Niki Zohdi

Occulta scientia siderum

2021

for solo bass clarinet in B♭

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Occulta scientia siderum

(2021)
for
solo bass clarinet in B-flat
Duration: c.6 minutes

The title, *Occulta scientia siderum* (tr. secret knowledge of the stars), alludes to what was found written on the epitaph of English composer John Dunstaple (c.1390-1453) at St Stephen, Walbrook, the place he was also buried. Unfortunately, the original epitaph was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666 but was reinstated in 1904.

John Dunstaple has been an influence on my music for a number of years as I find many nuances and aspects of his musical style and process being integral to the way I continue to develop my compositional style. *Occulta scientia siderum* contains three rather specific subjects that relate to Dunstaple in one way or another. First, the material for the piece is directly derived from Dunstaple's motet *Ascendit Christus super coelos* (15th century) from using implemented quotations, to using hidden references. The quotations and derivations of the Dunstaple material are 'hidden' by the use of constantly fluctuating levels of texture within a monophonic polyphony. This means that the quotations and references are always somewhere in between being quotations and not being quotations: they fluctuate within a middle ground between the two contrasts. Second, when constructing material for the piece, I utilised the use of the interval of a third as one of Dunstaple's stylistic traits was triadic harmony. *Occulta scientia siderum* exposes the interval of a third throughout the piece and these moments of exposure. Finally, as the title translates to 'secret knowledge of the stars', the intention behind aurally obscuring quotations and references of Dunstaple's material relates to the concept of secrecy as the quotations are never quite tangible, and are hidden as secrets throughout the piece.

Performance directions:

Very dry & percussive articulation:

Overblown notes** (let upper harmonics ring)**:** ◆

Quartertones:

Slightly dry & percussive articulation:

Multiphonics*:

Breath tone:** ◇

Slap tongue:

Cancels out previous direction: ord.

Change from one state to another: ⟶

Flutter tongue: flz. + tremolando

All **gracenotes** before the beat
All **trills, tremolandi and gracenotes** as fast as possible

No **vibrato**

SCORE IS TRANSPOSED

Accidentals are only valid for the note they precede, unless that note is immediately repeated

* Multiphonics are derived from Harry Sparnaay, *The Bass Clarinet: A Personal History* (Barcelona: Periferia, 2010)
** overblown notes and breath tones last as long as the bracket succeeding the symbol

Vocalisations (on ossia):

Transposed into B-flat

Top line of 3-line stave (e.g. bb.61-64): high vocal register
Middle line of 3-line stave: middle vocal register
Bottom line of 3-line stave: low vocal register
Between lines: between vocal registers
Follow the basic line of the curve dependent on own vocal register

Return to determinate vocalisations (in any comfortable register) on 5-line vocal staves

Vocal dynamics depend on the dynamics on the bass clarinet line

Occulta scientia siderum

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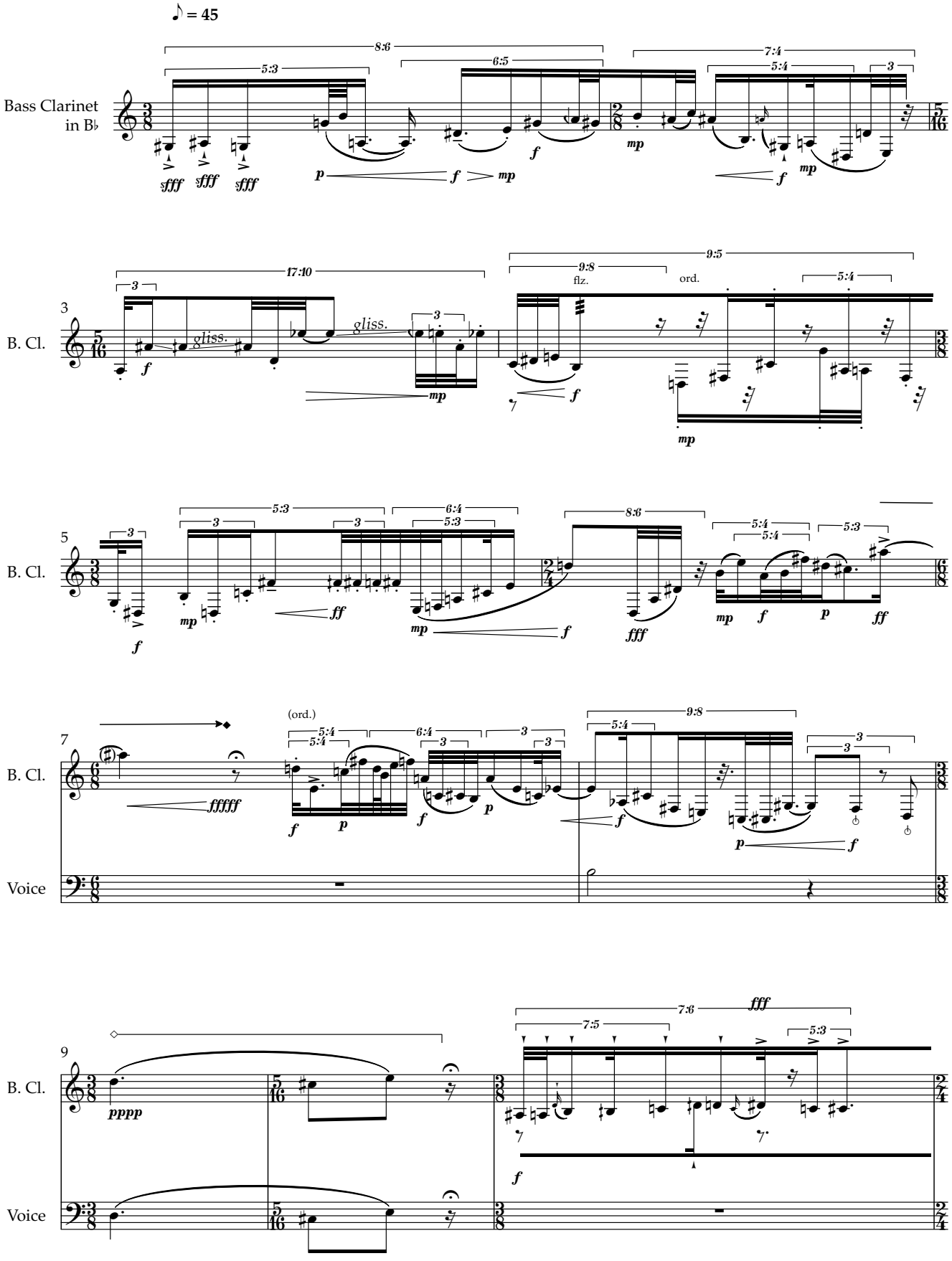
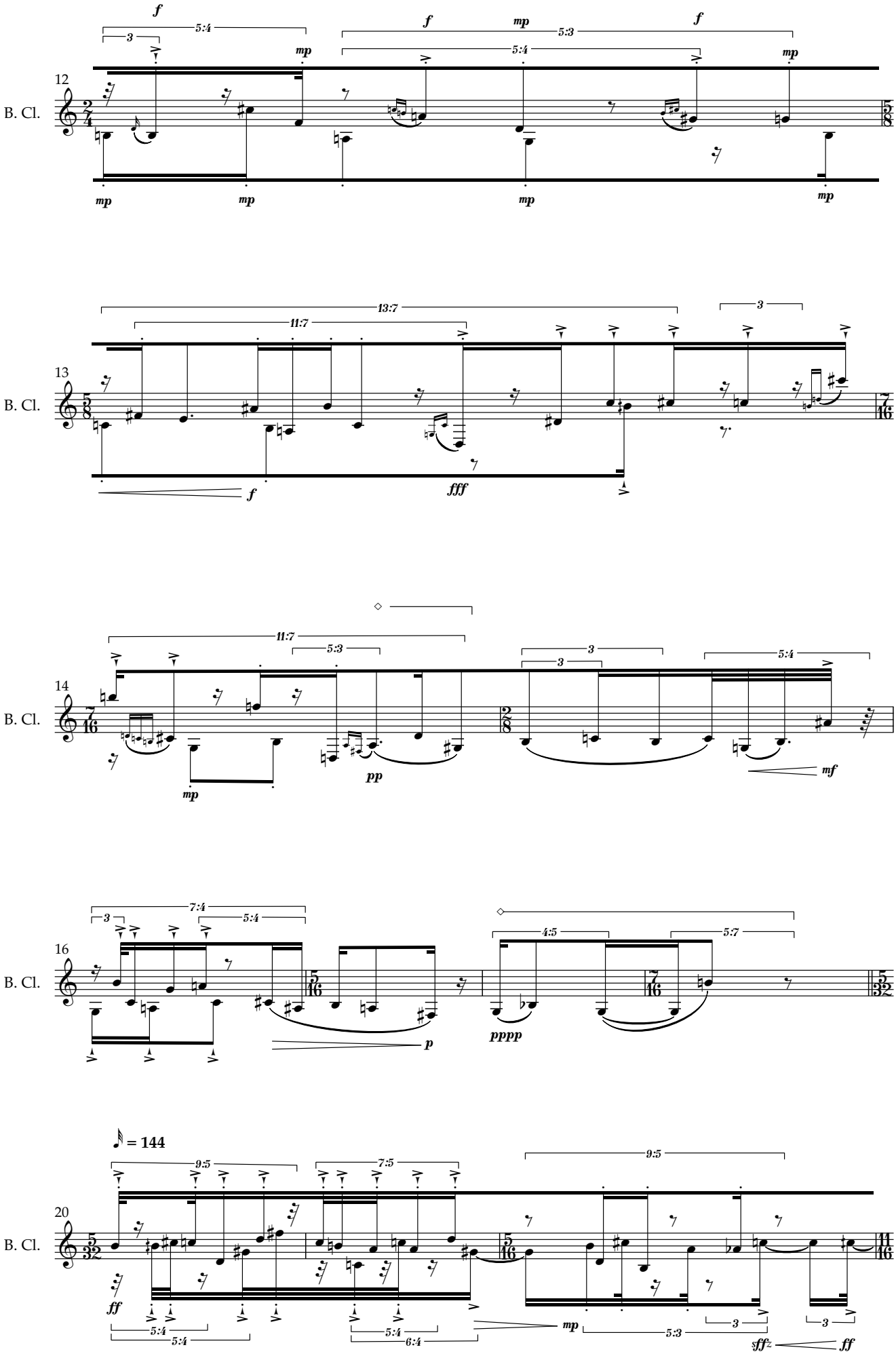
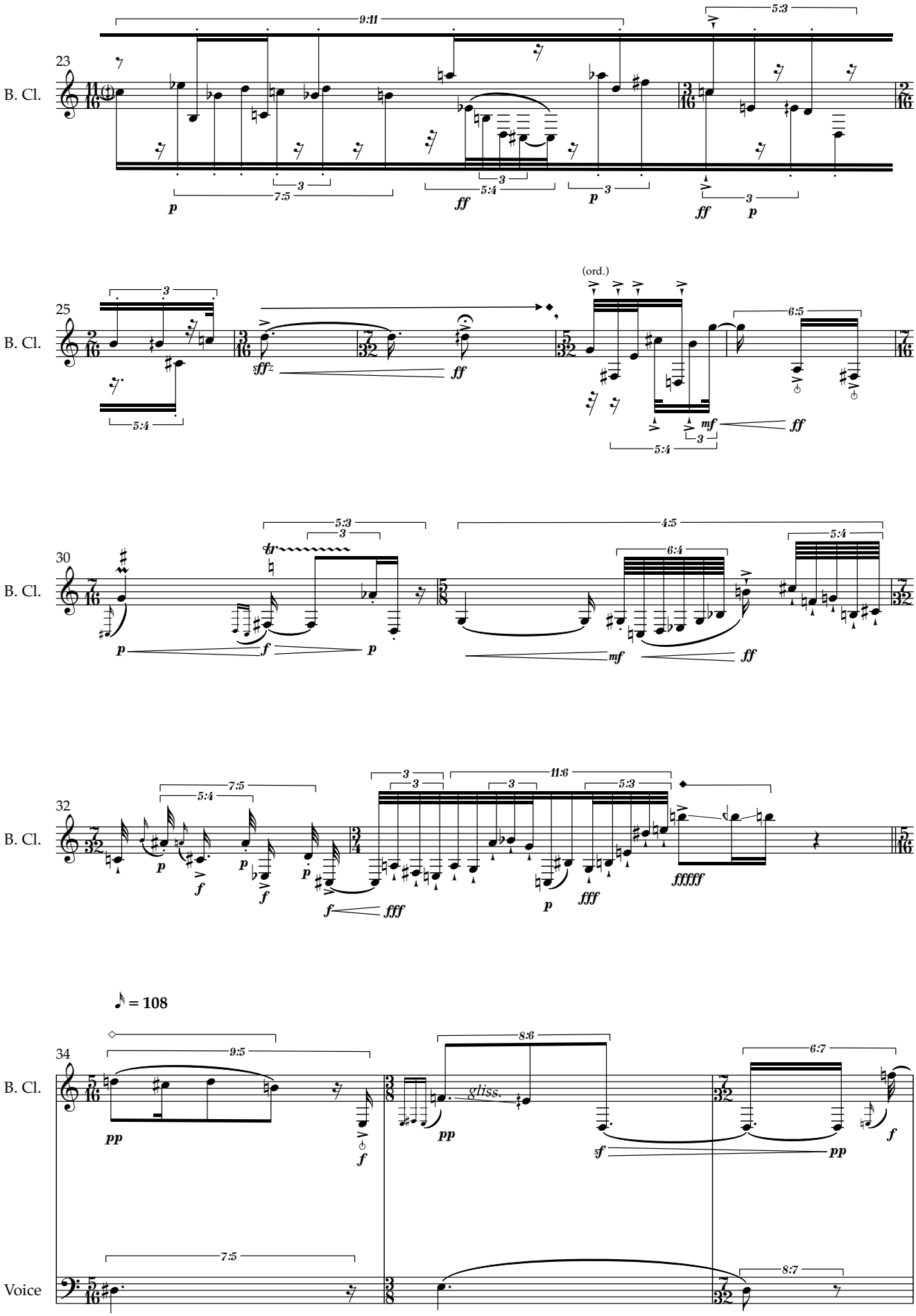
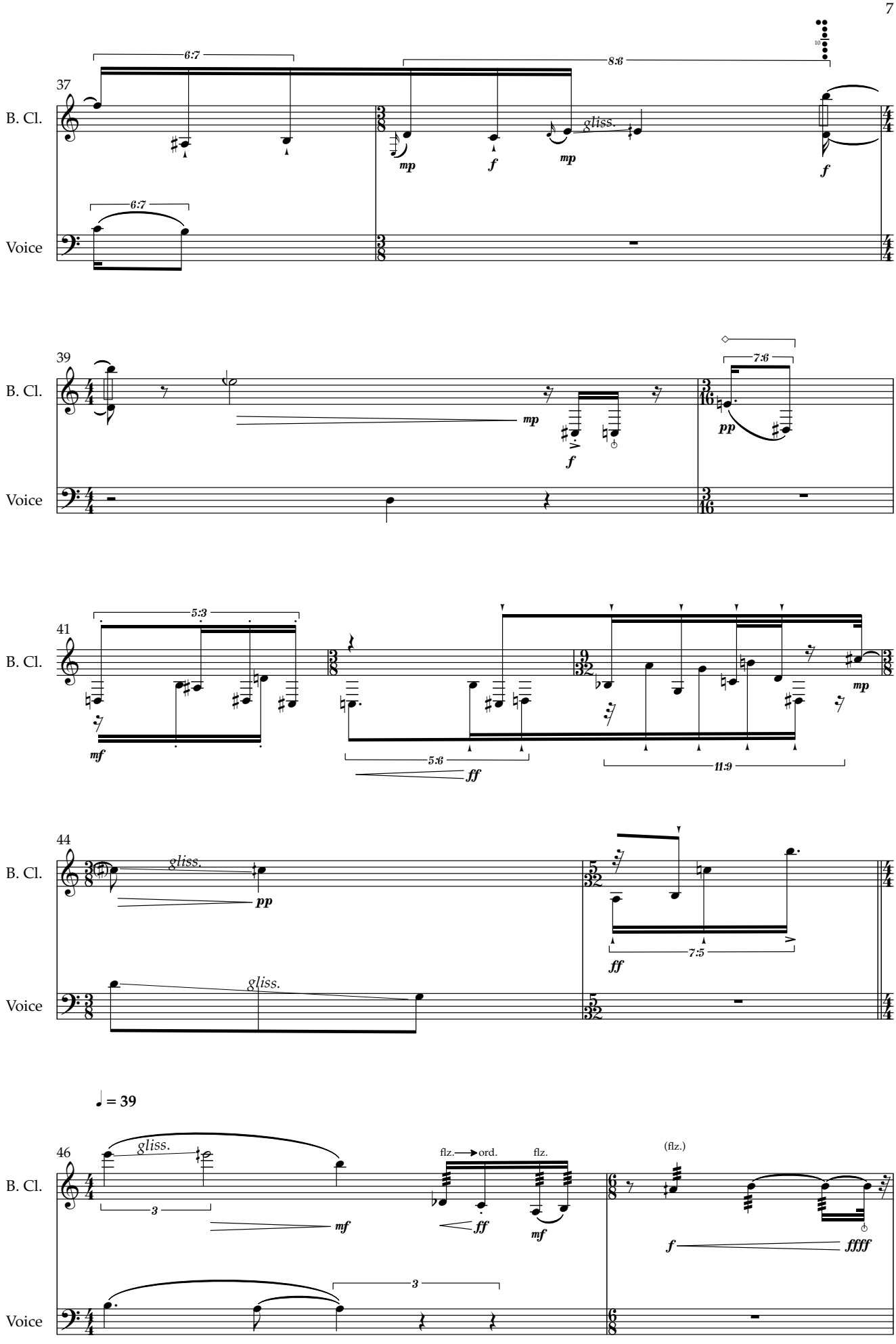
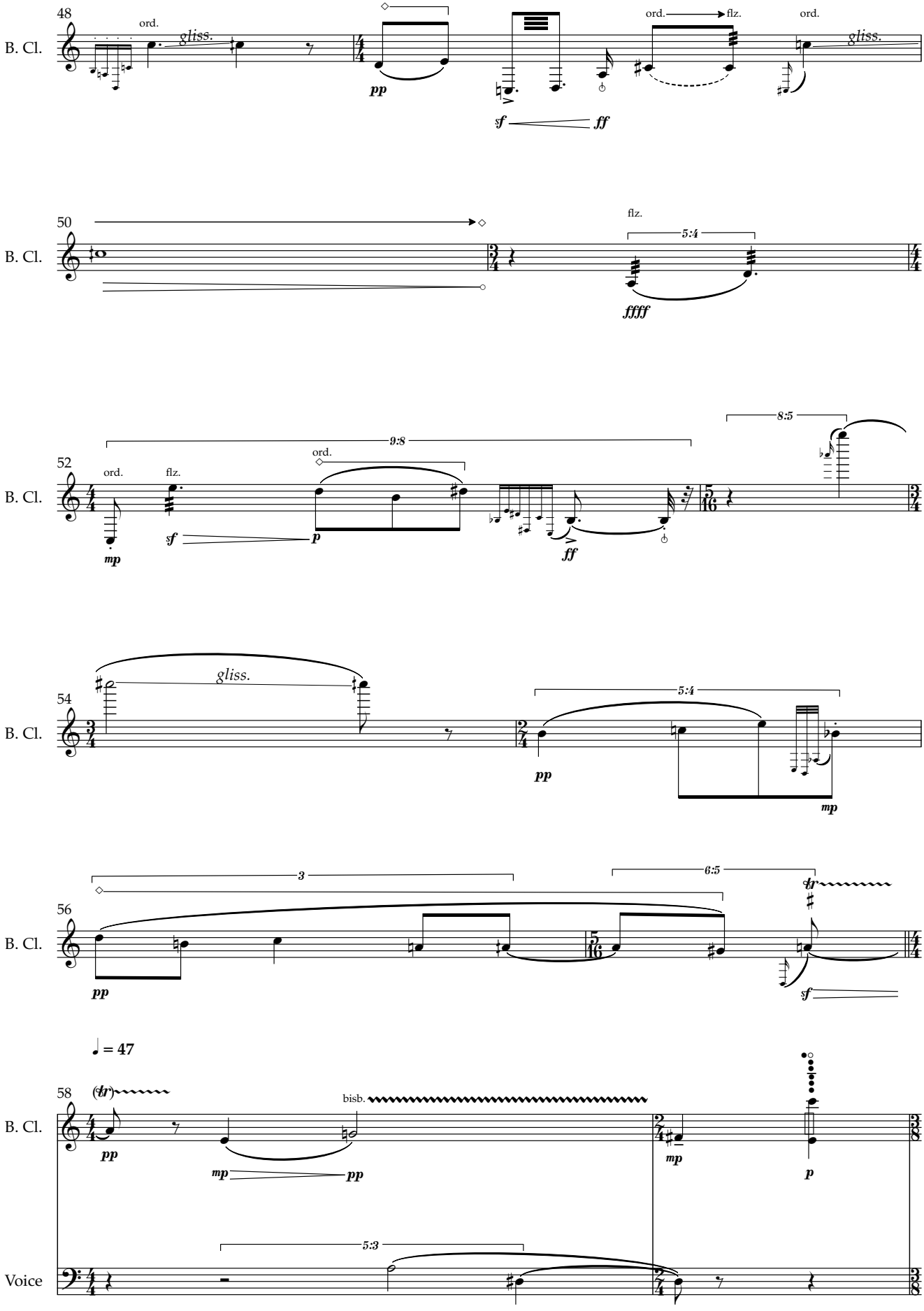
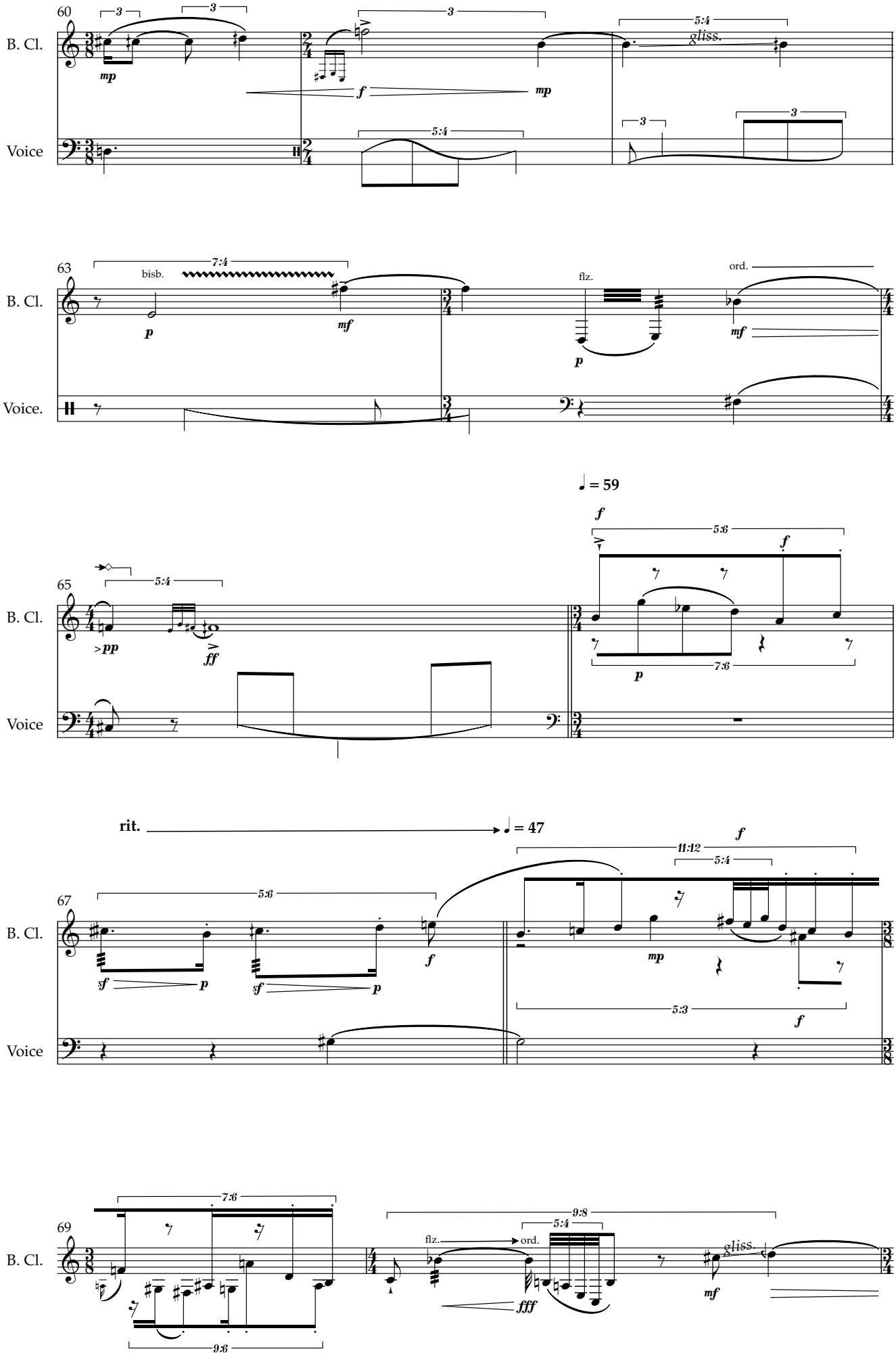


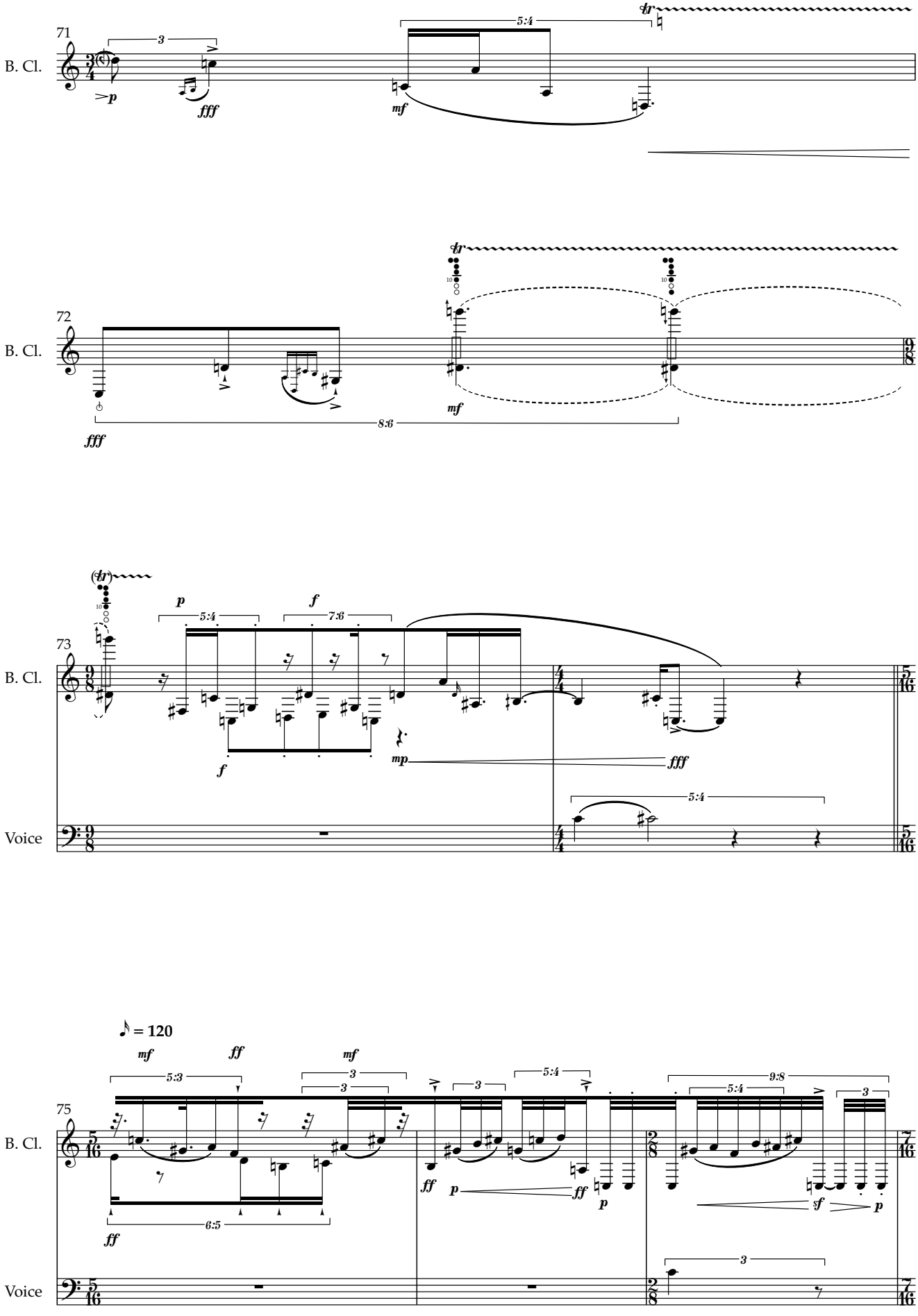

12
B. Cl.
13
B. Cl.
14
B. Cl.
16
B. Cl.
20
B. Cl.
♪ = 144

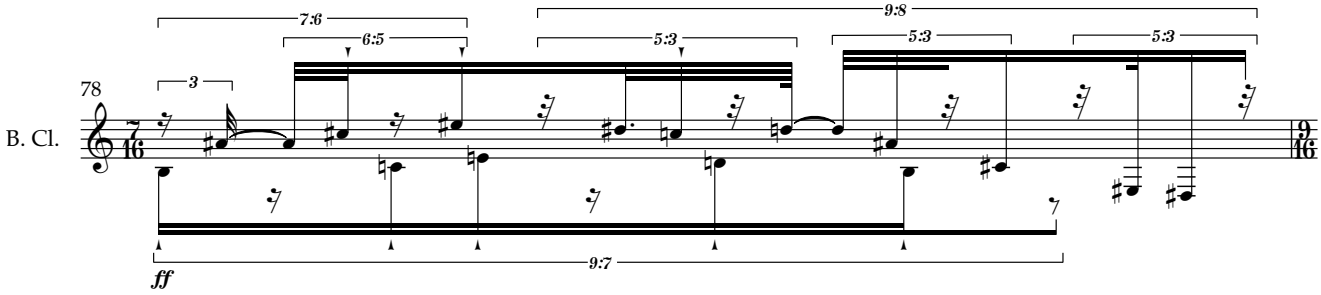

23
B. Cl.
9:11
5:3
7:5
5:4
p
ff
25
(ord.)
6:5
sffz
mf
30
4:5
6:4
5:4
tr
32
11:6
fff
fffff
♪ = 108
34
9:5
8:6
6:7
gliss.
sf
Voice
7:5
8:7

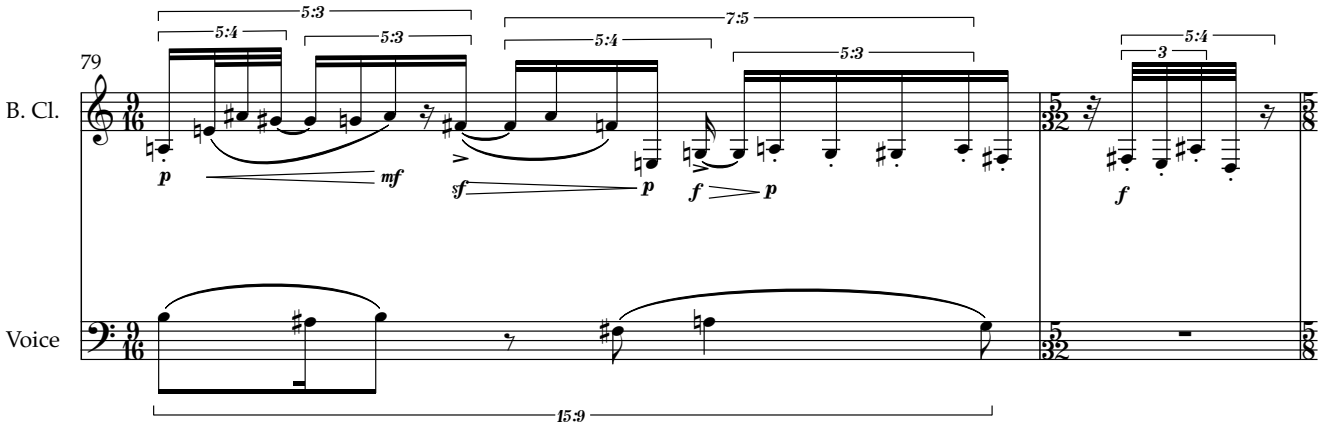

37
B. Cl.
Voice
6:7
8:6
gliss.
mp
f
mp
f
6:7
39
B. Cl.
Voice
mp
f
7:6
pp
41
B. Cl.
Voice
5:3
mf
5:6
ff
11:9
mp
44
B. Cl.
Voice
gliss.
pp
gliss.
7:5
ff
♩ = 39
46
B. Cl.
Voice
gliss.
3
mf
flz.→ord.
ff
flz.
mf
3
(flz.)
f
fffff

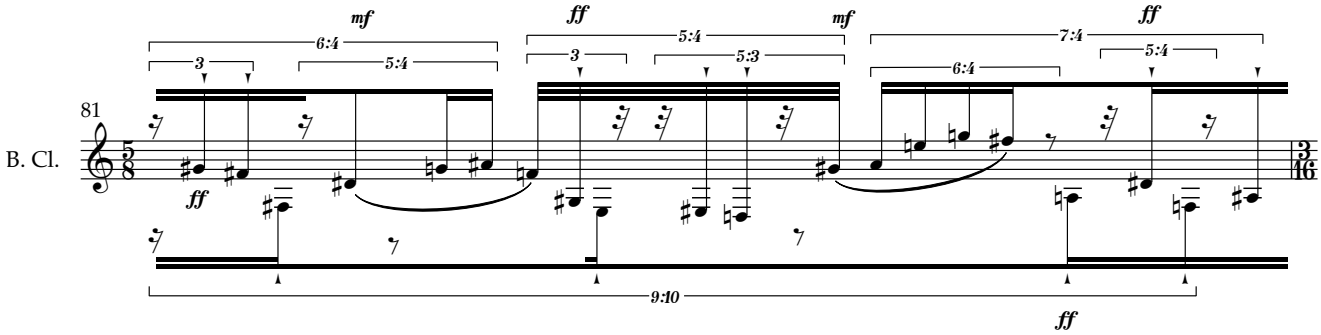

48
B. Cl.
ord.
gliss.
pp
sf
ff
ord.
flz.
ord.
gliss.
50
B. Cl.
flz.
5:4
ffff
52
B. Cl.
9:8
8:5
ord.
flz.
ord.
mp
sf
p
ff
54
B. Cl.
gliss.
5:4
pp
mp
56
B. Cl.
3
6:5
tr
pp
sf
♩ = 47
58
B. Cl.
(tr)
bisb.
pp
mp
pp
mp
p
Voice
5:3

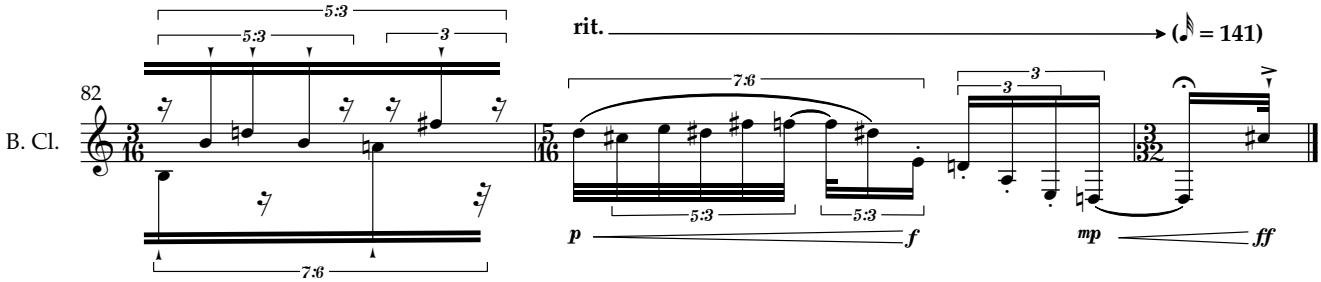

60
B. Cl.
Voice
mp
f
mp
gliss.
63
B. Cl.
Voice.
bisb.
p
mf
flz.
p
ord.
mf
65
B. Cl.
Voice
>pp
ff
♩ = 59
f
f
p
f
67
B. Cl.
Voice
rit.
♩ = 47
sf
p
sf
p
f
mp
f
f
69
B. Cl.
flz.
ord.
fff
gliss.
mf


71
B. Cl.
3
5:4
tr
p
fff
mf
72
B. Cl.
tr
mf
8:6
fff
73
B. Cl.
Voice
(tr)
p
5:4
f
7:6
f
mp
fff
5:4
75
B. Cl.
Voice
♪ = 120
mf
ff
mf
5:3
3
3
5:4
9:8
5:4
3
ff
6:5
ff
p
ff
p
sf
p
3


78
B. Cl.
7:6
6:5
9:8
5:3
5:3
5:3
3
9:7
ff


79
B. Cl.
Voice
5:3
5:4
5:3
7:5
5:4
5:3
5:4
3
15:9
p
mf
sf
p
f
p
f


81
B. Cl.
mf
ff
mf
ff
6:4
5:4
5:4
5:3
7:4
5:4
6:4
3
9:10
ff
ff


82
B. Cl.
5:3
5:3
3
7:6
rit.
(𝅘𝅥𝅯 = 141)
7:6
5:3
5:3
3
3
p
f
mp
ff