C E R E N E M J O U R N A L C

E R E N E M J O U R N A L C E

R E N E M J O U R N A L C E R

E N E M J O U R N A L C E R E

N E M J O U R N A L C E R E N

E M J O U R N A L C E R E N E

M J O U R N A L C E R E N E M

No. 6

2017


WHO BREAKS THE GLASSES, CUPS, AND DISH WARE?
BABIE + BIRTH + HAPPINESS + REGRET = CHICHEN SOUP
AWESOME
QUESTIONABLE
-NOT JUST
DISNEY
Hugh
Chicken Soup
LESBIAN

CERENEM JOURNAL
is the graduate journal of the
Centre for Research in New Music
University of Huddersfield

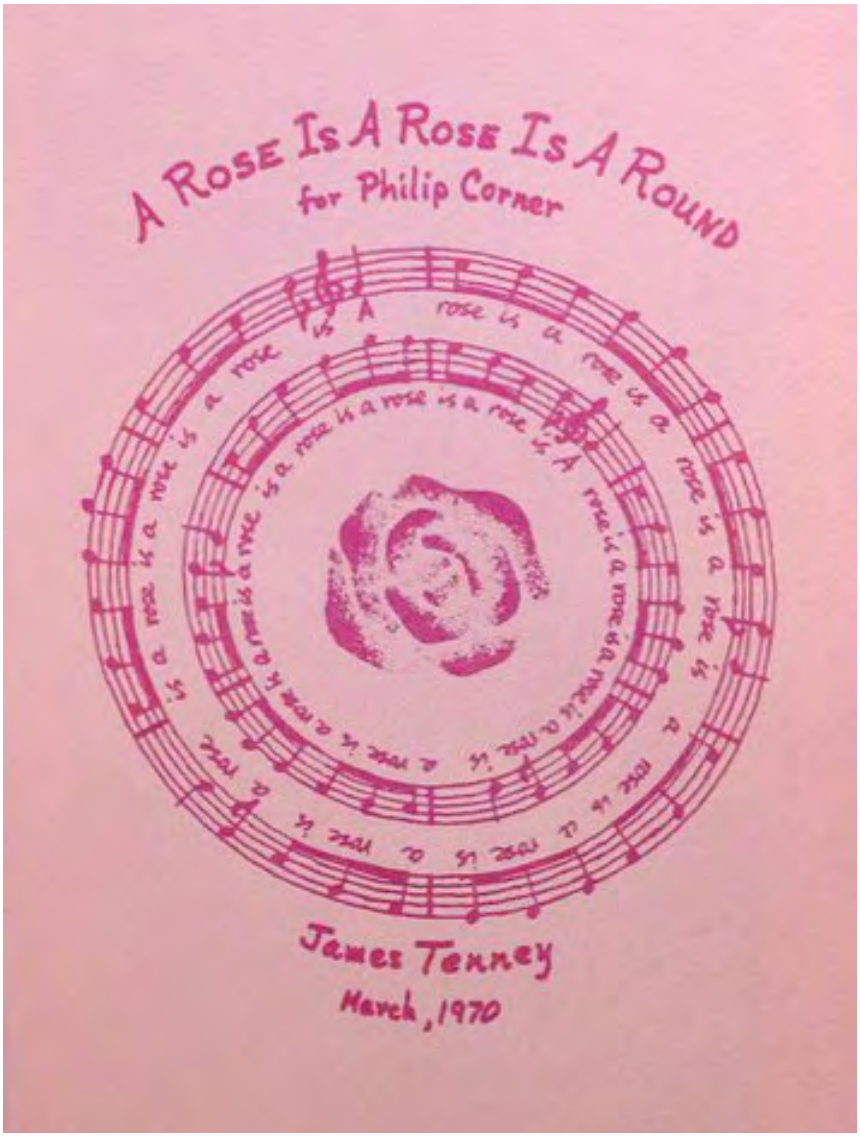
https://research.hud.ac.uk/institutes-centres/cerenem/

CONTENTS

Frontispiece:
from Mark So, *Millay* (2010)
Edit, typesetting:
Lawrence Dunn
Picture credits p. 223

editorial

lawrence dunn: music and persons



A Rose is a Rose is a Round, James Tenney, part of *Postal Pieces*, 1965-71.

What has music to do with the people it's 'for'?

Music can seem to be an almost inevitably 'dedicated' activity—in that music can actively resist not being 'for' something or somebody. (The designation 'music' does after all imply dedication to the muses.) Dedication is not the same as 'tailoring' or 'design'—it is more abstract; indeed, more devotional. As in consecration, it has the character of setting-apart, of surrendering, of gifting.

Dedication has two potentially directed aspects: an internal and

an external; but they comingle. The persons for whom the music is 'for' can be an internal circle, a private kin; or they can be some variety of external public or ceremonial (as originally, symbolic figures: the muse, prince, deity, etc.) The boundary between one's kin and the public is necessarily porous, in the sense that the kin invents a way for the public to articulate itself. The boundaries of the public are shaped by its being made up of potential kin; and kinship (which, if it is not familial kinship, is here artistic or 'in-law' kinship) can always be dismantled, divorced, disowned. Kin is brought from the public realm and in theory can be divorced back to it—though a kinship relation cannot be made raw again once it has been cooked. The implicit thing, though, that underlies dedication ('forness') is a kind of contradistinction. If there is a *for* then there must be a *not for*. There are those for whom this music is *not for*. There is music that is 'not for me'.

If one isn't careful, dedication can become a kind of kernal, from which spiral out answers most other potential questions about music. 'Why make this music?' 'Because it is for my kin.' Indeed, the act of making is identified with dedication to the kin—if it is undedicated, it isn't yet 'made'.

The artistic kin could be taken to be analogous to the 'artworld' *a la* Danto[1], only that the kin are more articulated: they make up those with which an individual affiliates and aligns, has been adopted and looked-after. Danto's artworld is a more mercenary and capitalist arena; the art kin is precapitalist, based on relations of tutelage and apprenticeship and collectivity and friendship, and can be explicitly anti-capitalist. Nevertheless, the modern capitalist artworld has at its core an elaborate cascade of multigenerational art kinship. It is not so much 'study' that grants adoption by this family so much as it is *studentship*. Affiliation is not something one can obtain merely by parody or imitation. Affiliation within the art kin is done by dedication—that the art is held to obtain a genuine (rather than feigned) relation to its progenitors and is accepted to have such.

This is the situation after the transformations of the twentieth century: it is the kin, and not the merchants or patrons, who are

1 See Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, Harvard University Press, 1981.

those to actually have the power to grant actions as *aesthetic* in the first place (as opposed to anaesthetic, or utilitarian, or mercenary, or commoditised). Or rather, if, as Boris Groys would have it, 'everything is aestheticised',[2] the kin are those who can grant aesthetic 'worth', as opposed to (mere) aesthetic 'content'. If artists today continue to be involved in making craft-objects or completing 'renderings' or 'likenesses', then the status of these labour-products is not determined by the 'artistry' of their rendering or likeness; they are determined by the way these objects are deemed and dedicated. As Andrea Fraser puts it: 'An artist is a myth. Artists internalize the myth in the process of their development and then strive to embody and perform it.'[3]

This is, one supposes, the difference between the outsider and insider artist. The outsider artist is deemed to be essentially incapable of performing their art—their art remains undedicated.[4] They cannot get detached enough from their autonomism. Outsider art essentially *isn't* art (it remains, from the bland point of view of habitually attendant professionals, occupational therapy) until it is brought into the artworld by its representatives and rededicated as such.

Of course, the art of outsider artists *is* art—and it is from the point of view even from those with severe mental disability.[5] But one feels it must only be art in the same way that other autonomisms are art; that the doodle is art; or that prehistoric art is 'art'—in that they have been held to be, or 'deemed' art. Certainly in the case of prehistoric art, this 'deeming' is such an anachronism that scholars

---

2 Boris Groys, *In the Flow*, chap. 3, Verso, 2016.

3 Quoted in Sarah Thornton, *33 Artists in 3 Acts*, 'Scene 6', W. W. Norton, 2014.

4 '[T]he work of art is only such—that is, both "work" and "of art"—and only has meaning for us because "it is only present through a relation with the other", because it "calls for the other", because it "requires the other". But the *art brut* work has no need of the other . . . The maker of *art brut* neither invites nor addresses us.' Alain Bouillet quoted in David Maclagan, *Outsider Art: From the Margins to the Marketplace*, Reaktion Books, 2009, p. 143.

5 'Even where we seem to be beyond any ordinary form of intentionality, let alone that usually associated with the creation of "works of art", there is arguably something inherent in the human gesture of making something that still has its own significance. As one writer, Madeleine Lommel, puts it: "How can we not take account of the fundamental impulses, that is, the confrontation with matter, that innate process on which man has to depend in order to impose an answerable presence."' David Maclagan, ibid. pp. 145-7.

considering it in the twenty-first century feel it is necessary from the get-go to make a disclaimer.[6] Such is the overwhelming capacity for the art kin to necessitate a landscape of dedication and rededication that one is tempted to regard the doodle only as 'proto-art'. (Doodling is to treading-water as the dedicated mark is to freestyle or breaststroke: swimming that is not only in a particular direction but has also a generic or preordained quality—i.e. 'stroke'. Does water treading count as a stroke?)

*

I should make an apology.

This issue is many months late. Most of the material was assembled through 2016: it should have appeared in January at the latest. However, in December, my step-father was diagnosed with cancer—and everything (at least from my perspective) went on hold. After he died, in February, I found myself emotionally overwhelmed and immersed in compositional commitments. I also wanted to contribute something to this issue, but struggled with exactly what. The present issue was always going to be about how music gets to be about people—initially, what music might have to do with portraiting, identity. But since that time it's taken me a while (and a writing-through of a number of compositions for other people in the intervening period) to end up a little more constructed about how music becomes to be 'about' and 'with' other people.

It occurs to me now that grief is a rather useless sort of emotion when it comes to musicmaking. At least, that particular grief one comes by after loss, rather than the 'pre-emptive' grief borne of the knowledge that loss will come. I suppose one could call it 'melancholy'. Oddly enough, this sort of 'pre-emptive' grief was something I'd had in mind making pieces throughout 2016; it remains so. Death is, after all, fundamentally just an idea; life, on the other hand, is actually lived, in the way that music is lived and is made of

6 'I have never felt comfortable with the use of the term 'art' to describe so many different [prehistoric] phenomena and have become increasingly aware of the difficulties involved in their study. . . . Although there have been many accounts of prehistoric art, nearly all of them begin by making the assumption that the concept is a useful one.' Richard Bradley, *Image and Audience: Rethinking Prehistoric Art*, Oxford, 2009, p. viii.

Three Pears, Walnuts, Glass of Wine and Knife
Jean-Baptiste-Simeon Chardin,
Musée de Louvre, 1768

bits of living.

Loss is a huge part of musicmaking—though one might argue it's become less foregrounded since the advent of recording. But it remains the case that musical activity can and only happens once. Recordings are at best likenesses. Sometimes, they are elaborately worked fictions—and fictions, like likenesses, can be more real than reality. Reality disappears. Likeness has the habit of articulating life; life becomes a 'version' of previously assimilated likenesses. Still, it takes an unusual level of acceptance (and a certain skill and togetherness) to be truly acclimatised to the genuine levels of loss involved in making music. Ephemerality is these days a kind of fetish, and has an allure exactly because documentation is so straightforward and hence so ubiquitous.

In Montreal in April, and later in Glasgow, I was working with Linda Catlin Smith—initially a mentor, she became a good friend. She had also experienced loss fairly recently, and I asked her about how she came to understand it from the point of view of composition:

I think the complex things that I feel and think are always with me,

> in the background of my composing, like an atmosphere. And it's the act of composing that helps me the most when I am struggling with large or overwhelming emotions. I more or less use the work as a place to go, a kind of solace or retreat from myself. That may seem selfish, I don't know. I don't make sad or grieving pieces—I don't make elegies or memorials—but loss is a big part of life and is in the background of my thoughts. It is like the aura of a still life painting —those beautiful Chardin paintings of fruit for instance—where the objects are surrounded by a solemn yet sensuous solitude.[7]

I sympathise with a lack of interest in the elegiac. Still, what do I know. It occurs to me that as a twentysomething I have simply not lived long enough—and have enjoyed the privilege of security as a fortunate westerner—to have much experience of loss, in all its awful contradictions. As much as it is a mystery what art and music have to do with other persons, it's a mystery what *life itself* has to do with other persons—who drift in and out of varying and maddening conditions of unknowability. As Linda said, 'I find that grief is a very strange creature and it moves in unpredictable ways.'

*

How does music, as a 'dedicated' activity, differ from the other arts? The nature of the visual or installation artist today has become remarkably similar to that of the composer. Their status is confirmed as such as it were 'behind the scenes', in rehearsal, in planning and programming ('curation')—they arrive into the public realm in fully-formed mythic attire, the gallery/concert-hall doing everything it can to establish status whilst assuming the condition of transparency. The onlooker is a 'guest', or a 'friend of the family'. This differs markedly from the older traditions of visual art, where the artist was employed to produce renderings and paintings-as-status-objects for patron-owners. As the content of artworks became less 'retinal', artists became much more concerned with their position as performed in front of a public.

Still, music functions differently in the sense that quite often the piece is a 'gift' granted to the performer, without whom it would not

7 Email, June 11, 2017.

A melpa woman from the Mt. Hagen region, New Guinea. She is adorned with *moka* shells.

exist in the world. Installation works are not 'given' to their gallerists or commissioners in quite the same way. Music exists typically as a relationship between *specific* persons; a visual artist's studio, or installation hanging team are not specific in this sense. An installation is not a gift given to the workers and assistants who have to fabricate and transport and install it.

Gift-giving and exchange are fundamental to human interaction such that this foregrounding by musical relationships ought to be given a second look. Anthropologist Marilyn Strathern put it with a scintillating bluntness: 'for "person", one can write "gift".' She elaborates:

> It is arguable that all Melanesian gift exchanges are 'reproductive' . . . Melanesians borrow origin stories, wealth and—as in the area I know best (Mount Hagen)—the expertise by which to organise their religion and their future. One clan takes from another its means of life. Indeed, exchanges surrounding the transfer of reproductive potential are intrinsic to the constitution of identity. . . . Pigs create

> pigs and money creates money, as shell valuables also reproduce themselves[.] . . .
>
> Persons are not conceptualised . . . as free-standing. A Hagen clan is composed of its agnates and those foreigners detached from other clans who will give birth to its children; a woman contains the child that grows through the acts of a man; shells are mounted on the breast. One person may 'carry' another, as the origin or cause of its existence and acts. An implicate field of persons is thus imagined in the division or dispersal of bodies or body parts.[8]

Agnates are descendents of male lines: the child in Mt. Hagen and the Trobriands has typically 'two fathers'—the first being the man 'whose semen moulds somatic identity' and the other (the mother's brother) 'who defines the kin group to which the child belongs.' *Moka* shells are given by men and adorn women (see above), retaining a sedimented record of their previous exchange, signalling status. The men who give them obtain status through their gifting, just as they do with their fathering. Their fathering is gifting. For Strathern, the shells are not mere 'symbols' of bodily reproduction: they are its equivalent.

For Strathern, the gift is more basic than we would typically hold it to be, with its 'altruistic' connotations[9] in modern, post-industrial western culture. Gifts are not 'presents', where a present is a kind of generalised consumerism. Gifts are rather part of the process of 'personification': 'the entire system of production, distribution and consumption . . . that converts food and objects and people into other people.' Gifts are 'given' in the sense that the world is 'given': in that the world is not only inherited, but also shared, contested, delimited, reproduced. Where there are gifts, so there are persons.

---

8 Marilyn Strathern, *Reproducing the Future: Essays on anthropology, kinship and the new reproductive technologies*, Manchester University Press, 1992, pp. 120-5.

9 Strathern is clear on this: in situations of exchange, '[t]here is no axiomatic evaluation of intimacy or closeness. . . . On the contrary, people work to create divisions between themselves. For in the activation of relations people make explicit what differentiates them. One may put it that it is the relationship between them that separates donor from recipient or mother from child. Persons are detached, not as individuals from the background of society or environment, but from other persons. However, detachment is never final, and the process is constantly recreated in people's dealings with one another. To thus be in a state of division with respect to others renders the Melanesian person *dividual*.' (emphasis added) Ibid. p. 125

Musical compositions are gifts of a much greater level of abstraction—and which often accrue the habitual altruistic character of gifts in a society ordered by commodity, capital and contracts. But baked into them is this much more fundamental set of relations. The musical artist is a person whose personification is determined by their gifting and granting.[10] Gifts in the form of compositions are articulated by exchange with other (specified) persons—performers—whose request and receptivity is mutually reinforcing and reproductive. Altruism and exchange go together with labour, with 'carrying'.

This line of reasoning can lead to some slightly alarming places. Are the composer and performer the 'parents' of a piece? Is the piece a kind of child, whose existence is presaged by parental efforts—indeed, *labour*, to bring into the world? A child which has an independent and subsequent existence? Especially given the gender roles so often found in classical music—that of the male composer and female virtuosic soloist—this kind of picture is worryingly apt.

Of course, heterosexuality is hardly the limit of sexual relations! Musical parentage comes in as many myriad kinds as every other kind parentage and sexuality. Still, parentage is a seductive way to see musical relationships, inasmuch as, so often, the *piece* (as opposed to the score or notation) is an entity which seems to accrue its own life and rights. A hybrid life, made out of an imaginary part, a set-down part, performed and remembered parts. It would also seem often to have its own 'requirements', at least during its making—there are things the piece 'needs', 'can do without'. Such requirements exist during reproduction too, during recording, subsequent rendition, etc. The greatest requirement, though, is perhaps is 'subsistence'. Pieces, like persons, only exist in the word inasmuch as persons are at hand to enable their existence to continue. Pieces

10 In a related sense, think of how often a sounding of a work is identified with the person who authored it: 'What are they playing on the radio?' 'I think it's Berlioz.' The person of Berlioz becomes identified and personified by performances of works granted to and given by others. This sort of 'distributed' personification—personification by way of residual authorship—contrasts with more usual kinds of personhood (which could be personification by action amongst relations), such that even seeing composers doing ordinary, 'related' things can appear weird for subsequent onlookers. This is how disembodied their personhood has become—the continuity of their identity has been achieved not by reproduction through relation, but through dedicated 'residuals'. See http://composersdoingnormalshit.com/

do not have wills; they cannot elect such-and-such. But the presence of a discernible will, nor the condition of ownership, does not in other situations lead to renunciation of personhood. The person with extreme autism, with no ability to make choices for themselves, does not stop being a person. A slave owned by another does not cease to be a person.

Are pieces persons? Given the interest in the points-of-view of objects and systems (things usually held to be non-persons) in Actor Network Theory and recent philosophy, positing such a thing isn't as outlandish as it might first appear.[11] What makes pieces and other artworks more like persons is to do with their 'dedicatedness', the fact that they have been put into the world and set-apart—consecrated, as it were—so as to be themselves and not some other thing. A piece, whatever its makeup, and however multiple its composition, is deemed to be singular. Persons are, after all, ensembles of matter and thought, composed of parts, which are taken to have singular identities, whose continuity is retained only by interaction with and reliance on others. As Strathern says: 'Persons are not . . . free-standing.'

Acquired personhood through dedication—maybe this is what 'naming' is.[12] In an early text (1916), unpublished during his life-

11 Of the 'actor' in Actor Network Theory, Bruno Latour writes: 'It is not by accident that this expression, [the 'actor'] like that of 'person', comes from the stage. Far from indicating a pure and unproblematic source of action, they both lead to puzzles as old as the institution of theater itself—[that of] the difference between [the actor's] "authentic self" and his "social role". To use the word 'actor' means that it's never clear who and what is acting when we act since an actor on stage is never alone in acting. . . . By definition, action is *dislocated*. Action is borrowed, distributed, suggested, influenced, dominated, betrayed, translated.'

He goes on: 'This is exactly what the words 'actor' and 'person' mean: no one knows how many people are simultaneously at work in any given individual; conversely, no one knows how much individuality there can be in a cloud of statistical data points. Figuration endows them with a shape but not necessarily in the manner of a smooth portrait by a figurative painter. To do their job, sociologists need as much variety in "drawing" actors as there are debates about figuration in modern and contemporary art.' Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor Network Theory*, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 46, 54.

12 Of the Fayum portraits (Greco-Roman paintings made in Egypt from the 1st to 3rd centuries), John Berger writes: 'the two of them, [sitter and painter,] living at that moment, collaborated in a preparation for death, a preparation which would ensure survival. To paint was to name, and to be named was a guarantee of this continuity.' John Berger, *Portraits,* Verso, 2015, chap. 2.

time, Walter Benjamin wrote:

> Things have no proper names except in God. For in his creative word, God called them into being, calling them by their proper names. In the language of men, however, they are overnamed. There is, in the relation of human languages to that of things, something that can be approximately described as 'over-naming': over-naming as the deepest linguistic reason for all melancholy and (from the point of view of the thing) of all deliberate muteness.[13]

Nature is mute, and 'where there is only a rustling of plants, there is always a lament. Because she is mute, nature mourns.'

But it is not as if, in a godless universe, humans are endowed with any greater capacity for naming. That which is named comes into the panoply of thinghood, but it is not made into a being merely by being called such-and-such. Benjamin is right to think of the human capacity for naming and dedication to be borne of hubris—but then, nothing is borne of hubris more than the God of Abraham himself, who is not a person (because he has no 'beginning', he 'is that he is'), but is nonetheless the very entity whose single charge is to make covenant with and single out those persons who are his against those who are not his. Who he is *for* and who he is *not for*. The God of Abraham is the entity (the device) the Israelites use to dedicate *themselves*; he names *them*.

Benjamin suggests that, because human, names are 'already withered.' But then so is Yahweh's name: because there is no God—his is a 'mere' name, a reminder that his naming and dedication is required for his continued existence. Yahweh's having-to-be-named is an embarrassment; his is a name akin to every other name, including those which are held to be false: Astarte, Asherah, Ba'al, Hadad, Aten. Yahweh's name is just as 'thrown upwards', just as crudely 'linguistic', a naming made by having tongues wrap around and smother the soft palate; syllables pushed into the world to be remembered and transmitted and rendered mutable and forgettable. Why else would its utterance be taboo? His name is as withered as any other.

---

13 Walter Benjamin, 'On Language as Such and on the Language of Man', *Selected Writings,* Vol. 1, ed. Marcus Bullock, Michael W. Jennings, Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 73.

Benjamin inverts the melancholy of mute nature, suggesting that ‘in all mourning there is the deepest inclination to speechlessness’. This speechlessness is ‘more than the inability or disinclination to communicate. That which mourns feels itself thoroughly known by the unknowable.’ It is almost that, in a condition of lament, one becomes aware of one’s primordial muteness, the deep humanness of one’s ability to name, which is also a characteristic hubris; one’s inability to provide a continual ‘naming’, so as to retain those who did live and now do no longer. That which is, is as such, whether it is named or unnamed; its naming is what grants us access and relation. But in mourning, the ambiguities of naming and personification collide with the basic conditions of being—the unknowabilities of being, such that there can be in the world ensembles of matter and thoughts, that are singular despite their singularities being unlocatable, that are multiple despite their multiplicities denied; that are not ‘free-standing’, that ‘carry’ and ‘are carried’.

There is no good way to know what a person is; we form them for ourselves. Our forms dwindle. They can be refigured.

*

I must thank Liza Lim for inviting me to edit the following issue, as well as the individual contributors, and Sam Gillies for assistance.

The present issue consists of a series of exchanges and conversations, conducted in 2016. The first is a conversation between myself and Jonathan Burrows and Matteo Fargion, about their series of dances *52 Portraits*, http://52portraits.co.uk/. These are remarkable pieces, for Burrows and Fargion the culmination of almost 25 years of working together. Each is an individual entity—yet they all are 'akin', being made with and for, and also 'using', the dancers portraited.

This is followed by an interview with Christian Wolff, conducted by Joseph Kudirka and Nick Williams. Wolff mostly discusses the *Exercises*, their genesis as well as their recording, as well as issues of composing with and for others.

There follows an exchange between Luke Nickel and Mira Benjamin, concerning Benjamin's recent research into tuning and Just Intonation and her personal experiences of navigating it—of 'identifying', 'instantiating', 'inhabiting', 'sailing'.

Michael Finnissy's interview by Cassandra Miller follows. Finnissy discusses his personal approach to transcription, 'writing-through', and also touches on portraiture, photography, painting, the influence of David Hockney and Walter Benjamin, museums, culture, melancholy, and everydayness.

Finally, there is Joseph Kudirka and Mark So's exchange on So's 'name pieces'—a large series of pieces made through dedication and transcription. Their exchange forms something of a vicarious catalogue, stretching over ten years of work, showing the extraordinary range and extent of So's method.

Thanks must again go out to all the contributors, who put up with delays and were so generous with their contributions.

LD, July 2017

Photo by LD (2010)

Photo by LD (2006)

jonathan burrows + matteo fargion: on making portraits

interview with lawrence dunn

LD: *It had been Tim Parkinson who had introduced me to Jonathan and Matteo's work: both Tim and Matteo had been students of Kevin Volans in the '80s and '90s. Jonathan and Matteo have been working together since 1989, with dance pieces made for live performance and for television. Around 2000 they began producing a series of two-handers, Jonathan and Matteo both appearing together on stage.* Both Sitting Duet (*2001*) *was the first of a series of such duets, recently profiled by William Forsythe's* Motionbank *project. Their work together has had quite some influence, particularly in the dance world—the publication of Jonathan's* A Choreographer's Handbook *in 2010 did something to further solidify this influence. Matteo is somewhat shyer, a little more elusive and probably not quite as well-known in musical circles as Jonathan is in choreographic. But his subtly informal, sardonic, and* (*particularly in the case of the* 52 Portraits) *moving music is a crucial part of their collective project. Music of his has been programmed particularly by Tim Parkinson at* Music we'd like to hear, *and also by* Parkinson Saunders, *a duo of Tim's with James Saunders on which Burrows and Fargion have had an impact.*

This conversation relates to their large-scale web-project 52 Portraits, *http://52portraits.co.uk, published in video format online throughout 2016. The interview was conducted by email in the middle of 2016, halfway through the cycle of dances, which are all danced (apart from the final dance) by other dancers, friends and associates.*

LD: Clocking in at maybe 200 minutes overall, with an enormous cast, this has got to be the most ambitious project you have both worked together on. Given that it's all split up into little bits maybe it doesn't feel like that, but considered as a single entity, one would have to look at least toward mid-century ballet to find something even slightly on this sort of scale. And yet, all these dances are being

quietly released week-by-week onto the web. How did this project come about?

JB: I had been thinking for a long time about other ways dance might occupy the internet, other than music videos and short clips of spectacular dancing that you might see on Facebook. The model for me was the year I spent on-and-off following Tim Etchell's daily political playbill series called *Vacuum Days*, which ran for the entirety of 2011. Matteo and I had had a two year experience of working with exploratory digital software, motion capture and so forth, as part of William Forsythe's *Motionbank*[1] project in Frankfurt, so we had some idea of that place where art meets the digital, but what I liked about Tim's project was that it wasn't about things looking digital but rather about the obvious ways we all use software. So we decided to make a project which would take the short form of Facebook postings, but give it this accumulating quality, so it might transcend the usual instant and forgettable nature of dance clips on social media. And the choice to stage each portrait at a table, was made with the understanding that many people would watch them while sat at a table with their laptop, so the watcher sits opposite the performer, sharing a familiar technological situation.

The project has given Matteo and I a way to engage with making a much bigger kind of piece, with a large number of collaborators, but at the same time working in the way we always work: from the start step at a time, paying attention to detail and focussing everything on the gap between one thing and the next.

LD: I wonder if the dances made for this project might represent a return to an earlier way of working—as the majority of your pieces over the years have been performed not by third-party dancers but by yourselves. One early collaboration was a 1994 dance made for television, called *Hands*. Was that the last dance made with the camera in mind? How would you compare your approach then to now, twenty years later?

JB: Recently Matteo and I seem to have found more satisfactory ways to invite other people to join us in our work, encouraged perhaps by a moment in dance where collective practice has become important again. And we're very glad about that.

And in terms of making something specifically for camera, yes, I

1 see http://motionbank.org/en/content/jonathan-burrows-matteo-fargion

Still from *Hands* (1994), directed by Adam Roberts, choreography and performance Jonathan Burrows, music Matteo Fargion, design Teresa McCann, camera Jack Hazan. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vqJ-kQwxfFI

guess for many years we've been more interested in making rougher representations of actual live performance, but *52 Portraits* goes back to what we were trying to achieve for camera in 1994 with *Hands*. In fact for me I would say that I think *52 Portraits* is finally a way of continuing the *Hands* project, which we wanted to do for a long time, and it seems sometimes these things take decades and you just have to wait.

LD: These dances are all called portraits, but it wouldn't be unreasonable to look at all of the two-hander pieces (going back to *Both Sitting Duet*) as being self-portraits of one kind or another. Would it be wrong to think of your work, generally speaking, as being more interested in portraiture than tableaux?

JB: I think your question touches upon something very interesting about dance, which is the way that no matter how abstract or distanced it seems, there is always a sense of the person revealed. Having said that though, the job of the dancer or performer is usually to resist the autobiographical impulse at all costs, because to embrace it is to reduce other rich and contradictory elements, like more abstract or formal things, and then you risk losing some of the peculiarities and uncertainties which make performance resonate.

LD: If I had to pinpoint the difference between *Hands* and these pieces, it could be the collective effect-by-osmosis of the duets. We as viewers of your pieces have gotten used to seeing Burrows and Fargion: the effect of this is that, when watching these dances for other

Still from *Counting to One Hundred* (2014)
https://vimeo.com/69679524

people, the style of movement echoes Jonathan's own characteristic movements; and of course pretty much all of the music is played or sung by Matteo. It brought to mind Gilbert and George, who, because they have for so long appeared in every one of their paintings, one now 'expects' to see—even if they are hidden or don't appear at all. With their paintings there emerges (at least with me) a certain 'where's-wally' looking-around-for-them. In other words, the difference between *Hands* and *52 Portraits* is that, in the portraits, Burrows and Fargion are consistently 'in the background'—is this reasonable?

JB: I think you're right that many of the people who've worked on the portraits know our work, and are in some sense in negotiation with it already when they enter the room, regardless of what they propose. This might be dangerous in terms of trapping what happens in a certain too familiar place, but at the same time the more familiar aspects and performance tone of Matteo and I's work creates a common ground where we might meet and move things forwards without too much instruction. And these 52 meetings with different artists are anyway feeding and disrupting and interrogating what Matteo and I do and think and assume and doubt and wish for, so the exchange is mutual, and that's the point of doing it.

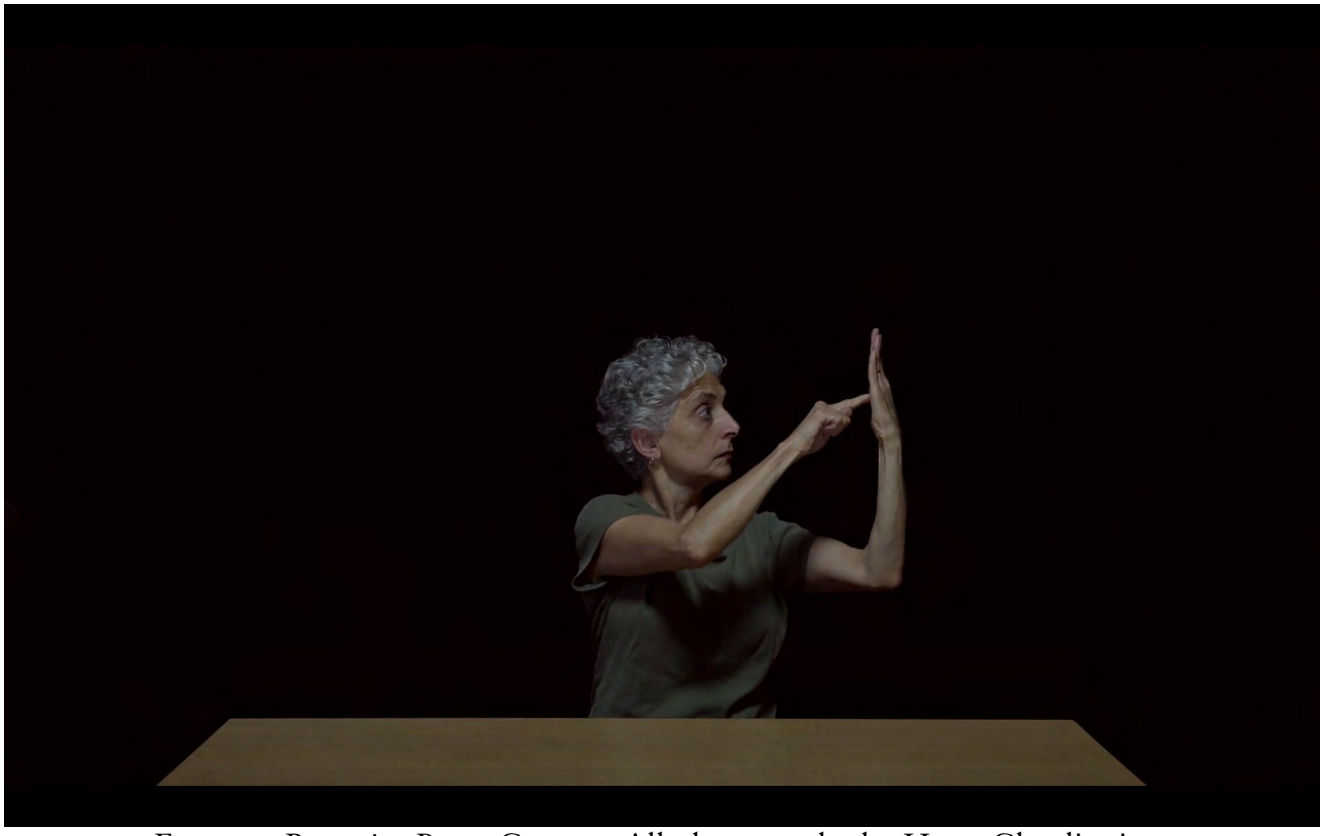
LD: There's also something in the duets that feels therapeutic—I fairly

Still from *Both Sitting Duet* (2001; 2012 performance)
https://vimeo.com/68204508

often get the feeling that Jonathan is Matteo's therapist. Do you think there's something therapeutic about these portrait dances too?—especially given that the song texts regularly dig into the dancing individual's backstory and childhood, desires, etc.

JB: Well you're right that the therapeutic nature of the dancing body is never far from the surface when we practice or watch dance, but for me the process of *52 Portraits* is perhaps more sociological and political. The intention of the lyrics is to throw the usual idea of the perfect, blessed, angelic dancer figure, and focus on more interesting, conflicting and contradicting information and ideas about what a dancer might be and why we might dance, and to expose the hidden politics of dance practice. Matteo and I are interested in counterpoint, both as a love between the parts but also as a friction which causes something else to happen. So for us the lyrics and music of each portrait are about sustaining and at the same time questioning the thing done.

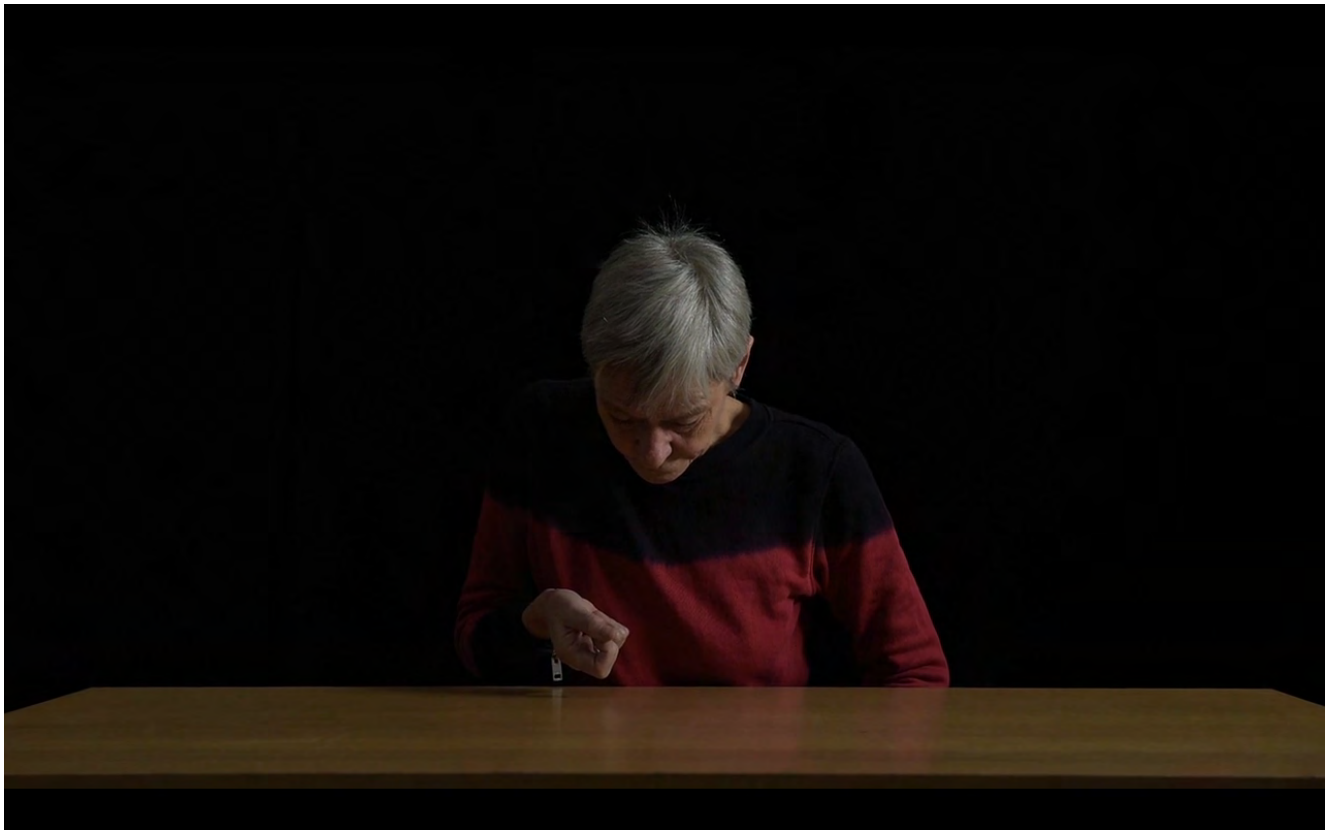
One of the pleasures of the project has been to experience the skill that dancers have, to be precise and at the same time spontaneous, and to pitch their performance with self-conscious awareness in relation to the camera and the viewer. And all of them come with a different methodology. And for me this is another aspect of the project, that as well as giving equal space to known and unknown



From *52 Portraits*, Betsy Gregory. All photography by Hugo Glendinning.
Click on each picture to go to the video of the dance

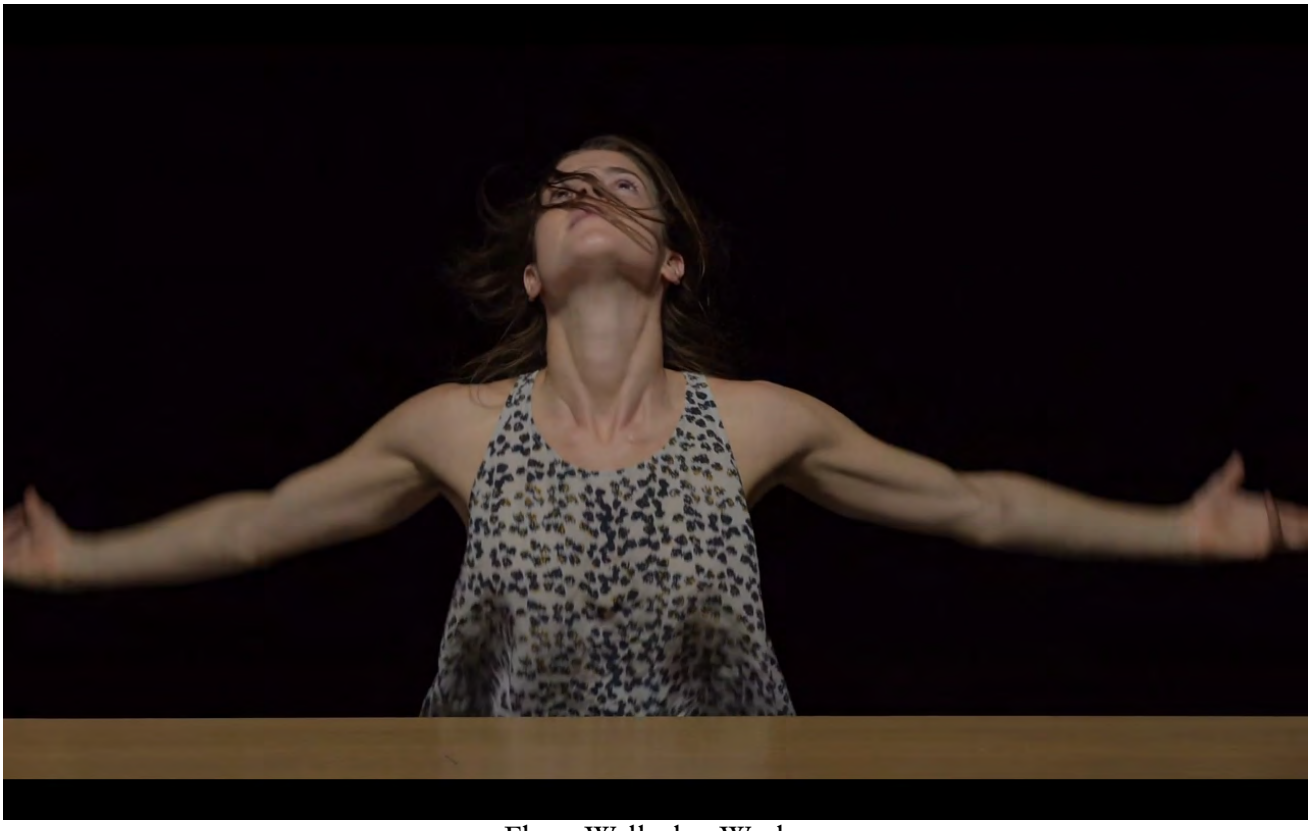
Robert Cohan

(l-r) Francesca Fargion, Jonathan Burrows, Matteo Fargion



Siobhan Davies

William Forsythe



Flora Wellesley Wesley

Deborah Hay

Namron

artists, it also gives space to different approaches to working, in a way that challenges the way the dominant discourse wants always to simplify and to reject what doesn't conform or no longer conforms.

LD: In this project there is a striking mix of persons doing the dancing. Some are quite well known (Betsy Gregory, William Forsythe, Robert Cohan, Siobhan Davies), while many others are young and relatively unknown. To put it bluntly—what's your relationship with factual biography? In that, with a young dancer whose background is unknown, one could essentially tell any story one would like?

JB: The portraits work like this: I make some exchange with the artist about what they might do, inviting that they start from what is overused, worn out, dug up, archaeological and somehow burned into their motor memory; and I suggest that they might trace or map those remnants into the space in whatever way, not to show the moves but just be in the act of engaging with them. And I offer the musical form of La Folia, which Matteo and I worked with extensively throughout 2014, and some use it and others don't and for the ones who don't I suggest other ways of mapping the thing, like a song sung privately in the head, which perhaps contains some sort of questioning. And every person arrives and says the same thing, 'I've had no time, I've got nothing really.' And then they sit down and the work comes out. This all takes no more than an hour or so, and Hugo Glendinning is lighting as he goes and shooting from the start. And when we're done I ask them some stock questions and some questions provoked by the conversation in the room, and I ask for a piece of music that matters in whatever way. And I write the text from the interview on the train home, using what they say verbatim, and I send the lyric and chosen music to Matteo, and Hugo sends him the video, and the music is written very fast. And the performers never hear the music until they see the final portrait. The process is a kind of benign ineptness, built upon a lifetime of working together. The actual skills we use are hardly evident, and the same goes for the dancers. The human body changes too rapidly, and experiences what's happening on a somatic level too intensely to grasp half of what is happening at any given moment, so we learn to deal with the superficial. And to answer your question, it's not about truth or not, it's much messier than that, because that's

Rembrandt van Rijn, *Woman Bathing in a Stream*, 1654, London, National Gallery

Henry Raeburn (attr.), *The Reverend Robert Walker Skating on Duddingston Loch* (*The Skating Minister*), c.1790, Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland

how the body is.

LD: Was there anything as regards historical models of portraiture that affected the way these dances were composed?—the lighting, for example, is very much chiaroscuro. For me, two different sorts of historical portraiture seemed to be relevant—one being the private, 'at a distance' picture (Vermeer's interiors, for example, or Rembrandt's *Woman Bathing in a Stream*, whose model was probably his lover Hendrickje). The sort of pictures which are full of desire, psychology, maybe even a little erotic voyeurism—but very much 'observed' by the artist.

The other sort of picture would be the 'fantasy' or 'character' portrait, where either a stock figure or a real person is bent into a shape or a pose by the artist. These pictures are more rhetorical, and are not seen from 'afar' but are instead very much flatter, with the subject foregrounded almost to a point of disembodiment. Raeburn's *The Skating Minister* springs to mind. It seemed to me that these dances had these two sorts of portraiture present as models and

flitted between them.

JB: I like very much your picture of these two kinds of portraiture, which sound like what Robert Lowell described in poetry as 'the raw and the cooked'. I think both are present in *52 Portraits*, and it's usually an accident of who we're working with and what happens on the day. I've been thinking more about this issue since I read your comments and looked at the images of Rembrandt's mistress and Raeburn's skating man, and I've come to the conclusion that sometimes the difference in the gaze that's invited in *52 Portraits* is to do with the colour of the clothing which the person chooses to wear. I've noticed that dark clothing leaves the person floating in a space which softens and contains them without distracting us with surface; whereas light coloured clothing places the performer very much within the room, in a more two dimensional and plastic way.

Finally there is within performance, as within the visual arts, an ongoing tension between more objective and more subjective approaches and gazes, and I'm aware that portraiture is a dangerous thing to attempt in a climate resonant with this discussion. However my reason for doing it is not so much to represent or defend a subjective stance, or get into that argument at all really, but rather to use the portrait form as a way to challenge the hierarchies of currency within dance practice which constantly want to place one approach or style above another. And I do this because as an audience member I continue to find extraordinary experiences in the most unlikely and least acceptable of places, regardless of style or conceptual viewpoint. It seems to me that the only criteria really as to what resonates seems to be that the person is more or less consistent and more or less evidently sentient.

LD: The music for these dances is enigmatic too—it feels both throwaway and carefully laboured. Each is a song, with lyrics referring to the dancer, and each uses a model tune (from Tina Turner, or MIA, or Iggy Pop, or The Roots, or Stravinsky's *Les Noces*) though I'm not sure they're all that recognisable as they are mostly reconfigured and recomposed (I certainly didn't recognise any). What was the thinking on this?

JB: Matteo and I just liked the idea that someone's ordinary life or ideas, might be sung as though what we are hearing is crucially important. And the act of singing has a way of universalising what

has been said.

LD: Do you have any thoughts on informality and formality? There feels something deeply informal about these dances—domestic, at turns—but also something about masks and formality and outward presentation. The music too, is often very informal, but this can sometimes feel jarring somehow, but I don't know 'with what'.

JB: Matteo and I have had a policy for many years of saying yes to any invitations to perform, and then figuring out how to do it afterwards, whatever the space and conditions of working. Hence the title of the new piece we're making, which is called *Any Table Any Room*. So we might be performing one week in a large proscenium arch theatre, and the next week in a hall without technical equipment. And each of those two extremes requires a different approach to the balance between what is formal and what is informal in the performance, and both qualities must be there in order that the audience members are invited and engaged, and at the same time free. The whole purpose of our performances is to be under the same roof, which is a term we borrowed from the director and performer Jan Ritsema, and the same philosophy applies to the portraits.

LD: There does seem to be a dialogue, both overall, and in the song lyrics themselves, between a certain 'behind-the-scenes-ish-ness'—things to do with funding and the Arts Council, careers, education, boring practicalities—and something deeply lyrical. But then I guess this is a preoccupation of much of your work? (*A Choreographer's Handbook* swings quite a bit between these two places.)

JB: In dance now there is a slow recognition that artistic practice includes many different elements, including how we deal with the practicalities and with the public face of what we do, and I wanted *52 Portraits* to reflect this in a respectful way. We are living through a period when there is a vast infrastructure of arts professionals, waged and protected by holiday pay and pensions and so forth, in ways artists can only dream of. And this class of arts professionals does good work but is also busy creating gateways for artists to pass through or not, and are constantly having to collude with government to create ever increasing bureaucratic mechanisms that we must negotiate. I wanted that *52 Portraits* highlighted the voices of artists while quietening these voices of bureaucracy, and one way to do that was to let artists speak directly about the daily job of

surviving.

LD: As we are now more than halfway through these dances being released, is there any long-term structure or development across them—even something emerging by accident?

JB: The only principle for curating the project was that it must be people whose work we love. But as the project has developed so it has become clear that it can never give room for everyone who should be there, and so we are looking at ways to make clear at the end that the list of 52 is in no way comprehensive and that it could go on. And we have already been asked would we do it again in another context, and our preferred model would be that the idea is put into the commons and anyone who wanted to make or subvert or do whatever they want with their own portraiture, would be welcome. And the list of 52 is in a sense deliberately random, shifting from known to quite unknown people, through obvious choices but with occasionally surprising choices. And the important thing for me is that everyone is equal under the roof of the project, so when I was asked could someone show just the portraits of older performers as part of another event, I said no, because to single out the older performers would be to make a judgment on their age, and for me there is a politics in the fact of ignoring all the usual hierarchies which stereotype or marginalise artists for whatever reason.

LD: Jennifer Walshe recently fingered you (rather cutely, in a footnote) in MusikTexte, where she was introducing the term 'New Discipline'—meaning a recent tendency toward incorporation of movement and the body and sociality and theatricality in an outwardly musical context.[2] I'm not sure there's anything 'new' or indeed, 'disciplined' about the trend she's noticed (that might have been the point of her term), but anyway, did you have any thought on this? Do you think of what you're doing as expressly new or experimental or revisionist?

JB: Well this is a nice article by Jennifer Walshe and it's very flattering to be mentioned in it, and I think she explains very clearly that her use of the term 'New Discipline' is pragmatic, so as to provoke a recognition of what's happening in terms of this current interest which composers have in performance. And of course this rekindled interest in the performing body is strongly present also in the visual

2 Jennifer Walshe, 'Ein Körper ist kein Klavier', *MusikTexte* 149, May 2016, p. 3

arts. But for me it's what I've always done because I'm a dancer, and I guess the more necessary question I have is why there's been this sudden turn back towards the body, and I think we're all still trying to work that out. Meanwhile Matteo and I tend to be moving in the opposite direction, where we talk of what we do more and more as being music, in order to clarify our position within the continuing conceptual moment in dance. Because we somehow fit in with this conceptual moment, but in other ways we make decisions which disappoint, so we're at pains always to make clear we never promised to entirely fulfill the conceptual obligation, and the reason is that we're busy making music. It's rhetorical but it helps. It keeps our options open. ▧

Photo by LD (2010)

christian wolff: in conversation

with joseph kudirka + nick williams

JK: *This interview was conducted in the autumn of 2009, when Christian Wolff was in Huddersfield to receive an honorary doctorate. I was directing Edges ensemble at the time, and we had been working on a retrospective concert of his work, which was presented that week.*

Earlier that year, I'd seen Christian in Ostrava, where his piece Rhapsody*, for three orchestras, had been premiered, so it was still fresh in my mind.*

JK: I was wondering, specifically, about things like the *Exercises*—did you write those with players in mind? Or were they more of a musical idea you thought people might take an interest in?

CW: Actually, no; though it was fairly soon that a kind of floating band for the *Exercises* emerged. But initially, no, I just plunged in. Along with a few other pieces around that time they were a sort of my response to Philip Glass and Steve Reich and that sort of music—which initially I liked a lot, it was great.

JK: You mean insofar as it's limited material? You had been using even less material earlier . . .

CW: No—it is that too, but it's more diatonic. I was never into that 'steady beat music', [but preferred] just having that occasional possibility of pulse.

NW: That's interesting because when I put on some of the *Exercises* and Songs when I was an undergraduate, we actually did them in the same concert as things like *Piano Phase*, and the first of Riley's *Keyboard Studies*. We felt that there was some sort of connection between them even though they sounded very different on the surface.

CW: Yeah, it's nice that people are surprised when I say that! The first time we did them in New York, and then the 'band' emerged which were a very good group, all of whom happened to be in New York—Frederic Rzewski, John Gibson (the saxophone player who played in the Philip Glass Ensemble), and er . . .

JK: . . . Arthur Russell?

CW: Yeah, how'd you know that!

JK: You played a recording of that group that included Arthur Russell.

CW: Oh—Arthur was a character. And—the later the day gets the worse my name recall becomes . . . Garrett List, trombone. I mentioned Frederic. And then it would depend—David Behrman sometimes came and played, he played viola in those days . . . sort of. And I played keyboard—and actually with Frederic, who would want to play piano, I would probably play guitar. And I used to play flute, so I might play a little flute. And organ and percussion—David and I mostly went for the percussion as we couldn't keep up with the other guys! [*laughs*] So that was the group.

JK: Between then and now you've changed the way you play them, in some ways.

CW: Have we changed the way we played them?

JK: You have, I think.

CW: Well I'd be surprised if we didn't.

JK: There are things even in the score—it seems like you've become more liberal, about how they can be interpreted. Like on the Ten Exercises disc, saying that there can be octave displacements.

CW: Yeah—that comes straight from the players. But, I mean Larry [Polansky] was going nuts trying to—it is hard.

JK: I guess if you're used to reading it in one way . . .

CW: If you're used to it in one way and if you have a transposing instrument, it's a real pain in the neck. I suppose someday somebody might prepare material in B-flat, as nowadays you can do that so easily once you get it into the computer. So I stretched it. But I think I mention in the note it's also for the piccolo but that doesn't occur on the record. She [Natacha Diels] really wanted to play her piccolo and I was like, 'okay . . .' [*laughs*] Almost everything is out of piccolo range so . . .

It was an interesting recording process [for the *Exercises*], as you can imagine, because you just can't do it! Which is nice in a way—mostly I really don't like recording sessions, they're such a drag. Play two minutes, or half a minute, stop, 'oh let's fix this'—it's awful. Whereas these pieces, if you stop, you have to start again, you can't pick it up in the middle. And you can't edit that way either! It just has to be one take. Fortunately we had a lot of takes, and it took a while to sort it all out. And some things that we thought were really great—typically those pieces, which are so fluid, fixing them for a

recording already feels a little wrong. And then you discover that what you can get away with, or what would be perfectly fine in a concert situation just won't fly on a recording. It's a really different medium entirely.

JK: Yeah.

CW: So if there's a little glitch, sometimes it's quite beautiful—and just move on to the next thing. But if it's fixed there on the record, you've got to hear it every time, it won't work! As a result we lost a lot of material that I thought, at the time, felt really good; just that little moment here and there.

JK: Do you think that's part of a reason that a lot of your stuff isn't recorded? We talked yesterday about how there's not a version of *Changing the System*, except for this one you'd planned.

CW: Yeah, that'd be a hard one. I like to think of them of just documentation of a performance. If you could do it in a live context and then put that on a cd I'd be perfectly happy.

NW: How would you feel about hypothetical recording process of something like *Changing the System* where you would record each of the elements separately, and then they're edited, layered, together?

CW: Yeah, you could do that—my first impulse is to say no, but I think I have enough experience now to realise that that actually sometimes works very well. I mean even Robyn [Schulkowsky] who's a fabulous virtuoso [did this], when she was recording some solo pieces of mine—parts of which are really outrageously difficult! For instance there's one piece which is mostly a transcription into rhythmic notation of a Josquin five-part motet.

NW: For solo percussion?

CW: Yeah, solo percussion—she has to keep five voices going. She can do it, but on the recording she said 'to hell with this, I'm doing two tracks!' [*laughs*] And it was fine, perfectly okay. Because all of that tension you get from a difficult performance, you don't see it [on the recording], you don't feel it, it's just not there. So, why not. And then another one which is on the record—actually, the percussion duo, it's almost my favourite thing on the record (it's the one with the noises in the background)—it was meant to be the accompaniment to another piece. And there we decided to just record separately—fortunately in this case, to a certain extent—the percussion

Christian Wolff in Huddersfield

part that runs simultaneously with the other stuff. It's no. 14. And that's the one that really broke my heart as we had a couple of 14s that I thought were really cooking, but they turned out not quite [right]. But we really liked our percussion duet! So we kept that.

JK: When you recorded the percussion for that, were you listening back to a version in headphones?

CW: No, just doing it. Again, that's something you wouldn't do with live performance, but it's idiomatic to recording to work that way, so you do it. Actually I was thinking of something else: she did a

solo CD of percussion music (another recording of the same piece that requires the five-part playing) and there's again one section where you have to play at least two parts, but they work the way the percussion does in that Exercise where the durations are all determined by the length of time it takes for the sound to die out. And I think this thing has up to three lines doing that and she has to do that simultaneously.

NW: So you have to be aware of which sounds finish first . . .

CW: You can imagine! We do that as a duo, and it simplifies it considerably.

JK: But it was written as a solo?

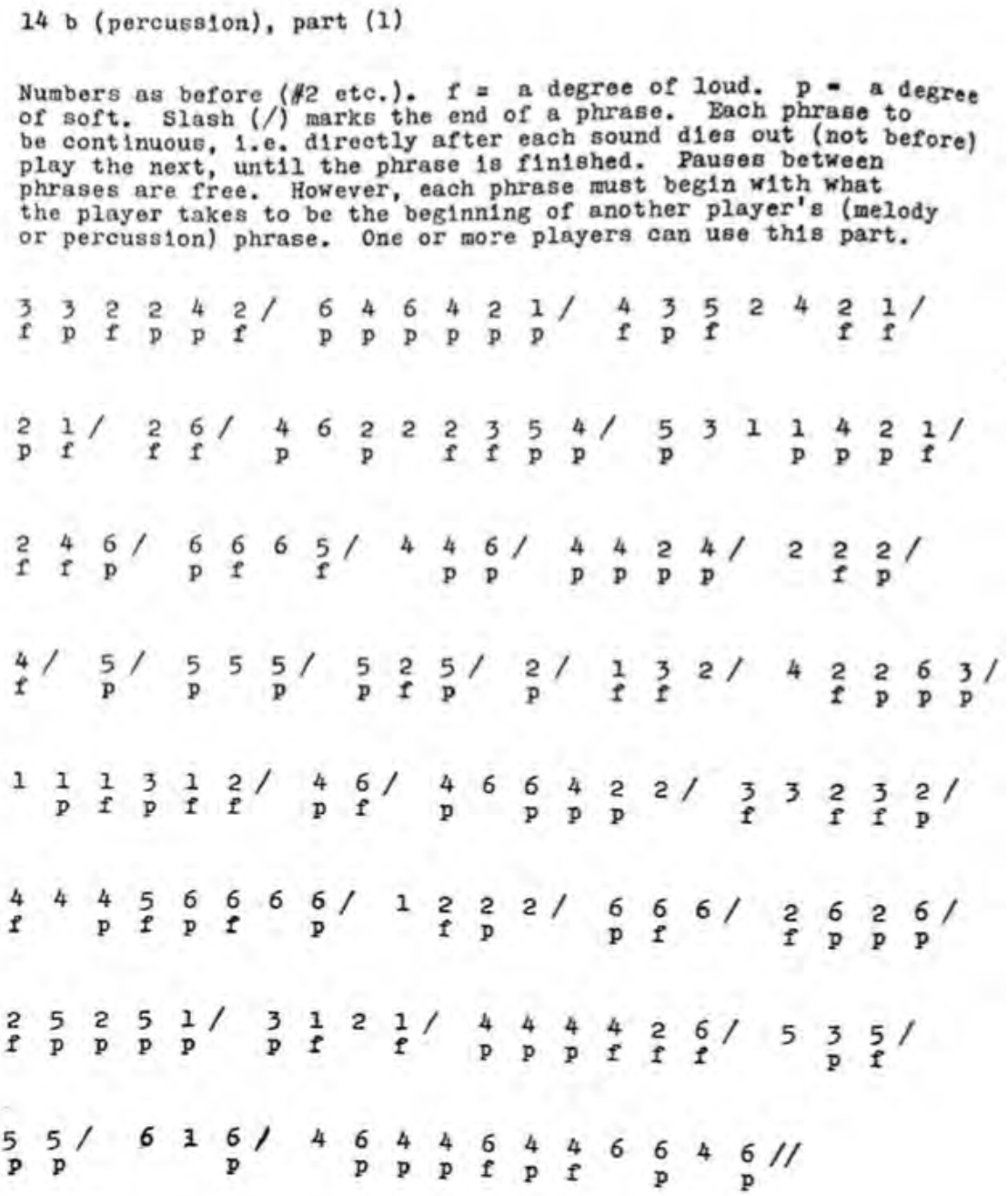
CW: It was written as a solo—I really pushed it in that one I think. Now there's a case of writing for a person. It's like writing for David Tudor—you know the guy's gonna like what you write, even if it's totally impossible, he's going to find it interesting. And Robyn's the same way. Solo music, there I definitely will write for people. Whereas ensemble music tends to be more [various], depending . . . If it's for a group of people like this one here where I know everybody, or if it's for some New Music ensemble that I've never worked with, it could make a difference, it does make a difference.

JK: I'm trying to think of the right way to ask it. When you're listening to another version of one of these pieces you've maybe written for a specific person or occasion, years later, is it always pleasing, is it sometimes upsetting? Do people sometimes not get what you thought you were able to convey in that one instance?

CW: It runs the whole gamut of possibilities here. I mean it could be just a bad performance, it comes with the territory. Otherwise, no, I usually find the differences interesting, even if I don't really like them. As long as I'm convinced that this person has done it seriously and is actually using the music that I've provided (which is something, at least in the old days, you couldn't count on at all). I've decided that people are who they are—including musically, and if that's what they are musically and that's how they do it, and they're doing it seriously, and they're doing it according to what I'd written, that's fine. I may not be totally delighted with that kind of person or that kind of music making, but it's alright.

NW: But if they do it in good faith . . .

CW: Exactly.



14 b (percussion), part (1)

Numbers as before (#2 etc.). f = a degree of loud. p = a degree of soft. Slash (/) marks the end of a phrase. Each phrase to be continuous, i.e. directly after each sound dies out (not before) play the next, until the phrase is finished. Pauses between phrases are free. However, each phrase must begin with what the player takes to be the beginning of another player's (melody or percussion) phrase. One or more players can use this part.

3 3 2 2 4 2 / 6 4 6 4 2 1 / 4 3 5 2 4 2 1 /
f p f p p f p p p p p p f p f f f

2 1 / 2 6 / 4 6 2 2 2 3 5 4 / 5 3 1 1 4 2 1 /
p f f f p p f f p p p p p f

2 4 6 / 6 6 6 5 / 4 4 6 / 4 4 2 4 / 2 2 2 /
f f p p f f p p p p p f f p

4 / 5 / 5 5 5 / 5 2 5 / 2 / 1 3 2 / 4 2 2 6 3 /
f p p p p f p p f f f p p p

1 1 1 3 1 2 / 4 6 / 4 6 6 4 2 2 / 3 3 2 3 2 /
p f p f f p f p p p f f f p

4 4 4 5 6 6 6 6 / 1 2 2 2 / 6 6 6 / 2 6 2 6 /
f p f p f p f p p f p p p p

2 5 2 5 1 / 3 1 2 1 / 4 4 4 4 2 6 / 5 3 5 /
f p p p p p f f p p p f f f p f

5 5 / 6 1 6 / 4 6 4 4 6 4 4 6 6 4 6 //
p p p p p f p f p p

Excerpt of Christian Wolff, *Exercise 14b*

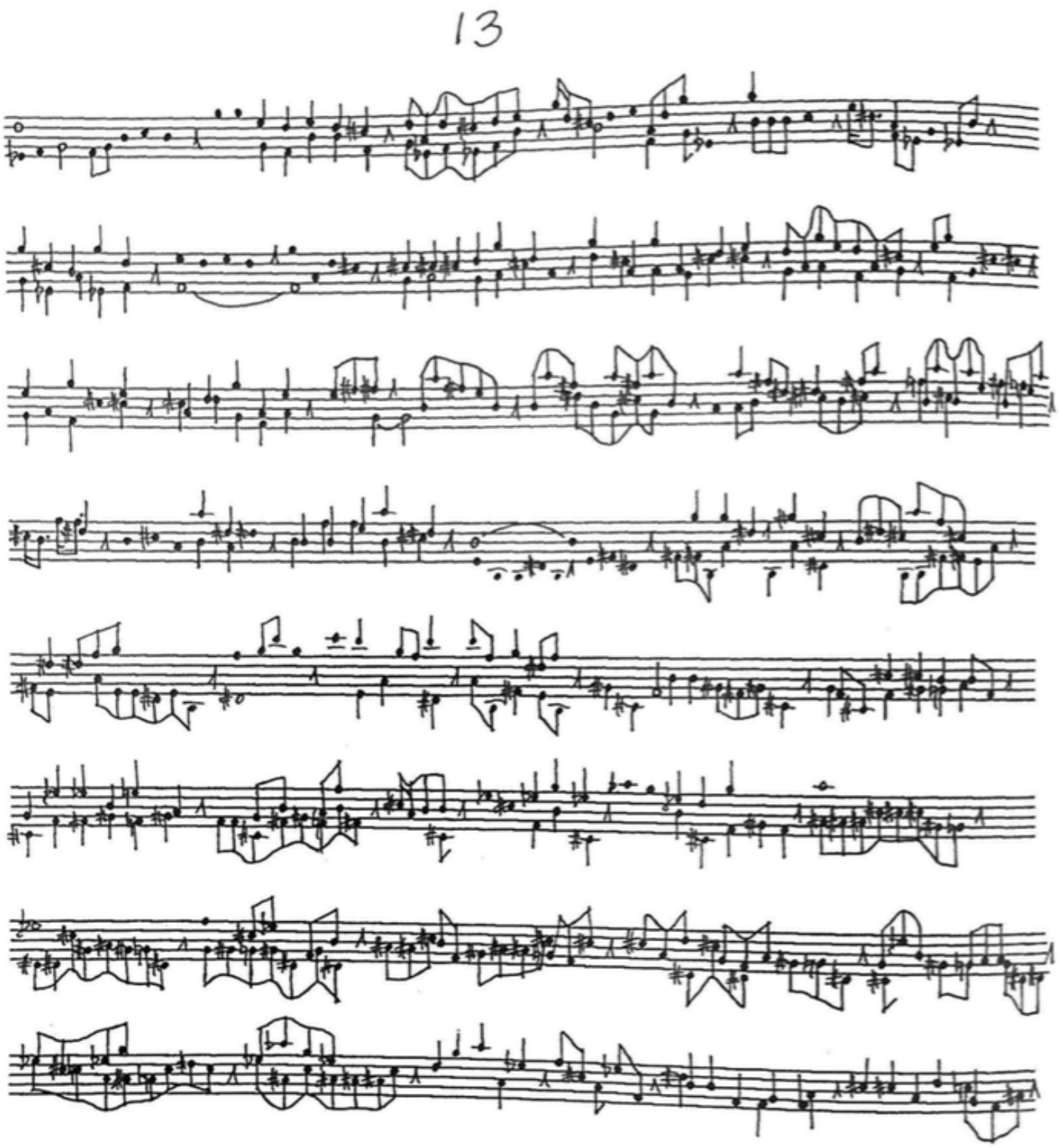
JK: Have you ever changed something or done something for a new piece because someone is doing something in this committed way, but they're interpreting it in a different way that you'd planned? You could, say, look at the wording, and realise how they got there?

CW: Oh okay, that there might be some loophole that I'd overlooked.

JK: Can that be nice?

CW: Yeah, often I'm delighted, people will think of things to do that I had not thought of.

JK: Could that change the way you write? Say you wanted to word something to get an effect . . .



Excerpt of Christian Wolff, *Exercise 13*

CW: You learn from it, yeah, it makes one more aware. With the earlier pieces I often forget what the hell I thinking, 'what the hell was this instruction, for God's sake?'

JK: Some of these notations you've come up with have stayed consistent. Like the wedge, the indeterminate pause. I guess that's a case of you having done something once—is the Exercises the first time that's used?

CW: That's a good question. Probably.

JK: And somehow it just worked, you've kept it up until . . .

CW: It's probably the single most important notation I use.

JK: I mean, I think it's that, or things similar, which are now adopted by other composers, because there's really nothing like it.

CW: Well, it's on the analogy—there are various little signs for breaks, fermata would be one, comma would be another one, and sometimes there are variations . . .

NW: But most of the others . . .

CW: But they're specified.

NW: . . . have some sort of specification. We would think of the comma as shorter than the fermata, whereas the wedge . . .

CW: The wedge is completely open.

JK: And also noteheads without stems. Did you get that from anywhere? The only things I can think about are some things from Cage and Brown and Feldman, but they usually operate differently from the way you handle them.

CW: I don't know. But earlier notations have things like that too, if you look at gregorian chant for instance. They have other things too, dots . . .

NW: Neumes.

*

JK: . . . I don't think I could be a composer who sits somewhere. Working with people is so important. And some composers can just work on a score, mail it off and turn up to the premiere.

CW: I couldn't do that.

JK: You've lived in Hanover [Massachusetts] . . .

CW: That's very isolating. Actually there is a modest and small music department with some interesting people in it. And the trick of living in Hanover is to get out as often as possible. [*laughs*] Boston's only two and a quarter hours away, and New York isn't too bad either.

JK: That's why you and Larry [Polansky] have worked together so much, isn't it?

CW: Yeah, on the spot.

JK: One thing that I thought was interesting in the new three-orchestra piece, *Rhapsody*, is that you seem to—in some ways it really reminded me of your much older music. 1950s kind of stuff. Very different from your other orchestra music, this new piece, do you

think?

CW: It's changed, yeah.

JK: It seemed to me a bit like Ives working with orchestra, that you have these groups, assembled 'as instruments'. I mean, any orchestrator does this, but maybe not to the extreme where you've separated to them into the three groups. It made me think of sonorities from the early string quartets and piano pieces, where you have something—a chord—that's treated as 'a thing', not as separate pitches; and that there's some parallels operating with the orchestras. Is that completely nuts?

CW: No, I mean the sound might come out like that. The writing, I'm trying to remember; I would say the largest proportion of it is just old-fashioned counterpoint. But it's not about the counterpoint, it's just a way to get the sound. And then you have the sounds coming from, actually, more than three places, but more or less three rough locations. Again, it's orchestration, but in a slightly different way because you get to do things like—you can have everybody, the whole group, playing exactly the same thing. Why not? And then you can have only two instruments from over there, and two from over here, playing the same thing. The number of combinations is mind-boggling. But it's actually also in my early music. When I started with two melody instruments with three notes, okay, that would make what I'd regard as twelve sounds, that was pretty clear. But then if you'd just up the ante by one instrument, you suddenly have thirty five possibilities. And then with say three instruments and four pitches, there's no end to what you can do! [*laughs*] Thinking about the orchestra made me think like that again. And I would actually draw up little charts of what combinations [were possible]—but then I quit, it's hopeless.

NW: Too many . . .

CW: But it does focus your mind, thinking that way.

JK: Also, it seemed like there were a smaller set of pitches being used than there has been in some more recent stuff?

CW: It's possible. I must say, I kept the range in the middle. There are areas where the counterpoint is fairly close, and I keep the ambitus . . .

JK: Lots of beautiful fourths and fifths and very consonant chords.

CW: Right.

JK: How did you decide what the make-up would be, of each orchestra? I know you had strings in each one. But then the extra players . . .

CW: I don't know quite how that happened. This is my second piece for three orchestras! [*laughs*] And the first one was a really wild, dishevelled operation, sort of like Burdocks but worked out a little further. And I didn't want to do that again—and I resisted even doing it, but Petr [Kotik] wanted me to do that. So, first of all, I was trying to not do what I'd done before. And then—I'd previously heard some string orchestra music and liked the sound quite a lot, and thought it'd be fun to do that, never done that. And then that seemed a little thin for three orchestras. And then I'd been listening to a lot of Haydn, and I thought 'he does very well', with a handful of strings and maybe two wind instruments, maybe brass or whatever. So I think of these as three little Haydn orchestras. [*laughs*] But minimal, and weird because I think one of them has a harp and trombone, the straight one has a flute and horn, that's perfect, and then the other one has trumpet and bassoon which isn't that far off either.

But then it was mixed up with something else—music that I hadn't really listened to at all with any attention—which was Bruckner. [*laughs*] I thought Haydn and Bruckner, what a great combination! But I really like Bruckner, it's so good, I hadn't really noticed what great music that was. That was more for scope, or scale; and also repetition. You know, he really does repetition very well, and he's not shy about doing it. It's almost Feldman territory, where he's got something, it's very distinctive, do it once, twice, three, four times, he doesn't care. He just keeps it running.

JK: I don't remember which symphony it was anymore but when I was in school and played in orchestras, I had a director cut out a whole hunk of these repetitions. It was ridiculous, twenty-five, thirty bars, exactly the same thing.

CW: And it's beautiful, he knows exactly what he's doing.

JK: His justification was because that's how Strauss had done it. And I thought 'well that's ridiculous'. Bruckner's better than Strauss.

CW: Absolutely. By quite a bit. ▧

Photo by LD (2006)

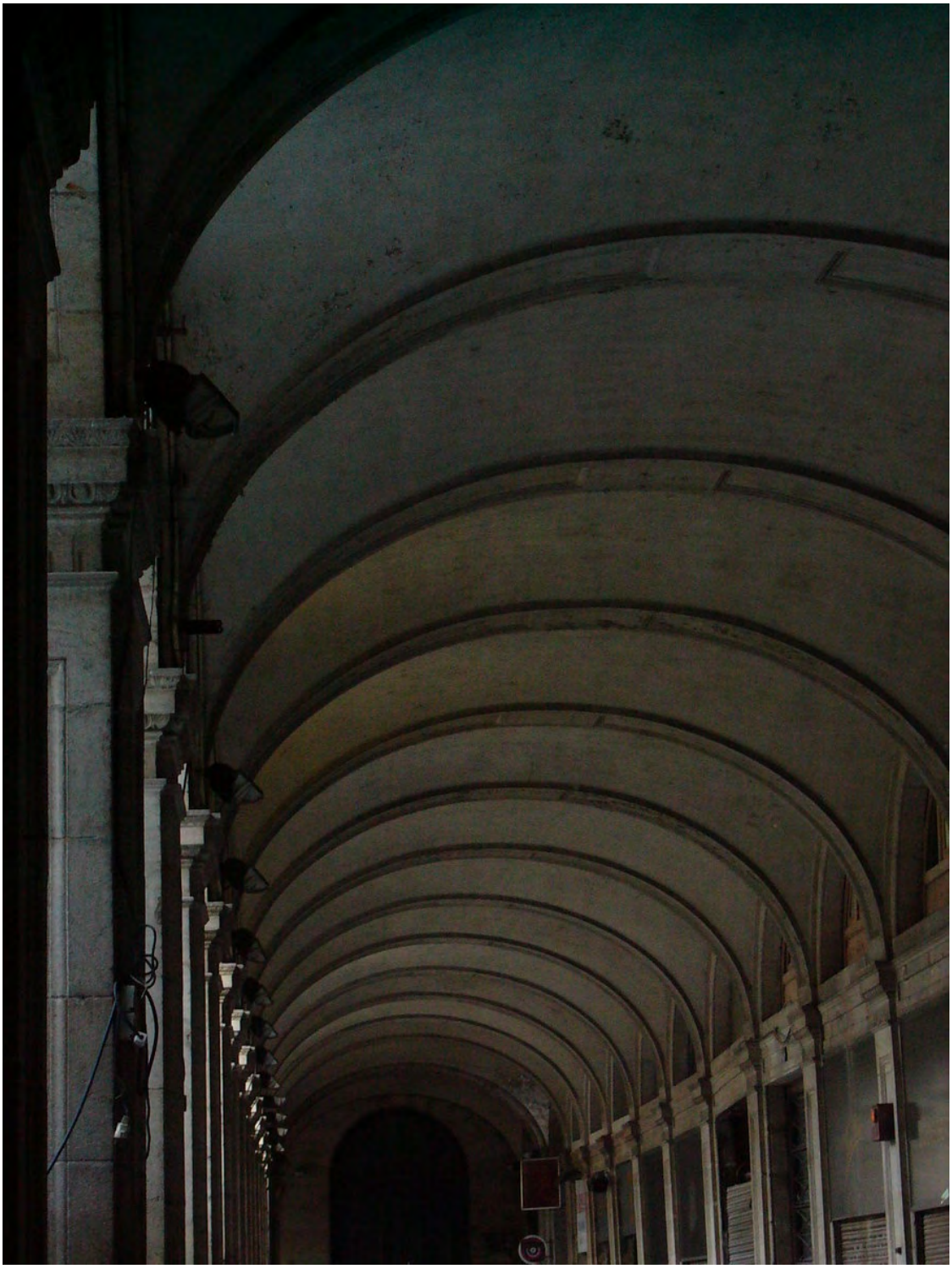


Photo by LD (2006)

mira benjamin + luke nickel: correspondance on tuning

LN: *The following is an exchange of email correspondence between myself and Mira Benjamin on the subject of microtonality, tuning and portraiture. With emphasis on tuning in particular, we discussed a variety of practical considerations and metaphorical models.*

LN: We began this exchange a few weeks ago with a phone conversation, in which you pointed me to Bob Gilmore's Keynote at the 2005 edition of Microfest (UK).

In his lecture, entitled 'Microtonality: My Part in its Downfall'[1], Gilmore explores the difficult—even paradoxical—task of narrating a history of microtonality. While one might discuss the history of microtonal notation, it is only possible to discuss microtonality as a phenomenon in opposition to a perceived 'non-microtonality', of which there is arguably none. Microtonality is relational.

Gilmore ends his lecture with a quote from Kyle Gann: 'music is a footnote to the history of tuning'. My first impulse was to draw a link between tuning and the idea of portraiture. However, if I am to follow that line of thinking, I would like first to better understand this above quote. Can you elaborate on your understanding of Gann's statement, and Gilmore's reference to it in the context of his lecture?

MB: Gilmore gave this quote as a summing up of his lecture, in which he narrates a potential history of microtonality. In this context I think Bob was acknowledging the formative influence of tuning practice upon the development of composition and performance. He suggests that due to this influence musical works could be regarded as instantiations of specific tuning practices. For example, the violinist and composer Giuseppe Tartini, having discovered the

1 Bob Gilmore, keynote address at Microfest 1, October 15 2005, http://homepages.inf.ed.ac.uk/stg/Bob_Gilmore/BGMicrofest05.pdf

difference tone in 1754[2], composed harmonic material that not only exhibited but also furthered the practice of Just Intonation. Perhaps in Tartini's practice music and tuning enabled each other.

Gilmore offers a lovely and succinct description of this interactivity in another of his articles, 'Changing the Metaphor: Ratio Models of Musical Pitch in the Work of Harry Partch, Ben Johnston, and James Tenney':

> Most models [of musical pitch] are designed not merely to provide a description of pitch 'space' but to suggest or embody an explanation of it. All such models are attempts to circumscribe and make manifest the processes by which we form cognitive representations of musical materials. Clearly the model and the observations that arise from it are linked: observation is done in the ambience of the model; the model is created in the context of an observation strategy. This interaction helps evolve the adequacy of the model and the sensitivity of the observation.[3]

Discussing microtonality from a non-comparative stance is a pervading challenge. I have found it helpful in my own research to try to define clearly at what point in the actualisation of music we choose to locate this thing called 'microtonality'.

If microtonality refers to a musical outcome—if it is a way of describing or analysing what we hear or have heard in a musical performance—then it is indeed unlikely that a non-comparative discussion will be possible. However, we might instead consider microtonality as a process—one which occurs pre- and in-performance. Such a process can provide useful strategies through which one can navigate the complex, iterative worlds of pitch and tuning.

The violinist and composer Marc Sabat has said that musical pitch occupies a 'glissando-continuum'.[43] If we are to think of pitch

---

2 Robin Stowell, *Violin Technique and Performance Practice in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 147.

3 Bob Gilmore, 'Changing the Metaphor: Ratio Models of Musical Pitch in the Work of Harry Partch, Ben Johnston, and James Tenney', *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 33, No. 1/2 (1995), p. 458.

4 Marc Sabat, 'Intonation and Microtonality', *New Music Box* (1 April 2005). Accessed 21 October 2016. Available from: http://www.newmusicbox.org/articles/intonation-and-microtonality/

as a flexible continuum without fixed points, then we must also appreciate the constant state of intonational decision-making that is inhabited by the performer. I would suggest that microtonality might be a way of characterising these decisions: it is a collection of vocabularies or models through which we can organise our understanding of pitch, and make decisions with relative consistency in different musical contexts. The concept of microtonality allows us to bypass any perceived normativity that might be assigned to any one tuning system or musical practice, and engage with the tuning itself as a process and a practice.

LN: This idea of the glissando-continuum reminds me of raw paints—or perhaps even a canvas—which must be manipulated by performers who pattern it: manipulated, consciously and unconsciously, into paintings (or performances) that are both representational and symbolic. As a performer, is the negotiation of the endless pitch-glissando continuum, via microtonal models, a series of conscious decisions? How do these decisions reflect the player's performative agency, and do they create a sense of individuality? Could this be likened to an act of (self-) portraiture?

MB: Sabat's use of the phrase 'glissando-continuum' reflects a concept of tuning that understands pitches in terms of their relationships with other pitches. In an article for *New Music Box* (2005) he writes:

> I would describe intonation as the art of selecting pitches, or (more accurately) pitch-'regions' along the glissando-continuum of pitch-height (following James Tenney's description in the 1983 article 'John Cage and the Theory of Harmony'). The 'tolerance' or exactitude of such regions varies based on the instrument and musical style. In this context, microtonality is an approach to pitch which acknowledges the musical possibility of this entire glissando-continuum and is not limited to the conventional twelve equal tempered pitch-classes.[5]

Sabat here refers to James Tenney's discussion of pitch space, following Cage's 1959 writings ('each aspect of sound . . . is to be seen as a continuum, not as a series of discrete steps favored by

5 Ibid.

conventions . . .'[6]).

I'm not sure I'd be drawn to see this glissando-continuum as something raw or unfinished, nor as a material which is available to be manipulated or patterned—although I might be more inclined to draw these analogies if I were a composer. As a violinist, I'd say the idea of a glissando-continuum encourages me to think about pitch space as a whole, fluid environment where locations (coordinates, even?) can be understood in various ways. I believe Sabat's approach not only describes but also defines a pitch in terms of relationship (proportion, proximity, triangulation) with other pitches. A single pitch, even when quantitatively measured (i.e. in Hz), is abstract—only through its relationship with another pitch can we begin to form a model that can be communicated and mutually understood.

I do think the negotiation of the glissando-continuum requires a series of constant decisions—although these may be be intuitive (or even unconscious), or they may be based in a more explicit model of pitch space. I would suggest that the degree to which these decisions might be 'likened to an act of (self-)portraiture' depends on the player's underlying motivations and priorities.

A performance could easily be seen as an act of self-portraiture—especially in circumstances where the music or musician prioritises dramaturgy or expressive narrative. In this kind of situation, intonation might function as a medium through which the player can project their intentions (perceptions), and is likely to result in tuning choices that aim to accentuate or exaggerate this intended (perceived) impact. For example, the cellist Pablo Casals defined a manner of intoning melodic passages, which he termed 'expressive intonation'. Casals advocated a subtle exaggeration of the relative sizes of diatonic intervals, relating to their melodic function: semitones were to be narrowed when approaching functionally important pitches, major thirds widened in the context of diatonic tetrachords, and sevenths intoned lower to encourage the perceived inevitability of their downward cadential resolution. The overall effect was a slight exaggeration of the difference between major and

6 James Tenney, 'John Cage and the Theory of Harmony', in Peter Garland (ed.), *Soundings* 13: The Music of James Tenney, (Santa Fe, NM, 1984), p. 55. Reprinted in *From Scratch: Writings in Music Theory* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), p. 280.

minor intervals, which Casals implied could reinforce a listener's impression of melodic expressivity.[7]

However, if the player instead chooses to prioritise the process of tuning, or if the music requires them to do so, then the tuning choices themselves become the subject of the performance, and the performer is likely to make tuning choices that are more akin to mapping. Rather than asking, 'how do I think should this sound?' the player may instead ask, 'how does this choice fit into my understanding of the whole?'

To me, mapping is not about (self-)portraiture, but about representing, describing, and inhabiting a space that includes and exceeds all its instantiations. It has been my experience that what we might call a 'microtonal' approach to pitch and tuning seems to suit the music and musicians for whom this process of tuning is itself the primary motivation.

LN: I read your answer as a rejection of interpretive ego, and an embracing of the mechanics and physical realities of an instrument and the way it makes sound.

Am I correct in understanding then that this process-based approach to microtonality affords the willing performer an infinite multitude of options to be navigated during performance? And that because there are so many options, any one process employed during performance might not form a portrait because it is only a small map of how a certain performer has negotiated a certain landscape? I'm taken with your metaphor of maps and space: perhaps turning to this metaphor again will help me better understand your answers.

The process you describe seems akin to re-envisaging a whole terrain as negotiable, rather than only using the main roads well-worn by time and practice. In this process-based application of microtonality, all terrain becomes open, with a performer striking out in whichever direction makes sense to them at the time. Sometimes they might encounter main roads with many people passing, and other times ancient, deadened paths that still remain fruitful for the courageous traveler.

---

7 David Blum, *Casals and the Art of Interpretation* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980) pp. 102-10.

This metaphor reminds me very much of Philip Thomas' proposal of an experimental performance practice. In it, he describes experimental performance as focusing on doing the job required with little preoccupation of narrative and continuity.[8] When you're exploring terrain, each moment must be spent navigating the particularity of where you are and what is in front of you.

How do you personally negotiate this landscape? Once you're off the beaten path, what strategies do you employ to understand the landscape around you and continue to move in any direction? What goes into your thought process when navigating the pitch space of the endless-glissando continuum?

MB: I really enjoy your description, and wholeheartedly concur on many points—particularly when it comes to Thomas' comments about 'doing the job'. However, I would hesitate to characterise my practice of tuning as 'going off-piste'. To use this analogy seems to me to re-subscribe to the comparative discourse surrounding tuning, which we have been trying to avoid in this discussion. Maybe, if we're sticking with metaphor for the moment, it might be more appropriate to think about tuning as sailing—negotiating the dynamics, behaviours, 'currents' if you like, of a fluid surface.

In more practical terms, it appeals to me to think about pitch using models that accommodate both the familiar and the unfamiliar on equal grounds. Convention encourages us to think about tuning by comparing what is less familiar to what is more familiar. We recognise the diatonic/chromatic pitch set from our experience of music, and call these pitches 'twelve-tone equal temperament' (a coarse generalisation). But in string practice, generalisations like this represent category errors. The practice of string intonation is necessarily relational, and involves a spectrum of microtonal nuance, which we negotiate according to context. Tenney describes the 'tolerance range' of each pitch—'a range of relative frequencies within which some slight mistuning is possible without altering the harmonic identity of an interval.'[9]

---

8 Philip Thomas, 'The Music of Laurence Crane and a Post-Experimental Performance Practice', *Tempo* 70, no. 275 (2016): p. 11.

9 Tenney, 'John Cage and the Theory of Harmony', pp. 55-83.

I think you are spot on when you talk about embracing the physical realities of the instrument—I'd go further to say the physical imperatives of the instrument. A violin has only four 'default' pitches (open strings), and when these are both adjustable and unpredictable, which pitches may we call 'normal', and which are therefore 'extended'? Evidently, the notion of normative and non-normative pitch is somewhat abstract in the practice of string playing.

So yes, I think it is constructive, as you say, to approach the whole terrain as negotiable—which is not to say that players are faced with infinite choice. As appealing as it may be to think of musical pitch as a great expanse of infinite possibility, in practice musical context goes a long way to defining constraints or preferences that guide our tuning choices.

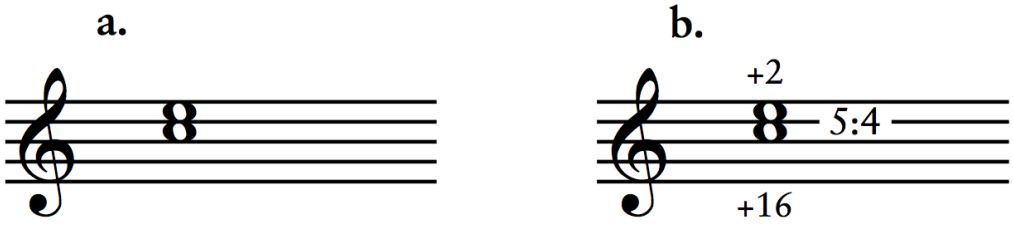
However, within a given musical context, there are still vital decisions to be made, and in order to filter or streamline these decisions, I have often found it revealing to project an established tuning system or model of decision-making. For example, I often experiment with Just Intonation-based tunings as a way of navigating scores that use common practice pitch notation. In some instances, I have found it helpful to define preference rules[10] that guide my tuning decisions. These exercises let me filter my decisions through extra levels of constraint, which help me to focus my choices, de-prioritise the familiar, and work past my learned responses and received practices.

LN: Thanks for this answer. I would like to examine more thoroughly your practical approach to the process of tuning. Specifically, I was wondering if you could walk me through how you would approach tuning in two different scenarios. In the first

10 Preference Rules are proposed by Fred Lerdahl & Ray Jackendoff in their book *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* as a means of identifying which of a possible number of interpretations of a musical event is the most appropriate in a given context. Defining their theory as 'a description of the musical intuitions of a listener who is experienced in a musical idiom,' Lerdahl & Jackendoff acknowledge that any musical example is subject to a number of possible analyses. A preference rule defines, in the light of contextual factors and other preference rules, a likely constraint or parameter which can be applied to an analysis. (See: Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1983), 3-9.

scenario, you are met with a traditionally notated 5-line-stave western score (what you have called common practice pitch notation). In the second, you are met with a more prescriptive score that explicitly indicates its tuning practice using either graphic symbols, words, or other methods. How do you approach performing (or teaching) the tuning within both scores? I am particularly fascinated by the metaphor of sailing you gave in an earlier answer. Perhaps it might be fruitful to draw this into your analogy?

MB: Both of these examples represent major thirds:



In the first example (a.) the intonation is understood implicitly by the player; a reading will depend on context and in many cases rely on an understanding of harmonic function. In the second example (b.) the intonation is more explicitly prescribed for the player, and a reading will rely on a familiarity with the harmonic series. (Interestingly, it is completely possible that the two above examples of notation could result in identical realisations: the first third [C-E], performed on a violin in the key of A major, may very well contain the same pitch content as the second third [C-E], played below the violin E-string in 5-limit Just Intonation.)

A player's sounding of each of these examples must not be conflated with the notation itself. Another discussion could explore the various functions notation might serve, but in the context of the practice of string intonation, it is fair to say that notation functions as a set of cues that prompt the player to audiate certain sounds or sounding proportions, and to sonify these according to preference, experience, context and choice.

So with respect to the above two examples, the process by which I (and I think most string players) would perform each of these forms of notation would be one and the same: I would observe the notation within the surrounding context, make decisions based on my

observations, audiate my intended sounding result, and carry out a practiced set of physical and technical movements which would bring me as close as possible to that intention. I would then listen to what had sounded, respond to it, and add that impression to the overall context going forward.

This is the practice of intonation, no matter what the initial prompt. Like sailing, this process is neither entirely one of planning, nor of spontaneous reaction. It is an exercise in maintaining the tension between the two—exploring contingency while remaining mindful of one's position within the whole.

Fittingly, this discussion brings us back to Bob Gilmore's Microfest lecture, and another question he posed that day: 'is the designation "microtonality" still useful today?' I think through this conversation we have offered a response to that question. And I propose that we continue these conversations, present and future, in appreciation of the generosity and curiosity with which Bob sailed the seas of musical pitch. ▧

michael finnissy + cassandra miller: transcription, photography, portraiture

Transcription[1]

MF: A transcription is something that you're writing *through*; and as you're writing through, you're thinking along the way as you go. Whereas an arrangement (to me) would presuppose that you haven't done very much to the shape to alter it. Of course, they reflect the context—the actual topic of the piece—because a country tune is less posh than a *mélodie* would be. And a Gershwin arrangement . . . Arrangement is the term that most arrangers use when they're doing stuff for singers who are going to sing a Gershwin song in a show or cabaret. [Whereas] transcription is a more high-falutin term, that you might use about operatic work; traditionally it is 'transcription' and 'paraphrase' which are the usages of Liszt, Busoni and various others who made operatic transcriptions for the piano.

I was already dealing and wrestling with these issues, and my teacher Bernard Stevens, who was an extraordinarily sensitive, erudite man, suggested that I read the essay by Busoni about transcription. He suggested this because Busoni's view of transcription is a very global, very holistic one. Busoni basically says all musical activities are in some form transcription. [. . .]

There were two decisions I made: the first one was that I wasn't going to transcribe things literally, so that the aim wasn't to produce a 'piano arrangement', a straightforward transcription, inasmuch as such a thing is possible (you do sometimes find those 'easy arrangements', of say the Czardas from *Die Fledermaus* or something). I wasn't going to do that; and [secondly] I wasn't going to just do a kind of 'decoration' of the original. I set my mind to actually composing *with* the material, pretty much as if it were my own, because

1 A video version of this interview is online here, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZMCOw4hAZA. It was edited by Cassandra Miller.

Michael Finnissy at home

by the time I'd made the choice of what to do, it becomes like the subject of a (well, here we go with our analogies, we're treading on thin ice here) portrait. Let's say I decide to make a portrait of you—as a photographer or as a painter—then, of course, you are the *subject*, and I'm not simply reproducing you if I take a photograph of you: I choose lighting, I choose an angle to photograph you from, because my view of you is not your view. Famous quote from Picasso about Gertrude Stein: he painted Gertrude Stein, she said 'it doesn't look anything like me.' He said: 'It will.' You can read any number of quotations from Hockney about this aspect of portraiture, and how the amount of work that you have to do, as a portraitist—the hours of sitting, the hours of looking at somebody's face—is very different from photography, not that it's any less or any more, but it's just different.

So I was thinking: *what am I doing*, if I'm transcribing? In our discussion earlier, before the camera and microphone were switched on, I said that actually I think all music is [potentially] there, all musical ideas are 'ready gain' for transcription. In a sense, is it even possible to take anything—any collection of sounds—and for it not to be a transcription? Because all those pitches are 'just there'. All those dynamics are 'just there'. And you can pretend that you're ab-

stracting them out of thin air, but of course you're not, and as soon as you start joining pitches together they resemble something else.

I decided I was not going to play this game of 'originality' either; it's not the issue. Of course I'd read books about how the *process* is what you're doing, not the material—so I just focussed on that and got on with it. In fact I don't think I ever really had a problem because, to me, with a much more mature visual arts training, the visual arts had already dealt with [the issue of originality], with figures like Marcel Duchamp. If collage and montage in cinema, and *objets trouvés* were part of the visual arts vocabulary, it didn't seem at all controversial to use them in music, it seemed entirely natural. I frequently—if I'm asked to do this—I frequently refer to my models from that world: Rauschenberg, David Hockney, Warhol, Stan Brakhage are as important (in some ways maybe even more important) than the whole chain of musical influences one goes through (Satie, Debussy, Bartók, Xenakis, Schoenberg).

And also, can you not filter? Of course you can't not filter, because this [filtration] is working all the time, and you're not only consciously making choices, but you're unconsciously making choices. So, it depends on whether you had a happy childhood or not, what your knowledge is, what your experiences are. All of these are filters. Of course, who you are, where you are, what you do, who you're friends with, who you fuck and who you eat dinner with, makes an incredible amount of difference to what kind of work you do, what kind of music you write. Would we really think it couldn't be like that? So it's all filtering.

[. . .]

Photography

I wanted to think about whether I was a photographer or not, because I was brought up with photography, my father was a photographer. And he was a qualified surveyor, but his job, when I remember what he was doing when I was maybe 3 or 4 years old, I used to go around with him, and was he was doing at that stage was documenting the rebuilding of London, photographically. He was preparing an archive of the rebuilding of London after the war. It was quite interesting work, though I don't suppose I recognised

that then; I do now. I wondered—I started writing the piece [*The History of Photography in Sound*] 2004–5 maybe[2], so it's not an early piece—so I was wondering, have I been a photographer all these years? Am I just continuing his work? Because I do sometimes casually refer to what I do as a kind of documentation, and I do put myself into my work to an extent that some composers don't. And I acknowledge my sources to an extent that most composers don't. (I actually do that in the score, I list the pieces: as we go along there are little arrows saying this is a quote from 'blah'.) I'm not a photographer [but] I read a lot about photography. We were talking earlier about Roland Barthes and *Camera Lucida*, there's Susan's Sontag's book on photography, and there are quite a few other tomes, about the meaning of photographs, the background, the 'reading' of a photo. Which I find very fascinating if slightly offensive because photos are a visual medium, and visualising something is not an narrative, it's not a literary process. The way in which a photograph evolves—and sometimes the information [the photograph] is designed to impart—are not the same as a writing a story, or describing a thing. You're sometimes *revealing* a thing in the same way Paul Klee writes about revealing an object by painting it, or by drawing it. You're actually extracting something which is not . . . I'm not literary either, so it's not something I find in literature.

But one has to be careful in music, because what are you doing? Are you simply supplementing, are you adding sounds to the world that haven't been there before? (There's the question of taking responsibility for doing that, needless to say.) What are you seeking to do? Are you bringing sounds out of nothing? Are we simply making a kind of refuse dump of sound, or creating some pompous edifice? People refer to works as 'monumental': I really hate that word. It's like those dreadful buildings in Paris, where everything is pseudo-Romanesque memorial to something. I don't design monuments. I have adventures, I go on journeys. If I have to talk about pieces, the process is one of discovery. I set myself a task thinking 'well I might have a good time if I do this.' If I find I'm not by day 3 then I scrap it all and start something else, because I'd be a fool not to. It's both uncovering and disclosing and investigating; it's performing

---

1 [Ed. The actual dates of composition of *The History of Photography of Sound* are 1995-2001—MF may just have got the wrong decade.]

David Hockney,
Hawthorn Blossom, Woldgate (2009)

an autopsy; it's instinctive, it's very technical, it sometimes gets very abstract. [. . .]

The thing about the Hockney print up there [on the wall] is the extent to which you're not seeing what is depicted, because if you say 'it's a road with trees alongside it, end of story', that is about 0.001 of the content of that painting. It's actually [a picture] about painting. If I tell you that something is called *Alkan-Paganini*, it's about 0.0001 per cent about Alkan and Paganini. Even though the amount to which I'm quoting Alkan and Paganini in the same way that Hockney is 'quoting' a tree—that's certainly there. But any sense that it was actually 'by' Paganini or Alkan [is] long gone. That's not the point; that's not what I'm doing. I'm not transcribing in order to reveal what's there already. Which is the odd thing about—why would you write down a tune that's in your head? This is the commonplace question: 'Do you write music that's in your head, or do you write it down first?' Well if it was in my head first there wouldn't be any point it writing it down, it would be so *boring*. [. . .]

Walter Benjamin

CM: Walter Benjamin, Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes—today I'm particularly interested in the engagement with Barthes, and I'm curious: has he influenced your thinking? And if so how?

MF: Not as much as Walter Benjamin. The reason I didn't mention Benjamin when I said the piece [*The History of Photography in Sound*] was dealing with references to Barthes and Sontag is that Benjamin is so much more than a philosopher of photography. Benjamin's project, and the whole way that he looks at the world, is fundamental to the way I think about producing stuff.

CM: Can you tell me more about that?

MF: Not in any detail I can't really, but I read an awful lot of Walter Benjamin's writing (certainly not all of it but a great deal of it). The interface between reality and meditation, between recollecting and tranquility (as Coleridge and company in the nineteenth century put it), and what it is that the artwork actually *is*, when you've made it. It's all there in Benjamin. If I could quote reams I could, but I won't; I'll just say go away and read it because it's essential. And it's the modern world—it's like reading Wittgenstein. It's not the nineteenth century any more.

In a funny kind of way I think Barthes is more nineteenth-century. It's very nostalgic, it's very much about memory—which is an important facet of what I do too, how we remember stuff and so on. But the narratives that hang off memory are different for Barthes than they would be for me. I'm not investing that kind of sentimental attitude. And not in a bad way, but it uses *sentiment* as the key element. I don't want to do it because that doesn't bring in as much technique, and I'm interested in the technique too. I'm interested in what my pen can do, what my eye can do, what my ear can do, what I can hear, what I can analyse. None of that has anything to do with sentiment. That's all very objective. (Or at least it seems so to me.)

So it's interesting—I haven't [previously] declared much interest in Benjamin because it's almost too important.

[. . .]

Composing

MF: It is a transcendence of time and place when you're composing.
CM: What do you mean by that?
MF: It means that you're not aware of where you are, who you are, what you're doing. The best composing happens when you lose awareness. Of course you're in a kind of control, but it's Feldman that says (or was it Rauschenberg? Feldman quotes Rauschenberg quite a bit; I think it's Rauschenberg) 'let the brush do the work'. There's something about holding the brush, and what you see is what you're doing, but you're actually escaping from that at the same time. You're not 'manipulating' it; you're allowing the itness to manipulate what happens next, it's a transcendence of self. Out of body experience.

And probably I could have either been a photographer and been quite happy doing that, [or] I could have been an anthropologist and been quite happy doing that too. Maybe one day I shall write a piece called *The History of Anthropology in Sound*.

CM: [*laughs*]
MF: But I'm doing that all the time.

[. . .]

MF: I enjoy changing stuff. Why do I enjoy doing that? Because it makes it feel more alive. I just set some words that have been very important to me: they're from a short novella (I think that's what you would call it; it's unfinished) by Georg Buchner, who wrote the play [*Woyzeck*] that Berg based Wozzeck on. And in it, Buchner pretends to be [Jakob] Lenz, who's another quite agitational—I don't know how to describe it—'alternative' German writer from the early nineteenth century. He makes Lenz say 'All I demand of art is that it has life.' Isn't that fantastic? And that's all I demand too. When I find that my pieces, to me, don't have life, I either burn them, or I change them until they do. And what is life? Unpredictability, spontaneity, love, hate, everything. Nothing excluded. Because otherwise you haven't told the truth.
CM: Haven't told the truth—what do you mean by that? Haven't told the truth of what it means to be alive. . . ?
MF: Yes, you haven't told the truth of what it means to be alive now.

You haven't said the audience 'this is what life is, this is what life can be.' Not sitting in rows in some fucking concert hall, listening to some guy play the piano for five-and-a-half hours, that's not *life*. It's part of life, but not the whole of life. Don't get confused about what it is. This piece is about life in all its diversity. It's a sort of exemplar that you take away with you and think about afterwards, and you say 'Oh I see, okay, my life's a bit like that too.' I'd be really happy with that kind of response. Doesn't need anything more intelligent. Actually I think that response is very intelligent.

CM: When we were walking here you told me, when I asked how you were doing, you said that you liked what you were working on, and that it was sort of new in the way that you related to found material. And I said 'Stop! We'll talk about that on tape.' So what did you mean by that?

MF: I found some different things to do. Different ways in which I can make it clear to the audience what the relationship is between the found object (which is alluded to or quoted, with alterations) and how one moves away from that to something else, and comes back to it. It's really the degree of focus, or where things are; can I describe this cinematically without confusing the issue? Probably not. But it's like if you work in close-up or in medium shot or long shot. It's quite interesting: there's a wonderful film by Carl Theodor Dreyer called *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, and it's nearly all in close-up. You hardly notice it until you think about it and then you think 'Oh my god, it's all in close-up.' Which is really weird because we're used to seeing things change in perspective. So it's that kind of thing, it's a very small thing. It's like Hitchcock's *Rope*, which is all done in very long takes; but do you notice? Unless you're looking for it, no, you don't. That's not the point—except that he [Hitchcock] is having a hell of a time, showing you can do it. And working out how you can do it. Because of course if you want any kind of camera movement, you've got to arrange the choreography in a particular way, and it creates a nightmare technically.

Relating to Schubert in the way that I'm doing it in this piece has created a nightmare of things I've got to be really ingenious about. And I'm having fun doing that of course, because is it Stravinsky who says: 'The more limitations you set yourself, the better it is.' In a way these things are limitations, and you've got to get past them

to do a good job. I don't want anybody to see what I'm doing and say 'Oh my god, he's done that, oh how fantastic!' because that would be to destroy the whole point. I don't want it to be *clever*. It's just that I'm having fun. It amuses me anyway.

Museums

CM: Would you say that your relationship to transcription—how to transcribe or what to transcribe, or any of these issues around identity or portraiture that we've been talking about—has this changed throughout your life? Was it much different when you were younger? Is it much different now than it was ten years ago?

MF: When I was younger, I think I believed that the culture would change. I believed that people would listen less to classical music. I didn't know anything about the *industry*, so I was probably very naïve to [think] that.

But the story. . . What happened was: I was very scared when I went to the Royal College [of Music] because I'd never had any proper composition training before. By midday most days I had a headache. I couldn't see the wood for the trees, so I had to get out of there. The Victoria & Albert museum is very close to the Royal College, so I used to seek sanctuary in the V&A. It's a museum, and it rejoices in the fact that it's a museum. It doesn't try and hide the fact (although it does more now, it didn't then). It was the archetypal Victorian museum; it was dusty, it was full of weird objects and odd juxtapositions. And I thought, this is kinda cool. Why would anybody get this place together? Then, I heard people describing the culture that we lived in (this was the mid 1960s) as a 'museum' culture. And I thought, 'So? What's the problem with that? I like museums. I like being in the Victoria & Albert museum.' I thought 'I'm going to turn this around, I'm going to make a museum.' Some aspect of my work is going to be the creation of a 'Victoria & Albert museum' all of my own.

CM: Do you mean this in a way that relates to your relationship to all these references that you use?

MF: Yeah, because I've been fairly systematic in working through the history of Western European music, and also the way in which 'exotic' musics from the orient and the near east, and remoter corners

of places like Transylvania, Azerbaijan, have impacted on (generally speaking) central European, not to say Austro-German tradition. In my work you can find pieces which reference Hildegard of Bingen (actually fairly extensively, I keep returning to that, because it's so fine, and it's monodic, and it has spiritual radiance that thrills me). And it goes all the way from Hildegard up to parodies of the present day. All of these things are in my museum, in their places with the labels on. Sometimes they're little jokes, that can be only appreciated if you know these composers really. [. . .]

CM: I like how you talk about the 'Western' tradition or 'central European' tradition, and how these 'exotic' musics have informed it, and you say that's your 'topic'. This brings up the question of: are you the 'outsider' to these musics—?

MF: Always.

CM: Always outside? Even with Brahms?

MF: Yeah, sure. I can go to Hamburg, but Brahms isn't there. Brahms' way of writing music is wonderful, but it's not possible any more, it's not tenable any more, as a choice. One can stand back from it and see it. I mean, I don't want to get too much into this because I don't really think that's the reason I do it [i.e. transcription]. Mostly it's curiosity. I'm curious about these things, and I like them and possibly feel guilty about them. Like Saint-Saëns' music for example, which I adore. But I feel guilty about liking it so much. It seems strange to me that French composers have always done more about 'exotic' music than most other nations have. Africa and Spain and so on, a lot of French composers have written music about those places.

It interests me too that when English folk music was finally being properly collected and documented, it was by clergymen, and the 'moneyed classes', and they usually collected at competitions, at which folk singers used to sing their best numbers. Now no folk singer will ever give you his best number, actually. But they got some pretty sensational material nonetheless. But were they the best people to be collecting it? I don't think they really were, because their class was completely different, and of course they were patronising these poor people, these people who were their servants, and often vastly senior in age. When Grainger (and Grainger was the best of

them probably) was collecting folk music with wax cylinder recordings, he was collecting from folk singers that were probably fifty years' his senior, and they could have been his servants. I wonder what sort of social attitude that was (I've never experienced it), and what effect it had on something like the desperation to do the job in a particular kind of way. But it's all that we have; and that's the purpose of having a museum isn't it. It's putting those objects there so we can interrogate them. It's a very confrontational museum, mine.

CM: There's this nice quote from Sontag about this relationship perhaps. 'To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself in a certain relation to the world, that feels like knowledge. And therefore like power.'

MF: That's it in a nutshell. It gives me a spurious kind of power. And it gives me a spurious kind of satisfaction, which I try and move on from constantly, which is why I'm setting myself challenges all the time, because I'm never satisfied with what I do. But I want it to be as good as it can be, and I want people to know these things intimately, and to interrogate them. It's not going to happen in my lifetime probably, sadly. Because youngsters who are now coming to my music are very respectful, and of course I like that. But it'll be interesting to see what they really can find there. That's the only real thing I hope to leave behind me, is something that's worth looking at and investigating—as I have looked at those topics and interrogated them. I think that is our responsibility, to interrogate and puzzle over the world that we have, because we can. [. . .]

Melancholy, everydayness

CM: When Barthes talks about photographs, one of the things that pricks him is this 'time' business, that there is something that was present that can no longer be touched. He finds this painful.

MF: And poignant.

CM: Yeah. It seems to me that there are composers where this is their relationship to music of history, that they're mourning that it's gone. But I don't sense that in what you're saying, and I don't sense that in your music.

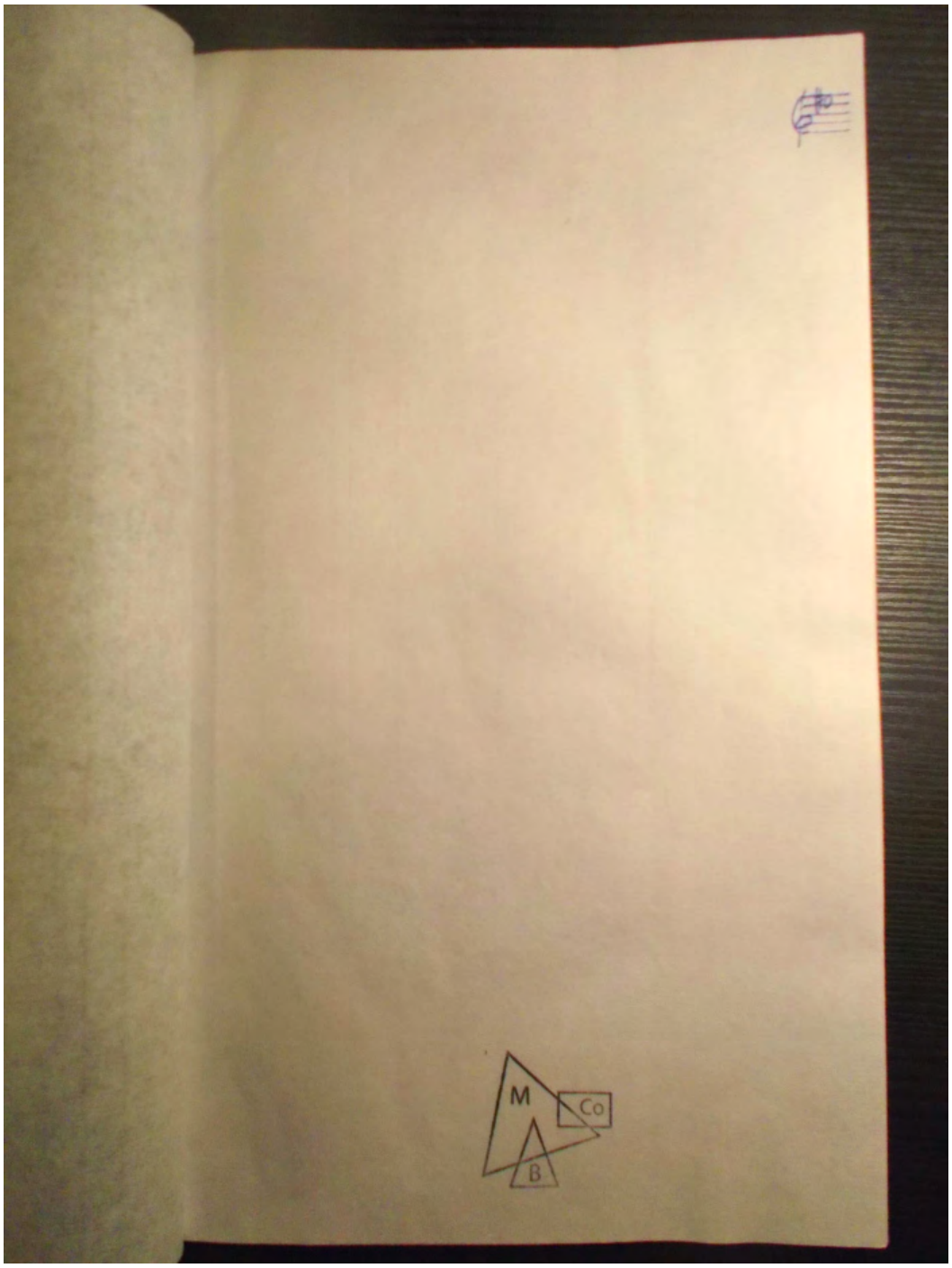
MF: Hm.

CM: What is your relationship with this 'time' distance?

MF: I don't think I'm melancholy about time—I am melancholy. I think anybody that's aware of mortality is going to be melancholy, because you're painfully aware; and the nearer I get to that moment . . . You're aware that you're not going to be here for ever, and these things are not going to last maybe more than a few years. It's impossible not to be slightly melancholic. But I'm not morbid about it. I think we should celebrate that, and we should look it in the face and stare it down, and say this is the way it is and has always been. Basically I want to go in mid-sentence.

The one thing I grew to dislike very much about Brahms are the long farewell codas. *That* kind of melancholy I don't like very much, although I'm quite happy to parody it every now and again. I like to cut off at the end and say 'where did that go?' [. . .]

This is what I do, this is who I am; and as Hockney said once, in an interview about painting, 'this is what I was put here to do'. It's no big deal, one just gets on with it. He paints every day—he's eighty, plus—and he goes out there with his easel, it's just everyday, it's like cleaning one's teeth. I think that's how it should be—I don't have to go into some super meditative state to compose, I mean look at the mess! I've tidied it up a bit, but before I went to meet you at the station [the table] was just covered in paper. It's a chaos. I know where it all is—but breakfast gets mixed up in it, the dog treats now, pots of tea. It's just that ordinary. It's no big deal. ▧



from Mark So, *Samuel Vriezen* (2016)

joseph kudirka + mark so: the name pieces

JOSEPH KUDIRKA:

When thinking about what to write for this journal, I'd been working on an article about dedications that composers put in scores and how those dedications relate to, foster, and help create community and culture. The composer I know who's dedicated more works to other people than anyone else I know is Mark So. So, whereas that paper focused on the larger community, I thought to reverse the focus here and look in detail at the works of Mark So that are dedicated to others, and more specifically at his 'name' pieces—pieces Mark has written over the last ten or so years titled after peoples names.

These pieces interest me not only in this community/cultural aspect, but also—and perhaps more so—in how they create a real body of work unlike what the vast majority of composers are doing now. While we often see now that composers work very much on their technique, and quite a bit on what might be termed 'style,' it is far more rare to see a composer who can truly be said to have a *practice*; to have a true method of working that's observable across a large body of work.

Mark So has done a few of these works in series, such as his writing through the poetry of John Ashbery: making a score which corresponds to each poem. While I like those works and they certainly foster a very unique personal relationship between So and Ashbery, it is these 'name' pieces of his that I'm especially drawn to, perhaps because of my interest in scoring and notation.

These pieces are systematic. In many ways, they are completely impersonal; there is a system of transcription of the person's name that's going to be followed. In this post-serialist, post-minimalist world, it's interesting to have a composer in the 21st century following such a rigid system across so many pieces for so long. However, like with serialist work, it's not the system itself that's of interest, but how the composer deals with it differently in specific instances.

Of special interest to me with these works is So's notation. In some ways, it's very traditional, but in others it's completely radical. It's radical not so much in its newness or any particular in-

novation, but in the way that it simply comes to insist upon itself. The notation in these works has the beautiful duality of being both incredibly deliberate as well as seeming to be completely natural. I get the feeling in looking at these works that I could be looking at a practice that's existed for hundreds of years, and in a way I am—these works are as indebted to the history of western notated music as Chopin preludes or Beethoven sonatas, but are also—and unapologetically so—incredibly unique and personal.

I just wanted to write a nice a little article about these works and perhaps ask the composer a few questions, but this is Mark So we're dealing with; one of the most prolific, intense composers working today. He's also one of my best friends (though I don't think I've seen him for nearly a decade). His music, like he as a person, is incredibly rich and rewarding if you give it the patience it deserves. There's a lot to be had from any piece right off the bat, but if you give it more time, let it ruminate, and take it together along with other pieces as a complete body of work, each individual piece starts to make all the more sense.

In starting to ask Mark about these pieces, he gave forth more information than I was frankly prepared for, letting me in on all of the details of the development of these works over the past ten years. What follows are largely his words guiding me through these pieces, with brief commentaries of my own on individual scores or larger points to be made which occur to me when looking at this progression. The more I came to look at these works and learn about them, the more I felt like I was just scratching the surface of what's going on here; what I'd thought was simple and beautiful still is, but—like many things that we adore for their simplicity and beauty—is also worthy of a detailed study that could become entirely consuming. While this is edited down from the exchange Mark and I had about these works, I have kept the text largely as he sent it and in the order that he sent it, going year-by-year from 2006 to 2016. Though I could have further condensed it, perhaps trying to bring out one aspect or another in particular, I feel that this is a rare opportunity to share a real insight into a composer's working method.

Without further ado, Mark So:

MARK SO:

Before I get into these, I should clarify the nature of the scale [used to transcribe letters into pitches]—it's:

A–G

going up in naturals from A on the lowest space in bass clef up to G

H

B at the top of bass clef

I–N

going up in flats from B♭ below middle C up to G♭

O–U

going up in sharps from A♯ above middle C up to G♯

V–Z

going up in naturals again, from the second A above middle C up to E

Ed. This article is broken up into sections, as follows:

(1) proto, 2006-7

These are basically name pieces that happened before they became a series, or before I knew what they are.

for ZACKARY DRUCKER was something I very deliberately made using the letters of their name, between early and late 2006, although I don't at all remember how I mapped the letters to pitches.

VICKI! I — I THOUGHT I HEARD YOUR VOICE! for Vicki (2007)

is really the first piece I made using the semblance of the alphabet I've kept going forward, basically a very weird ascending, mainly whole-tone series (with one reversal from H to I) covering the entire alphabet. there are minor differences from the one I'd ultimately settle on, but it's basically there in evidence. It's also an octave higher in this piece. It's also on a postcard—something which comes to predominate the set much later. It's for Vicki Ray, who was my piano teacher at Calarts.

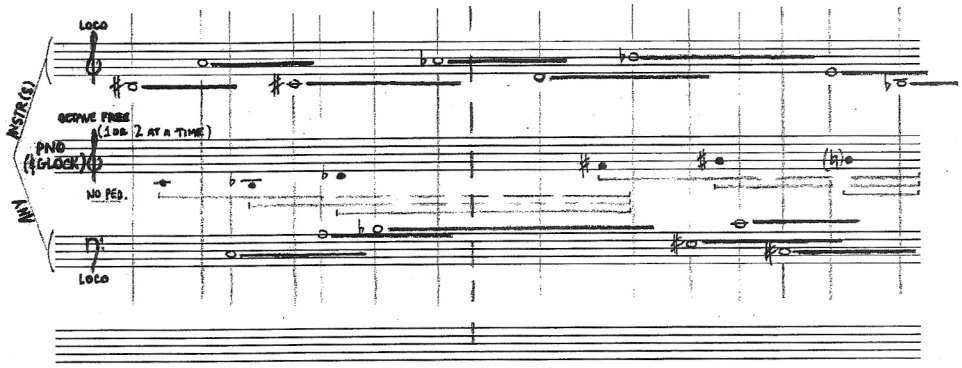
[*Ed. Clicking on each image will link to the relevant page of Mark's website, where the scores can be downloaded.*]

for ZACHARY DRUCKER — MARK SO

[QUITE SOFT]

– BEAUTIFUL –

CA. 20–150'



DURATIONS FREE BUT LONG; SPACING ROUGHLY IN THE PROPORTIONS GIVEN; ORDER OF ENTRIES/EXITS, AS WRITTEN

EACH TONE IN ANY TUNING OF THE PITCH INDICATED

→ PITCH IS POTENTIAL; MAY BE PLAYED 1-3 TIMES TOTAL IN BRACKETED PERIOD

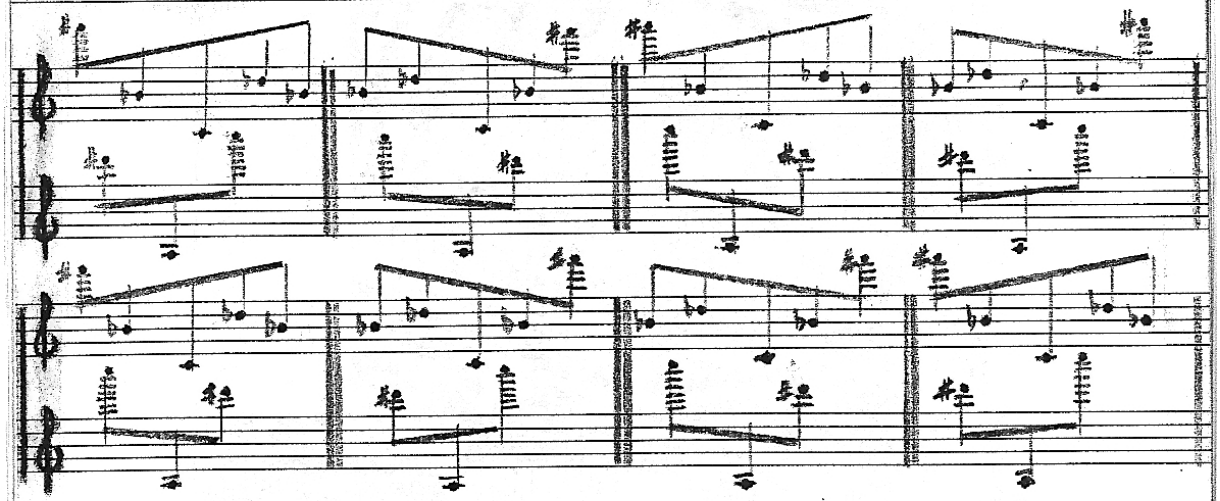
→ PITCH IS SOMEWHAT LESS POTENTIAL

→ PITCH SUSTAINING, OR REPEATED LONG TONES EACH A FULL BREATH/BOW, ACROSS THE DURATION INDICATED

15 MAY 2006; REVISED 3-6 OCTOBER 2006
VALENCIA — ~~LOS ANGELES~~

for VICKI — MARK SO

ANY INSTRUMENT(S), PLAYING SOMEWHAT TOGETHER, SHARING/DOUBLING EACH SECTION OF MATERIAL IN ANY WAY; EACH CHOOSING AN INDEPENDENT PULSE, BASICALLY REGULAR IN EACH SECTION; ~~DYNAMICS/ARTICULATION/TIMBRE ALWAYS FREE; PAUSES BETWEEN SECTIONS SPACING/ALIGNMENT OF PITCHES IN EACH SECTION IS CONTINGENT~~ (OPEN)

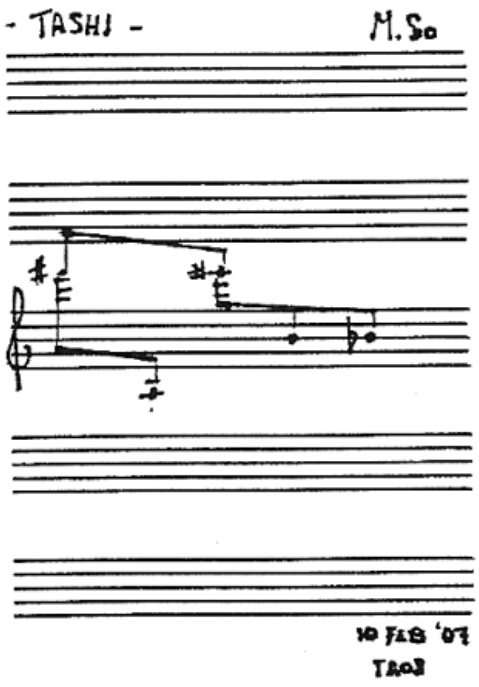


9 FEB 2007
TAOS, NM

(2) early series on mini paper, 2007

These were done in early 2007 while I was in Taos.

The first is TASHI, done a day after VICKI!, on a scrap of notation paper—again, this odd found backing; possibly still a 'proto.' The alphabet is the one going forward, but again, an octave higher. No last name (a number of these early ones are first name only).



LILACS isn't a name piece but was written just after (within 1 or 2 days) VICKI! and TASHI. It's significant because here you have a very comprehensive use of the alphabet in transcribing an entire poem ('Syringa,' by John Ashbery) into sort of a piano+ piece, and it's set in the octaves that I use going forward.

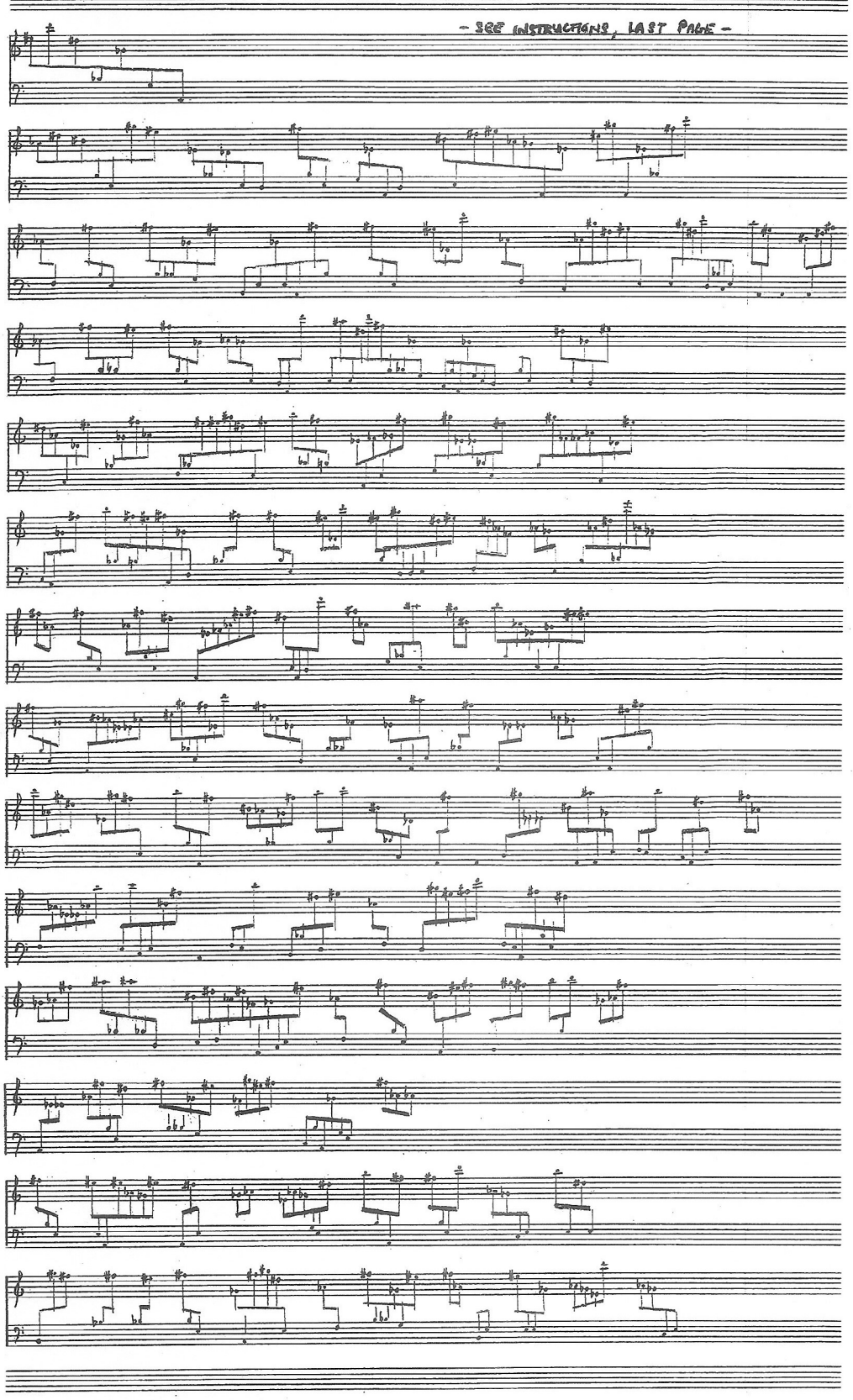
[*opposite, p. 1 of 7*]

LILACS

ONLY LONG STAYS ON THE BRAIN, AND SOMETHING THESE PEOPLE,
THESE OTHER ONES, CALL LIFE.
– JOHN ASHBERY, "SYRINGA"

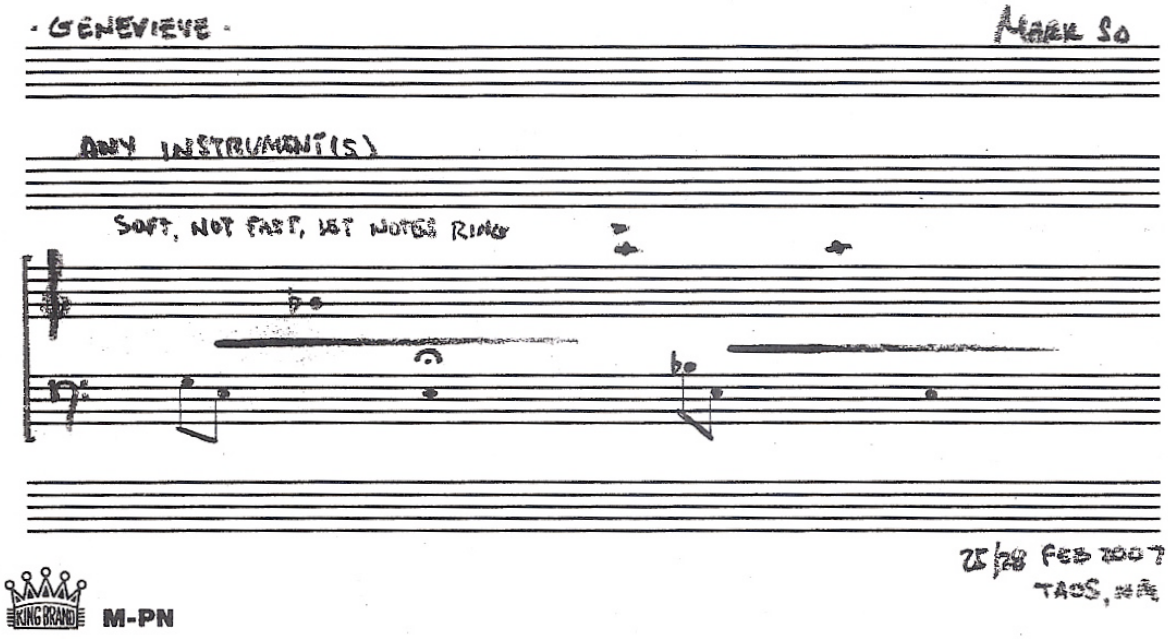
MARK SO

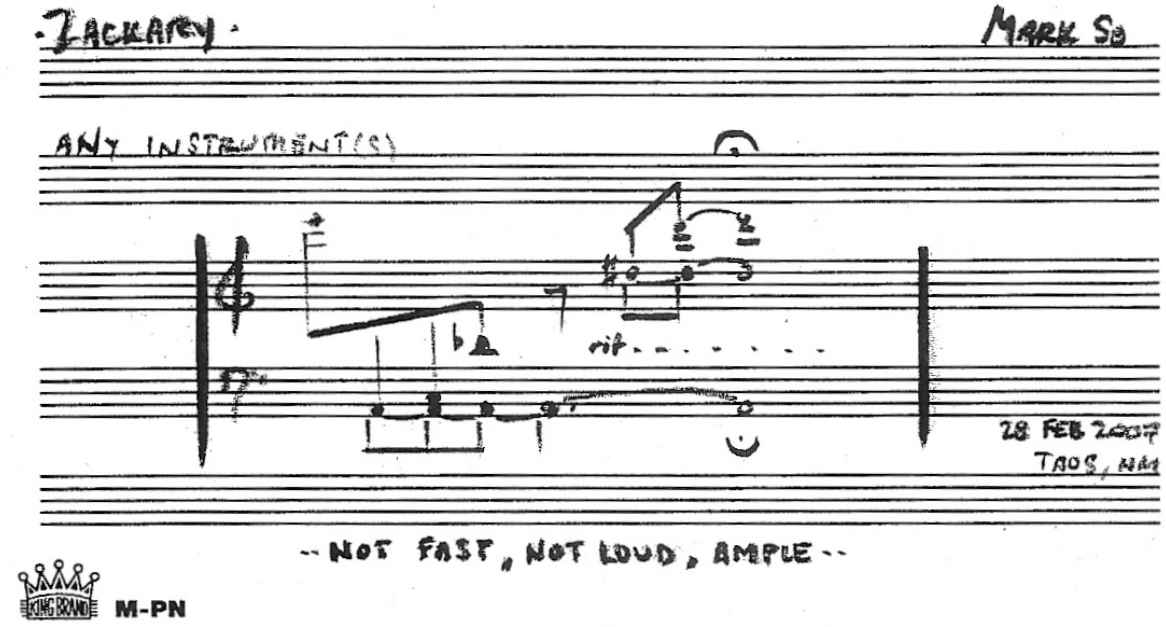
– SEE INSTRUCTIONS, LAST PAGE –

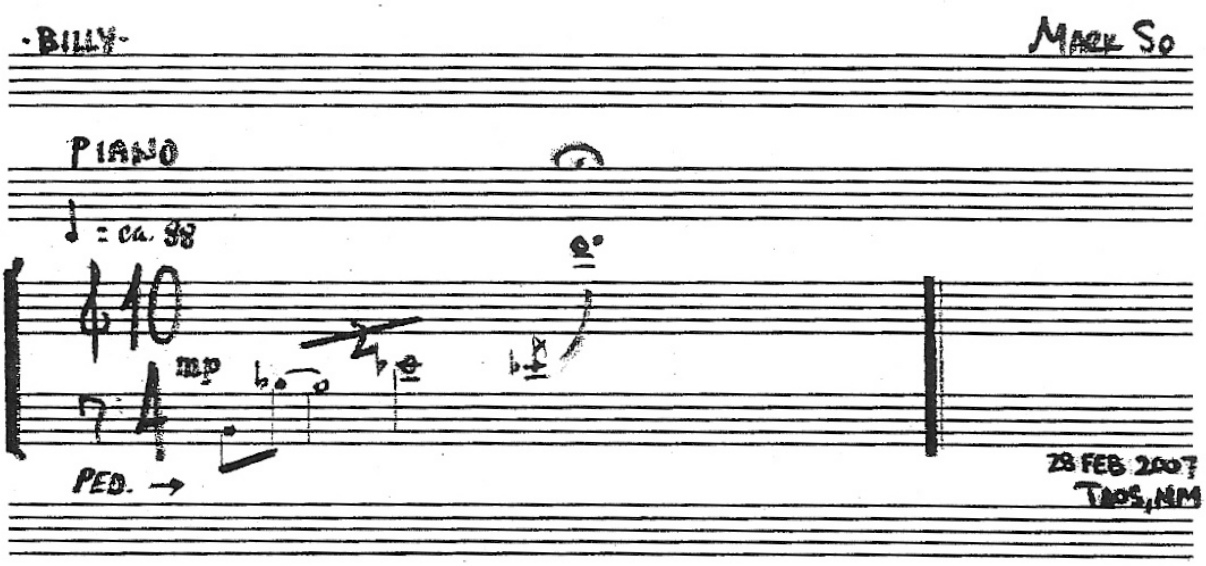


A couple weeks later, still in Taos, the names get rolling:

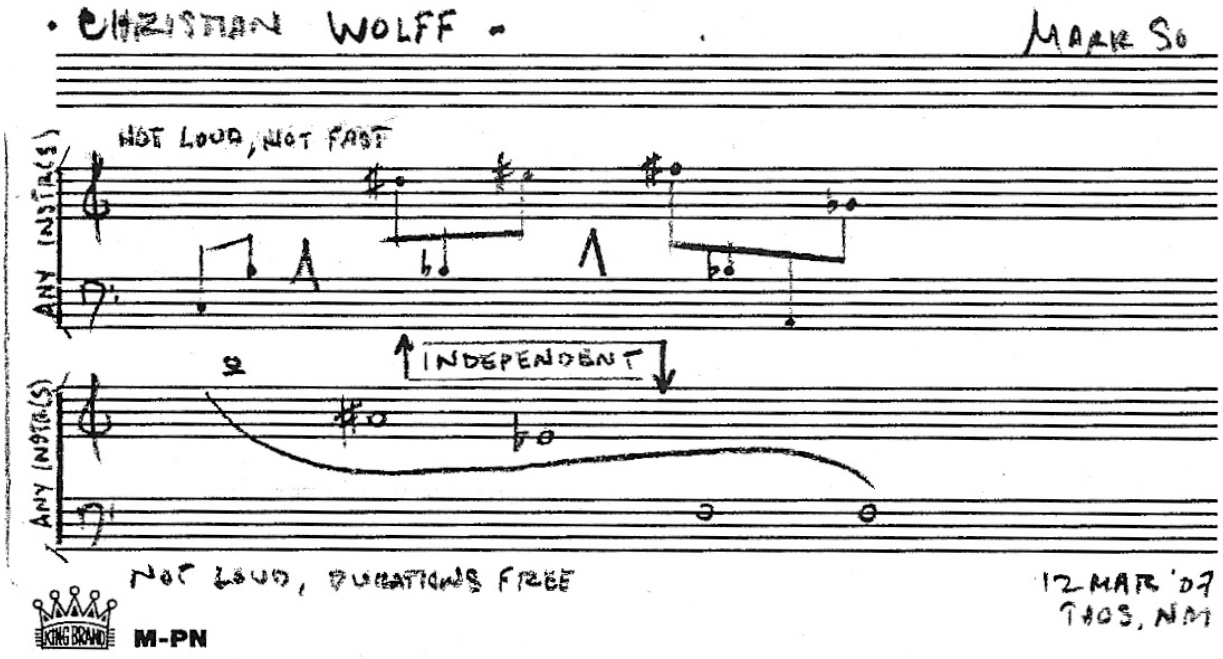
GENEVIEVE (this nice bohemian woman I met at the coffee shop who was I think lovers with an older leatherworker I met there through a friend, named Kevin Cannon, who gets a piece much later), ZACKARY (a proper go?), BILLY (Mintz, jazz drummer/composer and a great guy who was there at the residency with me)—you'll notice these are kinda 'fussier' in terms of the use of traditional notation (certainly this is true of all the earlier ones, but it's almost fetishistic here), I think because I thought they were cuter that way, as little chiseled mini Chopins, or something. . .

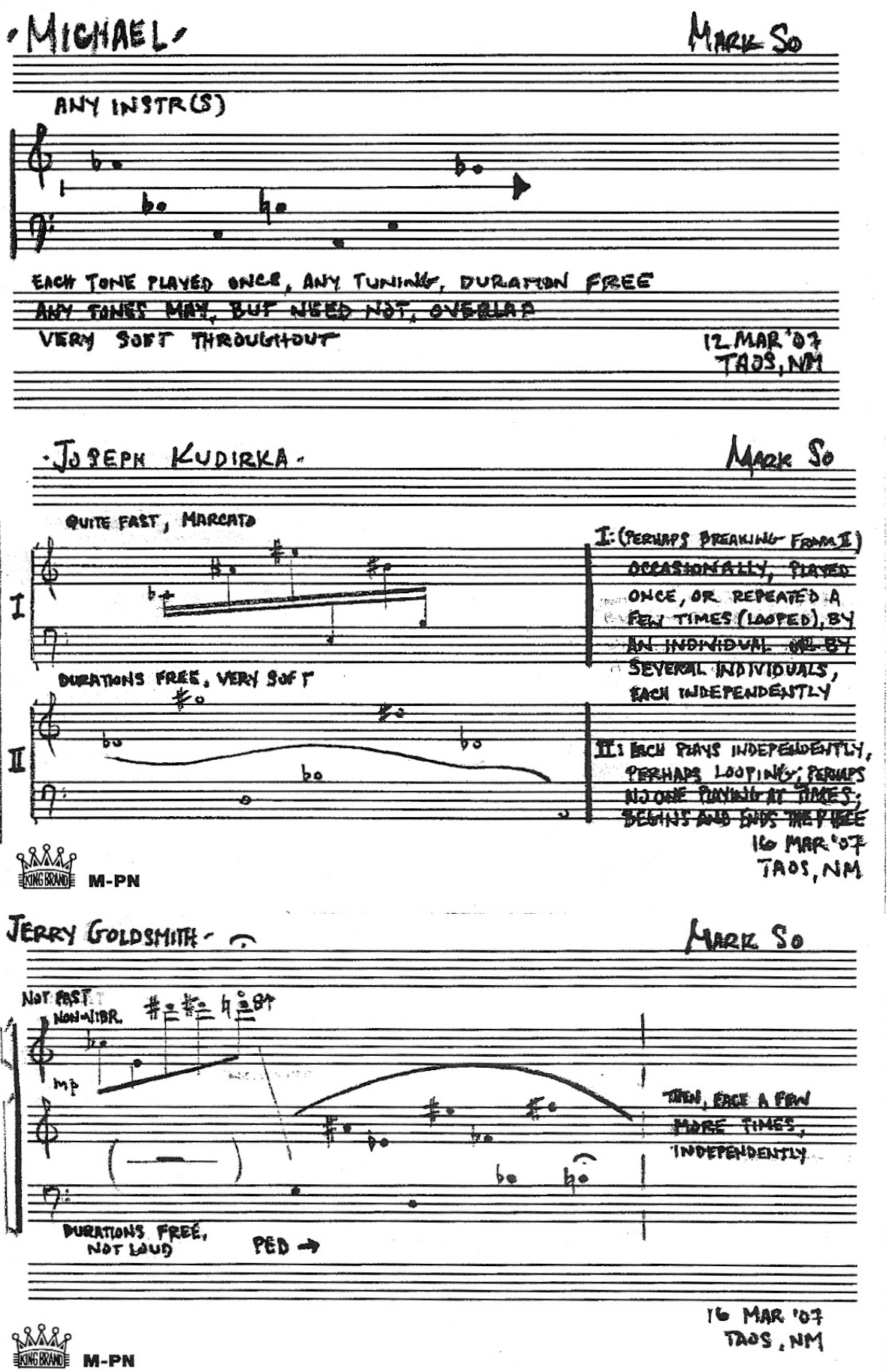






After that (like another 2 weeks, still in Taos), I think I consciously started letting the work of the named person come in and influence the notation/score, or maybe it's because now it starts being composers whose work I admire: CHRISTIAN WOLFF, MICHAEL (Pisaro, no last name), JOSEPH KUDIRKA (Michael remarked when we played it at dogstar that summer that it was as though we were in the presence of the man himself), JERRY GOLDSMITH.

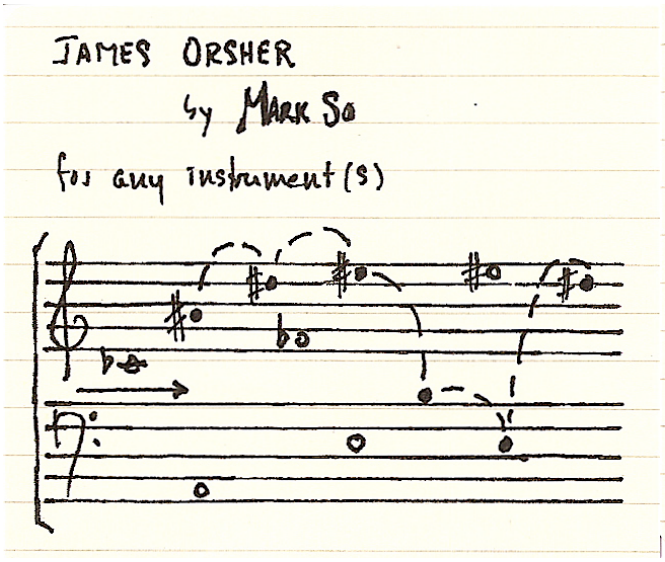


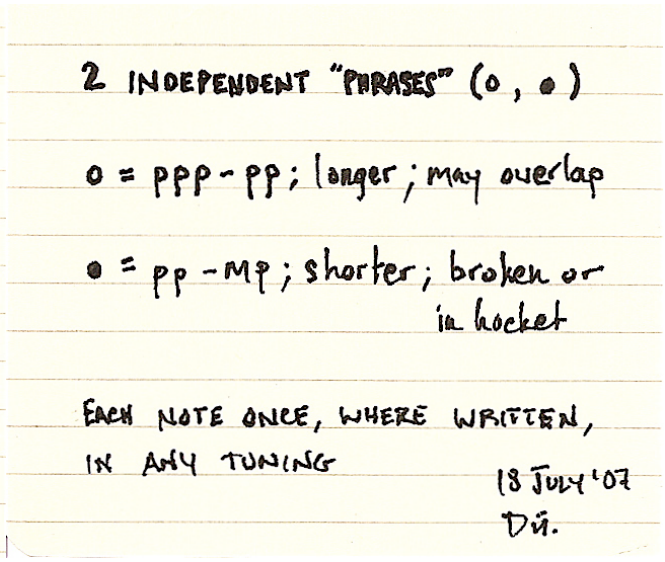

·MICHAEL·
MARK SO
ANY INSTR(S)
EACH TONE PLAYED ONCE, ANY TUNING, DURATION FREE
ANY TONES MAY, BUT NEED NOT, OVERLAP
VERY SOFT THROUGHOUT
12 MAR '07
TAOS, NM
·JOSEPH KUDIRKA·
MARK SO
QUITE FAST, MARCATO
I: (PERHAPS BREAKING FROM II)
OCCASIONALLY, PLAYED ONCE, OR REPEATED A FEW TIMES (LOOPED), BY AN INDIVIDUAL OR BY SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS, EACH INDEPENDENTLY
ANY INSTRS.
I
II
DURATIONS FREE, VERY SOFT
II: EACH PLAYS INDEPENDENTLY, PERHAPS LOOPING; PERHAPS NOT ONE PLAYING AT TIMES; BEGINS AND ENDS THE PIECE
16 MAR '07
TAOS, NM
KING BRAND
M-PN
·JERRY GOLDSMITH·
MARK SO
NOT FAST
NON-METR.
VN
PN
mp
THEN, EACH A FEW MORE TIMES, INDEPENDENTLY
DURATIONS FREE, NOT LOUD
PED
16 MAR '07
TAOS, NM
KING BRAND
M-PN

(3) divergent strategies, 2007

In July 2007 I was in Düsseldorf, and rather ad hoc, I scribbled down JOHN McALPINE on a beer coaster, which I gave to him because maybe it was his birthday (I don't have any documentation of the piece; he probably left it on the table)—I remember a forest scene of some kind, but I think the letters in his name were sort of strung from graphic points on the coaster on little staff lines I drew in here and there for context. It's a piano+ type piece, but the separation of the notes from a clear linear sequence is a precursor to the listing form that many later name pieces use.

Then I also scribbled down JAMES ORSHER in a notebook, I think to have something to play that night before a piece of his. It's a little cartoonish looking, but looking back on it now, it sets the form for one strand of lots of the name pieces going forward.





URSULA KWASNICKA (my mom, who is a harpist) is the first piece that's really a list, or lists, of notes. [*over page*]

Flying home from mom's, I got drunk on the night plane and got excited when the pilot told us we were over Lubbock (they still used to do that sort of thing), so I pulled out some paper and wrote MADISON BROOKSHIRE. Yep, it looks like an aeroplane, but it's also an effort to unconsciously/consciously bring together what were already these two divergent strands; the line and the list. The paper for this and the one for my mom is this kind of fancy pants lavender letter writing stuff Tashi gave me. [*over, opposite*]

URSULA KWASNICKA

for harp (and/or...)

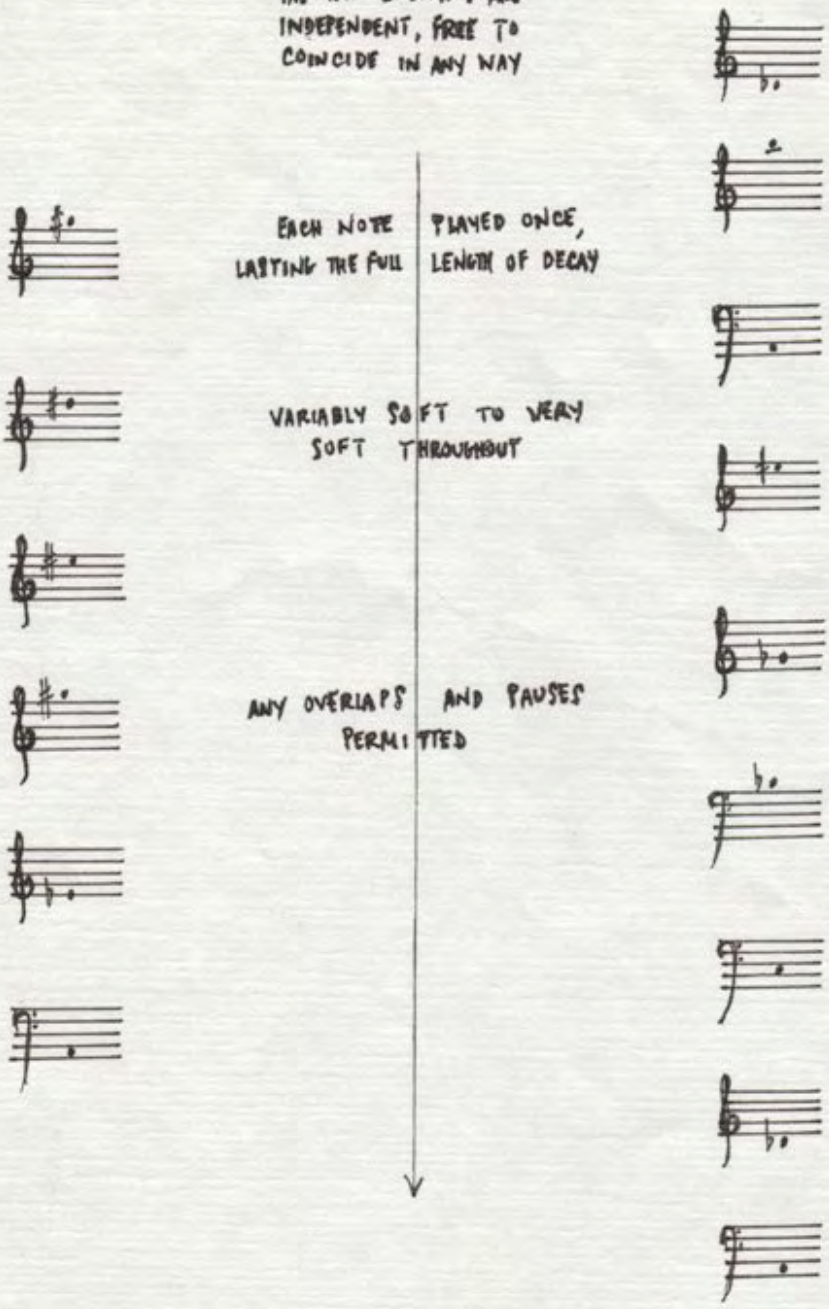
MARK So

THE TWO COLUMNS ARE INDEPENDENT, FREE TO COINCIDE IN ANY WAY

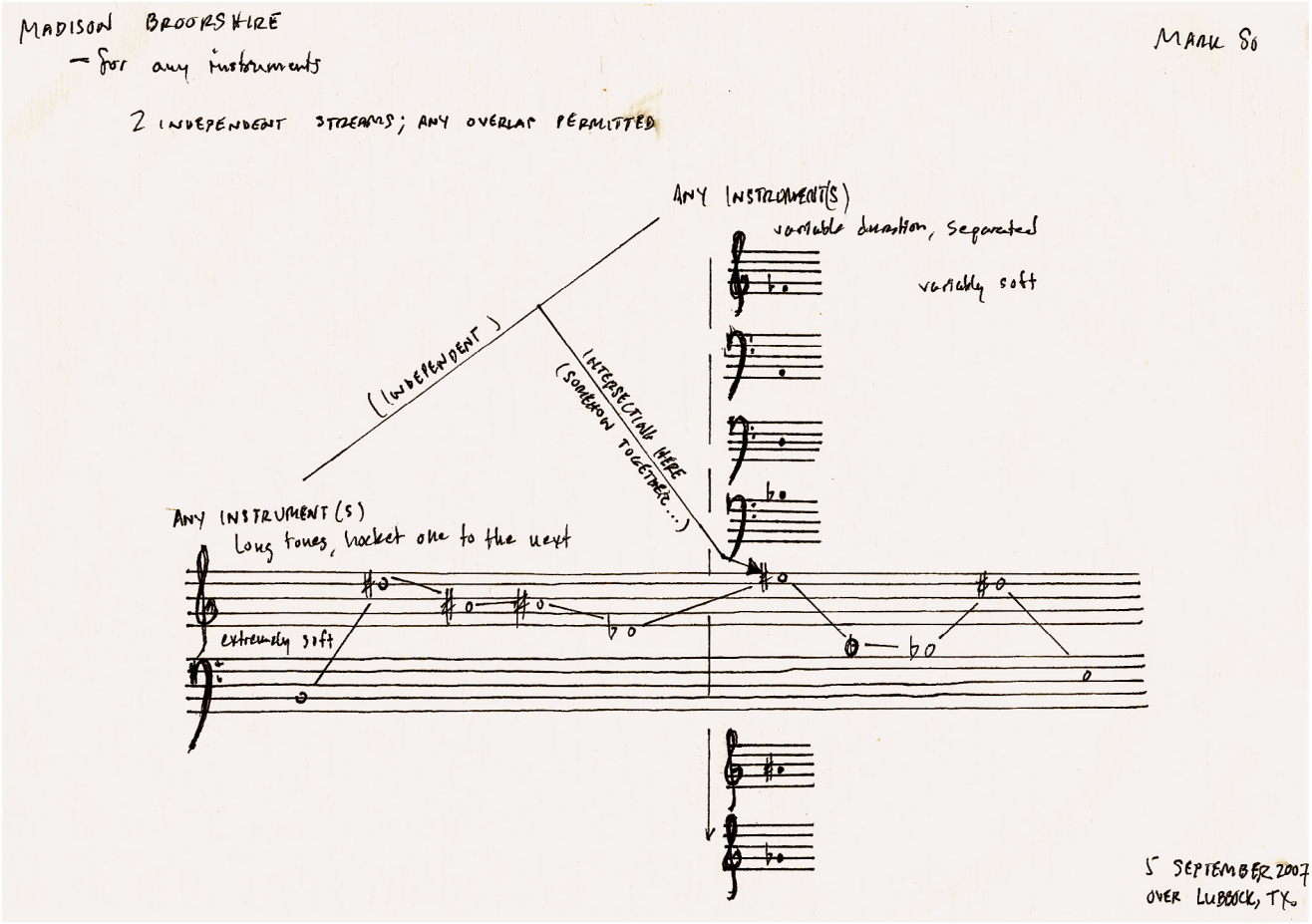
EACH NOTE PLAYED ONCE, LASTING THE FULL LENGTH OF DECAY

VARIABLY SOFT TO VERY SOFT THROUGHOUT

ANY OVERLAPS AND PAUSES PERMITTED



31 AUGUST 2017
SYRACUSE, NY



From this point I'm simply going to list the pieces for each year, descending in the order of completion, linking notable examples/variations as they come up. Obviously, this is going to take longer and longer as I go, since I have to go through them all one by one, and there are more and more each year in proportion to my overall output. One thing I should add from earlier: going back to BILLY (2007), I sometimes exercise the option for writing a piece for (a) specific instrument(s), usually reflecting the instrument played by the named musician (Billy Mintz is a drummer, but was working on a really long piano piece while I knew him). . .'

JK:

So, the pieces presented here are simply examples, often outliers from Mark's normal practice. Most of these were selected by Mark, but in a few cases I've used my discretion to edit things down to what I found to be either the most convenient or interesting.

(4) 2008

EILEEN MYLES
The last one on the tiny paper

VINELAND TURNING for Christa & Christine is actually the first of the pieces that's not explicitly a name piece, even though it is; the pitches are derived from CHRISTA and CHRISTINE; this one was rattling around for a couple years, and the working on the name pieces to that point convinced me that that was a good strategy for finishing the piece—it falls near the beginning of 2008, right after EILEEN MYLES. [*over page*]

JK:

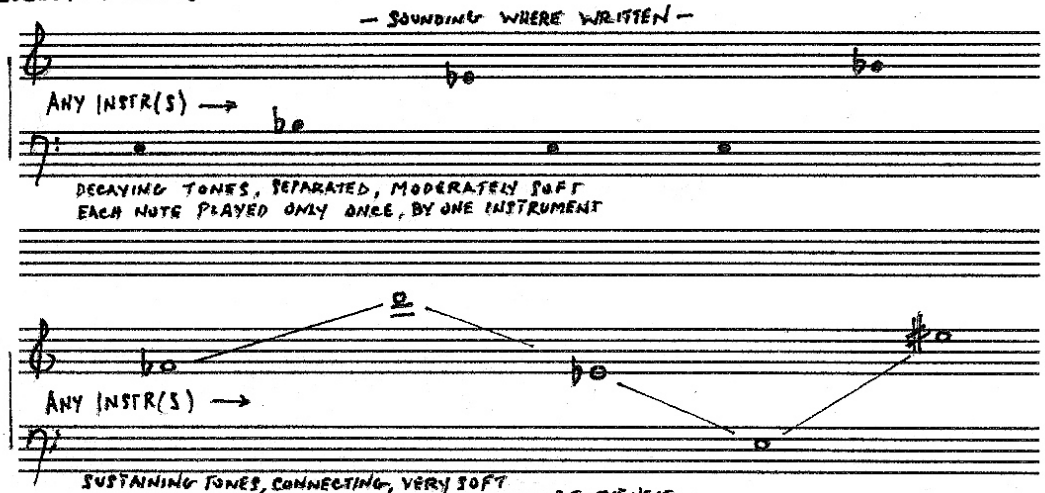
Perhaps I'm projecting from my own working methods here, without doing an actual survey, but I think this example provides an interesting insight into the working method of many composers. That is, the idea for this piece occurred to Mark before other, similar pieces, and this idea then had an influence on making those earlier works. Once those had been made, they recursively influenced the creation of this duet. I think this working method happens across the arts at large; one work doesn't simply follow another in a quasi-narrative structure, but rather the body of work as a whole must be taken into account when trying to find context for a single work, not simply those works which came before it.

DOROTHY STONE (in memoriam)
The first memorial-type piece; in the 2 list format, but with an additional indication, thus making it not just a name piece (something which some of the later pieces start to pick up on).

EILEEN MYLES

MARK SO

— SOUNDING WHERE WRITTEN —



KING BRAND M-PN

— PARTS INDEPENDENT BUT KEEPING PACE —

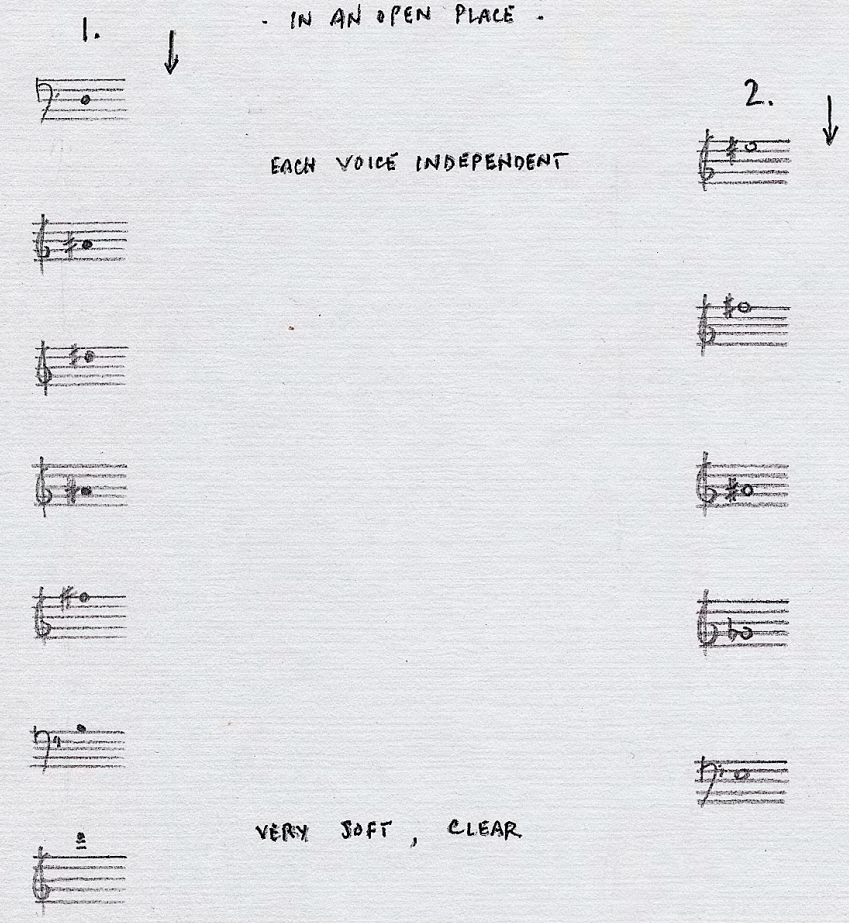
11 JAN 2008
LOS ANGELES

DOROTHY STONE

IN MEMORIAM

MARK SO

2 PITCHED INSTRUMENTS, SPACED APART



VINELAND TURNING

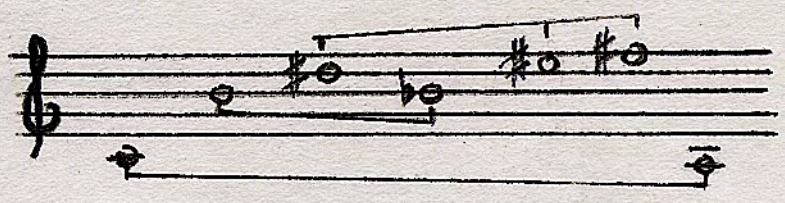
MARK So

for Christa & Christine

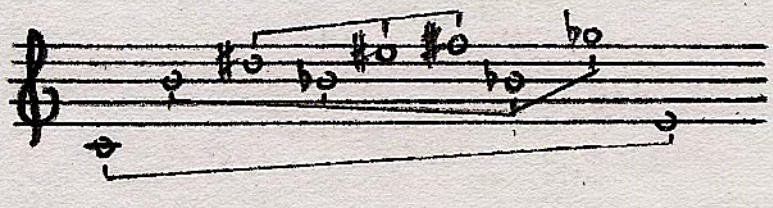
using 2 pitched instruments, wide apart in an open space

parts played independently, all notes in sequence, each note for a long time; any pauses, free duration, between notes; some notes may connect from one to the next

1.



2.



each tone may be in any tuning

each plays through her part twice, each turning around about 180° in space before the second time through (the turn taking place in between the two times through)

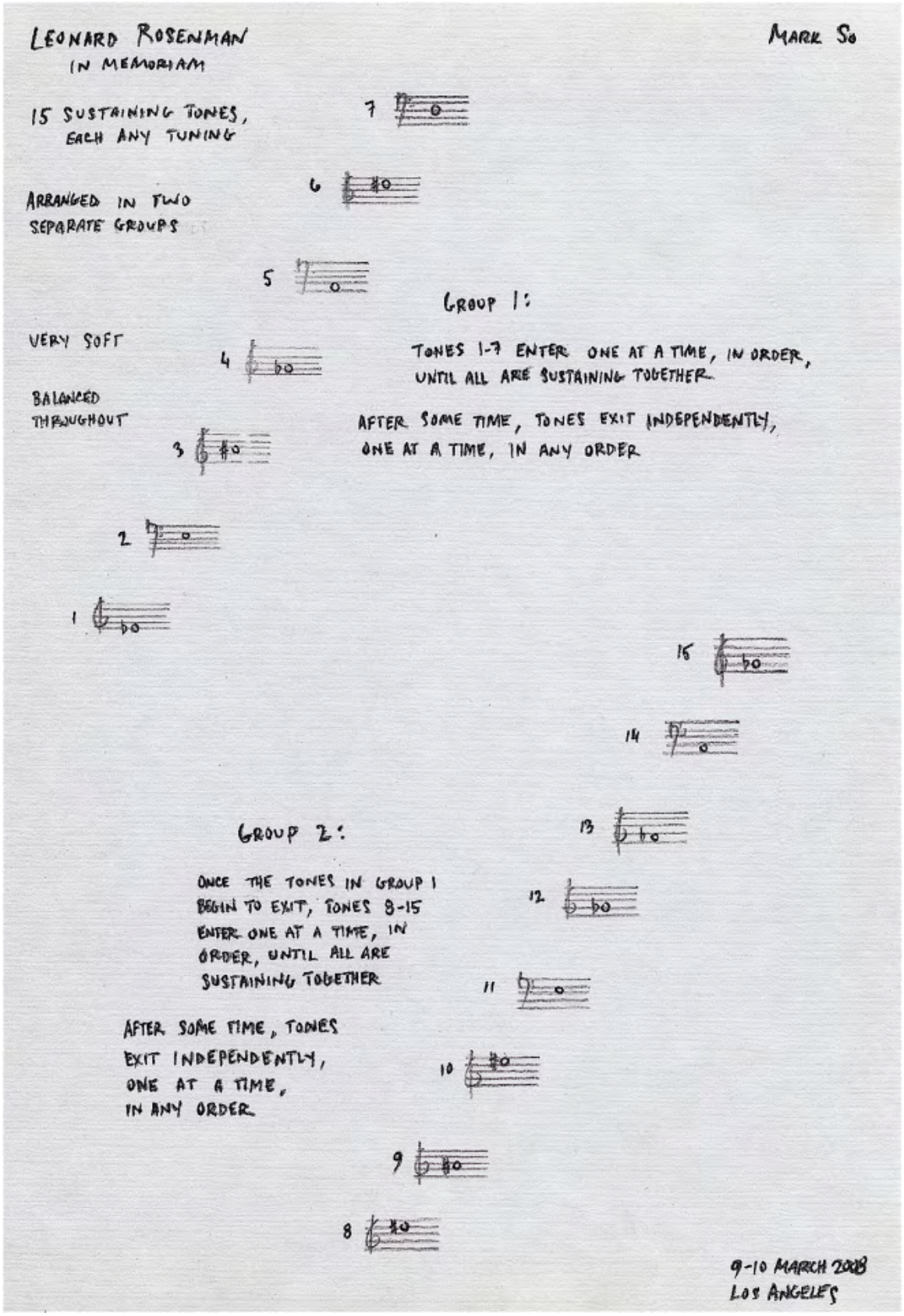
each grouped set of notes occurs in its own distinct octave in each part, preserving the written relationships within each grouping; each time through, octaves may change

all tones very soft amid the open surroundings; each instrument perhaps only intermittently audible to the other

15 OCT 2005 – 30 JAN 2008
VALENCIA – LOS ANGELES

LEONARD ROSENMAN (in memoriam)

It's lists, but also a reflection of Rosenman's style (I was working as an assistant to his widow when he died).



RICHARD SERRA

Another postcard; linear writing scored to reflect a sculptural idea.

RON ATHEY gave me an amazing massage; this one is stylistically related to the very first (proto) one for ZACKARY DRUCKER, who refers to herself as Ron's biological daughter; this one introduces a new grid paper stock that only recurs once or twice, I believe.

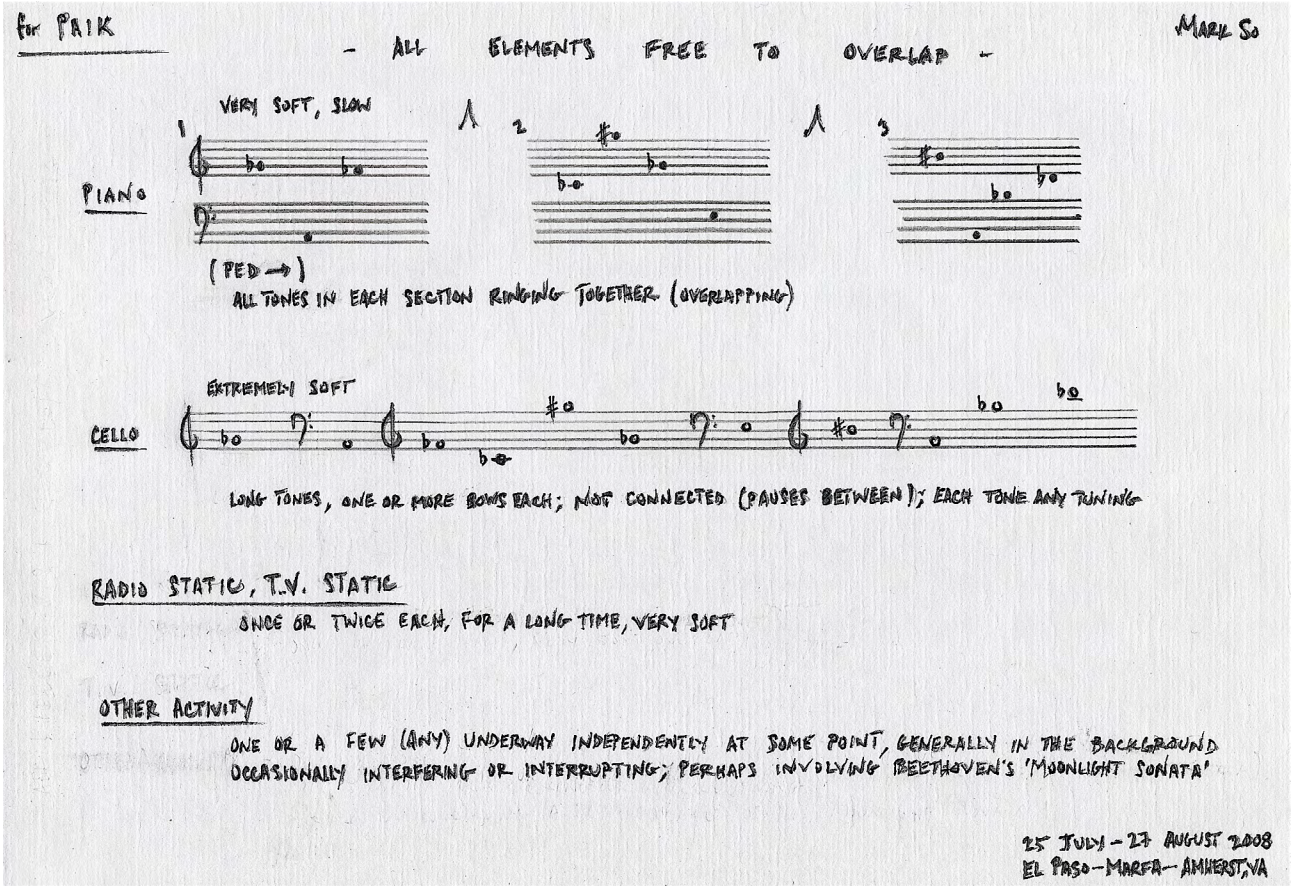
JOHNNY CHANG

Back to the fancy stationery from Tashi; settling into the format perhaps already established before this, as the variations from piece to piece get subtler. [*over page*]

HARRIS WULFSON (in memoriam) [*over page, opposite*]

for PAIK

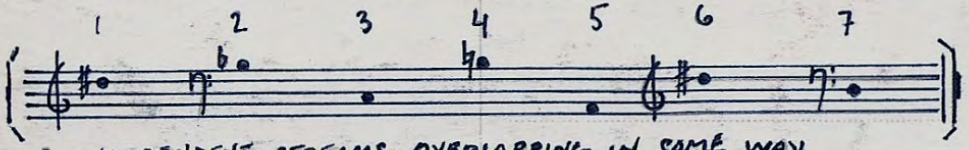
A more elaborate hybrid that's considerably more than a name piece; the Wolff ^ begins to appear as a basic part of the notation. [*below*]



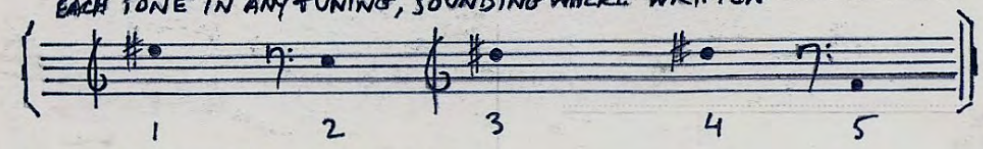
RICHARD SERRA

by Mark So.

FOR 12 INSTRUMENTS DISTRIBUTED FREELY IN A LARGE, OPEN SPACE



2 INDEPENDENT STREAMS, OVERLAPPING IN SOME WAY
IN EACH STREAM, PROCEED FROM ONE INSTRUMENT/TONE TO THE NEXT
SUCCESSIVE TONES MAY, BUT NEED NOT, CONNECT
EACH TONE IN ANY TUNING, SOUNDING WHERE WRITTEN



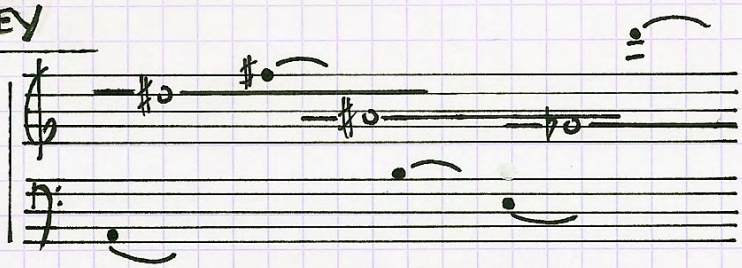
ALL TONES CLEAR AND FULL
DURATIONS FREE; UNHURRIED

2/8 APRIL 2008
LOS ANGELES

RON ATHEY

ANY INSTRS.

EACH TONE SOUNDS ONLY ONCE, ANY TUNING



Mark So
12·VII·08
LOS ANGELES

DURATIONS FREE; QUITE SOFT

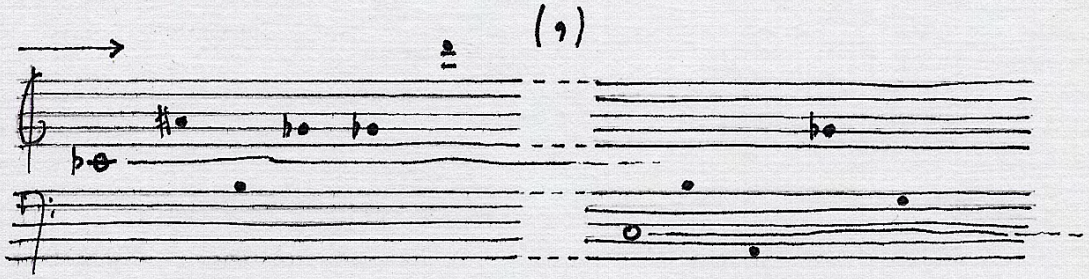
○ - SUSTAINING; CLEAR AND PURE, EACH CONTINUING INTO THE NEXT, OVERLAPPING
● - DECAYING; ALMOST DECORATIVE, COLORING UPON THE SUSTAINING TONES

JOHNNY CHANG

MARK SO

UP TO 30"

ANY INSTR (S)



EACH NOTE PLAYED ONLY ONCE, WHERE WRITTEN, ANY TUNING

O - SUSTAINING TONES (ONE MAY OVERLAP WITH THE NEXT)

● - SHORT OR DECAYING TONES (SLIGHTLY EMPHASIZED, MAY OVERLAP)

VERY SOFT, VERY FINE

25 JULY – 8 AUGUST 2008
EL PASO — BROOKLYN

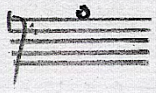
HARRIS WULFSON

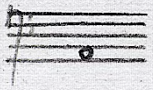
(IN MEMORIAM)

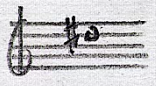
MARK SO

VERY SOFT

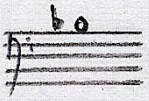
1

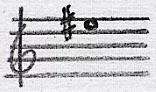






2x





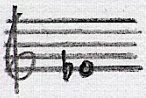
2 INDEPENDENT PARTS, OVERLAPPING SOMEHOW

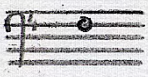
EACH PART PLAYED BY A FEW INSTRUMENTS, GENERALLY KEEPING TOGETHER –

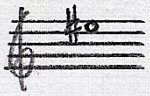
EACH NOTE IN EACH PART HOLDING OVER AT LEAST THROUGH TO THE NEXT, WITH NO BREAK IN SOUND IN EACH PART; ANY INSTRUMENT OR COMBINATION OF INSTRUMENTS PLAYING EACH NOTE

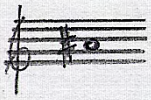
EACH NOTE SOUNDS WHERE WRITTEN, IN ANY TUNING BY ANYONE PLAYING IT

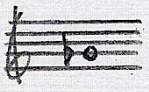
2











PERHAPS WITH A FEW INSTANCES OF SUSTAINED BOW NOISE ON THE BODY OF A STRINGED INSTRUMENT IN THE ENSEMBLE, WHILE THE PLAYING OF PITCHED SOUNDS IS UNDERWAY

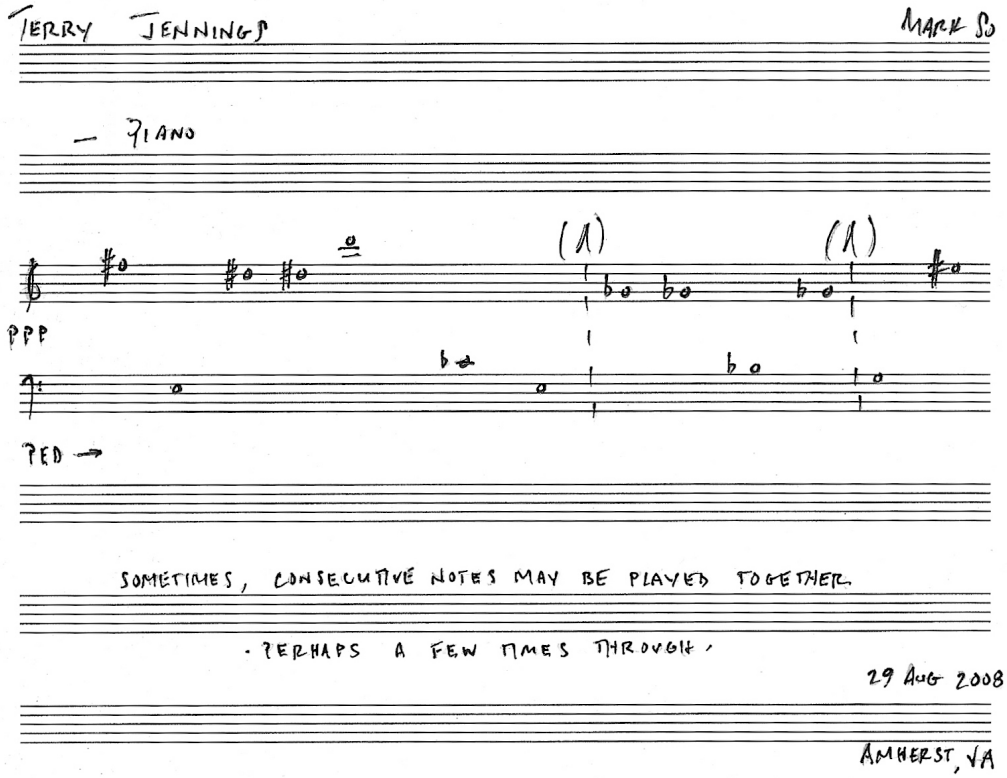
27 JULY – 26 AUGUST 2008
HOUSTON, TX – AMHERST, VA

JK:

One of the aspects I find most interesting in Mark So's work, but with these pieces in particular, is how the composer deals with notation in the sense of what is expected from the performer in terms of what might be termed 'literacy.' No explanation is given on the score for the meaning of the wedge (which is a notation for an open-length pause, introduced first by Christian Wolff), nor for the unstemmed open or closed note-heads (which are used by many composers, including Wolff, but also Morton Feldman, Antoine Beuger, and many others). As he says, the wedge becomes a basic part of the notation in this score, though it was used earlier in CHRISTIAN WOLFF. *Generally, with the notation in these works, details are given about how to read the notation only when it is specific to that single work, whereas elements of notation that are consistent throughout the body of work are left unexplained, with the expectation that the performer will know how to interpret it.*

TERRY JENNINGS

A more basic, more ambiguous approach to harmony and melody, coming out of the previously established idea of independent linear voices; the first of a long line of pieces written on a xeroxed single sheet of staff paper.



SIMEN JOHAN
The first one with an explicitly chordal implication drawn out of the two independent linear parts idea. [*see over next few pages*]

CAT LAMB
A more elaborate example of ensemble scoring (which has been a tendency in several of the foregoing pieces) deriving primarily from the emergent formal implications of the name transcription itself.

G. DOUGLAS BARRETT has assigned rhythmic values

LEWIS KELLER
A variant on the division of parts, finding implicit voicings in the total lay of notes, not just from the first and last names - this becomes a predominant tendency much later, particularly the idea of establishing 3 voices

ORIN HILDESTAD
A more detailed approach to notation/scoring.

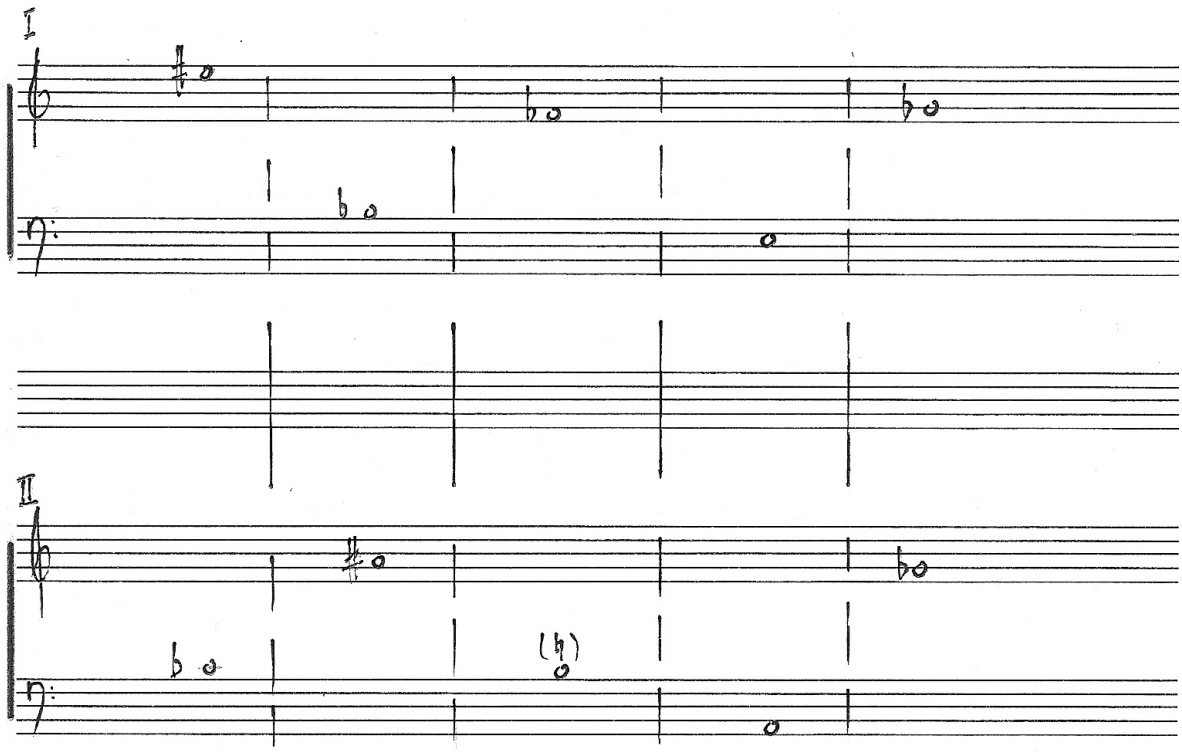
LUKE THOMAS TAYLOR (3 constellations)
An approach to deriving a prismatic multiplicity of parts, using layered implications of the tripartite name and the notational as well as graphic implications of groupings.

JASON THOMAS Another approach to establishing 3 voices.

TAYLAN SUSAM A basic idea of rhythmic cells contextualizing the relationships between discrete parts begins to emerge—I think probably something first suggested in TERRY JENNINGS, and likely a hangover from my obsession with his Piano Piece 1960, that summer. (In Düsseldorf, in the summer of 2007, Manfred Werder—I think it was Manfred Werder . . . maybe it was John McAlpine?—gave a performance of the Jennings piece).

GEORGE BRECHT, in memoriam
I think for the first time, first and last name used to create two successive blocks of harmonic activity (rather than independent/concurrent voices); also, another early example deriving three voices.

SIMEN JOHAN — MARK SO



2 PARTS, EACH ANY INSTRUMENT(S); EACH TONE PLAYED ONCE WHERE WRITTEN, IN ANY TUNING

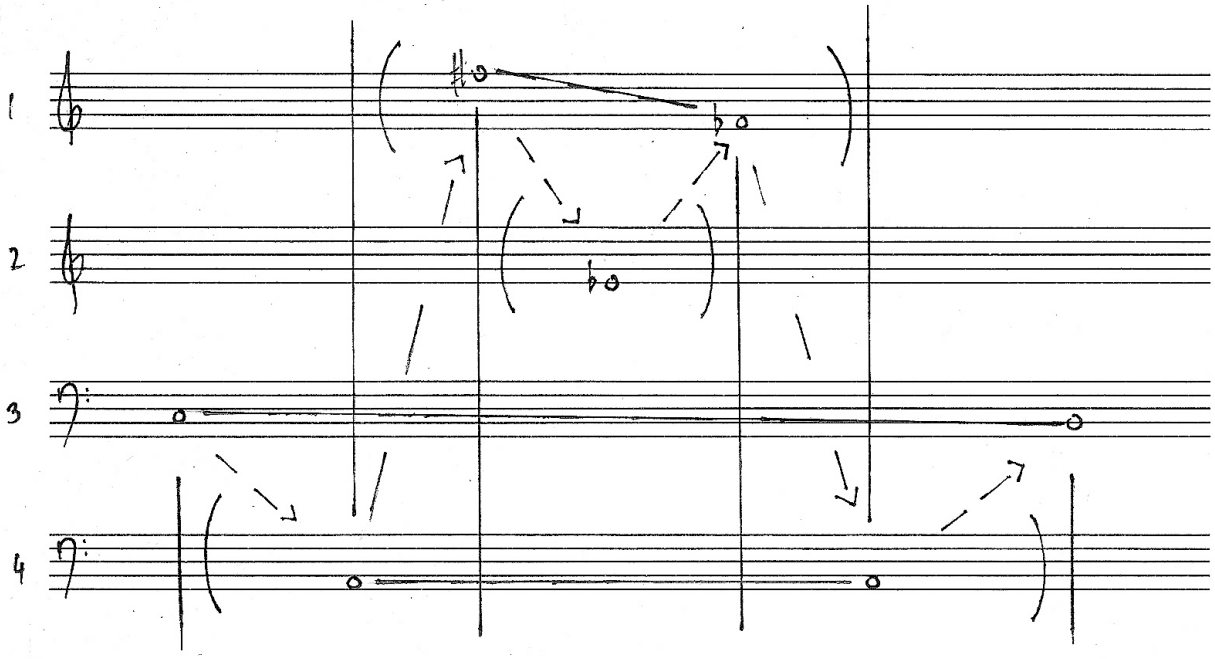
EACH TONE IN EACH PART OVERLAPPING IN SOME WAY WITH THE CORRESPONDING TONE IN THE OTHER
~~(ALSO FREE TO OVERLAP WITH OTHER TONES IN ITS OWN PART)~~

DURATIONS FREE; ANY PAUSES; QUITE SOFT (PERHAPS WITH SOUNDS OF INSECTS)

7 SEPT 2008
AMHERST, VA

CAT LAMB — MARK SO

EACH OF 4 PARTS PLAYED BY ANY INSTRUMENT(S)



EACH TONE PLAYED ONCE WHERE WRITTEN, IN ANY TUNING, QUITE SOFT

~~THE FIRST TONE IN A PART HOLDS THROUGH TO THE NEXT (LEGATO)~~

THE SECOND 'A' IN PART 4 ARTICULATED SEPARATELY, EITHER BY THE SAME INSTRUMENT OR ANOTHER.

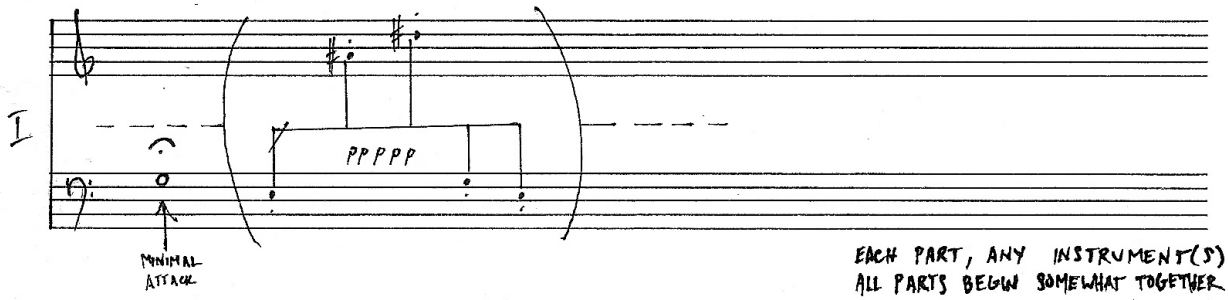
DURATIONS AND SPACING FREE, BUT RESPECTING THE INDICATED SEQUENCE AND RELATIVE LIMITS

~~AS WELL AS THE SOUNDING CONSTRAINTS OF THE ENSEMBLE (INSTRUMENTS WITH LIMITED SUSTAIN, ETC.)~~

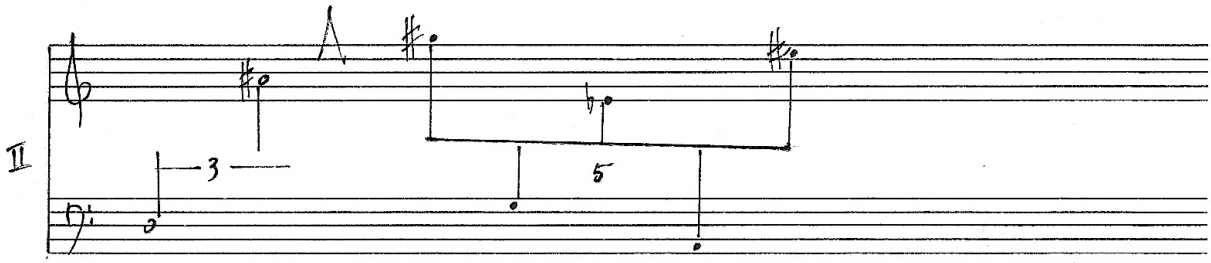
16 SEPT 2008
UCROSS, WY

Cerenem Journal no. 6

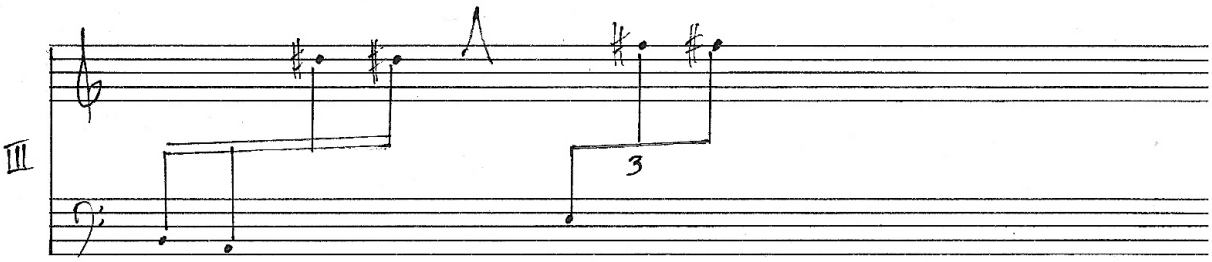
G. Douglas Barrett — Mark So



each part, any instrument(s)
all parts begin somewhat together
then continue independently



instruments doubling freely
but keeping pace in each part



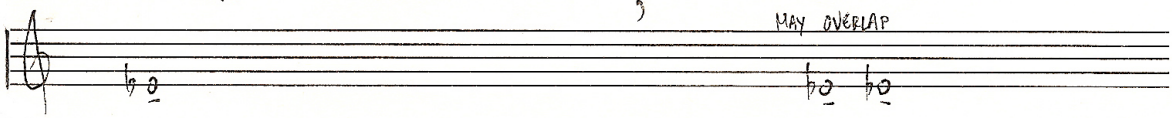
– notes sound where written, any tuning(s), quite soft –

29 Sept 2008
Ucross, WY

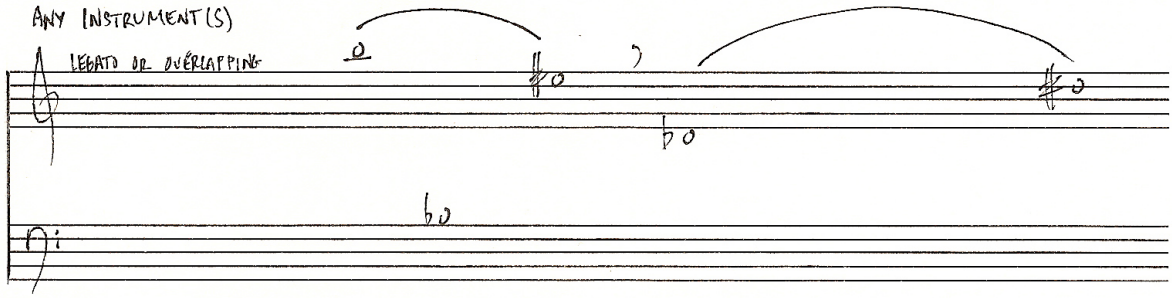
LEWIS KELLER — MARCH 30

3 INDEPENDENT PARTS, GENERALLY KEEPING TRACK

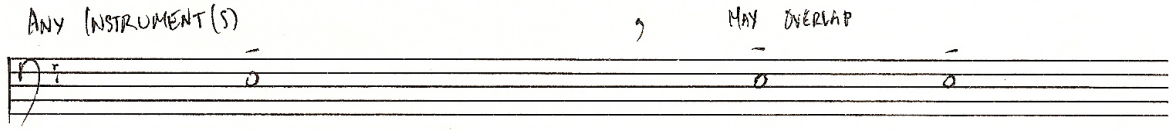
I — ANY INSTRUMENT(S) — MAY OVERLAP



II — ANY INSTRUMENT(S) — LEGATO OR OVERLAPPING



III — ANY INSTRUMENT(S) — MAY OVERLAP

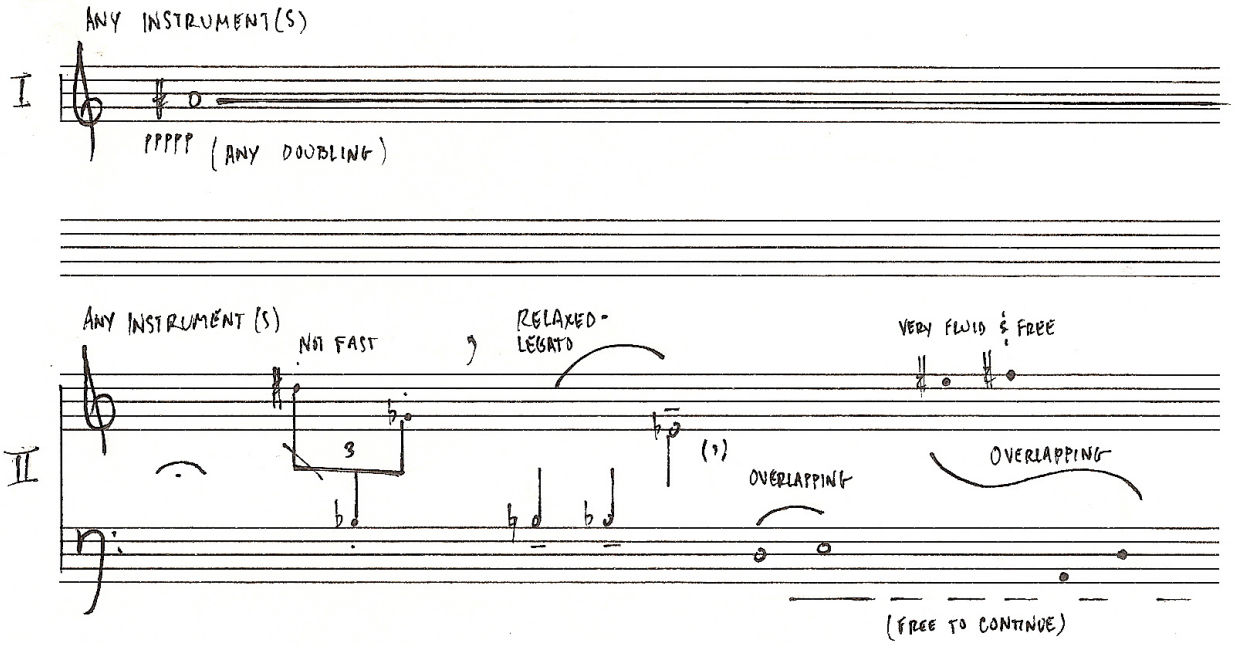


EACH NOTE PLAYED ONCE WHERE WRITTEN, IN ANY TUNING, QUITE SOFT

7 OCTOBER 2008
ULROSS, WY

Cerenem Journal no. 6

ORIN HILDESTAD — MARK SO

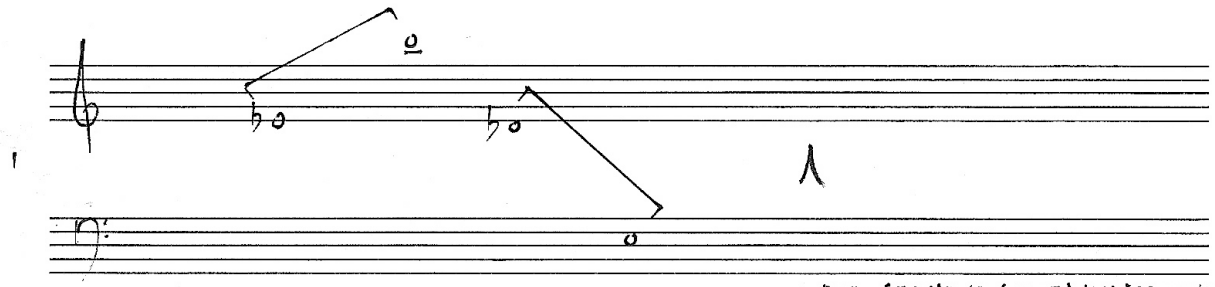


PART I - SUSTAINS THROUGHOUT; PERHAPS A NUMBER OF INSTRUMENTS COMING IN AND OUT; ALL PLAYING WHERE WRITTEN, BUT EACH MAY BE IN ANY TUNING; MINIMAL ATTACK.

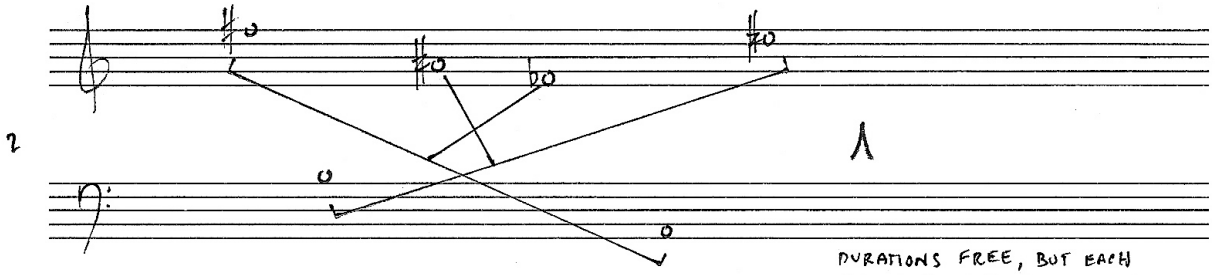
PART II - WHILE PART I IS UNDERWAY; DURATIONS AND SPACING LARGELY FREE, BUT IN THE SUGGESTED PROPORTIONS EACH NOTE PLAYED ONCE WHERE WRITTEN, IN ANY TUNING, QUITE SOFT

8 OCTOBER 2008
UCROSS, WY

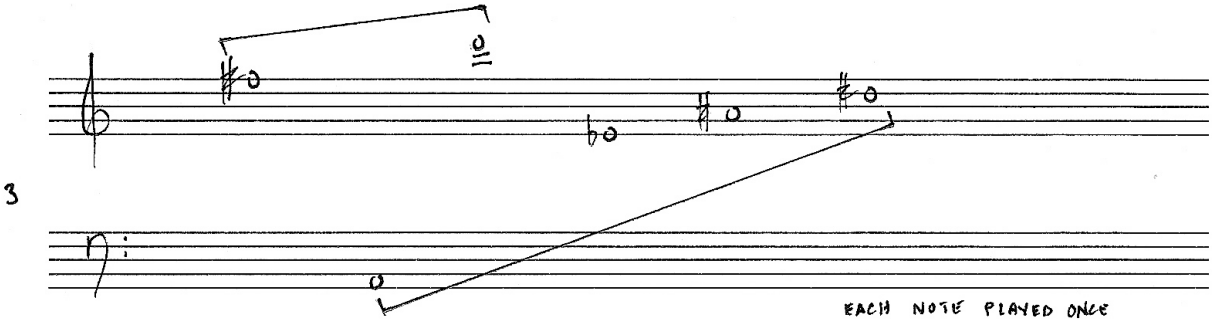
LUKE THOMAS TAYLOR (3 CONSTELLATIONS) MARK SO



EACH SEGMENT (⌐¬) INDEPENDENT, ANY INSTRUMENT(S); SEGMENTS IN EACH CONSTELLATION FREE TO OVERLAP



DURATIONS FREE, BUT EACH SEGMENT SOUNDING UNBROKEN (NOTES OVERLAPPING)



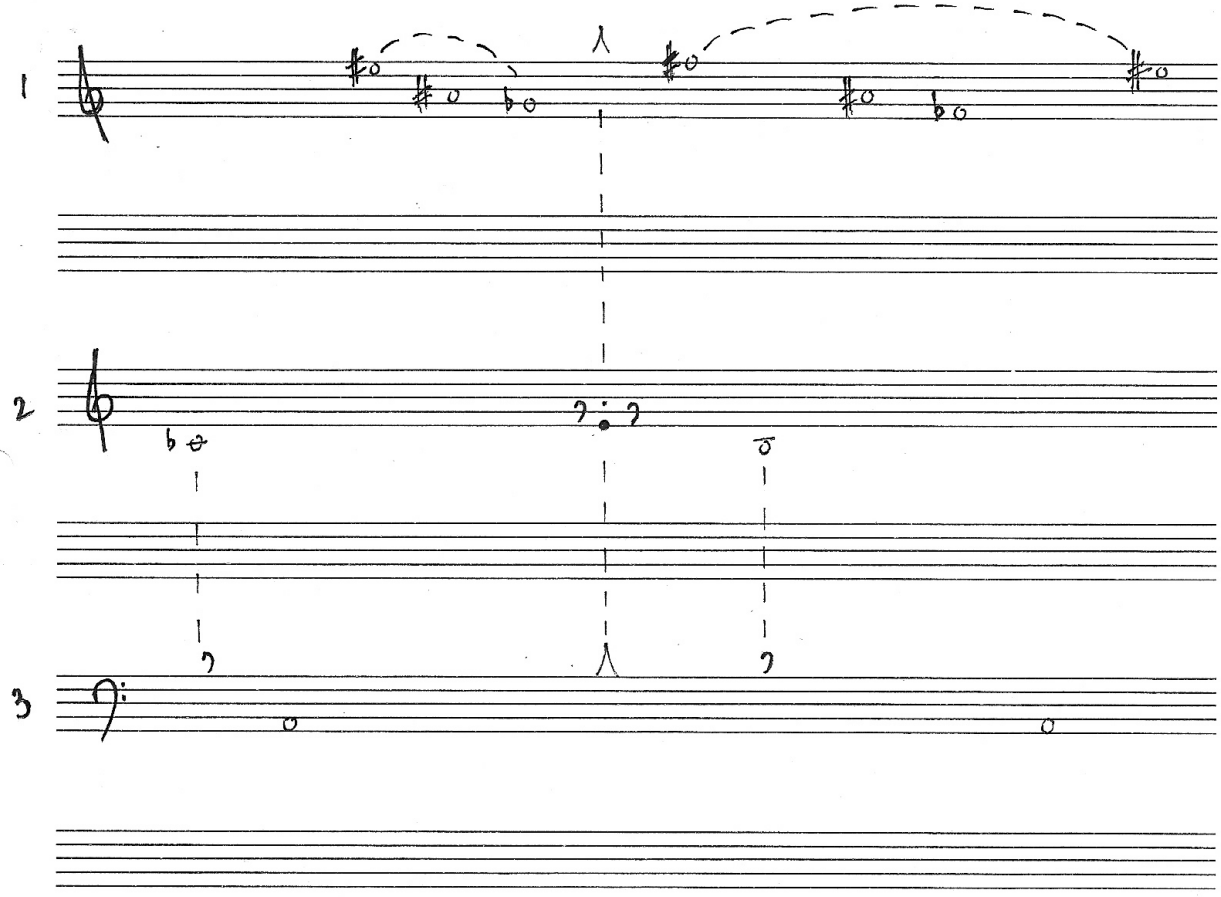
EACH NOTE PLAYED ONCE WHERE WRITTEN, IN ANY TUNING, VERY SOFT

9 OCTOBER 2008
UCROSS, WY

Cerenem Journal no. 6

JASON THOMAS — MARK SO

THREE PARTS, INDEPENDENT EXCEPT WHERE INDICATED; EACH PART ANY INSTRUMENT(S)

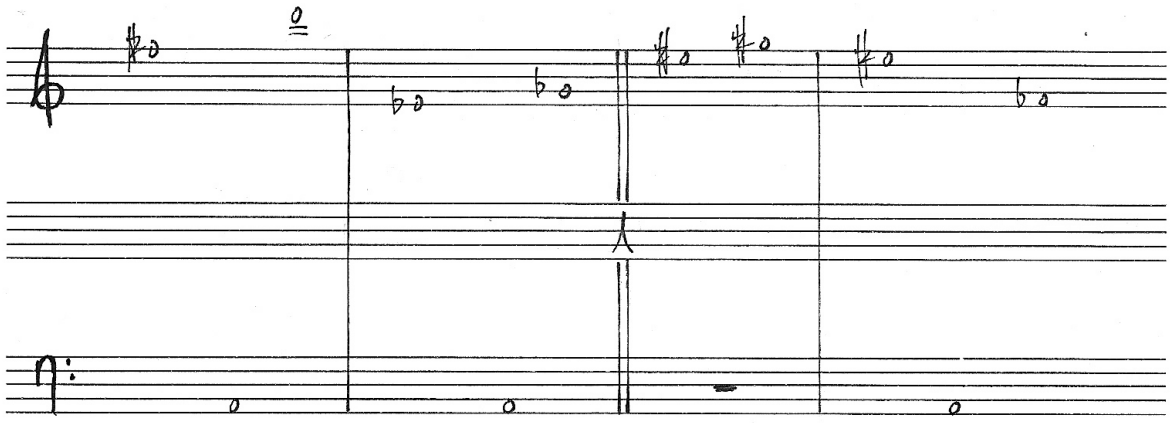


DURATIONS FREE; DYNAMICS FREE; EACH NOTE SOUNDS ONCE WHERE WRITTEN, ANY TUNING

23 OCT – 10 NOV 2008
LOS ANGELES

TAYLAN SUSAM MARK SO

EACH PART ANY INSTRUMENT(S)



DURATIONS FREE

PART 1: TONES MAY BE SEPARATED, LEGATO, OR OVERLAPPING IN EACH SECTION

PARTS 1 & 2 OVERLAPPING SOMEHOW IN EACH SECTION

EACH NOTE SOUNDS ONCE WHERE WRITTEN, IN ANY TUNING, QUITE SOFT

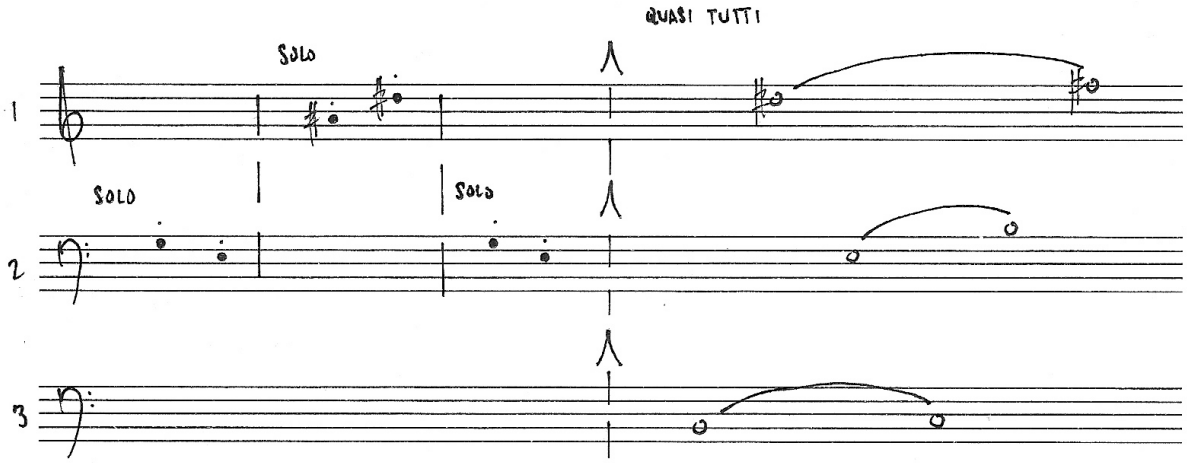
7-11 NOV 2008
LOS ANGELES

GEORGE BRECHT

MARK SO

IN MEMORIAM

3 INSTRUMENTS, EACH TO A PART



FIRST HALF: TONES PLAYED SHORT AS POSSIBLE, NOT CONNECTED OR OVERLAPPING

SECOND HALF: LONG TONES, CONNECTED IN EACH PART, ALL THREE PARTS OVERLAPPING FREELY

EACH NOTE PLAYED ONCE WHERE WRITTEN, ANY TUNING; EXTREMELY SOFT

16-25 DEC 2008
LOS ANGELES

(5) 2009

MANFRED WERDER
A different sequence, spelling each name down through chordal pairs, first and last divided by a wedge. [*over next few pages*]

ANTOINE
A horizontal list (the list reimagined as a line); the first of several pieces laid out horizontally on a sheet of white letter size paper.

EVA-MARIA HOUBEN
A reimagining of the interspersed two-voice concept as a single melody.

OSWALD EGGER
Using syllabic division in each name to imply subphrases within a broken melody.

CHRISTIAN KESTEN (5 blancs)
A 5 voice derivation of consequent note spellings of first and last name, as two blocks of shifting harmony

SORIANO UY SO
A 4 voice derivation

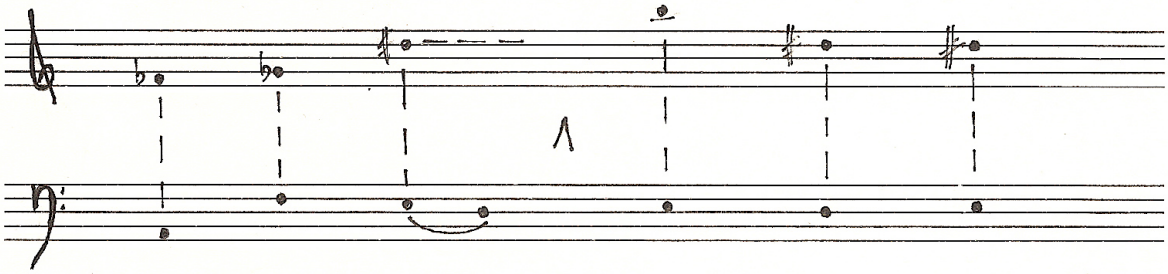
another piano piece for JULIE SIMON
A piano piece for the dedicatee, essentially a name piece without being explicitly so.

Cerenem Journal no. 6

MANFRED WERDER — MARK SO

ANY INSTRUMENT(S)

VERY SOFT THROUGHOUT



COORDINATIONS FREE, SOMEHOW OVERLAPPING

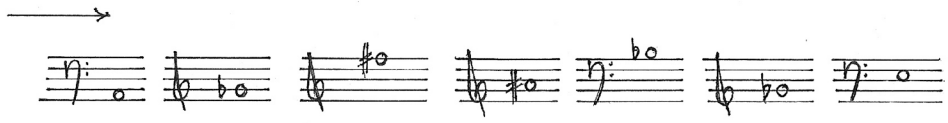
EACH TONE ONCE, WHERE WRITTEN

28 JANUARY – 21 MARCH 2009

LOS ANGELES

ANTOINE — MARK SO

ANY INSTRUMENTS



EACH NOTE PLAYED BY ONE OR MORE (ANY INSTRUMENTS DOUBLING/OVERLAPPING ON EACH NOTE, FREELY)
WHERE WRITTEN; VERY PURE, VERY SOFT

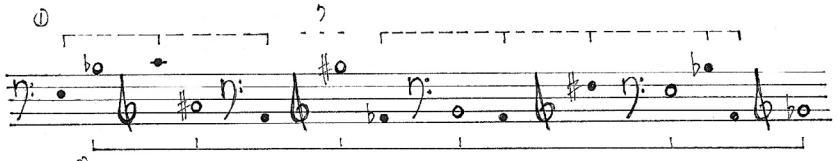
EACH NOTE EMERGING FROM SILENCE INTO ITS OWN CONTINUOUS SPACE
DISAPPEARING ENTIRELY BEFORE THE NEXT (ANY AMOUNT OF SILENCE BETWEEN NOTES)

5 APRIL 2009
PARK CITY

EVA-MARIA HOUBEN — MARK SO

KEYBOARD SOLO/DUO

VERY SOFT THROUGHOUT; MINIMAL ATTACK



(NO PEDAL)

EACH TONE ONCE WHERE WRITTEN

① "SINGING" - NOTES MAY BE SEPARATED, BUT CLEARLY PHRASED AS SHOWN

② LEGATO, AS AN ACCOMPANYING MELODY

THE TWO PARTS COINCIDING FREELY, MORE OR LESS KEEPING THE SEQUENCE SHOWN

UNHURRIED

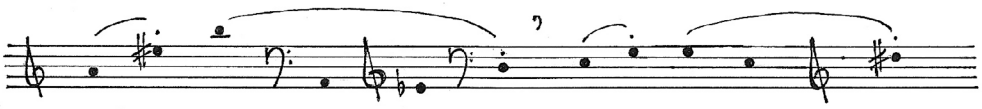
5 APRIL 2009
PARK CITY

OSWALD EGGER

MARK SO

ANY INSTRUMENT(S)

QUITE SOFT



EACH TONE ONCE WHERE WRITTEN, MINIMAL ATTACK

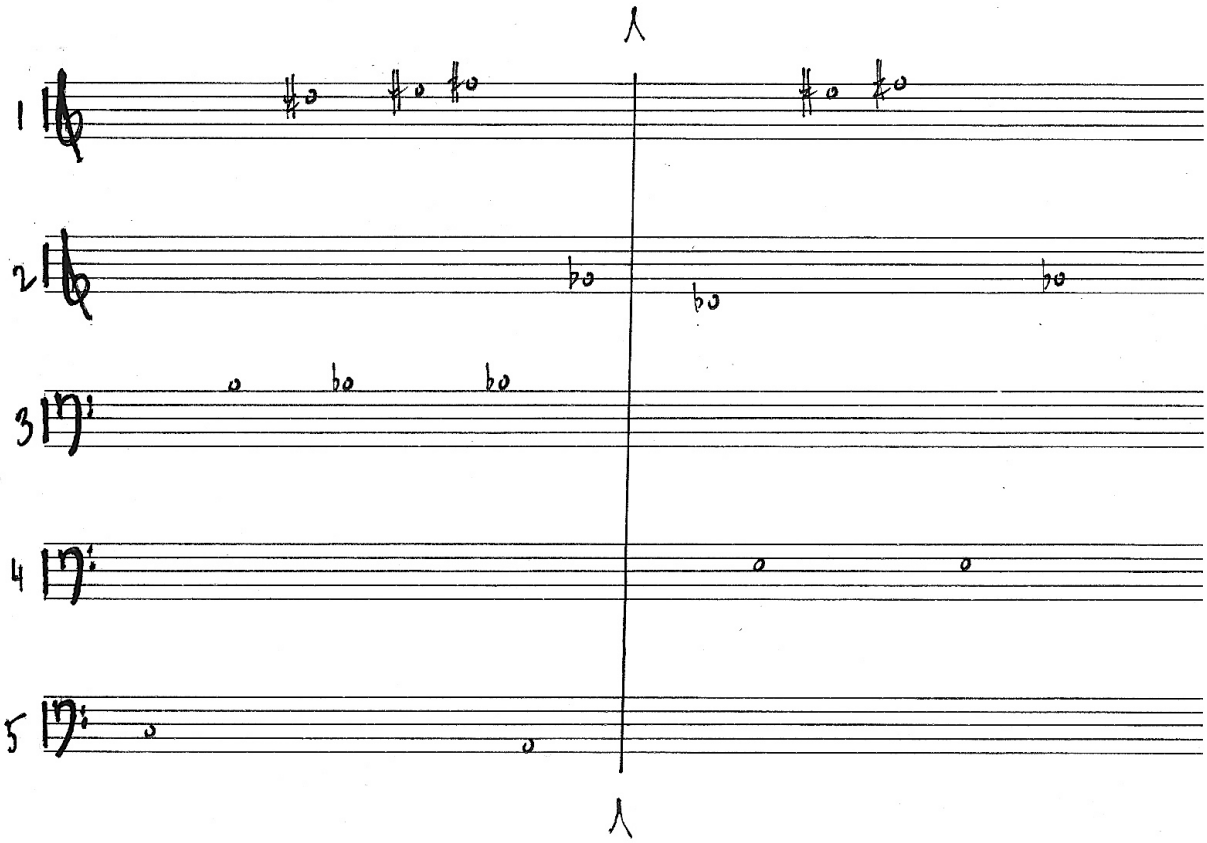
EXCEPT STACCATO, EACH TONE CONNECTS/OVERLAPS SLIGHTLY TO THE NEXT

DURATIONS FREE

6-8 APRIL 2009
PARK CITY

CHRISTIAN KESTEN (5 BLANCS) MARK SO

EACH PART ANY INSTRUMENT(S), EXTREMELY SOFT



EACH TONE ONCE WHERE WRITTEN; MOSTLY WHITE (NOISE), COLORED BY SLIGHT TONE

EACH PART LOOSELY KEEPING PACE WITH THE OTHERS; DURATIONS FREE

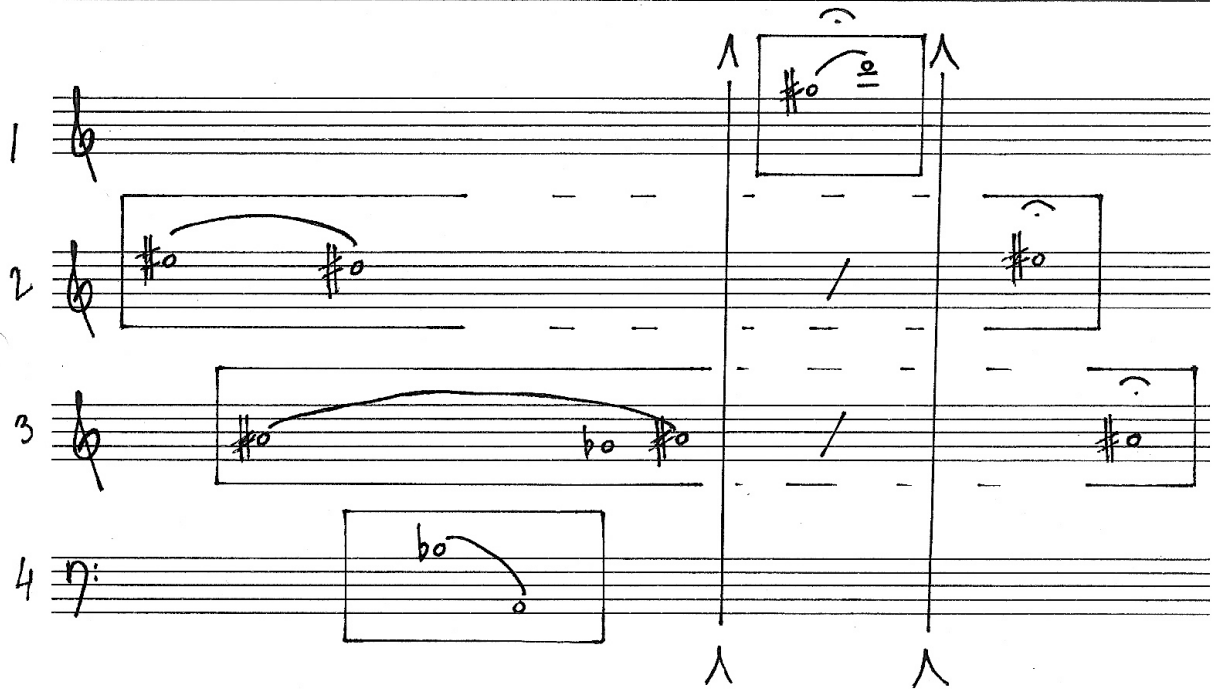
18 APRIL 2009
PARK CITY

SORIANO UY SO

MARK SO

EACH PART, ANY INSTRUMENT(S)

VERY SOFT



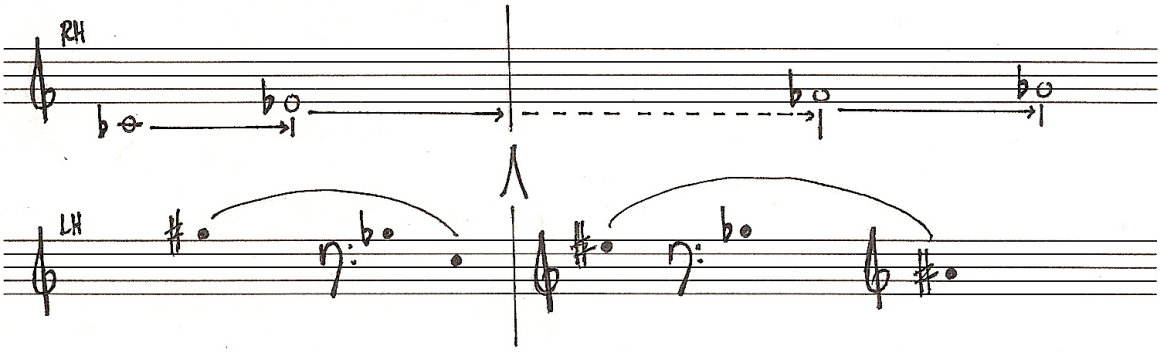
EACH TONE ONCE WHERE WRITTEN; DURATIONS FREE

THE 4 PARTS INDEPENDENT, BUT LOOSELY KEEPING SEQUENCE WITH EACH OTHER

20 APRIL 2009
PARK CITY

ANOTHER PIANO PIECE FOR JULIE SIMON — MARK So

QUITE SOFT



o→| SUSTAIN AS INDICATED

LEGATO POSS.

TWO HANDS INDEPENDENT, LOOSELY KEEPING PACE, DURATIONS FREE

27-30 MAY 2009
LOS ANGELES

JK:

As I noted before, it is cases like this that make looking at a composer's work as a whole so interesting. While Mark is conscious of having this working practice of writing these 'name' pieces, it's not cut-and-dry. Some pieces are explicitly so, some are explicitly apart, and others are somewhere inbetween.

CASSIA STREB

A 4 voice derivation for viola, combining the resultant notes derived from the names with the 4 stringed aspect of the instrument.

[*over next pages*]

DOUGLAS WADLE for 1 or 2 trombones, allows for the possibility of unpitched/otherwise produced sounds in the highest register.

RADU MALFATTI trombone solo, allows for the possibility of unpitched/otherwise produced sounds in the highest register; has a strict time structure.

JK:

Of interest to me with these two pieces for trombone (and for trombonists) is how the composer does not waver from the methodical practice of transcribing the name into specific pitches, but rather writes the pitches while also making allowances for reading the pitches in variant ways, fully knowing they are not otherwise playable on the trombone.

KERSTIN FUCHS

The second piece using the narrow horizontal graph paper, after RON ATHEY (2008); the wedge is here qualified as a place where something may be written or read; another instance where a noise may replace a tone.

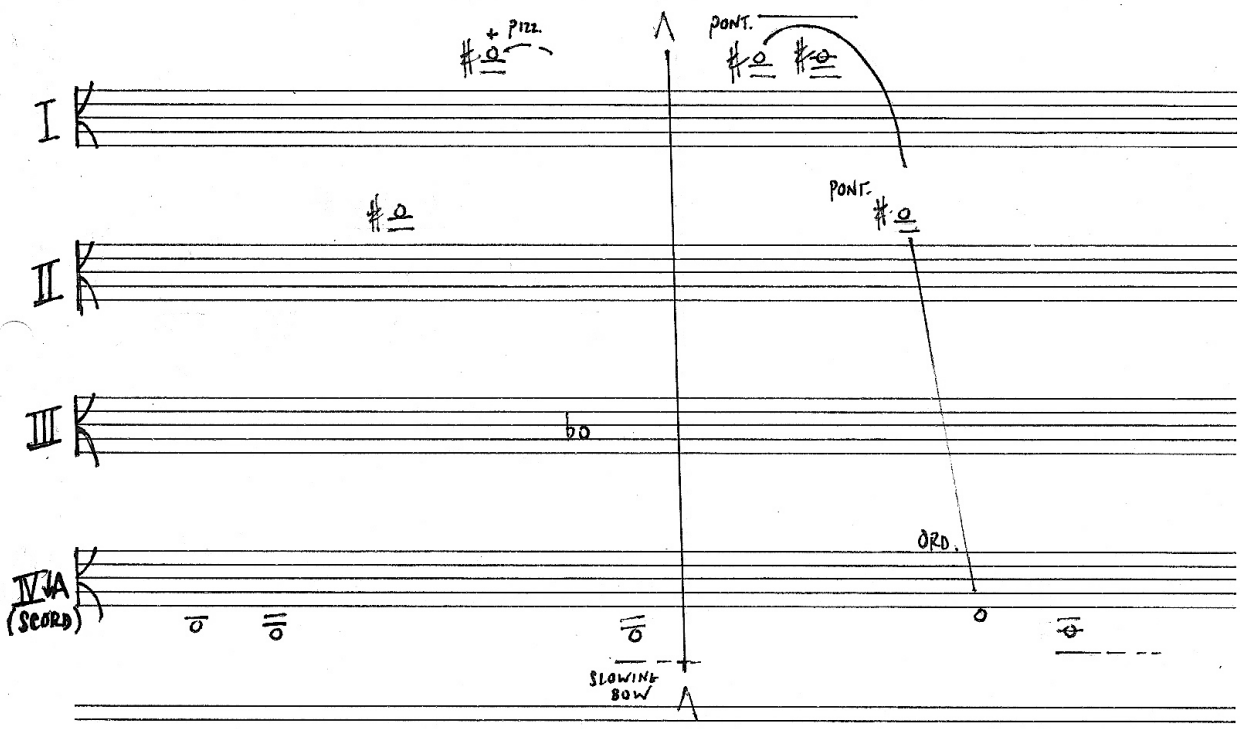
THE BELLES OF BASIN

A sort of name collection, spelling the first names of several women who live in Basin, MT (I'd met them all during a residency in 2005, and wrote the piece when I ran into one of them at a grocery store in Helena while passing through in 2009)

CASSIA STREB — MARK SO

VIOLA SOLO

VERY SOFT



EACH TONE ONCE WHERE WRITTEN, ON THE STRING INDICATED, ONE BOW EACH (EXCEPT PIZZ.)

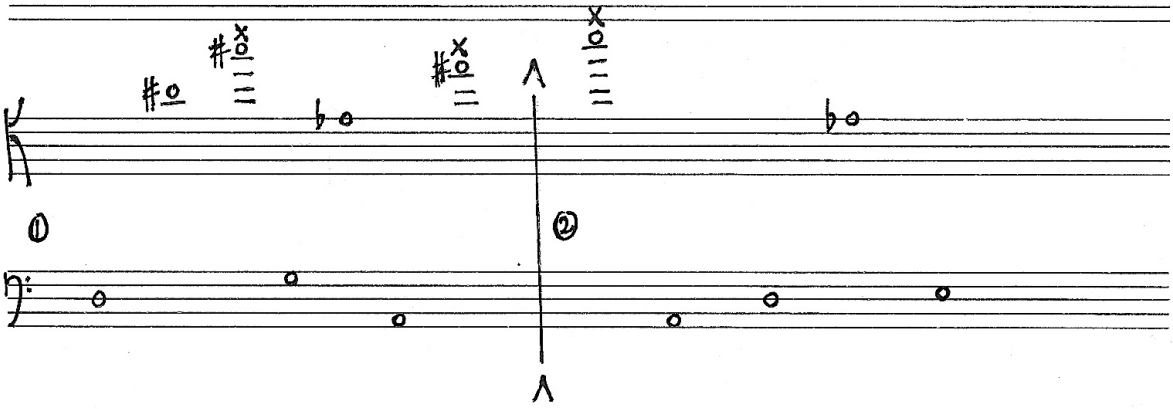
PHRASE AS INDICATED, OTHERWISE:
DURATIONS/DISTRIBUTION FREE; TONES MAY OVERLAP (DOUBLE STOP) ONE TO THE NEXT

5-14 JUNE 2009
LOS ANGELES

DOUGLAS WADLE — MARK SO

ONE OR TWO TROMBONES (+)

VERY SOFT



EACH TONE ONCE WHERE WRITTEN; TONES MARKED WITH AN 'X' MAY BE A NOISE, OR OTHERWISE PRODUCED

DURATIONS FREE; 1 OR 2 TONES WITHIN ① AND ② QUITE LONG, ALL OTHER TONES QUITE SHORT

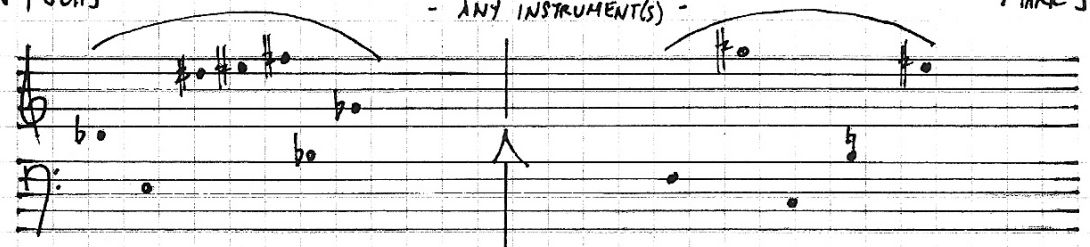
IF 2 PLAYERS, MORE OR LESS KEEPING SEQUENCE; TONES FREE TO OVERLAP ONE TO THE NEXT (OTHERWISE, SPACED FREELY)

5-14 JUNE 2009
LOS ANGELES

ARCHIVES
LL10S-10 Stave

KERSTIN FUCHS — MARK SO

- ANY INSTRUMENT(S) -



DECAY SOUNDS
EACH TONE ONCE WHERE WRITTEN
OCCASIONALLY, A NOISE REPLACING A TONE

(WHERE SOMETHING MAY BE READ OR WRITTEN)

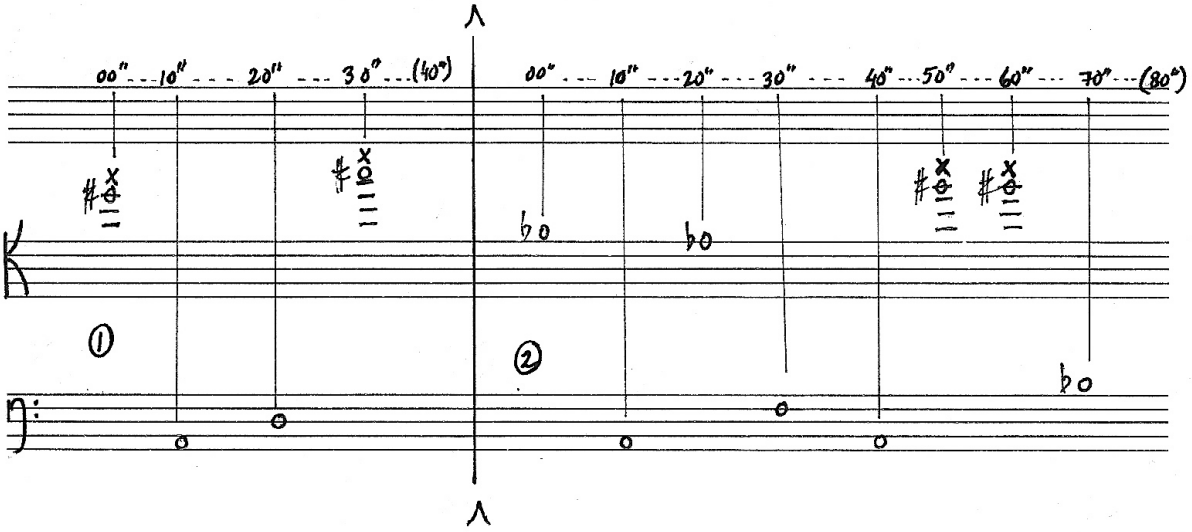
VERY SOFT
EACH PHRASE MORE OR LESS CONNECTED

8-31 JULY 2009
LOS ANGELES - SYRACUSE, NY

RADU MALFATTI — MARK SO

TROMBONE SOLO (+)

VERY SOFT



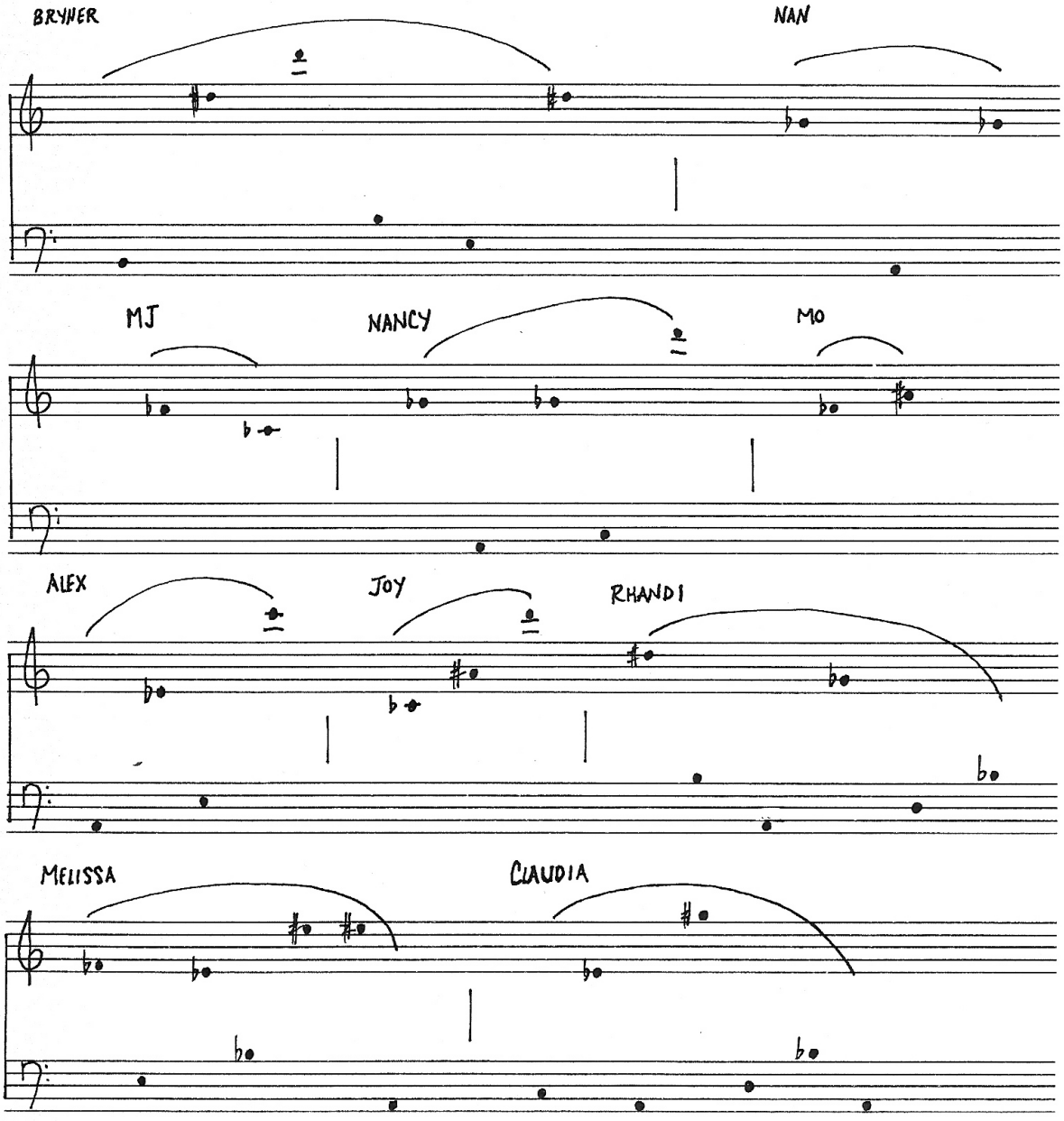
EACH TONE ONCE WHERE WRITTEN; TONES MARKED WITH AN 'X' MAY BE A NOISE, OR OTHERWISE PRODUCED

TONES IN EACH SECTION ① AND ② OCCUR EVERY 10" AND MAY LAST UP TO 10"

5-14 JUNE 2009
LOS ANGELES

THE BELLES OF BASIN — MARK SO

EACH PHRASE ONCE, FREELY, ANY INSTRUMENT(S); IN ANY ORDER; MULTIPLE NAMES MAY OVERLAP



20 VIII 2009
HELENA

GAYLE BLANKENBURG

My piano teacher in college; perhaps the first piece using a 4 stave (not necessarily 4 part) voicing that basically assigns a bass and treble cleff to the notes in each name (an expansion upon the layout with two blocks of activity on two staves, first and last name before and after a wedge or other break); also, some variant notation is introduced to help differentiate qualities of density—the part with fewer notes (first name) has sustains while the part with more notes (last name) has short tones. [*over next pages*]

SAM SFIRRI

Another approach to strict time structure, more ambiguous this time (I sense the slightest influence of the two earlier pieces written on graph paper)

LETITIA QUESENBERRY

4 stave layout, assigned rhythmic values.

MERCE CUNNINGHAM

Written on chinese burning paper; a noise if pitch unavailable—this obviously could take over the whole piece and imply a very different sort of scenario from the playing of notes, and this implication is deliberately not suppressed, somewhat in the way the impression on the other (shiny) side of the score presents a compelling face.

AGNES MARTIN

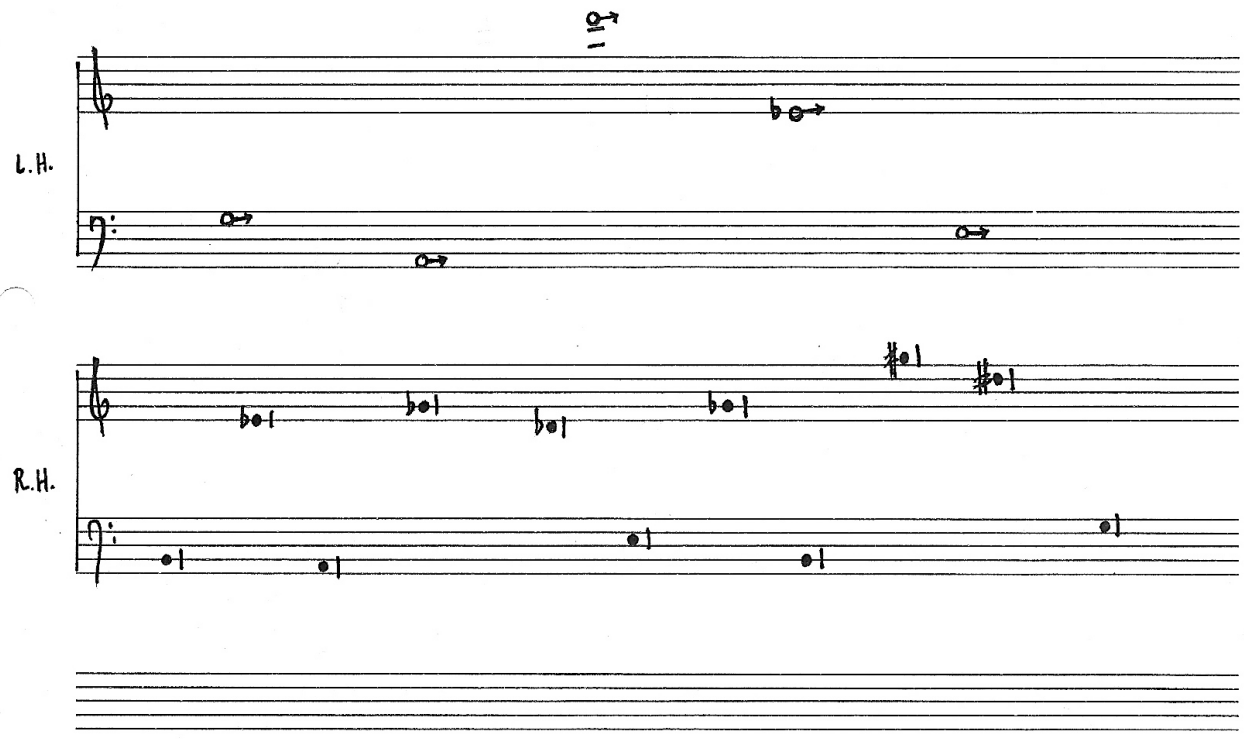
Another take on the 3-voice idea

Cerenem Journal no. 6

GAYLE BLANKENBURG — MARK SO

PIANO

SOFT THROUGHOUT, NO PEDAL



SUSTAIN FREELY SHORT (NOT STACCATO) ALL SPACED FREELY

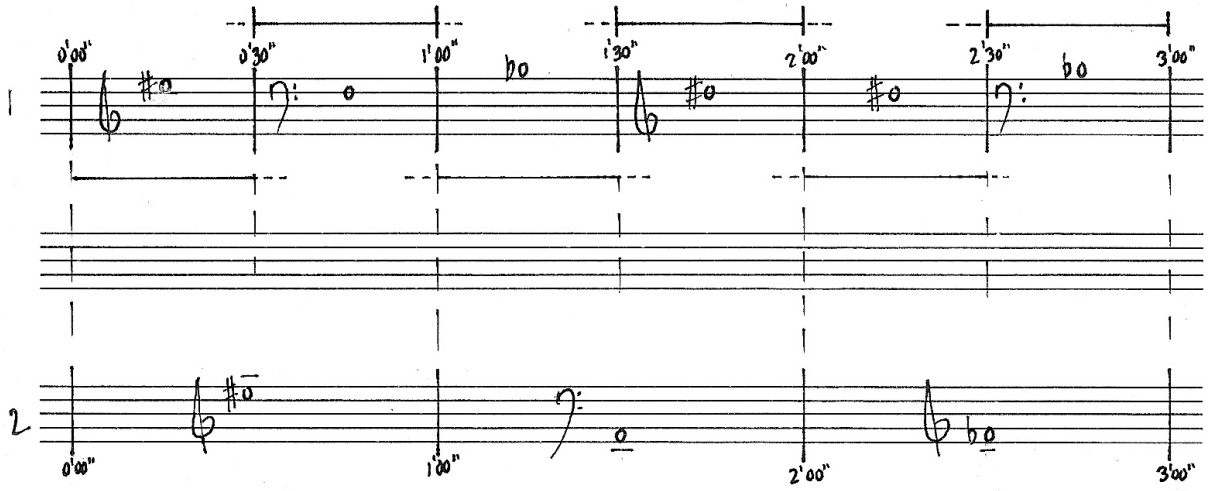
THE TWO HANDS/PARTS OVERLAPPING FREELY

4 AUGUST - 1 NOVEMBER 2009
SYRACUSE - LOS ANGELES

SAM SFIRRI — MARK SO

SUSTAINING AND DECAY INSTRUMENTS

VERY SIMPLE AND SOFT THROUGHOUT



1: SUSTAINING TONES, CONTINUOUS SOUND; EACH EXTENDING FREELY BEYOND THE DESIGNATED SPAN

2: DECAY TONES, SLIGHTLY ACCENTED; EACH ONCE AT SOME POINT IN THE SPACE INDICATED, FREELY

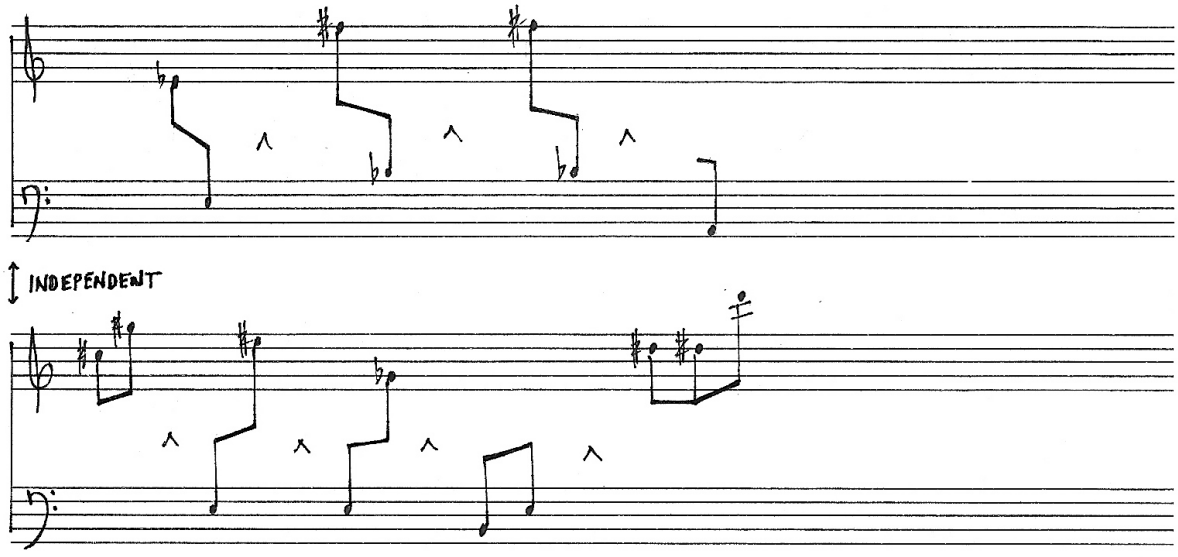
25 JULY – 1 NOVEMBER 2009
CHARLESTON, SC – LOS ANGELES

Cerenem Journal no. 6

LETITIA QUESENBERRY — MARK SO

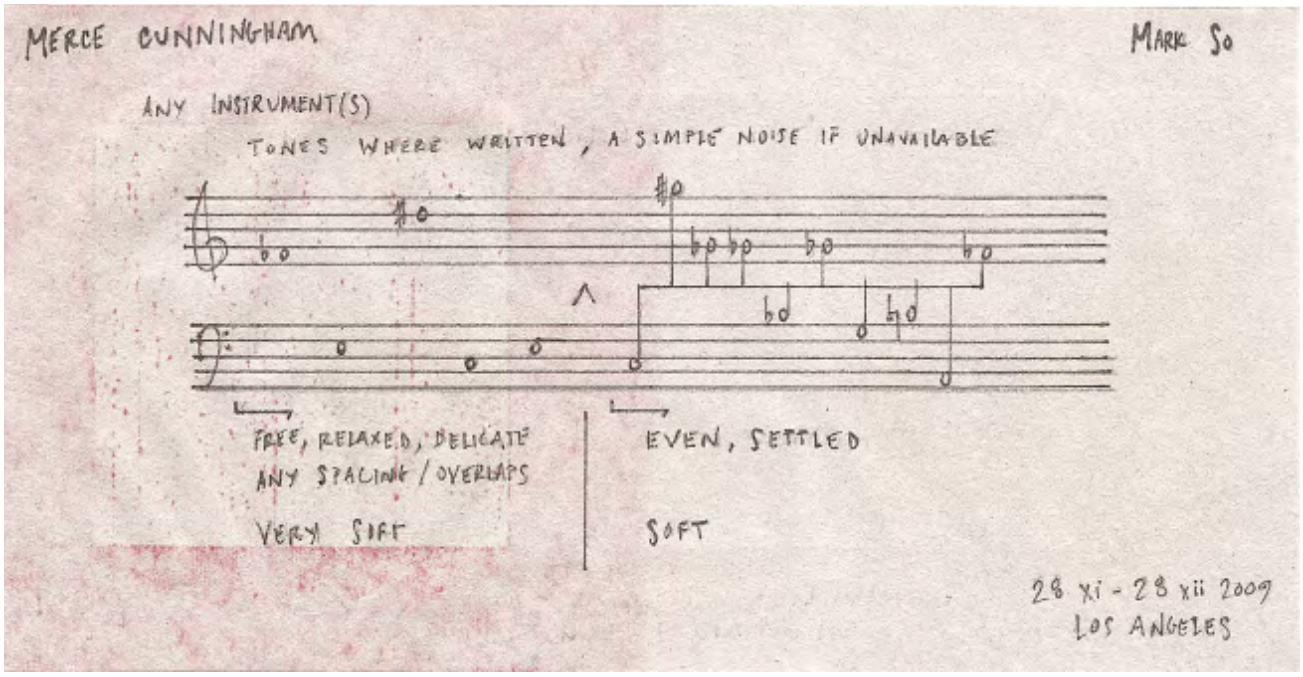
2 LIKE INSTRUMENTS

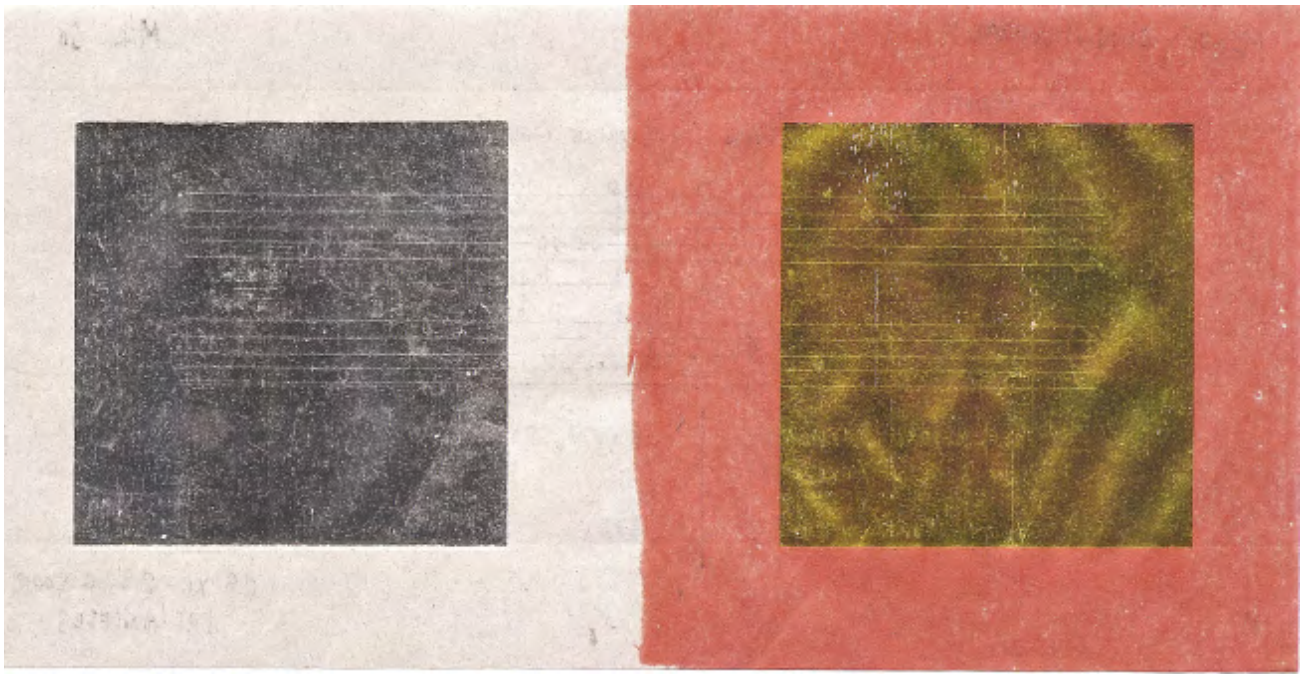
LIGHT, SOFT, FLEETING, NONCHALANT



ONE INSTRUMENT TO EACH PART

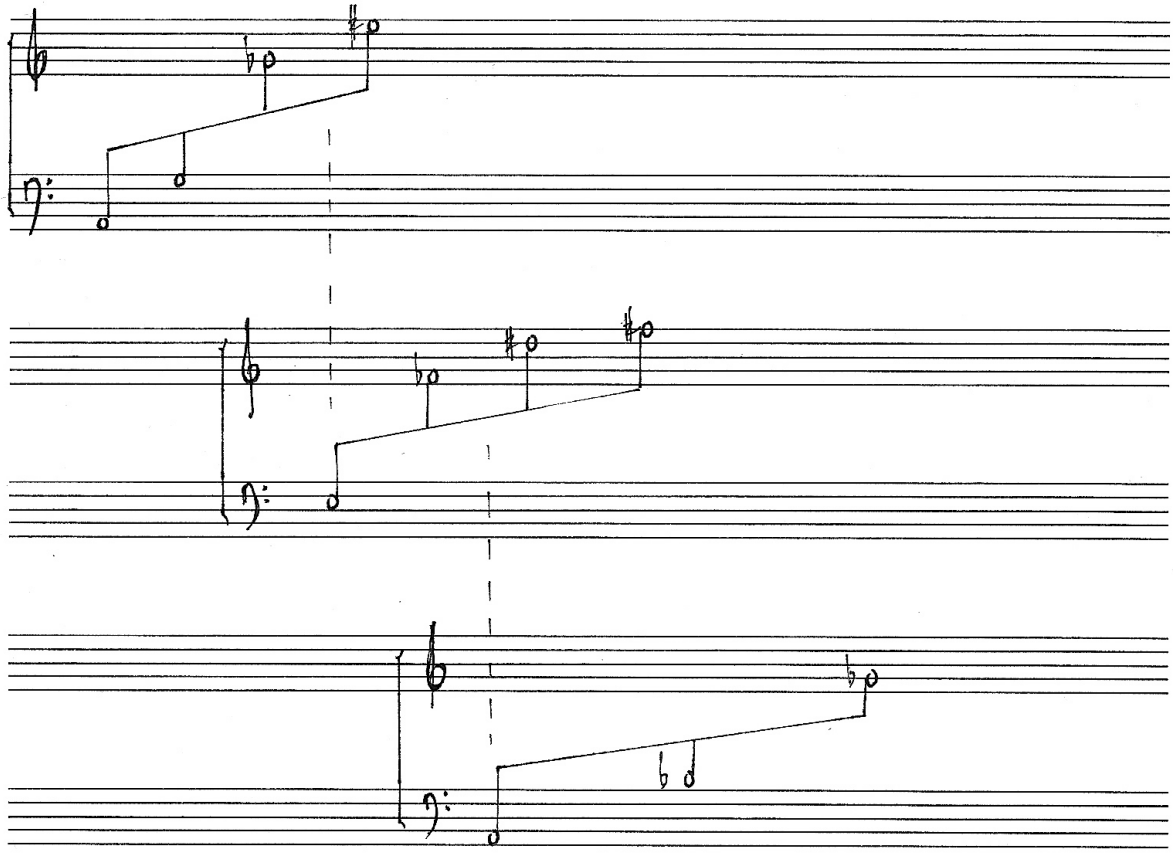
1 NOVEMBER 2009
LOS ANGELES


MERCE CUNNINGHAM
MARK SO
ANY INSTRUMENT(S)
TONES WHERE WRITTEN, A SIMPLE NOISE IF UNAVAILABLE
FREE, RELAXED, DELICATE
ANY SPACING / OVERLAPS
VERY SOFT
EVEN, SETTLED
SOFT
28 xi - 28 xii 2009
LOS ANGELES



AGNES MARTIN — MARK SO

ANY INSTRUMENT(S) COVERING EACH ASCENDING LINE



TONES WHERE WRITTEN, CONNECTING ONE TO THE NEXT IN EACH LINE, DURATIONS FREE

COORDINATE AS INDICATED, OTHERWISE FREELY KEEPING TRACK

SOFT AND CLEAR

29-30 XII 2009
LOS ANGELES

(6) 2010

These start going for a greater immediacy—I use this term loosely, but for instance, you no longer see me going back over my pencil draft in pen so much, and you also start getting kind of quick impressions of the person or their work, almost like a sketch.

ZAK LAWRENCE
Kind of a spreading-out of the field of resultant notes (there's also a wrong note in this one. . .); you have kind of a 3 voice idea, but more all-over attention to implicit groupings. [*over next pages*]

JOHN WIENERS
Starting to really become a deliberate attempt at portraiture by this point—probably evident in quite a few earlier pieces, but this one is almost narrativizing Wieners's personality/voice.

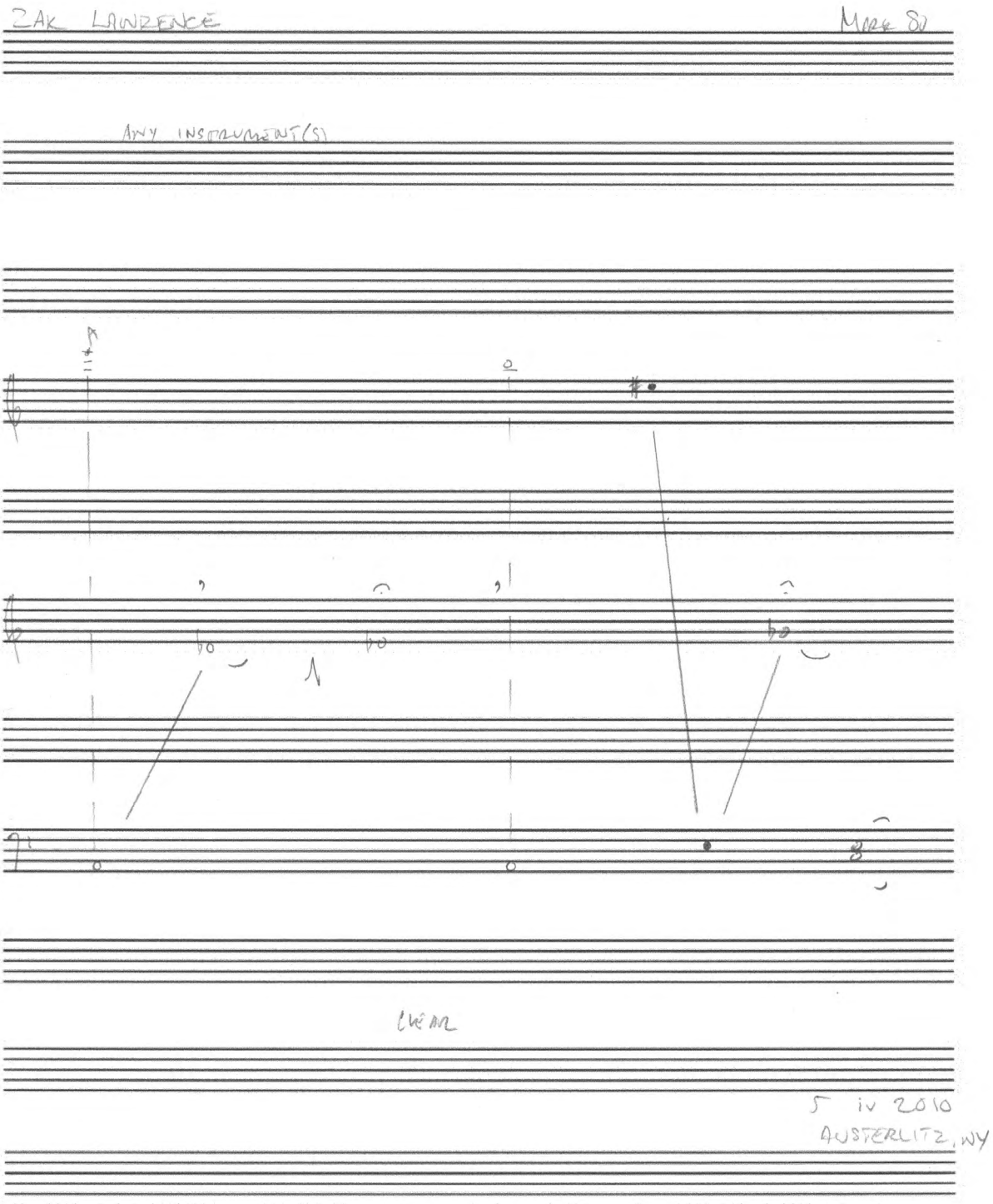
AMA BIRCH
A very measured approach to the 3 voice idea

TWO VIOLINS for Andrew Tholl & Andrew McIntosh
This starts a run of instrumental miniatures for specific musicians in which the parts are entirely derived from the spelling of their names, without explicitly being name pieces; several of these were for a concert series in a coatroom at the hammer museum, dubbed the little William theater, which I believe was put on by machine project.

SIMONE FORTI
This one sort of pushes the implications of MERCE CUNNINGHAM, in that I very consciously devised this as a piece that Simone (who's a movement performer and not a musician) could very much perform herself, almost treating the score like a choreography.

MILLAY for the Millay Colony
This one expands the list idea by having each letter in the sequence notated in the top corner of 6 successive pages in the colony register; each letter also associated with a word. [*2nd page is journal frontispiece*]

Cerenem Journal no. 6

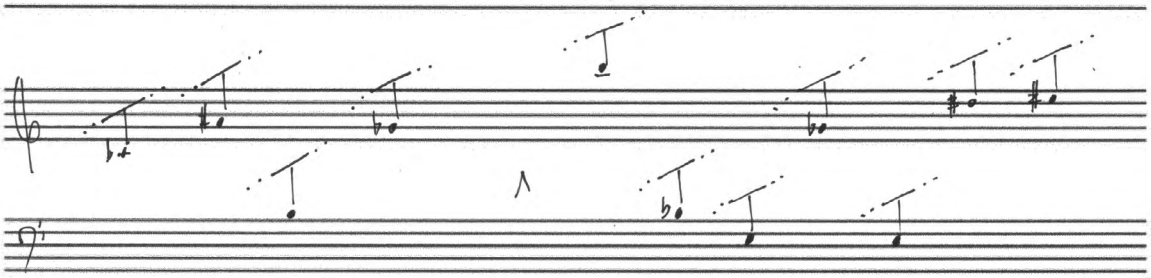


JOHN WIENERS

MAKE SO

ANY INSTRUMENT

SOFT, NERVOUS



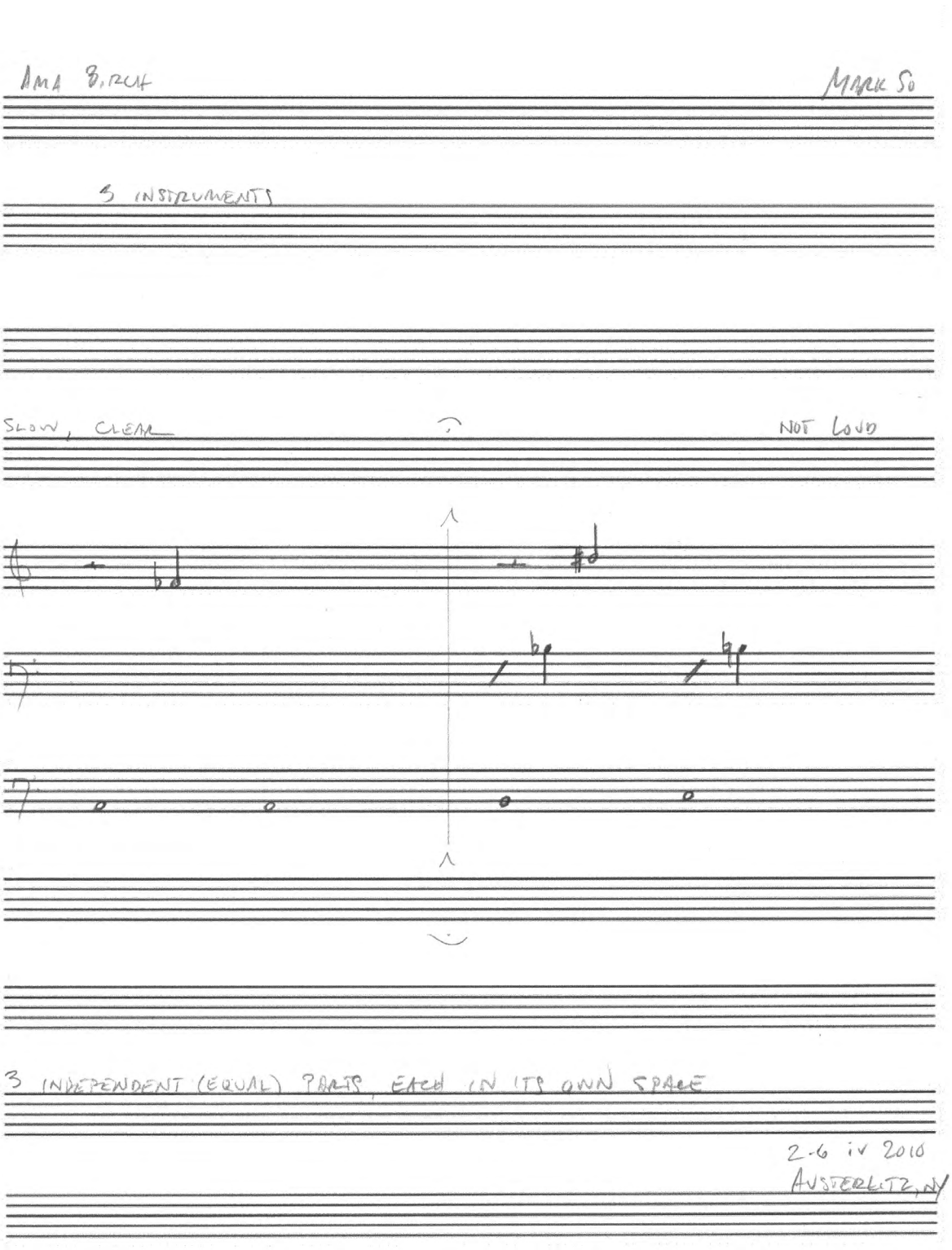
BUMPING ALONG, ABRUPT

..DROPPING/HALTING/ERRING/REVERSING/PICKING UP..

COVER ALL MATERIAL

2-5 IV 2010
AUSTERLITZ, NY

Cerenem Journal no. 6



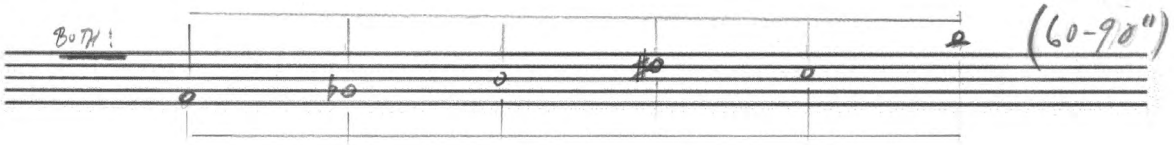
TWO VIOLINS

MARK SO

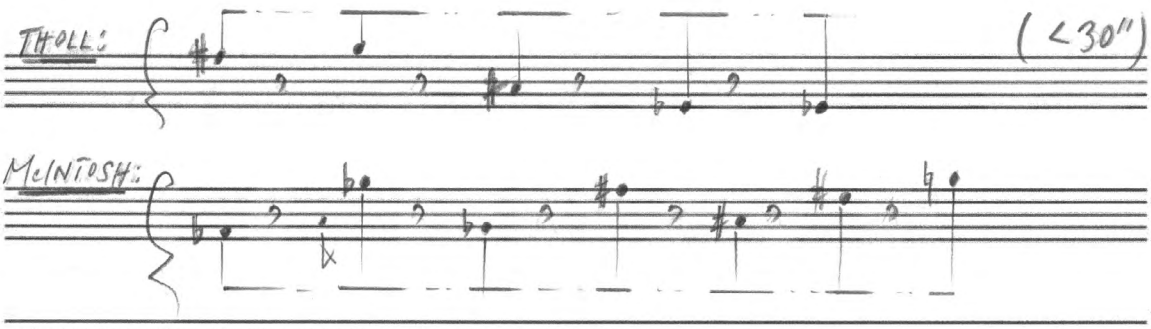
FOR ANDREW THOLL & ANDREW MCINTOSH

(DURATIONS, CLEFS AD LIB)

SECTION 1 - SIMULTANEOUS AS POSSIBLE, VERY SOFT, BALANCED

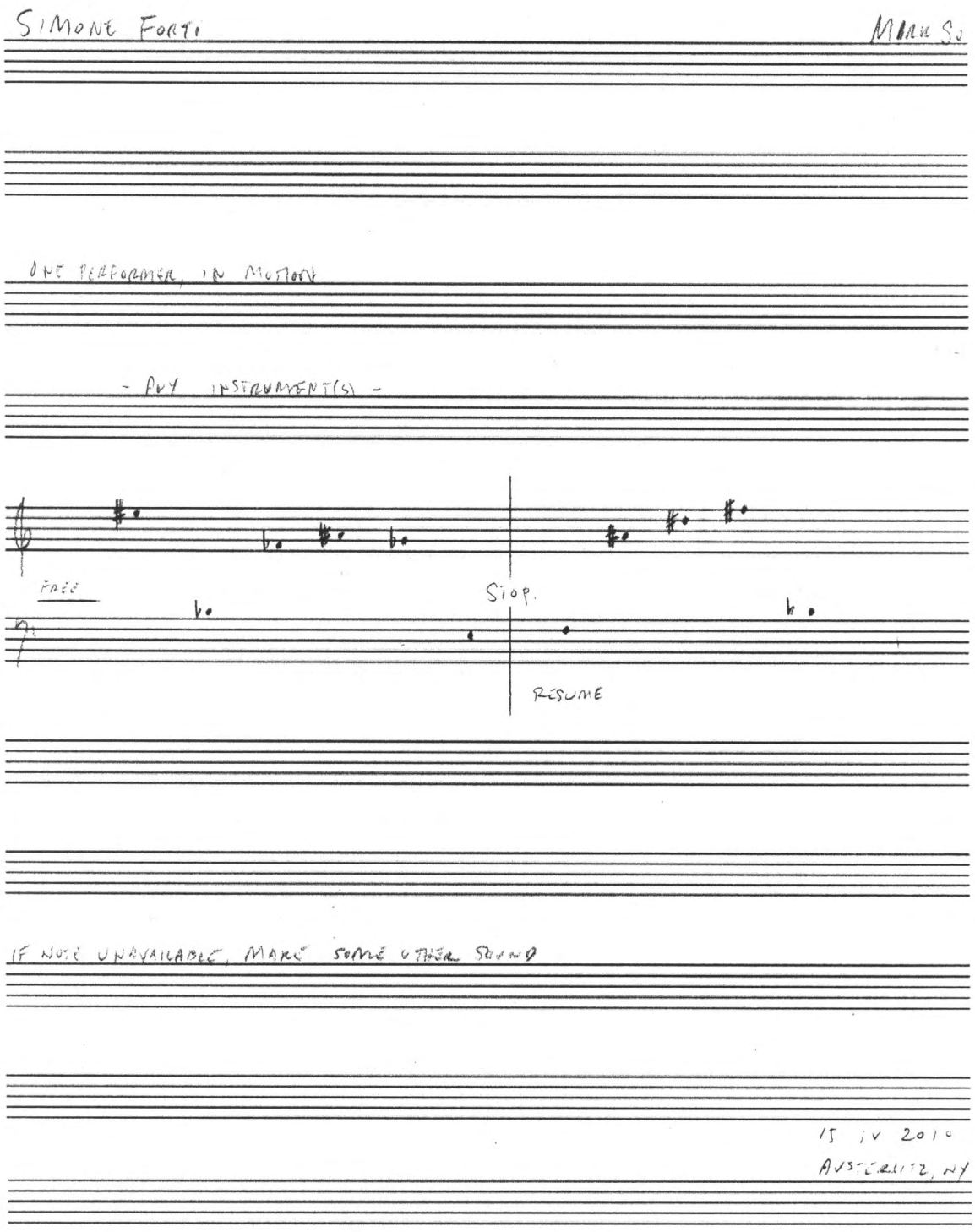


SECTION 2 - EACH INDEPENDENT, FREE



© IV 2010
AUSTERLITZ

Cerenem Journal no. 6



DICKY BAHTO
Probably the most beautiful one of its sub-type. [*over next pages*]

untitled (MS)
A unique piece—it's how I signed the doorjamb when I left my studio at Millay, i.e. a little name piece with my initials; simple notation implies the field/room as other surrounding source. . .

MIKE RICHARD This one has accompanying chords

JK:
Since Mike Richard isn't as well known as composers such as Michael Pisaro and Christian Wolff, who have pieces named for them in this series, I feel it's worth noting the commonalities between this piece and some of Richard's work. While a student at CalArts (around 2002 and 2003), Mike was setting large parts of Spinoza's writings to music which many musicians, including myself, performed. There was a vocal soloist who followed the text, and set of chords, which an ensemble played from, but not having individual parts. The ensemble moved through these chords, following the soloist and text.

COREY FOGEL This one treats the notes as a secondary accompaniment to drums.

MARI
Another go at dispersing the list, this time each letter is notated in the top corner of its own notecard.

JULIE TOLENTINO
Kind of a mysterious one since it implies an axis where a note might go 'in/down' perhaps perpendicular to the continuity of the sequence of notes as much as go 'along' with an emergent phrase; it implies a kind of potential choreography that engages a dimension that's beyond the notation.

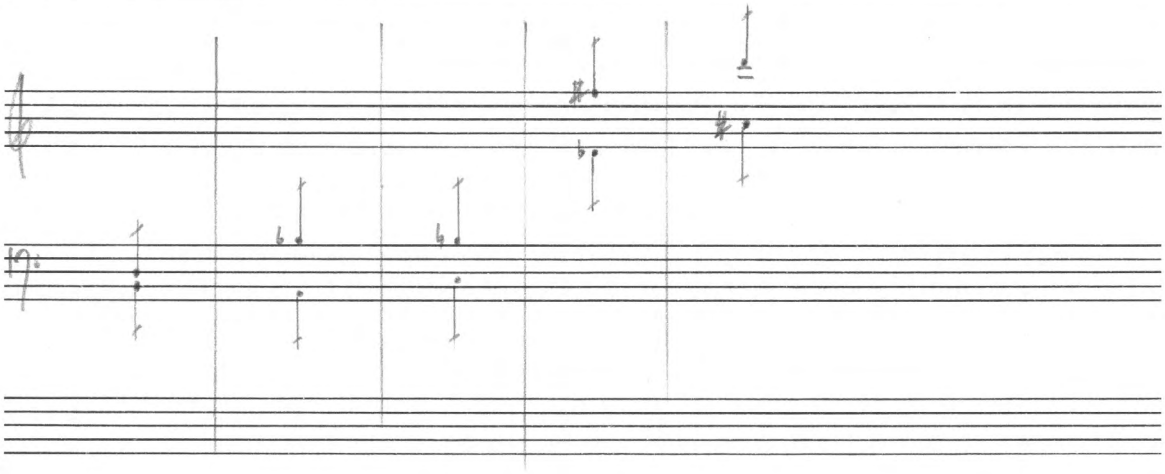
JAMES BENNING (5 frames)
Another piece predicated on the implication of not only fragmented materials, but fields.

Cerenem Journal no. 6

DICKY BAHTO

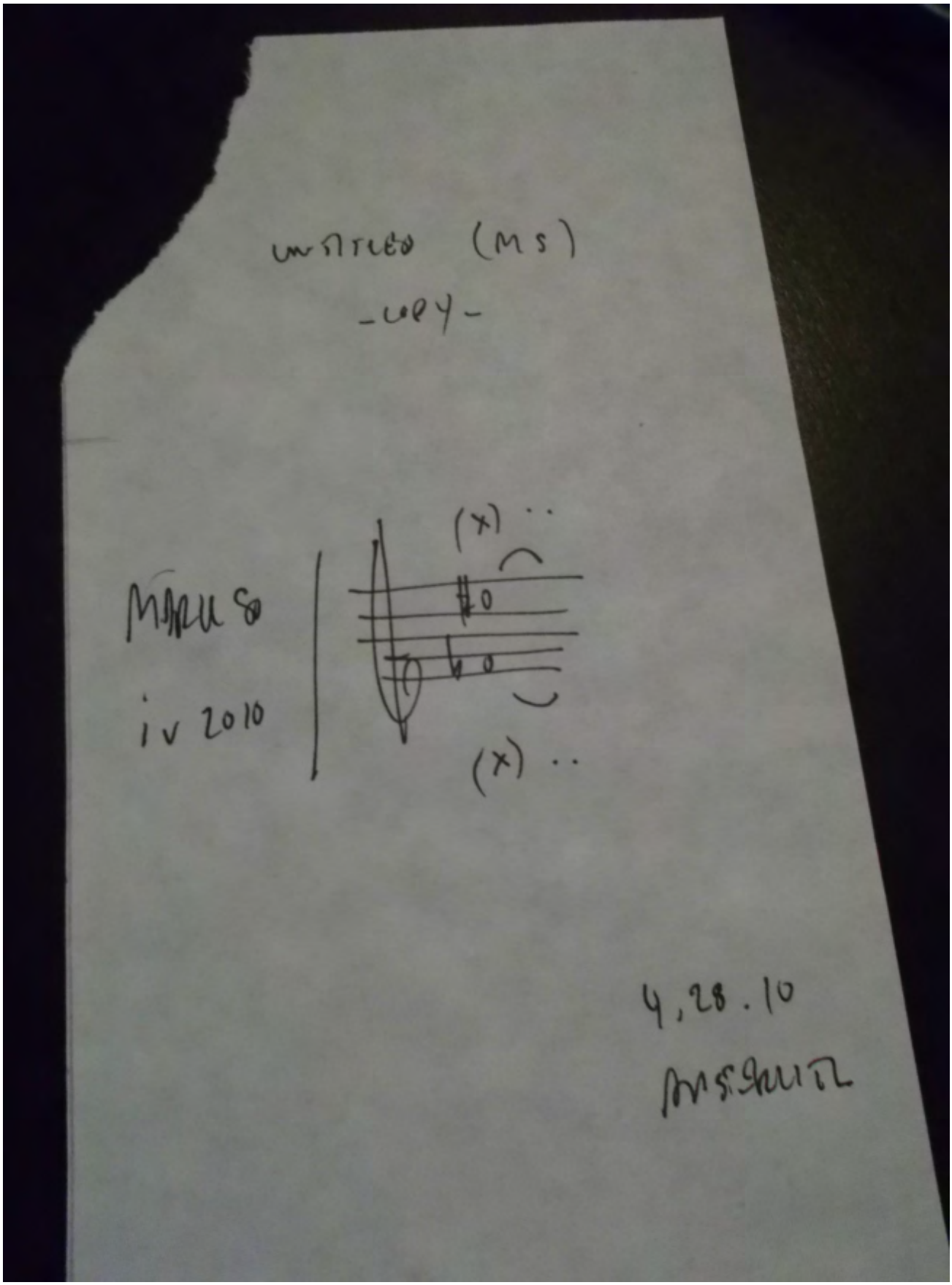
MARK SO

5 DISCRETE INSTANTS (FLASHES)



EXTREMELY PRECISE, SOFT, INSTANTANEOUS

23-25 IV 2010
AUSTERLITZ, NY


UNTITLED (MS)
-COPY-
(X) ..
(X) ..
iv 2010
4.28.10

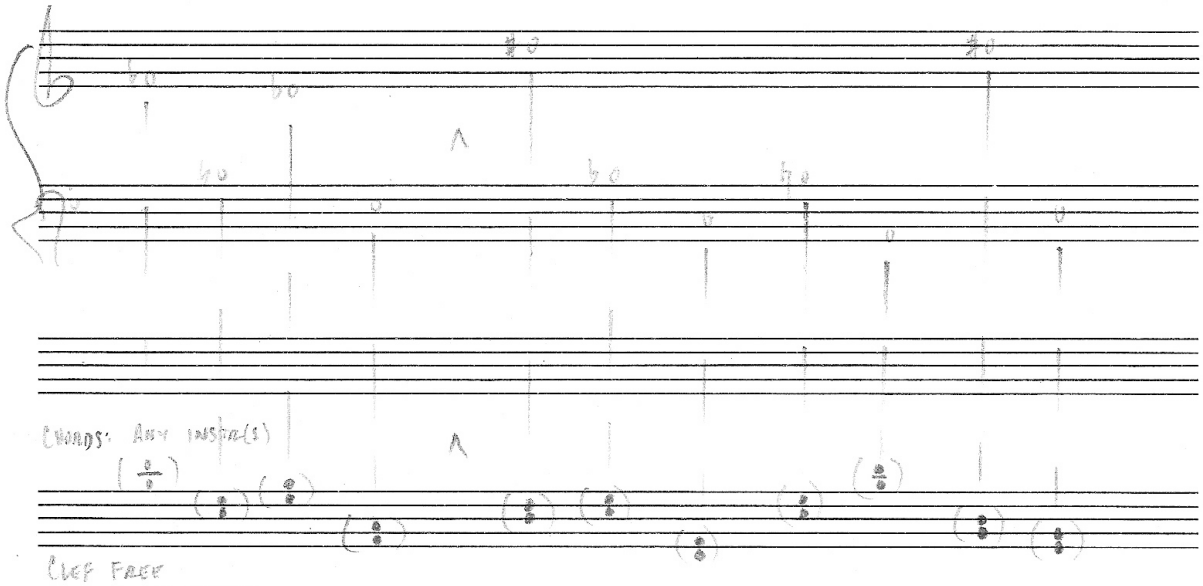
Cerenem Journal no. 6

MIKE RICHARD — MARK SO

MELODY / ACCOM.

NOT LOUD, DURATIONS FREE BUT UNHURRIED

MELODY: 1 OR 2 INSTRUMENTS SHARING/DOUBLING



CHORDS: ANY INSTR(S)

CLEF FREE
ANY ACCIDENTALS
SOMEWHAT TOGETHER WITH MELODIC TONES (SOMETIMES)

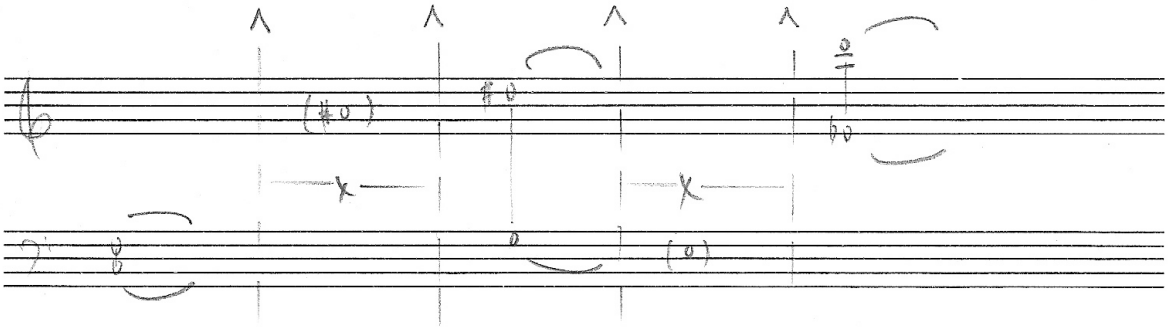
DELIBERATE, WAITING FOR EACH MELODIC TONE/CHORD TO FINISH BEFORE MOVING TO THE NEXT

30-31 V 2010
LOS ANGELES

COLIN FIGEL

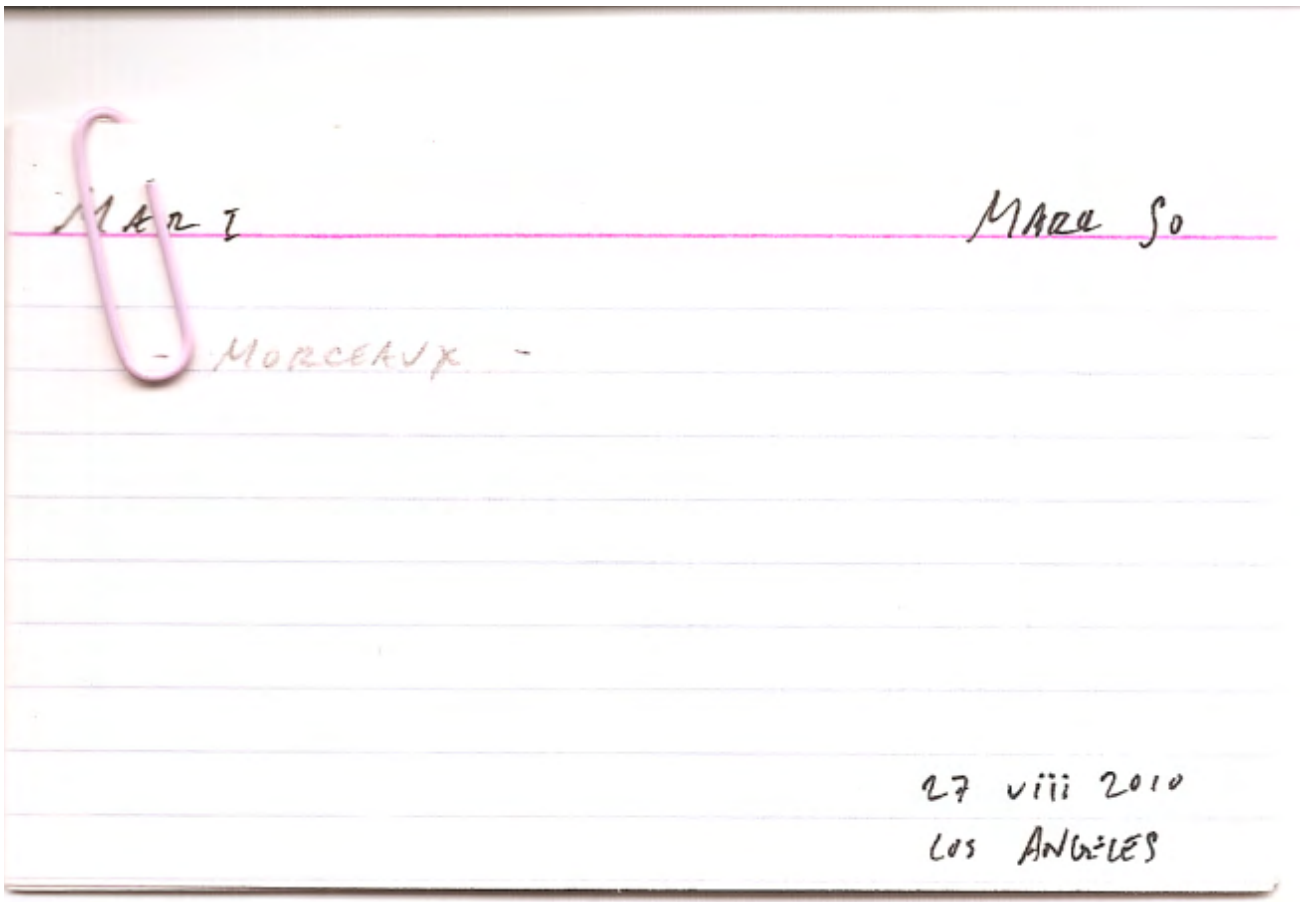
MARK SO

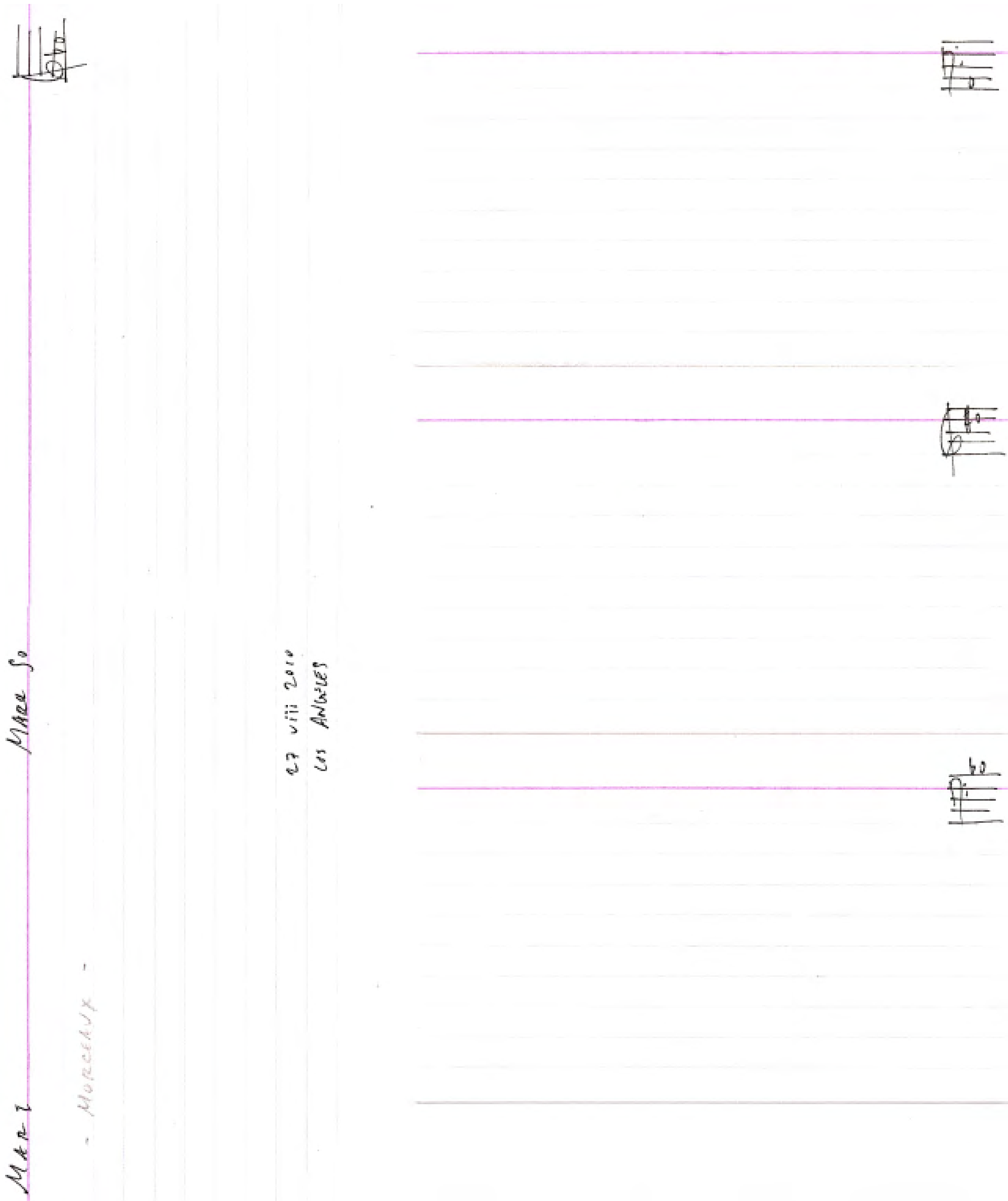
DRUMS AND



X - DRUMS

20-27 VIII 2010
SAN FRAN - LOS ANGELES


MARI
MARA SO
- MORCEAUX -
27 viii 2010
LOS ANGELES


MARI
- MORCEAUX -
27 viii 2010
LOS ANGELES

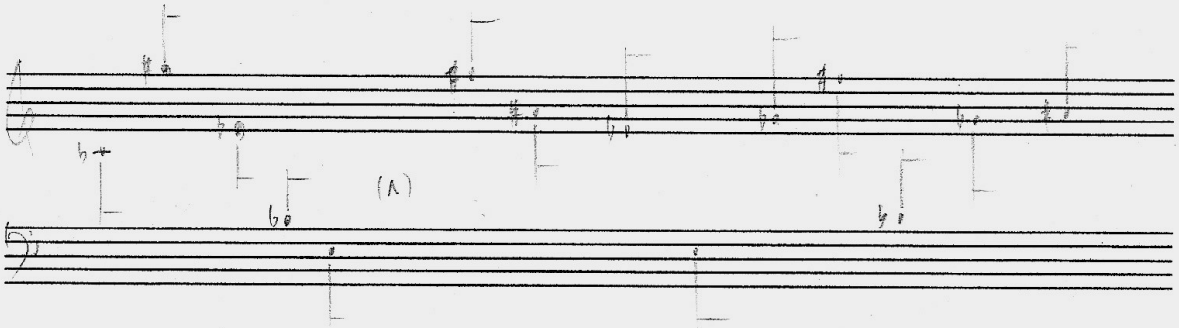
Cerenem Journal no. 6

JULIE TOLENTINO

MARK SO

ANY INSTRUMENT(S)

SOFTLY



EACH TONE LIGHTLY ALONG AN EMERGENT PHRASE; USE A DEEPER POINT OF FOCUS (PERSISTENT/HALTING)

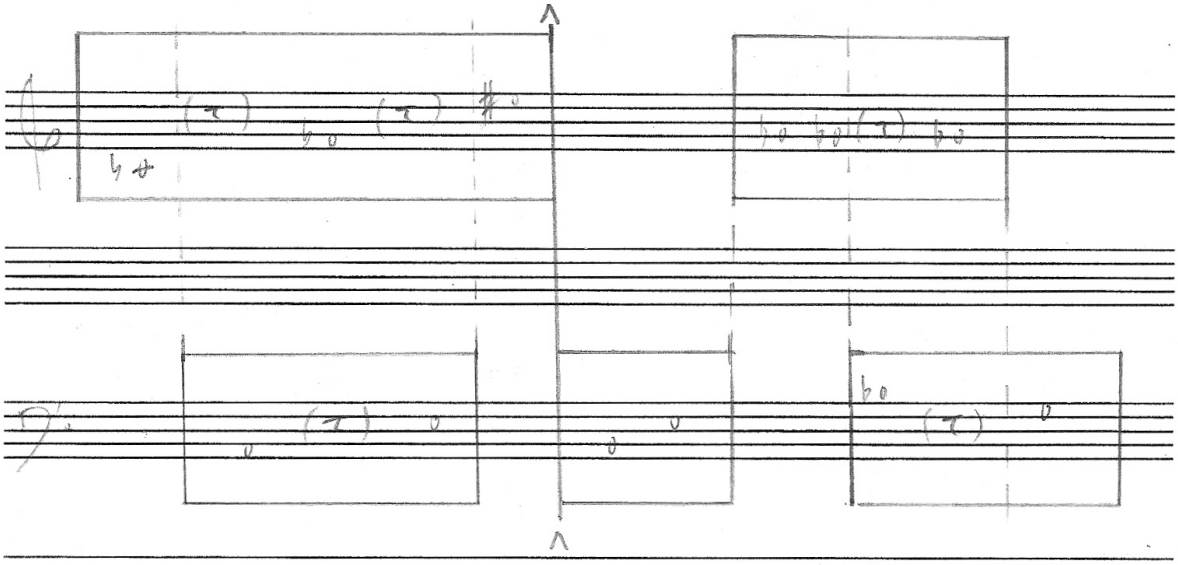
(PERHAPS A FOCUS LINGERING WHILE A PHRASE CARRIES ON, ETC.)

(MULTIPLE INSTRUMENTS MAY SHARE OR DOUBLE, FREELY BUT DELIBERATELY)

3 IX 2010
LOS ANGELES

JAMES BENNING — MARK SO

5 FRAMES



EACH FRAME STILL & CLEAR, PREOCCUPIED WITH ITS OWN FIELD

FRAMES GENERALLY ALIGN AS INDICATED, METRICAL WITHIN. DISPOSED FREELY

(LIKE NOTHING)

31 XII 2010
LOS ANGELES

(7) 2011

JOHN CAGE
Like MERCE CUNNINGHAM, written on burning paper, this time treating the two lists as two grids, each qualified by the backing material as a different metallic tone. [*opposite*]

MORTON FELDMAN
An uncannily Feldmanesque approach to counterpoint, for pianos; also coincidentally, probably the first implication of the emergent 3-voice treatment in the form it takes later on (I know I've been telegraphing this development for a while now. . .)

The next few getting a little more free-form, also a little more 'sketchy'—as per the previous two, an attempt to really push the form, but now combining their deliberate craftsmanship with a more spontaneous head/hand—they're almost expressionistic and hard to pin down in their variety:

AARON SPAFFORD [*over next pages*]

ROBBIE HANSEN JR

LUCIE JANE BLEDSOE

VOLKER STRAEBEL

STOSH FILA/PIG PEN one and the same person

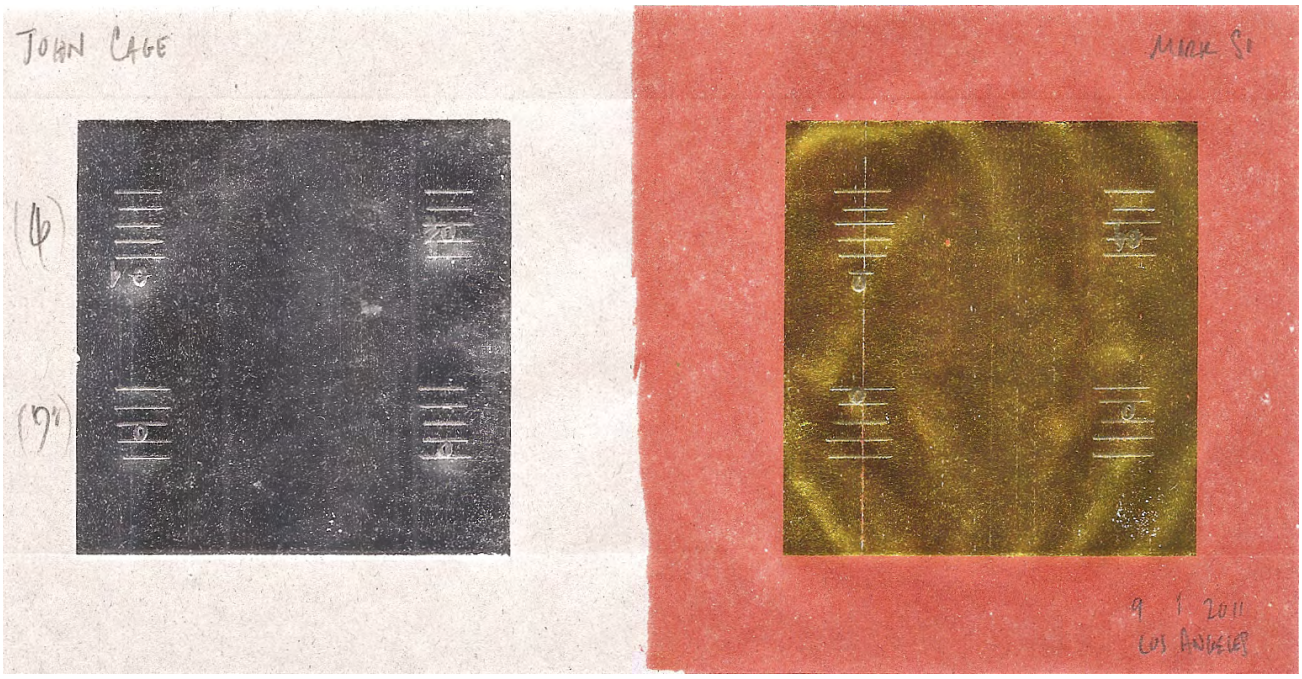
NICOLAS MILLER

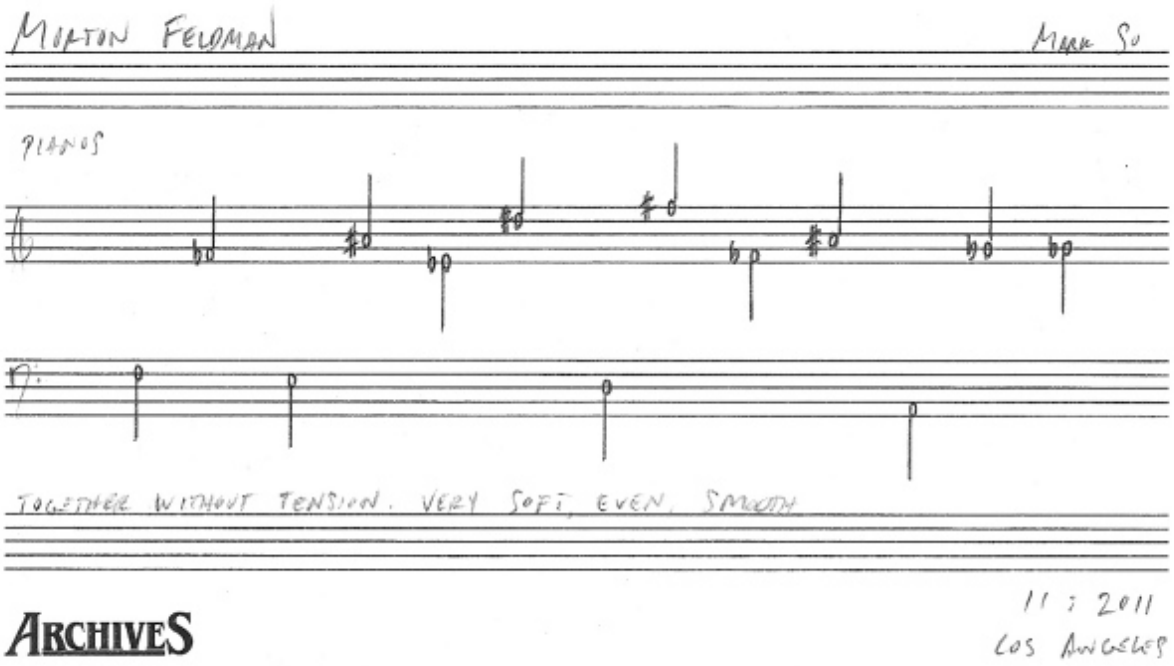
BLINKY PALERMO

DAVID HUGHES

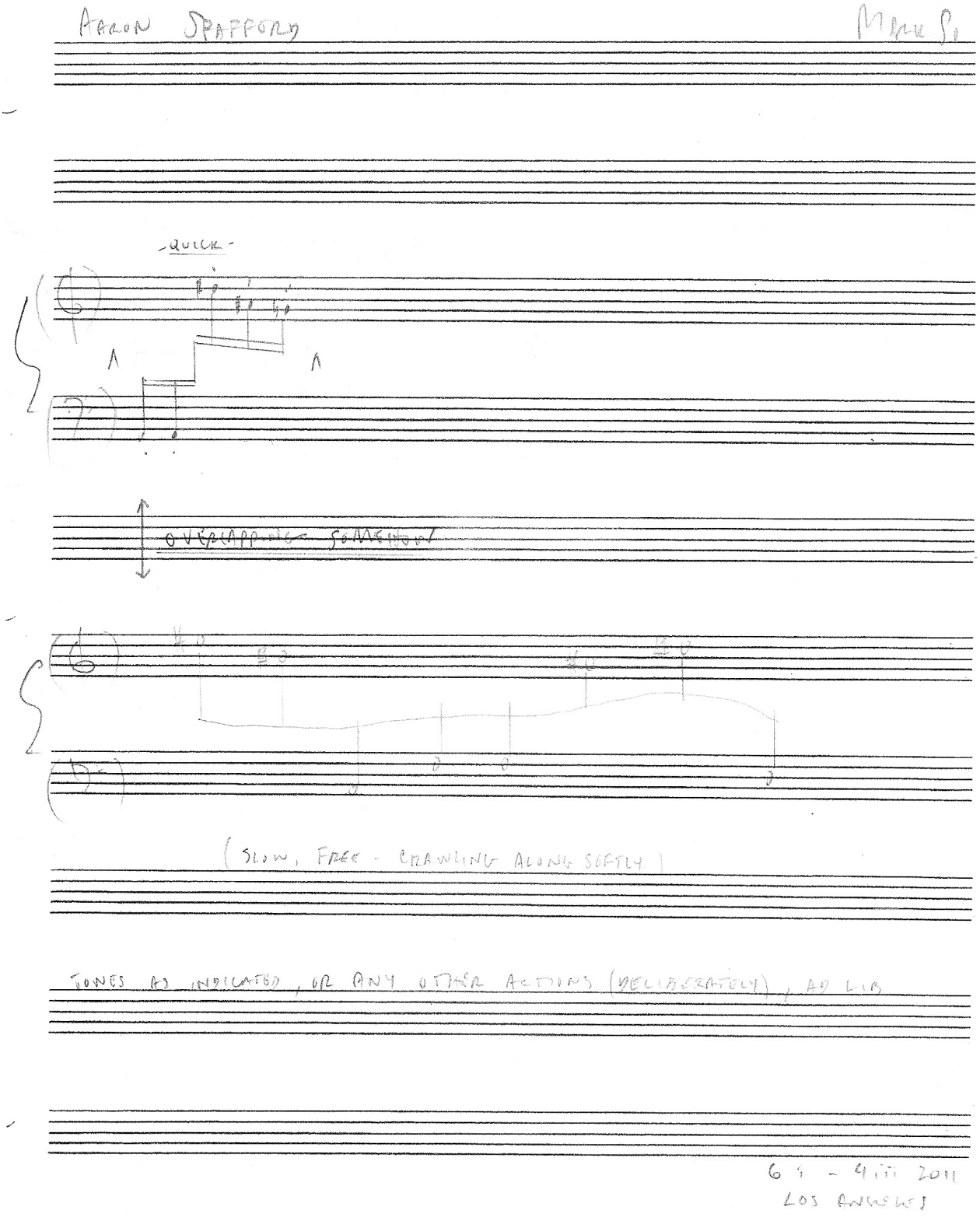
ANDREW MILLER

JONATHAN JACKSON


JOHN CAGE
MARK SO
9 1 2011
LOS ANGELES

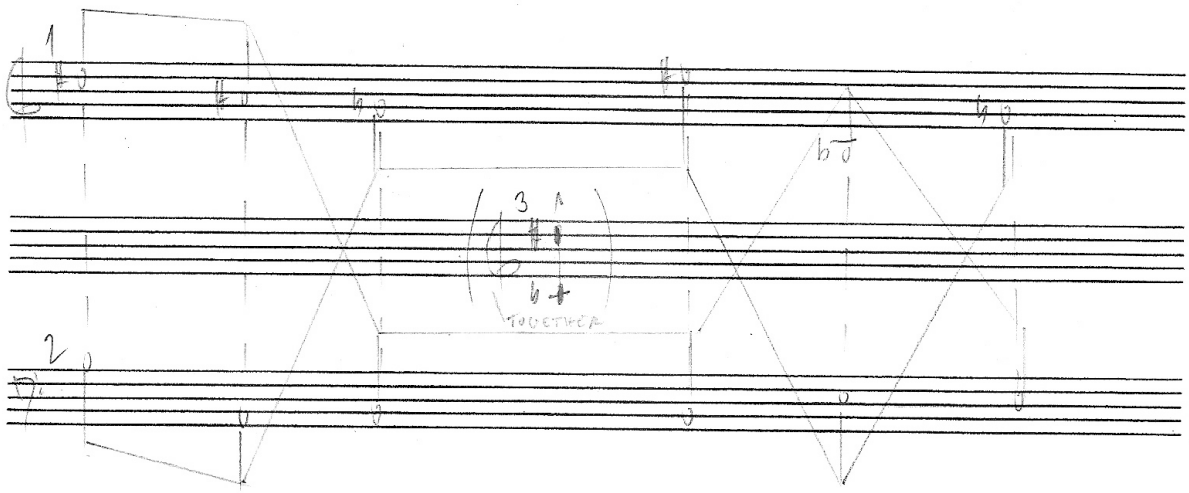

MORTON FELDMAN
MARK SO
PIANOS
TOGETHER WITHOUT TENSION. VERY SOFT, EVEN, SMOOTH
ARCHIVES
11 : 2011
LOS ANGELES

Cerenem Journal no. 6



ROBBIE HANSEN, JR. MARK SO

SOMEWHAT NORMAL

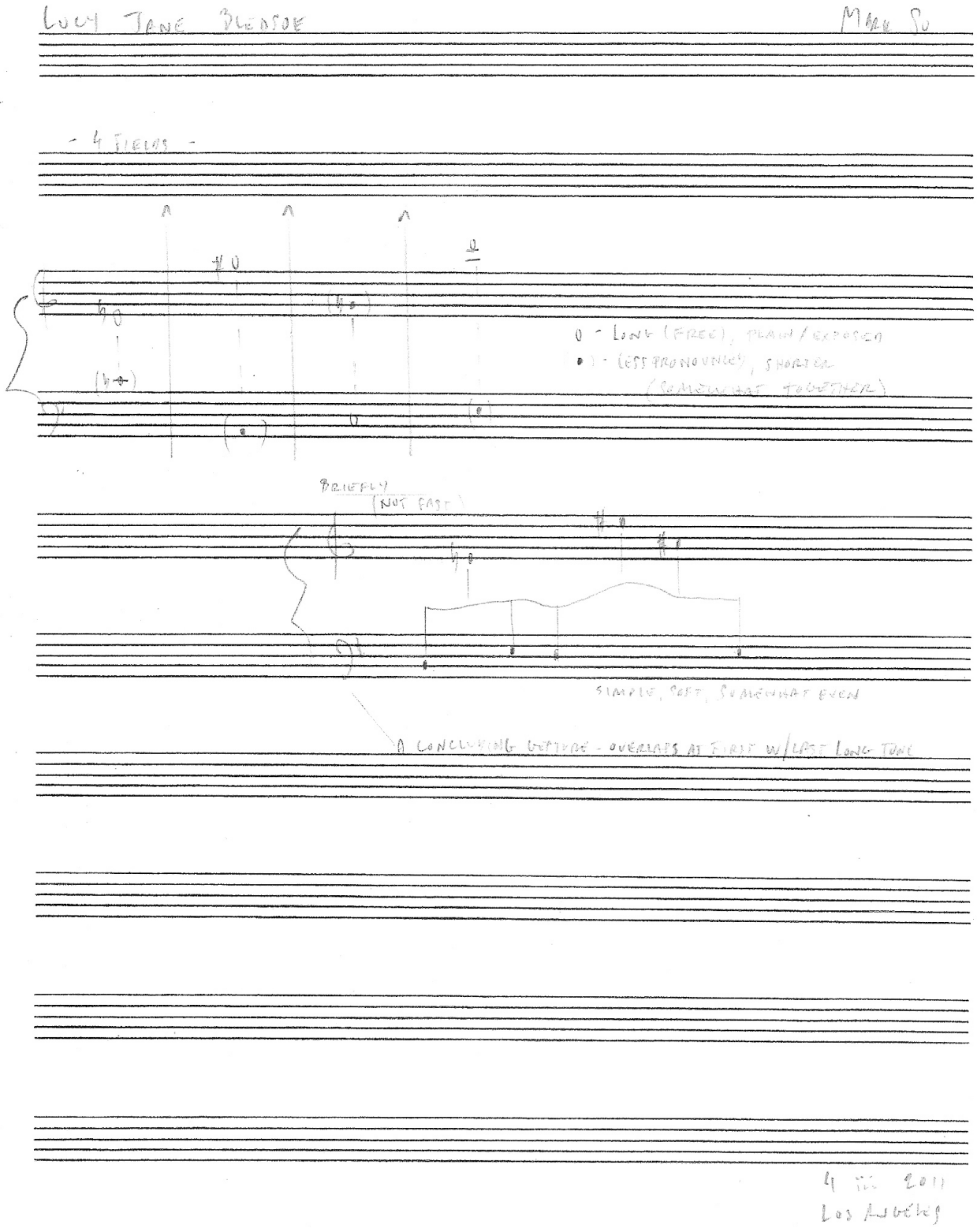


1 & 2 - STRAIGHTFORWARD. SLOW & FREE. LOOSELY TOGETHER ONE NOTE TO THE NEXT

3 - ONCE IN THE MIDST OF THE OTHER PARTS. INDEPENDENTLY. PRECISE AND FLEETING

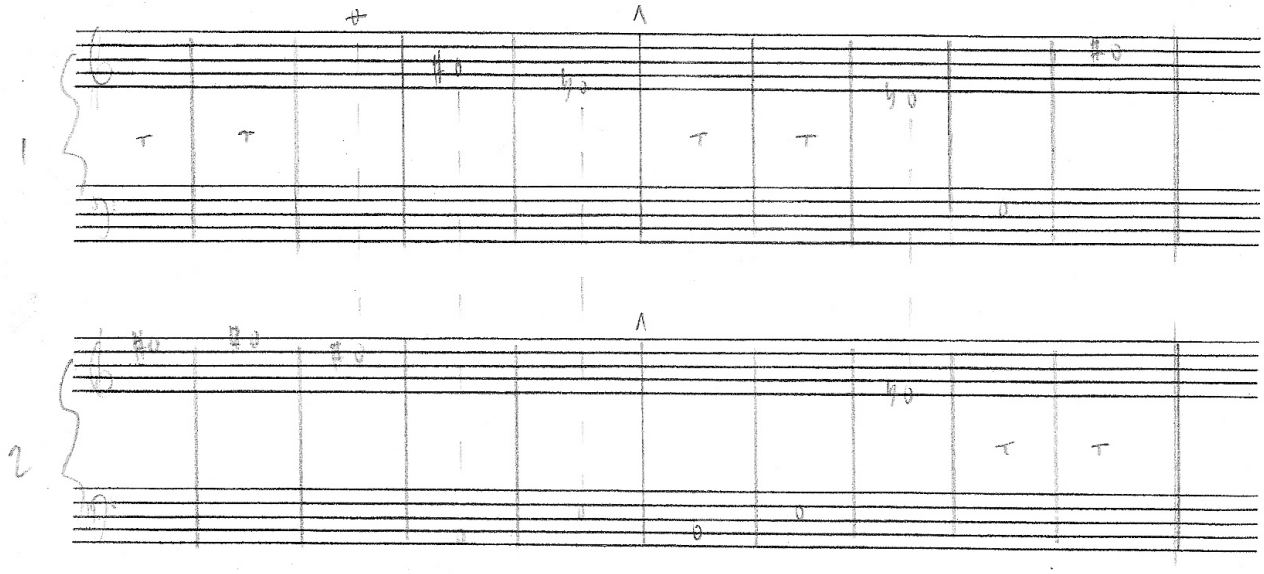
4 III 2011
LOS ANGELES

Cerenem Journal no. 6



VOLKER STRAEBEL — MARK SI

- 2 OPPOSITE SOURCES -



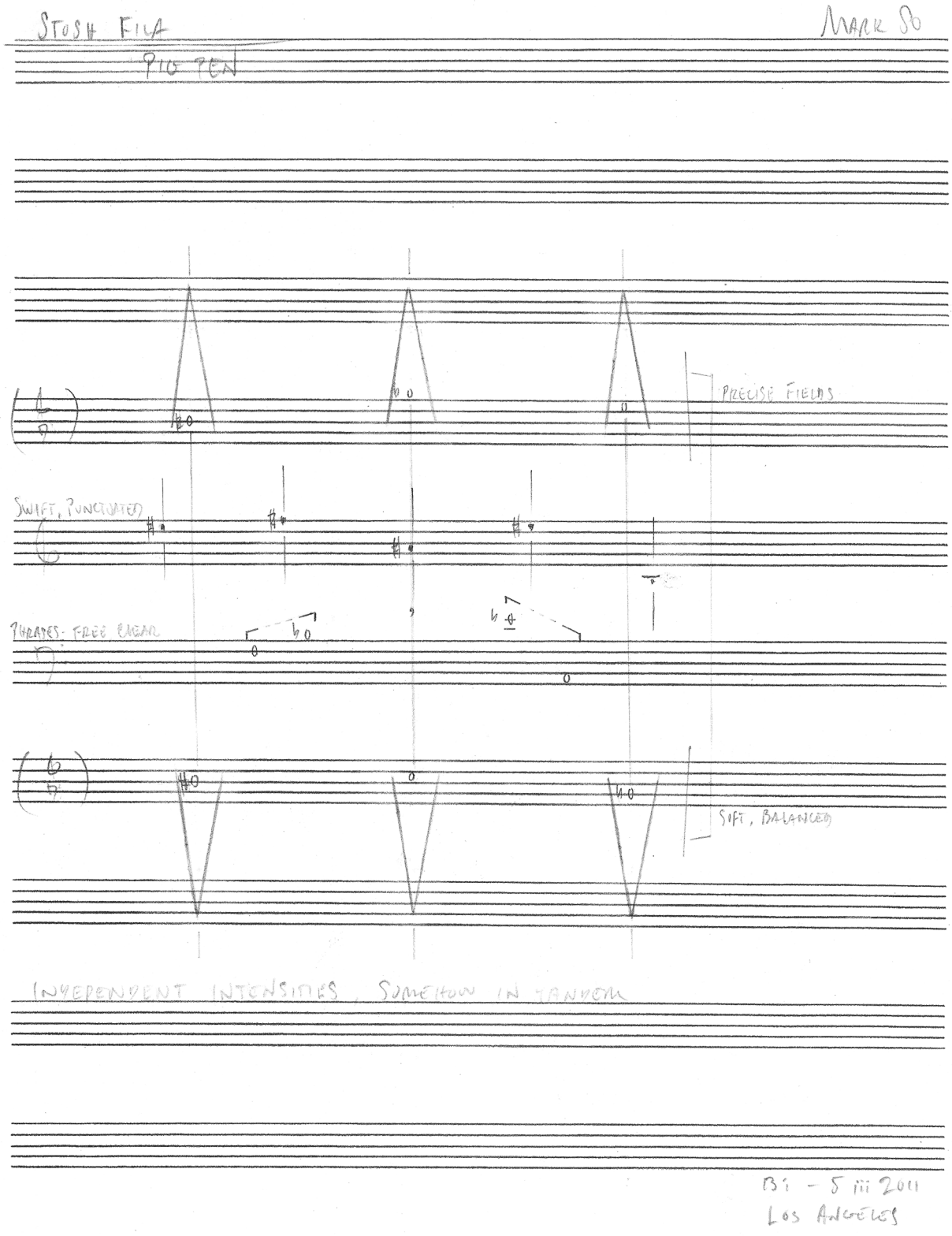
LONG TONES SIMPLE & CLEAR, NOT LOUD; A SHORT BREAK BETWEEN BARS

WHEN BOTH HAVE A NOTE IN THE SAME BAR, ONE TONE CONNECTS TO THE OTHER (EITHER BEGINS)

IF NOTE(S) UNAVAILABLE, A DISCRETE ATMOSPHERE MAY BE SUBSTITUTED FOR A TONE

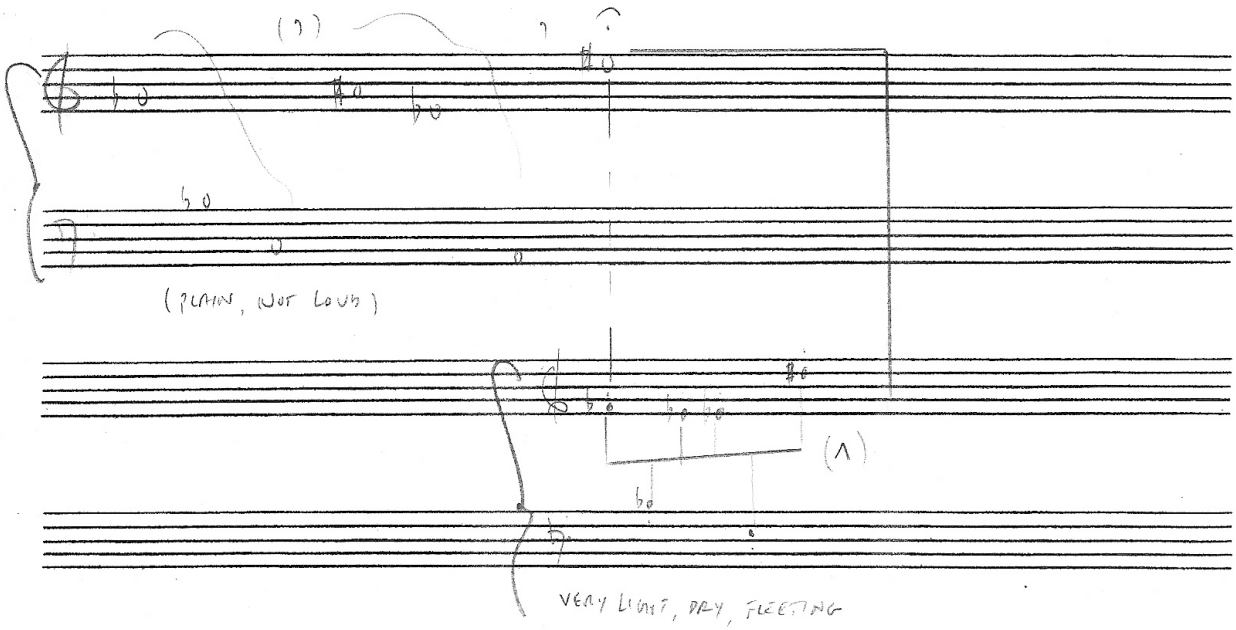
4 III 2011
LOS ANGELES

Cerenem Journal no. 6



NICOLAS MULLER

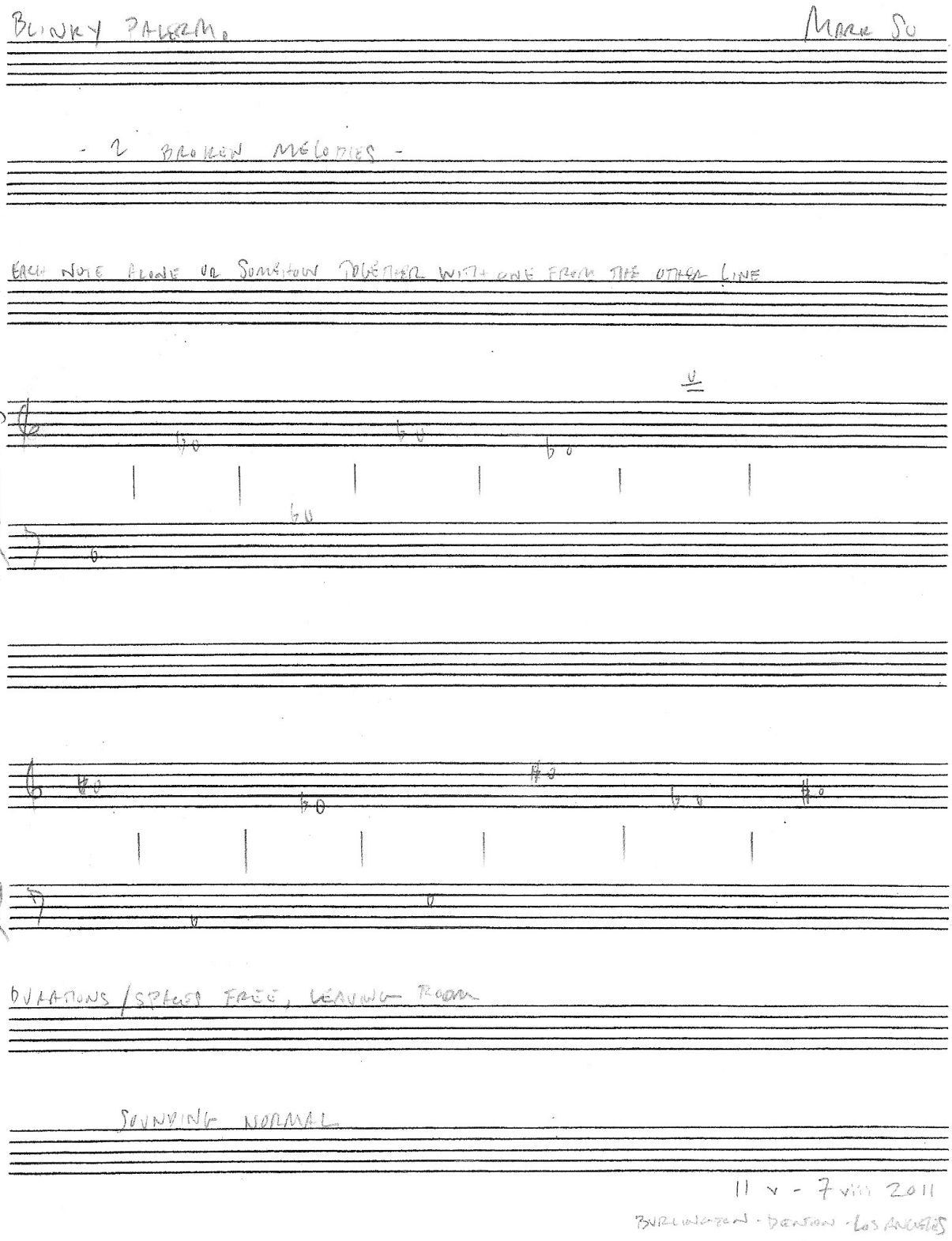
MARK SO



17 iv - 7 viii 2011

CHARLESTON SC - SYRACUSE - DENTON - LOS ANGELES

Cerenem Journal no. 6



DAVID HUGHES

MARK DE

CONSISTENT, SOFT, CONTINUOUS -

RELAXED, UNEVENNESS

WHILE THE ABOVE IS UNDERWAY:

PERFORATING -

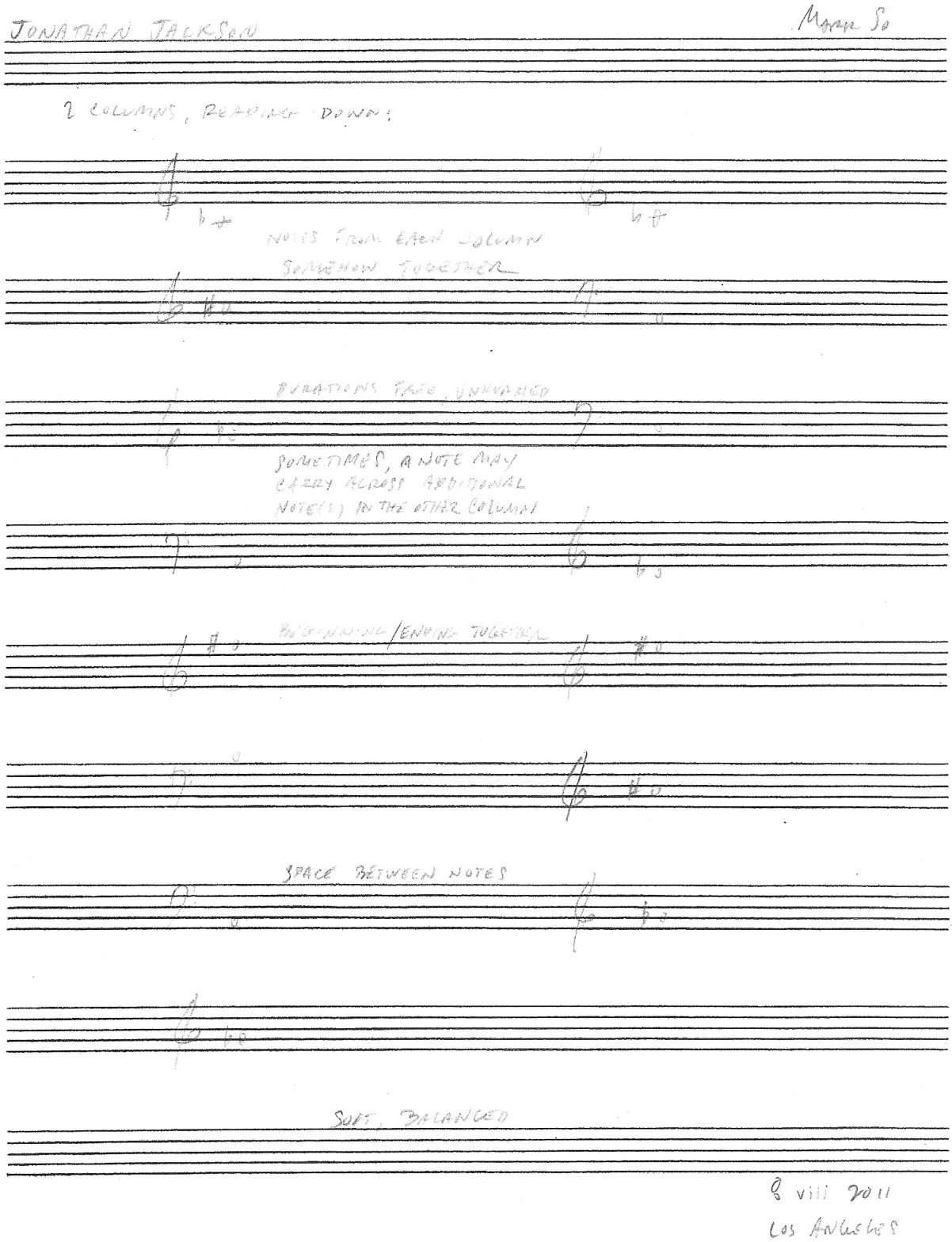
BRIEF STRIKES, SPACED FREELY

X - MAY BE PLAYED AS A PERCUSSIVE NOISE-SOUND

11 V - 7 VIII 2011

DURLINGTON - DENTON - LOS ANGELES

Cerenem Journal no. 6



MARTIN BACK [*over next pages*]

LIZ KOTZ
This one introduces a layered visual experience into the writing/scoring itself (sharpie & pencil), integral to the composition yet indeterminate in terms of the score (a consequence of certain other pieces which have involved a strong visual/material aspect).

MILTON BABBITT

JOHN BARRY

CHARITY COLEMAN
Layered writing again, this time with a corrected draft aspect.

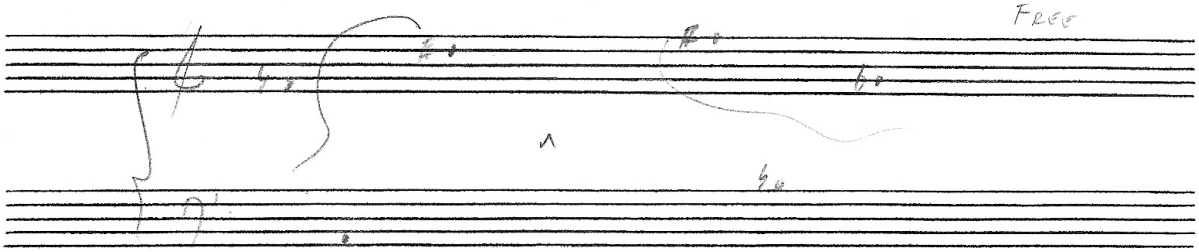
ANNE PORTER

Cerenem Journal no. 6

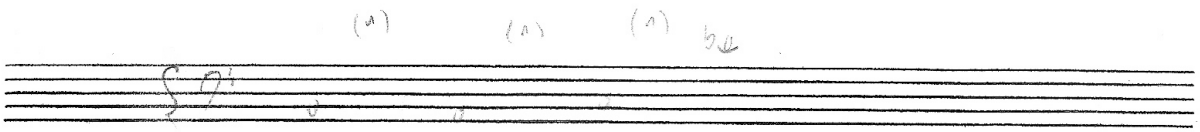
MARTIN BRECK — MARK SO

ASSEMBLED:

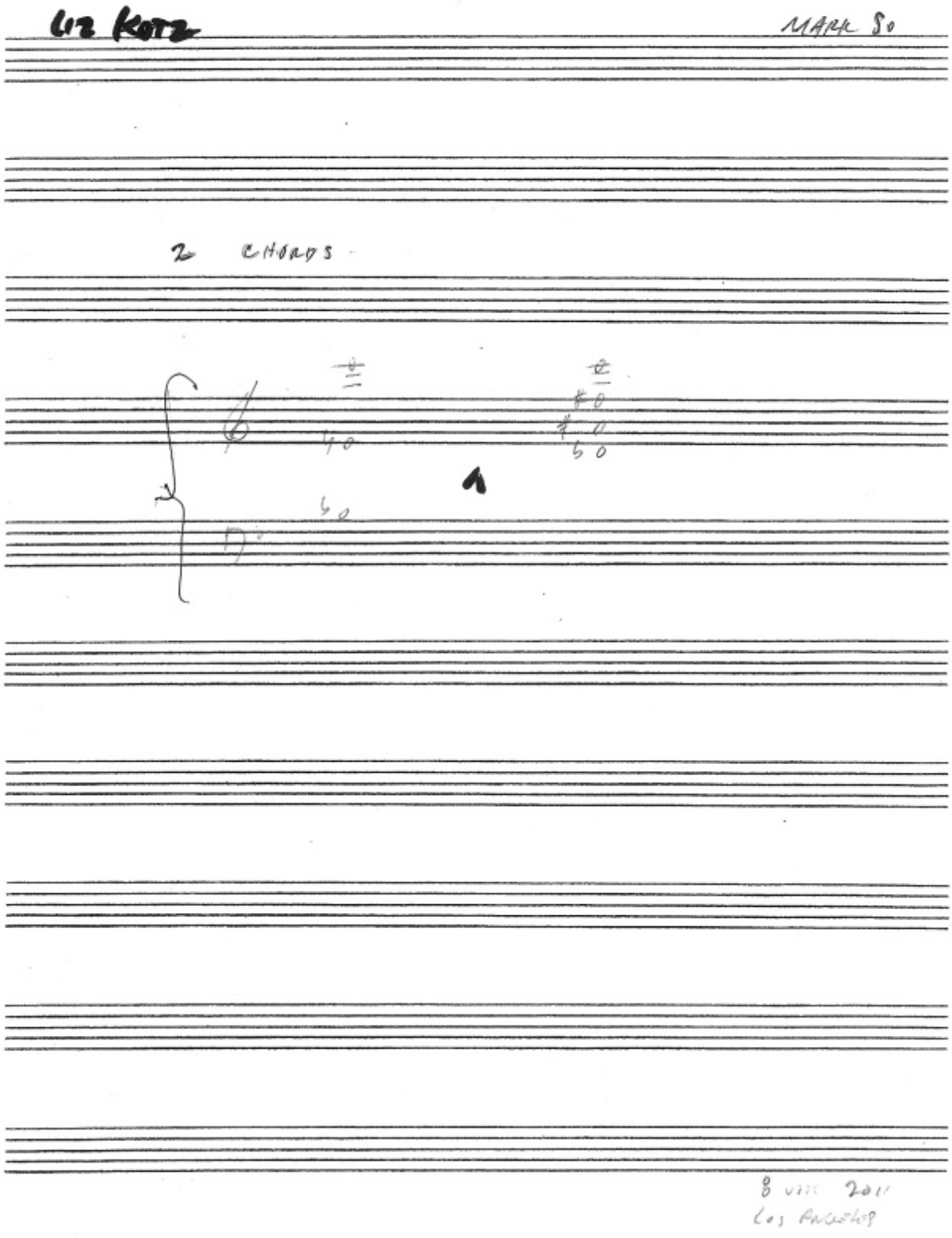
2 SHORT MELODIES —



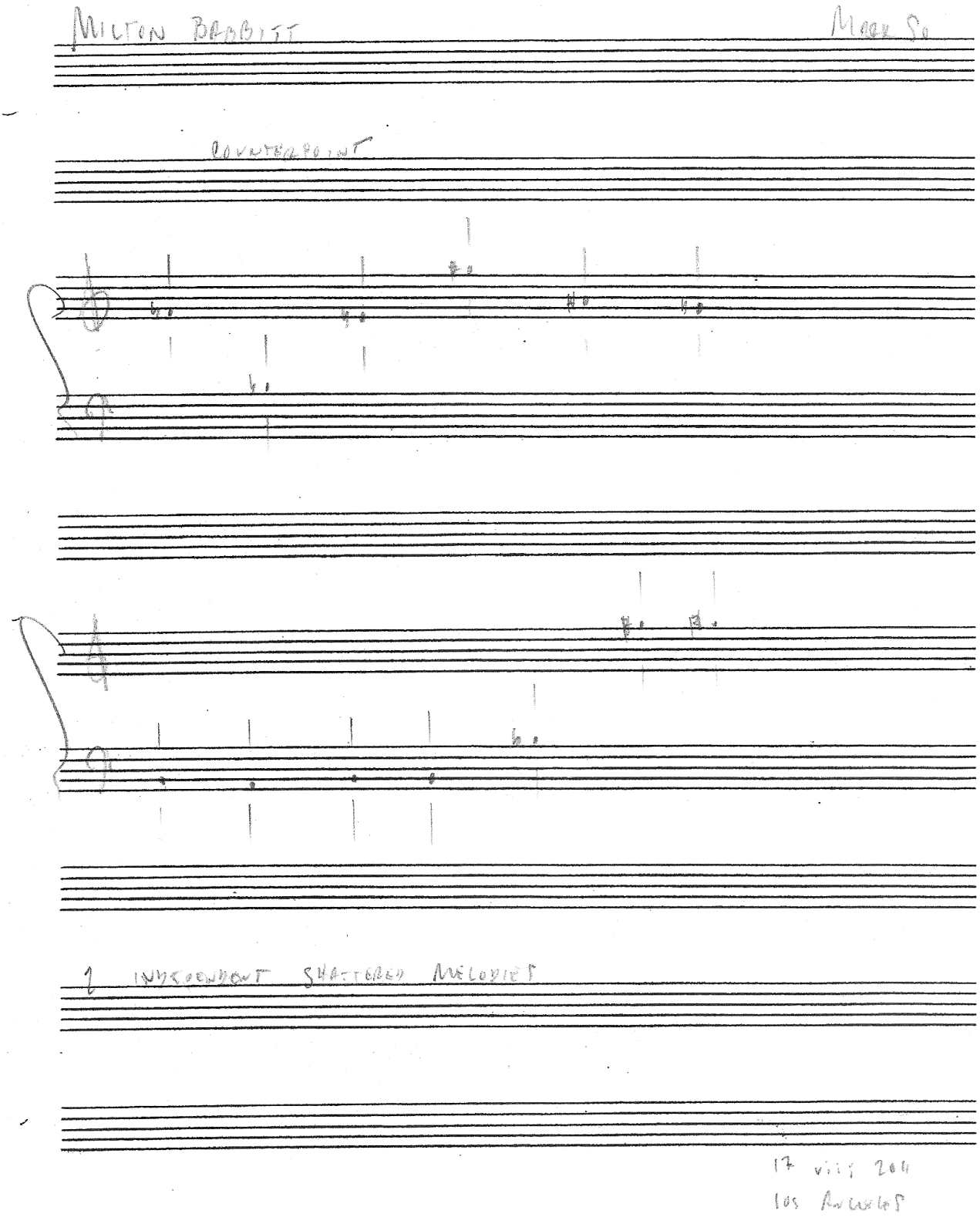
SOMEWHAT BROKEN, LONG TONES —



8 VIII 2011
LOS ANGELES


LIZ KOTZ
MARK SO
2 CHORDS
D°
8 VIII 2011
Los Angeles

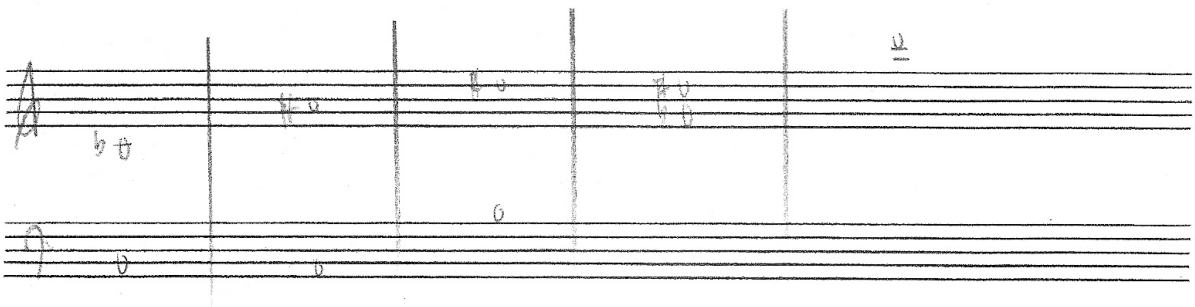
Cerenem Journal no. 6



John Gibby

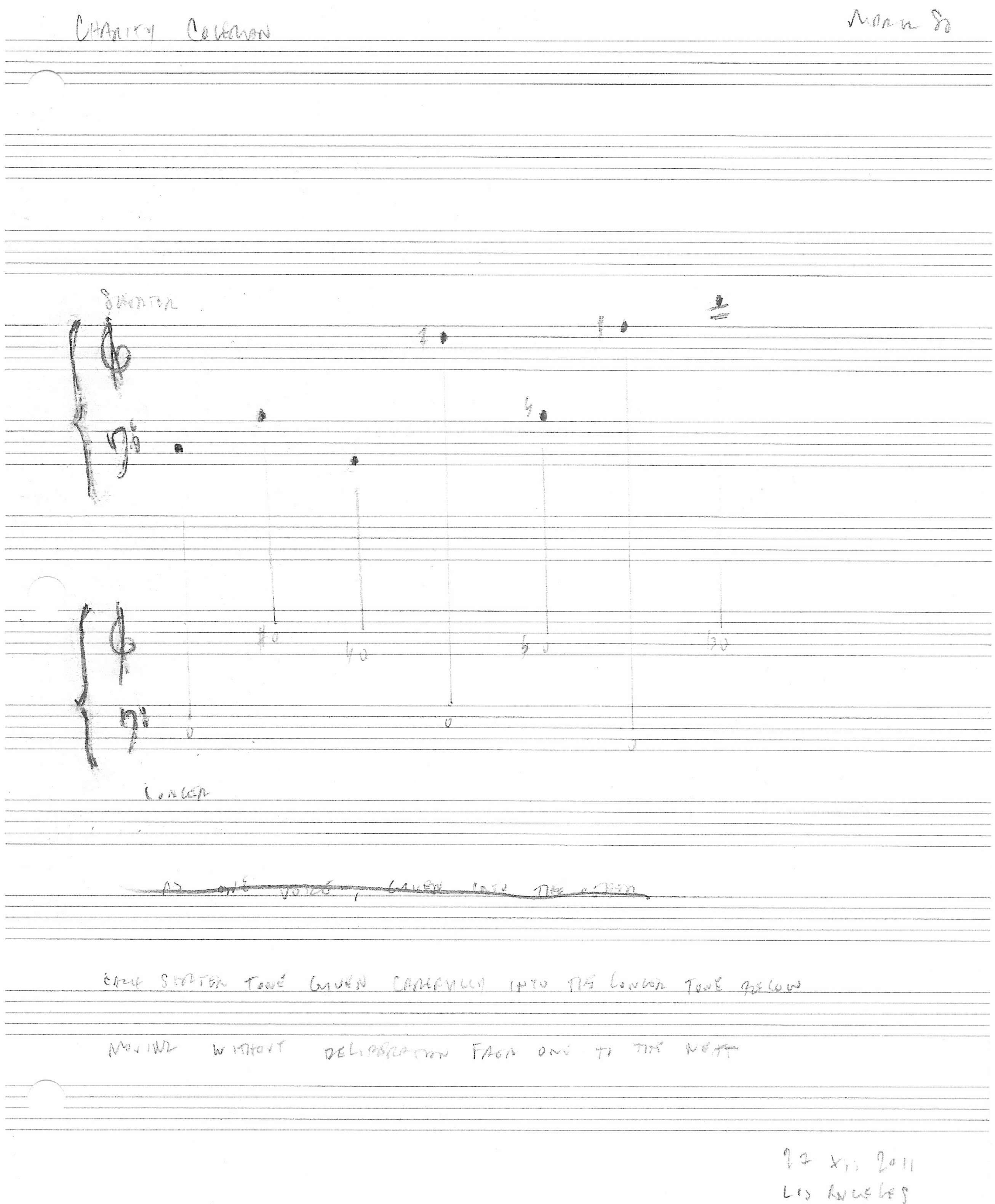
Mark So

5 Cellos



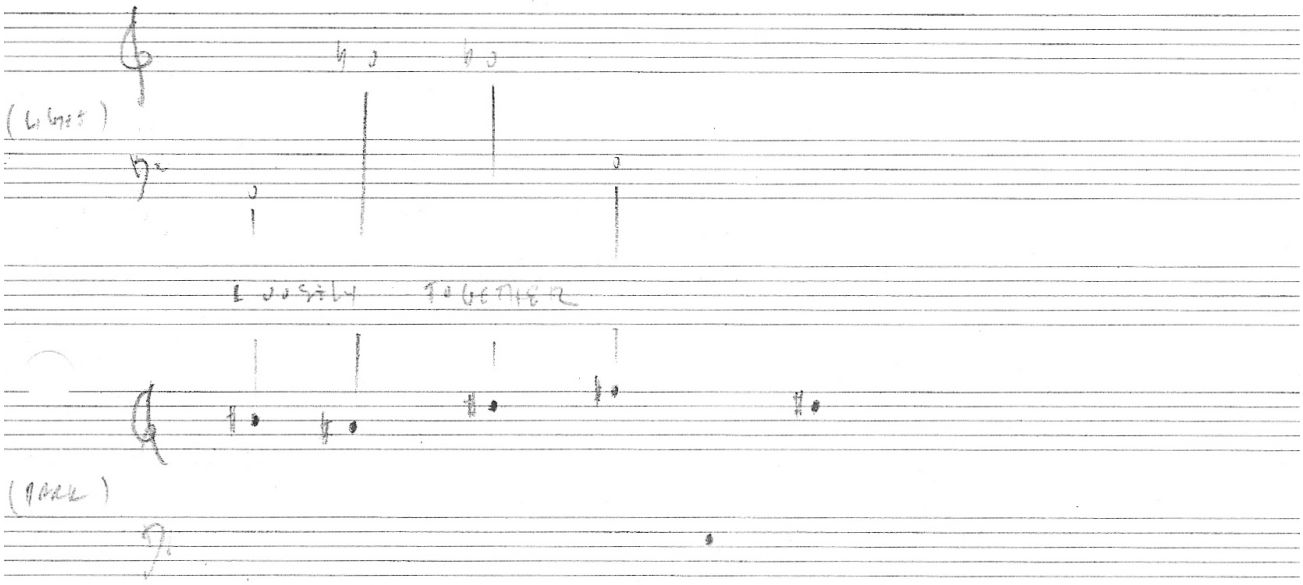
EACH FULL SECTION IN ITS PLACE

17 VIII 2014
Los Angeles


SHORTER
LONGER
EACH SHORTER TONE GIVEN CAREFULLY INTO THE LONGER TONE BELOW
MOVING WITHOUT DELIBERATION FROM ONE TO THE NEXT
22 XII 2011
LOS ANGELES

ANNE PORTER

MOZART



AUSTERE BUT NOT RIGID

28 XII 2011
LOS ANGELES

(8) 2012

Some more rather spontaneous & idiosyncratic ones, letting forms emerge in the sketching of the name, but swinging between characterizing the subject in some way and doing a very even and elegant distribution study of the field of notes, almost as though mapped on a grid:

JONATHAN MARMOR [*over next pages*]

LUTHER PRICE

GEORGES DELERUE
4 stave form emerges

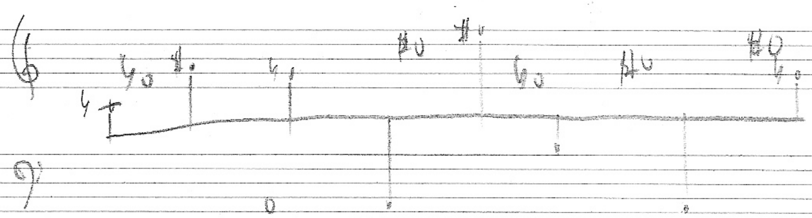
ROALD AMUNDSEN

CHRISTOPH GIRARD
4 staves again

VIOLA AND (for Natalie Fender Brejcha)
Another instrumental piece that's de facto a name piece, this time dispensing with clefs (since it's not a name piece, *per se*) but holding to a very clear grid; also, using triads; this one was commissioned by the dedicatee for viola with percussionist and dancer, so the idea was that it could potentially but not necessarily score all three activities.

TOMORROW MORNING

MARK SO

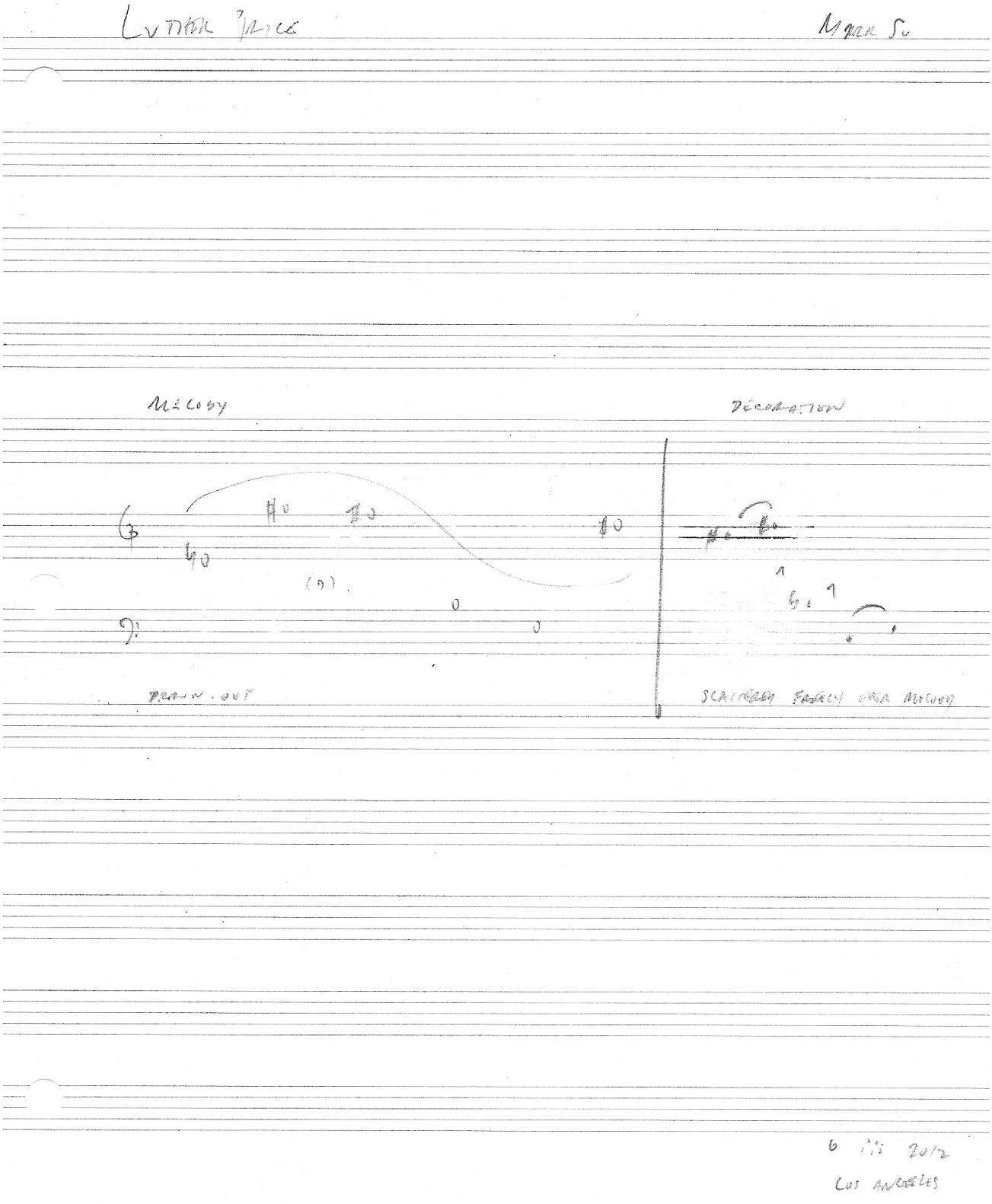


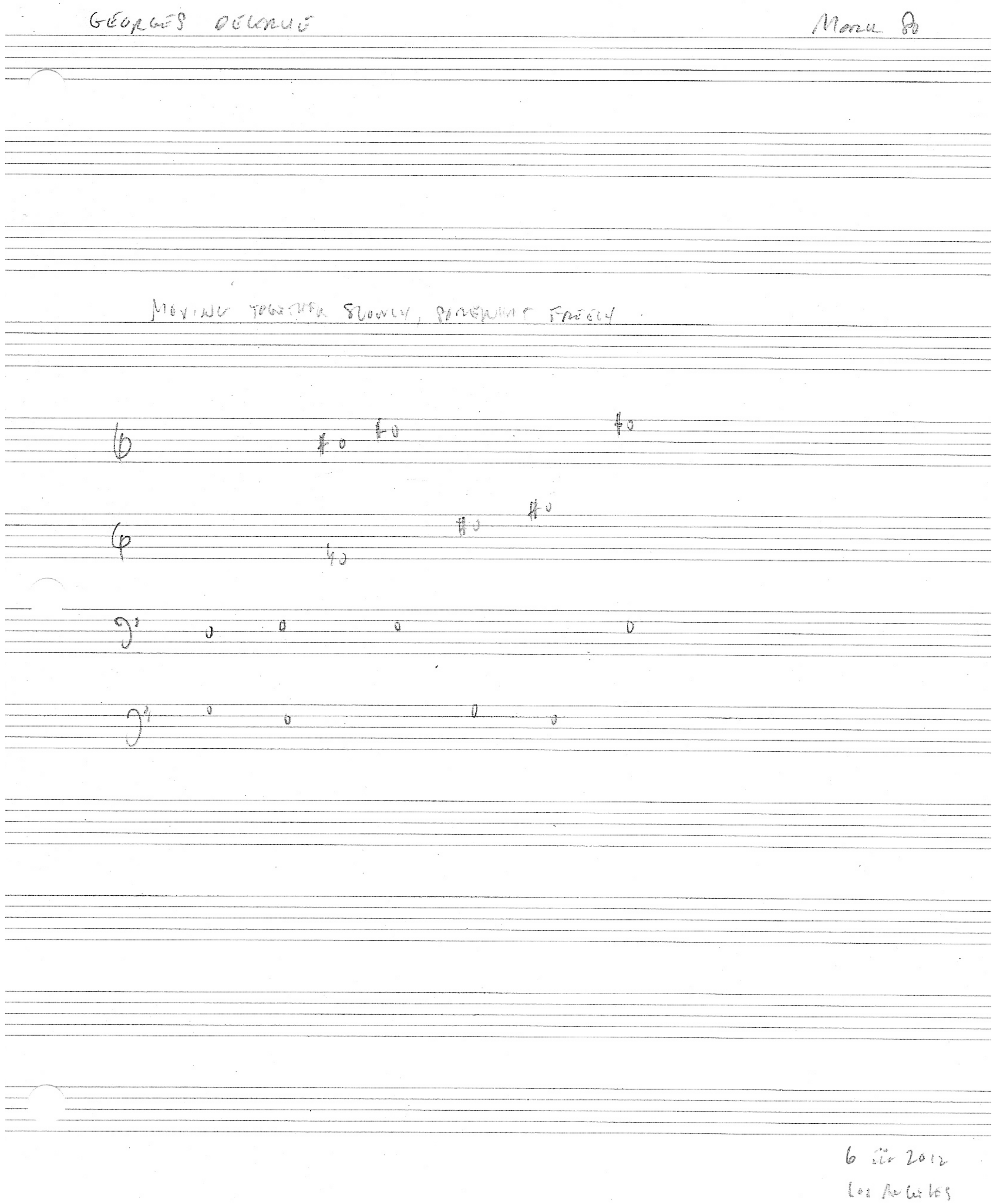
PART EVEN, PART OUT

(SOMEBODY TOGETHER)

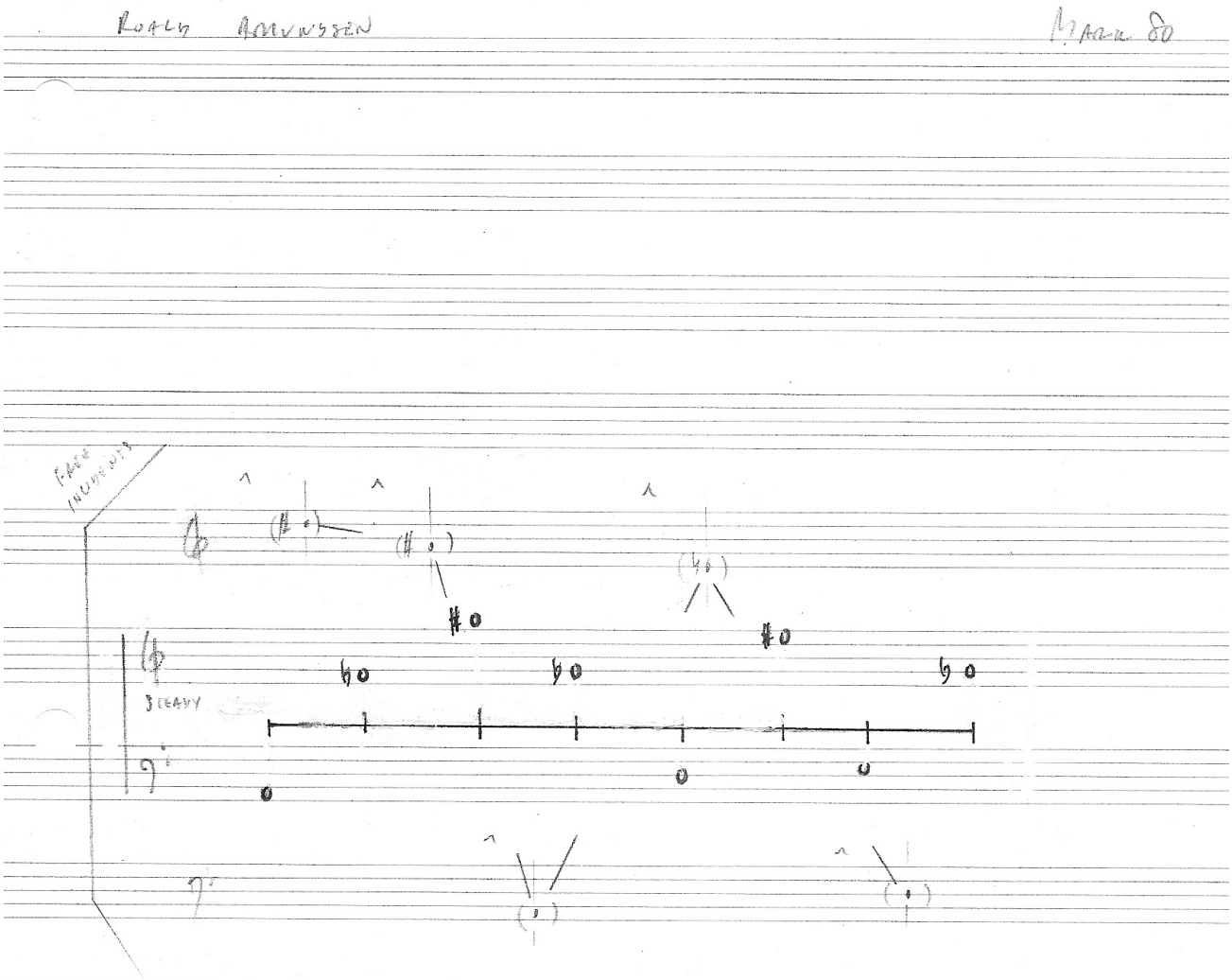
5 iii 2012
LOS ANGELES

Cerenem Journal no. 6

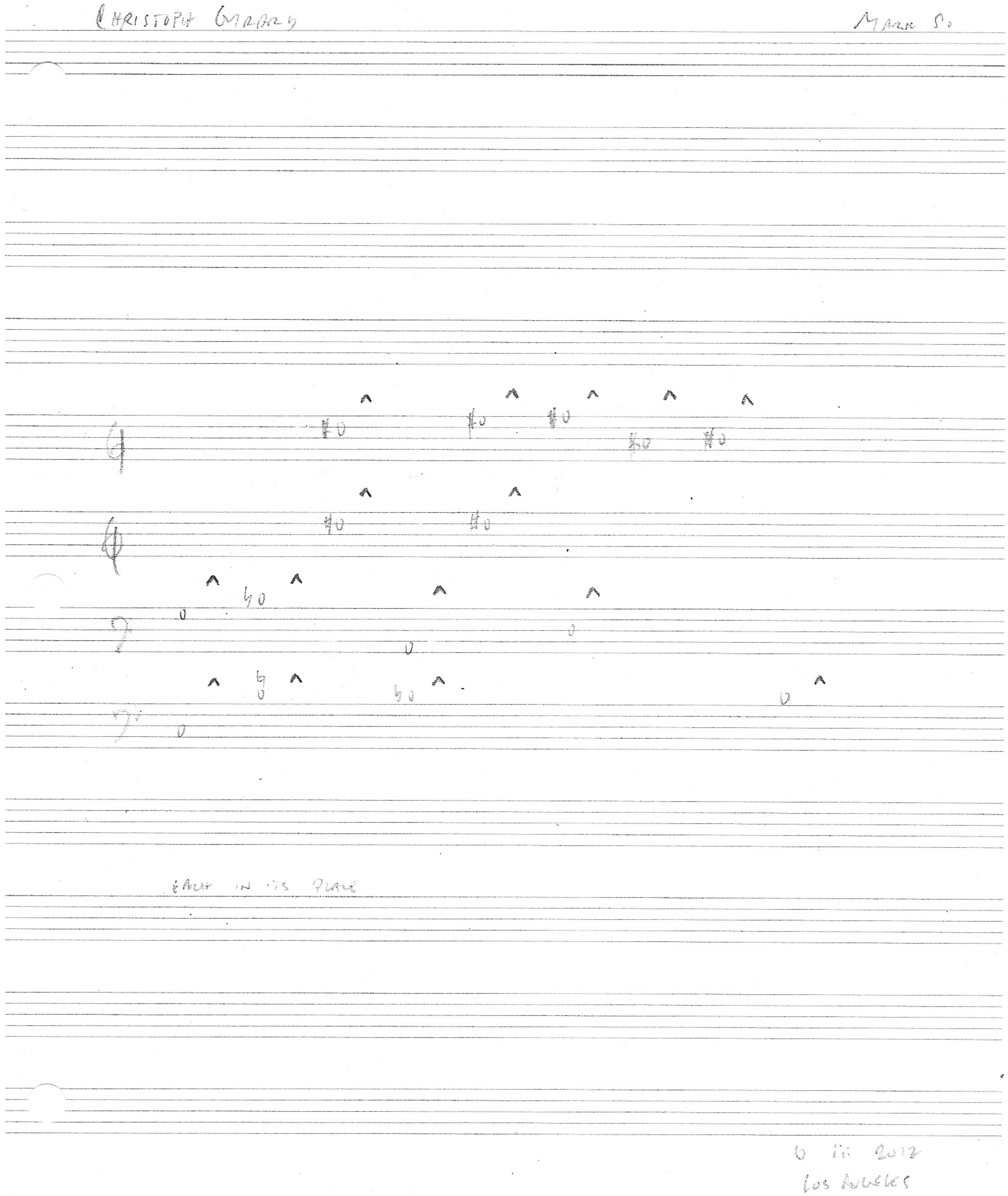



GEORGES DELERUE
MOVING TOGETHER SLOWLY, SOMEWHAT FREELY
6 JUN 2012
Los Angeles

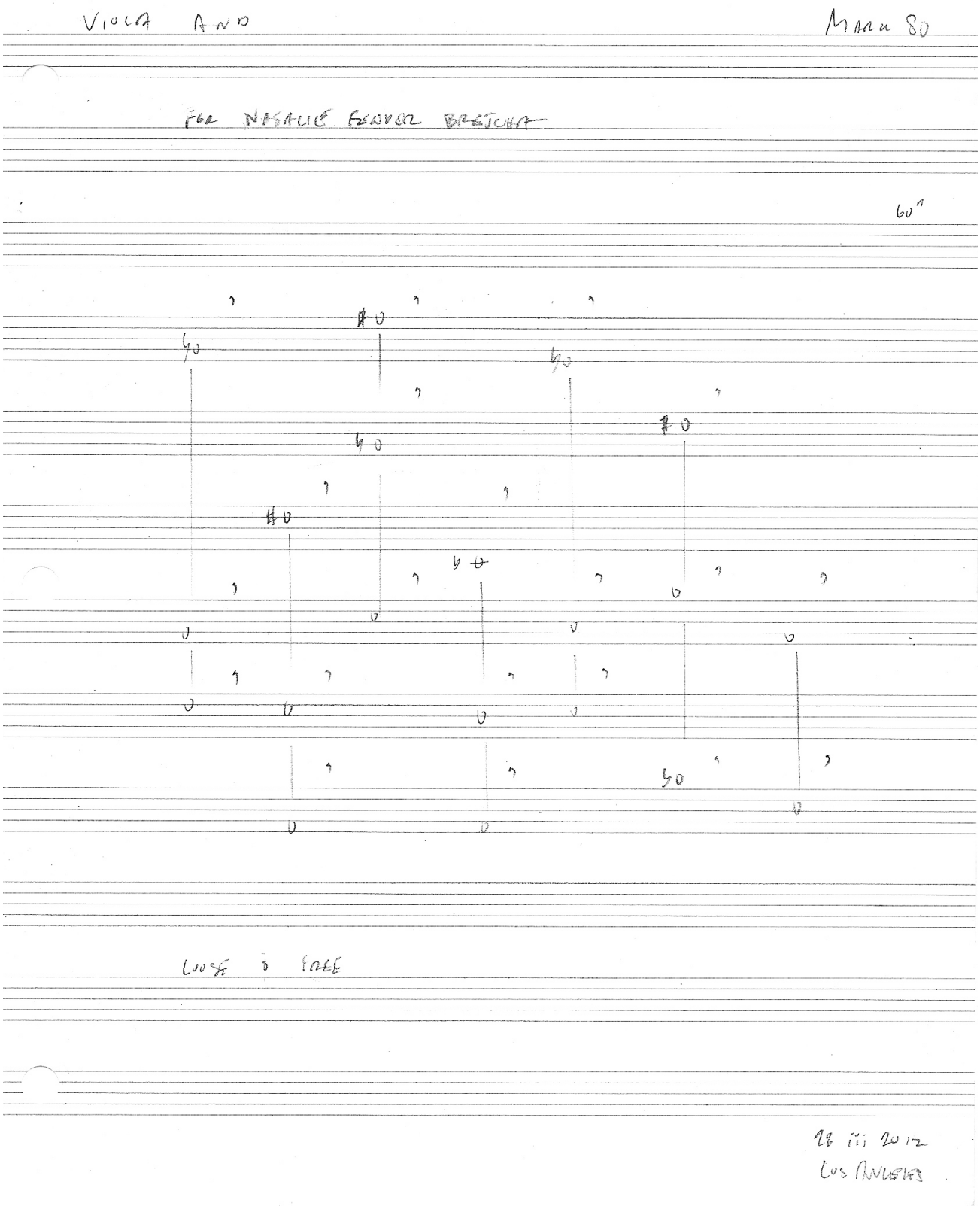
Cerenem Journal no. 6



6 III 2012
Los Angeles


MARK SO
EACH IN ITS PLACE
6 iii 2012
LOS ANGELES

Cerenem Journal no. 6



The 4 stave format really gets established here, and the variations get reduced to a matter of open or closed note heads, kinds of separations between events, and implicit variations in quality of simultaneity; all pencil/rather quickly drafted in one pass, with some very light text indication to give a slight characterization, occasionally with some minimal extra notational feature—because these are getting so self-similar, it's probably all the more worthwhile to examine the scores individually:

JK:

Here, Mark makes a point similar to the larger point I want to make about his larger body of work, which I think may go against conventional wisdom; that is, with these scores being so similar—through having this clear, methodical practice—it actually becomes possible to understand the important, distinctive details within each piece. If there were only a few of them, this wouldn't really be possible, and what is notable/important/interesting in any one piece could well go ignored.

CAROLYN CHEN [*over next pages*]

ANASTASSIS PHILIPPAKOPOULOS

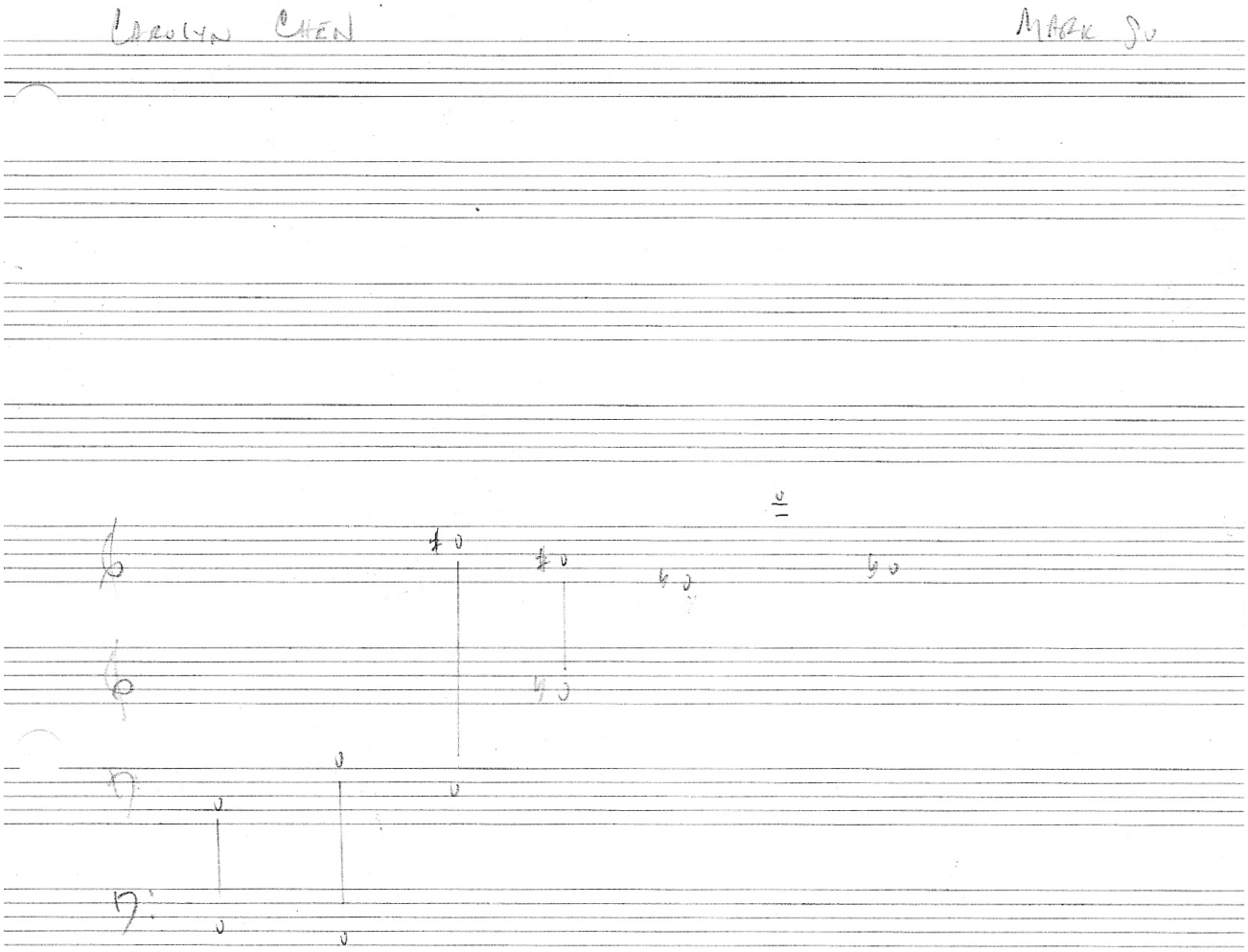
SHANNON EBNER

ERIKA VOGT

ADAM FITZGERALD

RAY BRADBURY

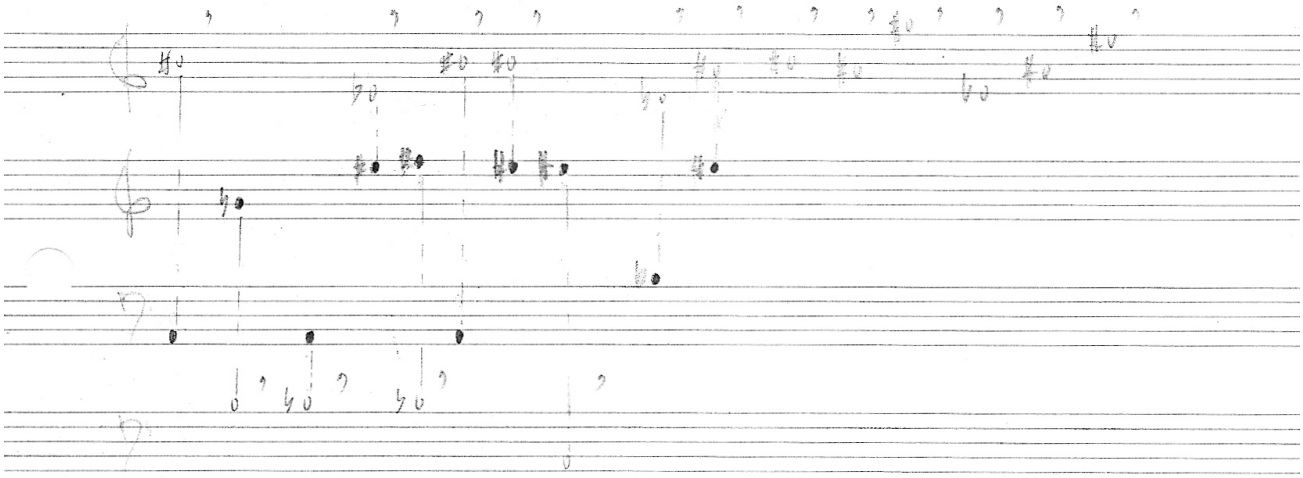
Cerenem Journal no. 6



15 iv 2012
Los Angeles

ANASTASIA PHILIPPOPOULOS

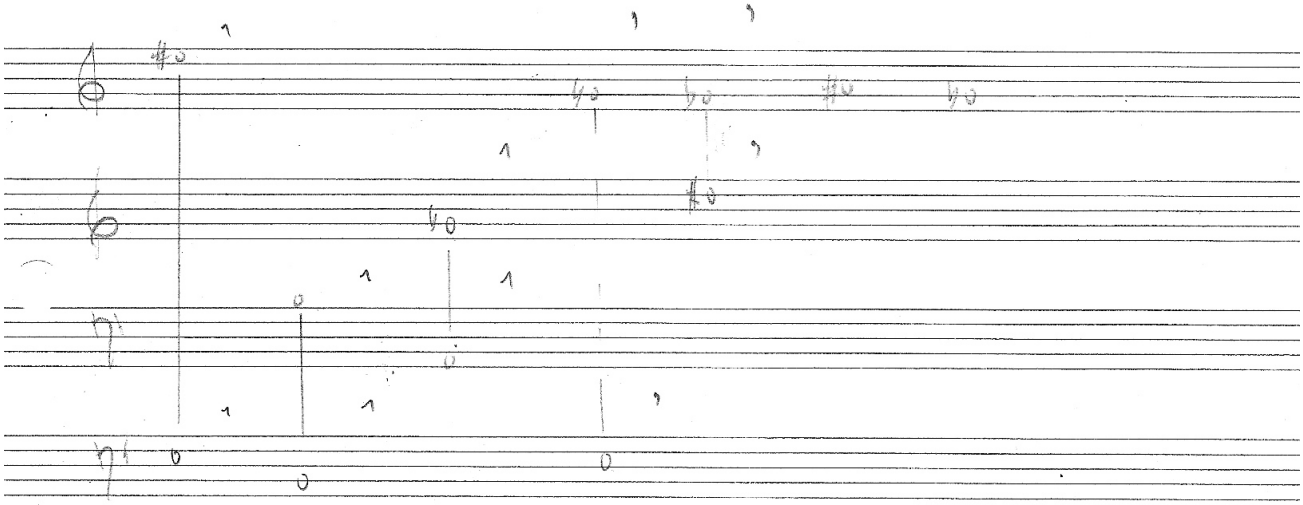
MANA SO



ASTERISMO AND DISAPPEARING

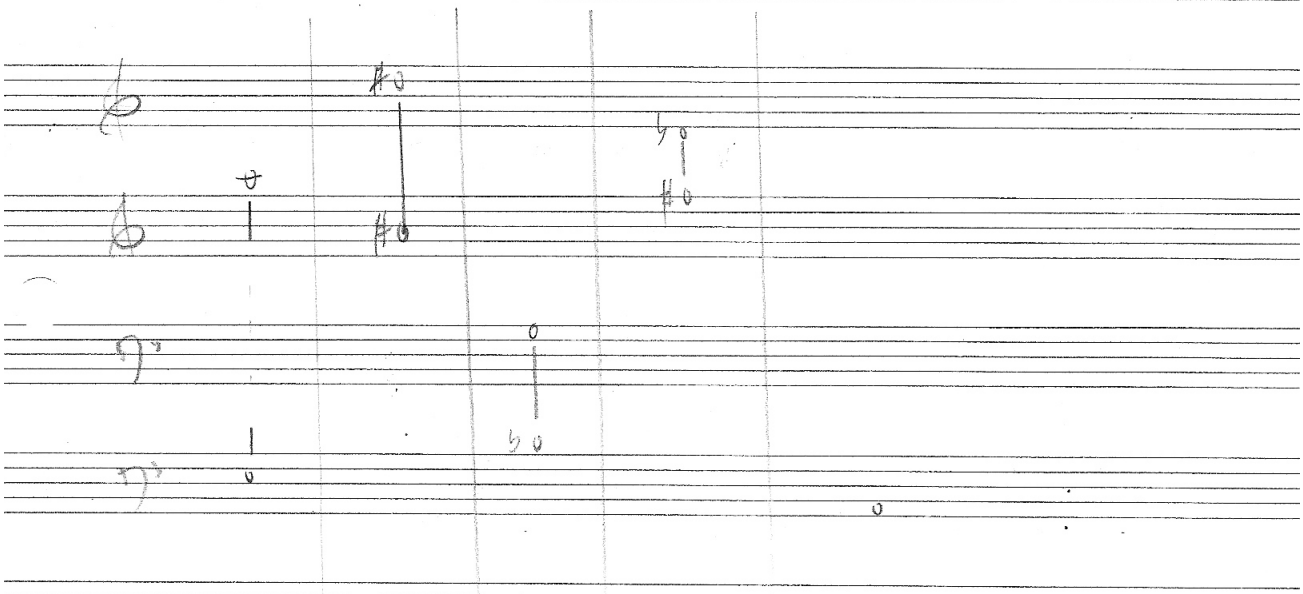
20 IV 2012
LOS ANGELES

Cerenem Journal no. 6

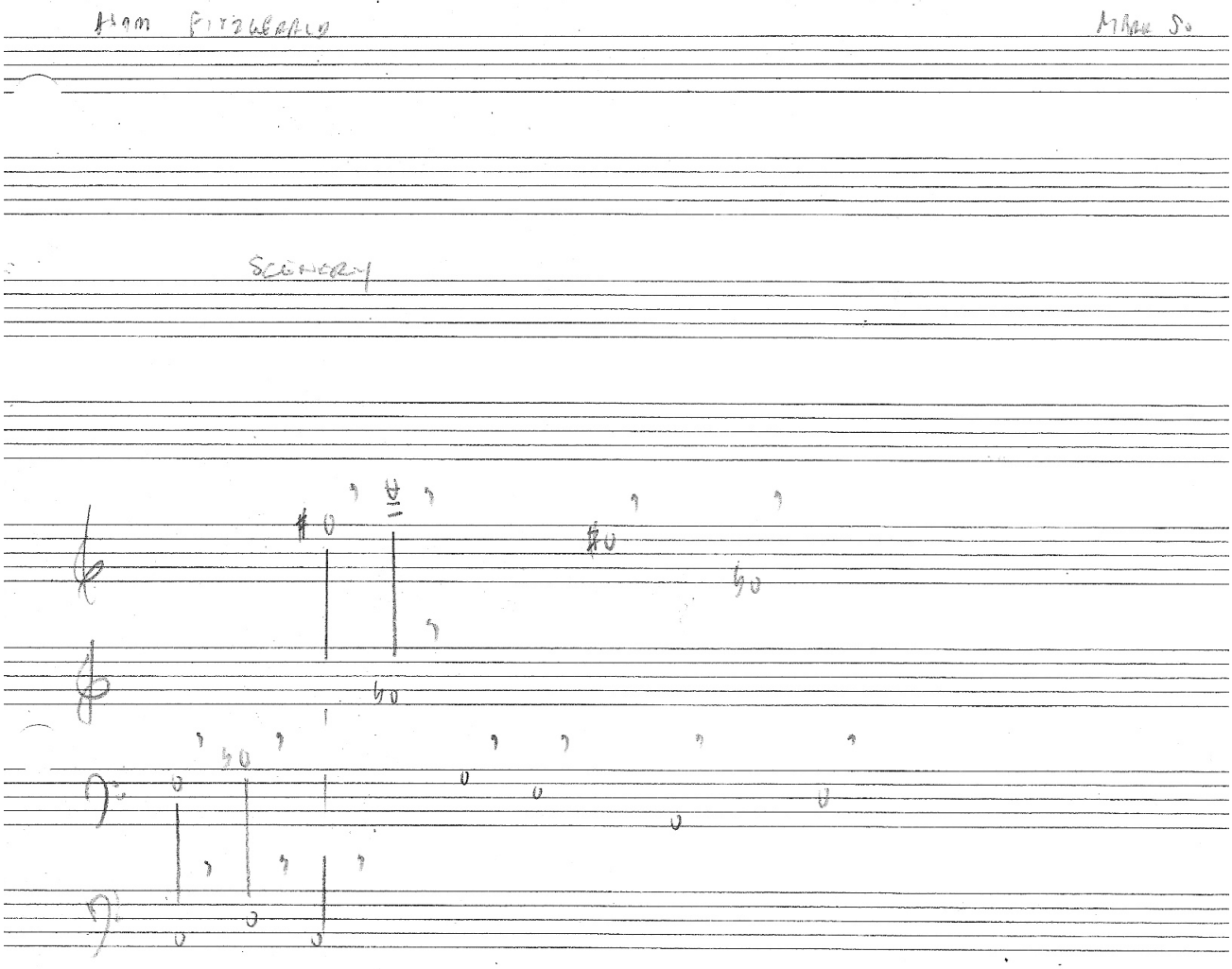


OPEN SOUNDS

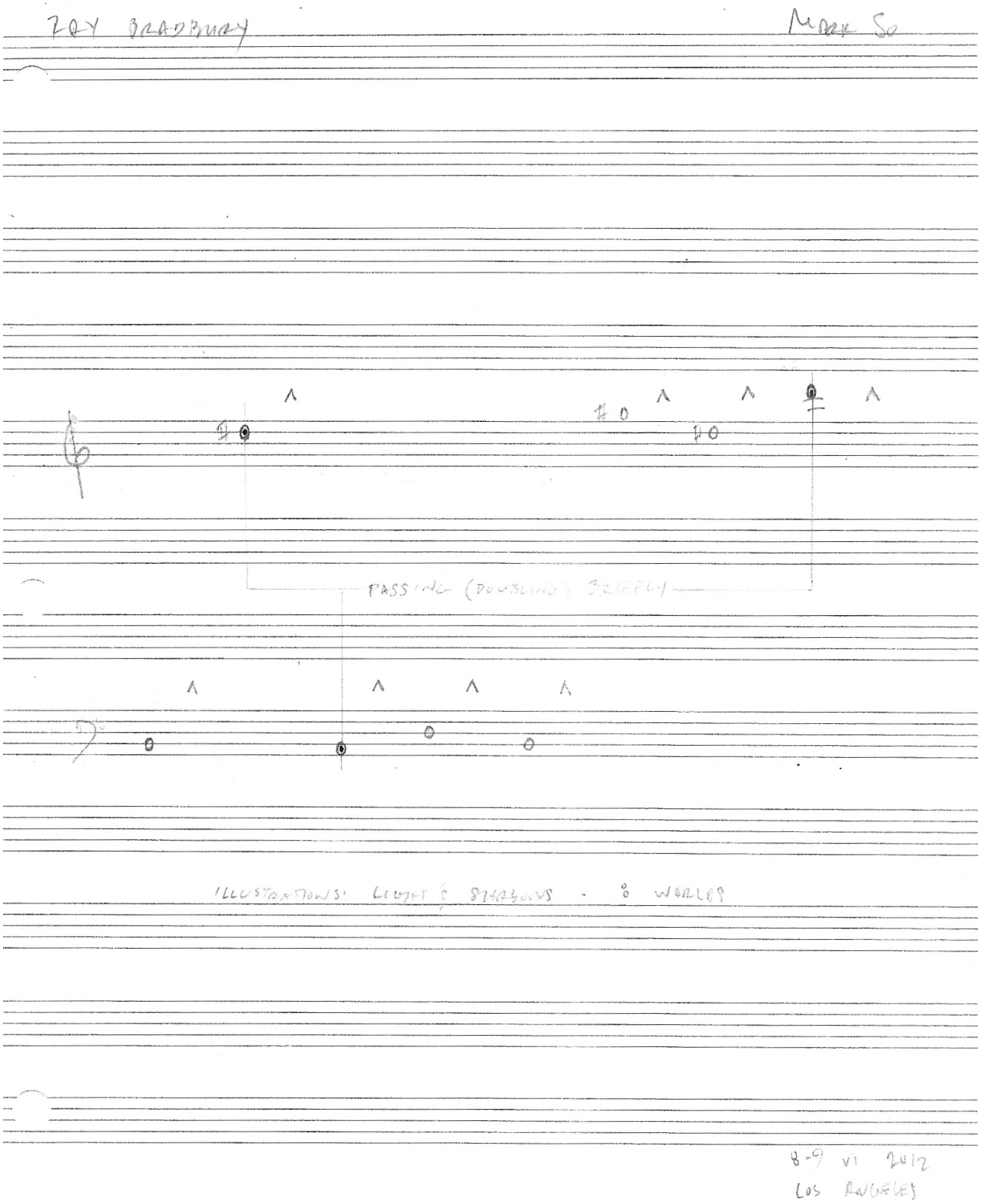
22 IV 2012
Los Angeles



Cerenem Journal no. 6



25 IV 2012
Los Angeles


RAY BRADBURY
MARK SO
PASSING (DOUBLING) BUTTERFLY
ILLUSTRATIONS: LIGHT & SHADOWS - 8 WORLDS
8-9 VI 2017
LOS ANGELES

These start to get crafty again, keeping the grid-like multi-stave format but more along the lines of exploring material/visual variations, both in the sense of found aspects (using smaller pieces of scrap music paper) and in different layered qualities of writing:

NEIL ARMSTRONG

A collage; torn staff paper against black construction paper to depict the mountains of the moon; this tearing of the paper in part presages the 1/2 sheet run of name pieces. [*opposite and over*]

HANS W. KOCH

A tiny miniature, like TASHI (2007)

Rather than being a tautology, in this case, 'tiny miniature' makes sense, when a work is particularly small within a world of pieces that is already a series of miniatures.

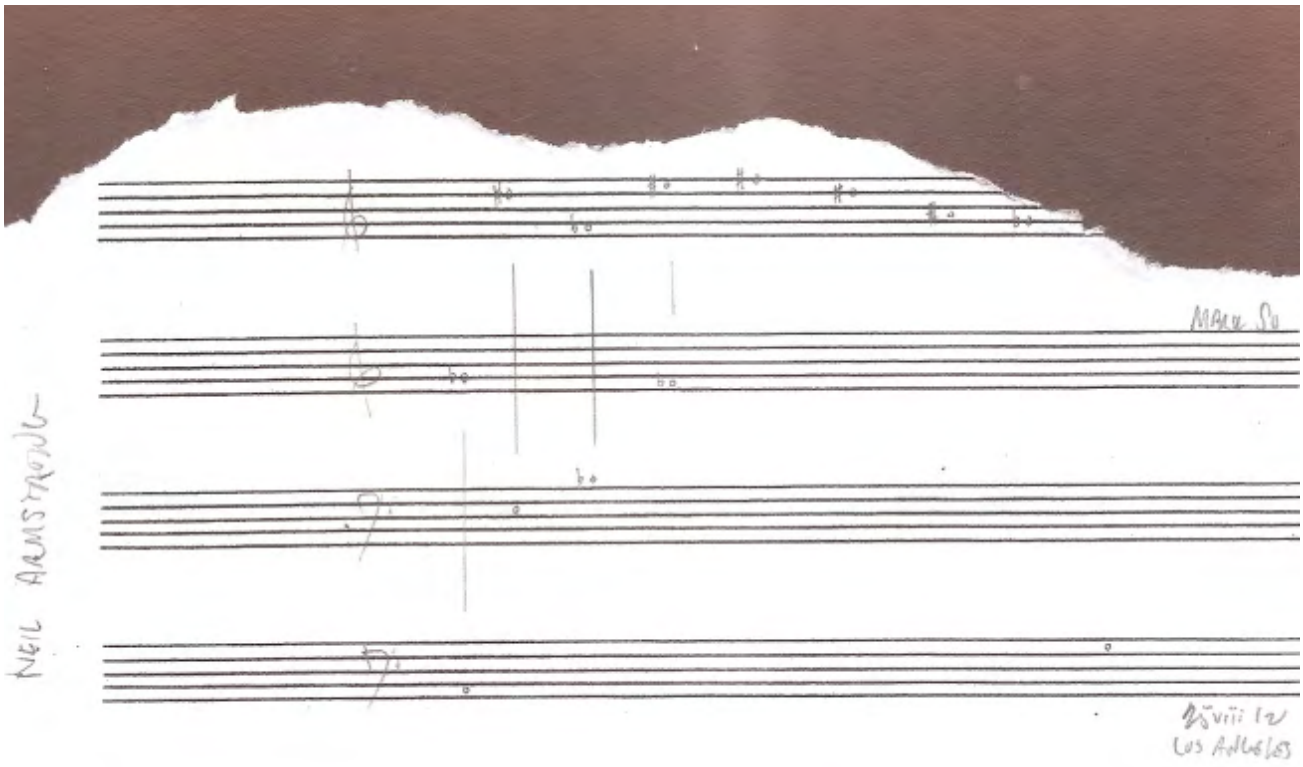
TIM JOHNSON

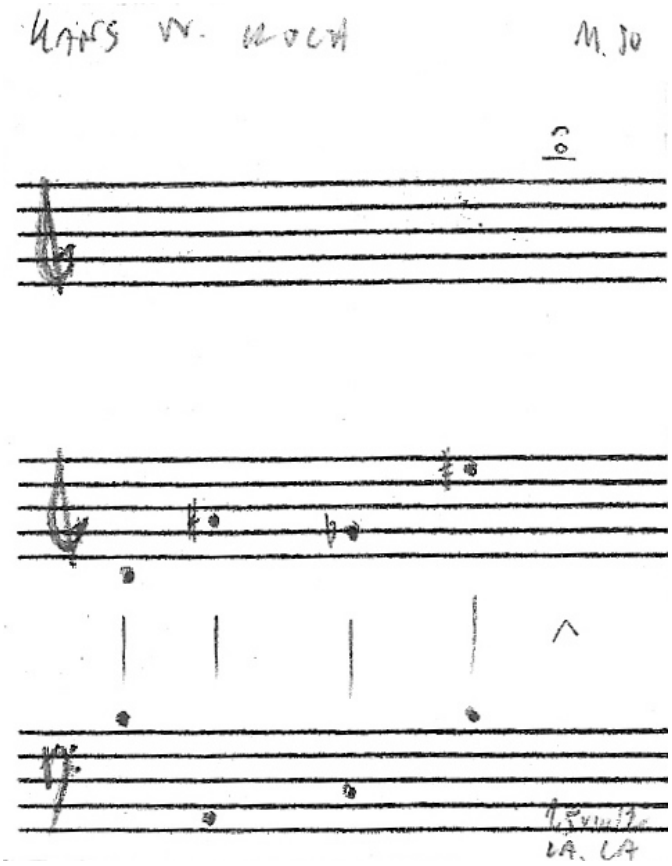
Perhaps the first 1/2 sheet piece, though in this case that was just the size of the scrap I found to make it on.

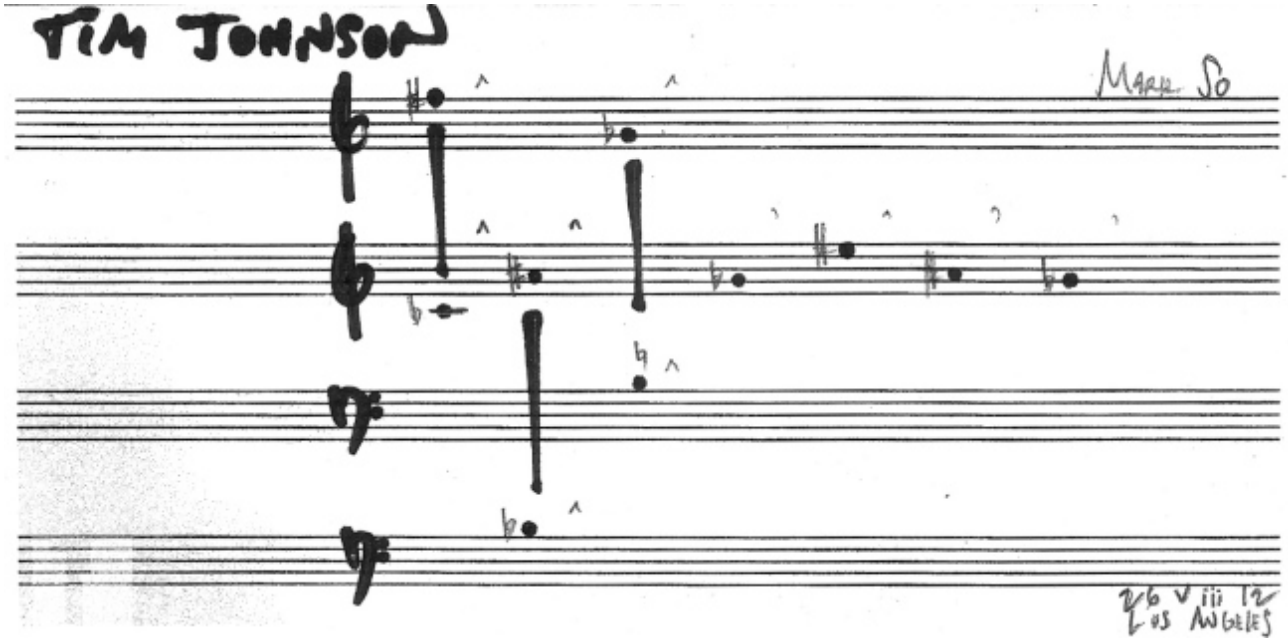
EZRA BUCHLA

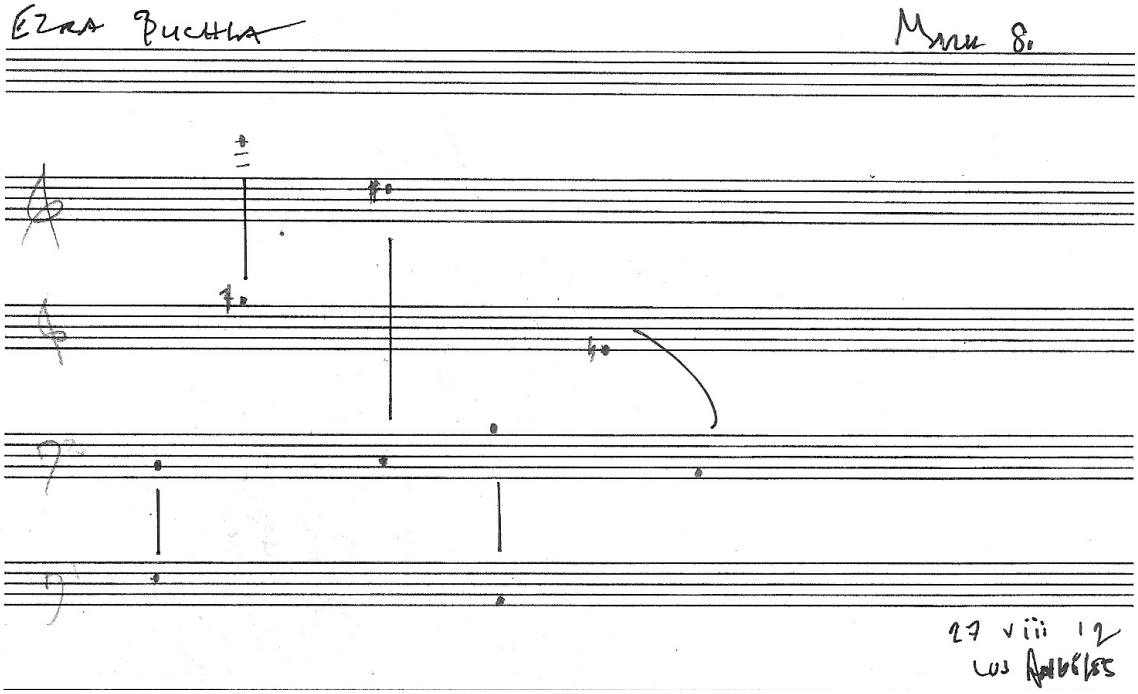
Perhaps a minor thing, but coming back to the full sheet for this one, I deliberately don't consider the whole page but put the date-stamp 'footer' near the middle of the sheet; thus, the piece is now conceptually less than coextensive with the sheet it's written on; this both changes the status of the score slightly, and also I think causes me to eventually start doing two per page. . .

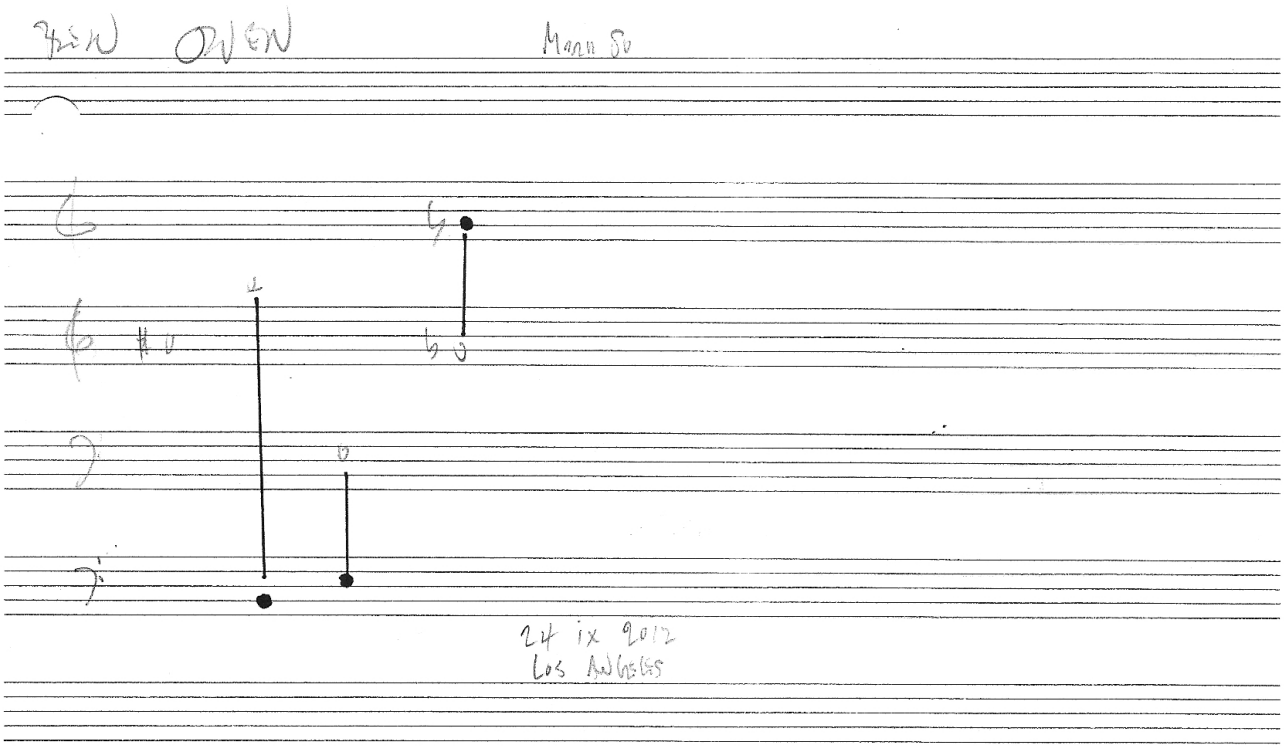
BEN OWEN


NEIL ARMSTRONG
MAY 30
LOS ANGELES


MARS VOLTA
M. 30
LA. CA


TIM JOHNSON
MARK SO
26 VIII 12
LOS ANGELES


EZRA BUCHLA
MARK SO
27 VIII 12
LOS ANGELES

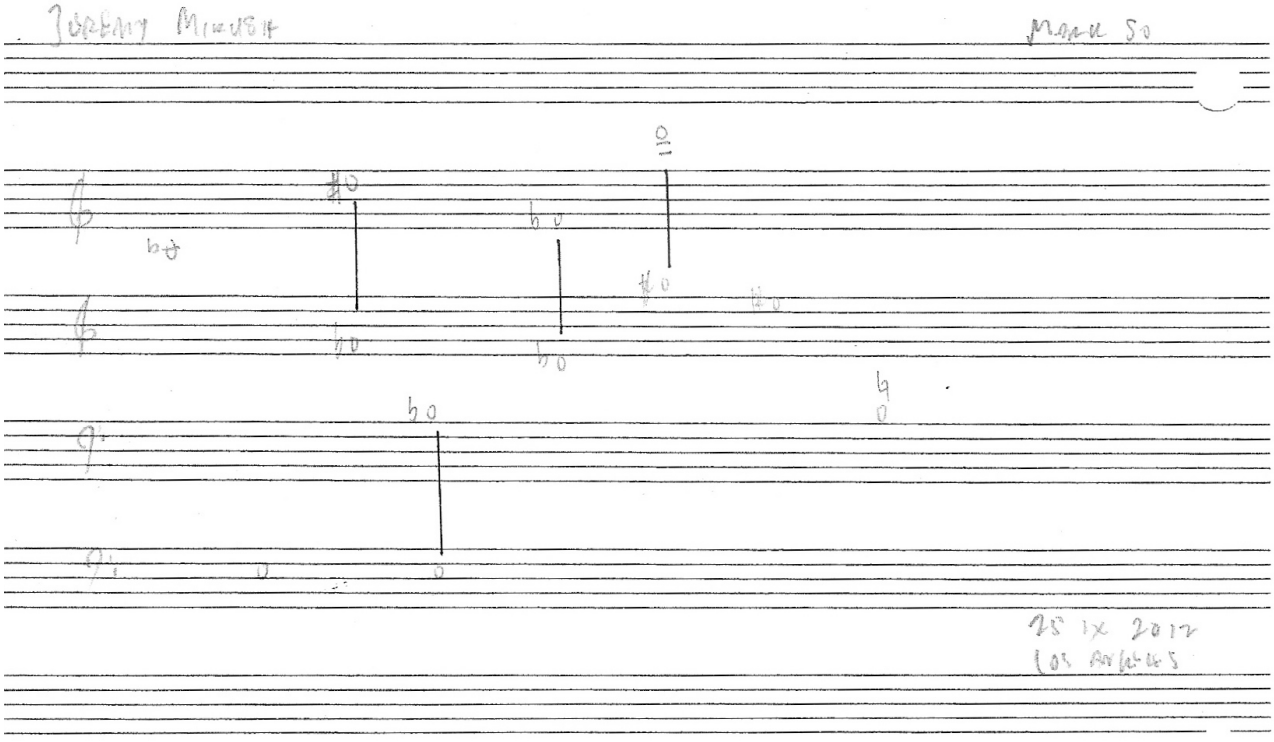


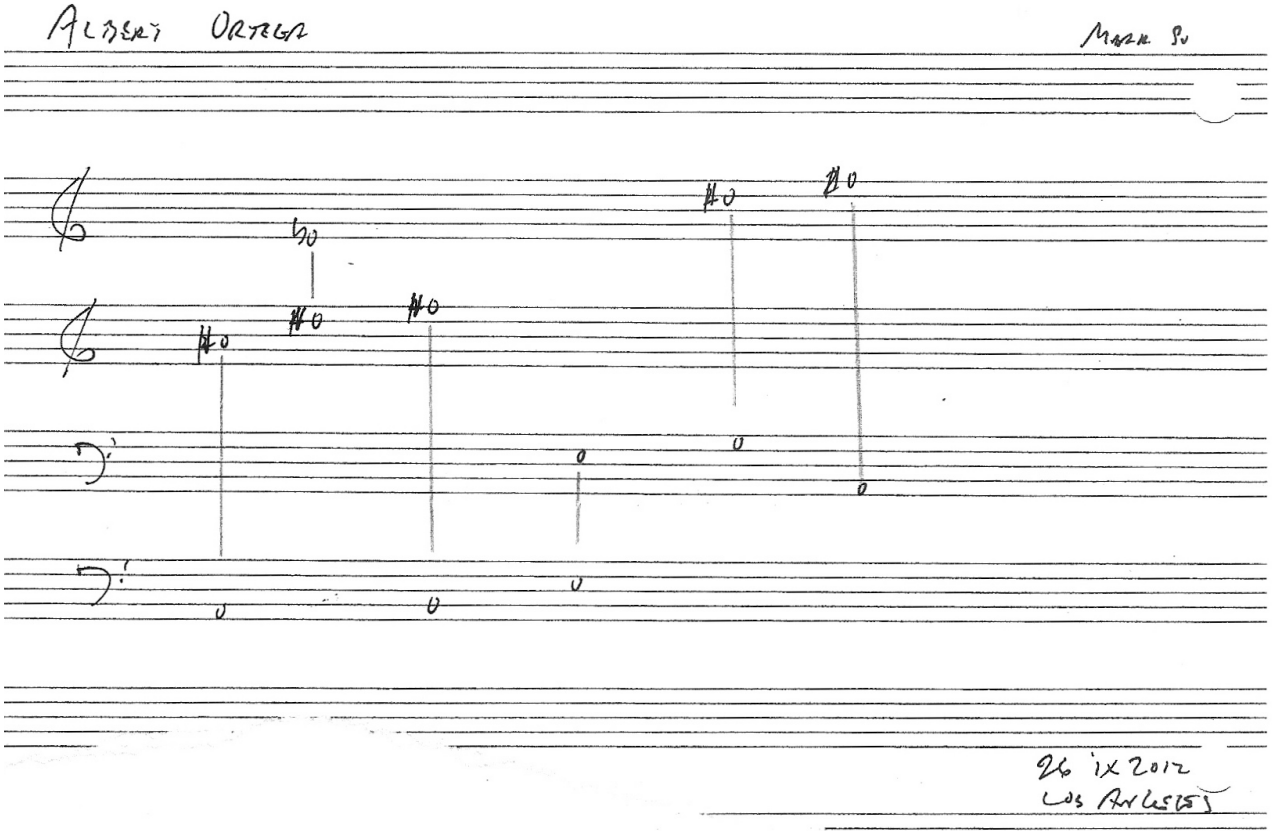
All of these are petty standard 1/2 sheet pieces—many of them are paired for a reason, but sometimes, for no reason; in general, I started waiting until I made both before separating the scores, and there's a slight tension between their independence and the implication that they used to make up a single whole sheet of paper (I'm attaching a few examples of what many of these looked like, pre-separation); generally all in the grid-like 4 stave format, sketched very quickly and with only the slightest individuation based mainly on the way the notes map out:

JEREMY MIKUSH
The first true 1/2 sheet name piece [*over*]

ALBERT ORTEGA
Made on the remainder of the page that NEIL ARMSTRONG was torn from.

Cerenem Journal no. 6





DAVID KENDALL

Using xerox to slightly alter the layout; this one has a correction that involves the application of a white label with the title written on it; this creates a unique texture, and the pdf gives you a feel for both sides of the page. [*below*]

KRAIG GRADY [*over next pages*]

DAVID KALHOUS (piano)

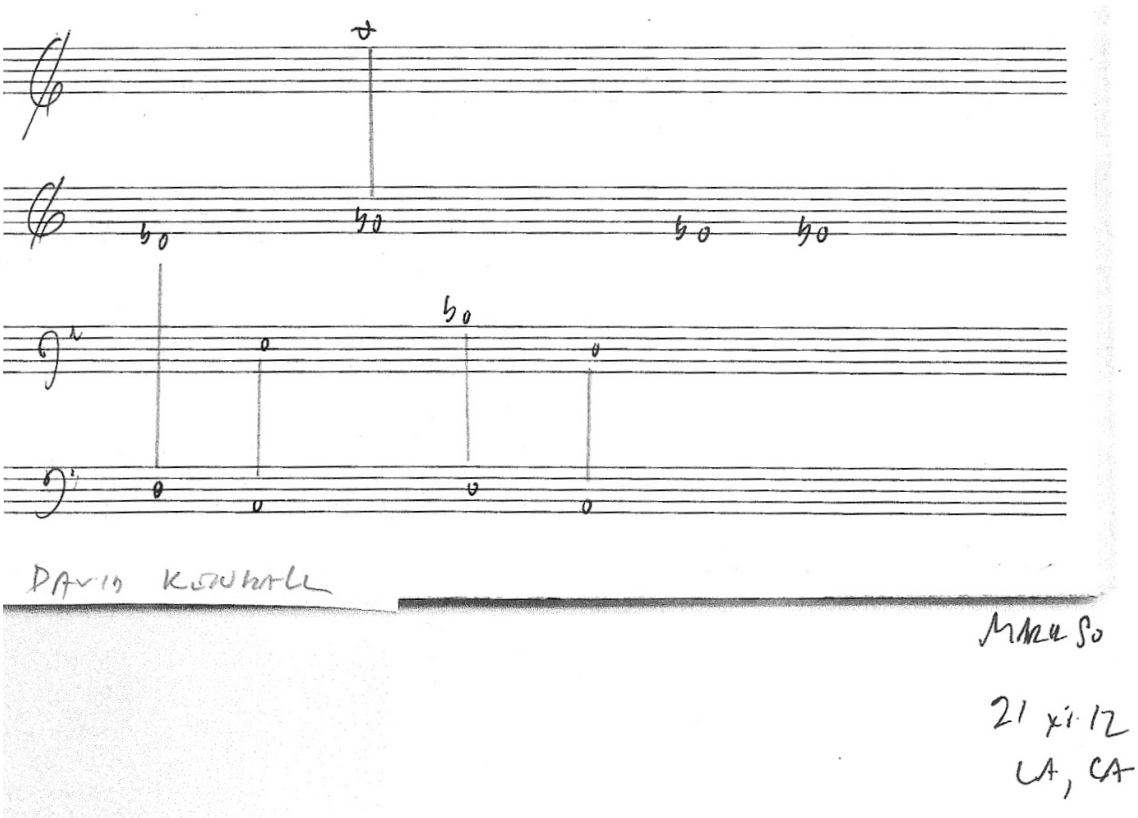
JAMES SAUNDERS

GABOR KALMAN & NORMAL LLOYD

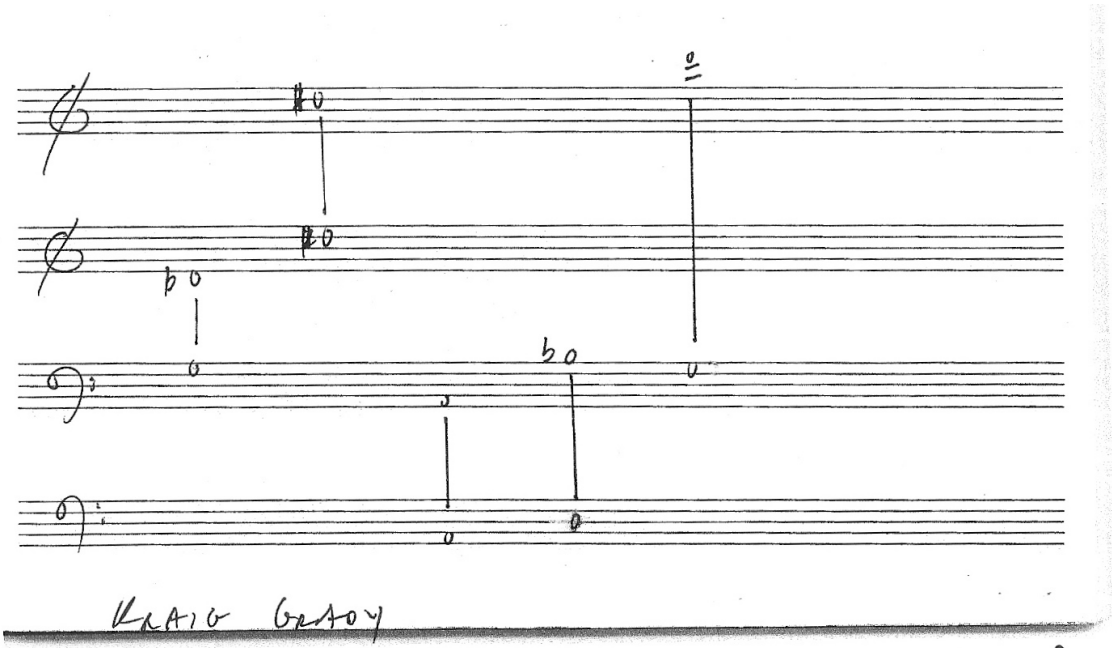
I left this pair together because they're a couple

CARMEN CAMERON-WOLFE

A return to full sheet, with a strip of text glued into the score, which is otherwise in the standard 4 stave grid-like format.

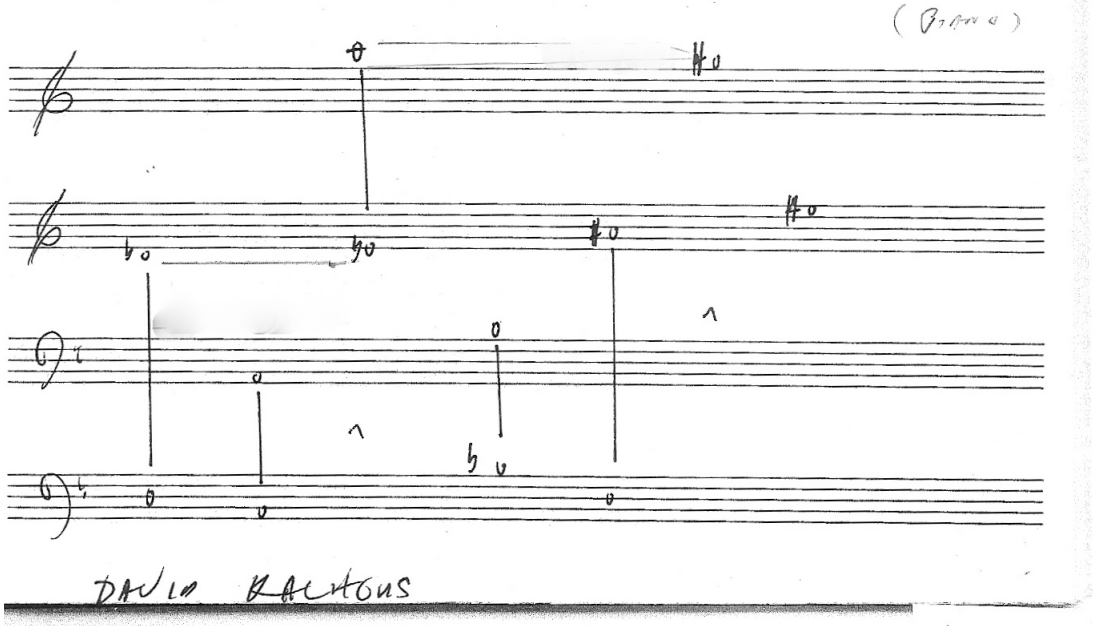


Cerenem Journal no. 6



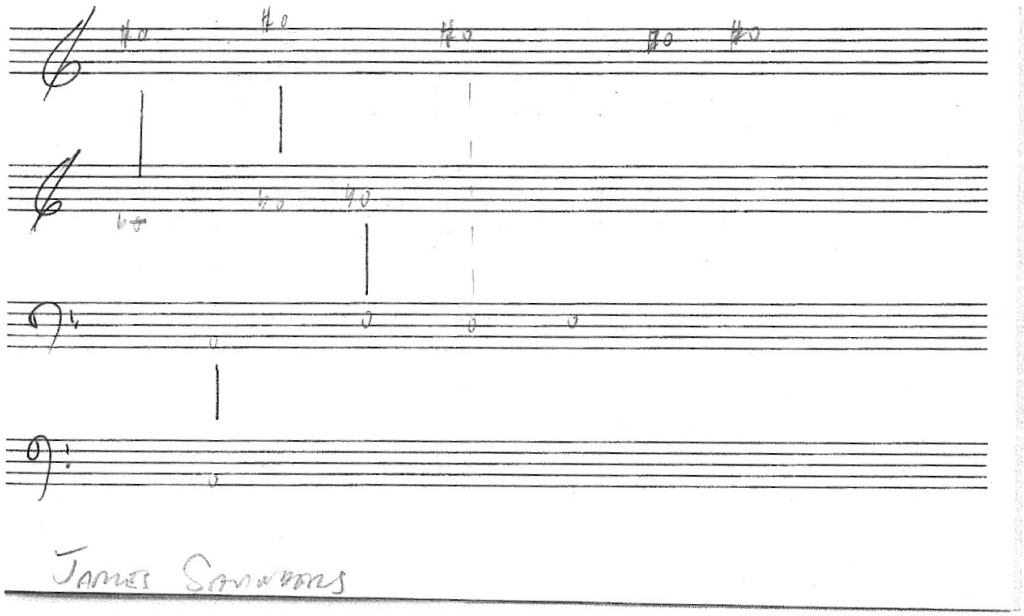
KRAIG GRADY

MARK 80
21 XI 12
LA, CA



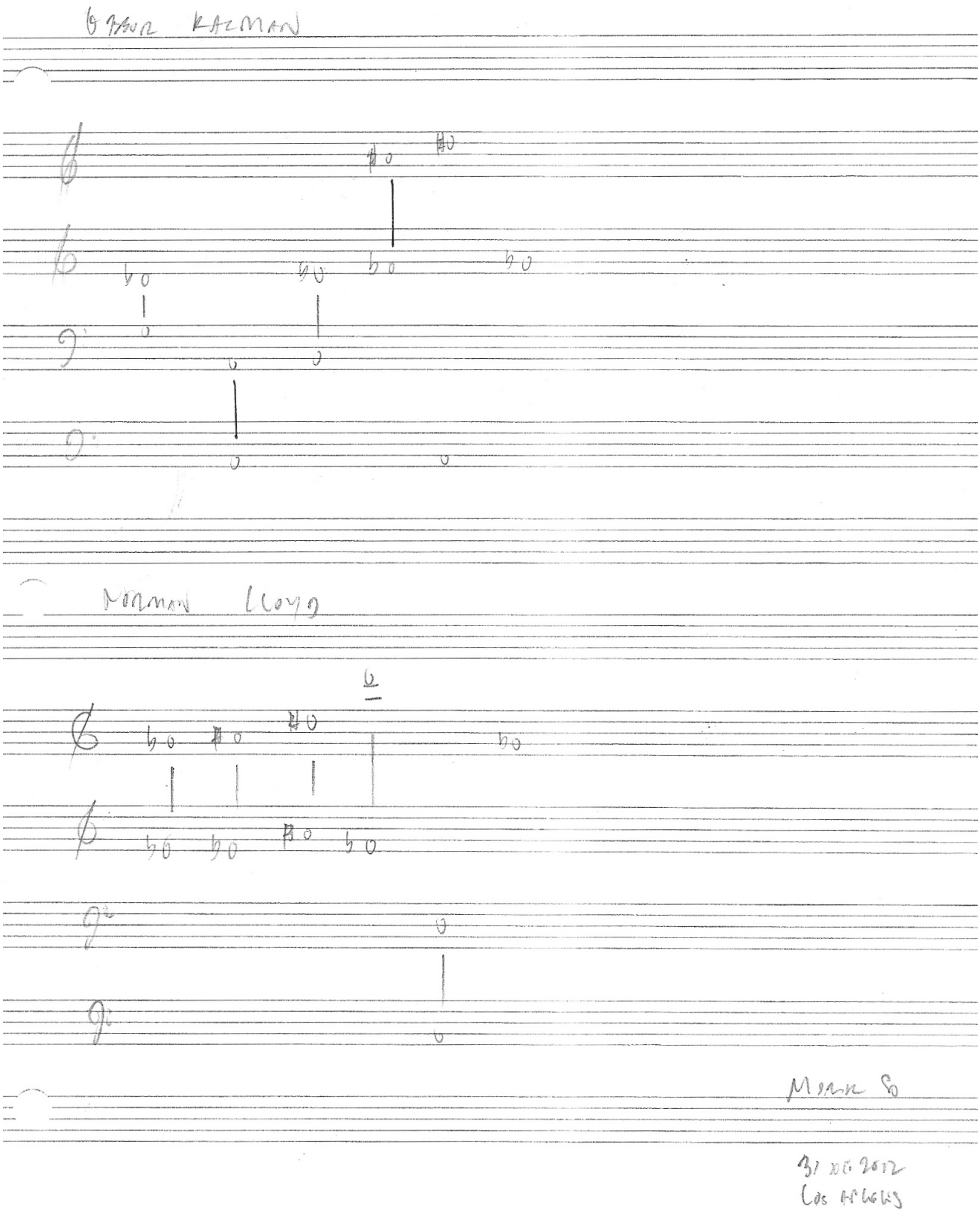
DAVID RACTOUS

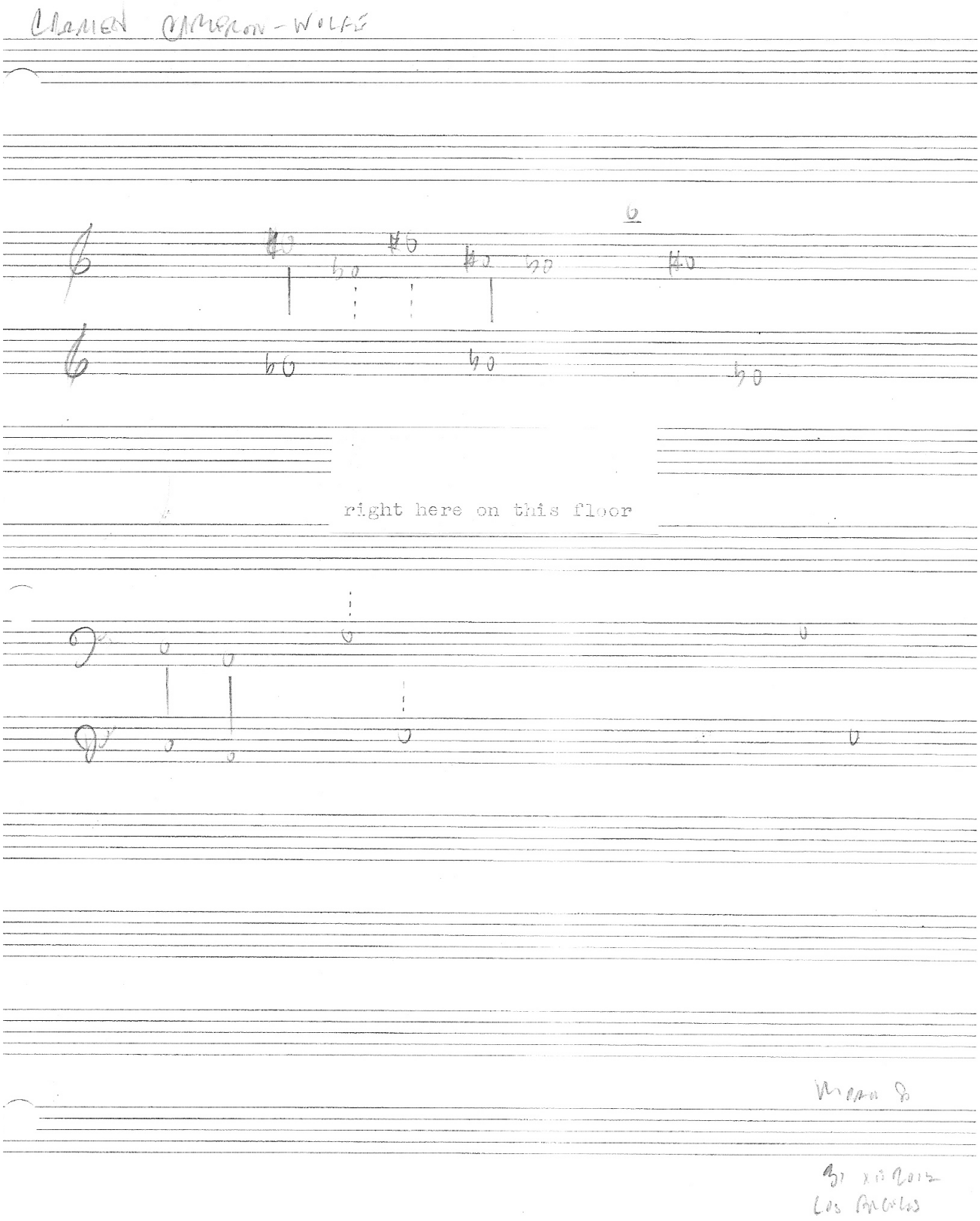
MARK 80
21 XI 12
LA, CA



March 8
28 x 12
Los Angeles

Cerenem Journal no. 6




right here on this floor

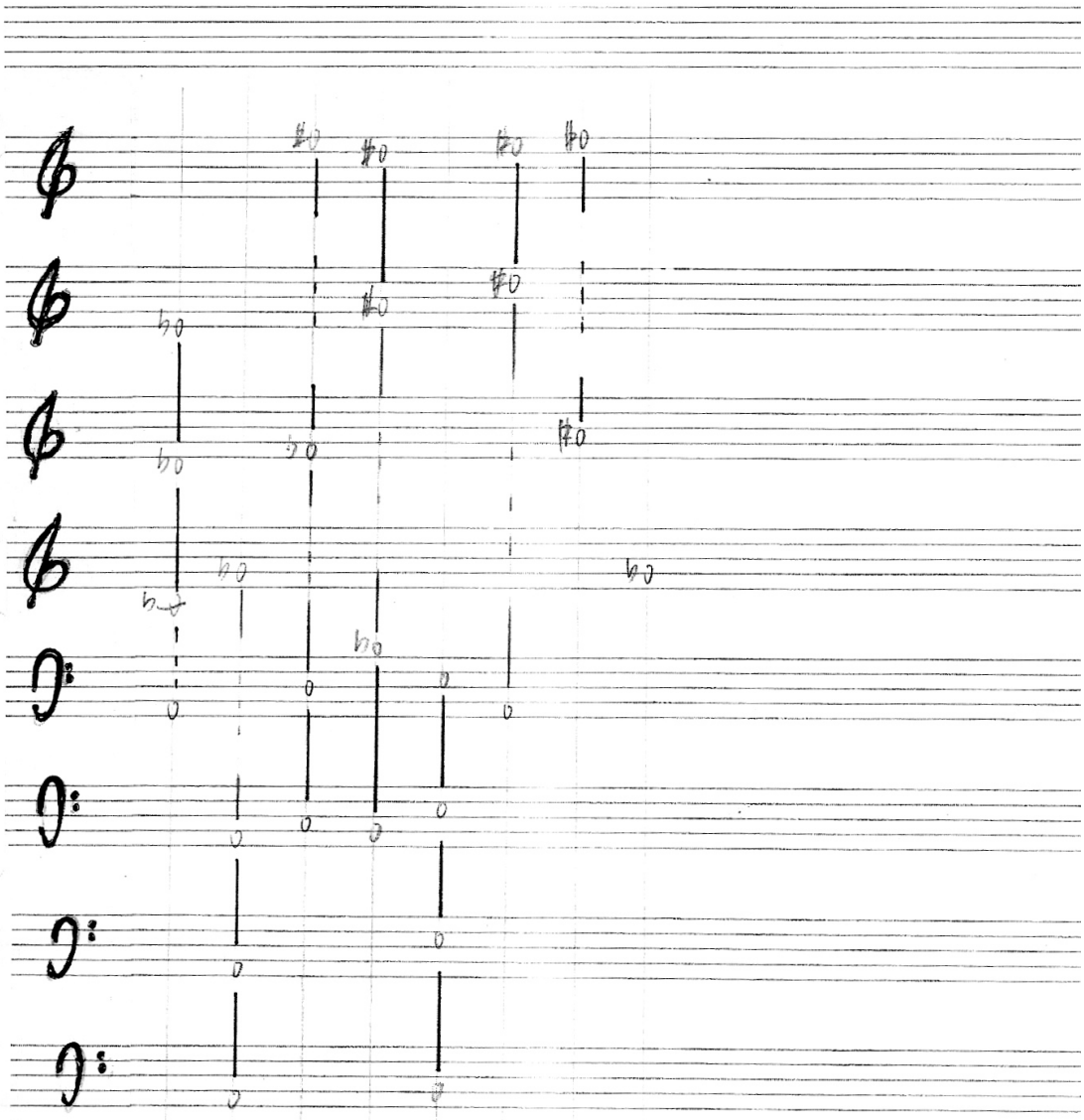
(9) 2013

ANDREA LAMBERT & KATIE JACOBSON

This one is for another couple (one of whom had just committed suicide)—instead of separates, I integrated their two names into kind of an 8 staff grid; the piece also exhibits probably the most intense exploration of various layered features; pencil, ink, erasure, whiteout, applied correction blocks; I think I've also used the two kinds of vertical ligature before (solid line, dotted line) to indicate different though somewhat ambiguous qualities of togetherness, determined whether connecting vertically adjacent notes in adjacent staves, or skipping one or more staves (this is somewhat consistently applied in many of the name pieces of this general period).

[*opposite*]

ANDREA LANGHOFF & KATIE JACOBSEN



12 i 2013
LOS ANGELES

The next several return to the half-sheet format (with two name pieces executed on a single sheet, again, often articulating some conjunction the two people form in my mind), and a fairly regular application of the 4 stave grid-like note layout (2 staves for each melodic sequence, representing each name) and 2 types of vertical ligatures; there's quite a run of first-draft-and-next pieces, done quite rapidly and mechanically, yet intuitively judging mostly the vertical order of the staves (whether treble/treble/bass/bass or treble/bass/treble/bass) and the application of the vertical ligatures, all in one pencil layer (I'll just attach a few of the full-sheet name pairs for your reference—remember, though, that the sheet is ultimately cut and the pieces exist independently):

DAVID RATTRAY
DAVID WOJNAROWICZ

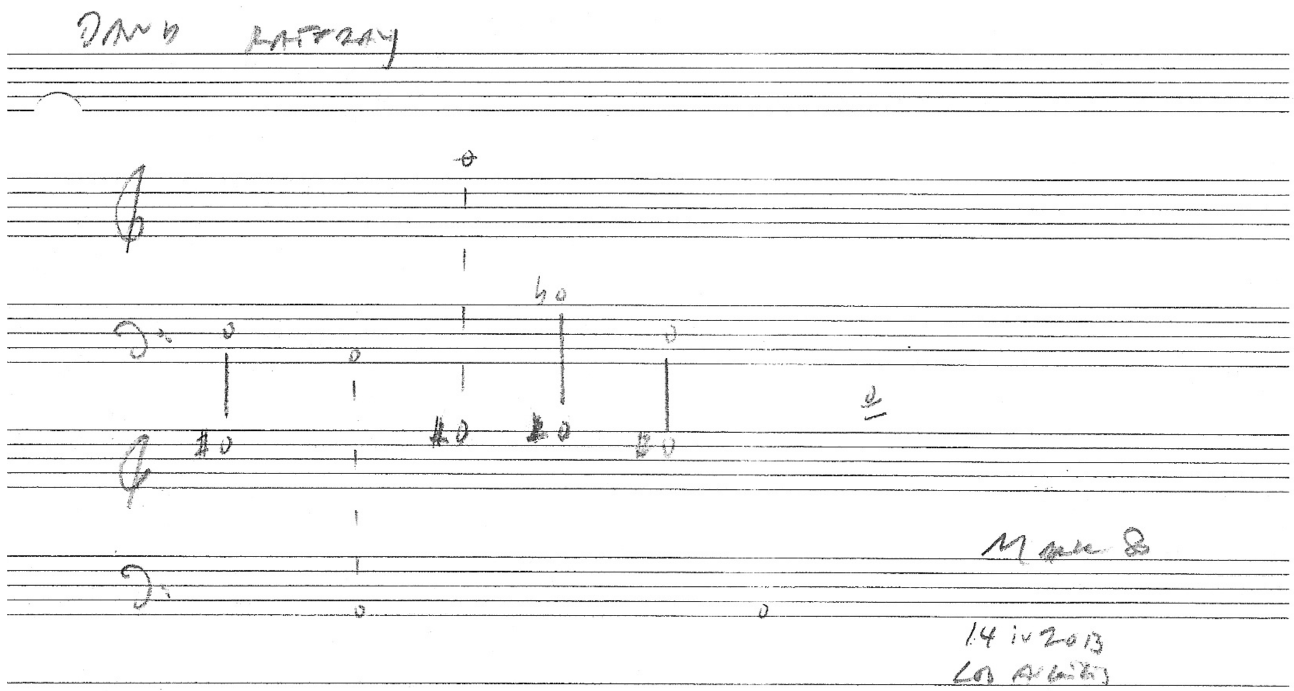
MONICA MAJOLI
ANTONIN ARTAUD

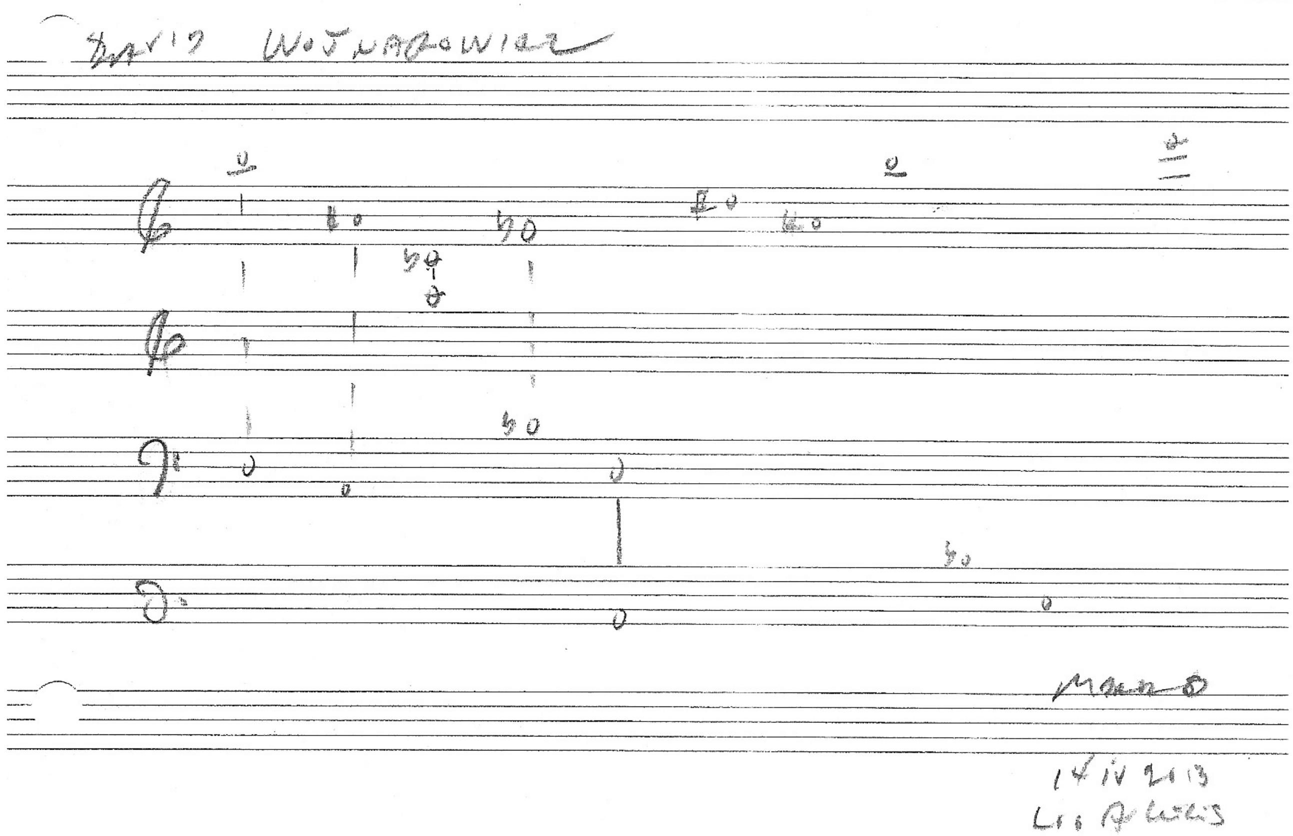
KATE BROWN
STUART KRIMKO

TRULEE GRACE HALL
This one and TARA JANE O'NEIL explore adding a third voice into the 4 stave grid.

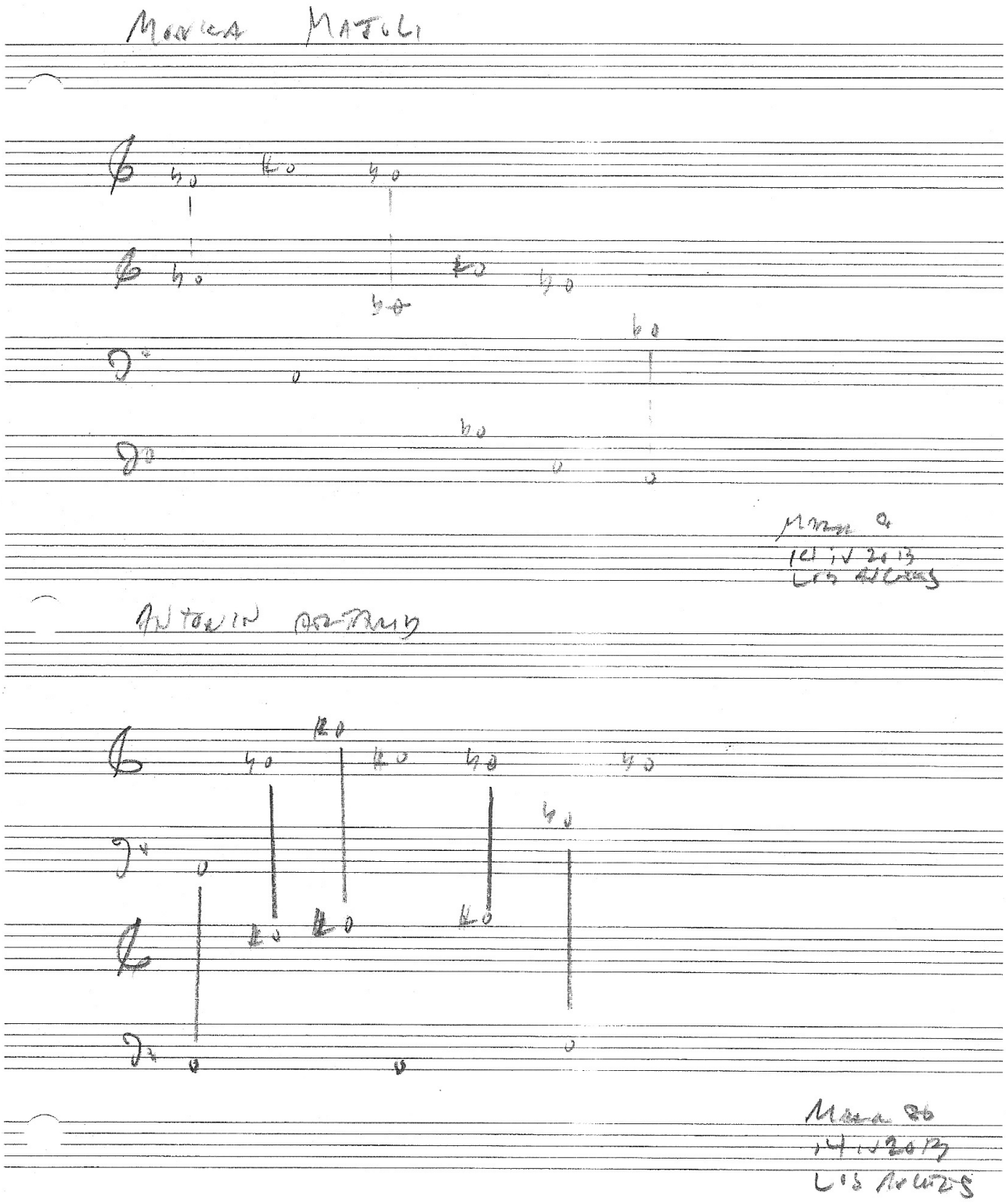
LEOPOLDINE CORE
DAVID KERMANI

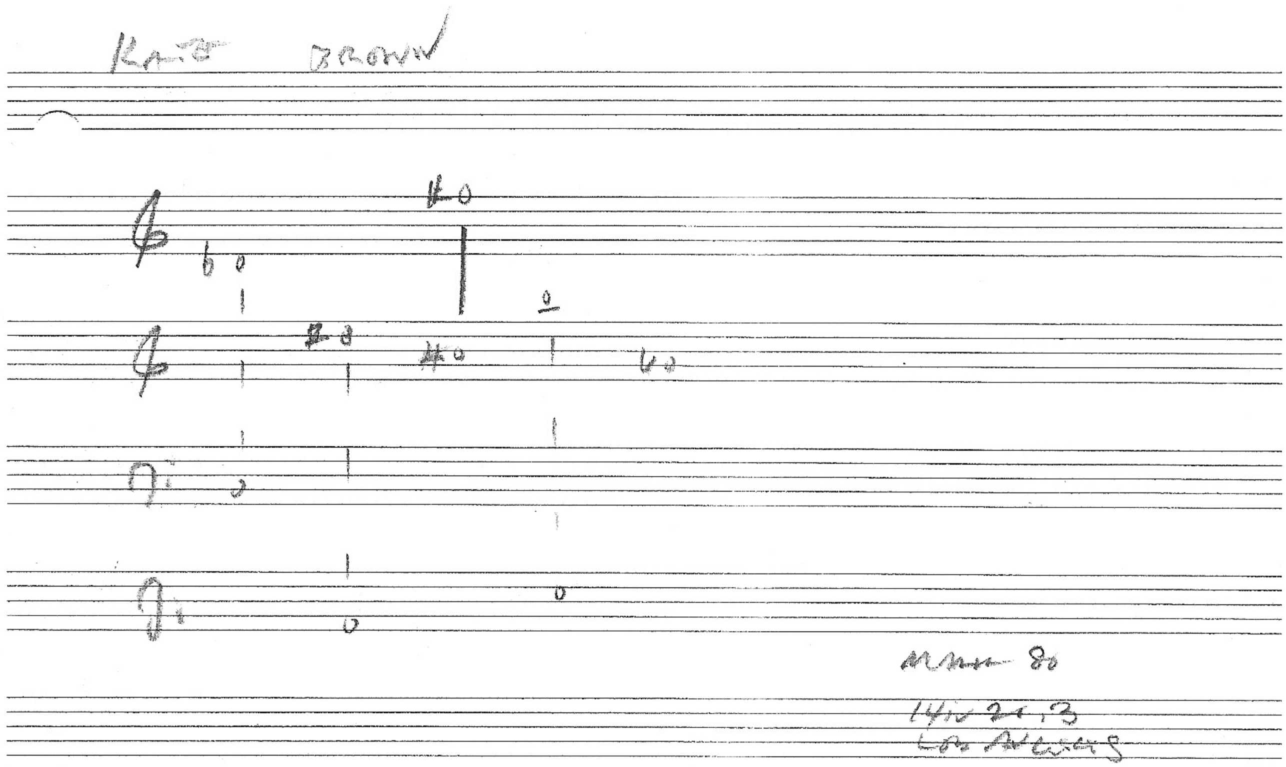
[*Opposite and over next pages. As of writing, MS has not published these scores online.*]

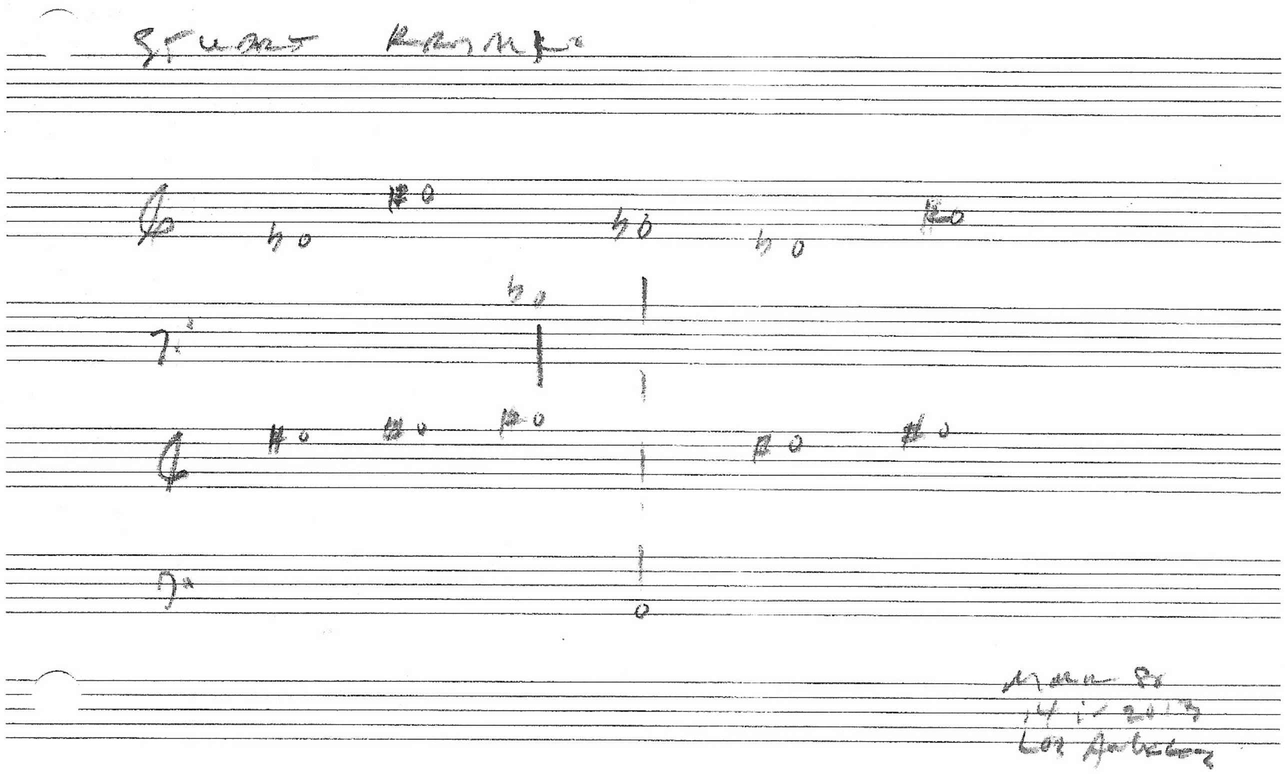

DAVID RATTRAY
14 IV 2013


DAVID WOJNAROWICZ
14 IV 2013

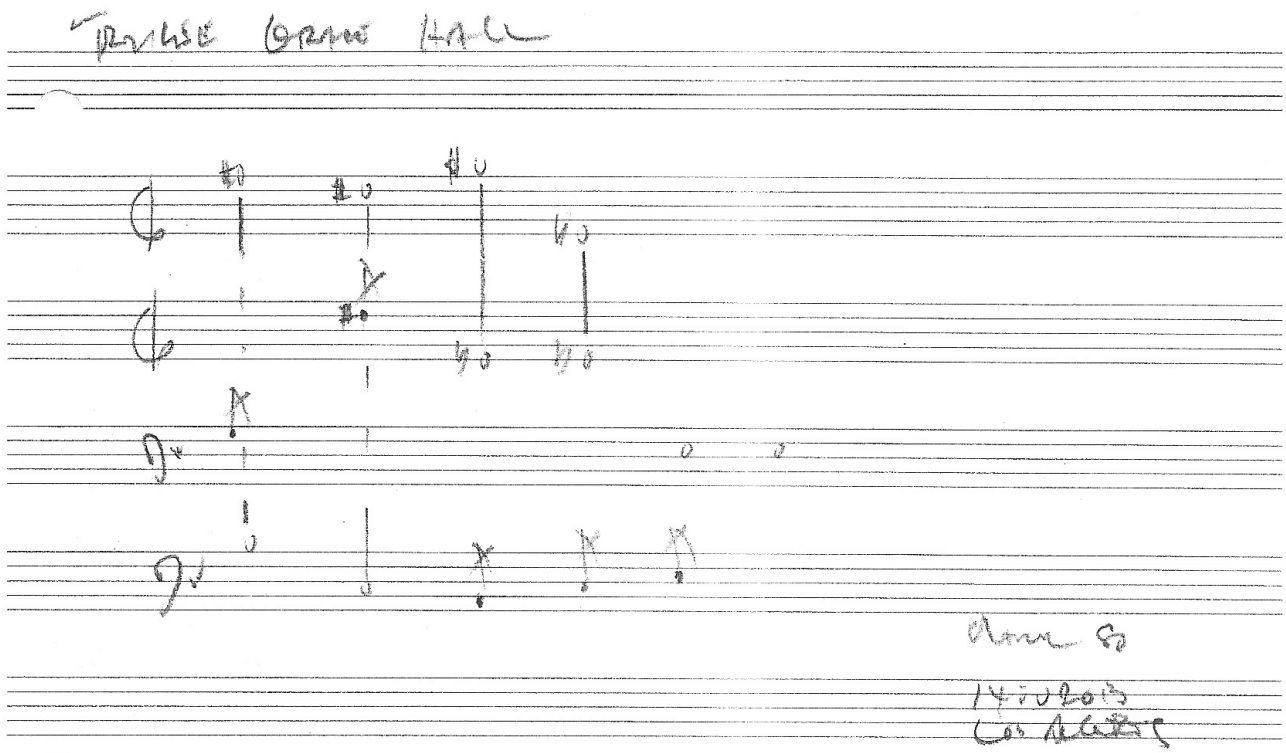
Cerenem Journal no. 6

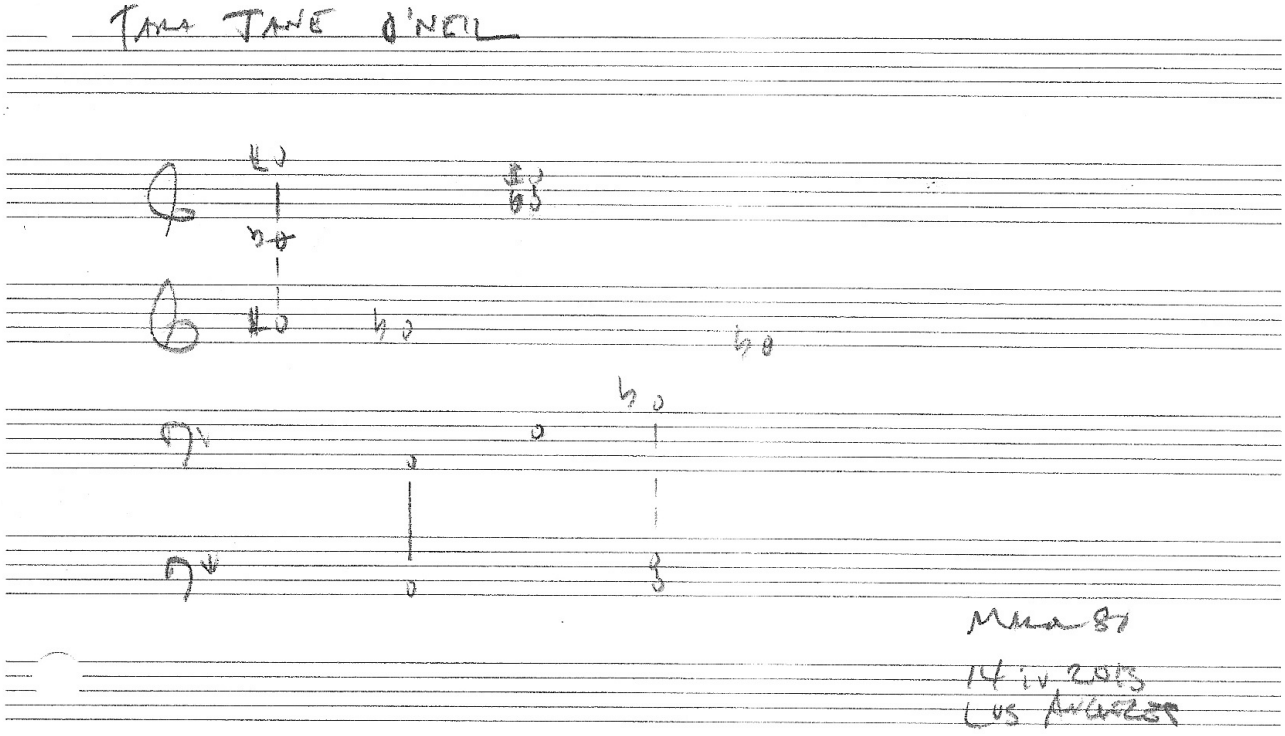


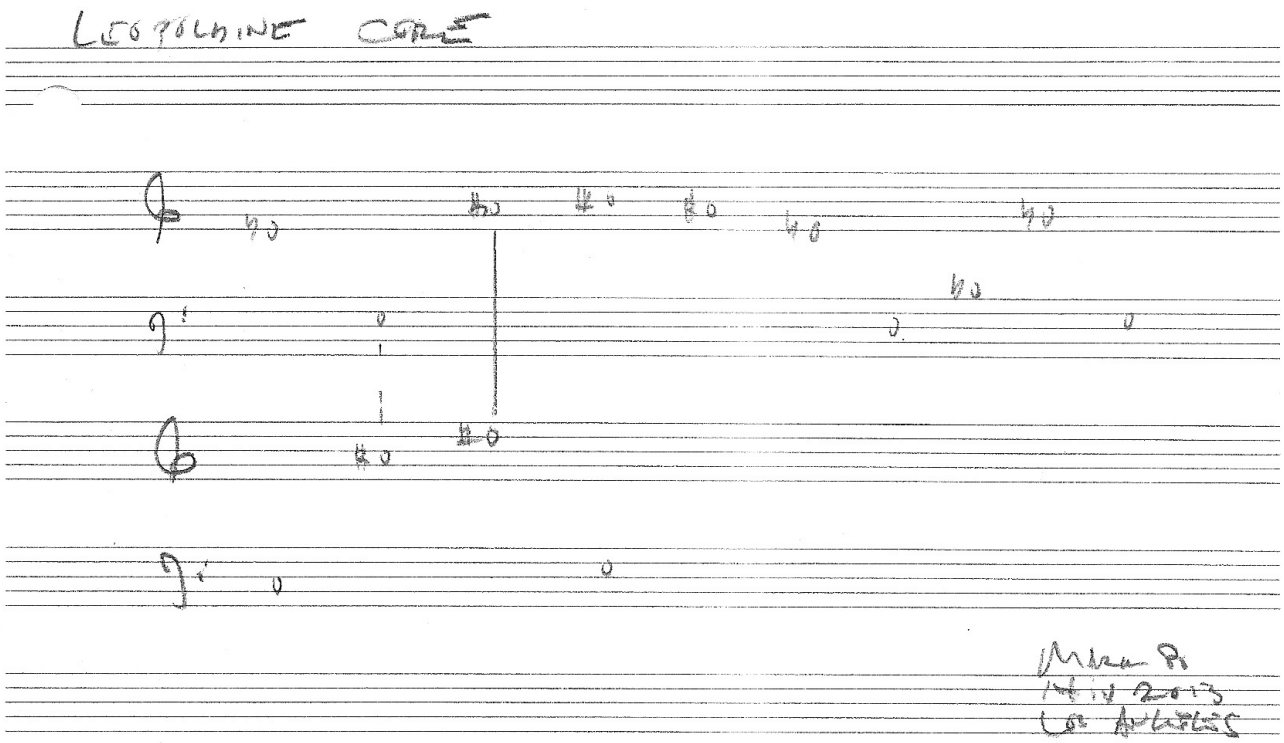

Kate Brown

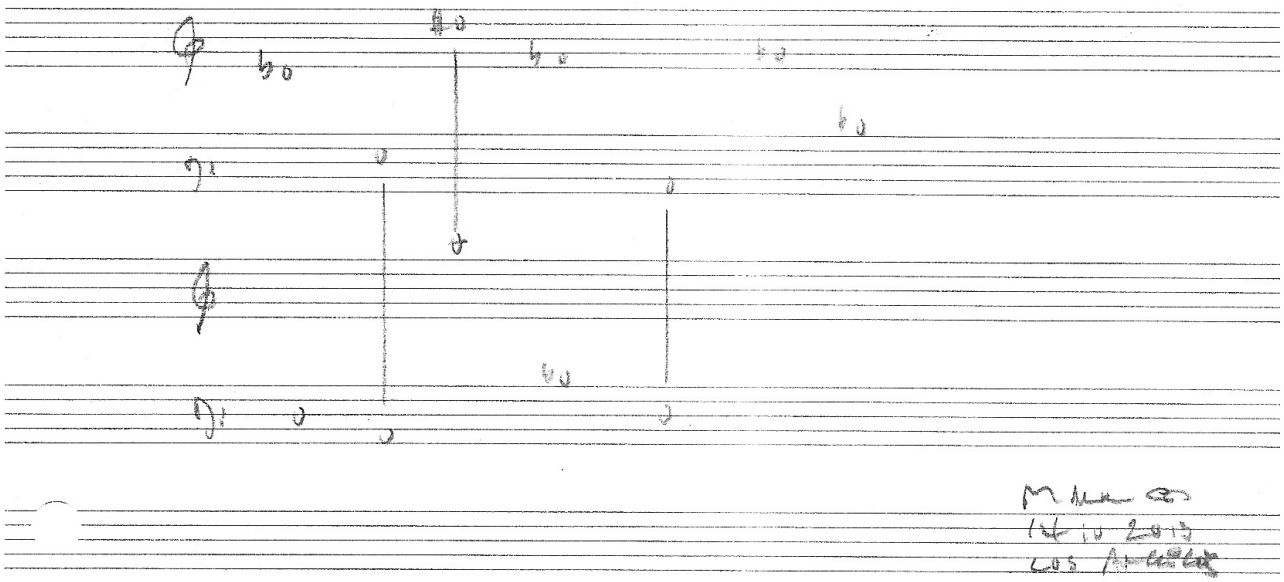

Stuart Krimko

Cerenem Journal no. 6









The rest start getting a little divergent, breaking more or less with the mould established above:

TAYLOR MEAD
A cute little horizontal phrasing ligature added. [*over next pages*]

ELAINE BARKIN
Filled noteheads, diagonal ligatures, guide marks.

TOM LEVINE
'painterly' layers return (pencil, charcoal, correction label), 3 staves

ARTHUR RIMBAUD
ambiguous noteheads, guidemarks

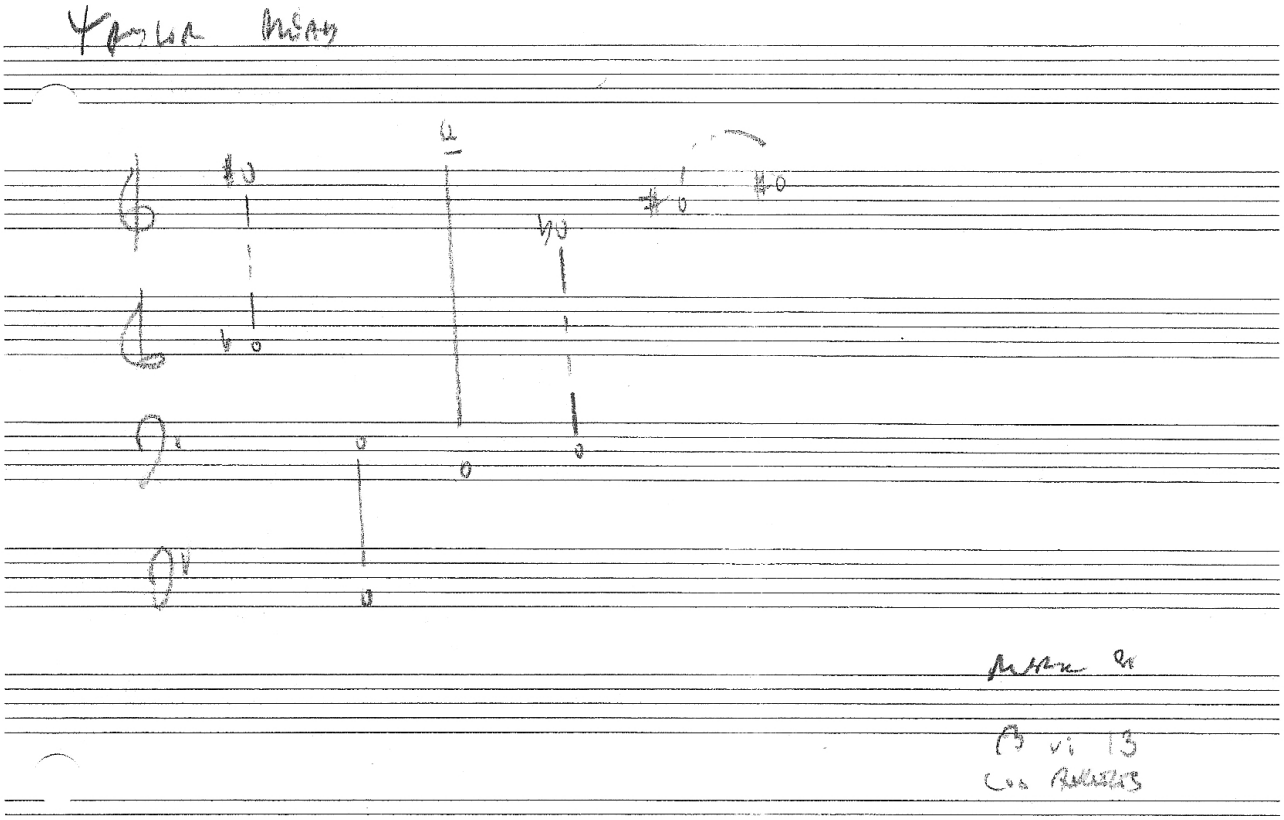
MARCUS RUBIO
correction labels, vertical and diagonal ligatures

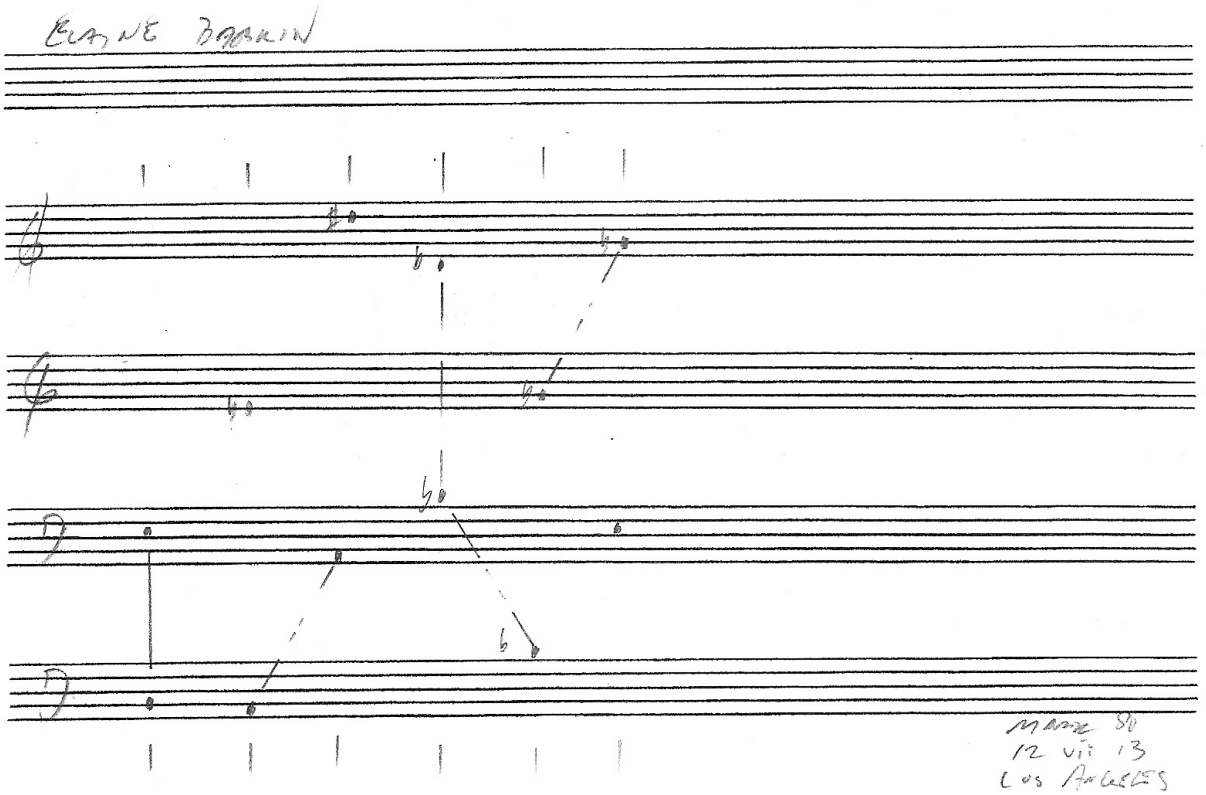
THOMAS FLAHERTY
Somehow, in this and CYNTHIA FOGG a more or less free form has reemerged, but completely informed by/coming out of the latest standard format.

DIANA NYAD
back to the mould

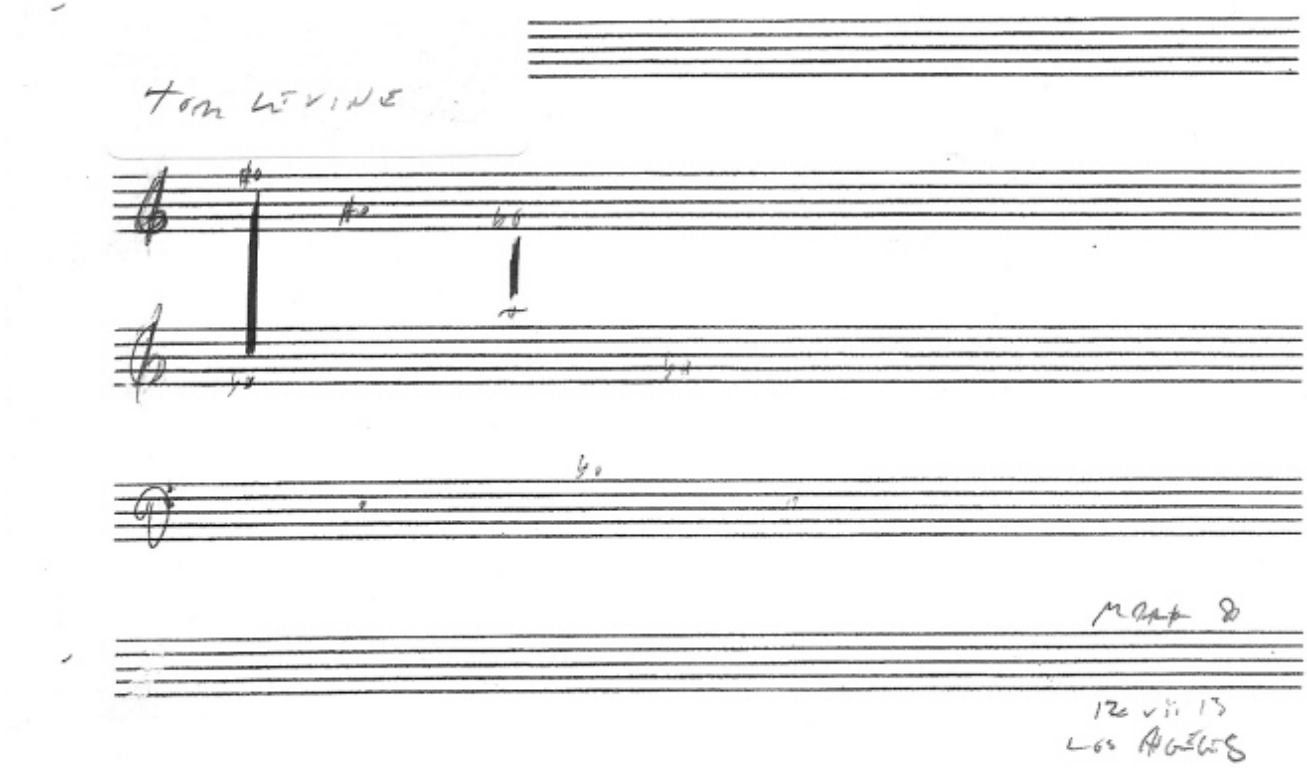
TAI KIM
A total anomaly—the return of the vertical list as two chords; made on a square scrap of staff paper.

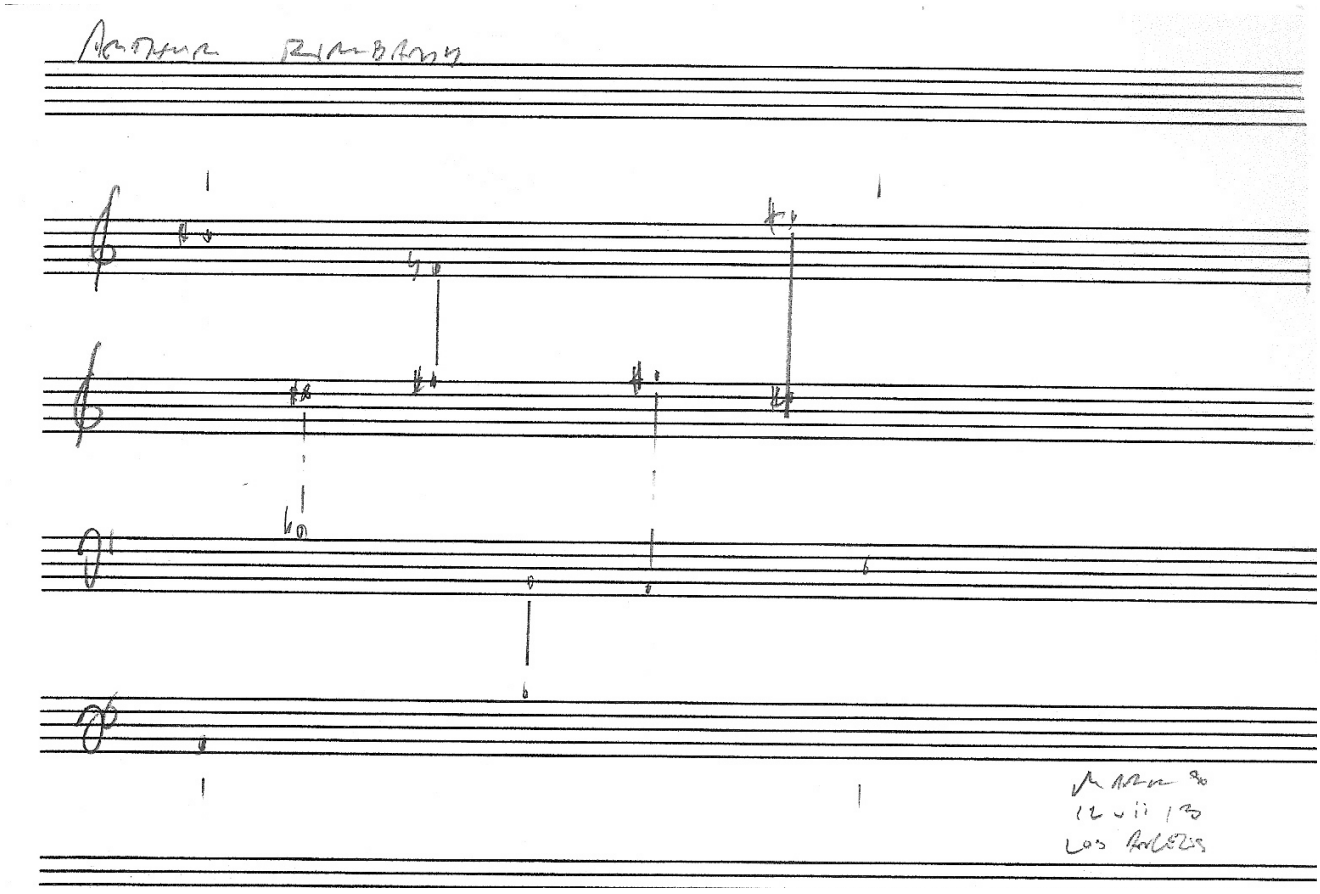
KATHERINE HAGEDORN
The standard format, but with a counterpoint of shorter tones (filled notes) against longer tones (open notes)

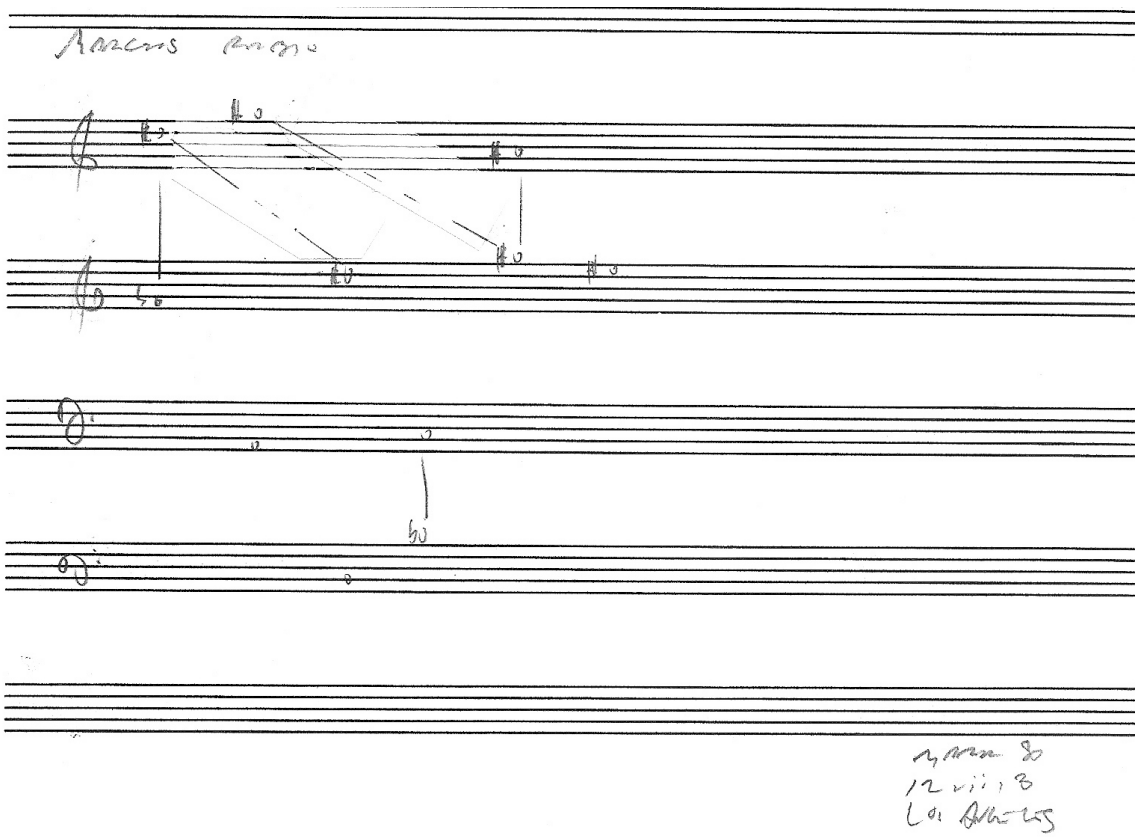


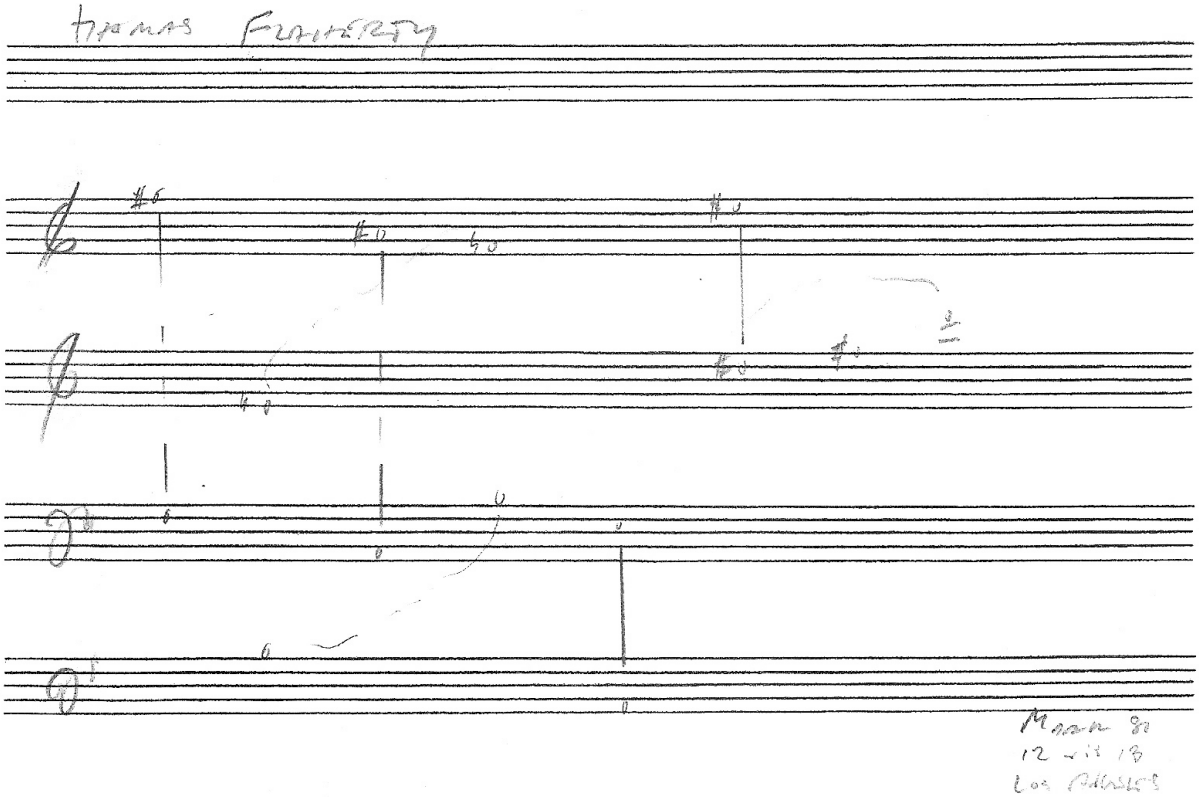


Cerenem Journal no. 6

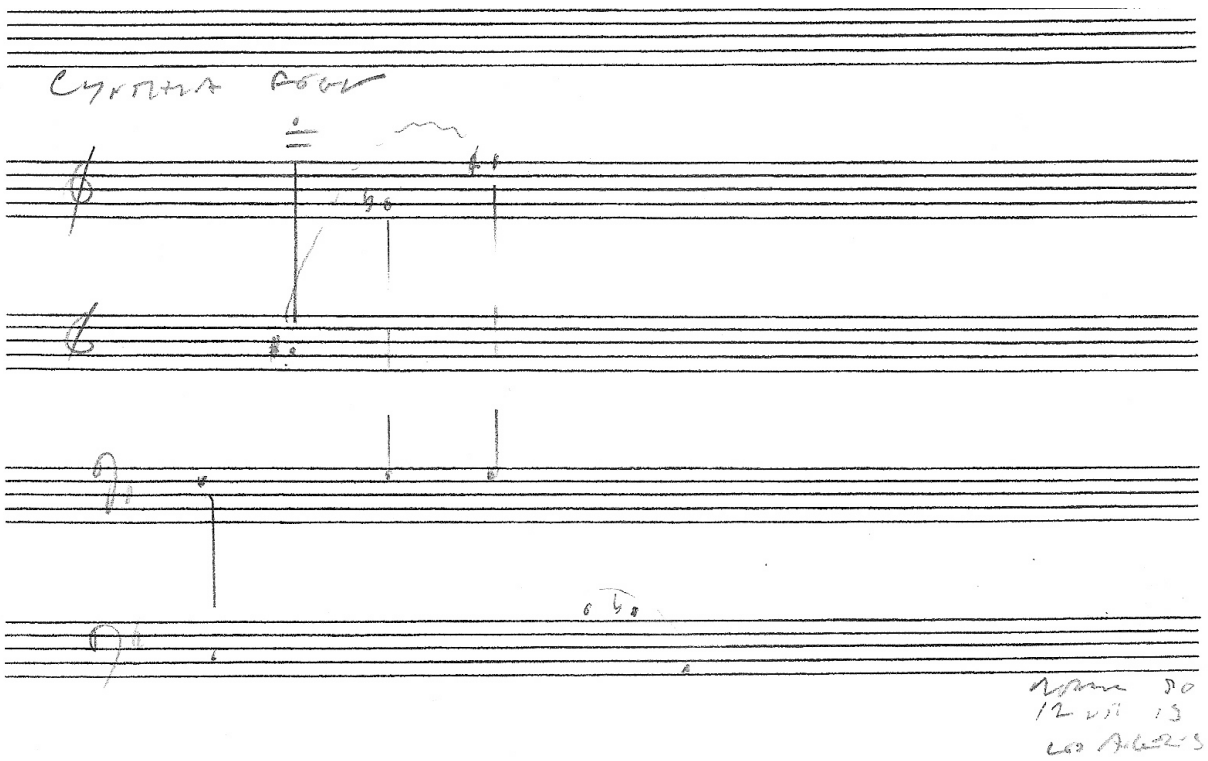


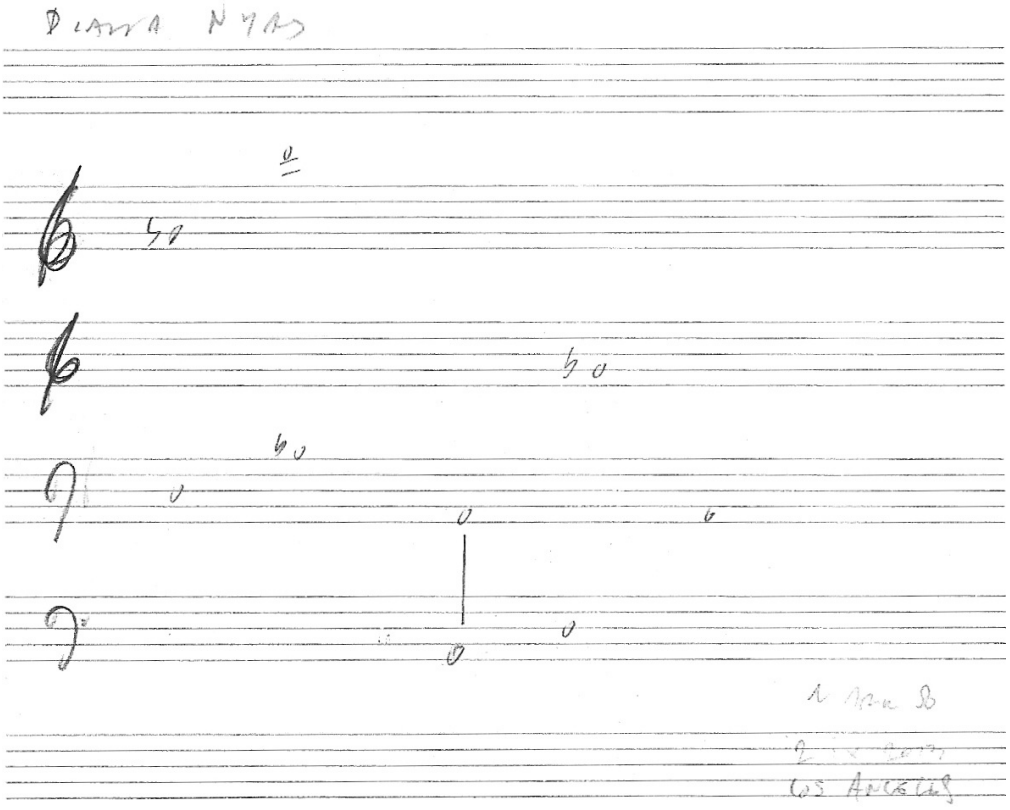


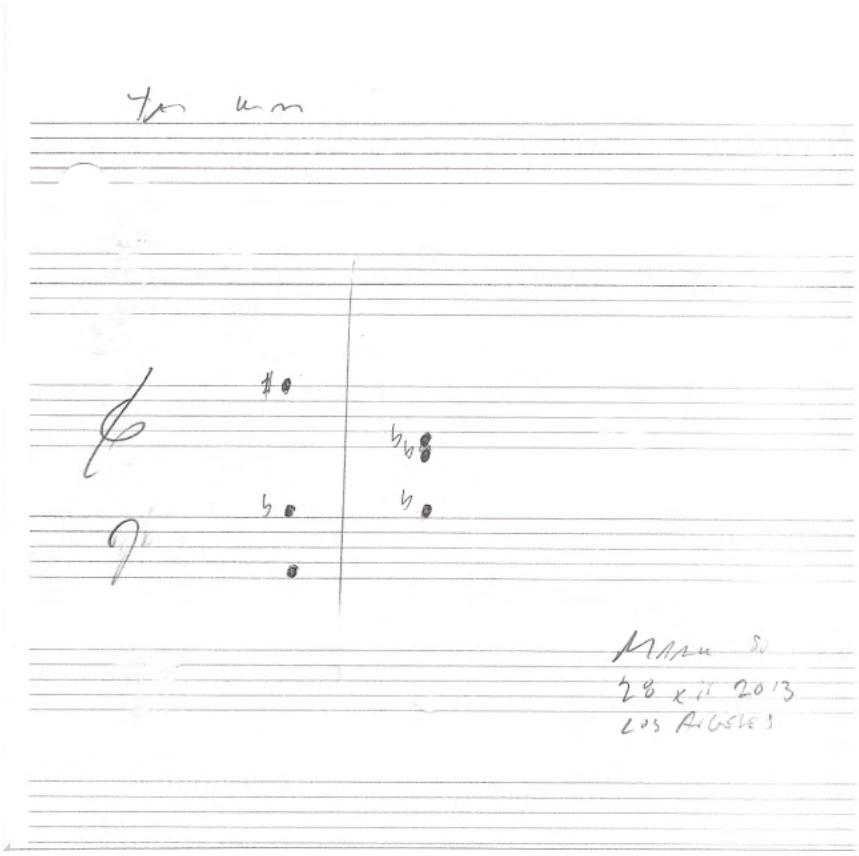


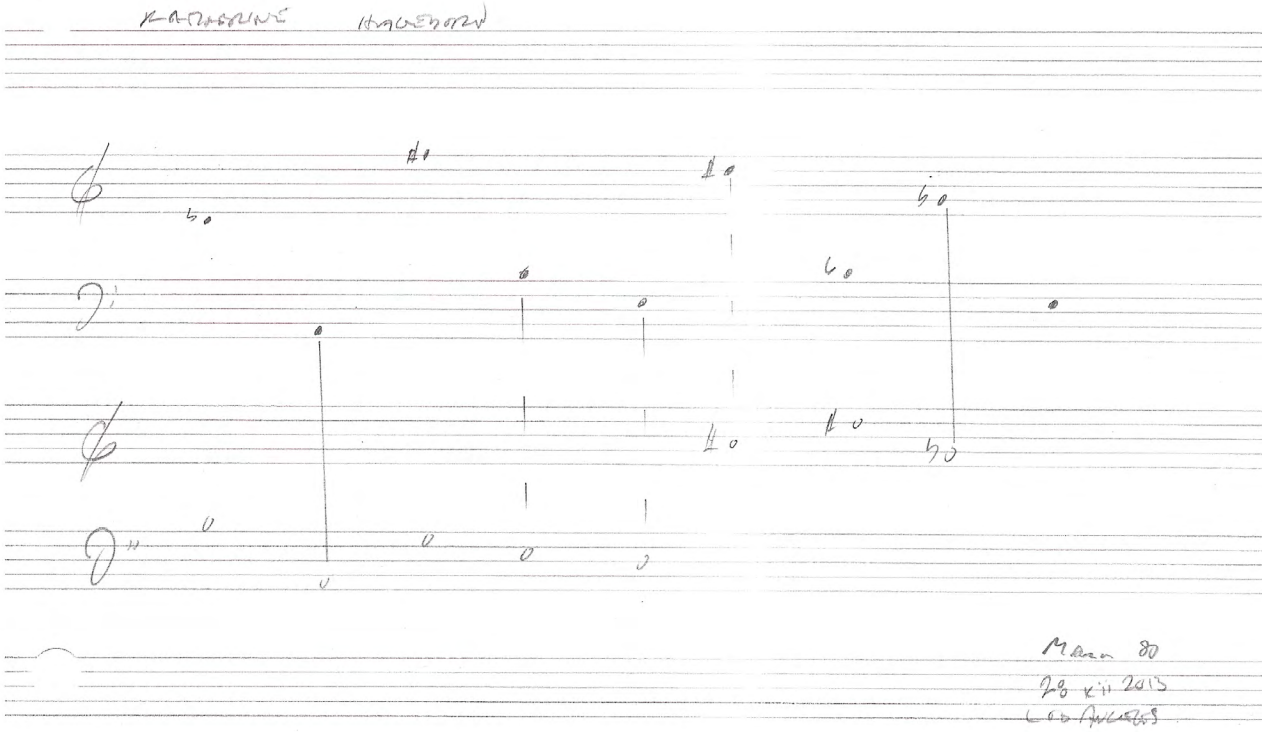


Cerenem Journal no. 6









(10) 2014-15

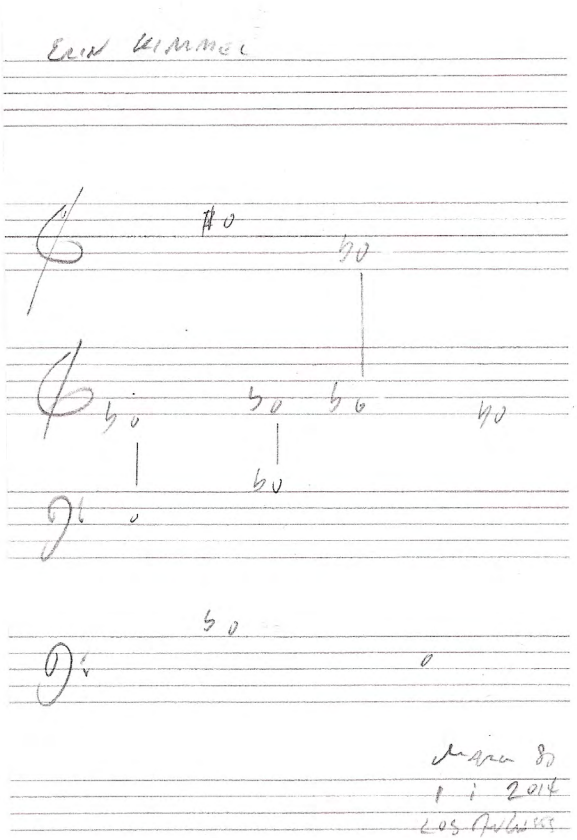
Here we have a stretch generally marked by a tension between mechanical adherence, more or less, to the half-page 4 stave single pencil layer format established previously, and more unique pieces, either in terms of quirks of notation that arise within the format, or more fundamental anomalies:

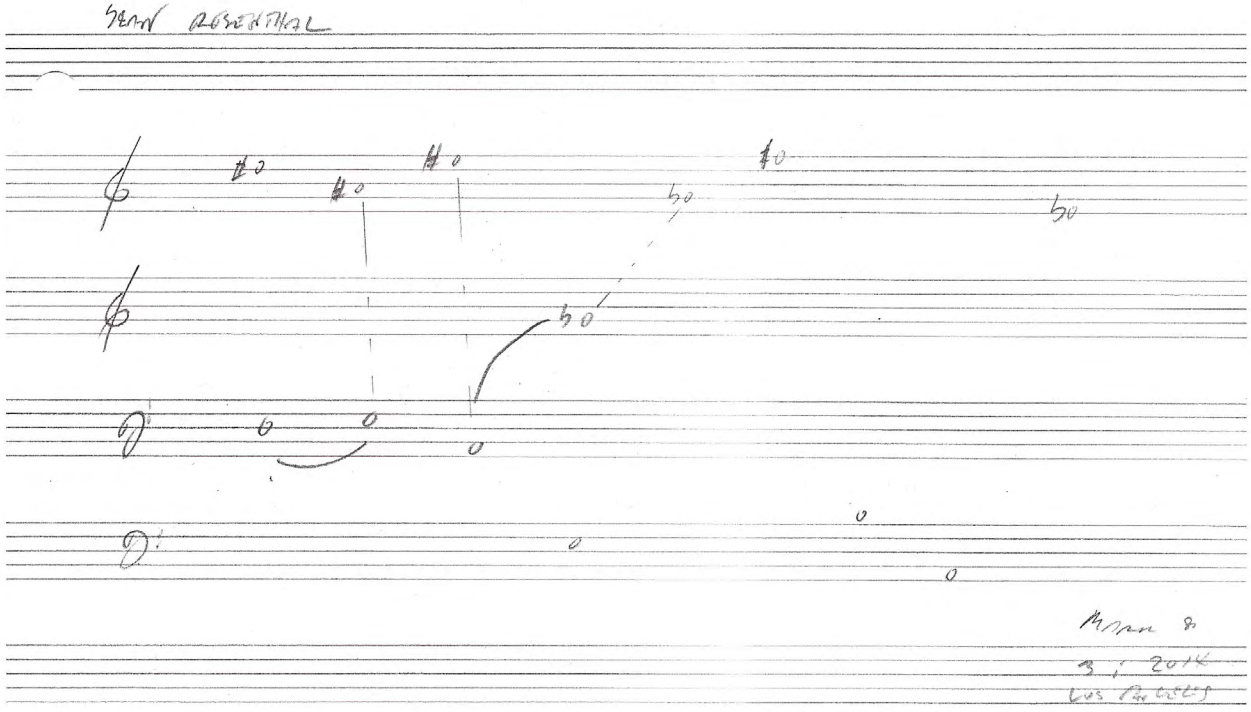
ERIN KIMMEL
Quite to format, yet done on a unique scrap of staff paper.

DEAN ROSENTHAL
Some phrasing indications added to imply voicing emergent within the grid.

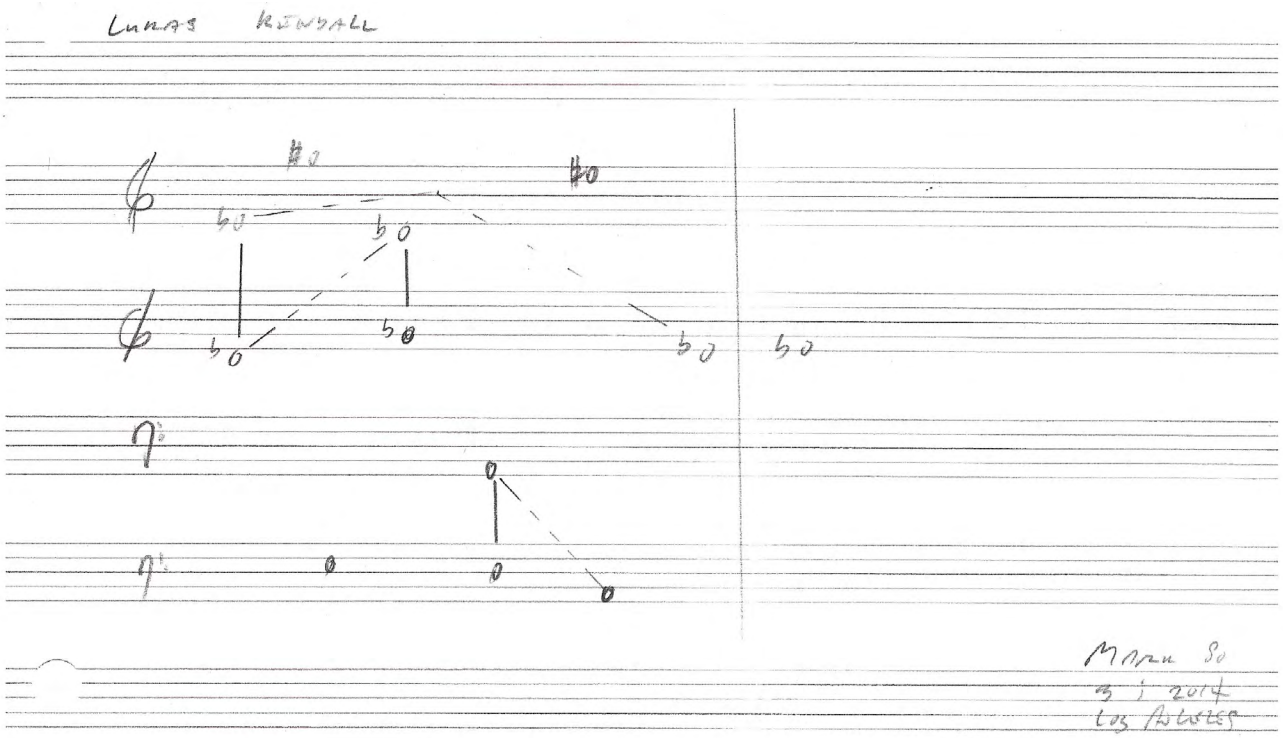
LUKAS KENDALL
A complicated study, with connections implied between the same note appearing in difference staves/voices, plus various other simple indications of connection/separation recently developed within this format.

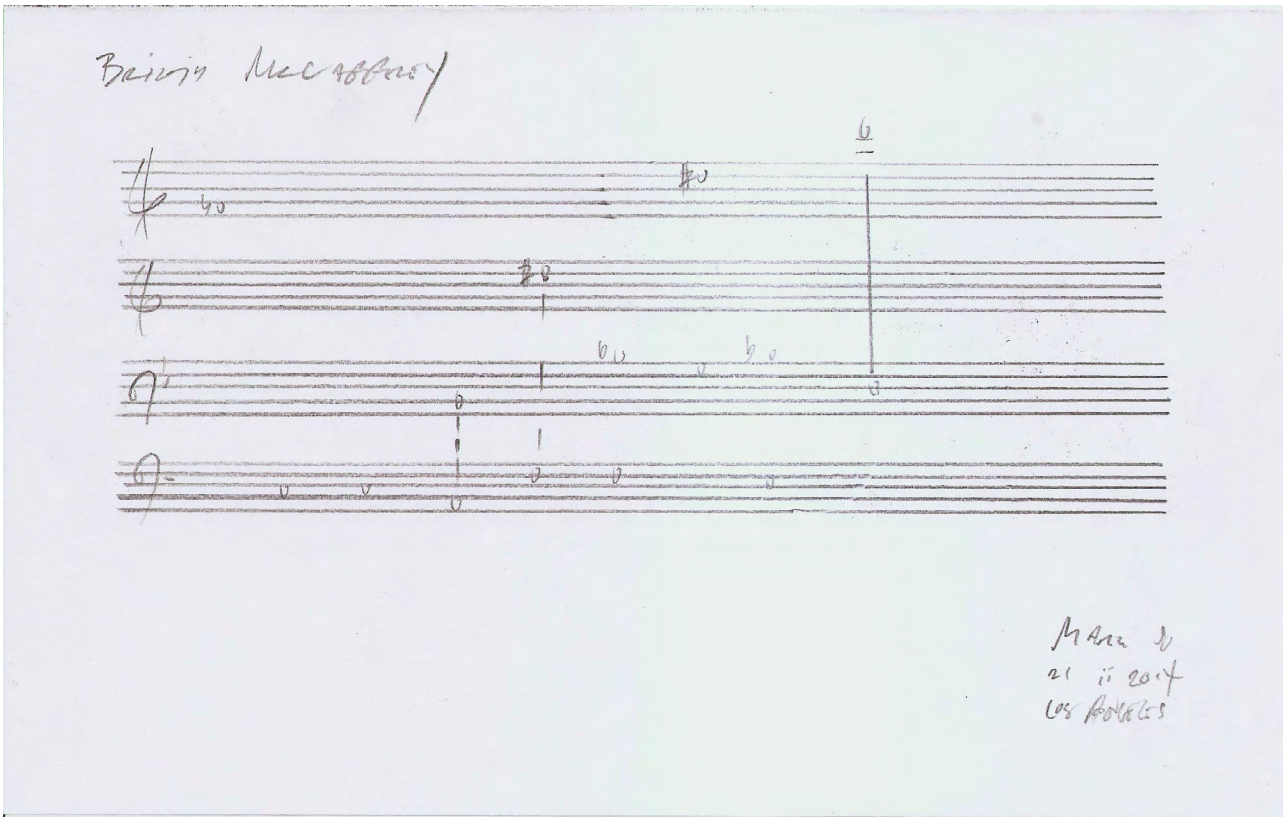
BRIGID MCCAFFREY
To format, but on hand drawn staves, giving it the quality/grain of a consistent textured surface.


Evan Hammel


Sean Rosenthal

Cerenem Journal no. 6





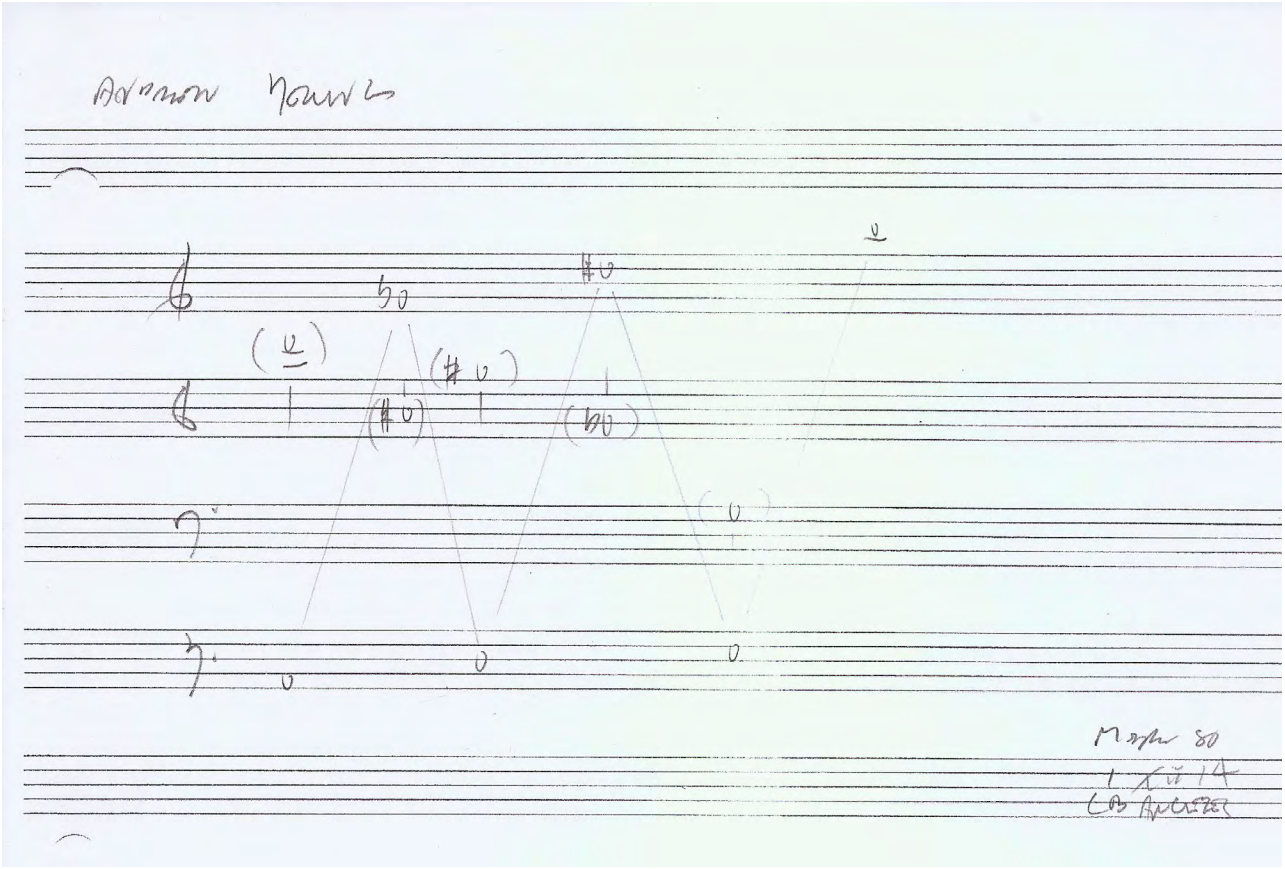
A run of pretty standard ones here; a few pre-cut pairs:

STEPHANIE SMITH
MARK TRAYLE

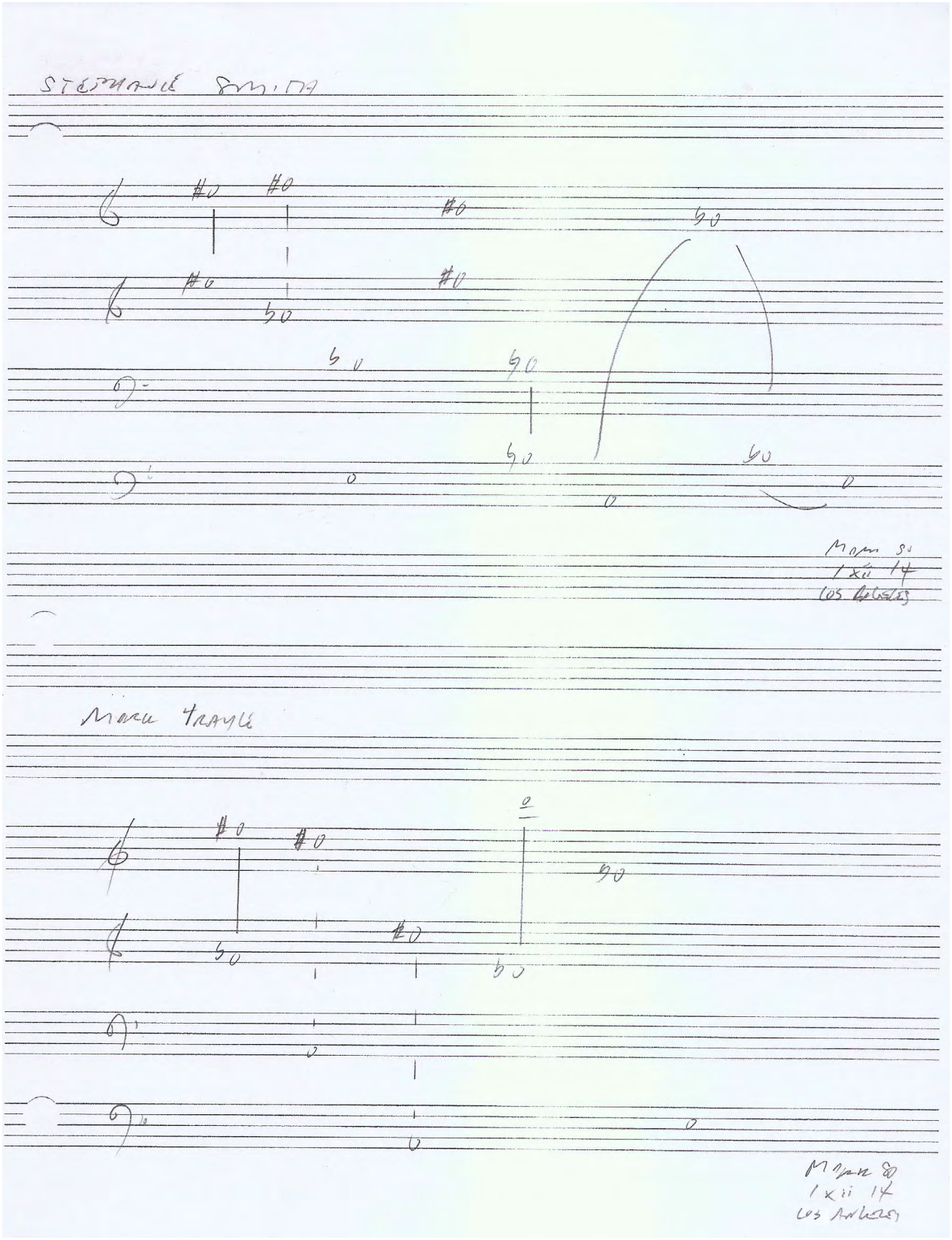
WANDA COLEMAN
LESLIE SCALAPINO

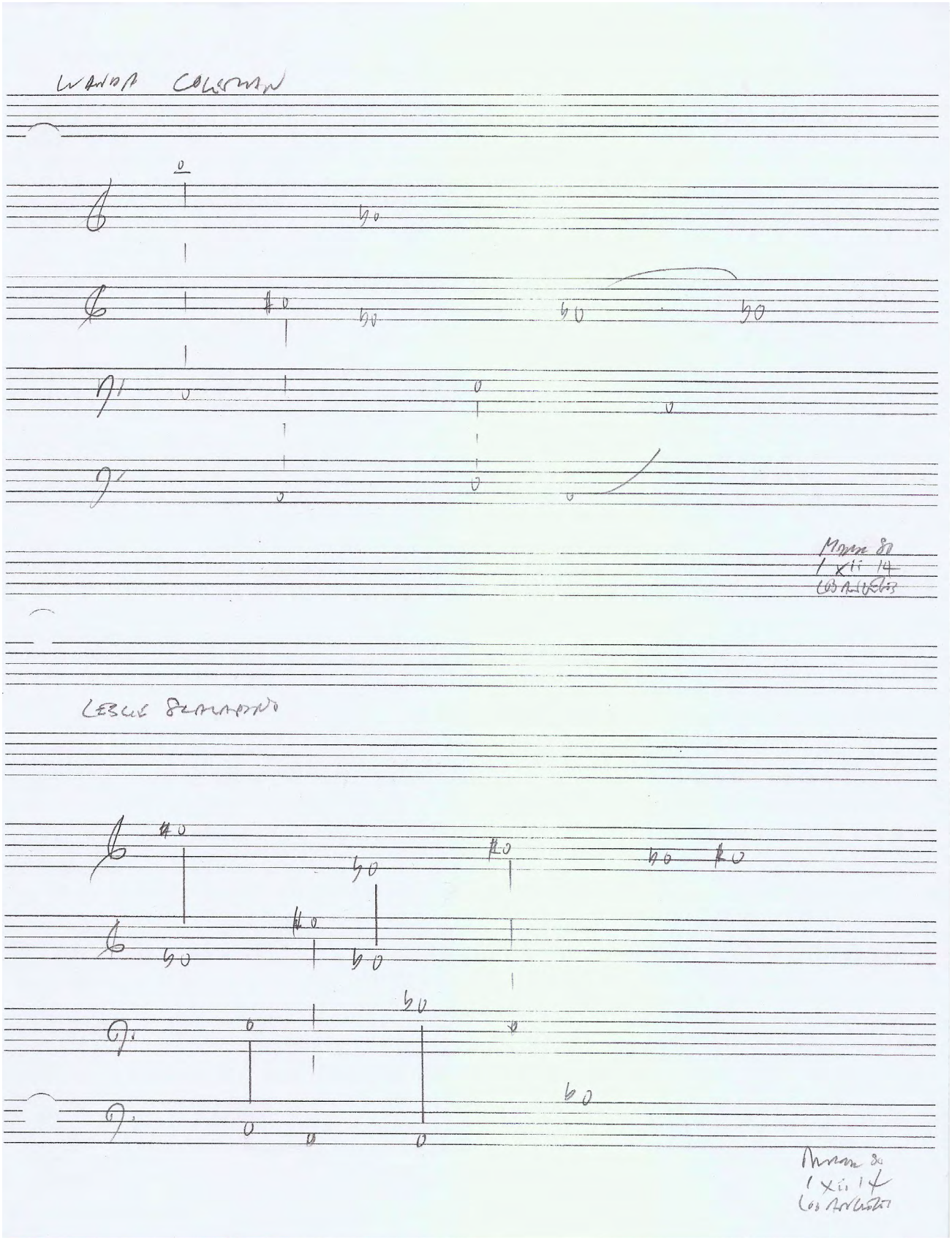
[*Ed. Over the page. These above are also unpublished.*]

ANDREW YOUNG
slightly anomalous and elaborated indication of voices
[*below*]



Cerenem Journal no. 6





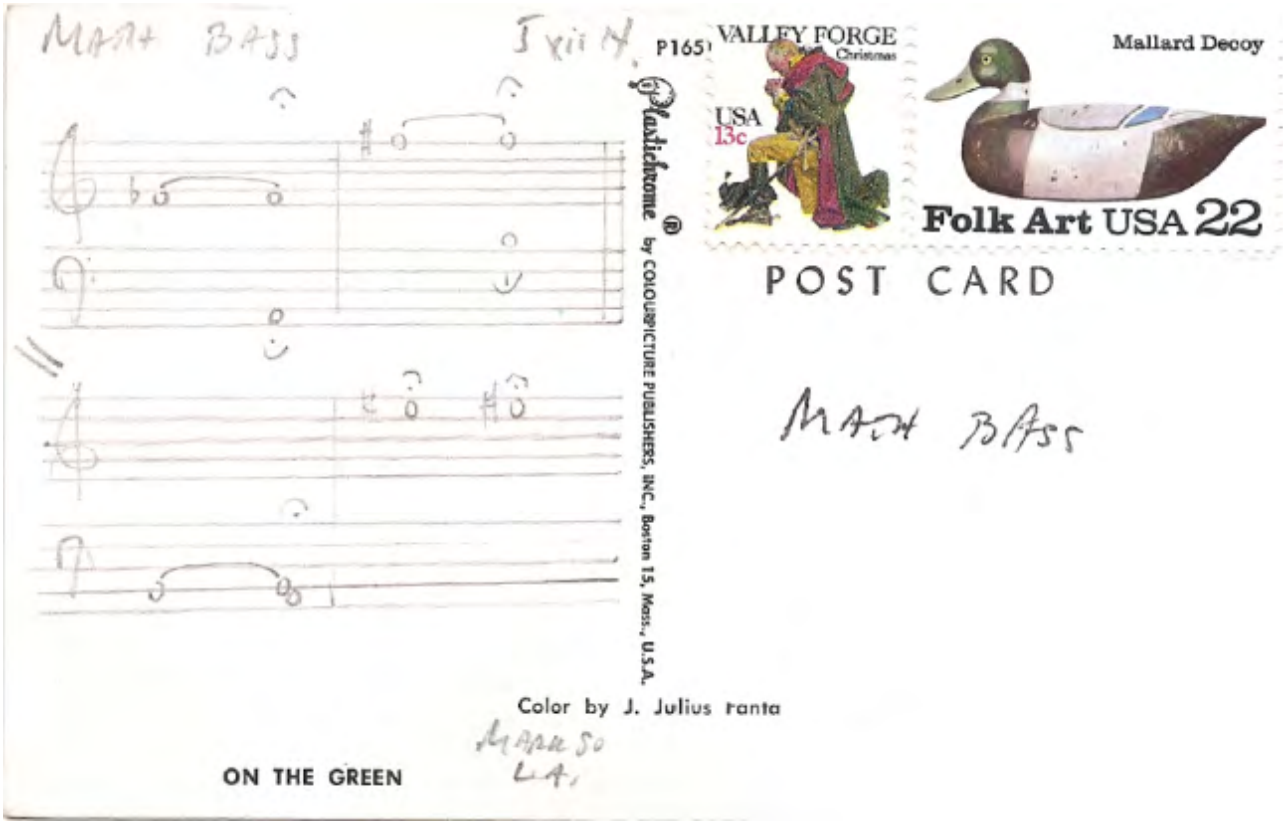
Things break and get different again here, as the pieces really become objects, specifically mail art, owing to the shift to using postcards as the supporting/framing medium—often, various elements of characterization are in play, between the parties involved in the exchange (myself and the titular subject), any image(s) depicted, other text, places (depicted, or of publication, composititon, destination. . .), applied materials (stamps, other labels. . .), and of course the notated name piece itself, also by now a layered entity (even when only drafted in one layer):

MATH BASS

The 4 stave grid format is broken in favor of treating each name as a quasi-melodic, quasi-harmonic block, minimally delineated

BEN BORETZ

Typed labels with text from one of Ben's pieces, each name treated syllabically.



PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS
This common desert cactus, one of the first to bloom each spring, has blossoms ranging from very light yellow to deep red. They hold their blossoms longer than any other of the desert flora.

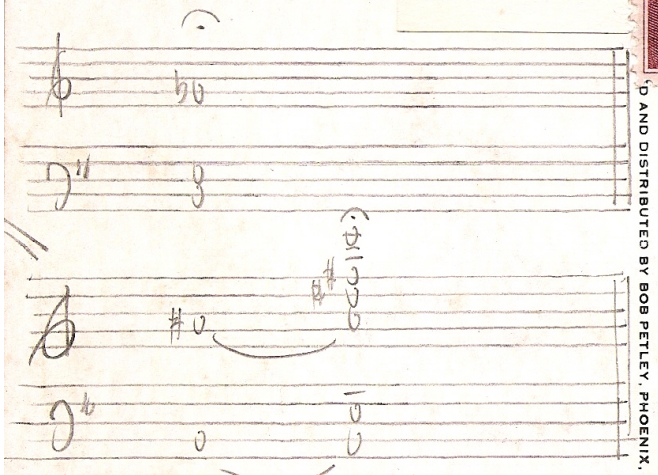
BEN
BORETZ

UNITED STATES POSTAGE
EPHRAIM McDOWELL
4¢

UNITED STATES POSTAGE
EPHRAIM McDOWELL
4¢

VALLEY FORGE
Christmas
USA
13c

VALLEY FORGE
Christmas
USA
13c



D AND DISTRIBUTED BY BOB PETLEY. PHOENIX. ARIZONA

DACHROME ORIGINAL BY ROBERT PLUMSTEAD

MADE IN U. S. A.

BEN BORETZ
29 SYCAMORE DR.
RED HOOK, NY
12571

Main SO 20 xii 2014. LOS ANGELES.

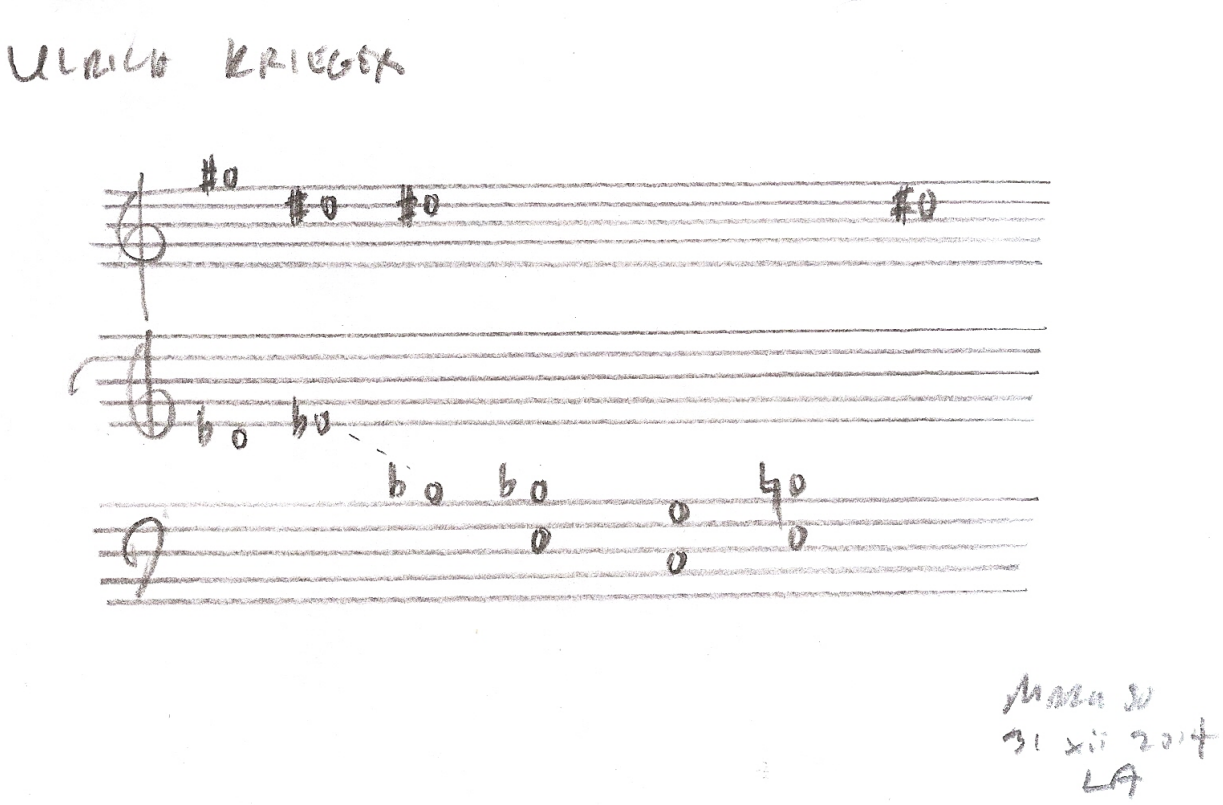
The 3 stave format really emerges here, with its individuated study of implicit sub-voicings; using hand drawn pencil staves on blank postcards:

ULRICH KRIEGER

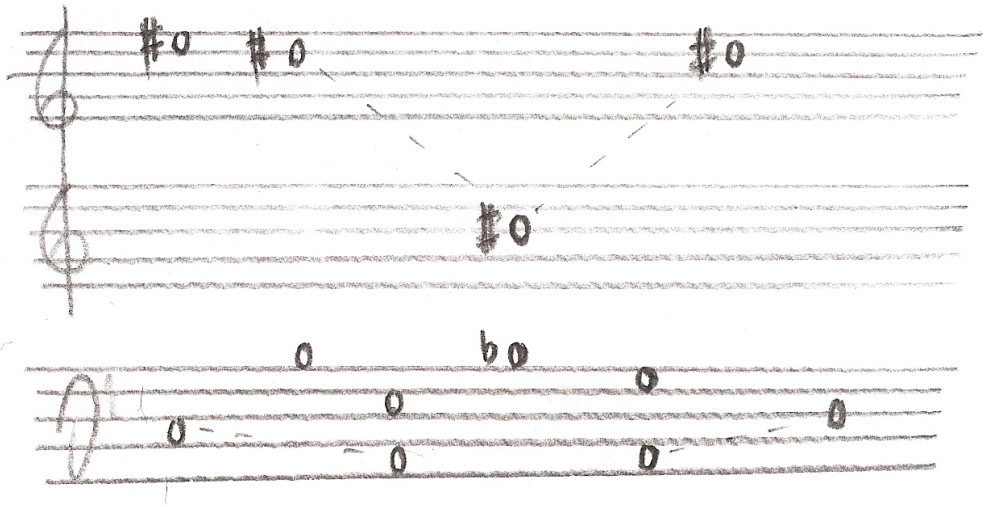
CRAIG SHEPARD

NARIN DICKERSON

SEAN BATTON (2nd piece)
I had forgotten I already made him one, when making one for him and his partner, KELSEY BRAIN

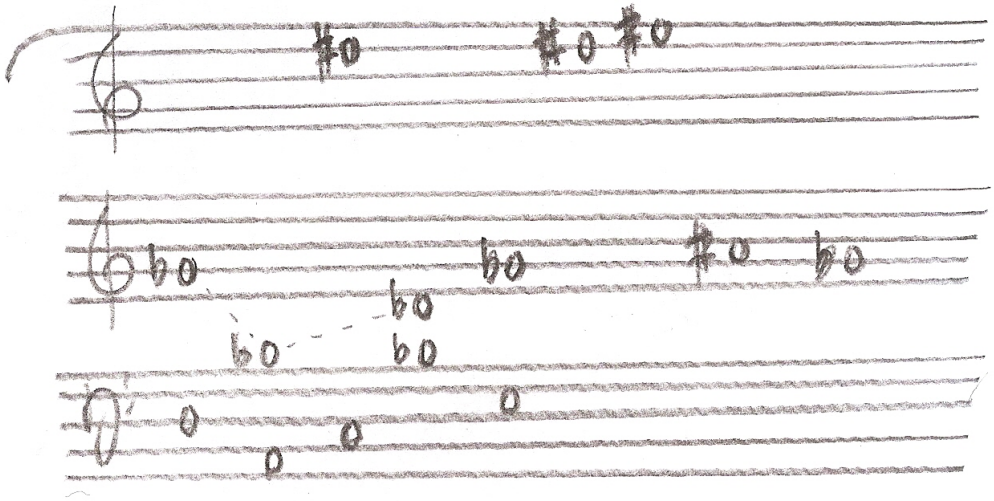


LARRY SHEPARD

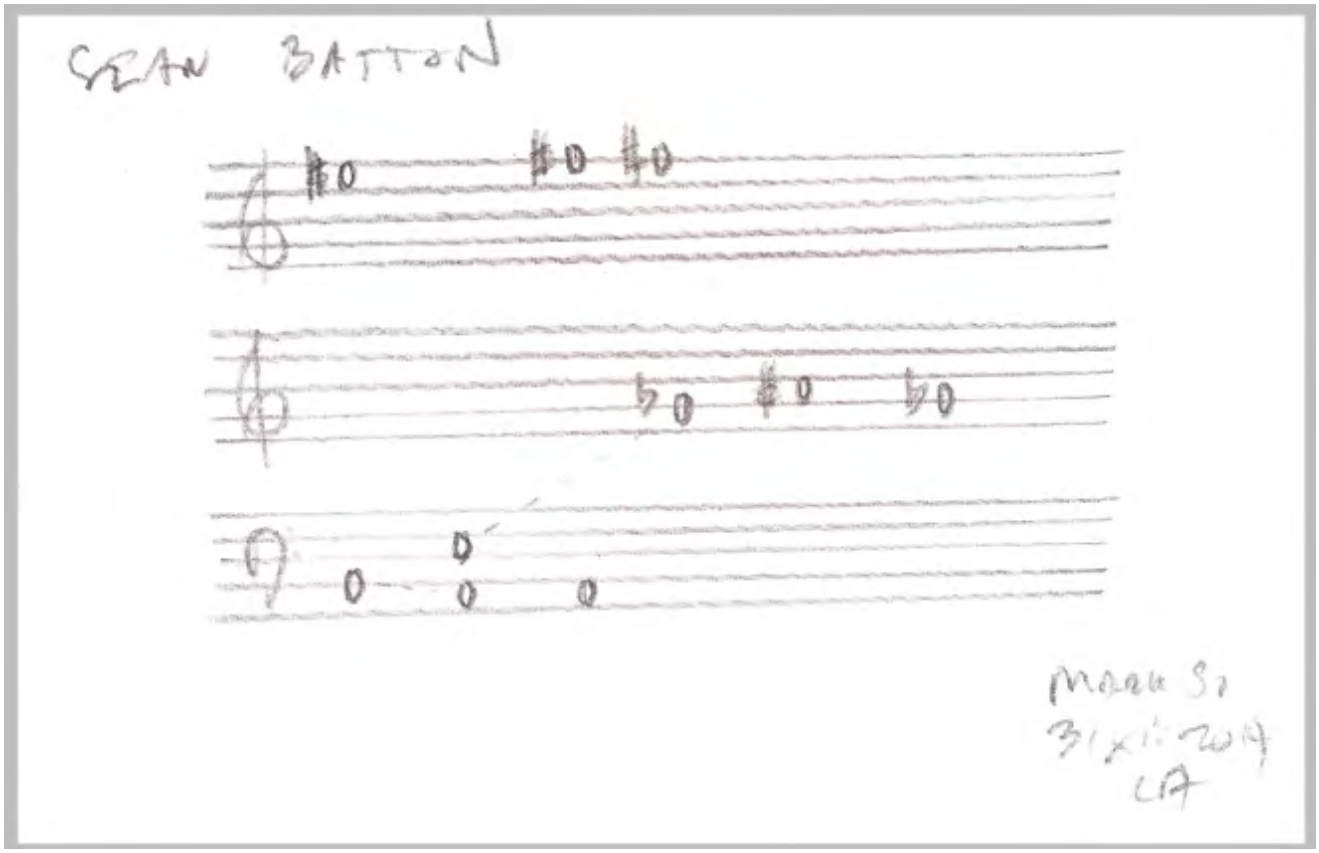


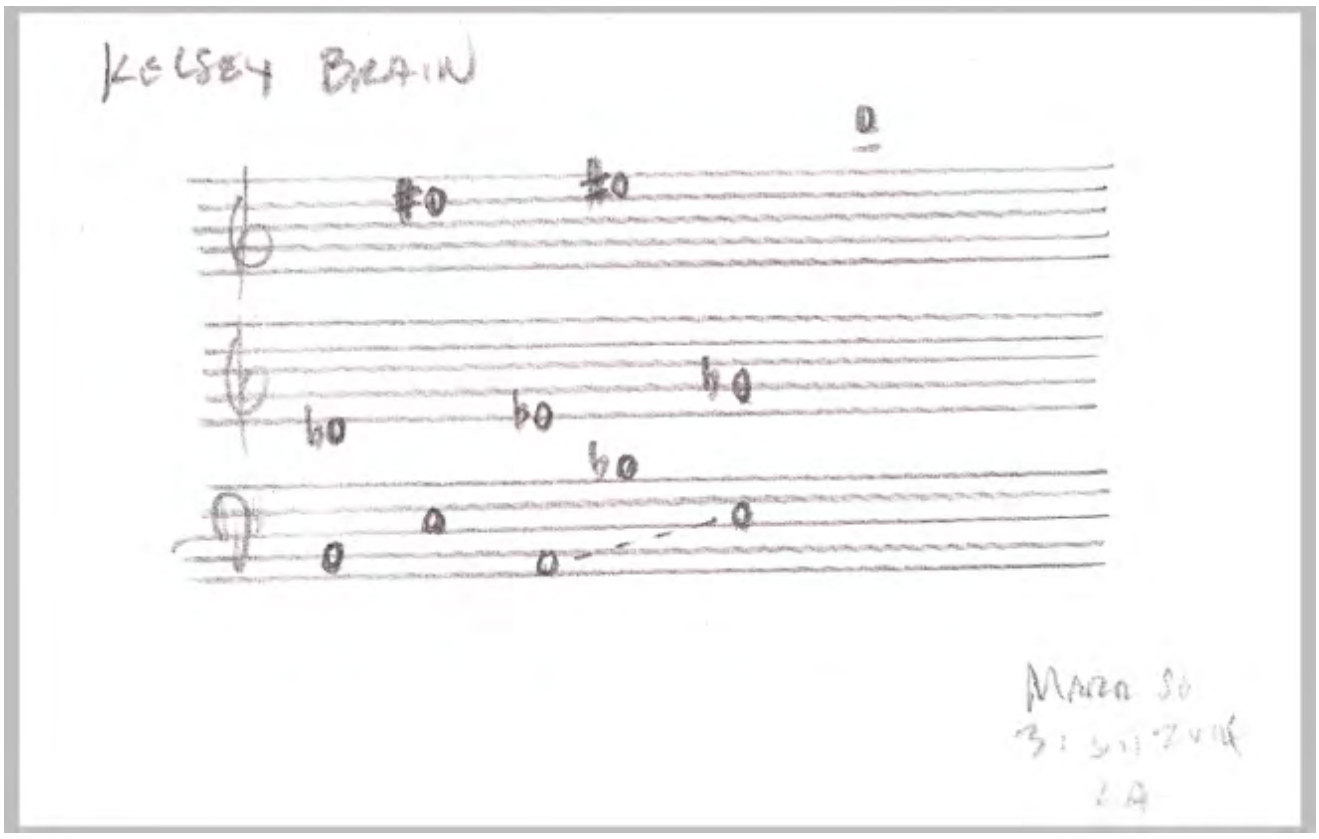
MARK SO
31 XII 2014
LA

NORMAN DICKENSON



MARK SO
31 XII 2014
LA


SEAN BATTON


KELSEY BRAIN

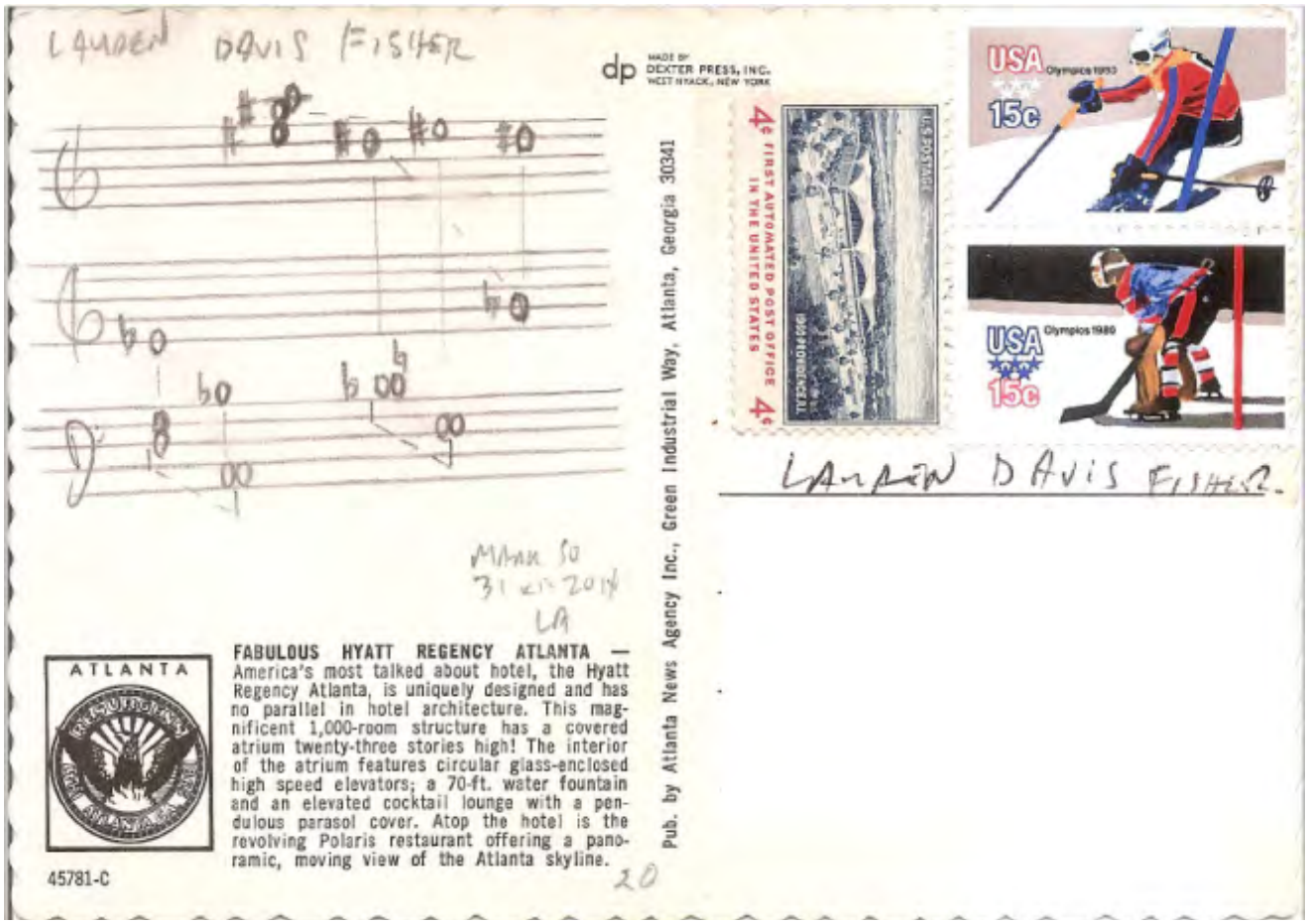
Three somewhat anomalous elaborations of the 3 stave format, and back to more complex objects:

LAUREN DAVIS FISHER

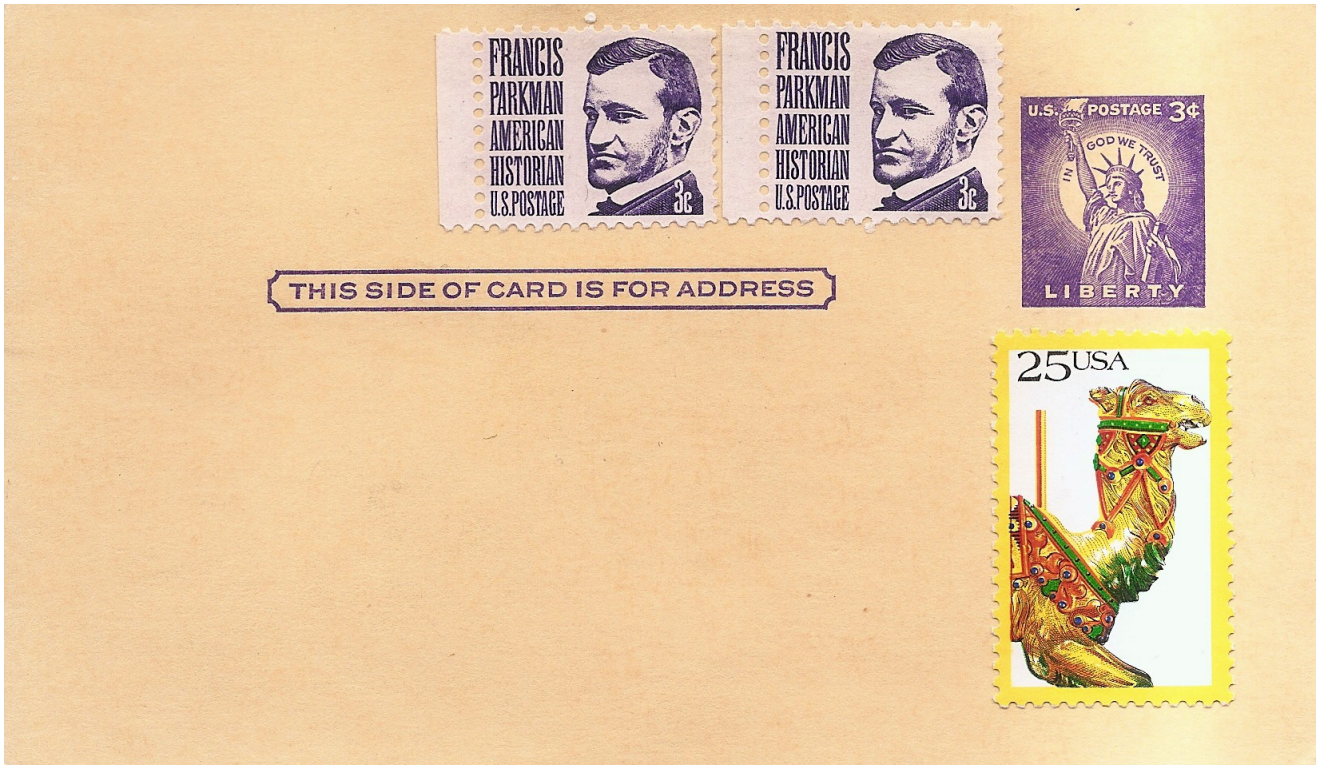
M P A

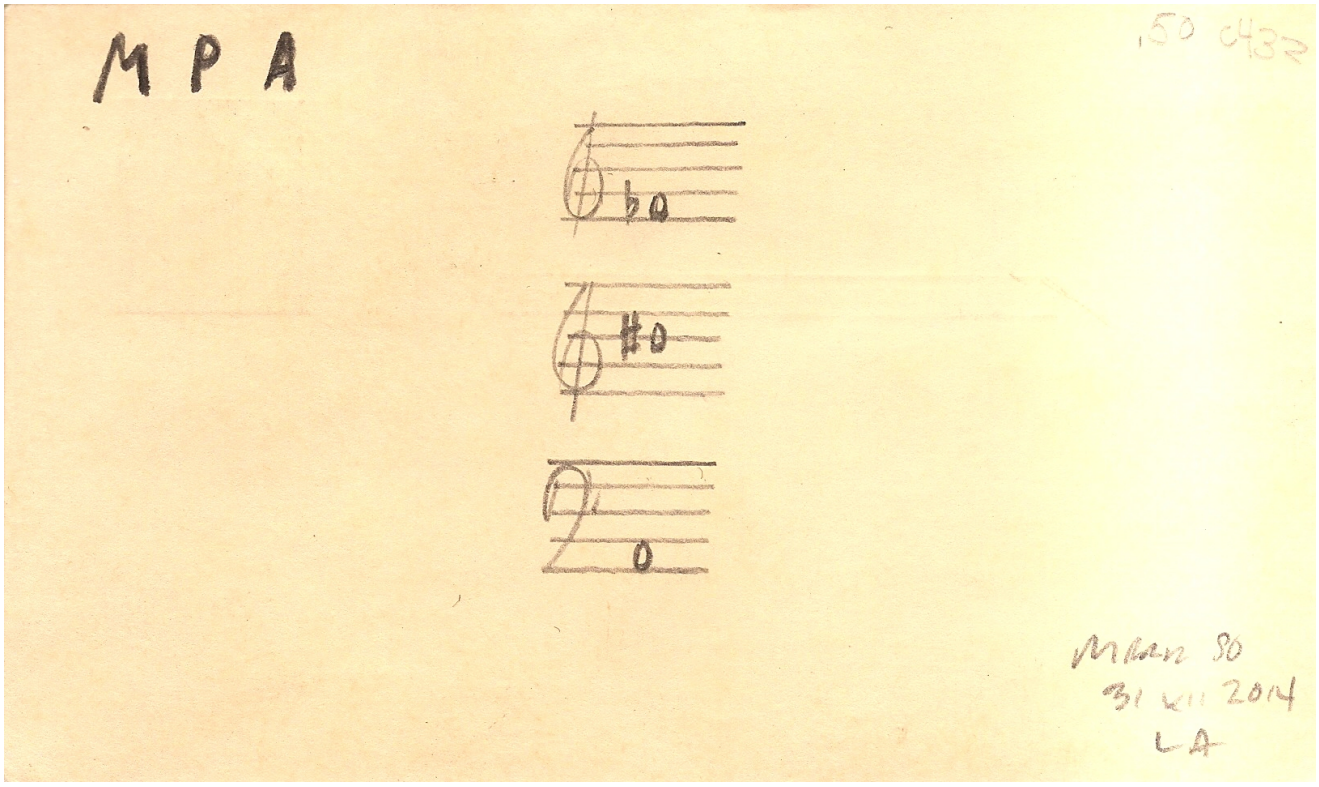
KATHLEEN JOHNSON

We'd just been in Utah to do Brainchild, part 3, kind of a sci-fi opera we collaborated on; the color painted on the back is the nail polish we all wore for the 2nd brainchild performance in L.A.—I was glad to get Mari to be in it, among others.



Cerenem Journal no. 6





KATHLEEN JOHNSON

AUTUMN SCENE IN UTAH

Highway 14 on Cedar Mountain leading to Cedar Breaks. Magnificent Cedar Breaks is a series of vast amphitheatres cut down from Kolob Plateau, 10,400 feet high and 3,000 feet deep, covering 60 square miles. Its huge, rough erosions in every conceivable shape and color form a most impressive and beautiful sight.

10 xi 15

Published by Geo. Mc Co., Box 7146, Murray, Utah

Plastichrome® by COLOURPICTURE PUBLISHERS, INC., Boston, Mass., U.S.A.

POST CARD

KATHLEEN JOHNSON

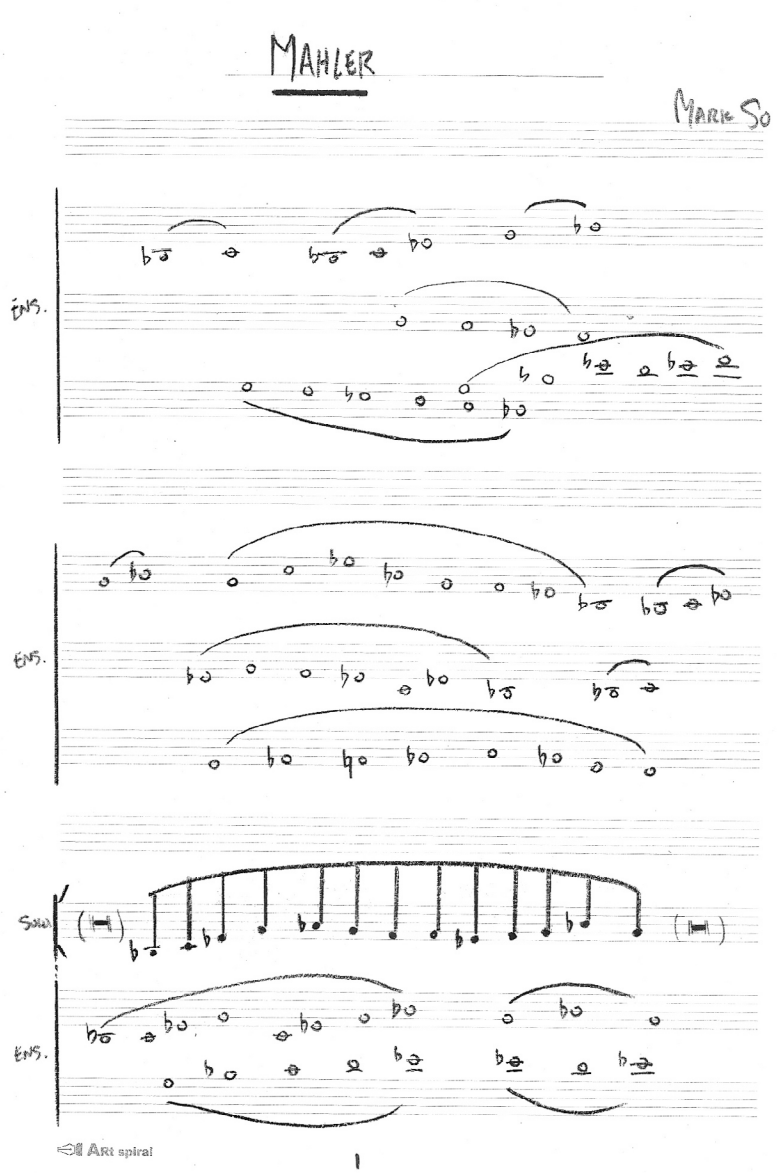
90039

MARK SO
LOS ANGELES

Photo by Roy White

This is the last installment:

(Oh, by the way, in case you were wondering, there are a couple pieces that are not name pieces in the sense of this series of transcribed names, but which are named after composers: MAHLER and Kong transcriptions (Steiner)—each of which is a kind of radical transcription of my favorite piece by that composer—'Ich bin der Welt abhanded geckommen' and the moody overture from King Kong, respectively. Soon, I'll start working on a Monteverdi piece, transcribing Arianna's lament, and I've long wanted to do BRUCKNER, based entirely on a brief passage for Wagner tubas in the adagio of the 8th symphony.)



(11) 2016
so far . . .

The 3 stave format continues—taking what are essentially two melodic voices tracking each other, and drawing from that format the most basic implications of three (or more) voices—postcards/layered mail art objects (for the most part):

SEAN GRIFFIN [*over page*]

honey
(Eileen's dog) An anomaly: a variation on the list, each letter notated in one ply of a bar coaster, placed in a different room in Eileen's house in Marfa.
(Of course not a complete anomaly, as John McAlpine—one of the first of these name pieces—was also written on a coaster.)
[*over page, opposite, each image shows H O N E Y*]

HOLLY WOODLAWN (/Marlene Dietrich/Zackary Drucker)
[*following pages*]

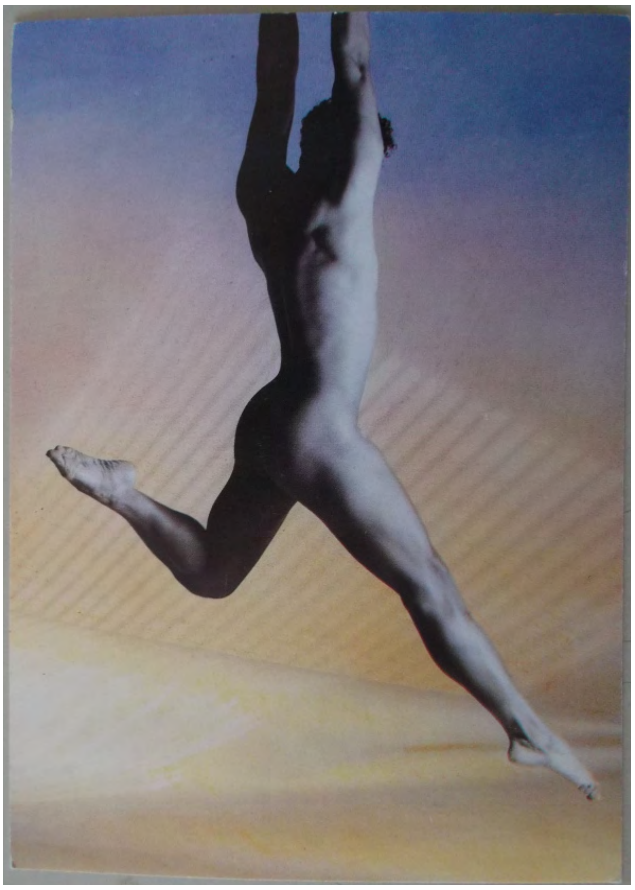
SAMUEL VRIEZEN
Another anomaly: once again, the list, taking after MILLAY in listing the name as notated marginalia, one letter/note on every other page of, in this case, a blank notebook, with each name crossing on inverse trajectories, meeting in the middle.

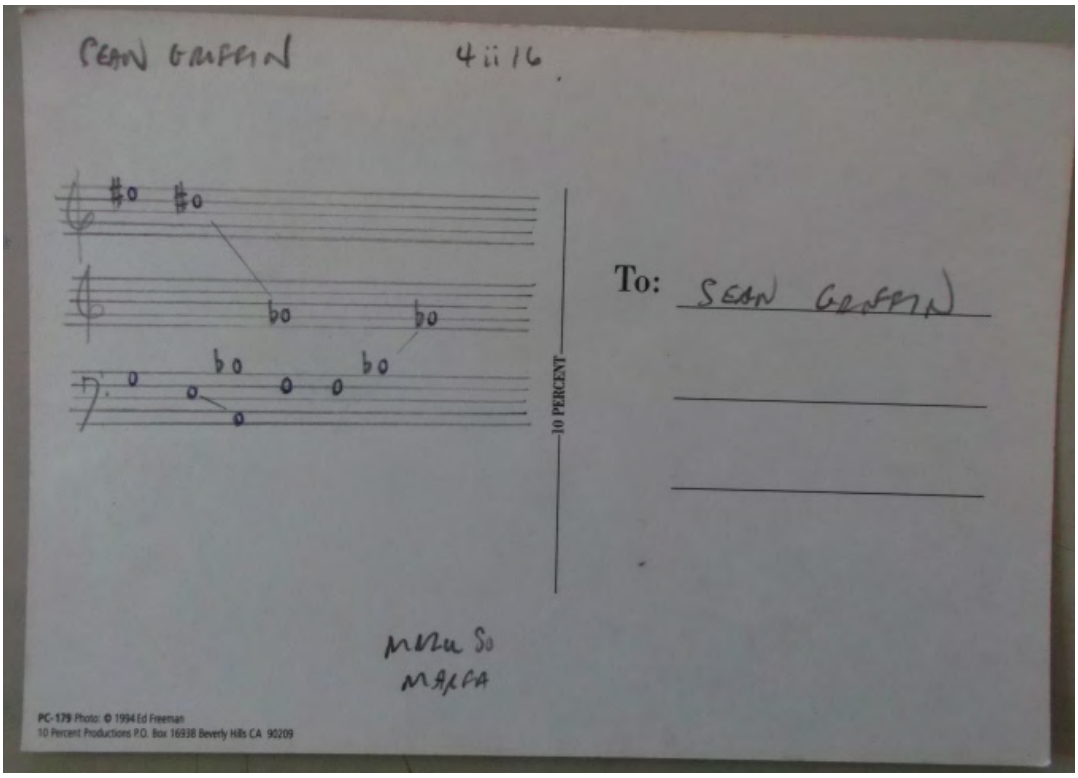
ARIANA REINES
A postcard she handed me in New York with her address on it; a bit of a departure; two staves, red pencil, kind of a return to an older idea of just a sequence of dyads.

Not really mail art, but gifts given personally—the red Marfa pencil remaining in evidence:

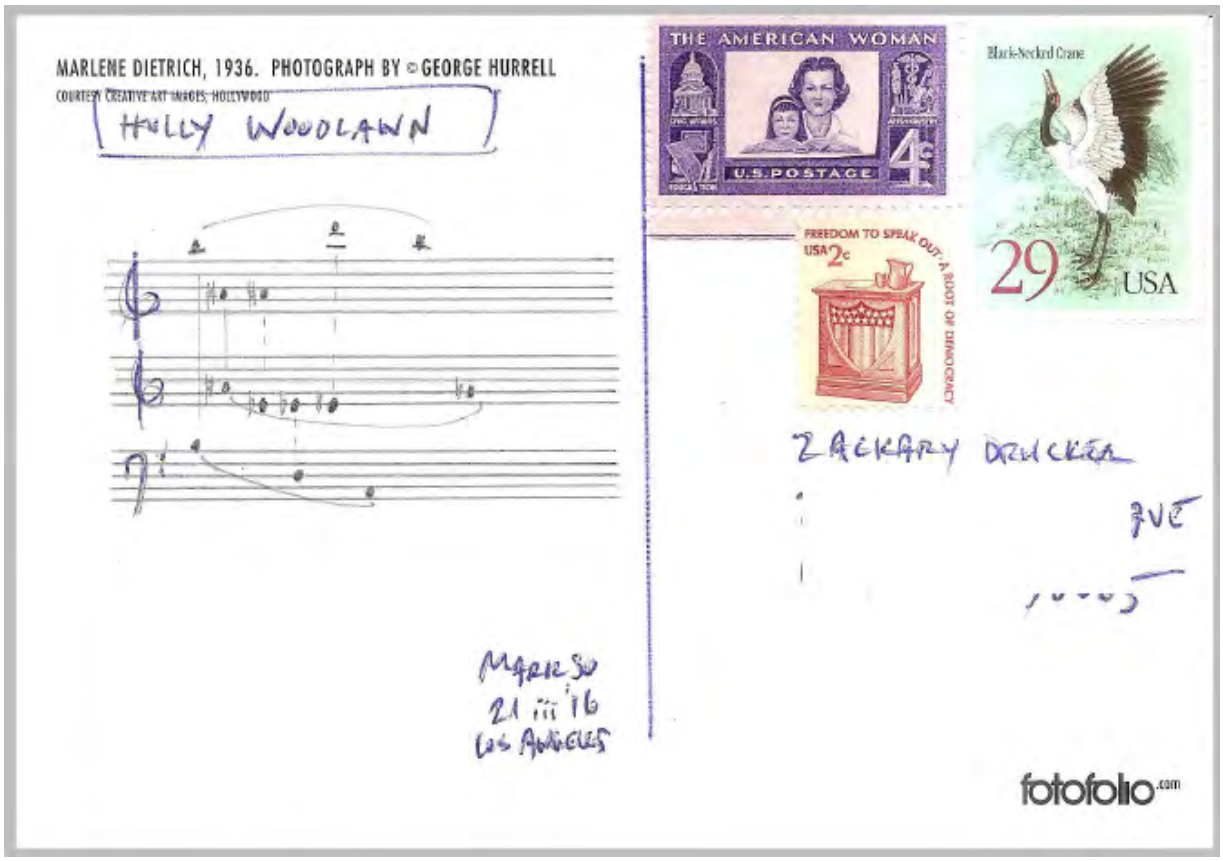
LYNN XU
A single staff, continuing with red pencil, more of a free exploration.

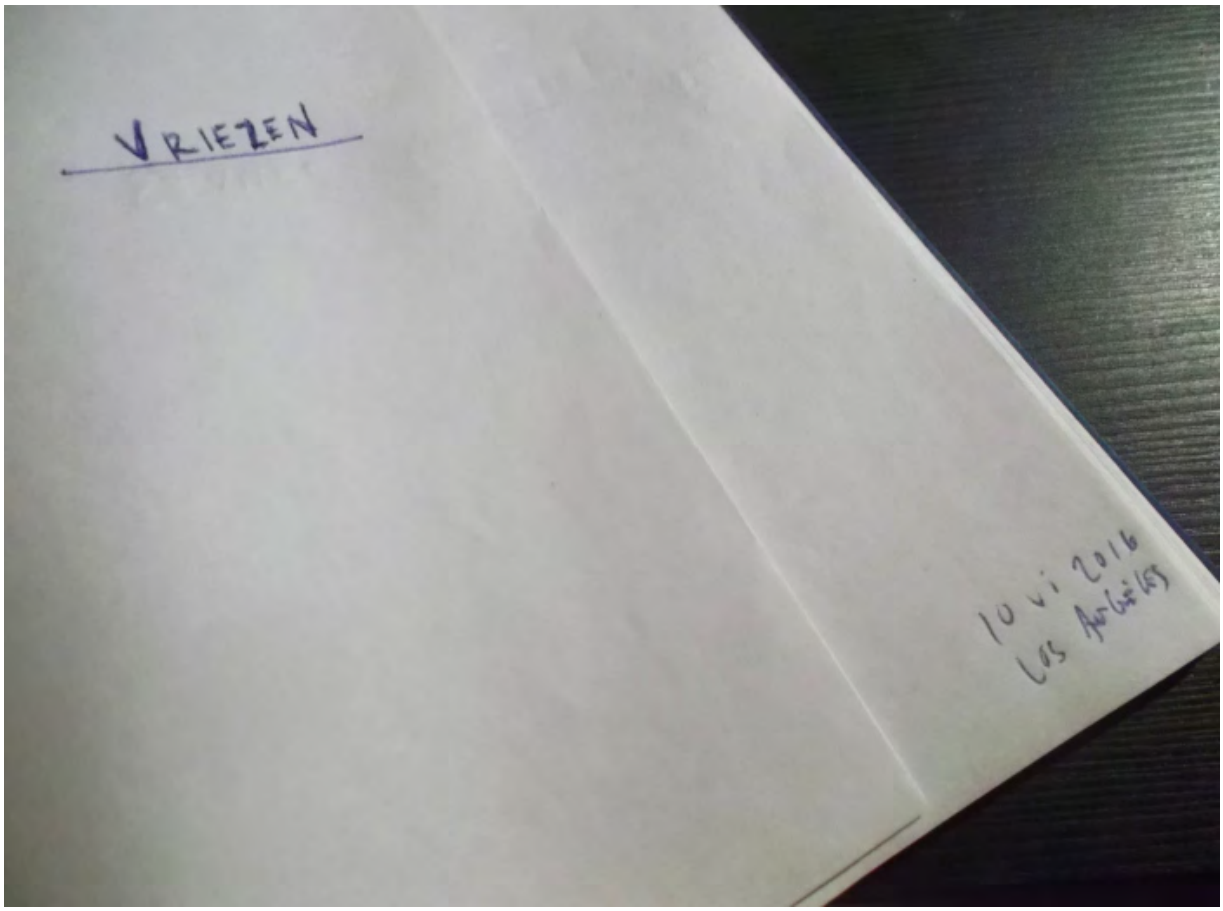
Cerenem Journal no. 6






LIKE A


MARLENE DIETRICH, 1936. PHOTOGRAPH BY © GEORGE HURRELL
COURTESY CREATIVE ART IMAGES, HOLLYWOOD
HOLLY WOODLAWN
THE AMERICAN WOMAN
U.S. POSTAGE
4¢
FREEDOM TO SPEAK OUT, A ROOT OF DEMOCRACY
USA 2c
Black-Necked Crane
29
USA
ZACKARY DRUCKER
MARILYN
21 III 16
LOS ANGELES
fotofolio.com


VRIEZEN
10 vi 2016
Los Angeles

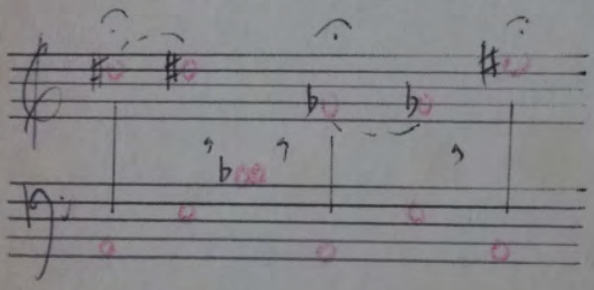
The Snyders Room in the New Hermitage

THE HERMITAGE, LENINGRAD

The Snyders Room in the New Hermitage
Designed by Klenze; built by Stasov
and Yefimov, 1851

ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ ЭРМИТАЖ, ЛЕНИНГРАД

Зал Снейдерса в Новом Эрмитаже
По проекту Л. Кленце
Архитекторы В. П. Стасов, Н. Е. Ефимов, 1851



ADRIANA REINES

QUEENS, NY

11385

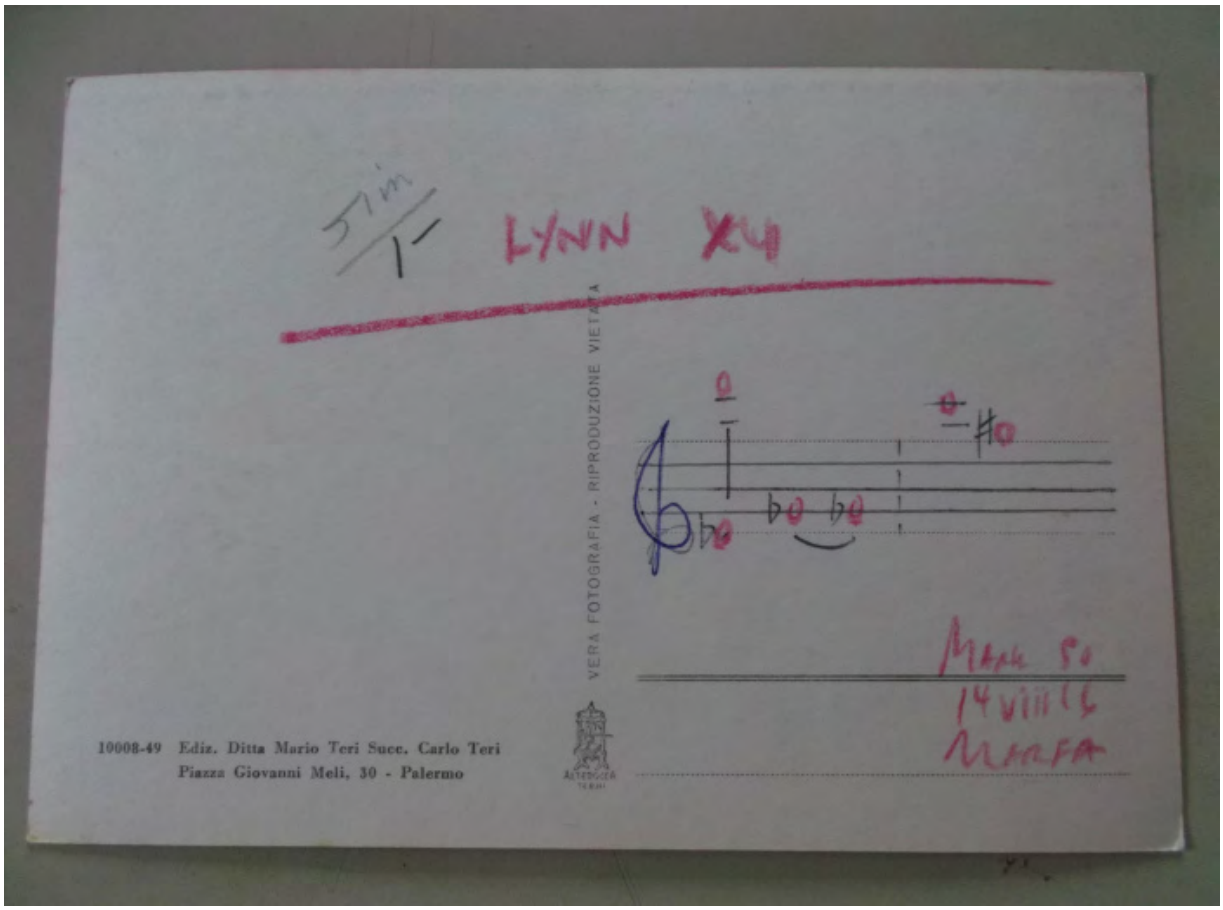
© AURORA ART PUBLISHERS, LENINGRAD, 1983

Отправлять только в конверте

Printed in the USSR

3 коп.


Palermo - Teatro Politeama e Piazza Castelnuovo


LYNN
VERA FOTOGRAFIA - RIPRODUZIONE VIETATA
10008-49 Ediz. Ditta Mario Teri Succ. Carlo Teri
Piazza Giovanni Meli, 30 - Palermo

JOSHUA EDWARDS
two staves, complicated voicings [*opposite*]

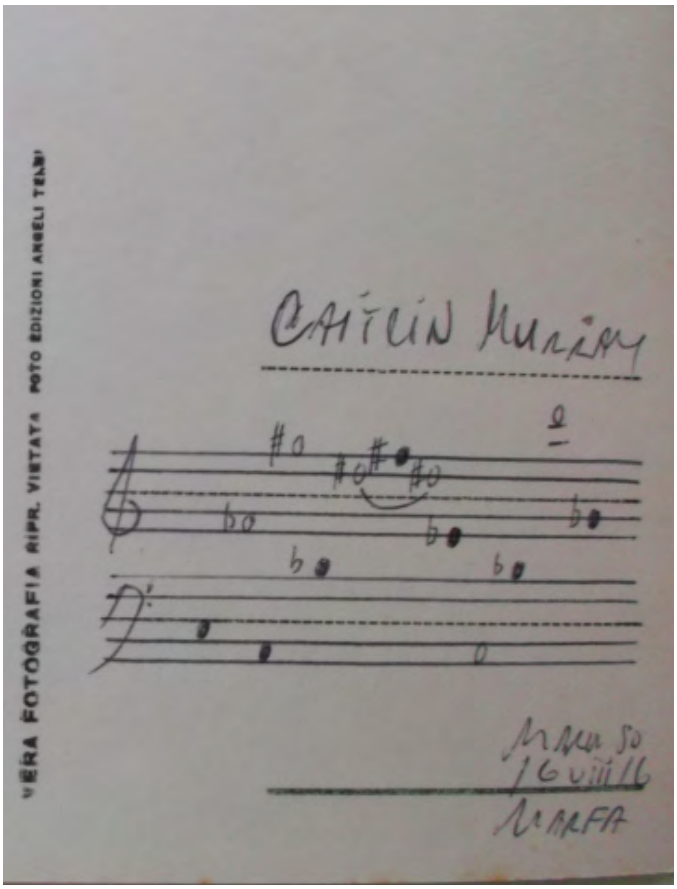
CAITLIN MURRAY
back to basics—a simple contrapuntal idea [*below*]

NINA PURO
syllabic breakdown of the two names [*over next pages*]

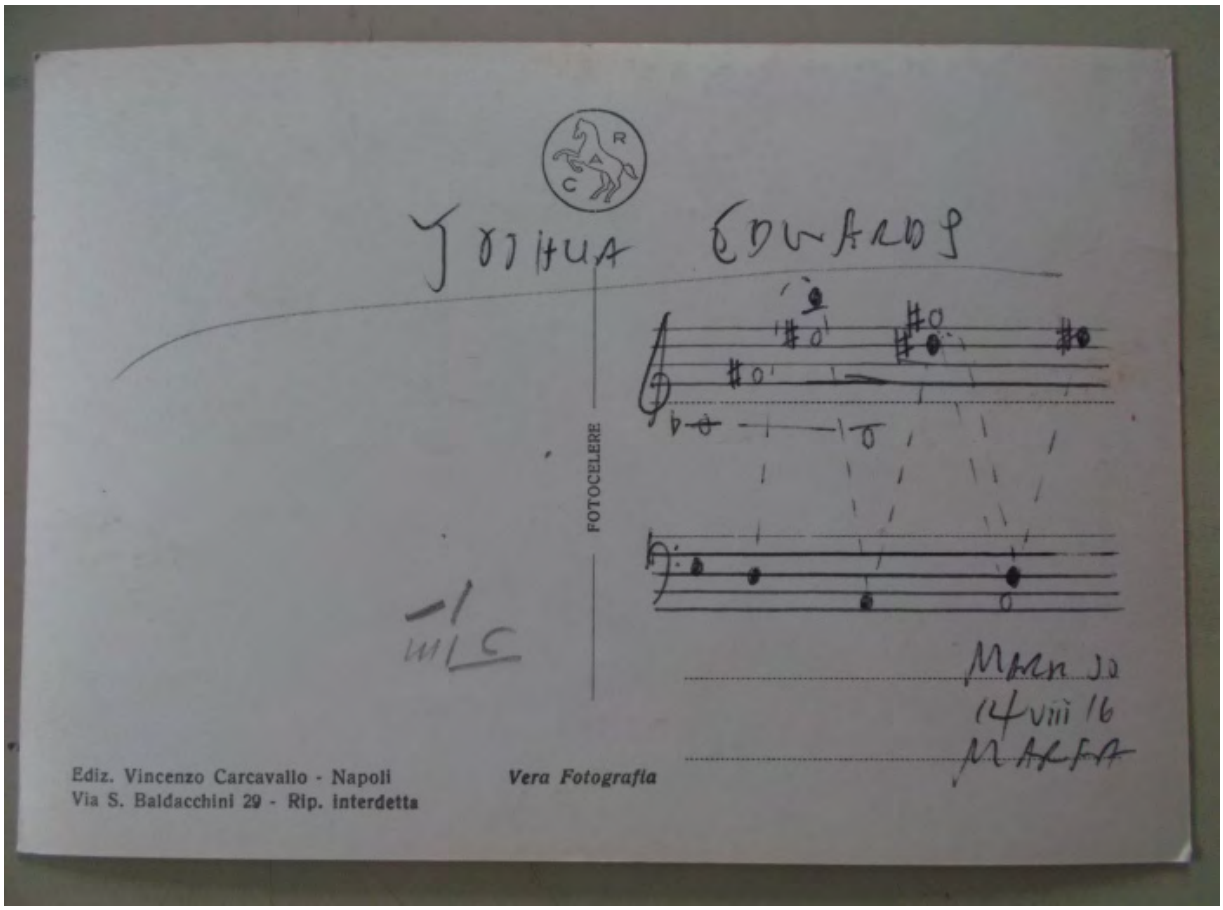
Back to mail art, and basic contrapuntal ideas:

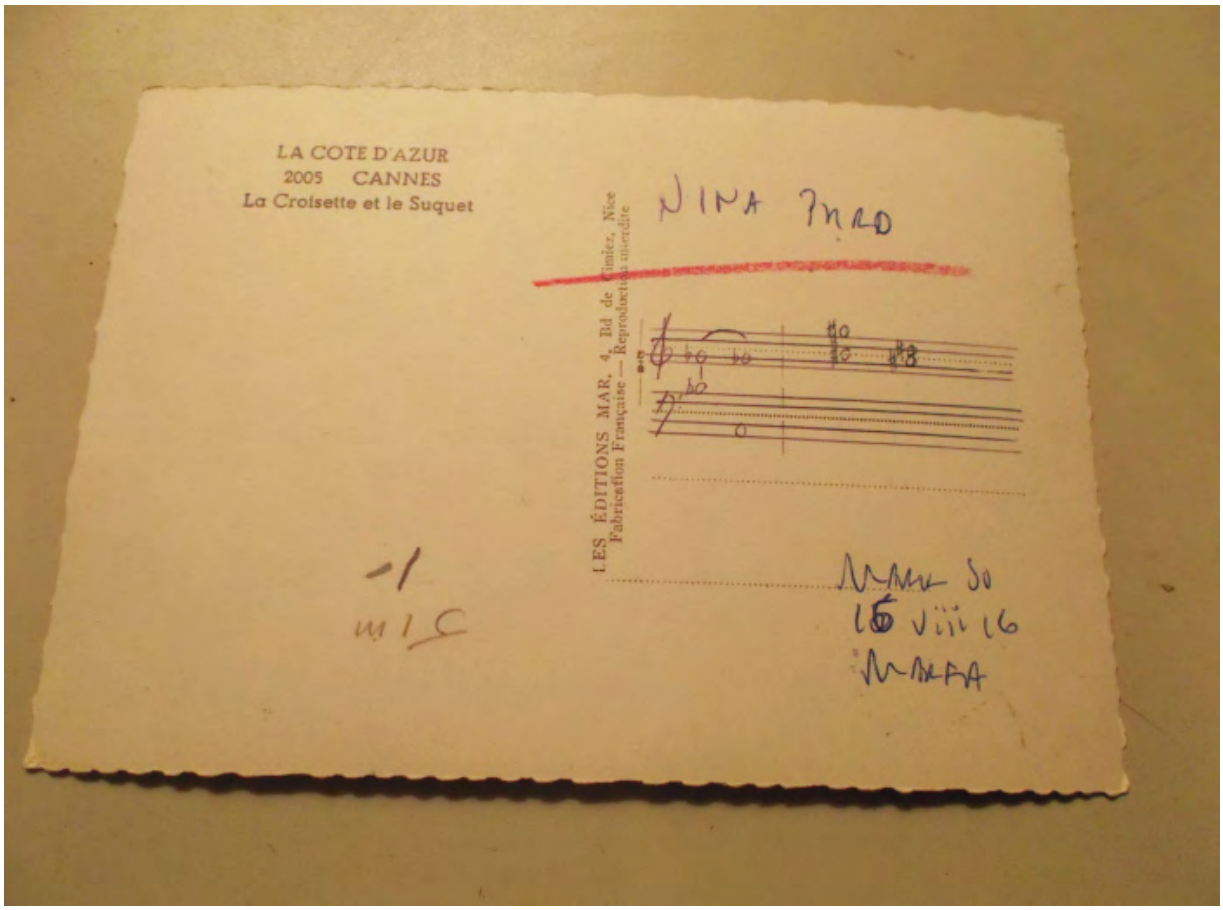
ROBERT BLATT

JORGE GOMEZ

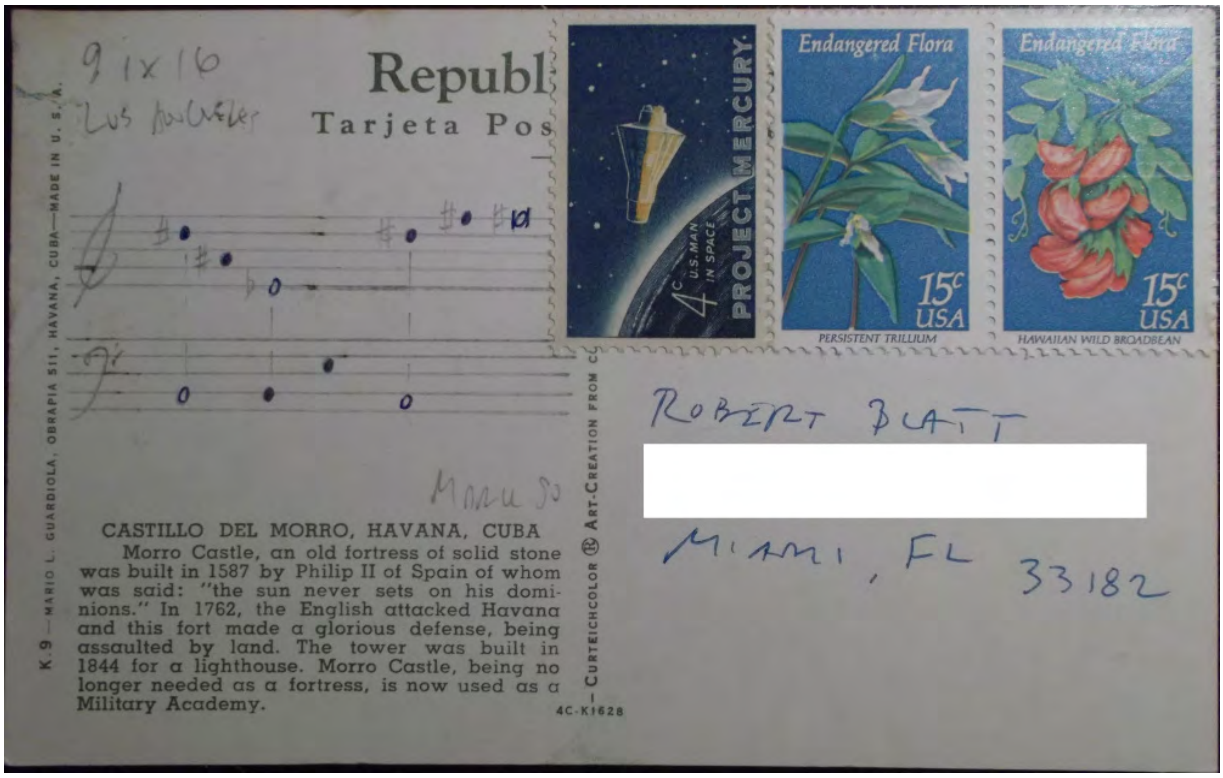



Capri - Marina Grande


FOTOCELERE
Ediz. Vincenzo Carcavallo - Napoli
Via S. Baldacchini 29 - Rip. interdetta
Vera Fotografia


LA COTE D'AZUR
2005 CANNES
La Croisette et le Suquet
LES ÉDITIONS MAR, 4, Bd de Cimiez, Nice
Fabrication Française — Reproduction interdite
NINA 7no


39053


9 1x16
Republ
Tarjeta Pos
4c U.S. MAN IN SPACE
PROJECT MERCURY
Endangered Flora
15c USA
PERSISTENT TRILLIUM
Endangered Flora
15c USA
HAWAIIAN WILD BROADBEAN
ROBERT BLATT
MIAMI, FL 33182
CASTILLO DEL MORRO, HAVANA, CUBA
Morro Castle, an old fortress of solid stone was built in 1587 by Philip II of Spain of whom was said: "the sun never sets on his dominions." In 1762, the English attacked Havana and this fort made a glorious defense, being assaulted by land. The tower was built in 1844 for a lighthouse. Morro Castle, being no longer needed as a fortress, is now used as a Military Academy.
K.9 — MARIO L. GUARDIOLA, OBRAPIA 511, HAVANA, CUBA — MADE IN U. S. A.
CURTEICHCOLOR ® ART-CREATION FROM C
4C-K1628

Cerenem Journal no. 6

I'd still be interested in whatever you'd have to say or speculate about notation. I feel like all I basically did was just look at all of them again for you, and state the obvious. Although revisiting everything has yielded a few details surrounding certain developments in the series that I hadn't really thought about because after all, they just happened that way, which may not be all that obvious . . . But I'm excited that you're doing it, the dignity of small things . . .

JK:

I'm excited that I did it; a bit overwhelmed, though inspired. I'd like to think this look at this body of work—in some ways in-depth, and in others incredibly casual—will also inspire others. In spending so much time with these pieces lately, I'm left with more questions than I had when I'd started looking at them, but I don't think that's a bad thing. I think if I felt everything was cleanly sorted away, I'd be a bit disappointed. Now, I want to go out and play these pieces, and I hope others do as well. ▧

CONTRIBUTORS

MIRA BENJAMIN is a Canadian violinist and member of ensemble Apartment House, completing a PhD at Huddersfield. Her research centres on Just Intonation and its practical and pedagogical applications.

JONATHAN BURROWS is a choreographer and dancer. He danced with the Royal Ballet for 13 years before leaving to pursue his own choreography in 1992.

LAWRENCE DUNN is a composer and improviser, completing a PhD at Huddersfield. His orchestra piece *Ambling, waking* was recently presented at Tectonics 2017. In October Quatuor Bozzini will perform a new string quartet.

MATTEO FARGION is a composer and performer. Studying with Kevin Volans, he has written much music for theatre and dance, working with Jonathan Burrows since 1989. He is a visiting member of faculty at Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's performance school PARTS.

MICHAEL FINNISSY is a composer and pianist. Prolific and influential, and the subject of two books, he was formerly president of the ISCM.

JOSEPH KUDIRKA is a composer and performer, born in Grand Rapids (Mi.). A graduate of Huddersfield, a release of his music performed by Apartment House has recently been issued on the label Another Timbre.

CASSANDRA MILLER is a composer from Canada, currently living in England, completing a PhD at Huddersfield. She studied with Christopher Butterfield in Victoria. Widely performed, she was also director of Montreal's *Innovations en Concert*.

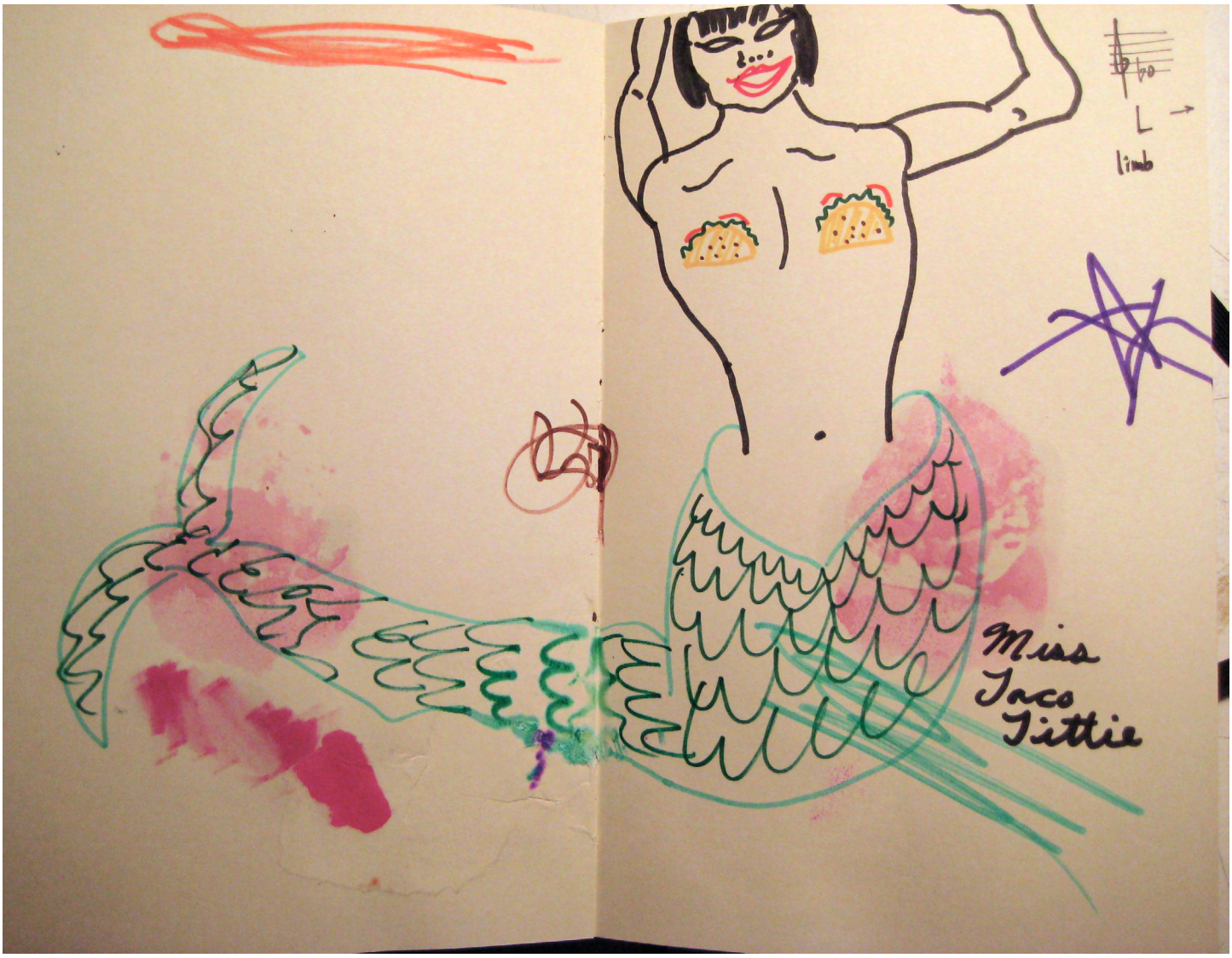
LUKE NICKEL is a composer and artist from Canada, currently based in England. Recently graduated with a doctorate from Bath Spa University, he is director of Cluster Festival, Winnipeg.

MARK SO is a composer and performer living in Los Angeles, a graduate of Calarts. According to Madison Brookshire, in his music 'there are often moments of great beauty . . . but there are never moments of transcendence. As a listener, you are ineluctably in the present, wrestling with it.'

NICK WILLIAMS is a composer and educator. A graduate of Huddersfield, his music draws on modernism and minimalism. In 1982 he founded Soundpool Ensemble, giving many first performances.

CHRISTIAN WOLFF is a composer. He studied music under Grete Sultan and John Cage, to whom he introduced the I Ching. He also taught Classics at Harvard and Dartmouth College.

Overleaf: from Mark So, *Millay* (2010)


L
limb
Miss
Taco
Tittie