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Philosopher in a Jar

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PHILOSOPHER IN A JAR

Christopher Castillo

28 Pages

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Philosopher in a Jar is composed for vibraphone, piano, electric guitar, and amplified contrabass. The music was inspired by the unpublished short story, “The Galleon,” by T.V. Swantek. Drawing from the ideas of the seventeenth century French philosopher René Descartes, the story is a fictional realization of Descartes “evil demon” scenario and references his philosophical idea: “Cogito Ergo Sum.” In “The Galleon,” the artificial intelligence entity is the “evil demon” and is represented in the music by the use of perfect fourth intervals and steady rhythmic phrases. The protagonist of the story is a consciousness (the philosopher), presumably a former human, which has been placed into a robotic body and is confined to the artificial intelligence vessel. The philosopher is represented in the music with freely performed phrases, improvisation and serial passages. The story is presented in the form of a message being sent by the philosopher. The music incorporates the use of Morse code to convey the moral of the story: “Cogito ergo sum.” The title refers to the preservation of the consciousness being held in the AI vessel.

PHILOSOPHER IN A JAR

CHRISTOPHER CASTILLO

A Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

School of Music

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

2014

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PHILOSOPHER IN A JAR

CHRISTOPHER CASTILLO

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KEY COMPOSITIONAL COMPONENTS & CHARACTERIZATIONS

- Instrumentation: The piano and contrabass represent the machine. The coarse sounding harmonics in the contrabass and the clashing overtones of the un-dampened piano passages are used to convey the mechanical ambiance of the A.I. vessel. The vibraphone at rehearsal letters “C,” part of “D,” and “E” represent conscious thinking of the philosopher. The Electric guitar represents the soul of the philosopher and could be thought of as the voice of humanity. The element of improvisation also presents a contrast to the conscious-less machine.
- Harmonic language: The perfect fourth interval is used to represent the machine. Stacked fourth chords are presented in octave displacement as a means for the machine to trick the philosopher (see example in the vibraphone at rehearsal letter “K”). Pitch content from tone rows are presented in quasi-serial passages, and represent the philosopher’s freedom of conscious thought ($P_0:0,7,11,2,4,1,6,9,3,10,8,5$).
- Tempo/Rhythm: Sections marked “Freely” represent the philosopher’s consciousness (rehearsal letter “C”) or represent the idea of freedom presented in the “Programmed Dream Sequence.” Passages in strict tempo sections that feature steady pulsed rhythms, such as the piano and contrabass in the “Mechanical” sections, represent the machine.
- Morse code: Represents the message being sent from the philosopher.

PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS

- In the vibraphone part, notes with a cross through the stem (*) are to be struck on the edge of the bar with the shaft of the mallet stick.
- The note values in the “Ad lib” section at rehearsal letter “C” are approximate note values and should be realized at the performer’s discretion. This section should be performed at a “*forte*” dynamic level though the performer should vary the dynamic levels to shape the phrase as to their liking.
- The “Freely” section at rehearsal letter “E” is to be performed in the same manner as the above mentioned section (“C”). The vibraphonist and guitarist are independent of each other; there is no need for any rhythmic alignment. However, the distinct phrase in the guitar part which directly precedes rehearsal letter “F” should act as a cue into the next section.
- Rehearsal letters “P”, “Q”, and “R,” up to “S,” include boxed pitches of sixteenth notes in the vibraphone and piano parts. The players should perform the boxed notes and repeat them with no pause after the note successions. The result should be a constant flow of sixteenth notes. In the first measure of rehearsal letters “P,” “Q,” and “R,” the performers should vamp their part until the guitar and bass cue the next measure. The vamped measures should last three to five seconds. The vibraphone player and piano player should listen to the guitar and bass parts to receive a cue into letter “S.”

- Morse code passages are to be played rhythmically just as a typical Morse code telegraph message would sound, but using the notes or note areas as provided in the boxed figures. The performer can think of the “dashes” and “dots” as (relatively) long notes and short notes. For example the code:

$\cdots / \cdots - / - - /$ can be interpreted as: 

The slashes represent a space in between letters and should be observed with a rest. A blank space in between two slashes represents a space between words and should be observed with a rest longer than the duration of the rest in between letters. The rhythmic example provided above does not serve as a necessary solution, and the performers should interpret the code as best as they see fit. There is no rhythmic dependence among the individual parts from rehearsal letter “T,” up until “V,” and it is not intended to be in any rhythmic unison.

- In the piano part, hand symbols () should be performed as tone clusters in the general note area of where the hand image is placed on the staff. The performer should play a mix of white and black keys.

PHILOSOPHER IN A JAR

Christopher Castillo

"The Machine"

A Mechanical $\downarrow = 60$

The score consists of four staves. The Vibraphone staff has three measures of rests followed by a measure of 2/4 time with a fermata over the first note. The Piano staff has three measures of rests followed by a measure of 2/4 time with a dynamic *p*, a bass drum, and a grace note. The Electric Guitar staff has three measures of rests followed by a measure of 2/4 time. The Amplified Contrabass staff has three measures of rests followed by a measure of 2/4 time with a dynamic *p* and the instruction "coarse". Measure numbers IV, III, and II are indicated below the staff.

8

Hard mallets
strike on the edge of bars w/ shaft of sticks

The score consists of three staves. The Vibraphone staff has a measure of rests followed by a measure of 2/4 time with a dynamic *p* and the instruction "hold until rehearsal C". The Piano staff has a measure of rests followed by a measure of 2/4 time with a bass drum and grace notes. The Cello staff has a measure of rests followed by a measure of 2/4 time with a dynamic *p* and the instruction "coarse". Measure numbers III, II, IV, III, II, III, and IV are indicated below the staff.

B

15

Vib.

Pno.

8vb

E. Gtr.

p expressive - w/o pick attack (volume swell and finger slide)

Cb.

II IV III II IV IV II III IV II III IV III

≡

21

Vib.

Pno.

8vb

E. Gtr.

Cb.

III IV III IV II III IV III II III II

27

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.

$\ll f$

pf

=

32 **C** **Freely**

Vib.

f expressive

=

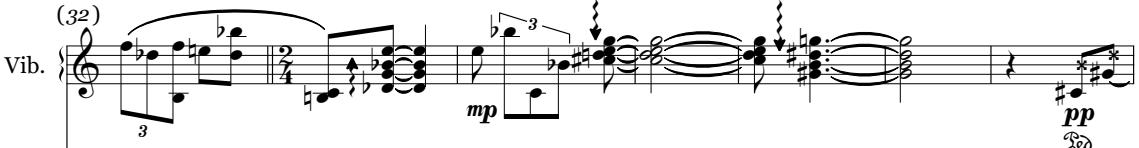
(32)

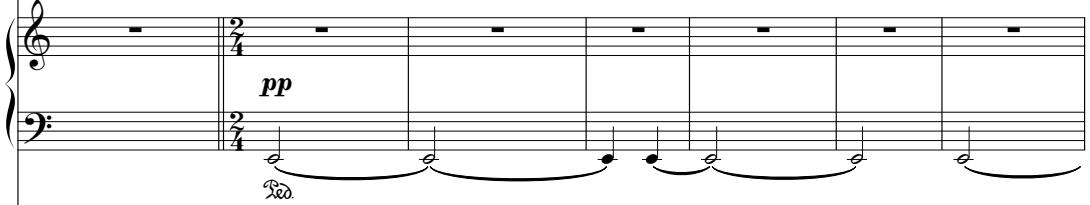
Vib.

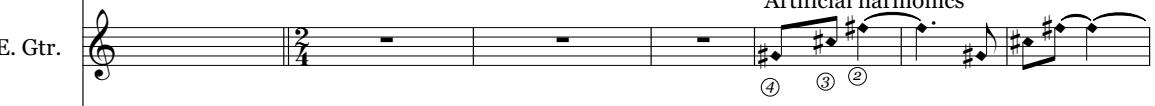
3

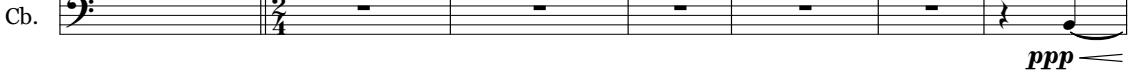
D

Quasi-mechanical $\text{♩} = 60$

(32) Vib. 

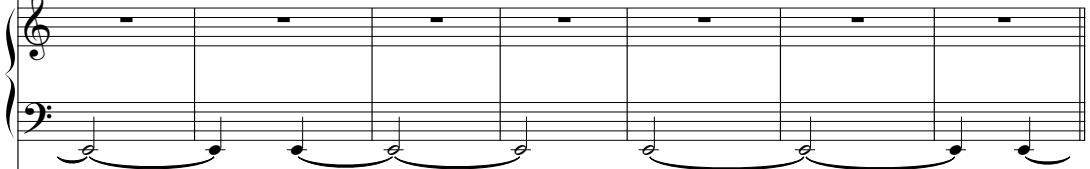
Pno. 

E. Gtr. 

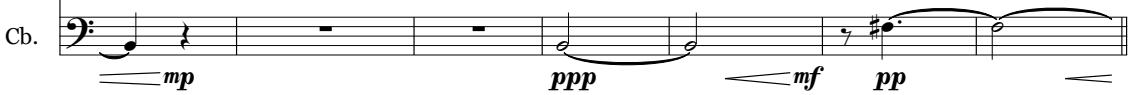
Clb. 

≡

39 Vib. 

Pno. 

E. Gtr. 

Clb. 

E

Freely

46

Vib. * *mf expressive*

Pno.

E. Gtr. use bar to bend up, hammer on, and/or slide to notes
* *mf expressive*

Cb. *= mf*

46

Vib.

E. Gtr.

Cb. *pp*

F

Quasi-mechanical $\text{J} = 60$

47

Vib. *p*

Pno. *pp* *poco a poco cresc. to rehearsal H*

E. Gtr. *w/ pick* *hold until rehearsal H* *8th* *l.v.*

Cb. *sul pont.* *poco a poco cresc. to rehearsal H*

53

Vib. *poco a poco cresc. to rehearsal H*
hold until rehearsal I

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb. *poco a poco cresc. to rehearsal H*

p

G

Slightly faster ($\bullet = 66$)

Vib. *(mp)*

Pno. *(mp)*

E. Gtr. *(mp)* (bend lower note from
sim. semi-tone below)
(mf)

Cb. *(mp)* *(mf)*

66 Slightly faster ($\text{♩} = 72$)

Vib. (mf)

Pno. (mf)

E. Gtr.

Cb.

Slow down (gradually H "Transition" into the tempo at "H")

H "Transition" $\text{♩} = 60$ l.v. ~

Vib. (f) ff

Pno. (f) ff p * *ad lib* (8)

E. Gtr. (f)

Cb. (f) ff ord. ff > p

78

Vib.

Pno.

(8) -

E. Gtr.

p expressive - w/o pick attack (volume swell and finger slide)

Clb.

l.v.

=

84

Vib.

Pno.

(8) -

E. Gtr.

Clb.

*

ppp

mp

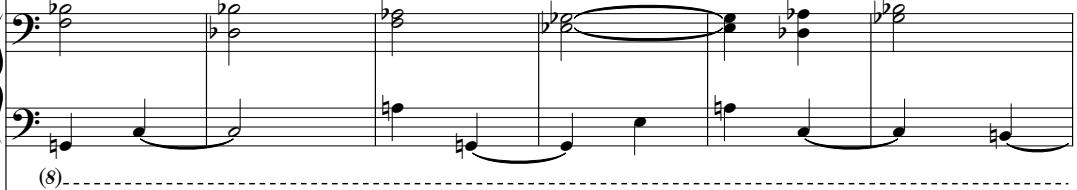
I

Soft mallets

At an independent tempo, play the Morse code signal using the provided notes. Repeat until "J."

90

Vib. {  →

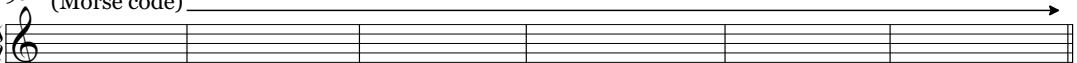
Pno. { 
(8)-----

E. Gtr. { 

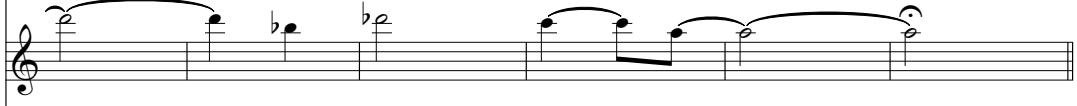
Cb. { 



96 (Morse code) →

Vib. { 

Pno. { 
(8)-----

E. Gtr. { 

Cb. { 

J**Freely (approx. 15")**

102 (Morse code) _____

Vib. {

E. Gtr. {

wide vibrato w/ bar,
gradually decrease frequency

gradually increase
vib. frequency

dive w/ bar & let
loosened strings
"grumble"

slow dive

rapid

Cb. {

**K "Programmed Dream Sequence"****L**

103 G.P. **Freely** ♩ = 112 **Freely**

Vib. {

Pno. {

p sim l.v.

p mechanical

8va----- l.v. -----

hold until measure 124

**M**

107 ♩ = 112 **Freely**

Vib. {

Pno. {

l.v.

3

8va----- l.v. -----

p mechanical

N

Vib. $\text{♩} = 112$ improvise on this chord until bass pizz. **Pno.** $\text{♩} = 110$ **Freely** $\text{♩} = 112$

8va **pno mechanical**

Cb. **pizz.** **mp**

**O**

Vib. $\text{♩} = 112$ **Freely**

Pno. $\text{♩} = 112$ **l.v.**

E. Gtr. **vol. swells** $\text{♩} = 112$ **mp**

Cb. $\text{♩} = 112$ **mf**

$\text{♪} = 112$

117 Vib. Hard mallets mp

Pno. mf

E. Gtr. mp

arco
Cb. mp

120 Vib. ff

Pno. ff

(8) E. Gtr. ff

Cb. ff

P (♩ = 112) 3" - 5" vamp

Play boxed notes and vamp this measure. Continue playing these notes into the next measures as the E. Gtr. & Bass start to play. Tempo does not change and there should be no pause inbetween note groups.

124

Vib. *mp*

* *hold until rehearsal T*

Pno. *mp*

hold until "T"

E. Gtr.

Cb.

Play boxed notes and vamp this measure. Continue playing these notes into the next measures as the E. Gtr. & Bass start to play. Tempo does not change and there should be no pause inbetween note groups.

add left hand

vol. swell every note

mf

vol. swell every note

mf

Q Vamp (same as before)

128

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.

R

Vamp (same as before)

135

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.

=

142

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.

S

148

Vib. { *f*
 Pno. { *f*
 E. Gtr. - *p* *sra* -
 Cb. *p* gliss.

=

152

Vib. { - *n*
 Pno. { - *n*
 E. Gtr. (8) - *n* *pp* *sra* -
 Cb. *gliss.* *sra* *n*

T "Frustrated message"

Play morse code signals at independent tempo
using pitches from the boxed figures

157

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.

=

159

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb.

U

160 Gradually increase intensity and speed

Musical score for measures 160-161. The score consists of four staves:

- Vib.**: Two staves for vibraphone, both playing eighth-note patterns. The first staff has a small square box above it.
- Pno.**: One staff for piano, playing eighth-note patterns. A small square box contains a piano icon above the staff.
- E. Gtr.**: One staff for electric guitar, playing eighth-note patterns. A small square box contains a guitar icon above the staff.
- Cb.**: One staff for cello, playing eighth-note patterns. A small square box contains a cello icon above the staff.

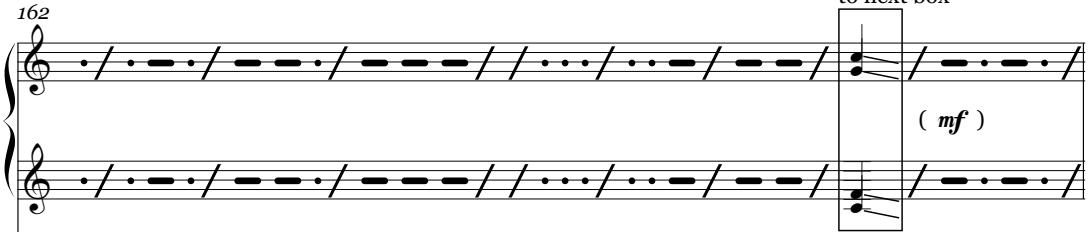
Measure 160 ends with a fermata over the piano staff. Measure 161 begins with a new tempo marking (mp).

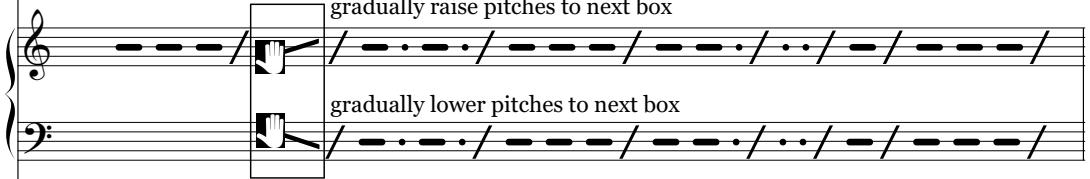
=

Continuation of the musical score for measures 161-162. The score consists of four staves:

- Vib.**: Two staves for vibraphone, playing eighth-note patterns. A small square box contains a vibraphone icon above the staff. Dynamic markings (mp) are placed above the piano and electric guitar staves.
- Pno.**: One staff for piano, playing eighth-note patterns. A dynamic marking (mp) is placed above the staff.
- E. Gtr.**: One staff for electric guitar, playing eighth-note patterns. A small square box contains a guitar icon above the staff. A dynamic marking (mp) is placed below the staff.
- Cb.**: One staff for cello, playing eighth-note patterns. A dynamic marking (mp) is placed below the staff.

162

Vib. 

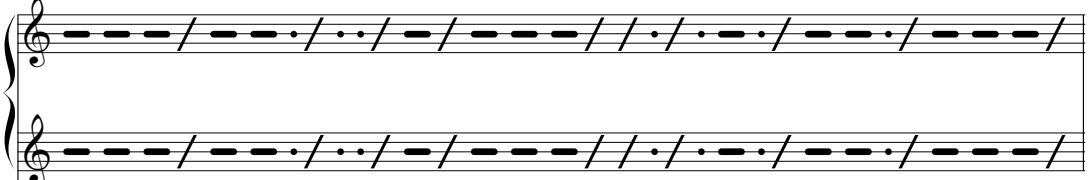
Pno. 

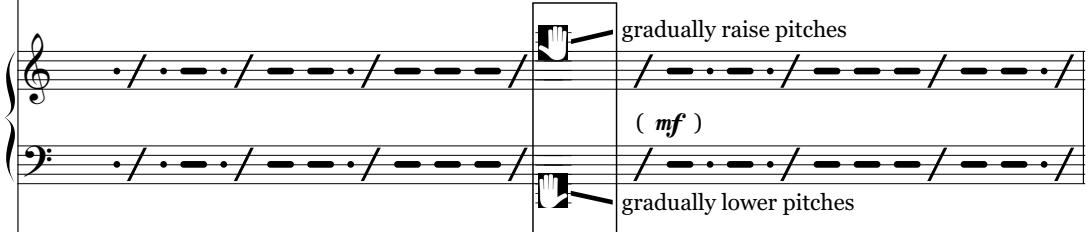
E. Gtr. 

Cb. 

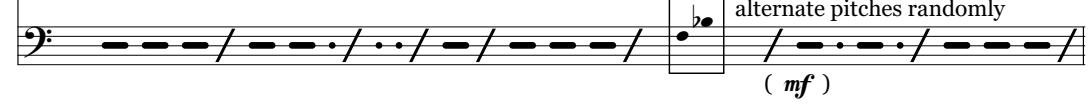
≡

163

Vib. 

Pno. 

E. Gtr. 

Cb. 

164

gradually raise pitches

Vib. (f)

Pno. (f) *8va* *8vb*

E. Gtr. (f)

Cb. alternate pitches randomly

=

165

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Cb. alternate pitches randomly (f)

166

Vib. (ff)

Pno. (ff)

E. Gtr. (ff)

Cb. (ff)

=

167

Vib. fff

Pno. fff alternate w/ bar

E. Gtr. fff

Cb. fff

Vamp until all players have arrived here. Continue upon consensus.

Vamp and gradually slow down. (not necessarily in rhythmic unison)

V

170 $\text{♩} = 60$

This musical score page contains four staves. The top staff is for the Vibraphone (Vib.), showing eighth-note patterns. The second staff is for the Piano (Pno.), featuring hand icons indicating specific fingerings or techniques. The third staff is for the Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), with a dynamic marking "sim." in the middle of the measure. The bottom staff is for the Cello (Cb.). The music is in 2/4 time.

176

This musical score page continues from the previous one. The Vibraphone (Vib.) has a dynamic marking "(b)." over its first note. The Piano (Pno.) staff shows hand icons with a dynamic marking "8vb" over the bass note. The Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.) staff includes a dynamic marking "b" over the first note. The Cello (Cb.) staff shows eighth-note patterns. The music remains in 2/4 time.

"The Philosopher's Lament"

Freely
approx. 10" $\text{♩} = 60$

182

Vib. l.v. (bassoon-like notes)

Pno. l.v. (bassoon-like notes)

E. Gtr. (bassoon-like notes)

Cb. (bassoon-like notes) Improvise freely: the philosopher's lament →

pizz. arco pizz.

ff

=

Freely
(10") $\text{♩} = 60$ Freely
(10") $\text{♩} = 60$

188

Vib. (bassoon-like notes) ff (bassoon-like notes) ff

Pno. (bassoon-like notes) ff (bassoon-like notes) ff

E. Gtr. (bassoon-like notes) (gtr. solo) →

Cb. arco pizz. l.v. arco pizz.

ff

"The Machine"

194

**Freely
(10"- 20")**

$\text{♩} = 60$

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

(gtr. solo) → End solo but continue improvising and gradually fade away to the end (pizz.)

Cb.

mp

=

W

200 Play morse code using previous chord (independent tempo)

Vib.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

(improvisation) →

Cb.

p

$8vb$

$8vb$

hold until end

hold until end

arco sul pont.

p

mf

p

208

Vib. brush mallet head across bars
pp

Pno. *8vb*

E. Gtr. (improvisation) →

Cb. *sfz* *p*

X

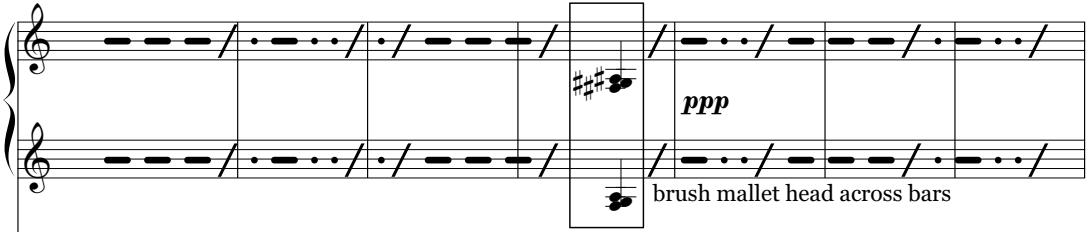
215

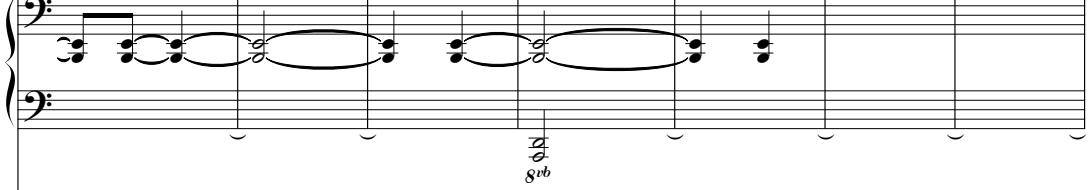
Vib.

Pno. *8vb*

E. Gtr. (improvisation) →

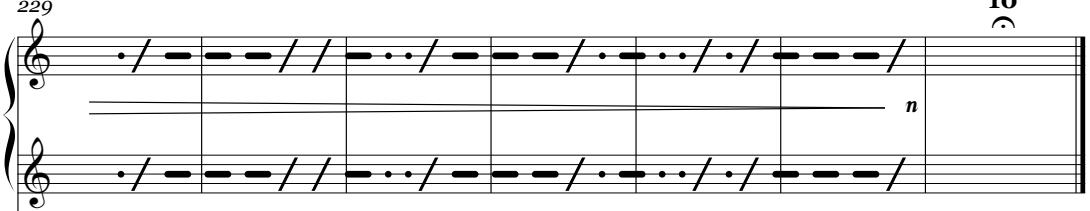
Cb. *pp*

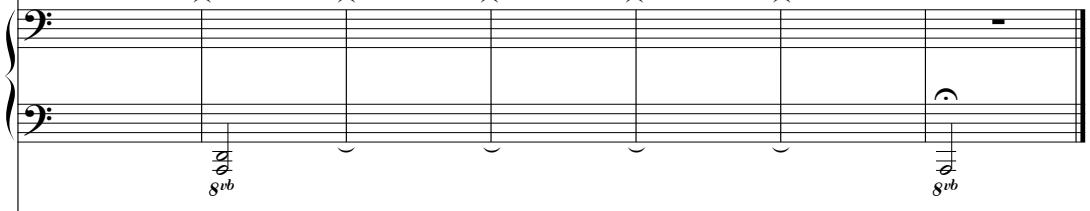
Vib. 222


 Pno. (improvisation)


 E. Gtr.
 Cb. play code and improvise with any high pitched harmonics (independent tempo)


=

Vib. 229


 Pno. 10"


 E. Gtr. (improvisation) n


Cb. n
