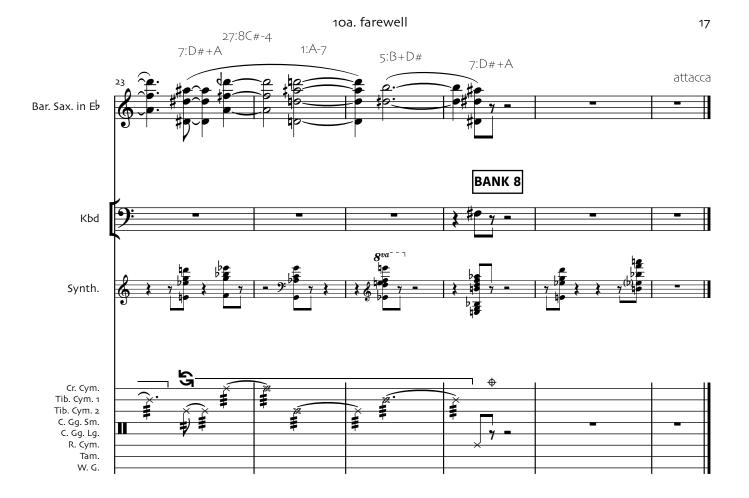




10a. farewell







10a. farewell: improvisation

michael edwards

Text summary/directions for notation below:

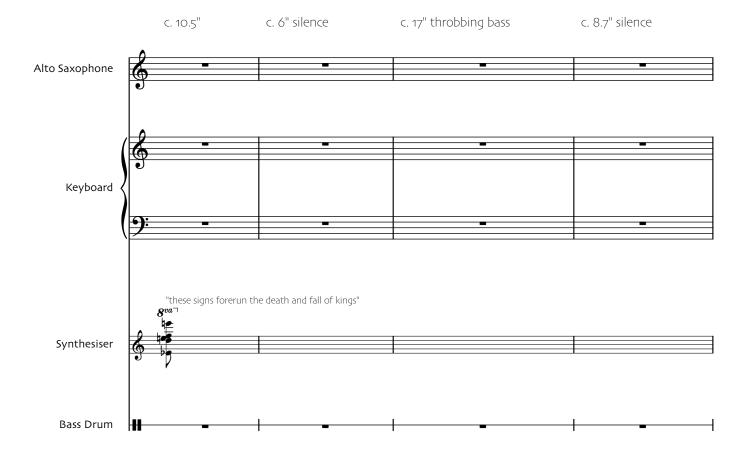
We begin with another chord attack in the sound files mixed with the voice reciting "these signs forerun the death and fall of kings".

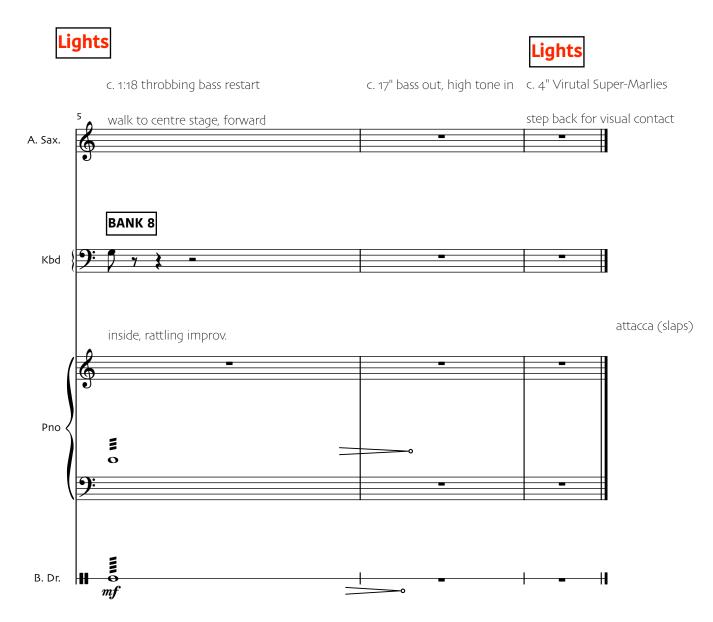
A pause of c. 6 seconds is followed by a throbbing bass sound in the sound files (c. 17 seconds), a pause of 8.7 seconds, then a restart of the throbbing bass.

On this restart, triggered by the pianist, the percussionist starts a fairly loud bass drum roll (soft sticks) and the pianist immediately moves to improvise loudly and fairly aggressively inside the piano, on the bass strings, with rattling metallic preparations that are easy to insert and remove. This lasts c. 1:18 before the bass drops out of the sound files and a high distorted tone enters (17 seconds).

At this point the percussion and piano stop playing, with a medium length decrescendo, letting any lingering sounds die out naturally. Meanwhile the saxophonist has walked to a new position central stage, quite far forward. He has a strong spotlight on his face and is ready to play the following slap tongues piece. Before doing so however, he takes some steps backwards so that he can visually coordinate his attacks with his trio partners.

"Virtual Super-Marlies" begins quite suddenly in the sound files and 4 seconds later the trio begins "our countrymen" (slap tongues).





10b. our countrymen are gone and fled: instructions/notes

Michael Edwards

November 11, 2022

Based partially or extrapolated from material already used in this project, *our countrymen are gone and fled* is not conventionally scored, rather the three trio voices are presented as parts only.

The dynamic is generally *ff* throughout but can be modulated *ad. lib.* for a few notes (e.g. on repeated notes/phrases, perhaps *sub. mp cresc.*).

Though the tempo is the same for all, there is no pressing need to coordinate attacks—it would in fact be almost impossible to do so. But through visual communication, some simultaneities should be attempted between two or even all three players at any point that appeals. This could also, perhaps, increase as the piece progresses.

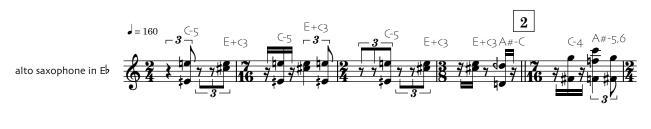
Three features are most salient:

- The percussion and saxophone parts are made out of a sequence of repeating cells. The cells are given on a separate sheet so that they may be practised in advance. The sequenced cells are fairly relentless but short pauses can be inserted by leaving out some notes, or even whole bars, when desired. When doing so, keep the material running mentally so that the part durations remain in approximate alignment by the end of the piece.
- 2. In the sound files there is a clear piano line that I call the *Virtual Super-Marlies*. She plays an extremely fast, scalebased, unbroken, single-line piano synthesis part which runs simultaneously against the trio. Both her and trio have approximately the same amount of material, in terms of duration.
- 3. Whilst the saxophonist uses exclusively slap tongue attacks, the other two players move gradually from their respective instruments onto samples of similar slap tongues, using a MIDI keyboard and a set of six percussion pads. The percussionist has a formal transition composed into her part but the pianist decides, from the point indicated in the score, when to insert samples from the keyboard, mixing these in between her piano chords— she may even play chord slaps at some point(s). The keyboard/sampler part is thus quite free and may loosely imitate or play simultaneously with the saxophonist and/or percussionist, but the piano chords should be retained (or at least attempted) for as long as possible. In both percussion and piano parts then, via different strategies, the slap samples (should) increase in number, to the point of dominating by the end of the piece (by which point the pianist really is improvising and the slap samples may be replacing the notated piano chords). Thus, at the end of the piece, the three players are slapping like crazy but the poor saxophonist cannot keep up with the samples at all. He may choose to stand and fight or give up in defeat. Indeed he may even choose to stand; to fight (with his instrument only, of course); to stand and walk off even. (Competence, incompetence, and their possible meanings in the context of technological attacks are thus musically-implicitly interrogated here, to the extent that this is at all possible.)

But that is not all: in the end, the trio must decide as a group whether they defeat the *Virtual Super-Marlies* or are defeated by her. This is a matter of who is left playing at the end. And that is left open to the performers.

Whoever wins, the next section begins immediately (i.e. no audible pause) by triggering a sound file of duration 1:49

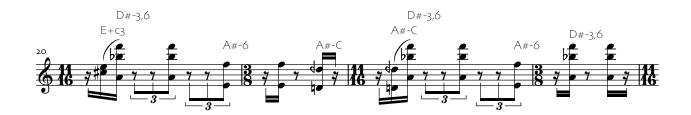
10b. our countrymen are gone and fled (alto saxophone cells)





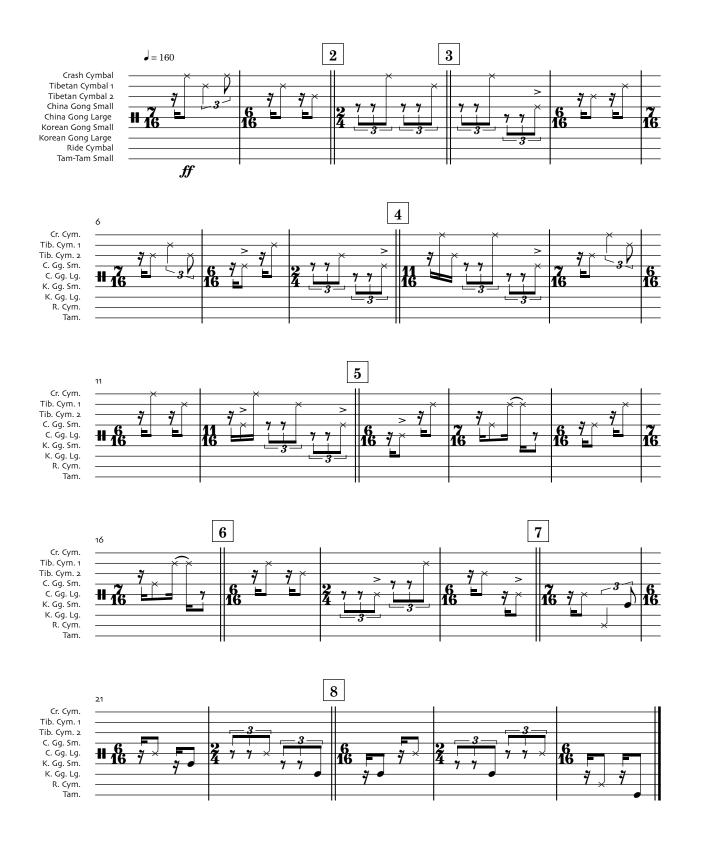








10b. our countrymen are gone and fled (percussion cells)



10b. our countrymen are gone and fled (alto saxophone)



















10b. our countrymen are gone and fled sax cells ordered mphonics

























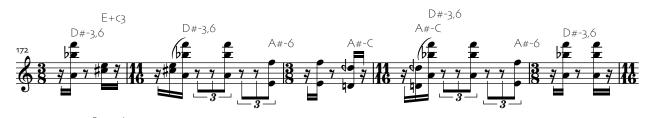








10b. our countrymen are gone and fled sax cells ordered mphonics







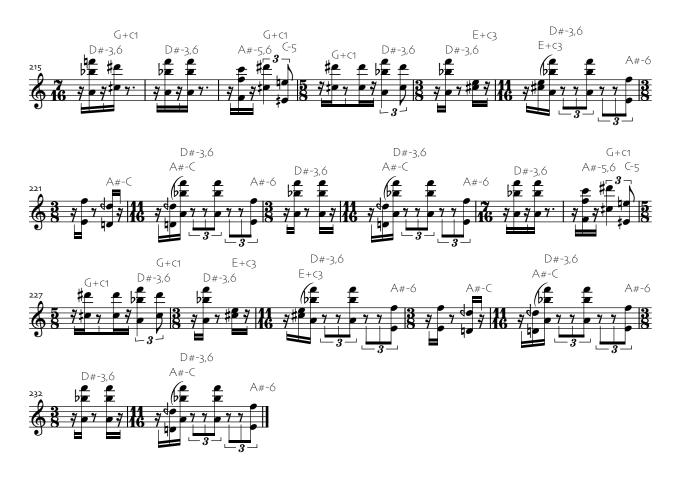




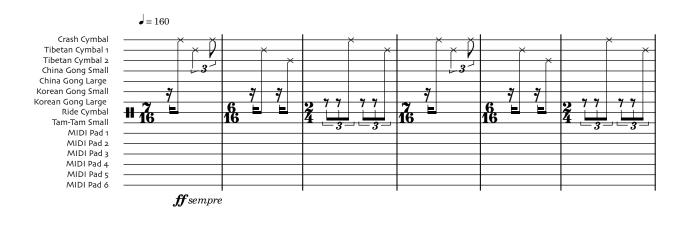


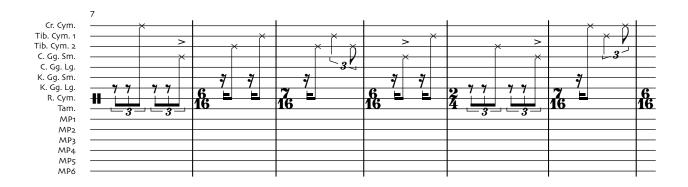


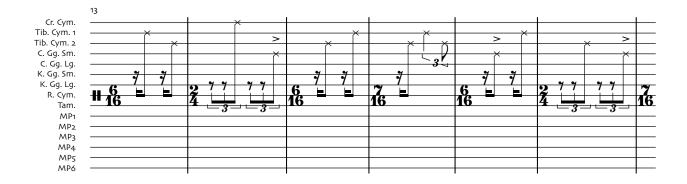




10b. our countrymen are gone and fled (percussion)

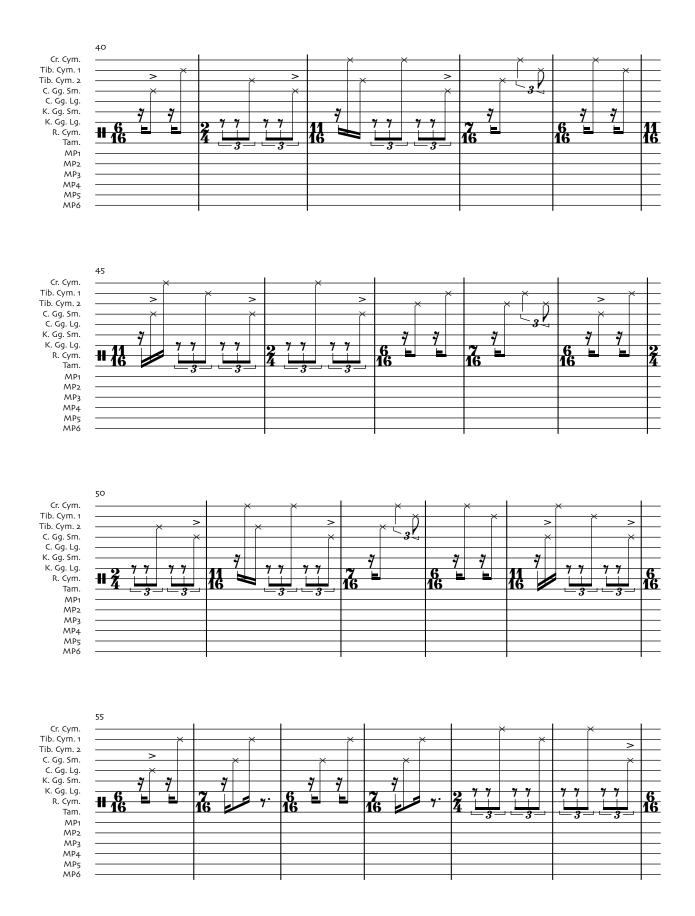






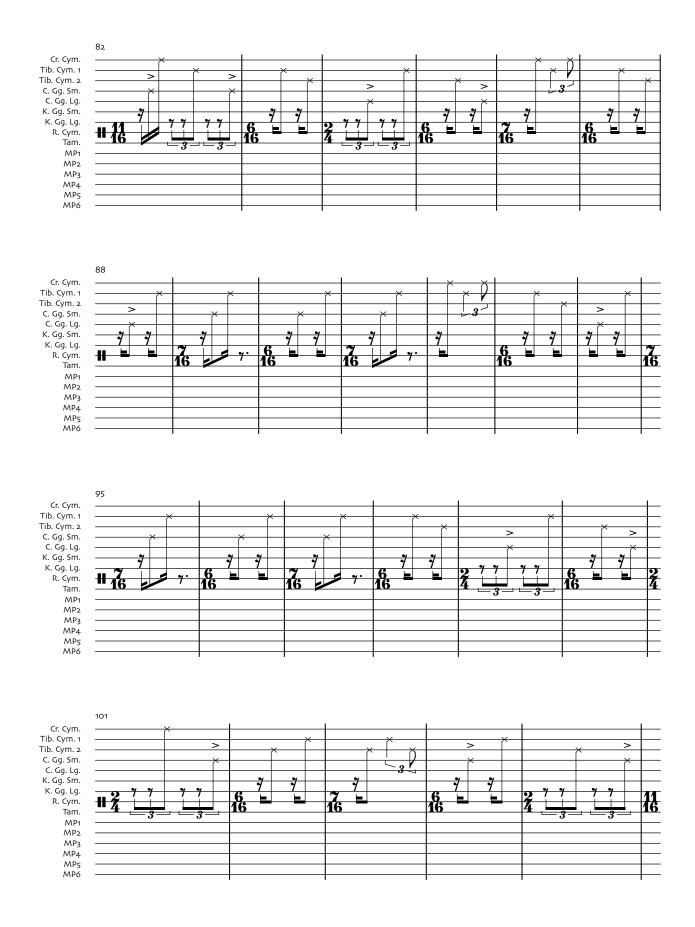


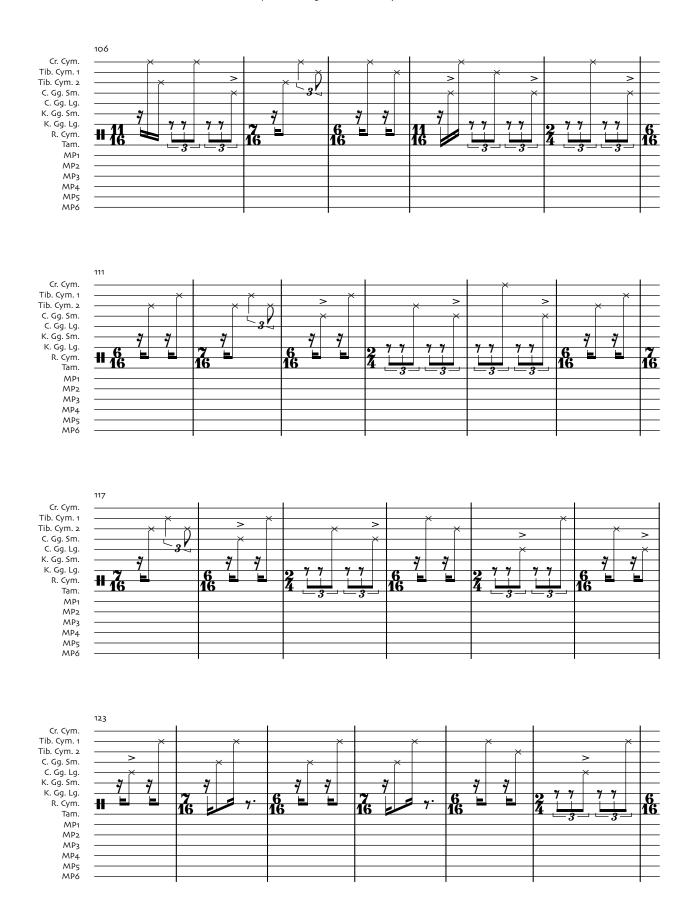
10b. our countrymen are gone and fled percussion cells ordered

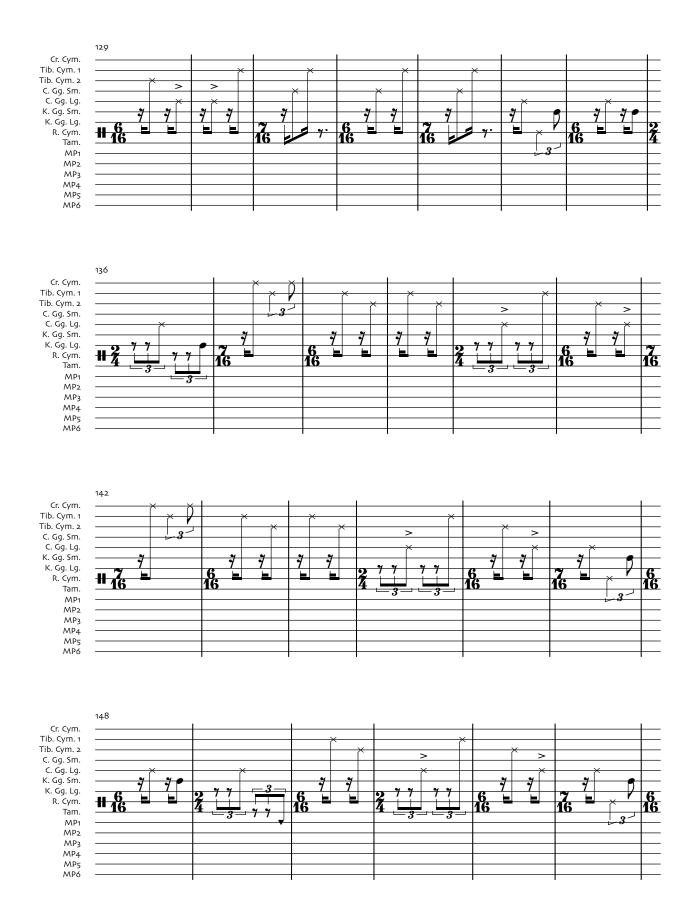


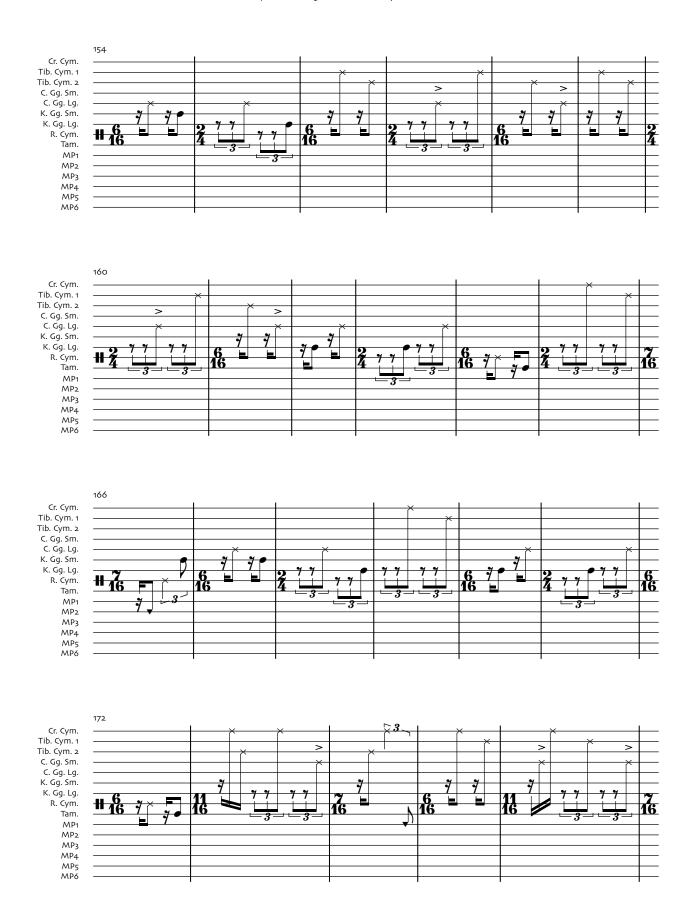
3







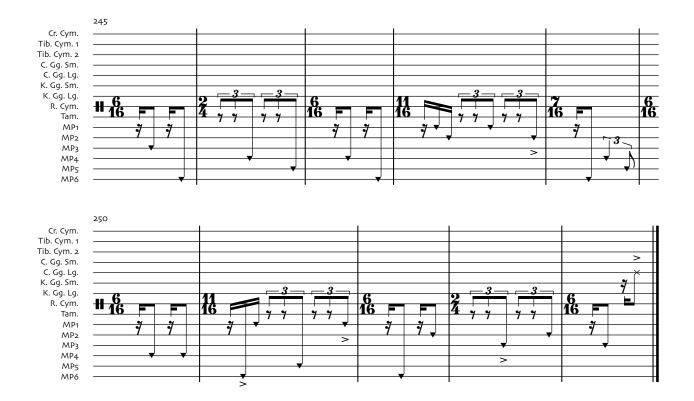












10b. our countrymen are gone and fled (piano)

michael edwards



















start adding sampler (see notes) using chromatic pitches from middle C-A on BANK o



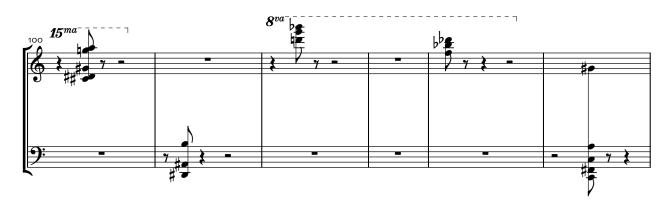


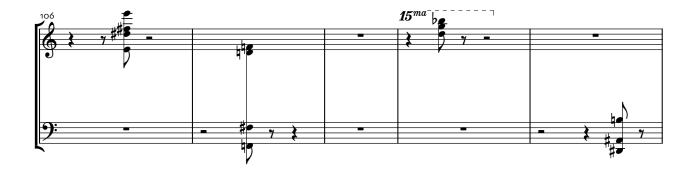












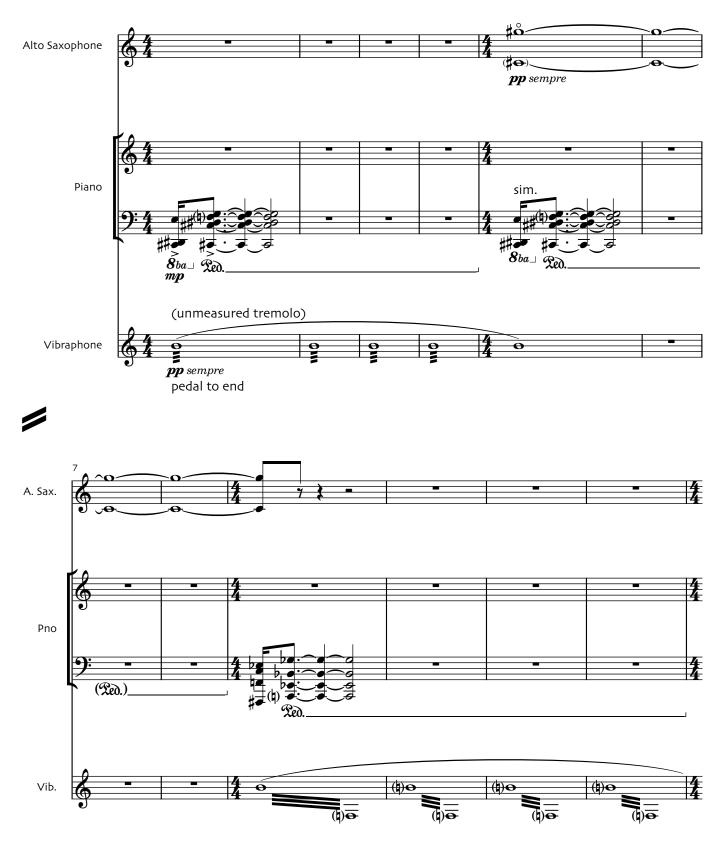
Lights



11a. as well assured

michael edwards

The sound file triggered at the end of the last piece should last 1:49 before this piece begins: start just before the end of the sound file, overlapping with it as it begins to fade out.



= 72 a little tentative, withholding

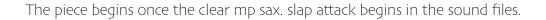


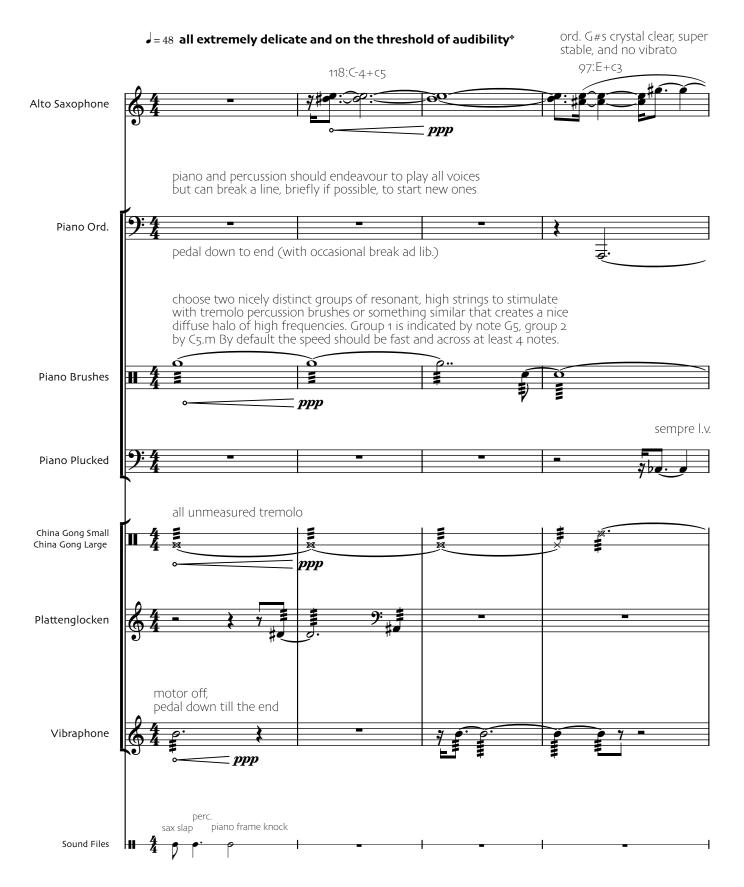
2

The sound file triggered here has a duration of 1:16.5

11b. richard their king is dead

michael edwards

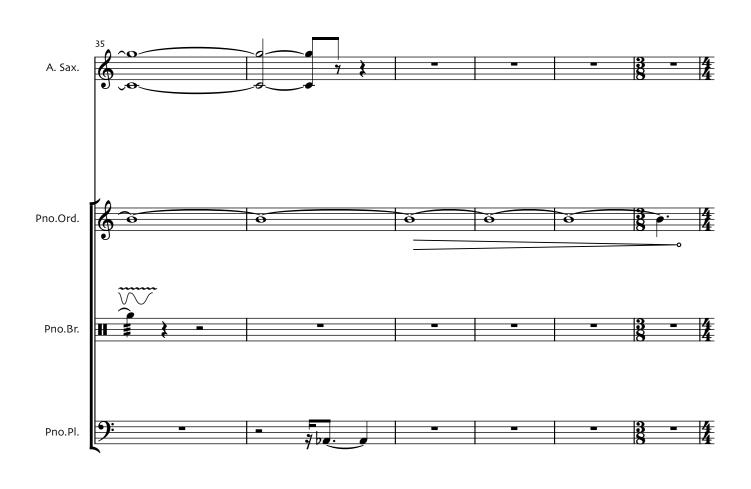


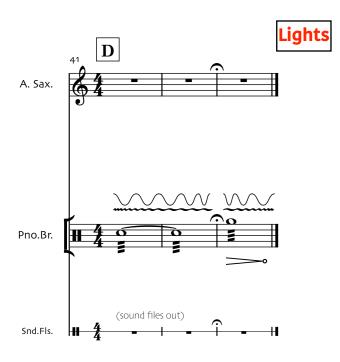






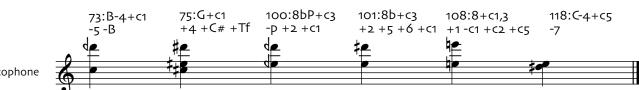






addendum to movement 5: all used multiphonics

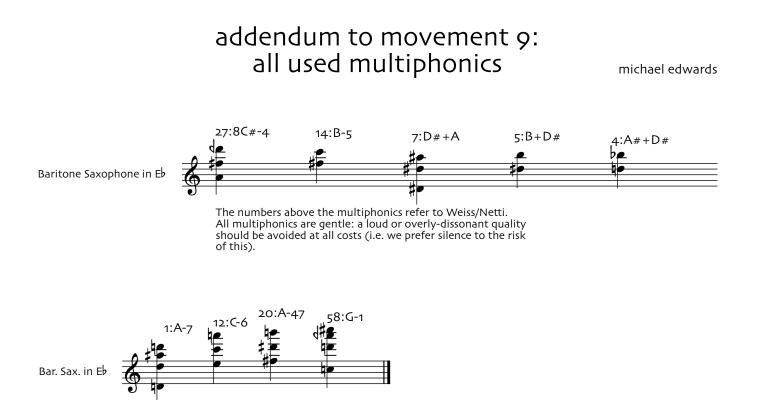
michael edwards



Alto Saxophone

The numbers above the multiphonics refer to Weiss/Netti. All possible finger changes linked to a multiphonic are shown on the line below the fingering. Pitches exact to nearest 1/4 tone. When a fingering change occurs (e.g. -5) the original sound is essentially retained but new sonic/pitch possibilities should be investigated (without diverging too much from the original). All multiphonics are gentle: a loud or overly-dissonant quality should be avoided at all costs (i.e. we prefer silence to the risk of this).

Thanks to Henrique Portovedo for providing information and recordings of these linking multiphonics.



addendum: in competence lighting summary

Michael Edwards

December 19, 2022

In general, and failing extensive lighting possibilities, the lighting should be 'atmospheric', with no need for music stand lights as all three performers read from iPads. Throughout the 1-hour through-composed work, pieces for trio plus electronics alternate with 'solo tape' (sound file) pieces. The lighting should be changed for the tape pieces if possible, e.g., made significantly darker and deep blue. In the details below there are some singular requirements but in general just three main light scenes: *full, dark & moody*, and *solo tape. full* indicates bright lighting (usually) on all three musicians; *dark & moody* indicates darker, atmospheric lighting on the ensemble: as the musicians will be playing, they should still be clearly visible; *solo tape* is darker again: the musicians do not have to be visible in this scenario.

Specific instructions/examples for each piece:

- 1 See beginning of score (*1. 'tis thought the king is dead; we will not stay*) for full details, excerpted here: The audience lights go down to black. The performance begins with a completely dark stage. The pianist is at her performance position under a spotlight. After some time she brings her finger down and triggers the first sound file and we cut to black. At about 4:10 a dark throbbing sound file begins. At this point the percussionist is at the bass drum. She starts a soft-stick roll and a little light is projected onto her. As the throbbing sound file becomes more rhythmicised, the light goes down to darkness again. At around 6:35 a spotlight appears gradually on the percussionist, who is now standing at her main position. She raises her arm and points to the ceiling with her mallet, poised to play. Between 7:26 and 7:29 she brutally starts the next piece, at which point the lights are cut and then go back up to maximum over a few seconds.
- 2 Full lighting on the percussion once the solo is underway. At the end, a high sound file is triggered and the saxophonist walks, playing, from his unobserved position to centre stage main playing position. A spotlight should follow him or be statically focused on his main playing position.
- 3 Ensemble *dark & moody* setting moving to *full* at letter B where the sopranino sax starts in earnest. Fade (c. 20 seconds) to *Solo tape* lighting for the 3-minute sound file at the end.
- **4** Ensemble *Dark & moody* at the beginning. From letter D, where the baritone saxophone starts playing very quietly, a 1-2 minute fade to red should begin
- 5 Slowly (e.g. 1 minute) fade to dark & moody from the previous red.
- 6 Remain *dark & moody*, also through to the end of the 1 minute sound file at the end.
- 7 Ensemble Full.
- 8 Ensemble *Full*. For the 1:25 sound file at the end, move quickly to *solo tape*.

- 9 Fade over c. 30 seconds to *dark & moody*. Remain so for *part 2: jabby chords*. At the end (letter H) an 18 second fade (i.e. during the silence) to *solo tape* (held for a further 1:30).
- 10a Begins with a quick fade to *dark & moody*. During the improvisation, the saxophonist walks to a new position central stage, quite far forward. He has a strong spotlight on his face, into which he looks (probably up). Before starting the next piece, he moves back to his normal playing position.
- **10b Ensemble** *Full* for the whole piece until the end where, during the sound file duration of 1:49, a transition should be made to *dark & moody*
- **11a** Ensemble *Dark & moody*.
- 11b Ensemble Dark & moody. At the very end there's a cut to black.