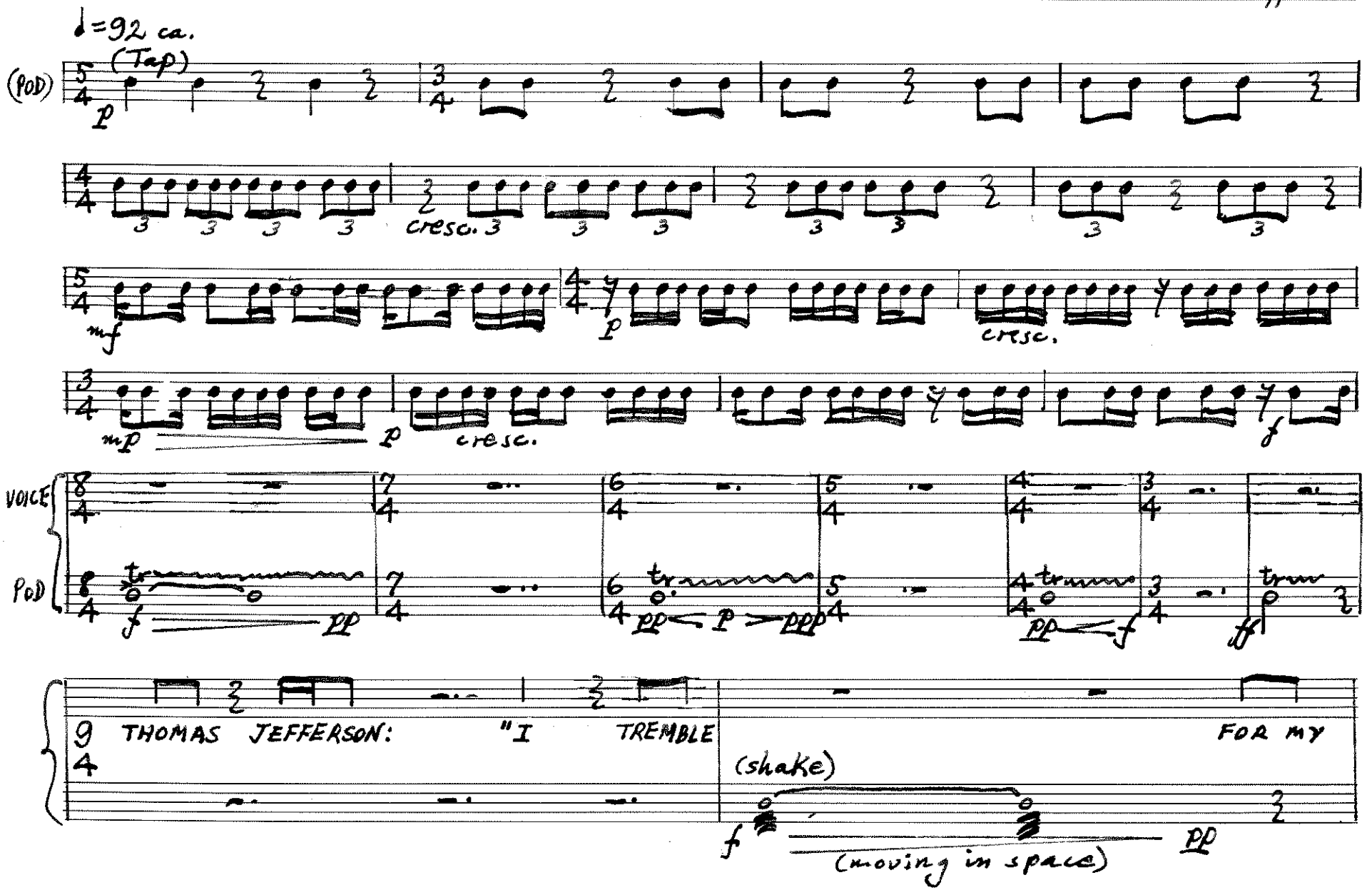
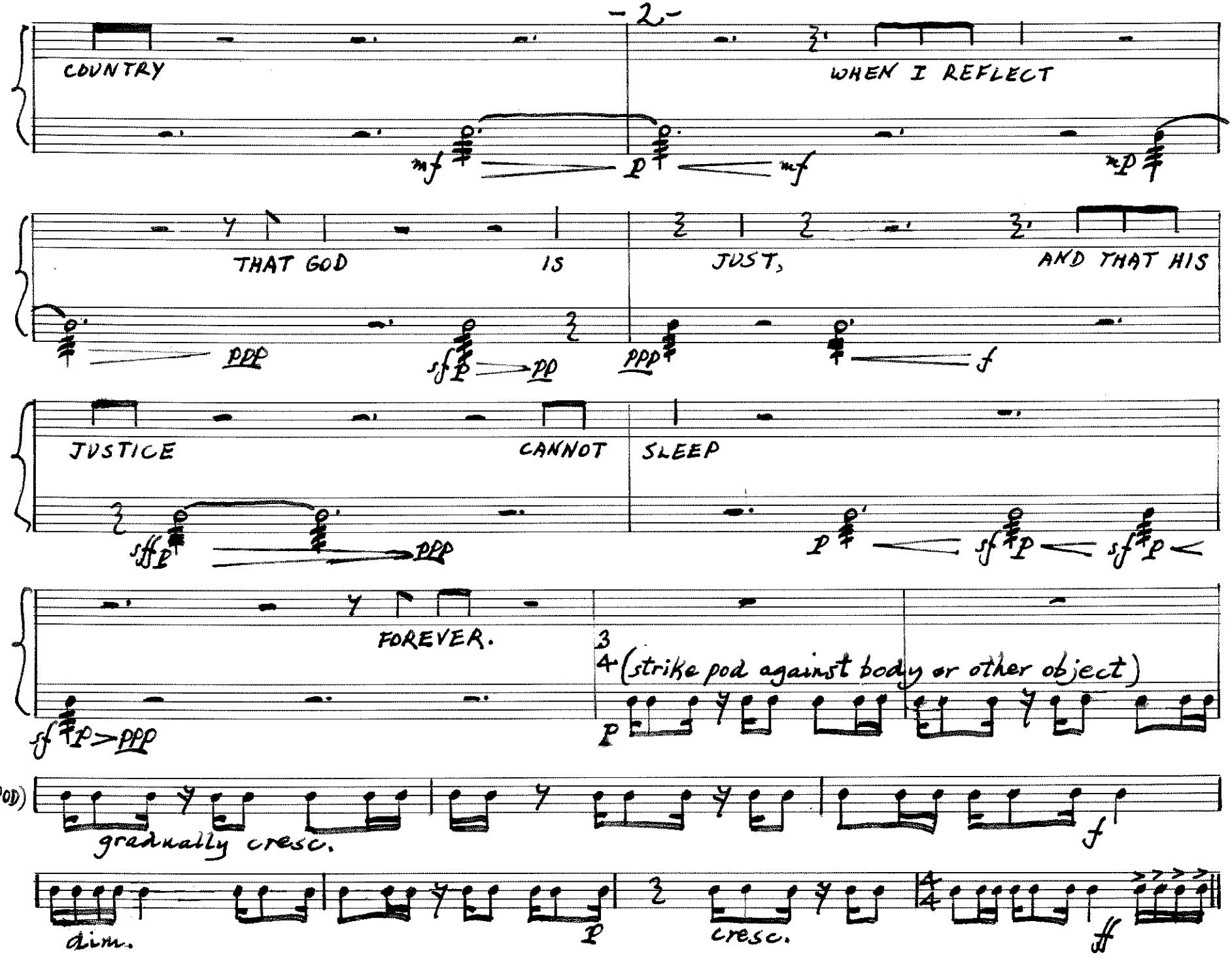
THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE
PROLOG

for seed pod with voice

Frederic Rzewski
(May 2007)
for Allen Otte
Text: Thomas Jefferson



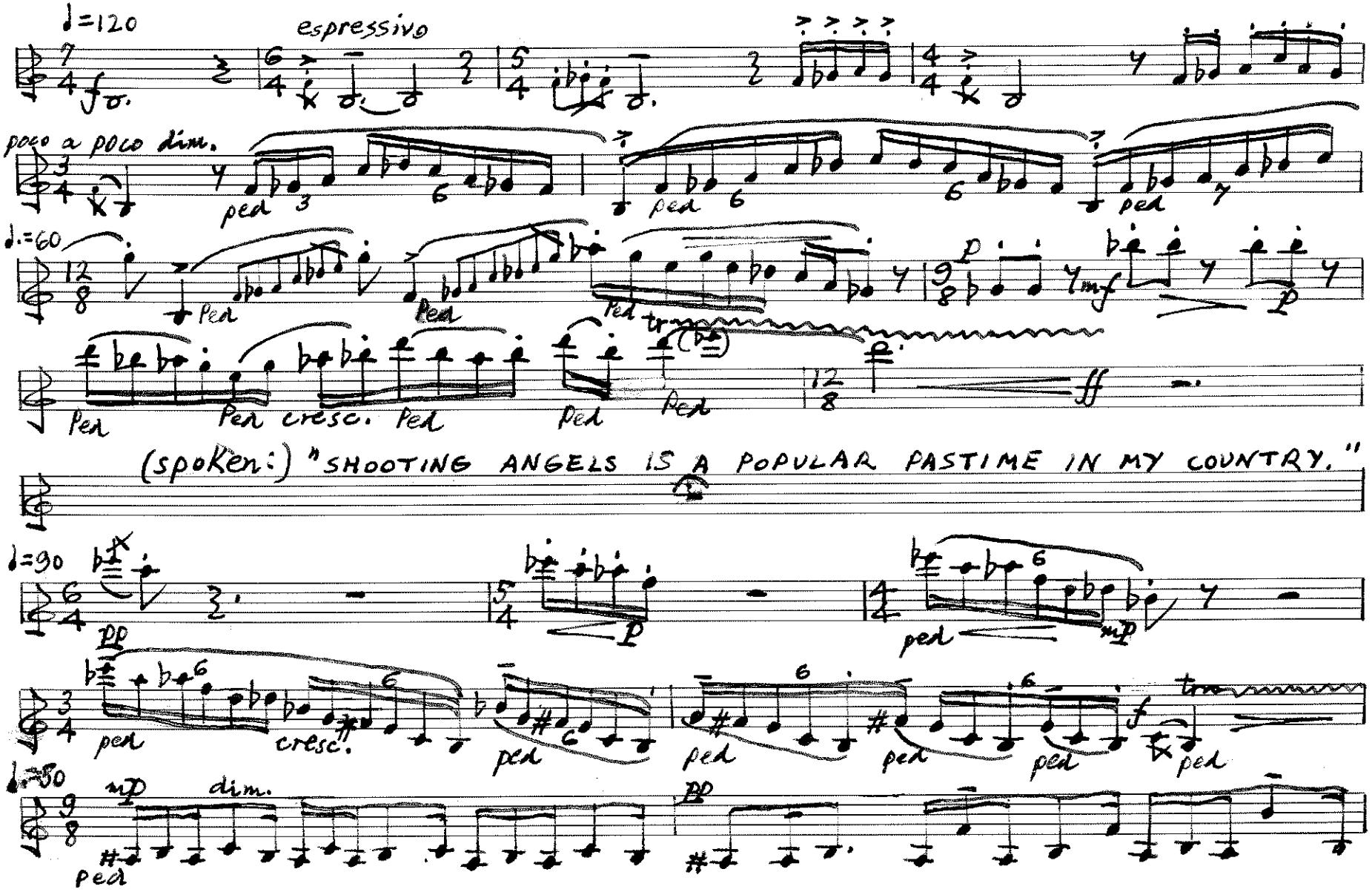

COUNTRY
WHEN I REFLECT
THAT GOD
IS
JUST,
AND THAT HIS
JUSTICE
CANNOT
SLEEP
FOREVER.
(strike pod against body or other object)
(POD)
gradually cresc.
dim.
cresc.

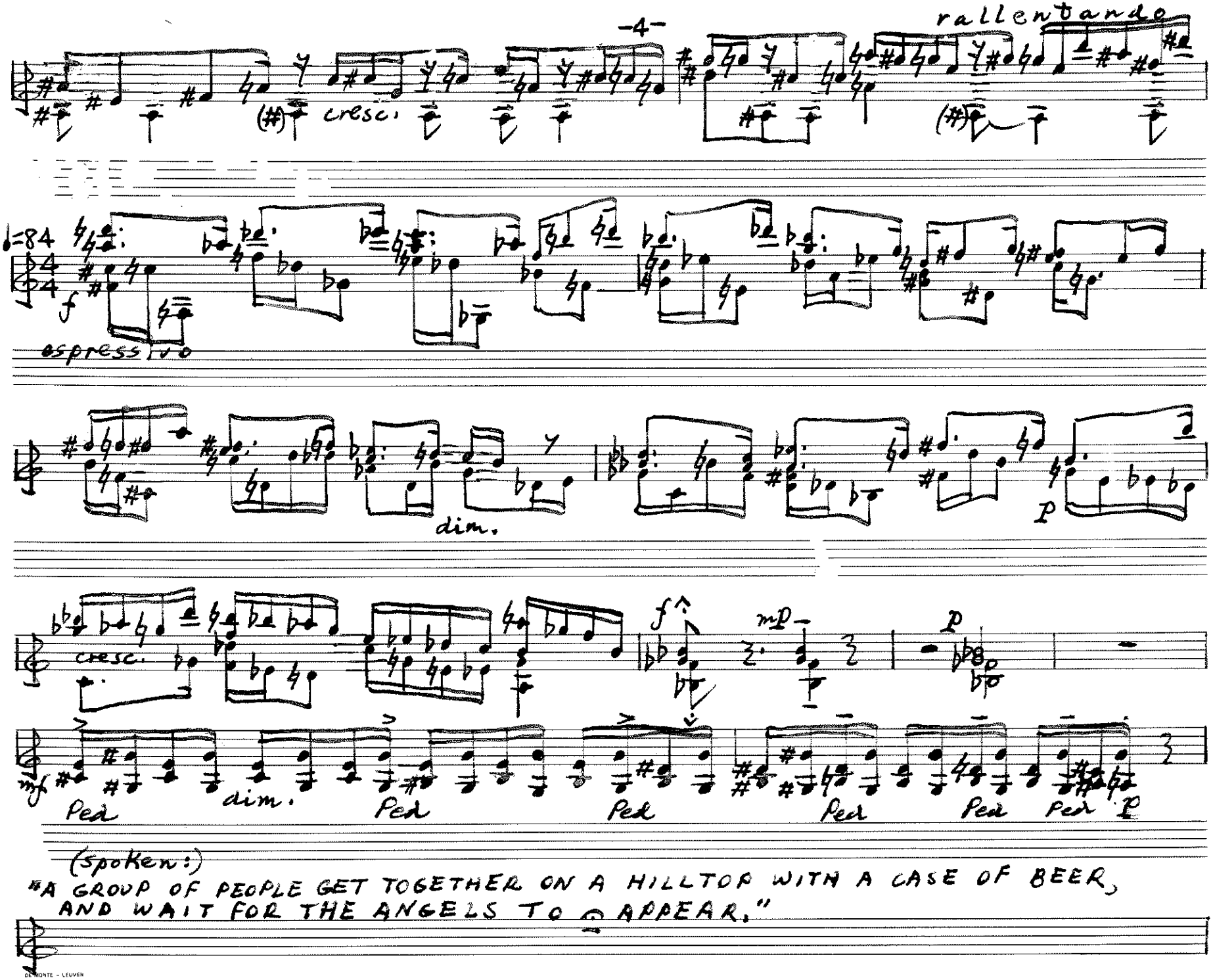
THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE,

ACT I. ANGEL SHOOT

Frederic Rzewski (2007)
for Allen Otte

for vibraphone





DE MONTE - LEUVEN

pp staccatissimo (damp key with mallet)

(no pedal)

(spoken:)
"HERE THEY COME! YOU CAN SEE THEM ON THE HORIZON, COMING OVER THE HILLS: HUNDREDS, THOUSANDS EVEN, MAYBE MILLIONS."

(Dampen:)

♩=69

Ped

(spoken:)
"WAIT A MINUTE! THOSE AREN'T ANGELS! THEY'RE DEMONS, LIKE THOSE YOU SEE IN HIERONYMUS BOSCH PAINTINGS."

(no pedal at first; add gradually)

Trem.

(Ped)

(spoken:) "SOMEBODY TRICKED US..."

(CA. 3'30")

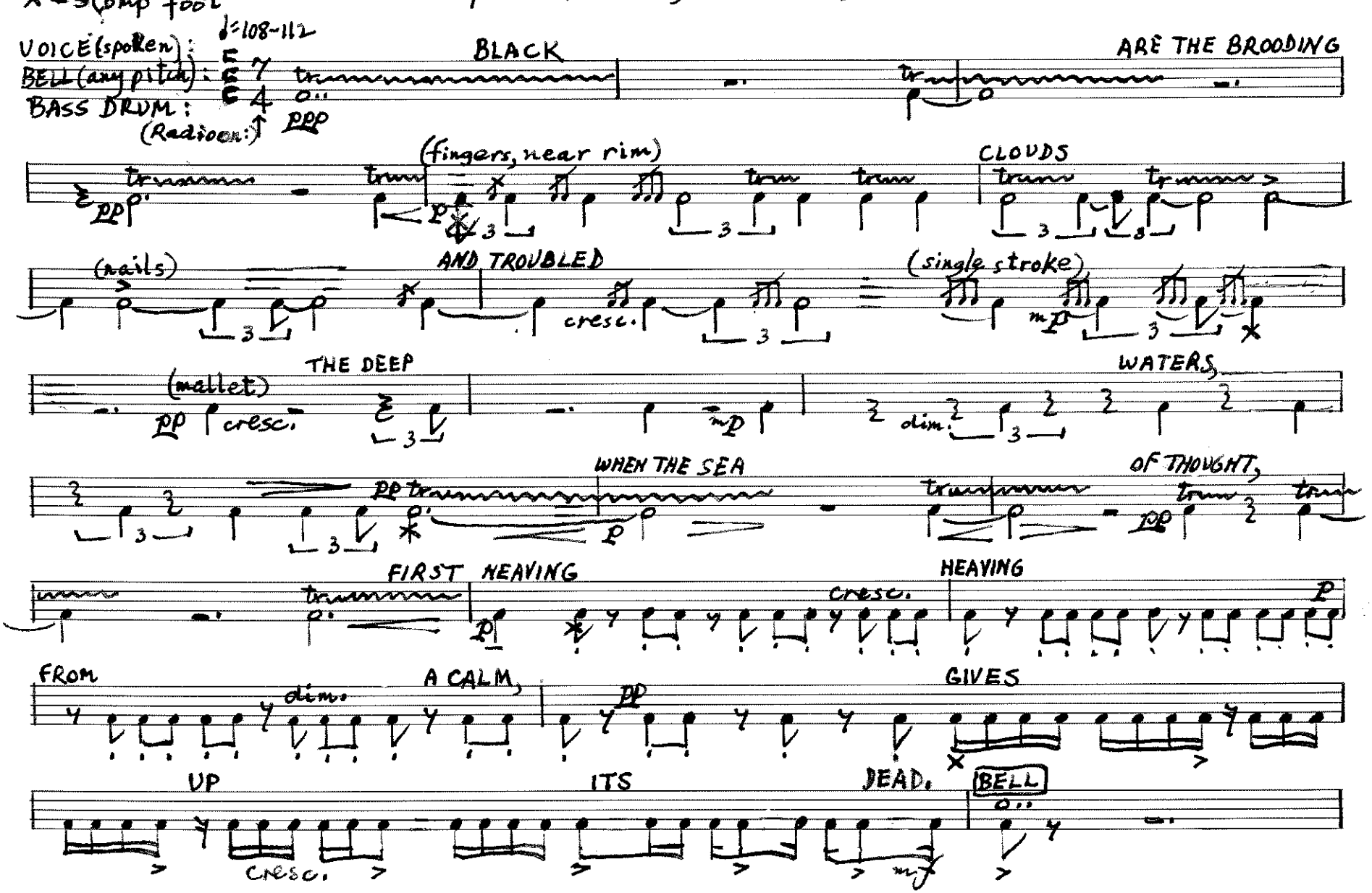
A small portable radio, tuned to a station with both speech and music, and inside a box (or otherwise muffled), is heard (very soft) throughout.
X = stomp foot

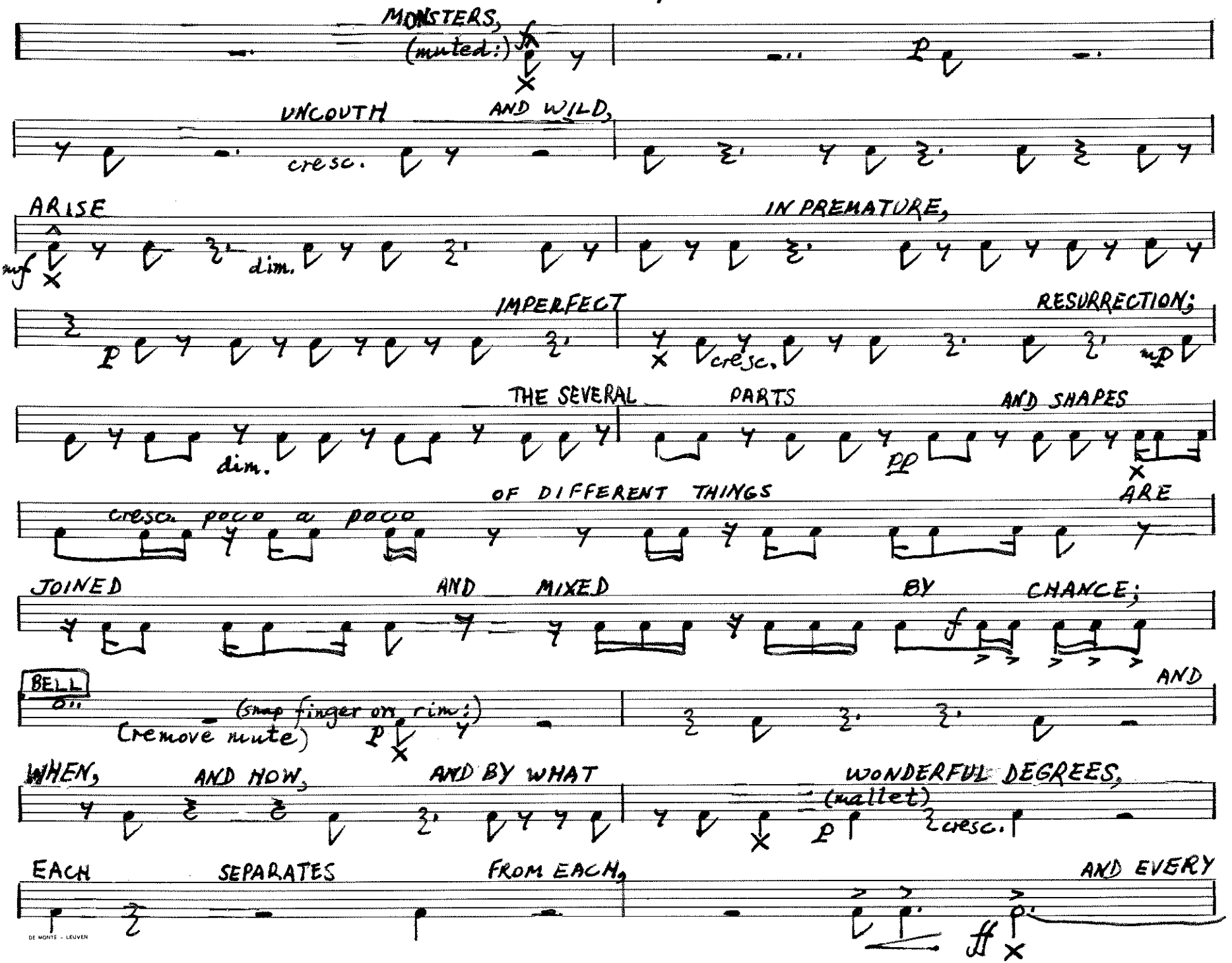
THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE, Frederic Rzewski (2007)

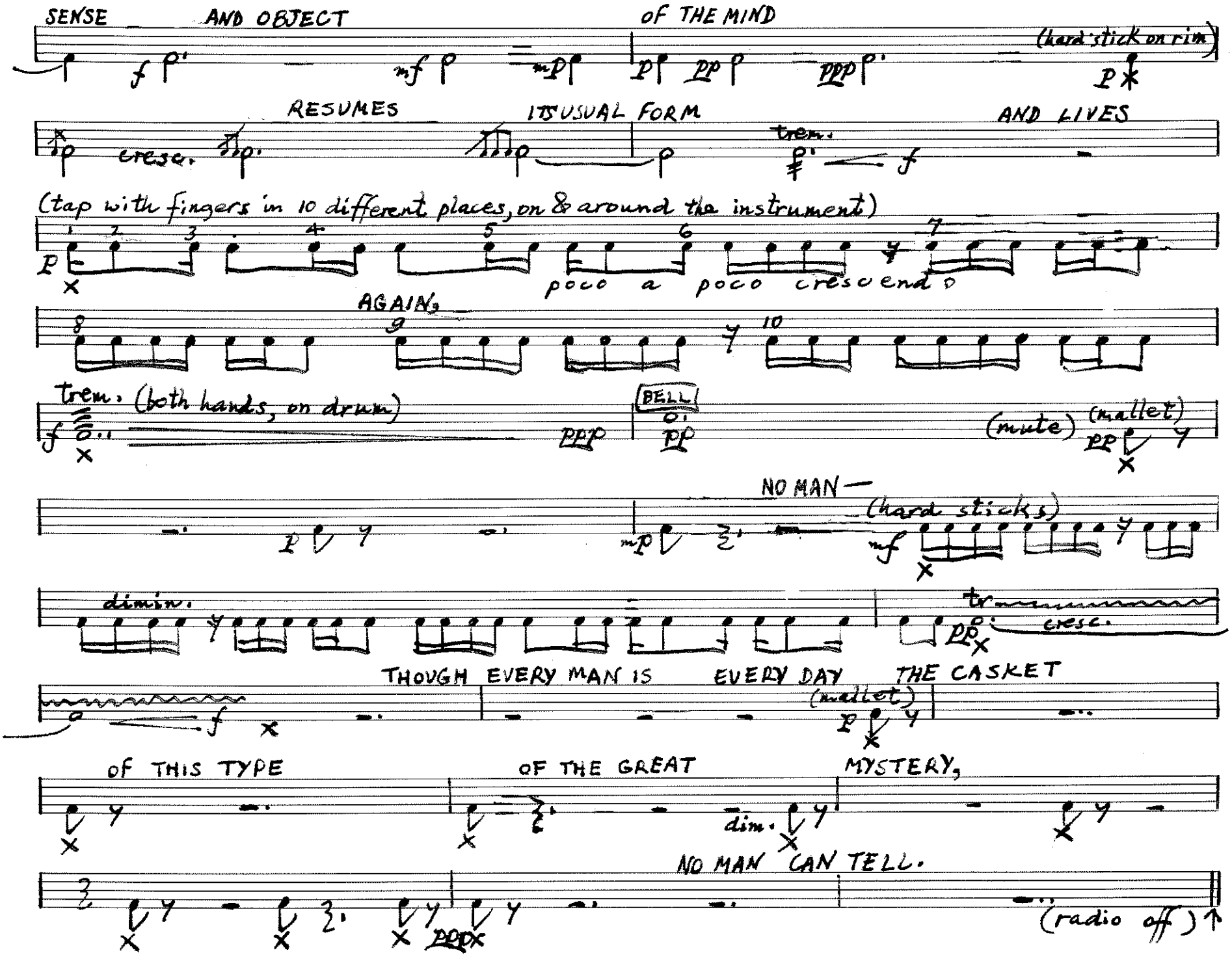
ACT 2: MONSTERS

for bass drum, tubular bell, & radio

for Allen Otte
Text: Dickens (The Chimes)




MONSTERS,
(muted:)
UNCOUTH
AND WILD,
cresc.
ARISE
dim.
IN PREMATURE,
IMPERFECT
RESURRECTION;
cresc.
THE SEVERAL
PARTS
AND SHAPES
dim.
pp
OF DIFFERENT THINGS
ARE
cresc. poco a poco
JOINED
AND
MIXED
BY
CHANCE;
BELL
(snap finger on rim;
remove mute)
AND
WHEN,
AND HOW,
AND BY WHAT
WONDERFUL DEGREES,
(mallet)
cresc.
EACH
SEPARATES
FROM EACH,
AND EVERY
DE MONTE - LEUVEN


SENSE AND OBJECT
OF THE MIND
(hard stick on rim)
RESUMES
ITS USUAL FORM
AND LIVES
cresc.
trem.
(tap with fingers in 10 different places, on & around the instrument)
poco a poco crescendo
AGAIN,
trem. (both hands, on drum)
BELL
(mute)
(mallet)
NO MAN
(hard sticks)
dimin.
cresc.
THOUGH EVERY MAN IS
EVERY DAY
THE CASKET
(mallet)
OF THIS TYPE
OF THE GREAT
MYSTERY,
dim.
NO MAN CAN TELL.
(radio off)

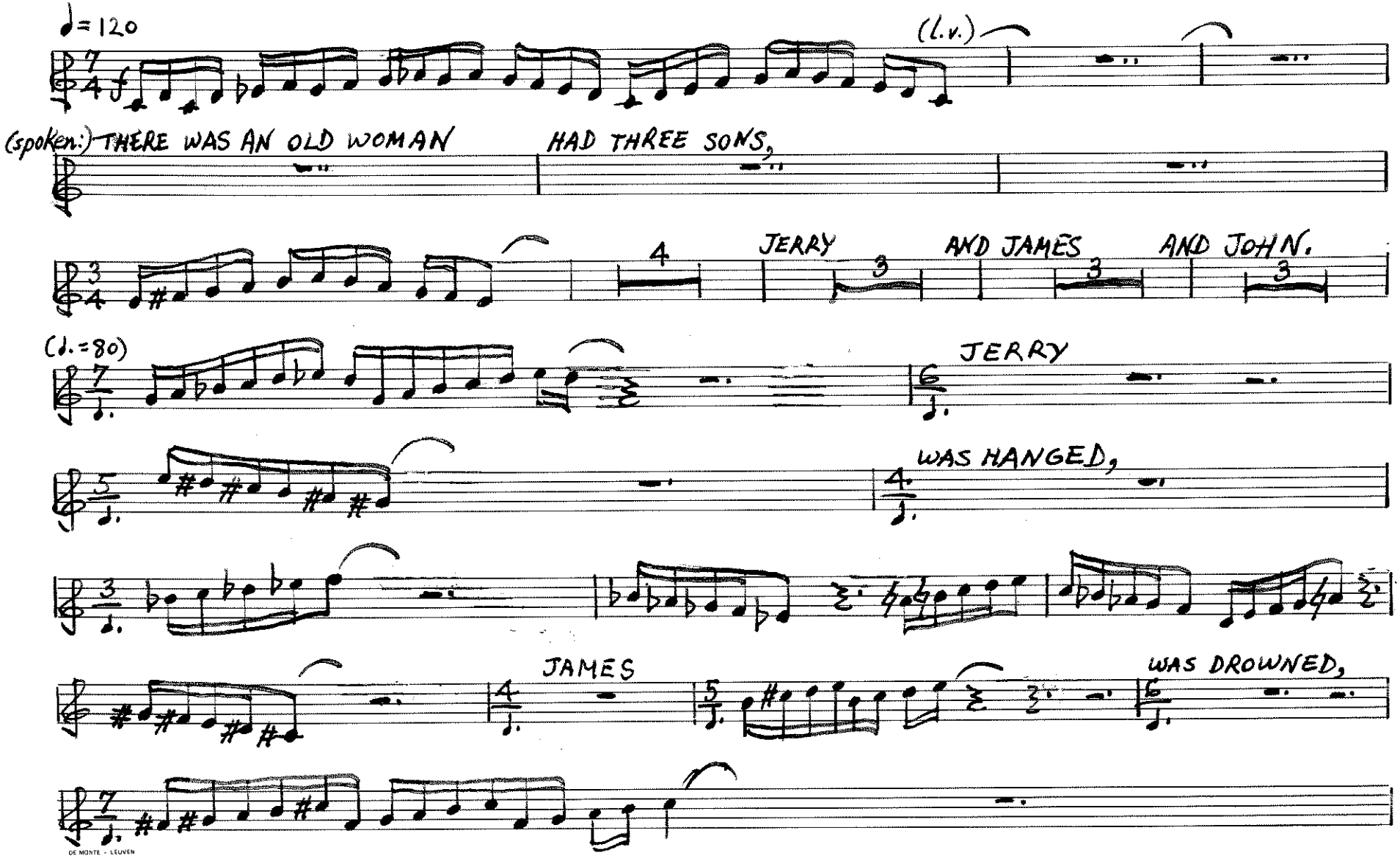
THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE,

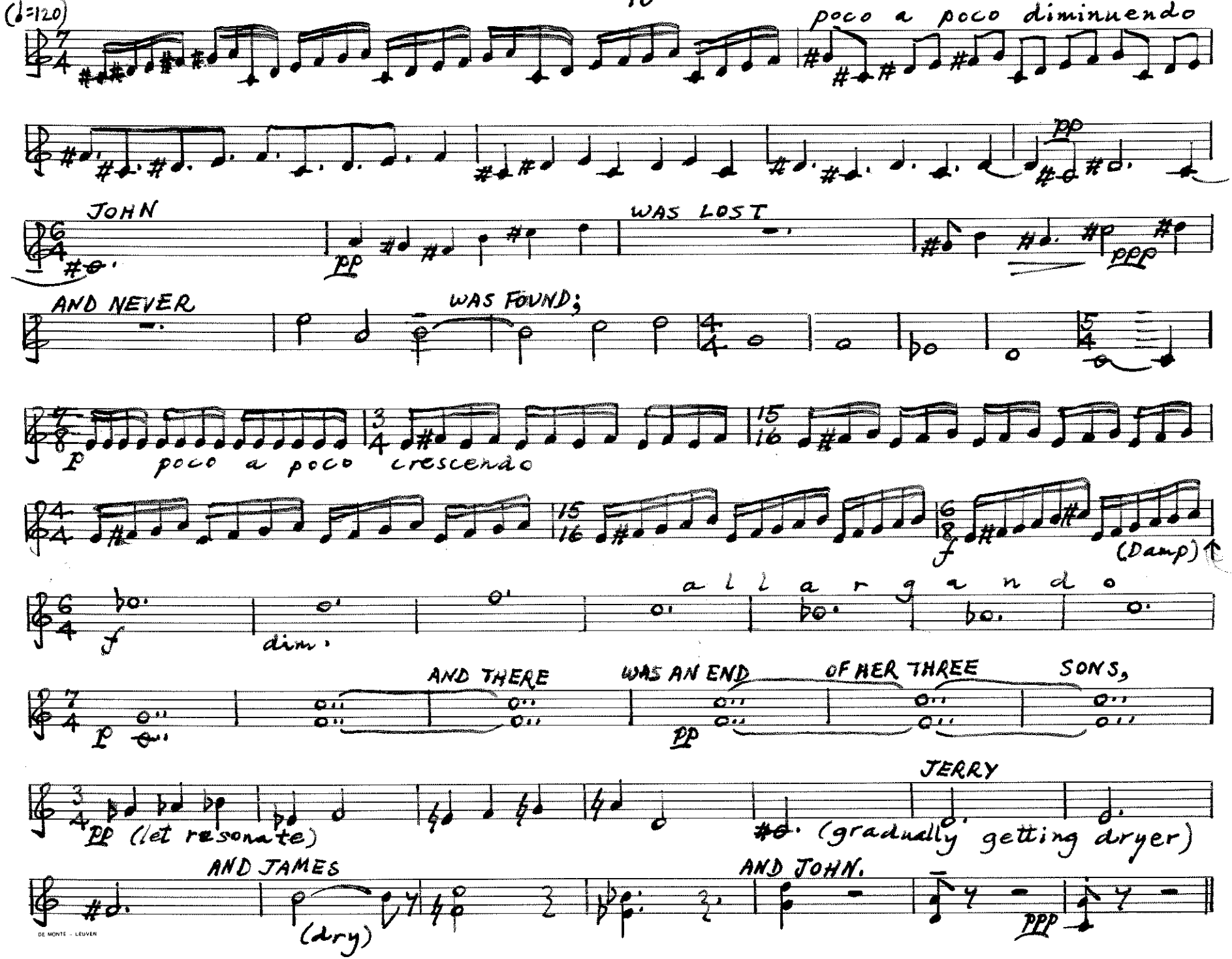
ACT 3: THREE SONS

for tubular bells

(All notes should resonate, except at the end)

Frederic Rzewski (2007)
for Allen Otte
Text: Mother Goose




(♩=120)
poco a poco diminuendo
JOHN
WAS LOST
AND NEVER
WAS FOUND;
p poco a poco crescendo
f
(Damp)
f
dim.
allargando
AND THERE
WAS AN END
OF HER THREE
SONS,
pp
JERRY
pp (let resonate)
(gradually getting dryer)
AND JAMES
AND JOHN.
(dry)
ppp
DE MONTE - LEUVEN

THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE,

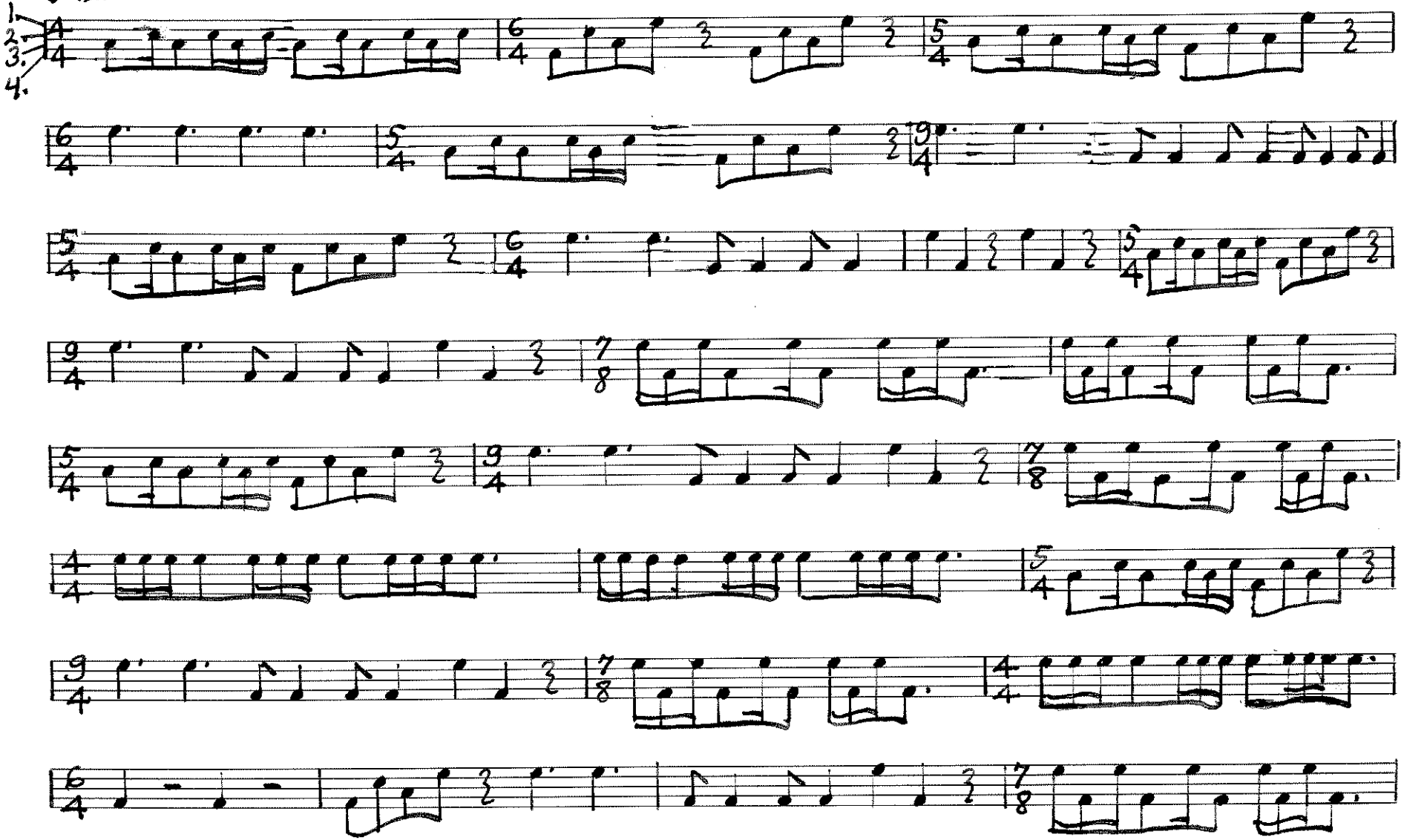
ACT 4. GLOBAL WARMING

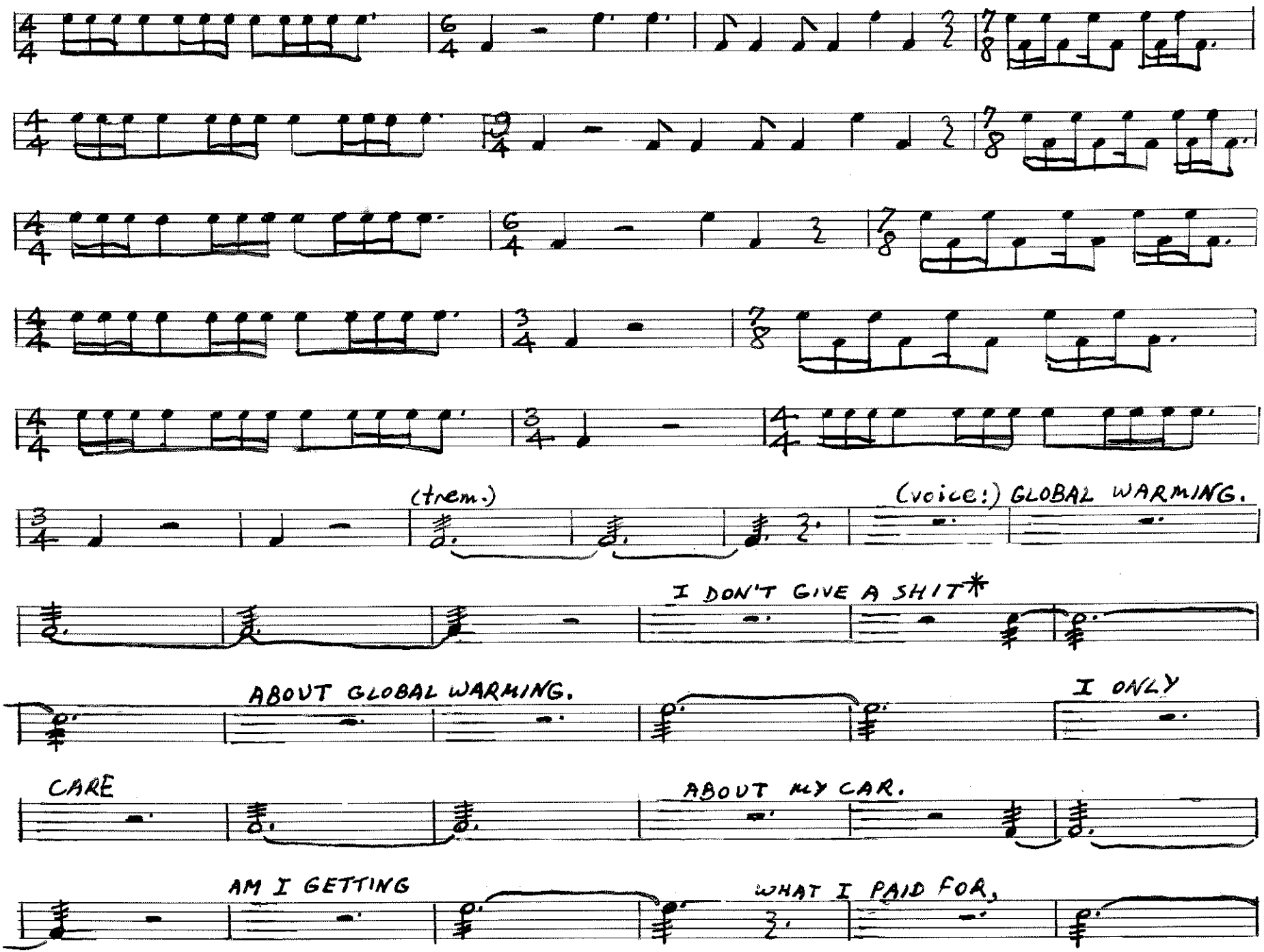
for any four sounds

Frederic Rzewski (2007)
for Allen Otte

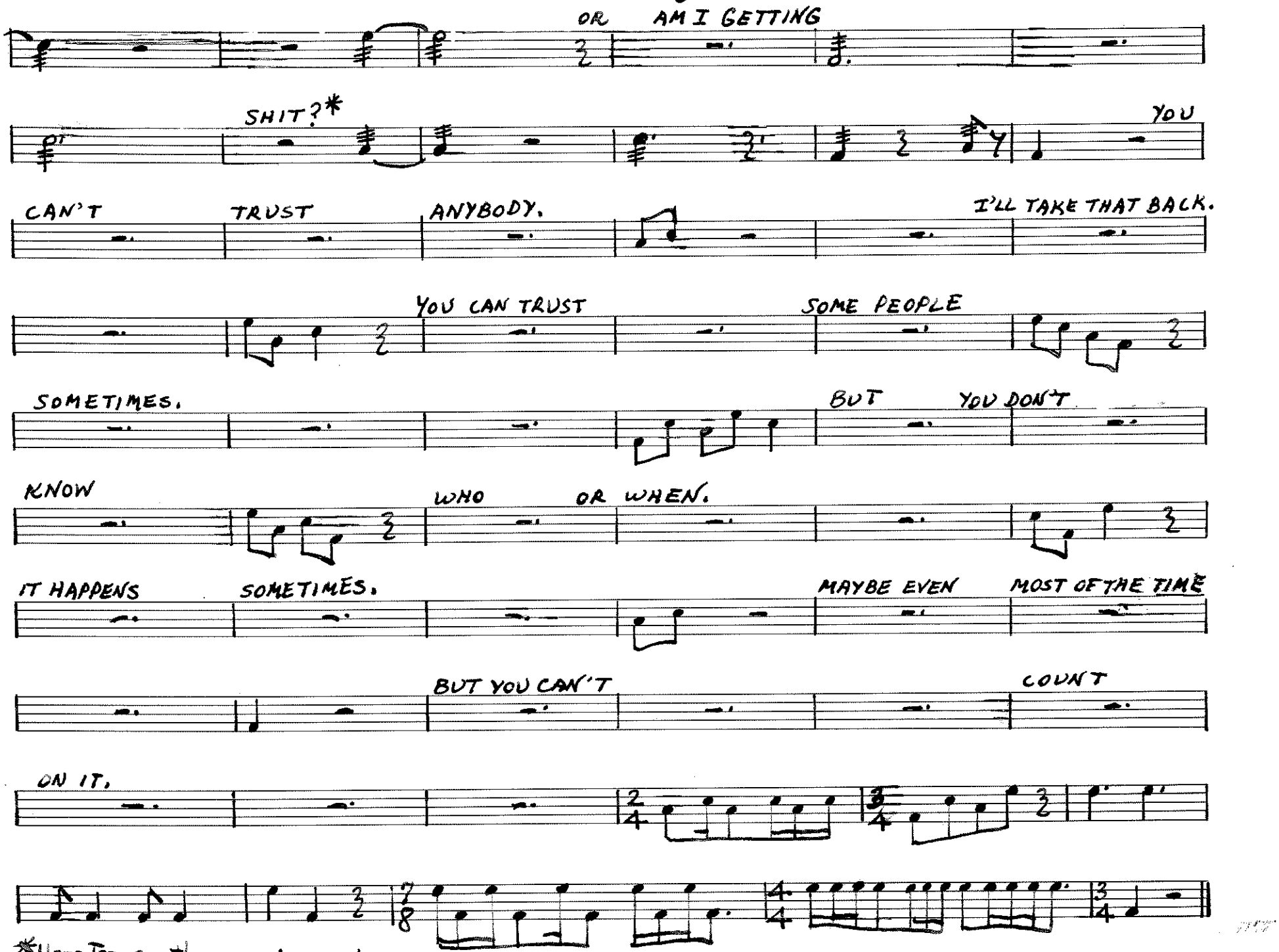
1. – highest sound
2. – medium high sound
3. – medium low sound
4. – lowest sound

♩=120–126





*If this word seems inappropriate, another may be substituted; e.g. "I DON'T GIVE A HOOT."



*Here too another word may be used, like "JUNK".

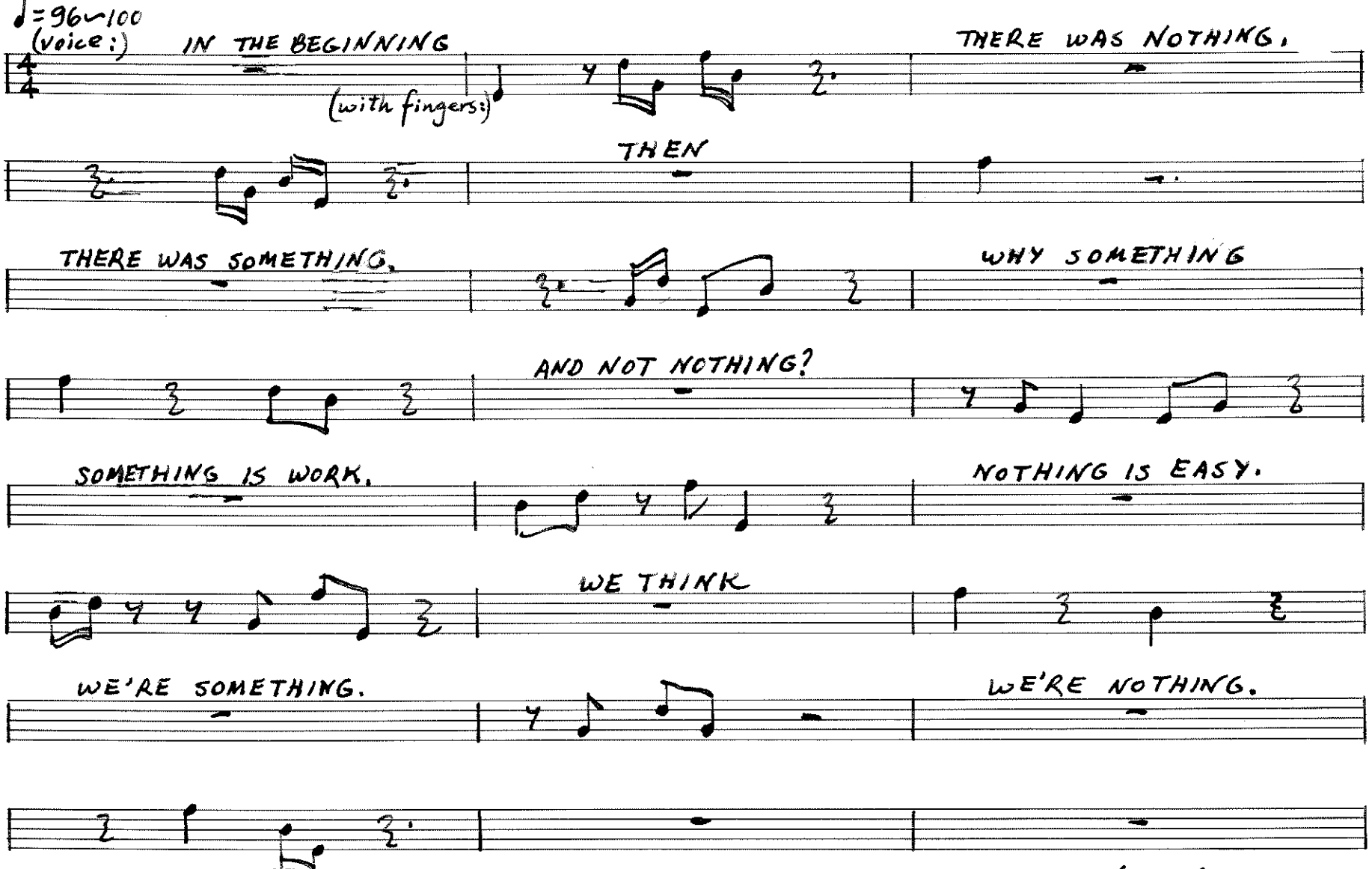
Objects are placed left to right.
Bottom line = left
Top line = right

THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE,

ACT 5: THE GROUND

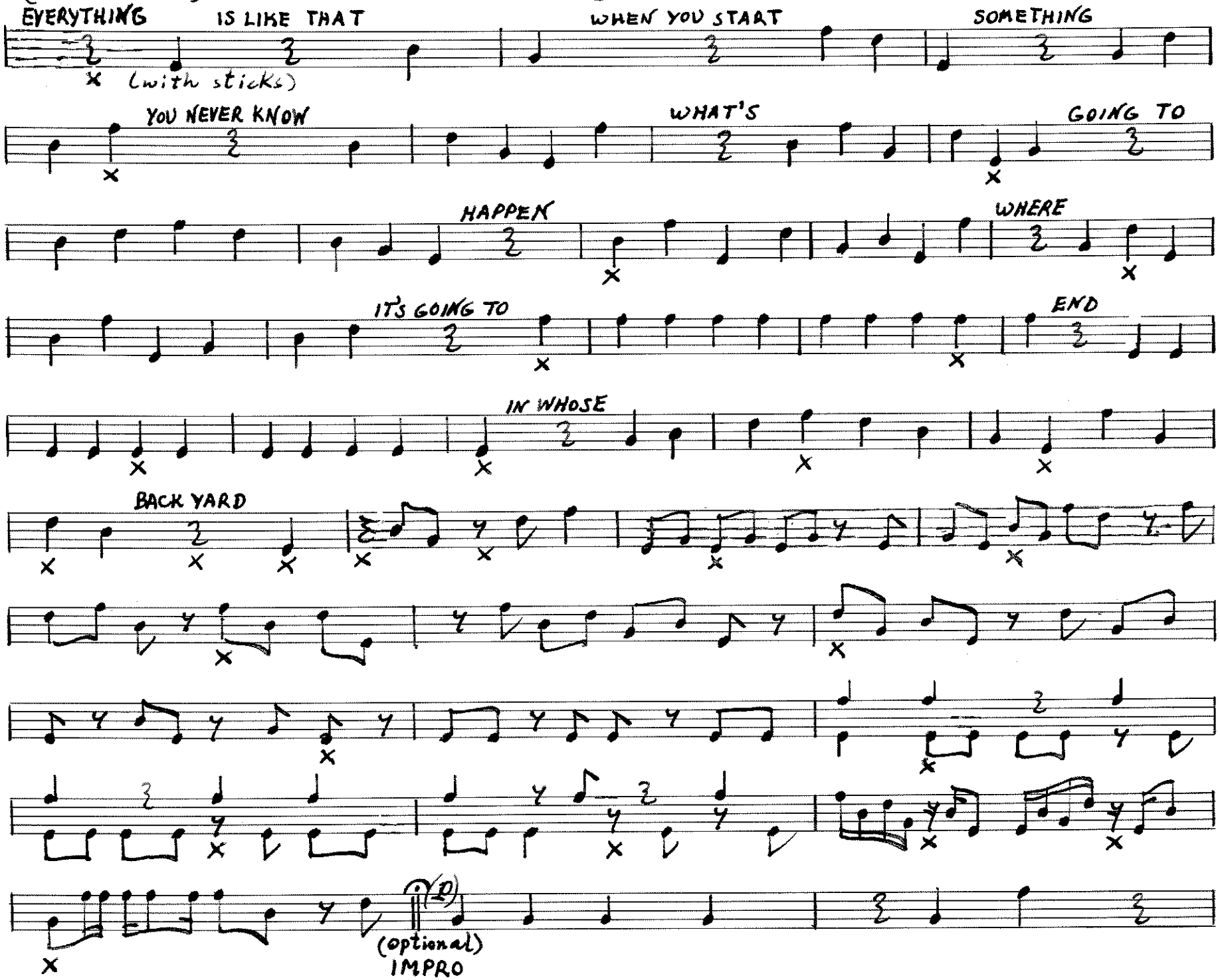
for any five objects*

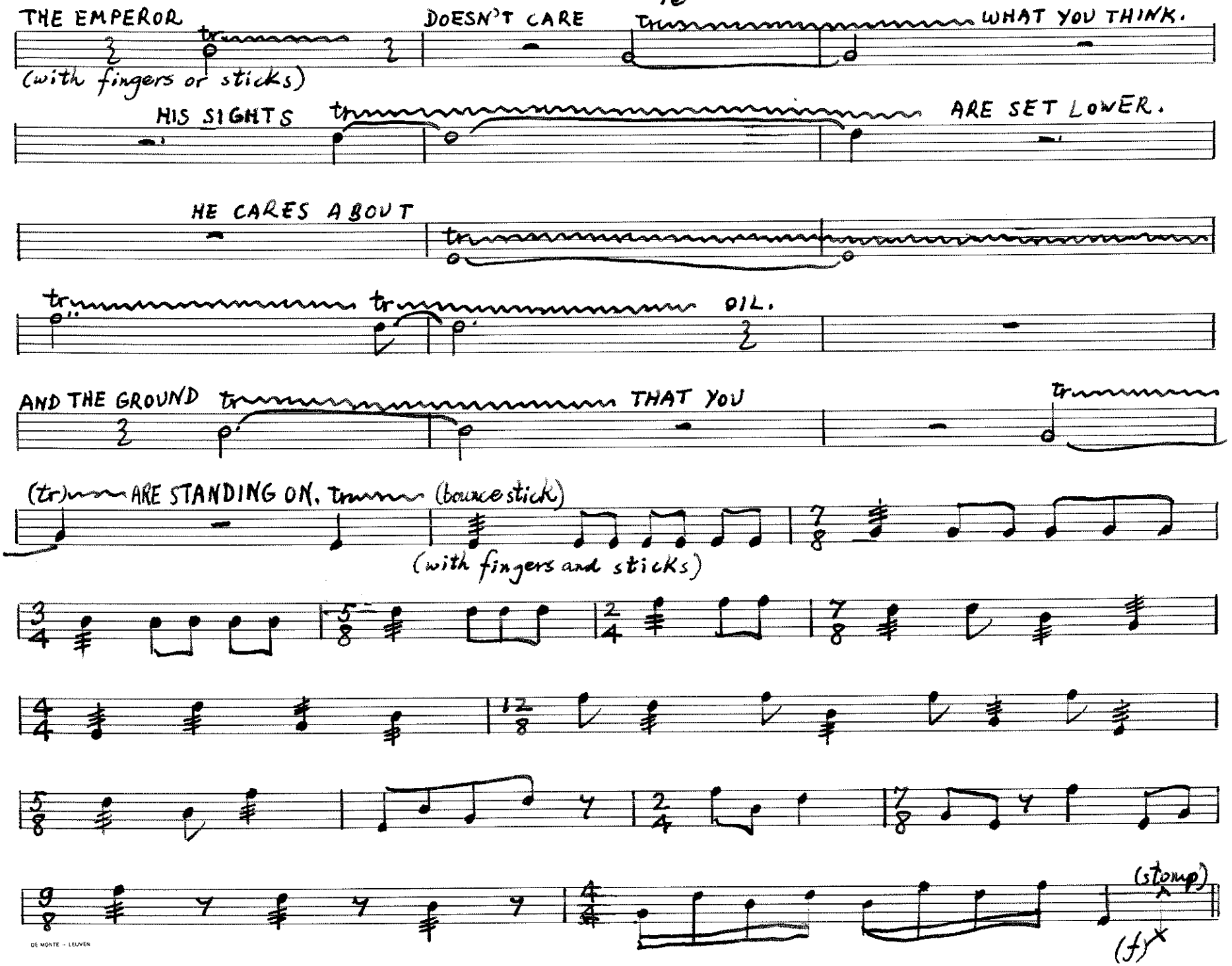
Frederic Rzewski (2007)
for Allen Otte



* An "object" may be complex or heterogeneous; e.g. an assortment of junk.

(x= FOOT STOMP)


EVERYTHING
IS LIKE THAT
WHEN YOU START
SOMETHING
(with sticks)
YOU NEVER KNOW
WHAT'S
GOING TO
HAPPEN
WHERE
IT'S GOING TO
END
IN WHOSE
BACK YARD
(optional)
IMPRO

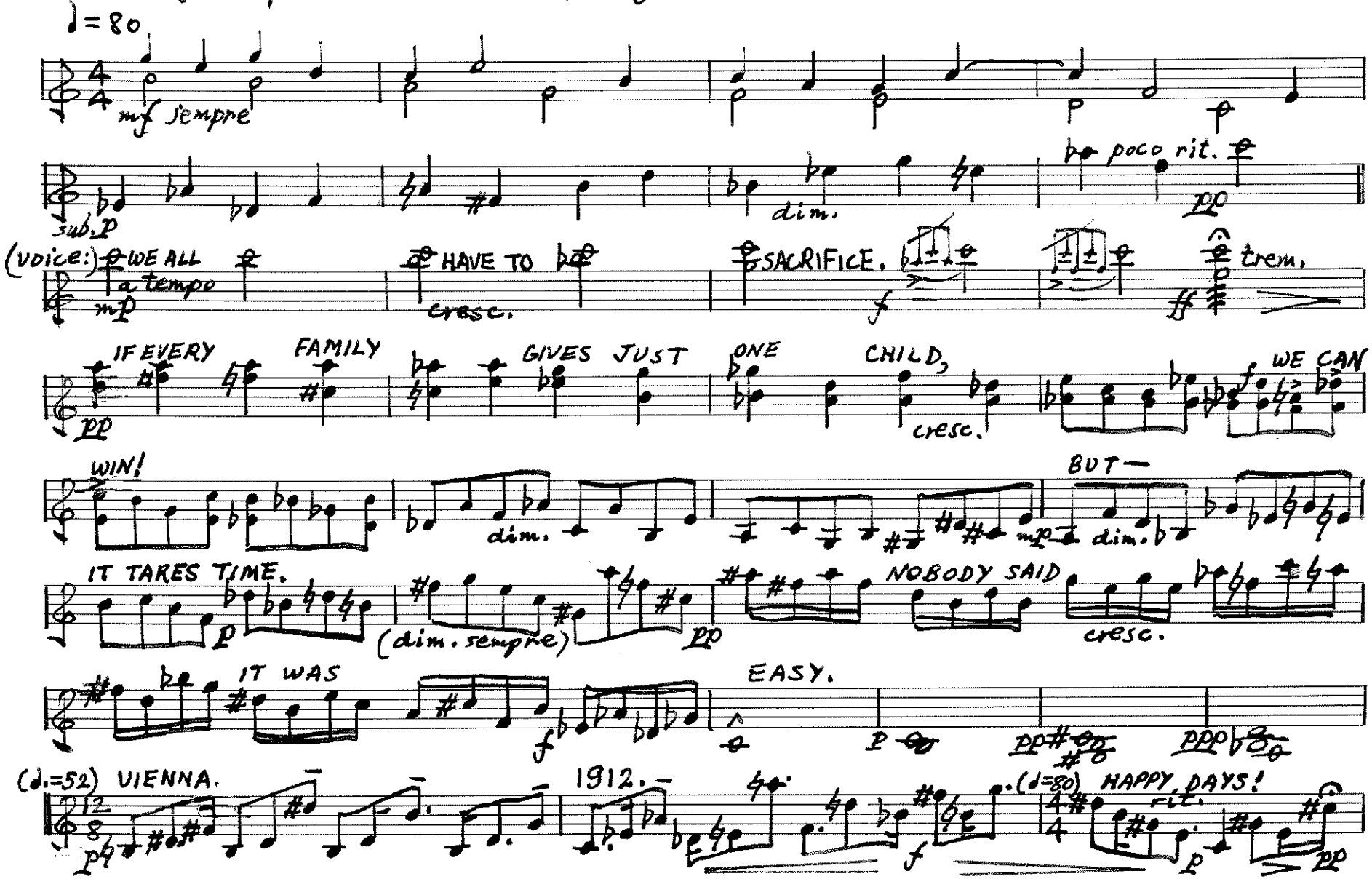


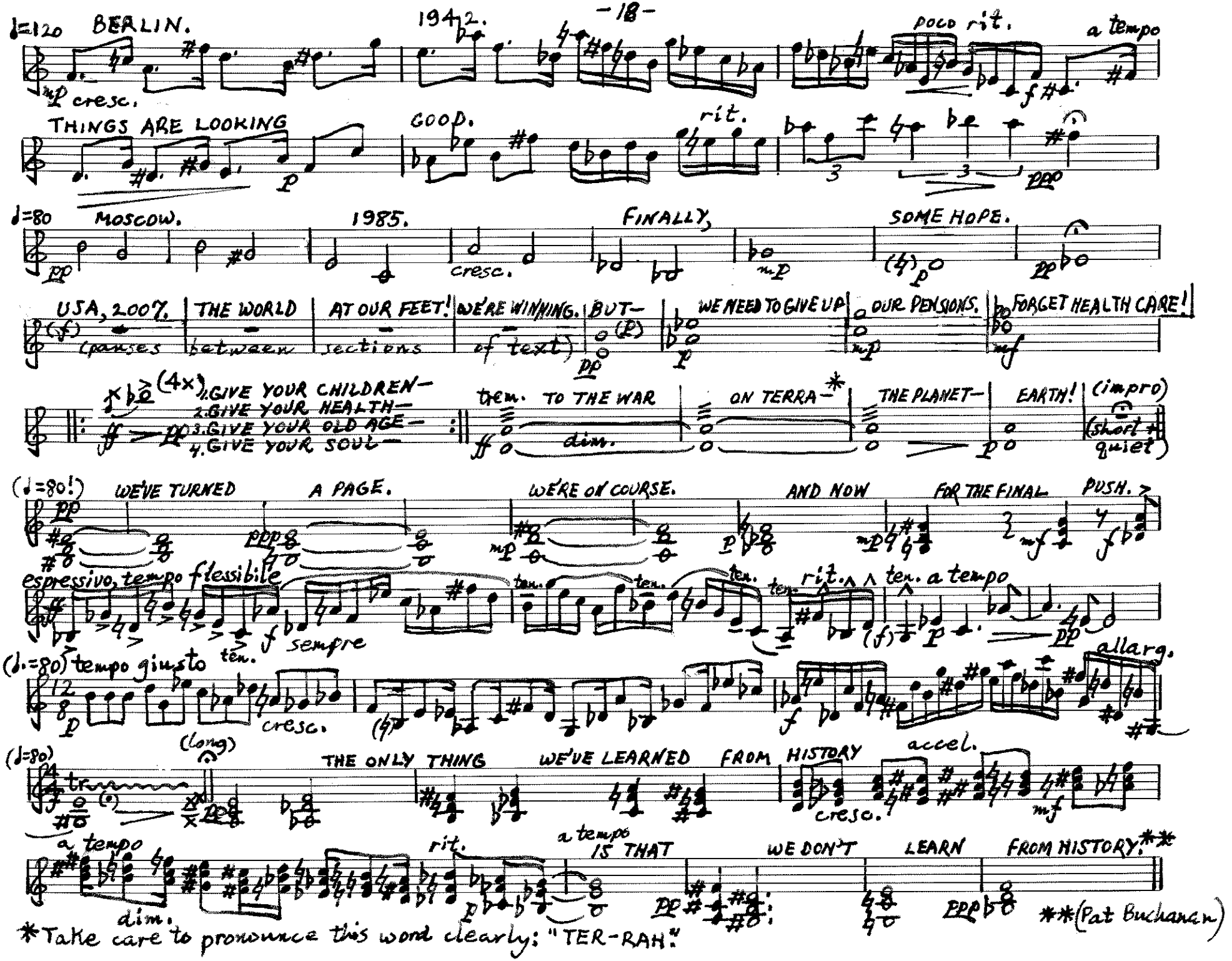
DE MONTE - LEUVEN

THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE,
ACT 6: SACRIFICE
for glockenspiel

Text: Freely spoken, never exactly together with music, but just before or just after a note.

Frederic Rzewski (2007)
for Allen Otte





*Take care to pronounce this word clearly: "TER-RAH."

**(Pat Buchanan)

THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE

ACT I: SABBATH

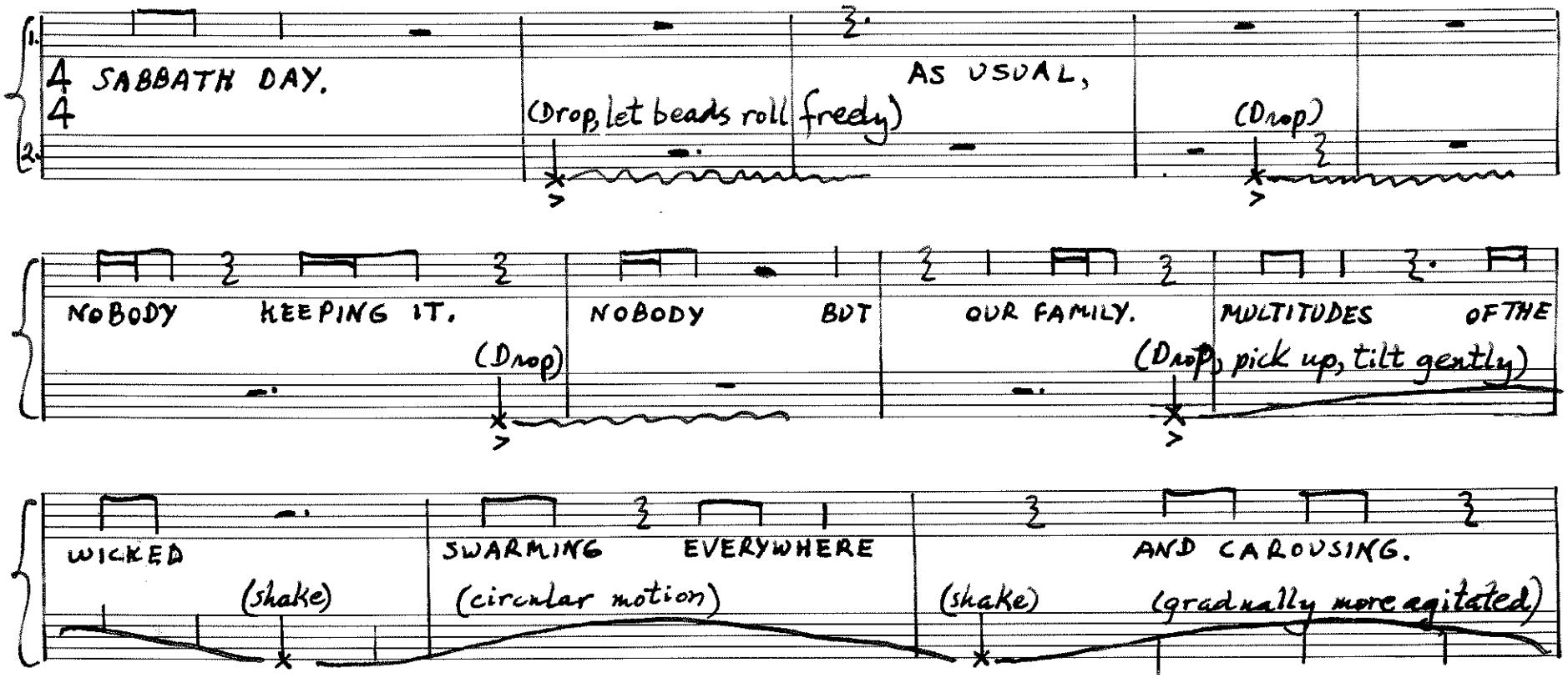
from "SHEM'S DIARY"

for solo speaking percussionist

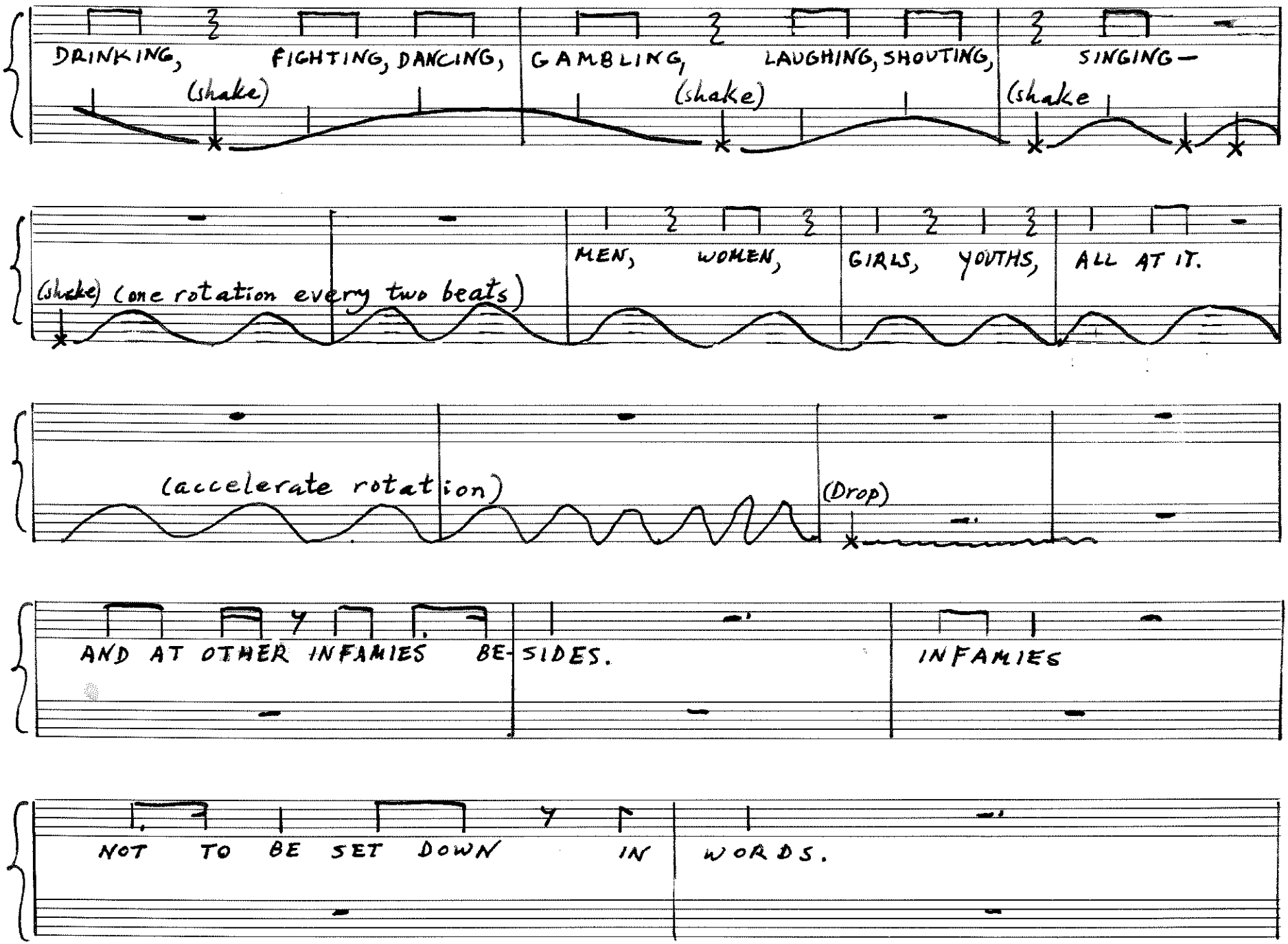
Frederic Rzewski (2007)
(Text: Mark Twain, Papers of the Adam Family)
for Allen Otte

1. Speaking voice
2. Tub, bowl, drum or cylinder of any material, 30–50 cm. in diameter, containing pellets, beads or balls that roll around freely, creating a sound reminiscent of sea or surf; sometimes held in or both hands, sometimes resting on or dropped on to a table, or the floor.

♩ = 84~88



DE MONTE - LEUVEN



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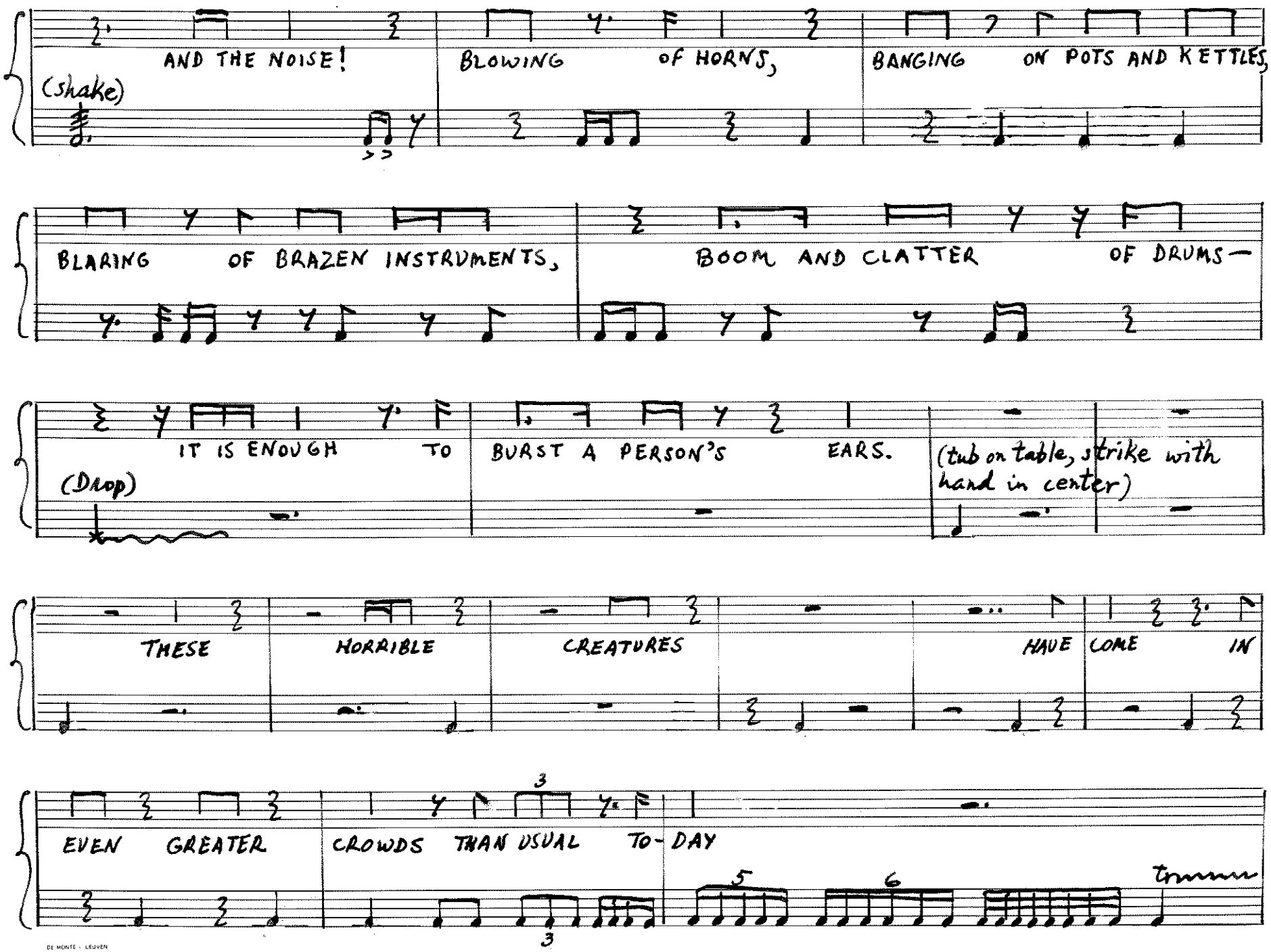

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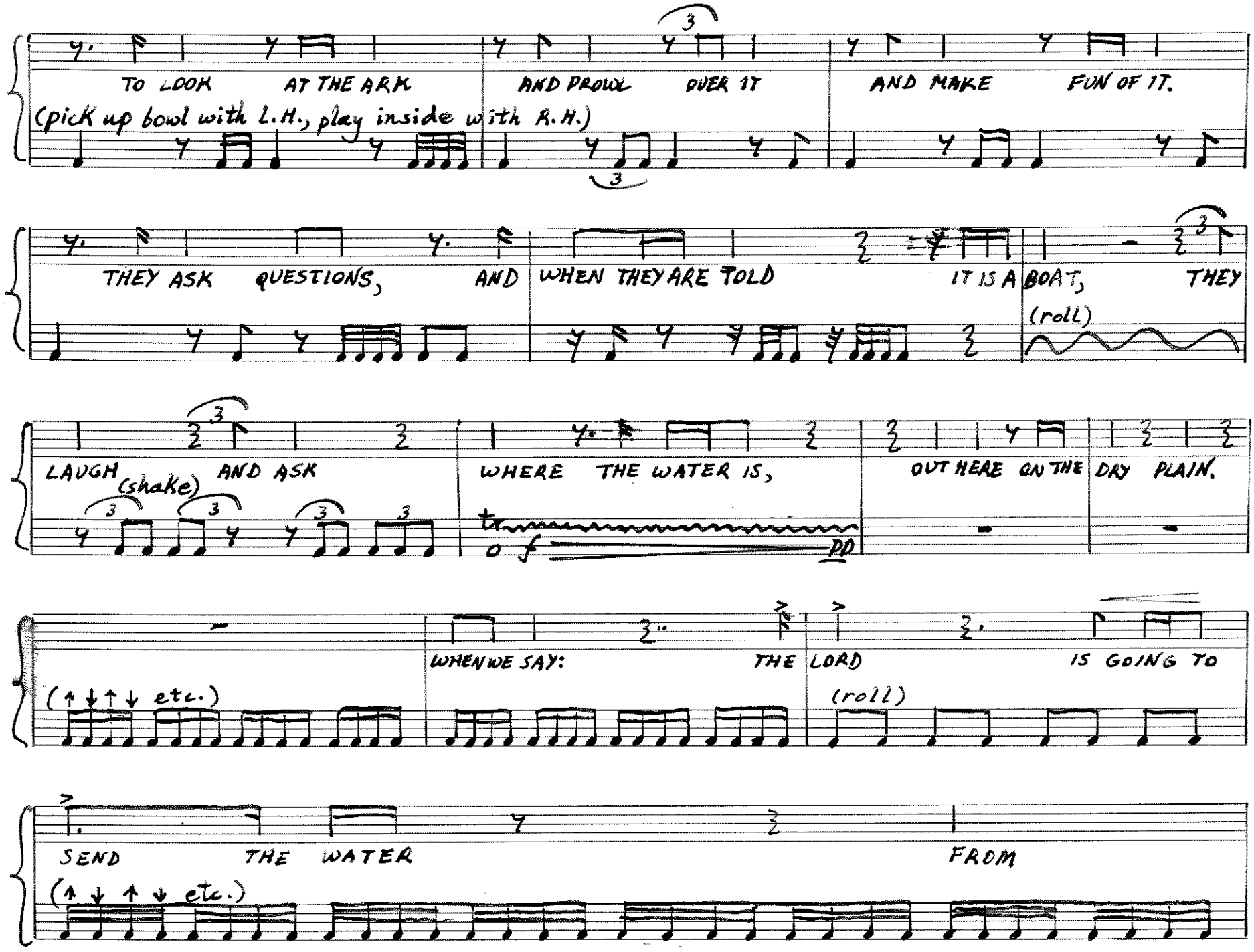

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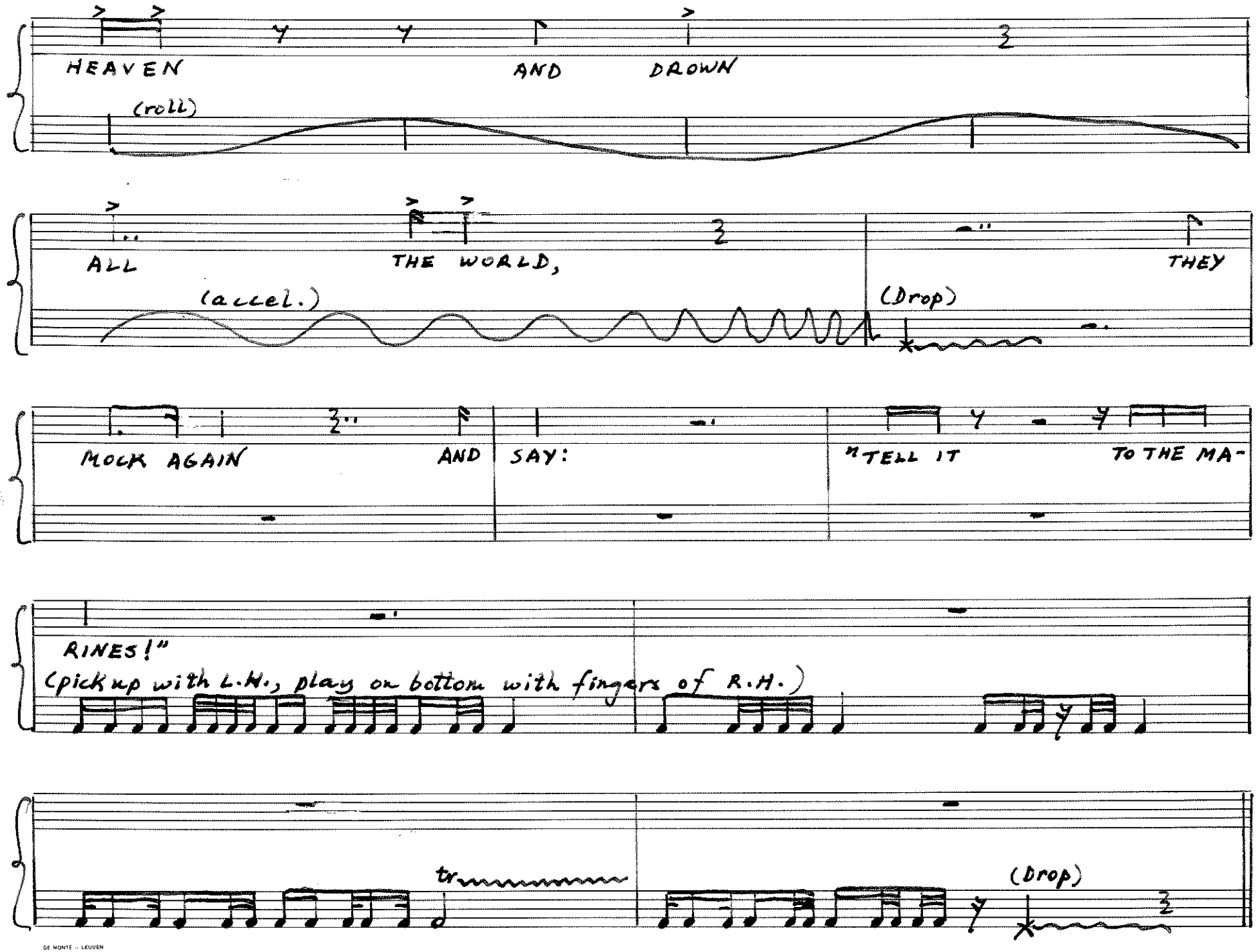


DE MONTE - LEUVEN

THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE,

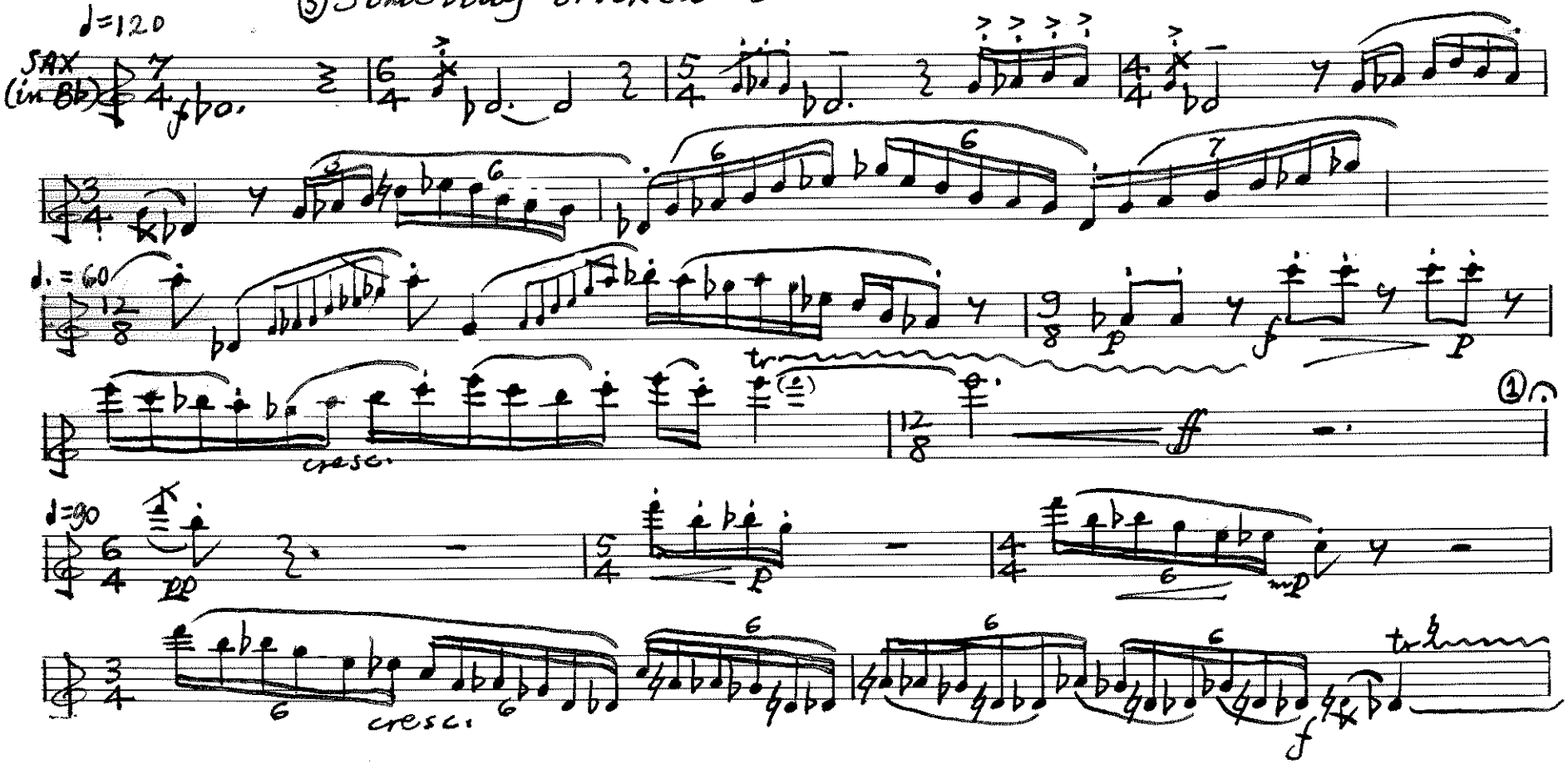
ACT I: ANGEL SHOOT

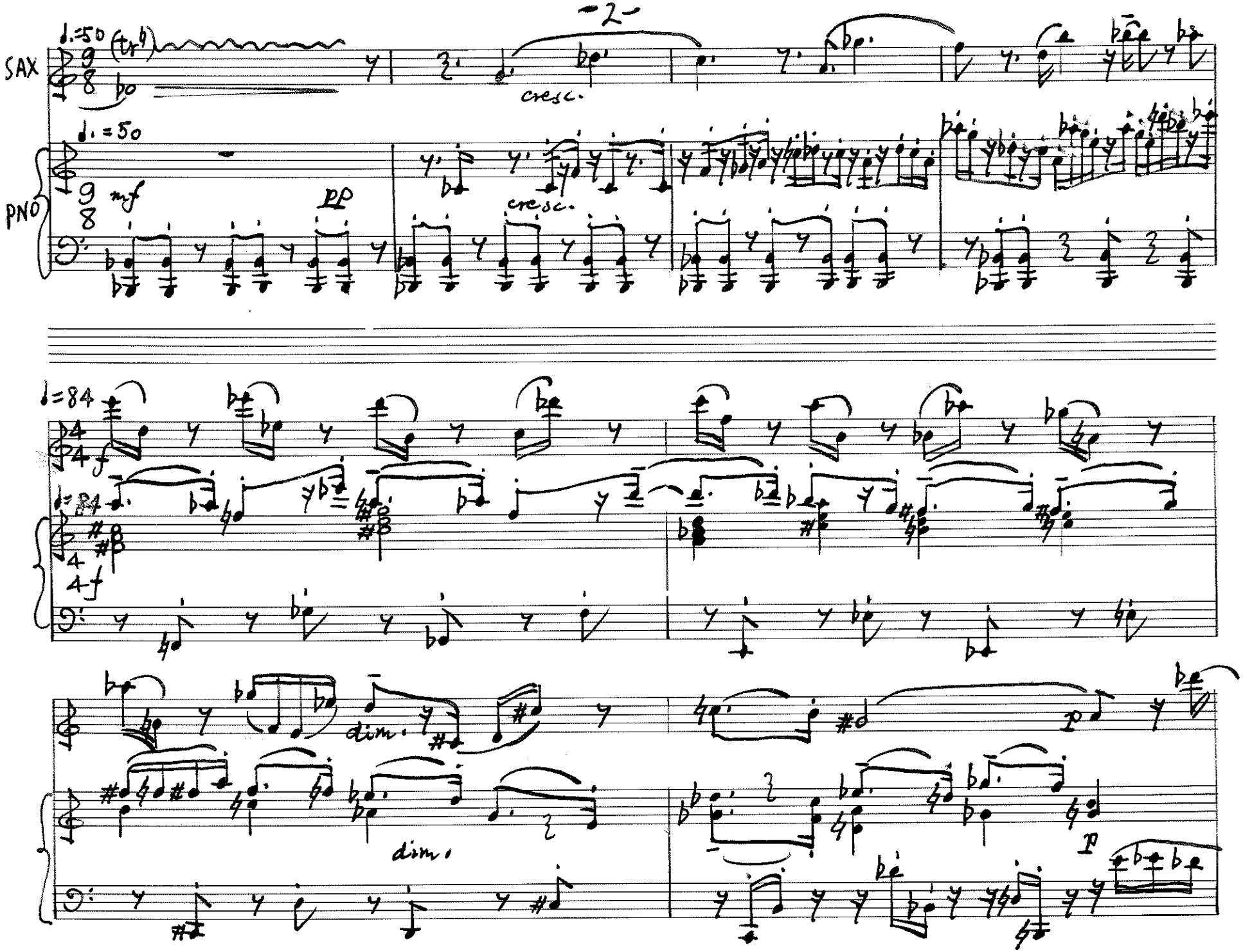
for soprano saxophone + piano

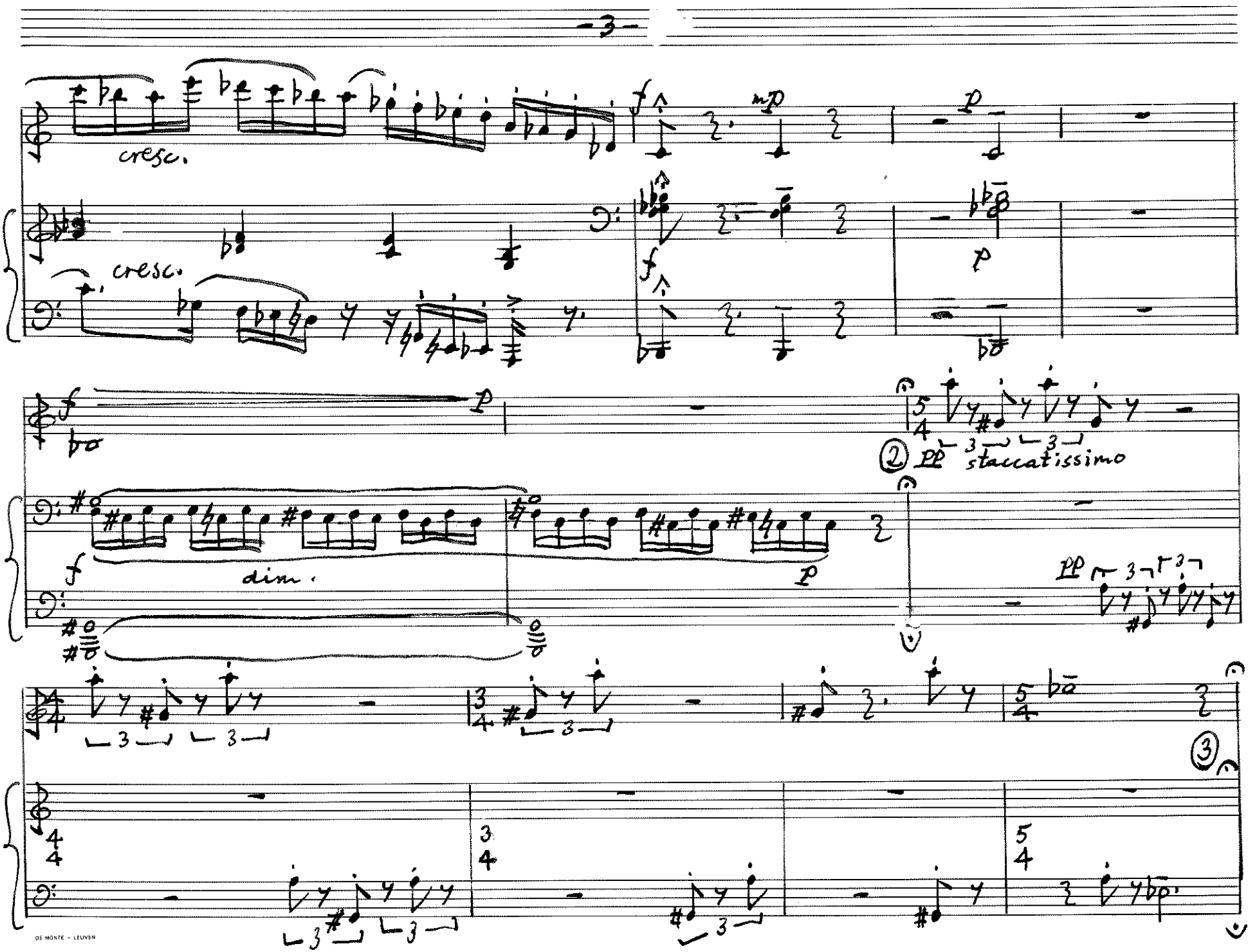
Frederic Rzewski (2006)
for John Sampen
and Marilyn Shrude

(Read aloud at the indicated points:)

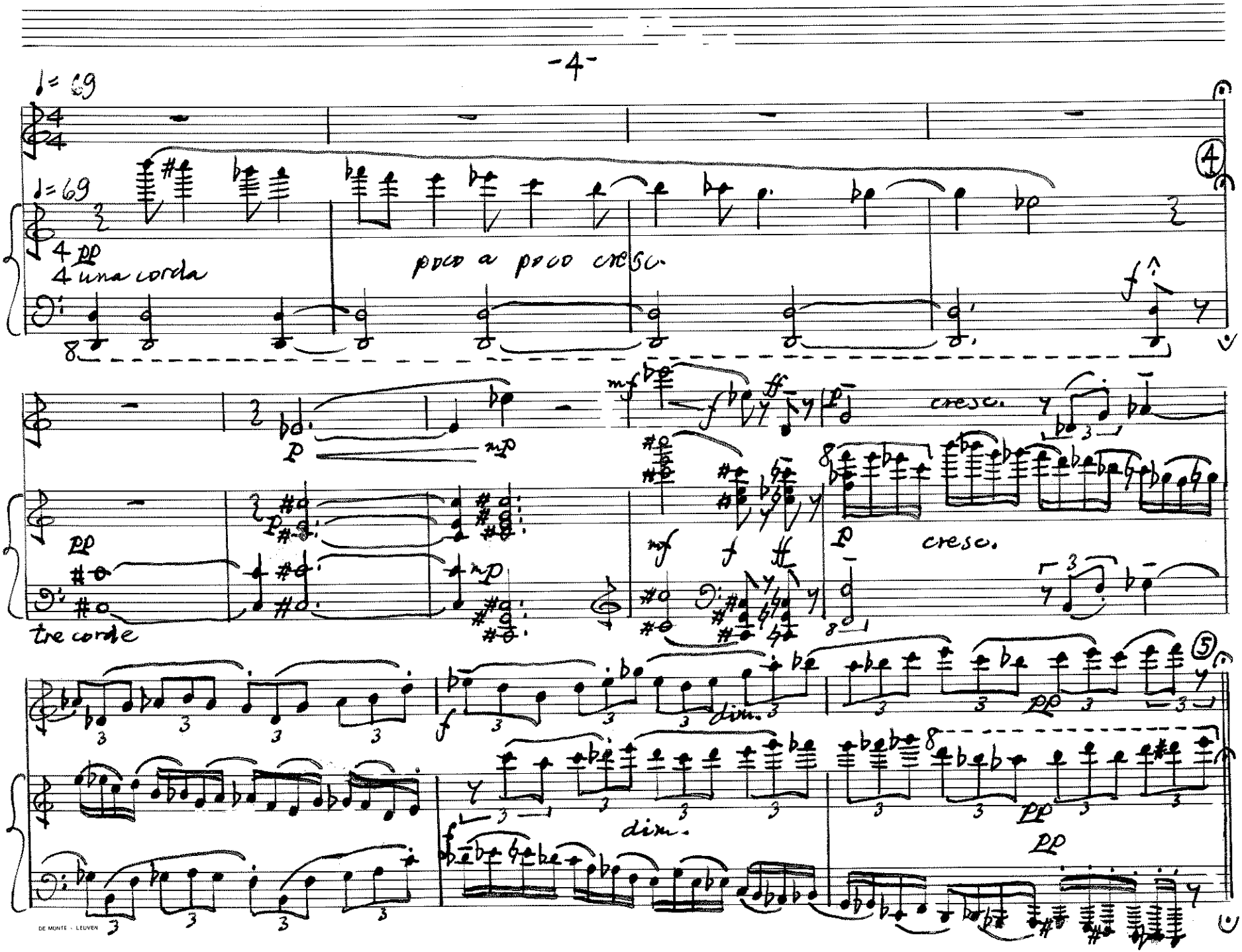
① Shooting angels is a popular pastime in my country.
② A group of people get together on a hilltop with a case of beer, and wait for the angels to appear.
③ Here they come! You can see them on the horizon, coming over the hills: hundreds, thousands even, maybe millions.
④ Wait a minute! Those aren't angels! They're demons, like those you see in Hieronymus Bosch paintings.
⑤ Somebody tricked us...




SAX
PNO
♩.=50
(tr♮)
cresc.
mf
pp
♩=84
f
dim.
p



OS MONTE - LEUVEN


♩= 69
♩= 69
4 pp
4 una corda
poco a poco cresc.
f
p
mp
mf
ff
cresc.
pp
tre corde
dim.
pp
DE MONTE - LEUVEN