

karma is a cruel mistress

for contrabass and computer

Brad Decker

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2017

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program note:

Karma is a Cruel Mistress, if she exists.

I began this work soon after the November 2016 election, but it evolved into a reflection upon current events. We are taught to believe that there is a balance between good and evil. Is that so? Do love and hate have a symbiotic relationship? Beauty can be found in a world of dark, dissonant moments. This essence is our source of hope.

The bass is out of tune because the world is imperfect. A and G strings have been detuned a quarter flat. This creates interesting relationships between harmonic overtones for each string, and certain portions of the piece exploit these dyads.

The detuning can be overcome by adjusting fingering position of traditional notes on the double bass, however harmonic overtones don't lie. They expose the true dissonance that lies beneath.

The computer portion of the piece is a hybrid of live processing and pre-composed samples. At some points, all three elements (live processing, prerecorded sounds, double bass performance) are combined. Sometimes the double bass is alone. Digital elements linger.

-b.

technical note:

This work is intended to be performed on double bass, with pickup. Pickup should send audio to a computer running Max 7 through an audio interface.

The Max 7 patch controls the playback of samples (1) and the live processing (2) referred to in the score. The third button (3) turns them both off.

The computer output is stereo.

I recommend using a foot MIDI controller to control the Max 7 program. If that is not practical, a technician can control the Max 7 program off-stage.

For more information or technical support, please contact me at b.decker75@gmail.com

E A^b D G^b
duration: ca 6:30

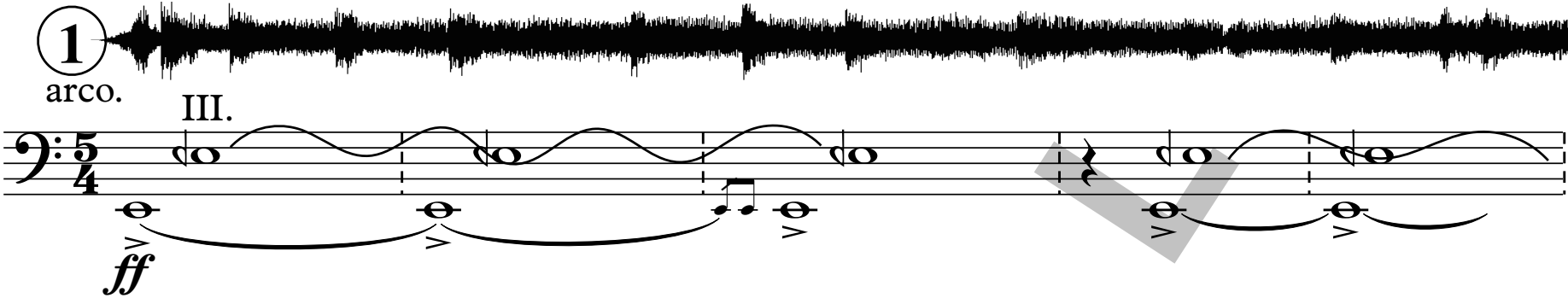
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♩ = 60
5" / bar

Sample 1 [0:32]

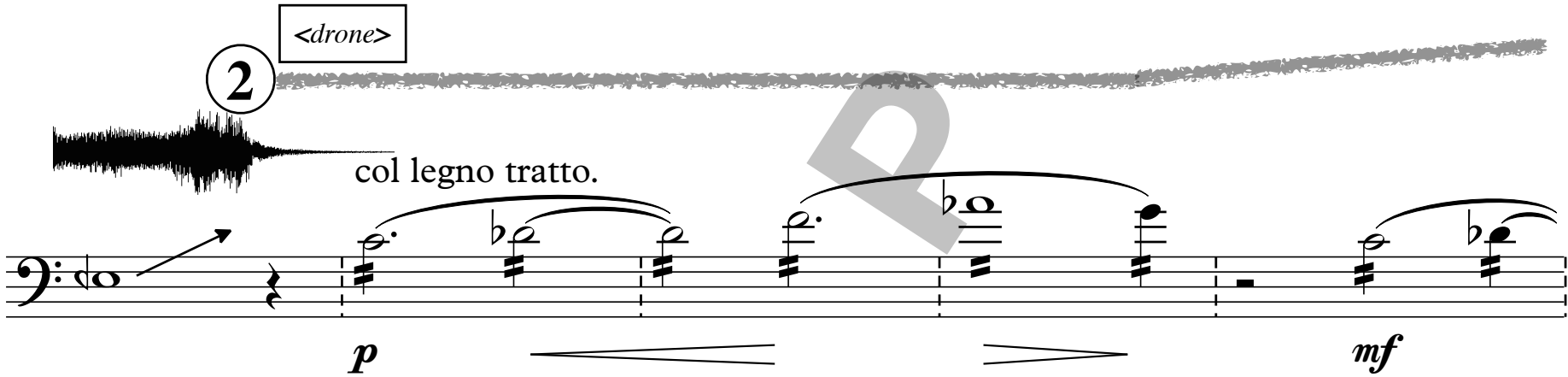
1 arco. III.



2 <drone>

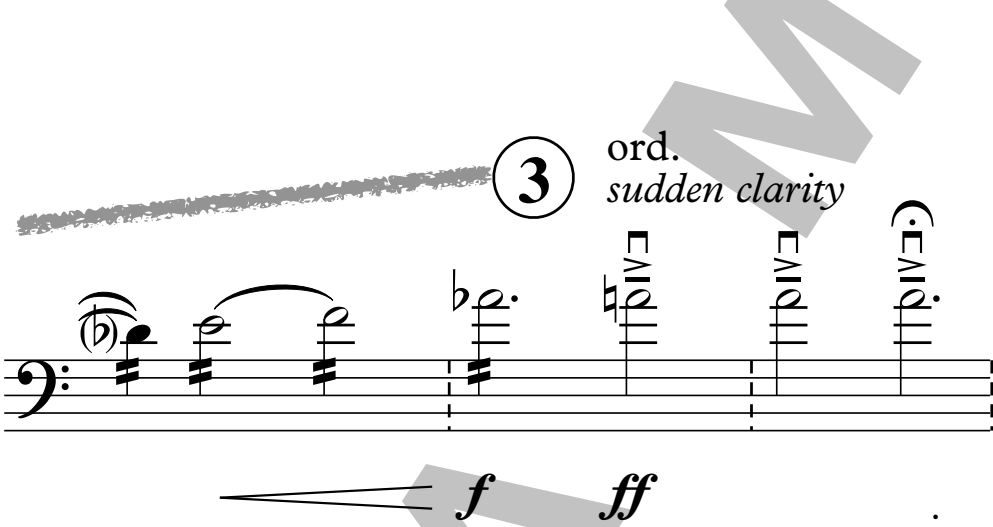
col legno tratto.

p mf



3 ord. sudden clarity

f ff

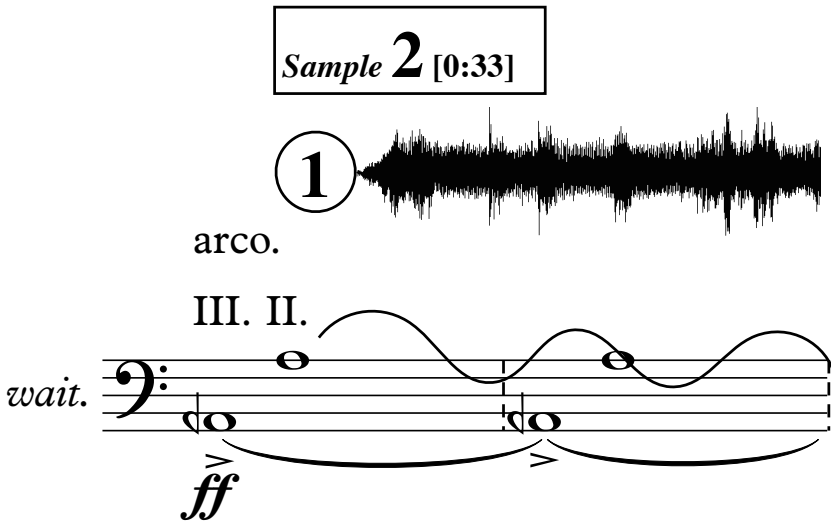


Sample 2 [0:33]

1 arco. III. II.

ff

wait.

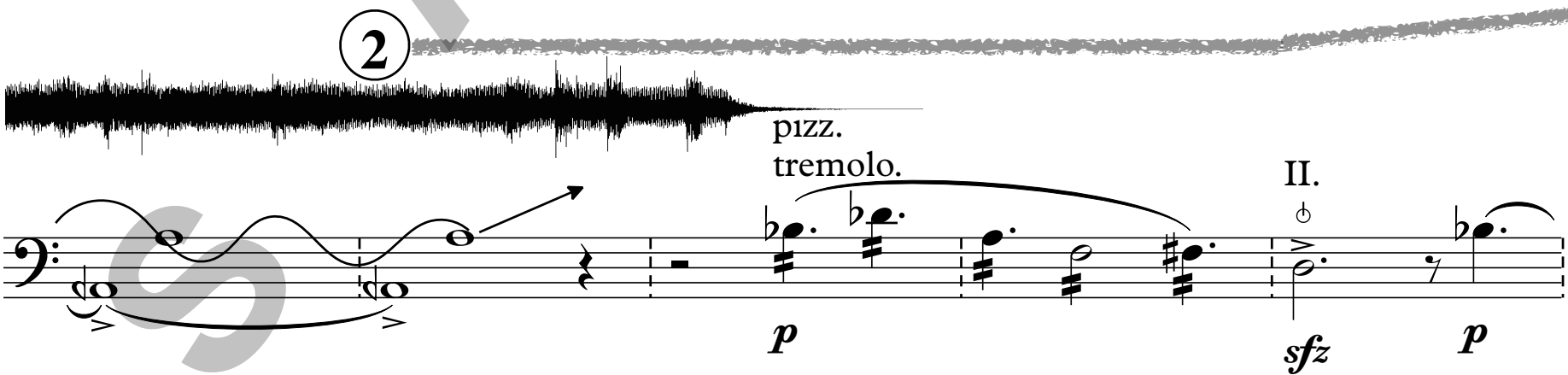


2

pizz. tremolo.

II.

p sfz p



③

II. arco. I.

I. II. I.v.

p sfz f ff ff

Sample 3 [0:32]

① ②

II. I. col legno tratto

f p

p f

③

ord. sudden clarity. intense. molto vib.

p f fff

Sample 4 [0:32]

①

I. II.

f

wait.

②

II.
f
III.
ff

pizz. tremolo.

pp
II.
sfz

arco sul pont. pizz. tremolo.

pp
p

③

Sample 5 [1:09]

①

III. arco. sul pont.

III.
sfz
p
f

②

p

