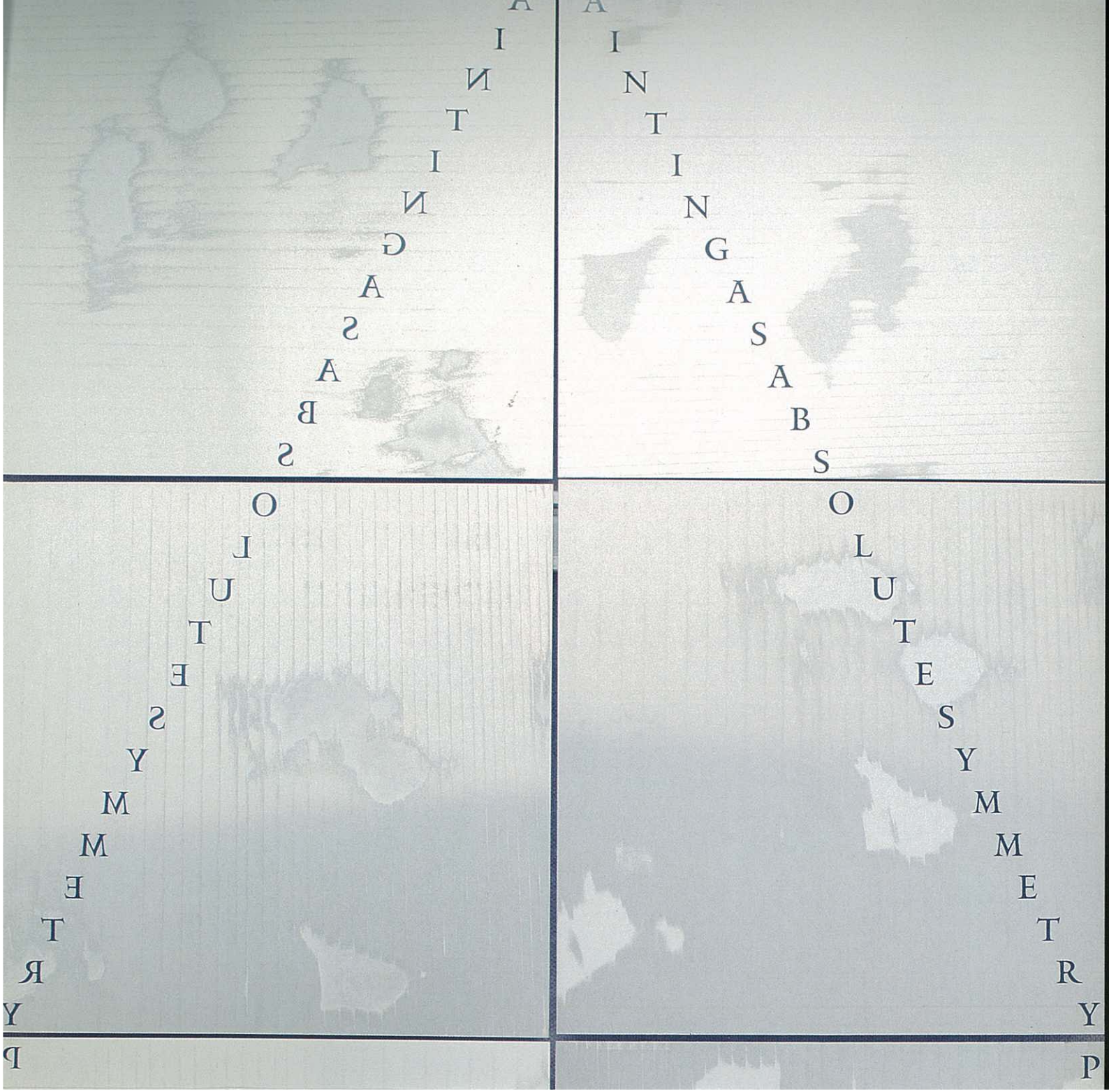
25 Songs on 25 Lines of Words on Art Statement for Seven Voices and Dance

JOE FELBER ELLIOTT GYGER LUCY GUERIN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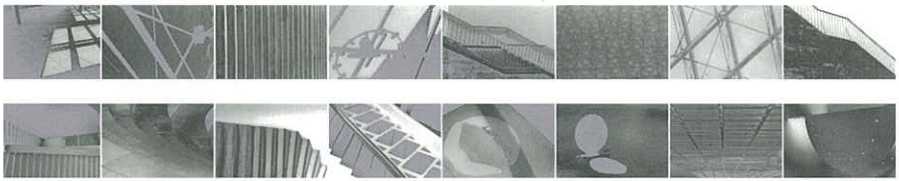

The most beautiful, the most profound emotion
that we can experience is the sensation of the mystical.

Albert Einstein

25 SONGS ON 25 LINES OF WORDS ON ART STATEMENT FOR SEVEN VOICES AND DANCE

JOE FELBER ELLIOTT GYGER LUCY GUERIN

1

Introduction

Through music I have learned to appreciate different ways of interpreting art.
Dance made me aware of dynamics and form.
Ad Reinhardt's *Black Paintings* opened my eyes to see.

This project is about transparency. Through it I stand behind the black paintings and look out, presenting the layers of cultures and meaning that Ad Reinhardt reduced to nothingness. Transforming the negation of his black paintings and his *25 Words on Art Statement.*

I invited Elliott Gyger (composer), and Lucy Guerin (choreographer and dancer), to collaborate and interpret these concepts through their arts practice.

This multimedia art project aims to reveal the mystical in art.
Einstein said; *'The most beautiful, the most profound emotion that we can experience is the sensation of the mystical'.*[1]

In addition to the *25 Songs* I have created seven works in steel that uncover a variable word conclusion which challenges the perception of concrete poetry, with the title; Trans -form, -late, -cendent.

Joe Felber

1 Albert Einstein quoted in Committee on Psychiatry and Religion, Group for Advancement of Psychiatry, Mysticism: Spiritual Quest or Psychic Disorder? 9:97 (November 1976): 788.

25 LINES OF WORDS ON ART STATEMENT

1. ART IS ART. EVERYTHING ELSE IS EVERYTHING ELSE.
2. ART-AS-ART. ART FROM ART. ART ON ART. ART OF ART. ART FOR ART. ART BEYOND ART. ARTLESS ARTIFICE.
3. PAINTERS' PAINTING. PAINTING'S PAINTERS. PAINTERS' PAINTERS.
4. PAINTING THAT "CANNOT BE TAKEN HOLD OF," THAT "CANNOT BE USED," THAT "CANNOT BE SOLD."
5. PAINTING "ABOUT WHICH NO QUESTIONS CAN BE ASKED."
6. PAINTING AS "NOT AS A LIKENESS OF ANYTHING ON EARTH."
7. ICON AS IMAGE AS IDEA AS SYMBOL AS IDEAL AS FORM AS ICON.
8. ICON AS DEVICE, DIAGRAM, EMBLEM, FRAME, GAME, SIGN, SPECTACLE, ETC.
9. DEVICE AS EMPTY. DIAGRAM AS DEAD. EMBLEM AS ARCHETYPE. FRAME AS (OF) MIND. SIGN AS FORECAST. SPECTACLE AS INVISIBLE.
10. PAINTING AS ABSOLUTE SYMMETRY, PURE REASON, RIGHTNESS.

11. PAINTING AS CENTRAL, FRONTAL, REGULAR, REPETITIVE.
12. PREFORMULATION, PREFORMALIZATION, FORMALISM, REPAINTING.
13. FORMS INTO UNIFORM INTO FORMLESSNESS. STYLE AS RECURRENCE.
14. LIGHT AS REAPPEARENCE, DULLNESS. COLOR AS BLACK, EMPTY
15. SPACE AS HALVED, TRIPARTED, QUARTERED, QUINQUESECTIONED, ETC.,AS ONE.
16. VERTICALITY AND HORIZONTALITY, RECTILINEARITY, PARALLELISM, STASIS.
17. OUTLINES, MONOTONES, BLANKNESS, QUIESCENCE, PREMEDITATION.
18. BRUSHWORK THAT BRUSHES OUT BRUSHWORK.
19. MATTER ONLY TO THE MIND.
20. THE STRICTEST FORMULA FOR THE FREEST ARTISTIC FREEDOM.
21. THE EASIEST ROUTINE TO THE DIFFICULTY.
22. THE MOST COMMON MEAN TO THE MOST UNCOMMON END.
23. THE EXTREMELY IMPERSONAL WAY FOR THE TRULY PERSONAL.
24. THE COMPLETEST CONTROL FOR THE PUREST SPONTANEITY.
25. THE MOST UNIVERSAL PATH TO THE MOST UNIQUE. AND VICE-VERSA.

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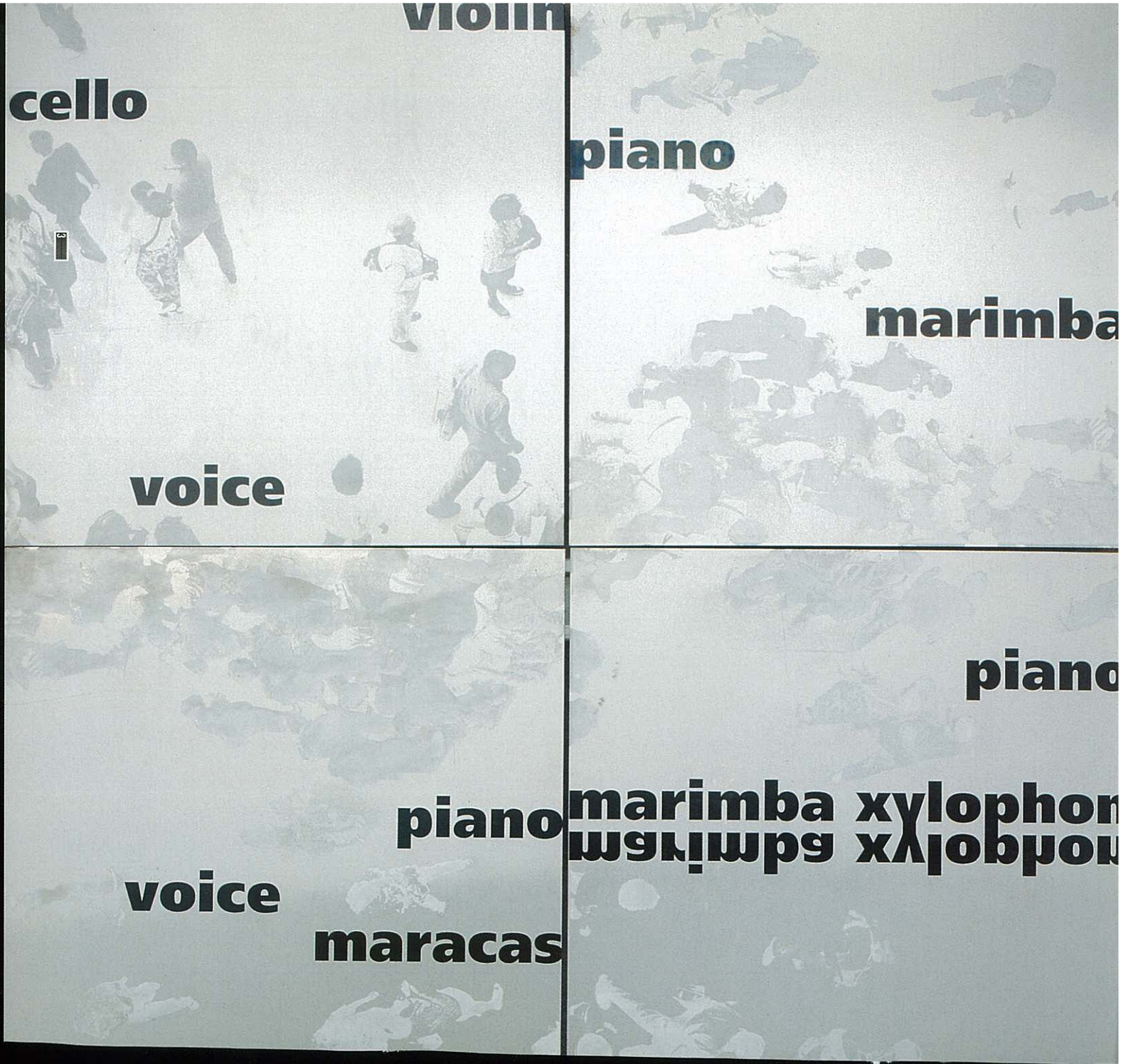
(The selected writings of Ad Reinhardt) Edited by Berkeley, Los Angeles, on page 51, 52.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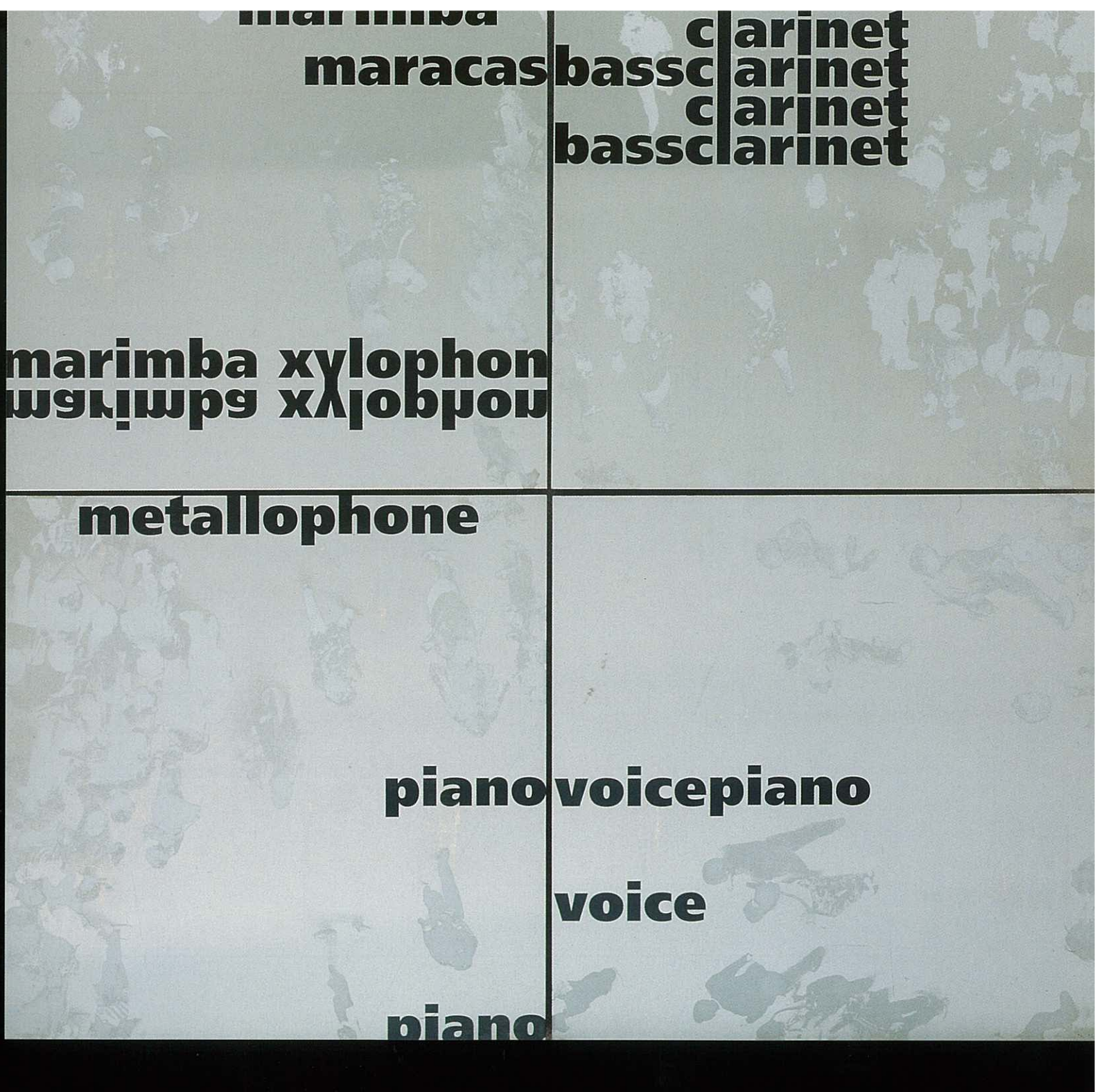
cello
piano
marimba
voice
piano
marimba xylophon
piano
voice
maracas


marimba
maracas
clarinet
bassclarinet
clarinet
bassclarinet
marimba xylophon
metallophone
piano
voicepiano
voice
piano

Words on Ad Reinhardt

AN INTERVIEW BETWEEN JOE FELBER, LUCY GUERIN, ELLIOTT GYGER
BY VICTORIA LYNN

Victoria

Joe, can you tell us what visitors will see when they come to your exhibition?

Joe

I describe it as a music/theatrical installation for seven voices. The installation will contain seven stainless steel tubes suspended from the ceiling, low to the ground. Each voice will inhabit one tube, performed electronically via speakers. For me, the tubes are like the oesophagus of the singer. In addition, there are suspended light bulbs that operate like metronomes. They represent the rhythmical structure of the music. The swinging bulb movement causes the visitor's shadow to move across the walls and ground. I have created a kind of aural cube. The audio component is extended with two video projections on the floor and played on a loop, the first with Lucy Guerin's three dances, the second with my 25 graphic interpretations of Ad Reinhardt's Art Statement. I made these with the help of computer animation and photographic slides. With this *Gesamtkunstwerk* I am trying to trans-form (-mit, -late, -cendent), layer by layer, the transparency of Ad Reinhardt's black paintings. I want to create a new hybrid interpretation of the *25 Lines of Words on Art Statement.* On this basis I have invited composer Elliott Gyger and dancer/choreographer Lucy Guerin.

Victoria

Why has Ad Reinhardt been the inspiration for this work?

Joe

I have been interested in Reinhardt's black paintings and his *Art Statement* for the last seven years. His work is based on a concept of negation in abstract art that transcends the negative. With this practice, he manages to suggest everything beyond the purity of his black paintings. My idea is to interpret the material and the empty spaces between: to create a new hybrid perception, bringing together art, sound (voice) and dance (body).

Victoria

You have chosen to base your project on Reinhardt's *25 Lines of Words On Art Statement* written in 1958. How do you think these 25 phrases relate to the black paintings? What's the connection for you in the way he uses language and the way he uses the colour black in the paintings?

Joe

Every statement of Reinhardt's eats itself, words upon words, but opens itself up to new suggestions. With these *25 Lines* he suggests everything and nothing – what he refuses to say or do – just as in the black paintings where black is negative space. Looking at Ad Reinhardt as a painter where an identical physical practice as a painter is accursed, reflects on his statement N° 18, 'brushwork that brushes out brushwork'.

Victoria

You initially treated the *25 Lines of Words* graphically, destroying them in a way. Why have you done that?

Joe

As I mentioned before, the text eats itself and the black paintings are negative, suggesting everything and nothing. This opened up a new possibility for me to interpret and transform them into a visual graphic that became the basis for the project by destroying the text and restructuring the statement into geometric visuals, each relating to the original text. For example, in Song N° 4, I chose an eight pointed star, two perfect squares on top of each other, and with this new form I determined a new reading, where the reader has to read diagonal, vertical and horizontal, forwards and backwards, letters isolated and compressed. So, often we have new words that are created by the visual poetic arrangement of single letters or a group of words. In one graphic I chose a soccer playing field, playing 'Art' against 'Painters'. The winners remain amongst the readers. This playful rearrangement became the basis for Elliott's compositions. The blackness allows a hybrid art practice to unfold with a different interpretation. I am replacing the blackness with seven voices and a dancer. The voice, as the most direct instrument, may be identified with the colour black – the voice and the body replace the blackness.

Victoria

Yves-Alain Bois has written on Ad Reinhardt, linking his work to the writings of Ferdinand de Saussaure and Claude Lévi-Strauss. In relation to Reinhardt, he comments, 'the more one refuses the more one signifies'.[1] The more negation there is, the more negative statements, the more possibilities there are. Perhaps it is not an ending, it is a beginning.

Joe

I would agree with that. Lucy, what do you think of this contradiction in Reinhardt?

Lucy

That idea is something that influenced me quite strongly in my working process. The idea of black or negation or nothingness cannot but suggest its opposite which is everything really, so by suggesting nothing, you imply everything at the same time. There is a huge depth in there for me to work with as a dancer, and I think I started from a point of trying to find within my own body the most non-representational or non-meaningful place and from there seeing what came out of it. But because the human body is so loaded with meaning, that process is quite a difficult thing to do.

Victoria

It is interesting, Joe, that you have chosen to work with a dancer and composer in this project as both involve the element of time. When one stands before an Ad Reinhardt painting and slowly becomes aware of the many different layers of paint, one's eye goes in and out of focus. There is a great deal of mobility in the black paintings and they take a long time to 'see'. Yves-Alain Bois comments that 'what one sees in front of a 'black' Reinhardt is the narrativisation of one's gaze (first this bar or that square 'appears', but then it dissolves, to be replaced by a similarly waning epiphany)' and he interprets this as Reinhardt's way of folding time back onto the spectator rather than containing it in the image.[2] The word 'narrativisation' suggests that there is a completion to this process, which I do not believe to be the case. Nevertheless, you have created a project that has an acute awareness of time and is sensitive to the 'non-completion', if you like, in Reinhardt. When I look at the graphics that you produced from the 25 Lines of Words, my eye is also moving around and around as I try to reconstruct the letters into words and the phrases into sentences. Elliott, I wonder what your response has been to Joe's manipulation of Reinhardt's language in this way?

1 Yves-Alain Bois., 'The Limit of Almost', Ad Reinhardt, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Rizzoli, New York, 1991, p 11
2 Bois, p 28

Elliott

I've worked probably about equally from Reinhardt's original text and Joe's graphic interpretation of it. The intelligibility of the text varies greatly from a simple straightforward setting of the words so that you can easily hear what's going on, to deconstructions of the sounds of the words, isolated vowels and consonants in some places, or a version of the text which is being desiccated. For example you might have all the vowels removed and just the consonants left so it is like the freeze dried version of the text. In some places I've abandoned the text altogether, responded perhaps to something of the mood it was suggesting in the gestures of the music but the actual text is not heard in any way directly.

Victoria

Did you find it difficult to determine some of the moods of the lines of text because Reinhardt's words are confusing at times?

Elliott

Very much and it was certainly a great help having Joe's visual. Sometimes I was able to get a much more direct response from those – to read Reinhardt through Felber – and we also had a couple of meetings early on in the process and I told Joe my responses to each graphic. He also responded to my responses and sometimes I think that they were pretty much what he expected and sometimes I think they were quite different from what he expected.

Victoria

You have also taken a numerical approach to the work.

Elliott

In the lead up to the project Joe was expressing a great interest in numerical symbolism which is, in a way, an extension of the playful aspect of the texts. There are 25 phrases, 25 songs, it is a perfect square number. I arranged those numbers into a magic square which then influenced a lot of the parameters of what goes on in each song. For example there is a note for each song which is determined by where it lies in the magic square. How fast each movement goes is also determined by numbers in the magic square. In the Gallery space you won't actually hear them sequentially at all. The order that you will hear them in is again derived albeit rather indirectly from the way that they line up in this magic square.

Victoria

Can we talk about one song in particular and the characteristics of that song, perhaps one of the numbers in the magic square with one of the titles that you've got.

AD REINHARDT / JOE FELBER

25 SONGS

ELLIOTT GYGER

1 simplicity	17 outlines	24 spontaneity	8 spiral	15 divisions
3×17 M (♩)=51	13×17 SS (♪)=221	2×17 A (𝅗𝅥)=34	19×17 B (♪)=323	7×17 TTTTT (♩)=119
20 formula	5 curt	10 perfection	23 machine	7 blurring
3×23 C (♩)=69	13×23 MMMM (♪)=299	2×23 FF (𝅗𝅥)=46	19×23 TTTT (♪)=437	7×23 SSSS (♩)=161
14 lacuna	22 surprise	13 recurrence	4 arcane	12 pattern
3×11 T (𝅗𝅥)=33	13×11 F (♪)=143	2×11 CC (𝅗𝅥)=22	19×11 S (♩)=209	7×11 BBBB (♩)=77
19 duality	3 combat	16 stasis	21 crux	6 ethereal
3×5 FFF (𝅝)=15	13×5 BB (♩)=65	2×5 SSS (𝅗𝅥)=10	19×5 AA (♩)=95	7×5 CCC (𝅗𝅥)=35
11 frontal	18 obliteration	2 game	9 dissolution	25 mandala
3×29 BBB (♩)=87	13×29 TT (♪)=377	2×29 MMM (𝅗𝅥)=58	19×29 FFFFF (♪)=551	7×29 AAAAA (♪)=203

7 Voices:

Boy treble [M]

Girl treble [F]

Soprano [S]

Contralto [A]

Counter tenor [C]

Tenor [T]

Bass [B]

Elliott

Partly as an aid to myself I tried to encapsulate every one of the 25 songs in a single word; a noun usually. There might be a few adjectives as well. Something that would give me something to focus on because in a way a number of the statements are trying to do similar kinds of things, particularly towards the end of the set of 25, the last 5 are very sort of parallel in the way that they are structured, so I really wanted to try and differentiate them as much as possible and exaggerate one particular aspect of each of them in different directions. One example that occurs to me is Song Nº 4. The text was one that I found a little hard to interpret: 'painting that cannot be taken hold of, that cannot be used, that cannot be sold'. The main idea that I took out of that phrase was inaccessibility, the resistance to outside interference if you like. But Joe's graphic draws upon the arcane aspects of that suggestion I suppose. I call Song Nº 4, 'arcane'. It's not actually a pentagram but it suggests a kind of magic diagram, a magic polygon, a space in which spells might take place or an incantation. So I took off from that and decided to break up the text into single syllables that mean absolutely nothing, most of them in fact read backwards. It is presented by the soprano as if it were a bizarre incantation – a demented, driven-insane kind of magic ritual. So it's gone a long way from 'painting that cannot be taken hold of, that cannot be sold', even though all those syllables actually just came out of that text but the intervening layers have added new connotations to it.

Joe

I absolutely love it. Elliott's musical transformation picks up on my graphic beautifully and the soprano singer adds colour, with the rather difficult singing captured like a new invented humourous language. With this practice chance plays an important role, and each artist knows that nothing is like the original This becomes the key of an interactive process that becomes profoundly important to respect the author Ad Reinhardt. Lucy, unfortunately we didn't have the complete work by Elliott Gyger and you had to work with 3 small samples of it. How do you feel about that?

Lucy

Well, I actually feel fine about that. It's interesting because that's close to the way that Merce Cunningham and John Cage worked: they never came together often until the performance and the music was generated by a series of chance techniques. You never really knew what was going to happen. I think there is a real element of separateness between the three of us. Joe, you and Elliott worked a lot from the text and Elliott composed his pieces quite mathematically and I think I could also have worked in that way. I could have set up a series of formulas for myself and worked the movement from those. But I thought that was getting a bit heavy handed and repetitive, so I chose to work a little bit more instinctively than that -just really starting from the idea of blackness. As the dancer I see myself as the random element. The architecture or the space is very set, the video of my performances is set (it is completely repeatable), the music is going to be pre-recorded and will be looped, so I see myself as being perhaps the one fairly minimally chaotic element in that whole set-up.

Victoria

Lucy has mentioned one of the great moments of collaboration between sound, dance and painting which was at the Black Mountain College in the United States, when John Cage, Merce Cunningham and Robert Rauschenberg worked together. Joe, are you interested in their work?

Joe

Yes, for several years I have been interested in the connections between John Cage and Marcel Duchamp. He was probably the aural Duchamp, the musical Duchamp, because Cage's work is based on the ready-made. Cage did the silent piece called *Four Minutes and Thirty Three Seconds.* This silence has a relationship to Reinhardt. They were both interested in Buddhism. They were both interested in deconstructing negation. John Cage made a statement: 'listen and become aware', in which he suggested a new awareness of listening. Reinhardt does the same.

Elliott

I have an ambivalent relationship to Cage. The good thing about Cage is that he takes the mickey out of it. Most of the time I tend to write fairly pre-structured music. There is a lot of pre-compositional organisation that goes on, a lot of rules that I invent for myself to keep me within limitations and I find that the easiest way to work because as anyone can tell you there is nothing so daunting as a blank page and any possibility. It's much easier when you've got some limitation of some sort, so I tend to set up these rules for myself. What Cage often did was to work within even more restrictive rules and he was attempting often to remove the personality of the composer from the music that was produced. To quote another line of his, I think it's from the *Lectures on Nothing:* 'I have nothing to say and I am saying it, that is poetry'. But the way that Cage went about saying nothing was to try and remove himself from the composition by setting up these elaborate systems of rules and then using random processes, throwing dice or using the I Ching (traditional Chinese determination procedures) to generate the notes so that he would have absolutely no choice at the end in what the resultant music was.

Victoria

Have you ever performed a Cage piece?

Elliott

Recently the Contemporary Singers gave a performance of a John Cage piece called *Hymns and Variations.* It is based on a couple of eighteenth century early American hymn tunes on which Cage has run these incredible procedures, the result of which is to remove most of the notes. So you are left with this incredible blank space into which occasionally one voice will come and sing. Every now and then by chance two or three voices come in together and you have a chord that sounds for a moment.

Maybe there is a parallel with the black paintings of Reinhardt's. It is ironic that Cage may have tried very, very hard to remove his personality from the music that he wrote, but the music he produced (the blankness in it) is so forcefully Cage, it couldn't be anyone else. In a way the Reinhardt black paintings are similar: this deliberate absence of personality is about the strongest fingerprint that you could seek to create. So in this piece for Joe's project, I've got all of those elaborate rules there, the magic square, the various other numerical things that are going on. I'm not attempting to create a blankness here but in a slightly different way to take the mickey out of that sort of elaborate structuring and question whether there is a purpose behind it – the playfulness of the text again I suppose.

(Incidentally, the Contemporary Singers were also involved in a collaborative project I did with Mike Parr at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1994, called *The Bridge.* The visual part was a sculpture made from cast beeswax over a wooden frame that sat on the wall at head height with 20 triangular holes in the front of it into which the 20 singers put their heads. Mike Parr wrote the text for that and I treated the text in a quite destructive way. I deliberately set the least important parts of it intelligibly, but gave the strongest musical statements to the more important parts which you couldn't actually hear the words for!)

Victoria

Lucy, have you been influenced by Merce Cunningham at all?

Lucy

I don't know a lot about Black Mountain College. I think that Merce Cunningham's been quite a big influence on me. I've been to hear him speak in New York and I spent quite a bit of time in New York. But I think that my main influences have been from the period of the '60s and '70s, performances which grew out of those early collaborations with visual artists. There is still a real focus in New York on movement rather than in European dance practice where it's more theatrical – it contains a lot more narrative, it's very emotional. In New York this is partly because of financial restrictions: dancers and choreographers don't have the money to put on big elaborate productions so that the cheapest thing that they can concentrate on is just the body and movement of the body. But it is also to do with that history of finding a language that is particular to the human body rather than gathering a lot of inspiration from outside and trying to place it on top of the body. In Ad Reinhardt's writing there are comments about negation which recalls for me a statement by Yvonne Rainer concerning dance: 'No to spectacle no to virtuosity...'[3] and so on.

Elliott

The thing that struck me about Reinhardt's lines is that they are completely ironic. I think Joe's idea of them eating themselves is a very good image. They are presented as straightforward statements that are utterly contestable in every possible way. There is not a one of them that you can actually accept at face value but they are all presented as if you are expected to accept them at face value. The first line is 'art is art, everything else is everything else' and one thing that John Cage in particular was concerned to break down is that notion that there is a clear dividing line between what art is and what the rest of life is. This was a large part of the thinking behind the famous silent piece that Joe mentioned . You have an audience sitting in a concert hall listening to a pianist on stage playing nothing but because they are there in those chairs in that position they are by definition at a concert and listening to music, so what they actually hear in Cage's view is their various shuffles, coughs, the hum of the air conditioning, passing birds outside the window, whatever happens to be going on – that is the music.

Victoria

Elliott, do you have other musical influences, if not Cage specifically?

Elliott

In terms of the work that I've done in these pieces there is a fairly strong influence from Luciano Berio's work and his fragmentation of text, his interdisciplinary response to semiotics and so on. In Berio, the texts are pulverised. He has chosen texts in which the meaning is obscure or even impenetrable to start with. For example he's worked with Beckett texts, he has worked with Joyce texts and really responds to the sounds in those texts and the meaning becomes lost if you like. In fact it also goes back to Stravinsky. Stravinsky will not actually destroy a text so that it is unintelligible but he will set it completely against any of the natural word stresses so that it is as if it's being recited in a monotone. For example, Oedipus Rex is one of the great intense psychological dramas of all time but Stravinsky's version is played deadpan and the effect is very, very distancing. While I have set texts straightforwardly and responded to them straightforwardly I have also been very interested in exploring other ways of responding to a text than the obvious one.

Victoria

How have you treated the line: 'art is art, everything else is everything else'?

3. Yvonne Rainer 'Some retrospective notes' Tulane Drama review. Winter 1965, Quoted in Barnes 'Terpsichore in Sneakers' p 43.

Elliott

That particular line is one that's going to be extremely intelligible in the piece. It is set for the boy soprano and I told him the way I wanted him to sing it was as if he is telling someone who is rather slow something that is incredibly obvious. It is so obvious, even a ten year old can understand it completely. There is this very interesting ironic kind of thing that's going on there and that's certainly an important part of the humour that I've tried to put into the piece.

I've introduced layers of humour which are perhaps more superficial, my own little digs on the surface. The second line is 'art as art, art from art, art on art, art of art, art for art, art beyond art, artless artifice' and I've set that again for several boy sopranos and it's like a word game; it's like a competition and they are tossing this backwards and forwards and they are seeing what they come up with. But right towards the end there is one of them that accidentally comes up with 'art Reinhardt'.

Victoria

Earlier on Joe used the word 'theatrical' to describe the project and the notion of layering. I am interested in the contradiction here between Reinhardt's intention to reflect nothing of the outside world in his black paintings and Joe's theatrical and highly referential installation. The American critic Michael Fried wrote about Minimalism in the '60s and denigrated it by saying it was too theatrical, too much of a part of our real space in real time. Joe's work has been influenced by American Minimalism, but here the Minimalism of his work is underscored by a layering of different disciplines and processes. By using two other artists in this project, Joe has also distanced himself as author of the installation. Elliott, I wonder how important the layering in the final electronic process is for you in relation to these points?

Elliott

Well there are two kinds of layering. There are seven voices that appear, one in each of the loudspeakers in the tubes and each voice is in a different vocal range so we've got a boy soprano, a girl soprano, an adult soprano, a contralto, a countertenor, a tenor and a bass. Each of my 25 songs is composed for just one of these voices, but often multitracked with itself (so, for example, Song 15 is for five tenors, but it's actually the same tenor five times). It's a very well-blended sound, but also very artificial because the multiplicity of a single voice is a very, very strange phenomenon. There is also the final layering. I've composed these 25 individual songs as self-contained units but I haven't yet composed the way that they will be combined. I wanted to create these artefacts and then remove myself and treat the artefacts as found objects. It's like a kind of collage: the seven voices will be heard sometimes just one at a time, often overlapping, and every now and then you will actually have briefly all seven going at once.

Victoria

This is a very different kind of collaboration with each of you fragmenting texts, misinterpreting one another's gestures.

Elliott

I am quite happy to misinterpret what Joe has given me. I think that that's almost part of the point. Early on it was very important to ask questions. The further we get away from the original conception, I think the more valuable the independence of the diverging streams is.

Victoria

It is a collaboration that has come together at a mutual point and then gone off again in different directions and Joe, as final director, will bring it all together again in one space.

Joe

I felt like once I gave Elliott and Lucy the work it was theirs and I never really questioned. I actually watch and let them be and I stitch everything together. As much as you edit the voices, Elliott, I choreograph the concept together in a spatial theatrical situation. It is very much like an unfolding experience. That is what I would really like to stress: I think we have to learn to experience challenge; we have to learn to share.

Victoria

And that spatial experience relies on a strong architectural element which pervades the project. You have always had an interest in architecture.

Joe

I studied architecture in technical college, as an architectural draftsman. I then worked for three years afterwards with some sort of terrible social buildings. I have a great appreciation for good architecture. I am glad I never went to art school because my architectural training gave me the perception of space. Each installation will be corresponding to the architecture of the museum. At the Art Gallery of New South Wales is the square grid; in the Art Gallery of Western Australia we have a triangular space and in Singapore we have a rectangular space.

Victoria

Lucy, in the video you wear a dress which looks a little like a piece of architecture. It reminds me of the costumes that Oskar Schlemmer created for his Triadic Ballet at the Bauhaus in 1924-26. His costumes inhibited the movements of the dancers so their dance became very awkward and mechanical in a sense. Perhaps the dress is like a limitation for you, despite the comment that you see yourself as the chaotic element in this project.

Lucy

The dress is very geometric. It's like a cone shape and it has the circles of boning from the top right down to the bottom so that the movement happens within the dress. The dress is transparent so that you can see through it and into it and a lot of action is happening within the dress and that does influence the dress, but the dress tends to hold its own form. I created it in response to Reinhardt's black paintings: the more you look into them, the more you see there.

Joe

Lucy, during the video production I saw how successful the dress is, your choice of the cone shape in relation to the body movement. What struck me was the relation of an inner space to an outer space. There were two layers of body which was yourself as a dancer and the dress as a form moving and reforming within an architectural space. And my question is did you feel like you were the negative space, the black space, and the architectural space outside was the positive, white space?

Lucy

I did feel that in moments especially at the beginning of my working process when I was just working with very simple geometric shapes that really cut into the white background so that they produced a silhouette or kind of absorbed light. But as the process went on I found that an emotional layer or a kind of stylistic layer settled on top of those geometric forms that tended to bring them out and give them more detail and solidity.

Joe

I noticed you have created three dances. Do you have any specific title?

Lucy

They don't have titles, I just called them one, two, and three, but the first dance deals with form and minimalism. Originally there's a section where the movements are contained right within the torso, so there's not a lot of limb movement at all. And then they begin to extend out into the arms and the body and it's a bit of an accumulation of dynamic form there, but it's very structural and very sort of linear and geometrical. In the second dance I wanted to throw all that away and create something more chaotic and more formless, because those two things are really contained in that idea of the black paintings for me – the strict form and the suggestion of formlessness. So in the second dance I absorbed a lot of different stimuli while I was working, just anything really that would go together to create this kind of fairly erratic sequence of movement. And then the last dance was more to do with the positive and negative space that was set against the white wall and was a little bit to do with looking out – somehow to do with the inner space and the outer space.

Joe

Lucy, next we will work towards the performance piece in each venue. How are you going to transform from this production into the live performance?

Lucy

I will be using that material in the live performance, but I will be structuring it more carefully so that it builds to something and it evolves to more of a whole rather than in contrast with the segmented nature of the video. I want to take the space into consideration in each different venue.

Victoria

Joe, how did you come to decide to use video footage of Lucy's dance with the video of your own graphics in this installation?

Joe

Lucy will not attend all the venues for a performance and most important is the video of her dance. Her interpretation of Ad Reinhardt's black paintings is quite different from Elliott's approach, even though music and dance are coherent. But here they are so independent and focused in their own practices as artists. I am interested to play both videos on a loop so the visitor can engage with different art practices, amongst the visual material provided for the collaborators. With Lucy's dance video, I am interested in her transformation of Ad Reinhardt's black paintings into three dances and the architectural photographic aspect of position and movement. The fragments of the dances, close ups, and the architectural form and light became the target to pursue in this video independent of any live performance. Both videos will be screened on the floor so they don't compete with the audio component. The second video projection is a text computer animation of the 25 visual graphics with photographic slides which explores the inquiry into abstraction in architecture and art, which is a continuation of my photographic portfolio of the past five years. This video relates to an earlier piece of mine installed at the Queensland Art Gallery, called *LINEAREADING*. I often use the camera as a physical process to achieve a result of abstraction by simple dropping or swinging the camera through the space to receive blurred abstracted images.

Probably one of my favourite artists is Bruce Nauman. He did one particular video piece called the *Clown Torture* and that has convinced me of the power of transformation. Nauman obviously comes from a different direction, that of body art. The *Clown Torture* has repetitive movements, himself as the clown, fragmented on different sized TV monitors. The acoustic noises and the repetition become a horrific torture for the viewer at the end.

Victoria

A final question I have for each of you is, do you have a favourite phrase from Reinhardt's *25 Lines of Words on Art Statement*?

Joe

Mine is 'brushwork that brushes out brushwork'. I am a painter and I came from painting. This statement actually wipes everything out by brushing it out. It is a gestural movement – brush with the brushes of brushwork – and it invites a lot of things.

Victoria

Could this entire project be your interrogation of painting perhaps?

Joe

Possibly.

Victoria

Elliott?

Elliott

It's difficult. The one that I find the most applicable to me is 'the strictest formula for the freest artistic freedom' which ties in with all these mysterious background structures, but there are others that perhaps appeal to me more in terms of a mood. I like 'painting about which no questions can be asked' for its confrontational kind of stance. That's another very sort of sulky one.

Lucy

My favourite is Nº 24, 'the completest control for the purest spontaneity'. I like the contradiction in it and I have used it as a motivation to make dance. I like the paradox in Reinhardt: the dialogue between two extremes.

Joe

What is your favourite statement of Reinhardt's Victoria?

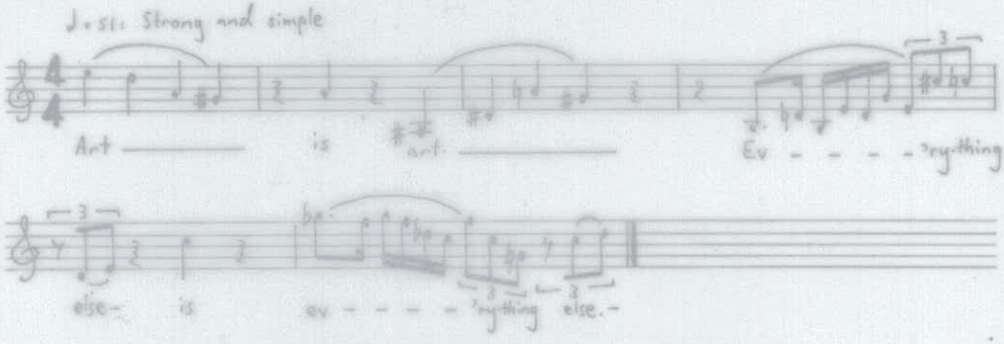
Victoria

Mine is 'art is art, everything else is everything else', because it is such a provocative statement and I can imagine us speaking for hours and hours about just that.

violin
cello
piano
marimba
voice
piano
voice
maracas

marimba
maracas
marimba xylophone
marimba xylophone
etallophone
piano voicepiano
voice
piano

SONG 1 (1 Boy Treble)



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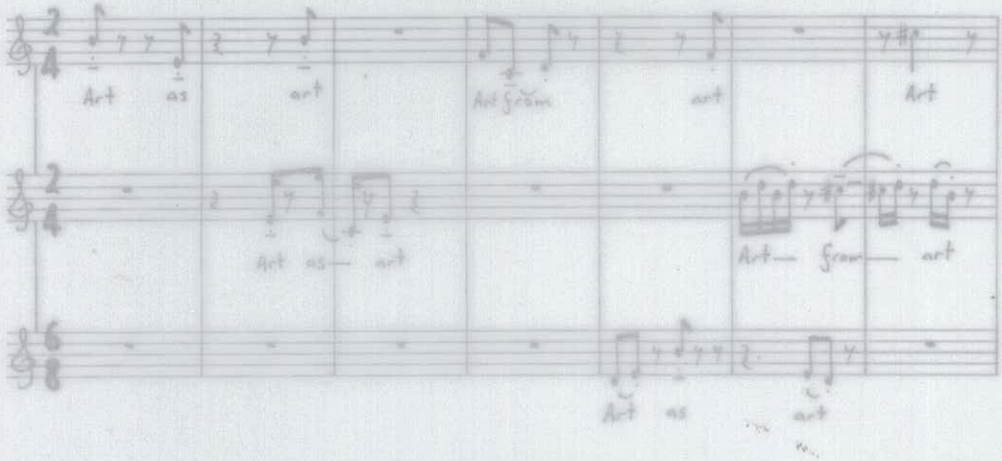
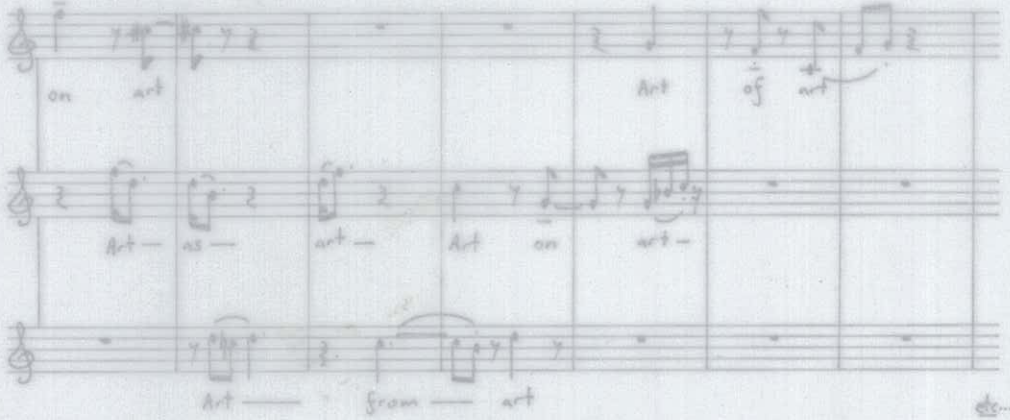
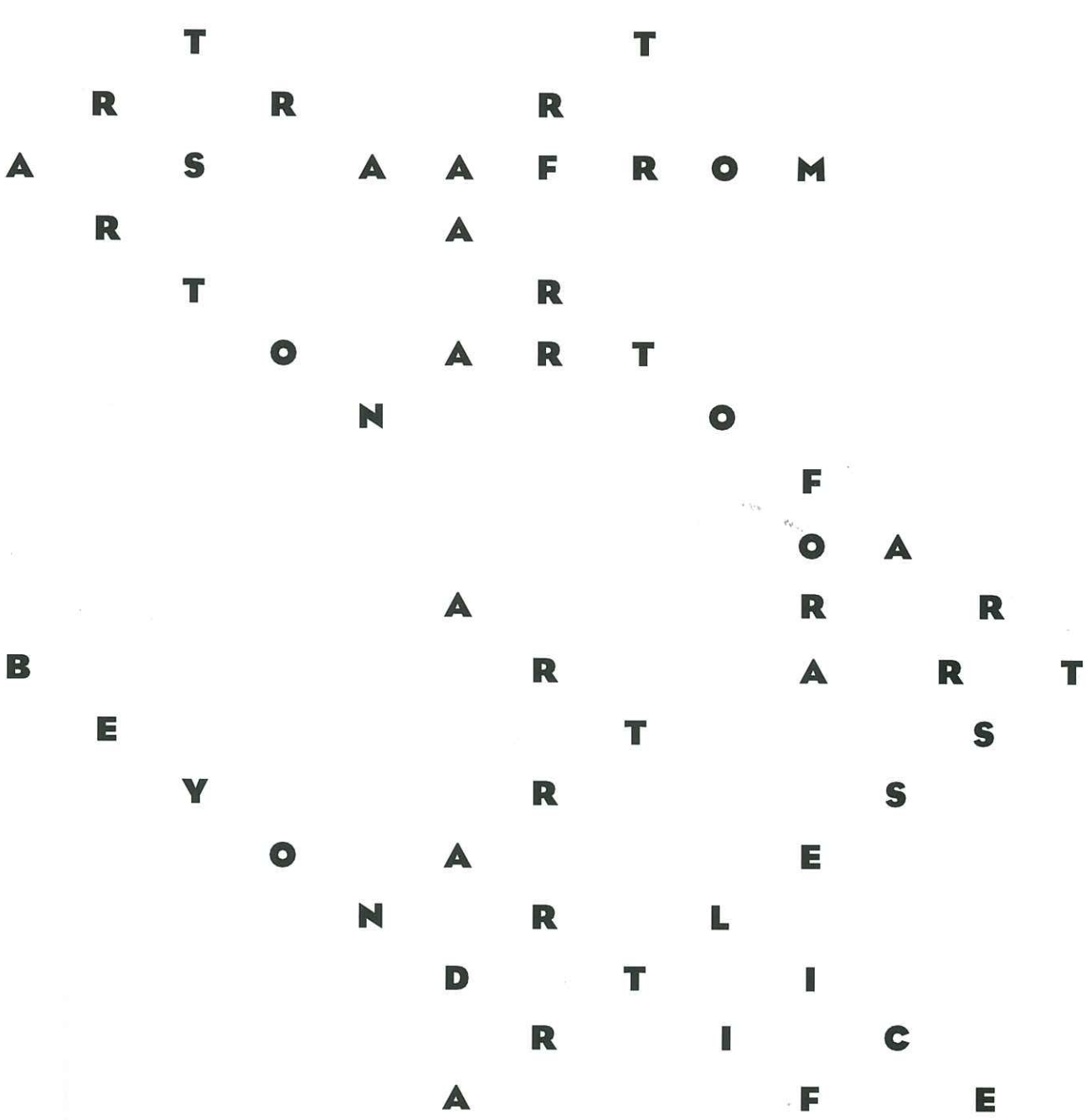
SONG 2 (3 Boy Trebles)

♩/♪. = 58: Playful, curious






T T
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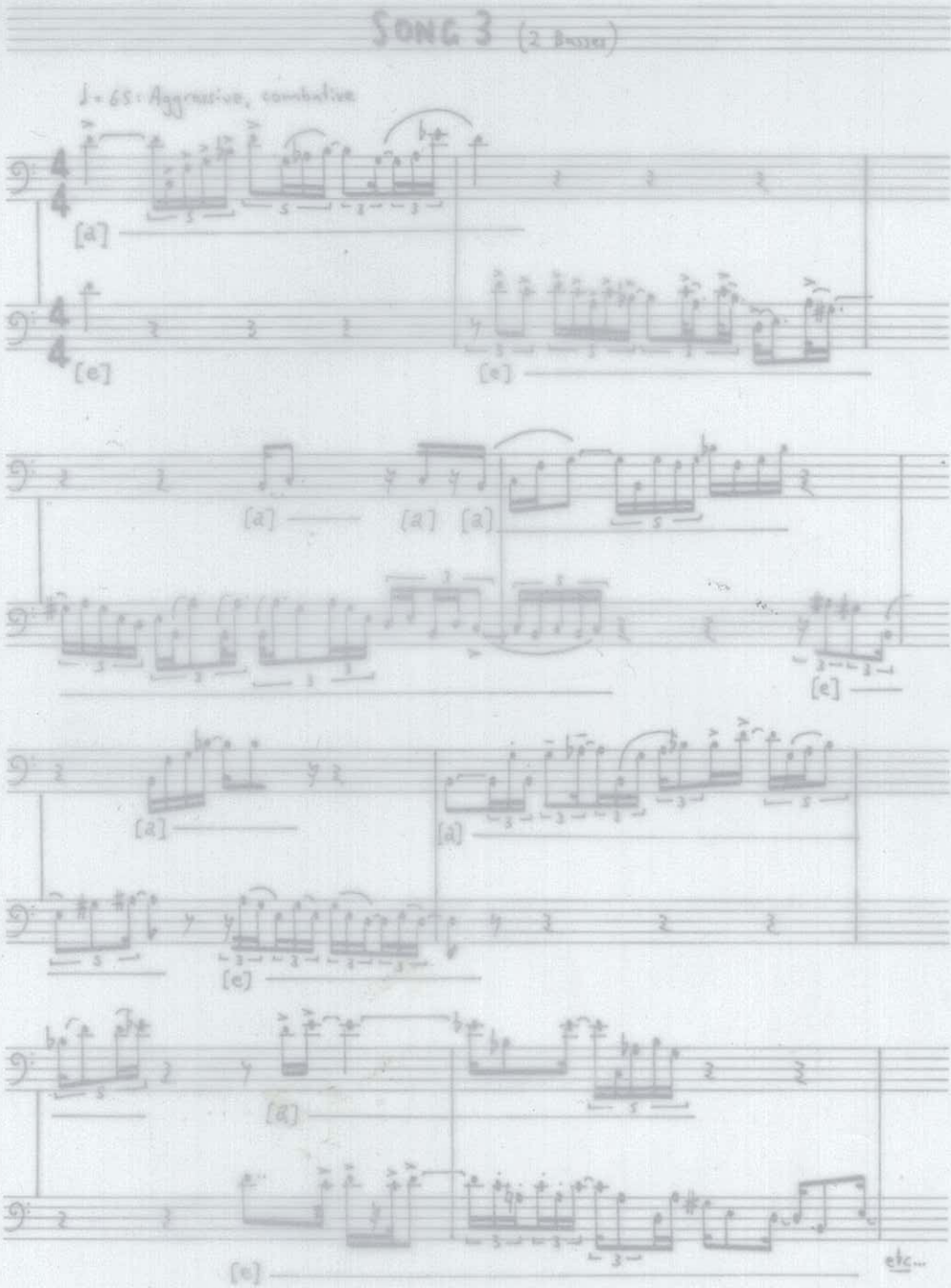
SONG 3 (2 Bass)
♩= 65: Aggressive, combative
[a]
[e]
etc...

ART

ON ART OF

ART ART

ART AS ART FROM ART

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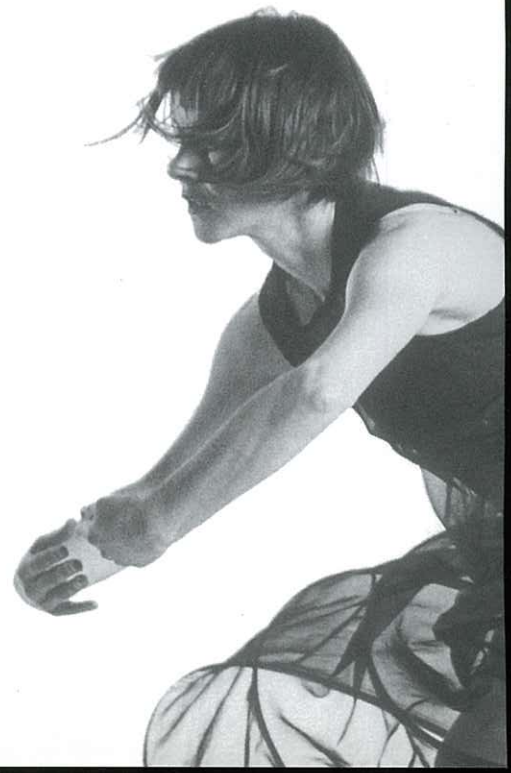
TINGS PAIN

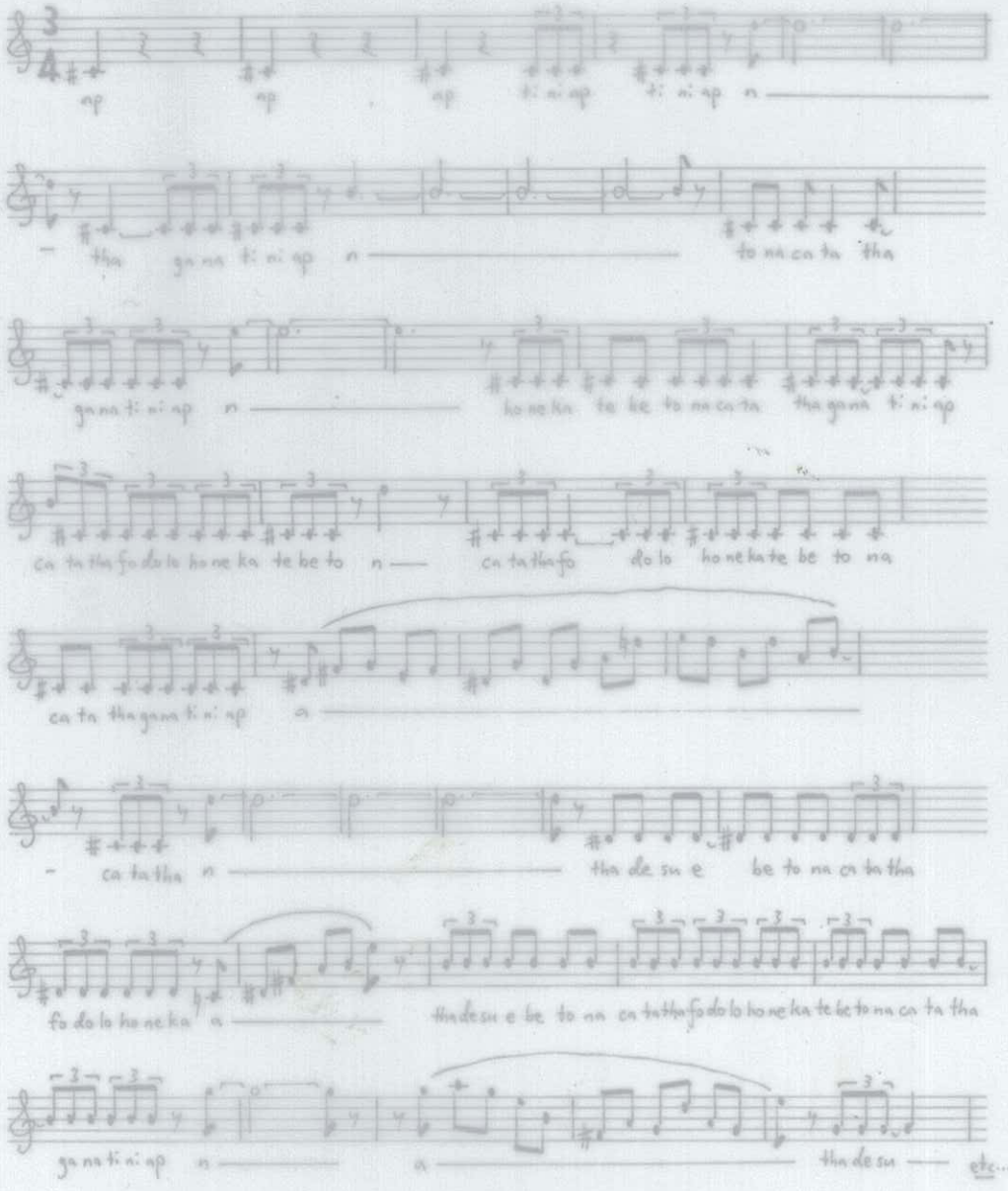
TINGS PAIN TERS

PAIN TERS



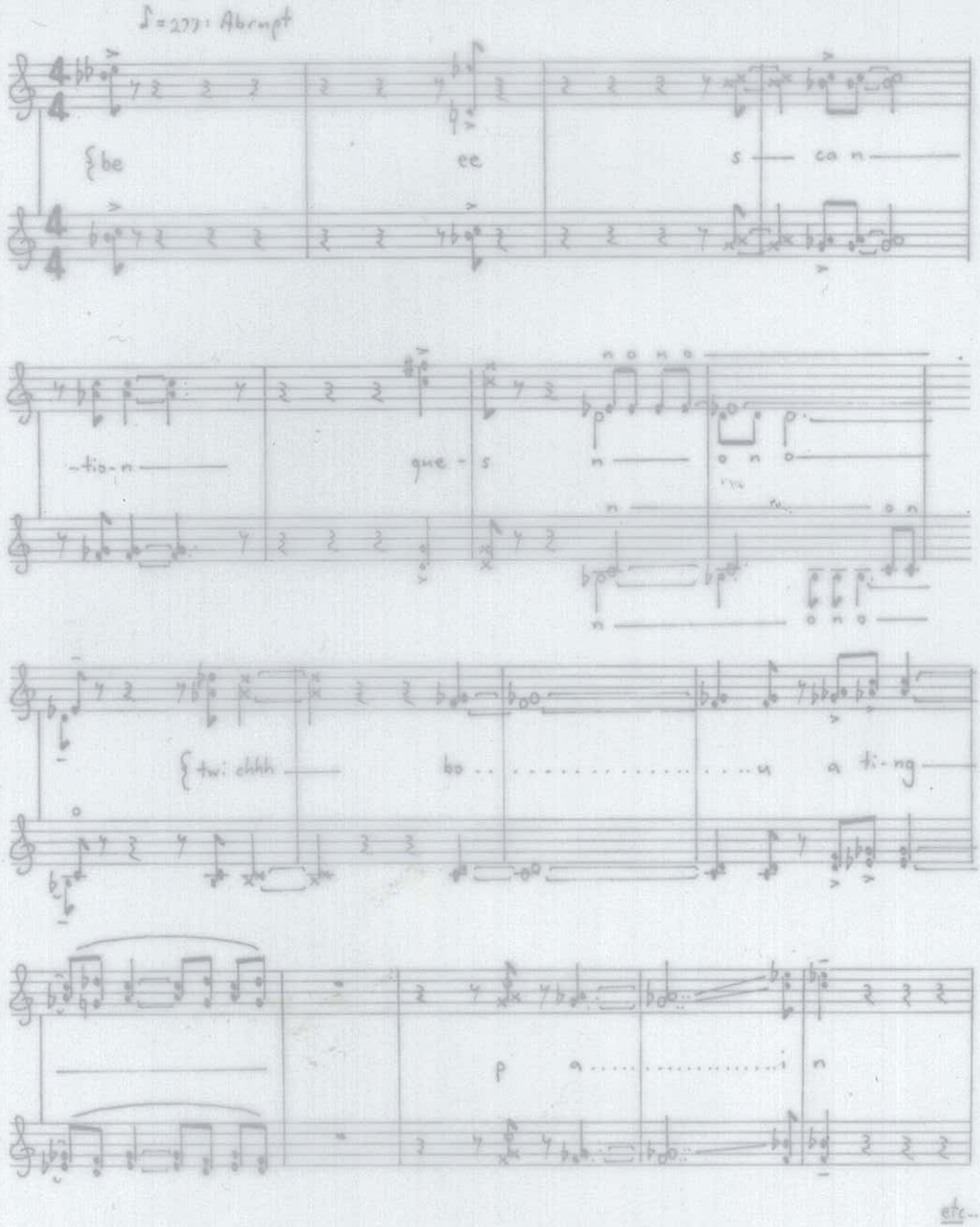
SONG 4 (1 Soprano)

♩= 209: Breathless, like a frenzied incantation



PAINTING THAT CANNOT BE TAKEN OFF THAT CANNOT BE USED THAT CANNOT BE CHANGED OR LOST

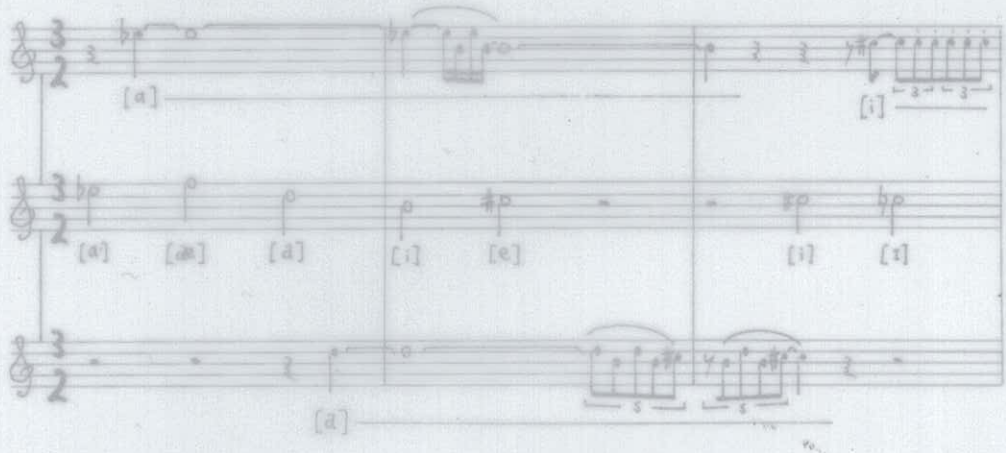
SONG 5 (4 Boy Trebles)

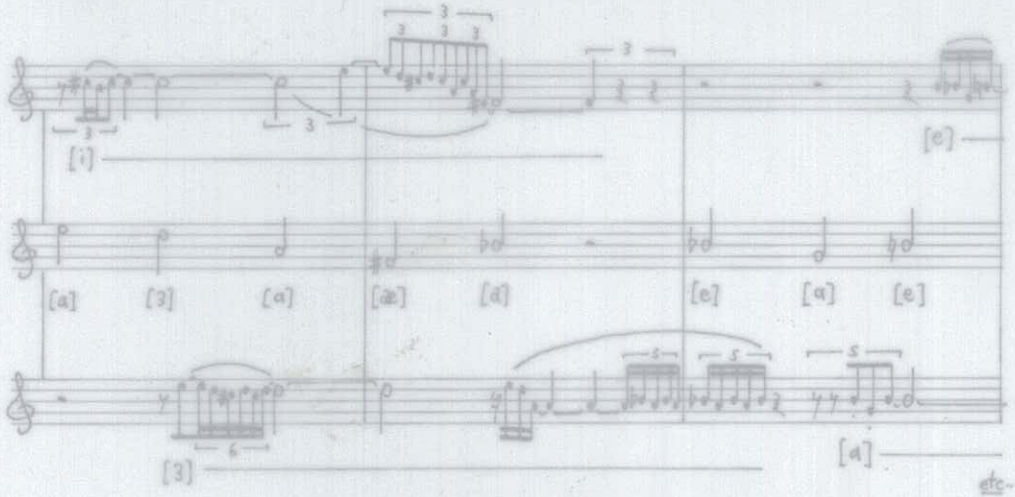


PAINTINGABOUTWHICHNOQUESTIONSCANBEASKED

SONG 6 (3 Countertenors)

♩ = 35: Ethereal and radiant





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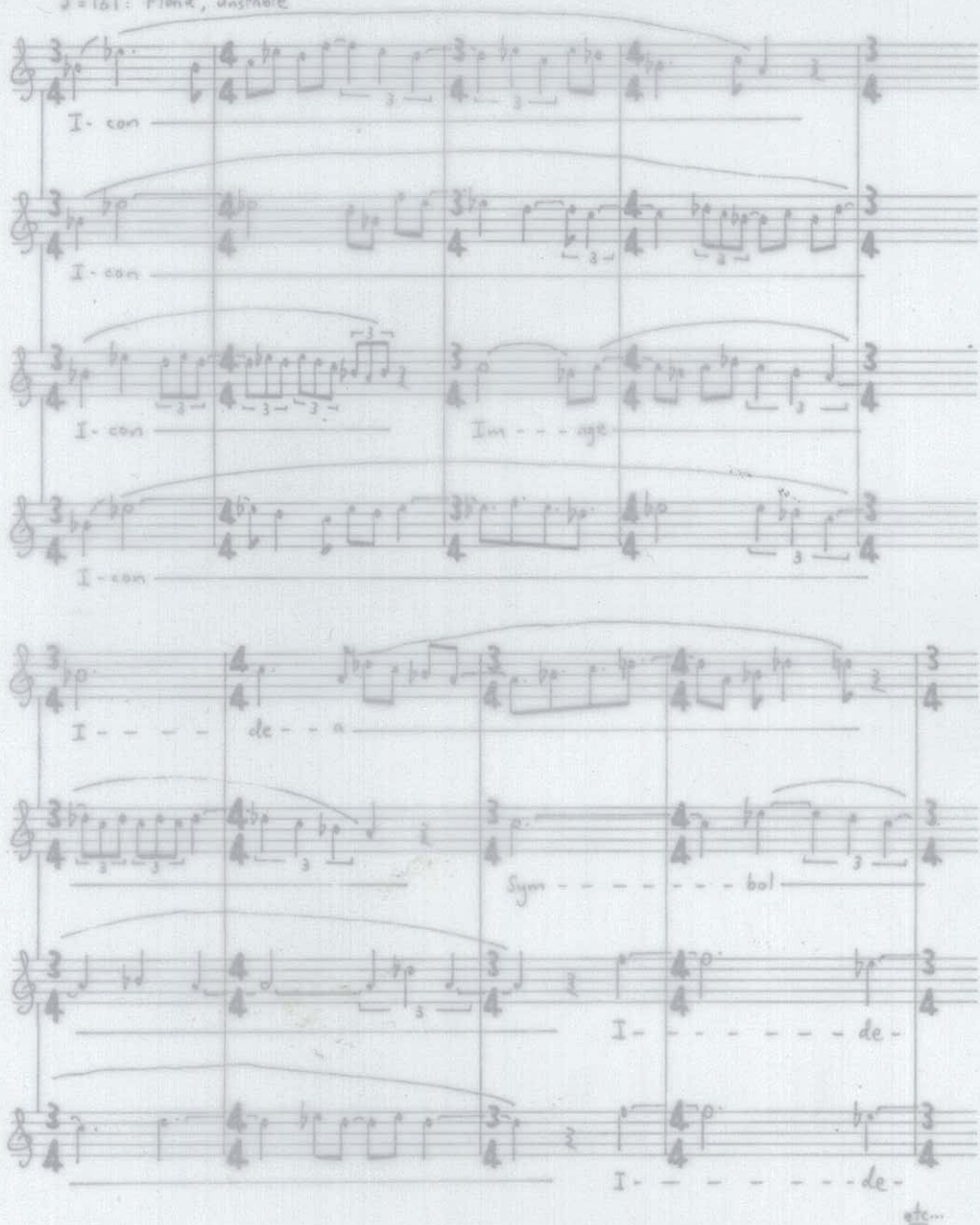
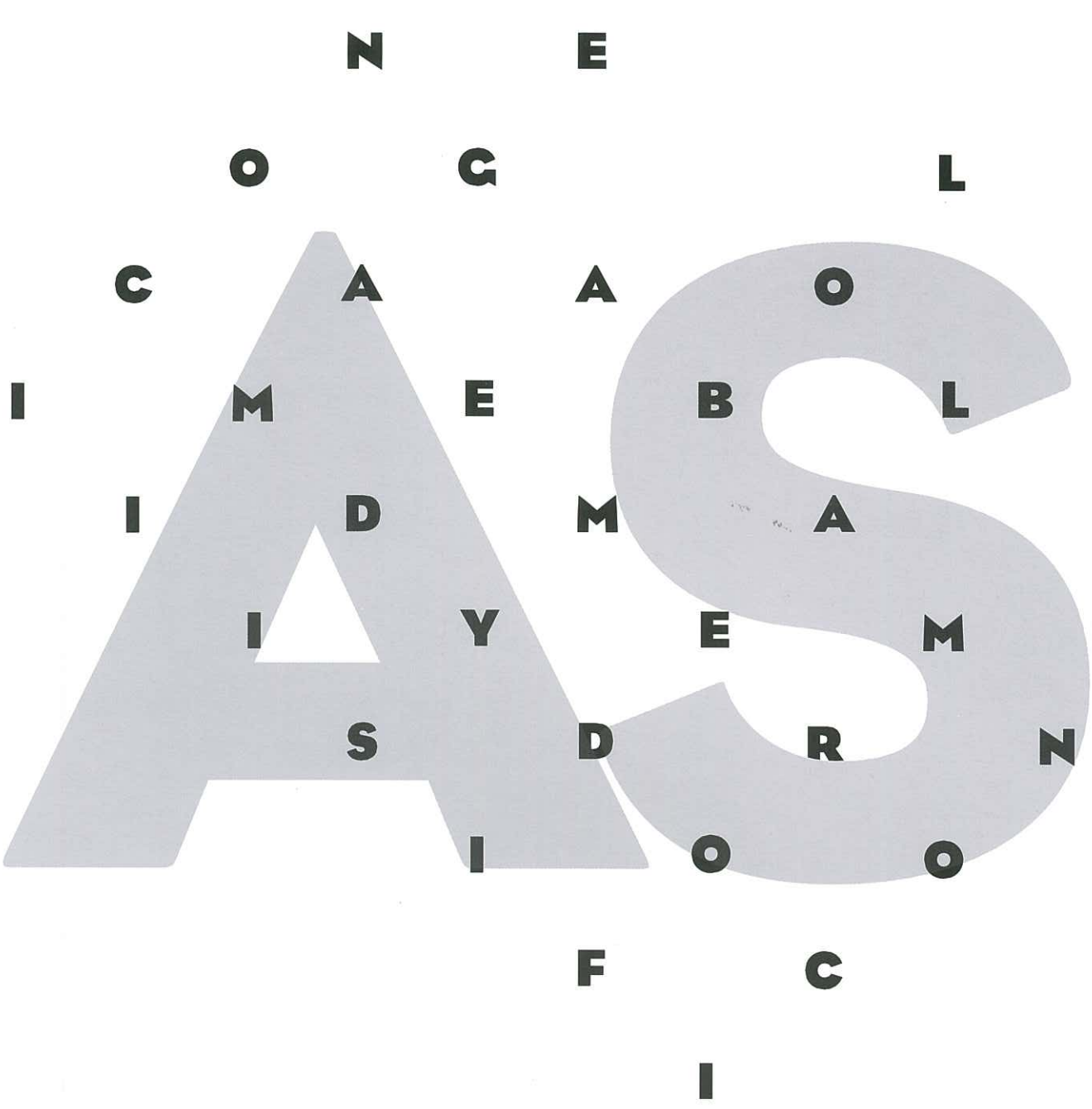
SONG 7 (4 Sopranos)

♩=161: Fluid, unstable





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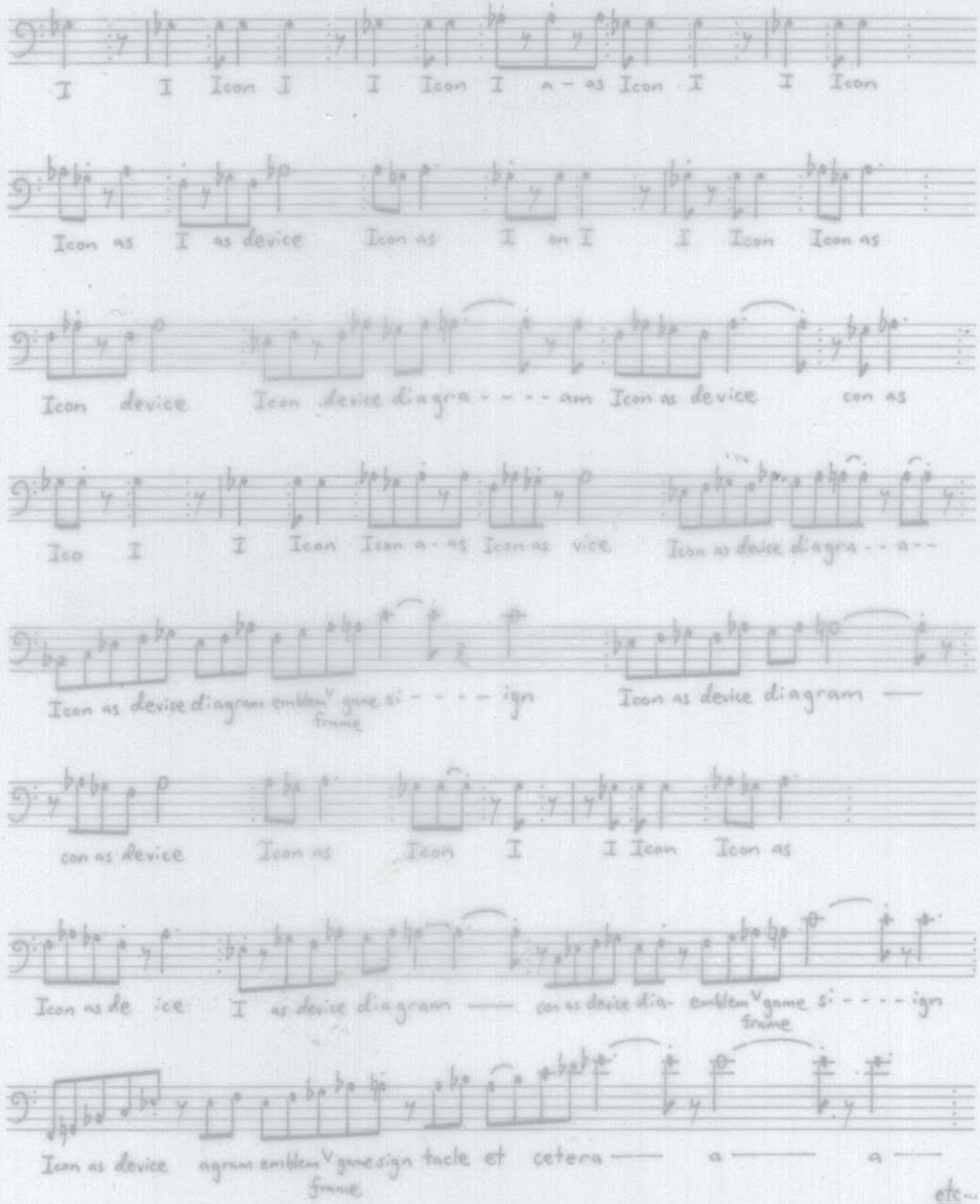
SONG 8 (1 Bass)

♩=323: Fluid, with great momentum



GAME SIGN SPECTACLE ETC

EMBLEM FRAME

DIAGRAM

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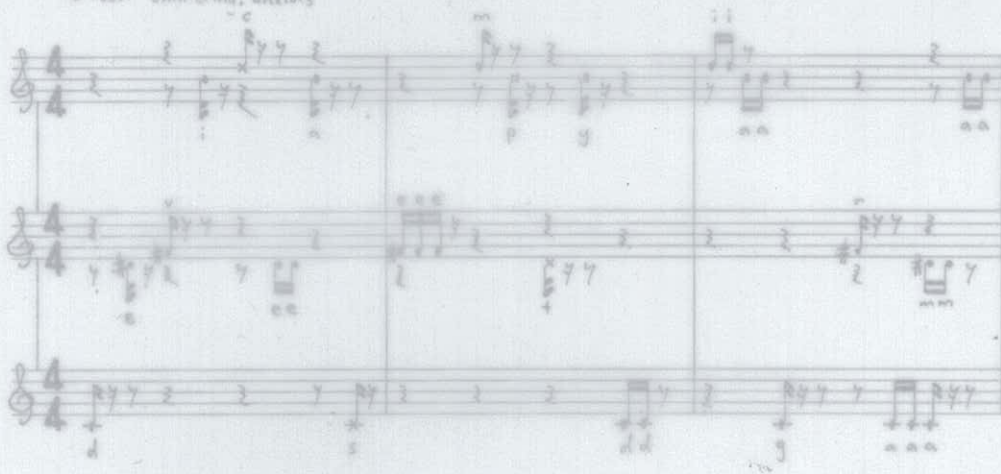
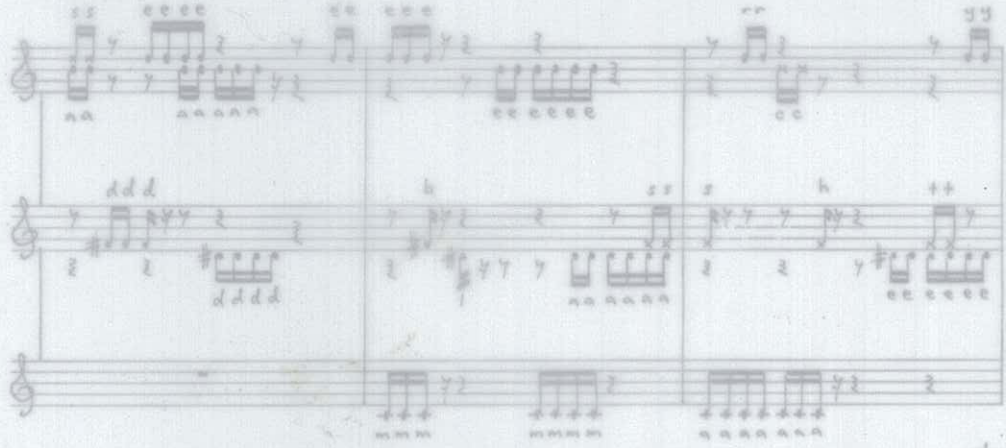
ASD

SONG 9 (5 Girl Trebles)

♩=551: Chattering, anxious





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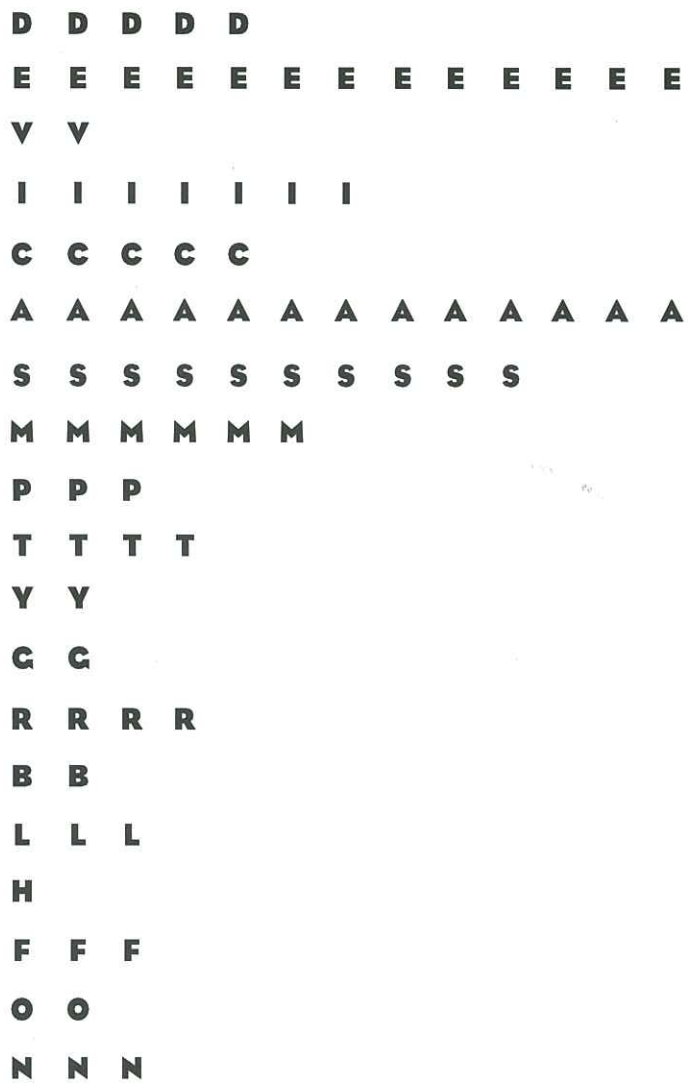
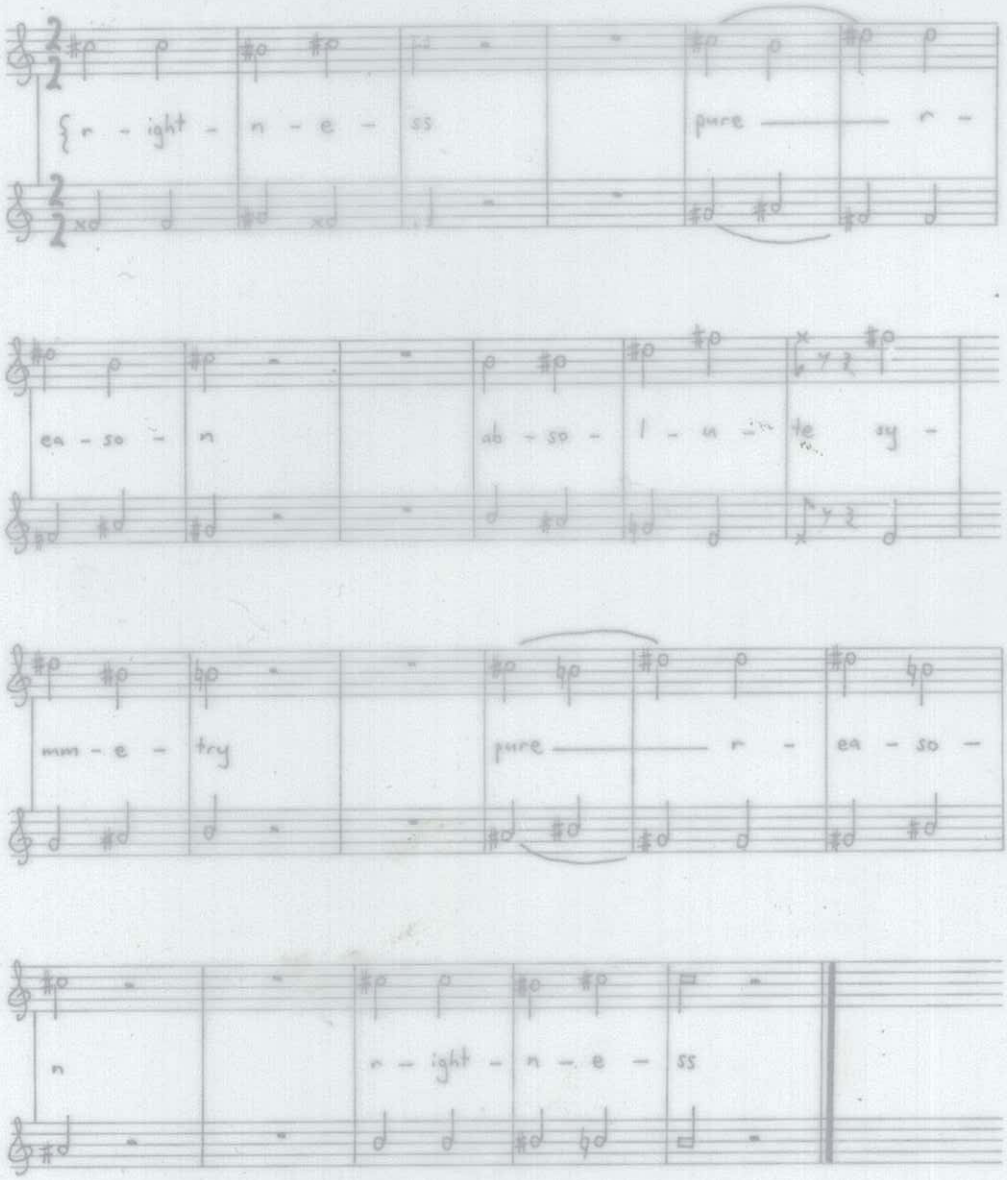
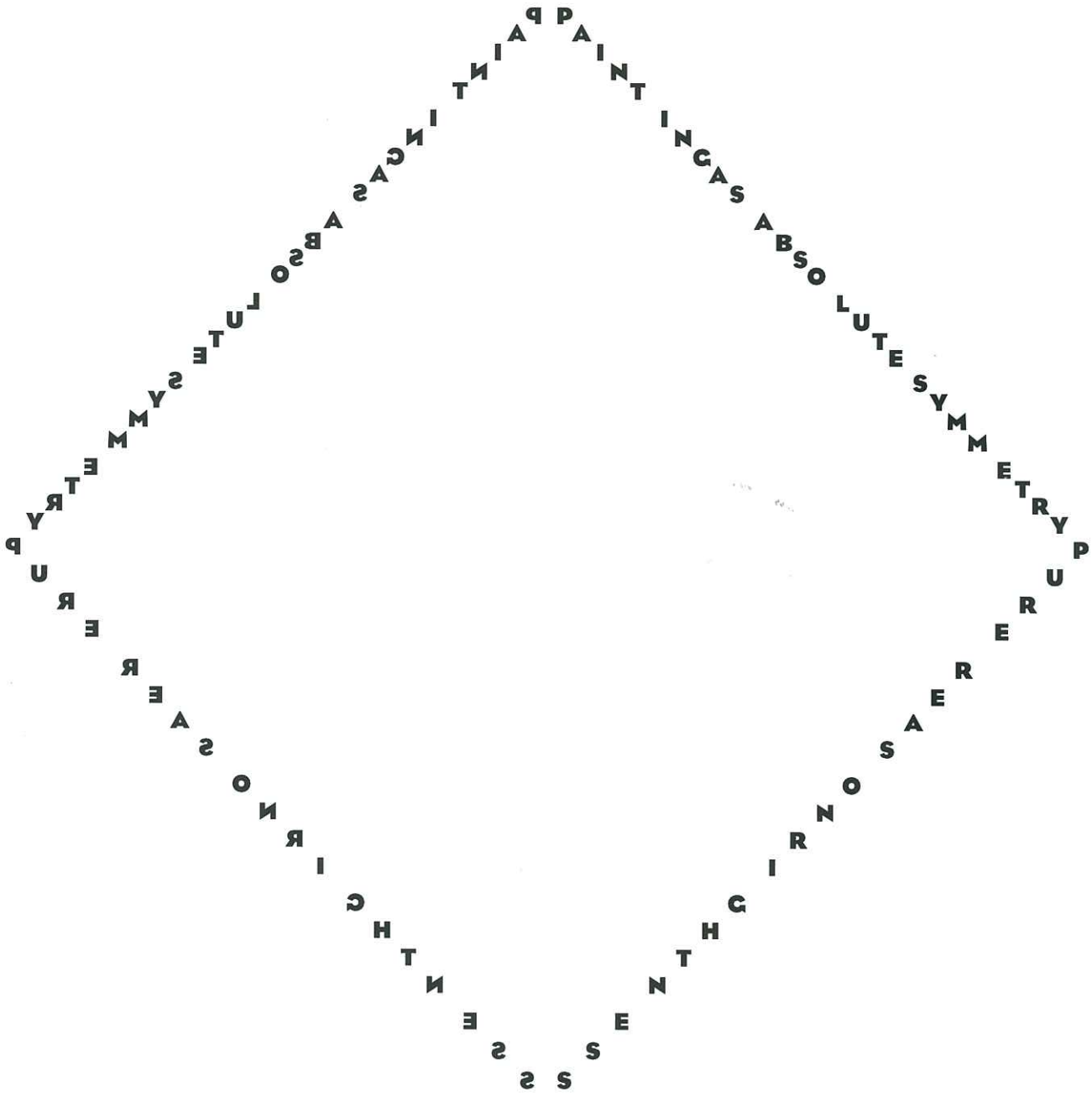

D D D D D
E E E E E E E E E E E E
V V
I I I I I I I
C C C C C
A A A A A A A A A A A A
S S S S S S S S S S
M M M M M M
P P P
T T T T
Y Y
G G
R R R R
B B
L L L
H
F F F
O O
N N N

Song 10 (2 Girl Trebles)

♩=46: Clear, serene





PAINTINGAS ABSOLUTE SYMMETRY PURE REASONING IRRIGHT NEESS

PAINTINGAS ABSOLUTE SYMMETRY PURE REASONING IRRIGHT NEESS

SONG II (3 Basses)

♩ = 87: Heavy, confronting

As reg as u lar pe tive tal

As reg as u lar pe tive tal

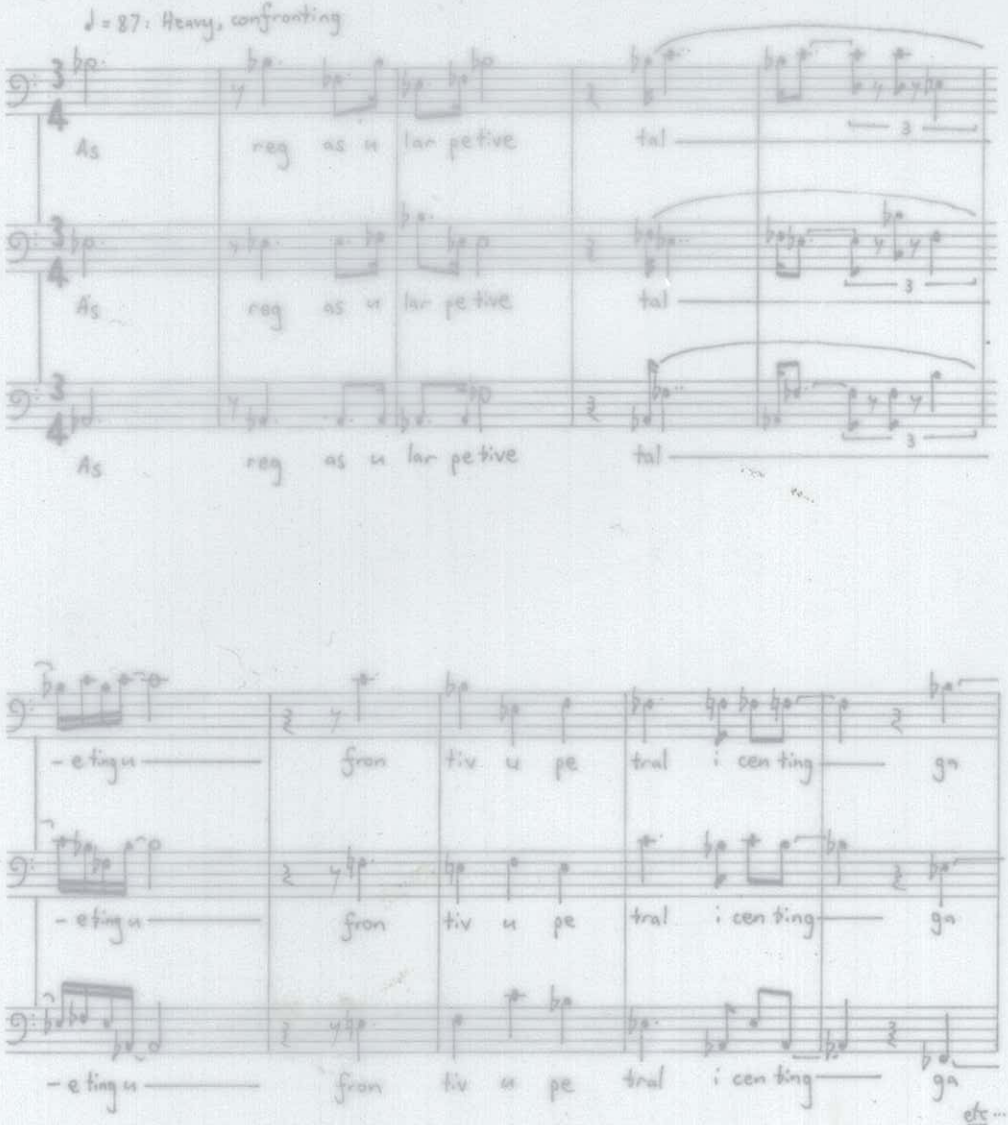
As reg as u lar pe tive tal

- e ting u fron tiv u pe tral i cen ting ga

- e ting u fron tiv u pe tral i cen ting ga

- e ting u fron tiv u pe tral i cen ting ga

etc...



PAINTING
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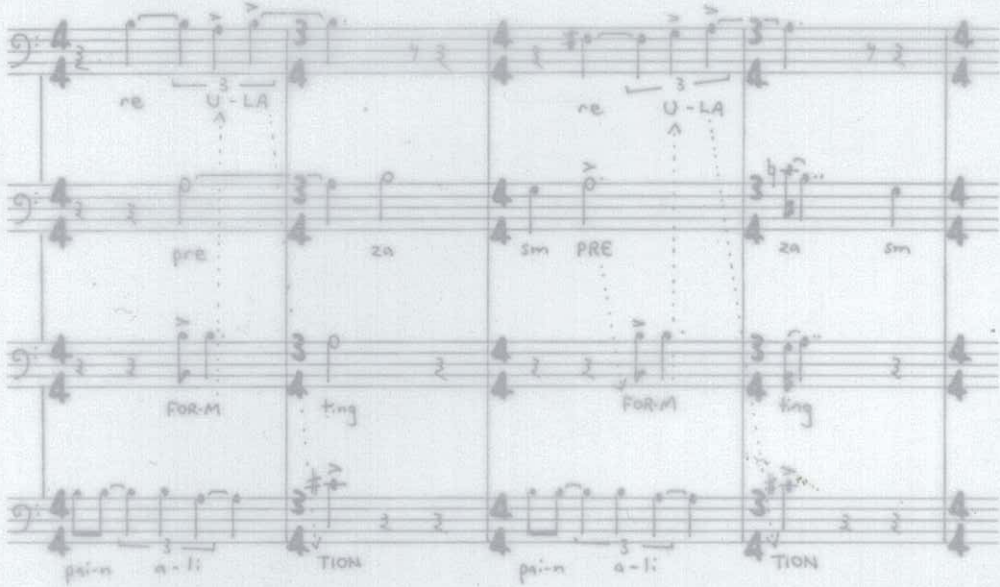
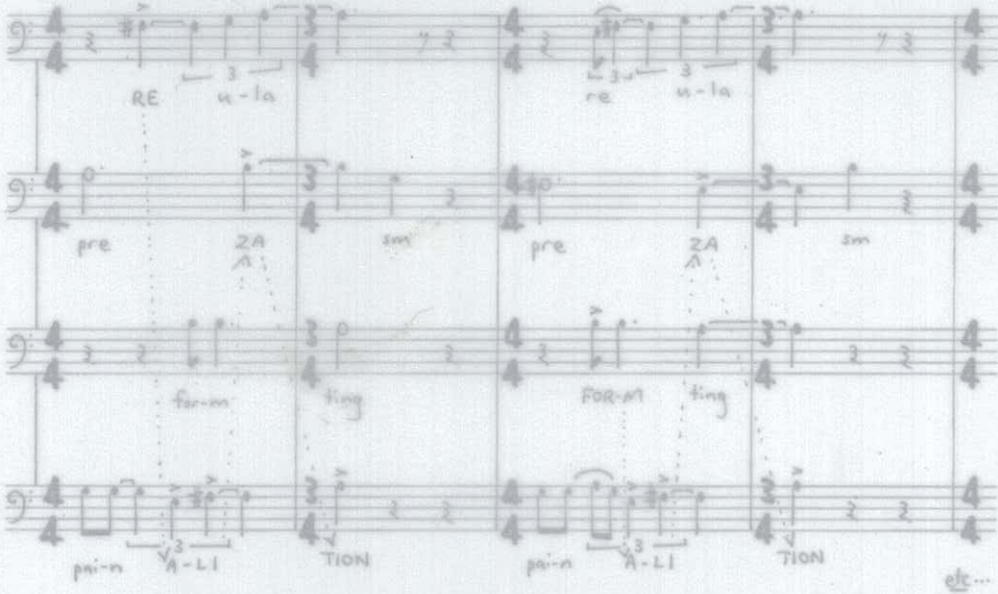
REGASULAR
REPETIVE
CENTRAL

SONG 12 (4 Bassoons)

♩=77: Peaceful, mysterious





etc...

F

E N O I T A L

R R U

P M

P M

A R R A

L E O L

I F N I

S O Z

M I A

R F T

O P G

F E A N

R I

T N

Song 13 (2 Counter-tenors)

o. = 22: Quiet, hypnotic

7/4 8 3/6 12

form - - lēzz - - nēzz

sense cell morph

7/4 8 3/6 12

N - - ni - - form - - lēzz - - nēzz

sense- cell morph

form

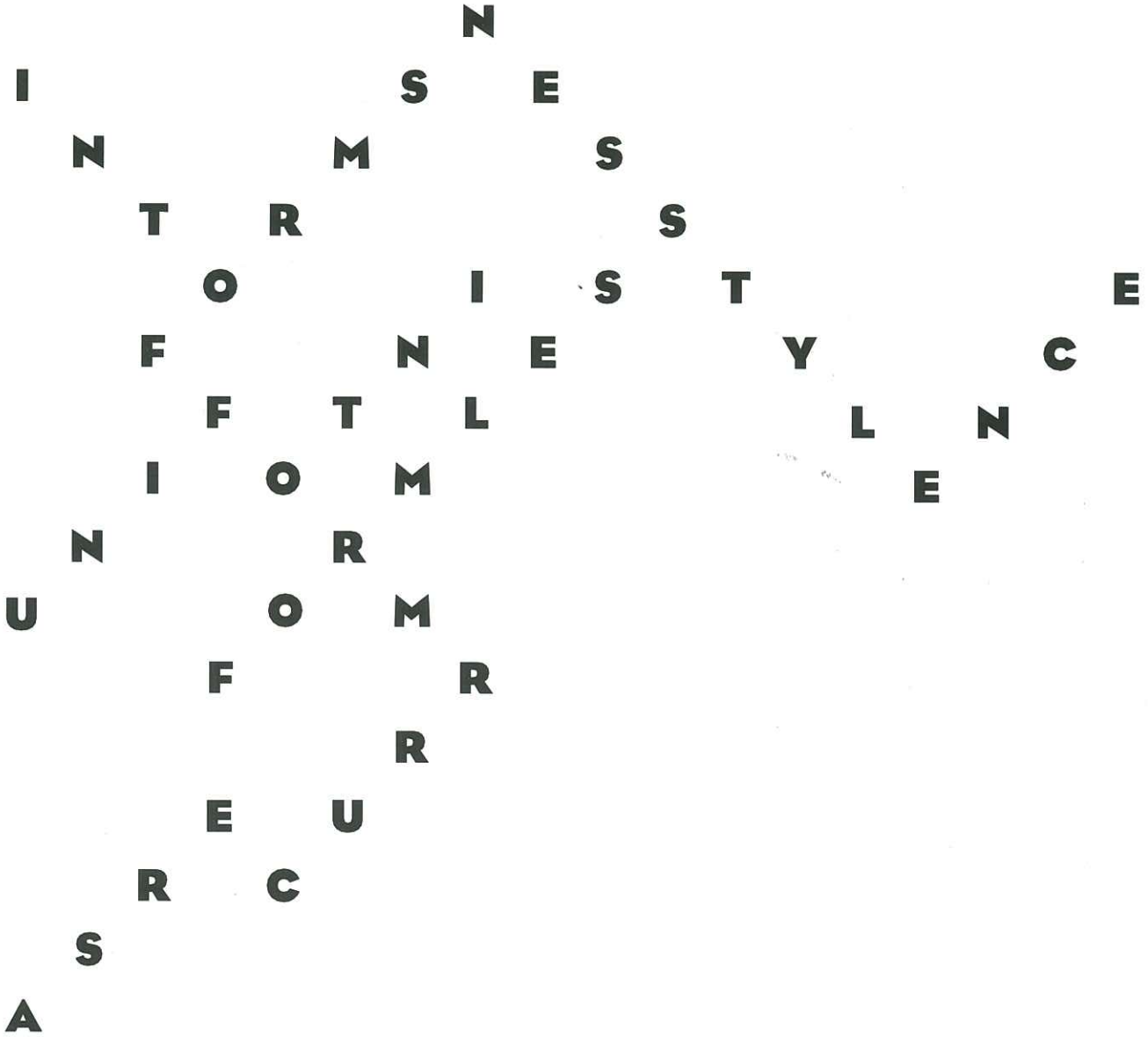
N - - ni - - form

morph in nem

N - - - ni - - - form

morph in nem morph

etc...


N
I S E
N M S
T R S
O I S T E
F N E Y C
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I O M E
N R
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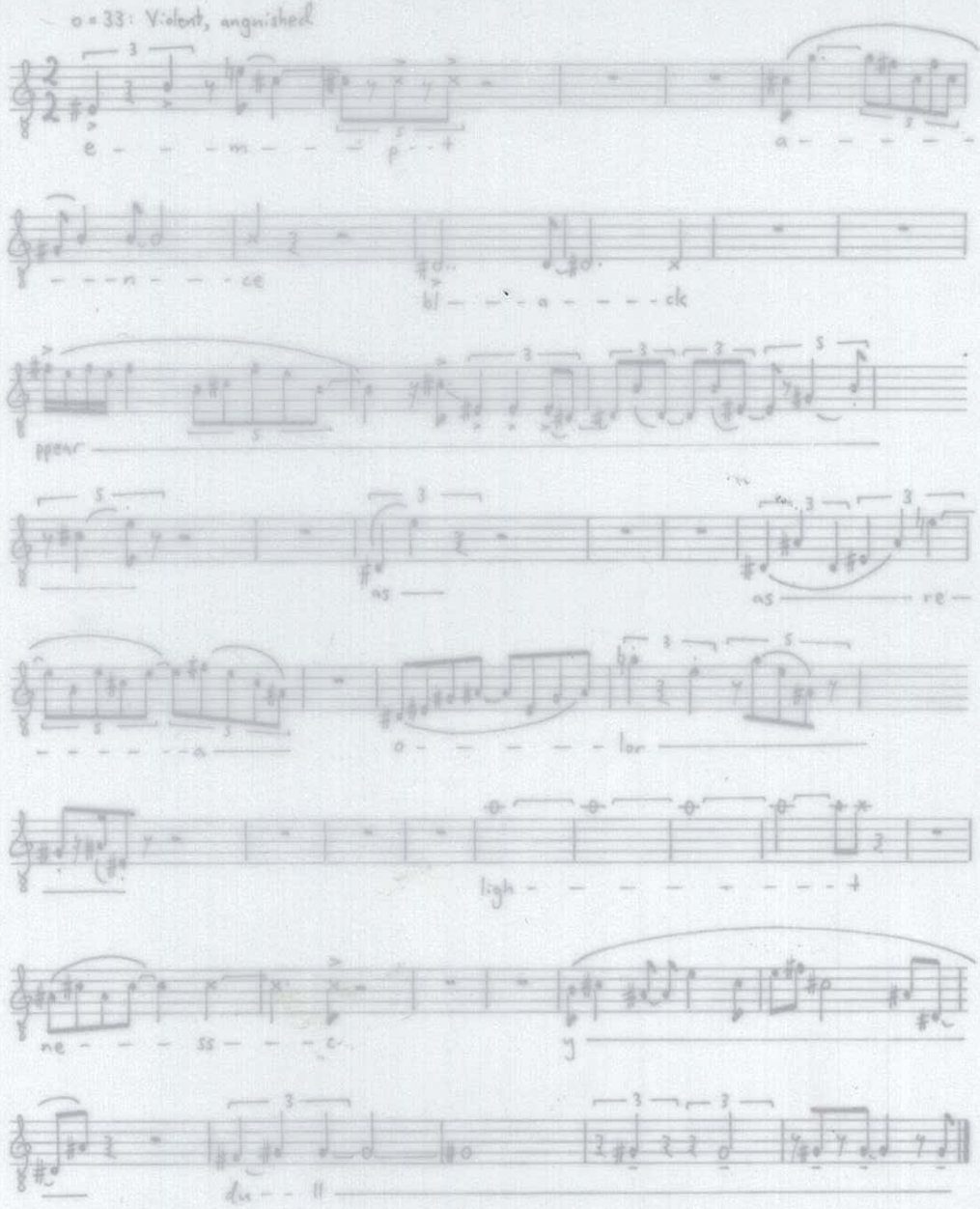
Song 14 (1 Tenor)

♩ = 33: Violent, anguished