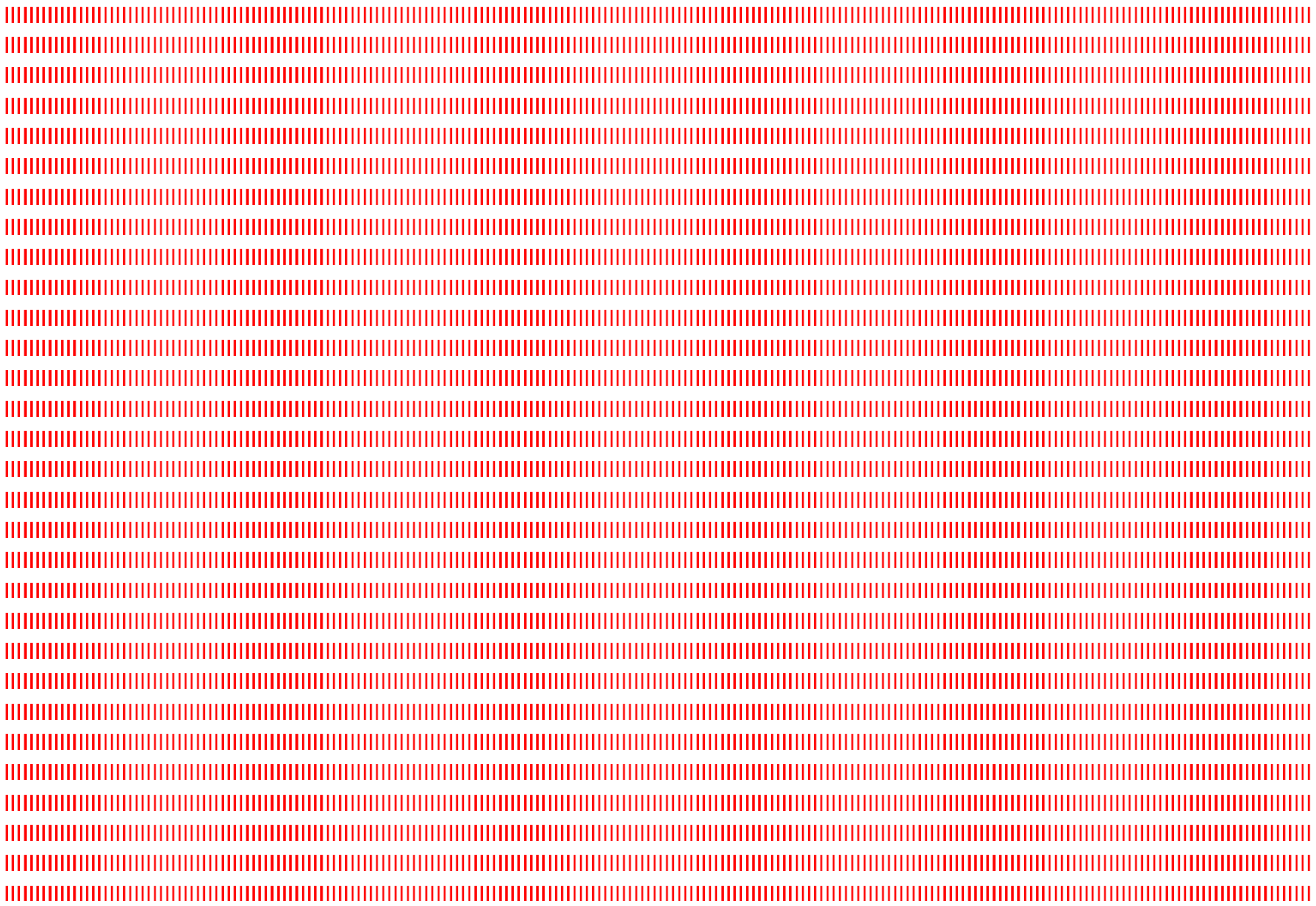


something is happening - for flute, piano, electric guitar, and cello - Jack Langdon (2020)

something is happening

for flute, piano, electric guitar, and cello

to Ensemble Dal Niente

Jack Langdon (2020)

program note:

This work was composed during June 2020 amidst the tumult and conflict that this summer will undoubtedly become remembered for. I started writing this piece while quarantined in Chicago, in near total isolation, but finished the majority of the material while on the road between Chicago and Missoula, Montana. Spending time in campgrounds and attempting to remain isolated during my travels, I fixated on the mysteries of change and conflict that unite our time to the times of generations past, and which undeniably will unite us with generations in the future. For much of my young life, I felt that nothing was happening at a great detriment to all—passively watching the world happen as if it were a film in a movie theater. Now I feel as if something is happening.

This piece is a poetic occurance of my reflections on change, stasis, interior/exterior, autonomy/heteronomy, nostalgia, and utopia. It is not methodological nor is it particularly conceptual. It is not attempting to demonstrate anything other than itself.

Sincerest gratitude to Ensemble Dal Niente and DePaul University for facilitating the creation and performance of this work.

materials required:

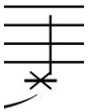
1. *three handheld am/fm radios*
2. *E-bow and drumstick for guitarist*
3. *flutist plays bass flute and piccolo*

performance notes:

general

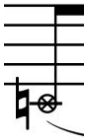
1. microtonal accidentals utilize the Helmholtz-Ellis Extended Just Intonation Accidentals system
    a. Link: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Just_intonation#/media/File:Helmholtz-Ellis_JI_pitch_notation_microtonal_accidents_legend.gif
2. the pianist, guitarist, and cellist all should have access to a portable am/fm radio for use
3. the quartet should be arranged so as to maximize the ability for the flutist and the guitarist to visually connect during the final section
4. italicized performance indications below dynamics are meant to act as subjective (for the performer), poetic evocations for playing technique - they vary in levels of abstraction and ought to be considered as an additional parameter for reflection in preparing this piece

flute



cross notehead = breath through flute only, with mouth completely covering embouchure hole, fingering notated pitch (no pitch sounding)

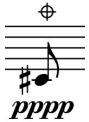
"up-bow/down-bow" = corresponds to "inhale/exhale" breath into/out through flute



x-circle notehead = breath with clear pitch

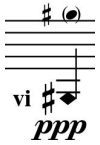
piano

encircled dynamics: these pertain to the volume knob on the am/fm radio - *forte* = full volume
*related, dashed hairpins denote volume adjustment on radio in particular

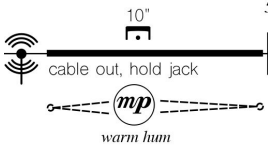


"mute" symbol above note = mute string on piano with flesh of finger - if this is impossible due to the particular piano being used, play as ordinary

electric guitar

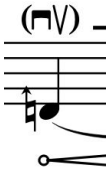


harmonic notation: the lower diamond notehead denotes the pitch location which should be played to create the above notated pitch shown in parenthesis - the number preceding the diamond notehead refers to the string which the harmonic should be played on

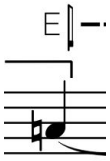


input jack hum technique: in measure 4, the guitarist must mute their amp, take out the input jack, hold the jack tip with their hand, then cresc./descresc. with their amp, then silently reinsert the jack into their guitar.

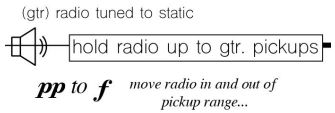
encircled dynamics: in this case, refers to volume/gain control on the guitar amplifier



"upbow/downbow" sign = this sign denotes the usage of a drumstick as a "guitar bow" at the notated pitch

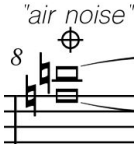


"E-bow sign" = this refers to the usage of an e-bow for the duration of the notated pitch



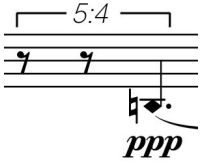
radio on pickups technique: this technique involves holding the radio near the guitar's pickups, which then cause radio interference, allowing for radio signals to be amplified by the guitar

cello



"air noise" technique: this technique is achieved by stopping the string with the right amount of pressure to "deaden" the string, only allowing for white noise to sound as a result. In this piece, this symbol is used in tandem with the square notehead, which indicates that the string should be "deadened."

MSP, MST, SP, ST = respectively "molto sul ponticello," "molto sul tasto," "sul ponticello," and "sul tasto."



harmonic notehead: the diamond notehead indicates that finger pressure appropriate for a harmonic to sound should be applied. In this piece, there are several instances where the resulting harmonic notation will result in a chaotic, uncontrollable, and fragile sounding result.

upward facing triangle notehead = highest note possible on notated strings

niente in radio part = turn off radio at coordinated point (in this case, synchronized with the pianist)

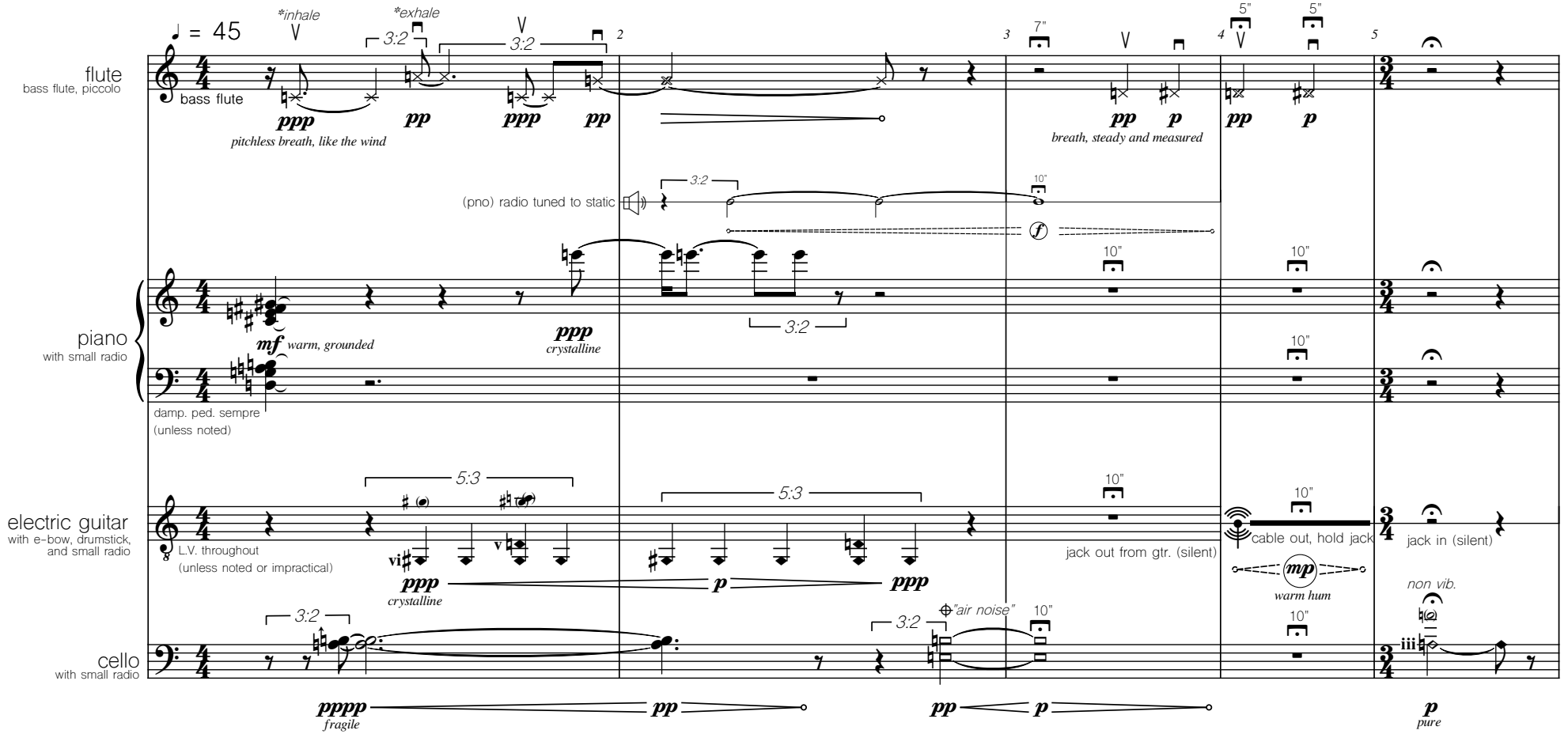
to Ensemble Dal Niente

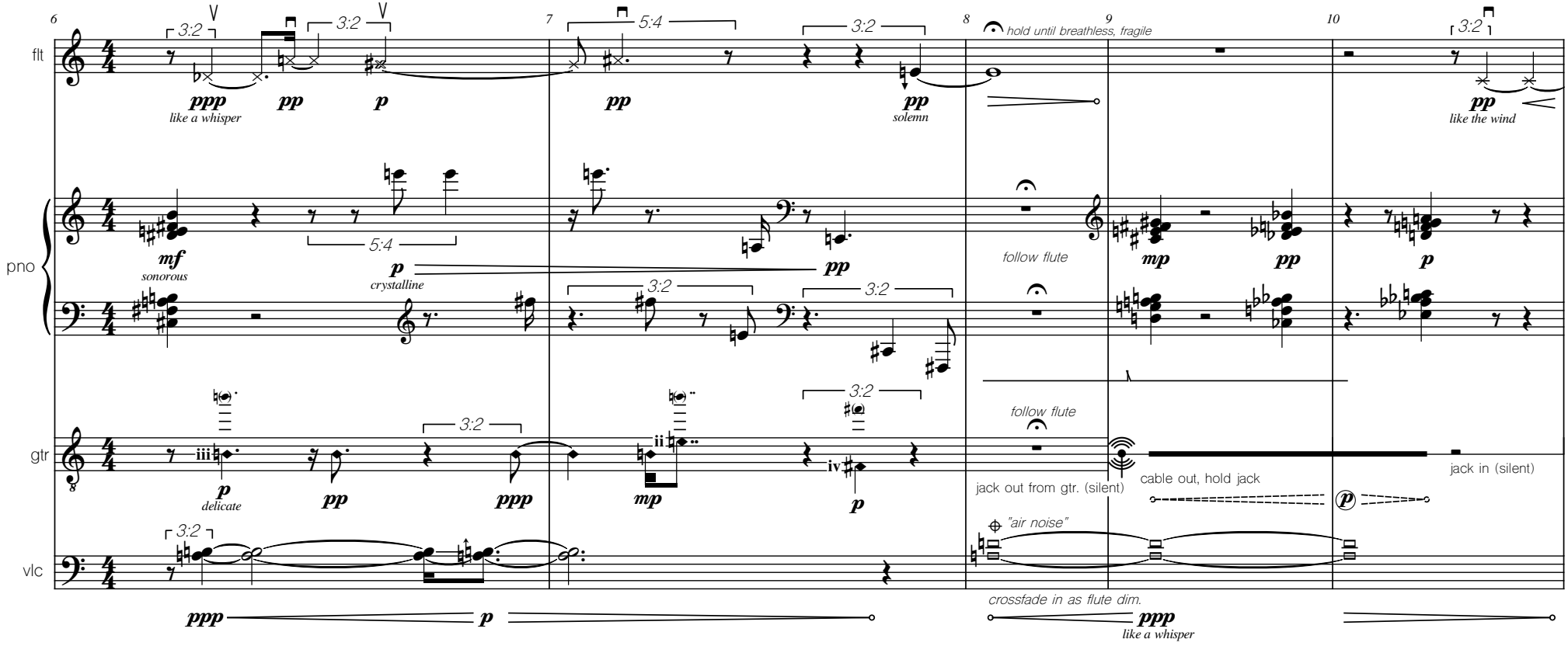
CONCERT SCORE

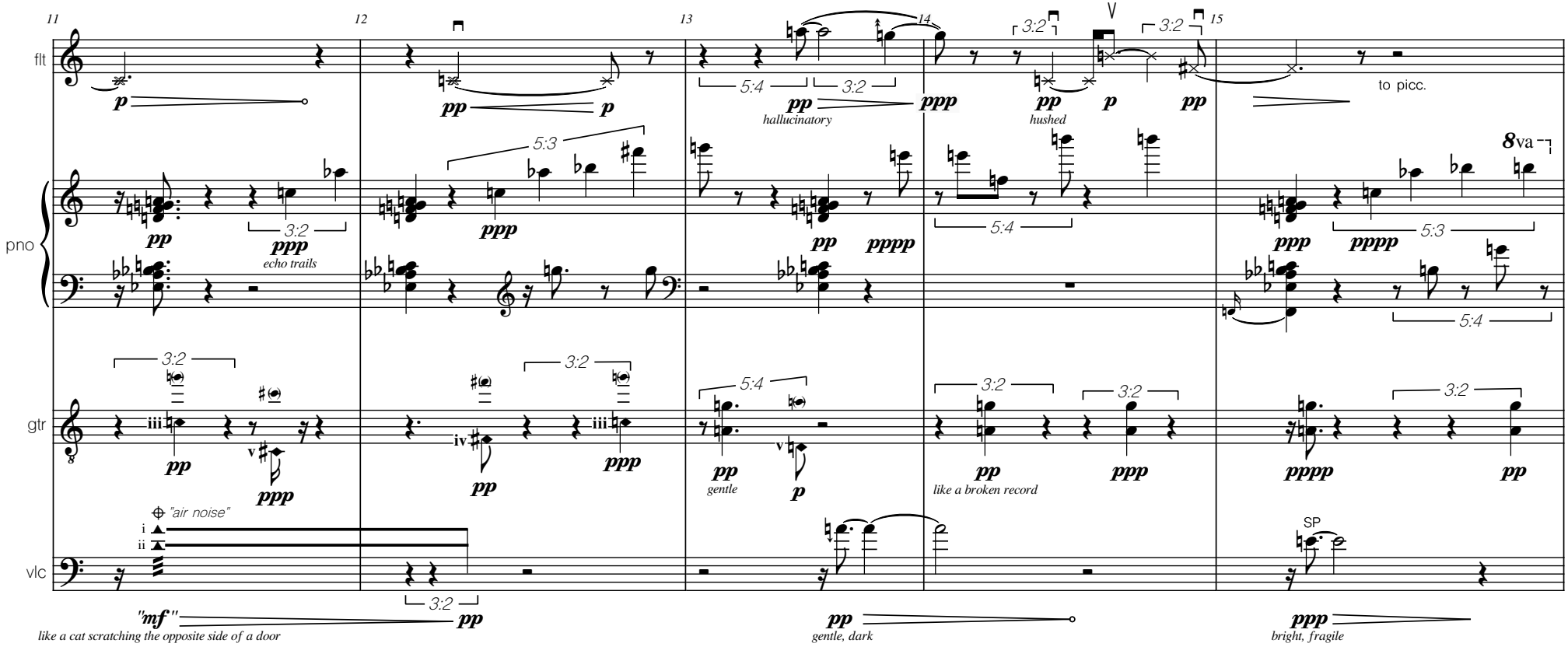
something is happening

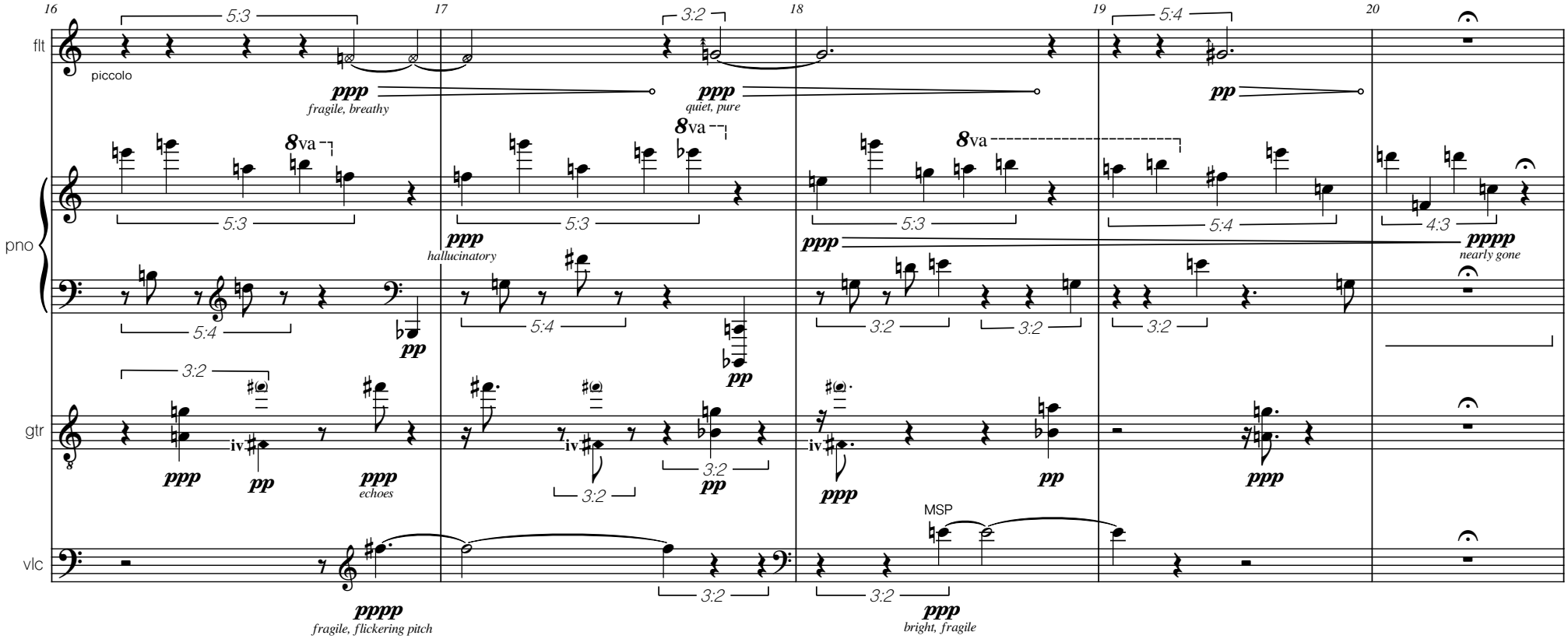
for flute, piano, electric guitar, and cello

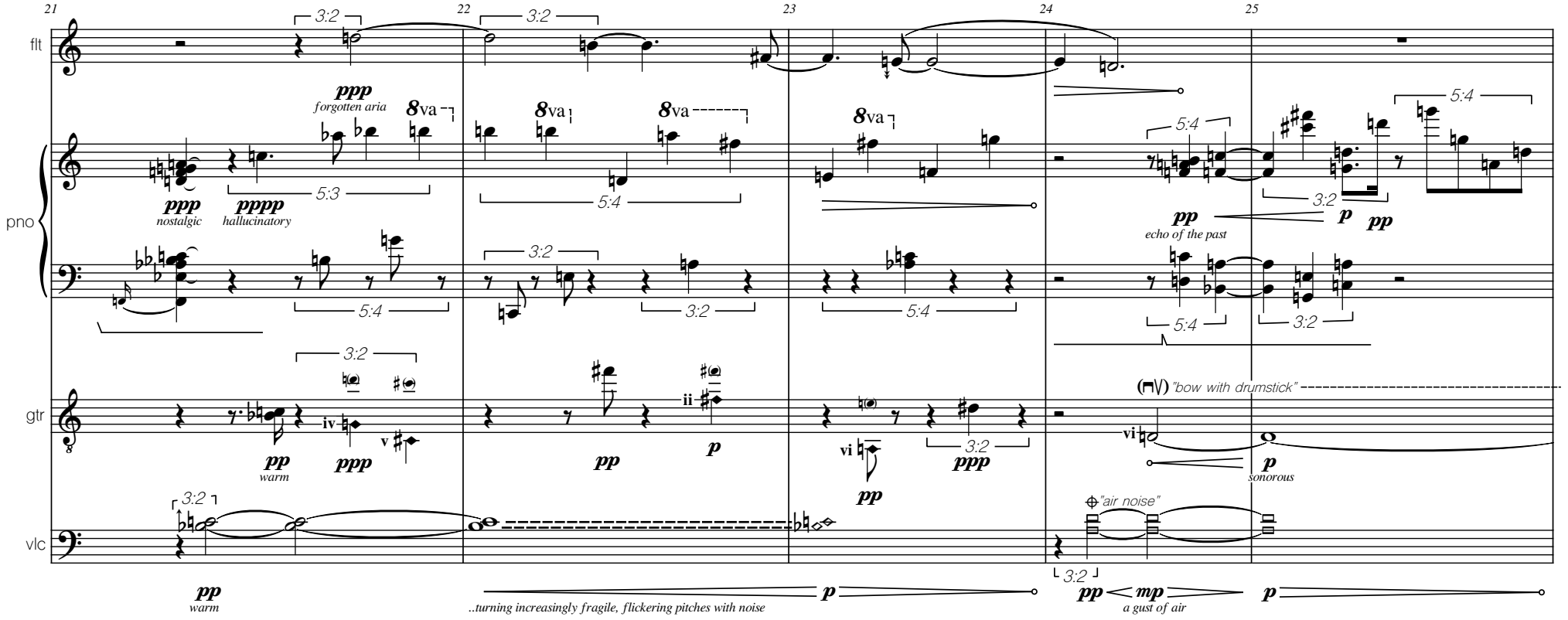
Jack Langdon (2020)

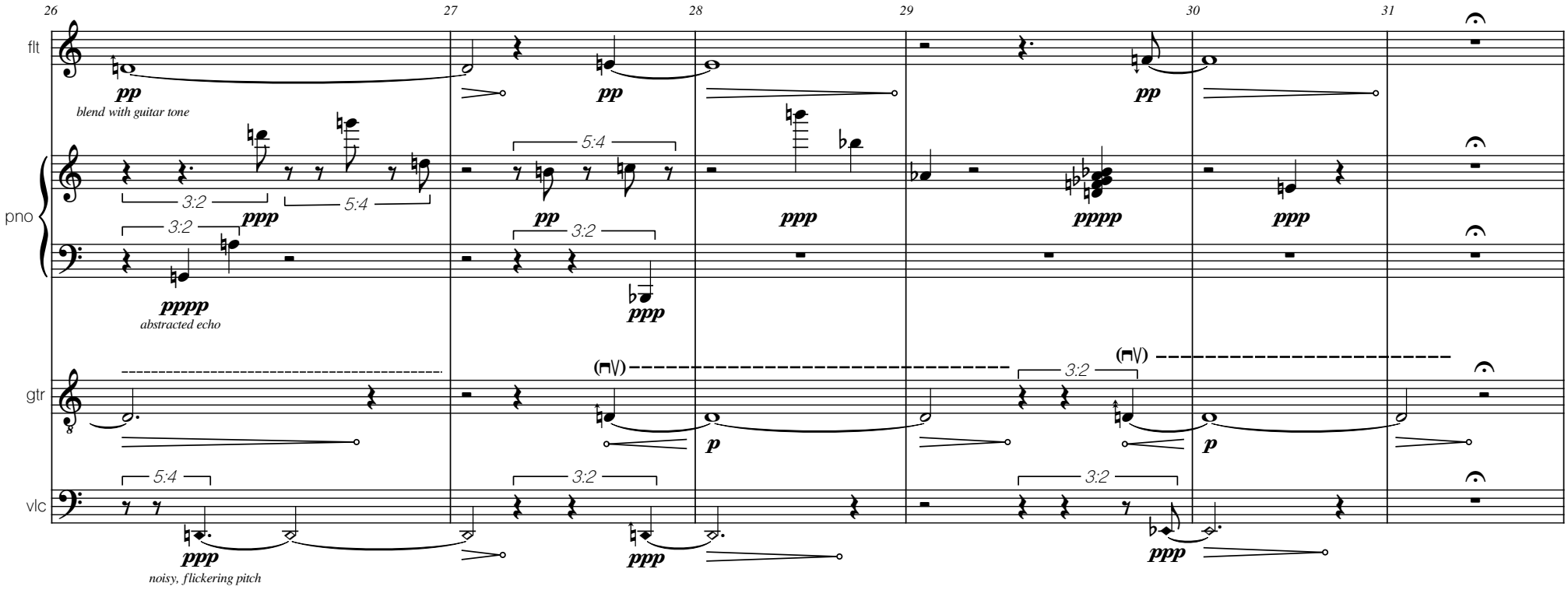


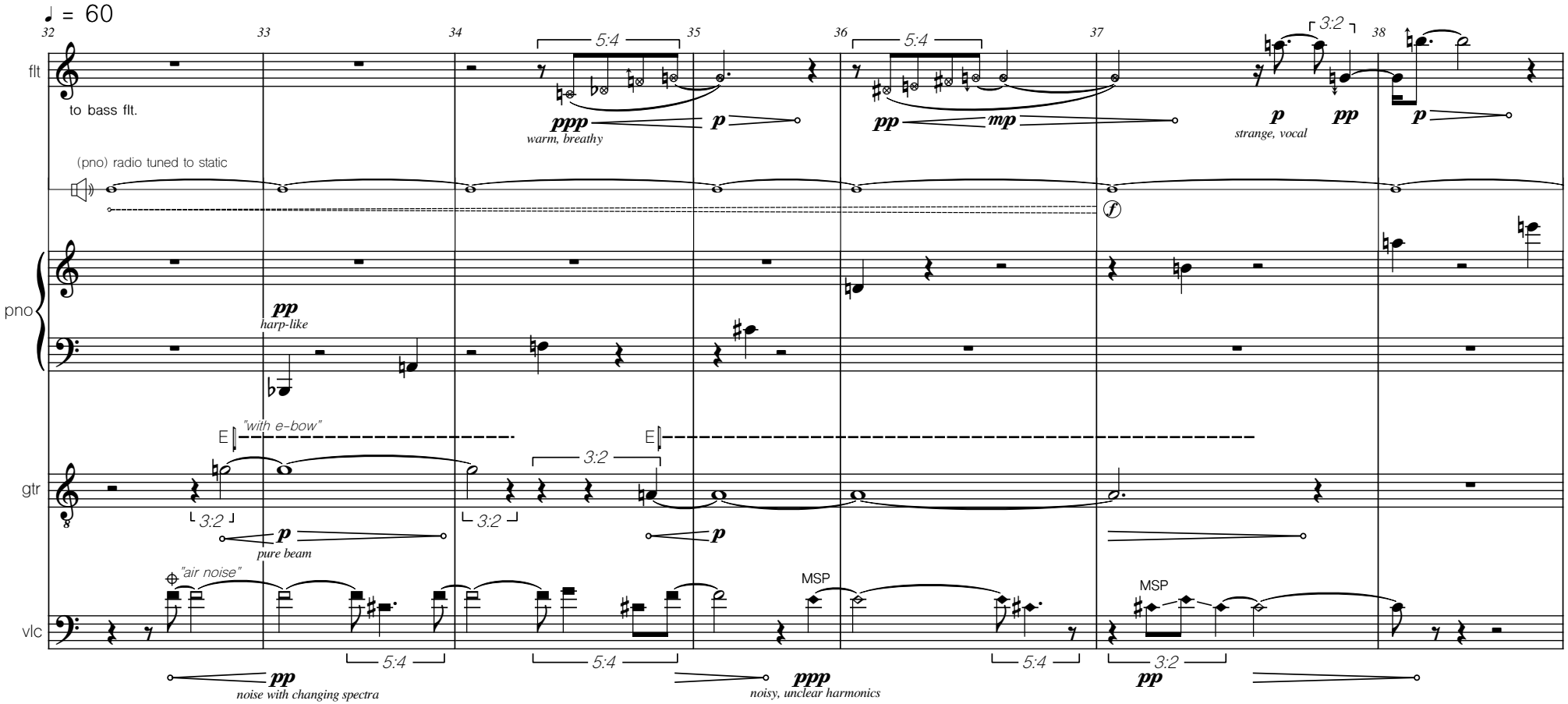

6
7
8
9
10
flt
pno
gtr
vlc
3:2
5:4
ppp
like a whisper
pp
p
mf
sonorous
crystalline
solemn
hold until breathless, fragile
follow flute
mp
like the wind
delicate
iii
ii
iv
jack out from gtr. (silent)
cable out, hold jack
jack in (silent)
"air noise"
crossfade in as flute dim.

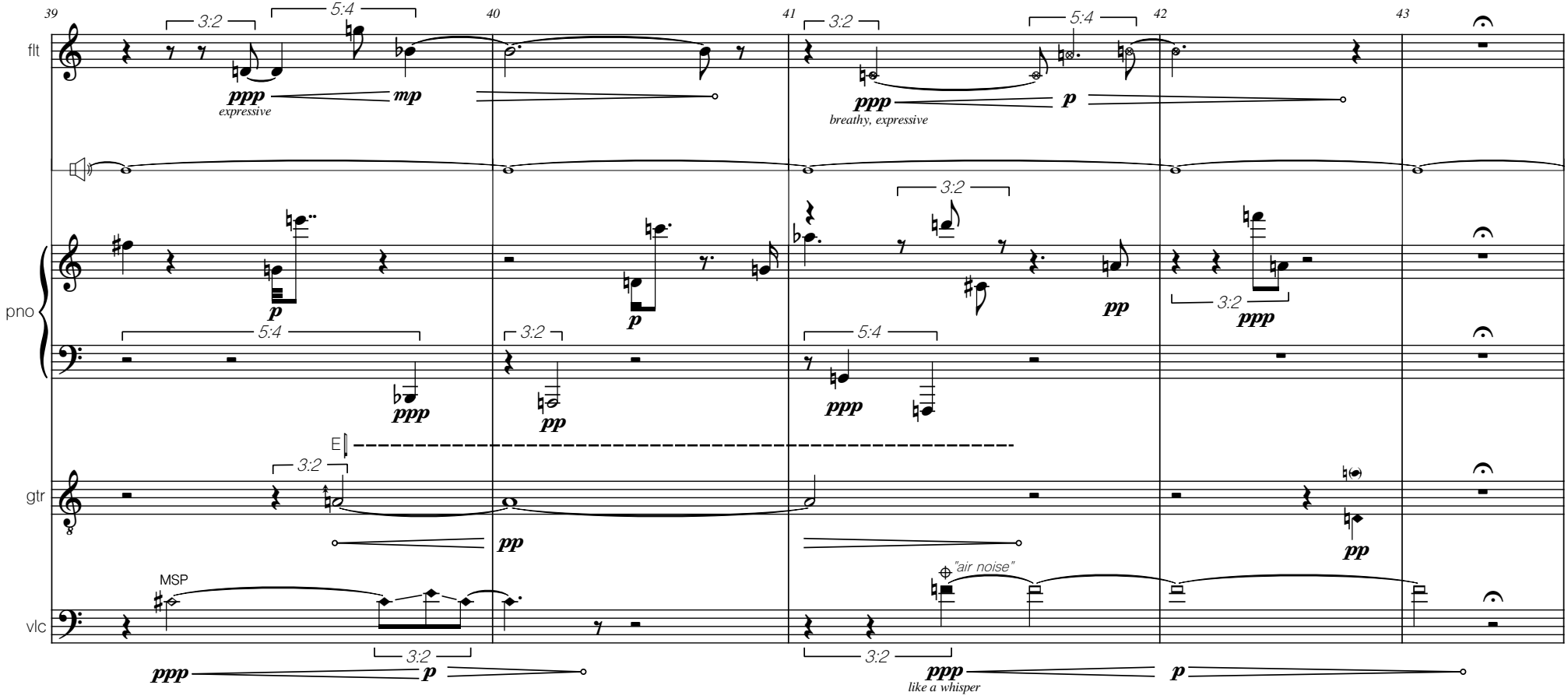

11
12
13
14
15
flt
pno
gtr
vlc
to picc.
hallucinatory
hushed
echo trails
gentle
like a broken record
"air noise"
SP
like a cat scratching the opposite side of a door
gentle, dark
bright, fragile

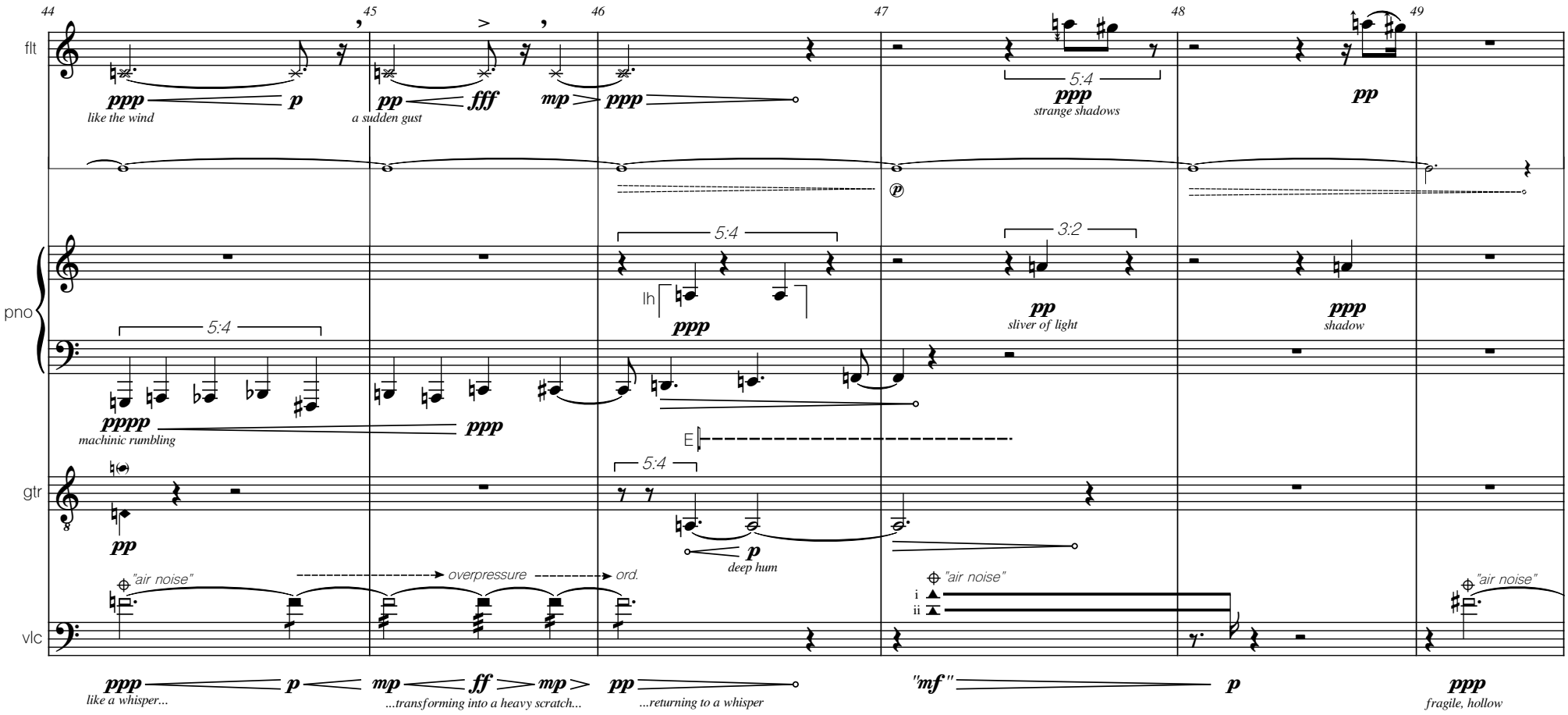

16
17
18
19
20
flt
piccolo
pno
gtr
vlc
5:3
3:2
5:4
4:3
ppp
fragile, breathy
quiet, pure
pp
8va
hallucinatory
pppp
nearly gone
iv
echoes
MSP
fragile, flickering pitch
bright, fragile

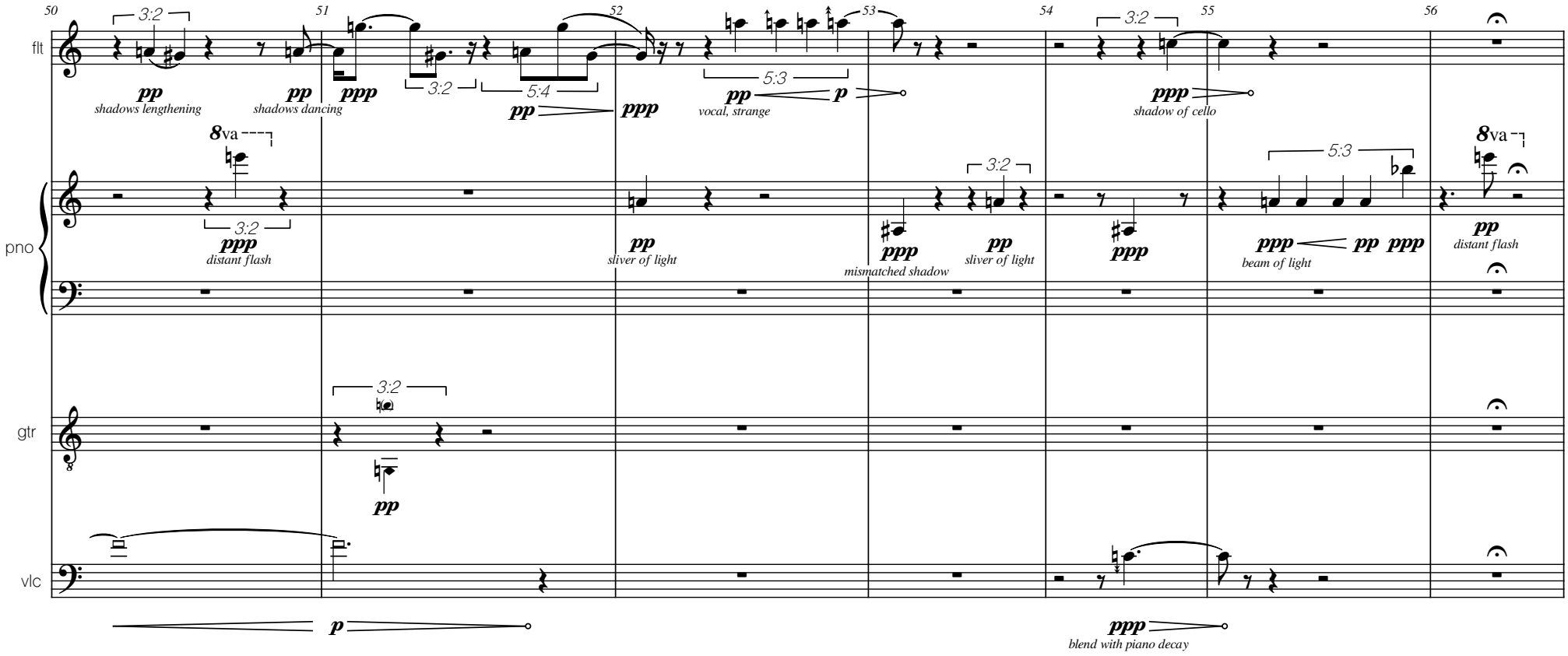

21
22
23
24
25
flt
pno
gtr
vlc
3:2
ppp
forgotten aria
8va
5:3
ppp
nostalgic
pppp
hallucinatory
5:4
pp
echo of the past
p
pp
iv
v
ii
vi
pp
warm
ppp
p
"bow with drumstick"
sonorous
"air noise"
pp
warm
..turning increasingly fragile, flickering pitches with noise
mp
a gust of air

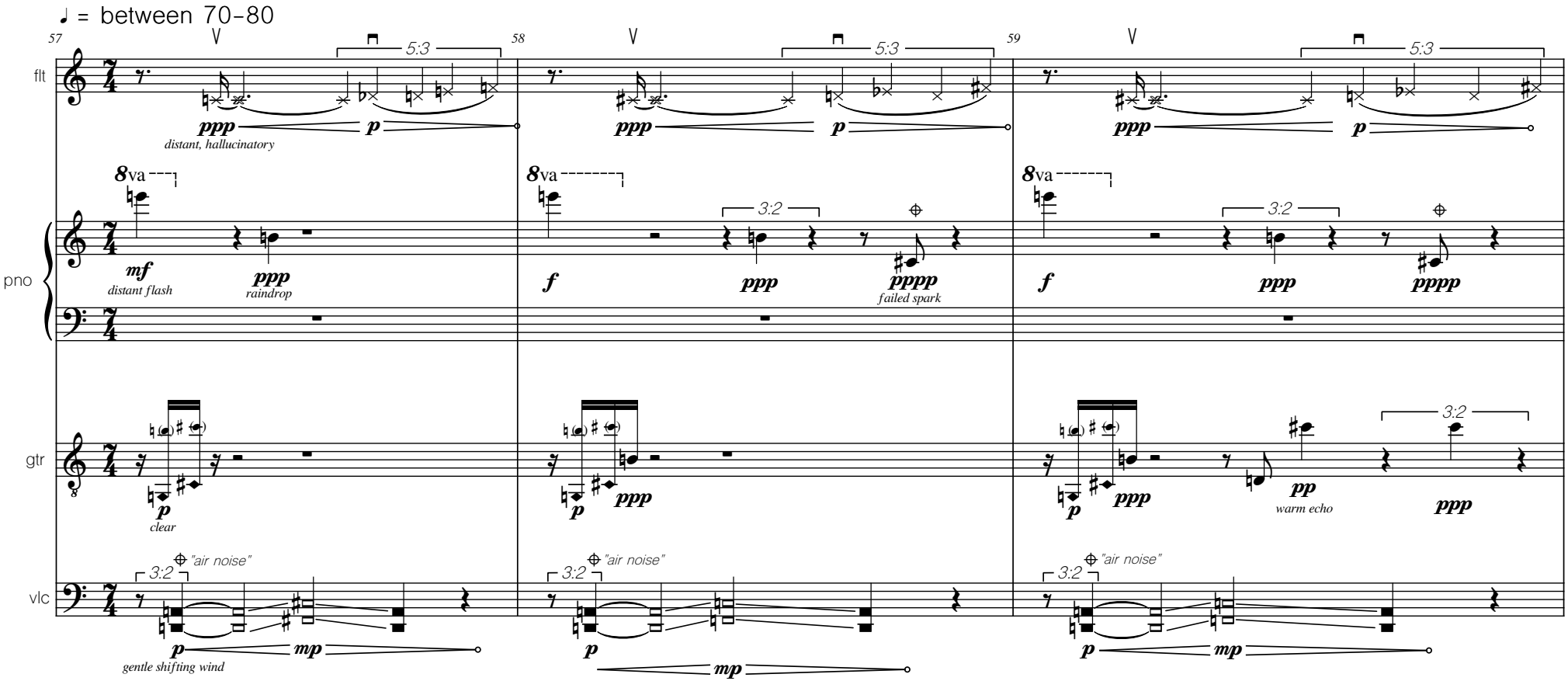

26
27
28
29
30
31
flt
pno
gtr
vlc
pp
blend with guitar tone
ppp
pppp
abstracted echo
p
noisy, flickering pitch
3:2
5:4

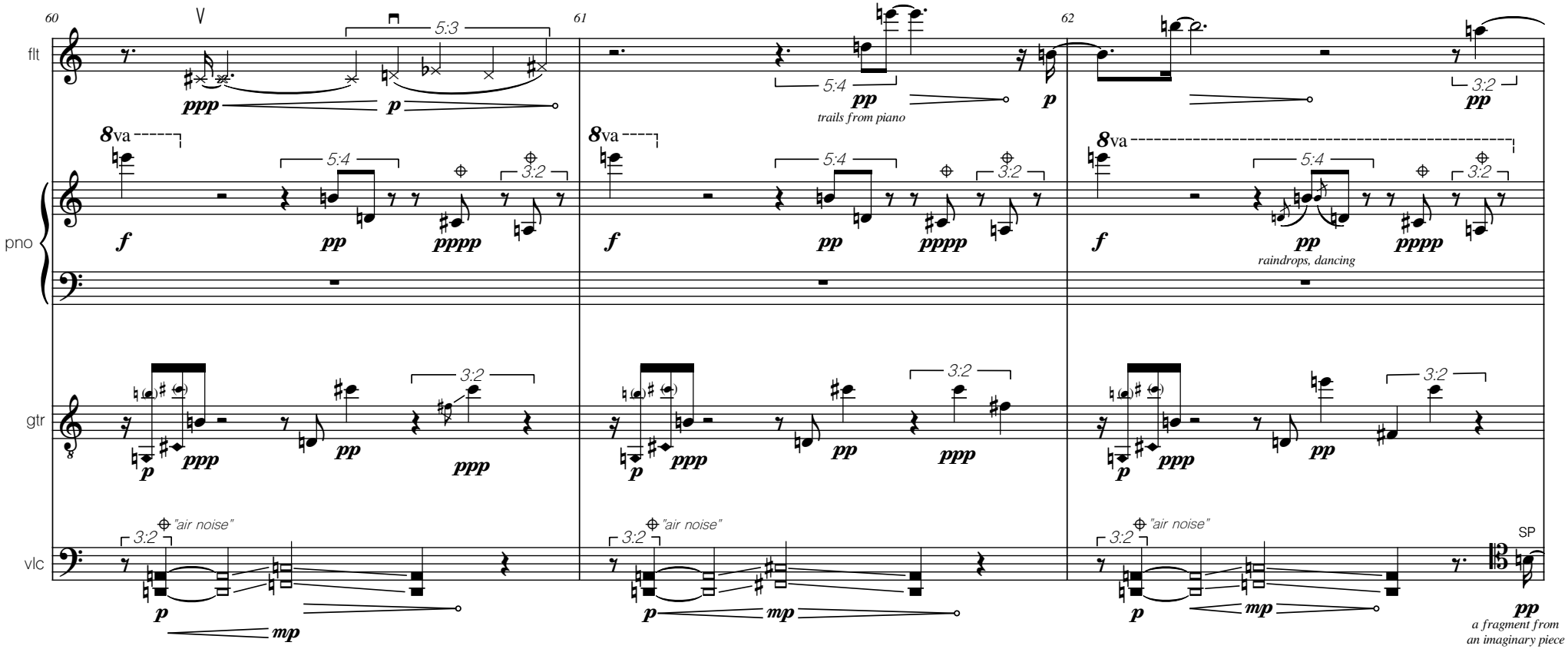

♩ = 60
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
flt
to bass flt.
5:4
ppp
warm, breathy
p
5:4
pp
mp
3:2
p
strange, vocal
pp
p
(pno) radio tuned to static
f
pno
pp
harp-like
E
"with e-bow"
E
3:2
gtr
3:2
3:2
p
pure beam
p
"air noise"
MSP
MSP
vlc
5:4
5:4
5:4
3:2
pp
noise with changing spectra
ppp
noisy, unclear harmonics
pp

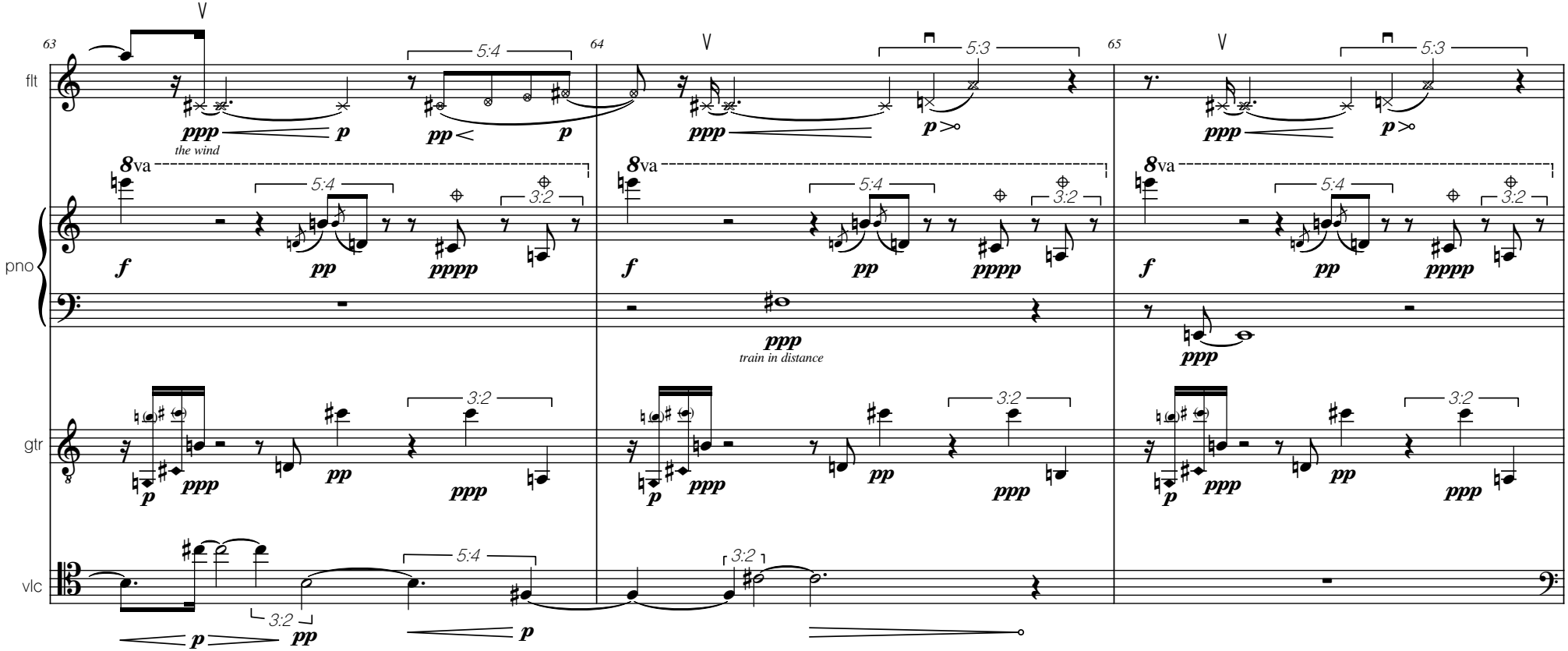

39
40
41
42
43
flt
pno
gtr
vlc
3:2
5:4
ppp
expressive
mp
breathy, expressive
p
pp
E
MSP
"air noise"
like a whisper

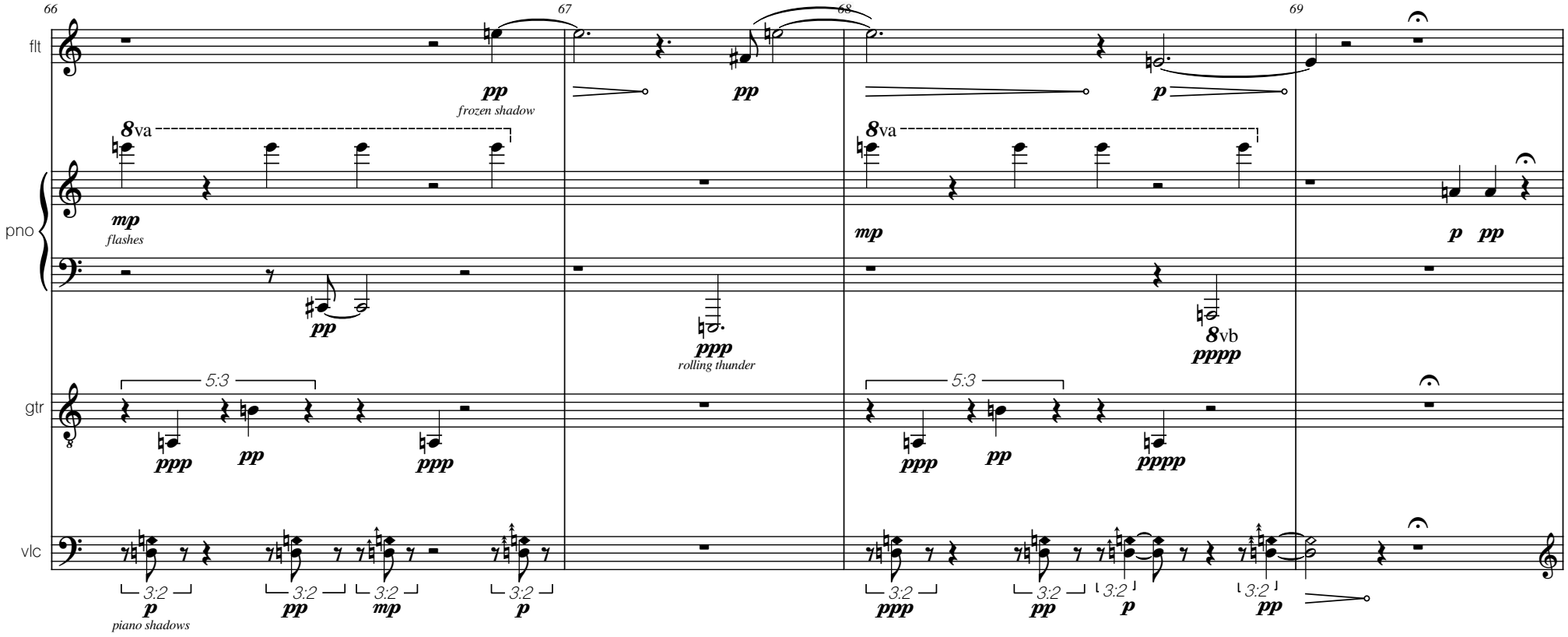

44
45
46
47
48
49
flt
pno
gtr
vlc
ppp
like the wind
p
pp
a sudden gust
fff
mp
ppp
5:4
ppp
strange shadows
pp
(p)
5:4
3:2
lh
ppp
pp
sliver of light
ppp
shadow
5:4
pppp
machinic rumbling
ppp
E
pp
5:4
p
deep hum
"air noise"
overpressure
ord.
"air noise"
i
ii
"air noise"
ppp
like a whisper...
p
mp
ff
mp
...transforming into a heavy scratch...
pp
...returning to a whisper
"mf"
p
ppp
fragile, hollow

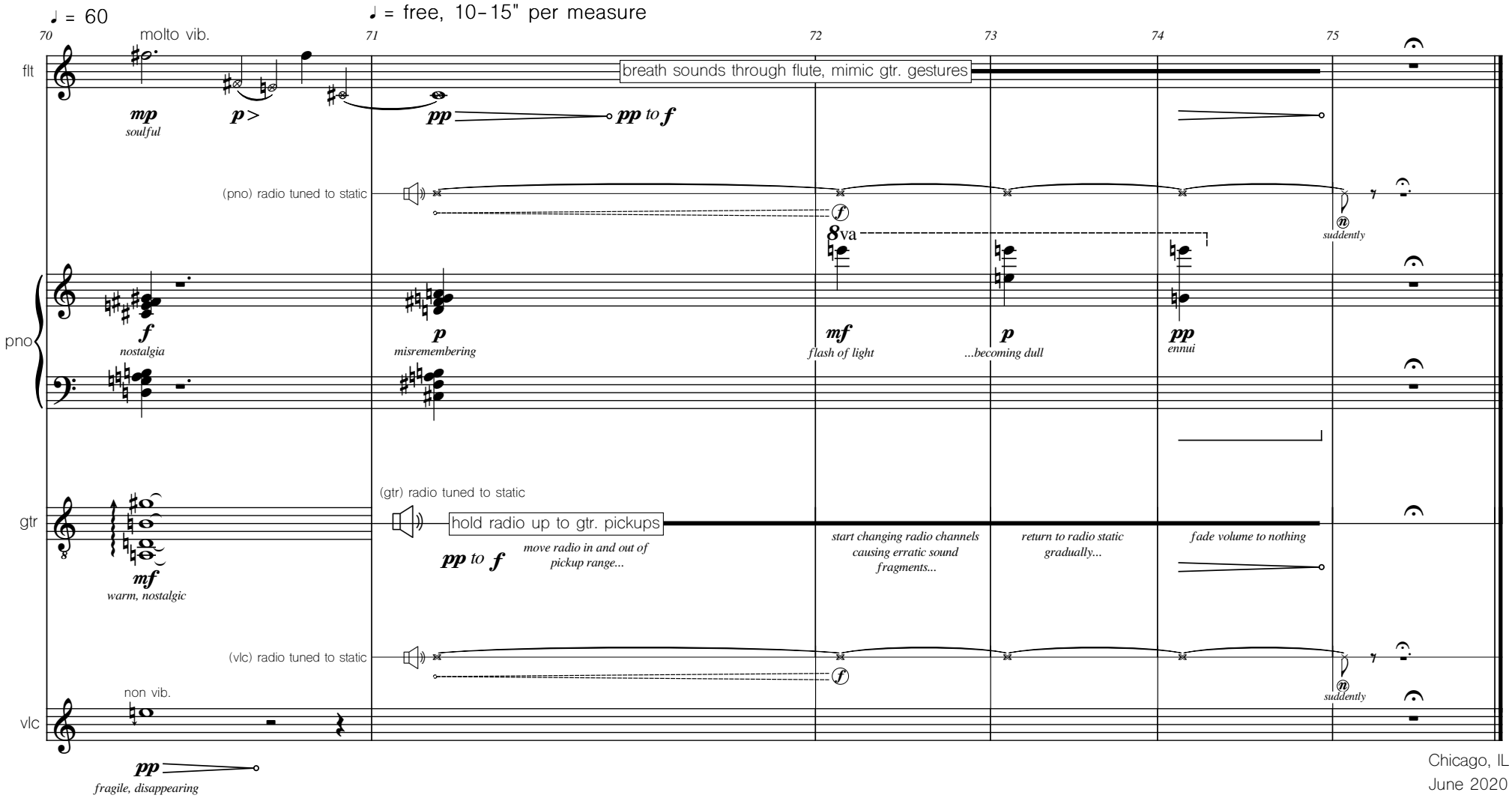

50
51
52
53
54
55
56
flt
pno
gtr
vlc
3:2
5:4
5:3
pp
ppp
p
shadows lengthening
shadows dancing
vocal, strange
shadow of cello
distant flash
sliver of light
mismatched shadow
beam of light
blend with piano decay
8va


♩ = between 70–80
57
58
59
flt
pno
gtr
vlc
5:3
3:2
ppp
distant, hallucinatory
p
8va
mf
distant flash
raindrop
f
failed spark
pppp
clear
pp
warm echo
"air noise"
gentle shifting wind
mp


60
61
62
flt
pno
gtr
vlc
5:3
5:4
3:2
8va
ppp
p
f
pp
pppp
mp
trails from piano
raindrops, dancing
"air noise"
SP
a fragment from
an imaginary piece


63
64
65
flt
pno
gtr
vlc
ppp
the wind
p
pp
f
pppp
8va
5:4
3:2
5:3
train in distance

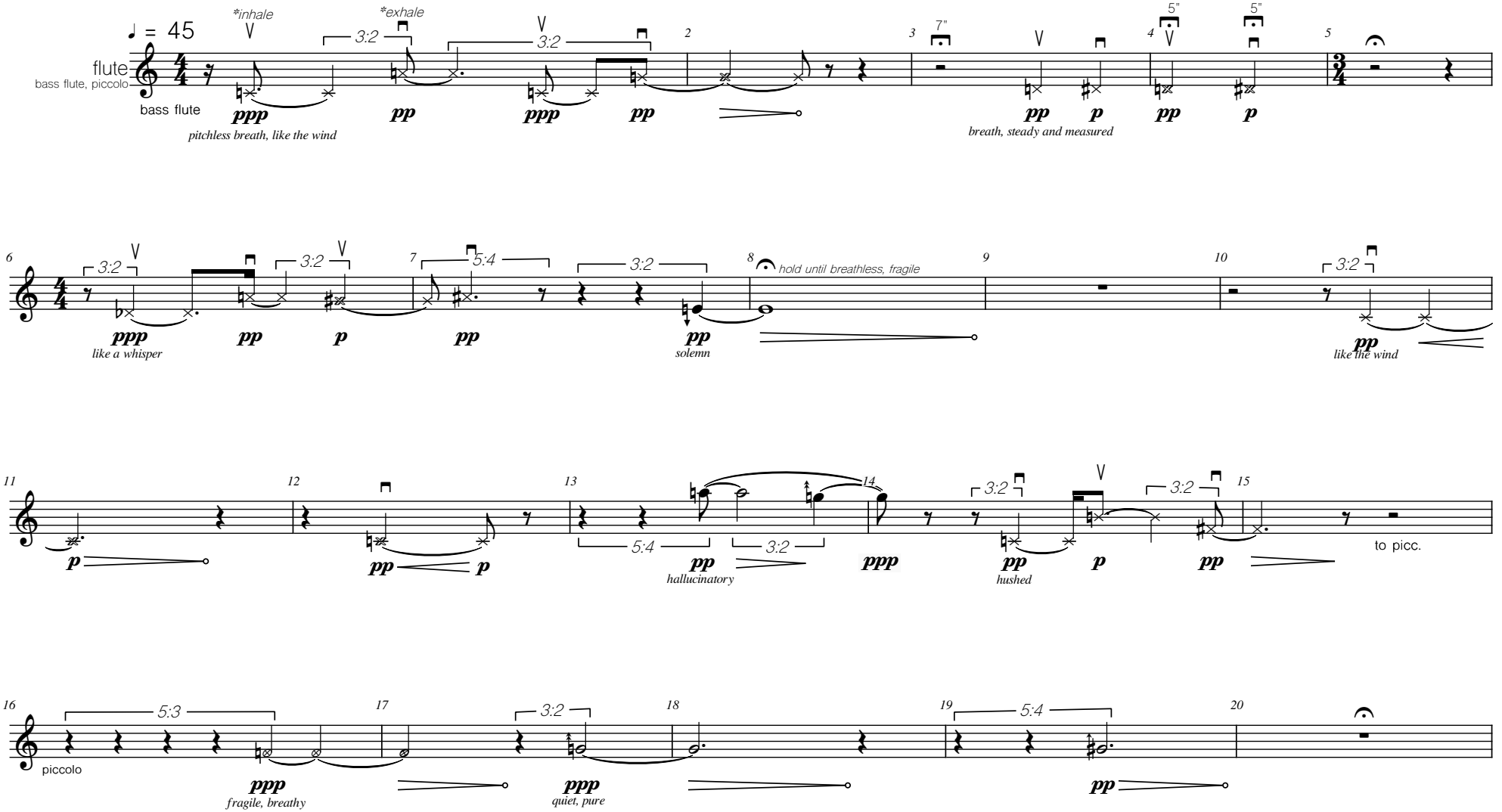

66
67
68
69
flt
pno
gtr
vlc
pp
frozen shadow
8va
mp
flashes
ppp
rolling thunder
8vb
pppp
5:3
3:2
piano shadows

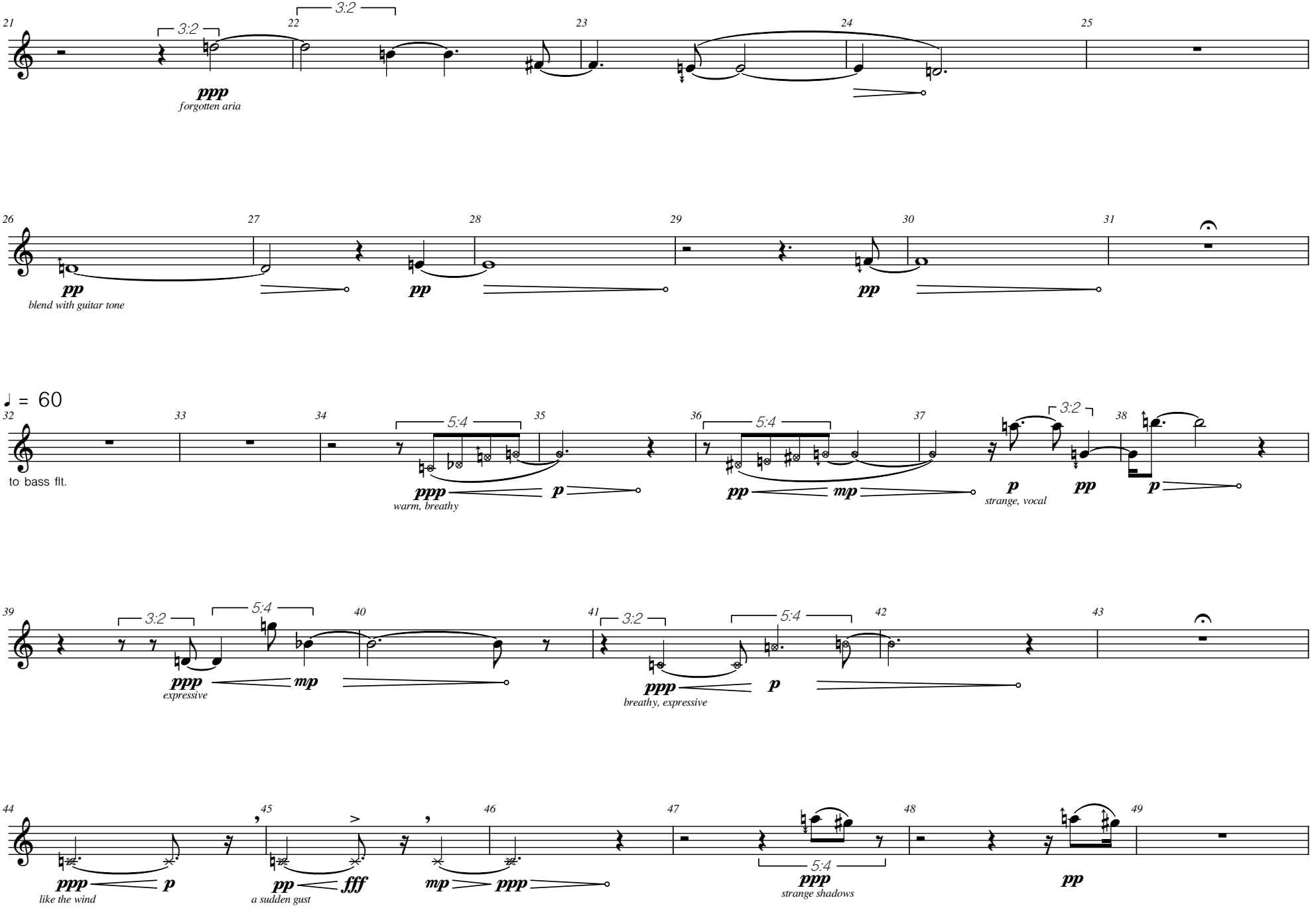

♩ = 60
♩ = free, 10–15" per measure
70
71
72
73
74
75
molto vib.
flt
breath sounds through flute, mimic gtr. gestures
mp
soulful
p >
pp
pp to f
(pno) radio tuned to static
f
8va
suddenly
pno
f
nostalgia
p
misremembering
mf
flash of light
p
...becoming dull
pp
ennui
(gtr) radio tuned to static
gtr
hold radio up to gtr. pickups
pp to f
move radio in and out of pickup range...
start changing radio channels causing erratic sound fragments...
return to radio static gradually...
fade volume to nothing
mf
warm, nostalgic
(vlc) radio tuned to static
f
suddenly
non vib.
vlc
pp
fragile, disappearing
Chicago, IL
June 2020

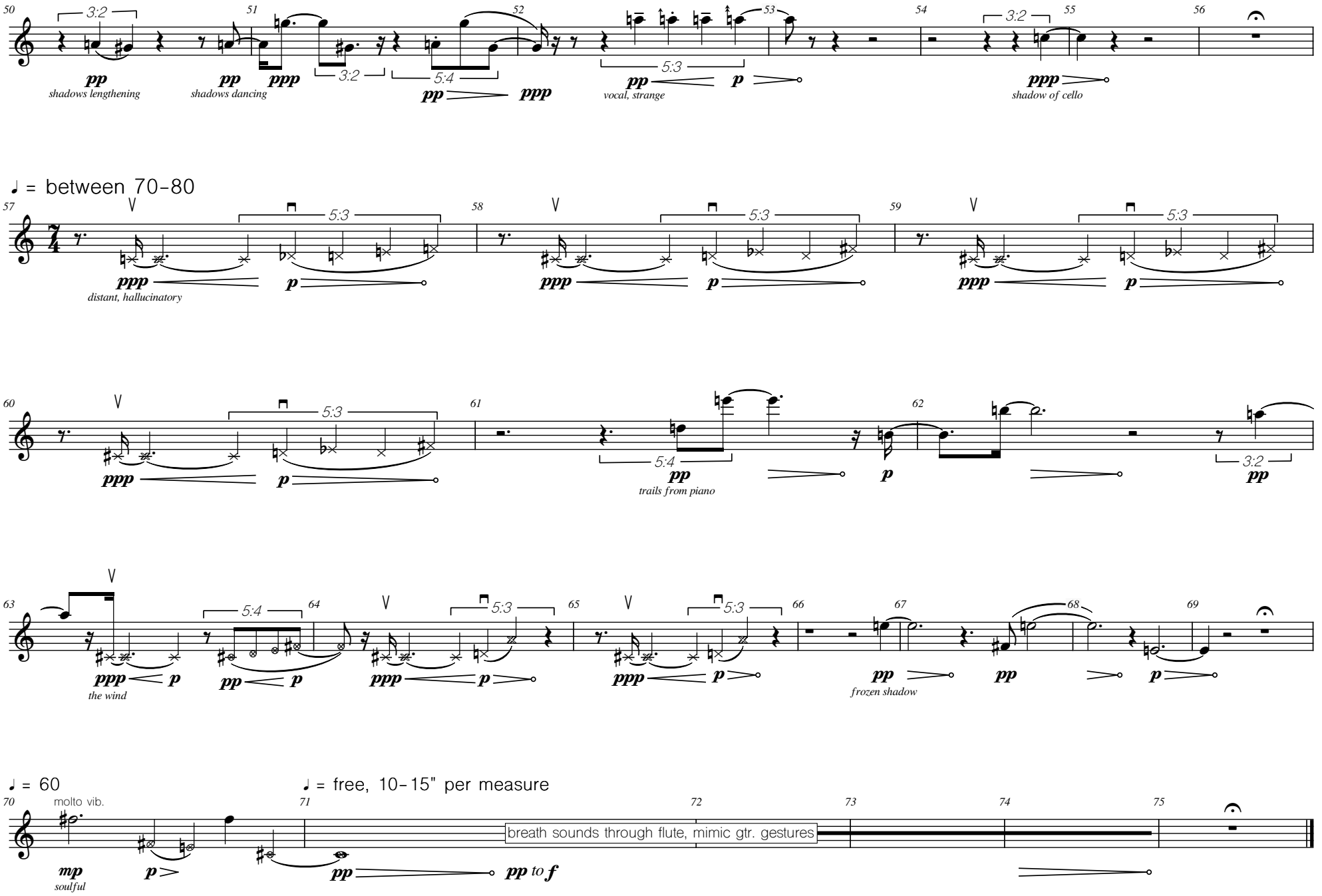
something is happening

for flute, piano, electric guitar, and cello

Jack Langdon (2020)




3:2
3:2
ppp
forgotten aria
pp
blend with guitar tone
pp
pp
♩ = 60
to bass flt.
5:4
ppp
warm, breathy
p
5:4
pp
mp
3:2
p
strange, vocal
pp
p
3:2
5:4
ppp
expressive
mp
3:2
5:4
ppp
breathy, expressive
p
ppp
like the wind
p
pp
a sudden gust
fff
mp
ppp
5:4
ppp
strange shadows
pp


50
3:2
pp
shadows lengthening
51
pp
shadows dancing
ppp
3:2
52
5:4
pp
ppp
53
5:3
pp
vocal, strange
p
54
55
3:2
ppp
shadow of cello
56
♩ = between 70–80
57
5:3
ppp
distant, hallucinatory
p
58
5:3
ppp
p
59
5:3
ppp
p
60
5:3
ppp
p
61
5:4
pp
trails from piano
62
p
3:2
pp
63
ppp
p
the wind
64
5:4
pp
p
65
5:3
ppp
p
66
5:3
ppp
p
67
pp
frozen shadow
68
pp
69
p
♩ = 60
70
molto vib.
mp
soulful
p
71
♩ = free, 10–15" per measure
breath sounds through flute, mimic gtr. gestures
pp
72
73
74
75
pp to f

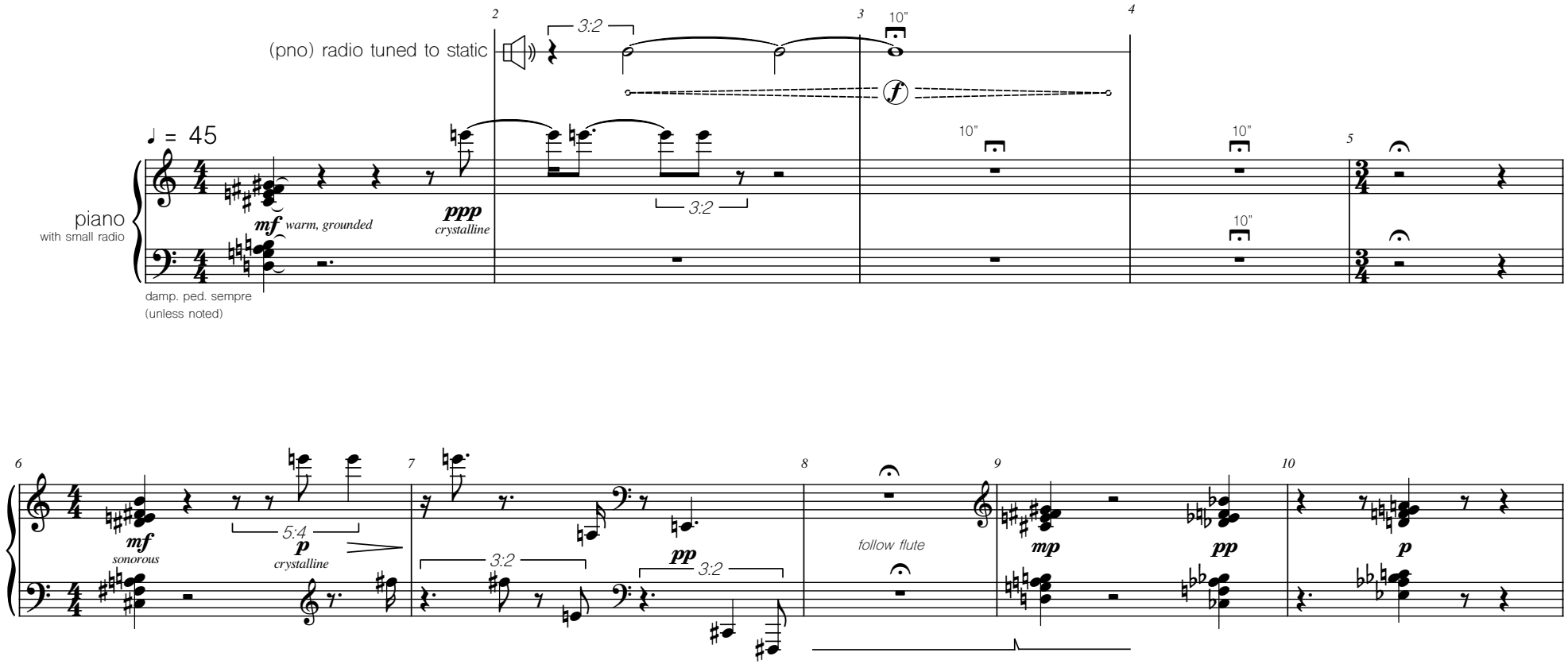
to Ensemble Dal Niente

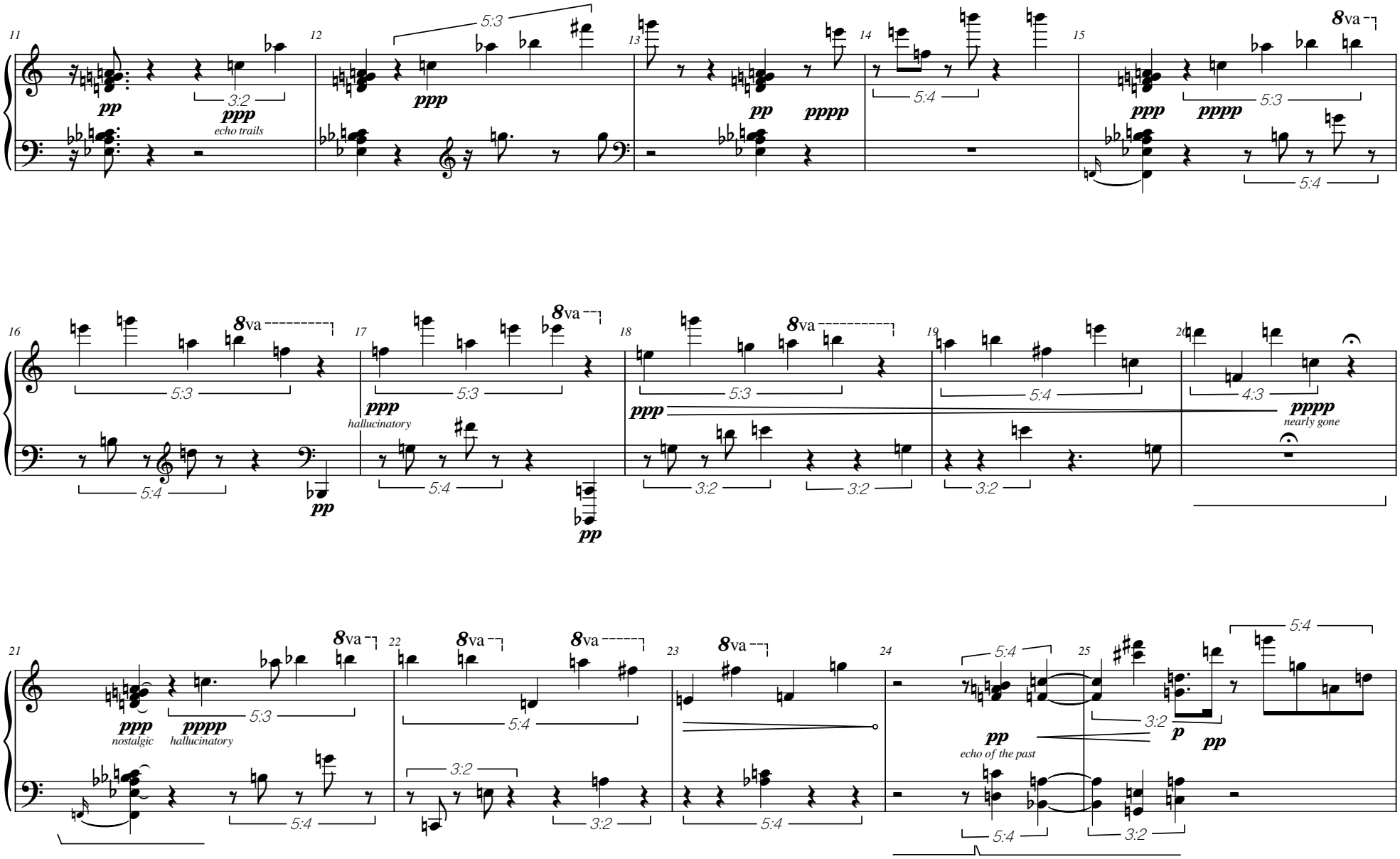
PIANO PART

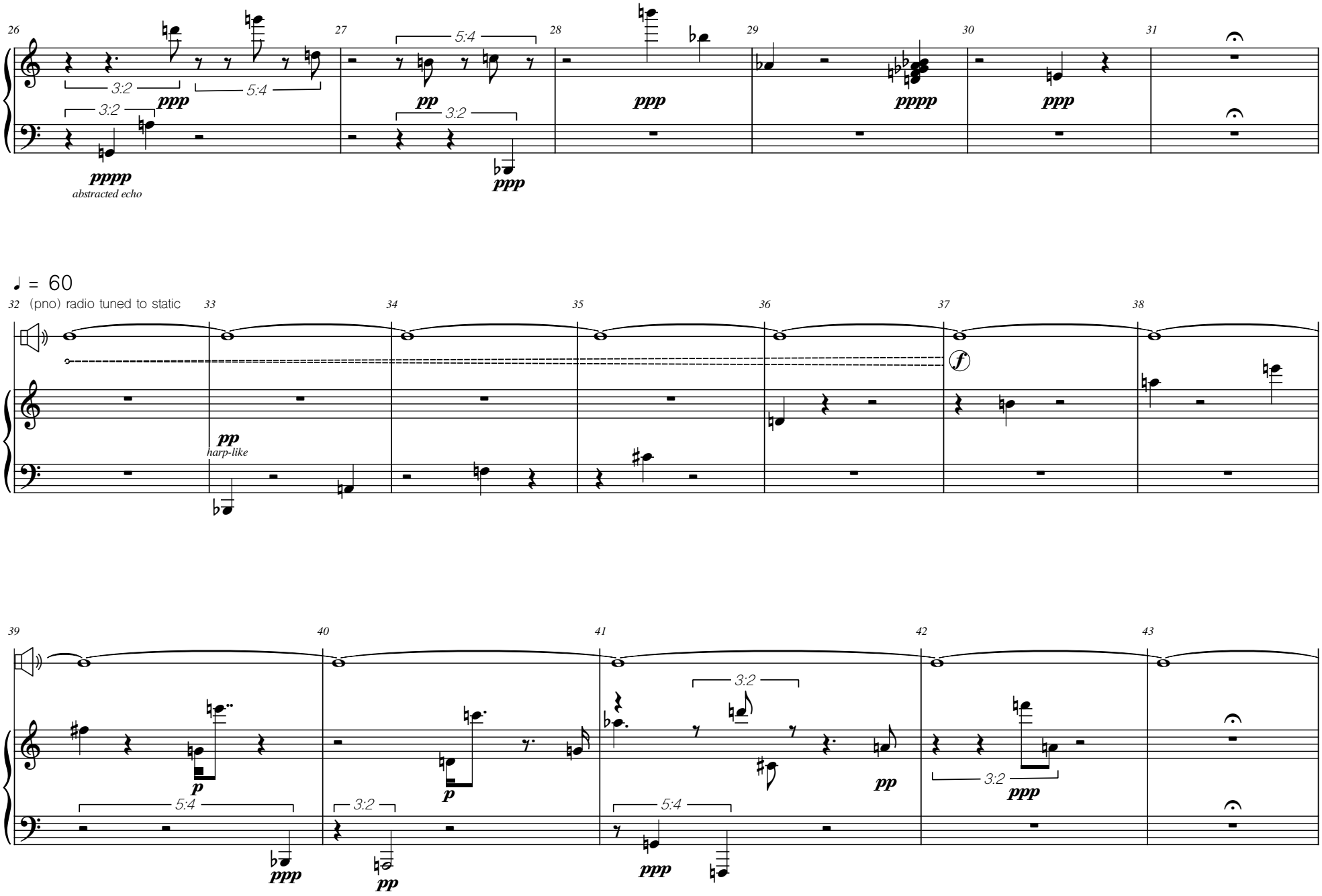
something is happening

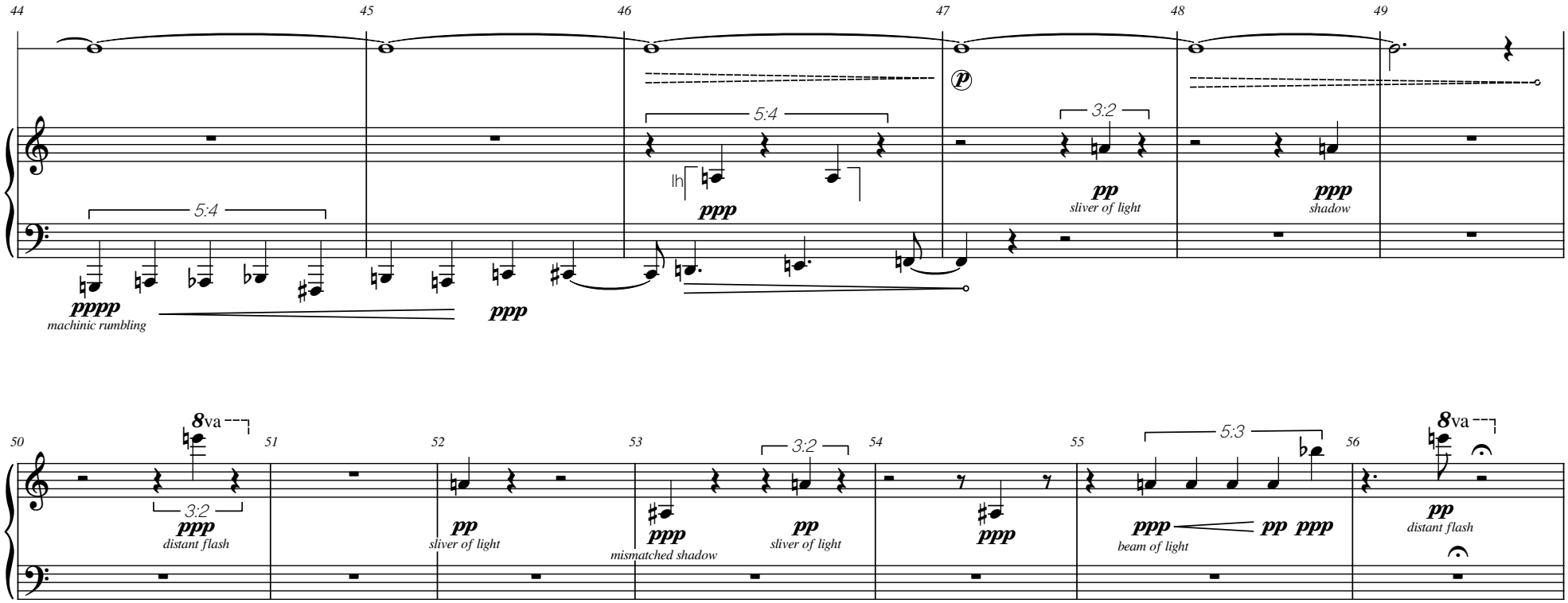
for flute, piano, electric guitar, and cello

Jack Langdon (2020)

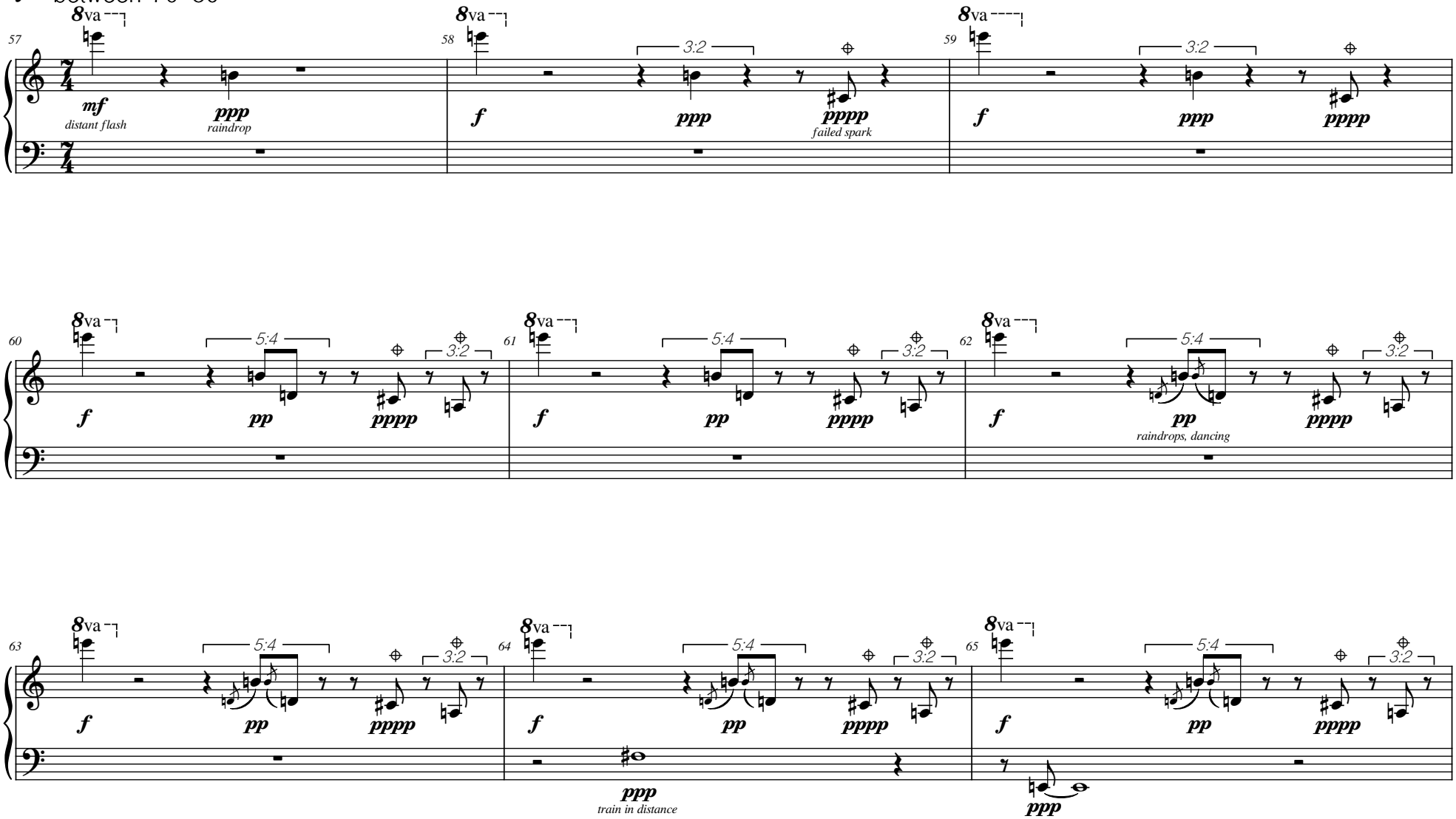


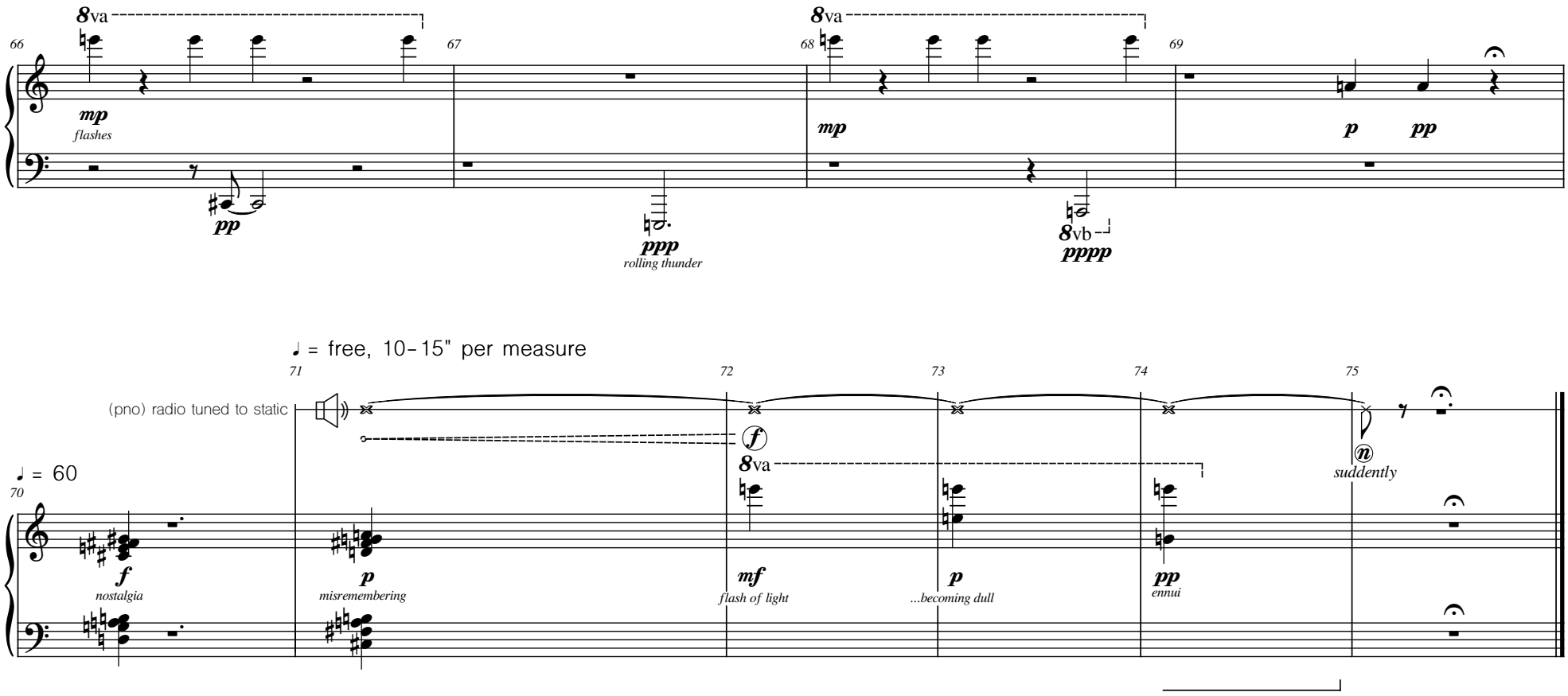

11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
8va
pp
ppp
pppp
echo trails
hallucinatory
nostalgic
nearly gone
echo of the past
p
5:3
3:2
5:4
4:3


26
3:2
5:4
3:2
ppp
pppp
abstracted echo
27
5:4
pp
3:2
ppp
28
ppp
29
pppp
30
ppp
31
♩ = 60
32 (pno) radio tuned to static
33
pp
harp-like
34
35
36
37
f
38
39
p
5:4
ppp
40
3:2
p
pp
41
3:2
5:4
ppp
pp
42
3:2
ppp
43


44
45
46
47
48
49
5:4
5:4
lh
ppp
p
3:2
pp
sliver of light
ppp
shadow
pppp
machinic rumbling
ppp
50
8va
51
52
53
54
55
56
3:2
ppp
distant flash
pp
sliver of light
ppp
mismatched shadow
3:2
pp
sliver of light
ppp
5:3
ppp
beam of light
pp ppp
8va
pp
distant flash

♩ = between 70-80




8va
66
mp
flashes
pp
67
ppp
rolling thunder
8va
68
mp
8vb
pppp
69
p
pp
♩ = free, 10–15" per measure
71
(pno) radio tuned to static
72
f
8va
mf
flash of light
73
p
...becoming dull
74
pp
ennui
75
n
suddenly
♩ = 60
70
f
nostalgia
p
misremembering

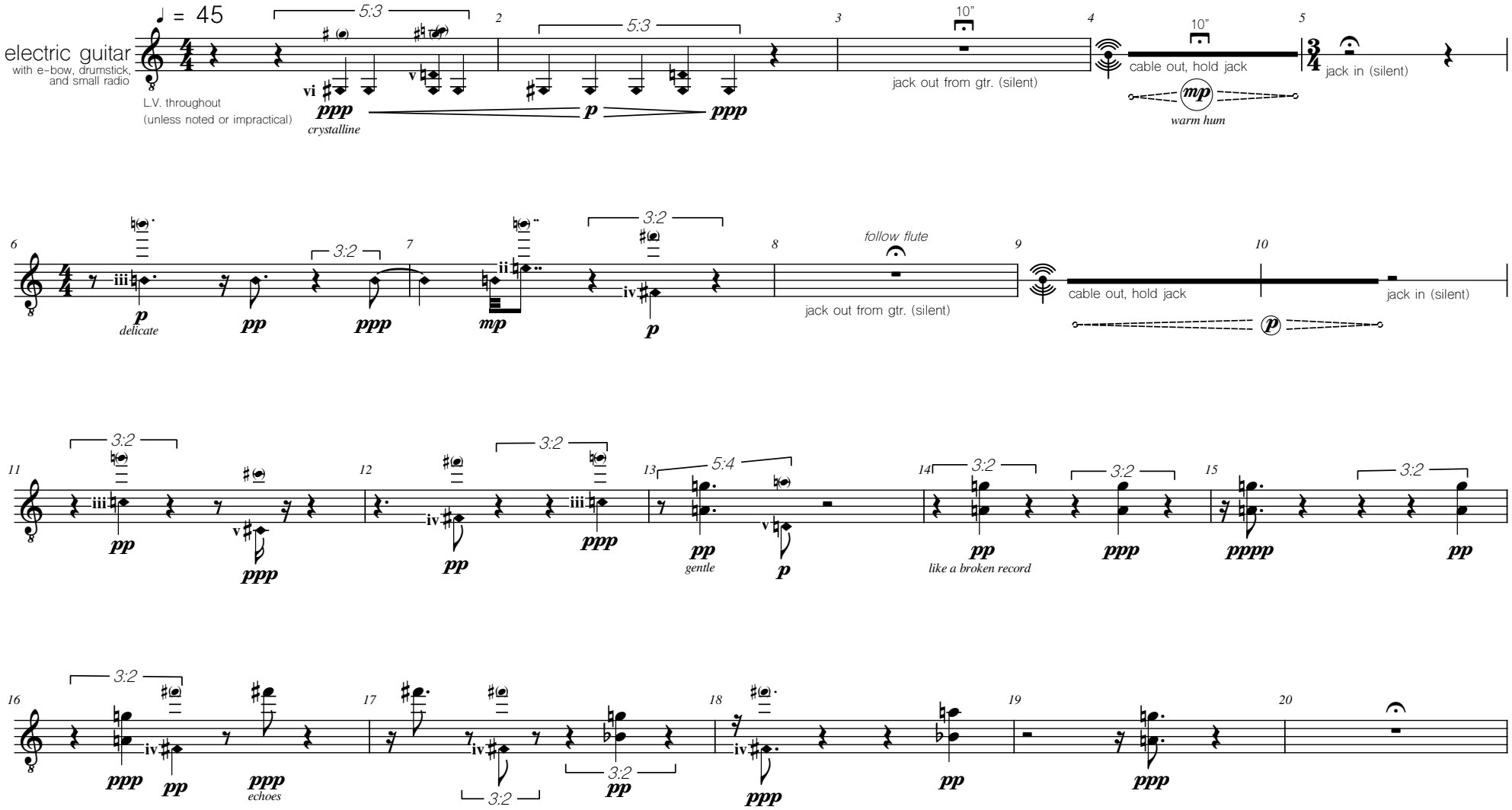
to Ensemble Dal Niente

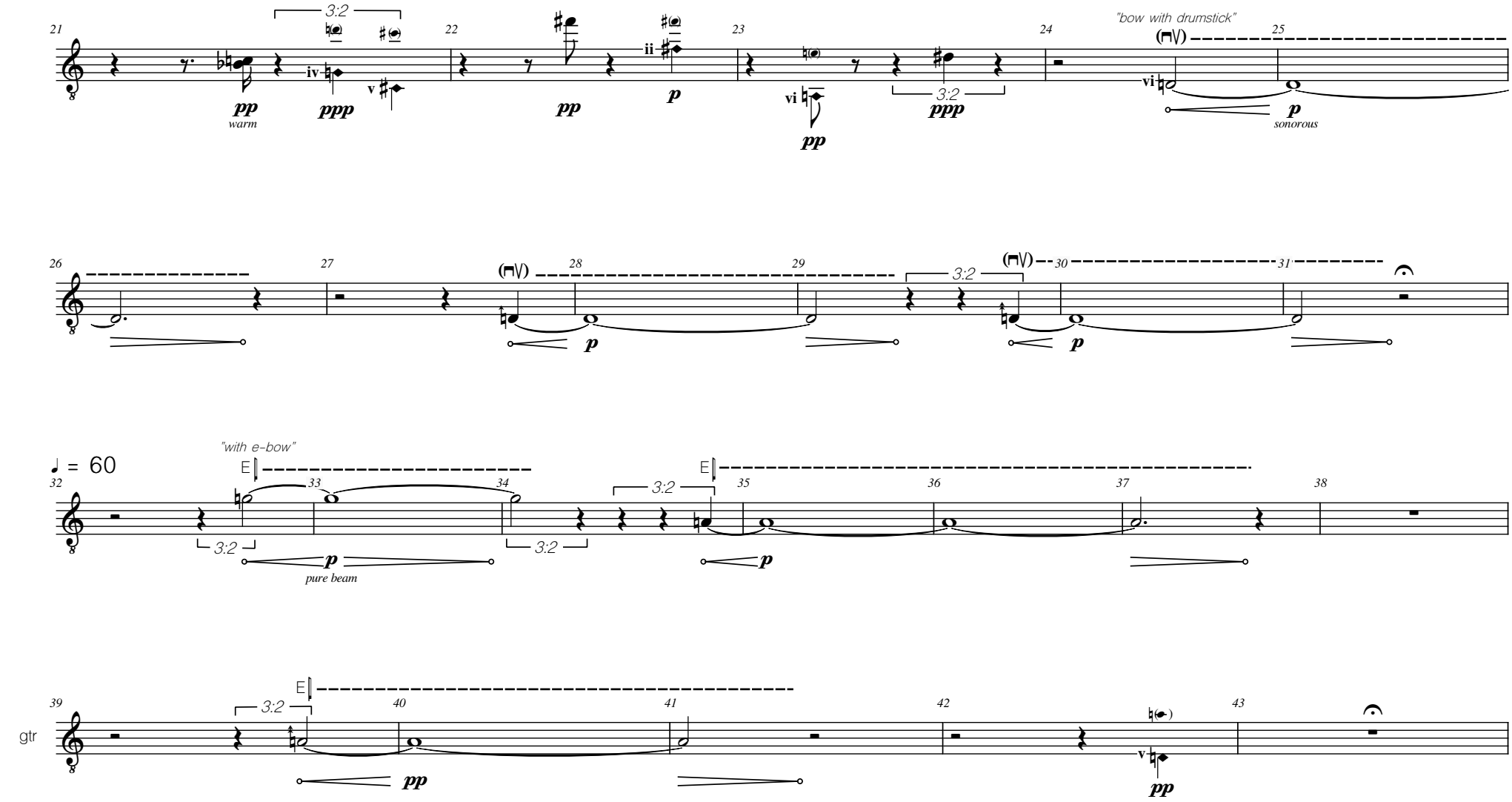
ELECTRIC GUITAR PART

something is happening

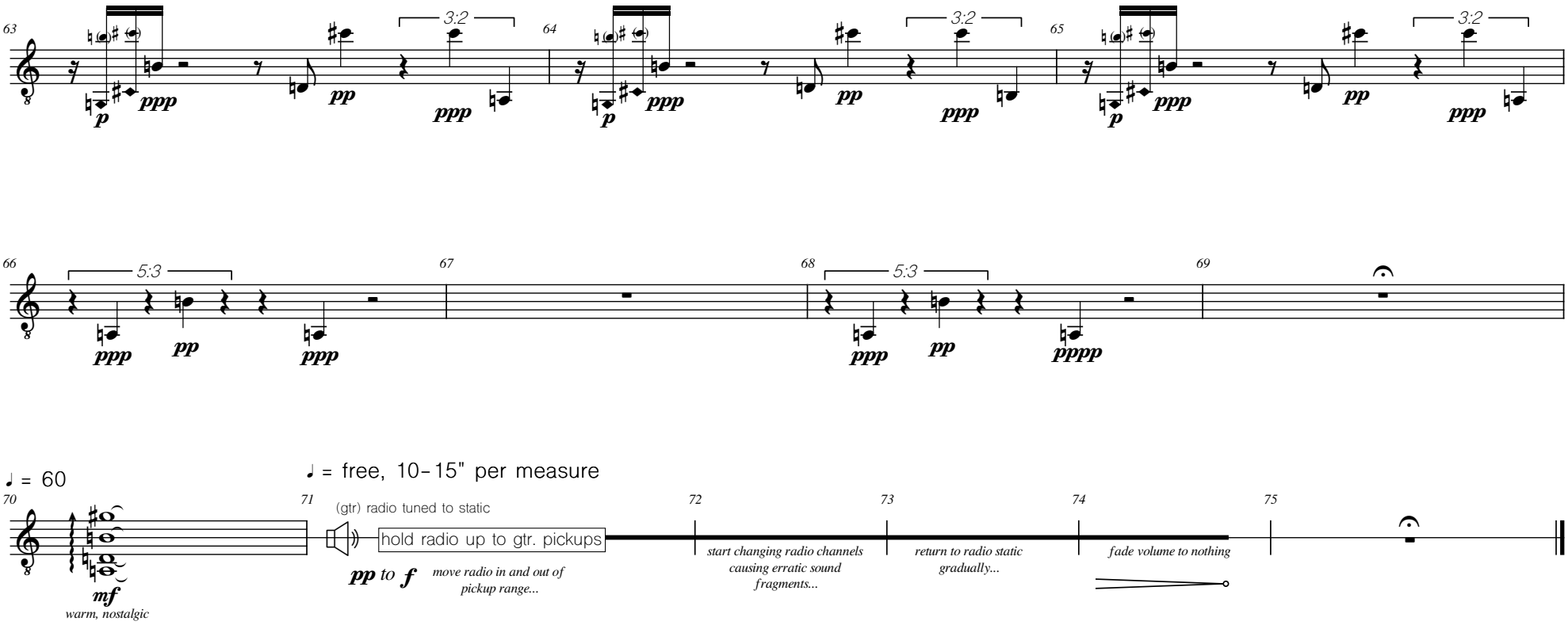
for flute, piano, electric guitar, and cello

Jack Langdon (2020)




21
3:2
iv
v
pp
warm
ppp
22
pp
ii
p
23
vi
pp
3:2
ppp
24
"bow with drumstick"
(⊓\/)
vi
25
p
sonorous
26
27
(⊓\/)
28
p
29
3:2
(⊓\/)
30
p
31
"with e-bow"
♩ = 60
E
32
3:2
33
p
pure beam
34
3:2
E
35
3:2
p
36
37
38
E
39
3:2
40
pp
41
42
v
pp
43
gtr

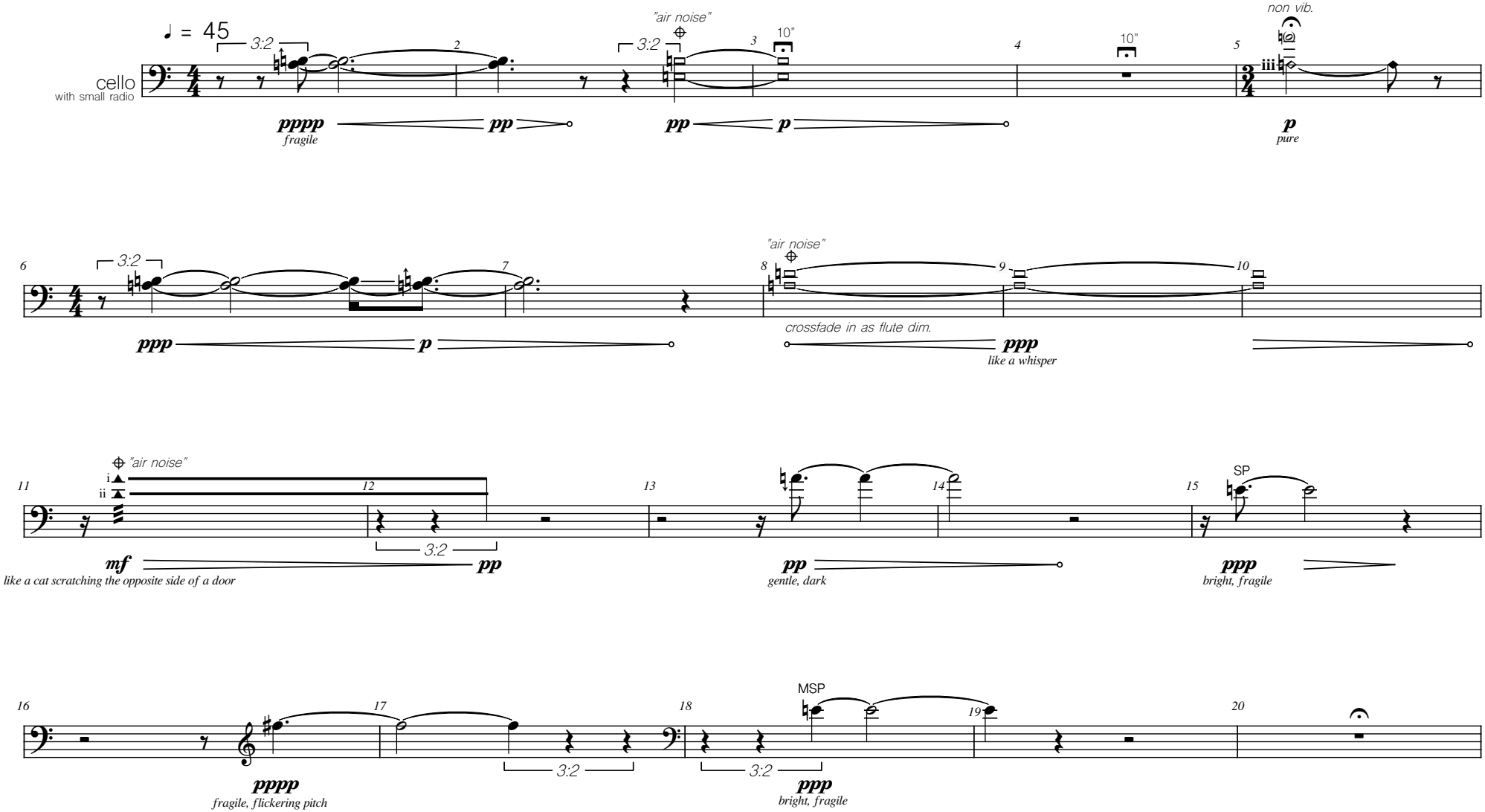
E
44
45
46
5:4
47
48
49
v
pp
p
deep hum
50
51
3:2
52
53
54
55
56
gtr
vi
pp
♩ = between 70–80
57
58
59
gtr
vi
v
p
clear
ii
ppp
iv
pp
warm echo
3:2
60
61
62
gtr
ppp
pp
3:2

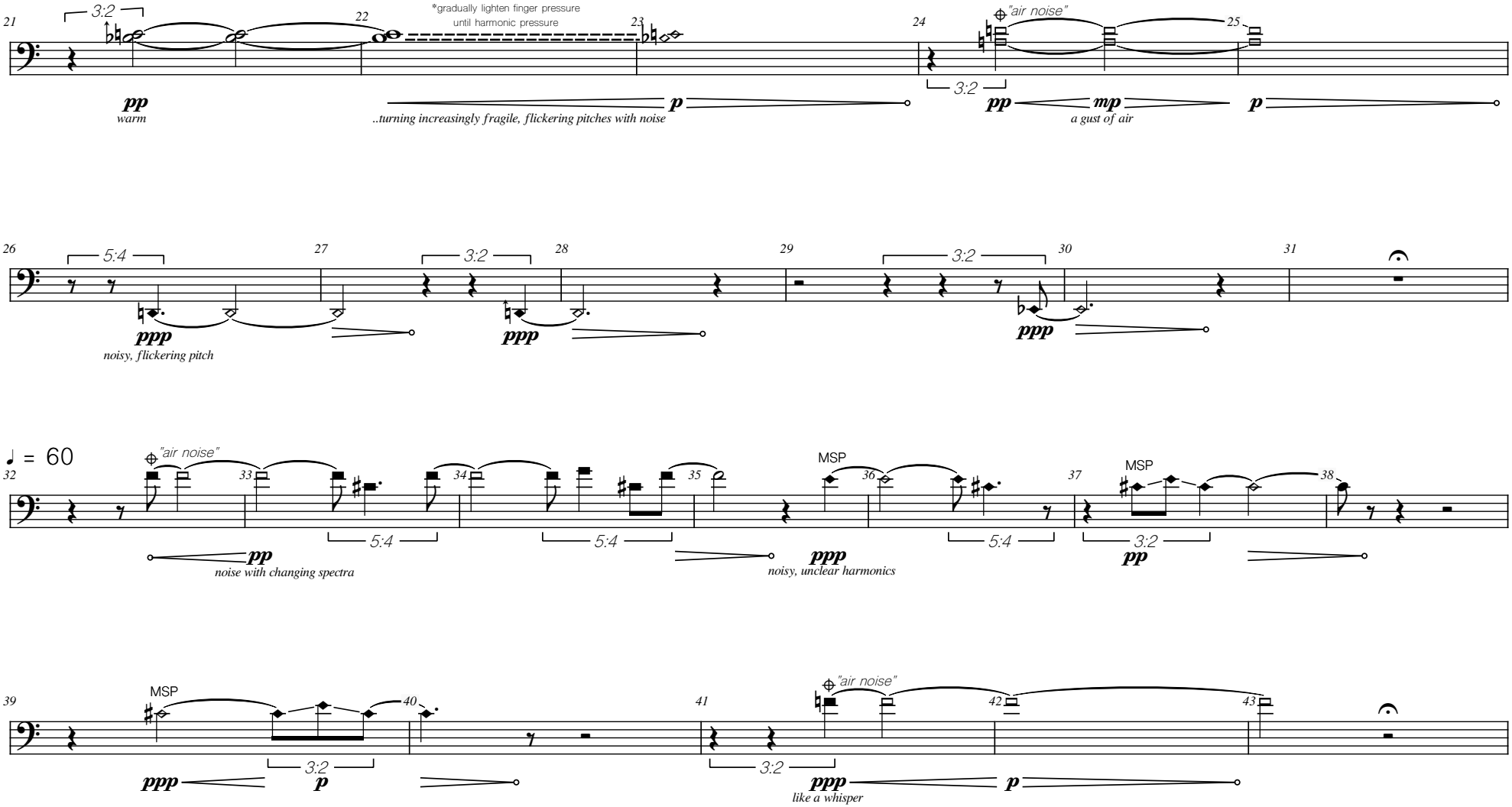

63
3:2
p
ppp
pp
ppp
64
3:2
p
ppp
pp
ppp
65
3:2
p
ppp
pp
ppp
66
5:3
ppp
pp
ppp
67
68
5:3
ppp
pp
pppp
69
♩ = 60
mf
warm, nostalgic
70
♩ = free, 10–15" per measure
71
(gtr) radio tuned to static
hold radio up to gtr. pickups
pp to f
move radio in and out of pickup range...
72
start changing radio channels causing erratic sound fragments...
73
return to radio static gradually...
74
fade volume to nothing
75

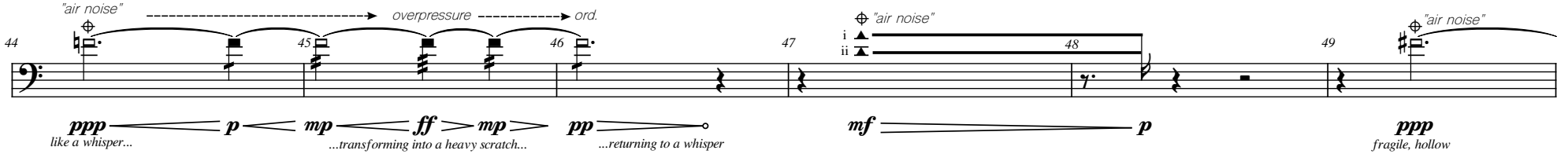
something is happening

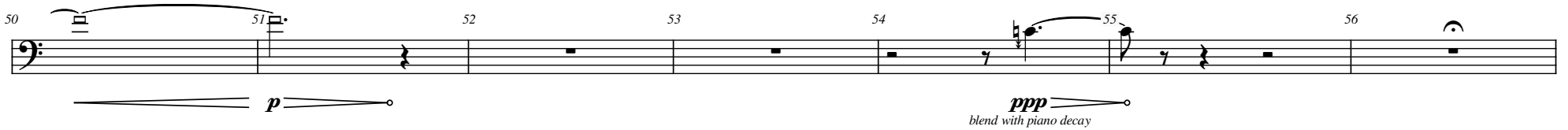
for flute, piano, electric guitar, and cello

Jack Langdon (2020)

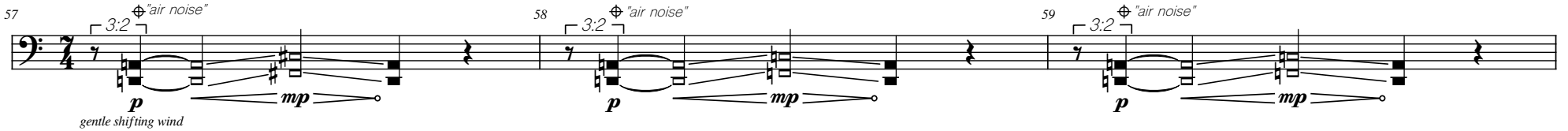



21
3:2
22
*gradually lighten finger pressure
until harmonic pressure
23
24
"air noise"
25
3:2
pp
warm
p
..turning increasingly fragile, flickering pitches with noise
pp
mp
a gust of air
p
26
5:4
27
3:2
28
29
3:2
30
31
ppp
noisy, flickering pitch
ppp
ppp
♩ = 60
32
"air noise"
33
34
35
MSP
36
37
MSP
38
5:4
5:4
5:4
3:2
pp
noise with changing spectra
ppp
noisy, unclear harmonics
pp
39
MSP
40
41
"air noise"
42
43
3:2
3:2
ppp
p
ppp
like a whisper
p





♩ = between 70-80



60
"air noise"
3:2
p
mp
61
"air noise"
3:2
p
mp
62
"air noise"
3:2
p
mp
SP
pp
a fragment from
an imaginary piece
63
3:2
p
5:4
3:2
pp
p
64
3:2
65
66
3:2
p
piano shadows
3:2
pp
3:2
mp
3:2
p
67
68
3:2
ppp
3:2
pp
3:2
p
69
3:2
pp
♩ = free, 10–15" per measure
71
72
73
74
75
(vlc) radio tuned to static
f
n
suddenly
♩ = 60
70
non vib.
pp
fragile, disappearing