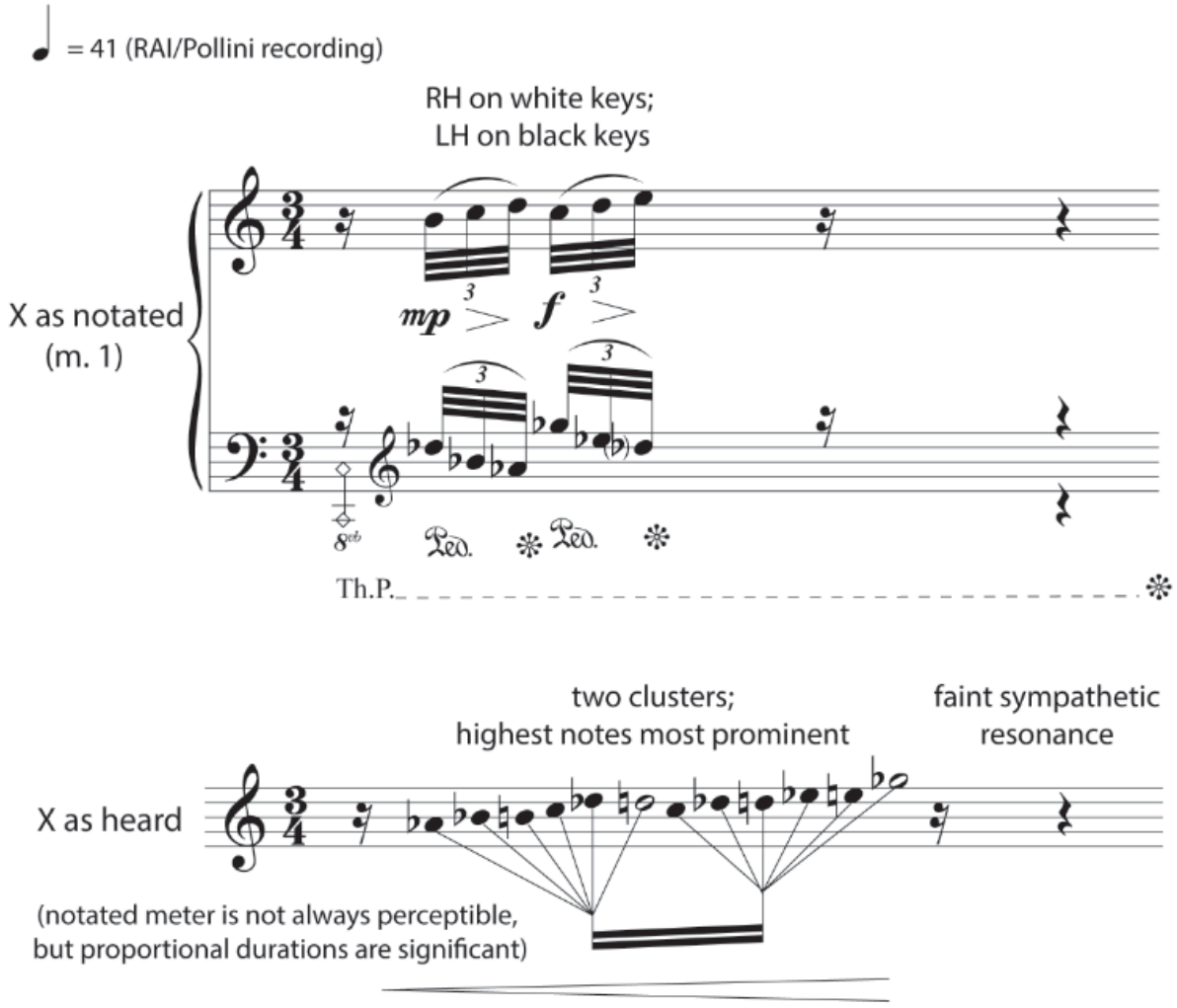
A JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR MUSIC THEORY

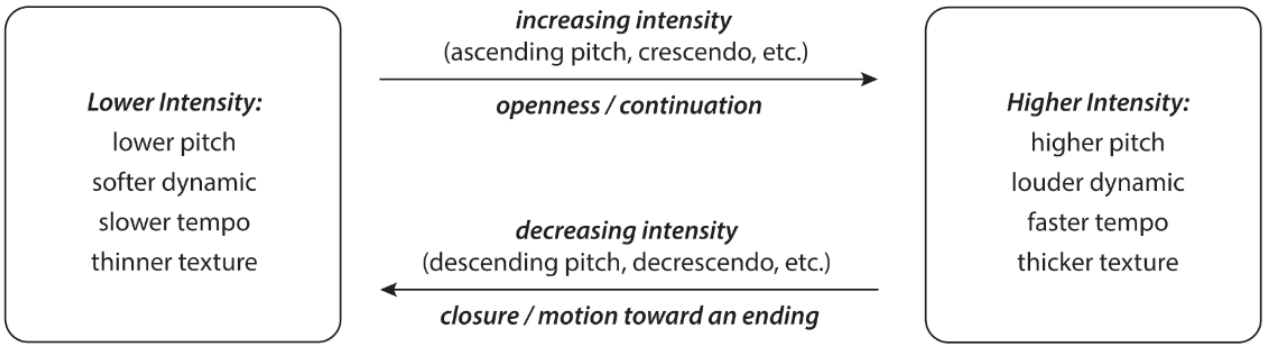
MTO 29.4 Examples: Boyle, Gestural Temporality in Sciarrino's *Recitativo oscuro*

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)
https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.23.29.4/mto.23.29.4.boyle.html

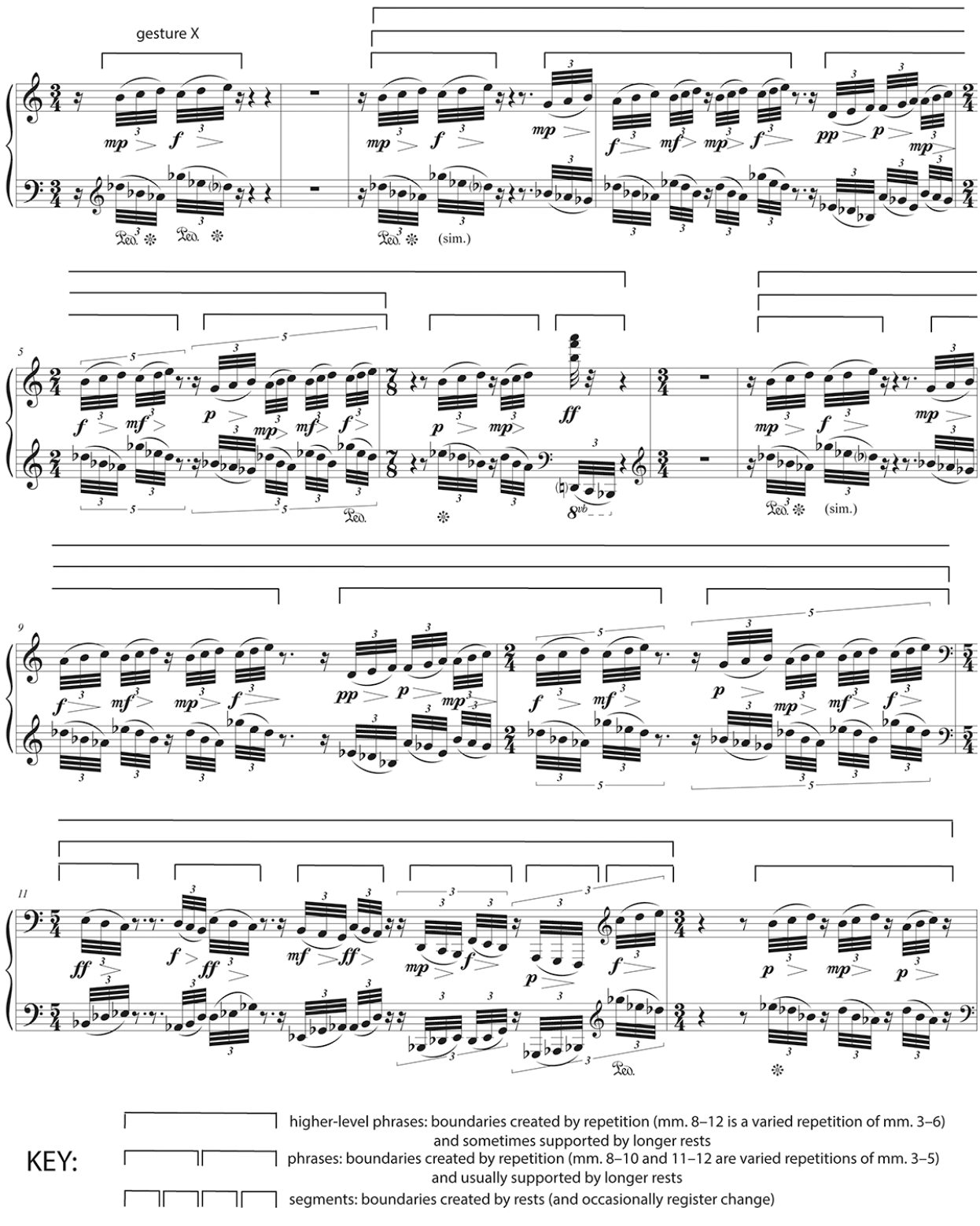
Example 1. Gesture "X" at the opening of *Recitativo oscuro* (0:00–0:08): the notation conveys two pianistic motions, but the two cells combine into a single aural gesture



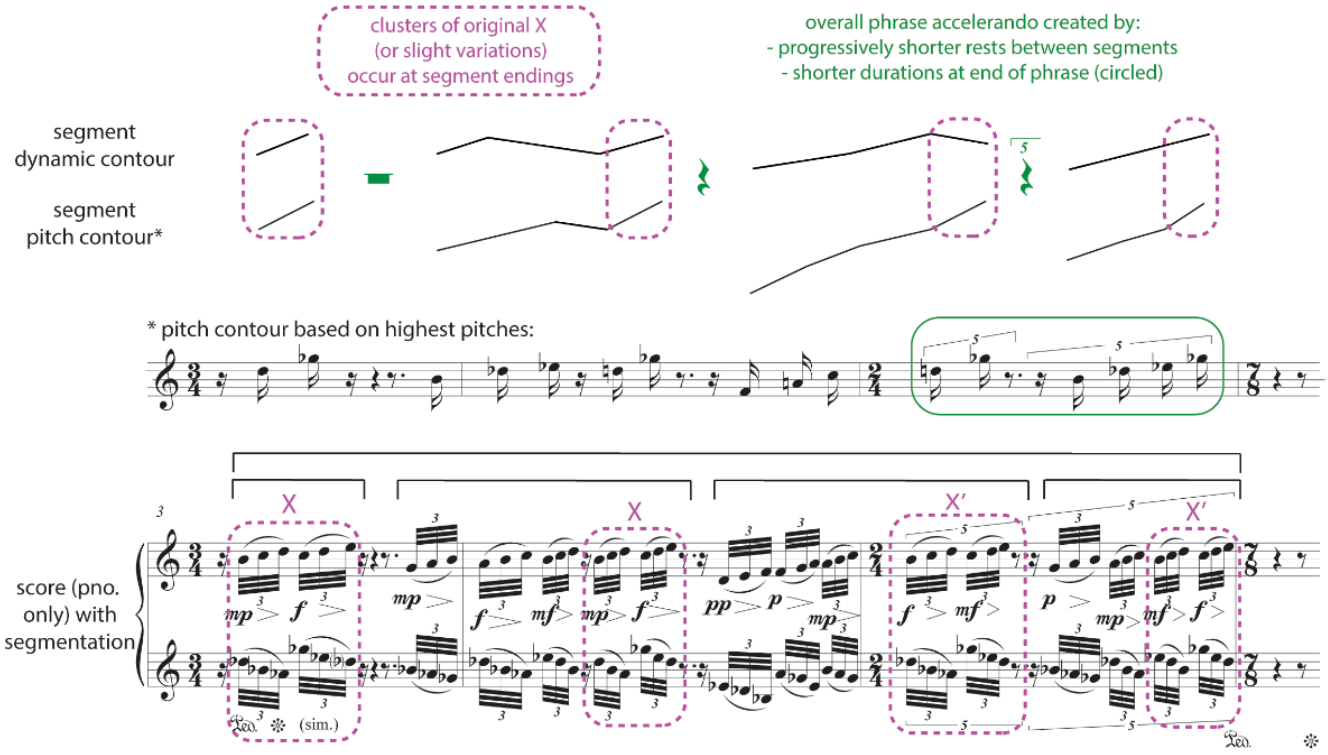
Example 2. Relationship between intensity change and temporal function, with examples of relative low/high intensity mappings



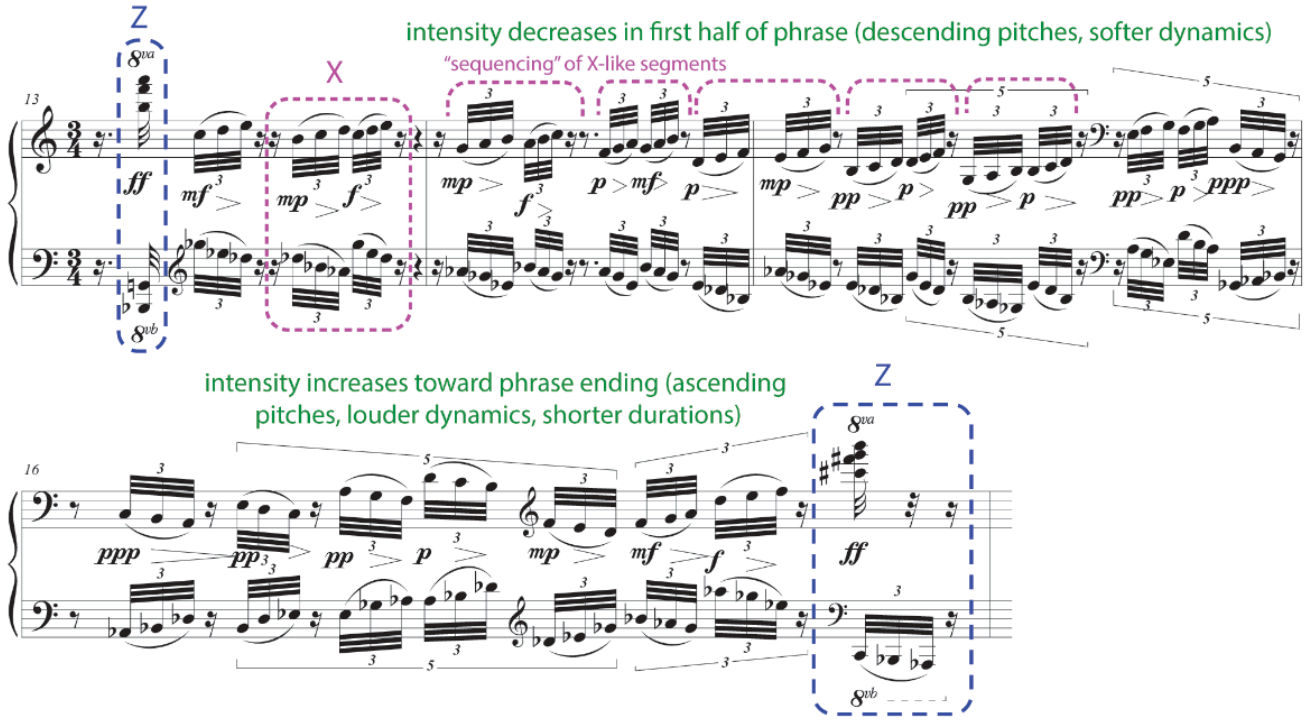
Example 3. *Recitativo oscuro*, mm. 1–12 (0:00–0:46), piano solo with segmentation (occasional orchestral parts in this section are not shown)



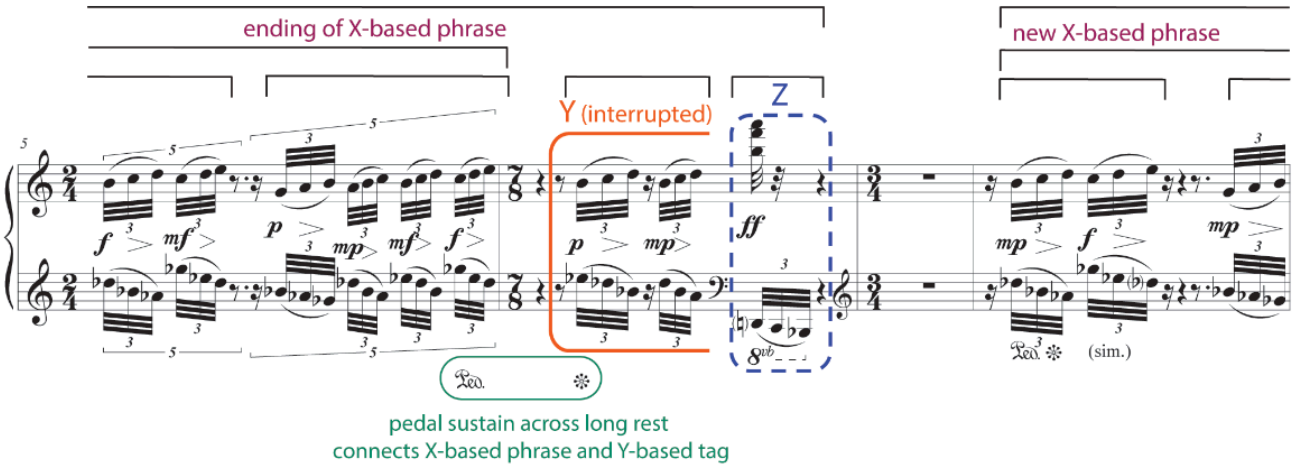
Example 4. First phrase of the piano solo (mm. 3–5; 0:09–0:19), in which gesture X's original intensity profile is mirrored at both segment and phrase level



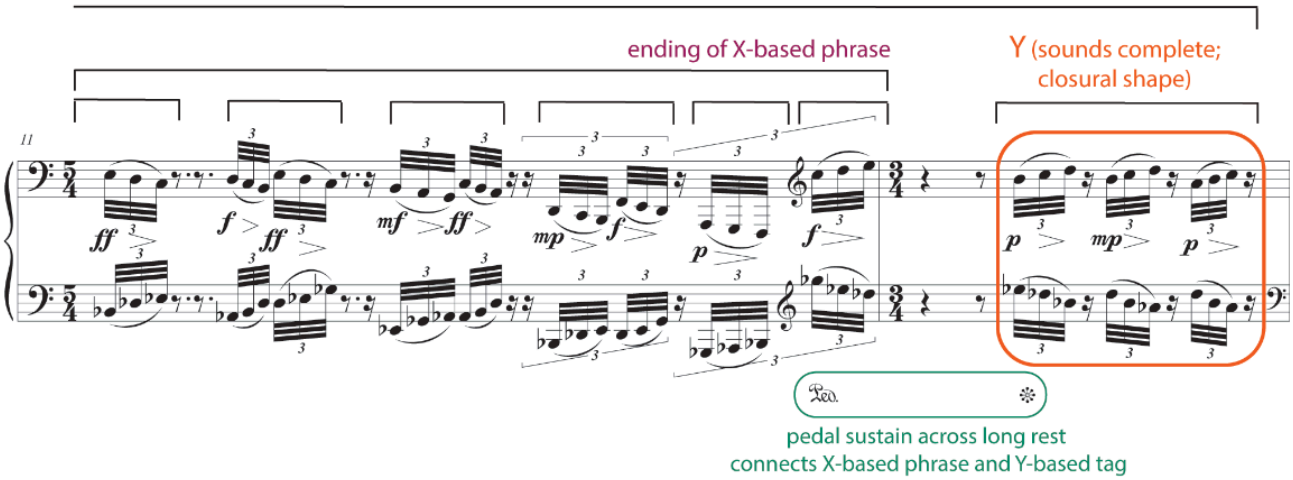
Example 5. *Recitativo oscuro*, mm. 13–16 (0:47–1:03), piano solo only. Gesture X realizes its implicit opening function, continuing with quasi-sequential motion, and leads to a phrase with an inverted intensity profile.



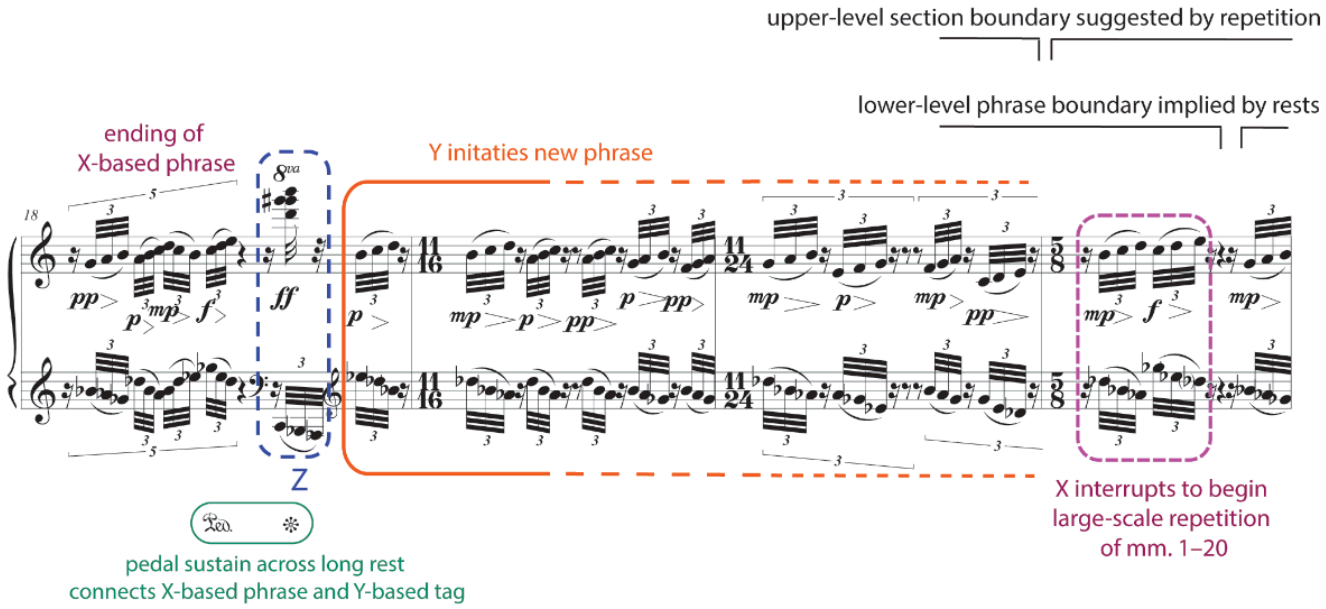
Example 6. Gesture "Y" emerges in mm. 1–12 (0:16–0:24 and 0:37–0:47)



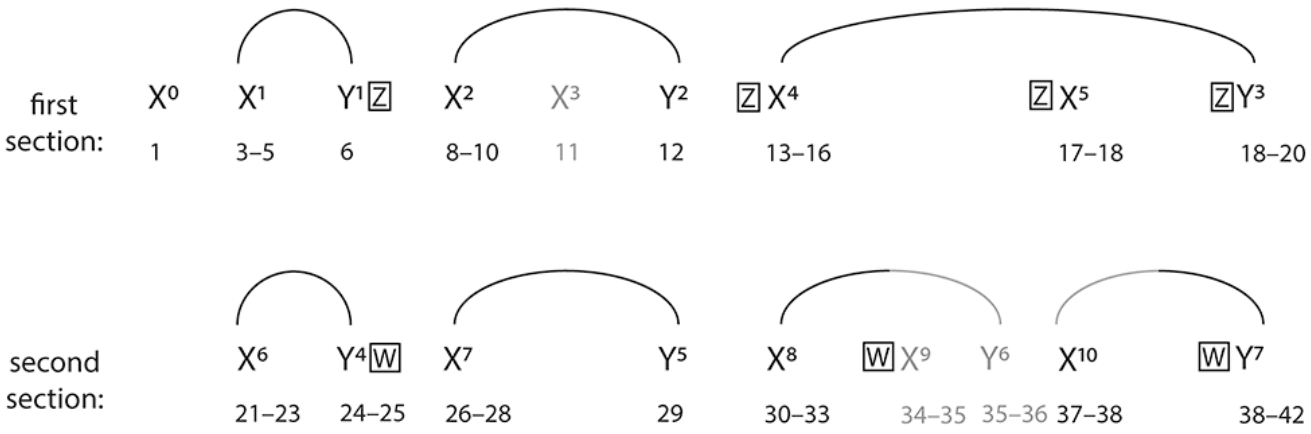
(mm. 9–10, ending of high-register X-based phrase and start of low-register X-based phrase, are omitted)



Example 7. *Recitativo oscuro*, mm. 18–21 (1:07–1:21): the third Y-based tag initiates a new phrase, which is interrupted by the start of a large-scale repetition; segmentation criteria conflict around the formal boundary.



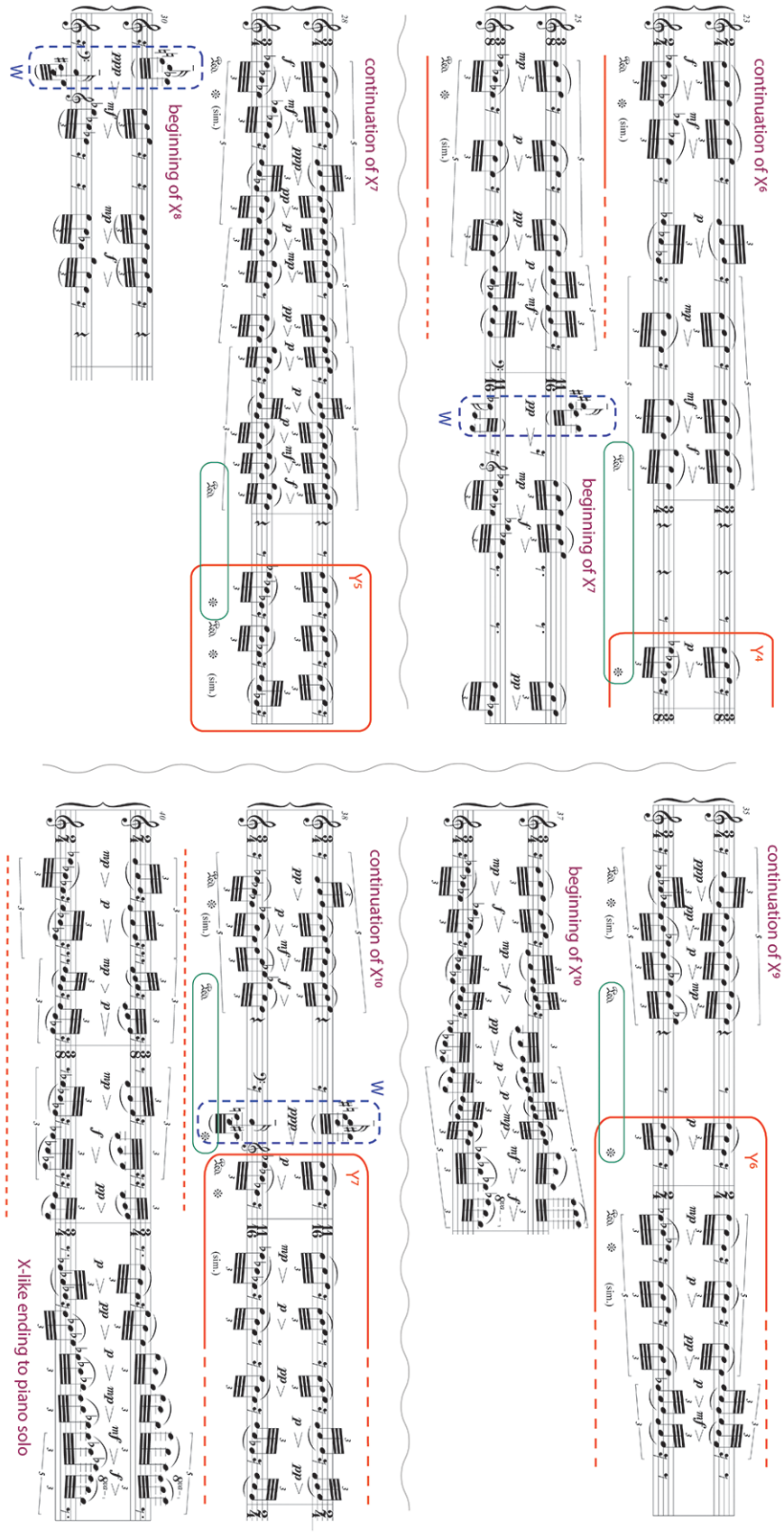
Example 8. Large-scale repetition in the piano solo



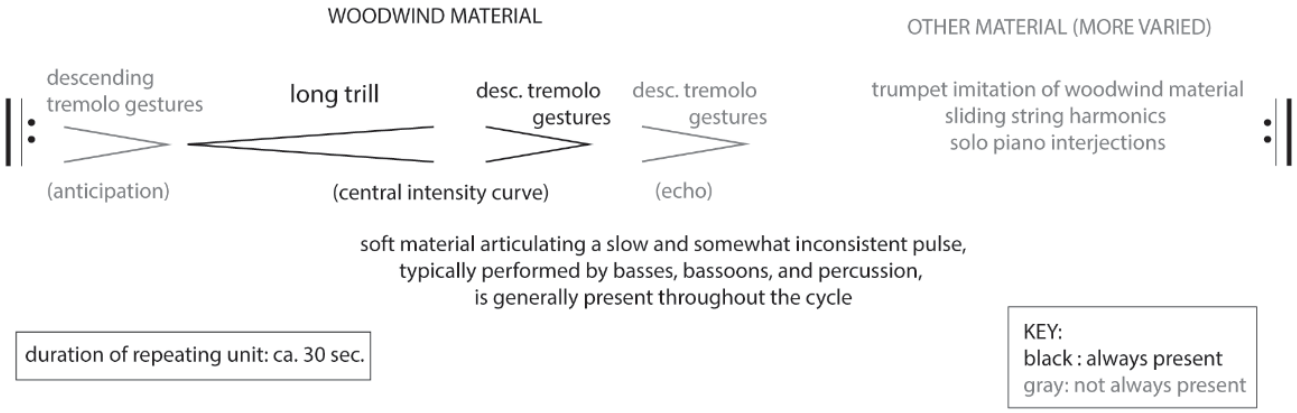
KEY:

X^0	opening X gesture
X^1, X^2 etc.	X-based phrases
X^3, X^9 etc.	phrases not present in both sections
Y^1, Y^2 etc.	Y-based tags
Z , W	interrupting gestures
	grouping of one or more X-based phrases with a Y-based tag
3–5, etc.	measure numbers for phrases

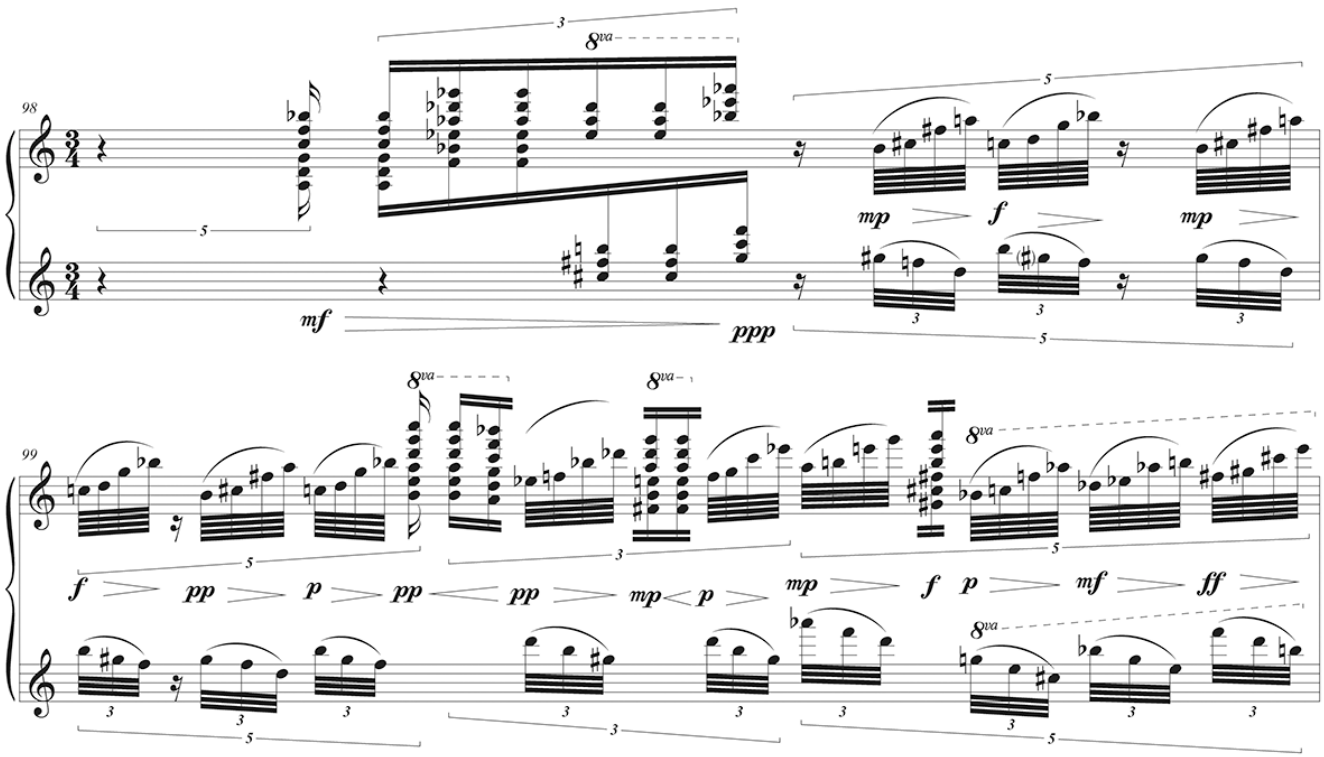
Example 9. Y-based tags in the second half of the piano solo (1:25–1:38, 1:44–1:56, 2:15–2:25, 2:25–2:43)



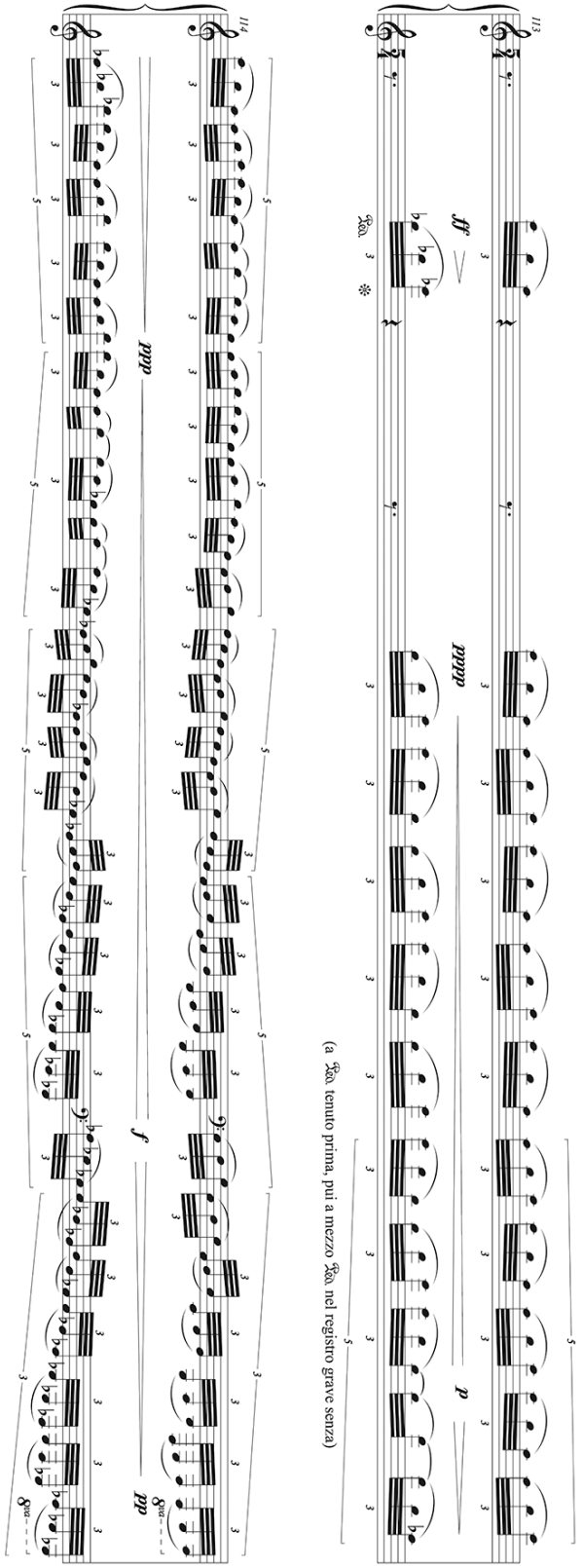
Example 10. Elements of the cycle in *Recitativo oscuro*, which repeats with variations and occasional disruptions approximately mm. 49–184 (3:00 to 14:47). The accompanying audio excerpt is from 4:09–5:49 and includes three repetitions of the cycle.



Example 11. Diatonic and quasi-diatonic piano part in the first outburst passage, mm. 98–99 (refer to Audio Example 1 to hear this excerpt in context)

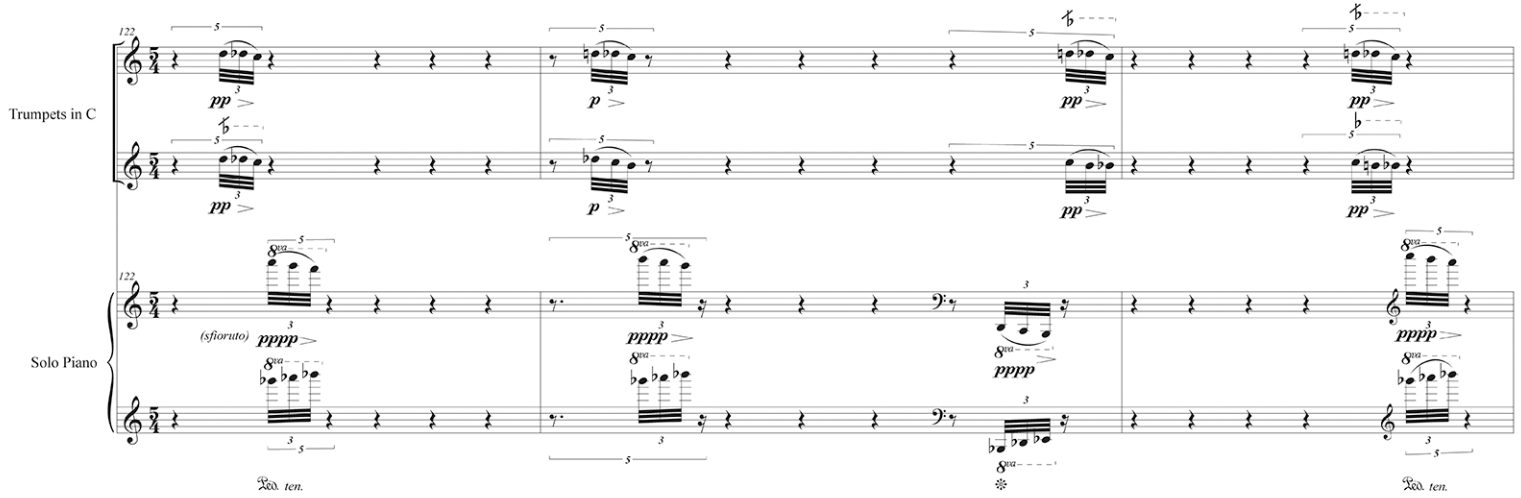


Example 12. Solo piano in mm. 113–114 takes on greater continuity of orchestral cycle. Audio excerpt (8:20–8:40) begins in the previous measure, when the piano still punctuates each cluster with an individual decrescendo as in the solo, and continues into the woodwind trill that follows.

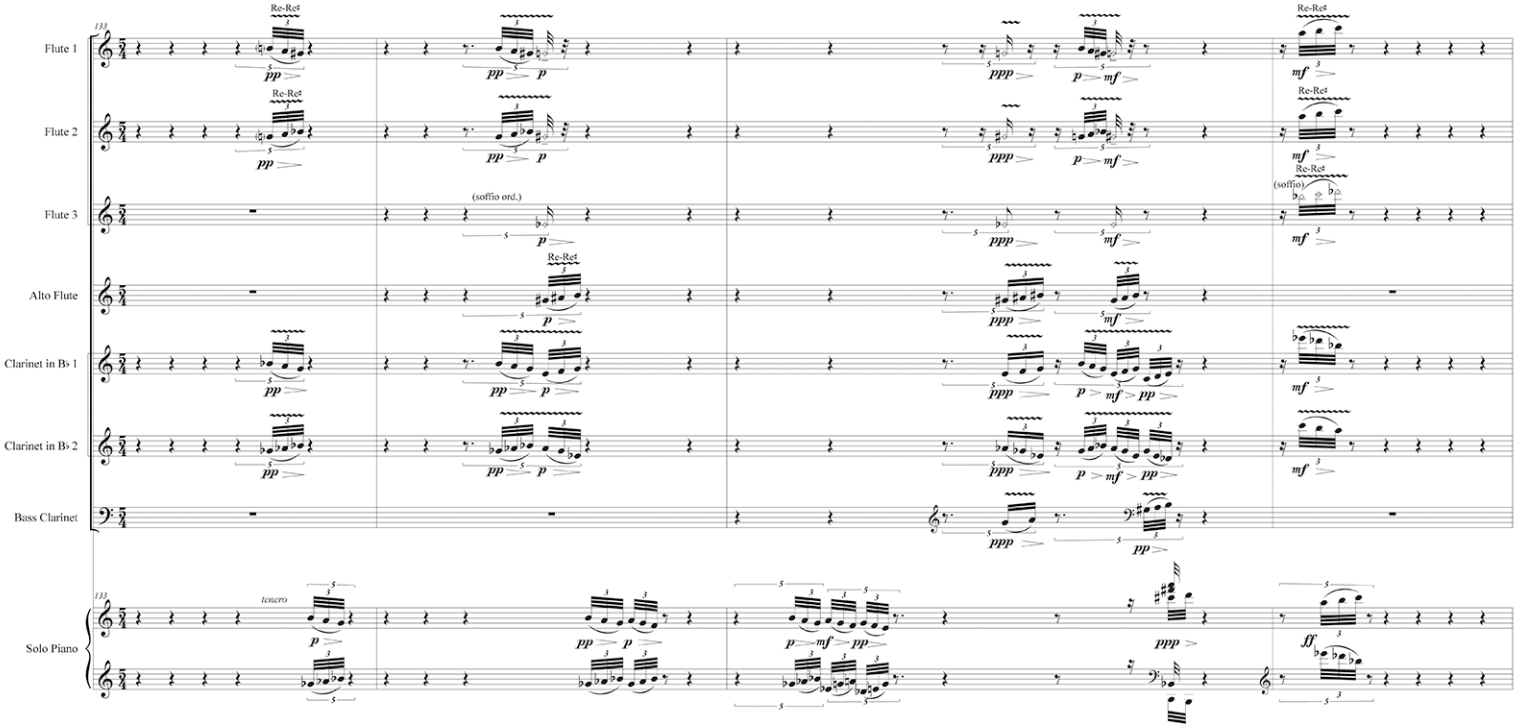


Example 13. Dialogues between piano and orchestral instruments. Audio excerpts are from 9:13–9:25 and 10:13–10:32.

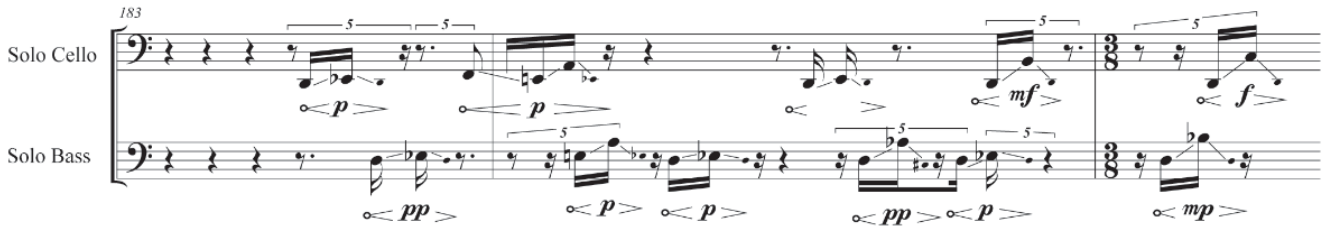
Call-and-response with trumpets, mm. 122–124



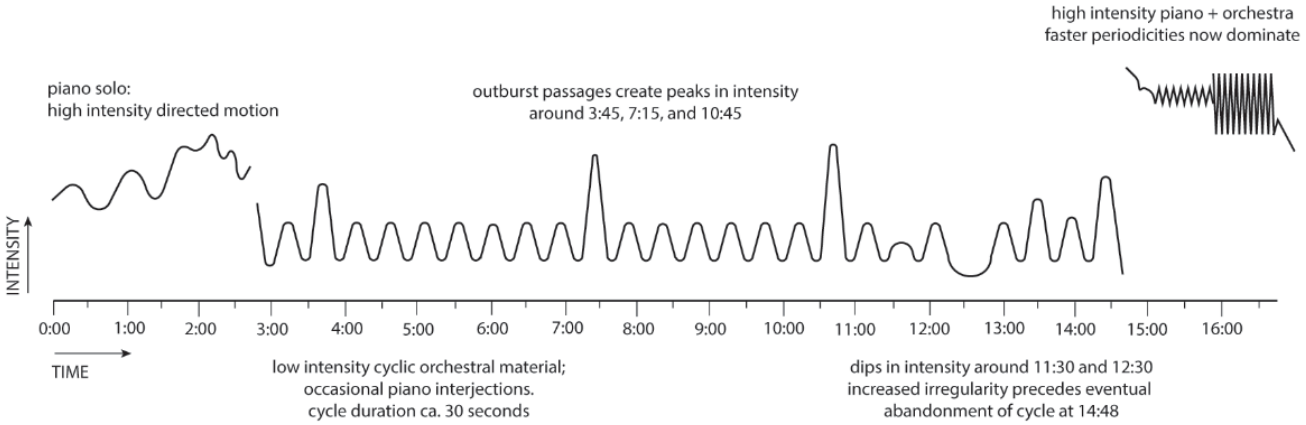
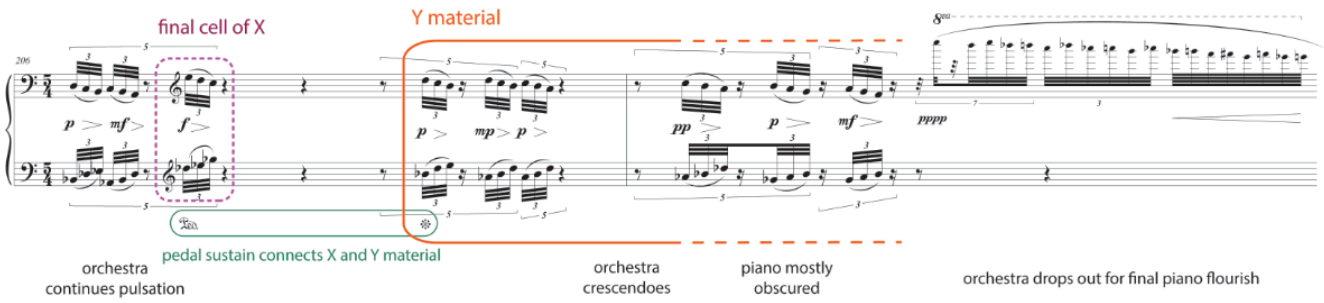
Call-and-response with woodwinds, mm. 133–136



Example 14. A dialogue between solo cello and solo bass in the *sillabazione scivolata* style (mm. 183–185). Audio excerpt (14:36–14:48) includes this soft material in context, bracketed by louder piano material and the explosive start of the final section.



Example 15. Visual representation of intensity and cyclic material in *Recitativo oscuro* as a whole: form mirrors inverted arch shape of individual phrases from the opening piano solo



Example 16. The clearest reference to X and Y material after the solo occurs in the final moments of the concerto (solo piano, mm. 207–208; audio excerpt, 16:19–16:34, continues to ending in m. 209)