Three Rituals on Metal

Process I: *Alloy* Process II: *Alchemy* Process III: *Compound*

Percussion quartet playing metallophones:

Glockenspiel
Vibraphone
Tubular Bells
Gongs (7)
Tam-tam
Thunder Sheet
Large Cymbal (mounted on large bass drum)
Small Splash Cymbal
Large Rivet/Sizzle Cymbal
Triangles (3)

Duration c. 11’30’’

A. Keegan-Bole

06.02.15

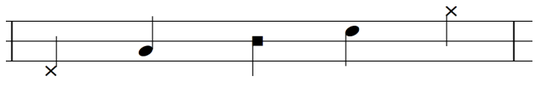
Instrumentation:

Player 1:
Glockenspiel (shared with player 2)
Small, light 'splash' cymbal (shared with player 4)
High triangle (shared with player 4)

Player 2:
Tubular Bells
Glockenspiel (shared with player 1)
Large, heavy rivet/sizzle cymbal (shared with player 4)
Low triangle

Player 3:
Vibraphone (shared with player 4)
Large, heavy cymbal mounted on a very large, low, loud bass drum[1]
Medium triangle

Player 4:
7 pitched gongs (D5, Eb5, F5, Gb5, Ab5, A5, B5) [*if gongs this high are not available use lower octave*]
Large tam-tam
Thunder sheet
Vibraphone (shared with player 3)
Large, heavy rivet/sizzle cymbal (shared with player 2)
Small, light 'splash' cymbal (shared with player 1)
High triangle (shared with player 1)



Mallets are printed in **bold**, instruments in boxed text.

Mallets:

Player 1:
Bow
Med (glockenspiel)
Soft (glockenspiel)
Triangle beater

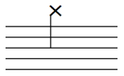
Player 2:
Rubber (with flexible but hard shaft e.g. plastic/bamboo)
Hammers (tubular bells: felt/leather one side, plain surface on the other)
Bow
Med (glockenspiel)
Triangle beater

Player 3:
Bow
Hard (vibes)
Soft rubber (vibes)
Triangle Beater

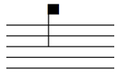
Player 4:
Triangle beater
Tam-tam beater
Snare sticks
Soft/med (gongs/unpitched)
Very soft (gongs/unpitched)
Bow
Med/hard (vibes)
Hard (gongs/unpitched)

[1] Cymbal placed upturned on the drum.

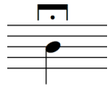
Notation:



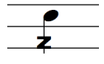
Cymbal



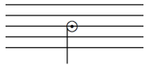
Strike the frame of the unpitched percussion or tubular bells[2]



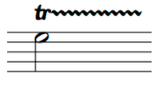
Long pause



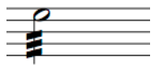
Press roll (one hand)



Dead-stick
(On tubular bells strike the bell flat on the top of the bell and maintain pressure, this should deaden the sound but also allow upper partials to be heard making the sound 'spangley'. Half pedal may assist achieving this effect)



Trills are distinguished from rolls. Unless otherwise stated trills are to the semi-tone above the notated pitch



Rolls are notated thus – three slashes are used to indicate a 'fast as possible' tremolo not a specific division of the beat

Programme Note:

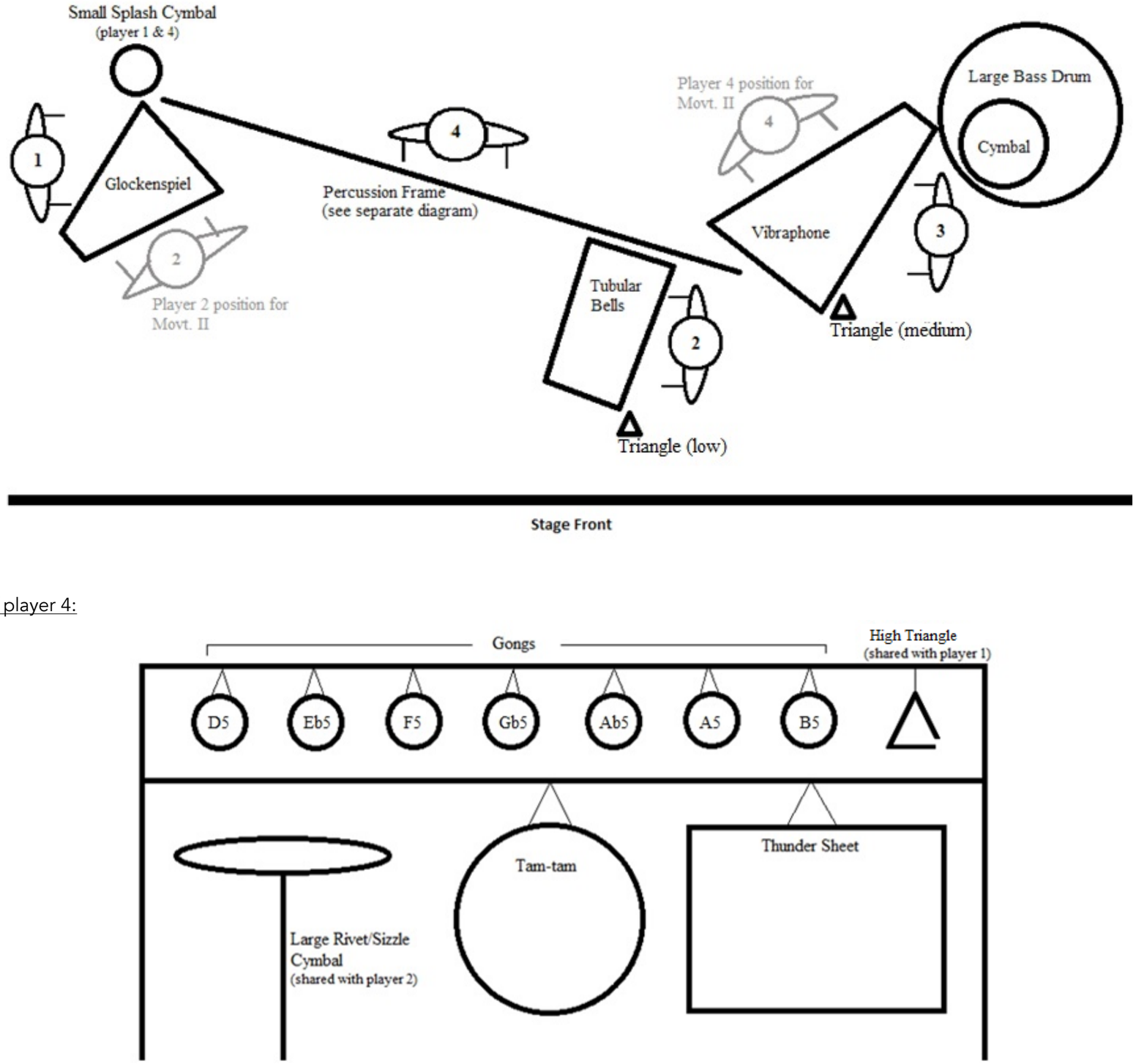
The movements of this piece work through processes to turn one type of musical material into another. Each is imagined as a ritual performed in honour of the metal instruments upon which they are played. I aim to explore the unusual soundworld of metal instruments inherent in their complex spectra with each movement focussing on different relationships between the instruments. In many respects it is a complex piece that explores ensemble playing challenges and the different ways that chamber groups interact. The difficulties of creating a homogenous sound, knowing when they are a quartet or soloists and physical choreography needed between players adds to the ritualistic nature of the piece.

The piece was commissioned by the CMV Concert Series 2014 but was revised extensively with the help of the Eastman Percussion Quartet – to whom I am grateful.

AKB

[2] 'Frame' sound is a metallic thud with a very brief high resonance at the attack. In first performance the tam-tam/thunder sheet and gongs were suspended from a large frame, players 1, 3 and 4 struck the part of the frame that suspended the tam-tam. Where this is impractical a metal pole of some sort (scaffolding perhaps) could serve the purpose.

Suggested Layout:



Percussion Frame from perspective of player 4:

Three Rituals on Metal

- Process I: *Alloy*

A. Keegan-Bole

♩=84

Glockenspiel

Triangle (high)

mp

allow bells to repeat cycle five times

(with vibes)

bow

5

mf

sim.

Ped.

Tubular Bells

(five cycles before bar 3)

rubber l.v. rhythm free, imitate church bells, accentuate inconsistent rhythm

ppp *(distant)*

strike the bell slightly lower than regular playing position to bring out more of the upper partials

Vibraphone

motor OFF

allow bells to repeat cycle five times

(with glock)

bow

mf

sim.

Ped.

Gongs

allow bells to repeat cycle five times

hands (fingers, nails, knuckles, fist... as appropriate) throughout this movement

Percussion

Splash cym

Tam-tam

Frame

Thunder sheet

Sizzle cym

Siz Cymbal

l.v.

p

ppp

T Sheet

Tam-tam

p

<*mp*>

f

as far as possible blend the ensemble colours - one arching phrase

a little faster

c. ♩=96

med

l.v.

15

mp *poco.* *p*

Glock.

(separate from vibes)

10

p

Tub. B.

hammers

l.v.

soft

ppp

at edge

(bright)

p

mp

hammers (hard side)

l.v.

mp *poco.*

mp *p*

p

Vib.

(separate from glock)

f

sim.

hard

l.v.

mp *poco.*

mp

p

mp

Gongs

dull, clear fundamental

<*mp*> <*mf*

emerge from bells

p <*mf*

p

l.v.

Perc.

mf

p <*mf*

bright

mf

f

p

l.v.

Glock.

Tub. B.

Vib.

Gongs

Perc.

20

25

l.v.

mp

3

(soft side)

(hard side)

pp

p

mf

butt of stick *

bright, short decay

deeper tone, long decay

sim.

(bright to deep)

30

35

norm.

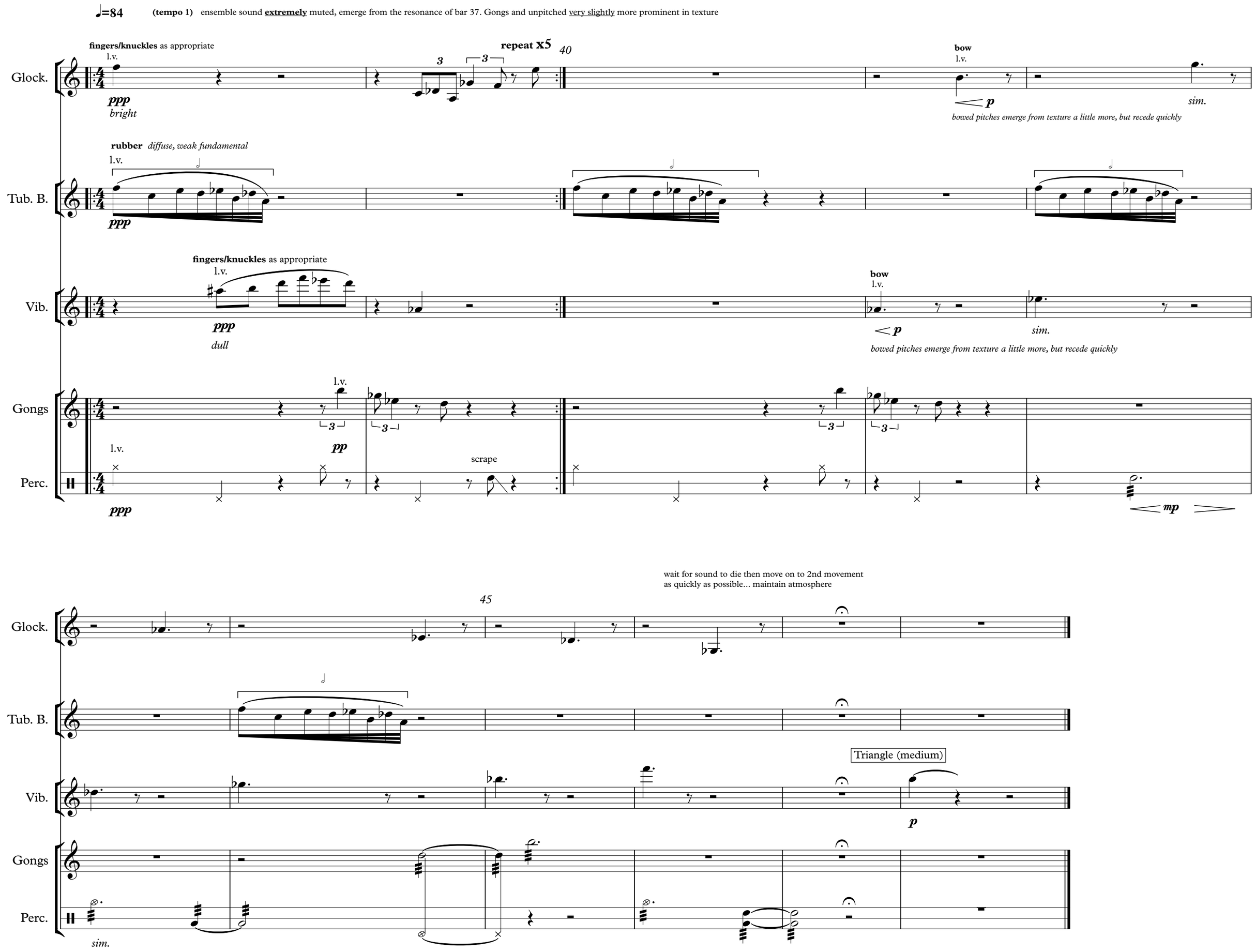
ff

scrape

(shake)

f

* soft but not too bright and trebley. Good results using butt with stick upright


♩=84
(tempo 1) ensemble sound extremely muted, emerge from the resonance of bar 37. Gongs and unpitched very slightly more prominent in texture
fingers/knuckles as appropriate
l.v.
repeat x5
40
bow
l.v.
Glock.
ppp
bright
p
sim.
bowed pitches emerge from texture a little more, but recede quickly
rubber diffuse, weak fundamental
l.v.
Tub. B.
ppp
fingers/knuckles as appropriate
l.v.
bow
l.v.
Vib.
ppp
dull
p
sim.
bowed pitches emerge from texture a little more, but recede quickly
l.v.
Gongs
pp
l.v.
scrape
Perc.
ppp
mp
wait for sound to die then move on to 2nd movement
as quickly as possible... maintain atmosphere
45
Glock.
Tub. B.
Triangle (medium)
Vib.
p
Gongs
Perc.
sim.

Process II: *Alchemy*

c. ♩=80

timing not strict, priority is to allow pitches to speak, fermatas are to allow resynchronisation and stick changes but should be as short as possible

*over the course of this minim rest gradually damp sound - make sure crotchet rest is silent. Use fingers or pedal as is convenient. Sim to bar 28, then damp in each fermata up to bar 38

Glockenspiel

Glockenspiel

motor on very, very slow (ideally half turn at c. ♪=40 or as slow as possible whilst still smooth)

Vibraphone

Vibraphone

Glock.

Glock.

Vib.

Vib.

solo line
hard *(bright)*

B

soft/med *(soft attack; perhaps softx2 & medx2 to adjust for register)*

35

Glock.

Glock.

l.v. (for rest of movement)

Vib.

slow down roll (toward ♪)

l.v. (for rest of movement)

Vib.

med/hard
(for staccato damp with fingers/hand after striking)

Glockenspiel

C

(with player 3)

40

Glock.

EACH REPEAT IN A DIFFERENT REGISTER
keep shape but retain naturals
(i.e. intervals will change according to register)

molto rubato

(with player 4)
med
(for staccato damp with fingers/hand after striking)

Glock.

slow → v. fast → slow
LH
RH

Vib.

(with player 1)

EACH REPEAT IN A DIFFERENT REGISTER
keep shape but retain naturals
(i.e. intervals will change according to register)

molto rubato

start with dense iterations at roughly semi-quaver then space out repeats and extend rhythmic values

♩=92
cymbal
bell
edge

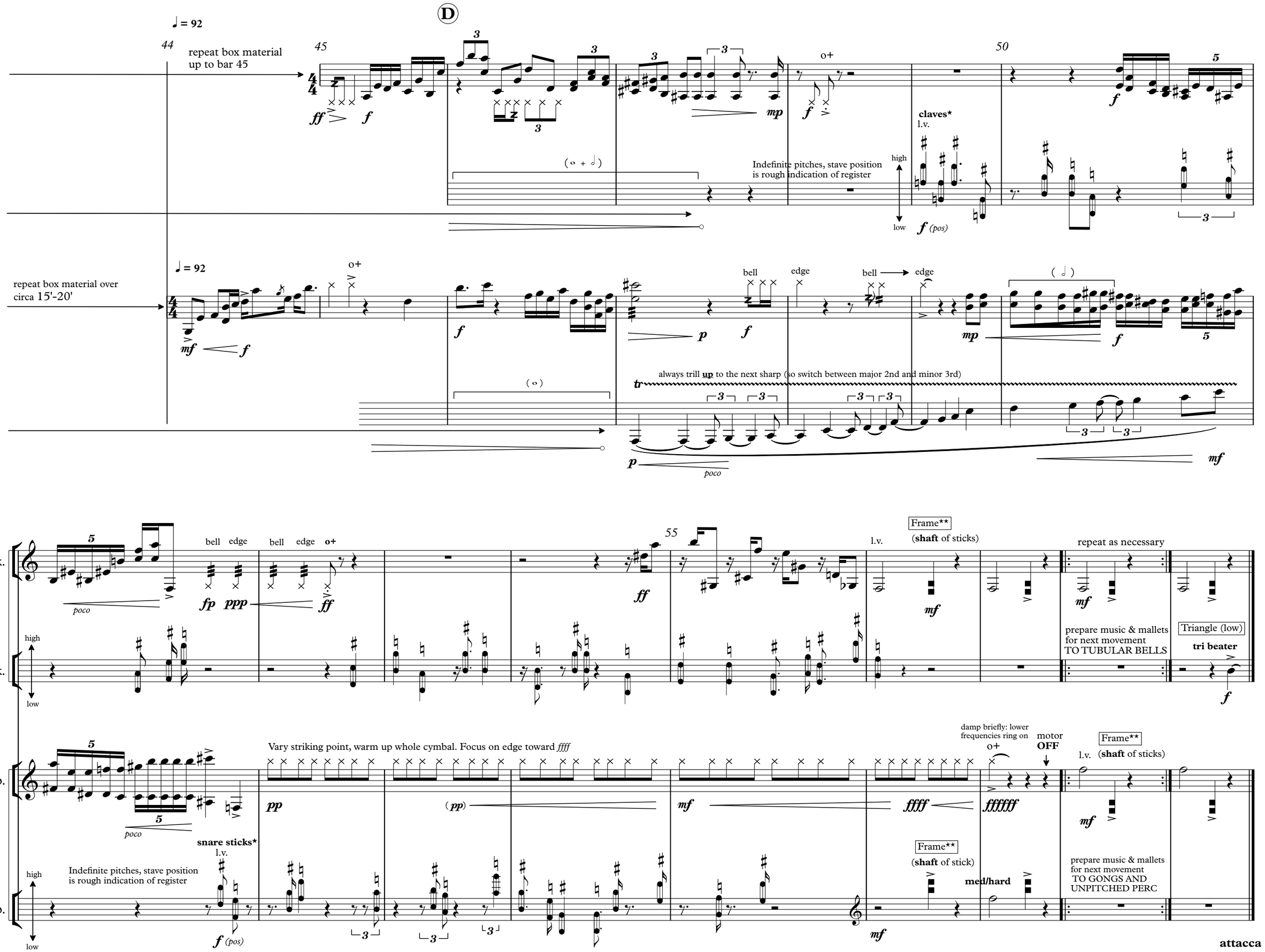
as rhythm of first box becomes more sparse increase iterations

between repeats slowly increase tempo of motor, at bar 50 a full turn should take ♩=92

Vib.

(with player 2)

v. fast → v. slow → v. fast
LH
RH



* Retain one mallet for bar 56. Strike the bars with the snare sticks/claves horizontal to create the clusters and **allow them to ring**.
Best results achieved when striking near the edge of the bars, this allowed the sticks to glance the bars without damping or causing a buzz

** 'frame' sound is a metalic thud ideally with a very brief high resonance at the attack. It is suggested the frame suspending the gongs is used.
If necessary, a metal pole of some sort (scaffolding perhaps) could serve the purpose.
For the theatre of the gesture players will ideally strike the frame with both hands

Process III

- Compound

(♩=92)

Glockenspiel

Tubular Bells

Vibraphone

Gongs

Percussion

5

10

15

A

Glock.

Tub. B.

Vib.

Gongs

Perc.

20

25

Glock.

Tub. B.

Vib.

Gongs

with shaft

norm.

cymbal

hammers
(frame)

hand/fist
(soft attack)

deadstick*

suddenly distant

* strike the bell flat on the very top, and keep contact to deaden the sound this should result in exposed upper partials making a muted 'sparkly' sound. half depressed damper pedal may help to achieve this

30

deadstick (if necessary to fit with ensemble
sound mute with fingers too)

emerge from glock

(no pedal)

D

(hairpins and dynamics refer to ensemble gesture)

35 40

Glock.

Tub. B.

Vib. — deadstick

Gongs

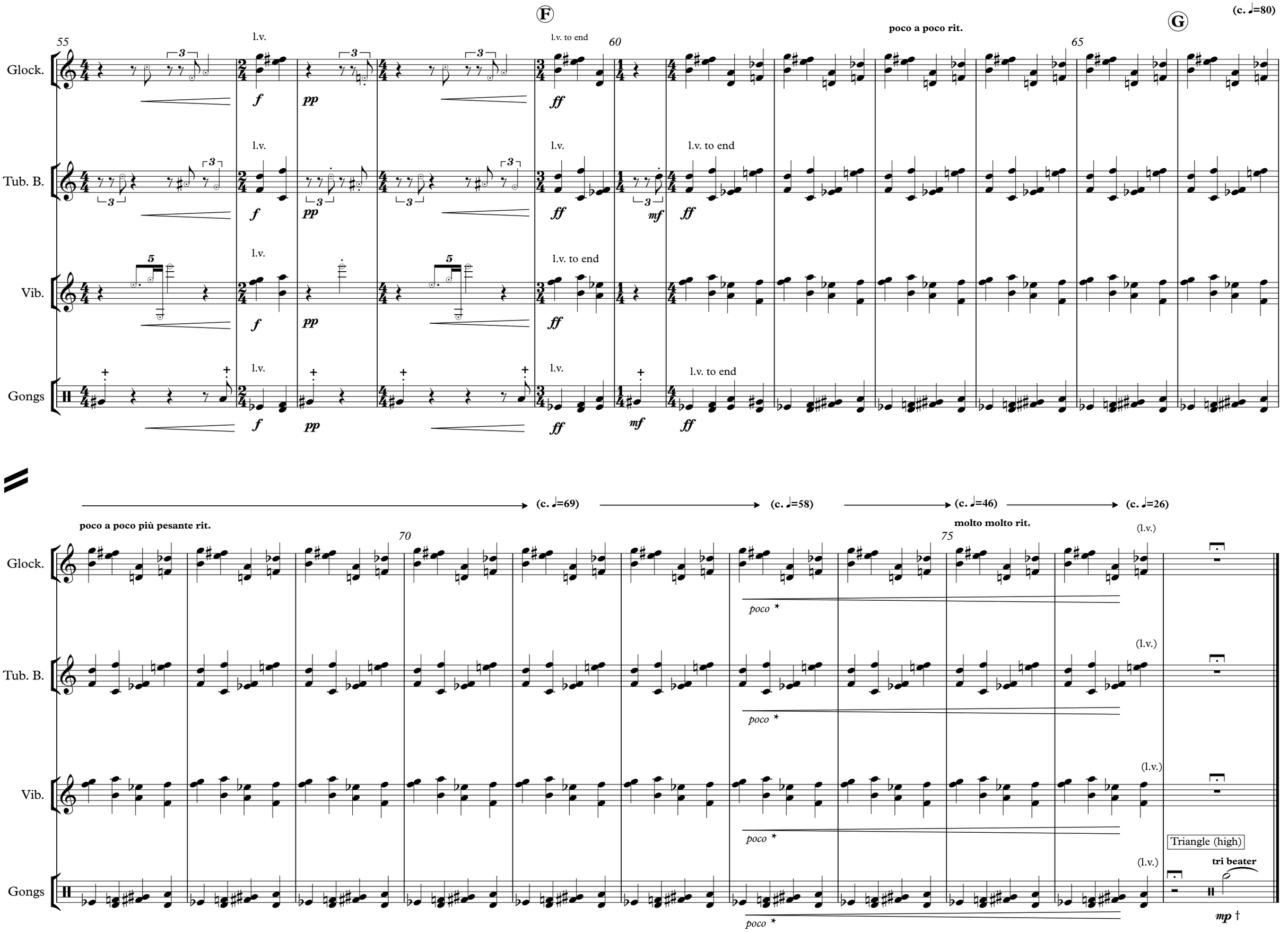
(mp) ppp

E

45 50

l.v.

p pp mp mf



* in order to maintain the relative dynamic *ff* through the rit, a slight crescendo will be neccessary

† wait until ensemble sound dims to *mp*, then allow triangle and ensemble sound to die out together.