

TLÖN

for 3 conductors and no players
Mark Applebaum, 1995

Tlön

for 3 conductors and no players

©Mark Applebaum, 1995

Duration: approximately 5 minutes.

* * *

Tlön was composed on the basis of the observation that the act of conducting, in itself, is not only *musical*, but *music*. Furthermore, elements traditionally associated only with sound, such as loudness or dissonance (particularly temporal dissonance), may be equally cultivated in the corporeal, gestural sphere; one need only consider the emotional or affective loudness of two people engaging in a virulent argument in sign language.

Tlön is to be performed by three conductors standing in a semi-circle, each facing the audience and spaced by approximately 1 to 1.5 meters. Although each individual conductor is encouraged to conduct with his or her own personal comportment, the three conductors must all dress in the same manner, must all use *or* not use batons, and must all conduct from memory *or* use music stands.

Throughout the piece each conductor imagines the ensemble which he or she conducts. The ensemble may be of any size and nature. The players of this virtual ensemble are located, spatially, in the audience or, in the case of larger halls, in the space between the stage and the audience; the audience, then, have the players' view of the conductor.

The composition consists of two sections, *Monolith* and *Kaleidoscope*, to be performed attacca.

Monolith

The monolith calls for the performers to conduct in a somewhat unconventional manner with each one describing a different two-dimensional plane. Each conductor is restricted to coordinates within his or her given plane; only together do the conductors describe a three-dimensional space.

Conductor 1's "default position" occurs at the end of the monolith (2:30) in which his or her arms extend straight out toward the audience with the palms facing down. Conductor 1 moves his or her arms up or down (as if in a climbing motion) according to the graphic notation. The solid line represents the right hand and the broken line the left hand. The middle horizontal line represents the height of the arms outstretched horizontally from the body while the top and bottom line represent the arms outstretched vertically up and down, respectively. At various times the conductor is required to rotate his or her wrists 180 degrees: the down arrow means "palm facing down" while the up arrow means "palm facing up".

Conductor 2's "default position" occurs at the end of the monolith (2:30) in which his or her arms extend straight out to each side with the palms facing down. Conductor 2 moves his or her arms up and down (as a flying bird) according to the graphic notation. The solid line represents the right hand and the broken line the left hand. The middle horizontal line represents the arms outstretched to each side while the top and bottom line represent the arms outstretched vertically up and down, respectively. At various times the conductor is required to rotate his or her wrists 180 degrees: the down arrow means "palm facing down" while the up arrow means "palm facing up".

Conductor 3's "default position" occurs at the end of the monolith (2:30) in which his or her arms extend straight out toward the audience with the palms facing inward, as if about to clap. Conductor 3 moves his or her arms horizontally (as one would do when wading through water) according to the graphic notation. The solid line represents the right hand and the broken line the left hand. The middle horizontal line represents the arms outstretched toward the audience while the top and bottom line represent the arms outstretched fully to each side. At various times the conductor is required to rotate his or her wrists 180 degrees: the two arrows which point at one another mean "palm facing inward" while the two arrows which point away from one another mean "palm facing outward".

Trill signs indicate a rapid quivering of the hand at the wrist.

Kaleidoscope

The kaleidoscope employs polymeter and polytempo. Above each line are beats to be conducted with the right arm in the given tempo. Conductors should use one of the standard beat patterns associated with the given meter. In the beginning and ending of sections G and Q each conductor beats two meters, one with each arm.

Note: all tempi have simple polyrhythmic relationships to 60. Furthermore, the tempo 60 (or 120) is always present in one voice. (An exception is section W during which the conductors are in rhythmic unison.)

Below the line are events to be cued, mostly with the left hand, but, on occasion, as an extremely explicit visual cue (for example, eye contact between conductor and player accompanied by a nod of the head). The conductor should make the cues to various locations, according to his or her imagined ensemble. The cued event is "articulated" at the notated time (as in a conventional score) and therefore may be cued beforehand according to the conductor's interpretation of the context and his or her imagined sound. However, events in section W, notated with a hexagon, are to be cued at the notated moment, not beforehand. Furthermore, the final two measures of section W contain hexagon cues in which a number is written; these numbered hexagons represent the conductors themselves, that is, one conductor cues another conductor. It is preferred that the cues in section W be done with the left hand as opposed to a visual cue.

The starting time of the cued event is notated; however, the rhythm of the event is not indicated. For example, an event written as an eighth note starts at the time of the eighth but may be shorter or longer in duration. Therefore, the conductor may imagine any sound, short or long, active or still, etc. and associate it with a cued event. Furthermore, the conductor is free to imagine many other virtual events in addition to the ones which have been explicitly notated as cues. That is, many events may be occurring in the virtual music but only some *require* cues and have thus been notated in the score.

The conductors are asked to imagine the sound of the virtual music and, from this imagined sound, choose appropriate gestures. This includes not only the style of the cue and its physical direction but also the character of the beat, additional left-hand gestures (which should be freely added to sculpt the imagined sound), the comportment of the head, eyes, torso, and legs, etc. The kaleidoscope is only a partial prescription for corporeal action; the conductor is urged to "bring the music to life" with his or her own repertoire of physical actions, much as he or she would do when conducting a conventional piece. Of course, the challenge in *Tlön* is that its sound is both virtual and less concretized by the composer. However, dynamic markings and character indications are provided and should be used to inform the conductors' interpretations.

Each conductor may have his or her own interpretation and set of physical actions for a given passage or all three conductors can agree upon a similar set of actions for any passage(s).

* * *

It is possible to perform *Tlön* without a click-track; however, it may be helpful to first practice with a click-track. If one is used in performance it should be as unobtrusive as possible and, under all circumstances, must not be heard by the audience. Some performers may wish to use a visual click-track with computer monitors or video.

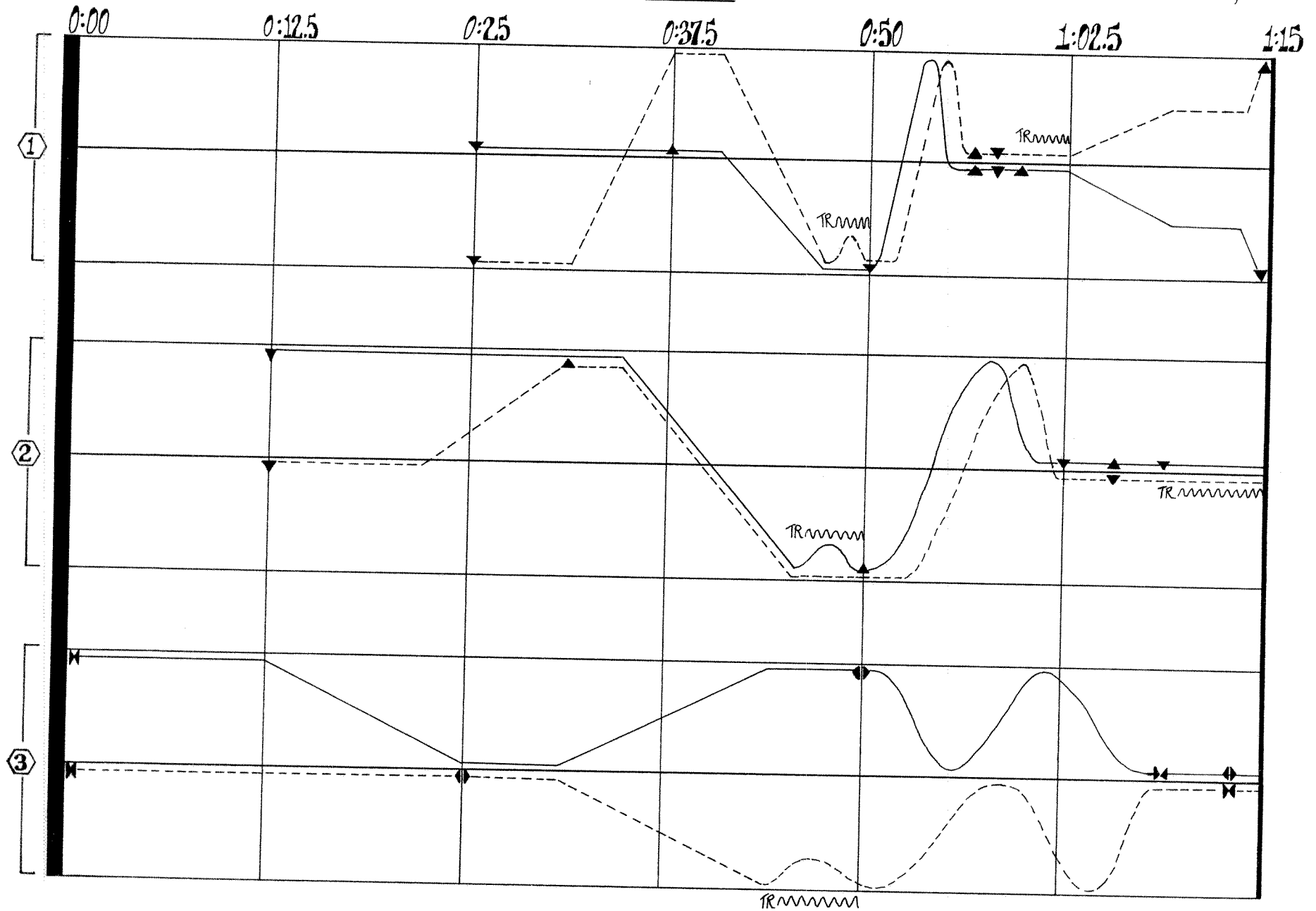
When the conductors enter the stage they may bow to the audience. During the applause at the conclusion of the piece, the conductors must turn away from the audience and bow (as if to the virtual audience upstage). They then turn back toward the audience and point out imagined soloists from the imagined ensemble or, if the composer is in the house, signal him. The composer comes forward, shakes the hands of the conductors and then all four bow together, the composer facing the audience and the conductors once again facing away from the audience.

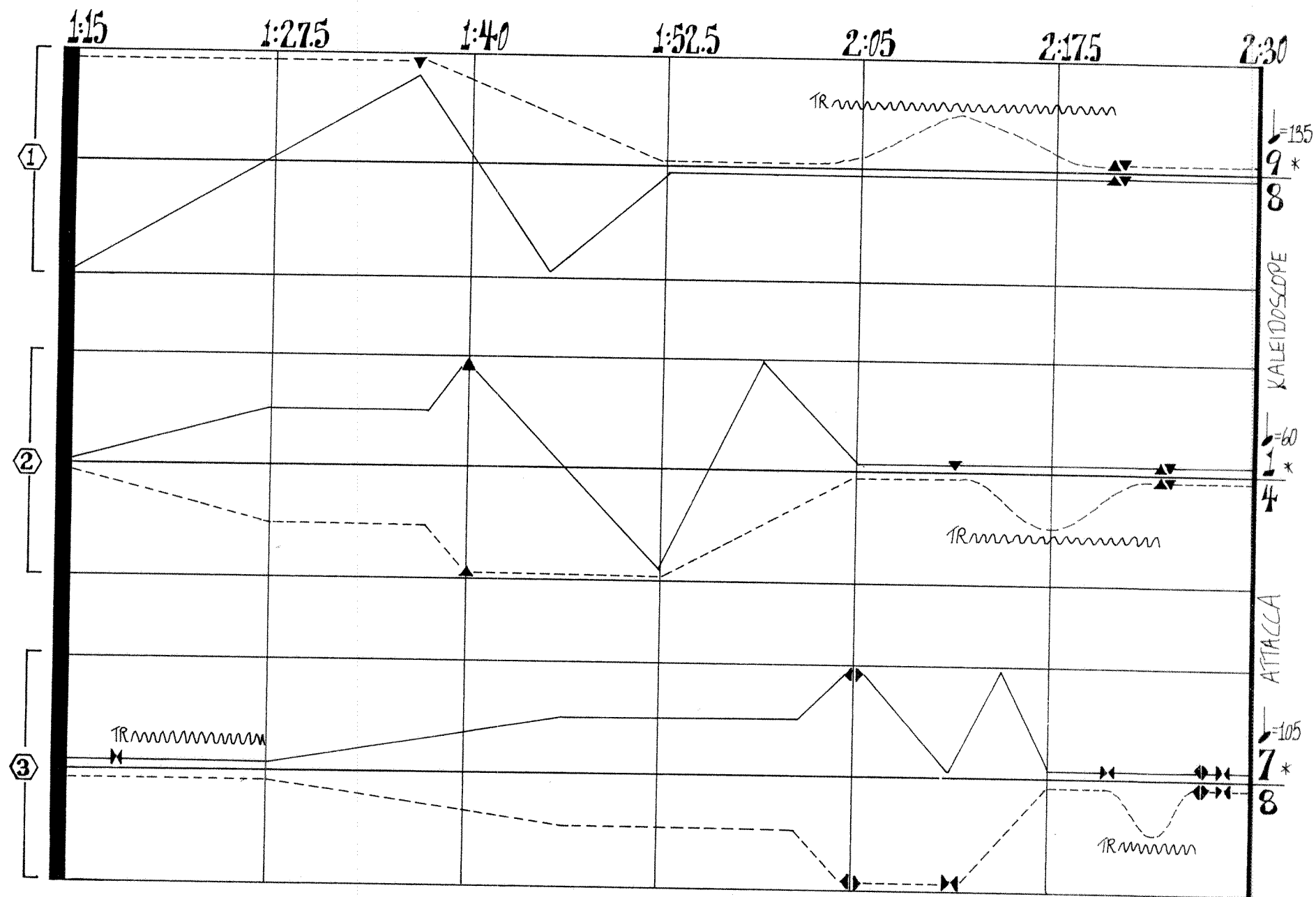
The composer wishes to thank Harvey Sollberger, Rand Steiger, Steven Schick, and Brian Ferneyhough for their invaluable input which helped to iron out the details of *Tlön*.

TLÖN

MONOLITH

M. APPLEBAUM, 1995





A KALEIDOSCOPE
ANIMATED
♩ = 135 (♩ = 90)

1 BEAT CUES

9/8
mf
mf
P
mp
ppp

ANIMATED
♩ = 60

2 BEAT CUES

1/4 2/8 1/4 2/8 5/4 1/2 2/4 2/4
fff SUB. ppp SUB. ppp P > fff ppp SUB. fff

ANIMATED
♩ = 105 (♩ = 70)

3 BEAT CUES

7/8 ppp SUB. ppp 2mp ppp 2mp P > fff mf fff

B DIDACTIC
♩ = 90

3/4 7/4 7/4
P > fff

DIDACTIC
♩ = 150

5/4 7/4
P > fff

DIDACTIC
♩ = 120

4/4 7/4 7/4
P > fff

C ANIMATED
♩ = 67.5 (♩ = 45)

9/4 8/4 8/4 8/4
mp ppp

ANIMATED
♩ = 60 (♩ = 30)

1/2 2/4 2/4
ppp SUB. fff

ANIMATED
♩ = 52.5 (♩ = 35)

7/4 8/4 8/4
mf fff

♩ = 170
3/4
♩ = 120
2/4
♩ = 120
1/4

D

① BEAT CUES

HEAVY $\downarrow=120$ CRISP, STACCATO FLUID, LEGATO RALLENTANDO $\downarrow=90$ BROADLY LIGHT $\downarrow=120$

3 4 2 5 3 4

4 4 4 4 4 4

fff SUB. p SUB. fff SUB. pp fff mf

② BEAT CUES

HEAVY $\downarrow=120$ CRISP, STACCATO FLUID, LEGATO BROADLY LIGHT $\downarrow=150$

2 4 2 2 4 4 2 10

4 4 4 4 4 4 4 8

fff SUB. p SUB. fff SUB. mf fff mf

③ BEAT CUES

HEAVY $\downarrow=120$ CRISP, STACCATO FLUID, LEGATO ACCELERANDO $\downarrow=180$ BROADLY LIGHT $\downarrow=165$

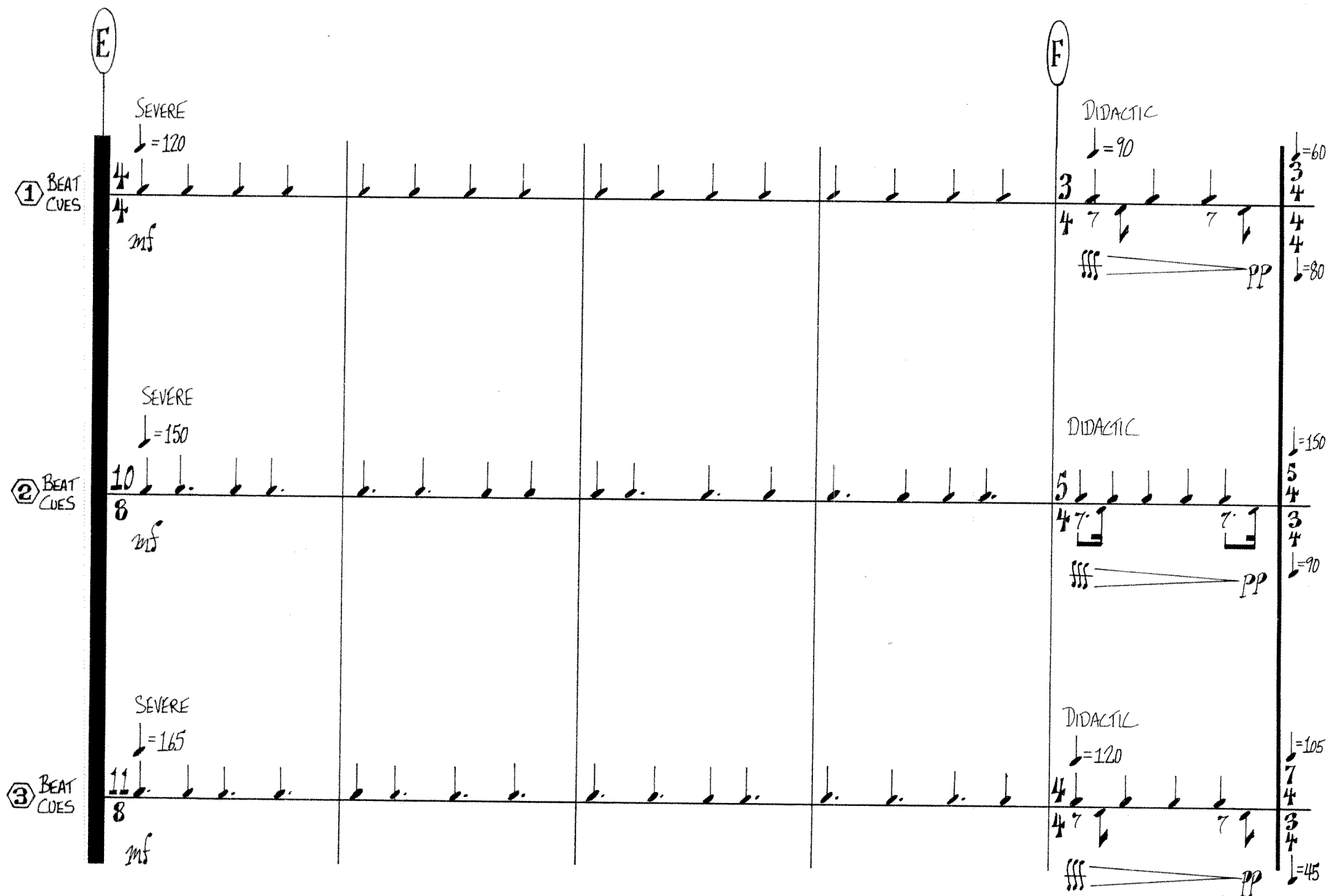
1 5 2 3 1 5 1 11

4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 8

fff SUB. p SUB. fff SUB. pp mf

(120) (116) (112) (108) (104) (101) (98) (95) (93) (91)

(120) (124) (128) (132) (136) (140) (144) (148) (152) (156) (160) (164) (168) (172) (176)



G

1 BEAT: RH LH

RIGOROUS $\downarrow = 60$

$\downarrow = 80$ PP

($\downarrow = 60$) (BOTH ARMS IN UNISON) PPP

MAJESTIC

RIGOROUS $\downarrow = 60$

$\downarrow = 80$ PP

$\downarrow = 128.6$

2 BEAT: RH LH

RIGOROUS $\downarrow = 150$

$\downarrow = 90$ PP

($\downarrow = 150$) (BOTH ARMS IN UNISON) PPP

MAJESTIC

RIGOROUS $\downarrow = 150$

$\downarrow = 90$ PP

$\downarrow = 102.9$

3 BEAT: RH LH

RIGOROUS $\downarrow = 105$

$\downarrow = 45$ PP

($\downarrow = 105$) (BOTH ARMS IN UNISON) PPP

MAJESTIC

RIGOROUS $\downarrow = 105$

$\downarrow = 45$ PP

$\downarrow = 120$

H

MECHANICAL

$\downarrow = 128.6$

① BEAT CUES

6

4

$\downarrow = 90$

3

4

fff

ppp

fff

MECHANICAL

$\downarrow = 102.9$ (8 BEATS!)

② BEAT CUES

8

4

$\downarrow = 150$

5

4

SEMPRE

mf

MECHANICAL

$\downarrow = 120$

③ BEAT CUES

7

4

4

4

ppp

fff

ppp

Handwritten musical score with three systems of notation, each featuring a vertical bar labeled I, J, K, and L. The notation includes beat cues, tempo markings, and dynamic markings.

System 1:

- Beat Cues:** ① BEAT CUES
- Tempo Markings:** DIDACTIC (♩=90), ANIMATED (♩=135 (♩=90)), SEVERE (♩=120)
- Dynamic Markings:** p , f , mf , fff , pp , mp , p , mf , fff , pp

System 2:

- Beat Cues:** ② BEAT CUES
- Tempo Markings:** DIDACTIC (♩=150), ANIMATED (♩=60), SEVERE (♩=150)
- Dynamic Markings:** p , f , $sub. ppp$, $sub. fff$, $sub. ppp$, mf , fff , $sub. pp$

System 3:

- Beat Cues:** ③ BEAT CUES
- Tempo Markings:** DIDACTIC (♩=120), ANIMATED (♩=105 (♩=70)), SEVERE (♩=165)
- Dynamic Markings:** p , f , $p < mp$, ppp , fff , $mf < f$, mf , fff , $sub. pp$

Handwritten musical score for three parts (1, 2, 3) across three sections (L, M, N). The score includes tempo markings, dynamics, and beat cues.

Section L

- Part 1:** DIDACTIC $\downarrow = 90$. Beat cues: 3, 4, 7, 7. Dynamics: *fff*, *SUB. pp*.
- Part 2:** DIDACTIC $\downarrow = 150$. Beat cues: 5, 4, 7. Dynamics: *fff*, *SUB. pp*.
- Part 3:** DIDACTIC $\downarrow = 120$. Beat cues: 4, 4, 7, 7. Dynamics: *fff*, *SUB. pp*.

Section M

- Part 1:** ANIMATED $\downarrow = 135 (\downarrow = 90)$. Beat cues: 9, 8. Dynamics: *ppp*.
- Part 2:** ANIMATED $\downarrow = 60$. Beat cues: 2, 8. Dynamics: *mf*.
- Part 3:** ANIMATED $\downarrow = 105 (\downarrow = 70)$. Beat cues: 7, 8. Dynamics: *fff*.

Section N

- Part 1:** SEVERE $\downarrow = 120$. Beat cues: 4, 4. Dynamics: *mf*, *ff*, *SUB. p*, *ppp*, *sfz*, *ppp*.
- Part 2:** SEVERE $\downarrow = 150$. Beat cues: 10, 8. Dynamics: *mf*, *ff*, *SUB. p*, *ppp*, *sfz*, *ppp*.
- Part 3:** SEVERE $\downarrow = 165$. Beat cues: 11, 8. Dynamics: *(mf)*, *ff*, *p*, *ppp*, *sfz*, *ppp*.

Final Measures:

- Part 1:** 6/4, $\downarrow = 128.6$
- Part 2:** 8/4, $\downarrow = 102.9$
- Part 3:** 7/4, $\downarrow = 120$

MECHANICAL
♩ = 128.6

① BEAT CUES
6
4/7
pp
ff
mf
fff
SUB. ppp
mf

MECHANICAL
♩ = 102.9 (8 BEATS!)

② BEAT CUES
8
4/7
pp
ff
mf
fff
SUB. ppp
ff
mf
p
f

MECHANICAL
♩ = 120

③ BEAT CUES
7
4/7
pp
ff
mf
fff
SUB. ppp

♩ = 120

Handwritten musical score for three parts, labeled ① BEAT CUES, ② BEAT CUES, and ③ BEAT CUES. The score is divided into five measures, each with a specific tempo and style indicated above the staff.

Measure 1: STACCATO, STABBING. Tempo: ♩=120. Part 1: 4/8, 8/8. Part 2: 4/8, 8/8. Part 3: 4/8, 8/8.

Measure 2: LEGATO, ROMANTIC. Part 1: 3/4, 4/4. Part 2: 3/8, 8/8. Part 3: 3/4, 4/4.

Measure 3: STACCATO, ELECTRIC. Part 1: 4/8, 8/8. Part 2: 2/4, 4/4. Part 3: 2/4, 4/4.

Measure 4: LEGATO, ROMANTIC. Part 1: 4/4, 4/4. Part 2: 4/4, 4/4. Part 3: 3/8, 2/8, 3/8, 8/8.

Measure 5: HYPER. Part 1: 4/8, 3/8. Part 2: 4/8, 8/8. Part 3: 4/8, 5/8.

Dynamic markings include *p* (piano) and *ff* (fortissimo). A crescendo line is present in Measure 4, and a decrescendo line is present in Measure 5.

① BEAT CUES

SUBDUED STACCATO LEGATO, SERIOUS EXIGENT

3 4 5 3 1 5 1 3

8 4 4 4 8 8 8 8

p ppp $> sf$ mp f p f fff

$\text{♩} = 60$

② BEAT CUES

SUBDUED STACCATO LEGATO, SERIOUS EXIGENT

4 4 4 4 4 1 5 1 3

8 4 7 8 8 8 8 8

p ppp $> sf$ mp f p f fff

$\text{♩} = 150$

③ BEAT CUES

SUBDUED STACCATO LEGATO, SERIOUS EXIGENT

5 4 3 5 1 5 1 3

8 4 4 8 8 8 8 8

p ppp $> sf$ mp f p fff

$\text{♩} = 105$

$\text{♩} = 90$

$\text{♩} = 45$

Q

1 BEAT: RH LH

RIGOROUS $\downarrow=60$

BEAT: CUES: $\downarrow=60$

MAJESTIC

RIGOROUS BEAT RH $\downarrow=60$

BEAT LH $\downarrow=80$

$\downarrow=135$

pp ppp ff ppp pp

2 BEAT: RH LH

RIGOROUS $\downarrow=150$

BEAT: CUES: $\downarrow=150$

MAJESTIC

RIGOROUS BEAT RH $\downarrow=150$

BEAT LH $\downarrow=90$

$\downarrow=60$

pp ppp ff ppp pp

3 BEAT: RH LH

RIGOROUS $\downarrow=105$

BEAT: CUES: $\downarrow=105$

MAJESTIC

RIGOROUS BEAT RH $\downarrow=105$

BEAT LH $\downarrow=45$

$\downarrow=105$

pp ff pp

① BEAT CUES

② BEAT CUES

③ BEAT CUES

R

ANIMATED
♩=135 (♩.=90)

9
8

fff

ppp

S

LYRICAL
♩=60

3
4

mp

f

p

T

LIGHT
♩=90

BROADLY

5
4

mf

fff

ANIMATED
♩=60

1
4

2
8

1
4

2
8

fff

SUB.
ppp

SUB.
fff

LYRICAL
♩=80

4
4

mp

f

p

LIGHT
♩=120

BROADLY

2
4

4
4

2
4

mf

fff

mf

ANIMATED
♩=105 (♩.=70)

7
8

fff

LYRICAL
♩=100

5
4

mp

f

p

LIGHT
♩=180

BROADLY

1
4

5
4

1
4

3
4

mf

pp

W

DETERMINED

1 BEAT CUES

3 4

$\downarrow = 120$ $\downarrow = 90$ $\downarrow = 67.5$ $\downarrow = 50.6$ $\downarrow = 38$

f sf mf sf mp sf p

DETERMINED

2 BEAT CUES

3 4

$\downarrow = 120$ $\downarrow = 90$ $\downarrow = 67.5$ $\downarrow = 50.6$ $\downarrow = 38$

f sf mf sf mp sf p

DETERMINED

3 BEAT CUES

3 4

$\downarrow = 120$ $\downarrow = 90$ $\downarrow = 67.5$ $\downarrow = 50.6$ $\downarrow = 38$

f sf mf sf mp sf p

ASSERTIVE SWEETLY

3 2 4

$\downarrow = 120$

fff pp

ASSERTIVE SWEETLY

3 2 10

$\downarrow = 150$

fff pp

ASSERTIVE SWEETLY

3 2 11

$\downarrow = 165$

fff pp

X

SEVERE

♩ = 120

Y

1

BEAT CUES

4/4

2

BEAT CUES

10/8

3

BEAT CUES

11/8

⑦

LYRICAL
♩=60

① BEAT CUES

3 4

mp f p < mp > pppp

CUT-OFF

DROP ARMS

LYRICAL
♩=80

② BEAT CUES

4 4

mp f p < mp > pppp

CUT-OFF

DROP ARMS

LYRICAL
♩=100

③ BEAT CUES

5 4

mp f p < mp > pppp

CUT-OFF

DROP ARMS

8"

8"

8"

AT APPLAUSE TURN AWAY FROM THE AUDIENCE AND BOW, FACING UPSTAGE; TURN BACK TOWARD AUDIENCE AND POINT OUT "SOLISTS" FROM IMAGINED ENSEMBLE OR, IF THE COMPOSER IS IN THE HOUSE, SIGNAL THE COMPOSER WHO THEN COMES FORWARD, SHAKES THE HANDS OF THE PERFORMERS AND BOWS TOGETHER WITH THE PERFORMERS DURING WHICH THE COMPOSER FACES THE AUDIENCE AND THE PERFORMERS AGAIN FACE AWAY.

FINE
M. Applebaum
SAN DIEGO 11/9/95