Staring at Walls

for flute and electronics

Jon Fielder

Program Notes

Staring at Walls is a composition inspired by ruminations on the topic of isolation, agency, and identity. Like many compositions of 2020 it was inspired primarily by the forced, yet necessary, isolation from the COVID-19 pandemic. My own experience with quarantine led to a number of revelations related to how I view my own agency, how that influences my concept of personal identity - as well as my identity in the greater framework of social interaction - and how the monotony of repetition played a strong role in all of that. My hope is that any performance of this piece will also take these ideas into consideration and, ideally, would incorporate the performer's own experiences with isolation, repetition, and identity.

Performance Notes

Sequence of events: the score is presented in 3 pages: A, B and C. There are 6 events on Page A, 6 events on Page B and a Page C as a stand-alone section

Order of Events

The order of events are to be chosen by the performer. This can be done at random, or with specific intention - though a combination of both is strongly encouraged. The ordering should be one A event, followed by a B event, then a new A event, a new B event, and so on. For example: A1 → B4 → A3 → B1 → A6 → B2 → A2 → B5 → A4 → B3 → A5 → B6. Page C may be inserted anywhere within this framework, and again is left to the performer's discretion as to where to place it.

Performance of A and B Events

The events on pages A and B (with the exception of B6) have repeats. These events may be repeated just as you would with any standard repeated section (A1, then A1 again). If the performer chooses to repeat a section it must be presented with slight variations such as playing faster or slower overall, playing some sections with different inflection, adding or removing vibrato, altering articulation, any combination of these, or whatever the performer may choose to do. These sections can be repeated as many times as the performer chooses, or may not be repeated at all.

Placement of Page C

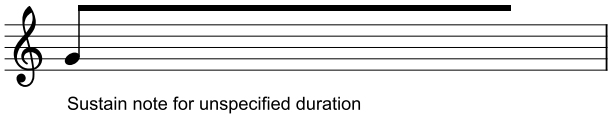
This page may be inserted at any point during the piece. It is made up of fragmented portions of the 12 events on Pages A and B, so placing it too early in the performance is not suggested, though again it is at the performer's discretion as to where to place it for the narrative intent to unfold.

Ending the Performance

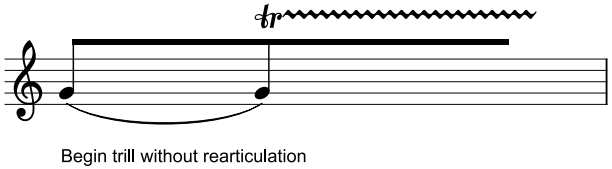
The piece should end with a return to the A event that started the piece, as a sort of bookend. The appearance at the end should also be different from the way the event was presented at the start of the performance.

Notation Key

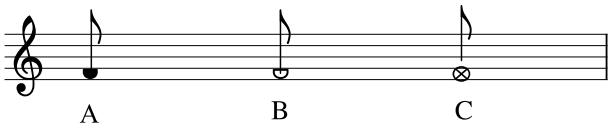
The score uses the following notation conventions. Any additional score markings have descriptions detailed in the context of the score.



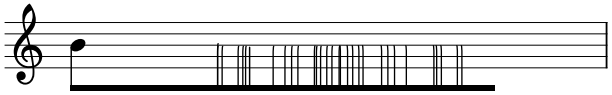
Sustain note for unspecified duration



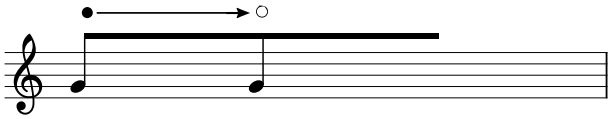
Begin trill without



A = breathe in (without embouchre)
B = breathe out (no embouchre)
C = vocalize through flute (vocalization specified in each passage)

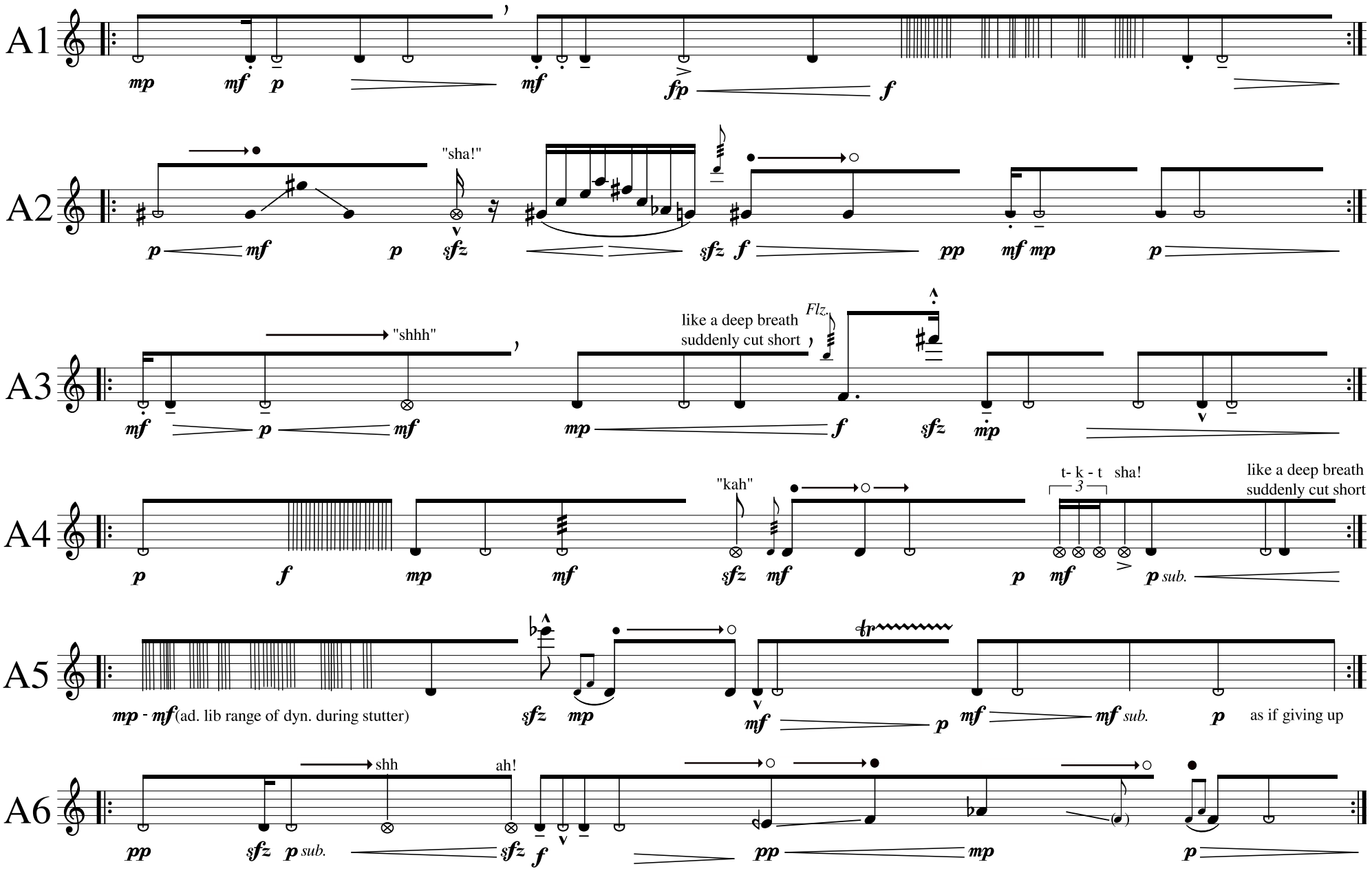


Rapidly re-articulate note. Breathe as necessary, sound does not continue from cluster of articulations to the next (allow for some space)

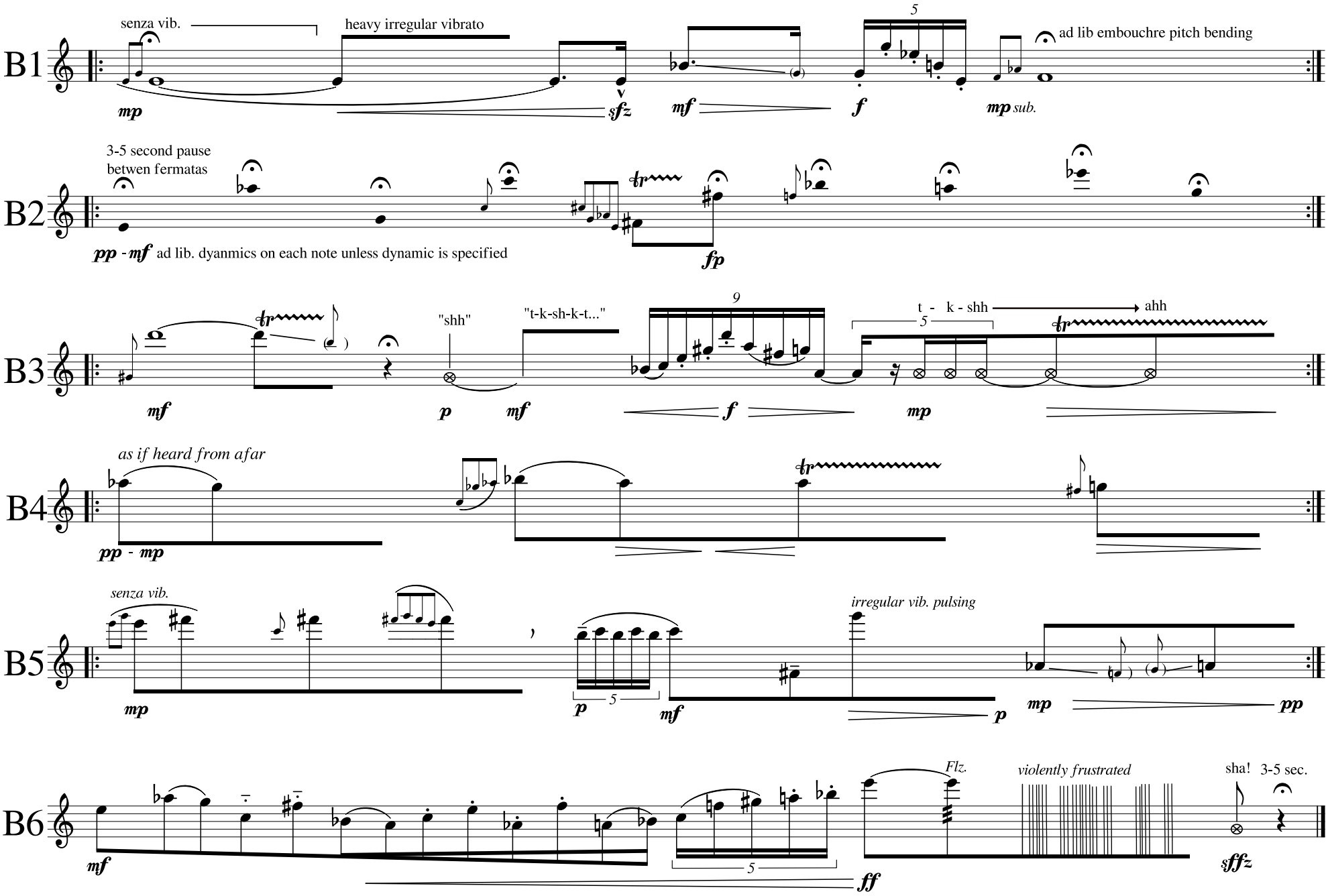


Gradual transition from pure tone (filled circle) to air tone (open circle). The air tone should be produced with embouchre still in place; differentiate from "breathe out"

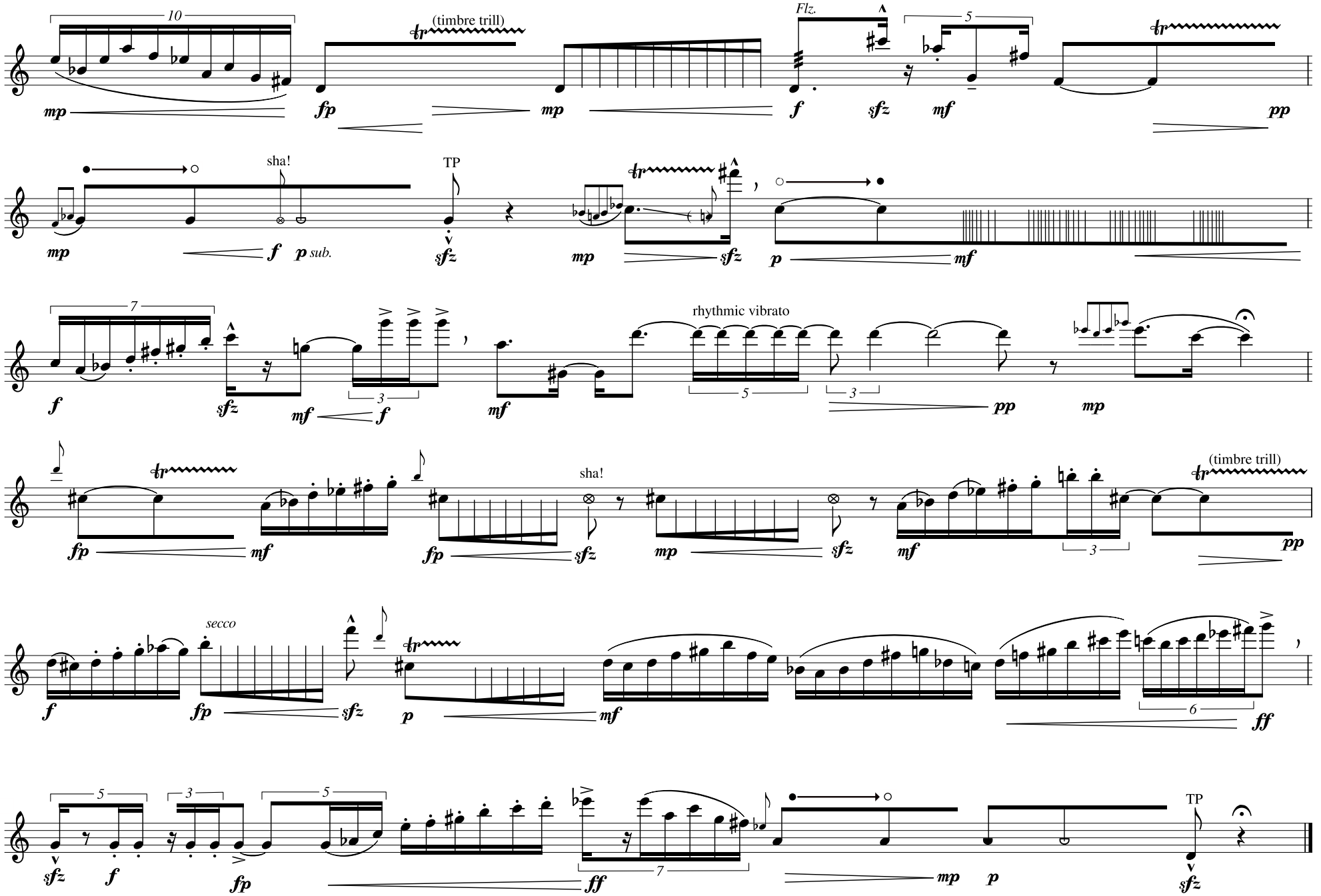
Page A


A1
mp
mf
p
mf
fp
f
A2
"sha!"
p
mf
p
sfz
sfz
f
pp
mf
mp
p
A3
"shhh"
like a deep breath
suddenly cut short
Flz.
mf
p
mf
mp
f
sfz
mp
A4
"kah"
t- k - t sha!
3
like a deep breath
suddenly cut short
p
f
mp
mf
sfz
mf
p
mf
p sub.
A5
mp - mf (ad. lib range of dyn. during stutter)
sfz
mp
mf
p
mf
mf sub.
p
as if giving up
A6
shh
ah!
pp
sfz
p sub.
sfz
f
pp
mp
p

Page B


B1
senza vib.
heavy irregular vibrato
ad lib embouchre pitch bending
mp
sfz
mf
f
mp sub.
B2
3-5 second pause
betwen fermatas
pp - mf ad lib. dyanmics on each note unless dynamic is specified
fp
B3
"shh"
"t-k-sh-k-t..."
t - k - shh
ahh
mf
p
mf
f
mp
B4
as if heard from afar
pp - mp
B5
senza vib.
irregular vib. pulsing
mp
p
mf
p
mp
pp
B6
Flz.
violently frustrated
sha! 3-5 sec.
mf
ff
sffz

Page C


10
(timbre trill)
Flz.
5
mp
fp
mp
f
sfz
mf
pp
sha!
TP
mp
f
p sub.
sfz
mp
sfz
p
mf
7
rhythmic vibrato
f
sfz
mf
3
f
mf
5
3
pp
mp
fp
mf
fp
sfz
sha!
mp
sfz
mf
3
(timbre trill)
pp
secco
f
fp
sfz
p
mf
6
ff
5
3
5
sfz
f
fp
ff
7
mp
p
TP
sfz