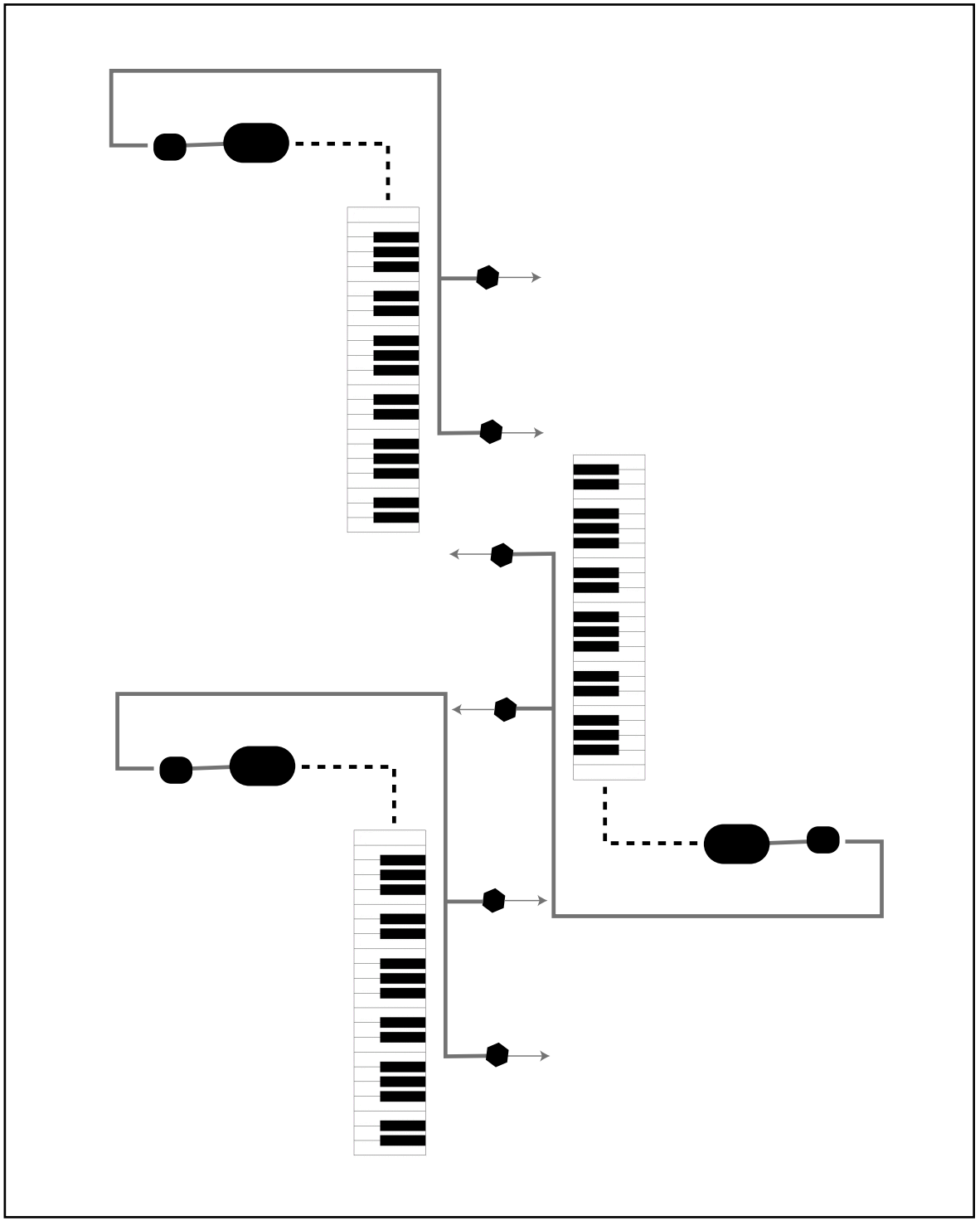
Untitled Acid

speaking pianist and keys

(2020)

Kelley
Sheehan

for riot ensemble



index

49-key midi-controller
max msp 8
- accompanying max msp folder“synth_control”

hardware setup

1. the midi controller should be plugged into a compatible laptop using an USB cable. This laptop should have Max MSP 8 installed. Note, either the full or “trail” version will work fine. The trail only disables “saving” and will be able to perform this patch. 2. From laptop, using an interface (or similar device) route the left and right channels into L/R speakers.

software setup

Make sure the entire folder “synth_control” is within the directory of Max Msp (document>Max 8>library) Open the folder and drag the file “setpath.maxpat” onto Max 8 icon. This will open the patch and instruct you to restart the program. Afterwares, open the performance patch “_Main_synth_control.”

Follow instructions within the patch (i.e. select midi controller from drop down menu, click the speaker icon to turn on the entire patch, press a key to make sure that soundfiles have loaded correctly, then use number box to adjust audio with midi-sounds. To do this, click on the box with an “x” to turn on midi sounds. Then adjust the overall volume of the patch.

At the bottom of the patch is a box with numbers “a”- “d.” These correspond with markings within the score.
These will need to be engaged during performance by the knobs on the controller (see photo “novationlayout.”
These can be used during rehearsal/performance of individual sections.

plot

keyboard and performer should be facing audience (or camera). Laptop should be out of view.

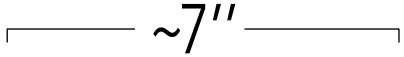
general notes

two staves are used in the score. Top staff is for vocalizations and the bottom for the midikeyboard. The midi controller is mainly used for pre-recorded samples whereas the individual amplitude is set. This means that any dynamics within the midi-controller staff is used for performative reasons. Dynamics used with the vocalization staff does refer to amplitude/volume.

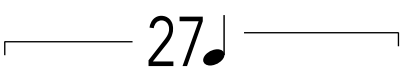
Each section utilizes different noteheads (square, traingle, etc). This is meant to indicate the unique samples loaded during these sections. For example, section 1's C4 may have an entirely different sample than that of section 2. If a notehead is seen from a different section then it is meant to show that the sample sound has remained the same.

There are 4 different sections and 4 unique pre-recorded sample banks. Section 1 midi notes should be 0-48, 2 should be 24-72 3 should be 72-119 and 4 after modulation has been fully rotated 172-219

notation guide



bracket with a number+ " indicates the number of sections"enclosed by brackets



indicates the number of quarter notes. Tempo remains the same.

a big number in a grey box indicates and names each section

letter in a dark box indicates which sample bank should be triggers within Max MSP. Use the assigned knobs to trigger

transpose keyboard up two octaves. Usually occurs at the end of a section.

move modulation wheel upwards

arrow indicates whether to inhale or exhale

small "x" means to hold breath

Final notes:

The text is a collection of words from a few of Margaret Atwood's poems. Although these poems are the original source, they hold no meaning and should be thought of as sound objects.

This work isn't inspired by Covid-19. So any reference to breath or breathing is not meant to be in relation to the pandemic. These moments, or gestures, are more to cause an unidentifable tension to the audience/viewer. Perhaps similar to method acting in it's nature. I'm thinking along the lines of Takasugi's works such as "sideshow" where he asks for performers to "blow up balloons" while out of sight of the audience so that we get the sight of them actually spent and red in the face from the effort. While, I don't wish to take it so far. I don't want the listener to recognize that anything is happening with regards to being instructed to "hold your breath" but I do want them to feel a sense of growing discomfort and tension. To feel that there is something perhaps artifical and strange happening.

All notes should be held to their absolute full duration. Even though there may be silence, many times a finally sound is in the last 32nd note. Sometimes the sample/note won't "speak" right away - that's okay and intended.

The score will sound nothing like the final realized work. By this I mean, this score transcribes a way to play these samples but not the internal rhythm of the sample. This is done to avoid complex rhythms and focus more on the sounds and performance of them. I'm providing a mock-up which covers from bar 8 to the end. This mock-up is to help place it all together in the ear of the performer as they learn this piece but this is not the authority. This piece is meant to be played by humans and therefor will inevitable sound a bit different and less mechanical - this is welcomed!

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c.a 5 minutes

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1

inhale! Like the lights have just been turned on

20″

voice

hold (breath)

keys

ff

a

2 *obsessive & undefined* ♩. = 90

discretely breath (not often and only if need)

continue to build tension

mf

7 ~7″

look straight ahead and

into the distance. Hold tension.

imitating energy ♩ = 100

8

deeply breathe

(catch your breath)

ord.

"mf"

"mf"

"f"

3

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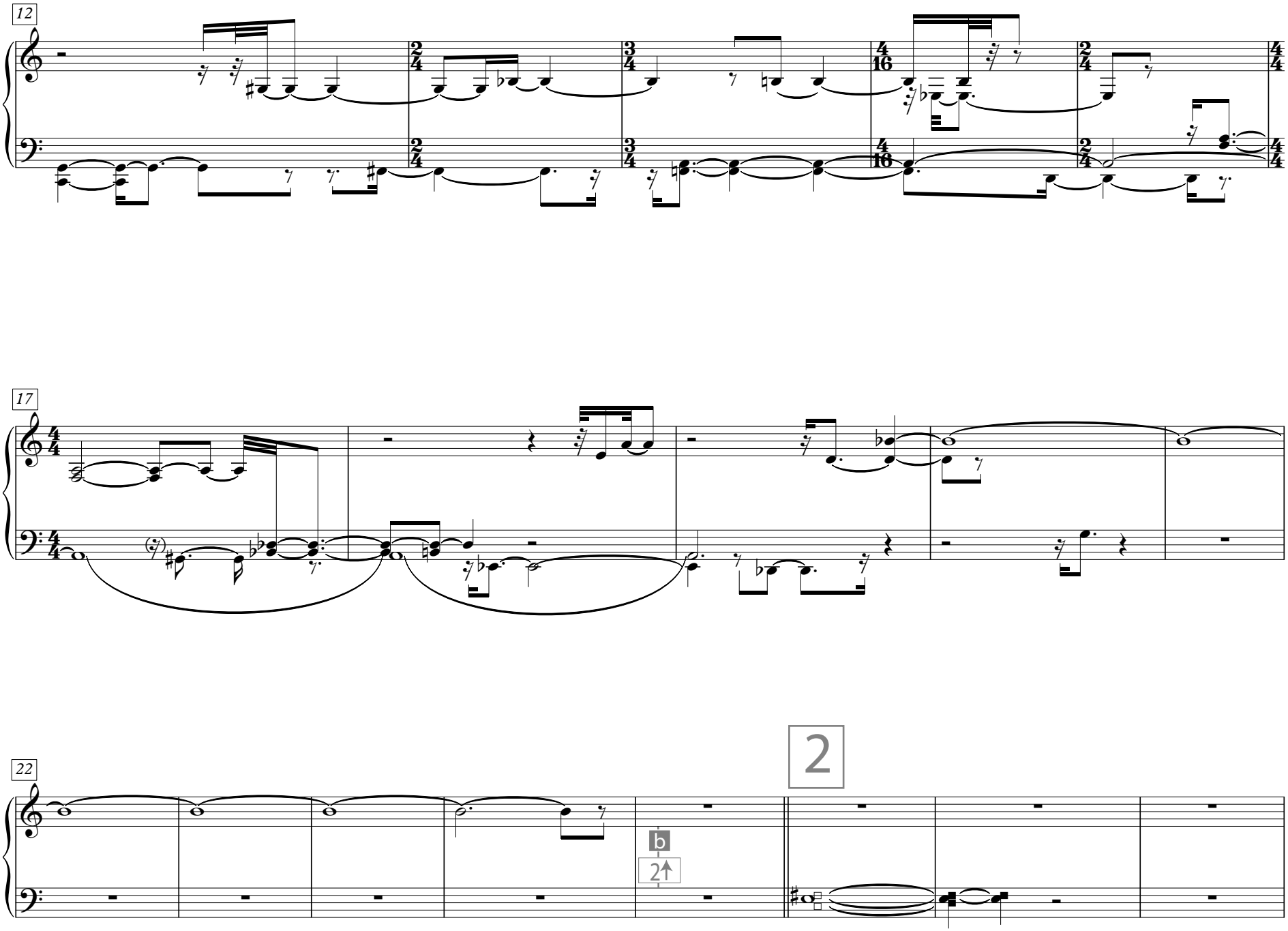
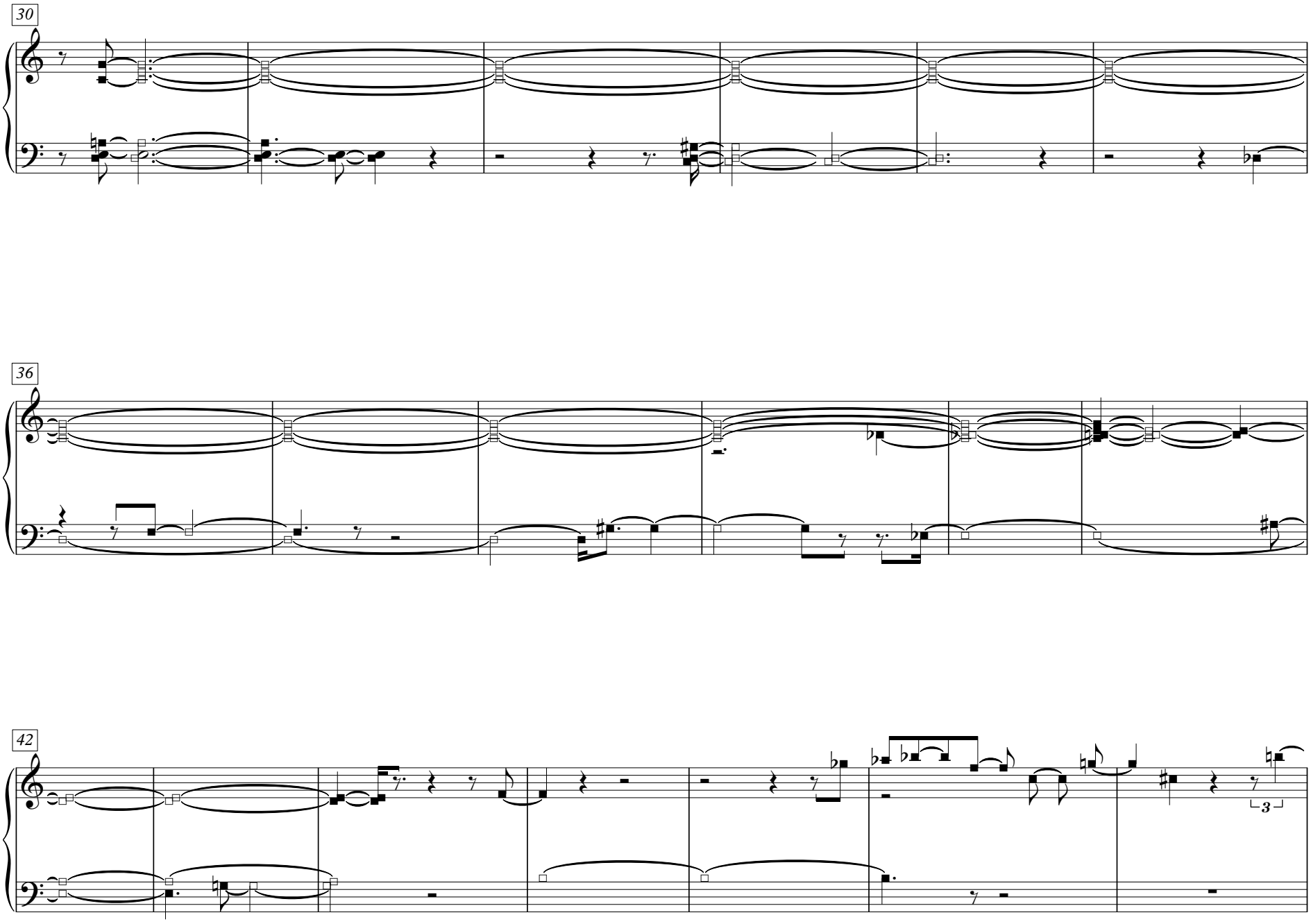
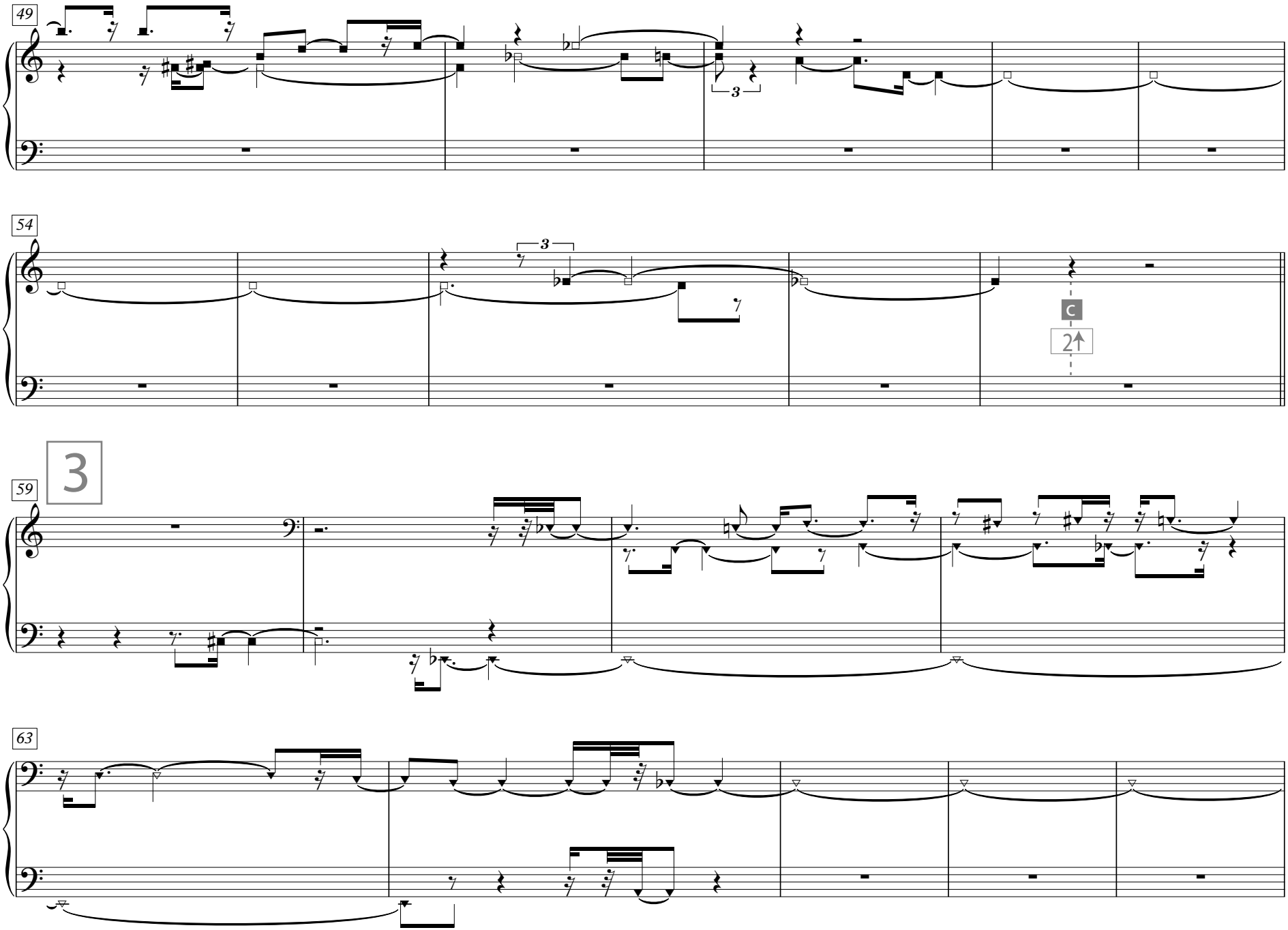
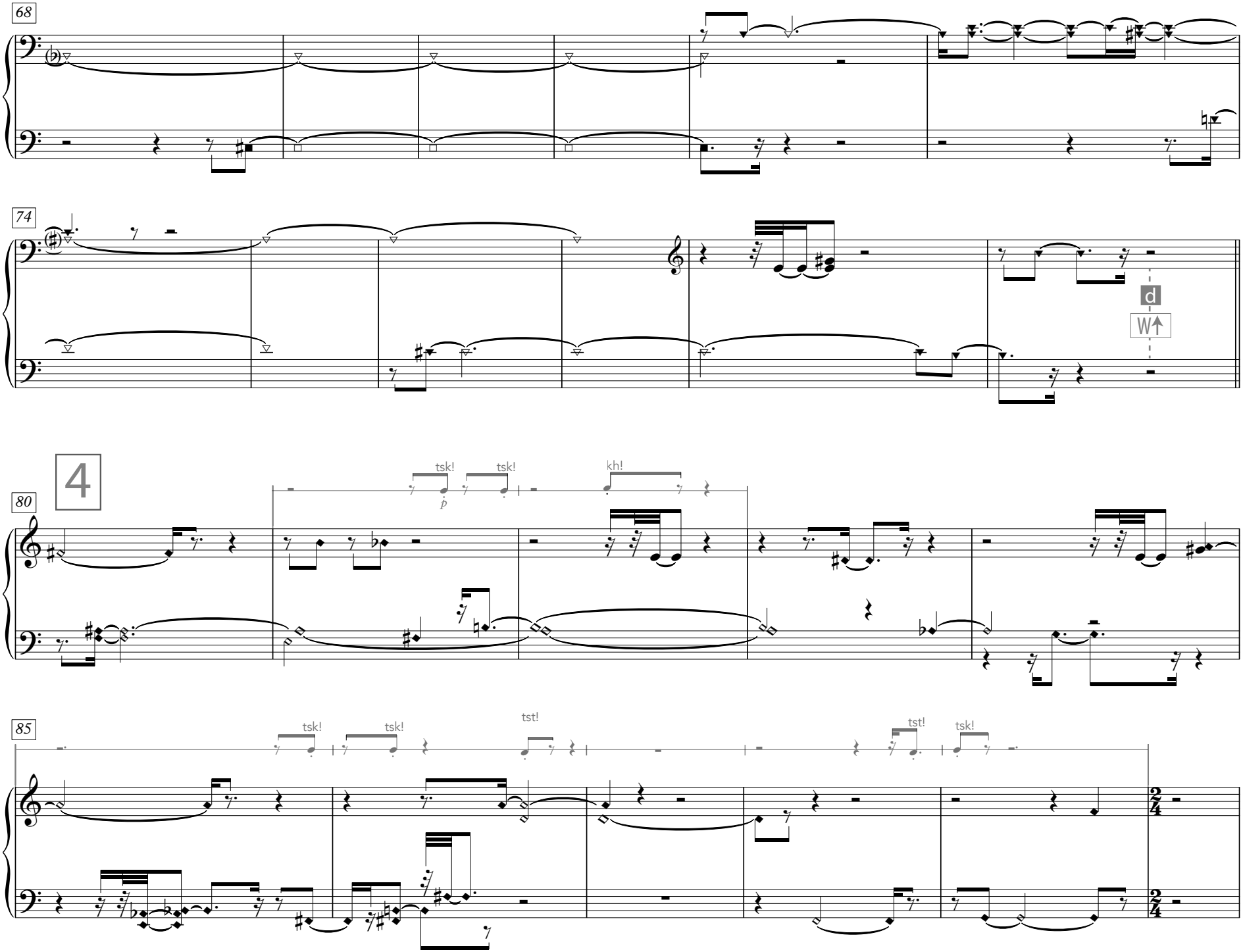
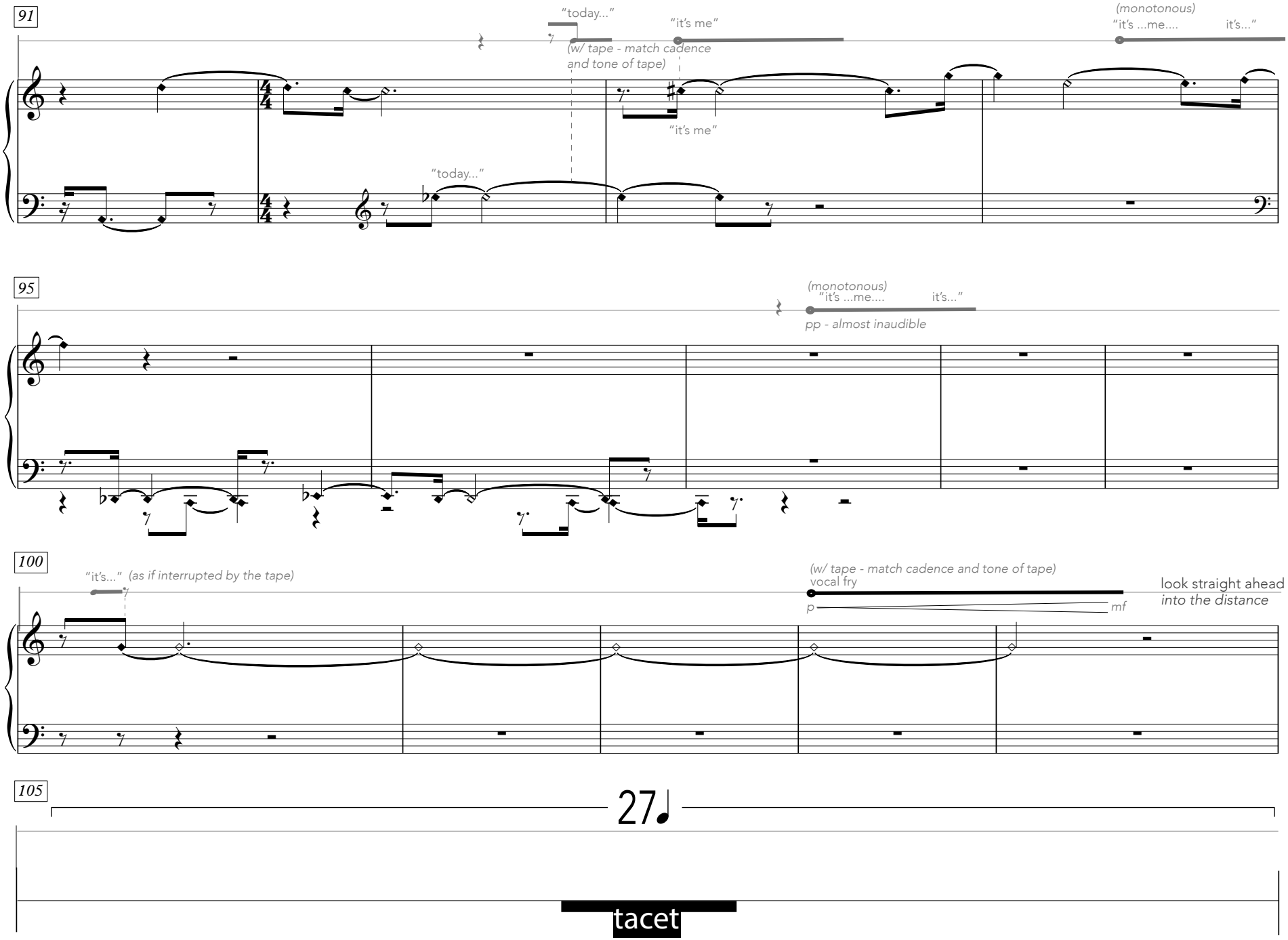

12
17
22
2
b
2


30
36
42
3


49
3
54
3
C
2
3
59
63


68
74
d
W
4
80
tsk!
tsk!
kh!
p
85
tsk!
tsk!
tst!
tst!
tsk!


91
"today..."
"it's me"
(w/ tape - match cadence and tone of tape)
(monotonous)
"it's ...me....
it's..."
"it's me"
"today..."
95
(monotonous)
"it's ...me....
it's..."
pp - almost inaudible
100
"it's..." (as if interrupted by the tape)
(w/ tape - match cadence and tone of tape)
vocal fry
p
mf
look straight ahead
into the distance
105
27
tacet

106
111
look at camera
still, full of tension
24
24
116
118
32
exhale, until there is no more air...
(timing of the following actions are extremely flexible)
slowly breath in...
a subtle action
hold until you no longer can
the piece is over
a moment before
you breath again
somerville, MA
5/17/2020