A Chill Breeze

For pedal harp and tape

Ian Percy

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Duration: 8’ 48”

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2009/10

Revised, rearranged, remixed and remastered

2021

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A Chill Breeze was initially composed as a solo piece for pedal harp between December 2009 and January 2010 whilst most of the UK was enveloped by a sheet of ice. The acoustic soundworld evokes aural images of Aeolian harps and frozen time (or timeless motion). Part of a series of works, it is a short, but virtuosic single movement exploring modal clusters, simple modulation and ambiguous consonances.

This electroacoustic version was first realised during 2010. The concrete audio was composed around an altered arrangement of the pre-existing acoustic part. Contrasting the intimate soundworld instinctively associated with the instrument, the concrete parts reinvent the single sound source amidst powerful gestures and primal screams, whilst combined medium unite in symbiosis along the way to enhance the idiomatic timbres and natural resonant atmosphere immediately recognisable as the sound of the harp. The piece was rearranged in August 2021, so the score was revised and the studio recording remixed and remastered.

Thanks go to American concert harpist Chilali Hugo for recording the primary sound material from which this piece was composed and for premiering both original versions of *A Chill Breeze* in October and November 2010.

Amplification

Ideally, the concrete parts should be diffused to multiple stereo, summated mono and sub-bass speakers. Preferably in an equidistant circle of four pairs spaced around the audience. The summated mono (fed by Aux sends) and sub-bass speakers should be placed in the centre of the audience. Other premixed versions of the concrete audio can be made available upon request.

The live parts should be mixed to a/b stereo (equal space either side of the central musician) through a two, four, or six speaker, front and centred pair/half-circle and the volume should then remain fixed throughout the performance. It is preferable if the live part has its own dedicated speakers (be it 2, 4 or 6). The musician will need a stage monitor and it would be very helpful if they could also read the playback time from the concrete audio.

Alternatively, in an intimate setting such as a solo chamber recital, the harpist could sit between two loudspeakers, with the volume balanced to match the acoustic resonance of the instrument, or amplify the live sound a little through a small mixing desk into the same speakers as the concrete sounds. A laptop feeding the concrete sounds to two good quality bluetooth speakers, could also offer a suitable mix (and a less invasive visual) within the acoustic resonance of some recital halls. The musician has plenty of time to settle after pressing play.

A Chill Breeze

... and a warm embrace ...

for pedal harp and tape

Ian Percy

Note: The bottom two strings should be pretuned to C♮ and D♭.

Note: It is helpful if the musician can see the playback time during performance

0' 00" **0' 04"** **0' 08"** **0' 12"** **0' 16"** **0' 20"**

♩ = 60 **... an aggressive concrete introduction ...**

CUE: start playback

oscillations & meta-timbre

ff *fff* *cresc.*

meta-timbre decay

CUE: tape silence

ff sssssssSSSSSSCRREEEAAAMMMMmmmm metallic decay *a niente*

E♭ F♮ G♭ A♭
B♭ C♮ D♭

clusters are played by striking the strings in a variety of attacks [ad lib.]: with the palm or side of the hand, arpeggiated/broken chords, glissandi, or as normal plucked chords.

CUE

0' 24"

CUE: tape silence

CUE

0' 48"

synthetic whispers & voice pipes → whispers & voice pipes → ambient texture builds → hi-pitch sci-fi

pp quiet ambient textures & mid-range motif *p* mid-range tape motif → *mp* mid-range tape motif →

... a relaxed entrance of idiomatic sound colours ...

A ♩ = 60 **rit.** [♩ = 40] **B** ♩ = 60 **... we answer what we can (mellow) ...** **rit.** [♪ = 60]

molto rubato, molto espress.

[harmonics are written at sounding pitch]

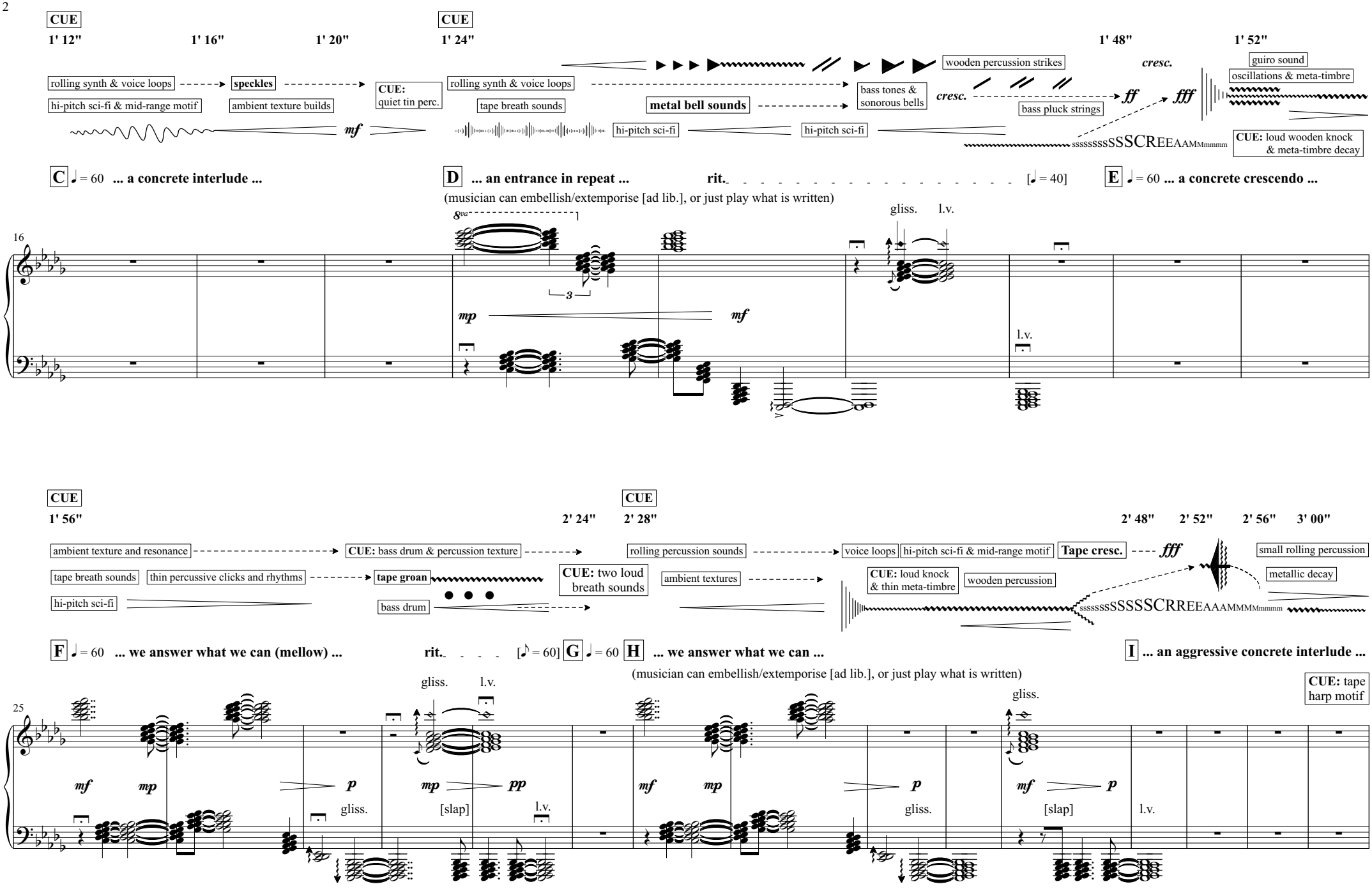
7

8va

gliss. l.v.

mp *mf* *mp* *p* l.v. *mp* *p* gliss. *mp* *pp* [slap] l.v.

timing can be very flexible between rehearsal marks/timing cues, but entrances and pacing [filling the allotted space] are very important


CUE
1' 12"
1' 16"
1' 20"
CUE
1' 24"
1' 48"
1' 52"
rolling synth & voice loops
speckles
hi-pitch sci-fi & mid-range motif
ambient texture builds
CUE: quiet tin perc.
mf
rolling synth & voice loops
tape breath sounds
metal bell sounds
hi-pitch sci-fi
hi-pitch sci-fi
wooden percussion strikes
bass tones & sonorous bells
cresc.
bass pluck strings
ff
cresc.
fff
guiro sound
oscillations & meta-timbre
CUE: loud wooden knock & meta-timbre decay
C ♩ = 60 ... a concrete interlude ...
D ... an entrance in repeat ...
rit.
[♩ = 40]
E ♩ = 60 ... a concrete crescendo ...
(musician can embellish/extemporise [ad lib.], or just play what is written)
16
8va
3
mp
mf
gliss.
l.v.
l.v.
CUE
1' 56"
2' 24"
CUE
2' 28"
2' 48"
2' 52"
2' 56"
3' 00"
ambient texture and resonance
CUE: bass drum & percussion texture
tape breath sounds
thin percussive clicks and rhythms
tape groan
hi-pitch sci-fi
bass drum
CUE: two loud breath sounds
rolling percussion sounds
ambient textures
voice loops
hi-pitch sci-fi & mid-range motif
Tape cresc.
fff
CUE: loud knock & thin meta-timbre
wooden percussion
small rolling percussion
metallic decay
F ♩ = 60 ... we answer what we can (mellow) ...
rit.
[♪ = 60]
G ♩ = 60
H ... we answer what we can ...
(musician can embellish/extemporise [ad lib.], or just play what is written)
I ... an aggressive concrete interlude ...
CUE: tape harp motif
25
mf
mp
p
gliss.
mp
pp
[slap]
l.v.
mf
mp
p
gliss.
mf
p
[slap]
l.v.
gliss.
gliss.
l.v.

CUE
3' 04"

CUE
3' 16"

ultra thin metal clicks

small rolling percussion ---------- tape harp motif

small rolling percussion ---------- tape harp motif very thin percussion dog barking very thin percussion dog barking oscillations

CUE: enter after tape harp motif

p ambient textures & quiet voice sounds ---------- gradual build-up of ambient texture ---------- thin percussion & quiet string scrapes trigger a short tape crescendo

J ♩ = 60 **... peaceful, but alert ... rit.** [♩ = 40]

K ♩ = 60 **poco rit.** [♩ = 52]

rit. [♪ = 52]

gliss. gliss.

40

f *mf* *f* *mf* *f* [slap] *mf* l.v. l.v. *f* *ff*

CUE
3' 40"

3' 44"

ambient textures & percussion sounds subtle cresc. ---------- quiet bass tone ---------- oscillations

cresc.

f *p*

CUE: tape fade

L ♩ = 60 **... a concrete interlude (in crescendo) ...**

46

CUE

3' 48"

Cue: owl-type sound

rolling percussion & oscillations fade

mp

short and smooth decrescendo of ambient atmosphere and texture

CUE

4' 02"

synthetic whispers & voice pipes

subtle hi-pitch sci-fi sounds

CUE

4' 16"

bell resonances

f

fff

voice pipes & mid-range motif

CUE: bells cresc.

M ♩ = 52 rit. [♩ = 40]

N ♩ = 52 rit. [♩ = 40]

O ♩ = 52 rit. [♪ = 52]

CUE: entrance with owl-type sound

48

mf

f

[slap]

mf

[slap]

ff

gliss.

[slap]

ff

l.v.

f

fff

[slap]

l.v.

CUE

4' 24"

synthetic voices

bass tones, subtle hi-pitch sci-fi sounds & mid-range tape motif

f

4' 28"

subtle cresc.

ff

voice pipes & mid-range motif

tape textures dissipate

synthetic grunt

mf

CUE: tape fades

P ♩ = 60 **... a concrete interlude (in crescendo) ...**

Note: change in harp tuning

53

C♭

E♭ F♮ G♭ A♭
B♭ C♭ D♭

CUE
4' 32"

CUE
4' 41"

pulse bass tones

ambient tape textures fade — *ppp* — synthetic whispers & voice loops — *p* — thick wooden bass percussion

CUE: entrance with 2nd synthetic grunt — thin percussion sounds — **CUE:** tape near silent — quiet rolling percussive sounds — ambient texture builds — thin percussion loops

Q ♩ = 52 **poco accel.** ♩ = 60 **accel.** [♩ = 76] **rit.** ♩ = 60 **rit.** [♪ = 60]

55

gliss. [slap] [slap] l.v. l.v.

mf *ff* *f* *fff*

Note: lowest C is not subject to the harp tuning mechanism, so these low Cs are naturals

CUE
5' 08"

5' 12"

5' 16"

5' 20"

whispers & voice loops — thin percussion loops

cresc. *mf* percussion fades with bass tones — thick wooden bass fades *pp*

R ♩ = 60 **... a concrete interlude (in dissipation) ...**

CUE: tape fades

Note: change in harp tuning

62

C♮

E♭ F♮ G♭ A♭
B♭ C♮ D♭

CUE
5' 24"

CUE
5' 48"

ppp thin wooden percussion → *mp* thin metallic percussion → **CUE:** synthetic pipe resonance loop → synthetic breath sounds → *mf*

subtle hi-pitch sci-fi sounds & ambient textures → whispers & voice loops → sci-fi & voice pipes → bass drum tones → sci-fi & voice pipes → wood percussion loops & thin metallic sounds

S ♩ = 60 **... relaxed ...** **poco rit.** [♩ = 40] **T** ♩ = 60 **... we answer what we can (mellow) ...** **rit.** [♪ = 60]

66

8va

3

mp *mf* gliss. l.v. *p* l.v. *mf* *mp* l.v. gliss. [slap] *pp* l.v.

CUE
6' 12" **6' 16"** **6' 20"** **6' 24"**

ambient textures fade and dissipate

wooden bass sounds

ff

CUE: loud knock & meta-timbre

oscillations & meta-timbre decay

fff

U ♩ = 60 **... a concrete interlude (in static tension) ...**

Note: change in harp tuning

75

C♭

E♭ F♮ G♭ A♭
B♭ C♭ D♭

CUE
6' 28"

CUE
6' 37"

thin rolling percussion

oscillations & meta-timbre decay | **synthetic breaths** | thin percussion sounds & voice loops | **rolling knocking** | tape mid-range motif

CUE: bass tone (groan) | bass tone

ambient voice and percussion loops

V ♩ = 52 **poco accel.** ♩ = 60 **accel.** [♩ = 76] **rit.** ♩ = 60 **rit.** [♪ = 60]

79

gliss. [slap]

mf *ff* [slap] *f* l.v. l.v. *fff*

Note: lowest C is not subject to the harp tuning mechanism, so these low Cs are naturals

CUE
7' 00"

7' 04"

7' 08"

throbbing bass pulse

bass tones & mid-range tape motif

ambient voice and percussion loops

mid-range tape motif | synthetic voices

synthetic grunts

CUE: loud knock & altered meta-timbre | voice & percussion loops

f

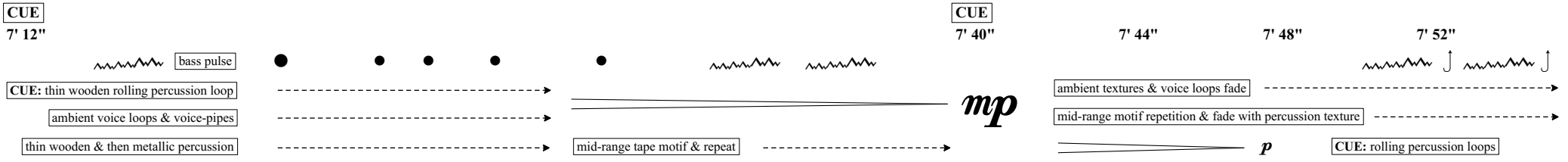
W ♩ = 60 **... a concrete interlude ...**

Note: change in harp tuning

86

C♮

E♭ F♮ G♭ A♭
B♭ C♮ D♭

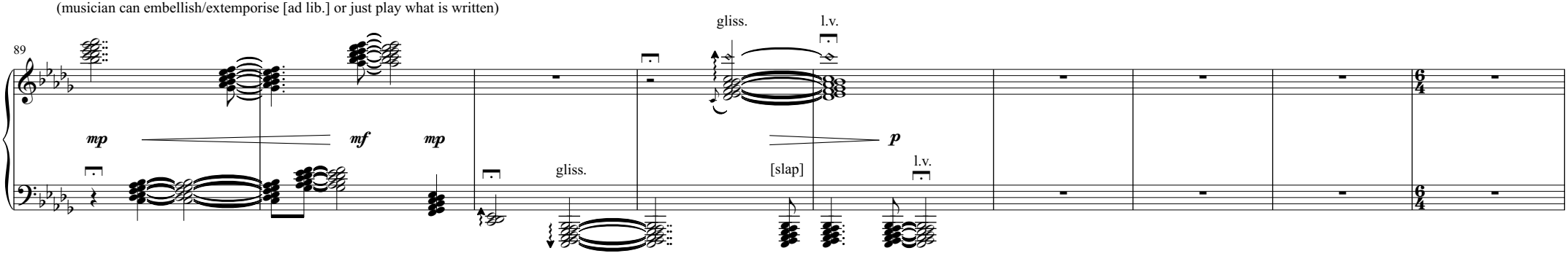


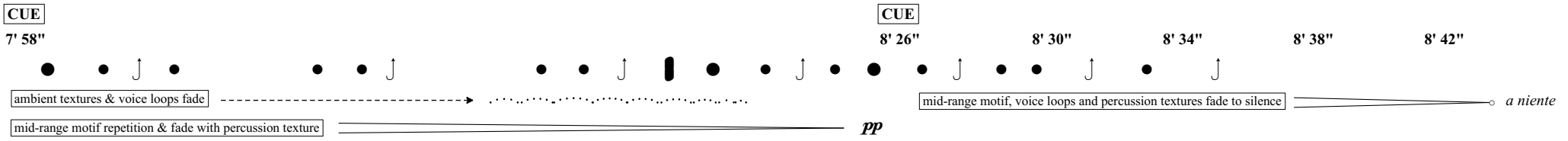
X ♩ = 60 **... in relaxed repetition (we answer what we can) ...**

(musician can embellish/extemporise [ad lib.] or just play what is written)

rit. [♪ = 60]

Y ♩ = 60 **... a concrete interlude (in dissipation) ...**

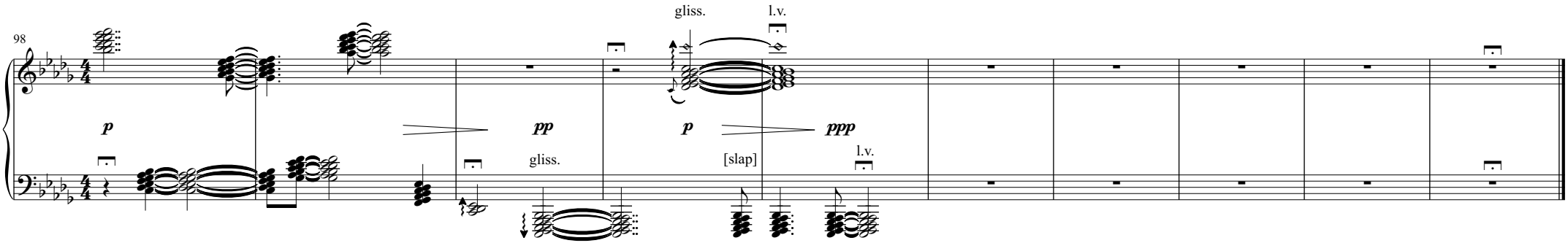




Z ♩ = 60 **... in relaxed conclusion ...**

rit. [♪ = 60]

AA ♩ = 60 **... a concrete conclusion (in diminuendo) ...**



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