

Richard Barrett

***codex XXIV***

2023

vocal/instrumental ensemble (9 or more performers) and conductor  
on texts by Simon Howard

performing score



Schicksaal | Die Blindesten aber |  
Sind Göttersöhne a stillness to the  
movement of people they talk in gauze  
arenas audition a mute movie sosososos  
isn asn? rarp, glime crawl they spin &  
spit & minus nil banners burst & trails of  
spools of compasses rubber robins rub  
robber barons' roulette reels. de-realities  
unsuitable for leisure news sticky out  
fresco blarp zwangsong .mirror.nature.

mirror of nature. mirror of mirror of  
nature. mirror of mirror of mirror of  
nature. mirror of mirror of mirror of  
mirror sosososos isn asn? rarp, glime  
crawl of nature. mirror of mirror of  
mirror of mirror of mirror of nature.  
mirror of mirror of mirror of mirror of  
mirror of mirror of nature. mirror of  
arcade. mirror of mirror of arcade.  
mirror of mirror of mirror of arcade. mirr

## performance

While *codex XXIV* is intended to have a certain kind of musical character influenced by the texts and the suggestions for their use, it shouldn't be conceived as a score with spaces opened in it for improvisation, but as a free improvisation with the score functioning as a network of points of structural/expressive focus. It's probably preferable for rehearsals not to attempt to converge on a supposedly optimal performance, but rather the opposite: to work towards opening *more* possibilities, so that the eventual performance has the freedom to be radically different from any of the rehearsal versions.

The score consists of five sections, with durations of approximately 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 minutes, plus a "coda" of up to 1 minute. (The timings given in the score are general indications for the conductor – making a musically meaningful change in the musical evolution is more important than making the timings strictly accurate.) Each section begins with a specific event where the entire ensemble is brought together, and continues with groups being individually cued by the conductor at time intervals mostly between 2 and 16 seconds, sometimes perhaps longer, especially as the performance progresses through its five sections of increasing duration. (Two or three groups may also be cued simultaneously.) The conductor listens to the outcome of each cue, which will involve a more or less random reconfiguration of the musical activity of the group(s) being cued, and how this activity develops, and makes decisions on whether and when to give the next cue to the same or another group. The conductor's role is not so much to "control" what happens as to facilitate unforeseeable combinations of instruments, voices and sounds, and unforeseeable changes and transitions between them. Responses to cues should generally be immediate and decisive, although the possibility of more gradual transitions should always be at least considered.

Each principal section of the score (1B, 2B, 3B, 4B, 5B) involves a "loop" of 24 sounds, 12 of which are specified in terms of pitch, and suggestions as to how this material is to be used (or not). The unspecified sounds are freely chosen by performers, differently in each iteration of the loop, pitched or unpitched, within the overall range of the loop or outside it. It isn't necessary at the beginning of a section to start the loop from the beginning, but when departing from and returning to the loop, performers should continue from wherever they left off, if possible. All of the sounds (specified and unspecified) might be more or less brief, separated by more or less silence in each individual part, and typically varied as much as possible in terms of dynamic, timbre and articulation. Not all pitches in all loops will be within the range of all voices/instruments. If a pitch is outside your range, treat it as an unspecified sound. This implies that for unpitched instruments (percussive or electronic sound sources, etc.) most or all of the sounds in a loop are to be treated as unspecified. At any rate, the five loops gradually expand in register, so that most instruments are likely to be able to play fewer and fewer of the specified pitches as the composition progresses. This in turn implies a gradual transition in the music, towards an increasing focus on spontaneous interactions as the scored material gradually "dissolves" into the ensemble. This process is paralleled by the *tutti* moments (1A, 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A) at the beginning of each section decreasing in duration as the sections themselves increase in duration.

The principal sections of the score also contain one or more "clocks". At the first cue of the section, each member of a group begins at a freely chosen point somewhere around one of the clocks (also freely chosen) with the suggestion placed at that point (for example, in section 1b, the single clock gives either free improvisation, silence or entering the loop with particular sonic suggestions). The next time the conductor cues this group, everyone moves clockwise to the next point around the clock. Once a single revolution of a clock is completed, on the next cue the performer moves onto a freely chosen point on another freely chosen clock (or the same one if there is only one) and continues clockwise from there. When single revolutions of all the clocks in a section have been completed, another is chosen freely and the process begins again.

The symbol ∞ indicates free improvisation – that is to say spontaneous actions and reactions without any restriction as to musical material, dynamic level etc. but responding to the ongoing musical environment as it changes.

The symbol ⊙ indicates an optional addition to the given suggestions, often in the form of "ornamentation" where a sound is sculpted into something more complex and/or evolving. The fact that a particular suggestion occurs at one point doesn't preclude its use elsewhere. Bear in mind also that, as mentioned above, this is not a score of which an adequate performance consists of accurately rendering all its "instructions", but an interconnected network of propositions spread over a living collective imagination.

# 1A begin at 0'00" (duration 30")



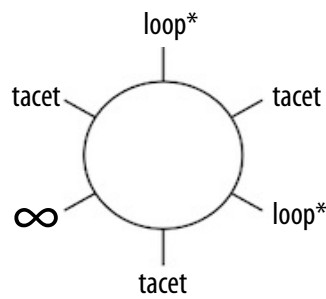
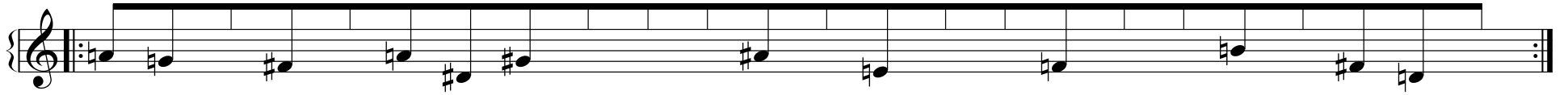
VOICES AND SUSTAINING (pitched) INSTRUMENTS ONLY - freely chosen timbres

choose a pitch (& phoneme if applicable), play/sing it for 3-6" *ppp* then brief pause, choose another pitch and different timbre if possible, continue like this until your group is cued for 1B.

(groups are individually cued to continue to 1B so there's a gradual transition from 1A to 1B)

⊙ slight microtonal deviations, especially if you find yourself in unison with someone else

# 1B 0'30" (30")



\* brief sounds, each with a different timbre (and phoneme as appropriate), each with a different dynamic between *ppp* and *fff*  
2-5" silence between each sound

# 2A 1'00" (24")



TUTTI - timbres often on the edge between pitch and noise

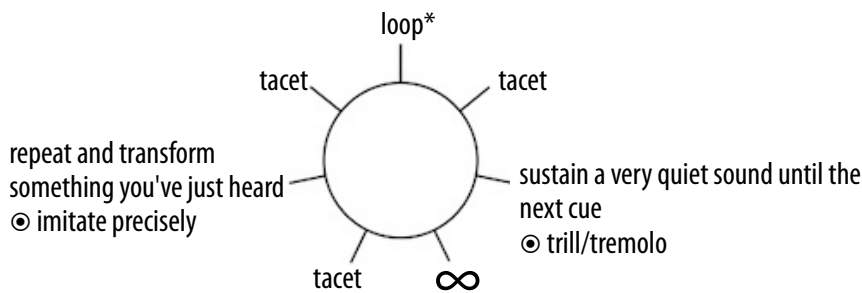
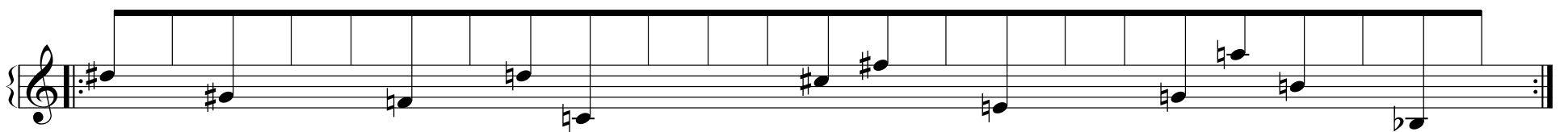
all begin together - choose a pitch, an articulation type between staccato and marcato, and a tempo (♩ at ♩=between 45 and 90), play several repetitions within a diminuendo *p* over 2-5", then brief pause, choose another pitch, articulation, tempo and timbre, continue like this until your group is cued for 2B

(again groups are individually cued for 2B)

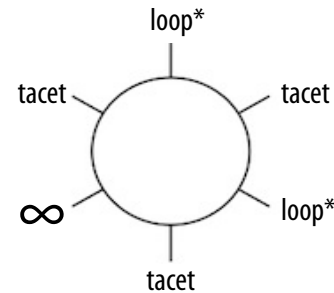
voices: each group of sounds uses a freely chosen *sequence* of phonemes from the text so that whole words and phrases begin to emerge

⊙ change tempo slightly, exploring synchronisation/desynchronisation

# 2B 1'24"(1'36")

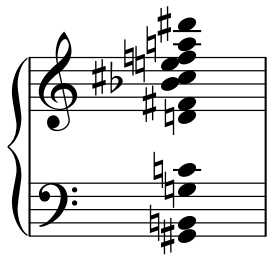


\* more complex but still brief events consisting of rapid groups of sounds centring on the specified pitch when present, each with a different dynamic between *pp* and *ff*  
1-4" silence between each sound



\* brief sounds, each with a different timbre (and phoneme as appropriate), each with a different dynamic between *ppp* and *fff*  
2-5" silence between each sound

3A 3'00" (18")



TUTTI - pure timbres

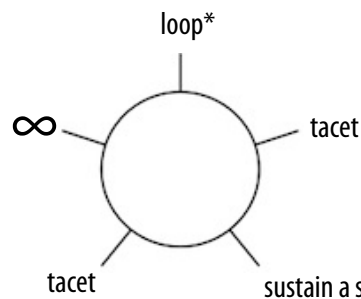
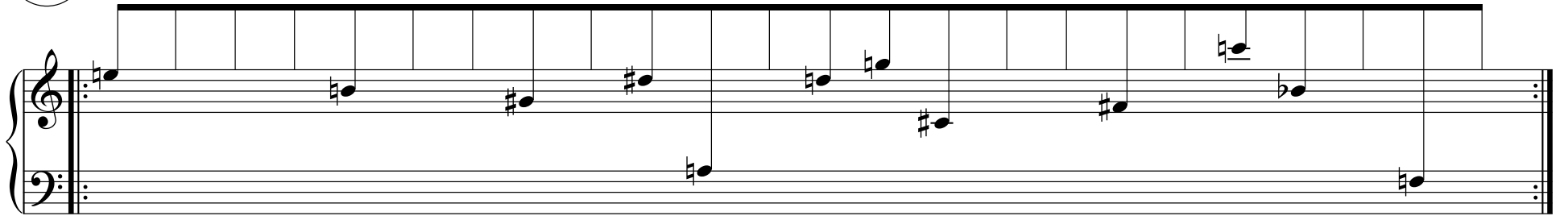
all begin together - choose a pitch, an articulation type between staccato and marcato, and a tempo (♩ at ♩=between 50 and 80), once or twice change one or other pitch to another in the chord, continue like this until your group is cued for 3B. *mf* sempre

(again groups are individually cued for 3B)

voices: division of phonemes across the alternating pitches may be freely chosen

⊙ microtonal variations in pitch, perhaps also microtonal trills or vibrato at varying speeds

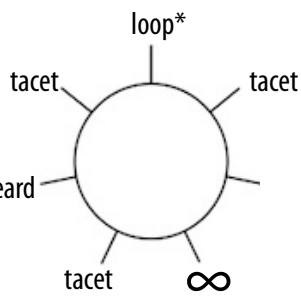
3B 3'18" (2'42")



sustain a sound you can hear like a resonance of it  
⊙ ... and continue with a glissando in pitch and/or a transformation in timbre

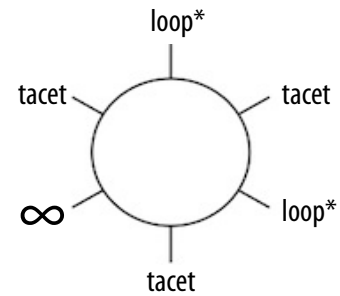
\* sustained sounds 3-6" each separated by silences of 0-3", each with a different dynamic between *p* and *mf*

repeat and transform something you've just heard  
⊙ imitate precisely



sustain a very quiet sound until the next cue  
⊙ xxxx

\* more complex but still brief events consisting of rapid groups of sounds centring on the specified pitch when present, each with a different dynamic between *pp* and *ff*  
1-4" silence between each sound



\* brief sounds, each with a different timbre (and phoneme as appropriate), each with a different dynamic between *ppp* and *fff*  
2-5" silence between each sound

4A 6'00" (12")



VOICES, PERCUSSIVE, PLUCKED and ELECTRONIC INSTRUMENTS

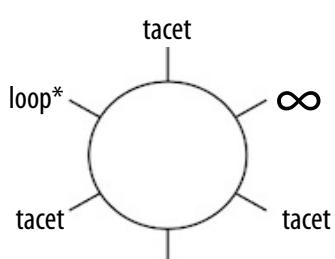
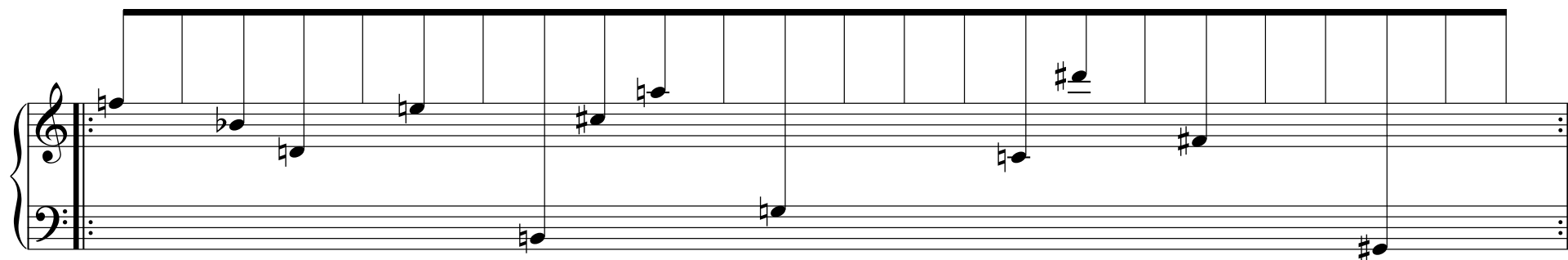
all begin together - choose as many pitches from the chord as possible (or none) and play a single loud accent *sffz* (lascia vibrare as appropriate) - voices: a single (shouted?) phoneme

SUSTAINING INSTRUMENTS

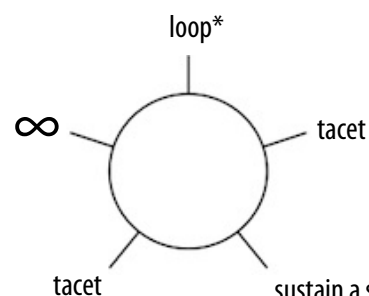
pick up on a pitch you hear being played, transform it from a pure to noisy, distorted sound (high bow pressure, multiphonic etc.) *f*

At the end of the 12 seconds, all groups move together to 4B on cue!

4B 6'12" (3'48")

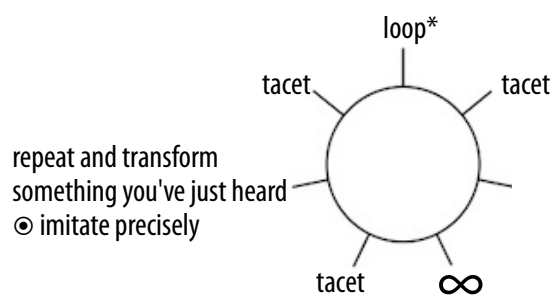


alternate between 2 sounds, between ♩ = 55-70 and "as fast as possible"  
 ◎ more or less rapid and extreme changes in speed/pitch/timbre



sustain a sound you can hear like a resonance of it  
 ◎ ... and continue with a glissando in pitch and/or a transformation in timbre  
 \* sustained sounds 3-6" each separated by silences of 0-3", each with a different dynamic between *p* and *mf*

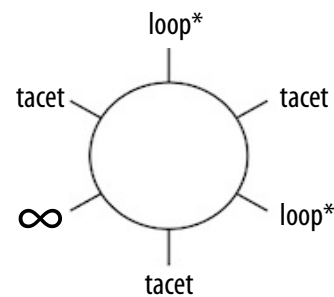
\* continuous transitions between sounds (scales/glissandi/transformations between pitch and non-pitch...) 4-7" each, no silence, *mp* sempre



repeat and transform something you've just heard  
 ◎ imitate precisely

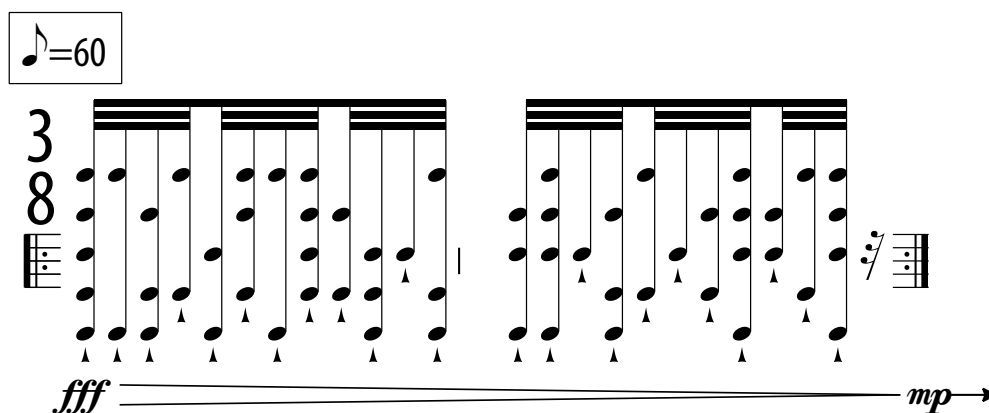
sustain a very quiet sound until the next cue  
 ◎ xxxx

\* more complex but still brief events consisting of rapid groups of sounds centring on the specified pitch when present, each with a different dynamic between *pp* and *ff* 1-4" silence between each sound



\* brief sounds, each with a different timbre (and phoneme as appropriate), each with a different dynamic between *ppp* and *fff* 2-5" silence between each sound

5A 10'00" (6")



TUTTI - gradual change from pure to denatured timbre, for example strings towards sul ponticello, or winds/voices towards breathy sound

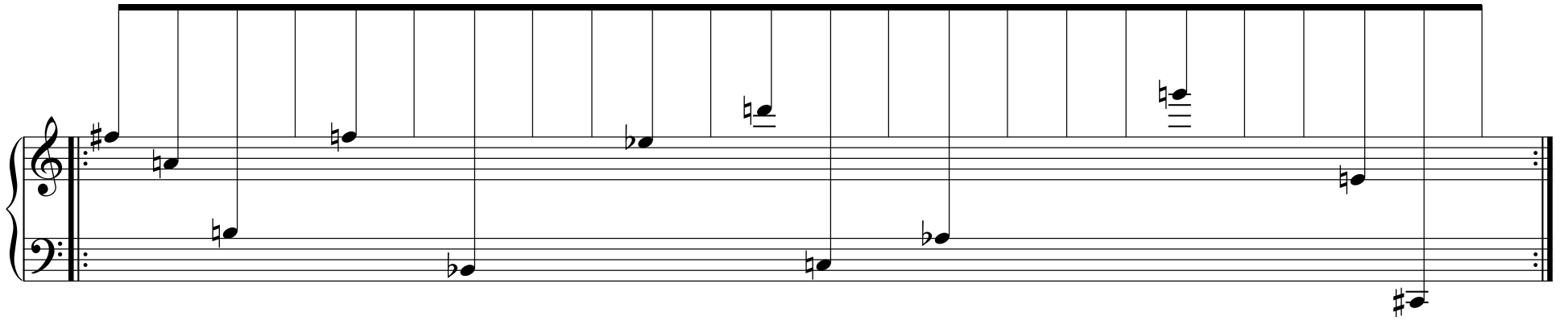
all begin together - choose a pitch and one of the 5 rhythmic layers and follow conductor, continue (looping the rhythm) after the two conducted bars until your group is cued for 5B

( groups are individually cued for 5B)

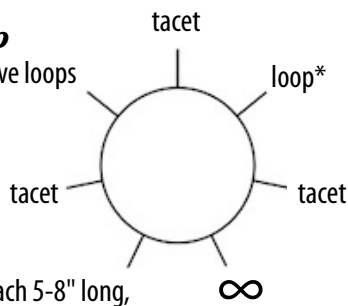
voices: repeat the same phoneme

◎ gradual transition between first chosen pitch and another (or between two unpitched sounds)

5B 10'06" (4'54")

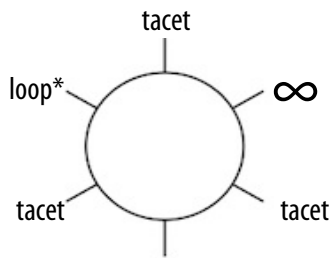


slow quiet melody  
between *pp* and *mp*  
based on any of the five loops  
⊙ OR ∞

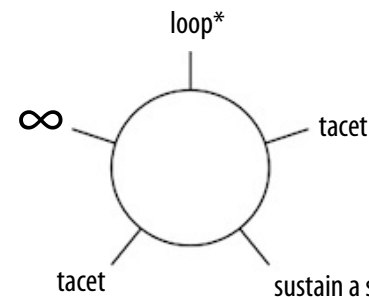


\* extremely brief sounds  
with intervening silences  
of 5-8", sempre *sf**ffz*

repeated *f* envelopes, each 5-8" long,  
consisting of repeating staccato sounds in similar  
rhythms to 5A, ♪ in ♪=45-90  
(voices: single phoneme iterated)  
⊙ irregular accentuations within the iterations



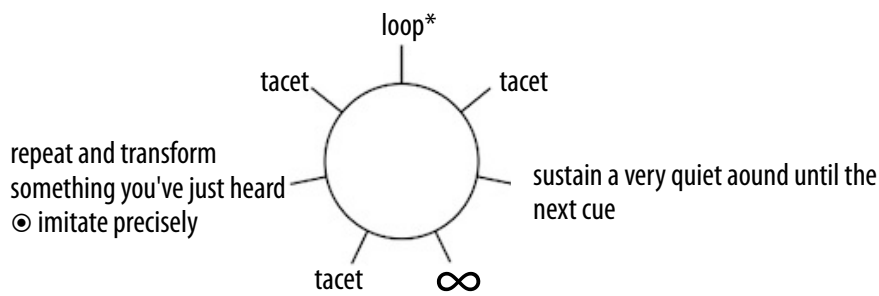
alternate between 2 sounds, between  
♪ = 55-70 and "as fast as possible"  
⊙ more or less rapid and extreme  
changes in speed/pitch/timbre



sustain a sound you can hear  
like a resonance of it  
⊙ ... and continue with a glissando  
in pitch and/or a transformation in  
timbre

\* sustained sounds  
3-6" each separated  
by silences of 0-3",  
each with a different  
dynamic between  
*p* and *mf*

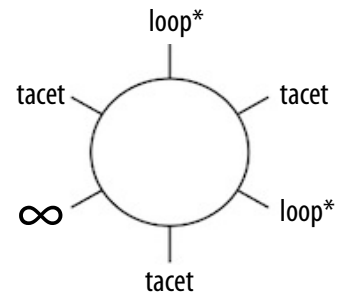
\* continuous transitions between sounds  
(scales/glissandi/transformations between pitch and non-pitch...)  
4-7" each, no silence, *mp* sempre



repeat and transform  
something you've just heard  
⊙ imitate precisely

sustain a very quiet sound until the  
next cue

\* more complex but still brief events  
consisting of rapid groups of sounds  
centring on the specified pitch when  
present, each with a different  
dynamic between *pp* and *ff*  
1-4" silence between each sound



\* brief sounds, each with a different timbre  
(and phoneme as appropriate), each with a  
different dynamic between *ppp* and *fff*  
2-5" silence between each sound

6 15'00" (up to 1')

TUTTI

at final cue for all groups, all move to the next point on their clock (or to another clock if a revolution has been completed), and collectively find an end within one minute or so