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a line is a dot that went for a walk

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a line is a dot that went for a walk

for solo percussion

Tristan Coelho

(2017-18)

a line is a dot that went for a walk

Program Notes

This piece is inspired by a quote from artist Paul Klee which is also the work's title: "A line is a dot that went for a walk." I just found the idea so playful and immediately appealing from a musical perspective. Straight away I had a mental image of an artist hesitantly starting in one corner of a large canvas, carefully placing multi-coloured dots which over time give way to sweeping lines and later form bold and blocky patches of colour. The piece, in two movements, also brings together two more general approaches which include a meditative and spacious style of music linked with nature as well as groove/loop-based approaches working with ideas of glitch and 'hard cuts' between ideas which are aligned with technology. In addition, my work is a nod to the classic vibraphone solo, Omar, by Italian composer Franco Donatoni.

a line is a dot that went for a walk was commissioned by Ensemble Offspring with the generous support of Baiba Berzins to whom the work is dedicated. The first movement was especially written for and performed at an event to celebrate Baiba's birthday in 2017.

Performance notes

general:

– The piece is scored for:

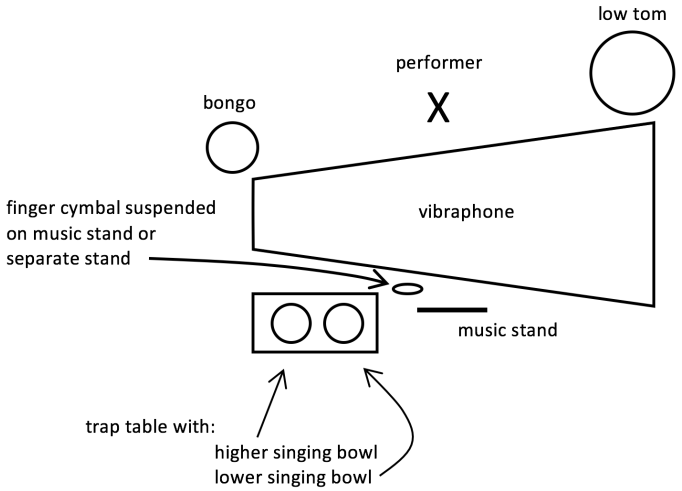
- Movement I – vibraphone, two singing bowls and suspended finger cymbal.
- Movement II – as above with the addition of kick drum and high bongo drum.

– The ‘mallet w/chain’ involves a hard mallet with a short piece of metal chain attached with tape just below the head (around 5-6cm). The chain should be of a length that allows a metallic ‘jangle’ sound when striking the bar as well as buzzing effect when resting on a vibrating bar. However, the chain should not be so long as to interfere with mallet technique and adding too much weight.

– For the majority of the opening and rehearsal figure B of movement I stem direction in the vibraphone stave indicates sticking (LH stems down, RH stems up).

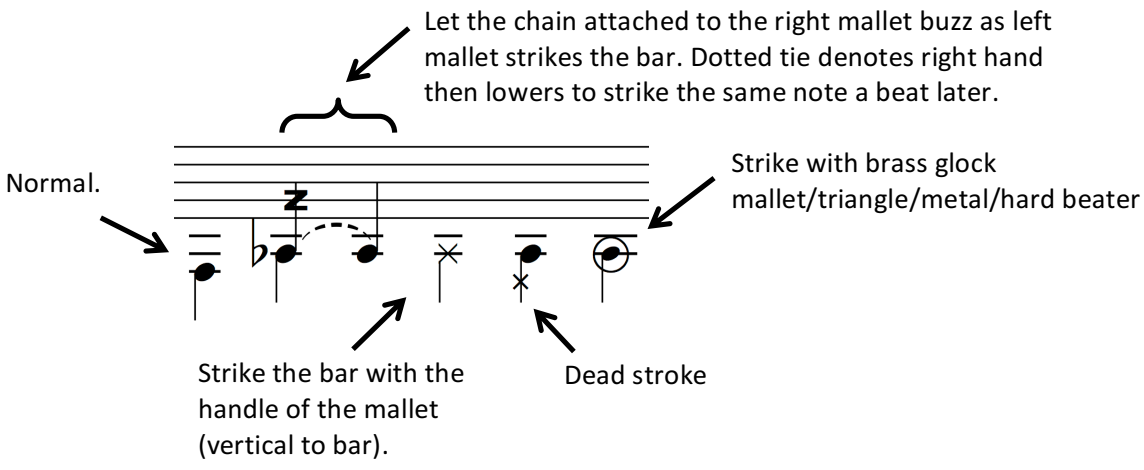
– Some pedal markings are given as a guide however the performer should exercise discretion in how pedal is used depending on the acoustic and personal taste.

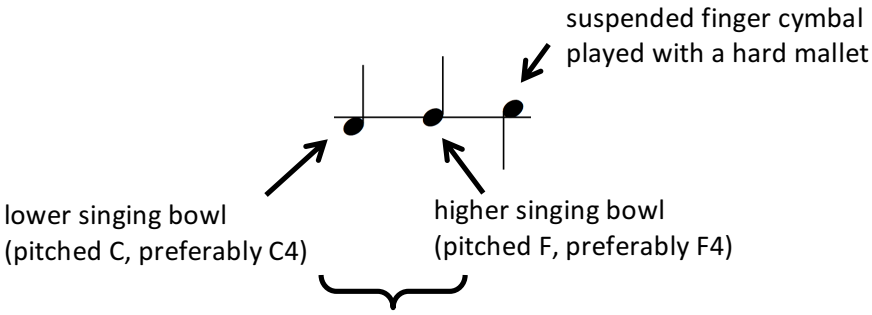
stage setup:



notation:

Movement I

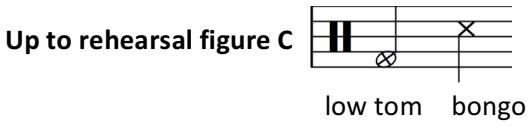


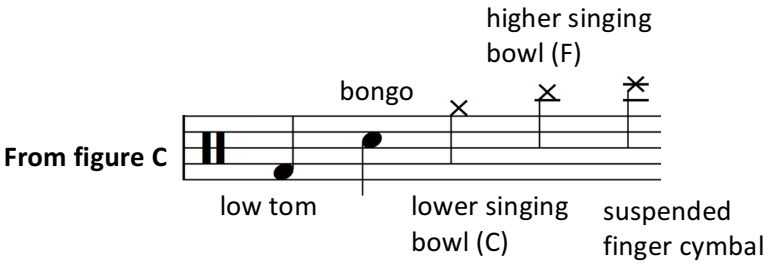


S C In the central 'free' section of movement I, the material can unfold at the discretion of the performer. **S** means the notes from a specific point are 'scattered' freely, not necessarily treated as chords but still read left to right. Sections marked **C** mean that the notes are played in chord groups as indicated.

Movement II

The first section of this movement has the vibraphone as well as kick and snare/tom on the same staff. From rehearsal figure C the multi setup is written on a separate staff for ease of reading. Please see below:





In movement 2, the lower singing bowl is pre-set as upturned. The tone should be reminiscent of a brake drum. Before rehearsal figure F, the bowl is turned upright to resonate as normal. An optional 3rd singing bowl can be used and upturned from the start if preferred.

for Baiba Berzins & Claire Edwardes

a line is a dot that went for a walk

I

Tristan Coelho

Poco rubato ♩ = 72

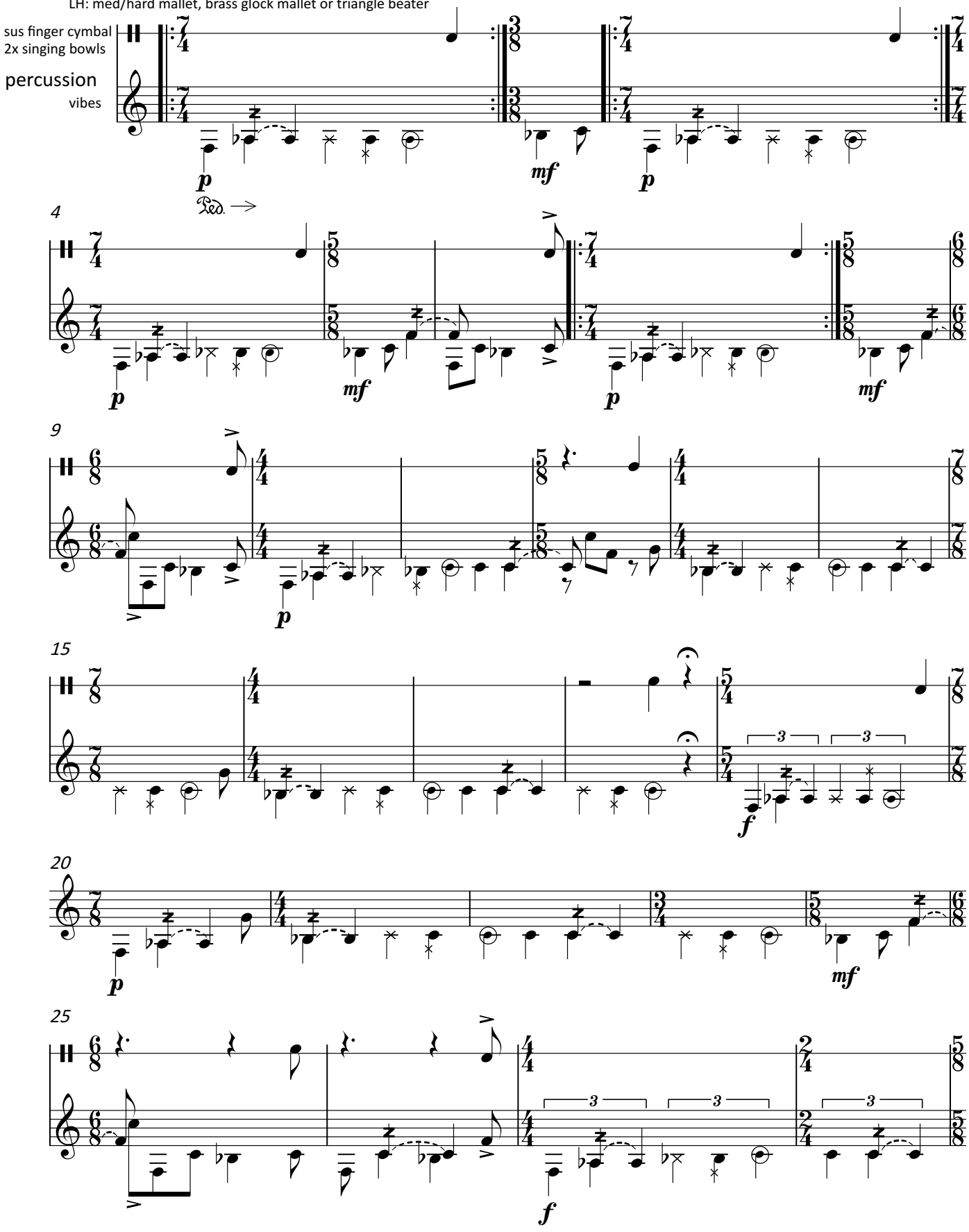
RH: hard mallet w/ chain
LH: med/hard mallet, brass glock mallet or triangle beater

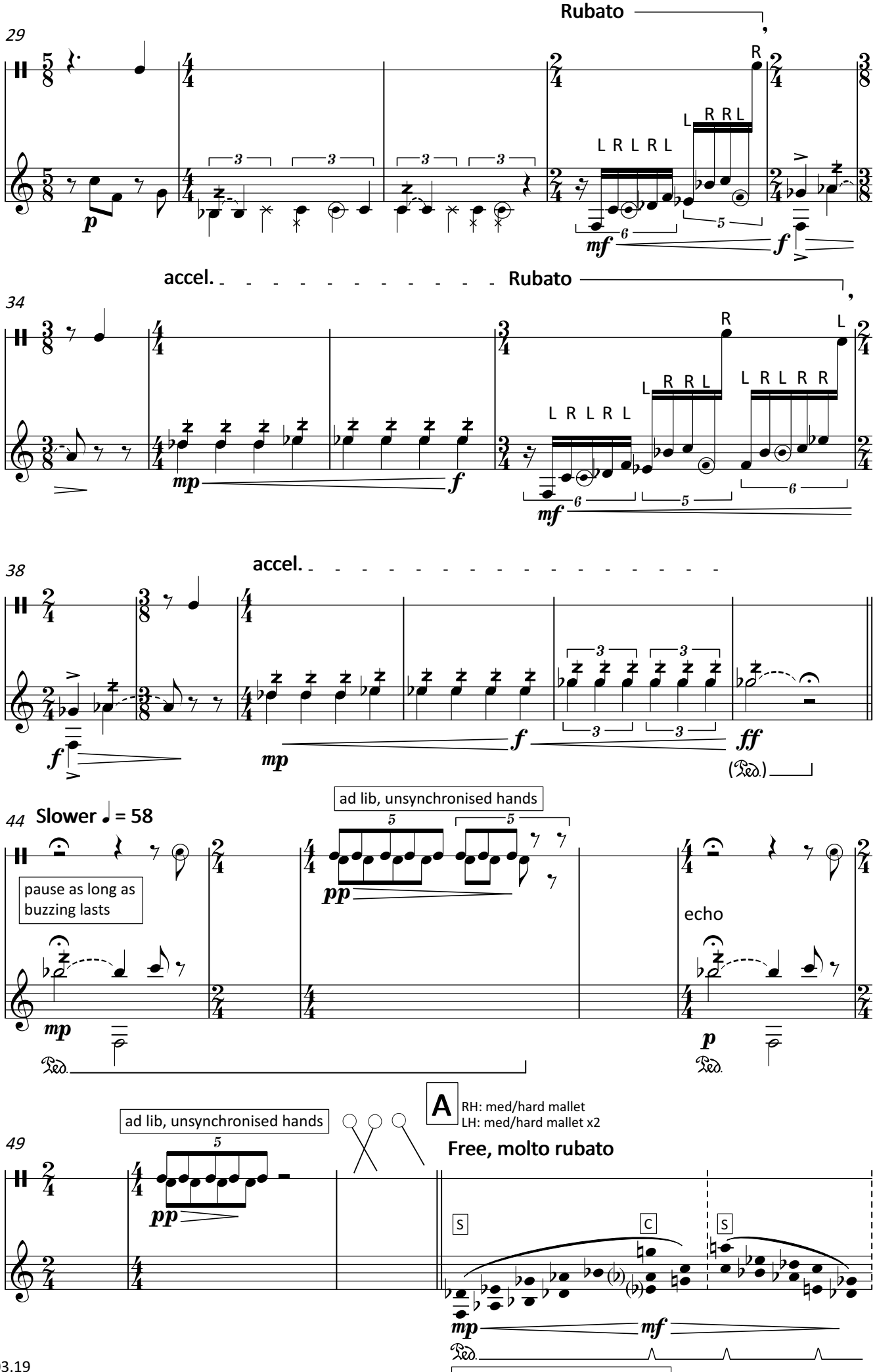
x 4

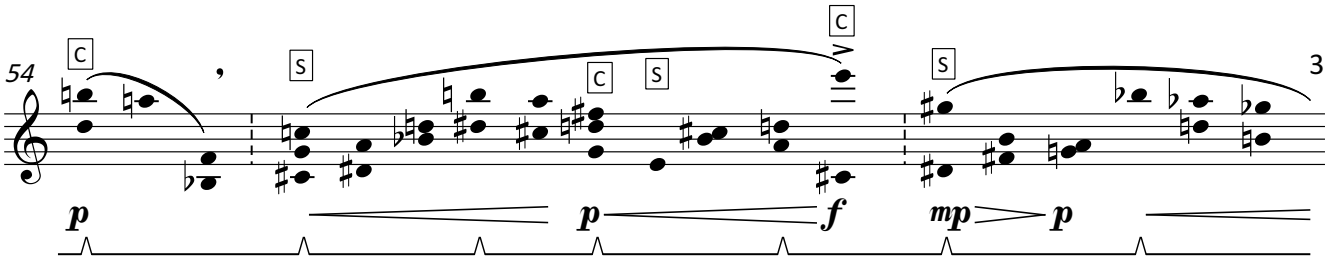
sus finger cymbal
2x singing bowls

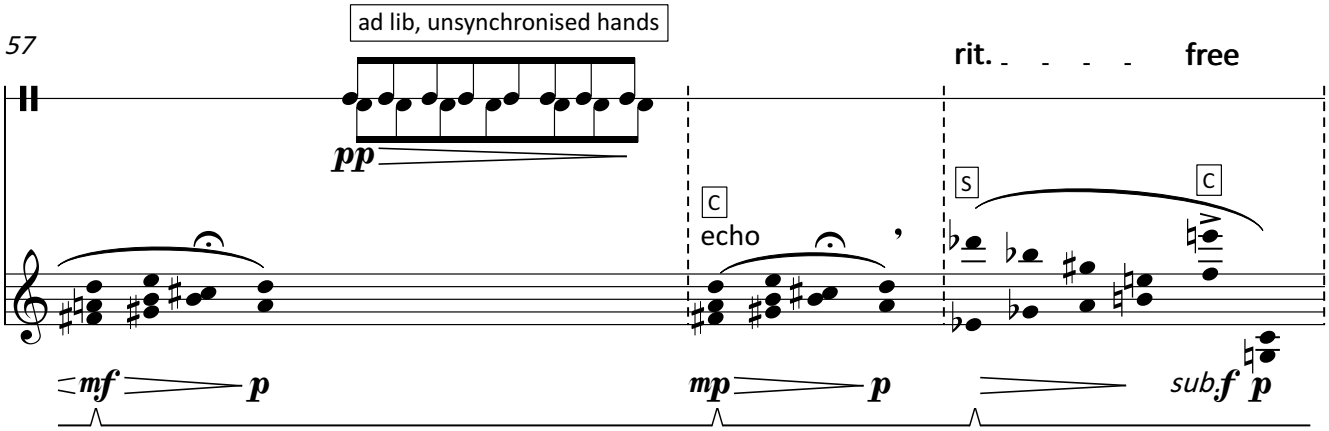
percussion

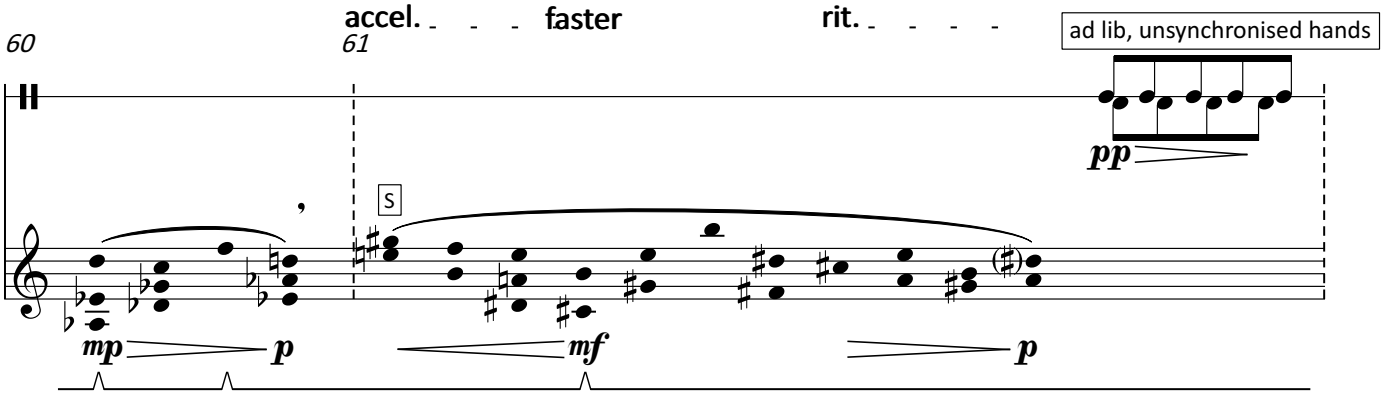
vibes

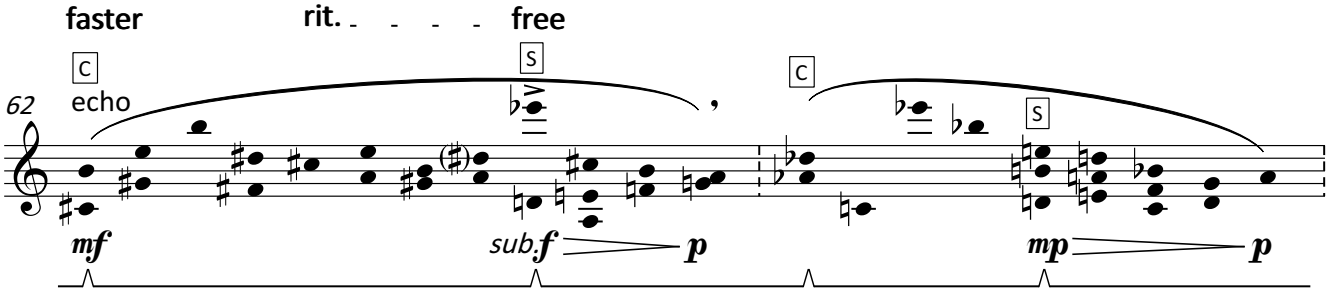


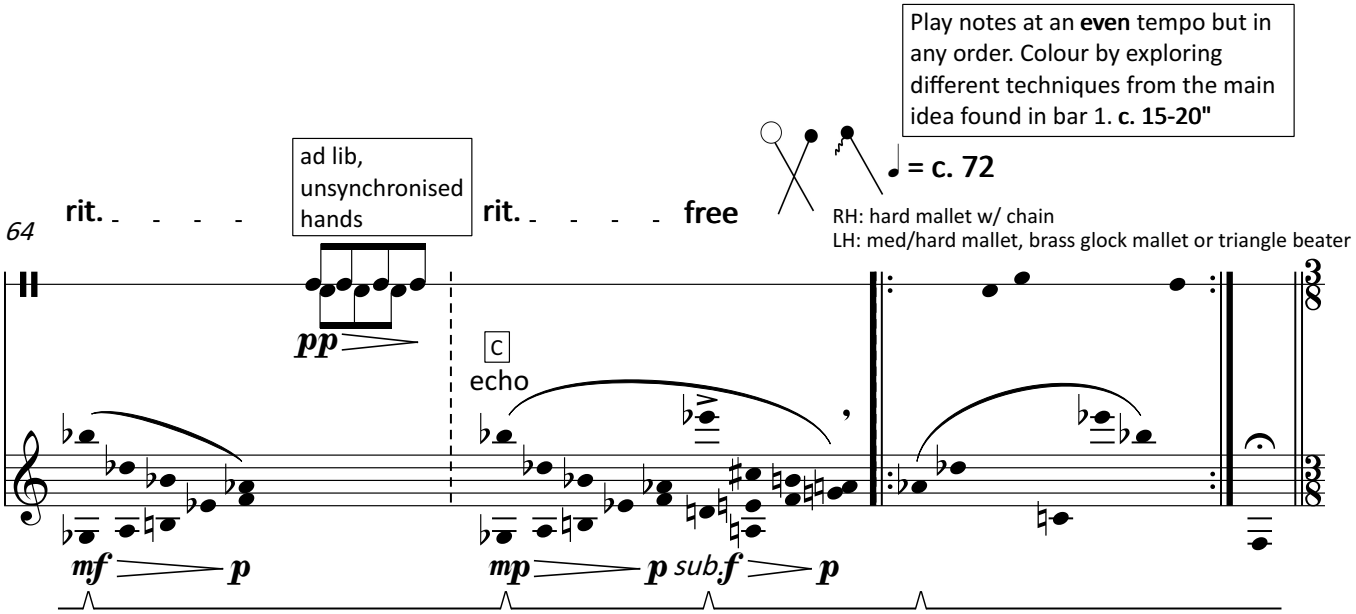

29
Rubato
L R L R L
L R R L
R
mf
f
34
accel.
Rubato
mp
f
mf
L R L R L
L R R L
L R L R R
R
L
38
accel.
f
mp
f
ff
(Ped.)
44
Slower ♩ = 58
ad lib, unsynchronised hands
pause as long as buzzing lasts
pp
mp
Ped.
echo
p
Ped.
A
RH: med/hard mallet
LH: med/hard mallet x2
49
ad lib, unsynchronised hands
pp
Free, molto rubato
S
C
S
mp
mf
Ped.
flutter ped. throughout ad lib

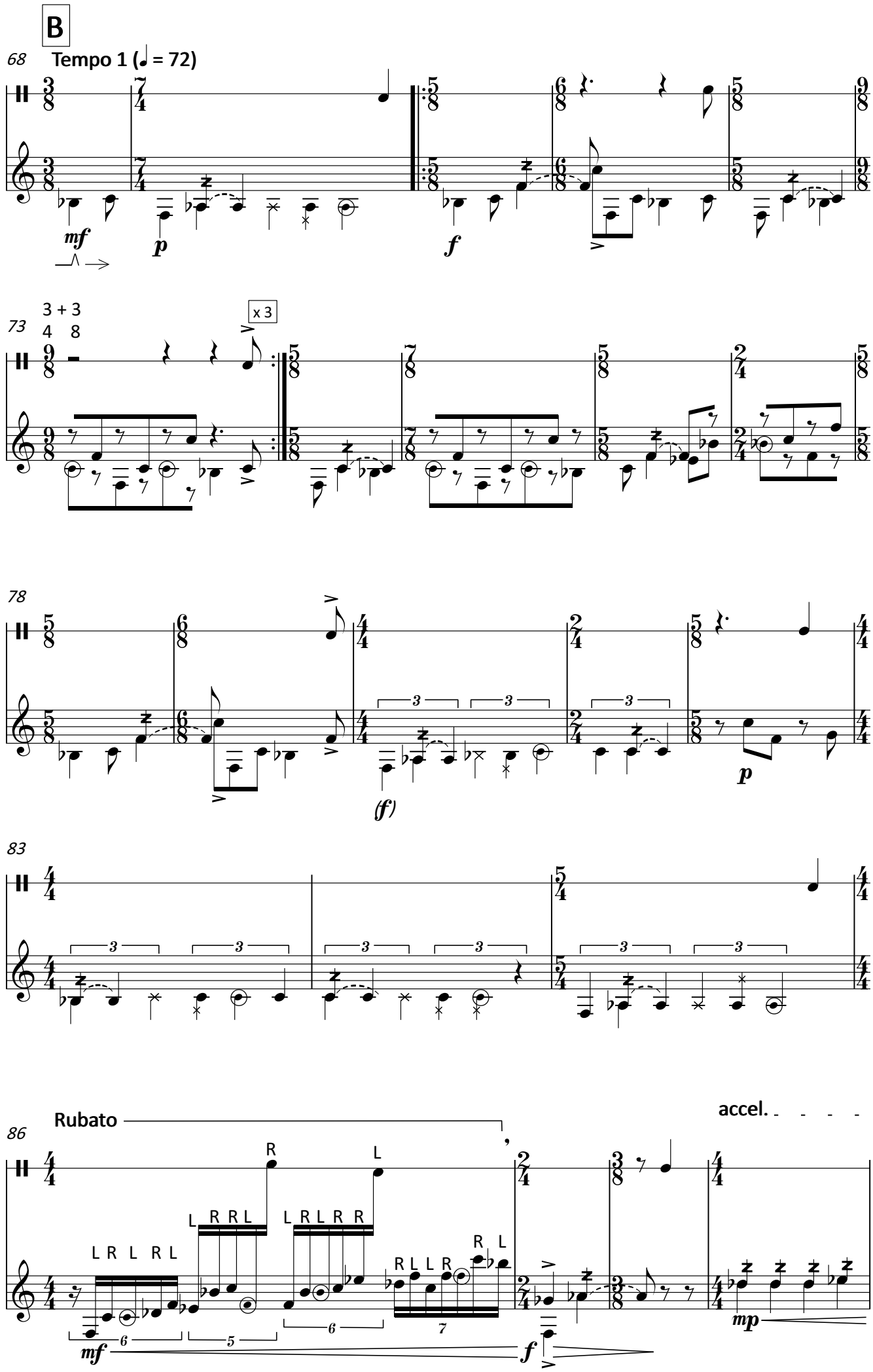

54
C
S
C
S
C
S
p
p
f
mp
p

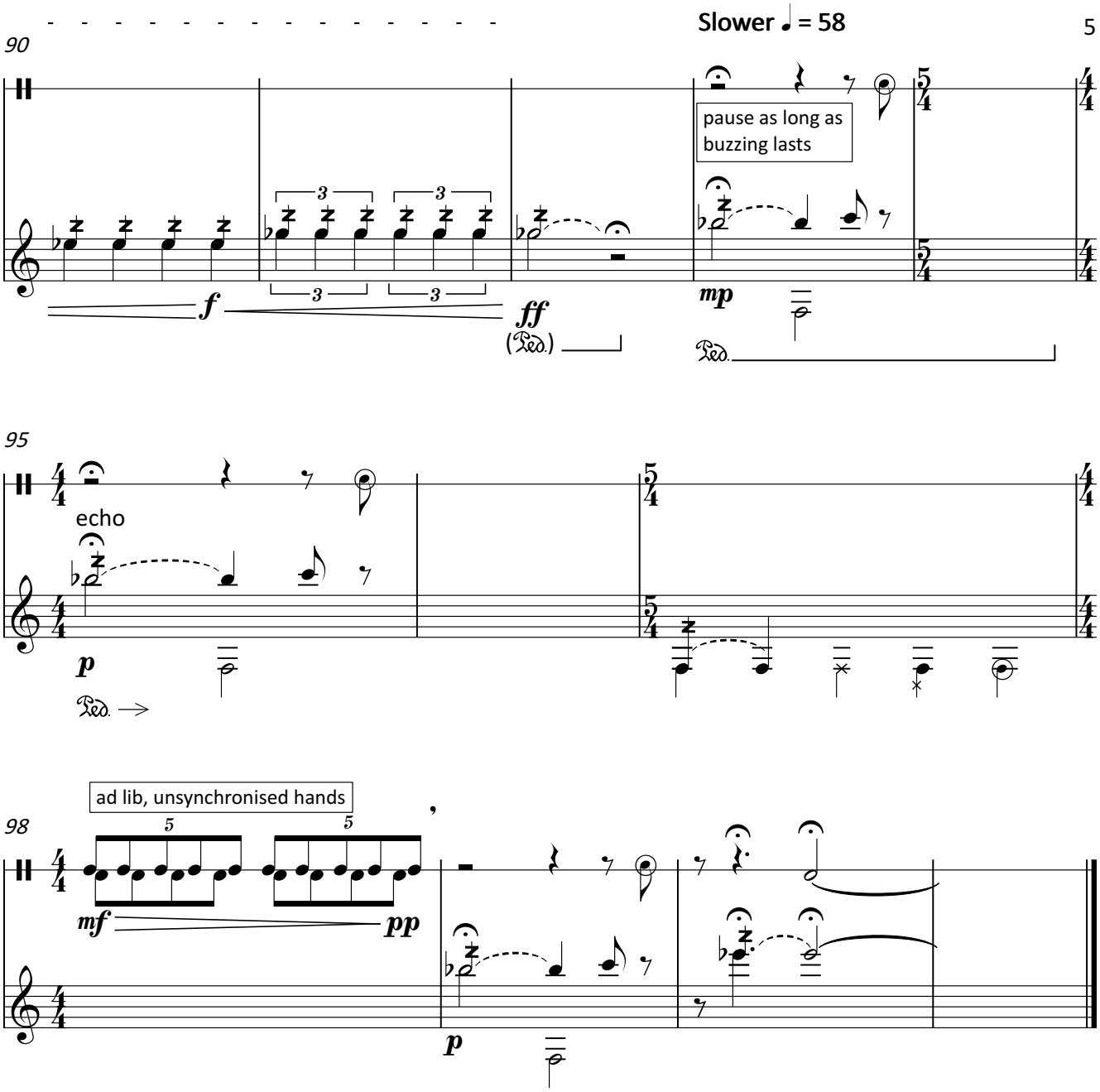

57
ad lib, unsynchronised hands
pp
rit.
free
C
echo
S
C
mf
p
mp
p
sub.f
p


60
61
accel.
faster
rit.
ad lib, unsynchronised hands
pp
S
mp
p
mf
p


faster
rit.
free
62
C
echo
S
C
S
mf
sub.f
p
mp
p


Play notes at an even tempo but in any order. Colour by exploring different techniques from the main idea found in bar 1. c. 15-20"
= c. 72
RH: hard mallet w/ chain
LH: med/hard mallet, brass glock mallet or triangle beater
rit.
ad lib, unsynchronised hands
rit.
free
64
pp
C
echo
mf
p
mp
p
sub.f
p


B
68
Tempo 1 (♩ = 72)
mf
p
f
73
3 + 3
4 8
x 3
78
(f)
p
83
86
Rubato
accel.
L R L R L
L R R L
L R L R R
R L L R
R L
mf
f
mp
6
5
6
7


Slower ♩ = 58
90
pause as long as buzzing lasts
95
echo
98
ad lib, unsynchronised hands

Preset: lower singing bowl upturned (base facing up). The sound should resemble that of a brake drum.

||

♩ = 112 Funky

RH: 2x med/hard mallets
LH: 2x med/hard mallets

bongo
vibes
tom

right hand under

f

Ped. ad lib.

3

5

7 *dolce*

pp

funky

f

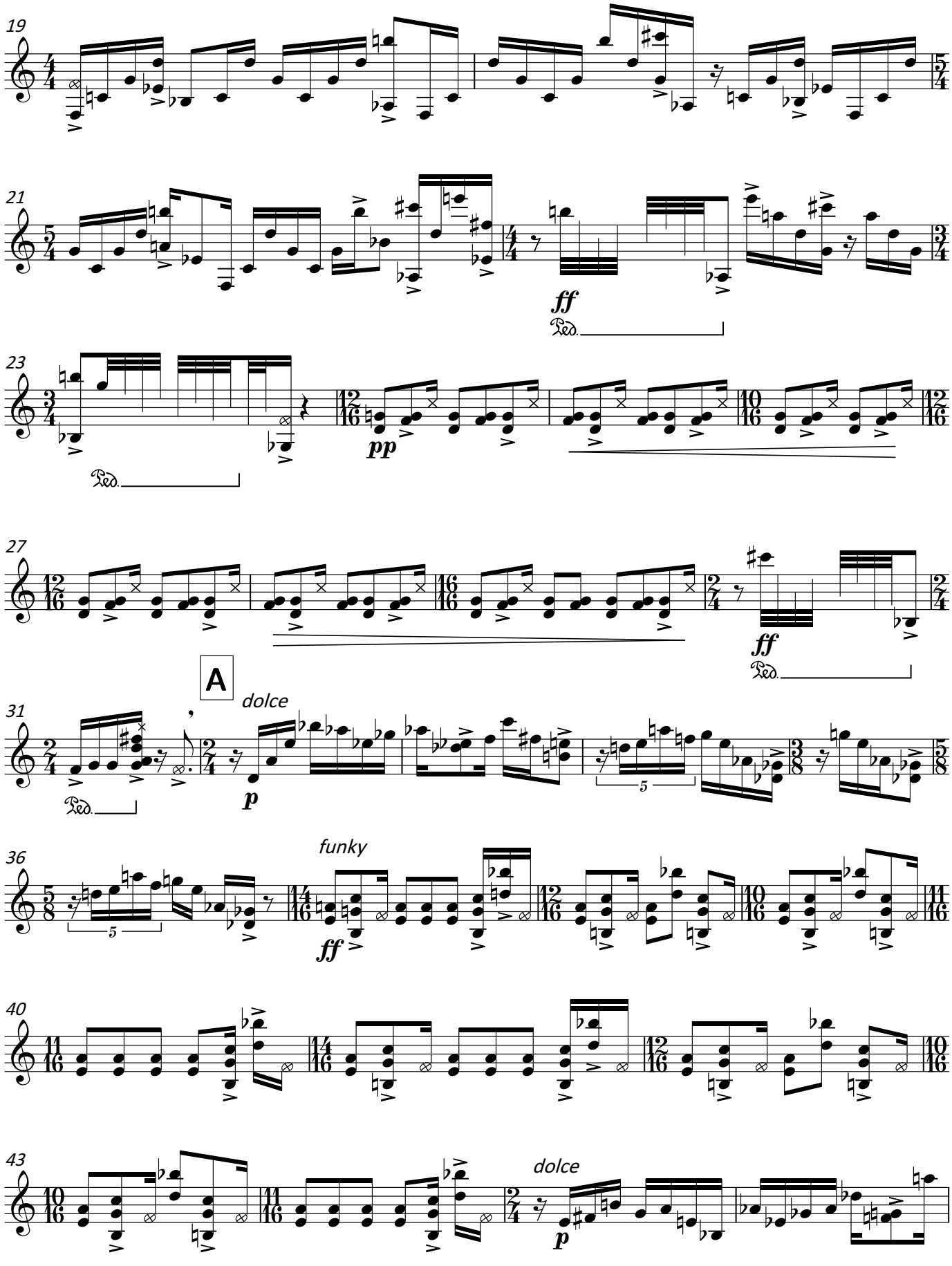
11

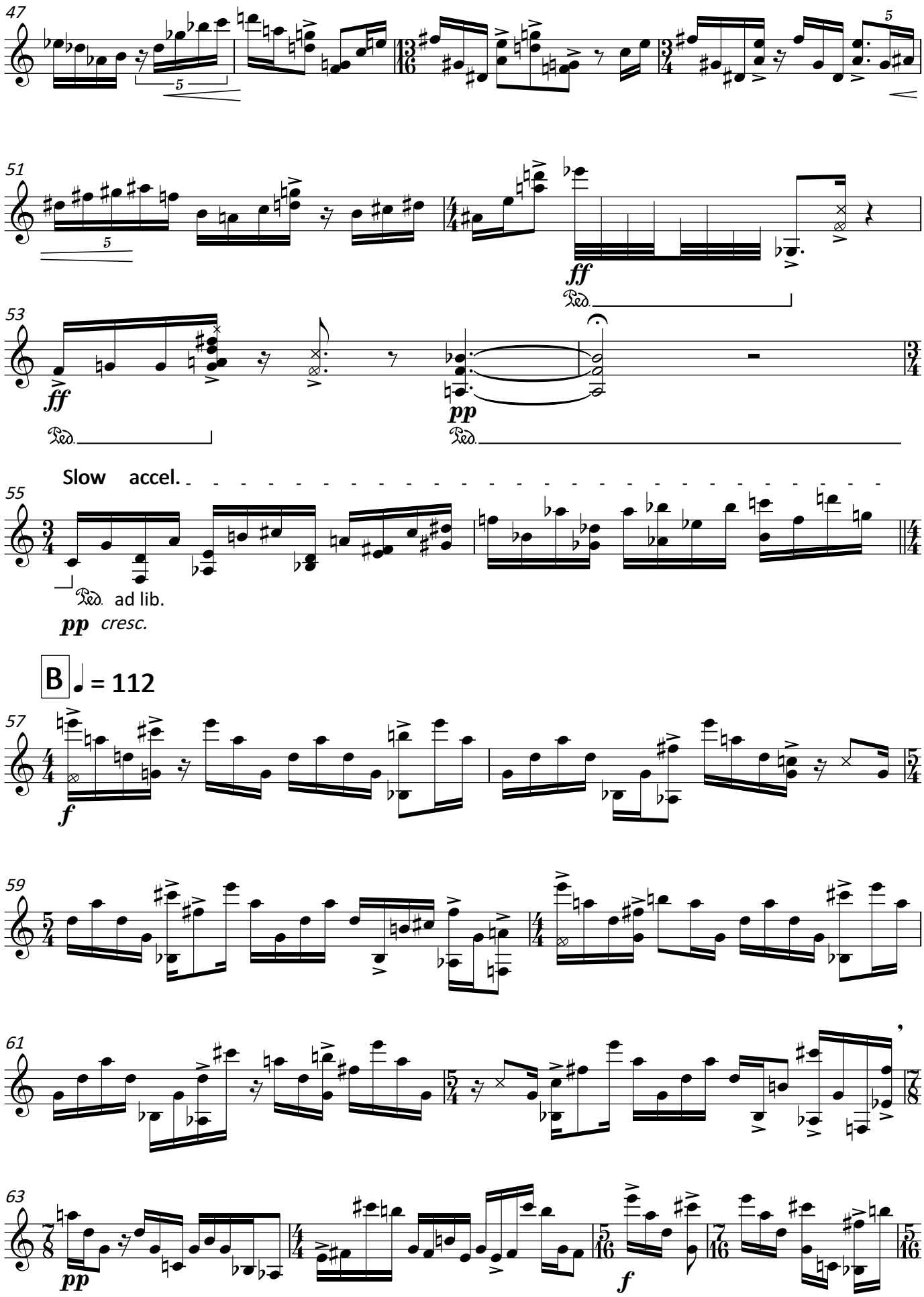
pp

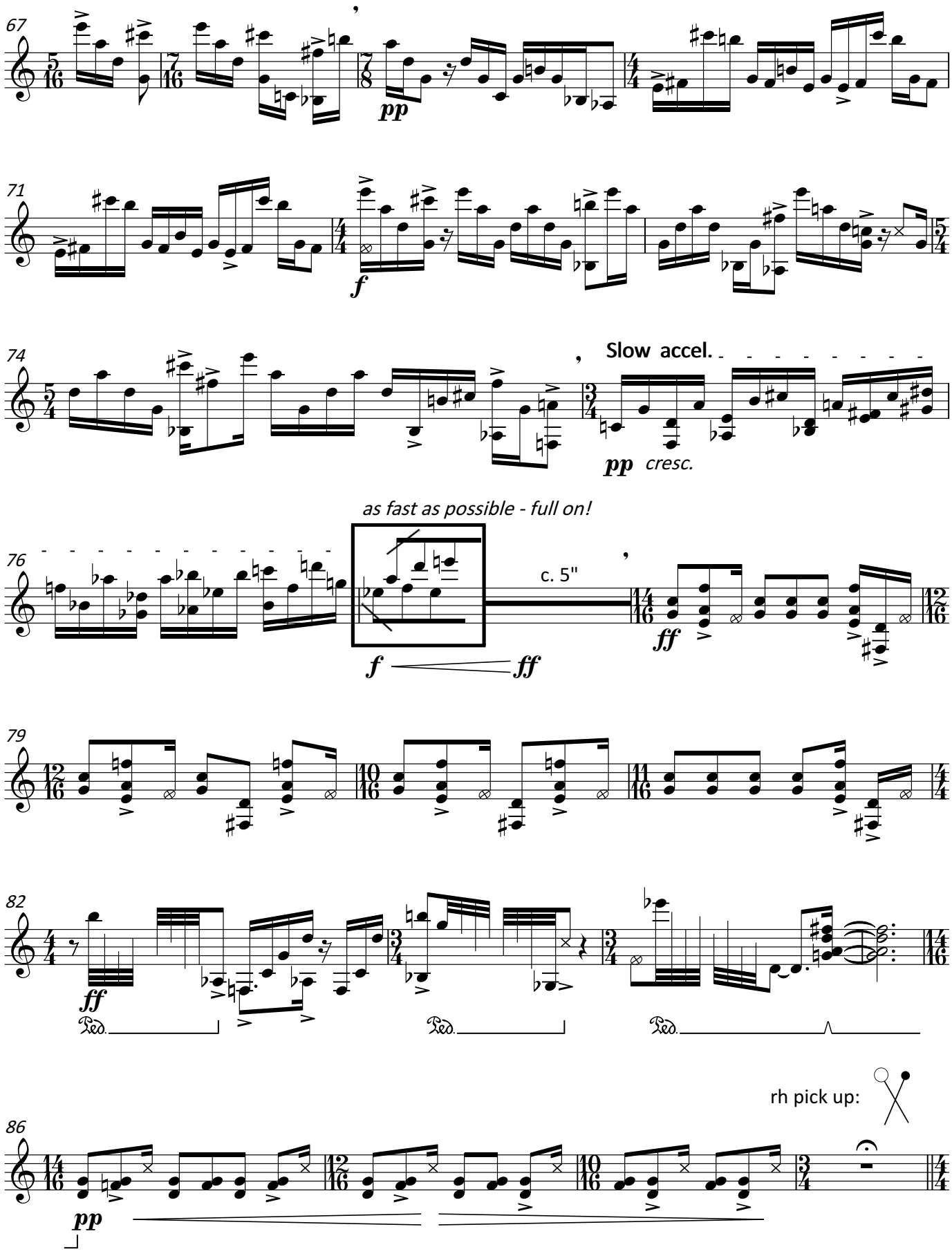
15

f

17

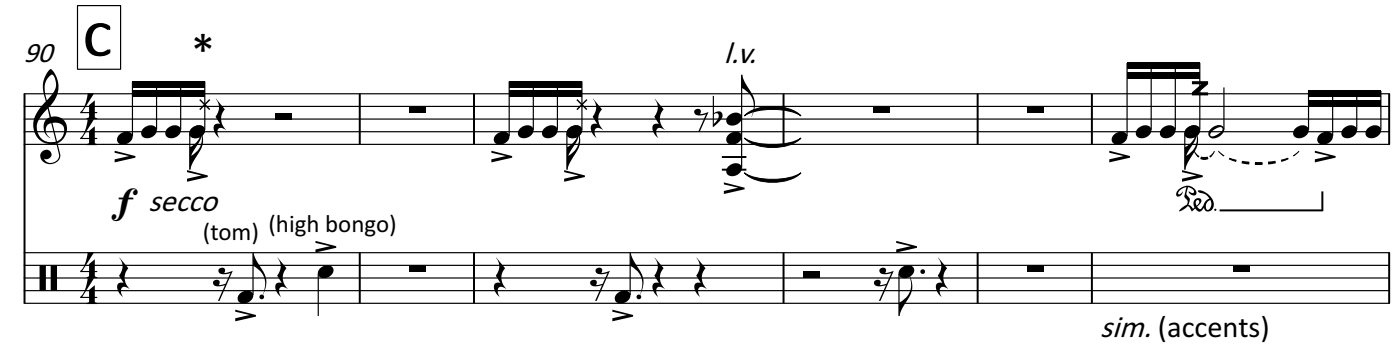

19
21
ff
23
pp
27
ff
A
31
dolce
p
36
funky
ff
40
43
dolce
p

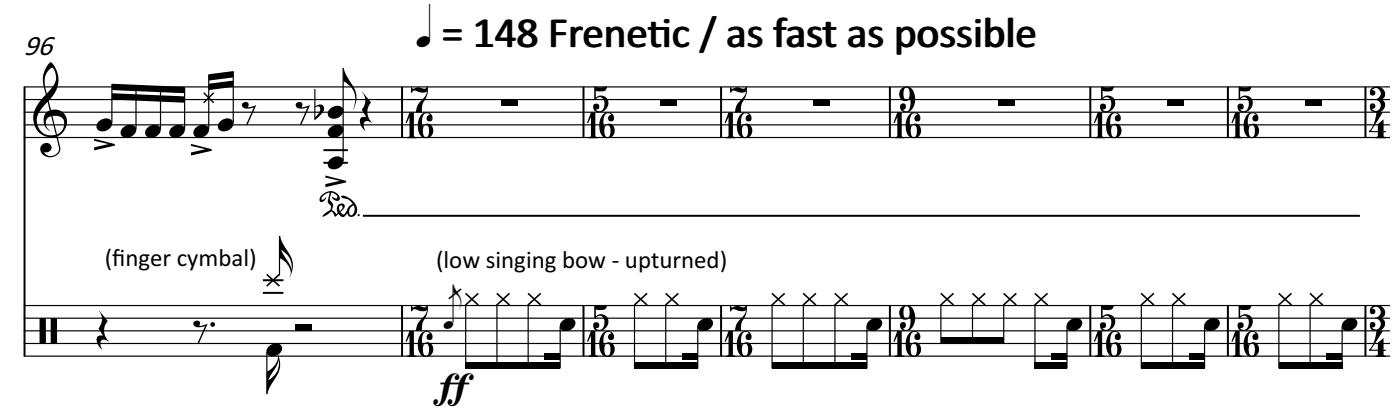

47
51
ff
53
ff
pp
Slow accel.
55
ad lib.
pp cresc.
B
♩ = 112
57
f
59
61
63
pp
f

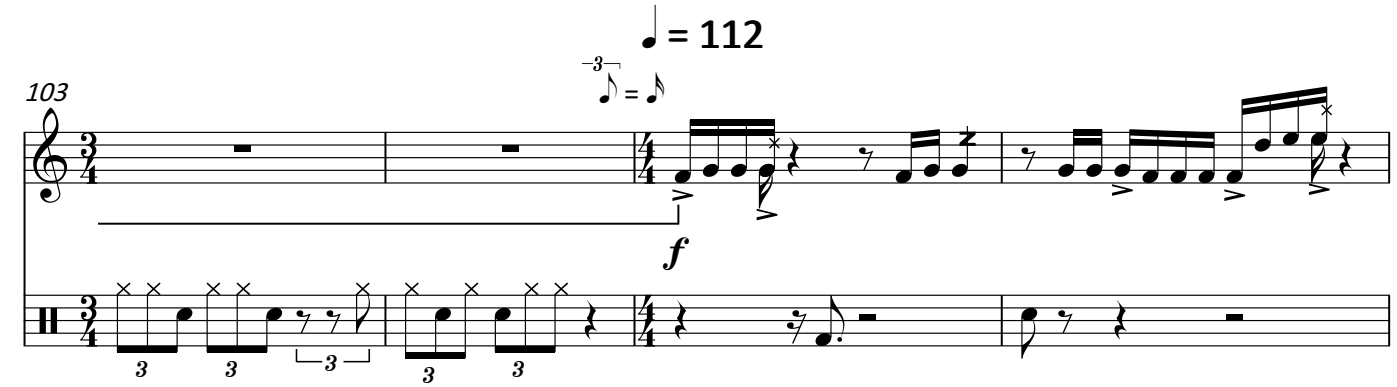

67
pp
71
f
74
Slow accel.
pp cresc.
as fast as possible - full on!
76
c. 5"
f ff
ff
79
82
ff
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
rh pick up:
86
pp

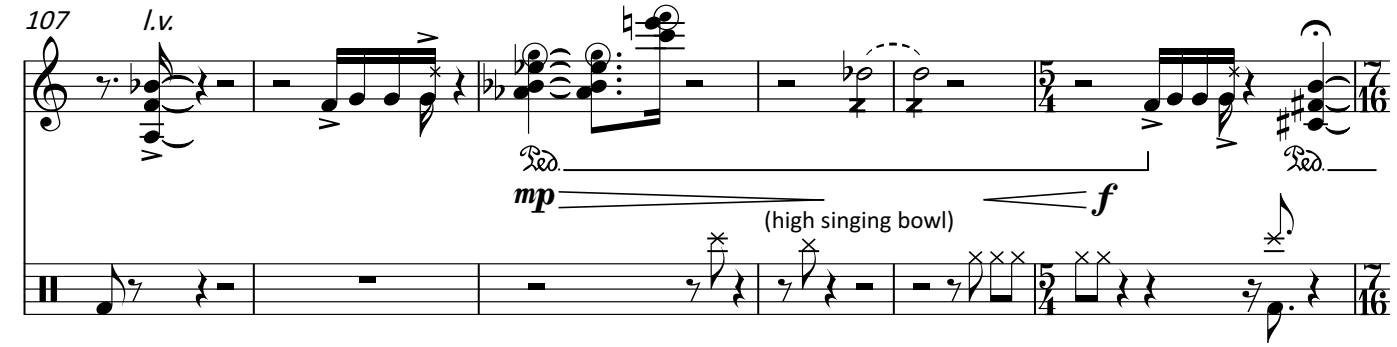
(♩ = 112)

RH: med/hard mallet, brass glock mallet or triangle beater
LH: 2x med/hard mallets

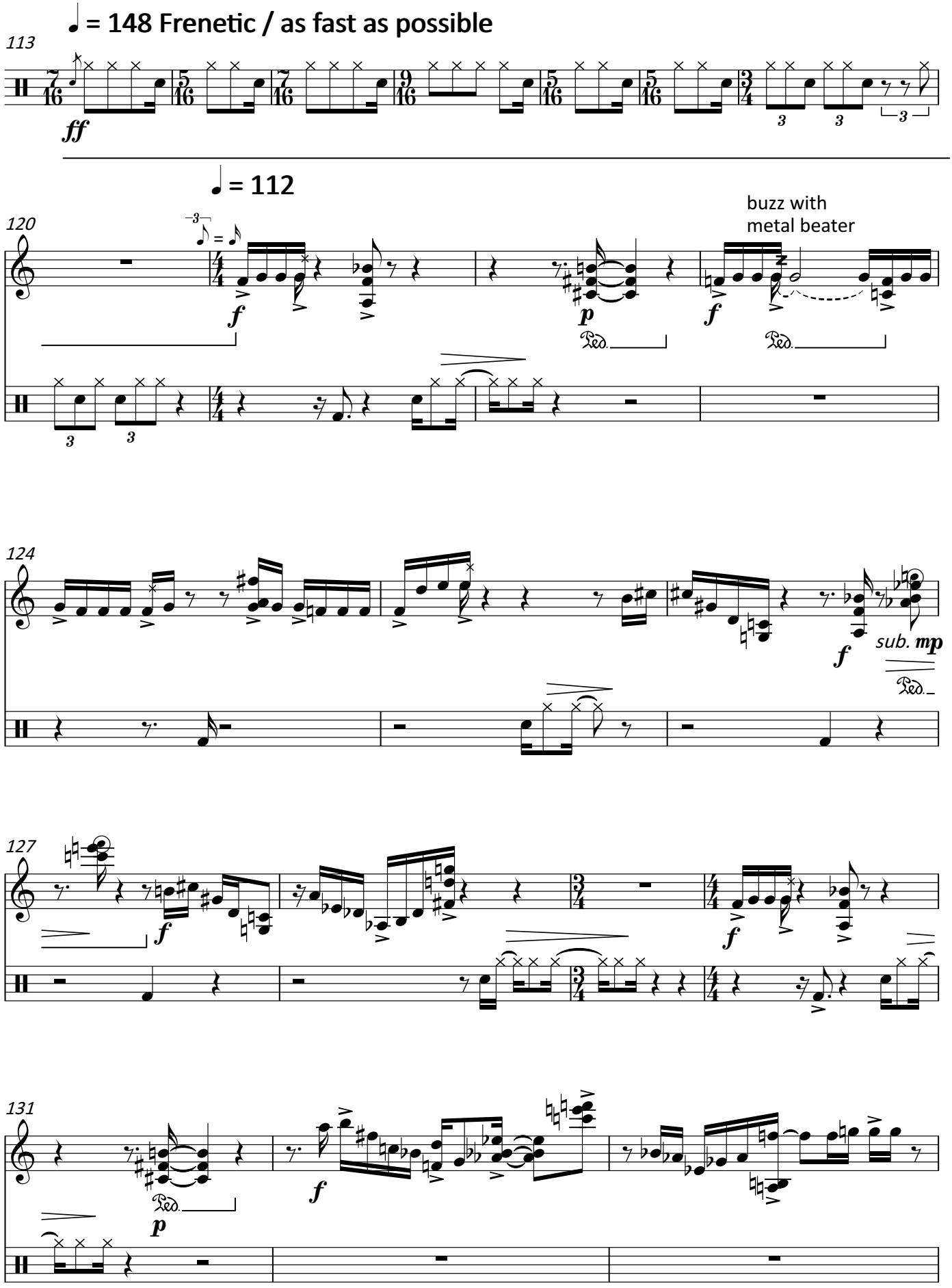


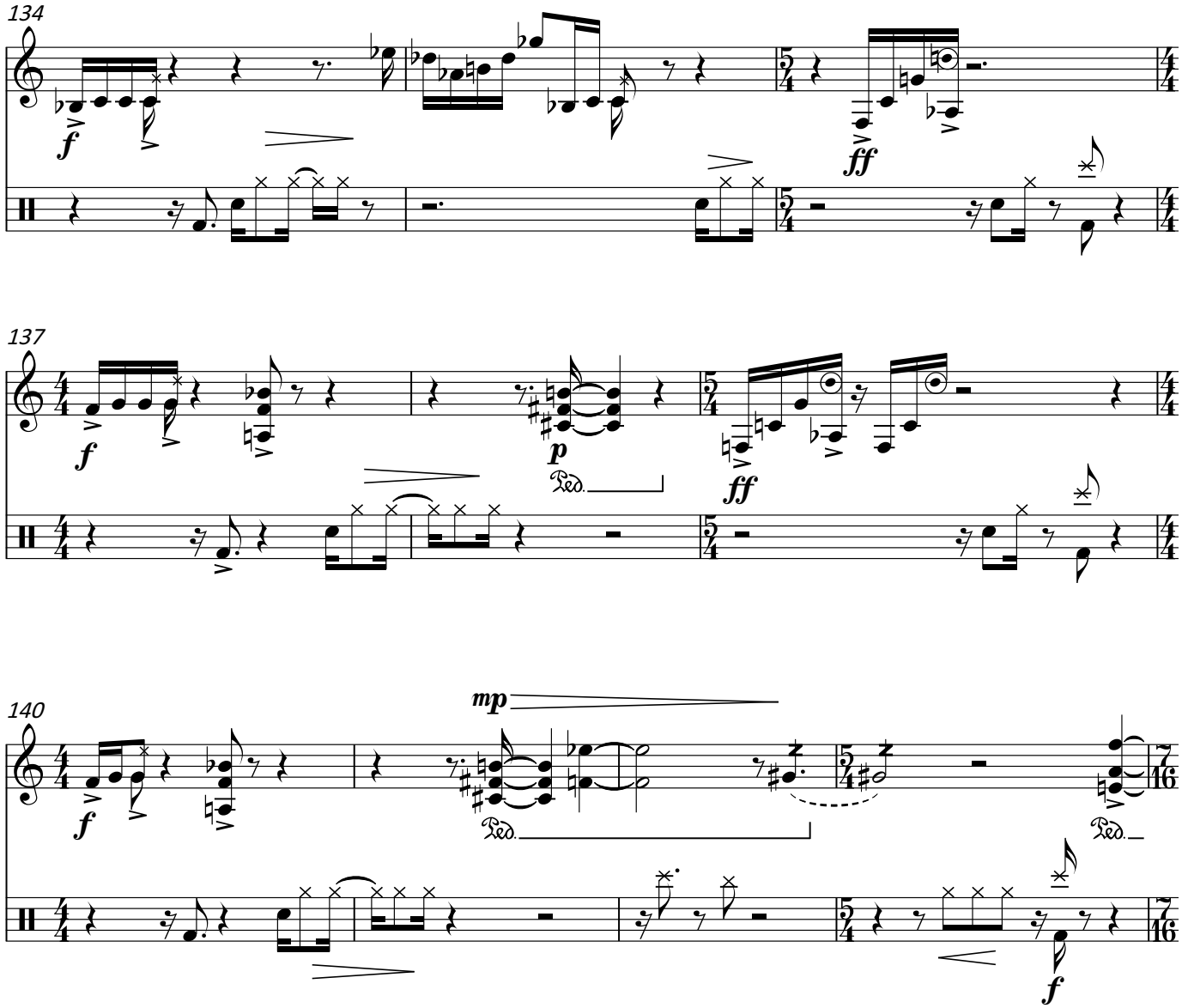


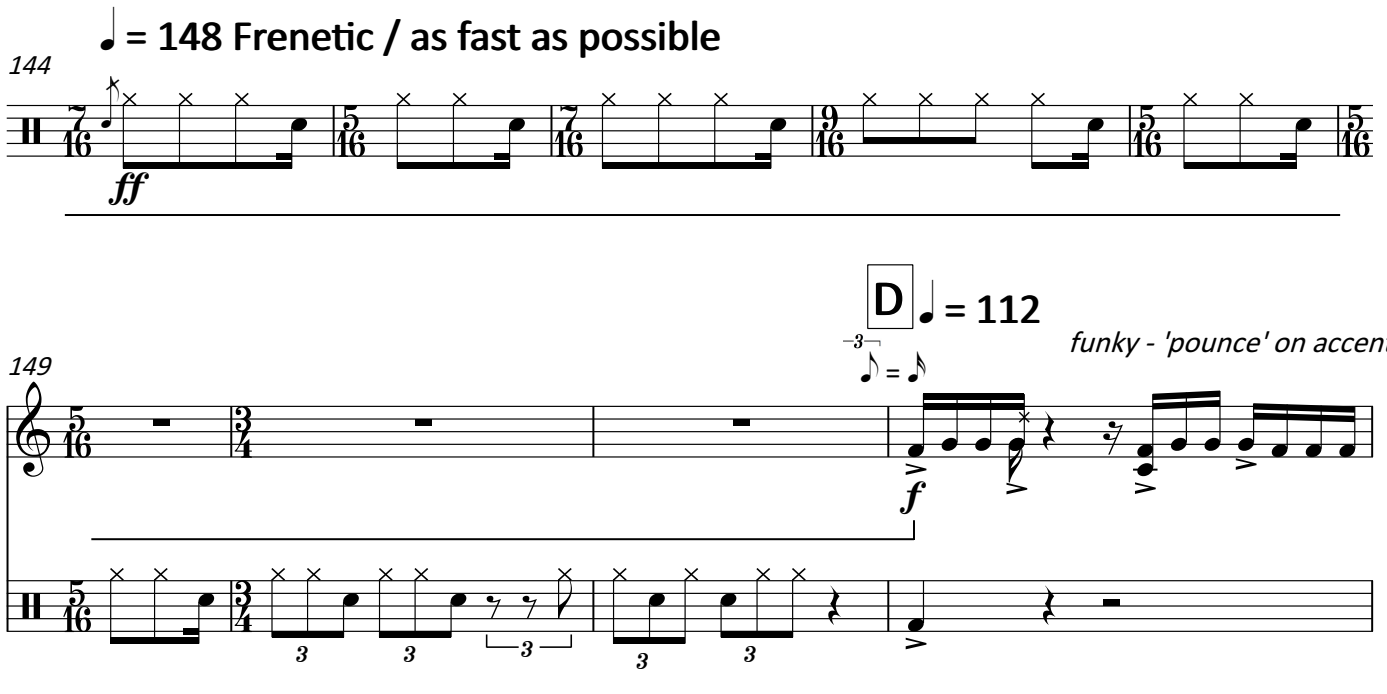


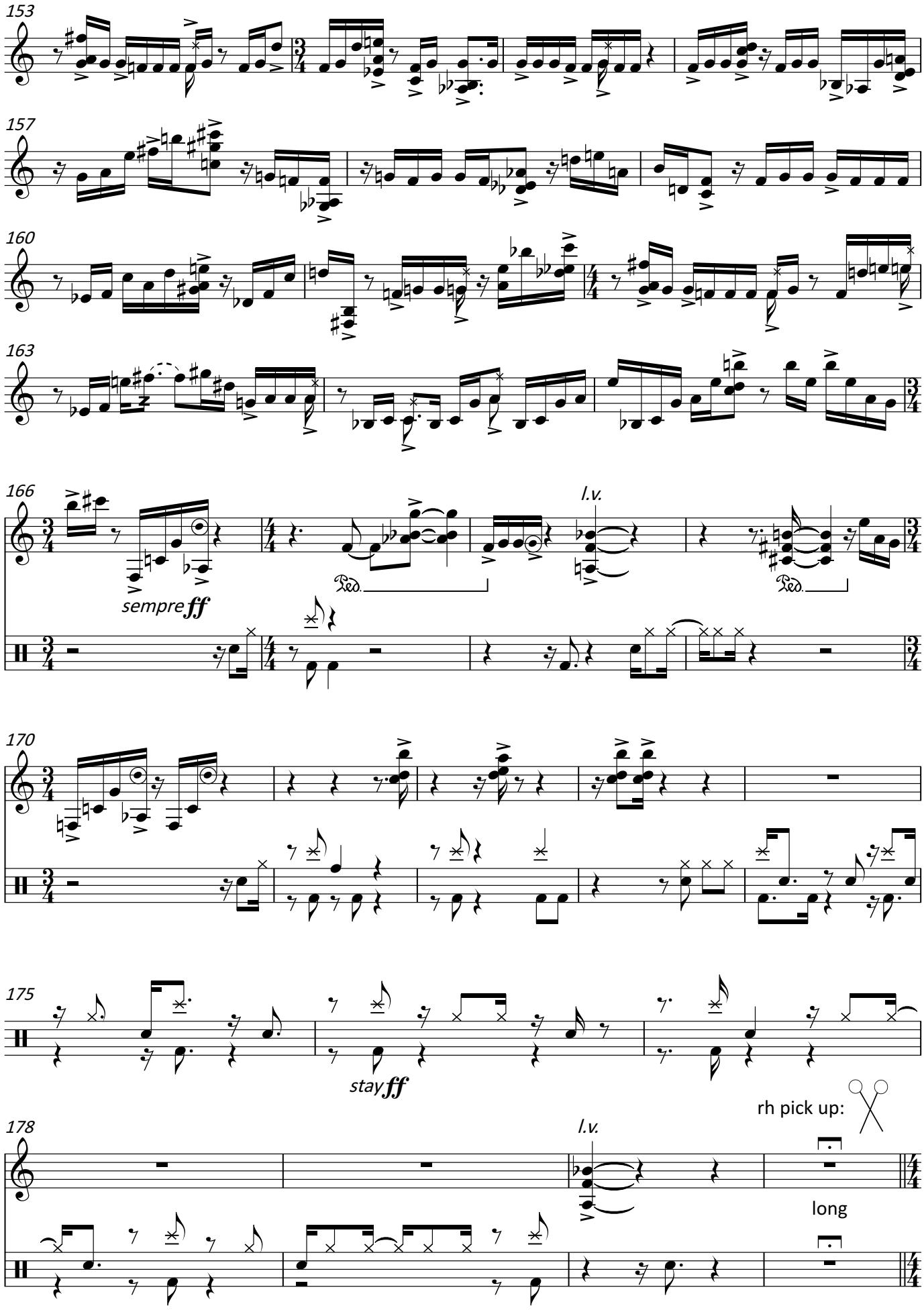
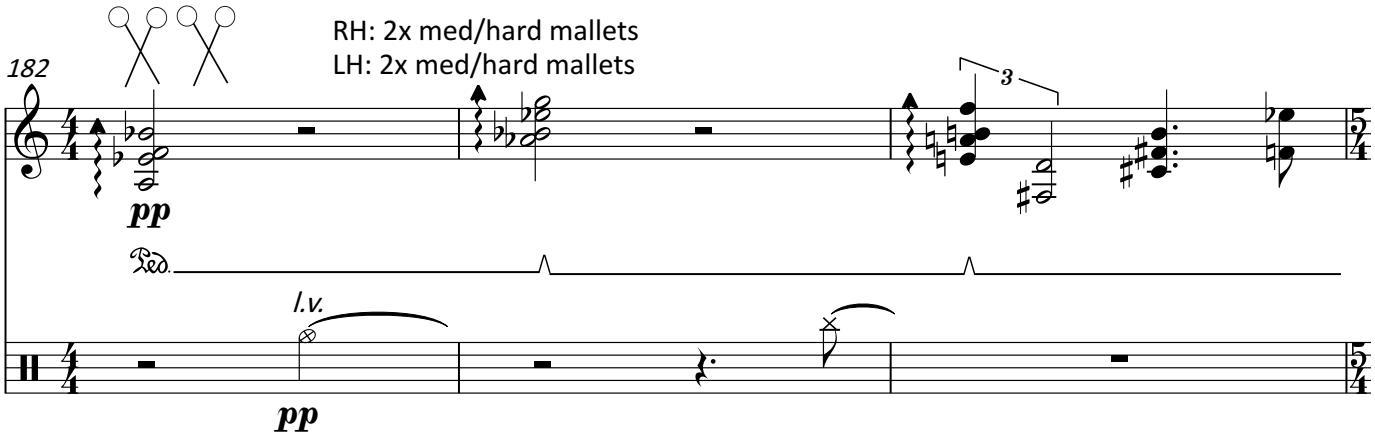
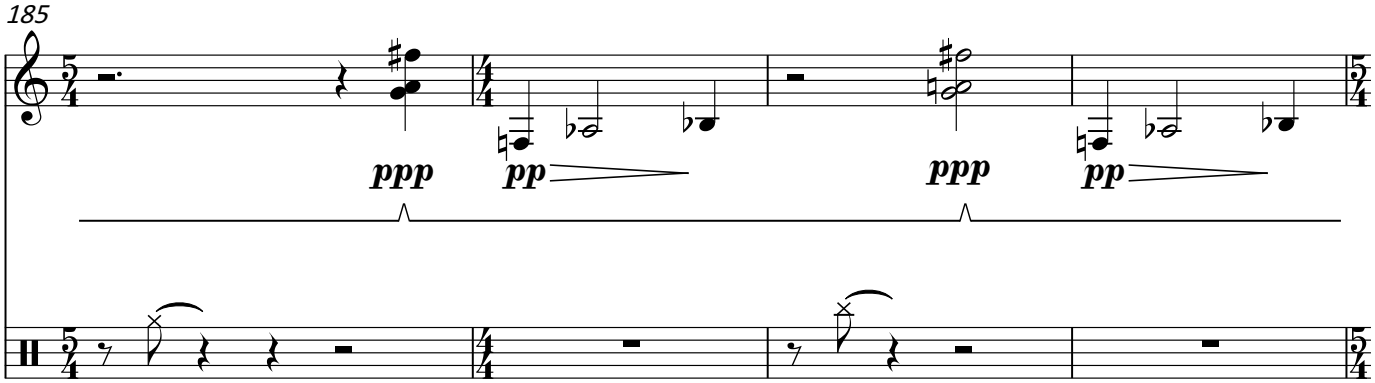
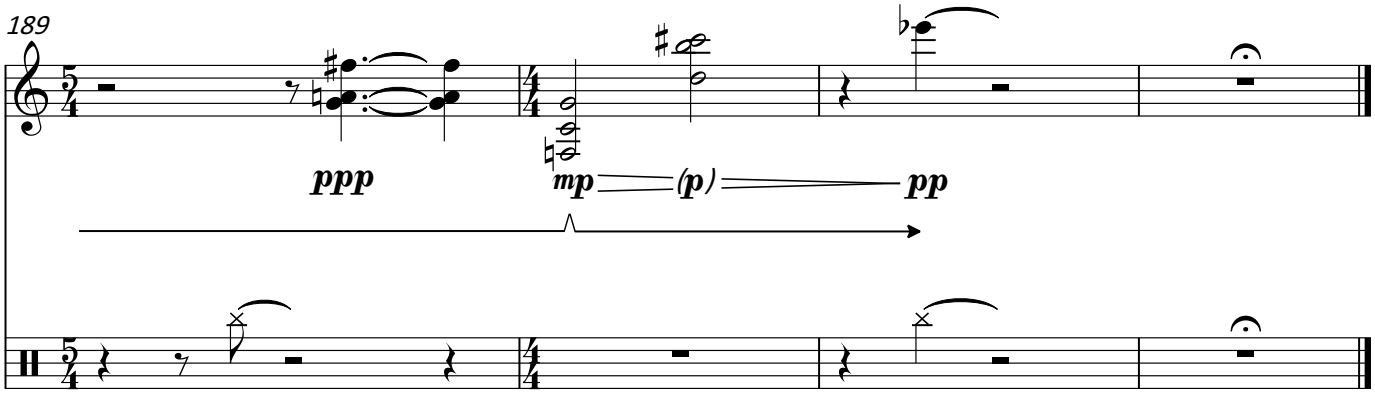


*Note: all 'dead strokes' in the context of this main motif involve the glock mallet/triangle beater. The left hand mallet also plays the same vibraphone bar simultaneously.


♩ = 148 Frenetic / as fast as possible
113
ff
♩ = 112
120
f
p
f
buzz with
metal beater
Ped.
Ped.
124
f
sub. mp
Ped.
127
f
f
131
Ped.
p
f


134
137
140
mp
Ped.


♩ = 148 Frenetic / as fast as possible
144
149
D
♩ = 112
funky - 'pounce' on accents


153
157
160
163
166
sempre ff
l.v.
Ped.
Ped.
170
175
stay ff
rh pick up:
178
l.v.
long

E ♩ = 56 Meditative, molto rubato