Christian A. Gentry

Earworm

for piano and live electronics

PREVIEW ONLY

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Program Notes
The thought that raced through my mind throughout composing this piece is “Am I writing a cover or a composition?” After sitting with this a few months my answer is emphatically and decidedly “yes.” Taking Monk’s “Rhythm-a-ning” as the main idea that is strung throughout the piece I purposefully scratch away anything that is “Monk” about it. There isn’t any real dissonance, disjunct rhythms and a lot of empty space. And where these things do happen, they are more “caricaturistic” than “characteristic” of Monk’s style. Instead I take the tune and push it to its logical conclusion by what is implied in the opening riff: A play on the whole idea of circle-of-fifths harmonic progression. There is no melody, just quickly moving harmony and dense chords. The comedic opening acts as a false start of sorts where the composer/performer/improviser seems to be creatively messing with an initial idea that he/she cannot quite get right, ultimately giving up through huge arm clusters followed by a more “tonal” and rhythmically-oriented B section. Finally, this section seems to get at a more clearly stated gestural proclamation of the opening material with harmonically dense chords that finally give way to the interlocking of chords between hands that end the piece on the dominant (F chord). In the mean time another performer live samples, loops, and otherwise affects the performance creating a mediated space between performer and audience. Essentially, what happens is a dramatic interplay between composition, improvisation, and recreating a classic tune by one of the greats. I also want to acknowledge that the chasing octaves idea that happens throughout represents another level of mediation. That is, McCoy Tyner’s solo version of the same piece recorded live in 1991 in Poland.

Performance Notes
Piano: Smaller clusters=black and white keys played with palms. Large clusters=black and white keys played with forearms. Also, tempos are flexible and should be communicated clearly with live electronics performer.

Live electronics: An application (in Max 7) is provided by the composer. At the present moment the best tool for performance is laptop interfaced with a Behringer BCF2000. The performer basically acts as a shaper of sounds that come out of the piano. Instructions are general at this point. As it is performed, instructions may change and become more specific, but the built-in flexibility should not be lost. There may be questions arise as to how long the captures of particular music from the pianist should last with the subsequent looping of such events. This is fully up to the performers, although the composer suggests that captures beyond two bars may be a bit too long. The ending of the piece is solely up to the live electronics performer.

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Part I: Pre-recorded Sounds

Please follow the following instructions. The music below is to be pre-recorded in advance of any performance of the work.

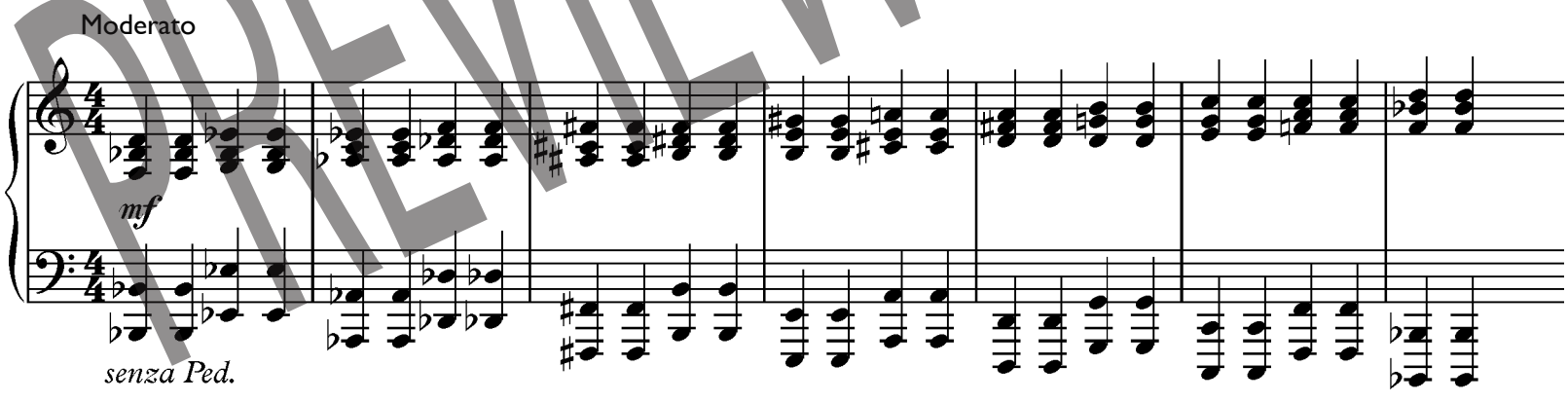
The music below should be recorded *no more* than **three times** using the key below as a guide for 1)Instrument type, 2) Recording device, and 3) Recording venue. There are eight possible recording situations and they are to be chosen randomly. As to how the recording situations are chosen is wholly up to the performer although the composer provides a random number generator patch for convenience sake. After the recordings, please send them to whomever will be operating the live processing.

Guide

Instrument	Device	Venue
Concert Grand Piano (CG)	Mobile device (MD)	Practice room (PR)
Rickety Upright (RU)	Portable handheld audio recorder (HR)	Concert Hall (CH)

Possible Recording Situations and Assigned Numbers

Random Number	Recording Situation
0	CG, MD, PR
1	CG, MD, CH
2	CG, HR, PR
3	CG, HR, CH
4	RU, MD, PR
5	RU, MD, CH
6	RU, HR, PR
7	RU, HR, CH



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Earworm

for piano and live electronics

for Jeff Manchur

Christian Gentry (2014)

Piano

ca. 5-7"

ca. 7-10"

ff *ppp* *ff* *ppp*

Ped. throughout

Electronics

R=subtle

ca. 5" ca. 5" ca. 3-5"

A **Vivace non troppo stabile**

f *pp* *mf* *pp* *ff* *pp* *mf*

EQ=High Pass

R=slowly increase delay

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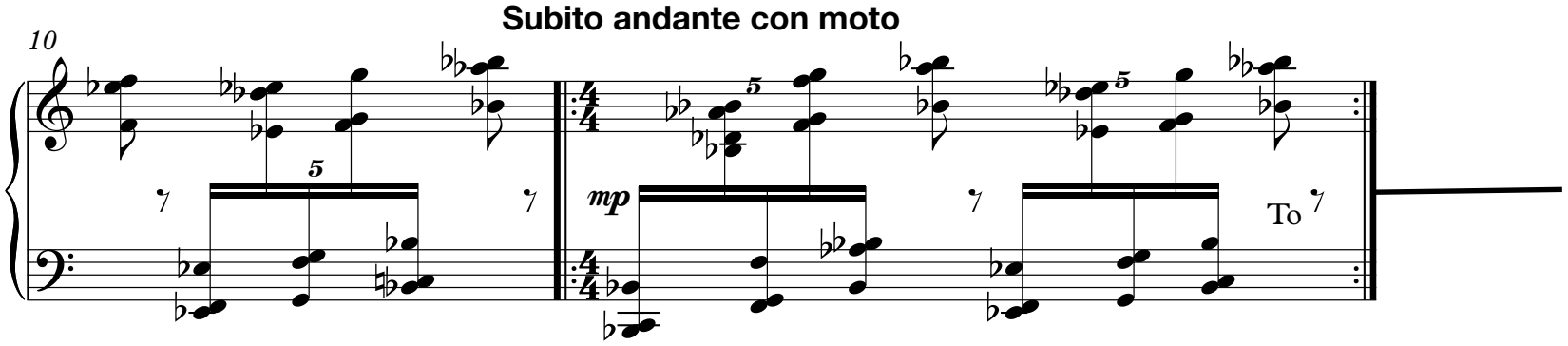
Subito andante con moto

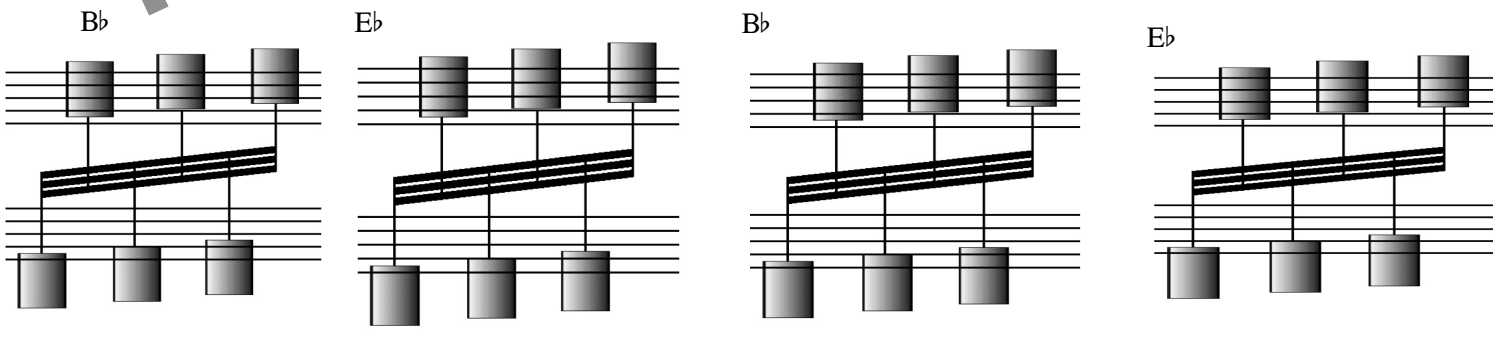


EQ=Peak-notch, midrange
Move peak across spectrum
faster and faster until clusters

ca. 10"

grow increasingly faster, louder, and dissonant until the chords become clusters.

B **Too fast and furious**



R=huge pre-delay and post delay
creating feedback loops

MIX-Throughout cluster section, slowly increase amplitude of processed signal while decreasing dry signal

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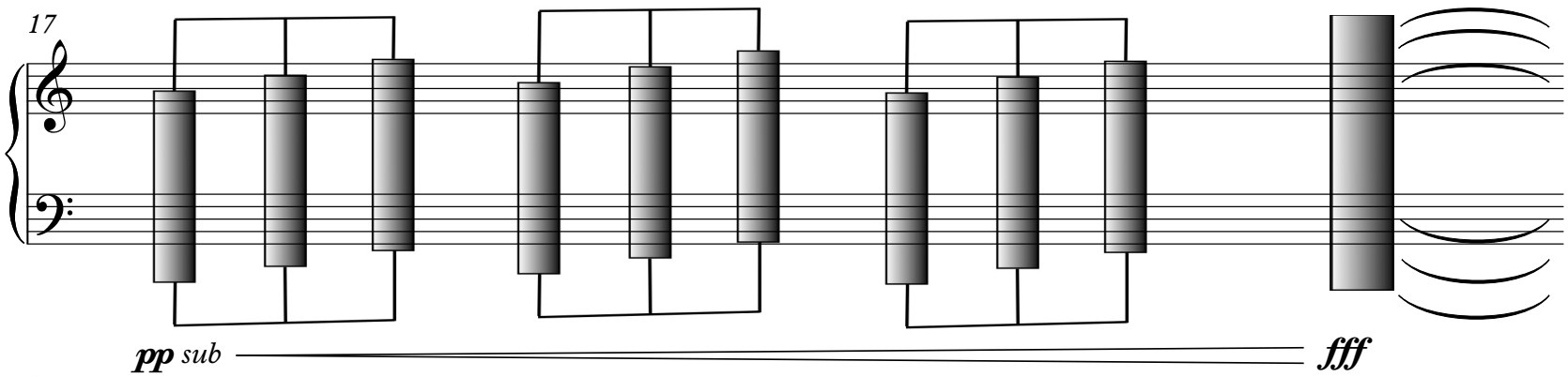
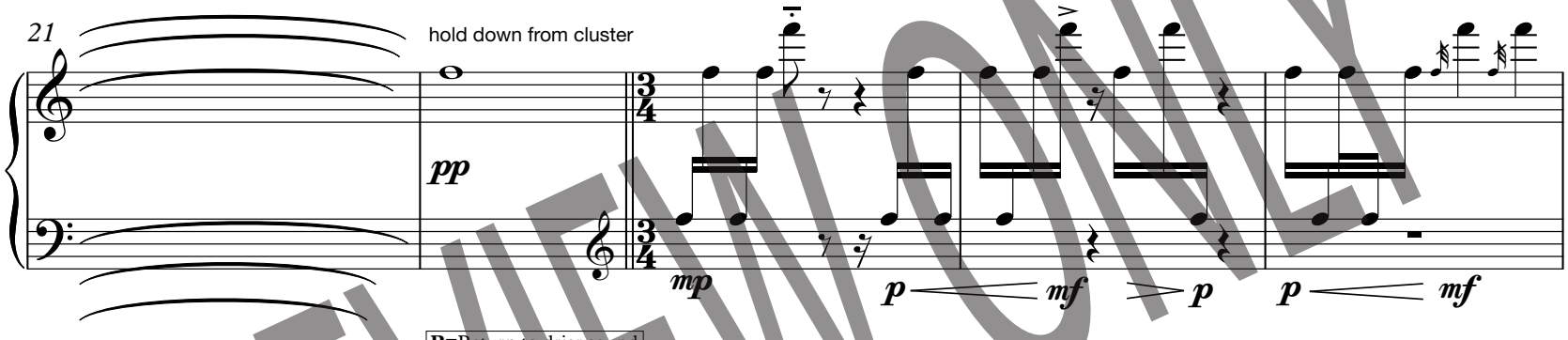
Molto ritardando, Allargando



Capture cluster

C **Pulsating, somewhat fast (♩=70-76)**

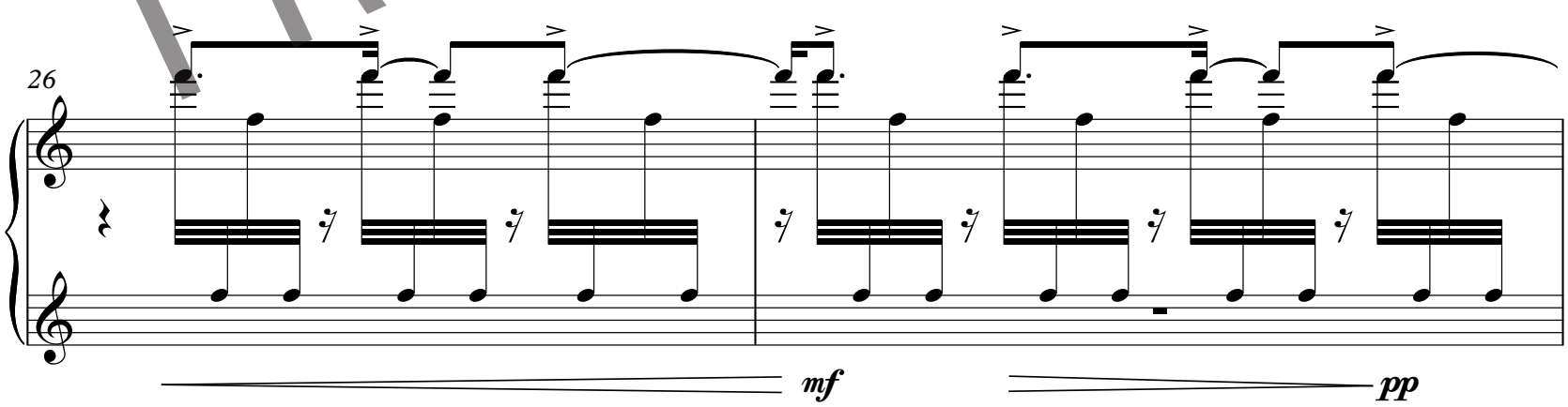


R=Return to drier sound

MIX-Increase dry signal

EQ=Subtly highlight and meander around the F5 harmonic spectrum

PLAY cluster, Revmix



Capture mm.54-55

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senza misura, yet pulsating

28

D

f

ppp

PLAY Capture 1

Capture 2

PLAY Effects=Percussive and a bit detuned

30

mf

32

pp

Playback Capture 2

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34

mf *pp*

Capture 3

36

E

mf *pp*

Fade Capture 1

Playback Capture 3

38

f *p*

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40

Repeat 3-5x **rit.**

mf sempre

pp

Fade Capture 2

Capture 4, m.65

A Tempo

F *Explosive!*

42

ff

pp

44

f

Playback Capture 4

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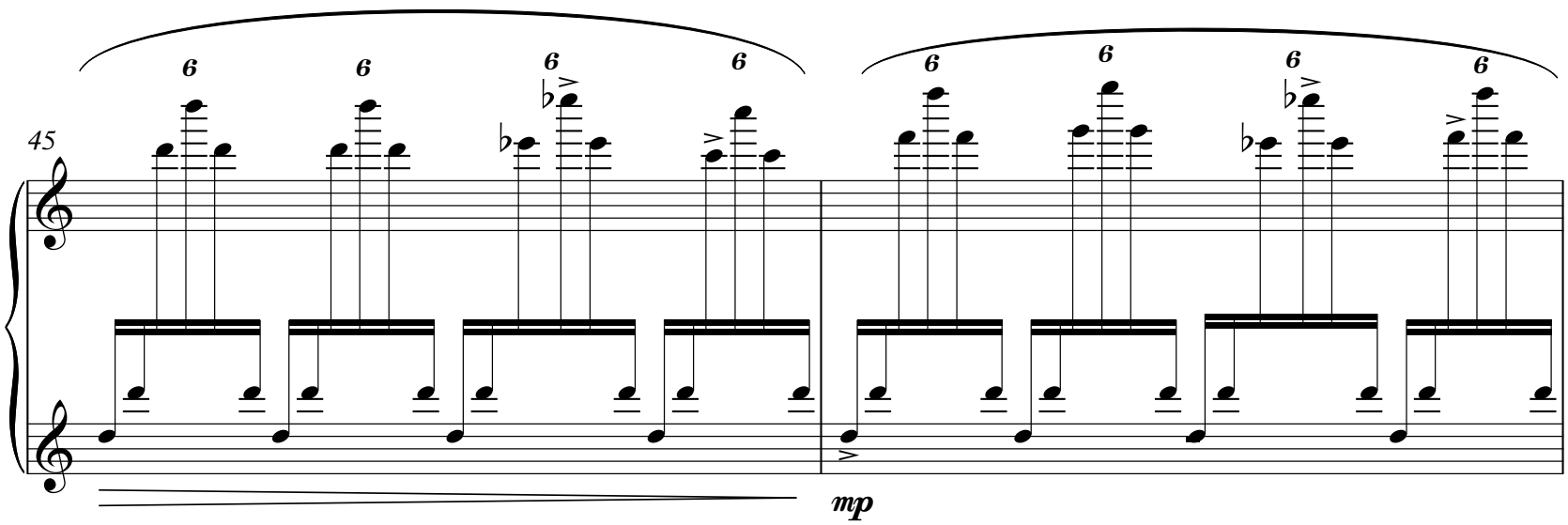
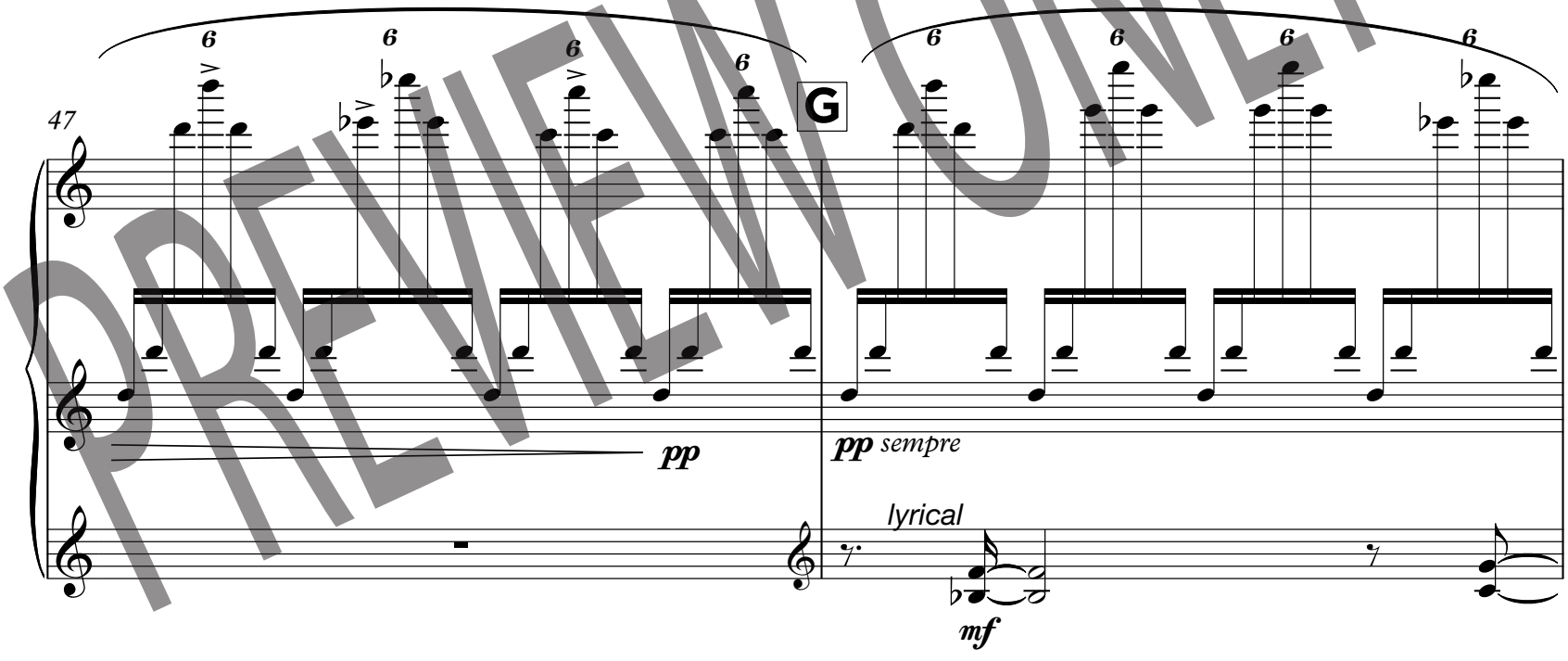
45



47



Fade Capture 3

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49

51

rit.

53

A tempo

H

PREVIEW ONLY

55

57

Capture 5, especially F Pedal

59

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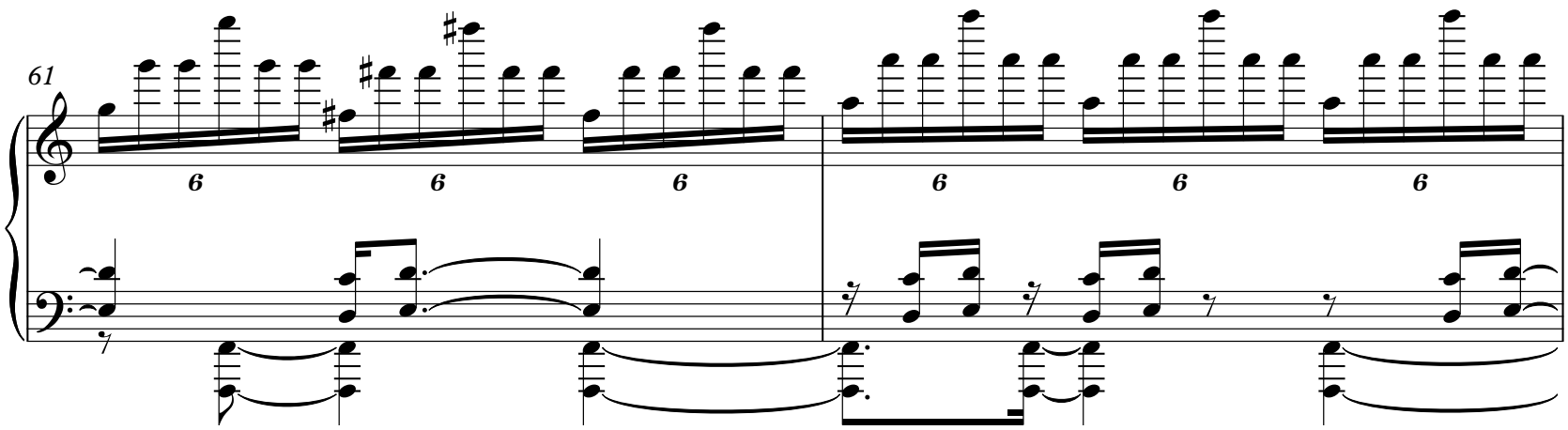
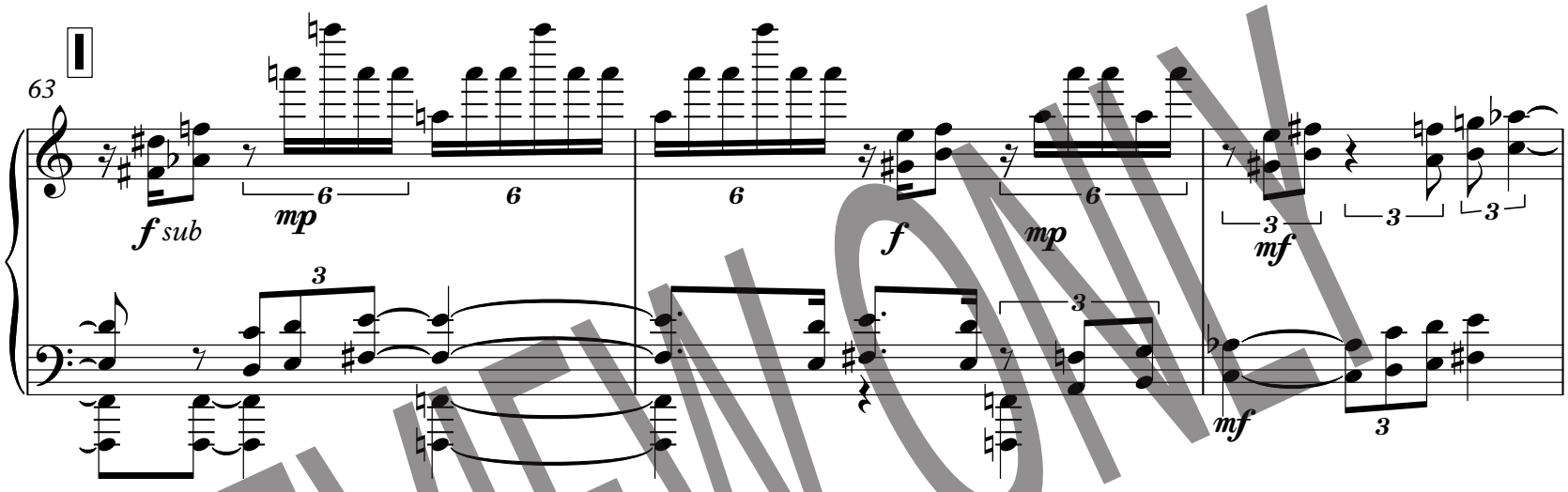
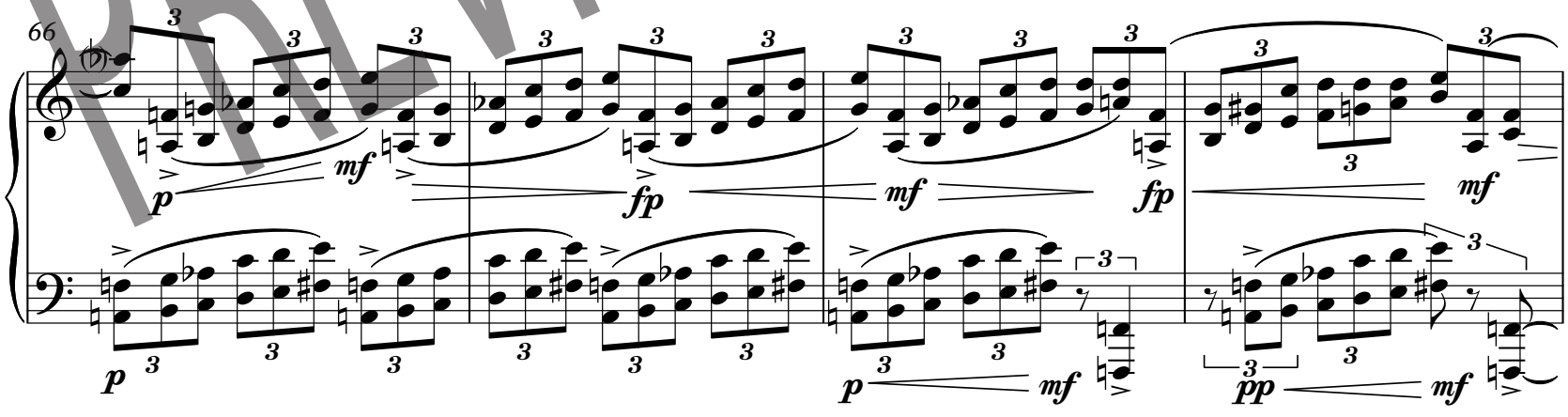




Playback 5

Playback EFX: Low pass, emphasize 44-87 hZ



EFX: Alter direct line-in through downsampling, bit distortion, and delay until m.104

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70

fp *mf* *fp*

mf *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf*

74

molto accel.

fp *mf* *fp*

pp *mf* *fp*

78

Allegro assai

J

f *pp* *ff*

CUT ALL EFX: Begin Circle of Fifths loops

pp

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82

mf

85

pp sub

ff sub

pp sub

pp

90

ff sub

pp sub

ff sub

pp sub

ff sub

pp

PREVIEW ONLY

96

ppp

3 3 3 3 3 3

K

101

pp *mp*

pp *mp*

pp

Capture 6

106

mp

mf

p

PREVIEW ONLY

111

pp *mf* *pp*

115

mf *ff*

Rubato, expressive, nearly half time

pp

Capture 7

119 **L** **A Tempo**

pp *ff*

Rubato, expressive

mp

PREVIEW ONLY

123

A Tempo

pp

f

mp

127

f

Rubato, expressive

mp

psub

131

A Tempo

pp

f

p sub

PREVIEW ONLY

133

135

ff

pp sub

Playback 7

139

Rubato, expressive

rit.

mp

ppp

Playback 6

PREVIEW ONLY

M **A Tempo**

144

pp

poco a poco crescendo

146

mf

148

ff

pp sempre

pp sub.

PREVIEW ONLY

150

ff

152

ff sub *pp sub* *ff sub* *pp sub* *ff sub* *pp sub* *ff sub*

pp sub

Capture 8

End all playbacks

155

pppp

Playback 8

R: Increasingly wet w/more post-delay

ff *let ring and fade*

23 Jan 2015
Somerville, MA

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