hag riding

for

percussion quartet

(with percussion 4 doubling on spoken word)

poems of

Lucille Clifton

music by

Anna Rubin

hag riding, composed for Umbilicus Percussion Quartet, is based on two poems by Lucille Clifton, the late and highly honored poet, who spent part of her career in Maryland. The two poems, *hag riding* and *auction street,* are vivid and direct. I have attempted to capture her fierce art in these settings featuring one player who is a speaking percussionist. I am grateful to Tom Goldstein for his encouragement and to Shelly Purdy who premiered the spoking percussionist part. Umbilicus premiered the piece at the University of Maryland BaltimoreCounty (UMBC) Livewire Festival 4, 2013, and played it at The Parlor (Baltimore), also in 2013 and again in 2018 at the Livewire Festival 9 at UMBC.

hag riding

why
is what i ask myself
maybe it is the afrikan in me
still trying to get home
after all these years
but when i wake to the heat of morning
galloping down the highway of my life
something hopeful rises in me
rises and runs me out into the road
and i lob my fierce thigh high
over the rump of the day and honey
i ride i ride

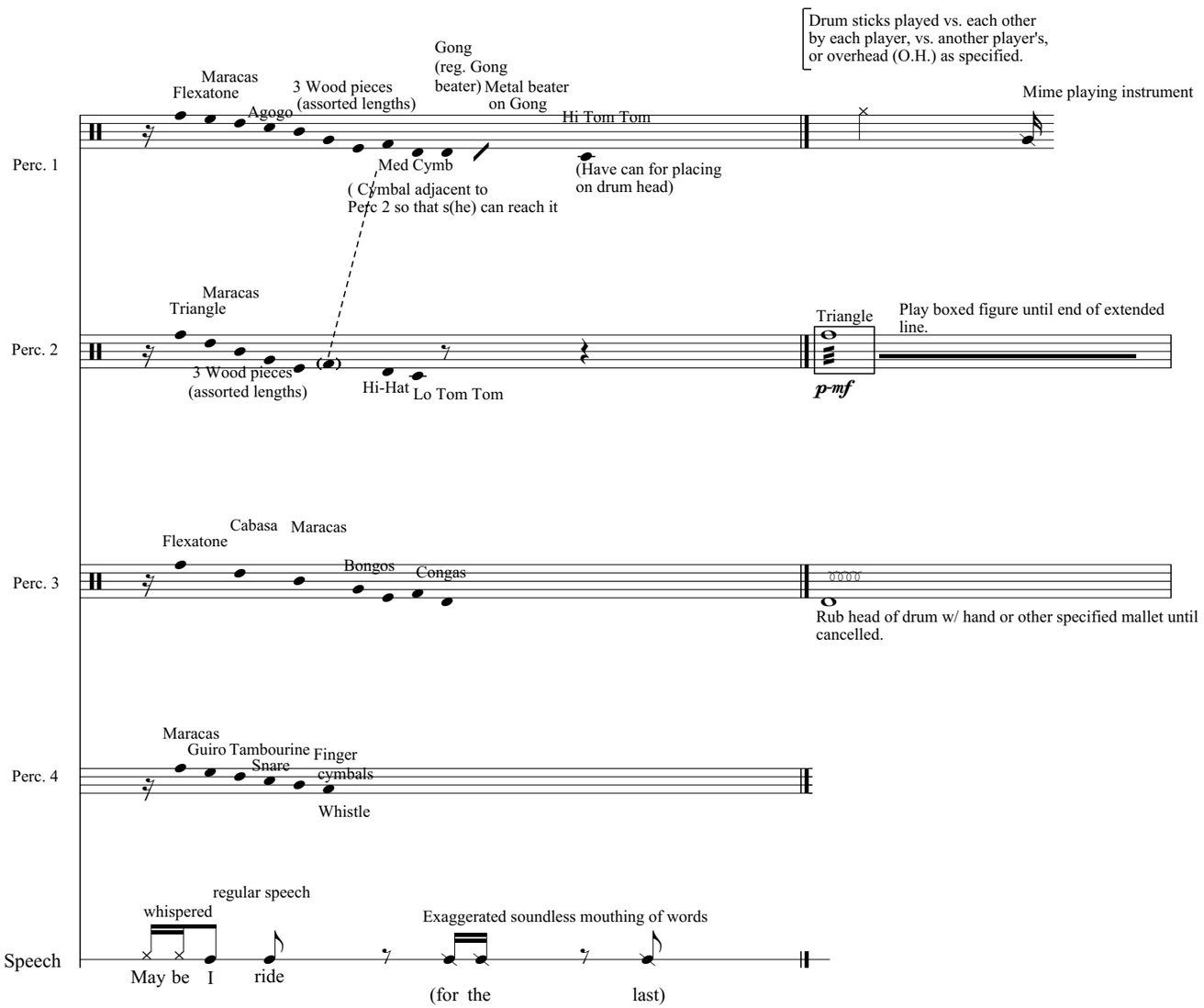
auction street

consider the drum.
consider auction street
and the beat throbbing up through our shoes,
through the trolley
so that it rides as if propelled
by hundreds, by thousands
of fathers and mothers
led in a coffle to the block.

consider the block,
topside smooth as skin
almost translucent like a drum
that has been beaten
for the last time
and waits now to be honored
for the music it has had to bear.
then consider brother moses,
who heard from the mountaintop:
take off your shoes,
the ground you walk is holy.

From *The Terrible Stories* published by BOA Editions Ltd. (1996), and used with their permission.

Notes - The Clifton Poems for Percussion Quartet
In this piece, Perc. 4 is the principal speakerof the text, though all the players have occasional moments when they also speak. The speech line is below each instrumental staff.
The piece begins with an introduction, then proceeds to the setting for "hag riding," an interlude, and then "auction street".



Full Score

hag riding

♩ = 76

Around 6-8"

Flexatone

p-mf Freely play, occasionally plucking ball directly w/ free hand

Gradually damp clapper to get rattle only

ord.

p

Agogo

mf

Perc 1, 2 & 3:
Point at R rear corner of hall w/ extended R arm & slowly sweep from R to L w/ glance following arm motion.

Freely play Triangle

p-mf

Partially damp Triangle to get rattle only

ord.

p

Flexatone

p-mf Freely play, occasionally plucking ball directly w/ free hand

Gradually damp clapper to get rattle only

ord.

p

Cabasa - rub beads (maintain steady pulse but add occasional accents;)

mf

Perc. 4

Spoken

Snare (Snares on)

p-mf

Hold snare in hands so that you can stroke the wires directly

Tap head of snare w/ hand

mf p mf p f p f

Put Snare on stand and pick up Drumsticks

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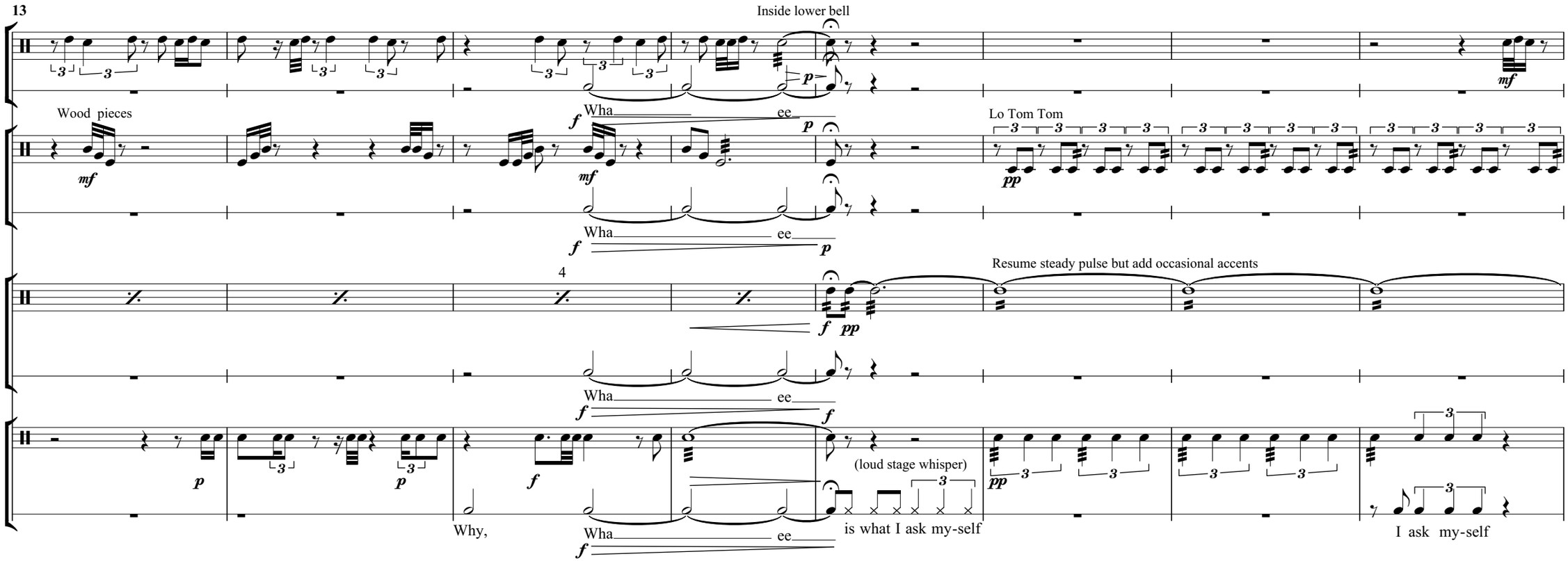
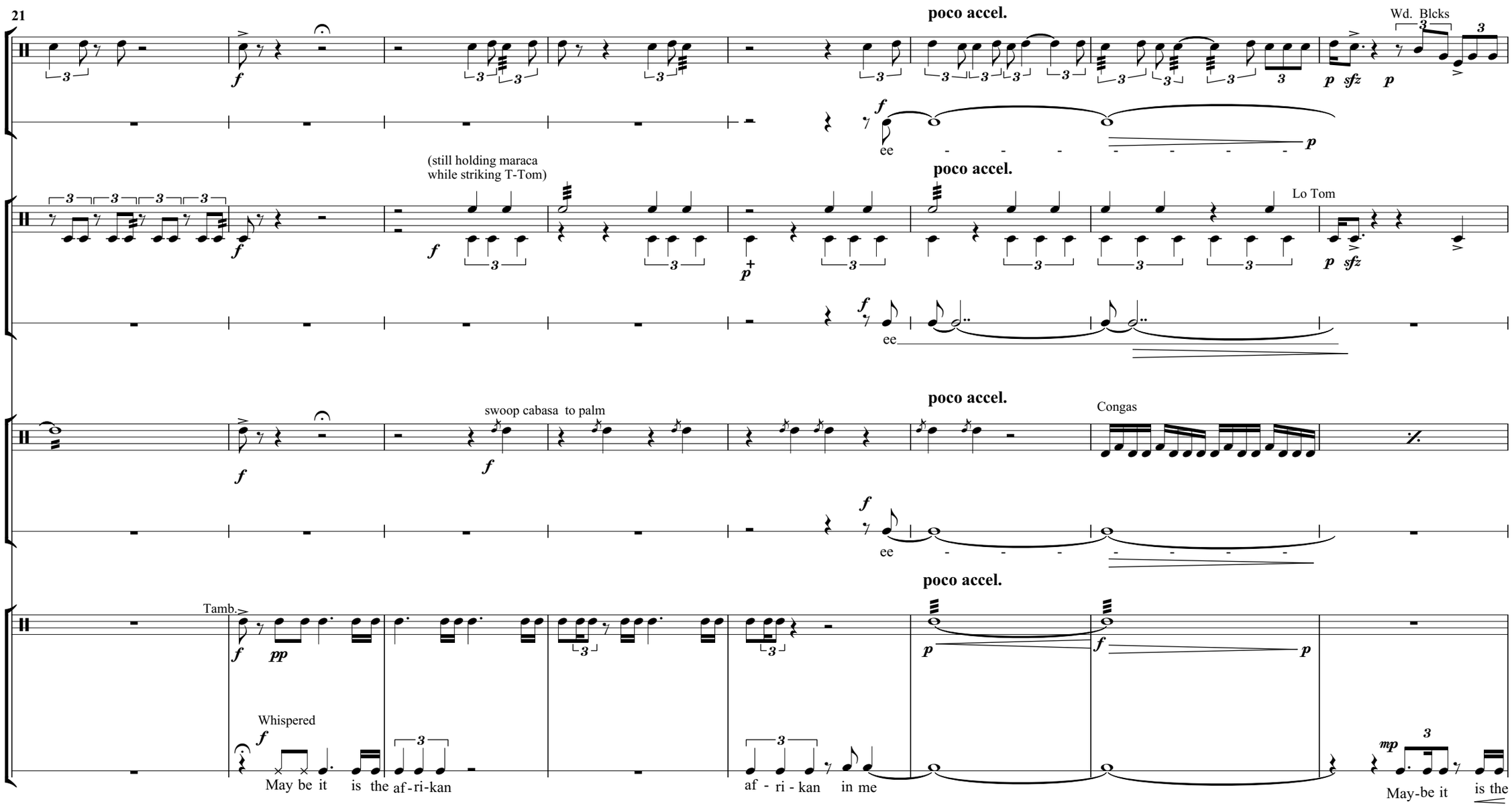
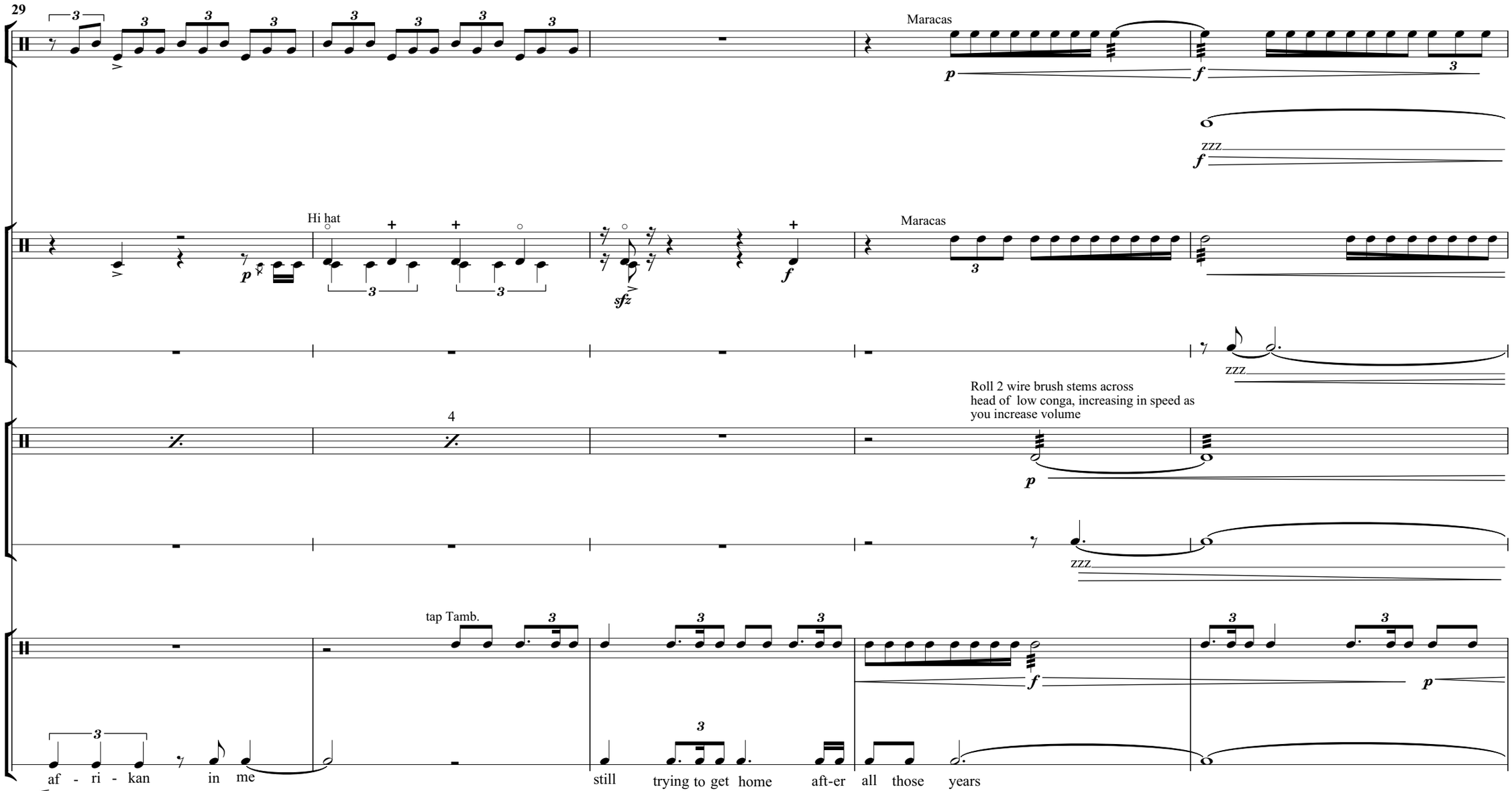
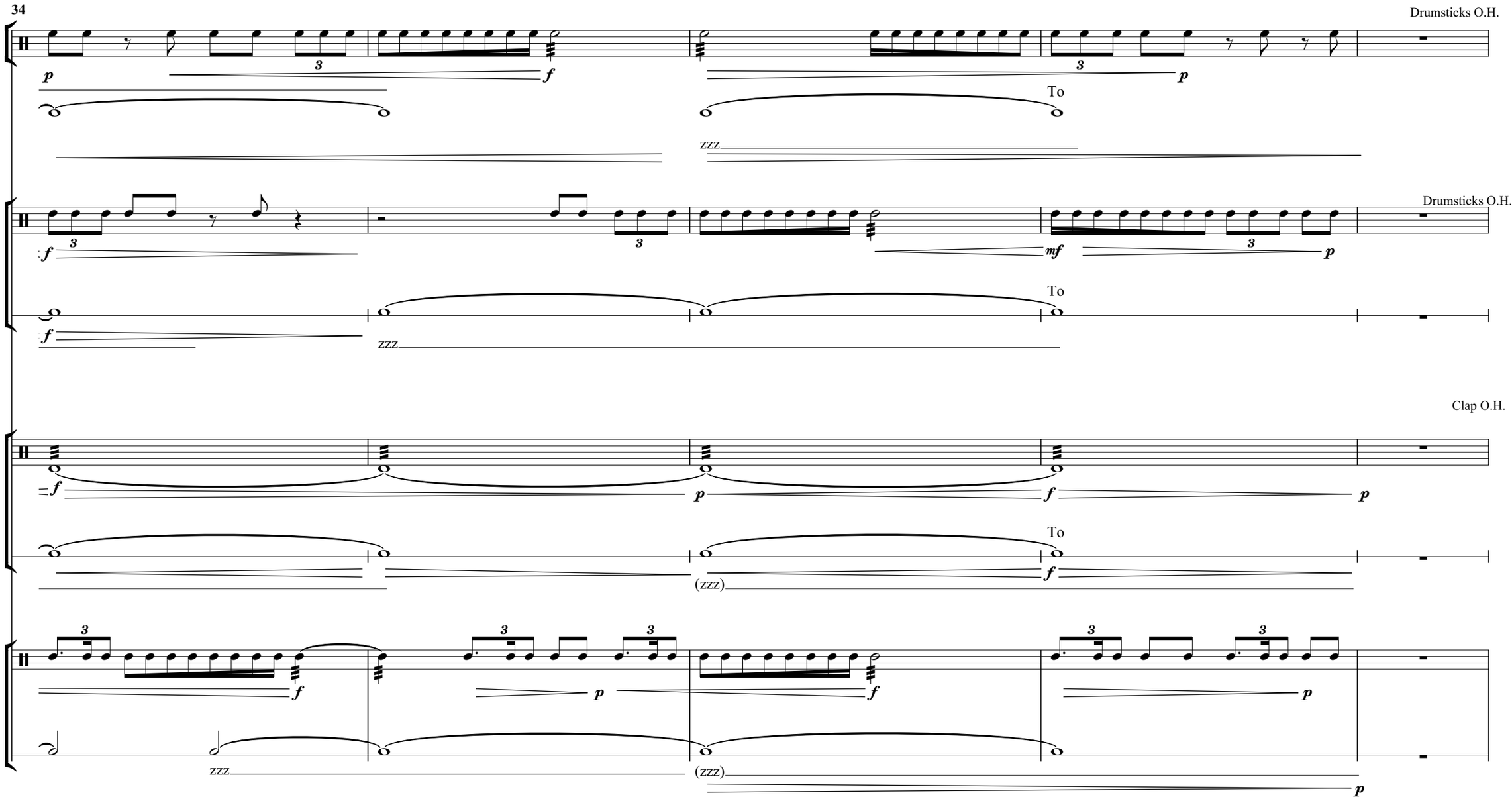
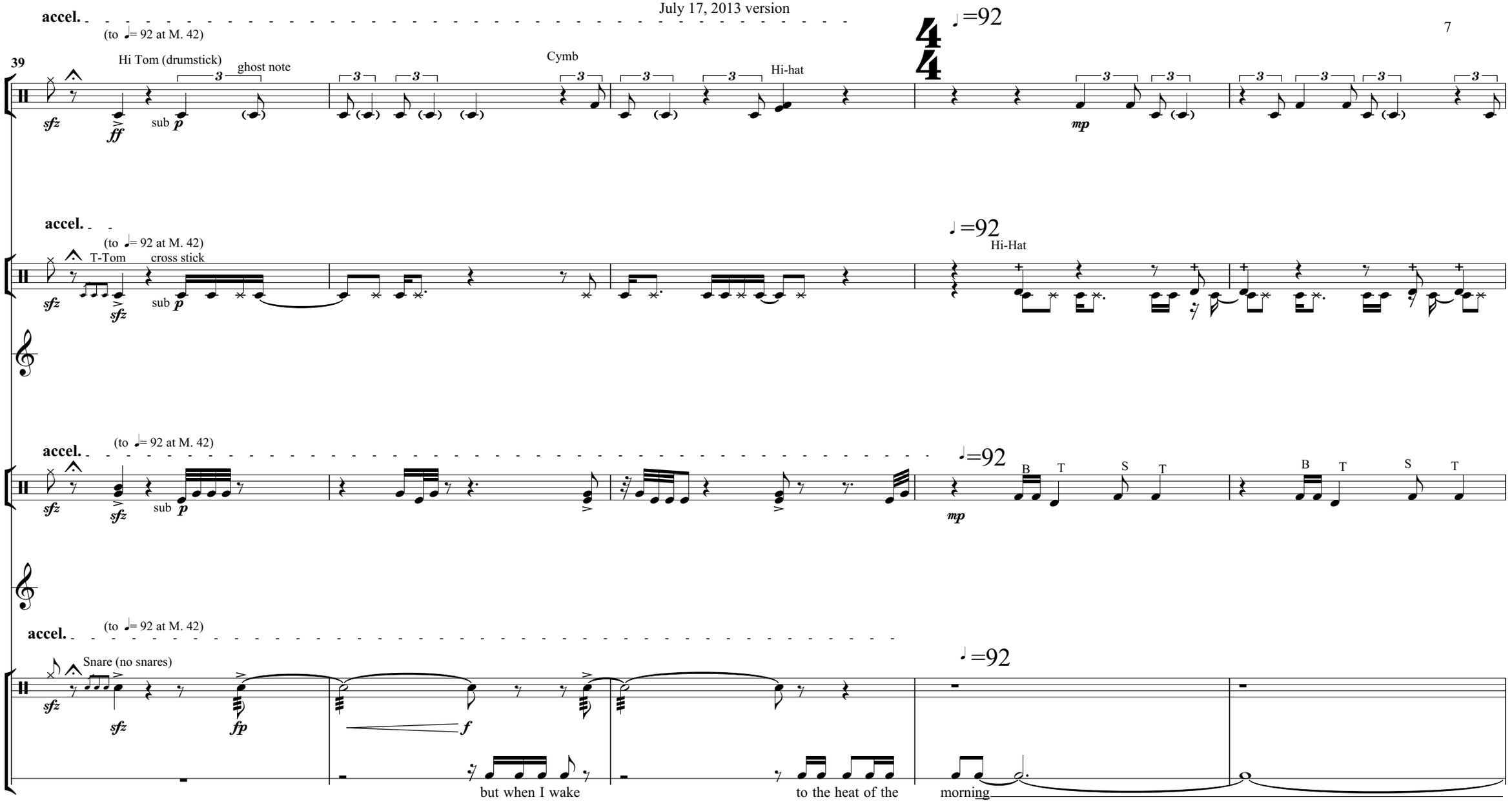
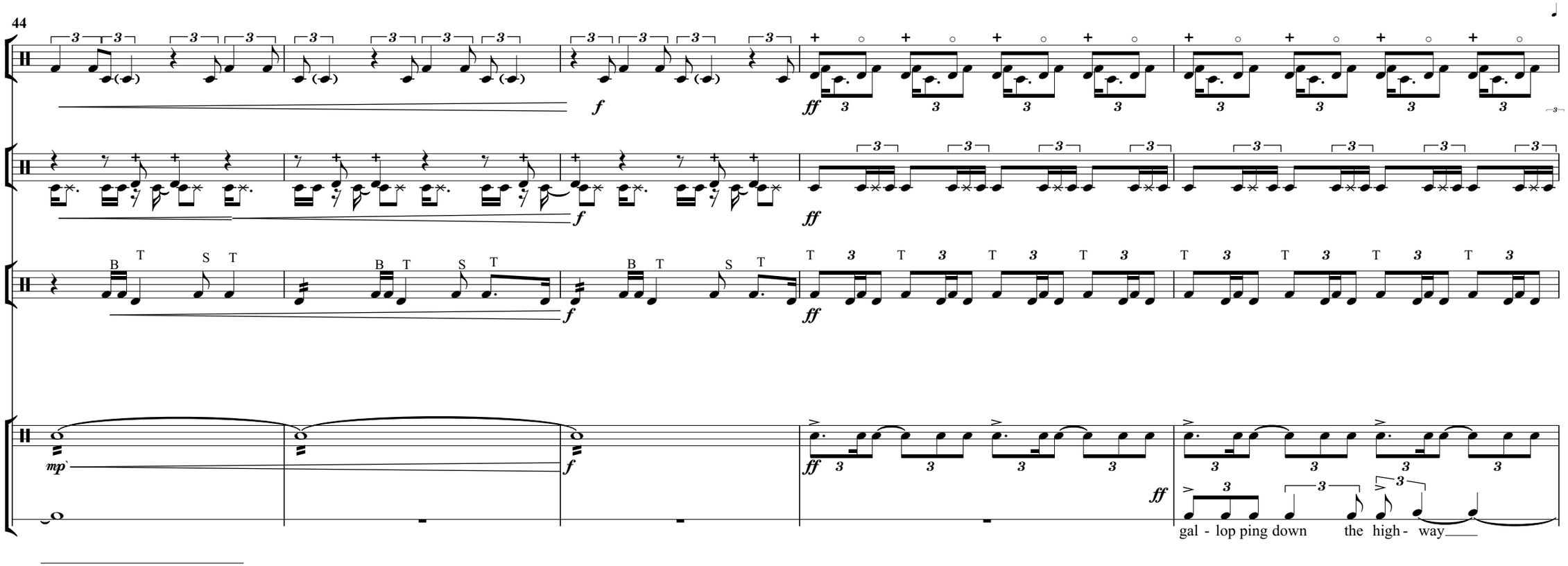

13
Inside lower bell
Wood pieces
Wha ee
Lo Tom Tom
4
Resume steady pulse but add occasional accents
(loud stage whisper)
Why,
Wha ee
is what I ask my-self
I ask my-self


21
poco accel.
Wd. Blcks
ee
(still holding maraca
while striking T-Tom)
poco accel.
Lo Tom
ee
swoop cabasa to palm
poco accel.
Congas
ee
poco accel.
Tamb.
Whispered
May be it is the af-ri-kan
af - ri - kan in me
May-be it is the


29
Maracas
Hi hat
Maracas
4
Roll 2 wire brush stems across
head of low conga, increasing in speed as
you increase volume
tap Tamb.
af - ri - kan in me
still trying to get home aft-er all those years


34
Drumsticks O.H.
To
zzz
Drumsticks O.H.
To
zzz
Clap O.H.
To
(zzz)
zzz
(zzz)


accel.
(to ♩= 92 at M. 42)
39
Hi Tom (drumstick)
ghost note
Cymb
Hi-hat
♩=92
sfz
ff
sub p
mp
accel.
(to ♩= 92 at M. 42)
T-Tom
cross stick
Hi-Hat
♩=92
sfz
sub p
mp
B
T
S
T
accel.
(to ♩= 92 at M. 42)
♩=92
Snare (no snares)
fp
f
but when I wake
to the heat of the
morning


44
mp
f
ff
B T S T
gal - lop ping down the high - way

49

=138 High energy

drumsticks

subito *p*

L stick plays vs Perc 2- R stick

L stick plays vs Perc 2- R stick

etc. sim.

Perc 1 & 2
face each other w/ raised sticks.
Perc 1 strikes
opposite sticks of Perc 2 .

3/8

ff

my life life

=138 High energy

drumsticks

p

R stick plays vs Perc 1- L stick

L stick plays vs Perc 2- R stick

etc. sim.

Perc 1 & 2 face each other w/ raised sticks.
Perc 1 strikes your sticks.

ff

my life life

=138 High energy

ff

subito *p*

drumsticks

ff

Perc 3 & 4
face each other w/ raised
Perc 3 strikes
opposite sticks of Perc 4

my life life

=138 High energy

Hold sticks still in raised position.

ffp *ffp* *ffp* *ffp*

sfz

Whistle
Tamb.

subito *p*

ff

high way of my life life

59

Perc 2 strikes your sticks.

Vary cymbal surface and bell

etc. sim.

4

O.H.

life

Perc 2 strikes
opposite sticks of Perc 1 .

Maraca in R.H. w/
Mallets for L & R hands

etc. sim.

4

life

4

freely

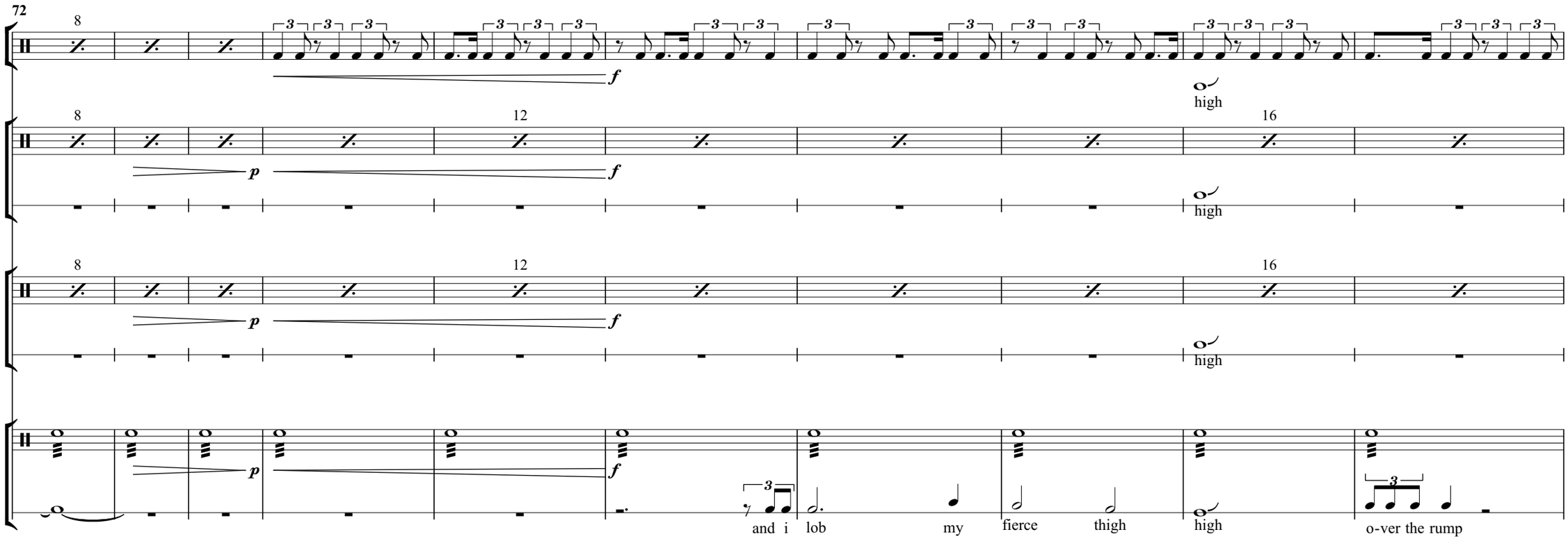
life

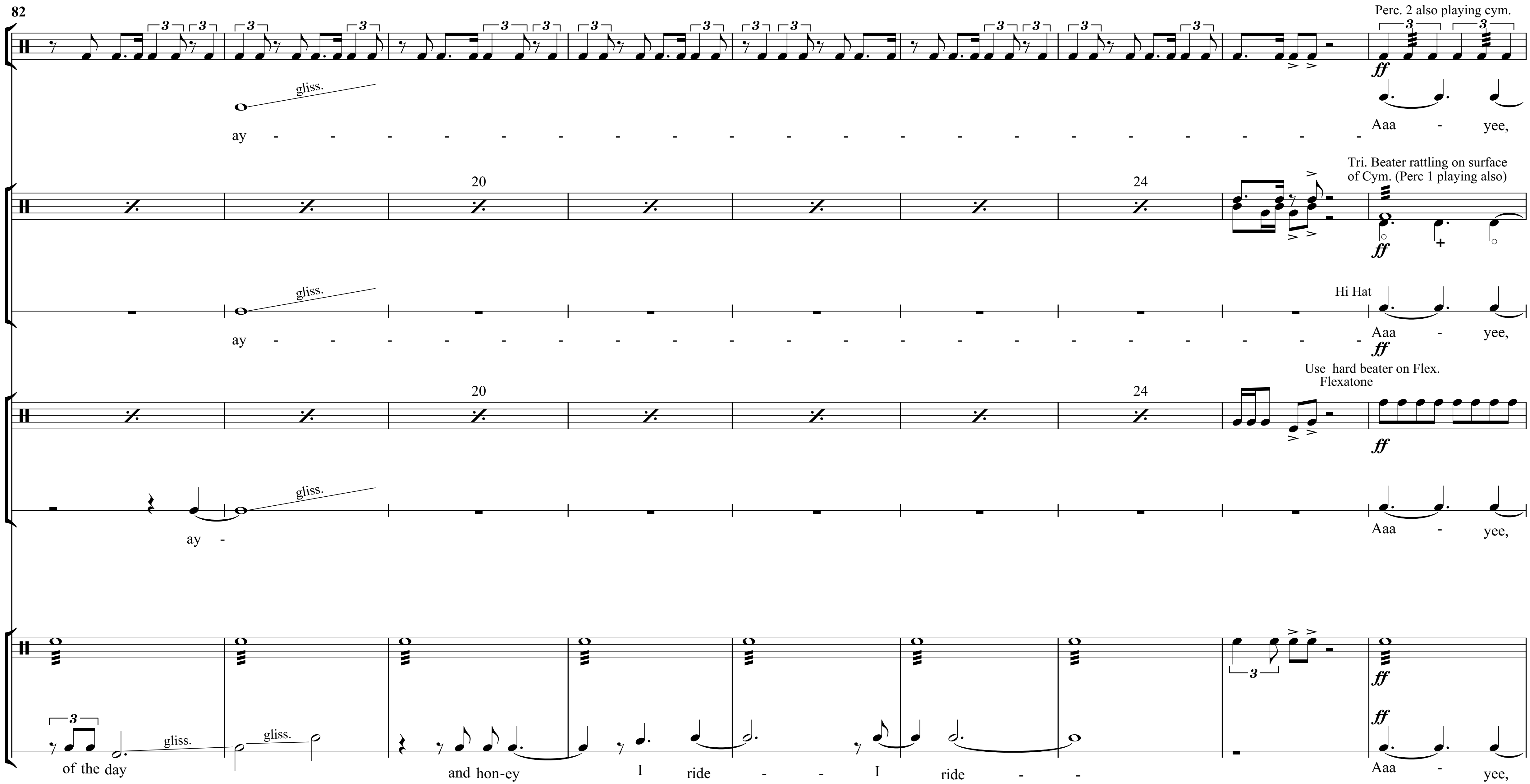
Guiro

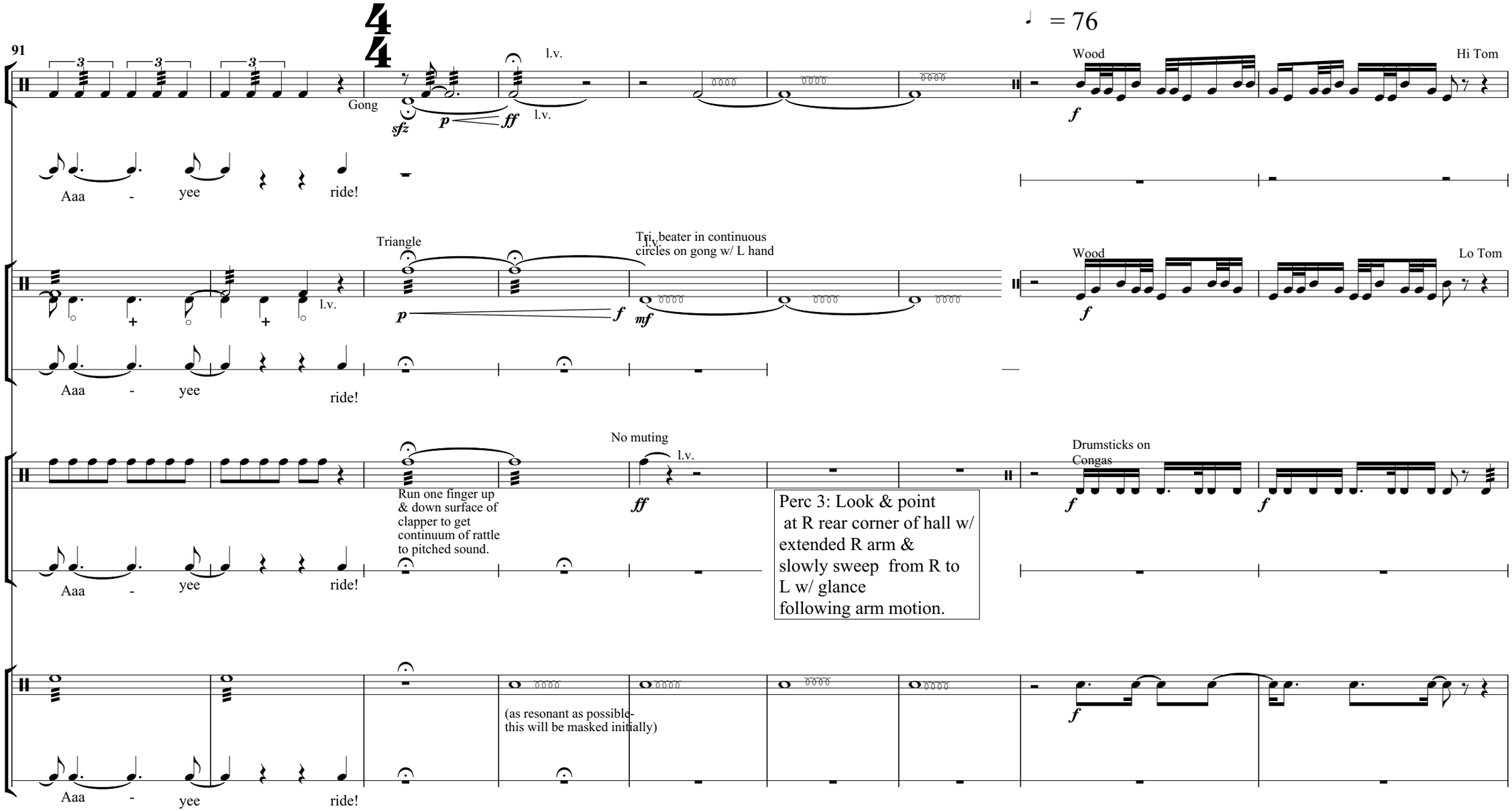
Whistle

Freely improvise on Guiro in this section up to Mm 89.

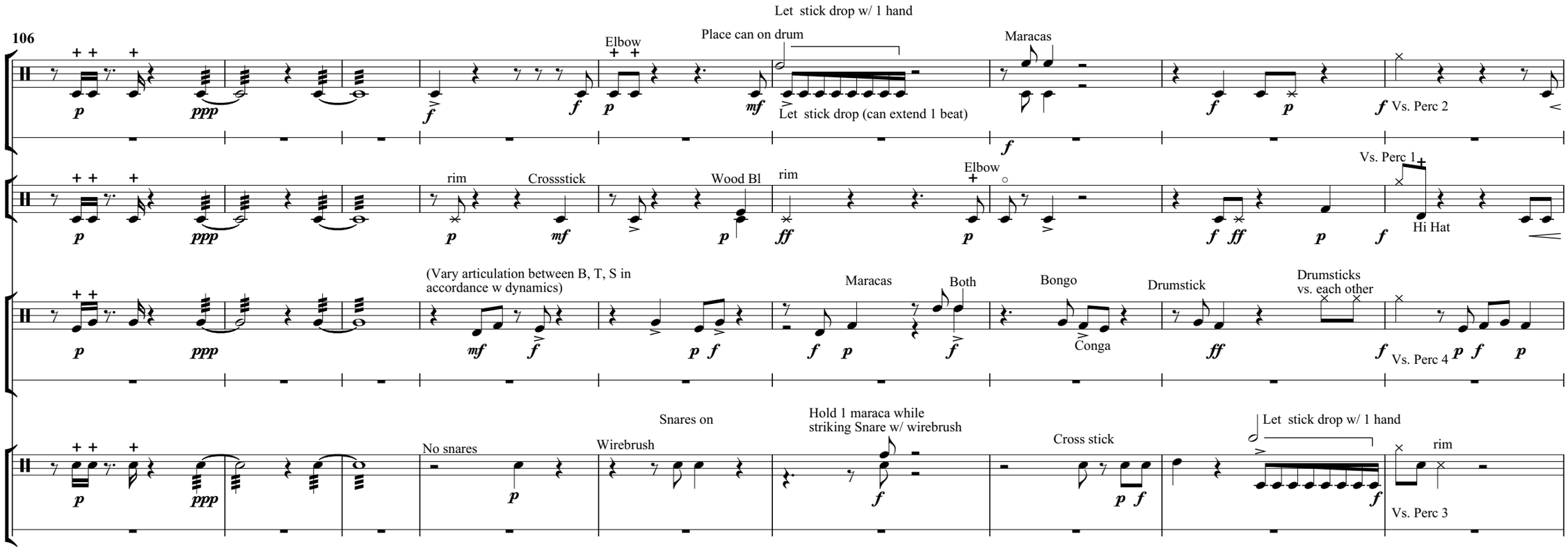
some-thing hope-ful ri-ses in me ri-ses and runs me out in - to the road

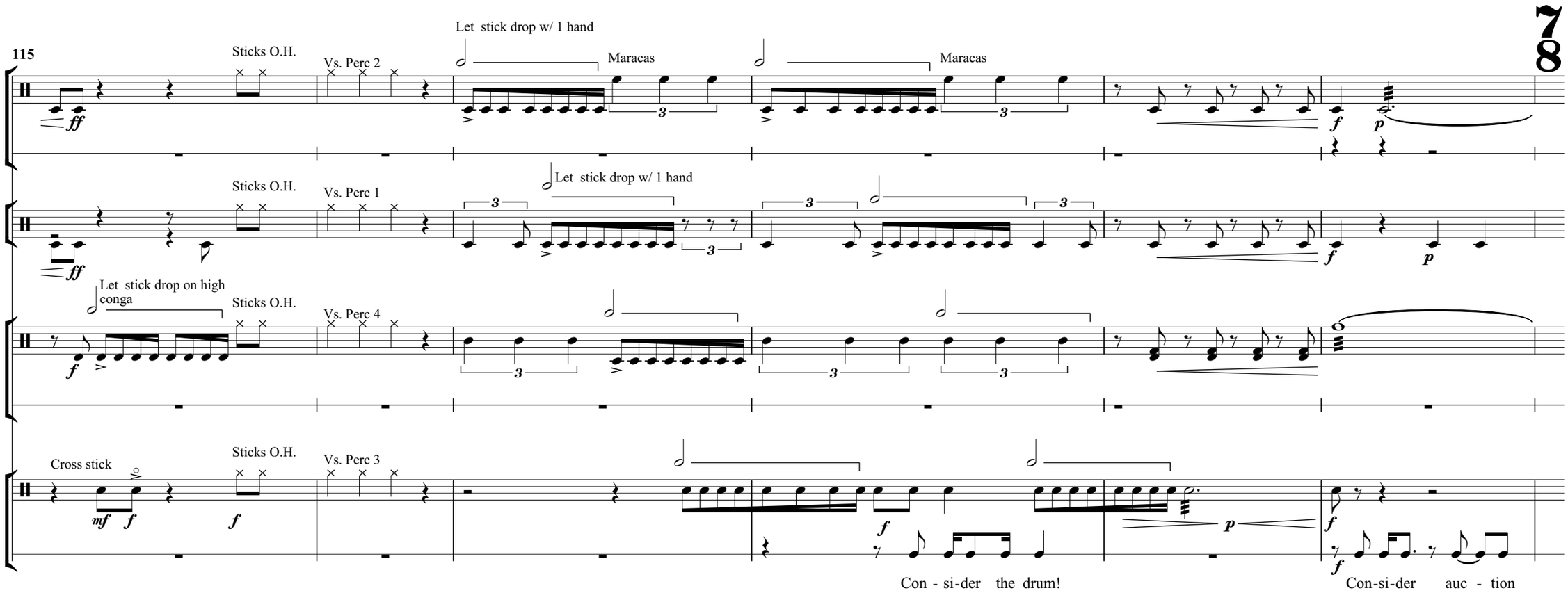

72
8
12
16
high
and i
lob
my
fierce
thigh
o-ver the rump

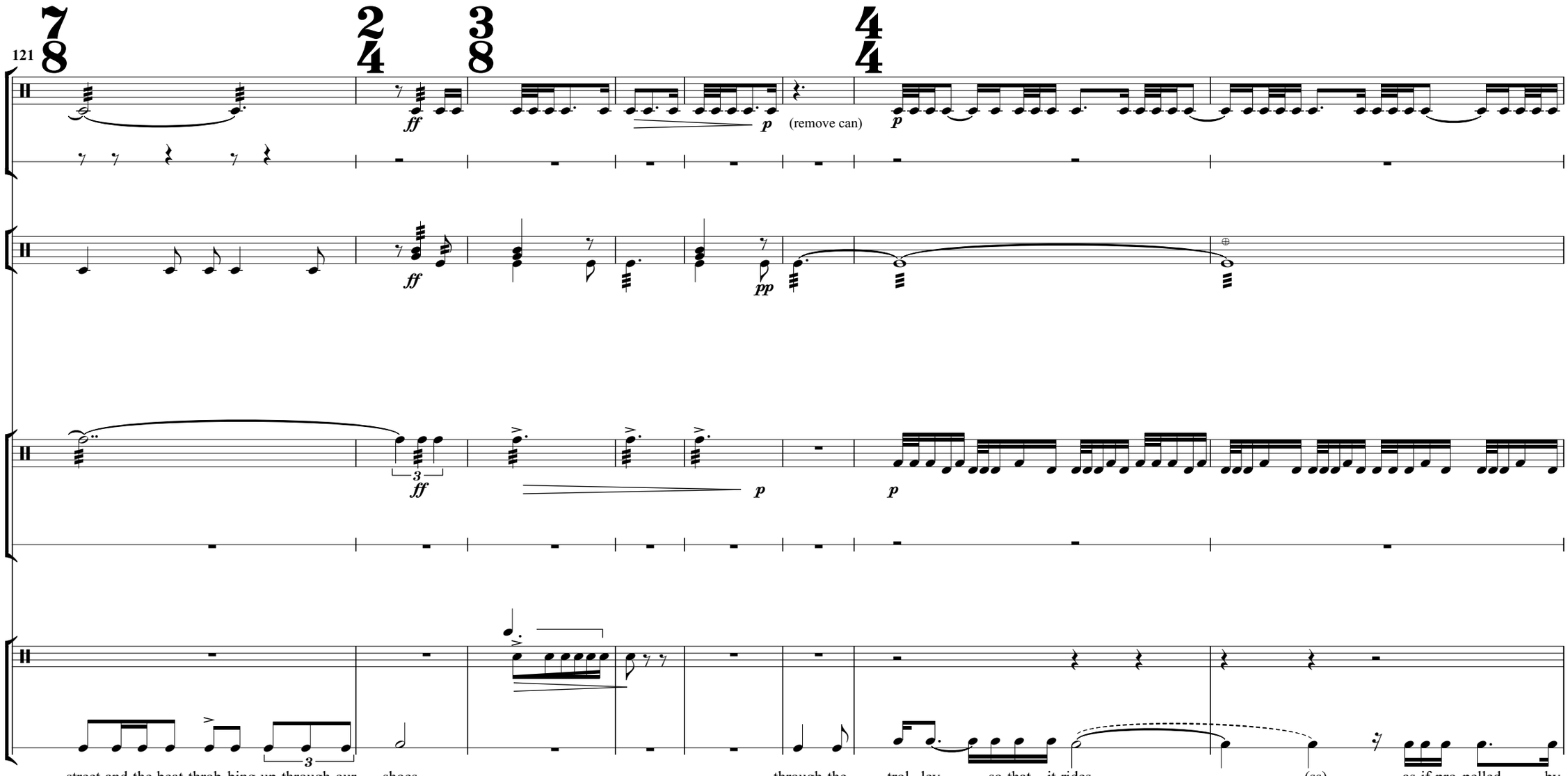

82
Perc. 2 also playing cym.
gliss.
ay
Aaa - yee,
20
24
Tri. Beater rattling on surface
of Cym. (Perc 1 playing also)
Hi Hat
gliss.
ay
Aaa - yee,
Use hard beater on Flex.
Flexatone
20
24
gliss.
ay -
Aaa - yee,
gliss.
gliss.
of the day
and hon-ey
I ride - - I ride - -
Aaa - yee,

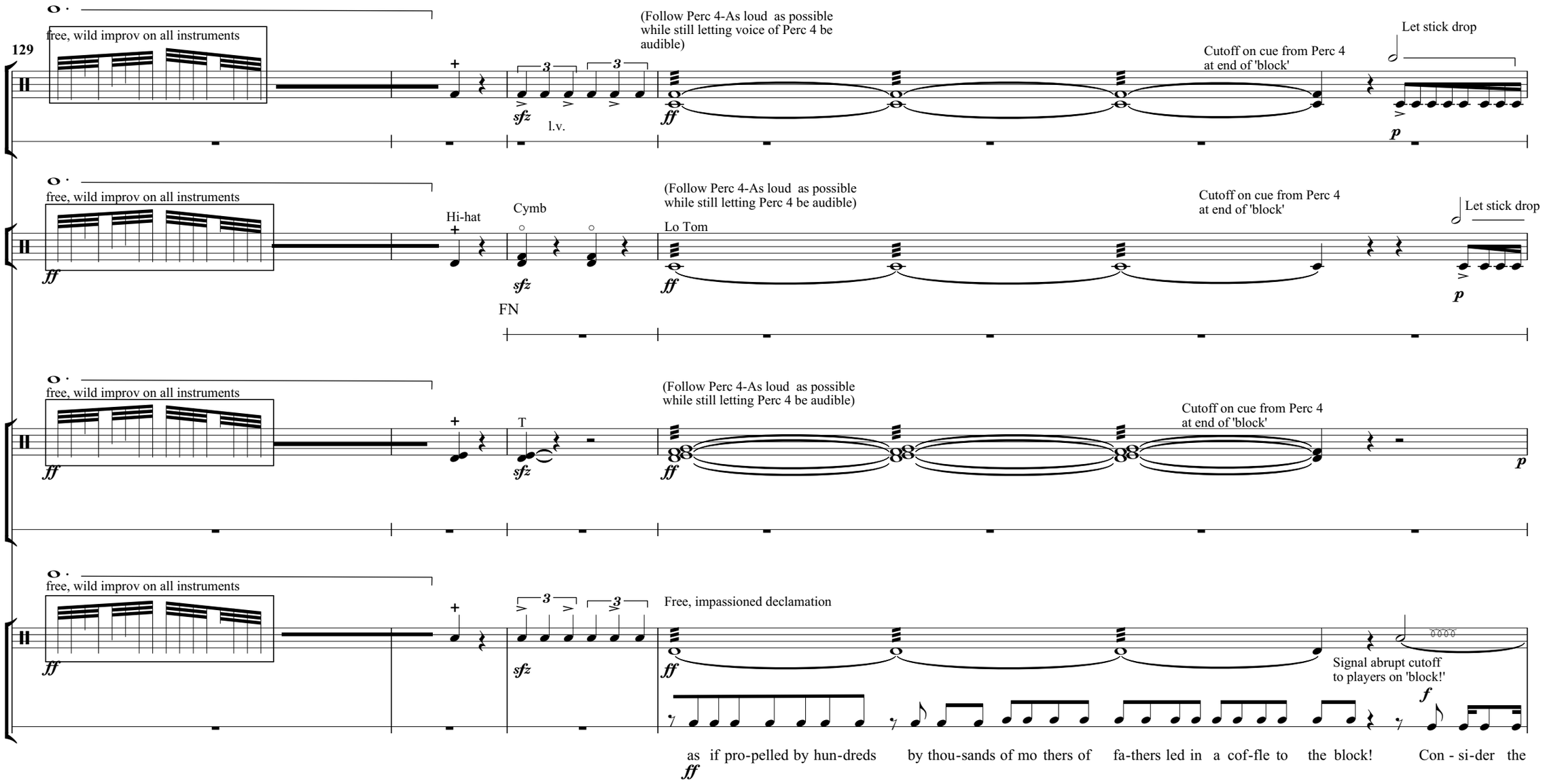

91
4/4
♩ = 76
Gong
sfz
p
ff
l.v.
l.v.
Wood
f
Hi Tom
Aaa - yee ride!
Triangle
p
f
mf
l.v.
Tri. beater in continuous circles on gong w/ L hand
l.v.
Wood
f
Lo Tom
Aaa - yee ride!
No muting
ff
l.v.
Run one finger up & down surface of clapper to get continuum of rattle to pitched sound.
Drumsticks on Congas
f
f
Perc 3: Look & point at R rear corner of hall w/ extended R arm & slowly sweep from R to L w/ glance following arm motion.
Aaa - yee ride!
(as resonant as possible- this will be masked initially)
f
Aaa - yee ride!

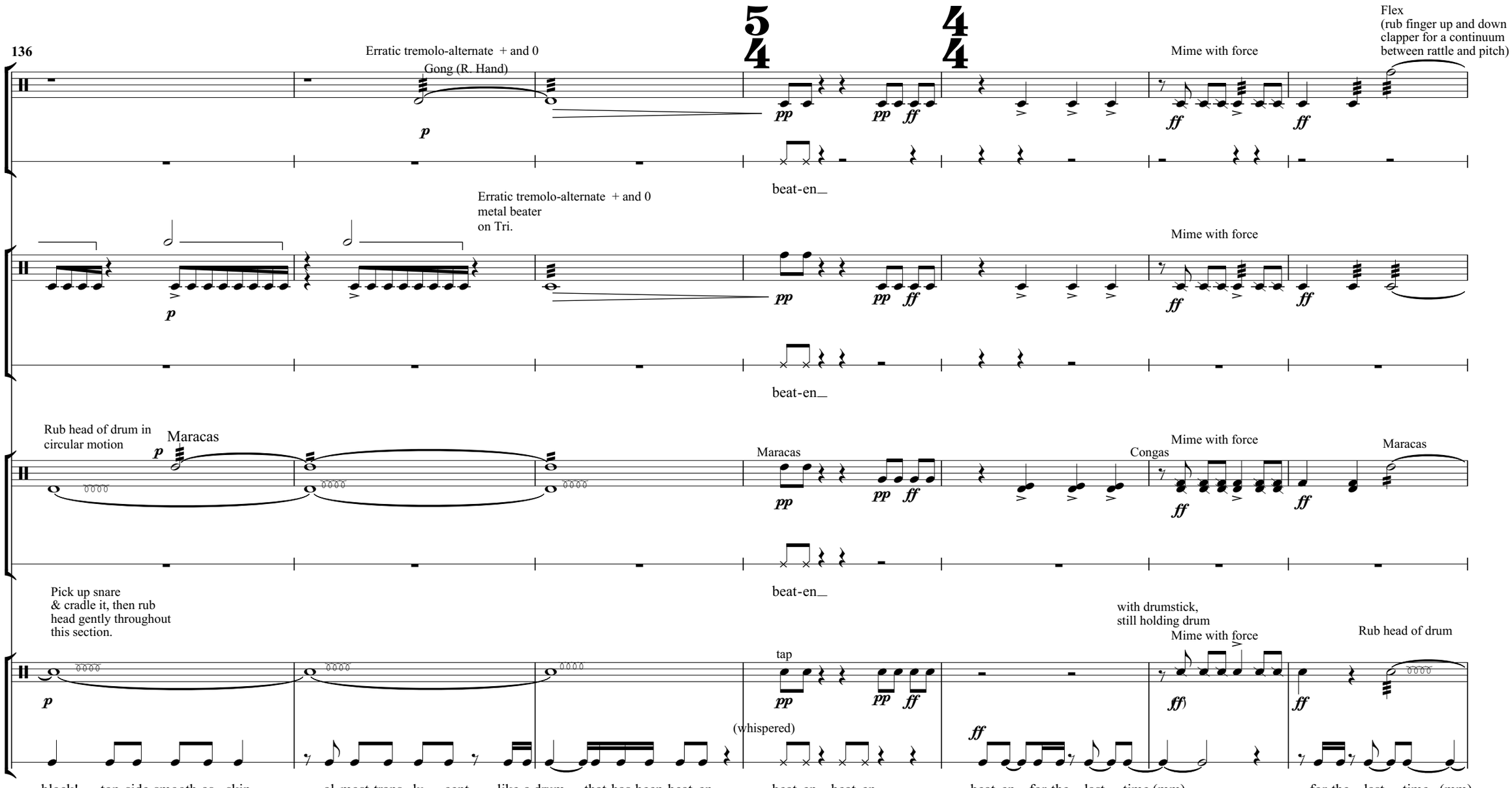
100
Wood
Hi Tom
Wood
Wood
Hi Hat
Lo Tom
Wood
Drumsticks on
Congas
rim
Bongos
rim
Conga
Strike Tamb. with
drumstick

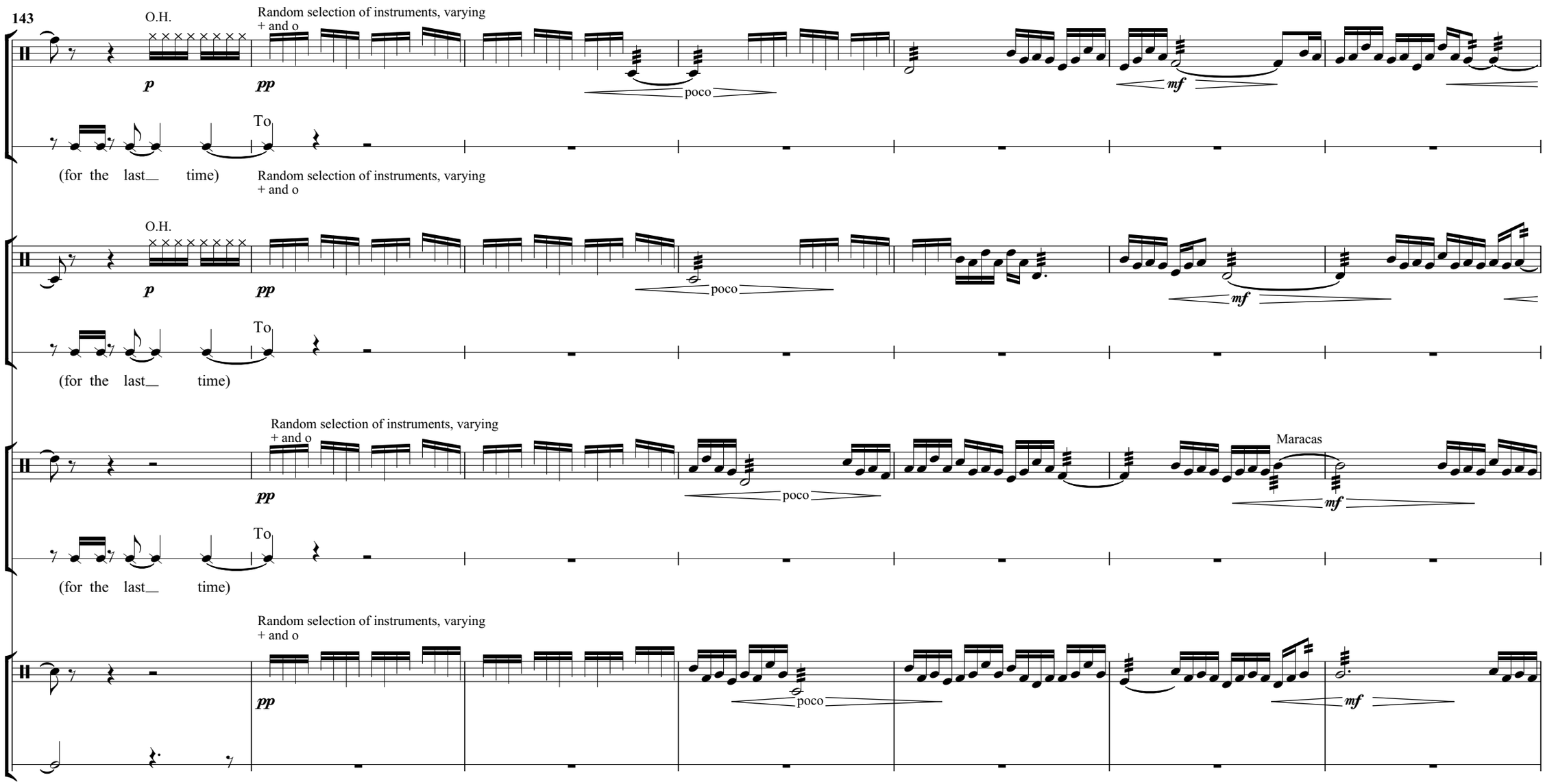

106
Let stick drop w/ 1 hand
Elbow
Place can on drum
Maracas
Let stick drop (can extend 1 beat)
Vs. Perc 2
rim
Crossstick
Wood Bl
rim
Elbow
Vs. Perc 1
Hi Hat
(Vary articulation between B, T, S in accordance w dynamics)
Maracas
Both
Bongo
Conga
Drumstick
Drumsticks vs. each other
Vs. Perc 4
Snares on
No snares
Wirebrush
Hold 1 maraca while striking Snare w/ wirebrush
Cross stick
Let stick drop w/ 1 hand
rim
Vs. Perc 3

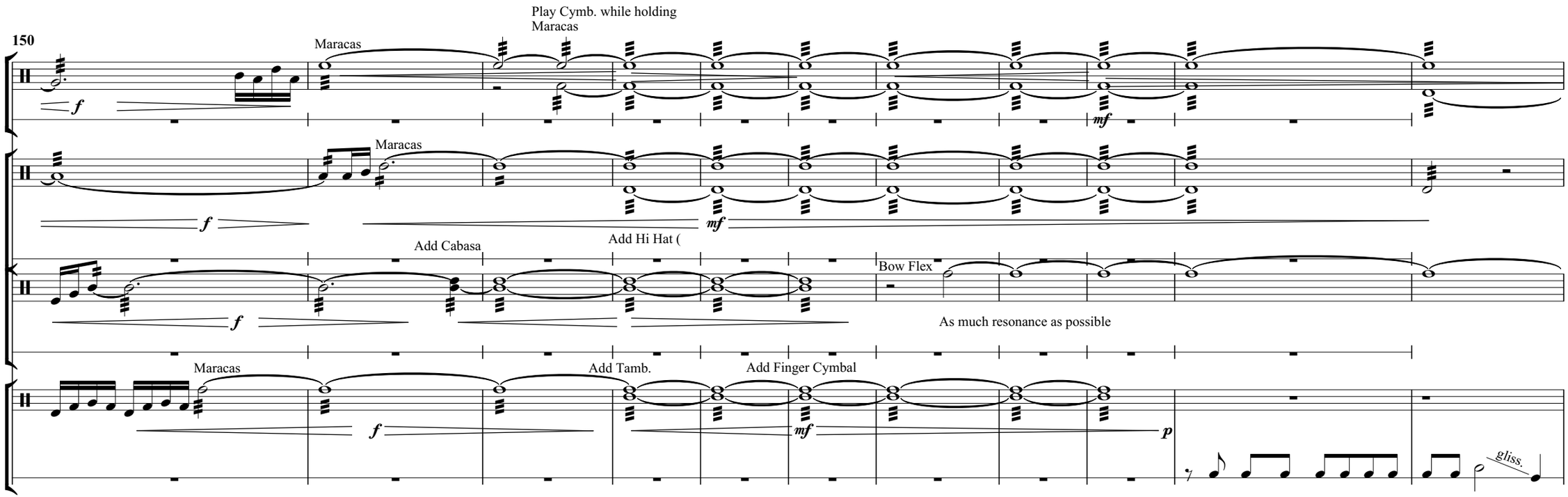

115
Sticks O.H.
Vs. Perc 2
Let stick drop w/ 1 hand
Maracas
Maracas
Sticks O.H.
Vs. Perc 1
Let stick drop w/ 1 hand
Let stick drop on high conga
Sticks O.H.
Vs. Perc 4
Cross stick
Sticks O.H.
Vs. Perc 3
Con - si-der the drum!
Con-si-der auc - tion

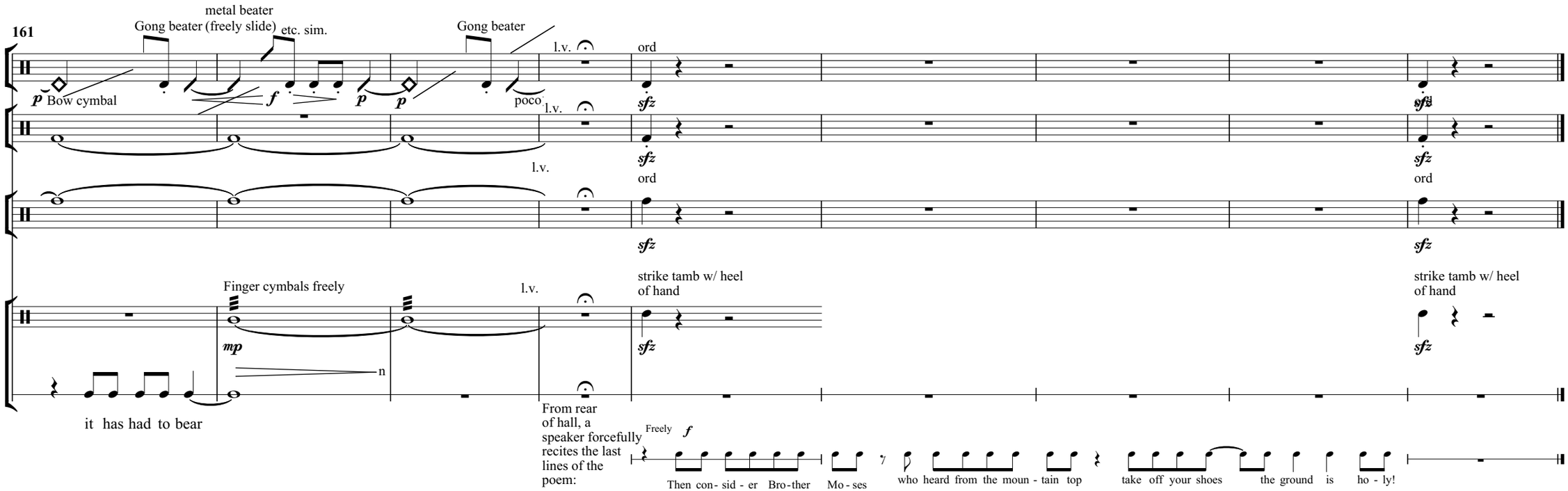

121
7/8
2/4
3/8
4/4
ff
p
(remove can)
pp
3
street and the beat throb bing up through our shoes
through the trol - ley so that it rides - - - (ss) - as if pro-pelled by


129
free, wild improv on all instruments
(Follow Perc 4-As loud as possible while still letting voice of Perc 4 be audible)
Cutoff on cue from Perc 4 at end of 'block'
Let stick drop
sfz
l.v.
ff
p
free, wild improv on all instruments
Hi-hat
Cymb
Lo Tom
(Follow Perc 4-As loud as possible while still letting Perc 4 be audible)
Cutoff on cue from Perc 4 at end of 'block'
Let stick drop
FN
free, wild improv on all instruments
T
(Follow Perc 4-As loud as possible while still letting Perc 4 be audible)
Cutoff on cue from Perc 4 at end of 'block'
free, wild improv on all instruments
Free, impassioned declamation
Signal abrupt cutoff to players on 'block!'
f
as if pro-pelled by hun-dreds by thou-sands of mo thers of fa-thers led in a cof-fle to the block! Con - si-der the


136
Erratic tremolo-alternate + and 0
Gong (R. Hand)
5/4
4/4
Mime with force
Flex
(rub finger up and down clapper for a continuum between rattle and pitch)
beat-en_
Erratic tremolo-alternate + and 0
metal beater
on Tri.
Mime with force
beat-en_
Rub head of drum in circular motion
Maracas
Maracas
Congas
Mime with force
Maracas
beat-en_
Pick up snare & cradle it, then rub head gently throughout this section.
with drumstick, still holding drum
Mime with force
Rub head of drum
tap
(whispered)
block! top-side smooth as skin
al-most trans - lu - cent
like a drum that has been beat en_
beat-en_ beat-en_
beat en_ for the last_ time_(mm)
for the last_ time_(mm)


143
O.H.
Random selection of instruments, varying
+ and o
p
pp
poco
mf
To
(for the last time)
Random selection of instruments, varying
+ and o
O.H.
p
pp
poco
mf
To
(for the last time)
Random selection of instruments, varying
+ and o
pp
poco
Maracas
mf
To
(for the last time)
Random selection of instruments, varying
+ and o
pp
poco
mf


150
Maracas
Play Cymb. while holding
Maracas
Maracas
Add Cabasa
Add Hi Hat (
Bow Flex
As much resonance as possible
Maracas
Add Tamb.
Add Finger Cymbal
gliss.
the block waits now to be hon - ored for mu - sic


161
metal beater
Gong beater (freely slide)
etc. sim.
Gong beater
p Bow cymbal
f
p
p
poco
l.v.
ord
sfz
Finger cymbals freely
mp
n
strike tamb w/ heel of hand
it has had to bear
From rear of hall, a speaker forcefully recites the last lines of the poem:
Freely
f
Then con- sid - er Bro-ther Mo - ses who heard from the moun - tain top take off your shoes the ground is ho - ly!