Song & Dance

An excessively elaborate effort to explain or justify

For 9 musicians

Commissioned by Ulysses-network
Written for
International Ensemble Modern Academy
Frankfurt am Main, Germany

July 2017

Maya G.L. Verlaak

Verlaak Verlag

Note: This work is written for the 2016-2017 International Ensemble Modern Academy. However, it can be performed by any ensemble. **The instrumentation can also be changed.**

Concept: Compositional justification processes

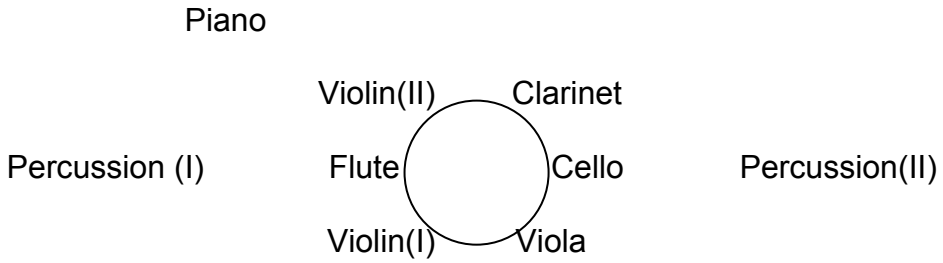
To directly highlight the theme of justification in this piece, I developed an idea for the ensemble to not receive any written music from me, but rather receive a justification of the music instead. They receive a musical analysis of the work, rather than a conventionally notated version of the work. While performing my piece, they are directly engaged with this justification of the piece.

The material I analysed is in three sections: A, A' and B, and is reconstructed as a three-part music analysis game. Playing the game recomposes the song but most importantly, the musicians have complete insight into the construction of the piece. To play the game they have to use the analysis material and follow the rules, which I constructed and developed from my analysis of an existing piece.

1. Instrumentation and ensemble set up

Positioned in a circle in this order:
Violin (II), Clarinet, Cello, Viola, Violin (I), Flute

Piano and
Percussion I&II (= 2x4 pieces of different kinds of sand paper)



2. Performance techniques

- Strings

Non-*vibrato*

Dynamics: *pianissimo* (to create all together a *piano* dynamic, in relation to the winds-dynamics)

Accent/crescendo: On each new note: f*p* => *pp tenuto*

- Winds

Dynamics: *piano*

Accent/crescendo: On each new note: f*p* => *p tenuto*

- Percussion

Dynamics: *mezzo forte with clear attack*

- Piano:

Dynamics: *forte*

3. SCORE & PARTS

3.1 Rhythm part for two percussionists

In reference to the attached percussion score-chart:

Choose for each note value (4): a specific piece of sand paper to make 4 slightly different white noise sounds.

In addition,
Percussion 1: blow a D-pitch whistle (choir-tuner or whistle) in unison with the piano (every time the piano player plays a D).
This triggers **Percussionist 2** to change tempo.

Percussion 2: blow an A-pitch whistle (choir-tuner or whistle) in unison with the piano (every time the piano player plays an A).
This triggers **Percussionist 1** to change tempo.

In reference to the attached percussion score-chart:
Use only the following tempi in any order:
 = 160 or 80 or 53 or 40

Note: a dotted line in the score is equal to the other lines. It is only dotted to prevent confusion when two lines cross.

3.1.1 Time structure

Part 1 = 00:00 - 03:17 (everyone starts together)

10 sec break (everyone stops)

Part 2 = 03:27 - 06:44

10 sec break (everyone stops)

Part 3 = 06:54 - 12:48

10 sec break (percussion & piano stops, not the ensemble)

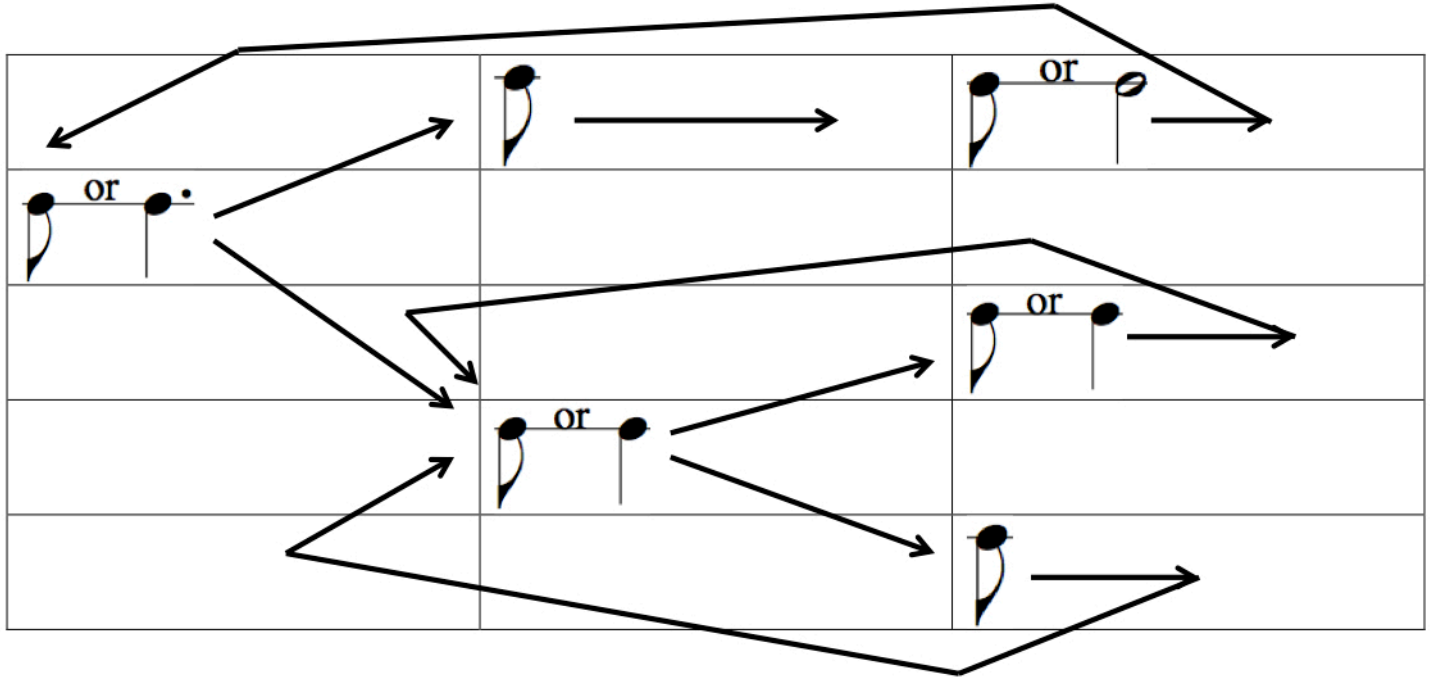
At 12:48: Ensemble (Violin (II), Clarinet, Cello, Viola, Violin (I), Flute) keeps playing until after the 10 sec. break and stops at the start of the CODA.

12:58 CODA part: The piano player finishes solo (ensemble stops)

PART 1 (00:00 - 03:17)

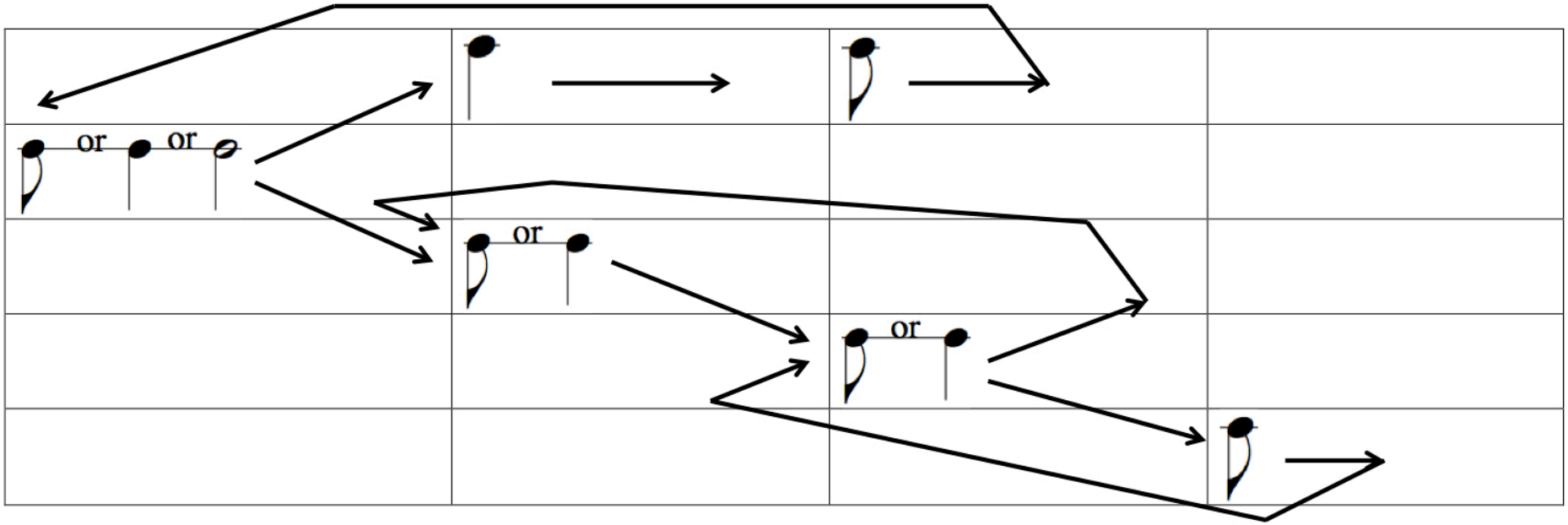
Percussion 1

Tempo: 160 or 80 or 53 or 40
Change tempo when Percussionist 2 whistles an A-pitch in unison with the piano.
Play from the grids (with the sand paper) on repeat and whistle a D-pitch in unison with the piano. (The whistle can also be an instrument, such as a choir-tuner).



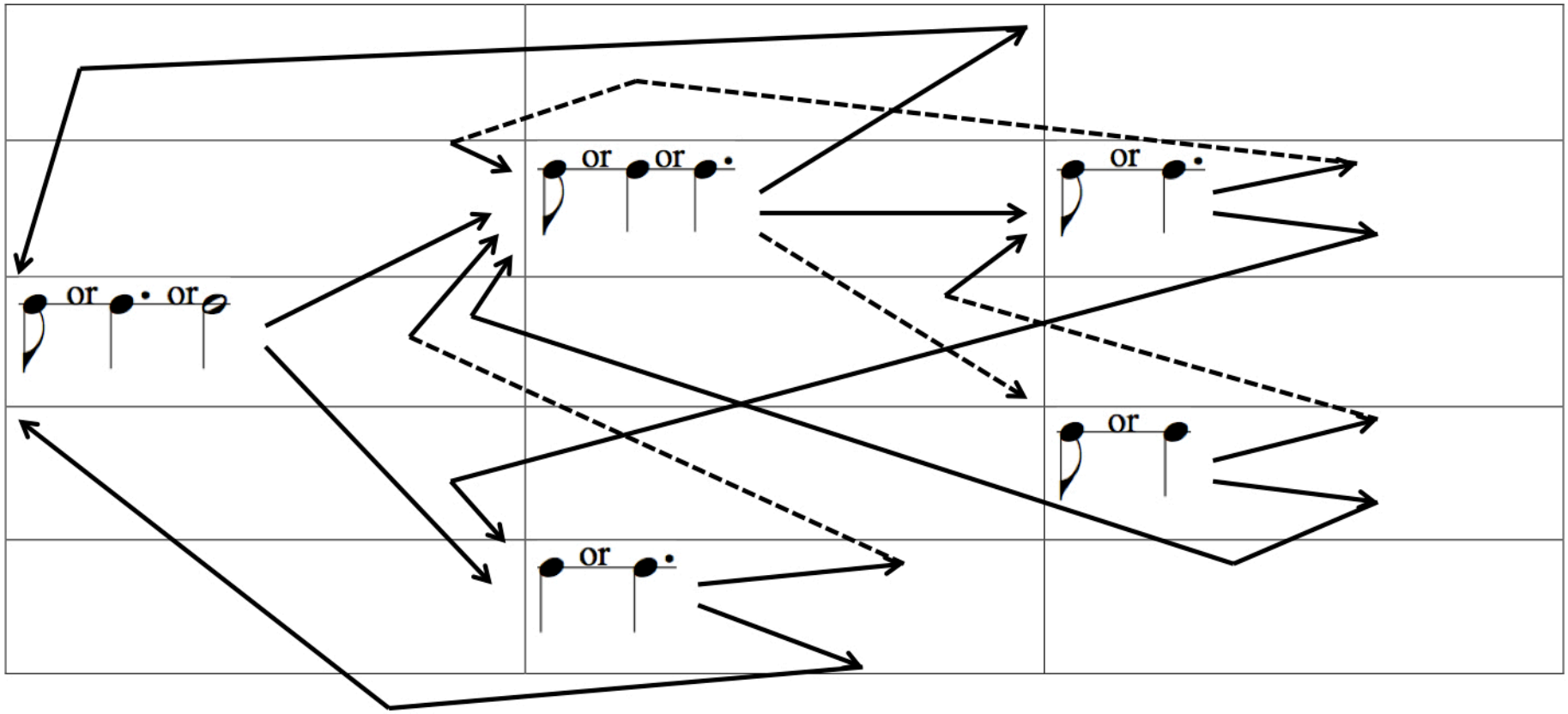
PART 2 (03:27 - 06:44)

Percussion 1



PART 3 (06:54 - 12:48)

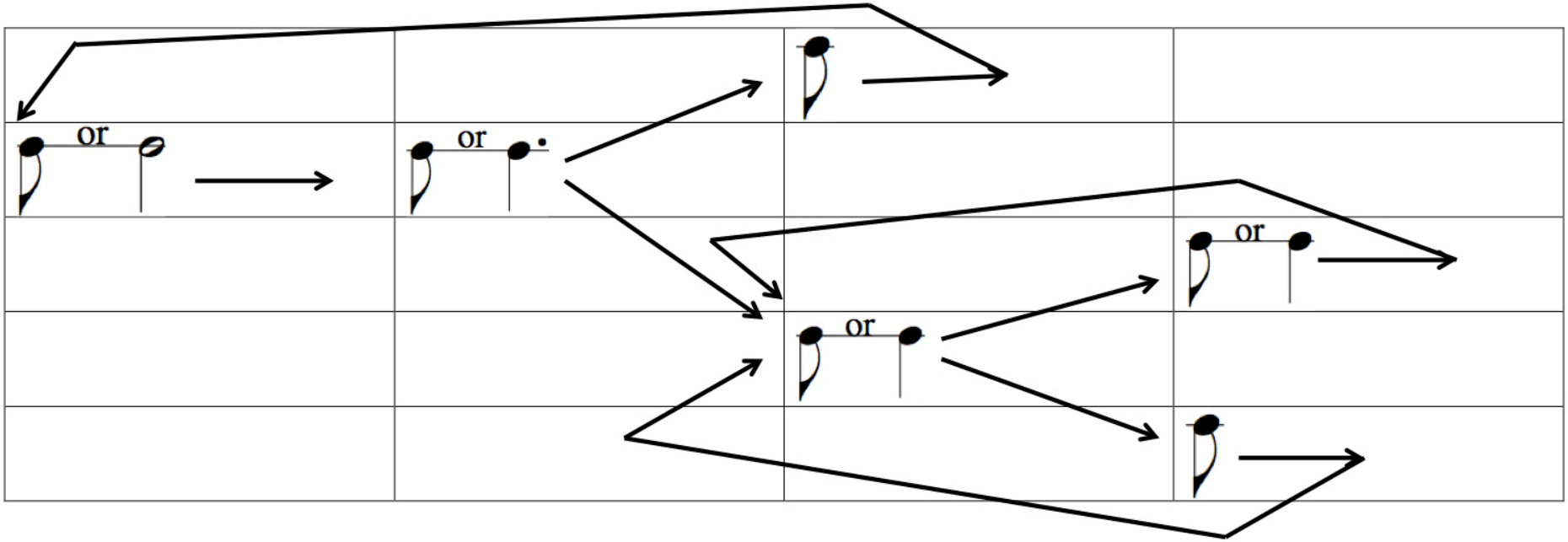
Percussion 1



PART 1 (00:00 - 03:17)

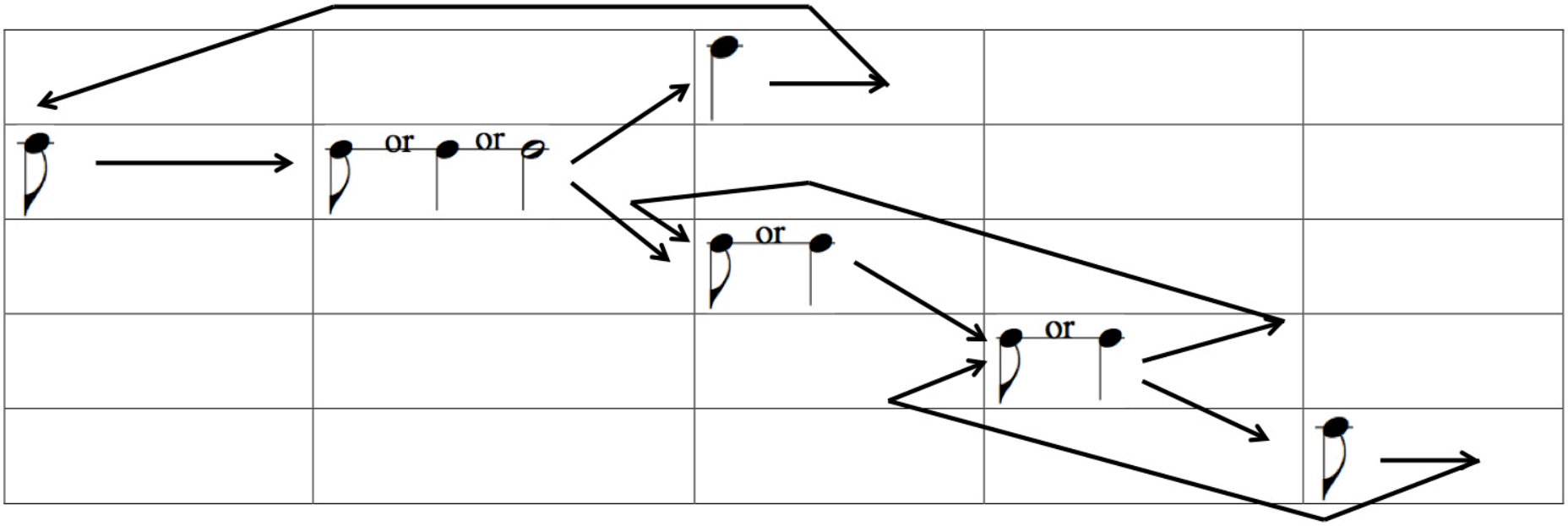
Percussion 2

Tempo: 160 or 80 or 53 or 40
Change tempo when Percussionist 1 whistles a D-pitch in unison with the piano.
Play from the grids (with the sand paper) on repeat and whistle an A-pitch in unison with the piano. (The whistle can also be an instrument, such as a choir-tuner).



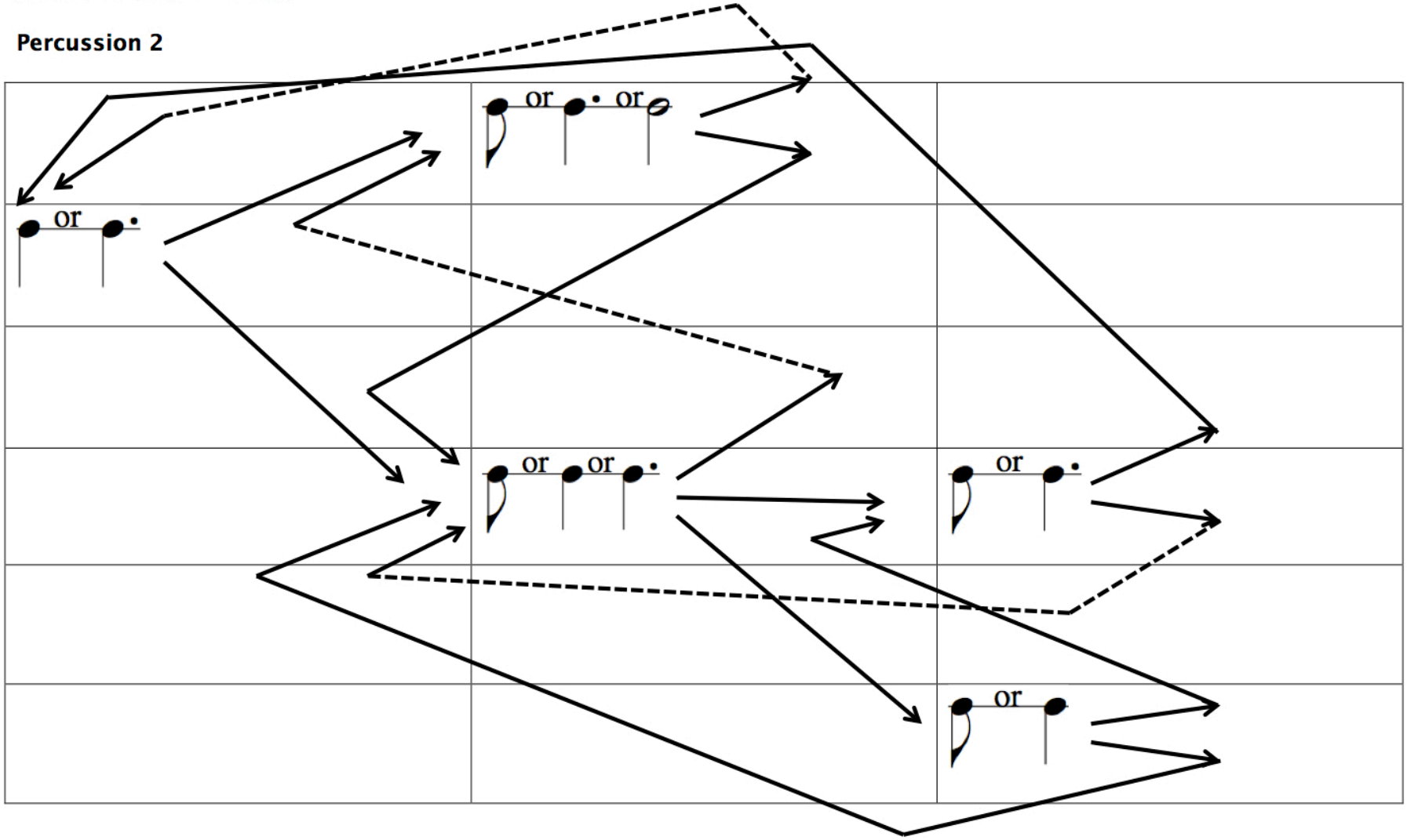
PART 2 (03:27 - 06:44)

Percussion 2



PART 3 (06:54 - 12:48)

Percussion 2



3.2 Pitch part for Violin (I), Violin (II), Viola, Cello, Flute and Clarinet

The group is divided into:

- Ensemble (5 musicians)
- Rotating soloist (1 musician): With the role of playing the theme; rotating around the circle)

3.2.1 Ensemble (5 musicians)

In reference to pitch grid on the next page: each musician starts independently on a different note and makes an interval decision in the grid.

For instance: start playing the D and move to a perfect 4th down. Sustain this new note until you hear someone else playing your note, in unison or in octave. Choose again a new interval but move from the note that one has arrived at and repeat the process.

As example: The violinist plays an E and decides to choose the *major second up* in the grid. After this decision the violinist will be playing a F#.
The flautist is playing a G and decides to choose a *Minor second down* in the grid. After this decision the flautist will be playing a F#. The Violin player hears the Flute player playing the same note. Therefore the violin player makes a new interval choice in the F# column, for instance the *Major 7th down*.
Continue the process.

3.2.2 Rotating soloist (1 musician)

Listen to the other musicians (Violin (I) Violin (II), Cello, Viola, Clarinet and Flute) and play the same note of one musician in unison or octave.

a) Do this in the structure of the theme for instance in
PART 1: D – A – C# – D – F# – G – E

As a result, this musician will stop playing his/her note and make a new decision using *the interval grid.*

For instance, you think you hear a D therefore you play a D. The person who plays the D will stop playing the D.
Now, you think you hear an A therefore you play an A. The person who plays the A will stop playing the A.
Now you think you can hear a C# therefore you play the C#, the person who plays the C# stops playing the C#. Continue the process until E.

b) Do this by choosing the pitch-lengths mentioned in the *pitch-length grid.*

For instance, when you hear someone playing a D, play a unison D after 1 or 4 counts, (after this person has started playing that D).
When you hear an A, play unison after 1 or 3 counts.
The time length of one count should be in the tempo of one of the percussionists.

c) When the musician comes to the end of the theme: **circulate roles.**

For instance,

Violin (I) plays the theme using the *Pitch length – grid*
Violin (II), Clarinet, Cello, Viola and Flute play from the *Interval – grid*
Violin (I) plays the last note of the theme (E)

CIRCULATE roles: The flute plays the theme using the *Pitch length-grid*
Violin (II), Clarinet, Cello, Viola and Violin(I) play from the *Interval – grid*

3.2.3 Time structure

Part 1 = 00:00 - 03:17 (everyone starts together)

10 sec break (everyone stops)

Part 2 = 03:27 - 06:44

10 sec break (everyone stops)

Part 3 = 06:54 - 12:48

10 sec break (percussion & piano stops, not the ensemble)

At 12:48: Ensemble (Violin (II), Clarinet, Cello, Viola, Violin (I), Flute) keeps playing until after the 10 sec. break and stops at the start of the CODA.

12:58 CODA part: The piano player finishes solo (ensemble stops)

PART 1
(00:00 - 03:17)

1) Ensemble (5 musicians)

Interval – grid

from D	**from E**	**from F#**	**from G**	**from A**	**from C#**
Perfect 4th down	Major 2nd up	Major 2nd down	Minor 2nd down	Major 3rd up	Minor 2nd up
Perfect 5th up	Minor 7th down	Minor 7th up	Major 7th up	Minor 6th down	Major 7th down
		Minor 2nd up		Minor 3rd down	
		Major 7th down		Major 6th up	

2) Rotating soloist (1 musician)

Theme: D – A – C# – D – F# – G – E

Pitch length – grid

D	**E**	**F#**	**G**	**A**	**C#**
1	1	1	1	1	1
4		2	2	3	

PART 2
(03:27 - 06:44)

1) Ensemble (5 musicians)

Interval – grid

from D	**from E**	**from F#**	**from G**	**from A**	**from C#**
Perfect 4th down	Major 2nd up	Major 2nd down	Minor 2nd down	Major 3rd up	Minor 2nd up
Perfect 5th up	Minor 7th down	Minor 7th up	Major 7th up	Minor 6th down	Major 7th down
		Minor 2nd up		Major 2nd down	
		Major 7th down		Minor 7th Up	

2) Rotating soloist (1 musician)

Theme: A – C# – D – G – F# – E

Pitch length – grid

D	**E**	**F#**	**G**	**A**	**C#**
1	1	1	1	1	2
		2	2	2	
				4	

PART 3
(06:54 - 12:48)

1) Ensemble (5 musicians)

Interval – grid

from D	**from E**	**from F#**	**from G**	**from A**
Perfect 4th down	Major 2nd up	Major 2nd down	Minor 2nd down	Minor 3rd down
Perfect 5th up	Minor 7th down	Minor 7th up	Major 7th up	Major 6th up
Major 3rd up	Major 2nd down	Minor 2nd up	Minor 3rd down	Perfect 4th up
Minor 6th down	Minor 7th up	Major 7th down	Major 6th up	Perfect 5th down
		Minor 3rd up		
		Major 6th down		

2) Rotating soloist (1 musician)

Theme: A – D – F# – G – E – D

Pitch length – grid

D	**E**	**F#**	**G**	**A**
2	1	1	1	1
3	3	2	2	3
		3		4

3.3 Piano part

Use the attached video score. Listen with headphones and perform the video image. Try to recreate what you hear and see. Play the sustained notes as long as possible but do not replay them to make them sound longer.

Cue the full ensemble when you start.

3.3.1 Pitch

Each part should be performed with a different set of pitches (in all octaves):

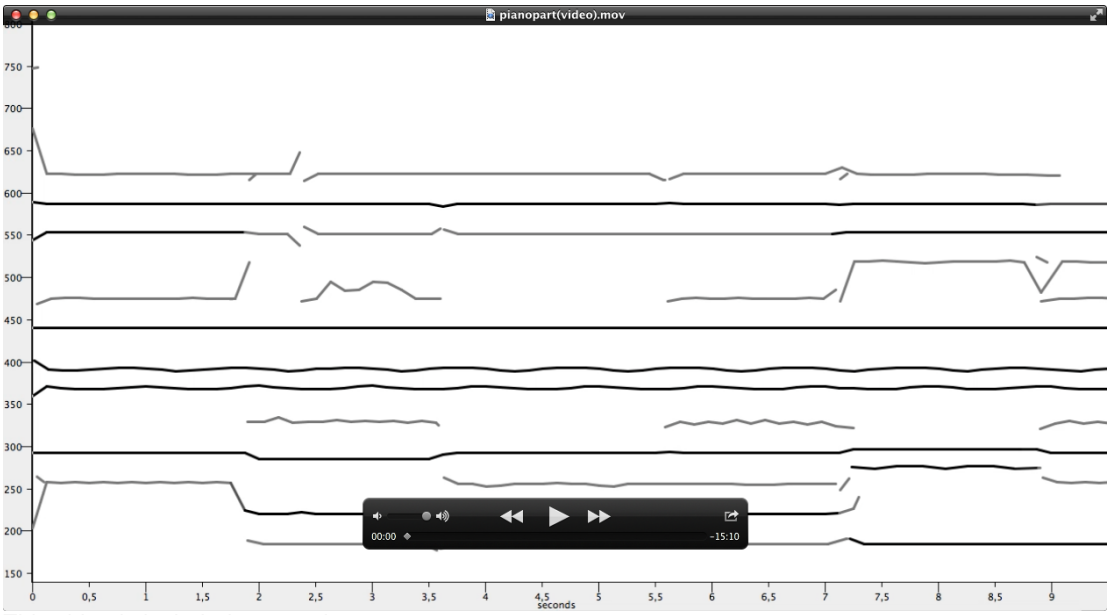
PART 1 = D – A – C# – D – F# – G – E

PART 2 = A – C# – D – G – F# – E

PART 3 = A – D – F# – G – E – D

CODA = D – F# – G – E – D

Example of the video score:



This video is included as attachment

3.3.2 Time structure

Part 1 = 00:00 - 03:17 (everyone starts together)

10 sec break (everyone stops)

Part 2 = 03:27 - 06:44

10 sec break (everyone stops)

Part 3 = 06:54 - 12:48

10 sec break (percussion & piano stops, not the ensemble)

At 12:48: Ensemble (Violin (II), Clarinet, Cello, Viola, Violin (I), Flute) keeps playing until after the 10 sec. break and stops at the start of the CODA.

12:58 CODA part: The piano player finishes solo (ensemble stops)