# Joseph Klein

Mélodrame

for solo contrabass and environment

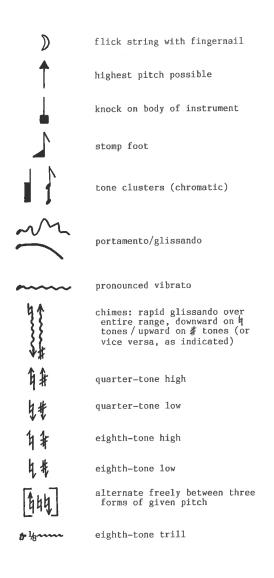
(1989)

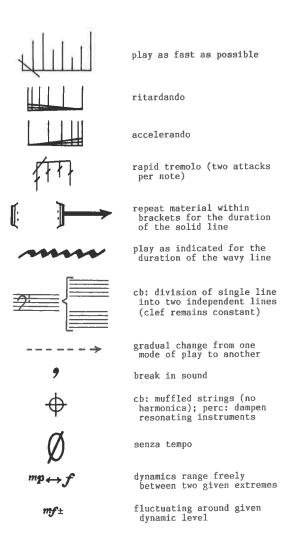
- to Michael Hartt-

Duration: 15'

### SYMBOLS

s.p.	sul ponticello
s.t.	sul tasto
clb	col legno battuto
c1t	col legno tratto
"sitar"	with hammer-on, a greatly exaggerated vibrato, resulting in a sitar-like tone
s.p. s.t.	constant, gradual fluctuation between sul ponticello and sul tasto ("circular bowing")
	change bow direction ad lib.
	overpressure (downbow)
٧	overpressure (upbow)
<b>↑ ↑</b>	play below the bridge
<b>★</b>	play on the bridge
$T \rightarrow B$	play on the tailpiece: top (T), bottom (B) $$
Ť	play on cable at bass of tailpiece
No.	slap strings with hand
+	left-hand pizzicato
$\oplus$	hammer-on
Ф	snap pizzicato
<b>↑</b> ↓	with pizzicato, direction of strumming





#### INSTRUCTIONS

#### General -

Accidentals apply only to those pitches which they immediately precede, except in the case of repeated notes.

Synchronization of events is denoted by a dotted vertical line in non-metered sections; where such precision is not desired (in non-metered sections), no lines are used.

Where notes are placed outside of a staff, or where headless stems occur, pitches are approximate, the performer following the basic contours indicated.

All material which appears parenthetically is to be mimed by the player (as in contrabass part, pp. 2-3, 49).

Performers-

- (1) contrabass solo
- (1) harpsichord
- (2) percussion
- (5) performance assistants
- (1) girl
- (1-2) technical assistants

In the program, only the contrabass soloist should be mentioned; if necessary, other performers may be listed under the collective heading "assistants" or "assisted by:", but under no circumstances may the instruments themselves be mentioned. It is also very important that no sounds be heard from those accompanying instruments/performers, nor should they be seen, prior to the performance (with the possible exception of the technical assistants) and percussionists, which may be among the audience); the assistants within the audience (A2-A5) must make their presence as unobtrusive as possible.

Contrabass: Instrument must have Low C extension and should be slightly amplified at all times (even when Delay Unit is not in use); performance begins with E lock released (i.e., IV = C) and prepared as in Preparation Diagram 1. In addition to a bow and preparations (specified in detail later), performer will also require a mute, a tray full of various striking implements, including a wooden dowel (all of which are to be knocked over during performance, as specified in the score), and a police whistle; when not in use, the preparations and police whistle should be kept out of the audience's view (but are not to be placed on the tray).

Harpsichord: The lid should be set at medium height, with the upper manual (8') used in  $\underline{\mathrm{mf}}$  passages, and the lower manual (8'8'4') used in  $\underline{\mathrm{ff}}$  passages; the performer will require a paintbrush (2"-3" wide, with stiff bristles) for play inside the instrument, and a weight of some sort, large enough to cover at least an octave (quarter rolls taped together or a small sack full of sand may be used) in order to sustain a cluster while playing with both hands.

Percussion: Placed at rear balcony (or at the far back of the hall, if no balcony is available) and separated as much as possible; each player is to have his/her own set of instruments (i.e., there should be no sharing of instruments) including cymbals and gongs (2-3 each, of various sizes and timbres), chimes, and crotales; if only a single set of crotales is available, it may be divided between the two players (one player using all \$\mathbf{p}\$ pitches, the other all \$\mathbf{f}\$ pitches, in which case such designations in the score are to be disregarded). In addition to these instruments, percussion I will require cowbell, wood-block, police whistle, and airhorn; percussion II will require bass drum, klaxon horn, helium (in a balloon or other container, to be inhaled prior to "laugh" in Movement III), fire alarm (bell-type), and electric siren (emitting a single pitch); both players require chime hammers (2 each), hard yarn mallets (2 each), and a contrabass bow; in addition, percussion II requires a bass drum beater.

Performance assistants: Located on stage (A1) and throughout audience ( $\Lambda 2-\Lambda 5$ ; see Setup Diagram); A1 is responsible for all miscellaneous activities which occur onstage during performance (including pulling the curtains, if necessary); all performance assistants play in Movement III, and will require the following instruments:

Al - electric buzzer, large book (to be dropped flat onto stage floor), police whistle, 3 small marbles, and 1 large marble;

A2 - police whistle, airhorn, woodblock (struck with hard rubber mallet), and party horn (paper variety, which unfurls when blown);

A3 - squeak toy, balloon (to be popped), paper bag (to be inflated and burst), gun (with blanks), and wooden switch (to be snapped in two);

A4 - police whistle, wooden switch (to be snapped in two), and duck call;

A5 - whoopie cushion, bird whistle, pitch pipe (blown so as to produce a cluster), police whistle, cow toy (producing "moo" when inverted), and pop gun (with cork)

It is important that none of the performance assistants (particularly A2-A5) draws too much attention to him-/herself prior to actually playing, as this will tend to diminish the effect of their involvement in the performance.

Girl: 10-13 years old, with long hair (at least shoulder-length), wearing a somewhat frilly pink or white dress (knee length) and low-heeled shoes; she is to walk across the stage in Movement V as indicated in the score and shown on the Setup Diagram (the entire episode should take no longer than 30 seconds).

Technical assistants: To control lighting and sound (i.e., delay); they should be placed either on the balcony at the rear of the hall (as indicated in Setup Diagram), or in the center of the audience near the stage; in addition to lights and sound, these assistants are also in control of the TVs and clock in Movement II.

#### Equipment -

- (2) Spot lights
- (3) Strobe lights
- (1) Digital Delay Unit (or tape delay)
- (3) Television sets with Video Cassette Players
- (1) Digital clock
- (1) aluminum rain gutter

Spot 1: Situated above and to the right of bassist, illuminating instrument, performer, and tray (but no more, if possible); may either be part of stage lighting or a separate light source mounted on a floor lamp base;

Spot 2: Situated to the right and slightly behind and above the harpsichordist, illuminating the performer and most of the instrument; as with Spot 1, may either be stage light or floor lamp;

Strobe 1: Set at approximately 120 flashes/minute, situated on the floor to the front left of the bassist, directed upwards (at approximately 30° from the horizontal) toward back of stage:

Strobe 2: Set at approximately 96 flashes/minute, situated on the floor to the right of the harpsichordist directed upwards (at approximately  $30^{\circ}$  from the horizontal) toward the back right of stage;

Strobe 3: Set at approximately 72 flashes/minute, situated at far left of stage, elevated approximately 3 feet, and directed (parallel to stage floor) toward opposite side of stage (if possible, light should be far enough to side of stage so as not to be directly seen by audience);

Digital Delay Unit (or tape delay): Used to modify contrabass only; must have a delay capacity of 3-4 seconds and be patched into mixer so as to loop back upon itself 3 or 4 times (see Delay Diagram); channels are designated in score as "FX Send" and "FX Return", respectively. It is crucial that the source microphone and monitor themselves be placed far enough apart and/or directed in such a way so as not to feedback (but the monitor must not be so far away from the contrabass as to sound like a separate sound source).

Television sets: 2 color (TV1, TV2) and 1 B/W (TV3) with at least 19" screens, set up at front of stage right, facing audience (as indicated in TV/Clock Setup Diagram). The TVs are to be run off of separate Video Cassette Players, which are to be running continuously throughout the performance (though the televisions themselves are to remain off except for the brief section in Movement II). The video tapes themselves are to consist of brief images (1-2 seconds each) culled from various local, national, and (as appropriate) international television broadcasts, and should represent (given the limitations of time) the greatest variety of images possible (including such pertinent items as news broadcasts, commercials, cartoons, music videos, televangelists, sporting events, home shopping channels, soap operas, game shows, etc., as well as an occasional dead channel (static) and/or test pattern. Either an endless loop video tape (of at least 10 seconds duration) or a standard tape, containing enough images to last until the TVs are actually turned on in the performance (approximately 4 minutes, preferably more), may be used in each video player (though the images do not necessarily have to be completely different; some overlap/repetition of images is permissible). The volume of each TV must be fairly high (but without distortion), and the three should be evenly balanced.

Clock: A large digital display (at least 2" high LED digits), placed on top of TV3 (as in TV/Clock Setup Diagram); the number "12:00" should flash when clock is turned on.

Rain gutter - Aluminum, approximately 10' long, (corrugated, if possible), directed from rear right of stage to front (elevated approximately 20° from the horizontal); rain gutter should not obstruct the audience's view of either the harpsichordist or the TV sets, nor should it be in the path of the girl.

#### Contrabass Preparations -

Because of the complex and often unpredictable affect which preparations may have upon the strings, pitches indicated within prepared sections of the score represent those to be played (i.e., fingered) rather than the pitches which are actually produced; thus, the resultant pitches may be quite different from those notated.

#### Movement I (see Preparation Diagram 1):

String I - rubber surgical tubing, cut into 3" section and slit lengthwise, placed over string at bridge; tubing should be of wide enough bore so as to rotate freely when bowed directly, but must not rattle when string is activated;

String II-large cork stopper (approximately  $1\,1/4\,^{\circ}$  diameter, 1'' long), slit from the bottom to about the middle and pushed tightly onto the string; cork should remain firmly in place throughout;

String III - rubber gasket (approximately 1" diameter, 1/4" wide), slit to the center and pushed tightly onto the string (as with the cork, gasket should remain firmly in place throughout);

String IV—aluminum foil (begin with a fresh piece), wrapped around string at bridge and pressed into a loosely-packed ball (no more than 2" diameter, with string running through center); foil must not be condensed too much, as it must be loose enough to rattle loudly when string is activated, yet not so loose as to rotate or move freely along string (nor should it create an excessive amount of noise when the other strings are activated).

#### Movement IV (see Preparation Diagram 2):

Strings II and III - rubber crutch feet (approximately 1" diameter at base, 1 1/4" long), slit from the bottom about 3/4 way upward (or far enough so that string actually comes into contact with base of foot); these preparations should affect the strings in such a way that the resultant pitches will remain relatively unchanged no matter how the string is stopped (the effect being an apparent contradiction between the bassist's frantic movements around the strings and the monotonous sound which results):

Strings I and IV-to be prepared ad libitum by the performer, using any materials or combination of materials (e.g., paper clips, nuts/screws, split shots, alligator clips, pipe cleaners, styrofoam, etc.), placed anywhere along the string, but not so as to obstruct the playing of given material; if possible, pitches should remain fairly distinct on both strings (as opposed to strings II and III).

#### Performance Instructions -

Movement I: Contrabass solo should be played in a flamboyant (though somewhat arrogant) manner. Percussion must remain unobtrusive throughout, the sound of the bowed cymbals/gongs being continuous and subdued, relatively unaffected by the occasional crotales strokes (which are to be only slightly more penetrating than the cymbals/gongs).

Movement II: The bassist should attempt to imitate the harpsichord at the beginning of this section. On pp. 14-15, the hands of the harpsichordist should become independent, each continuing on its own trajectory (the left hand beginning to retard before the right hand); the same effect occurs at the end of the movement where the right hand accelerates and the left hand retards independently.

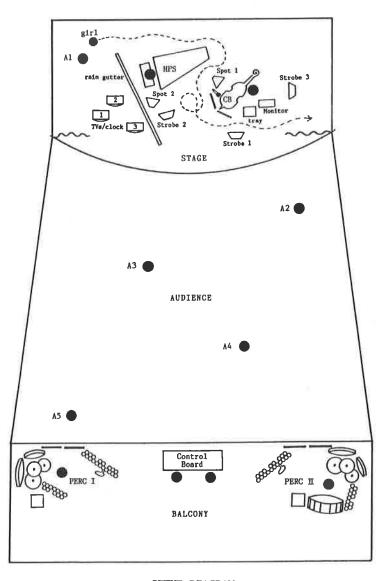
Movement III: The harpsichord should continue from Movement II unaffected, eventually "breaking down" (as indicated in the score). The bassist is to play incessantly, with an obsessive intensity; whistle is to remain in player's mouth throughout entire first section, only being allowed to fall where indicated. Though bassist is to attempt to play all the material at the brisk tempo indicated, beginning on p. 26 aberrant material is to gradually take precedence, displacing/superceding ordinario parts; the emphasis here is on the struggle in the performance (the bassist being virtually inundated by the material presented), rather than technical precision. The interruptive bursts by the percussionists and performance assistants must attempt to follow the solo part as indicated, and are to be loud, relatively short, and obtrusive (amplification may be necessary).

Movement IV: During the first section of this movement (pp.38-42), delay is to be used to extend the pizz./port. gestures in the contrabass part while the bassist plays the harmonics sections (the delay gradually fading until next pizz./port. section); under no circumstances are the harmonics to be processed by the delay (the source being turned off during those sections). In Variant section (pp. 43-49), the harpsichord clusters are to be played by means of a weight, as specified earlier. In the contrabass part of the final variant (9. Nonchalant), the mimed material is to be freely interpolated into the existing line.

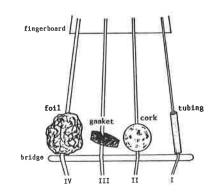
Movement V: Though the various tempi indicated in both the contrabass and harpsichord parts are to be approximated as accurately as possible, it is not expected that cross-relationships between the individual lines be realized precisely (performers should, however, use the strobe lights to gauge their tempi, as indicated in the score); the overall effect here should be that of several independent lines. The delay should enter almost unnoticeably, adding yet another layer to the increasingly dense texture; the removal of the contrabass from the texture (p. 54) should also be unnoticed (to be covered by the delay, which by that time will have been feeding back, creating several layers of its own). Visually, the bassist and harpsichordist should give the impression of a struggle (within themselves and between one another), maintaining a high degree of intensity throughout.

Movement VI: As in Movement I, cymbals/gongs must remain unobtrusive; crotales enter as a reaction to the contrabass outbursts and should penetrate the texture. Harpsichordist must continue unaffected from Movement V, eventually "breaking down" (similarly to Movement IV). Bassist must make a clear aural and visual distinction between sustained tones and intermittent outbursts; reaction to the environment (in this case, the audience itself) during sustained sections must also be distinct and proportionate to the degree of activity to which the performer is reacting; during final fade-out, bassist's reactions are to diminish in a similar manner, as though the volume (and, therefore, the energy level) of the entire piece were being gradually turned off.

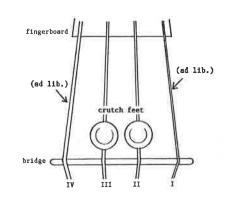
## DIAGRAMS



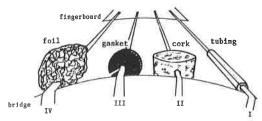
SETUP DIAGRAM

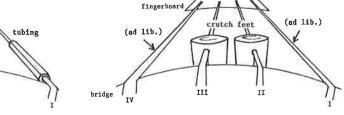


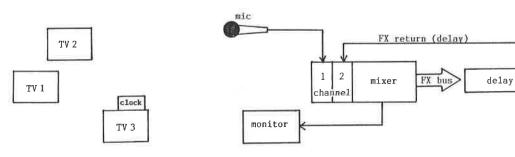
PREPARATION DIAGRAM 1



PREPARATION DIAGRAM 2



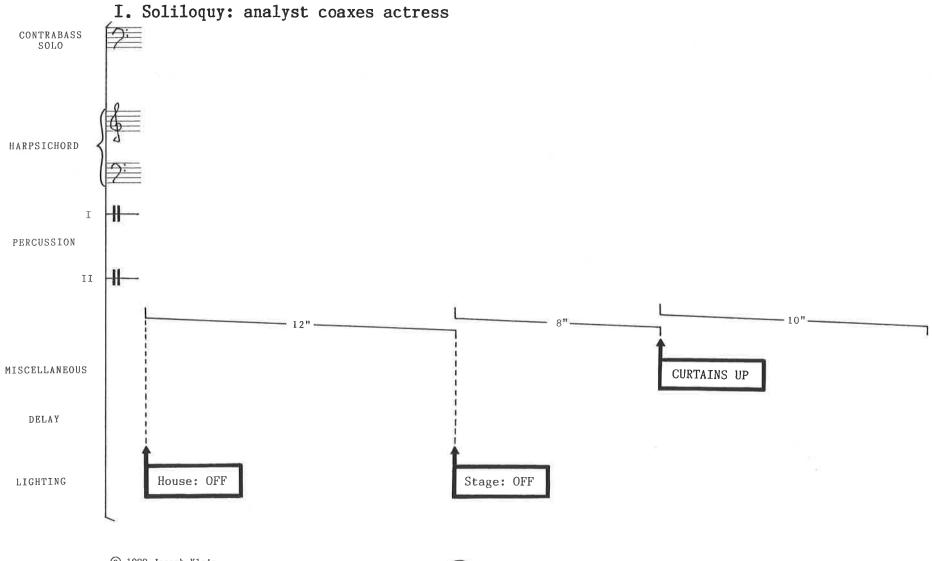


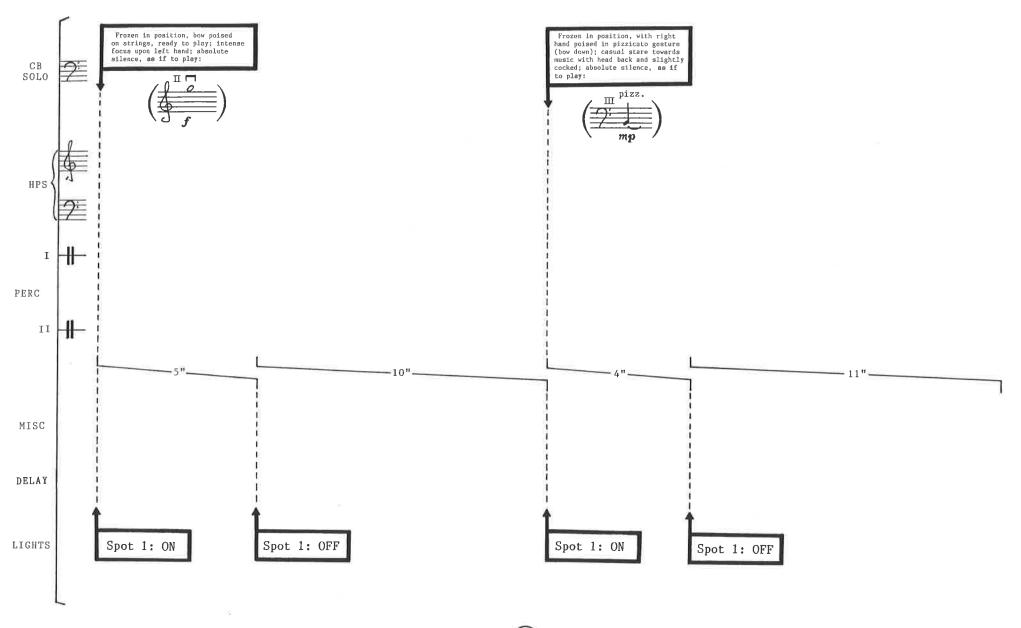


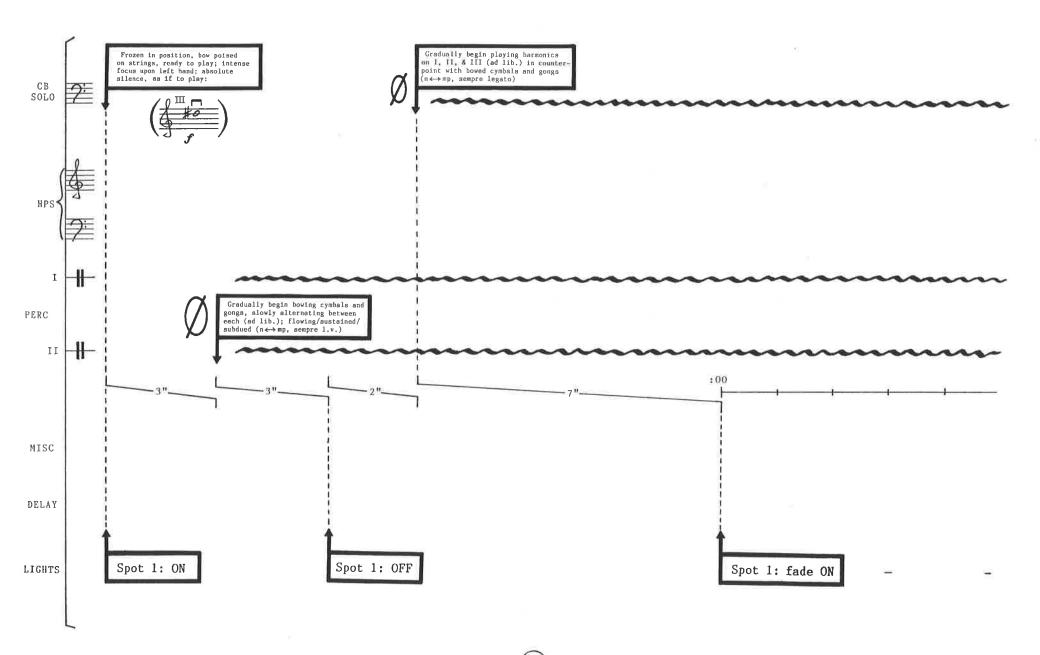
TV/CLOCK SETUP (front view)

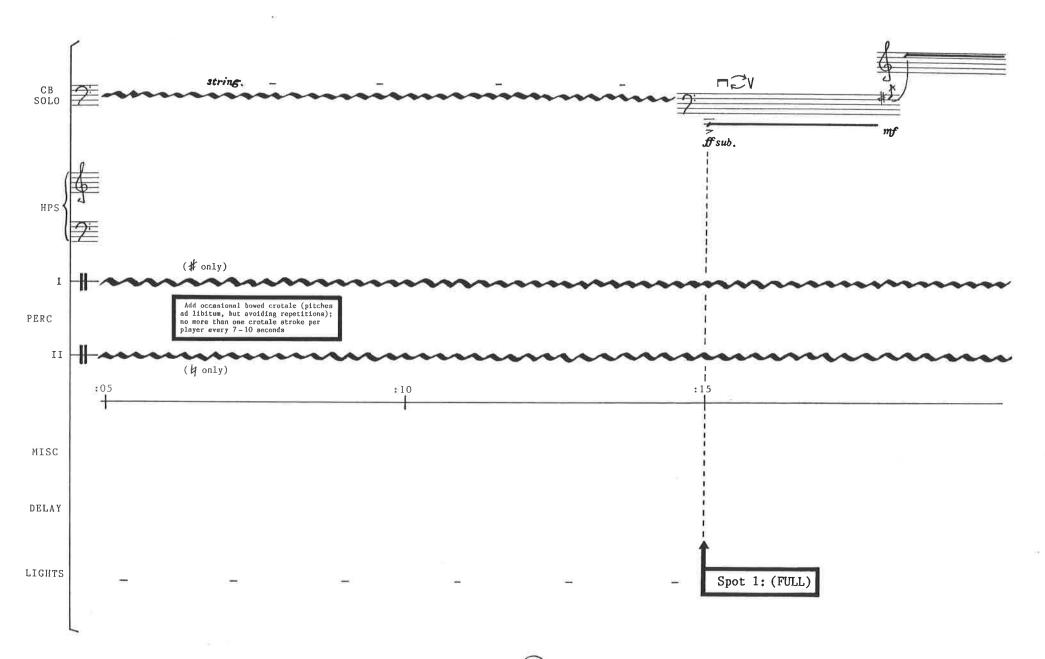
DELAY DIAGRAM

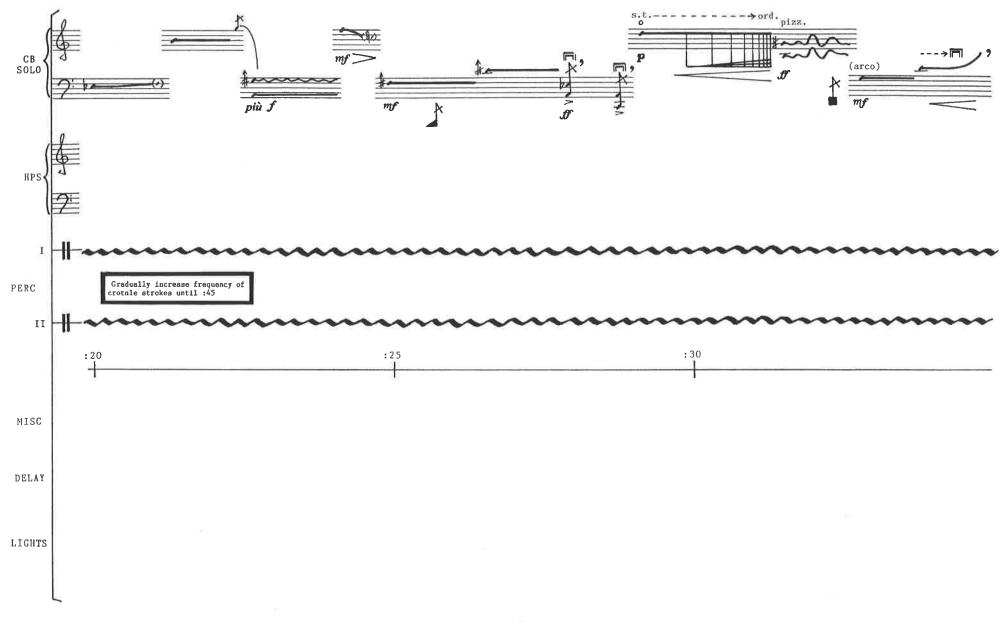
for solo contrabass and environment

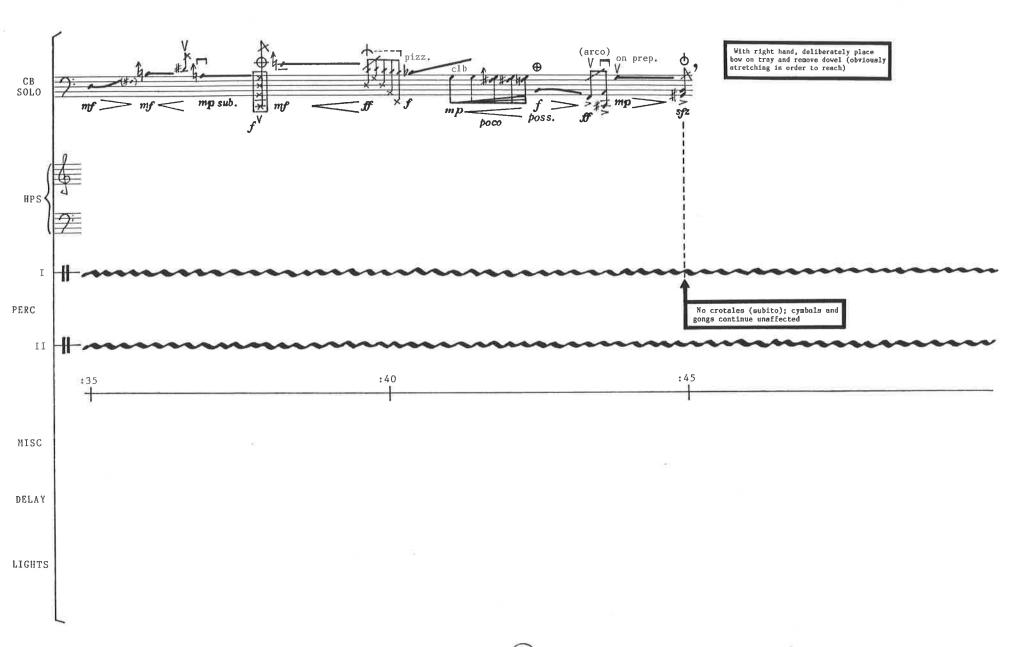


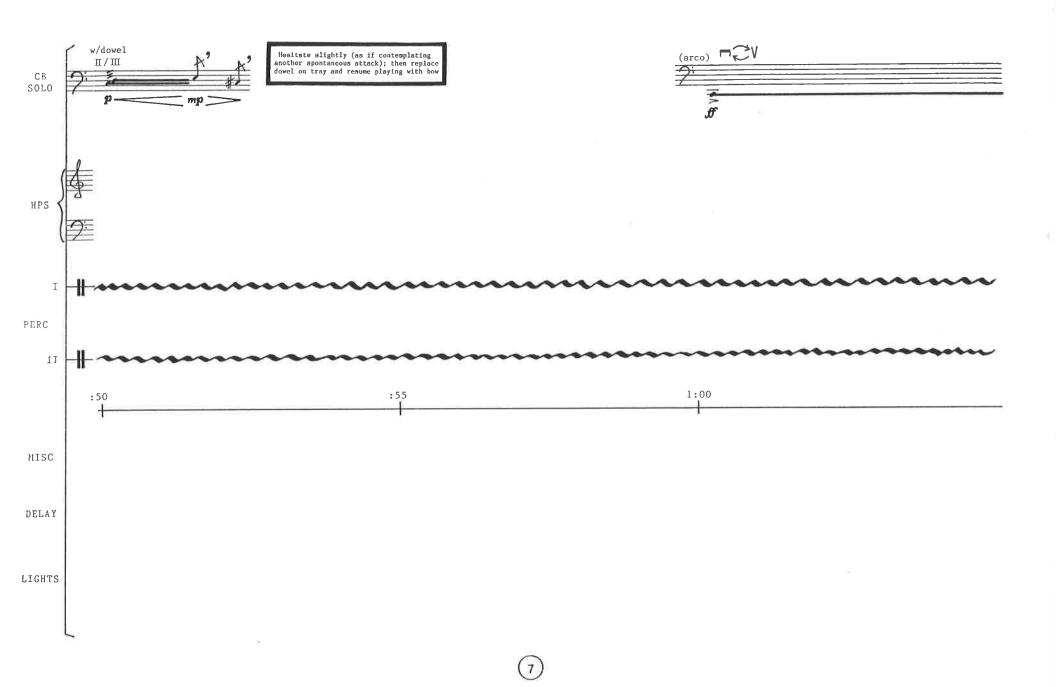


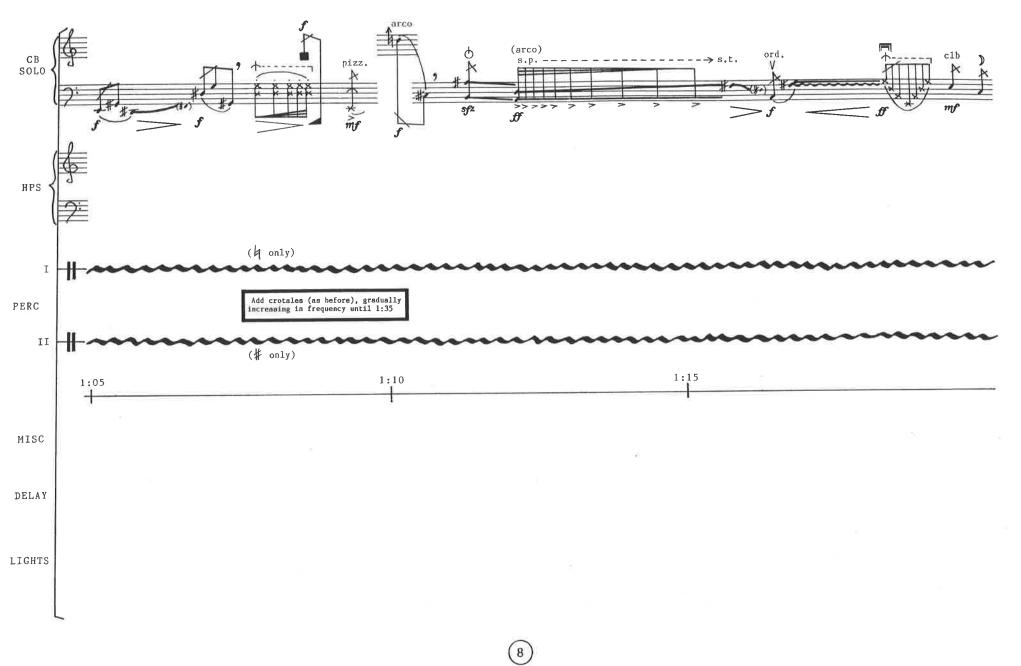


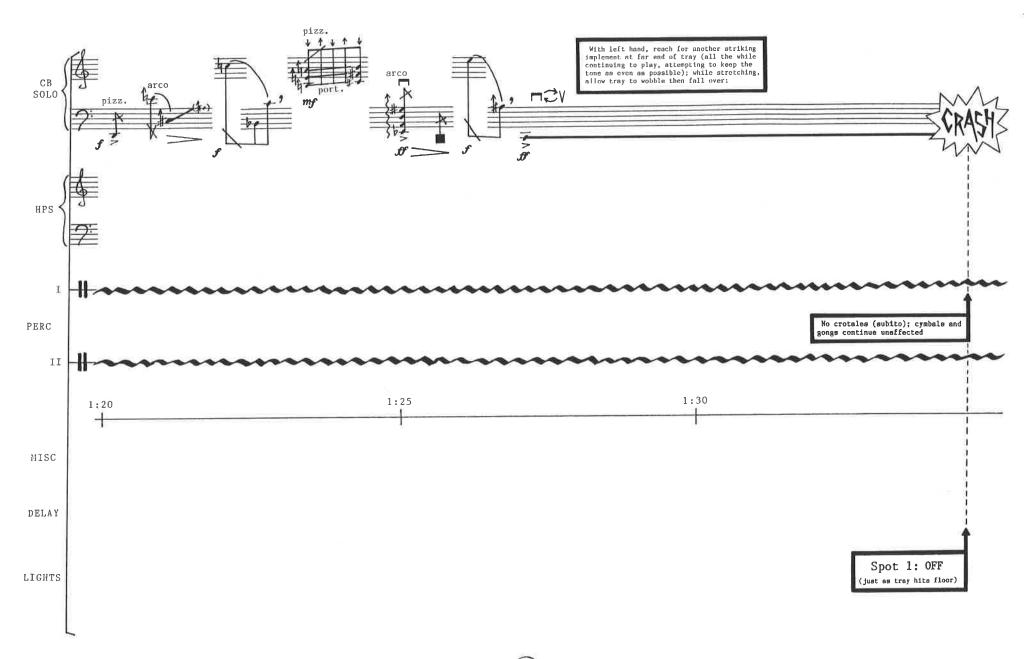




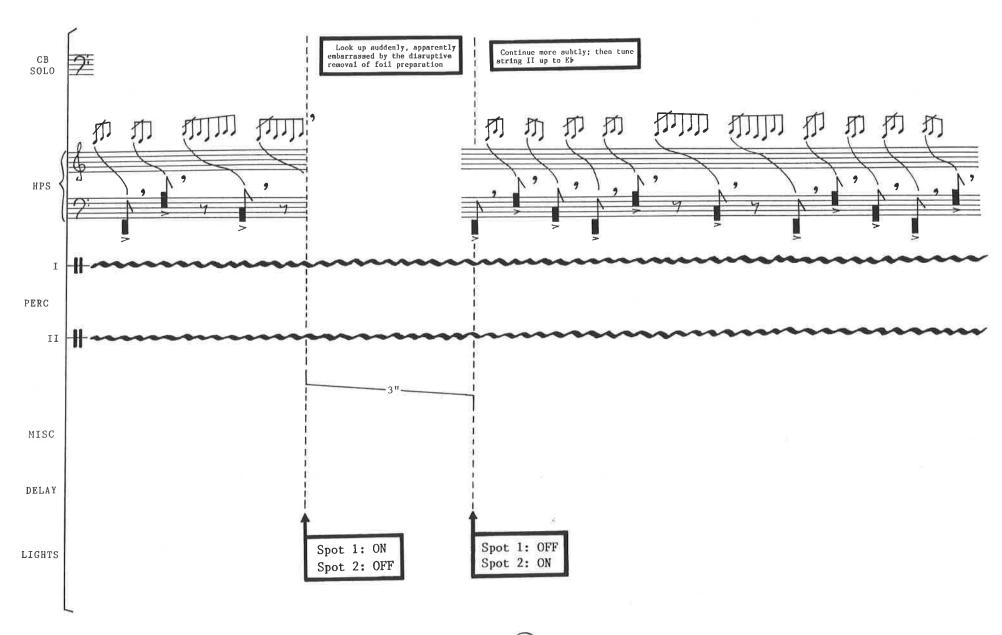


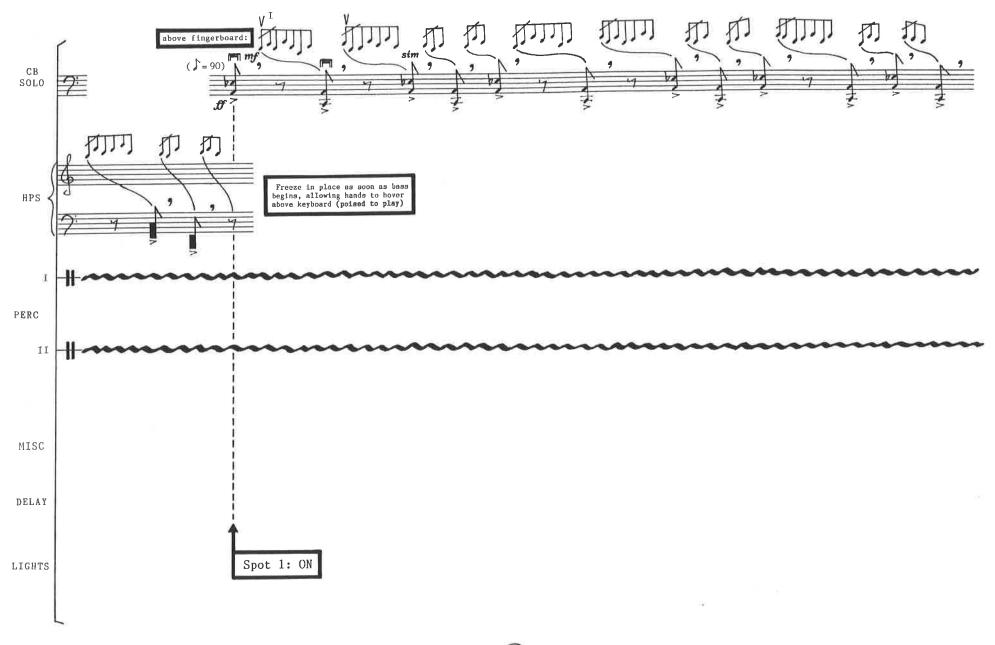


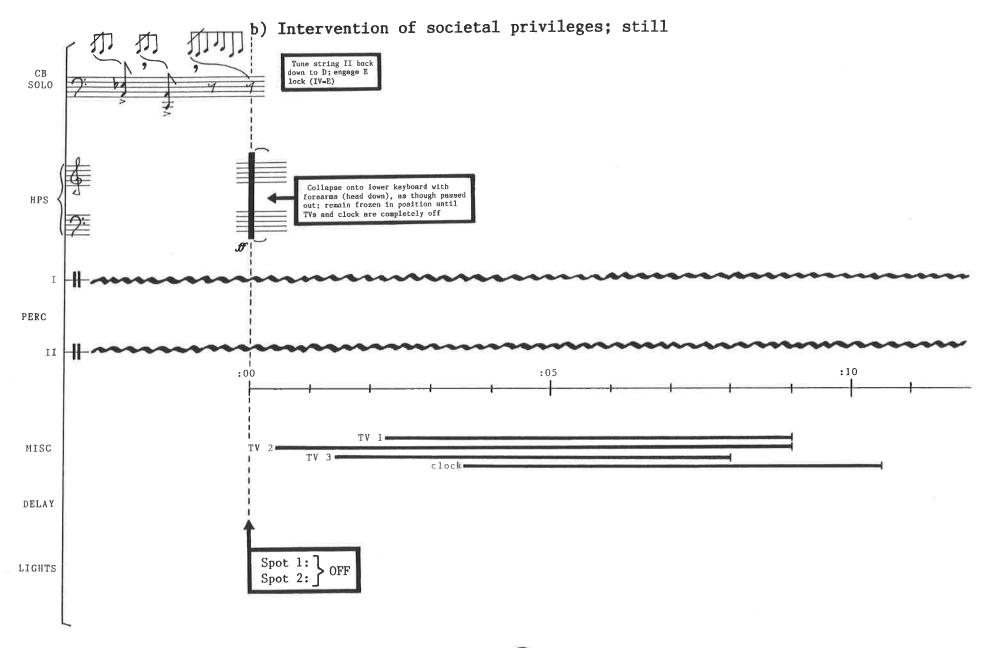


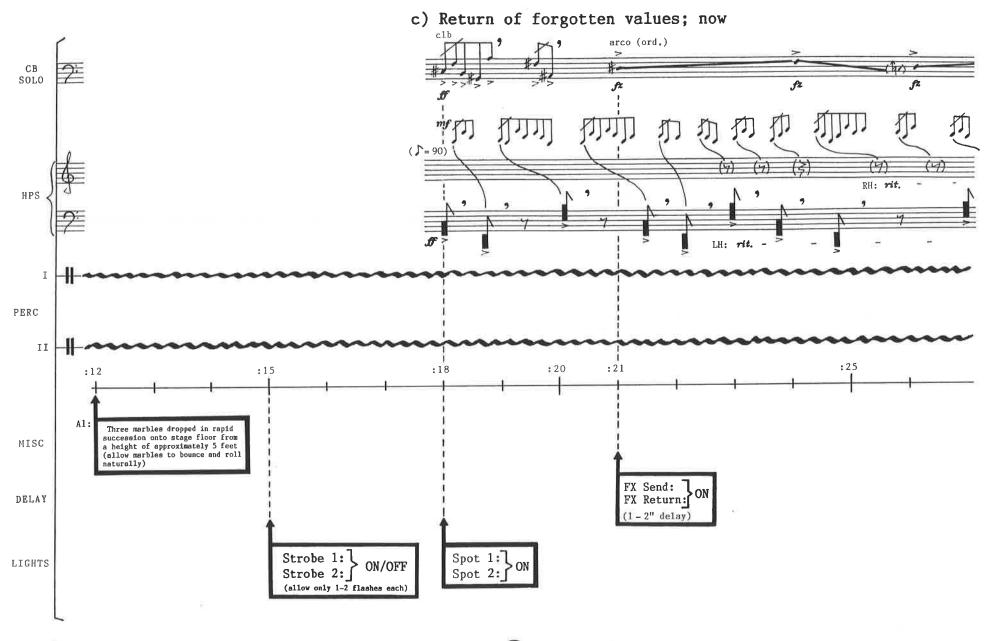


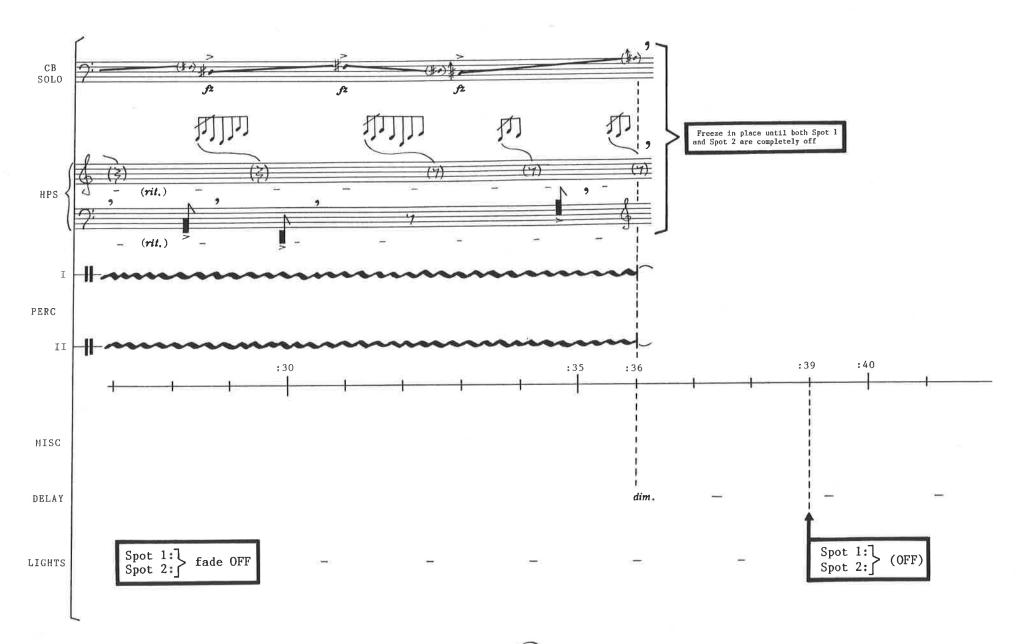
II. a) Confrontation des timbres vertes; yet Remove all preparations, all the while noisily "attempting" to remove foil preparation from string IV ...then speak (as if to self, but plainly audible): CB SOLO (shit!) (highest 6 pitches) PERC ΙI 1:40 1:35 MISC DELAY Spot 2: ON LIGHTS

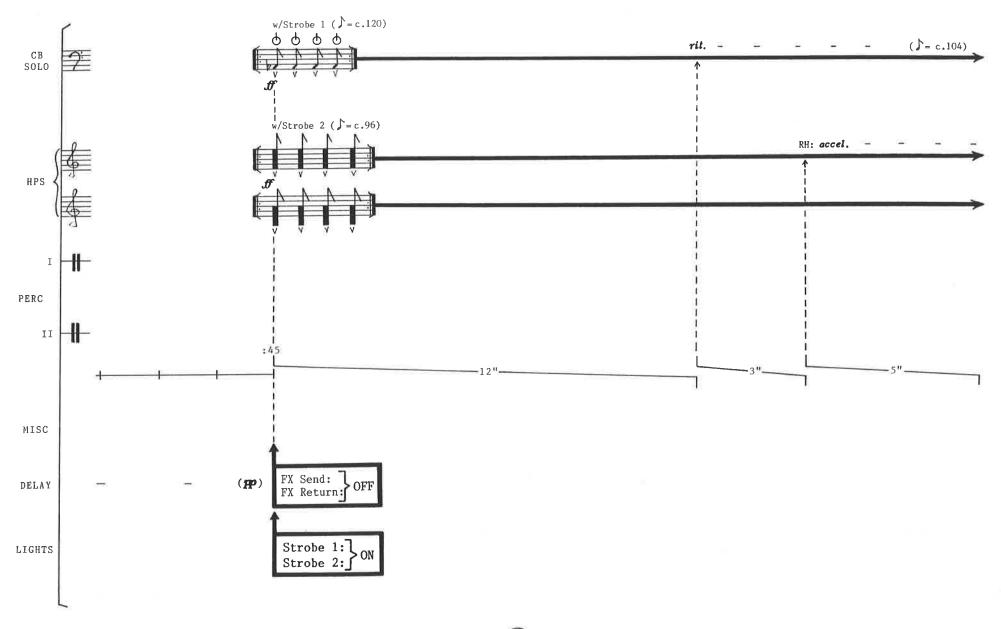




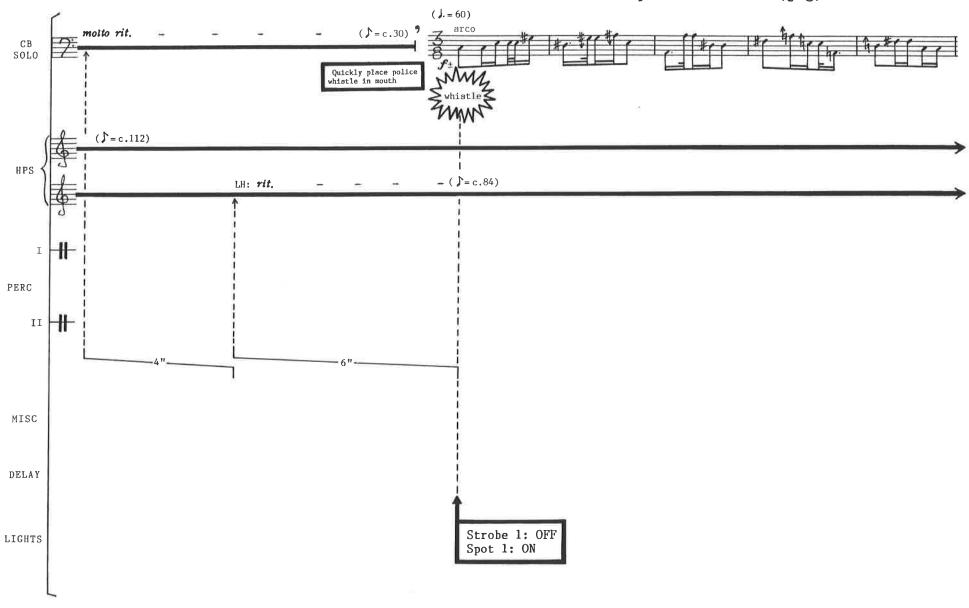


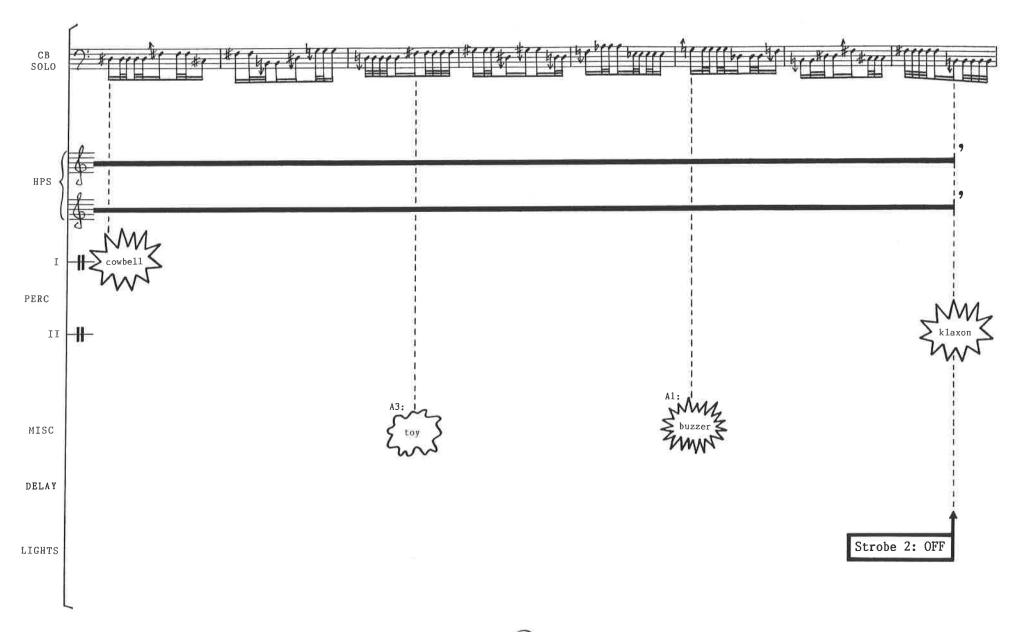


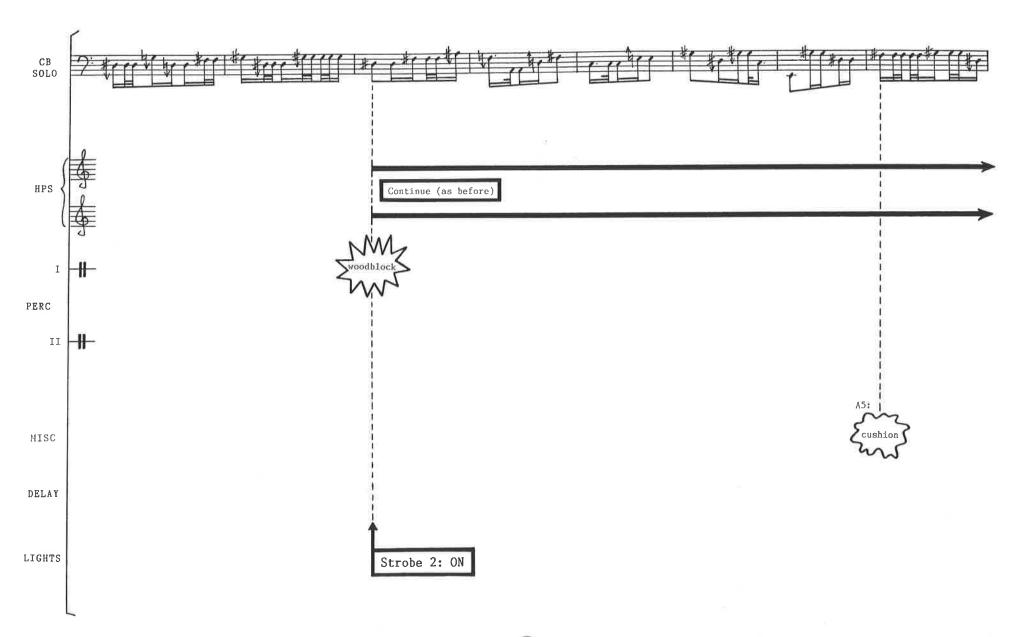


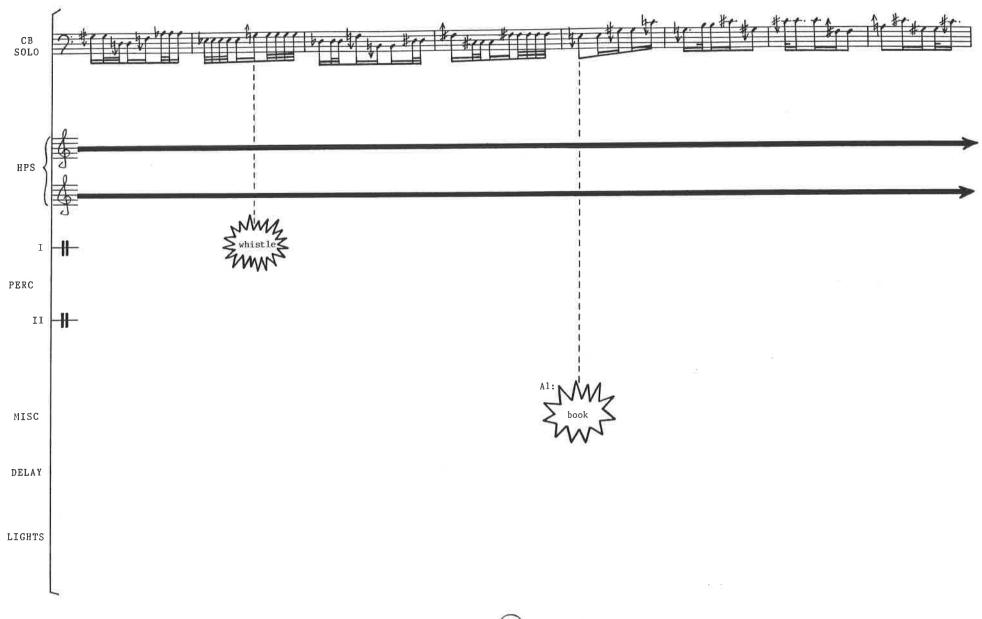


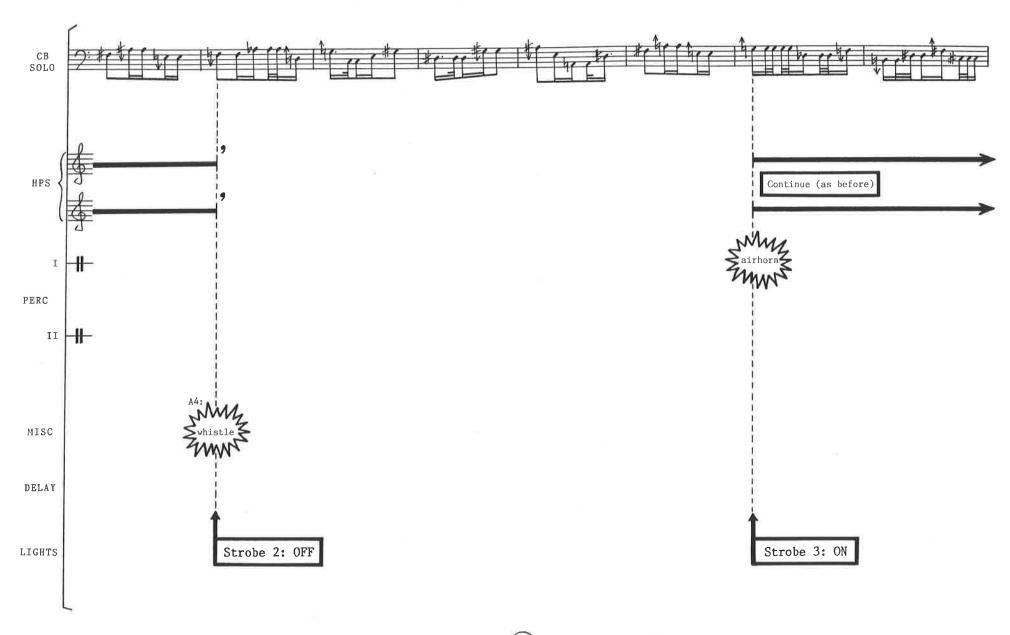
III. Heinrich Schenker passes a stone (jig)

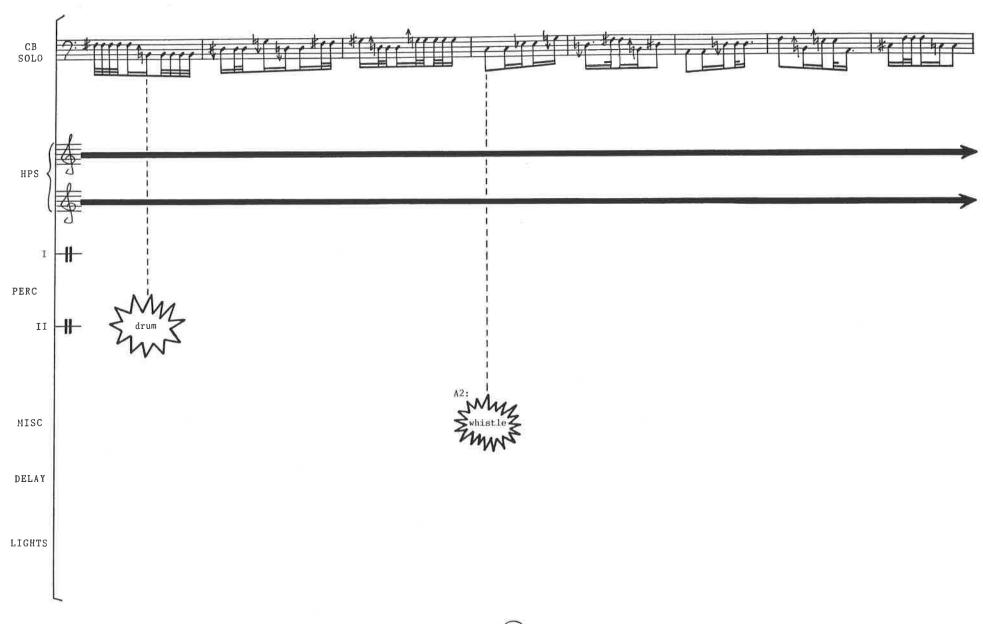


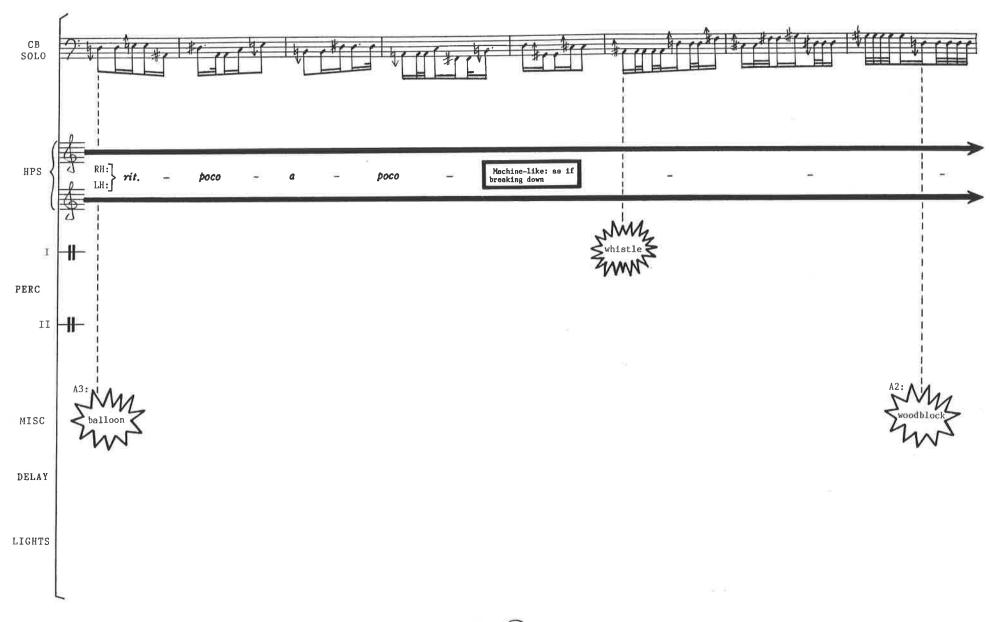












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