for seven musicians

Scored for Flute + piccolo, Bass Clarinet, Bass Trombone (or trombone), Piano (see preparation notes), Violin, Viola, and Cello (scordatura: IV tuned to A1)

The piece is broken into six movements as follows:

I. Ari, the helicop

II. Slugs!

III. ter pilot who cam

IV. (The dream of) Cerberus, the Clown Warrior

V. e down from heaven

VI. 3 meetings (irritable, awful) - "First Love"

If desired, instead of playing this collection as a coherent piece, any movement can be played on its own as an independent miniature, movements can be interspersed throughout a concert program, or they can otherwise stitched together as desired. If re-ordering or rescinding Stories, I, III, and V can be played continuously or be broken up as desired, but should always be played in above order and seen as one Story. If the entirety of the collection is not being played (for example, if one Story is removed), the title of the overall piece should correspond to the number of Stories played. If only one is played, the title can simply be the title of the miniature.

Program Note

When home alone as a child, I would often sit at the piano and play out a narrative in my head --- a girl danced cheerily in a forest or meadow, while a fierce bear plodded through the woods towards her. The narrative never resolved itself or developed: the music of the bear and that of the girl never came together, battled each other. If memory serves, I plinked out some delicate sounds at the upper end of the keyboard for the girl and then repeatedly slammed my hands on the keys at the other end for the bear, stopping when I realized I didn't know how to bring this drama to a head. I see this piece as conceived from that same kind of play.

These "stories" comprise a series of independent, informal movements whose musical material is an intuitive translation/transcription of some type of literary, dramatic, or visual-gestural starting point. The titles of the movements allude to the originating idea which is "entertained" in each: from a man's developing relationship with a woman in Beckett's odd love story, "First Love" to the illustration of a helicopter pilot-mystic's glory or the imagination, aspirations, and daydreams of a clown warrior, to the spinning-out of what was originally a graphic score sketch. They are a series of independent vignettes that, by way of their continuity in time, form an odd, possibly-narrative progression.

Performance notes

Movements I and III are written in a 5/4 meter at J=60, where each bar is equivalent to 5 seconds. Spatial notations in these movements should be played relative to this time scale.

Movement II – The material of the flute, clarinet, piano, violin, and viola is 'environmental,' while that of the cello functions as a solo voice/character in conjunction with the trombone. Blend is important within these two groupings.

Movement IV – The trombonist functions as soloist/protagonist, while the material of the B. Cl., Pno., and Vlc. both colors and shapes his/her material. The trombonist generally leads cues into and out of ensemble rests, as he/she usually plays at the start of each sonority. At mooments where other performers begin a sonority, the trombonist can still provide the cue, or other arrangements can be made as desired.

Movement VI – environmental sounds again in ensemble, while trombone and piccolo players function as solists/main characters.

Technical notes

Piano preparation (can be maintained for entire performance):

Note: a grand or baby-grand piano must be used.

Rosin should be applied to piano strings within range indicated in "Cerberus, the Clown Warrior" (range is non-specific and will depending on friction object used). Any hard, flat, friction-able edge will work. Success has been found with the straight long edge of a glass bottle, a small piece of wood with a rounded edge, and a small coarse metal tube. The effect is accomplished by slowly sliding the activating object perpendicular to strings (away from and towards keyboard as indicated by graphic notation) under moderate to hard pressure—the resulting sounds should be ethereal, shrill, non continuous, vaguely chordal overtone "whistles." Rosin is not always necessary on older, tarnished piano strings, as the corrosion can provide enough friction depending on the activating object used.

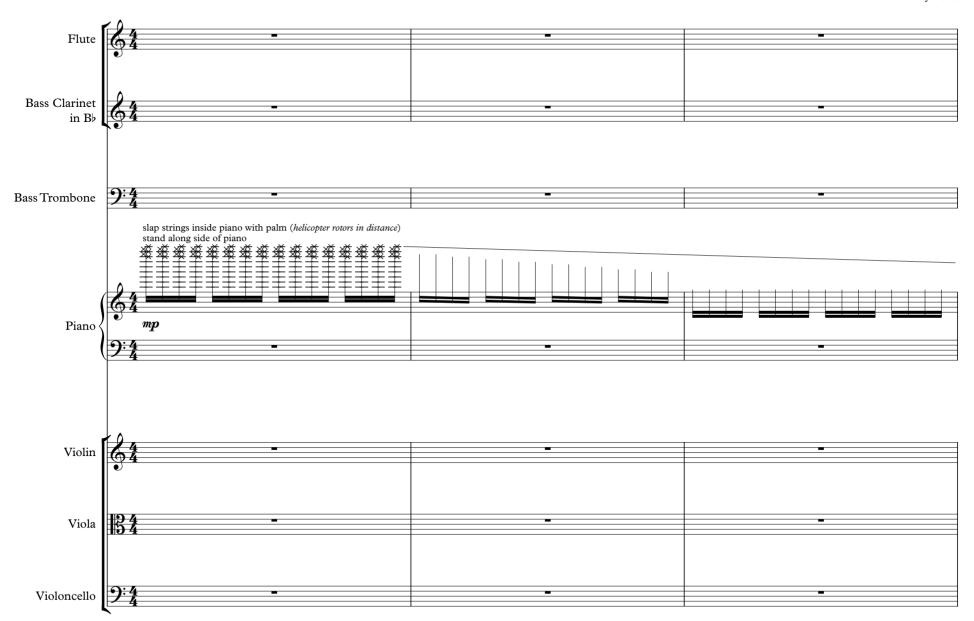
Poster putty or similar material should be applied to the highest strings for "raindrop" effect in "First Love," covering the entirety of the range indicated. Even though the "Ari" miniature uses these strings, the putty does not interfere with the sounds it calls for.

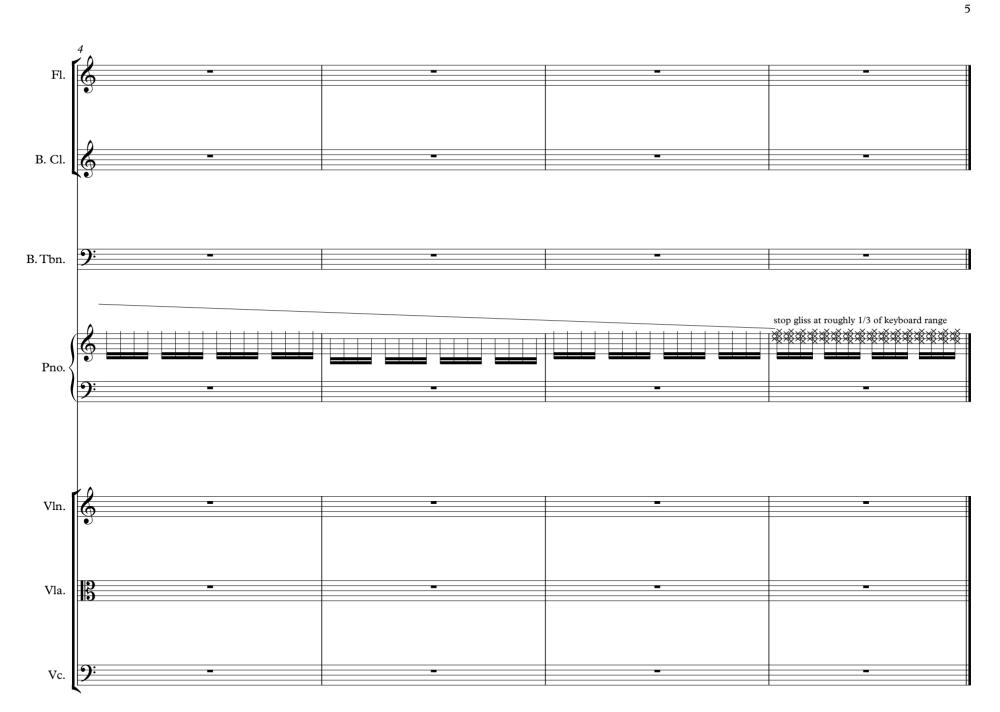
Inside-the-piano sounds are much easier to produce if piano lid is removed for the piece.

Trombone and bass clarinet: For singing notations that lie outside of a performer's vocal range, transpose voice part to the same pitch in a comfortable octave

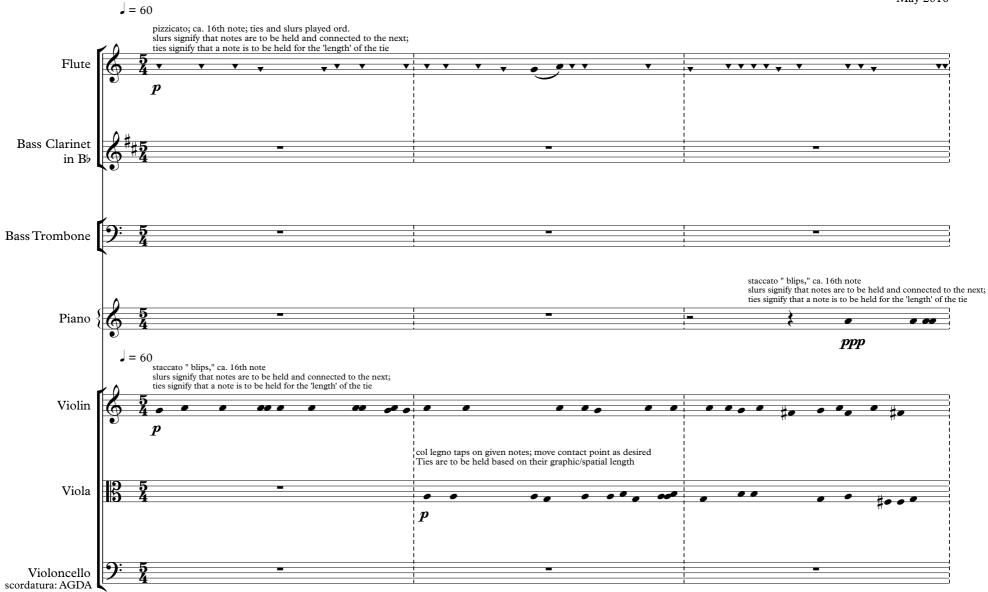
Cello scordatura: cello is notated in sounding pitch in full score, written pitch in individual part; a non-transposed part can be requested from the composer.

I. Ari, the helicop

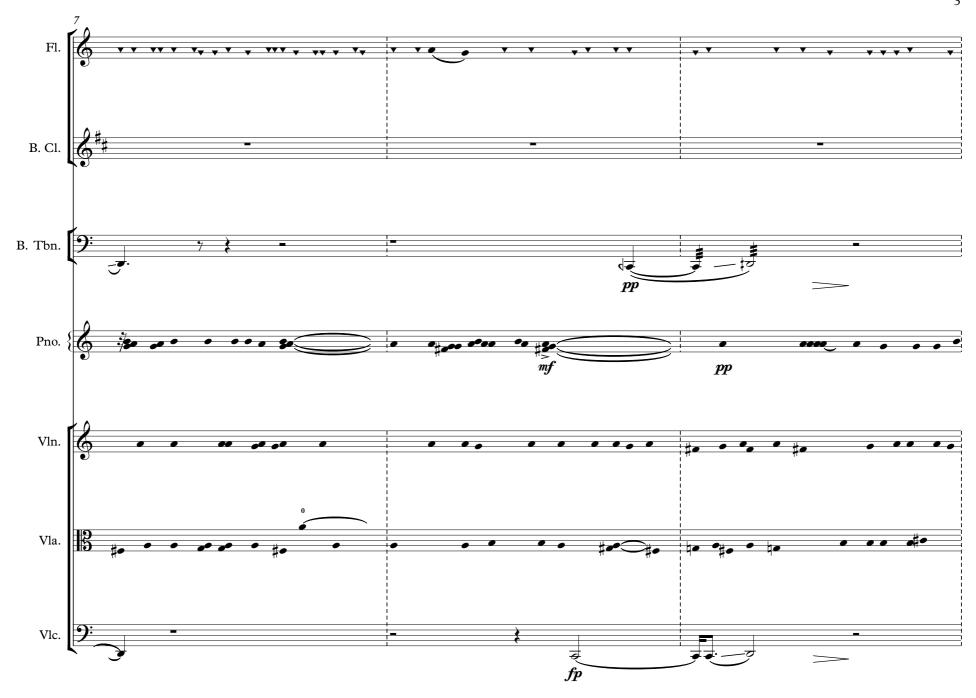


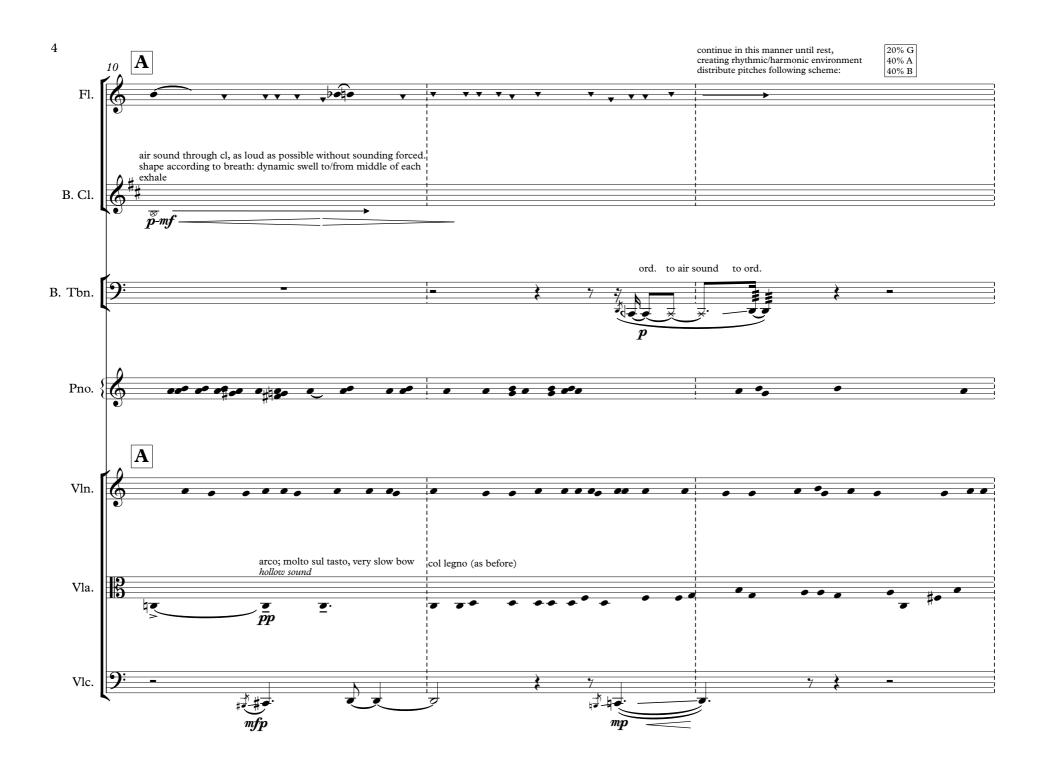


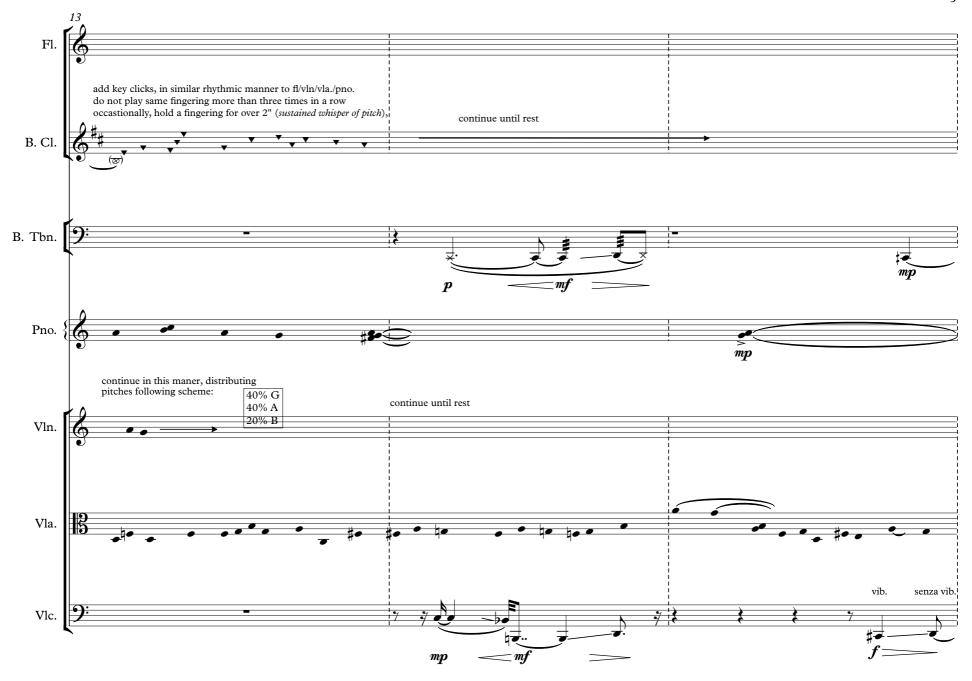
II. Slugs!



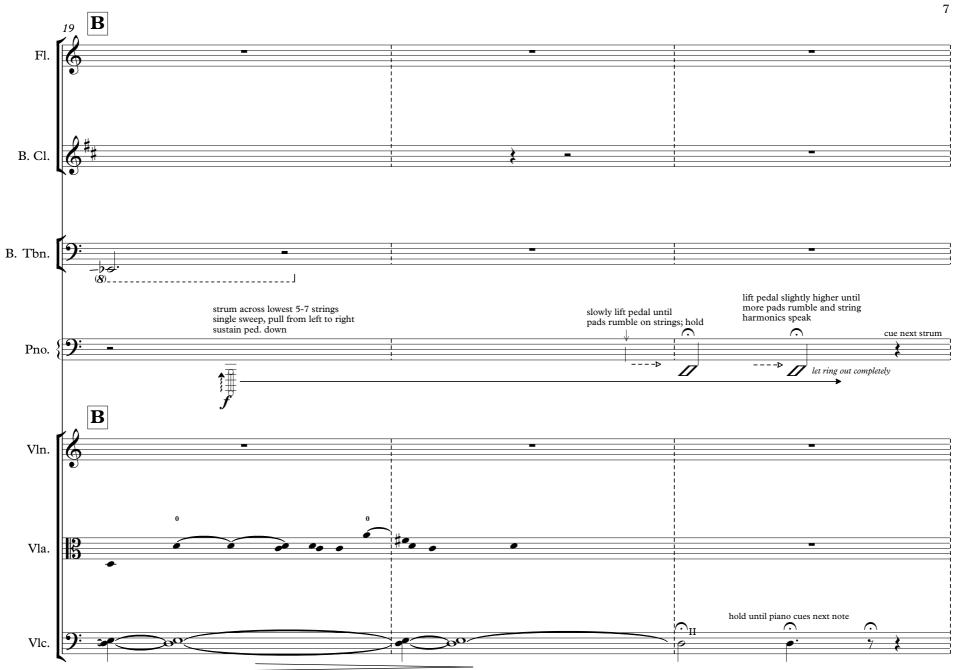


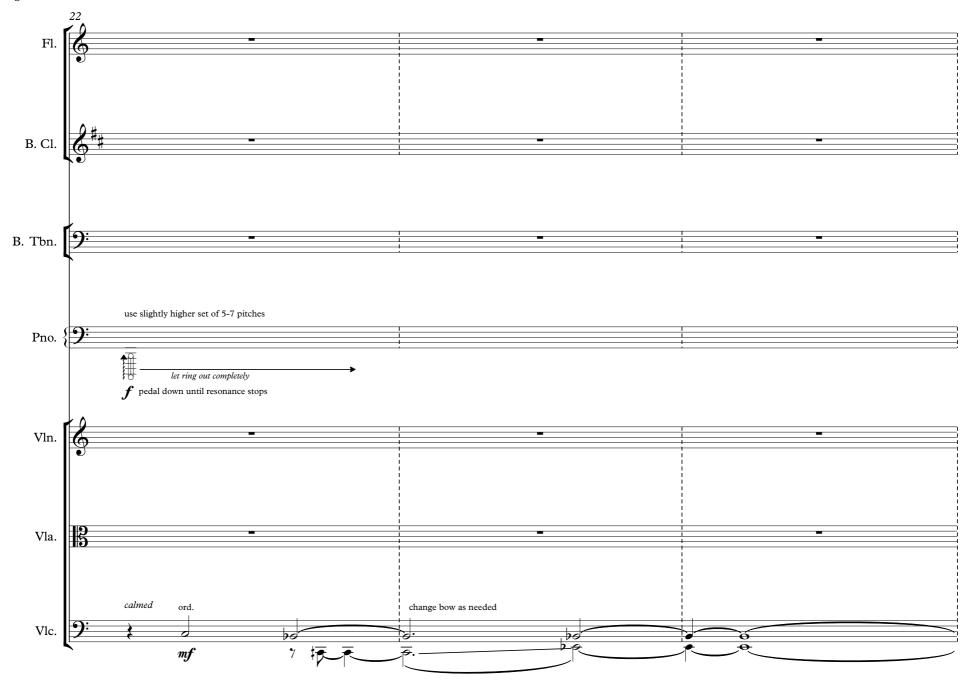


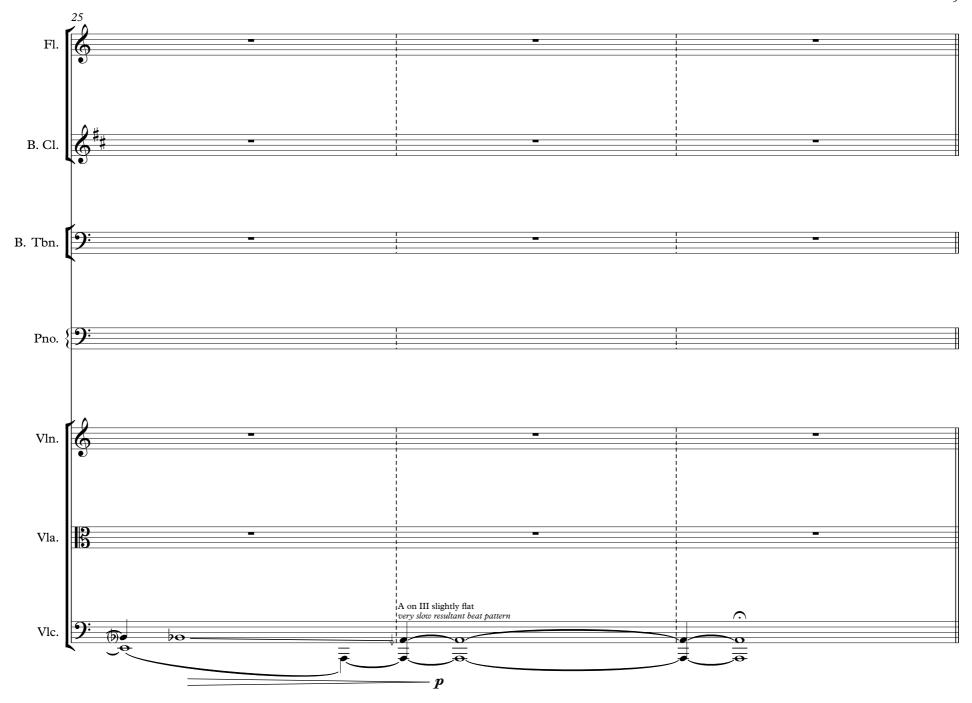






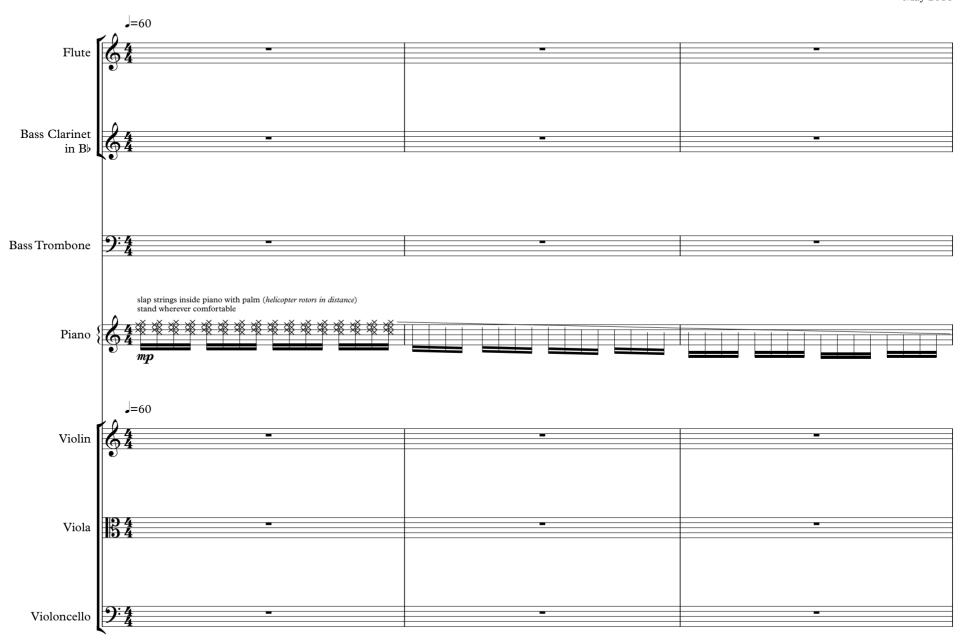


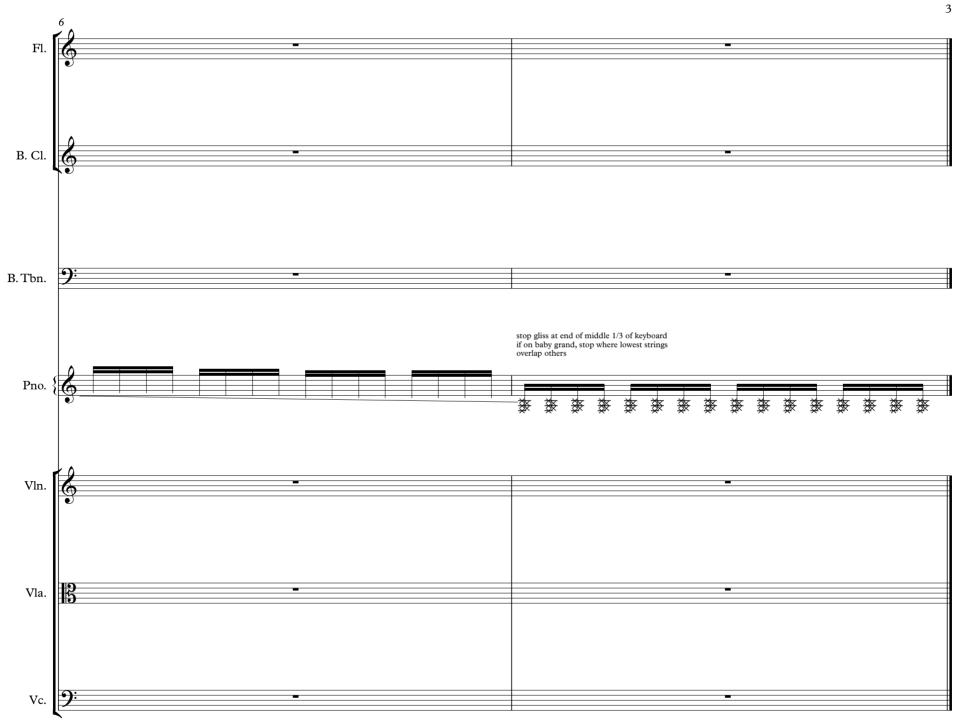




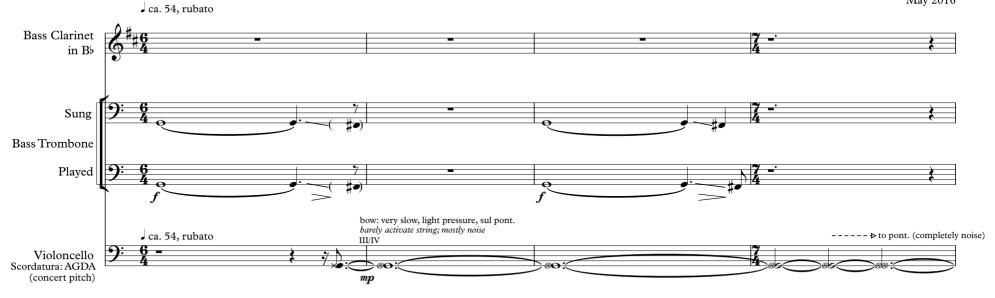


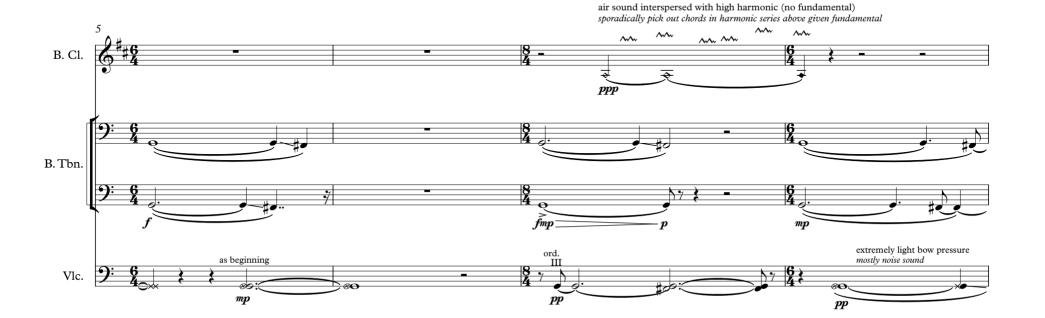
III. ter pilot who cam





IV. (The dream of) Cerberus the Clown Warrior

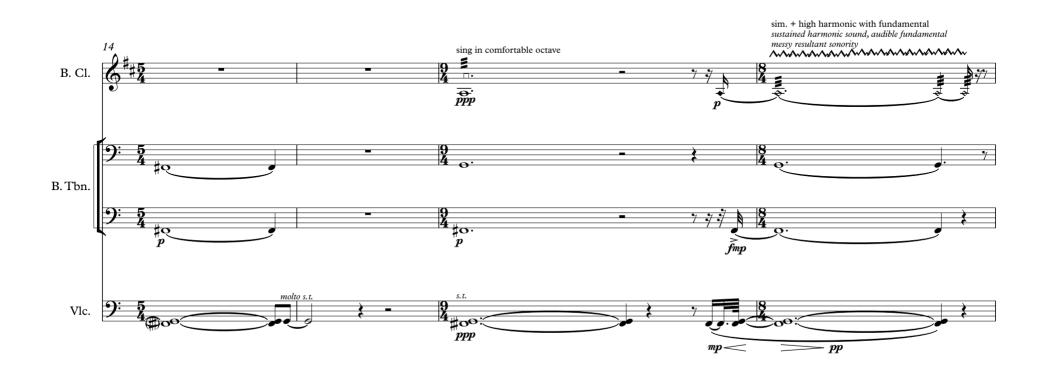




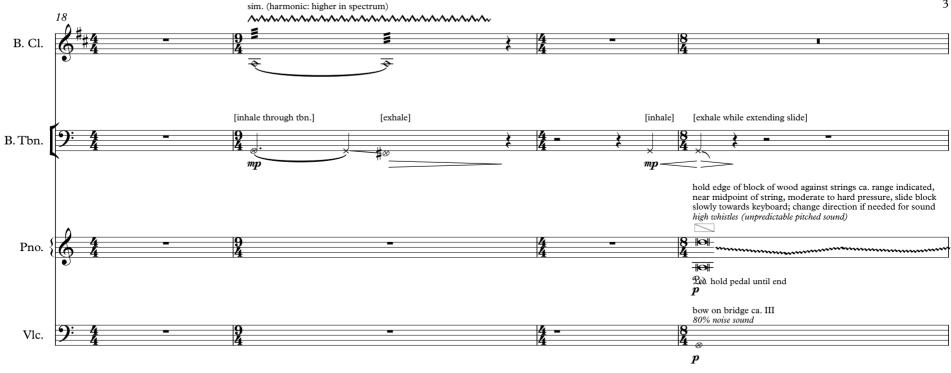
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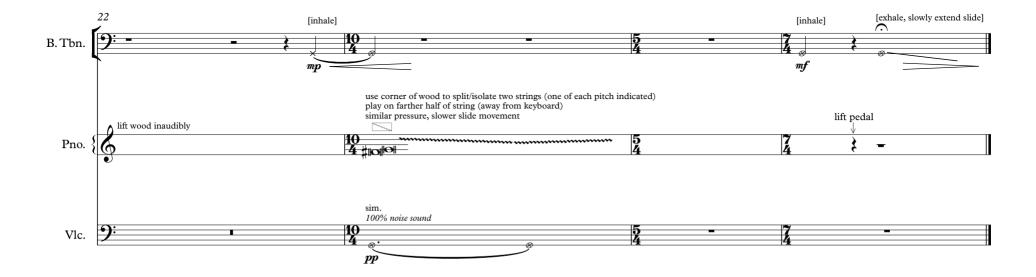
to pont. (noise)

equally noise and pitch





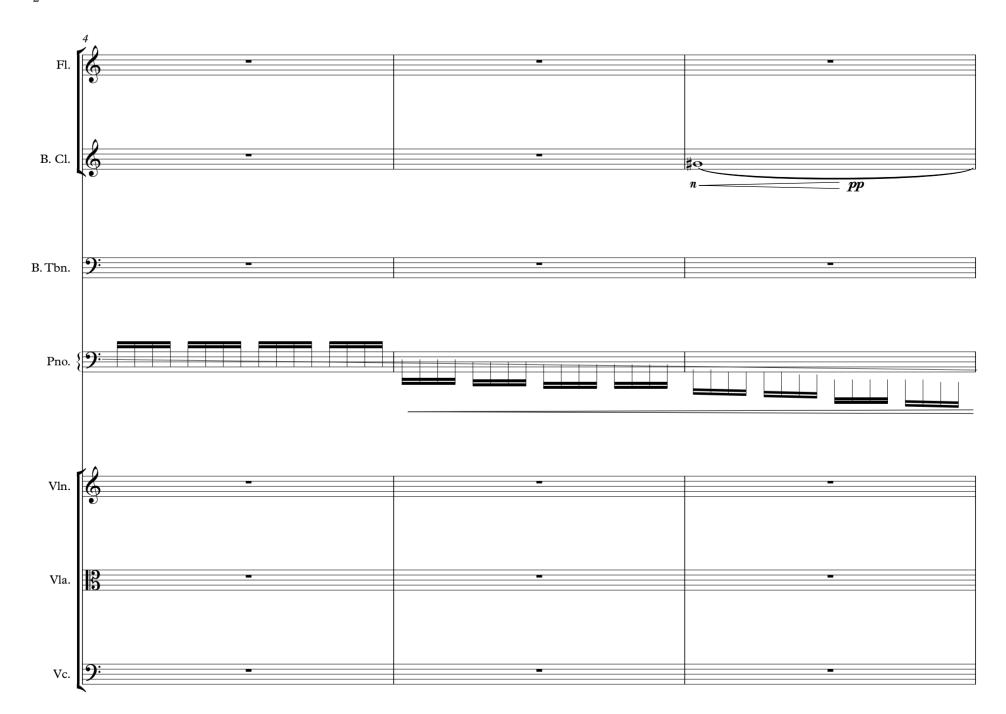


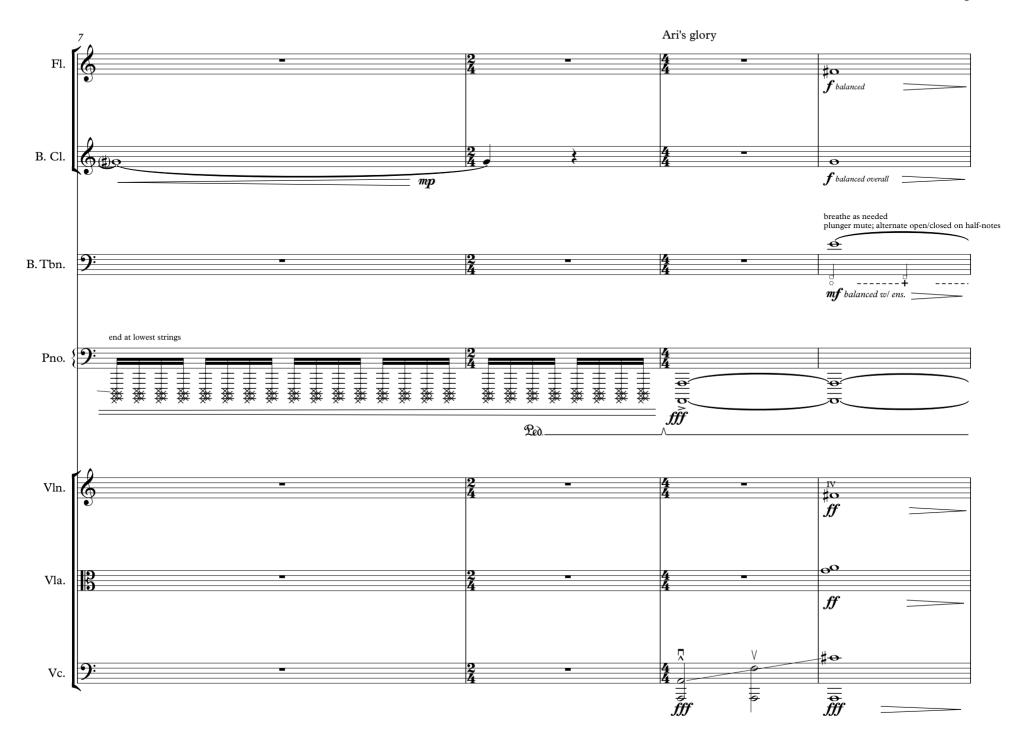


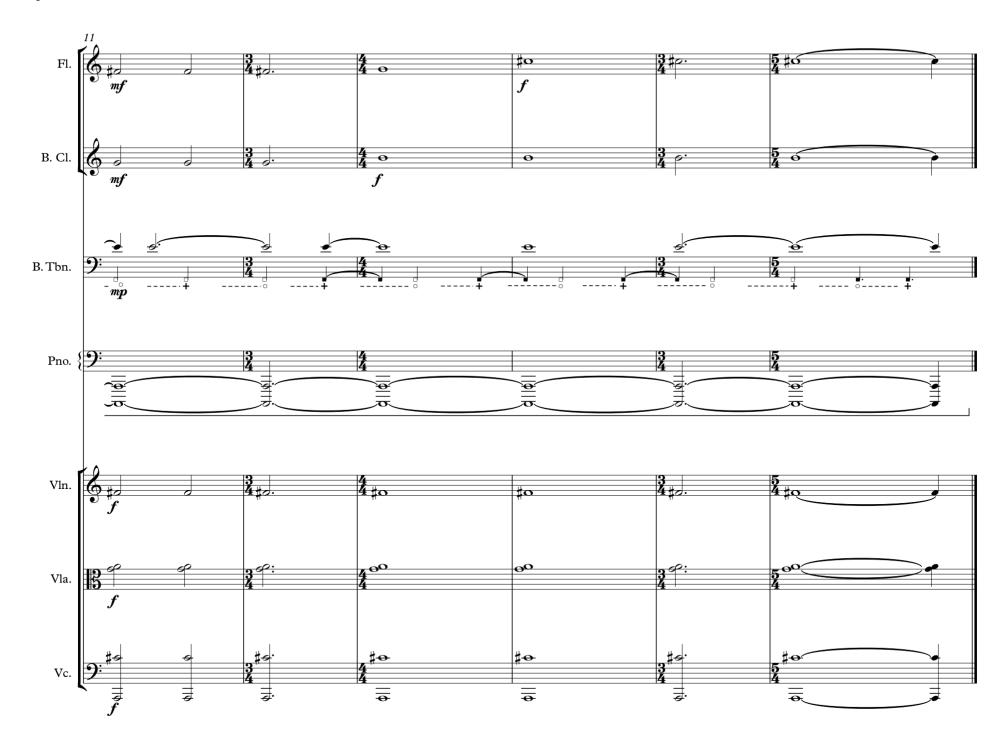
V. e down from heaven

Wilson Tanner Smith

May 2016 J=60 Bass Clarinet in B♭ Bass Trombone slap strings inside piano with palm ($helicopter\ rotors\ in\ distance$) stand at keyboard Piano =60 Violin Viola Violoncello







VI. 3 meetings (irritable, awful) - "First Love"

