Cecilia Damström

Op.74

# Helene

for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and piano

20'

#### **Requirements**:

All players are required to sing and whistle

(The ensemble will be required to sing/whistle chords. Please feel free to change notes among each other, according to personal ranges. However make sure that all notes of the chord are sung/whistled, if possible in the written octaves.)

Flute: Flute and Piccolo flute Extended techniques: jetwhistle, singing while playing

Oboe: Requiered to play on reed only (in second movement)

Clarinet:

A big brush and a piece of wood to rub it against. Alternatively: two pieces of sandpaper on two pieces of wood to rub against each other

Bassoon:

A thick straw (used for voice therapy) A big (1 liter) jug of water to blow into

Piano:

Grand Piano with three pedals (sostenuto pedal) One E-bow for piano (can be purchased online at for instance Thomann) Blue Tack for putting inside the piano (one note [f#] in the last movement) Soft covered books for putting inside piano (Tape for marking the strings which will be prepared) All rhomb shaped notes are prepared notes Plectrum or old creditcard Slapstick

• Always continuous gliss. starting immediately from the first note.

Duration: 20 min Composed for Kokonainen Festival 2020 with support of The Finnish Arts Council Taike World premiere 7 August 2020; Janakkala Church Heli Haapala, Kristiina Salmi, Pekka Niskanen, Jaakko Luoma, Tiina Karakorpi

ISMN XXXXXXXX Score: GE XXXX Study score: GE XXXXX Copyright © 2020 Gehrmans Musikförlag AB, Stockholm Responstryck, Borås MLG/MM 2019

#### **Program note**

My third piano quintet "Helene" Op.74 is the last quintet out of a trilogy consisting of three large form works with the theme "Woman's Destiny". The trilogy is a three-year commission by the Kokonainen Festival in Finland. The first quintet "Minna" was premiered at the festival in 2017 and the second quintet "Aino" was premiered at the festival in 2018.

The third quintet "Helene - Nuances from the life of Helene Schjerfbeck" will get its world premiere this year on the 7th of August at the Kokonainen Festival 2020. It will be played by the incredible musicians Heli Haapala flute, Kristiina Salmi oboe, Pekka Niskanen clarinet, Jaakko Luoma bassoon and Tiina Karakorpi piano. As the name says, it is a selection of nuances and feelings from the life of the painter Helene Schjerbeck (1862-1946). Schjerfbeck is one of Finland's most famous modernists.

The art of Helene Schjerfbeck has been dear to me since I was a child and I painted my first copy (for own use) at the age of 12. In addition to loving her art I also felt a strong understanding and belonging to her as a person, as she throughout her life suffered from health problems and partly therefore was moth melancholic and depressed. She never married, painted all her life and finished her last painting a week before her death.

Schjerfbeck grew up under hard circumstances in a Swedish speaking family in Helsinki. She got a hip injury at the age of four which contributed to that she sat still a lot and probably therefore dedicated a lot of time to drawing. She was accepted to the Finnish Art Societies Drawing School at the mere age of 11 years and got a free place at the school. After she had completed her studies in Finland she with help of grants continued her studies in Paris and England. She often recollects in later letters these years to have been the happiest of her life. In a letter from 1918 to Einar Reutes she writes "In my youth there was hope and love towards the work, it was fun to paint, the only fun thing at all - the time in Paris and the first year in England. Then in Finland there was no hope anymore, no joy, all that contributed to that I won't say here." In the first movement "Dancing Shoes", named after a painting with the same name from 1882, I try to catch that joy of life. She returns to the motive of "dancing shoes" several times during her life, as she does to the happy memories from her time in Paris and England.

While abroad Schjerfbeck got engaged to an English painter and was engaged for two years before her fiancé broke up the engagement, probably because of her poor healt. She burnt all his letters and also has asked all her friends to burn all her letters that considered him. Therefore we don't know today who her fiancé was. The burning of all letters can also be heard in the first movement. In the 1920ties she comments that through the broken engagement she knew what pain was, but that she was happy about that she had been able to choose art over all the duties she would have had as a wife.

Although she didn't to fulfil any duties as a wife, she still had to fulfil her duties towards housekeeping. A lot of time and energy went to sweeping and washing the floors, cutting wood, lighting fire, washing clothes, making food and washing the dishes. As she was weak and sick most of her life, these duties robbed even more of her energy and limited the time she had left for painting. In a letter to Einar Reuter from 1932 she writes "They laugh at me when I say I have had a lot to do - I clean up, wash the dishes, cook food at times, sow clothes, mend all the clothes, and that is a lot, and every now and then I correct a painting -- If I sit down to paint there come bills, never a calm moment. If only I could be freed from the household!"

In general everything that is considered to have to with women's daily lives has been classified as unimportant and uninteresting. Therefore it is not a surprise that a female artist paints a painting such as Schjerbecks "Drying Laundry" from 1883 is a painting no male artist would have painted. In the same way as Schjerbeck illustrates the female everyday living with her art, I feel that as housholdwork took such a big part of her time and thought power in Helenes life, it is essential to dedicate a quarter of this piece to exactly drying laundry. In a letter from 1922 to Reuter she summarizes her wishes with the words "I am not looking for fame but for money - because with money I get the possibilities to paint more, and that is more than fame and honour for me."

Schjerfbeck is maybe most known for her around 40 self-portraits. She writes in a letter to Ada Thilén in 1921: "When I now so seldom have energy to paint, I have begun with a self-portrait. You always have the model at hands, it is just not at all fun to see yourself." She was also encouraged by the art dealer Gösta Stenman, who was her patron and made sure to both sell her paintings and create a financial independence for her. In two different letters from 1937 to her friend Reuter she comments on this "I am weak - but beginning the self-portrait Stenman wants to have." and "Isn't it strange that he still keeps wanting to have self-portraits!". She liked to investigate the different options she had and writes in a letter to Dora Estlander in 1944 "I'm looking at a book with painters self-portraits. They who embellish themselves are boring - Dürer and also others." In 1921 she writes to Reuter "Drew infront of the mirror, after 5 minutes the face falls together tired will be continued tomorrow...

This is the one life, an other hidden current is one's own real me." This own real she always seemed to look for in all her art. The third movement "Self-portraits" is a passacaglia consisting of 12 chords. Everytime the chord progression is repeated it is instrumented slightly differently, with different nuances. The first four chords are also the main ingredient in the first and last movements and parts from self-portraits can be heard in the second movement, when she is longing for to paint.

The Convalescent from 1888 is one of Schjerfbeck's most famous paintings and is also often called for "The Pearl of Ateneum" (the Finnish National Art Gallery). The motive is one of Schjerfbeck's most used motives (in addition to her self-portraits). The painting was exhibited at the Paris Exhibition in 1889 (that time with the name "The first greenery") and won a bronze medal of first class. The Convalescent can be seen as a contributions to the public debate, a tribute to Louis Pasteur's discoveries of infectious diseases and their cures. The original title however seems to refer to an awakening after a winter or a disease and appears to be a belief in the future. The paining has also been interpreted by many as a sort of self-portrait, an insight and introduction to a new phase in her painting and that she finally felt liberated from the broken engagement. It is also speculated if she returned to the motive so often due to suffering a lot from her hip injury all her life and also being a large part of her life ill and thus a convalescent herself. But since she was a shy person and has not spoken about this topic, all this remains only as speculations.

# Helene

Nuances from the Life of Helene Schjerfbeck

### for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and piano

#### Score in C

#### I. Balskorna

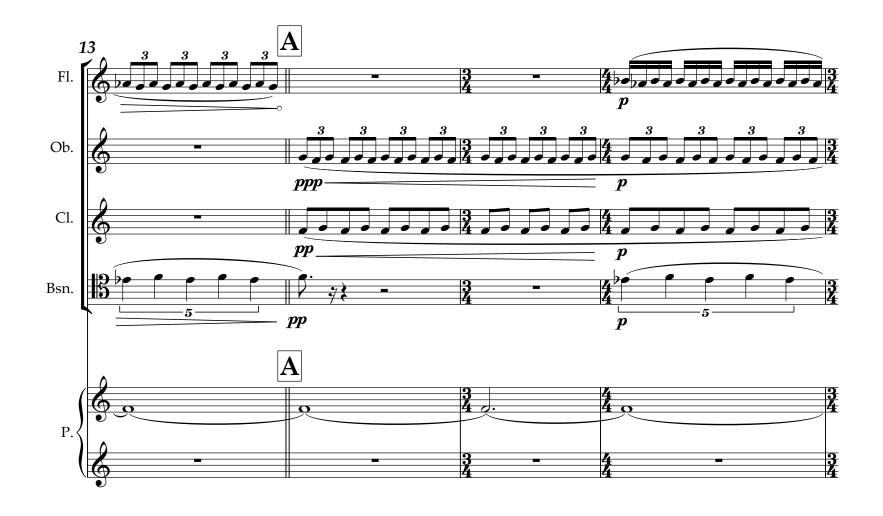
"I ungdomen fanns hopp, och kärlek till arbete det var roligt att måla, det enda roliga som fanns - tiden i Paris och första året i England. Sedan i Finland fanns intet hopp mer, ingen glädje, allt hvad som verkade det säger jag ej här".



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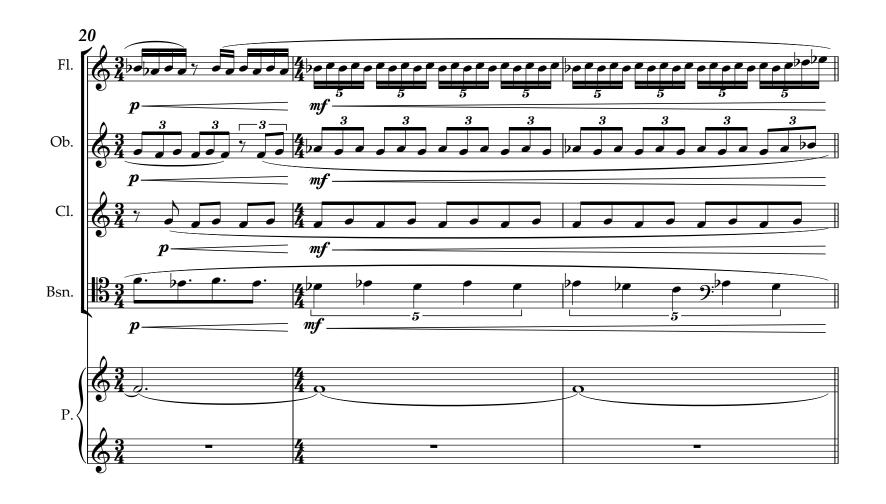


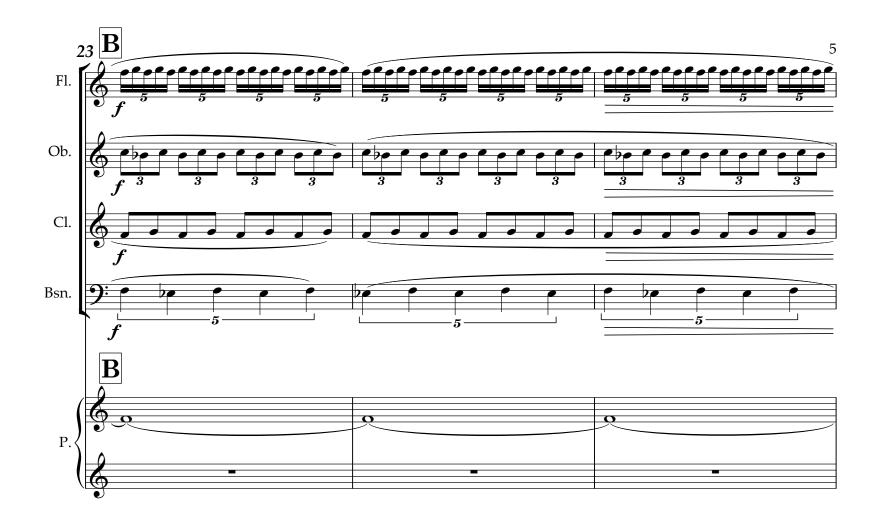






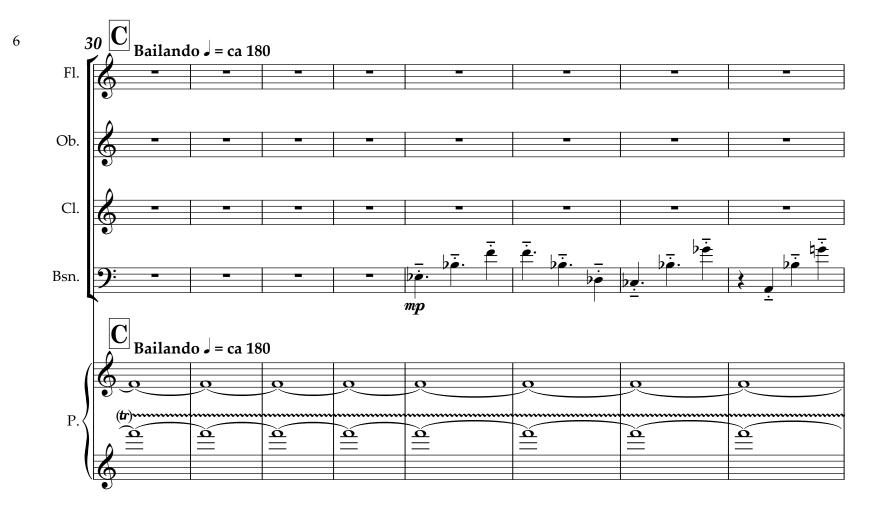


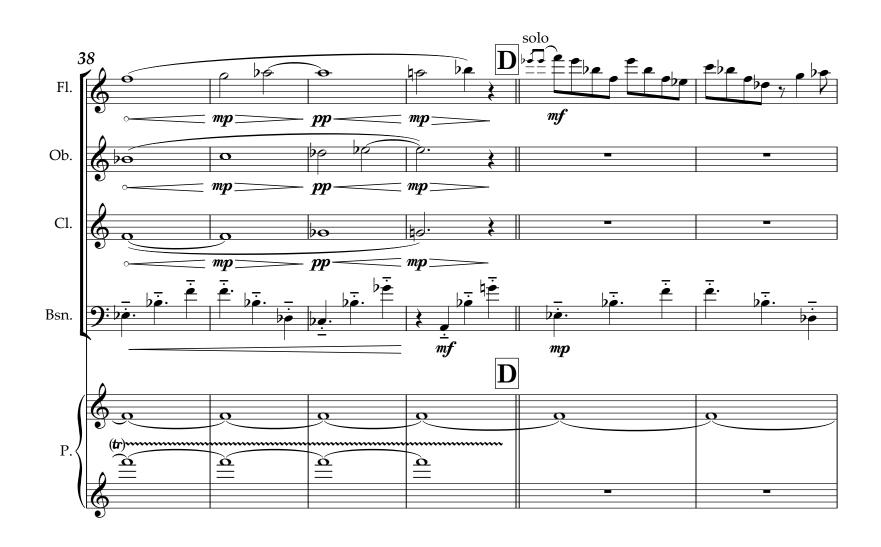




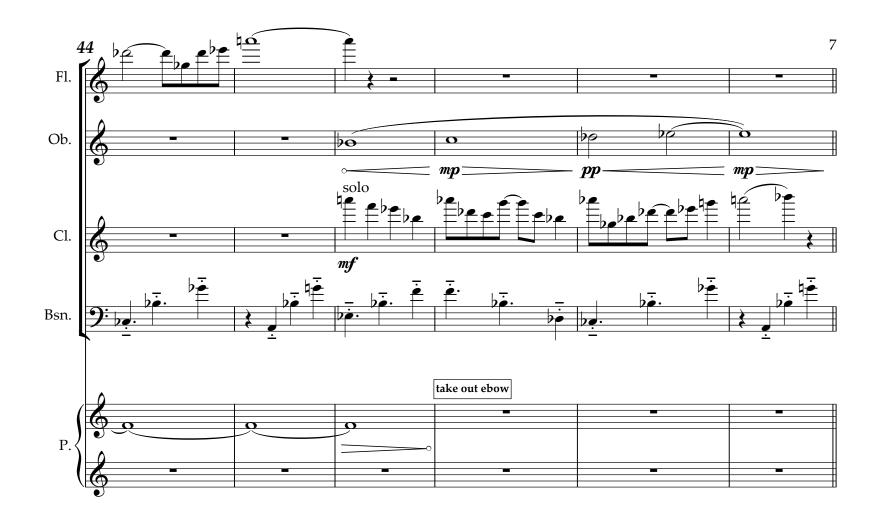




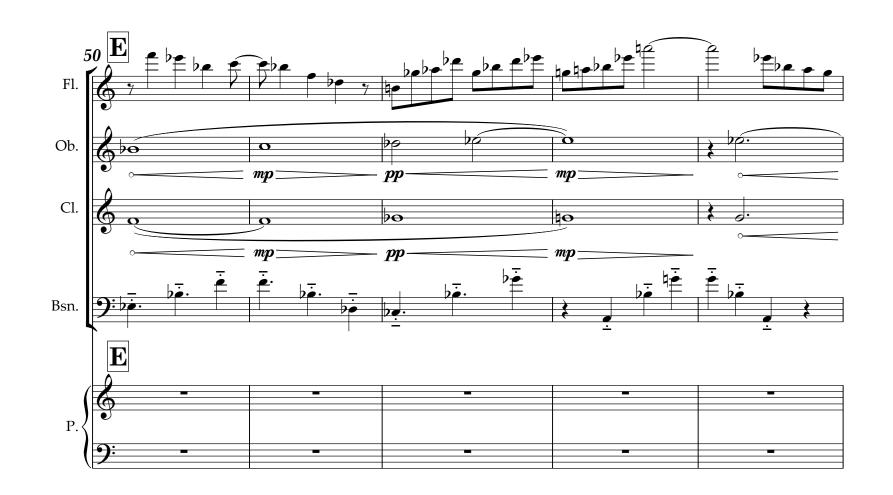


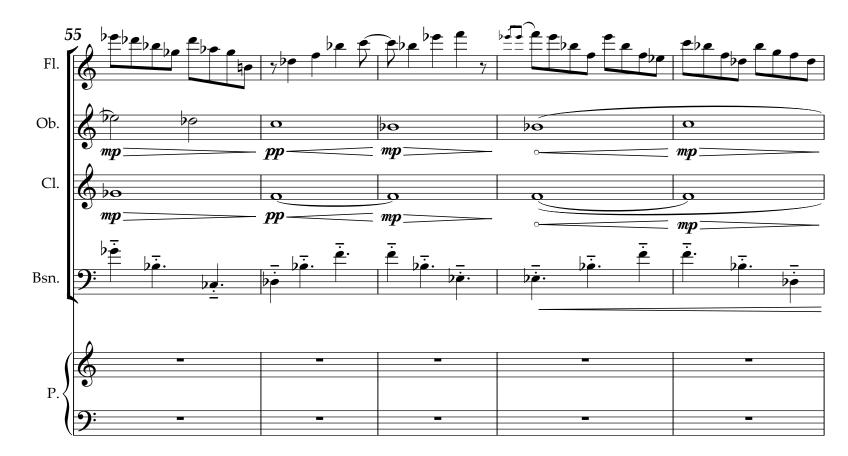


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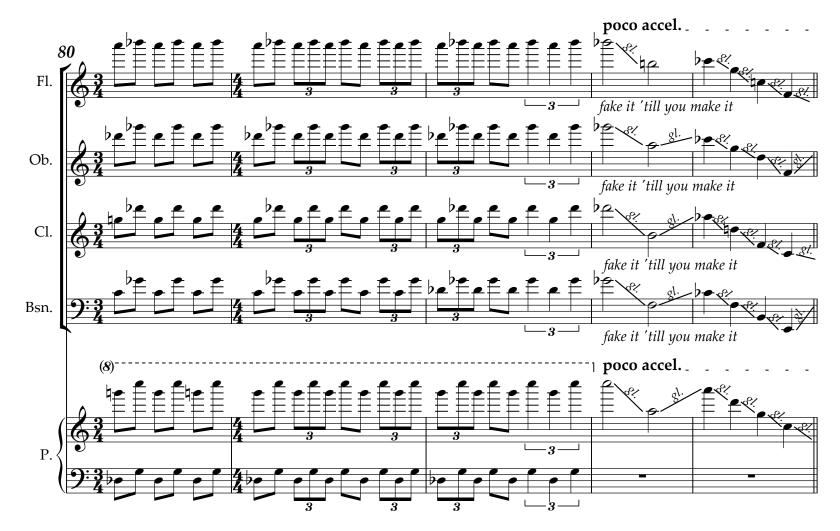




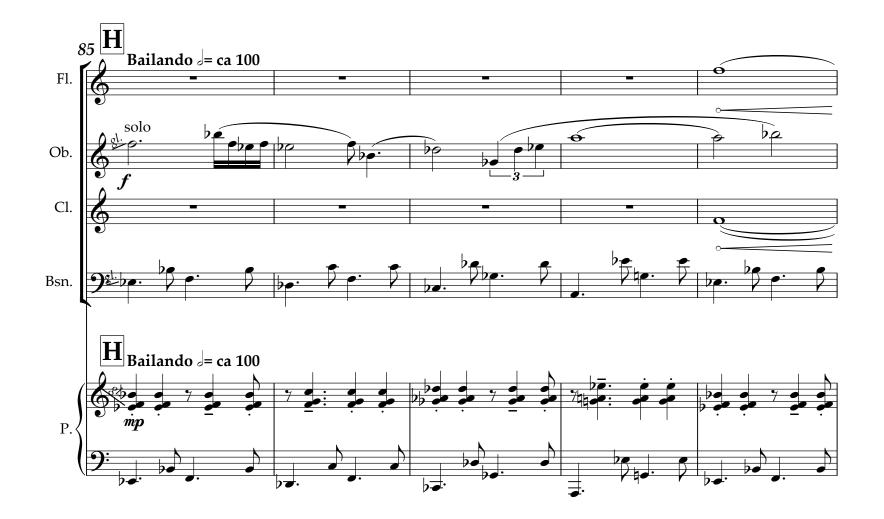


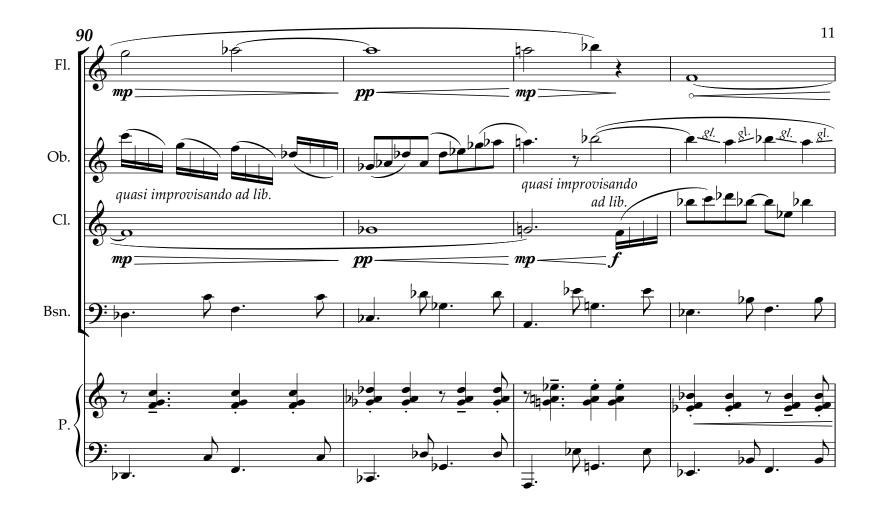


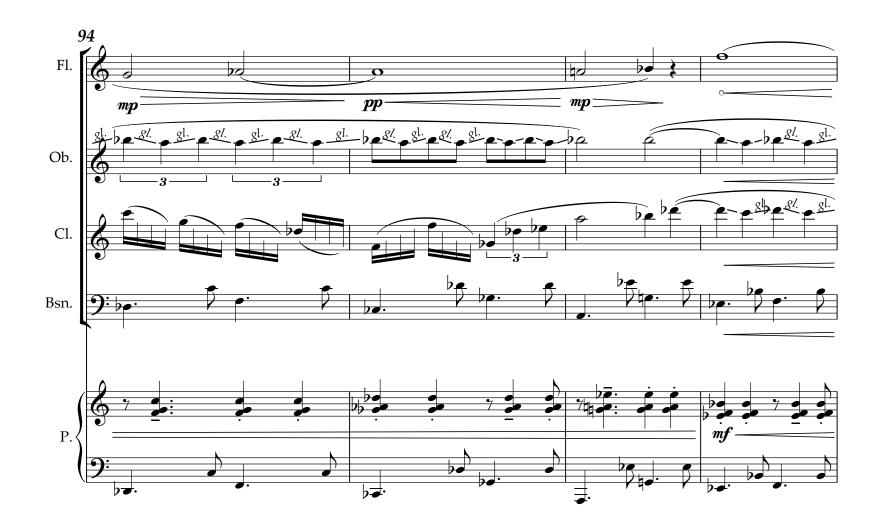








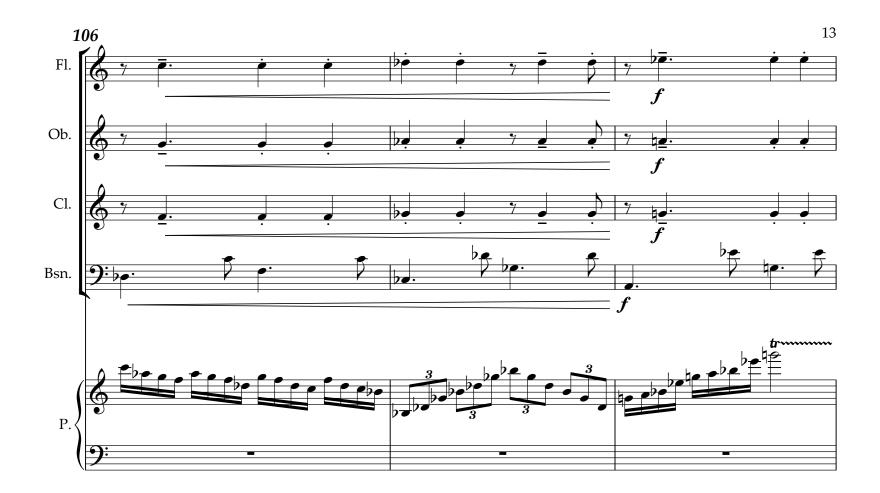










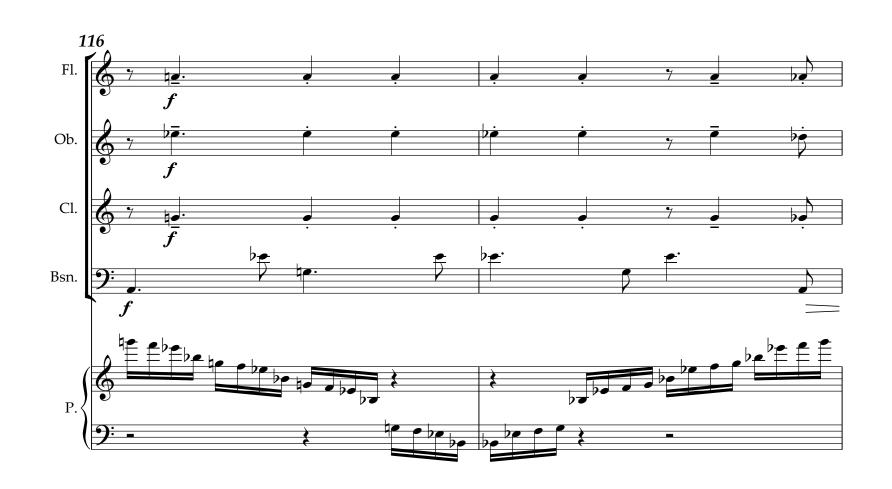


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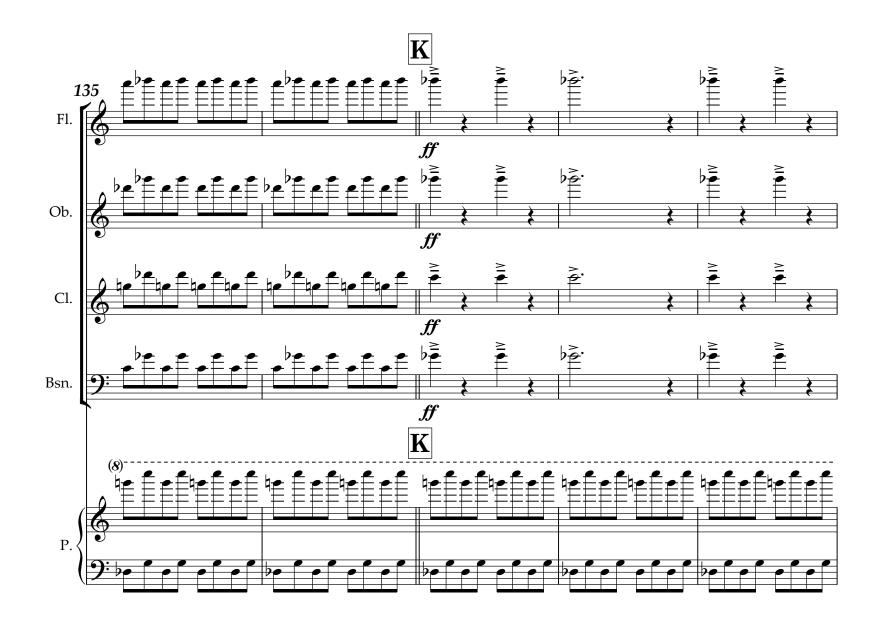


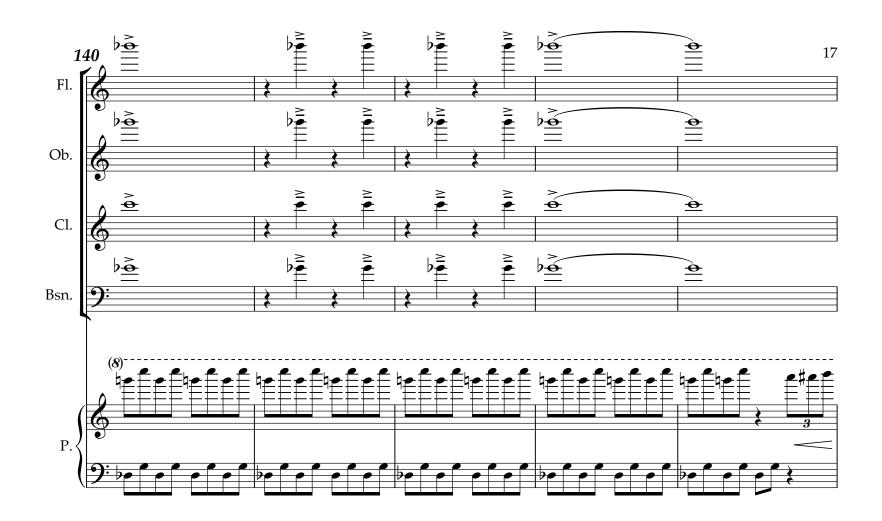


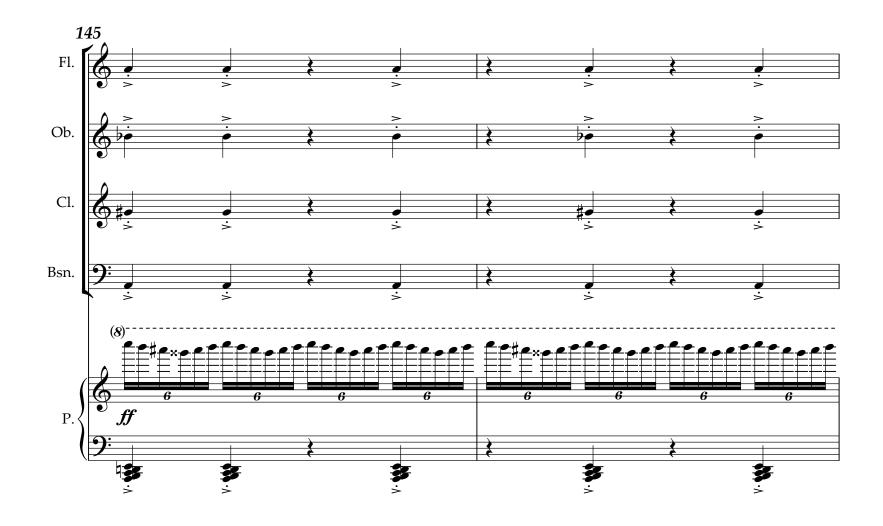


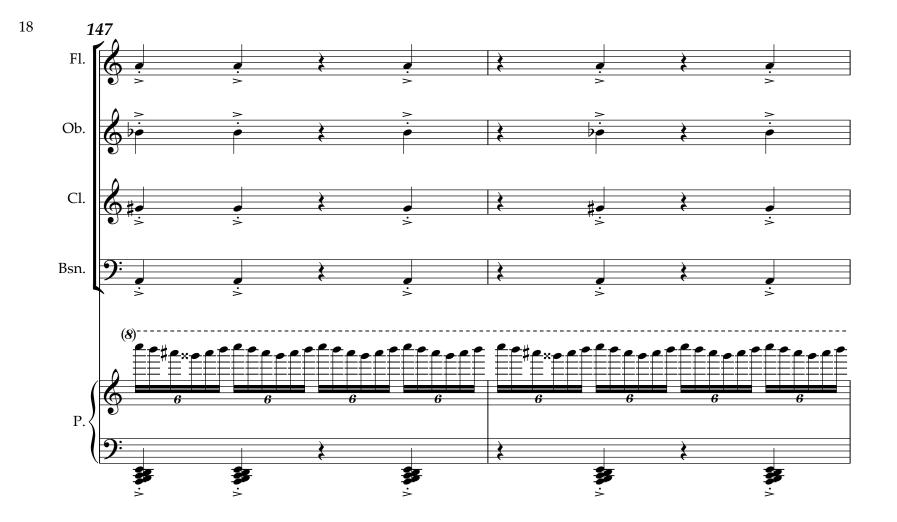


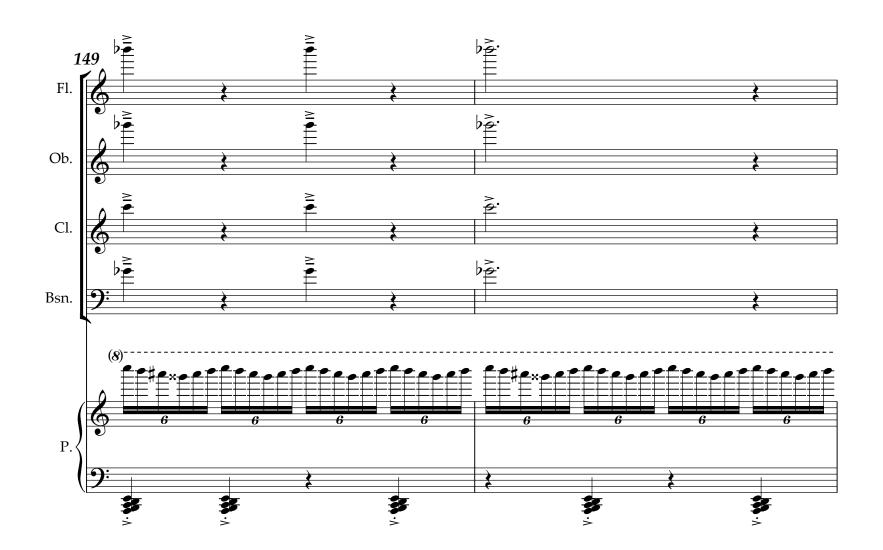


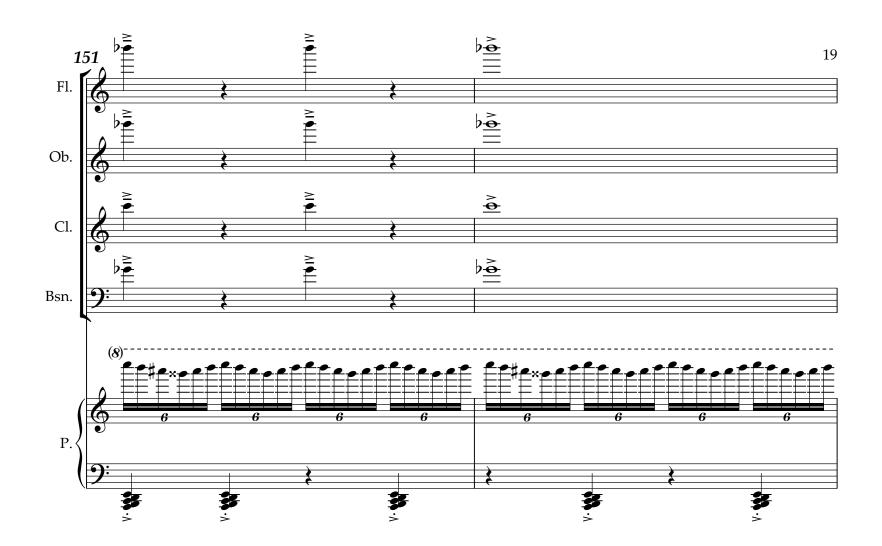


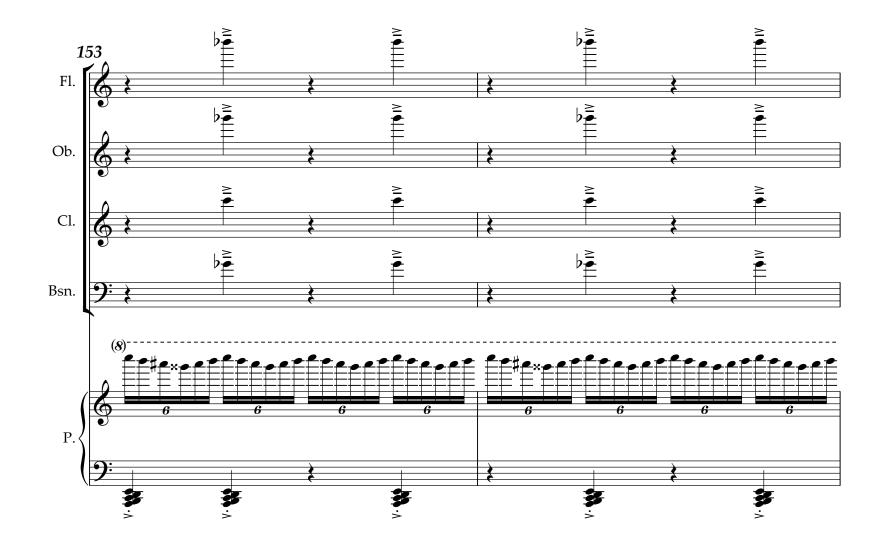


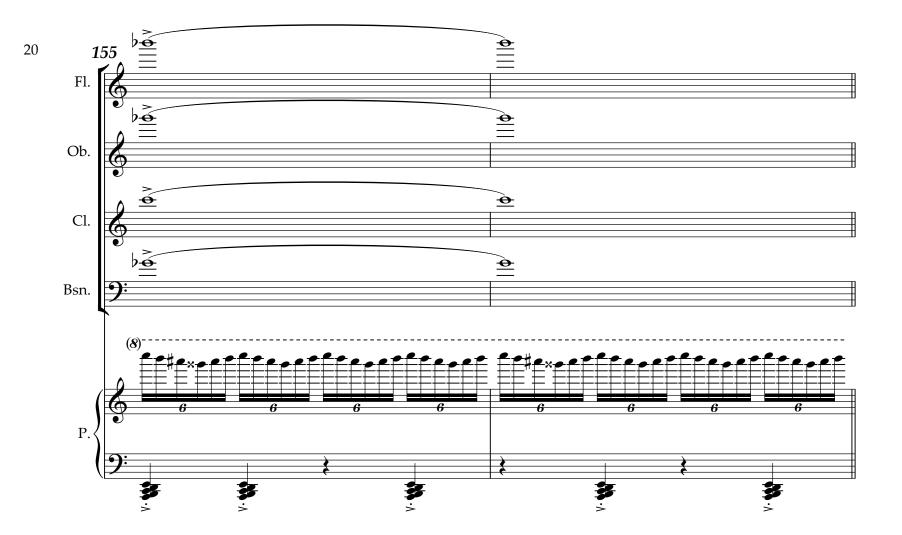


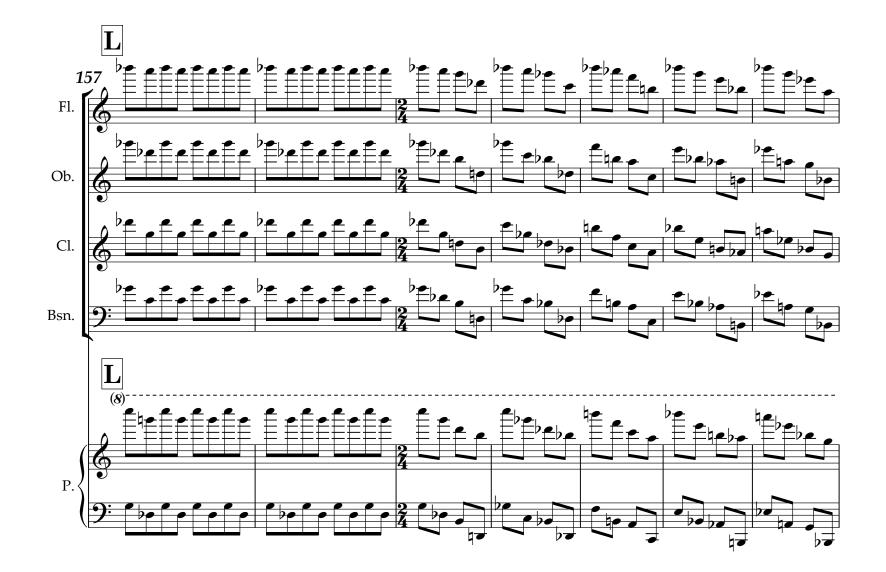






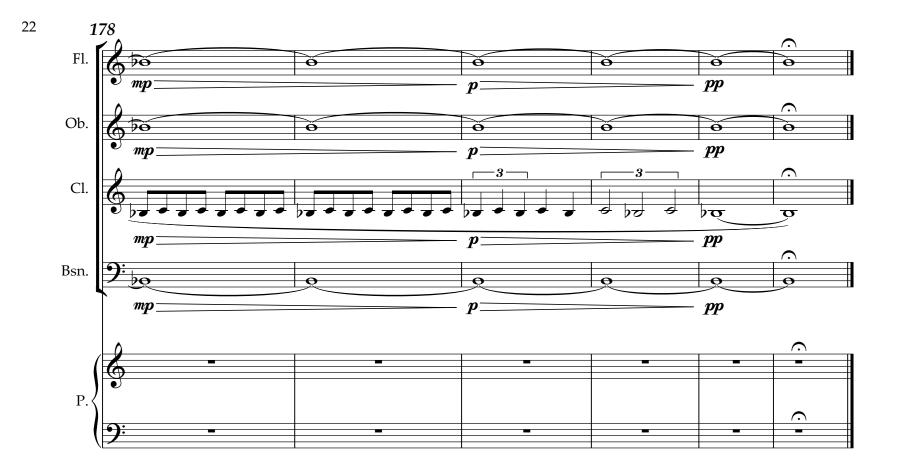






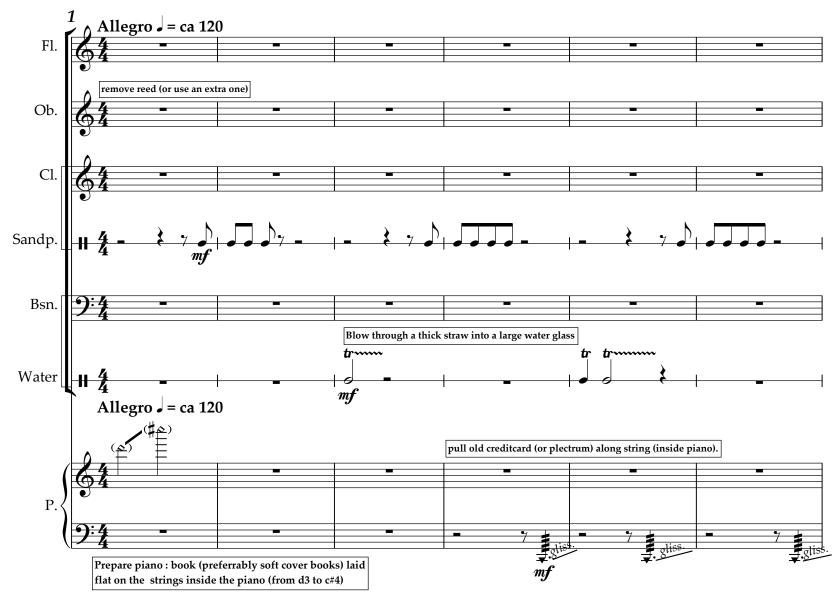






## II. Byktork

"De skratta åt mig när jag säger att jag haft mycket att göra -- jag städar, diskar, kokar ibland, syr kläder, lappar allt, och det är mycket, och tittar ibland åt en målning -- sätter jag mig att måla kommer räkninhar, aldrig ro. Om man slapp hushållet!"

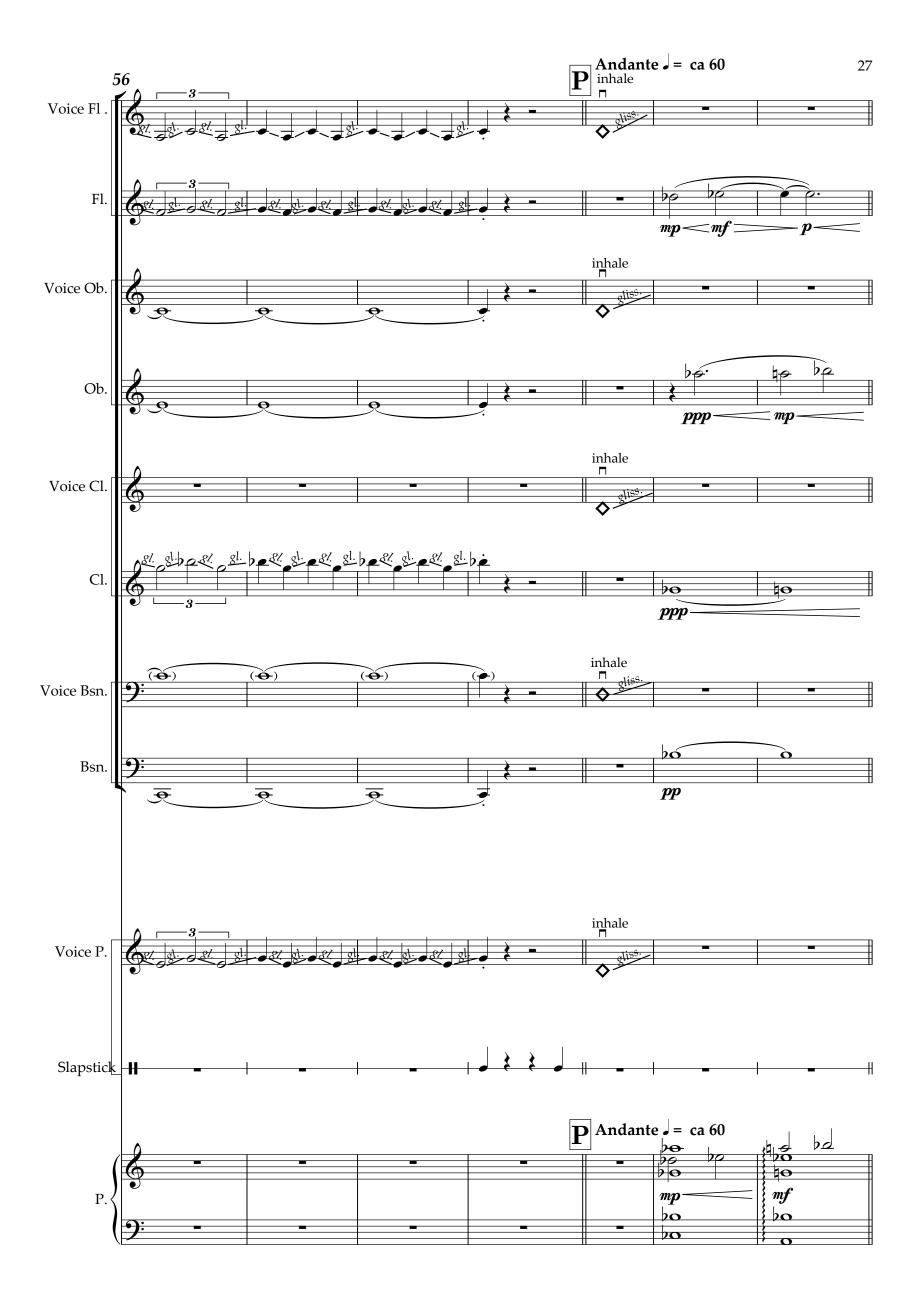


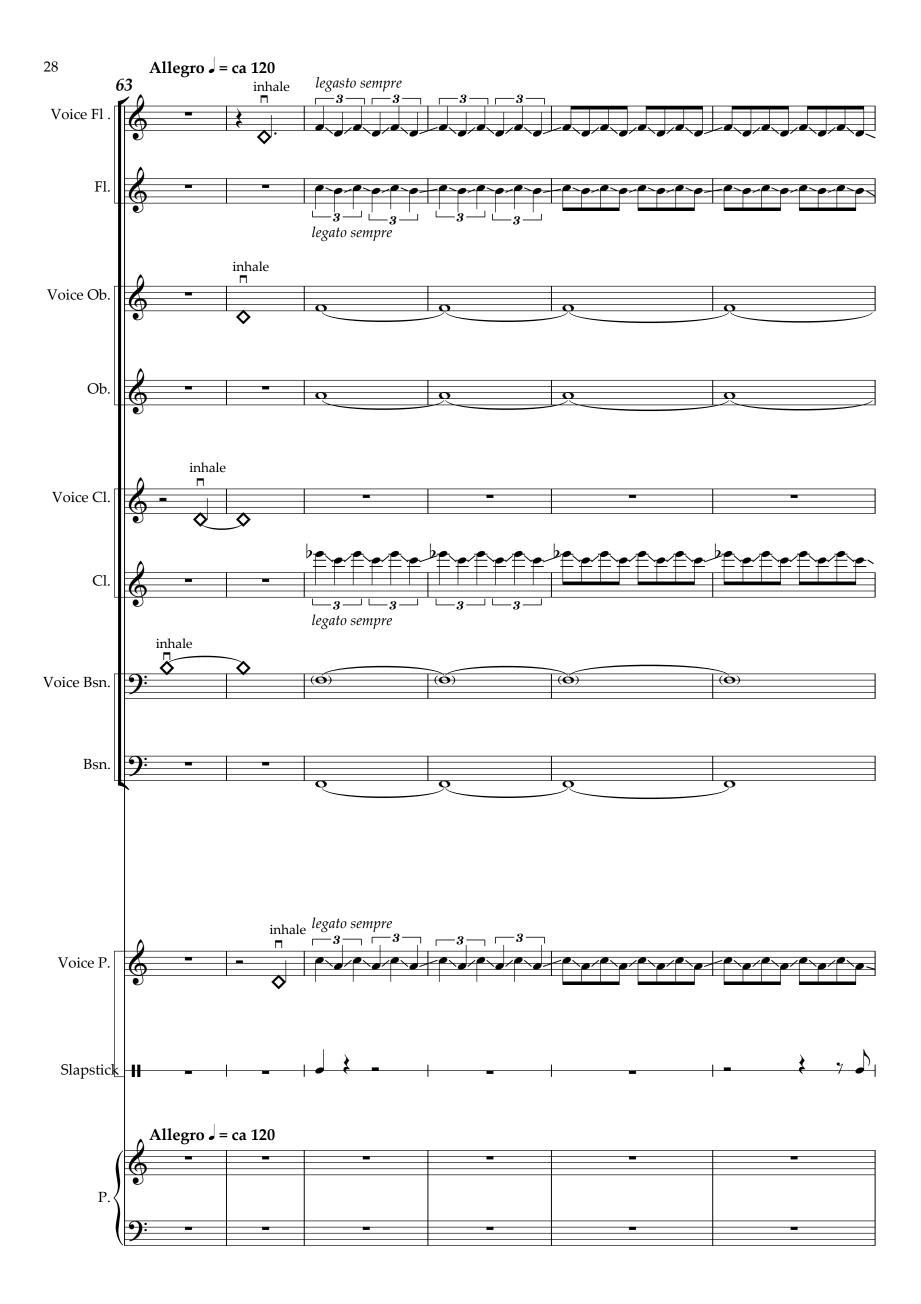


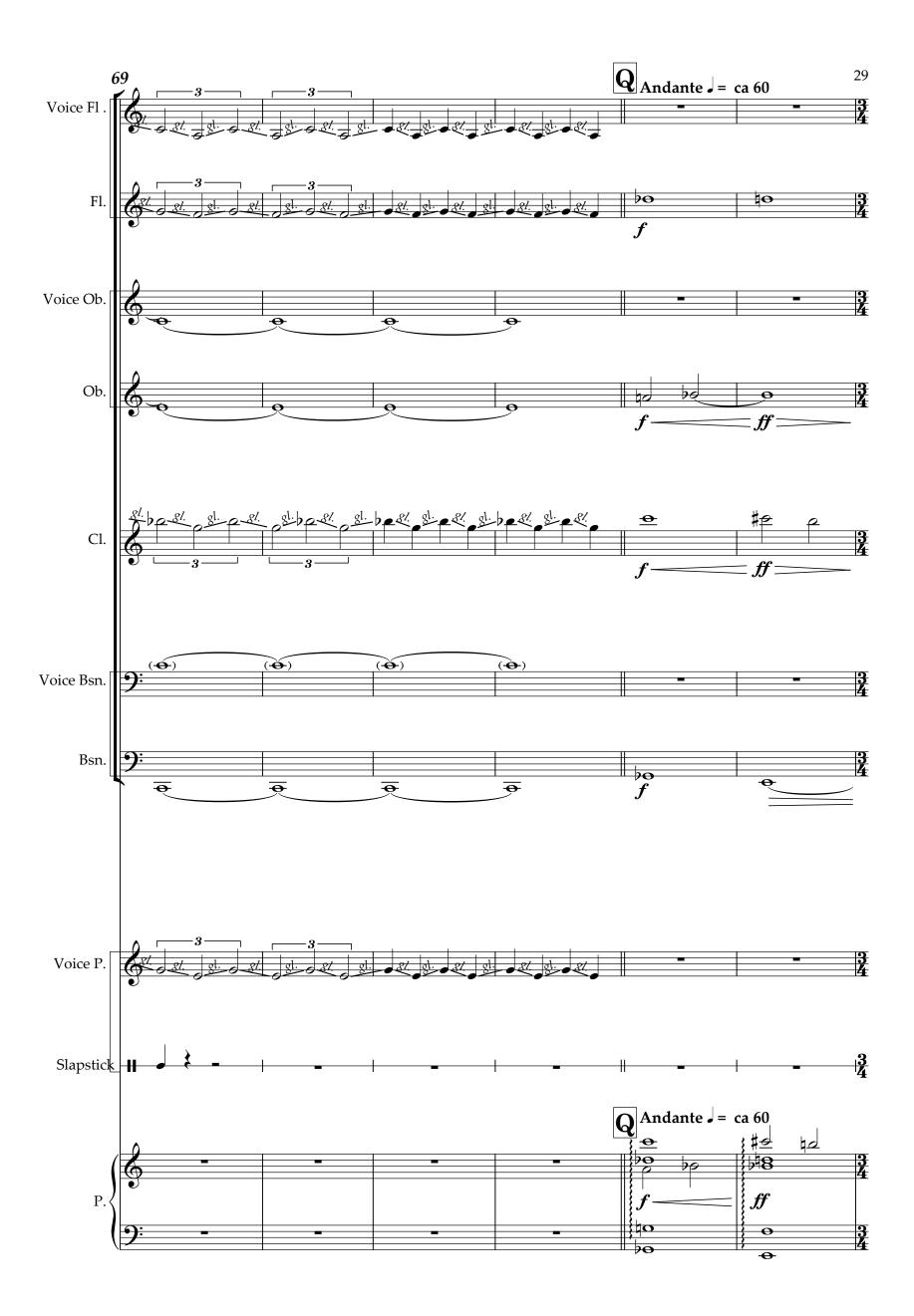


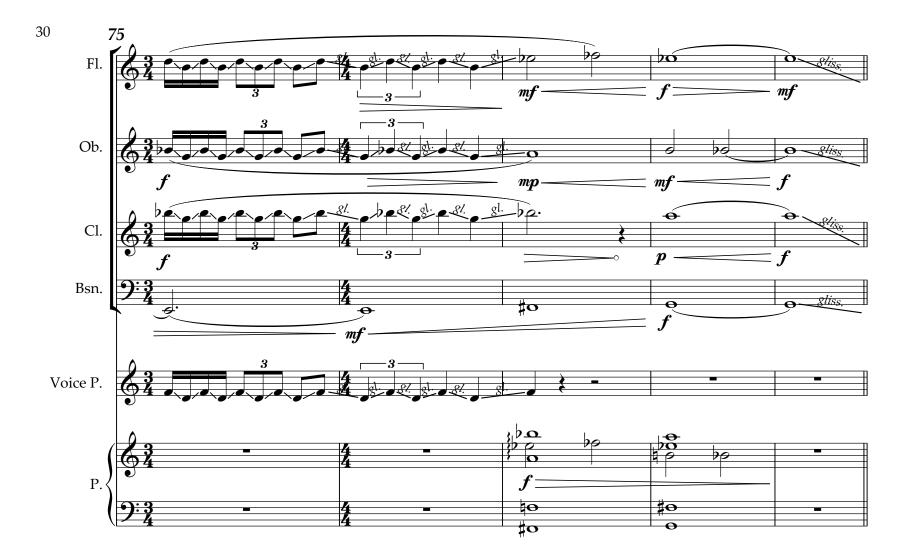












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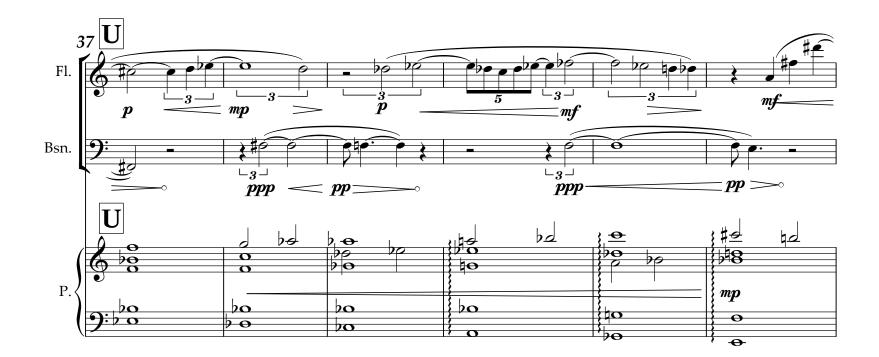
## III. Sjelvporträtt

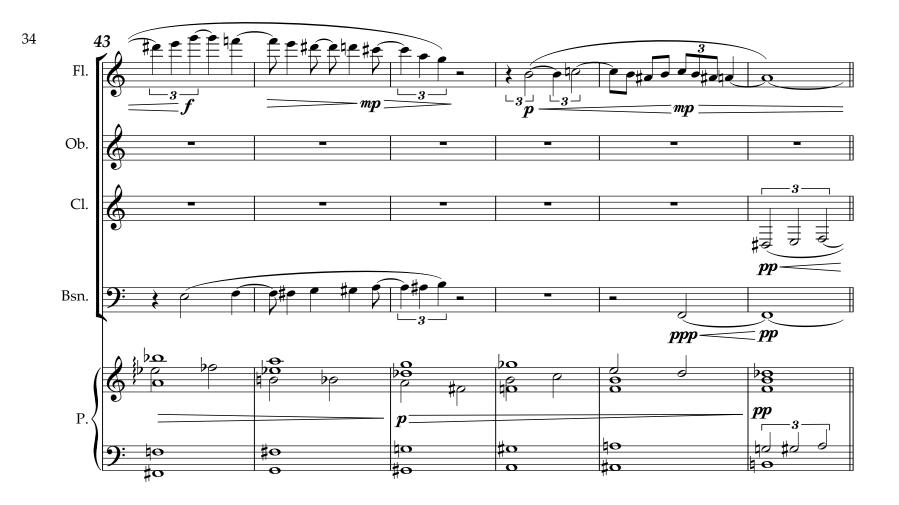
"Tecknade framför spegeln, efter 5 minuter faller ansigtet trött ihop i morgon fortsätts ... Det är det ena livet, en annan dold ström är ens eget riktiga."

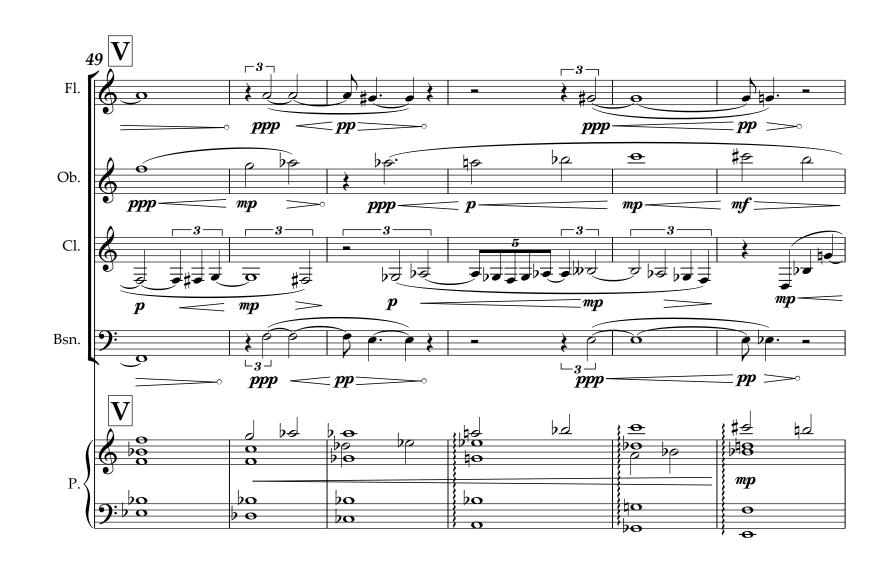




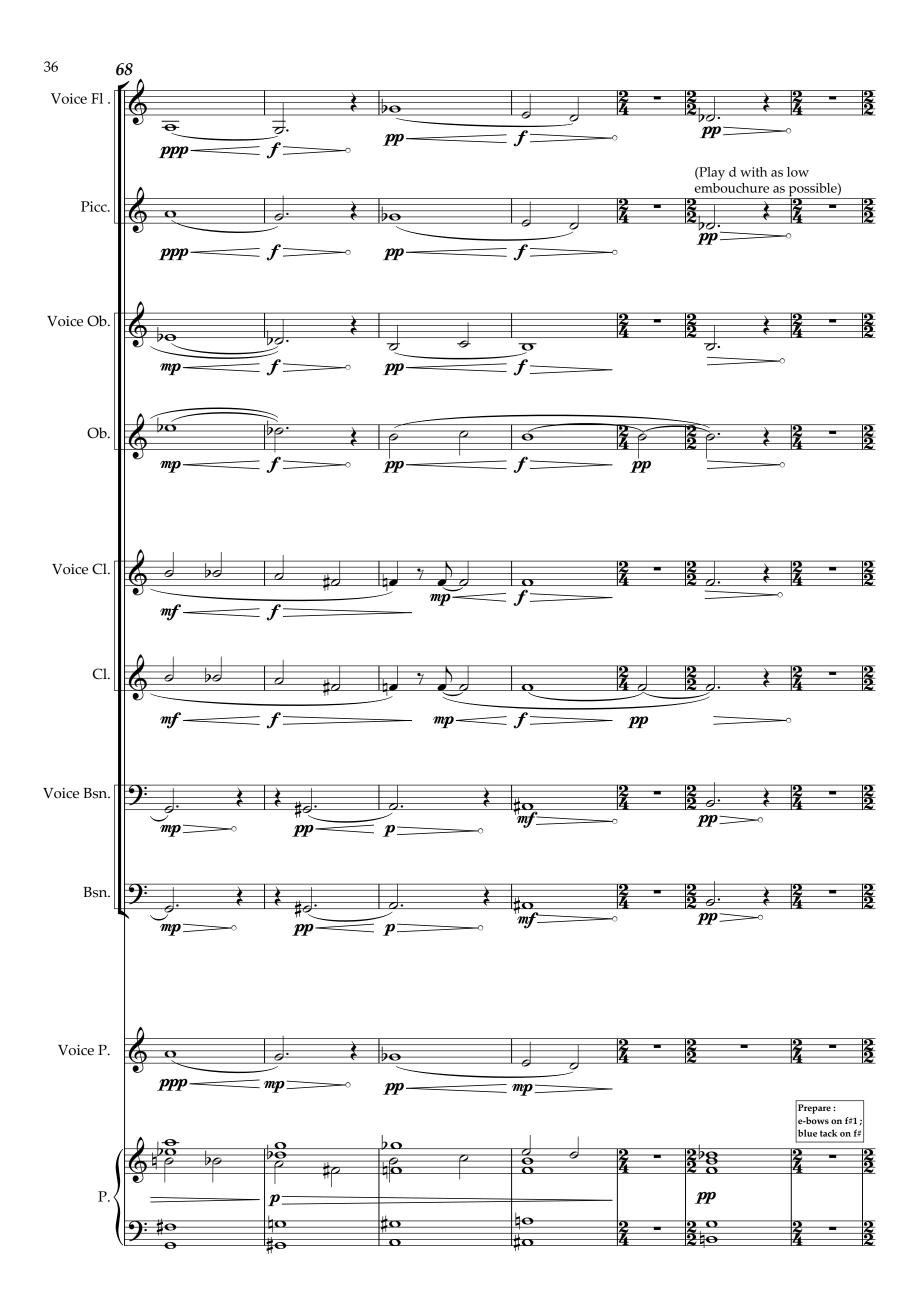


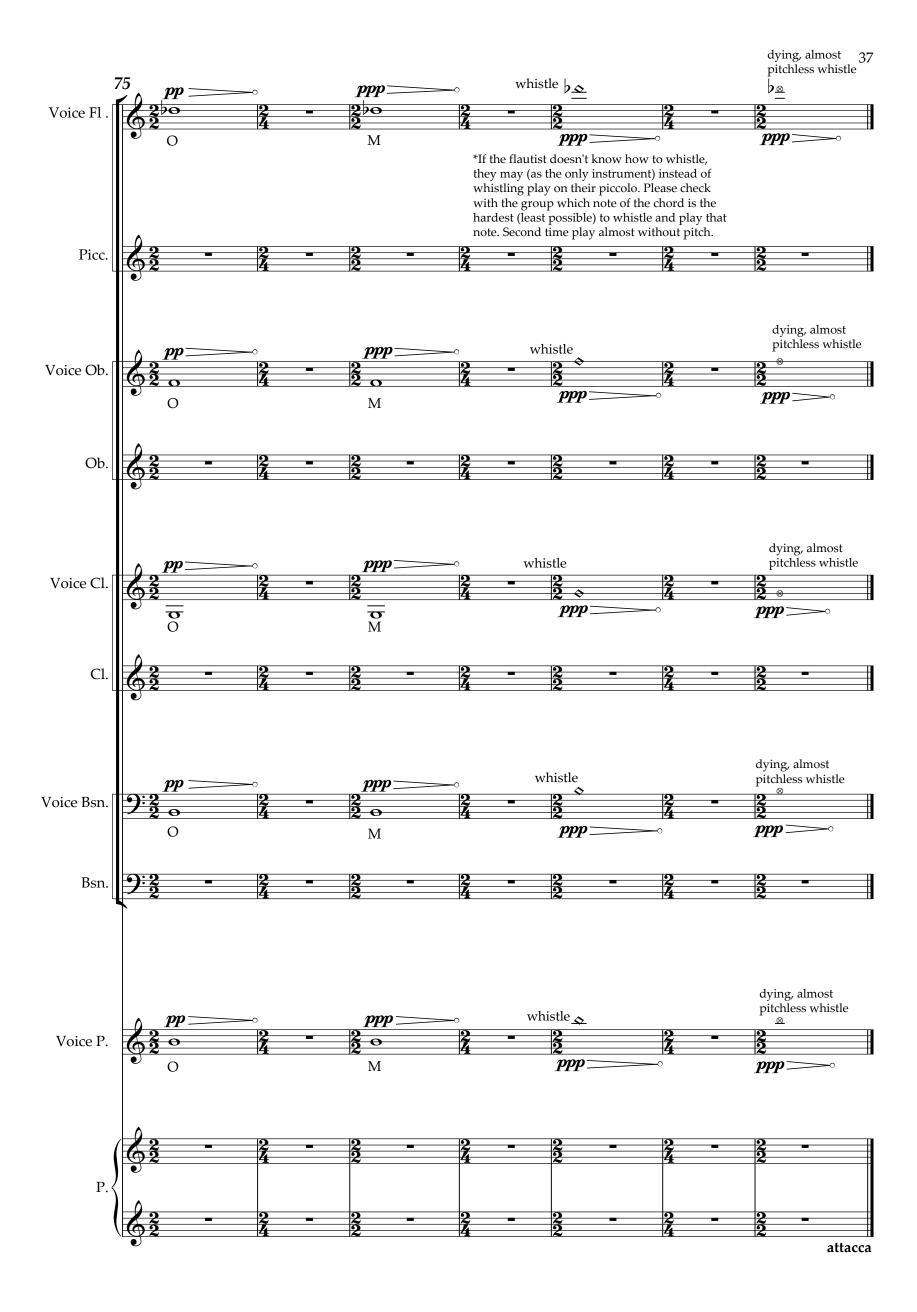












#### IV. Konvalescenten

"Jag längtar mången natt efter ro - och älskar ändå livet - Är jag ej i grunden lättsinnig som älskar det så - "



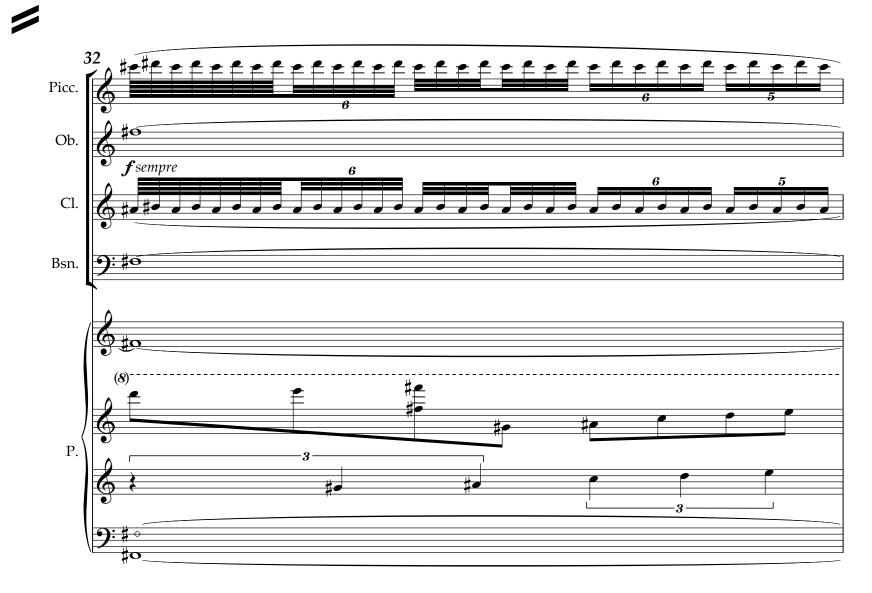














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