Alex Christie

Paranoia in the Expanded Field: Four Forms of Alienation

for 2 pianos and 2 percussion

for YarnlWire

2016

Theatrical Elements

This piece places a heavy emphasis on creating and developing relationships between the four performers through musical and extra-musical techniques. The score frequently includes instructions on how to act and how to perceive the actions of other players (for instance, "don't trust Perc. 1"). While these instructions do not follow a specific narrative in strictest sense, they are meant to create trajectories individual to each performer that also change the overall group dynamic over the course of the piece.

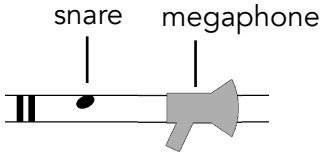
Performers should express these aspects of the piece through facial expression, eye contact, body language, performance intensity, and any other means they can think up. In general, the goal is to create an unstable and constantly shifting power structure between ensemble members. Sometimes performers are ignored and respond aggressively, sometimes a performer tries to maintain a neutral indifference, sometimes a performer tries to take the lead, etc. For instance, Piano 1 begins the piece with unique material that is quickly extinguished by the others (in particular Percussion 1). This material reappears, however, in trio form in an attempt to salvage and rebuild group trust. In the end, nobody really wins and we are left in a state of uncertainty and paranoia. Don't trust the others.

Additional Performance Notes

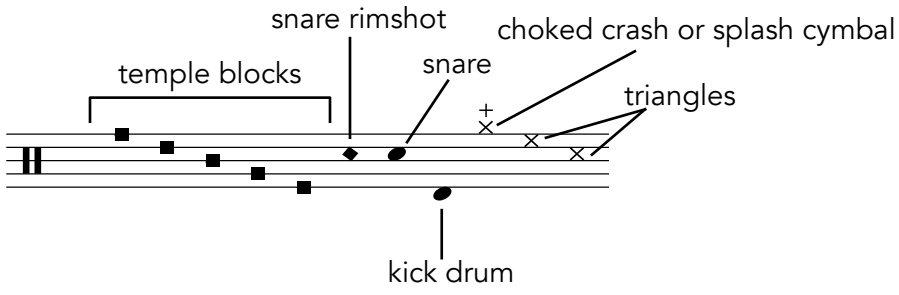
Some material in this piece may be very challenging to execute exactly as written, specifically Section I-K. One goal of this material is to create a frantic and almost panicked environment between Piano 1, Piano 2, and Percussion 2. I have tested the individual piano techniques and have found them to be playable, but of course they become much more difficult in sequence. For this section of the piece rhythmic accuracy should take precedence over pitch accuracy. The rhythmic exchange between instruments and the group momentum is the primary focus.

Notation Keys

Percussion 1



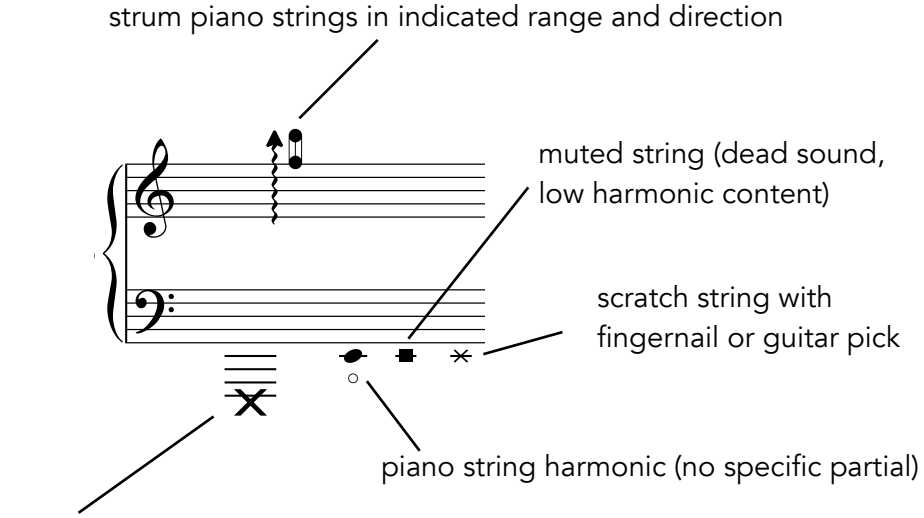
Percussion 2



Percussion List:

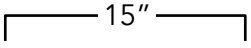
5 temple blocks
2 snare drums
1 kick drum
1 crash or splash cymbal
2 triangles
4 slide whistles
1 megaphone

Notation Key for Pianos

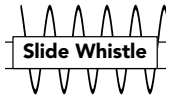


cover the strings in the indicated area (approximate) with paper strike paper with palm (followed by circular motion)

Notation Key for All Performers



Time brackets/proportional notation is used throughout the piece. An empty bracket is a rest. Sometimes rests contain theatrical instructions.

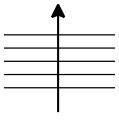


Glissando through the full range of the slide whistle at the approximate rate as indicated by the graphic.

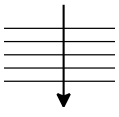
Gradually transition between indicated material over the length of the arrow.

Continue current material/phrase/gesture, etc.

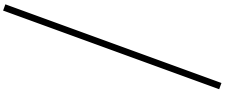
Rub the indicated surface in a circular motion. Depending on the instrument and point in the piece they player will use their hands, paper, or brushes.



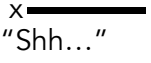
Slide Whistle: highest note possible



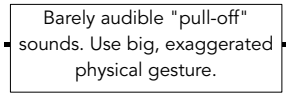
Slide Whistle: lowest note possible



Slide Whistle: Glissando in indicated direction



Make "Shh…" sound vocally, sometimes with attitude depending on instructions.



Press hand firmly against the snare head or mid-range piano strings. Quickly pull hand off the surface in an exaggerated motion. This action should produce a very quiet sound. If this action produces absolutely no sound then the performer may add a slide or swipe to the pull-off motion to make it a bit louder. The sound really should be as quiet as possible and contrast the extreme physical motion. Pianists may use pedal if they find it is necessary.

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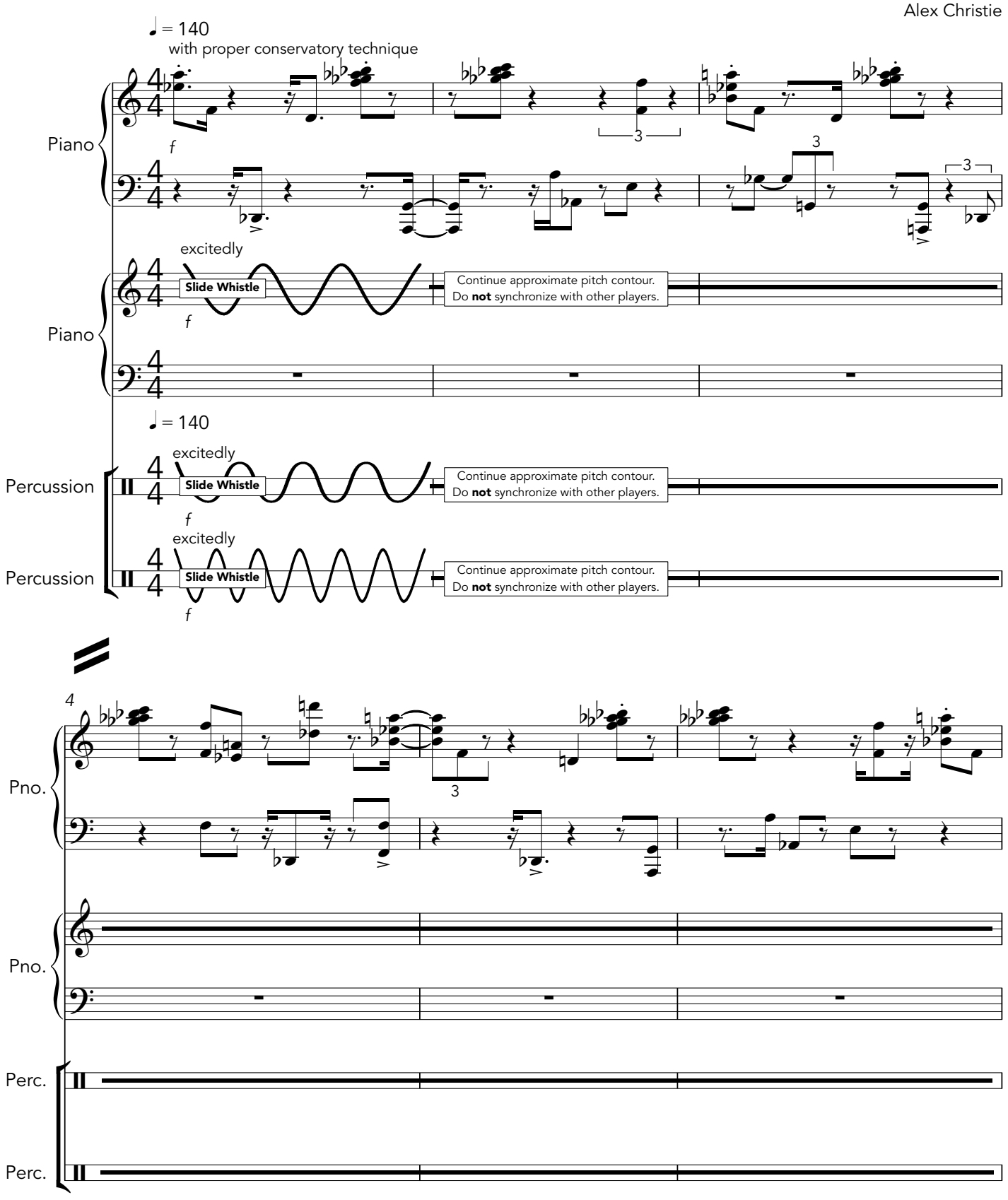
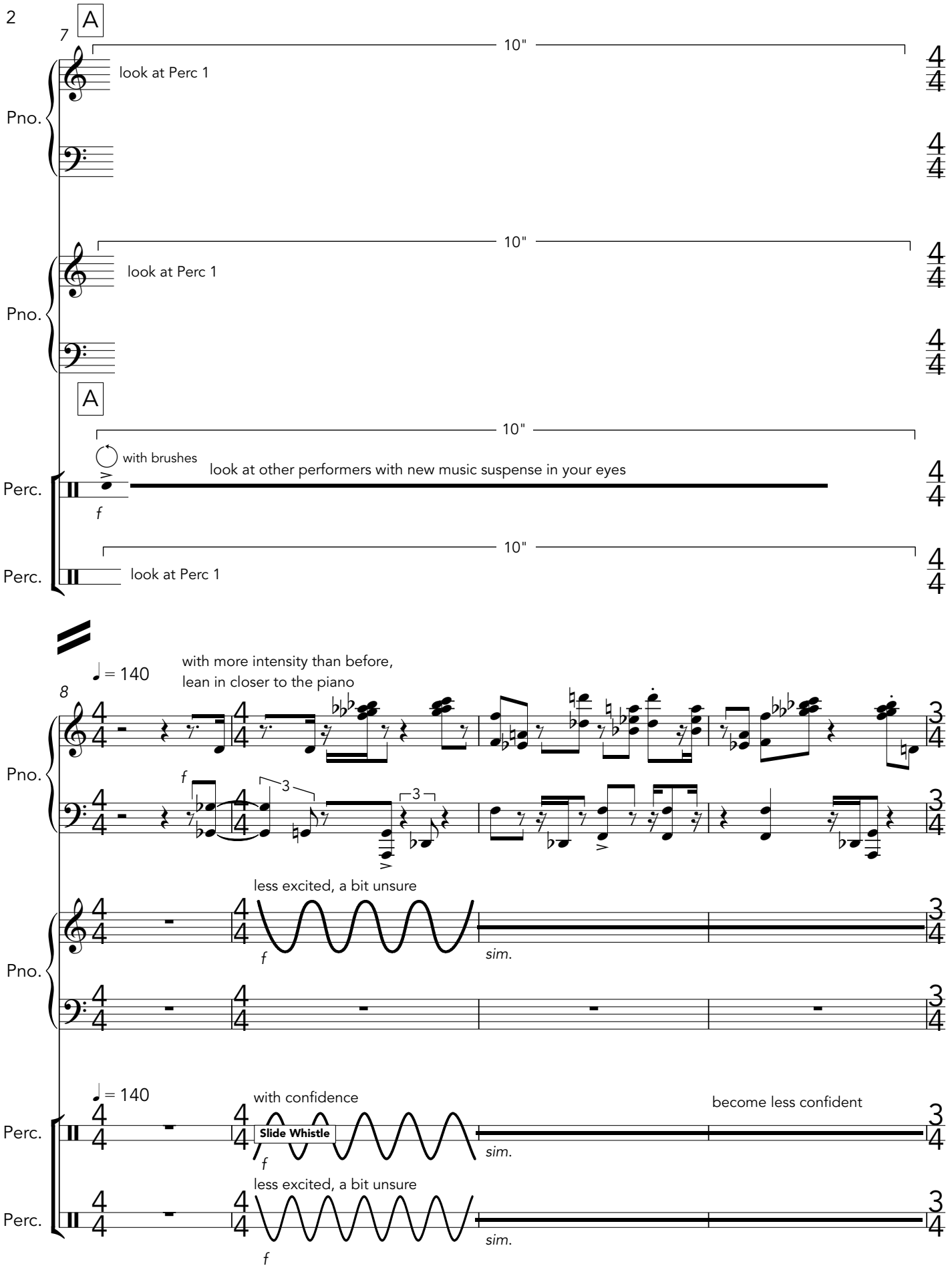



7
A
10"
look at Perc 1
Pno.
10"
look at Perc 1
Pno.
A
10"
with brushes
look at other performers with new music suspense in your eyes
Perc.
f
10"
look at Perc 1
Perc.
8
♩ = 140
with more intensity than before,
lean in closer to the piano
Pno.
f
3
3
less excited, a bit unsure
f
sim.
Pno.
♩ = 140
with confidence
become less confident
Perc.
Slide Whistle
f
sim.
less excited, a bit unsure
Perc.
f
sim.

B

12

Pno.

10"

look at Pno 2

3

Pno.

10"

look at Pno 1

Perc.

10"

with brushes

a bit unsure of yourself

f

Perc.

10"

watch Perc 1

mf

"Shhhhh....."

look at Perc 1

C

14

♩ = 140

lean in even closer, with intense focus

Pno.

ff

3

loud and strong but mostly out of obligation

f

sim.

Pno.

C

♩ = 140

fairly desperate

Perc.

Slide Whistle

f

sim.

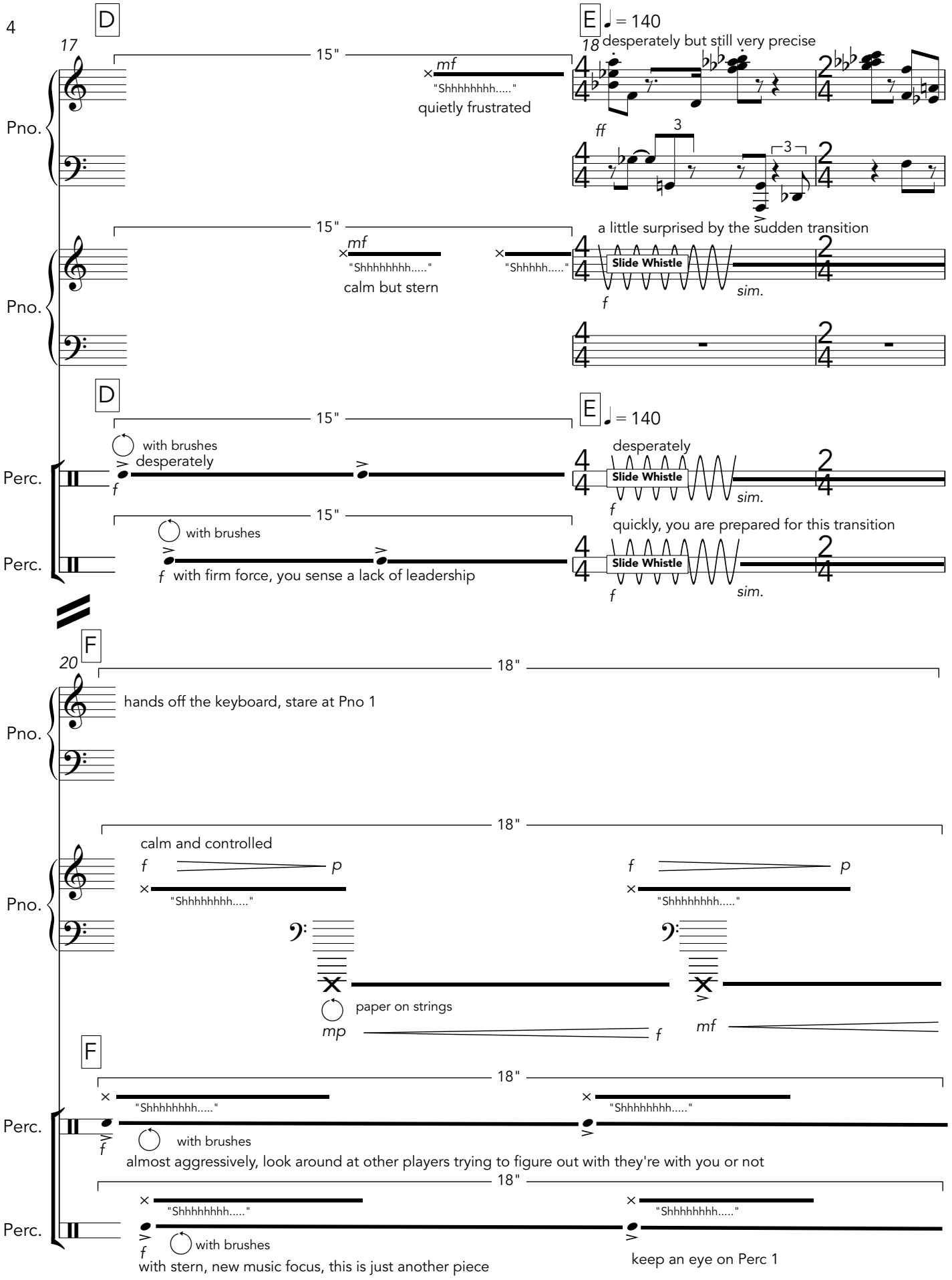
strong and professional

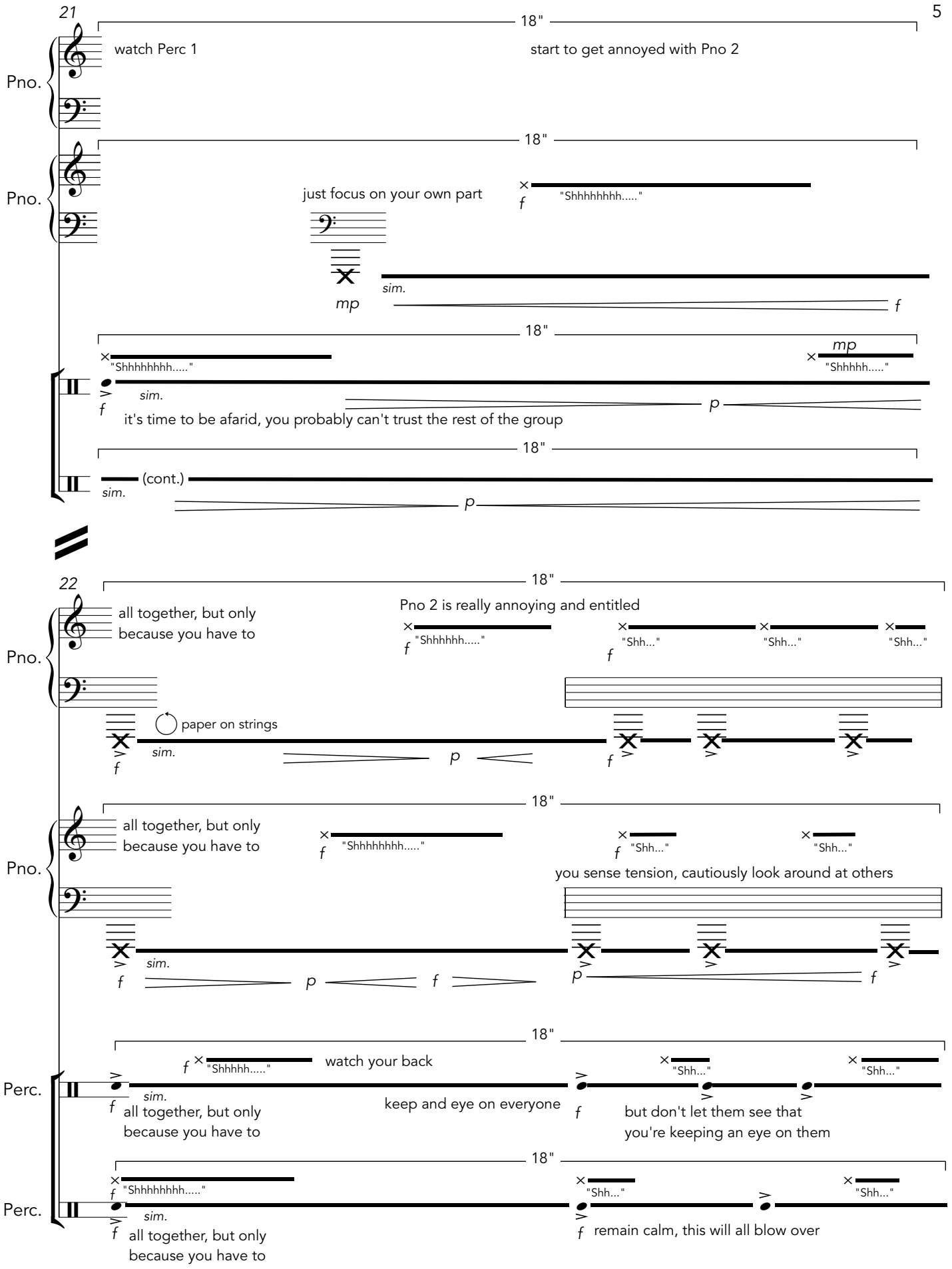
Perc.

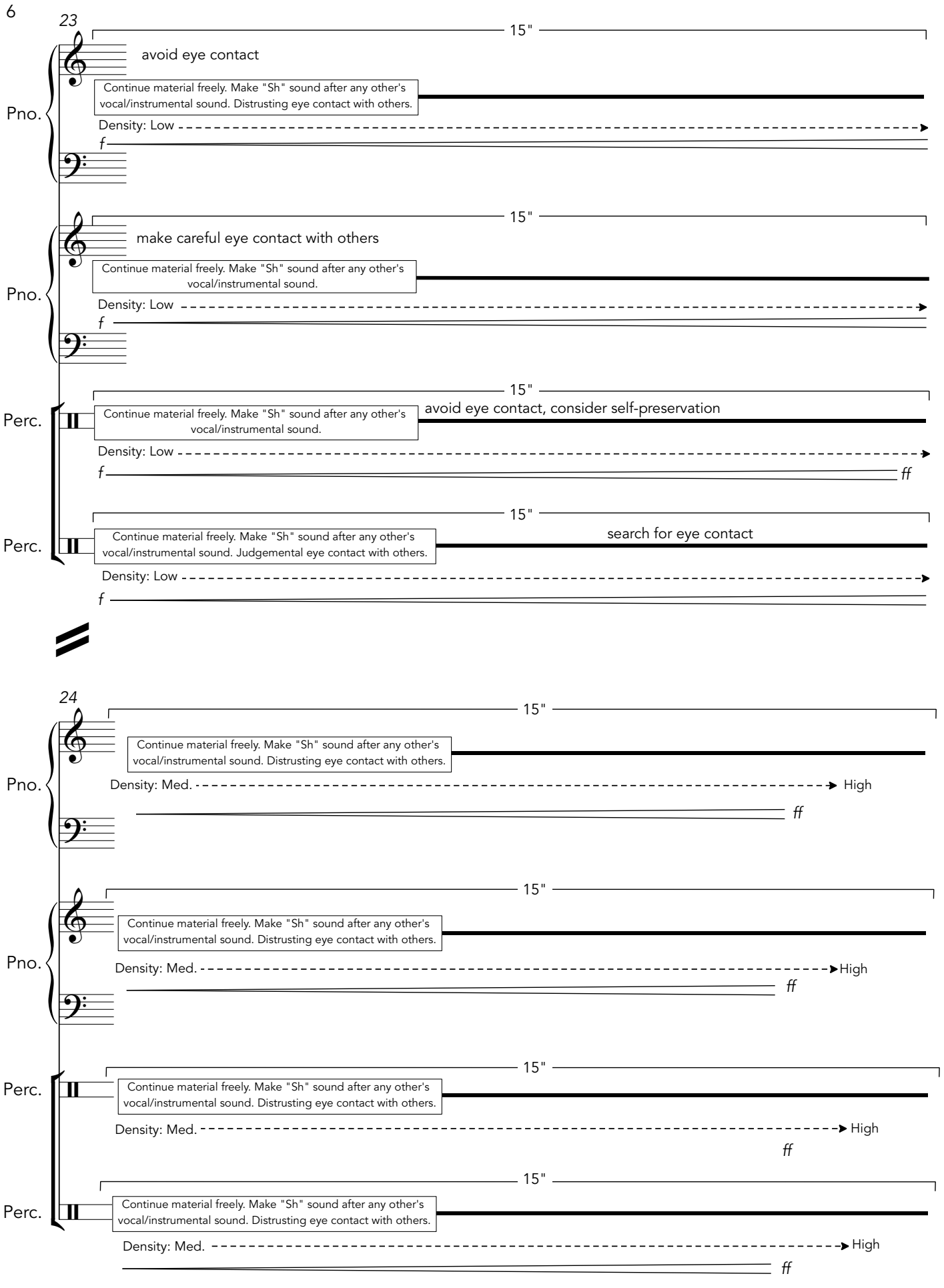
Slide Whistle

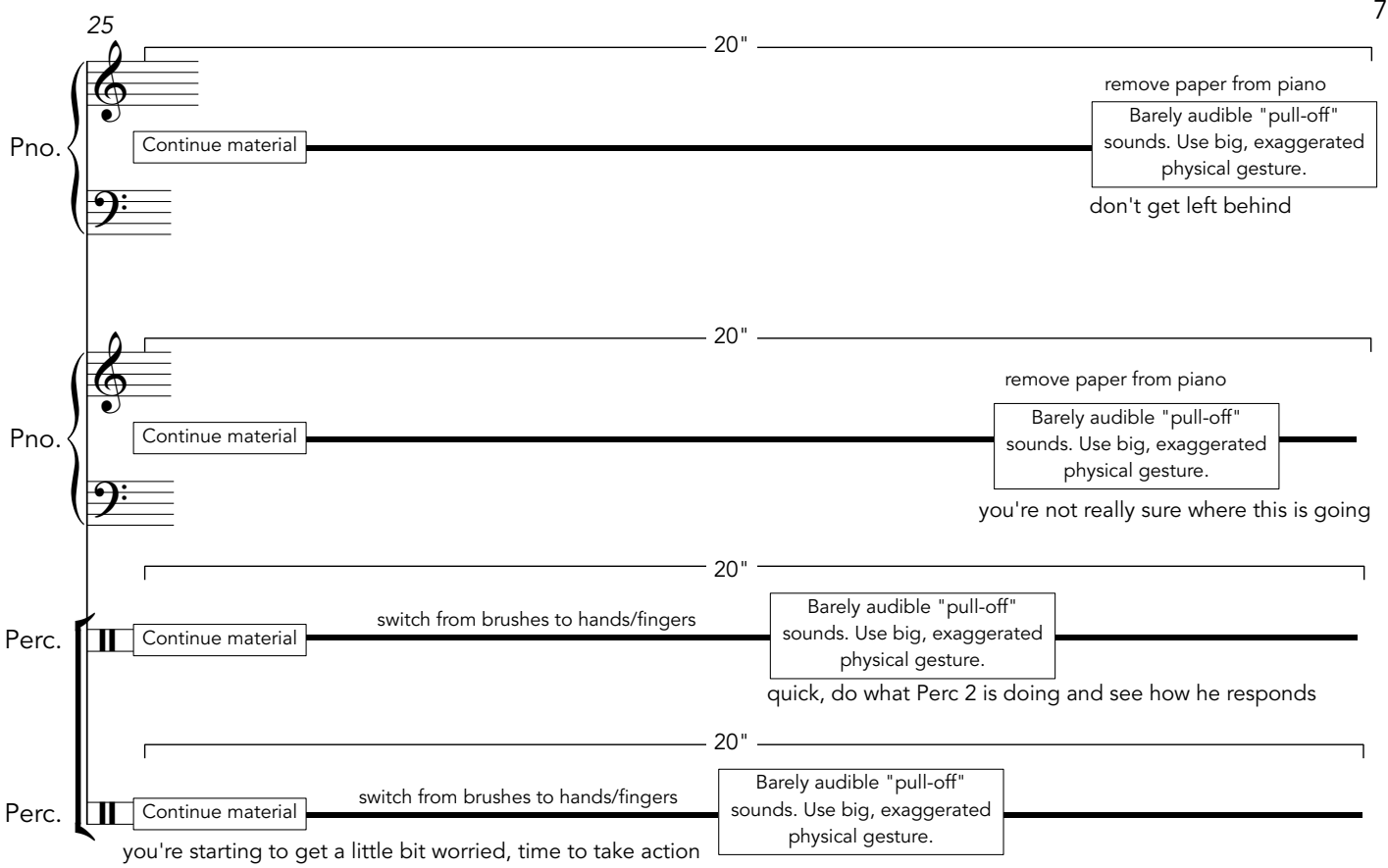
f

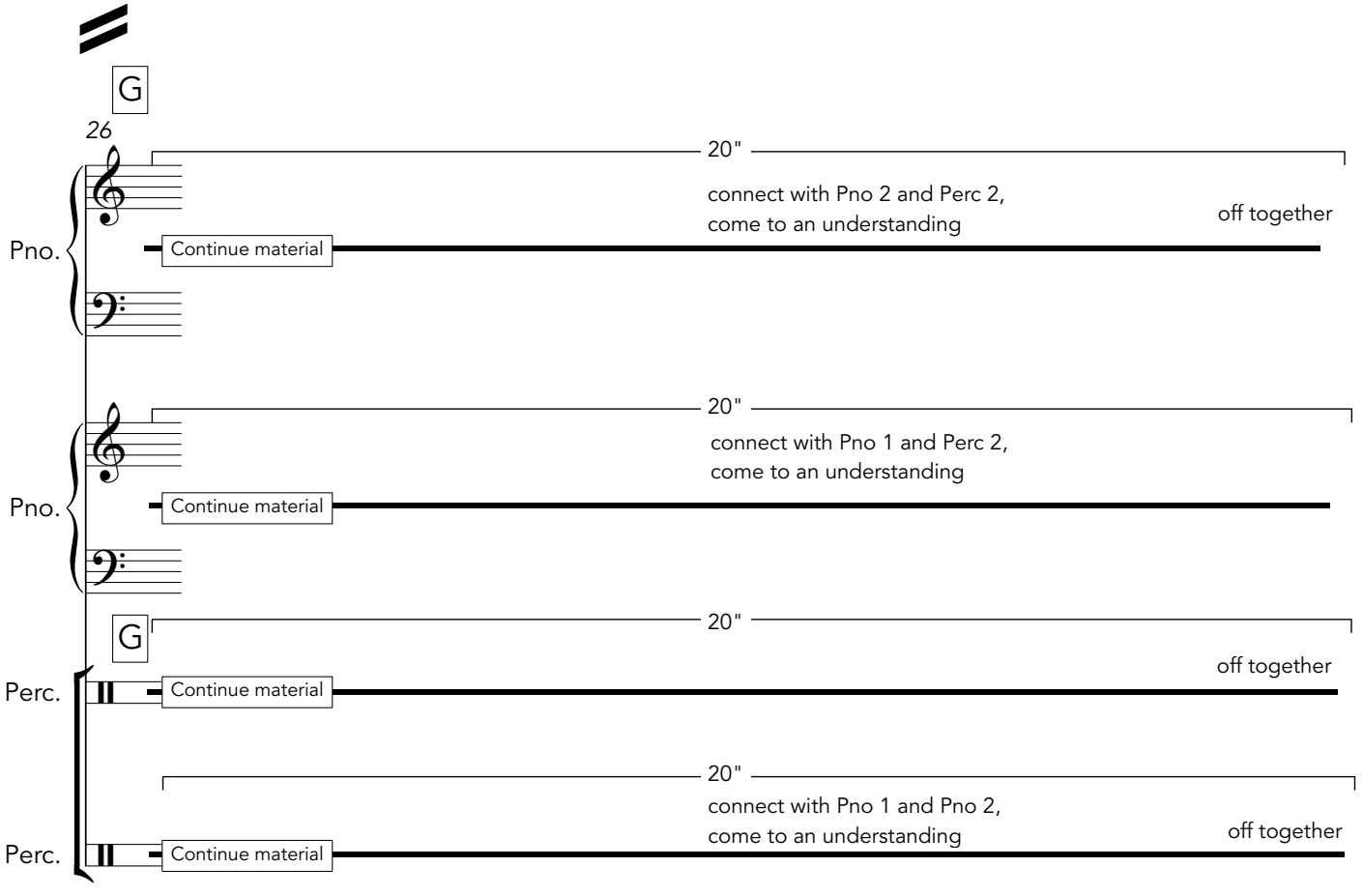
sim.

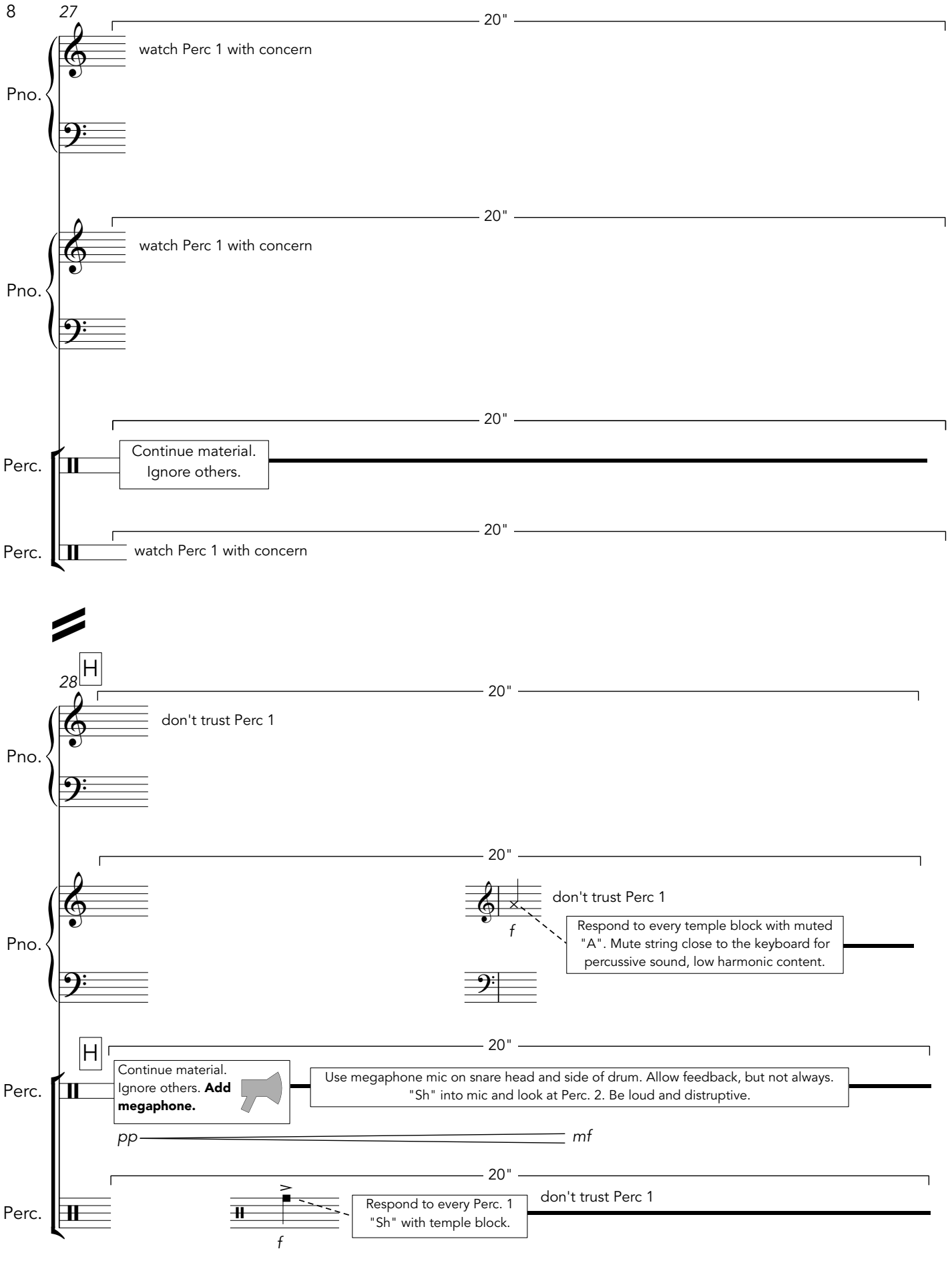

D
17
15"
mf
"Shhhhhhhh....."
quietly frustrated
E
= 140
18 desperately but still very precise
Pno.
ff
3
15"
mf
"Shhhhhhhh....."
calm but stern
"Shhhhh....."
a little surprised by the sudden transition
Slide Whistle
f
sim.
Pno.
D
15"
E
= 140
with brushes
desperately
Perc.
f
Slide Whistle
sim.
15"
with brushes
quickly, you are prepared for this transition
Perc.
f with firm force, you sense a lack of leadership
Slide Whistle
f
sim.
F
20
18"
hands off the keyboard, stare at Pno 1
Pno.
18"
calm and controlled
f
p
"Shhhhhhhh....."
f
p
"Shhhhhhhh....."
paper on strings
mp
f
mf
F
18"
"Shhhhhhhh....."
"Shhhhhhhh....."
Perc.
f
with brushes
almost aggressively, look around at other players trying to figure out with they're with you or not
18"
"Shhhhhhhh....."
"Shhhhhhhh....."
Perc.
f
with brushes
with stern, new music focus, this is just another piece
keep an eye on Perc 1

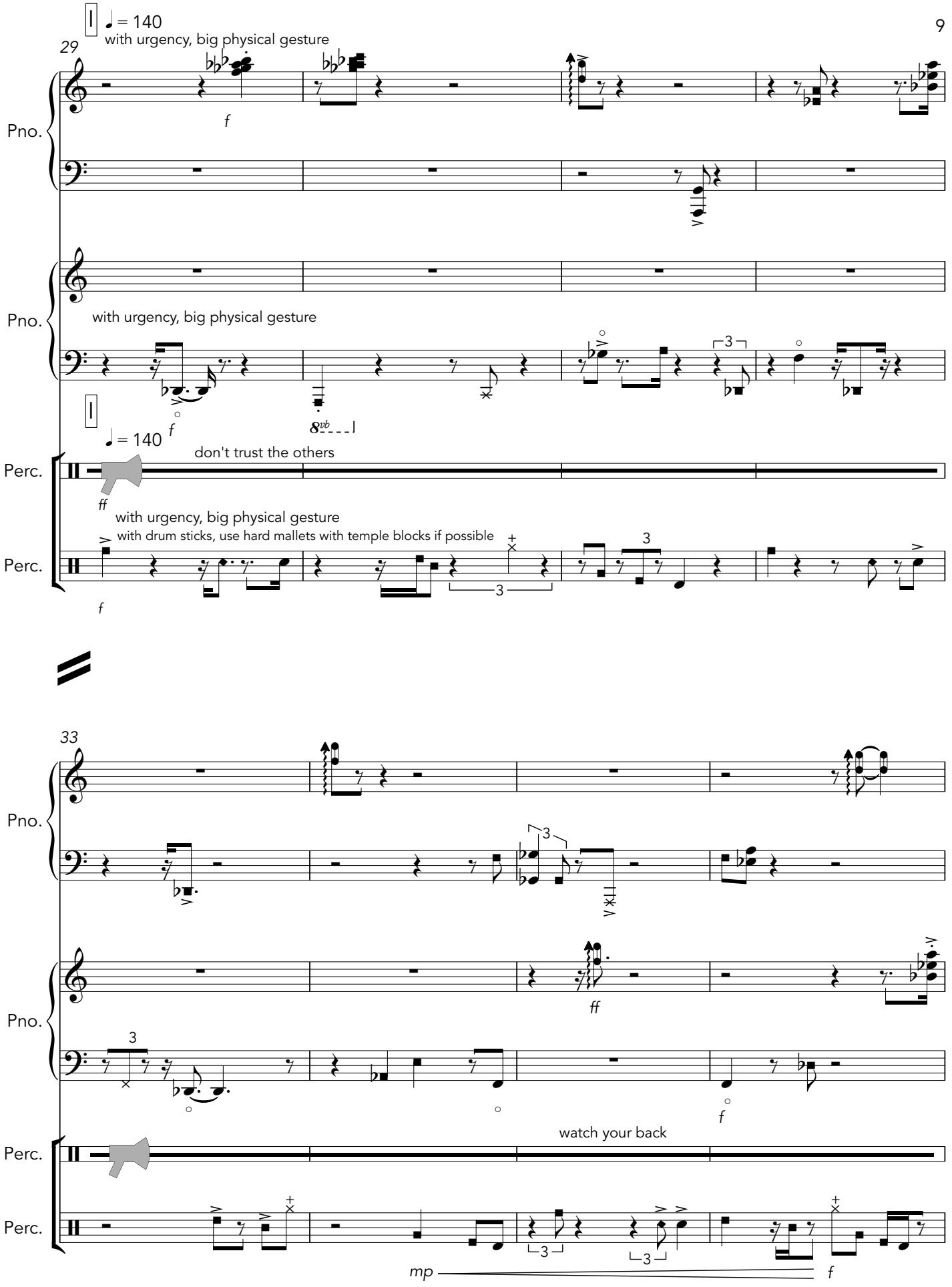

21
18"
Pno.
watch Perc 1
start to get annoyed with Pno 2
18"
Pno.
just focus on your own part
f
"Shhhhhhhh....."
mp
sim.
f
18"
"Shhhhhhhh....."
mp
"Shhhhh....."
f
sim.
p
it's time to be afarid, you probably can't trust the rest of the group
18"
(cont.)
sim.
p
22
18"
Pno.
all together, but only
because you have to
Pno 2 is really annoying and entitled
f
"Shhhhhh....."
f
"Shh..."
"Shh..."
"Shh..."
paper on strings
sim.
f
p
f
18"
Pno.
all together, but only
because you have to
f
"Shhhhhhhh....."
f
"Shh..."
"Shh..."
you sense tension, cautiously look around at others
sim.
f
p
f
p
f
18"
Perc.
f
"Shhhhh....."
watch your back
sim.
f
all together, but only
because you have to
keep and eye on everyone
"Shh..."
"Shh..."
f
but don't let them see that
you're keeping an eye on them
18"
Perc.
f
"Shhhhhhhh....."
sim.
f
all together, but only
because you have to
"Shh..."
"Shh..."
f
remain calm, this will all blow over

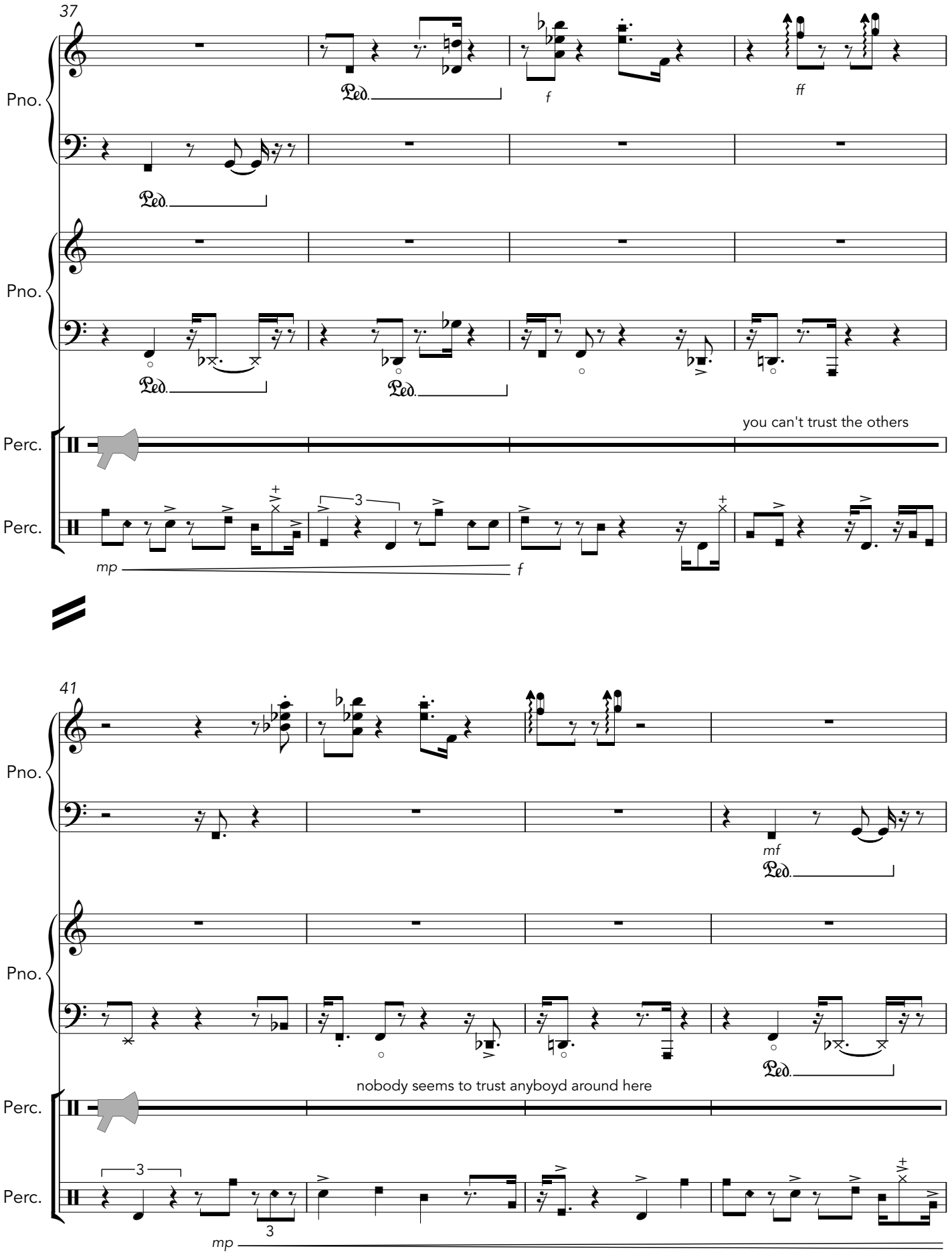

23
15"
avoid eye contact
Continue material freely. Make "Sh" sound after any other's vocal/instrumental sound. Distrusting eye contact with others.
Pno.
Density: Low
f
15"
make careful eye contact with others
Continue material freely. Make "Sh" sound after any other's vocal/instrumental sound.
Pno.
Density: Low
f
15"
Perc.
Continue material freely. Make "Sh" sound after any other's vocal/instrumental sound.
avoid eye contact, consider self-preservation
Density: Low
f
ff
15"
Perc.
Continue material freely. Make "Sh" sound after any other's vocal/instrumental sound. Judgemental eye contact with others.
search for eye contact
Density: Low
f
24
15"
Pno.
Continue material freely. Make "Sh" sound after any other's vocal/instrumental sound. Distrusting eye contact with others.
Density: Med.
High
ff
15"
Pno.
Continue material freely. Make "Sh" sound after any other's vocal/instrumental sound. Distrusting eye contact with others.
Density: Med.
High
ff
15"
Perc.
Continue material freely. Make "Sh" sound after any other's vocal/instrumental sound. Distrusting eye contact with others.
Density: Med.
High
ff
15"
Perc.
Continue material freely. Make "Sh" sound after any other's vocal/instrumental sound. Distrusting eye contact with others.
Density: Med.
High
ff

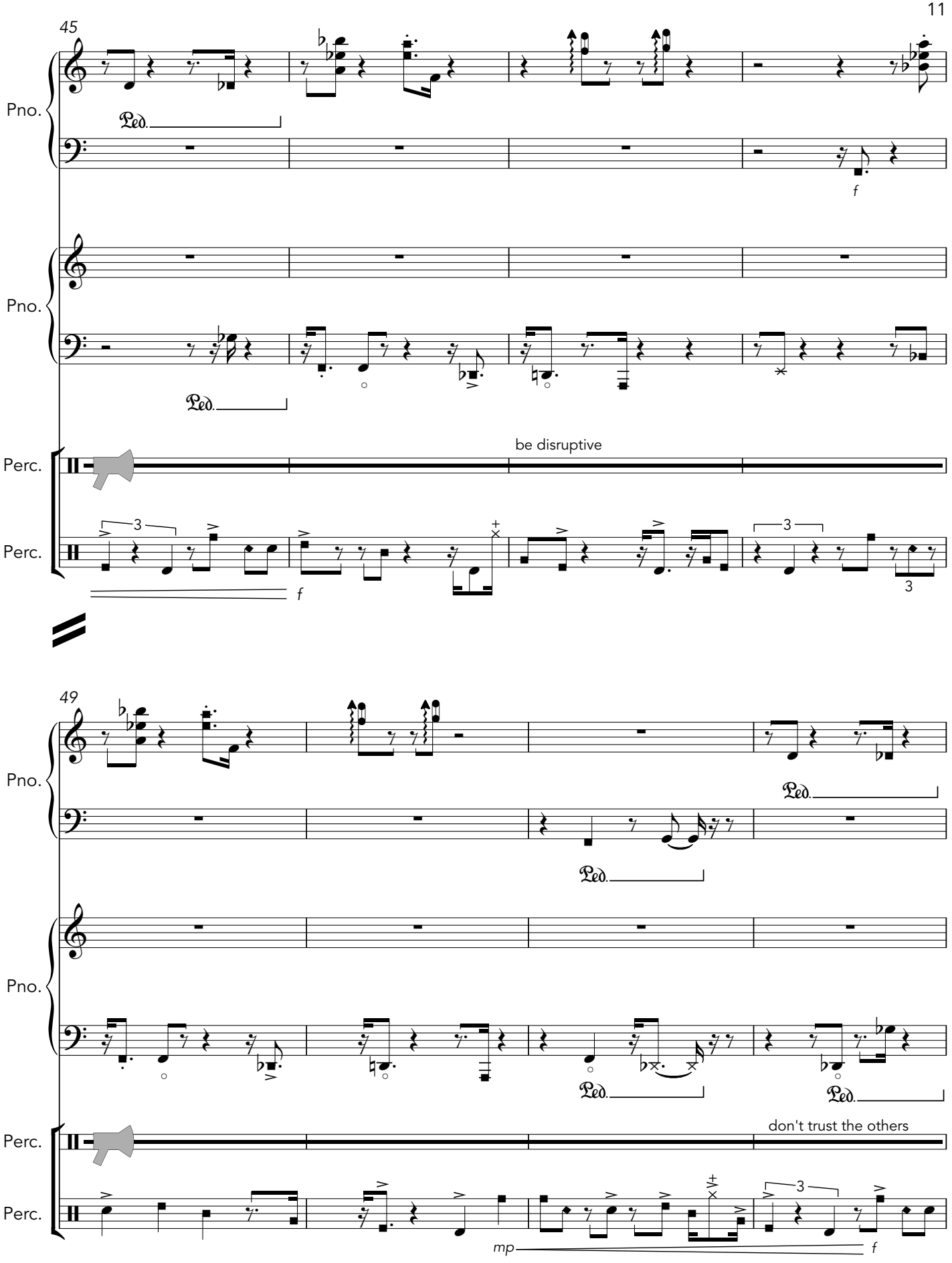

25
20"
Pno.
Continue material
remove paper from piano
Barely audible "pull-off" sounds. Use big, exaggerated physical gesture.
don't get left behind
20"
Pno.
Continue material
remove paper from piano
Barely audible "pull-off" sounds. Use big, exaggerated physical gesture.
you're not really sure where this is going
20"
Perc.
Continue material
switch from brushes to hands/fingers
Barely audible "pull-off" sounds. Use big, exaggerated physical gesture.
quick, do what Perc 2 is doing and see how he responds
20"
Perc.
Continue material
switch from brushes to hands/fingers
Barely audible "pull-off" sounds. Use big, exaggerated physical gesture.
you're starting to get a little bit worried, time to take action

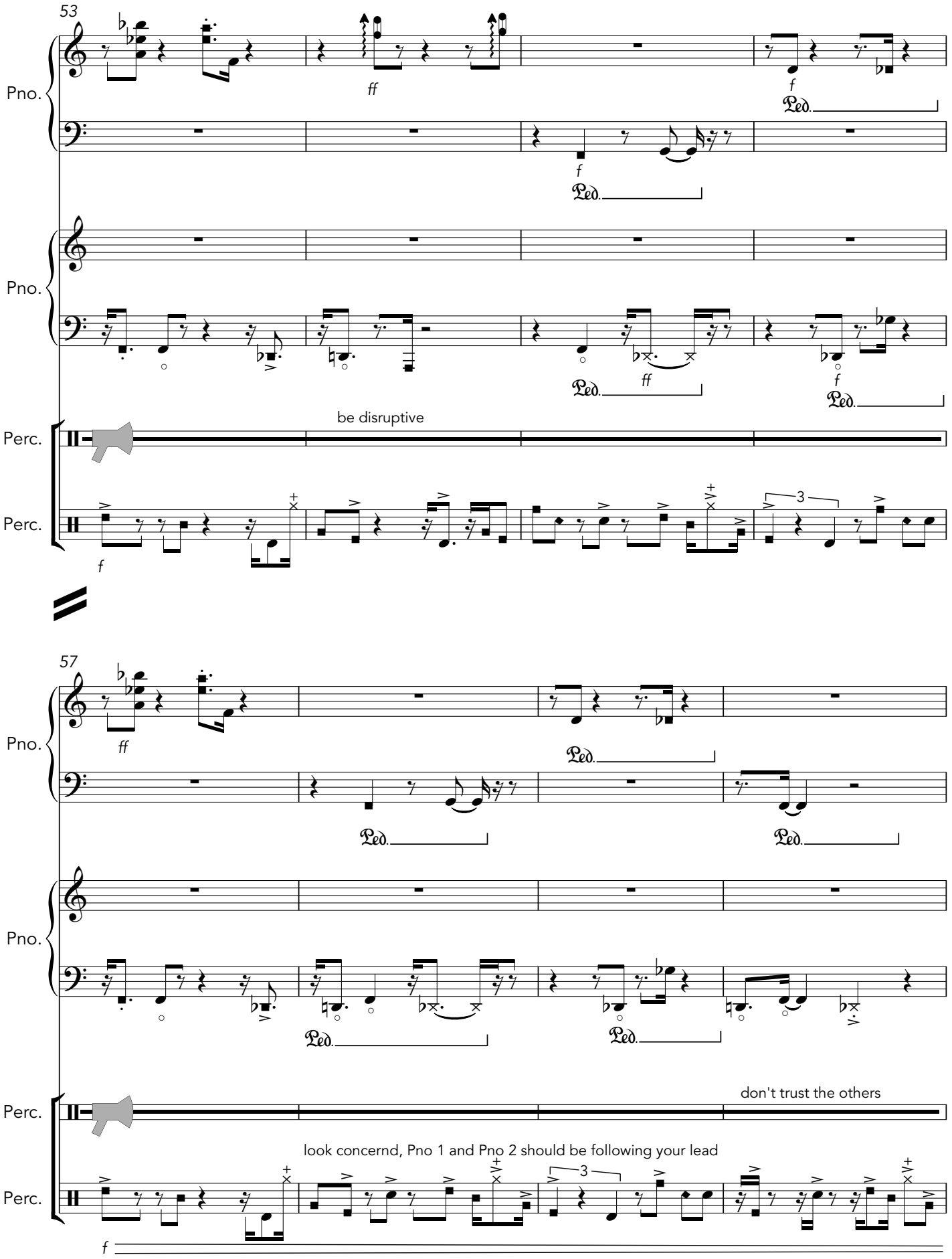

G
26
20"
Pno.
Continue material
connect with Pno 2 and Perc 2, come to an understanding
off together
20"
Pno.
Continue material
connect with Pno 1 and Perc 2, come to an understanding
G
20"
Perc.
Continue material
off together
20"
Perc.
Continue material
connect with Pno 1 and Pno 2, come to an understanding
off together

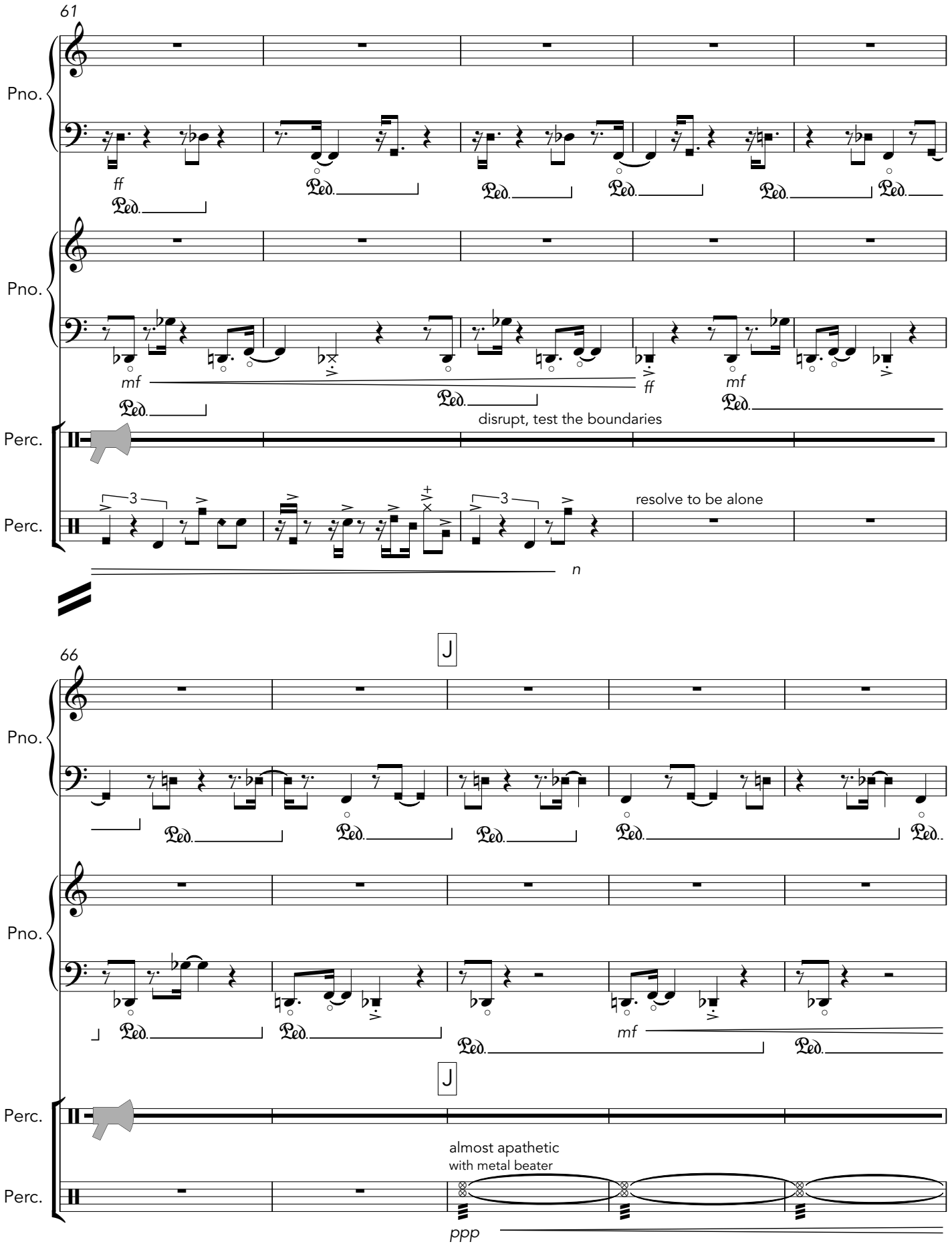

27
20"
watch Perc 1 with concern
Pno.
20"
watch Perc 1 with concern
Pno.
20"
Perc.
Continue material.
Ignore others.
20"
Perc.
watch Perc 1 with concern
28
H
20"
don't trust Perc 1
Pno.
20"
don't trust Perc 1
f
Respond to every temple block with muted "A". Mute string close to the keyboard for percussive sound, low harmonic content.
Pno.
H
20"
Perc.
Continue material.
Ignore others. Add megaphone.
Use megaphone mic on snare head and side of drum. Allow feedback, but not always.
"Sh" into mic and look at Perc. 2. Be loud and distruptive.
pp
mf
20"
Perc.
Respond to every Perc. 1
"Sh" with temple block.
don't trust Perc 1
f

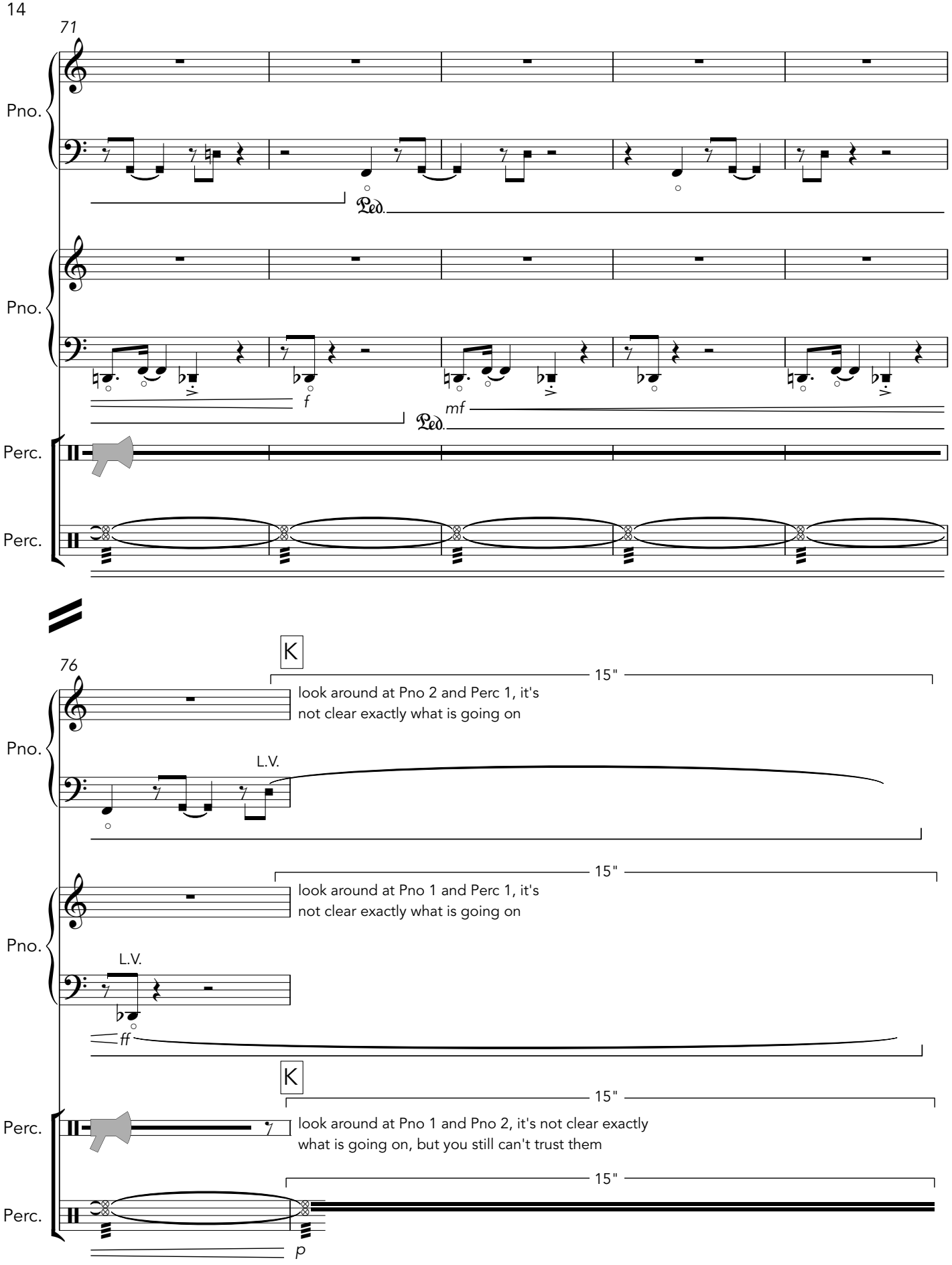

29
♩ = 140
with urgency, big physical gesture
Pno.
f
Pno.
with urgency, big physical gesture
f
8vb
♩ = 140
don't trust the others
Perc.
ff
with urgency, big physical gesture
with drum sticks, use hard mallets with temple blocks if possible
Perc.
f
33
Pno.
Pno.
ff
f
watch your back
Perc.
Perc.
mp
f


37
Pno.
Ped.
f
ff
Pno.
Ped.
Ped.
Perc.
you can't trust the others
Perc.
3
mp
f
41
Pno.
mf
Ped.
Pno.
Ped.
nobody seems to trust anyboyd around here
Perc.
3
Perc.
3
mp


45
Pno.
Ped.
f
Pno.
Ped.
be disruptive
Perc.
Perc.
3
f
3
49
Pno.
Ped.
Ped.
Pno.
Ped.
Ped.
don't trust the others
Perc.
Perc.
3
mp
f


53
Pno.
Pno.
Perc.
Perc.
be disruptive
57
Pno.
Pno.
Perc.
Perc.
don't trust the others
look concernd, Pno 1 and Pno 2 should be following your lead


61
Pno.
ff
Ped.
Pno.
mf
ff
mf
Perc.
disrupt, test the boundaries
Perc.
3
3
resolve to be alone
n
66
J
Pno.
Pno.
mf
J
Perc.
almost apathetic
with metal beater
Perc.
ppp


71
Pno.
Ped.
Pno.
f
mf
Ped.
Perc.
Perc.
76
K
15"
look around at Pno 2 and Perc 1, it's not clear exactly what is going on
Pno.
L.V.
15"
look around at Pno 1 and Perc 1, it's not clear exactly what is going on
Pno.
L.V.
ff
K
15"
look around at Pno 1 and Pno 2, it's not clear exactly what is going on, but you still can't trust them
Perc.
15"
Perc.
p

78

L

20"

Slide Whistle

Breathe as needed delicately, focus your energy inward

p

Pno.

20"

Slide Whistle

Breathe as needed delicately, focus your energy inward

p

Pno.

L

20"

Perc.

20"

Perc.

p

79

20"

Slide Whistle

p

Pno.

20"

Slide Whistle

p

Pno.

20"

Cautiously walk over to Perc 2.
Bring megaphone with you.

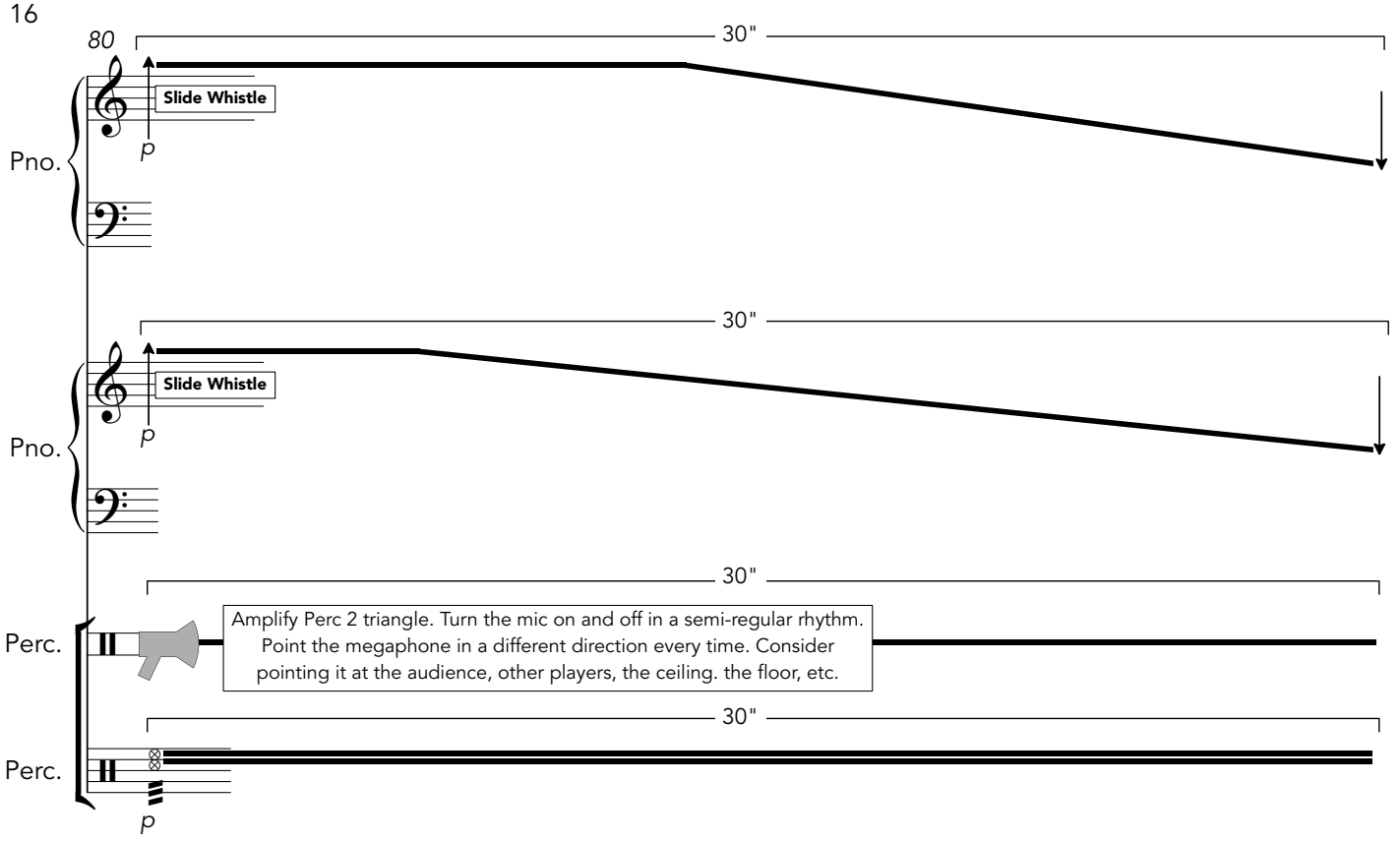
Amplify Perc 2 triangles. Turn the mic on and off in a semi-regular rhythm. Point the megaphone speaker in a different direction every time. Consider pointing it at the audience, other players, the ceiling, the floor, etc.

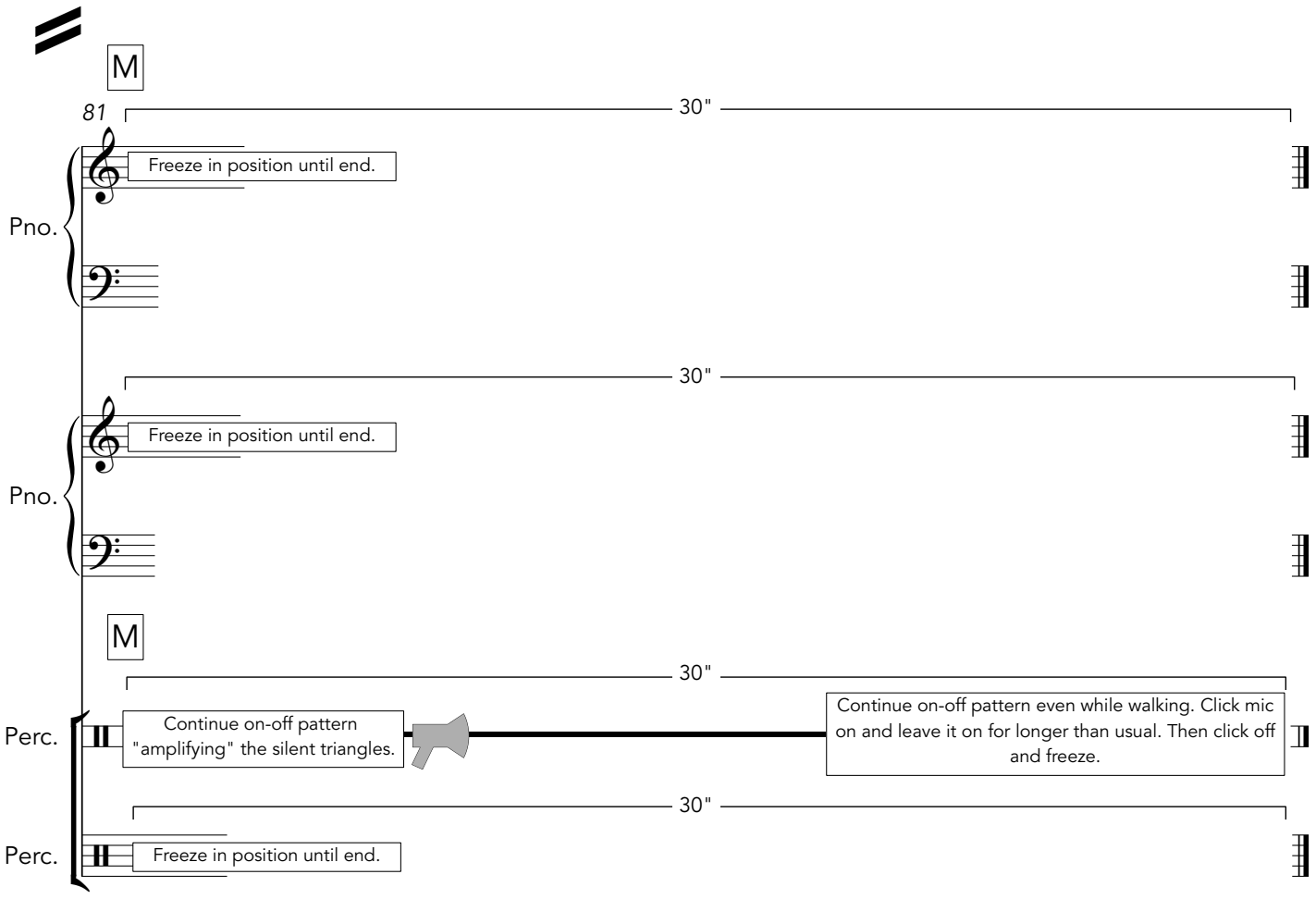
Perc.

20"

Perc.

p


80
30"
Slide Whistle
p
Pno.
30"
Slide Whistle
p
Pno.
30"
Perc.
Amplify Perc 2 triangle. Turn the mic on and off in a semi-regular rhythm. Point the megaphone in a different direction every time. Consider pointing it at the audience, other players, the ceiling. the floor, etc.
30"
Perc.
p


M
81
30"
Freeze in position until end.
Pno.
30"
Freeze in position until end.
Pno.
M
30"
Perc.
Continue on-off pattern "amplifying" the silent triangles.
Continue on-off pattern even while walking. Click mic on and leave it on for longer than usual. Then click off and freeze.
30"
Perc.
Freeze in position until end.