THE VERNACULAR WRIT

Christopher Walker

INSTRUMENTATION

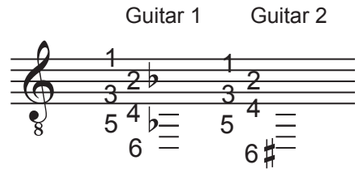
2 Classical Guitars, mic'd + amplified in house
Harpsichord, mic'd, processed through Pure Data + amplified in house
Double Bass, mic'd, processed through Pure Data + amplified in house
Electronics represented in Pure Data + amplified in house

PERFORMANCE NOTES

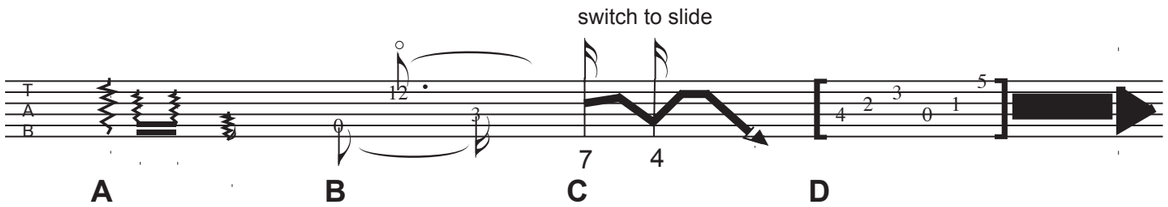
Classical Guitars 1 & 2 serve as the "pure" voicings in this work.

Each guitar is prepared by **scordatura** - a special tuning that in this work, will allow the instruments to create a crunchy texture when played openly together.

The two tunings are as follows:



The guitar parts are read in standard six-line tablature staves, but there are a number of non-standard notation used throughout. They are as follows, arranged in order of appearance:



A - This notation indicates a full, thumb stroke across open strings. The notehead and stem length indicate which strings to openly strum.

B - The standard notation; numbered noteheads indicate fretboard position on a particular string, slurs indicate the amount of time a note is left to resonate, harmonics are indicated by °.

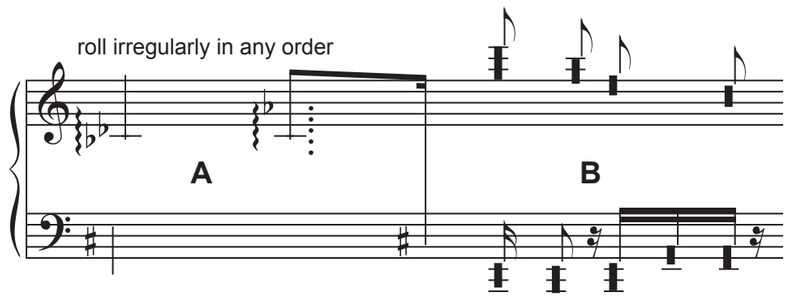
C - This notation calls for the use of a slide appropriate to the instrument, adorned on the ring finger; a full thumb stroke across all open strings is made at the fretted position indicated by the number below, then the arrowed line indicates the motion of the slide in relative 'up' and 'down' motions across the fretboard.

D - This notation denotes free aleatoric fingerings of the desired notes, for a duration as long as is indicated by the broad arrow in time.

The **Harpsichord** serves as the "distorted" voicing in this work.

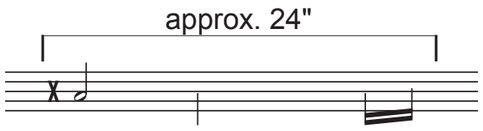
The part reads as any other keyboard instrument, but there are two clarifications to be made in notation.

Again, as they appear in the score:



A - Whenever the standard rolled arpeggiation is used, it is to be performed irregularly, in any up or down order.

B - Whenever two noteheads with a bar between them are notated, this indicates a five-finger cluster note; the position of the notes show approximate hand placement on the keyboard.

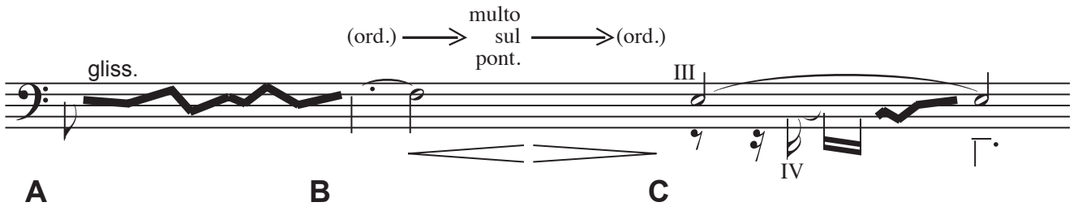


In general, whenever an “X” stands in place of a time signature, the piece is in free time, per the graphic notation sense of the term. The duration of these periods of free time are indicated in seconds above the staff. During these periods, a written note’s duration lasts at the performer’s own discretion; the white space in between indicates rests, also with the performer’s discretion. All written material must happen within the time stated above the staff.

These periods happen at the beginning of the work and during the Harpsichord’s “free cadenza”.

The **Double Bass**, along with the **Electronics**, represent the “evolving voices” of this work.

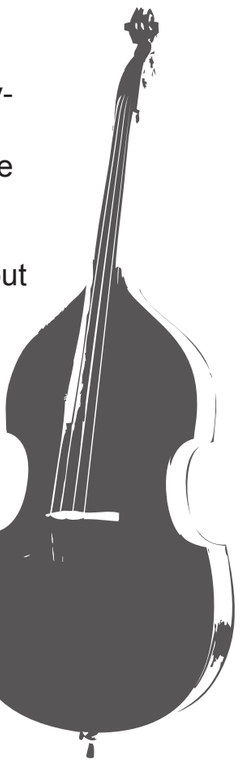
The Bass part is in standard notation, with some modifiers, listed in order of appearance:

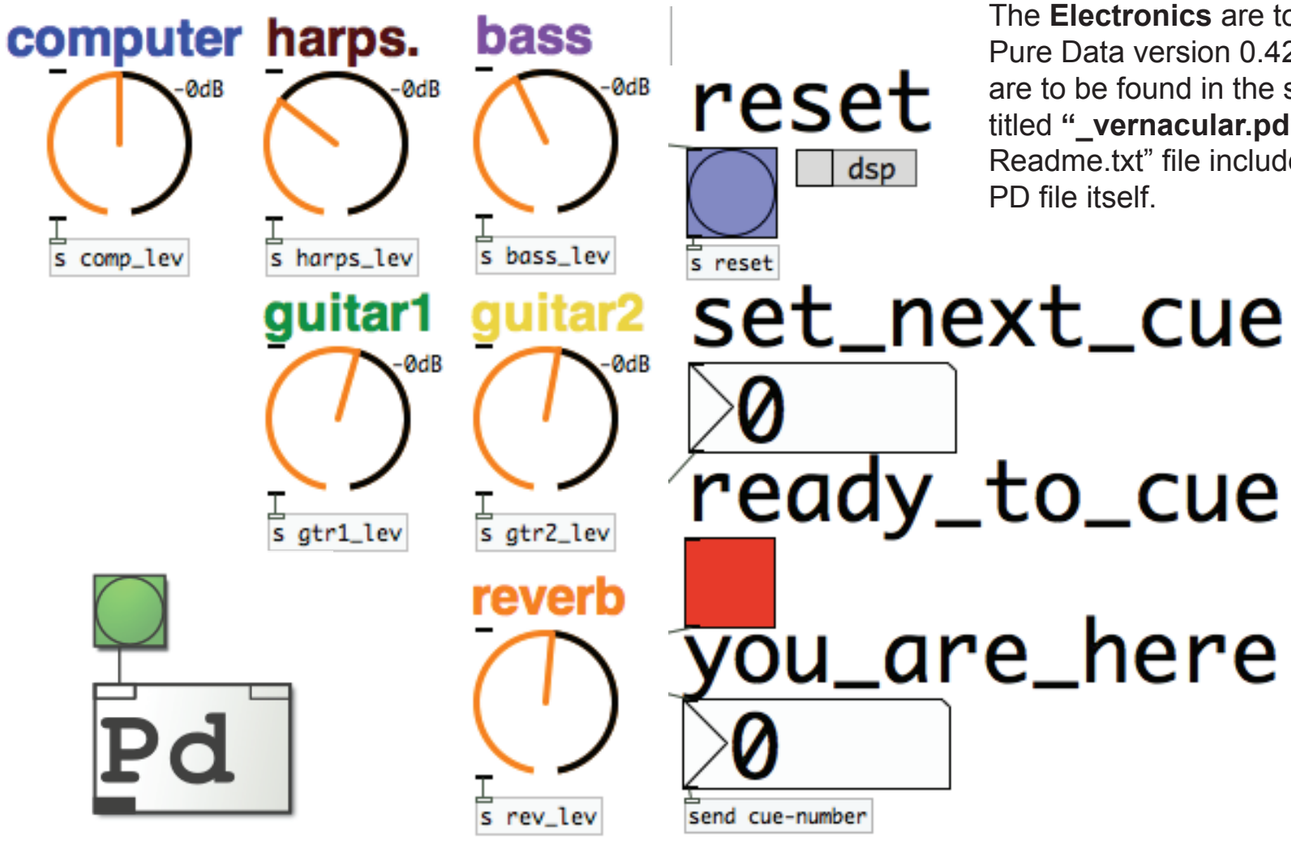


A - Glissandi are notated by the thick black lines, indicating total direction along the fingerboard.

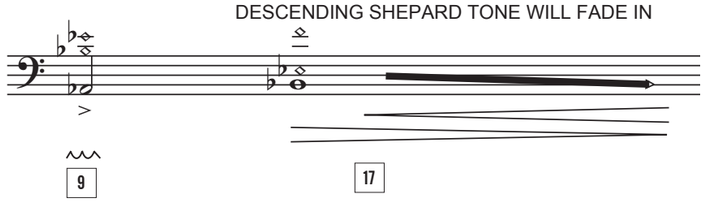
B - This notation indicates a linear progressionfrom ordinary playing to multo sul ponticello playing, and back again. At “msp”, it is desired for the bow to be nearly on top of the bridge. This gesture will be often accompanied by dynamics motion.

C - This notation shows an extension of the glissandi gestures, but in the inclusion of a double stop, with individual strings notated.





The **Electronics** are to perfomed with **Pd-extended,** compiled against Pure Data version 0.42.5**.** All necessary files, libraries and extensions are to be found in the same folder as this PDF score. The main file is titled **“_vernacular.pd”**. Additionally, there is a separate “_vernacular Readme.txt” file included in the folder that has the full rundown on the PD file itself.



The Electronics consist of a multi-layered drone, a sound file of a descending Shepar-Risset tone, and the plug-ins to make the inputs from the Harpsichord, Double Bass and Drone distorted and reverberant.

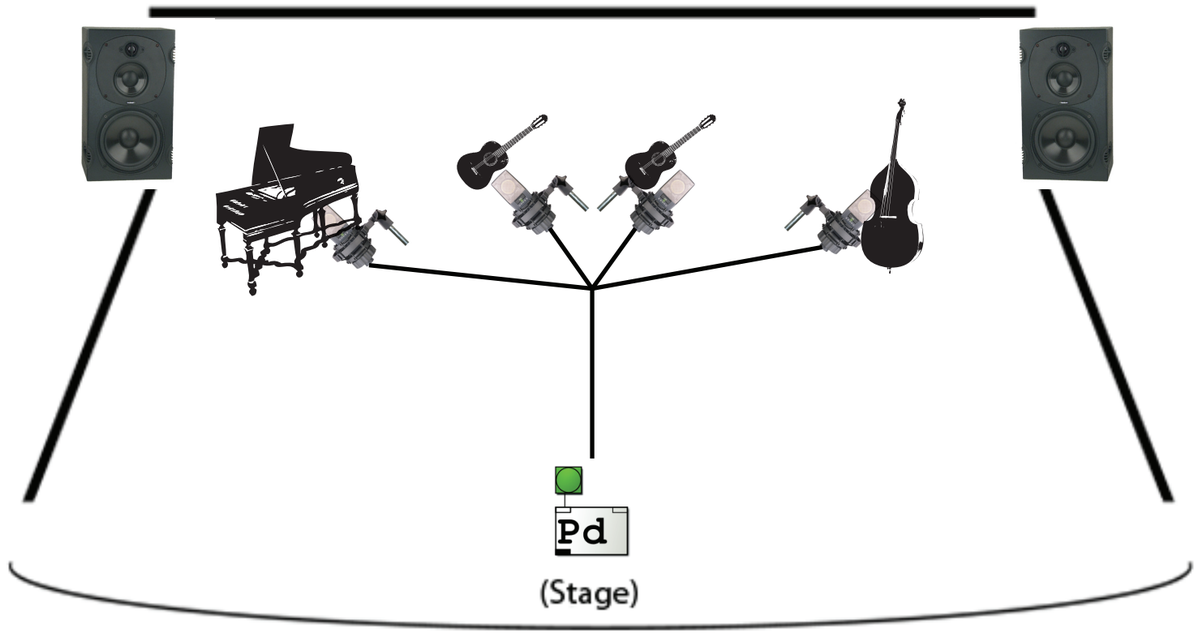
The user at the computer simply has to have the “ready_to_cue” toggle on, then follow along in the score, clicking the space-bar whenever the next numbered cue (encapsulated int he score by squares) comes along in the performance. The “you_are_here” box should display the same cue as is present in the score.

PERFORMANCE NOTES (CONT.)

The performance space should be set up in the manner displayed to the right.

The computer running Pd-extended must have at least stereo outputs available. Four-channel output is preferred.

Again, please refer to the “_vernacular ReadMe.txt” file for a full explanation on set-up procedures.



PROGRAM NOTE

This piece was created from the thoughts of “What if?”

What if Western notation as we know it today was something forced upon instrumentation?

What if instruments had their own unique “vernacular”; a dialect distinctly separate from both each other and their written history?

What if the idiomatic usage of instruments was nowhere near its true vernacular? The Harpsichord a racuous judge, a Double Bass the subtle commentator.

What if a group of like races, say stringed-instruments for instance, had a societal plight against them, an issue to rally under, a strife that demands justice and retribution?

What if a legal writ was established in response?

THE VERNACULAR WRIT

Christopher Walker

1. Casus belli

approx. 40"

Scordatura 1

Guitar 1

Scordatura 2

Guitar 2

Harpsichord

Double Bass

Electronics

0

Steadfast ♪ = 80

12

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

pp (full strums remain *f*, each subsequent single note is under a **cresc.**)

p (full strums remain *f*, each subsequent single note is under a **cresc.**)

Hpschd.

D.B.

Elec.

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Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Hpschd.

D.B.

Elec.

22

pppp

cresc.

(ord.) multo sul pont. (ord.)

gliss.

mf

(ord.) multo sul pont. (ord.)

32

mf

sfz

sfz

(ord.) multo sul pont. (ord.)

mf

III

IV

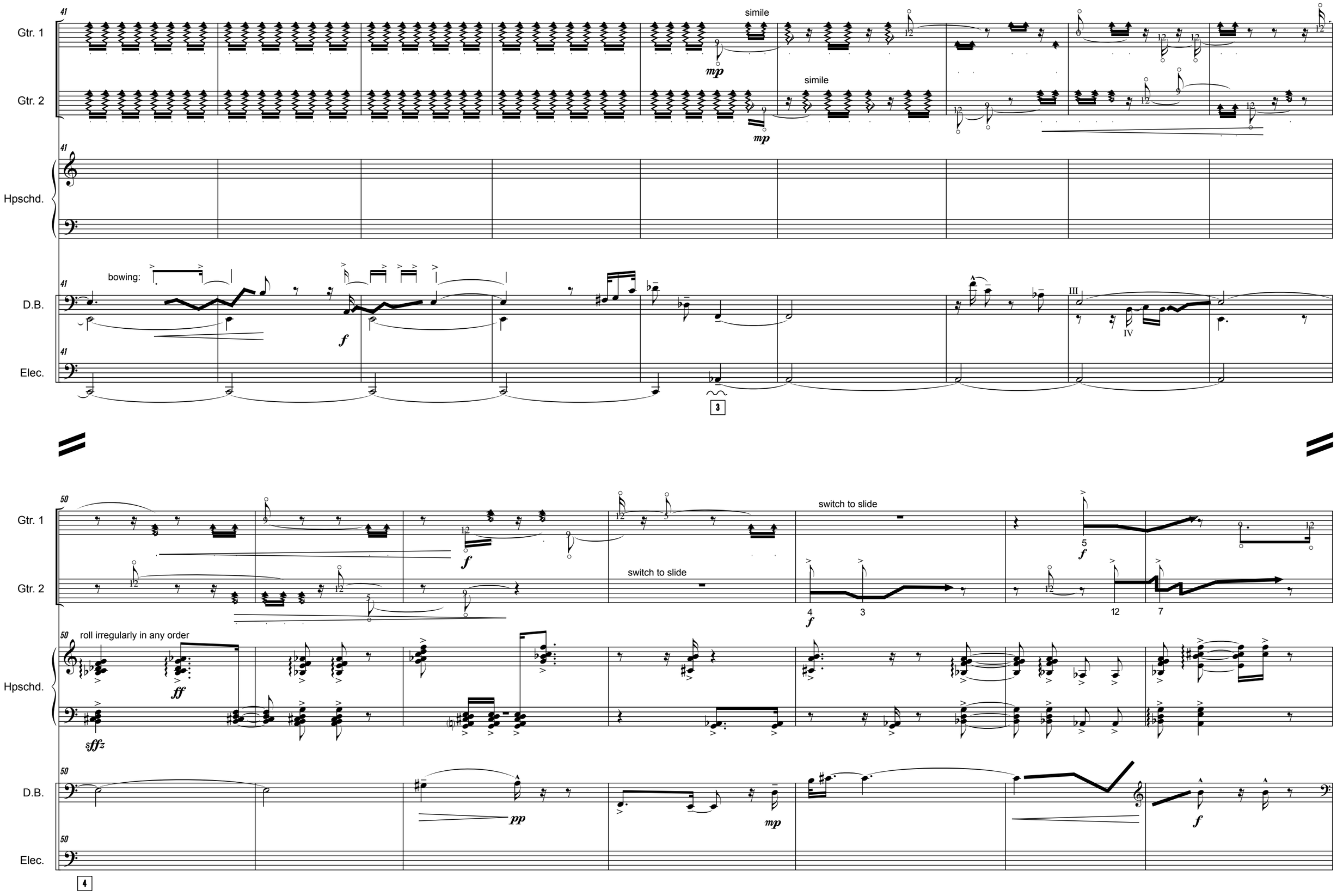
f

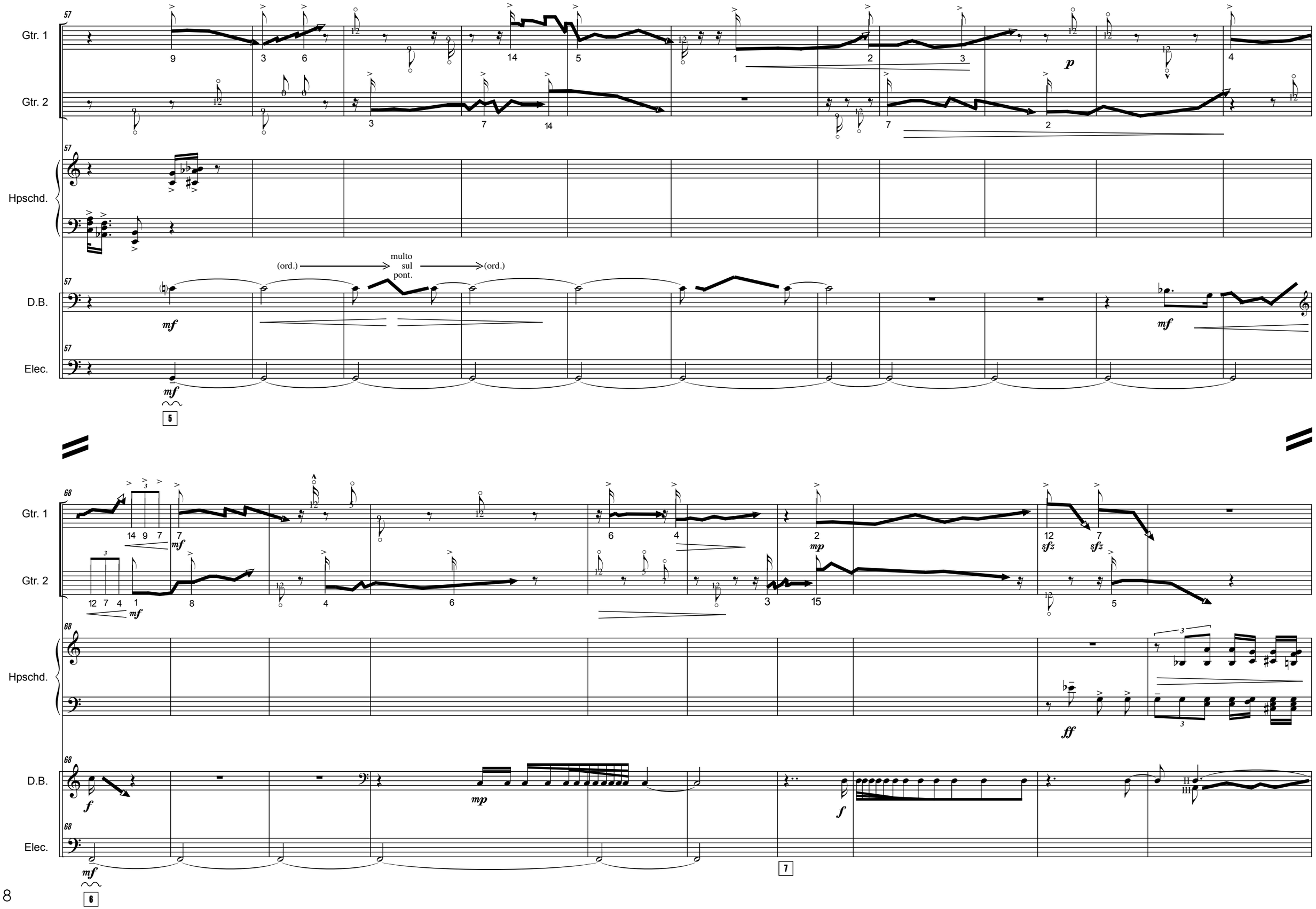
ppp

mf

1

2


Gtr. 1
Gtr. 2
Hpschd.
D.B.
Elec.
simile
bowing:
switch to slide
roll irregularly in any order


Gtr. 1
Gtr. 2
Hpschd.
D.B.
Elec.
(ord.)
multo sul pont.
(ord.)
mf
p
mp
sfz
ff
f
5
6
7

3. leges humanae nascuntur, vivunt, moriuntur

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Hpschd.

D.B.

Elec.

78

sffz

X

remove slide

sfz

(ord.) multo sul pont. (ord.)

f

sfz

8

9

4. All hail he, who without fail, shall render a verdict true

86

approx. 24"

free cadenza

mp *f* *mp* *mf* *fp* *f* *p* *mf* subita *pp* *mp* *mf* *mp* *p* *sfz* *pp* *sfz* *f*

10 11 12

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Hpschd.

D.B.

Elec.

103

pp

cresc.

approx. 32"

(mf)

approx. 6"

13

14

114

(f)

sfffz

mp

sfz

mf

p

15

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Hpschd.

D.B.

Elec.

125

approx. 24"

mp

cresc. into a stupor

approx. 8"

DESCENDING SHEPARD TONE WILL FADE IN

mf

16

17

132

♪ = 120

approx. 24"

f

ff

mp

18

19

140

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

140

Hpschd.

mf

140

D.B.

140

Elec.

150

ritard

♪ = 80

150

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

150

Hpschd.

150

D.B.

150

Elec.

20

21

5. Amicus curiae

repeat in aleatory rhythm, though tenuto throughout

159

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

repeat in aleatory rhythm, though tenuto throughout

Hpschd.

D.B.

Elec.

169

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Hpschd.

D.B.

Elec.

6. Straw poll

182

Gtr. 1

as even as possible

mf

Gtr. 2

as even as possible

mf

ff

ff

Hpschd.

mp

D.B.

ppp

Elec.

195

Gtr. 1

mf

pp

Gtr. 2

mf

pp

Hpschd.

cresc.

f

D.B.

cresc.

mf

still cresc.

f

Elec.

207

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Hpschd.

D.B.

Elec.

(ord.) multo sul pont. (ord.)

mf

mp

23

216

ppp

ppp

f

decresc.

cresc.

f

mf

24

7. The vernacular writ

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Hpschd.

D.B.

Elec.

229

242

simile

sfffz

25

26

27

28