Vocal Crisis

For Flute with Live Electronics

by Joshua Hahn

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“'Vocal Crisis' means a crisis in the voice, but it also means articulate crisis, crisis given voice. Hardly an interruption of diva art, vocal crisis is the diva's self-lacerating announcement that interruption has been, all along, her subject and method" (Wayne Koestenbaum, The Queen's Throat pp.128-9). The possession of a voice is inseparable from narratives of crisis. The voice may undergo an untimely interruption, faltering without warning, betraying a self that is alien, incapable of meeting societal expectations. But crisis also has a voice of its own, one that forces a state of inner trauma into the public realm. In ***Vocal Crisis*** (2012) the computer is a temperamental mouthpiece for the flute, at times speaking for the flute, and at other times distorting the flute by responding in a discontinuous, unpredictable manner. The flute’s gradual separation from the computer is not merely a crisis of voice, but an unveiling of the inner workings of a vocal instrument.

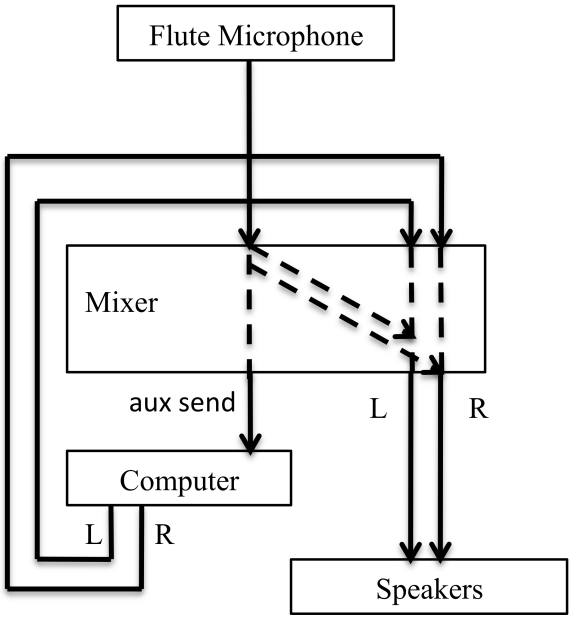
Duration: 8'

Technical Requirements:

1) One microphone
2) A computer that runs Max 6 or Max 6 runtime, a free read-only version of Max 6 available from cycling74.com
3) Stereo loudspeaker system

Optional:
4) A mixing board (allowing for the unprocessed sound of the flute to be mixed and carefully balanced with the electronic sounds)

When a mixing board is used, the following diagram may be used as a model for an effective setup:



Description of the electronic component:

The main electronic component is a dynamic buzzing sound that plays in unison with flute and serves to modulate its timbre. Buzzing sounds displaced by an octave in either direction and "chords" of buzzing sounds are also added to the flute's sound in separate parts of the piece. Recordings of processed flute sounds are also used.

This piece is designed to be executed by a performer without an assistant. Events are triggered either by particular pitches or by the rests between individual phrases.

A pedal may be used in place of or in conjunction with the computer score following.

The player should tune before beginning the piece to lessen the chance of computer error.

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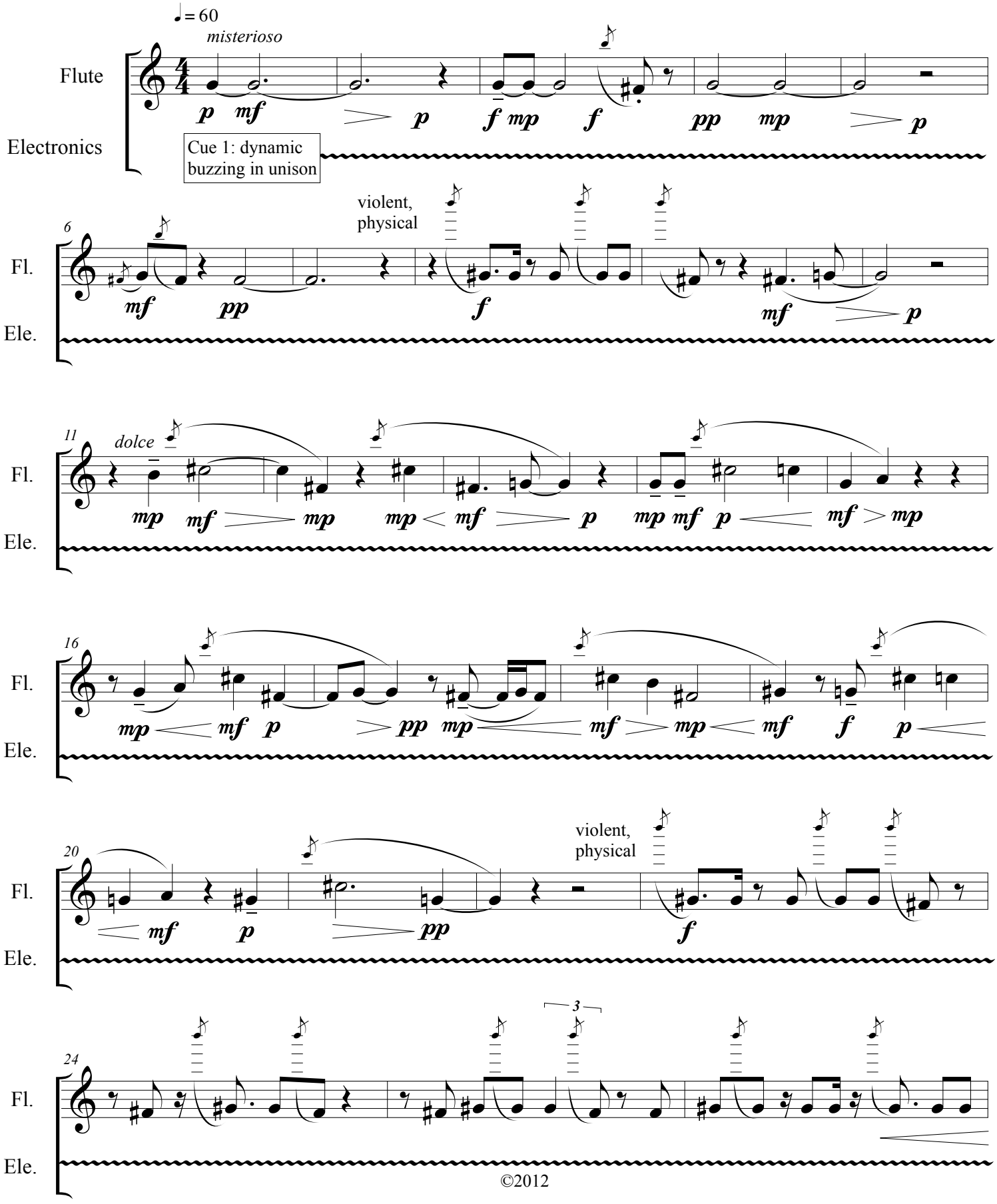

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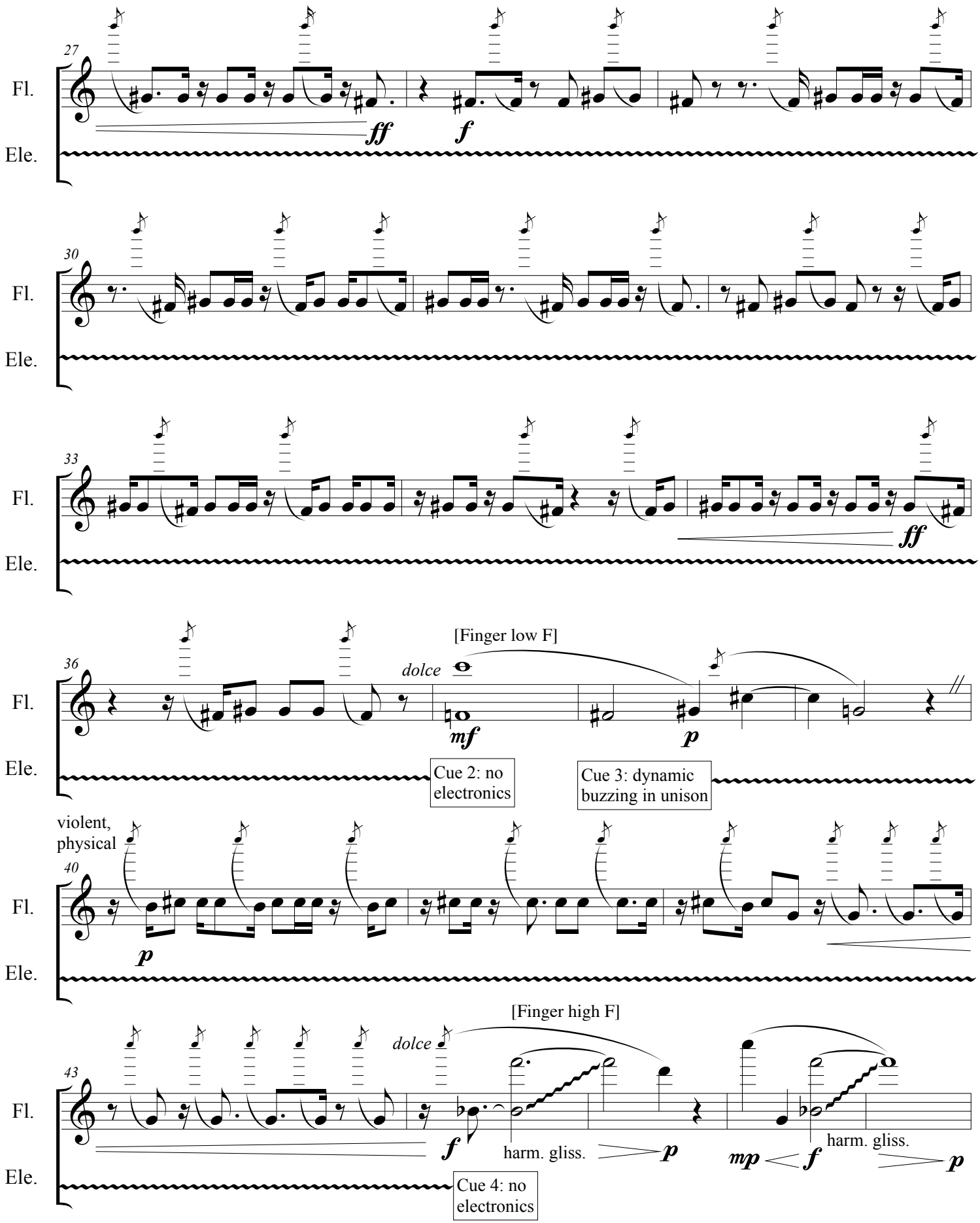
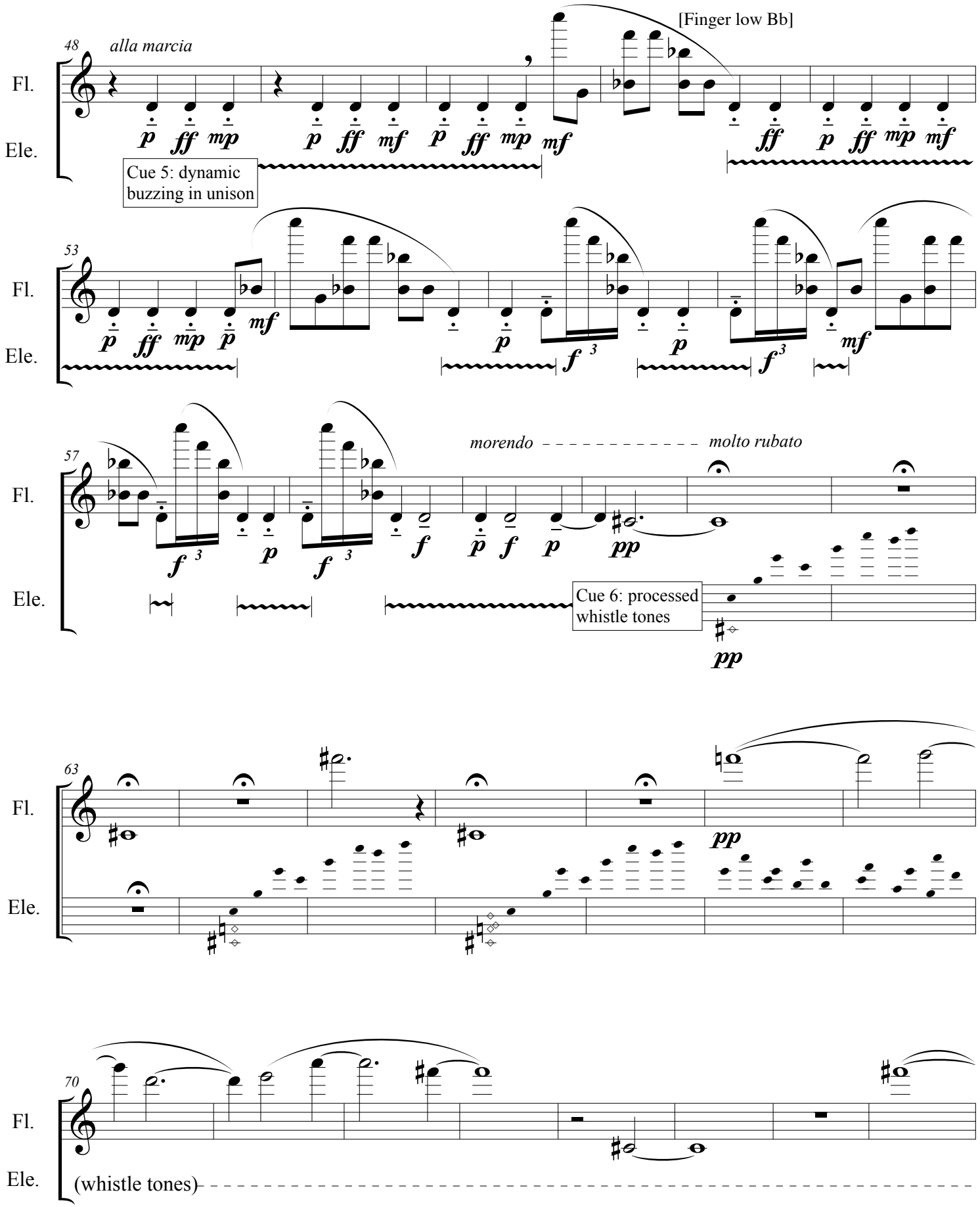
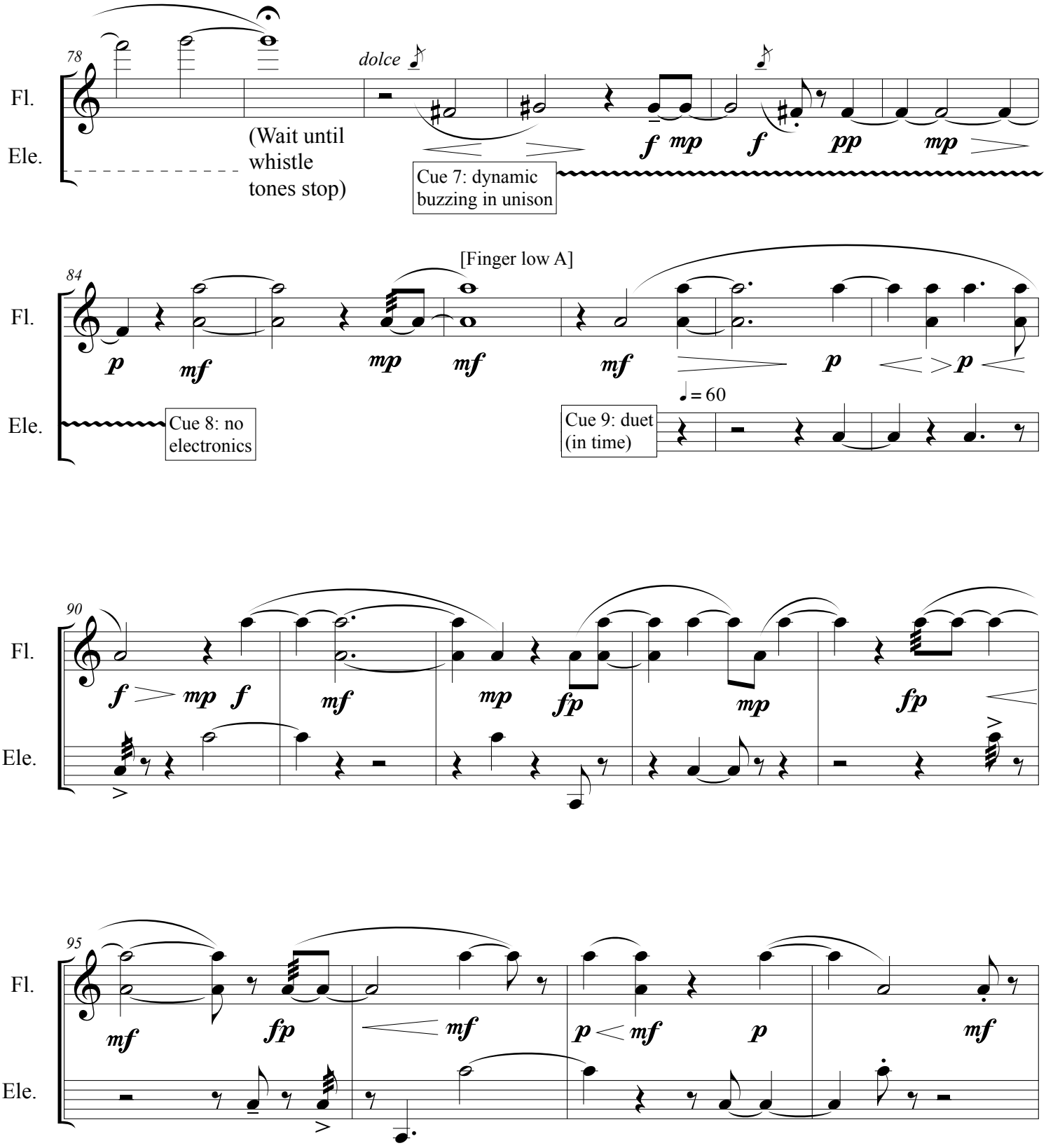
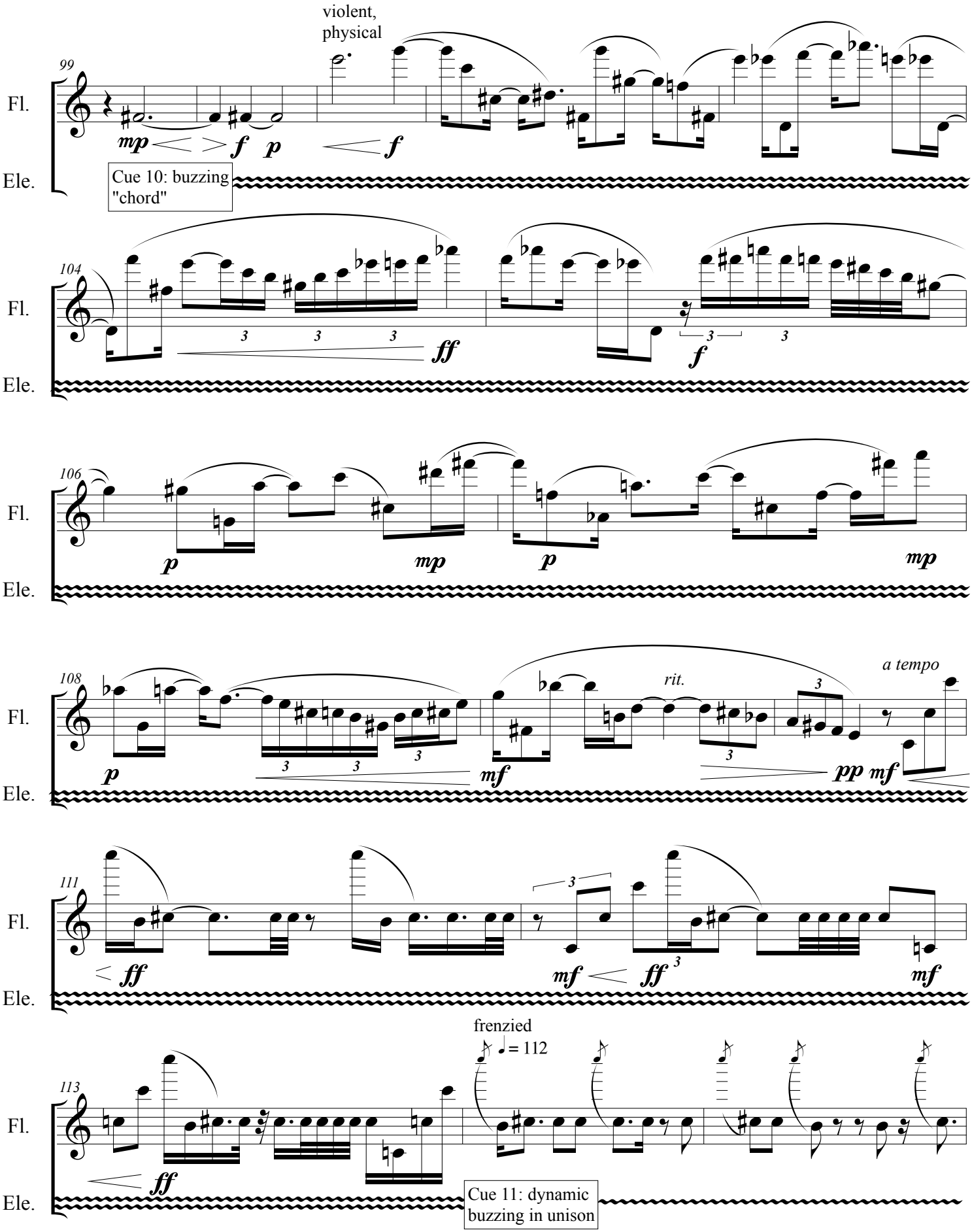
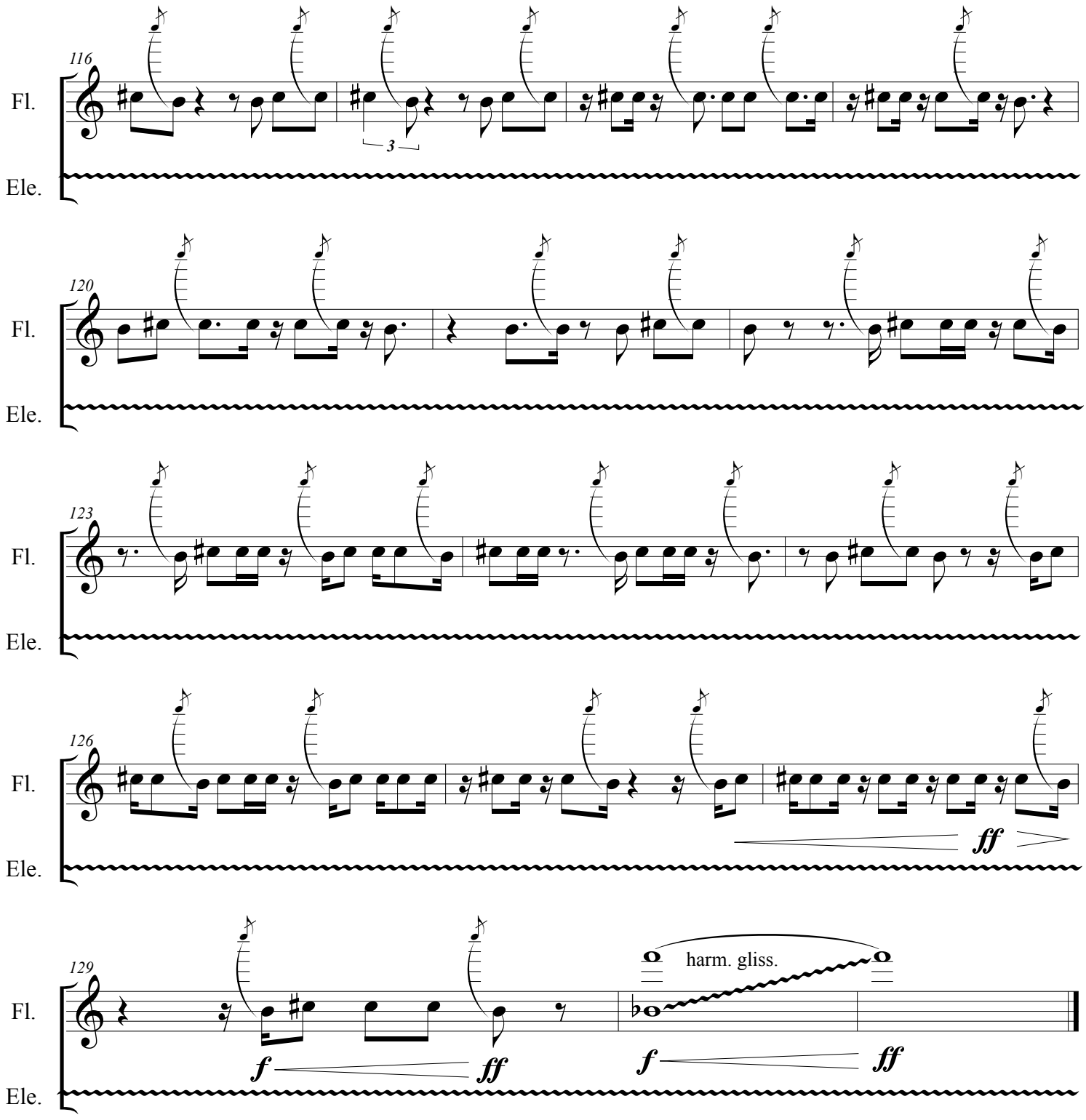

27
Fl.
Ele.
ff
f
30
Fl.
Ele.
33
Fl.
Ele.
ff
36
Fl.
Ele.
[Finger low F]
dolce
mf
p
Cue 2: no electronics
Cue 3: dynamic buzzing in unison
violent, physical
40
Fl.
Ele.
p
[Finger high F]
dolce
43
Fl.
Ele.
f
harm. gliss.
p
mp
f
harm. gliss.
p
Cue 4: no electronics


48
alla marcia
[Finger low Bb]
Fl.
Ele.
Cue 5: dynamic buzzing in unison
53
57
morendo
molto rubato
Cue 6: processed whistle tones
63
70
(whistle tones)


78
Fl.
Ele.
dolce
(Wait until whistle tones stop)
Cue 7: dynamic buzzing in unison
84
[Finger low A]
Cue 8: no electronics
Cue 9: duet (in time)
♩= 60
90
95


violent,
physical
99
Fl.
Ele.
mp
f
p
f
Cue 10: buzzing
"chord"
104
Fl.
Ele.
3
3
3
ff
f
3
3
106
Fl.
Ele.
p
mp
p
mp
108
Fl.
Ele.
p
3
3
3
mf
rit.
3
a tempo
pp
mf
111
Fl.
Ele.
ff
mf
3
ff
3
mf
frenzied
113
Fl.
Ele.
ff
♩= 112
Cue 11: dynamic
buzzing in unison


116
Fl.
Ele.
3
120
Fl.
Ele.
123
Fl.
Ele.
126
Fl.
Ele.
ff
129
Fl.
Ele.
f
ff
harm. gliss.
f
ff