negotiating the absolute location of buoyancy - - - for horn - - - 2012 - - - ray evanoff

About the Piece - - -

Influences on the composition of *Negotiating the Absolute Location of Buoyancy*, in no particular: Dal Niente Executive Director Ryan Muncy's statement that this work was being commissioned for a "concert called 'Hard Music Hard Liquor', which gives you an idea of the type of piece we're looking for"; my first confrontation with the horn; a discussion with an eighth grader on the geographic term "absolute location"; Hans Tutschku asking me about my use of pitch, and being dissatisfied with my initial answer; Steven Takasugi asking me about surface clarity and what I take out of my music, and reminding me that grains of sand become pearls. I hope that some of these grains of sand become pearls.

This piece was commissioned by Ensemble Dal Niente and written for Matthew Oliphant. I am exceedingly thankful for the support and encouragement of the ensemble in general, which is an almost-improbable assemblage of special people, and of Matt in particular, who fielded my endless stream of questions with grace, and applied himself to the perhaps-absurd demands of this piece with aplomb. I cannot overstate my gratitude for the experience of working with him.

Performance Notes - - -

The indicated tempo admittedly sits at, and occasionally crosses over, the edge of performability, particularly in terms of the overlapping/interrupting rhythms and the sung doubling of the horn part (see below). While the numerical value of the chosen tempo may itself be seen as more negotiable than the fixity of the provided indication suggests, maintaining the overall sensation of speed and compaction, even in the face of preserving the wealth of dynamic and articulative detail present, is absolutely crucial. This speed itself is a principle component of the music's identity, as is the condition of risk and the potential for failure it creates. Compromising this speed in order to "more accurately" realize other aspects of the work jeopardizes undermining an essential, inherent quality of the composition.

Beyond their purely rhythmic function, the overlaid tuplets illustrate the simultaneous presence of multiple, colliding voices. This material may not always be playable strictly as written, due to the onset of new material before the full rhythmic value of the preceding has been exhausted. Expressing the intrinsic nature of the elements involved, as well as the state of collision and interruption they exist in, is of primary importance in these instances. Rhythm is spaced proportionally to duration.

The voice/noise stave serves several functions. As a single line, it indicates the use of unpitched and indeterminately pitched techniques (specified below). In these instances, register is generally indicated in relation to the central line: on the line indicates middle register, above the line indicates higher register, and below indicates lower register. Register may be understood as relative to the specific technique being used.

As a conventional 5-line staff, the voice/noise stave indicates pitches which are to be sung through the horn without any accompanying sound produced in the instrument, although sung pitches may overlap with independently-indicated sounds performed on the horn. These pitches are transposed to correspond with the horn, so that written pitches sound the same in the voice as in the horn. Sung pitches may be transposed at the octave if necessary, although singing a pitch which is difficult to produce in a given register may be preferable to singing that pitch in a more stable, "safer" register. As above, risk and its attendant extremity are integral to the piece.

Singing brackets indicate that the horn part is to be simultaneously sung in the voice. Pitches may be transposed at the octave if necessary, but should always be sung slightly out of tune, so as to produce a beating effect with the horn part, even though this effect will not always be appreciably produced owing to the speed and brevity of the notes being sung. The purpose of this technique is to produce a shadowy doubling of the horn part that distorts the music's surface. As such, the piece should not be slowed or otherwise made easier in order to more accurately vocalize the horn line: the vocalized line exists in subservience to the details found in the horn itself, and thus may be fractured or partially/inaccurately realized in order to preserve the speed and detail in the horn line (although every effort should be made to realize the vocalized line as fully as possible). When only a individual note is sung, the "SING" indication is given directly adjacent to the note being sung.

Quarter and eighth tones are principally derived from the "out-of-tune" 7th, 11th, and 13th partials. Microtones in the lower registers are also intermittently utilized; these require manual adjustments to achieve,. The following microtonal accidentals are used:

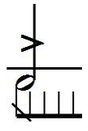
quarter flat | quarter sharp | eighth flat | three-eighths sharp

Accidentals only carry in cases of direct repetition, although cautionary accidentals may be used.

"Open" indicates an open, brassier timbre produced by removing the right hand entirely from intercepting the projected tone.

"Veiled" indicates a muffled tone not quite the level of 3/4 stopped, produced by directly positioning the right hand opposite the body to inhibit all free flow of sound while covering slightly and adjusting the pitch upward accordingly.

indicates a tongue "pizz", a percussive technique generated through forcing a fast air stream into the mouthpiece ending with a strong tongue stop. When a specific pitch is indicated, the lips are to be brought together to form a pitch just prior to the moment of articulation. When on the voice/noise stave, the lips are not to be brought together to form a pitch, producing a sound with little to no definite pitch.



indicates that the above technique is to be repeated as rapidly as possible over the indicated duration. The precise number of attacks is unspecified.

indicates an air tone. When written on the conventional horn staff, this technique indicates a breathy tone with a definite pitch. When written on the voice/noise stave, this technique indicates an unpitched air stream blown through the horn. Louder dynamics for the latter instance are relative to the technique itself.

indicates half-valving. Transition between half- and full-valving may occur.

indicates a "kissing" sound produced by sucking the air inward whilst the mouthpiece is in place.

Duration: ~4'45"

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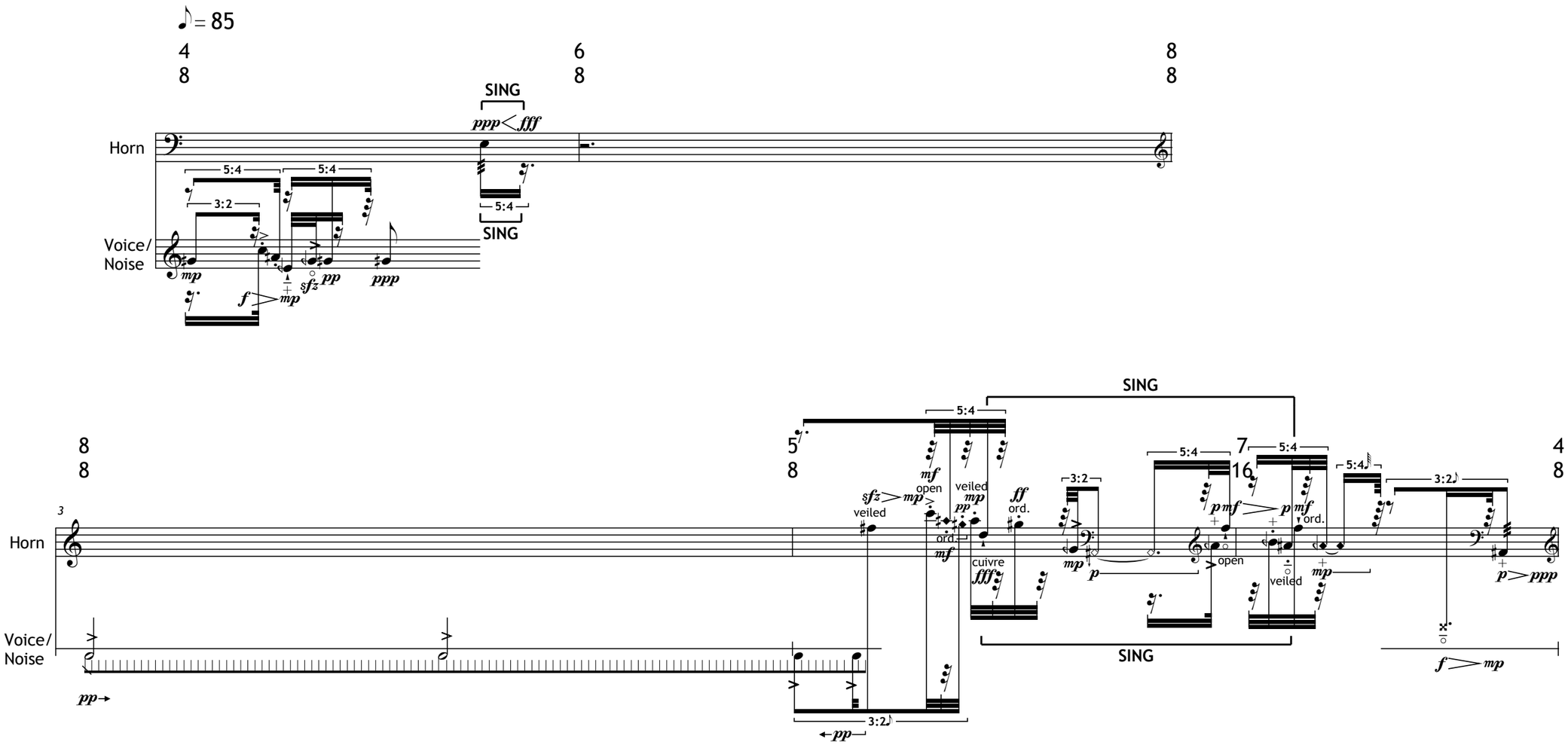
- - -

Ray Evanoff



10

Horn

Voice/
Noise

13/16 9/16 7/16 6/8

SING SING SING SING SING SING

14

Horn

6/8 7/16 3/8 4/8 15/16

SING SING SING

18

Horn

15/16 27/32 15/16 27/32

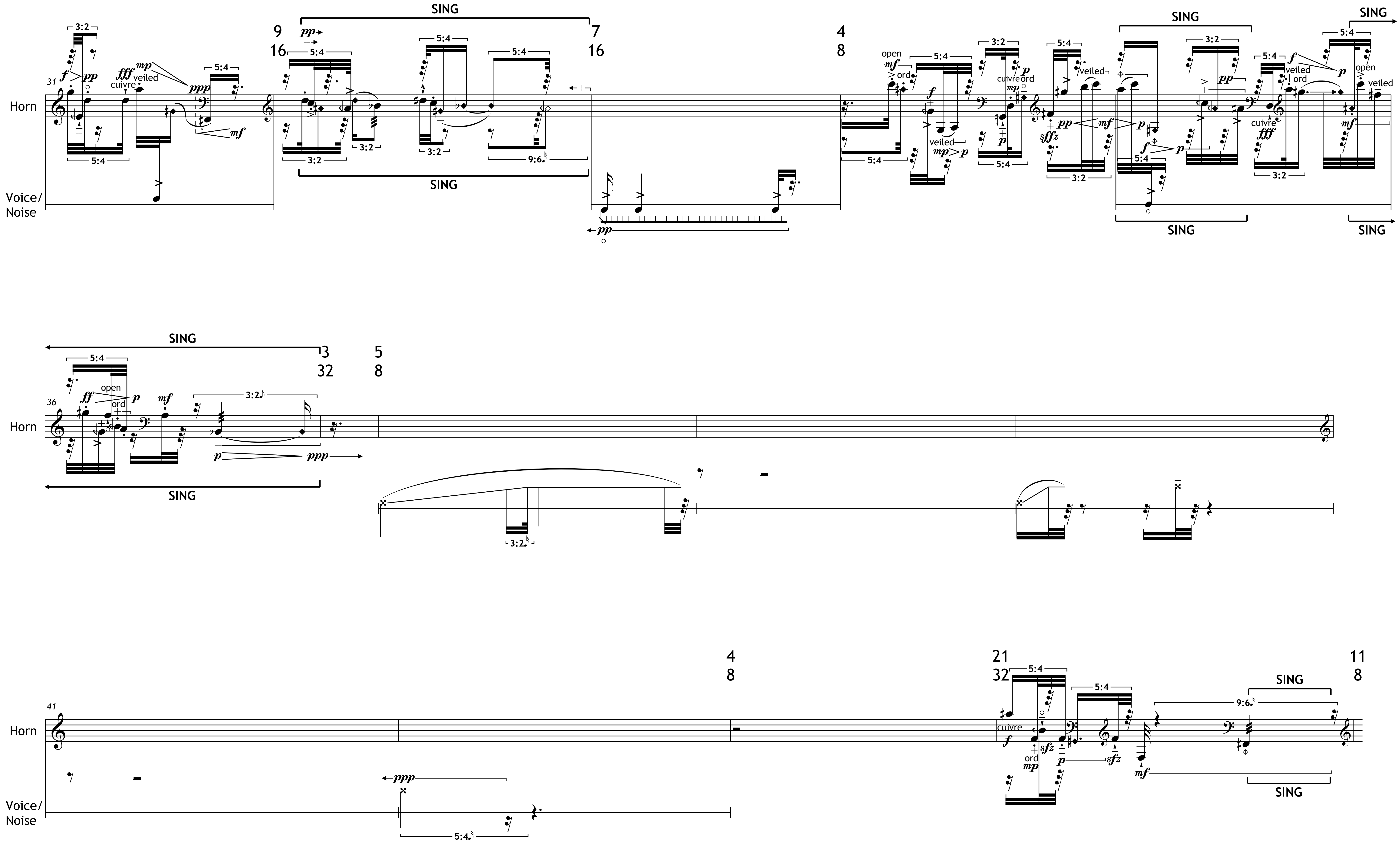
SING SING SING SING

Horn

Horn

Horn

Voice/
Noise


Horn
Voice/
Noise
31
36
41
SING
9
16
7
16
4
8
3
32
5
8
4
8
21
32
11
8
3:2
5:4
9:6
cuivre
veiled
open
ord
f
pp
fff
mp
ppp
mf
p
ff
sffz
sfz
fff

11/8 13/16

45

Horn

Voice/ Noise

mf open ord f p pp 5:4 SING p ff ord cuivre mp 3:2 5:4 mp mp 3:2 5:4 mp pp ff SING p 5:4

SING 11/16 11/32 5/8 3/8

47

Horn

Voice/ Noise

ff cuivre pp 3:2 5:4 5:4 p ppp SING 3:2 mp pp fff cuivre f pp mp 5:4 mp veiled ff 9:6 pppp mp mf 3:2 5:4 "fff" 3:2 SING p pp 5:4 mf p mf ff p veiled cuivre ord 3:2 mp pp SING ff 5:4 pp mp pp SING cuivre mp open ff ord cuivre SING fff 3:2 5:4 open mf ord p mf cuivre 3:2 5:4 3:2 3 8

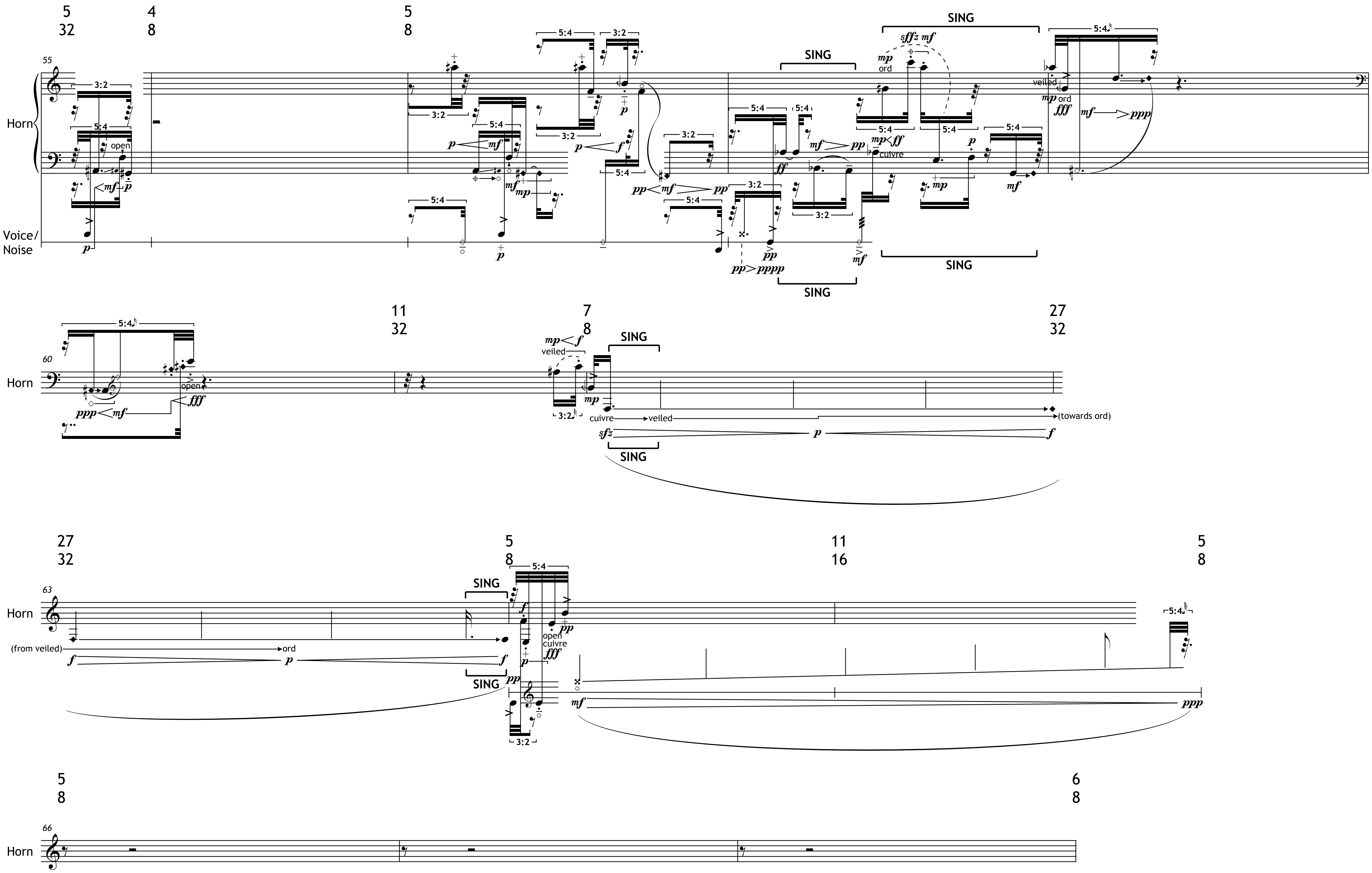
3/8 4/8 6/8 23/32 5/32

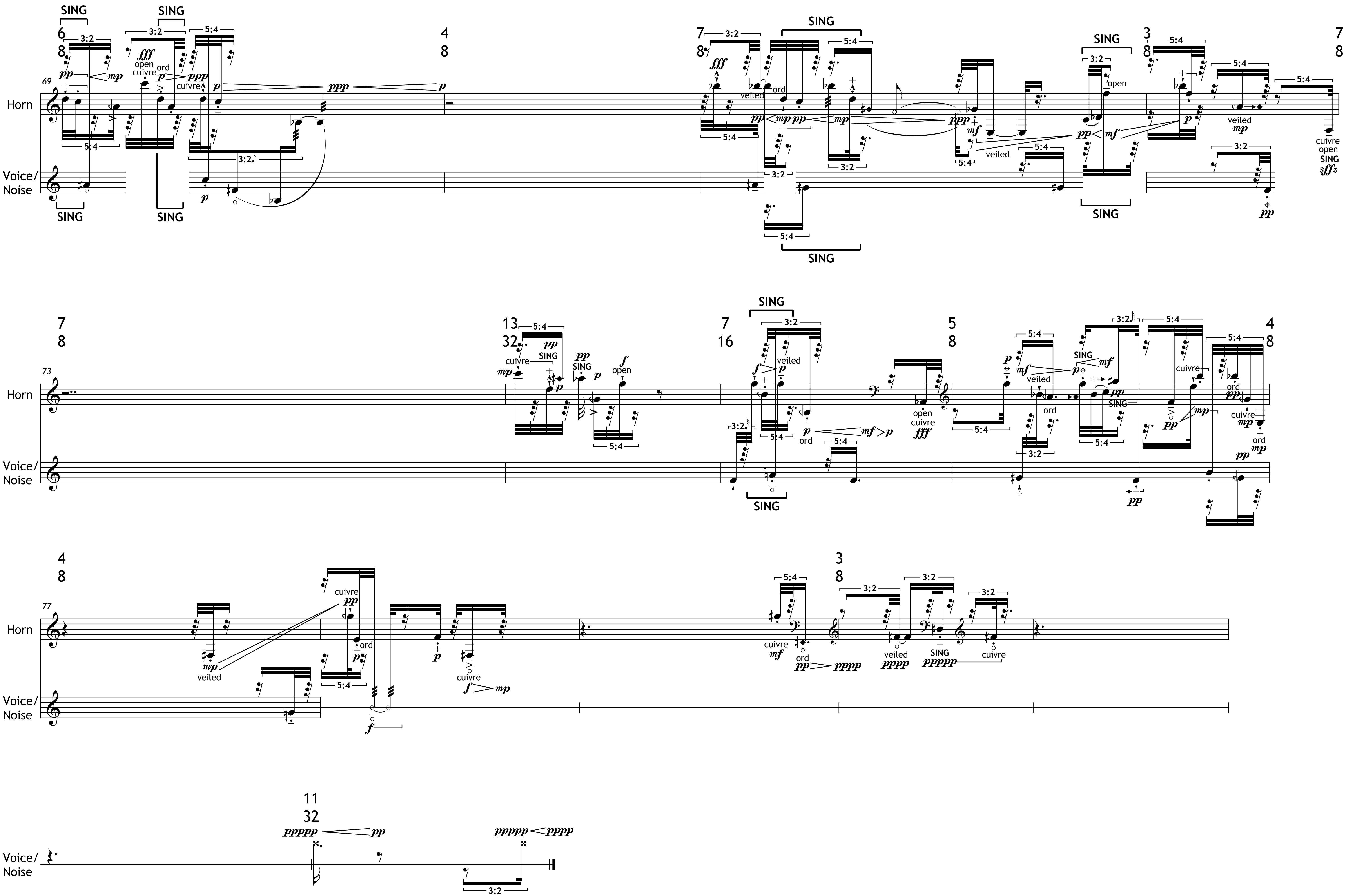
51

Horn

Voice/ Noise

mp pp cuivre sfffz mp 5:4 veiled mp SING ff pp mf pp mp pppp pp 3:2 5:4 3:2 SING sfz SING sfffz open cuivre mf cuivre mf pp 5:4 ppp 3:2 SING p ord ppp 5:4 SING fff cuivre open pp f p ord pp mf pp 5:4 3:2


Horn
Voice/
Noise
SING
open
ord
veiled
cuivre
cuivre
veiled
(towards ord)
(from veiled)
ord
open
cuivre
5:4
3:2
55
60
63
66


Horn
Voice/
Noise
SING
open
cuivre
ord
veiled
3:2
5:4
fff
pp
mp
ppp
p
mf
f
sffz
pppp
ppppp