Mum Hum

Mauro Hertig

Soundscape of an Unborn

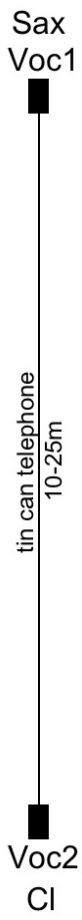
for 4 performers

Kompositionsauftrag der Stadt Witten für die Wittener Tage für neue Kammermusik 2021,
mit Unterstützung der Schweizer Kulturstiftung Pro Helvetia

Komponiert für das Ensemble Garage Köln

Bb-Clarinet
Alto-Saxophone
Vocal performer 1 (m/f/x)
Vocal performer 2 (m/f/x)

Duration 8'



Mum Hum is performed outside or inside, if the possibility of a long tin can telephone in the space is given.

The tin cans are always held by Voice 1 and Voice 2. They hold it either onto their own mouth/ear, or onto the ear or bell of their respective partner, Clarinet or Sax.

The audience moves around the musicians as they please. Throughout the piece, the audience never hears what is transmitted through the tin can telephone - only how the performers imitate what is coming through.

The score should be learned by heart for maximum freedom of movement of the bodies.

Material for tin can telephone:
-2 large empty tin cans, 10-15cm diameter
-Fishing line, strong
-2 staples
Make a tiny hole in each of the tin cans. Insert the fishing line. Once through the hole, tie each end of the fishing line to the side part of one of the staplers. Applying a little pressure, the tin can wire can now be used to transmit sound.

Score in Transposition

Imitation Chains

The entire piece is built on imitation chains. One performer plays their music from the score, while the others, in order of the chain, imitate their predecessor. There are three types of imitations appearing at different stages of the piece (All of them are also explained in the score):

-Immediate and continuous imitation of the predecessor. Reaction time between 0.5 - 1 sec

-Pulse-synchronized imitation. Imitate with respect to the tempo of the pulse; with one quarter note delay

-Imitation from memory. After an entire passage of the predecessor has passed, imitate it from memory

While in all cases similarity in the chain should be aspired, the limits of the individual instruments and of the human perception will falsify the original. These distortions and mistakes become part of the performance, which is a welcome result and integral part of this piece.

- Sax and Cl: When imitating Voc1/Voc2, do not sing or talk, but imitate as well as possible through the instrument; blowing of phonemes in front of mouthpiece is possible. Feel free to use techniques from your written score parts in the imitation sections.

-Voices: When imitating Cl and Sax, make sure to pay as much attention to the noise/click/air sounds as well as to the pitch

Octaving:
When the sound of your predecessor in the imitation chain is too high/low for your range, use octavation to the nearest-by octave. But please only when really necessary.

Rehearsal Process:
Imitations processes should be rehearsed, but always only by listening to the predecessors, never by reading from their score.

Clarinet / Saxophone:

● full pitch

⦿ half air

○ only air

⊗ no air, key clicks only

(Eat_ me) text in parenthesis serves as orientation for expression and phrasing, is not spoken

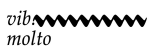
Voice 1 / 2:

⊗ without inhaling/exhaling air. All sound produced by the mouth cavity only

spoken syllable downwards

spoken syllable upwards

 spoken syllable with stable pitch



speaking vibrato: whichever pitch you land on, hold it and do an extreme vibrato

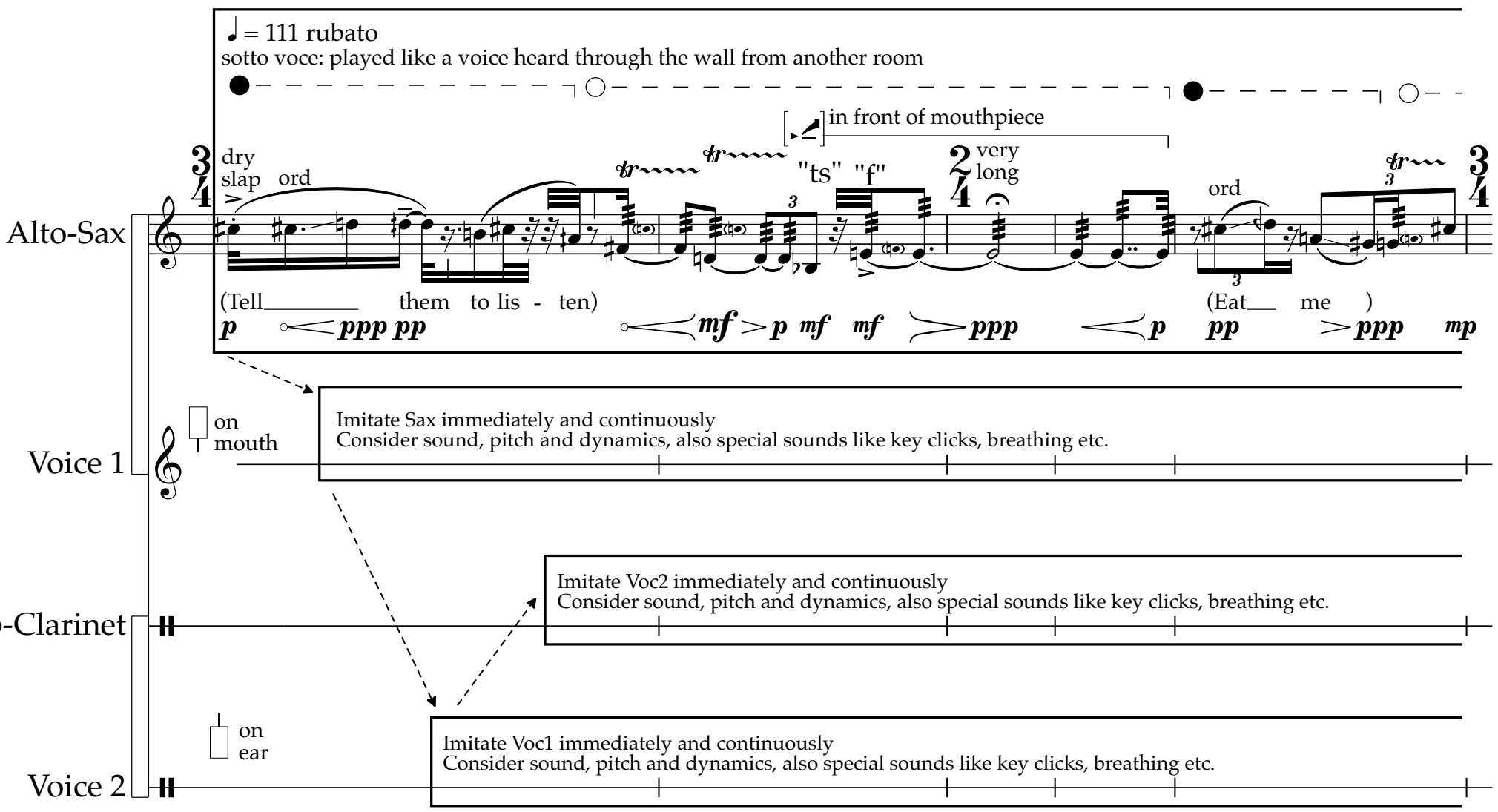
 square fermata: tacet/sustain until other performer triggers next action

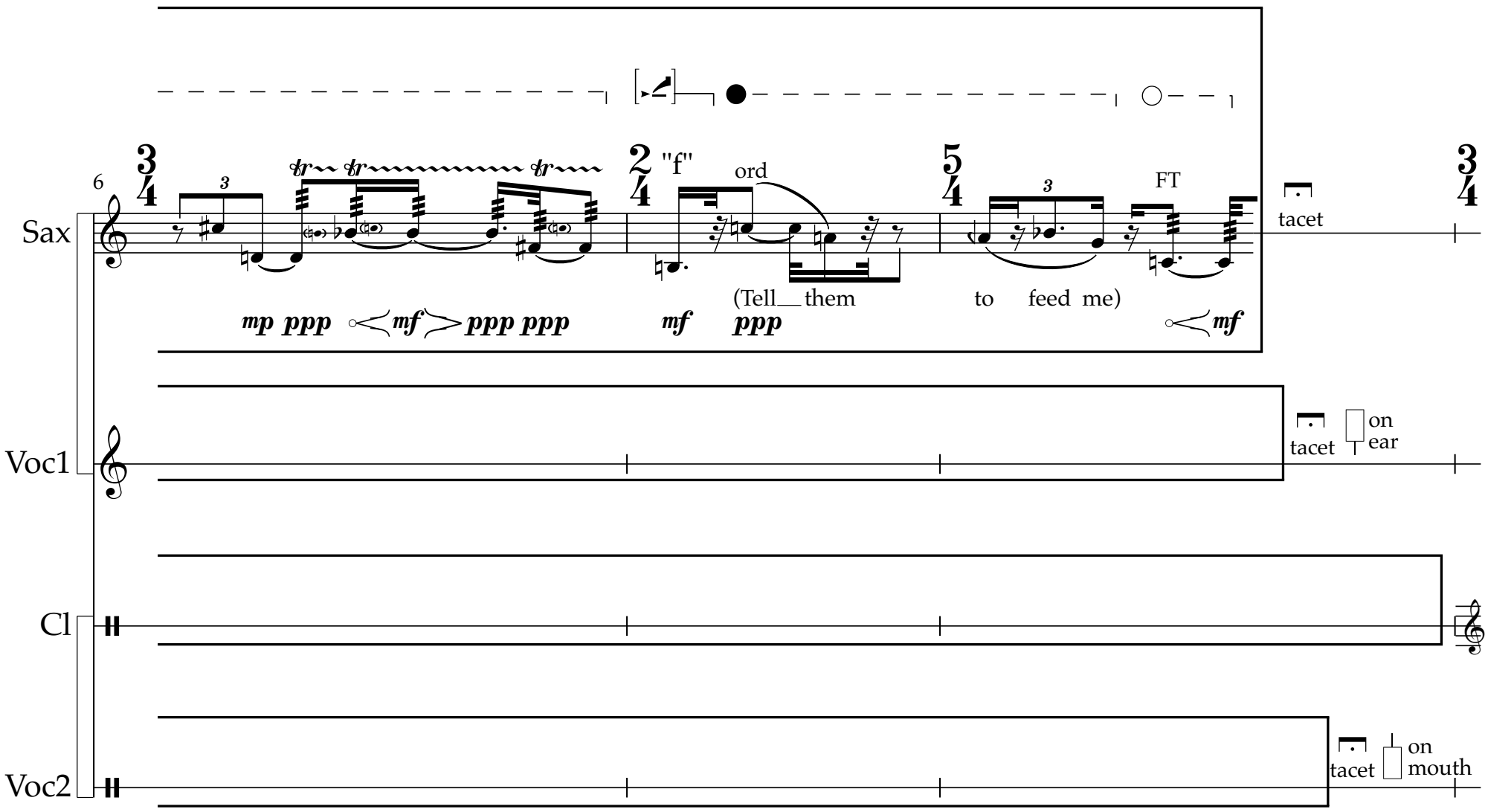
Mum Hum

Mauro Hertig
2021

1

Starting position on each end of the tin can telephone:
Sax has ears held onto back of Voc1
Cl has ears held onto back of Voc2





2

9

Sax

Voc1

Cl.

Voc2

Imitate Cl immediately and continuously
Consider sound, pitch and dynamics, also special sounds like key clicks, breathing etc.

attacca as soon as last sound of Saxophone has arrived

♩ = 111 rubato

sotto voce: played like a voice heard through the wall from another room

long

FT

FT

slap ord

7:6

mf ppp mf

(Eat mum)

mf

(Feed- me sound)

13

on mouth

tacet

NO AIR

key clicks only

dry slap

dry slap

"f"

"psss..."

"...t"

mf p mf mp p mp pp sfzppp sfzpp sfz mf

tacet

on ear

tacet

3

come prima

→Voc1 →Voc2 →Cl

attacca as soon as last sound of Clarinet has arrived

key clicks only

17

Sax

p *mf* *p>ppp* *p* *mf* *p* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *p* *p*

21

Sax

p *ppp* *mf* *p* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *mf* *p>ppp*

slap ord

(Tell them to feed me sound)

4

→Voc2 →Voc1 →Sax

♩ = 130 exact in pulse

25

Cl.

slap ord ord slap color fingerings ord FT

(Play my meal) (On one, two, three o' clo - ck, four o' clo - ck, ro - ck)

mf *pp* *pp>ppp* *mf* *pp* *p* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *ppp*

5

→Voc1 →Voc2 →Cl

♩ = 130 exact in pulse **♩ = 80** **rit.**

30

Sax

color fingerings slap ord slap slap ord slap

(Five, si - x, se-ven o' clo - ck, eight o' clo - ck, ro - ck) (Tick, tock, tick, tock,

pp *mf* *pp* *p* *pp* *mf* *pp* *p* *ppp* *mp* *ppp*

♩ = 65

34

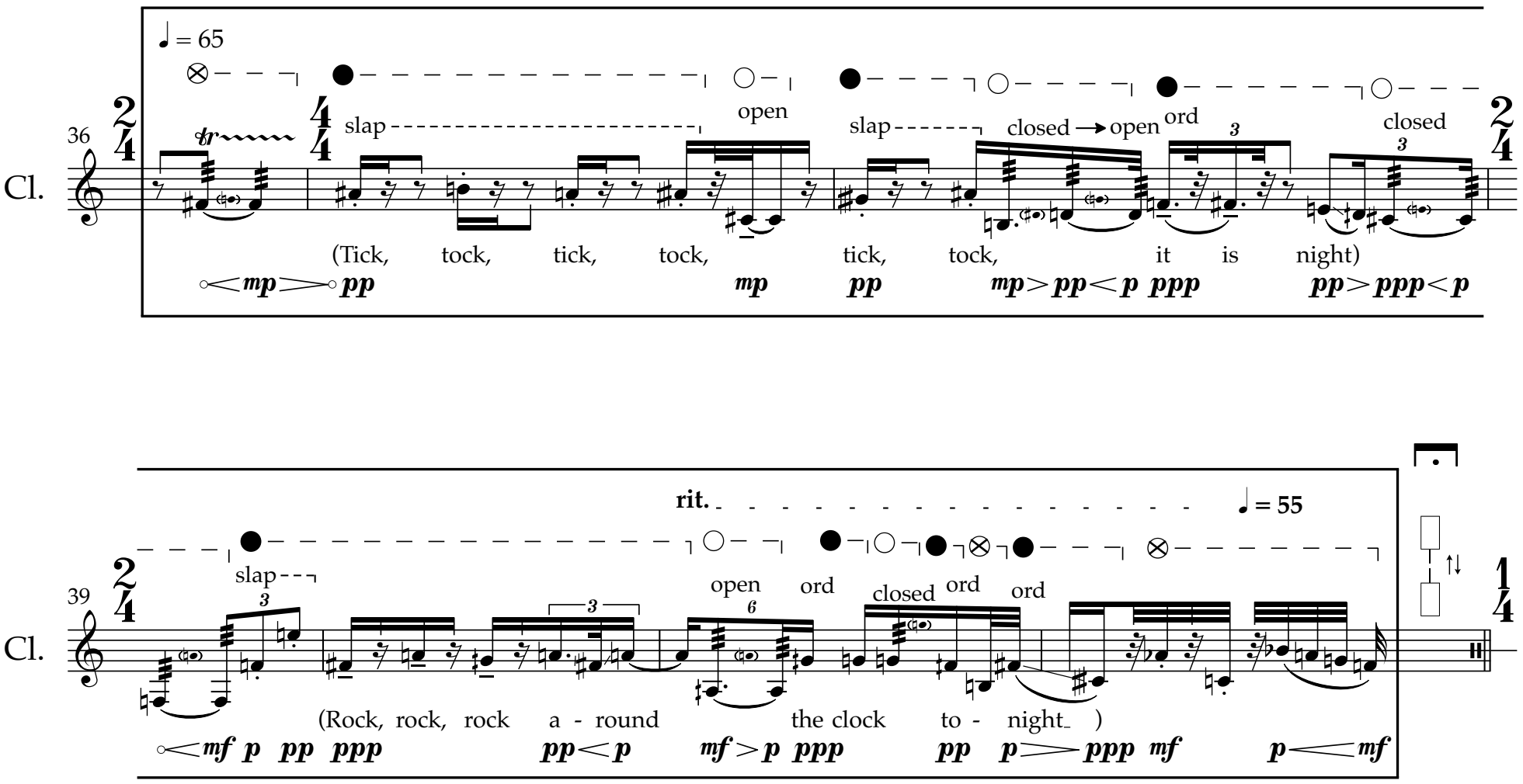
Sax

slap ord

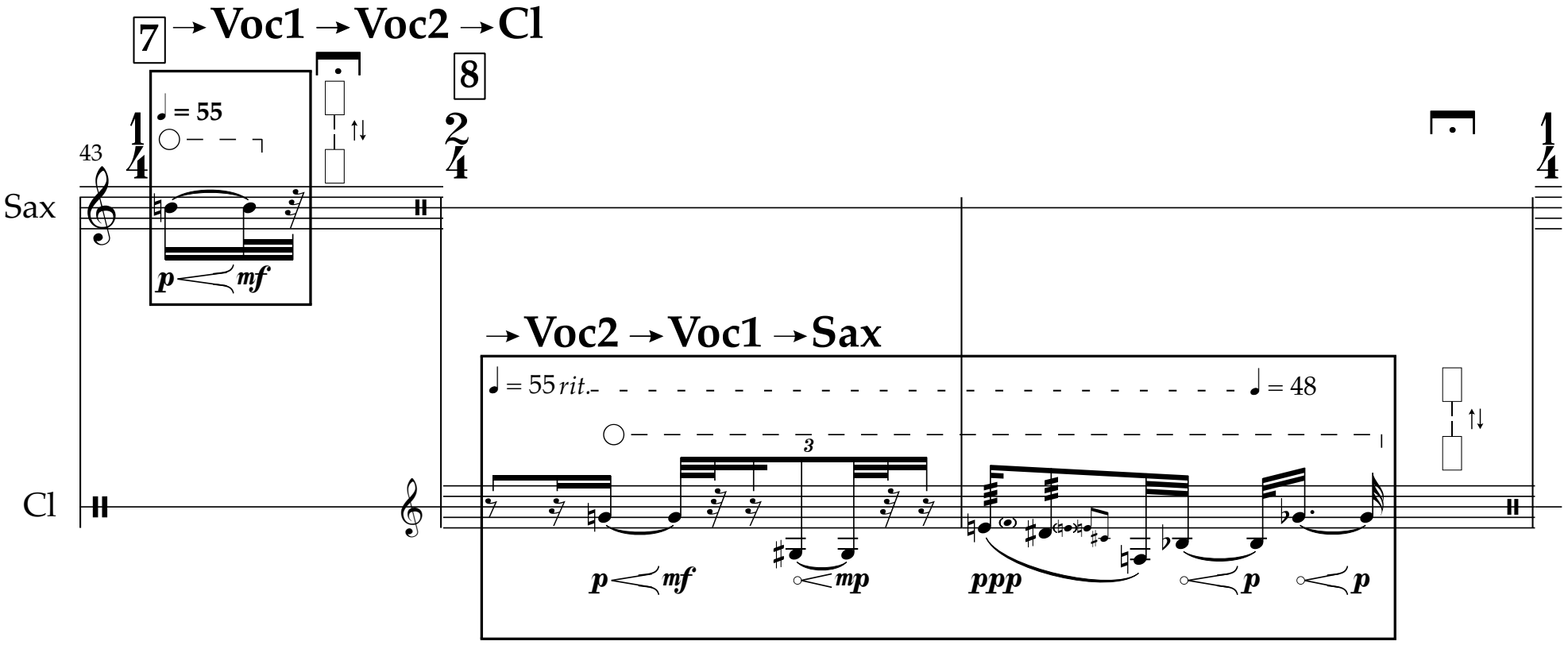
tick, tock, it is day)

mf *ppp* *pp* *p* *mp*

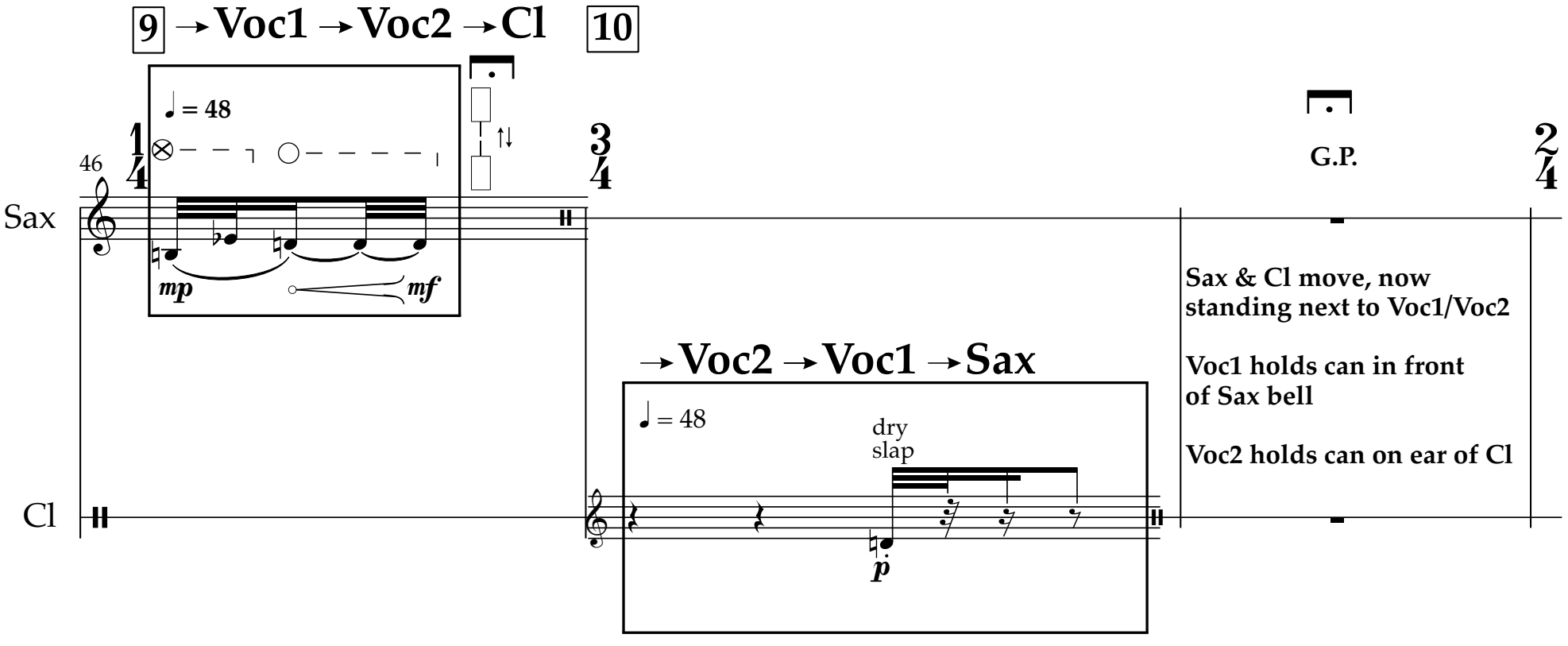
6 →Voc2 →Voc1 →Sax



7 →Voc1 →Voc2 →Cl 8

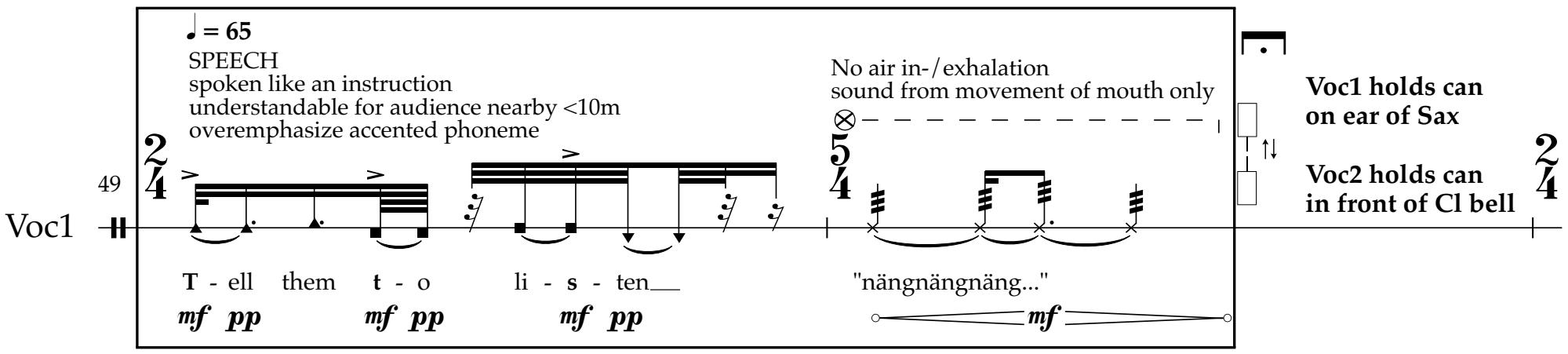


9 →Voc1 →Voc2 →Cl 10

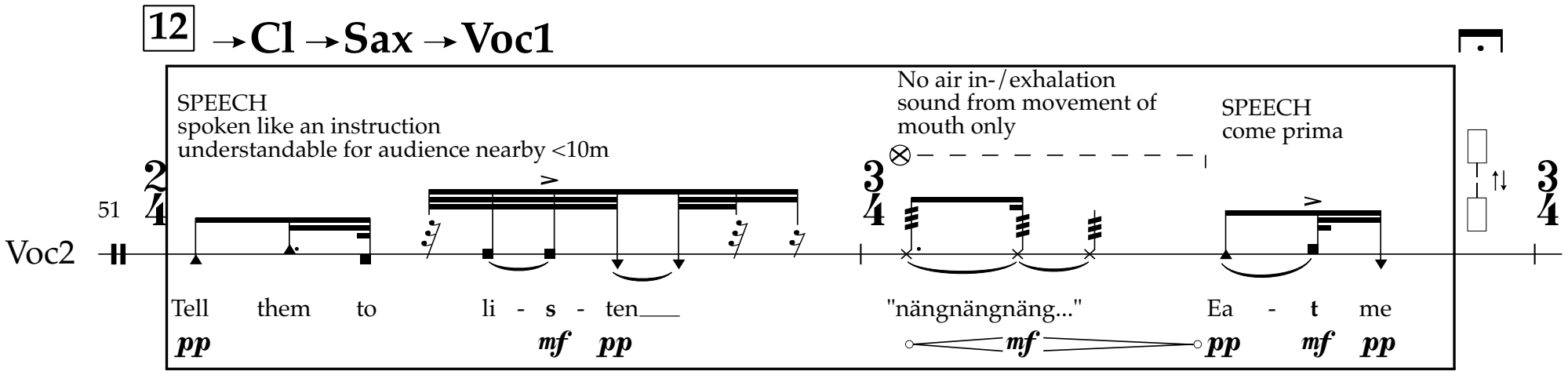


11 Imitation chain new order, execution come prima

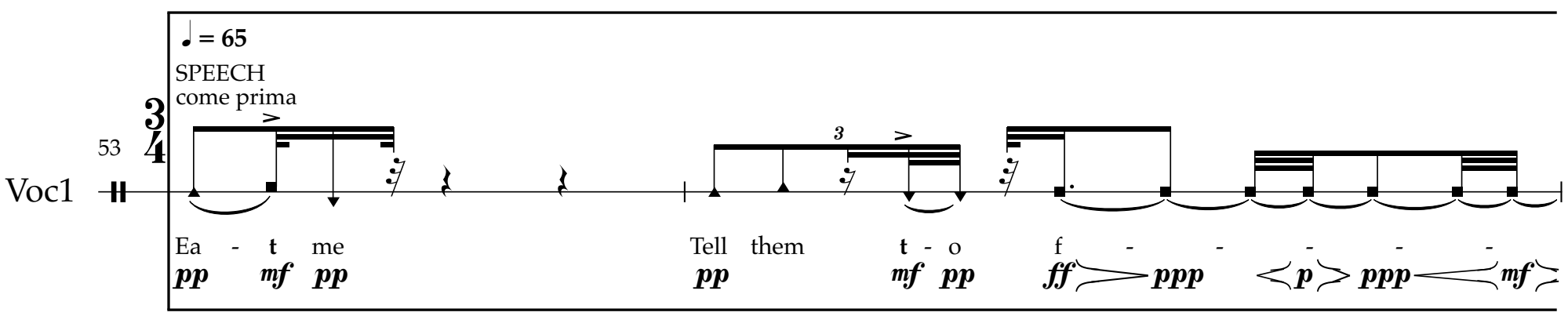
→Sax →Cl →Voc2

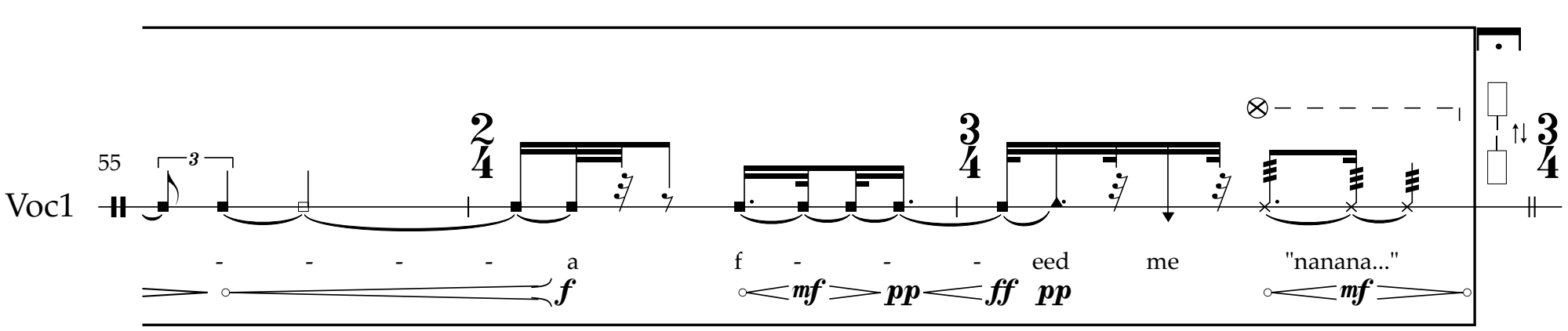


12 **→Cl →Sax →Voc1**

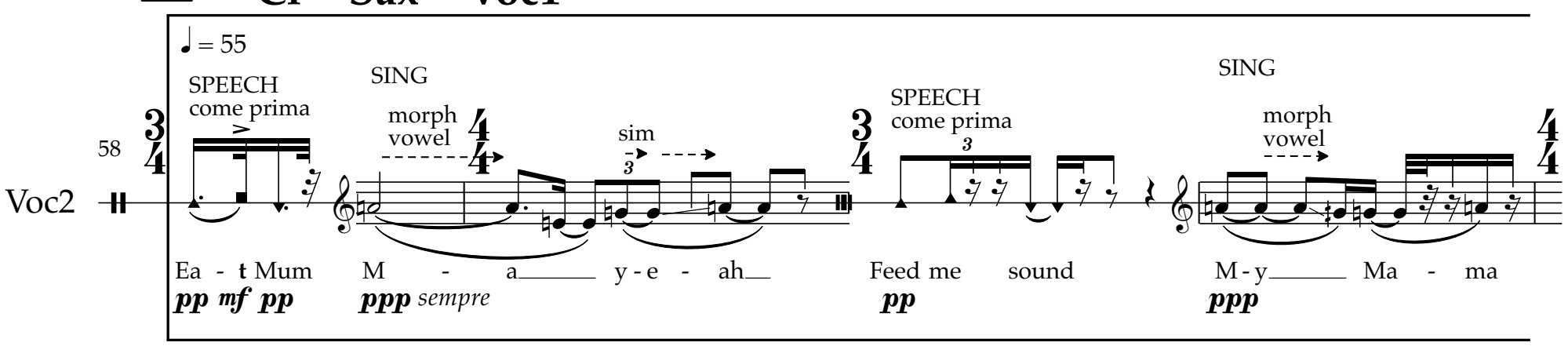


13 **→Sax →Cl →Voc2**





14 **→Cl →Sax →Voc1**



62

Voc2

sim

t - o - - l - d m - e

f *ppp*

♩ = 65

SPEECH

come prima

Tell them to **f**-eed me **s**-ound

pp *mf pp* *mf pp*

15 → **Sax** → **Cl** → **Voc2**

64

Voc1

♩ = 65

SPEECH

come prima

Tell them to **f**-eed me **s**-ound

pp *mf pp* *mf pp*

SMOTHERED SINGING

P-lay my meal On

mf pp *pp*

66

Voc1

♩ = 130

one, **t**-wo, three o' clo - **ck,** four o' clo - **ck,** ro - **ck** **F**-ive, si - **x,** se-ven o' clo - **ck,**

f pp *f pp* *f pp* *f* *f pp* *f pp* *f*

16

69

Sax

continue imitation

♩ = 111

Pulse-Synchronized Imitation:
Imitate ♩ after Voc1

Voc1

♩ = 111

eight o' clo - **ck** ro - **ck** **Sh**-e' - **s** my ro - **ck'** n' roll ma - ma, **sh**-e' - **s** the **s**-wee- te - **st** ba - by in

pp *f pp f* *f pp f* *f pp* *f pp f* *f pp* *f pp*

Cl

continue imitation

Pulse-Synchronized Imitation:
Imitate ♩ after Sax

Voc2

continue imitation

Pulse-Synchronized Imitation:
Imitate ♩ after Cl

17

73

Sax

Imitation
come prima
without pulse

1/4

4/4

Pulse-Synchronized Imitation:
Imitate ♩ after Cl

3/4

Voc1

ex-/inhale air in mouth cavity

on
ear
of
Sax

t own
f pp

tststs... ft ft ft ft ft
mf f mp

sss
mf

Pulse-Synchronized Imitation:
Imitate ♩ after Sax

Cl

tacet

Pulse-Synchronized Imitation:
Imitate ♩ after Voc2

on
bell
of
Cl

♩ = 111
attacca
continue pulse from before

Voc2

SMOTHERED
SINGING

Sh e' - **s** my ro - **ck'** n'roll ma-ma, **sh** e' - **s** the **s** wee te-**st** ba - by in
f pp f *f pp* *f pp f* *f pp f pp*

18

77

Sax

3/4

4/4

sim

3/4

4/4

on
bell
of
Sax

Voc1

tacet

Wan-na
pp

Cl

mp *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp*

Voc2

tacet

t-own
f pp

19

BAR LINES DO NOT REPRESENT SYNCHRONICITY BETWEEN THE GROUPS IN THIS SECTION

81

Sax

sim.
imitate Voc1

play in direction of Clarinet; attacca next box when Cl moves to next box (=plays forte)

♩ = 111 *rit.*

( ) ( )

f ***mf*** ***mp*** ***p*** ***pp*** ***ppp***

Voc1

off

t-ell eve - ry **b** - o - dy wan - na

f ***f*** ***ff*** ***mf***

No tempo

attacca
whisper text slowly, in direction of Voc2
A cacaphony of slushes, beats and burps mark the passage of food, blood and air. In and out through the...

ff *poss*

♩ = 55
attacca
ord

ma - ze

p ***ff***

Cl

sim.
imitate Voc1

Pulse-Synchronized Imitation of Sax
♩ delay
transmission through air (no tin can)
play until Sax is inaudible, then proceed attacca to next box

Voc2

off

sim.
imitate Voc1

attacca when Voc1 whispers

No tempo

Imitate Voc1 from air transmission
come prima, without pulse

sim.

20

83

Sax

Pulse-Synchronized Imitation of Clarinet
♩ delay
transmission through air (no tin can)
play until Cl is inaudible, then proceed attacca to next box

Voc1

No tempo

Imitate Voc1 from air transmission
come prima, without pulse

sim.

Cl

play in direction of Sax; attacca next box when Sax moves to next box (=plays forte)
different fingering than before

cont. rit.

( ) ( )

f ***mf*** ***mp*** ***p*** ***pp*** ***ppp***

Voc2

No tempo
attacca
whisper text slowly, in direction of Voc1
... of passages and tubes just inches from the baby's ears. The fetus can also hear noises from the world outside; conversa-...

ff *poss*

♩ = 55
attacca
ord

tion - s

ff ***ppp***

21

come prima; attacca next box when Cl moves to next box (=plays forte)

cont. rit.

multiphonic
with central note
sounding c'

84

Sax

sim.

f *mf* *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

No tempo

attacca

whisper text slowly, in direction of Voc2

... Loud noises and music filtered and distorted through the mother's abdomen. Higher sounds will be most muffled by the lay-...

ff *poss*

Voc1

♩ = 55

attacca

ord

er - s

mf ***ff***

Pulse-Synchronized Imitation of Sax

♩ delay

transmission through air (no tin can)

play until Sax is inaudible, then proceed attacca to next box

Cl

No tempo

Imitate Voc1 from air transmission

come prima, without pulse

sim.

Voc2

22

85

Sax

Pulse-Synchronized Imitation of Clarinet

♩ delay

transmission through air (no tin can)

play until Cl is inaudible, then proceed attacca to next box

No tempo

Imitate Voc2 from air transmission

come prima, without pulse

attacca next active bar *

Voc1

come prima; attacca next bar when Sax moves to next box (=plays forte)

cont. rit.

multiphonic
with central note
sounding c'

Cl

f *mf* *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

No tempo

attacca

whisper text slowly, in direction of Voc1

... of skin and fat. Only the lower bass notes of a piece of music will have much im-...

attacca next active bar *

ff *poss*

Voc2

23

come prima; attacca next box when Cl moves to next box (=plays forte)

cont. rit.

multiphonic
partly containing
sounding c'

86

sim.

Sax

f *mf* *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

Voc1

inactive
bar

Pulse-Synchronized Imitation of Sax
delay
transmission through air (no tin can)
play until Sax is inaudible, then proceed attacca to next box

Cl

Voc2

inactive
bar

24

AS SOON AS VOC2 DOES A LARGE GLISS UPWARDS (= bar89), ATTACCA *

87

Pulse-Synchronized Imitation of Clarinet
delay
transmission through air (no tin can)
play until Cl is inaudible, then proceed attacca to next box

Sax

Voc1

inactive
bar

AS SOON AS VOC2 DOES A LARGE GLISS UPWARDS (= bar89), ATTACCA *

cont. rit.

multiphonic
with central note

Cl

f *mf* *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

Voc2

inactive
bar

25

88

Sax

inactive bar

* Imitate Voc2 from air transmission come prima, without pulse

G.P.

Voc1

* Imitate Voc2 come prima, without pulse

sim

Cl

inactive bar

* Imitate Voc2 come prima, without pulse

Voc2

*

♩ = 55
attacca
ord

pa - ct
f *ppp*

♩ = 40 tempo rubato "slow motion"

morph
phoneme

sim

M - m - a y - e - ah!
p *f*

26

93

Sax

Imitate Voc1 sim.

♩ = 40 tempo rubato "slow motion"

morph
phoneme

sim

Voc1

M - y M - a - m - a T - o - - l - d m - e
p *f* *p* *f* *sfffz* *mf* *f* *p* *mf* *mf* *f*

Cl

Imitate Voc1 sim.

Voc2

Imitate Voc1 sim.

27

97 G.P.

Sax

Imitate Voc2
sim.

attacca when Voc2 reaches pitch f'

♩ = 65

"sch"
trills ad lib.

① ② ③ 3

ff ppp f pp mf

tacet

Voc1

Imitate Voc2
sim.

tacet

Cl

Imitate Voc2
sim.

tacet

Voc2

♩ = 40 tempo rubato "slow motion"

morph
phoneme

sim

3

Y - e - - - - ah!

mf < f p

tacet

28

29

100

Sax

attacca when Clarinet becomes inaudible

Imitate whole last phrase of Clarinet from memory
but **slower** and **slightly softer**

Voc1

attacca when Sax becomes inaudible

♩ = 55

open
trills ad lib

① ② ③ 3

Cl

f ppp mf pp mp

Voc2

30 **31**

102

BAR LINES REPRESENT SYNCHRONICITY
FROM HERE TILL END OF PIECE

3/4 ♩ = 65 sempre

Sax

on ear

Voc1

WALK BACKWARDS
AWAY FROM THE ENSEMBLE
always facing Voc2

attacca

Left
foot
front heel

Right
foot
front heel

Cl

attacca when Sax becomes inaudible
Imitate whole last phrase of Sax from memory
but **slower** and **slightly softer**

on mouth

Voc2

105

Sax

Time-synchronized
Imitation:
play the sound
of Voc1
♩ delay

sim

Time-synchronized
Imitation:
play the sound
of Voc2
♩ delay

sim

sim

Voc1

sim
L

sim
R

L

Time-synchronized
Imitation
play the sound
of Cl's footsteps;
♩ delay

sim

sim

Cl

Voc2

32

108

Sax

sim

sim

tacet

Voc1

sim

off

tacet

FOOTSTEPS

L

R

L

Cl

R

open

bisp.

ord

fast

slow

fast

ord

Voc2

sim

off

Spoken
deep voice

vib.
molto

I hear foot - step-sss sl - ow - - ly wal - king

33

113

Sax

Imitate the whole last phrase (8 beats) by the Clarinet;
what you heard from the distance

tacet

Voc1

Imitate the whole last phrase (8 beats) by Voc2;
what you heard from the distance

tacet

FOOTSTEPS

Cl

R

L

R

STOP

Voc2

Time-synced
Imitation
come prima

sim

sim

WALK BACKWARDS,
AWAY FROM THE ENSEMBLE
always facing Voc1

34

117

Sax

Left foot front heel

Right foot front heel

sim **L**

Voc1

on mouth

Time-synced Imitation; play the sound of Sax' footsteps; ♩ delay

sim

sim

Cl

Time-synced Imitation of Voc 2; ♩ delay

sim

Voc2

on ear

Time-synced Imitation of Voc 1; ♩ delay

sim

sim

35

121

FOOTSTEPS

Sax

ord

vib.

open slap

open slap

ord

vib.

Voc1

Spoken deep voice

vib. molto

As they ge - - ntly walk a - cro - - ss the lone-ly floor

mf *sempre*

Cl

sim

tacet

Voc2

off

tacet

36

FOOTSTEPS

125

Sax

Voc1

Cl

Voc2

Time-synced Imitation come prima

Time-synced Imitation come prima

sim

sim

on ear

Time-synced Imitation come prima

sim

Imitate the whole last phrase (9 beats) by the Sax; what you heard from the distance

WALK come prima

sim

Imitate the whole last phrase (9 beats) by Voc1; what you heard from the distance

on mouth

Time-synced Imitation, play sound of Cl's footsteps;

delay

sim

off

37

38

131

Sax

Voc1

Cl.

Voc2

FOOTSTEPS

ord

bisp. fast slow

ord

bisp. slow fast

ord

tacet

Spoken deep voice

And a voi - - ce is so - - - ftly say - ing

tacet

39

135

Sax

Imitate the whole last phrase (8 beats) by the Clarinet;
what you heard from the distance

tacet

Voc1

Imitate the whole last phrase (8 beats) by Voc2;
what you heard from the distance

tacet

Cl

FOOTSTEPS

R

L

R

STOP

Voc2

Time-
synchronized
Imitation
come prima

sim

sim

pp

40

WALK
come prima

Right
foot
front
heel

41

FOOTSTEPS

Sax

ord

vib.

vib.

pp

pp

mp

pp

Time-synced
Imitation;
come prima;
delay

Spoken
deep voice

vib.
molto

vib.
molto

vib.
molto

Dar-ling thi - s will be good-bye for-e-ver more

mf

p mf

mp mf

Voc1

pp

Time-synced
Imitation of
Voc 2; delay

Cl

pp

Time-synced
Imitation of Voc 1;
delay

on
ear

Voc2

pp

42

145

Sax

FOOTSTEPS

R

L

R

STOP

Time-synced
Imitation
come prima

sim

sim

pp

Voc1

Cl

Imitate the whole last phrase (9 beats) by the Sax;
what you heard from the distance

Voc2

Imitate the whole last phrase (9 beats) by Voc1;
what you heard from the distance

REPEAT UNTIL SAX OR CLARINET ARE SO FAR AWAY THAT VOC1 OR VOC2 CANNOT HEAR THEIR FOOTSTEPS ANYMORE; AS A RESULT, THEY STOP IMITATING THEM, THE CHAIN IS INTERRUPTED; TUTTI TACENT; END OF PIECE

43

44

149

Sax

WALK
Time-synced
attacca
♩ delay

L/R

Time-synced
Imitation of Voc2
come prima
♩ delay

Time-synced
Imitation, play
sound of Sax'
footsteps;
♩ delay

Time-synced
Imitation
come prima
♩ delay

on
ear

on
mouth

on
ear

pp

meno

meno

Voc1

WALK
come prima

L

WALK
Time-synced
attacca
♩ delay

R/L

Time-synced
Imitation, play
sound of Cl's
footsteps;
♩ delay

Time-synced
Imitation
come prima
♩ delay

Time-synced
Imitation, play
sound of Cl's
footsteps;
♩ delay

on
mouth

on
ear

on
mouth

pp

meno

meno

Cl

Voc2