Mesa a 3

for female voice, clarinet in B-flat, violin, electronics
and a prepared cooking pot

Sara Cubarsi
2025

Optional program note

A text generated by AI is sung in Latin and features an invented prayer before a meal and a benediction of the table, as well as an invitation to enjoy the delicious feast. This is set on stage in an almost theatrical way, with the singer having a prepared cooking pot on a table. Through the singer's performance there is a play between the vulgar and the sacred, and only inadvertently touching on the blasphemous - as the verb "coeo" ("coimus" in the lyrics) can also have sexual connotations.
I am interested in finding a path into new melodies in extended just intonation, but which also accommodates speed and drama in the music. The music is developed from three precisely tuned tones, evolving to a larger net of pitch relationships, with first simple lines that the instruments pass on to each other, echoing plainchant, later becoming ornamented and transgressed. The musical tension in this piece resides in the fact that one musical aspect - tuning - requires maximum clarity, attention and time, while the other theatrical elements represent a threat to the focus of tuning.

Performance notes

Tuning

- The whole piece is notated using the Helmholtz Ellis JI notation https://masa.plainsound.org/pdfs/notation.pdf

Scenography

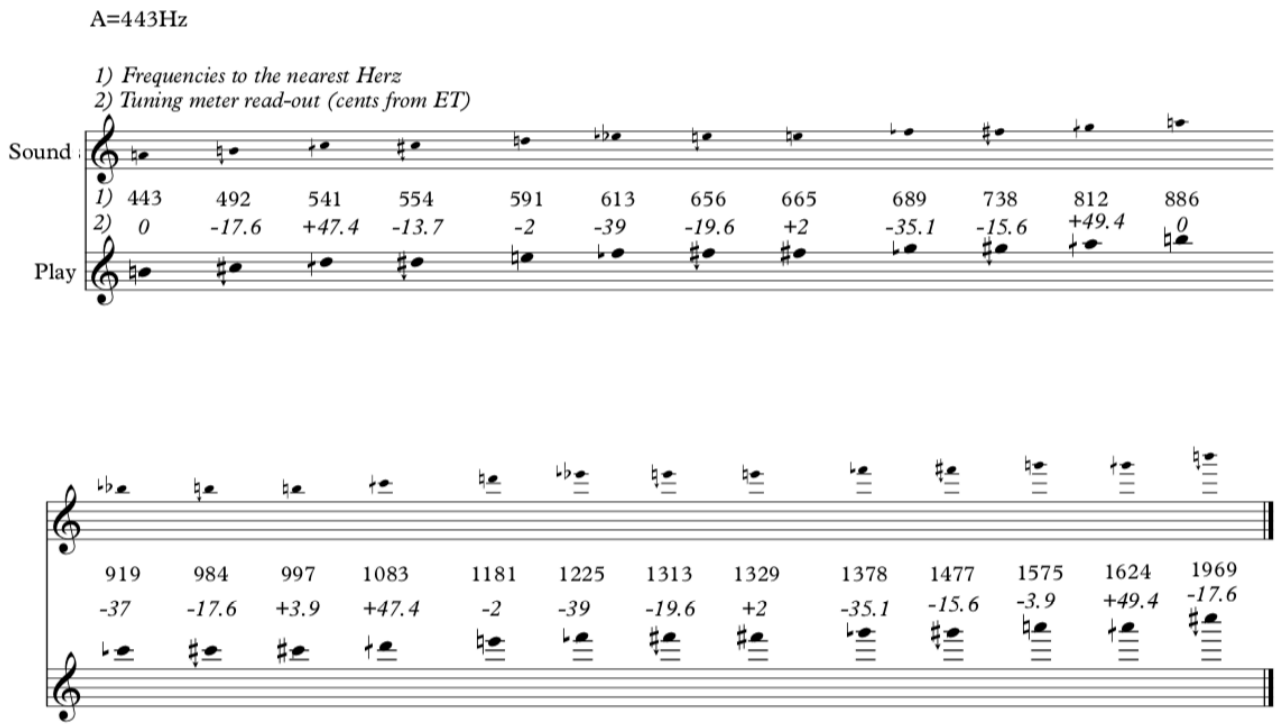
- The violinist stands on the left (from the audience), the singer in the center, and the clarinetist on the right.
- The singer in the middle has a table with a red table-cloth, where a large cooking pot (a normal soup pot) is placed.
- There should be some lighting from behind to accentuate the profile of the smoke that will come out from the cooking pot.
- The lighting in general can be quite dim, in a chiaroscuro style.
- All performers should wear black.

Voice

- "**Dal niente**" hairpins always imply: to/from *as quiet as possible.*
- The pitch **range** is wide: find a timbre/technique that suits each range.
- The **tuning** will almost always be obvious from context, pay attention to who has reference pitches.
- **Overtone singing**: diamond note heads indicate overtone singing. Play with different vowels (as suggestions on the score), bringing the tongue from back to front, etc. Watch Anna Maria Hefele's Youtube Channel for an introduction: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vC9Qh709gas
- Notated **boxes** indicate that this moment includes opening and/or closing the pot.

Clarinet in B-flat

- **Ossia**: 2nd Line - Page 4, in case it is too high, apply ossia.
- **Box** indicates that this will take a longer time, repeat *ad libitum*.
- The clarinet plays the following **tones**. The first row of numbers are the frequency Herz, and the second row the cent deviation from equal temperament. Sound files available from the composer.



Violin

- Scordatura: The E-string is tuned to the seventh of G, a low F. The other strings remain tuned in perfect fifths.
- Where indicated, the violinist triggers the electronics with a pedal.
- **Box** indicates that this will take a longer time, repeat *ad libitum*.

Electronics

- There are 8 sound files which are triggered by the violinist as exactly indicated.
- The pitches of these eight tracks are written in the score. The timing is within flexible.
- When the pot opens, the electronics will be heard by the audience.

Pot

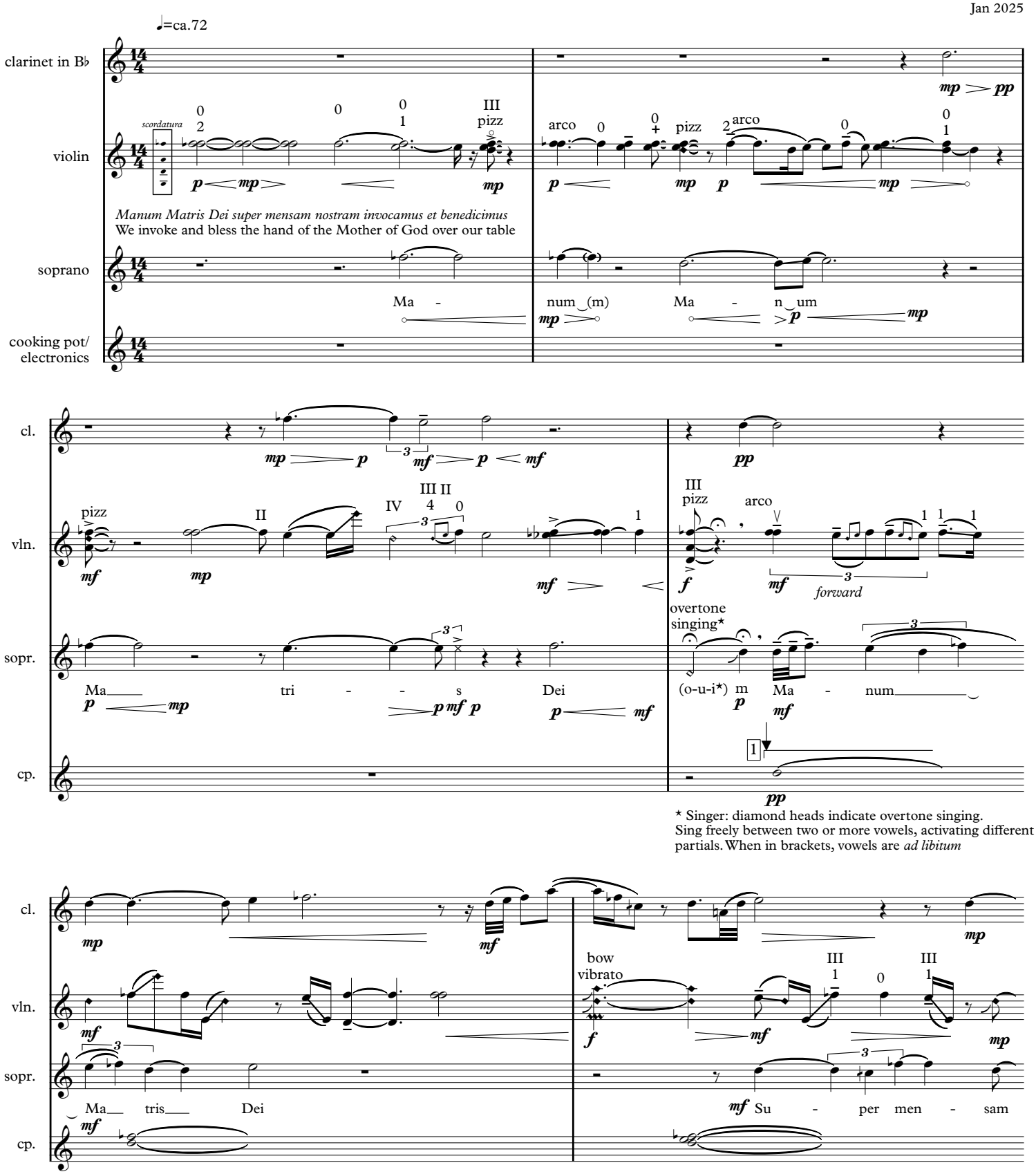
- The pot contains a **bowl with dry ice** and water and a **bluetooth speaker** - water makes dry ice evaporate (please be careful - inform yourself before buying dry ice, it needs to be handled with special gloves or a tool).
- The **bluetooth speaker** plays the files on **QLab** which are triggered by the violinist
- The pot has a **pot-cover** which fits. The singer will be opening and closing the cover as indicated.

Sounding pitch score

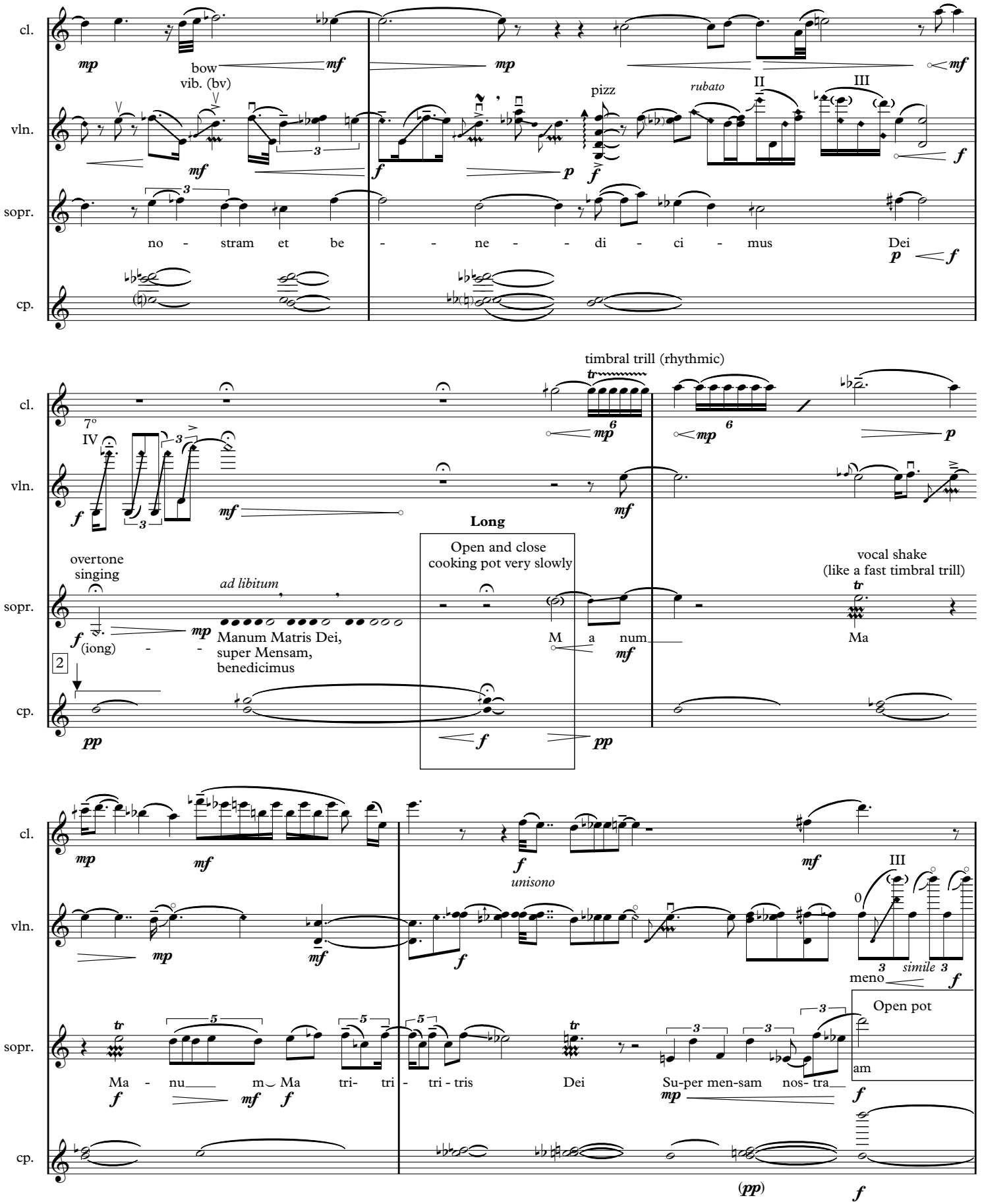
Mesa a 3

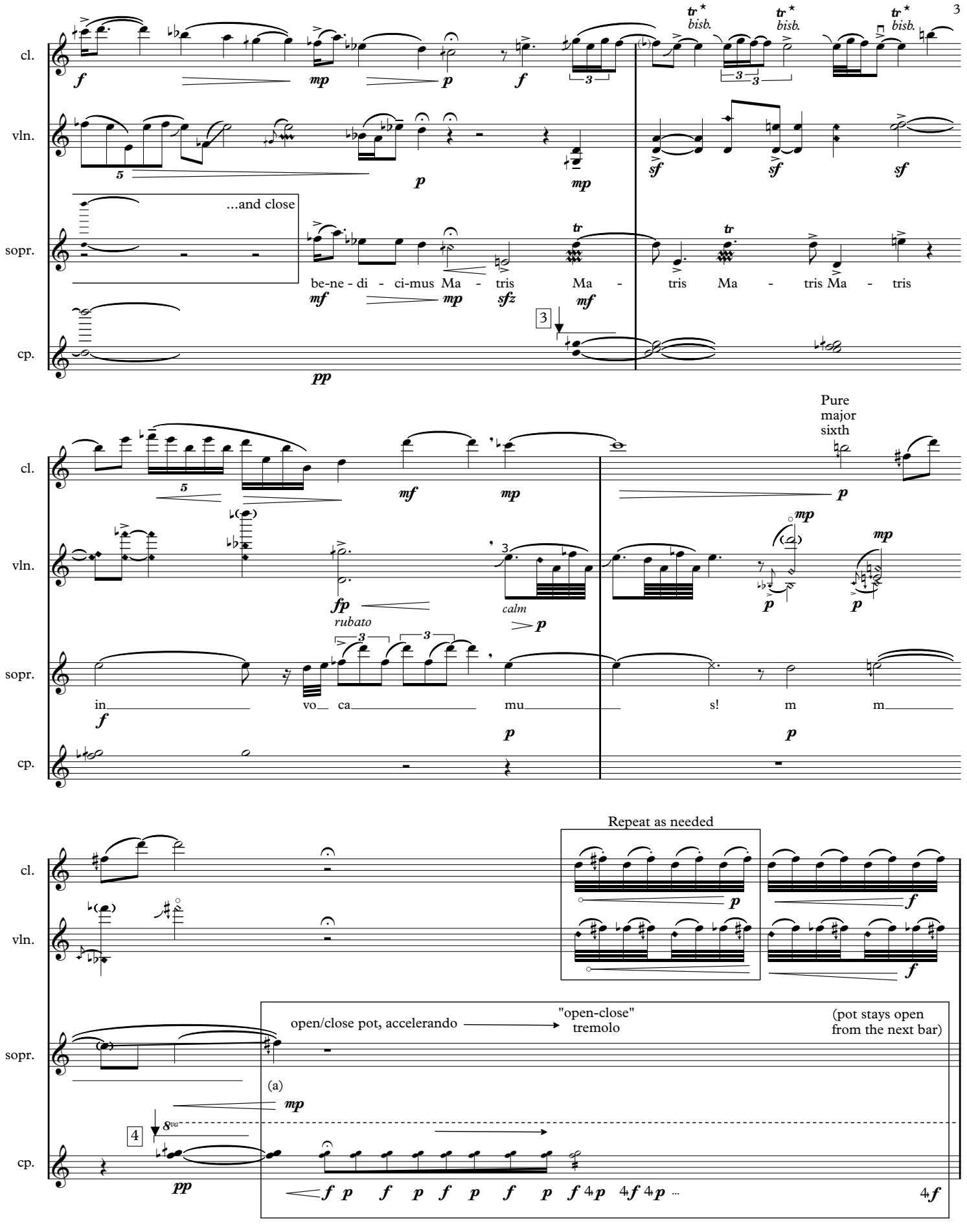
for female singer, clarinet in B-flat, violin, electronics and a prepared cooking pot

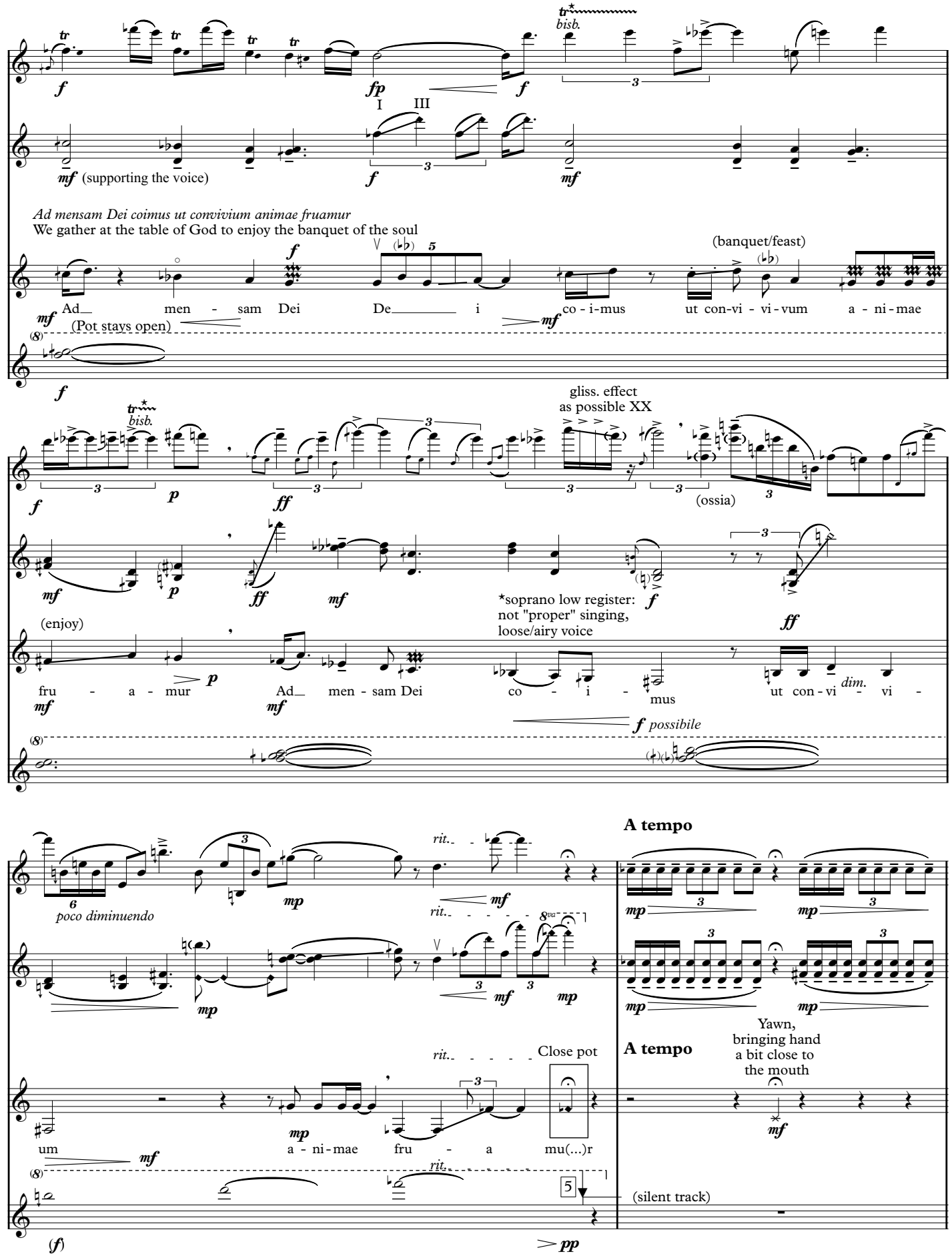
Sara Cubarsi
Jan 2025

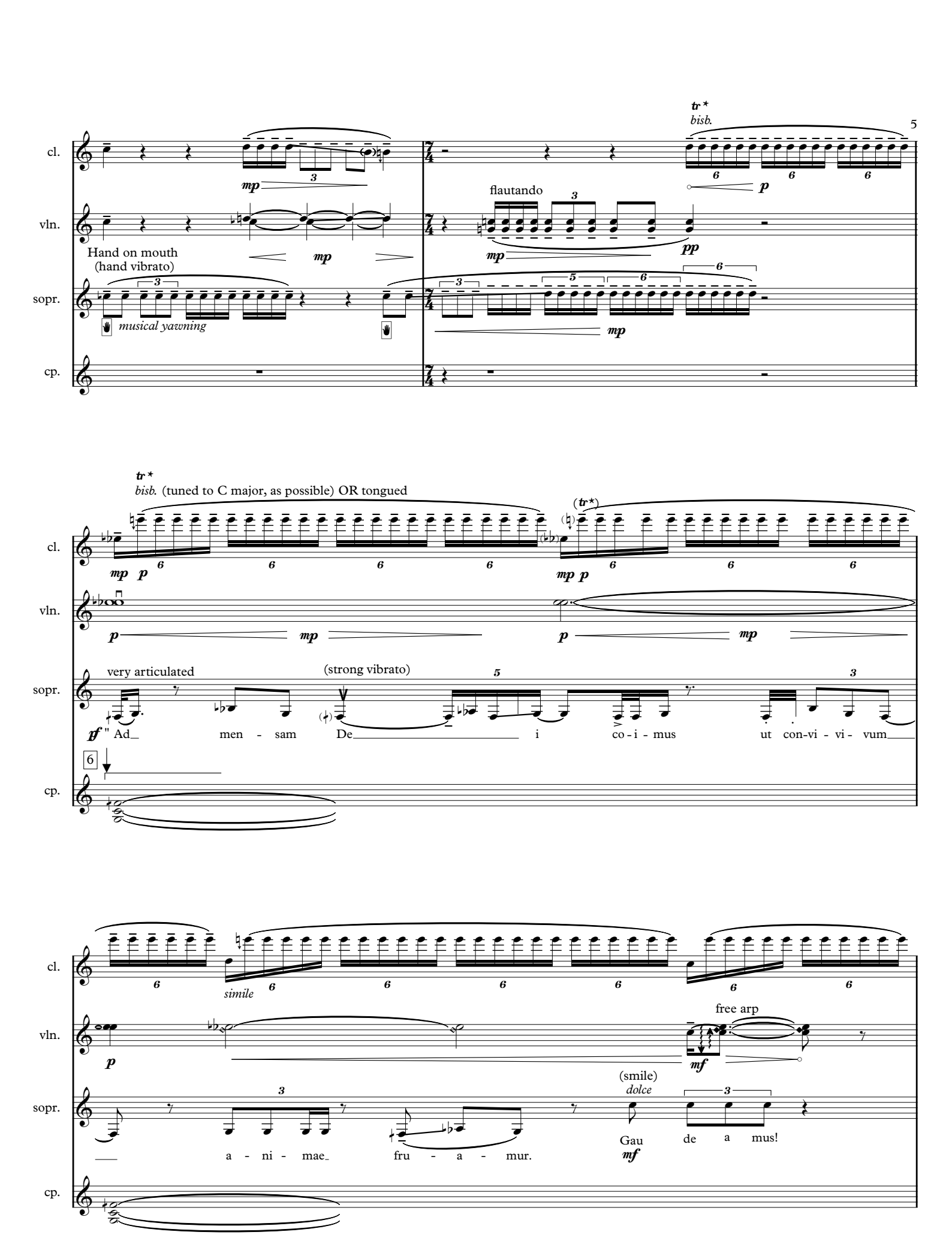


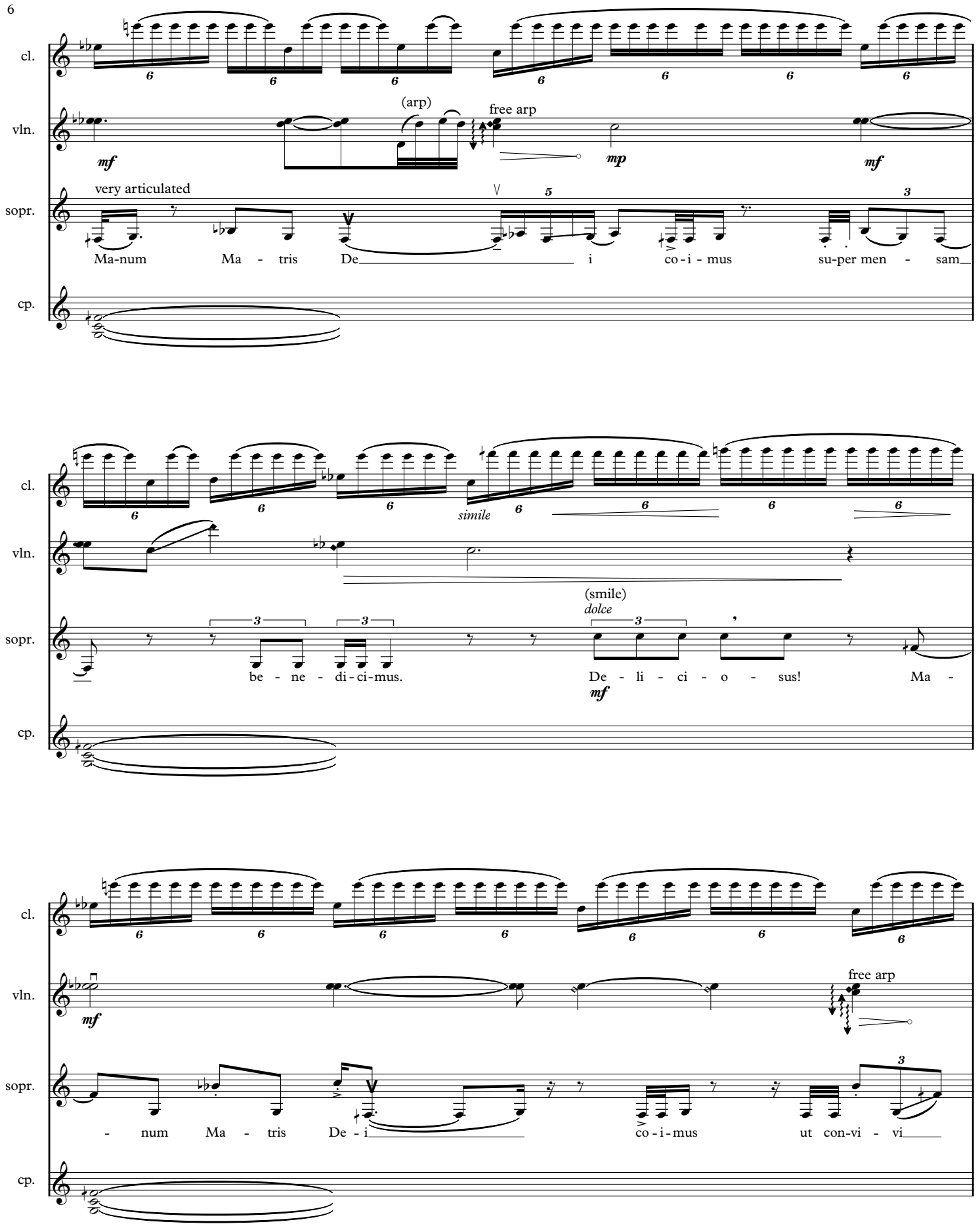
* Singer: diamond heads indicate overtone singing.
Sing freely between two or more vowels, activating different partials. When in brackets, vowels are *ad libitum*

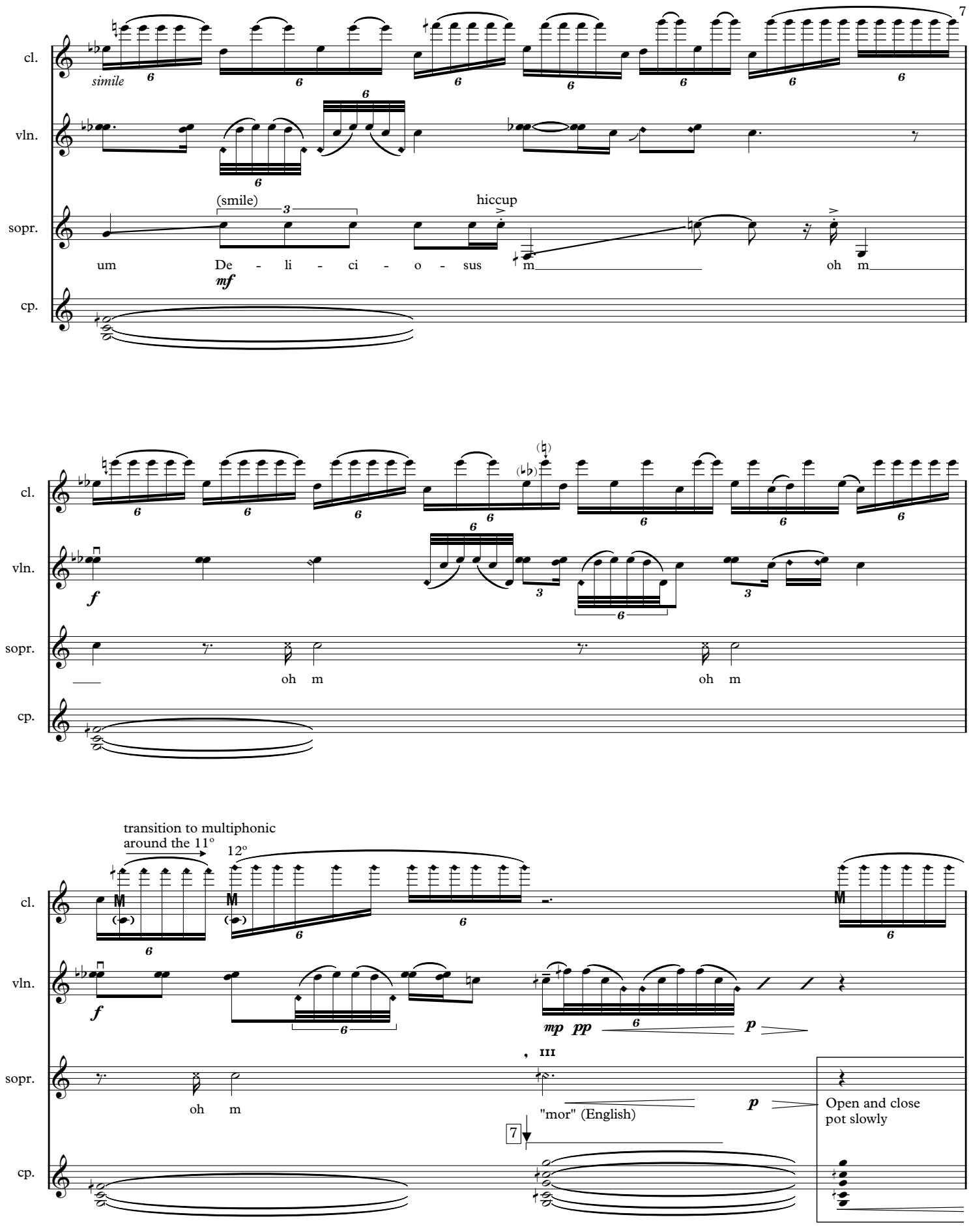

cl.
vln.
sopr.
cp.
mp
bow
mf
vib. (bv)
pizz
rubato
II
III
f
p
no - stram et be - - ne - - di - ci - mus
Dei
timbral trill (rhythmic)
7°
IV
overtone singing
(iong)
ad libitum
Manum Matris Dei, super Mensam, benedicimus
Long
Open and close cooking pot very slowly
M a num
vocal shake (like a fast timbral trill)
Ma
2
pp
unisono
meno
simile
Open pot
am
Ma - nu m Ma tri- tri - tri - tris Dei Su-per men-sam nos- tra
(pp)

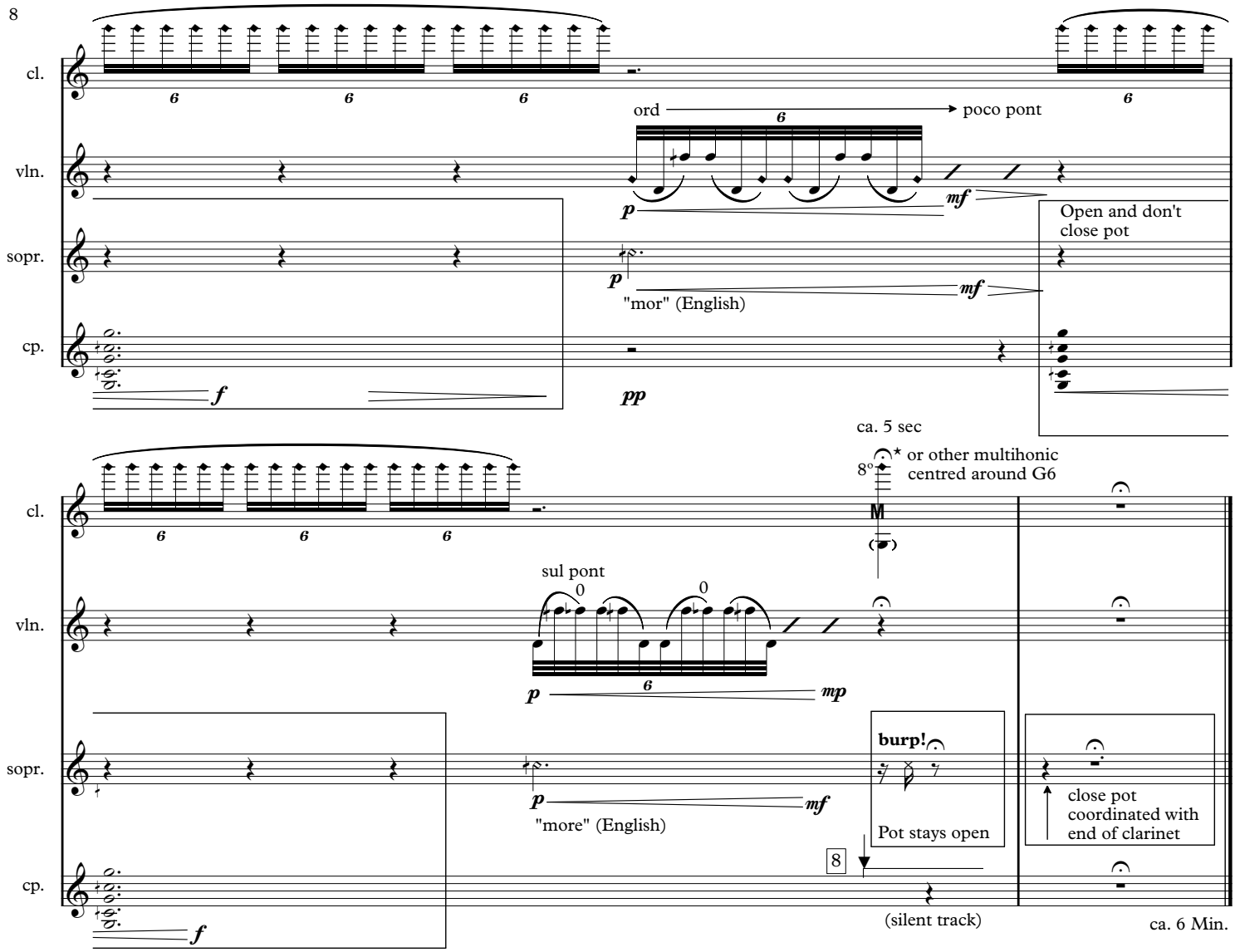

cl.
vln.
sopr.
cp.
...and close
be-ne - di - ci-mus Ma - tris Ma - tris Ma - tris Ma - tris
bisb.
Pure major sixth
in vo ca mu s! m m
rubato
calm
Repeat as needed
open/close pot, accelerando
"open-close" tremolo
(pot stays open from the next bar)
(a)
8va


cl.
vln.
sopr.
cp.
bisb.
I III
(supporting the voice)
Ad mensam Dei coimus ut convivium animae fruamur
We gather at the table of God to enjoy the banquet of the soul
(banquet/feast)
Ad men - sam Dei De i co - i-mus ut con-vi - vi-vum a - ni-mae
(Pot stays open)
gliss. effect
as possible XX
(ossia)
(enjoy)
fru - a - mur Ad men - sam Dei co - i - mus ut con-vi - vi -
*soprano low register:
not "proper" singing,
loose/airy voice
dim.
possibile
poco diminuendo
rit.
8va
A tempo
Yawn,
bringing hand
a bit close to
the mouth
Close pot
um a - ni-mae fru - a mu(...)r
(silent track)


5
tr*
bisb.
cl.
vln.
sopr.
cp.
mp
3
flautando
pp
Hand on mouth
(hand vibrato)
musical yawning
6
5
tr*
bisb. (tuned to C major, as possible) OR tongued
(tr*)
p
very articulated
(strong vibrato)
ff
" Ad_ men - sam De_ i co - i - mus ut con-vi - vi - vum_
simile
free arp
(smile)
dolce
Gau
de a mus!
a - ni - mae_ fru - a - mur.


cl.
vln.
sopr.
cp.
(arp)
free arp
very articulated
mf
mp
mf
Ma-num Ma - tris De i co - i - mus su-per men - sam
simile
(smile)
dolce
be - ne - di - ci-mus.
De - li - ci - o - sus!
Ma -
- num Ma - tris De - i
co - i - mus
ut con-vi - vi


7
cl.
vln.
sopr.
cp.
simile
(smile)
hiccup
um De - li - ci - o - sus m oh m
mf
f
oh m
oh m
transition to multiphonic
around the 11°
12°
mp pp
p
oh m
"mor" (English)
Open and close
pot slowly


8
cl.
vln.
sopr.
cp.
ord
poco pont
p
mf
Open and don't close pot
"mor" (English)
f
pp
ca. 5 sec
8°
or other multihonic centred around G6
M
sul pont
0
0
mp
"more" (English)
burp!
Pot stays open
close pot coordinated with end of clarinet
8
(silent track)
ca. 6 Min.