'n thawt; better'ter see nuthin'

Rob Durnin

for 5 theatrical persons and electronic apparatus
(c. 15 mins)

Notes on Performance

Performers/Speech

The parts for the three performers may be considered as musically notated speech.
The notation consists primarily of an empty two-line staff - used for designating metred speech - in which notes higher in the staff should correspond to a higher register of the (spoken) voice.
Occasionally distinct pitches are required - written in the sounding octave (often requiring falsetto for male performers).

In passages where the staff is abandoned entirely, the spoken text should be simply spoken naturally, inkeeping with any accompanying performance directions and fitting within the specificed duration relative to the other musical elements (this will sometimes require the text to be spoken unusually fast or slowly).

Staging/Props

Due to the degree that the staging will depend on the performance space, there will be no stageplan included here.
However, each movement includes a brief description of the composer's intention with the staging for that movement and within the movements themsleves performers will have various directions as to their movements/actions.
Video recordings of previous performances can also be reffered to in the case of any ambiguities.

A list of necessary props is below:

A small set of chimes (light enough to be held up for a few minutes)

2 translucent 'veils' or curtains - these may need to be mobile (depending on the stage planning), and must be large enough to conceal a person behind

Several music stands

One table (large enough for 3 people to sit around in an arc)

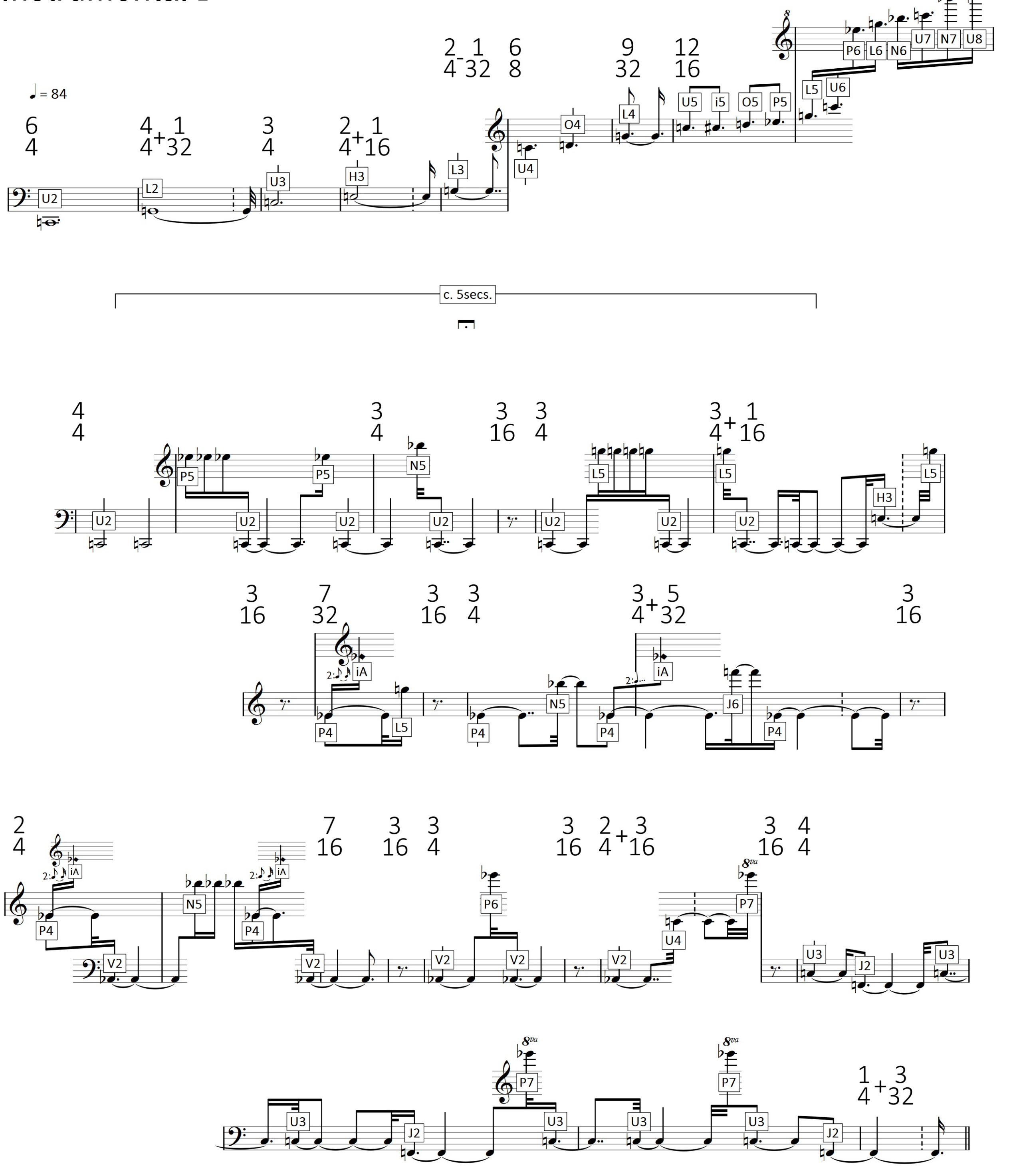
3 chairs (+ extras for conductor/stagehand etc.)

Electronics

The electronic part for this piece is to be performed live with a laptop (which must be Windows OS to work properly).
The necessary sound files + code are available upon request from the composer, including a description of how to set up the 'synth' for performance.

As it is notated, the electronic part offers an only occasionally concise description of the sounding result.
The letters and numbers attached to various notes indicate which keys must be pressed to sound the note.

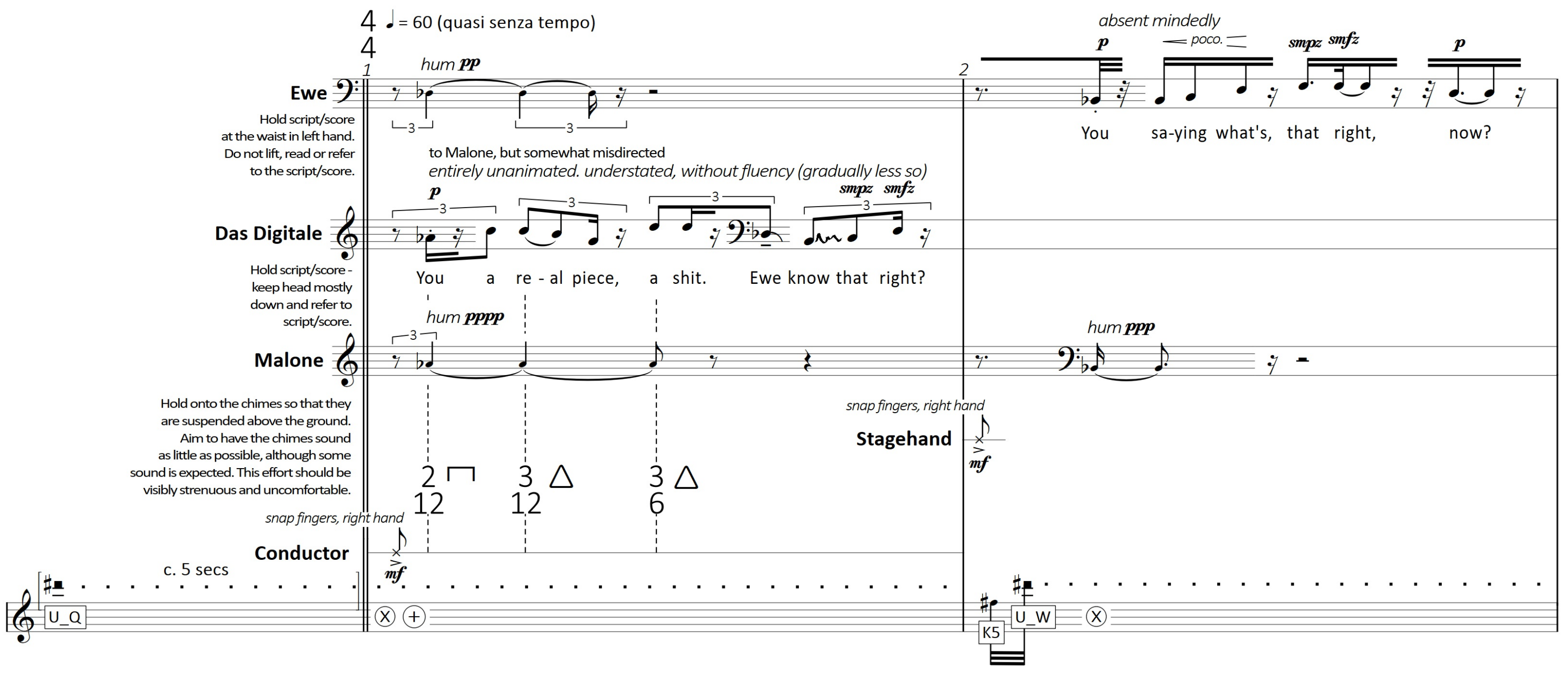
Instrumental I


♩= 84
c. 5secs.
U2
L2
U3
H3
L3
U4
O4
L4
U5
i5
O5
P5
L5
U6
P6
L6
N6
U7
N7
U8
P5
N5
H3
iA
L5
P4
J6
V2
P6
U4
P7
J2

attacca

- I - The Petulant, The Arbitrary and The Obfuscating

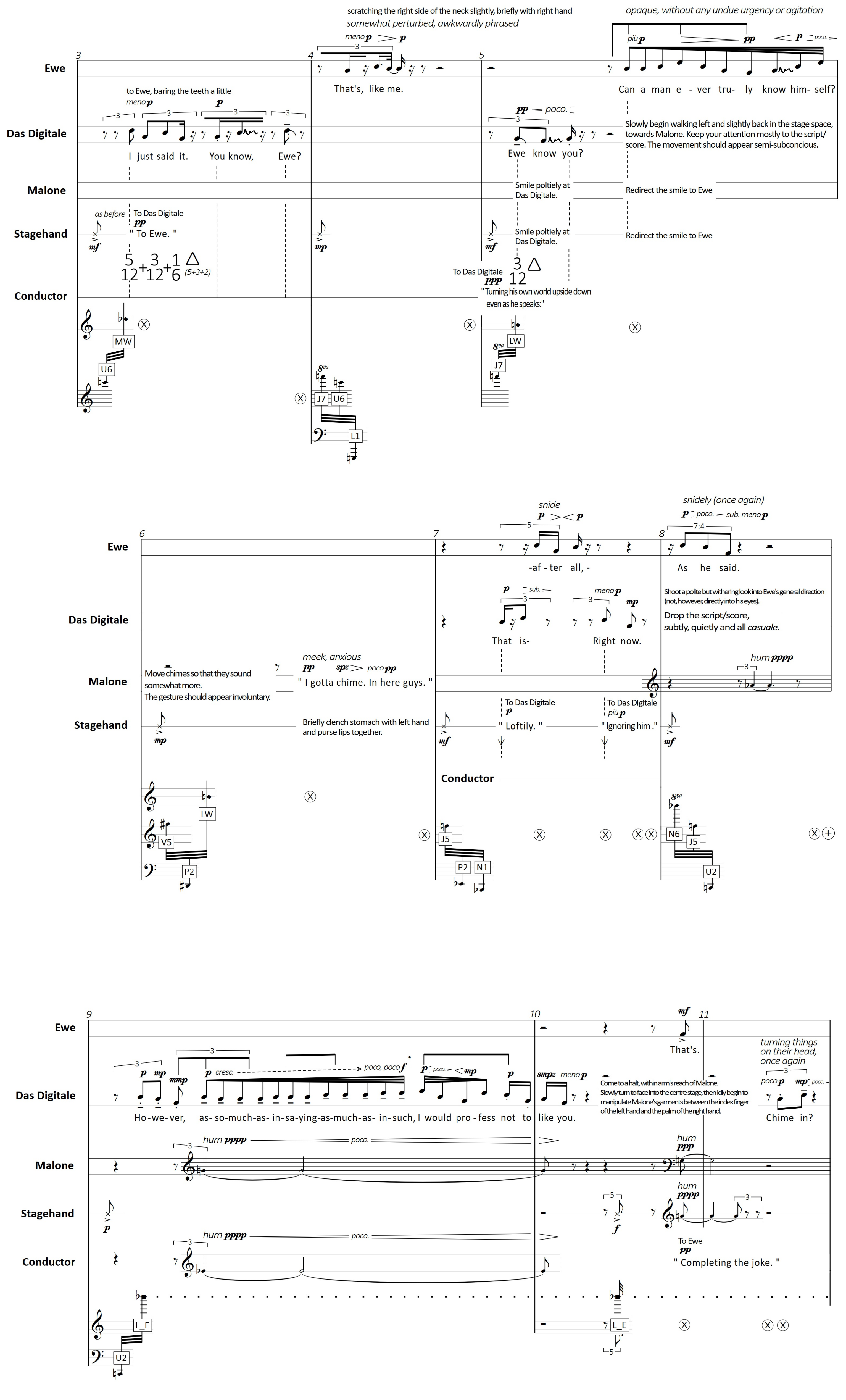
" The three stand in an empty room in an inward-facing arc (audience perspective, left to right: Das Digitale, Ewe, Malone).
Malone is somewhat aside from the other two, with more distance between himself and Ewe than Ewe and Digitale.
Behind Malone is a closed door. A stale and almost restless aura pervades the room. Malone carries a small set of chimes.
He is holding them perfectly still so as not to fill the room with the sound of those troublesome chimes. "

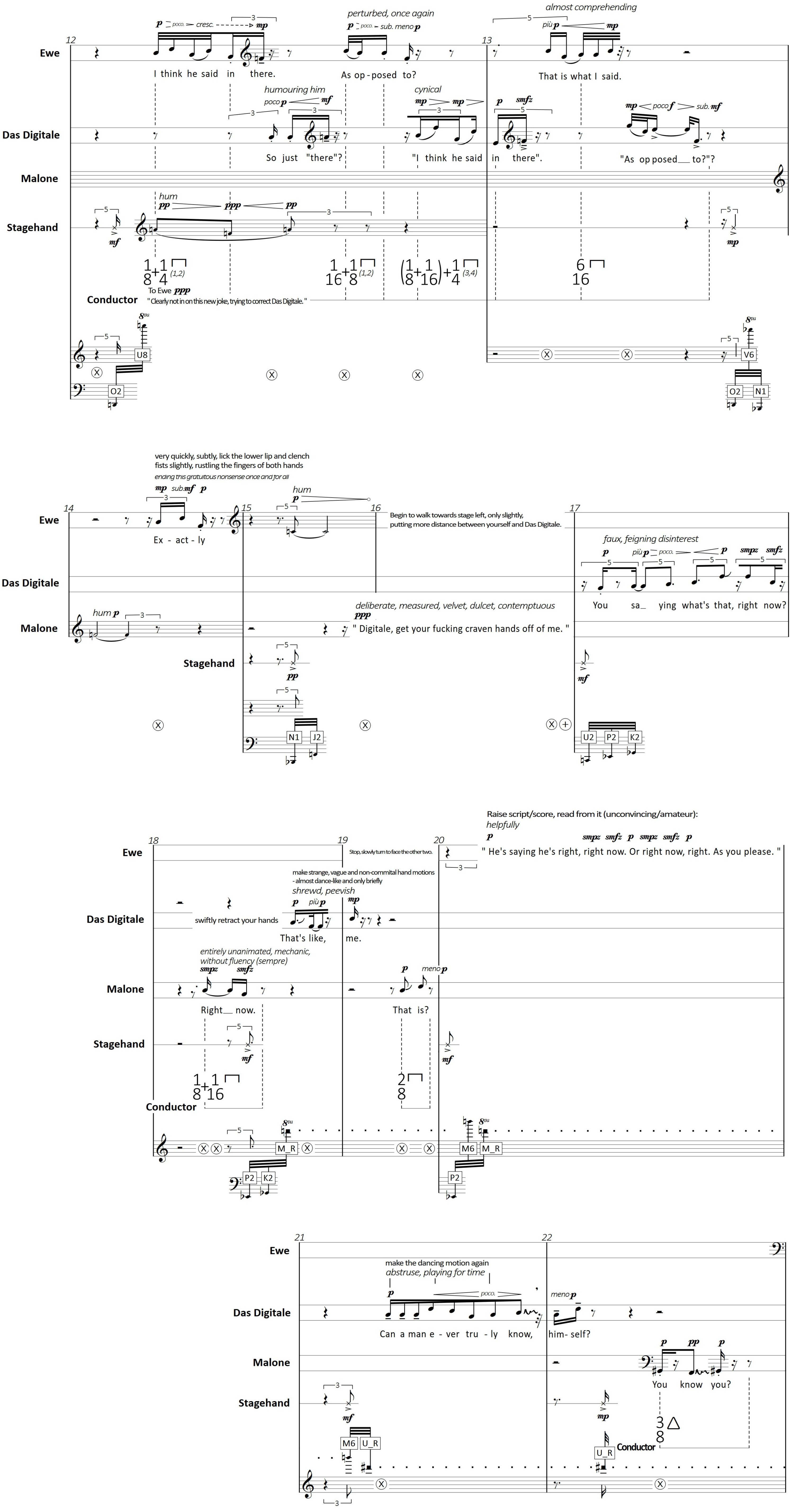

♩= 60 (quasi senza tempo)
Ewe
hum pp
absent mindedly
p
poco.
smpz smfz
You sa-ying what's, that right, now?
to Malone, but somewhat misdirected
entirely unanimated. understated, without fluency (gradually less so)
Das Digitale
You a re - al piece, a shit. Ewe know that right?
Malone
hum pppp
hum ppp
snap fingers, right hand
Stagehand
mf
snap fingers, right hand
Conductor
c. 5 secs
U_Q
K5
U_W

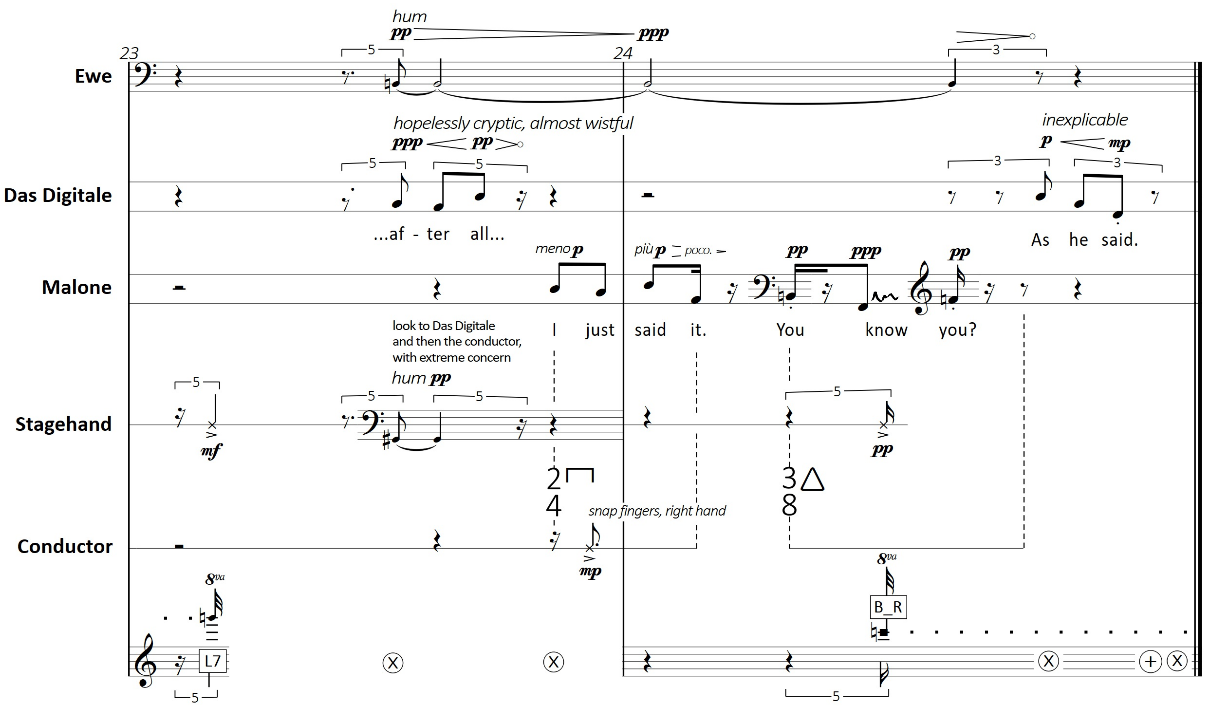
Ewe: Hold script/score at the waist in left hand. Do not lift, read or refer to the script/score.

Das Digitale: Hold script/score - keep head mostly down and refer to script/score.

Malone: Hold onto the chimes so that they are suspended above the ground. Aim to have the chimes sound as little as possible, although some sound is expected. This effort should be visibly strenuous and uncomfortable.

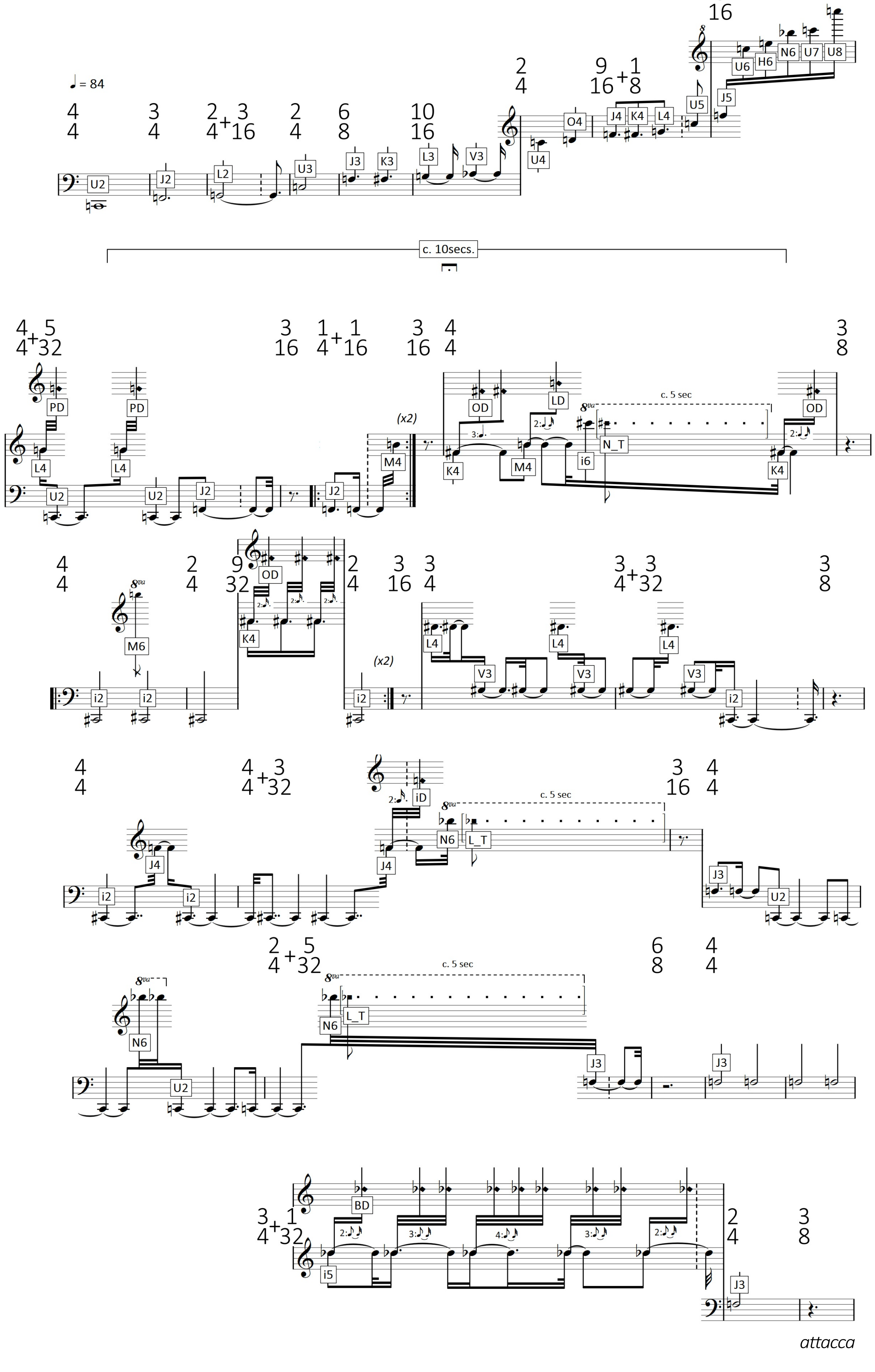

Ewe
Das Digitale
Malone
Stagehand
Conductor
3
4
5
scratching the right side of the neck slightly, briefly with right hand
somewhat perturbed, awkwardly phrased
meno p > p
That's, like me.
opaque, without any undue urgency or agitation
più p > pp < p ≥ poco.
Can a man e - ver tru- ly know him- self?
to Ewe, baring the teeth a little
meno p
p
I just said it. You know, Ewe?
pp = poco. =
Ewe know you?
Slowly begin walking left and slightly back in the stage space, towards Malone. Keep your attention mostly to the script/score. The movement should appear semi-subconcious.
Smile poltiely at Das Digitale.
Redirect the smile to Ewe
as before
mf
To Das Digitale
pp
" To Ewe. "
mp
Smile poltiely at Das Digitale.
Redirect the smile to Ewe
5/12 + 3/12 + 1/6 △ (5+3+2)
3/12 △
To Das Digitale
ppp
" Turning his own world upside down even as he speaks: "
MW
U6
J7
U6
L1
LW
J7
8va
6
7
8
snide
p > < p
-af - ter all, -
snidely (once again)
p ≥ poco. = sub. meno p
7:4
As he said.
p ≥ sub. =
meno p
mp
That is- Right now.
Shoot a polite but withering look into Ewe's general direction (not, however, directly into his eyes).
Drop the script/score, subtly, quietly and all casuale.
Move chimes so that they sound somewhat more. The gesture should appear involuntary.
meek, anxious
pp spz > poco pp
" I gotta chime. In here guys. "
hum pppp
mp
Briefly clench stomach with left hand and purse lips together.
mf
To Das Digitale
p
" Loftily. "
To Das Digitale
più p
" Ignoring him . "
mf
Conductor
LW
V5
P2
J5
P2
N1
N6
J5
U2
9
10
11
mf
That's.
Ho-we-ver, as- so-much-as- in-sa-ying-as-much-as- in-such, I would pro - fess not to like you.
p mp mmp p cresc. poco, poco f p ≥ poco. = < mp p smpz meno p
Come to a halt, within arm's reach of Malone. Slowly turn to face into the centre stage, then idly begin to manipulate Malone's garments between the index finger of the left hand and the palm of the right hand.
turning things on their head, once again
poco p mp ≥ poco. =
Chime in?
hum pppp poco.
hum ppp
p
hum pppp
f
hum pppp poco.
To Ewe
pp
" Completing the joke. "
L_E
U2
L_E
5


Ewe
Das Digitale
Malone
Stagehand
Conductor
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
perturbed, once again
almost comprehending
I think he said in there.
As op-posed to?
That is what I said.
humouring him
cynical
So just "there"?
"I think he said in there".
"As op posed__ to?"?
hum
To Ewe ppp
" Clearly not in on this new joke, trying to correct Das Digitale. "
U8
O2
V6
N1
very quickly, subtly, lick the lower lip and clench fists slightly, rustling the fingers of both hands
ending this gratuitous nonsense once and for all
Ex - act - ly
Begin to walk towards stage left, only slightly, putting more distance between yourself and Das Digitale.
deliberate, measured, velvet, dulcet, contemptuous
" Digitale, get your fucking craven hands off of me. "
faux, feigning disinterest
You sa_ ying what's that, right now?
J2
U2
P2
K2
Raise script/score, read from it (unconvincing/amateur):
helpfully
" He's saying he's right, right now. Or right now, right. As you please. "
Stop, slowly turn to face the other two.
make strange, vague and non-commital hand motions - almost dance-like and only briefly
shrewd, peevish
swiftly retract your hands
That's like, me.
entirely unanimated, mechanic, without fluency (sempre)
Right__ now.
That is?
M_R
M6
make the dancing motion again
abstruse, playing for time
Can a man e - ver tru - ly know, him- self?
You know you?
U_R


23
24
hum
pp
ppp
Ewe
hopelessly cryptic, almost wistful
ppp pp
inexplicable
p mp
Das Digitale
...af - ter all...
As he said.
meno p
più p poco.
pp ppp pp
Malone
I just said it. You know you?
look to Das Digitale
and then the conductor,
with extreme concern
hum pp
Stagehand
mf
pp
2
4
3
8
snap fingers, right hand
Conductor
mp
8va
L7
B_R

attacca

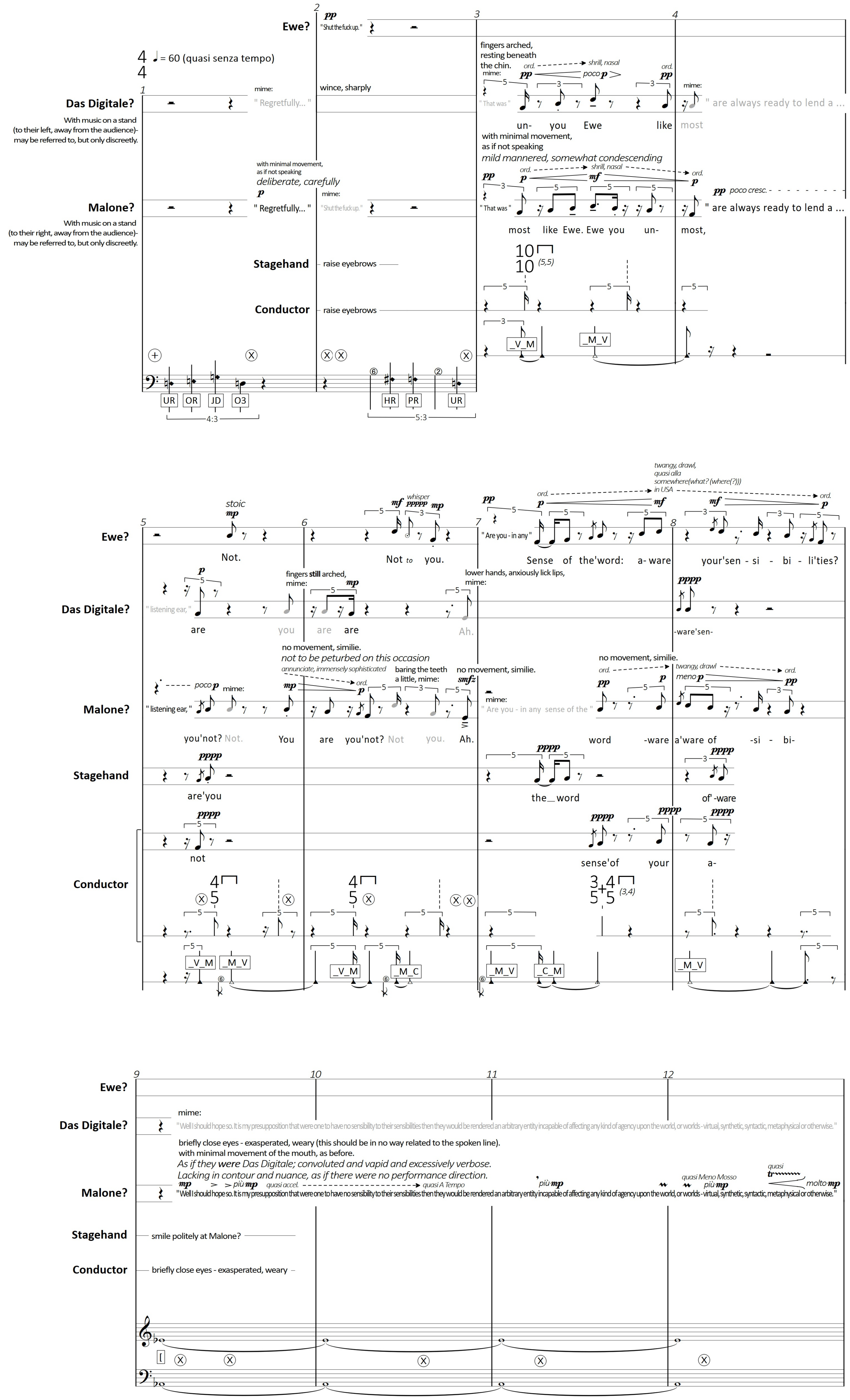
Instrumental II

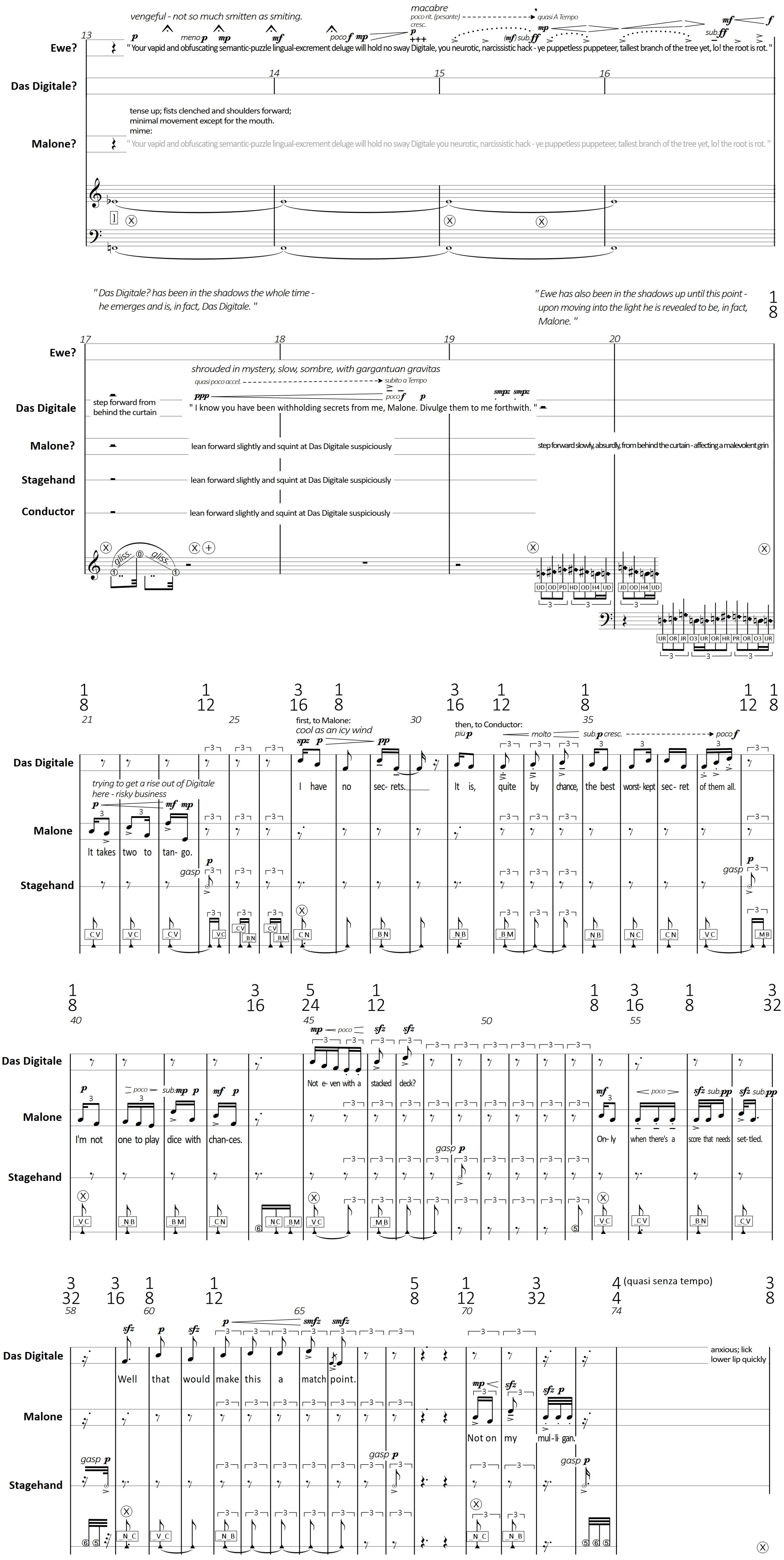

♩ = 84
U2
J2
L2
U3
J3
K3
L3
V3
U4
O4
J4
K4
L4
U5
J5
U6
H6
N6
U7
U8
c. 10secs.
PD
L4
(x2)
M4
OD
LD
c. 5 sec
N_T
i6
K4
M6
i2
V3
iD
L_T
BD
i5
8va

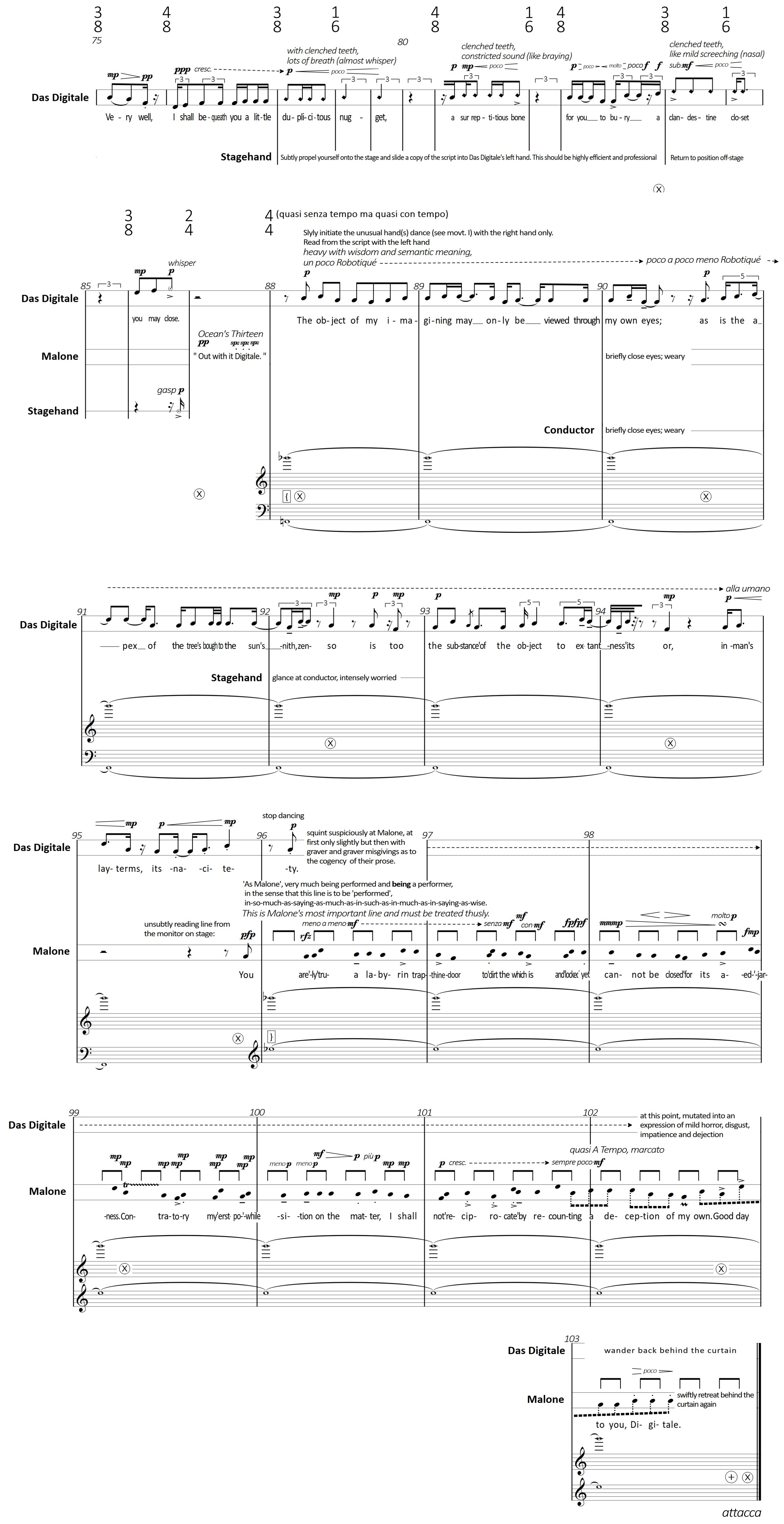
attacca

- II - Double-Duo: The Duplicitous Duo

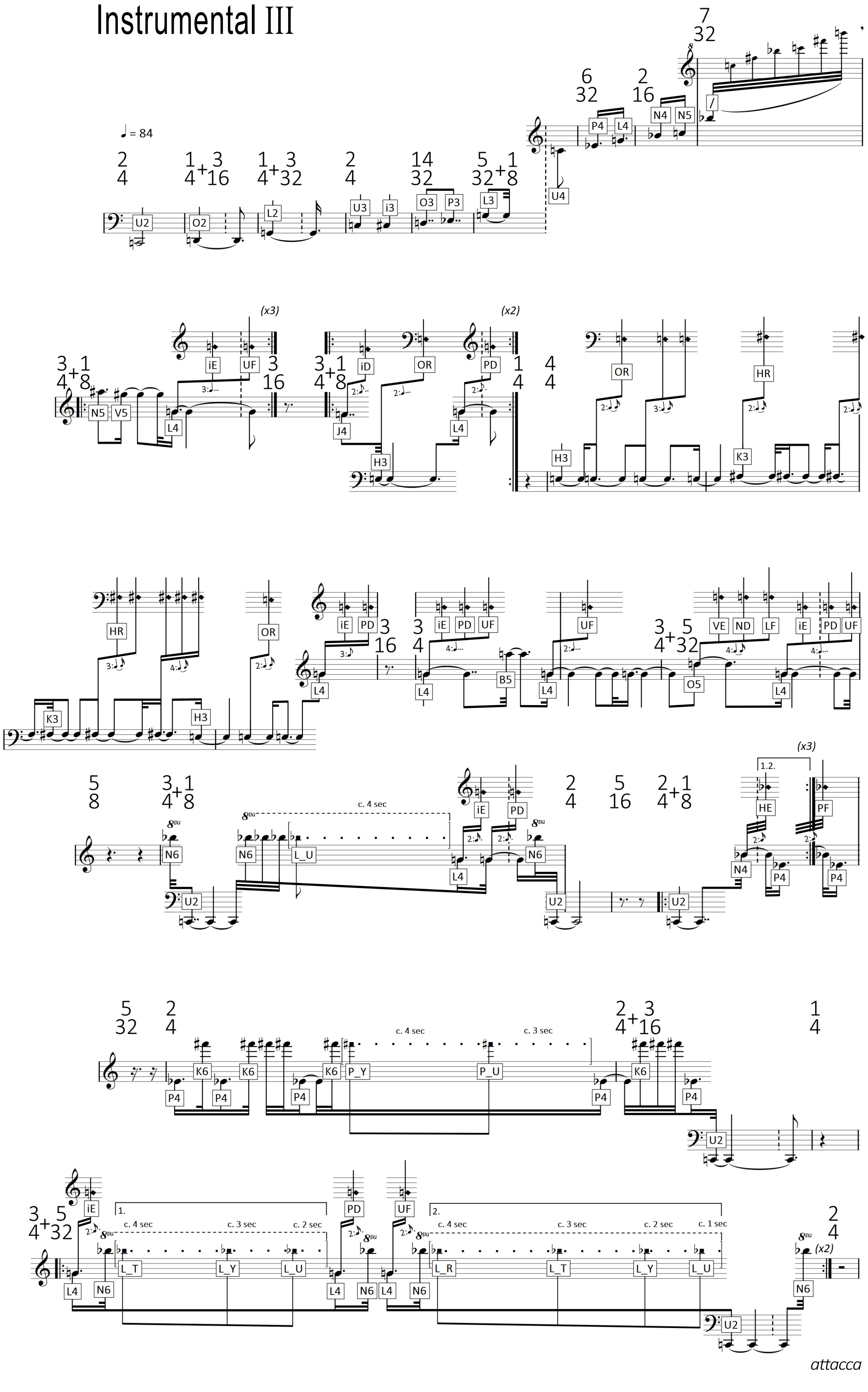
" Two figures stand facing each other in a dimly lit room - each figure stands at opposite ends of the room (left to right) each behind their own semi-transparent curtain that spans the entire height of the room. The space between the two curtains at the centre of the room is empty and illuminated by a dim light. Ostensibly, Malone stands behind the left curtain, and Ewe behind the right curtain. "


Ewe?
Das Digitale?
With music on a stand (to their left, away from the audience)- may be referred to, but only discreetly.
Malone?
With music on a stand (to their right, away from the audience)- may be referred to, but only discreetly.
Stagehand
Conductor
4/4 ♩ = 60 (quasi senza tempo)
pp " Shut the fuck up. "
mime: " Regretfully... "
wince, sharply
with minimal movement, as if not speaking
deliberate, carefully
p " Regretfully... "
mime: " Shut the fuck up. "
raise eyebrows
raise eyebrows
fingers arched, resting beneath the chin.
mime:
ord. shrill, nasal
pp poco p
" That was "
un- you Ewe like most
" are always ready to lend a ...
with minimal movement, as if not speaking
mild mannered, somewhat condescending
ord. shrill, nasal ord.
pp p mf p
" That was "
most like Ewe. Ewe you un- most,
pp poco cresc.
" are always ready to lend a ...
10/10 (5,5)
_V_M
_M_V
UR OR JD O3
4:3
HR PR UR
5:3
stoic mp
Not.
whisper mf pppp mp
Not to you.
pp
" Are you - in any "
ord. twangy, drawl, quasi alla somewhere(what? (where(?))) in USA ord.
p mf mf p
Sense of the'word: a- ware your'sen - si - bi - li'ties?
p
" listening ear, "
are you are are Ah.
fingers still arched, mime:
lower hands, anxiously lick lips, mime:
pppp
-ware'sen-
poco p mime:
" listening ear, "
you'not? Not. You are you'not? Not you. Ah.
no movement, similie.
not to be peturbed on this occasion
annunciate, immensely sophisticated
baring the teeth a little, mime:
no movement, similie.
smfz
mime:
" Are you - in any sense of the "
no movement, similie.
ord. twangy, drawl ord.
pp p meno p pp
word -ware a'ware of -si - bi-
pppp
are'you
the_word
of' -ware
not
sense'of your a-
4/5
3+4/5+5 (3,4)
_V_M _M_V _V_M _M_C _M_V _C_M _M_V
mime:
" Well I should hope so. It is my presupposition that were one to have no sensibility to their sensibilities then they would be rendered an arbitrary entity incapable of affecting any kind of agency upon the world, or worlds - virtual, synthetic, syntactic, metaphysical or otherwise. "
briefly close eyes - exasperated, weary (this should be in no way related to the spoken line).
with minimal movement of the mouth, as before.
As if they were Das Digitale; convoluted and vapid and excessively verbose.
Lacking in contour and nuance, as if there were no performance direction.
mp > > più mp quasi accel. quasi A Tempo
più mp
quasi Meno Mosso più mp
quasi tr molto mp
" Well I should hope so. It is my presupposition that were one to have no sensibility to their sensibilities then they would be rendered an arbitrary entity incapable of affecting any kind of agency upon the world, or worlds - virtual, synthetic, syntactic, metaphysical or otherwise. "
smile politely at Malone?
briefly close eyes - exasperated, weary
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12


vengeful - not so much smitten as smiting.
macabre
poco rit. (pesante) quasi A Tempo
cresc.
Ewe?
" Your vapid and obfuscating semantic-puzzle lingual-excrement deluge will hold no sway Digitale, you neurotic, narcissistic hack - ye puppetless puppeteer, tallest branch of the tree yet, lo! the root is rot. "
Das Digitale?
Malone?
tense up; fists clenched and shoulders forward;
minimal movement except for the mouth.
mime:
" Your vapid and obfuscating semantic-puzzle lingual-excrement deluge will hold no sway Digitale you neurotic, narcissistic hack - ye puppetless puppeteer, tallest branch of the tree yet, lo! the root is rot. "
" Das Digitale? has been in the shadows the whole time - he emerges and is, in fact, Das Digitale. "
" Ewe has also been in the shadows up until this point - upon moving into the light he is revealed to be, in fact, Malone. "
Das Digitale
step forward from behind the curtain
shrouded in mystery, slow, sombre, with gargantuan gravitas
quasi poco accel. subito a Tempo
" I know you have been withholding secrets from me, Malone. Divulge them to me forthwith. "
lean forward slightly and squint at Das Digitale suspiciously
step forward slowly, absurdly, from behind the curtain - affecting a malevolent grin
Stagehand
Conductor
gliss.
UD OD PD HD OD H4 UD JD OD H4 UD
UR OR JR O3 UR OR HR PR OR O3 UR
Malone
first, to Malone:
cool as an icy wind
I have no sec- rets.
It is, quite by chance, the best worst- kept sec- ret of them all.
then, to Conductor:
più p
molto sub. p cresc. poco f
trying to get a rise out of Digitale here - risky business
It takes two to tan- go.
gasp
CV VC CV VC CV BN CV BM CN BN NB BM NB NC CN VC MB
I'm not one to play dice with chan-ces.
poco sub.
Not e- ven with a stacked deck?
On- ly when there's a score that needs set- tled.
VC NB BM CN NC BM VC MB VC CV BN CV
Well that would make this a match point.
Not on my mul- li- gan.
NC VC NB NC NB
(quasi senza tempo)
anxious; lick lower lip quickly


Das Digitale
Stagehand
Malone
Conductor
with clenched teeth, lots of breath (almost whisper)
clenched teeth, constricted sound (like braying)
clenched teeth, like mild screeching (nasal)
Ve - ry well, I shall be-queath you a lit-tle du-pli-ci-tous nug - get, a sur rep-ti-tious bone for you to bu-ry a clan-des-tine clo-set
Subtly propel yourself onto the stage and slide a copy of the script into Das Digitale's left hand. This should be highly efficient and professional
Return to position off-stage
whisper
you may close.
Ocean's Thirteen
" Out with it Digitale. "
gasp
(quasi senza tempo ma quasi con tempo)
Slyly initiate the unusual hand(s) dance (see movt. I) with the right hand only.
Read from the script with the left hand
heavy with wisdom and semantic meaning,
un poco Robotiqué
poco a poco meno Robotiqué
The ob-ject of my i - ma-gi-ning may only be viewed through my own eyes; as is the a-pex of the tree's bough to the sun's -nith, zen- so is too the sub-stance of the ob-ject to ex-tant-ness its or, in-man's lay-terms, its na-ci-te-ty.
briefly close eyes; weary
glance at conductor, intensely worried
alla umano
stop dancing
squint suspiciously at Malone, at first only slightly but then with graver and graver misgivings as to the cogency of their prose.
unsubtly reading line from the monitor on stage:
'As Malone', very much being performed and being a performer, in the sense that this line is to be 'performed', in-so-much-as-saying-as-much-as-in-such-as-in-much-as-in-saying-as-wise.
This is Malone's most important line and must be treated thusly.
You are-ly tru- a la-by-rin trap-thine-door to dirt the which is and lodex yet can- not be closed for its a-ed-jar-ness. Con-tra-to-ry my erst po-while -si-tion on the mat-ter, I shall not re-cip-ro-cate by re-coun-ting a de-cep-tion of my own. Good day to you, Di- gi- tale.
at this point, mutated into an expression of mild horror, disgust, impatience and dejection
quasi A Tempo, marcato
wander back behind the curtain
swiftly retreat behind the curtain again
attacca

Instrumental III


♩ = 84
2/4
1/4+3/16
1/4+3/32
2/4
14/32
5/32+1/8
6/32
2/16
7/32
U2
O2
L2
U3
i3
O3
P3
L3
U4
P4
L4
N4
N5
/
3/4+1/8
(x3)
(x2)
N5
V5
L4
iE
UF
3/16
J4
H3
iD
OR
PD
1/4
4/4
HR
K3
3/16
3/4
B5
O5
3/4+5/32
VE
ND
LF
5/8
3/4+1/8
8va
N6
U2
L_U
c. 4 sec
2/4
5/16
2/4+1/8
1.2.
HE
PF
5/32
2/4
K6
P_Y
P_U
c. 3 sec
2/4+3/16
1/4
3/4+5/32
1.
2.
L_T
L_Y
L_R
c. 2 sec
c. 1 sec
2/4
attacca

- III - The Portentous

" The three are seated in an arc around a table, facing towards the audience; from left to right (audience perspective): Malone, Das Digitale, Ewe. Das Digitale has a deck of cards face-down on the table before him - leaning forwards and downwards into the table slightly, he assumes a kind of oracular capacity within the party. Malone appears somewhat disquieted, yet gently disposed towards a placable sincerity. His hands remain beneath the table at all times except when drawing his card. Ewe is a predominantly neutral figure and largely superfluous to the thrust of the conversation. Despite this, their interjections attest to a waxing and ameliorating prescience of thought. Their posture, while unremarkable, is too rigid to invite any too nonchalant an utterance. "

senza tempo

c. 30 secs.

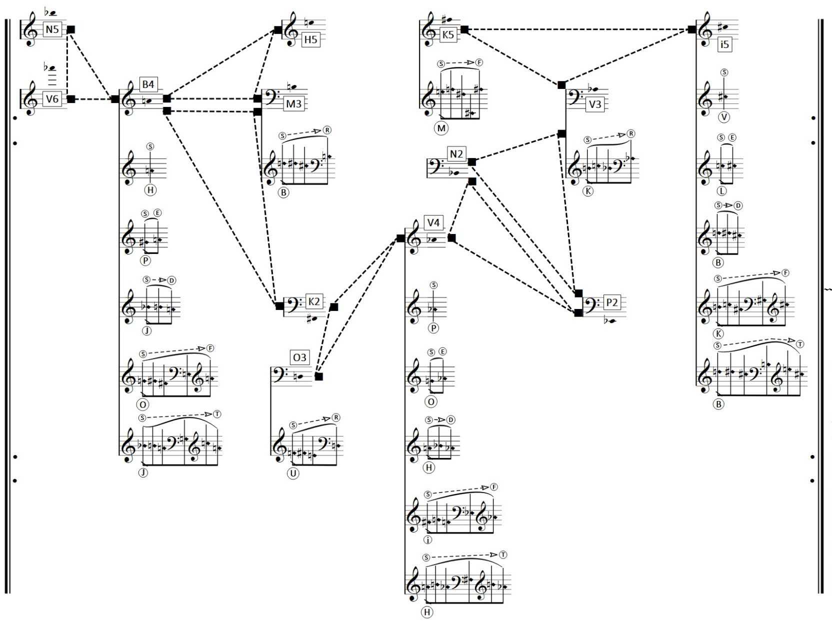
0s — *c. 30s*

Ewe Remain montionless, sombre, looking slightly downwards, until 30s mark.

Das Digitale Remain montionless, sombre, looking slightly downwards, until 30s mark.

Malone Remain montionless, sombre, looking slightly downwards, until 30s mark.

Stagehand *Tacet, sit to stage left - motionless, passive.*



repeat within this structure:
with brief pauses (c. 4 secs) and gradually shorter over time (accel.)

*****

Begin at any point in the constellation.

After playing any given bar/point in the constellation, progress to another different point that is connected to the previous one by a dotted line.

Once a dotted line has been traversed in this way, all three nodes that form the triangle that includes that line must be travelled to before a new triangle can be accessed.

When reaching all points of the triangle in this way, the order is not important and the same point may be visited multiple times before entering a new triangle (e.g. for triangle with points A B and C: ABABCA).

For nodes with multiple options/systems, any of the options may be chosen.

Between different points or instances there should be a pause, initially of some seconds and gradually reducing over time.

c. 30s

Das Digitale: *glacially slow, wildly fluctuating between various poorly executed accents*

To live is, in essence, to draw a card from the deck of untold tellings. Each every card is one of da weeks from de year so like if you folded the cards in half you'd be getting these weird type divisions of the day into sevenths or something, and then if you think to yourself well everything to do with that Olde Youngin' we call time, it divides by six for the most part, well then it's gonna get messy is all I'm sayin'. 𝄐

c. 1m30s

Malone: *apparently without direction or purpose, and then less so*

I will tell you this though for a something as much as it as, like. If I was gonna be sayin' something I'd probably be like extrapolate it outwards - know what I'm sayin'? Why would you content yourself with a microcosm of seminal abstractions divvied between intrepid digits, when we might dare to expound a reckless nebulus, nay nebula, of opaque and pontificatory limbs charting all told undirections and vectors - a truly untold deck. 𝄐

c. 2m30s

Das Digitale: *ever the pedagogue*

To live is, in essence, to go out on a limb, as they say. Choose your cards wisely and be always prepared to burn a card so that the other cards might learn to fear your despondent abandon and deft weilding of that nebulous force we call the fire-

c. 3m

Malone: *interrupting*

Of life? 𝄑

c. 3m5s

Ewe: *not without a degree of disinterest*

Mayhaps. 𝄑

c. 3m10s

Das Digitale: Draw from the deck. 𝄐

end repetitions
(after "Draw from the deck.")

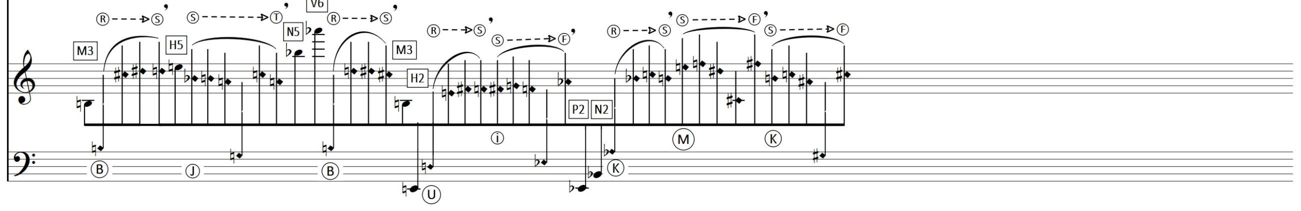
(accel.)

c. 20 secs. — c. 10 secs.

c. 3m10s — *c. 3m30s* — *c. 3m40s*

Malone
Very slowly and deliberately draw a card from the deck.
Look at it only very briefly, then exasperatedly , dramatically throw it face-up onto the table.

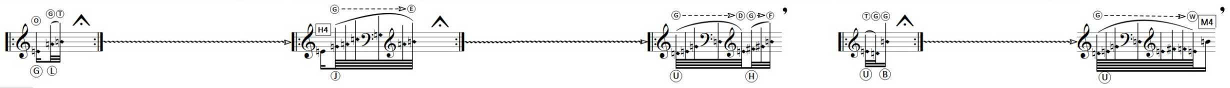
mp *laborious, indulgent*
" Woe am I, for he is me. A Queen of Spades - foulest destiny. "



c. 3m40s

Malone: *unusually earnest*

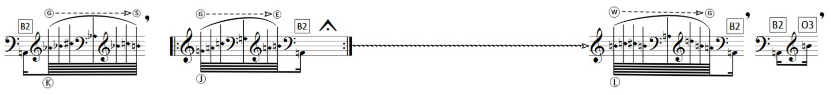
For what would you take me Digitale? Your wretched digits have 'trated this deck and I shan't sit and read their wretched testament before you. ^



c. 4m

Das Digitale: *back at it (what?) again*

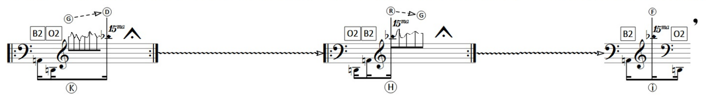
Like a sleeping horse, the deck cannot lie. I knew you to be spineless Malone, but limbless too? ^



c. 4m15s

Ewe:

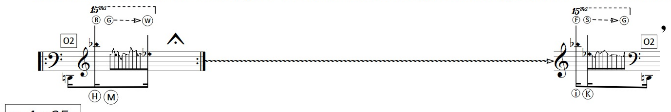
You mean dogs, and you have to let them. Once they've been vetted, of course. And as for appendages-



c. 4m25s

Malone: *interrupting*

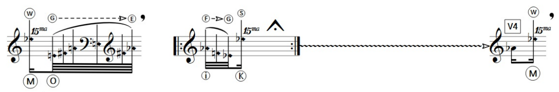
Ewe shall append no more, you. We shall hand the game to Digitale. If he has feet left to stand on.



c. 4m35s

Das Digitale:

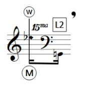
Toe the line, Malone - such metaphorical shoehorning ill fits you. ^



c. 4m45s

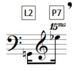
Malone: *juvenile, smug*

Velcro.



Ewe: *rich in phonemes*

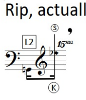
Snap.



c. 4m50s

Das Digitale:

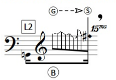
Rip, actually. ^



c. 4m55s

Malone:

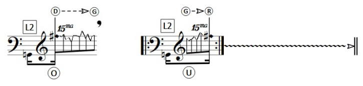
It's immaterial.



c. 5m05s

Das Digitale:

Quite the opposite.



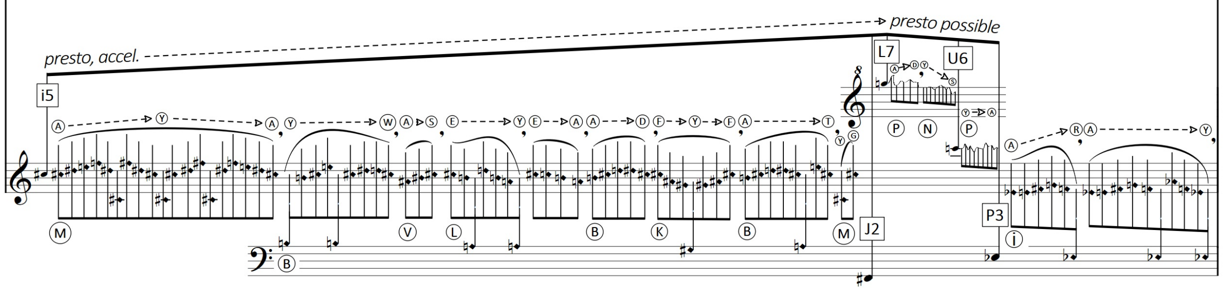
c. 5m15s — c. 15 secs. — c. 5m30s

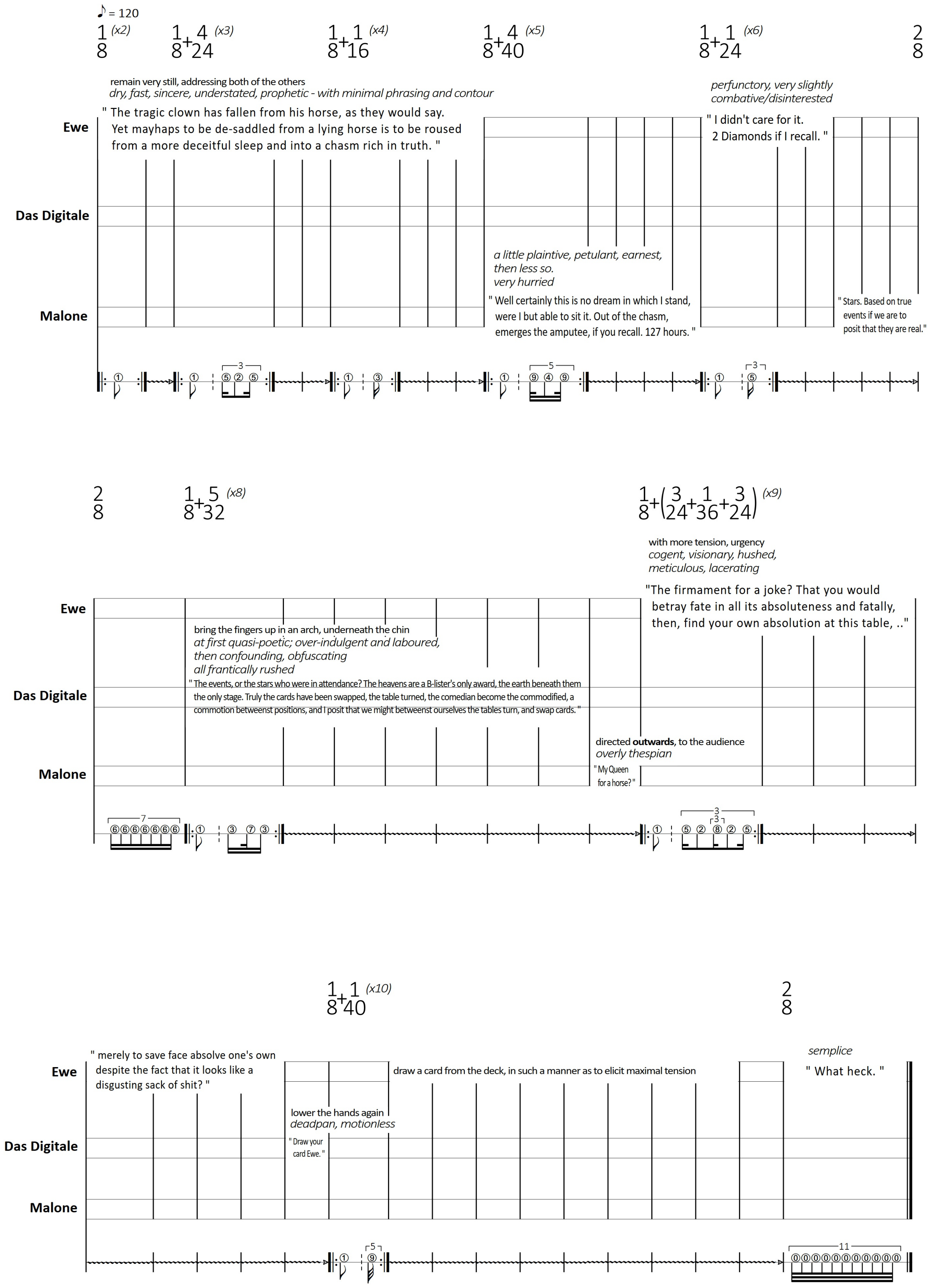
Das Digitale

Slowly, draw a card from the deck; upon reading it, your expression instantly becoming grave and despondent.
Even more slowly, place the card face-down on the table.

almost without movement or gesture,
looking into the table
defeated, fatigued
ppp

" What is this wretched chasm before me? "




♪ = 120
1/8 (x2)
1/8 + 4/24 (x3)
1/8 + 1/16 (x4)
1/8 + 4/40 (x5)
1/8 + 1/24 (x6)
2/8
Ewe
Das Digitale
Malone
remain very still, addressing both of the others
dry, fast, sincere, understated, prophetic - with minimal phrasing and contour
" The tragic clown has fallen from his horse, as they would say. Yet mayhaps to be de-saddled from a lying horse is to be roused from a more deceitful sleep and into a chasm rich in truth. "
a little plaintive, petulant, earnest, then less so. very hurried
" Well certainly this is no dream in which I stand, were I but able to sit it. Out of the chasm, emerges the amputee, if you recall. 127 hours. "
perfunctory, very slightly combative/disinterested
" I didn't care for it. 2 Diamonds if I recall. "
" Stars. Based on true events if we are to posit that they are real."
① ⑤ ② ⑤ 3 ① ③ ① ⑨ ④ ⑨ 5 ① ⑤ 3
2/8
1/8 + 5/32 (x8)
1/8 + (3/24 + 1/36 + 3/24) (x9)
bring the fingers up in an arch, underneath the chin
at first quasi-poetic; over-indulgent and laboured, then confounding, obfuscating all frantically rushed
" The events, or the stars who were in attendance? The heavens are a B-lister's only award, the earth beneath them the only stage. Truly the cards have been swapped, the table turned, the comedian become the commodified, a commotion betweenst positions, and I posit that we might betweenst ourselves the tables turn, and swap cards. "
directed **outwards**, to the audience
overly thespian
" My Queen for a horse? "
with more tension, urgency
cogent, visionary, hushed, meticulous, lacerating
"The firmament for a joke? That you would betray fate in all its absoluteness and fatally, then, find your own absolution at this table, .."
⑥⑥⑥⑥⑥⑥⑥ 7 ① ③ ⑦ ③ ① ⑤ ② ⑧ ② ⑤ 3 3
1/8 + 1/40 (x10)
2/8
" merely to save face absolve one's own despite the fact that it looks like a disgusting sack of shit? "
lower the hands again
deadpan, motionless
" Draw your card Ewe. "
draw a card from the deck, in such a manner as to elicit maximal tension
semplice
" What heck. "
① ⑨ 5 ⓪⓪⓪⓪⓪⓪⓪⓪⓪⓪⓪ 11