# Permutation City

for percussion duo

commissioned by, and for Speak Percussion: Eugene Ughetti & Peter Neville with respect and affection

Into a mute crypt, I Can't pity our time Turn amity poetic Ciao, tiny trumpet! Manic piety tutor Tame purity tonic Up, meiotic tyrant! I taint my top cure To it, my true panic Put at my nice riot To trace impunity I tempt an outcry, I Pin my taut erotic Art to epic mutiny Can't you permit it To cite my apt ruin? My true icon: tap it Copy time, turn it; a Rite to cut my pain Atomic putty? *Rien!* 

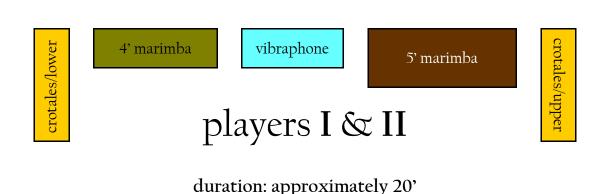
He muttered the password, 'Abulafia'...

-from Permutation City, Greg Egan, 1994

### for two players sharing:

upper octave of crotales five-octave marimba vibraphone four-octave-marimba lower octave of crotales

# AUDIENCE



## Synopsis

Greg Egan's novel concerns a virtual "place", called by it's uploaded inhabitants *Permutation City*, not subject to the normal rules of real geography. This is therefore an *urban* music, and as such it belongs in the line of descent of such artefacts as Mondriaan's *Broadway Boogie-Woogie*, Stan Kenton's *City of Glass*, and John Alden Carpenter's *Skyscrapers*. While a certain phraseological "swing' is appropriate, it is NOT JAZZ, and all rhythms should be performed as precisely as possible. My concept while composing the piece was of the imagined and idealised city beloved of Renaissance artists (perhaps updated as in Japanese Animé, for instance—this thought provided by Richard Haynes), with the outer sections metaphorically suggesting gradual approach to and departure from the CBD (how could I not characterise it as Melbourne city centre?) through the increasingly busy streets. The severe black and white colours of marimbas and vibraphone/crotales emphasise the unreality of the locale, it's nowhereness.

#### Performance notes:

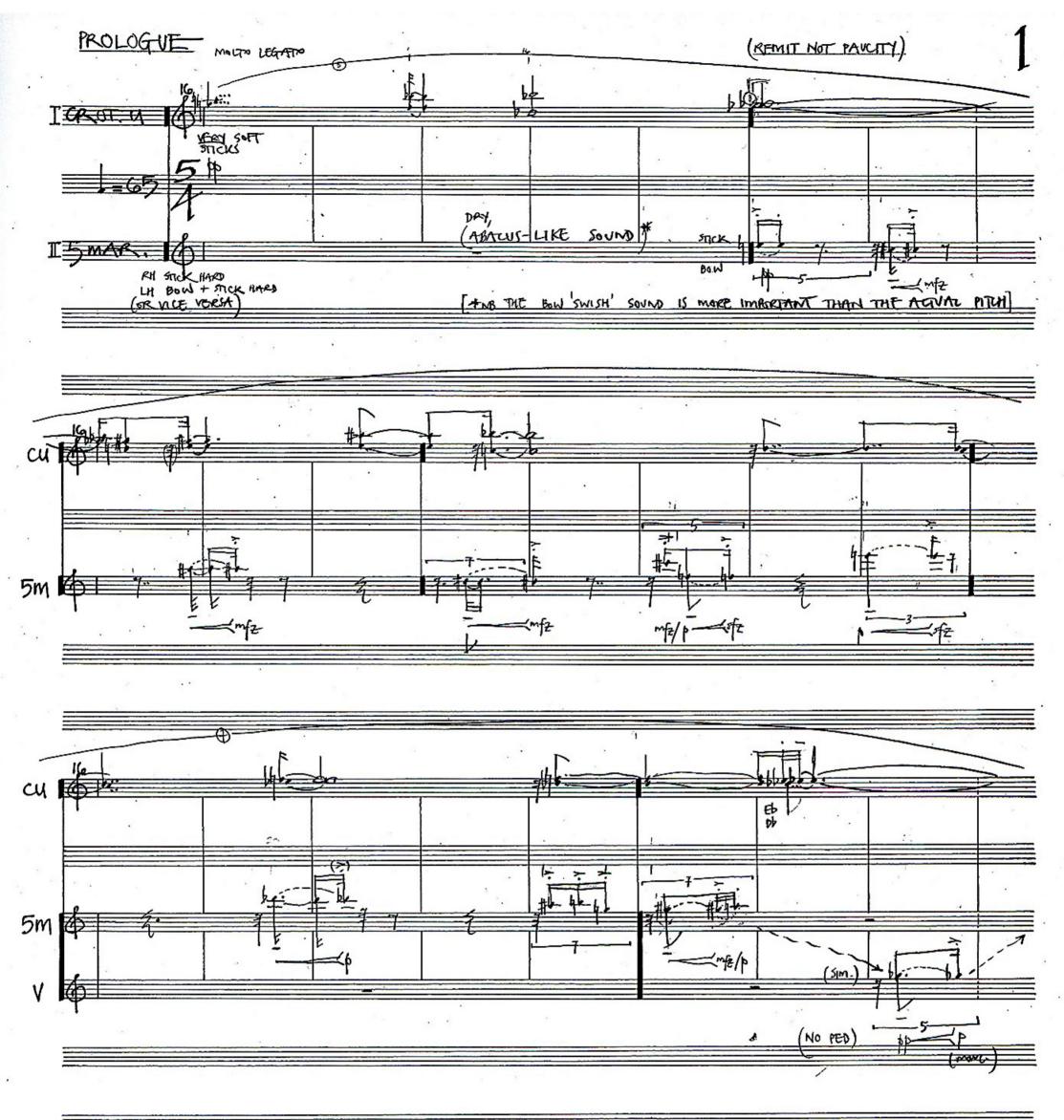
- 1 Accidentals only apply to the notes they immediately precede.
- 2 The A3 version of the score is notated at 3 cms = 1 second throughout.
- 3 There are nine steps of dynamic:

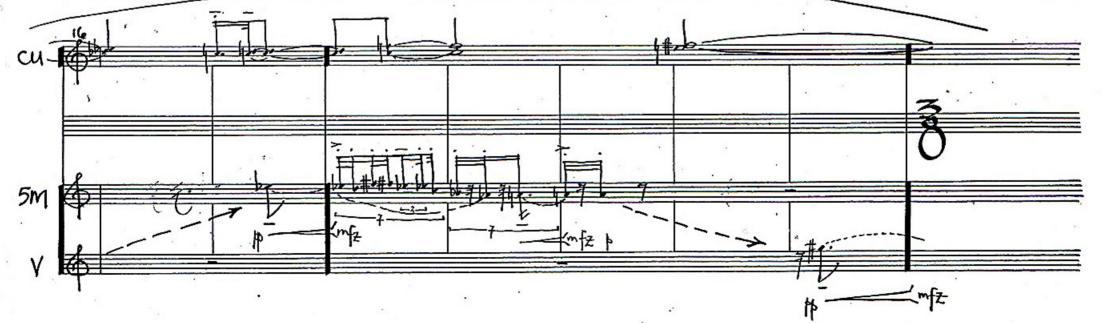
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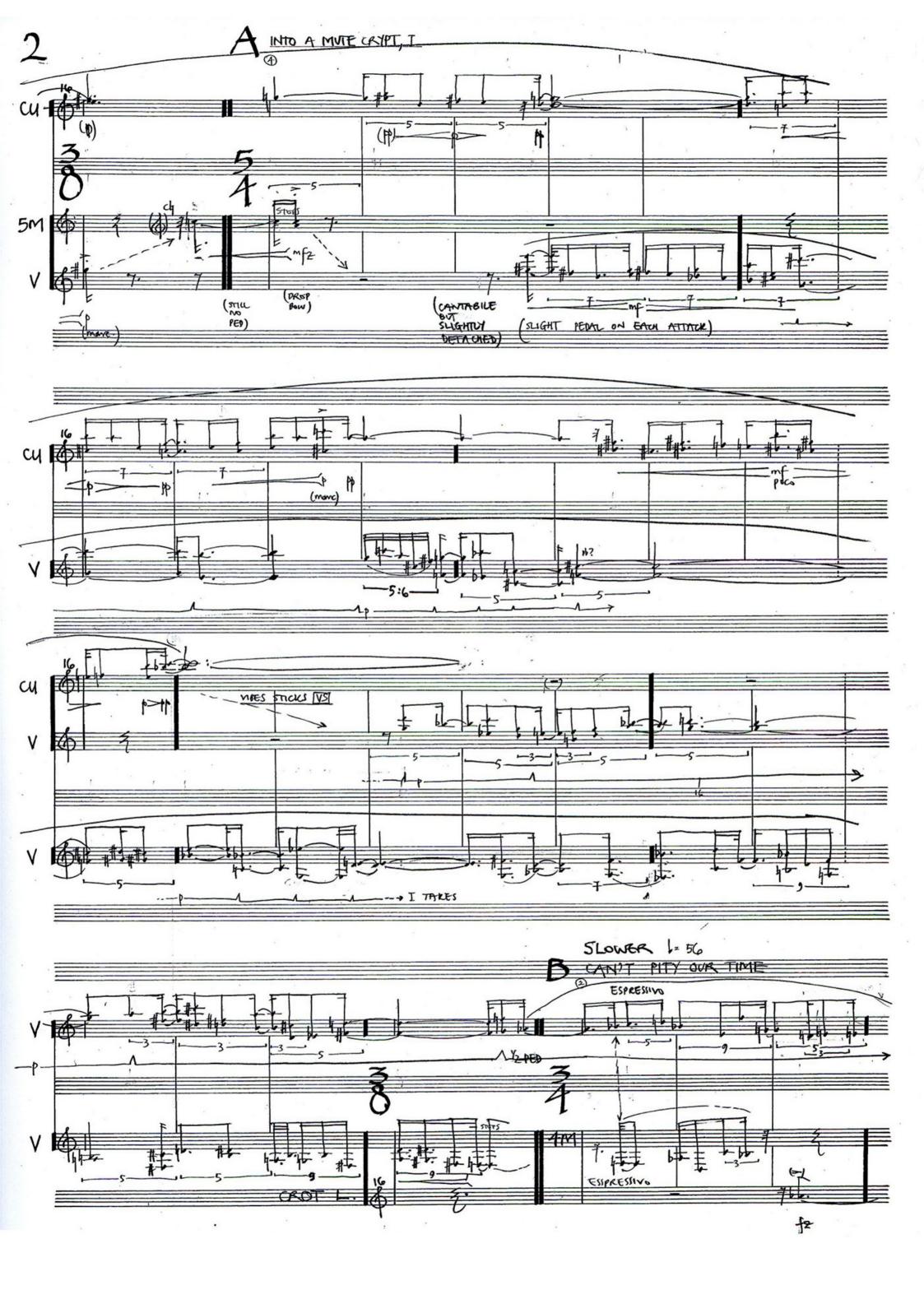
- 4 Instrumental layout should approximate to that given above; the players being able to communicate is more important than the exact layout, however.
- 5 The music should not be rushed, even in the hectic middle sections. If appropriate play slightly below marked metronomic tempi. The moments of rest between each lettered section should be considered as respites between the bursts of activity. An image: pausing on a street corner before setting off along another busy street.
- <sup>5</sup> If wished the work can be performed accompanied by an on-screen projection, from a PC, of the poem ("Into a mute crypt, I/Can't pity our time/Turn amity poetic/...," etc), with each line being added onscreen as the sections unfold—for instance, using Powerpoint. The bracketed sections ["(Remit not paucity)", etc] should be entered as '**Prologue**: Remit not paucity', '**Interlude**: Rip, tie, cut toy man', '**Epilogue**: Can't you time trip?'; preferably, these lines should be laid out offset, to indicate that they are not part of the poem proper.

Performers interpretative guide—[NOT to be reproduced as program notes]			
Approach		<b>Prologue: (remit not paucity)</b> This line opens a number of the chapters of the novel from which the poem is excerpted. The Prologue introduces a basic idea of the piece, suspended metal dyads, accompanied by the simulated sound of beads swishing across abacus rods.	
	A	<b>Into a mute crypt I</b> Continues and expands the metal dyads soundworld, <i>mute</i> implied by the soft attacks on metal, <i>crypt</i> by the chorale-like harmonies.	
	В	<b>Can't pity our time</b> The slightly maudlin vibraphone line is reproved by the hard-edged 'espressivo' of the marimbas.	
	С	<b>Turm amity poetic</b> In contrast to <b>B</b> , the marimba takes up a bow and blends— <i>amity</i> —with the luxuriantly lyrical— <i>poetic</i> —vibraphone line.	
	D	<b>Ciao, tiny trumpet</b> The bowed marimba, then vibraphone, is matched by bowed crotales to provide a semblance of a high-pitched, but valedictory, brass fanfare.	
	E	Manic piety tutor Manic because of the demented marimba flailings, <i>pious</i> because of the plainsong- like vibraphone melody.	
	F	Tame purity tonic The extremely limited compass of the material suggests that it is <i>tame</i> , the wholetone harmonies imply <i>purity</i> . It is perhaps a tonic for the section that follows	
	G H	Up, meiotic tyrant! A military pseudo-march. I taint my top cure	
	Ι	To it, my true panic An emotional state that anticipates the <i>nice riot</i> .	
	J	Put at my nice riot	
		Interlude: (Rip, tie, cut toy man) A slighty manic vibraphone line is 'attacked' by even more rabid marimba melismata—the <i>riot</i> continues.	
	K	To trace impunity	
CBD	L	I tempt an outcry, I I imagine the complex and tricky 4-marimba cadenza as an <i>outcry</i> against the paleness of section K.	

	Μ	<b>Pin my taut erotic</b> Combines the two sexiest sounds the line-up can produce: bottom octaves of the 5-marimba, and the lower octave of crotales. It is <i>pinned</i> by the aggressive <i>sforzati</i> .
Departure	Ν	Art to epic mutiny A pun: the section is fairly mutinous in itself, consisting of wild, tessiturally- expanding but carefully crafted marimba lines. Also the section is a transition from controlled rhythmic precision to
	Р	<b>Can't you permit it</b> The rhythmically decoupled bravura of this section is the <i>epic mutiny</i> referred to by section N.
	Q	To cite my apt ruin? This section should give a sense of erosion, of the gaps in the sound being due to weathering.
	R	My true icon: tap it The <i>true icon</i> here is the composer's name in (unrecognisable) Morse Code—it is <i>tapped</i> using extremely hard sticks.
	S	<b>Copy time, turn it; a</b> <i>Time is copied</i> by the repetitive crotales rhythmic pattern, against which the vibraphone begins as a similar pattern but gradually changes— <i>turns</i> —into a marimba melodic line that progressively rises in pitch.
	Τ	<b>Rite to cut my pain</b> The chant-like harmonically simple crotales melody is intercut by anxious chromatic bursts, culminating in a climactic duet-cadenza which rapidly passes through all the harmonic fields of the next section:
	U	Atomic putty? <i>Rien</i> ! Of course, part of the the <i>putty</i> of <i>atoms</i> is the wave/particle duality. Here, the struck/bowed crotales are the "waves", and the marimba the "particles". The section ends with a GP—the <i>rien</i> ?
		Epilogue: (Can't you time trip?) Recapitulates in miniature several earlier sections of the piece.



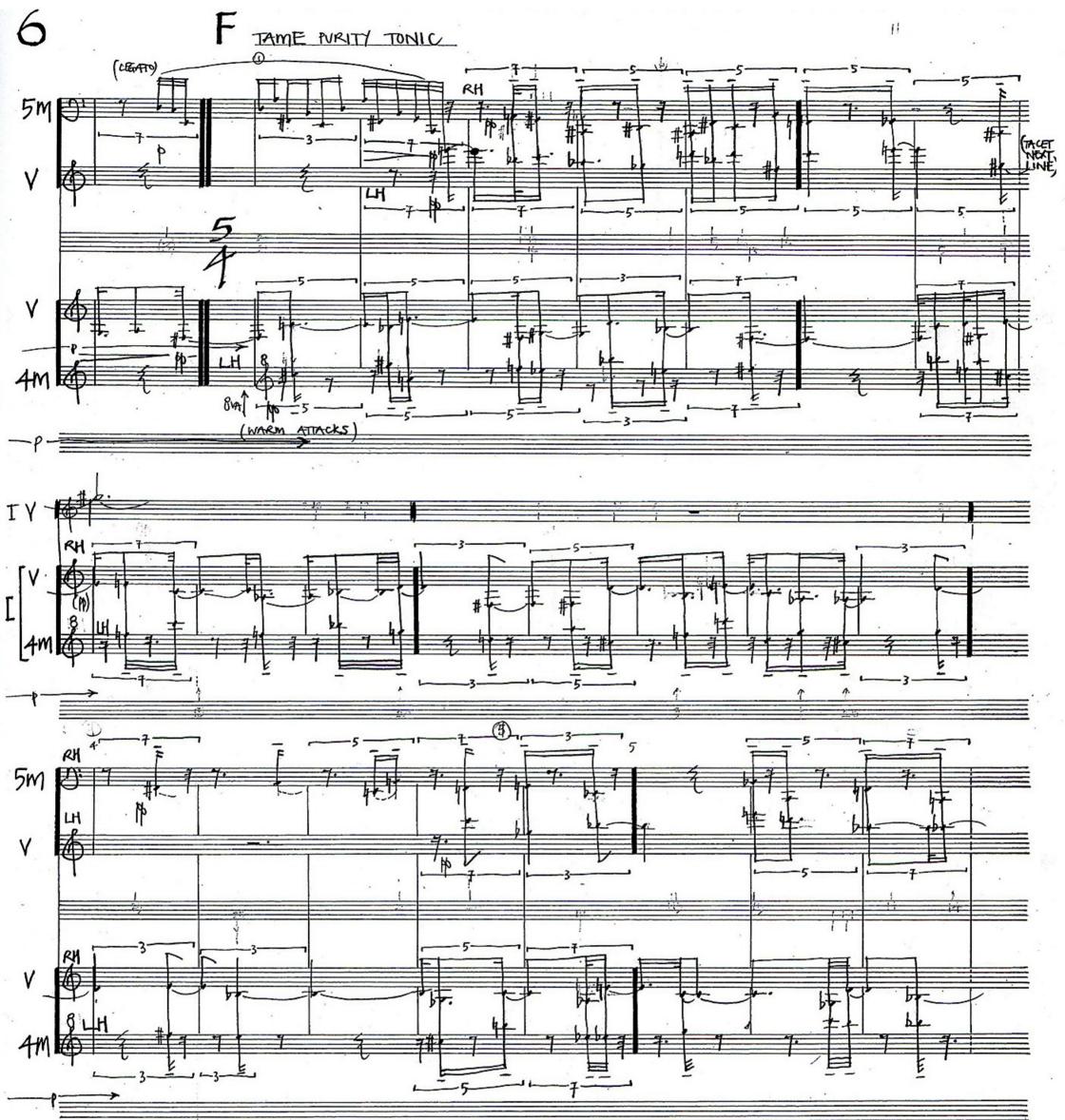




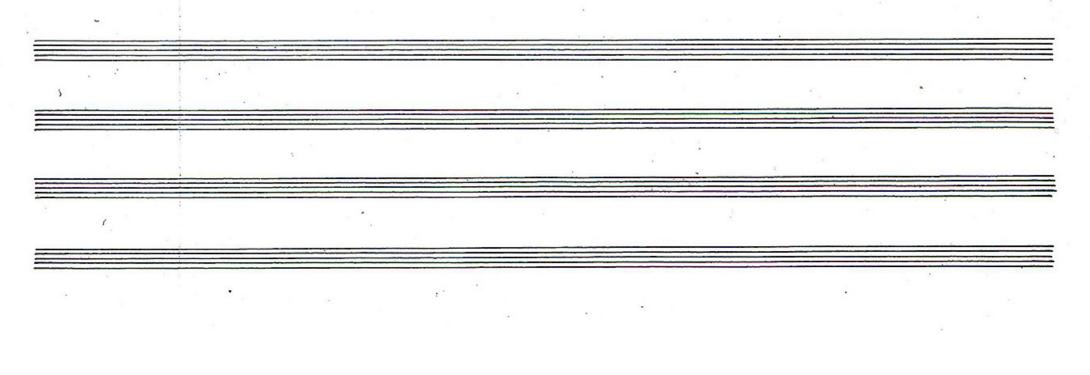




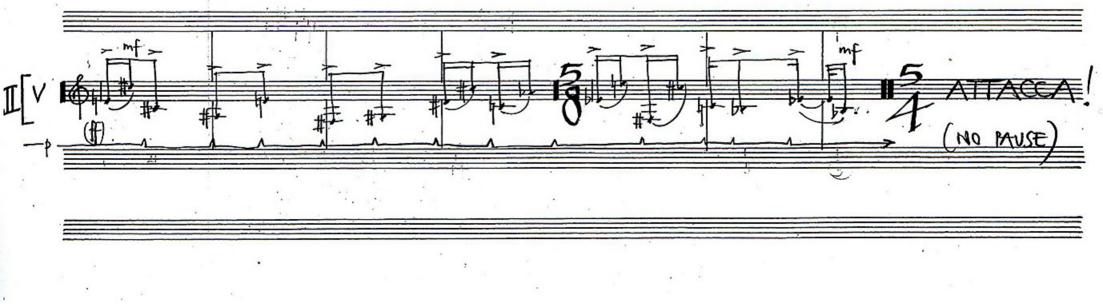




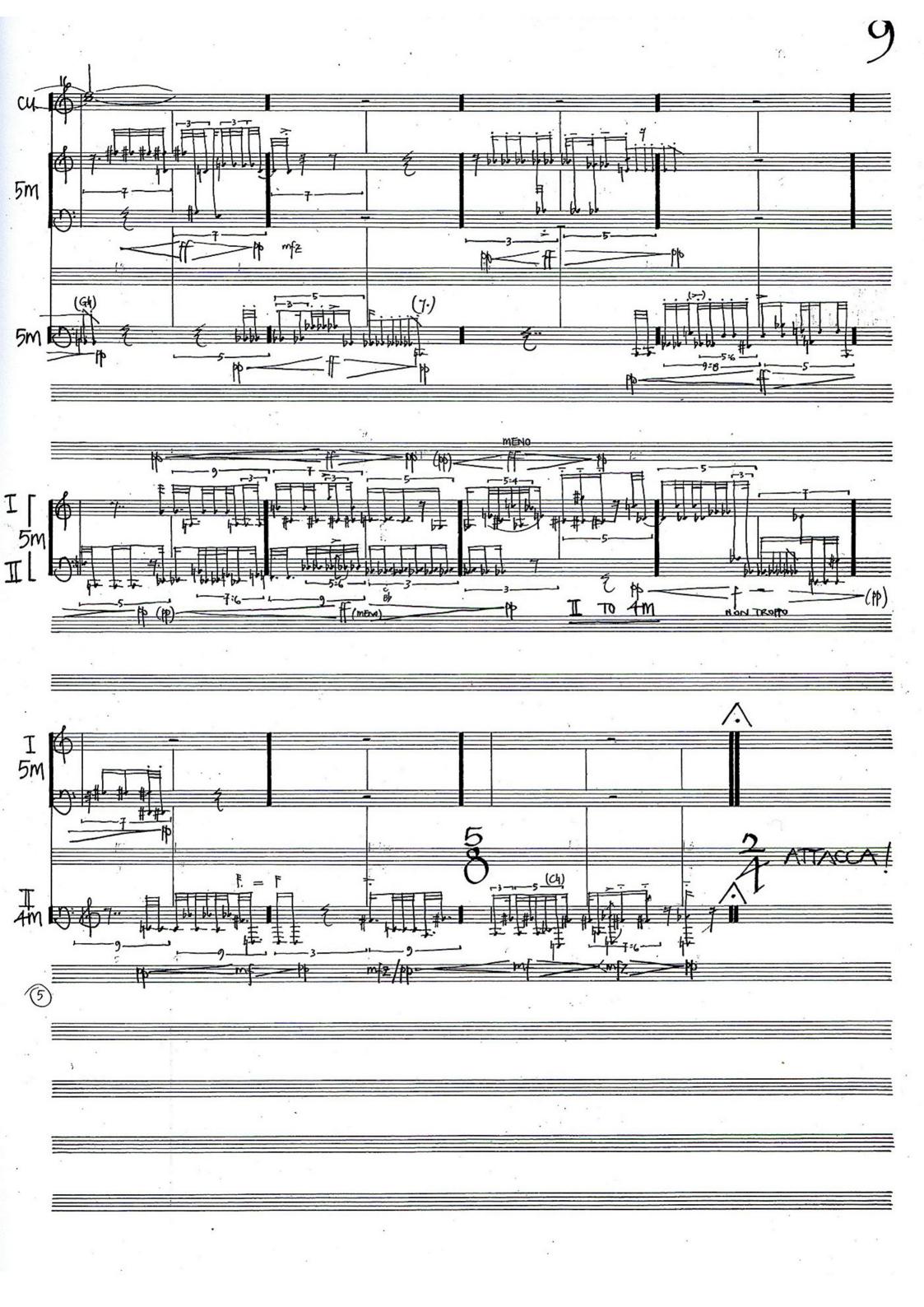
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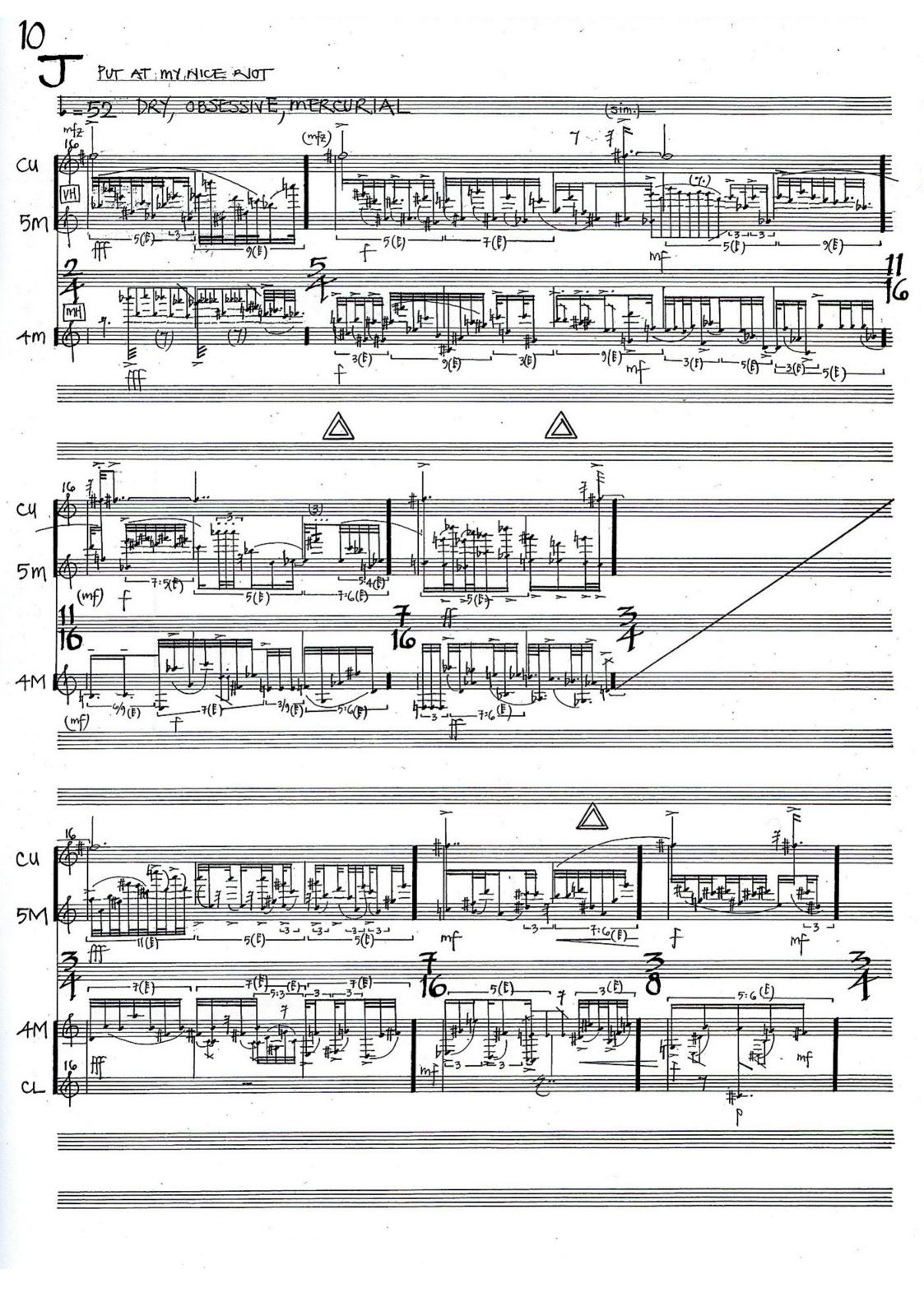


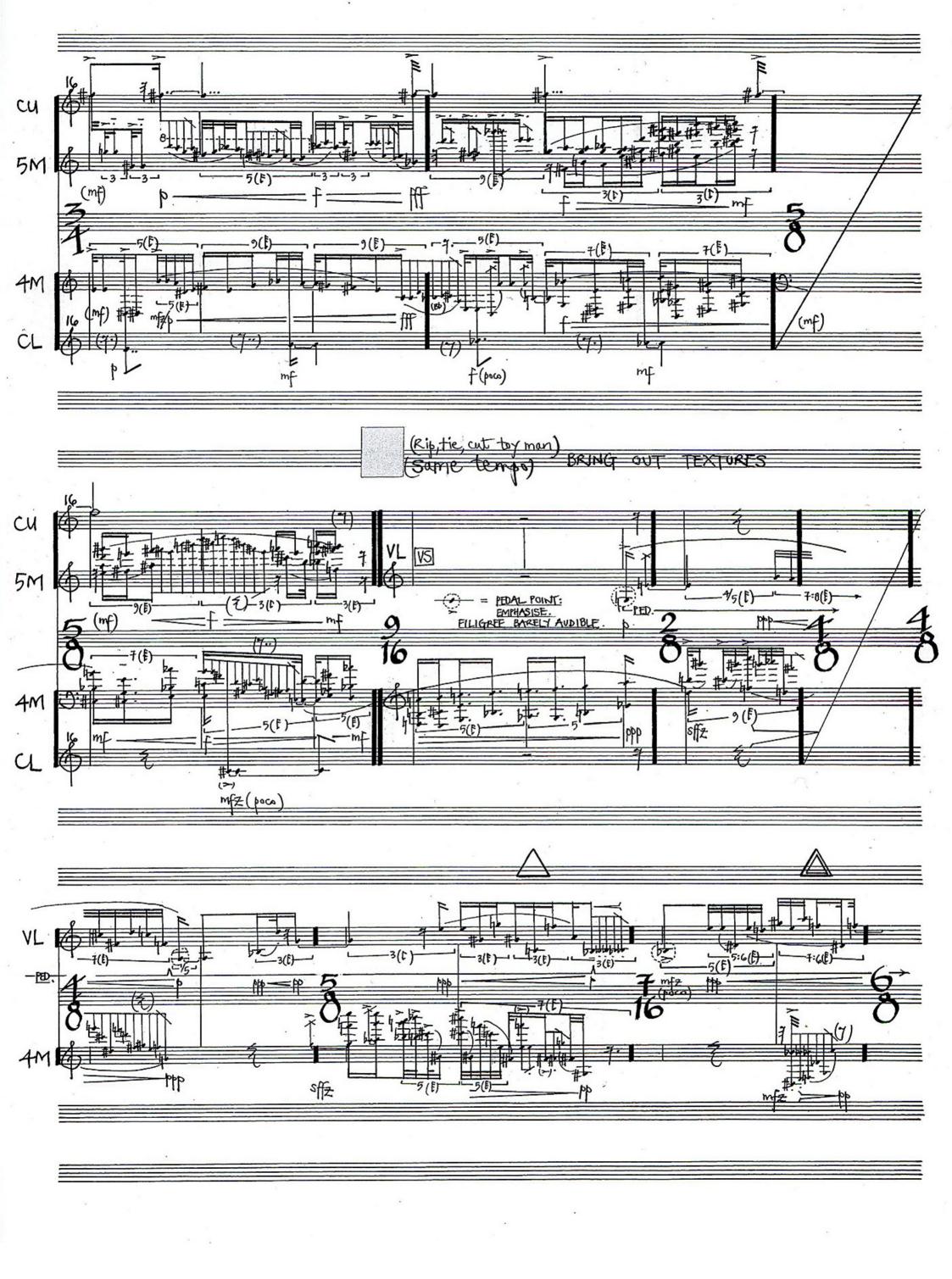




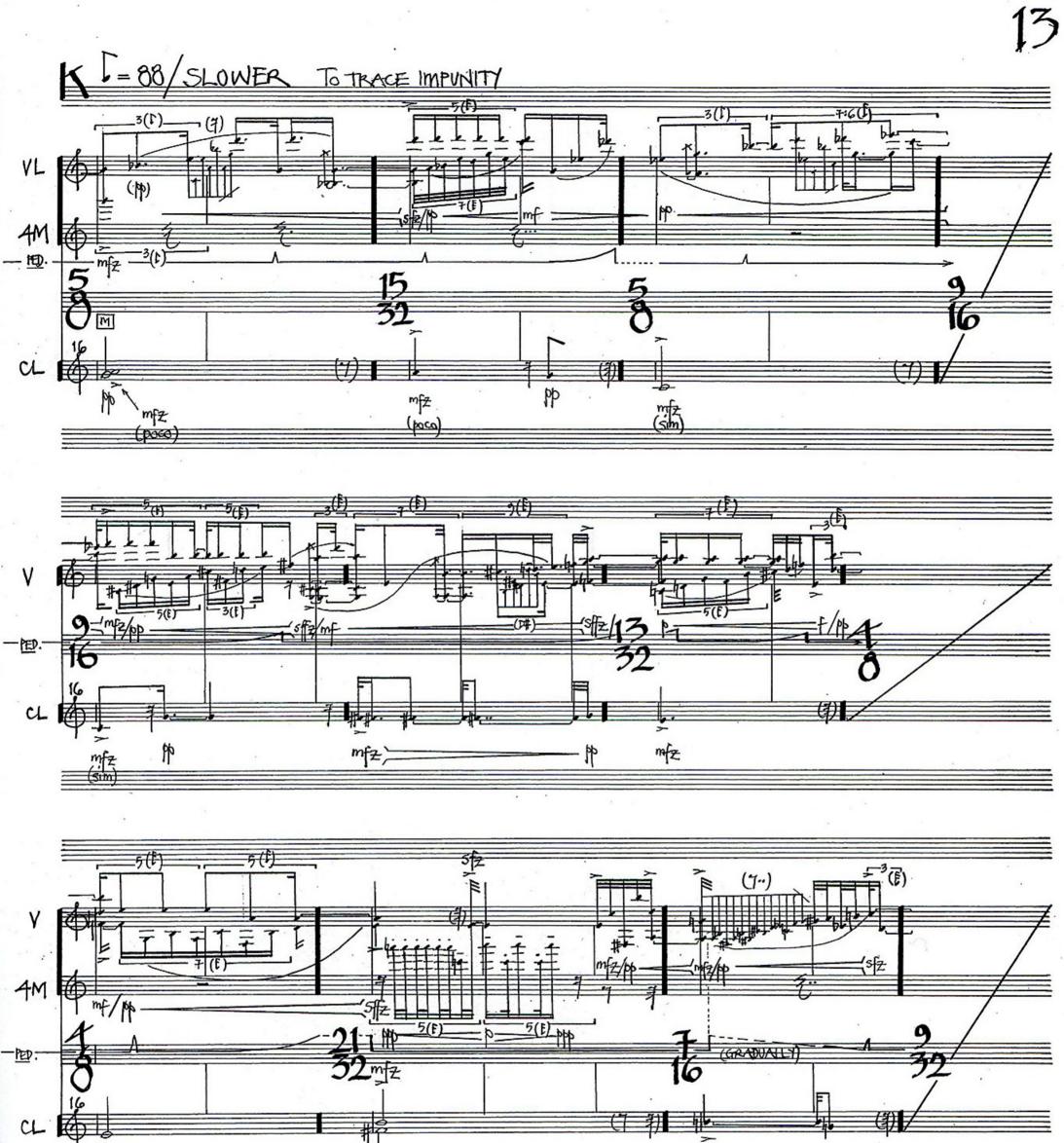




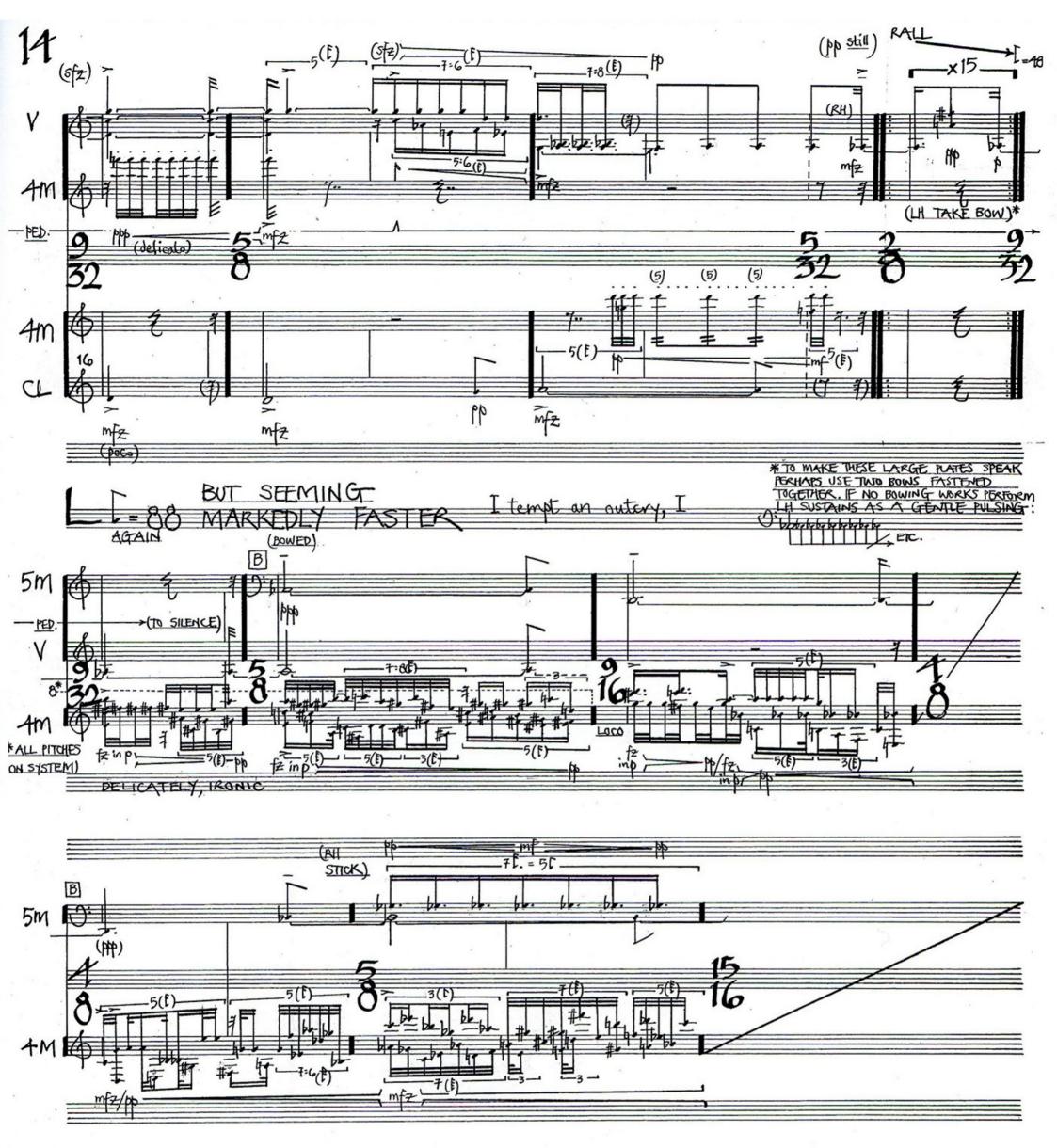


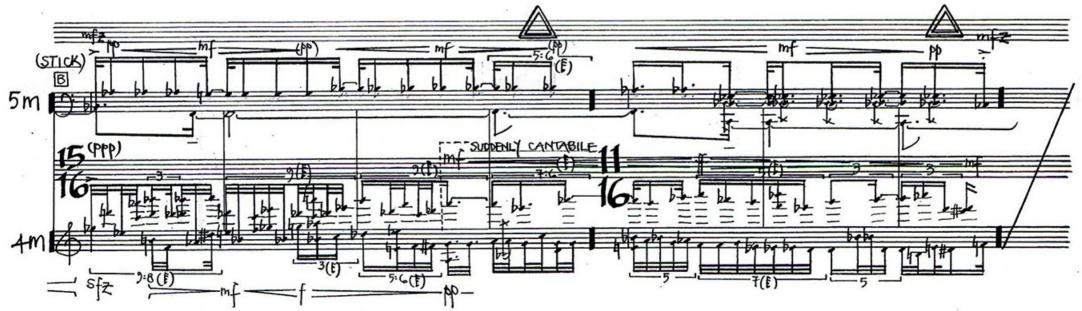


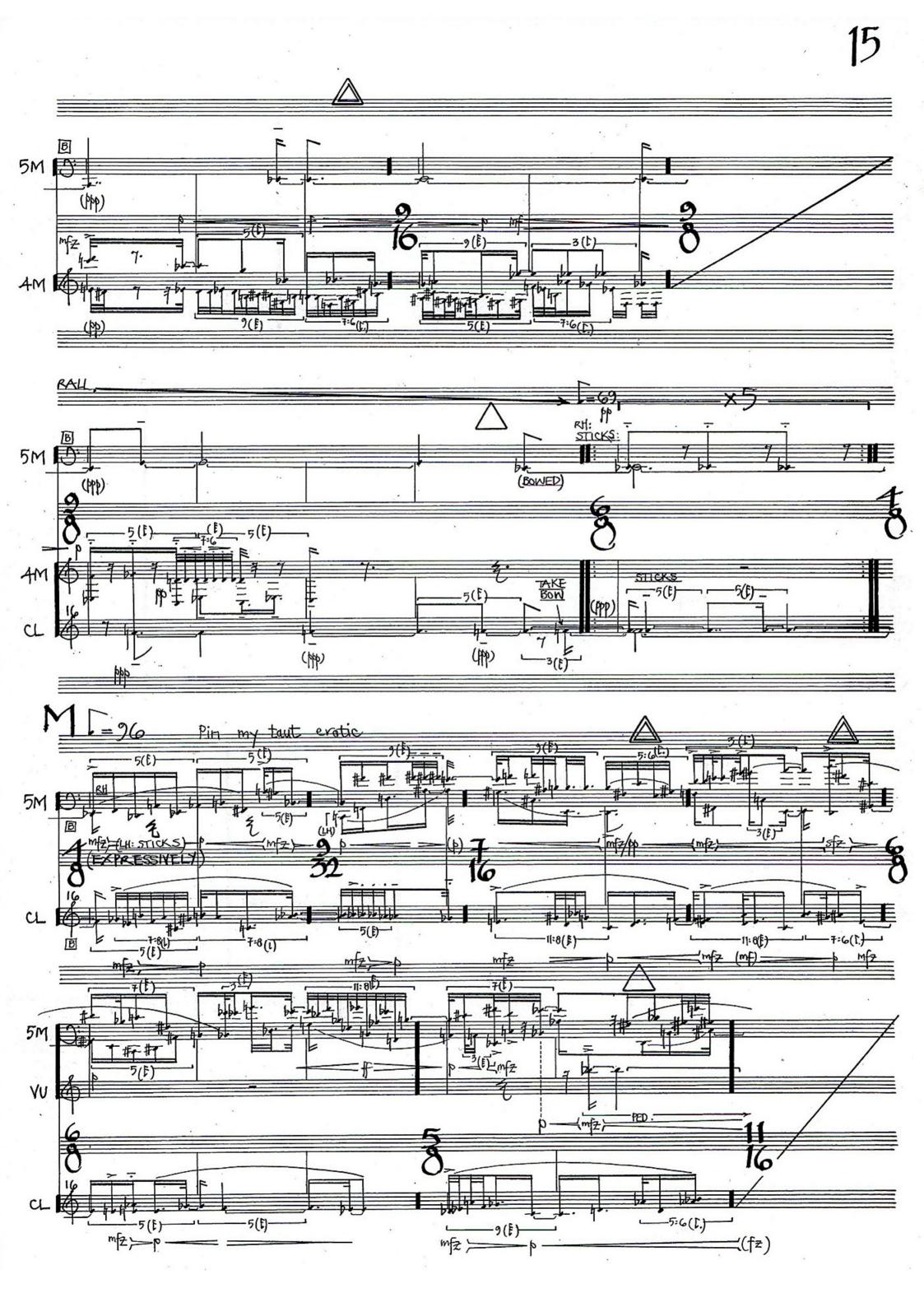




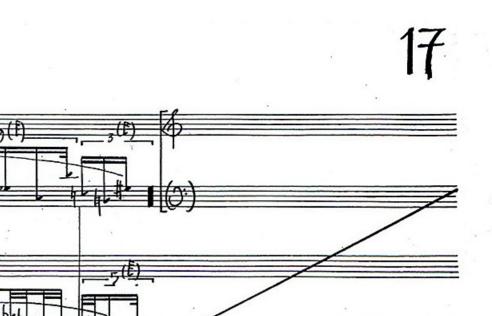
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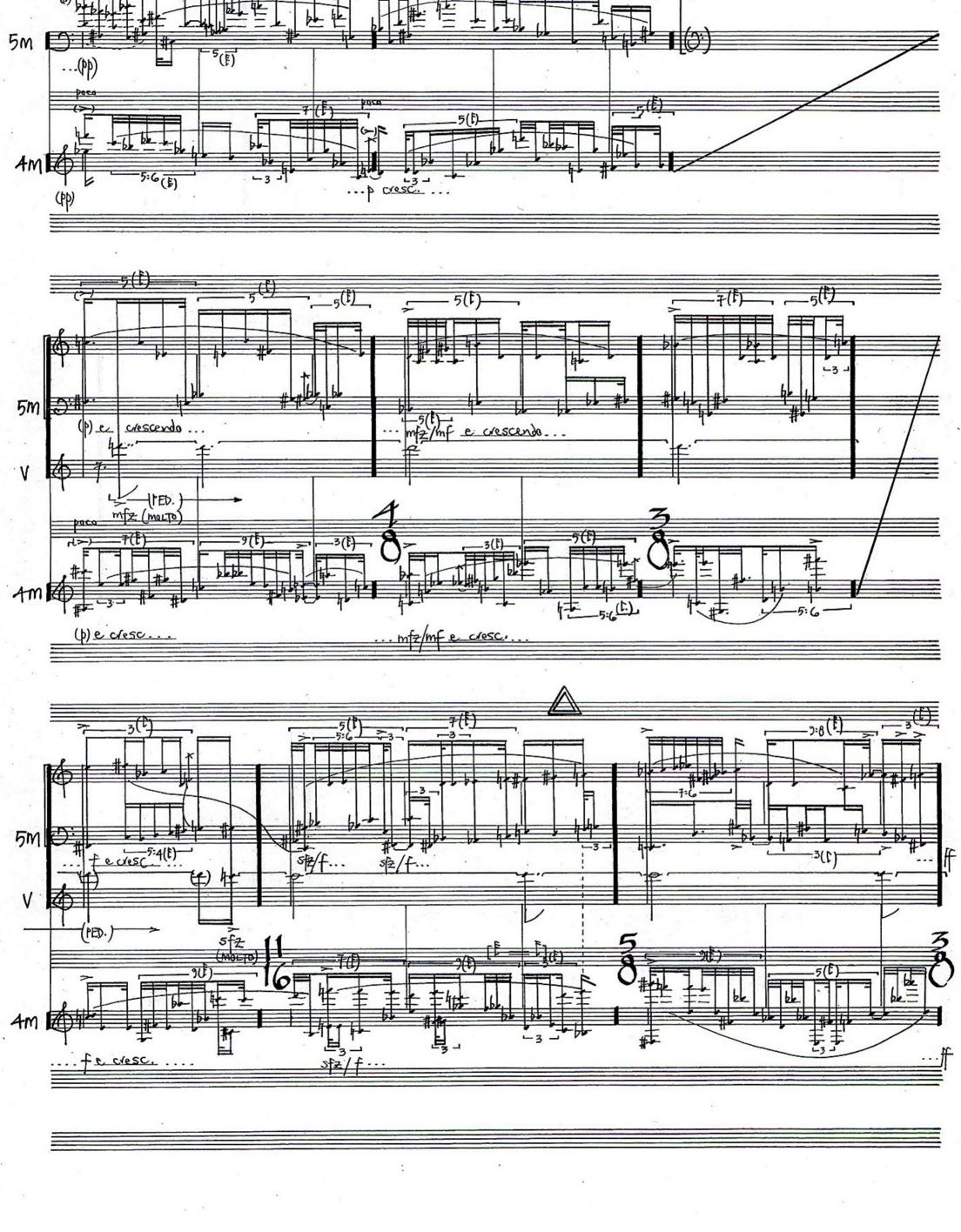










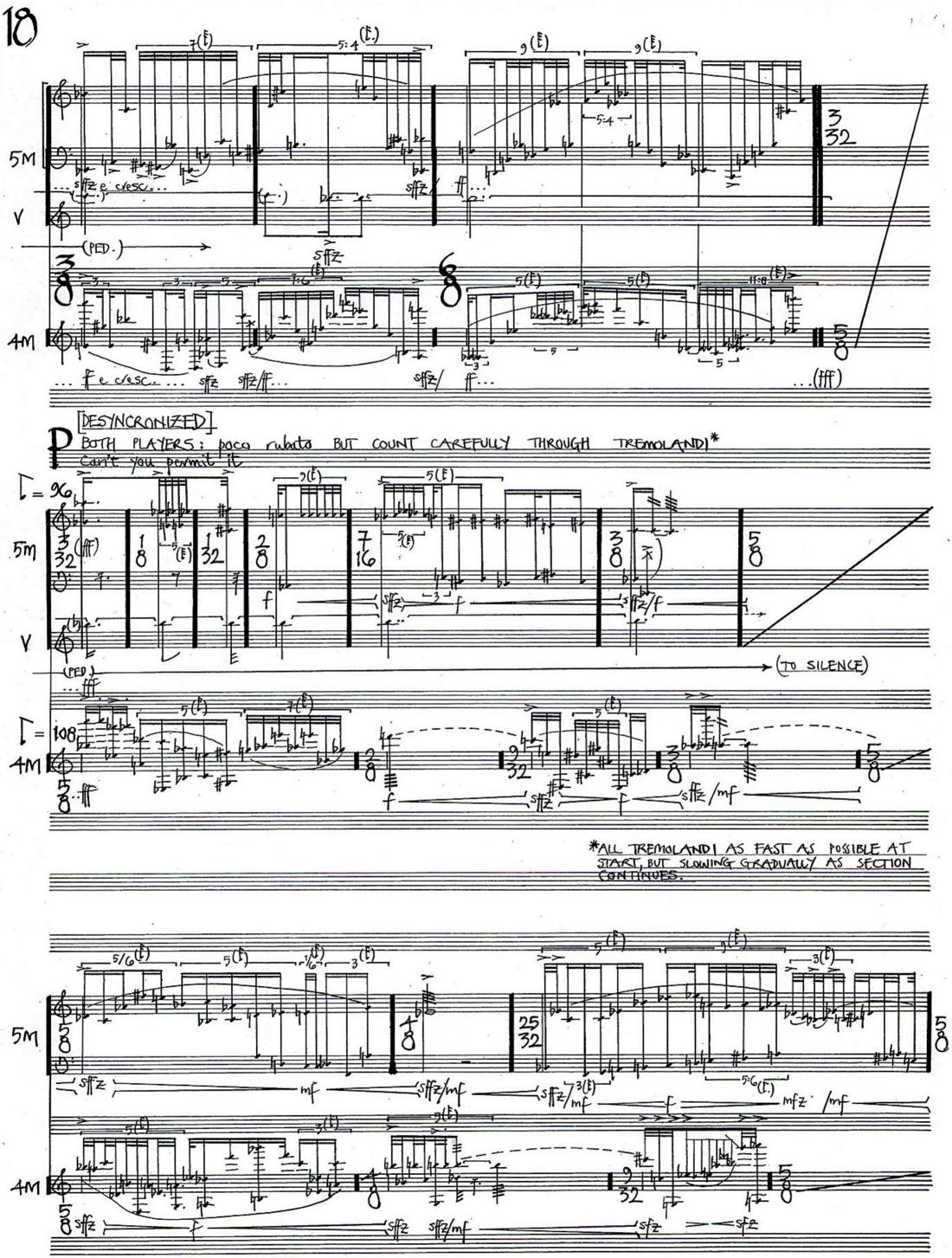


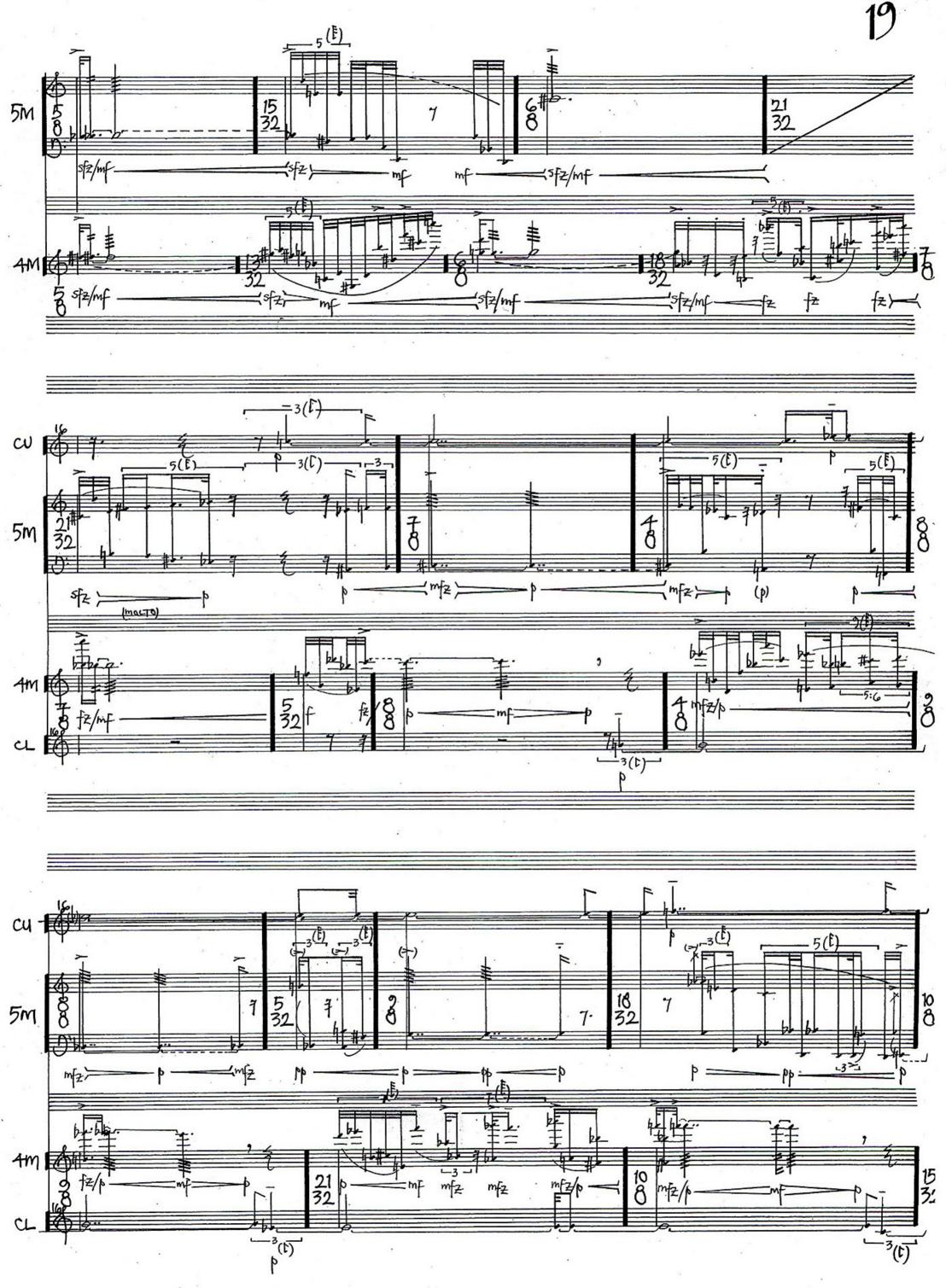
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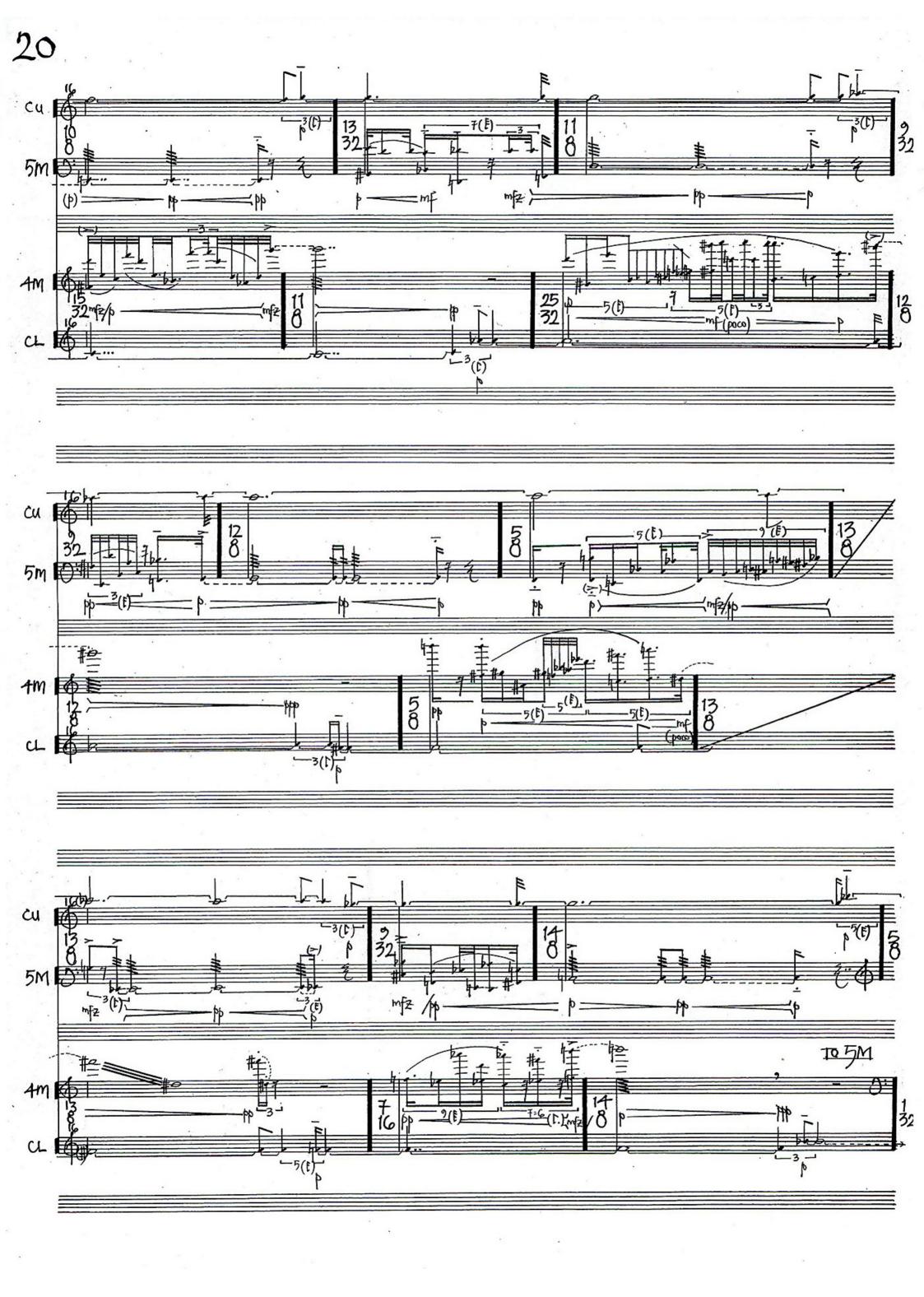
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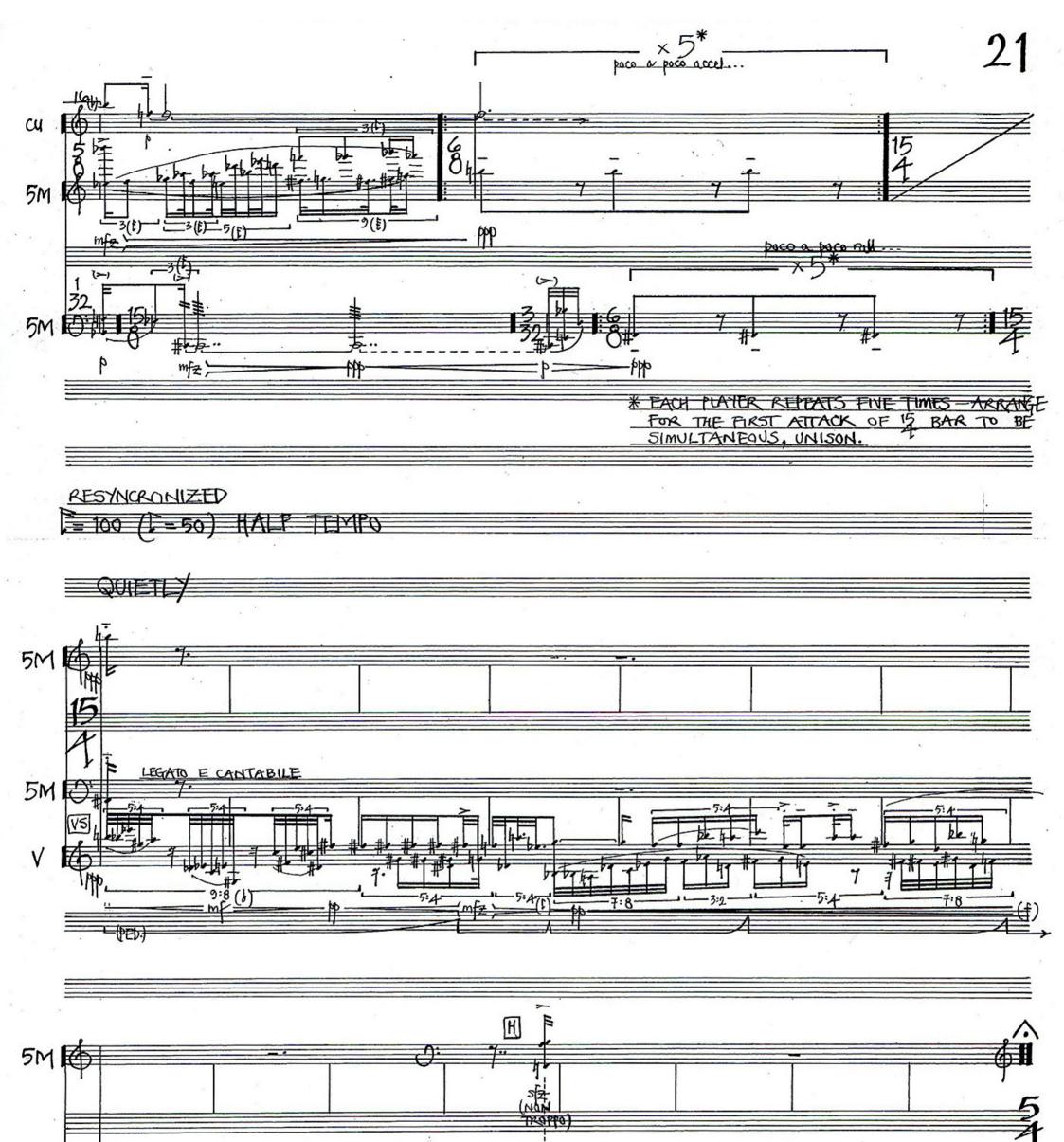
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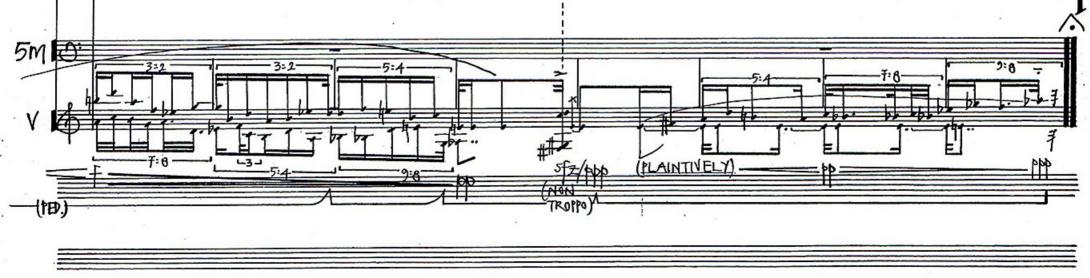
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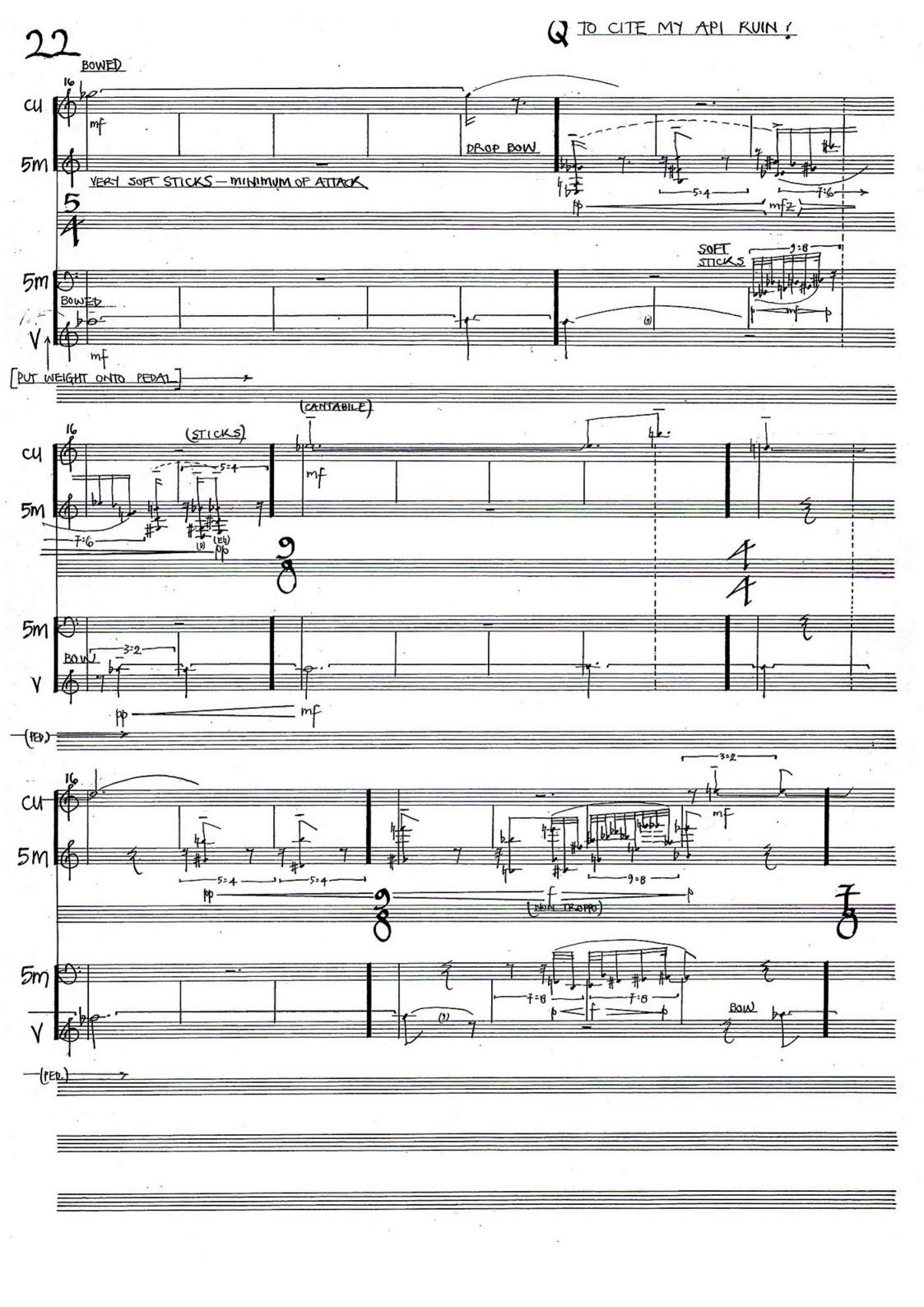
















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