

oliver thurley
the heart is a knot



the heart is a knot

double bass, entangled
for Marianne, quietly, a soft glaze.

five minutes

played as written, with overwhelming anxiety. the heart is a knot is for trepidation, delicate touch, the grain of flesh and bow, and softly traced harmonic lines.

the performance focuses on the microscopic detail and boundaries of unstable harmonics. the performer entangles herself in points of friction, tremors, turbulence, and the grain of a body moving with the instrument.

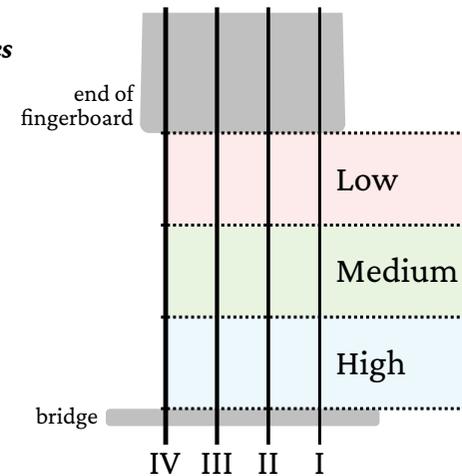
notation

The entire piece is *extremely* quiet (*ppppppp*) and located in the space between the end of the fingerboard and the bridge. Pitches are not notated specifically in the score. Instead, pitch **zones** act as areas in which to navigate various stable, unstable, and dead points. For each string, this space is divided into three approximate zones: **low**, **medium**, and **high** (e.g. II-Lo, IV-Med, etc.).

bowed: the sound is soft and smooth, interrupted by a skip in which the bow briefly loses contact from the string then re-articulates as delicately as possible. You may wish to use a violin bow instead of a bass bow.

Vertical motion indicates very small *gliss.* motions (either by 'crawling' the finger—rolling it on the string—or by pulling the string to the side to 'bend'. This is subtle, not a pronounced harmonic *gliss.* gesture).

no bow: fingers remain engaged with string, but bow is not drawn.



crini bowed with the *hair* of the bow.

½ tratto bowed with *a mixture of hair and the wood* of the bow. Soft, with some grit of the wood.

tratto bowed *entirely with the wood* of the bow (*col legno tratto*). A hushed, emaciated tone.

In place of dynamics, there are three levels of clarity in the piece:

1. **noise** — bowed so softly that no harmonic can emerge, just a very soft-focused string noise.
2. **shade** — pulled back just below the brink where the harmonic is clear, noise with a softly filtered harmonic shadow.
3. **harm** — bow drives just enough to produce a harmonic tone (but still *ppppppp*, and with some noise).

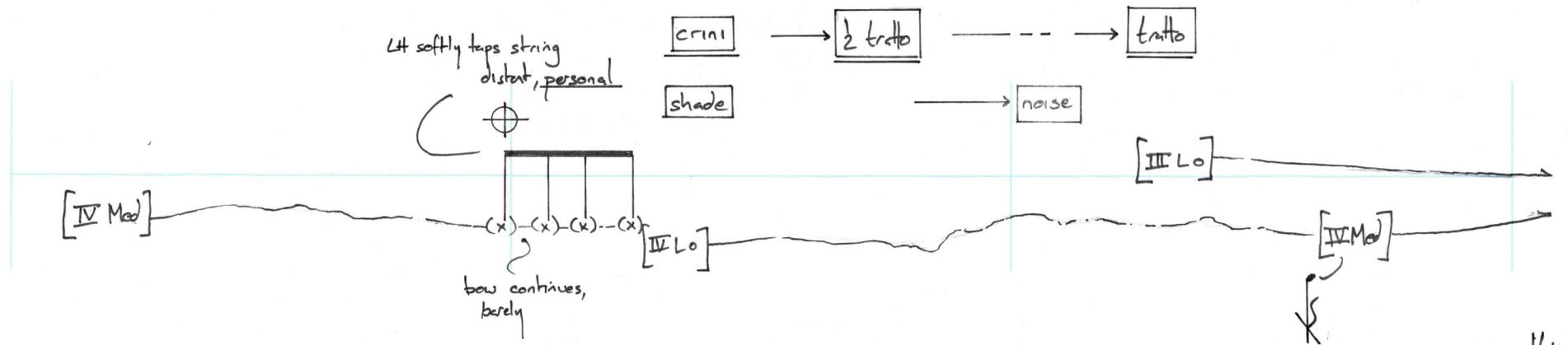
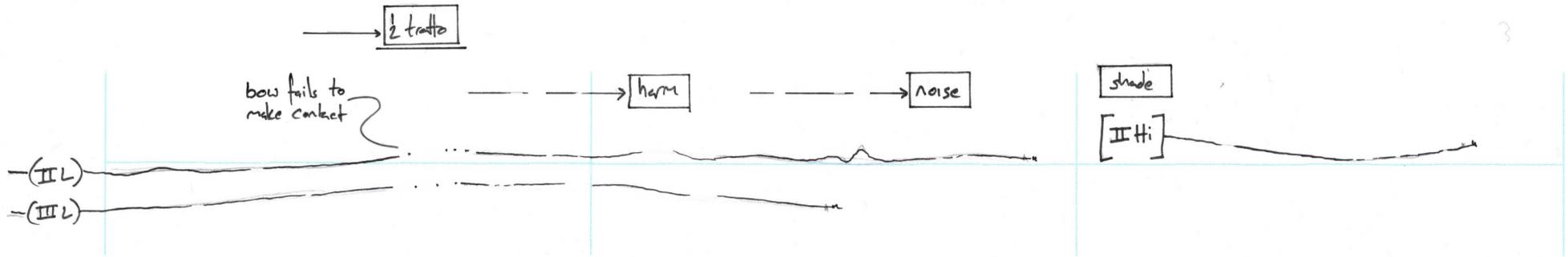
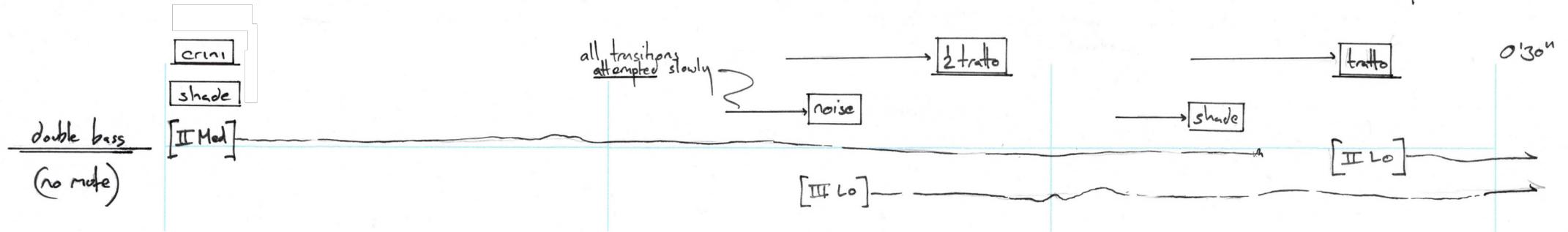
The differences between these sounds are often porous.

commissioned by The Riot Ensemble, with funds from the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation.

oliver thurley
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score version 0.03

the heart is a knot

diver Hurley



crini

harm

shade

pull on III, no bow

harm

noise

$\frac{1}{2}$ tratto

(III L)

(IV H)

[III Lo]

tratto

shade

mobile — harmonics shift from the bow

noise

harm

fast, irregular, brush/tap like rain

on I — no bow

$\frac{1}{2}$ tratto

harm

(III L)

[I Lo]

[II Med]

[F]

[III Med]

[IV H]

