

For Whom do We “Perform”?

By Aidan Gold

for at least 5 instruments

General Notes

This piece is a conglomeration of many different approaches to composing- it is at times a 'traditional' score, sometimes a graphic score, sometimes an event-based score, and sometimes a text-based framework. Several of the movements in this piece are very open-ended and can serve as a base for many kinds of improvisatory exercises and pieces. The ensemble is encouraged to put its own ideas on top of the ideas presented here and modify some of the rules to transform this piece into something unique and personalized to the ensemble.

There are 5 movements in this piece:

I. Flickering Sea

II. Telephone Canon

III. Conversation

IV. Board Game

V. Elegy

All the movements can be played individually, and they do not directly relate to one another- the ensemble can choose the movements that best suit their needs. The movements can also be re-ordered if preferred.

The piece is for open instrumentation and can be performed synchronously or asynchronously. The piece can be performed with any number of musicians from 5 to a whole orchestra. Some modifications may be necessary depending on how many musicians are used to make the piece as effective as possible. For example, in some of the movements I have grouped the musicians into 5 Groups- if only 5 musicians are used, then each group will have only 1 musician. Groups with more than one musician may need additional planning and coordination beforehand to decide what they will play for the improvisatory elements of the piece.

The piece is designed for any instruments that can play all 12 equal tempered notes of the chromatic scale, as well as an option for unpitched instruments. For diatonic instruments modifications may be made to the score or notes left out to facilitate their inclusion. Any note in the piece may be transposed to fit the range of the instruments. In the 5th movement the instruments are grouped into 4 groups ranging from high to low, plus an unpitched group. If instruments in the written ranges are not used, the figures may be transposed to allow them to be played by the instruments that are available.

I: Flickering Sea

In this movement the parameters of pitch and rhythm are controlled independently.

PITCH

Each musician should spend around 6 seconds on each pitch. Exact synchronicity between moving to the next pitch is not required, but the musicians should move within a couple seconds of each other. If needed, a conductor can mark each pitch change to aid the musicians moving together. If a conductor is used, they can have musical freedom to stretch or compress given notes in the pattern for expressive purposes.

The performers can choose to follow pitch sequence 1., 2., 3., or 4. freely regardless of the register of their instrument- all notes can be transposed into any octave. They can rotate the page so that their chosen sequence reads left to right.

1. *concert pitch, any octave*

2. *concert pitch, any octave*

3. *concert pitch, any octave*

4. *concert pitch, any octave*

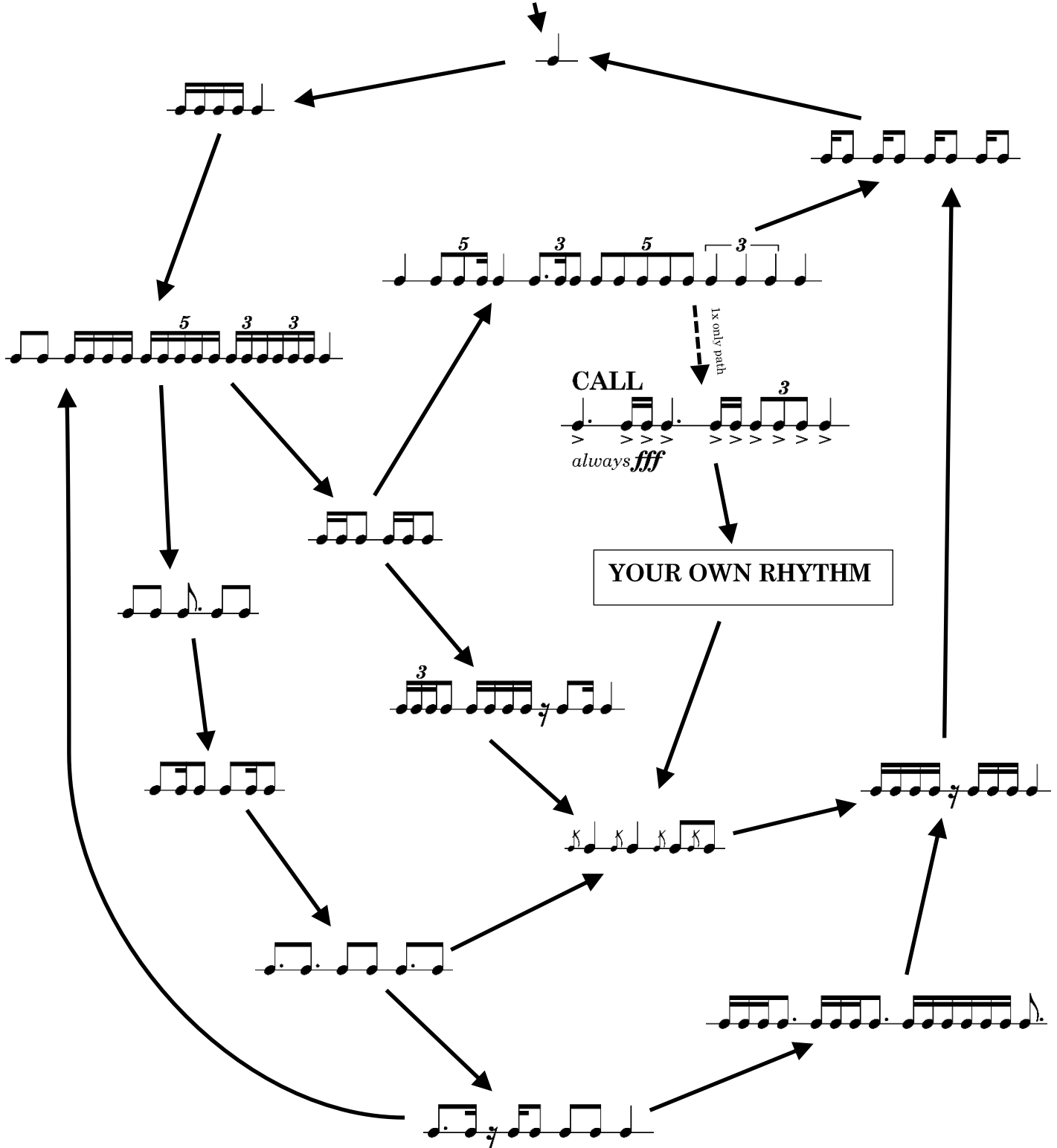
Ideally, there should be similar numbers of musicians playing each pitch sequence.

The rests have the same length as the notes- the musicians should remain silent for that duration (approx. 6 seconds).

The movement ends when all the musicians have finished the last note of their sequence. The musicians can choose to end together or individually as they prefer.

RHYTHM

Start



RHYTHM (cont.)

The performers start at the first rhythm after “Start”, and follow the arrows down a path of their choosing, playing each rhythm that they come across once, then moving on to the next one. Each musician should attempt to play every rhythm at least once over the course of this movement, but this may not be possible depending on the route chosen.

Each musician can choose to play the rhythms at any tempo, and may pause for some time between each rhythm. The length of these pauses and the potential ranges of tempos to choose from may be determined by the ensemble beforehand, depending on how animated or dense they want the movement to sound and how many musicians are in the group (e.g. with very many musicians, having lots of space between each rhythm will ensure that the texture doesn't become too dense). Ideally, the overall texture should be continuous (no extended silences), yet not so dense that the individual rhythms that everyone is playing are not able to be heard.

If a performer moves to the CALL rhythm, they must play it triple forte as a solo on top of the ensemble, regardless of the current dynamic of the rest of the ensemble, so that all the other musicians can hear that they have played the CALL rhythm. After this, that musician then plays a short rhythm of their choosing. Then, for around the next 10 seconds, all the musicians must stop the rhythms that they are currently playing and attempt to imitate the rhythm that the above musician played (they do not need to be synchronous). After this period ends (if a conductor is used, they could signal this), the musicians return to the rhythm they were previously on and continue following their own paths. The arrow leading to the CALL rhythm can only be traversed once by each musician, so as a result each musician can only force the ensemble into a rhythm of their choosing once. If a large number of musicians are playing, it may be advisable to restrict this further- only give a few of the musicians the privilege of being able to reach the CALL/custom rhythms.

ARTICULATION

The movement should begin extremely staccato, and move to full, sustained legato in the middle, and move back to staccato at the end. Within this general shape, the musicians are free to insert their own various accents or other articulations to the rhythms that they are currently playing.

DYNAMICS

The dynamics for this movement are completely up to the ensemble. The ensemble may choose to agree on an overall dynamic shape beforehand or attempt to improvise one as a group while playing the movement. Certain musicians could also act as temporary 'soloists' by playing at a louder dynamic level than others. The musicians can also introduce expressive dynamic changes within the rhythms themselves to give them a bit more life. The goal is to create an interesting and varied texture and dynamic shape throughout the movement through the use of dynamics.

TIMBRE

The timbre each instrument uses is also up to the ensemble. It is encouraged that the performers vary the timbre they use to create variety in the textures throughout the movement. This may be decided real-time or planned beforehand (e.g. the strings could agree to begin the movement pizzicato, move to arco sul tasto, and finish col legno).

GENERAL NOTES FOR THIS MOVEMENT

It is recommended to rehearse the pitch sequences by themselves, and then the rhythm sequences by themselves, until the musicians are very comfortable with both, before combining them. Unpitched instruments should disregard the pitch sequences and just play the rhythmic sequences.

II: Telephone Canon

Each group should prepare by composing a melody beforehand that is around 30 seconds long. No group should let the other groups know what their melody is beforehand.

Group 1 begins by playing their melody. After playing for around 5 seconds, Group 2 enters trying to imitate Group 1's melody (from the beginning) as closely as possible, purely by ear. Group 3 should enter around 5 seconds after Group 2, this time imitating what Group 2 is playing. If Group 2 makes a deviation from what Group 1 played, Group 3 should try to imitate Group 2's version as best as they can. Group 4 and 5 should enter staggered in the same manner, each attempting to imitate the previous group as closely as possible. Once Group 5 (or the final group) has entered, Group 1 enters ~5 seconds later imitating Group 5's melody, which at this point may be substantially different from the initial melody. Once Group 1 finishes its second presentation, there is a brief pause.

Next, Group 2 enters with their pre-composed melody, and Group 3 imitates, beginning the same process but shifted over by one group. This entire can be repeated for all the groups that prepared pre-composed melodies, or only for a few groups dependent on what the ensemble wants to do. Dynamic shaping of the various subsections is up to the ensemble. It is recommended that each group's pre-composed melody be very distinct, which will lead to more variety between the various sections focusing on each group's melody.

III: Conversation

In preparation for this movement, each musician should come up with a short musical representation of their name, in the style of the famous BACH and DSCH short musical motifs that represented the respective composers in their own work. This can be done through a variety of different systems, such as a modified letter-to-note-name system, a rhythmic system for unpitched instruments, or even just a short musical phrase that the performer likes or feels represents them in some way. What is important is that this motif is easily identifiable and recognizable. The musicians should notate or in some other way communicate their “musical names” to the rest of the ensemble, and the other musicians should learn to recognize them and associate them with the musician (this may take some practicing as a group).

The ensemble splits into 2 groups of roughly equal numbers, and one of the groups decides on a starting order. The first musician in that group plays the “musical name” (as described above) of a person from the other group; and they pair up. After they pair up, the second musician in the first group plays the musical name of one of the remaining people from the second group, and they pair up. This continues until all the musicians are paired up. If there is an odd number of musicians, the final musician joins the last-formed pair to create a group of 3.

As soon as the musicians have paired up, they begin having a musical “conversation”. These musical conversations should mimic verbal conversations as much as possible- one method of achieving this is for the musicians to imagine speaking to their partner normally, and then ‘translating’ that speech into instrumental sounds that mimic the gesture, contour, and emotion of the verbal gesture. The musicians should react to each other much as if they would in a verbal conversation. The conversations should not be loud; they should be about the volume of a typical vocal conversation between two people next to each other. This will allow each musician to hear their musical names when they are called.

In order to guide the emotional ‘content’ of the conversations, the musicians can use the following grid of words and create speech-like musical material that reflects these feelings. Each musician should trace a path through the grid so that they cover at least 8 of the different emotions. They should then pace their

movement through the emotional grid so that they can complete their path by the time the movement ends.

Content	Bored	Regretful	Lonely
Sleepy	Exhausted	Hyper	Ecstatic
Frustrated	Overwhelmed	Peaceful	Unsettled
Terrified	Nostalgic	Relieved	Confused

After conversing with their partner for at least a minute, the musician may decide to move to a new conversation partner by loudly playing the musical name of the new musician they want to converse with. If a musician's musical name is played, that musician must now switch to having a musical conversation with the musician who played their musical name. If two musical names are played simultaneously that cause a conflict- e.g. musician A plays the musical name of musician B at the same time that musician C plays B's name- then the players may choose to form a group of 3- musicians A, B, and C- to have a conversation, or the ensemble may decide beforehand on a different way of resolving these conflicts that they prefer.

This movement can go on for as long as the ensemble wishes. The ensemble may choose to set a limit of numbers of conversation partners that each musician has (e.g. 5 conversation partners would mean around a 5 minute movement), or a different criteria could be used, or the movement could naturally wrap up real-time as the musicians feel like they're done. Once a musician finishes all the conversations they want to have, they can stop playing and wait for the rest of the ensemble to finish- they can either not respond to the playing of their musical name by other musicians, or respond with a brief musical "no" gesture of their own creation.

IV: Board Game

This movement is ideally performed with 4 musicians, plus a conductor or referee. More musicians can be used, but the more musicians moving through the game simultaneously, the more chaotic the resulting music will be, and it may be difficult to tell for the musicians where their opponents are in the game. This could be solved in a number of different ways, from inserting rests between each musical cell to having multiple different ‘rounds’ of the board game with different musicians on each so that all the musicians have a chance to play. The ensemble should decide what format works best for them when approaching this piece.

The musical cells in this movement span a pitch range from G3 to E6 (C4=middle C). For instruments outside of this range, all the cells can be transposed up or down an octave or two. It is also possible to transpose individual cells if an instrument’s range doesn’t quite cover those cells but works well for the other cells, but, if possible, the majority of cells should be played in the same octave relative to each other.

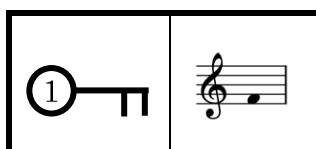
SETTING UP THE GAME

The board consists of pages 14-17 of this score. A copy of all 4 pages should be printed single sided for each musician, and they should be taped together in this orientation, and then placed on the music stand:

14	15
16	17

If done correctly, all the black lines that reach to the edge of the paper should line up with corresponding lines on the other pages, to create a complete board.

The page after the board- page 18- consists of a table of cards representing notes of the Key Melody. One copy of this page should be printed out per musician that is performing the piece. Beforehand, the page should be cut up along the bold solid lines to produce individual Key Note cards that look like this:



Each card should be folded in half along the small black line (and perhaps taped shut if needed). The conductor/referee should choose one card for each key

(numbered 1-4) to create a 4 note melody. They should then distribute copies of these cards to the players with the key facing up, so that each player has a copy of all 4 notes of the melody but cannot see what those notes are yet. The players should not flip over the cards.

Note: If this piece is performed virtually / distanced then a different system of distributing the notes of the melody must be devised; such as a document sent to each musician where they can scroll down to discover various notes or some other method.

Each musician should choose a starting point on the board from which to begin playing. If more than 4 musicians are used, two will have to start from the same location.

PLAYING THE GAME

Synchronized or Asynchronized

This game can be played as a synchronized or asynchronized piece. If performed as a synchronized piece, then all the musicians should play with a common quarter note pulse, as given by the conductor. This pulse can be anywhere from approx. 80 to approx. 138, depending on the limitations of the instruments playing and how comfortable the musicians are with the musical cells. The pulse can even change in speed during the course of the piece if the conductor and ensemble decide to do so.

If the game is performed asynchronously, then each musician can choose to follow their own pulse, independently of the other musicians. This pulse can also speed up and slow down, and the musician can even strategically change the tempo that they are playing in order to dodge or run into other players on the board.

Starting

The conductor/referee gives a signal to the players to start, and they can begin. Players move around the board by playing through the musical cells that they land on once, and then moving to a different one via the solid black lines connecting each cell. Players can cross these lines in any direction and can even move back and forth between 2 different cells (though they cannot repeatedly stay on a single cell). Players cannot move to cells that are not connected to the cell that they are currently on via a line. In the standard version of this game, each player should move to the next cell without any pause. However, if more than 4 players are used, extra pauses between cells may be inserted to thin the texture enough so that it is comprehensible to both the players and the audience.

Strikes

The musicians should strive to play each cell as accurately as possible, even if they choose to play the cell very quickly. The conductor/referee should listen to the musicians carefully. If the conductor catches a musician making a large enough mistake or playing a cell very sloppily, the conductor can give them a “strike” (this can be done via a hand gesture or some other method of communication). If a musician receives 3 strikes, they are out of the game and must stop playing for the rest of the game (this movement). The degree of severity of a mistake to make it worthy of a “strike” is up to the ensemble to decide beforehand and may be dependent on how familiar the ensemble is with the musical cells.


Winning the Game

The goal of the game is for the musician to collect the 4 Key Notes on the board (denoted by the key symbols 1-4) and then proceed to the door on the right side of the board. When a player reaches a Key, they can then flip over their corresponding Key Card to reveal the note that Key represents. Once they reach all 4 keys, they will have flipped over the whole Key Melody. When they reach the door, they must play the 4-note Key Melody (in the correct order; notes 1-4) for the conductor. If they have played the correct melody, then the conductor declares them the winner. As a prize, they get to invent a short ‘victory melody’ that they then play as a solo. Then, the rest of the musicians can try to get to the door to claim 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place. Since the Key Melody was already revealed when the door was opened, the other musicians do not need any of the keys to claim 2nd, 3rd, or 4th place—they simply need to reach the door.

Key Reveals

If two musicians land on the same musical cell at the same time, one of the musicians could decide to initiate a Key Reveal in which both players are forced to reveal the Key Notes that they have already collected to each other. To initiate a Key reveal, a player who is in the middle of playing the same musical cell as another player can stop and play a quick glissando up to the highest note in their range. Then both players on the cell must stop playing temporarily to reveal their Key notes to each other. Thus it is to the advantage of players who do not have many keys to chase down players with lots of Keys in order to force a Key reveal and perhaps not have to collect the Key Notes themselves; and it is in the interest of players with lots of Keys to avoid other players in order to hide their keys from them.

*Skip*s

If a player takes a path that lands them on a , they collect one “skip” that can be used to hop over one musical cell of their choosing. When using a skip, instead of playing the cell that they hop over, the musician instead should play a short, pitchless noise (such as a jet whistle, high cluster, etc.) and then move on to the cell after the skipped cell. After they skip one cell, they use up their skip and cannot skip again until after collecting a new skip. Players can collect as many skips at a time as they want. It is up to the players and the referee to make sure that players are only skipping cells when they have a skip to use. Skips can be used to reduce the time needed to travel across the board, to skip an especially long or tricky musical cell, or even to dodge another player by skipping over the cell that they are currently playing. Additionally, a skip is required to cross the black box next to the 3rd Key.

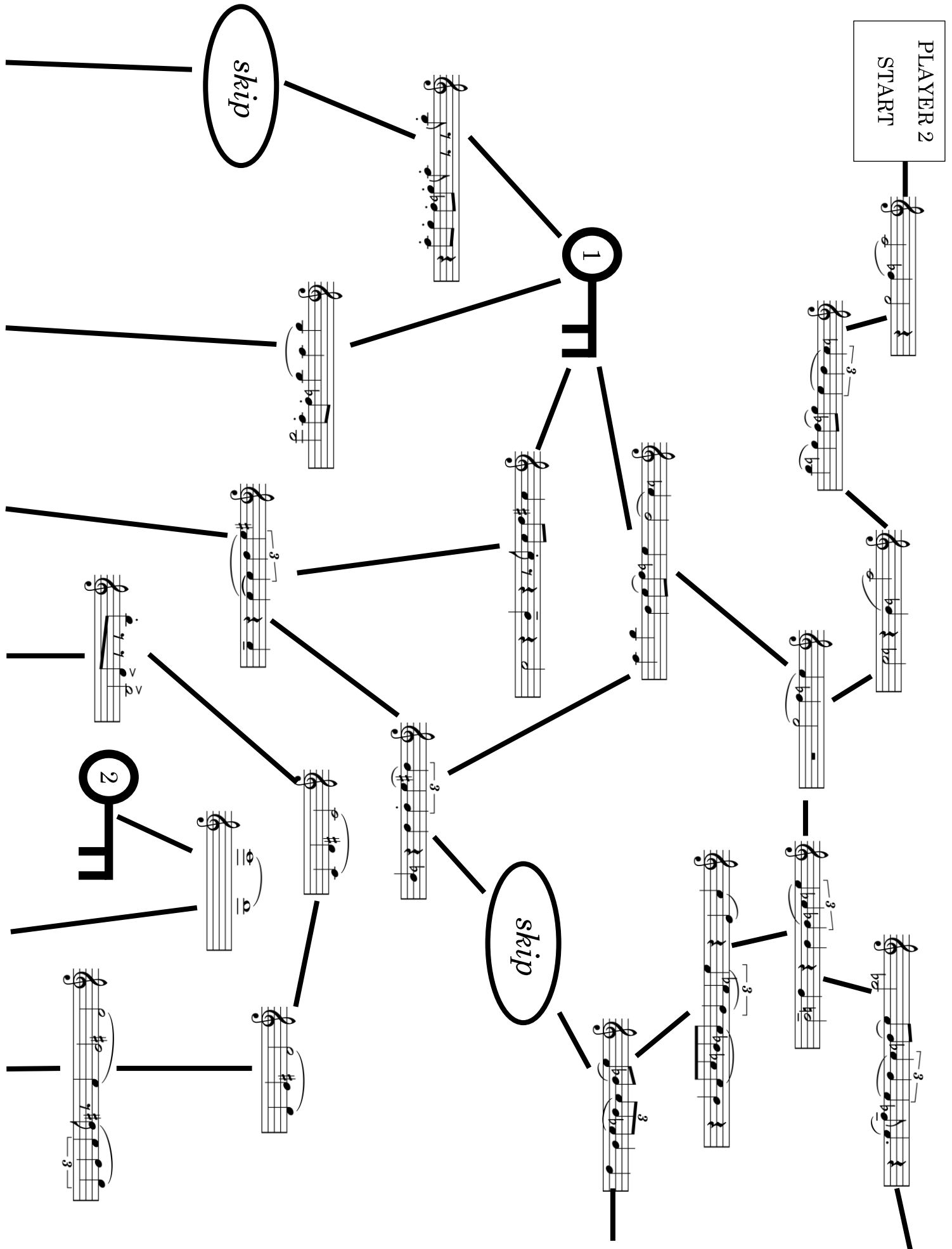
DYNAMICS

The dynamics throughout this game are completely up to the ensemble. The ensemble may choose to agree on an overall dynamic shape beforehand or attempt to improvise one as a group while playing. Certain musicians could also act as temporary ‘soloists’ by playing at a louder dynamic level than others. The musicians can also introduce expressive dynamic changes within the cells themselves to give them a bit more life. The goal is to create an interesting and varied texture and dynamic shape throughout the game through the use of dynamics.

GENERAL NOTES FOR THIS MOVEMENT

It is recommended that the musicians first practice playing all the cells individually, and then practice making their way through the board collecting the keys and going to the door on their own without trying to keep track of where the other musicians are. Once the musicians are comfortable enough with every cell, they can then practice in pairs, doing exercises such as trying to find each other on the board while playing, and other exercises to build up experience determining where other players are on the board based on the music that they are playing. It is to every player’s advantage to keep track of where every other player is on the board while playing the game in order to take keys via Key reveals or avoid them.

PLAYER 2
START



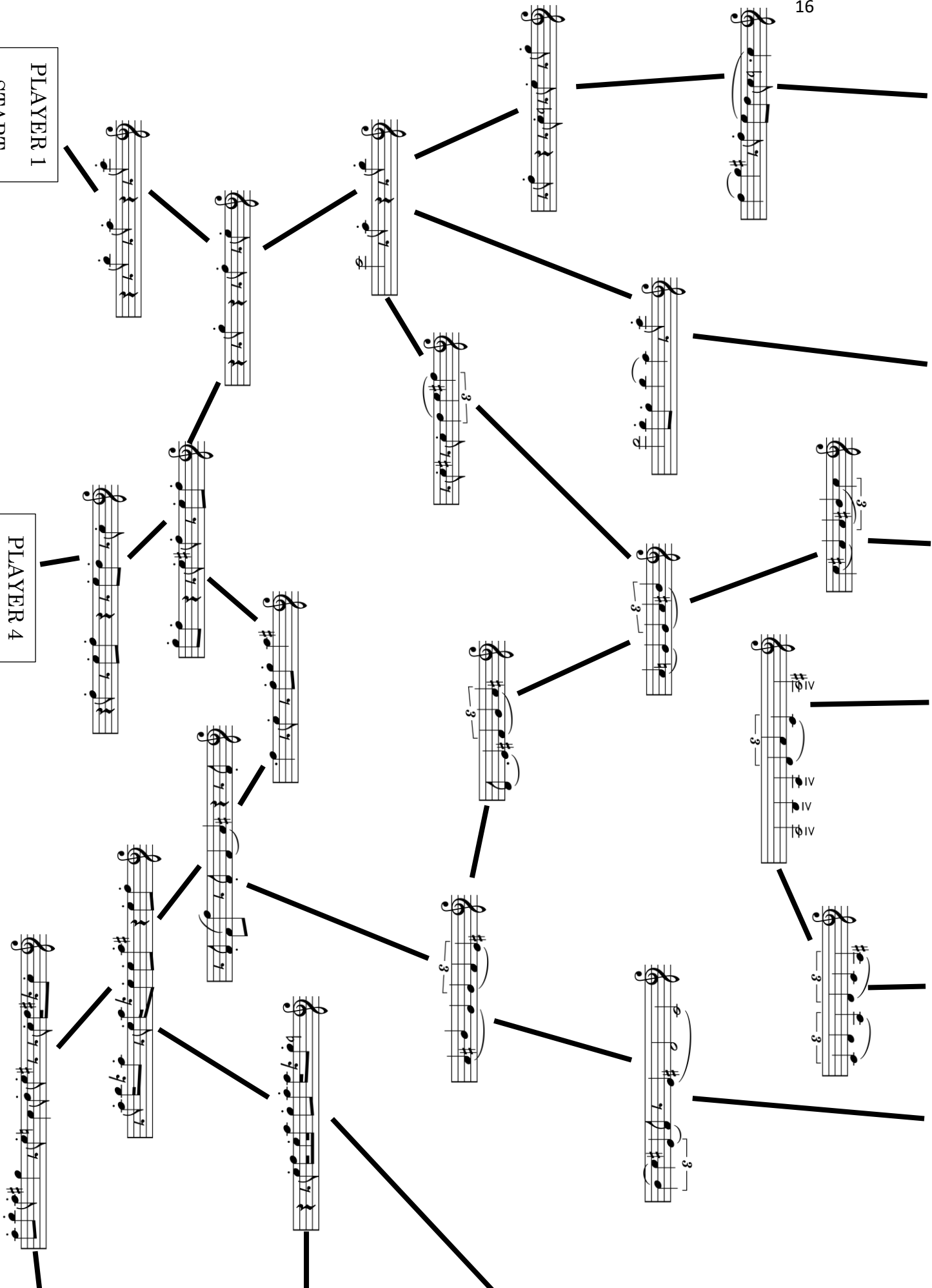
15
PLAYER 3
START

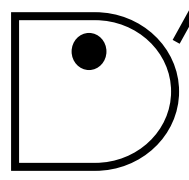
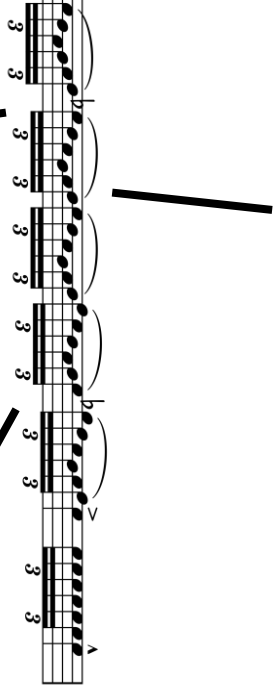
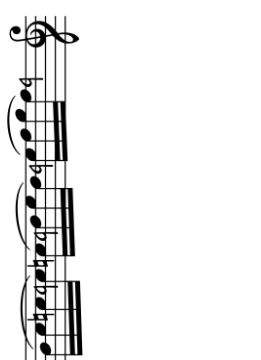
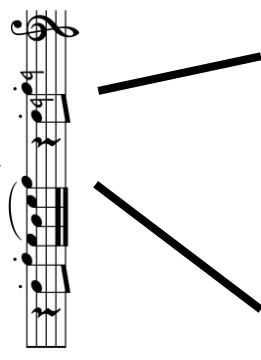
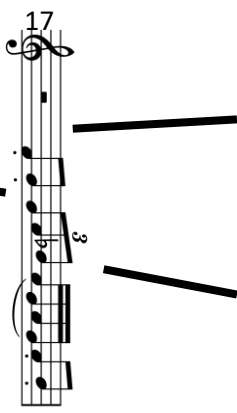
This musical score is for Player 3 and begins with a 'START' instruction. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of several staves of music, including a large section of sixteenth-note runs. Annotations include:

- A circled '4' with a key symbol at the bottom center.
- A circled 'skip' oval on the right side.
- A circled '15' at the top right.
- Various musical markings such as triplets (3), quintuplets (5), and a fermata.
- Dynamic markings like *tr* (trill) and *trm* (trill mark).
- Accents and slurs throughout the piece.

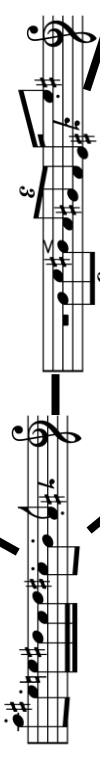
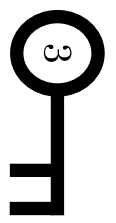
PLAYER 1
START







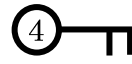

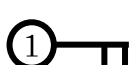

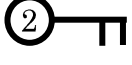



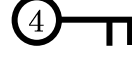







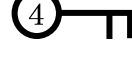







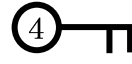

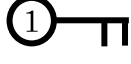

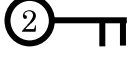



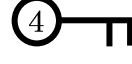















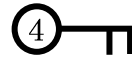







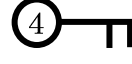







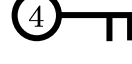



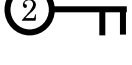



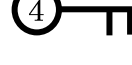







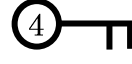

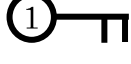

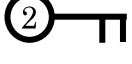



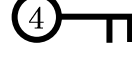

PLAYER 4
START





Need skip to pass



V: Elegy

This movement is for 5 groups of instruments. The first 4 groups are organized roughly from high to low, and the 5th group is unpitched instruments. The movement can be performed with a single musician per group, but for this movement it is preferred to have as large of an ensemble as possible.

This movement needs a conductor or a person to signal each dotted barline. The musicians do not all have to move exactly simultaneously to the next section, but should attempt to do so within around 1-3 seconds of each other. The duration of each numbered section (1-38) is up to the ensemble, but an average duration of about 10 seconds each is recommended.

Most of the music in this movement consists of repeated figures. Each musician should play these figures at their own tempo (randomly chosen between approx. quarter=50 and 92), and should not try to line up with the other members of their group. The only exception is that in two moments group 4 has a figure marked “roughly together”. These figures should be played roughly together as a whole group, but once again do not need to be precisely synchronized.

If any figure is out of the range of an instrument in the group, it may be transposed. Figures can even be transposed up/down an octave for added dramatic effect.

In sections 35-37, the musicians from groups 1-3 are asked to sing. This can be done in any octave.

When groups have multiple repeated cells in one section (labelled A, B, C, etc.) each individual musician is free to choose which one to repeat and can move between the cells whenever they feel like it (so they could play ACBABACAABBBAAACABACBABC etc. in an entirely random order, or stick to one cell).

V: Elegy

① ♩ = 50-92

②

③

1

2

3

4

Unpitched

④

⑤

⑥

1

2

3

4

Unpitched

⑦

⑧

⑨

1

2

3

4

Unpitched

10 11 12

3-6 sec. 1-3 sec. 1-3 sec.

f *f* *f* *f* *p* *f* *p*

Unpitched *f*

13 14 15 as fast as possible

1-3 sec. 3-6 sec.

mf *mf* *mp* *p* *f* *pp*

High Sound random, erratic rhythms; wind-chime like

Unpitched *pp*

16 17 18

3-6 sec. 3-6 sec. 3-6 sec.

p *mf* *mf* *f*

A B

p *p* *mf* *p*

Unpitched

V: Elegy

19 *mf*

20 *as fast as possible* *mf* *1-3 sec.*

3-6 sec. *p* *B* *3-6 sec.* *p < mf > p*

High Sound *random, erratic rhythms; wind-chime like* *pp*

21 *p < mf > p* *3-6 sec.* *B* *3-6 sec.* *p < mf*

22 *p* *A* *B* *p*

Unpitched

23 *cresc. poco a poco* *mf* *cresc. poco a poco*

24 *A* *B* *cresc. poco a poco*

25 *A* *B* *cresc. poco a poco*

Unpitched *Low Sound* *3* *3-6 sec.* *mf* *cresc. poco a poco*

26 27

1 *molto cresc!* A B *molto cresc!* A B *molto cresc!*

2 *molto cresc!* A B *molto cresc!*

3 *molto cresc!* A B *molto cresc!*

4 *molto cresc!* *molto cresc!*

Unpitched *pp* *molto cresc!* *mf* *molto cresc!*

High and Low Sounds (or whichever is louder)

28 29

1 *fff* A B *fff* A B C *fff*

2 *fff* A B C *fff*

3 *fff* A B C *fff*

4 *fff* A B *fff*

Unpitched *fff*

30 31

1 *dim. poco a poco* A B *dim. poco a poco*

2 *dim. poco a poco* A B *dim. poco a poco*

3 *dim. poco a poco* A B *dim. poco a poco*

4 *gliss.* *dim. poco a poco*

Unpitched *dim. poco a poco*

32 33

1 *f* *dim.* *pp*

2 *f* *dim.* *pp*

3 *f* *dim.*

4 *f* *play once roughly together*

Unpitched

34 35 SING, don't play (syllable: ah)

1 *p* *SING, don't play (syllable: ah)* *1-3 sec.*

2 *p* *SING, don't play (syllable: ah)* *1-3 sec.*

3 *pp* *(play)* *4-8 sec.*

4 *p*

Unpitched *High Sound* *random, erratic rhythms; wind-chime like* *pp*

36 37 38

1 *hold and fade*

2 *SING, don't play (syllable: ah)* *1-3 sec.* *hold and fade*

3 *p* *hold and fade*

4 *hold and fade*

Unpitched *ppp* *wispy* *pppp*