Håkon Thelin

# Glasperlenspiel

for double bass and vocal tenor

2013

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Composed with support from The Norwegian Artistic Research Fellowship Programme.

First performed by Håkon Thelin and Frank Havrøy at the Norwegian Academy of Music, Oslo, June 2011.

Released on the CD ”Light” (Atterklang, 2011).

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# Glasperlenspiel

for double bass and vocal tenor

Håkon Thelin, 2010

The unusual combination of bass and voice in *Glasperlenspiel* creates great expressive possibilities, which are enhanced by the freedom achieved through extended instrumental techniques. I have been lucky to be able to work with the singer Frank Havrøy on techniques for overtone singing that in this piece are combined with my own techniques of harmonics on the double bass.

**Zu einer Toccata von Bach**
Urschweigen starrt... Es waltet Finsternis...
Da bricht ein Strahl aus zackigem Wolkenriss,
Greift Weltentiefen aus dem blinden Nichtsein,
Baut Räume auf, durchwühlt mit Licht die Nacht,
Lässt Grat und Gipfel ahnen, Hang und Schacht,
Lässt Lüfte locker blau, lässt Erde dicht sein.

Es spaltet schöpferisch zu Tat und Krieg
Der Strahl entzwei das keimend Trächtige:
Aufglänzt entzündet die erschrockne Welt.
Es wandelt sich, wohin die Lichtsaat fällt,
Es ordnet sich und tont die Prächtige
Dem Leben Lob, dem Schöpfer Lichte Sieg.

Und weiter schwingt sich, gottwärts rückbezogen
Und drängt durch aller Kreatur Getriebe
Dem Vater Geiste zu der grosse Drang.
Er wird zu Lust und Not, zu Sprache, Bild, Gesang,
Wölbt Welt um Welt zu Domes Siegesbogen,
Ist Trieb, ist Geist, ist Kampf und Glück, ist Liebe

**Das Glasperlenspiel**
Musik des Weltalls und Musik der Meister
Sind wir bereit in Ehrfurcht anzuhören,
Zu reiner Feier die verehrten Geister
Begnadeter Zeiten zu beschwören.

Wir lassen vom Geheimnis uns erheben
Der magischen Formelschrift, in deren Bann
Das Uferlose, Stürmende, das Leben,
Zu klaren Gleichnissen gerann.

Sternbildern gleich ertönen sie kristallen,
In ihrem Dienst ward unserm Leben Sinn,
Und keiner kann aus ihren Kreisen fallen,
Als nach der heiligen Mitte hin.

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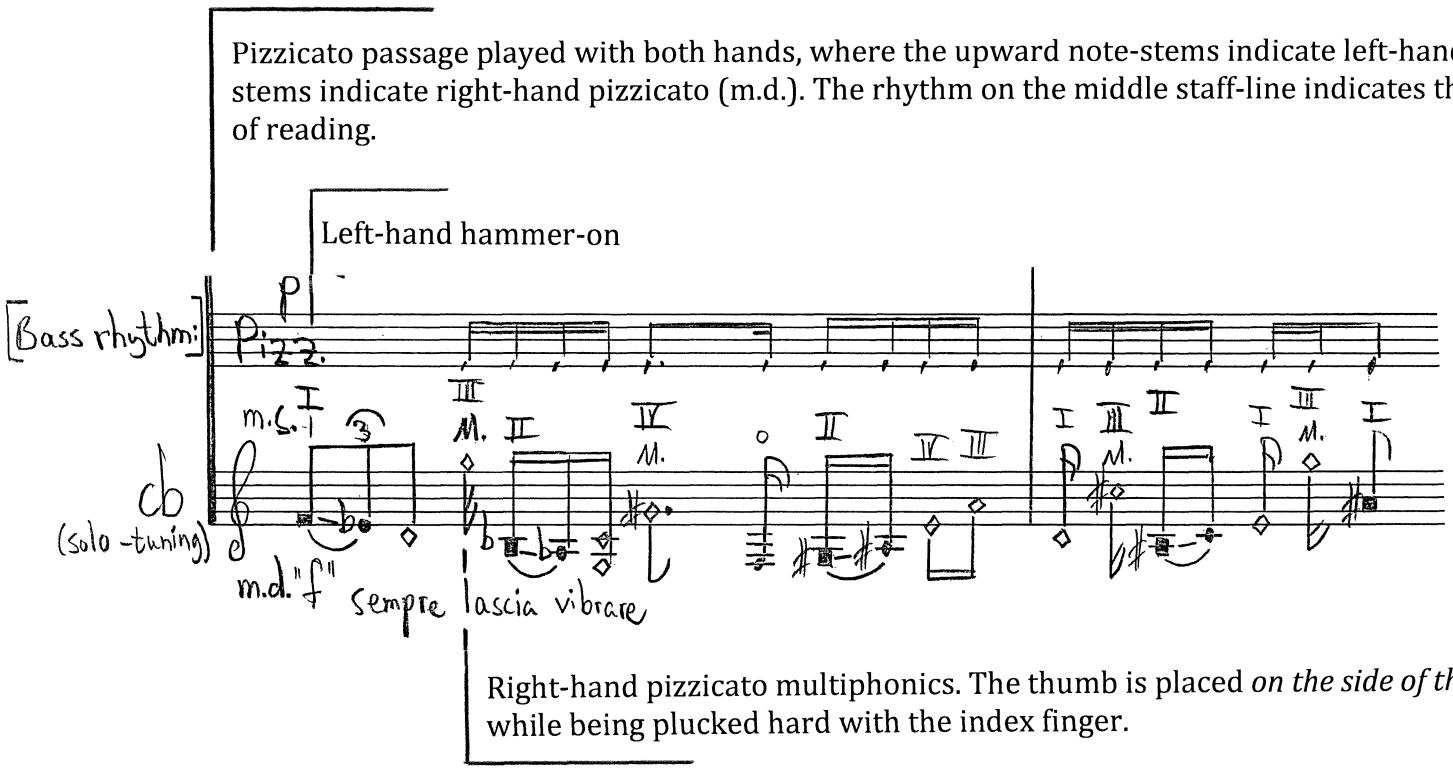
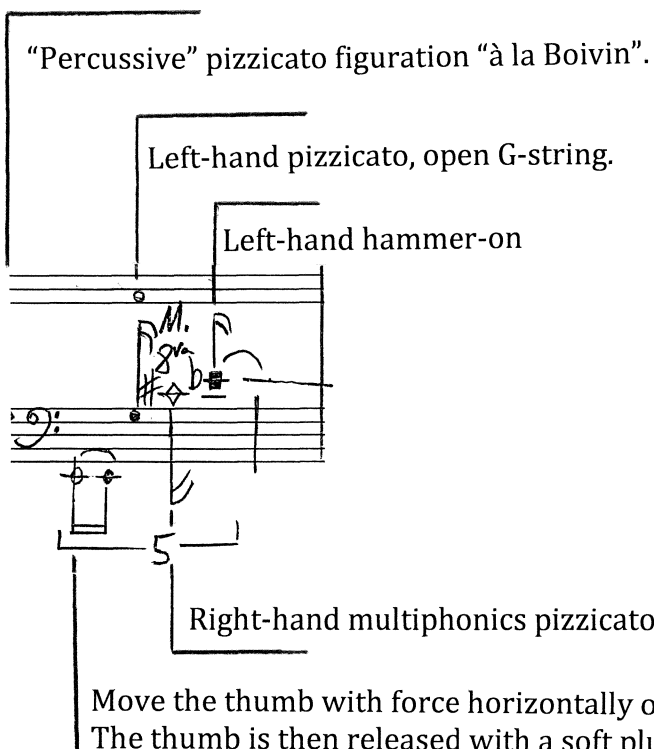
*Glasperlenspiel* is organized according to an alternating use of two poems, "Zu einer Toccata von Bach" and "Das Glasperlenspiel", which are taken from Hermann Hesse's novel by the same title. Following the verses of the two poems, *Glasperlenspiel* is divided into sections that are repeatedly interwoven. Like characters from 'Castalia', the performers partake in a dialogue, an intellectual 'Klangspiel' with Hesse's words. A dissection of words and phrases shapes the textual and phonetic part of the voice and numerical series (derived from the poems) constitute the structural basis for the different sections of the work. Hence, the composition becomes a game with text fragments and musical phrases, in which the explicit communication, or a precise interpretation of the texts, is secondary to the attempts of expressing the very subjective feelings that arise when reading Hesse's words. The opening is sung without words, except for a theme-fantasy called *Liebeslied*, which uses some central text fragments from "Das Glasperlenspiel" as well as the melodic material in its original intervallic form (borrowed from a toccata of Johann Sebastian Bach). In unison with the double bass, the vocal part continues with rhythmified singing and recitation of passages from "Zu einer Toccata von Bach", interrupted by verses of "Das Glasperlenspiel" where a flowing melodic line characterizes the double bass — vivid and brilliant in its dialogue with the singer who more calmly contemplates on fragments and phonemes from the text. Here, a third character is introduced through the voice of the bass player who, like a listener from the 'outside world', tries to imitate the erudite scholar with a monotonous but clear articulation. Unable to fully grasp what is expressed, he ends up producing an unredeemed caricature of the voice of the 'Magister' The double bass part is based on improvisations and re-writings of phrases from the music of Scodanibbio, which were subsequently organized in rhythmical structures according to the numerical series derived from the text. Many of these inspirational phrases of Scodanibbio are found in his work *Due pezzi brillianti*, which exhibit a perpetuum mobile that I wanted to transform into a more free and improvisational character. A musical synthesis of the material from both sections ("Das Glasperlenspiel" and "Zu einer Toccata von Bach") marks the ending of the last "Das Glasperlenspiel" verse, followed by another appearance of the *Liebeslied* theme — this time as a solo double bass fantasy — that transits into the last verse of "Zu einer Toccata von Bach" Here, the music radically changes character. Aphoristic utterances echo into textures of floating consonant and dissonant harmonies. The 'listener' now approaches a possible understanding of the text, and lets the reverberating music colour his interpretation. Towards the end, as the music gradually consolidates the past and present and resolves into its old shape, the initial Bach melody leads into the final and quiescent *Liebeslied*.

## Playing instructions

### Explanations with examples from the score:

Double bass:

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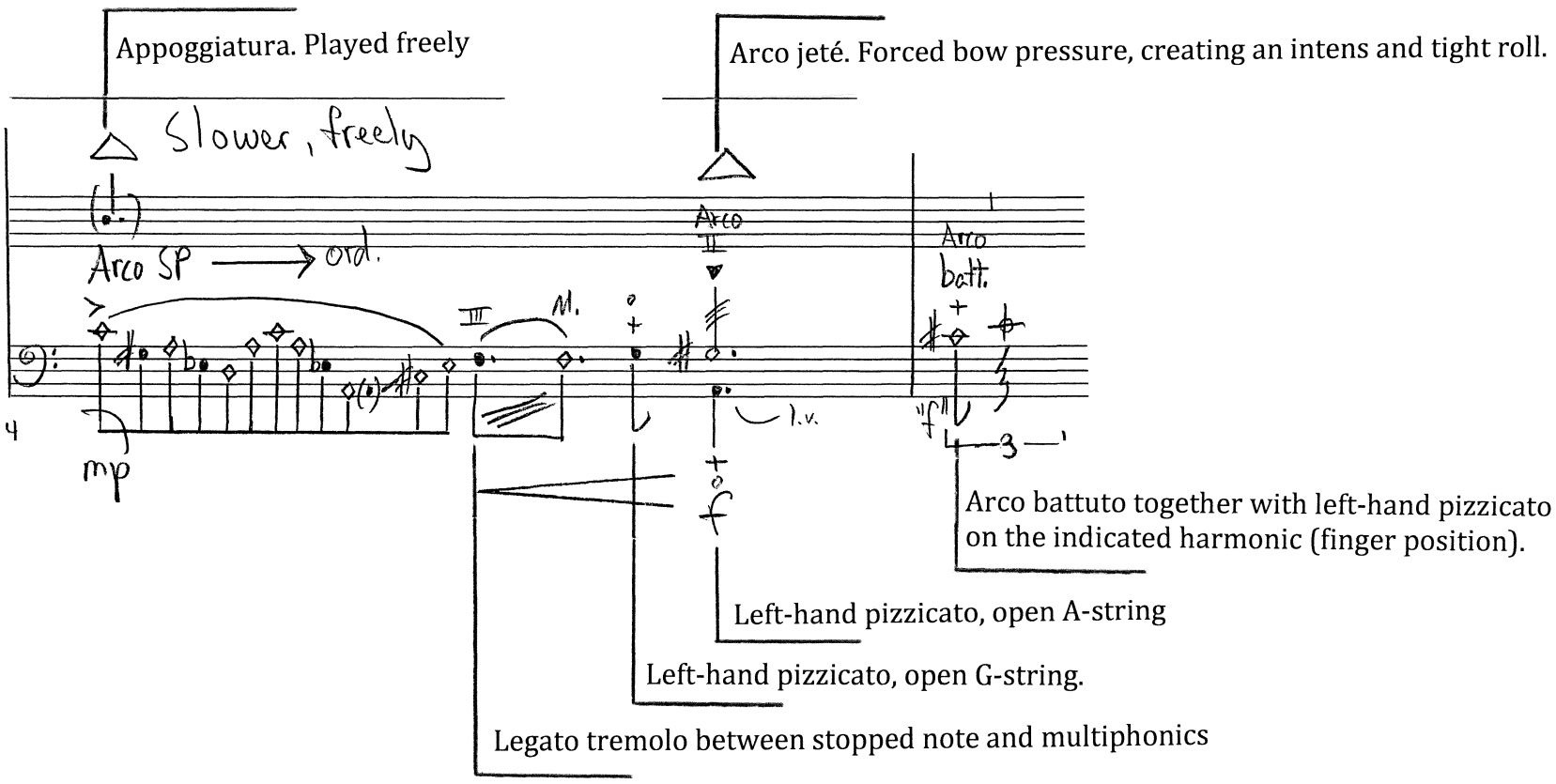
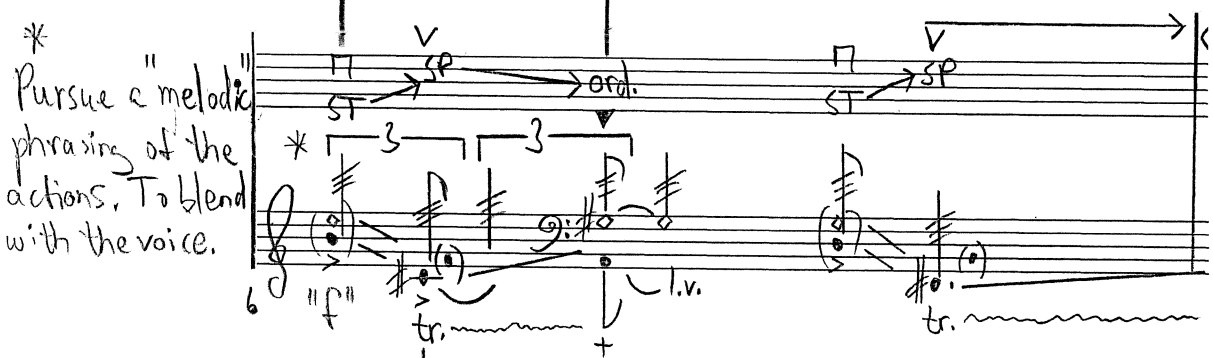


Arco jeté in a movement from sul tasto to sul ponticello to ordinario.

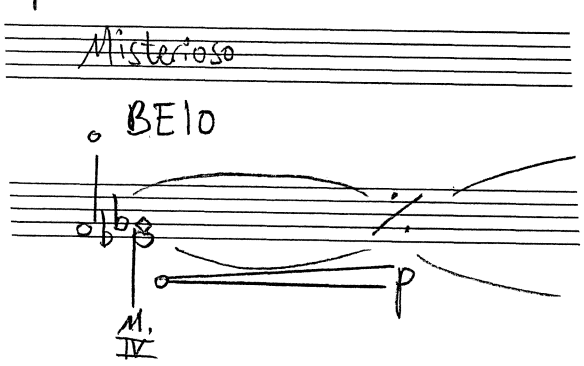
Arco jeté. Forced bow pressure, creating an intens and tight roll.




Left-hand pizzicato, open A-string

Percussive trill action

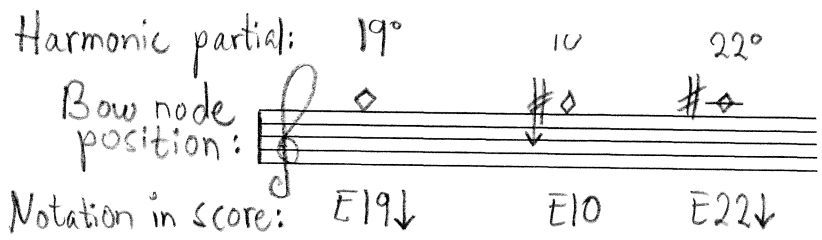
Artificial multiphonics played together with an open A-string.
The expression *B E10* indicates the bow position, where B=bow and E10=bow node position (E-string, 10th harmonic partial).




The bow positions for the artificial multiphonics used in *Glasperlenspiel* are notated according to a *bow node position*. The bow is placed at, or close to, the indicated node position. Its sounding harmonic partial is in this figure written on the upper line, while the score notation is written on the lower line.

In addition to a correct placement of the bow, one also needs to control the *bow resistance* (pressure and bow speed) for each multiphonics.

Fig. 7

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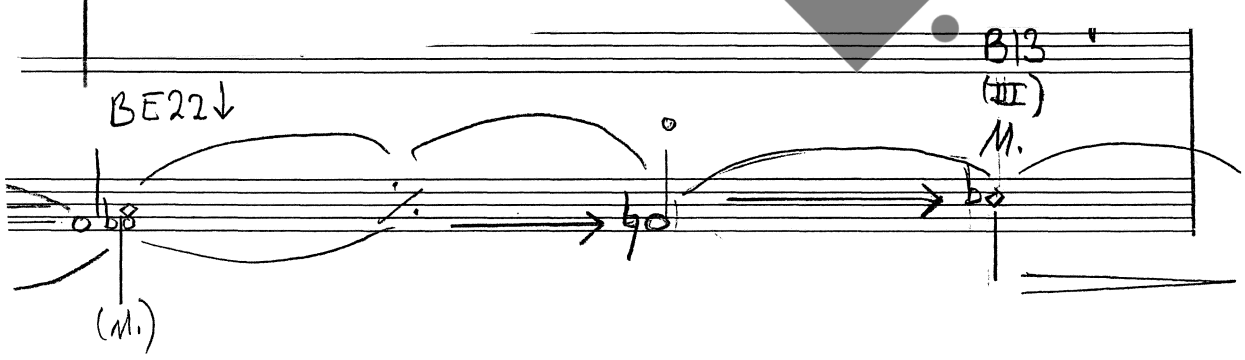
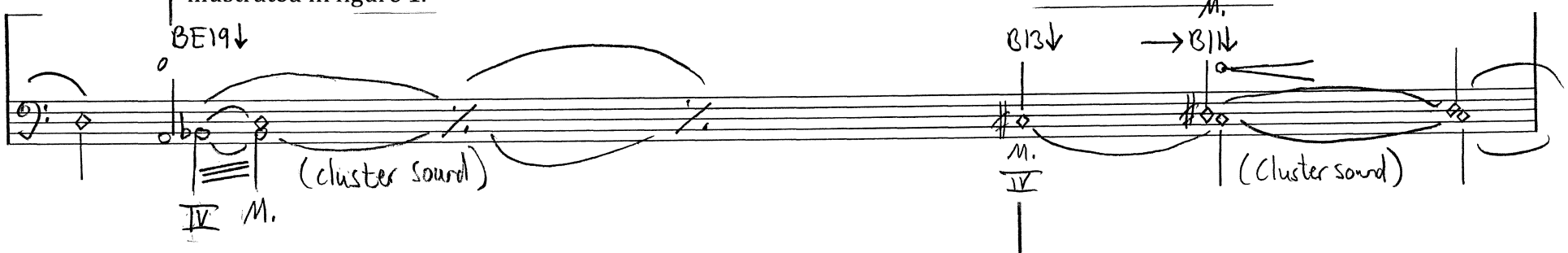
Artificial multiphonics played together with the open A-string, which gradually change to open A-string and then to a multiphonics (with the bow placed on the 13th harmonic partial on the A-string, see figure 2).



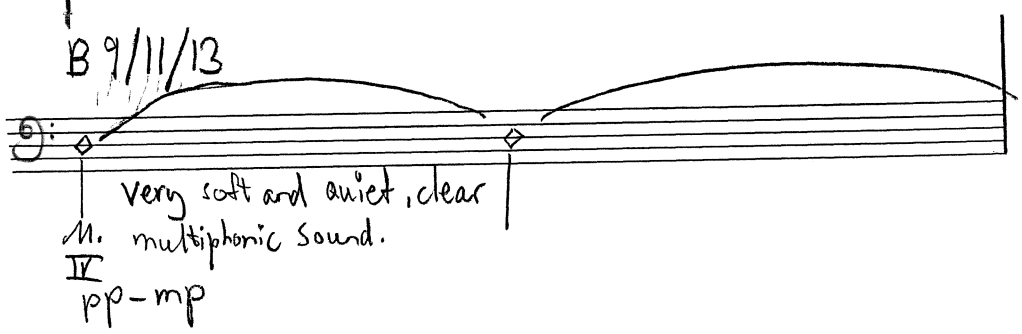

Legato tremolo between the fundamental and the artificial multiphonics, played together with the open A-string. The placement of the bow is illustrated in figure 1.

Multiphonics on the E and A-string. The placement of the bow is illustrated in figure 2.




Multiphonics on the E-string. The placement of the bow is illustrated in figure 2.

Semitonic multiphonics on the E-string. The bow can be placed on either the 9th, 11th or 13th partial node (see illustration in figure 2).



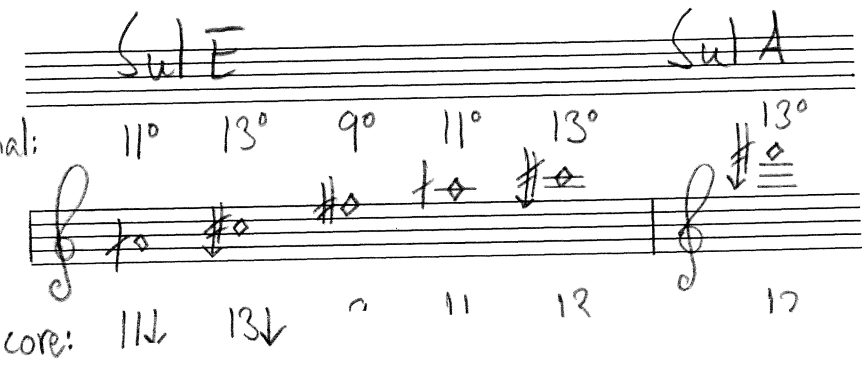




Fig. 2

The bow positions for semitonic multiphonics are notated according to a *bow node position*. The bow is placed at, or close to, the indicated node position. Its sounding harmonic partial is in this figure written on the upper line, while the score notation is written on the lower line.

In addition to a correct placement of the bow, one also needs to control the *bow resistance* (pressure and bow speed) for each multiphonics.

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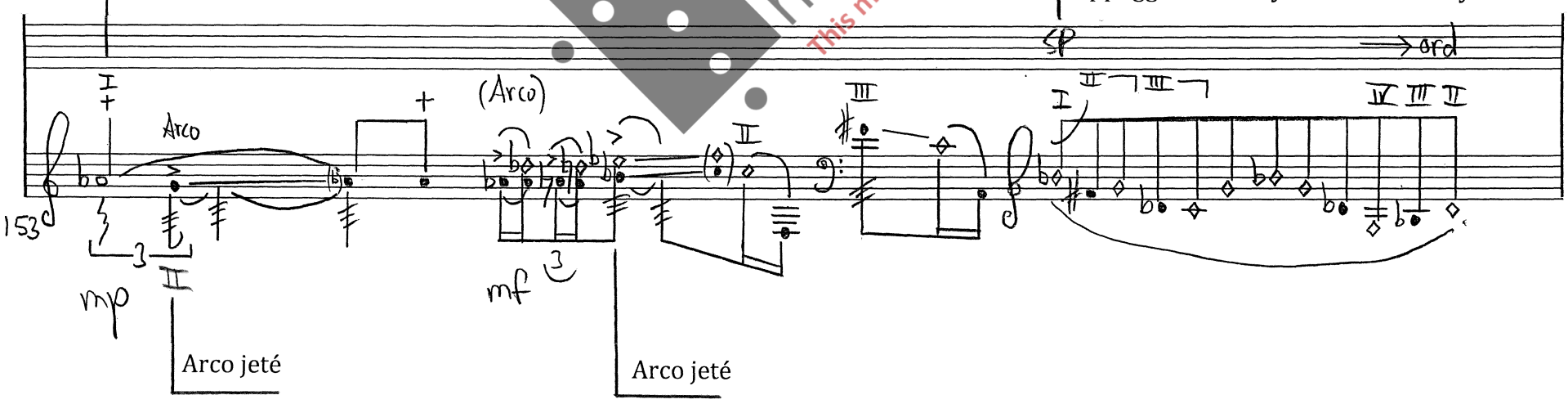
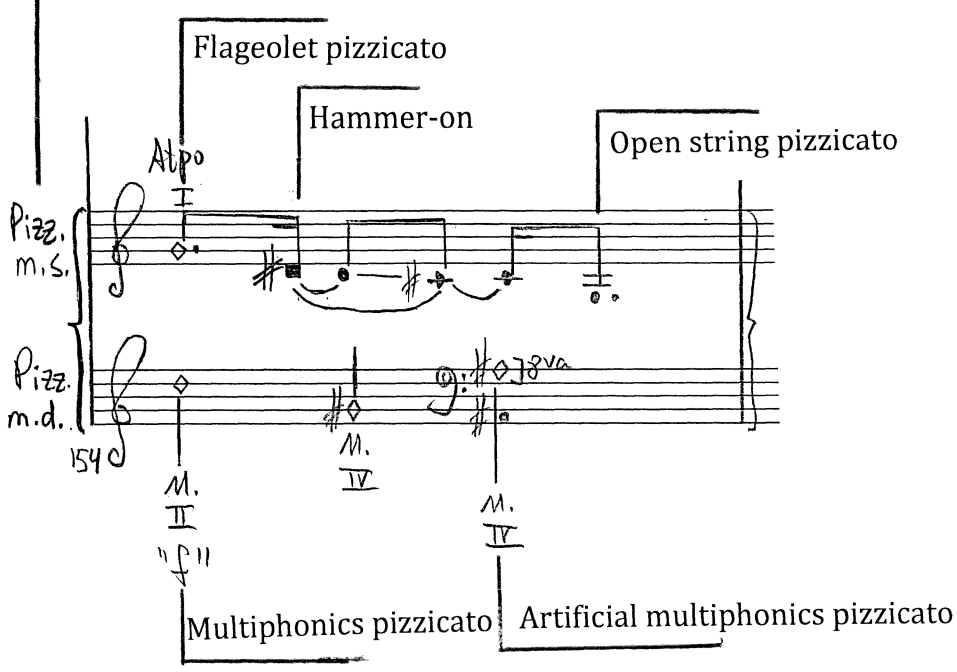
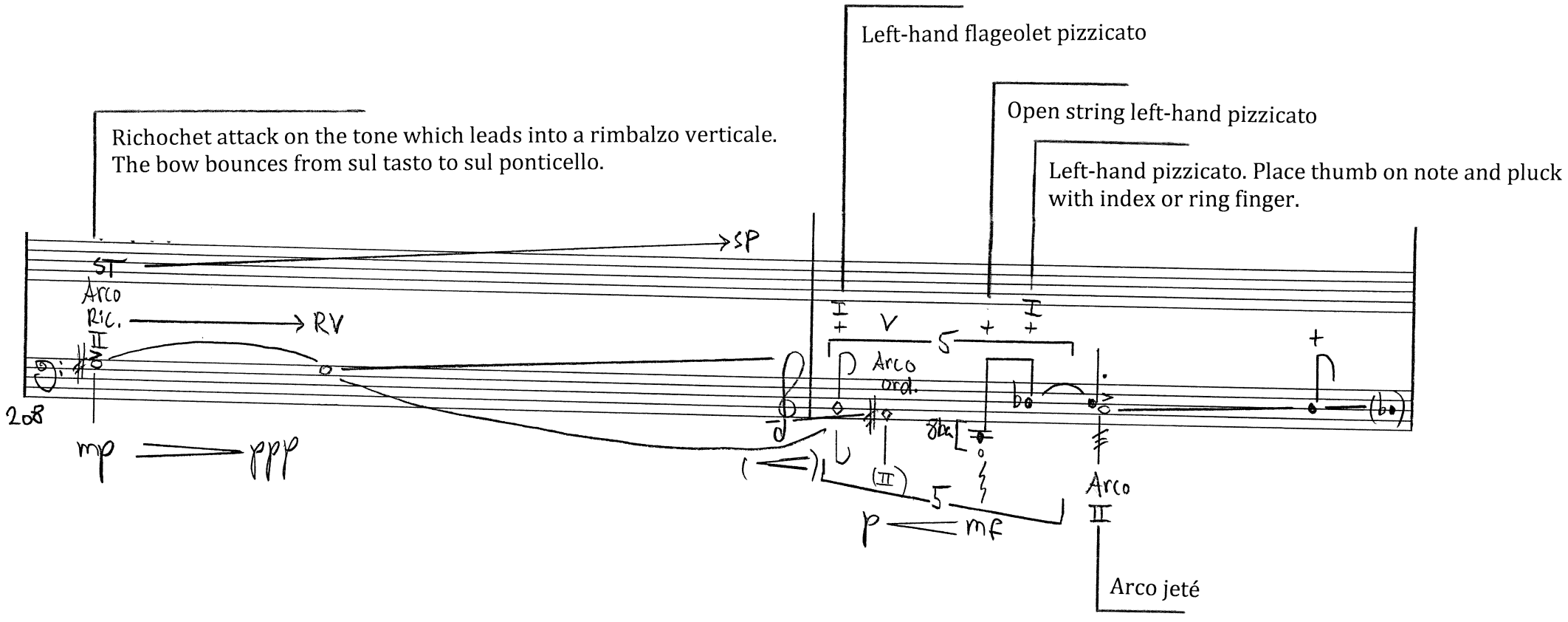
Left-hand pizzicato. Place thumb on note and pluck with index or ring finger.

Appoggiatura. Played fast but freely.




The encapseled sections, like the one shown here, which occur in the last part of *Glasperlenspiel* are played pizzicato. The notes on the upper stave are played with the left-hand (m.s.) and on the lower stave with the right-hand (m.d.). Techniques which are use are flageolet pizzicato, left-hand hammer-on, open string pizzicato, right-hand multiphonics pizzicato, artificial harmonic pizzicato and artificial multiphonics pizzicato.



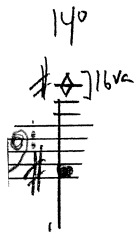



Voice:

**General signs:**

- With the tip of the tongue against lower teeth.

- With the tongue raised and fixed between palate and velum. Nasal timbre, pressed sound.




*Diphonic chant; numbers indicate partials.*
The partials (fundamental and overtones) of a sound wave made by the voice are selectively amplified by changing the shape of the resonant cavities of the mouth, larynx and pharynx. This resonant tuning allows the singer to create apparently more than one pitch at the same time (the fundamental and a selected overtone), while in effect still generating a single fundamental frequency with his vocal folds.

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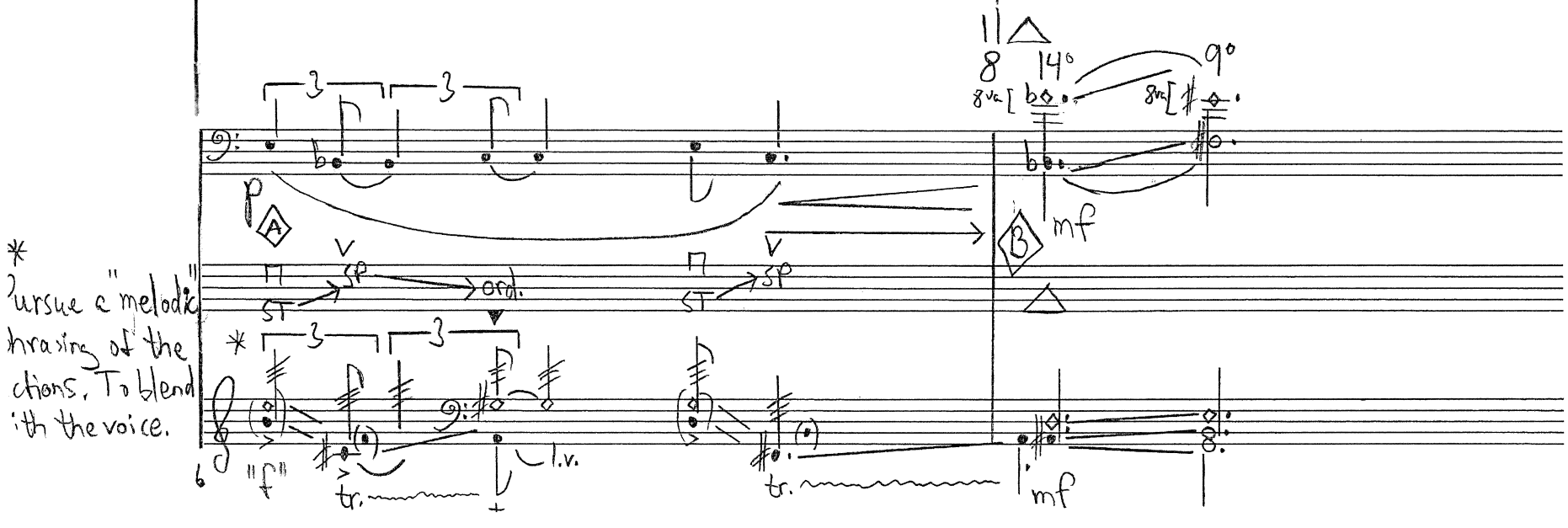
The figure indicates a low position of the larynx, with a dark and full sound.

*The words and text fragments are to be pronounced according to the German language.*

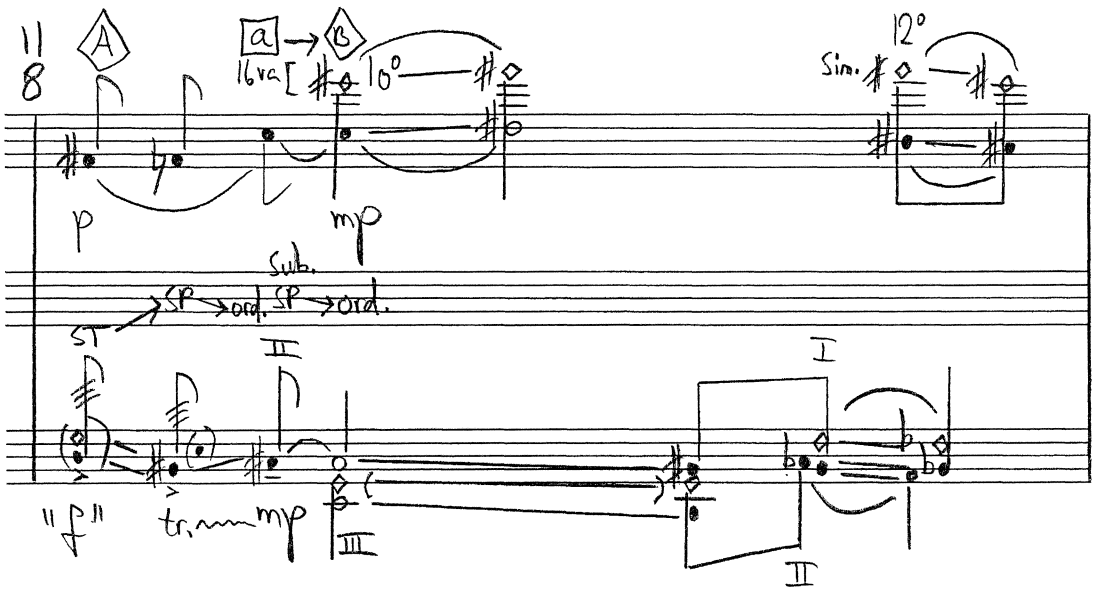
**Explanations with examples from the score:**

The line is sung with the technique described as (A) (the tip of the tongue against lower teeth). The timbre gradually changes into a more nasal and overtone-rich sound when altering to the technique described as (B) (the tongue raised and fixed between palate and velum).

*Diphonic chant;* the 14th and 9th harmonic partial sound together with the fundamental. When singing with the double bass, the resulting chord effects are either consonant or dissonant, with a constant gliding motion between the two.



A quick succession of the different timbral types used in the piece. The moderately nasal sound of (A) is followed by a warm, vocal “a” that quickly transform into overtone singing, using the technique described as (B). The 10th harmonic partial sounds together with the fundamental.

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# Glasperlenspiel - for contrabass and vocal tenor

Håkon Thelin
2009-2010

♩=80

voc.

[Bass rhythm:]

cb
(solo-tuning)

m.d. "f" sempre lascia vibrare

Slower, freely

Arco SP → ord.

mp

f

l.v.

5 spoken
4

ist
mp

ist ist

Arco
batt.

"f"

Slower, freely

Arco

mf

* Pursue a "melodic" phrasing of the actions. To blend with the voice.

"f"

tr.

Sempre l.v.

mp ord. → B

Slower, freely
Arco

mp

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A p

ST

sp

ord.

B mp

"f"

l.v.

tr.

I

II

mp

5°

6°

7°

3

4

5

6

7

8

13

15

18

X

"Liebeslied"

Very free. Almost without tempo

Misterioso

BE10

M.

IV

a

mf

Molto espressivo

Mu

mf>p

Si

Ch

Wö

Ren

Be

S

BE22↓

(M.)

move bow in a parallel glissand with the left ha

Very slow gliss.

sempre multiphonics

B13

(III)

(a)

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D3-5 PANOPUS SCORE-SYSTEM®

Atpo, slow and free

→ A

8va 6° 5° Sim. mp p

Atpo

(M.) 19 mp

ST sp → ord.

→ B 16va 14° 8° 10° 12° mp

11 A p

a → B 16va 10° mp

Sim. 12°

Sub. sp → ord. sp → ord.

ST

21 l.v. Arco batt. ord. mp

"f" tr. mp

ord. → B

23 A p

ST sp → ord. Arco batt. ord.

"f" tr. l.v. mp

16va 14° 8° 10° 12° 10° 12° 16va

25 mp

5° 7° 8va

Arco batt. l.v.

27 "f" tr. l.v.

14° 8° 10° 12° Sim. 10°

Arco batt. l.v.

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"Zu einer toccata von Bach

30

A

ST sp ord.

"f" tr. l.v.

B mp

Arco batt.

l.v.

(dampen string)

ist mf ist ist

33

"f" l.v.

Arco batt.

36

ist Trieb ist

Arco batt.

"f" l.v.

Trie... ...b

Gei... ...st

l.v.

39

ist ist ist Kampf ist

Arco batt.

"f" l.v.

Arco batt.

"f"

Gradually more intense!

41

Kampf f

und mp

Glück

ist ist mf

Arco batt.

"f" l.v.

"f"

"f"

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7/8

X "Liebeslied"

4 Very free. Almost without tempo

Molto espressivo

Be

mf > p

Arco batt.

l.v.

"f"

B 9/11/13

Very soft and quiet, clear multiphonic sound.

pp - mp

a

mf — p

Si

mf > p

Ch

Mu

mf > p

Ren

mf — p

BE19↓

(cluster sound)

IV M.

B13↓

→B1N

M. IV

(Cluster sound)

A

Atpo

K

Atpo ♩=80

l.v.

"f"

46

Arco batt.

3

"f"

5/4

mp Ur- Schwei- gen Star- -rt Es

wal-tet Fins- ter-nis

Pizz. m.s.

m.d.

47

"Das Glasperlenspiel" nr.7

7:5

Molto legato. Mysterioso, but with melodic phrasing

7:4 3:2

Mu mp

Si

K

p

m pp

Cb: De (I) S

Wel mf

Tall

Sun

Arco sp → ord.

14P:4P

15P:4P

10P:4P

50

p ↔ mf, very dynamics freely

articulate clearly ch word- -gment and nsonant

♩ = ♩

! = ♩

* spoken by contrabass player. With a curious, yet rather cold and distant expression. Articulated, with free rythm.

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Mysterioso. Similar as before

Mysterioso.

Mei Zu Be Rei Ne Ne Zu Rei Ne Feie

Neh R Fu R Ch Tan Zu Hö Ren

Wi Ti Neh

Cb: Sun Cb: De Cb: Wi Cb: Ti Neh

slow harmonic glissando

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Die
mf

Ve
mp

Re

R
p

Ten
mf

5:4 10P:4T 5:4 10P:4T

mf (p↔mf)

8:9 5:3 3:2 5:3

8:7 4:3 3:2 4:3

Gei
(mf)

S
p

Te
mp

R
p

rit...

10P:4T

rit...

Slower

Free variation of voice timbre/overtones

Cb: Be G Na De Te R

sim.

p Spectral phase bowing

Cb: Zei

Ten

rit..

Atp

Zu
mp

Atp

ff

9:10

Be

S
p

Ch
mp

Wö

Ren
f

Freely

ist
mf

Arco batt.

l.v.

"f"

Trie...

ist Geist

Spoken:

Da bricht ein strahl aus zackigen Volkenriss, greift weltentieten aus dem blindern Nichtsein

Arco batt.

l.v.

"f"

NB noter
This music is copyright protected

14° 8° 10° 12°

16va

Atpo ♩=80

mp

Arco batt.

l.v.

Pizz.

m.s.

m.d.

"f"

Arco batt.

Arco batt.

"f"

Spoken:

Baut Räume auf, durch wühlt mit Licht die Nacht, Lässt Grat und Gipfel ahnen, Hang und Schacht

Freely

Arco batt.

Arco batt.

Arco batt.

"f"

"f"

"f"

Atpo ♩=80

Pizz.

Arco batt.

Arco batt.

mp

ist ist

Lä- sst Luf-te lo- cher-blau

lä- sst Er- de

Dicht Dicht sein Es

spal-tet Schöpfe-risch zu Tat und Krieg

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Der Stra- hl ent- zwei das kei- mend Träch- ti- ge:

Auf- glänzt ent- zündet Die er- schrockne We- -lt

Vom Ge- Heim Ni- S

"Das Glasperlenspiel" nr. 2 La Sen

*Cb: Un Se

*spoken by bass player

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3/8 9/8 8:9 5:3 5:3

m pp

Cb: De R

Ma Gi S Chen

mp p f

102 ff p↔mf 5:4 I II III 3

13/8 12:13 4:3 3:2 4:3 3:2

Fo R Mel S Ch Ri F Tin

mp p mf p mp p mf

104 3 II I II III I II

2/8 5/8 6:5 3:2 4/8

Tin De Ren Bann

(mf) mp f

105 (II) 9:8

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3/8 4/4 9:8

m pp

Cb: Da S

Fe R Lo Se

mp p mp Rit...

108 14:16 14:16

9/8 3/8 Slower Free variation of voice timbre/overtones Atpo

A p Slower

Cb: S Tü R Men De rit... rit... m pp Atpo Cb: Da S

m v m v n v m v sim.

110 p Spectral phase bowing p↔mf



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5/8 6:5 3:2 2/8 rit... 6/8 Slower rit..

Le Ben Zu

mp mf mp

A

p Slower

Cbi Kla Ren

sim.

rit... rit... rit...

112

p

6/4 Atpo 9:6 3:2 Rit...

Glei Ch Ni S Sen

f mp p mf

Atpo 15:16

Rit...

115

p↔mf

6/8 Slower 4/4 Atpo !=P

A

p Slower

rit... rit...

Cbi Ge Rann Es wan- delt sich wo- hin die

Sim. mp

Atpo

m.s.

Cmd.

"f"

116

p

Li- cht-Saat fällt Es ord- net sich und töht die präch- ti-

3 3 3 3 3 3

II

118

3/4 7/8 5 5

ge Dem Le- ben Lob Dem Schö- pfer Lich- te Sieg

3 3 3 3 3 3 5 5 5 5

II II

121

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5/4 3/4

124

4/4

6 "Das Glasperlenspiel" nr. 3 ♩= ♩

10:6

Arco sp p mp ord. Te Rn Bil mf mp Oe Rn

126

p↔mf

6/8 7:6 4/4

Rit... Lei mf Ch mp rit...

Rit... Sie Ne R Tö Nen rit...

128

p

3/8 Atpo

10/8 9:10 5:3 4:3 5:3

Sie mf K p Ri mp S p Tal mf Len

130

Atpo

p↔mf

2/8 5/8 6/8 6:5 3:2 7:6 4:3

m pp Nih mf Rem Dien f S p T

Cb: i Nih

132

ff (harmonic gliss) ff

NB noter
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135
Wa
R
Dun
Dun
Se
Rm
ff
f
Le
Ben
Sinn
Cb: Un D
137
Kei
Ne
R
Kan
Nau
Cb: Nau Sih
140
Sih
Ren
Slower
Cb: K Rei Sen
143
Atpo
Na
Ch
Cb: Fal Len
Cb: Al S
145
"f"

NB noter
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D3-5 PANOPUS SCORE-SYSTEM®

3/8 — 4/4 — 7:8

m pp

Ch. De R — Hei — Li — Gen

mf — mp — f

Arco batt. 3 — Arco batt. 3 — Arco batt. — 5

I — II

148

mf

5/8 — 7:5 — 5:3 — 3/8 — Molto rit. — 7/8 — ♩=♩

Mi — T — Te — Hin

mp — p sp — mp — mf

→ ord. — Molto rit.

Atpo — Pizz. m.s. — Pizz. m.d.

Freely, ♩=±60

II — I — 3

M. — III — M. — III — M. — IV

150

X 4

"Liebeslied" freely

Arco — (Arco) — sp — → ord.

I — II — III — IV — V

153

mp — mf — mp

NB noter
This music is copyright protected

p — mf — pp — ff — Poco rall.

M. — IV — M. — III — M. — IV — M.

"Zu einer toccata von Bach" nr. 3

3/4 — Atpo ♩=±60 — 4/4 — 7/16 — 2/4 — Atpo

Sprohen — Und wei-ter Schwingt sich — gottwärts rückbezogen

Pizz. m.s. — Pizz. m.d.

Arco — sp — ord. — ST — Poco rall.

(attevato)

B mp — (IV) mf — mp (II) — "f"

154

"f"



D3-5 PANOPUS SCORE-SYSTEM®

Poco rall.

Atpo

mp

Arco

Poco rall.

Atpo

Pizz

"f"

Und dränget

Arco

Poco rall.

Durch aller

Atpo

Arco

Pizz.

m.d.

Poco rall.

Krea-tur getriebe

Pizz

"f"

Arco

Poco rall.

Atpo

Der Vater Geiste

Pizz.

Arco

Poco rall.

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Atpo

Zu der Gro-ße Drang

Pizz

Arco

172

"f"

mf

mp

Atpo

Er wird zu Lust und Not

Poco rall.

Pizz.

175

"f"

mp

Arco

Poco rall.

Pizz

"f"

Zu sprache

Bild Ge-sang

Wölbt Welt um Welt

178

mp

Poco rall.

Arco

Pizz

Atpo

"f"

Zu

Domes

Siegesbogen

1st

183

mp

Poco rall.

Arco

Pizz

Atpo

"f"

1st Trieb

187

mp

Poco rall.

Arco

Pizz.

Atpo

"f"

NB notes
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190 Poco rall. Arco Poco rall. mp 1st Geist Pizz. "f" Arco mp 1st Kampf Pizz. "f"

194 Poco rall. Arco Poco rall. Und Glück Pizz. "f" Poco rall. Pizz ord. "f"

197 1st Liebe Mu mp Arco lunga "f" Very soft (almost whisper) 1st Trieb Sil Very soft 1st Geist

200 Be schwö - ren 1st Kampf und Glück Very soft Als nach der hei - li -

205 mf gen Mi tte Hin Whisper: 1st Liebe pp "f"

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"Liebeslied"

A ppp → sp
ST
Arco
Ric. → RV
II
mp ppp

Arco ord.
(II)
Arco II
p mf

(Arco)
ord.
ST
Ric. → RV.
ppp

ppp
Arco
Ric. → RV
II
mp ppp

Arco ord.
(II)
p mf "f"

B
mp
Gradually less harmonic
poco a poco dim. al niente
m.s.
Arco batt. Pizz "f"
m.d.
M.
III

Cb sounding
last chord:

NB noter
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