

Brakhage Miniature

piano & percussion

Grégoire Lorieux

2010 (rev. 2012)

This piece is dedicated to Ramon Lazkano.

Brakhage Miniature, pour piano et percussion

This short piece (sketch for further development), as in my latest pieces, is a reflection on the musical metaphor of light perception. The stained glass windows of churches and cathedrals capture, tame the light, in a word: invent light. The cinema writes (photographs) light by cutting in regular time intervals. In his most abstract works, the filmmaker Stan Brakhage questions the perception of light itself. Chartres Series is inspired by the contemplation of the windows of the cathedral : paint is spread over the paint film or painted miniatures are reproduced in each picture. Photograms scroll without apparent consistency, but the effect of retinal persistence combined with the viewer's short-term memory enables to perceive something that eventually resemble forms: a coherence that may not be designed in the filmmaker but appears to our perception. While composing, I reveal the musical elements in the same way: a sound recording, taken as the starting point of the room, is analyzed in time frames that each have an harmonic print. This cutting makes traces a rhythmic pattern whose vectors determine some consistency. On the other hand, I metaphorically associate acoustic resonance and light propagation: it is a question of color, brightness, immediacy, persistence ...

The piano is the place to build this light that first appears sliced in regular time: pianist and percussionist operate at each end of the strings and build rays of persistent resonances. Later, light / resonance becomes more diffuse, and more concrete.

As Brakhage built in Chartres Series representation of stained glass, ie a representation of the representation of light, and invents his own dream of light , this piece is an attempt to build the metaphor of a dark light radiation.

Grégoire Lorieux

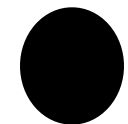
Grégoire Lorieux, *Brakhage Miniature* for piano & percussion
Notes for performance



keyboard
(pianist)

4
4

Ped. - - - *
st. Ped. - - - *



Piano
Spring Drum
(percussionist)

4
4

string middle
string end

Strings

Piano body

Spring Drum

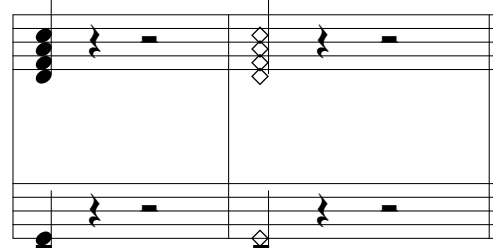


PIANO

Keyboard

play normally on the keyboard

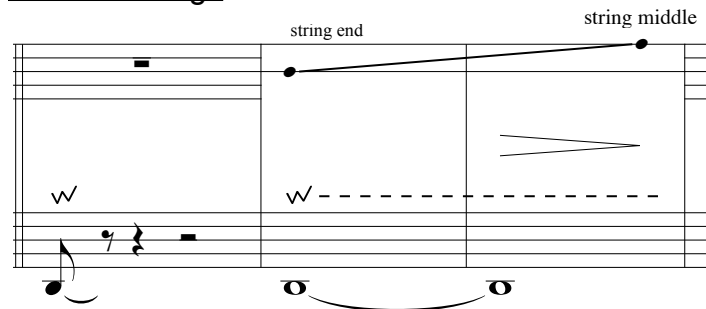
play "silent" on the keyboard : depress the keys without sounding the strings.



this is a cluster

this is a "silent" cluster

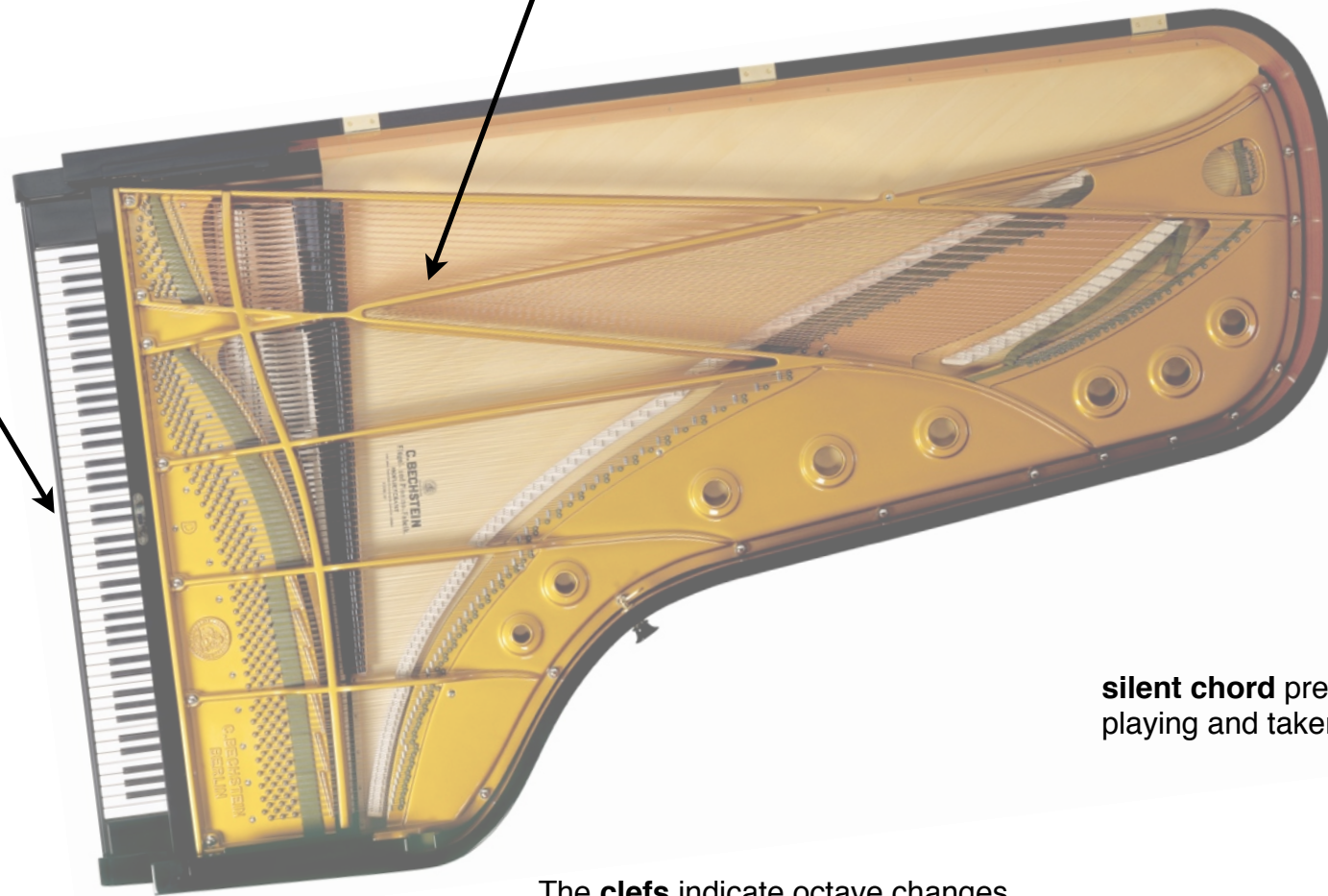
Rub the strings



sfz

"swipe" rapidly along the string with a plectrum or the fingernail. let vibrate.

Rub a plastic card or a plectrum along the indicated string, following intensities ("f" means fast/ "p" means slow) and directions (from string end, near you / to string middle, in the middle of the piano



silent chord pressed before playing and taken in the sostenuto

interpretation indications are in french.

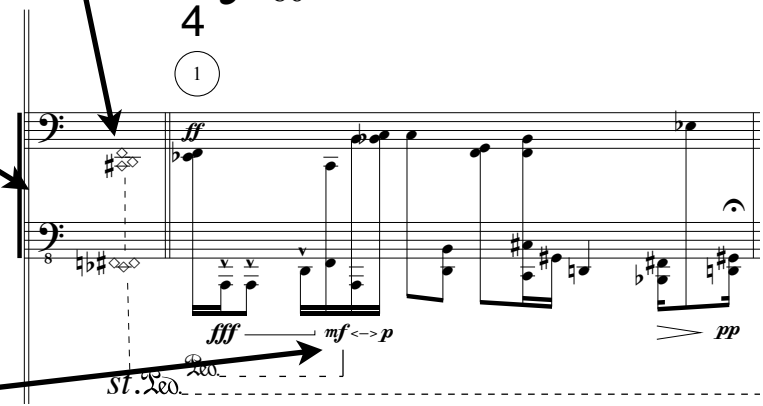
The **clefs** indicate octave changes. So pay attention to them !

dynamics mf<->p mean : play between the 2 indicated dynamics irregularly to have a living sound rather than a «plain» sound. Dynamics should be different for every note, even inside the chords. The intention is to excitate the vibrating strings (taken in the sostenuto pedal, for instance), always differently.

Rugueux, mat
accents : brillants, métalliques

6/4 ♩ = 80

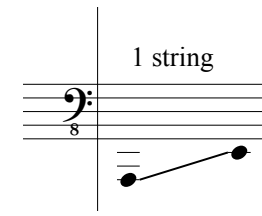
①



ff → *mf<->p* → *pp*
st. ped.

PERCUSSION

the percussionist plays the lowest strings inside the piano, that correspond to the crossed strings (like on the model presented here).
 Generally the 8 lower strings are single (1 note=1 string)
 The number of double and triple strings depends on the piano model. (Steinway C2 : 5 double, 7 triple)



Hit the body of the piano

choose 3 spots on the body of the piano with different sounds. The higher on the staff will be the brighter.

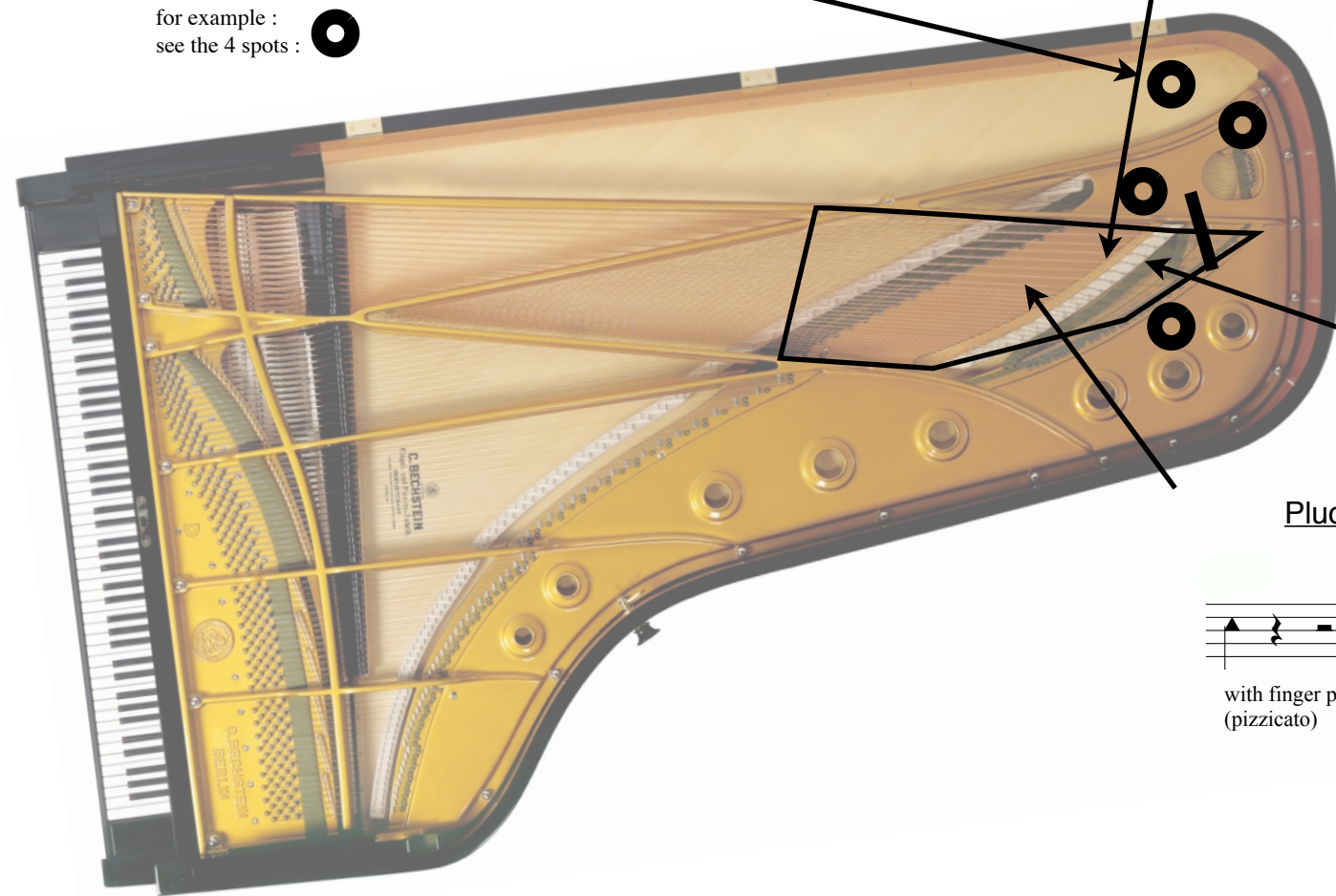
strike on the metal structure to get a wide, bright sound (especially when the pedal is pressed) for an example : see that sign

Strings

Piano body

Spring Drum

for example : see the 4 spots :



Hit the strings

hit the string «normally» (with a mallet)

hit the string while muting it, by putting the finger harder on the string to avoid the resonance.

this staff indicates the place on the string to put the finger on.
 string end (line on bottom of the staff) : towards the player,
 string middle (line on top of the staff) : towards the middle of the string (not necessarily the exact middle),

hit the string while putting the finger on the string (as for an harmonic). here : on the last string (A-1), move the finger on the string from the middle of the string towards you. Always indicated with a + (like «pizz») Try to make harmonics emerge

hand palm cluster .
 the lower note is approx. indicated.

Pluck the strings

with finger pulp (pizzicato) with fingernail or a plectrum

Rub the strings

string end

string middle

sfz

pp

"swipe" rapidly along the string with a plectrum or the fingernail. let vibrate.

Rub a plastic card or a plectrum along the indicated string, following intensities ("f" means fast/ "p" means slow) and directions (from string end, near you / to string middle, in the middle of the piano)

touch a resonating string rapidly with a plectrum or the back of the ballet, or something else made out of metal, to «dirty» the resonance.

Spring Drum

slide along the string

swipe the string fast

strike the string

shake

rotate

intensities indicate shake /rotation speed

string middle

string end

f **sfz** **pp** **p < f > p**

during rotation :
 p = damped sound
 f = sound like cymbal-roll with soft mallets

Mallets and accessories

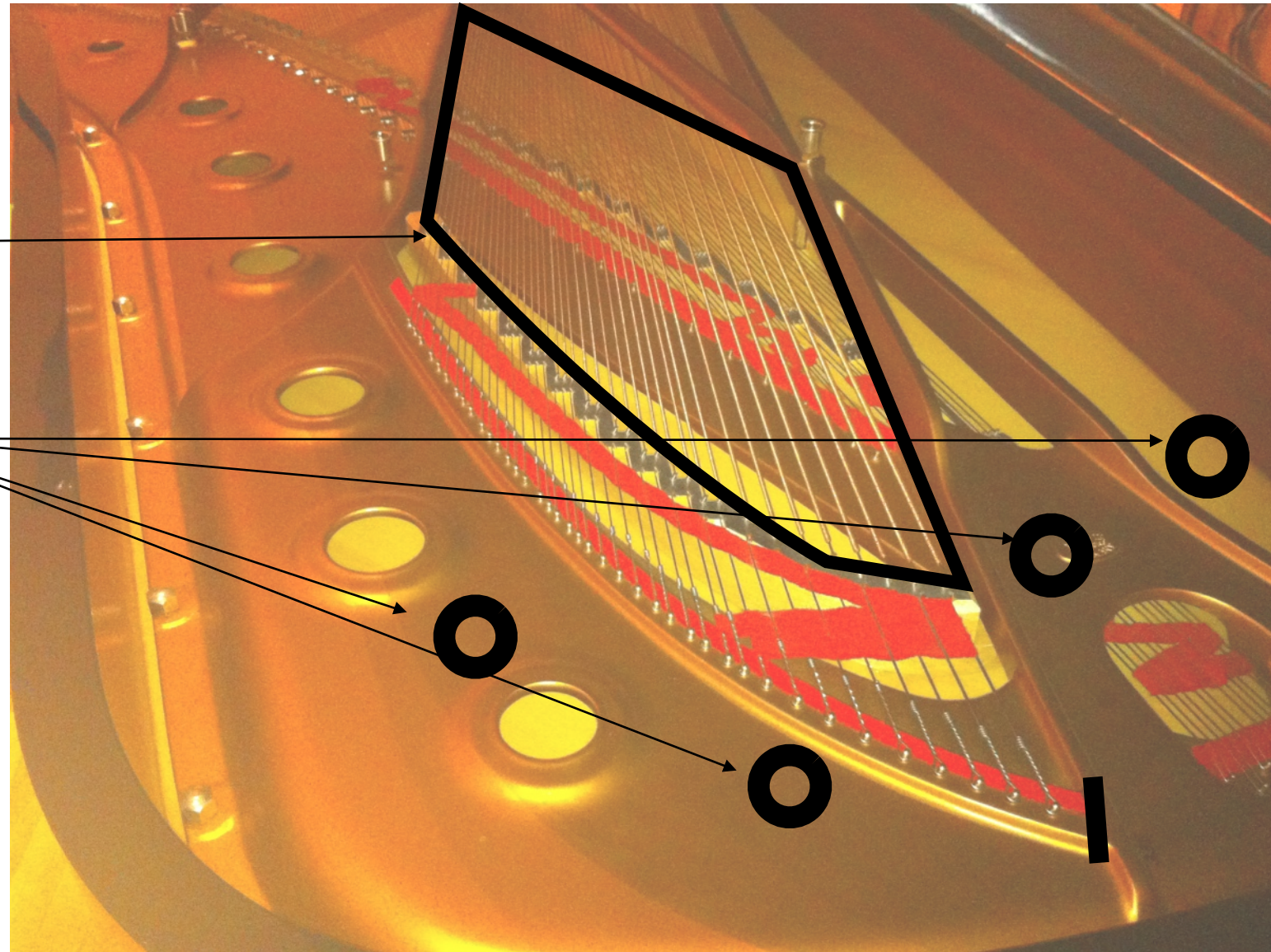
mallets (soft/hard)
 + small metal bar
 + plectrum / plastic card



from the percussionnist point of view.


playing zone on the strings


4 spots to play on the body of the piano

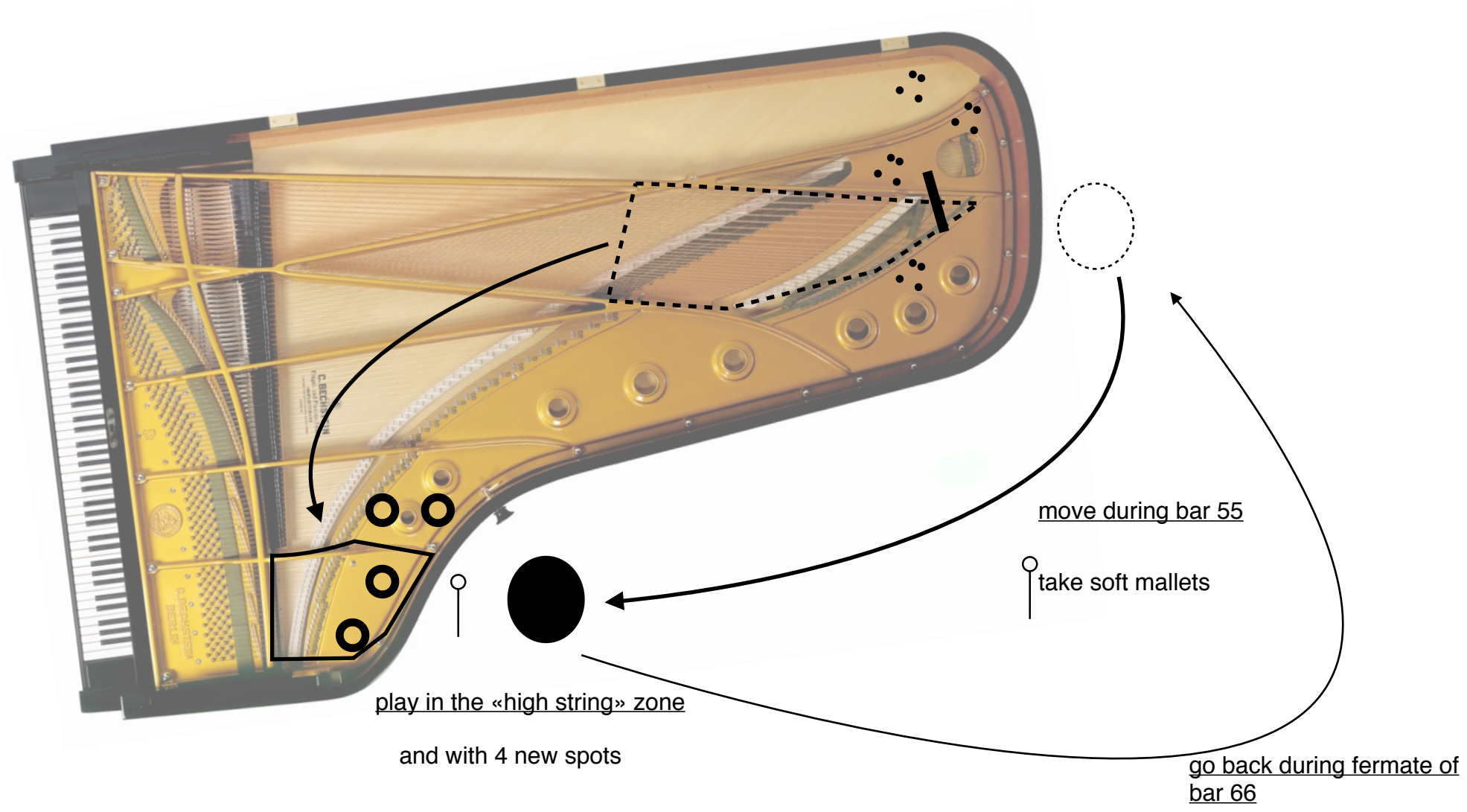


PERCUSSION

FERMATAS

 this fermate are considered like tempo suspensions, that break the rhythmic regularity, not stop signs. Approx. 1,5 times the rhythmic value.

 this fermate are "stop signs"



Interpretation Notes

- Balance the dynamics to reach a general «metallic» perception : favor the percussion part on the keyboard part.
- The temper when rubbing the D strings should be sensual : caressing, sweet and slow.
- Here "électrique" means nervous, but with a dampened-like sound - "as if" muted.
- The grace notes can be very short, fast and with accents in parts E, F, N. But in other places leave space between the grace notes and the bigger notes. Their role is to give rhythm perturbation.
- the pianist should be aware of the harmonic compexity and diversity. parts A-D : quite "horizontal". E-G : quite "vertical". Look for consonances (fifths, thirds) and try to enhance them. One example : bar 110 (third relation), bar 7 : G3 is quite accentuated to be the fundamental of a chord that is arpeggiated during the bar. Big accents on the notes are like main notes.

8/4 4/4 ♩ = 69 3/4 1/8 7/4 4/4 7/4 1/8 6/4 2/4

pian. *mp* <-> *pp* *fff* *mp* <-> *p* *p* <-> *pp* *p* <-> *pp* *fff*

(st. Ped) *st. Ped.* *st. Ped.* *st. Ped.* *st. Ped.* *st. Ped.*

8/4 4/4 ♩ = 69 3/4 1/8 7/4 4/4 7/4 1/8 6/4 2/4 (half muted)

perc. *sf* *pp* *mf* <-> *p* *pp* *mf* <-> *pp* *p* *mp*

palm cluster

C 4/4 ♩ = 60 7/4 *Toujours mat et rugueux* 3/4 5/4 8/4 5/4 *Presque étouffé Métallique* 4/4 7/4 *Presque étouffé* 2/8 4/4

pian. *pppp* *fff* *ppp* *pppp* *fff*

gliss along the D string with plectrum or fingernail
keyboard side
towards the middle of the string
ibid. *ibid.*

(st. Ped) *st. Ped.* *st. Ped.* *st. Ped.* *st. Ped.* *st. Ped.*

NB: this fermate are "stop signs"

4/4 ♩ = 60 7/4 3/4 5/4 8/4 5/4 4/4 7/4 2/8 4/4

perc. *fff* *pp* *p* *pp* *ppp* *pp* *p* *ppp*

rub the double/triple strings with the palm
rotate
rotate
15

left hand : right hand :

>> move to the "high strings" zone

E

6/4 Feutré, mais électrique
♩ = 60 ↔ 66 (very flexible)

F

7/4

♩ = 66

3/4

pian.

56 *mf* ↔ *pp*

56 *mp* ↔ *pp*

(st. Ped.)

6/4 Frémissant
tremolos : *dolcissimo*, and very dense
♩ = 60 ↔ 66 (very flexible)

7/4

Feutré, mais électrique
♩ = 66
-> left + right hands : ! !

3/4

perc.

15

15

pp *ppp* *sf* *pp* *ppp* *sf* *p*

G

6/4 4/4 2/4 6/4 3/4 5/4 ♩ = 69

mp ↔ *pp*

mp ↔ *pp*

pian.

65

65

sff *sf* *sff* *sf* *sff* *sf* *sff* *sf* *sff*

(st. Ped.)

middle string end

6/4 4/4 2/4 6/4 3/4 5/4 ♩ = 69

>> move back to the "low strings" zone

perc.

65

65

sf

M

3/4 = 80

4/4

2/4

5/4

4/4

6/4

12/4

6/4

12/4

silent forearm cluster

pian.

3/4 = 80

4/4

2/4

5/4

4/4

6/4

12/4

6/4

12/4

perc.

N

3/4 = 120 *Métallique, électrique*

estimated time 7:26

104

pian.

3/4 = 120

perc.