restricted access, regulated body

for amplified oboe



Stephen de Filippo | 2026

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ca. 11’00”

This work explores unstable relationships between language, the oboe, and the body. Throughout the work, speech, breath, pitch, key mechanism, and vocal tract shift between acting together and independently. Rather than remaining fixed, these materials continually interfere with, interrupt, and reshape one another.

The work unfolds across four interconnected sections, that act as distinct modes of performance that may recur, overlap, and gradually transform throughout the piece. Mechanical resistance, instability, incidental sounds, and involuntary behaviours are treated as primary musical material.

Mesostic

Drawing on John Cage's mesostics, particularly ***62 Mesostics re Merce Cunningham*** and ***Anarchy***, this section was initially conceived as graphic notation, with typography, spacing, and linguistic fragmentation shaping instrumental action. The present notation formalises aspects of Pilar Fontalba's interpretation during the work's premiere, translating her reading into a vocabulary of speech, breath, suction sounds, squeaks, clicks, sung pitch, and other instrumental noises.

Fragmentation

Pitch, vocalization, and key mechanism function as partially independent systems whose coordination remains fragile and continuously unstable. Temporal drift, interruption, overlap, silence, and mechanical residue become structural components of the material, producing unstable relationships between bodily action and sonic result.

Vowel Morphing

Continuously changing mouth shape, tongue position, jaw opening, lip rounding, air pressure, and embouchure reshape the sounding pitch and its timbre. Stable and recognisable vowels dissolve through continuous transformation, allowing pitch, breath, reed-noise, and multiphonic states to emerge fluidly throughout the process.

Detachment

The instrument is gradually expelled from the body. Physical contact is continuously withdrawn while the gesture persists beyond the instrument itself, continuing at the lips after contact has been relinquished. The gradual transformation of contact produces unstable transitions between instrumental sound and bodily sound.

Performance Notes

General

This work explores unstable interactions between speech, breath, reed, pitch, and key mechanism. Throughout the work, the reed remains in the mouth, allowing vocalizations to pass through the instrument. Instability is fundamental to the work. Incidental sounds, reed interference, unstable pitch, breath leakage, multiphonics, mechanical key noise, interrupted vocalizations, and other liminal behaviours should be embraced as primary musical material rather than corrected or suppressed.

General Notes:

The work moves between three approaches to musical time:

- **Metered notation:** where rhythmic values are interpreted conventionally within the indicated tempo.
- **Proportional notation:** where systems or brackets are assigned durations in seconds. Musical events should be distributed proportionally across the given time span rather than interpreted metrically.
- **Spatial notation:** where no fixed tempo is prescribed, but each system is divided into approximately 10″ durations.

Unless otherwise specified, transitions between these temporal systems should feel continuous rather than abrupt.
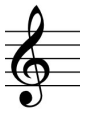
Dynamics describe the intended energy and physical intensity of an action rather than absolute volume. Mechanical sounds, reed noise, and unstable resonances may remain relatively quiet even at louder dynamic markings.

Amplification:

This work should be performed with amplification. The amplification should prioritise the sounds produced at the mouthpiece and key mechanism rather than the sounding pitch projected from the bell.
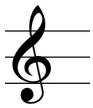
Microphone placement should emphasise the interaction between the voice, reed, breath, and mechanical key sounds. Suitable solutions may include close microphones positioned near the mouthpiece, clip-on or lavalier microphones attached near the hands or wrists to capture key noise, or other arrangements that reveal these intimate mechanical sounds. Performers and sound engineers are encouraged to experiment with microphone placement according to the instrument, venue, and available equipment.

Staves



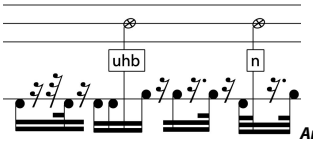
Pitch:
The top five-line staff represents sounding pitch, including unstable tones, multiphonics, glissandi, and other pitched instrumental sounds.

Voice:
The middle three-line staff is dedicated to vocalizations produced through the mouthpiece.



The centre line represents the performer's comfortable speaking register. Notes above or below this line indicate relative changes in vocal height rather than precise pitches. Boxed text may consist of individual phonemes, complete words, or fragments of words separated by hyphens. These should be understood as articulatory suggestions that shape airflow, tongue position, mouth shape, and resonance. They may be clearly spoken through the instrument or used more subtly to influence the resulting sound.

Typography indicates the degree to which the text should be projected. Bold boxed text should be spoken clearly through the instrument. Unbolded boxed text should function primarily as an articulatory guide, influencing the resulting sound without necessarily producing clearly intelligible speech. Where bold and unbolded text occur within the same word or sequence of fragments, the performer should gradually shift between these two modes of projection.



An example of vocalizations occurring on the vocal staff with a boxed phoneme in the stem.

Text Examples:

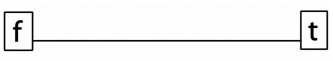
uhb	Articulatory; speech need not be clearly intelligible.
uhb	Clearly spoken through the instrument.
rr	Underlined text refers to a rolled r or a throaty, gutteral sound

for-	mat-	tion

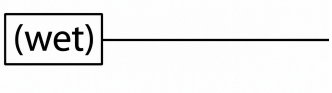
Gradual shift between spoken and articulatory projection.

Elongated vocalizations are indicated by a lyric extension line continuing from the boxed text. This indicates that the preceding phoneme, syllable, or word fragment should be sustained until the line ends. Where the extension line terminates in another boxed syllable, this syllable marks the conclusion of the vocalization and should be articulated at the end of the sustained gesture. The concluding syllable may be accompanied by a vocalization notehead or may appear as boxed text alone.

Text may also indicate a vocal behaviour or physical action rather than spoken material. For example, (wet) instructs the performer to introduce exaggerated wet mouth sounds into the vocalization, including salivary sounds, sucking sounds, lip smacks, tongue clicks, or other moist articulations.

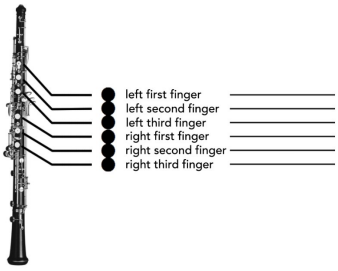


A lyric extension line indicates that the preceding phoneme, syllable, or word fragment should be sustained until the line ends. Where the extension line terminates in another boxed syllable, this syllable marks the conclusion of the vocalization and should be articulated at the end of the sustained gesture. The concluding syllable may appear with or without a vocalization notehead.



(wet)
Introduce exaggerated wet mouth sounds. Vocalizations may become saturated with saliva, lip smacks, sucking sounds, tongue clicks, or other moist articulations. Audible speech is optional. Treat this as an improvised behavioural instruction that colours the surrounding notation.

Keys:



The bottom staff represents fingering. This staff may consist of one, three, four, or six lines, corresponding to the number of independently controlled keys. Each line represents a single selected key (or fingering) and, once assigned, continues to represent that key until a new fingering system is introduced.

The fingering staff is used only in conjunction with the vocal staff and is never performed simultaneously with the pitch staff. Its purpose is to activate the mechanical resonance of the instrument independently of sounding pitch.

A single-line staff represents a repeating alternation between two fingering patterns: one for the left hand and one for the right hand. Performers should select comfortable fingerings for each hand and alternate between them according to the notated rhythm. Where the instruction ***new pattern of two fingerings*** appears, a new pair of left- and right-hand fingerings should be selected.

Three-, four-, and six-line staves represent a sequence of independently controlled keys. These passages are frequently accompanied by instructions such as ***rising key gesture***, indicating that the selected keys should create a clear physical and mechanical sense of ascent when performed in succession. Exact fingering choices are left to the performer.



Noteheads/Symbols

Performance Indications:

underblown	Reduce air pressure until the tone becomes fragile, unstable, and prone to collapse. Allow breath leakage and intermittent sounding.
multiphon.	Transition towards or sustain a multiphonic. Exact fingering is left to the performer.
bisbig.	Rapidly alternate between two fingerings for the same pitch to produce timbral fluctuation (bisbigliando).
wavering/ stuttering	Introduce intermittent instability into an otherwise continuous sound. Allow trembling, interruption, uneven airflow, fluctuating pitch, and irregular attacks to emerge.
destabilize	Gradually increase instability within the sound. Permit noisy components, split tones, partial multiphonics, reed interference, cracking timbre, and breath leakage to emerge without attempting to recover a stable tone.

Stems:

M **Multiphonic:** See performance indications.

Z **Instability:**
Erratic, unstable quality into the sound. Encourage roughness, reed interference, cracking, intermittent multiphonics, noisy attacks, and fluctuating resonance. No stabilisation

Noteheads:



Sung *(on reed, on the vocal staff; off reed)*
Sustain the indicated vocal pitch while continuing to play through the mouthpiece. Allow interactions between the sung pitch, reed, and sounding oboe to occur naturally.



Vocalization:
Produce the indicated phoneme or vocal gesture through the mouthpiece with the reed remaining in the mouth. Clarity of speech is not required; allow the instrument to obscure and deform the sound.



Percussive mouth sounds *(lip smack, tk, k, tch, wet clicks, etc.):*
Produce the indicated percussive articulation through the mouth and reed. Sounds should be dry, immediate, and mechanically articulated. Precise timbre may vary.



Normale Pitch *(on the pitch staff)*



Inhale:
Audible inhalation through the mouthpiece. Breath noise, reed response, and incidental pitched sounds may emerge naturally.



Exhale:
Audible exhalation through the mouthpiece. Breath, reed noise, unstable pitch, or incidental resonance are acceptable.



Tromba: (off reed)
Produce a trumpet-like buzzing sound with the lips, allowing pitch, pressure, and timbre to fluctuate freely.

Pitched suck (squeak): (on reed)
Brief inward suction on the reed, producing an unstable, squeaking pitched sound. Embrace cracking, multiphonic, or otherwise unpredictable results.



Complex sound / Multiphonic:
Produce a dense, unstable sonority combining pitched sound, reed interference, breath, and vocal resonance. Exact multiphonic content is less important than the emergence of a complex, unstable sound.



Tchip:
Sustained squeaking sound produced by drawing air through the front teeth. Resonance from the reed and instrument may emerge naturally. Allow the pitch and timbre to fluctuate freely through changes in embouchure and mouth shape.



Sucks/Squeaks:
Sucking or squeaking sounds. Allow unstable pitch, cracking, and incidental noises to emerge naturally.



Kissing Sound:
Short, percussive kissing sounds with the lips.

restricted access, regulated body

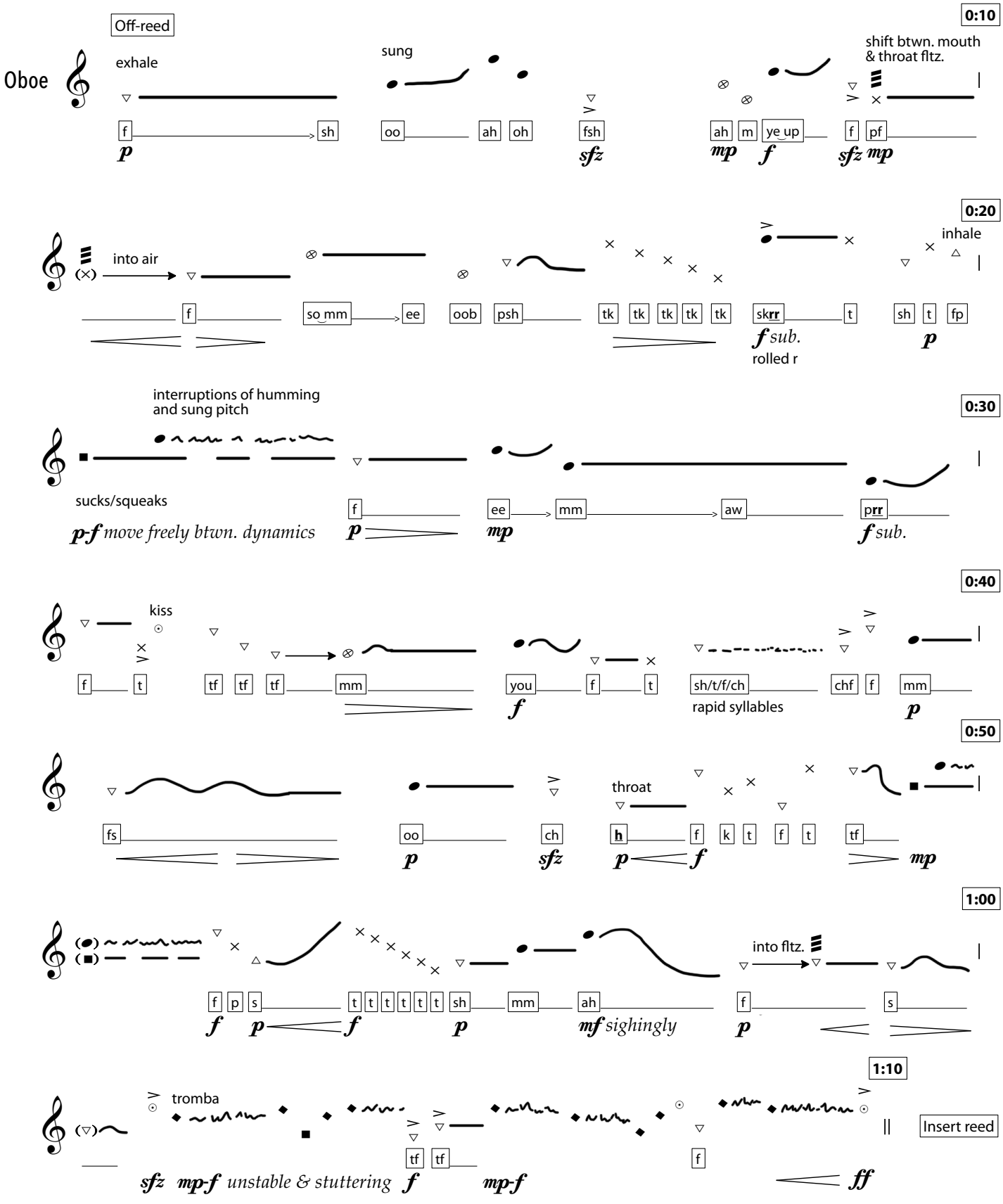
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Mesostic:

The following passage is extracted from a performance by Pilar Fontalba during the initial premiere of this work. In that performance, Fontalba interpreted a sequence of mesostics as a form of graphic notation, translating their spacing, interruption, density, typography, and linguistic fragmentation into instrumental action.

This notation formalises aspects of that performance using the off-read techniques developed in her interpretation, including suction sounds, squeaks, key sounds, clicks, speaking into and through the oboe, breath sounds, and related instrumental noises.

Key work is not specified on this page, and is free to the performer. Durational timings are an approximation, you may move freely through these actions.
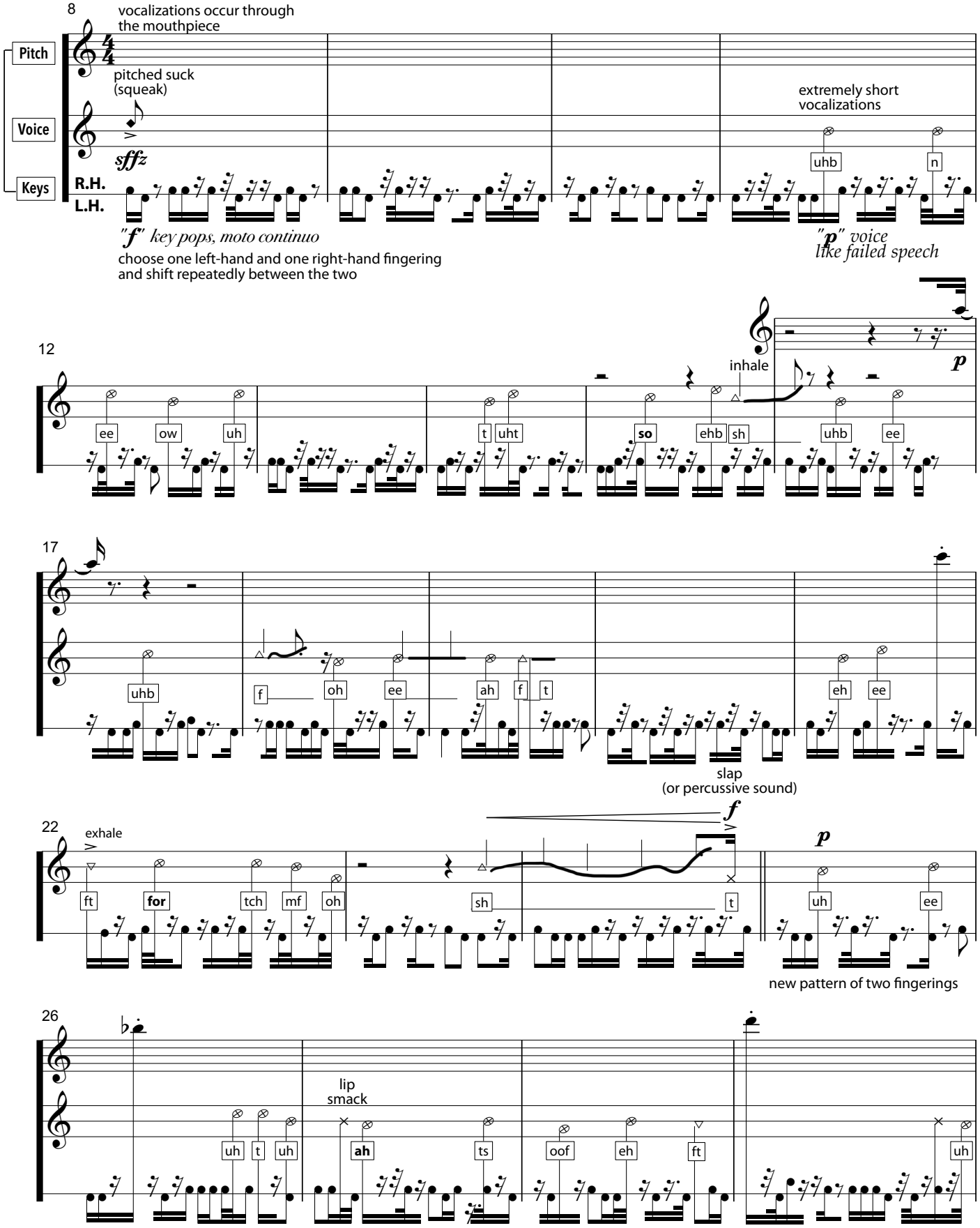


Fragmentation:
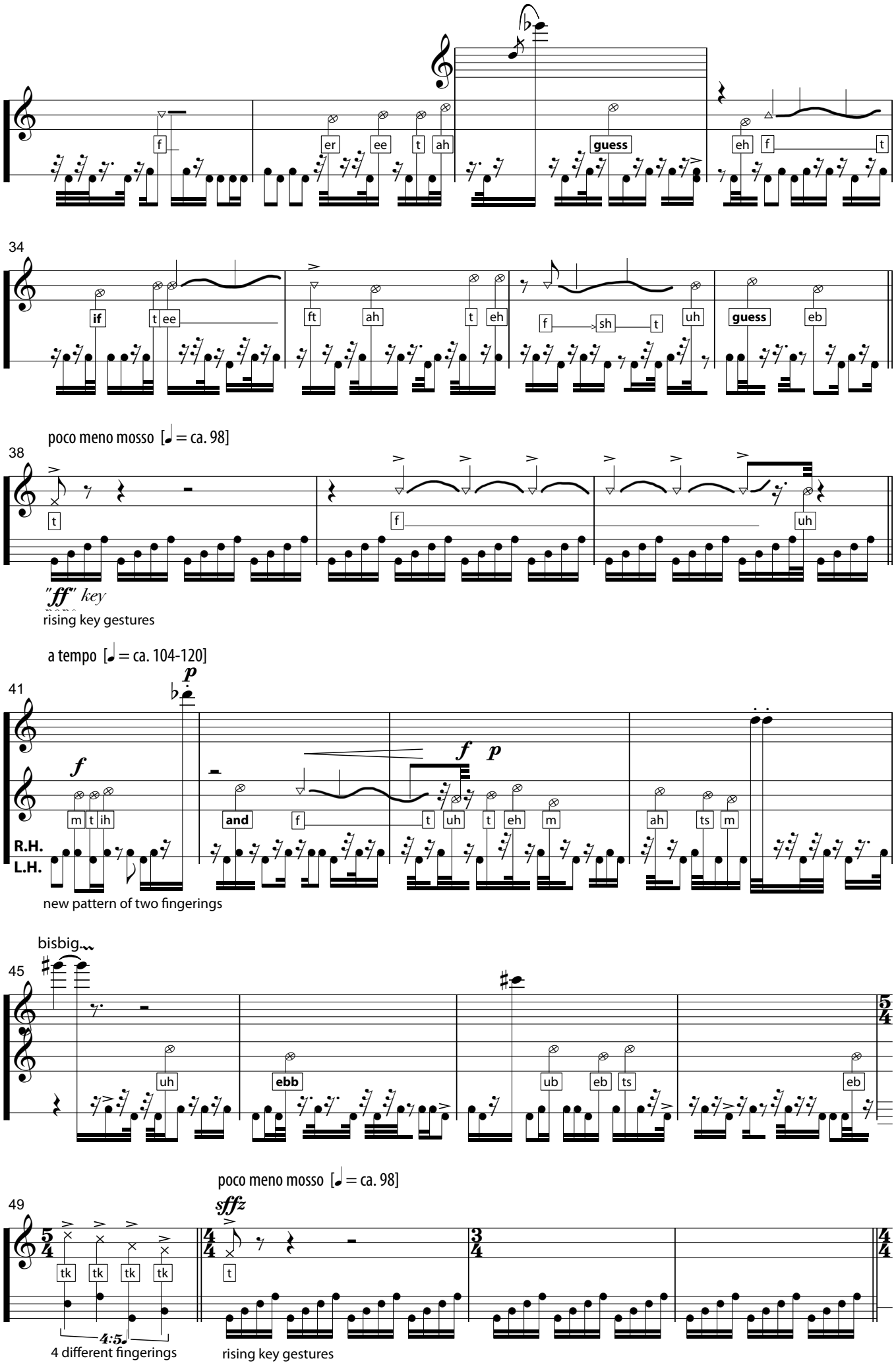
Pitch, vocalization, and key mechanism function as partially independent systems. Coordination between these layers should remain unstable, fragile, and continuously shifting.

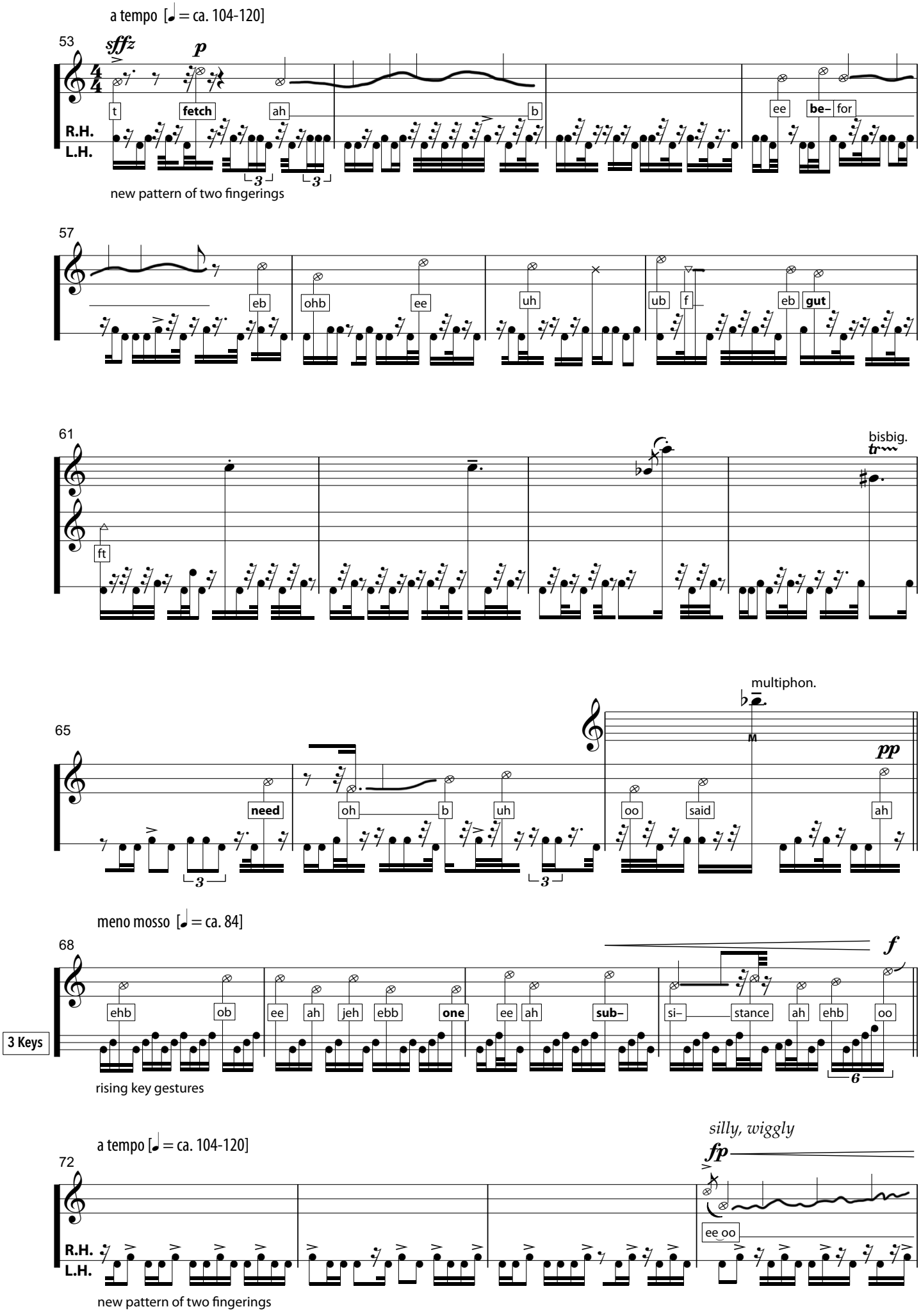
Incidental sounds, interruptions, obstructions, and mechanical interference are integral to the material and should not be corrected or suppressed. Allow sounds to emerge unevenly through the instrument.

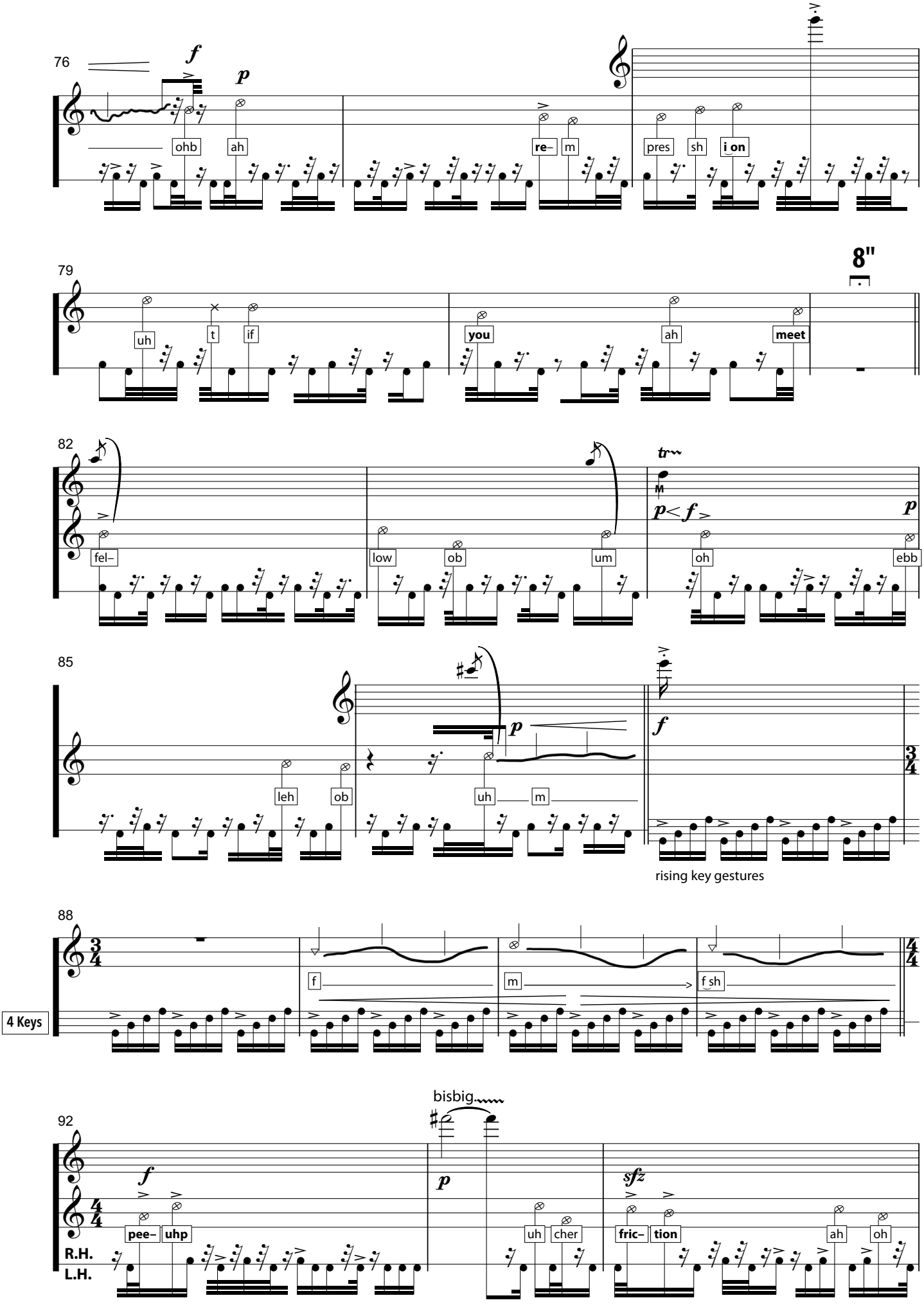
Avoid metric regularity. Permit interruption, overlap, suspension, temporal drift, and hesitation between layers. Silence and mechanical residue are structurally significant.
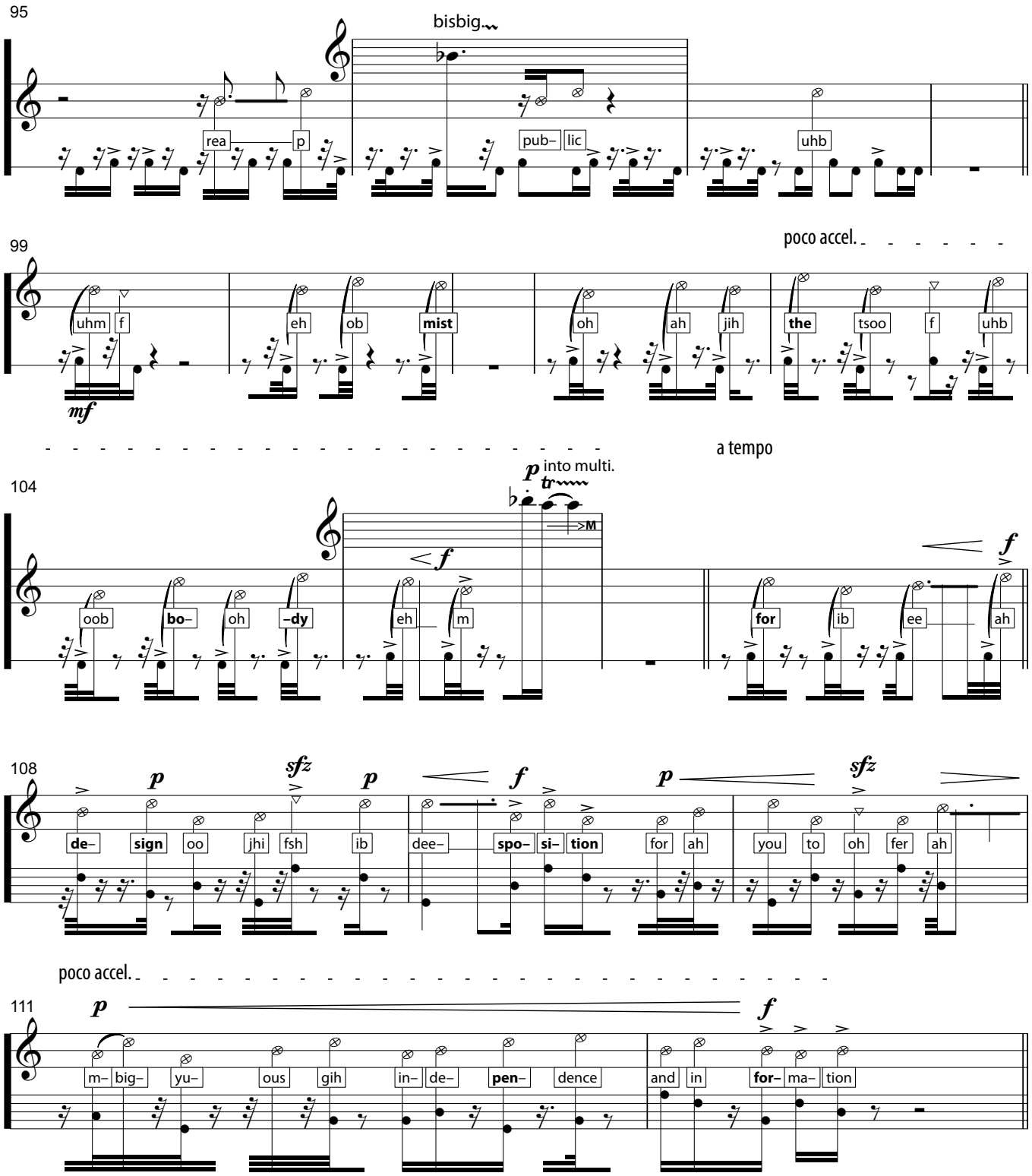
contastingly rhythmic: a nervous, particulate motion.
the body is quiet but the mechanism of the instrument is loud [♩ = ca. 104-120]




f
er
ee
t
ah
guess
eh
f
t
34
if
t
ee
ft
ah
t
eh
f
sh
t
uh
guess
eb
poco meno mosso [♩ = ca. 98]
38
t
f
uh
4 Keys
"ff" key
rising key gestures
a tempo [♩ = ca. 104-120]
41
p
f
f
p
m
t
ih
and
f
t
uh
t
eh
m
ah
ts
m
R.H.
L.H.
new pattern of two fingerings
bisbig
45
uh
ebb
ub
eb
ts
eb
poco meno mosso [♩ = ca. 98]
49
sffz
tk
tk
tk
tk
4:5
t
4 different fingerings
rising key gestures


a tempo [♩ = ca. 104-120]
53
sffz
p
t
fetch
ah
b
ee
be–
for
R.H.
L.H.
new pattern of two fingerings
57
eb
ohb
ee
uh
ub
f
eb
gut
61
bisbig.
tr
ft
multiphon.
65
M
pp
need
oh
b
uh
oo
said
ah
meno mosso [♩ = ca. 84]
68
f
ehb
ob
ee
ah
jeh
ebb
one
ee
ah
sub–
si–
stance
ah
ehb
oo
3 Keys
rising key gestures
a tempo [♩ = ca. 104-120]
72
silly, wiggly
fp
ee oo
R.H.
L.H.
new pattern of two fingerings


76
ohb
ah
re–
m
pres
sh
i on
79
8"
uh
t
if
you
ah
meet
82
fel–
low
ob
um
oh
ebb
85
leh
ob
uh
m
rising key gestures
88
4 Keys
f
m
f sh
92
bisbig
pee–
uhp
uh
cher
fric–
tion
ah
oh
R.H.
L.H.

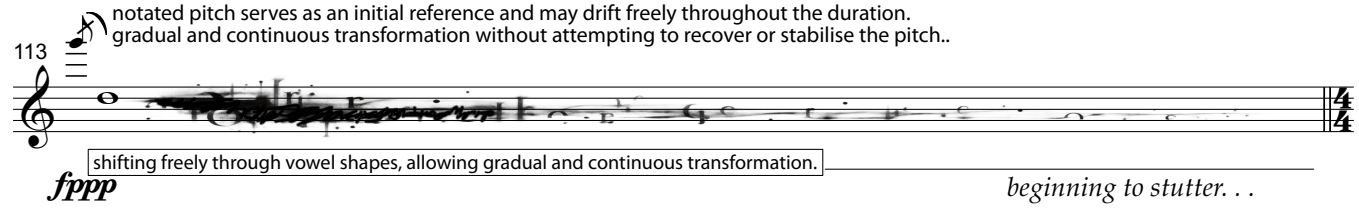


Vowel Morphing:
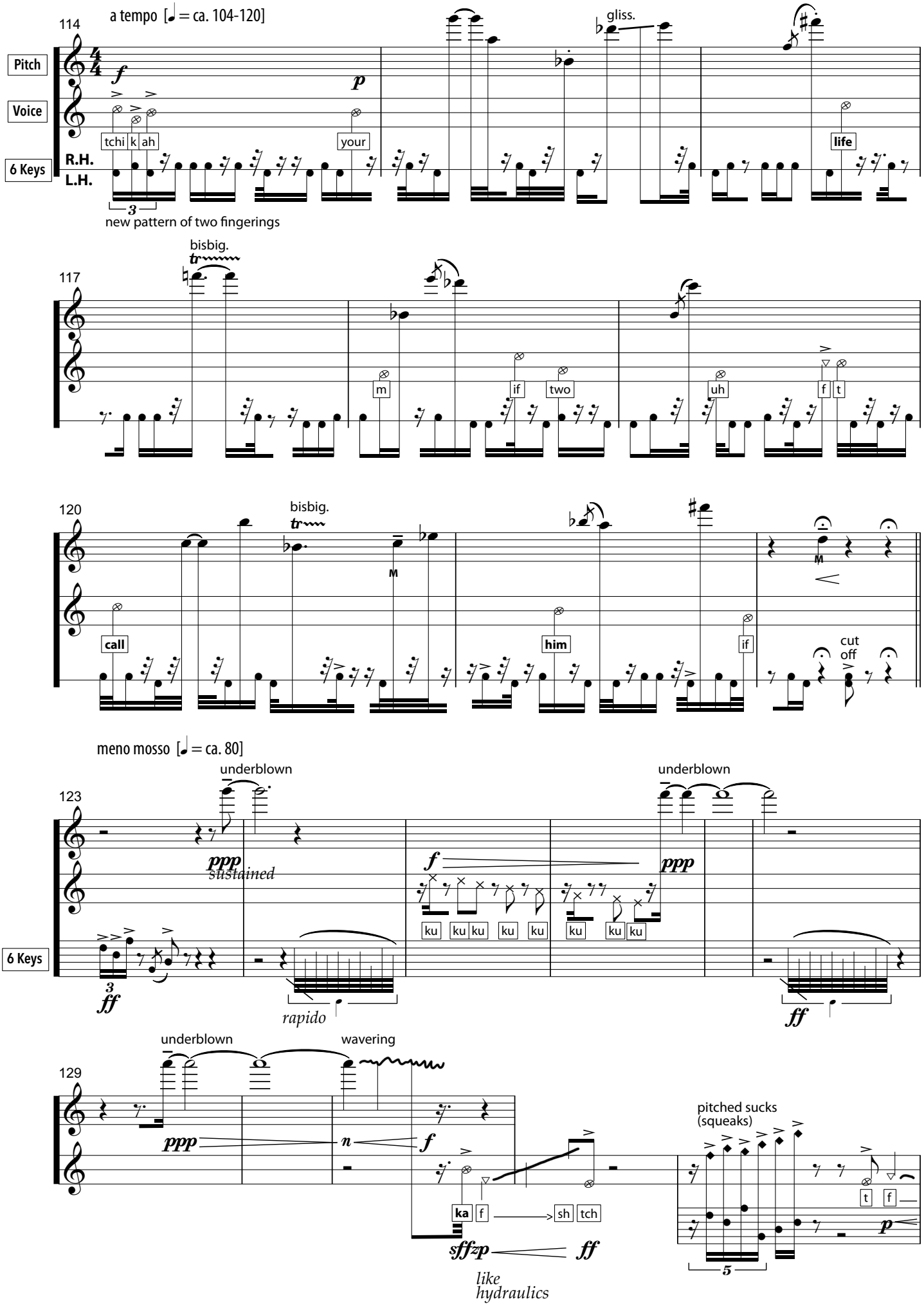
Continuously reshape the sounding pitch through changes in mouth shape, tongue position, jaw opening, lip rounding, air pressure, and embouchure.

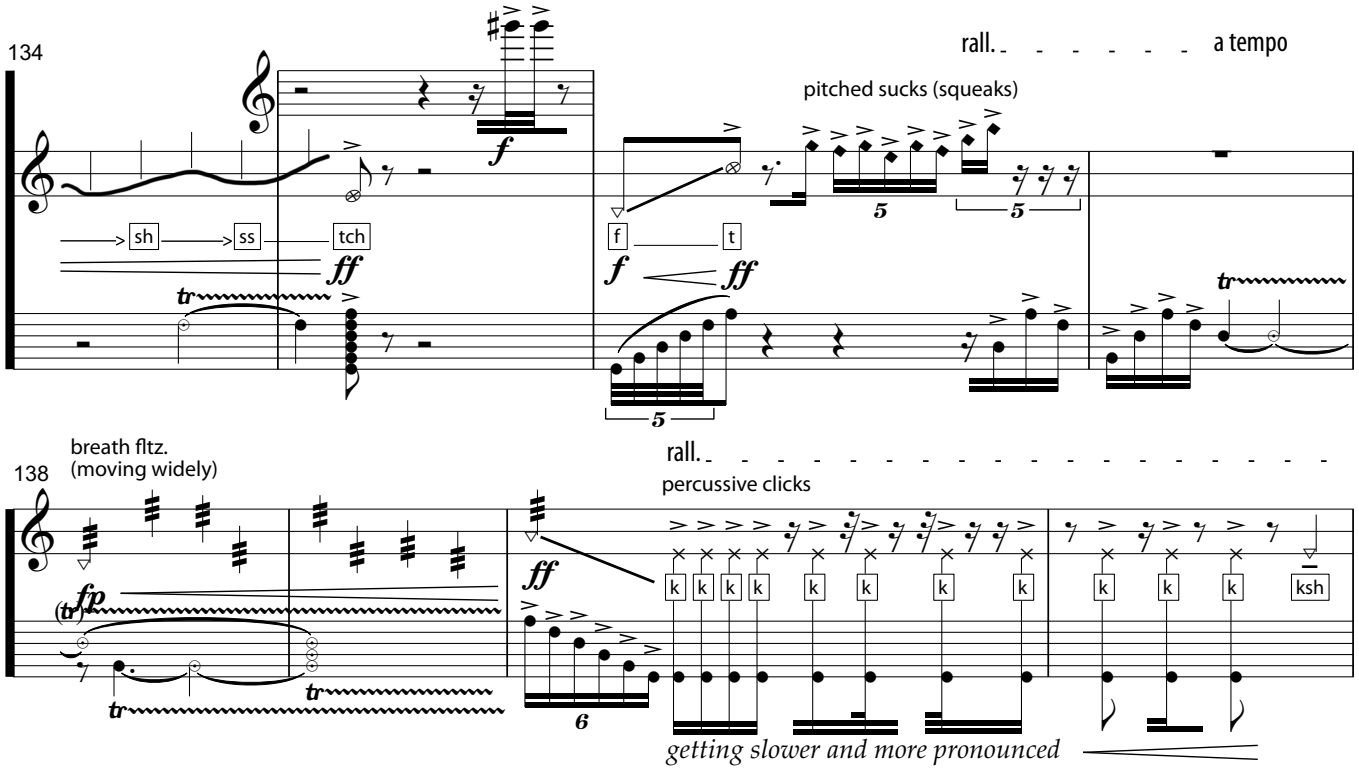
Avoid discrete or recognisable vowels. Instead, move fluidly between unstable resonant states, allowing split tones, partial multiphonics, breath leakage, reed intererence, and momentary collapse of pitch to emerge naturally.

20"



Fragmentation:

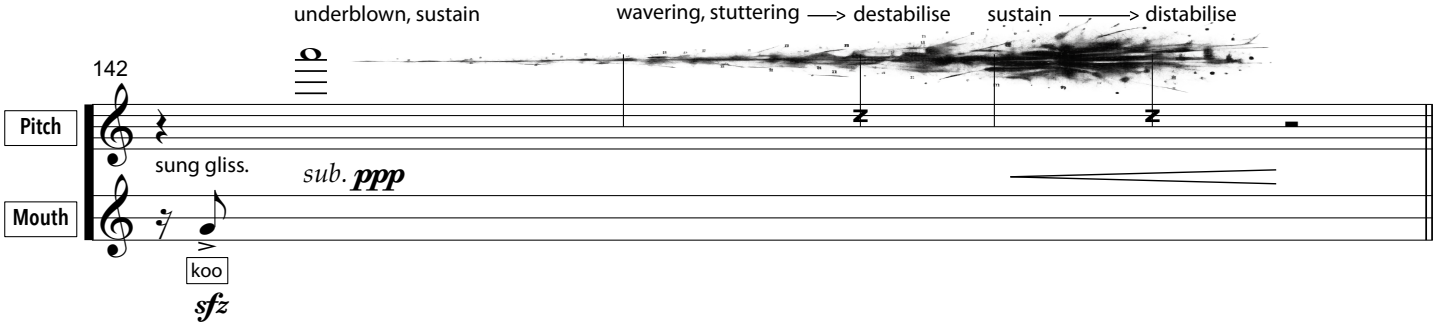




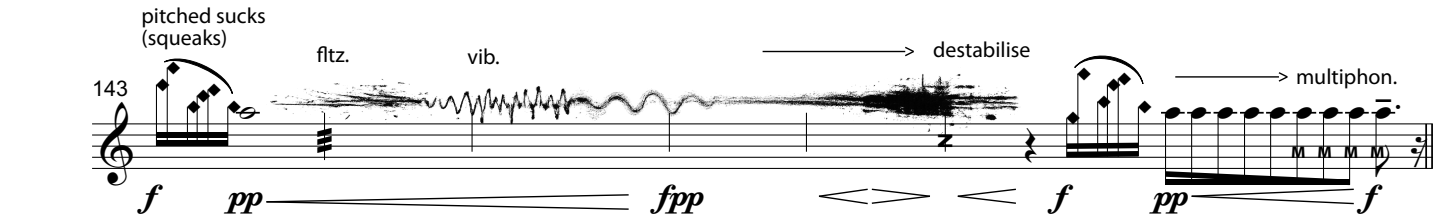
sustaining an underblown, fragile pitch throughout. moving fluidly between stable non-vibrato sustain and increasingly unstable states. follow the changing density of the graphic as a continuous transformation.

16"

wavering/stuttering: introduce intermittent instability into the sustain: trembling, interruption, unevenness, pitch disturbance.
destabilise: allow noisy components to emerge gradyally: split tones, partial multiphonics, unstable overtones, cracking timbre.

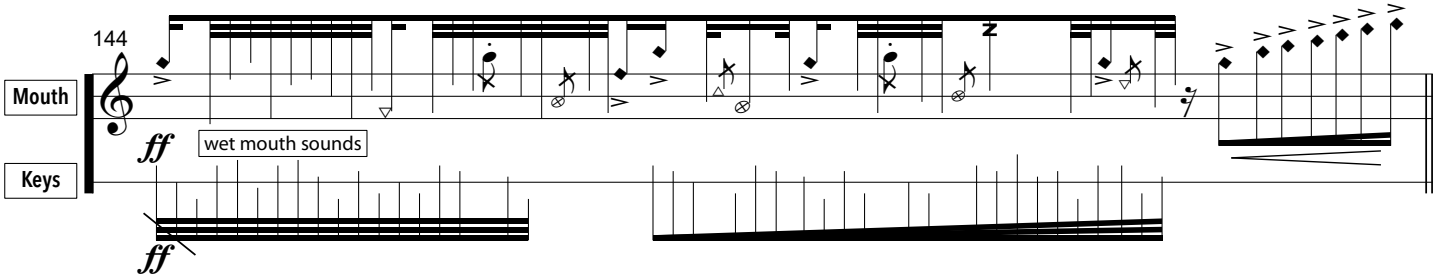


22"

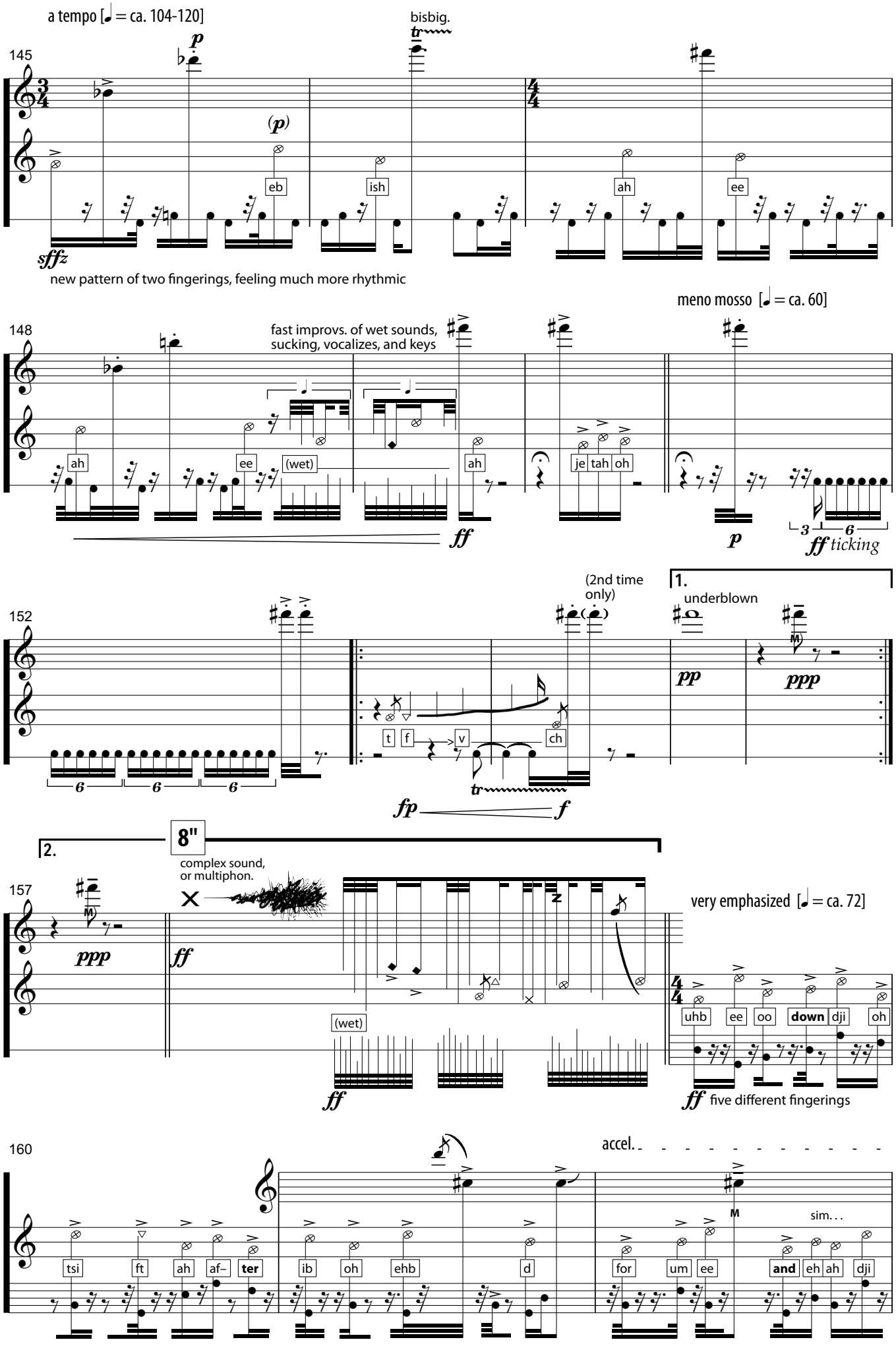


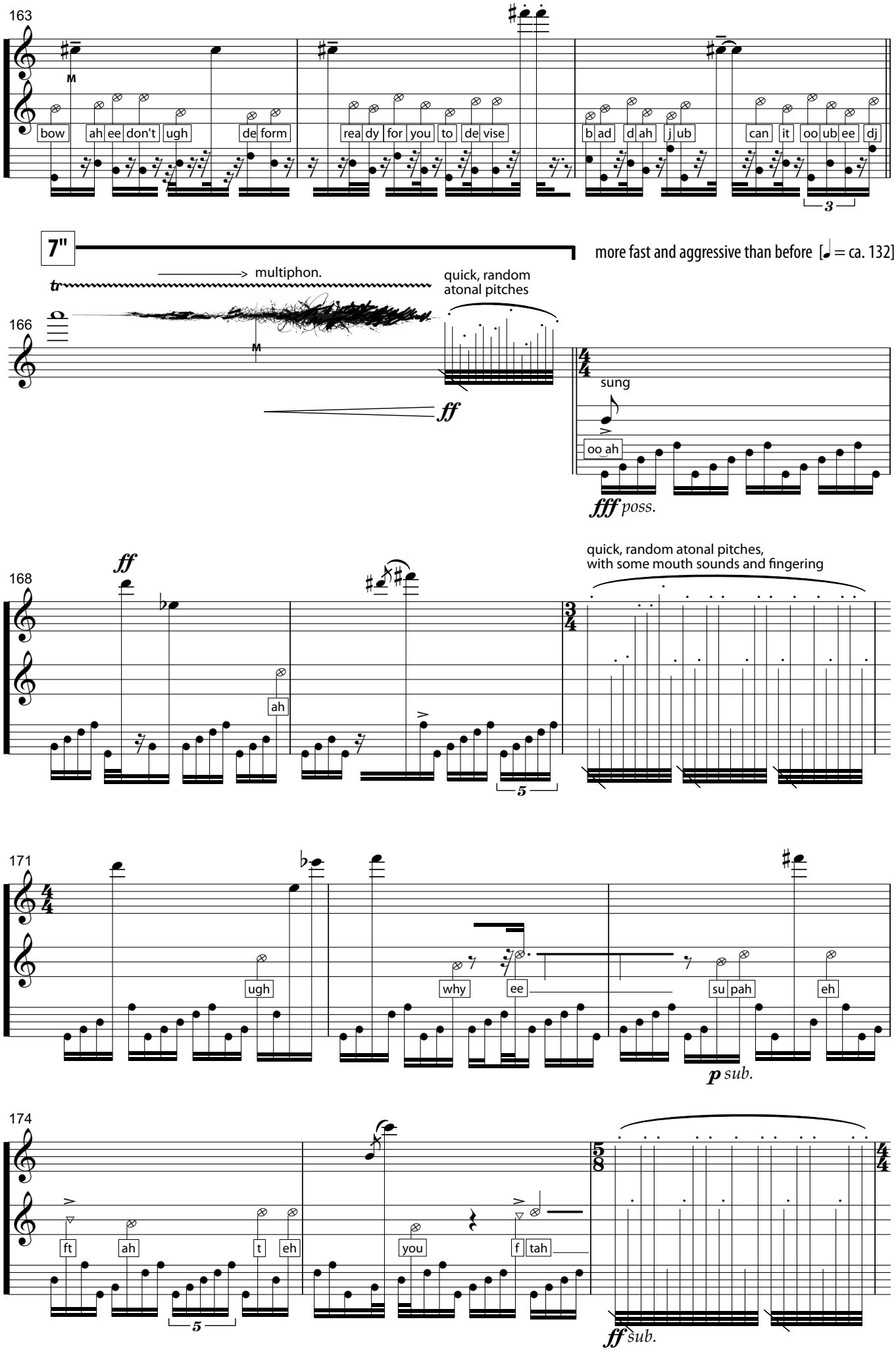
10"

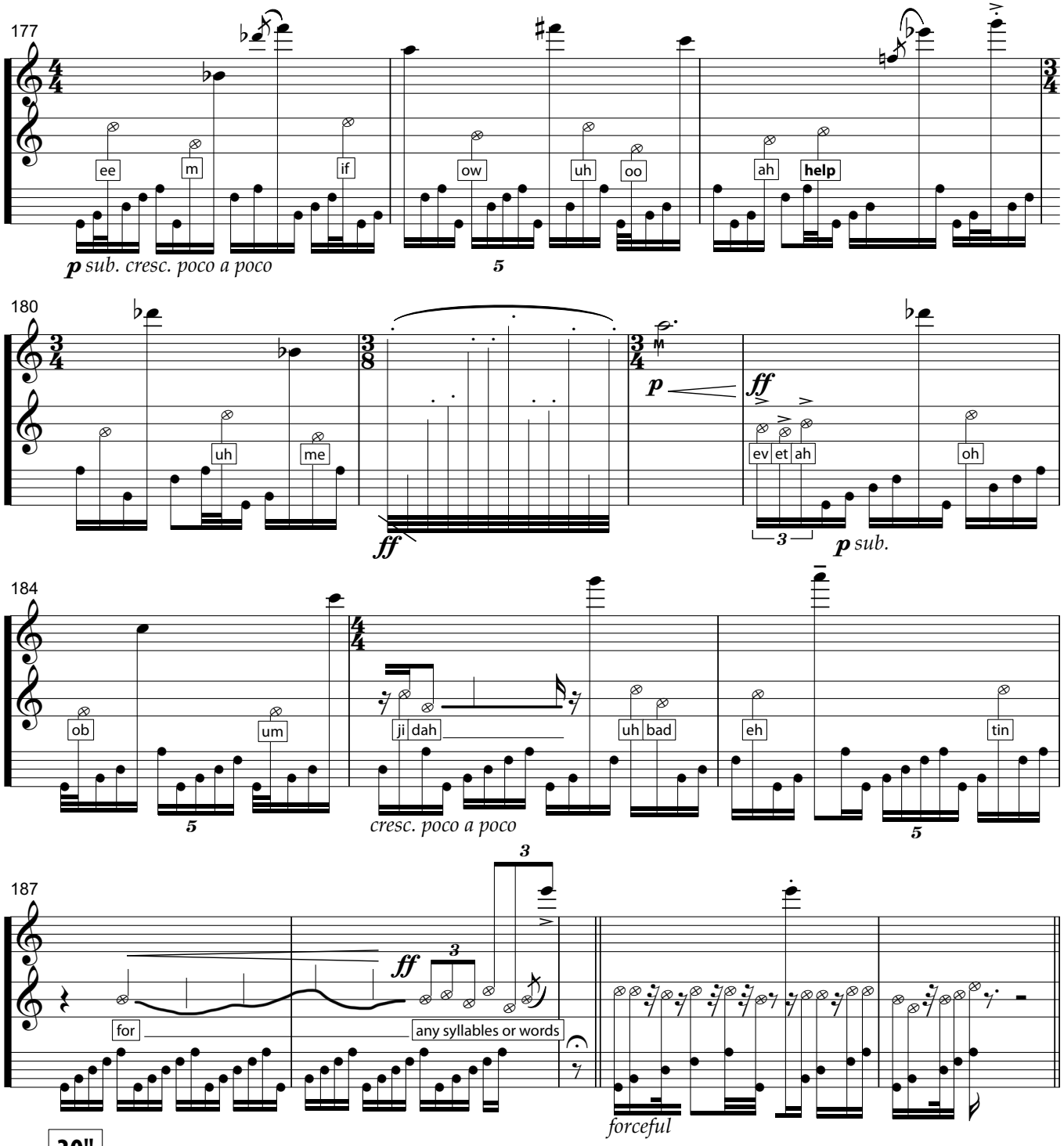
combinations of wet saliva mouth sounds, breath sounds, pitched sucking gestures, fragmented syllables, staccato pitches, unstable complex sounds, and rapid key clicks.



fast keys, any fingerings


a tempo [♩ = ca. 104-120]
bisbig.
145
eb
ish
ah
ee
sffz
new pattern of two fingerings, feeling much more rhythmic
meno mosso [♩ = ca. 60]
148
fast improvs. of wet sounds, sucking, vocalizes, and keys
ah
ee
(wet)
ah
je
tah
oh
ff
p
ff ticking
(2nd time only)
1.
underblown
152
t
f
v
ch
fp
f
pp
ppp
2.
8"
complex sound, or multiphon.
157
ppp
ff
(wet)
ff
very emphasized [♩ = ca. 72]
uhb
ee
oo
down
dji
oh
ff five different fingerings
160
accel.
tsi
ft
ah
af–
ter
ib
oh
ehb
d
for
um
ee
and
eh
ah
dji
sim…

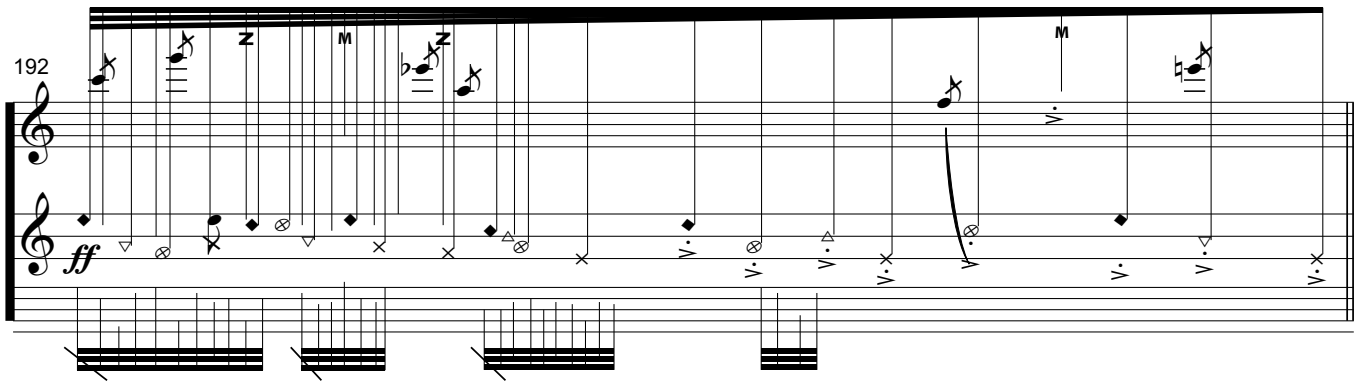

163
bow
ah ee don't ugh
de form
rea dy for you to de vise
b ad d ah j ub
can it oo ub ee dj
3
7"
more fast and aggressive than before [♩ = ca. 132]
multiphon.
quick, random atonal pitches
166
ff
sung
oo ah
fff poss.
168
ff
ah
quick, random atonal pitches, with some mouth sounds and fingering
5
171
ugh
why
ee
su pah
eh
p sub.
174
ft
ah
t
eh
you
f tah
5
ff sub.



30"

frantic and unstable stream of rapidly alternating actions moving between mouth, breath, voice, pitch, and keys
gradually decelerate and separate the gestures, shifting from dense continuous activity into sparse, irregular, and precisely placed isolated sounds.
final moments should feel exposed and arrhythmic, with emphasized, disconnected attacks.

cycling through wet saliva sounds, pitched sucking gestures, fragmented vocal syllables,
short staccato pitches, unstable complex sounds and multiphonics, breath sounds, and percussive key clicks

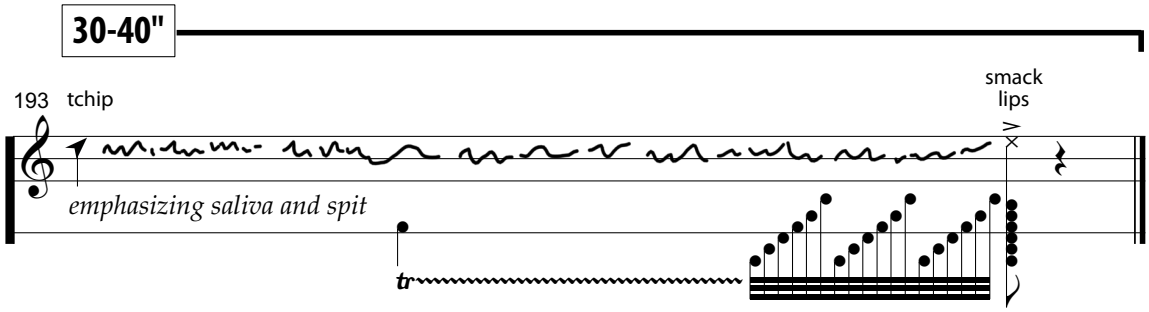


Detatchment:

The instrument is gradually expelled from the body.

Beginning with the reed in the mouth, physical contact is continuously withdrawn, slowly, until the instrument rests vertically against the body. The gesture continues at the lips after the instrument has been removed.

The continuity of the gesture should be privileged over the preservation of any particular pitch or timbre.



2026
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Taipei, Taiwan
Bainbridge Island, Washington

Stephen de Filippo

Stephen de Filippo is an Australian composer and sound artist whose practice spans instrumental composition, electroacoustic music, field recording, multimedia, and experimental performance. His work explores relationships between sound, bodies, environments, and technologies, often incorporating unconventional performance techniques and unstable sonic materials.

His compositions have been presented internationally across concerts, festivals, exhibitions, and site-responsive contexts. He holds a PhD in Music Composition from the University of California San Diego and is an Assistant Professor of Music at Canadian University Dubai.

Premiere:
28 Aug 2026: Pilar Fontalba, Attara Soinu, Casa de Cultura de Villava, Villava-Atarrabia, Navarra, Spain

Thank You:
Pilar Fontalba, Juan José Eslava Cabanellas, Javier Torres Maldonaldo