# The Velvet Rage (2017)

matthew sergeant (b.1984)

# The Velvet Rage (2017)

matthew sergeant (b.1984)

# Performance Information

## **Instrumentation:**

Flute (concert, alto or bass, see performance guide)

**Voice** (with Talkbox, see performance/notation guide)

Cello (with scordatura and twine bow, see performance/notation guide)

# **Duration:**

Approximately 20 minutes

# **Commissioning Context:**

The Velvet Rage was commissioned by Trio Atem in celebration of their tenth anniversary, with funds generously provided by Arts Council England.



# Programme Note:

The Velvet Rage probably has more to do with Sara Ahmed's text, *Queer Phenomology*, than the famous self-help book from which it actually takes its title. Ahmed was interested in unpacking ideas of orientation within sexual orientation - what does it mean to be orientated, sexually? So I suppose it's a piece about relationships - relationships between performers-to-performers, bodies-to-instruments and digital-to-flesh - bodies sometimes controlling instruments, instruments sometimes controlling bodies - and liquefying those relationships into a state of dialogue and juxtaposition - setting up mutual queerings between these kinds of relationships - prepared instruments, rich in glitch, accompanying the natural "human" rhythms of speech - perhaps - or the body as a bio-filter for electronic sound - maybe. The Velvet Rage was commissioned in 2017 by Trio Atem in celebration of their 10th anniversary, with funds generously supplied by Arts Council England. It is dedicated to Nina Whiteman, in friendship and comradery.

MS 2017

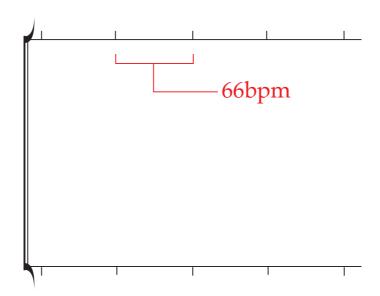
matthew sergeant (b.1984)

# Performance/Notation Guide

# (a) General

# Notation of rhythm

Rhymically, the score is presented in a format where horizontal space equates to time. An approximate pulse grid is provided along the top of each system via a constant series of notches, where each notch represents a beat of approximately 66 bpm:



Articulation-points placed within this grid are played with their starting point relative to it. *I.e.* articulations closer together occur in quicker succession to those further apart.

The *duration* of events is indicated with a line extending from the notehead or, if this is not possible within the context, with the lenth of the flag (see right).

SUSTAIN

## **Ensemble co-ordination**

Throughout the score, events that are aligned vertically are expected to only approximately align in time, although it is expected that players will generally be occupying the same 'beat' (i.e. space-tim 'notch') at any one given moment. Events are are precisely co-ordinated in time (mainly the beginning/ends of sections) are conjoined with vertical dotted lines.

# Notation of pitch

The score contains passages of music that are notated with both precise and relative pitch contents.

Passages of precise pitch are notated in the conventional manner, although convening to the space/time relations detailed above. In addition to standard conventions, the following clefs may need further delineation.

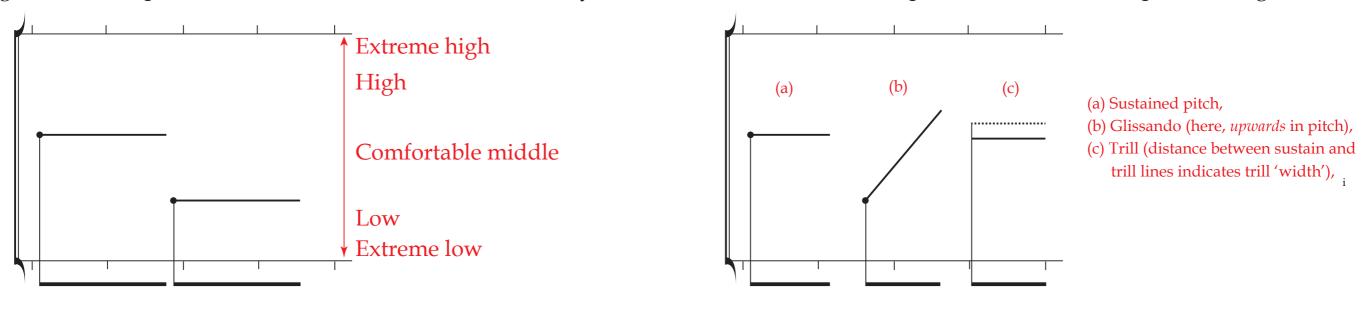




[Voice only]

Semi-indeterminate pitch. Any starting value may be selected for the material, providing the notated *intervals* are retained.

Passages of realtive pitch are notated in a manner akin to the rhythmic notation, where vertical space in the score corresponds to register.



# **Dynamics**

Throughout the composition, dynamics should be considered as an indication of *input energy* and not resultant sound (i.e. it is acknowledged that certain combintations of performance techniques will result in a more scaled bandwidth of dynamic output).

# (a) Vocalist

# General Guidance

The general colour and sound required should mirror an 'untrained' voice as much as possible. Vibrato is strictly prohibited throughout and chest voice (even in the highest registers) should be prioritised over head voice.

# **Phonetics**

All phonetics are notated using symbols from the international phonetic alphabet (IPA). For a comprehensive guide to pronounciation, including sound examples, visit: www.internationalphoneticalphabet.org

## **Vowels**

Vowel sounds are notated in boxes and are consistently colour-coded throughout:

a

Sustainted vowel sounds are notated with thick coloured lines:

Transitions between vowel sounds are notated with a gradiation of colour between vowel states: [2]

E u

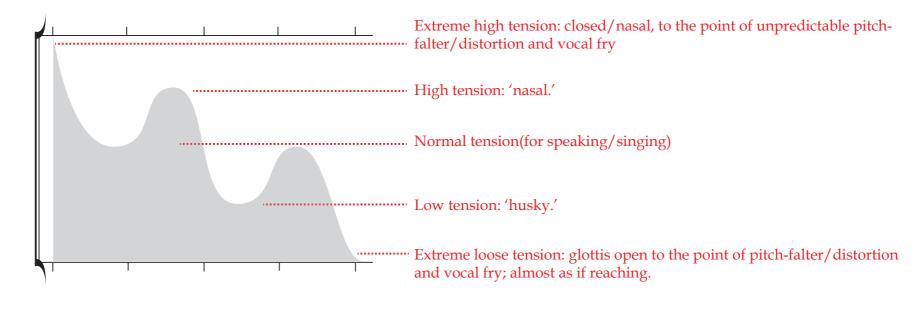
### **Consonants**

Consonants are also notated using the international phonetic alphabet (see above). Consonants are often notated rhythmically independently of pitch - in such circumstances consonants should be seen as interruptions to ongoing vowel activity.

Sustained frictive consonants are notated:  $\theta$ 

## **Glottis**

Glottis tension is notated with greyed-out space (see below), the higher the grayed spaced extends, the higher the relative tension postion.



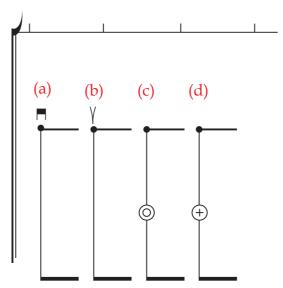
#### Note:

When no greyed-out space is indicated, the material is to be performed with conventional glottal tension, typical for the context.

## Other notations

The following additional notations will also require further explanation:

- (a) Singing on the out-breath,
- (b) Singing on the in breath,
- (c) Mouth open,
- (d) Mouth closed,



#### Note:

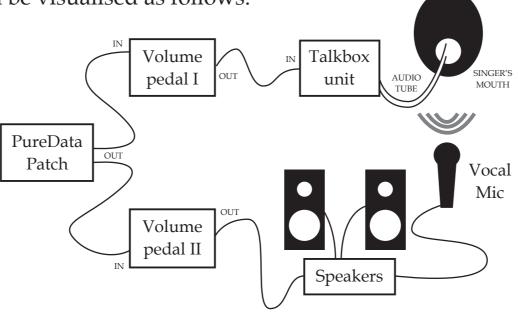
If no mouth open/closed indication is provided on the stem, the material can assumed to be with mouth open.

## **Talkbox**

The composition requires the vocalist to use a talkbox unit, such as the *Banshee II* device manufactured by Rocktron, alongside two volume controller pedals. Visit www.rocktron.com/banshee-2.html for further information on the talkbox unit.

The talkbox is connected to the output of a realtime generated PureData patch, available from the composer (email info@matthewsergeant.com for further details and to receive the patch).

The configuration of the talkbox system can be visualised as follows:



The voice will need to be subtly amplified through the vocal mic at all times, with or without the Talkbox.

# **Talkbox Notations**

When the Talkbox is used, the position of the its audio tube within the mouth is notated:



Just inside the lips, level with the teeth,



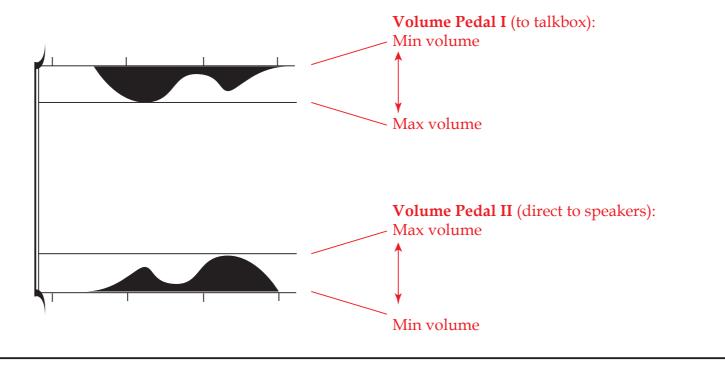
Middle of mouth cavity,



Back of mouth, towards the throat,

Vowel sounds (notated as previous) are used to indicate tongue/mouth positions with which to filter the electronic material via the Talkbox. These are notated as per previous explanations.

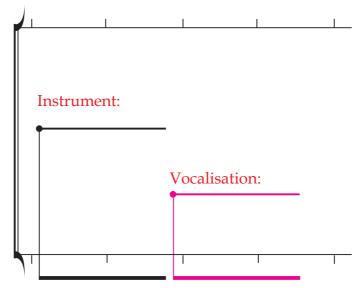
The two volume pedals are notated:



# (b) Instruments (General)

# **Vocalisations**

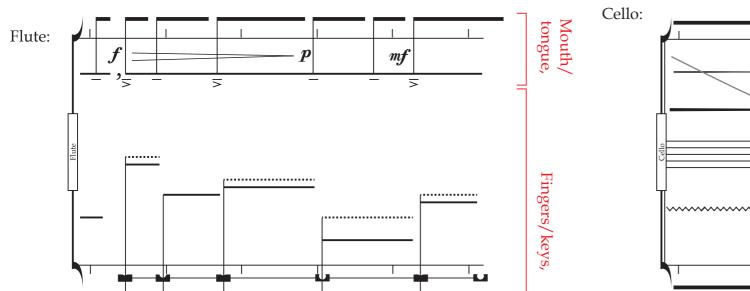
During the composition, both instrumentalists are required to vocalise, sometimes simultaneous with thei instrumental performance. Stems and flags associated with instrumental activity are notated in black, whilst vocalisations are notated in magenta. For example:

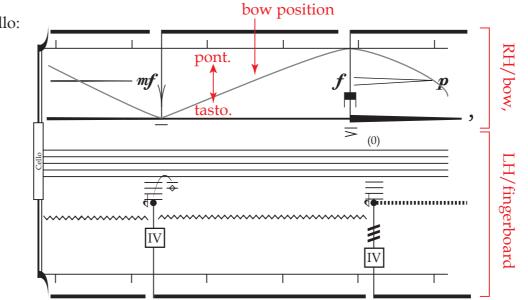


When vocalising, phonetics are notated as per the vocalist's part. It is advised these notes are therefore reviewed by instrumentalists additionally.

# Decoupling

At certain times in the score, different areas of instrumental physicality (e.g. bow/fingerboard or mouth/keys) are rhythmically decoupled. Such passages should be executed simultaneously on the instrument, the sonic results being the collission of the layers. For example:





# Note:

During these passages, dynamics are positioned with the line of activity associated with producing them (i.e. with the mouth, in the flute, and with in the bow, in the cello).

During such passages, often contradictory performance states will often be superimposed, resulting in many 'glitches' or additional sound to be produced. This is both expected and encouraged in performance.

# (c) Flute

# **Instrument**

The piece can be performed on concert, alto or bass flute. The instrument selected for a performance should be made in relation to the player's vocal range so as to be broadly compariable, i.e. male flautists should first consider the bass instrument whereas female flautists may prefer the concert or alto instruments.

# **Instrument rotation**

The rotation of the instrument, leading to pitch bending and sometimes pitch destabilisation, is notated thus:

- Tilted *away* from the body,
- Ordinario,
- Tilted *towards* the body,

# (d) Cello

# Scordatura and strings:

The following scordatura is used throughout the composition:

# IV III II I

#### Note:

It is not expected that string IV wil hold a consistent pitch at this level of detuning. Activity on this string will result in severe pitch destabilisation and this is both expected and encouraged in performance.

The strings intended for performance of particular articulations are notated with boxed roman numerals (often positioned within the stems).

# Bow pressure

When rhythmically decoupled from fingerboard activity, bow pressure is notated using lines of varying thickness:

- Scratch-tone/over-pressure. Distorted, with limited pitch content,
- Semi-scratch. Distorted, but with some audible pitch content,
  - Ordinario,
- —— Flautando bow pressure. Extremely/unnecessarily light, causing cracks/squeaks and pitch falters.

# Pizzicato:

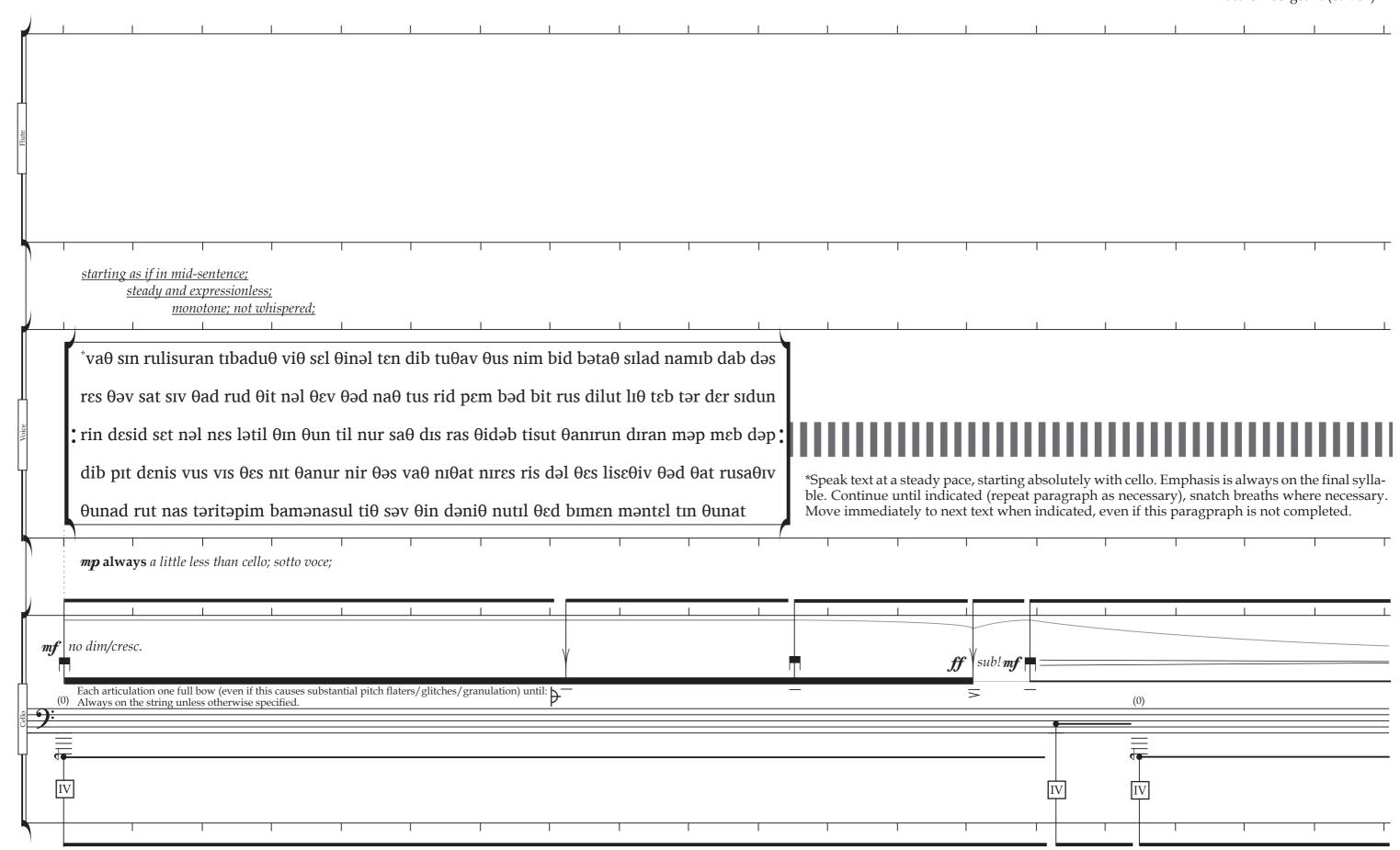
Pizzicato is notated with a circle through the stem of the articulation to which it is applied. All other articulations are to be considered arco. E.g.:

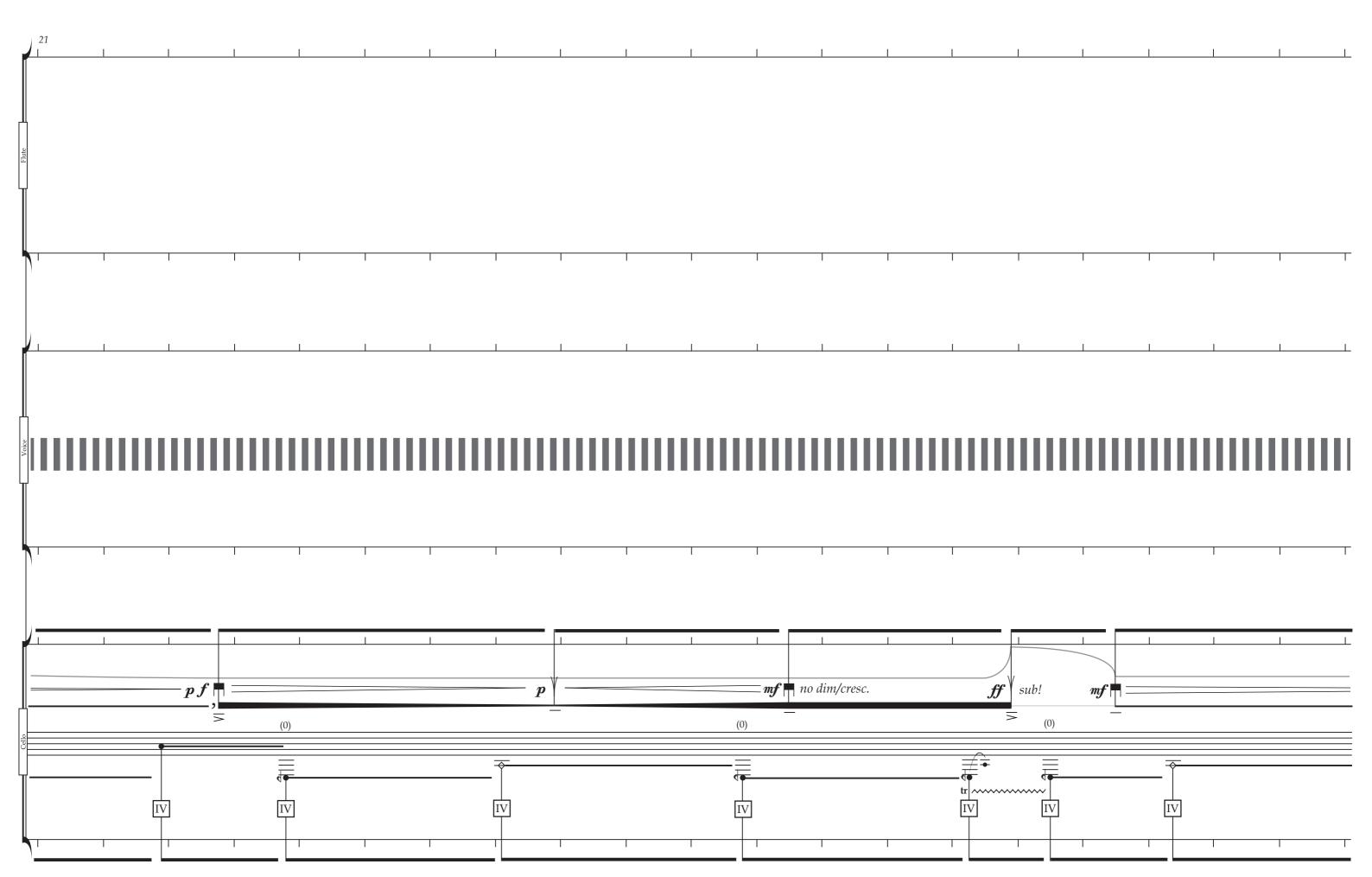
# Twine bow:

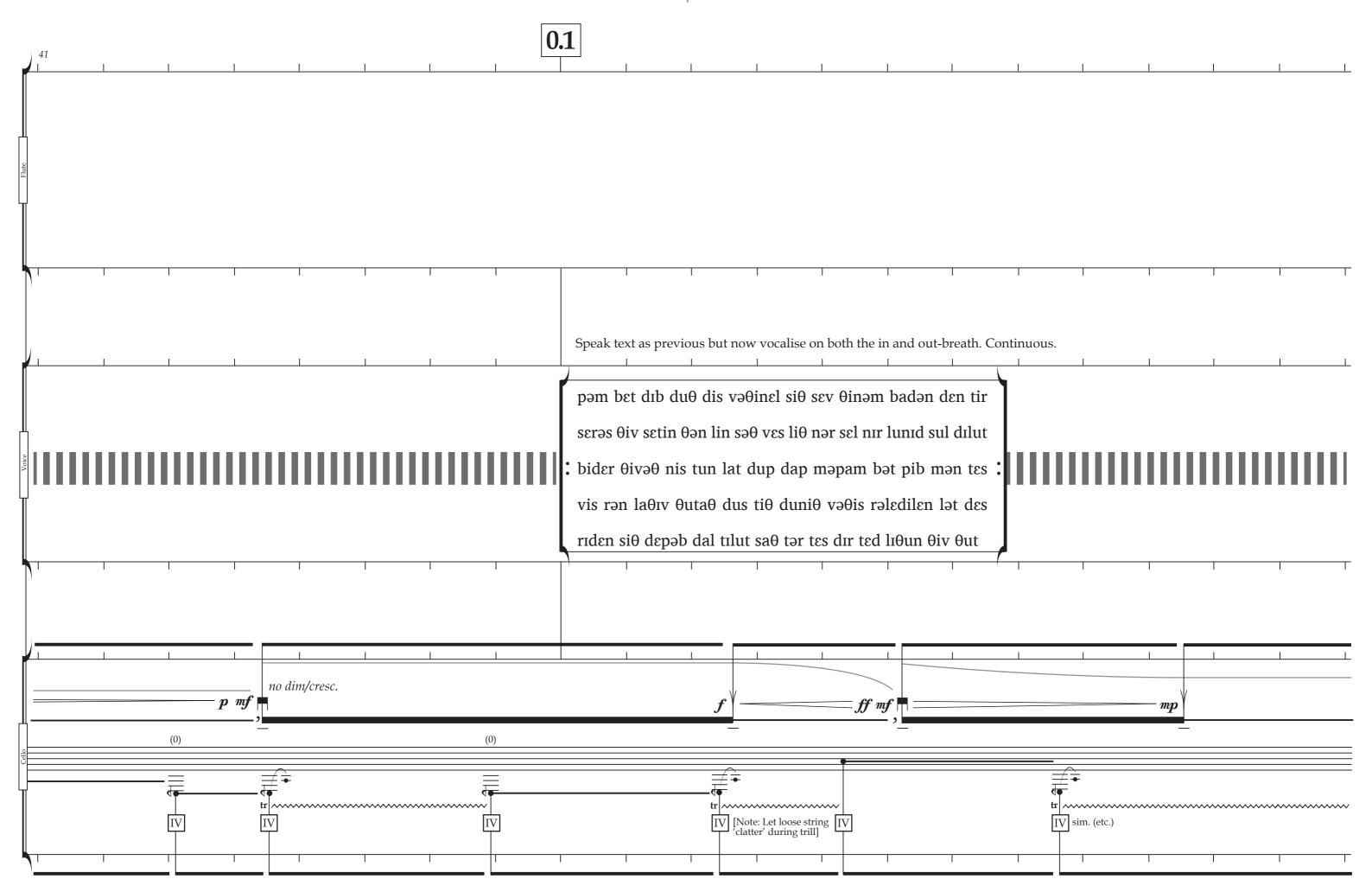
At the end of the composition, the cello is to be played with a 'twine bow' - a conventional cello bow, the hair of which has been overlaid with a coarse garden twine. Further information regarding the twine bow (including assembly instructions) are available from the composer via email (info@matthewsergeant.com).

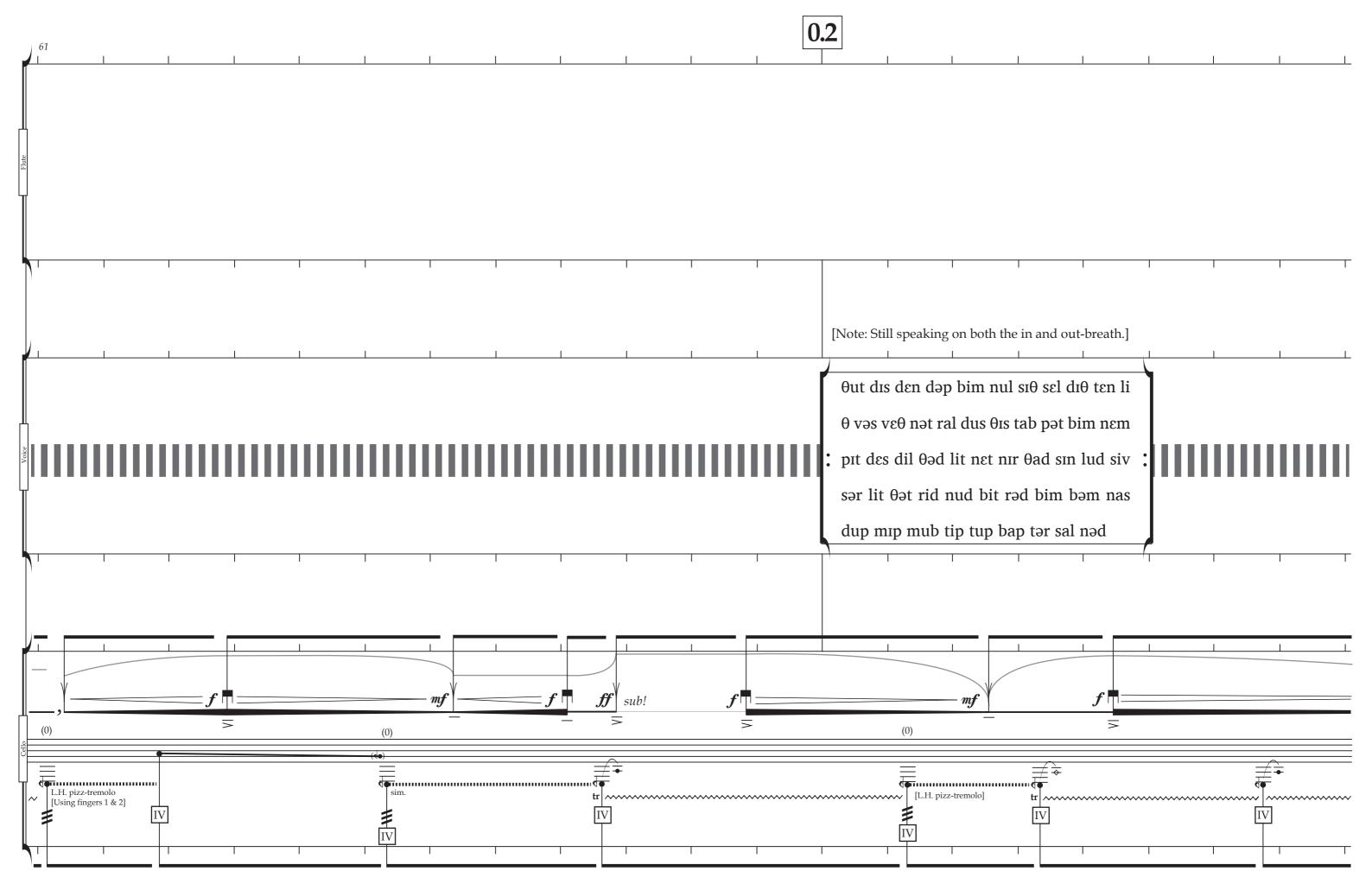
# The Velvet Rage

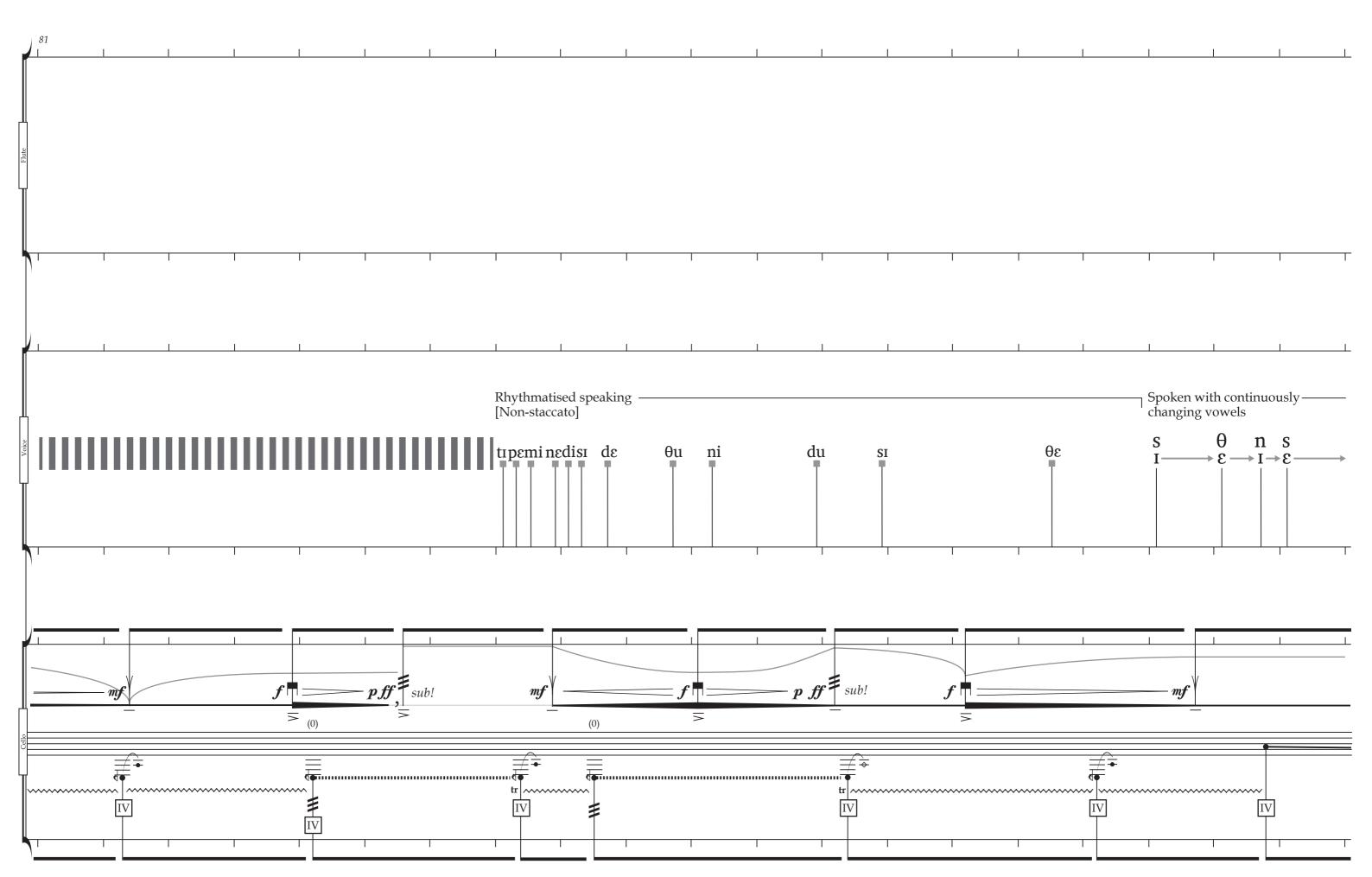
matthew sergeant (b.1984)

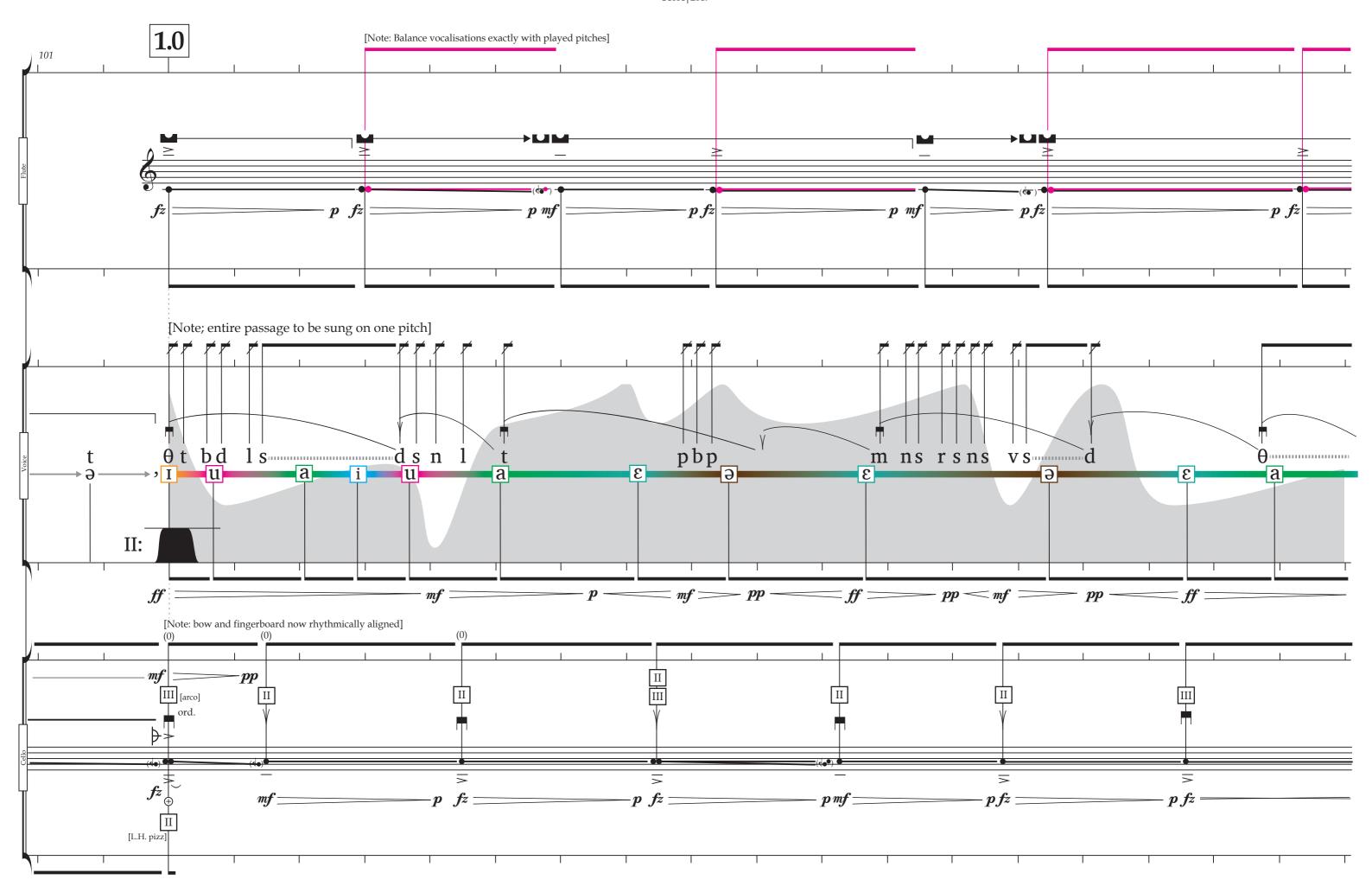


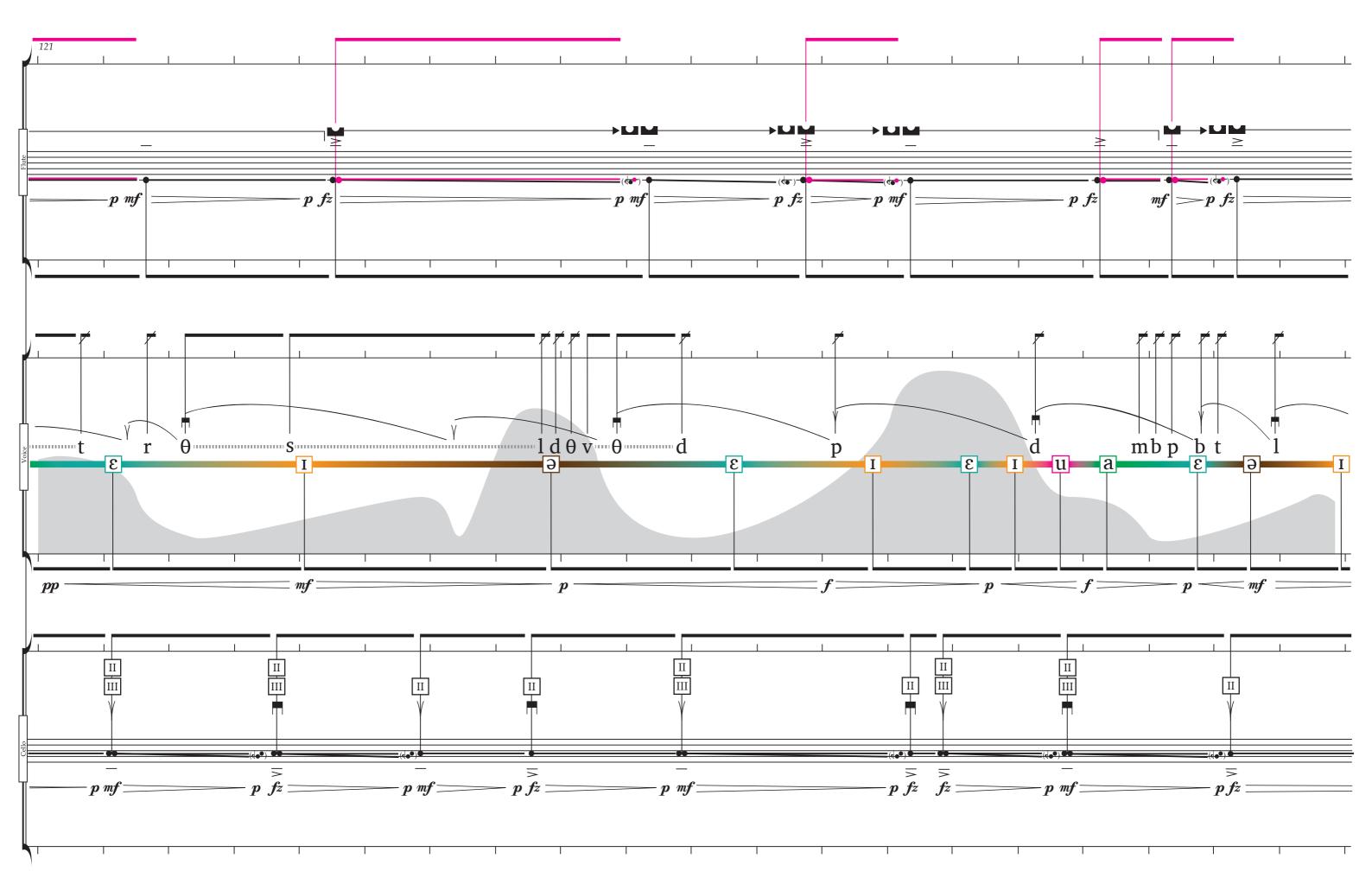


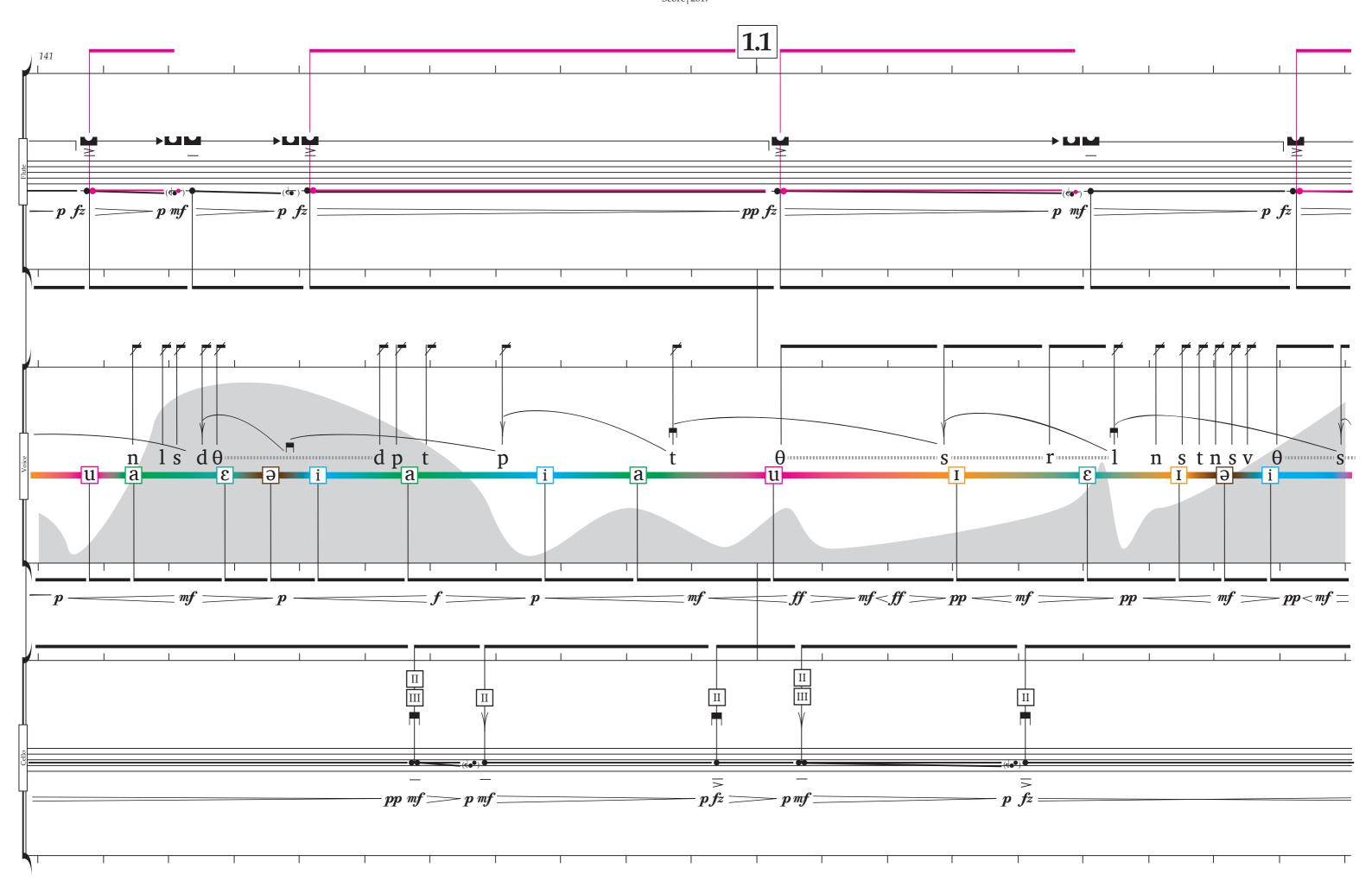


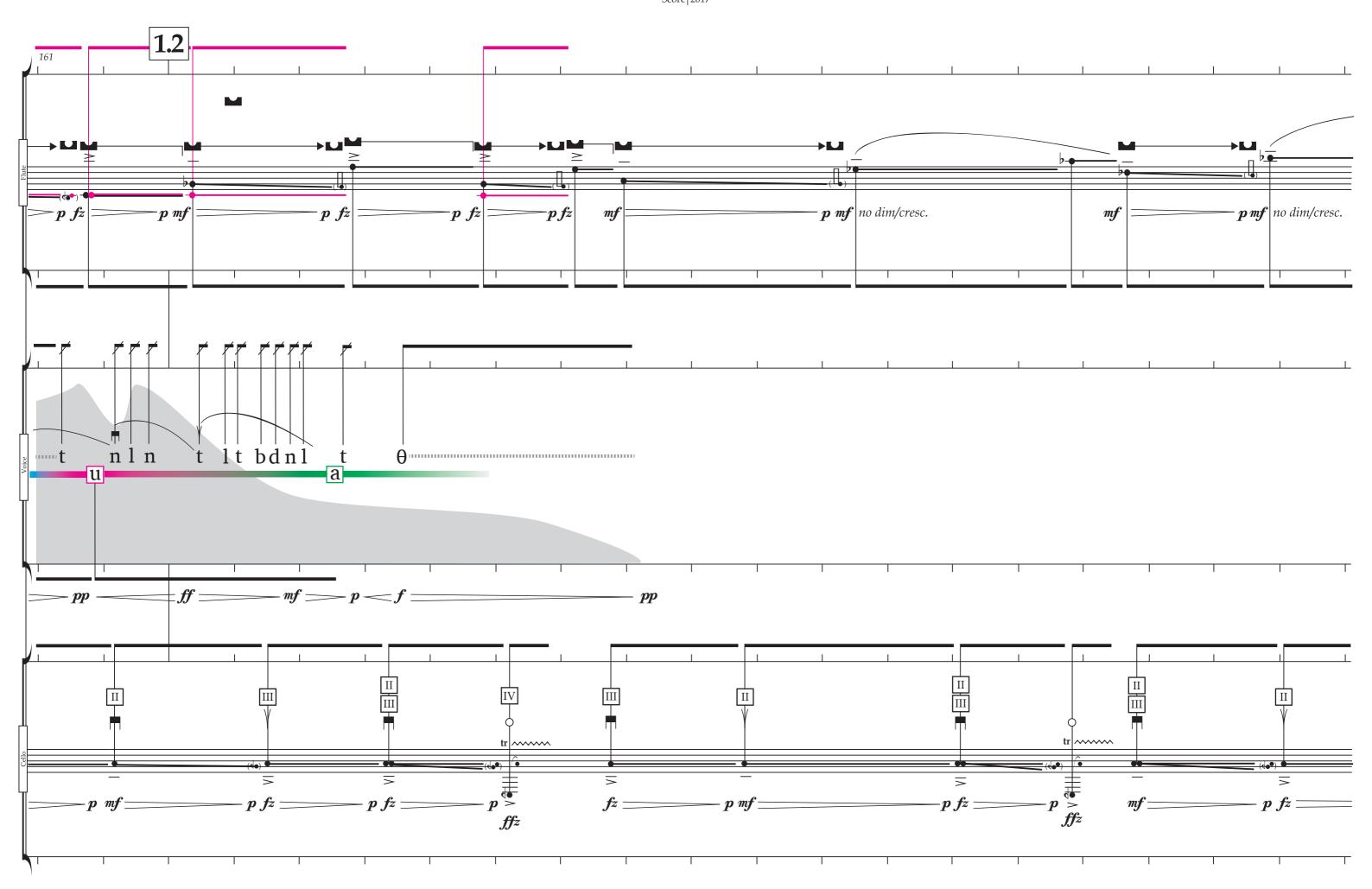


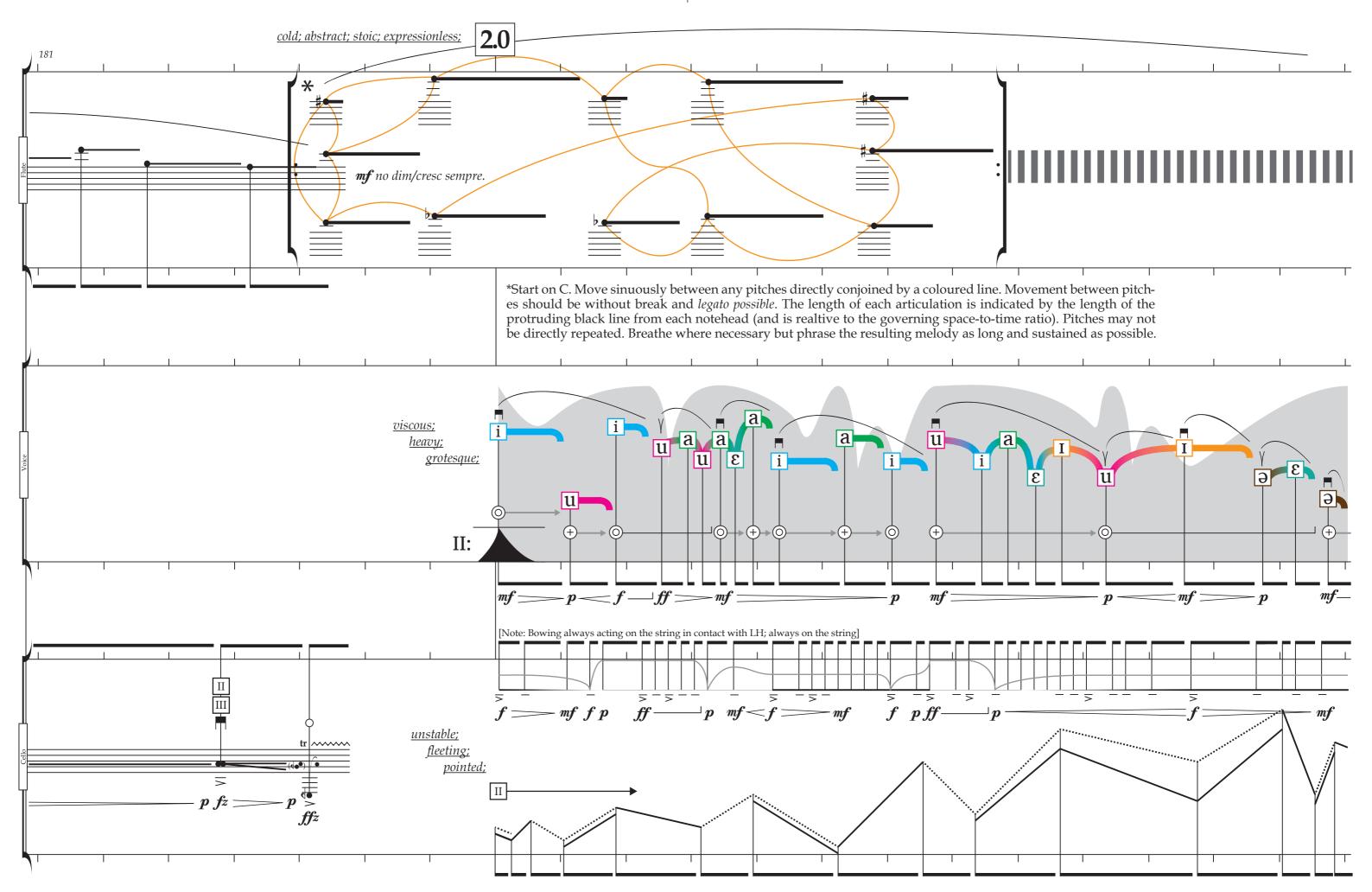


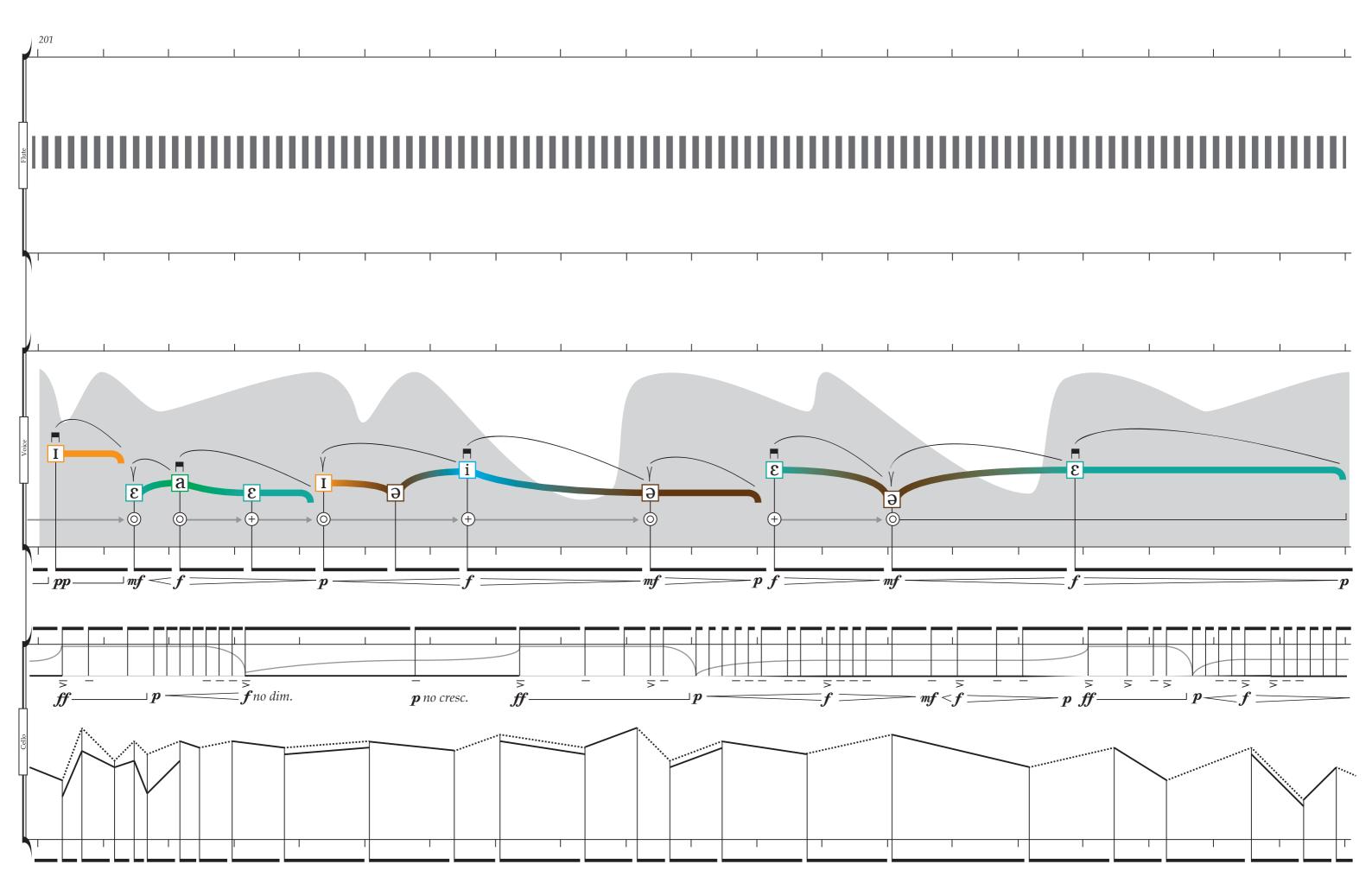


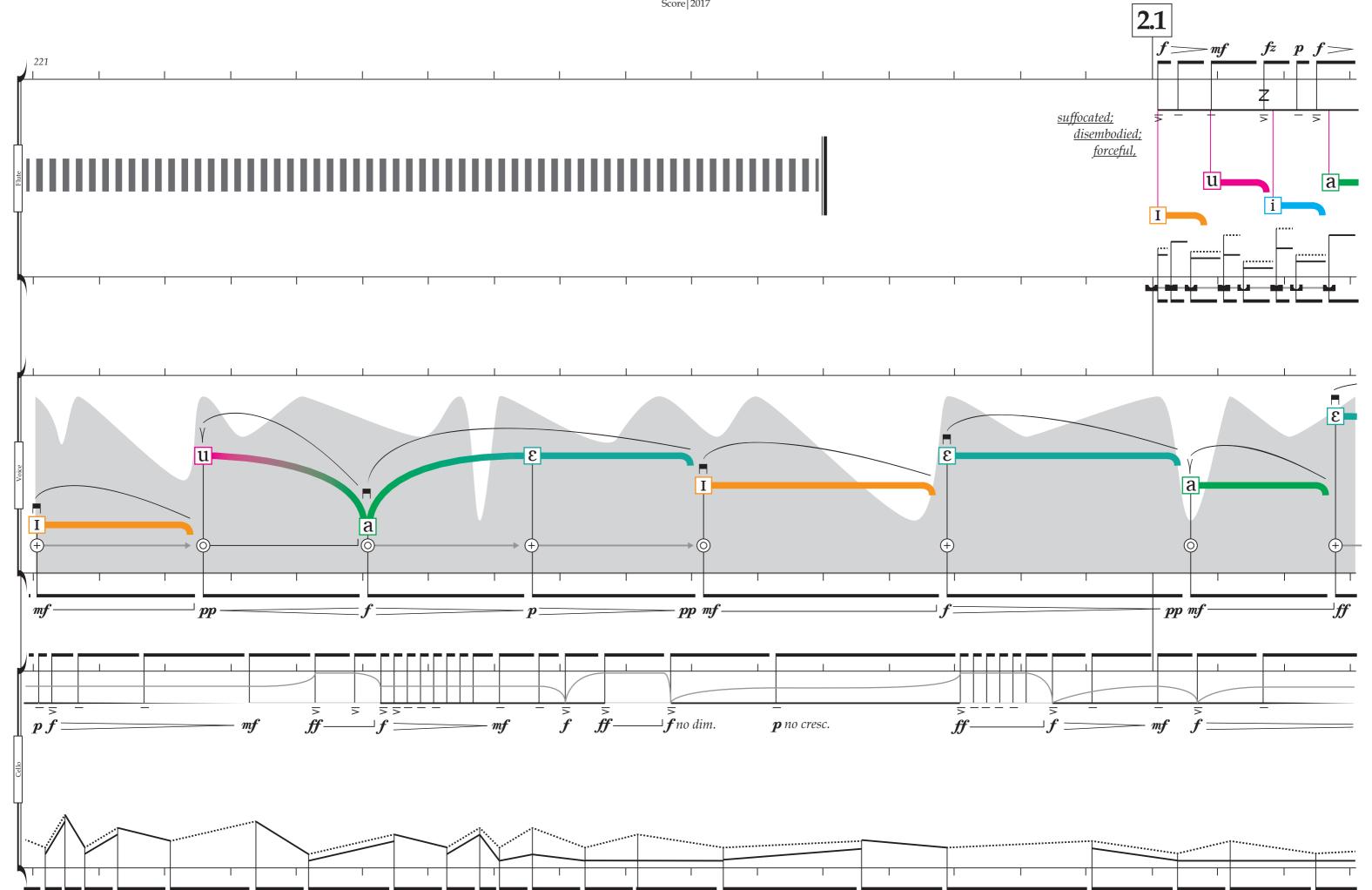


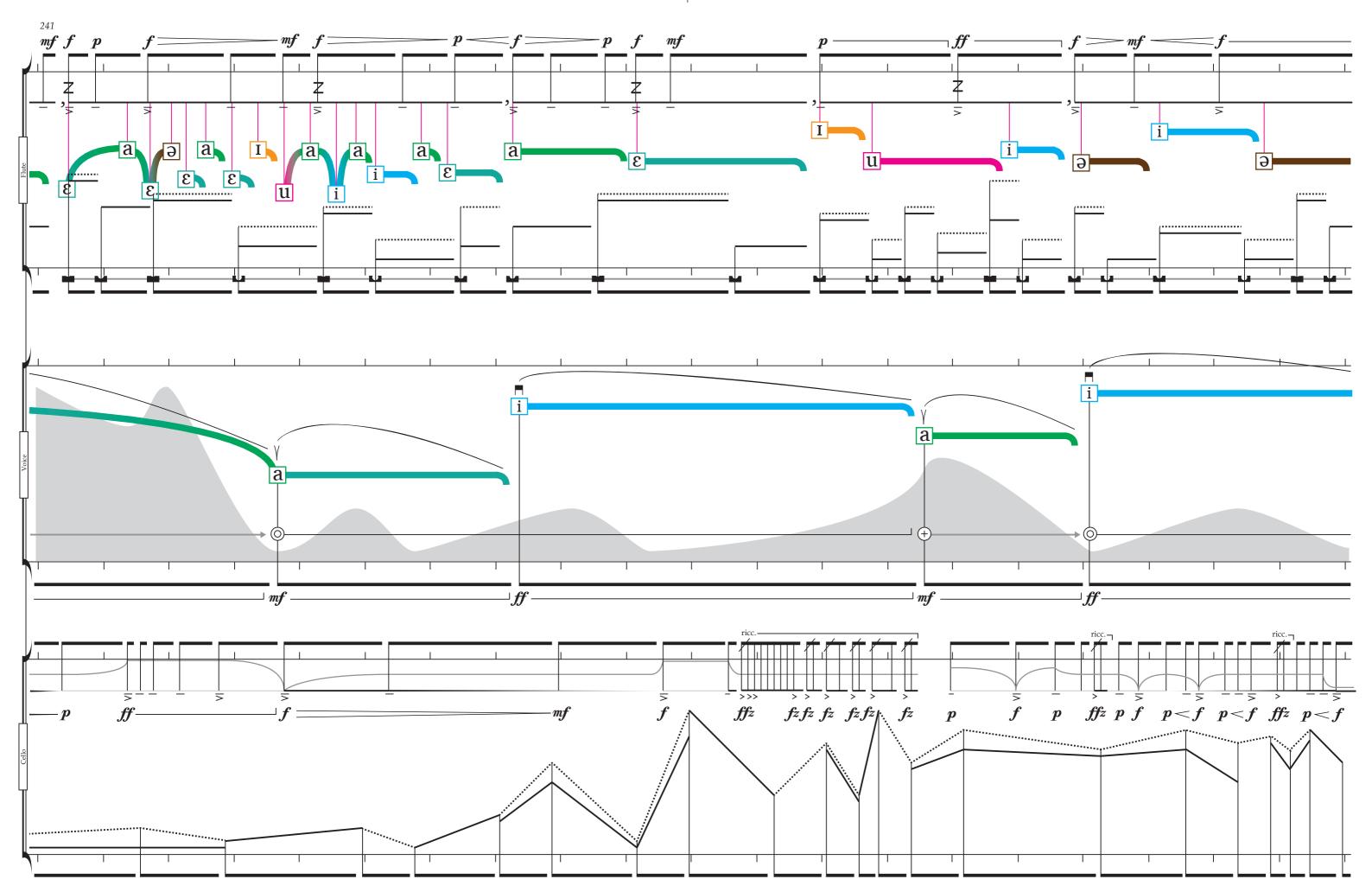


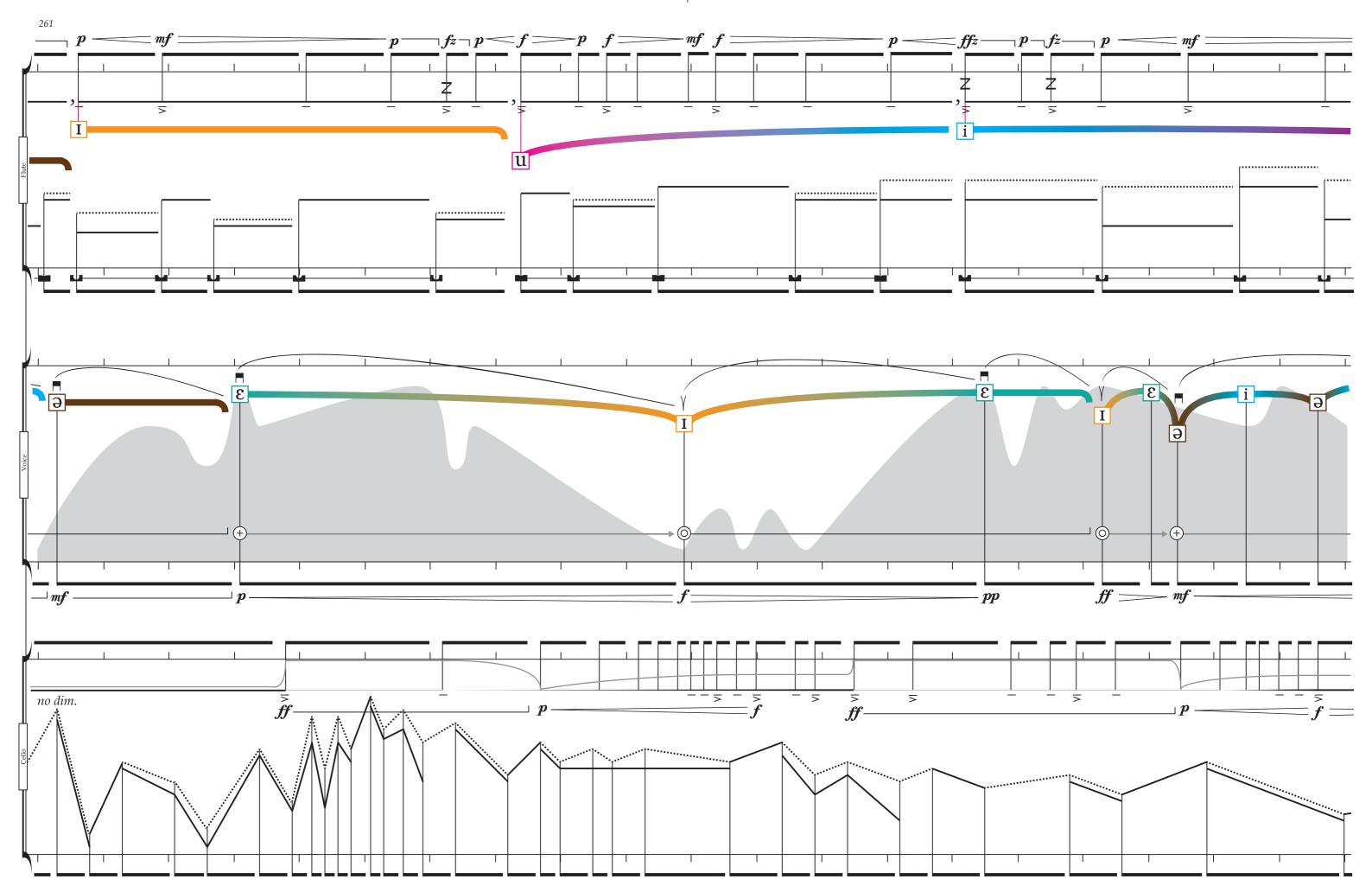


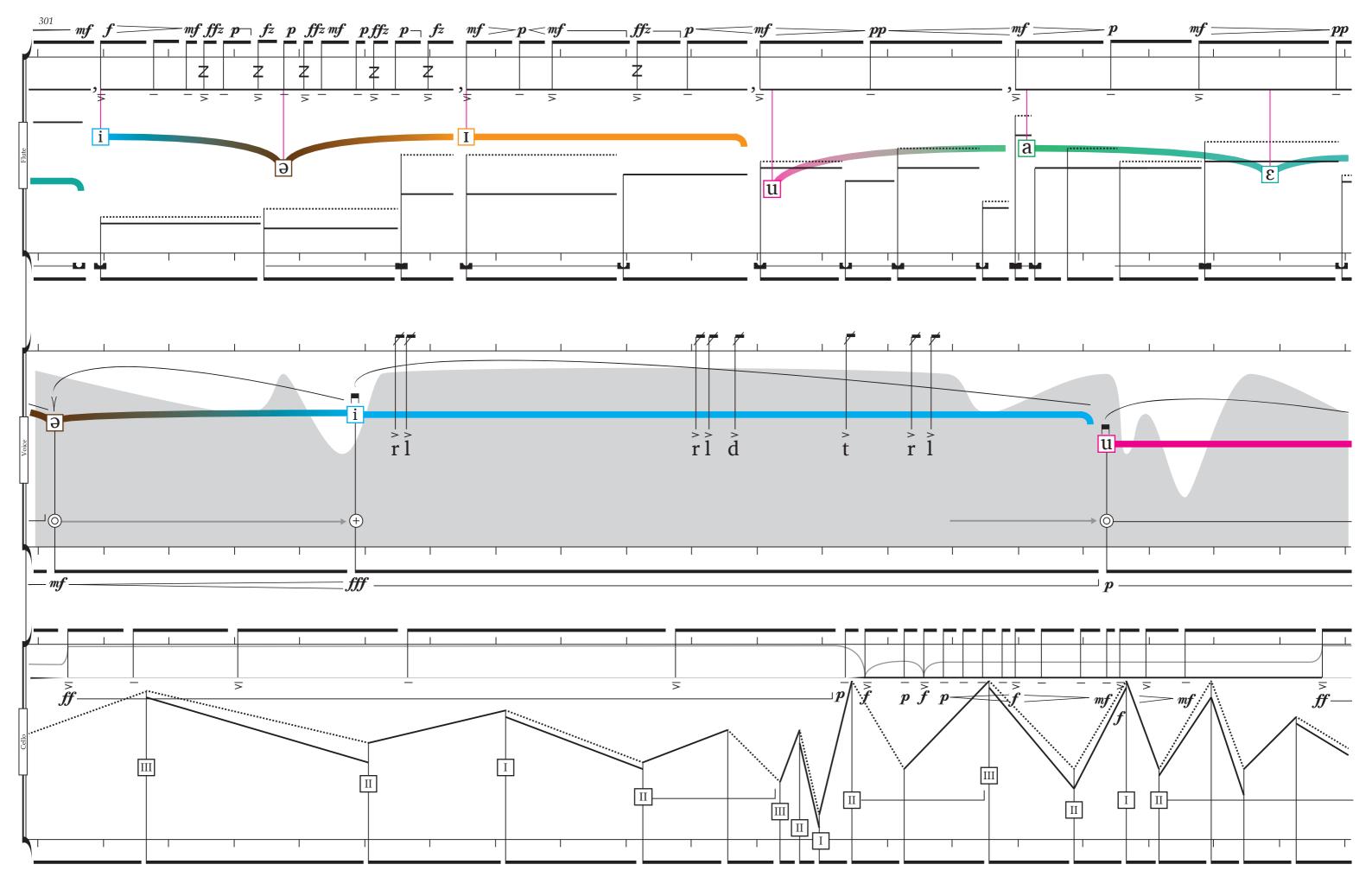


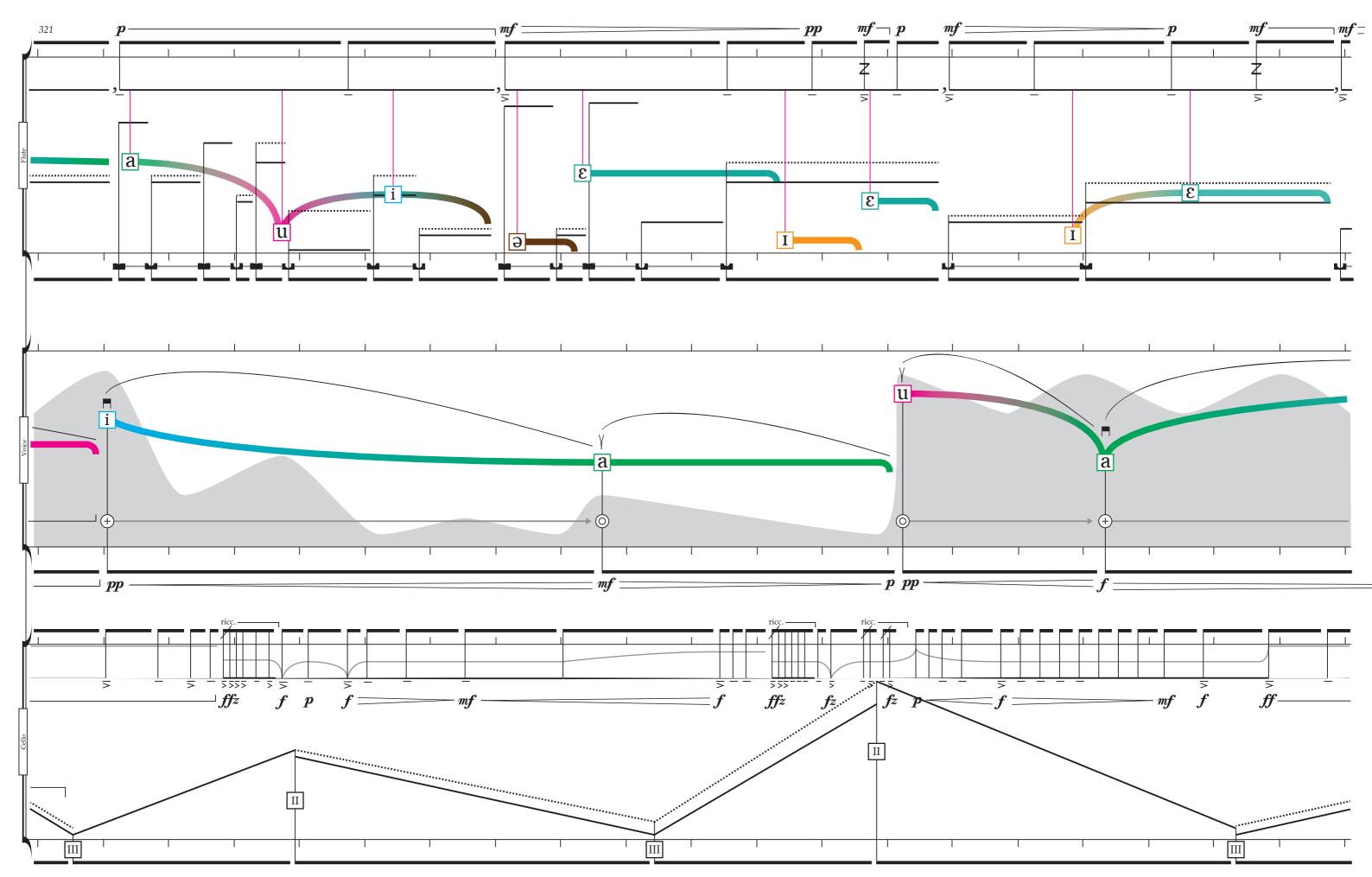


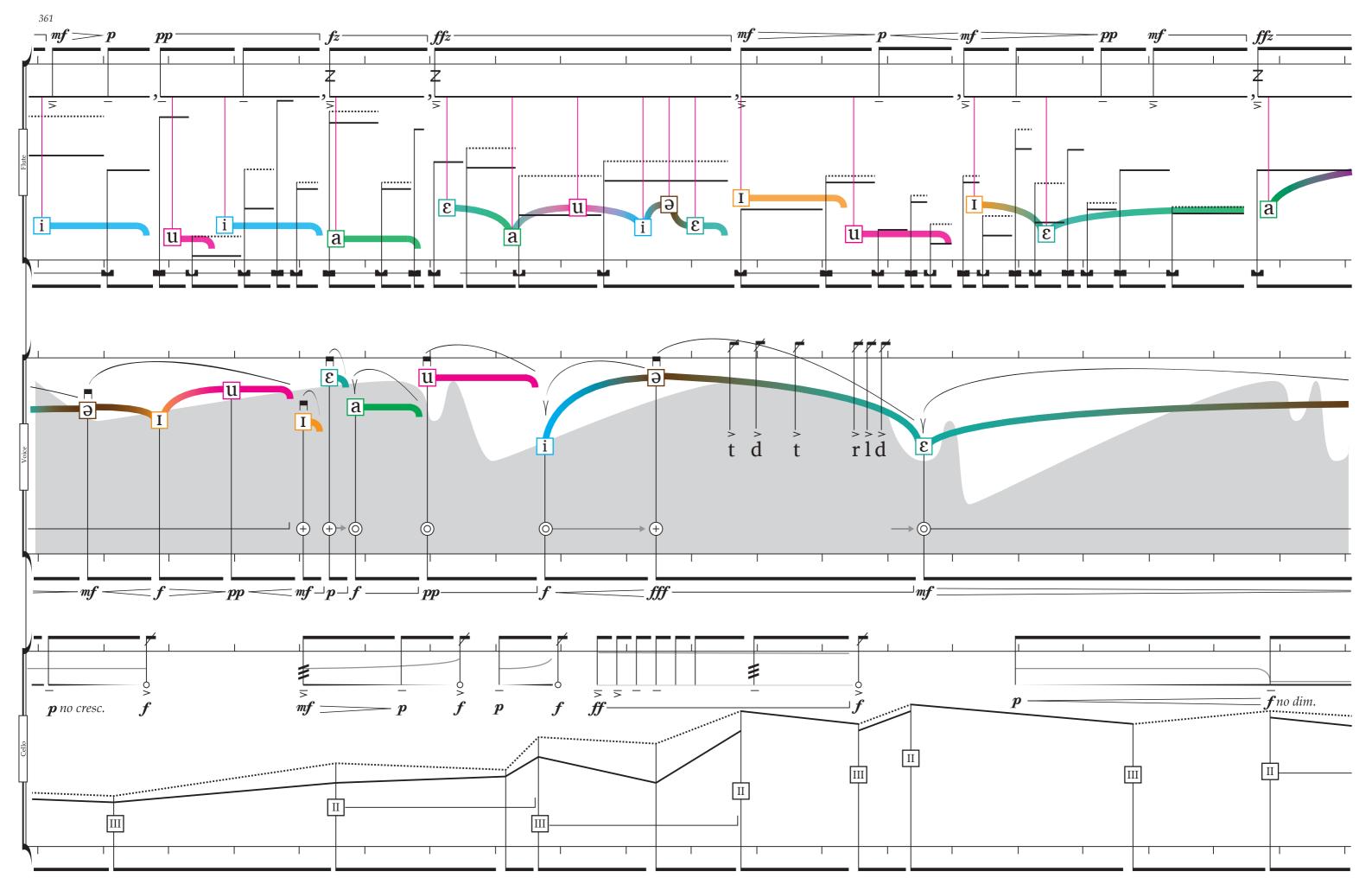


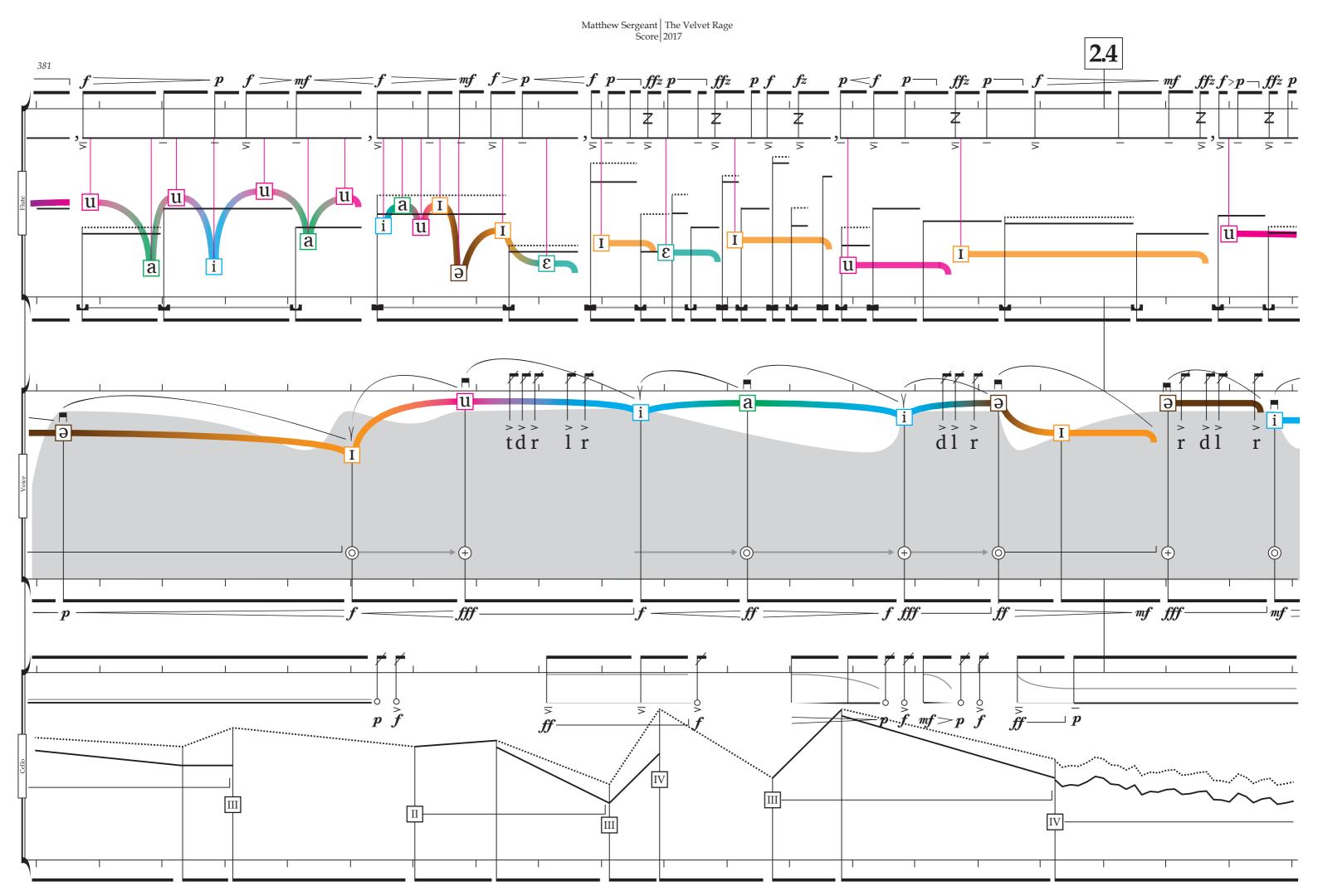


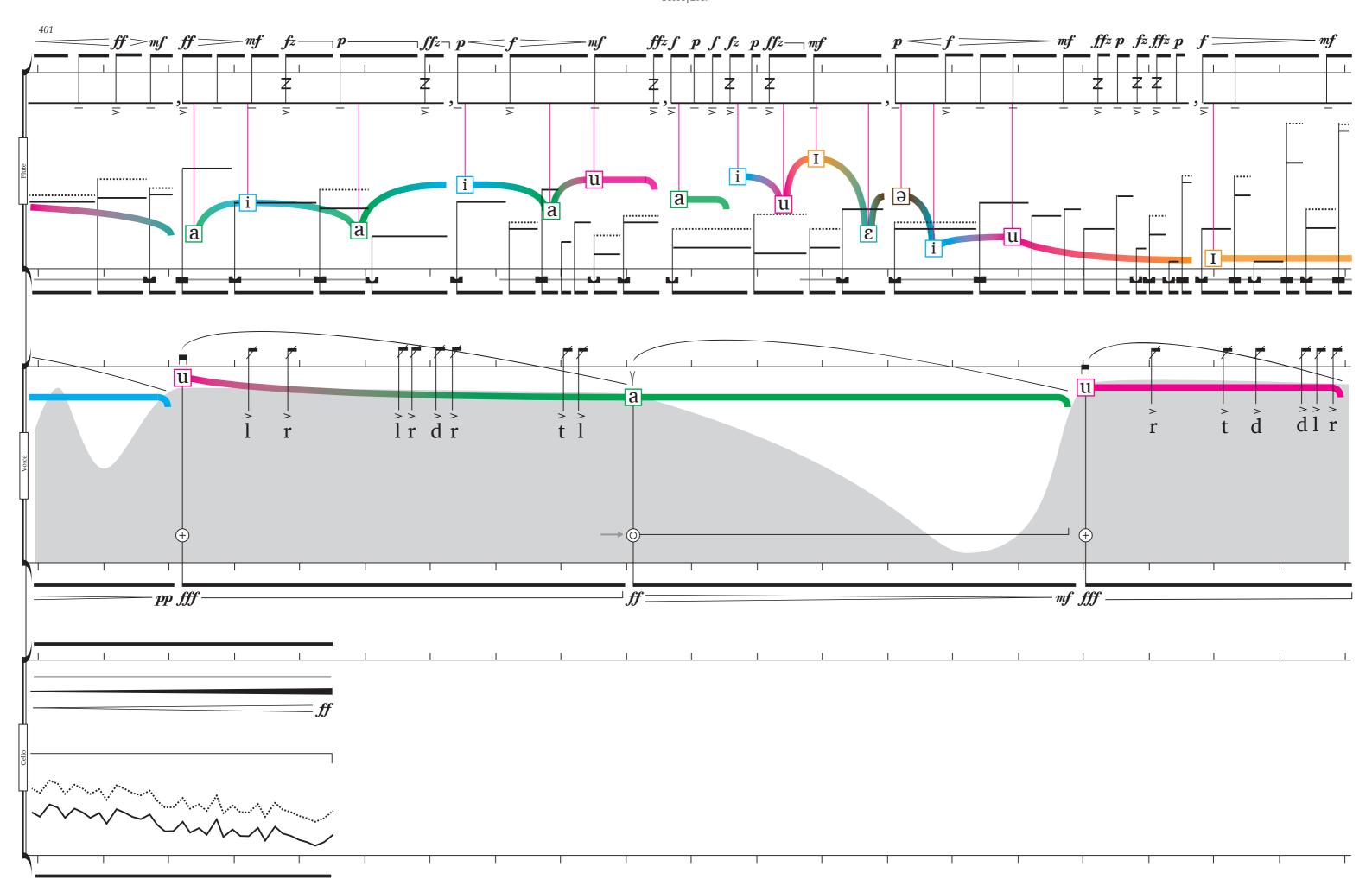


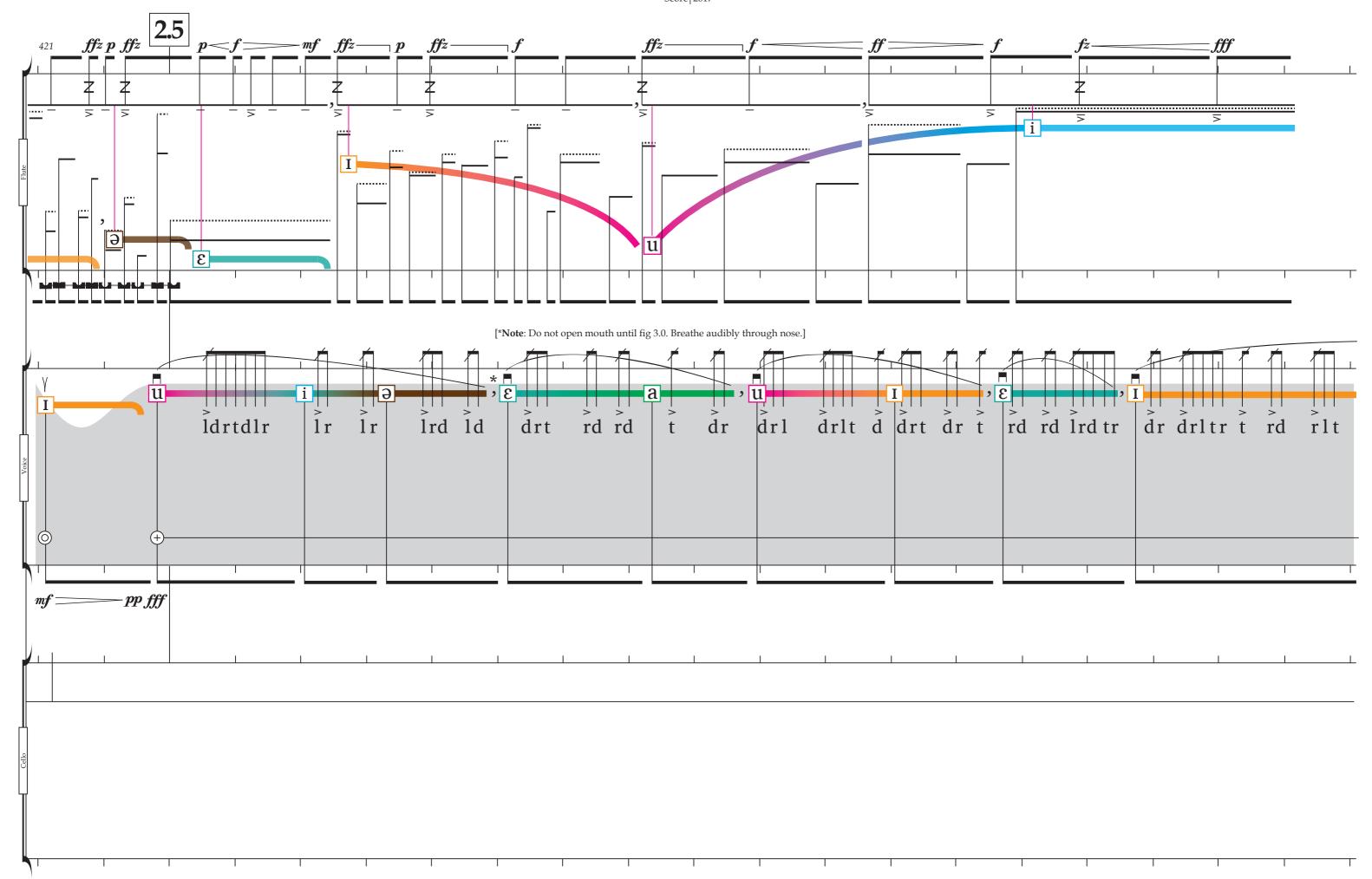


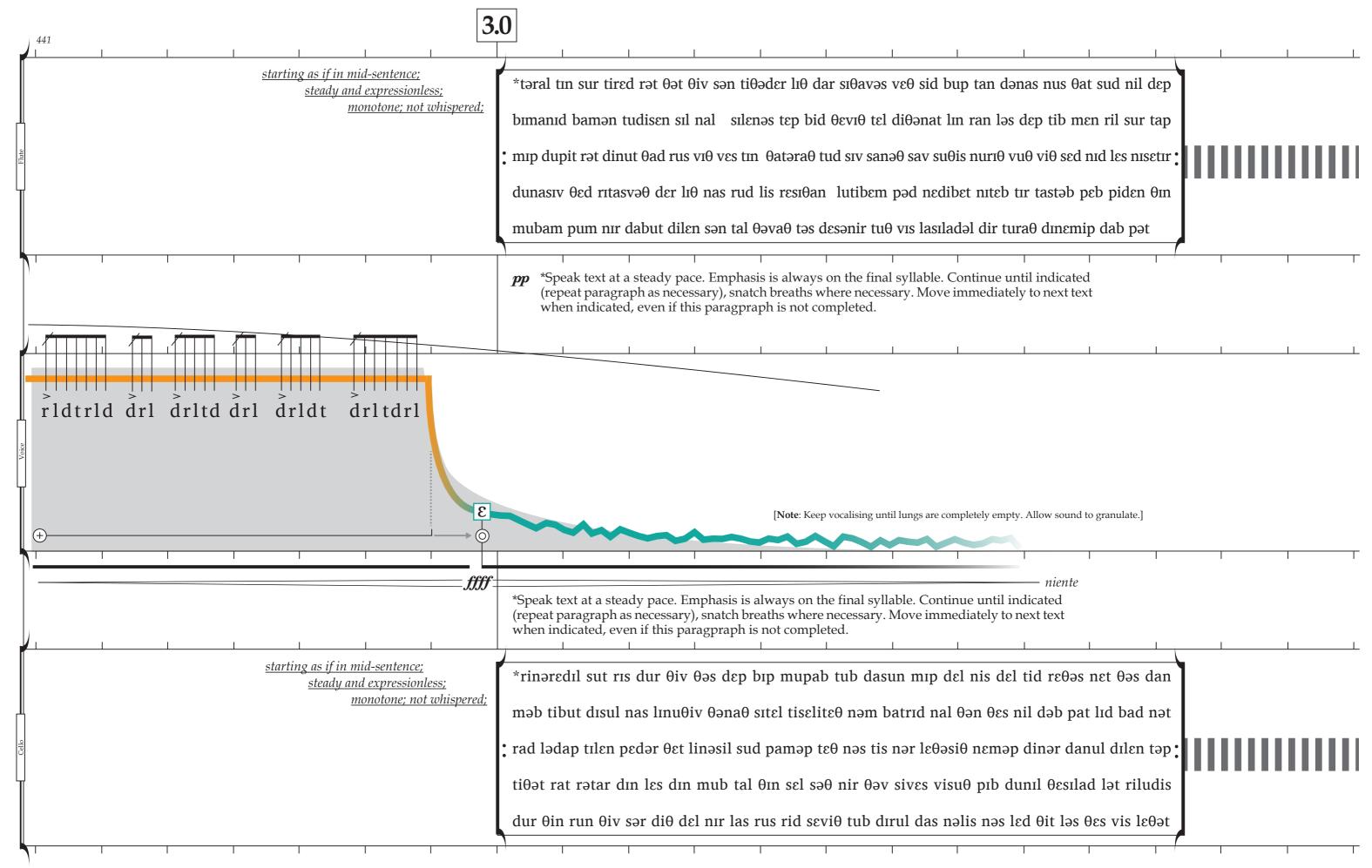


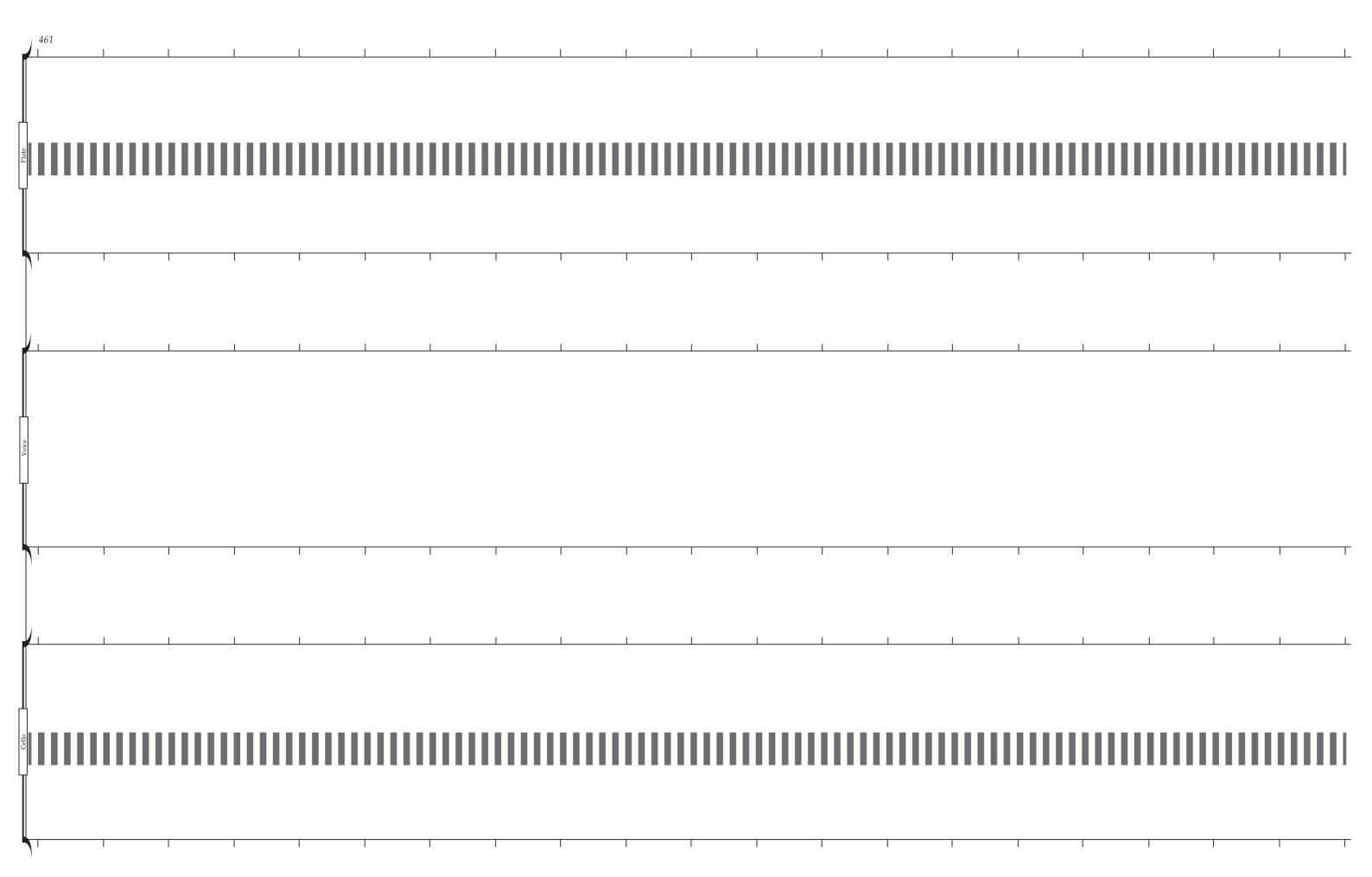


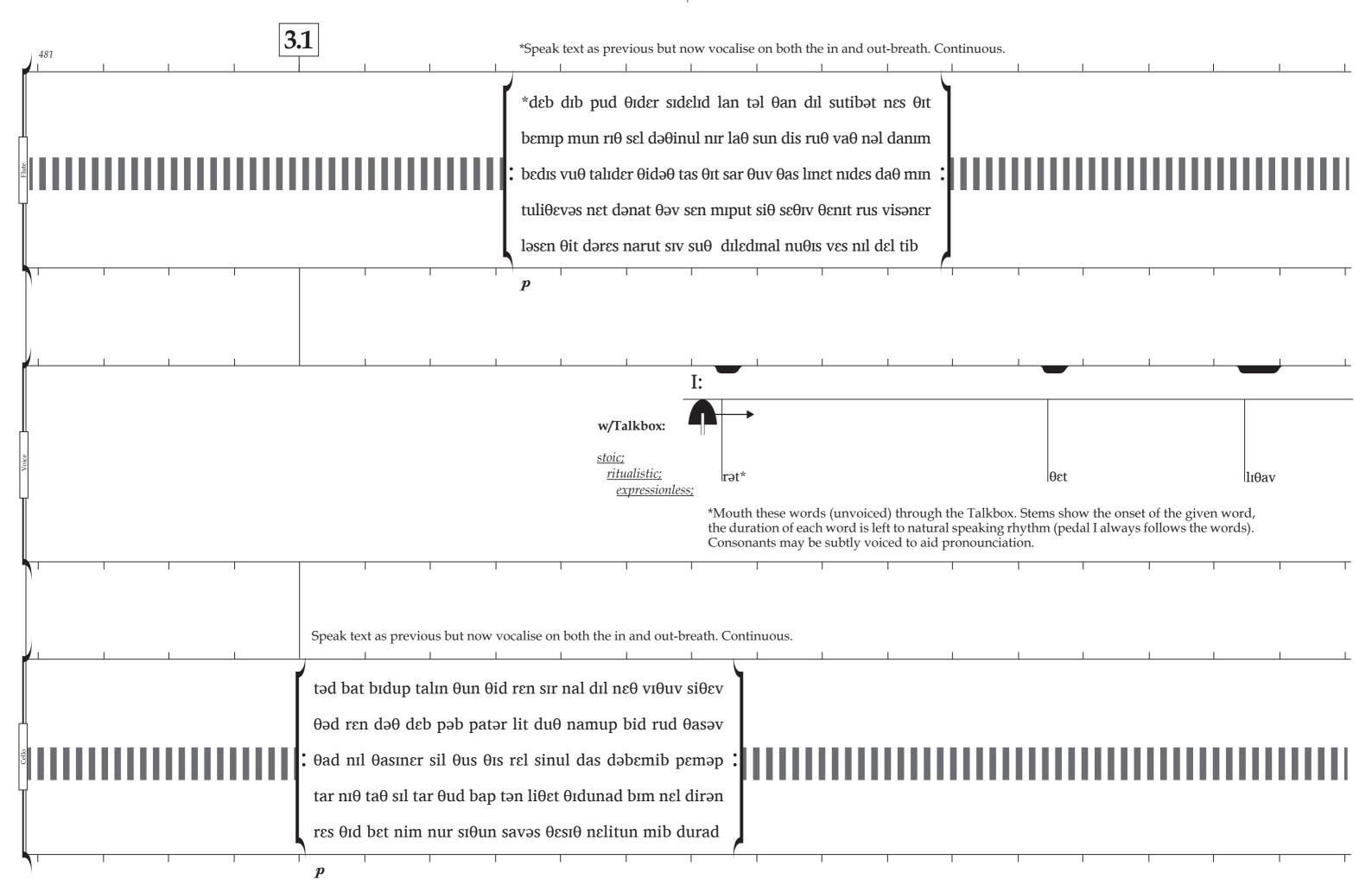


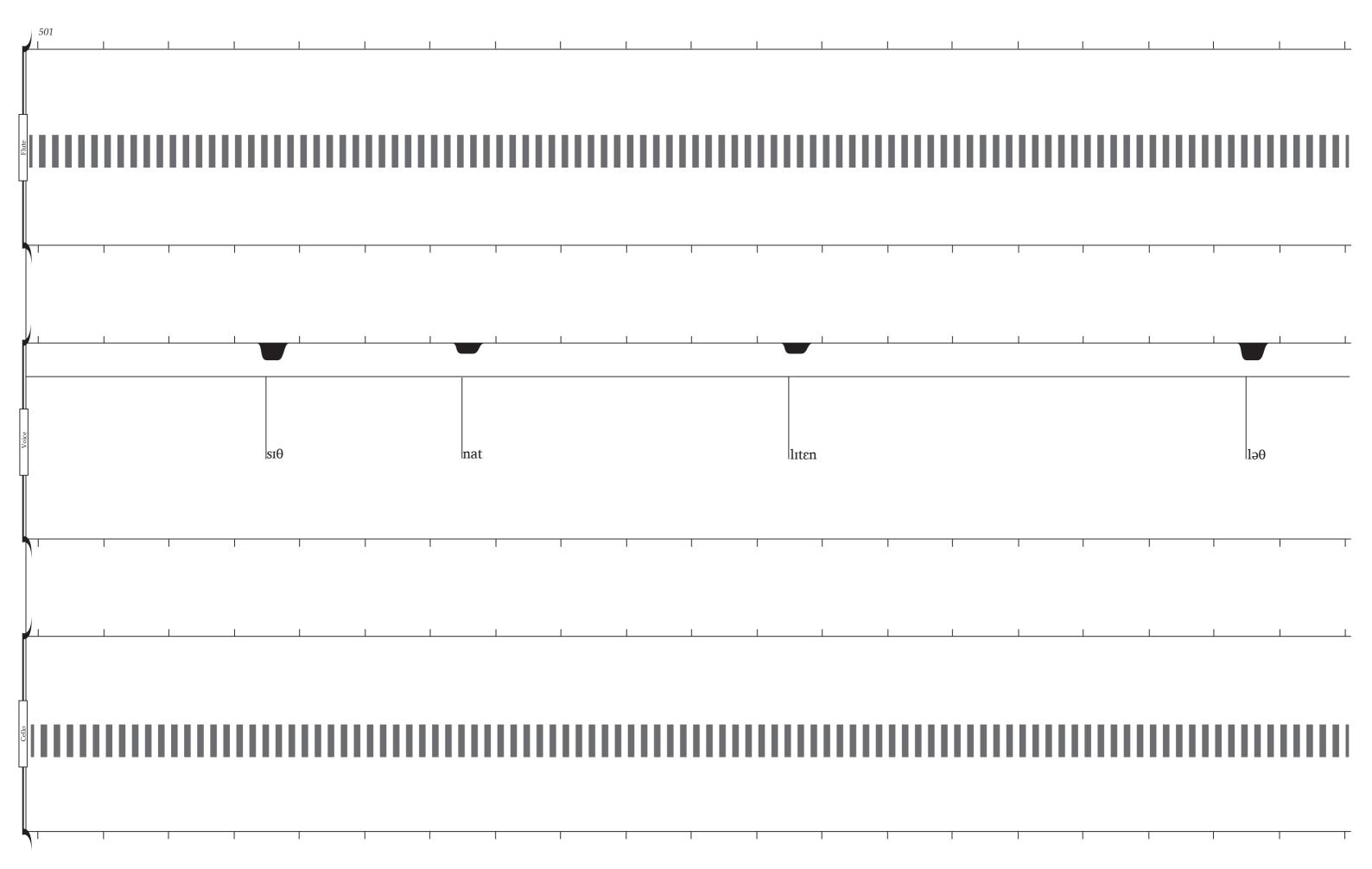


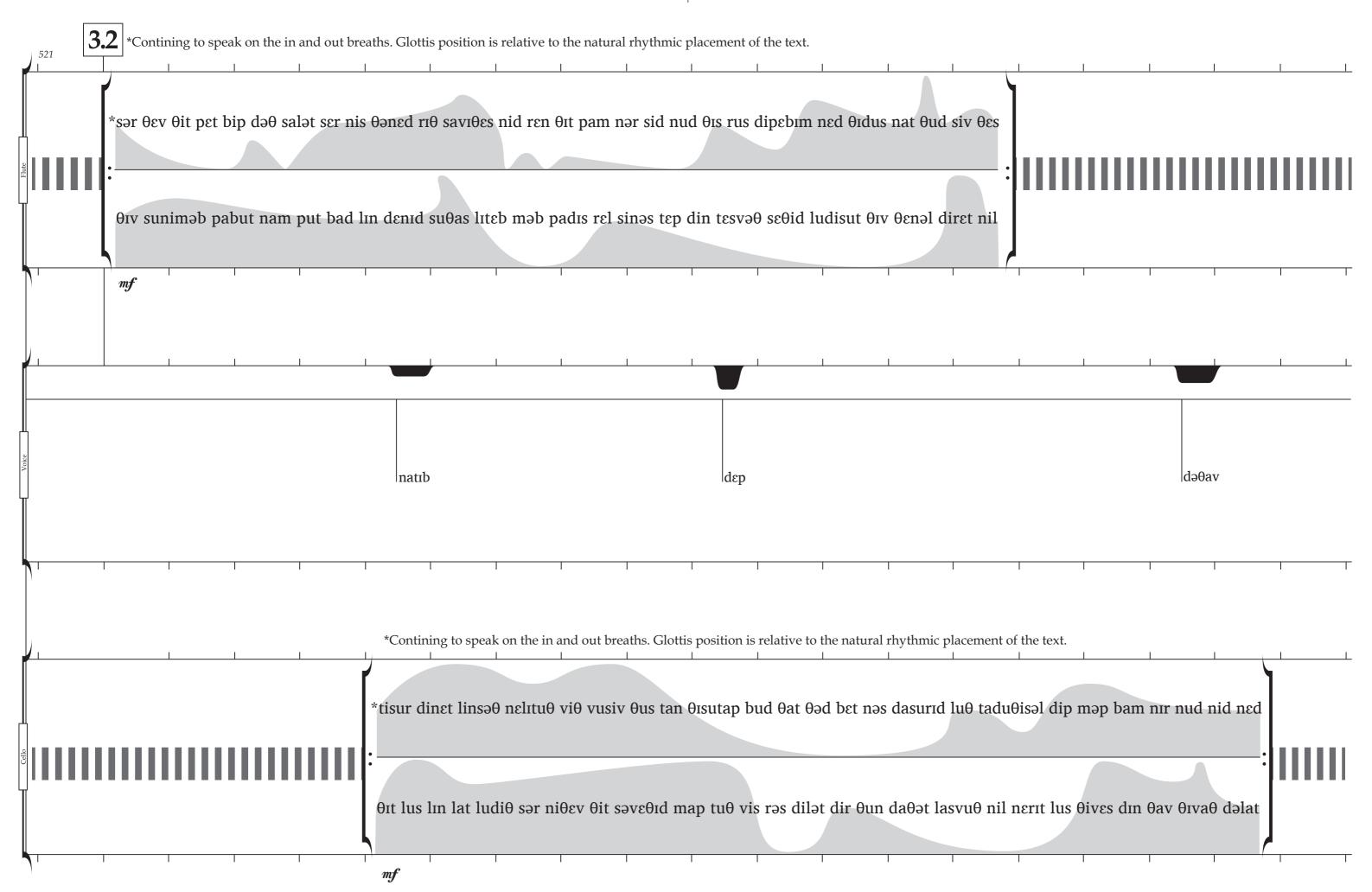


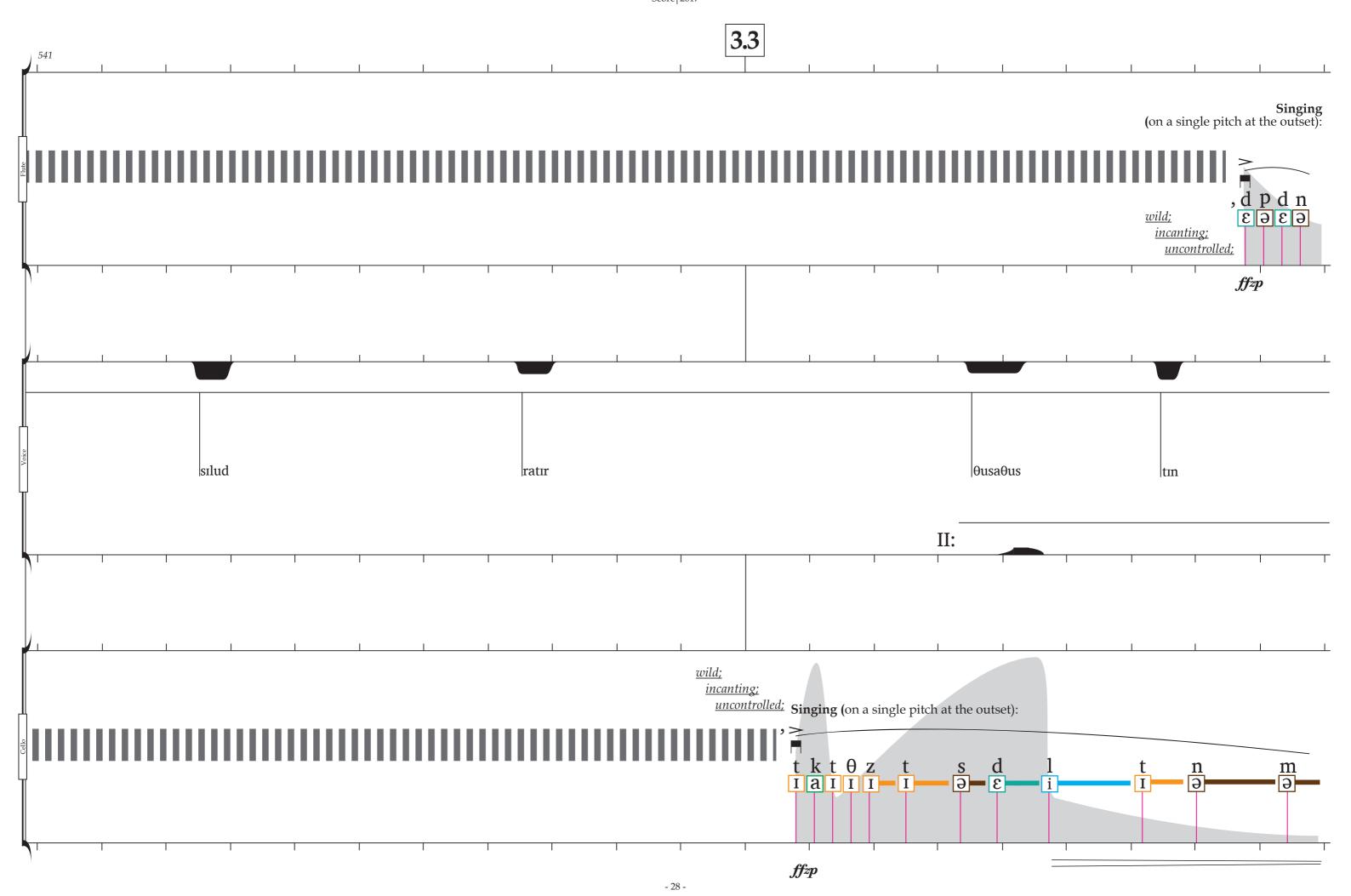


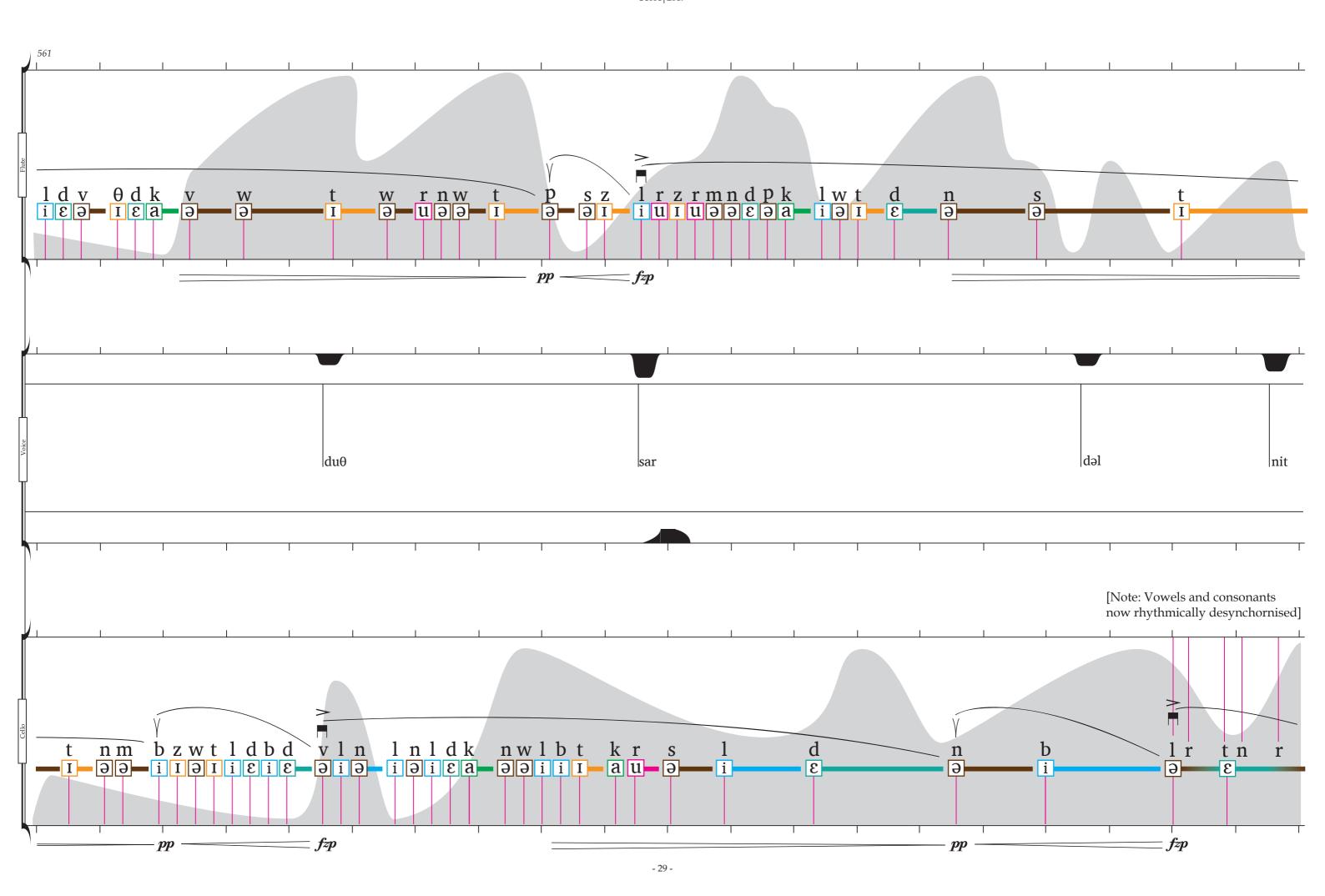


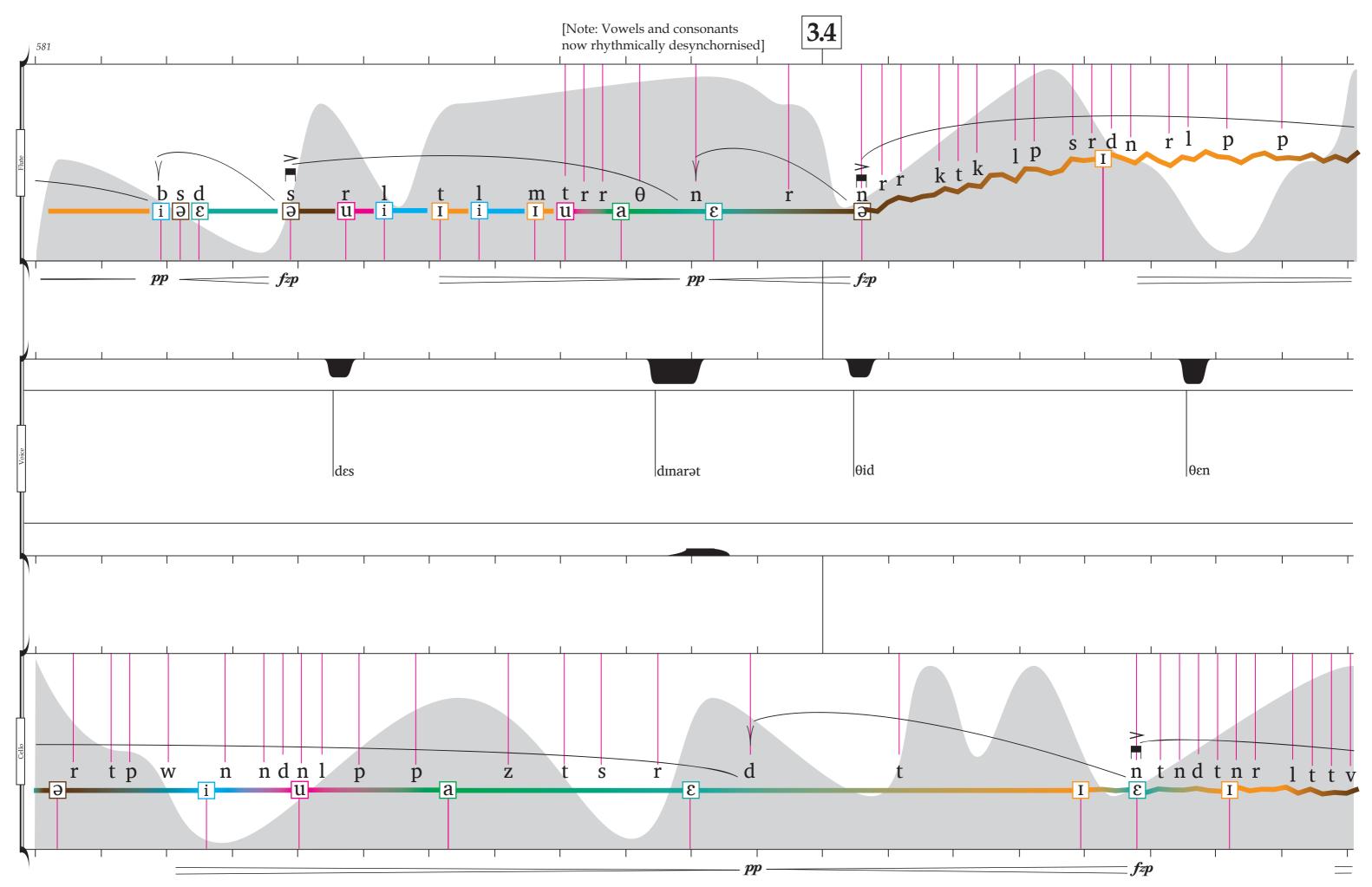


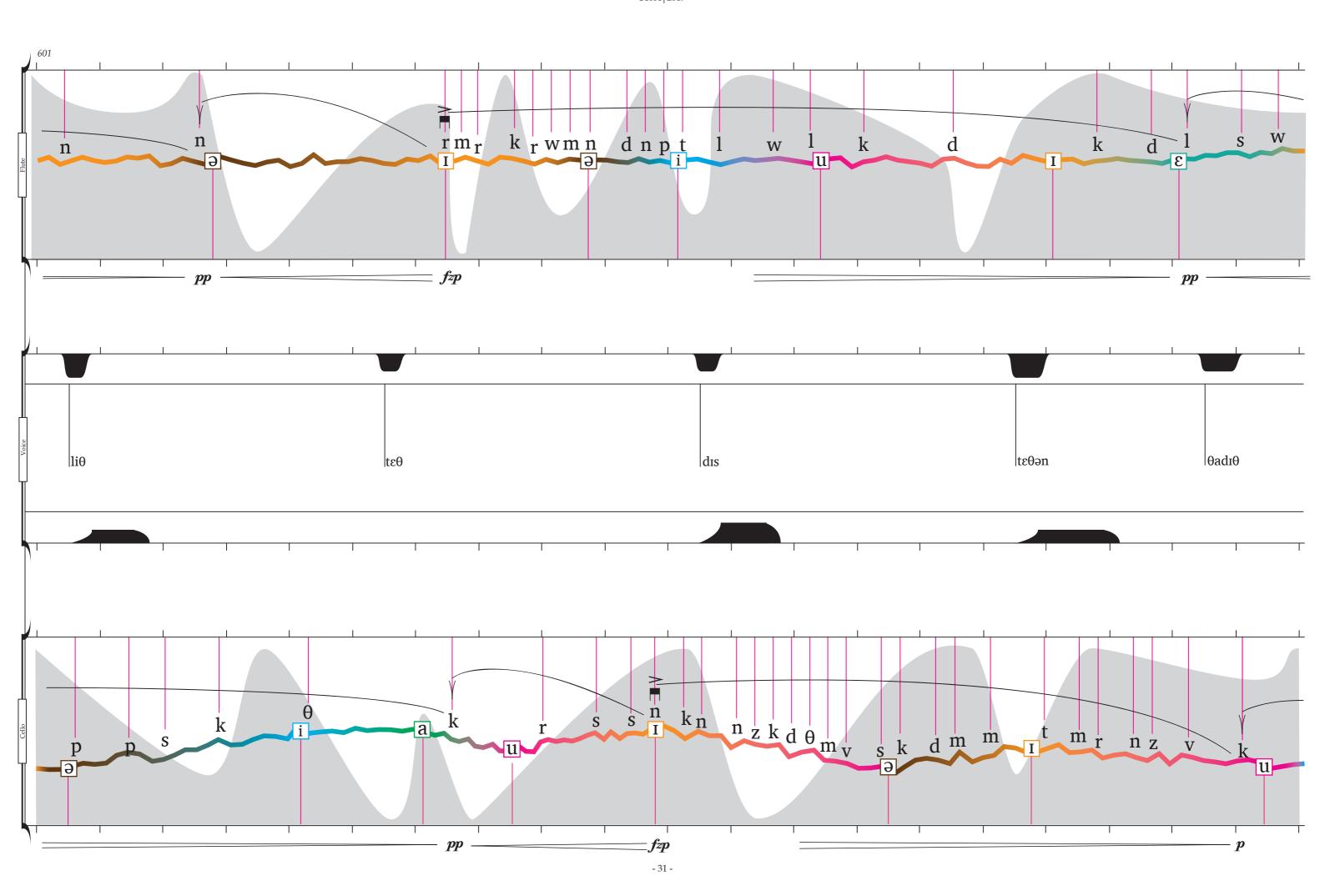


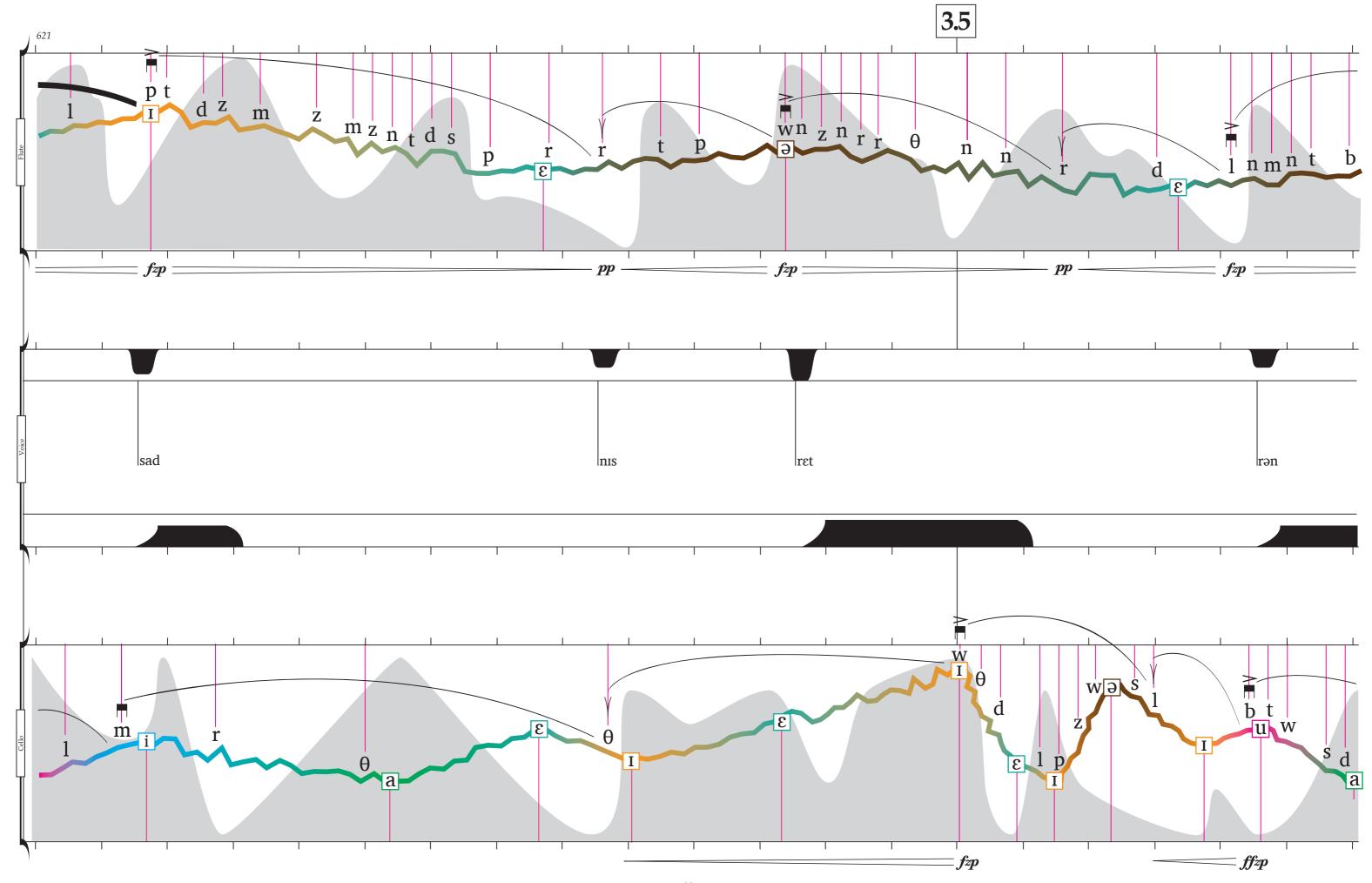


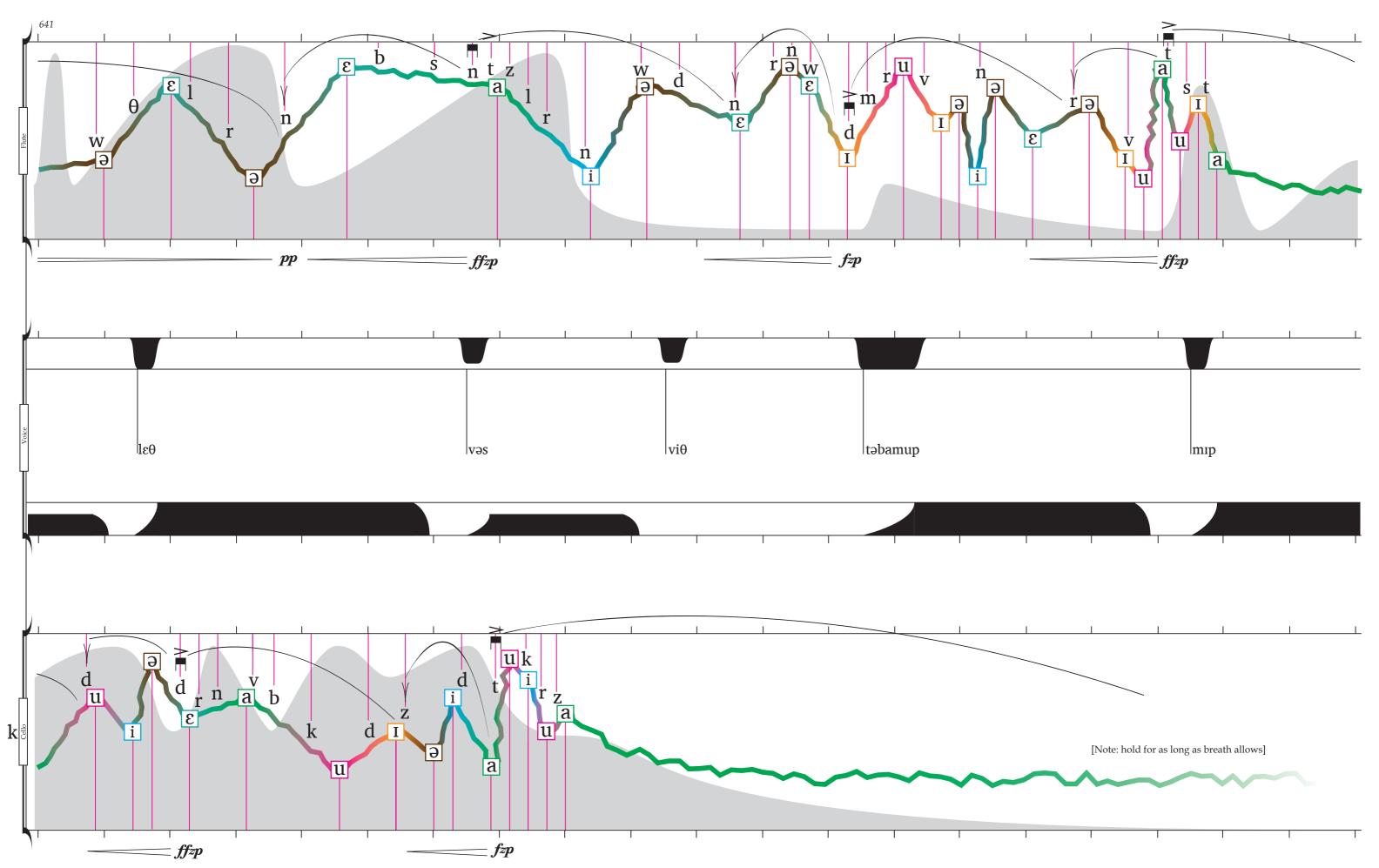


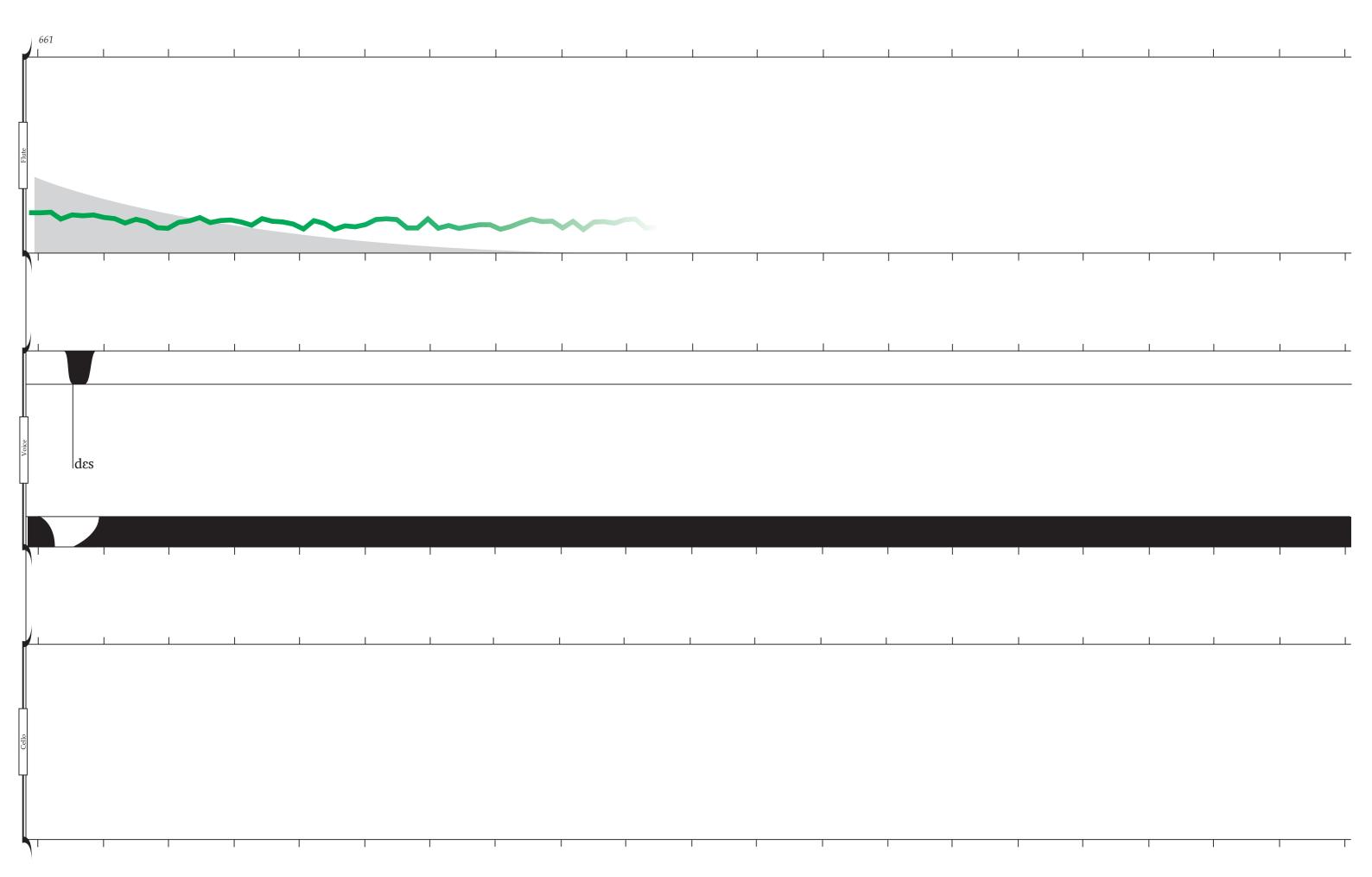


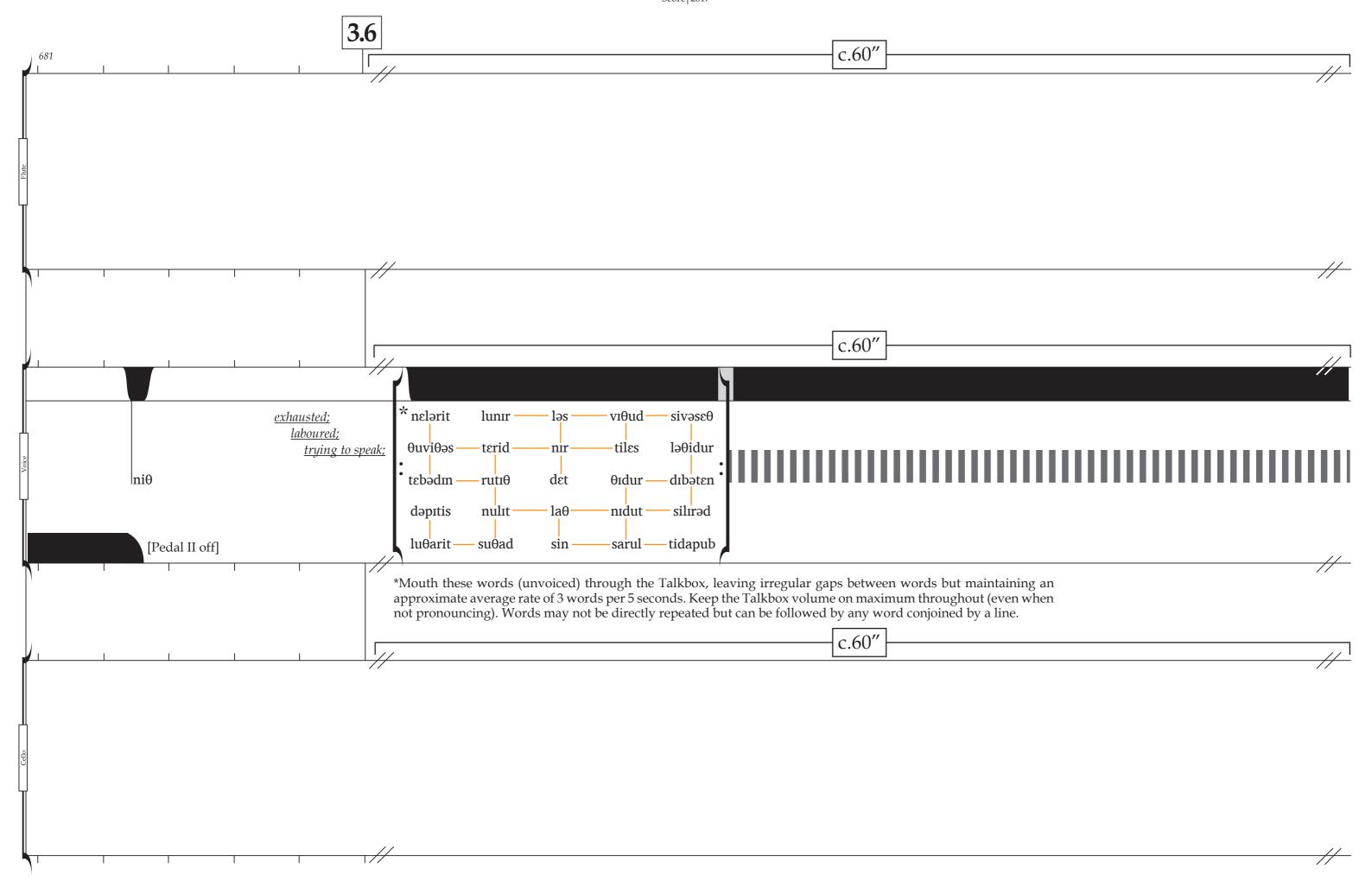


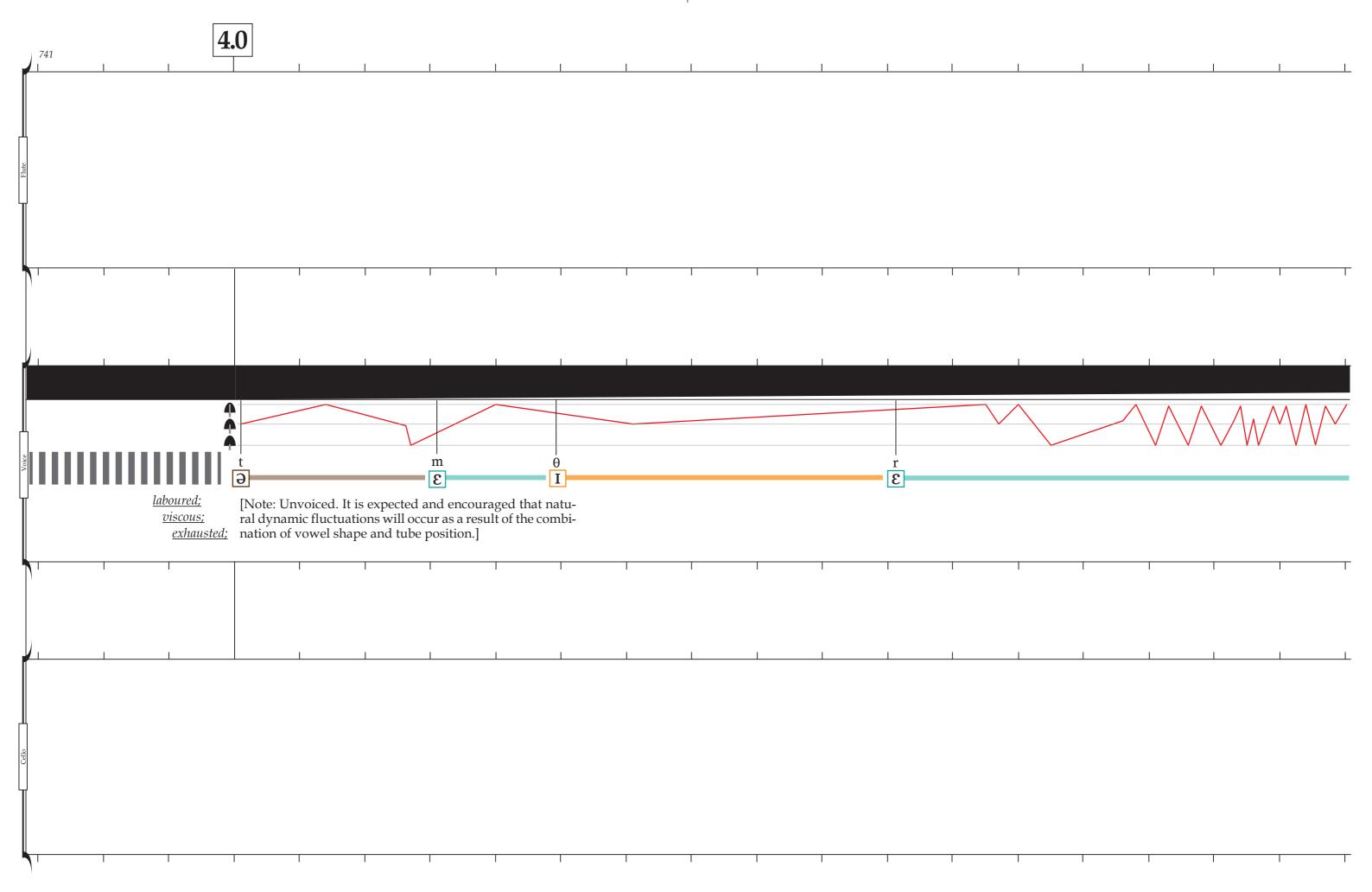


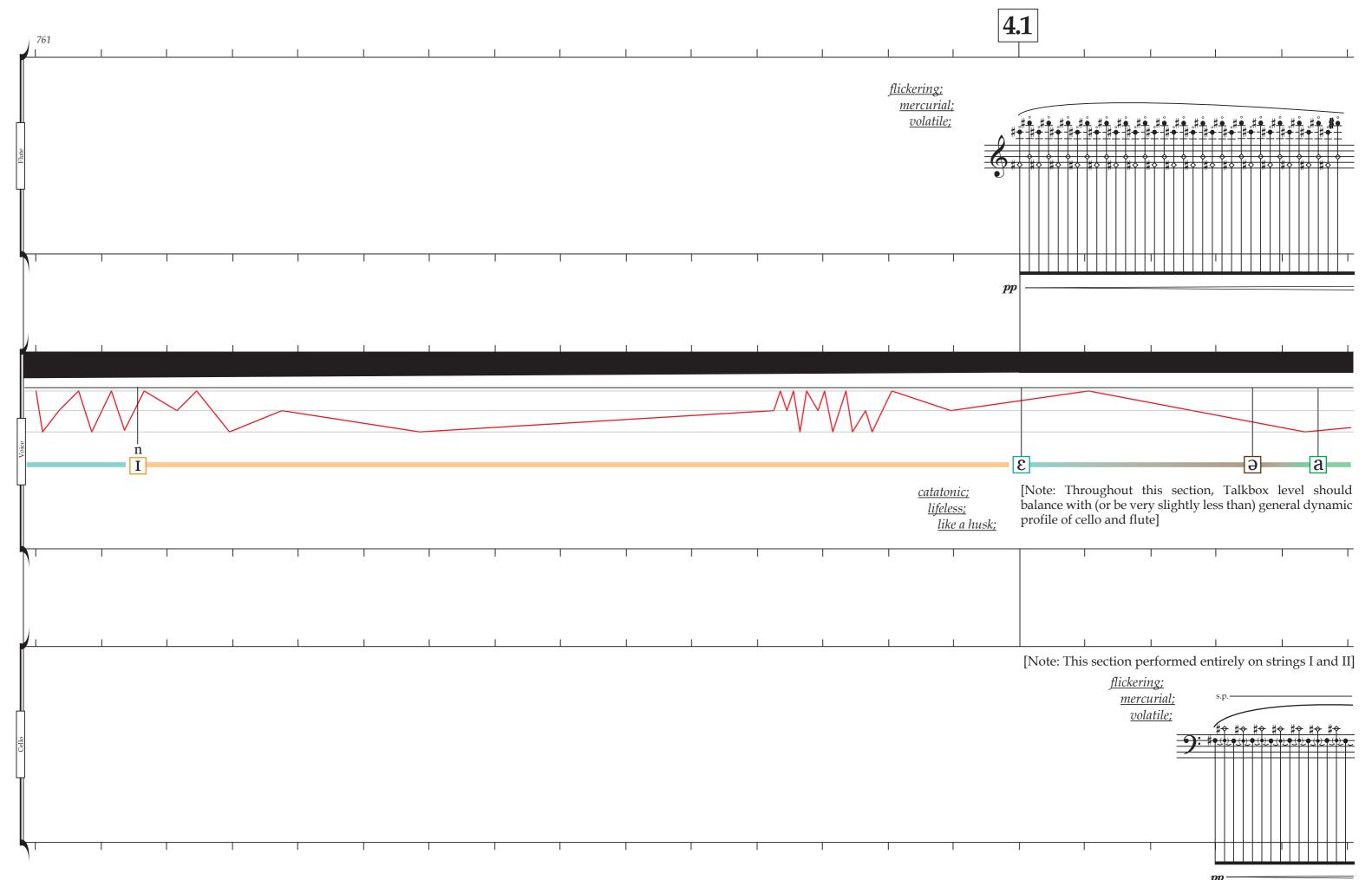


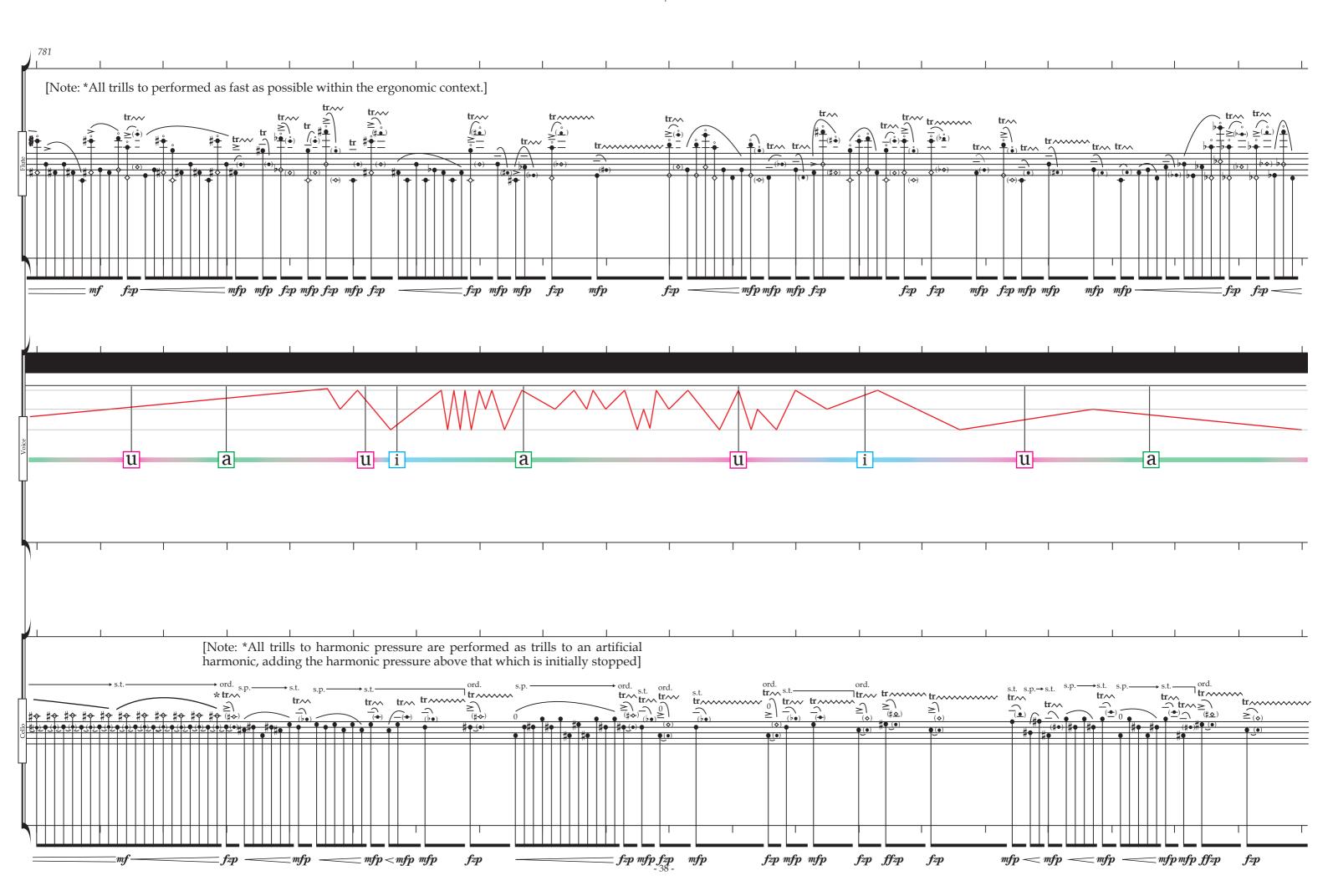


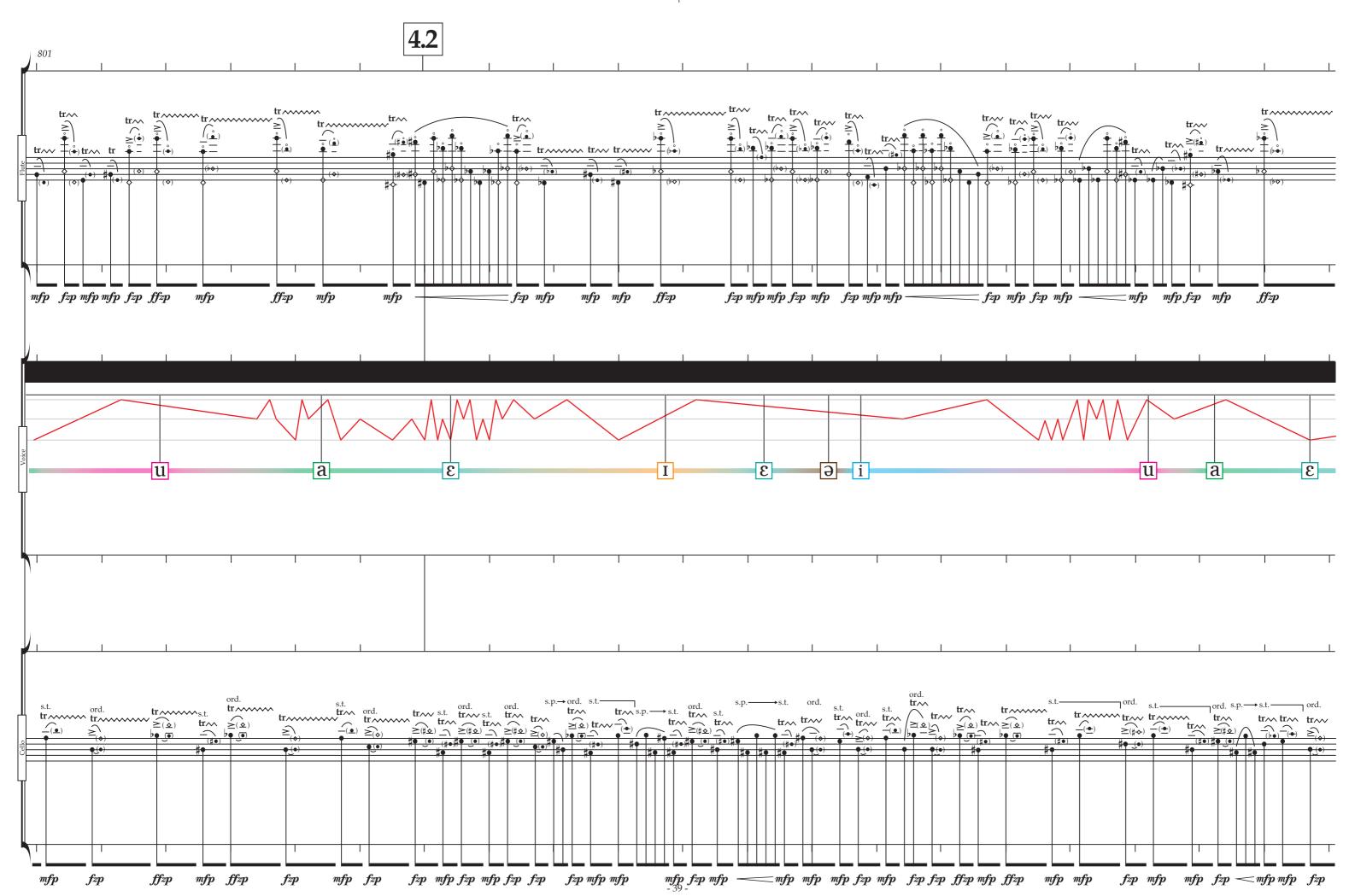


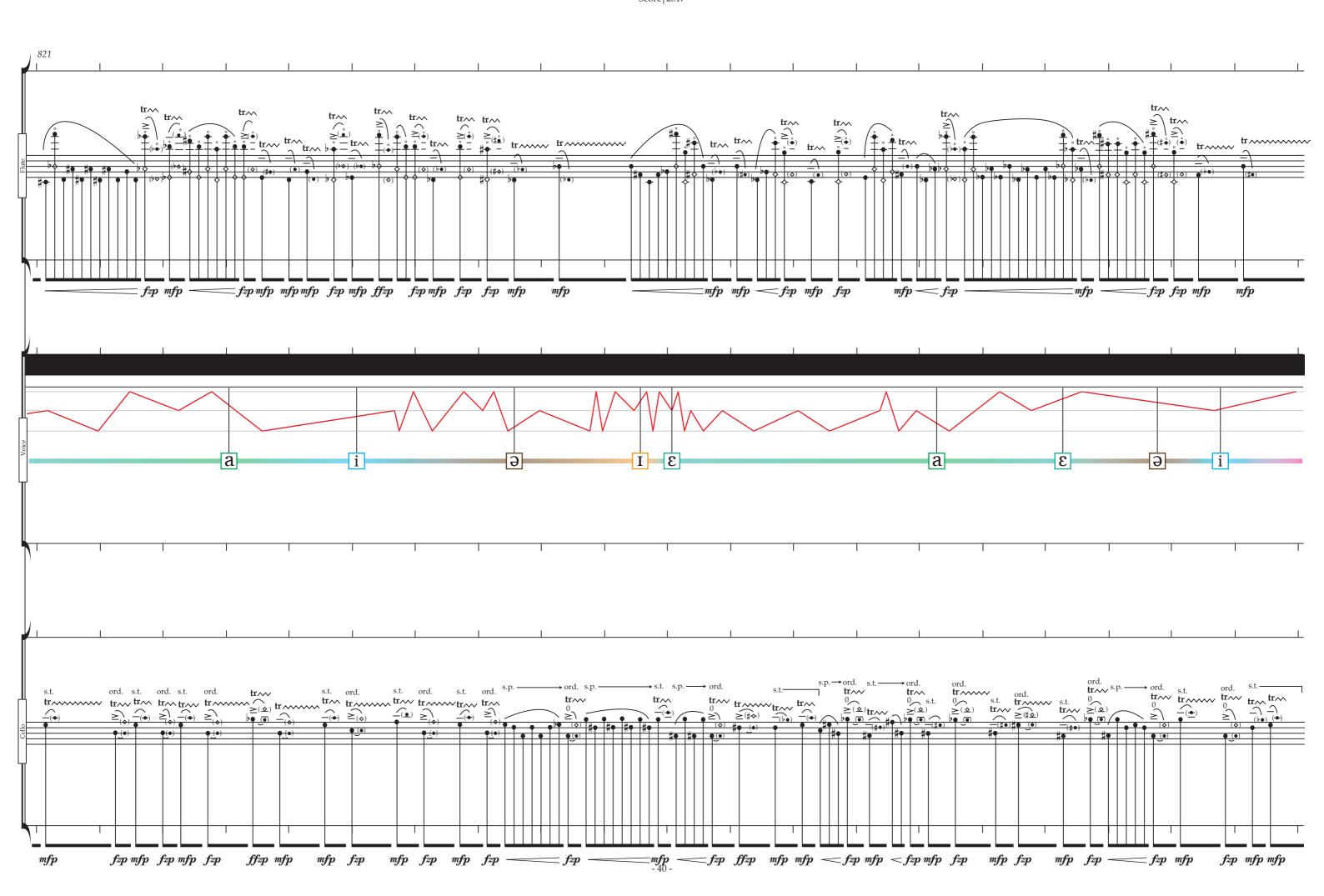


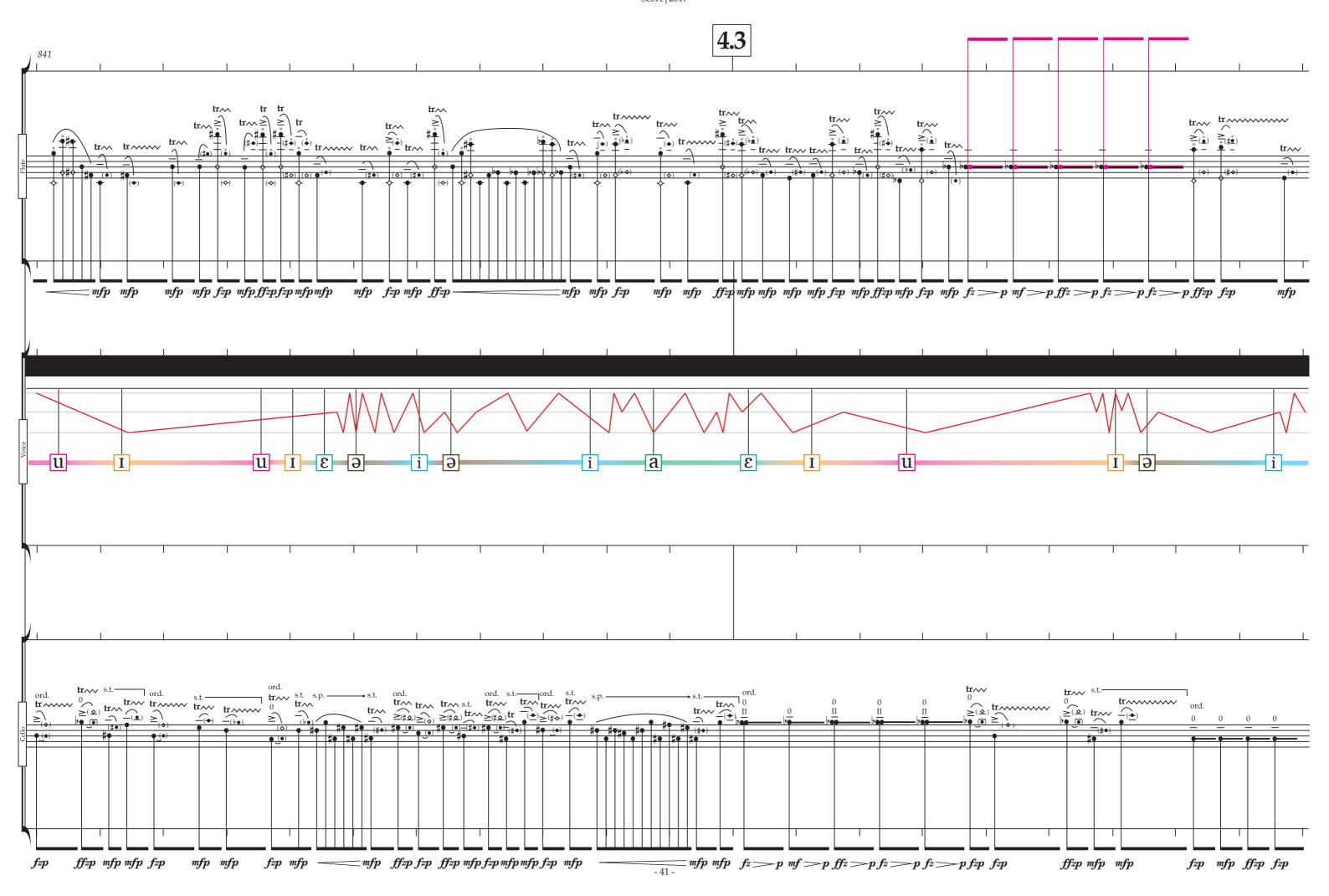


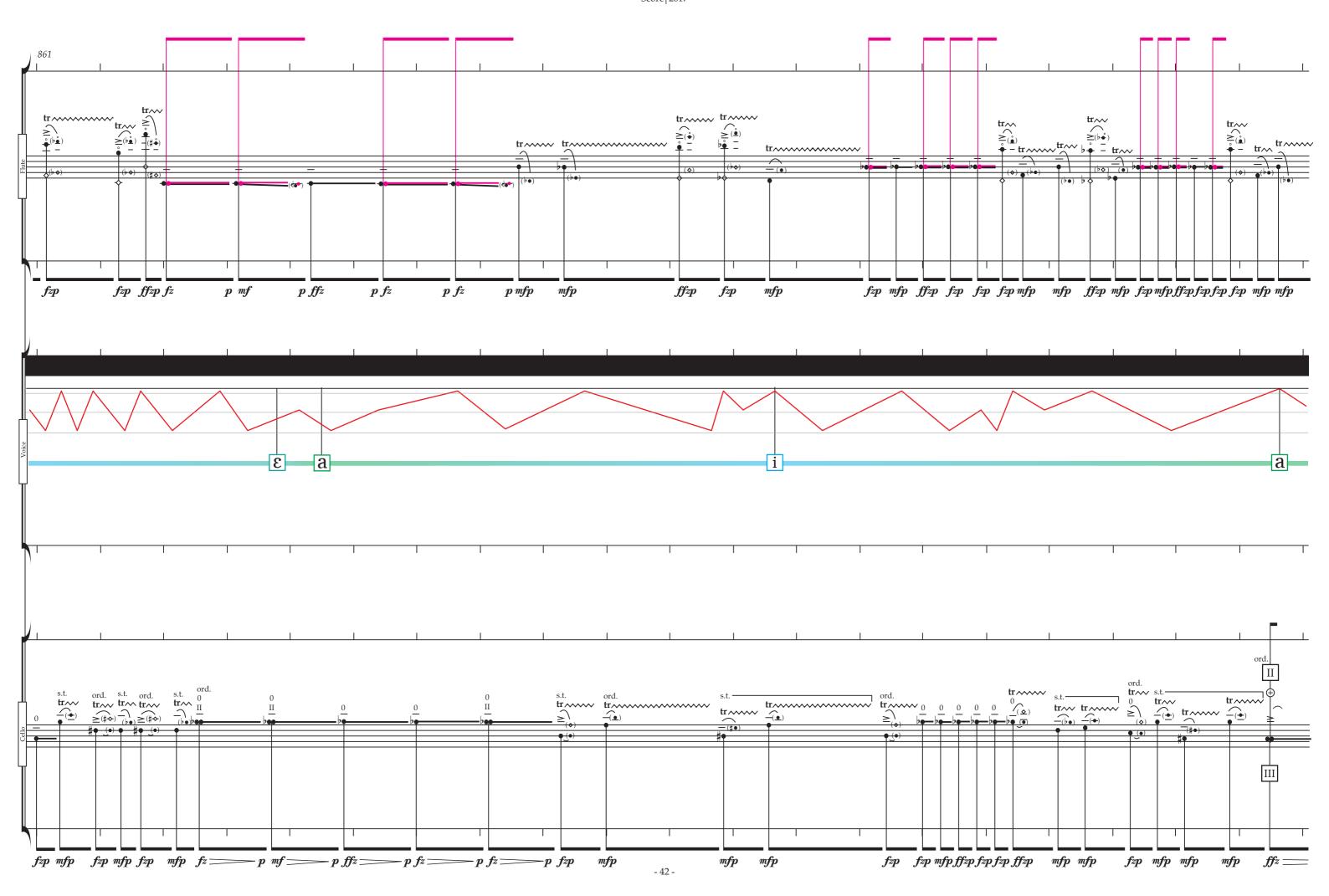


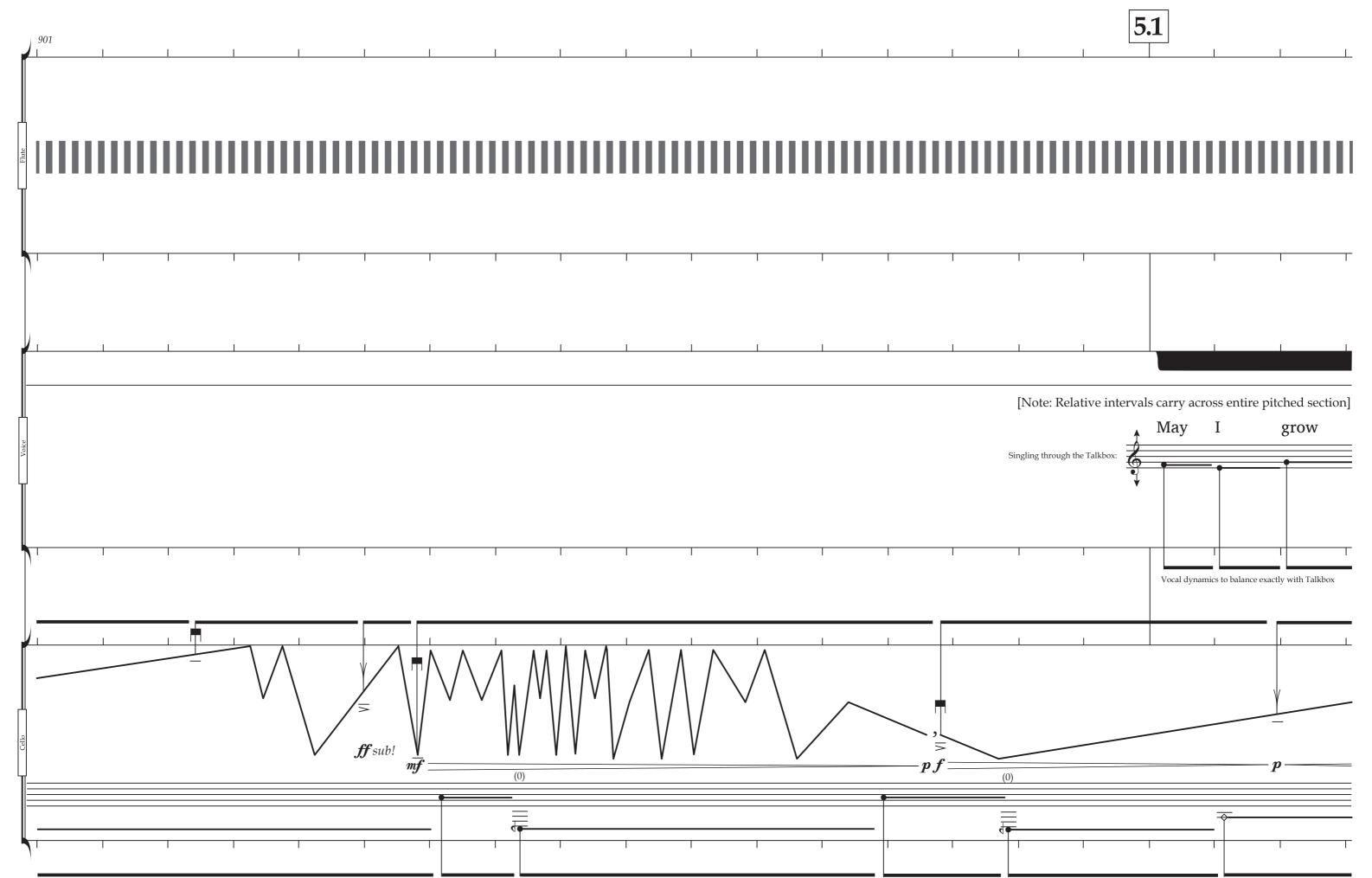


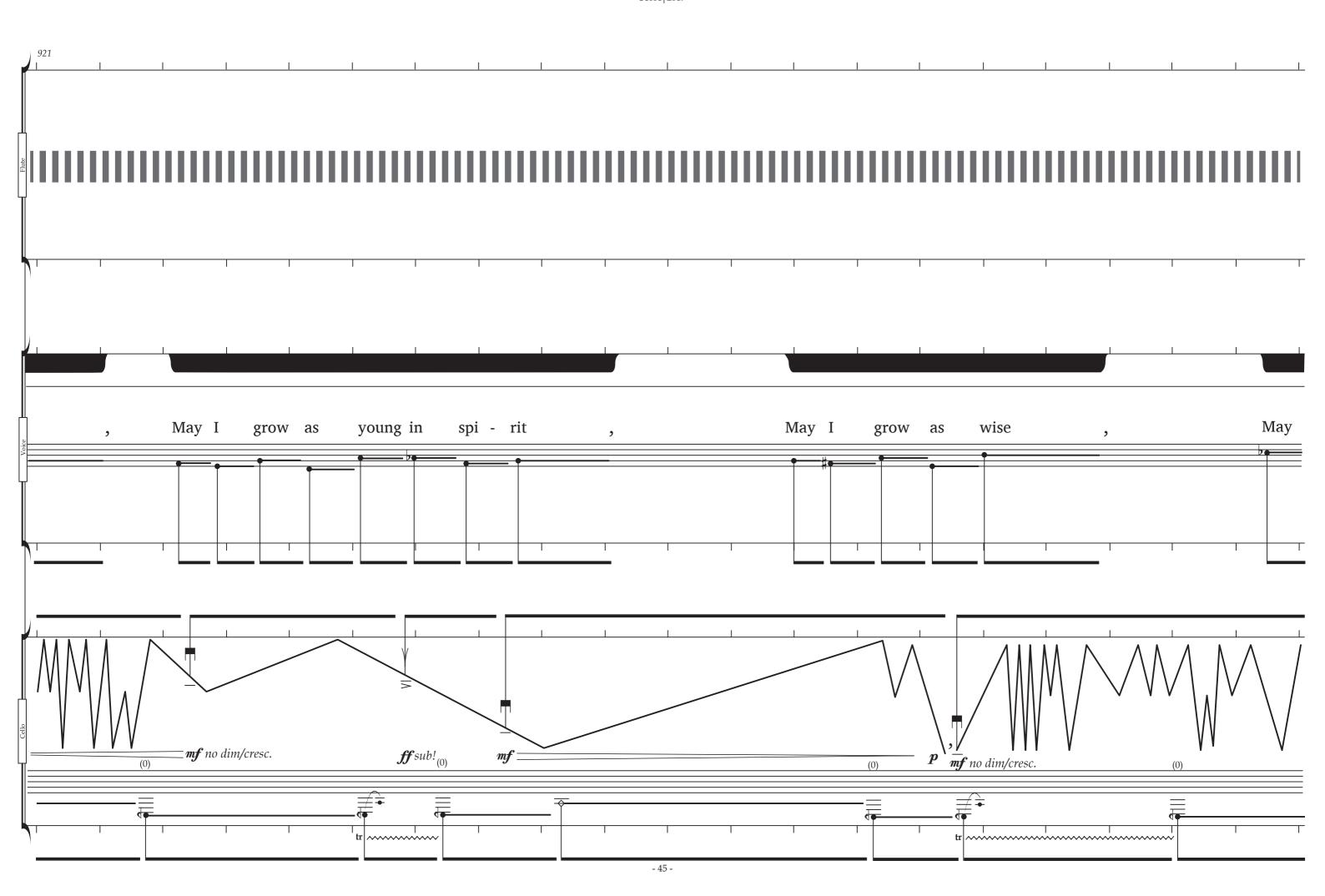


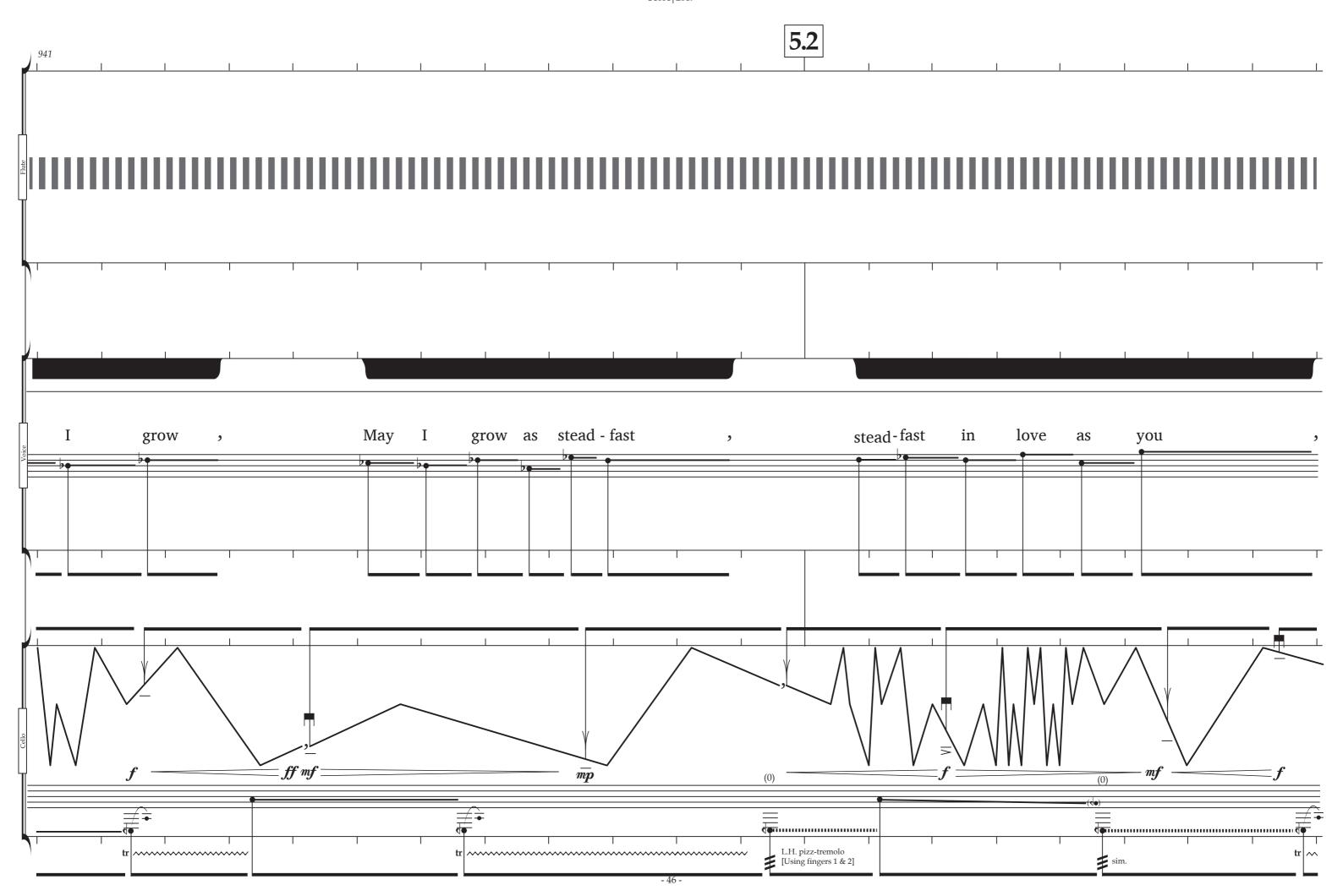


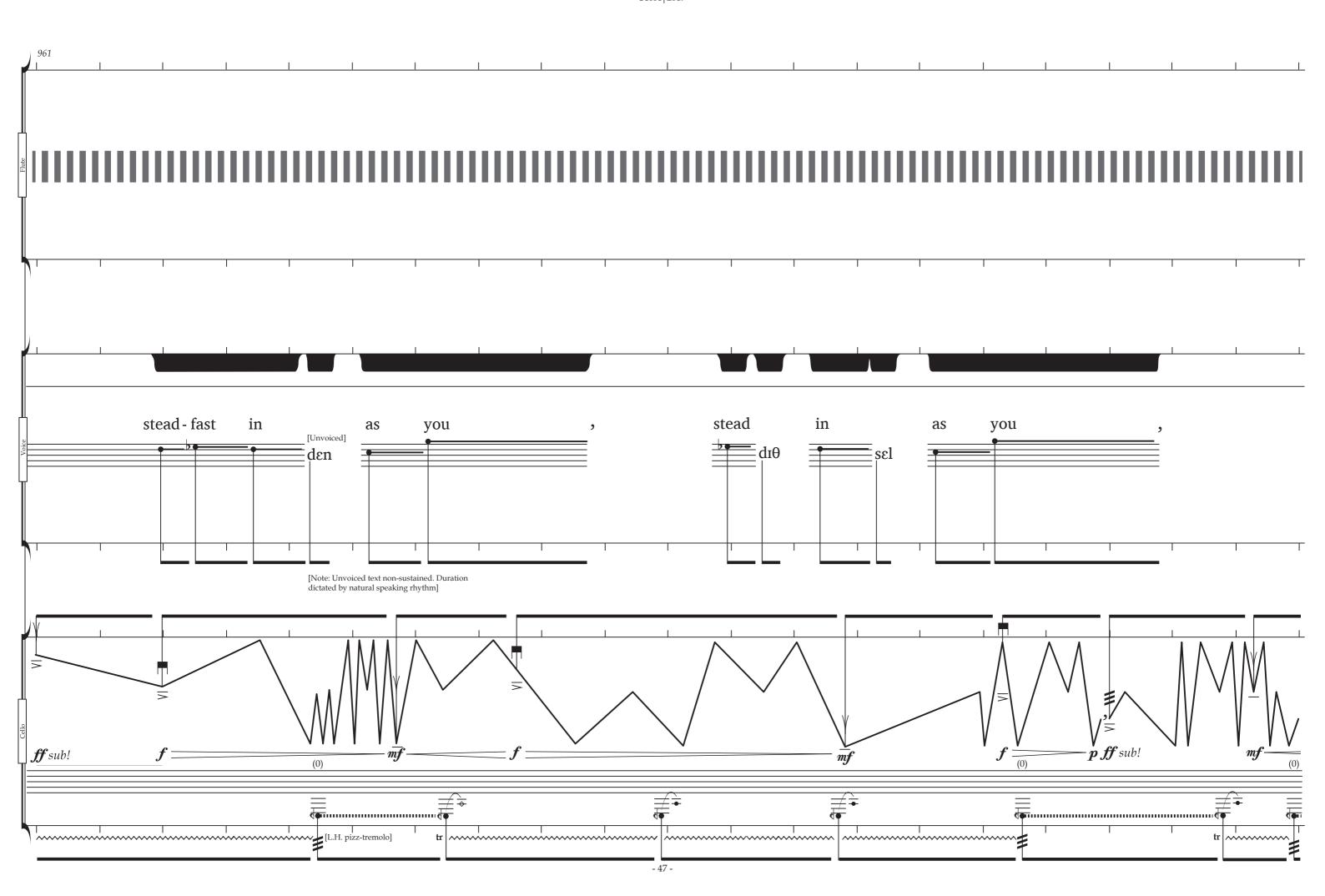


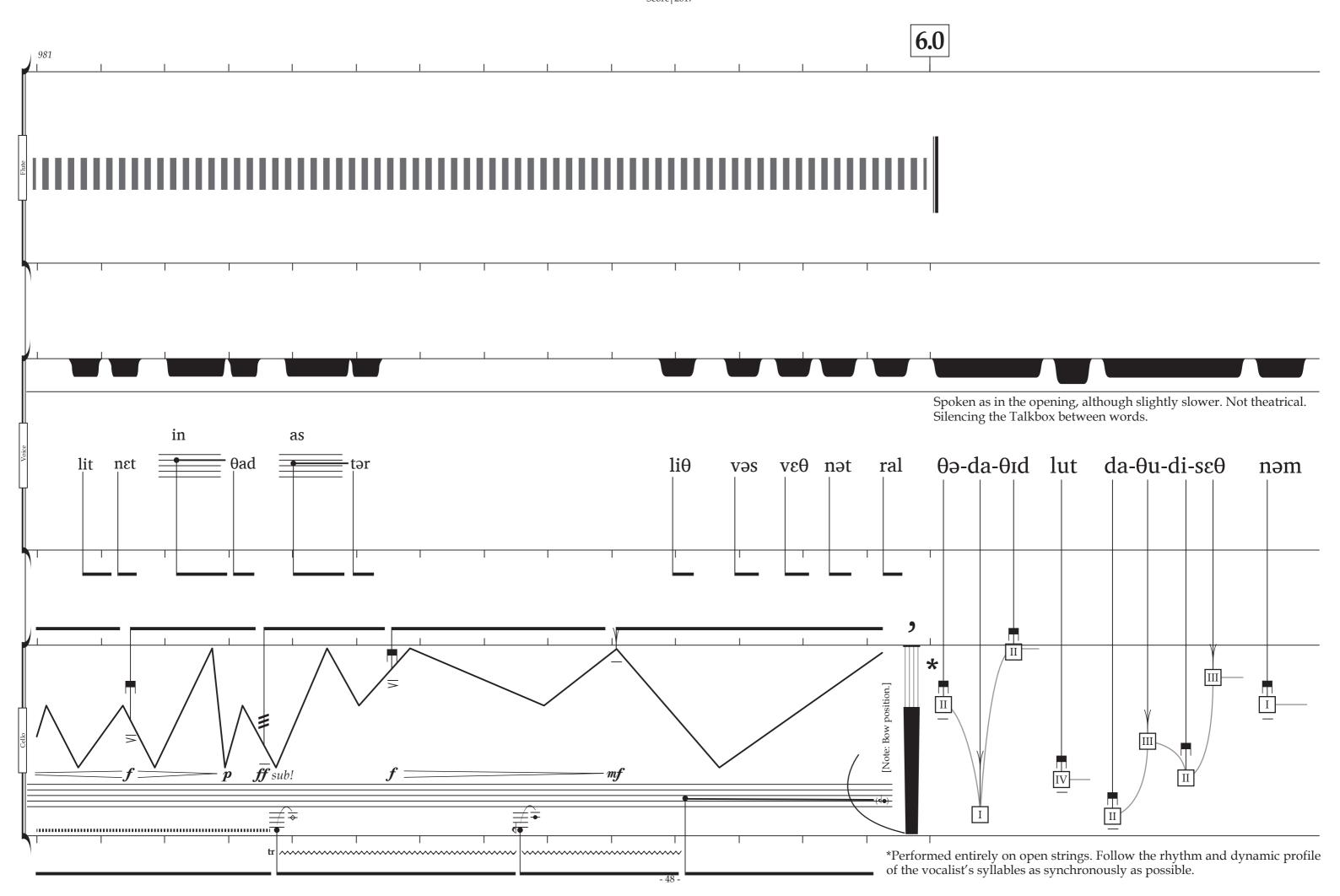


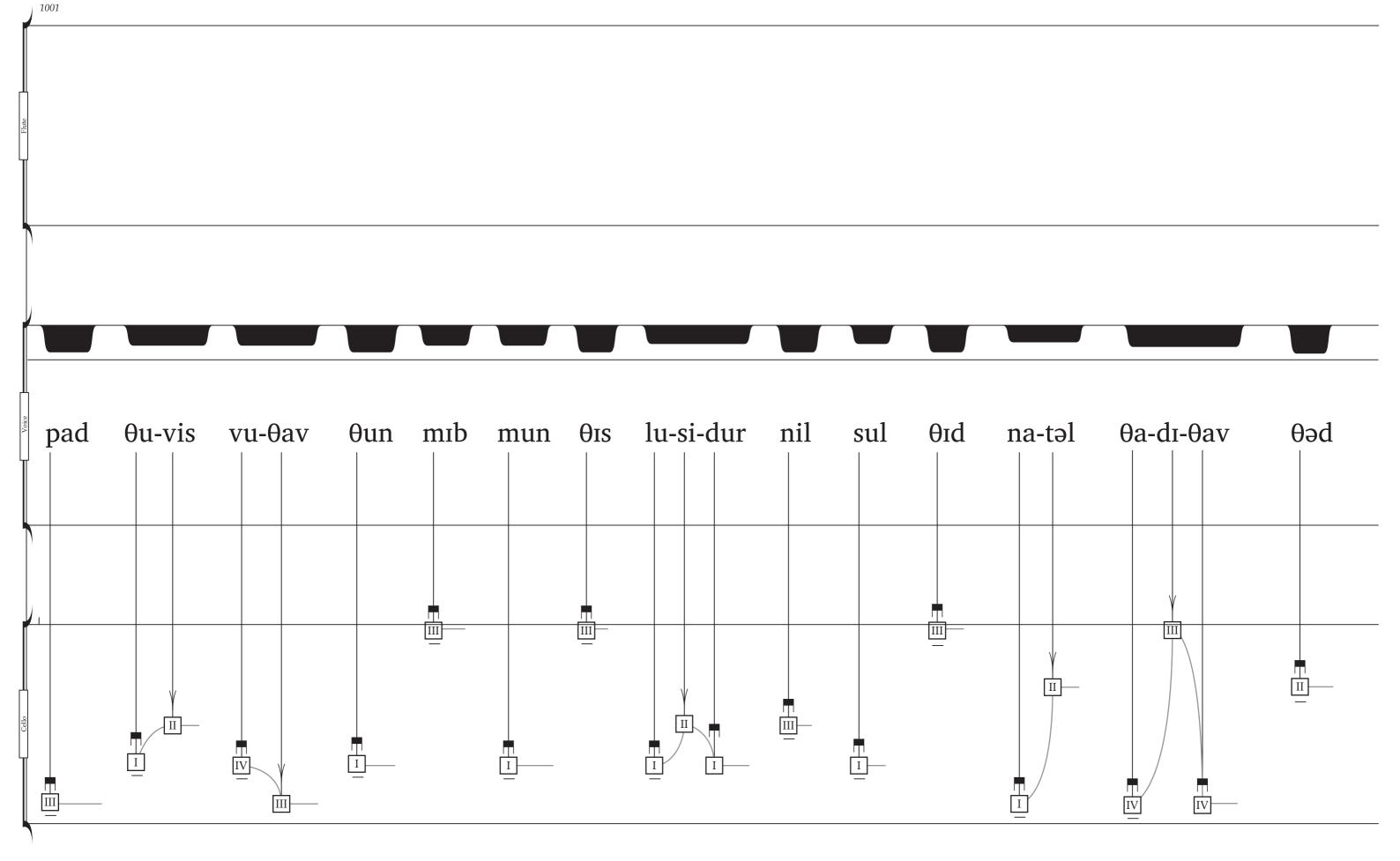




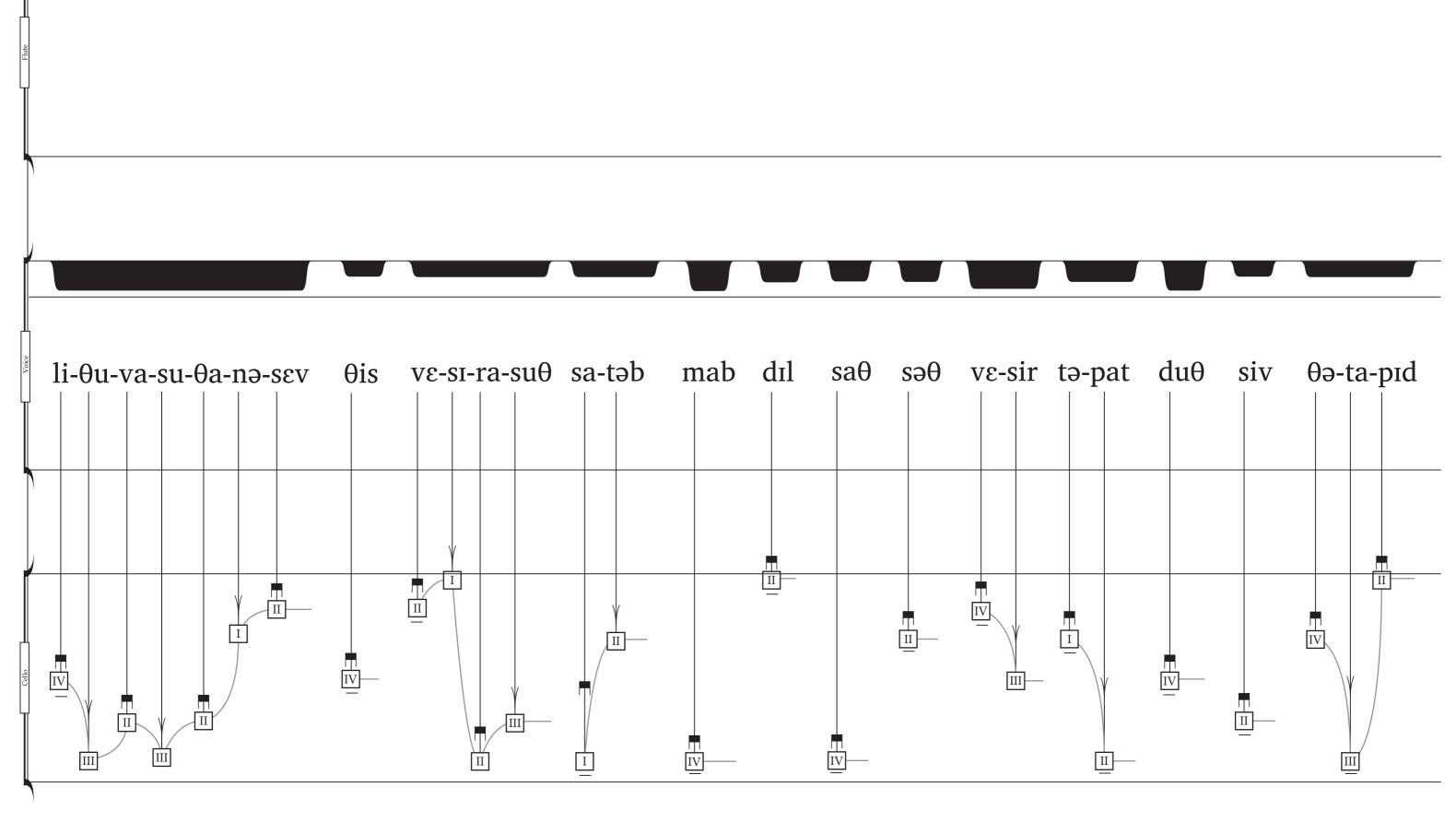


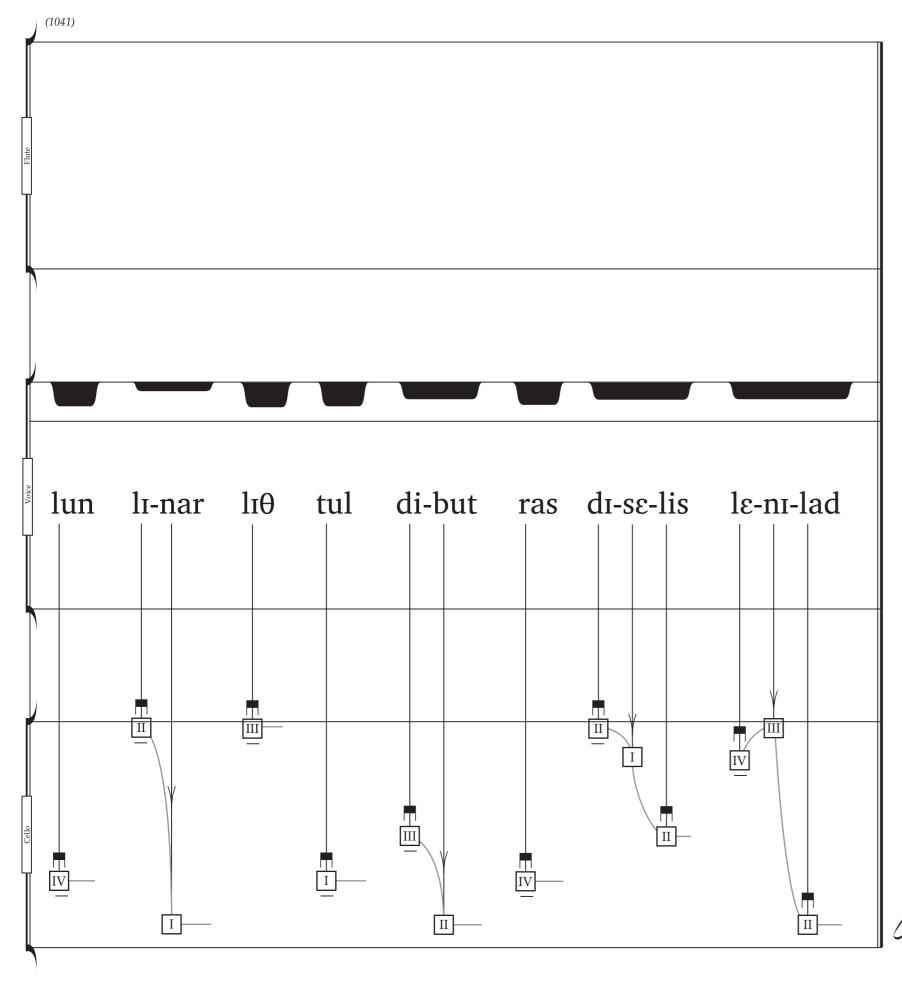






(1021)





[Manchester - Bath, December 2016 - May 2017]