Nocturne

Written for and with Tom Torrisi to whom I am indebted

Guitar and electronics

Duration: c. 8′

A. Keegan-Bole

06.01.15

Programme note:

This night music is indebted to a radio broadcast – *Closedown* – heard each morning just before 1am on BBC Radio 4 in the UK. It is a series of rather unusual announcements framed by musical fragments which have a firm place in the British cultural landscape and which have been referred to as a "secular prayer" (Katy Guest). I find it deeply and pleasurably sedative. For a time, dozing through its elements was a nightly ritual I enjoyed and that helped me deal with mild insomnia.

Mostly for solo guitar, the first section of *Nocturne* sets up a strange soundworld that hints at a waltz and juxtaposes found sounds of the *Shipping Forecast* (an abstract, strangely poetic weather forecast) and *Sailing By* (a light orchestral tune written by Ronald Binge) with the guitar. I think of it as a lullaby that drifts between the worlds of consciousness and sleep accompanied by the comfort, peril and/or escapism found in the poetry of the *Shipping Forecast*.
The second section dwells in an eerie sine-tone world that comes from the Greenwich Time Signal 'pips' (six sine tone beeps that mark each hour on BBC radio). To me there is a latent activity inherent in the silences between the pips and it is this imaginary space that I hope to explore.

My thanks go to Tom Torrisi who had a huge part to play in creating this music. His hard work was only matched by his patience!

AKB

Performance notes:

- Numbers in boxes on the tape stave refer to the tape cue number. The tape is moved on in sections by pressing the pedal. The pedal should be pressed as per the rhythmic position of the boxed number in the score – with leeway for interpretation. In free sections the tape part should feel plastic enough to mould to interpretive pacing of the music.

- Natural harmonics are always given the string and fret number and are written one octave above sounding pitch in accordance with regular guitar octave transposition.

- Artificial harmonics show the fretted pitch one octave above (in accordance with regular guitar octave transposition). They will sound one octave above written.

  [*Since so many harmonics of both types are used they are further distinguished by the addition of art. (for artificial harmonics) and nat. (for natural harmonics).]*

- Feathered beams with note-heads attached indicate an *accel./rit.* articulating the number of note-heads indicated.

- Feathered beams with no note-heads indicate an *accel./rit.* with an indefinite number of articulated notes.

- Crossed note-heads are explained on a case by case basis in the score, as are other unusual note-heads.

- Commas are used to indicate a brief 'breath'. These are either to allow time for a hand movement or technique or just as phrasing.

- Regular *fermatas* indicate a medium pause but I would not expect a uniform approach – use them with interpretive freedom.

- Square *fermatas* indicate a long pause – normally long enough for the guitar resonance to fade.

Technical notes:

Software:

- This piece requires bespoke software created in the *Max* environment. The up-to-date software package and details of how to run it can be found and downloaded at www.arthurkeeganbole.com (follow links to the download page).
- To access the software, provide the following code in a form at the webpage above:

  Sc1SBy3319

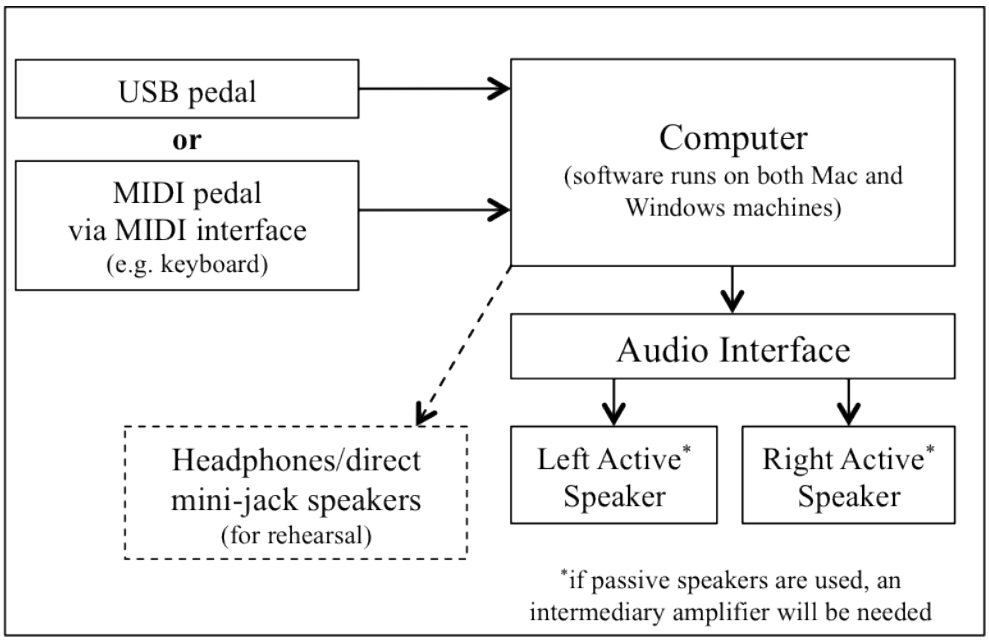
  Within five days of submitting this code (normally within 24 hours) you will receive an automated e-mail with instructions – because it is automated, it may be directed to your junk folder.

- There are labelled screenshots of the software interface on the next two pages. Further details and instructions are included with the download.

Hardware and sound:

- The electronic component of this piece plays multiple soundfiles (whose pacing is controlled by the guitarist via a foot pedal) that are intermittently processed live. This means the guitarist requires a foot-pedal, which can be either MIDI or USB. The pedal does not need to be fancy… it does however need to be quiet!
- Playback should be via two full range speakers positioned with the performer – underneath their chair or just behind them. The aim is to bring the guitar and tape soundworlds together – as far as possible the tape sounds should feel as though they emanate from the guitar (particularly true in the second half of the piece).
- The speakers should face fairly wide, roughly at an angle of 120°, in order to accentuate the stereo information despite their proximity.
- Unless absolutely necessary (due to the size of the auditorium) the guitar should not be amplified.

Signal Path and Kit List:



Performance Interface Explained

Click the X to turn audio on/off

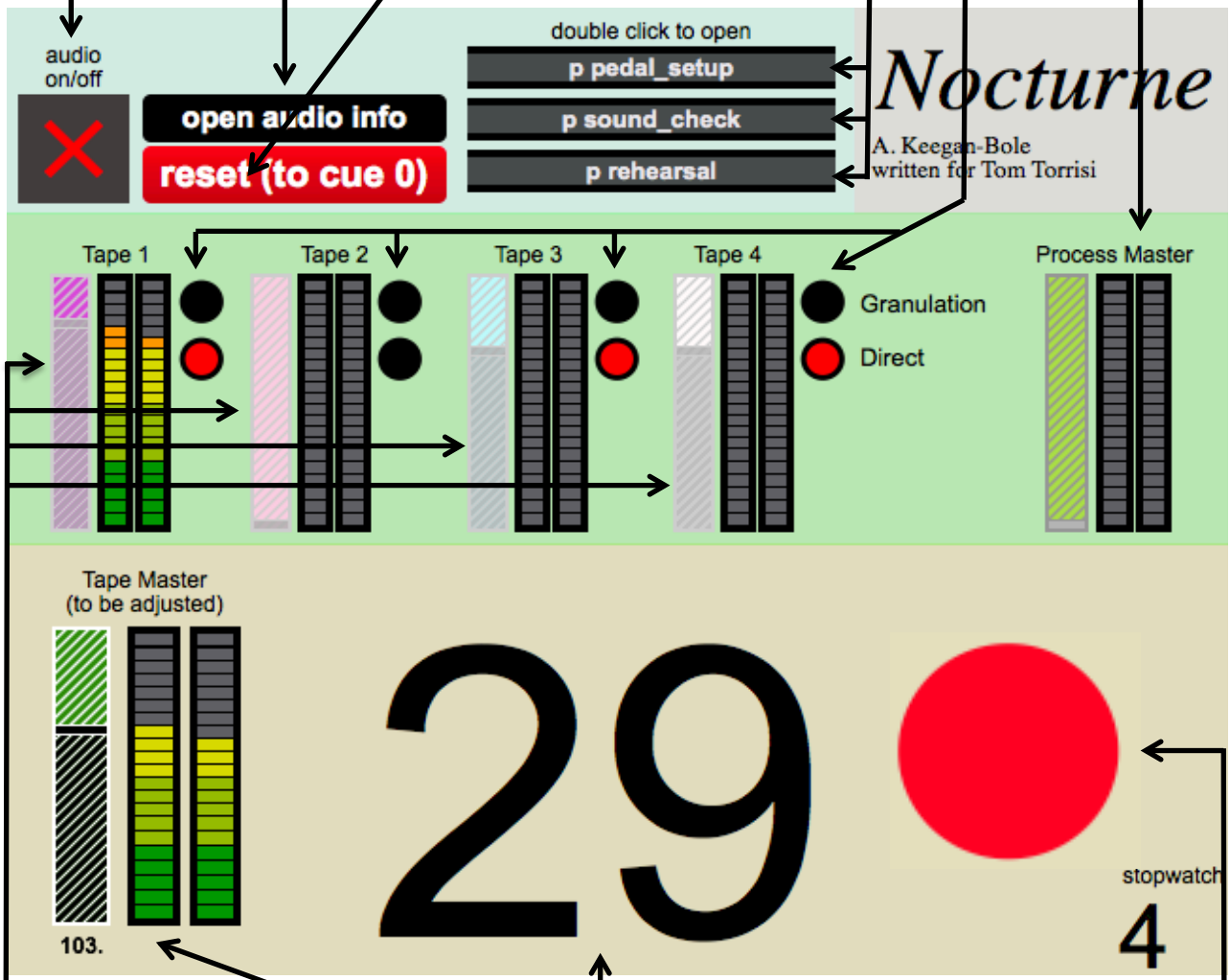
Reset the programme ready for performance

shows whether the tape audio signal is being processed by granulation or is going direct to the output

Audio info shows all audio routing

Double-clicking these boxes opens new windows that aid set-up and rehearsal (outline of each below)

Shows the level of granular sound



Displays the changing levels of the four tape parts. This may aid understanding of the real-time relationship between the score and the tape.

This is the master output. Gain control on the left and meter reading for both channels on the right. In conjunction with the main system output this must be set to an appropriate level before performance

Current cue number (correlates with score).

A stopwatch appears at cue 1 and 29 to aid synchronization

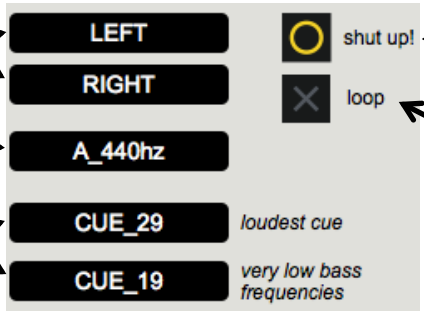
Red light flashes when pedal is activated

p sound_check sub-patch

A guitar's single pitch (A) will be sent to the left or right speaker

A sine tone (A440) will be sent to both speakers

Check levels and range of speakers with the loudest and lowest cues



Stop the sound (click in the circle)

Click the X to switch between one-instance playback and looped

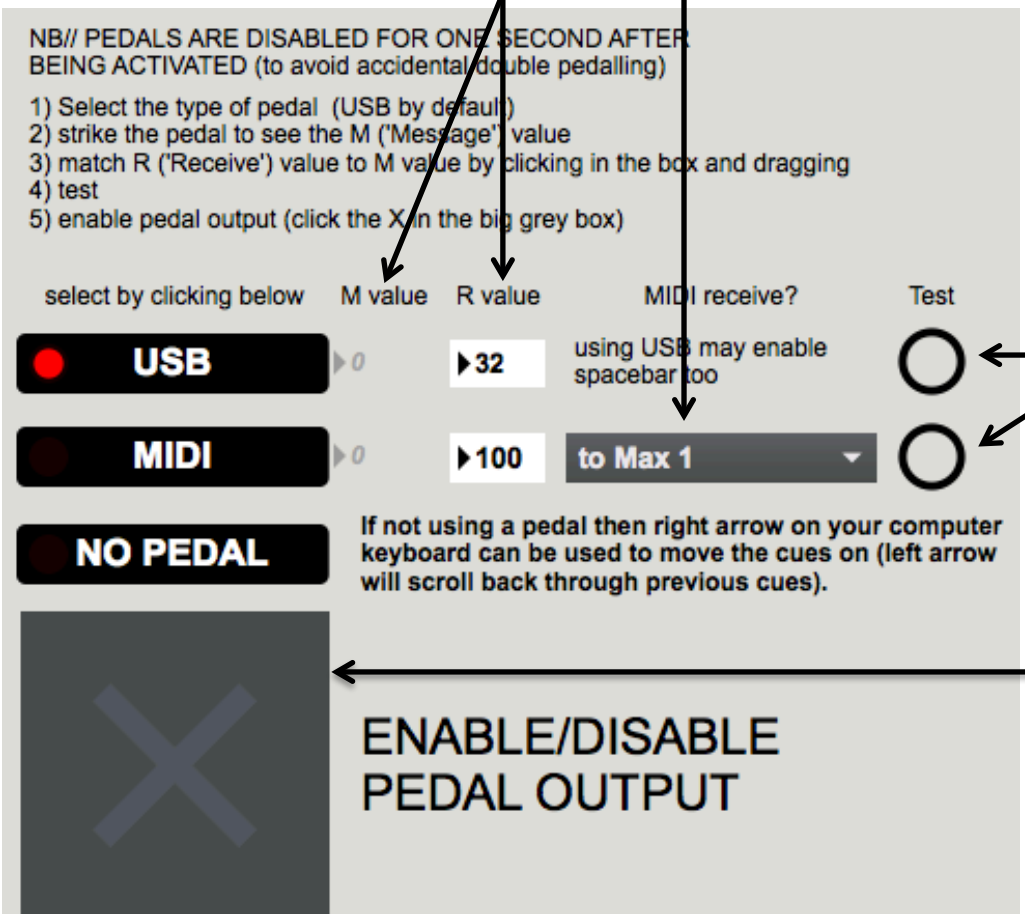
p pedal_setup sub-patch

Select the type of pedal you are using

M & R value:
When pedal is pressed, the M value appears in grey. Click the R value number and drag up or down to match the M value.

If using MIDI pedal, the port that is receiving MIDI data must be set from the drop-down menu before any signal will be received

Once R value matches M value, these circles will flash when the pedal is pressed



Click the X to enable/disable pedal output

NB// AS A PRECAUTION AGAINST ACCIDENTAL DOUBLE-TRIGGER, THE PEDAL WILL BE DISABLED FOR ONE SECOND AFTER EACH ACTIVATION

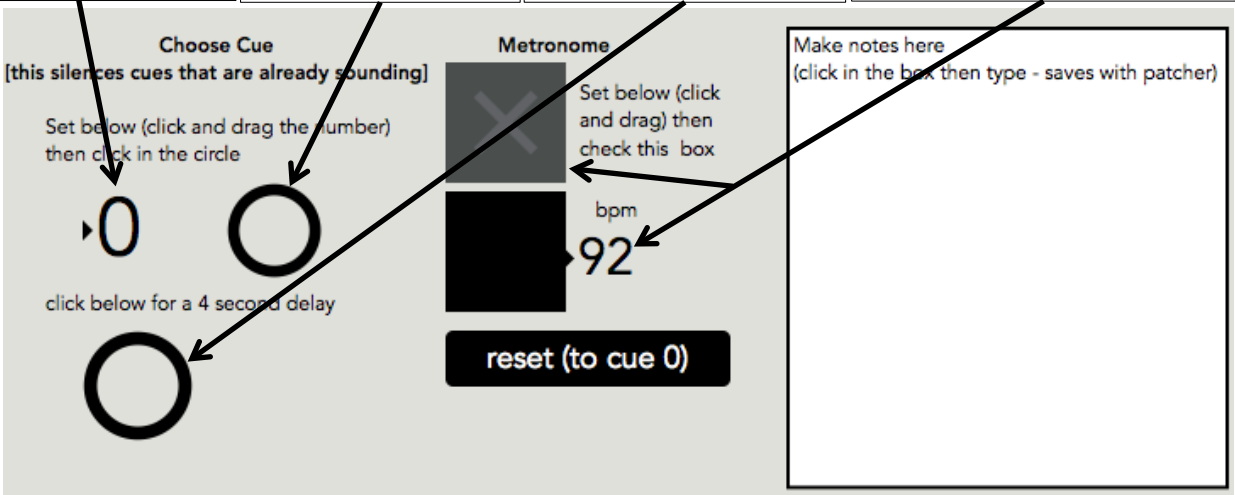
p rehearsal sub-patch

Click the number and drag up or down to select cue to start from

To activate selected cue immediately, click in this circle

To begin from selected cue with a 4 second delay click in this circle

For metronome, select bpm (click &drag the number) then click the X to start/stop

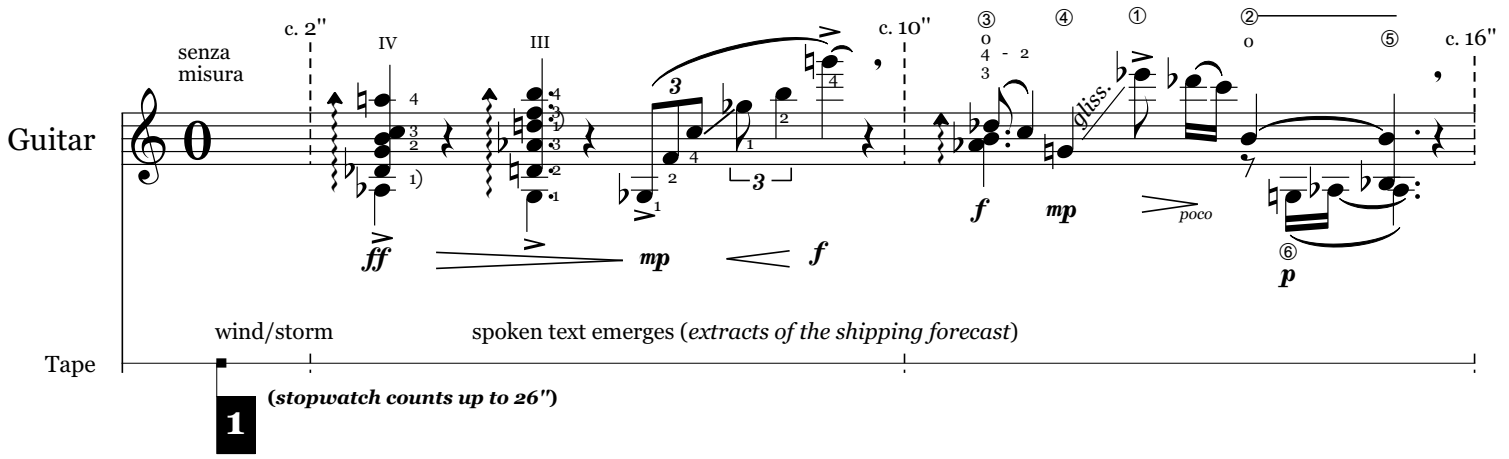


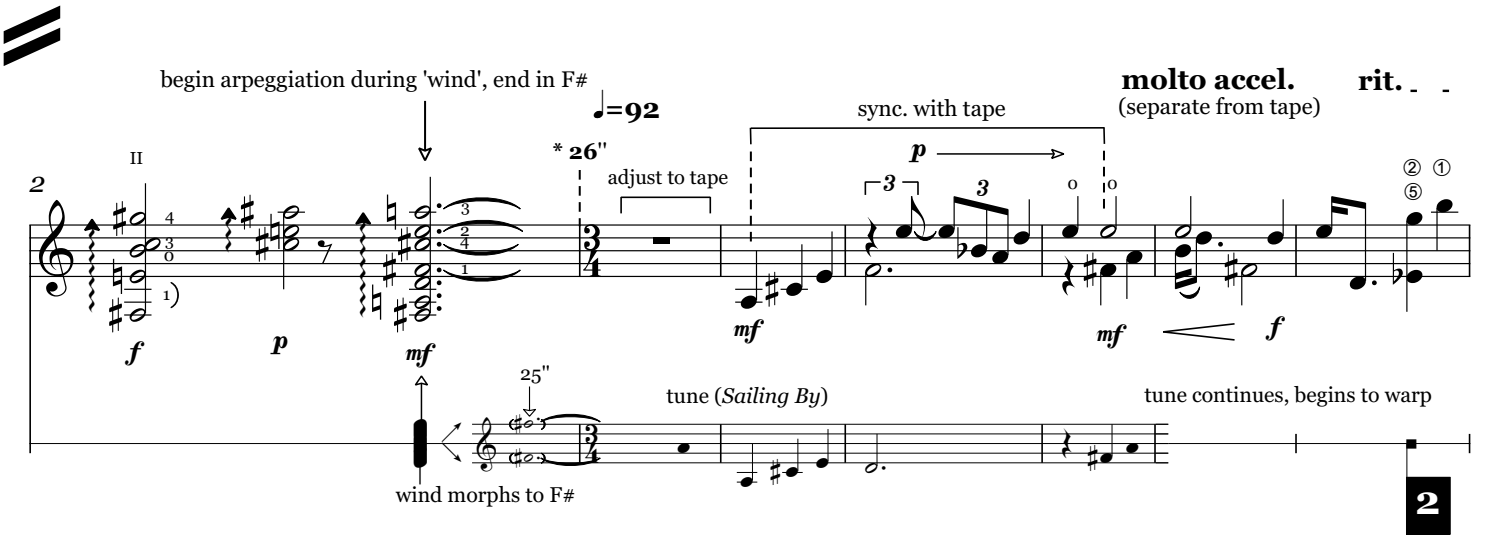
Nocturne

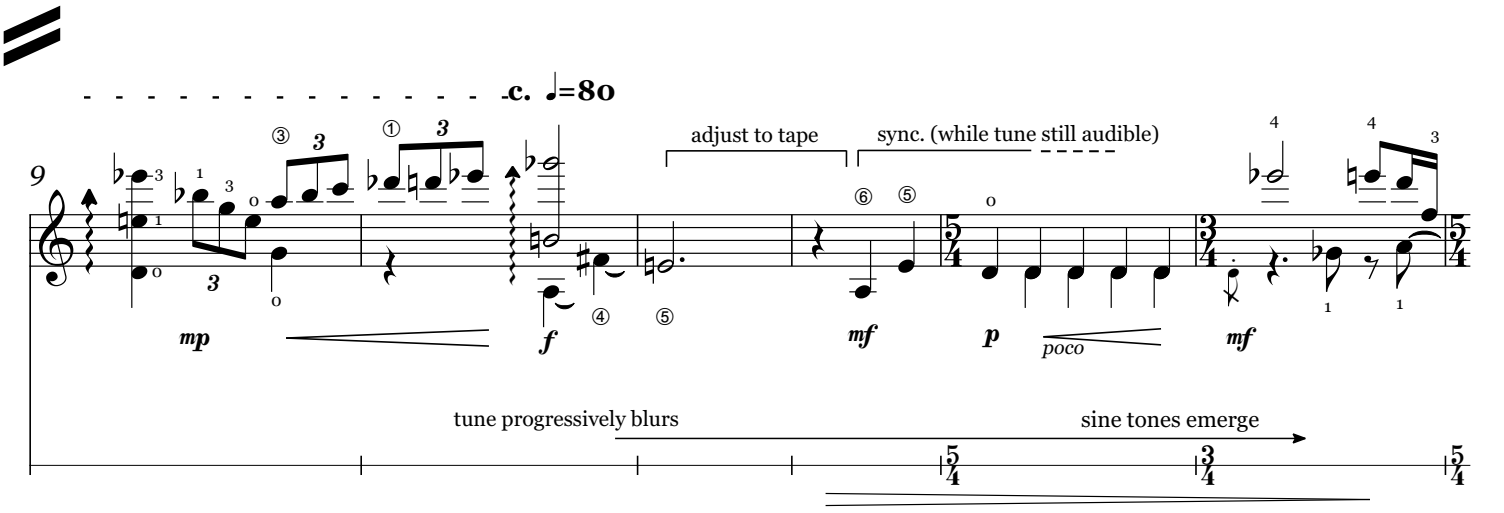
for Tom Torrisi

A. Keegan-Bole
Suggested fingerings by Tom Torrisi

note values indicate relative length of arpeggiation.
unless specifically articulated allow as much ring as possible

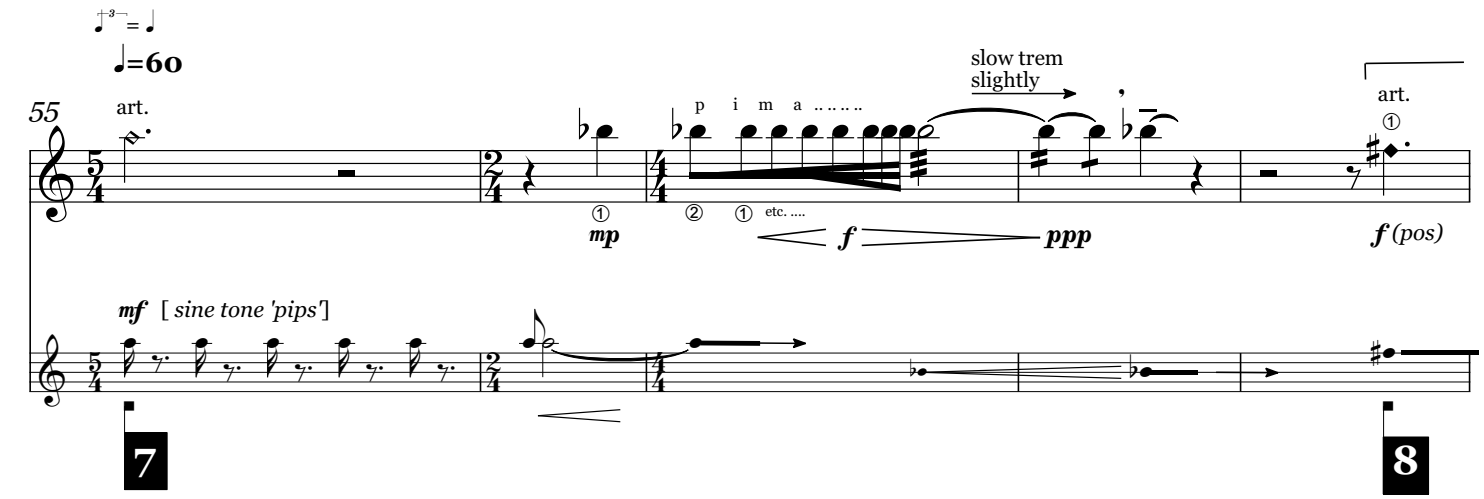


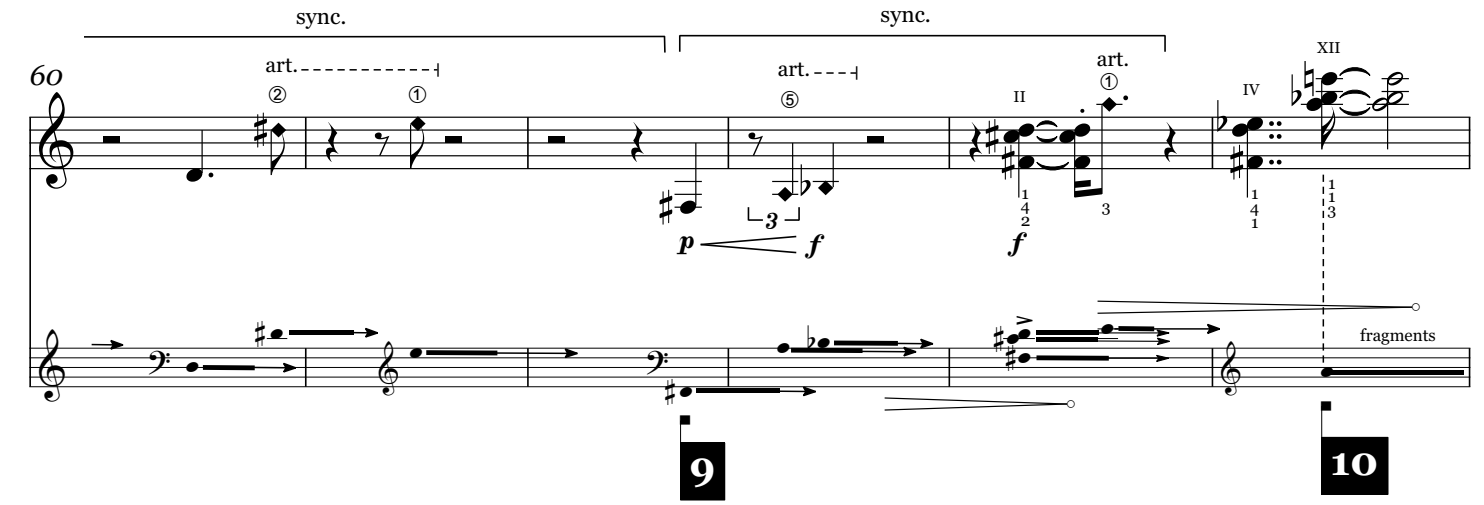


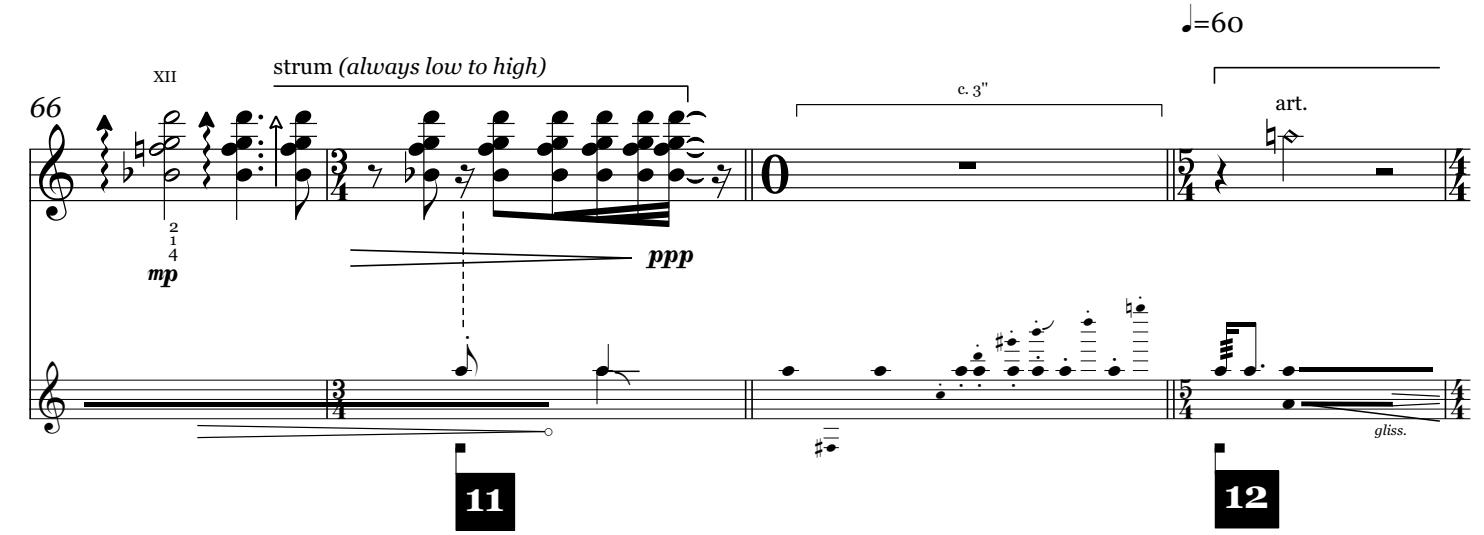


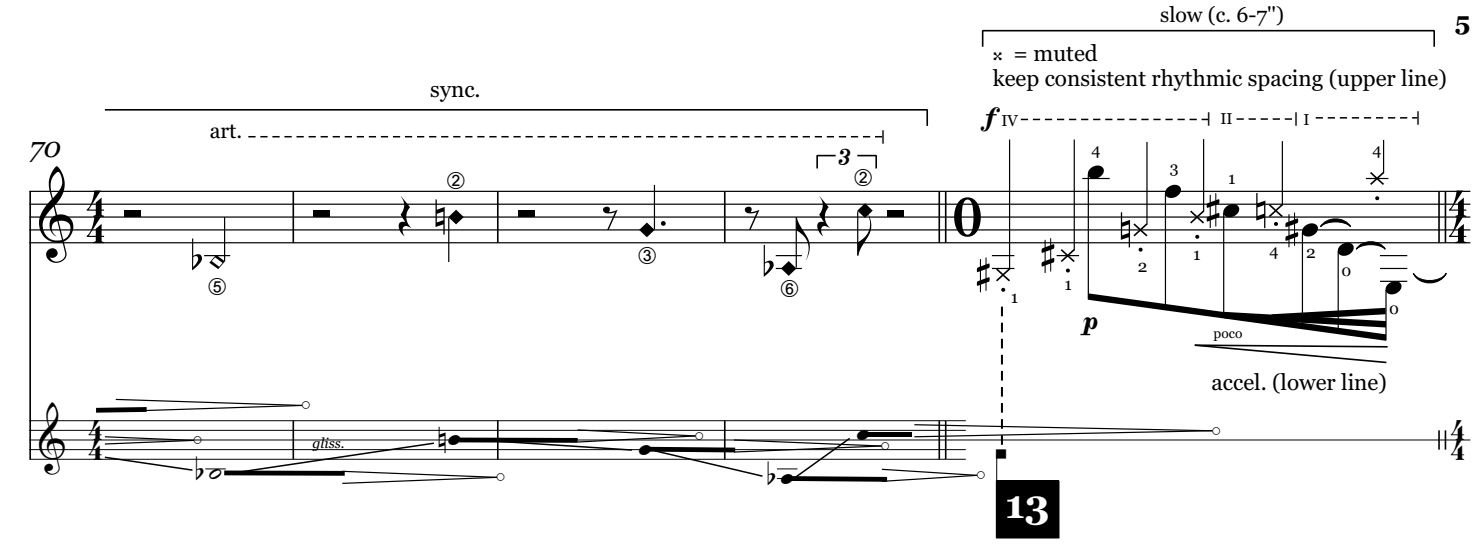

♪ = ♩
rit.
♩=46
♩=92
molto rit.
c. ♩=63
15
sync. with tape
mf
f
pp
f
tune (fragmentary)
momentarily clear
3
much faster
c. ♩=84
nat.
art.
20
p
mf
p
f
gliss.
c. ♩=63 rubato
rit.
c. ♩=46
c. ♩=92
accel.
24
pp
f
poco
mp
f
mp
f
sense of urgency
tune &
spoken text
sine tones emerge
4
rit.
a tempo
30
poco
pp
f
mf
spoken text
5

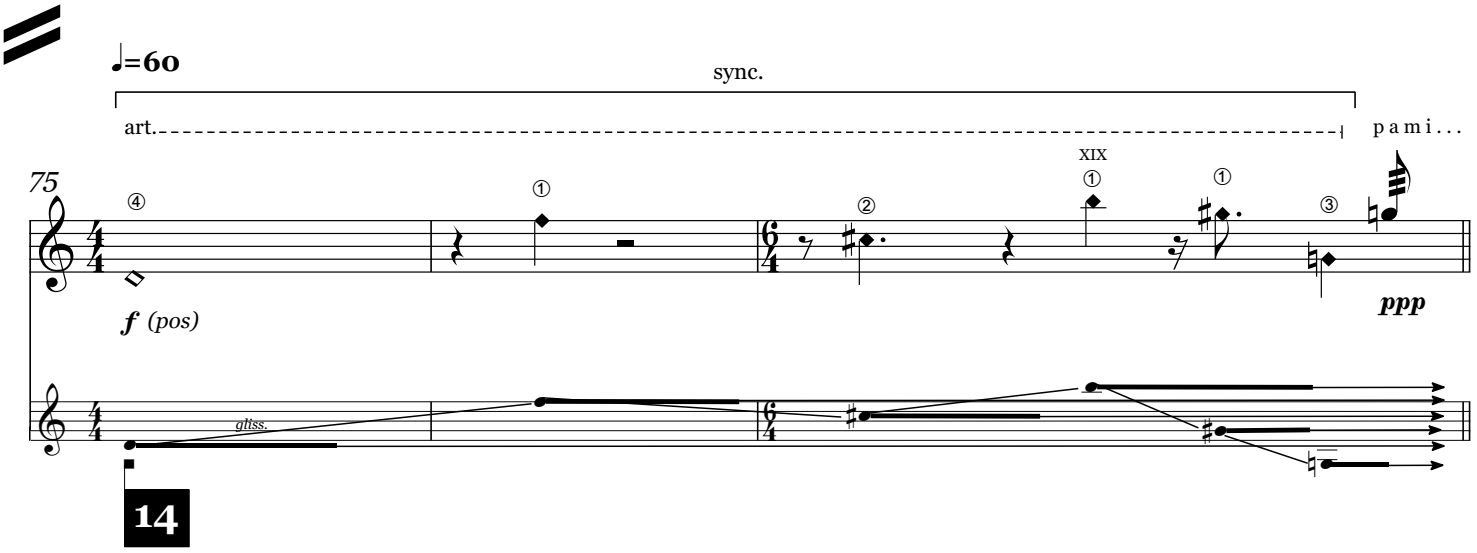

molto rit.
37
art.
nat.
poco
espress.
mf
44
c. ♩. = 43
art.
c. ♩=56 (faster)
non-rubato
allude to a waltz
48
(♪. v fast)
let ring
let ring
52
♩=42
spoken text
6


♩=60
55
art.
p i m a .....
slow trem
slightly
art.
mp
f
ppp
f (pos)
mf [sine tone 'pips']
7
8

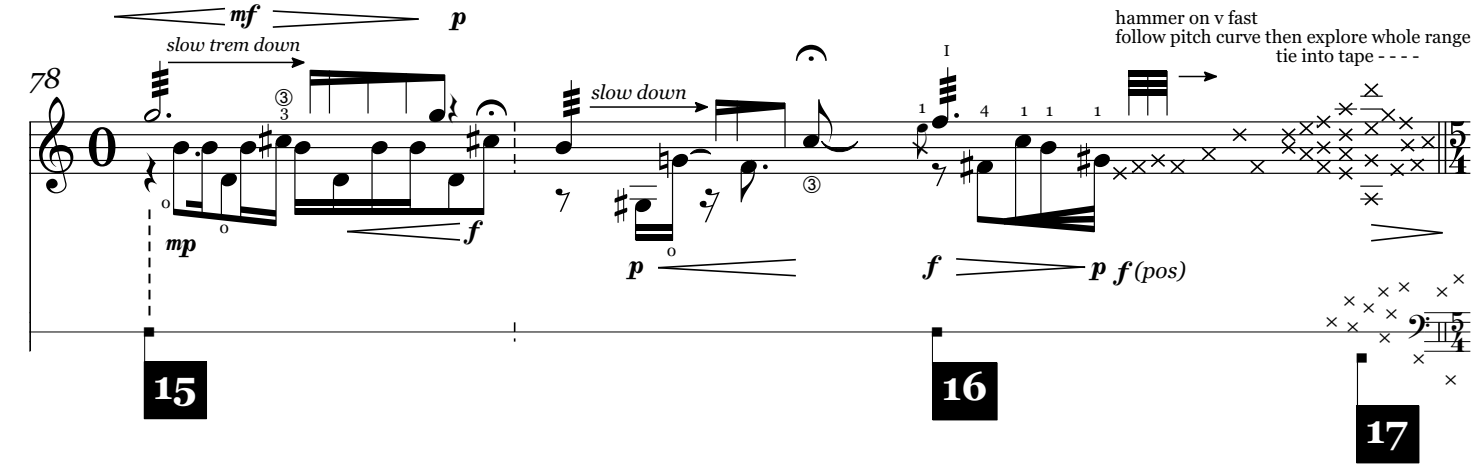

sync.
sync.
60
art.
art.
art.
II
IV
XII
p
f
f
fragments
9
10

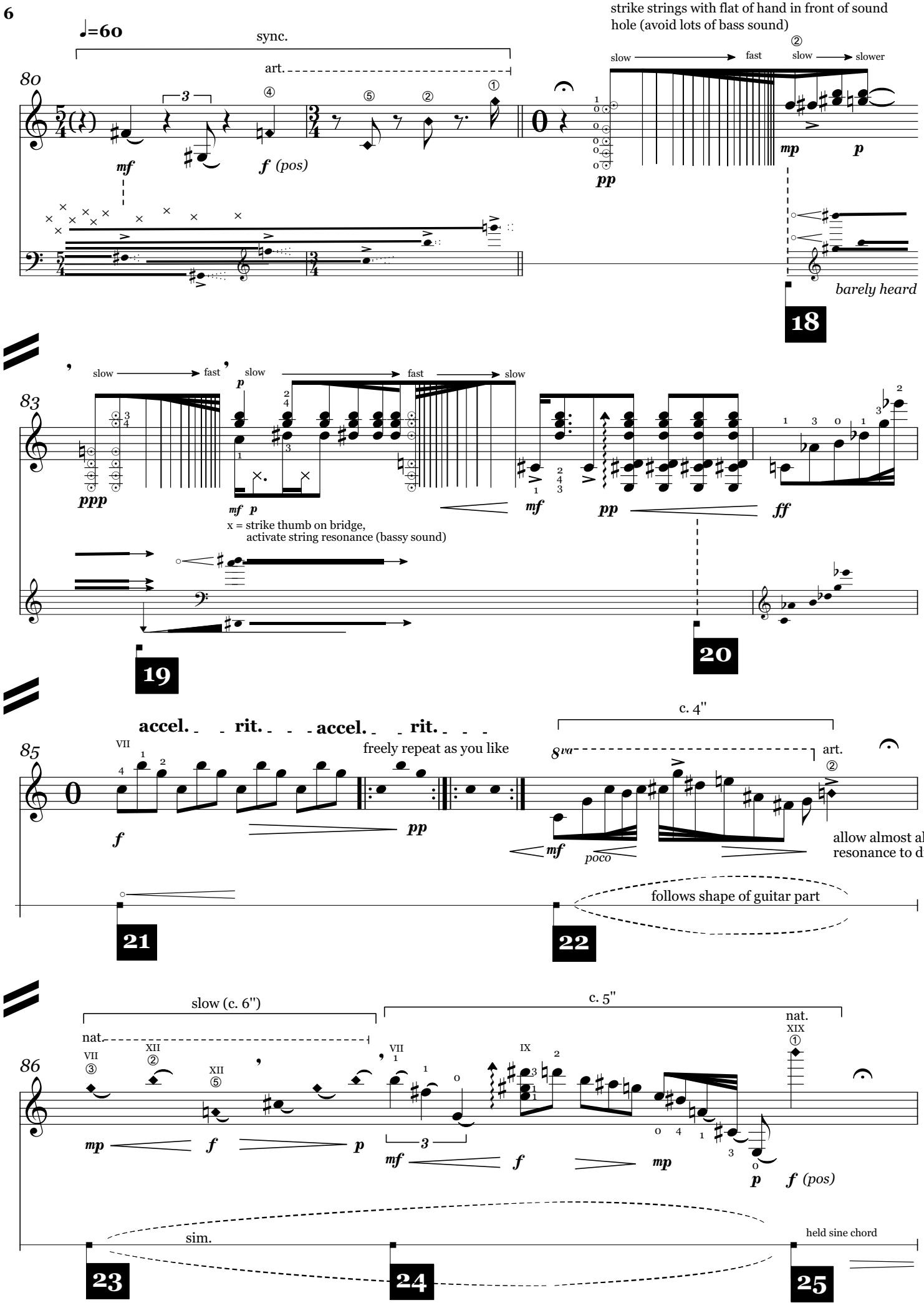

♩=60
XII
strum (always low to high)
66
c. 3"
art.
mp
ppp
gliss.
11
12

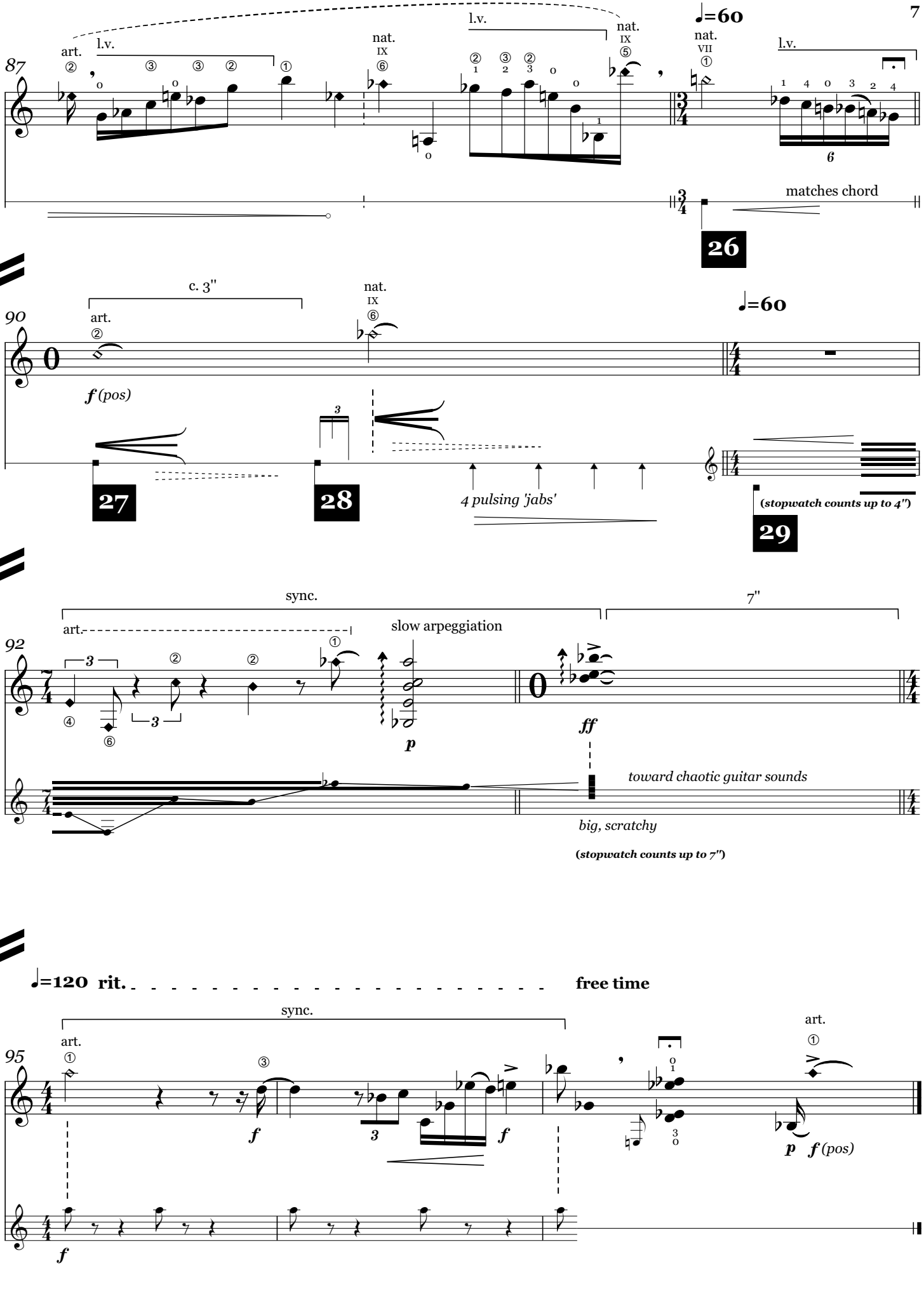




much slower
tempo not strict rhythm shows relative values.
use open strings wherever possible




♩=60
sync.
art.
80
mf
f (pos)
strike strings with flat of hand in front of sound hole (avoid lots of bass sound)
slow
fast
slow
slower
pp
mp
p
barely heard
18
83
slow
fast
slow
fast
slow
ppp
mf p
x = strike thumb on bridge,
activate string resonance (bassy sound)
mf
pp
ff
19
20
accel. rit. accel. rit.
freely repeat as you like
c. 4"
85
8va
art.
f
pp
mf
poco
allow almost all resonance to die
follows shape of guitar part
21
22
slow (c. 6")
c. 5"
nat.
86
mp
f
p
mf
f
mp
p
f (pos)
sim.
held sine chord
23
24
25


87
art.
l.v.
nat.
IX
nat.
VII
♩=60
matches chord
26
90
c. 3"
art.
nat.
IX
♩=60
f (pos)
27
28
4 pulsing 'jabs'
(stopwatch counts up to 4")
29
92
sync.
7"
art.
slow arpeggiation
p
ff
toward chaotic guitar sounds
big, scratchy
(stopwatch counts up to 7")
♩=120 rit.
free time
95
sync.
art.
f
p
f (pos)