Joseph Klein

Die Müde

(The Tired Woman)

character study after Elias Canetti

for solo alto saxophone

(2004)

- to Eric Nestler -

duration : c. 4'

Performance Notes

Ø *senza misura*

tr½ semitone trill throughout

X/4 metered notation: beat units are fixed, measure units fluctuating

pitch bend (between a major second and a minor third)

accelerando/ritardando

→ → → gradual change from one mode of play to another

durational continuum within *senza misura* section: values arranged from shortest to longest (precise durations *ad libitum*)

pause/break continuum: arranged from shortest to longest

music within brackets should be interpreted as an aside, temporarily breaking the flow of the interrupted music.

• Accidentals apply only to the notes they immediately precede, with the exception of repeated pitches.

• Each line of music in proportional notation is approximately 20 seconds duration in the Languid sections, and approximately 15 seconds duration in the Agitated and Exasperated sections.

Program Note

Die Müde (*The Tired Woman*) is the seventh in a series of short works for solo instrument based upon characters from *Der Ohrenzeuge: Fünfzig Charaktere* (*Earwitness: Fifty Characters*), written in 1974 by the Bulgarian-born British-Austrian novelist Elias Canetti (1905-1994). Canetti's distinctive studies incorporate poetic imagery, singular insights, and unabashed wordplay to create fifty ironic paradigms of human behavior. This collection of works, begun in 1997, was inspired by the vividly surreal depictions of Canetti's characters, and includes works for contrabass, violin, bass flute, ocarina, contrabassoon, glass harmonica, alto saxophone, trumpet, percussion, bass saxophone, guitar, and piccolo, among others. In Canetti's depiction of this character, The Tired Woman "is no longer young, she is not all that old either, but old enough to sigh over too much work"; but when angered, "she flares up and starts yelping and screeching away in her language, and keeps yelping and yelping tirelessly... All her sentences end shrilly on a very high note... When she finally collapses on her seat, she peers around, her eyes begging for pity, and whimpers: 'Tired.'"

Die Müde was composed in September of 2004 for saxophonist Eric Nestler, who first performed the work at the University of North Texas on October 19, 2004.

Die Müde

(The Tired Woman)

The tired woman sits in her restaurant and watches out. She is no longer young, she is not all that old either, but old enough to sigh over too much work. She greets the steady customers entering the place. As the owner or as the owner's wife, whichever, she has the right to be asked how she feels. "How are you today?" "Tired," she says, whether it is twelve noon or twelve midnight, and not without giving reasons for her tiredness. If it is noon, she says: "I worked eighteen hours yesterday"; if it is midnight: "I worked eighteen hours today." This sentence is the only thing that does not tire her, she has been reiterating it for years a hundred times a day. She accompanies it with a weepy face, stands up to show how close she is to collapsing, takes two steps, and really does collapse. She makes sure she falls upon a cushioned seat, she does not want to get hurt if she does collapse. As soon as she is properly seated, she casts beseeching glances around her and says: "Tired."

But a waiter has already done something wrong: failed to notice a guest, forgotten something in a dish. She flares up and starts yelping and screeching away in her language, and keeps yelping and yelping tirelessly. The cross she wears on her chest is affected by her excitement, it dances nastily to her words. All her sentences end shrilly on a very high note. Since there are many sentences, every conversation stops, no one can understand his own words anymore, the patrons go mute. Loving couples are seized with anxiety about their future and they no longer look into each other's eyes.

Scolding, she gets up from her seat, staggers to the counter, personally takes hold of a plate, staggers through the restaurant, changes her mind, and carries the plate back to the counter, where, amid the shrillest squawks, she deposits it without smashing it. No one dares to order anything, who could possibly wish for anything except her silence? New customers may come, the tired woman nods by way of greeting and keeps scolding unswervingly. She yelps to make sure that everything is in order, that's why she's there after all, the cross on her chest gives her strength, without the cross everything would be over after three sentences. When she finally collapses on her seat, she peers around, her eyes begging for pity, and whimpers: "Tired."

— Elias Canetti, *Der Ohrenzeuge: Fünfzig Charaktere*
(translated by Joachim Neugroschel)

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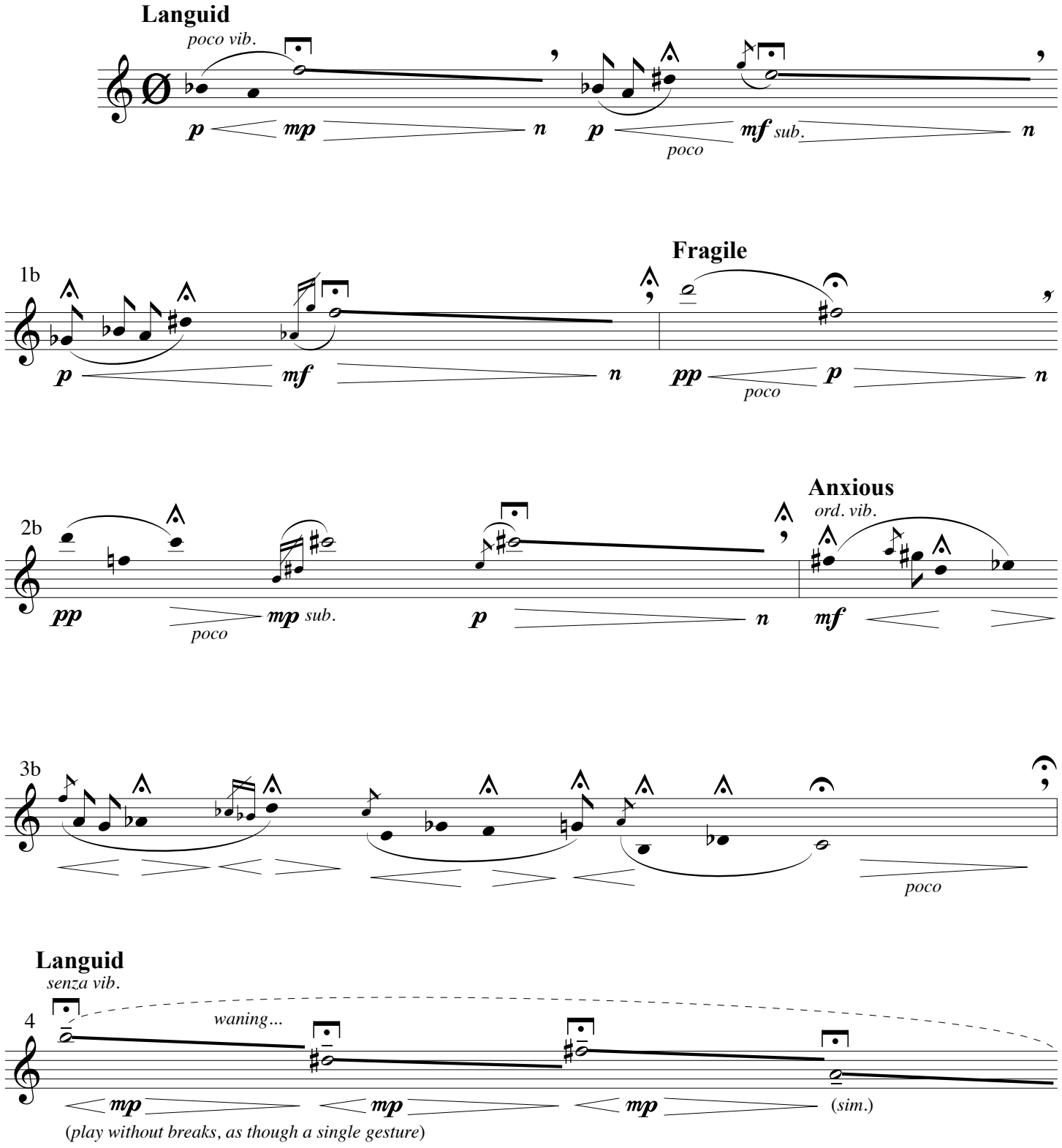

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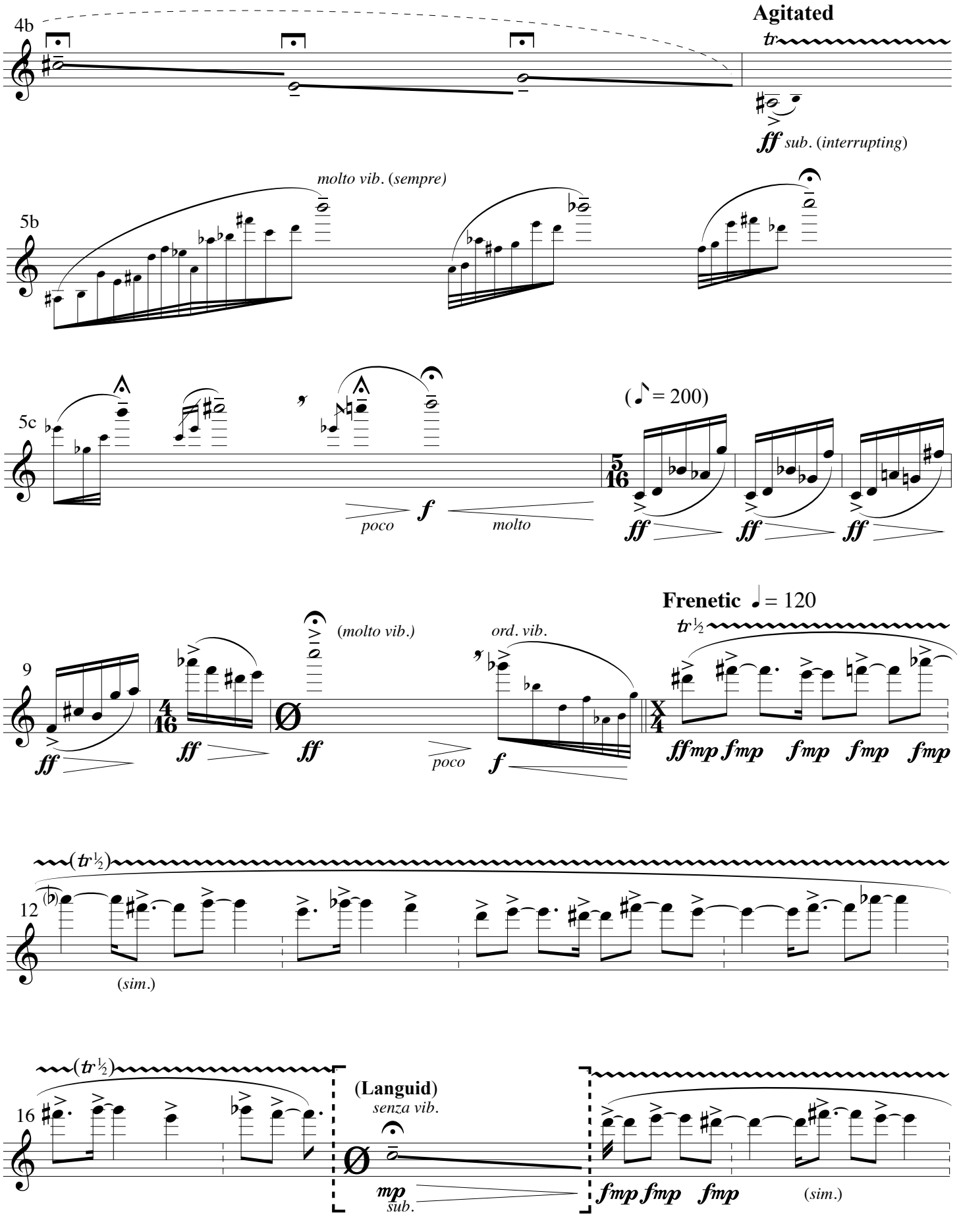
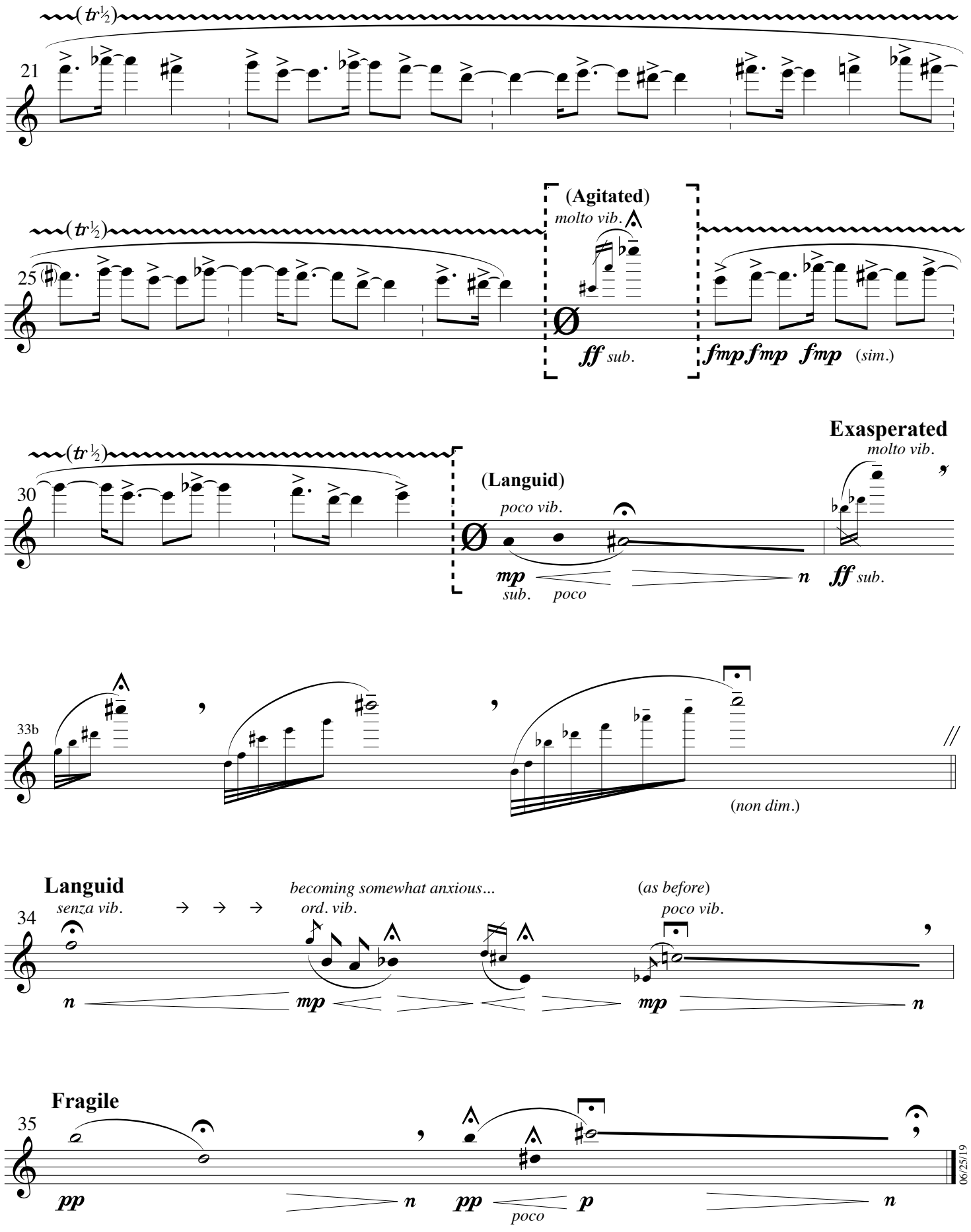

4b
Agitated
tr
ff sub. (interrupting)
5b
molto vib. (sempre)
5c
(♪ = 200)
poco
f
molto
ff
ff
ff
9
(molto vib.)
ord. vib.
Frenetic ♩ = 120
tr½
ff
ff
ff
poco
f
ffmp fmp fmp fmp fmp
12
(tr½)
(♭)
(sim.)
16
(tr½)
(Languid)
senza vib.
mp sub.
fmp fmp fmp
(sim.)


(tr½)
21
(tr½)
25
(Agitated)
molto vib.
ff sub.
fmp fmp fmp (sim.)
(tr½)
30
(Languid)
poco vib.
mp sub. poco
n
Exasperated
molto vib.
ff sub.
33b
(non dim.)
Languid
senza vib.
becoming somewhat anxious...
ord. vib.
(as before)
poco vib.
34
n
mp
mp
n
Fragile
35
pp
n
pp
poco
p
n
06/25/19