paul joshua lehman

five breaths in hě sápa

for quartet
2025

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my home has a scar
and in the deep of summer,
the wound is salted
a herd of fawns prepare to defend her
for earth, and memory
im visited by my friend the bee
who dances for me and tells me
of the five hundred year old garden
to know the land and the people
and what would have been
the dream and the possible
still, he cherishes

instrumentation: violin, clarinet in Bb, cello, piano (with minimal voice part)
duration: ca. 10 min
transposed score

I - the old man and the young man: an elder holding a pipe sits on a naturally fallen log in the forest. in his lap, peppers and radishes. a boy sits a few paces away from him, on the stump of a cut down tree. they face the same direction. the boy smokes a cigarette and has a chunk of bread in his free hand. they sit together, eating and smoking and not saying a word.

II - the old woman and the doe: an old woman, blind and nearing the end of her life, sits alone in a meadow, surrounded by trees. she is visited by a fawn, who approaches and looks in the misty eyes of the elder and they stay, face to face, unmoving, suspended in time.

III - the artificial mountains: in the heart of hě sápa, a sacred mountain is missing, carved out long ago to mine for gold, left as a scar exposed to the cold air. the mountain was displaced by the miners, who piled it up in massive, grotesque, treeless tiered mounds. they had forgotten the earth was their mother.

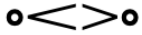
IV - the fawns: in the twisting and winding roads of hě sápa, when the mechanical bugs come, fawns stand on the roadside and watch the intruders, often gathering, silent crowds, a hundred doe eyes in the mist beside the road.

V - the ghost of hanna valley: there is a valley in hě sápa where its phantom protector resides, between the mist and the elk calls and the moonlight she watches over her sacred forest.

performance notes:



crescendo from nothing



swell from and back to, nothing



overpressure with bow

1/2 air

with a very airy tone



short harmonic gliss



artificial harmonic



fluttertongue

movement IV piano/voice part - voice enters in the bass clef (opt 8va or 15va to accommodate voice types), maintain piano parts in the treble clef

transposed score

I

Larghissimo ♩ = 30

deeply gentle




10
pizz.
mp
pp sub.
p dim.
pp dim.
arco
pp dim.
pp dim.
(8)

II

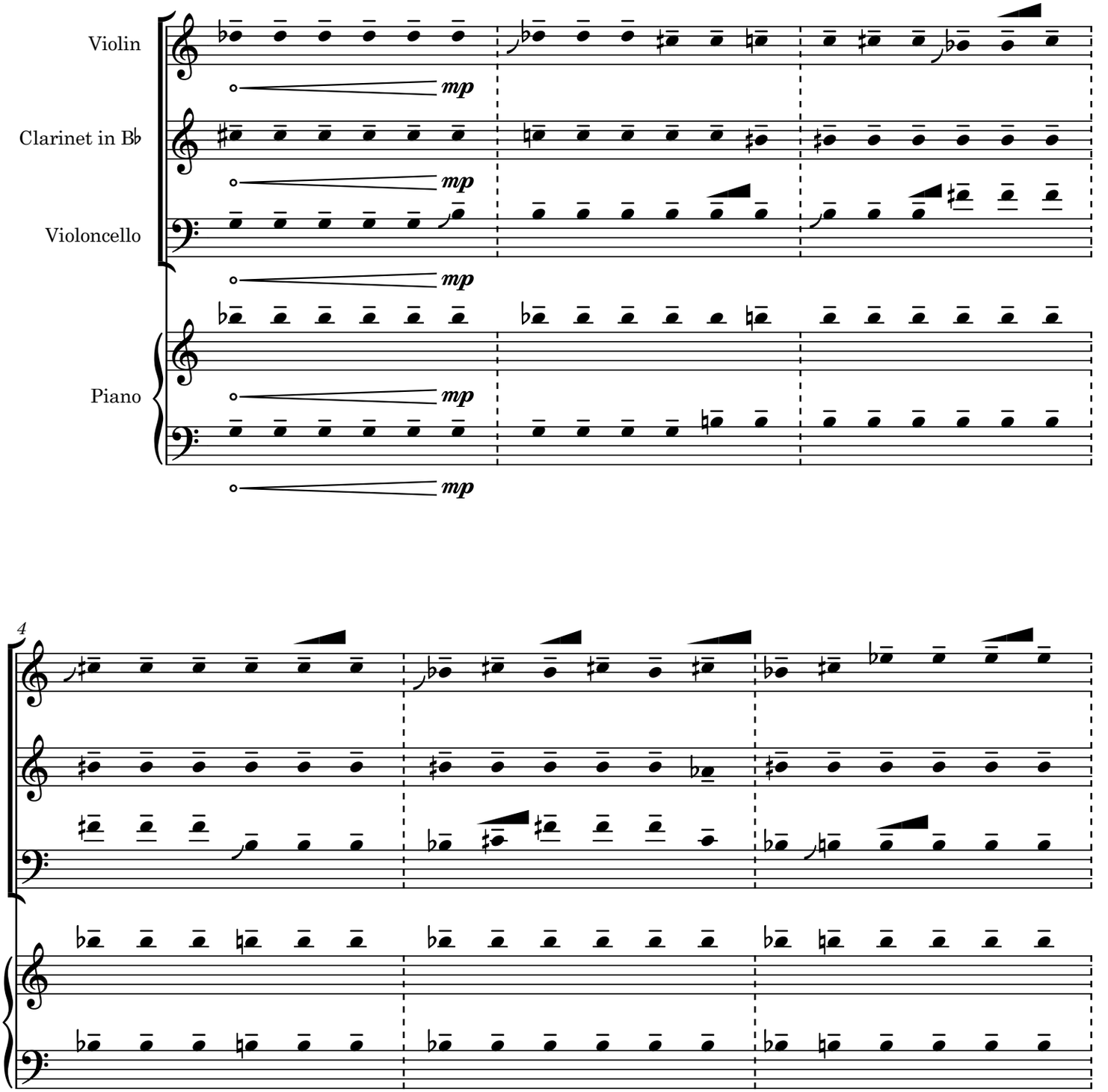

Larghissimo ♪ = c. 50
with fragile stillness
Violin
Clarinet in B♭
vib.

III

pulsing, generally together ♩ = c. 56

with palpable tension throughout

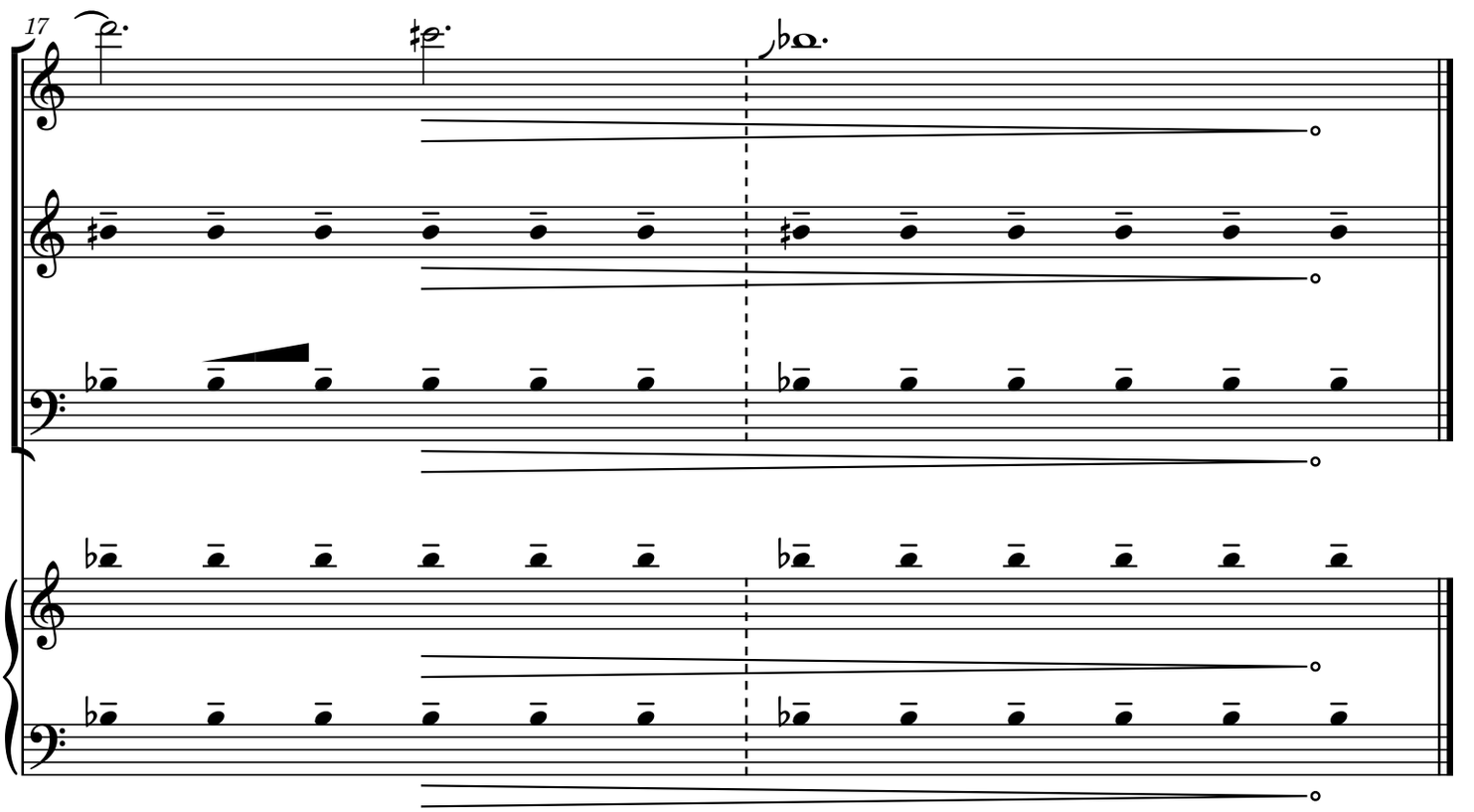
connect notes to create a wavelike pulse




7
pp
pp
pp
pp


with fullness and intention
10
mf
mp
mp
mp
mp


14


17

IV

Adagio ♩ = c. 66

distant, ambiguous, fragile

mp

mp

1/2 air

flautando, floating and amorphous, bow changes at will

p

ppp *cresc. poco a poco*

5

ord.

p

p

1/2 air

ppp

ord.

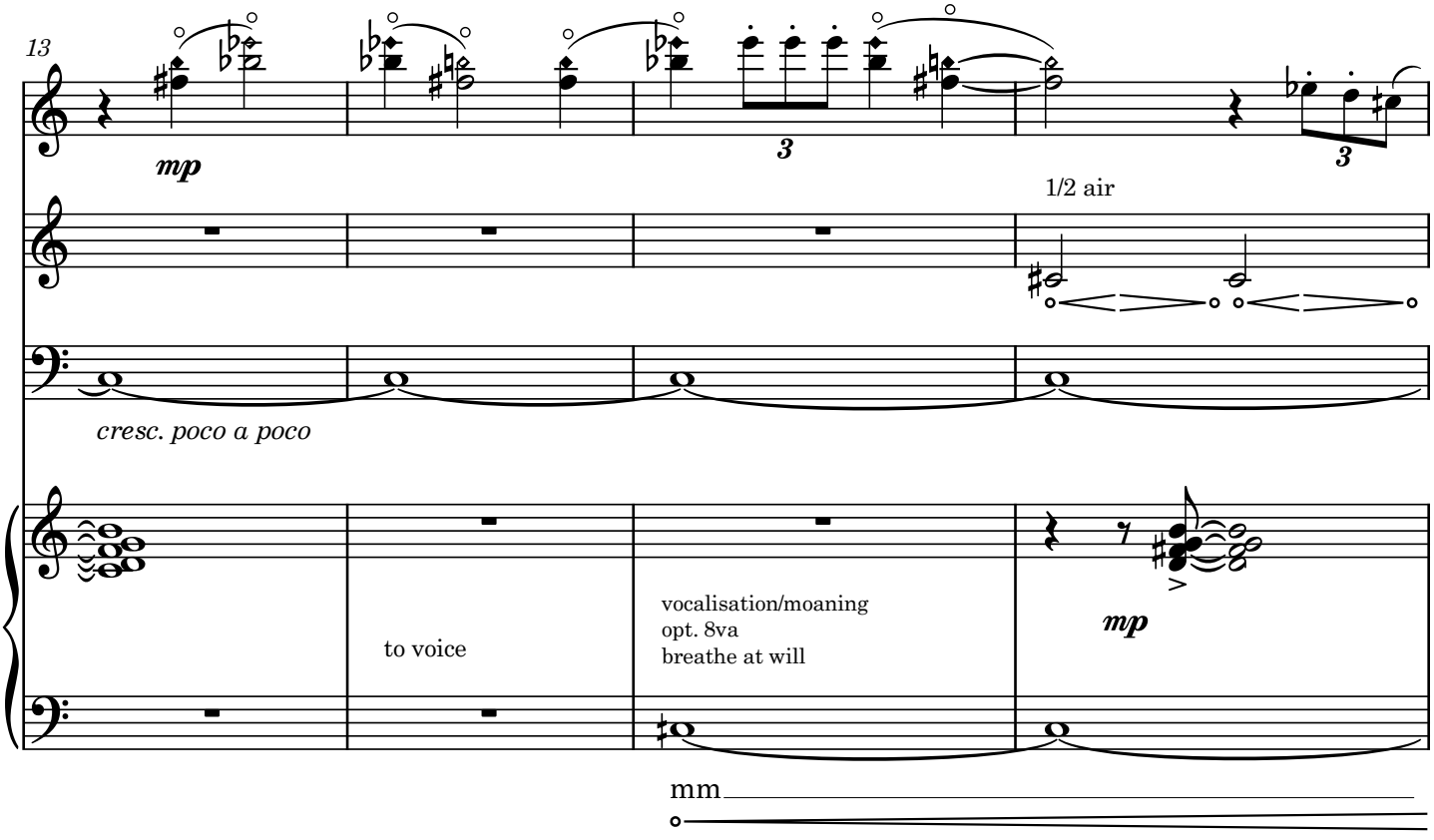
p

gradually to ord.

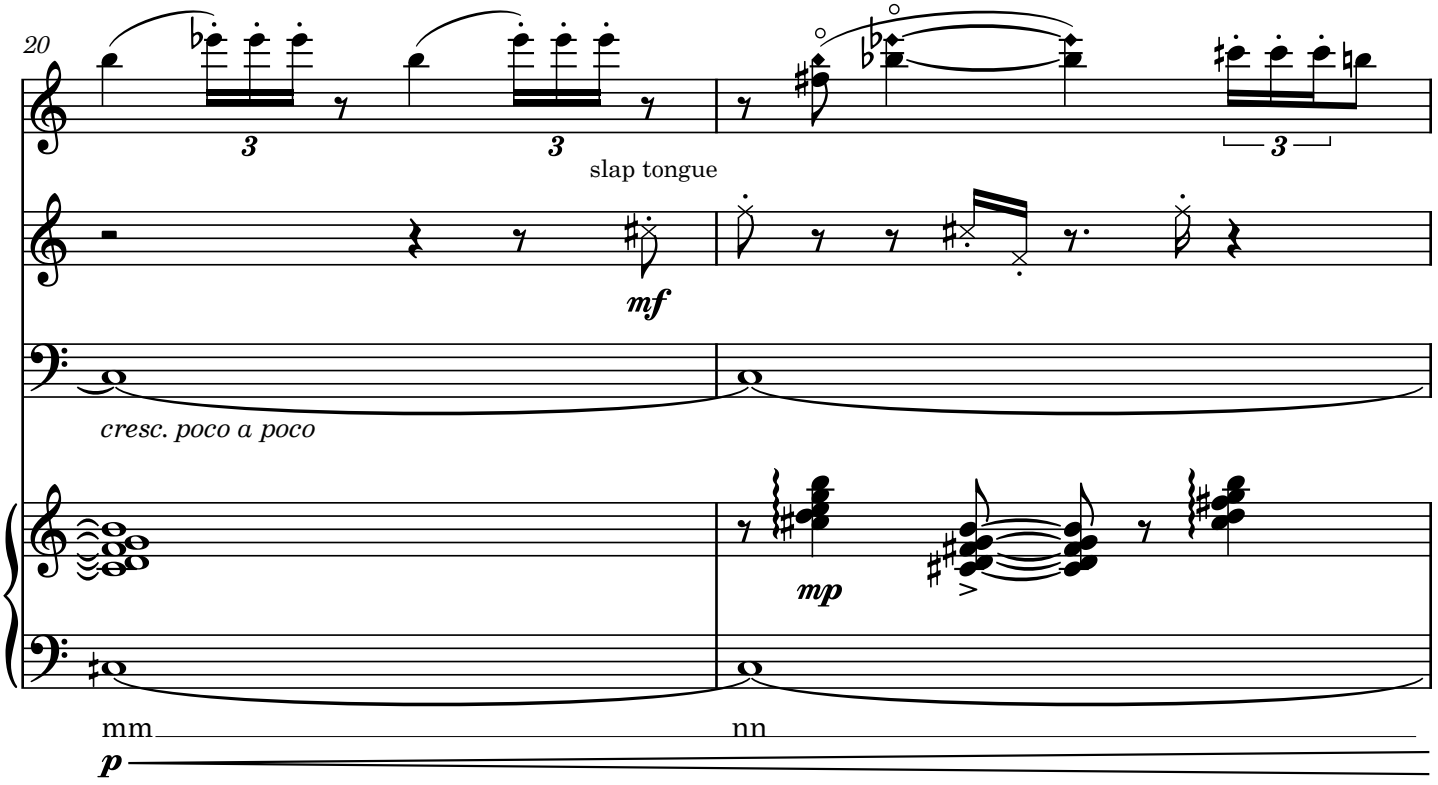
p

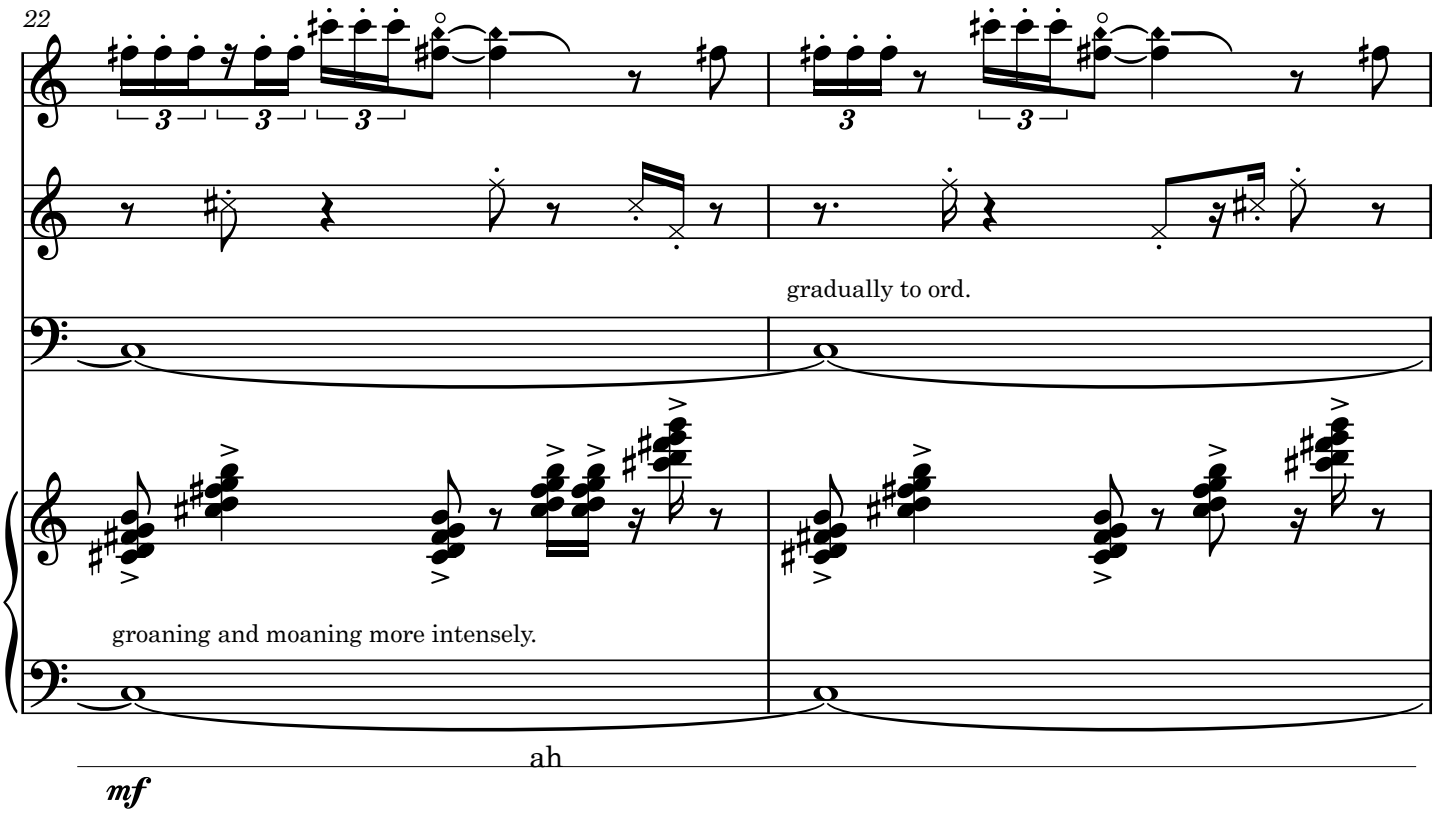
p


9
ord.
pp
mp
mf
p
ppp

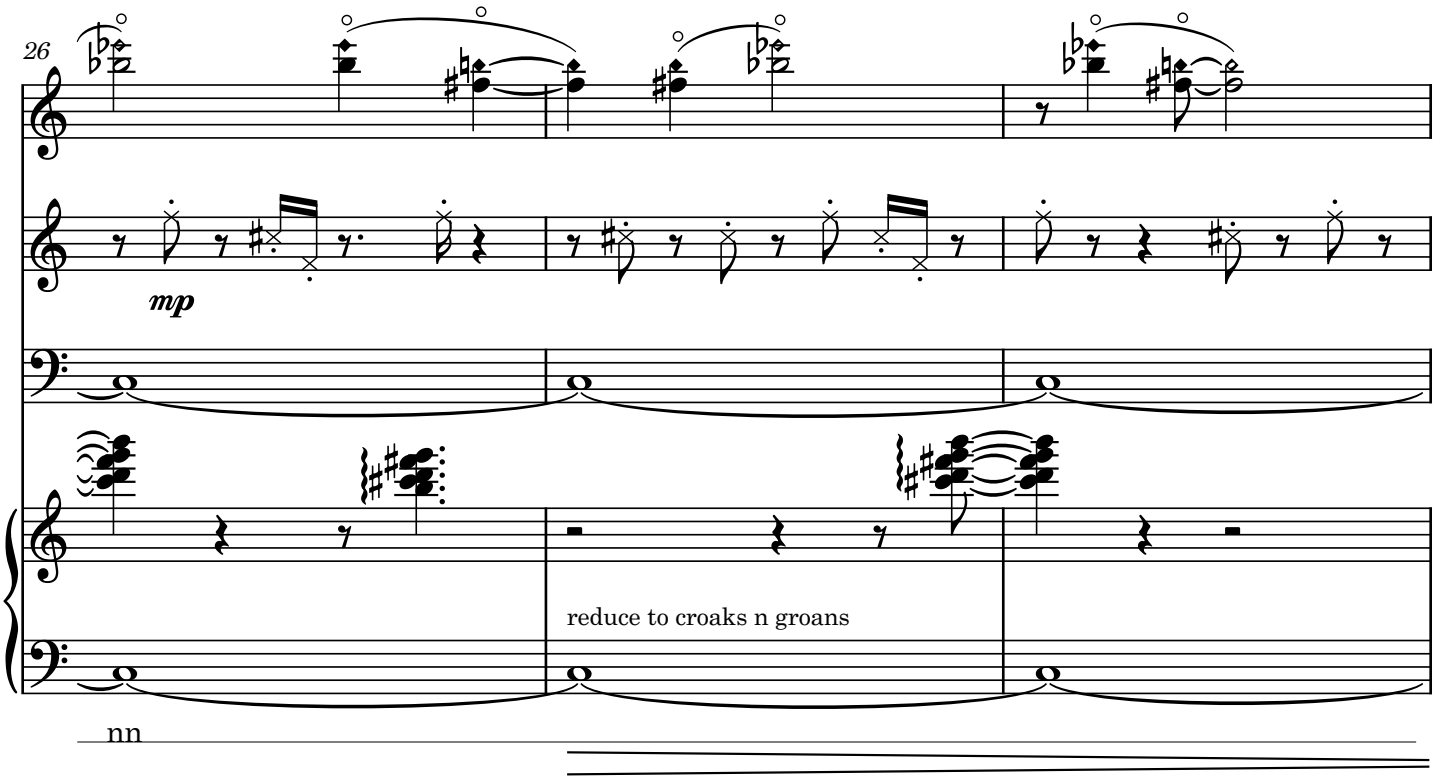

13
mp
1/2 air
cresc. poco a poco
to voice
vocalisation/moaning
opt. 8va
breathe at will
mp
mm

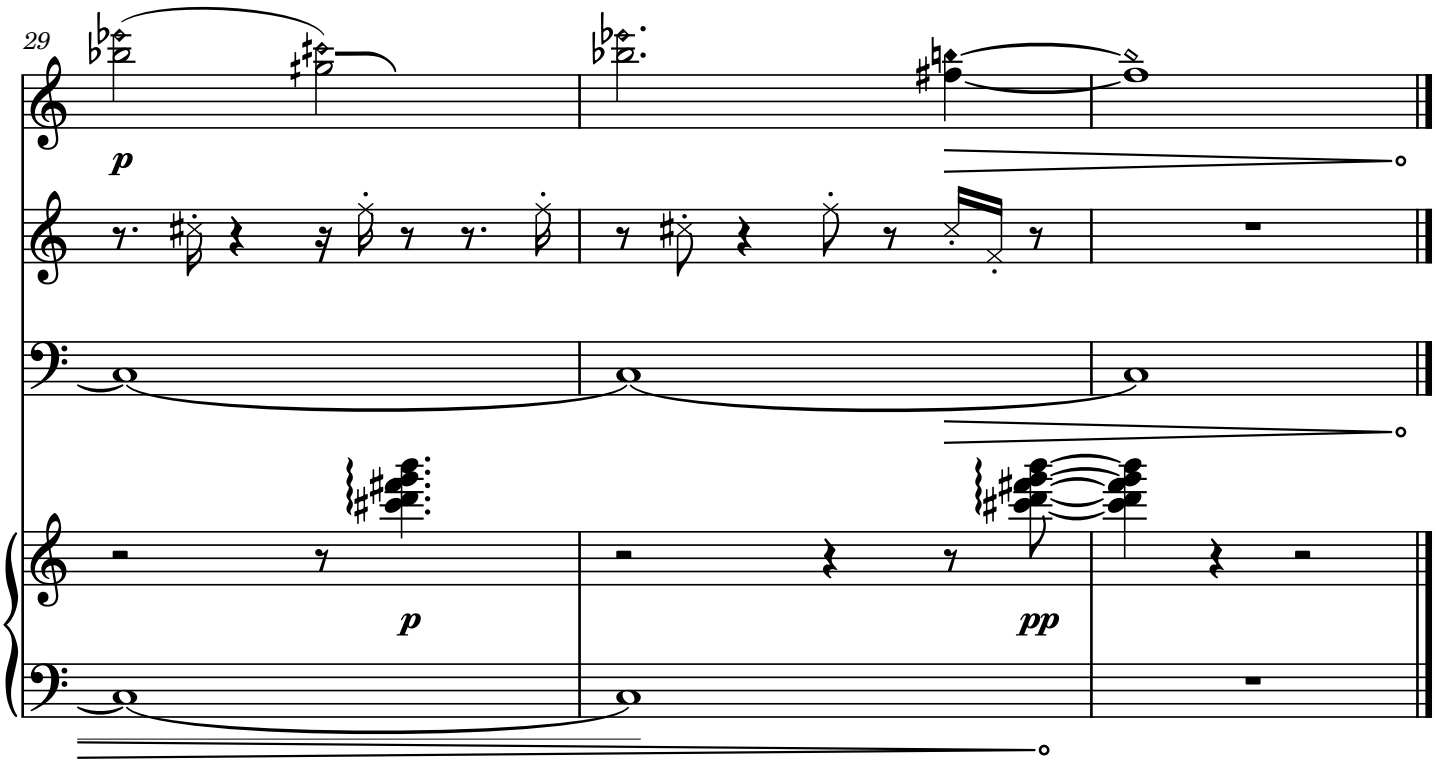

17
mf
ord.
mp
sul tasto
p
p


20
slap tongue
mf
cresc. poco a poco
mp
mm
nn
p


22
gradually to ord.
groaning and moaning more intensely.
ah
mf

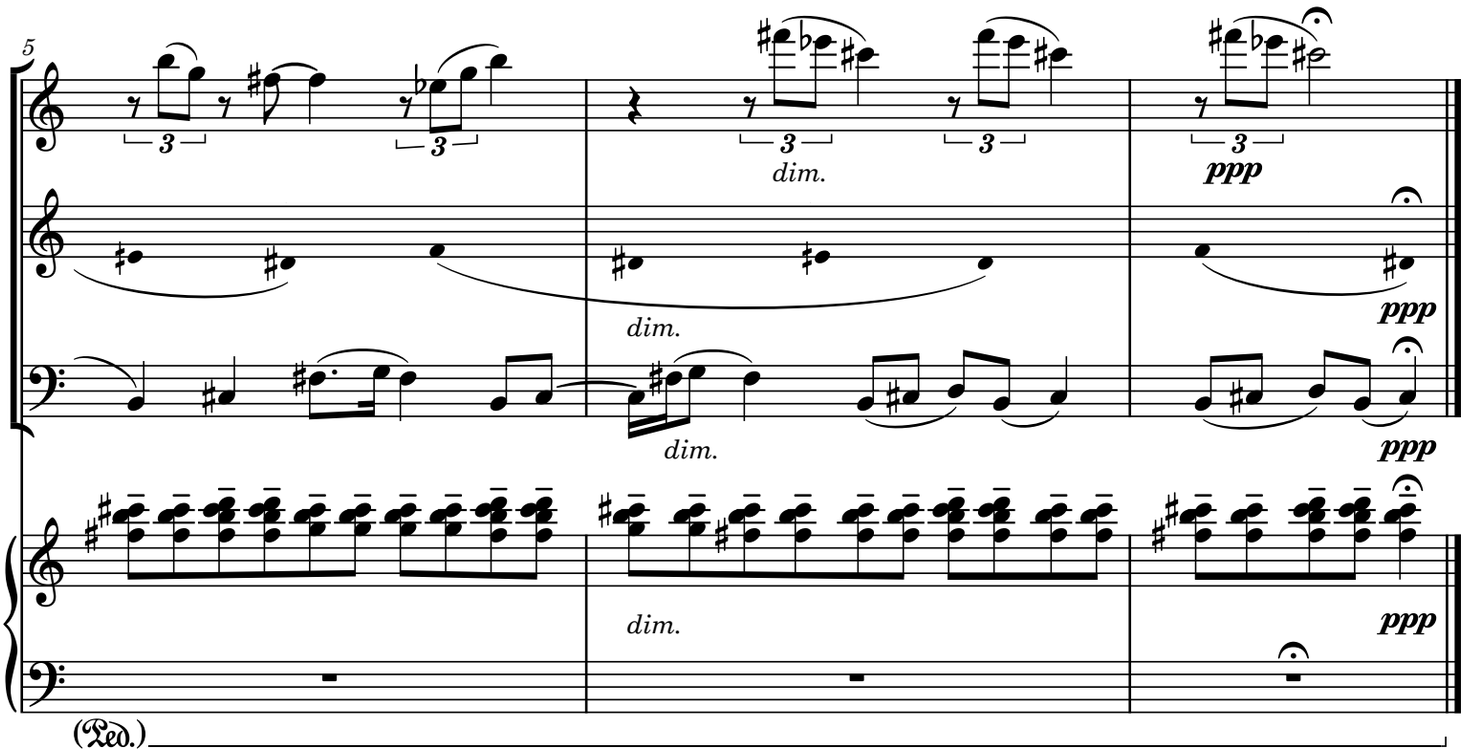

24
gradually to sul pont., invite overtones
mf
dim. poco a poco
mm
dim.


26
mp
reduce to croaks n groans
nn


29
p
p
pp

V


Grave ♪ = 46
eerie, abysmal
Violin
Clarinet in B♭
Violoncello
Piano
distantly
sul tasto, smoothly.
sempre una corda
1/2 air, floating and amorphous


5
dim.
ppp
dim.
ppp
dim.
ppp
dim.
ppp
(Ped.)