Christian Mason

Lost in the Horizon -
In Memoriam Harrison Birtwistle (2022)

for piccolo and tape

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Composed for the Royal Academy of Music 200 Celebrations

For: solo piccolo (live) and bass flutes (12 parts, pre-recorded)

Duration: 6 minutes

INFO FOR RECORDING

- Three BASS FLUTE LAYERS [1, 2a, 2b] each in 4-parts need to be pre-recorded, therefore a total of 12 parts (with various internal subdivisions) needs to be recorded. These will then be mixed into their respective layers.

- Within each layer the parts are synchronised and should be recorded to click as per the indicated metronome mark for each layer

- Audio Cues are to be prepared in advance, with reference to the three bass flute scores (Layer 1, Layer 2a, Layer 2b). Existing audio material (recorded at RAM, London, by flautist Jessica Scott in March 2022) may also be used.

INFO FOR PERFORMANCE
I envisage a 'quadraphonic' setup, with front and rear stereo pairs of speakers.

Q-Lab is the recommended software for triggering the cues. Timing of cues is indicated in the Performance Score.

- **LAYER 1** will play continuously in the background, giving the basic structure of the piece; present equally in all speakers.

- **LAYER 2a** is divided into two equal halves [A] and [B], to be cued during performance; present in all speakers, but stronger in the rear pair.

- **LAYER 2b** is divided into twelve overlapping 'loop fragments' [A] - [L] of different lengths, to be cued during performance; alternating between front and rear speakers.

- **SOLO PICCOLO:** the solo part is to be performed live, with the player following the bass line in the performance score as a reference for synchronisation.

Programme note

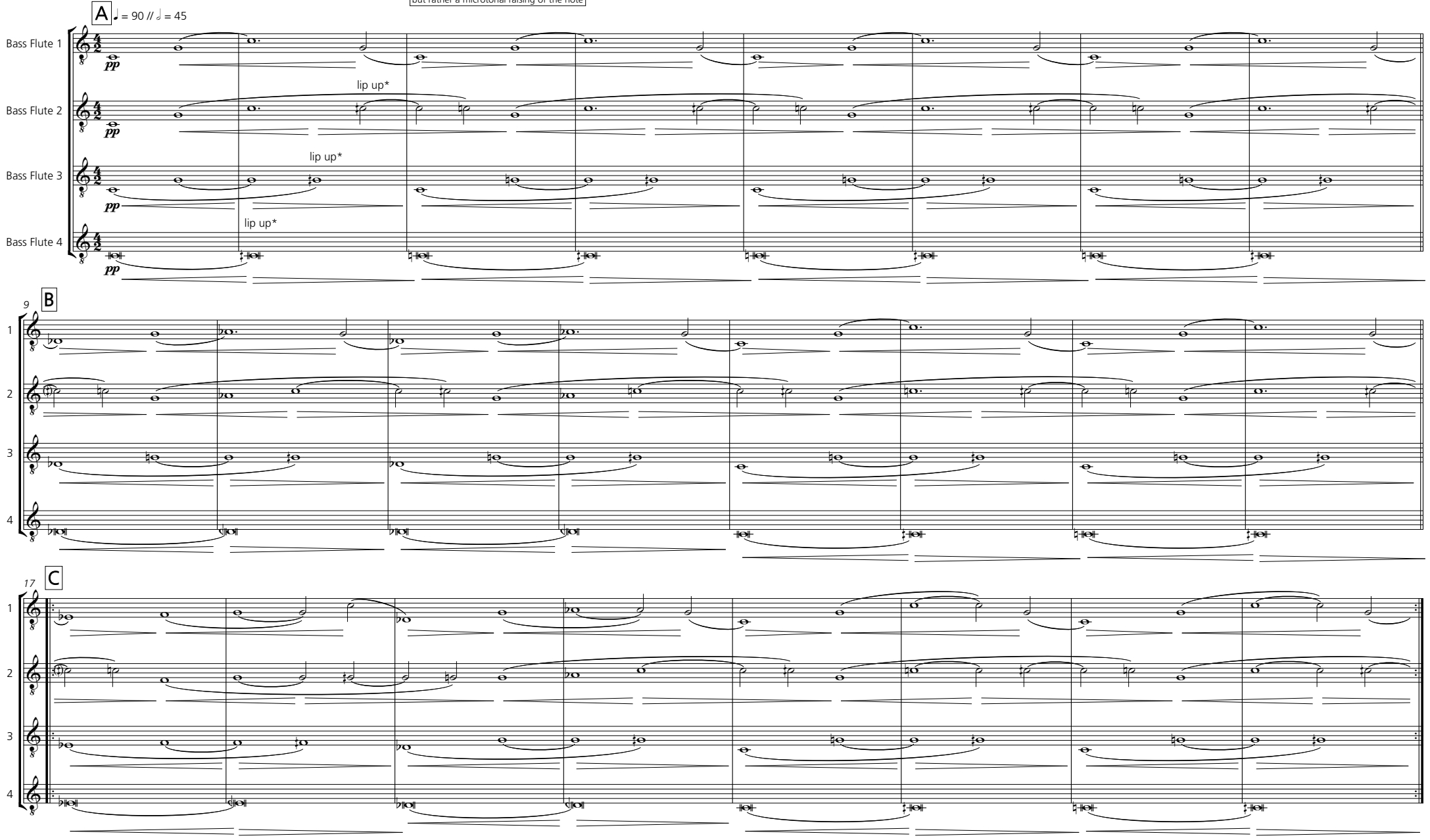
Looking south, into the distance, there's a tantalising sense of mystery in the hazy horizon-line forms of trees and hills, quite at odds with my knowledge that London continues for many miles. It seems almost as if anything could be possible there, even another world. I get a similar sense from musical situations in which the precise identity of individual parts is blurred and tangled, concealing their compositional origins and leaving room for imagination, room to wander and wonder. Nothing better than the velvet sound of low layered bass flutes to foster this fantastical feeling! The piccolo, on the other hand, can't help but stand out. Appearing like a figure in the landscape, she sings a sad song to the distant hills, lamenting the loss of Harry whose dear presence so defined our musical landscape.

Christian Mason, October 2022

Lost in the Horizon - LAYER 1 (background)
[MATERIAL FOR RECORDING]

"TANPURA LAYER" record with close mic for lots of sound detail.
Playing should emphasise variety of microfluctuations and noises in the sound avoiding a conventionally attractive 'pure' tone

* doesn't have to be precise quartertone but rather a microtonal raising of the note



25 D

1
2
3
4

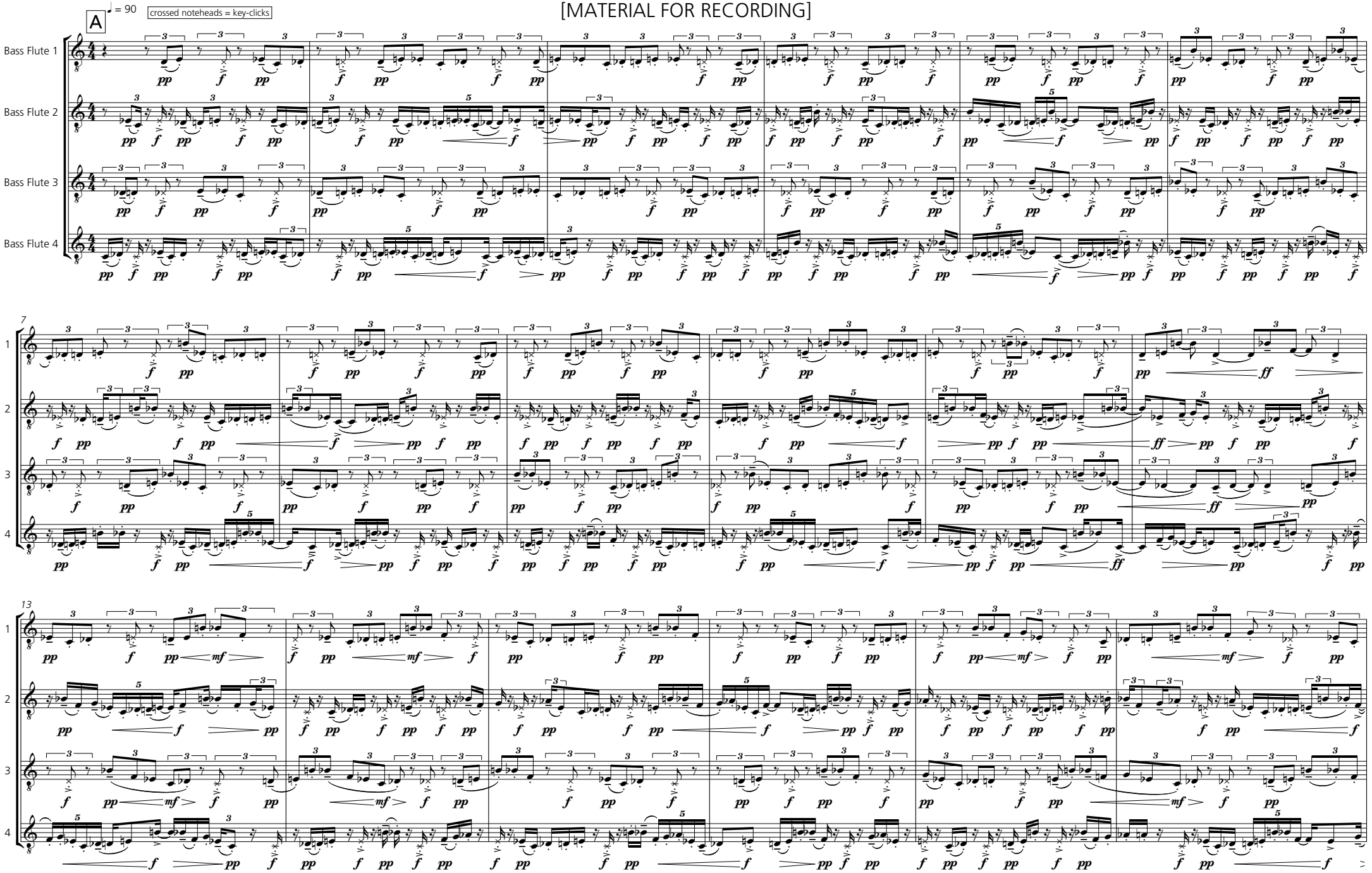
33 E

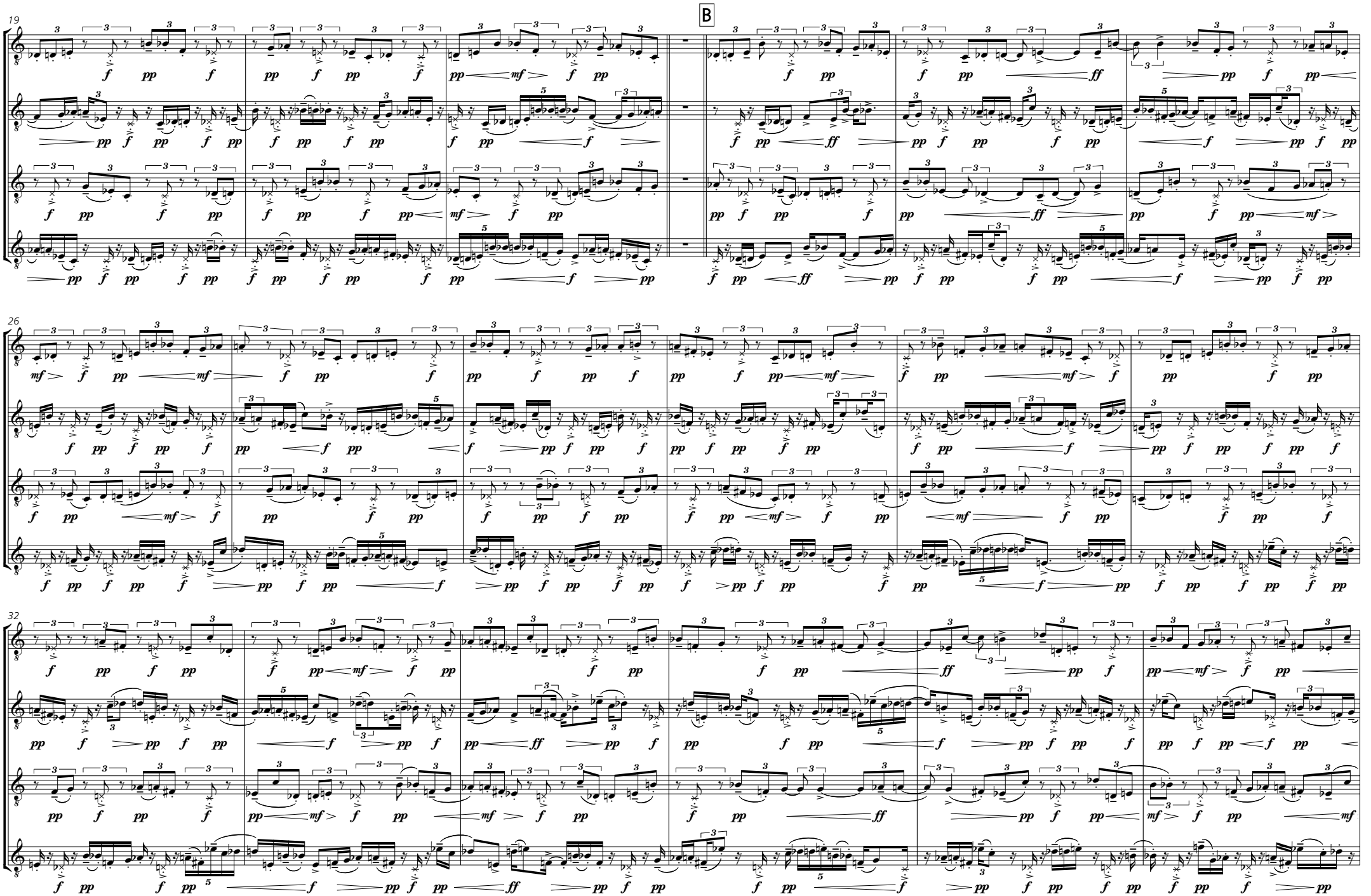
1
2
3
4

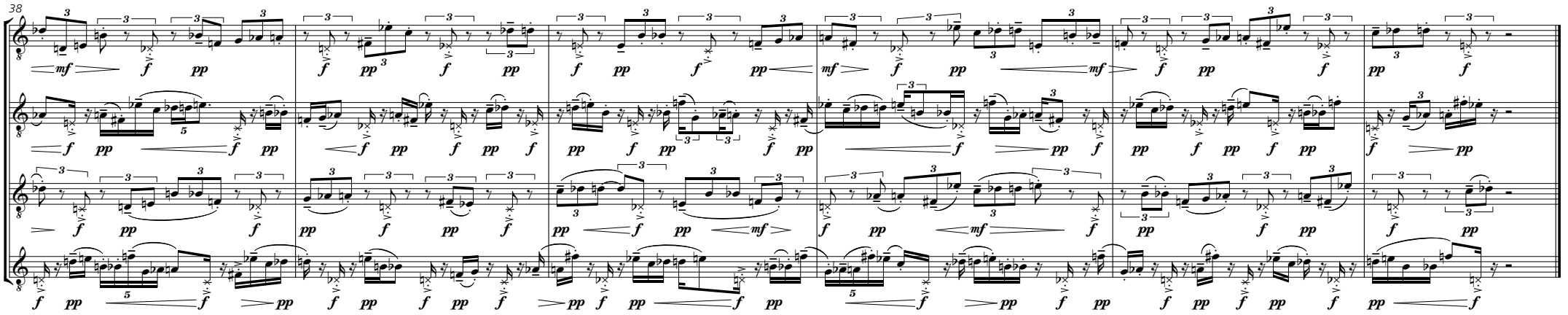
41 F

1
2
3
4

Lost in the Horizon - LAYER 2a (middleground)
[MATERIAL FOR RECORDING]




19
B
26
32
1
2
3
4

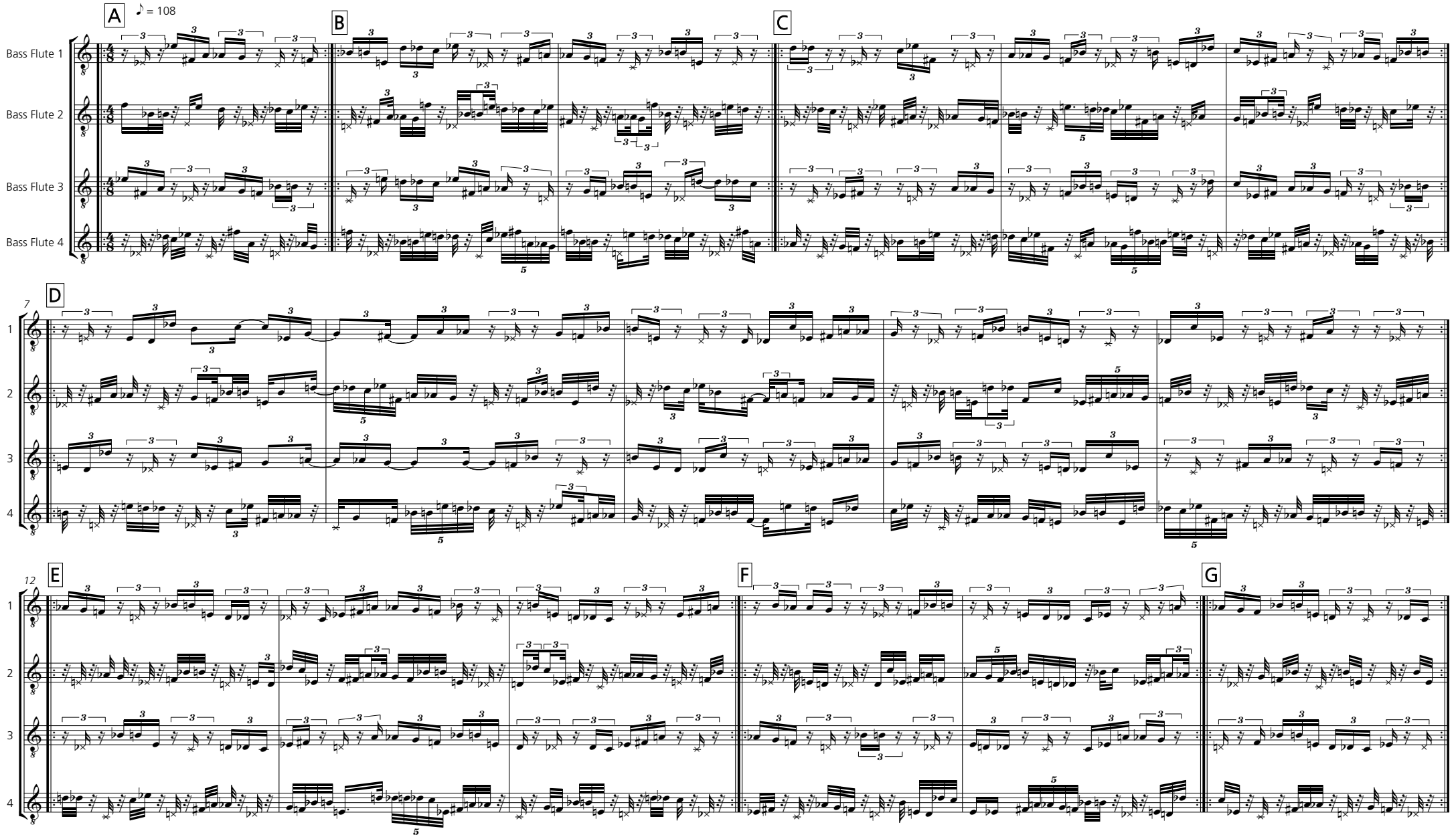

38
1
2
3
4

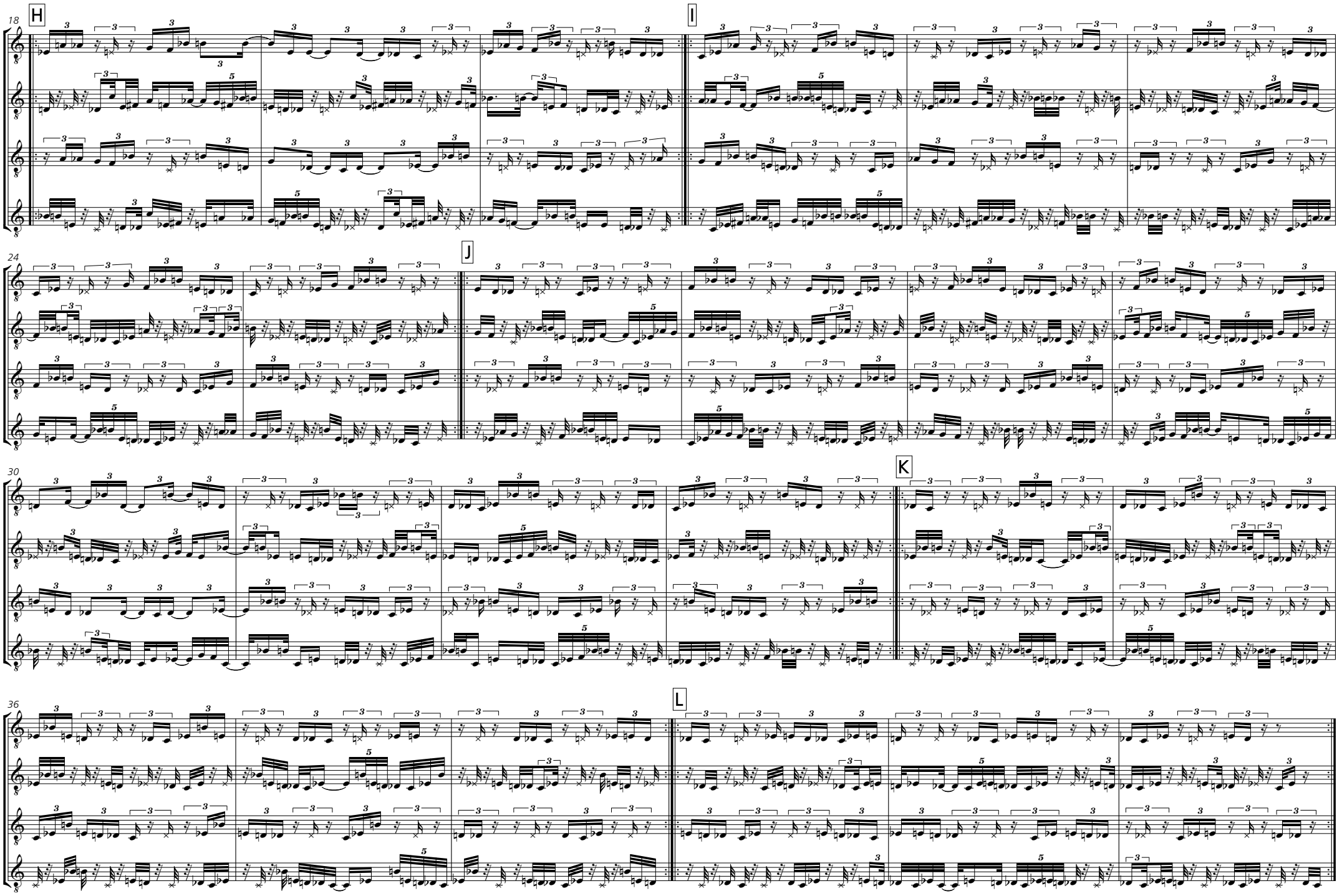
Lost in the Horizon - LAYER 2b (middleground)
[MATERIAL FOR RECORDING]

N.B. EACH REPEATING FIGURE SHOULD BE RECORDED SEPARATELY

DYNAMICS:
crossed notehead = sempre ff poss. (key clicks)
normal noteheads = sempre pp

ARTICULATION:
- Freely mix slurs and staccato to create inner textural variety
- Freely add occasional accents for colouristic variety




2
18
H
I
24
J
30
K
36
L

In Memoriam Harrison Birtwistle

Lost in the Horizon
[PERFORMANCE SCORE]

Christian Mason

A **Lyrical, yet wistful**

♩ = 90 // 𝅗𝅥 = 45

B

C

Piccolo

FRONT PAIR

Audio [Q-Lab]

REAR PAIR

LAYER 1 [GUIDE]

LAYER 1 + crackling fire embers

LAYER 2a [A]: plays 3x

LAYER 2b [A]

lip bend

sempre sim.

Picc.

Q-Lab

LAYER 2b [B]

LAYER 2b [C]

LAYER 2b [D]

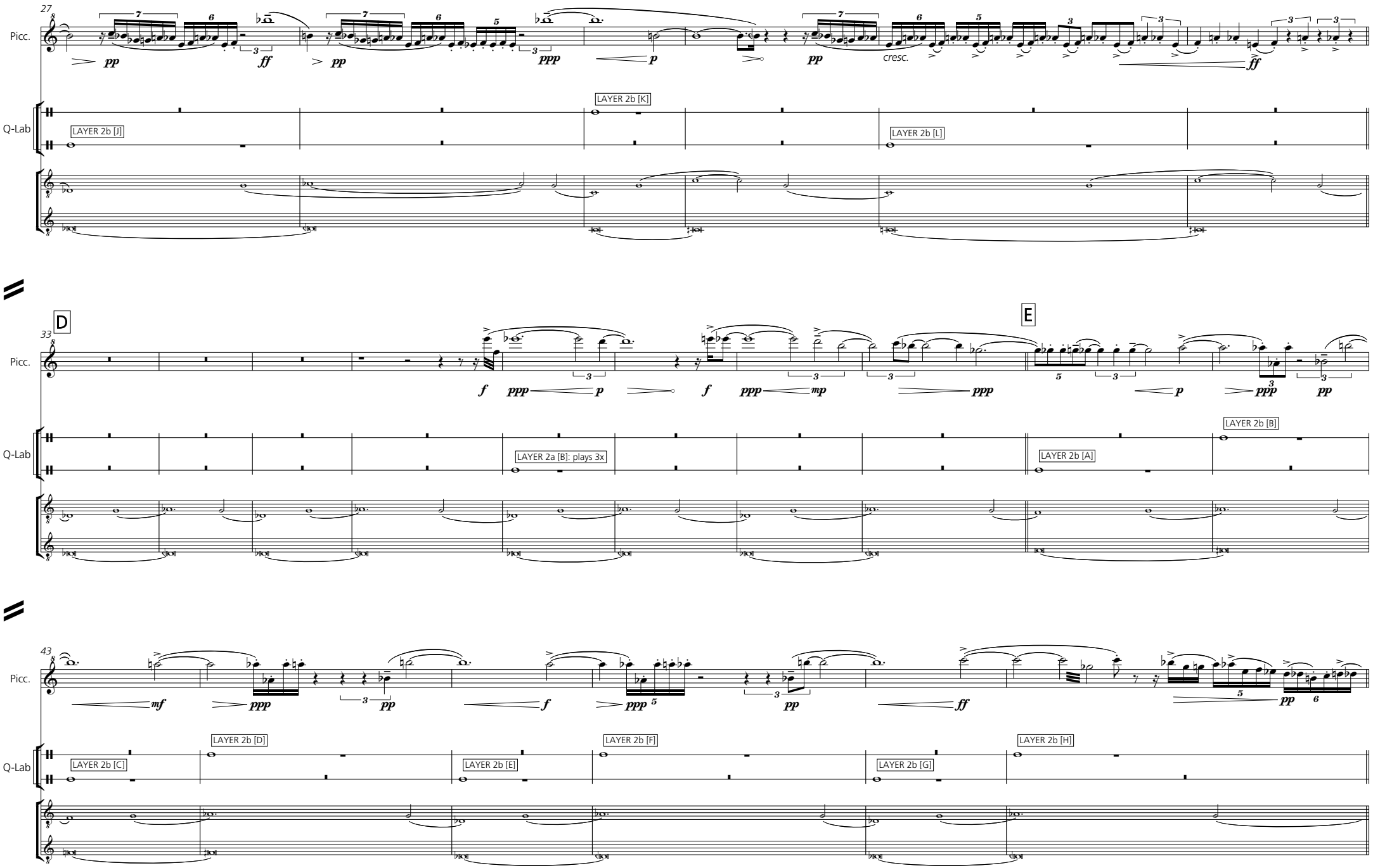
LAYER 2b [E]

LAYER 2b [F]

LAYER 2b [G]

LAYER 2b [H]

LAYER 2b [I]


27
Picc.
Q-Lab
LAYER 2b [J]
LAYER 2b [K]
LAYER 2b [L]
cresc.
D
E
33
LAYER 2a [B]: plays 3x
LAYER 2b [A]
LAYER 2b [B]
43
LAYER 2b [C]
LAYER 2b [D]
LAYER 2b [E]
LAYER 2b [F]
LAYER 2b [G]
LAYER 2b [H]

F

49

breath interrupts cresc.

Picc.

cantabile

Q-Lab

LAYER 2b [I]

LAYER 2b [J]

LAYER 2b [K]

55

Picc.

Q-Lab

LAYER 2b [L]

- BEGIN EXIT (WITH FOOTSTEPS FOLLOWING ♩ PULSE)
- PLAY FROM MEMORY
- MAINTAIN PRECISE RELATIONSHIP WITH LAYER 1

G

61

Picc.

Q-Lab