Rosetta Stone

open score for percussion trio

Jordan Nobles

Dedicated to John Cage

North Vancouver, June 2016

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DETAILS:

Rosetta Stone was completed in June 2016 in North Vancouver, BC.

PROGRAMME NOTES

Rosetta Stone was inspired by the ancient black granite stele inscribed with a decree from King Ptolemy I in three different scripts. It is essentially the same text, with only minor differences, written out in three different languages. Since some of the stone was missing and the text incomplete, it took a few decades to decipher, but eventually the stone provided the key to an understanding of Egyptian hieroglyphs.

I've written numerous pieces with all of the harmonies and melodies composed but a great deal of flexibility offered to the performers with respect to the rhythms and exactly when to play the given harmonic material. With *Rosetta Stone* I set about to reverse that and to prescribe exact rhythms but leave the pitches free to be spontaneously decided during performance (much like in **Louis Andriessen's** *Worker's Union*, or many of the aleatoric works of **John Cage**).

Similar to the actual Rosetta Stone, the three performers have essentially the same material, in the form of an almost perfect canon, but they each choose, in the moment, their own 'language'.

It is dedicated to John Cage, who provided the key to so many new areas of exploration.

DURATION:

The duration of *Rosetta Stone* is variable. Certain sections (**A**, **B**, **D**, **F**, etc.) can be repeatedly as many times as desired therefore leaving the duration of performance anywhere from 3 or 4 minutes to somewhat longer. Also a Section or Sections can even be skipped entirely if desired.

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

INSTRUMENTS:

Rosetta Stone is designed to be played by 3 SIMILAR instruments i.e. 3 marimbas (or 3 players on one marimbas), 3 vibraphones, 3 glockenspiel, or 3 players performing on wine glasses, untuned metal bars, or other resonant objects. It can be different with each performance.

SECTIONS:

All sections are 6 or 12 measure patterns and can be repeated or ignored to suit the performance, depending on preference/duration, etc.. For instance, one performance can just include Section A & B for 5 minutes and nothing else

RHYTHMS:

The rhythms are all based on a three measure pattern  which, when in canon, provides an interlocking rhythm, and the key to understanding the piece.

PITCHES:

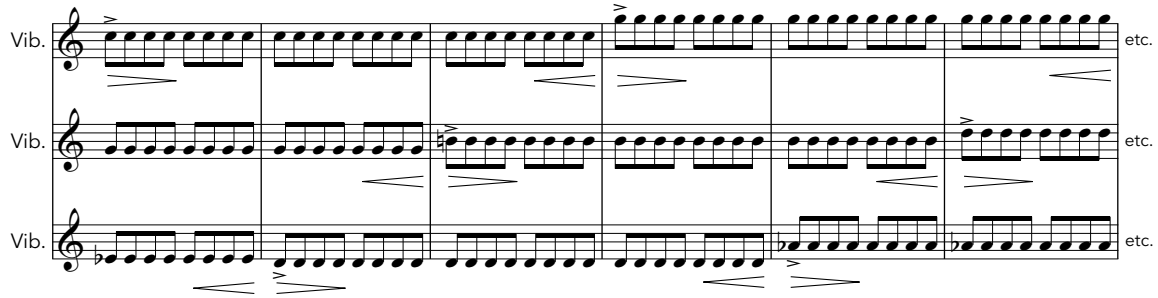
Performers can choose to be completely aleatoric with the pitches or they can decide ahead of time on a certain pitch set before each performance if they wish. For instance, they can decide to choose any scale or chord and stick to only those notes for the whole performance.

Some suggestions for pitch material:

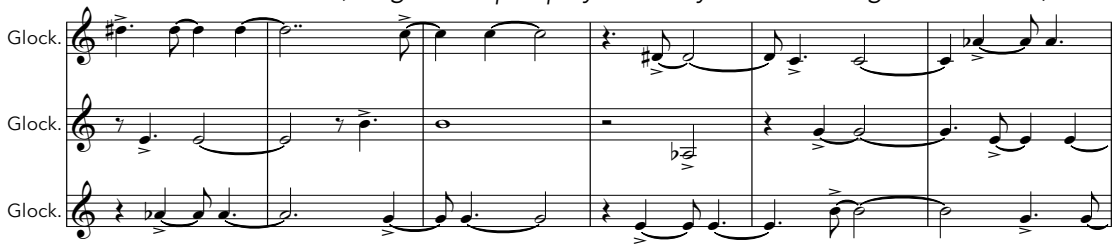
- **C.A.G.E.** just using those notes (i.e. an Am7 or C6 chord), in honour of John Cage
- **Whole Tone** (C, D, E, F♯, G♯, B♭) or switch back and forth between both whole tone scales
- **Symmetrical Augmented Scale** (C, D♯, E, G, A♭, B)
- **Black Notes** (i.e. F♯, G♯, A♯, C♯, D♯)
- **White Notes** (i.e. A, B, C, D, E, F, G) or switch back and forth between white and black
- **Minor Harmonic** (C, D, E♭, F, G, A♭, B)
- **Chromatic** (i.e. any chromatic note)
- **Microtonal**
- **Non-pitched** (any object of part of an instrument that doesn't make a recognizable pitch such as wood, tuned or untuned wine glasses, or resonant metal objects, as long as there are enough different colours to change tone frequently)
- **Variable** (i.e. changing at each new section or even each performer choosing their own pitch set 'language')

For example:

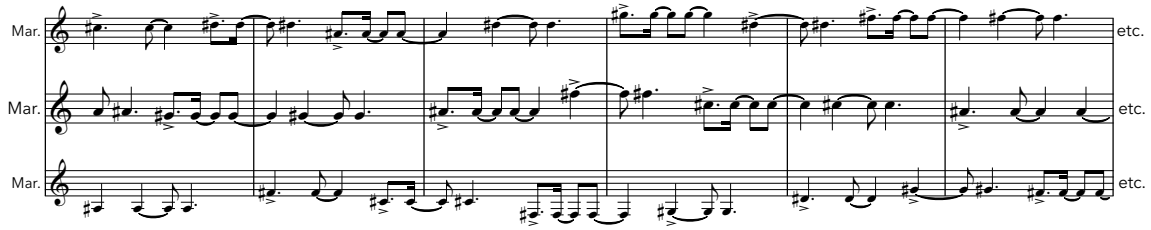
Section B could sound like this *(if 3 vibraphones played C harmonic minor)*



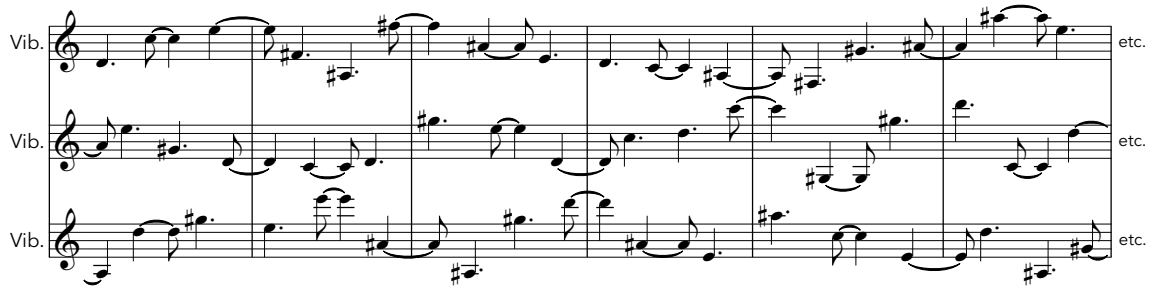
Section E could sound like this *(if 3 glockenspiel played a C Symmetrical Augmented scale)*



Section I could sound like this *(if 3 marimbas played on black notes only)*



Section K could sound like this *(if 3 vibraphones played a Whole Tone Scale)*



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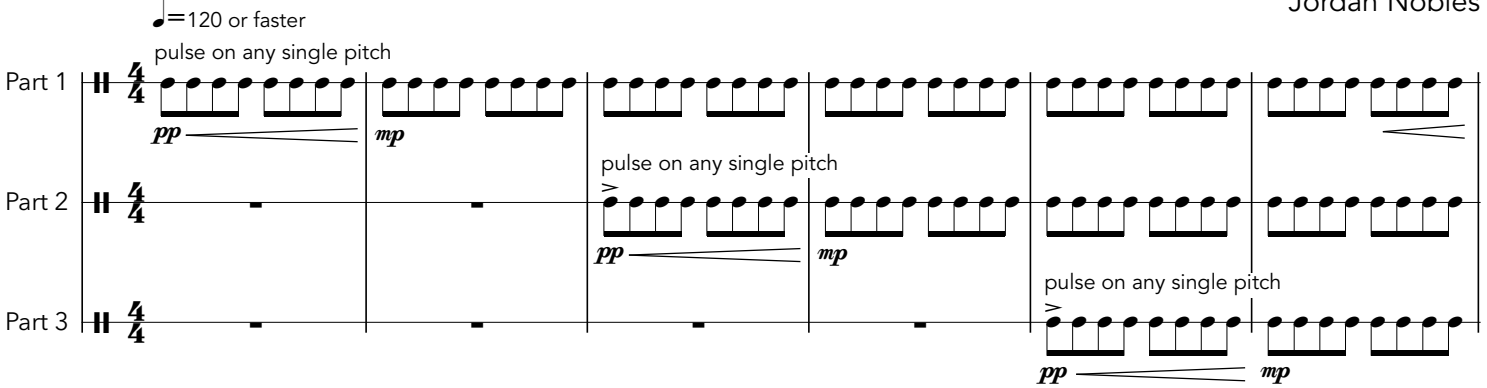
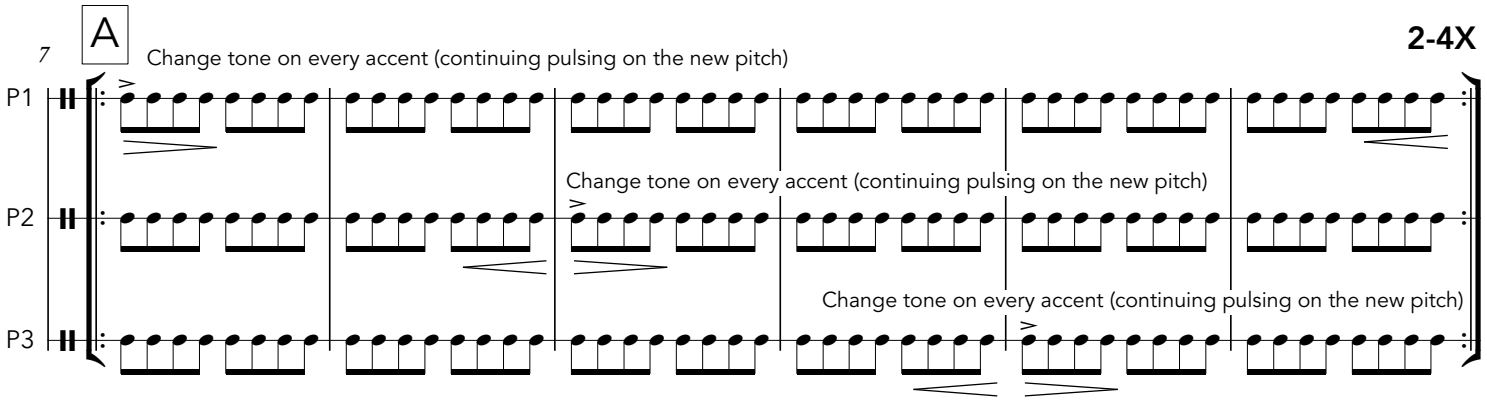
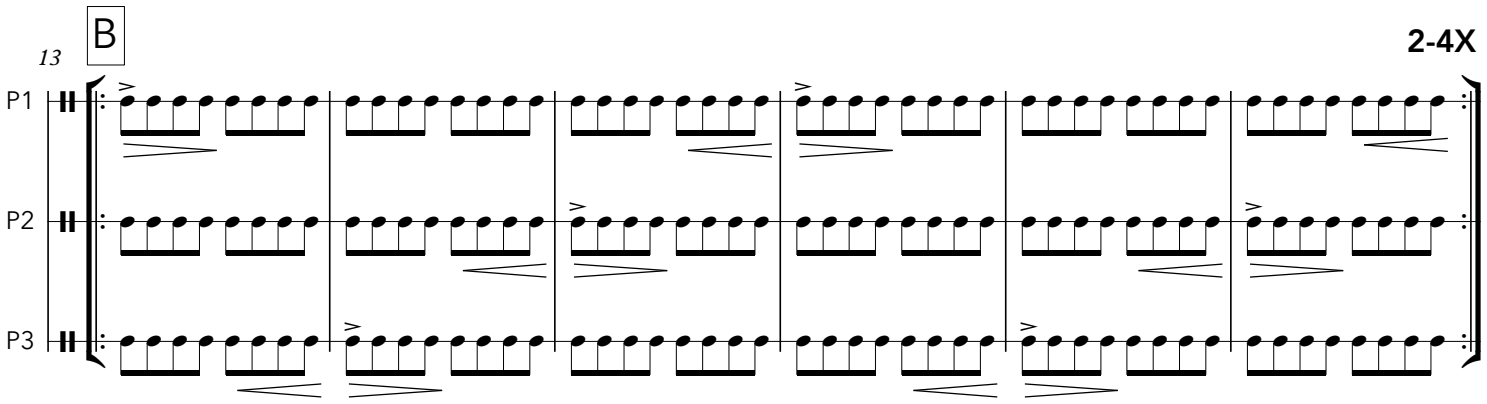
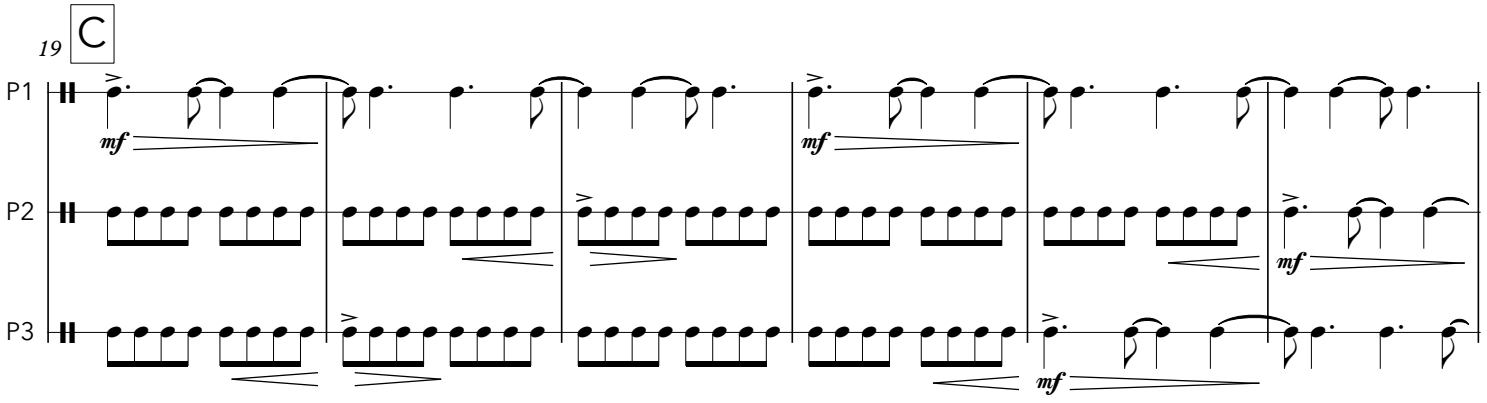
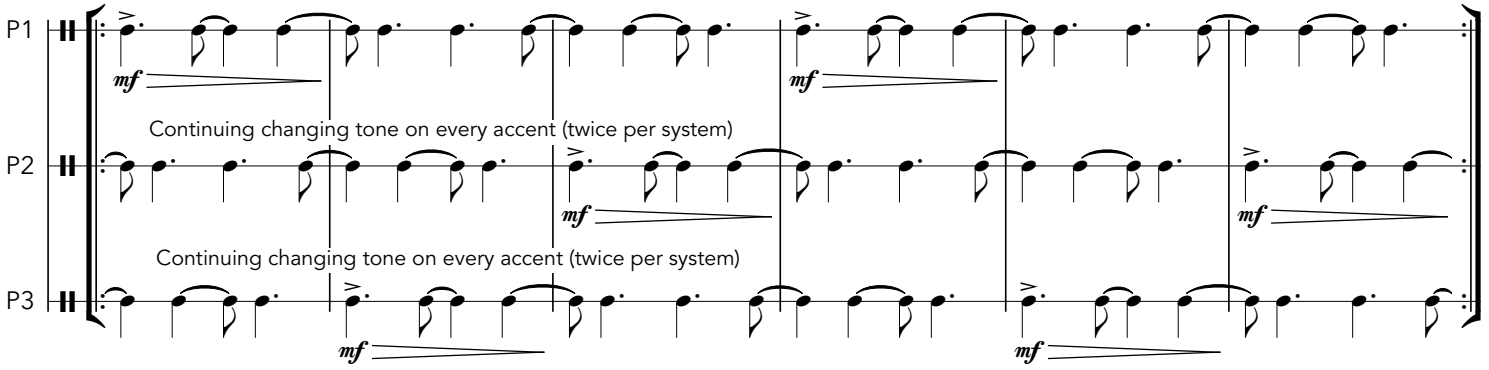




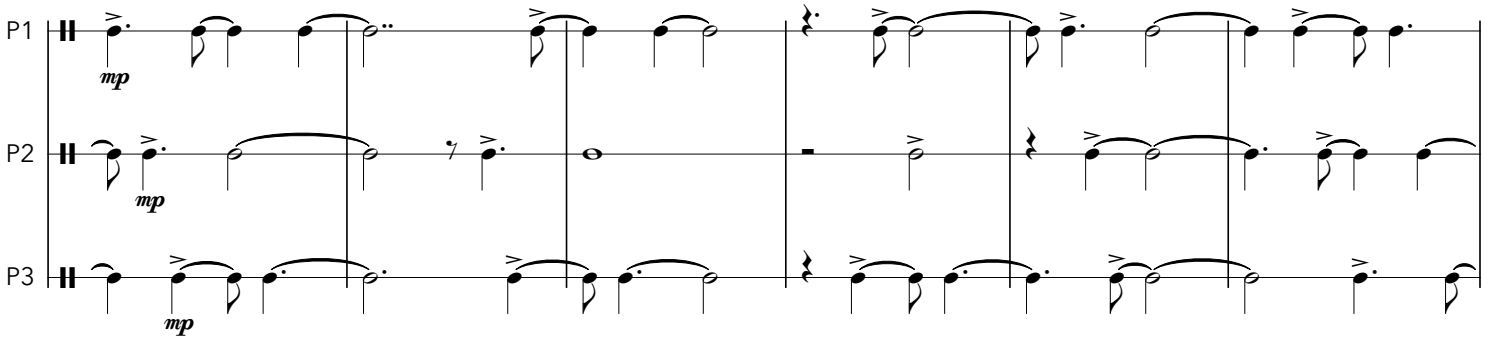




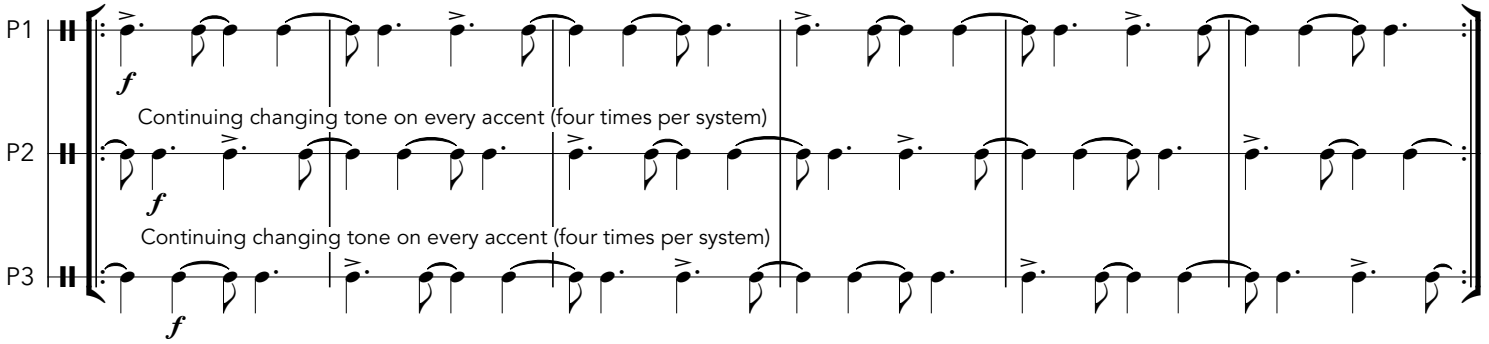
25 D Continuing changing tone on every accent (twice per system) **4-8X**



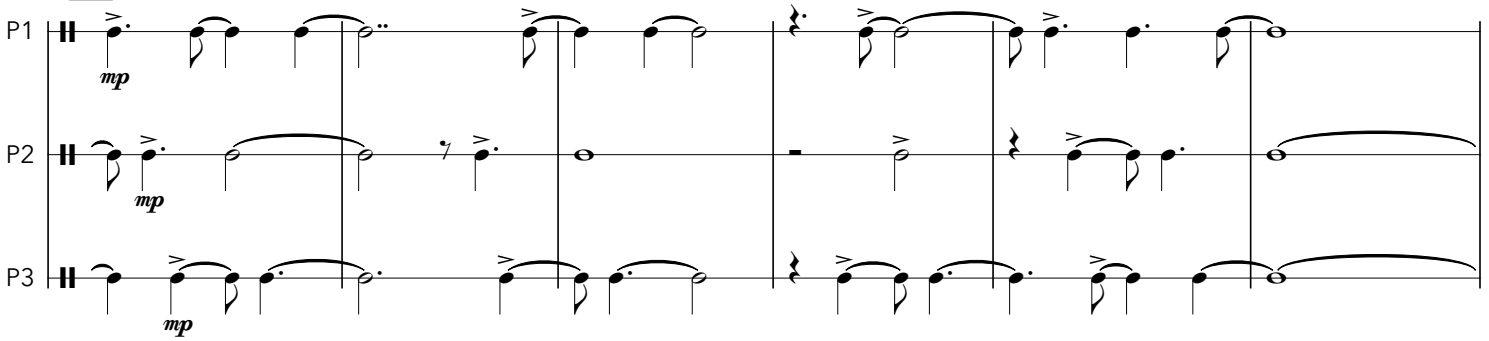
31 E

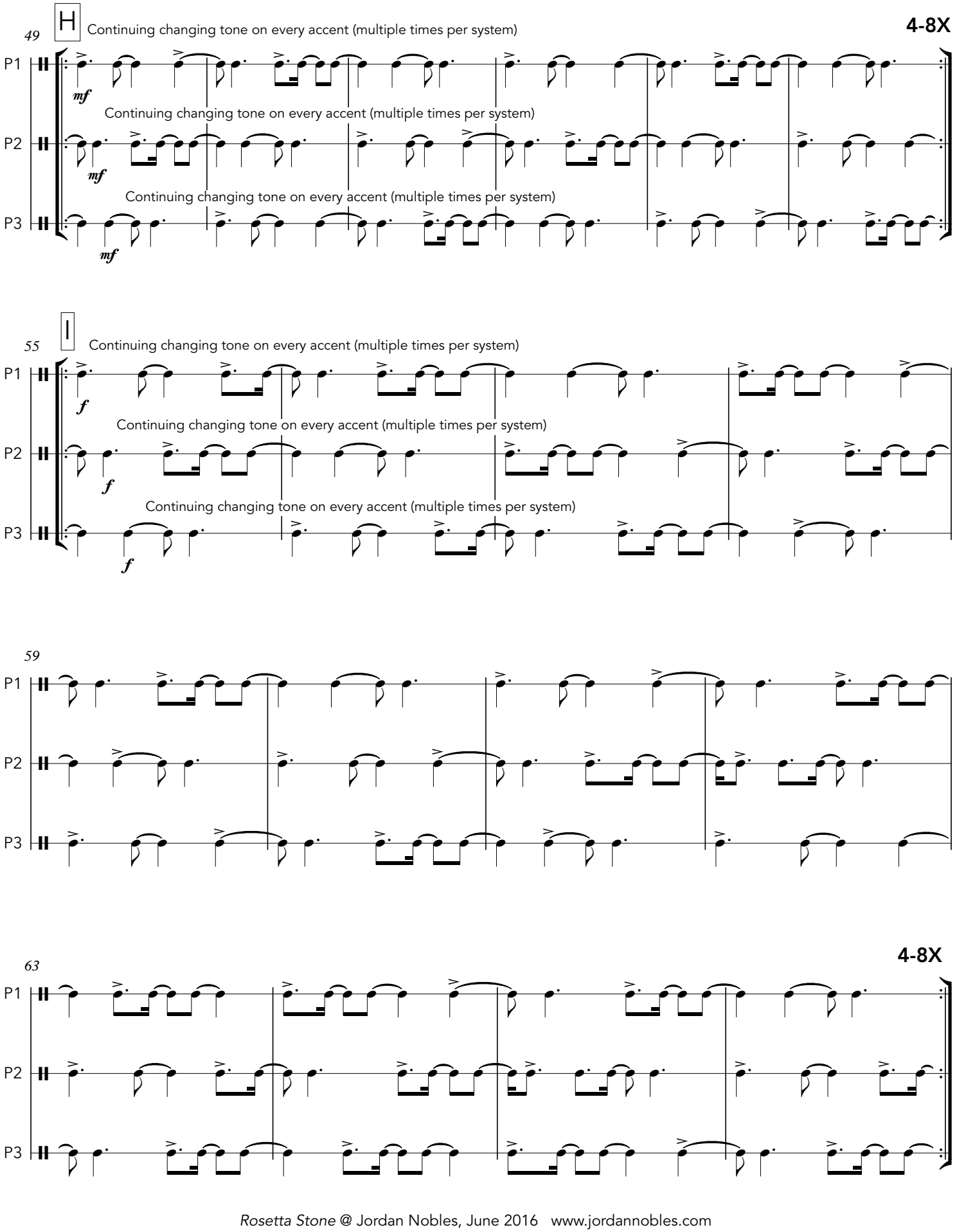


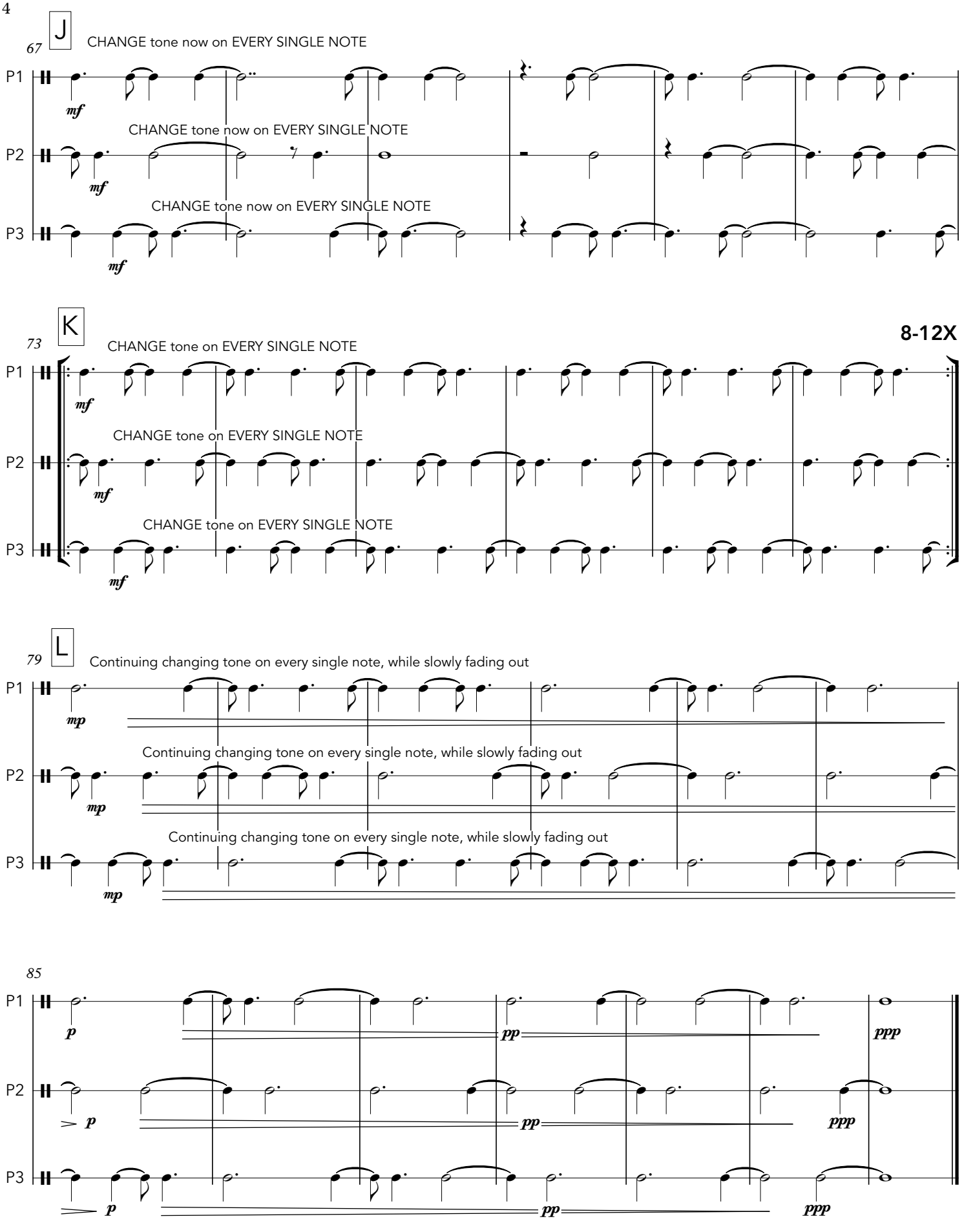
37 F Continuing changing tone on every accent (four times per system) **4-8X**



43 G




49
H
Continuing changing tone on every accent (multiple times per system)
4-8X
P1
P2
P3
mf
Continuing changing tone on every accent (multiple times per system)
Continuing changing tone on every accent (multiple times per system)
55
I
Continuing changing tone on every accent (multiple times per system)
f
Continuing changing tone on every accent (multiple times per system)
Continuing changing tone on every accent (multiple times per system)
59
63
4-8X


67
J
CHANGE tone now on EVERY SINGLE NOTE
P1
mf
CHANGE tone now on EVERY SINGLE NOTE
P2
mf
CHANGE tone now on EVERY SINGLE NOTE
P3
mf
73
K
8-12X
CHANGE tone on EVERY SINGLE NOTE
P1
mf
CHANGE tone on EVERY SINGLE NOTE
P2
mf
CHANGE tone on EVERY SINGLE NOTE
P3
mf
79
L
Continuing changing tone on every single note, while slowly fading out
P1
mp
Continuing changing tone on every single note, while slowly fading out
P2
mp
Continuing changing tone on every single note, while slowly fading out
P3
mp
85
P1
p
pp
ppp
P2
p
pp
ppp
P3
p
pp
ppp

Part 1

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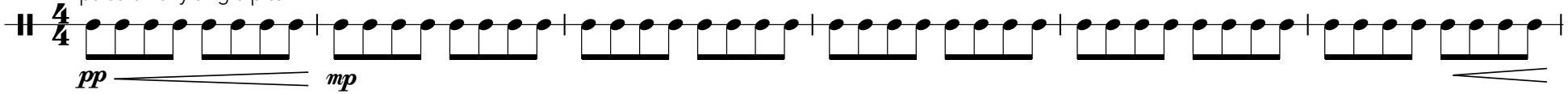
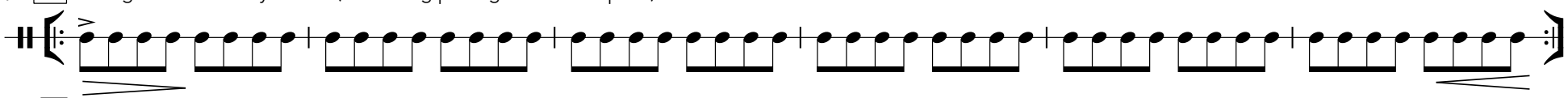
♩=120 or faster

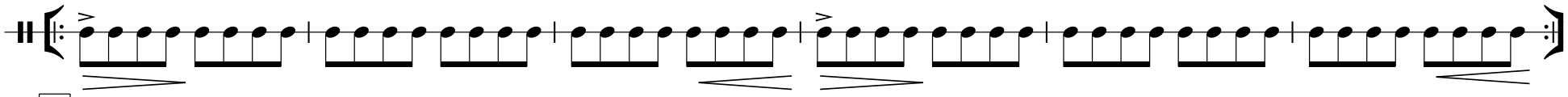
pulse on any single pitch



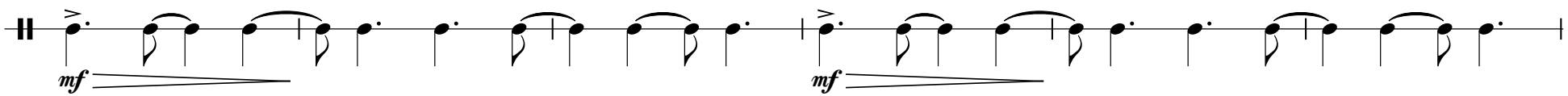
7 A Change tone on every accent (continuing pulsing on the new pitch) 2-4X



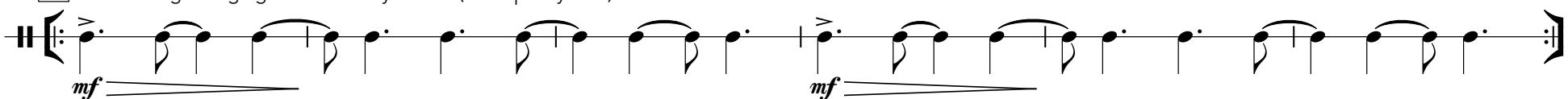
13 B 2-4X



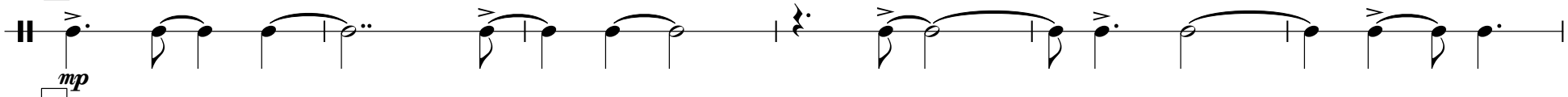
19 C



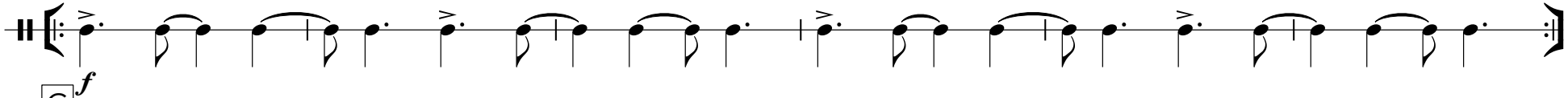
25 D Continuing changing tone on every accent (twice per system) 4-8X



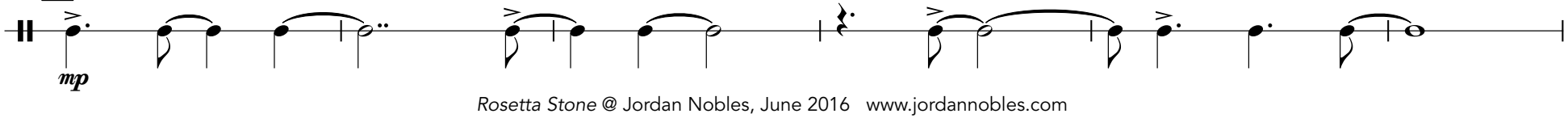
31 E



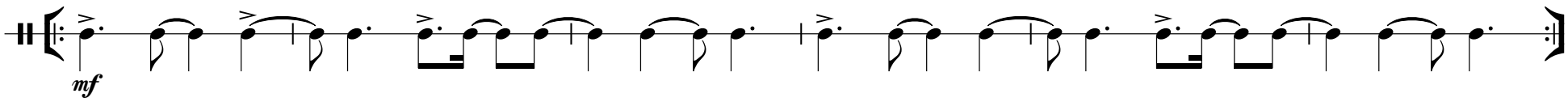
37 F Continuing changing tone on every accent (four times per system) 4-8X



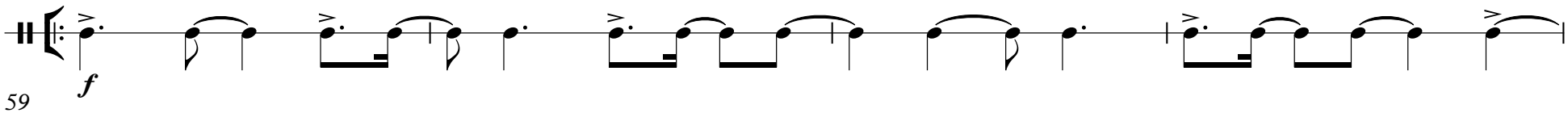
43 G



49 H Continuing changing tone on every accent (multiple times per system) 4-8X



55 I Continuing changing tone on every accent (multiple times per system)



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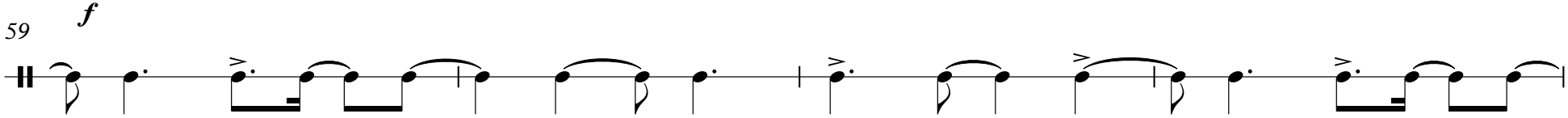
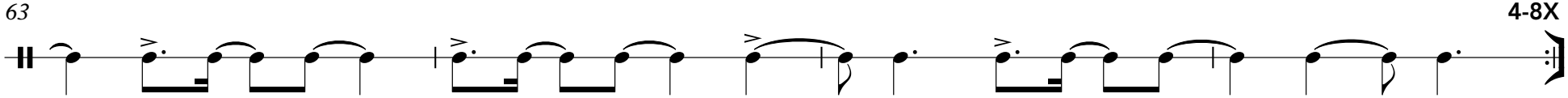
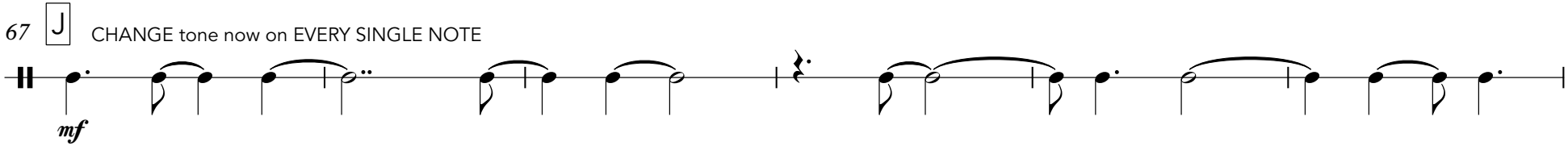


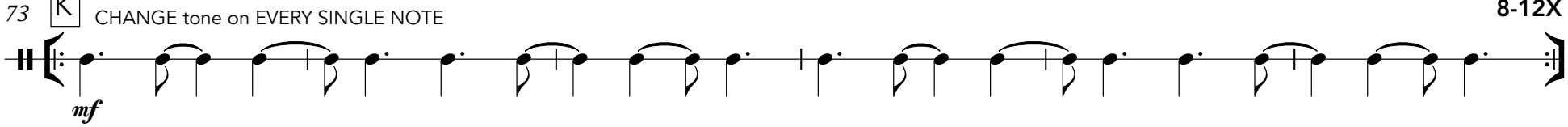
63 4-8X



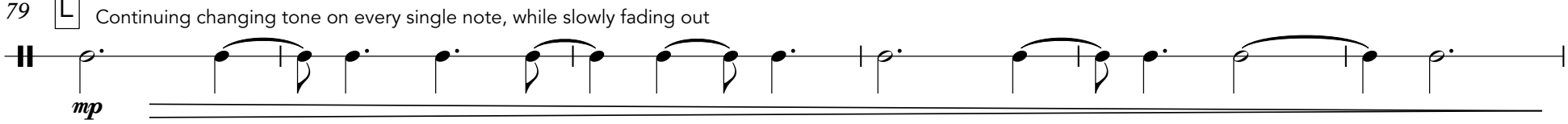
67 J CHANGE tone now on EVERY SINGLE NOTE



73 K CHANGE tone on EVERY SINGLE NOTE 8-12X



79 L Continuing changing tone on every single note, while slowly fading out



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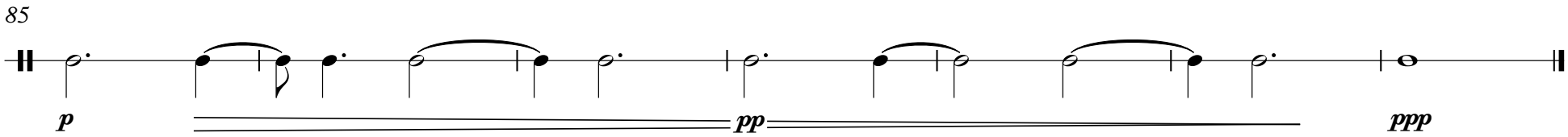

Part 2

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open score for percussion trio

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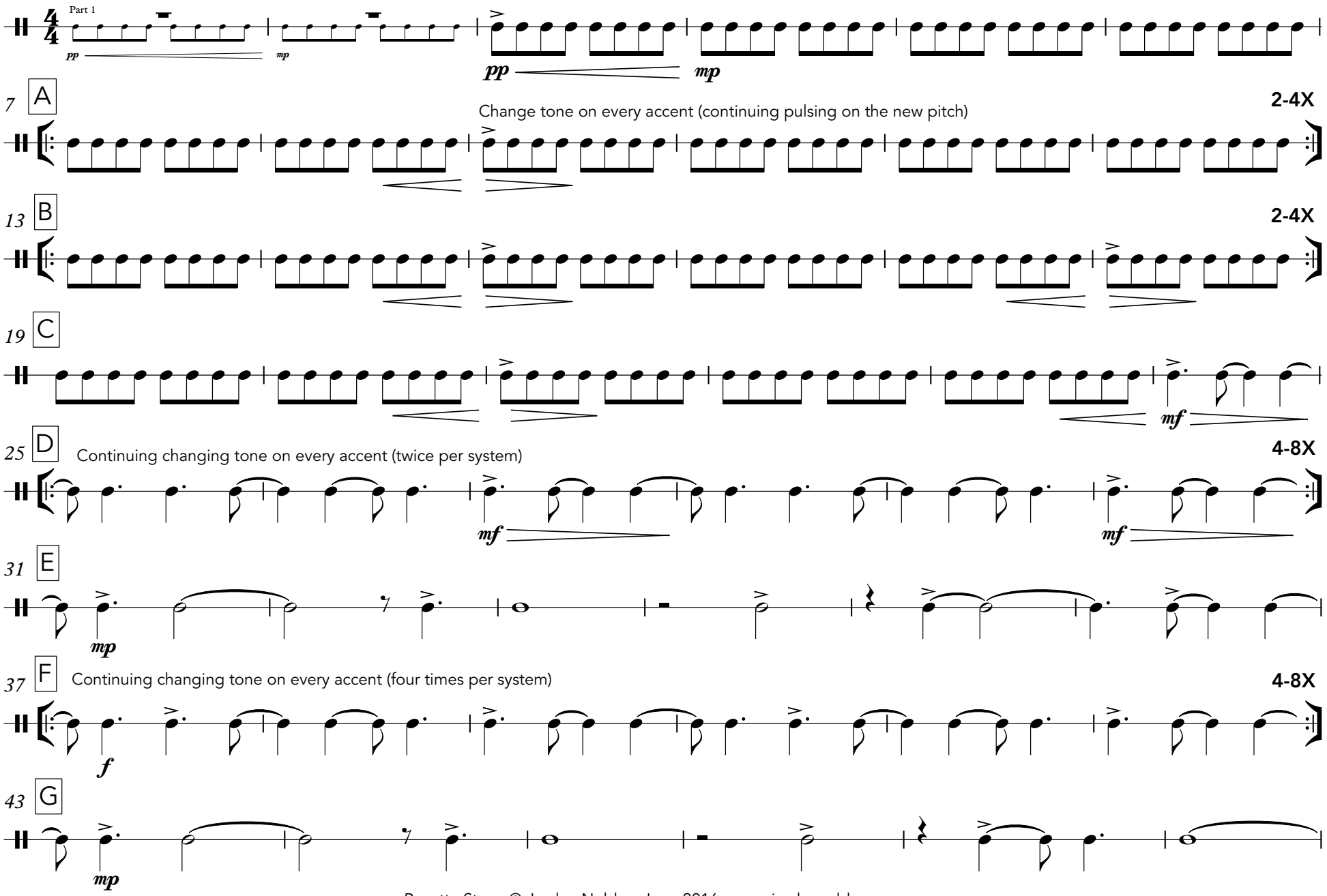
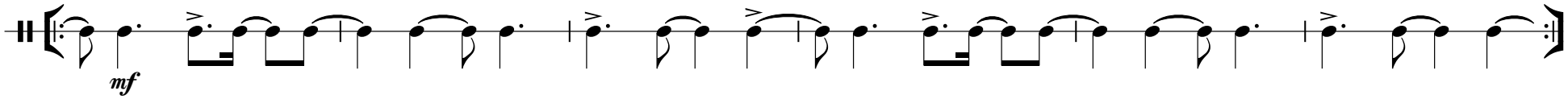
♩=120 or faster

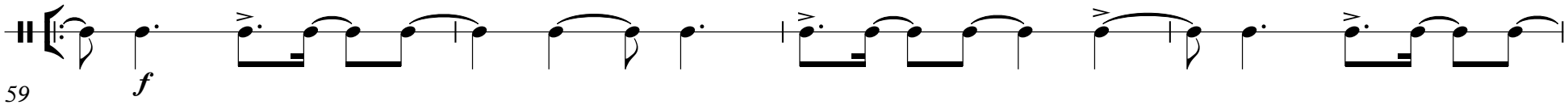
pulse on any single pitch



49 H Continuing changing tone on every accent (multiple times per system) 4-8X



55 I Continuing changing tone on every accent (multiple times per system)



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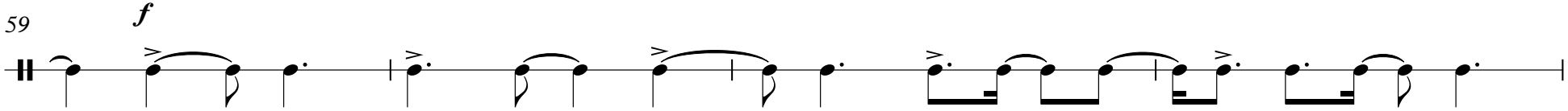
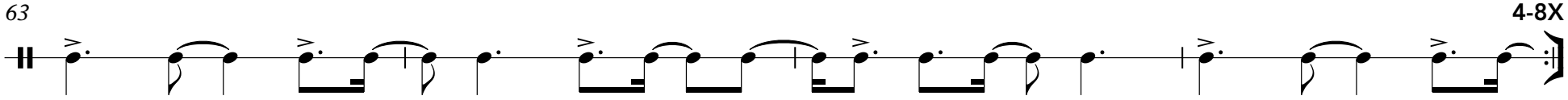
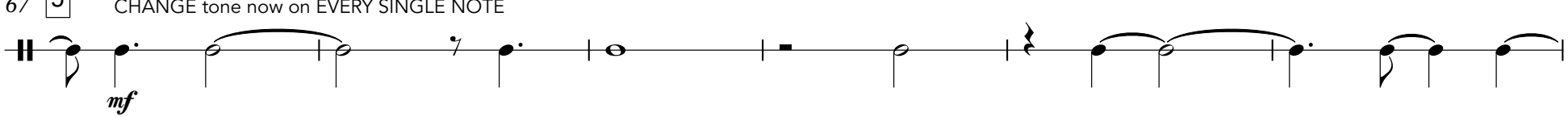


63 4-8X



67 J CHANGE tone now on EVERY SINGLE NOTE



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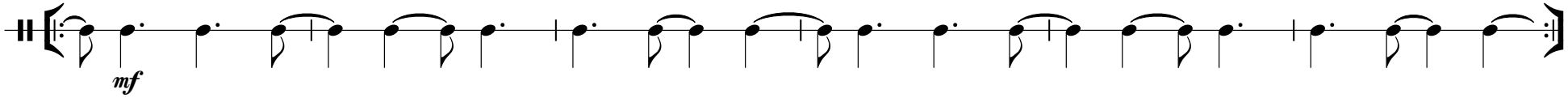
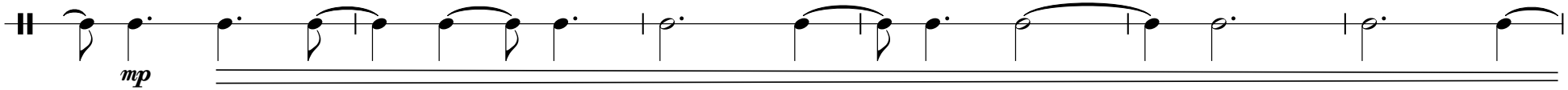


79 L Continuing changing tone on every single note, while slowly fading out



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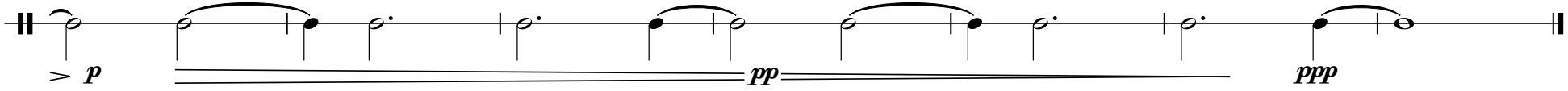

Part 3

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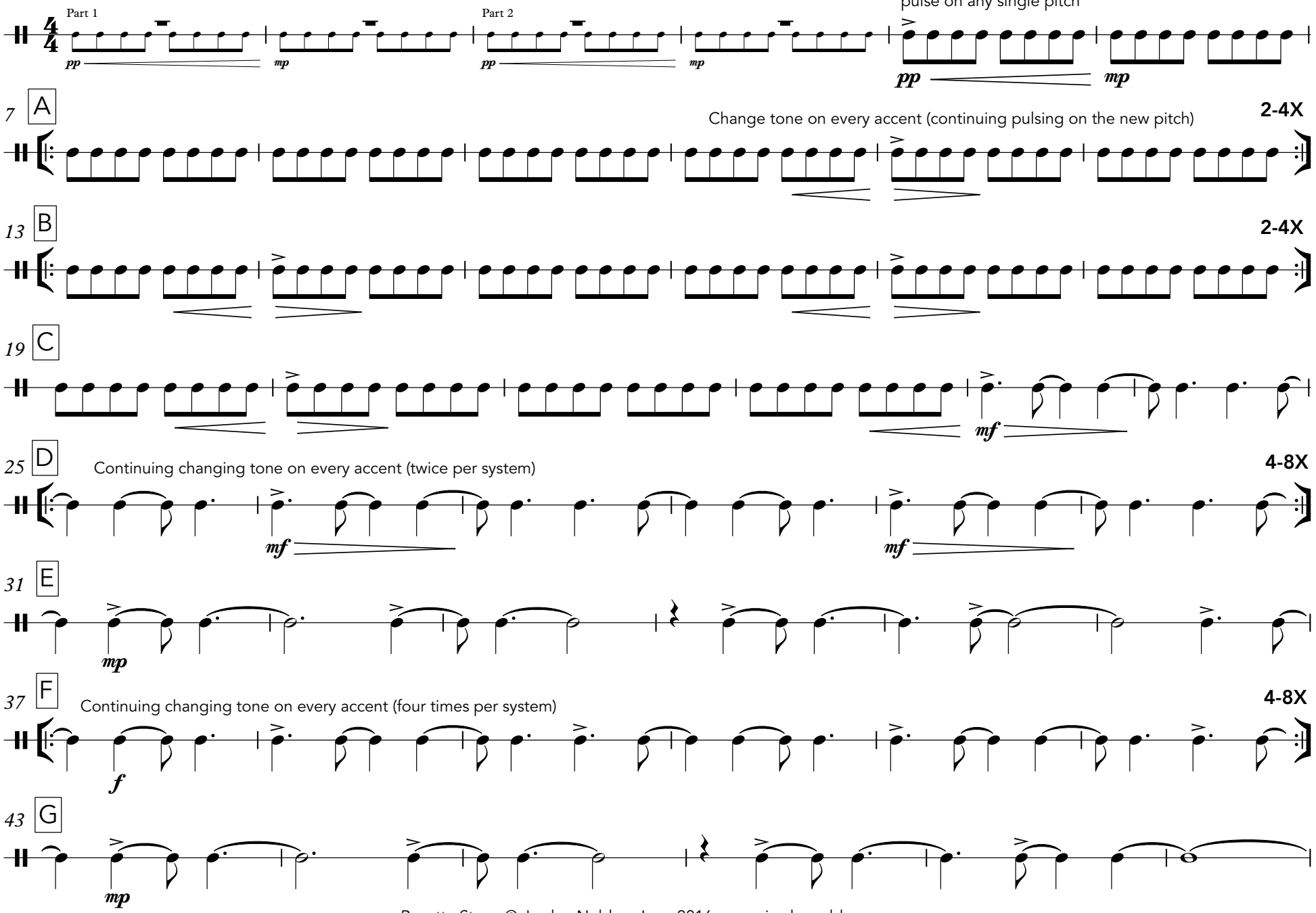
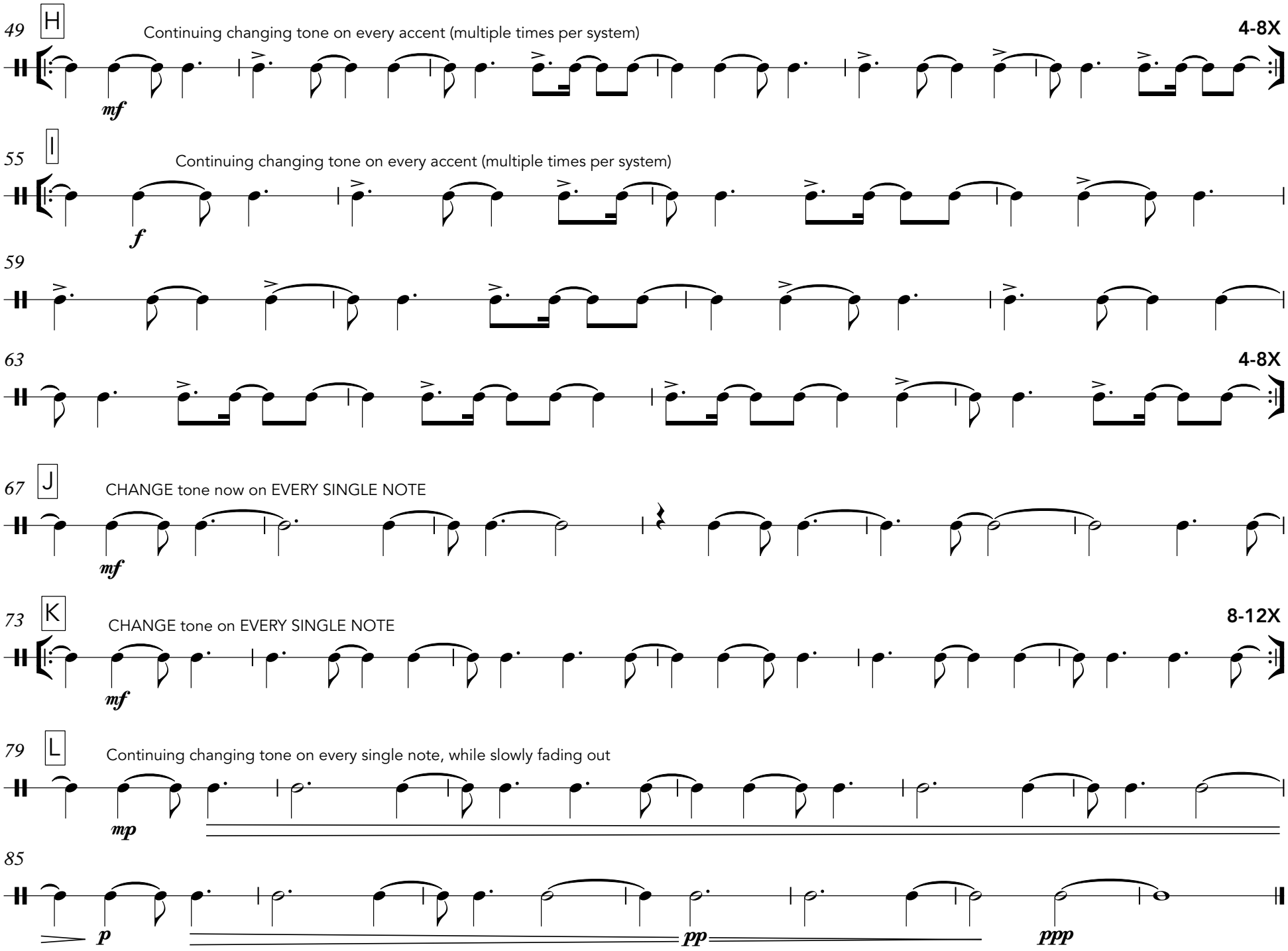
♩=120 or faster

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H
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4-8X
mf
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I
Continuing changing tone on every accent (multiple times per system)
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CHANGE tone now on EVERY SINGLE NOTE
mf
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K
CHANGE tone on EVERY SINGLE NOTE
8-12X
mf
79
L
Continuing changing tone on every single note, while slowly fading out
mp
85
p
pp
ppp