written for

Alexis Young

an intimate space

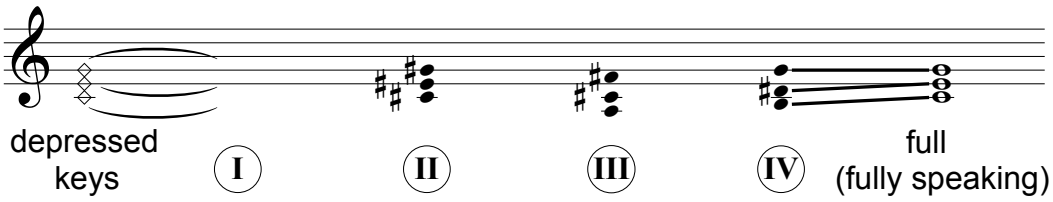
FOR MECHANICAL ACTION ORGAN

by graeme shields

VITAL ORGAN PROJECT

performance notes

Because every organ is different, it's important that the performer becomes incredibly familiar with the organ on which they will perform this piece. Since the main interest lies with gradually pulling on meachanical-action stops the performer will need to pay great attention to the intricacies and tendencies of their performance instrument. There will be three stops that serve as the focal timbre for the piece: 8', 4', and 2' flutes. The performer should first find four distinct "stages" at which each stop will excite the partials of their respective pipes and then recall what they sound like for use in the performance. As an example, an approximation of the four stages for the 8' flute stop from the instrument this piece was written on are notated below:



wind directed to chest: the loudest possible without any sounding pitch

barely speaking: the first sound of pitch coming from all 3 notes (not partially speaking chord)

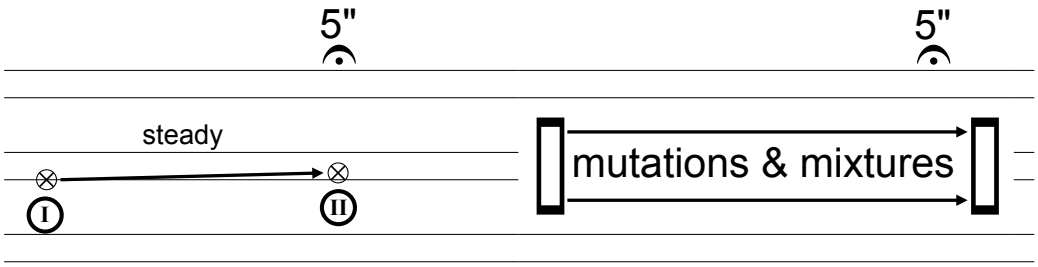
only stipulation is that it must be distinct from II and IV

close enough to "full" so the performer can slide into "full" with no break in pitch.

Although the sounding pitches may be unique to this instrument, the relationship between each of these stages should be universal across all tracker-action organs. As a result, the roman numerals beneath each sounding pitch collection in the example above will be used in the score to denote which stage of the partial-pulled stop is desired. The performer will determine what each stage is on their performance instrument and "pull accordingly". The simplest advice the composer can offer to the performer is to be patient and pace your performance.

x noteheads represent starting and stopping of activity in the flute stops.

the rectangles represent mutations and mixtures which may be tiered from least present to most present (or vice versa) to match the dynamic directions given in the score.



the fermatas apply only to the end goal over which they occupy, not the entire gesture. In the example above, the performer should begin at the first stage, pull the stop to the second stage, and hold for 5 seconds.

the arrows in this staff are not meant to be proportional: as long as the motion is slow and steady, the performer may take as long as needed to pull or push the stop to the desired stage.

program notes

The *intimate space* portion of the title refers to many aspects of this piece, both physical and musical. The changing pitch relationships heard throughout are the result of the organist pulling out the stops at small incriments: an intimate amount of space. The aural result is a conceptually intimate difference between sonorities, dealing with microtonal harmonies. As a gross generalization, many mechanical action organs tend to have fewer pipes or available timbres than electro-pneumatic or fully electronic instruments, and therefore tend to occupy physically smaller spaces. Lastly, the success of the piece relies heavily on the intimacy of the performer/instrument relationship, requiring time spent discovering the intricacies and tendencies of the instrument.

for Alexis Young

an intimate space

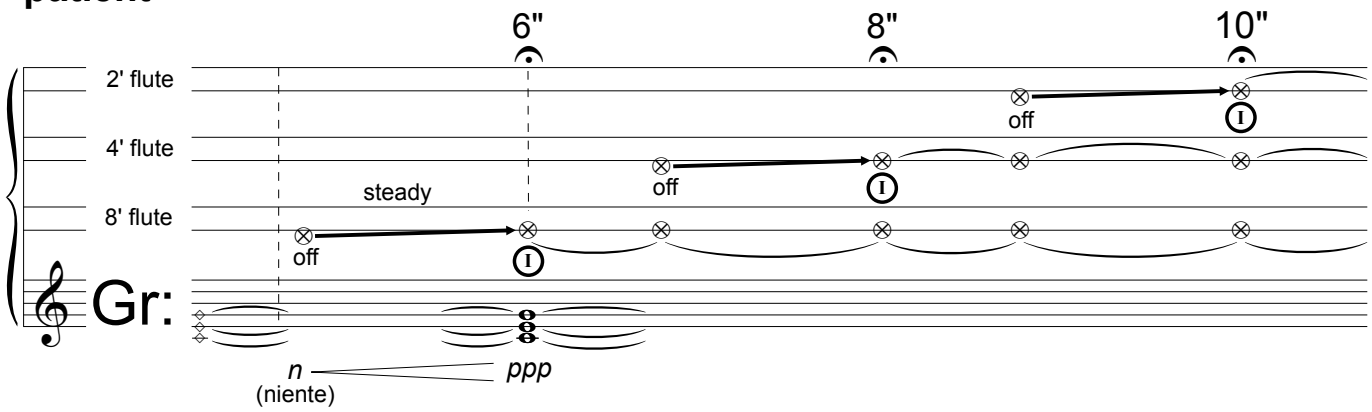
for mechanical action organ

graeme shields

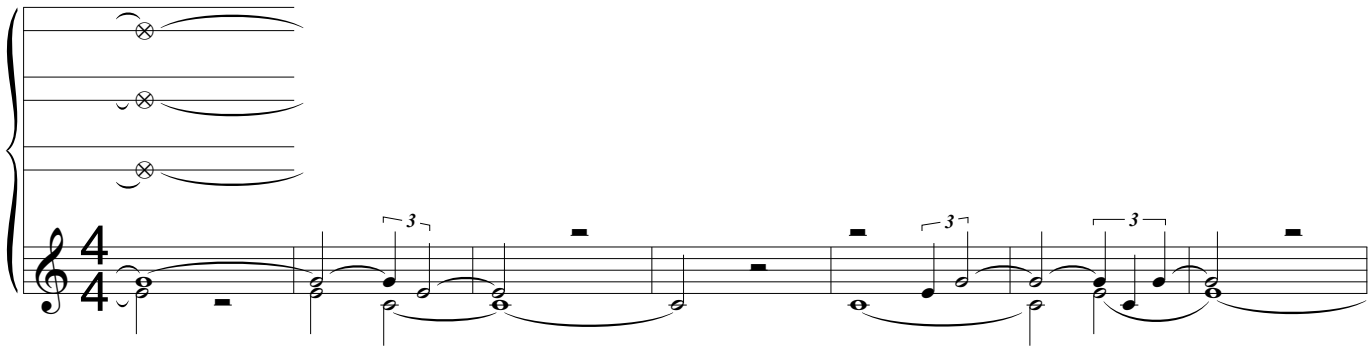
all durations over fermatas
are minimum suggestions

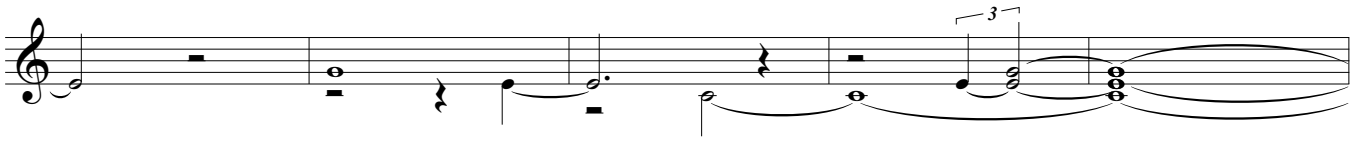
Gr: no stops pulled
Ped: 8' 16' flutes

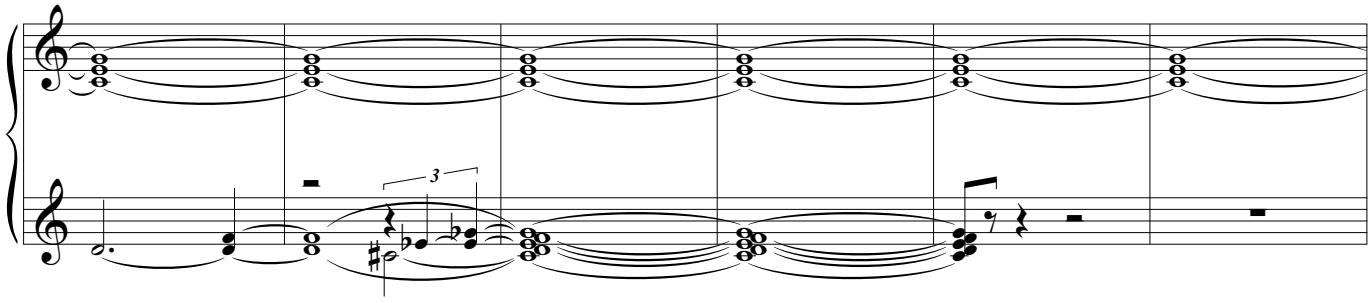
patient

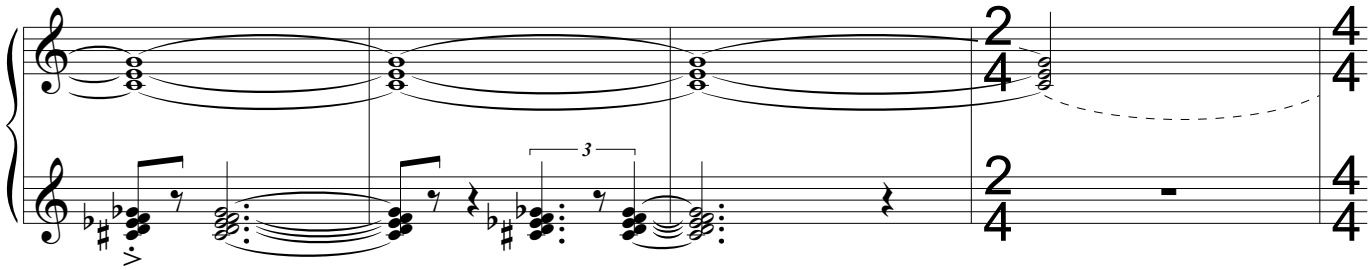


A **♩ = 60; with some freedom**
(still no pitch)

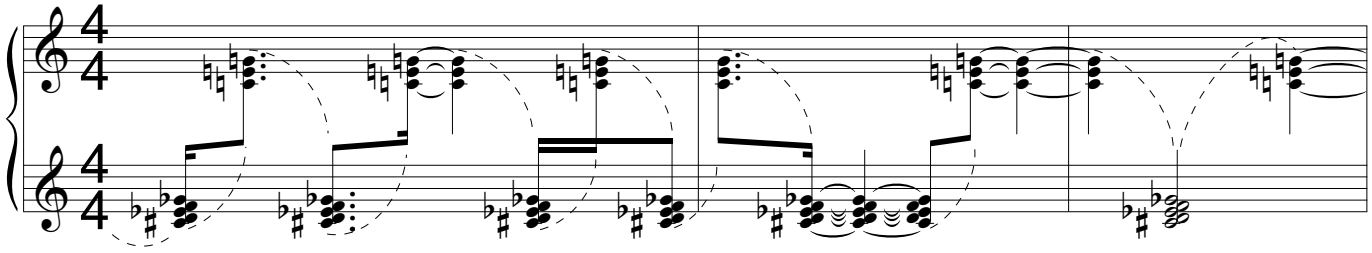




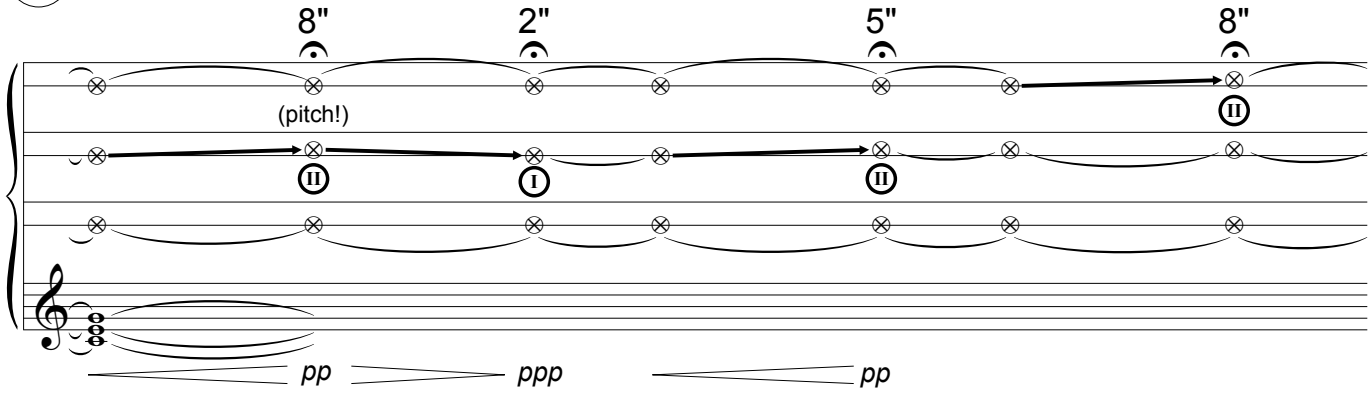


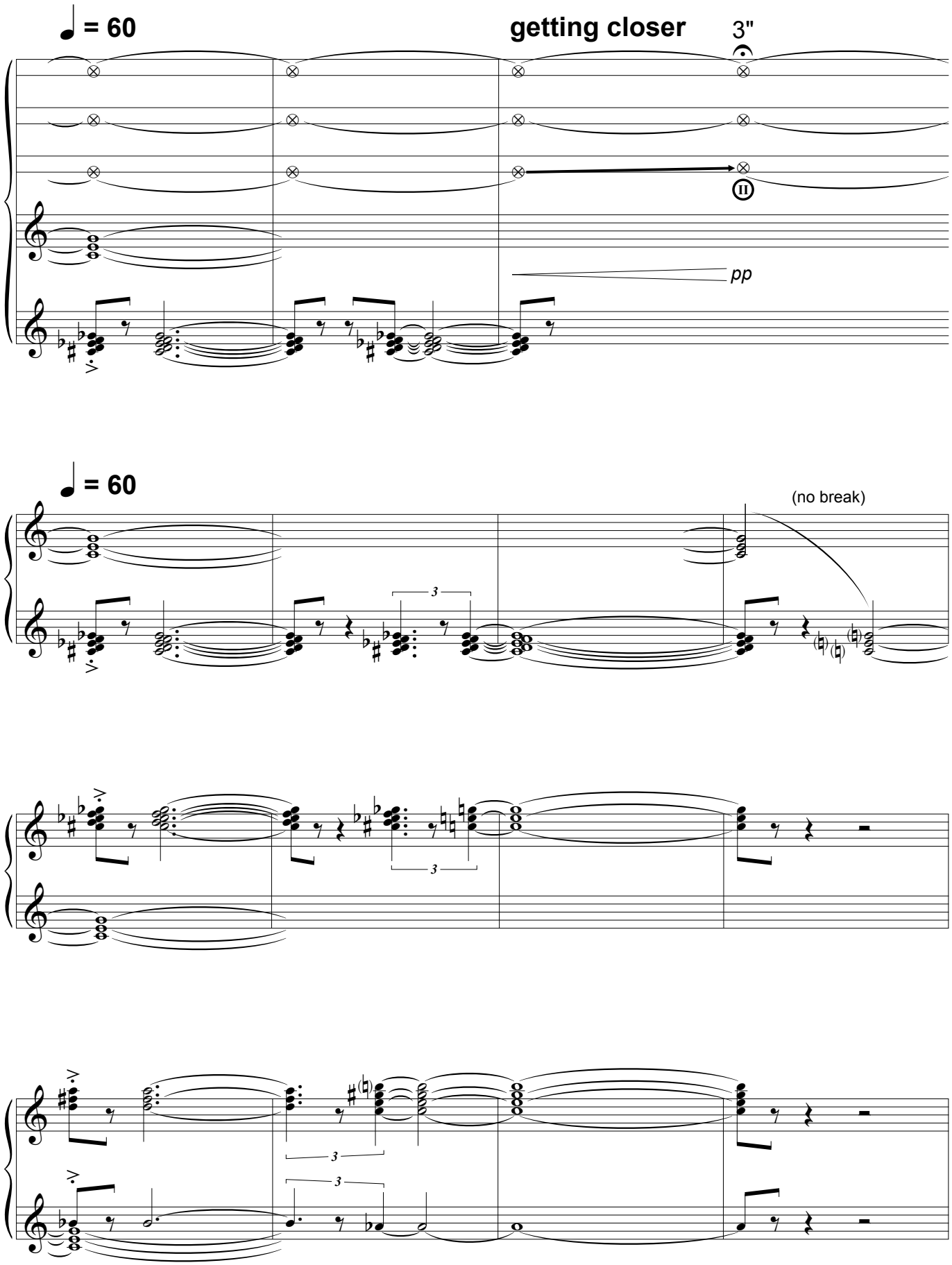


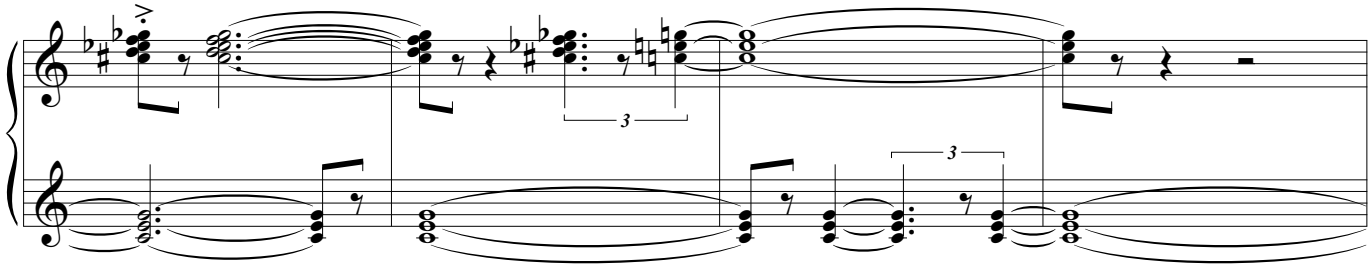
*maintain a continuous stream of wind

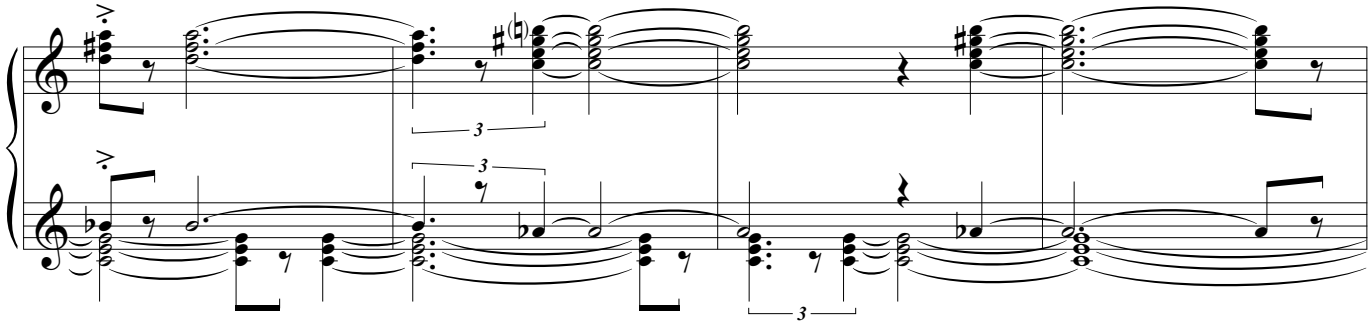


B whistles in the distance

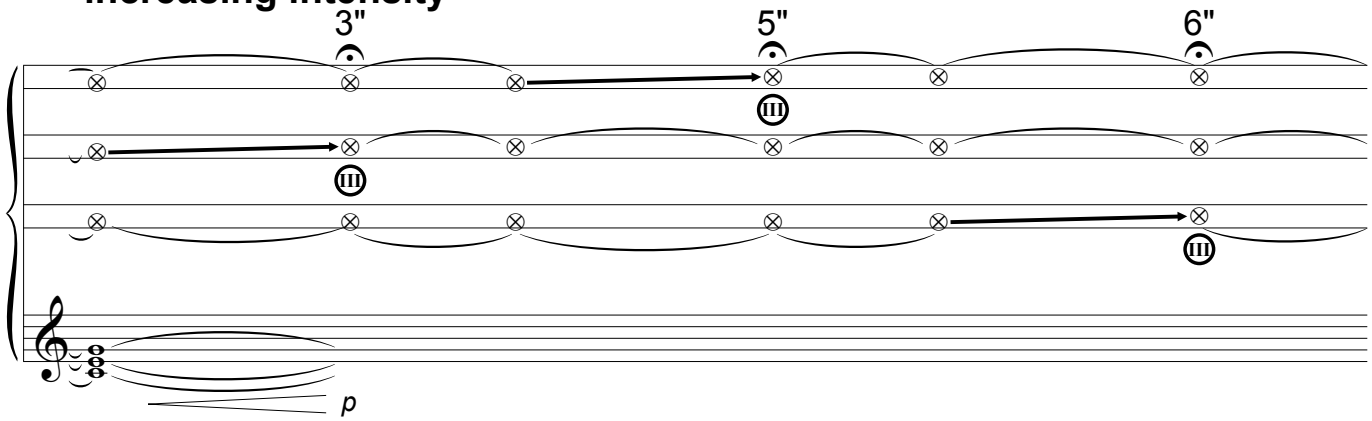


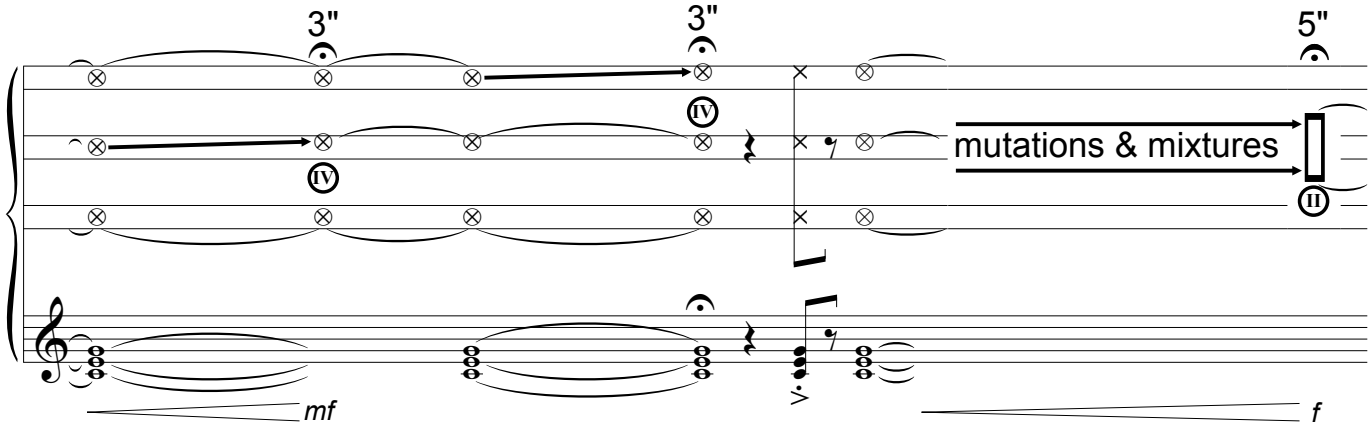

♩ = 60
getting closer
3"
II
pp
♩ = 60
(no break)
3
3
3
3

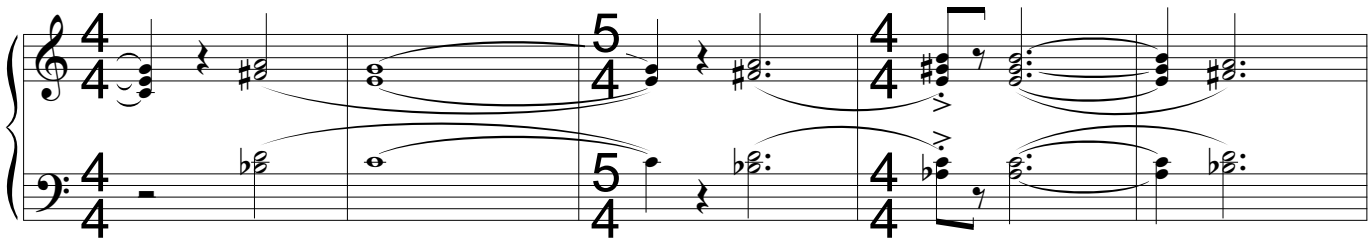


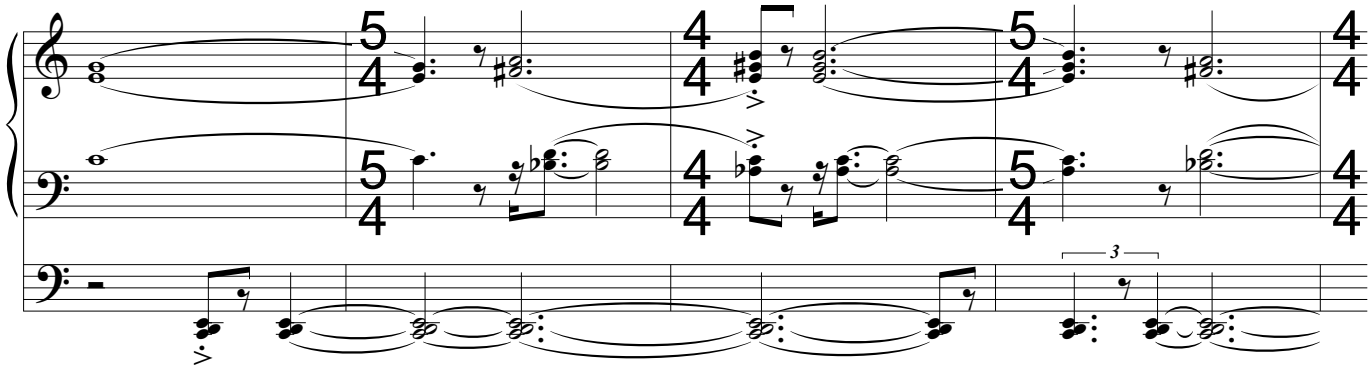


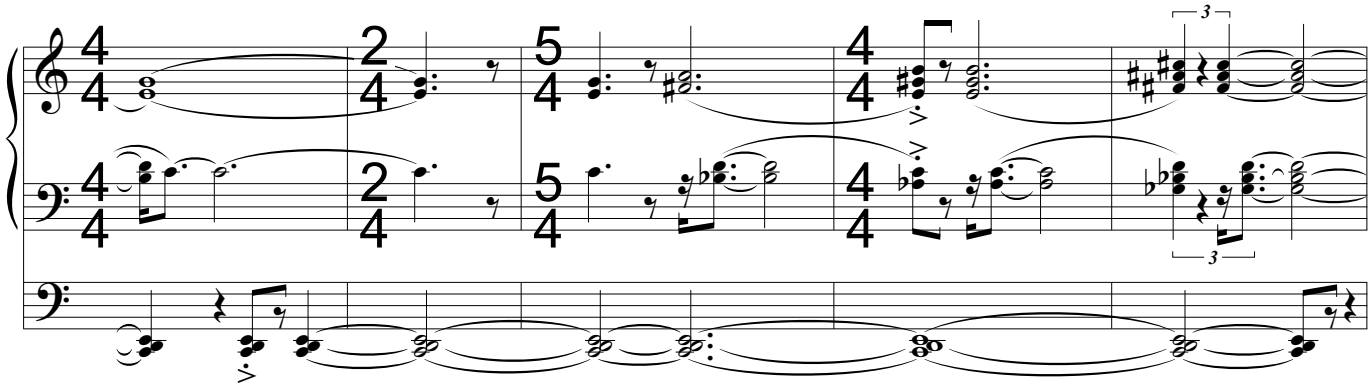
increasing intensity

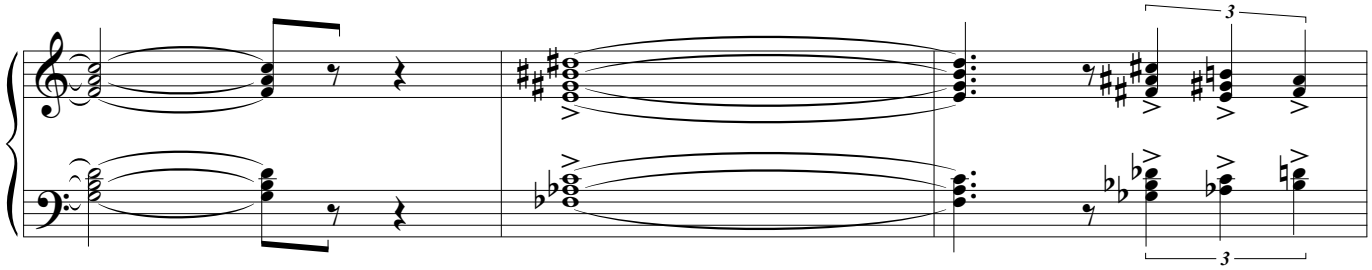


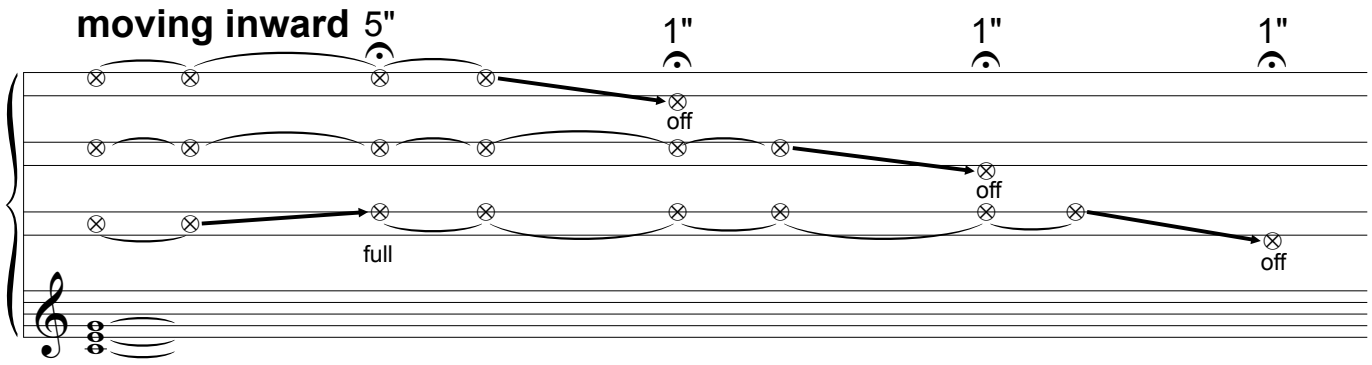






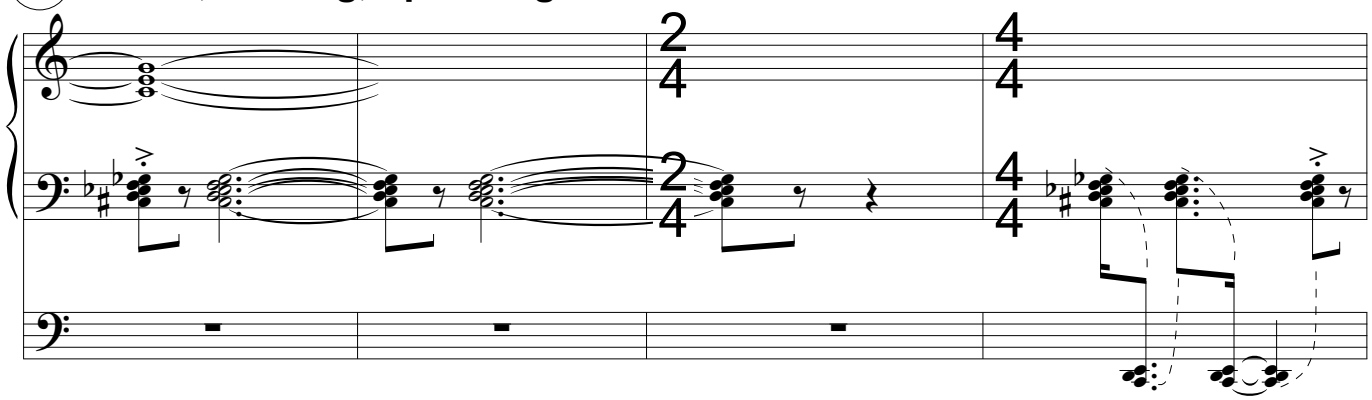


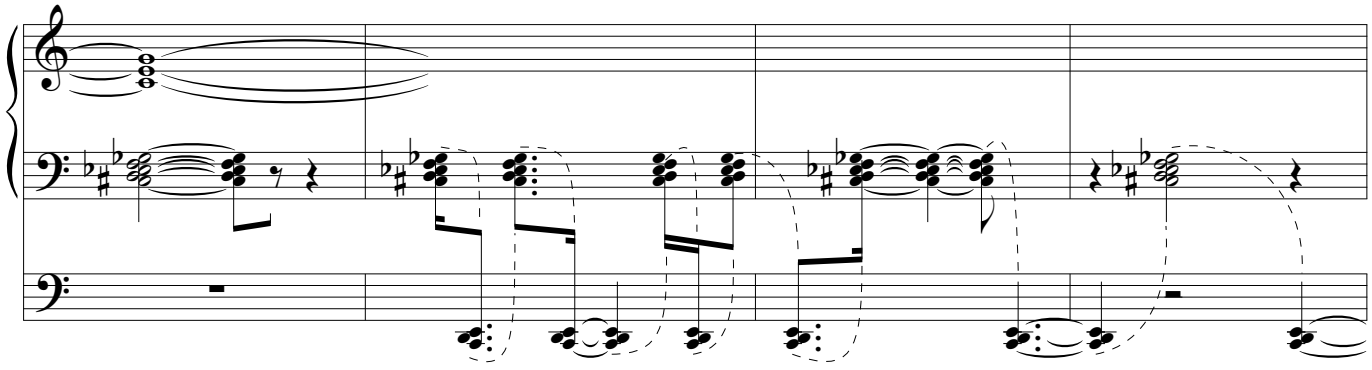


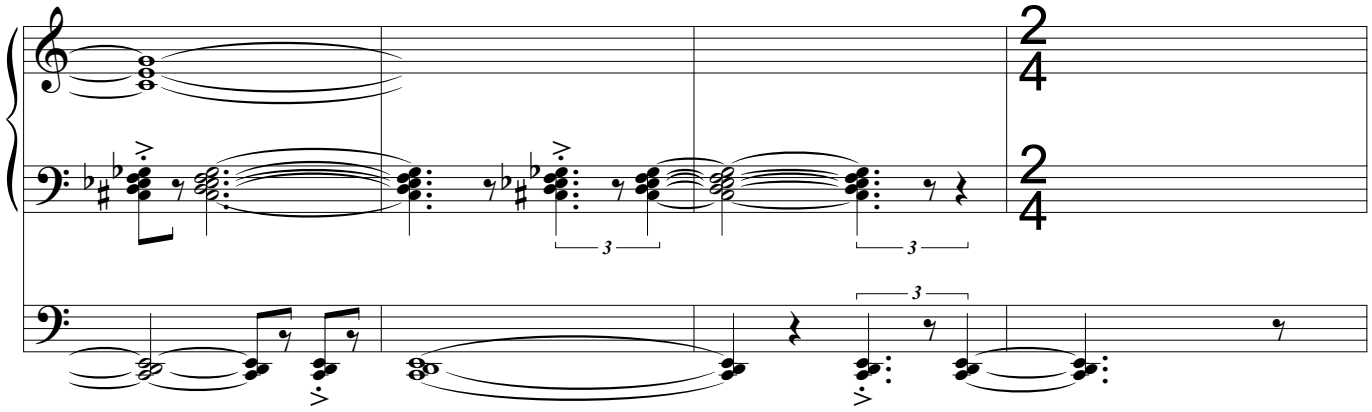


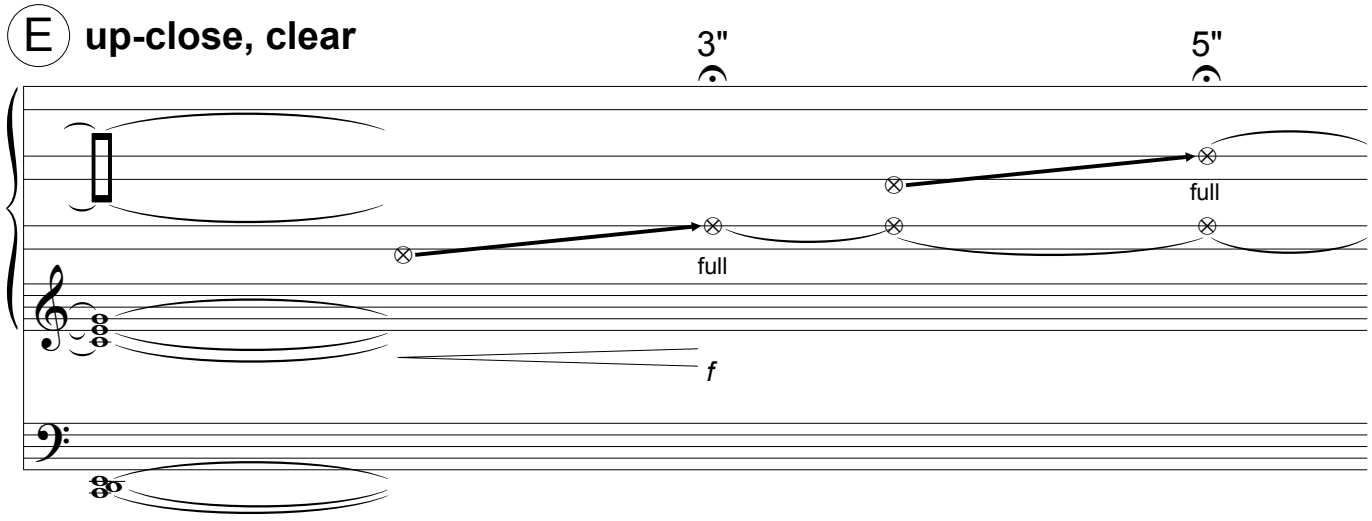
(Gr: mixtures and mutations only)

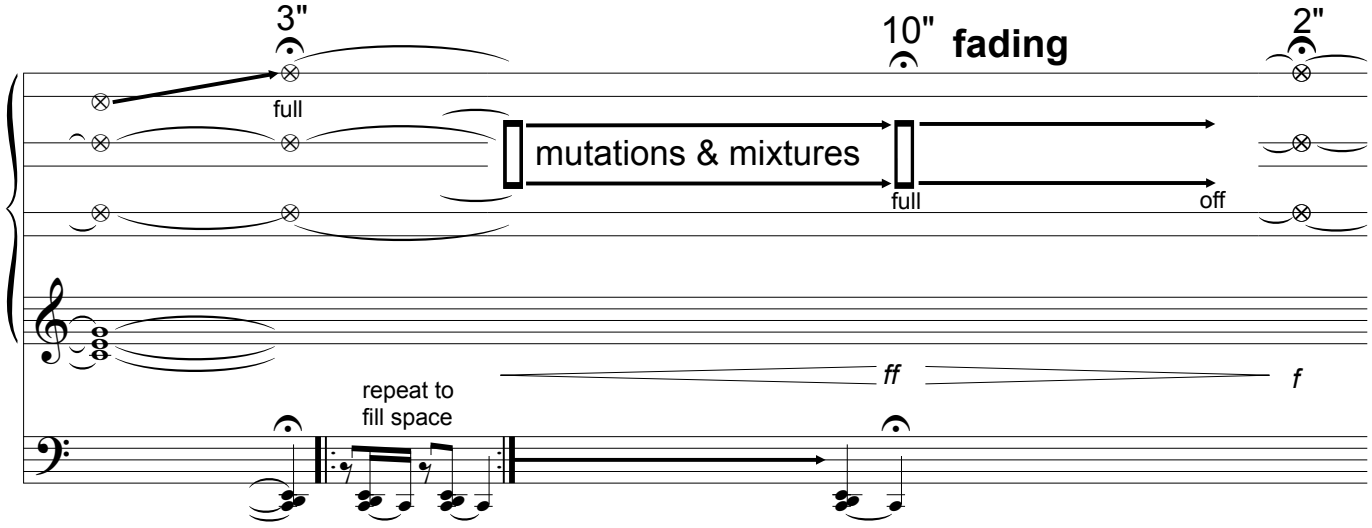
D ♩ = 60; moving, operating

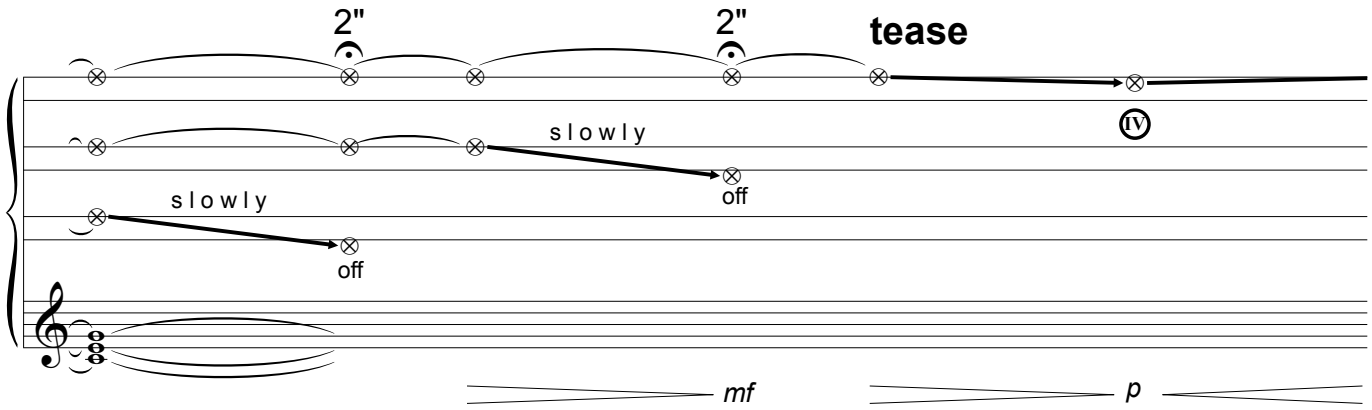


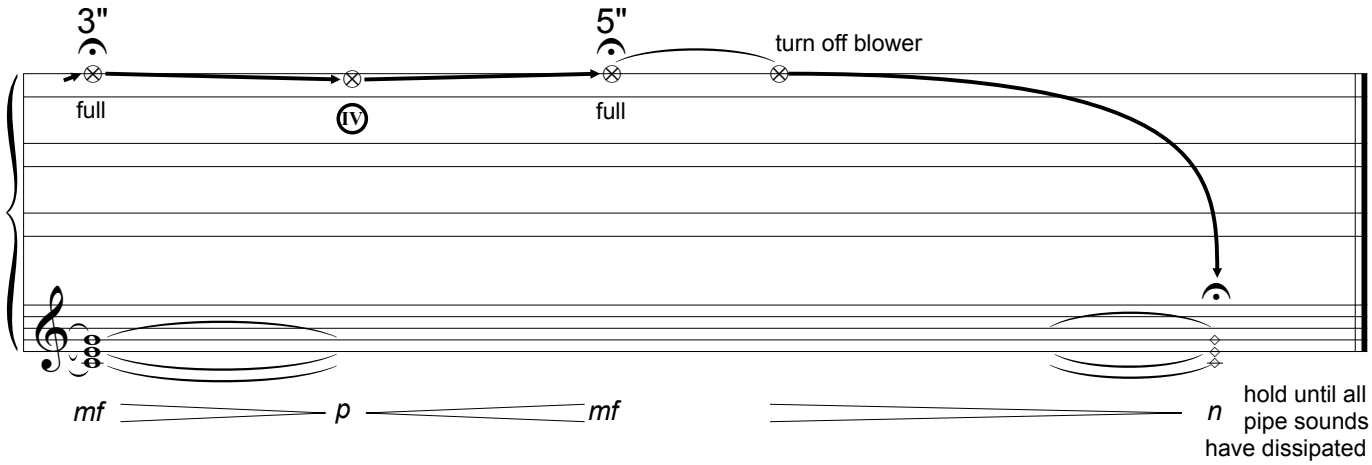



2
4
2
4
3
3
3


E
up-close, clear
3"
5"
full
full
f


3"
10"
fading
2"
full
mutations & mixtures
full
off
ff
f
repeat to
fill space


2"
2"
tease
s l o w l y
off
s l o w l y
off
mf
p


3"
5"
turn off blower
full
full
mf
p
mf
n
hold until all
pipe sounds
have dissipated

VITAL ORGAN PROJECT