Gestaltzerfall

(2025)

Max Chung

For C trumpet, piano, percussion, and live electronics

Full Score

PIECE TITLE: Gestaltzerfall

DURATION: ca. 6’

INSTRUMENTATION: C trumpet, piano, and percussion

PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS: Drum set: kick drum, snare drum, mounted tom-toms (2), hi-hat, crash cymbal

MALLETS: sticks, brushes

PROGRAM NOTES: “Gestaltzerfall” refers to a psychological phenomenon where a complex shape or pattern is observed for a long time, and in that time, the brain begins to break the image into simpler sections. This fragmentation leads to unfamiliarity with the object. In the same way, this piece takes a melody and focuses on tiny sections to repeat and modify, stretching these moments out through improvisatory sections. Rhythmically, the work switches between locking the instruments in a strict grid and decaying into a nebulous cloud of sound, using the motifs from before and developing them.

The piece explores the idea of desperately trying to hold the future within my control, as a familiar situation becomes increasingly confusing. The government in which this country has been put under is now completely alien as it feels like anyone who meant to represent me has disappeared. The instability of trying to cobble together aspects of the old structure is represented in the work with the constant back and forth of the piece, finally flatlining in a single note before cutting off.

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

The piece explores the idea of the contrast between rhythmically sharp and very free phrases, using the same notes but focusing on the effect of the groove. Over time, these differences grow, and the "gestaltzerfall" described in the program notes begins to take over. These short 2-5 note patterns for each instruments alternate with a strict 2/4 groove. Terms like "robotic" are invoked in order to give a sense of emotionless repetitiveness in the sections hammering the same notes over and over.

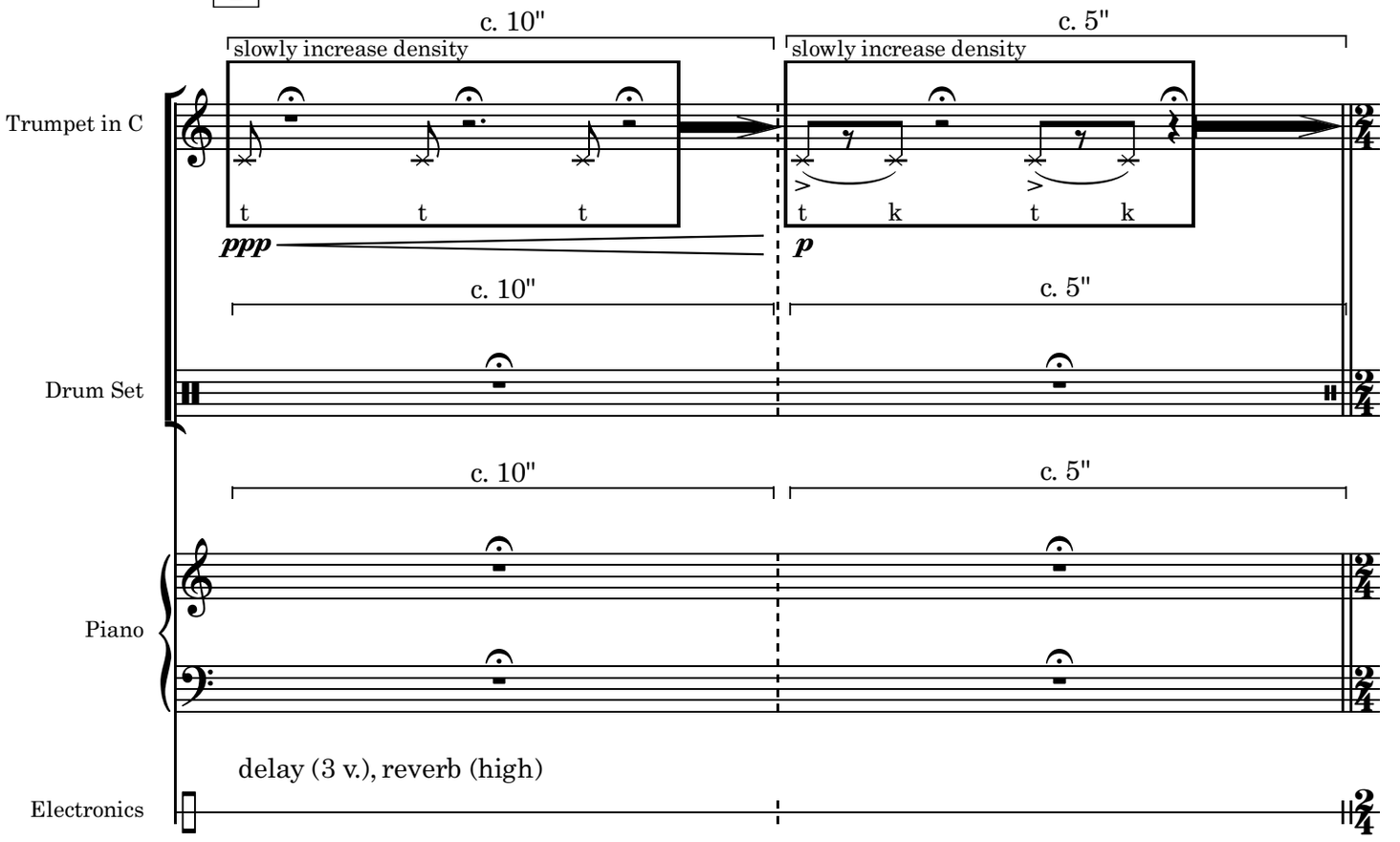
In the improvisatory sections, the players should start on the beats but slowly drift away from the beat over time, and then come back together. The ideal situation would be to make it as smooth as possible in between these two very different sound worlds.

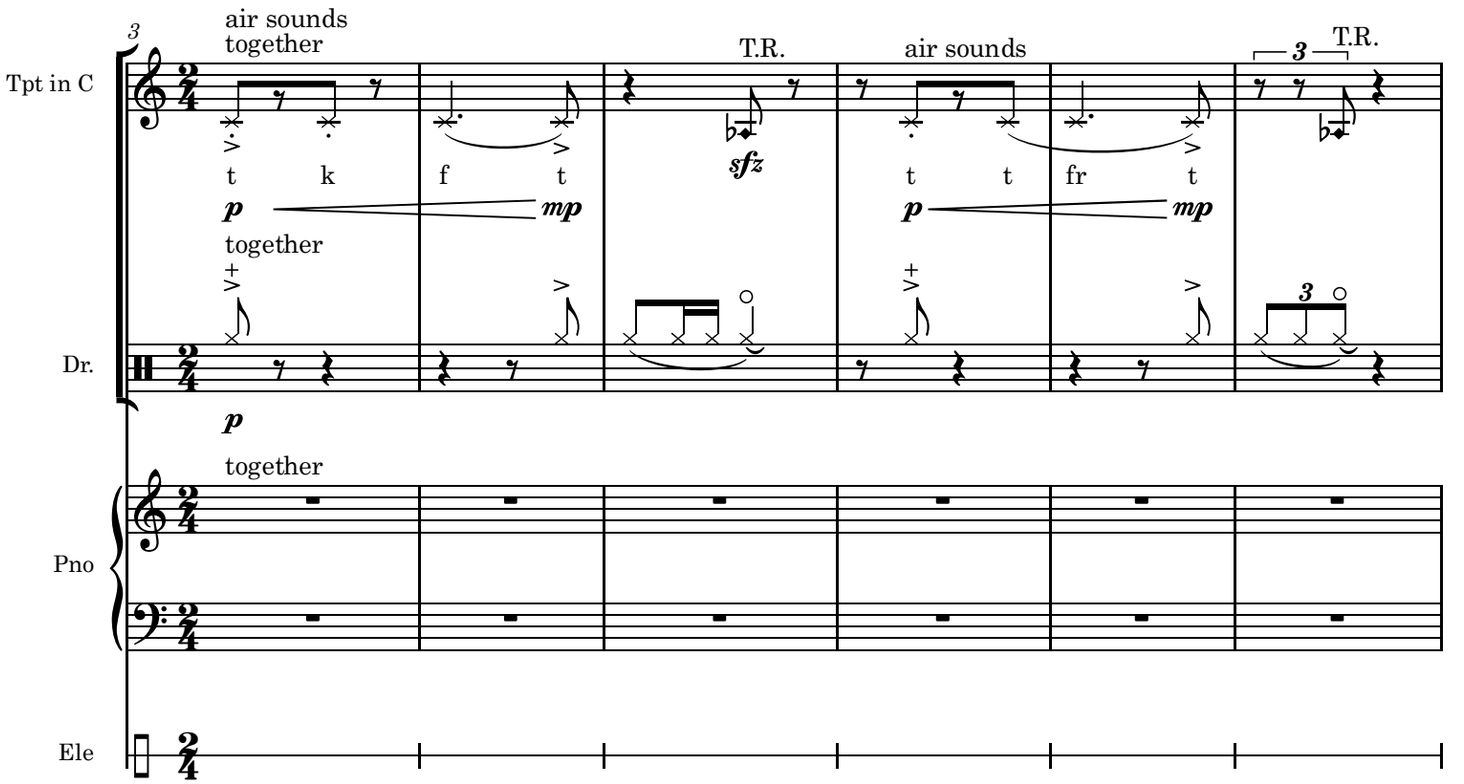
Gestaltzerfall

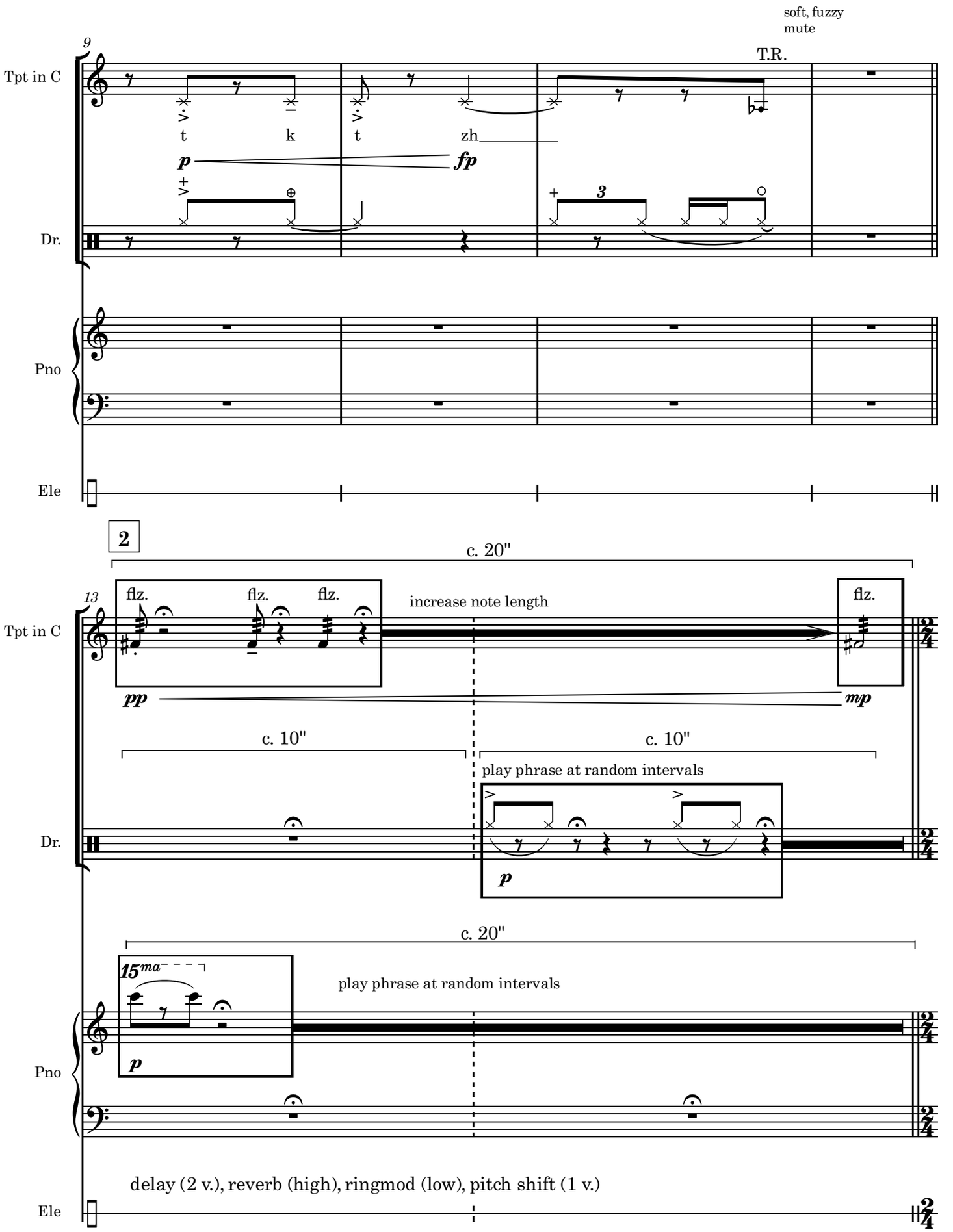
Ethereal, Floating ♩ = 156

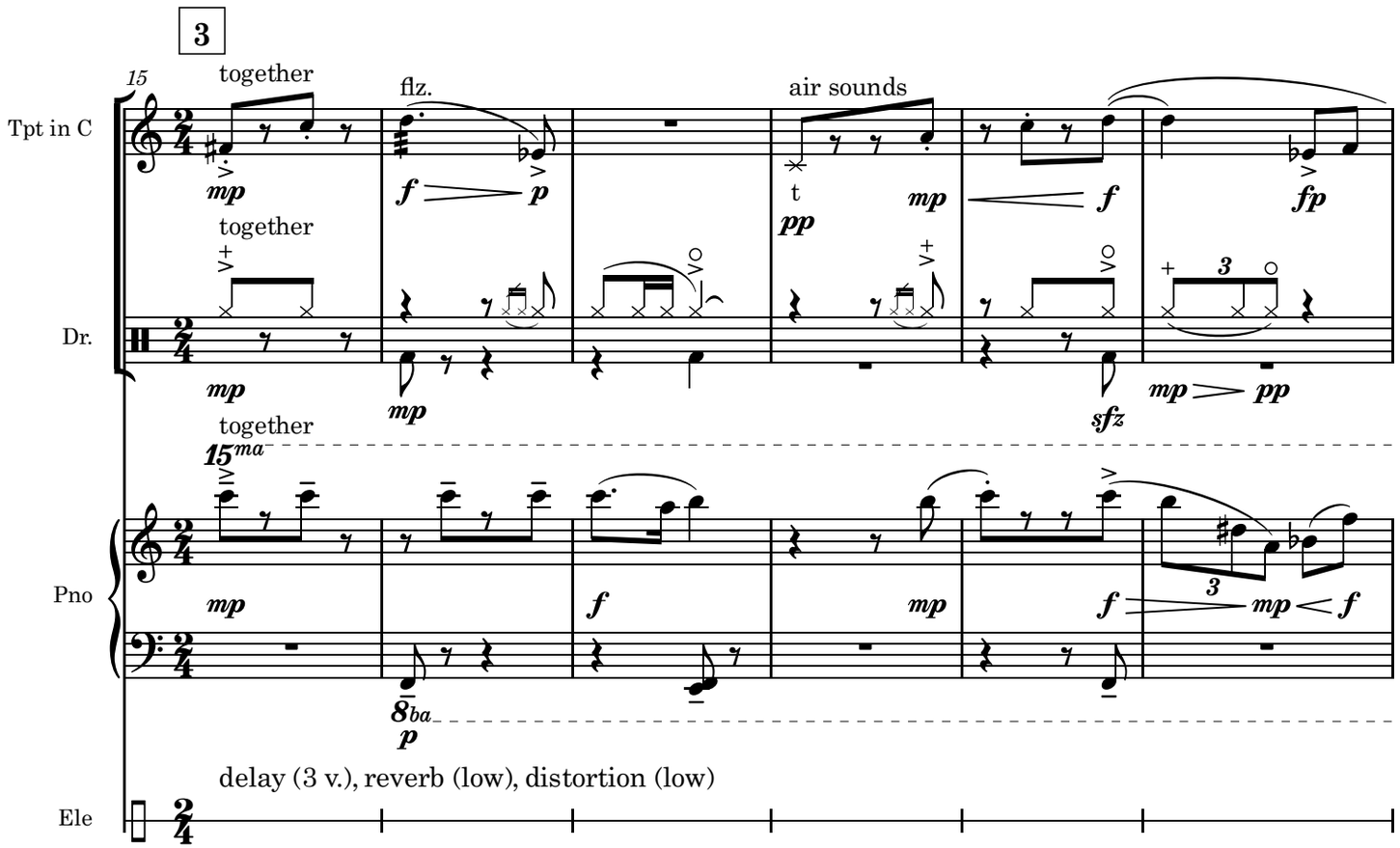
1

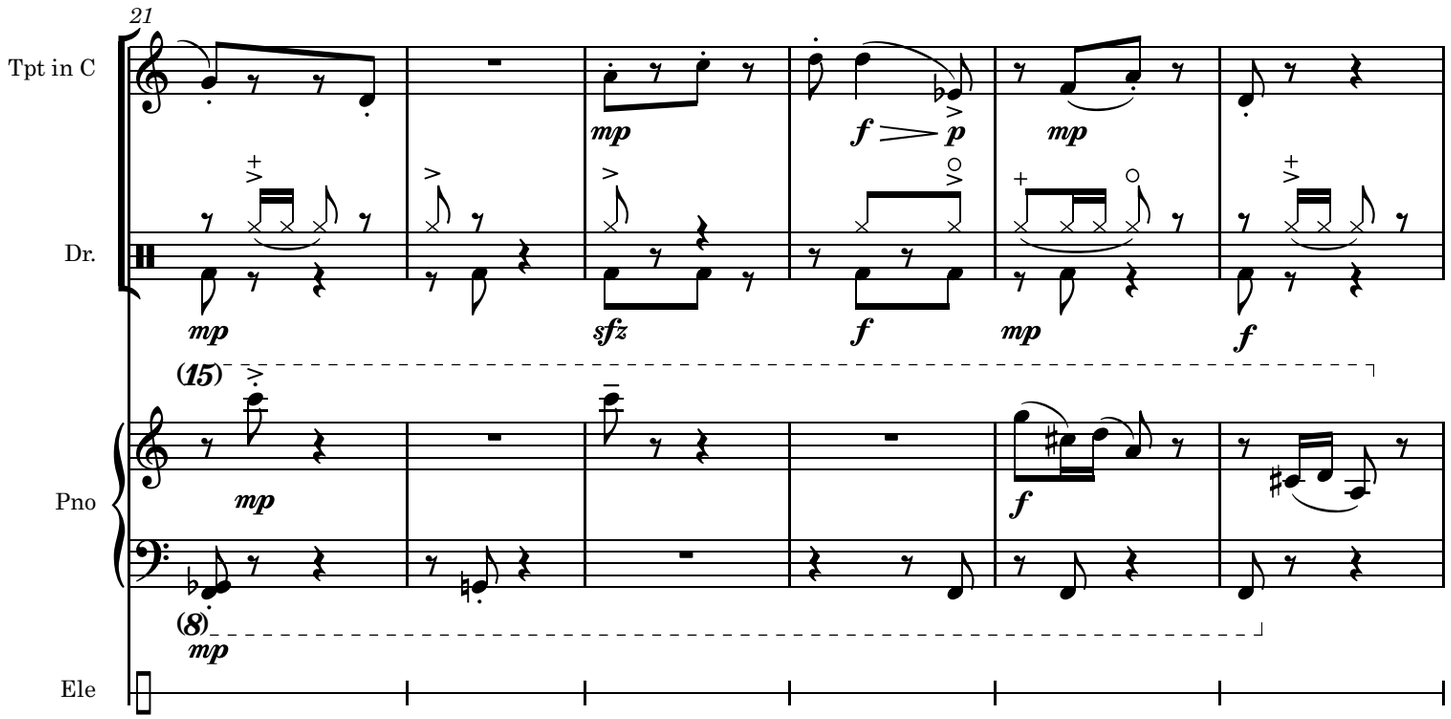
Max Chung

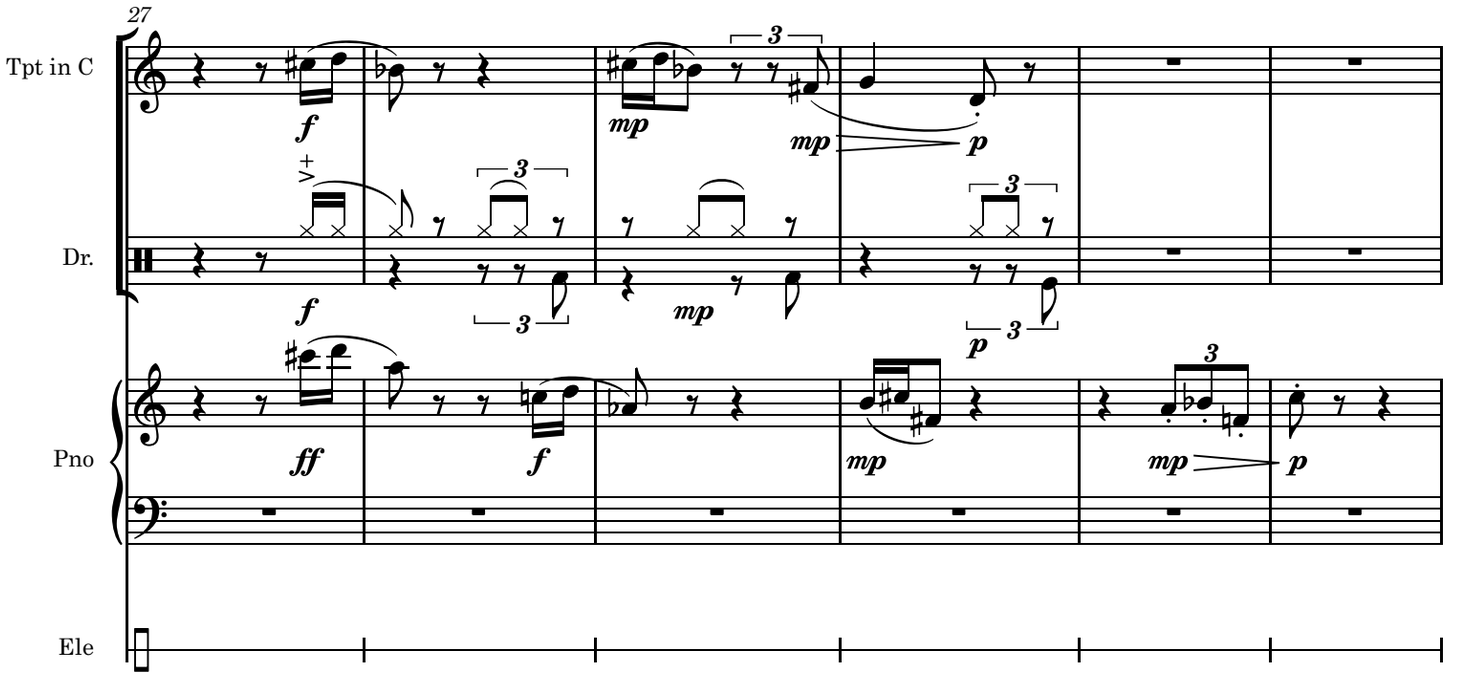


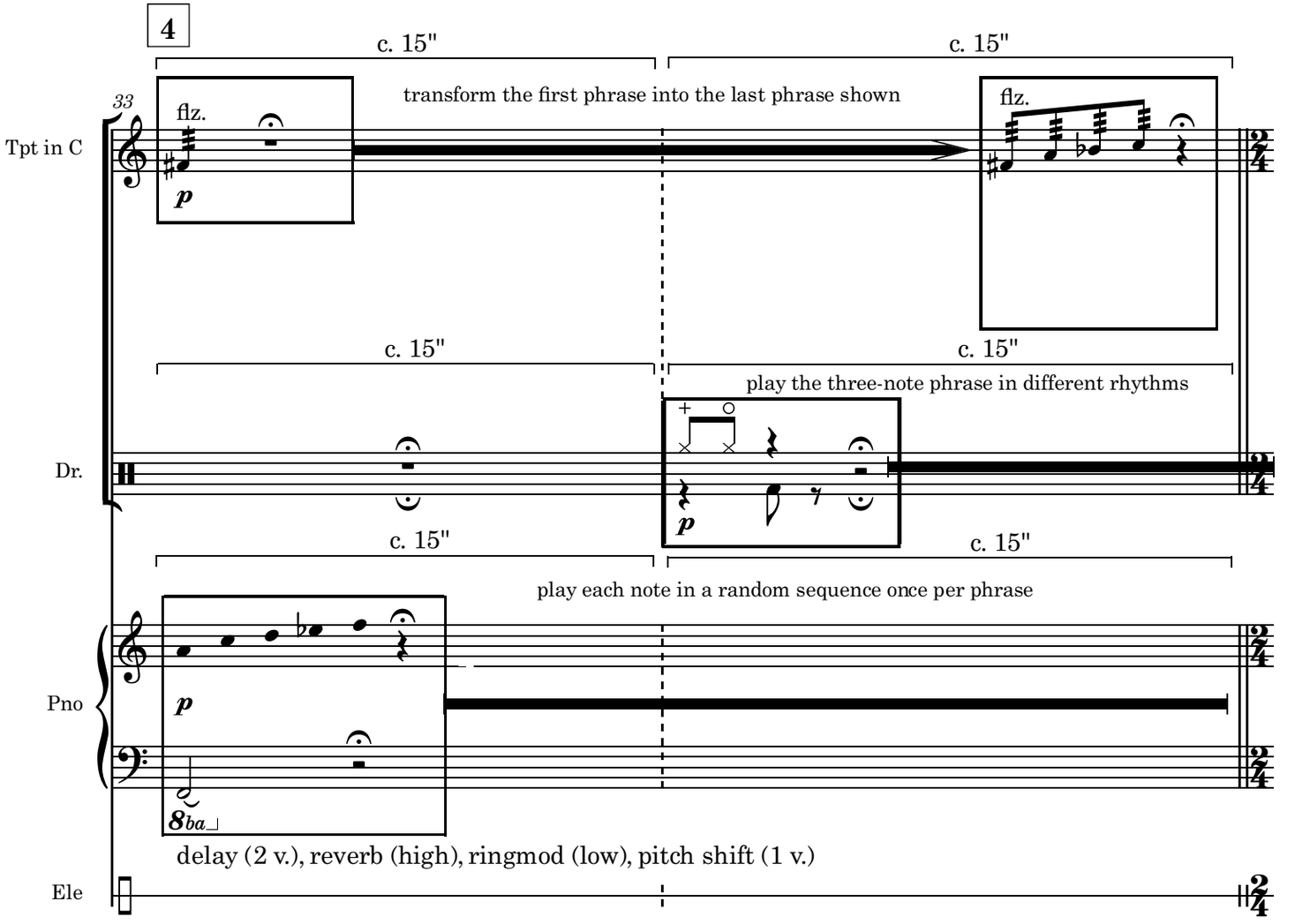



soft, fuzzy
mute
9
T.R.
Tpt in C
t
k
t
zh
p
fp
3
Dr.
Pno
Ele
2
c. 20"
13
flz.
flz.
flz.
increase note length
flz.
pp
mp
c. 10"
c. 10"
play phrase at random intervals
p
c. 20"
15ma
play phrase at random intervals
p
delay (2 v.), reverb (high), ringmod (low), pitch shift (1 v.)

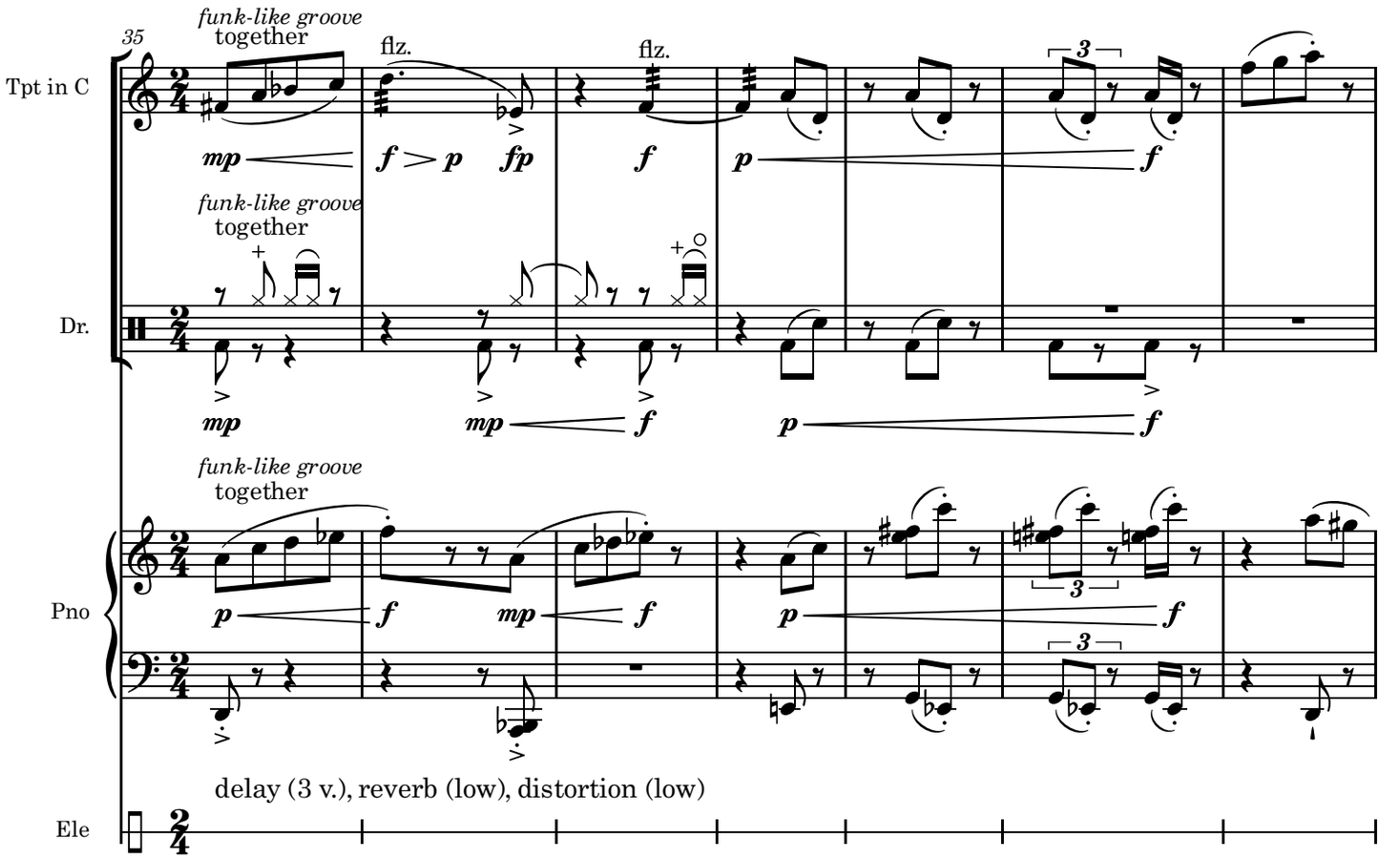

3
15
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
together
flz.
air sounds
together
together
15ma
8ba
delay (3 v.), reverb (low), distortion (low)

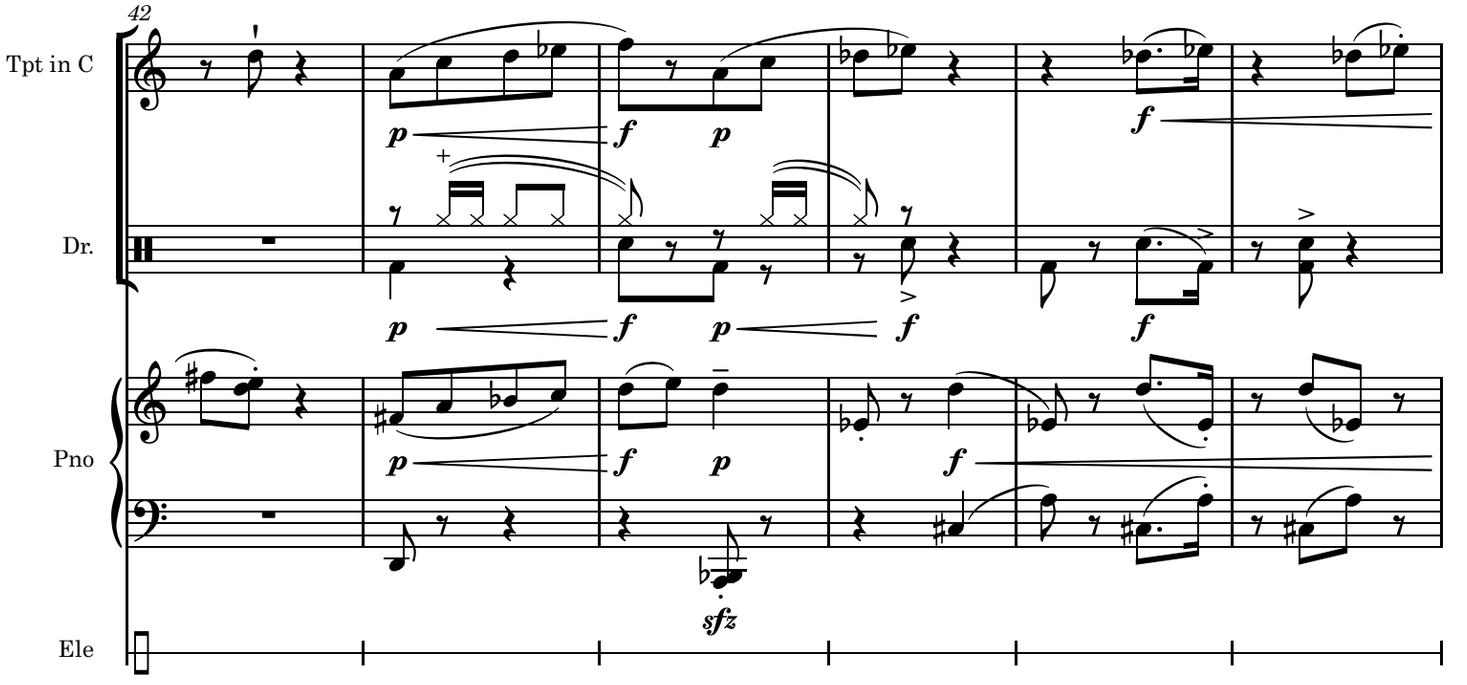

21
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
(15)
(8)

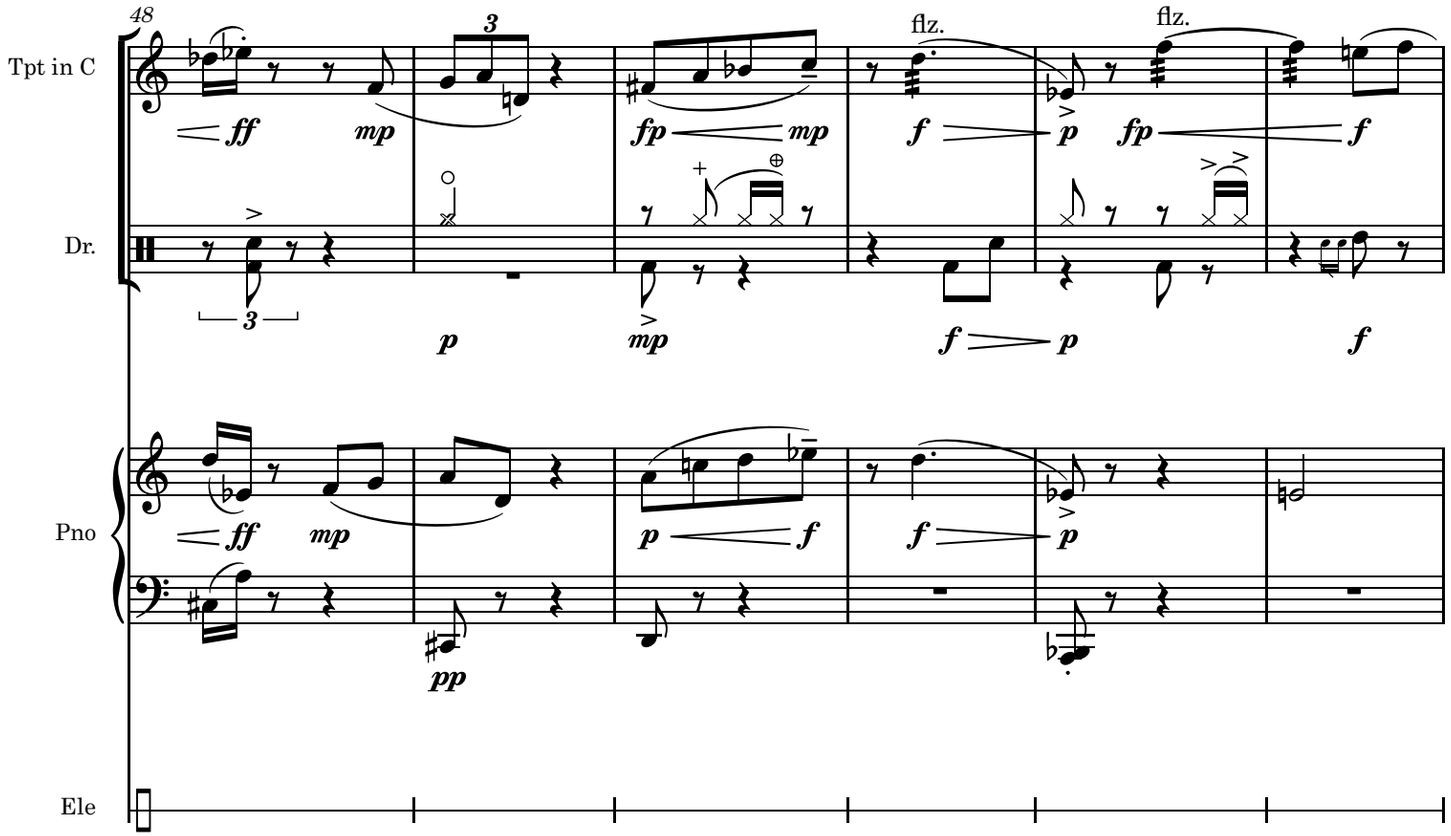

27
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
f
mp
p
ff
3

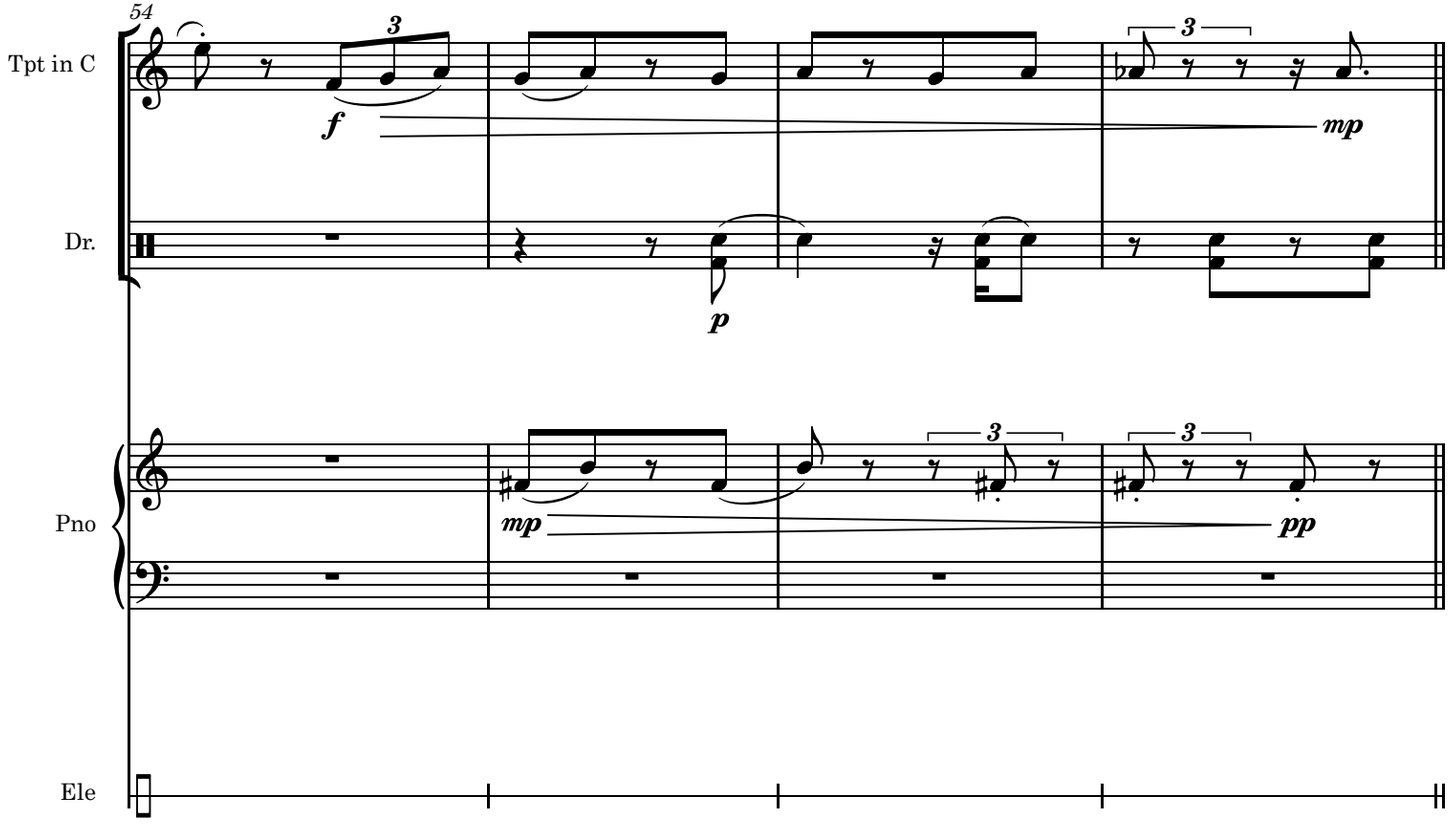

4
c. 15"
c. 15"
transform the first phrase into the last phrase shown
33
flz.
Tpt in C
c. 15"
c. 15"
play the three-note phrase in different rhythms
Dr.
c. 15"
c. 15"
play each note in a random sequence once per phrase
Pno
8ba
delay (2 v.), reverb (high), ringmod (low), pitch shift (1 v.)
Ele

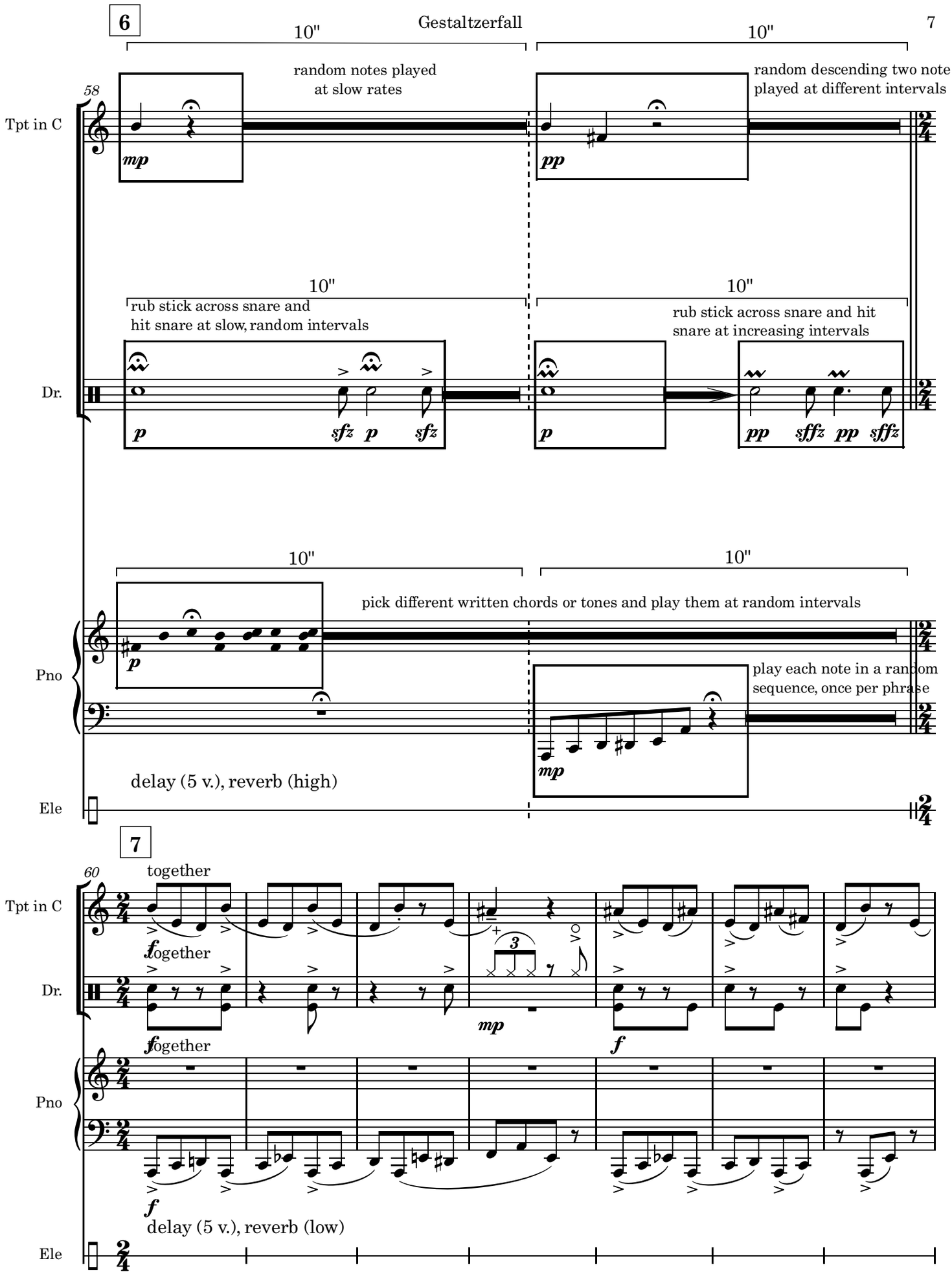
5

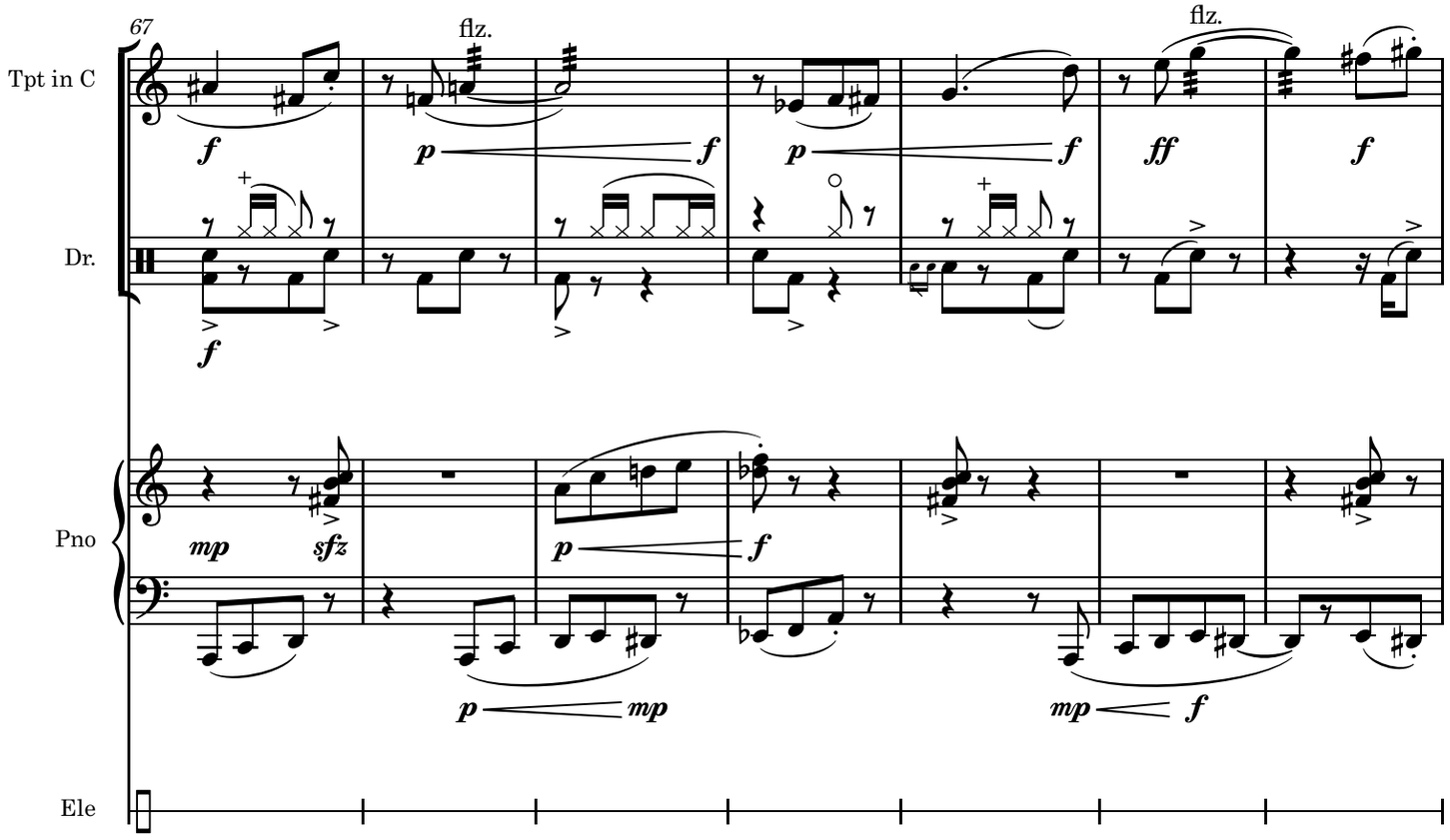

35
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
funk-like groove
together
flz.
delay (3 v.), reverb (low), distortion (low)

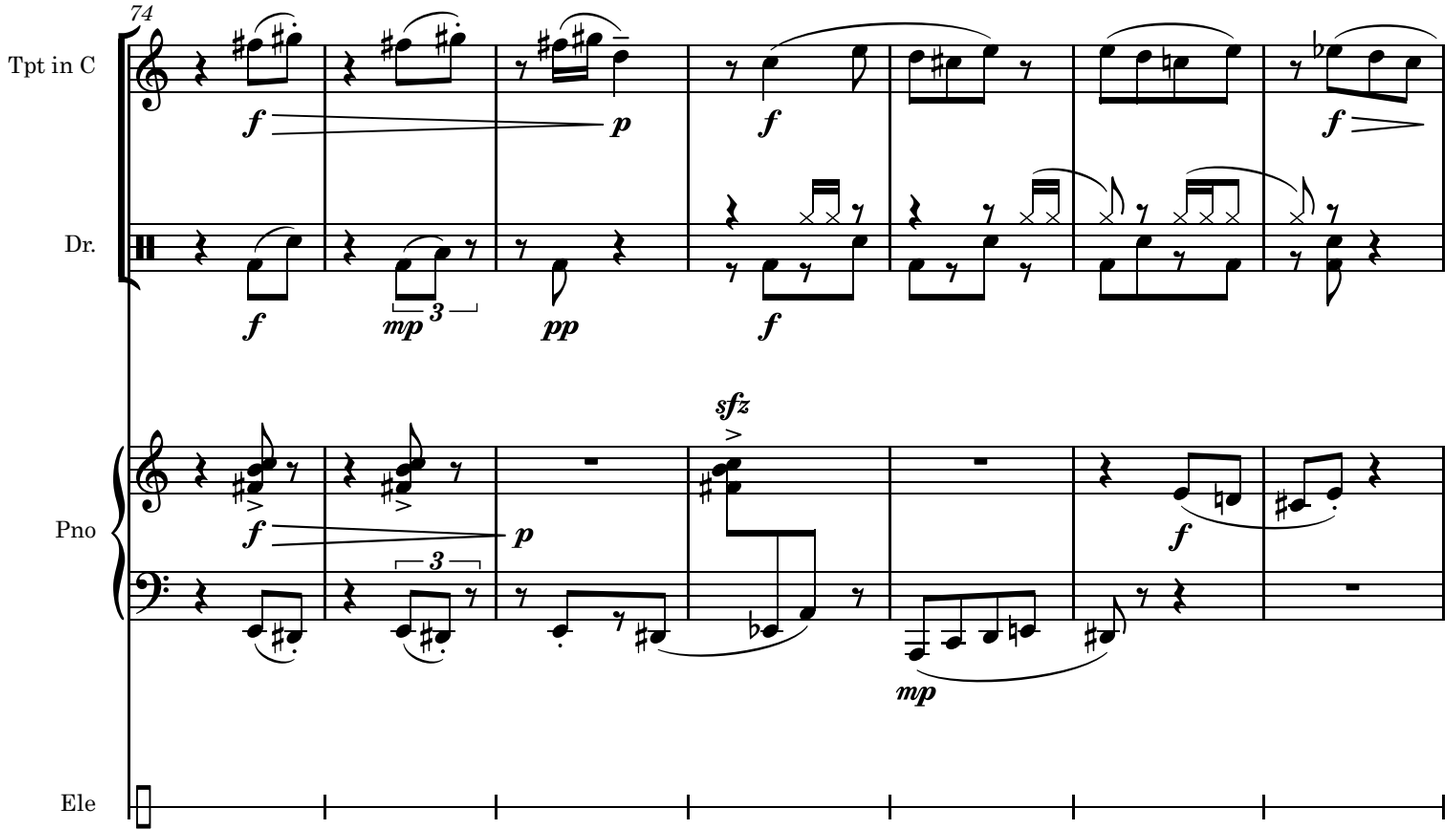

42
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
sfz

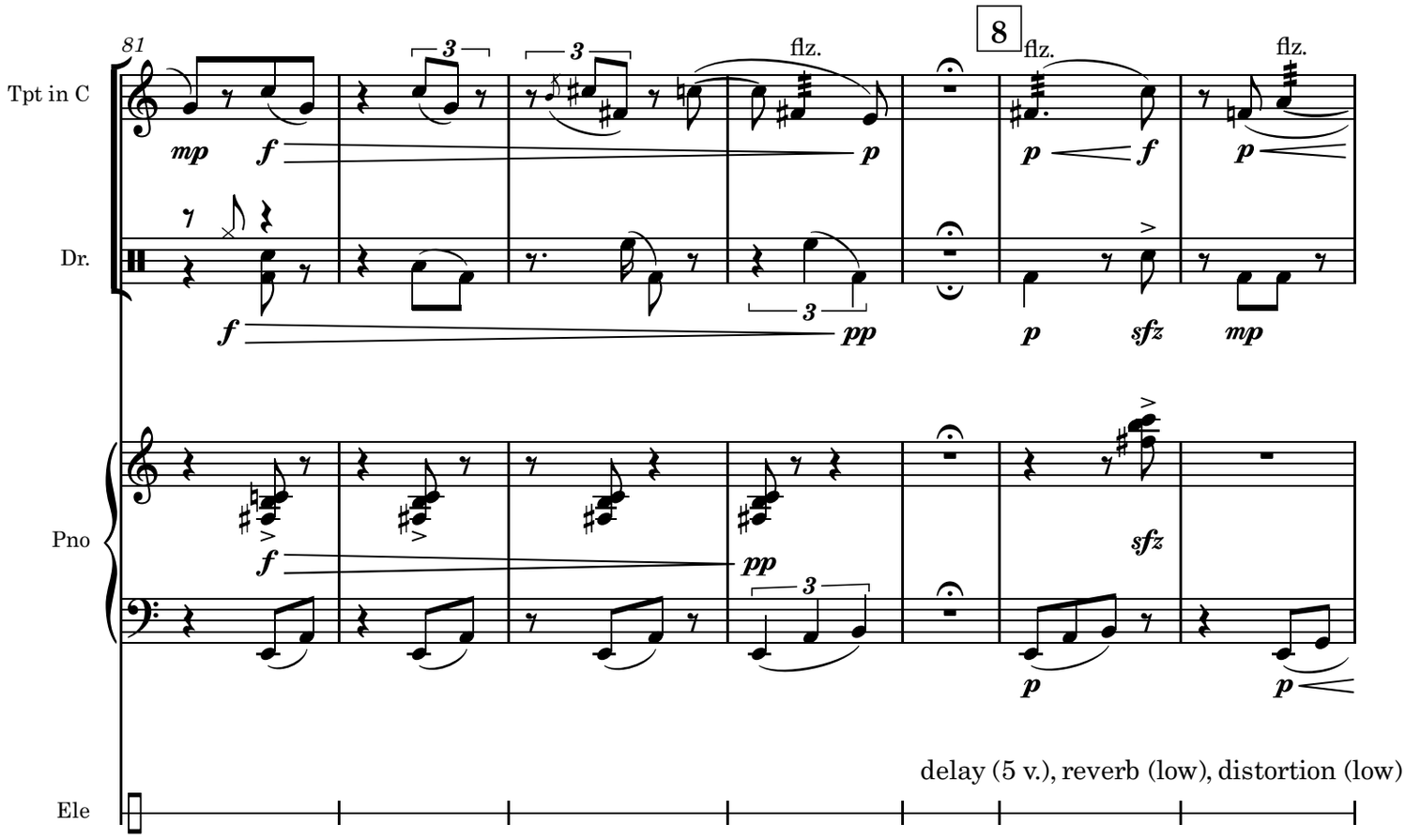

48
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
flz.
flz.

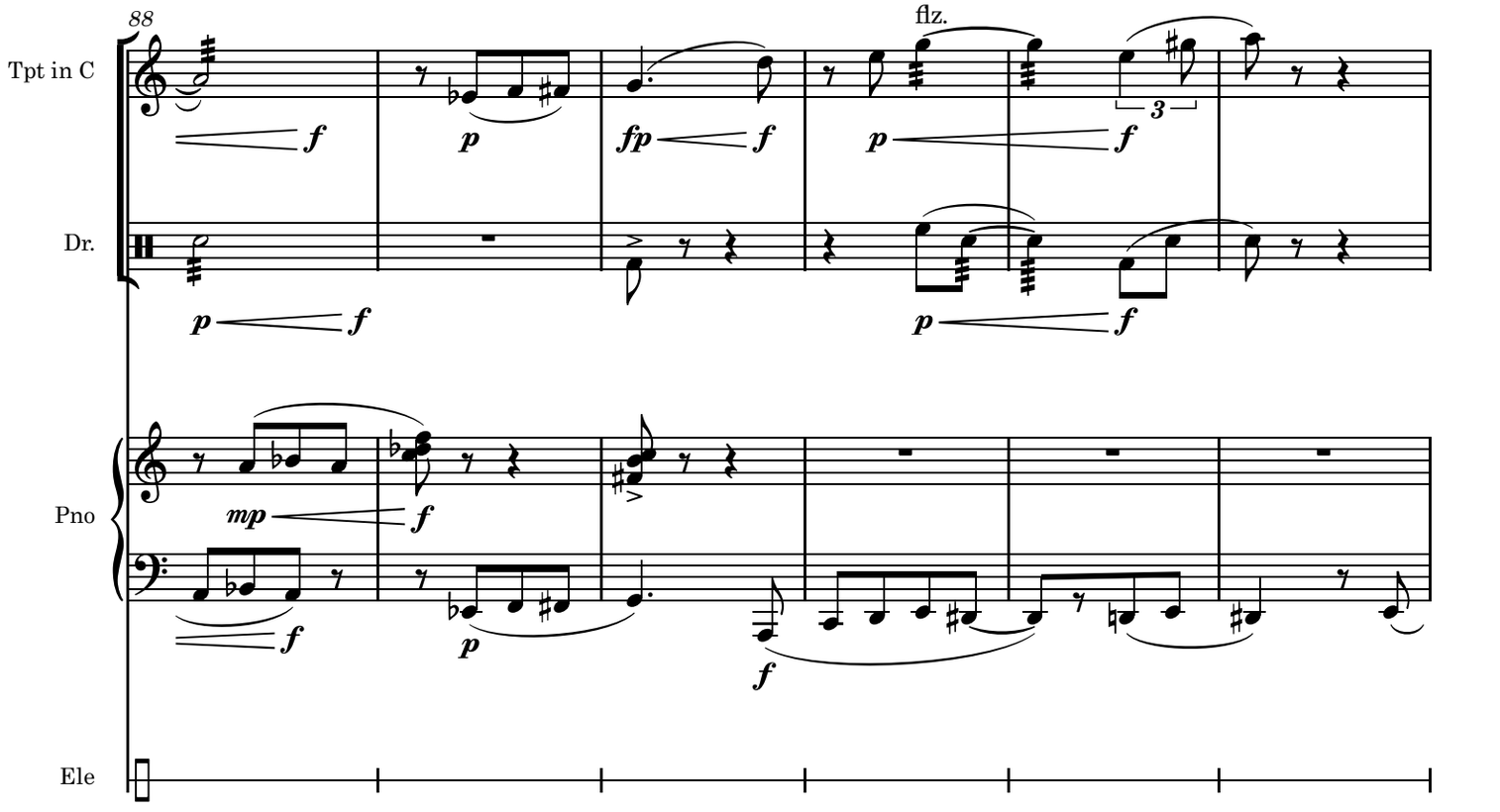

54
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele

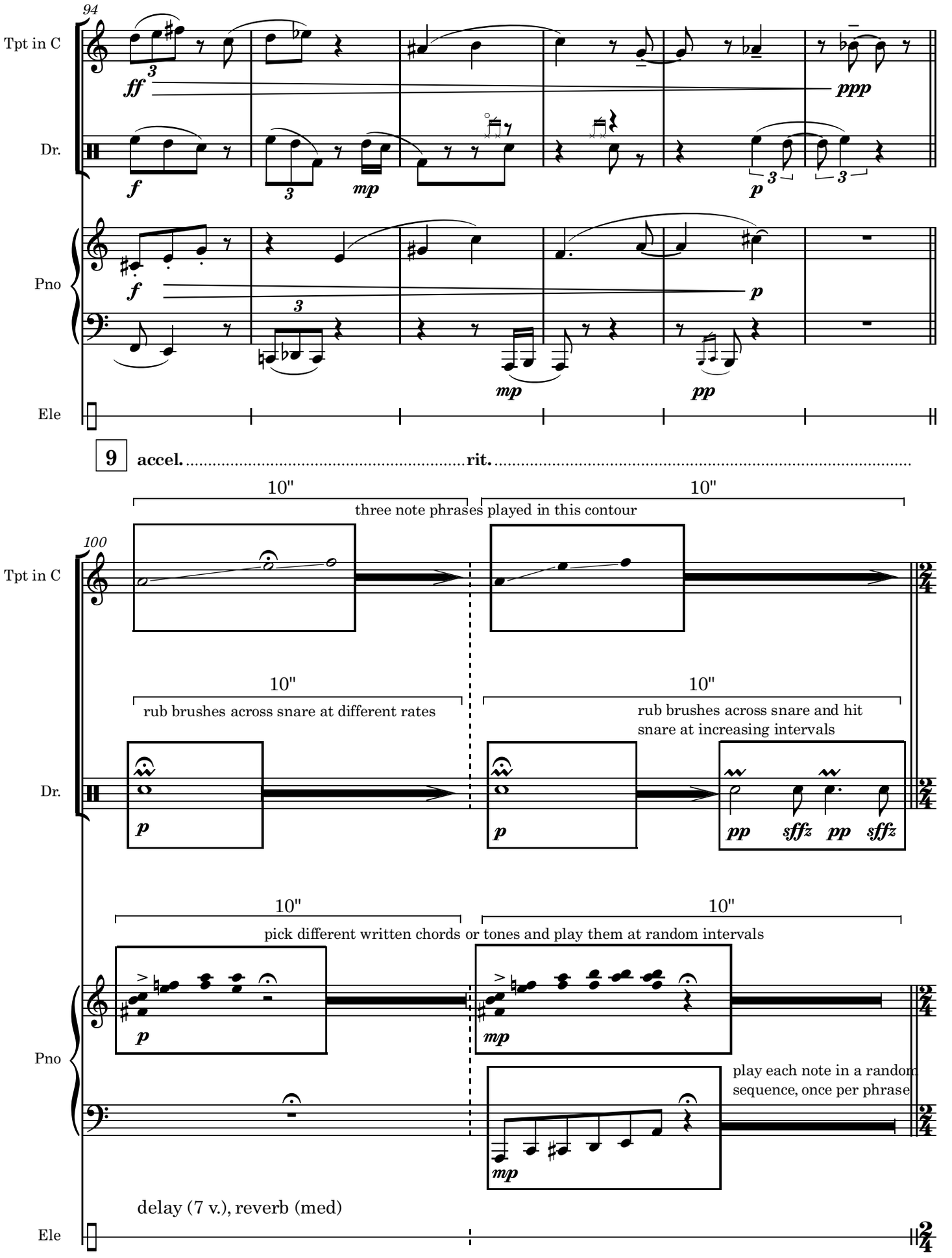

6
10"
10"
random notes played at slow rates
random descending two note phrases played at different intervals
58
Tpt in C
mp
pp
10"
10"
rub stick across snare and hit snare at slow, random intervals
rub stick across snare and hit snare at increasing intervals
Dr.
p
sfz
p
sfz
p
pp
sffz
pp
sffz
10"
10"
pick different written chords or tones and play them at random intervals
play each note in a random sequence, once per phrase
Pno
p
mp
delay (5 v.), reverb (high)
Ele
7
60
together
Tpt in C
f
together
Dr.
mp
f
together
f
Pno
f
delay (5 v.), reverb (low)
Ele

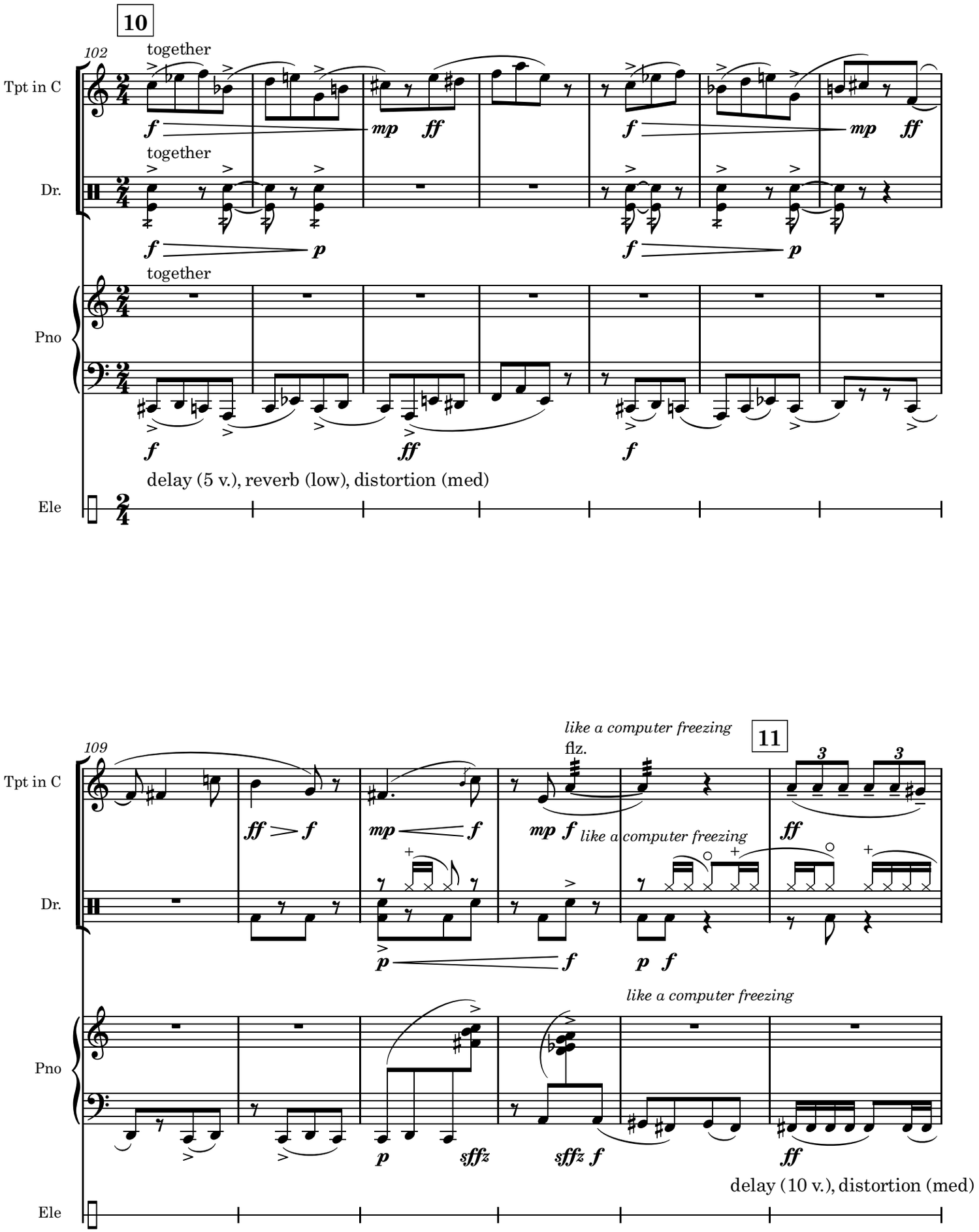

67
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
flz.
flz.
f
p
f
p
f
ff
f
f
mp
sfz
p
f
p
mp
mp
f

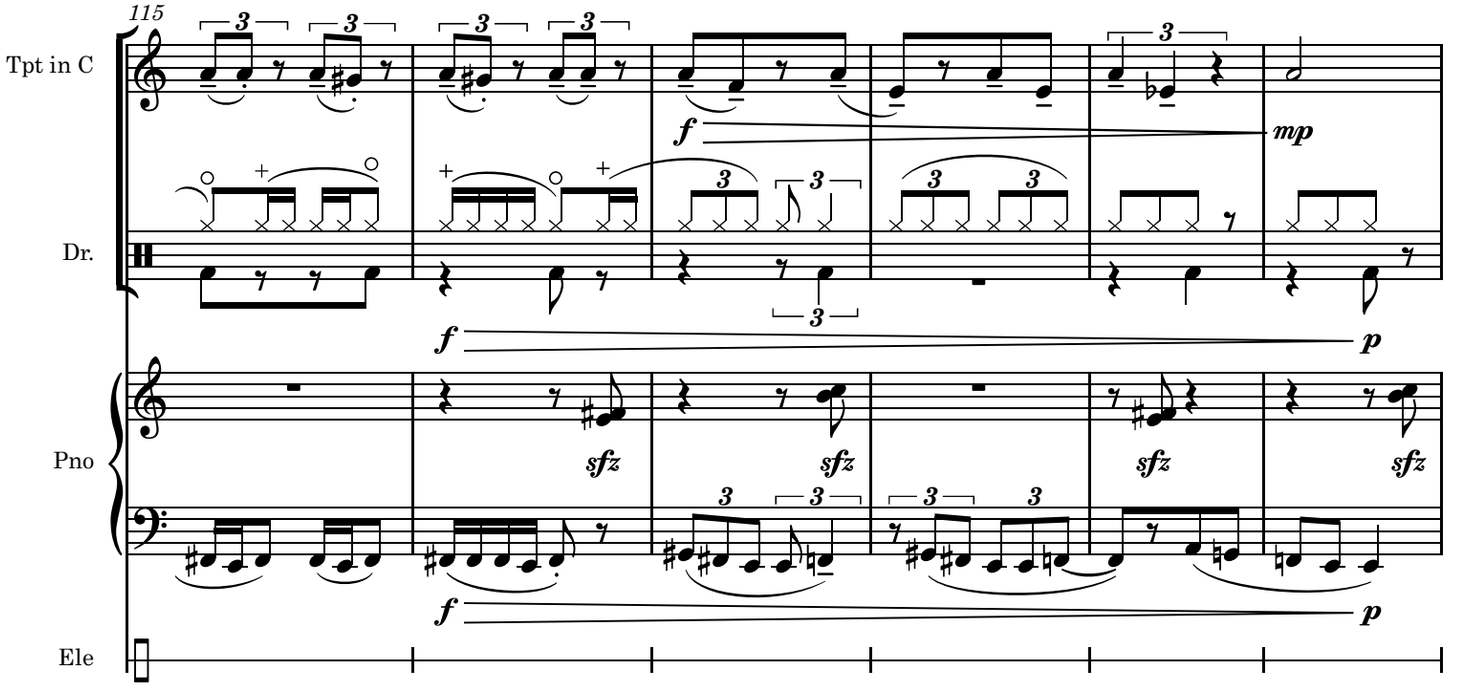

74
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
f
p
f
f
f
f
mp
3
pp
f
sfz
f
p
3
mp
f

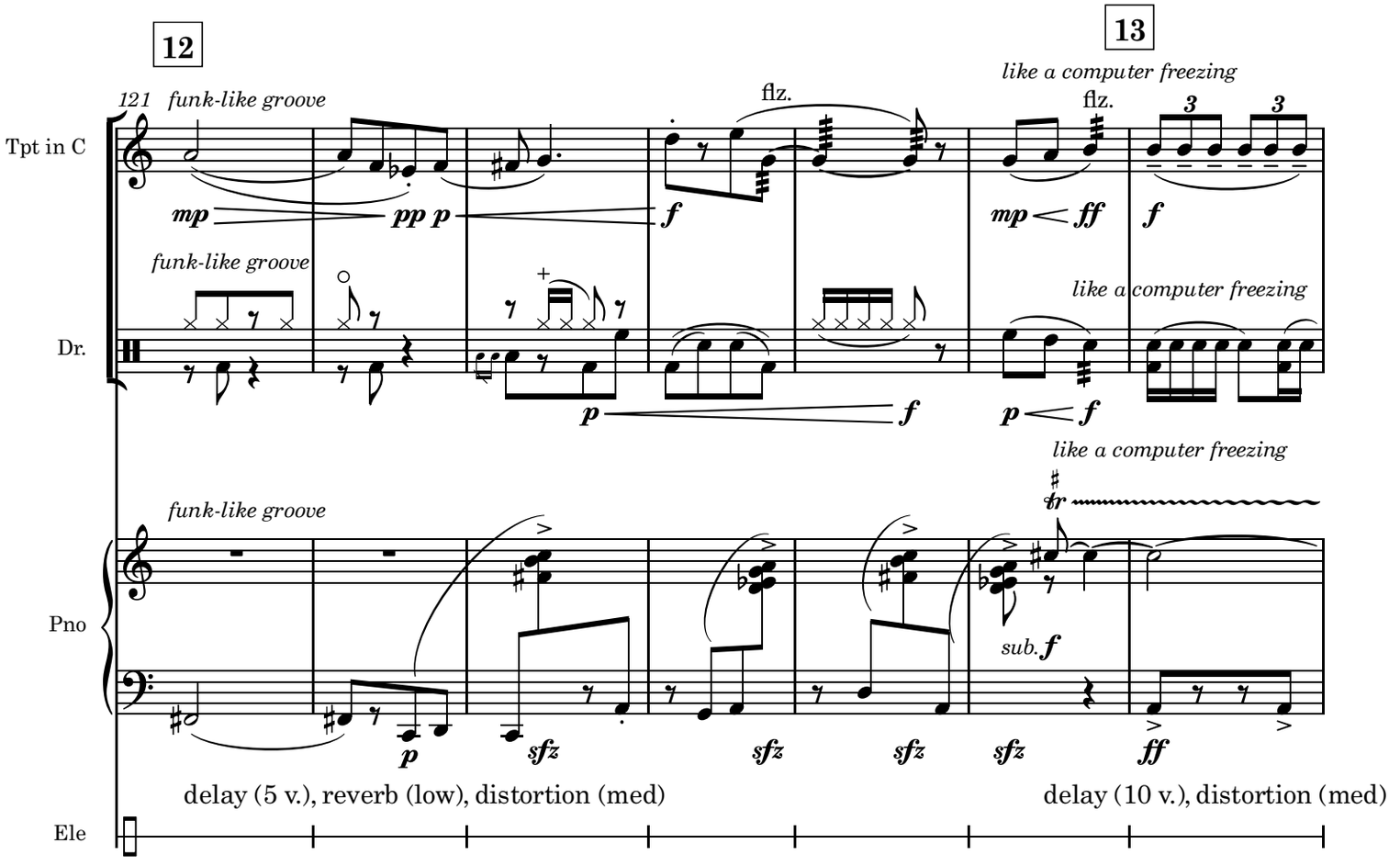

81
8
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
flz.
flz.
flz.
delay (5 v.), reverb (low), distortion (low)

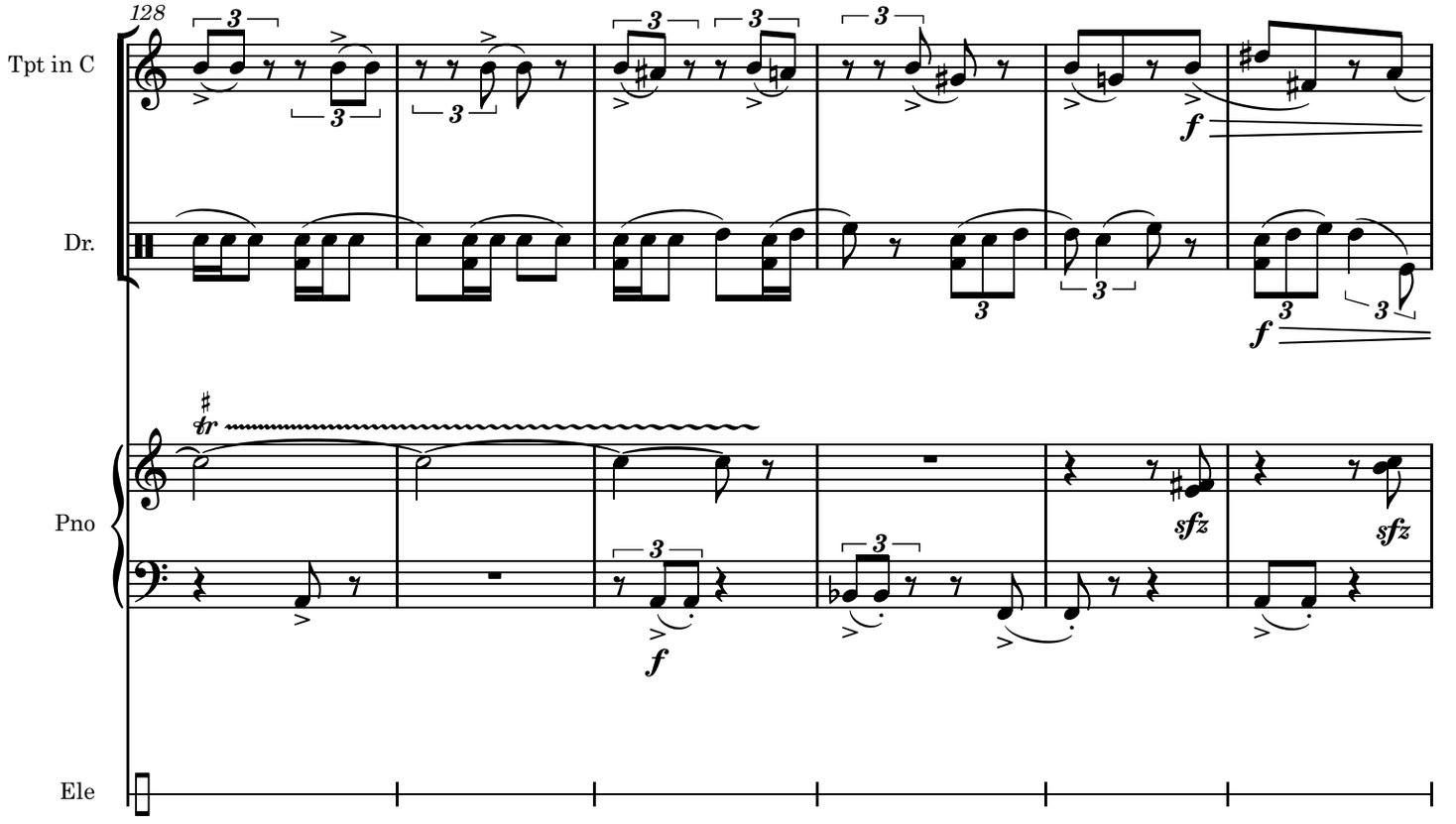

88
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
flz.

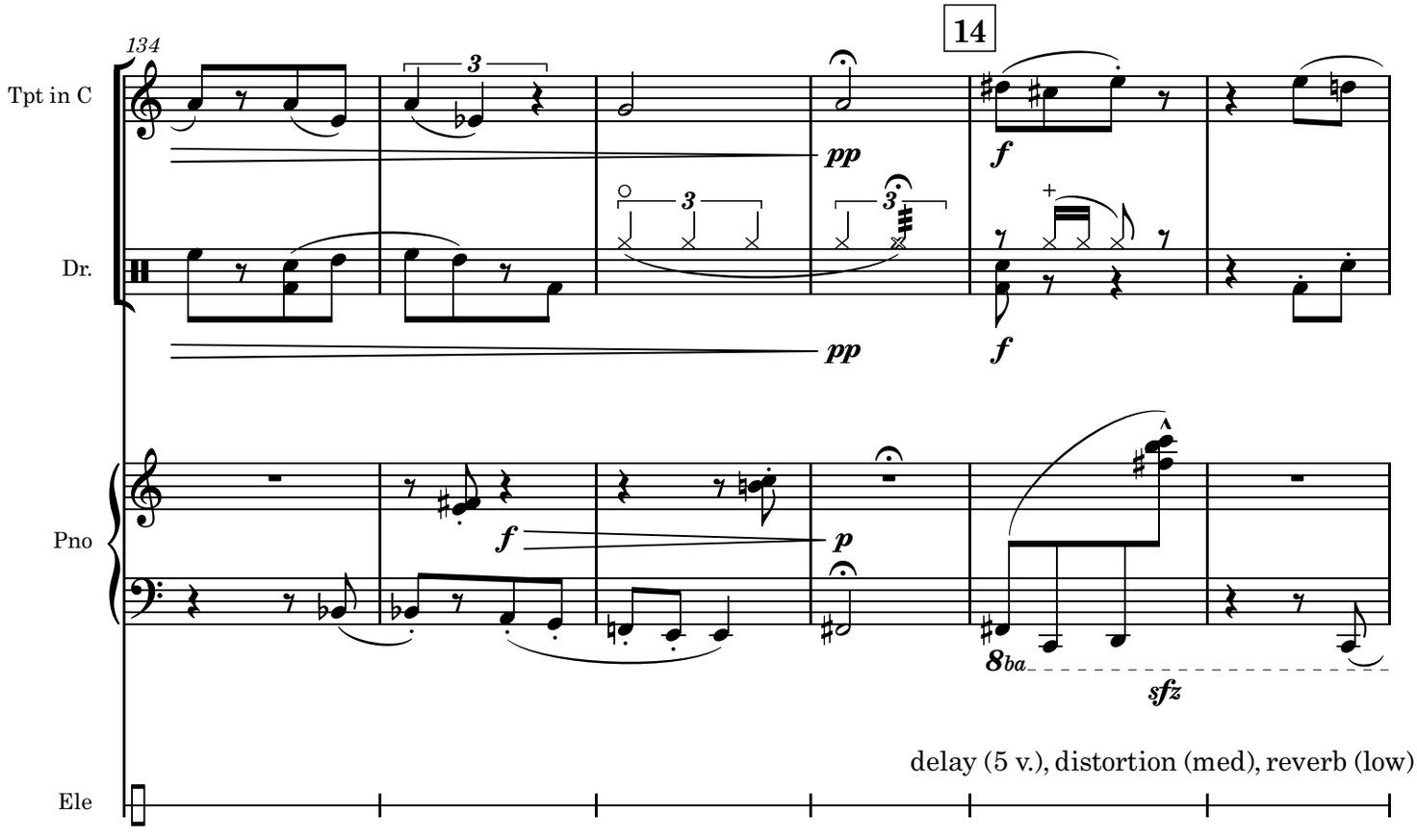

94
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
ff
ppp
f
mp
p
pp
9
accel.
rit.
100
10"
three note phrases played in this contour
rub brushes across snare at different rates
rub brushes across snare and hit snare at increasing intervals
sffz
pick different written chords or tones and play them at random intervals
play each note in a random sequence, once per phrase
delay (7 v.), reverb (med)

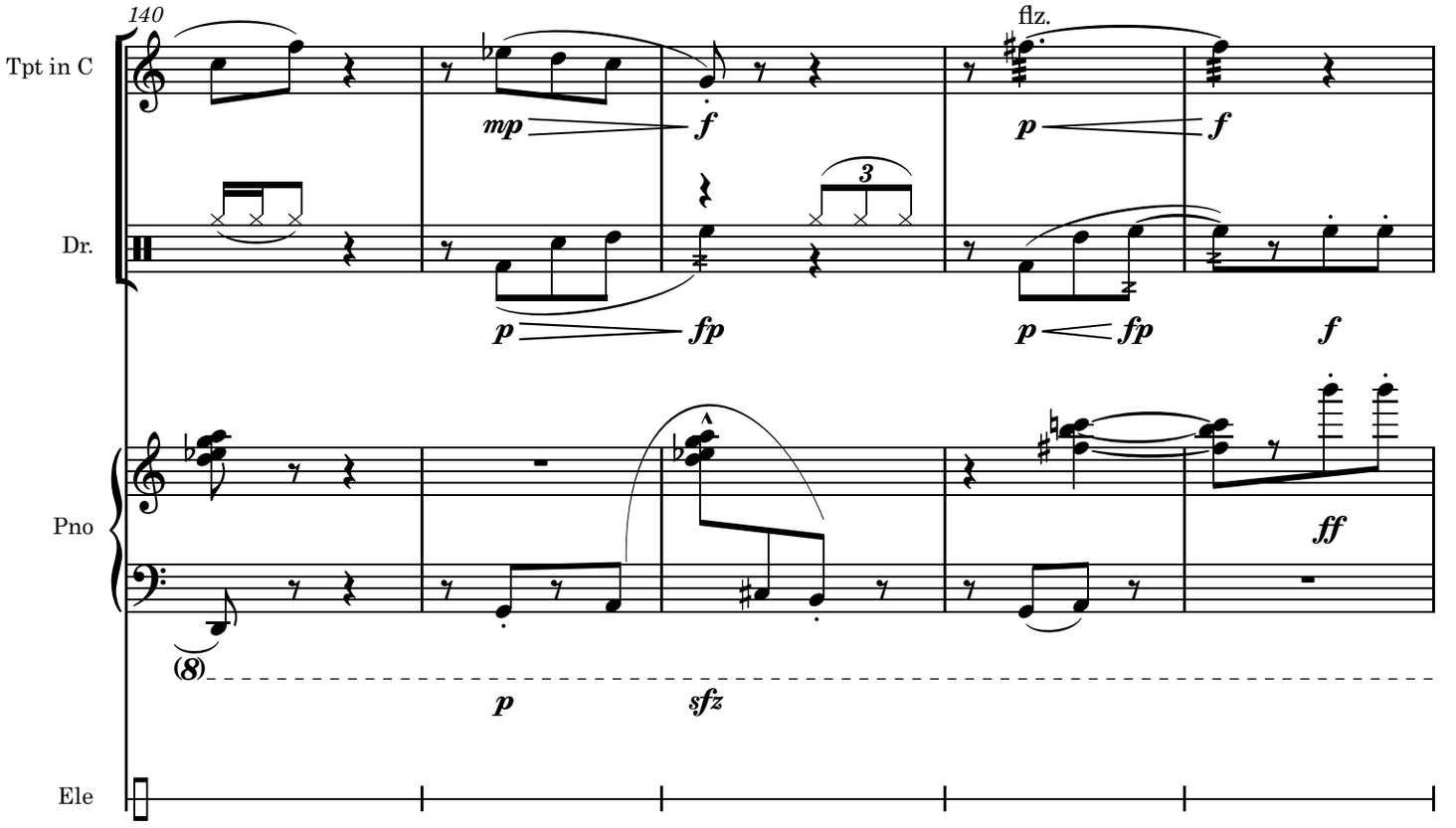

10
102
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
together
together
together
delay (5 v.), reverb (low), distortion (med)
109
like a computer freezing
flz.
11
like a computer freezing
like a computer freezing
like a computer freezing
delay (10 v.), distortion (med)

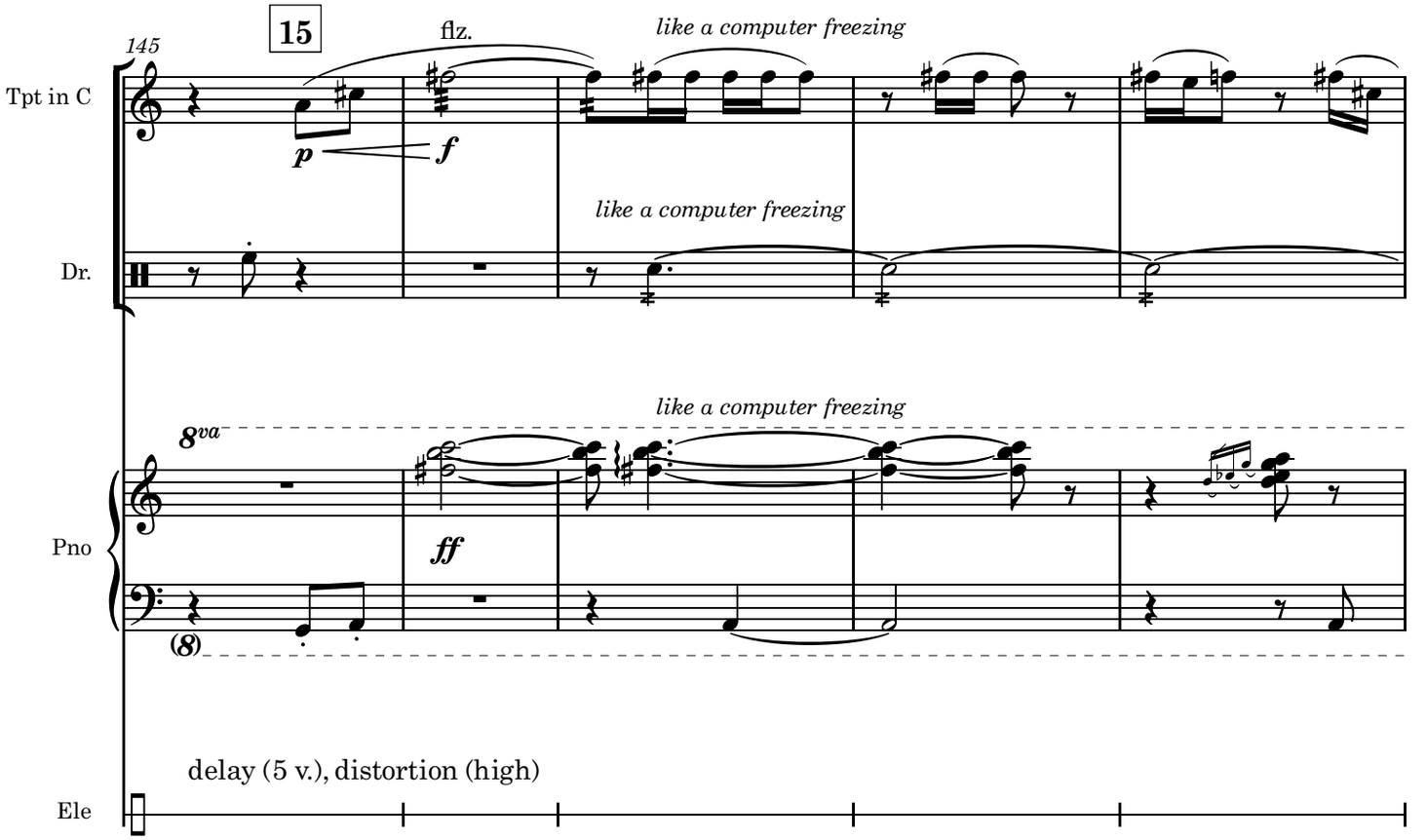

115
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele

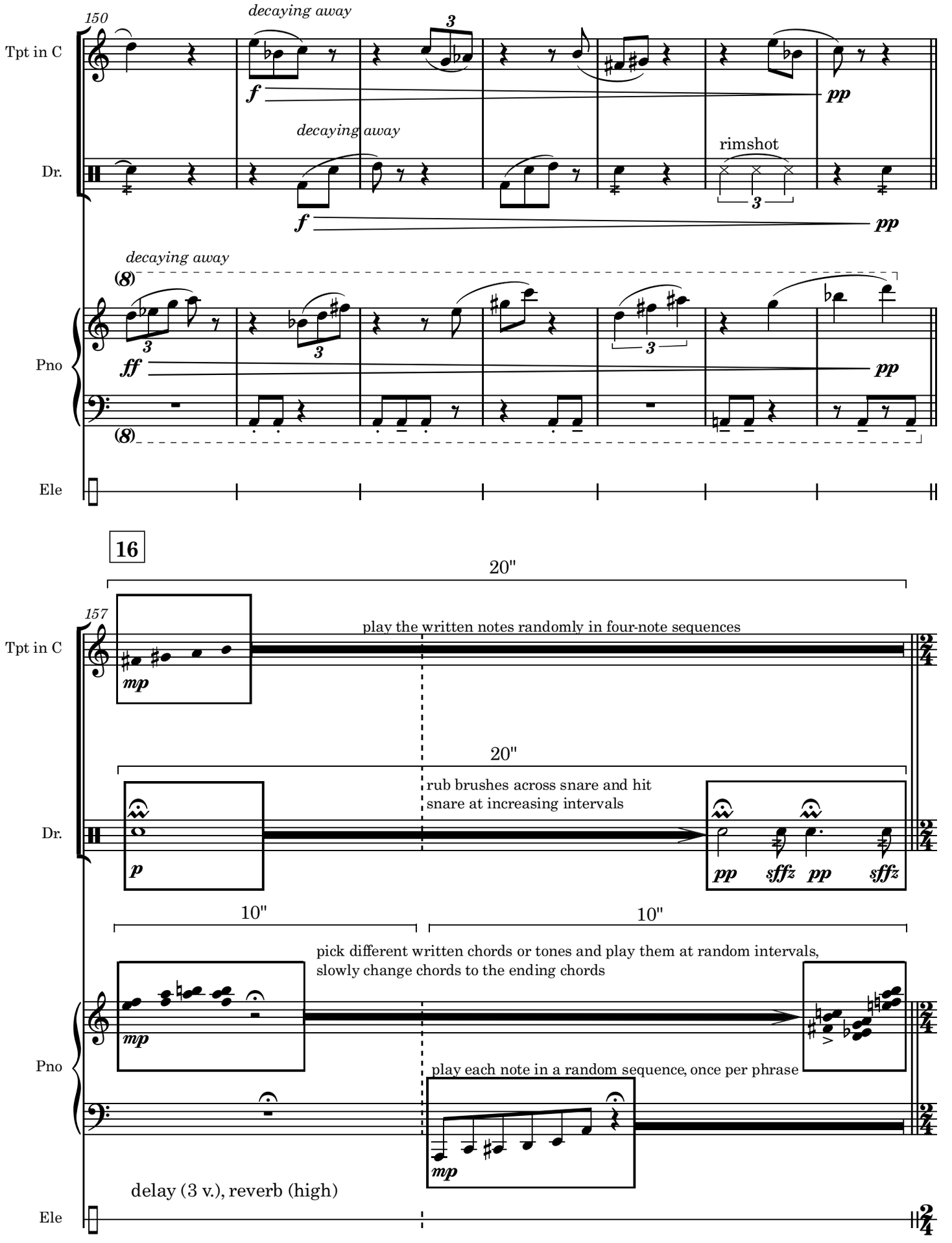

12
13
121 funk-like groove
like a computer freezing
flz.
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
delay (5 v.), reverb (low), distortion (med)
delay (10 v.), distortion (med)

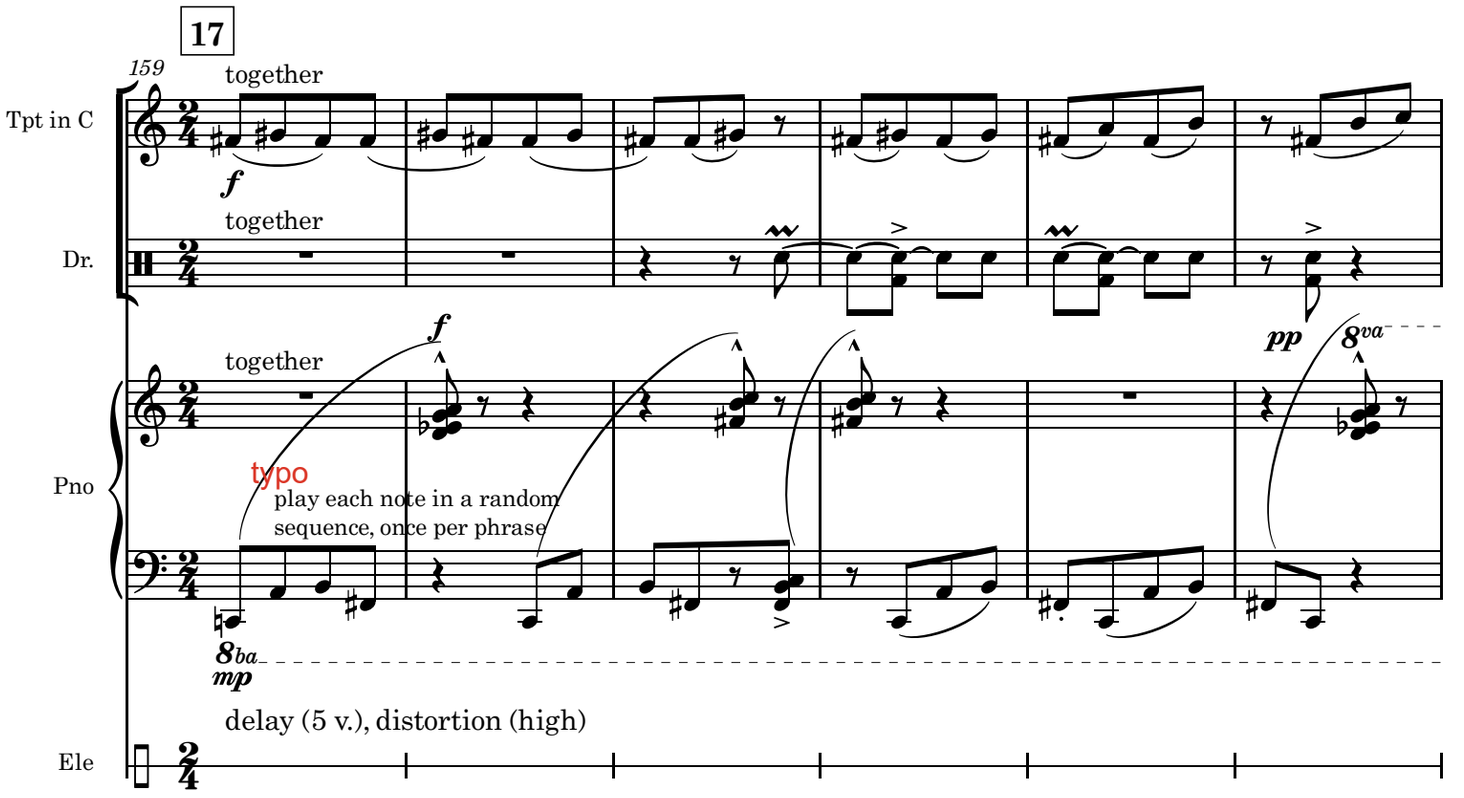

128
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
tr
f
sfz
sfz
f

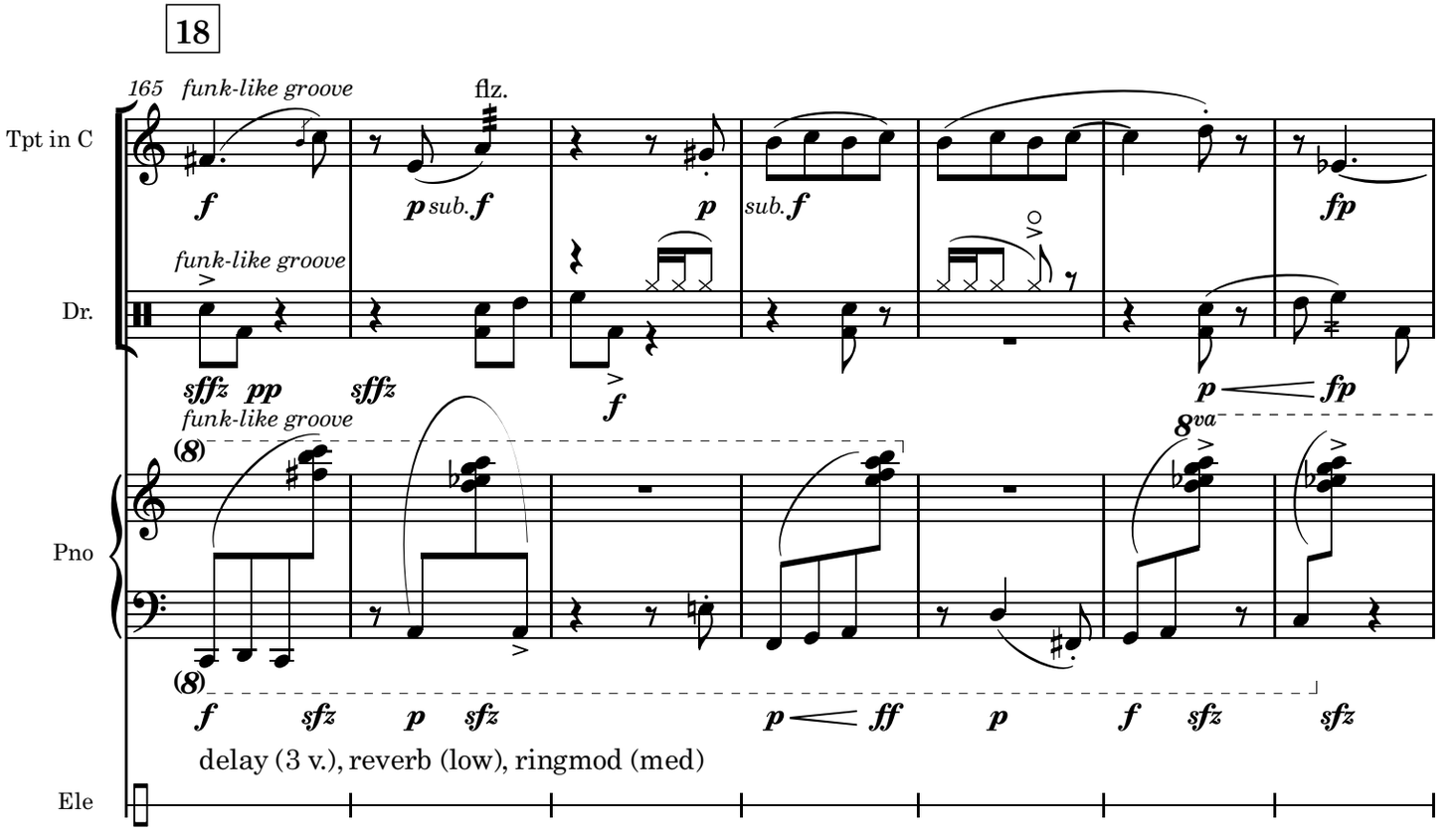

134
14
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
pp
pp
f
f
f
p
8ba
sfz
delay (5 v.), distortion (med), reverb (low)

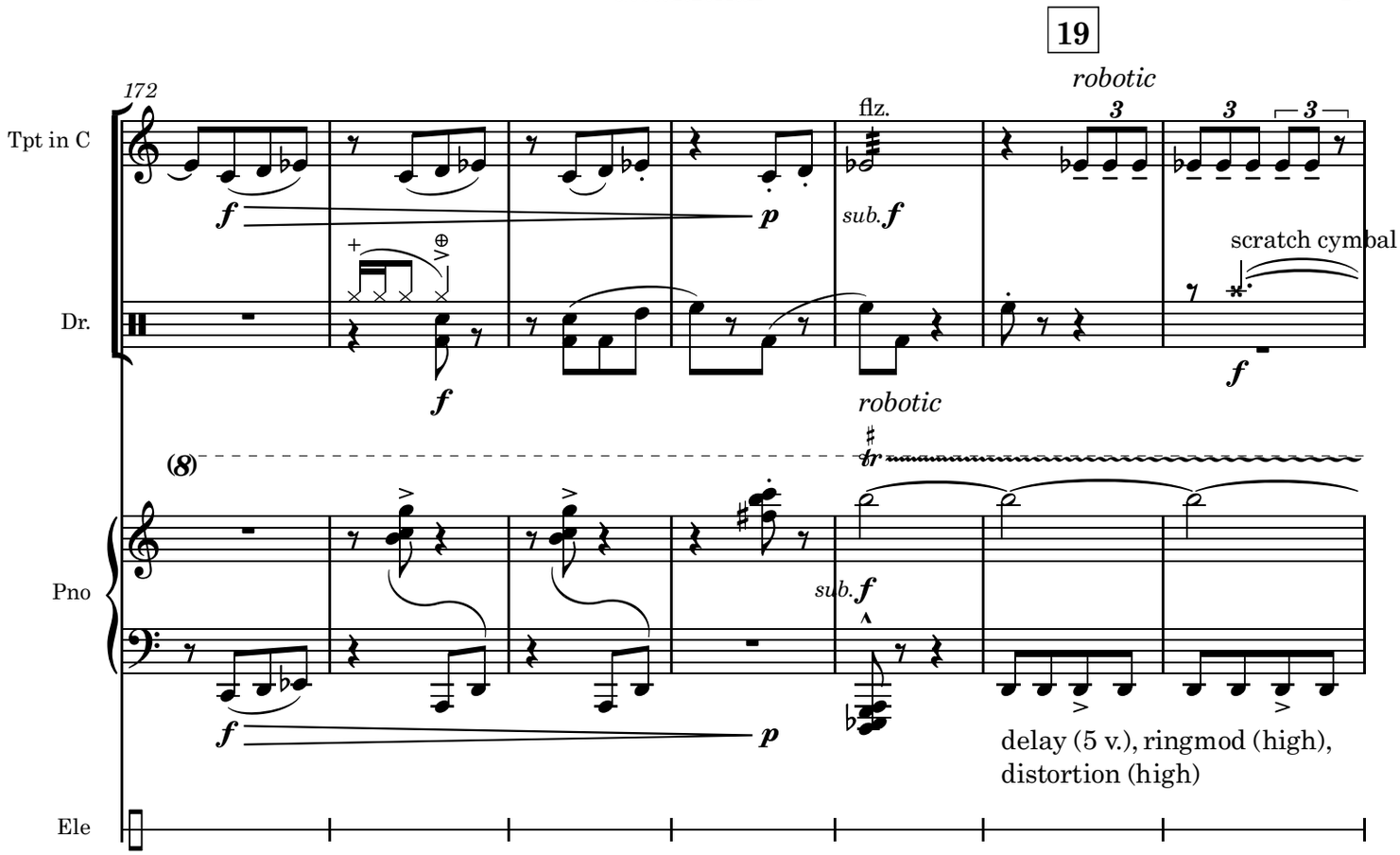

140
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
flz.
mp
f
p
fp
3
ff
sfz
(8)

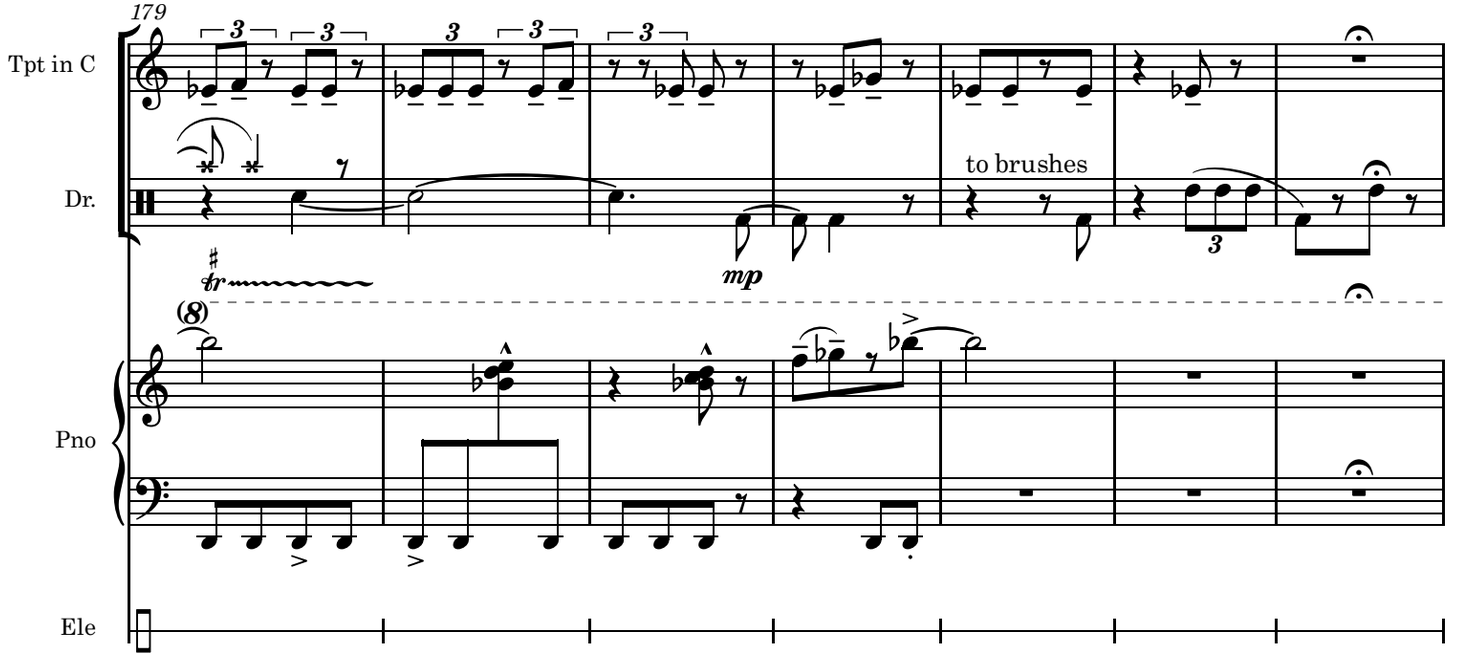

145
15
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
flz.
like a computer freezing
like a computer freezing
like a computer freezing
8va
(8)
p
f
ff
delay (5 v.), distortion (high)

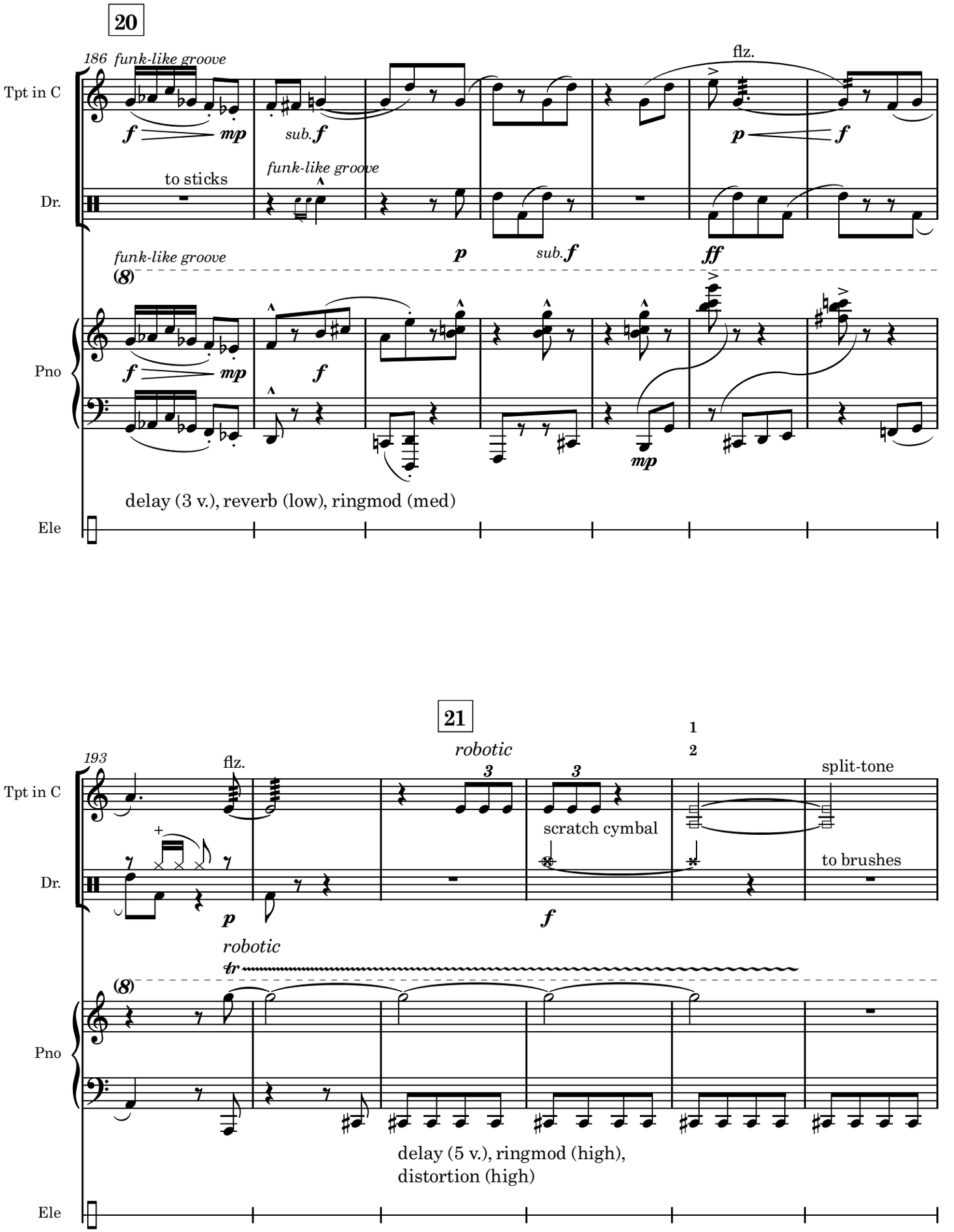

150
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
decaying away
decaying away
decaying away
rimshot
f
pp
ff
16
20"
157
play the written notes randomly in four-note sequences
mp
20"
rub brushes across snare and hit
snare at increasing intervals
p
pp
sffz
10"
10"
pick different written chords or tones and play them at random intervals,
slowly change chords to the ending chords
play each note in a random sequence, once per phrase
delay (3 v.), reverb (high)

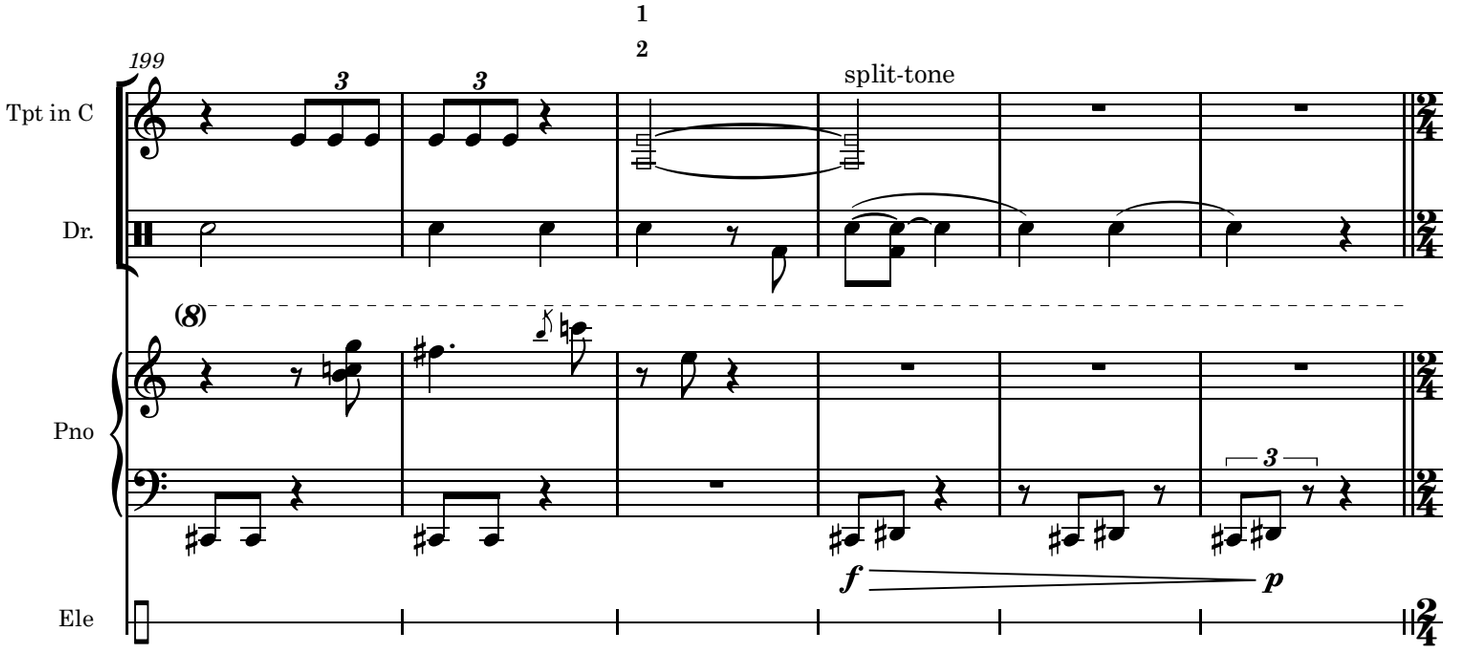

17
159
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
together
together
together
f
pp
8va
typo
play each note in a random sequence, once per phrase
8ba
mp
delay (5 v.), distortion (high)

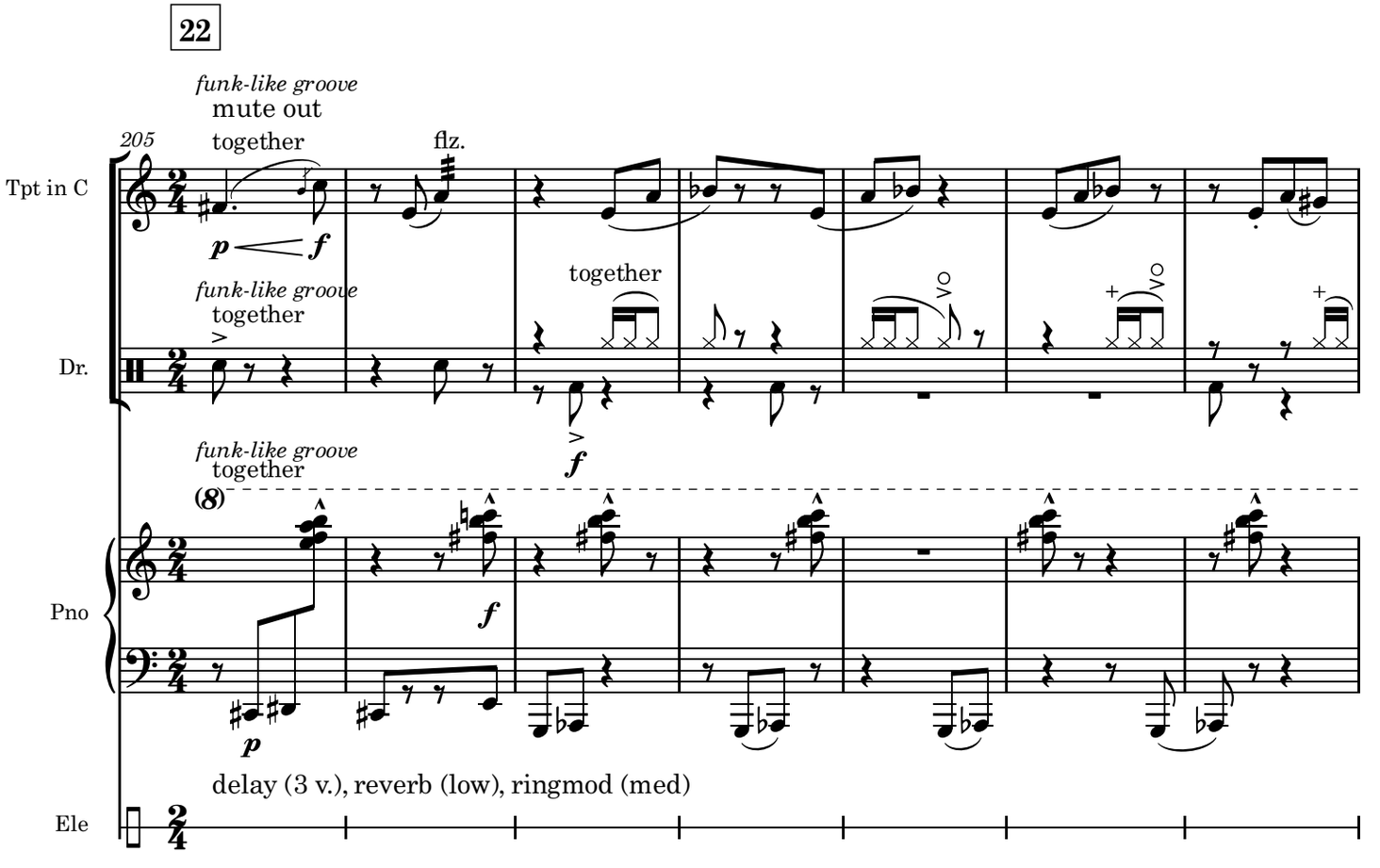

18
165
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
funk-like groove
flz.
sub.
fp
sffz
pp
8va
delay (3 v.), reverb (low), ringmod (med)

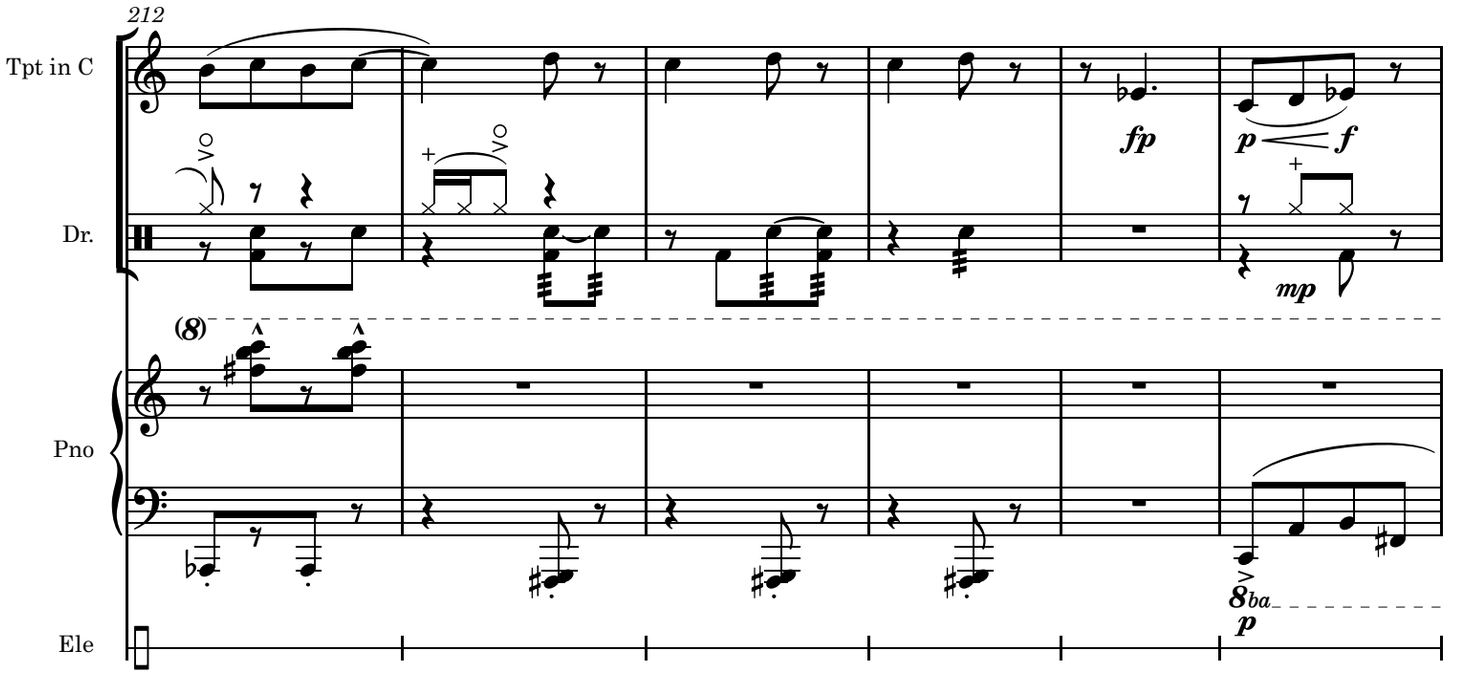

19
172
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
robotic
flz.
sub. f
scratch cymbal
robotic
sub. f
delay (5 v.), ringmod (high),
distortion (high)

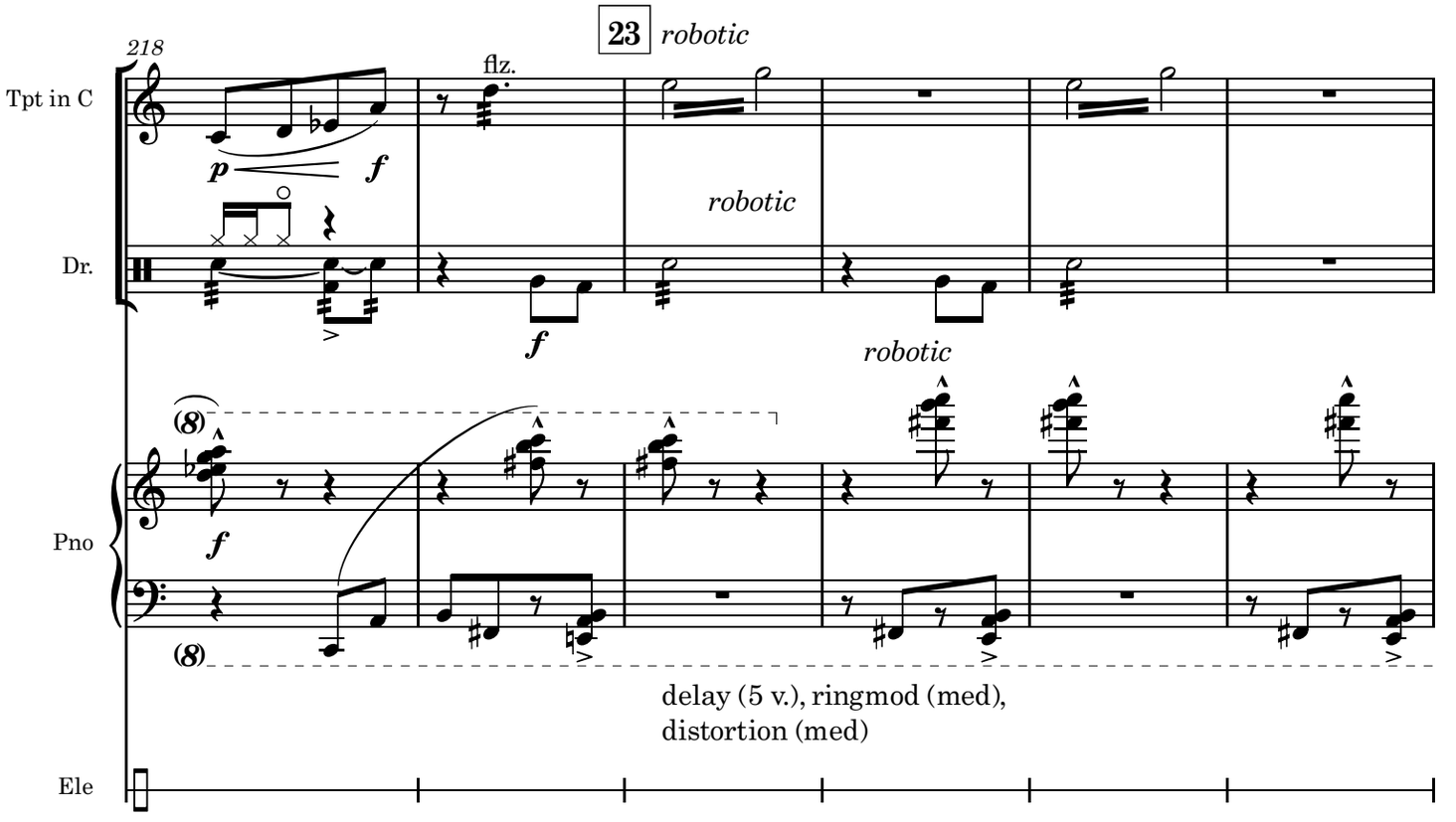

179
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
to brushes

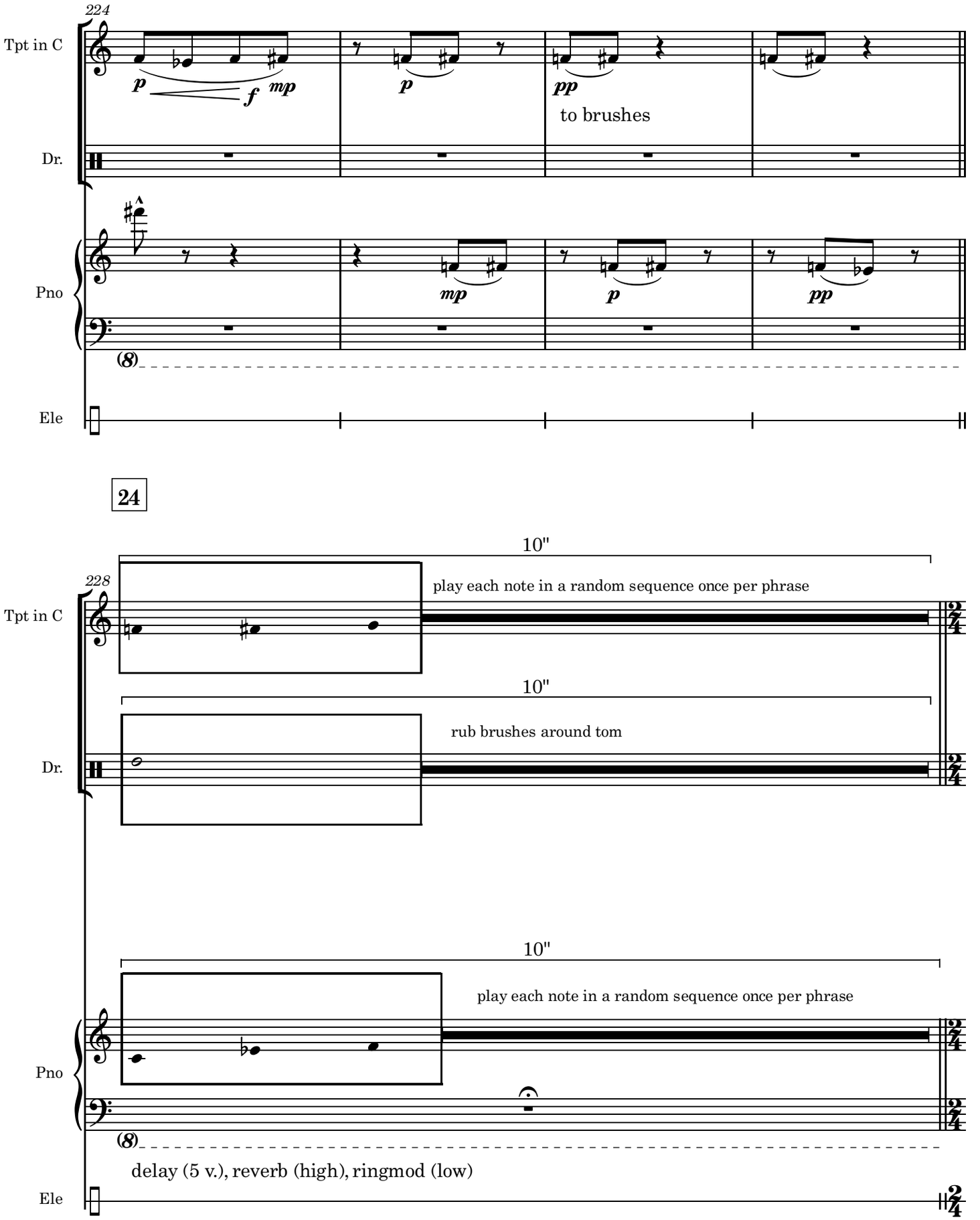

20
186 funk-like groove
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
flz.
to sticks
funk-like groove
sub.
delay (3 v.), reverb (low), ringmod (med)
21
193
robotic
split-tone
scratch cymbal
to brushes
delay (5 v.), ringmod (high),
distortion (high)

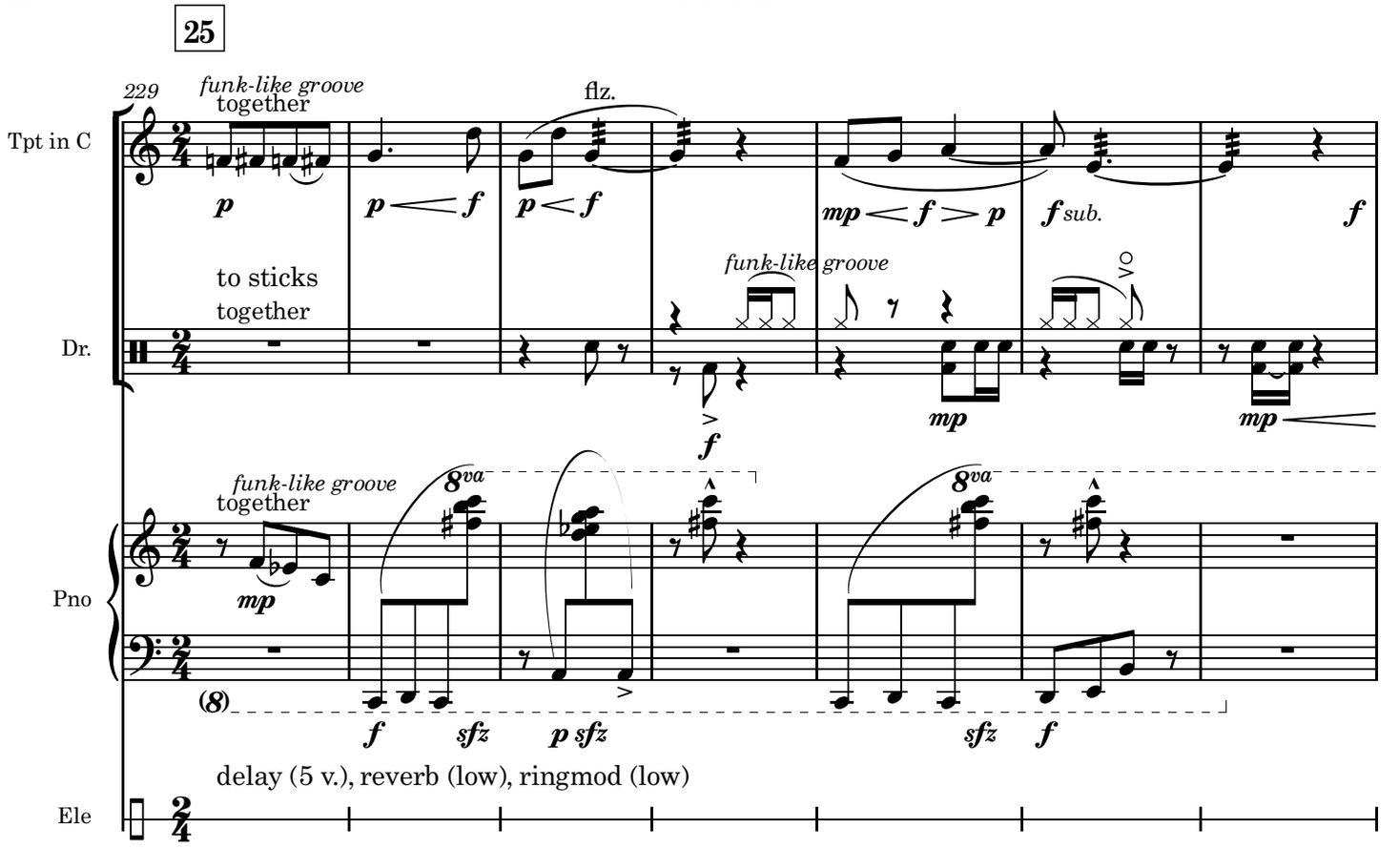

1
2
199
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
split-tone
(8)
f
p

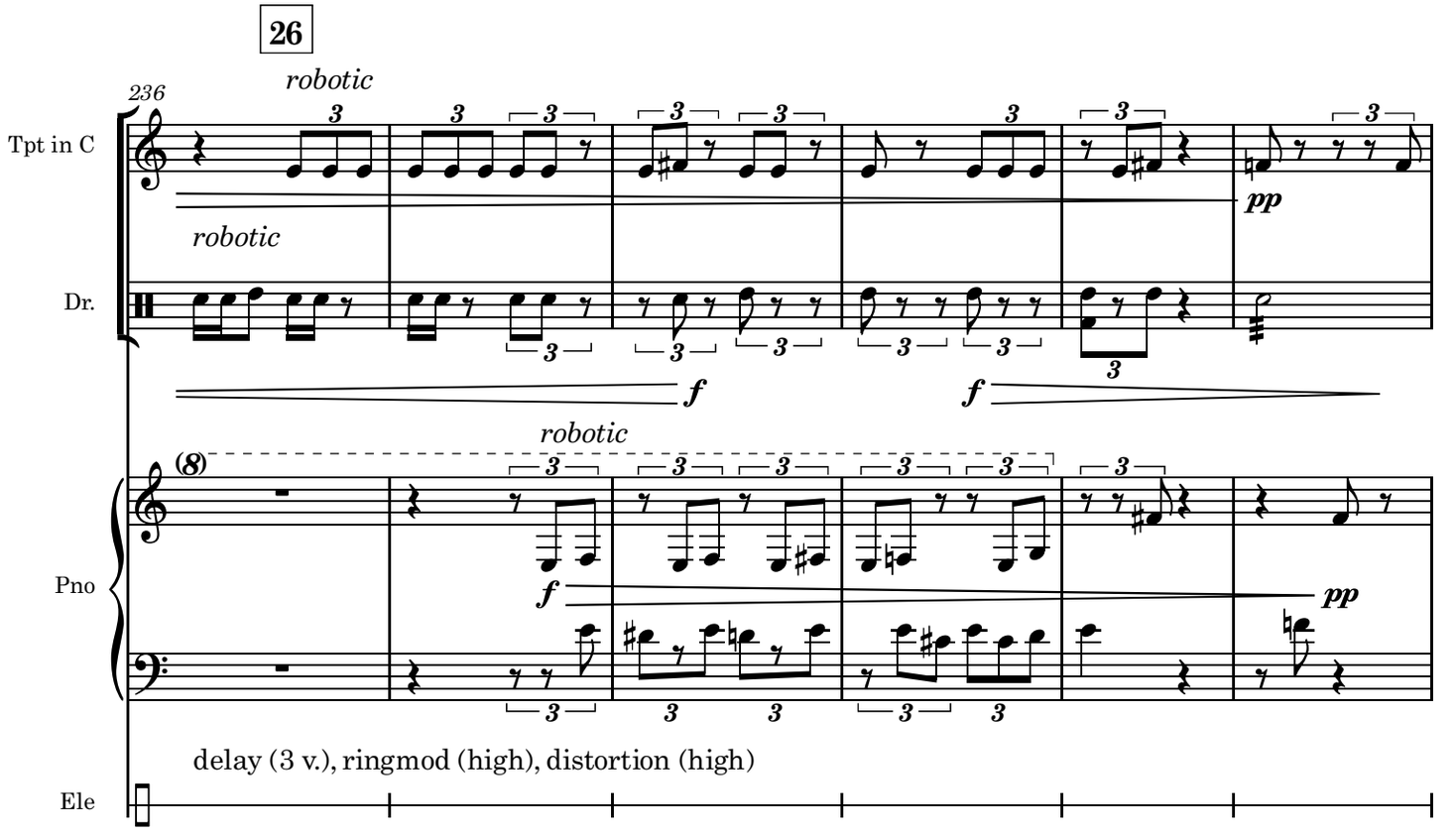

22
funk-like groove
mute out
205
Tpt in C
together
flz.
p
f
funk-like groove
together
Dr.
together
funk-like groove
together
(8)
Pno
f
p
delay (3 v.), reverb (low), ringmod (med)
Ele

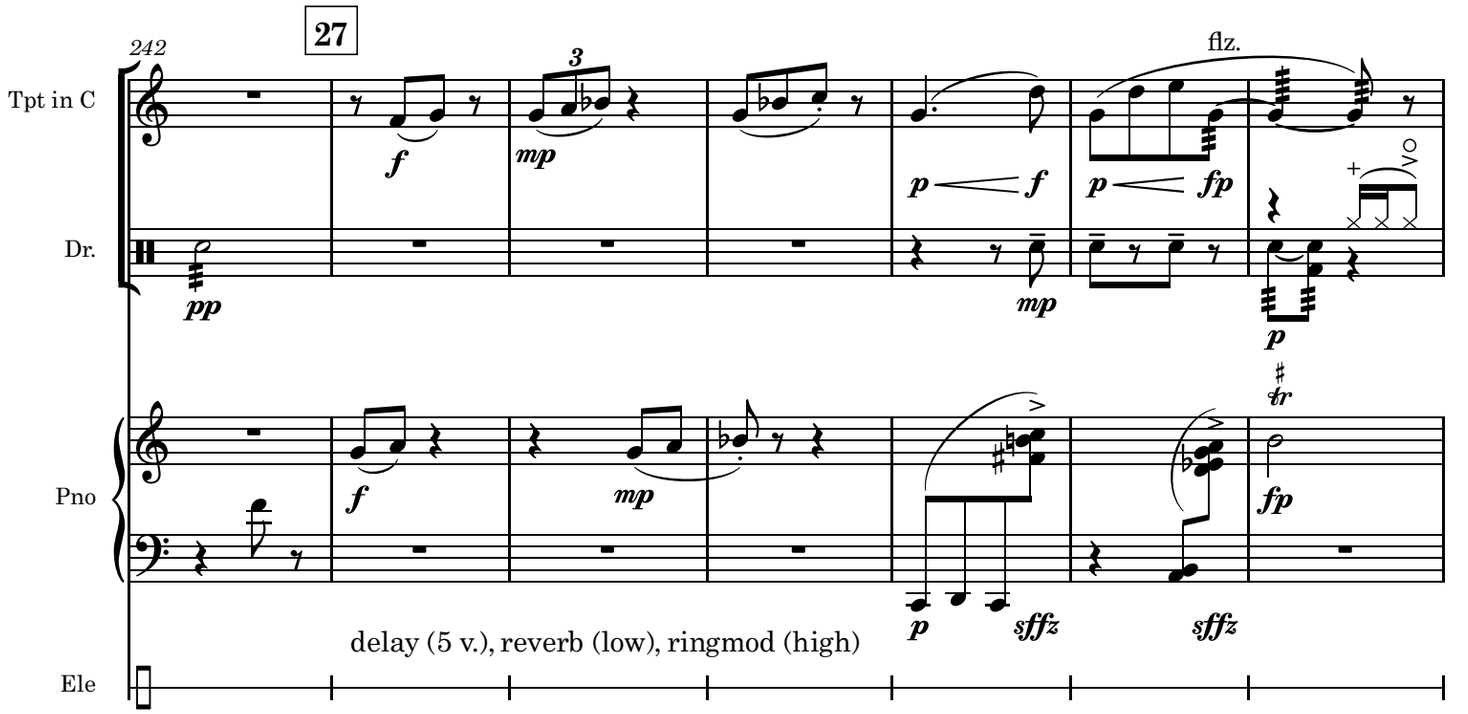

212
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
fp
p
f
mp
8ba
p

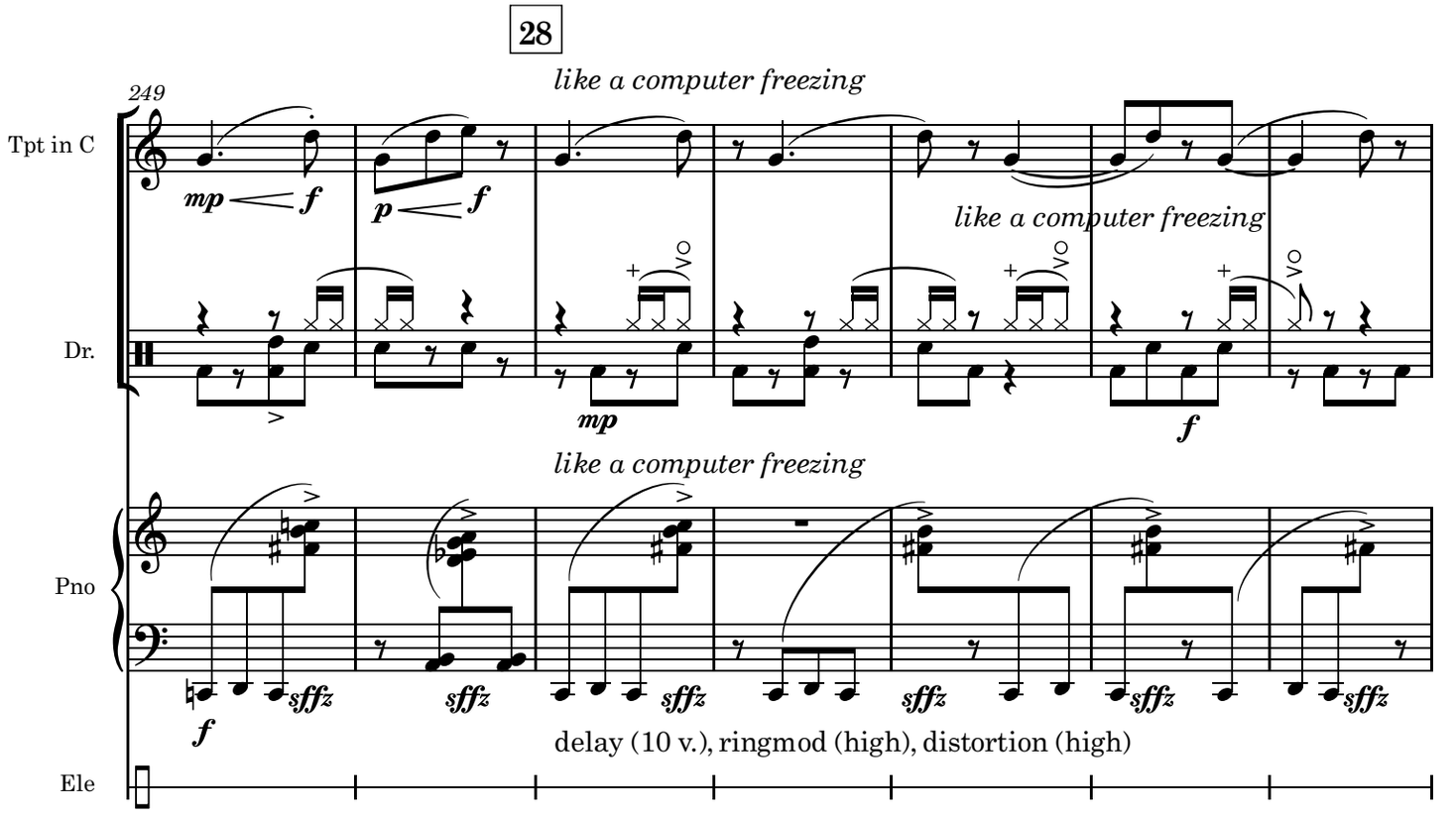

218
23 robotic
Tpt in C
flz.
p
f
robotic
Dr.
f
robotic
Pno
f
delay (5 v.), ringmod (med),
distortion (med)
Ele

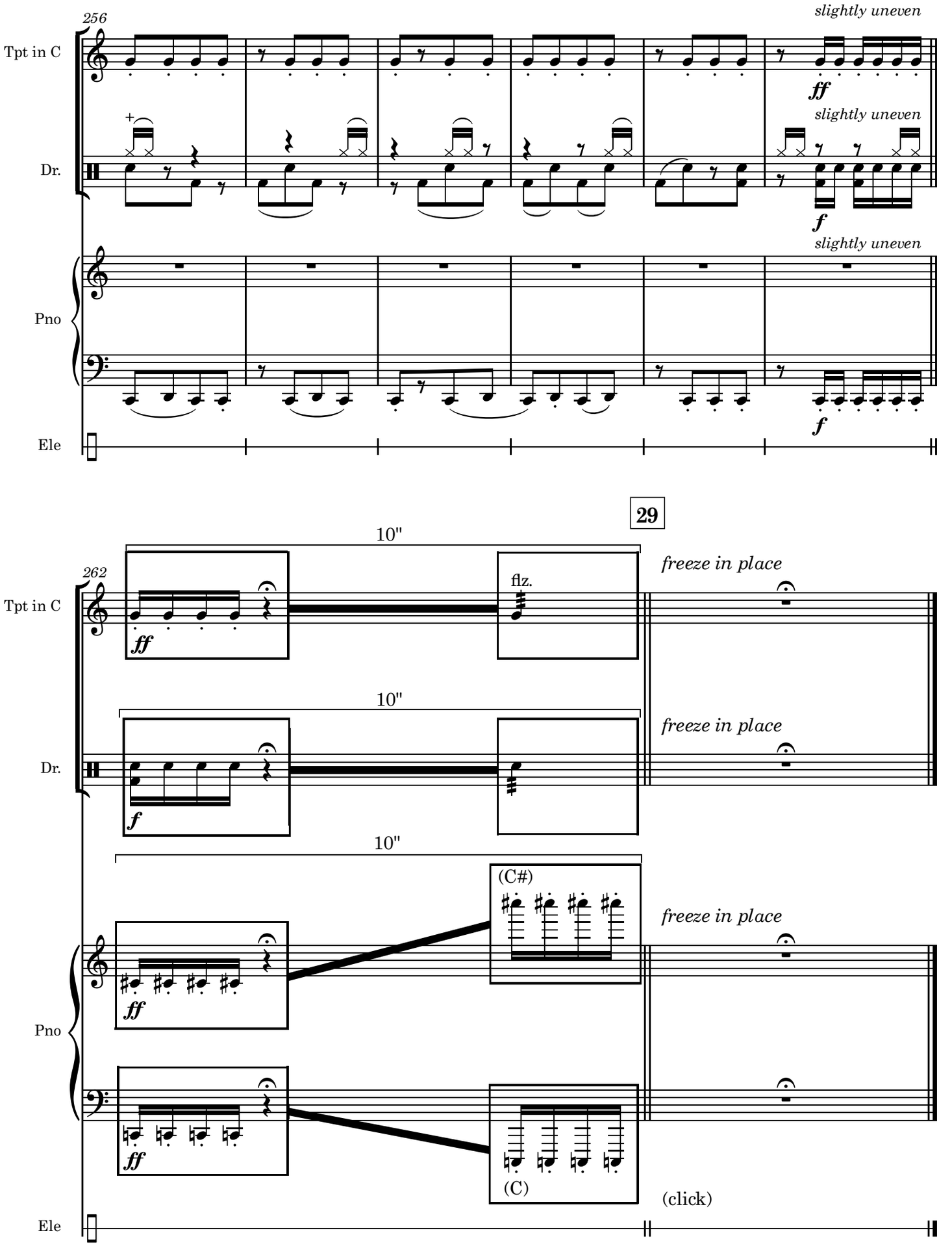

224
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
p
f
mp
p
pp
to brushes
mp
p
pp
(8)
24
228
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
10"
play each note in a random sequence once per phrase
10"
rub brushes around tom
10"
play each note in a random sequence once per phrase
(8)
delay (5 v.), reverb (high), ringmod (low)


25
229
funk-like groove
together
flz.
Tpt in C
p
p < f
p < f
mp < f > p
f sub.
f
to sticks
together
funk-like groove
Dr.
f
mp
mp
funk-like groove
together
8va
8va
Pno
mp
(8)
f
sfz
p sfz
sfz
f
delay (5 v.), reverb (low), ringmod (low)
Ele


26
236
robotic
Tpt in C
robotic
pp
Dr.
f
f
robotic
(8)
Pno
f
pp
delay (3 v.), ringmod (high), distortion (high)
Ele


27
242
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
flz.
delay (5 v.), reverb (low), ringmod (high)


28
like a computer freezing
249
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
like a computer freezing
like a computer freezing
delay (10 v.), ringmod (high), distortion (high)


256
slightly uneven
Tpt in C
Dr.
Pno
Ele
ff
f
29
10"
262
flz.
freeze in place
(C#)
(C)
(click)