RUDY PERCIVAL

UNCANNY VALLEY

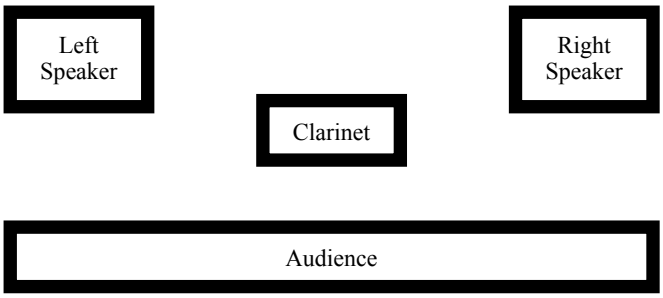
For amplified Clarinet in B♭ and Fixed Electronics

(2021)

Notes

Mixing
The fixed electronics part is in stereo. A WAV file can be downloaded here:
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GF7zEsHzFn1oA4B4pQk1Jtblw2TATJOj/view?usp=sharing]

The solo clarinet should be amplified to match the levelling of the fixed electronics, panned to centre. The fixed electronics should become an extension of the live performing body. Here is a recommended performance layout:



A reasonable amount of reverb is desirable. Depending on the performance venue, some electronically generated reverb may be applied to the amplified solo clarinet to better match the fixed electronics part (which has quite a lot).

Performance Necessities
Playback of the fixed electronics should begin at 00:00 in the score.

A stopwatch should be started at the same time as the playback of the fixed electronics and must be visible to the solo clarinettist throughout performance.

Score and Performance
The solo clarinet part is formed of stemless noteheads, this is to give the performer a higher degree of freedom in rhythmic interpretation.
The performer should begin playing the material in each new bar when the stopwatch reaches its given timecode (located at the top left of each bar). Fermatas are provided on the final note of each bar, providing a pitch to dwell on (if needed) before the timecode of the following bar is reached. These fermatas consist of three approximate lengths, allowing the solo clarinettist to prepare appropriately:

 = Short

 = Medium

 = Long

The solo clarinettist should not resist breathy sounds in softer dynamics.

Accidentals apply to the whole bar.

Duration: *6’13”*

Programme Note

The phrase, “Uncanny Valley” is characterised by the perceived ‘dip’ in emotional response that people have when encountering an entity that is almost, but not quite, human. The most common examples of this phenomena would be a human-like robot, or perhaps a prosthetic limb. The focus of this piece is to explore the relationships between human music production, and mechanical, and push them to a place that might sit somewhere inside of the “Uncanny Valley.”

Collaborating with clarinettist Heather Roche, she and I undertook a remote recording session where I asked her to play and sing a number of different pitches using various techniques (and to record her breathing). I then isolated these gestures and electronically sampled them, creating an ensemble of ‘Heather Sampler Instruments.’

The piece itself is intended to sound slightly unsettling. It is formed entirely of sounds produced by Heather, featuring a live performance part for her, and a fixed electronic part (made from manipulated ‘Heather’ sounds). Both parts begin somewhat unified, then gradually diverge, becoming more and more chaotic. An apex is reached, after which the music settles into a final, rather alien texture, as though it has arrived on the other side of the valley…

This entire project was rehearsed and recorded over Zoom, and Heather and I are yet to meet in-person.

A music video is also available to watch here: https://youtu.be/inzDmJmIMnw

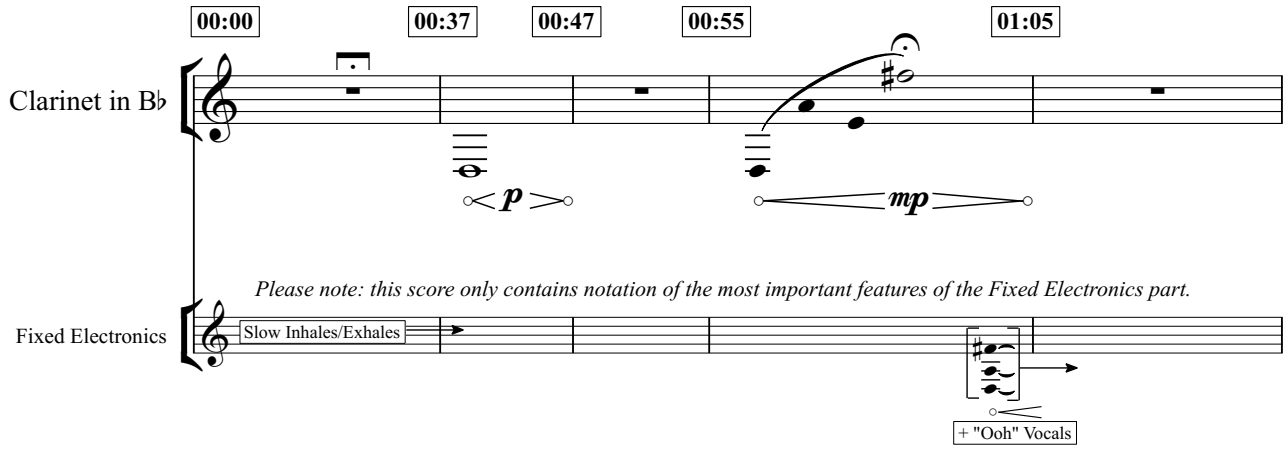
REHEARSAL SCORE IN C

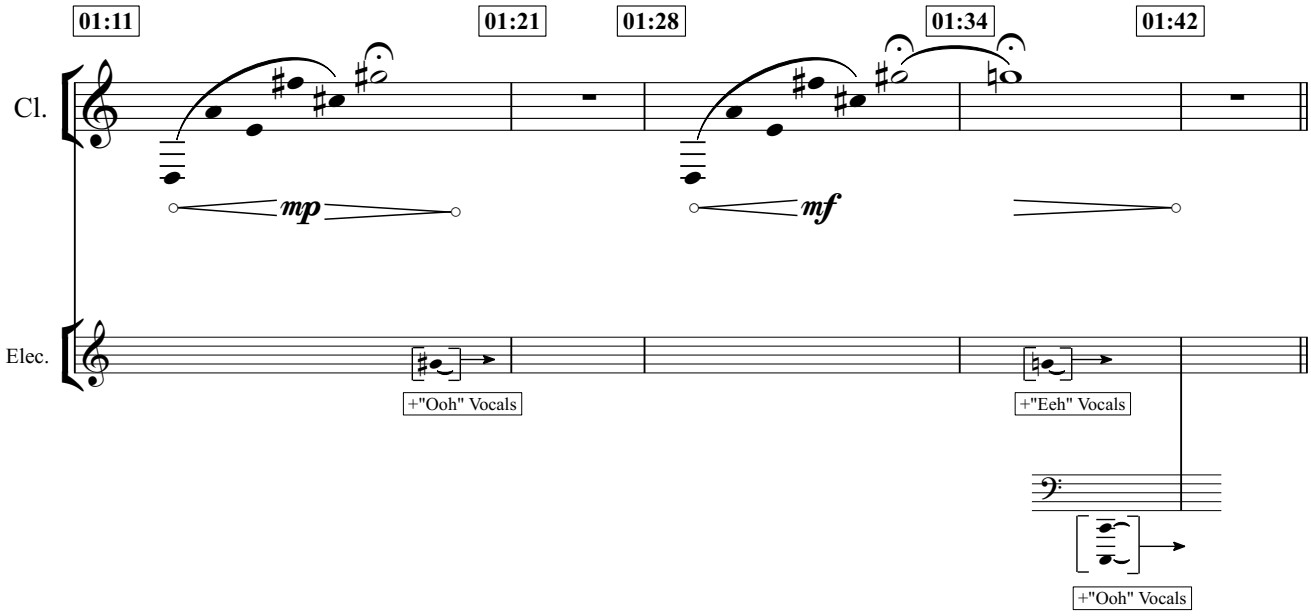
UNCANNY VALLEY

For amplified Clarinet in B♭ and Fixed Electronics

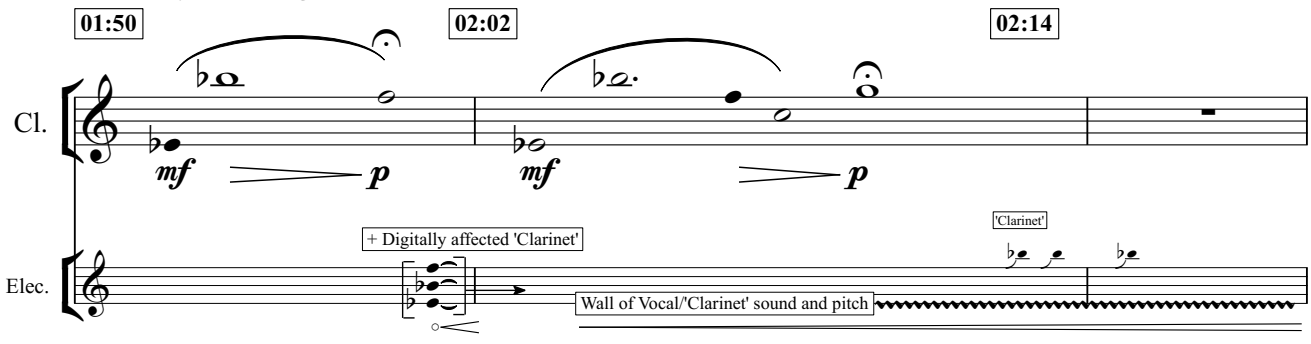
RUDY PERCIVAL

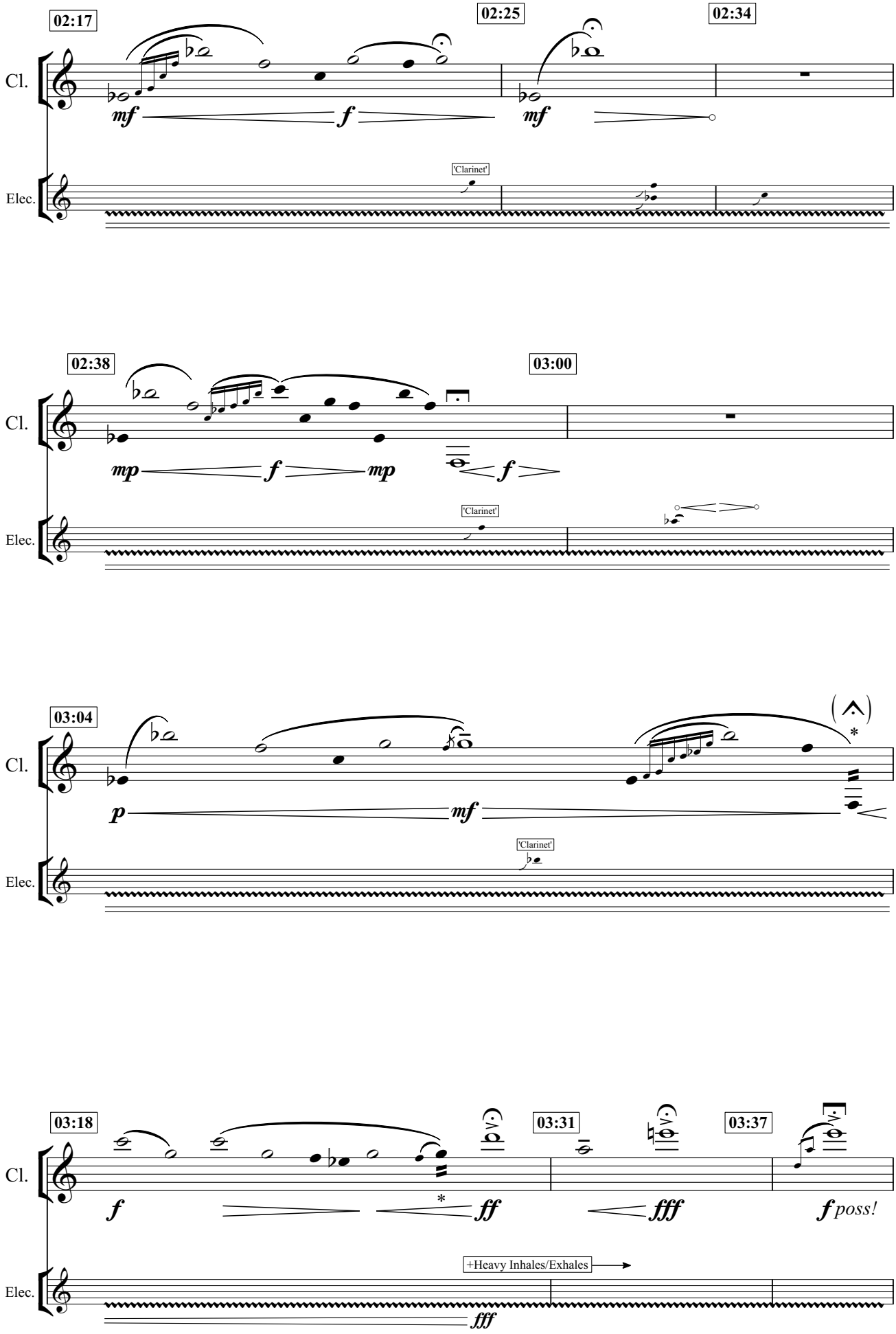
Tranquil, slow always



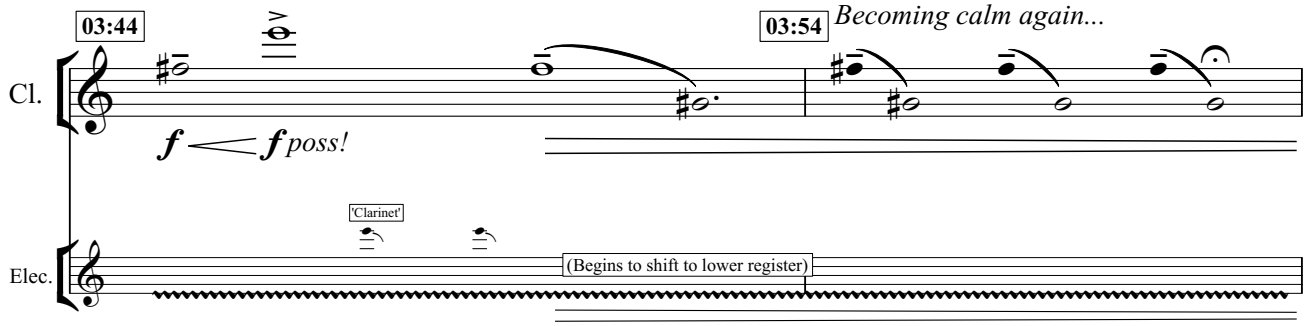


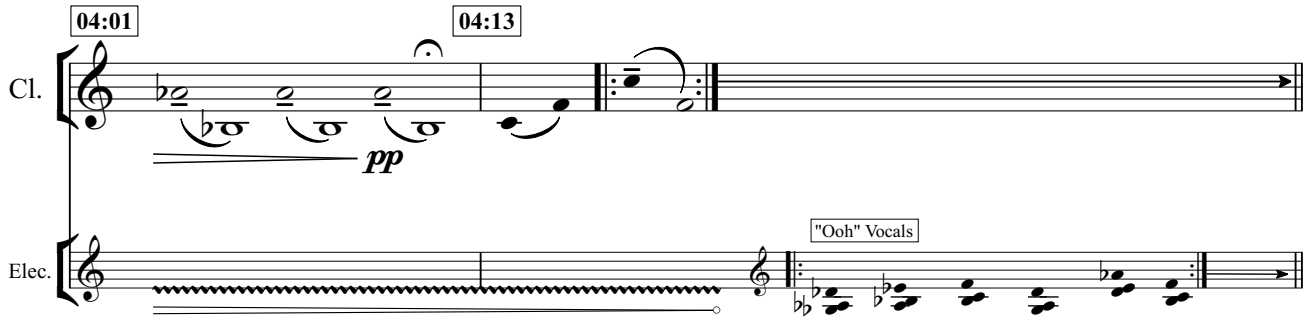
Gradually becoming more violent...

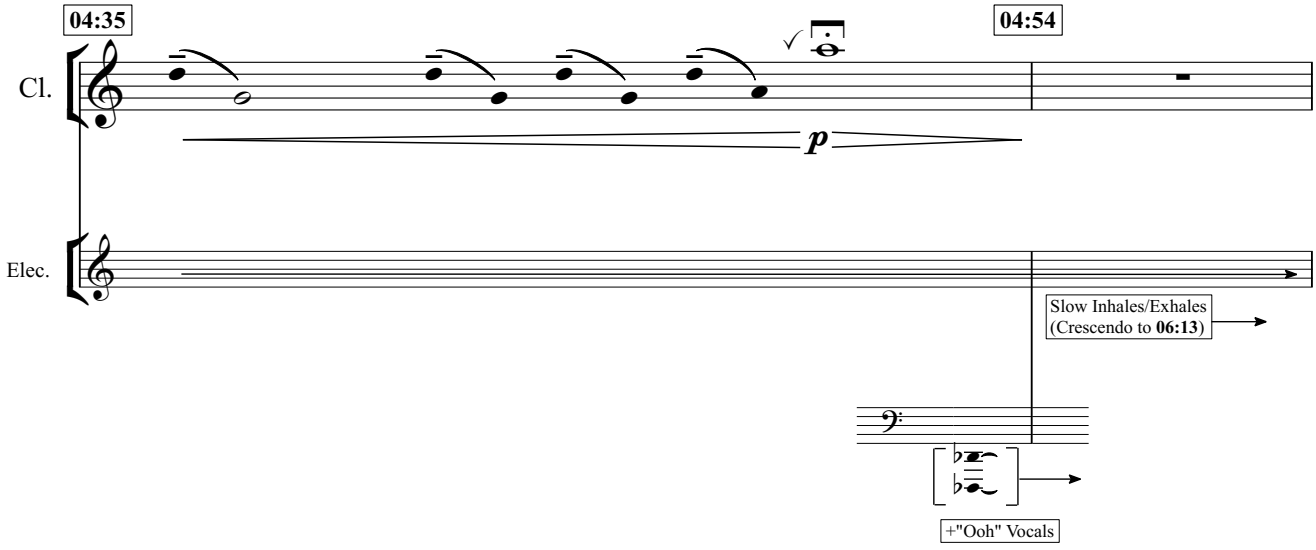


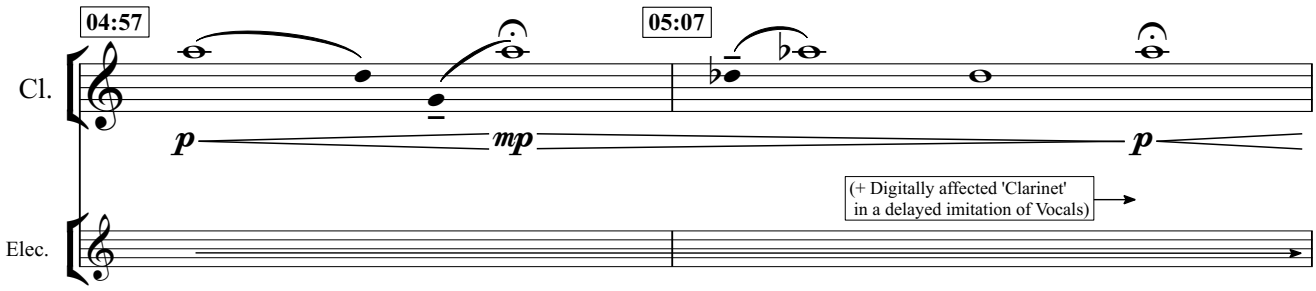


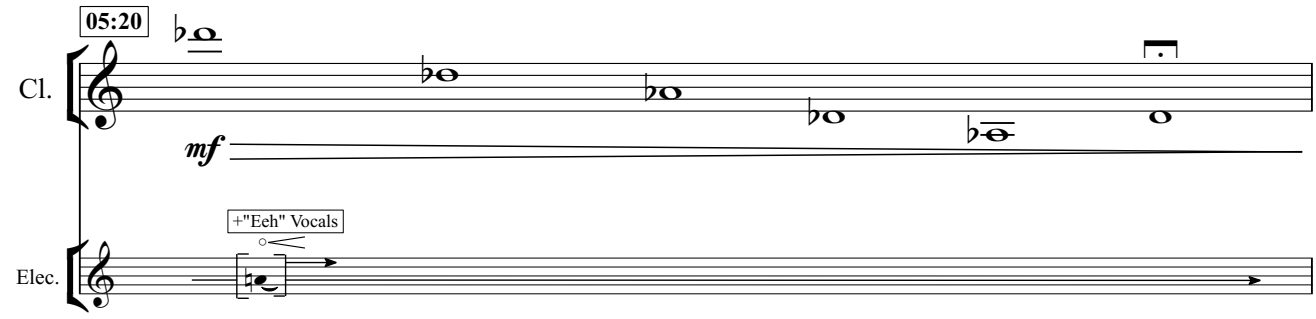
* = Find a way to make these notes as aggressive as possible! (i.e. overblowing or singing through the clarinet).

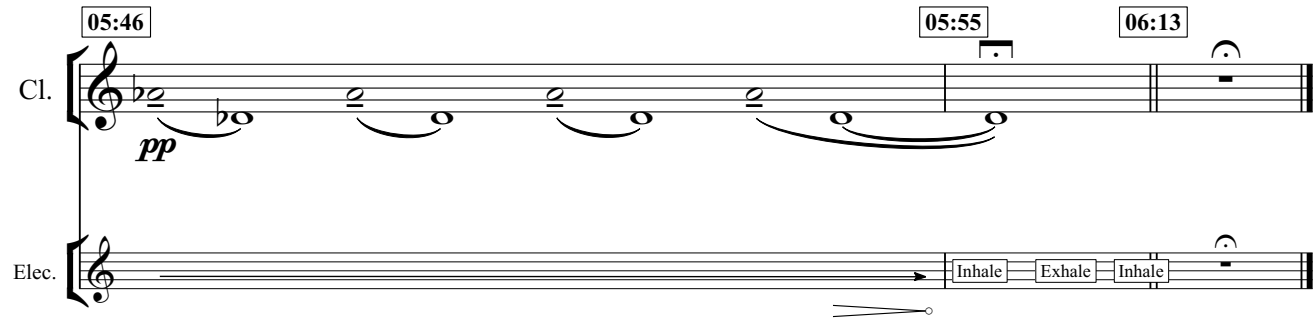

03:44
03:54
Becoming calm again...
Cl.
f
f poss!
'Clarinet'
Elec.
(Begins to shift to lower register)


04:01
04:13
Cl.
pp
"Ooh" Vocals
Elec.


04:35
04:54
Cl.
p
Elec.
Slow Inhales/Exhales
(Crescendo to 06:13)
+"Ooh" Vocals


04:57
05:07
Cl.
p
mp
p
(+ Digitally affected 'Clarinet'
in a delayed imitation of Vocals)
Elec.


05:20
Cl.
mf
+"Eeh" Vocals
Elec.


05:46
05:55
06:13
Cl.
pp
Elec.
Inhale
Exhale
Inhale