à mMbira

for (amplified) marimba duo

rudiger meyer

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Novels can be written in two ways. A John Irving for example might start with knowing only the first and last sentences of his book before gradually filling in the elaborate structure that separates them. Such writers usually claim to have to have a mental picture of the whole before being able to begin with the work itself. A Harry Mulisch on the other hand might begin a novel without having any idea of where it is going to lead and write the book in order to find out.

à mMbira, which has nothing to do with Zimbabwean thumb pianos and perhaps everything to do with space and memory, is a composition of the latter type.

*

à mMbira begins with an exploration of different tempi. Each tempo is however, through its notation as a tuplet, linked to a measure and thus also a specific duration. Speed and space are connected. The notation of the different tempi as tuplets makes this compositional device clear as well as the relation of each speed to the basic tempo of eighth note = 176 that underlies the entire composition.

Despite the structural clarity that this method of notation offers the performers will probably find it useful to think of many of the tuplets in terms of tempi (and learn them as such by "physically" memorising them) and only make use of calculated cross rhythms later in the composition when larger note values (and slower speeds) make this a more practical way of learning and playing the music. Thinking of the opening pages in terms of tempi also makes it possible to deal with the technique of interrupting measures by inserting other measures into them. This technique (rather like the use of parentheses in language) is basic to the entire composition places an emphasis on memory. One has to keep track of that which has been interrupted until it is once again resumed. On an overall scale this also applies to the various materials of the composition each of which is in a slow process of gradual dissolution.

*

The first seven minutes of the composition (pages 1 - 8) are to be played without the use of mallets, the players using only their hands in the various positions described on the following page.

Since the resulting sound revels will be quite soft (the dynamic markings in the score primarily indicate playing strength rather than actual volume) the marimbas should ideally be subtly amplified so as to make the volume experienced by the players also available to the audience. In an especially intimate performance space this may not be necessary.

When mallets are introduced on page 8 an attempt should be made to match the sound levels and to some extent timbre with that of the preceding, hand played, pages.

In contrast to the intimate, inwardly directed sound world of the first part the second half of the composition (pages 28 - 39) should be loud and characterised by a clear projection of sound into the performance space. The dynamic levels marked in the score can generally be regarded as being at least a step higher than those of the first part.

Accidentals apply throughout the measure and only to the octave of the note that they precede.



with the tip of the third finger



with the joint of the third finger (**v**)



with the 2nd, 3rd & 4th fingers flattened (_)



with the joint of the third finger (>)



with the thumb of the left hand (√)
and the tip of the third finger of the right



with the part of the palm directly
underneath the knuckles (υ)

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Marimba I

Marimba II

with 3rd fingers

Both players: play using the 3rd fingers of each hand (unless otherwise indicated) until mallets are introduced on page 8, measure 257.
Dynamic markings indicate playing strength - the resulting sound levels remain quite soft. Accidentals apply throughout the measure.

very soft, like a single sound

* Tempo markings under tuplets indicate the actual speed of the tuplet, the underlying tempo of ♪ = 176 applies throughout the composition.

41

8:5

8:5

8:5

8:5

I

II

50

8:5

♩= 140

4:3

♩= 117

5:4

*

I

II

*with joint of 3rd finger

57

8:5

8:5

I

II

62

8:5

8:5

I

II

68

8:5

8:5

I

II

74

I

II

8:5

8:5

78

I

II

8:5

3:2

♩= 210

**

*

* with the thumb
** with the palm
of the hand

81

I

II

8:5

3:2

8:5

3:2

8:5

3:2

87

I

II

8:5

3:2

x7

p

3:2

p

x7

94

I

II

8:5

x4

8:5

x3

3:2

*

mf

3:2

8:5

8:5

x4

x3

* with 2, 3 & 4th
fingers flattened

102

I

II

3:2 3:2 3:2 3:2 3:2

mf

111

I

II

8:5 8:5 8:5

♩= 140

x3 x7 x3 x7

121

I

II

x6 x6

8:5 8:5 8:5 8:5

p *mf* *mf* *p*

131

I

II

8:5 8:5 8:5 8:5

140

I

II

x4 x4

8:5

p *p* *mf*

144

I

II

8:5 8:5 8:5

152

I

II

8:5 5:4 4:3

161

I

II

8:5 4:3 8:5 x4

p p x4

168

I

II

mf mf

8:5 3:2 4:3

175

I

II

8:5 8:5 3:2 4:3 x5 x5

mf mf

181

I

II

8:5

8:5

187

I

II

4:3

4:3

x6

8:5

4:3

4:3

x6

* with joint of third finger

193

I

II

mp

mp

* The fingernail is drawn across the length of the key. The entire length of the key should be covered within the given duration of the note, i.e. the speed with which the fingernail is drawn across the key will vary.

200

I

II

204

I

II

210

I

II

218

I

II

223

8:5

3:2

I

3:2

II

p

230

4:3

58

I

4:3

II

237

I

II

243

I

II

3:2

3:2

251

I

II

3:2

8:5

4:3

♩= 117

4:3

257

I

II

♩= 140

8:5

8:5

8:5

mp

with fingertips

8:5

8:5

mp

both players: right hand with medium mallet*, only grace-notes with fingertips

(only grace-notes with fingers)

(*try to match the dynamic and tone-colour of the mallet with that of the hand)

261

I

II

266

I

II

270

I

II

275

4:3

I

II

281

8:5

8:5

I

II

286

8:5

8:5

8:5

I

II

290

8:5

8:5

I

II

both players take second mallet

296

I

II

8:5

8:5

302

I

II

8:5

308

I

II

8:5

311

I

II

317

I

II

7:5

7:5

319

8:5

326

8:5

333

4:3

338

8:5

4:3

4:3

8:5

4:3

8:5

343

8:5

347

I

II

8:5

8:5

8:5

352

I

II

4:3

8:5

4:3

8:5

355

I

II

8:5

359

I

II

8:5

7:5

♩= 61

363

I

II

8:5

8:5

370

I

II

4:3

373

I

II

8:5

377

I

II

8:5

381

I

II

7:5

384

I

II

4:3

8:5

5:3

387

8:5

I

II

390

I

II

393

4:3

8:5

I

II

396

I

II

401

8:5

mf

mf

I

II

405

I

II

(c)

(c)

mp

mp

(from this point on sustained notes to be played with bow)

409

I

II

3

3

416

I

II

8:5

3

422

I

II

3

3

5:4

8:5

3:2

3

427

I

II

8:5

8:5

434

I

II

mp

p

3:2

442

I

II

f

f

446

I

II

mf

mf

5:4

450

I

II

f

f

5:4

454

I

II

8:5

8:5

8:5

(e)

(c)

458

I

II

8:5

mp

8:5

mp

462

I

II

8:5

3

3

467

I

II

3:5

♩= 106

3:2

3:5

474

I

II

8:5

8:5

481

I

II

3 3 3 8:5 3:2

486

I

II

8:5 4:3

492

I

II

7:5 61 8:5 7:5

496

I

II

500

I

II

(3)

504

4:3

I

II

507

I

II

513

7:5

8:5

61

I

7:5

8:5

II

(d)

515

(c)

(b)

I

II

520

I

II

527

4:3

I

4:3

II

533

I

4:3

II

538

I

8:5

II

544

I

II

549

I

II

554

8:5 (c) 8:5 4:3 (b) (b)

I

II

f *f*

558

8:5 (d) (c) 4:3 (b)

I

II

mp *mp*

564

(d)

I

II

(d)

571

I

II

578

I

II

585

I

II

591

I

II

597

I

II

604

(d)

I

II

609

I

II

613

3:2

618

622

626

629

632

I

II

638

I

II

645

I

II

651

I

II

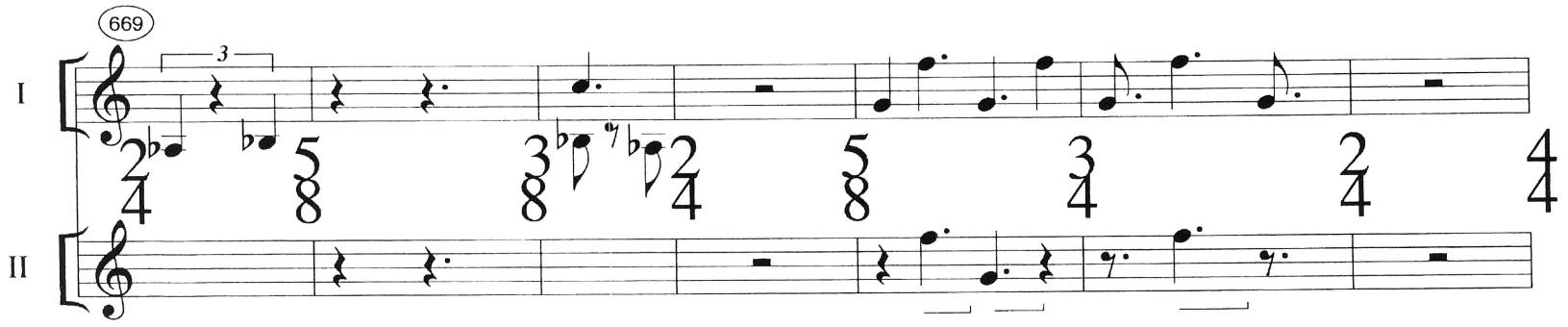
660

I

II

3:2

8:5


669
3
I
II

676

I

II

mf

(d)

(d)

mf

681

I

II

cresc.

(c)

f

p

cresc.

(c)

f

686

I

II

4:3

8:5

p

(c)

693

I

II

4:3

8:5

8:5

mf

701

I

II

f *mp* *mf* *f* *p* *mf* *mf* 8:5

707

I

II

8:5 4:3 *mf* *p* *p* *mp* *f* *mf*

714

I

II

4:3 4:3 *p* *p*

721

I

II

4:3 4:3

727

I

II

4:3 *x7* 4:3 *x7*

731

I

II

5:3

♩= 73

f

hard mallets!

mf

5:3

735

5:3

5:3

5:3

739

mf

5:3

f

5:3

743

mf

5:3

5:3

5:3

747

5:3

5:3

5:3

The volume of the second part of the piece, ie. pp. 28-39, will be louder than that of the first. Hard mallets are used and the volume of the mallets no longer has to be matched against the volume that the fingers are capable of generating. Thus dynamic indications may generally be taken as being about a step higher than in the first part.
The intention is that an externally directed projection of sound into the performance space contrasts with the generally more intimate and inwardly directed sound world of the first part.

751 (mf) 5:3 5:3 5:3 (mf)

755 5:3 5:3

759 5:3 5:3 5:3

763 5:3 5:3 5:3 f f

767 (d)* (c) (a) 5:3 5:3 5:3 mf f

*The D-flat exceeds the range of the marimba. If possible make use of a xylophone key or leave the note out.

>>>>

771

I

II

mf

mf

5:3

5:3

5:3

775

I

II

f

f

5:3

5:3

(d)

779

I

II

(c)

(a)

mf

f

5:3

5:3

783

I

II

f

mf

787

mf

I

II

f

(e)

mf

(e)

(c)

(e)

(e)

5:3

5:3

791

I

II

(mf)

mf

(mf)

mp

(mp)

794

f

mf

4:3

5:3

798

5:3

4:3

5:3

5:3

802

806

I

II

11/8 16/4

mf piu f

7:5 7:5

♩= 123 ♩.= 117

mf piu f

7:5 7:5

♩= 123 ♩.= 117

♩= 88

808

I

II

11/8 16/4

7:5 7:5 7:5

mf mf

810

I

II

16/4 11/8

piu f f

7:5 7:5 7:5 3:2

piu f f

7:5 3:2

812

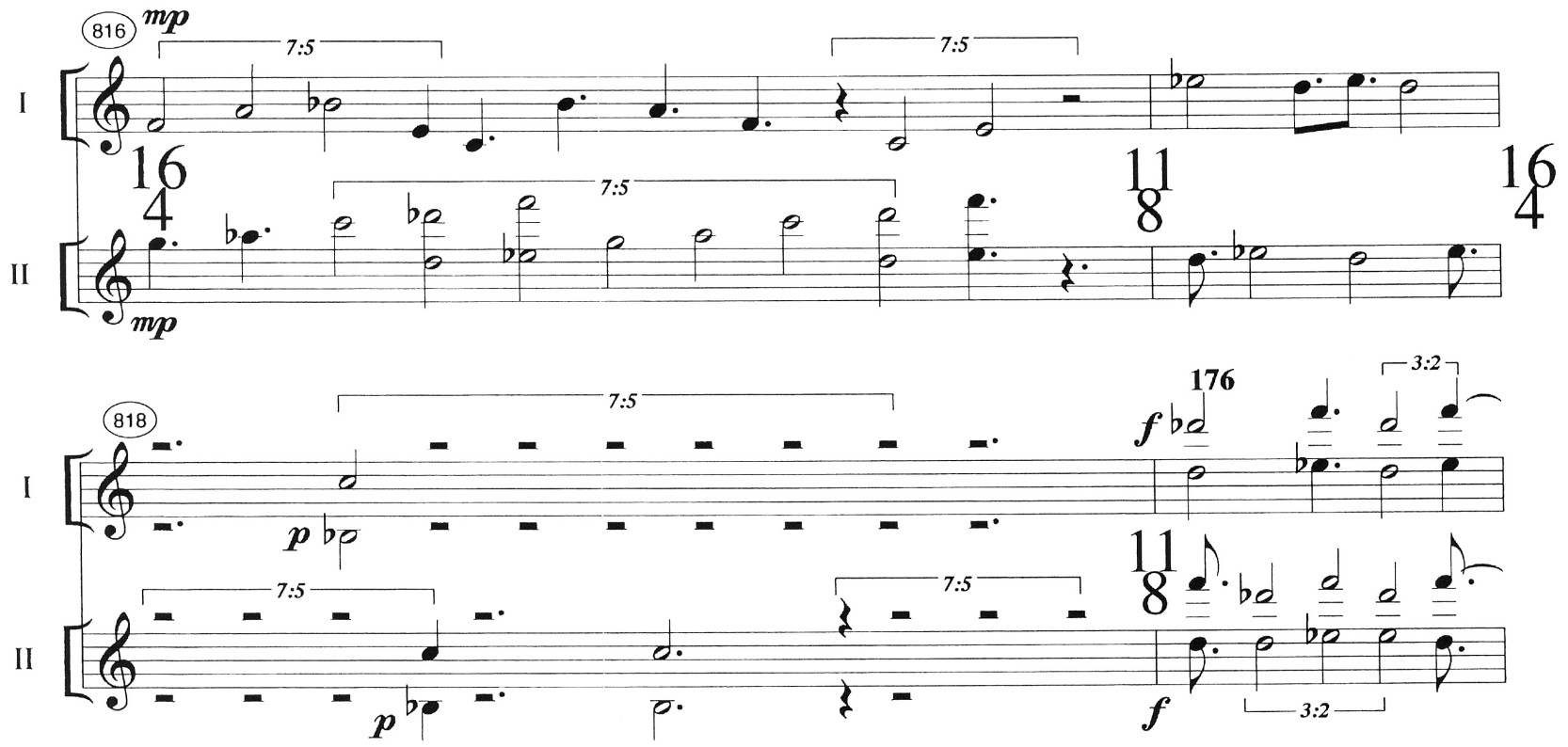
I

II

5/8 16/4

3:2 3:2 3:2 3:2

3:2 3:2


816
mp
7:5
7:5
I
16
4
7:5
11
8
16
4
II
mp
818
7:5
176
3:2
I
p
f
11
8
7:5
7:5
II
p
f
3:2

820

I

II

3:2 3:2 3:2 5:3 5:3

p p

16/4

822

I

II

5:3 5:3 5:3

11/8 16/4

824

I

II

5:3 5:3 5:3

mf mf

16/4 11/8

826

I

II

7:5 7:5

16/4 11/8

828

I

II

mp mf mp mf

7:5 7:5 7:5 7:5

11/8 16/4 11/8

3:2

>>>>

830 *mp*

I

II

mp

7:5

3:2

7:5

832

I

II

7:5

7:5

3:2

7:5

834

I

II

3:2

3:2

3:2

838

I

II

3:2

3:2

3:2

3:2

842

I

II

3:2

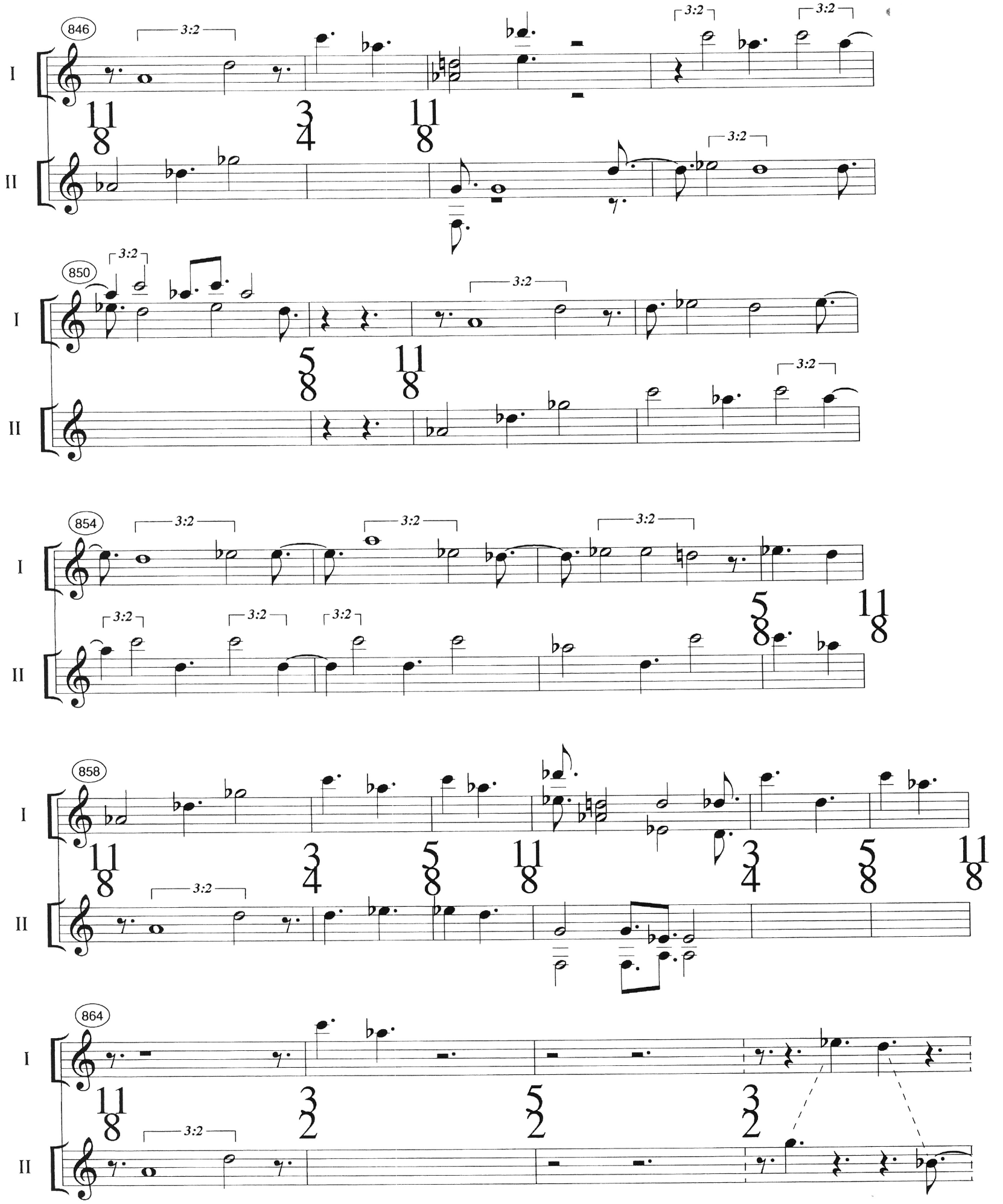
3:2

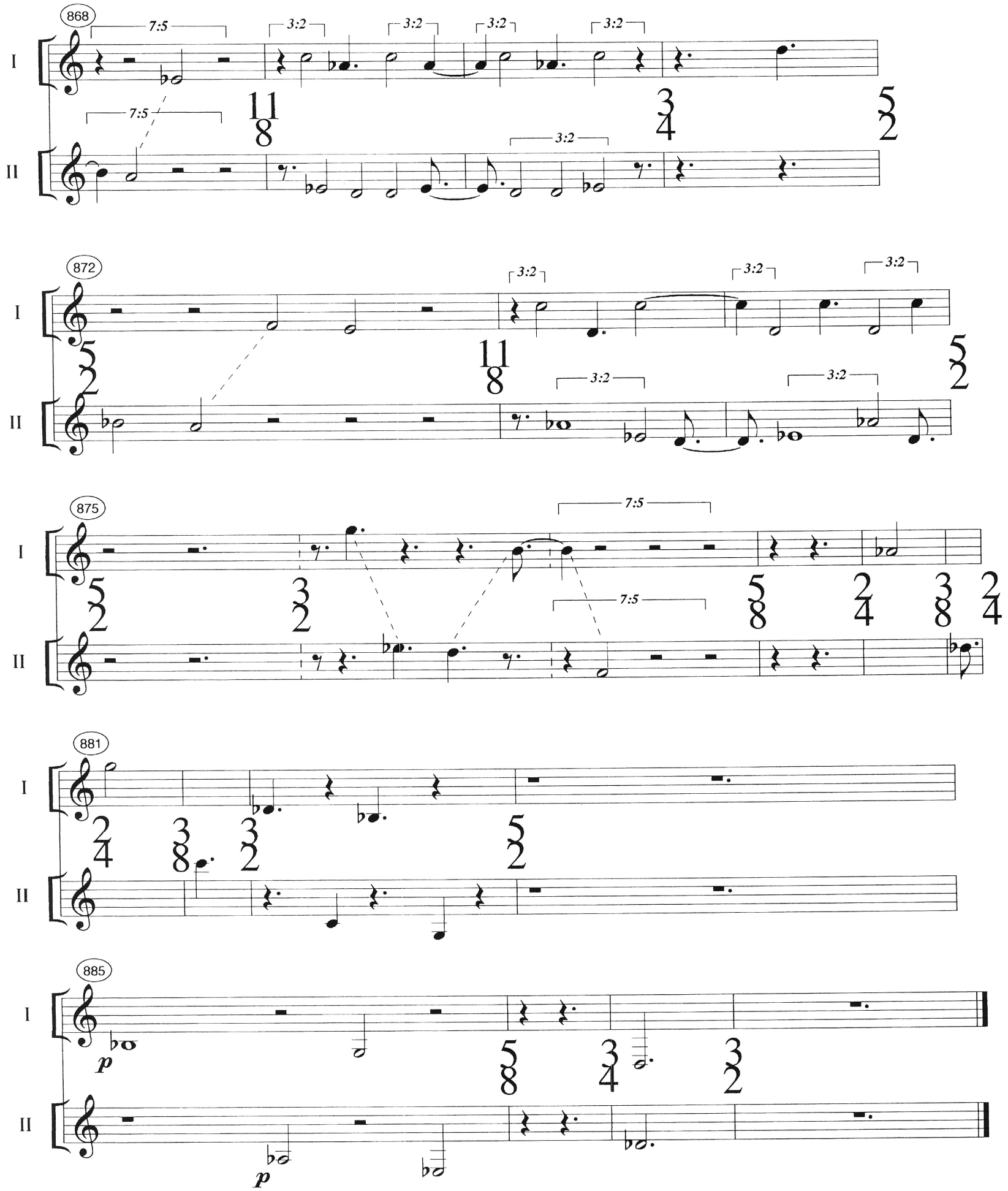
3

3

3:2

3:2


846
850
854
858
864
I
II
3:2


868
I
II
7:5
3:2
872
875
881
885
p