

John Pax

Il y a – memory of a word lacking

for 2 soprano, mixed ensemble, and electronics

(2020-2022)

Il y a – memory of a word lacking

for 2 soprano, mixed ensemble, and electronics

(2020-2022)

first performance

Holmes à Court Gallery, South Perth, January 20th 2022

Bonnie de la Hunty, *soprano*

Thea Rossen, *percussion*

Adam Lewin, *bass flute*

John Pax, *conductor*

Brianna Louwen, *soprano*

Ashley Smith, *clarinets and saxophone*

William Huxtable, *violin*

Christopher Tonkin, *live electronics*

Instrumentation

Clarinet in Bb (also Bass, and Soprano Saxophone)

Percussion: 28" Timpani, Apple Chime, Wind Gong, Bass Drum

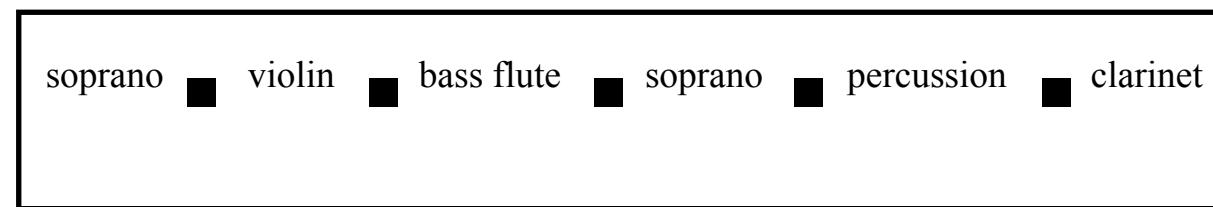
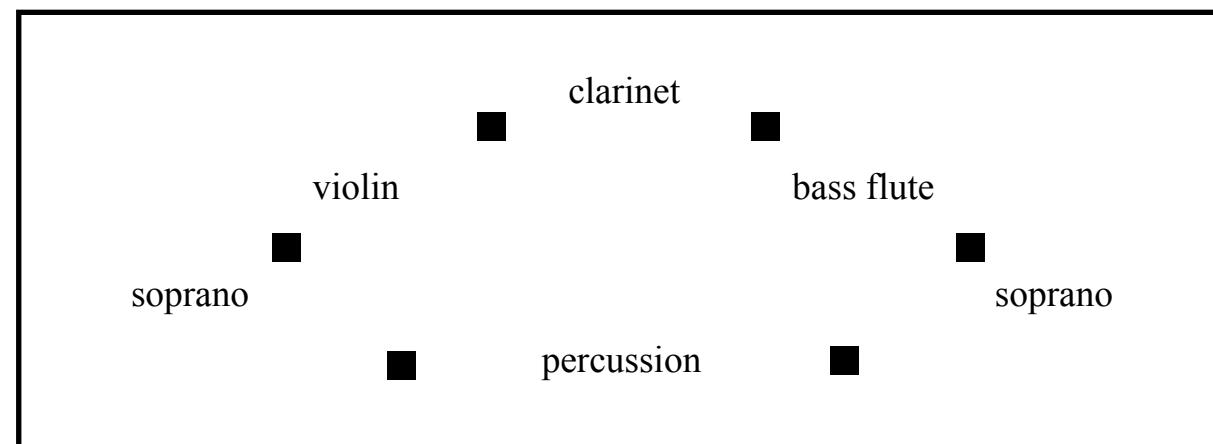
2 Soprano

Violin

Bass flute

Live Electronics

Arrangements



SUNG TEXTS

Part II

iv. ...and caused to fall

— תְּרִיבָה וַיַּפֵּל עַל —
and .. a deep sleep to fall upon — and .. slept

Bereshit

Wer, wenn ich schrie,
hörte mich denn aus der Engel Ordnungen?

Who, if I cried out,
would hear me among the angelic orders?

Rainer Maria Rilke, *The First Elegy*

Part III

vi. hymnos .. tin iros (Pindar)

ἀναξιφόρμιγγες ὕμνοι τίνα θεόν τίν' ἥρωα τίνα δ' ἄνδρα ...

Hymns that rule the lyre what god, what man,
what hero shall we celebrate?

Pindar, 2nd Olympian Ode

viii. Sind wir ganz.. (Scholem)

Sind wir ganz von dir geschieden? [...]
Nur dein Nichts ist die Erfahrung, die sie von dir haben darf.

Are we utterly estranged from You? [...]
entitled only to experience you in the shape of your negation.

Gershom Scholem, *With a Copy of Kafka's Trial*

vii. Daß ich.. (Rilke)

Daß ich dereinst, an dem Ausgang der grimmigen Einsicht,
Jubel und Ruhm aufsinge zustimmenden Engeln.
[...] der falschen, aus Übertönung gemachten Stille ...

Someday, at the end of the nightmare of knowing,
May I emerge singing praise and jubilation to assenting angels.
[...] the false silence of sound drowning sound ...

Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Tenth Elegy*

Part IV

ix. il y a (Levinas)

il y a

there is
Emmanuel Levinas, *Existence and Existents*

fragmented throughout the score

Name I, II, and III

אֱלֹהִים elohim
θεός theos

section iii. commissioned by

Ashley William Smith and the Conservatorium at the University of Western Australia

section v. dedicated to

Elena Rykova and Thea Rossen

research and development of parts III & IV supported by

The committee on Australian Studies, Harvard University

Il y a - memory of a word lacking

for 2 soprano, mixed ensemble, and electronics

Score in C

John Pax
(2020-2022)

$\text{♩} = 40$ i. Prologue

1

Electronics

Clarinet

Percussion

Voice I

Voice II

Violin

Bass Flute

Score in C

$\text{♩} = 48$

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥

pppp semper

(distant)

poco e poco

ff

pp

>ppp

più

poco

dolce

10"

mf > pppp

pp

p > ppp decresc.

con fiato

meno

This musical score page displays a six-staff section of a composition. The top staff is for 'Electronics', featuring sustained notes across all measures. The second staff is for 'Clarinet', which is the most active part, with dynamic markings like 'poco e poco', 'ff', 'pp', 'ppp', 'più', 'poco', 'dolce', '10"', 'mf > pppp', 'pp', 'p > ppp decresc.', 'con fiato', and 'meno'. The third staff is for 'Percussion', the fourth for 'Voice I', the fifth for 'Voice II', and the bottom two for 'Violin' and 'Bass Flute' respectively, both of which are mostly silent. Measure numbers 1 through 6 are indicated above the Clarinet staff. Measure 1 includes dynamic markings 'pppp semper' and '(distant)'. Measure 2 has a dynamic 'pp'. Measures 3 and 4 show a transition with 'più' and 'poco dolce'. Measures 5 and 6 feature sustained notes with 'con fiato' and 'meno' dynamics. The score is set in common time (indicated by a '4') and uses a standard musical notation system with stems and note heads.

2

♩ = 60 ii. Parados

elec.

cl.

perc.

v. I

v. II

vln.

bfl.

8

(ppp)

(pppp)

simple scale askew (uneven pitch) ad lib.
→ più → meno ord. <*mf*> *pp* echo <—> *ppp* <*f*> *pppp* poco più sim. <—> *ppp* <—> *pp* *mf* > *pp* decresc. poco

non vib. con fiato

slowly moving timbre (ad lib.)

pp

ppp

O

ow

21 8

elec.

cl.

perc.

v. I

v. II

vln.

bfl.

(10) Song-A ca. 60"

(*pppp cresc.*)

> o *< pppp echo of violin*

> o sim.

poco

semre dolce (like a secret)

i ts - e ei s - a

IV bow tilt
poco pont. → tasto

ppp echo of clarinet

pppp shadow of voice II

(unbalanced diad)

sim.

poco

8

31 (Song-A) (11)

bassflute-amplification on voice2-amplification on (ca. 40")

cl. *p poss. echo of bassflute*

perc.

v. I

v. II *poco* *p* *ppp* *(con fiato)* *p* *ppp*
più fiato *meno* *eh* *s - e*

vln. *poco* *p* *ppp* *pont.* *norm.* *tasto*

bfl. *p poss.* *ppp* *pppp* *echo* *(fing.)* *(lip)* *(fing.)* *(lip)*

41 (Song-A)

elec.

(12) Song-B ca. 32"

song: **ppp** (cresc.)

poco
pp > pppp reflection of vocalist

cl. gliss.
 poco e poco
 to Bass Clarinet in Bb

perc.

(dolce e lontano)
 slowly moving timbre (ad lib.)
 non vib. con fiato

v. I i
 pp
 ppp uneasy
 pp ppp
 v. II ei
 poco
 ppp
 a

vln. **pppp** poco cresc.
 poco e poco
 pp > ppp
 molto ponticello

bfl. poco
 poco più
 poco fiato
 3 (lip)
 warm
 mf
 ppp

51 (Song-B)

(13)

Resonance
p poss. cresc. poco e poco (ca. 3')

violin-transformation on

Song-C ca. 55"

song: pp (cresc.)

Bass Clarinet in Bb
ord.

cl.

perc.

v. I

(stable)
pppp simply

s - e → i

dolce
p poss. — pp — p poss.

v. II

(stable)
dolce
p poss. — ppp — p poss.

a

s - e → i

tasto flat bow
pppp airy

pont. bow tilt
pppp unstable

vln.

bfl.

pppp hollow - stable

as before

p poss.

61

elec.

clarinet-immensity

cl. (opening an immensity)
con fiato - always shifting - ad lib.

perc.

v. I vib. senza vib.
p pppp f pp sub.

v. II vib. senza vib.
p poss. f pp sub.

vln. norm.
p fp cresc. poco e poco

bfl. *fp cresc. poco e poco*

71 (Song-C) (Resonance)
res: **ppp** (cresc.)

15 Song-D ca. 25"
res: **pp** (cresc.)
song: **p**

16 Rotate
p poss. (behind res.)
cresc. (ca. 45")

cl. più fatio → meno → più normale - as before 3 ,
pppp → pp → pppp → gliss. → ppp → pp → p → sfz →

perc.

v. I **ppp** cresc. **mf** → i

v. II **ppp** cresc. **mf** → i

vln. poco pont. → molto 3 , norm.
pp → p → sfz →

bfl. (cold) → 3 ,
pp → p → sfz →

elec.

(Resonance)

(Rotate)

res: **p** cresc.
rot: **ppp** poco cresc.

res: **mp** cresc.
rot: **pp** poco cresc.

cl.

p decresc.

to Clarinet in Bb

perc.

v. I

ppp poco

a_____

pp cresc. **f** **ppp** **p** <**ff** **pp**

v. II

ppp poco

a_____

pp cresc. **f** **ppp** **p** <**ff** **pp**

vln.

p decresc.

o poco e ad lib. **mf** **ppp** sub.

mfppp **p** **sffz pp**

bfl.

p decresc.

o as before **mf** **ppp** sub.

f **ppp** **p** **sffz pp**

$\text{♩} = 90$ iii. ...a day without a day (Jabés)

10

92 (17) (cl1a: confrontation - cl1b: hawwah chorale - cl1c: sand)

res: **f** fade all amplification (excerpt clarinet)
rot: **mp**
(encroaching)

elect.

Cl. Clarinet in Bb

ff f mp hollow 3 16" down on reed gliss. 9" sim. 14" (into electronics) 12" as before pp sim. gliss. (with electronics) ppp p pp glowingly p ppp p pp quasi ff poco quiver (blinding terror) with and against high clarinet in electronics (poss.) ca. 1'30"

perc.

v. I

v. II

vln.

bfl.

Measure 92: Clarinet in Bb (cl.) starts with ff, followed by f, mp hollow, 3 eighth-note grace notes, 16" dynamic with instruction "down on reed", gliss., 9" dynamic, sim., 14" dynamic with instruction "(into electronics)", 12" dynamic with instruction "as before", pp sim. gliss. (with electronics), ppp, p, pp, p, pp, quasi ff poco quiver (blinding terror), with and against high clarinet in electronics (poss.). Measure 17: Electronics (elect.) has a sustained tone. Measure 18: Electronics (elect.) has a sustained tone. Measure 19: Electronics (elect.) has a sustained tone.

102 ***ff*** tuba-air (20) ***• = 70*** iv. ...and caused to fall
 elect. (cl5: multiphonic glow)

voice1-amplification on
 voice2-amplification on
 voice-transformation on
 bassflute-amplification on (ca. 12")
 violin-amplification on (ca. 12")

hawwah chorale stop (subito)
 (cl3a: low-a -- cl3b: low-b -- cl4: transition)

cl.
ppp molto tranquillo
 (avoid dynamic peaks)

perc.

v. I sempre tenuto
pp molto tranquillo cresc. poco e poco
 wa - (a)y - ya - ap - ***p*** poco

v. II sempre tenuto
pp molto tranquillo cresc. poco e poco
 wa - (a)y - ya - ***p*** poco

vln. half col legno tratto - unstable
pppp molto tranquillo

bfl. con fiato - unstable
pppp molto tranquillo

109 (21) (22)

elec. (cl6x low-glow -- dolce air) (cl7a: sand -- cl7b: sine/hawwah chorale)

cl.

perc.

v. I *pp* (cresc. poco e poco) *p* *poco*, *p* *pp* *poco* *pp* *p* *poco* *pp* *p*

v. II *pp* (cresc. poco e poco) *p* *poco*, *p* *pp* *poco* *pp* *poco* *pp* *p*

vln. *poco* sim. *poco sempre* *pppp shadow of vocalist II*

bfl. *poco* sim. *poco sempre* *pppp shadow of vocalist I*

119 (23)

electric (cl6x low-glow)

cl. from pre-recorded clarinet senza sord. molto vibrato (*unstable*) senza vibrato (*luminous - still*) sim. poco

ff (*emphatic*) **ppp** sub. (*withdrawn*)

perc.

v. I wa ay y a

v. II wa ay yi

vln. ord. tilt tasto **ppp** dolce poss. with cl.

bfl. normale ma con poco fiato **ppp** dolce poss. with cl. (fingerd.)

128

(24) v. ...and dreamt (Sweelinck)

elec.

tutti amplification off
voice-transformation off

timpani-amplification on
timpani-transformation on
bassflute-amplification on (ca. 60")
violin-amplification on (ca. 60")

cl.

con tutti

[with a sense of exploration (*searching - dreaming*) respond to the ebb and flow of the electronic transformations
(*quasi vocalist*) prior to a word (*muse-ically*) the voice never forms
prioritise resonance over stable sonority - echoes which the pedal colours resonance is sustained (*renewed*) by the transducer]

perc.

Surface (transducer) (learning to sing)
pppp sempre (avoid dynamic peaks i.e. feedback)
Pedal
emerging (almost melancholic) faint traces of gesture receding simply - faintly (melisma)

[voice-B]

v. I **p** **poco** ah

v. II **p** **poco** ah

vln. **p poss.** **con clarinet** IV tasto bow tilt (airy) **p poss.** **ppp** **pp** **meno**

bfl. **p poss.** **con clarinet** **con fiato (warm)** **p poss.** **ppp** **pp** **meno** (fing.)

139

25

♩ = 60 Name I

elec

voice1-amplification on (ca. 15")
voice2-amplification on (ca. 15")
chime-amplification on (ca. 25")

pero

[voice-C]

to Wind Gong

Wind Gong [voice-D]

*quivering (tense)
emerging - differentl*

sparkling - hidden (like a secret)

V. I

v. II

vln

bfl

cl

per

V. 1

v. II

vln

bfl

*quivering (tense)
emerging - differentl*

1

sparkling - hidden (like a secret)

— 1 —

A musical staff with five horizontal lines. From left to right: a bass clef, a dotted half note with a vertical stem pointing down, a fermata (a small curved line over a dot), another dotted half note with a vertical stem pointing up, a fermata, a bass clef, and a short vertical bar line.

bfl.

con fiato (*shifting*) (as before)

pp

norm. (senza vib.) legato

8va stop on string tasto poco pont.

ff

ffff a shadow **ppp** poco decresc.

norm. (fing.) (cold)

ff **p** poss. a shadow **pppp**

149 (26) rit. $\text{♩} = 40$

elec.

pppp distant (as before)

*tutti amplification off
clarinet-amplification on*

*bassflute-amplification on (ca. 4")
bassflute-transformation on*

cl.

normale (senza sord.)

ppp

perc.

(o)

barely sustained

morendo

(o) an echo

(o) shimmering

v. I

v. II

vln.

ppp poco decresc.

bfl.

con fiato poco ad. lib.

p poss.

3

3 pppp

159

(27)

elec.

ppp (subito)

violin-amplification on

(28)

voice1-amplification on (ca. 25")
voice2-amplification on (ca. 25")

pre-recorded voice

cl.

f > *pp* —————— *mf* —————— *ppp* —————— *p* > *pp* ——————

(withheld)

Timpani normale

p poss. molto dolce

perc.

to Timpani
[turn devices off]

v. I

v. II

vln.

ppp

pp ——————

tasto tilt (warm, pale air)

molto dolce

bfl.

ppp ——————

(warm, pale air)

molto dolce

169

(29)

elec.

voice1-amplification off (ca. 24'')
voice2-amplification off (ca. 24'')

(**ppp**)

(30)

violin-amplification off (ca. 14'')
bassflute-amplification off (ca. 20'')
clarinet-amplification off (ca. 30'')

cl.

(dry - clear)

mp o — *p* — *pppp* — *ppp* — *pppp* *poco* — *ppp decresc.*

perc.

to Bass Drum

v. I

pp > *ppp* (*cold*)

v. II

pp > *ppp* (*cold*)

vln.

IV / III normale

poco pont. tilt (unstable)

tasto flat (unstable)

con sord.

pp >

p —

ppp

bfl.

con fiato (unstable)

ad lib.

p poss.

3

pppp

$\bullet = 50$ vi. hymnos .. tin iros (Pindar)

G.P.

(31)

179

elec.

cl.

perc.

v. I

v. II

vln.

bfl.

pppp molto dolce (echo choirs)
voice1-amplification on
voice1-transformation on
voice2-amplification on
voice2-transformation on

to Soprano Saxophone

hy - m -

no -

o - s

e -

ppp echo of vocalist
m

ppp molto dolce
an echo
o - s

ppp
ti

189

(32) Name II

voice-fx input off (ca. 4")
violin-amplification on (ca. 10")
violin-transposition-BB on
violin-reverb on
voice-fx input on (ca. 15")

elec.

cl.

perc.

v. I

p poss. ————— **ppp decresc.** > dolce **f sub.** ————— **ppp sub.**

na ————— a e - lo - o hi - m

v. II

ppp ————— **pp dolce decresc.** > (dark) **f sub.** ————— **ppp sub.**

e - na the o - v

vln.

con sord. tilt behind the bridge "poco pont." (*hollow glow*)
(change pitch by bending the G string with left hand - pitches are approx.)

ppp molto dolce e poco cresc. gliss.

bfl.

<**mf**> **pp** poco cresc. poco e poco
molto espressivo

199 (33) $\text{♩} = 40$

bassdrum-amplification on violin-transposition-BB off (ca 18')

elec.

cl.

perc. Bass Drum (unmeasured) p poss.

v. I p poco Ke → a → ndi - so → e → n xi - fo - min -

v. II p pp Ke - la - - me - - n a - na - - fo o -

vln. gliss. mp pp decresc. poco e poco normale tasto flat (hollow, airy, weak drone) unstable p poss.

bfl.

(34)

209 vocal echos continue and fade

♩ = 60 vii. Daf ich.. (Rilke)

elec.

violin-transposition solo
chris-control output
bassdrum-expand on
voice1-amplification off (ca. 4'')
voice2-amplification off (ca. 4'')

(bass drum resonance is noticeably widening)

cl.

perc.

(p poss!)

below violin

v. I

gis

v. II

pp
(perfect 4th)

vln.

poco ad lib. (con sord.)
molto sul tasto (**octave node**) tilt
muted lightly with the first finger

bfl.

p poss. emerging (a continuous sonority)

above bass drum

(p poss!)

poco cresc. poco e poco

irregular

→ light, flat bow (*hollow - airy*)
without muting

→ irregular muting

→ heavier bow

219

(bassdrum resonance fades)

(35) $\text{♩} = 50$

bassflute-amplification on (ca. 4")
bassflute-transformation on
violin-transposition jump (ca. 15')

cl.

perc. to Toy Chime

v. I

v. II

vln. → muted → poco col legno tratto quasi tilt (to stop string 'grain spikes') stop on strings (frozen) senza c.l.t. and finger mute (noticeable change of pitch)
pp *mp* *sub.* *p* *intense* *p* *pp* *poco* *pp sub.*

bfl. poco ad lib. con fiato *piú* *meno*
p poss. *pp* *molto dolce*

236

elec.

cl.

perc.

v. I

v. II

vln.

bfl.

(38)

3

clarinet-transposition on
(moving - behind)

molto jaw vibrato with irregular air (*spluttering light*)

p sub.

ff

mf

p shifting (as if breathing)

meno

Toy Chime

f (glowing)

poco

f sub.

mf

ff

p

f più

ff < ppp

p

mf

ff

pp dolce

poco e poco

terrified

en

de

zu

i - mme

e

st i -

si

ng - e

cresc. poco e poco

molto sul tasto (as before)

f

f poss.

fz poss.

stop on strings

ff

mf

mf più

tilt (light)

irr. gliss.

gliss.

heavy

ppp

poco e poco con molto vibrato

molto fiato

meno

molto!

meno fiato e senza vibrato (fing.)

(unformed - uneasy)

255 (40)

elec. (sine tone) gliss. whistle-sine 2 (ca. 6") (and divide)

cl. molto dolce warm pp slight quiver più meno to Clarinet in Bb

perc.

v. I pp (molto dolce) hör el. ↗

v. II pp (molto dolce) e ör t

vln. molto dolce pppp senza sord.

bfl. pp pppp

Whistle
always shifting air to tone ratio, hold pitch firmly
ppp cresc. poco e poco

elec.

cl.

perc.

v. I

v. II

vln.

bfl.

Whistle
always shifting air to tone ratio, hold pitch firmly
ppp cresc. poco e poco

41

262

$\text{♩} = 60$

violin-amplification off
bassflute-amplification off
violin-amplification on (ca. 30")
violin-transposition-pizz on

Performed - follow whistle, lean either side of their tones

♩ = 40 viii. *Sind wir ganz..* (Scholem)

Sind wir ganz.. (Scholem)

elec. sine tone off
chime-amplification on
chime-transformation on
bassflute-amplification on

cl.

perc. (Toy Chime)
strike + small shake until end (ad lib.)

v. I *pppp simply*
O nicht ei

v. II *pppp simply*
icht ei

vln. senza sord.
+ (*shattered light*)
f molto espressivo
pizz. poco rit.
pp airy
mp dolce
ppp più e molto dolce
behind the bridge
ppp
gliss.
p quickly

bfl. (lip)
gloss.
ppp poco
(fing.)
pppp
mp

G.P

elec.

cl.

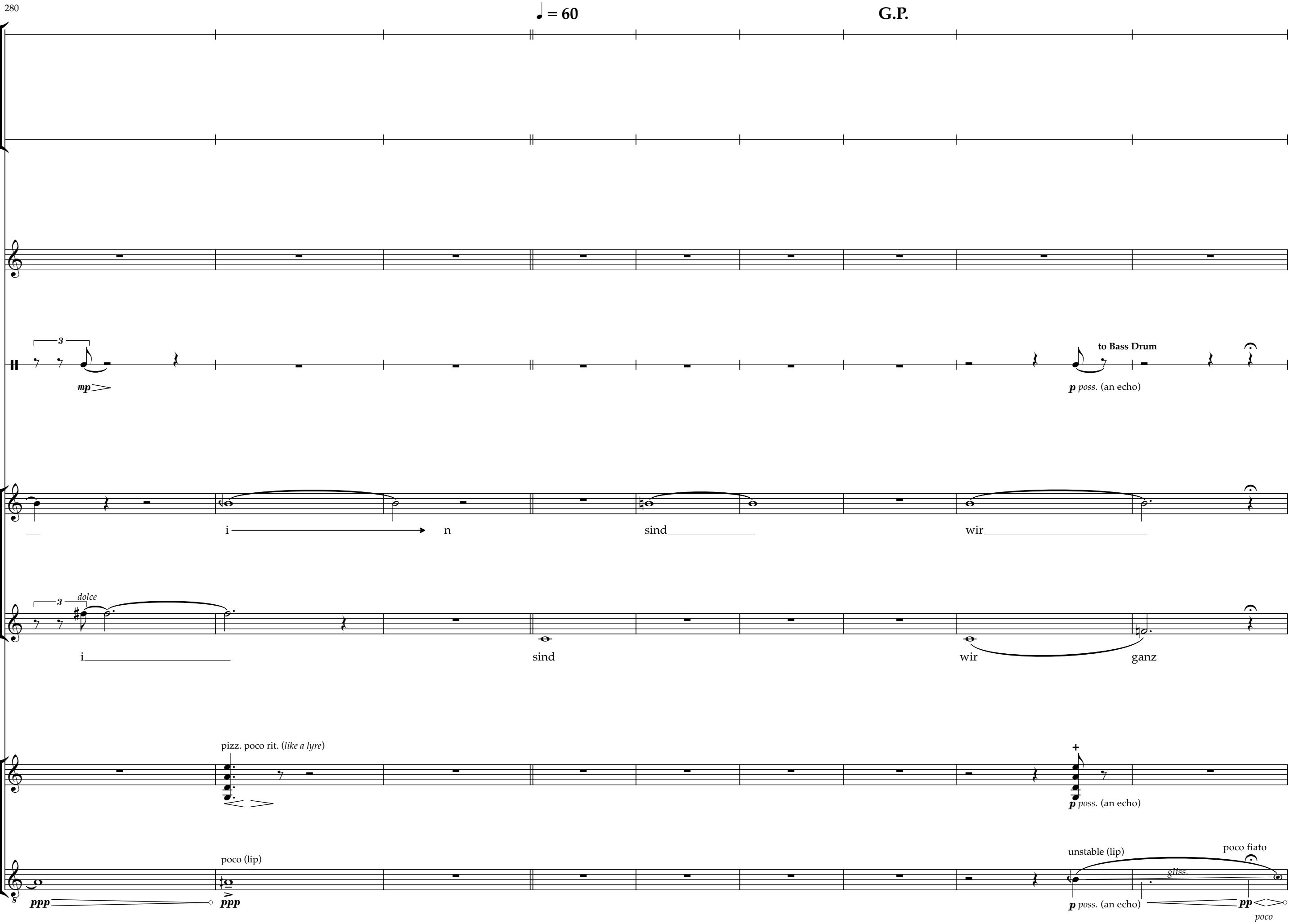
pero

v. 1

v. II

vln.

bfl



(44)

Sine tone

289 (43) chime-amplification off

ppp *molto dolce*

cl.

perc.

v. I *p poss. (warm)* *ppp bright* *ppp* *ppp cresc. poco e poco* *3* *(brighter)* *p*
 von de - → i dei - nem de - e - e → m

v. II *p poss. (warm)* *ppp bright* *(perfect 5th)* *cresc. poco e poco* *ie* *de* - - → m

vln. *IV tasto unstable* *pppp cresc. poco e poco* *3* *poco* *gliss.* *gliss.* *p* →
 → molto fiato → meno

bfl. *8* *ppp* *gliss.* *mp > ppp* *poco* →

298 $\text{♩} = 80$ ix. *il y a* (Levinas)

$\text{♩} = 60$

(45)

elec.

cl.

perc.

v. I
ord. **pp** *molto dolce* **ppp**, **ppp** v.2
i ly

v. II
ppp a v.1
ly y

vln. IV tasto gliss. poss. *gliss.* **pppp** poco fade into electronics

bfl. (lip) **pppp** poco vib fade into electronics

304

elec.

cl.

perc.

v. I

v. II

vln.

bfl.

violin-amplification 1
violin-transposition-bb 1
bassflute-amplification 1
bassflute-transposition 1

v.2

a.

(self)

p poss.

moving timbre (*like a secret*)
tasto → pont → molto → b.b. "pont." tilt gliss.

ppp

pp hollow glow

senza vib - shifting timbre (*like a secret*)
p poss. → ppp → ppp → ppp più

33

J = 50

311

elec.

cl.

perc.

v. I *ppp più*
i y v.2 a v.2 i v.2 ly

v. II *ppp più*
ly v.1 a v.1 a pp v.1 ly v.1 i v.1 i

vln. *gliss.* → "tasto"
(σ) (σ) (σ) (σ)

bfl. *warm - dolce*
p poss. *pppp*

320

(46) vocal-transformation on vocal-transformation off

cl.

perc.

v. I *fp* *ff* *ppp* *into sine* *pppp* *ppp* *(s)* *molto dolce*

v. II *(self)* *ppp* *gliss.* *up - poco* *v.1* *pppp* *ppp* *v.1* *molto dolce* *(s)*

vln. *(b.b) tilted bow* *pppp molto dolce* *normale punta d'arco (quivering, unstable - molto dolce)* *p poss.*

bfl. *(blend with violin sonority)* *pppp molto dolce* *quivering (air and jaw) unstable - molto dolce* *p poss.*

$\bullet = 40$

32

A diagram of a horizontal cylinder with two circular ports. The cylinder has a thick wall, indicated by a double-lined boundary. Two circular holes, labeled with the Greek letter ϕ , are positioned on the outer surface of the cylinder at different heights.

48

328

pc.

bassoon: sustained notes with grace notes

cl.

perc.

I: vocal line with dynamic markings (con vib., senza vib., mf, pp dolce, pppp subito, poco, ppp), articulations (v.2, v.1, 5th), and glissandos (gliss. poco)

II: vocal line with dynamic markings (mf, ppp, poco), articulations (v.1, 5th), and glissandos (gliss. poco)

n.: sustained notes with grace notes

fl.: sustained notes with grace notes

$\text{♩} = 60$ Name III

37

336 8

elec. (p poss.)

cl.

perc.

v. I

v. II

vln. sul E poco pont. (with electronics)

bfl. (with violin)

(49)

p poss. cold

ppp molto dolce o(v) v.2 The(ov) (s.) e → o

ppp molto dolce v.1 lo e(l)

p poss. cold

ppp poco IV shadow of bassflute

pppp (fing.)

