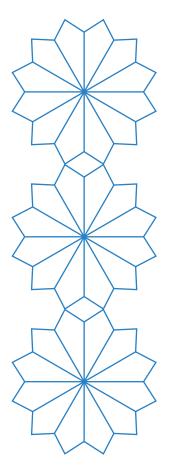




Only Sound Remains was produced as part of the Stay Close project 2013/14. It was supported by Arts Council England, Jerwood Charitable Foundation and Iran Heritage Foundation.

www.staycloseproject.com

Flute
Clarinet in Bb
Ney
Tenor trombone
Tombak
Harp
Tar
Soprano
Kamanche
Violin
Viola
Violoncello
Double bass



Duration: c. 20 minutes

An Introduction to Iranian Music

Radif and dastgah

Radif ('row') refers to the complete repertoire of Iranian classical music and consists of 400 short pieces (gusheh – 'corner') that are taught to a pupil by an ostad ('master'). For many centuries each ostad was likely to teach their own version of the gusheh built up over many years and thus there was great variation in their content. By the midnineteenth century, court musician Ali Akbar Farahan (1810-55) began to formalise the wide range of gusheh into the modern day radif.

The modern radif is divided into twelve groups of modes, seven of these are called dastgah and five are referred to as avaz. Each dastgah/avaz and gusheh has its own title referring to a person, a region or particular sentiment or quality of character it is thought to represent.

Dastgah-e Shur Avaz-e Abuata Avaz-e Dashti Avaz-e Bayat-e Tork Avaz-e Afshari Dastgah-e Segah Dastgah-e Chahargah Dastgah-e Homayun Avaz-e Bayat-e Esfahan Dastgah-e Nava Dastgah-e Mahur Dastgah-e Rast Panjgah

Generally, gushehs at the beginning of the series are of a lower pitch, with pitch gradually rising as you move through the series. A single piece of music often stays largely in one dastgah throughout and musicians must make a series of decisions which amount to extemporisation. Broadly speaking they must decide how many gushehs of that dastgah to play, in which order to play them, how to progress from one to the next and how to embellish or vary their manner of performing each one

Instruments

The piece uses a mixed ensemble of Western and Middle Eastern instruments. Below, some information is given on each of the Middle Eastern instruments.

Tar



The Tar is a double-bellied, six-string lute with three sets of double strings. Each pair of strings is tuned in unison, the first two in plain steel, the third in wound copper. These strings are tuned in fourths (C4, G3, C3) with one extra bass string (wound in copper and tuned to G2) that runs outside the fingerboard and passes over an extension of the nut. There are also two pairs of shorter sympathetic strings whose tuning is variable according to the piece to be played and with the performer's tastes. The fingerboard has twenty-five to twenty-eight adjustable gut frets. Its range is about two and a half octaves, and it is played with a small brass plectrum.

The word $t\bar{a}r$ (C) means 'string' in Farsi, thus it is claimed that the tar is the root of the names of instruments including the Persian setar, Indian sitar and Western guitar.

Kamanche



Kamancheh - كمانچه - is a four-string upright fiddle also referred to as a spike-fiddle. The soundbox is made of mulberry wood and the soundbox is covered by a skin membrane.

It is played sitting down held like a cello though it is about the length of a viola. The end-pin can rest on the knee or thigh while seated in a chair. It has four strings that are tuned in 4ths, to D4, A4, D5, A5. The tension in the bow is not fixed and is controlled by the player during the performance. The player also rotates the instrument in order to move from high to low strings.

Ney



The ney features in Iranian, Turkish, Azerbaijani and Arabic music traditions. It is an end-blown flute, consisting of a piece of hollow cane or reed. Turkish and Arab neys normally have 7 holes, 6 in front and one thumb-hole in the back. The typical Iranian ney has 6 holes, one of which is on the back. The ney has been played continuously for 4,500–5,000 years, making it one of the oldest musical instruments still in use.

The interval between the holes is a semitone, although microtones (and broader pitch inflections) are achieved via partial hole covering, changes of embouchure, or positioning the angle of the instrument.

The ney has a range of about a 9th and has the ability to play notes contained in one dastgah at a time. Therefore, it is common for players to use a range of neys in order to reach further pitches and play in a variety of dastgah

Tombak



Tombak is a drum carved from solid wood and covered at the wide end with calf or goat skin. It is held horizontally across the player's lap and is played with both hands. The elaborate finger technique consists of various rolling and snapping styles, which allow for a great variety of sounds.

Voice

The voice plays a particularly important role in Iranian music since it is the meaning of lyrics – often derived from medieval mystic poets Saadi (1184-1283), Rumi (1207-73) and Hafez (1325-1389) – that is the key focus of attention.

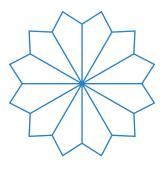
A key characteristic of Persian vocal style is a type of warbling called tahrir - 'which is used as an ornament or trill and is similar to the Swiss yodel. There are various types, including 'tahrir bolbuli' – so called because it echoes the sound of a nightingale. The tahrir ornament is used in long, melismatic phrases and normally falls at the end of the phrase.

Microtones

Iranian music makes extensive use of microtones, generally referred to as 'koron'. Below is the notated tonality of Dastgah-e Chahargah with the koron sign at notes A and D.



Koron denotes a lowering of the interval by a microtone. This microtone is variable according to which dastgah it appears in, the particular gusheh being played, the pitch of the note and the direction by which it is approached. The koron should not be considered a quarter-tone, this is an attempt to align it with a system of equal temperament that is entirely irrelevant to the Iranian music tradition.



Performance instructions

Tonality

The piece uses microtones throughout. While recognising that microtones in Iranian music are flexible and not equivalent to the Western quarter-tone, for ease of playing by Western musicians, this pieces uses the notation of a quarter tone. The Western musicians should listen carefully to their Middle Eastern counterparts and try to emulate the microtone sound that they produce.

In the score, the sign: denotes a microtone/quarter flat and the sign: , a microtone/quarter sharp.

The piece uses Iranian dastgah as its tonal basis. The 1st, 2nd and 5th movements are in the mode of Homayoun while the 3rd movement is in the mode of Segah.



Improvisation

The piece features improvisation by the Middle Eastern instrumentalists. This is notated in the score with a large arrow through the middle of the stave. A blue arrow denotes a player improvising as a soloist and a green arrow denotes a player improvising as accompaniment.

The second movement is a voice and kamanche duet. The soprano line is notated while the kamanche part is shown with a blue arrow denoting soloist improvisation. An estimated length of the bar is given in boxed text below the solo line.

Improvisation in the original performance was developed by the following musicians:

Ney – Louai Alhenawi Tombak – Fariborz Kiannejad Tar – Jamal Samavati Kamanche – Adib Rostami

Third movement

This movement uses an Iranian rhythmic cycle in 13, which is notated as alternating bars of 6/8 and 7/8.

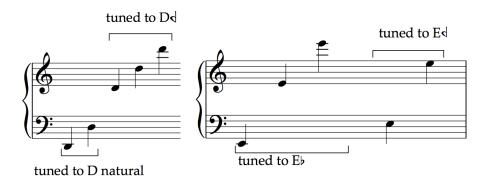
Voice

Tremelo lines in the voice part, depicted below and found in bar 142 of the 5th movement, denote the tahrir technique (see above for explanation).



Harp

The strings of A should be tuned up a quarter-tone to give the notes of Av. The strings of D and E should be tuned according to the graphics below.



Lyrics

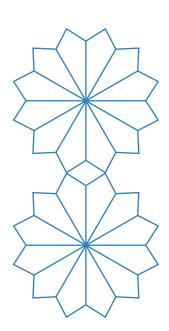
The lyrical content of the second movement is derived from the following section of the 1966 poem 'It is Only Sound that Remains' by Forough Farrokhzad (1935-1967):

Sound, sound, only sound,
The sound of the limpid wish of water to flow,
The sound of the falling of starlight on the layer of earth's femininity,
The sound of the binding of meaning's sperm
And the expansion of the shared mind of love.
Sound, sound, sound, only sound remains.

صدا، صدا، شما صدا

صدای خواهش ثفاف آب به جاری شدن صدای ریزش نور ساره بر جدار مادئی خاک In the score, lyrics are written in Farsi with English transliteration. The following pronunciation rules apply:

â – the 'a' in start a – the 'a' in clap i – the 'ee' in feel e – the 'e' in egg kh – the 'j' in the Spanish jamón



Biography

Soosan Lolavar is a British-Iranian composer, sound artist and educator who works in both electronic and acoustic sound, and across the genres of concert music, contemporary dance, installation, film, animation and theatre.

Her work has been performed at the Royal Festival Hall, V&A, National Maritime Museum, ICA, Chisenhale Gallery, LSE New Academic Building, Blackheath Concert Halls, Jacqueline Du Pré Music Centre, Bonnie Bird Theatre, Circus Space and broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

In 2013 she was selected as one of two Embedded composers in residence at the Southbank Centre, with the aim of writing a piece for the newly refurbished organ that will form part of the Pull Out All the Stops Festival in March and April 2014. In 2012 she won the John Halford Prize for Composition awarded by Ian Pace and was selected as part of the Adopt a Composer scheme funded by PRS for Music Foundation and run by Making Music, in partnership with Sound and Music and BBC Radio 3.

She holds degrees in Social and Political Sciences (University of Cambridge), Musicology (University of Oxford) and Composition (Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance) and her research interests include the politics of gender and sexuality, post-colonialism and the music industry and postmodernism in electronic musics. She has worked as an Assistant Lecturer at Trinity Laban Conservatoire, leading a course on music, gender and sexuality and at City Lit Adult Education college where she teaches: music appreciation; music analysis and criticism; and opera appreciation for beginners.

Programme Note

Only Sound Remains is inspired by the works of two contemporary Iranian female poets. It takes its title and lyrical content from the 1966 poem 'It is Only Sound that Remains' by Forough Farrokhzad (1935-1967).

The title of each of the five movements is taken from the 1967 poem 'Wild Mountain Plant' by Jaleh Esfahani (1921-2007).

I am a wild mountain plant, not a tulip in a vase. Do not take me to senseless festivities. I am used to the coldness of the rough rocks. Do not take me home. My birthplace is the mountain. Once I grew under a rock. Once I will be buried under a rock. My rough nature is the nest of grief. I am separated from compatriots and home. My heart does not shed happiness. There is no jubilation in me. Do not expect me to be fresh, scented and colourful. I am but the fury of heartache. I am a wild mountain plant waiting for spring. Stroking me with affection makes me weep. Do not make me weep.

Only Sound Remains combines elements of both Iranian and Western classical music in order to explore new musical territory for both traditions. The tonal basis of the piece is derived from two Iranian dastgah – often described as modes but functioning more as melody types – called Homayoun and Segah. These melody types require all musicians to play fluctuating microtones, referred to as koron, which are unused in Western musics. Similarly, the piece uses as source material two gusheh – established melodic fragments within a particular dastgah that are used as the basis for extemporization. A dance-like melody called Reng-e Farah features in the 5th movement, initially as a tar solo, while Jamedaran provides the source material for the fast moving tutti passage in the same section.

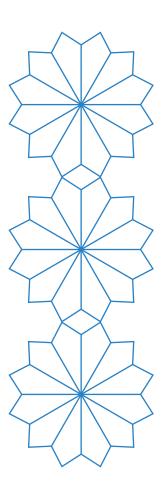
The piece also makes use of structural conventions, techniques and textures more common to Western classical music styles. Only Sound Remains is a work in five movements, freely combining notated, seminotated and improvised sections. It makes use of a wide variety of instrumental timbres, thus expanding beyond the notion of melody and decoration which is the focus of Iranian music, and employs a range of ensemble textures, disrupting the established solo and accompaniment form in much traditional Iranian work.

Beyond the technical aspects of the piece, Only Sound Remains is a very personal reflection on both my experiences over the past 10

months of Stay Close and my own British-Iranian heritage. I have been deeply inspired by my work with musicians in Iran and members of the Farsi- speaking community in the UK. Through these two research phases I have discovered a form of creativity in both Iran and the UK that freely combines Iranian and Western musical ideas as well as taking traditional forms and updating them in the context of a contemporary work.

On a personal level, Stay Close was born as part of a wider process of rebuilding my relationship with Iran, through which the composing process stands as a tool for asking and answering questions about my Iranian identity. This practice-as-self- exploration process has been enlightening and will no doubt extend far beyond the culmination of this project.

Soosan Lolavar, London (April, 2014)



I. I Am A Wild Mountain Plant





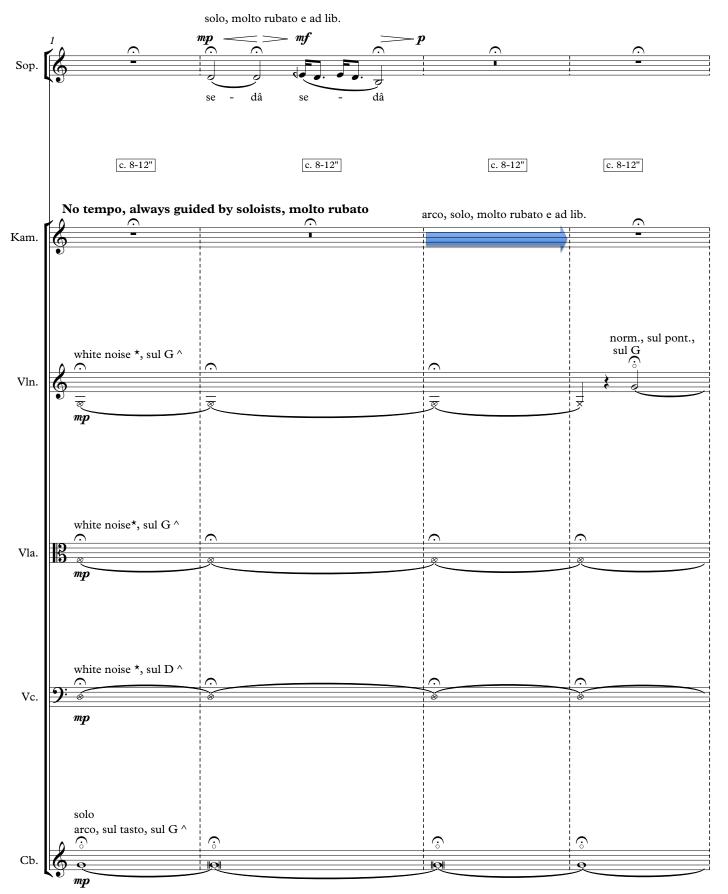






II.
The Coldness of the Rough Rocks

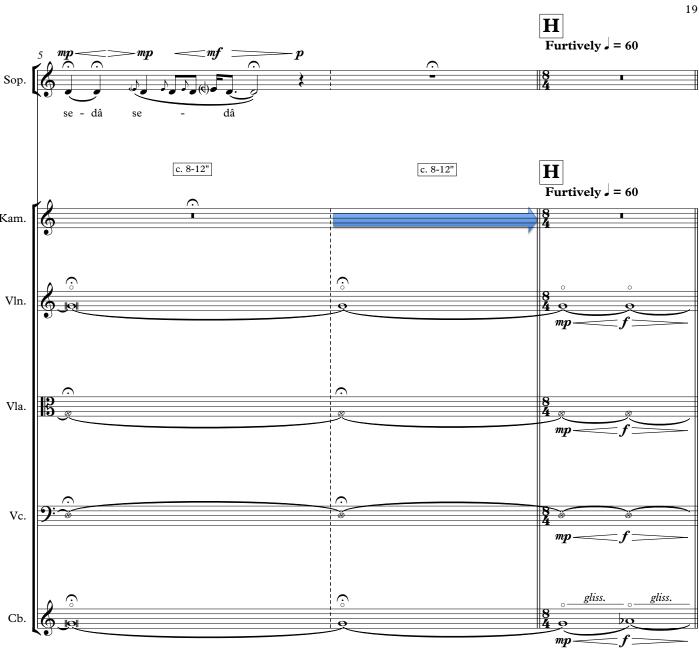
No tempo, always guided by soloists, molto rubato

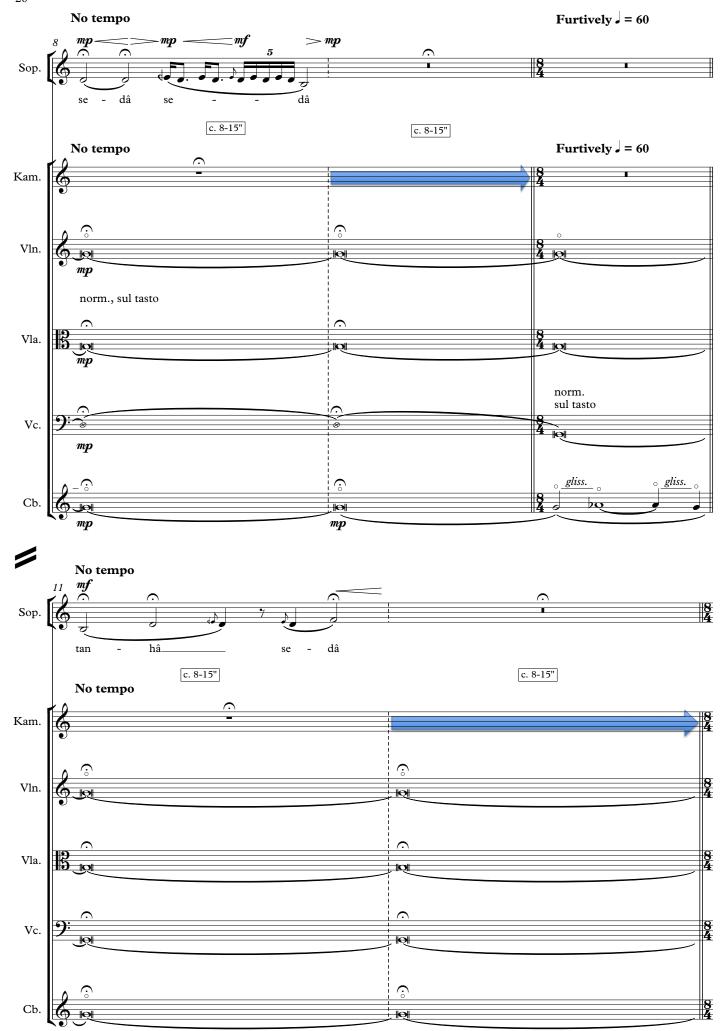


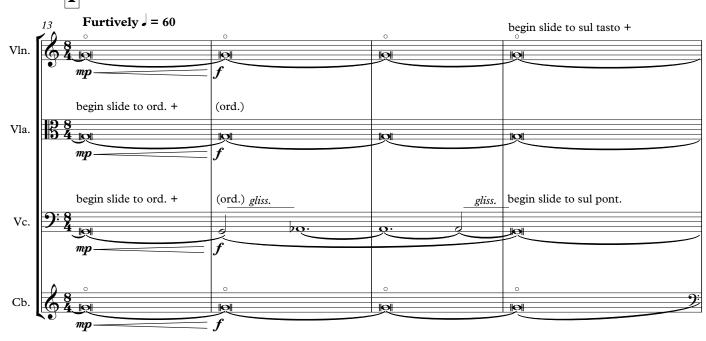
^{*} Dampen strings and play directly on the bridge to create a white noise sound with no tone.

[^] Bow freely but avoid changing bow at barline throughout

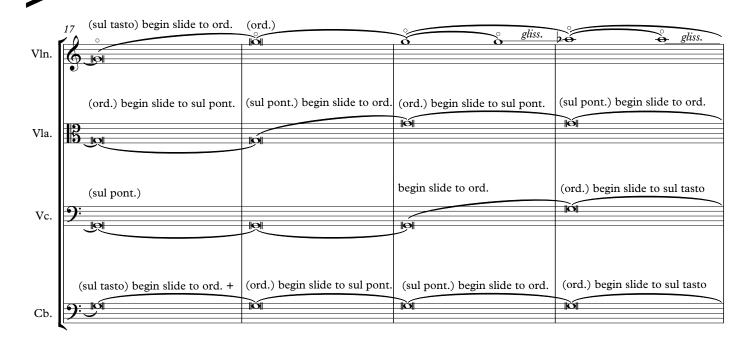


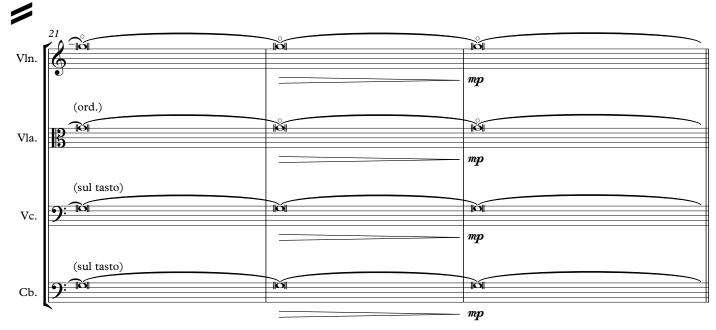




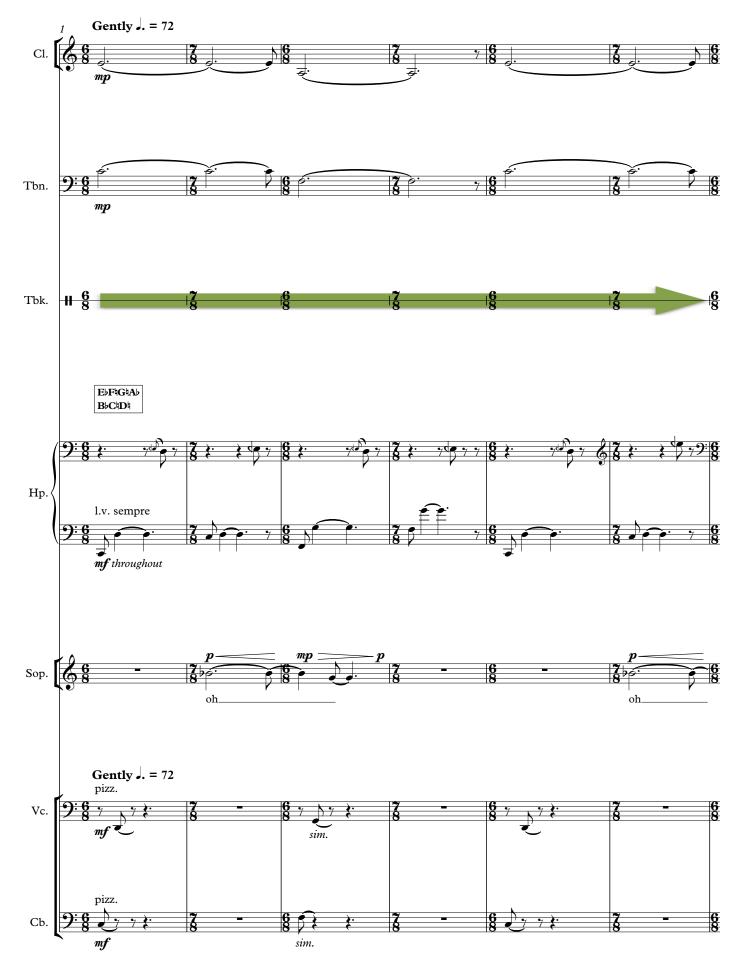


+ All slides between bowing techniques should occur gradually, taking the whole length of the bar to complete.



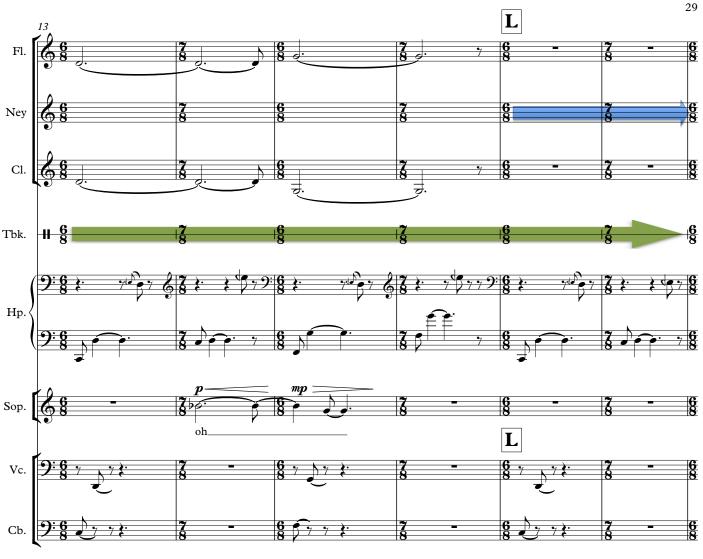


III.
My Birthplace is the Mountain

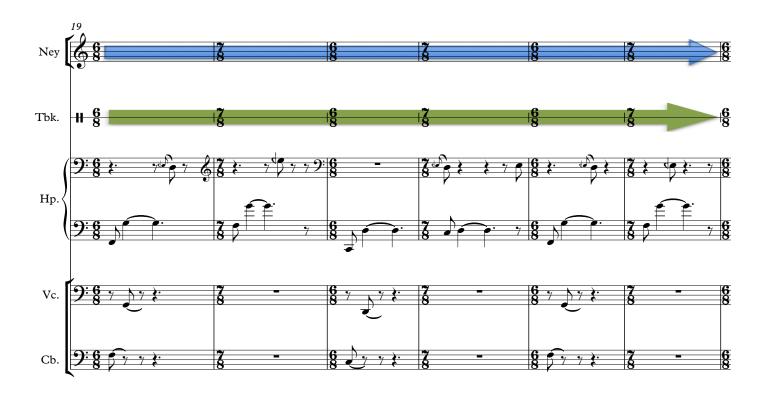




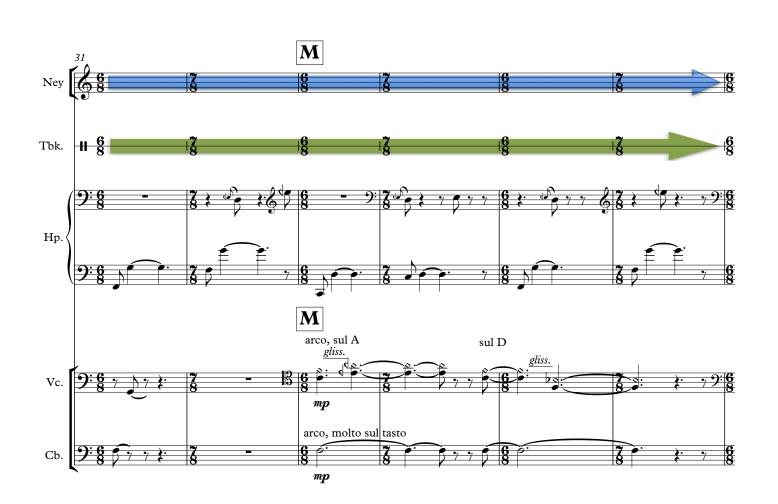












IV.
I Am But The Fury of Heartache



V. Do Not Make Me Weep

