

st261.1.68



sumtone

:

**michael edwards**

who says this, saying it's me?

for tenor saxophone and  
quadraphonic sound files



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programme note

Michael Edwards (1968)  
who says this, saying it's me?  
for tenor saxophone and quadraphonic sound files (2009)

"Where would I go, if I could go, who would I be, if I  
could be, what would I say, if I had a voice, who says  
this, saying it's me?"

Samuel Beckett, opening of *Texts for Nothing 4*

Composers' concentration on the musical text and the general perception of composers as exclusive musical visionaries who set down notes which performers need only play in the right order and with the required precision in order to succeed, greatly obscures the role of the performer and all s/he brings to a piece of composed music. We can see this not just in terms of conscious interpretation, but centuries of mostly undocumented and implied performance practice; all the intricate details which need to be mastered to bring music to life, but which are not to be found on the page. Anyone who has heard a machine performance of a well-known piece immediately hears and understands this.

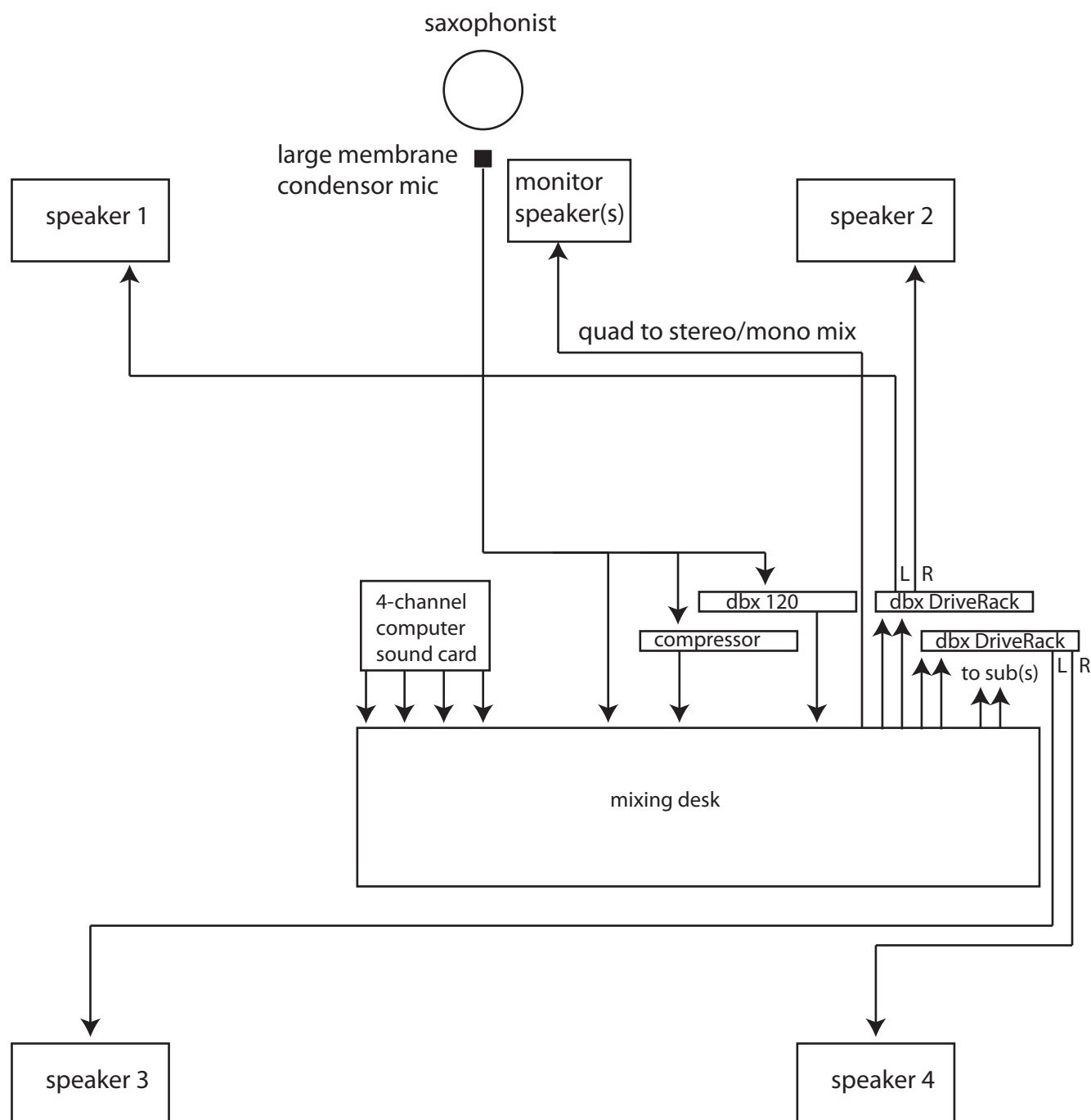
In more and more of my recent works I treat the score not as an ideal which must be achieved but as a system to strive against which leads to expressive yet often out-of-control situations. All the usual notational details are present and most are quite simple (this is not the New Complexity); there is nothing aleatoric or random about the score, but one or two of the performance parameters will be extreme. In this piece, the speed at which musical material is to be presented is such that the performer is forced to skim, to improvise even, to react to the score rather than simply (!) play it. The intention is for an unusual energy and tension to arise, along with unimaginable and perhaps unnotatable instrumental sounds.

The saxophone as we know it is slowly revealed through various more unusual views of the instrument, as a technological extension of the human vocal apparatus, and as a resonating tube. Each of the six sections proceed via the same but ever-shortening algorithm: a two-in-one-voice hoquet-like exchange of foreground and background notes, most often in different registers. Both saxophone and computer play through the same basic material but this is obscured in the former by a superimposed note-rejection procedure and in the latter by intentionally programmed rhythmic sloppiness. The obscuring reduces over the course of the piece until in the final section the computer and saxophone are locked in a uni-rhythmic and euphoric *mêlée* of sharply accented, ever-changing metrical assaults. Whose music you are hearing though—mine or the performer's—is open to question.



# Signal Schematic

who says this, saying it's me  
for tenor saxophone and computer



The incoming sax signal needs to be split (by unity gain aux sends or something similar) and sent to the dbx 120 and the compressor independently. The returns from these processors need to be controlled by separate faders. The compression used is extreme: high ratio, quick attack, high make-up gain; this is so that plenty of signal is available during the quiet sax sections without risking clipping or sudden loud attacks; it will also provide parallel compression by being used in conjunction with the uncompressed sax signal. The dbx 120 is a subharmonic synthesizer. It is used to process the sax signal only during section E.

The two dbx DriveRacks should be used mainly as feedback suppressors but may also be useful for tuning the room through their auto-eq function.

The one or two subwoofers will need to be controllable by separate mixing desk faders.

## performance requirements

- a four-channel playback system. most probably fed by the max/msp5 patch providing visual cues with the sound files (available from the composer); a Nuendo file with all meter and tempo information is also available for easy bar cueing. N.B. the four channels may be mixed onto two if only stereo playback is available.
- 1 high-quality (preferably large-membrane) microphone with high-quality pre-amp.
- 1 dynamic compressor: high-quality analogue hardware preferred.
- 1 dbx 120 subharmonic synthesiser (optional: see section E).
- 2 dbx DriveRacks or similar room-tuning/feedback suppressor system capable of processing a total of four channels (optional).
- 1 or 2 subwoofers capable of frequencies down to at least 30Hz; the levels for these should be on separate faders on the mixing desk so that they can be controlled during the performance.

# who says this, saying it's me?

michael edwards 2009

♩ = 151 / ♩ = 227\*2 Dark, suffocating, nervous, fighting, rushing

Tongue, closed\*1

Tenor Saxophone

\*1 Very closed embouchure, tongue closing reed against mouthpiece but varying position (ad lib); high pressure blowing--also varying--but mostly no air can get through instrument, thus tongue/mouth/reed noises escape at unpredictable intervals; highly amplified (compressed). Breathing should not be accompanied by release of embouchure, rather it should occur through the nose whenever necessary during/after a note (though embouchure can of course be released during rests); breathing should also be sonically audible and incorporated into the musical tension. The cross note heads represent fingering and a slight opening of the reed to allow air through the instrument and a louder sonic event (though this may be no more than a squeek and should be part of the uninterrupted breath, not a separately articulated event).

\*2 There is an implicit slight accelerando through every section; follow the pulse in the electronic sounds.

\*3 Quoted dynamics and dashed hairpins indicate intensity level and/or increase/decrease of breath pressure on the (closed) reed, with attendant increase/decrease of mouth noise etc.; in general more/less intensity/pressure/accidents.

\*4 All directions in red refer to events in the sound files and are intended to aid synchronisation.

\*5 The metric switch from ♩. beats to ♩. beats should be physically felt and evident in the musical tension: an increase in activity and speed up of pulse occurs in the e.g. 4/8 bars despite the fact that very little is conventionally audible. All through this first part of the piece you should be counting through and playing as if miming to some inaudible but highly energetic and rhythmic music.

\*6 Staccato implies a separate, short, tongue articulation.

\*7 Diamond note heads indicate air flowing more freely through the instrument: subtle at first, still 'pinched', only full-blown after section B.

\*8 Harmonic sign means try to inject a squeezed high tone into the sound; as with all these playing states, this does not have to be present and unchanging throughout the whole note, rather it is an approach to playing which creates sounds constantly in flux, including "accidents".



grace note click to wind tone + bass synth

bass synth

bass synth

key clicks

bass synth

key click + wind tone

higher synth

click + breath + bass synth

louder mouth noise + bass synth

grace note to louder key click

higher synth

mouth noise

high mouth squeek + higher synth

mouth noise

grace notes to louder key click

(synth wiggles)

breath

louder mouth noise (higher synth stops)

high mouth squeek

cut

Meno mosso: lighter, nimble

quiet dull attack (inhale)

short mid-tone sequence

(inhale)

new texture: high tone and "m'aidez"

\*1 Accented staccato implies a stronger attack with the tongue slightly releasing and allowing a pop or similar sound to escape.  
 \*2 *mtr* or "multi-trill" means trill on more than one note: concentrate on the normal two trill notes but intersperse the others indicated at irregular intervals.  
 \*3 Breathe in through instrument, audibly; lasts only for duration of note the arrow is attached to i.e. breathe out/play normally immediately on the following note.  
 \*4 "D" with an accent means "diaphragm accent" i.e. not tongued. "T" (for tongue) may be used to explicitly cancel diaphragm accents where the context is not clear.

270 (closed) open (subito)

275 (inhale) 280 long exhale

290 bass synth buzz short cresc inhale 295 exhale + long delay

300 (immediately breathy, no transition) click, delay line \*2 6 305 (synth note) (closed)

310 (quiet gliss) key click 315 (high sine) 320

325 (closed) synth wiggle (tongue click = TC) short quiet bass surge TC 330

335 key click 340 louder synth wiggle TC 3

345 TC 350 C-6 \*3 TC TC

355 TC TC

360 bass synth + 2 higher notes C-6 \*4 365 key click (inhale) 370

(inhale) key click + delay (exhale) (inhale) 375 (exhale)

\*1 Try to move from an open breath-only flutter tongue to a more closed, even squeaky flutter.

\*2 Quick runs are intended to be throwaway: like grace notes.

\*3 Multiphonic. Written note is one of the principle pitches in the sound. Fingering is indicated based on a basic low note fingering minus various fingers; SB<sub>i</sub>=side B<sub>i</sub>; F=Alt F. Just a hint of multiphonic at this stage i.e. mostly breath.

\*4 Over all normal noteheads the harmonic sign indicates a normal harmonic; the smaller note is the fingered pitch, the note above the sounding.

loud click and heavy bass

380

*mf*

D#-3 (♩ = 217)

B $\flat$ -C

385 (breath)

3 key clicks

click and surge (♩ = 220)

390

395

click

400

405 (inhale)

B $\flat$ -C

(inhale)

(exhale)

410

(still breathy; only very light tones until otherwise directed)

D#-3 (♩ = 223)

B $\flat$ -C

D#-3

D#-3

click

415 (inhale) +Tone<sup>\*1</sup>

C-4

click + delay (inhale)

(exhale)

420

click sequence

leggero

425

click

(exhale)

click + delay forced

2 clicks (exhale)

closed notes now becoming quite wild and unpredictable

430

(inhale)

*mf*

435

(♩ = 229)

D#-3

440

(inhale)

445 (inhale)

(exhale)

(♩ = 232)

2 (inhale)

450

(exhale)

2

(♩ = 235) (further inhale/exhales)

2

5

\*1 Add a little bit of pitched harmonic to the basic breathy sound.

5:05 ↓ big exhale + tone

Despite prevailing tempo, more relaxed, noble even

Meno mosso ♩ = 201



C-4

C-4\*2

465

↓ low click

ST<sup>\*1</sup>

470 (breath surge) C-6

480 2 485 bass thud

490 C-6 C-4 C-6 C-4 495 mid short tone C-6 C-4 500 high click + delay ST D#-3 D D#-2

510 high click + delay D#-3 C-6 B-4-C+F 515 C-6 B-4-C+F

520 B-4-C+F high click + delay + key click sequence 530 3 B-4-C+F D#-3

530 C-6 B-4-C+F D#-3 C-6 B-4-C+F 535 C-6 B-4-C+F sim C-4 Bb-C B-4-C+F

540 Bb-C Bb-6+SBb Bb-C Bb-6+SBb D#-3 B-4-C+F 545 Bb-6+SBb Bb-6+SBb B-4-C+F Bb-C B-4-C+F D#-3 D#-2

550 Bb-6+SBb Bb-C B-4-C+F D#-3 Bb-6+SBb Bb-C B-4-C+F 555 D D C-6 C-4 C-6 560 C-4 C-6\*4 + C-6 C-6

565 Bb-6+SBb Bb-6+SBb 565 Bb-6+SBb D#-3 D#-3 sim Bb-C Bb-6+SBb 570 click + delay Bb-6+SBb Bb-C Bb-6+SBb

580 Bb-C Bb-6+SBb Bb-C 2 sim D#-2 C-6 C-4 C-6

\*1 ST = subtone.

\*2 Unless a new multiphonic is indicated, always play the last notated.

\*3 Over any held multiphonic, always 'modulate' (synthesiser-like) the tone ad lib by varying the amount of fundamental and harmonic content. The extent of this modulation should be reflected by the prevailing dynamic. Where deemed appropriate, a growl tone may also be added.

\*4 The + sign indicates slap tongue.



585 (high whirring sound louder and gliss) ↓ 6 louder bass thuds

short high + delay

590 C#-5

595 B-4-C+F

short high + delay

(♩ = 204)

600 D#-3 Bb-6+SBb

605 sim Bb-C

short mid tone + delay

dance-like; delicate

mid tone then short high + delay

615 C-4 D#-3

620 C#-5 C-6

key clicks

♩ = 209

bass thud

630 Bb-6+SBb sim

635 D#-3 D#-2

mid click + reverb

B-4-C+F

breathy clicks (with pre-echo 2 ♩s earlier)

♩ = 212

mid tone + delay

645 C#-5 C#-5+E C#-5

650 C#-5 C-6

655 Bb-6+SBb Bb-C C-4

short mid tone + delay

660 (warm slight surge) (♩ = 217) (repeated knocking; bass pulses; cresc. scraped string sound leads into next section)

\*1 With this multiphonic the high E key must be played with the thumb.  
 \*2 It goes without saying that these high harmonics are targets only and that neighbouring harmonics might sound instead of those written--always strive though, the attempt is important to the music

7:36 **D** key clicks Full on, fairly wild  
Meno mosso ♩ = 191

680 (♩ = 223) short mid tone + delay

685 C-6 key click + delay

690 C-6

700 C-4 B $\flat$ -C C-6

710 C-4 N click + delay knock + delay

715 C-6 B $\flat$ -C C-6

720 C-6 B $\flat$ -C C-6 (held mid-high tone) knock + delay then sub pp

730 C $\sharp$ -5 C-6 C $\sharp$ -5

735 C $\sharp$ -5+E C $\sharp$ -5 C $\sharp$ -5+E short mid tone + delay

740 C $\sharp$ -5 C-6 C $\sharp$ -5+E click + delay

745 C $\sharp$ -5 D

750 B $\flat$ -6+SB $\flat$  D $\sharp$ -3 C-6 D $\sharp$ -3 ST

755 B $\flat$ -6+SB $\flat$

760 C $\sharp$ -5+E C $\sharp$ -5 B $\flat$ -6+SB $\flat$  knock

765 C-6 B $\flat$ -6+SB $\flat$  C $\sharp$ -5 B $\flat$ -6+SB $\flat$  C $\sharp$ -5 C $\sharp$ -5+E sub f: 3 bass pulses

770 (sax phrase) 2 770 knock + delay

775 775 knock + delay

780 D $\sharp$ -3

\*1 A thick wavy line indicates a growl tone i.e. sing/growl tone in throat whilst playing.

\*2 N means normal fingering for a note i.e. to clarify after e.g. a harmonic.

\*3 No octave key on the octaves. Where an octave is indicated with two normal size note heads, aim for a 50/50 mix of fundamental and first harmonic.

8

780

knock + delay

785

$p < f$

790

piano delay + sub pp

mouth noise

knock + delay

795

795

800

short low tone + delay

knock + delay

(silly bass synth tune)

805

$ff$

$sfp$

knock + delay

810

mid tone + delay

$\text{♩} = 194$

$B\flat - C$

815

knock + delay + texture change (p)

2

2

2

825 ♩ = 196 knock \*1 + bass synth (begins exchange with sax) B $\flat$ -C 830 knock + delay C $\sharp$ -5

840 C $\sharp$ -5+E 2 ♩ = 198 knock B-4-C+F C $\sharp$ -5 sim mp

840 3 3 C $\sharp$ -5 mid tone + delay B-4-C+F 2 mp

850 ♩ = 201 C $\sharp$ -5 mid tone + delay 855 2

860 click + delay B-4-C+F 860 203 click + delay noisy bass synth 865

875 short mid high tone + delay 206 875 5 \*\*\* (toneless slaps) pp

880 short mid high tone + delay B-4-C+F 880 2 pp B-4-C+F

885 bass synth 208 885 crackles fade in 211

\*1 Until letter E: slaps no longer so aggressive: more clicks than loud snaps.  
 \*2 From here until \*\*\* reduce the pitch content until all slaps are toneless hollow clicks.



**E** Close to mic; deeply resonant **Engineer: fade in subharmonic synthesiser**  
Meno mosso ♩ = 181

890 crackles end; piano tone starts 895 short high tone + delay (air only)

*pp*

(ringing rhythmic high sines)

900 TC (= tongue clicks)

905 key click + delay

910 *mf* *pp* key click + delay 915

920 *mf* key click 925

930 *mtr* *pp* *mp* *pp* key click 935 *mtr* TC *pp* *mp*

940 *pp* *mp* *pp* *ppp* key click 945

950 key click; texture change: bass synth held grunt 955 click + delay

960 key click (breath attacks) TC *mf* *pp* *mp* *pp* key click (bass synth) 965

970 key click TC TC TC TC *pp* *mf* *f* *pp* key click + breath noise 975

985 TC TC TC TC *p* *pp* *mf* key click (breaths stop)

990 (delays) TC TC TC TC TC TC *f* *ff* *p* *f* *p* key click 995

1000 2 key click

\*1 Square noteheads indicate exaggerated key click noise only i.e. no tone unless otherwise indicated. Dynamics indicate the sounding level, so adjust effort to achieve those indicated. To maximise the resonance the reed should be closed with the tongue and the fingered note approached from a fingering diametrically opposed i.e. from all fingers off to all on or vice-versa. From the start of this section, the engineer should quickly but unobtrusively fade in the subharmonic synthesiser creating deep bass resonances from the key clicks. The subharmonics last until the beginning of section F.

1005 **key click; delay** *mtr*  $(\text{♩} = 183)$  **(high rhythmic sines)**

1010 **f**

Detailed description: This staff contains measures 1005 to 1010. It starts with a treble clef and a 3/8 time signature. A red arrow points to the first measure with the text 'key click; delay'. The music features a melodic line with various rhythmic patterns, including triplet eighth notes and sixteenth notes. There are several 'TC' (Time Change) markings above the staff. Dynamics include *p*, *mp*, and *f*. A tempo marking of  $(\text{♩} = 183)$  is present. The word 'mtr' is written above the staff with a wavy line underneath it. The staff ends with a double bar line and a '2' above it, indicating a time change to 2/4.

1015 **key click + delay** **(high rhythmic sines)**

1020  $(\text{♩} = 185)$

Detailed description: This staff contains measures 1015 to 1020. It starts with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. A red arrow points to the first measure with the text 'key click + delay'. The music continues with rhythmic patterns similar to the previous staff. Dynamics include *p*. A tempo marking of  $(\text{♩} = 185)$  is present. The staff ends with a double bar line.

1025 *mtr* **key click** **TC TC**

1030 **f**

Detailed description: This staff contains measures 1025 to 1030. It starts with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. A red arrow points to the first measure with the text 'key click'. The music features rhythmic patterns with 'TC' markings. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, and *p*. The staff ends with a double bar line and a 'p' dynamic marking.

1035 **2 key clicks + breath** **TC -**

1040 **p**

Detailed description: This staff contains measures 1035 to 1040. It starts with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. A red arrow points to the first measure with the text '2 key clicks + breath'. The music features rhythmic patterns with 'TC' markings. Dynamics include *p*. The staff ends with a double bar line and a 'p' dynamic marking.

1045 **knock** *mtr*  $(\text{♩} = 189)$  **2 key clicks**

1055 **p**

Detailed description: This staff contains measures 1045 to 1055. It starts with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. A red arrow points to the first measure with the text 'knock'. The music features rhythmic patterns with 'TC' markings. Dynamics include *f* and *p*. A tempo marking of  $(\text{♩} = 189)$  is present. The staff ends with a double bar line and a 'p' dynamic marking.

1060  $(\text{♩} = 192)$  **3 key clicks** **TC** 1065

1065 **p**

Detailed description: This staff contains measures 1060 to 1065. It starts with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. A red arrow points to the first measure with the text '3 key clicks'. The music features rhythmic patterns with 'TC' markings. Dynamics include *p*. A tempo marking of  $(\text{♩} = 192)$  is present. The staff ends with a double bar line and a 'p' dynamic marking.

1070 **2 key clicks + delay** **TC** 1075

1075 **ff**

Detailed description: This staff contains measures 1070 to 1075. It starts with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. A red arrow points to the first measure with the text '2 key clicks + delay'. The music features rhythmic patterns with 'TC' markings. Dynamics include *f* and *ff*. A tempo marking of  $(\text{♩} = 192)$  is present. The staff ends with a double bar line and a 'ff' dynamic marking.

1080 **2 key clicks** **TC** 1085

1085 **p**

Detailed description: This staff contains measures 1080 to 1085. It starts with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. A red arrow points to the first measure with the text '2 key clicks'. The music features rhythmic patterns with 'TC' markings. Dynamics include *p*. The staff ends with a double bar line and a 'p' dynamic marking.

1090 **key click + delay** **(noise filter gliss)** **TC** 1095

1095 **p**

Detailed description: This staff contains measures 1090 to 1095. It starts with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. A red arrow points to the first measure with the text 'key click + delay'. The music features rhythmic patterns with 'TC' markings. Dynamics include *p*. A tempo marking of  $(\text{♩} = 196)$  is present. The staff ends with a double bar line and a 'p' dynamic marking.

1095 **key click + delay** **(continuous high noise)** 1100 (GP) **Engineer: fade out subharmonic synthesiser**

1100  $(\text{♩} = 199)$  **8**

Detailed description: This staff contains measures 1095 to 1100. It starts with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. A red arrow points to the first measure with the text 'key click + delay'. The music features rhythmic patterns with 'TC' markings. Dynamics include *p*. A tempo marking of  $(\text{♩} = 199)$  is present. The staff ends with a double bar line and a 'p' dynamic marking.

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12:31 ↓ short high FM drum attack (applies to all following cues unless otherwise indicated)

**F** Meno mosso ♩ = 169 Rough tone (slight growl)

*f* ben marcato

1110

click + delay ↓ (FM drum)

1115

bass pulse ↓ (FM drum) 1125 (more extreme growl)

1130 (held whirring) 1135

1140 knock + delay ↓

1145 *p* sub e cresc

1150

1155 *tr* *ff*

1165 (held whirring) *mf* cresc

1170 very high short note + delay ↓

1175 *ff* *p* *ff*

1180 very high short note + delay ↓

1185 *sfzp* *f*

1190 "m'aidez"

1195 *sfzp* *f* *Bb-C* \*2 gliss.

1200 C#-5 B-4+C+F

1205 *f* *mtr*

\*1 Ossia: play the higher notes with the usual fingerings instead of as harmonics; however it is preferable to attempt the harmonics and fail occasionally than just to play safe. The most important thing is that the jumps from high to low result in a feeling of two-part counterpoint; if the harmonics are not sure enough and the fundamentals come through too much or often, this will be destroyed; in that case the normal high note fingerings are preferable.

\*2 The gliss here refers to the pitch of the growled/sung tone though a lip gliss would be effective too.

mtr  
 1210  
 1215  
 1220 (♩ = 171)  
 mtr  
 gliss.  
 1225  
 1230  
 (♩ = 173)  
 1235  
 1240 (bass synth rub)  
 1245 (♩ = 175)  
 bass synth cutoff sub p; pulses  
 1250  
 1260 (bass synth rub)  
 1265 (+ delay) (♩ = 179)  
 1270  
 1275  
 1280  
 1285 (♩ = 182) (distant delays; pp)  
 14  
 (♩ = 182)  
 ff  
 sim  
 1305  
 1310  
 (♩ = 188)  
 2 mid-low synth notes descending semitone