Cort Lippe

Solo Tuba Music

(1987)

for

tuba alone

Written for tubist Mel Culbertson.
Dedicated to the tubist and composer David Durant.

bp1122

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Program Notes

Solo Tuba Music was written for tubist Mel Culbertson, who premiered the work in Paris in 1987, and is dedicated to the tubist and composer David Durant.

The piece employs conventional playing, secondary and percussive sounds, and vocal sounds in a hierarchical manner. A fascinating and challenging solo instrument, the tuba is used to explore musical depth of field, intelligibility of text, and to exploit a large musical palette demanding much of the soloist.

The piece was recorded by Mel Culbertson on a Neuma Records compact disc (Neuma CD 450-71).

The text used in this work is a paragraph extracted from the novel *Gravity's Rainbow* by Thomas Pynchon:

The Meggazone is like being belted in the head with a Swiss alp. Menthol icicles immediately begin to grow from the roof of Slothrop's mouth. Polar bears seek toenail-holds up the freezing frosty-grape alveolar clusters in his lungs. It hurts his teeth too much to breathe, even through his nose, even, necktie loosened, with his nose down inside the neck of his olive-drab T-shirt. Benzoin vapors seep into his brain. His head floats in a halo of ice.

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PERFORMANCE NOTES

I Percussive (lower staff)

pop mouthpiece with palm of hand

click tongue

click valve(s)

tap bell of instrument

tap, scrape, or stamp foot (or feet)**

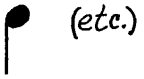
II Playing and Tonguing (middle staff)

slap tongue on pedal tone

throat growl on pedal tone

flutter-tongue (frullato)

harmonic series glissando above a fundamental (usually a pedal tone) following contour line

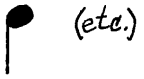


conventional playing

III Voice (upper staff)

air current noise (with air direction split by the mouthpiece half into the instrument and half outside the mouthpiece for maximum volume)

fricative or whispered word - very percussive (words or fricatives in double quotes above staff - see above for blowing directions)



sung with or without vowels or words - usually while playing (vowels or words placed in double quotes above the staff)

spoken word(s) - usually while playing (box connected to lowest line of upper staff)

vowels silently formed in mouth cavity while playing without producing any sound with vocal cords (box placed below the lowest line of the upper staff)

continous glottal growl into the instrument with a constant rapid change of oral cavity filtering

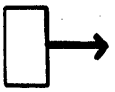
IV Miscellaneous

lap, fap — loud as possible, fast as possible

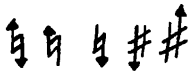
½V___ — depress valve(s) half way down to produce altered internal resonance (arrow means to gradually depress valve)

½V——→

↑ ↓ — highest, lowest notes possible (middle and upper staves)

 — repeat a cell of notes until the end of arrow playing notes in any order, usually as fast as possible (all staves)

— accel. , rit.

 — approximately one quarter-tone higher and/or lower depending on arrow direction

— harsh release of note

— as **sfz** as possible

**N.B. The foot (or feet) indications are best realized using a small amount of sand placed directly on the floor or on a flat sheet of rigid metal under the player's feet. Stamping should produce a very loud percussive sound. Scraping should produce a sound which blends dynamically with the musical context. Care should be taken that the scraping does not dominate any given texture. Room acoustics, amount and type of sand, and floor surface all play an important role in determining the dynamics of the foot indications.

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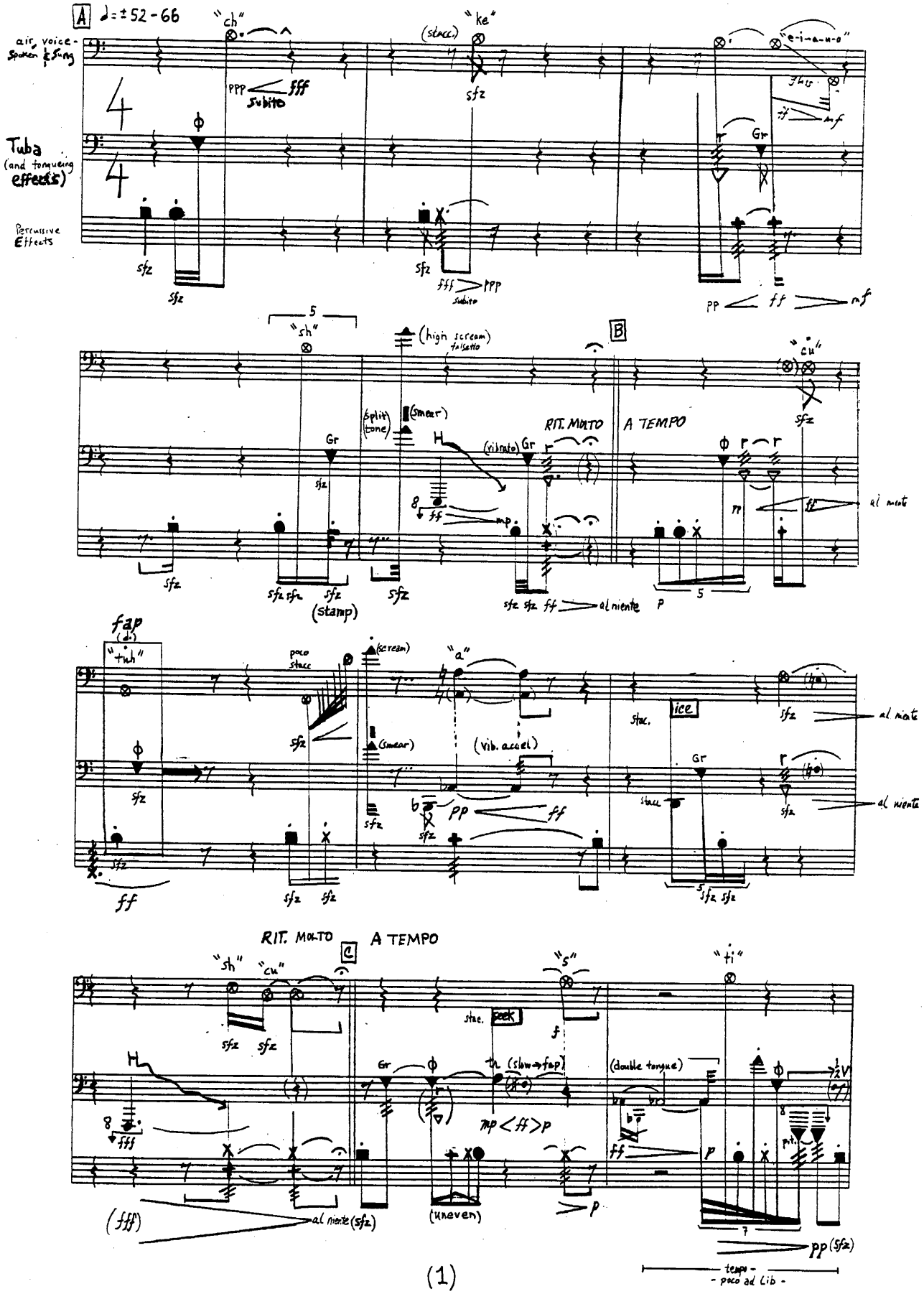

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Gravity's Rainbow text Copyright © by Thomas Pynchon 1973.
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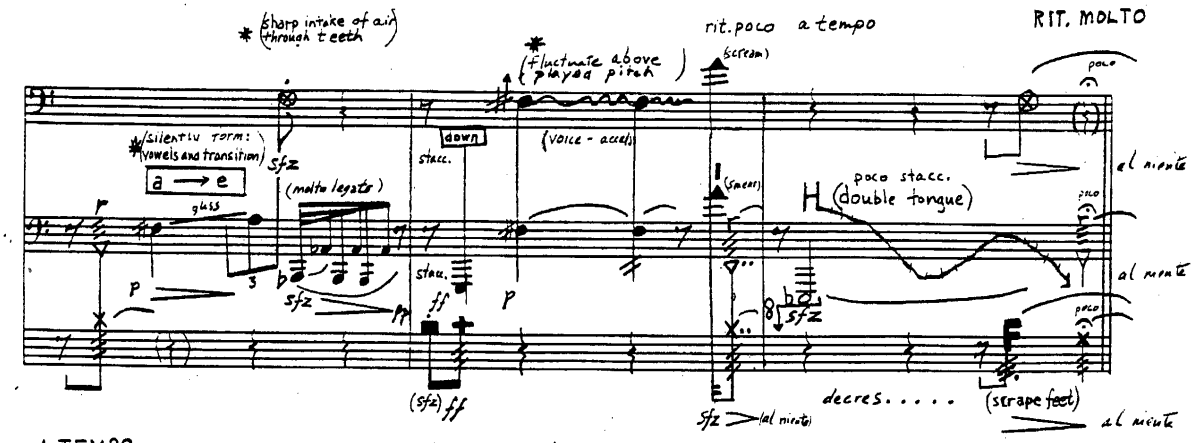
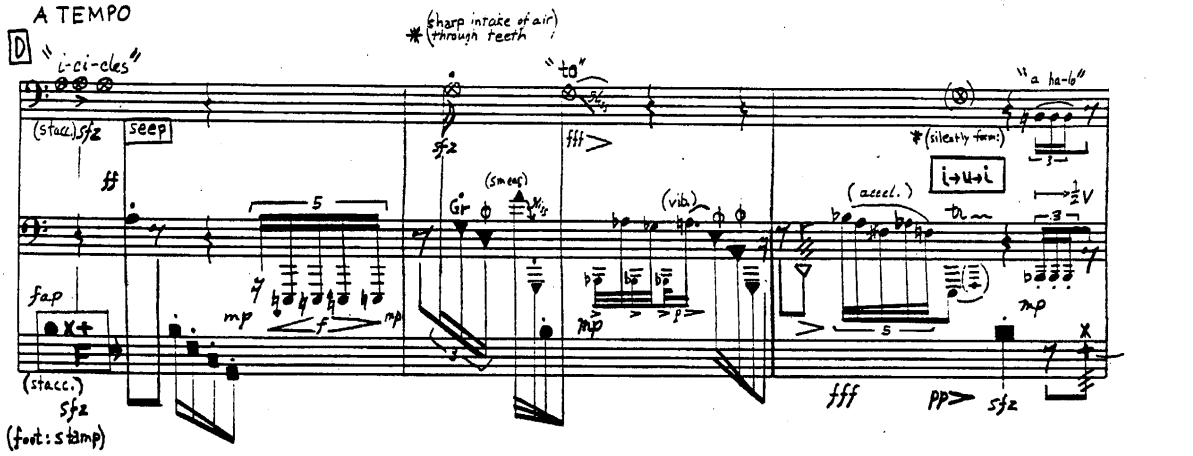
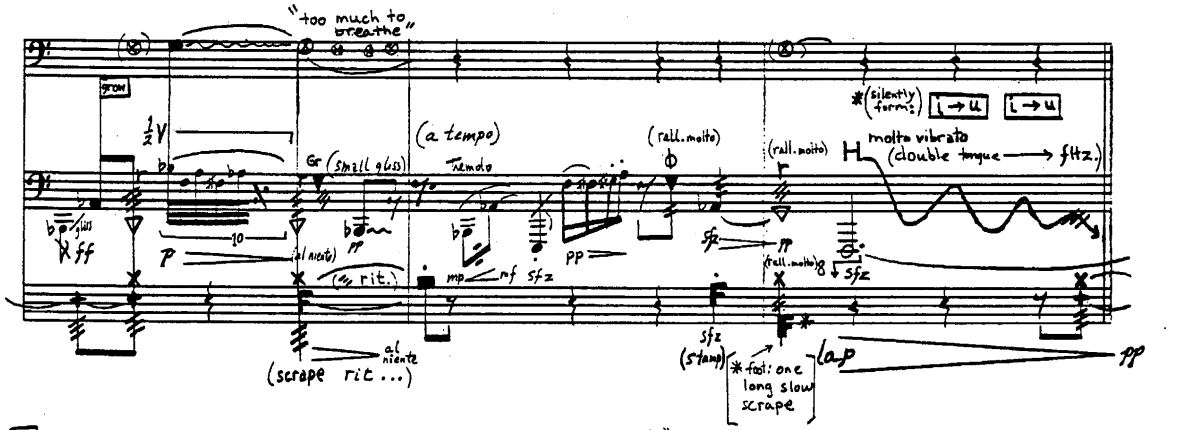
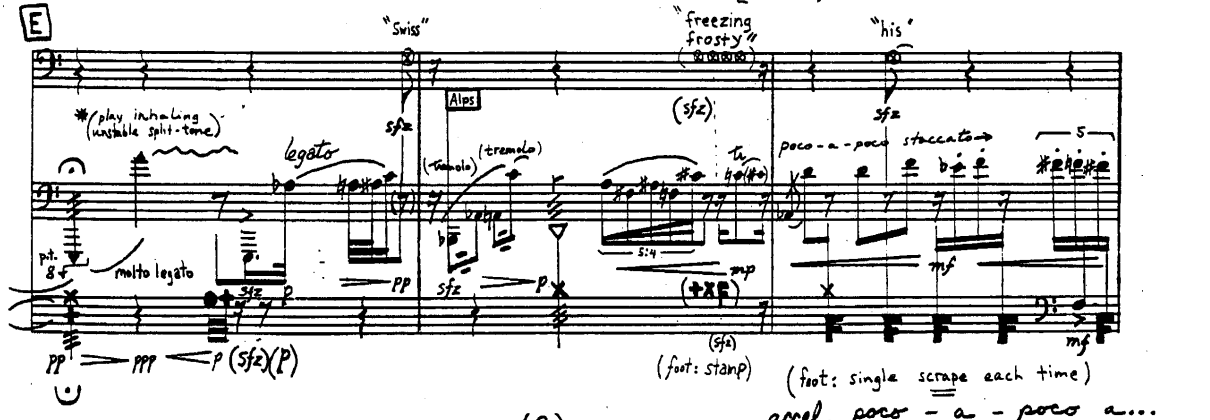
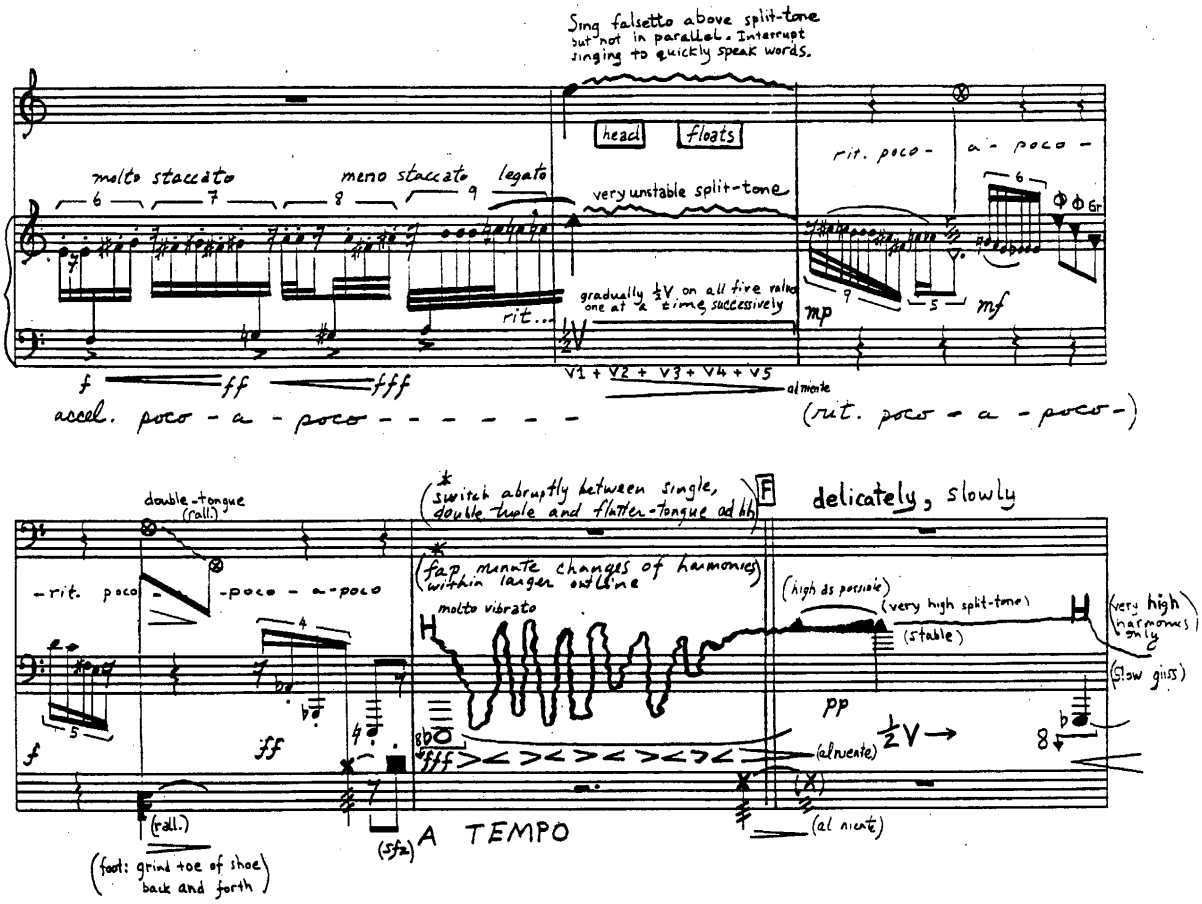
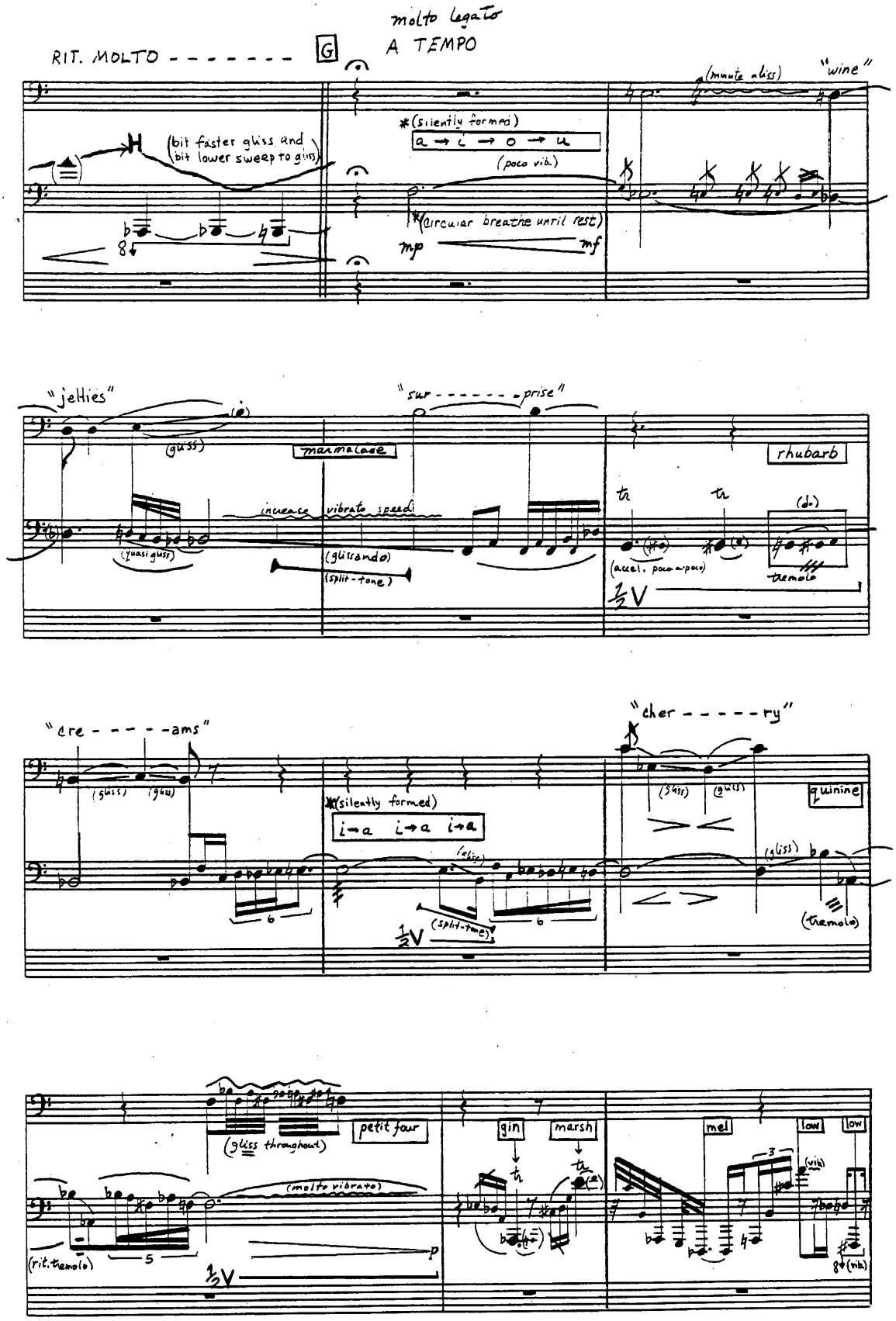

(sharp intake of air through teeth)
rit. poco a tempo
RIT. MOLTO
(fluctuate above & below a pitch)
(scream)
poco
(silently form: (vowels and transition))
a → e
sfz
(molto legato)
down
stacc.
(voice - accel.)
(sneer)
poco stacc.
(double tongue)
al niente
gliss
p
ff
(sfz) ff
decres. . . . .
(scrape feet)

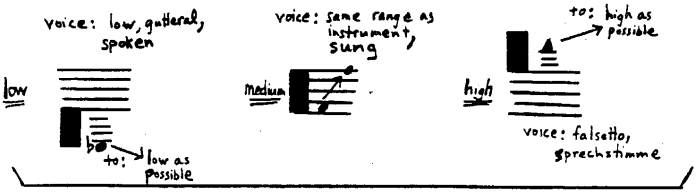

A TEMPO
D
"i-ci-cles"
(sharp intake of air through teeth)
"to"
"a ha-le"
(stacc.) sfz
seep
(smear)
(silently form:)
i → u → i
(accel.)
(vib.)
fap
(stacc.) sfz
(foot: stamp)
fff
pp sfz


"too much to breathe"
(a tempo)
Tempo
(rall. molto)
molto vibrato
(double tongue → fltz.)
(silently form:)
i → u
Gr (small gliss)
(scrape rit ...)
(stamp)
* foot: one long slow scrape
l.v.p
pp

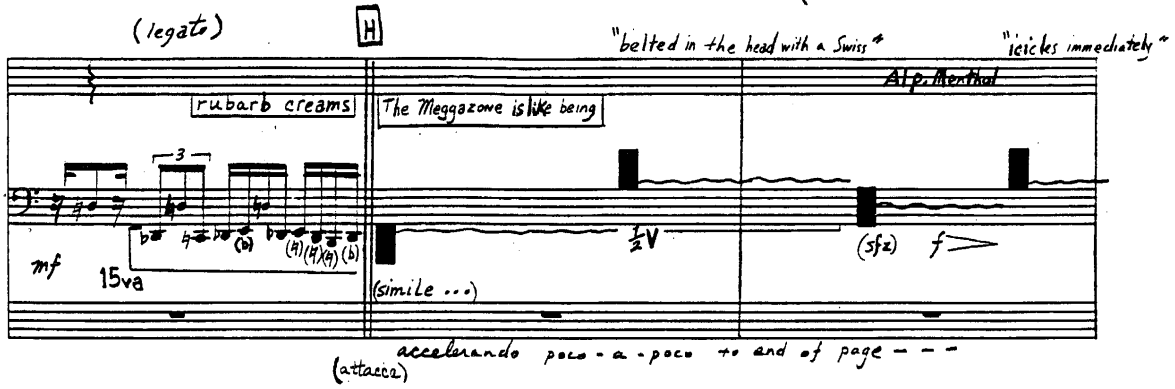

E
"Swiss"
"freezing frosty"
"his"
(play inhaling (unstable split-tone))
legato
Alps
(tremolo)
poco-a-poco staccato
molto legato
(sfz)
(foot: stamp)
(foot: single scrape each time)
accel. poco - a - poco a...

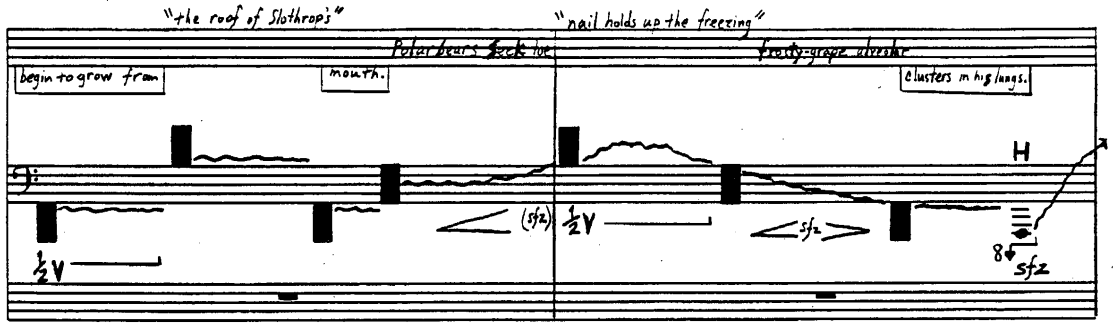

Sing falsetto above split-tone but not in parallel. Interrupt singing to quickly speak words.
head
floats
molto staccato
meno staccato
legato
very unstable split-tone
rit. poco -
a - poco -
gradually ½V on all five rails one at a time successively
rit...
mp
mf
f
ff
fff
V1 + V2 + V3 + V4 + V5
al niente
accel. poco - a - poco - - - - - -
(rit. poco - a - poco -)
double-tongue (roll.)
(* switch abruptly between single, double tuple and flutter-tongue ad lib)
F
delicately, slowly
-rit. poco -
-poco - a-poco
(fap manate changes of harmonics within larger outline)
molto vibrato
(high as possible)
(very high split-tone)
(stable)
(very high harmonics only)
(slow gliss)
pp
ff
fff
½V →
(al niente)
(roll.)
(sfz)
A TEMPO
(foot: grind toe of shoe back and forth)
The Meggezome is like being belted in the head with a Swiss Alp.
(stable split-tone)
(slighty unstable split-tone)
(very high harmonics - slow gliss -)
PP
"i-ci-cles"
"from"
"sloth-rop's"
Menthol
begin to grow
the roof of
MOUTH
sfz
(more unstable)
(very unstable)
(vib.)
(increase vib. speed)
(change ½V combinations while playing - ad lib)
(change ½V combos faster)
(rapidly change ½V combos)

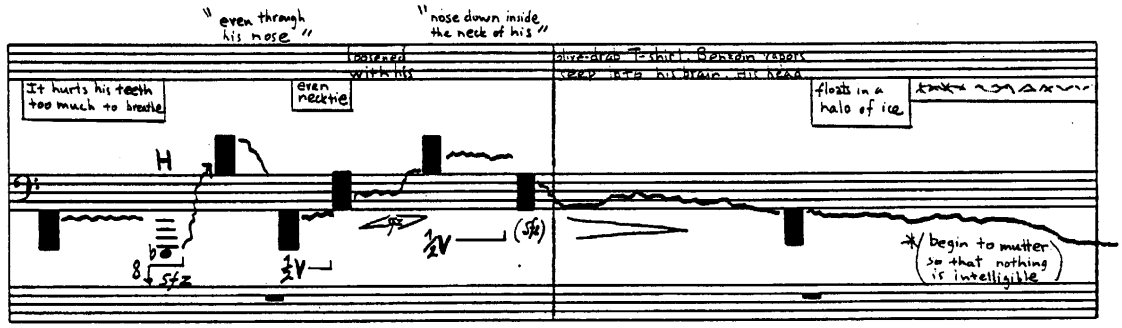

RIT. MOLTO - - - - - - - -
G
molto legato
A TEMPO
"wine"
(minute gliss)
(bit faster gliss and bit lower sweep to gliss)
*(silently formed)
a → i → o → u
(poco vib.)
*(circular breathe until rest)
mp
mf
"jellies"
"sur - - - - - - prise"
(gliss)
marmalade
rhubarb
increase vibrate speed
(quasi gliss)
(glissando)
(split-tone)
(accel. poco-a-poco)
tremolo
"cre - - - - -ams"
(gliss)
(gliss)
*(silently formed)
i→a i→a i→a
(gliss)
(split-tone)
"cher - - - - - ry"
(gliss)
(gliss)
quinine
(gliss)
(tremolo)
petit four
(gliss throughout)
(molto vibrato)
(rit. tremolo)
gin
marsh
mel
low
low
(vib)
(nb)

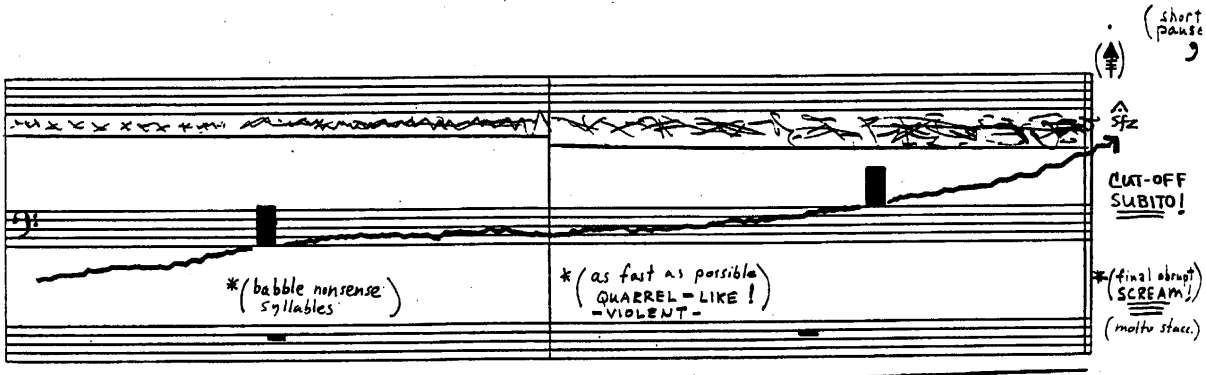


* In section H play randomly in the specified range while following directions for vocal production for the specified range (low, medium, or high). Entire page should have a gradual increase in rhythmic activity. Vocal and tuba activity should be somewhat parallel without being a simple one-to-one correspondence.





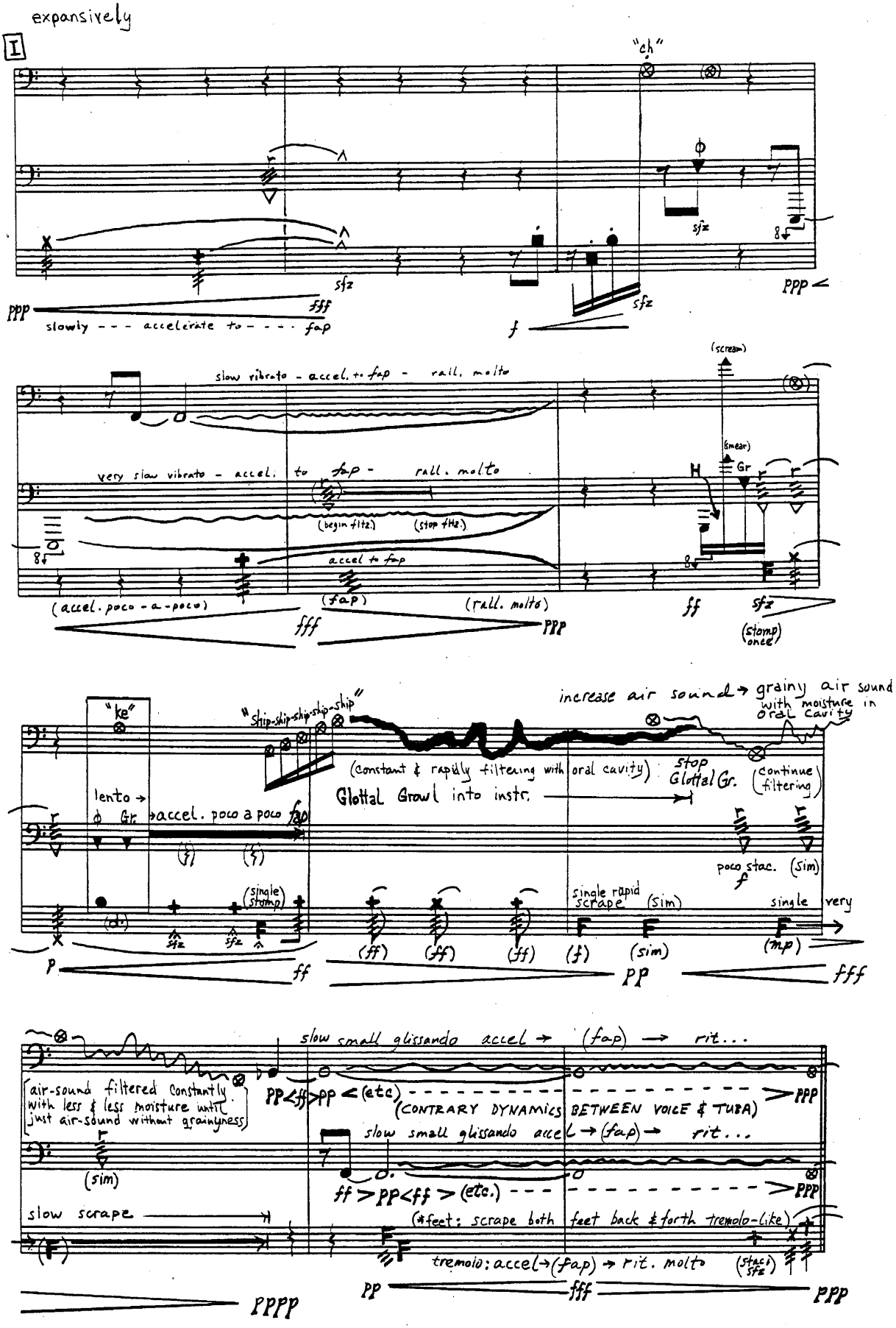


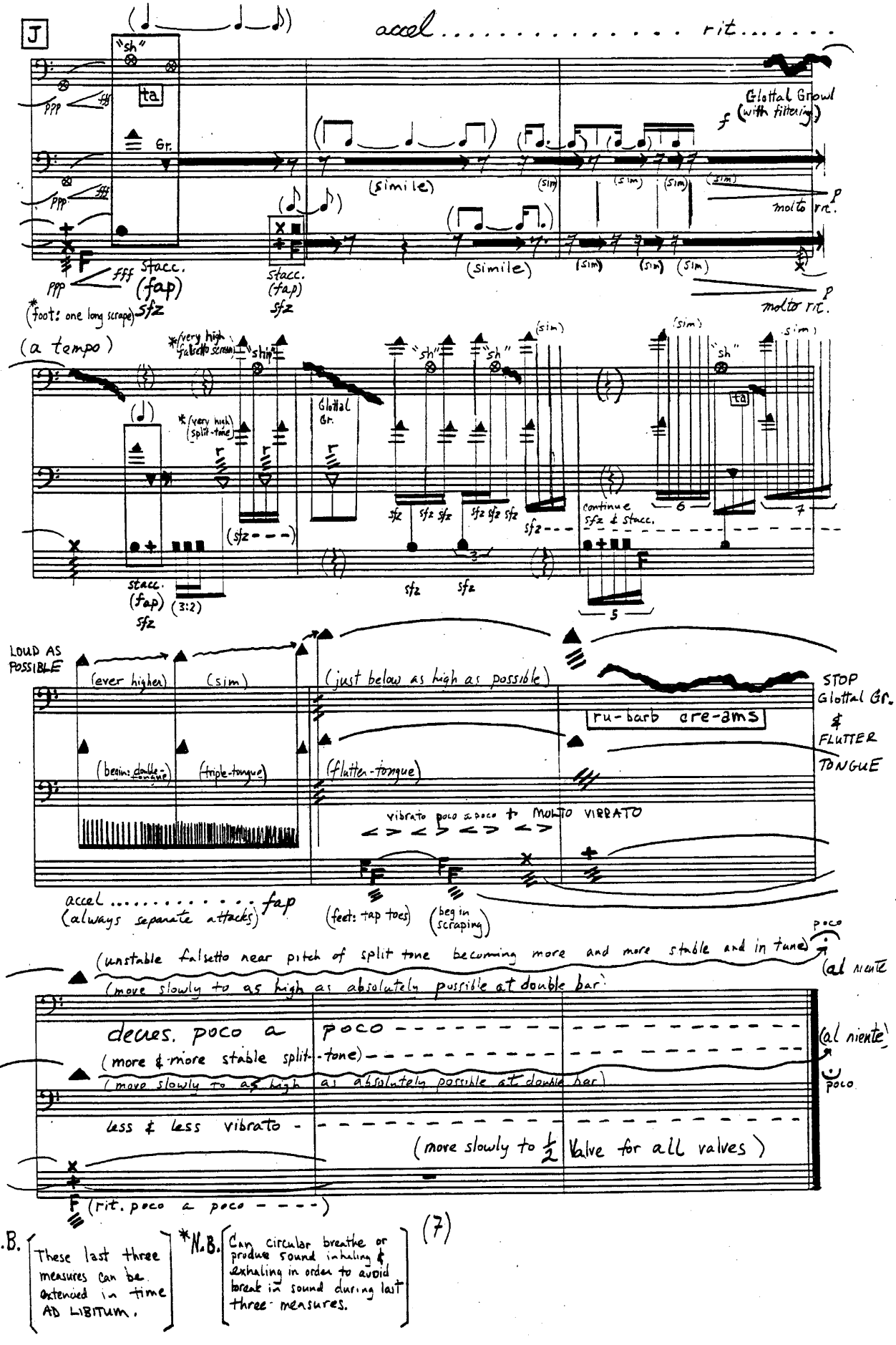


* N.B. [These two measures can be extended in time ad libitum.]

ffff

(cap)


expansively
I
"ch"
sfz
ppp
fff
slowly --- accelerate to - - - - fap
f
slow vibrato - accel. to fap - rall. molto
(scream)
very slow vibrato - accel. to fap - rall. molto
(begin flttz.)
(stop flttz.)
(6mear)
Gr
accel to fap
(accel. poco-a-poco)
(fap)
(rall. molto)
ff
(stomp once)
"ke"
"Ship-ship-ship-ship-ship"
increase air sound → grainy air sound with moisture in oral cavity
(constant & rapidly filtering with oral cavity)
stop Glottal Gr.
(continue filtering)
Glottal Growl into instr.
lento →
Gr
→accel. poco a poco fap
poco stac.
(sim)
(single stomp)
single rapid scrape
single
very
(ff)
(sim)
(mp)
p
pp
fff
slow small glissando accel → (fap) → rit...
air-sound filtered constantly with less & less moisture until just air-sound without graininess
pp<ff>pp <(etc.)
(CONTRARY DYNAMICS BETWEEN VOICE & TUBA)
ppp
slow scrape
ff>pp<ff>(etc.)
(*feet: scrape both feet back & forth tremolo-like)
tremolo: accel→(fap)→rit. molto
(staci sfz)
pppp


J
accel . . . . . rit . . . . . .
"sh"
ta
Gr.
Glottal Growl (with filtering)
(simile)
molto rit.
Stacc. (fap) sfz
(foot: one long scrape)
(a tempo)
(very high falsetto scream)
"shh"
(very high split-tone)
Glottal Gr.
continue sfz & stacc.
(3:2)
LOUD AS POSSIBLE
(ever higher)
(sim)
(just below as high as possible)
STOP Glottal Gr. & FLUTTER TONGUE
ru-barb cre-ams
(triple-tongue)
(flatter-tongue)
vibrato poco a poco to MOLTO VIBRATO
accel . . . . . fap
(always separate attacks)
(feet: tap toes)
(beg in scraping)
(unstable falsetto near pitch of split tone becoming more and more stable and in tune)
poco
(al niente)
(move slowly to as high as absolutely possible at double bar)
deces. poco a poco
(more & more stable split-tone)
less & less vibrato
(move slowly to 1/2 Valve for all valves)
(rit. poco a poco - - - -)
*N.B. These last three measures can be extended in time AD LIBITUM.
*N.B. Can circular breathe or produce sound inhaling & exhaling in order to avoid break in sound during last three measures.
(7)