Ventriloquist

for tenor saxophone

Christopher Fisher-Lochhead

Ventriloquist [2012] for solo tenor saxophone

Based on material from *Blissing Out* for saxophone quartet, dedicated to the Anubis Quartet.

Ventriloquist was originally written as material for my saxophone quartet, *Blissing Out*. Technically, the saxophone writing, which is constructed entirely from progressions of sonorities achieved by changing only one key at a time, was an attempt to come to terms with an instrument of which I had no experience playing. Because all of the creative decisions were based entirely on technical considerations and not on a critical ear, the resulting sounds flow into one another in ways they might not if aural considerations were prioritized. I think of the process of writing this piece as finding my own way through the saxophone's labyrinth of sonic possibilities.

The title's significance is twofold. Ventriloquist literally means "belly talker", an image that seems apt for the saxophone, which produces sound mostly from the keyholes up and down its tube. Additionally, I like the parallels between the image of the saxophonist with her instrument and that of the ventriloquist with her dummy.

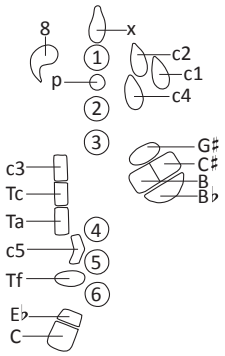
Ventriloquist was premiered by Geoffrey Landman at Brooklyn's 109 Gallery on May 1st, 2013 as part of the MIKROS festival.

A full recording of the premiere is available to stream at http://www.cflmusic.com/works/ventriloquist/

Notation

This piece uses a mix of descriptive and prescriptive notation. Each system includes a tablature "staff" indicating fingerings and a conventional staff indicating the resulting sonority. The six primary keys (1-6) are notated as circles and are always given at the beginning of a system or phrase, regardless of whether they are used or not. The remaining keys are indicated by shape and vertical placement, but are only notated when they come into play.

At the beginning of each phrase or system, a base fingering is given, solid black keys indicating which are depressed. Following the base fingering, only the keys that change are given, black keys indicating depression, hollow keys indicating release. The following fingering chart and key names are taken from Marcus Weiss' *Techniques of Saxophone Playing*.



Rhythmic Notation

All rational rhythmic information is given in the rhythm "staff" at the top of each system. Grace notes do not need to be executed in strict accordance with their horizontal spacing, but the relative pacing of events given rationally should be observed. Meters are indicated above the rhythm staff. Sustain is indicated by horizontal lines. Tempo is left to the performer, but should be chosen so as to balance continuity of phrasing and the effective speaking of multiphonics.

Multiphonics

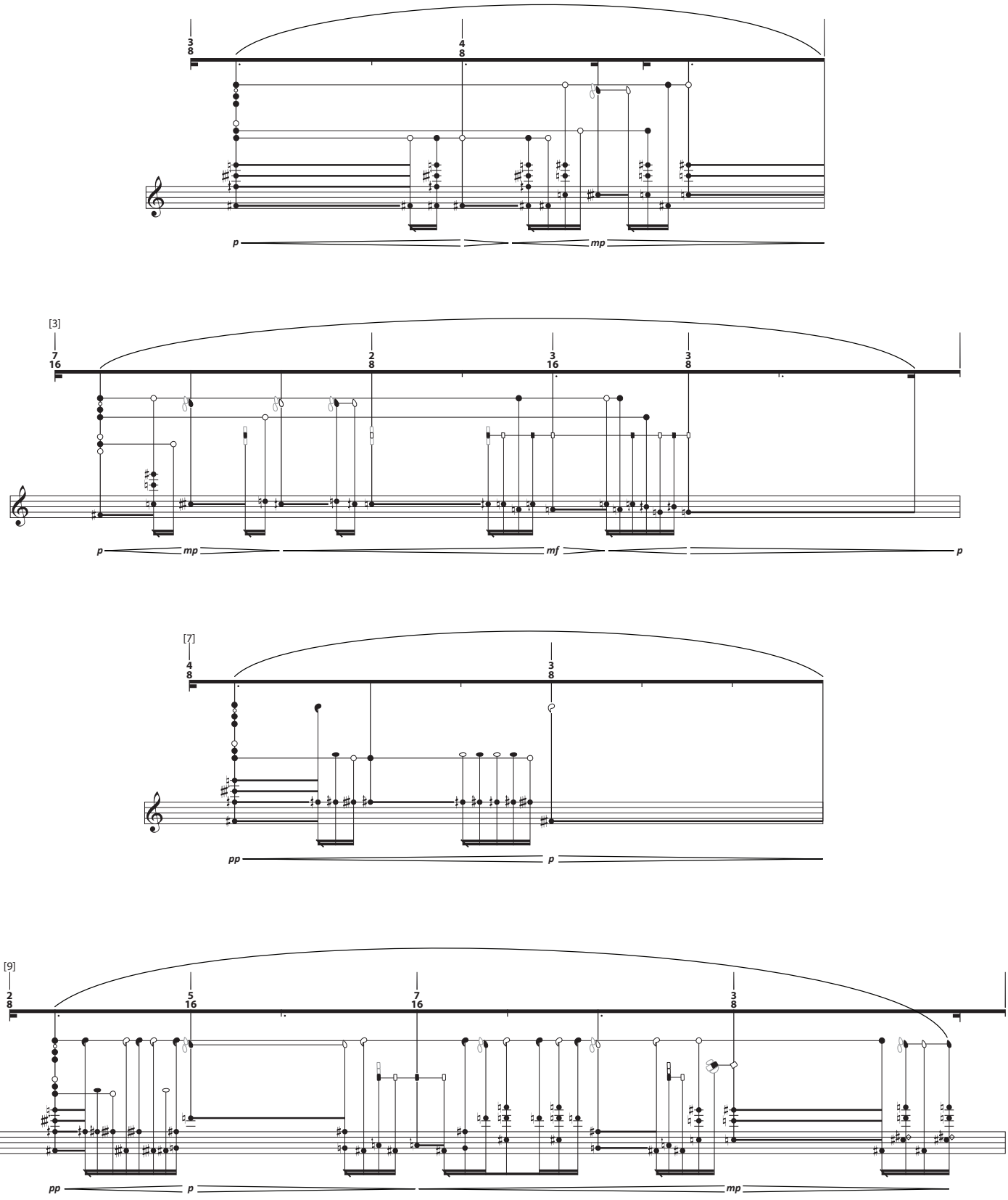
All of the fingerings for multiphonics, microtones, and timbral variants were taken from Marcus Weiss' *Techniques of Saxophone Playing.* When executing multiphonics, an effort should be made to have each speak as well as possible. In order to do this, a little flexibility of rhythm is acceptable (especially with grace notes), but the overall pacing should not be sacrificed.

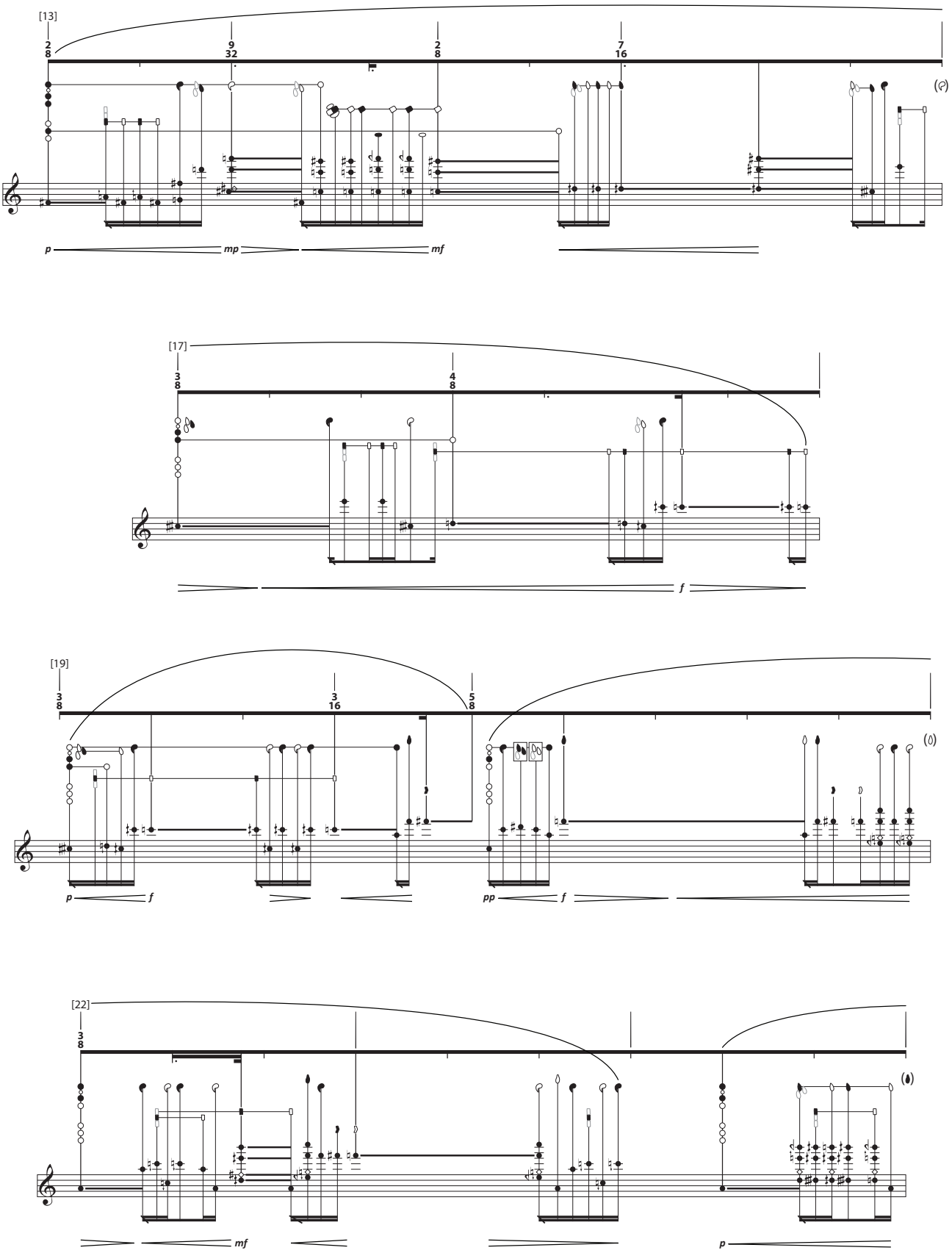
Phrasing

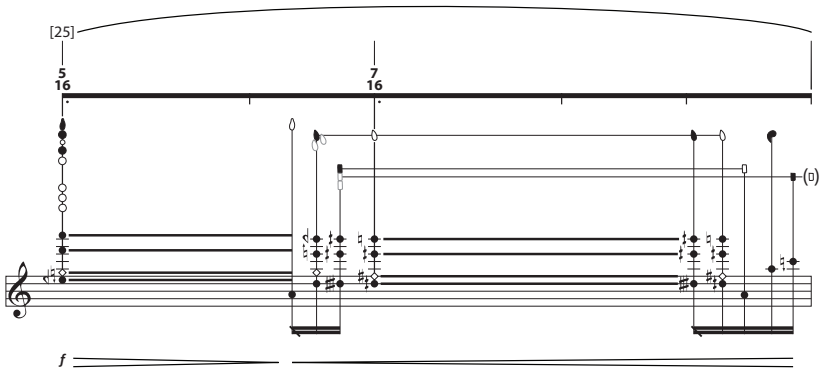
Slurs indicate phrasing. Whenever possible, a single phrase should be executed under a single breath. Otherwise, circular breathing or a well-placed and subtle breath are acceptable.

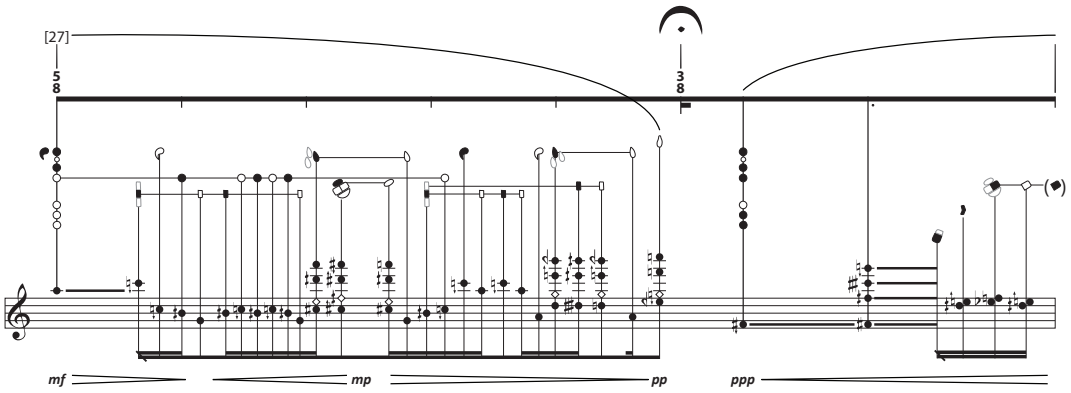
Ventriloquist

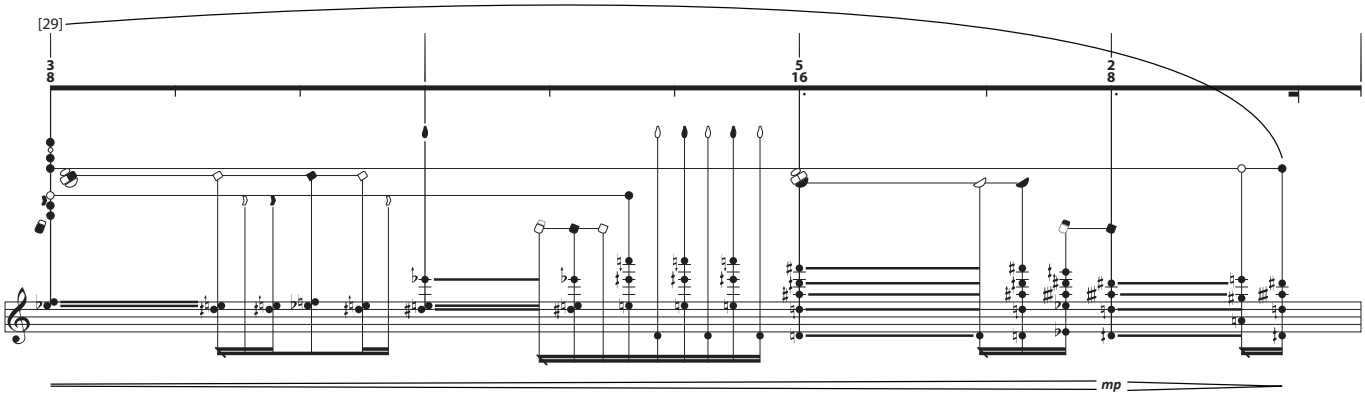
Christopher Fisher-Lochhead

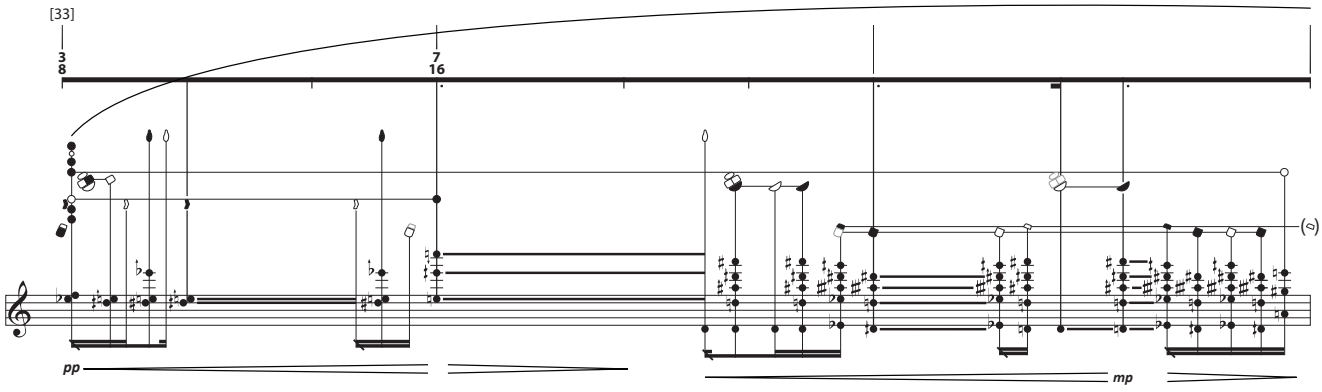


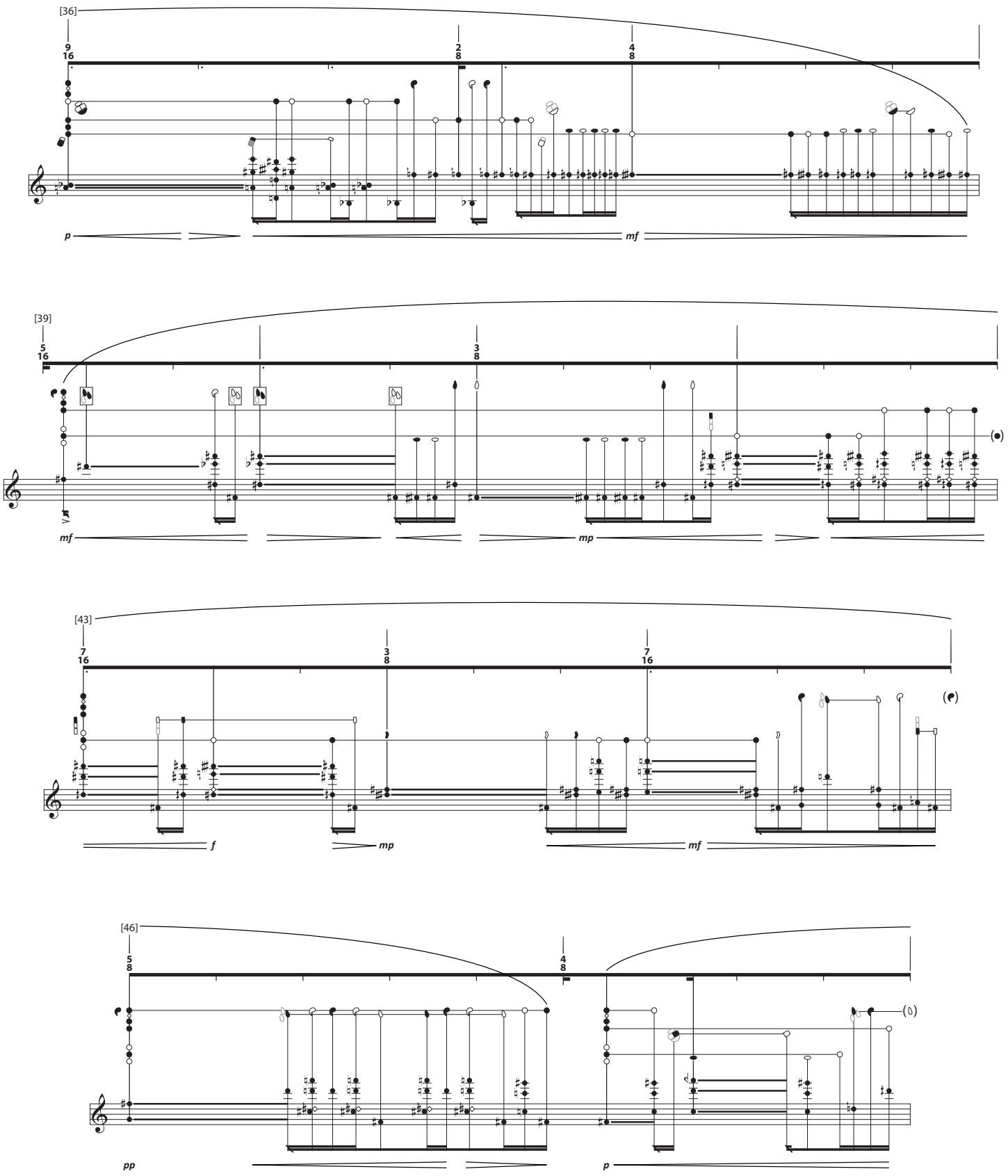

[13]
2/8
9/32
2/8
7/16
p
mp
mf
[17]
3/8
4/8
f
[19]
3/8
3/16
5/8
p
f
pp
f
[22]
3/8
mf
p

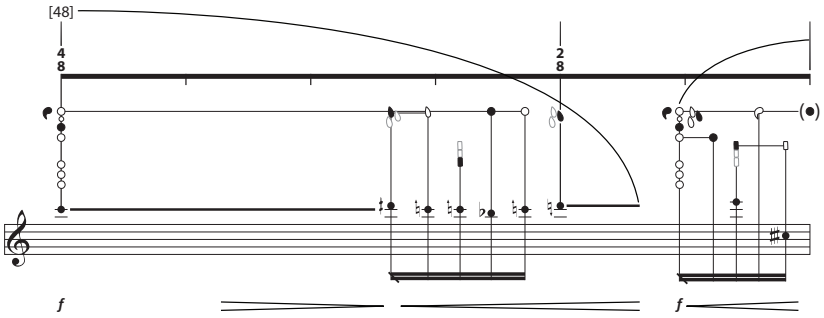

[25]
5/16
7/16
f

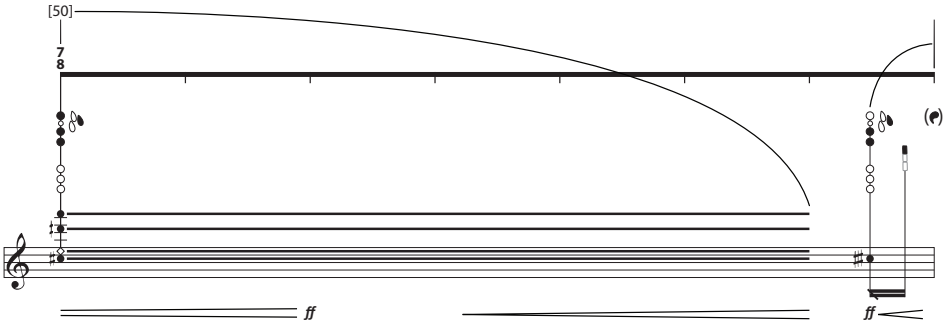

[27]
5/8
3/8
mf
mp
pp
ppp

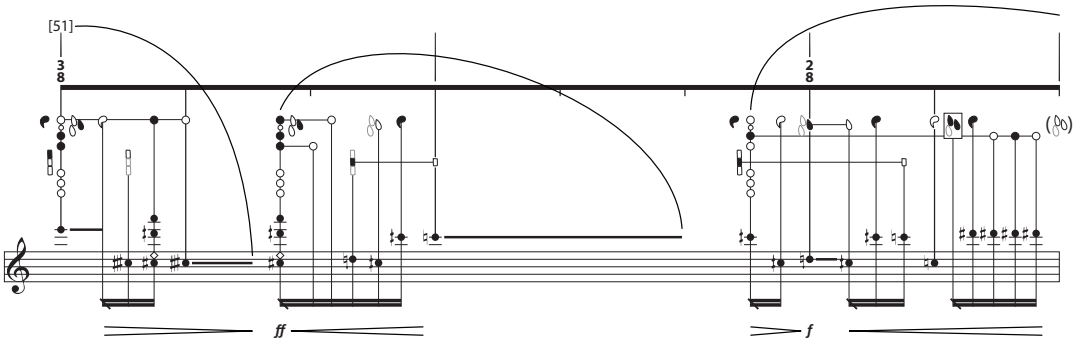

[29]
3/8
5/16
2/8
mp

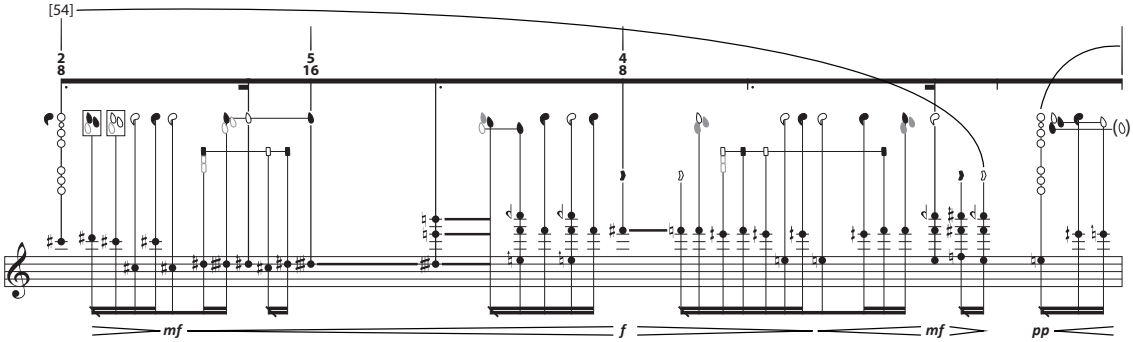

[33]
3/8
7/16
pp
mp

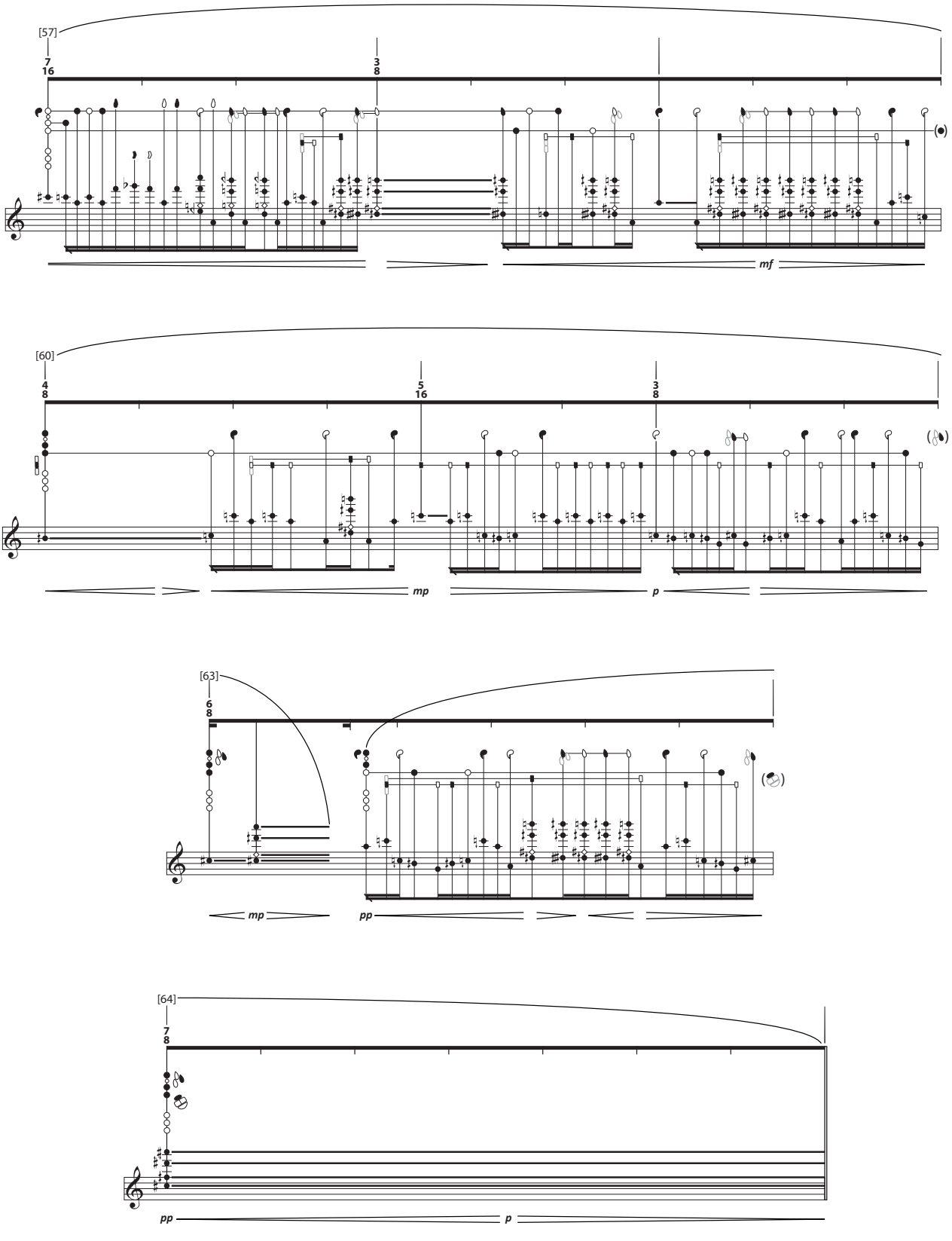

[36]
9/16
2/8
4/8
p
mf
[39]
5/16
3/8
mf
mp
[43]
7/16
3/8
7/16
f
mp
mf
[46]
5/8
4/8
pp
p


[48]
4
8
2
8
f
f


[50]
7
8
ff
ff


[51]
3
8
2
8
ff
f


[54]
2
8
5
16
4
8
mf
f
mf
pp



Chicago, 2012 (rev. 2014)