Miriam

for

Piano and Fixed media (8 ch)

2012

Haruka Hirayama

Programme note

This piece is composed based on the short novel ‘Miriam’ written by Truman Capote as well as my own interpretation of it. In the story there are two Miriams, one lady is called Mrs. Miller who is a widow spending everyday by herself, and the other is a very young girl Miriam. However, I suppose that there may be several different interpretations regarding the actual existence of young girl Miriam.

Whether the young girl has actually existed or not in the story, I tried to express the surrounding world of Mrs. Miller with an assumption of Mrs. Miller's interpretations of the presence of Miriam, because it is understood that the reality which Mrs. Miller experienced would be the reality. My impressions as a reader of the story was also a full of realism. I think this is because of detailed descriptions of common scenes for her and of emotional movement which appears when she is meeting and talking with the girl.

In this piece, I made a attempt to combine sounds of a musical instrument and environment for first time: there are sounds of piano, crowd, opening a door, and bird. The part for electronic sound is created for 8 channel speaker system. By the syntheses of those sounds and space for acoustics, I pursue the reality which enclose Mrs. Miller.

In terms of the issue of synchronisation between the piano and electronics, it is tackled by preparing an electronic score, which is programmed with Max/MSP and Jitter, offering a piano score and some graphical elements. This is shown on the computer screen so that a pianist can control all parts.

この曲はトルーマン・カポーティの短編小説「ミリアム」を題材に、自身の解釈のもと作曲された。小説には、二人のミリアムと言う名の女性が登場する。一人は、毎日を一人で過ごしている未亡人の女性ミセス・ミラーと、もう一人は幼い少女ミリアムである。しかしながら、少女ミリアムの実在については、本の文脈から察するに、色々と解釈が分かれる作品であるかもしれない。

私がこの作品を表現するにあたっては、少女ミリアムの存在如何に関わらず、ミセス・ミラーの体験したリアリティは変わらないということ、そして、その彼女を取り巻く世界と、彼女自身にとっての少女ミリアムの存在の解釈を想定し、音楽として表現しようと思った。私の本の読み手としての感想もまた、とてもリアリティのあるものであった。それはミセス・ミラーの日常の風景や、少女ミリアムと会っている時の受け答えや感情的な動きに関する丁寧な描写によるものではないかと思う。

この作品では、初めて楽器と環境音を組み合わる試みをしており、ピアノの音に加えて雑踏やドアの音、またはカナリヤなどの環境音が使われており、また、電子媒体パートのサウンドは8チャンネルのスピーカーシステムの為に作られている。
これらの音と音響空間の総合によって、ミセス・ミラーを取り巻くリアリティを追求している。

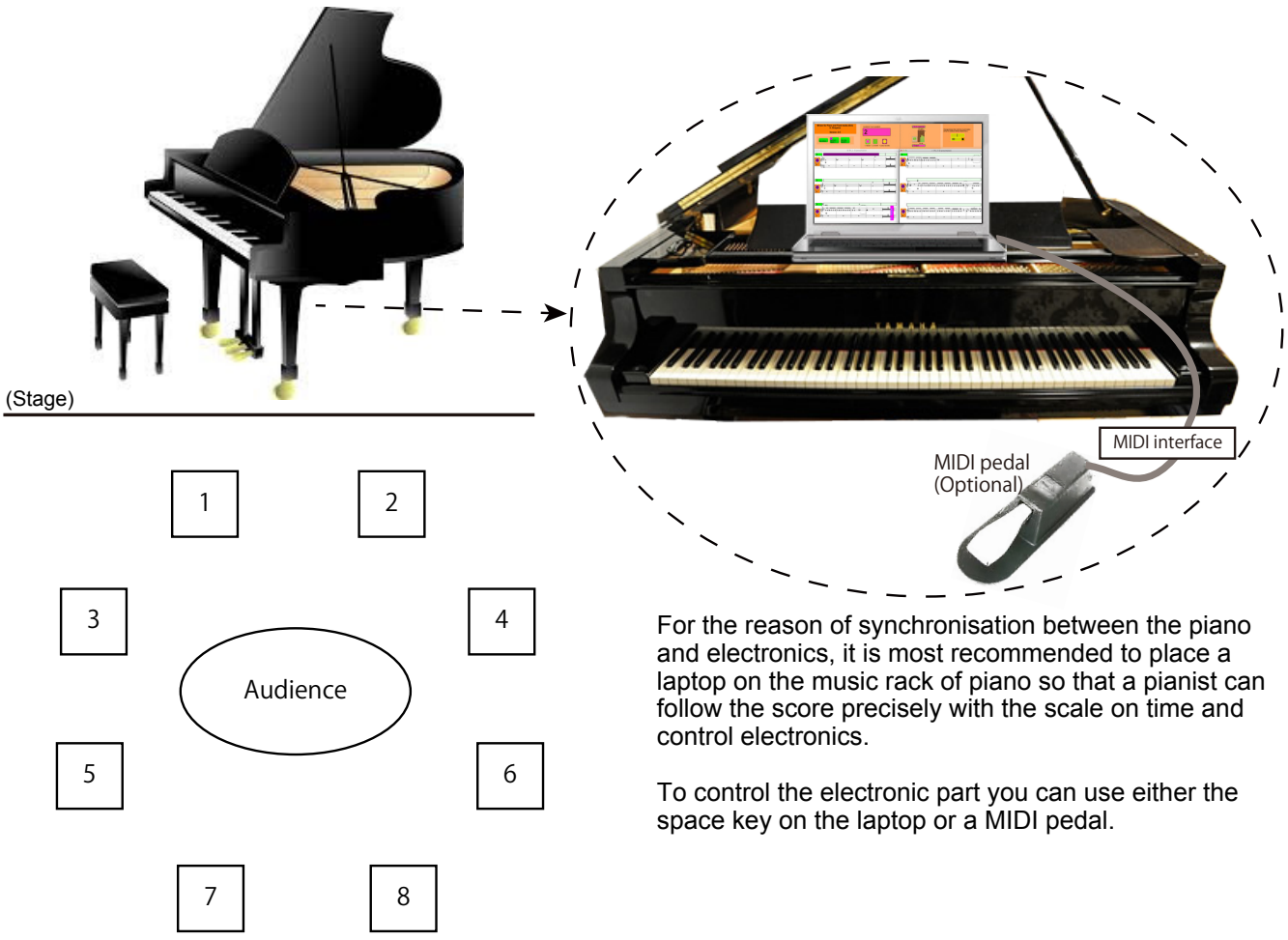
楽器と電子音のシンクロナイズは、ピアノの楽譜とメトロノームなどをMax/MSPおよびJitterによってグラフィカルに組み合わせたコンピュータスクリーン上の楽譜を用いて演奏される事で試みられている。

2012

[Required equipments]

- Piano
- 8ch speaker system with 24bit/48k sound card
- Max/MSP application
- MIDI foot pedal (optional)
- Macintosh computer

[Stage and speaker set up]



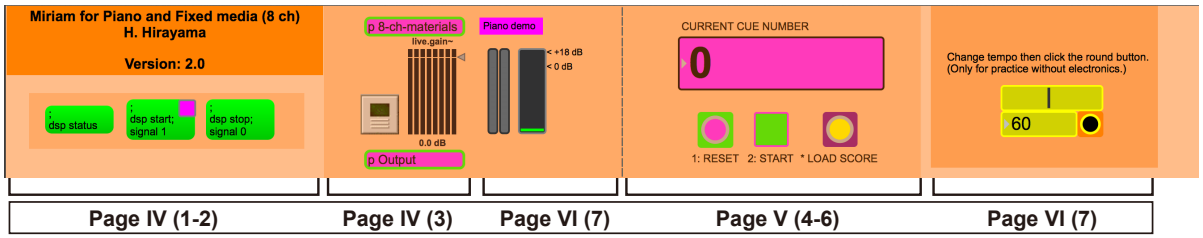
For the reason of synchronisation between the piano and electronics, it is most recommended to place a laptop on the music rack of piano so that a pianist can follow the score precisely with the scale on time and control electronics.

To control the electronic part you can use either the space key on the laptop or a MIDI pedal.

[Instructions for electronics]

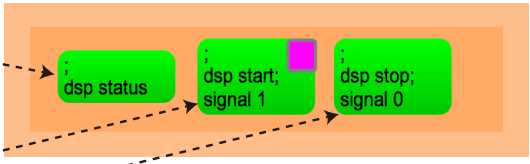
1: Set up 8-ch speaker systems and connect computer output 1-8 channels to 1-8 speakers respectively.
2: Plug in a MIDI foot pedal if required. (Alternatively, electronics are controllable by the space and return keys of a computer.)
3: Launach Max/MSP patch for Miriam.

[Main Max/MSP patch for Miriam]



[How to run the patch for Miriam]

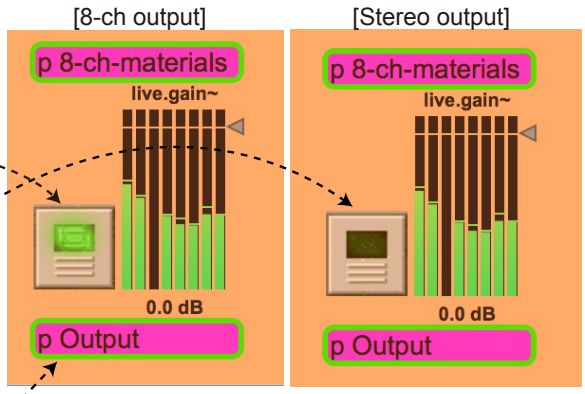
1: Click the 'dsp status' button, and set up your audio card (input and output device) as well as allocation of output channels.



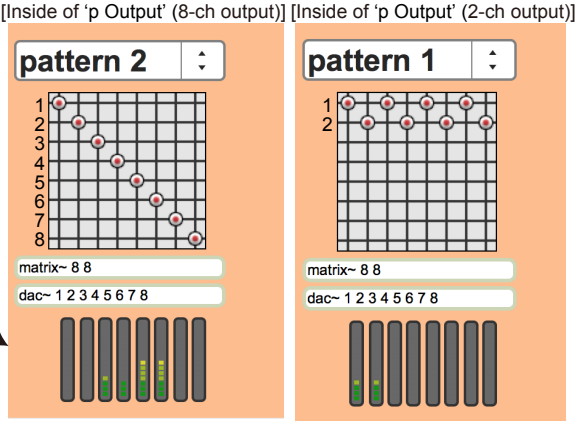
2: By clicking the 'dsp start' button, you are ready to gain the sound of electronics. Conversely, you can switch it off by clicking the 'dsp stop' button. (It is still possible to practice the piano part only.) When dep is on, the pink box is ticked.

3: In order to enable 8-ch output for electronics, you have to switch on the button here. Instead, you can also have the stereo output version, and in this case, you should keep the swich off (Default).

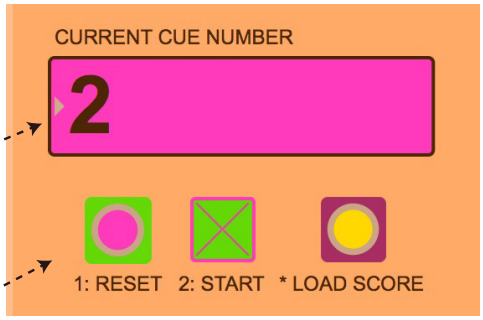
Either way, the gain-meter (live.gain~ object) shows each 8-ch output value identically.



(Just in case you cannot get sound properly, you can check the configuration of sound out put by double-clicking 'p Output' object.
Here, you can distinguish between 8-ch and 2-ch output by the gain-meter.)



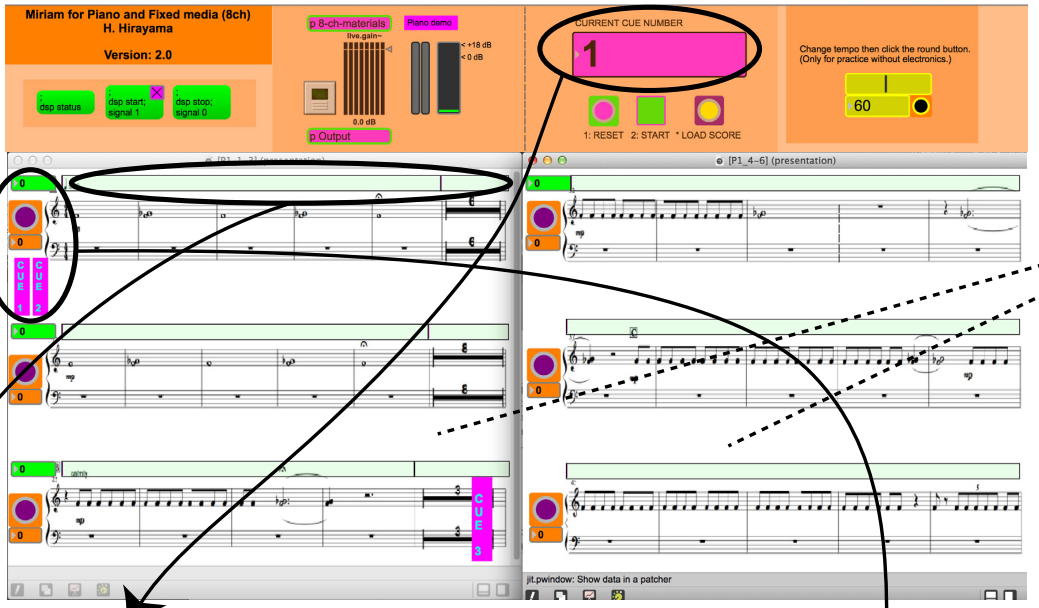
4: Once you click the 'dsp start' button with output-switch setup, you are ready to start music: tap the **Space key** so that you can move cues forward (to change programs of computer). When you need to reset them, tap the **Return key** then start again with the **Space key**.



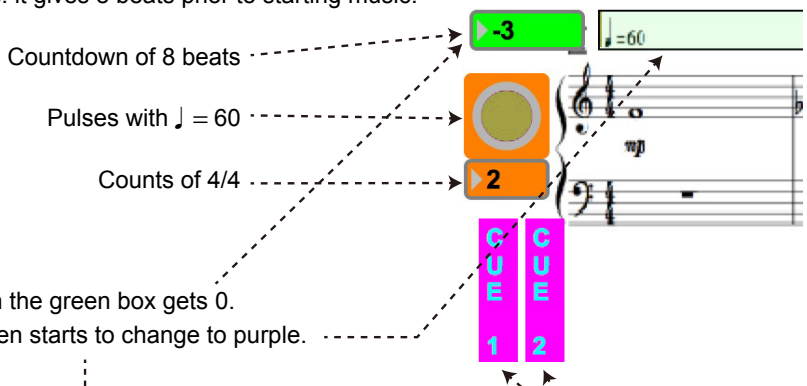
The current cue number is shown in this box.

(You won't need to use the three buttons, but you can reset all timers with the left button (reset), and start from the beginning with the middle switch (start). In case you cannot get the score, use the right button to load it (load score).)

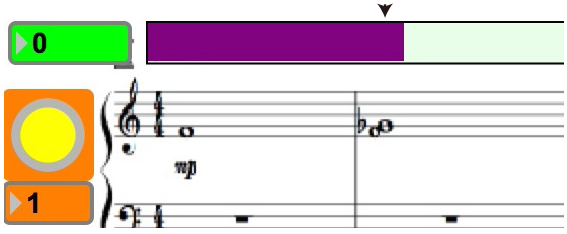
5: When the cue is **1**, you can get two windows of score (= pages 1).
(At rehearsals, it is recommended to arrange pop-up windows (= all pages of score) properly in a computer display, running through all cue numbers. You can also make score images smaller/larger with ⌘- or ⌘⇧ - . Then reset with the return key and start again. Do not close the main Max/MSP window.)



6: When the cue is **2**, the system starts: it gives 8 beats prior to starting music.



The pianist should start playing when the green box gets 0.
At the same time, the bar of light-green starts to change to purple.

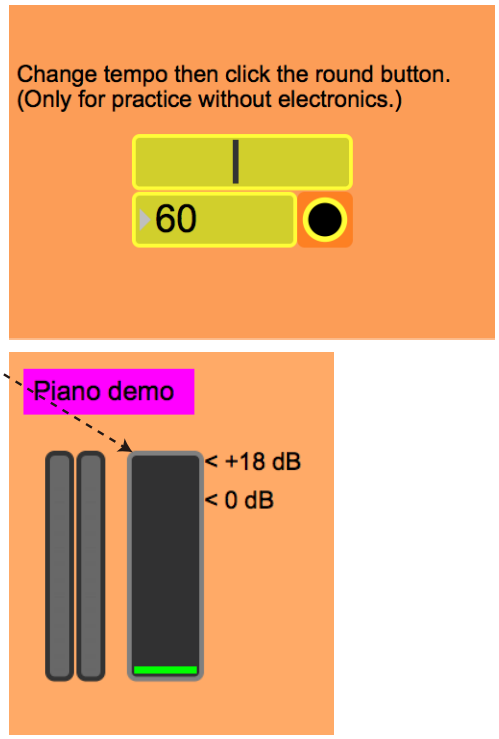


Tap the space key, or work a MIDI pedal so that the CURRENT CUE NUMBER box corresponds to the suggested number on score.
After cue 3 (m. 29), you will have more pop-up windows for score, and you can adjust the timing to tap as you like.

7: If you want to practice the piano part with different tempo, you can using the metronome.

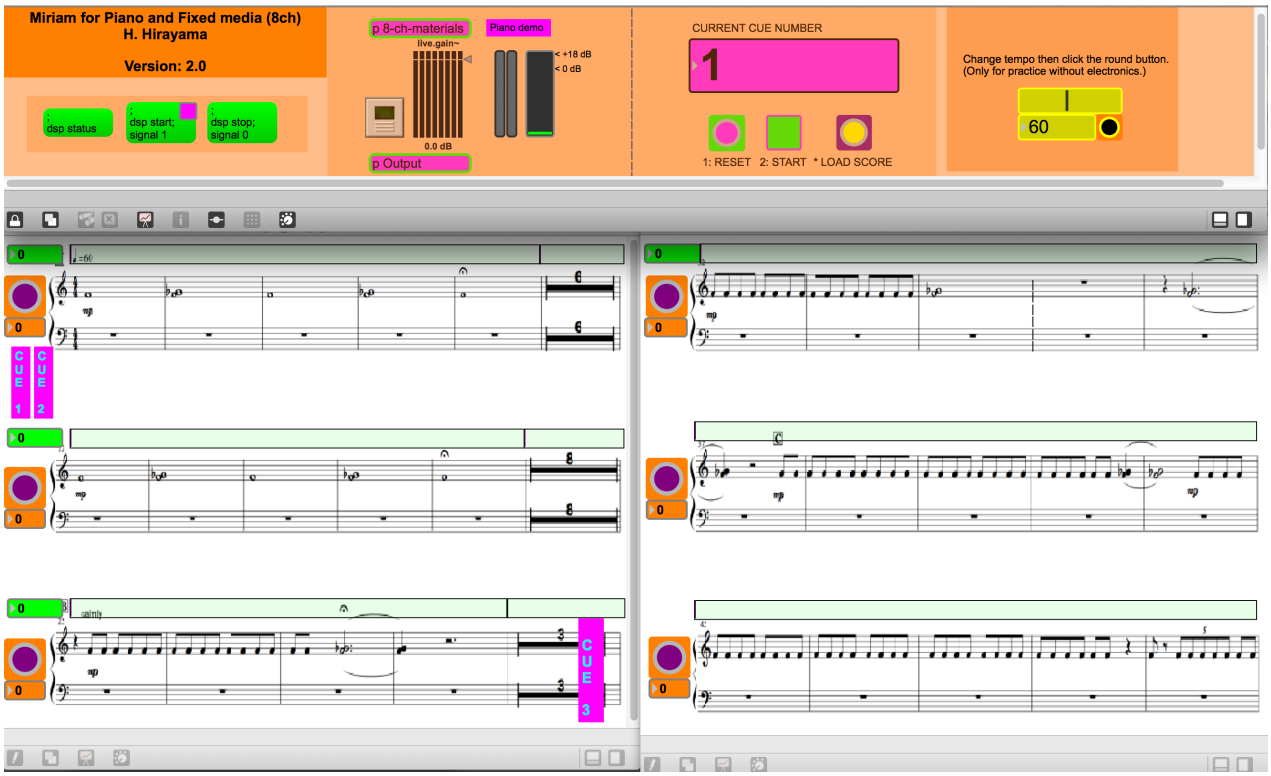
Once you set it, all tempo-related signs on the score will be changed, but it doesn't affect the speed for the electornic sound at all.

If you like to listen to the Piano part, turn up the volume fader. Default is 0.

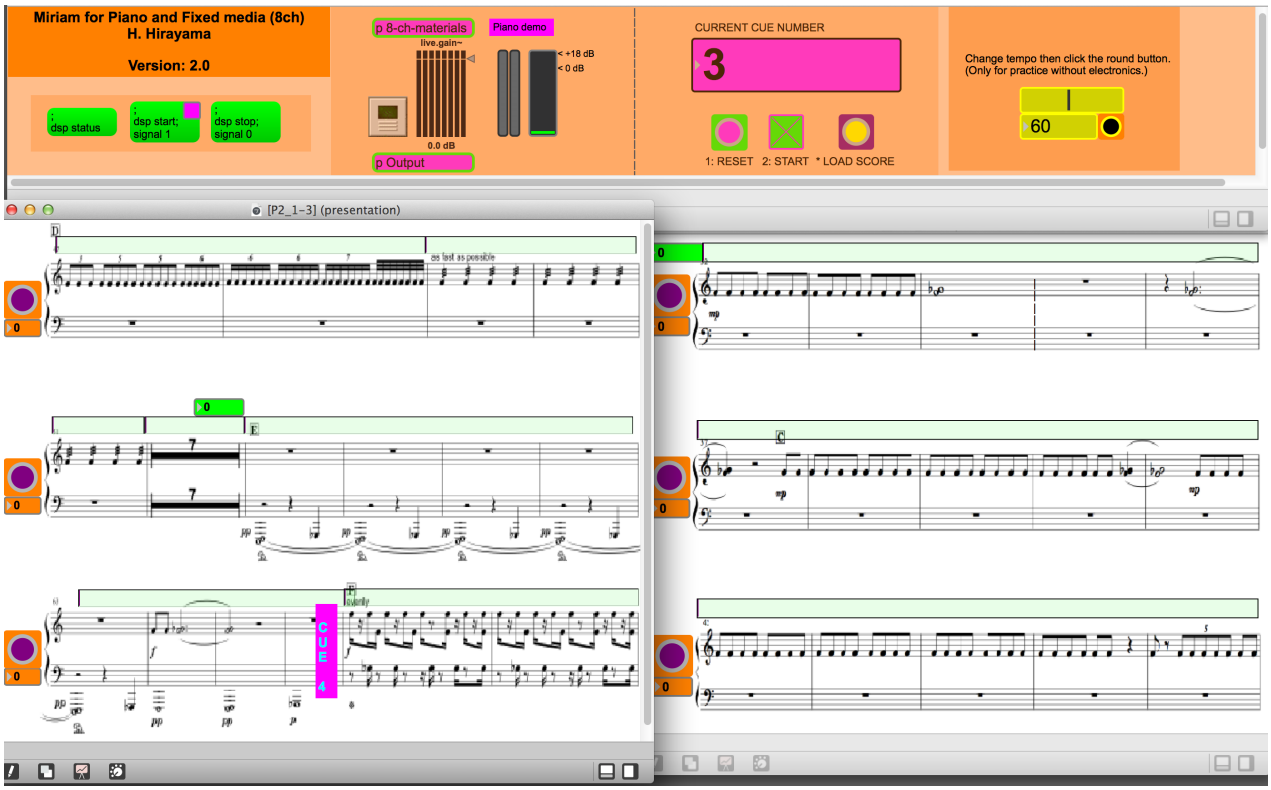


[Recommended views for electronic score and performance]

A preview for the page 1, mm. 1-46. (Two windows appear when the cues 1 is triggered.)



A preview for the page between 1-2, mm. (32)-68. (One window for the first half of page 2 appears when the cues 3 is triggered.) You may be better to adjust the size of window to display all.



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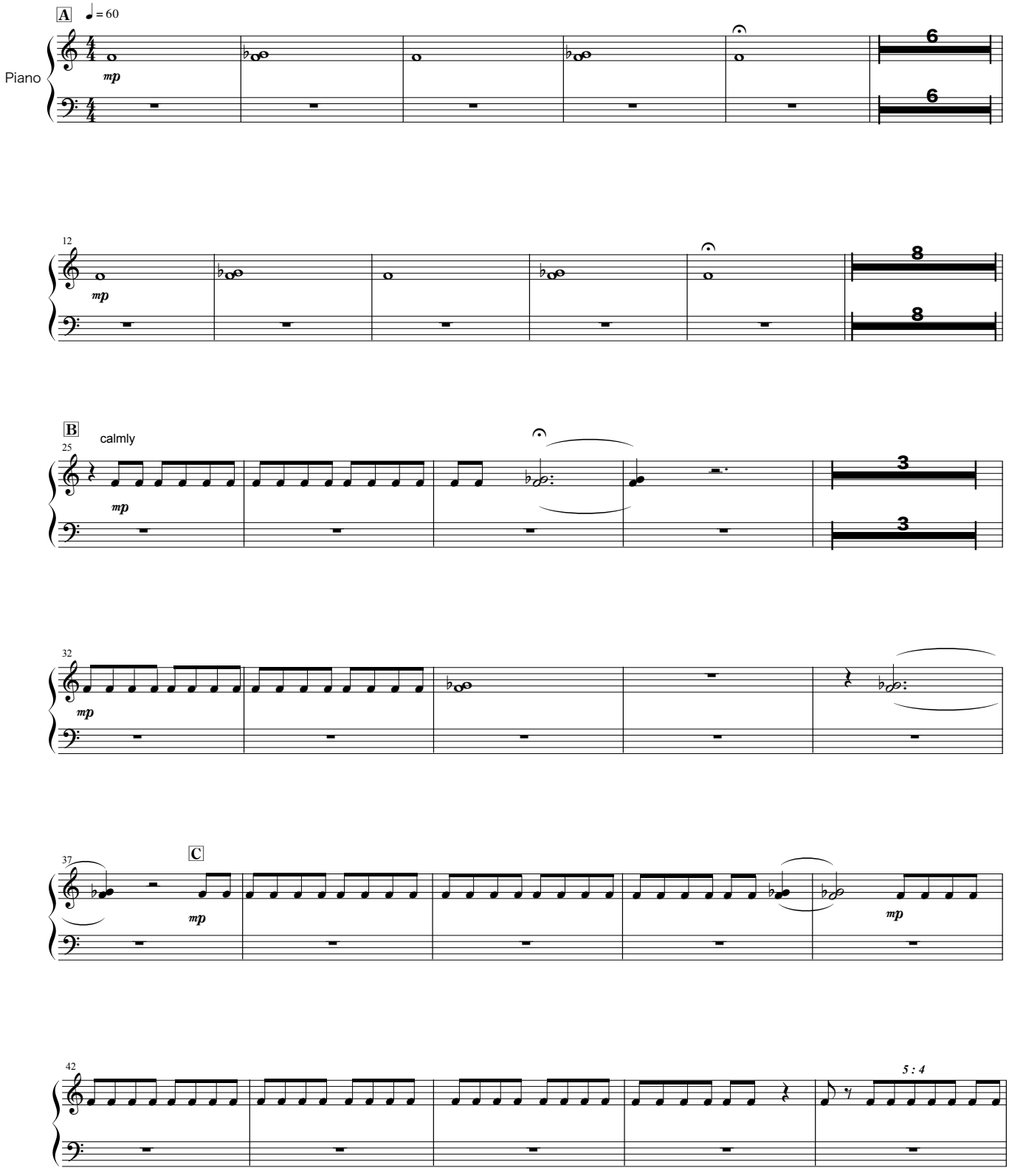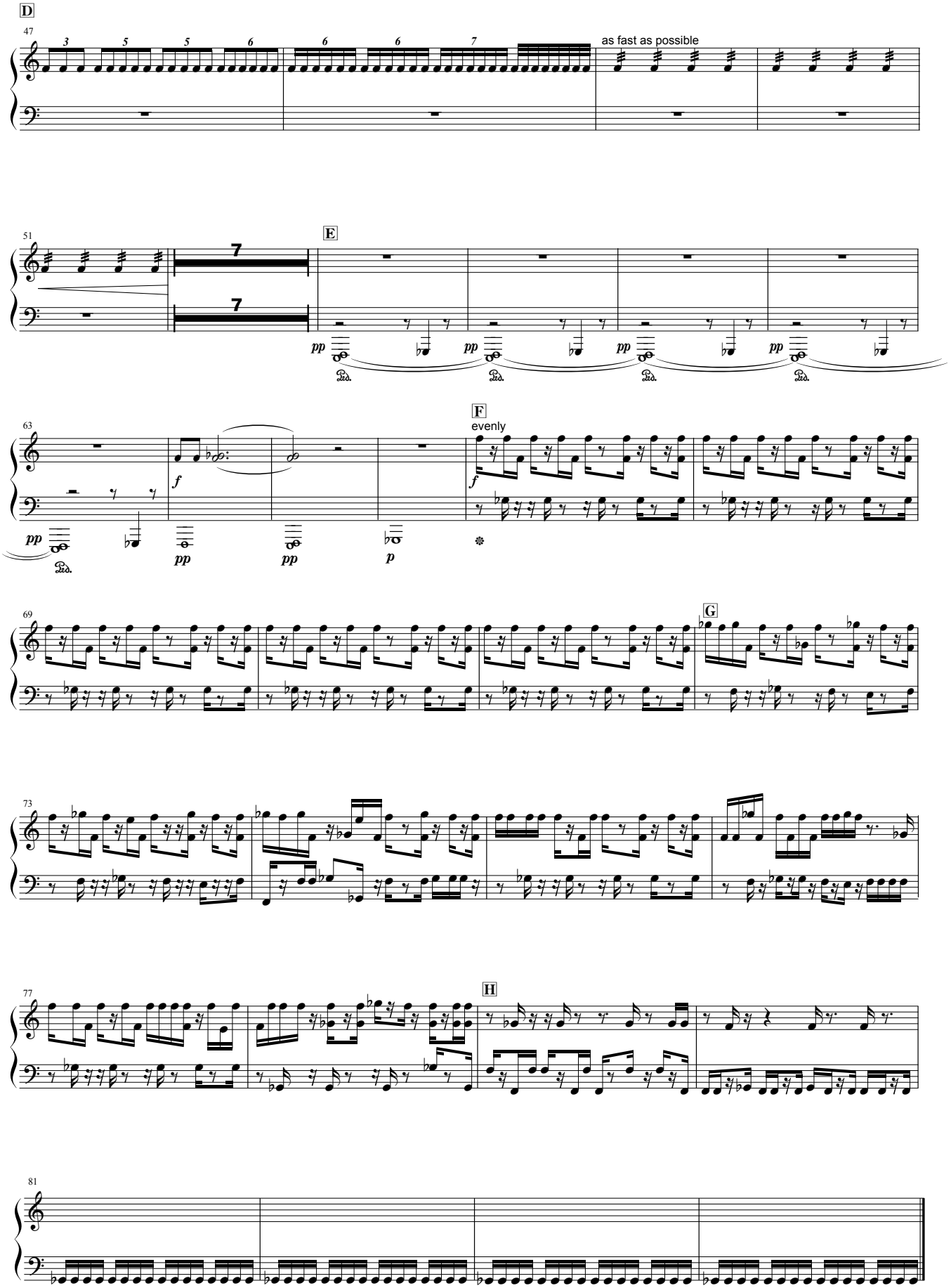

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