Andrew Thomas

And the Bird by the Water is Turning White

for flute and live electronics

(2013)

Commissioned by the London Sinfonietta as part of Writing the Future, which is generously supported by The Boltini Trust, Anthony Mackintosh and Michael & Patricia McLaren-Turner.

The first performance was given by David Cuthbert (flute) at the Southbank Centre, London on 8th December 2013.

Copyright 2013, by Andrew Thomas
7 Carlyon Close
Mytchett
Surrey
GU16 6JQ
www.altmusic.org.uk
Computer notated by the composer.

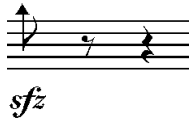
a sudden squall
and the bird by the water
is turning white

Yosa Buson, tr. David Cobb

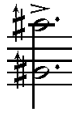
‘We inhale the world and breathe out meaning’.

Salman Rushdie, *The Moor’s Last Sigh*

Notation and Performance Notes

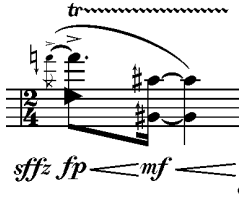


Indicates an audible intake of breath. The length of note indicates the duration over which the breath should be taken. Hence the given example represents a sudden, short intake of breath similar to that made when shocked. Breathes marked as such should be produced at a sufficient volume to be picked up by the microphone. The overall shape of notated breathes corresponds to the transition from a state of excitation to a state of calm.

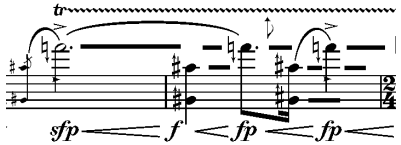


Arrows above accidentals indicate slightly sharp, arrows below accidentals indicate slightly flat.

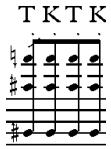
Slashes across keys on fingering charts indicate the key(s) to be trilled. Hence in this example the first finger of the right hand would be trilled.



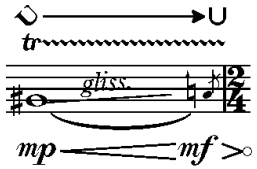
Right pointing arrows on stems indicate a strong diaphragm accent without tonguing (i.e. including forceful breathing mixed in with the sound).



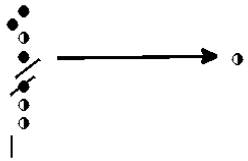
Solid beams indicate that the sound may oscillate freely in the approximate shape given between the various partials that occur during trills on non-standard fingerings.



The inclusion of ‘T K T K’ indicates that the articulation should form part of the sound (i.e. a slightly less focused, percussive sound).



The symbol U tilted 45 degrees to the left indicates rolling the flute inwards to achieve the desired pitch. The same symbol tilted 45 degrees to the right indicates rolling the flute outwards. A solid line with an arrow leading to a non-tilted U indicates gradually roll the flute to standard playing position.



The arrow indicated gradually move from closed to half hole (ring) on the key indicated.

Programme Note

The initial impetus for this work is a response to the title of the 'Hidden' project for which it was commissioned. The piece makes use of 'hidden' modes of sound production such as breathing, tonguing and key clicks to create a musical structure. As well as this positive approach the idea of being 'hidden' manifests itself in a claustrophobic soundworld which is enhanced and projected around the performance space through the use of live electronics. Whilst being in no way programmatic the music falls into two main sections, the first beginning with energetic, frantic gestures, the second with calm pulsations of sound.

Electronic Details and Requirements

- One microphone
- Digital-Analogue interface
- Computer running INTEGRA LIVE (free to download at www.integralive.org)
- PA with quadrophonic speaker setup (a stereo version is also available if necessary)
- Performance patch available from the composer

The electronic part is built using a series of delay, reverberation and pitch shifting units which create a continuos texture upon which the acoustic sound sits. There are no recorded sounds used, all sound is processed in real time. The microphone should be placed approximately 20 - 25cm from the flute. The amount of amplification depends on the concert space but the amplified sound should create an even balance with the acoustic sound. The level should be loud but not so loud as to cause discomfort in the audience.

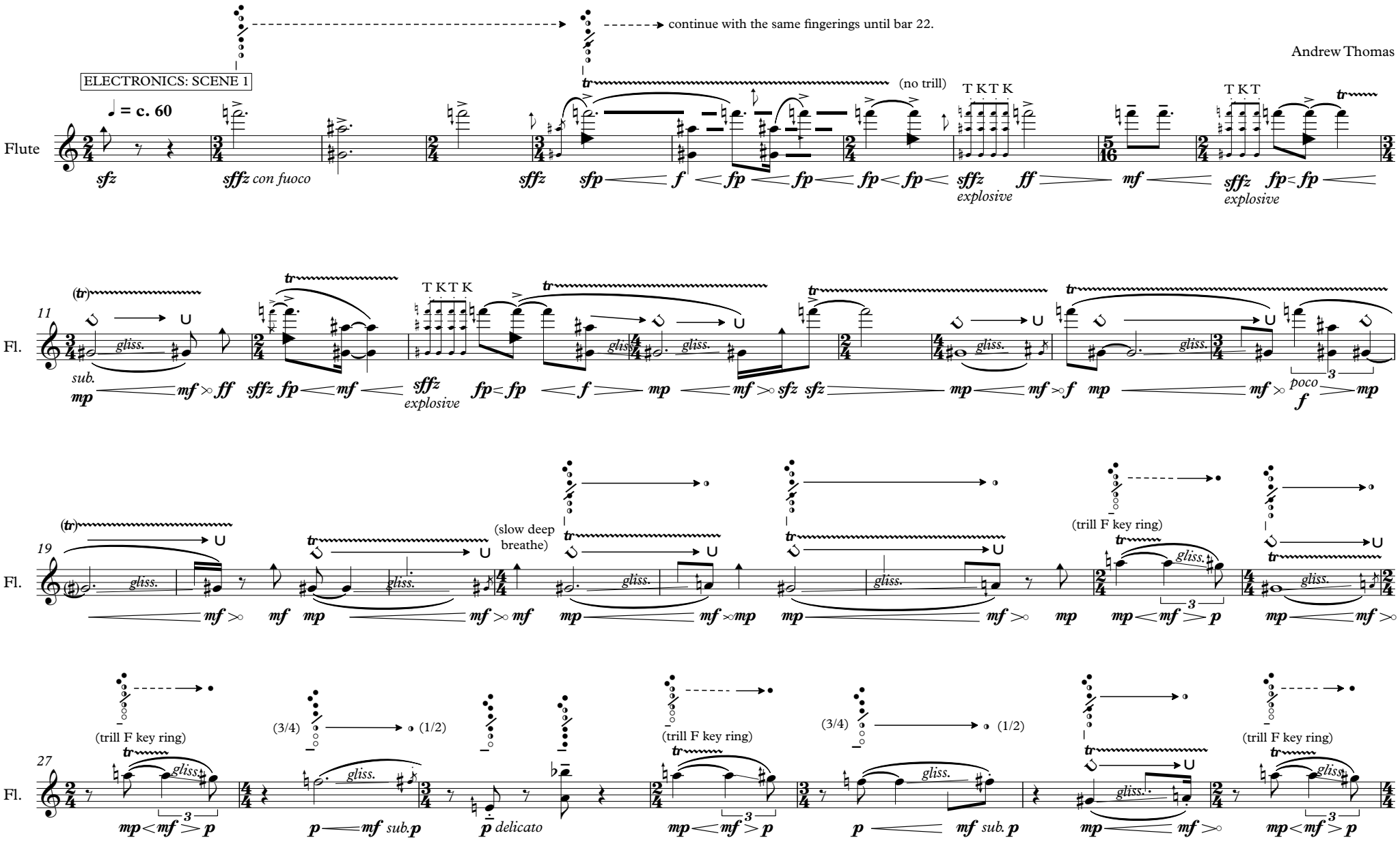
The spatial distribution of the speakers is at the discretion of the performer. The ideal scenario would involve the speakers being placed into 'hidden' areas of the performance space in a way that will result in the maximum distribution of sound possible. As a consequence of this 'site specific' approach a panning controller has been placed in each of the 'scenes' of the patch so that the performer is at liberty to interpret spatial distribution of gestures in relation to each specific performance.

The electronics themselves are triggered and manipulated from the computer and, hence, require a second performer or technician to facilitate the performance. Time cues for the electronics are given in the score.

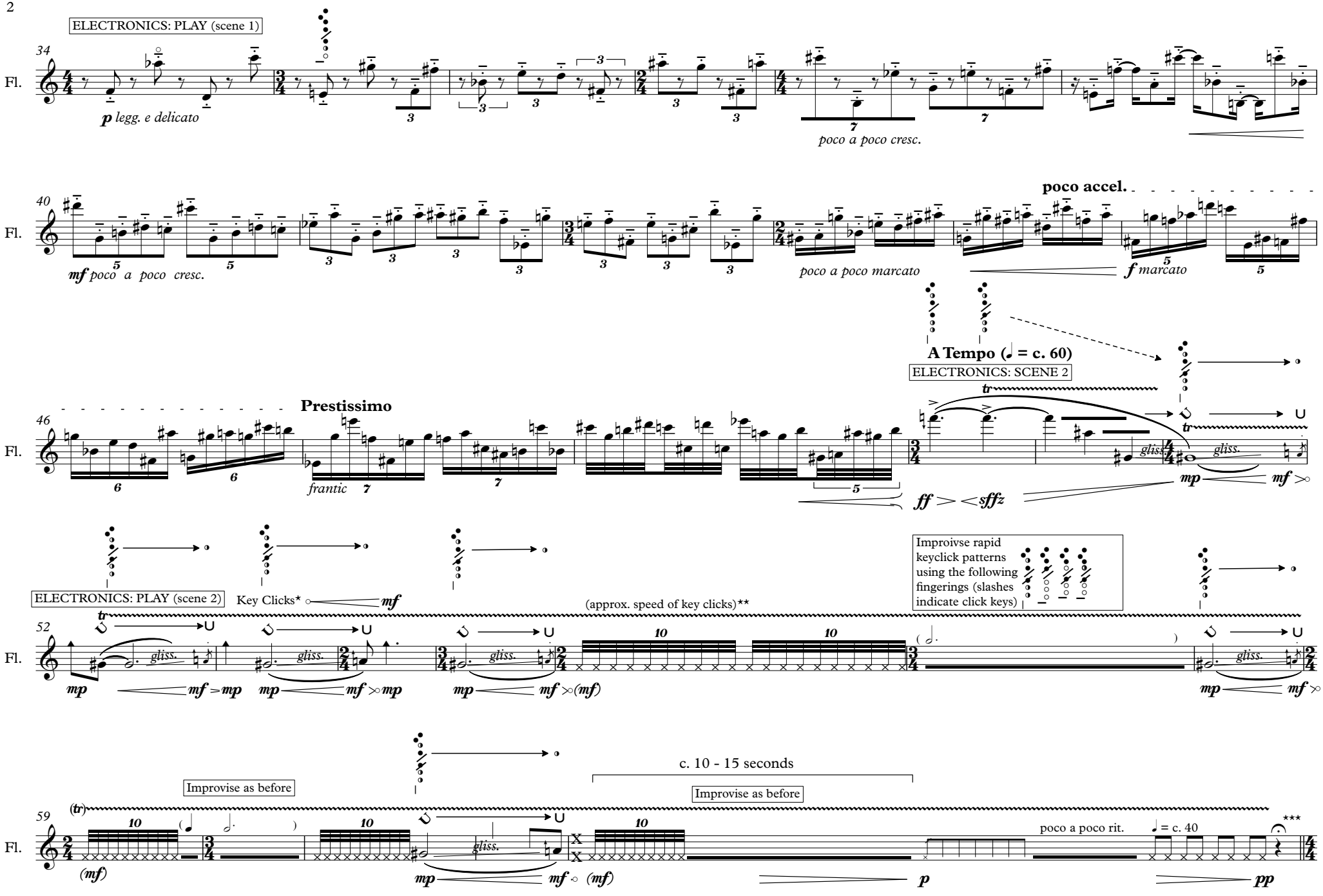
to David Cuthbert

And the Bird by the Water is Turning White

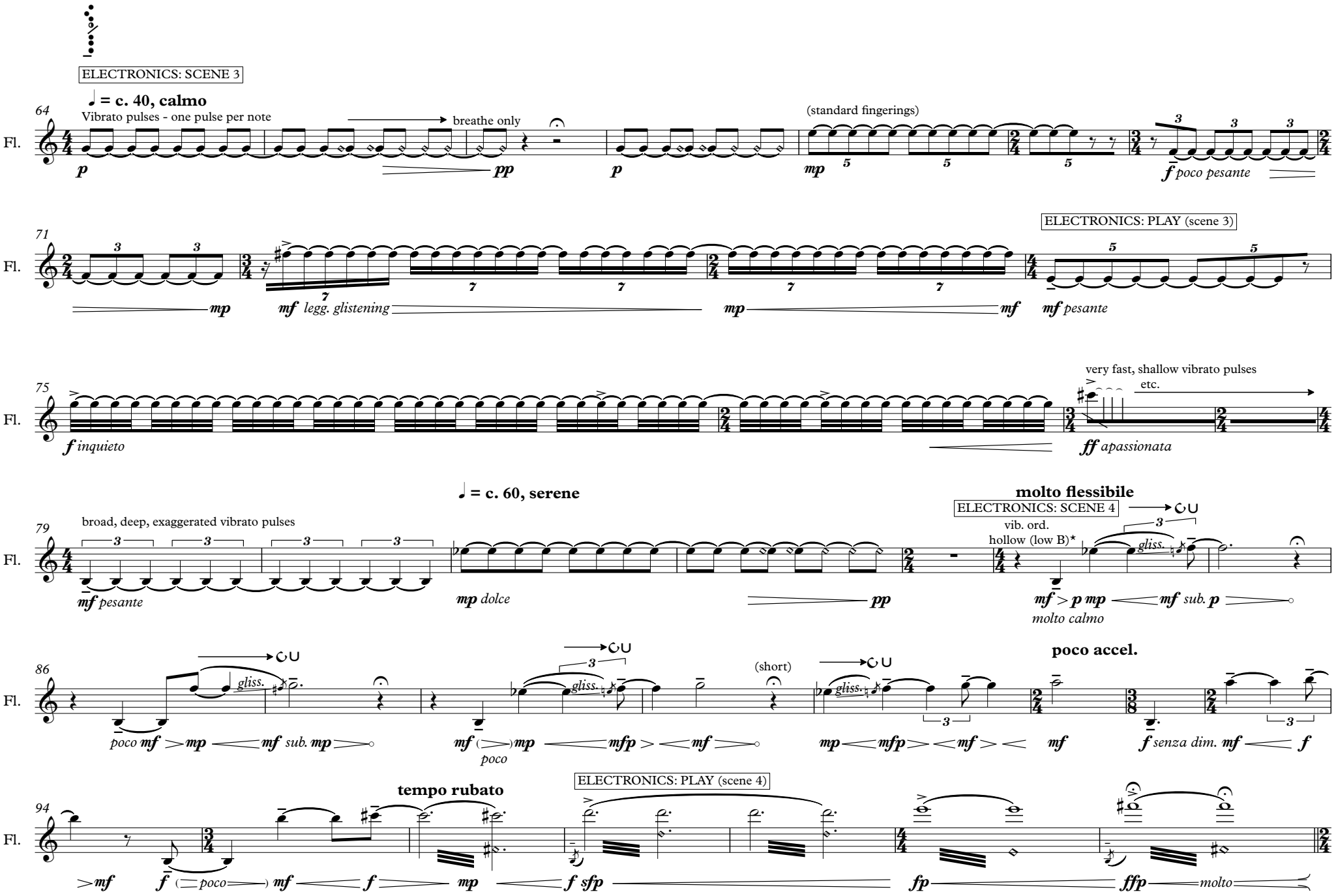
for flute and live electronics



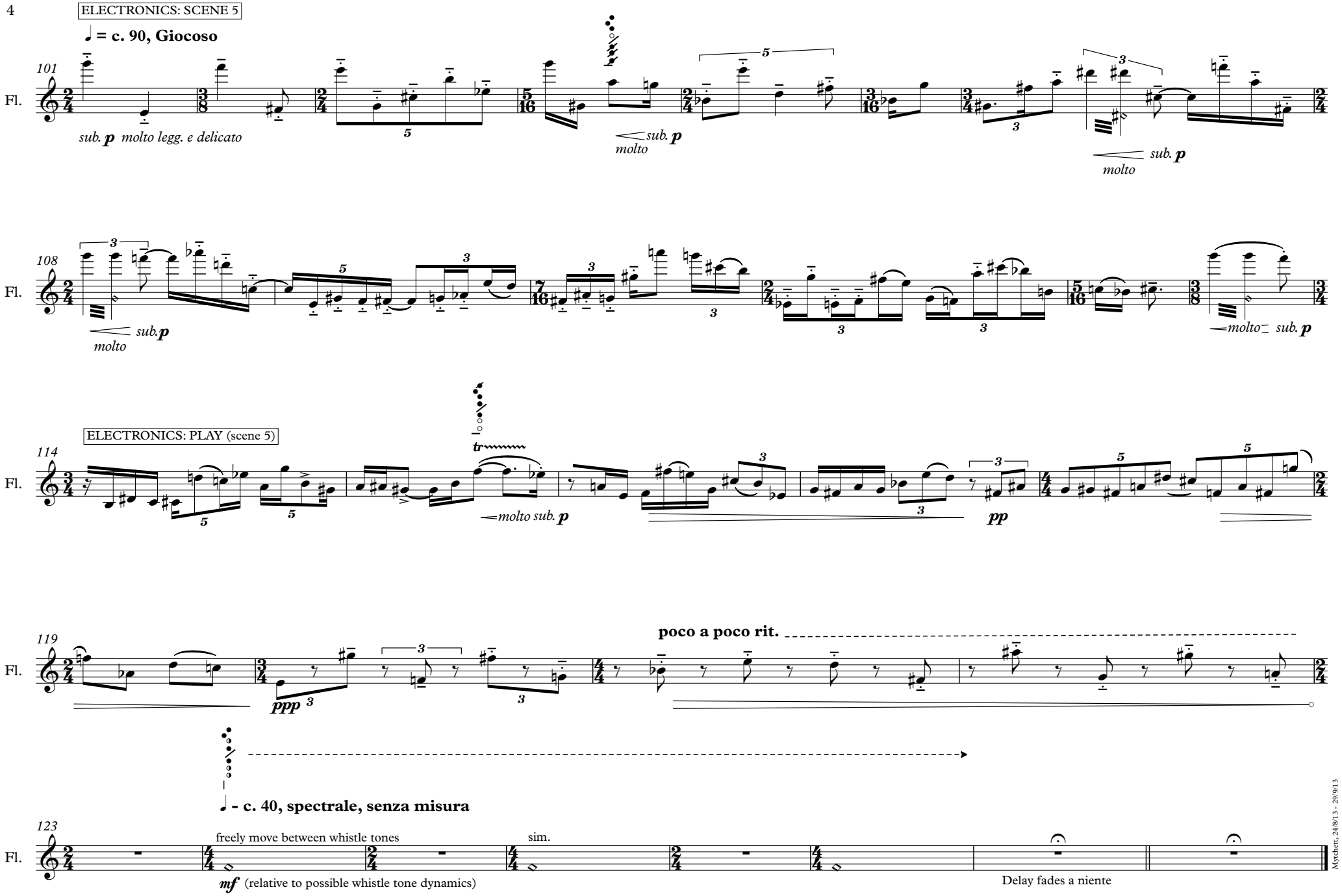
© Copyright 2013, by Andrew Thomas



*Allow trill to become a key click that continues during the breathes. ** Move the flute closer to the microphone during key click sections to enhance the sound. *** Allow electronics to almost stop before continuing to bar 64.



* Low B should be 'bell like', beginning hollow and distant and growing in richness and presence at each repetition.



Myrchett, 24/8/13 - 29/9/13