Pillars and Glisses

for Wild Rumpus

by Nomi Epstein

April 2012

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Written for Wild Rumpus in their first season (2011-12)

Non-vibrato throughout

Durations are notated spatially, with seconds marked across the bottom of each system. Each player will use a stopwatch. A cue will be given at the start of the piece for all players to start their stopwatches.

PILLARS

Pillars, represented by long, thin rectangular shapes in the score, depict short, loud (ff), cacophonous sonic events. Each pillar is to be played by the instrument(s) listed within the oval of the pillar. Options for sound techniques used in pillar events are listed below. Though each instrument may have multiple options for these sonic events, each pillar should demonstrate just one technique at a time. For example, the flute may play one multiphonic for pillar 1, another multiphonic for pillar 2, and overblow a note for pillar 3. Or, the violin may play a scratch tone on the E-string for Pillar 1, a scratch tone on the G string for Pillar 2, and a double stop scratch tone for Pillar 3. Other sound techniques are possible for pillars, and individual performers are invited to invent or collect sounds to introduce to the composer for possible inclusion.

Sopranos (s1, s2): overblow a slide whistle creating a harsh, high-pitched sound.
shout the word “dah” or “bah” (as in banana) in either a high range or a low range (shout should not contain a pitch change).

Flute (fl): multiphonic (choose 3 or 4 different multiphoncs that can be used throughout the piece, and which can be produced at a very loud dynamic.)
Overblow a note to produce a harsh, loud sound.

Clarinet (cl): multiphonic (choose 3 or 4 different multiphoncs that can be used throughout the piece, and which can be produced at a very loud dynamic.)
Squeak tone (produce a harsh, high-pitched sound)
Overblow a note to produce a harsh, loud sound.

Strings (vln, vc): scratch tone (either on any single string, or as a double stop)

Electric Guitar (eg) Using a guitar amplifier with spring reverberation, with a bit of force, knock the top of the amplifier so that the spring reverb is set off.
Hit the strings with palm, let ring for c.1-3”.
Snap string.

Piano (pno): With hands (palms facing down), hit the strings in the lowest register of the piano.
Damper pedal depressed, with hand(s) hit the strings in the lowest register of the piano. Release pedal after c.2-5”.
Play a 6-12 note chromatic cluster in the bottom register of the keyboard.
With damper pedal depressed, play a 6-12 note chromatic cluster in the bottom register of the keyboard. Release the pedal after 2-5”.

GLISSES

Each glissando is notated with a starting pitch, and in parentheses the upper or lower extreme of the pitch movement is specified. Players should be aware of the length of both ascent and descent of glissando using the graphically notated duration in seconds. It may prove helpful for each performer in preparing the score to write out the duration of each ascent and descent so that s/he may practice the pacing required to move between the two pitch areas notated in the score.

The dynamic level throughout a glissando should be consistent and without crescendo. Glissando dynamics are notated at the beginning of each event. If a glissandi line starts within a pillar, the sound should begin while the loud pillar event is taking place, despite it being overshadowed by the cacophonous sound event. Pitch movement (gliss) should be steady, without speeding up or slowing down within the period of time for that glissando. Throughout the entirely of a glissando, the pitch should be constantly moving, despite how slow it may be moving upwards or downwards.
Singers and wind players should breathe when necessary.
Singers may find it helpful to use a pitch guide throughout the performance such as an ipod or iphone application which delivers pitches.

Some glissandi events contain movement in only one direction for example, page 2, pillar 3 depicts violin and cello sliding down in pitch.
Other lines may indicate a sustain of a pitch without pitch sliding.
Page 3, pillar 5, soprano 2 and violin begin on the same pitch (F), before briefly sliding up/down to reach the pitch which they will each then sustain through the next pillar.
On page 3, pillar 7, soprano 1 and violin meet in pitch at the very end of the glissando event and play in unison briefly.
Similarly, page 3, pillar 8, directs soprano 2 and violin to sustain their starting pitch for c. 20" before a slow pitch slide begins.

Microtonal inflections are not cent specific.

Sopranos: glissando should be produced with an airy, light tone.
Pronunciation: "oh" as in Ohio. "ah" as in about. , "eh" as in every. "mm" with mouth closed.

Strings: all glissandi should be played sul tasto.

Winds: each glissando depicts a very small pitch bend.
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ (dotted line)- create an air sound on the instrument without pitch. Note that the angle of the dotted line does not denote a glissando, but merely indicates the instrument's role of shadowing the activity of another glissando line.

Electric Guitar: an EBow should be used to sustain pitches throughout the glissandi.

Piano:  - play any 3-7 note chromatic cluster within the highest octave of the keyboard, p.
(If a cluster comes directly after a pillar played by the piano, the pedal should to be released prior to the playing of the cluster.)

Pillars and Glisses

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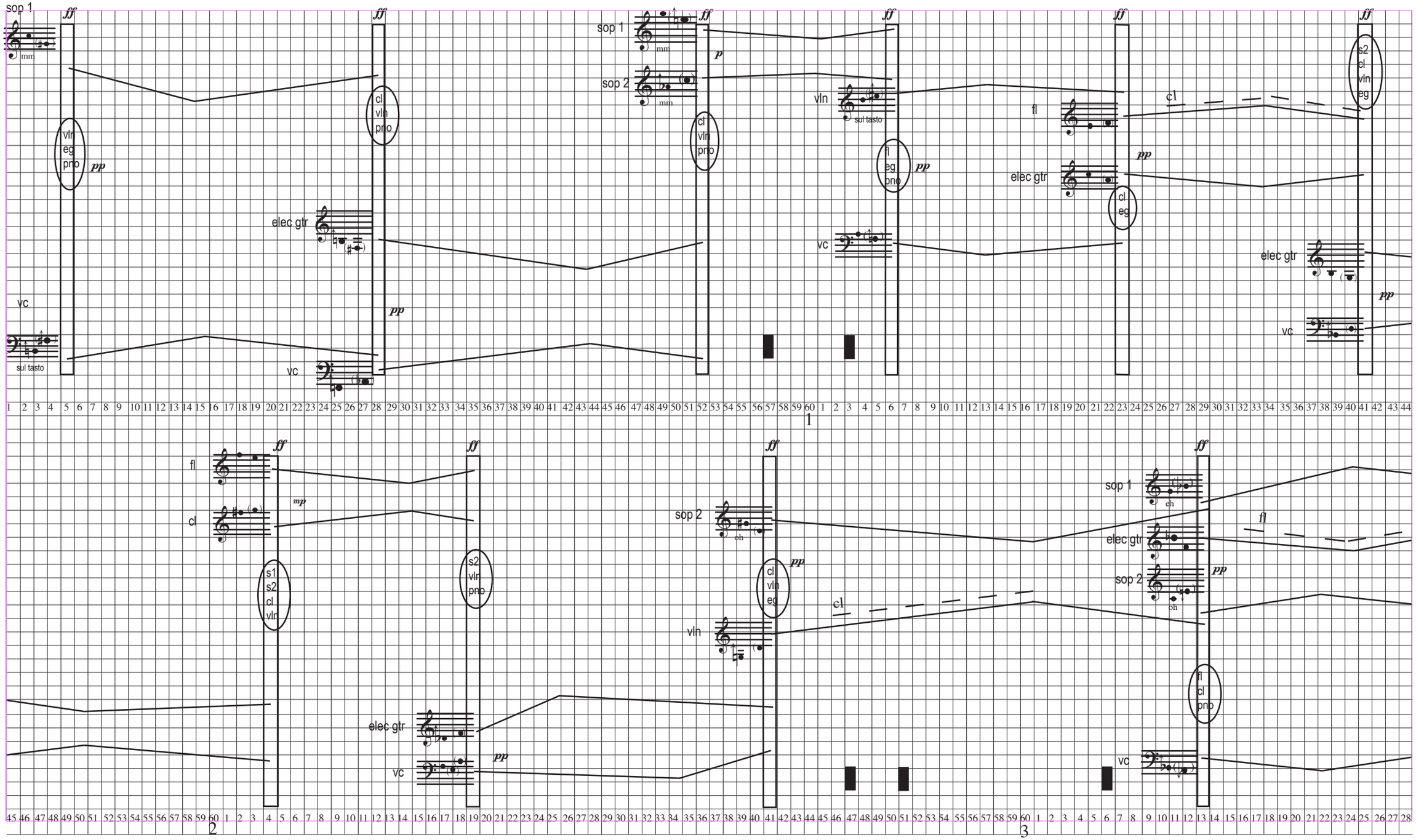

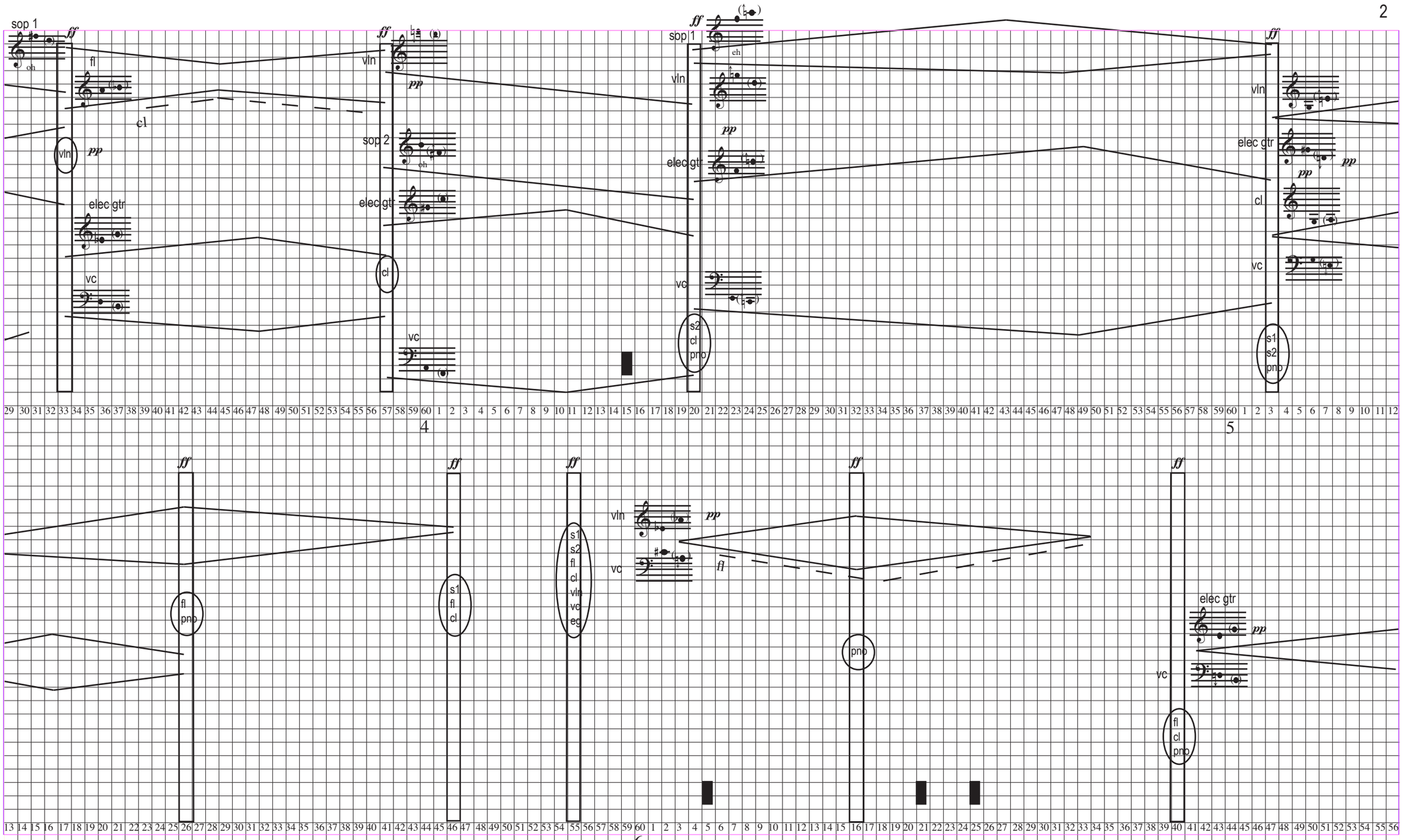
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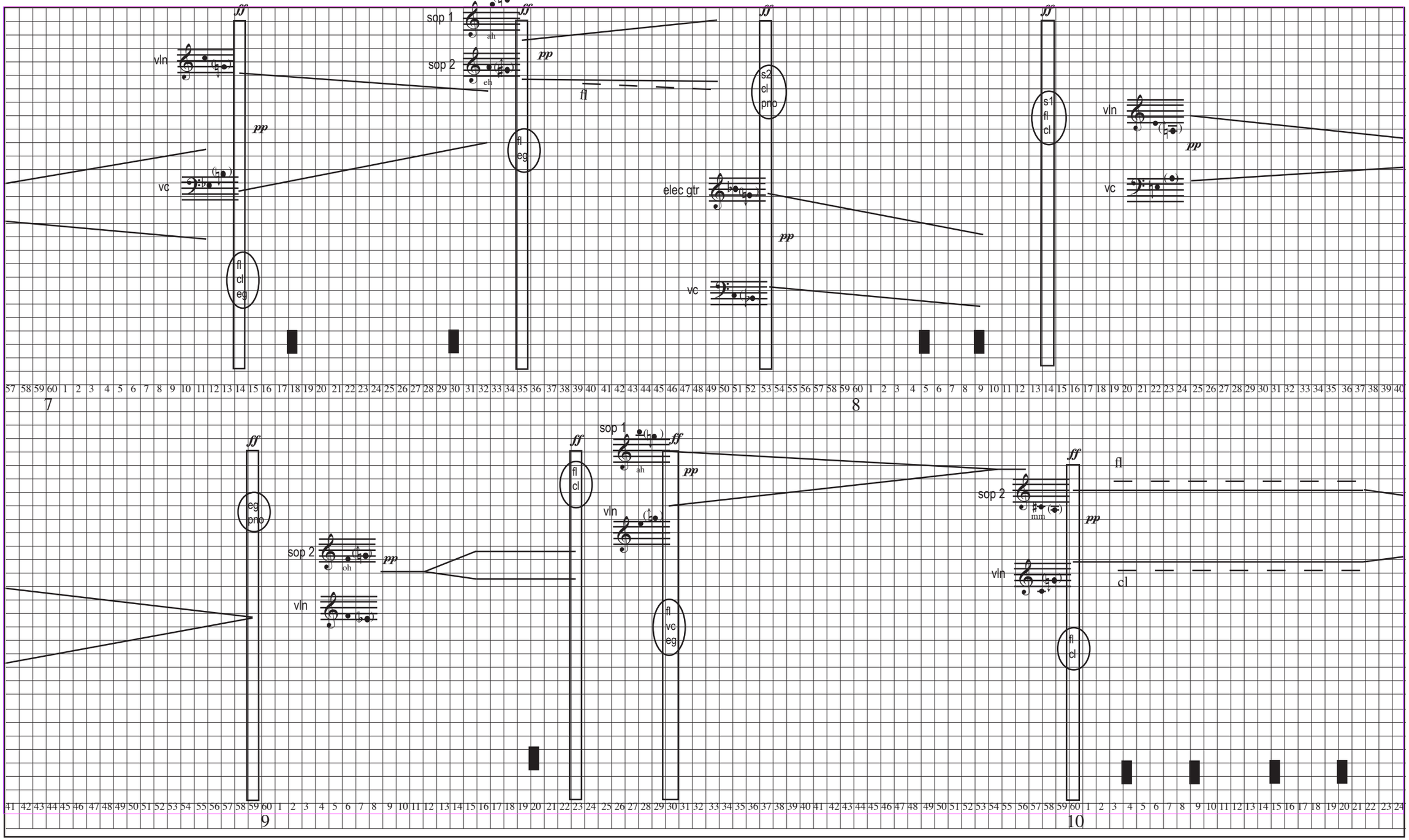
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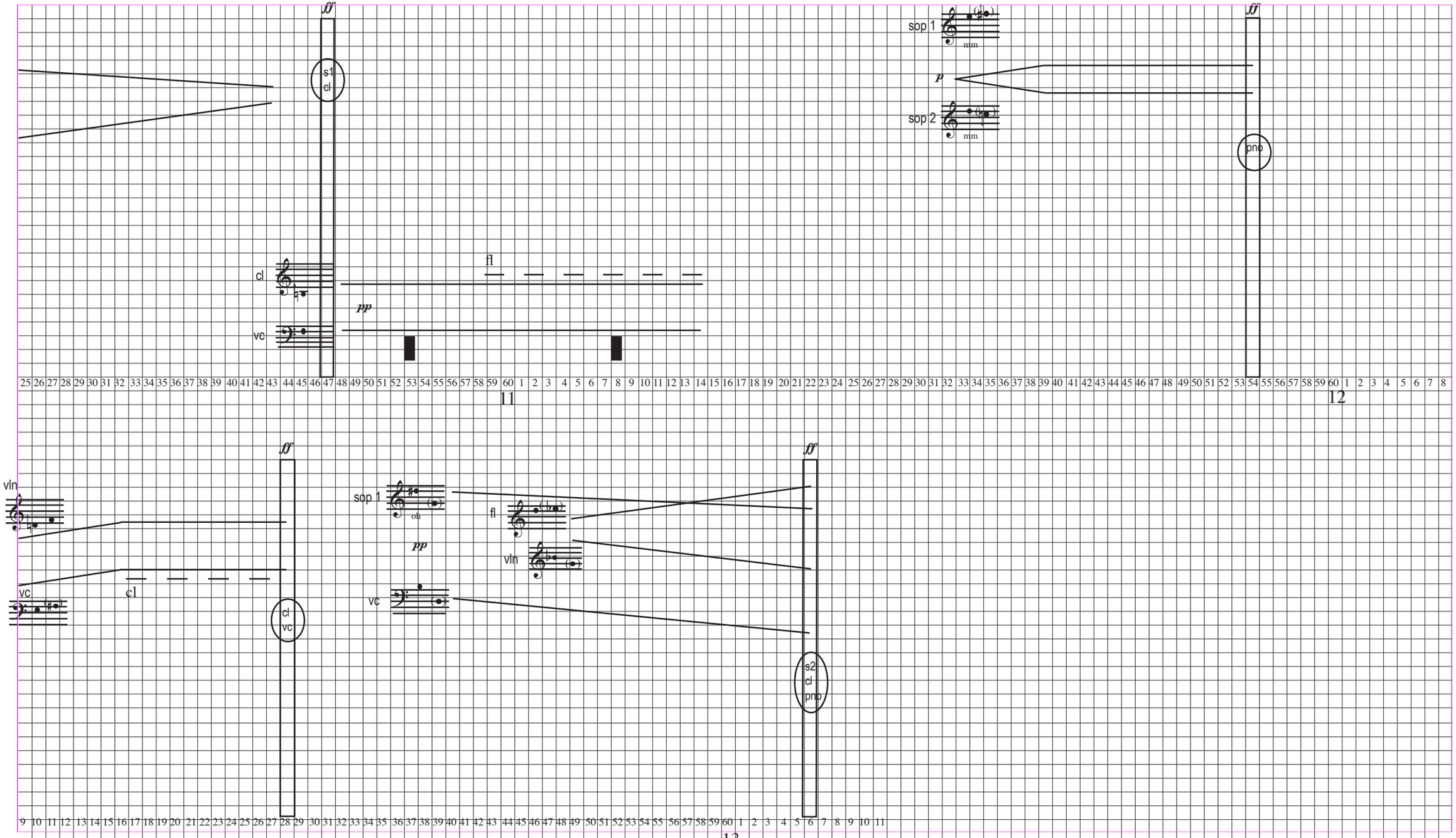
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