for the sake of opacity (a catalyst for honesty) - - - for soprano, piccolo, and guitar - - - 2013 - - - ray evanoff

About the Piece - - -

The following influenced my thinking while composing *For the Sake of Opacity (A Catalyst for Honesty)*: issues of my musical surface raised during the 2012 Harvard Composition Summer Course, Riemann mathematics and its associated formulas, Trevor Bača's comment on the possibility of parametricizing the amount of "sweat" expended when rendering musical material, the use of paneling in experimental graphic novels (Gaiman, Moore, etc), close-ups of Gerhard Richter's *Cage* paintings and Robert Storr's accompanying comment that "Only dead paintings are executed. Living ones come into being," Amanda DeBoer Bartlett's statement in conversation that composers often desire vocalists to be instruments (to everyone's detriment), and the idea that creating art can be a catalyst for a radical degree of honesty.

This piece was written for Amanda DeBoer Bartlett, Shanna Gutiérrez, and Jesse Langen at Jesse's request. I am deeply grateful for their effort, investment, willingness, and friendship. An additional debt is owed to the faculty and attendees of the 2012 Harvard Composition Summer Course: our discussions together have made a lasting impression on me.

Performance Notes - - -

General Considerations - - -

The indicated tempo admittedly sits at, and occasionally crosses over, the edge of performability, particularly in terms of the overlapping/interrupting rhythms. 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.

Parenthetical intrusions (usually articulations, but also other playing techniques such as vibrato, level of breathiness, and tongue/lip pizz) represent perturbations of and impingements upon the sustaining sounds over which they're layered. Their interpretation is to a certain extent subjective, but there are several important considerations. These perturbations should not be simply interjections of the parenthetical material: their intrusion should be integrated into the ongoing execution of the sound they're layered onto. This intrusion should reflect the innate quality of the parenthetical material, be it the pointedness of a *staccatissimo* or the violence of a lip pizzicato. The players are encouraged to develop personal strategies to reflecting the presence of these impingements, but their effects on the sustained materials should be perceivable and palpable, and should reflect their fundamental intrusiveness.

From after measure 47 on page 9 to the reintroduction of time signatures on page 13, the players are to perform uncoordinated and independently. Players should rest upon completing their part in this section if the others are yet to arrive at their end. The trio should progress into and out of this uncoordinated section without audibly marking their transition; they should enter and exit smoothly and without interruption.

Dynamics range from *pppp* (on the threshold of inaudibility) to *fff* (as loud as possible given the technique in question).

Quarter tone indications are used at the exclusion of three-quarter tone indications; eighth tones are indicated by an arrow extending upwards or downwards from a natural or a sharp.

Accidentals only carry in cases of direct and immediate repetition, although cautionary accidentals are often used.

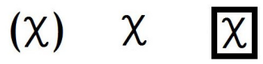
indicates an excessive amount of vibrato.

indicates a transition from no vibrato to an excessive amount of vibrato.

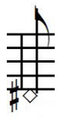
Duration: ~5'

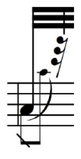
Soprano - - -

Consonants layered over sung passages indicate phonemes which should be voiced over top of the sung vowels, coloring the sound to varying degrees. The relative strength with which the consonant should be voiced is represented as follows, ranging from least to most:



Consonants which are not layered onto sustaining sounds should be voiced normally.

 indicates a breathy tone. Transitions between normal and breathy tone are used.



In cases where a series of grace notes extend off of a "main" notehead, the figure is to commence at indicated rhythmic point and to be executed as rapidly as possible; there should be no audible difference between the "main" notehead and the subsequent grace notes. The total duration of such figures will almost invariably bleed into the subsequent rests, sometimes to the point that no such break between the grace note figures and what follows will actually occur. While the speed of these figures may vary internally or from one to another depending on the nature and variety of the accompanying indications, they should nevertheless always be executed extremely rapidly.

Piccolo - - -

Quarter and eighth tones are intended to be achieved via fingerings rather than adjustments in embouchure. Microtonal and multiphonic fingerings were sourced from Carin Levine's *The Techniques of Flute Playing*.

In the multiphonic used in measures 60-68, the player is to isolate the various partials as indicated. The indicated partials themselves represent the endpoints of transitions into and out of their emphasis; these transitions should take place as smoothly as possible over the indicated duration. Dynamic may need to be somewhat varied around the indicated *mezzopiano* to access certain partials; this should be minimized as much as possible, but is otherwise allowable.

Additionally, the player is to depress the and release the A trill key as indicated. The duration of these transitions is indicated spatially. The adjustments in pitch which result from this depression are not reflected in the pitch notation.

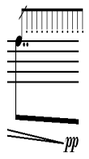
International Phonetic Alphabet indications should be voiced through the instrument, with the instrument rotated inward as in tongue ram position. Individual phonemes are as follows:

χ - ach (German ach-laut)

f - fare

ʀ - (uvular trill)

ʃ - sock



indicates a series of individually-articulated repetitions on the given pitch to be executed as rapidly as possible; the exact number of articulations is not specified. These articulations are to be executed with the tongue.

indicates a pitch with a moderate degree of breath content.

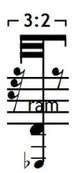
indicates pitched air when on the staff and unpitched air when placed away from the staff.

Transitions between various states of breathiness may occur.

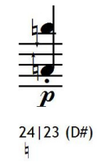
indicates a flutter with the throat.

indicates a flutter with the tongue.

indicates a lip or tongue "pizz"; the choice is left to the performer based on preference and context.



indicates a tongue ram, with the normal-sized notehead indicating the fingered pitch and the reduced-size notehead indicating the sounding result.



This multiphonic may be performed with or without the D# key; the performer may use either fingering as their preference dictates.

Guitar - - -

Natural harmonics are notated at the sounding pitch. The string and suggested fret are given; partial number is given in parenthesis.

Open strings and harmonics ending in destinationless ties should be allowed to resonate for as long as possible. All other notes should be muted at the end of their specified durations.

Tremolos should be executed extremely rapidly, so as to give the impression of a single, continuous sound, comparable to a snare drum roll.

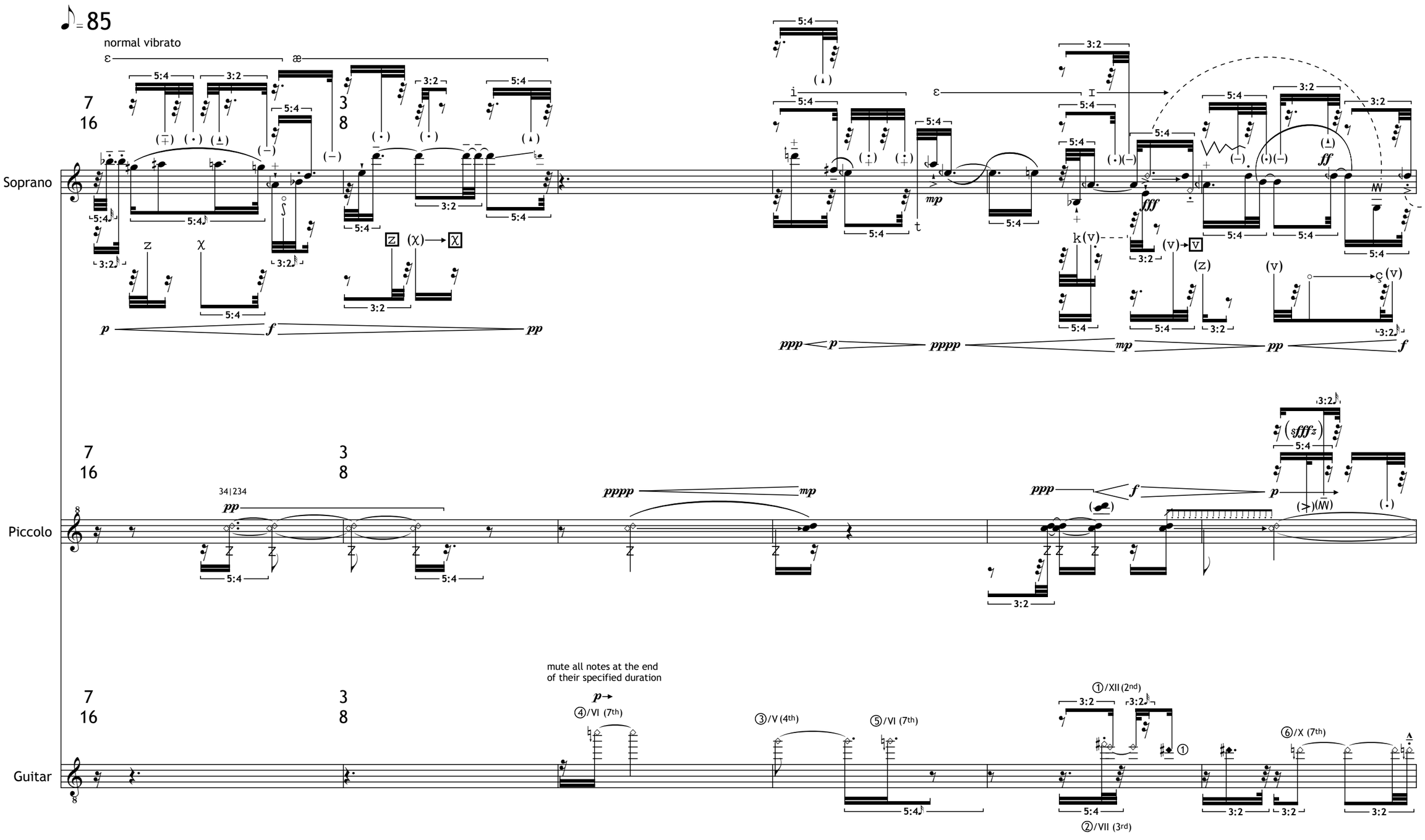
indicates a note played with half-harmonic pressure at a non-nodal point, resulting in a dull or deadened sound. Such notes may not always be able to sound for the entirety of their indicated duration.

indicates a greater-than-normal physical attack, half-way between a conventional attack and a snap pizzicato.

For the Sake of Opacity (A Catalyst for Honesty)

- - -

Ray Evanoff



© Ray Evanoff/ASCAP 2013

Sop.

Picc.

Gui.

Sop.

Picc.

Gui.

Sop.

Picc.

Gui.

senza vibrato

voice consonant while simultaneously playing the indicated pitch

3
16

Sop.

26

3
16

Picc.

26

3
16

Gui.

26

Sop.

normal vibrato

Picc.

Gui.

Sop.

Picc.

Gui.

34| D#

24|23 (D#)

④/V (4th)
⑥/VI (7th)

senza vibrato

heavy vibrato

Sop.

Picc.

Gui.

SING

(mute)

tremolo speed

de/crescendo as rapidly as possible; exact number is unspecified

finger indicated pitch and transition from harmonic pressure to normal pressure; hold fret and let resonate for indicated duration beyond tremolo

players should perform independently
and uncoordinated until page 13

Sop.

Picc.

Gui.

Sop.

normal vibrato

Picc.

Gui.

Sop.

Picc.

Gui.

Sop.

Picc.

rest until others finish

Gui.

Sop.

Picc.

Gui.

Sop.

Picc.

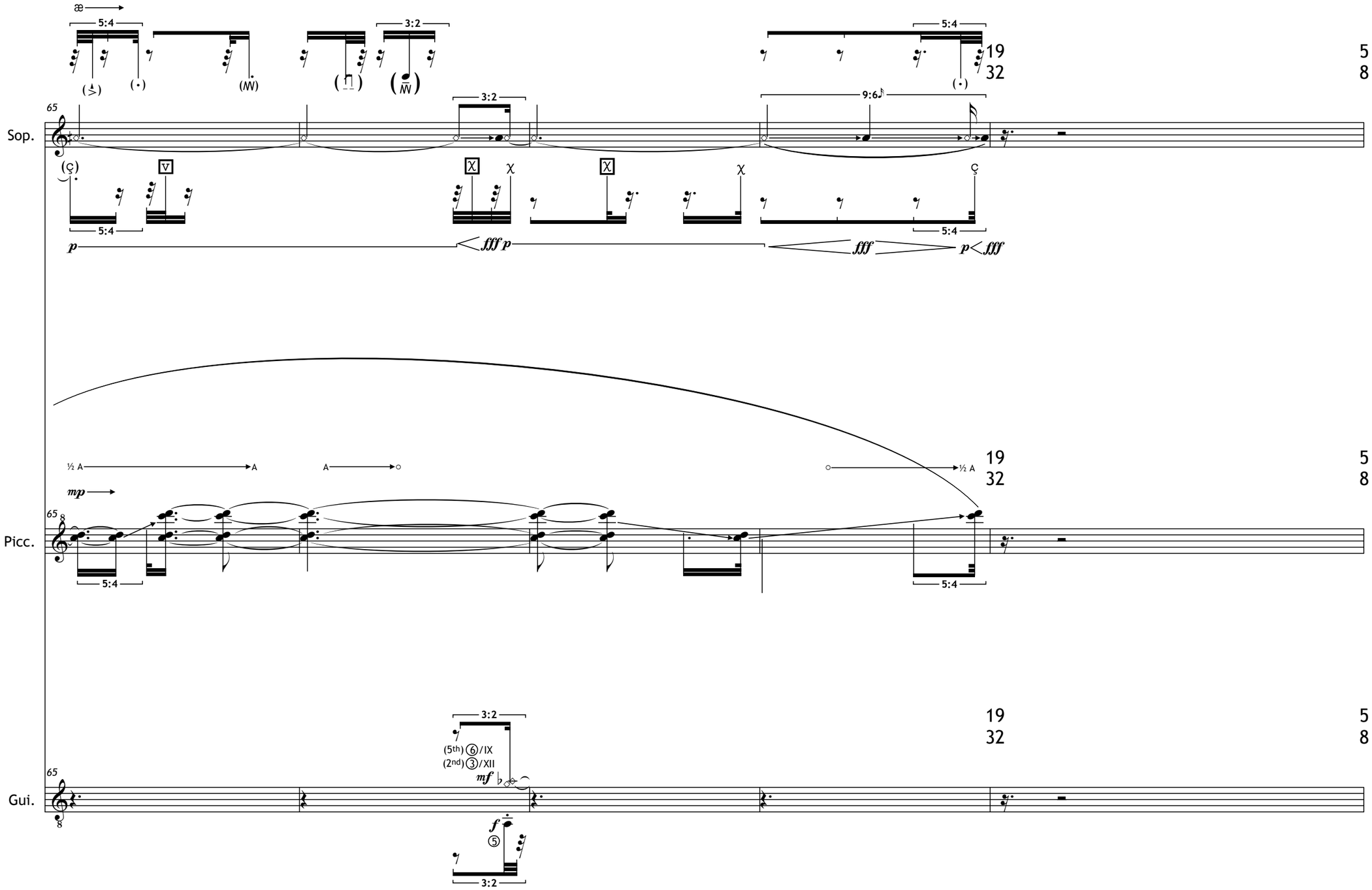
Gui.

Sop.

Picc.

Gui.

dynamic level may need to be varied to allow for access to and emphasis of constituent multiphonic notes


Sop.
Picc.
Gui.
5:4
3:2
9:6
19
32
5
8
(5th) ⑥/IX
(2nd) ③/XII

Sop.

Picc.

Gui.

Sop.

Picc.

Gui.