toon™ (mmix)

joey bargsten

CONCERTO/SPECTACLE FOR ORCHESTRA AND LIVE DIGITAL MEDIA

tOOn™ (mmix)

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Since 1979 I have been exploring technology as a means of expanding the expressive range of conventional ensembles.

Extended instrumental/vocal techniques, experimental notation (prerecorded instructions, pitches, and rhythms played for individual performers over headphones—the "Walkman Ensemble", later supplanted by the "Portable CD Ensemble", and now the "iPod Ensemble"), structured improvisation, algorithymic composition, and all manner of electronic sound production (*musique concréte*, tape, analog/digital synthesis, MIDI, sampling, digital audio editing and signal processing; and now a bewildering array of digital possibilities housed on a slender laptop) have been important tools in guiding me toward the synthesis of a personal style.

tOOn™ (mmix) is a huge work which incorporates almost three decades of discovery about the nature of sound and the interaction of performer and machine. More than merely a catalogue of instrumental, vocal, and electronic effects, it is a large-scale symphonic concert piece which takes its imagery from one of the major oracular systems of Western culture, the Tarot. I do not literally depict, for example, *The Hanged Man* or *The Wheel of Fortune* or *The Tower of Destruction*, but rather the music provides an atmosphere in which the cards can be drawn, arranged, and contemplated in the listener's mind.

The (car)toon(s) in the title refer to the plasticity with which I approach musical elements and the logic with which they interact and transform themselves: musical phrases, textures, and sounds which—in the manner of a Warner Brothers cartoon—can become flattened by steam rollers, pop back into shape, scramble in midair until they realize they've run off a cliff; musical black holes that can be grabbed off train tunnels and thrown on the ground in front of angry pursuers, ideas in sound that present faces stretched, inflated, exploded, and revitalized in the course of a few seconds.

These cartoon-like aspects characterize the first portion of the work, which opens with an orchestral watercolor accompaniment to a real-time sampler improvisation and proceeds episodically throuh a number of alternately dense and sparse textures. This section was conceived as a highly concentrated concerto for orchestra.

—JB

Footnote: Ok, well, so you've probably figured out this piece has a little history of its own (however obscure that history is . . .). It started our as its own little piece - "Tarot Cartoons", then it took on a bunch of other movements as "Cyborg Symphony", and now it's back on its own, with the truncated title.

The instrumentation has evolved, too. It began with an unplayably huge orchestra (double winds, eight horns, three bowed pianos, 12 vocalists), which is fine if you're playing Mahler or the complete *Firebird* or whatever, but, you know, get real. So, I've reduced the size of the orchestra to regular size (there might be a little more touching up to do in that department). The electronic instrumentation started out with the MIDI modules, drum machines, and samplers I had in 1992, and the instructions were quite specific. That was a bad idea, since almost all that equipment is no longer available to anybody. Now, the electronic instrumentation is completely and purposely ambiguous, so that as the technology changes, the work can still be performed. The notation is graphic and gestural, allowing improvisation within the time framework (see *APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE SCALING*, next page).

PERFORMING FORCES (minimum)

2 flutes (doubling piccolos), 3 oboes (third doubling English Horn), Eb clarinet, 2 Bb clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon.

4 horns, 3 trumpets in C (first doubling on piccolo trumpet in D), 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba.

4 percussionist (sometimes playing inside open grand piano), timpani, piano, celesta, harp.

1 - 5 live digital media performers (audio and video)

Strings.

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE SCALING

Que Number:	Percentage of Total Length:
1	7
2	6
3	7
4	8
5	10
6	8
7	10
8	8
9	11
10	7
11	3
12	2
13	5
14	8

Orchestra plays each notated que at suggested tempo. Audio digital media perfomers play beyond que until total length of que is completed, then next orchestral que is played, etc. Visualists and video artists will contribute their live component throughout the piece.

Total time will vary according to number of digital media performers (between 1 and 5 recommended, playing separately or together). Suggested length: between 11 and 26 minutes.

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(Please see note on ques and time scaling, previous page)

(Please see note on performing forces, previous page)

Piccolo 1 2
Flute 1 2
Oboe 1 2 3
English Horn
Eb Clarinet
Bb Clarinet
Bass Clarinet
Bassoon 1 2
Contra-Bassoon
Horn 1,2 3,4 5,6 7,8
Piccolo Trumpet D
Trumpet C 1 2 3
Tenor Trombone 1 2
Bass Trombone
Tuba
Percussion 1 2 3 4
Timpani
Live Digital Media (audio and video)
S-10: cric-x
PARK LANDSCAPE 1. (339) end:
(REV-6, 11:00)
piano
celesta
harp
violins I
violins II
violas
cells
basses
(touch)
(transposed score)

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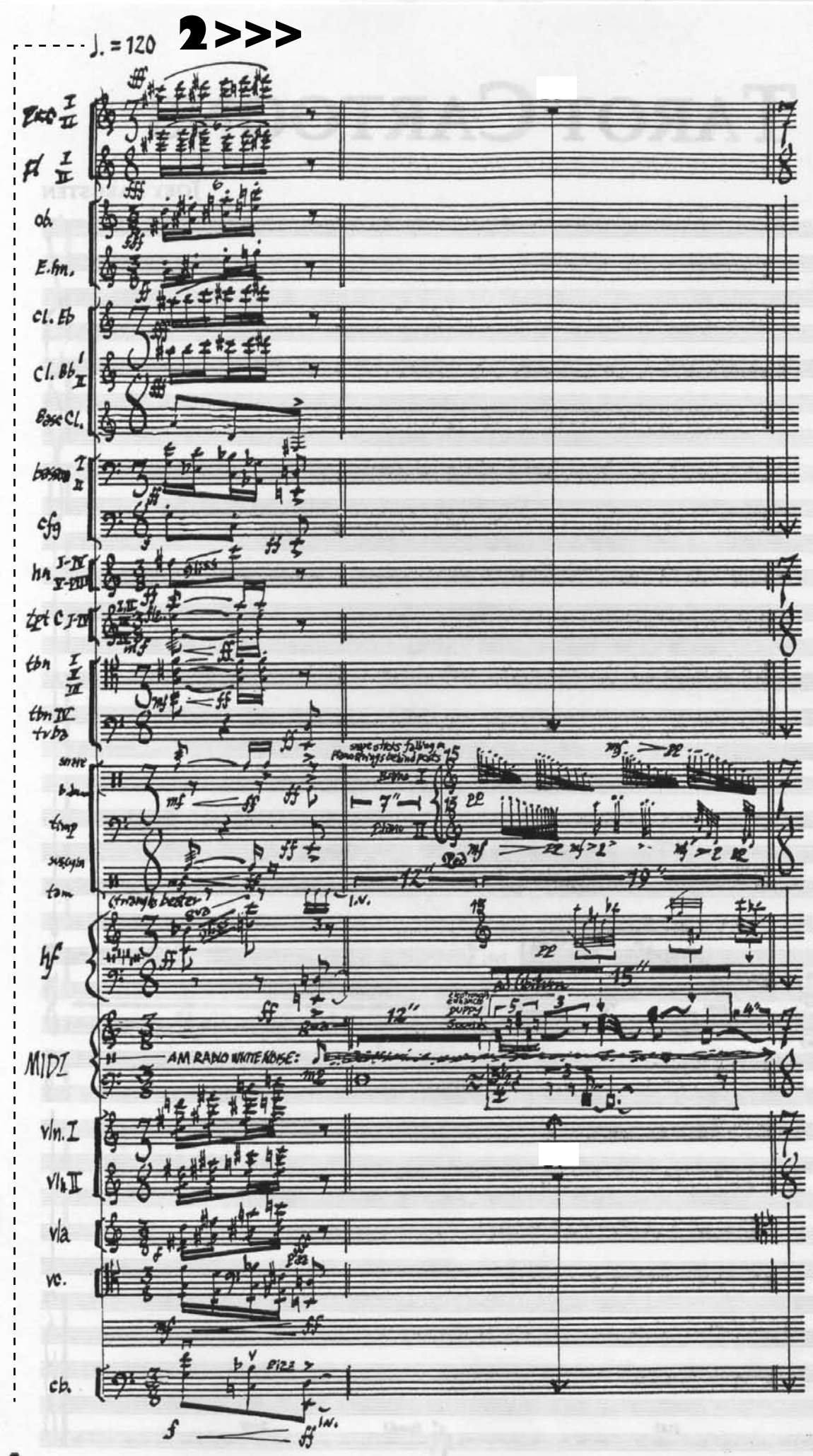
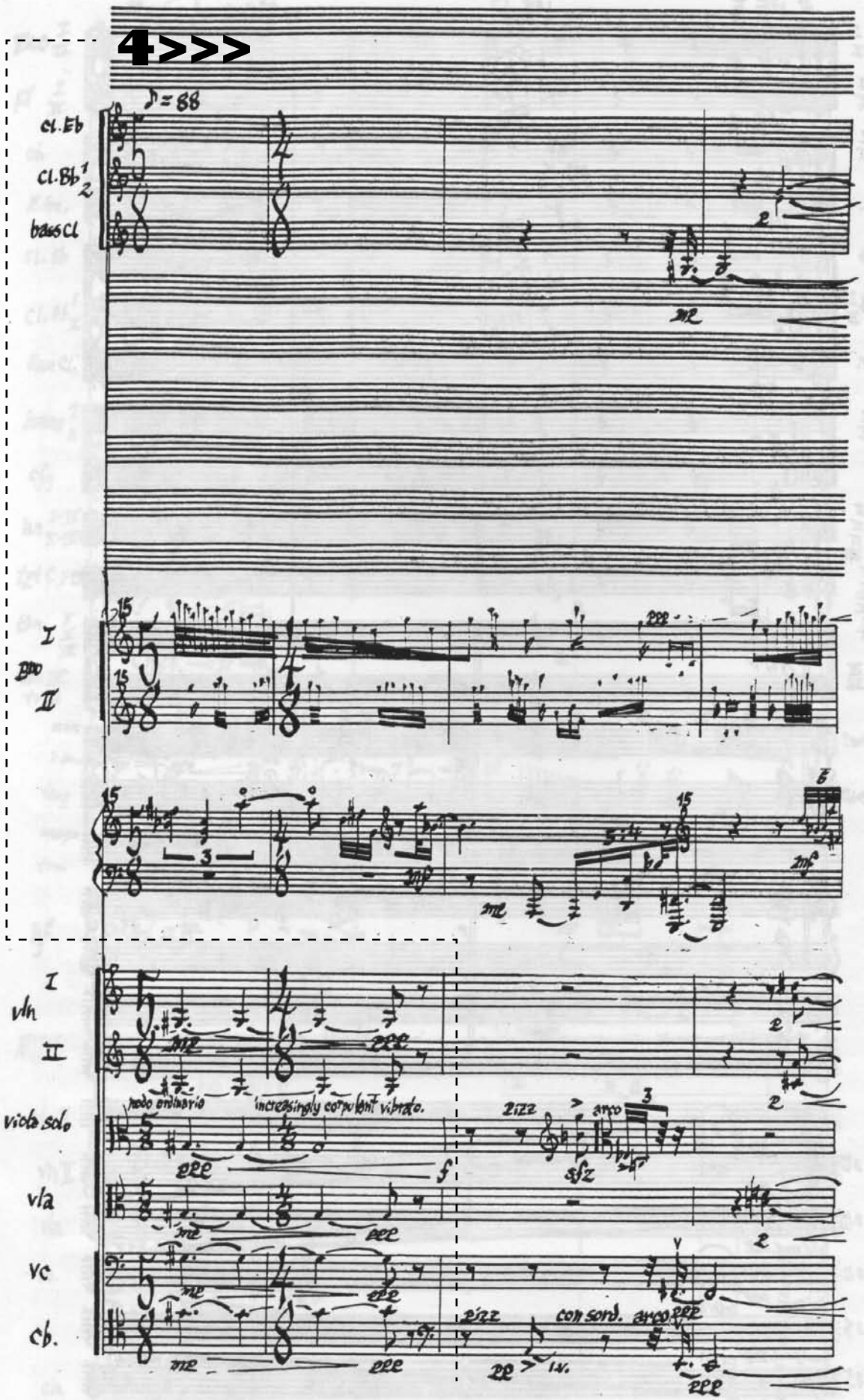

♩. = 120
2>>>
Bass Cl.
bassoon
cfg
hn
tpt C
tbn
tbn IV
tuba
snare
b.drum
timp
suspcym
tam
hf
MIDI
AM RADIO WHITE NOISE:
vln. I
vln. II
vla
vc.
cb.

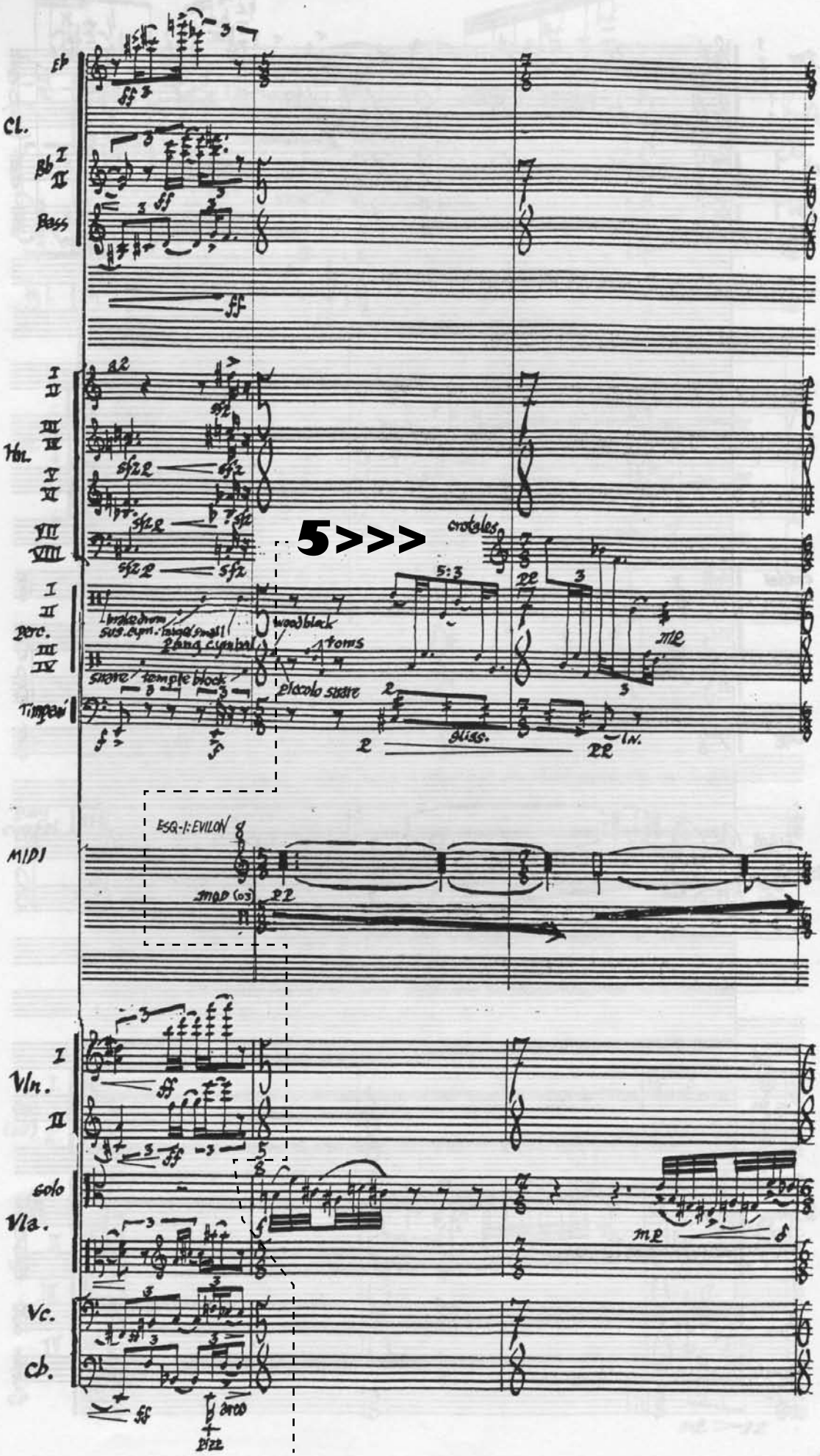
♩.=120

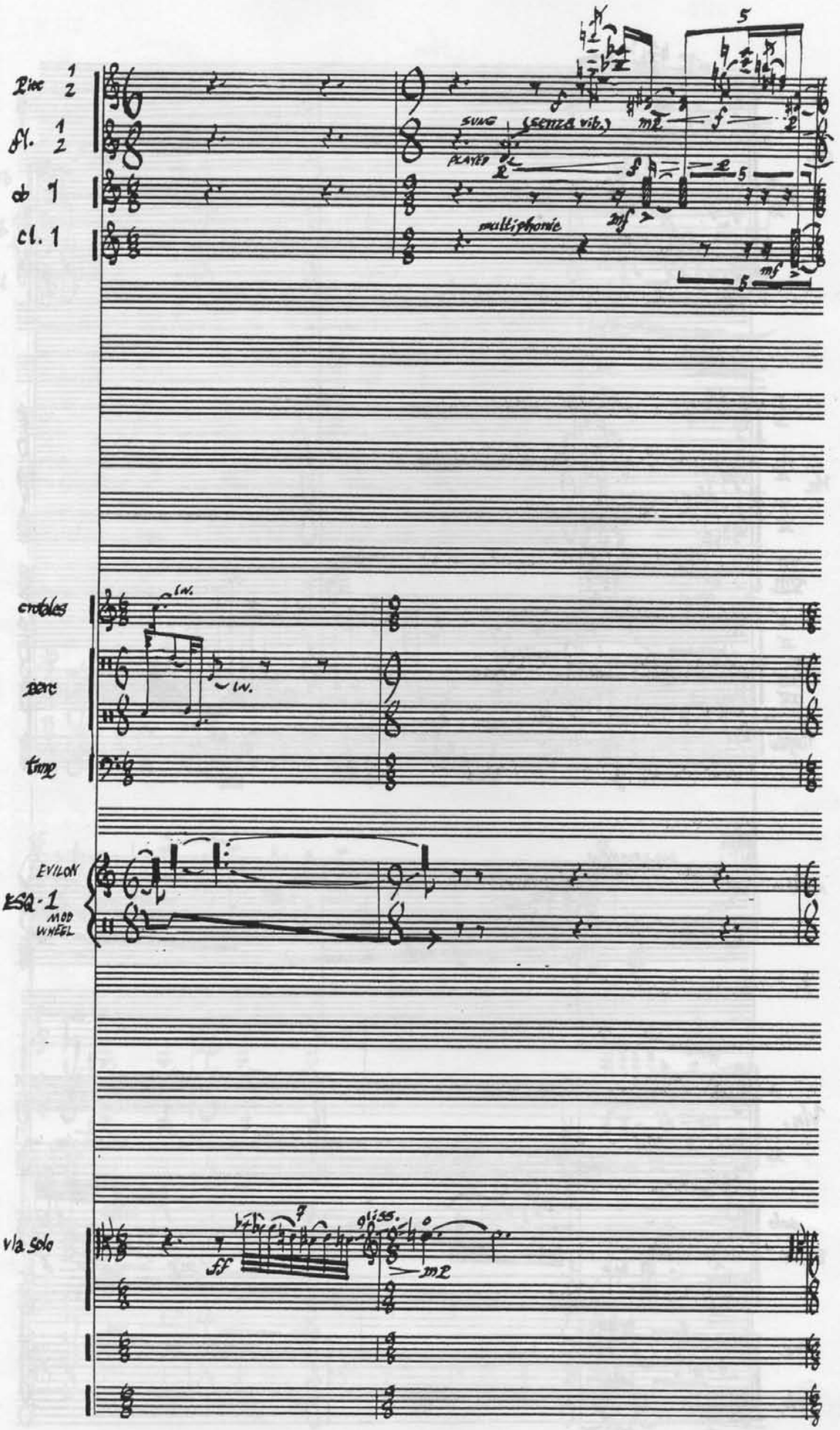
3>>>

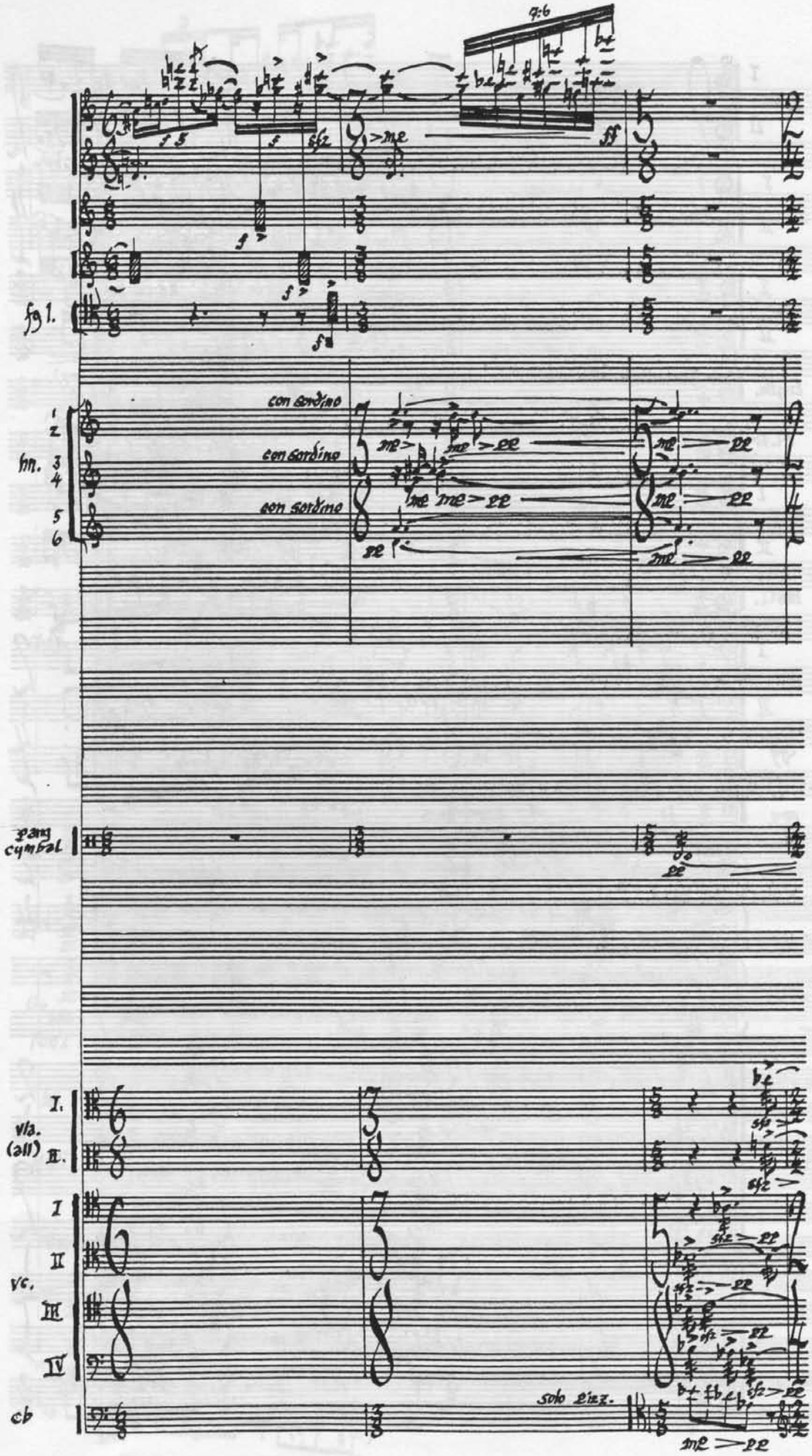
Picc. I II
fl. I II
ob. I II
E.hn.
Cl. Eb
Cl. Bb I II
b. clar.
fg. I II
cfg
hn. I II III IV V VI VII VIII
trpt.c I II III IV
tbn I II
B.tbn III IV
tuba
I percussion Duo I
II Duo II
hf.
MIDI
sul pont.
a12
a12
a12
a8
a5

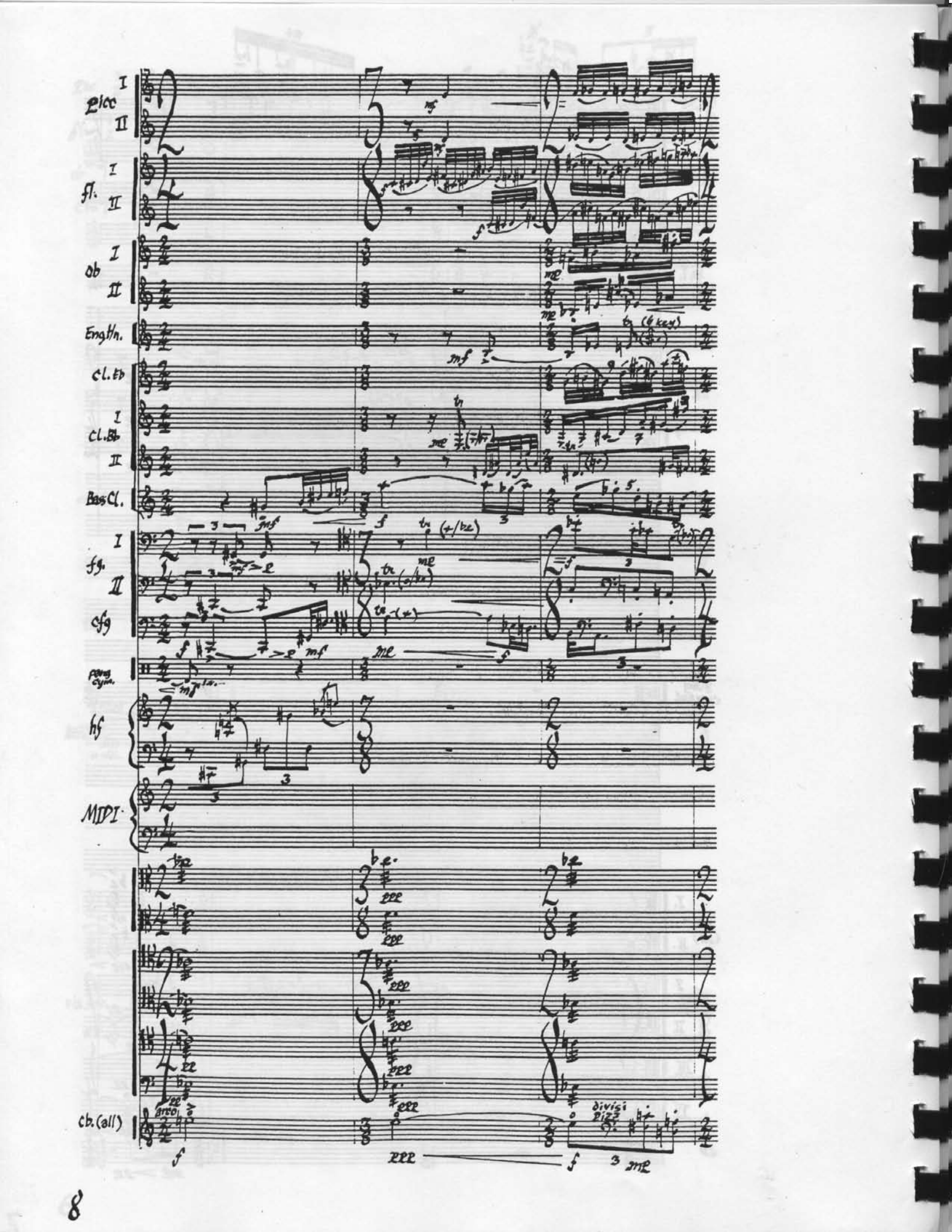
17"

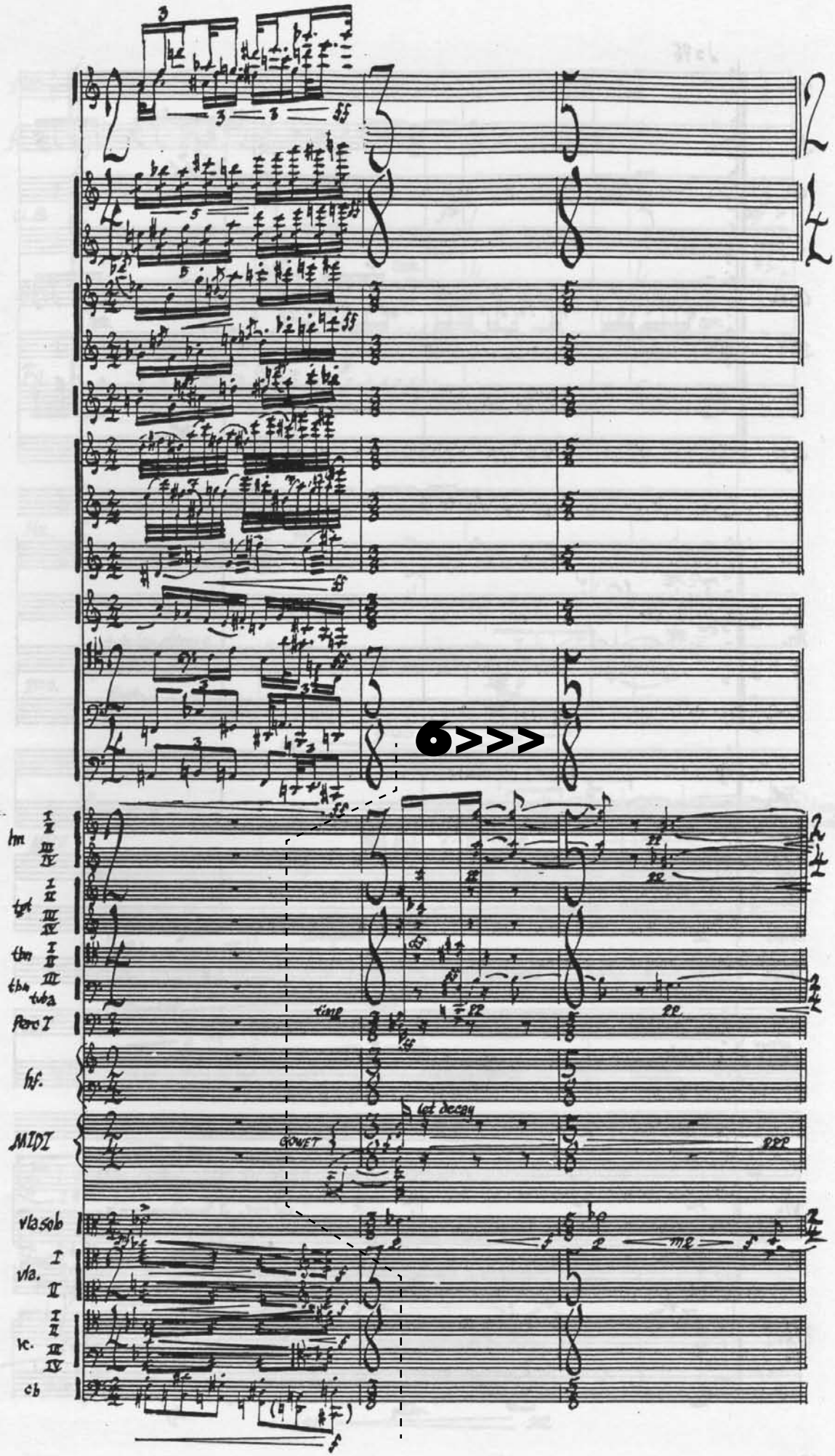

4>>>
♪ = 88
cl. Eb
cl. Bb 1 2
bass cl.
I
Pno
II
I
vln
II
viola solo
vla
vc
cb.
modo ordinario
increasingly corpulent vibrato.
zizz
arco
sfz
con sord.
arco
zzz
zz
lv.


Cl.
Bass
Hrn.
Perc.
Timpani
5>>>
crotales
bass drum
sus. cym.
triangle small
2 pang cymbal
woodblock
toms
piccolo snare
snare
temple block
gliss.
MIDI
ESQ-1: EVILON
Vln.
solo
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.


Fl. 1 2
SUNG
(senza vib.)
PLAYED
ob 1
cl. 1
multiphonic
crotales
bells
timp
EVILON
ESQ-1
MOD WHEEL
vla solo
gliss.


9:6
fg 1.
con sordino
con sordino
con sordino
hn. 1 2 3 4 5 6
perc. cymbal
vla. (all) I. II.
vc. I II III IV
cb
solo clar.


Picc
I
II
fl.
I
II
ob
I
II
Eng.Hn.
Cl.Eb
Cl.Bb
I
II
Bas Cl.
fg.
I
II
cfg
perc. cym.
hf
MIDI
Cb. (all)
arco
divisi
Rizz.


hn
tpt
tbn
tba
Perc I
hf.
MIDI
let decay
GOUET
vla solo
vla.
vc.
cb

♪=76

Picc. 1 2

Fl. 1 2

a2

mf

Ob. 1 2

E.horn

Cl.Bb 1 2

mp

mp

mp

B.Cl

Fg. 1 2

mp

Cfg.

Hn. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

mp

mp

Tpt. 1 2 3

Tbn. 1 2 3

B.Tbn

Tuba

mp

MIDI (S-10)

Vln. I II

sul cont.

sul cont.

pp

pp

Vla.

tutti, pizz.

pp

Vc.

mp

mf

pp

Cb.

solo

mf

Picc. 1 2

Fl. 1 2

a2

mf

f

Cl.B♭ 1 2

B.Cl.

Fg. 1 2

Hn. 3 4

tubular chimes

Perc.

Temp.

pp

glass

mp

(o)

MIDI

Pitch Mod:

(decay also glissandos)

I

Vln.

II

mp

ppp

Vla

Vc

solo

Cb.

sotto

pizz. l.v.

Ob. 1 2

Fl. 1 2

E.horn

1 cl.Bb 2

B.Cl.

1 Fg. 2

3 hn. 4

perc.

large sus. cymbal.

pp

f

D.A.: decay orch. hit (reversed)

mp

ff

MIDI

molto ordinario

chin strings: sul ponticello

I vln.

II

mp

ff

v/a.

tr h

tr b

mp

ff

vc.1

vc. 2

cb.

cb.

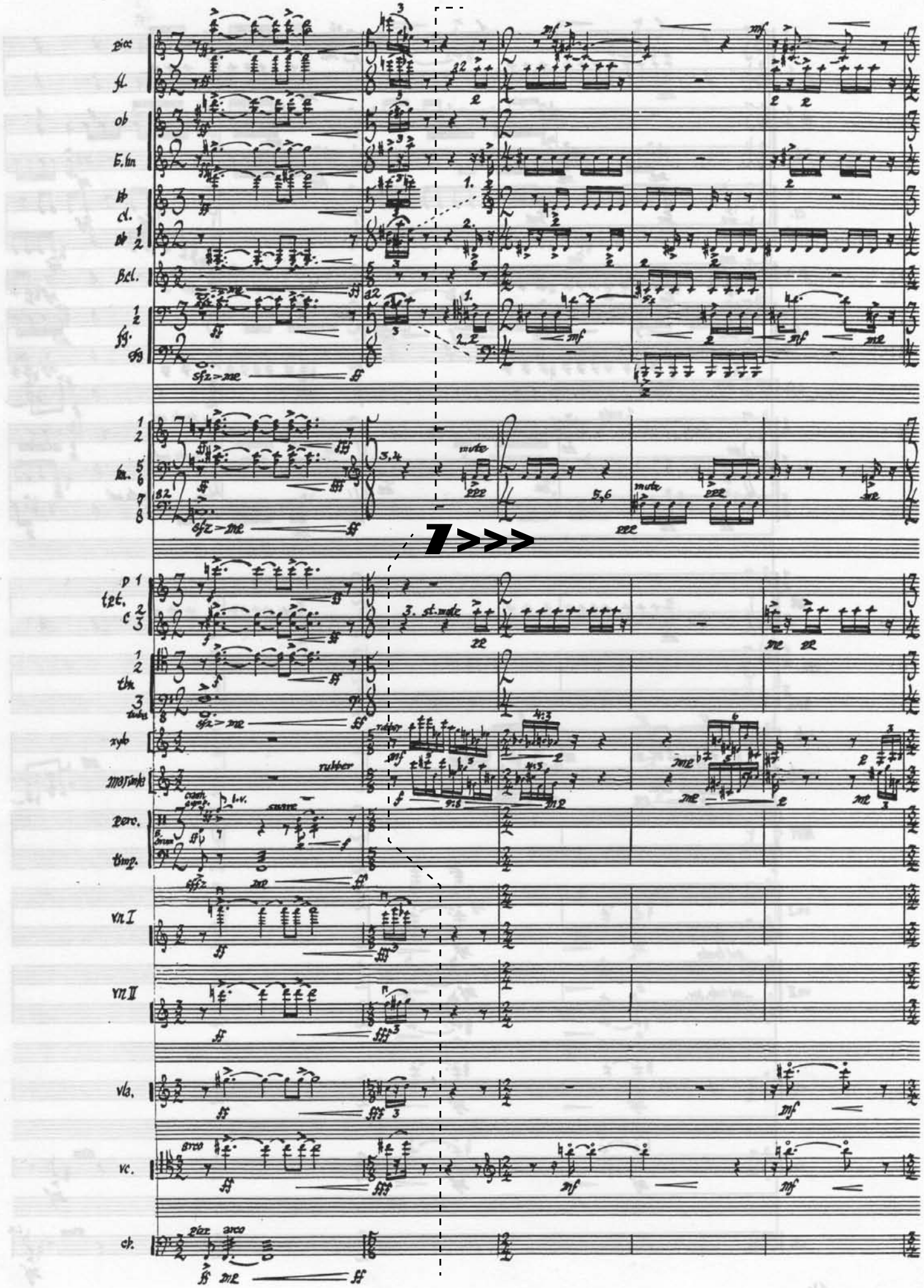
fizz

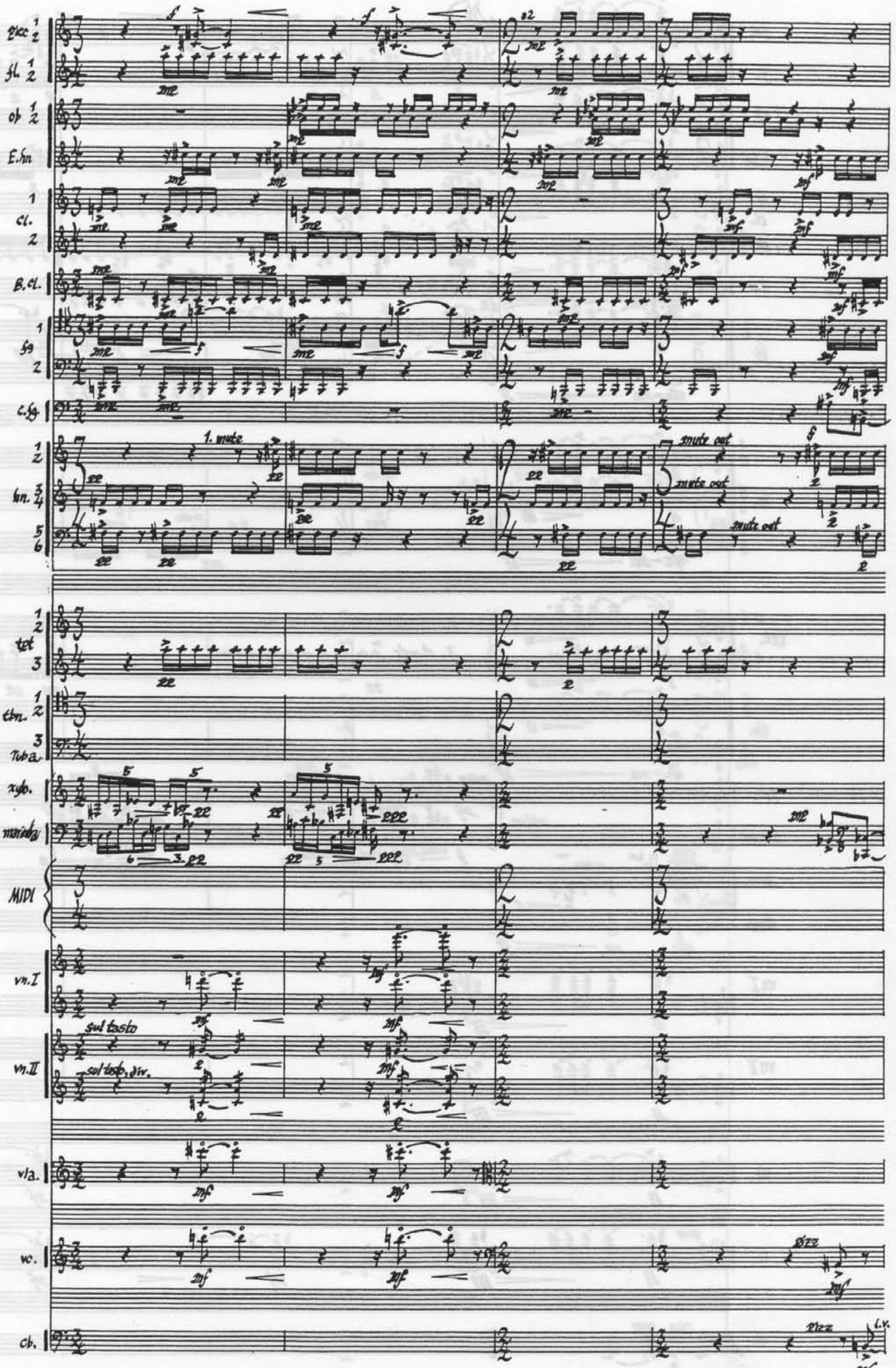
fizz

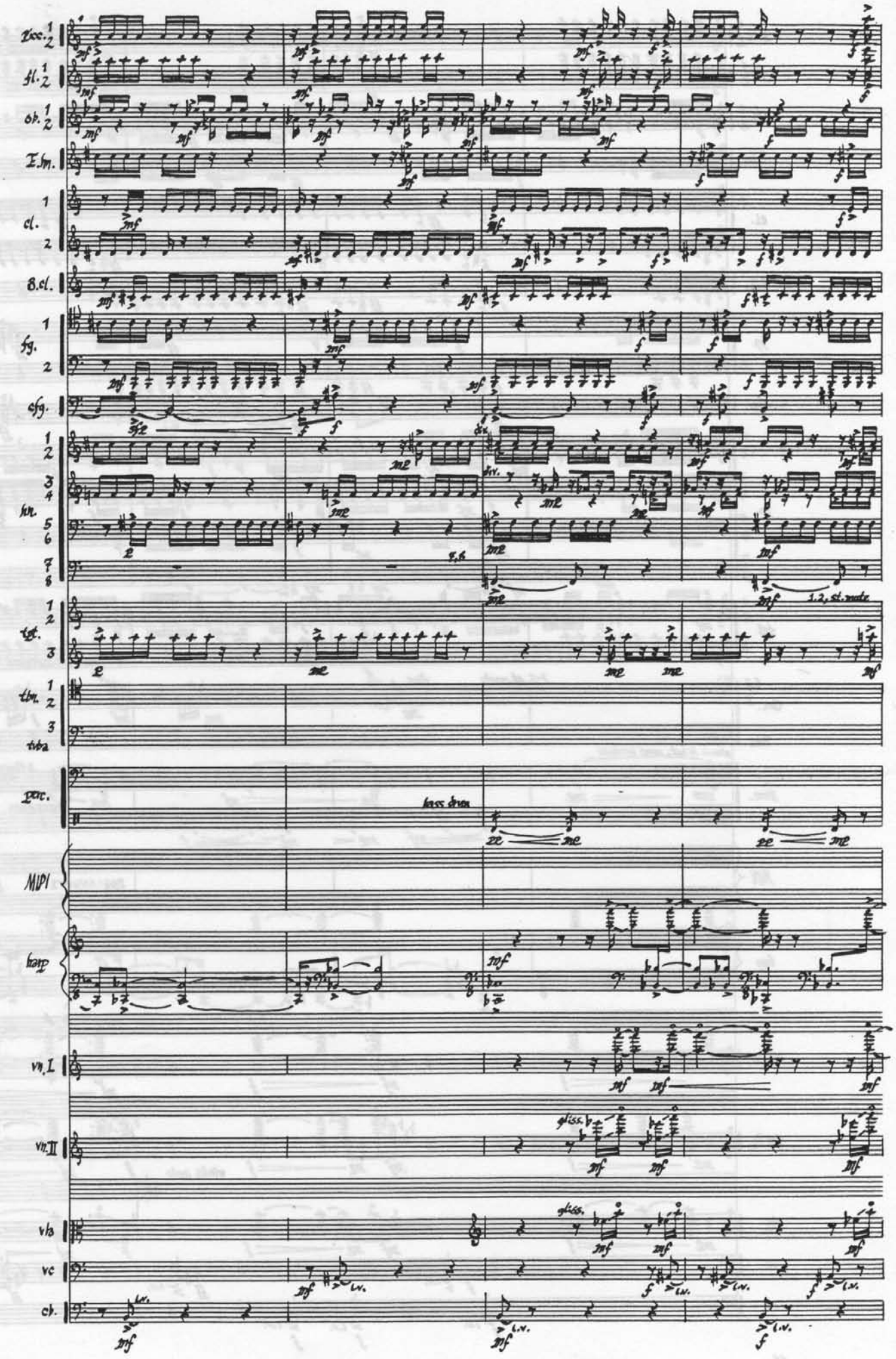
fizz

mp

ff


Picc.
fl.
ob
E.hn
B♭ cl.
B♭ cl. 1 2
B.cl.
fg. 1 2
fg.
hn. 1 2 5 6 7 8
mute
7>>>
p 1
tpt. C 2 3
3. st. mute
tbn. 1 2 3
tubas
rub
rubber
xyl
marimba
perc.
timp.
vn I
vn II
vla.
vc.
arco
cb.
pizz.
arco


picc. 1 2
fl. 1 2
ob. 1 2
E.hn.
1 cl. 2
B.cl.
1 bg 2
c.bg.
1. mute
mute out
mute out
mute out
1 2 tpt 3
1 tbn. 2 3
Tuba
xyl.
marimba
MIDI
vn.I
sul tasto
vn.II
sul tasto, div.
vla.
vc.
cb.
l.v.


Acc.
fl.
ob.
E.hn.
cl.
B.cl.
fg.
cfg.
hn.
tpt.
tbn.
tuba
perc.
bass drum
MIDI
harp
vn. I
vn. II
vla
vc
cb.
gliss.
1.2. st. mute

Picc. 1 2
fl. 1 2
ob. 1 2
E.hn.
cl. 1 2
B.cl.
bsn. 1 2
cbsn.
hn. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
tpt. 1 2 3
tbn. 1,2 3
Tuba
perc.
MIDI
harp
vl. I
vln II
vla
vc
cb.

1-3, st. mute
open
piccolo hi hat, gong cymbals
2 timpani
bass drum
ESQ: ANNOY1
viola solo
l.v.

♪ = 88

♩ = 76

piccolo 1 2

fl 1 2

to picc. 3&4

ob 1 2

E.hn

Eb.Cl

Bb.Cl 1 2

b.Cl.

bsn 1 2

cbsn

hrn 1 2 3 4

trpt 1 2 3

st. mute

thn 1 2

thn 3

tuba

to mute

8>>>

perc

triangle:

medium – large tam: (l.v.)

dampen

MIDI

REV: 7 (large)

ESQ: MINI M

hp

vn I

vn II

solo vla

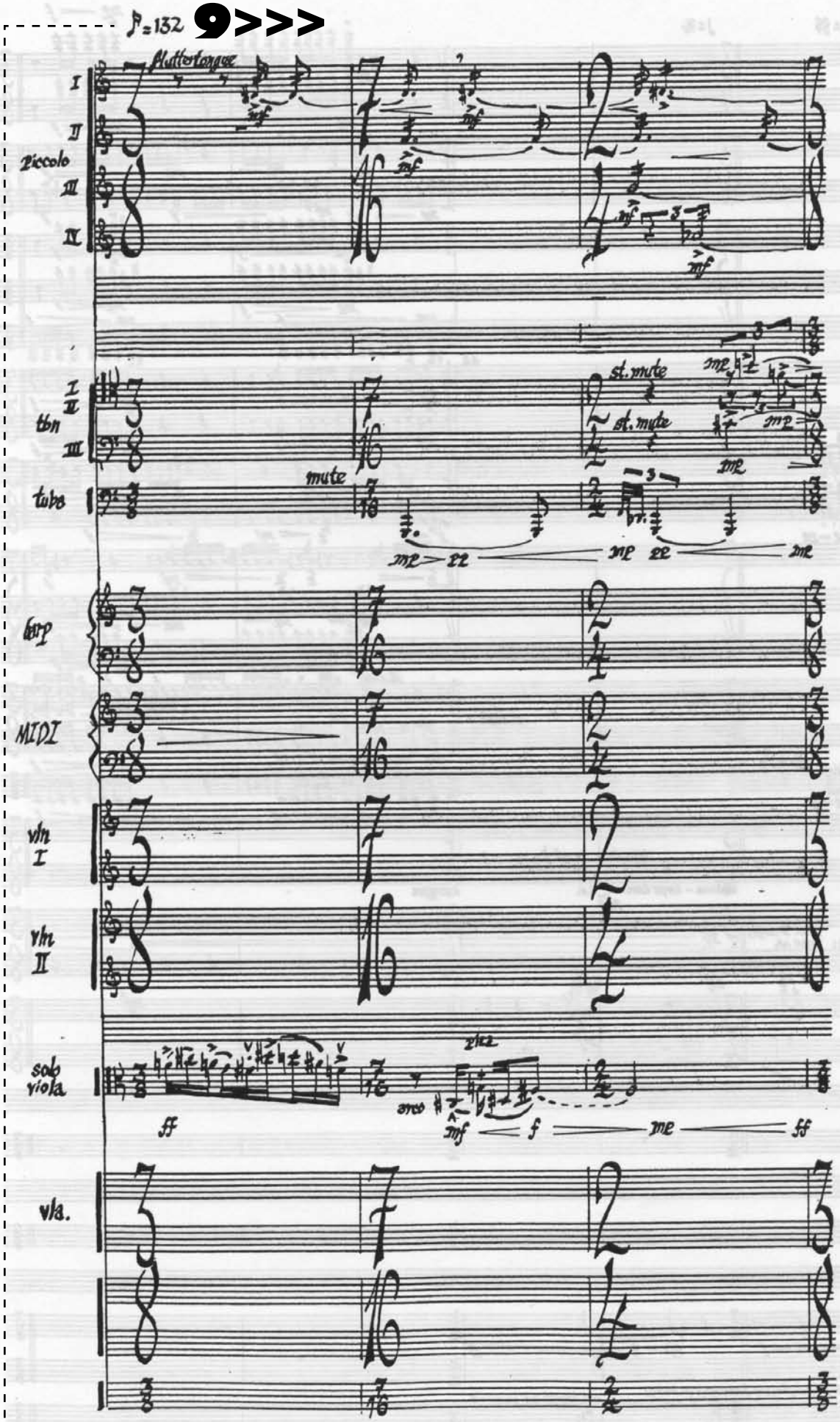
section

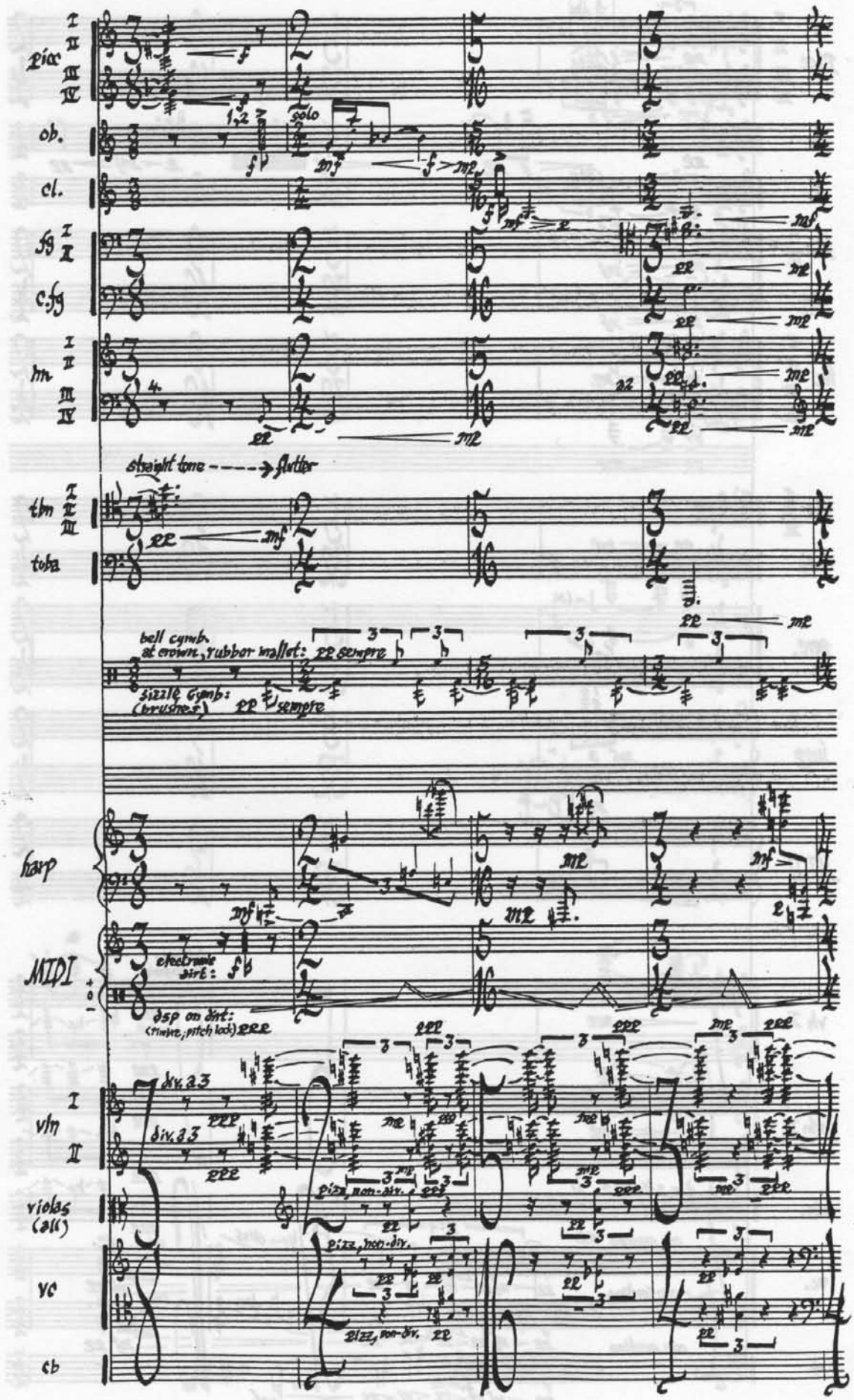
Solo vcello by neck; fingers drumming on body:

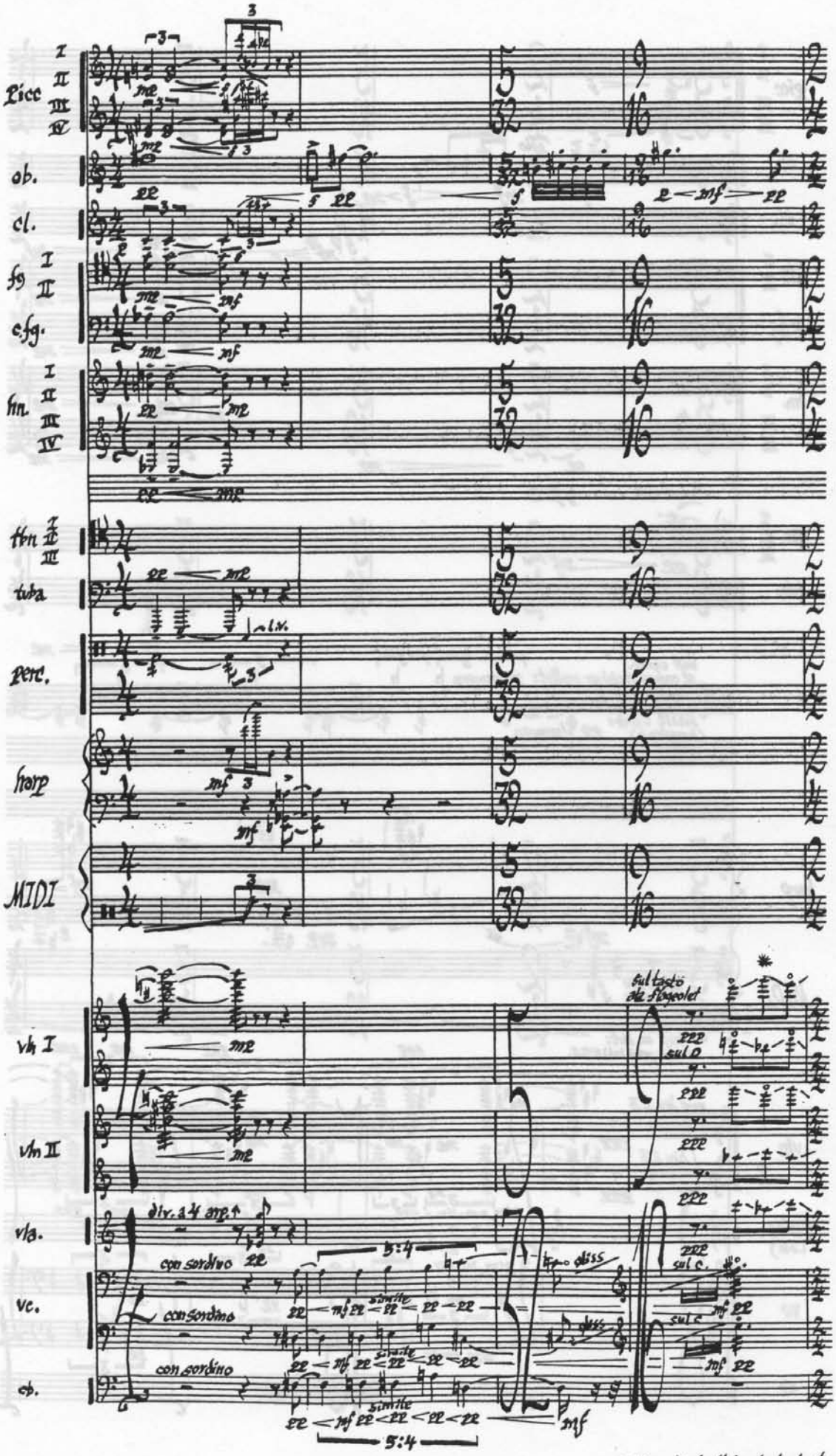
vc

col legno, let bow bounce:

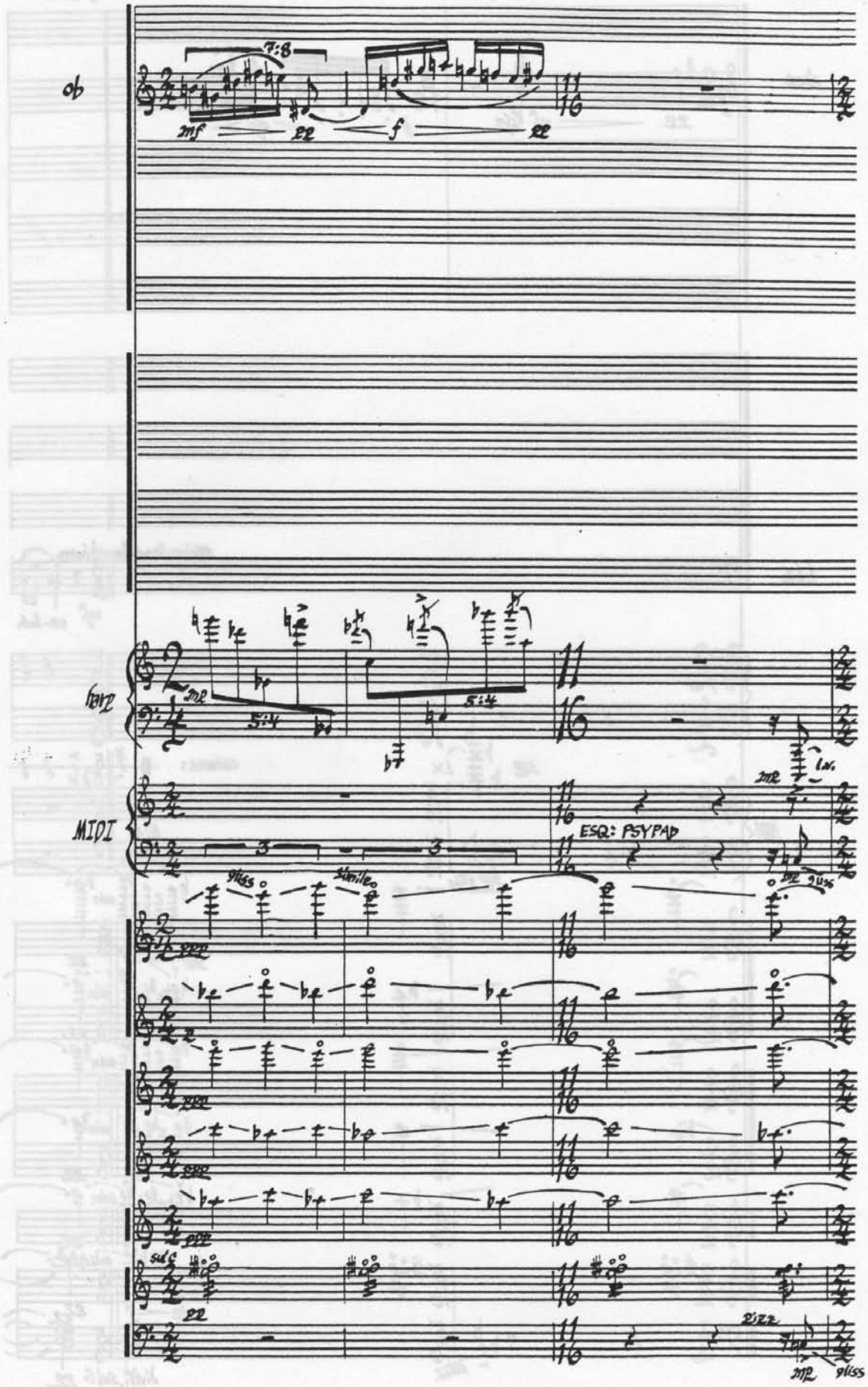
db

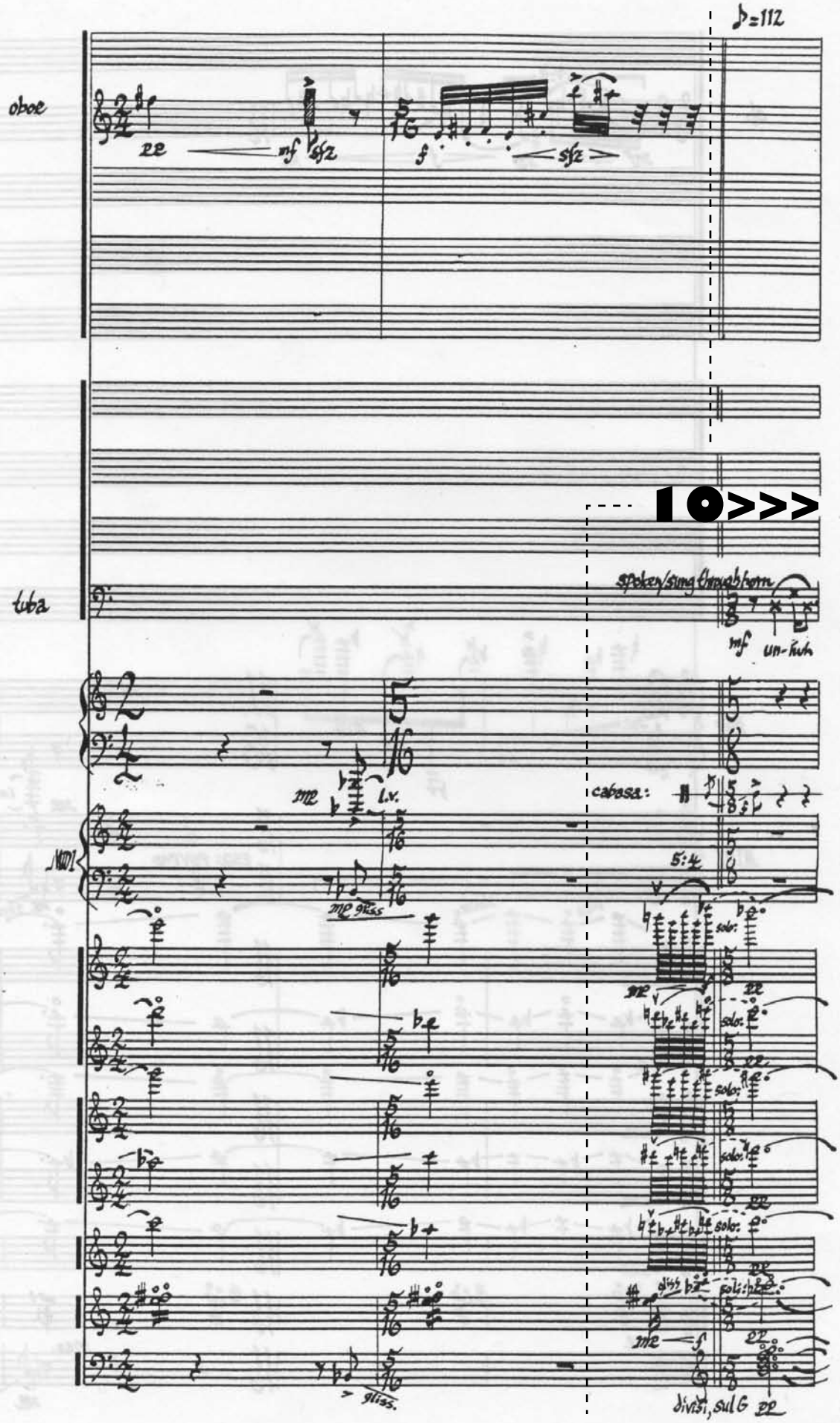

♪=132
flutterlongue
I
II
piccolo
III
IV
I
II
tbn
III
st. mute
st. mute
mute
tuba
harp
MIDI
vln
I
vln
II
solo
viola
zhz
zwo
vla.


picc
I
II
III
IV
ob.
solo
cl.
fg
I
II
c.fg
hn
I
II
III
IV
straight tone ----> flutter
tbn
I
II
III
tuba
bell cymb.
at crown, rubber mallet: pp sempre
sizzle cymb:
(brushes) pp sempre
harp
MIDI
electronic
dirt:
dsp on dirt:
(time, pitch lock) ppp
div. a 3
vln
I
II
violas
(all)
pizz, non-div.
vc
cb



* Glissandi should be short, about 1/2 the length of notes involved, or less.


ob
7:8
mf
pp
f
pp
harp
5:4
5:4
mp
MIDI
3
3
ESQ: PSYPAD
gliss
sim.
mp
gliss
pp
sul c
pp
gliss
mp
gliss


♪=112
oboe
pp
mf
sfz
f
sfz
10>>>
tuba
spoken/sung through horn
mf
un-kuh
mp
l.v.
cabasa:
5:4
mp gliss
solo:
mp
pp
solo:
solo:
solo:
solo:
pp
div.
sol:
mp
f
pp
gliss.
divisi, sul G
pp

Eb cl.

cl 1

cl. 2

B. cl

perc.

harp

MIDI

vn I

solo plus section (div.)

sul tasto

vn II

solo plus section (div.)

sul tasto

vla

solo plus section:

sul tasto

vc.

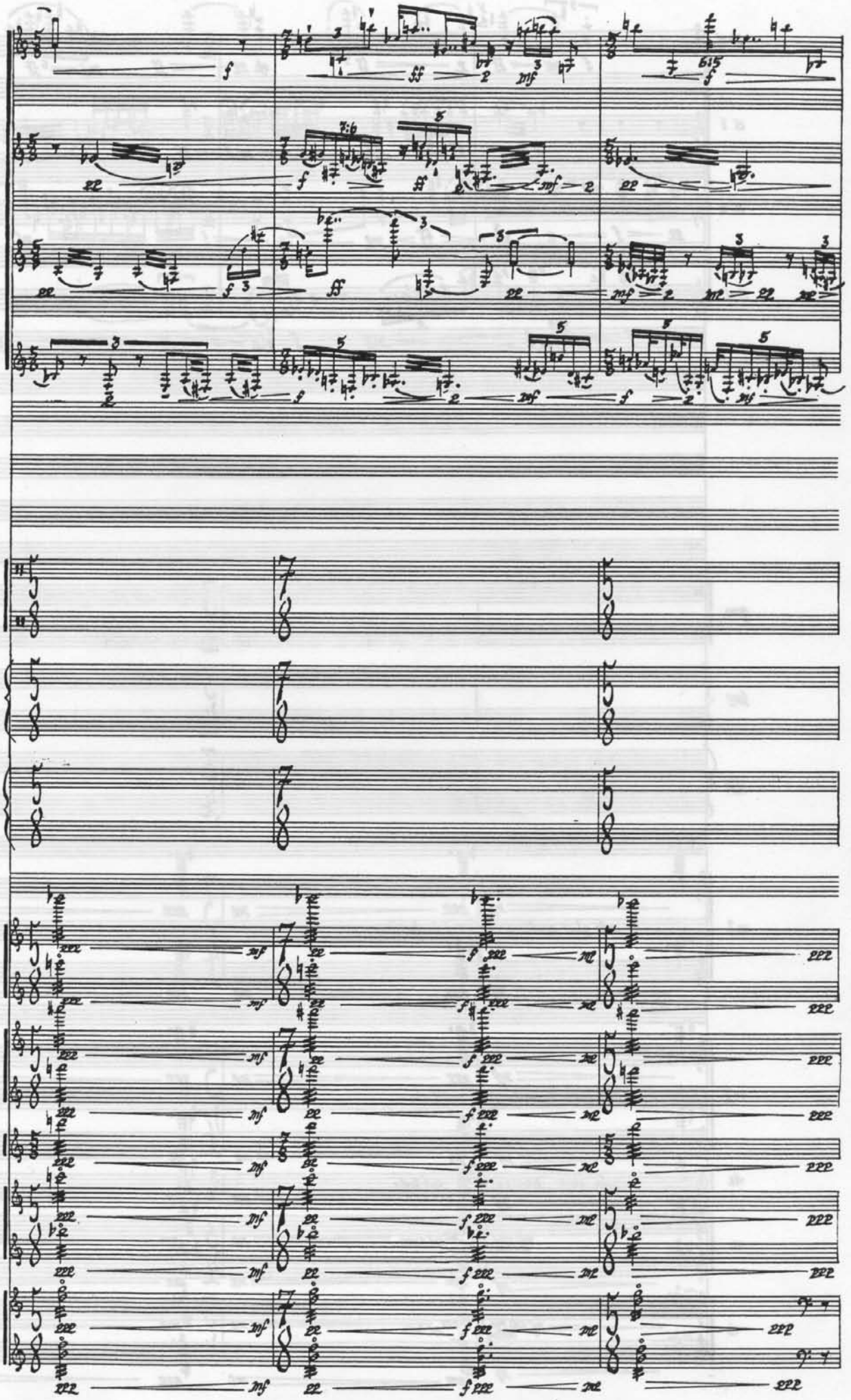
soli plus section:

sul tasto

cb

soli plus section

sul tasto



Eb
1
cl. Bb
2
bass

1
2
3
4
horn
5
6
7
8

amplified, gated:
1
I
2
percussion (inside pianos)
3
II
4

amplified, gated:

celeste

harp

MIDI

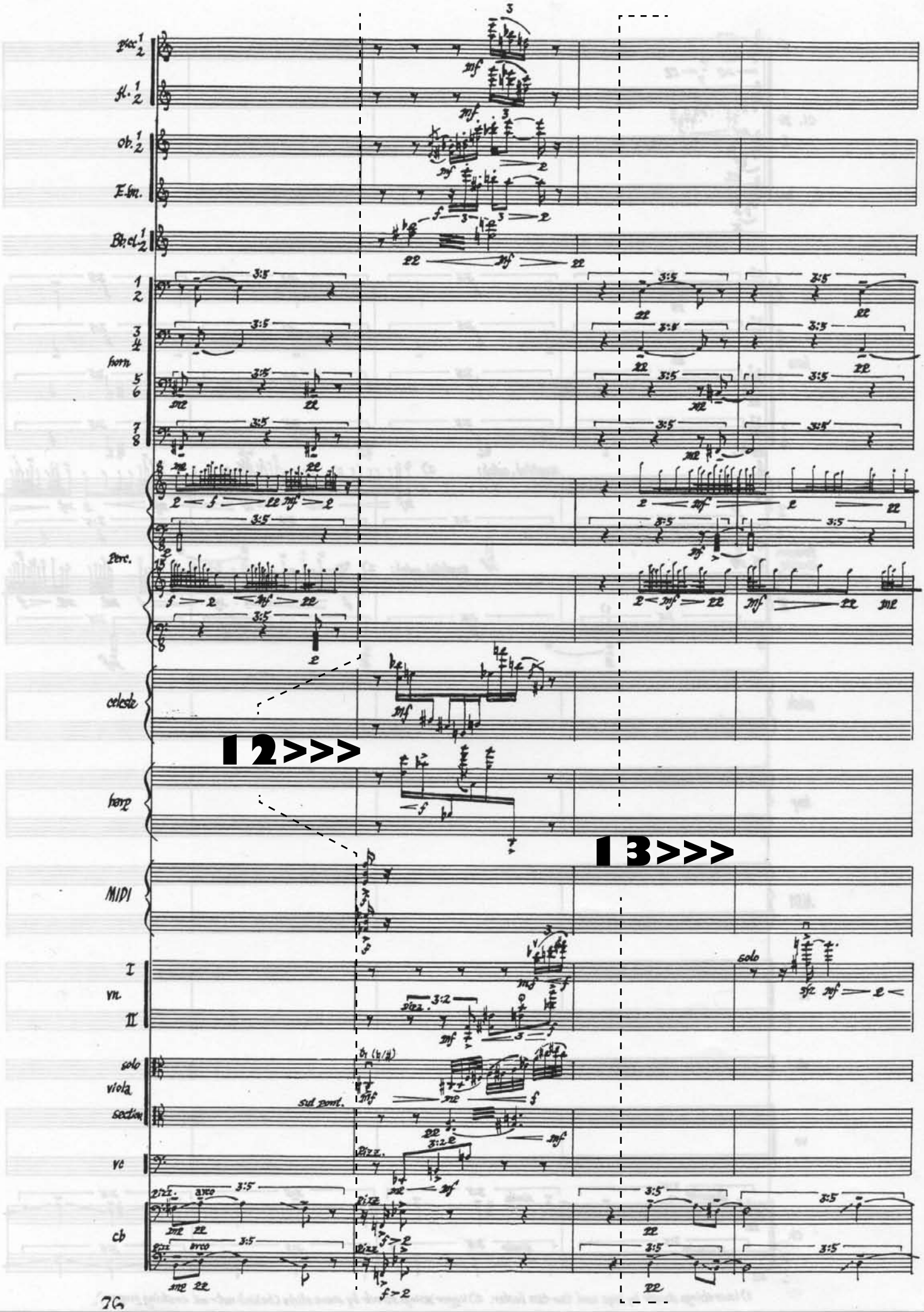
I
vn
II

vla

vc

glissando
simile
cb.
glissando
simile

1) lower strings struck by large wool tam-tam beater. 2) upper strings struck by snare sticks (behind nut–not on string proper).


Picc. 1 2
fl. 1 2
ob. 1 2
E.hn.
Bb cl. 1 2
1 2
3 4
horn
5 6
7 8
perc.
celeste
12>>>
harp
13>>>
MIDI
I
vn
II
solo
viola
section
vc
cb
solo
sul pont.
pizz.
arco

*(rapid, unmeasured reiterations which slow)

ob 1 2

E.hn

fg. 1 2

c.fg

horn 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

trumpet piccolo in D

cup mute

glide

MIDI

solo violin

sonticello

ord.

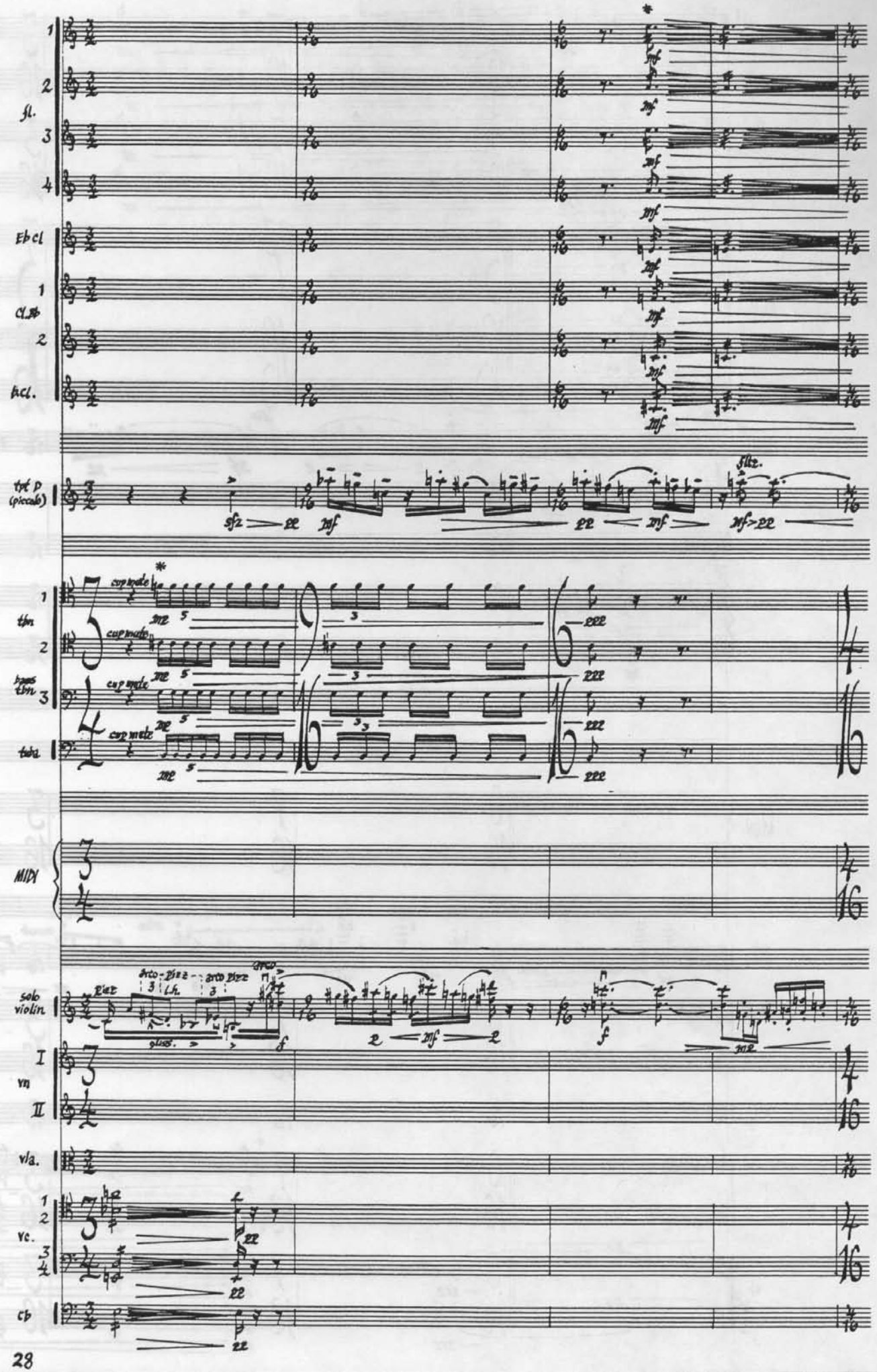
vln I

vln II

vla

vc

cb


fl.
1
2
3
4
Eb cl
Cl.
1
2
b.cl.
trt p
(piccolo)
sfz
mf
fltz.
hrn
1
2
bass hrn
3
cup mute
tuba
MIDI
solo violin
arco
pizz.
vn
I
II
vla.
vc.
1
2
3
4
cb

♩=76

82

fl.

ob.

Eng.hn

Eb.cl.

Bb.cl.

b.cl.

bsn.

cbsn.

hn

trpt D

trpt C

mute out

tbn.

tuba

timp

perc

harp

MIDI

digital audio:

ANGRY SWELL (:08)

14>>>

violin solo

vn I

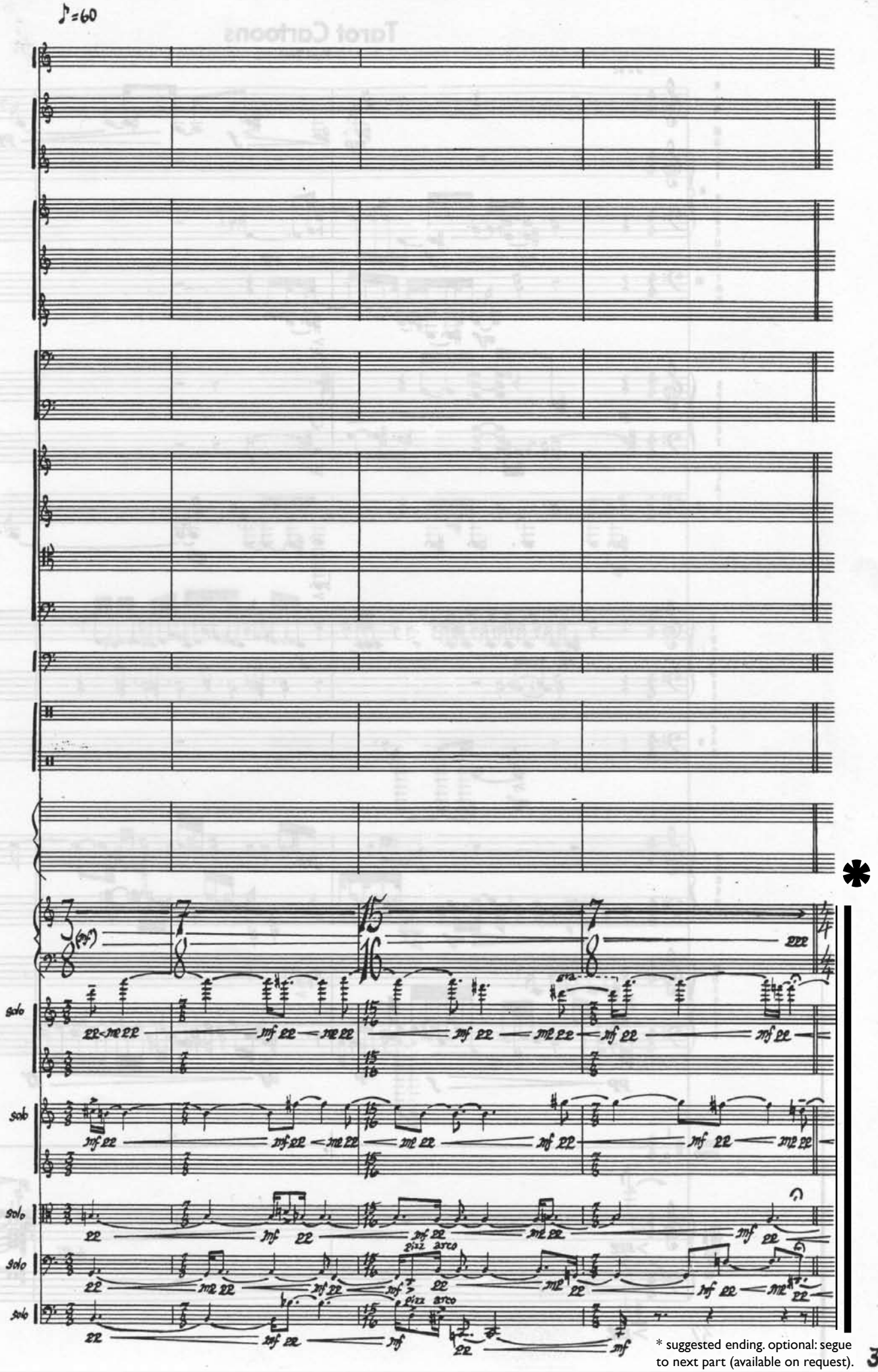
vn II

vla.

vc

db

fl.&pic.
ob.a2
Eng.hn
Eb.cl.
Bb.cl. 1 2
b.cl.
fg.a2
cfg.
hn. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Pavillon en l'air!
tpt. 1 2 3
tbn. 1 2 3
tuba
timp
perc
harp
MIDI
digital audio:
orchestral hit reverb (sans attack)
Vn. I II
vla
vc
cb
non div.
div.
dim.
mp
Soli: con sordino



* suggested ending. optional: segue to next part (available on request).