vagantes II

wandering on long roads, companionless

for piano

Chris Dench

II

wandering on long roads, companionless

—[of Dido] the pitiful sorrowful dreaming in Virgil's loveliest lines of herself always alone, always abandoned, wandering on long roads companionless...

Helen Waddell, the Wandering Scholars, xxvii.

Paragraphs V.IIA-V.IIZ

Play Paragraph A first.

Then play Paragraphs B to Y in any order.

Play each Paragraph once only; do not omit any.

No extra pauses between Paragraphs, please!

Then close the movement by playing Paragraph Z.

For those who prefer not to actively choose, the work can be effectively performed in strict alphabetical order.

It is suggested that the player assemble the individual Paragraphs into the desired order *prior* to performance.

With particular thanks to Julian Barbour, whose the End of Time provided the model for this Platonian passacaglia.

Interpretative remarks:

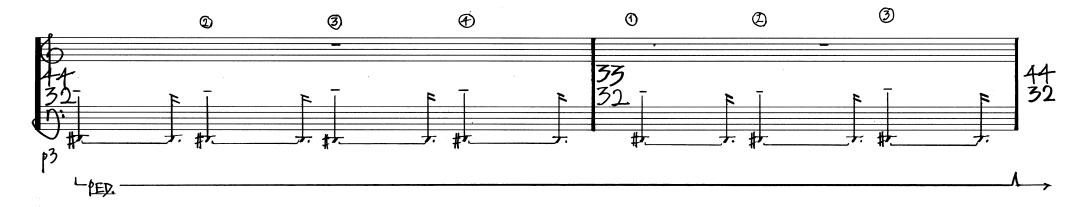
The paradox of vagantes II is that it is a completely static piece entirely concerned with movement ("wandering"); obviously, a work like this is not subject to the usual structural logic. A potential metaphor to consider when approaching the score is that of the 'street directory'. Although superseded by GPS nowadays, the street directories of towns possess features that correspond to those of this score: they offer a layout of the roads but no prescribed route from one location to another – that falls to the journeyer. The boundaries are clearly defined; unlike GPS, there is no provision of information beyond the edge of the map. The roads vary markedly in length. One can only "know" the place after walking all of its streets, perhaps becoming lost once or twice. And, like an ancient walled town, there is only a single entrance and exit. In the music, each Paragraph is, by analogy, a 'road' down which the player wanders; none are identical, but all are similar, particularly in that many exhibit an intensifying and then dissipation of tension.

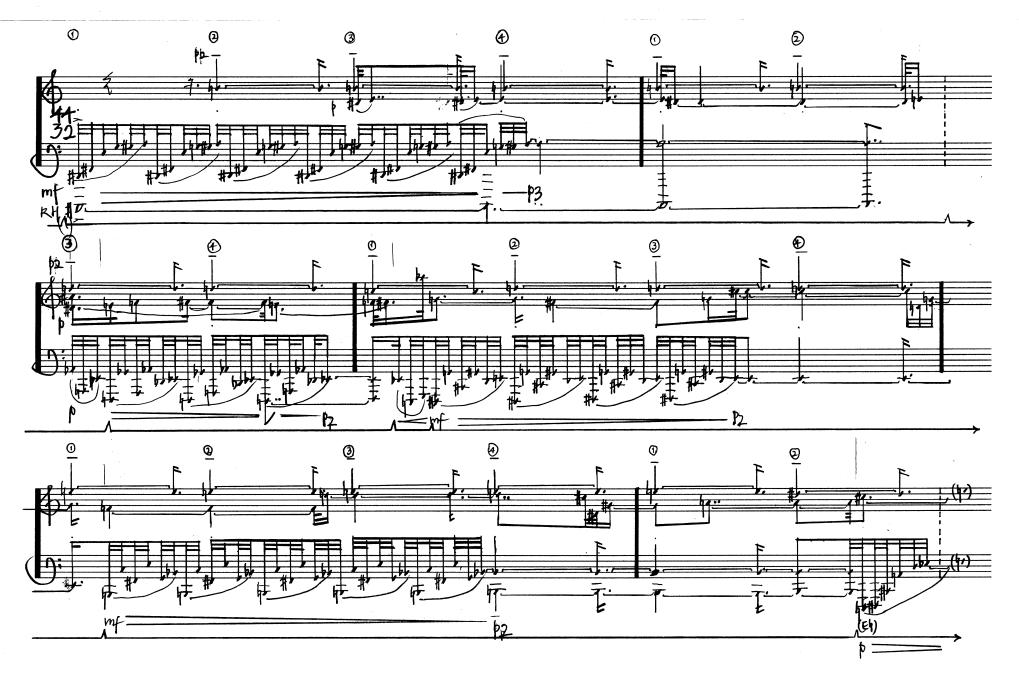
Also, it is not necessary to adopt a random or haphazard ordering, although that is an option. The two 'digest' Paragraphs, C and W, could be played consecutively and centrally, with the other material spread around. Or the Paragraphs could be ordered from fastest to slowest, or shortest to longest, or vice versa. And so on.

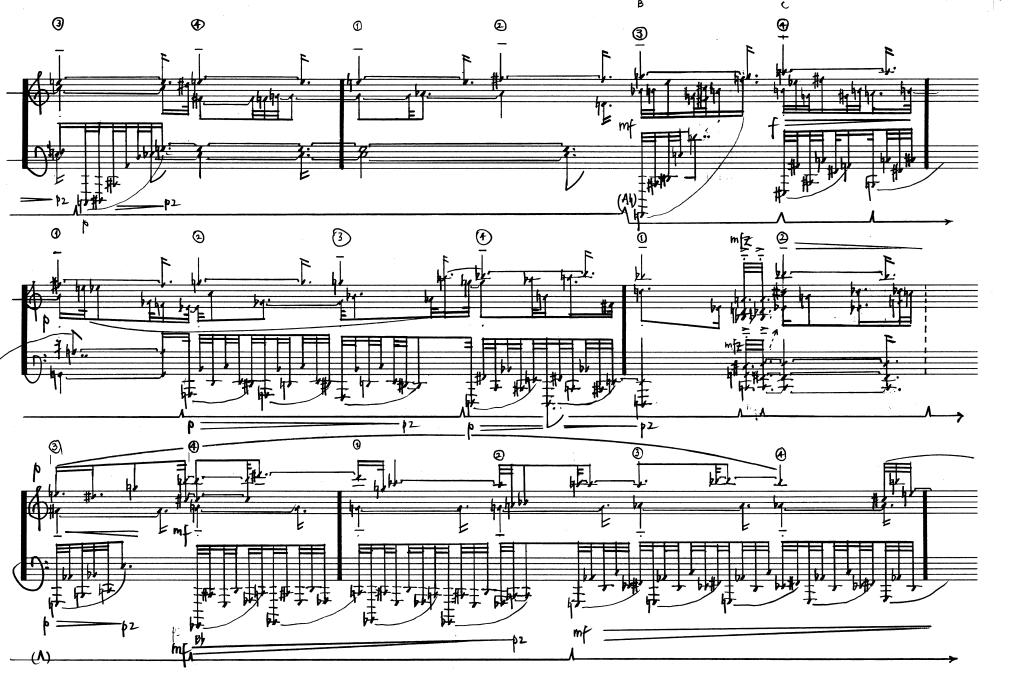
As Lévy-Strauss expressed it in *the Raw and the Cooked*, "Through the power of an ever-new internal logic ... there will no longer be a difference of kind, but only of degree, between inventing music and listening to it."

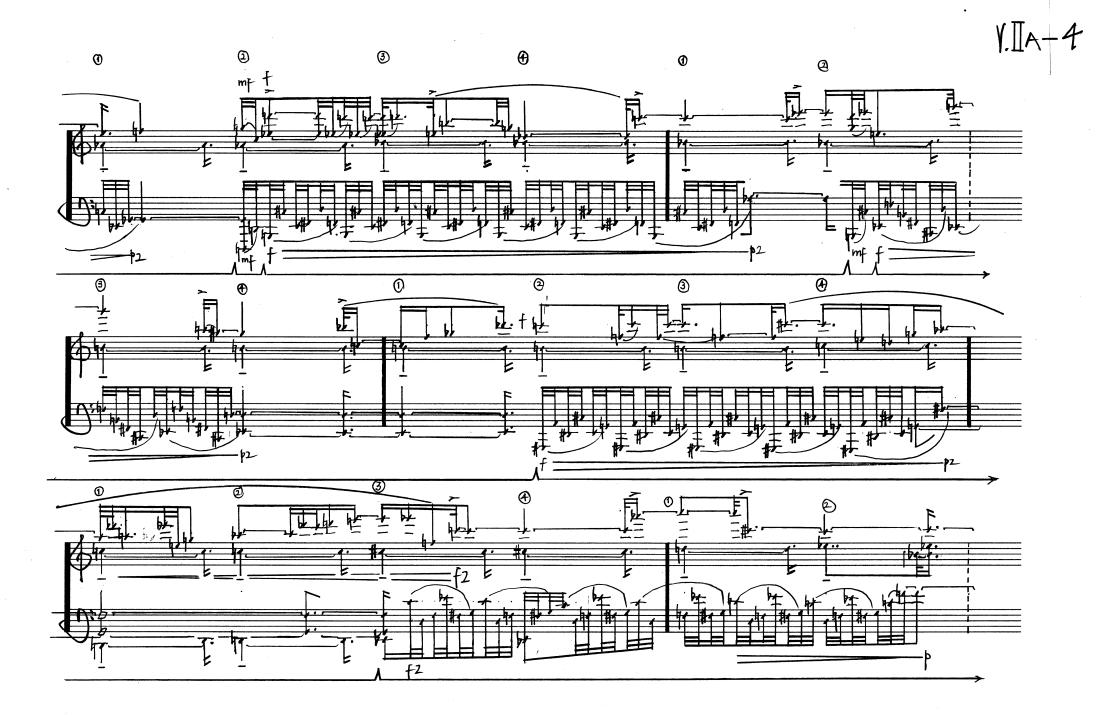


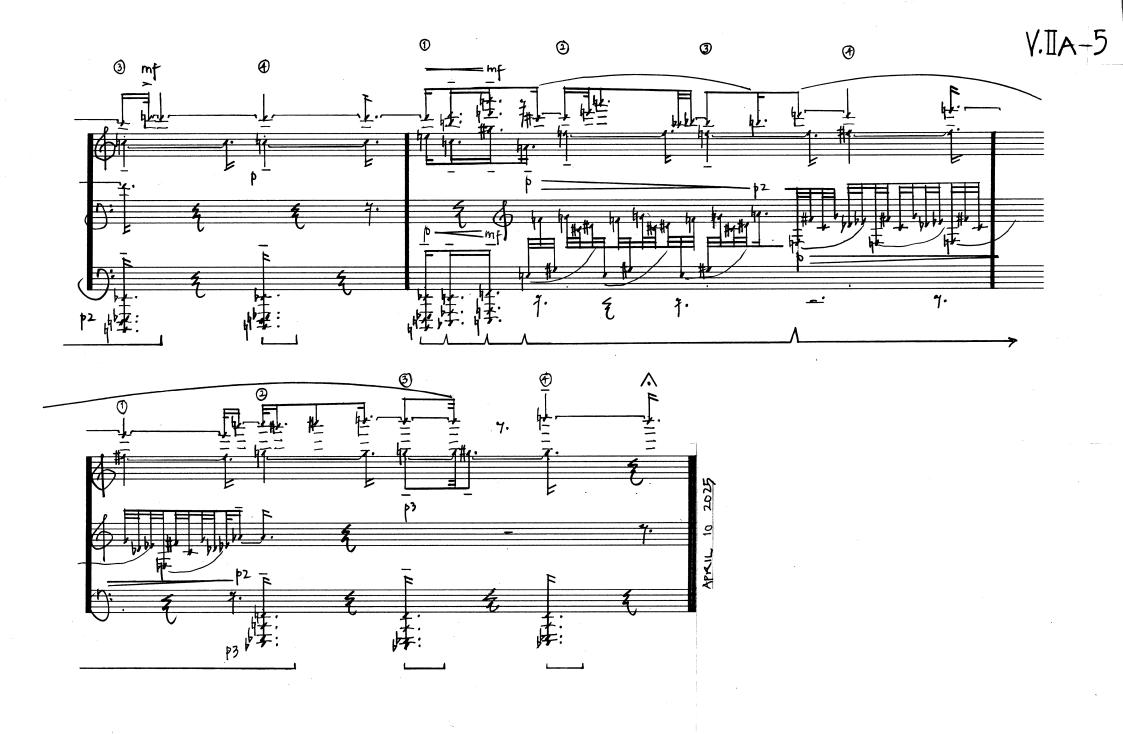
WEARILY-SLOW WALKING TEMPO









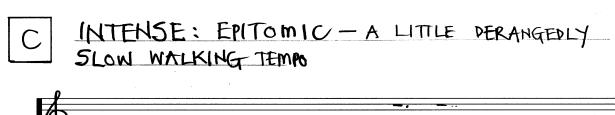


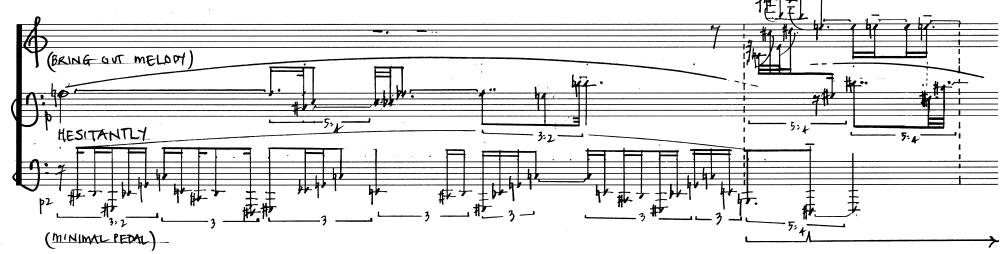


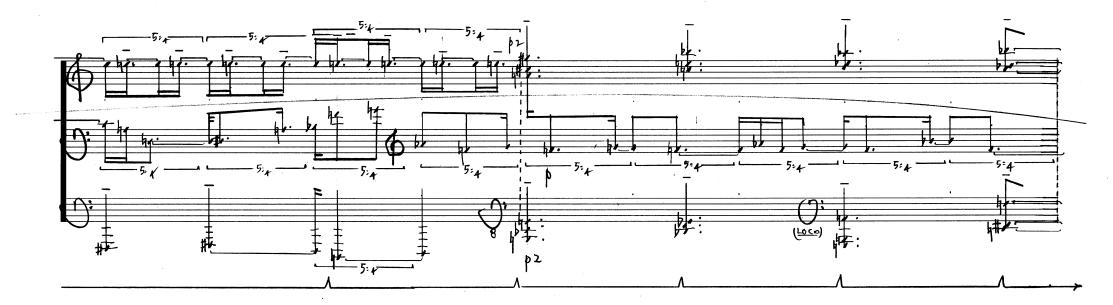


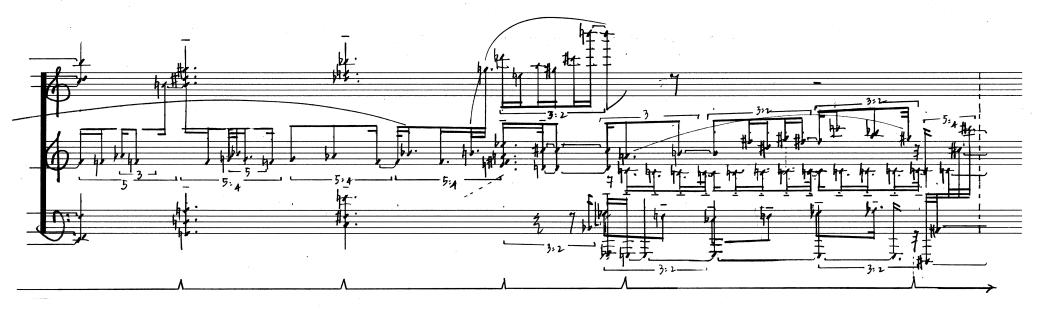


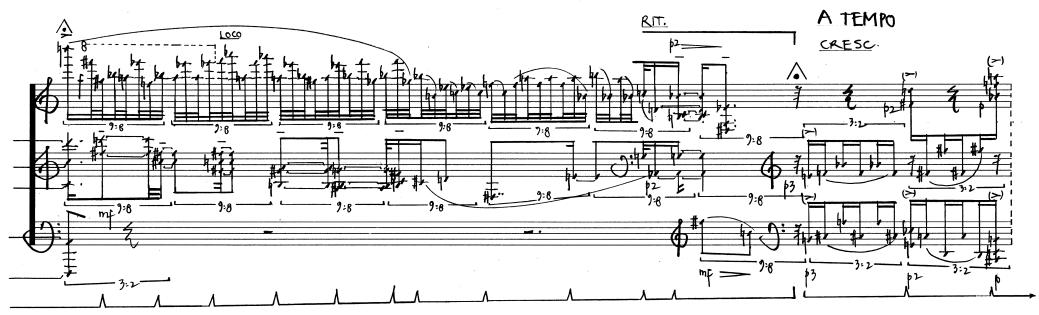


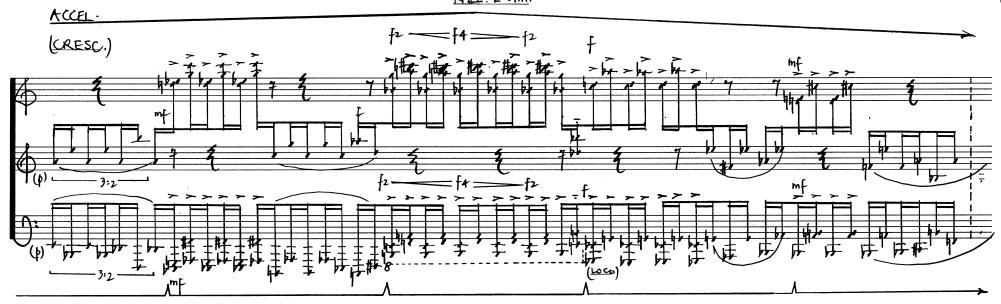


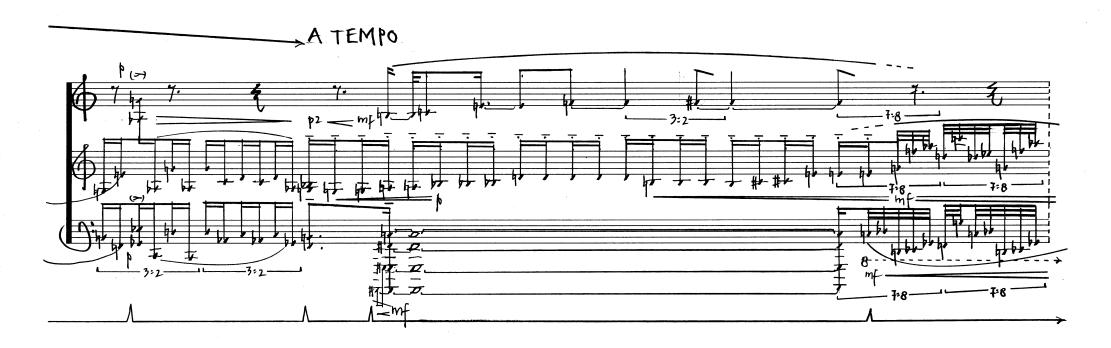


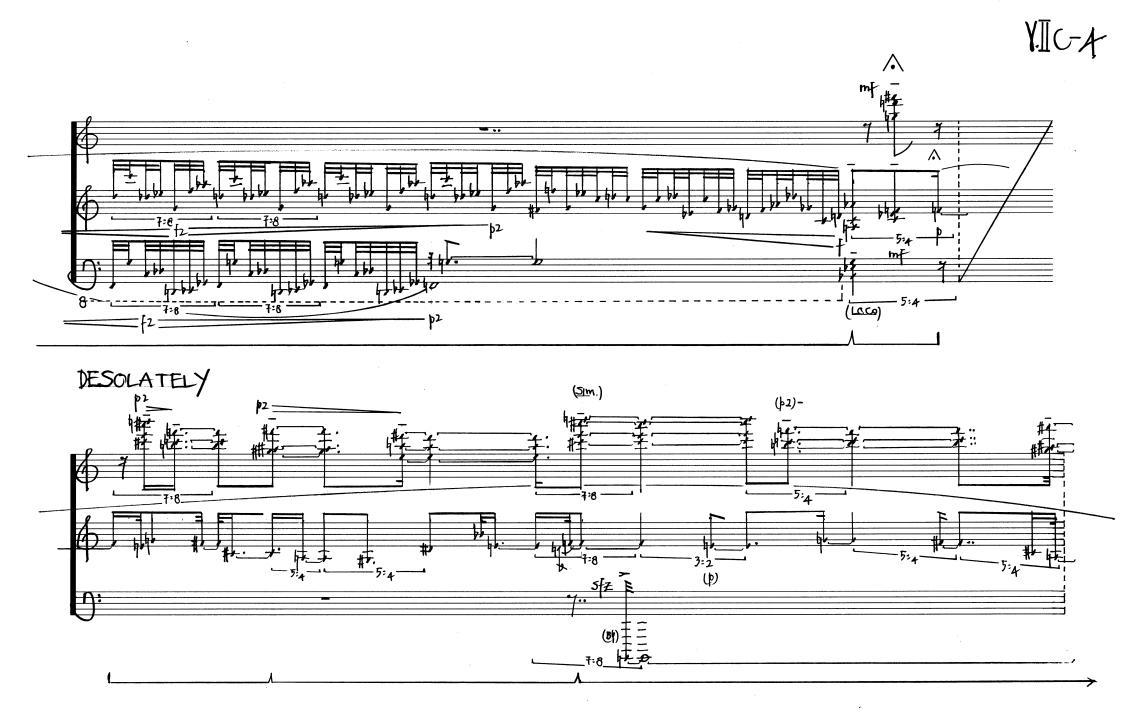


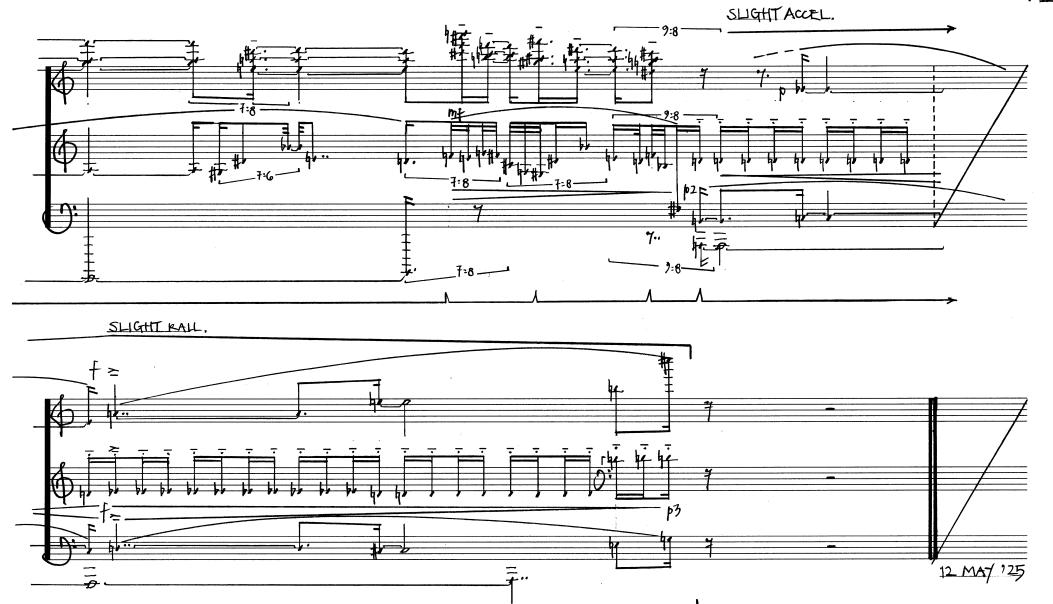


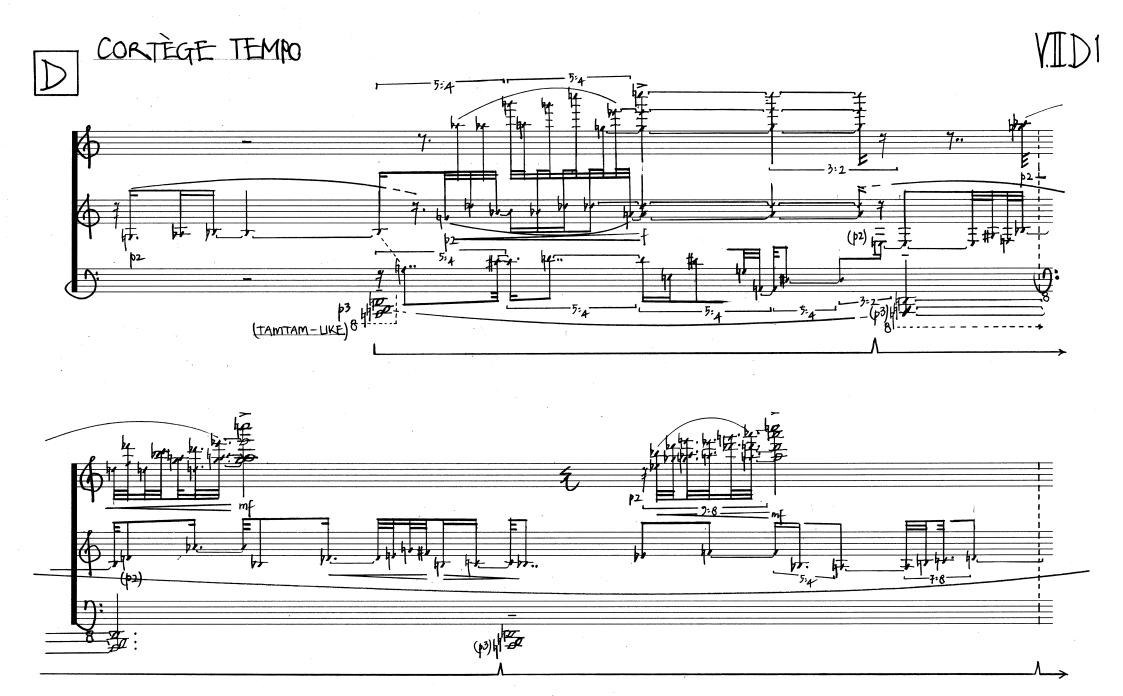


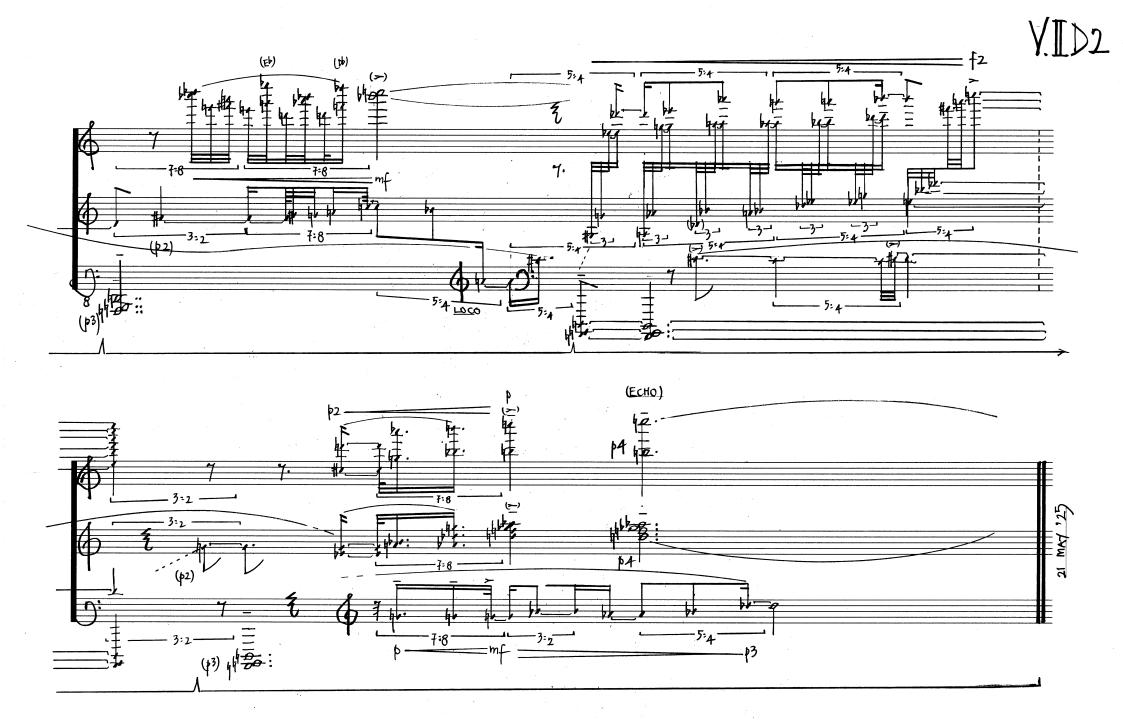


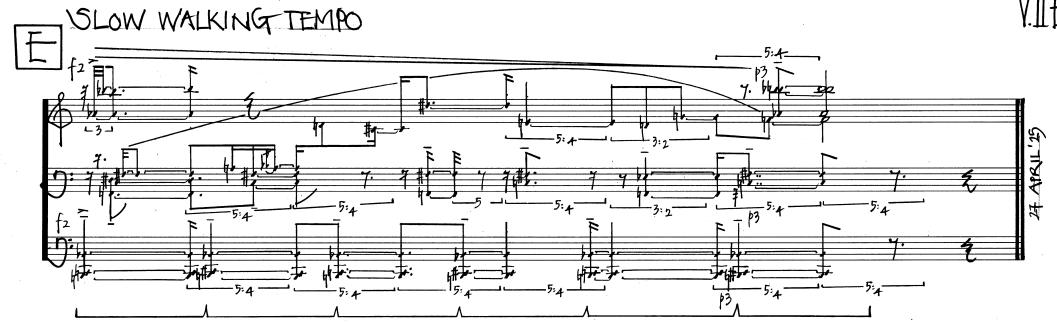


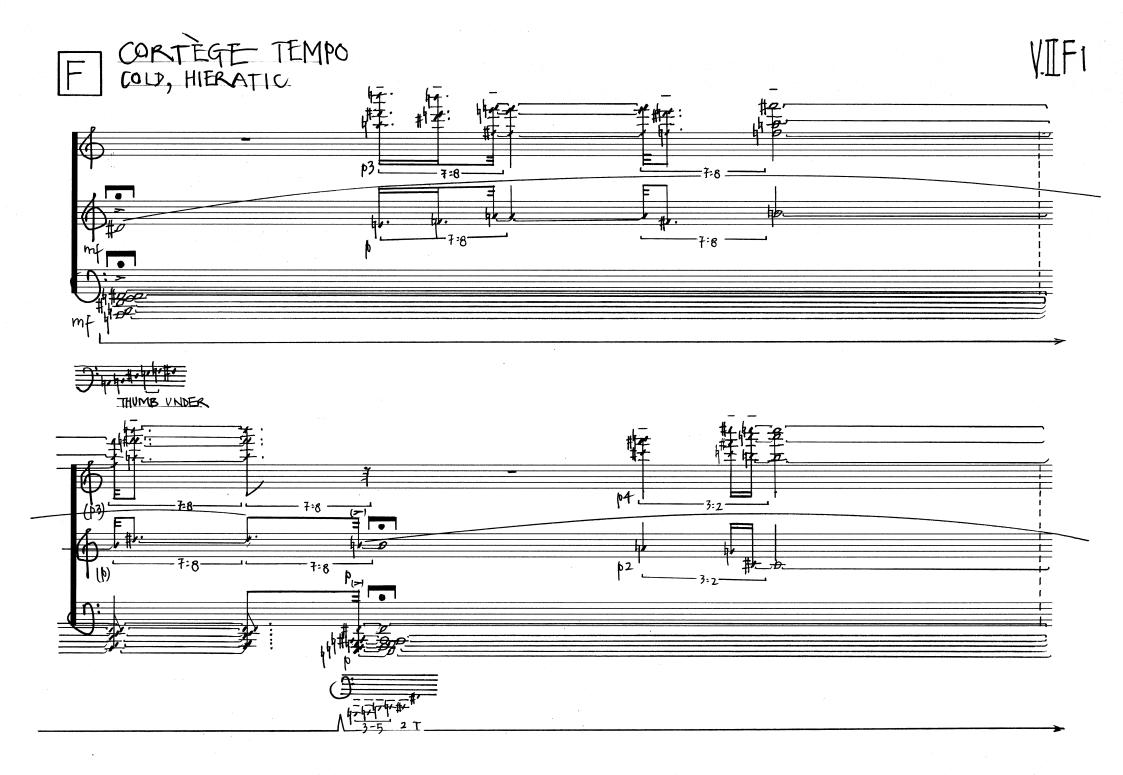


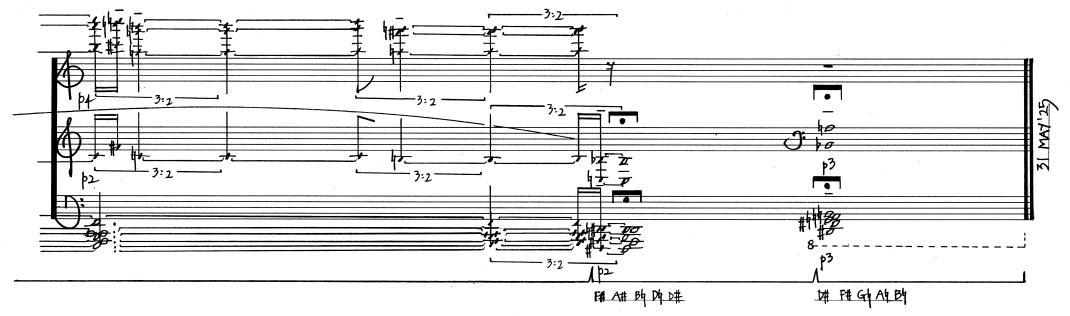




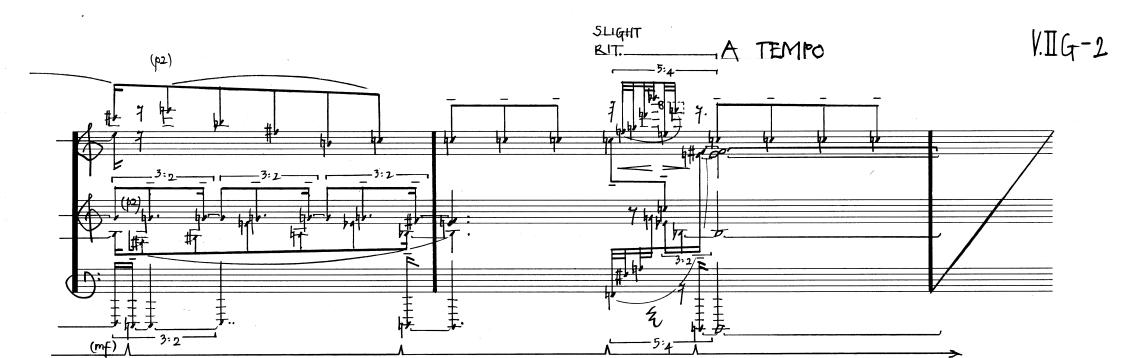




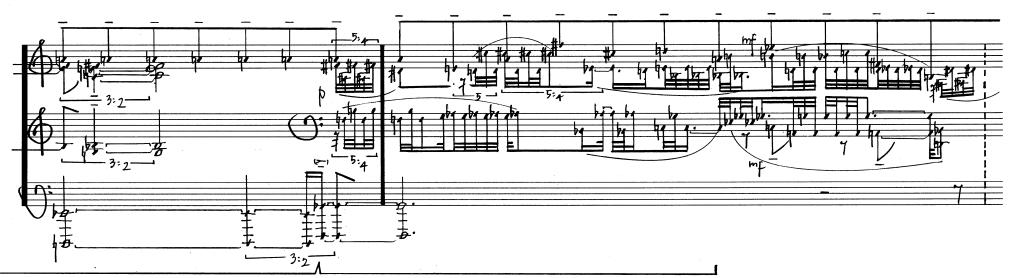


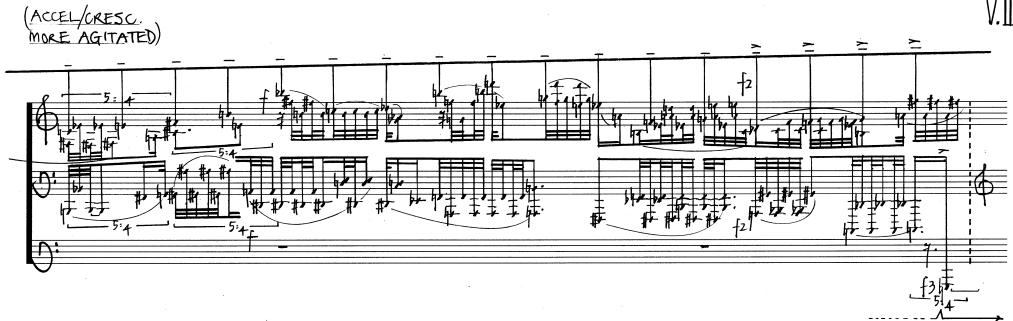


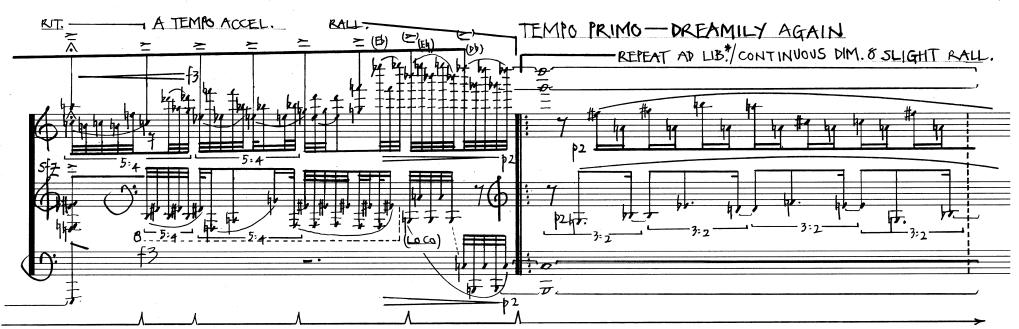
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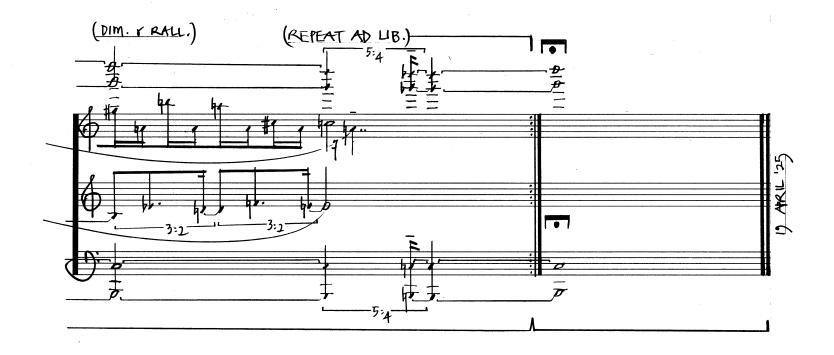




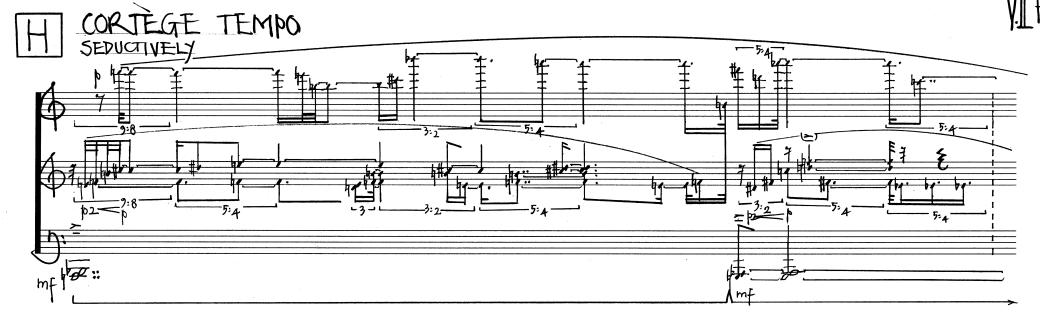


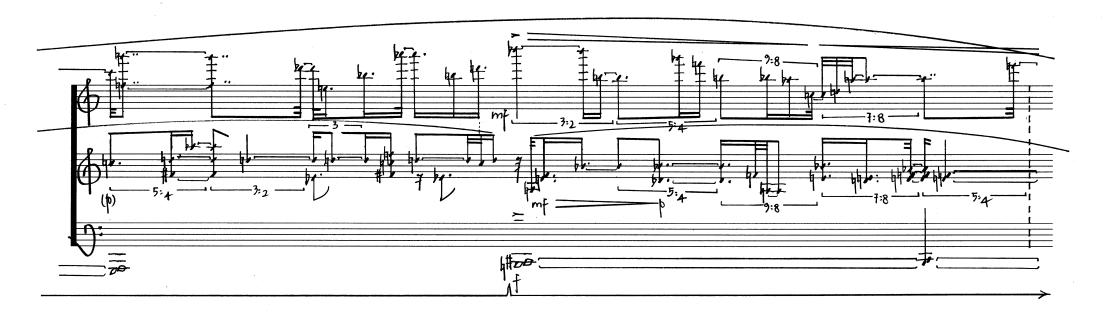


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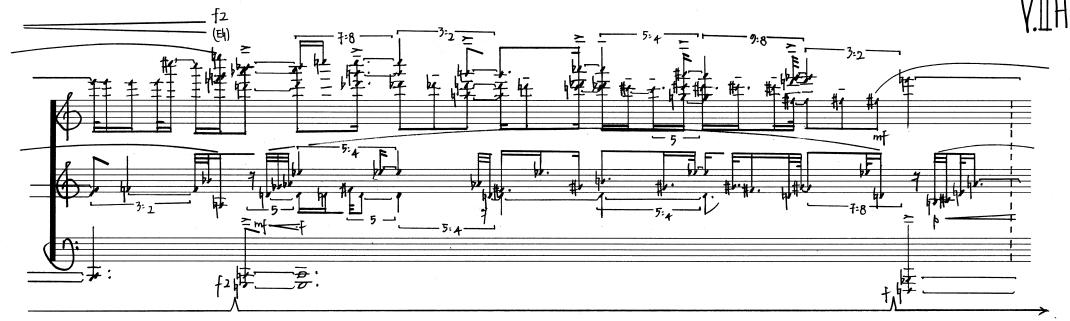


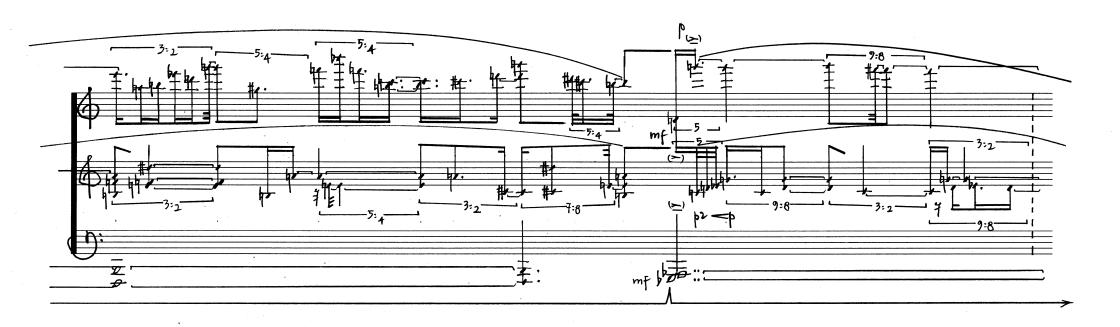
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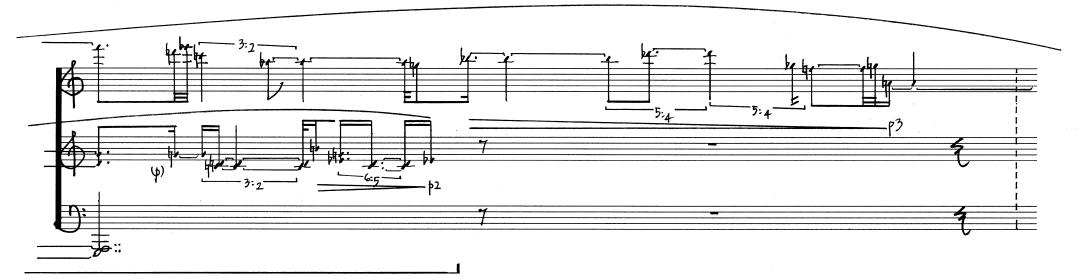


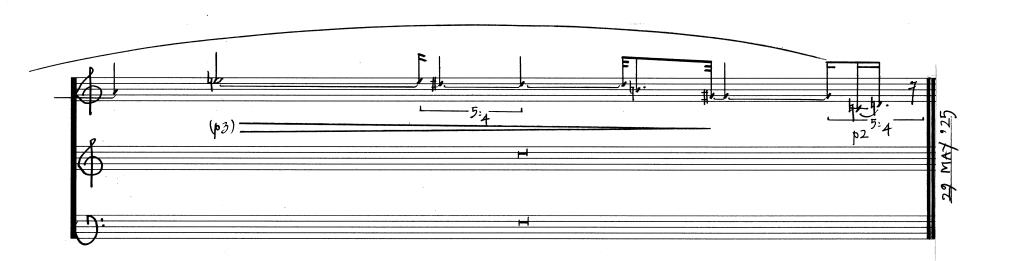






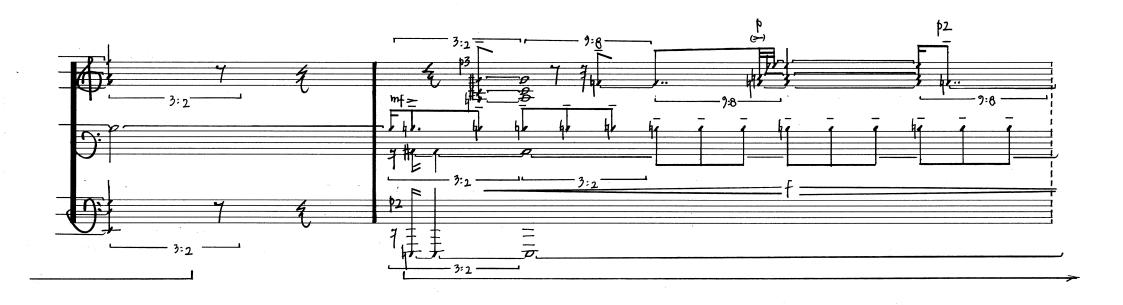


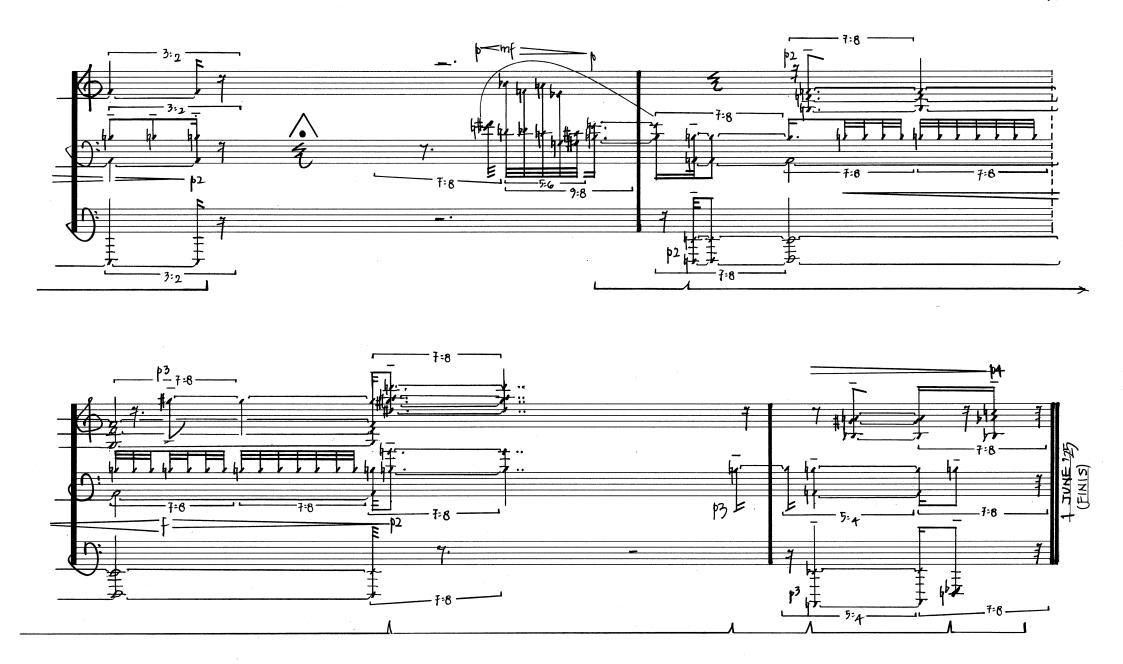


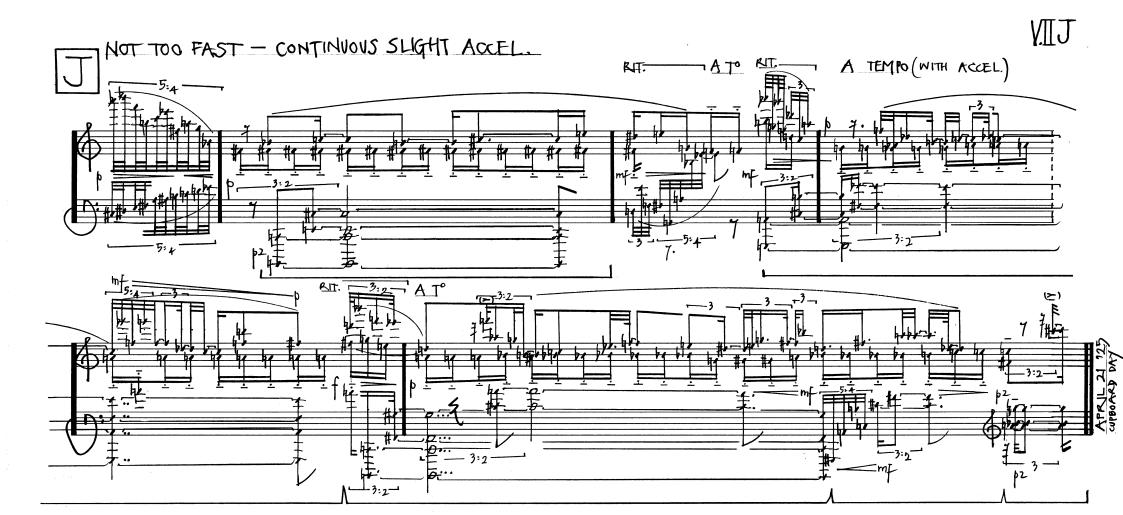


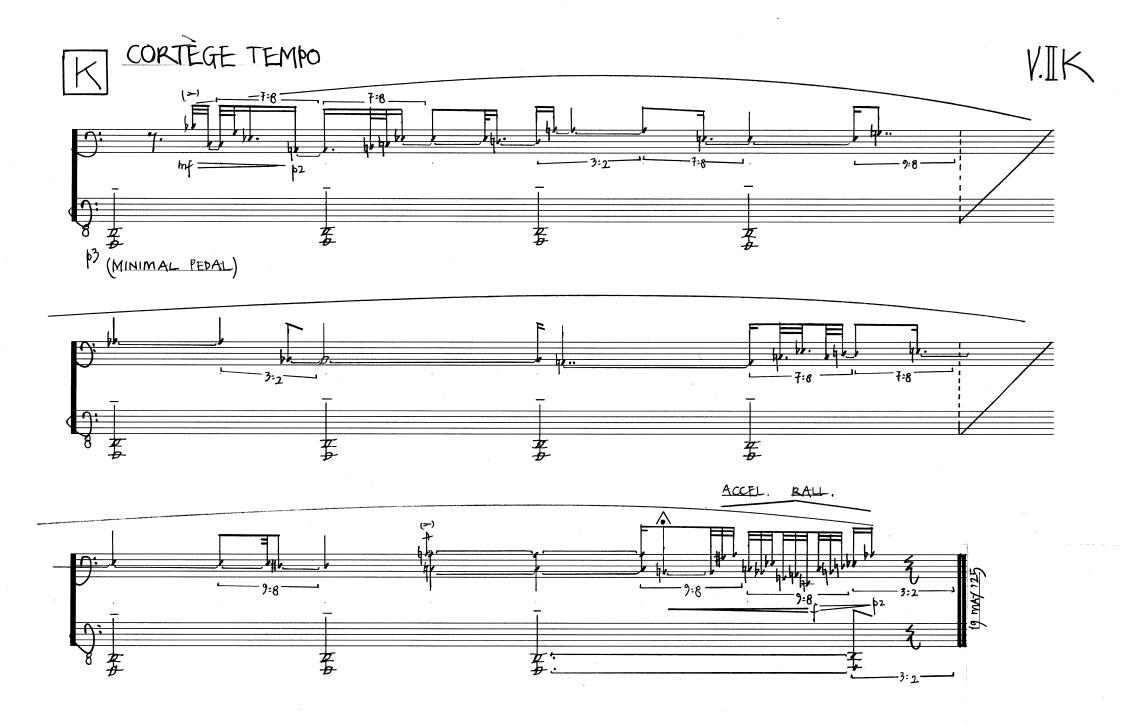




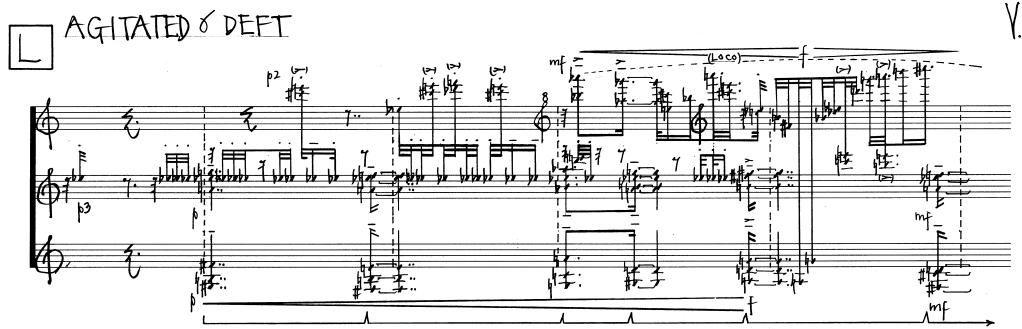


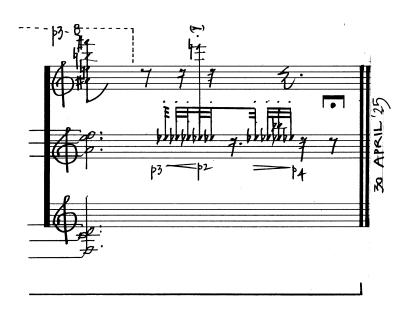




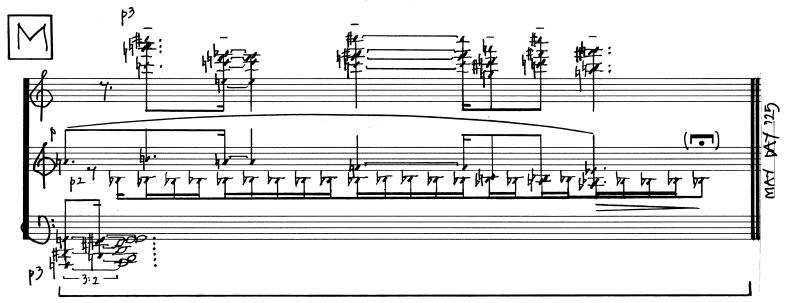


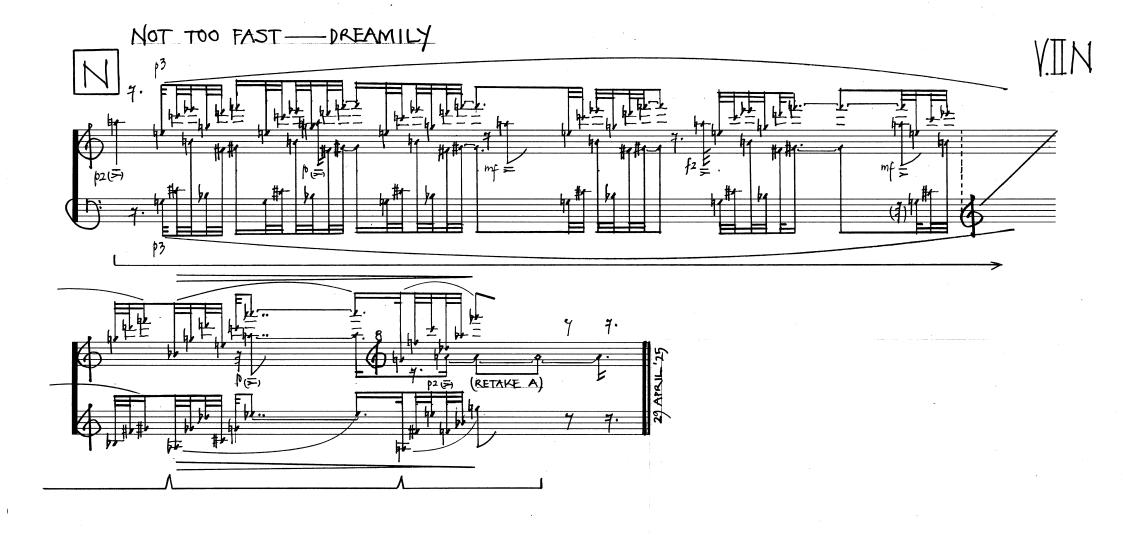
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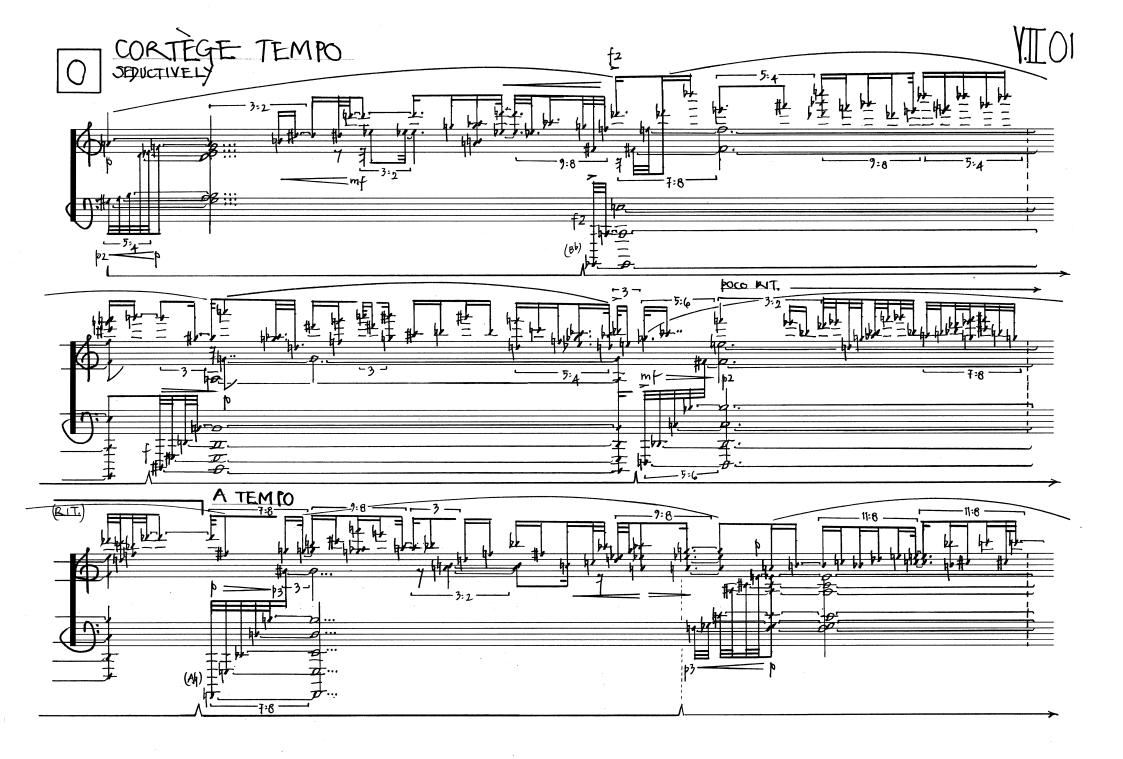


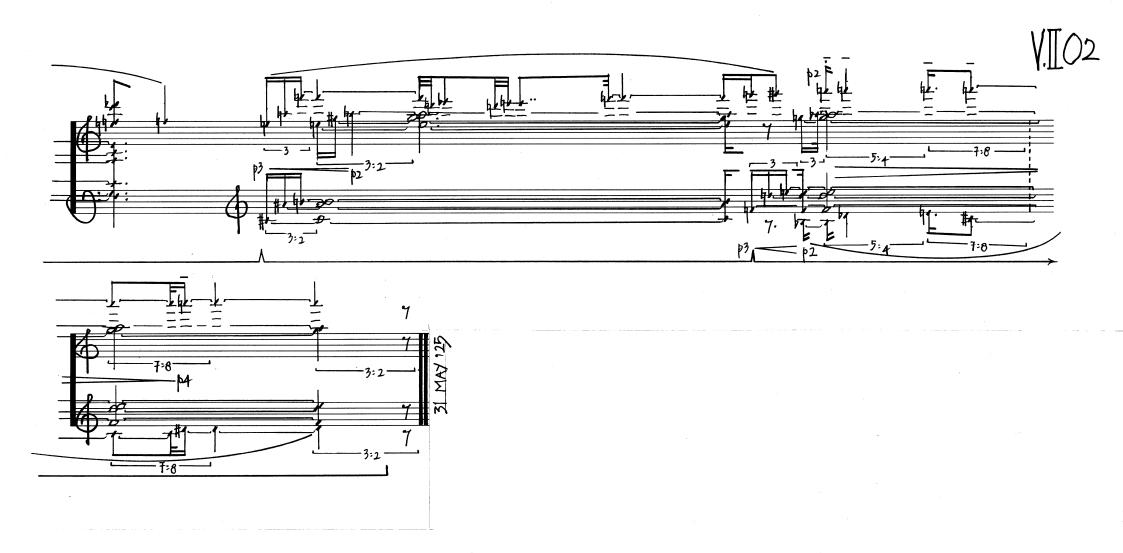


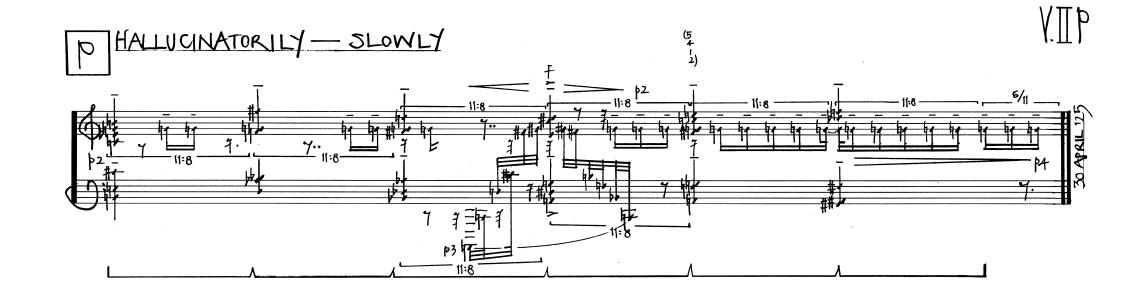


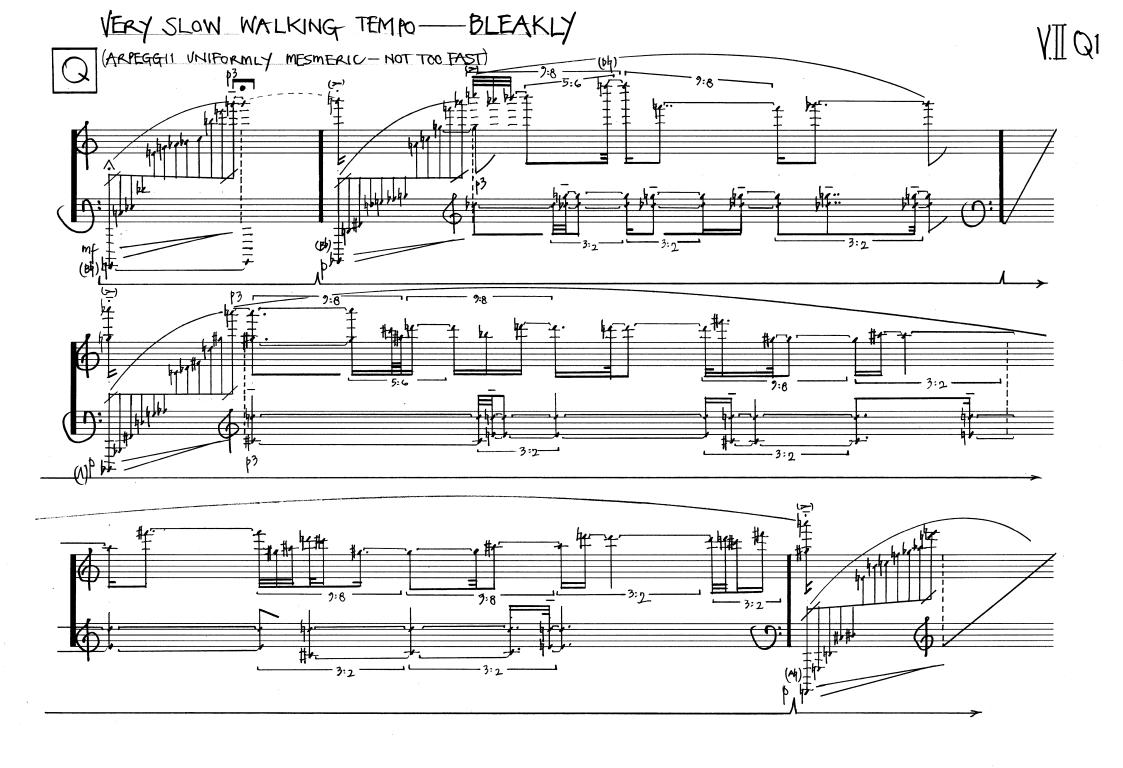


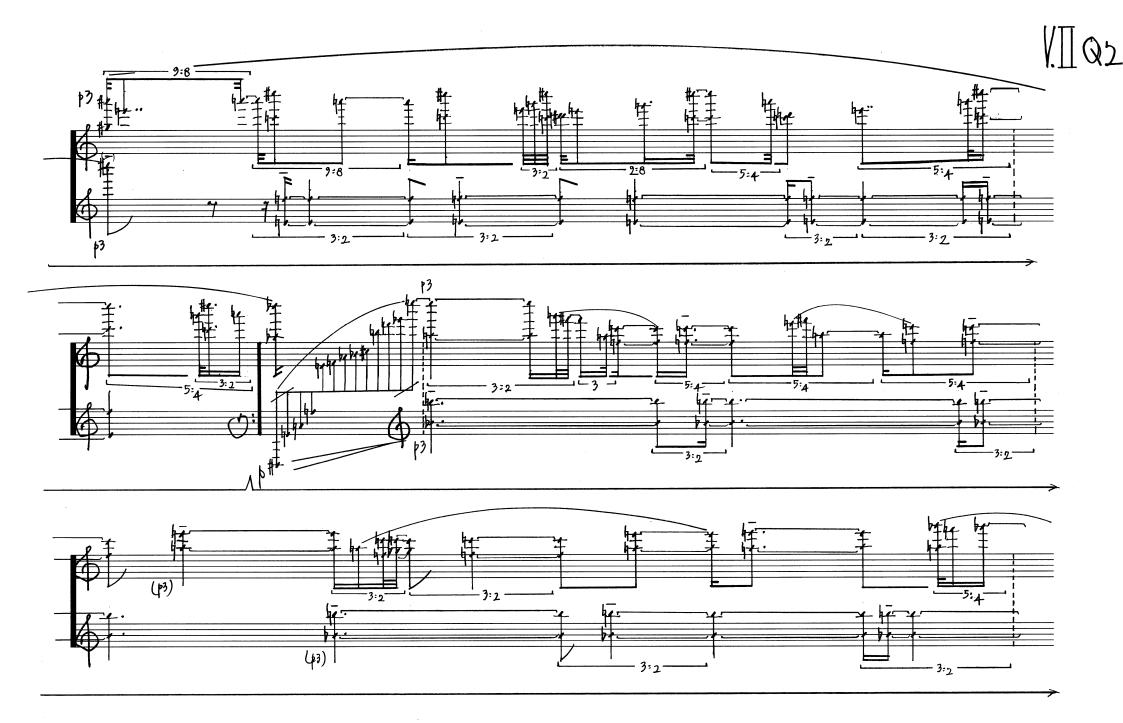


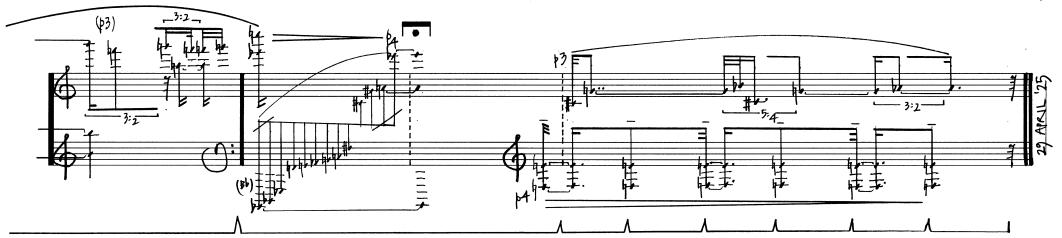






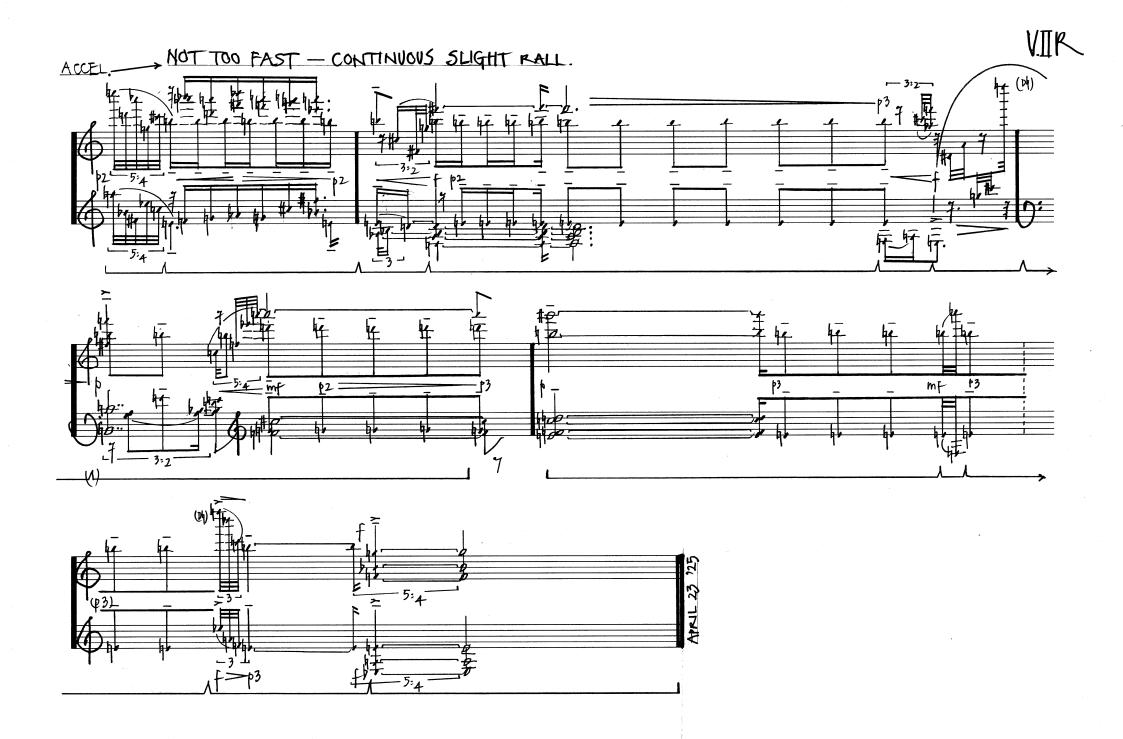


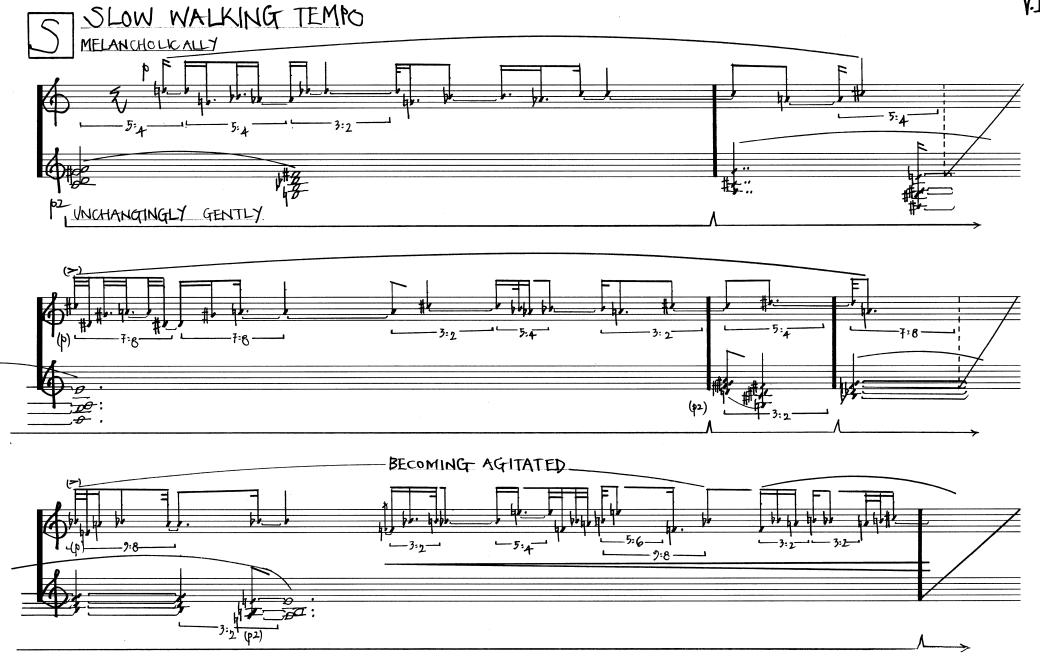


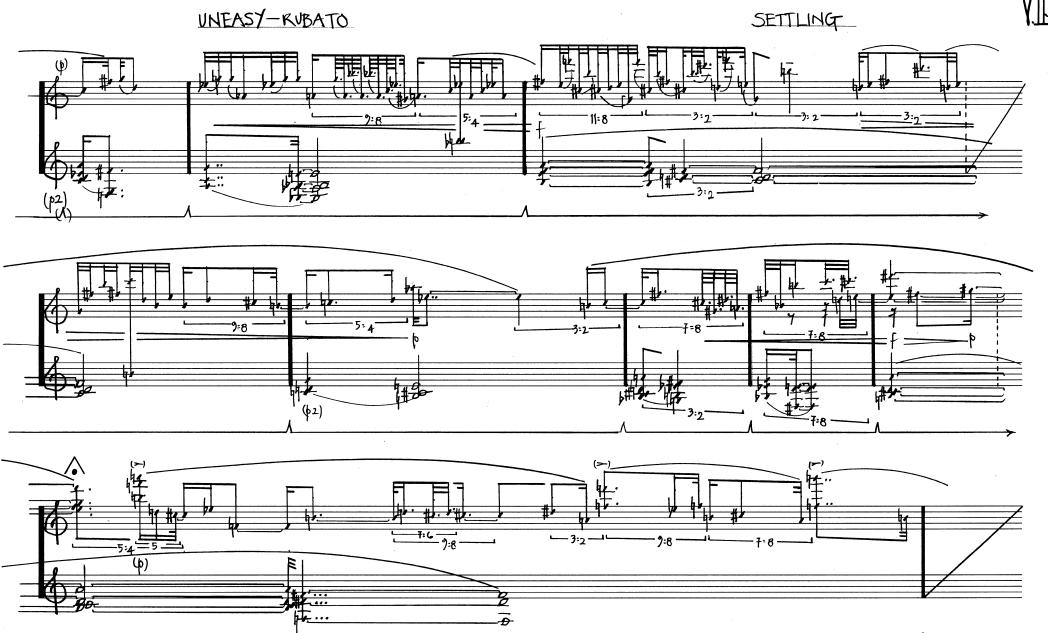


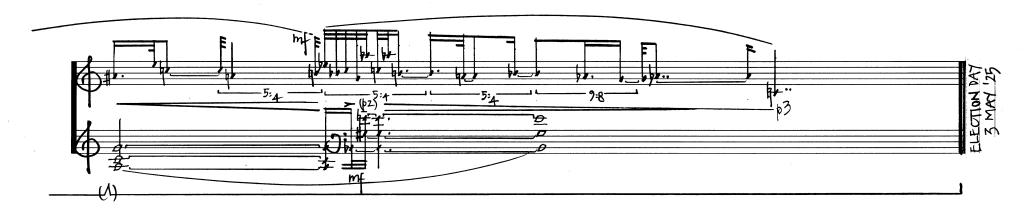
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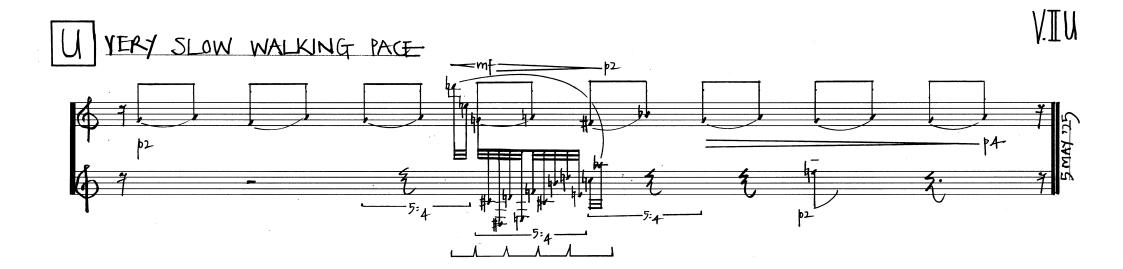


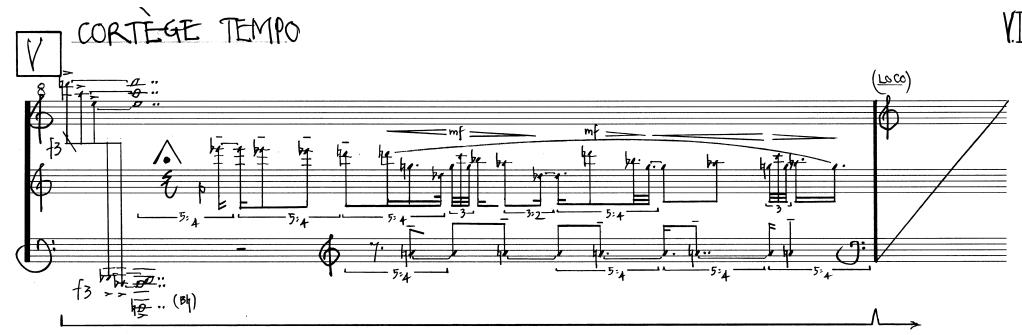


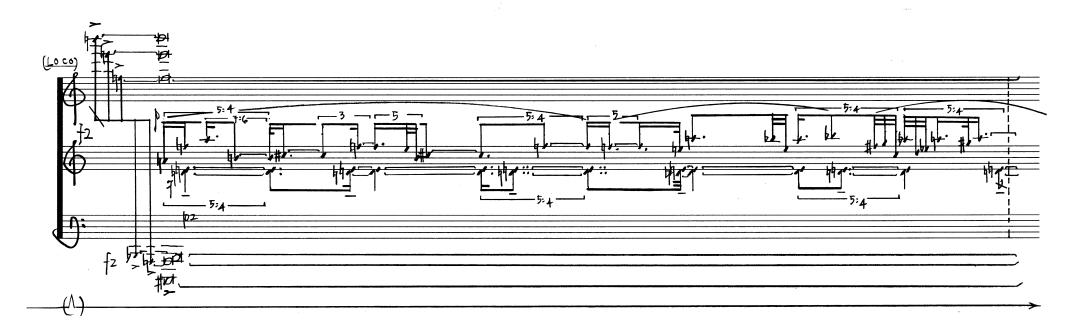




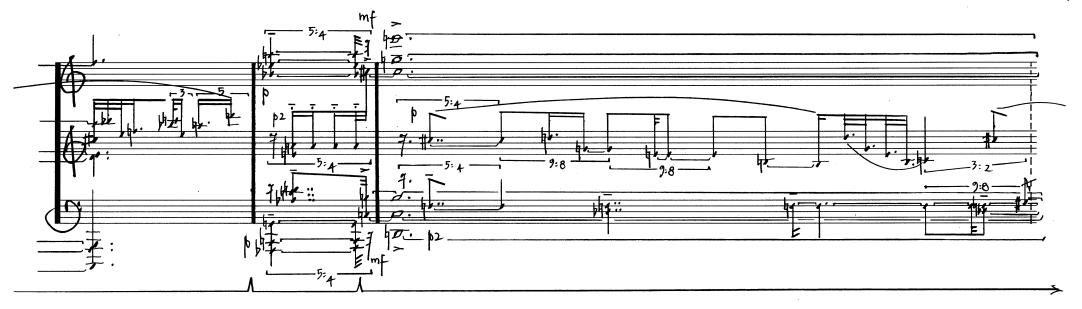


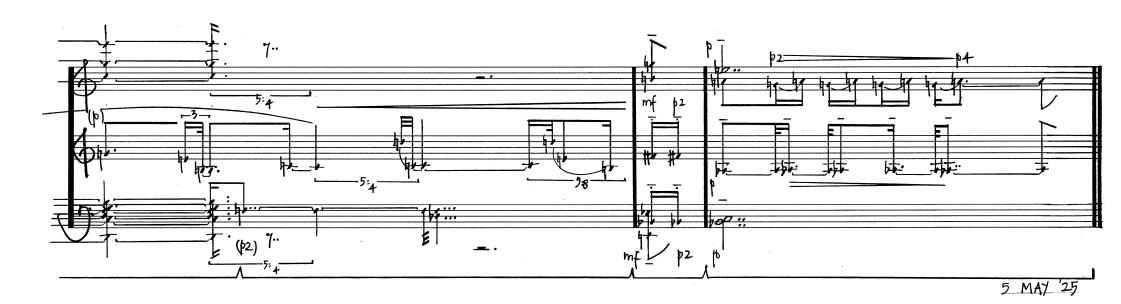


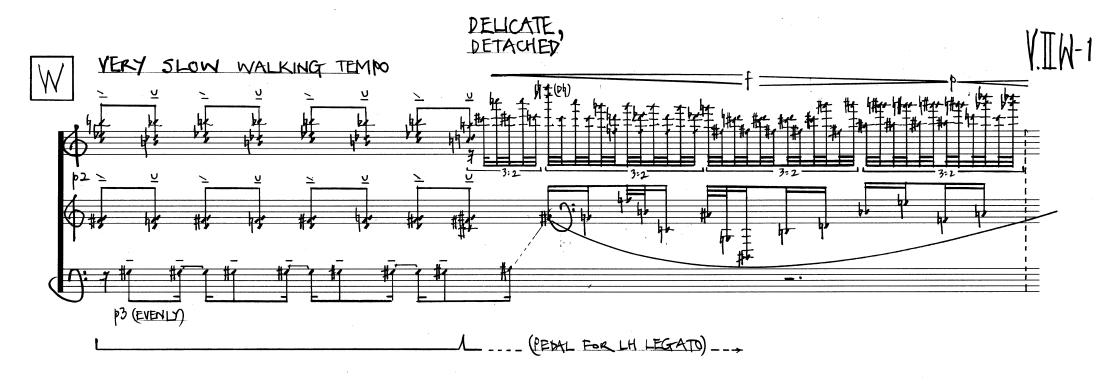


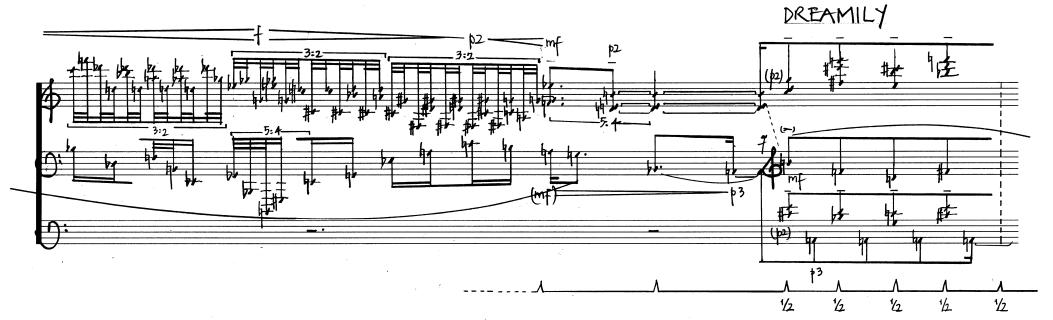


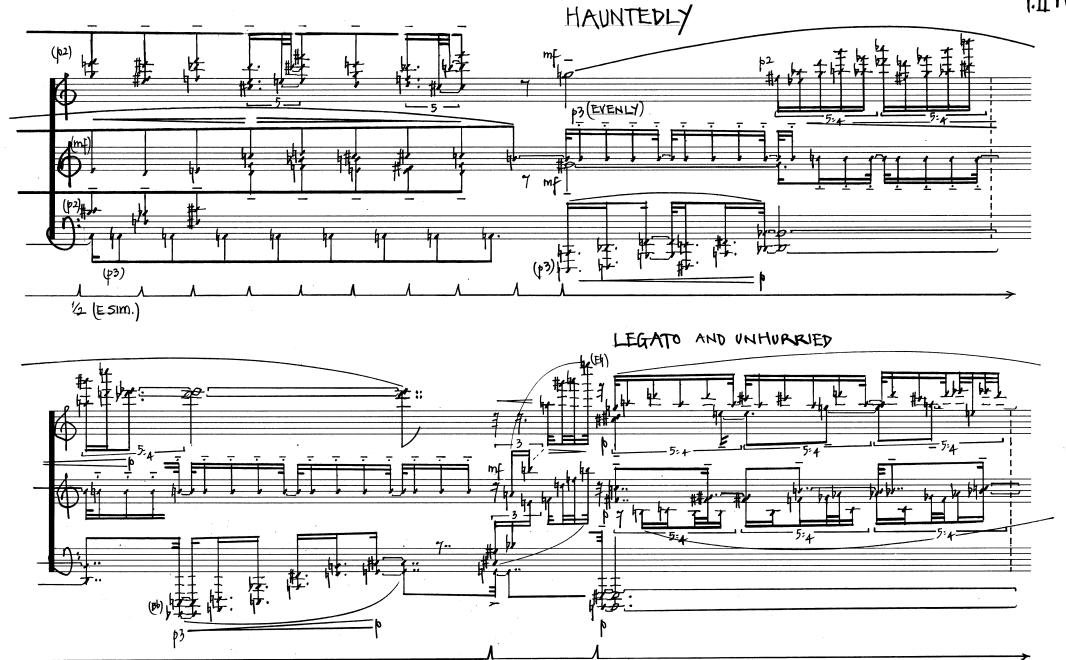
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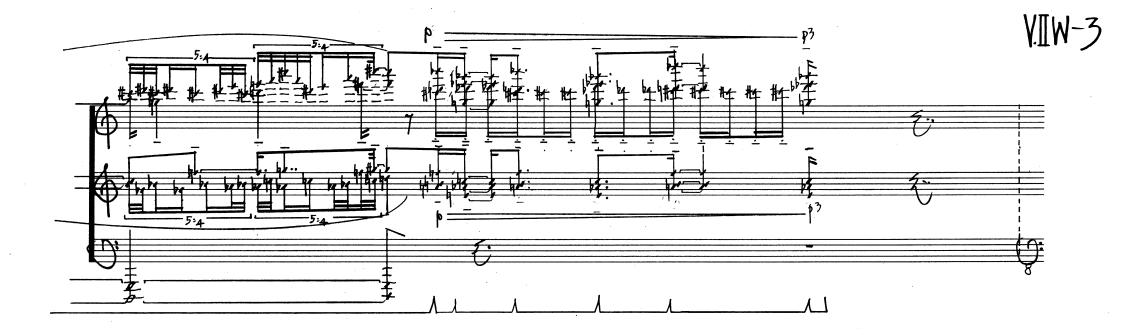


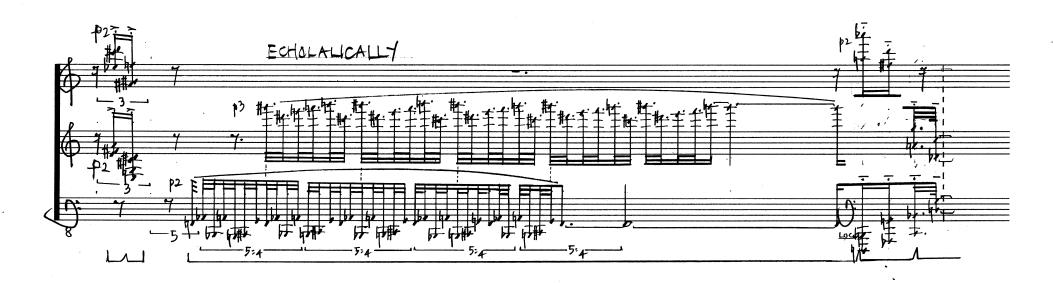


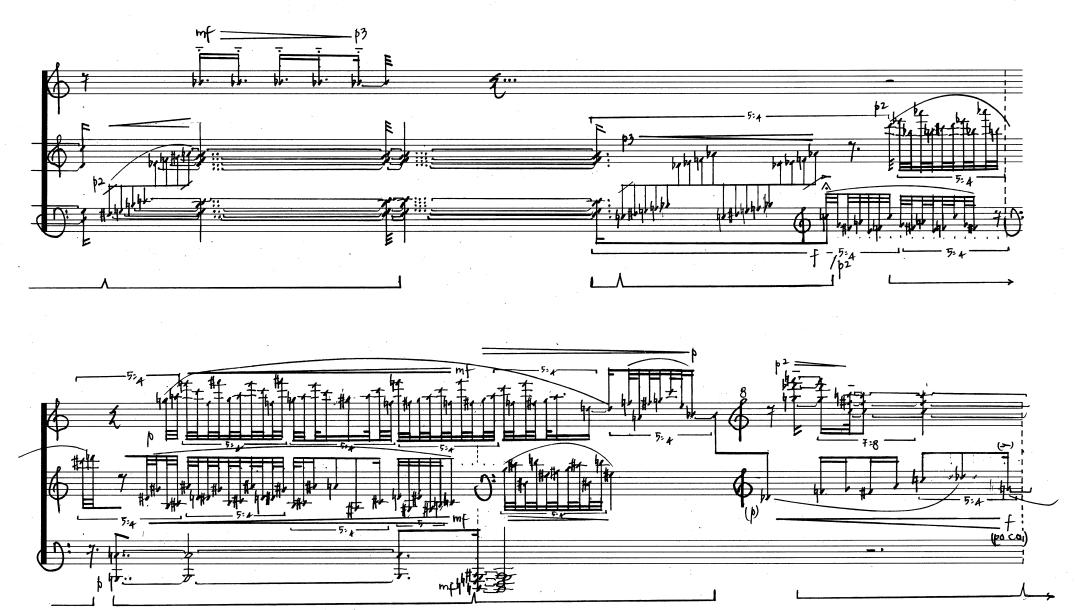


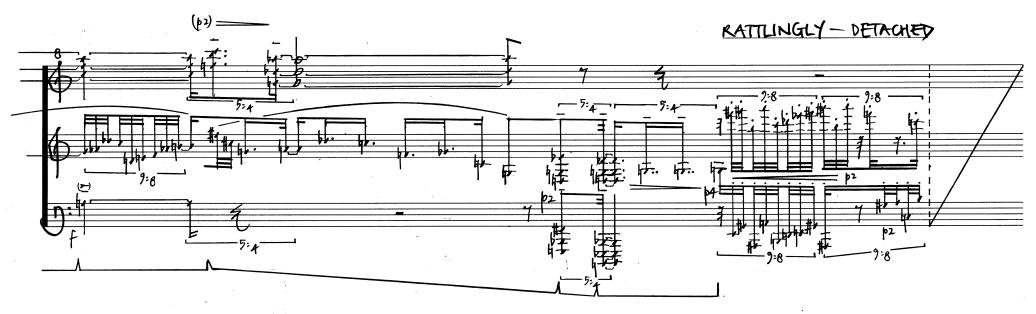


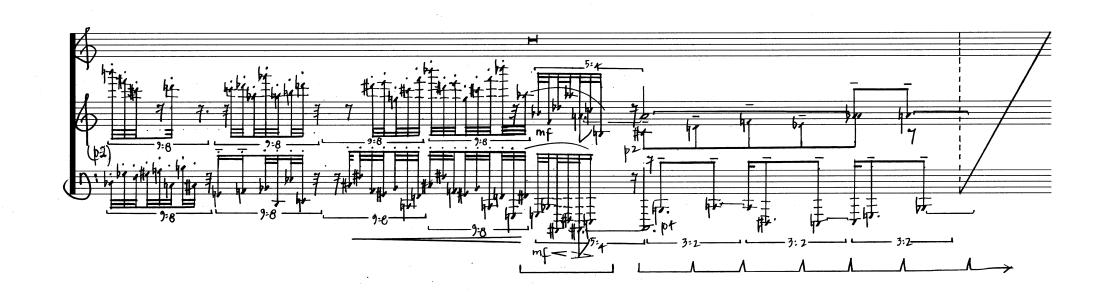






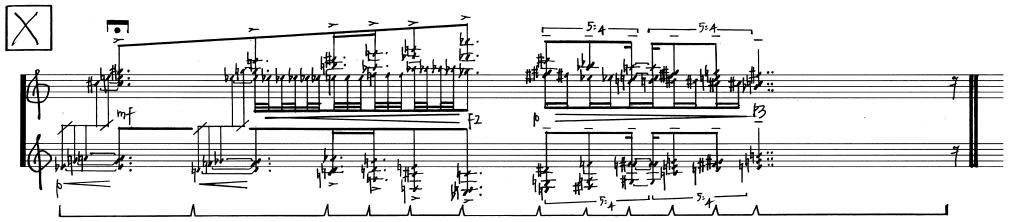


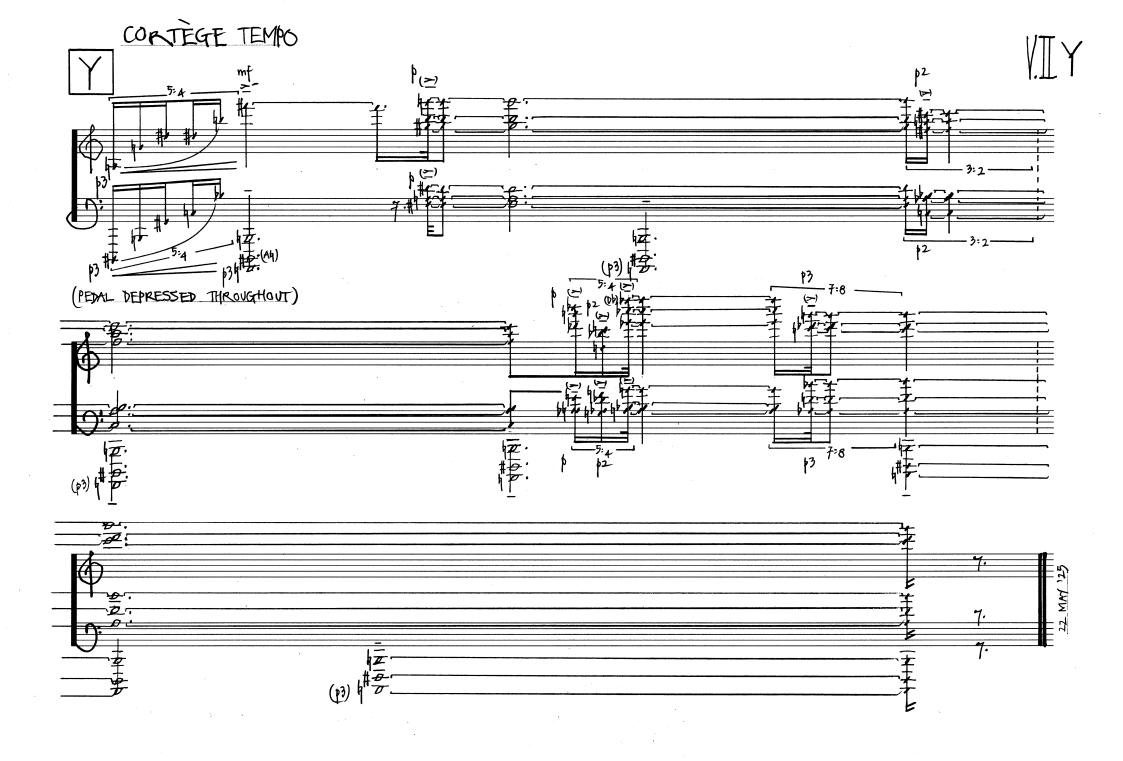


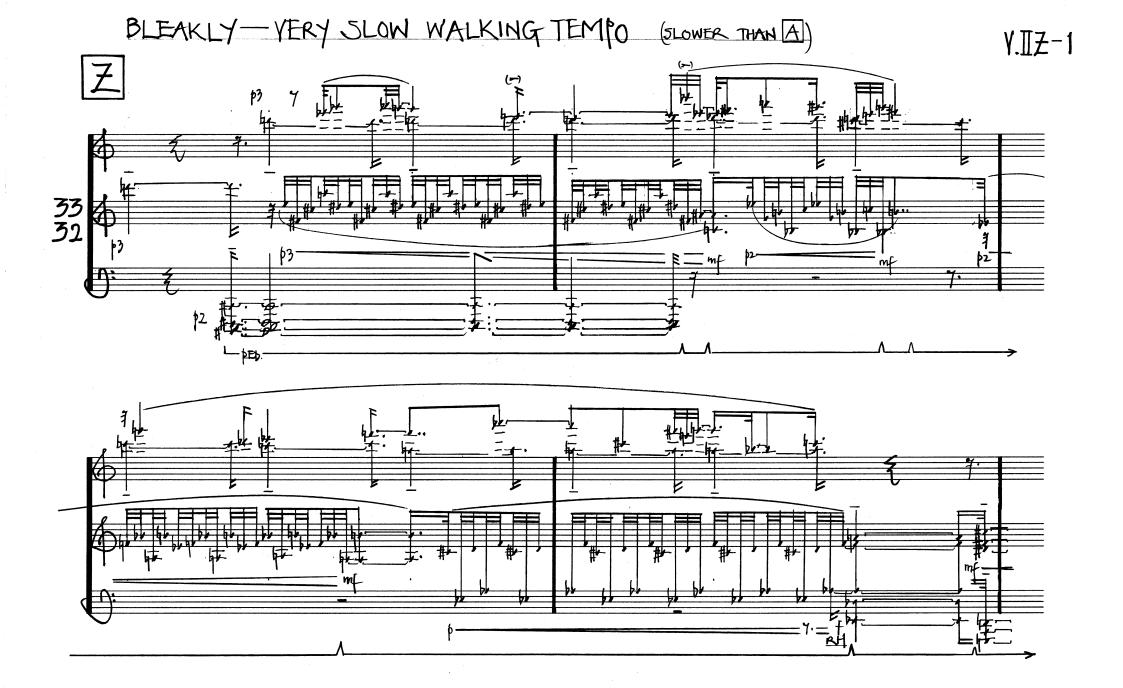


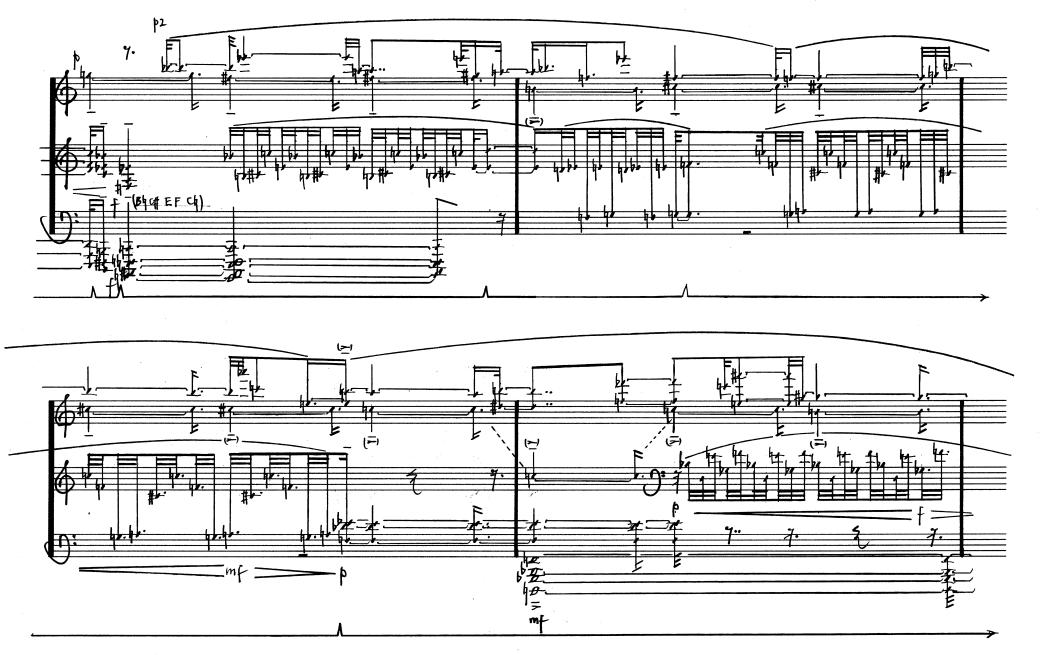


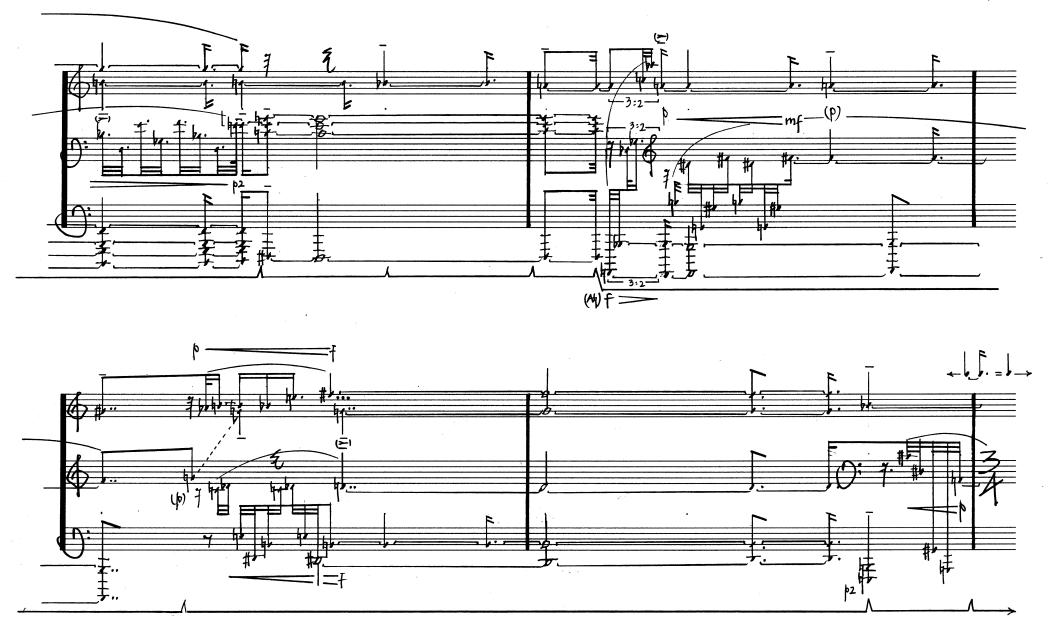






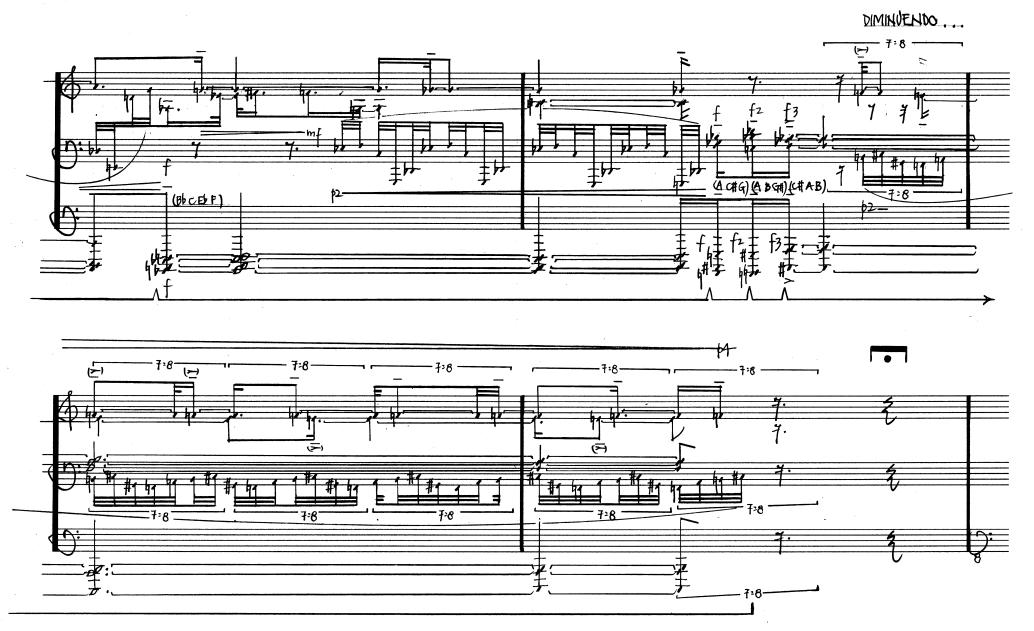






Y.][Z-4







13 APRIL 2025 BLACK HILL STUDIO

II wandering on long roads, companionless

Afterword — Paragraphs: structural allegiances

Slow walking tempo—long/6						
A	Е	I	N	S	W	
Entrance/6	Fragment/l	Short/3	Fragment/2	Mid/4	Long/5	The overall structure of this
J Fast—short/1						movement consists of 26 Paragraphs, which are ordered similarly at two different levels, global and local. Both the global and local proportions
Cortège tempo—half-medium/3						
В	F	K	O	T	X	emerge from a 6 by 6 matrix, each line of which permutates values, and
Short/3	Mid/4	Long/6	Long/5	Fragment/l	Fragment/2	ordering, from 1 to 6. The basic matrix
R Fast—short/2						values are: 6-1-3-2-4-5
Cortège tempo—medium/4						These numbers and orderings are not
D	Н	M	Q	V	Y	used thoroughgoingly, however, in keeping with the 'wanderingness' of
Mid/4	Long/5	Fragment/l	Long/6	Fragment/2	Short/3	the movement.
Very slow walking tempo—long/5						
С	G	L	P	U	Z	
Long/5	Long/6	Fragment/2	Fragment/l	Short/3	Exit/4	

As is shown above, performing the movement in alphabetical order offers maximised variety—but this is only one of very many options. The dates of completion have been added at the end of each Paragraph, and the work could even be performed in order of composition.

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