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### **Title**

Flint

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### **Author**

Gottfried, Rama

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flint
for ensemble mosaik

by

Rama Jesse Gottfried

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Music

and the Designated Emphasis

in

New Media

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Franck Bedrossian, Chair
Professor Edmund Campion
Professor Cindy Cox
Professor Gregory Niemeyer

Spring 2015

### Abstract

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Rama Jesse Gottfried

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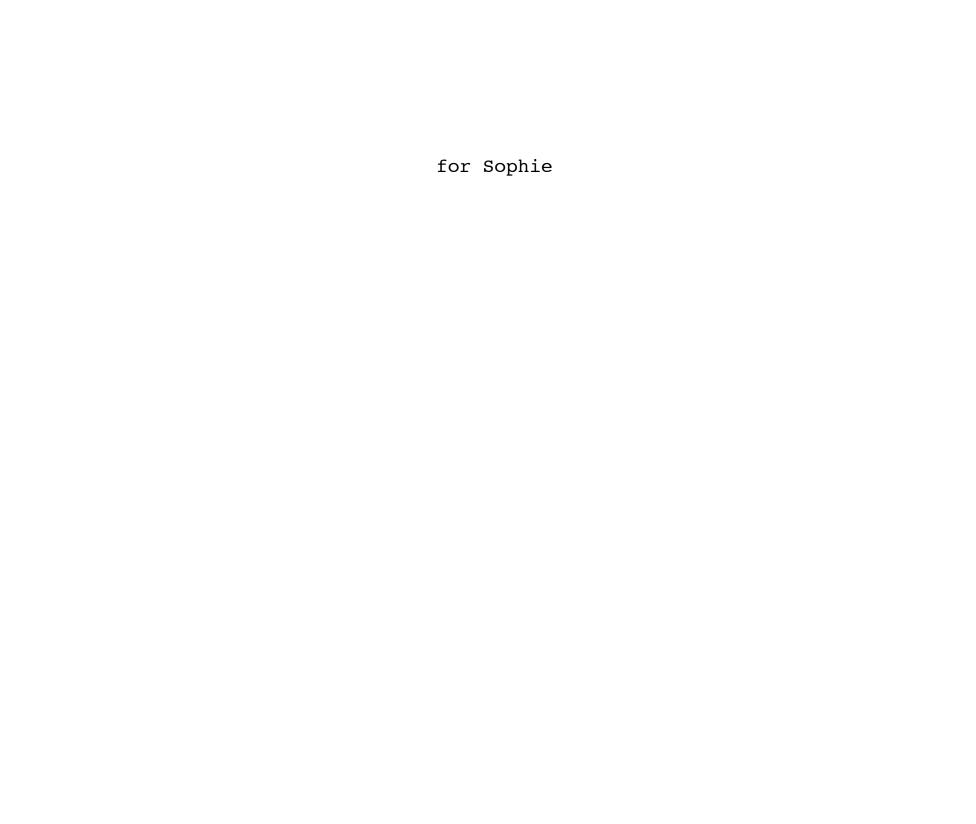
Striking flint rock against iron pyrite, tiny sparks leap from seemingly nowhere into existence. Like the combination of sounds, when a spark contacts flammable material a flame forms; expanding and transforming as it grows, feeding itself on the material, continuing until it has released as much of the material's content as it can before diffusing into the air.

The machinery of life follows a similar progression — from the microscopic drama of atoms, cells, neurons, leaves, amoebas, and digital bits — to the macro-scale drama of lives, societies, and universe-sized ecosystems.

The piece *flint* for ensemble mosaik, is not universe-sized, but instead is comprised of millions of microscopic lives and deaths in sound.

By magnifying these most minuscule of sonic gestures through extreme amplification and human computer interaction instrument systems, the work extends the gestures of the ensemble and reaches into the space around the listeners.

flint was premiered by ensemble mosaik at the Bluderzer Tage zeitgemäßer Musik Festival in Bludenz, Austria, November 2014.



## Acknowledgments

I dedicate this dissertation to my family who has supported me through many years of study, and especially to my amazing wife Celeste who has given me the courage to keep going whenever doubts creep in, and my daughter Elodie who reminds me of the importance of play.

I would like to also acknowledge the many teachers I have had through my academic career, starting with T.L Read, and Ernest Stires who told me I was a composer, Justin Dello Joio, Nils Vigeland, Marc Sabat, and Walter Zimmermann.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge the intellectual engagement of the faculty at UC Berkeley: David Wessel, Edmund Campion and Adrian Freed at the Center for New Music and Audio Technologies who have guided my work and holistic growth as an artist and technologist; Franck Bedrossian whose careful listening and thoughtful reflections have greatly refined my aesthetic handling of material; and at the Berkeley Center for New Media, Abigail De Kosnik and Greg Niemeyer who helped expand my artistic and scholarly thinking putting me in dialog with other graduate students from many other backgrounds.

Thank you.

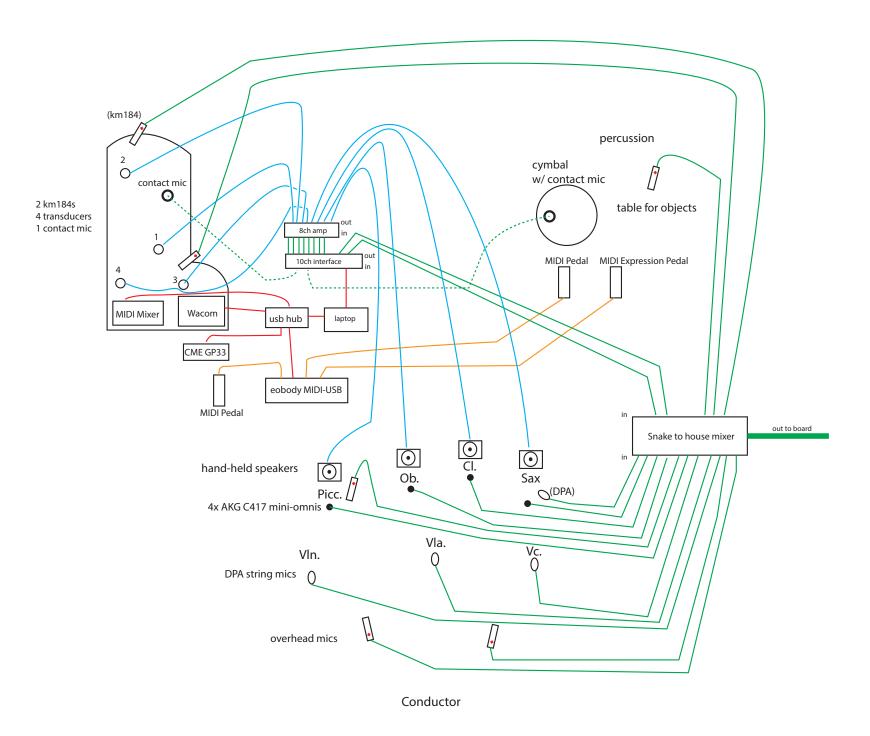
## instrumentation:

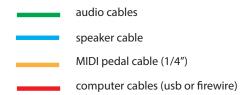
```
piccolo with internal mic, handheld speaker
oboe with internal mic, handheld speaker
clarinet in Bb with internal mic, handheld speaker
soprano saxophone with close mic, handheld speaker
percussion:
    close mic:
        plant pot base
        cleaning brush on bongo drum
        2 rocks
    cymbal with contact mic
    midi pedals (see schematic)
piano:
    wacom tablet computer interface
    4 transducers
        attached to various objects sitting on piano strings:
            wooden frog
            tibetian bowl
            piece of wood
        unattached ping-pong balls
    midi pedals and mixer (see schematic)
violin
viola
violoncello
```

duration: ca. 12 minutes

1

### schematic





note:

for best results all winds should have compression and EQ to create a highly flat, electronic sound. boost extreme low and high frequency ranges for maximum boom and click.

MacBook Pro Wacom tablet MIDI mixer (UC-33, BCF2000 or sim) CME GP33 Foot pedal eobody MIDI-USB 2x MIDI Pedals 1x MIDI Expression pedal USB hub

10ch audio interface (FF800 or sim) 8ch amplifier

4x small transducers (Dayton Audio)
6x KM184 (or sim)
4x AKG C417 (or sim)
3x string DPA (or sim)
1x sax DPA (or sim)
2x contact mics
4x small handheld speakers (with housing)

## piccolo

equal temperament (ET)

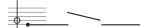
±14 cents from ET)

±31 cents from ET

±50 cents from ET



relative pitch of keyclick/air-noise around held note. where the held note continues, there should also be a click.



relative key glissando from held note.



relative pitch of fingering/click, relative to the  ${\tt G}$  on the

light air tone not on staff, slight to no pitch



light air tone on staff, slightly more tone than above

heavy air tone, forceful air pressure, with mouth covering

a small omni-directional microphone should be placed inside the instrument, wrapped with plastic-wrap to avoid water damage. for the piccolo, the mic should be placed inside the end of the instrument, and secured with a rubber band to keep the mic in place, the gain to the PA speakers should be quite loud, and should be compressed, and EQ'd with boosts in the very low and very high ranges -- as loud as possible without feeding back. some distortion is desirable, for example, with the "heavy air tone".

### graphic notation:

for some techniques in the piece, graphic notation is used to visually describe the resulting sound. in general, the vertical position of a shape refers to the relative pitch of the sound, while the vertical width and darkness of the shape indicates the relative loudness of the sound. the internal variations of each shape indicate that a change in quality should be apparent, for instance this might possibly achieved by changing the embouchure shape.

flutter-whistle tone: fluttertounge technique with throat plus whistletone, a high frequency sound, with a bouncing rhythm a bit like a small stone skipping on water





motor sound: a low-pitch fluttertounge technique with throat, with the mouth completely covering the embouchure hole. the resulting sound should be something like a motorcycle. usually combined with keyclick glissando, and heavy air sound. see also the general graphic notation explanation.



ingressive, lip sound

very high pitch with irregular rhythm, and density. here, the staccato 16th note at end indicates as sharp ending point.





sfz

staccatissimo, dead tongue sound, click-like.

staccatissimo, pizzicato

### oboe

equal temperament (ET)

±14 cents from ET)

±31 cents from ET

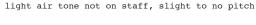
±50 cents from ET



relative pitch of key fingering/click around held note. where the held note continues, there should also be a click.



relative pitch of fingering/click, relative to the G on the





light air tone on staff, slightly more tone than above, should be an "almost" pitch, with a light, unstable grittiness.



air fluttertongue with relative pitch keyclick glissando

a small omni-directional microphone should be placed inside the instrument, wrapped with plastic-wrap to avoid water damage. for the oboe, the mic should be placed inside instrument approximately at the mid point, and secured with a rubber band by the cable at the bell to keep the mic in place. the gain to the PA speakers should be quite loud, and should be compressed, and EQ'd with boosts in the very low and very high ranges -- as loud as possible without feeding back.

### graphic notation:

for some techniques in the piece, graphic notation is used to visually describe the resulting sound. in general, the vertical position of a shape refers to the relative pitch of the sound, while the vertical width and darkness of the shape indicates the relative loudness of the sound. the internal variations of each shape indicate that a change in quality should be apparent, for instance this might possibly achieved by changing the embouchure shape.



"geiger-counter": staccatissimo, ingressive breath, dead tongue sound, very short click sounds. possibly best produced with strong embouchure pressure, with the reed at the side of the mouth.



even though the notehead is black here the result should be a bit more pitch than the light air-tone on the staff, but not a full bodied pitch.



ingressive, lip sounds

very high pitch with irregular rhythm, and density. in example "a" the staccato 16th note at end indicates as sharp ending point. example "b" is similar, but with more interpretive variation. see also the general graphic notation explanation.

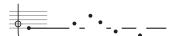
### clarinet Bb

equal temperament (ET)

±14 cents from ET)

±31 cents from ET

±50 cents from ET



relative pitch of keyclick/air-noise around held note. where the held note continues, there should also be a click.



relative pitch of fingering/click, relative to the G on the

light air tone not on staff, slight to no pitch



light air tone on staff, slightly more tone than above, should be an "almost" pitch, with a light, unstable grittiness.



air fluttertongue with relative pitch keyclick glissando

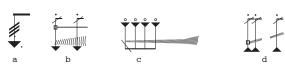


ingressive, lip sounds very high pitch with irregular rhythm, and density. in example  $% \left( 1\right) =\left( 1\right) \left( 1\right) \left($ "a" the staccato 16th note at end indicates as sharp ending point. example "b" is similar, but with more interpretive variation. see also the general graphic notation explanation.

a small omni-directional microphone should be placed inside the instrument, wrapped with plastic-wrap to avoid water damage. for the clarinet, the mic should be placed inside the middle of the instrument, and secured with a rubber band or tape to keep the mic in place, the gain to the PA speakers should be quite loud, and should be compressed, and EQ'd with boosts in the very low and very high ranges -- as loud as possible without feeding back.

### graphic notation:

for some techniques in the piece, graphic notation is used to visually describe the resulting sound. in general, the vertical position of a shape refers to the relative pitch of the sound, while the vertical width and darkness of the shape indicates the relative loudness of the sound. the internal variations of each shape indicate that a change in quality should be apparent, for instance this might possibly achieved by changing the embouchure shape.



- a: slap-tongue tremolo, many many slap-tongues, as fast as possible
- b: staccatissimo tongue slaps, with fluttertongue (throat) air at the same time c: air fluttertongue (throat) with short, slap-tongue multiphonics (overtones)
- d: ingressive air sound, with staccatissimo ingressive slap-tongue



"whistlers" -- very high whistle-like sounds, produced with lots of embouchure and air pressure, plus a little spit on the reed. depicted graphically -- see also the general graphic notation description.



teeth on reed -- very high whistle sound

## soprano saxophone

equal temperament (ET)

±14 cents from ET)

±31 cents from ET

±50 cents from ET



relative pitch of keyclick/air-noise around held note. where the held note continues, there should also be a click.



relative pitch of fingering/click, relative to the G on the treble clef.

light air tone not on staff, slight to no pitch



light air tone on staff, slightly more tone than above, should be an "almost" pitch, with a light, unstable grittiness.



air fluttertongue with relative pitch keyclick glissando

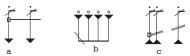


ingressive, lip sounds very high pitch with irregular rhythm, and density. in example the staccato 16th note at end indicates as sharp ending point. example "b" is similar, but with more interpretive variation. see also the general graphic notation explanation.

the saxophone uses a DPA mic, with gooseneck clip mounted on the instrument so that mic is over the keys, approximately at the mid-point between the two hands. the gain to the PA speakers should be quite loud, and should be compressed, and EQ'd with boosts in the very low and very high ranges as loud as possible without feeding back.

## graphic notation:

for some techniques in the piece, graphic notation is used to visually describe the resulting sound. in general, the vertical position of a shape refers to the relative pitch of the sound, while the vertical width and darkness of the shape indicates the relative loudness of the sound. the internal variations of each shape indicate that a change in quality should be apparent, for instance this might possibly achieved by changing the embouchure shape.



- a: staccatissimo tongue slaps, with fluttertongue (throat) air at the same time
- b: short, slap-tongue multiphonics (overtones)
- c: ingressive air sound, with staccatissimo ingressive slap-tonque



"spit whistlers" - a percussive fluttertongue sound, produced by adding a little spit into the reed and angling the bell of the instrument upwards, so as to keep the water in the reed. the resulting sound should not sound like heavy gurgling, but a light, somewhat transparent pitched sound. depicted graphically -- see also the general graphic notation description.



staccatissimo, dry slap-tongue



teeth on reed -- very high whistle sound

## percussion

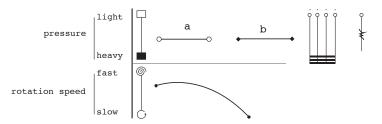
hard brush on bongo flower pot base two rocks

bowed cymbal with contact mic

### amplification:

at least two mics are used, one or two for the flower pot base, brush on bongo, and rocks -- a contact mic is taped to the cymbal and is routed into the piano/wacom computer interface.

### igoplus motion on flower pot base



a: open circles are finger tipsb: black diamonds are the back of the finger nail



hand brush on bongo drum -- three main sounds are used: (1) a gradient of rhythms created by moving the bristles against the drum head at different speeds and pressures, from sparse clicks,

- (2) changing the relative pitch of the bristles, by using the other hand to alter the resonance of the drum head, and
- (3) rubbing the handle of the brush (smooth plastic) against the drum head to produce a slightly more pitched noise sound, the frequency of which is controlled by rubbing closer or further from the rim of the drum head.

 $\mathbf{a}\colon \mathsf{bristle}$  sounds with graphically depicted results -- the relative vertical position indicates pitch, and the horizontal density indicates rhythm and

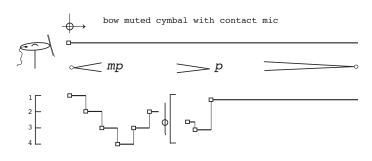
b: open circles are used for the brush handle

### midi pedals:

1) section pedal changes the presets used in the wacom instrument 2) a midi expression pedal is used to jump the cymbal sound between transducers in the first sections, and later between handheld speakers.

### graphic notation:

for some techniques in the piece, graphic notation is used to visually describe the resulting sound. in general, the vertical position of a shape refers to the relative pitch of the sound, while the vertical width and darkness of the shape indicates the relative loudness of the sound. the internal variations of each shape indicate that a change in quality should be apparent, for instance this might possibly achieved by changing the resonance of the drum head, the amount of pressure used, or speed of motion.



while bowing the muted cymbal, move expression pedal to jump between transducers in the piano. in the second part of the piece, the sound jumps between hand-held speakers on stage.

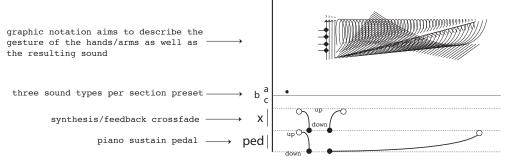


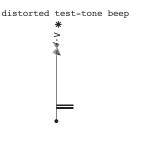
press two rocks against each other with varying degrees of speed and pressure, using the graphic notation as a general guide for relative

## wacom/transducer/piano instrument

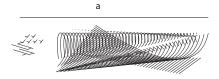
on top of the piano sits a multi-touch wacom tablet fitted with a tactile surface in a simplar pattern to a two manual keyboard. the finger motions are sent into a computer running max/msp used as an impulse sound source for signals sent from the computer through four tranducers sitting on the strings of the piano. see also the technical layout description for more indepth layout. the wacom part is the central electronics source in the piece.

graphic notation is used in the wacom/piano part to visually describe the resulting sound as well as the gesture of the fingers, hands and arms on the tablet surface. in general, lines which are more vertical in orientation are used for more dry staccato like textures, while sounds that have more continuty (e.g. longer FM sounds) have more of a horizontal orientation. the approximate vertical center of a shape indicates a relative pitch, and the relative height/size of a shape indicates its intensity, and granular density.

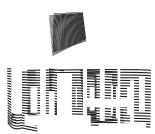




## basic sound types:









dry, percussive granular sounds

pitched, or semi pitched granular sounds.

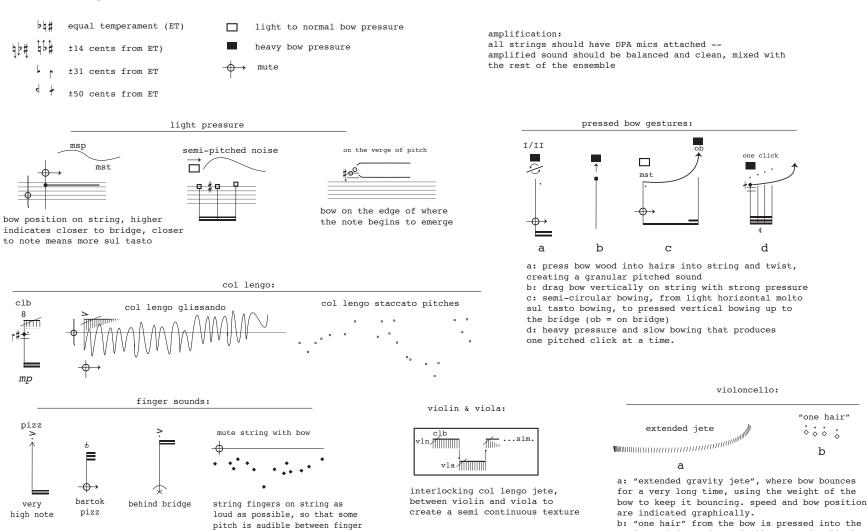
for notated pitches, keyboard range is from C below middle C, to C above the staff.

highly modulated, more continuous FM sounds

extreme feedback pitches to the point that the transducers jump up and down on the strings

recording of a large group of people talking filtered with wacom interface and played into transducers into the piano

## strings



string and dragged vertically, creating little  $% \left( 1\right) =\left( 1\right) \left( 1\right)$ 

pitched clicks as it chafes against the grains

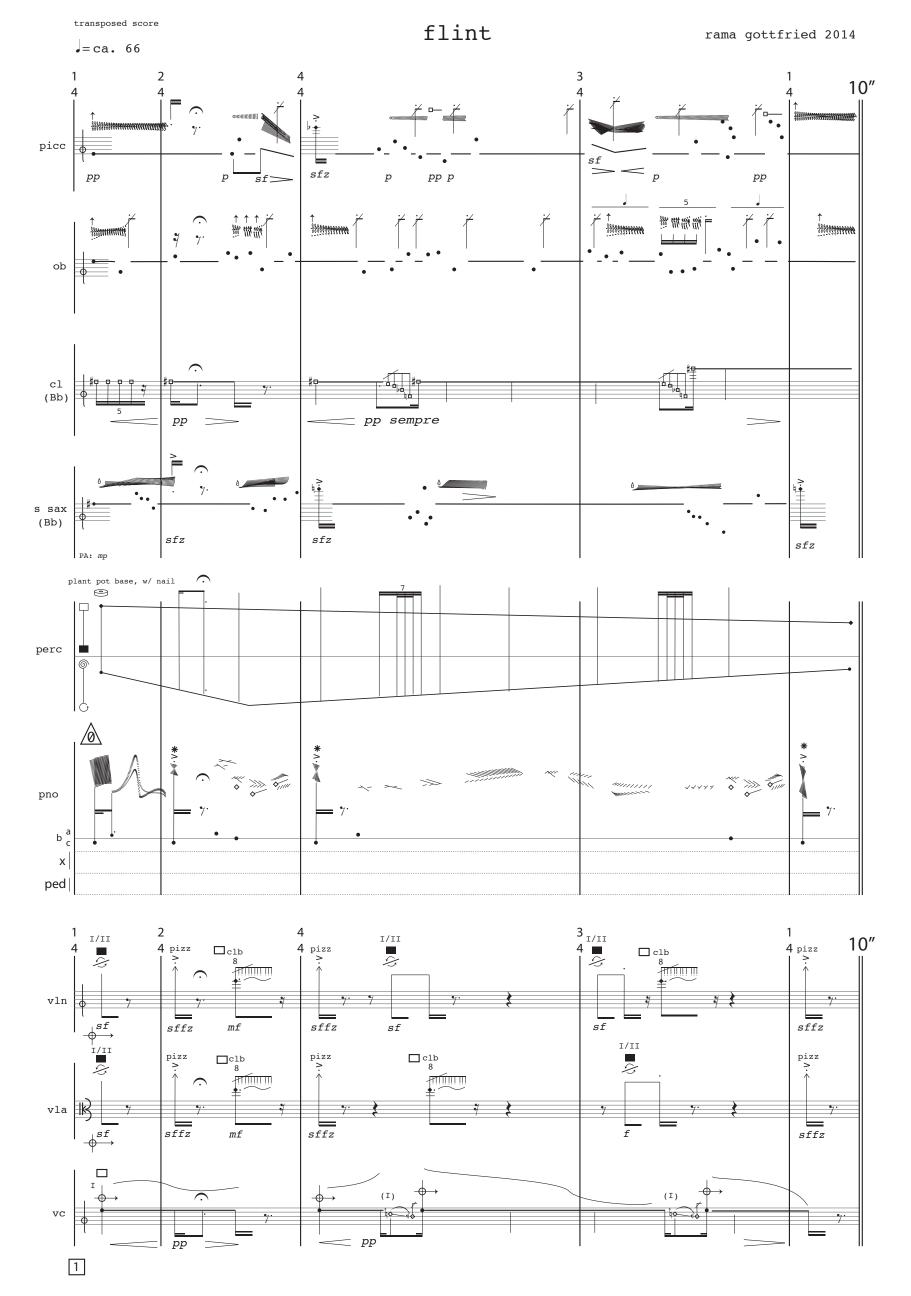
### handheld speakers

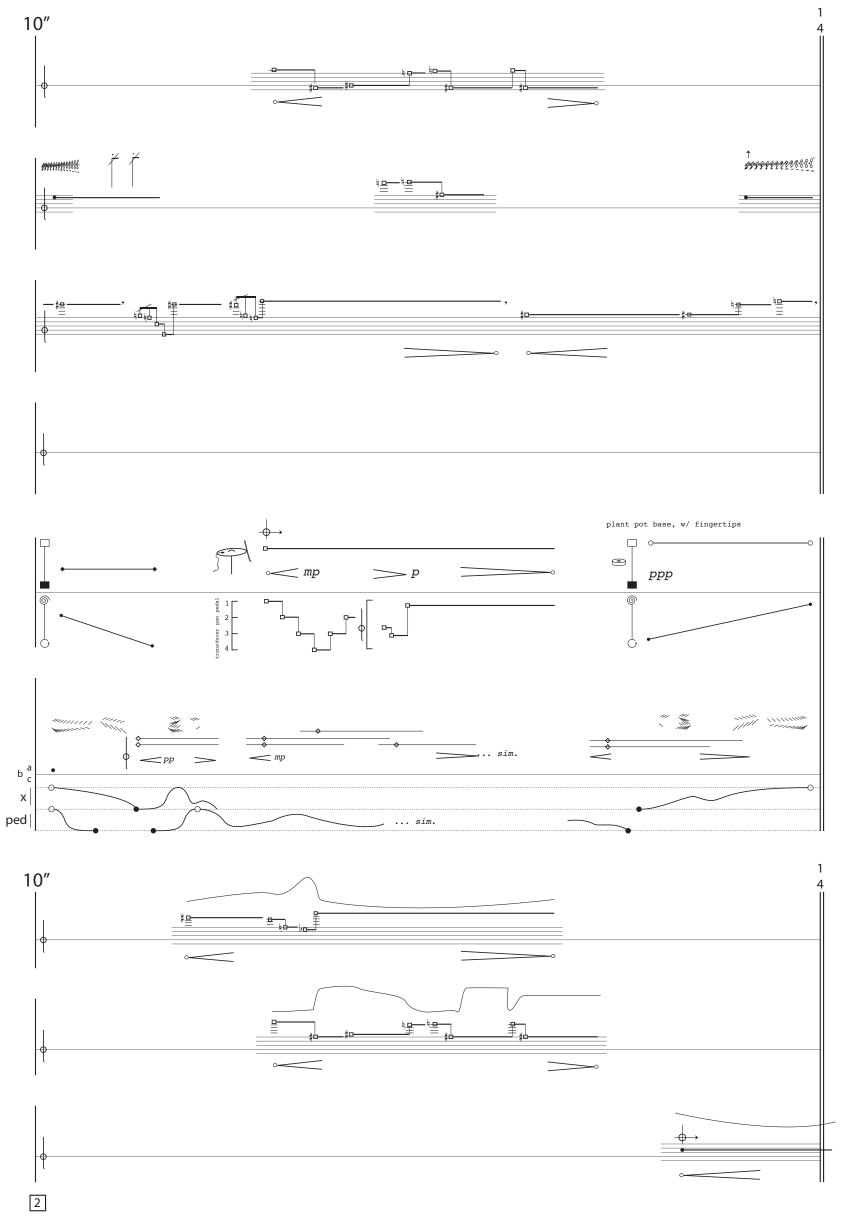
and nut.

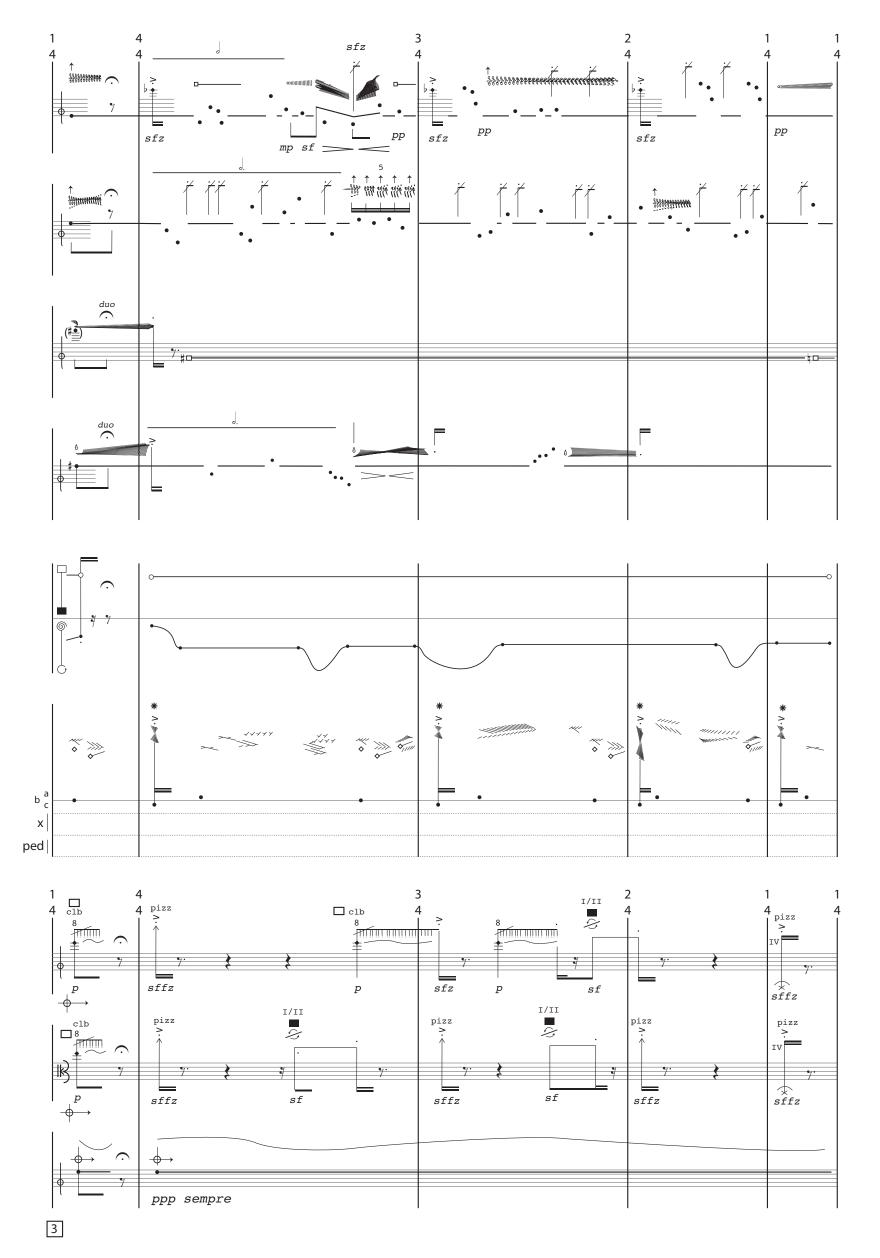


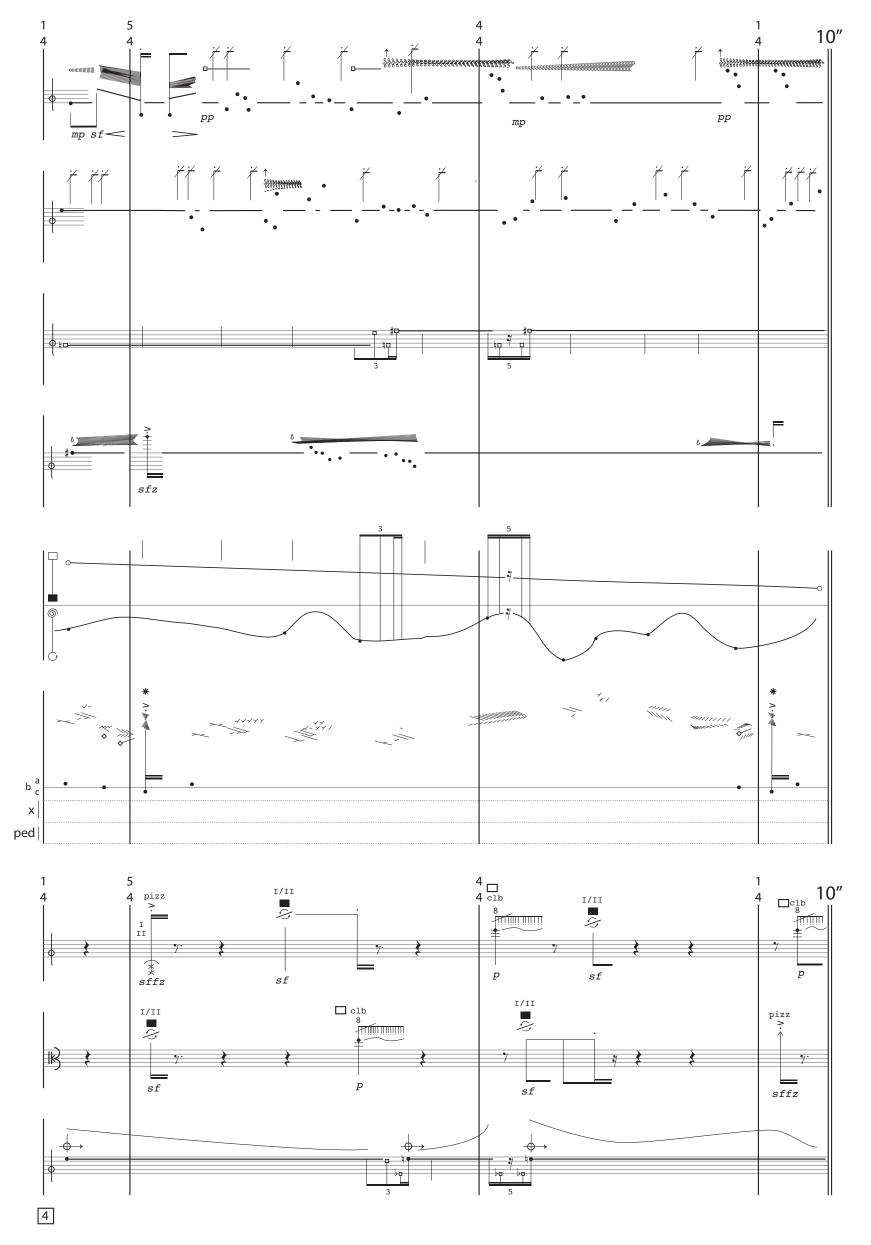
at a climatic moment in the piece, the winds put down their instruments and stand holding hand held speakers. at first the sound coming out of the speakers is a mezzoforte white noise. as the performers slowly move the speakers through the air we hear soft aliasing and cancellation effects. there is a short interruption by the ensemble at rehearsal number 44, and then after another section of white noise, the ensemble enters again — the white noise is cut and replaced with the amplified sound of the percussion. for a long period of time, only the percussion comes through the handheld speakers until the last section (59-64), where the piano/wacom instrument shifts from the transducers into the speakers, and ends with high sinewaves also in the speakers.

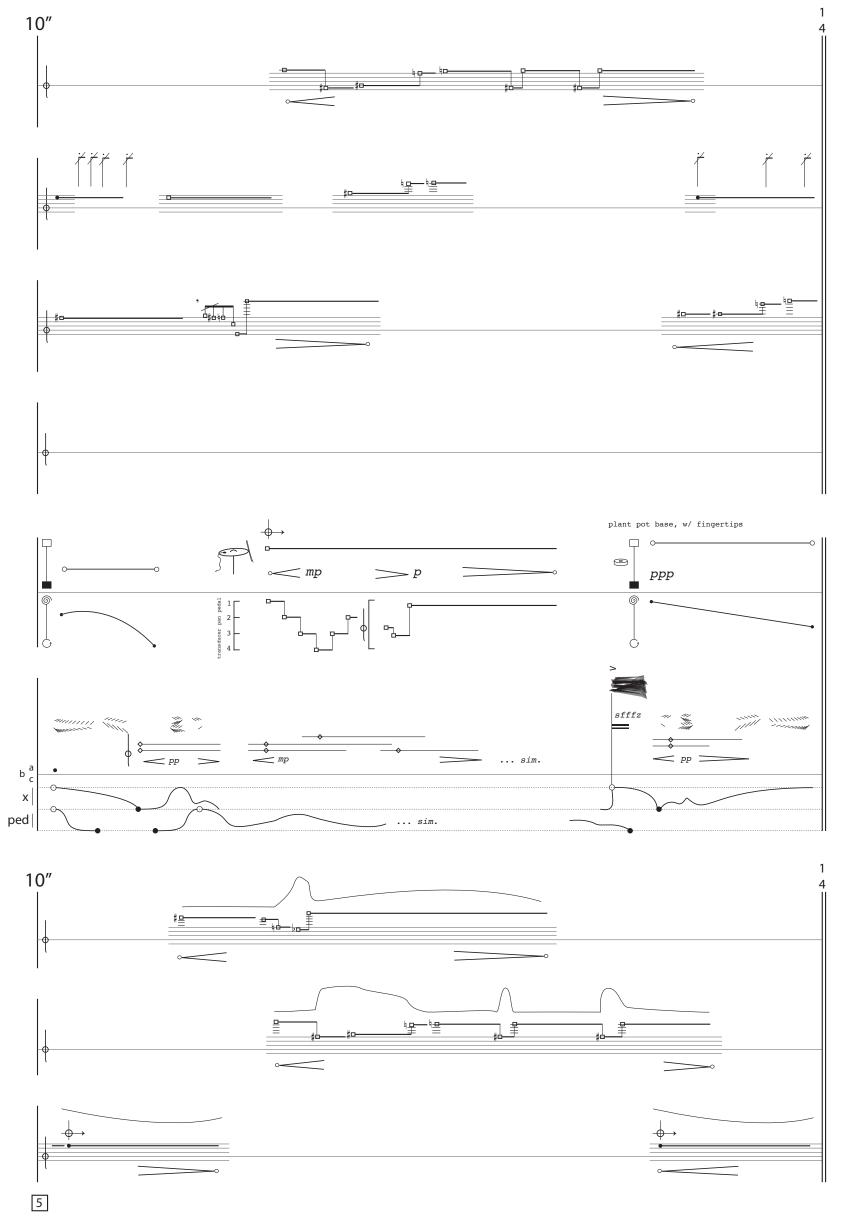
the moments of the speaker performers should be as unified as possible; very smooth, somewhat majestic, yet impersonal, like robots. transitions between poses are notated, where arrows continue between positions, there should be no stop, but a fluid continuation, to the next location.

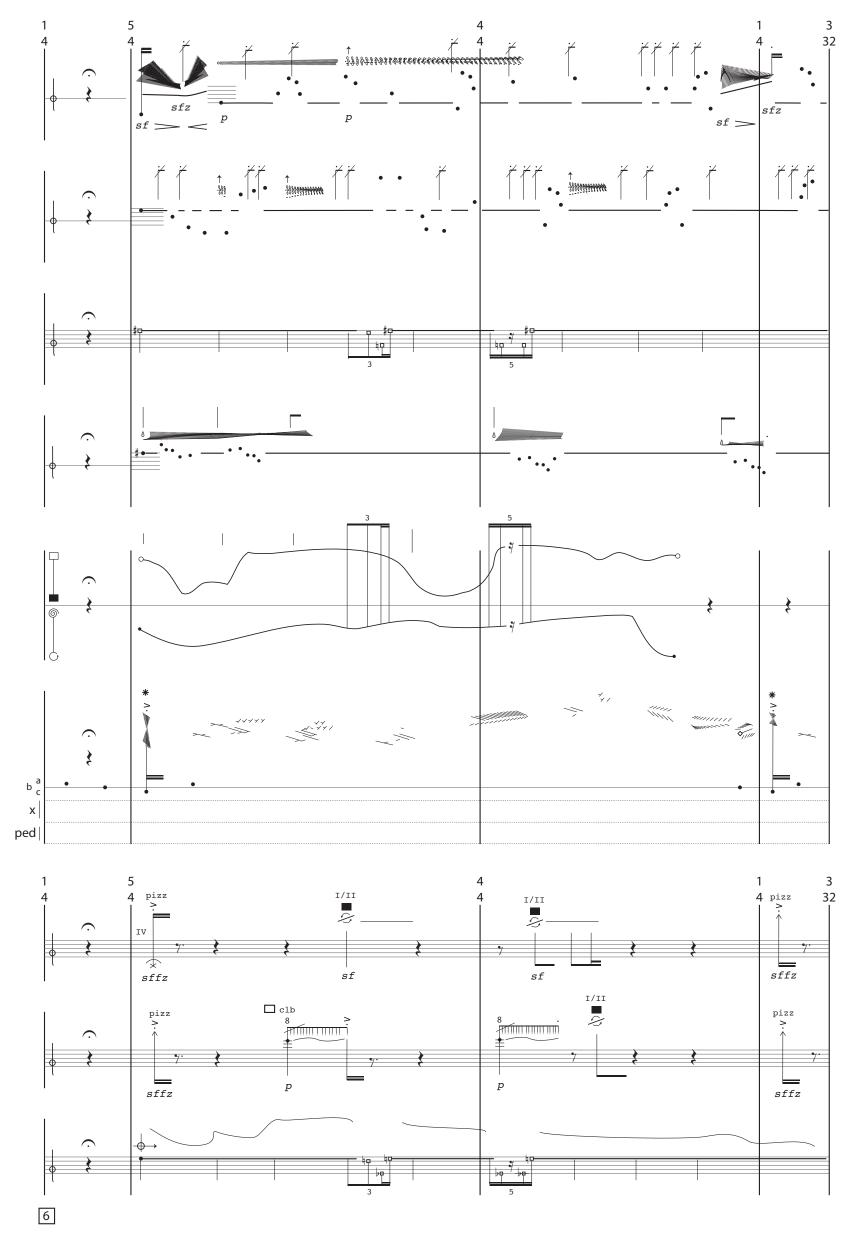


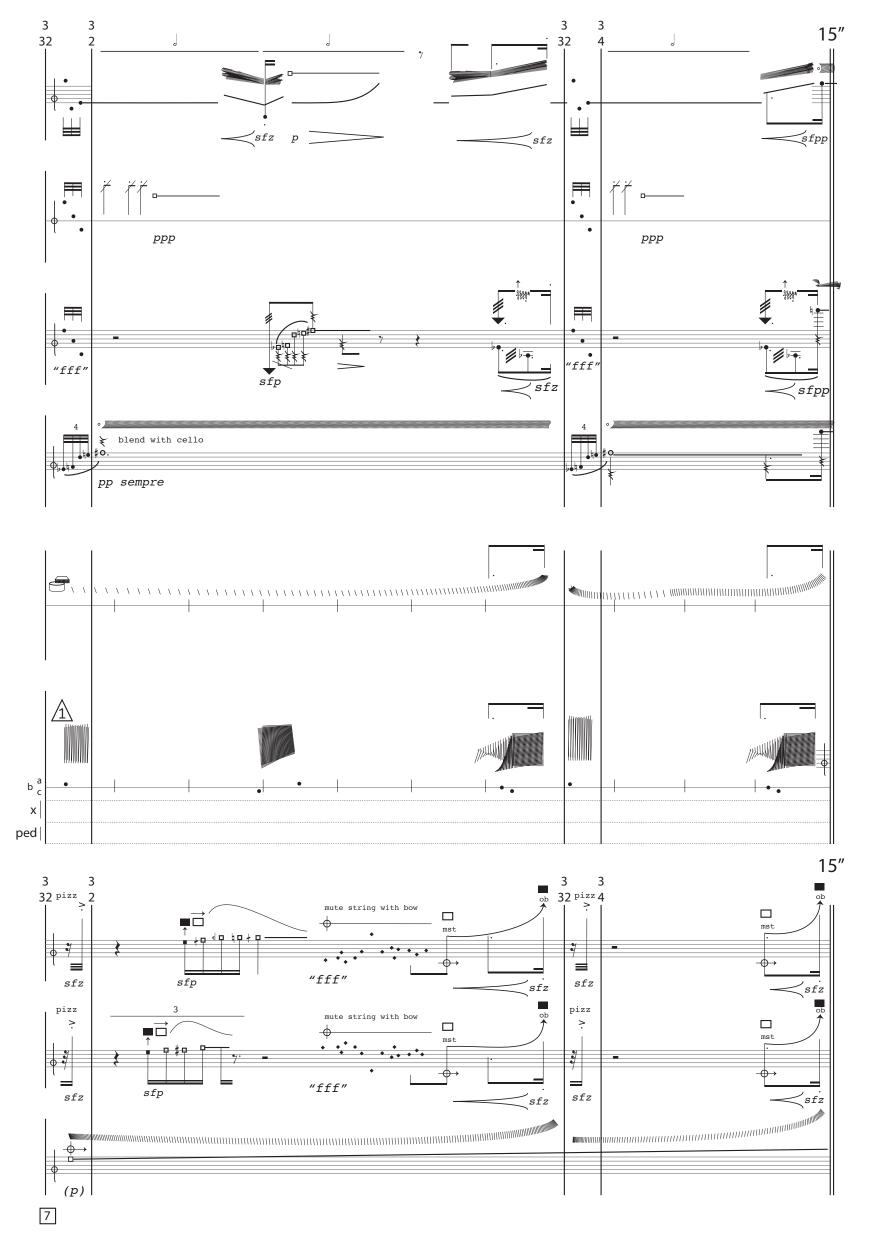


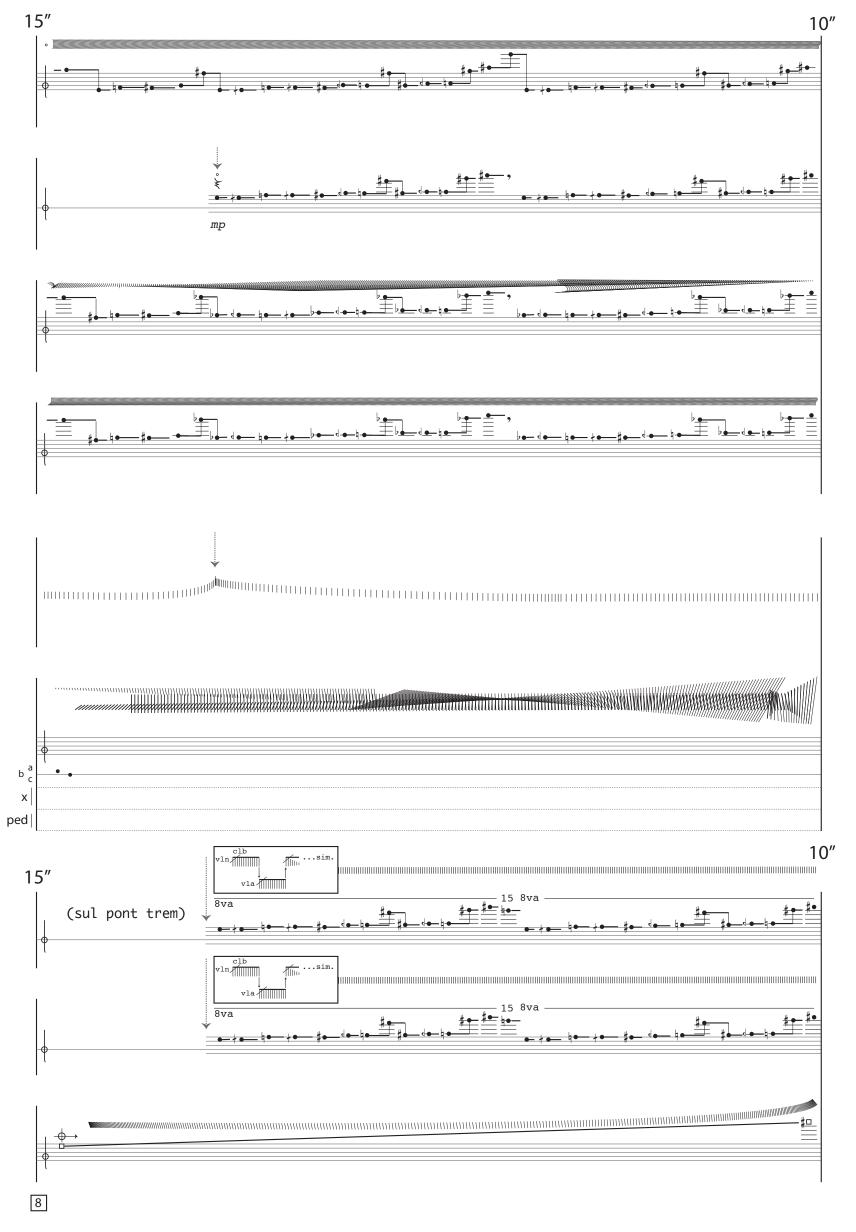


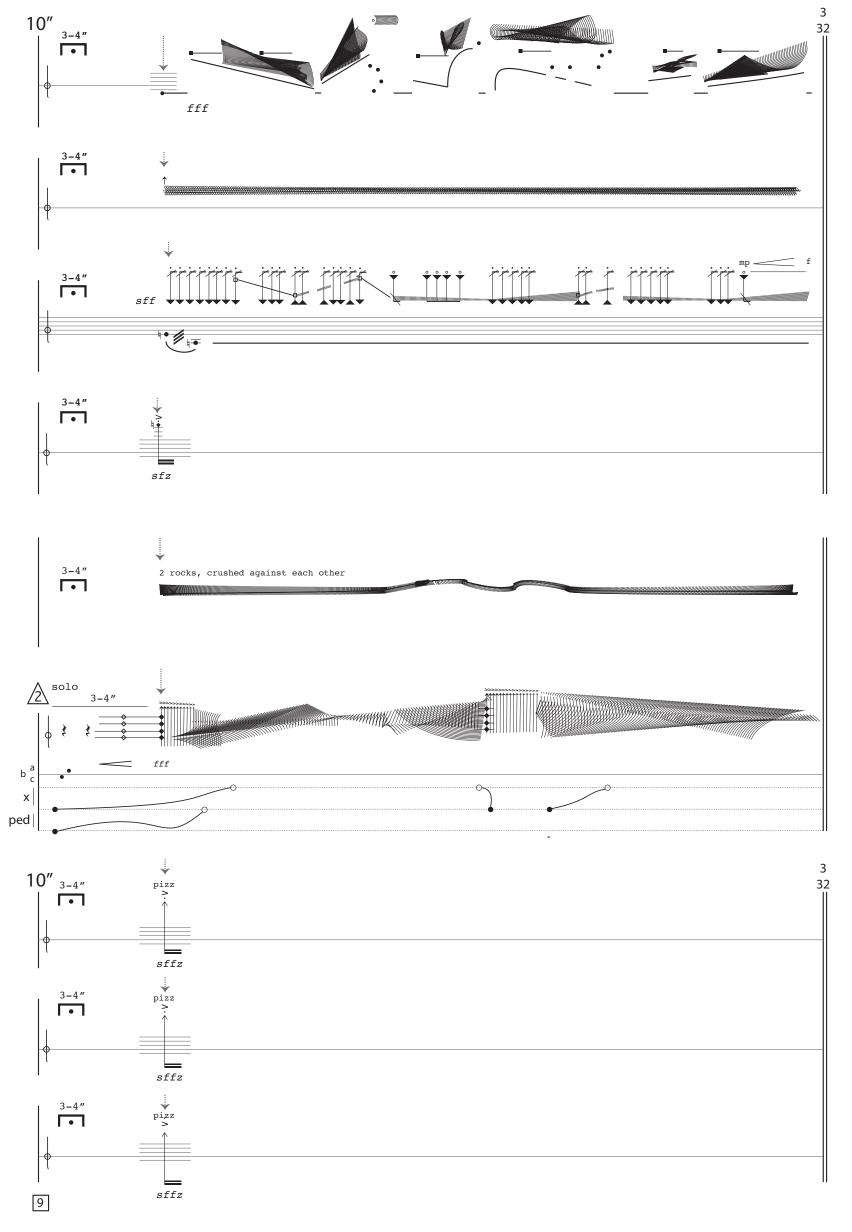


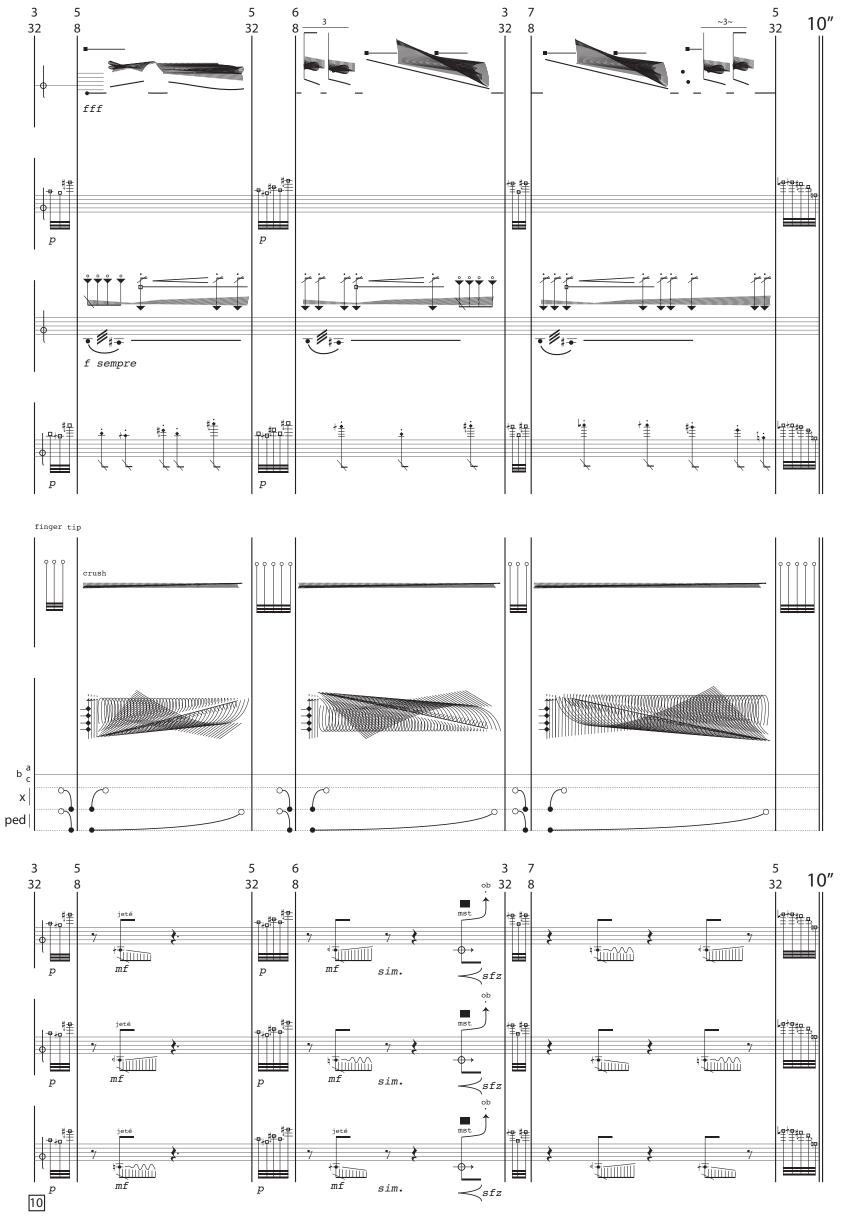


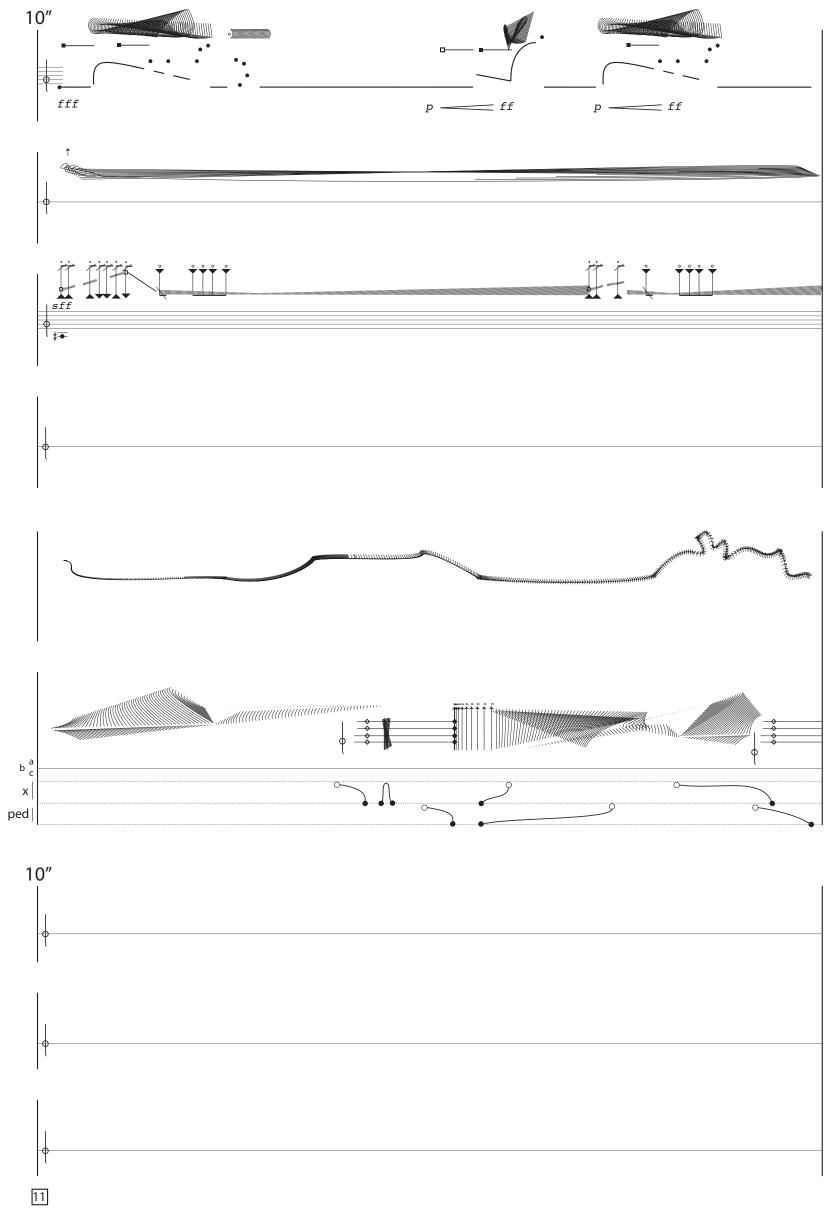


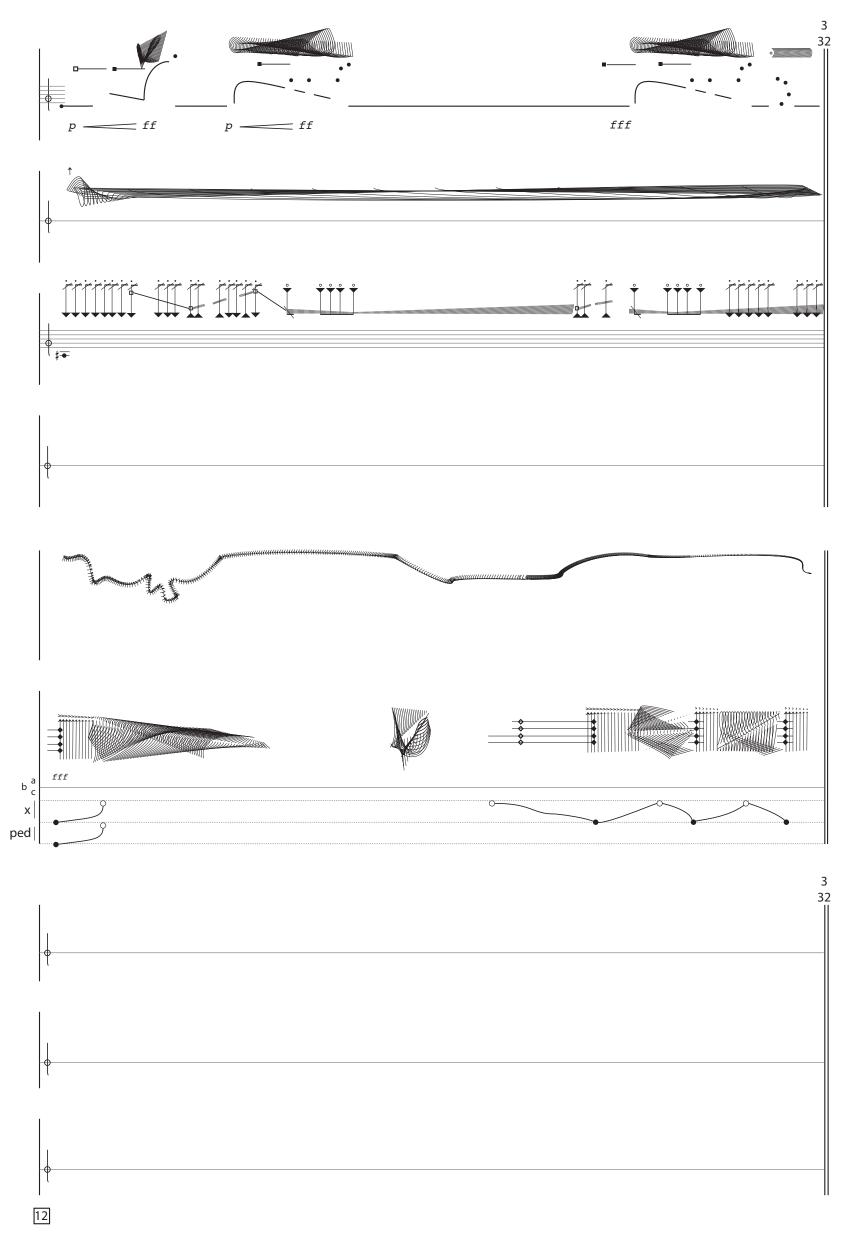


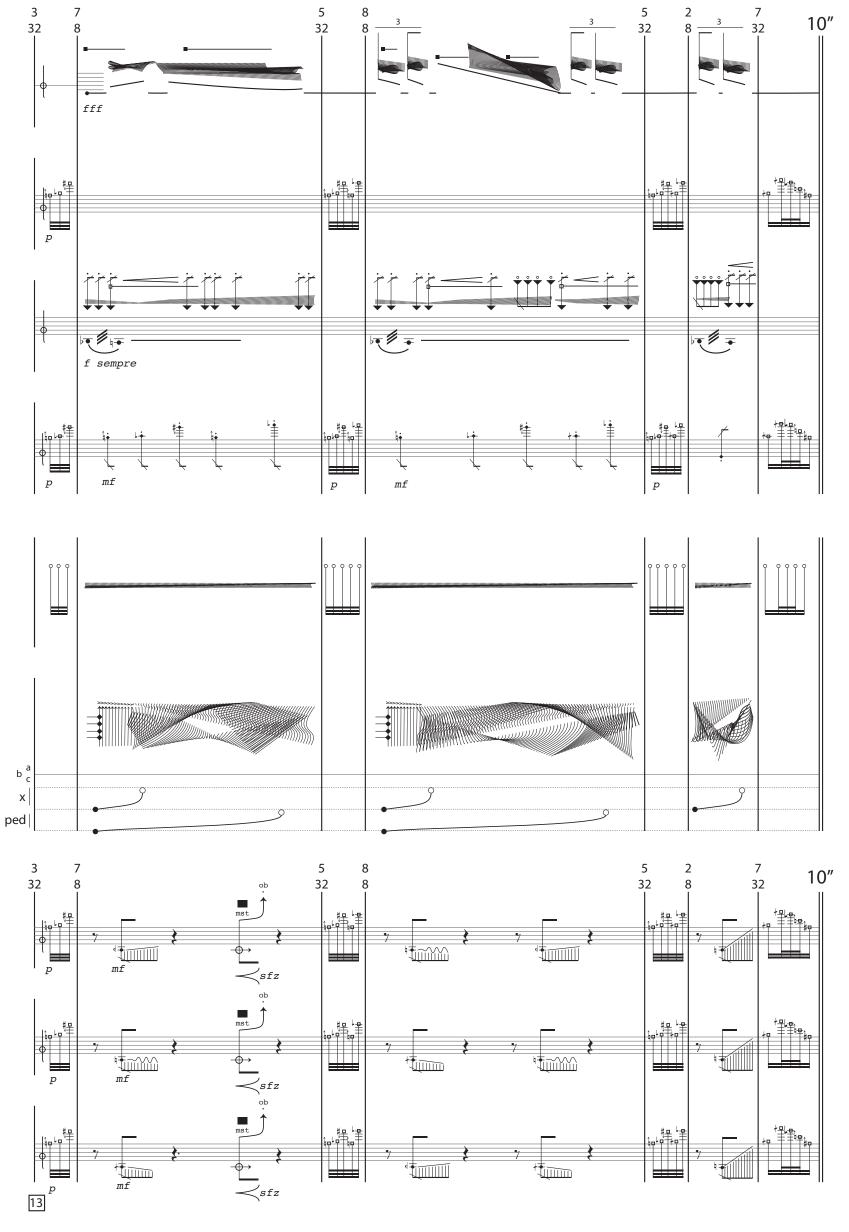


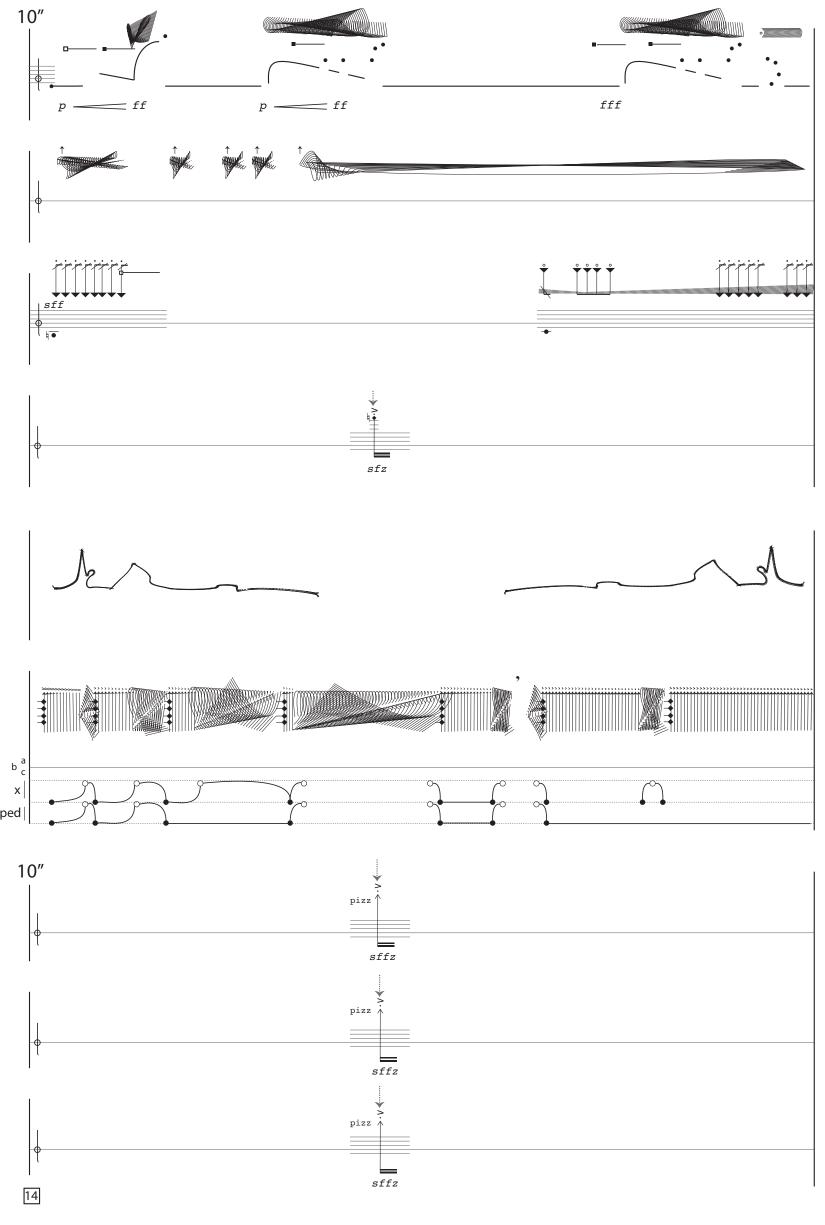


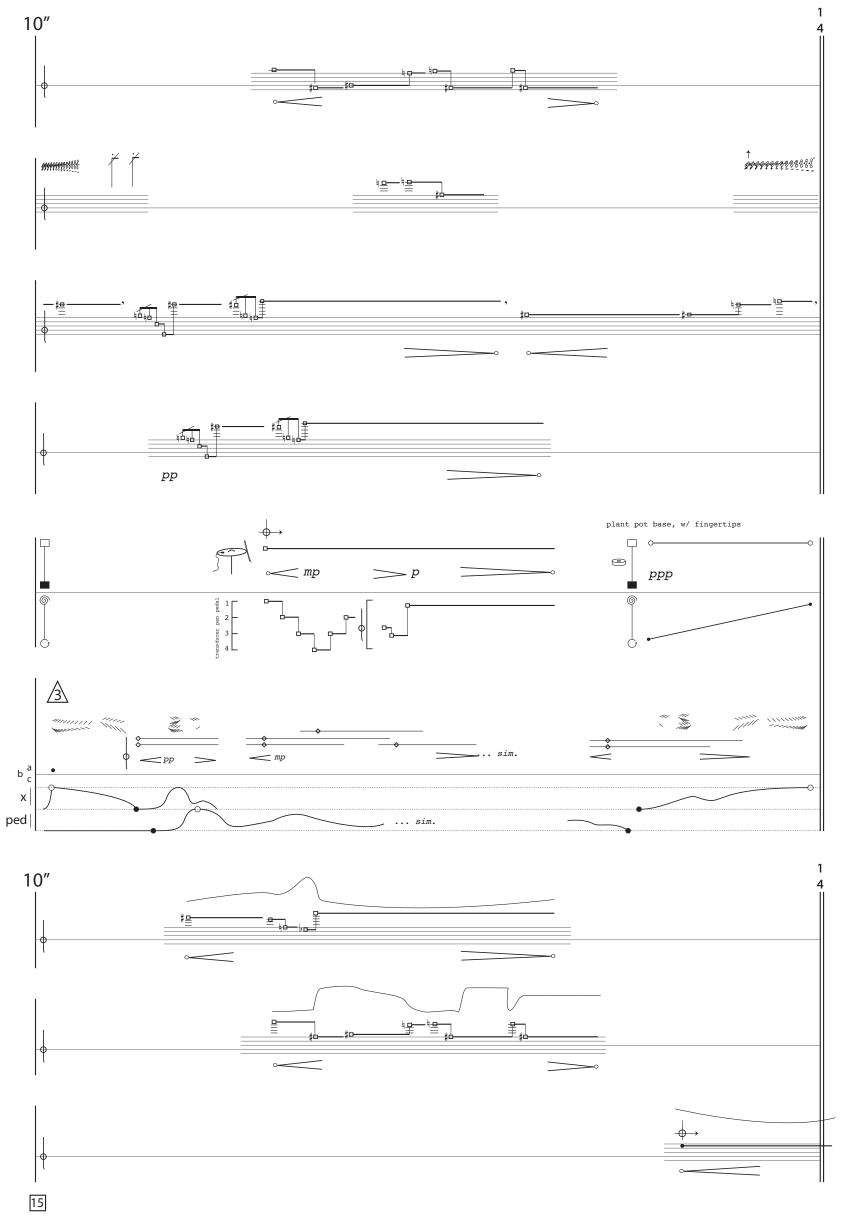


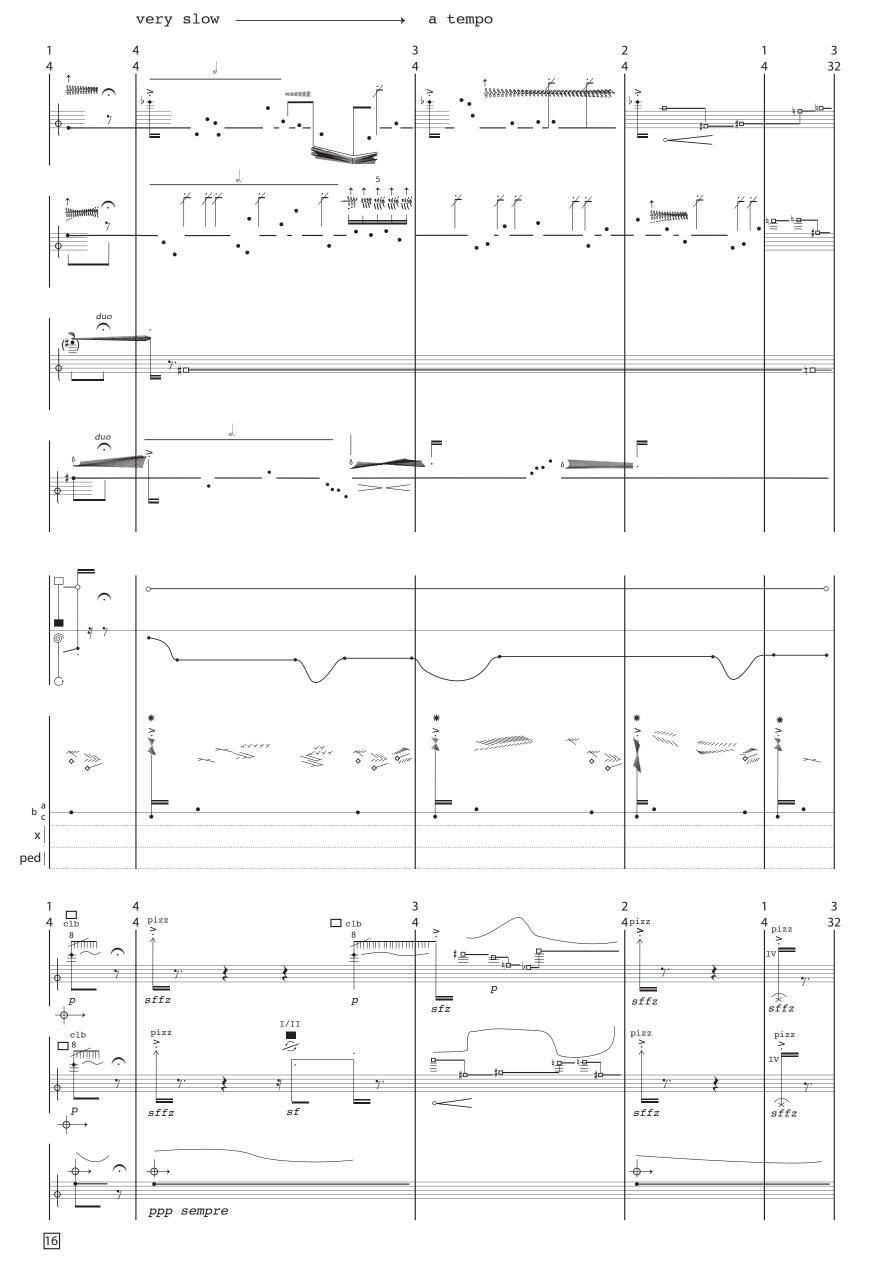


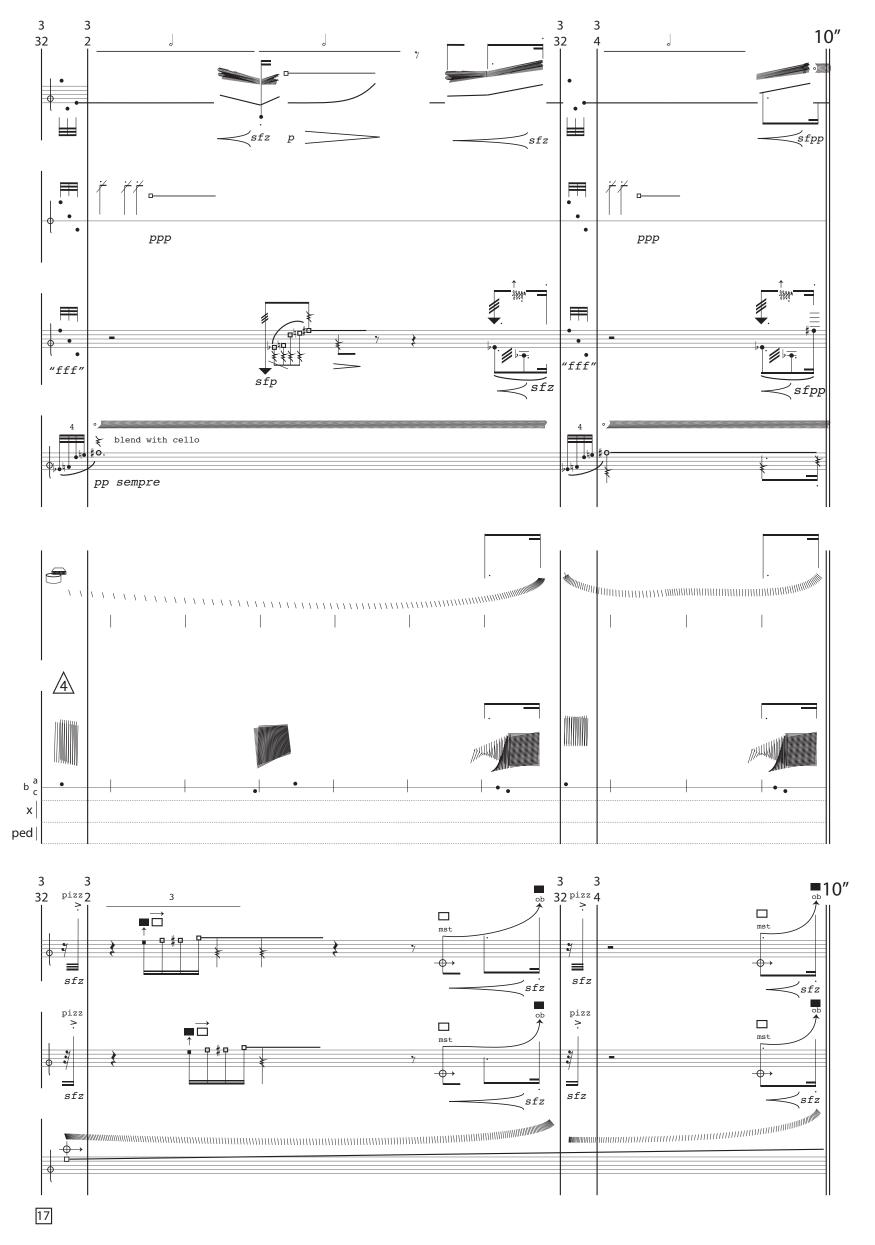


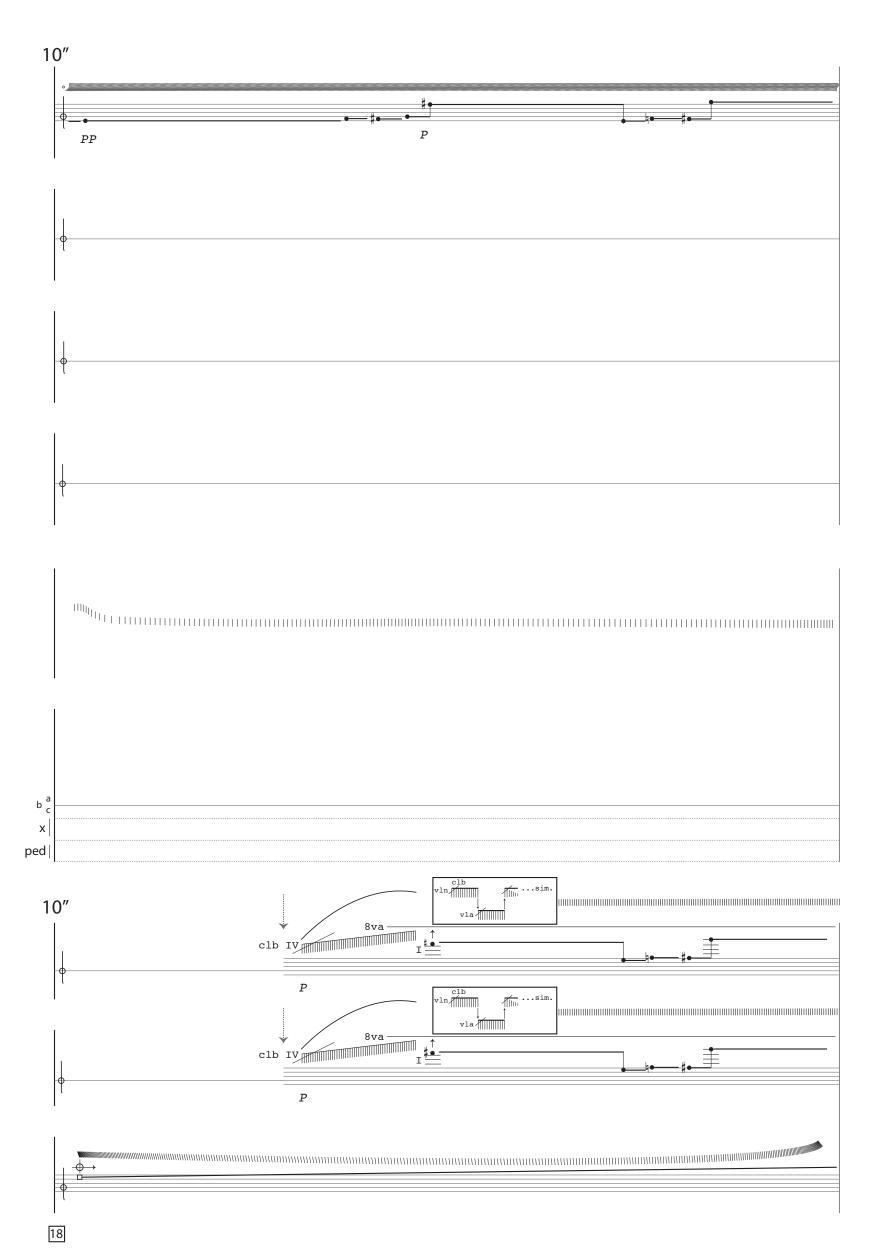


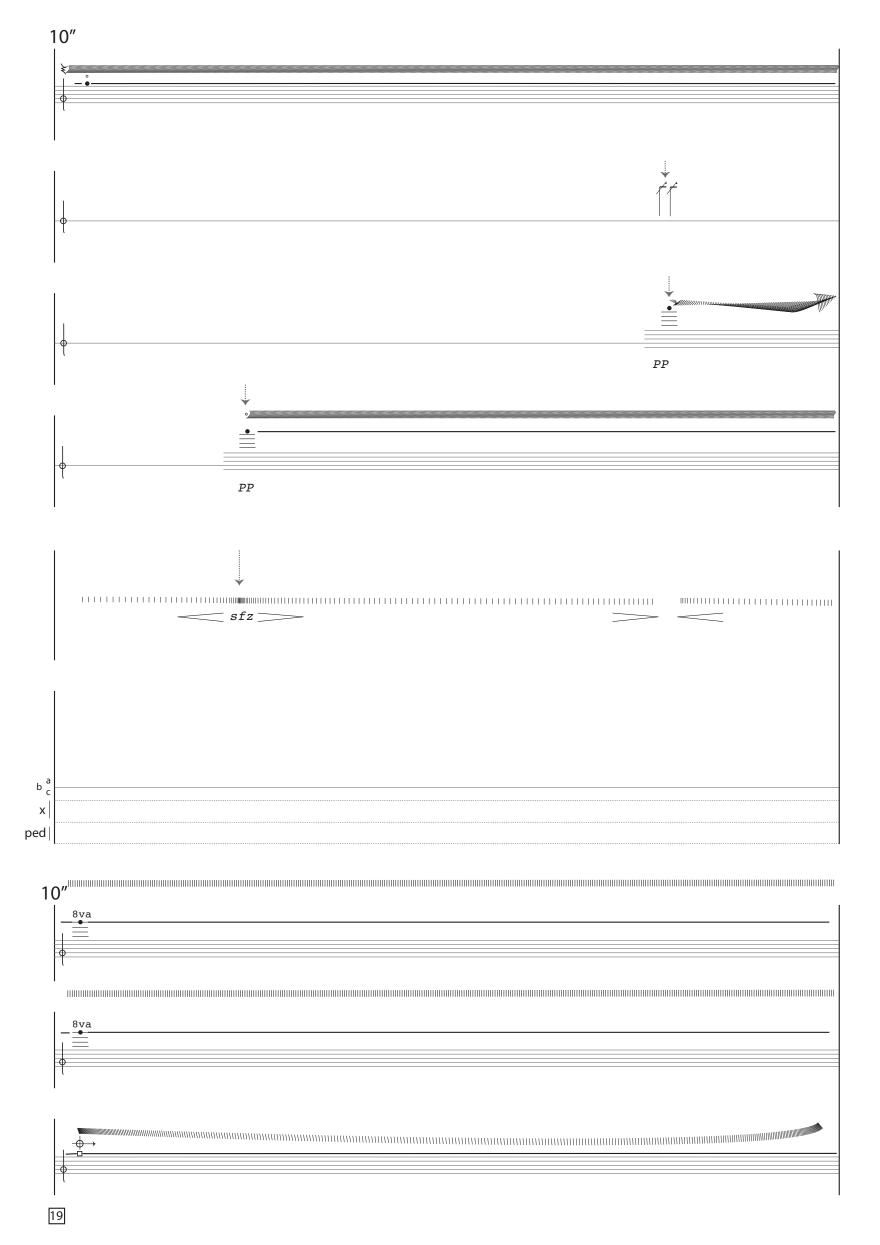


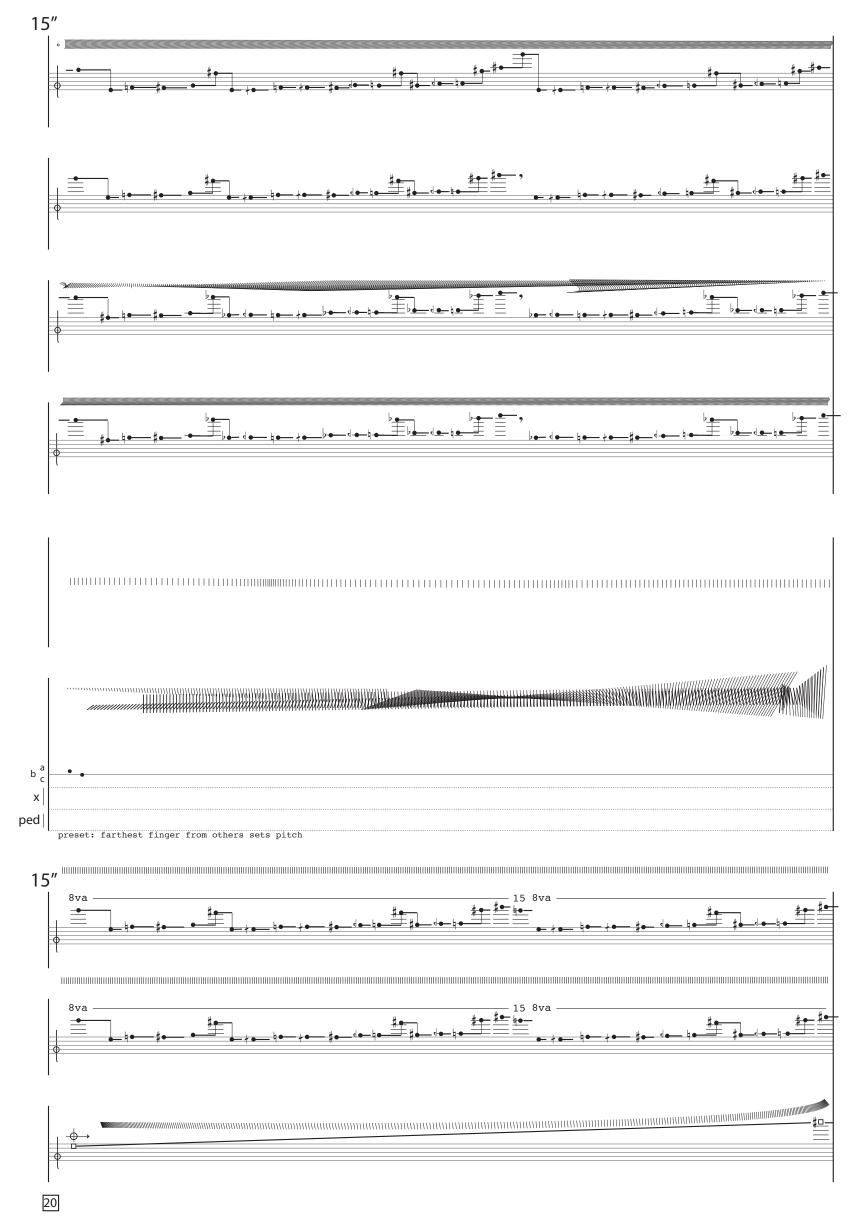


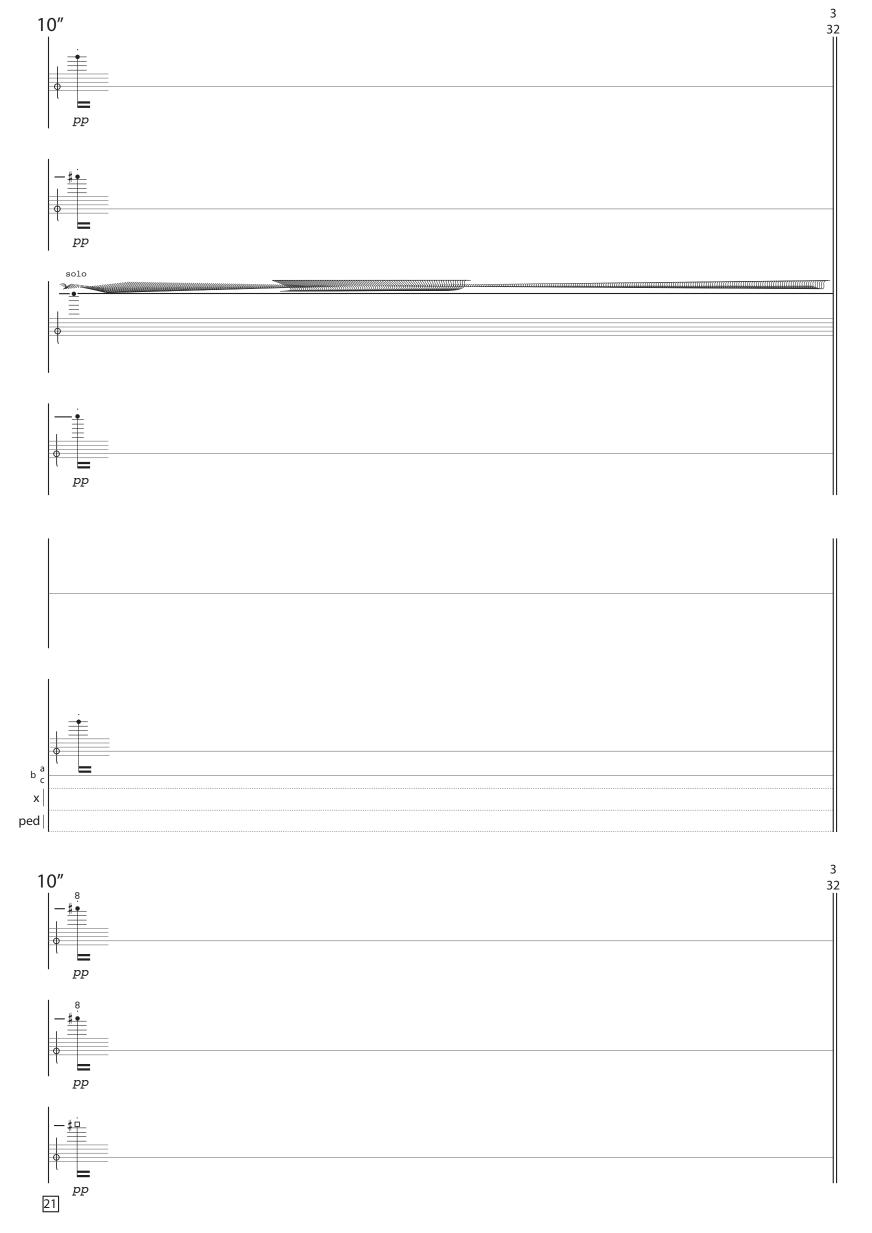


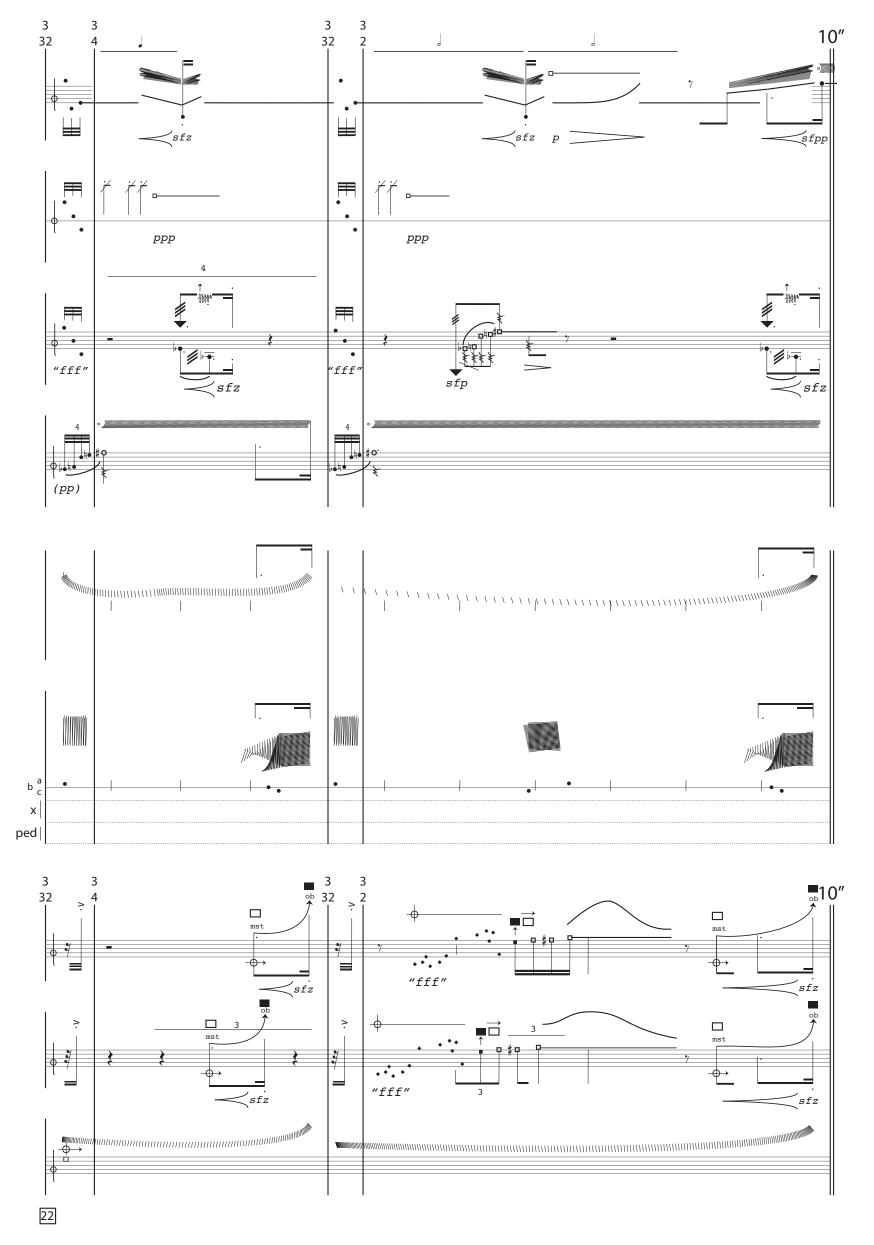


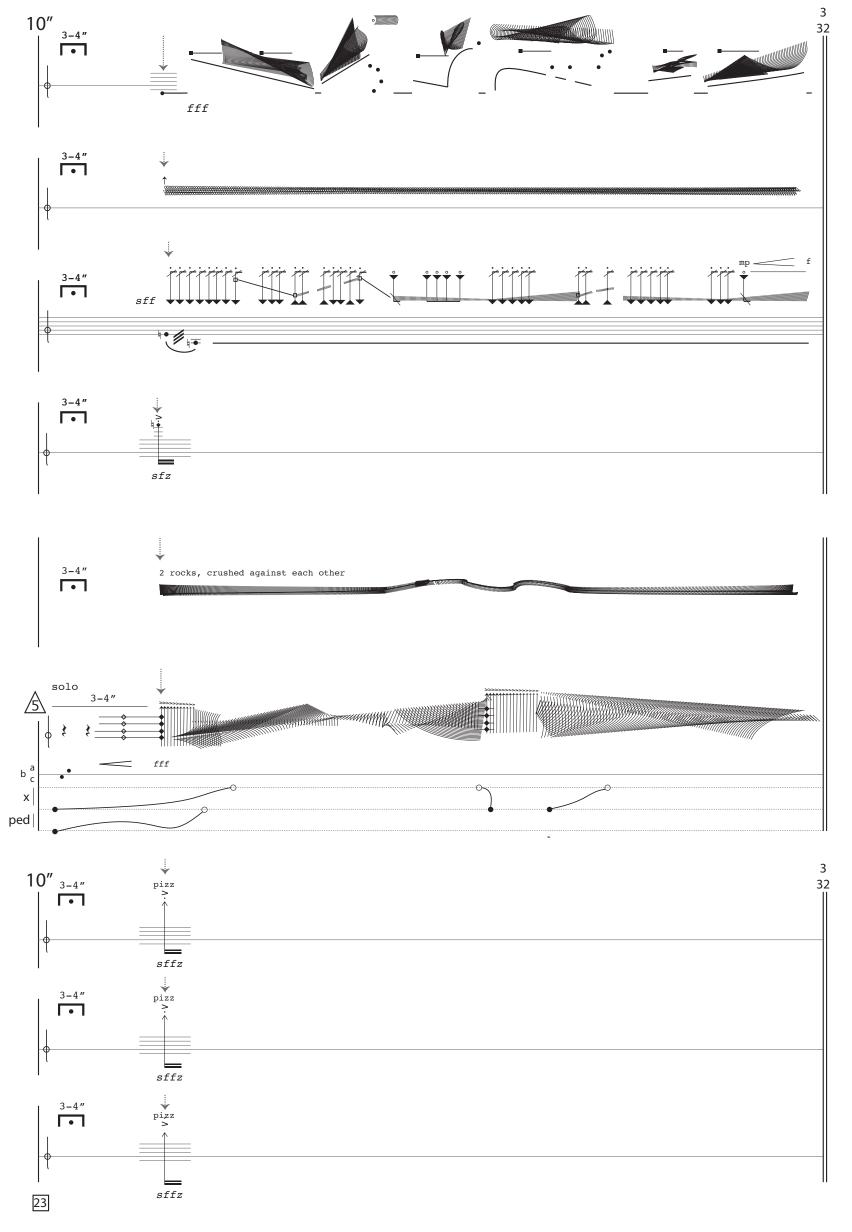


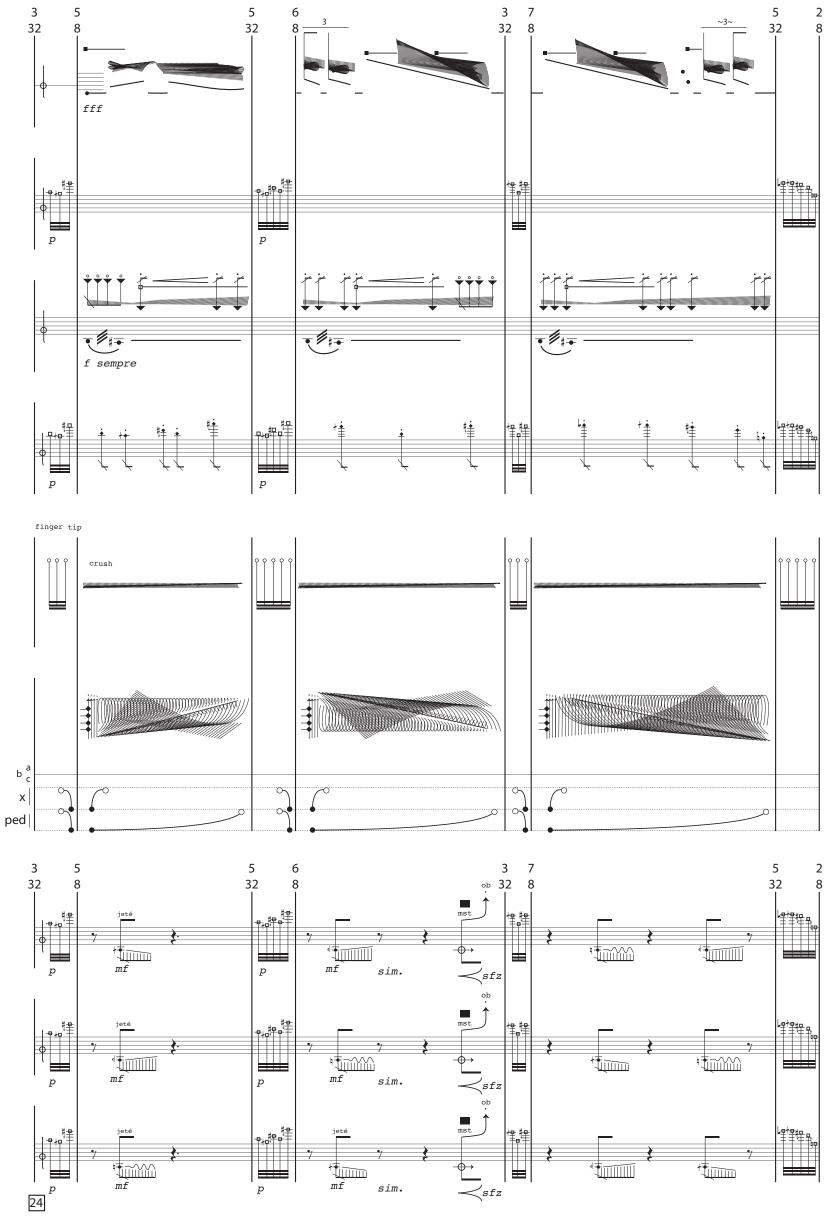


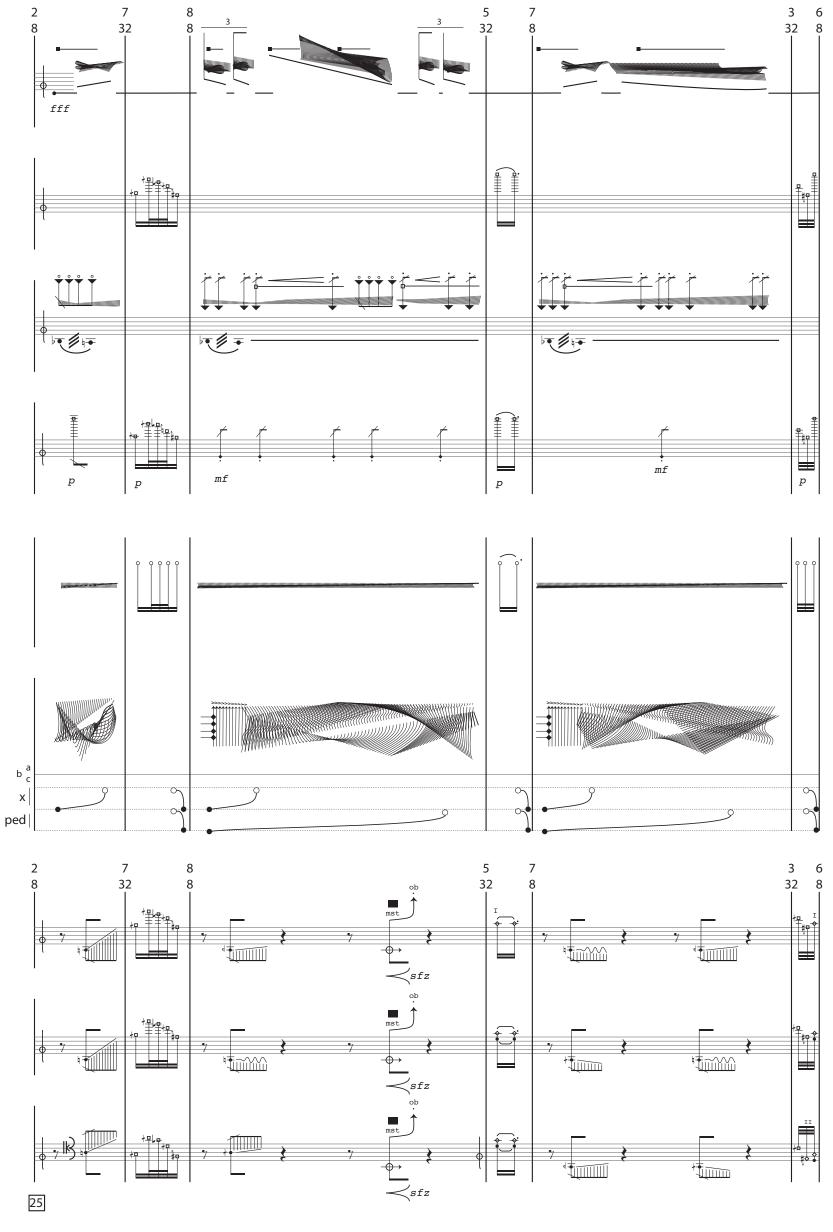


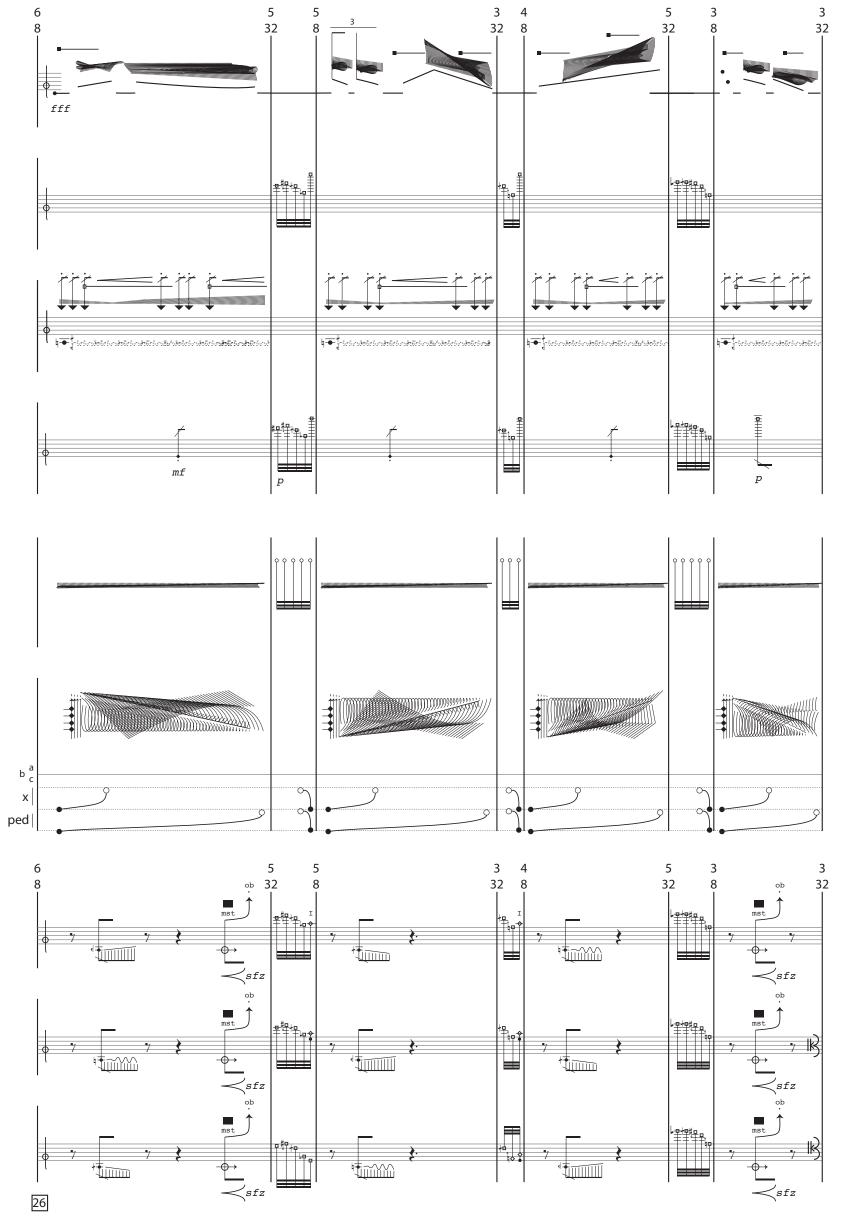


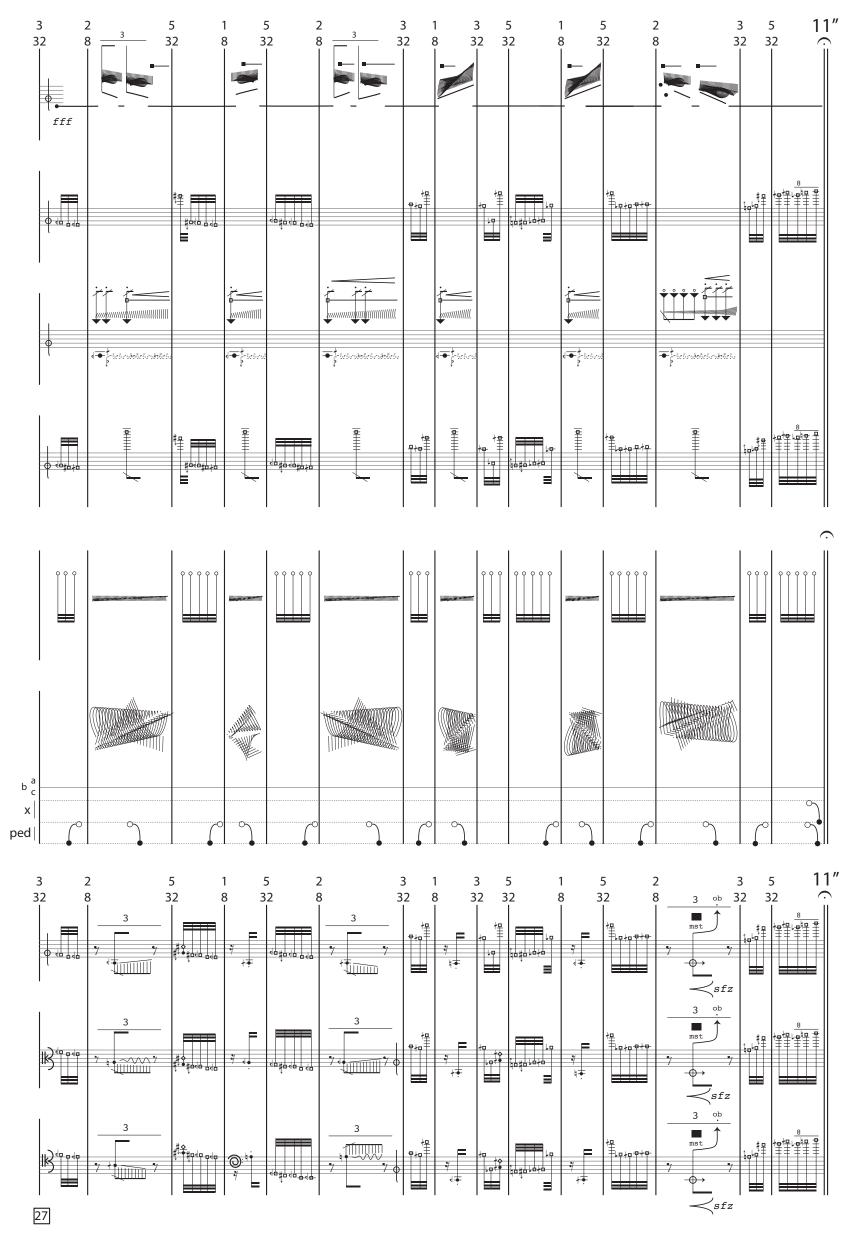


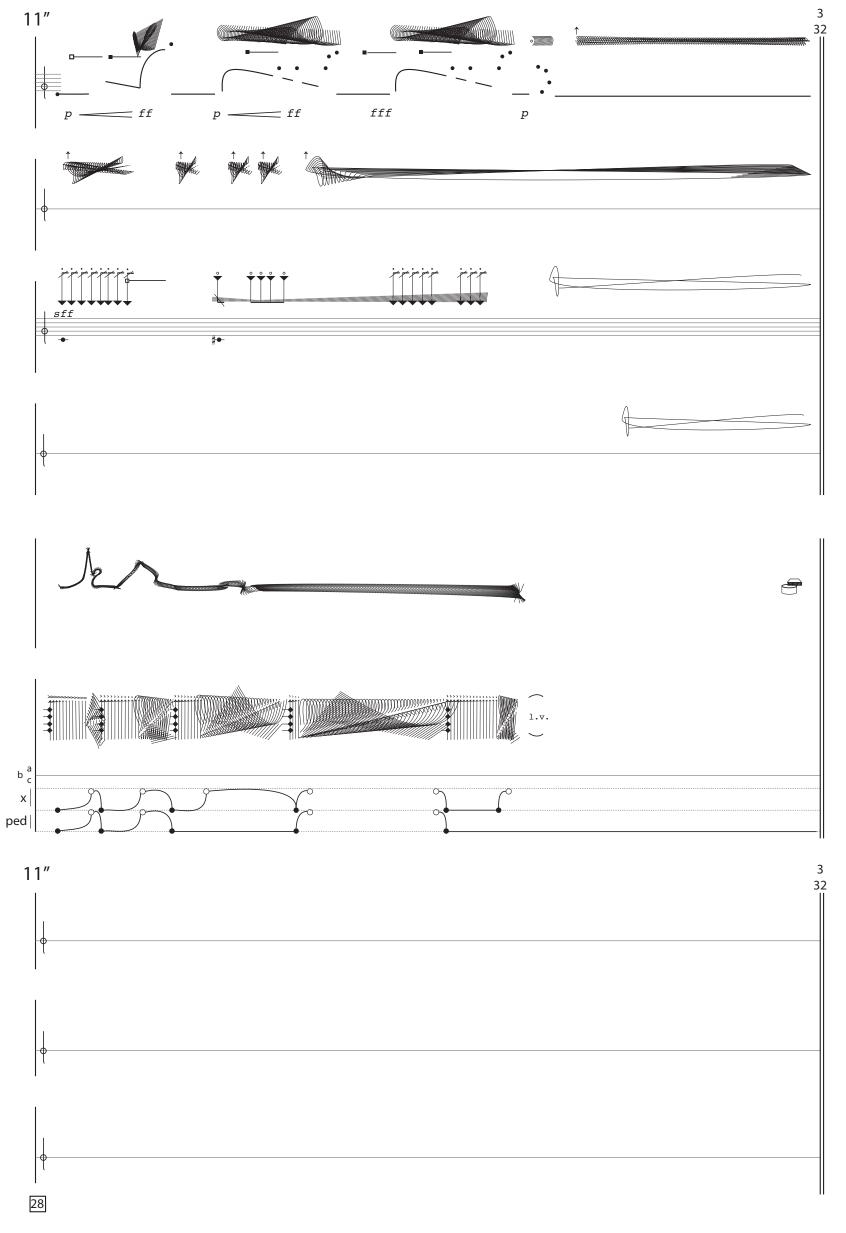


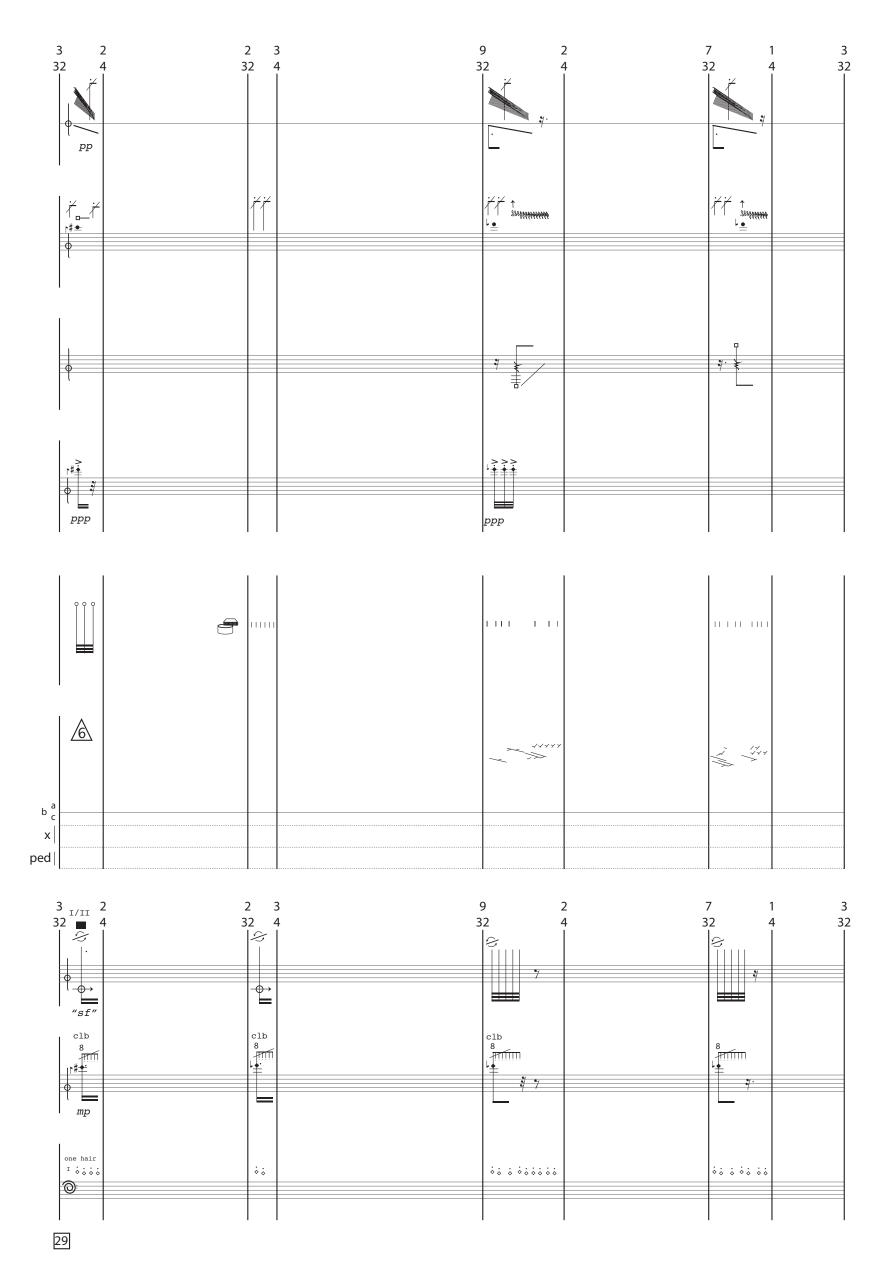


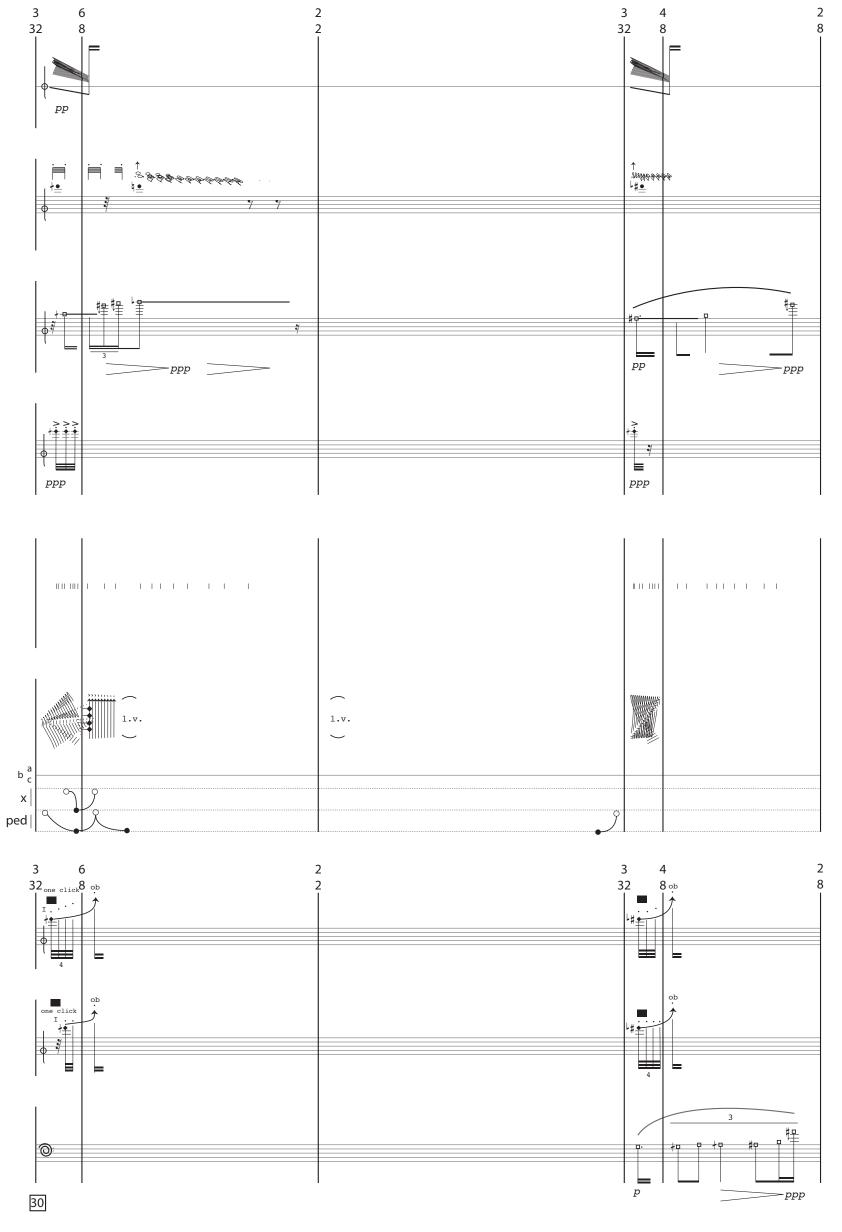


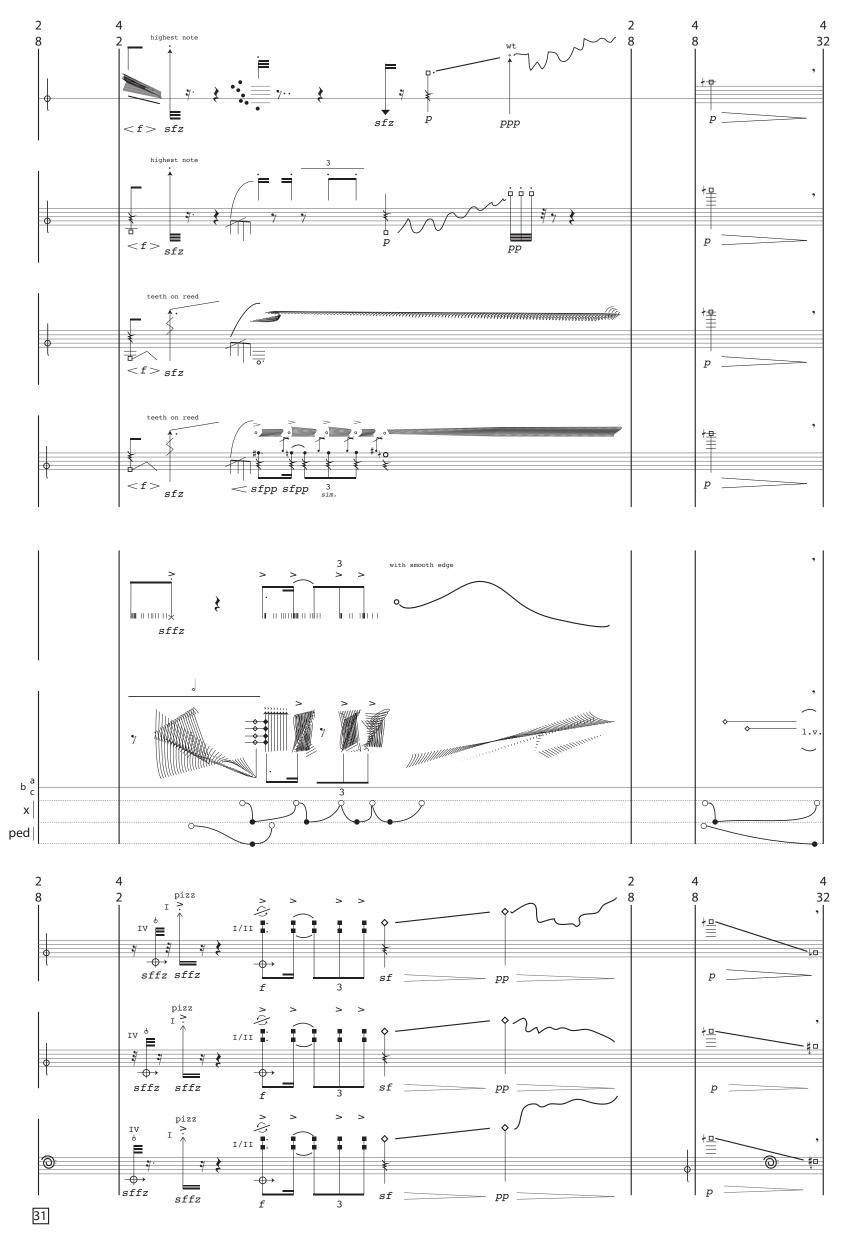


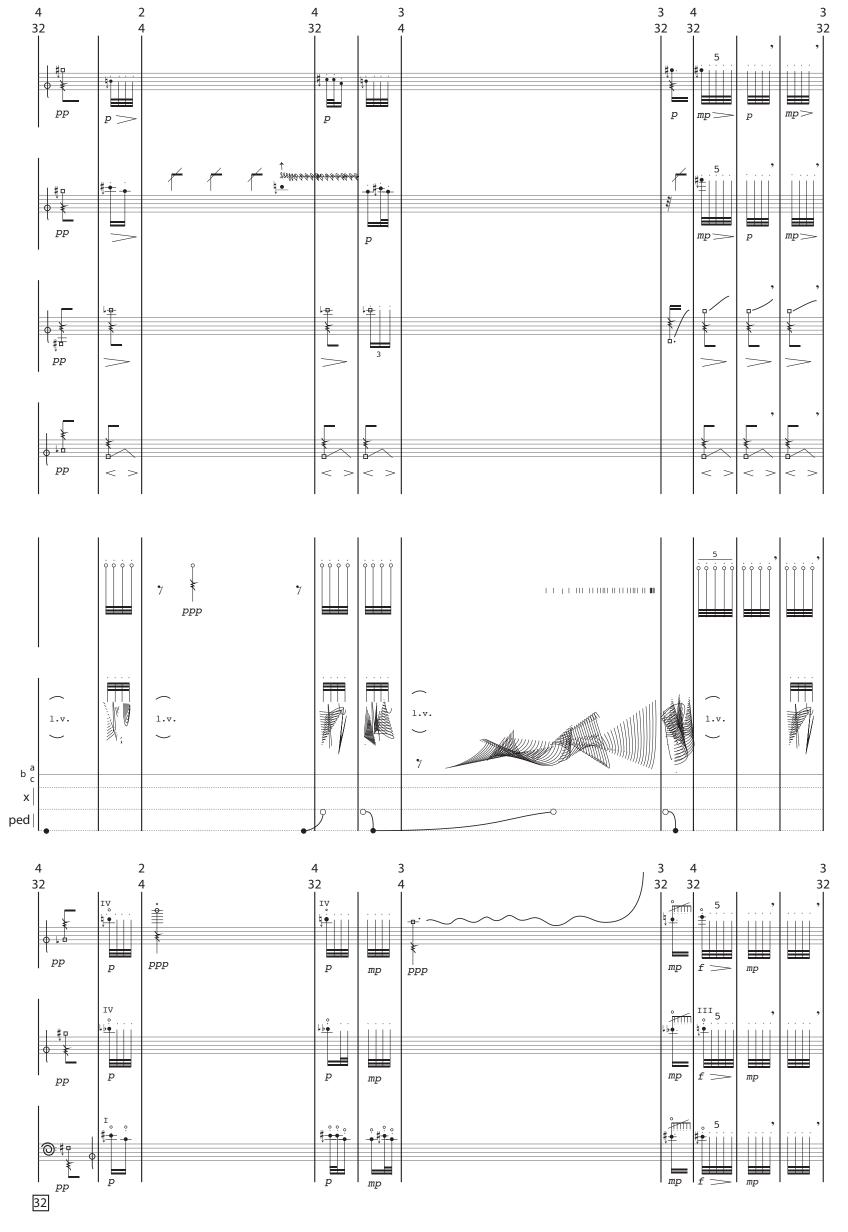


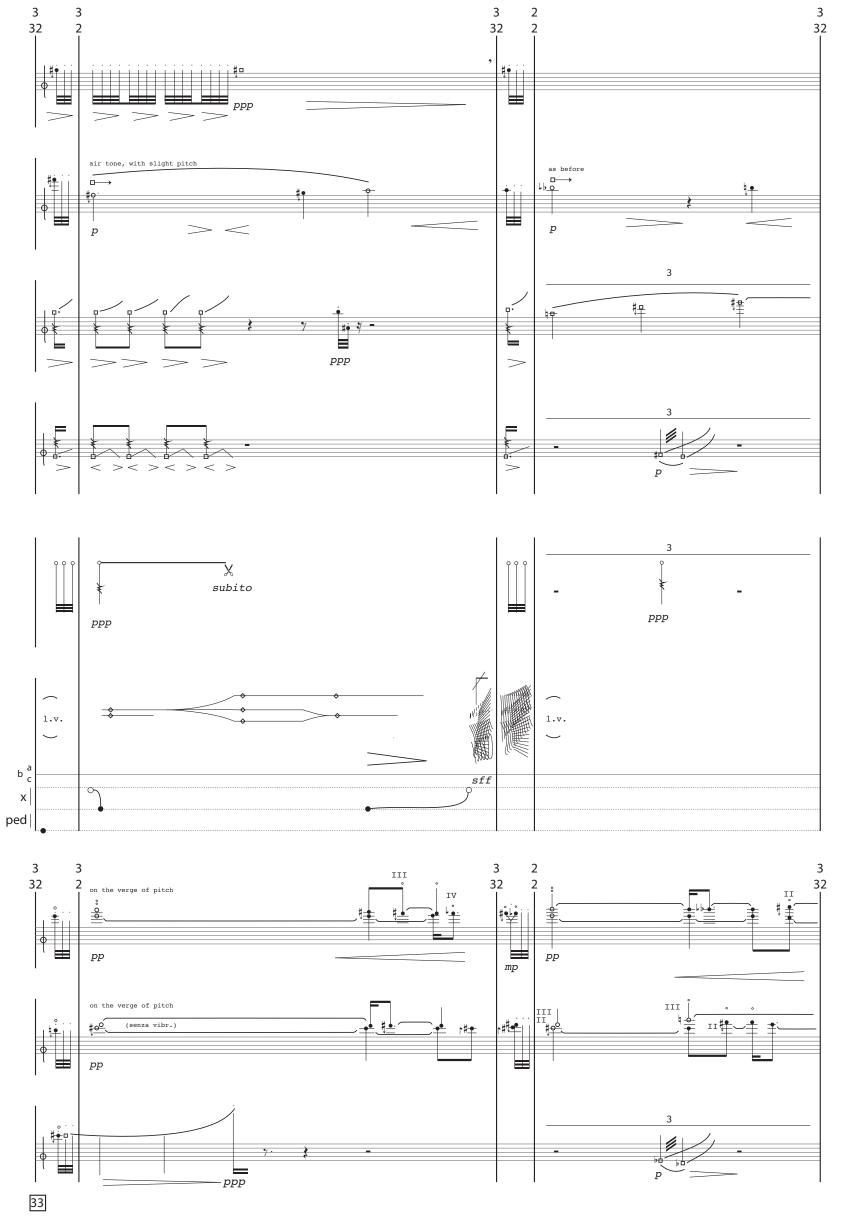


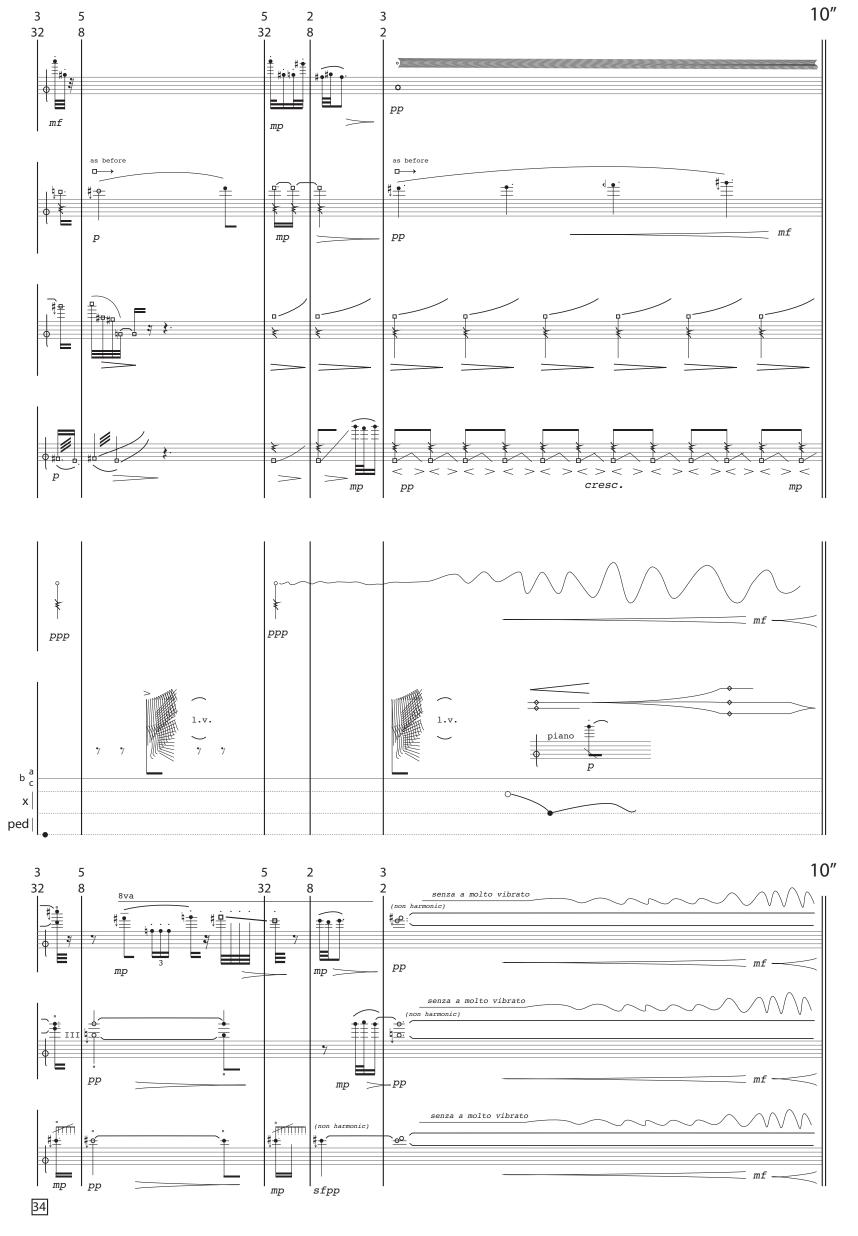


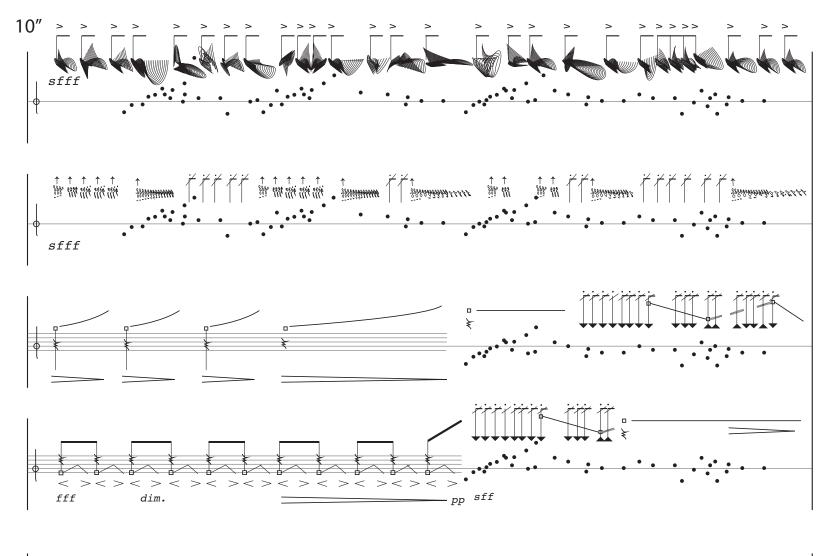


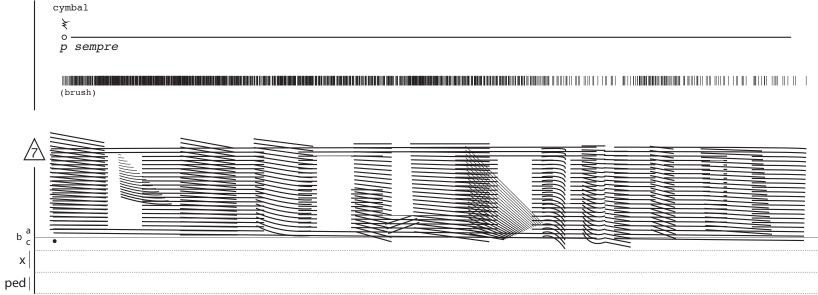










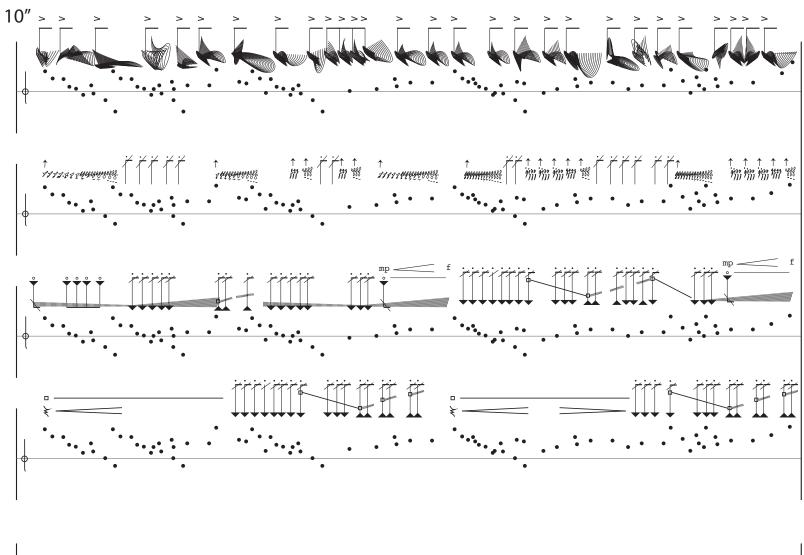


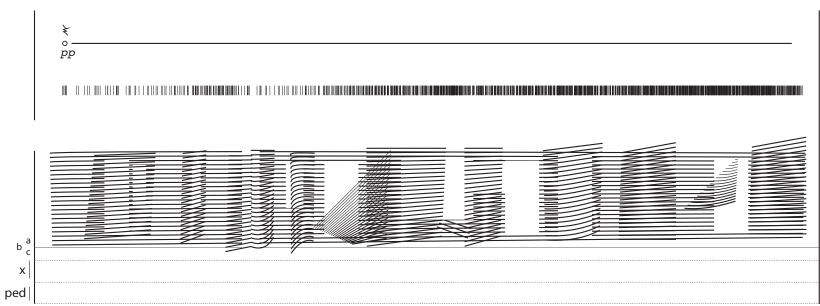
10"

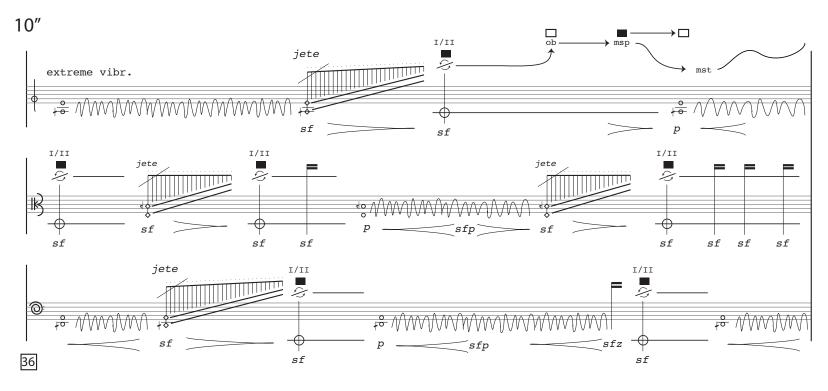
\*\*\* from molto to extreme vibrato

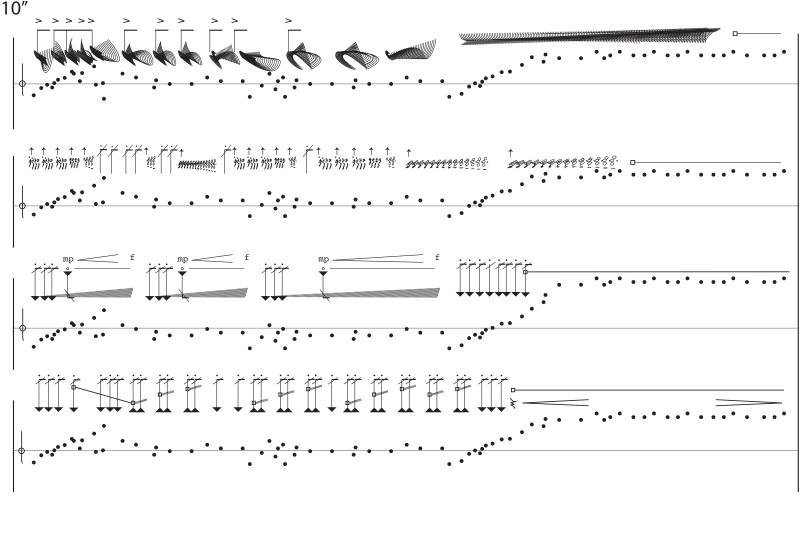
sfff mf

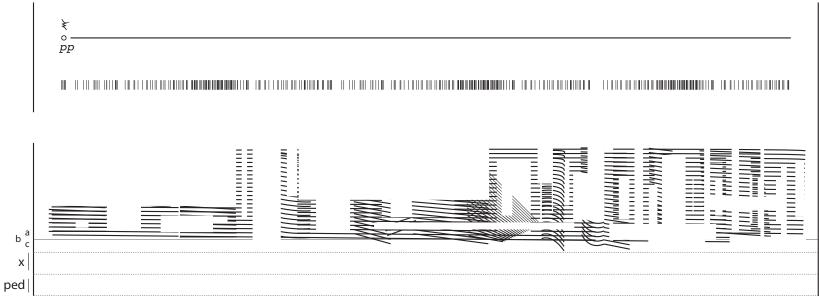
\*\*\* from molto to extreme vibrato

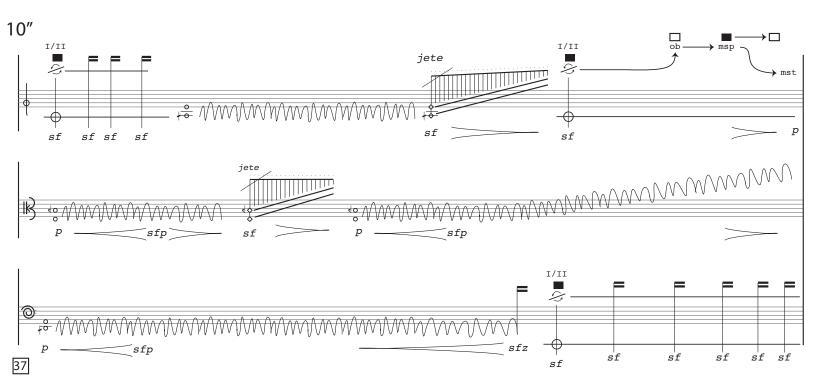


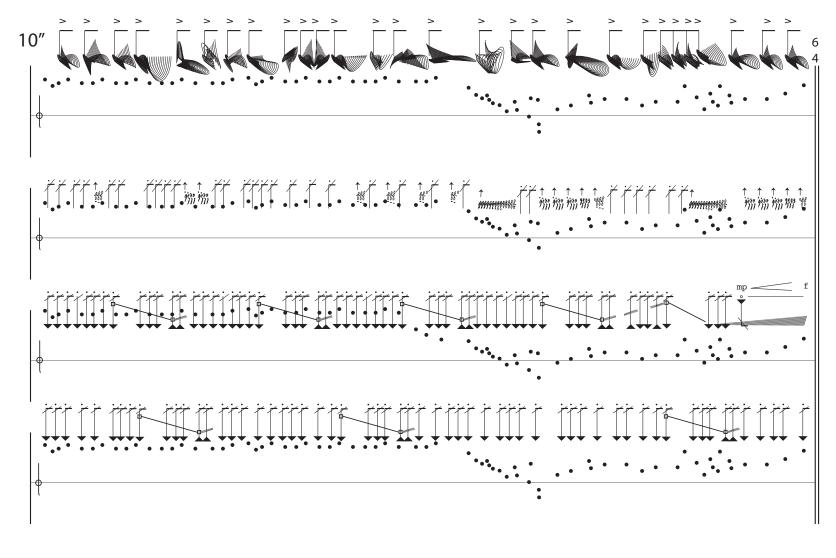




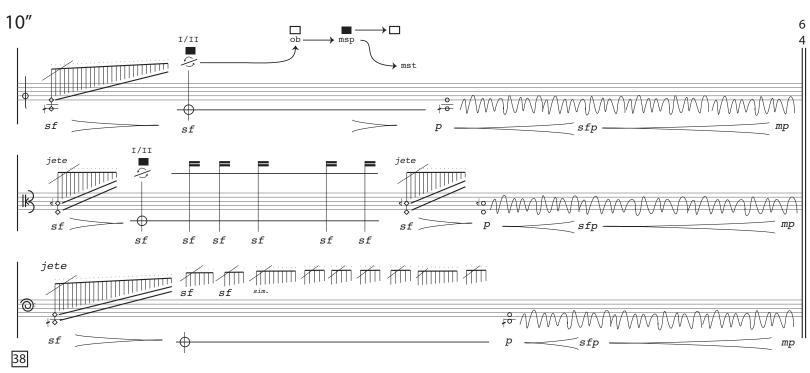


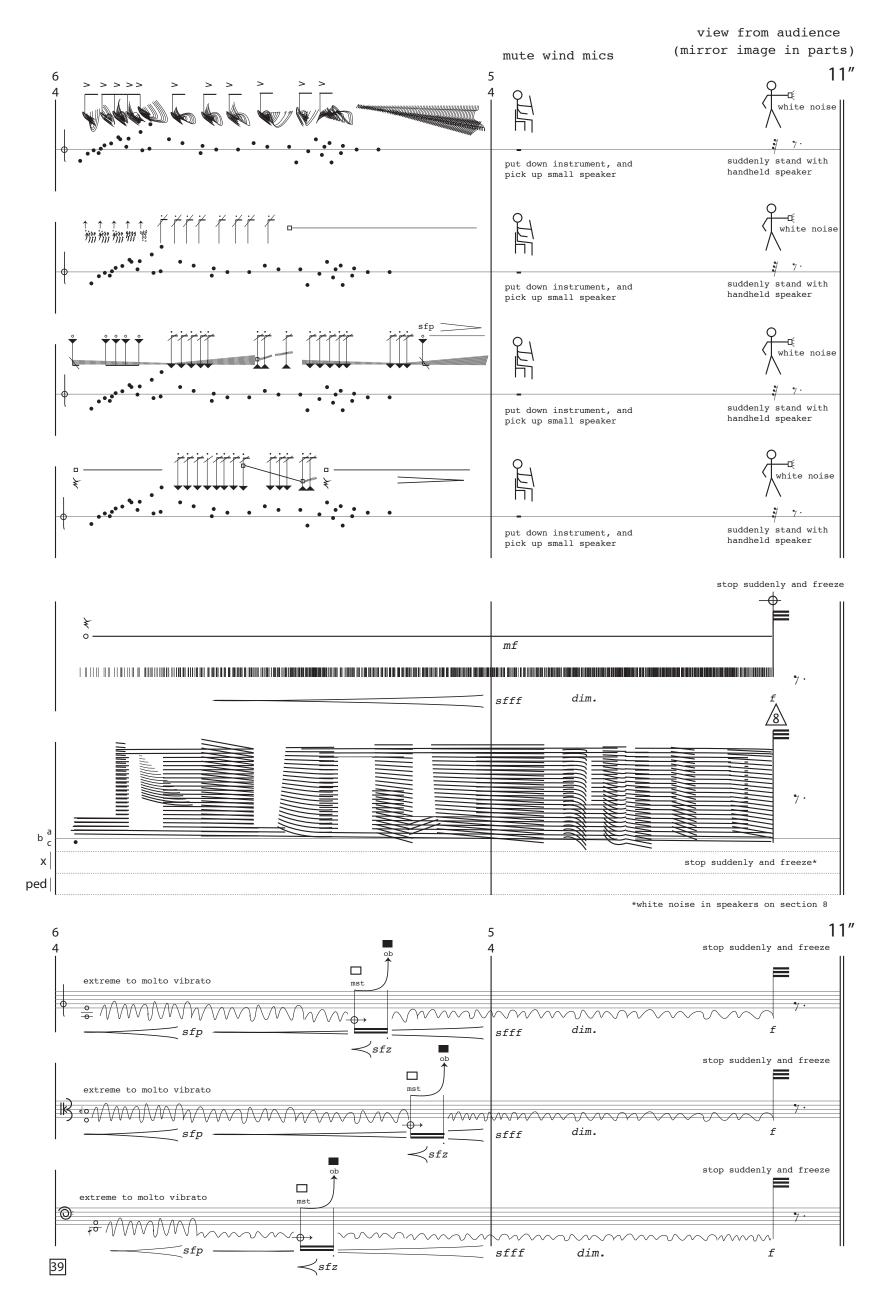




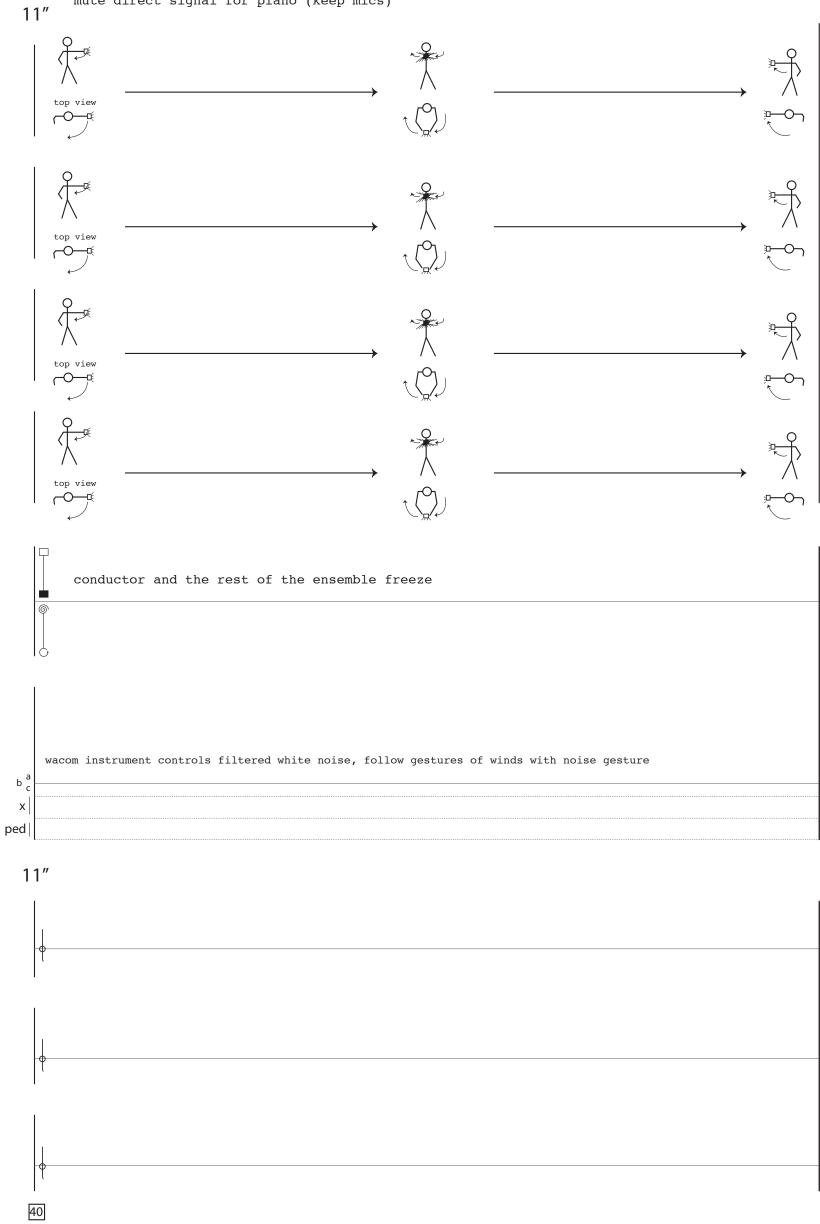


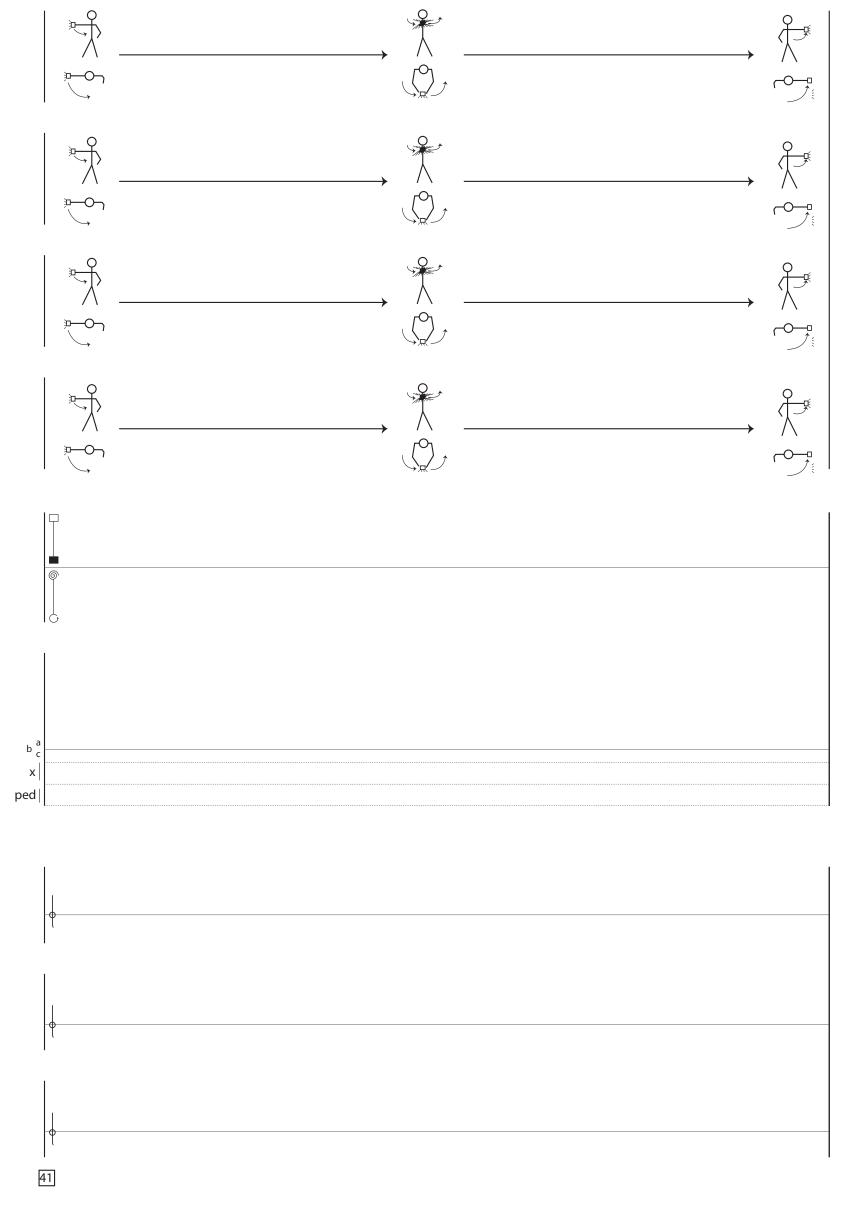


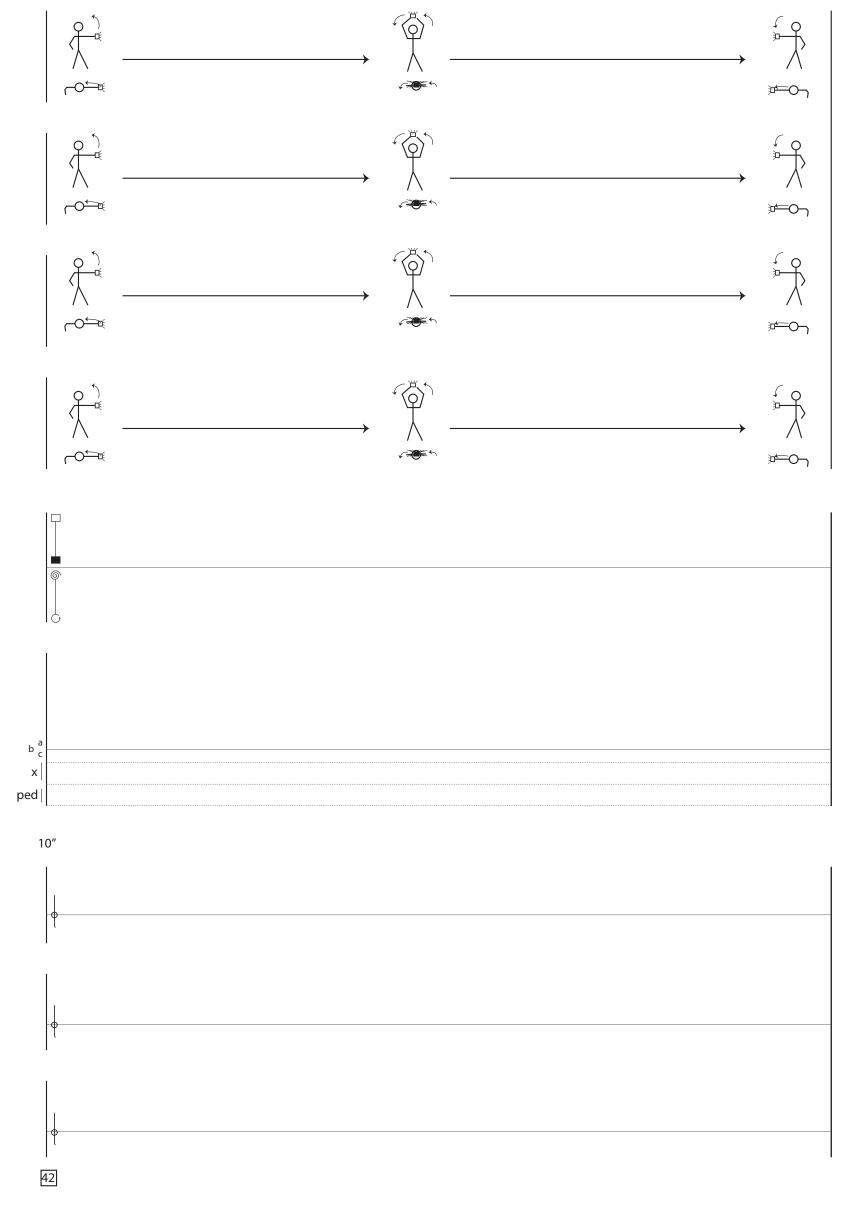


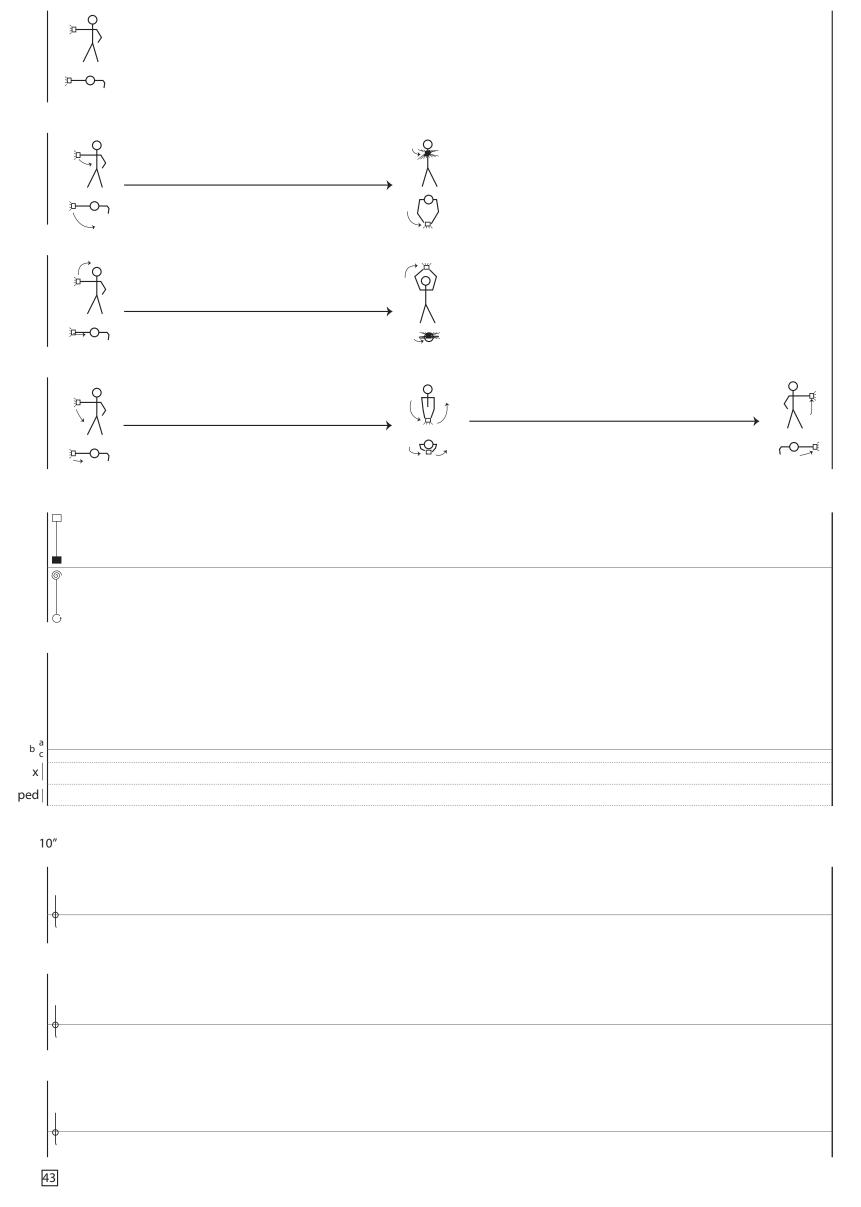


white noise in speakers
mute direct signal for piano (keep mics)

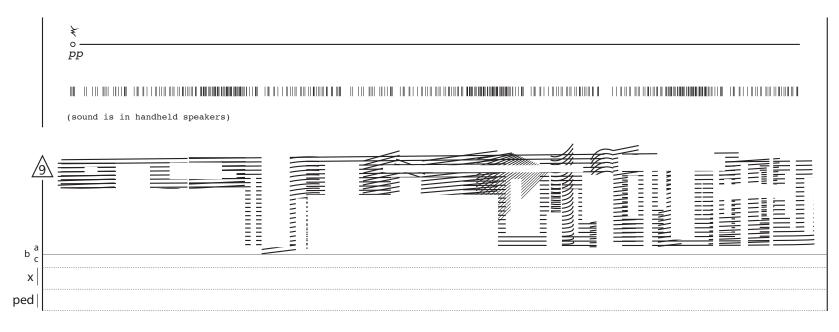


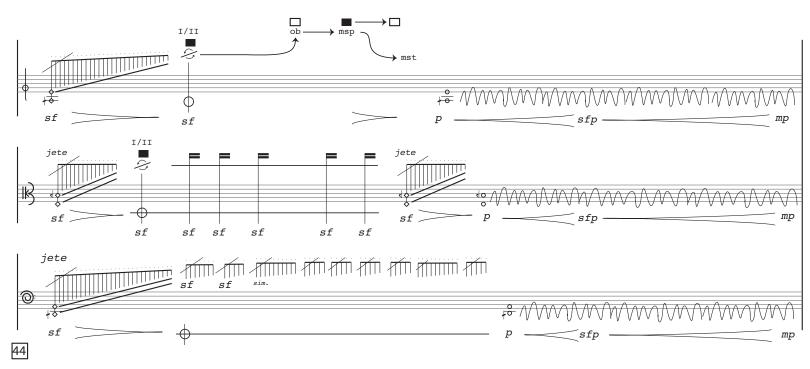


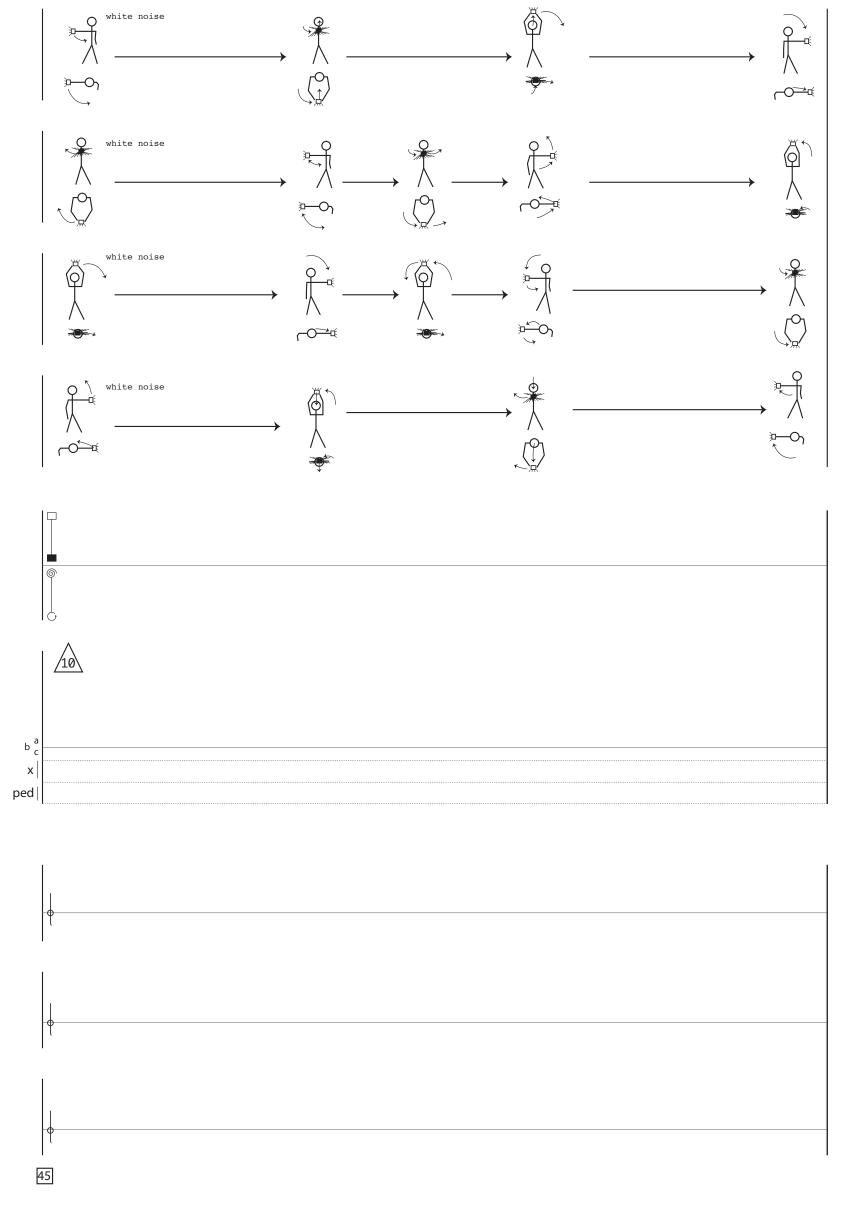


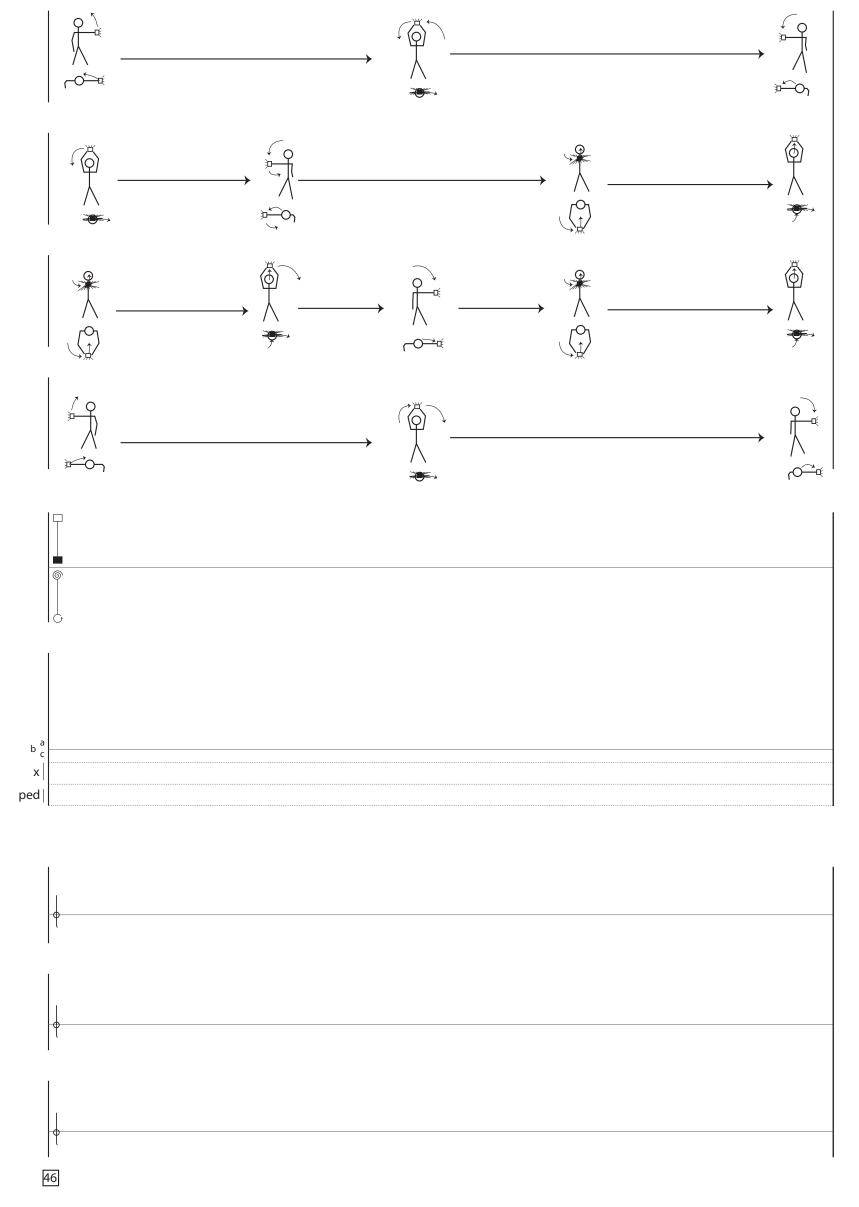


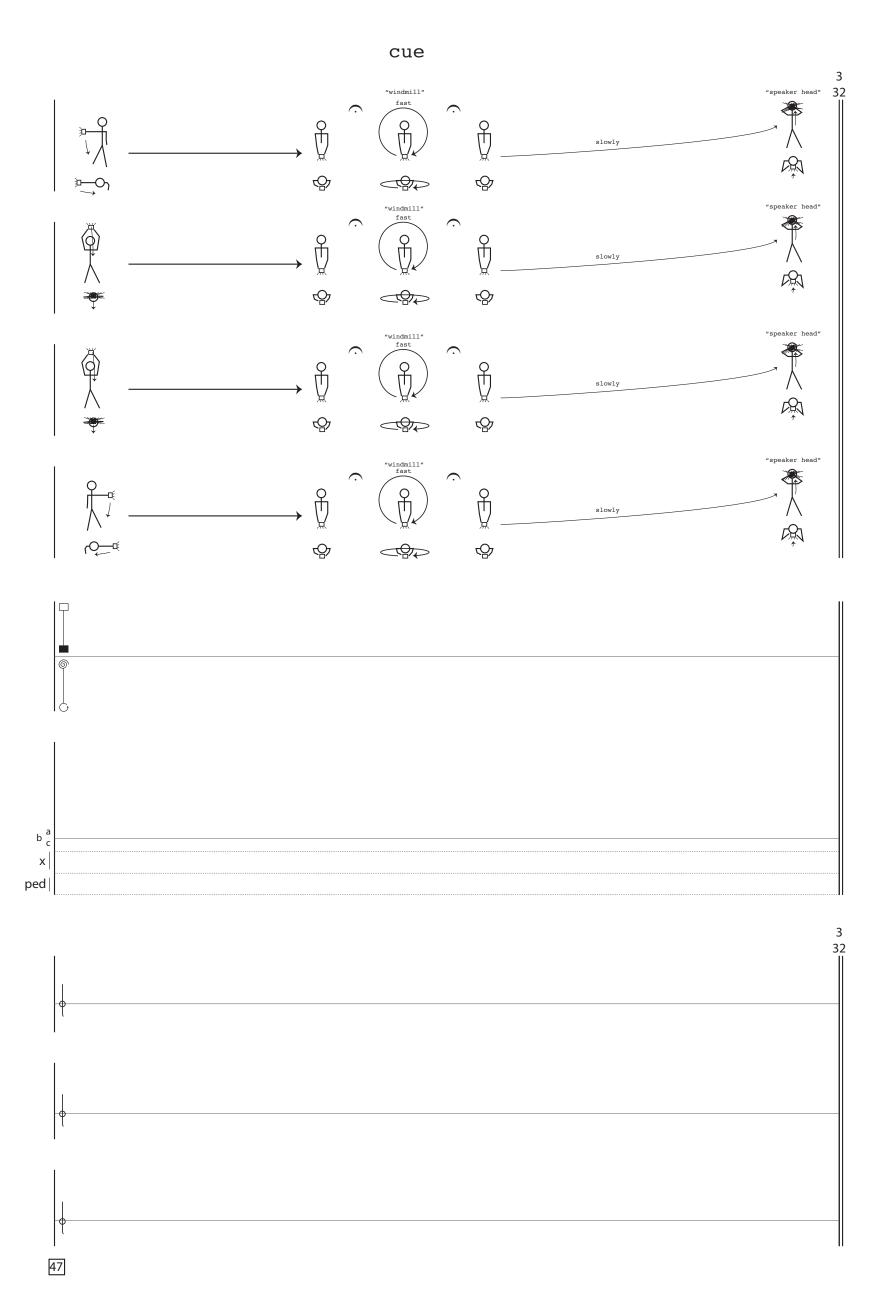


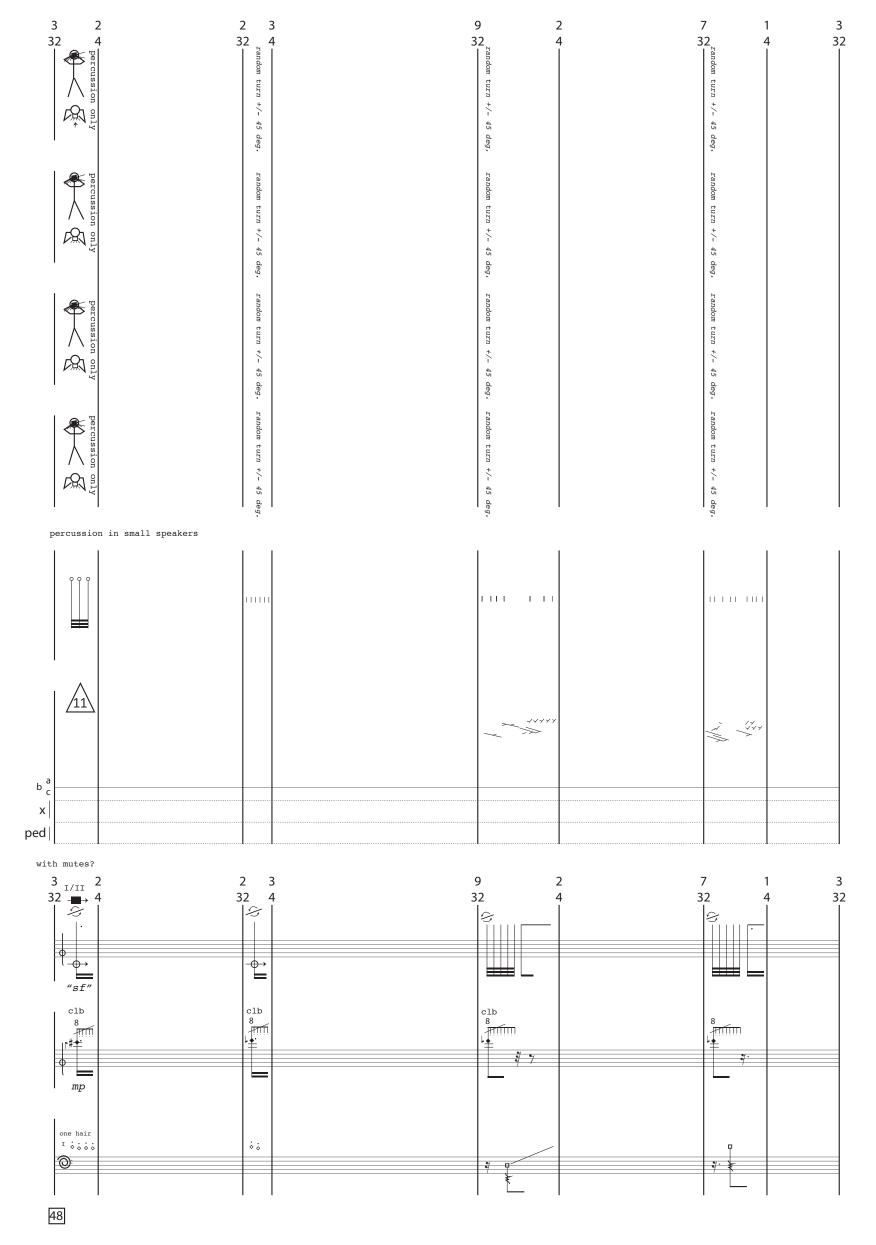


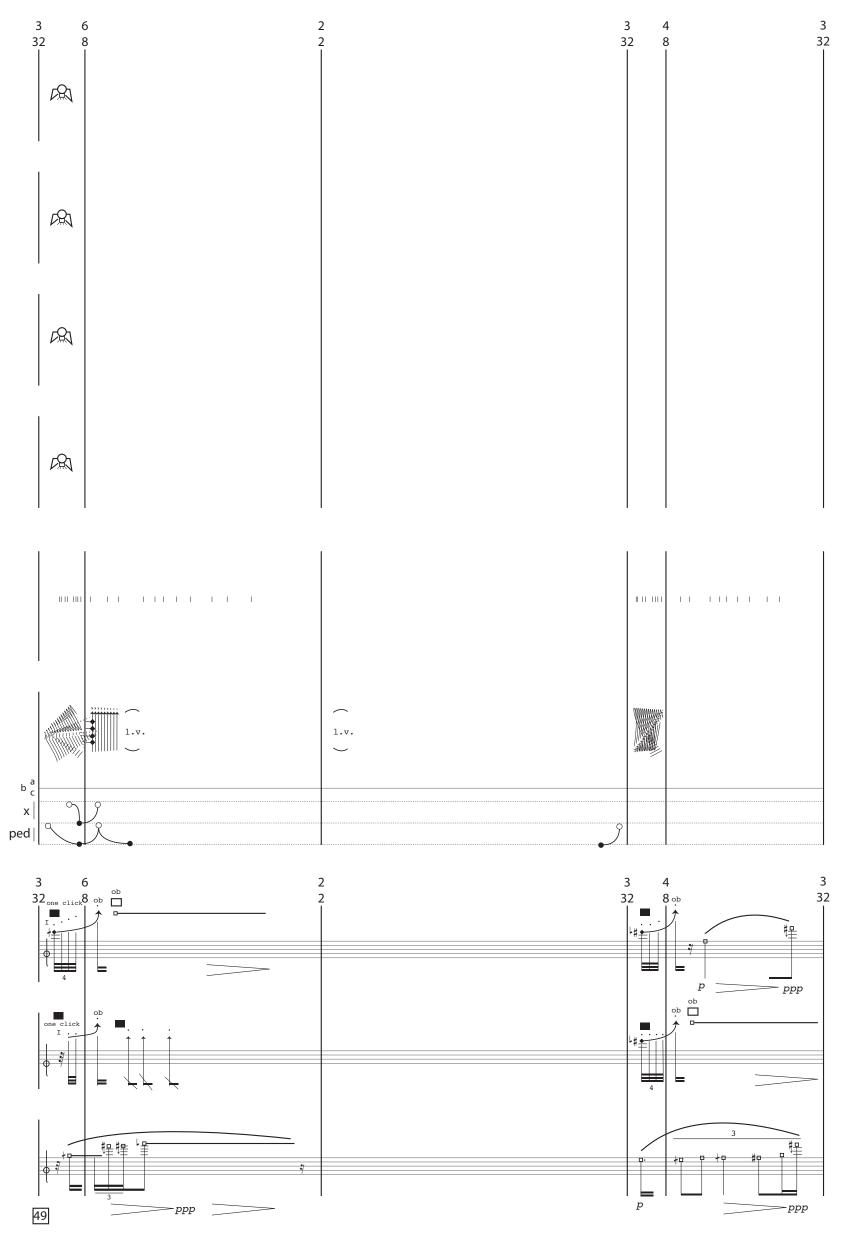


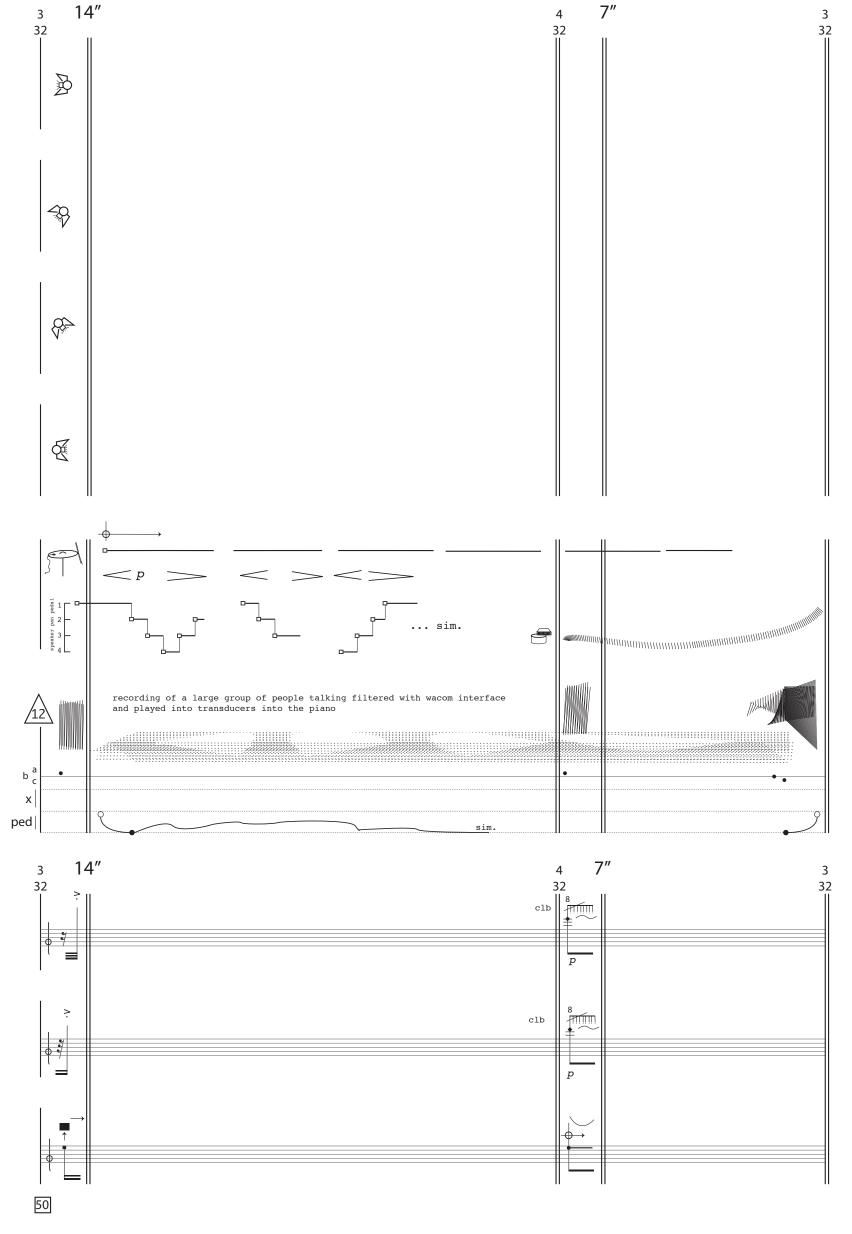


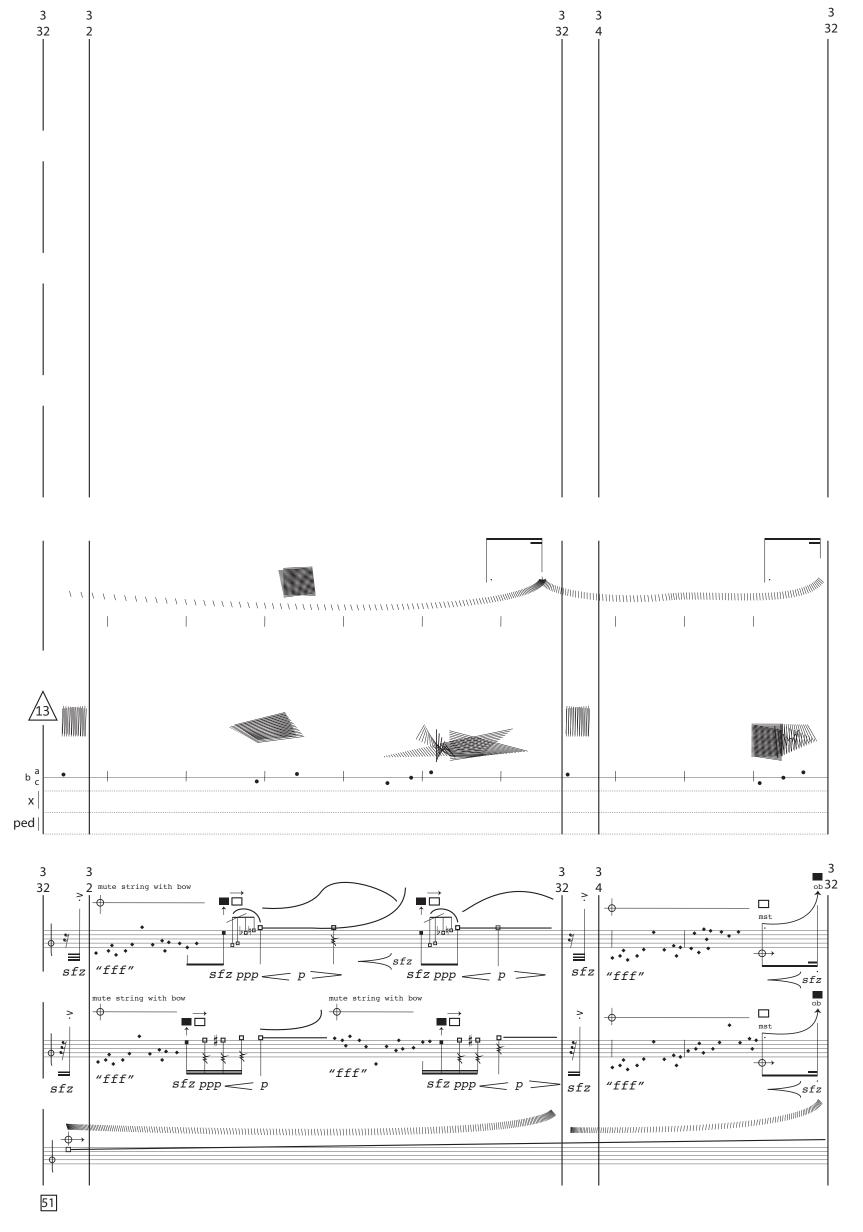


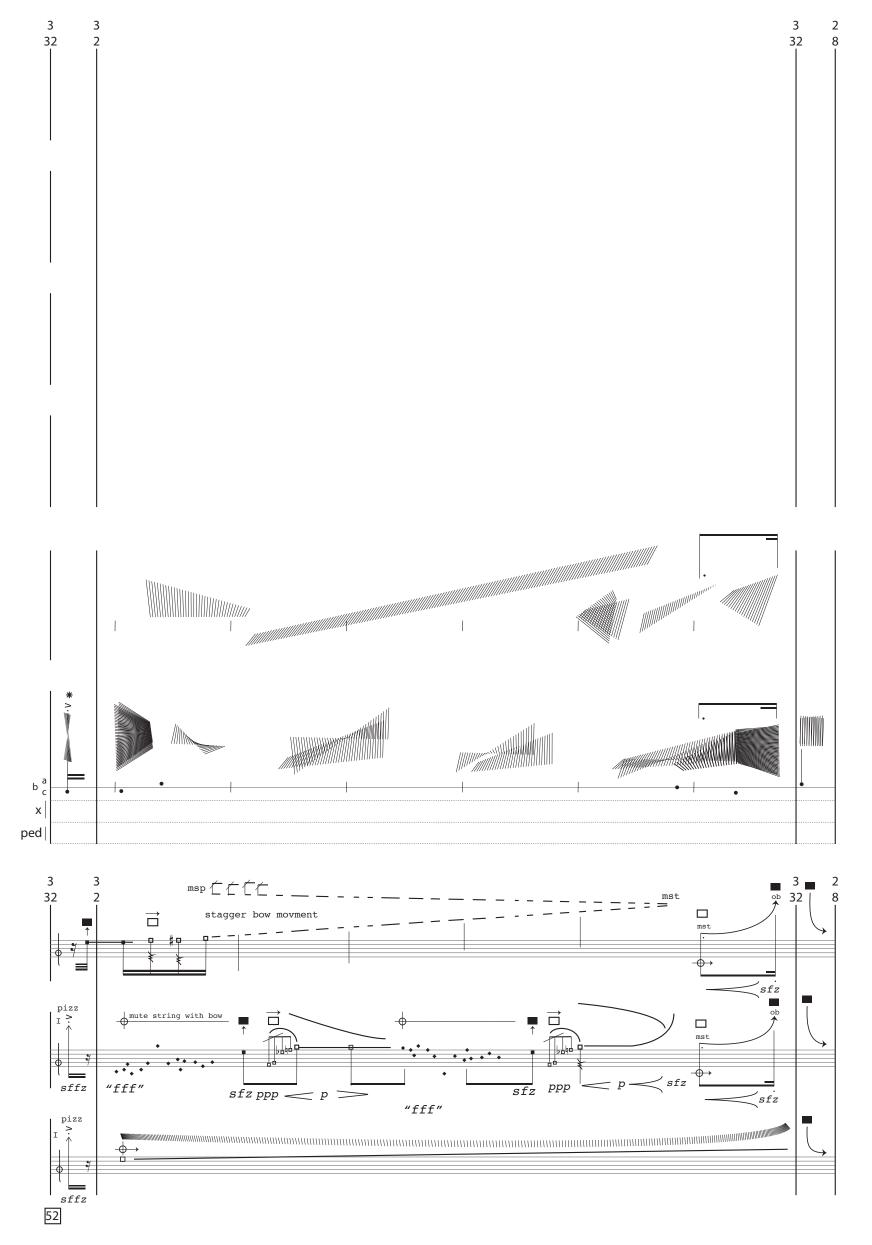


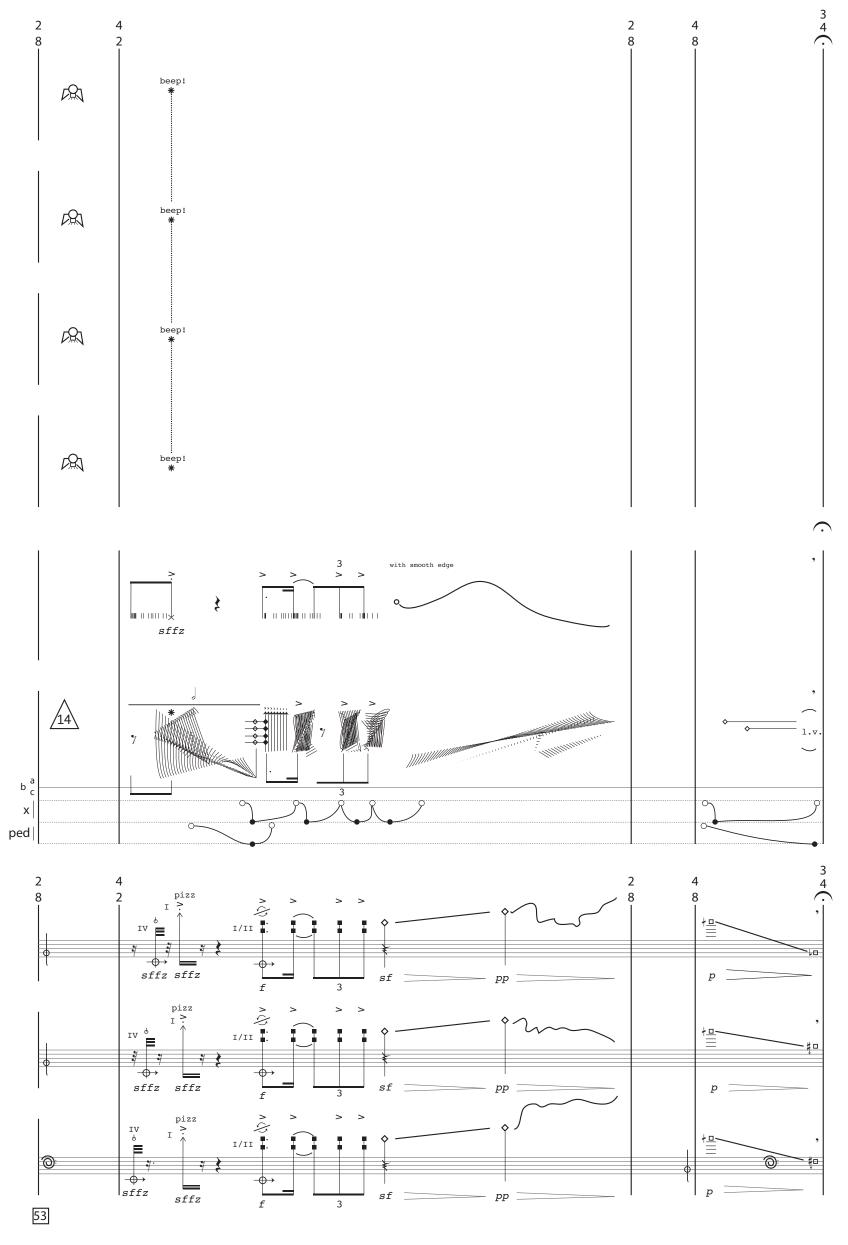


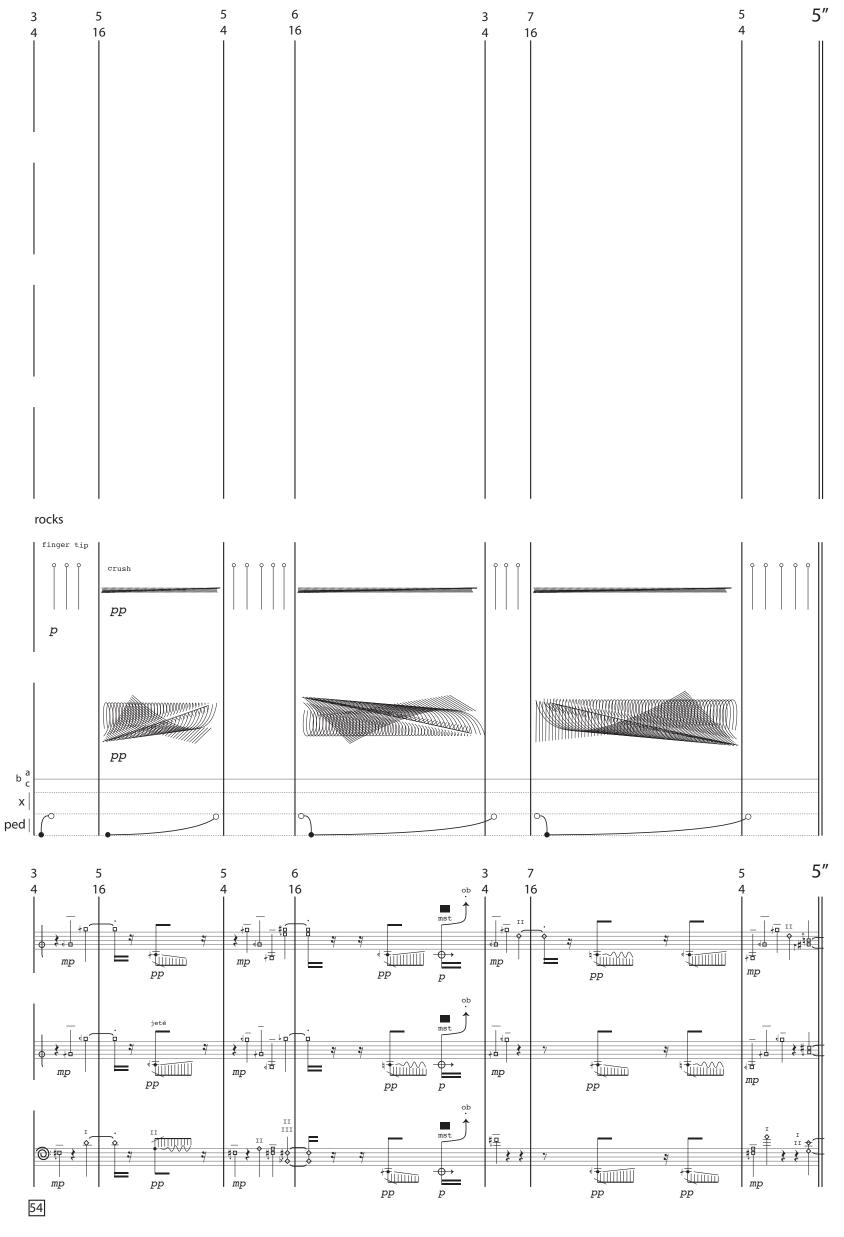


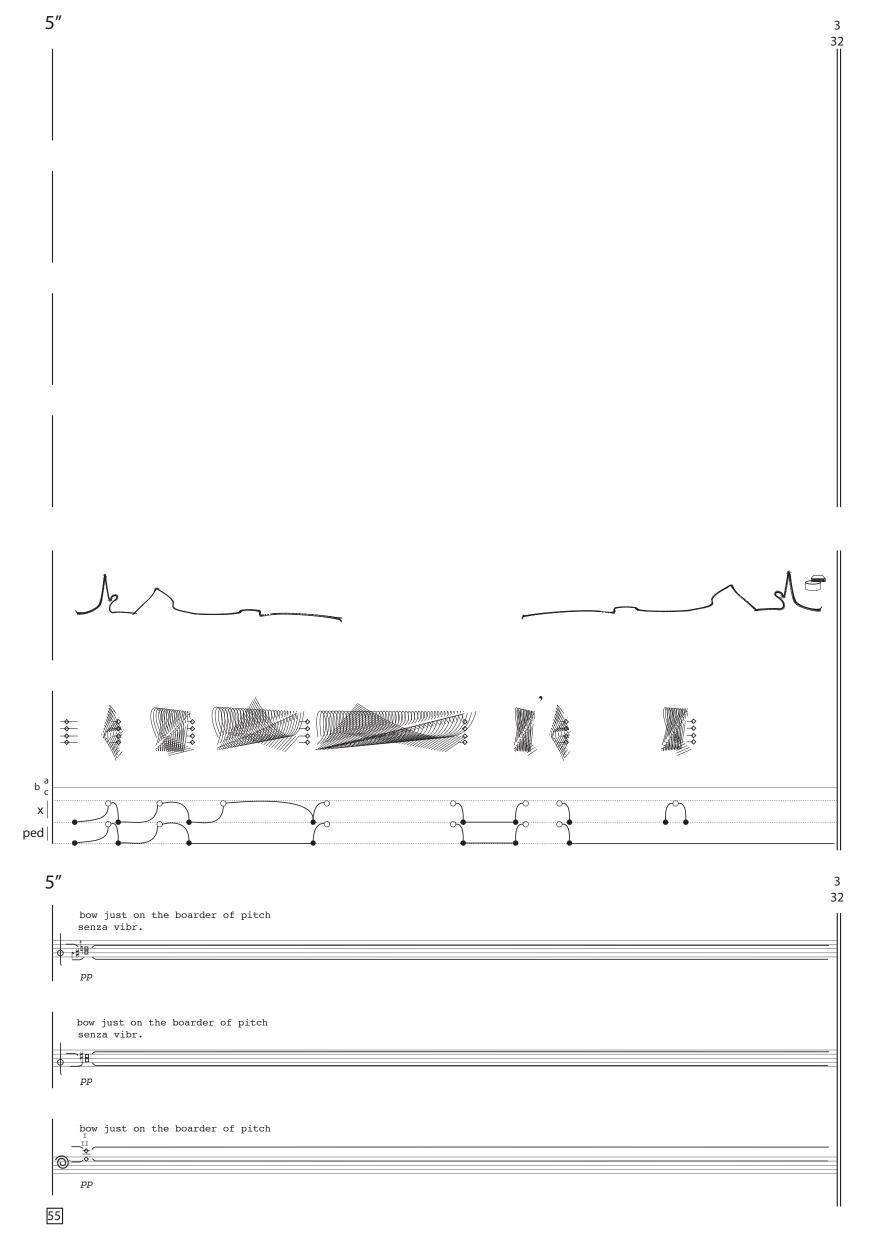


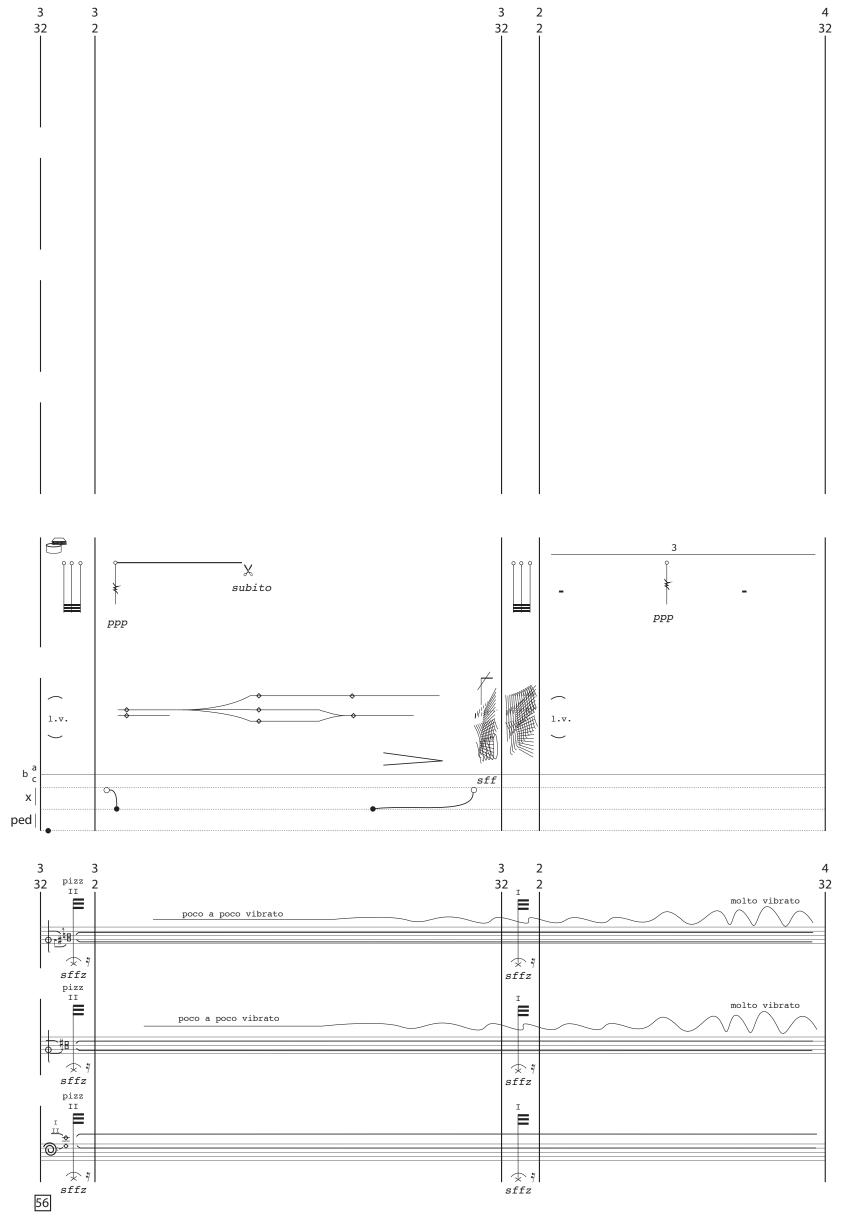


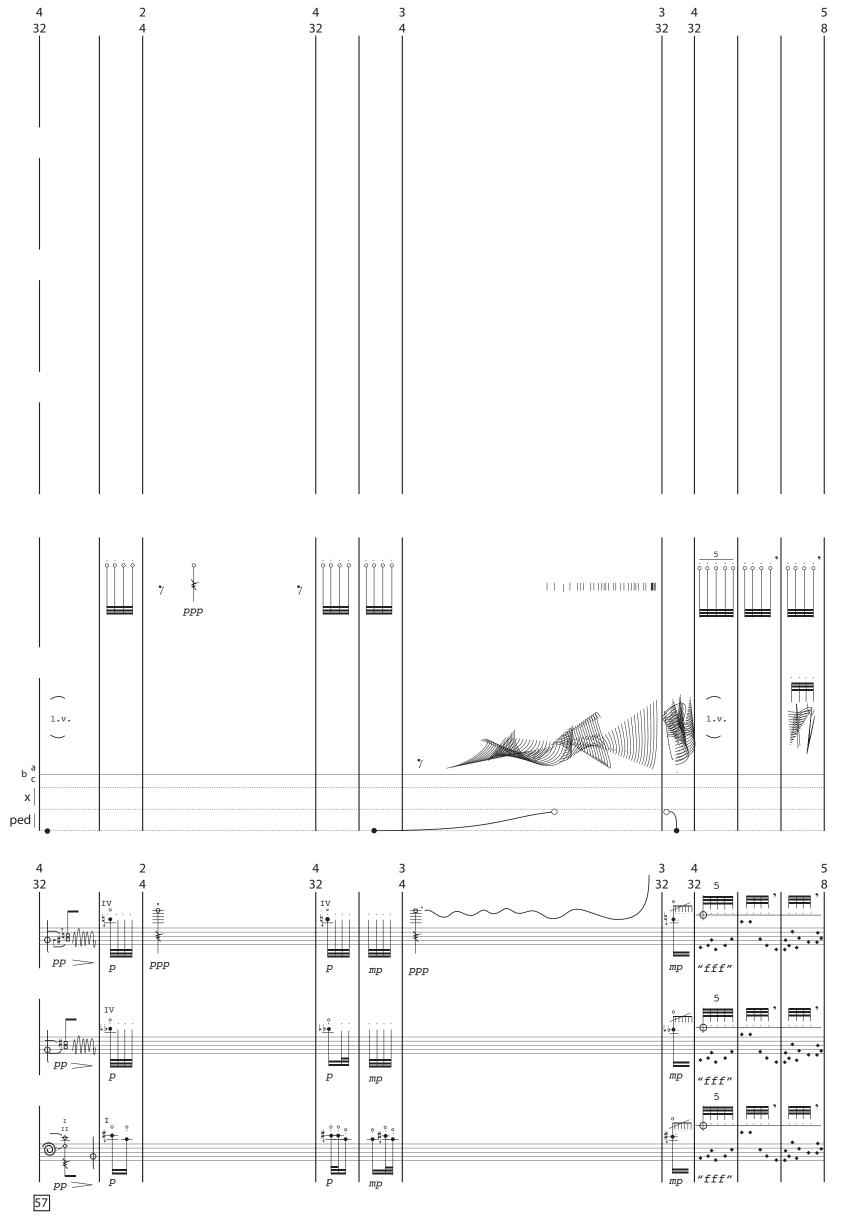


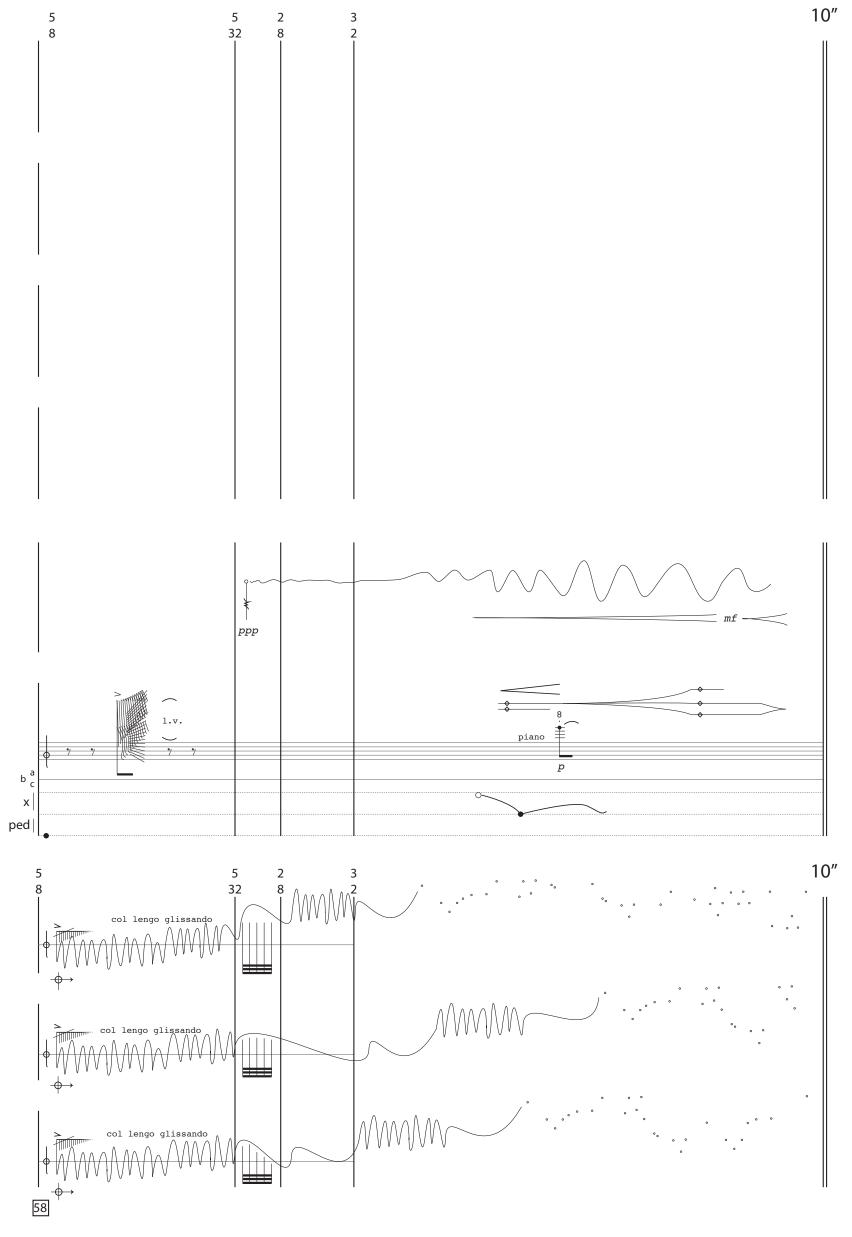






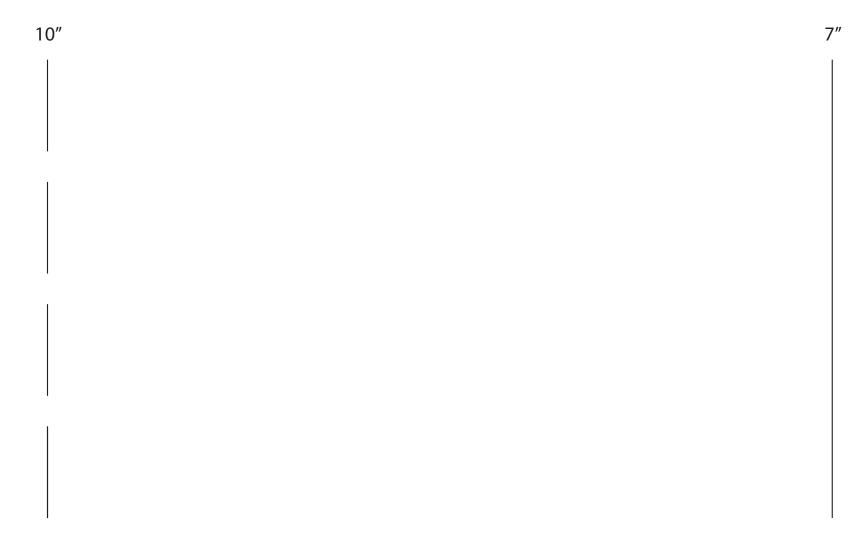


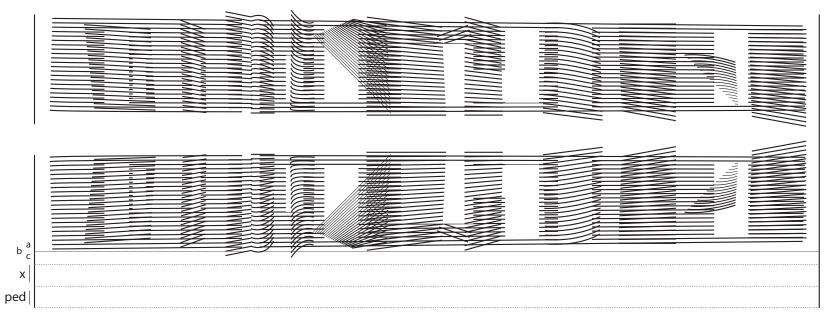


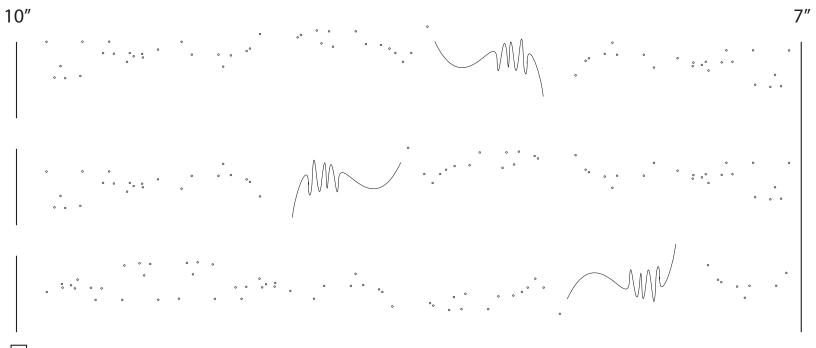


10"

wacom + percussion in speakers 多 wacom + percussion in speakers wacom + percussion in speakers Q. wacom + percussion in speakers unconducted unison with piano b a Х unconducted unison with percussion ped 10" 









7"

10"





10"

62

