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# Preludes

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**Preludes. [Original composition]**

Clay, David E., M.A.

San Jose State University, 1993

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PRELUDES

A Master's Project Score  
Presented to  
The Faculty of the Department of Music  
San Jose State University

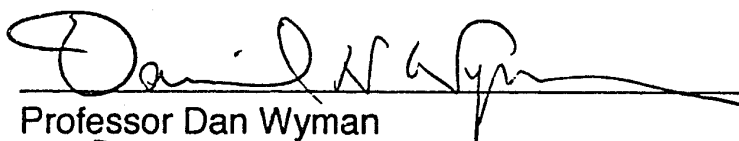
In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree

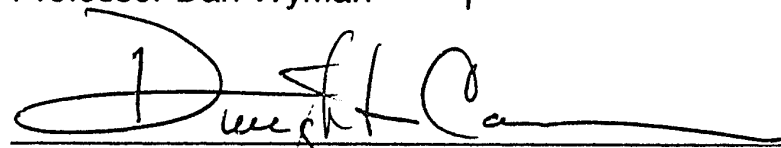
Master of Arts

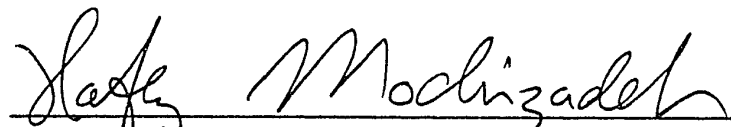
by

David E. Clay  
December, 1993

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Professor Dan Wyman

  
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Professor Dwight Cannon

  
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Dr. Hafez Modirzadeh

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

  
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## ABSTRACT

## PRELUDES

by David E. Clay

"Preludes" is music for a theater piece performed on November 30th and December 2nd, 1992, at San Jose State University. The project was a collaboration with Richard Andrews, concurrently a candidate for Master of Fine Arts at San Jose State University. The music is scored for percussion (2 players), Harp, keyboards, and singer. It makes use of digitally sampled sounds, pre recorded music, and specially designed percussion instruments; improvisation is an important element of the work's structure.

## INTRODUCTION

"Preludes" is music for a theater piece called "Fluid Discontinuities, or Living Life Backwards", a collaboration of the composer and Richard Andrews, a visual artist. The music and visuals are separate works, but were both conceived as elements of the collaboration. This joint thesis project was performed at the Morris Dailey Auditorium at San Jose State University on November 30, and December 2, 1992. The complete stage piece uses actors, lighting, and sculptural stage sets in addition to five musicians playing traditional and original instruments. The audience occupies the stage with the action and music surrounding them; the work is a large scale environment which the audience enters to view and interact.

"Fluid Discontinuities" is a presentation of images and actions which sometimes overlap and blend together. First is a death scene - the first actor, who is the central character/narrator/ seeker/ observer of his own life, rides a carousel sort of sculpture as he goes through the agony of dying. He enacts the uncertainty and anguish of not understanding what his life has been. Second, another actor enters. He is dressed as a businessman and wears a collar to which is fastened a large chain. The chain ties him to a large brief case which he laboriously drags across the stage. The case is filled with toys and other relics of childhood.

Third, the businessman and a 'primitive' man enter from opposite sides of the stage. The primitive man is dressed in animal skins. The two characters slowly walk toward each other, meet, embrace, undress, and exchange clothing. The seeker watches this action.

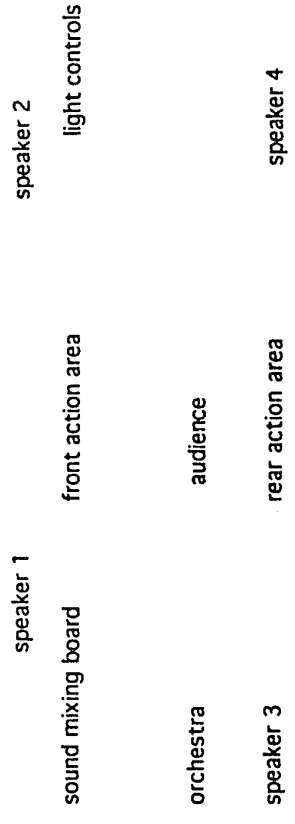
The fourth scene takes place on an elevated platform behind the audience. The modern man and the primitive man approach each other in slow motion and the modern man tries to take the early man's hand. The primitive finally refuses to meet the other and turns away.

Scene five takes place in front of the audience. A sculpture which looks like a crucifixion setting moves to the center of the stage. On it is suspended a limp person. The piece is illuminated from below and behind so that the figure is seen only in outline. The seeker sees the figure, becomes alarmed, summons the other two characters to help, and together they remove the figure from the crucifix. They take the figure, now fully visible, to a couch and try to revive it. At this point we realize that she is a woman. The seeker tries to bring her back to life, but he fails. During this section the singer has become visible. She stands in a pulpit-like construction, elevated somewhat above the action and the musicians. She is like a Greek chorus, commenting on the play.

In the closing action the seeker tries to attach himself to the crucifix, fails, and dejectedly leaves the stage. The other actors enter with large fragmented photographs of the seeker

which they hold together and show to the audience. The first photograph shows the seeker upright and fully clothed, the second photograph shows him prone and naked. The lights dim. (See, Richard Andrews, "Fluid Discontinuities" in the San Jose State University Library)

### STAGE LAYOUT



The music is similar to the stage action in that different sections of the composition overlap and blend together. The intention is to present a sound collage rather than a through-composed piece. The music parallels the stage images in a loose way, synchronizing with the stage action only at a few key points - the beginning, the end, and during scene five when the seeker and his other selves try to rescue the feminine figure. The music, some of which is taped, is amplified with a quadrasonic sound system. The piece is without text, except for the vowels and sounds used by the singer.

Structured improvisation is a key element of the music. The sensitivity and ingenuity of the performing musicians is relied upon as a formative principle of the piece. Improvised sections are given form and coherence in three ways: First, the instruments and sounds to be used are carefully designated. Second, imitation is used as an organizing principle. Performers are sometimes asked to mimic each other or to imitate a composed section of music. Third, the performers are directed and rehearsed to interact with each other (and the actors) with particular attention to motivic continuity and musical space. The performers are to be partners in the process of composition.

## PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS

Standard notational practice is followed where measure lines are present.

All metronome and duration markings are approximate.

In sections without measure markings (proportional notation) durations are indicated by time designations, proportional placement, and extended beams. Open note heads are to be played roughly twice as long as solid note heads.

Care must be exercised in setting up the amplification system and in mixing sound. Quadraphonic sound is very useful, especially in blending the overlapping sections of the piece.

Sound processing should be used where desired. Reverb, delay, and echo effects are effective for the voice and the oak chimes. The judgment of the live mixer is an important element of the performance.

The various sections of "Preludes" overlap or blend together. This process requires special attention to dynamics and pacing as the sections are conducted in and out.

Specific instructions are given at the beginning of each section.

## CUE POINTS

The music should synchronize with the following stage actions. The stage actions are referenced in the score by the appropriate letters (enclosed).

- A Action begins. Lights come up suddenly, revealing the turning carousel and actor.
- B The carousel stops, stage darkens, second actor enters.
- C Stage front darkens, the action on the back stage wall begins.
- D Actors remove the tied figure from the crucifix structure.
- E First actor tries to revive the woman.
- F The first photograph is displayed at stage front.
- G The second photograph is removed, lights down.
- H Lights up.

## INSTRUMENTS

### Conductor:

May be one of the musicians or the sound mixer

### Voice:

mezzo soprano, prepared to improvise with wordless sounds, clicks, animal sounds, and percussion noises

### Percussion 1:

kalimba  
 12 redwood chimes\*  
 2 suspended cymbals, 19 and 22 inches  
 floor tom tom  
 contact pick-up to be used with any of the instruments at the player's discretion

### Percussion 2:

6 oak chimes\*, amplified with pizzo contact pick-ups  
 mallet midi driver (Kat), connected to the synthesizer and sampler

### Harp:

amplified with pizzo contact pick-ups

### Keyboards:

Piano

Korg O1W Pro (or other similar synthesizer capable of producing "orchestral" sounds and a piano-like patch)

EPS Keyboard Sampler or similar keyboard capable of live playback of samples (particularly the voice samples in section 5)

\*The wooden chimes, designed and built by the composer, are open tubes suspended vertically. The redwood chimes are 2.5 inches in section and 8, 6, 4.5, 3.75, 3, and 2.5 feet in length. The oak chimes are 3 inches in section and 6, 4.5, 3.75, 3, and 2.5, and 2 feet long. Thus the resonant lengths of the tubes decrease by the rough ratio of 4-3. The oak chimes can be easily played with fingers or hands as well as mallets, sticks, or other chimes, and are amplified by means of simple contact pick-ups fastened at the upper ends. Timbre changes can easily be effected by striking on or away from the resonant points (3/4 of the length and the ends).

## I: OPENING

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Synthesizer 1 plays a composite program with flute, bells, solo flute (upper part of keyboard).

Synthesizer 2 plays a composite program with gong, bell and tympani (at lower velocities only).

The Kat midi driver plays the same program as Synthesizer 2.

The beginning should synchronize with lights up and the start of stage action. Loud, dramatic, even melodramatic.

The final fermata must sustain until the beginning of Section 2.

**A** 2 sus cyms

Perc. *mf* floor tom *mf* press head with mallet *mf*

mallet synth *mf*

Harp *mf*

Synth 1 *mf*

Synth 2 *sfz*

The musical score is arranged in five systems. The first system is for Percussion, featuring two suspended cymbals (2 sus cyms), a floor tom, and a mallet. The mallet part includes the instruction 'press head with mallet' and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The second system is for Mallet Synth, with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The third system is for Harp, also with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The fourth system is for Synth 1, with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The fifth system is for Synth 2, with a dynamic marking of *sfz*. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs, along with performance markings like accents and dynamic changes.

**B**

**Perc**  
p [9] p [11] mf p

**mallet synth**  
mf p

**Harp**  
p mf p

**Synth 1**  
mf p

**Synth 2**  
mf p

**continue similar ad. lib**

**continue similar ad. lib**

*mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*



## 2: QUARTET

### INSTRUCTIONS

The performance should be in fairly strict tempo, with limited vibrato. The last passage - mm 76 to end -- must be played with a very subdued quality. The last harmonics should almost disappear as section 3 begins over them. This last section should also be faded to one side of the sound system as the harp enters from the other side.

forcefully, in strict tempo

Musical score for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Cello, measures 4-8. The score is written in 3/4 time. Violin 1 and Violin 2 parts feature melodic lines with accents and dynamic markings of *f* and *mf*. Viola and Cello parts provide harmonic support with sustained notes and rhythmic patterns. Measure numbers 4, 8, and 12 are indicated at the top of the staves.

Musical score for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Cello, measures 12-16. The score continues with similar melodic and harmonic textures. Violin parts show more complex rhythmic figures and dynamic shifts between *f* and *mf*. Viola and Cello parts maintain a steady accompaniment. Measure numbers 12 and 16 are indicated at the top of the staves.

Musical score for measures 20-24, featuring four staves: V1 (Violin 1), V2 (Violin 2), Via. (Viola), and VC (Violoncello). The music is in 4/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *f*. Measure numbers 20, 24, and 28 are indicated above the staves.

Musical score for measures 28-32, featuring four staves: V1 (Violin 1), V2 (Violin 2), Via. (Viola), and VC (Violoncello). The music is in 4/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *p* and *mf*. Measure numbers 28 and 32 are indicated above the staves.

36 40

VC poco a poco cresc.

V1 V2 Vla VC

*mp* *mp* *f* *f*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 36 to 40. It features four staves: V1 (Violin I), V2 (Violin II), Vla (Viola), and VC (Violoncello). The key signature has one sharp (F#). The VC part begins with a dynamic marking of *poco a poco cresc.* and reaches a forte (*f*) dynamic by measure 40. The V1 and V2 parts have a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *mp* in measure 38. The Vla part has a dynamic marking of *f* in measure 40.

44 48

V1 V2 Vla VC

*sf* *sf* *mf* *f*

*dimin.* *solo espressively*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 44 to 48. It features four staves: V1 (Violin I), V2 (Violin II), Vla (Viola), and VC (Violoncello). The key signature has one sharp (F#). The V1 and V2 parts have a dynamic marking of *sf* (sforzando) in measure 44. The Vla part has a dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte) in measure 46. The VC part has a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) in measure 48. The V1 part includes a *dimin.* (diminuendo) marking in measure 47. The V2 part includes a *solo espressively* marking in measure 48.

Musical score for strings (Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello) from measure 52 to 56. The score is written in G major and 4/4 time. Measures 52-53 feature trills (tr) and very soft dynamics (pp) for the strings. Measures 54-56 feature a melodic line for the strings with dynamics ranging from mezzo-forte (mf) to piano (p). The instruction "sul ponticello" is written above the staves in measures 54-56.

Musical score for woodwinds (Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello) from measure 60 to 64. The score is written in G major and 4/4 time. Measures 60-61 feature a melodic line for the woodwinds with dynamics ranging from mezzo-forte (mf) to piano (p). The instruction "col legno" is written above the staves in measures 60-61. Measures 62-64 feature a melodic line for the woodwinds with dynamics ranging from mezzo-forte (mf) to piano (p). The instruction "nat." is written above the staves in measures 62-64.

Musical score for measures 68-72. The score is written for four staves: V1 (Violin I), V2 (Violin II), Vla. (Viola), and VC (Violoncello). Measure 68 is marked with a box containing the number 68. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The V1 staff has a 'div.' (divisi) marking above it. The notes are: V1 (B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat), V2 (B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat), Vla. (B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat), and VC (B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat). Measures 69-72 continue with similar melodic lines.

Musical score for measures 76-80. The score is written for four staves: V1 (Violin I), V2 (Violin II), Vla. (Viola), and VC (Violoncello). Measure 76 is marked with a box containing the number 76. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The notes are: V1 (B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat), V2 (B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat), Vla. (B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat), and VC (B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat). Measures 77-80 continue with similar melodic lines. The dynamic marking 'pp' (pianissimo) is present in measures 77, 78, 79, and 80.

84

V1 *ppp*  
V2 *ppp* R  
Via. *ppp* G  
VC *ppp* G

88

V1  
V2  
Via.  
VC

92

V1 V2 Vla. VC

This system of music covers measures 92 to 95. It features four staves: V1 (Violin I), V2 (Violin II), Vla. (Viola), and VC (Violoncello). The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings such as *ppp* and *pp*. The V1 staff has a *ppp* marking at the beginning of measure 92. The V2 staff has a *pp* marking at the beginning of measure 92. The Vla. and VC staves have *ppp* markings at the beginning of measure 92. The music concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 95.

96

V1 V2 Vla. VC

This system of music covers measures 96 to 99. It features four staves: V1 (Violin I), V2 (Violin II), Vla. (Viola), and VC (Violoncello). The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings such as *ppp* and *pp*. The V1 staff has a *ppp* marking at the beginning of measure 96. The V2 staff has a *ppp* marking at the beginning of measure 96. The Vla. and VC staves have *ppp* markings at the beginning of measure 96. The music concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 99.



### 3: CADENZA

#### INSTRUCTIONS

This section must be played very freely, in an exaggerated 'cadenza' style.

Beams tapering narrower indicate decelerando.

One percussionist may be directed to mimic the harp sounds with a kalimba and continue this improvisation into the next sections

C

with expression      let ring throughout

Harp

Harp

Harp

*♩* -80 forcefully, strict tempo

as fast as possible

Harp

L.H.

R.H.

Harp

Harp

(Ab) pedal gliss.

(Ab)

D

Detailed description: The page contains three systems of musical notation. The first system is for the Harp, with a tempo marking of quarter note = 80, 'forcefully, strict tempo', and a performance instruction 'as fast as possible'. It features a treble clef and a bass clef with a complex, rapid arpeggiated pattern. The second system is for the Left Hand (L.H.) and Right Hand (R.H.), with a treble clef for the L.H. and a bass clef for the R.H., showing a melodic line in the L.H. and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the R.H. The third system is for the Harp, with a treble clef and a bass clef, featuring a glissando marked '(Ab) pedal gliss.' and a chord marked 'D'.

## 4: CHORUS (in two sections)

### INSTRUCTIONS

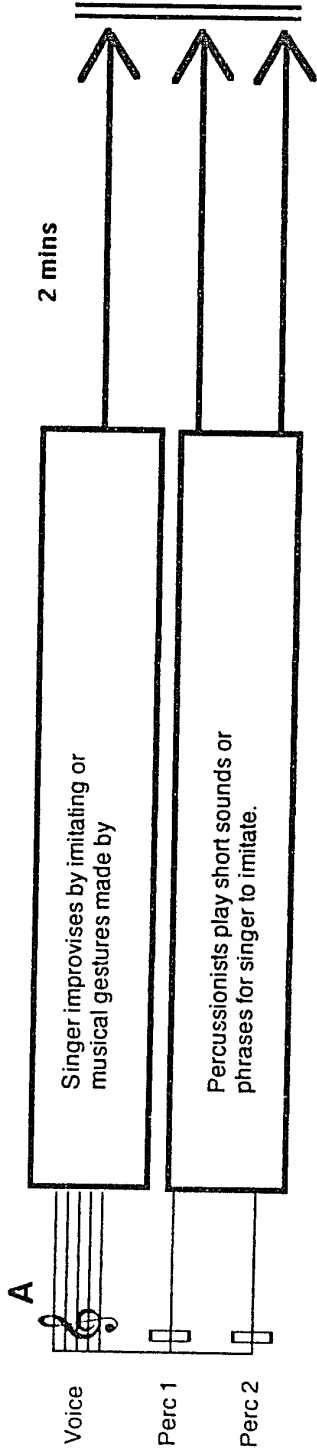
A: The percussionists begin by presenting short individual sounds or short phrases which the singer will imitate. It is important that there be ample time for the vocalist to respond dramatically to each event. As the piece progresses, tension can be increased by playing longer phrases and reducing the singer's response time.

Percussionist 2 will use the oak chimes, but also the midi driver to trigger a set of samples which can be made from the singer's voice, the chimes, or any other 'abstract' sounds the players choose.

Duration may be 2 minutes or more.

B: The piano - or synthesized piano - begins the first ostinato very slowly, the percussion sounds fade, then the singer begins the melody as notated. The singer uses the notated pitches, but improvises vowel sounds to use. This section should contrast with part A not only in tempo and feeling, but in the linguistic materials used. Here there should be only long vowel sounds.

The end must be very soft, followed by a period of silence.



**B**

Voice

Piano

expressively

12<sup>m</sup>

*p*

*pp*

Repeat evenly

Voice: *bend*

Piano: *pp*

Repeat evenly

Voice: *bend*

Piano: *ppp*

2 mins. 4 mins. total

*ppp*

*fade*

*ppp*

## 5: ARIA

22

### INSTRUCTIONS

The keyboard player plays each cluster as notated, very slowly, sustaining the pitches long enough to allow the singer's note to fully sound and decay. The singer chooses one pitch from the cluster and sings that pitch in imitation of the sample program. The singer may wait for the cluster to be complete or enter before all of the cluster notes are established. The singer may choose to not sing with some of the clusters.

The sample program is made from samples of the singer intoning the long vowels 'Oh' and 'Ah'. It is important that the microphone used for sampling be the same as that used for the performance. The samples are combined into a patch with a very slow attack - up to 2 seconds - and a very slow release time - up to 4 seconds. The patch should sound like a human voice, but with a very dry quality.

Singer imitates any one pitch played by sample player.

F 8" voice sampler

voice

sampler


voice sampler

voice

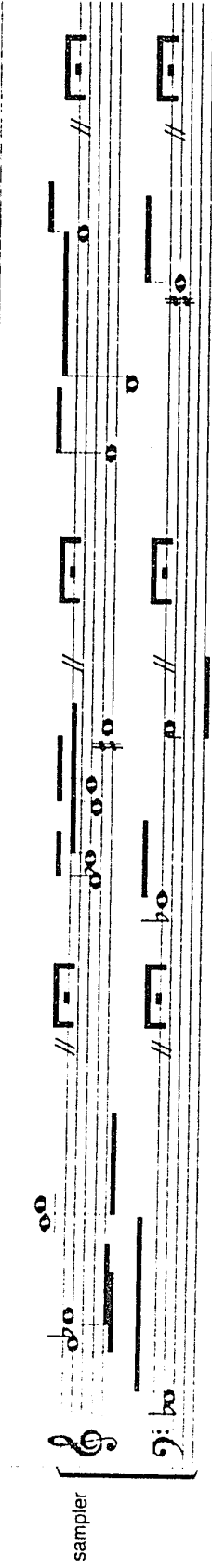
sampler



voice

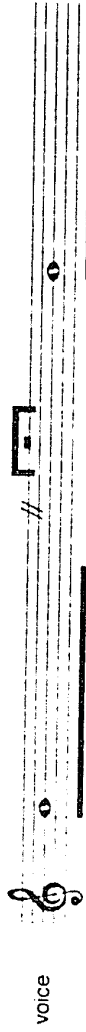


sampler

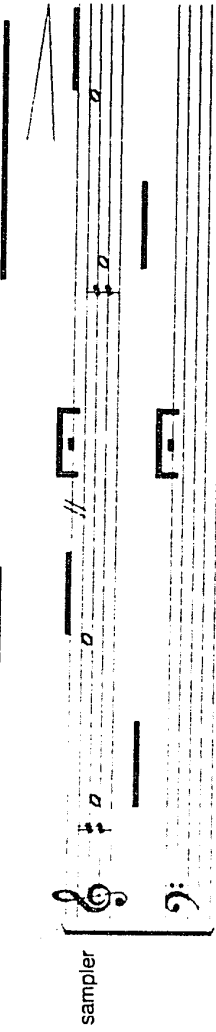


As written.

voice



sampler



As written.

## 6: CLOSING

### INSTRUMENTS

Percussion: 2 suspended cymbals  
tom tom

Mallet Midi Driver: plays Synth 2

Harp

Synth 1: composite patch with flute, bells, solo flute  
(upper part of keyboard)

Synth 2: composite patch with gong, bell and tympani  
(at lower velocities only)

### INSTRUCTIONS

This is a reprise of the opening, and should be as much like the opening as possible - without the improvisation section.

**G**

Perc. 2 sus cyms floor tom. press head with mallet

*mf* **3** **5** **7**

mallet synth

Harp

Synth 1

Synth 2

*mf* *sfz*

The musical score consists of five staves. The Percussion staff (top) features a sequence of notes with dynamic markings *p* and *mf*, and a hairpin crescendo. The Mallet Synth staff (second) contains a melodic line with notes marked *mf* and *p*, and a hairpin crescendo. The Harp staff (third) shows a sustained chord with a hairpin crescendo. The Synth 1 staff (fourth) has a sustained chord with a hairpin crescendo. The Synth 2 staff (bottom) features a melodic line with notes marked *mf* and *p*, and a hairpin crescendo. The score includes various musical notations such as stems, beams, and dynamic markings.