





"Music to Chew On"  
for twelve singers, chewer, and audience

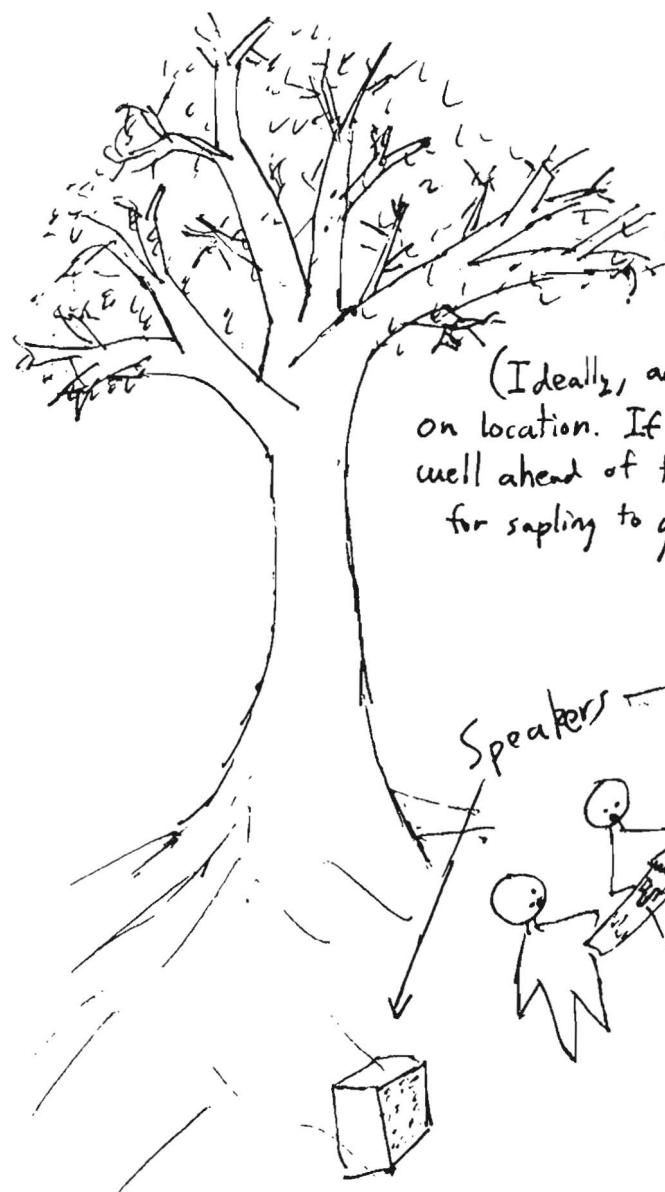
Duration: ~12' - 13'

By Marc Evans

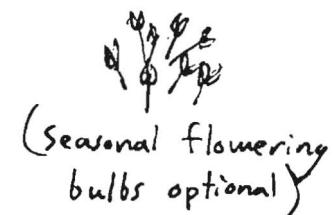
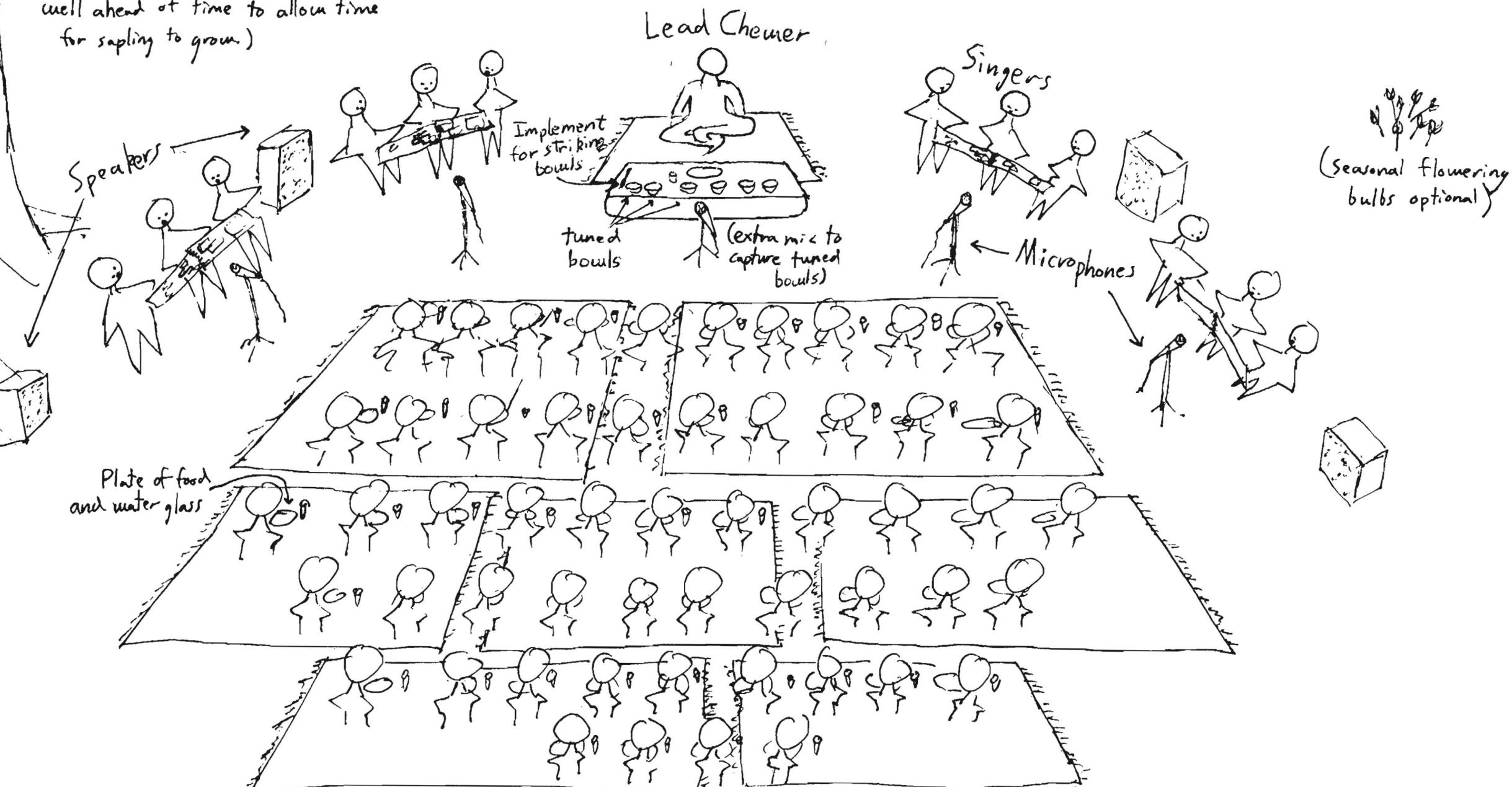
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# Suggested Setup



(Ideally, adult tree is already  
on location. If not, plan performance  
well ahead of time to allow time  
for sapling to grow.)



Ideally, audience sits on blankets

## General Remarks on Performance and Score

"Music to Chew On" is a work for 12 singers and one "actor" (for lack of a better term) that seeks to explore the experience of mindful eating. As one can see from the setup diagram on the previous page, the "audience" is to eat a selection of foods as they listen to the music, a process that is led by the actor sitting in front, who takes the role of "lead chewer". Thus the audience knows what and when to eat by mimicking the leader.

I place the word "audience" in quotes above (and just now once again) because a key goal of this composition is that it be as participatory as possible. Thus the setup is designed to surround and include the audience, and by eating, they take an active role. Also, for this reason, it is best that the choir not be conducted in a traditional sense, but rather led from within by one or several of the singers. One inspiration for this work has been the notion of a shared meal, both in terms of religious rituals like communion and in more secular contexts such as a family dinner. In all aspects of the production, be as inclusive as possible.

### The Lead Chewer Role

The lead chewer is given instructions in the score that carefully coincide with musical events. The lead chewer may be young or old, male or female – essentially any sort of person. This is not to say, however, that the choice doesn't matter – quite to the contrary, the results are very different, and should be considered. Rather, each choice may be good for different reasons.

What should be kept in mind about the lead chewer role is that he/she is crucial in setting the tone for the whole event. The nature of that tone can best be described as "light hearted". It is "light" in the sense that it is not to be taken overly seriously, but full of heart as well, and hopefully meaningful. One final note is that the Lead chewer is to remain silent throughout.

### The Food Itself

The meal consists of (and the plates of both lead chewer and audience should contain):

- One glass or cup of water.
- Two bite-sized pieces of bread, one of which is coated with peanut butter. The bread should be of a whole-grain variety and not contain a crunchy crust. (Much as I personally love a crunchy crust, it was musically not the best choice.)
- Two large grapes of a variety that has a noticeable dry and bitter skin as you finish chewing.
- One fairly long length of celery stalk that is enough for two bites taken by the hungriest, most celery-loving person expected in attendance. Alternatively, two pieces of half that size.
- A stick of some sort with smooth peanut butter on the end of it (like a popsicle stick, except that the stick itself should have no taste). Alternatively, use a small plastic spoon.
- About four red raisins.
- A pecan of delicious variety, not glazed or processed in any way.
- Two small mouthfulls of basmati rice (cooked!) on plastic spoons (or more creative and sustainable cutlery).

All of the foods described above should be purchased organic, preferably locally grown. As much as possible, it should be known where it comes from, and this knowledge should be a positive thing. Also, naturally the food should be as fresh as possible.

The food is to be eaten with the hands, with the exception of the few basic utensils described above.

## Food Preparation

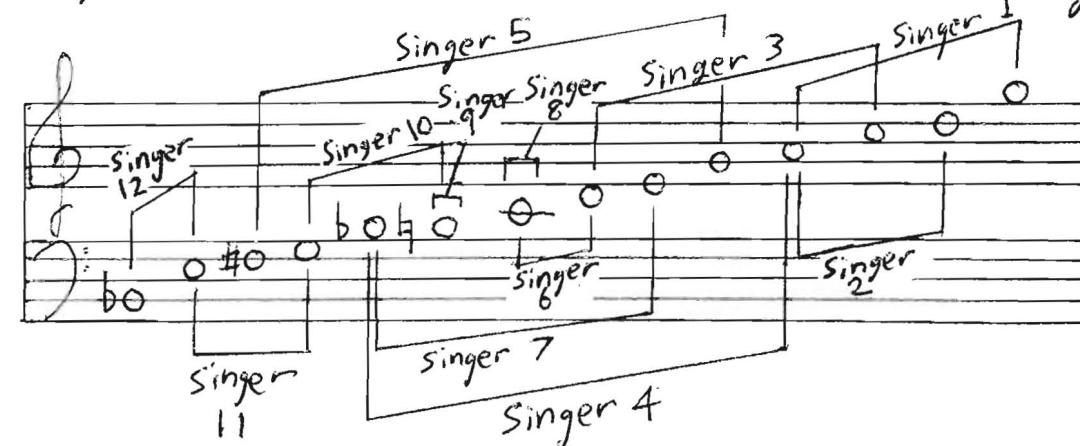
Though the food should be cut and chopped ahead of time, the final assembly of the plate should be left to the participant. A table may be laid out near the performance space, with a "demo plate" placed in front on which the foods are placed in the appropriate order and quantities.

## Giving Pitches

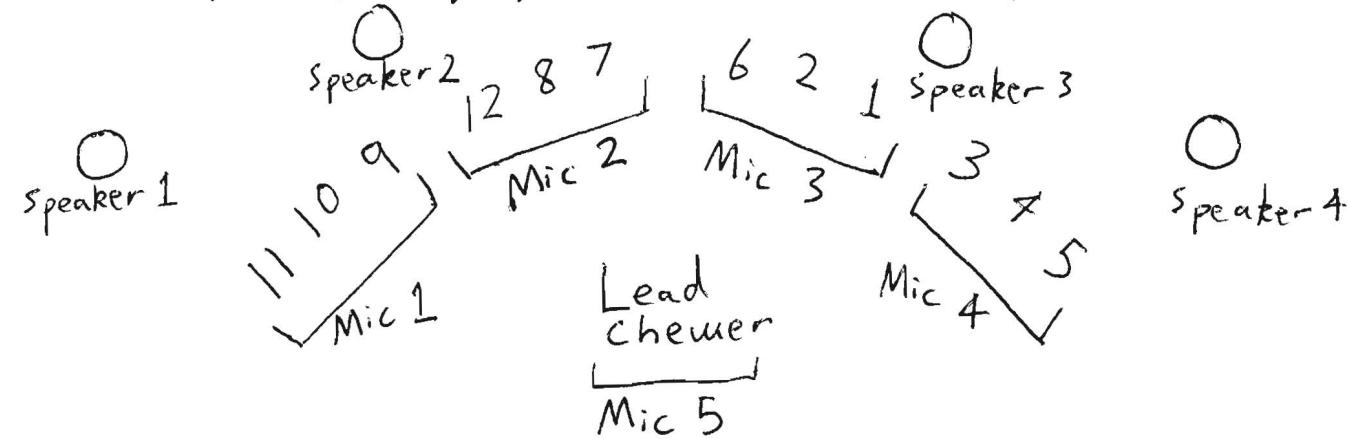
Since the choir will need reference pitches for many of the movements, the lead chewer will have in front of him/her a set of six bowls, tuned to the pitches E, G, A, B<sup>b</sup>, C, and D by being filled with the appropriate amount of water. They are to be struck with a small, fairly thick wooden implement chosen to impart a round tone. The striking of these bowls also serves to alert the audience of a new food.

## Assignment and Arrangement of Singers

"Music to Chew On" was initially conceived as a work for SATB, with 3 sopranos covering parts 1, 2, and 3, 3 altos covering parts 4, 5, and 6, 3 tenors covering parts 7, 8, and 9, and 3 bass/baritones covering parts 10, 11, and 12. However, considerably more flexibility exists, due to the small range of pitches used, and so it is enough that the singers are comfortable in the following ranges:



The following physical arrangement of the singers is suggested. Slight modifications may be made<sup>⑤</sup> for ease of performance; however, only slight, so as not to tamper with the spatialization of the sound.



(Mic 1 → Speaker 1, Mic 2 → speaker 2, Mic 3 → Speaker 3, Mic 4 → Speaker 4, Mic 5 → Speakers 1, 2, 3, and 4)

### Transposition (or lack thereof )

All pitches written for the singers are given at their precise concert pitch. This also applies to tenor voices in treble clef, which do not transpose down an octave.

### Timing

Suggested timings for each movement are found in the score, and are to be taken as guides. In practice, the lead chewer naturally has significant control over the pacing. The singers should err on the side of the music outlasting the food, rather than vice-versa. (After all the taste will remain in the eaters' mouths well after the food is swallowed.)

## Flexibility of the Score

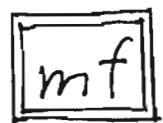
Throughout much of the score, the exact number and length of the symbols need not be taken one hundred percent literally. For example, in the exact manner and timing of the disintegration of the "juicy vowel loops" in the grape movement, or in the exact shapes and timings of the VE's in the celery movement, the score is to be taken as a guide, whose spirit should be observed, but whose exact details need not be. Thus the loops in the grape movement should start to grow shorter and more spaced out, but need not be counted out loop for loop.

## Some Words of Thanks

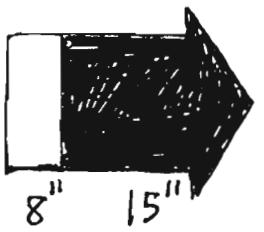
I would first and foremost like to thank my teacher, Jaroslaw Kapuscinski, for providing the encouragement and guidance that helped turn this from a kind of unusual (but fun) idea into a kind of unusual (but fun) reality. I would also like to thank Prof. Mark Applebaum for his help at an early stage of this project with respect to how to go about improvisational notation.

Finally, I would like to thank all my friends from the Shire and anyone else whose encouragement and culinary advice have become a part of this piece.

# Explanation of Symbols



Global dynamics: applies to all parts in a given movement/food.

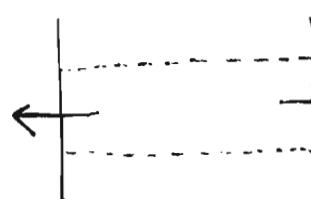


Indicates a transition from one state (to the left of the arrow) to another (to the right of the arrow).

The white portion, where present, indicates that the first state is to be held for a time before the transition begins. Durations below indicate the length of the hold and the transition respectively.



This arrow indicates that the given section is to gradually get ahead of the others over the course of several repeats (with a left-facing arrow indicating that the section get behind).



Similar to the arrow immediately above, except that it applies to individual singers, and the arrows in both directions indicate that the singer is to break free from those around around him/her, getting ahead or behind at his/her own choosing.



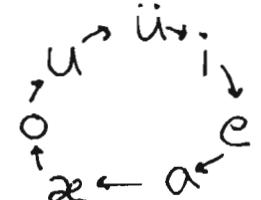
Vocal shape to be sung on the pitches given, with the sounds given. The shape corresponds to dynamics, primarily, though possibly also pitch, as in the case of the shape on [n].



This symbol denotes a "pop": the singer has free choice of any short, abrupt clicking or popping sound such as [l], [f], [t], as well as possibly a very short and accented [k] or [ts]. Dashed vertical line indicates that these gestures are to be simultaneous.



This symbol is produced by forming the mouth into a [S] and then sucking inward. The air rushing through the lips should naturally cause them to close. Depending on the force of the in-breath, this happens at different speeds, so the length of the gesture can be varied.



Vowel cycle used in the loops described on the following page. All vowel symbols are IPA symbols, except for "ü", which is the more recognizable German symbol for the IPA [y].

Viii



These loops indicate a cycling sequence of vowels to be sung on the pitch given. The sequence of vowels is a subsequence of the "vowel cycle" given at the beginning, chosen by the singer. For example, the singer might choose the subsequence:  $\text{ii}, \text{i} \uparrow, \text{e}$ .

$\stackrel{i}{\rightarrow}$   
 $\left(\uparrow\right) \quad e^{\leftarrow}$

In this case, he/she would sing:



(the loop speeds up as it progresses)

The sequence is to be performed largely fluidly, with each vowel smoothly changing into the next.

Simply hum on the given note on the syllable [n].

80% unis.



sfz

This "crunch" is to consist of short, crunchy sounds, such as [k], [ts], [χ], [ʃ] , [s], [l], chosen at the singer's discretion. These sounds are to take place simultaneously or close to simultaneously, depending on the % unison notated. Thus 100% unis. should be exactly together, whereas a 50% unis. crunch should have some of the parts crunching early or late, with the number indicating the degree of together- or non-togetherness. The vertical bracket indicates which singers are to take part in the crunch.

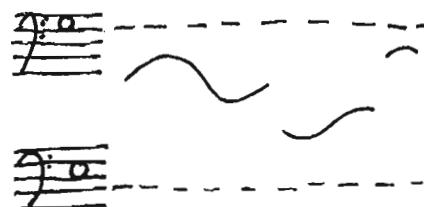


Lips ~~~  $\Rightarrow$  lips  
unrounded      rounded

A "slurping" sound. see the IPA description for how to pronounce [ʃ]. The sound lasts as long as the solid band indicates. Over this time the lips round, producing the slurping effect.

Stands for "voiced fricative." The singer is to pick any of the voiced fricatives [z], [v], [ʒ], [j], or [χ] and follow in glissando roughly the melodic contour shown. These gestures are not assigned precisely to a given singer, nor given precise timing. The idea is that, when not otherwise occupied with crunches, the singer may perform any of the given gestures, not necessarily using the ones that cross his or her horizontal dashed line. The written shape may be interpreted fairly faithfully, or used simply as a model.

Also note the vertical coming together of the written gestures as the movement progresses; this indicates that upper voices are to perform the gestures increasingly low in their range, and lower voices perform them higher in their range, so that the gestures become near in pitch (around middle C-E).



Glissando on the syllable [l] between the two pitches given. The upper dashed line indicates the highest and the lower dashed line the lowest pitch level the singer may reach.



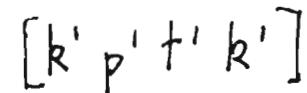
Repeat the given figure for the duration of the squiggly line.



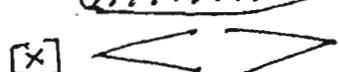
Same as above, except that the delta ( $\Delta$ ) symbol indicates a transition from the figure at the left of the arrow to the figure at the right of the arrow.



The syllables [ŋ̊] (short [ŋ], held [ŋ]) are sung on the main pitch given, followed by an aspirated [k'], represented by the horizontal line (the aspiration lasting slightly longer than usual). The filled notehead in parentheses indicates a pitch to and from which the singer occasionally drifts over the course of several of these gestures, like an ornament or non-harmonic tone.



Sequence of aspirated plosive consonants to be "sung"/spoken without pitch in the sequence given, forming groupings of four. The horizontal spacing is indicative of temporal spacing.



Simply a swell on the fricative consonant [x] for the duration indicated.

(X)

# IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) Symbols

The syllables to be pronounced by the singers are given by symbols adapted from the international phonetic alphabet. They appear in square brackets.

## Nasals and Approximants

[m]	standard "m" sound.
[n]	standard "n" sound.
[ŋ]	the Spanish "ñ", as found also in the English word "Canyon".
[ɳ]	Velar nasal; the "ng" part of the suffix "ing" in English.
[l]	standard voiced English "l", as in "lottery".
[ɫ]	unvoiced English "l", as in "click".

## (Voiceless) Plosives

[k] or [k']	standard English "k".
[p] or [p']	standard English "p".
[t] or [t']	standard English "t".
[tʃ]	standard English "ch". (actually an affricate)

Note: ['] is the symbol for aspiration. This means that the given consonant is to be followed by a brief outward puff of air. English speakers do this naturally for voiceless plosives.

## Voiceless Fricatives

[s]	standard "s" sound.
[f]	standard "f" sound.
[ʃ]	standard "sh" sound, as in the English "shoot".
[χ]	one variant of the "ch" sound in German, as in "Ich". Also can be produced by pronouncing the vowel [i] ("ee") without vibrating the vocal chords.
[χ̥]	another variant that the German "ch" takes, as in the word "hoch". Tongue placement is essentially the same as in [χ] or [k], except that a slight gap should be left with the roof of the mouth to create the turbulent white-noise-like fricative sound.

Note: I use a backward arrow above certain IPA symbols to denote inward, rather than outward, air flow. Thus [χ̥] and [l̥] are pronounced like their counterparts [χ] and [l], except that one breathes in.

## Voiced Fricatives

[z]	standard English "z" sound.
[v]	standard English "v" sound.
[ʒ]	voiced [ʃ], as in "equation".
[j̥]	voiced [ʃ].
[ɣ]	voiced [χ].

## Clicks

Produced by forming and releasing a suction in the mouth.

[t̚]	Dental click of the tongue, as in the expression "tsk tsk"
[t̥̚]	Palatal click; place the tongue against the roof of the mouth.
[l̚]	Lateral click; similar to the palatal click above, but done to the side of the mouth.

## Vowels

[a]	[e]	[i]	[o]	[u]	like the simple vowels of the same symbols in Spanish.
[y]					denoted "ü" in this score is made by rounding the lips like in [o] and forming the tongue like in [i].
[ɛ̄]					nasalized [e]; keep vowel in back of mouth
[ǣ]					as in the English "bat"

# Notes on Individual Movements

(xi)

## Bread:

The general shape of this movement is as follows: There are four groups of three singers each that are each assigned three notes and a musical shape. Thus each individual singer sings one of the notes with the syllables given, following (in terms of dynamics, and in the case of the "[n]" group, pitch) the shape. These groups start out all together, repeating their shapes every 3-4 seconds in a coordinated fashion. Gradually, the top two groups get behind and the bottom two get ahead, so that two distinct gestures are heard with each repetition. In the next stage, we bifurcate one more time so that each 3 person group is heard distinctly. Finally, each individual singer moves to disassociate with the others, so that we hear 12 individual voices repeating their gestures in a somewhat stochastic manner. The repeats then grow increasingly sparse and quiet, and individual voices drop out until we have silence.

One natural method of coordinating this motion is to have a leader for the choir as a whole, another leader for one of the half-choirs that breaks off, and two more group leaders, so that all four groups can be led their separate ways.

## Grape:

For this movement, each singer is given a part to follow horizontally. Voices 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 10 are pitched from the beginning, and voices 11 and 12 are pitched later in the movement. The remaining voices are unpitched throughout. Other aspects of the notation are found in the "Explanation of symbols" section.

## Celery:

For this movement, each vocal part is given a dashed line to follow horizontally. This is relevant only to the performance of the "crunches" (⌚) and the "juice". The "Voiced fricative shapes" (VF) are independent of the lines and are to be sung when the voices are not otherwise occupied. (See "Explanation of symbols" section.)

## Celery-Peanut Butter transition:

The celery score becomes visually thinner toward the end partly to indicate decreasing dynamics, as well as to make room for the entrance of peanut butter above. Peanut butter begins, as indicated, on page 7, although its content is described on page 8.

## Peanut Butter:

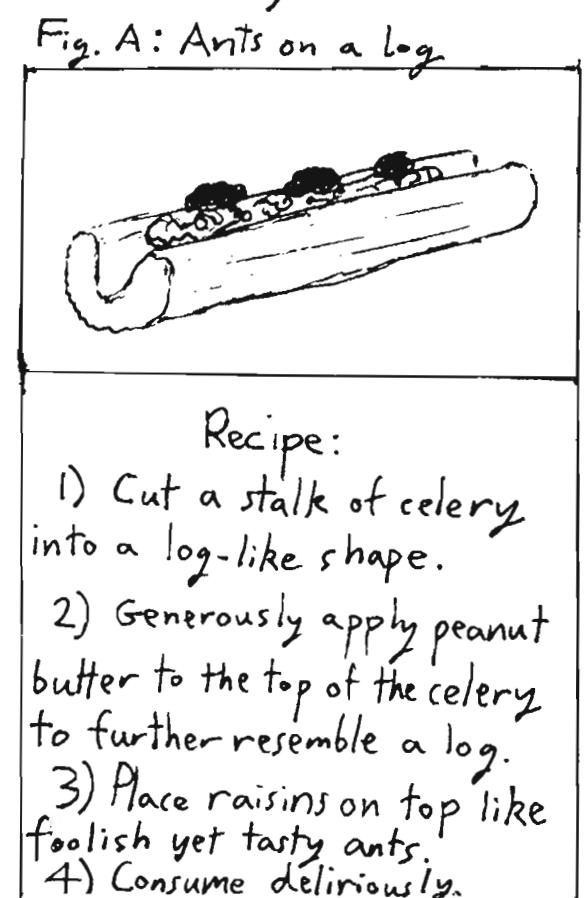
Each singer is to sing slow glissandos on the syllable [l] between the two pitches given. The upper dashed line indicates the highest, and the bottom dashed line indicates the lowest pitch level the singer may reach. Since the intervals for the different singers are non-overlapping, the voices will not cross, and due to their spacing, a variety of near-triads will form.

(Note that, in its first appearance on page 8, the score for "peanut butter" has been somewhat compressed horizontally. This is a biproduct of other notational considerations, and should not result in a different interpretation than on page 12.)

## Raisins:

The progression of this movement is governed by a chain of dependent entrances: once a voice enters, all voices connected to the right of it may enter. Thus, the movement starts with the A, at which point the D and E may enter soon after at the singer's discretion. Once the D has entered the F<sup>#</sup> and B<sup>b</sup> may enter, etc.

Each voice sings its note on the syllable "ying", which is repeated several times following the envelope given. The envelope represents loudness over time, and thus the repeated "ying"s (depicted as swirls) grow quieter and spaced further apart.



### Pecan:

Each voice progresses horizontally, with its height in the score depicted by the label to the left. Explanations of the symbols used can be found, rather unsurprisingly in the "Explanation of Symbols" section. Note that a certain sweetness arises in the middle of the movement as the pitched gestures become more stretched out. This sweetness is given an, if you will, "nutty" flavor by the brief deviations of the pitched parts to their alternate notes (in parentheses).

### Rice:

The timing of entrances and events is depicted by the horizontal position in the score. While in the other movements, the music does not begin until the eating begins, here we start to hear music as soon as the rice is raised up.

### A Final Consideration

If the performance is very well-received, and given that the pecan occurs only once in the composition, the performers may opt to give a "pecancore".



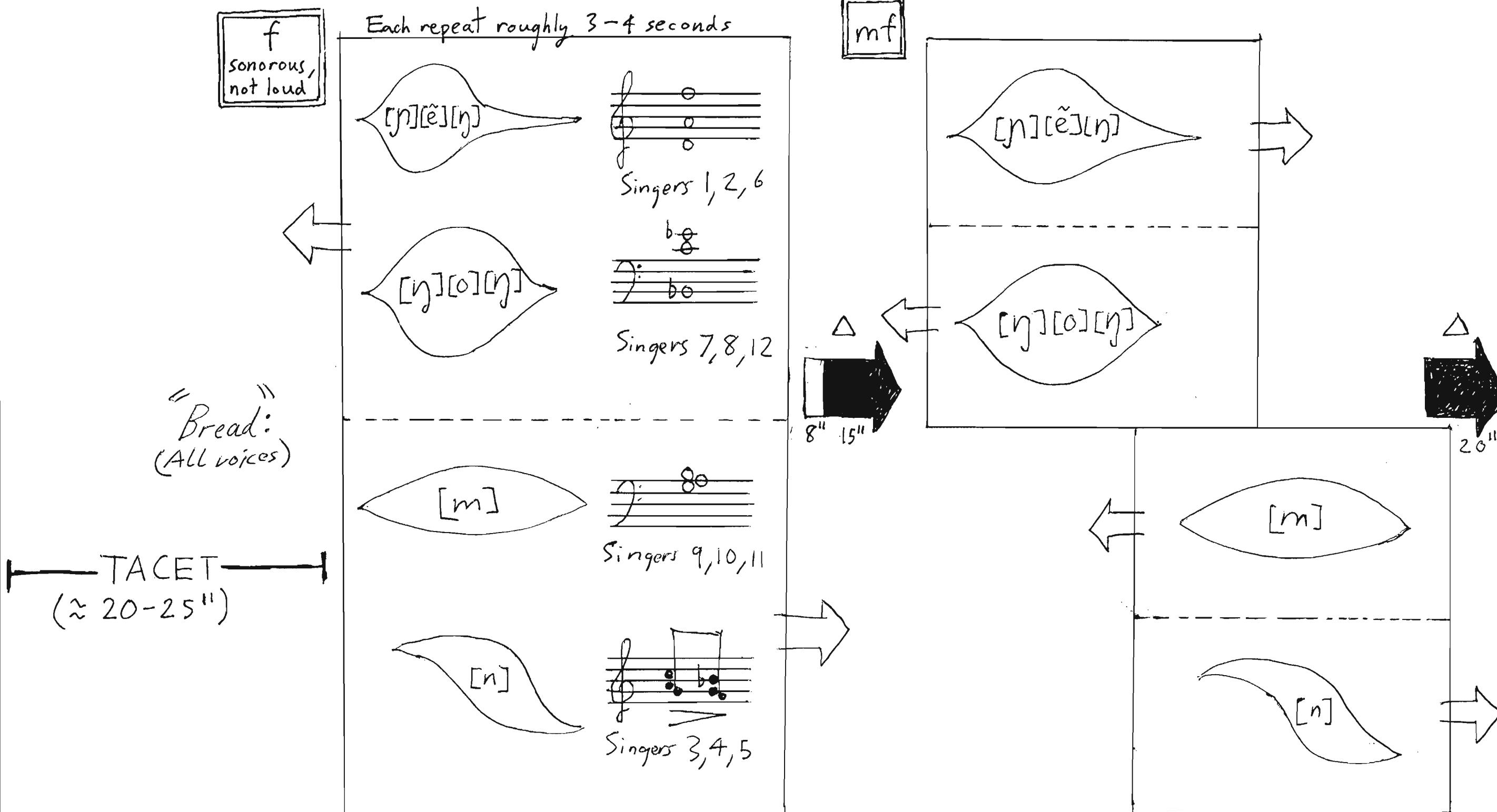
Score of  
"Music to Chew On"

①

## "Music to Chew On"

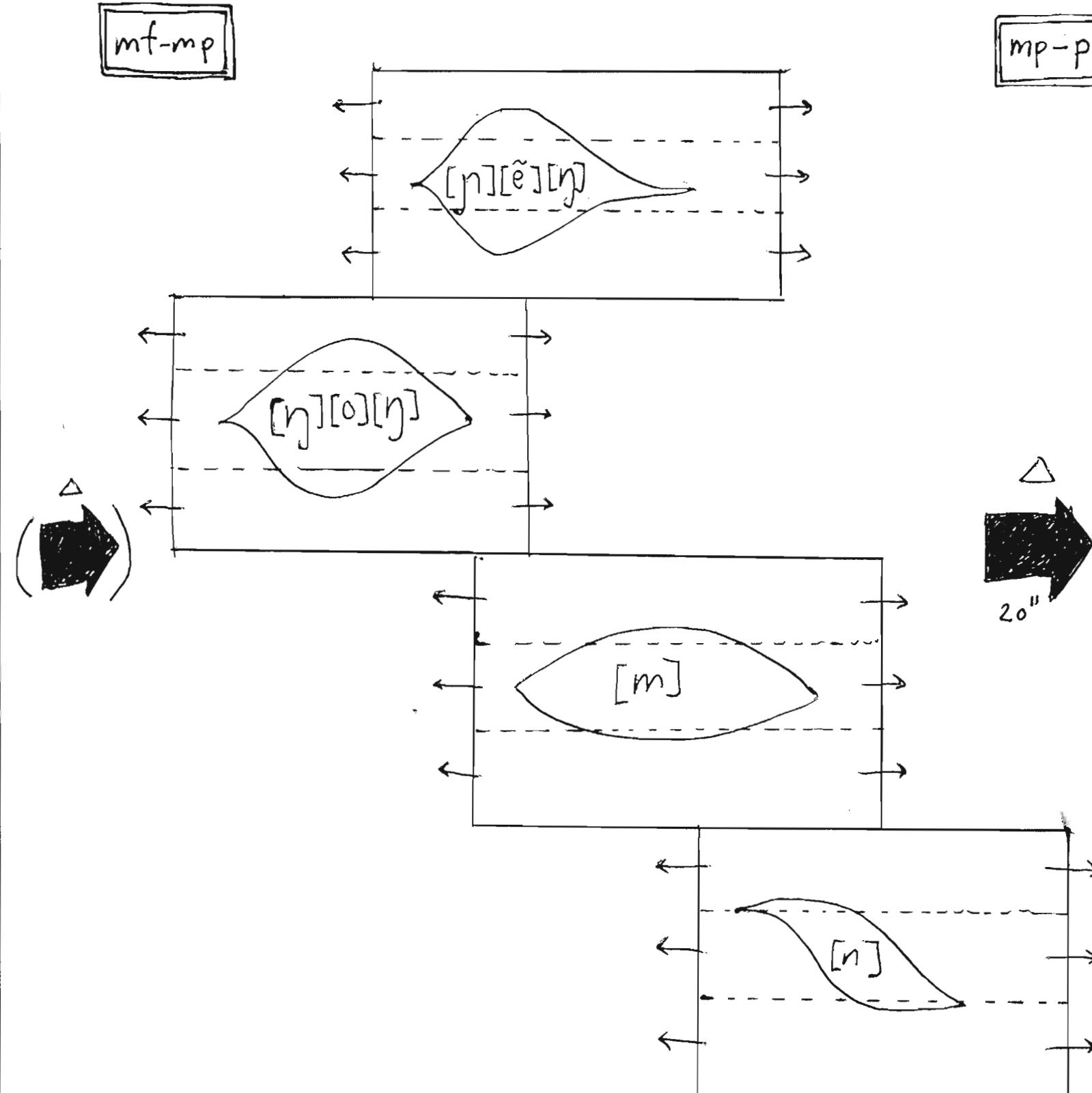
Marc Evans  
(2010)

Choir

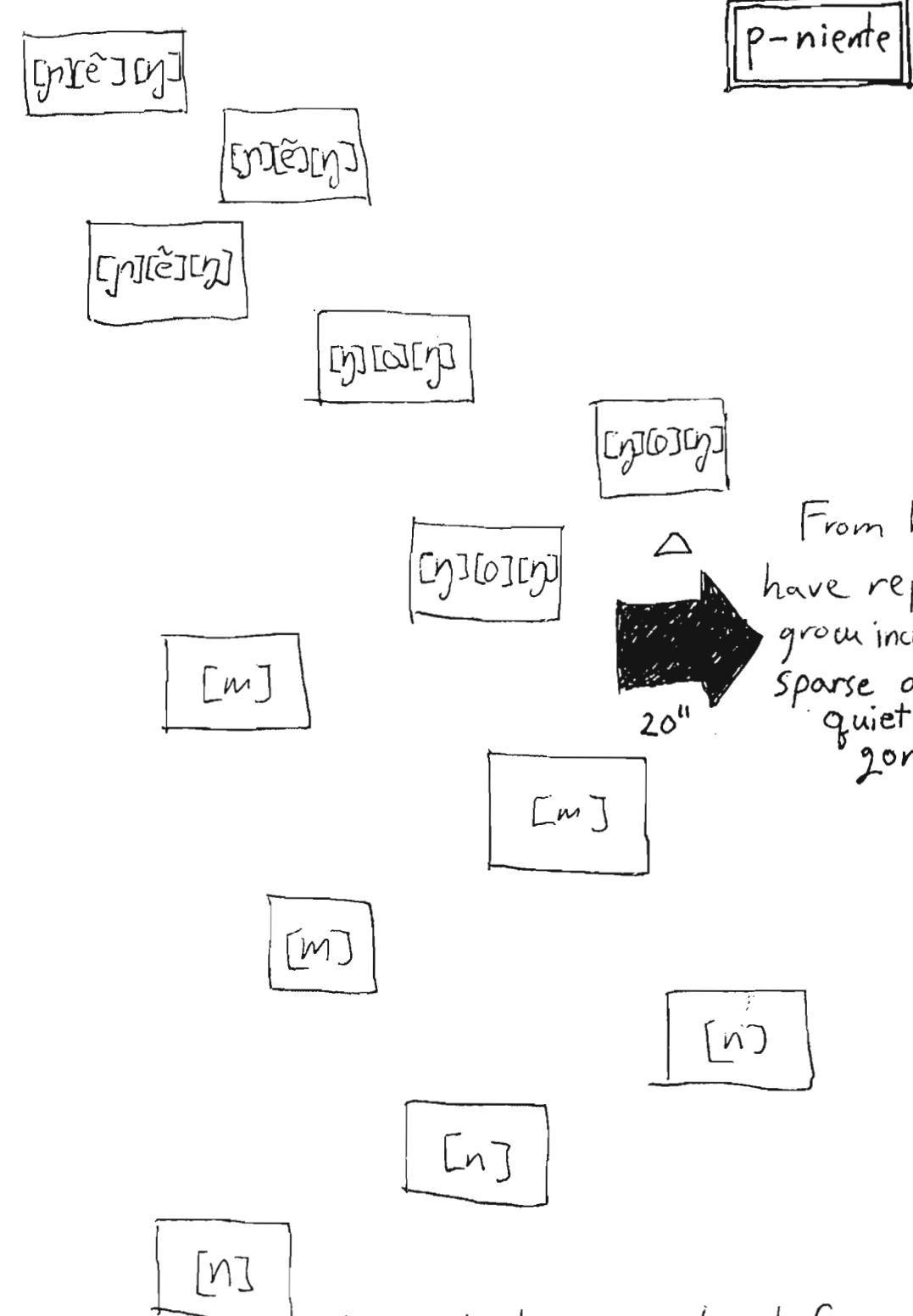


Lead Chewing

Choir

Lead  
Chorus

(chew thoughtfully)



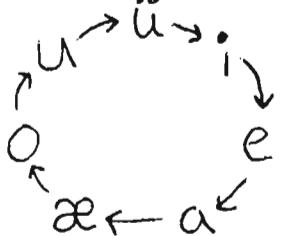
\* Finish chewing bread

③

Choir

TACET  
≈ 30"

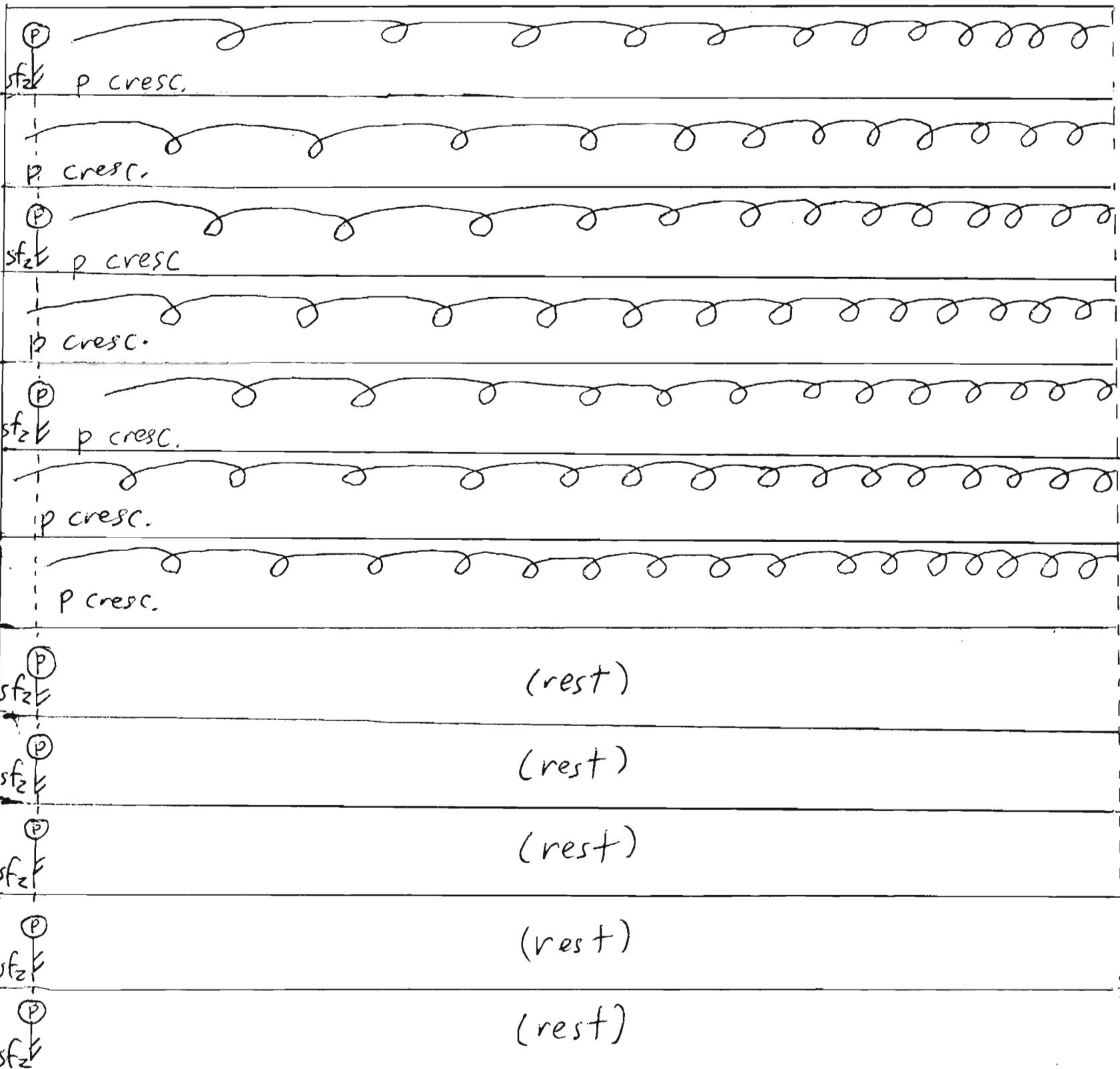
Vowel Cycle  
(see explanation)



"Grape":  
(all voices)

Voices:

- Voice 1: f o
- Voice 2: f o
- Voice 4: f o
- Voice 5: f o
- Voice 7: f o
- Voice 8: f o
- Voice 10: f o
- Voice 3: —
- Voice 6: —
- Voice 9: —
- Voice 11: —
- Voice 12: —



Lead  
Chewer

\* pause   \* take a slow  
briefly   sip of water   \* Sound   \* Raise up \* Start  
D and C   Grape eating  
bowls   Grape

4

(cresc.) f dim. (p)

*ccccccccccccc cccccccccccccc cccccccc cccccccc cccccccc cccccccc cccccccc*  
*(cresc.) f dim.*

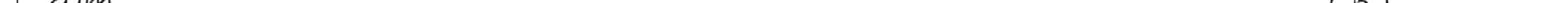
*(cresc.) f dim.*

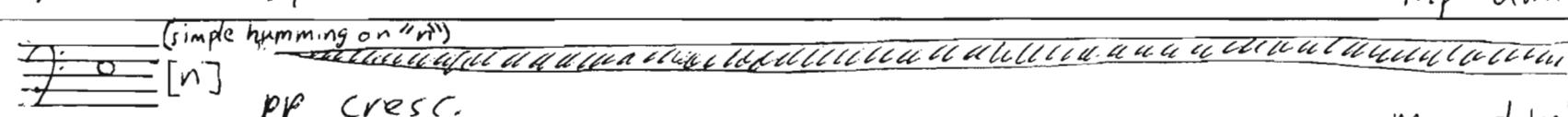
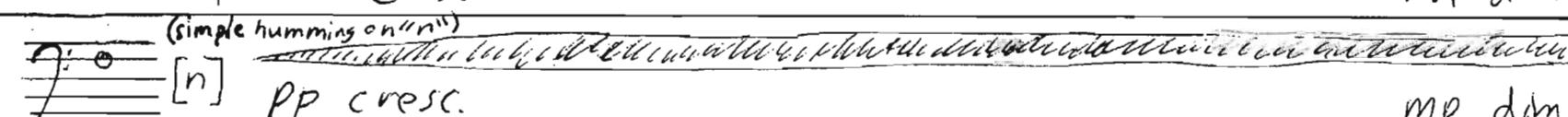
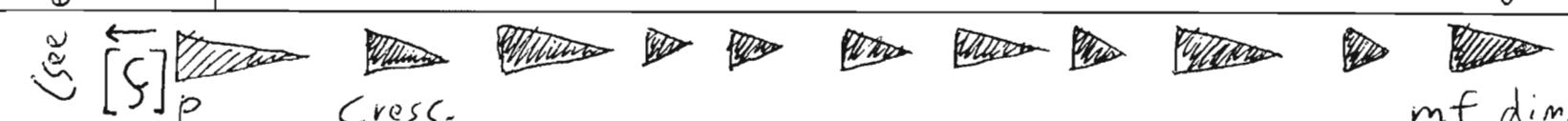
*(reread)* f dim. (p)

A horizontal row of five small, dark, irregular shapes, likely representing a row of small plants or seedlings.

(cresc.) f dim. (p)

## Choir

 (cresc.) f dim. (p)



0:20

0:40

Lead  
Chemist

(chem happily)

5

$\approx$  1:00

# Lead Chemier

(mostly peel  
now)

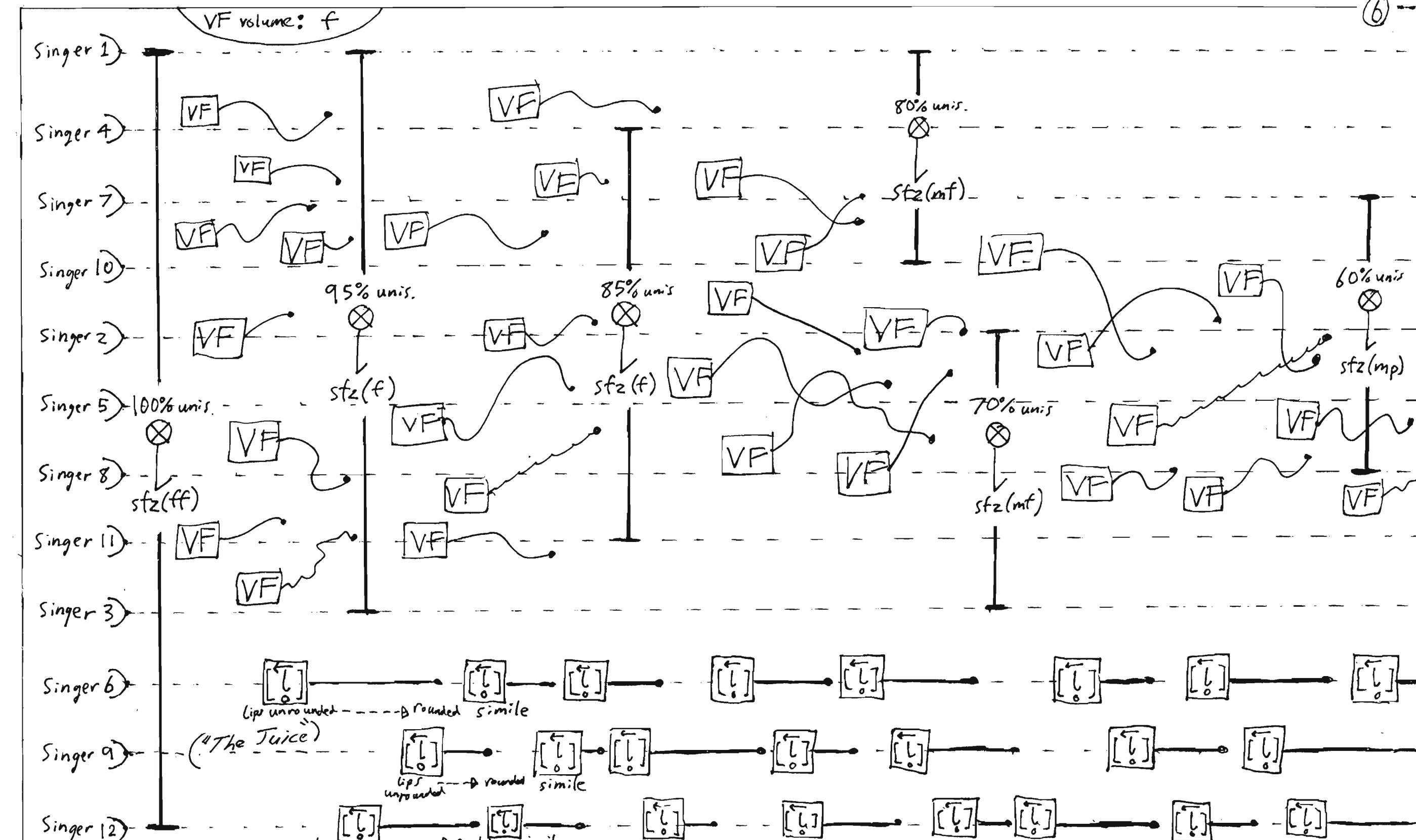
\* Finish \* pause  
and briefly  
Small/om

\* take a slow  
sip of water

\* Sound Bb  
bowl

## Choir

"Celery":  
(All voices)



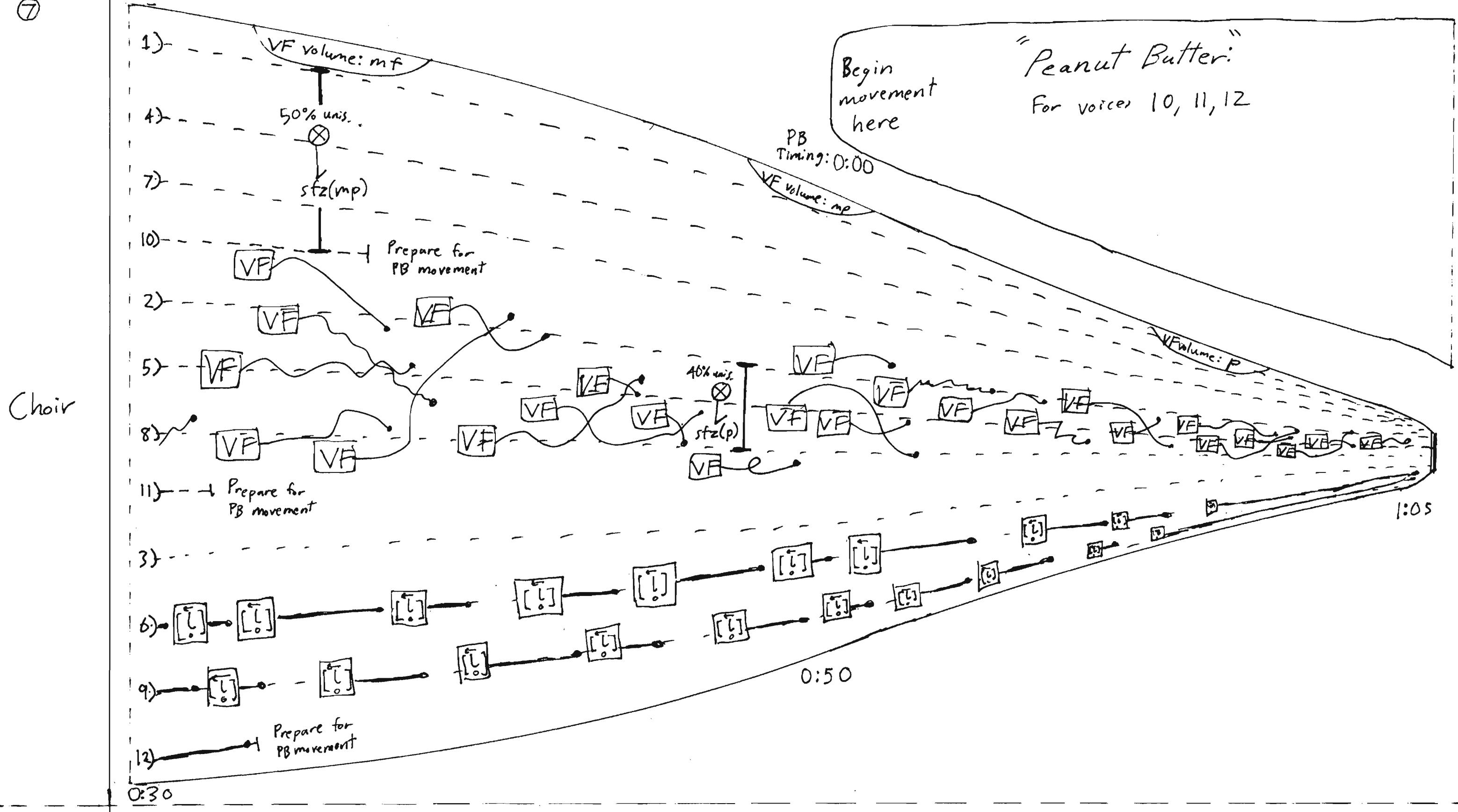
Lead  
Cheerer

\* Raise up  
Celery

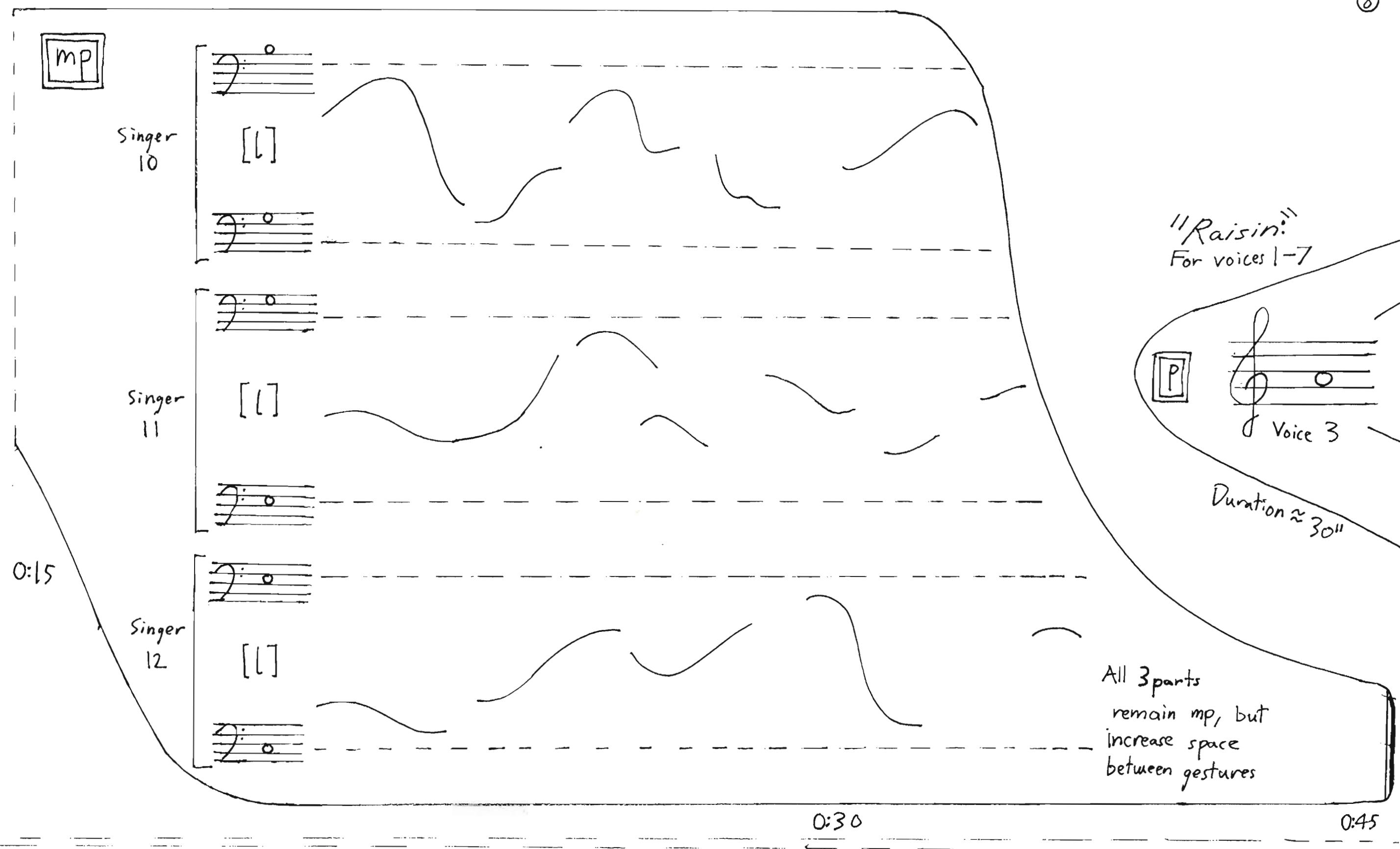
\* Start  
eating  
celery

(keep munching  
and crunching)

⑦

Lead  
Cheerer\* Sound  
E bowl\* Raise up  
peanut butter\* Start  
eating  
peanut butter

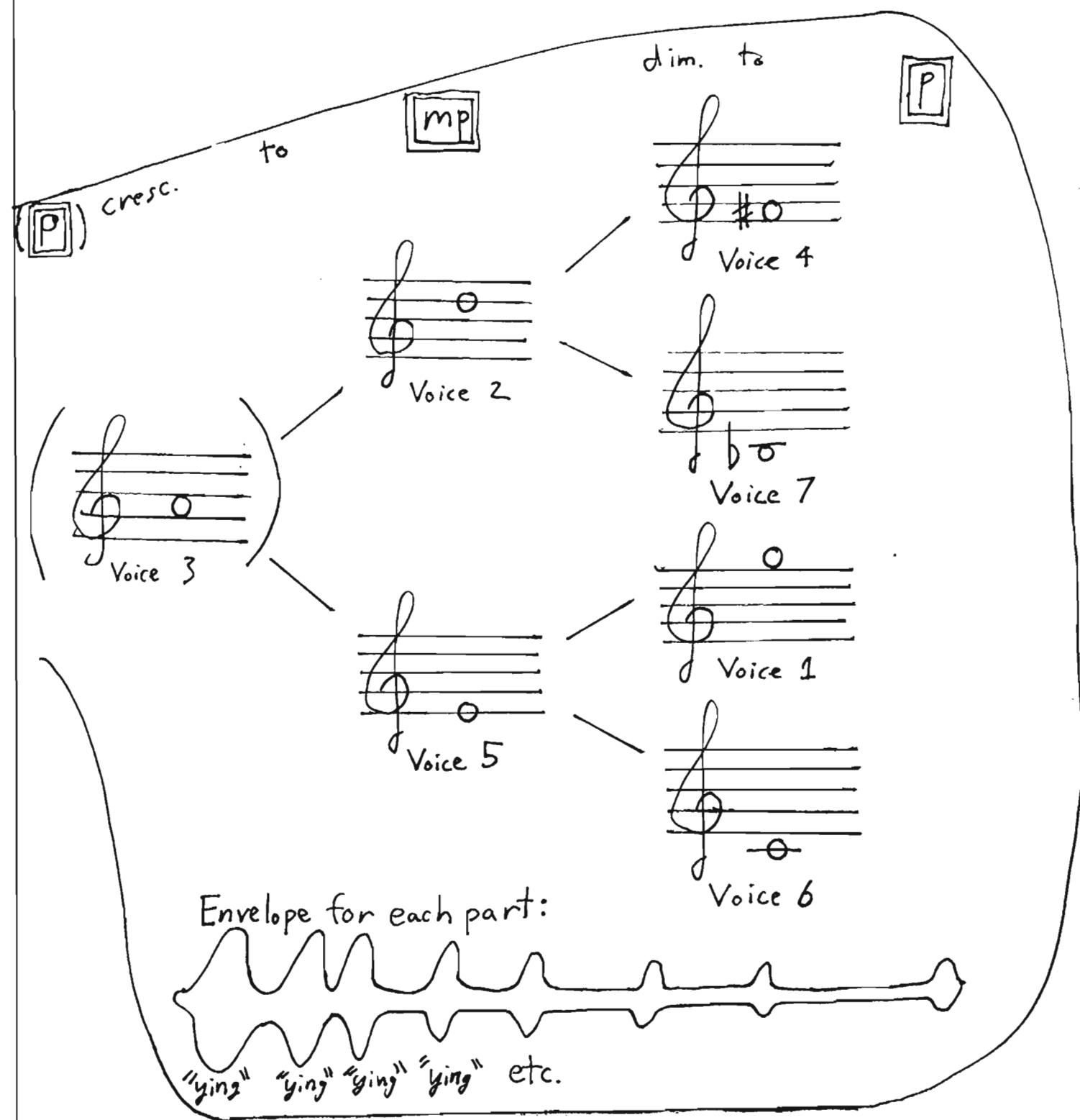
Choir



Lead Chewer

9

Choir

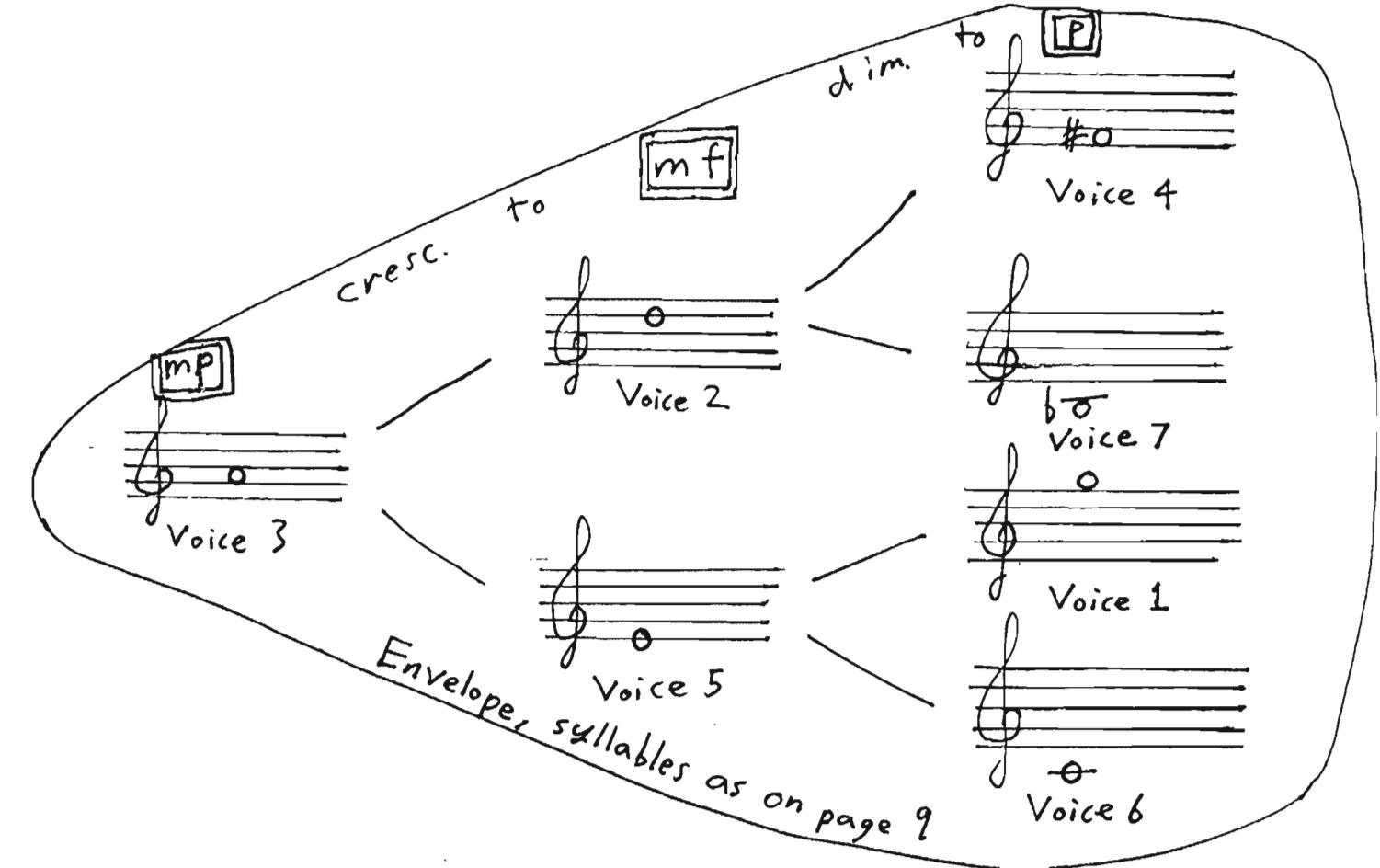


TACET  
 $\approx 25''$

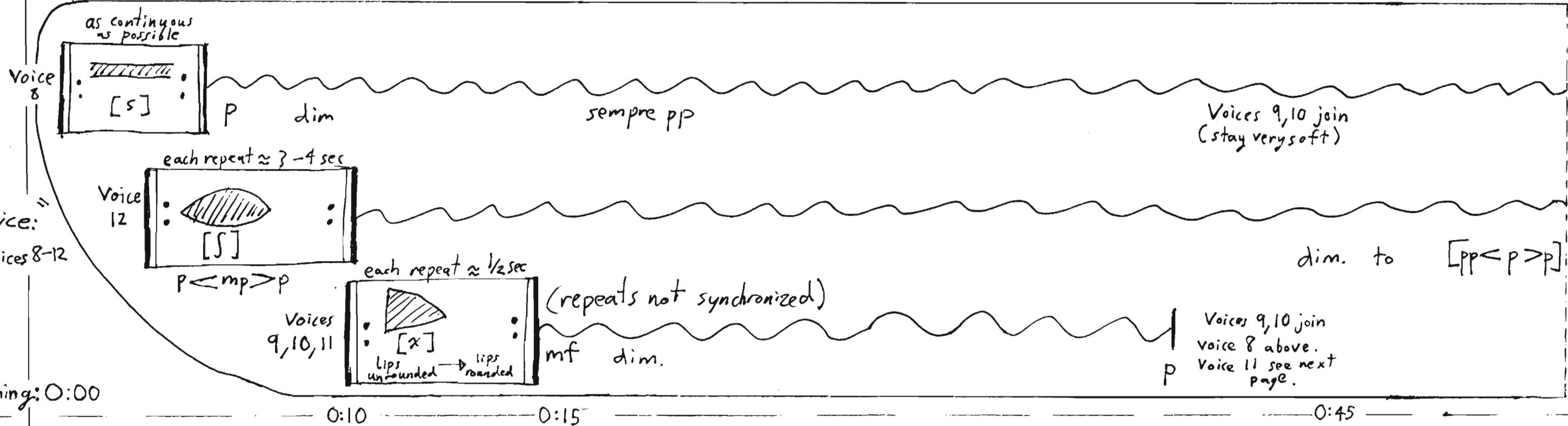
Lead  
Cheerer\*Finish eating  
raisin\*Pause  
briefly\*Take a slow  
sip of water\*Sound A  
bowl

## Choir

"Raisin:"  
For voices 1-7



"Rice:"  
For voices 8-12



Lead  
Cheerer

\* Raise up rice  
in one hand and  
some raisins in  
the other

\* Begin eating  
rice

\* Begin eating  
raisins

\* Sound  
C, A bowls

\* Raise up  
pecan

11

Ending Ossia:  
One voice substitutes one  
[nə] for one [ŋj][k']

*"Pecan:"*

For voices 1-7

Voice 3: [ŋj][k'] p cresc. mp dim. P

Voice 4: [ŋj][k'] p cresc. mp dim. P

Voice 5: [ŋj][k'] p cresc. mp dim. P

Voice 6: [ŋj][k'] p cresc. mp dim. P

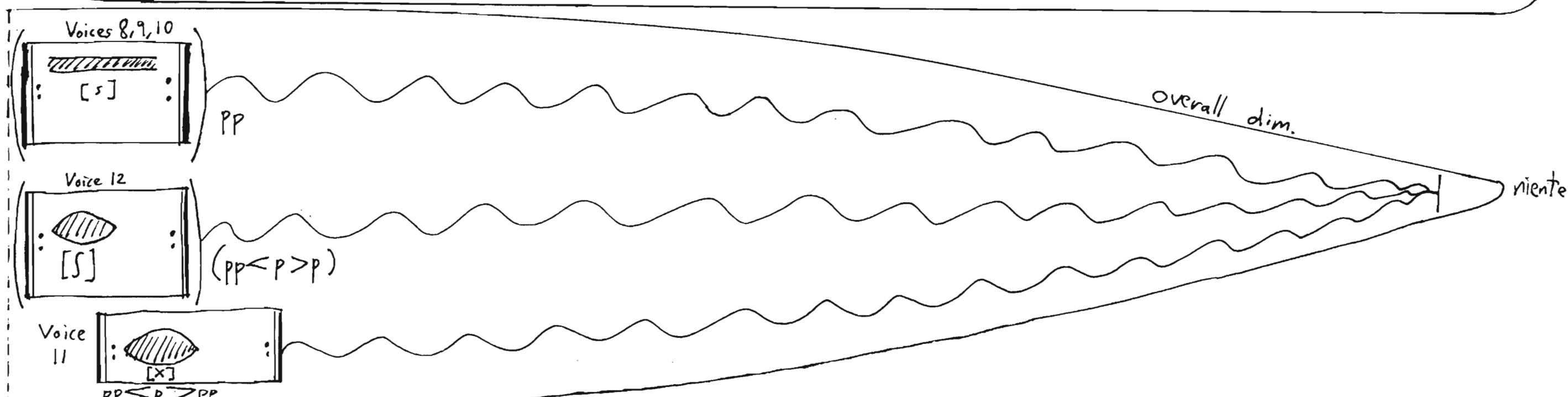
Voice 7: [ŋj][k'] p cresc. mp dim. P

Voice 2: [k'p't'k'] [kp't'k] [kp't'k] [k' p't' k'] [k' p' t' k'] P

Voice 6: [kp't'k] [kp't'k] [kp't'k] [k' p' t' k'] P

Voice 7: [kp't'k] [kp't'k] [kp't'k] [k' p' t' k'] P

Choir: [x] mp [x] mf dim. [x] P



Lead  
Chewer

\*Begin eating  
pecan

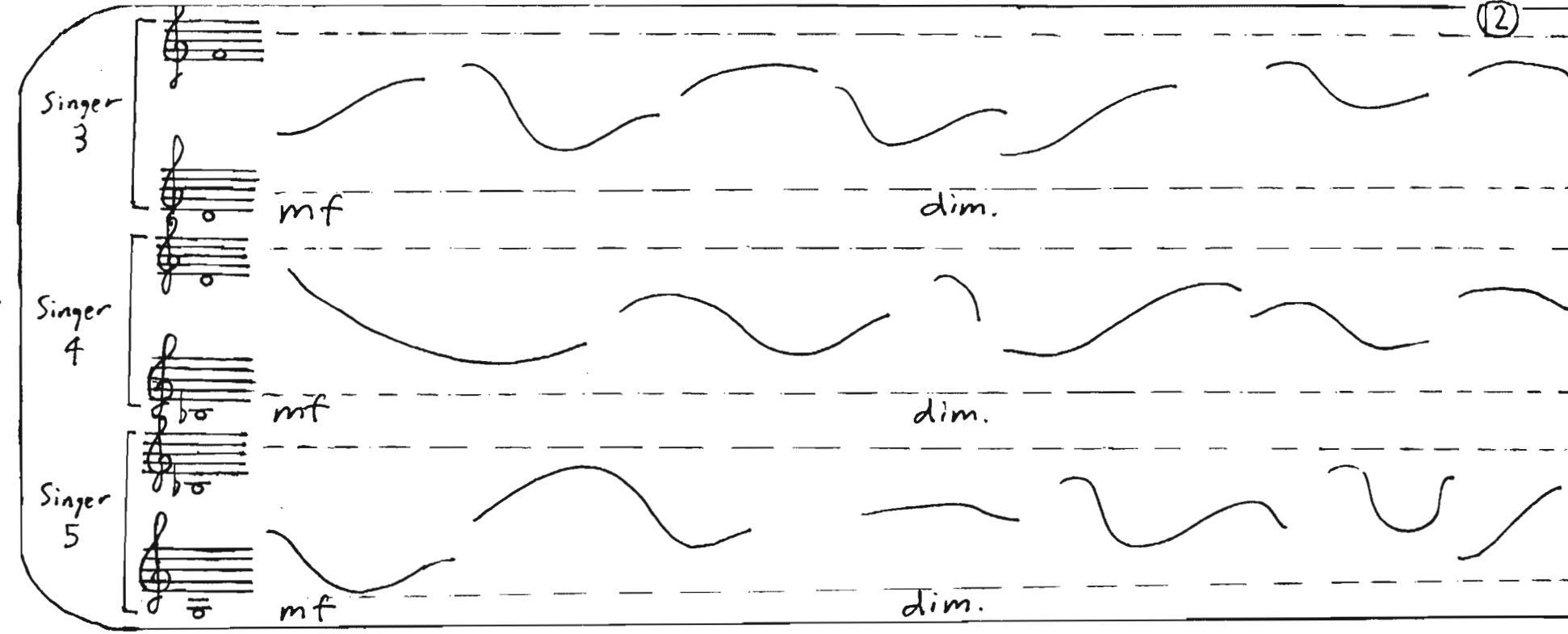
(Enjoy the pecan's  
subtle sweetness)

\*Finish eating  
pecan, rice,  
raisins

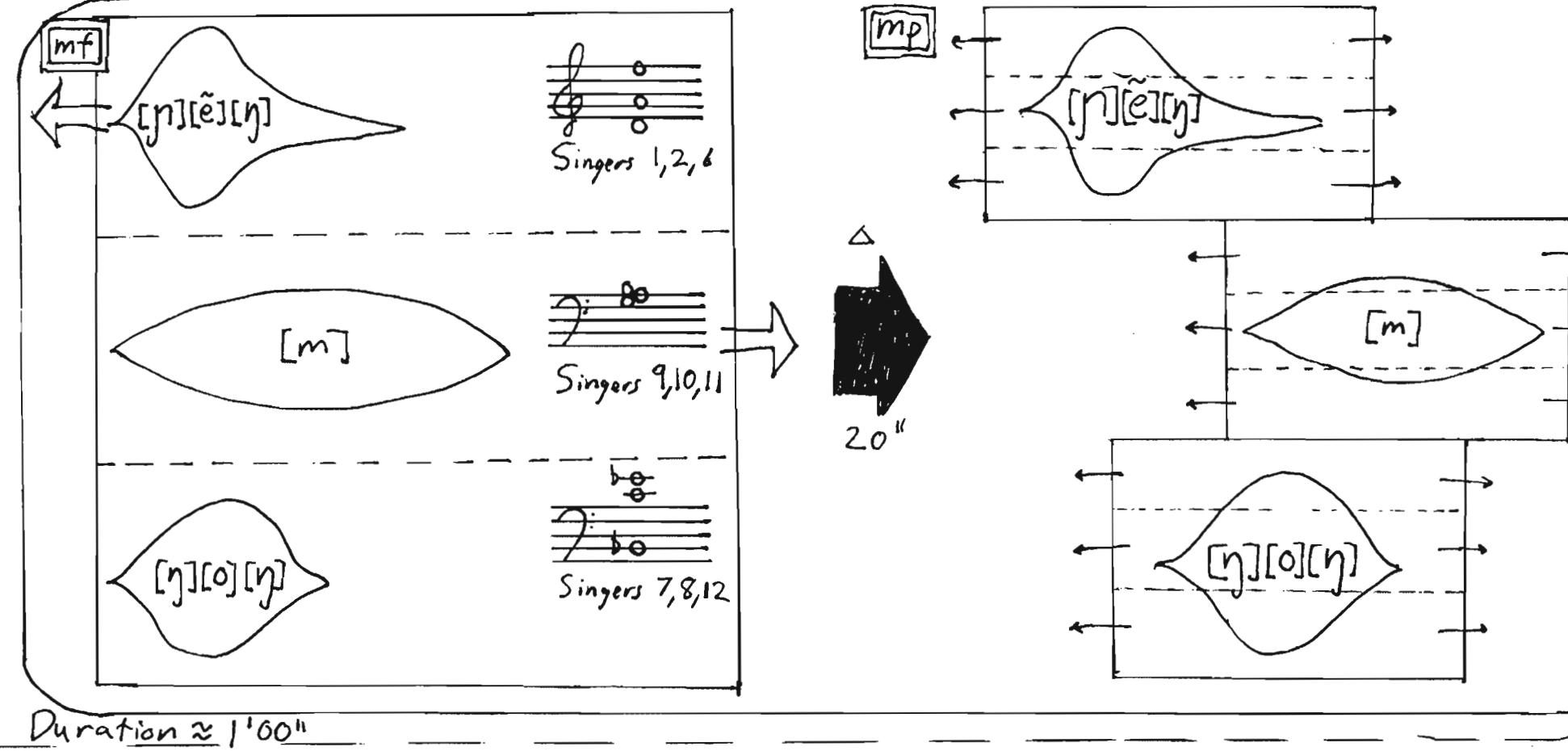
Choir

TACET  
 $\approx 20-25''$

"Peanut Butter:  
 For voices 3, 4, 5"



"Bread:  
 For voices 1-2  
 and 6-12"



Lead  
 Chewer

\* pause  
 briefly

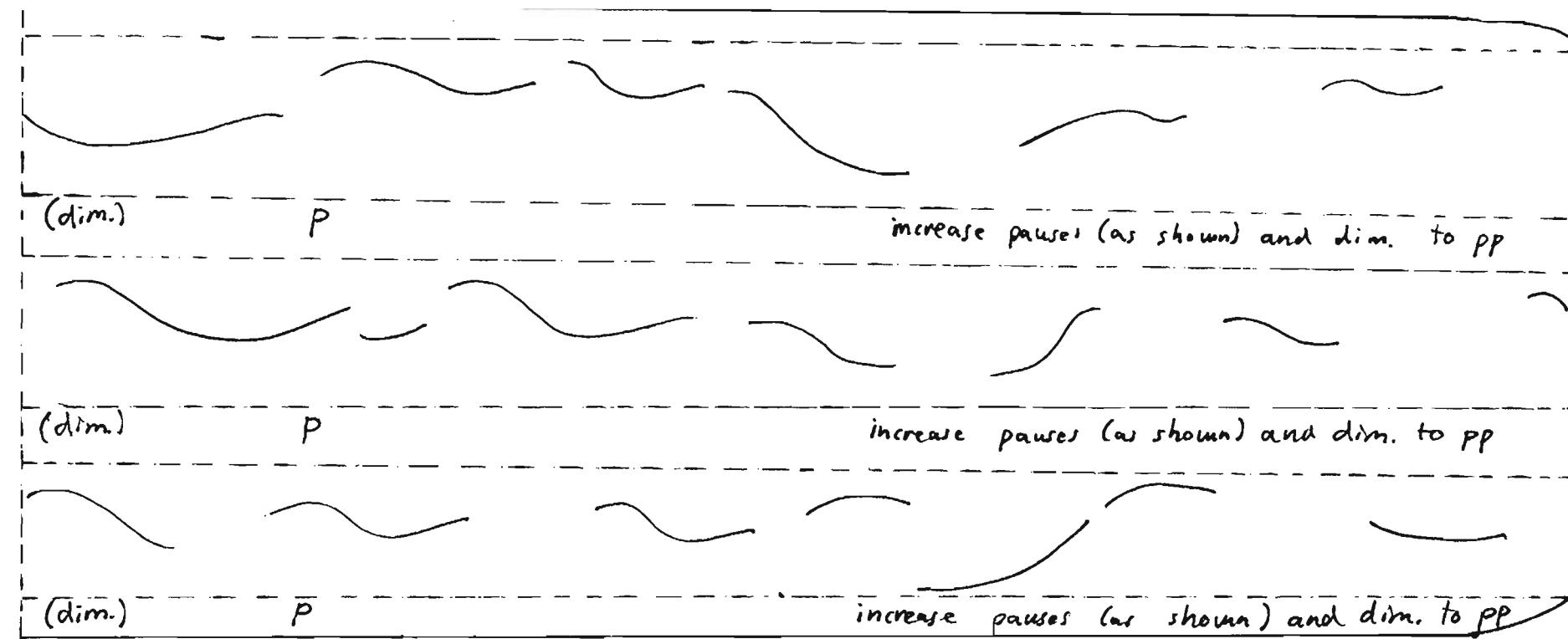
\* take a slow  
 sip of water

\* Sound G and  
 D bowls

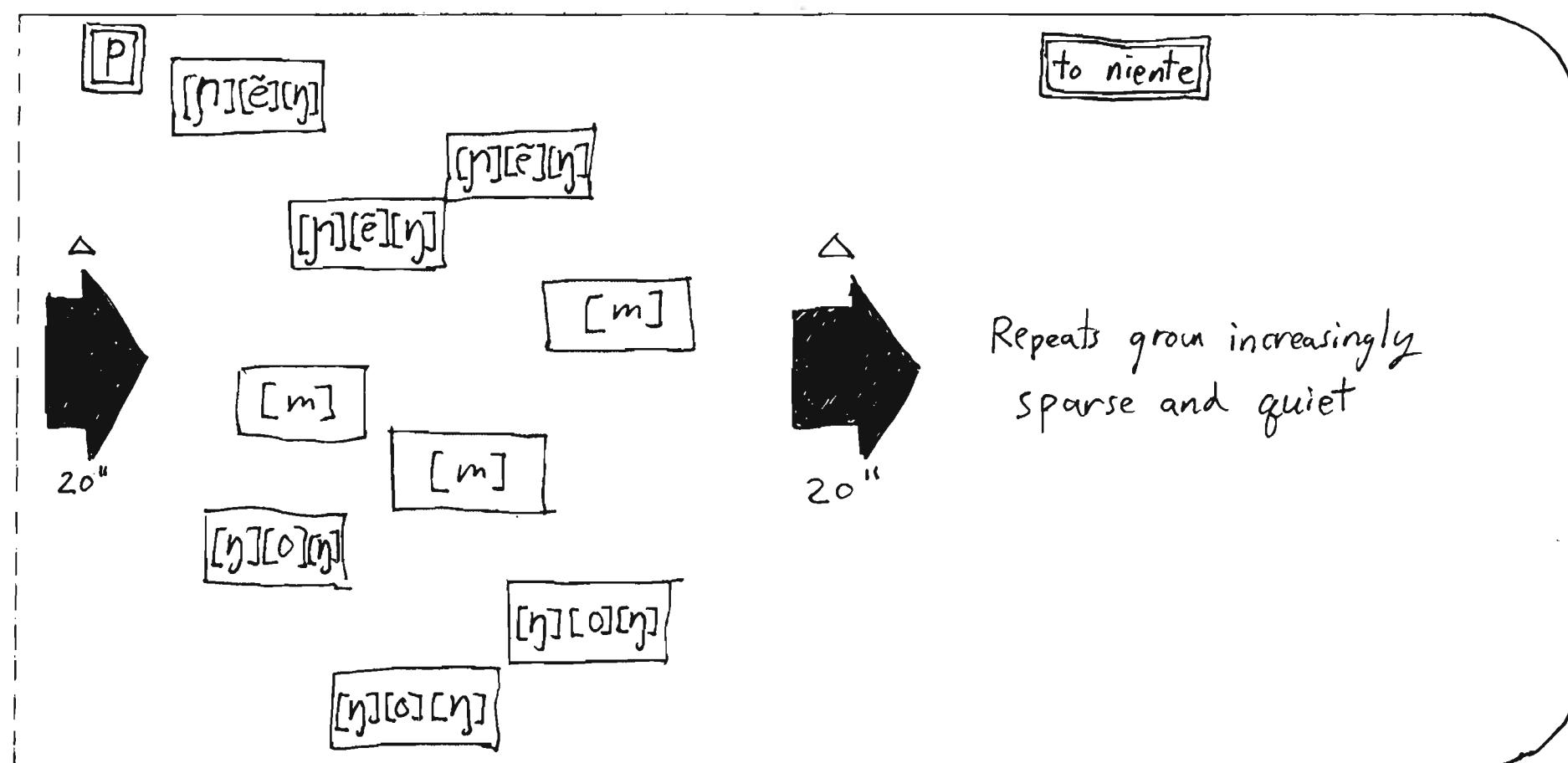
\* Raise up and start  
 eating bread with  
 peanut butter.

(chew  
 sticky)

(13)



Choir



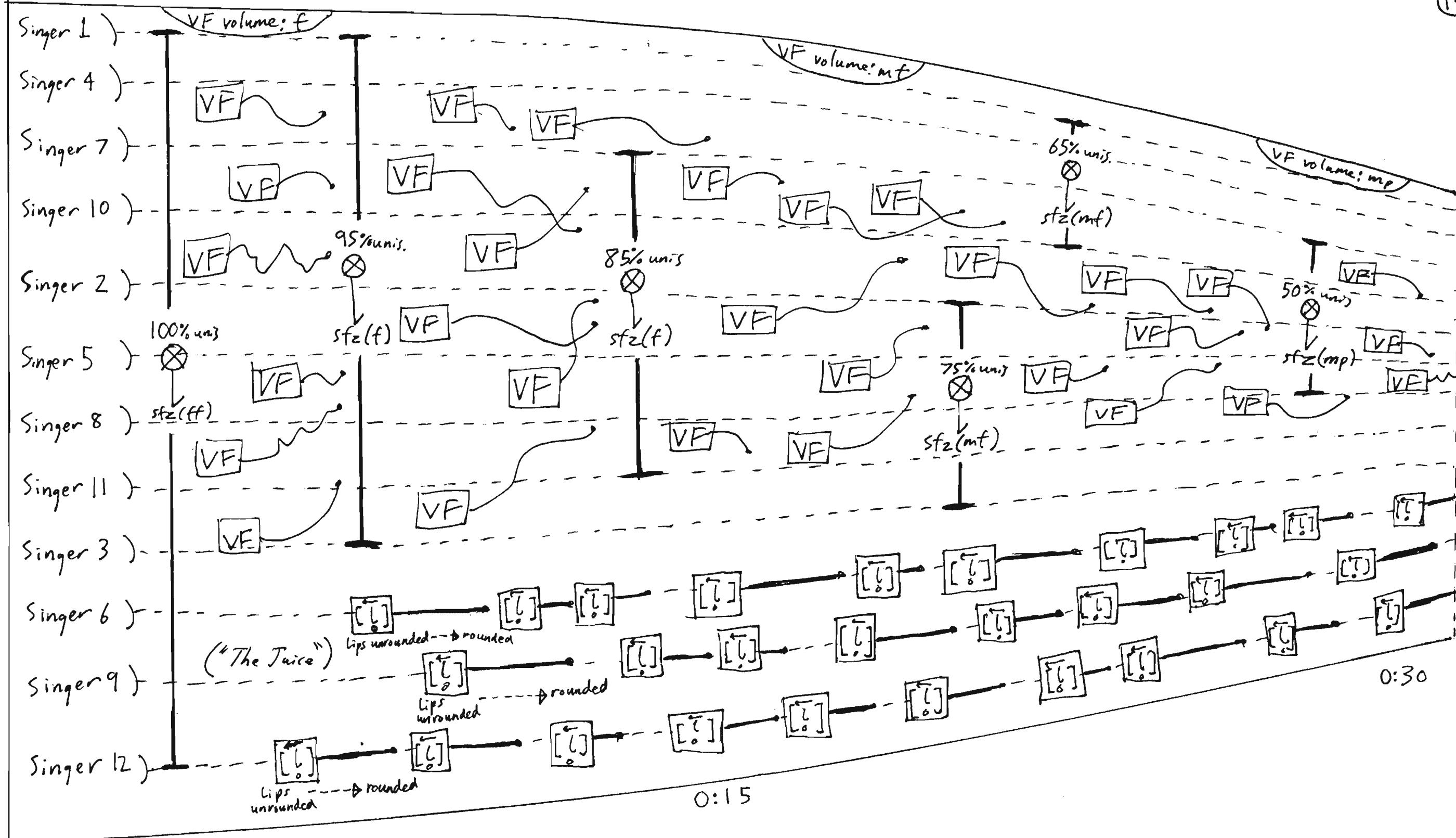
TACET  
≈ 20"

Lead  
Cheerer

\*Finish chewing bread with peanut butter \*pause briefly \* take a sip of water \* Sound Bb bowl \* Raise up Celery

Choir

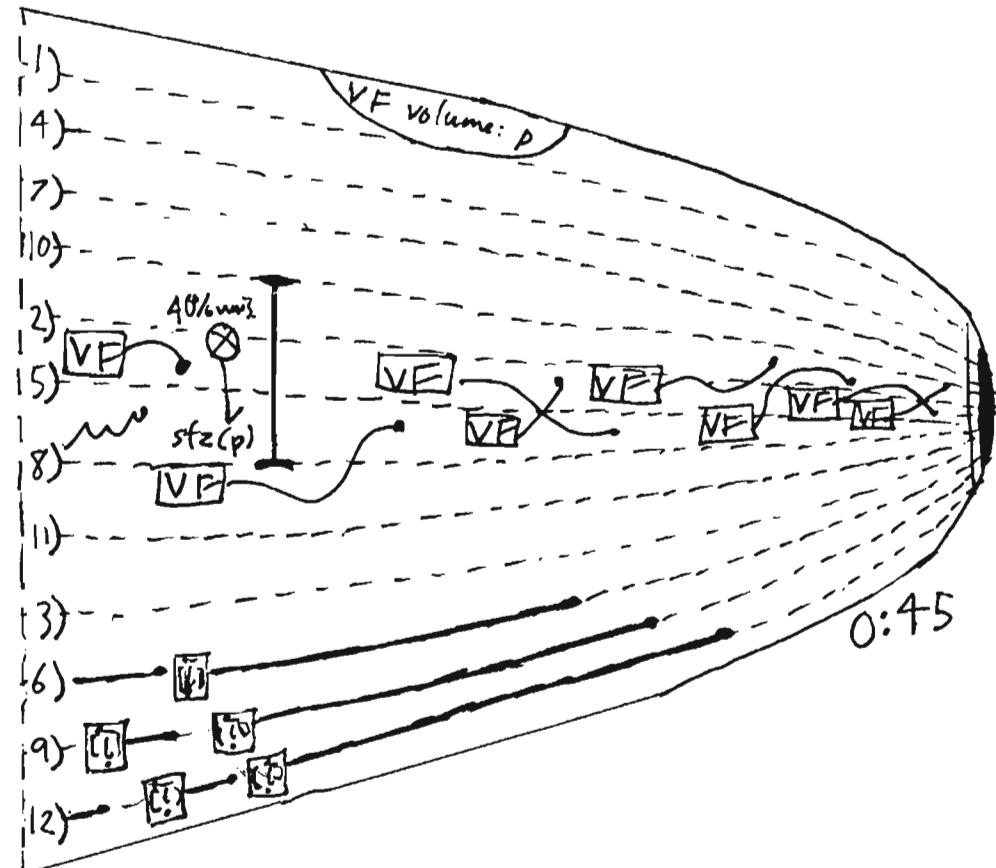
"Celery"  
(All Voices)



Lead  
Chewer

\* Start chewing  
celery

Choir



TACET  
 $\approx 20''$

Vowel Cycle  
 u → ii → i  
 o → e → a

"Grape"  
 (all voices)

Timing: 0:00

Voice 1	
Voice 2	
Voice 4	
Voice 5	
Voice 7	
Voice 8	
Voice 10	
All Others	

P cresc.  
 sfz P cresc.  
 P cresc.  
 sfz P cresc.  
 P cresc.  
 sfz P cresc.  
 P cresc.  
 sfz P cresc.

Lead Chopper

\* Finish chewing celery   \* Pause briefly   \* Take a sip of water   \* Sound D and C bowls   \* Raise up Grap   \* Begin chewing Grape

Choir

mf dim.

(rest)

0:15

0:35

Lead  
Chewer(enjoy the  
juiciness)\*Finish chewing  
Grape

17

Choir

TACET  
 $\approx 20''$

"Rice"  
 (For all voices)

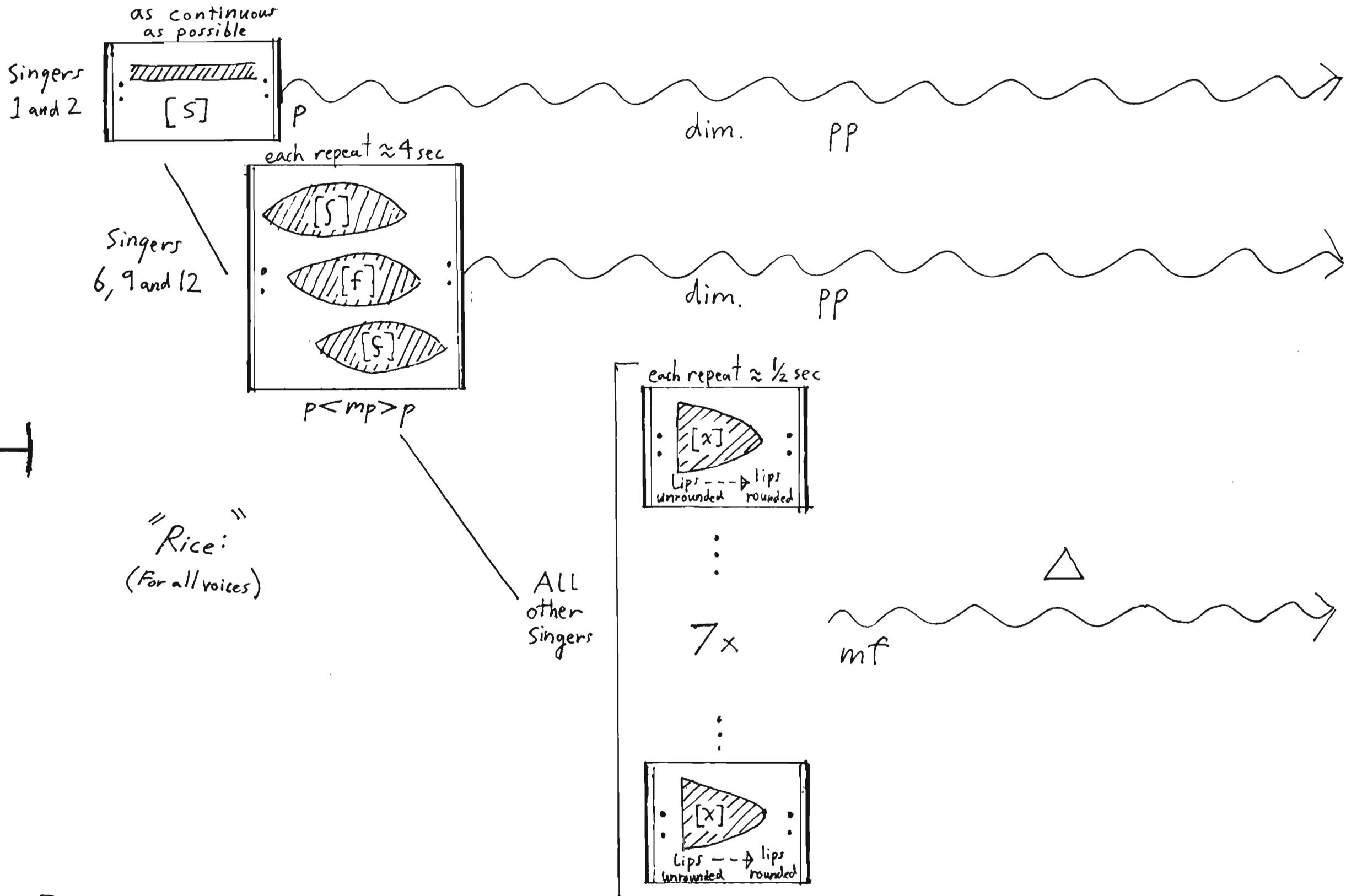
Timing: 0:00

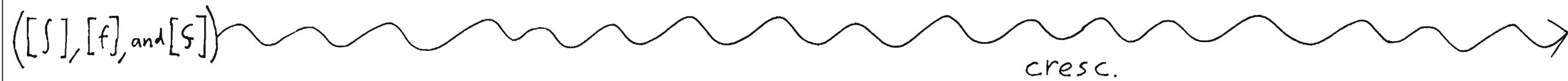
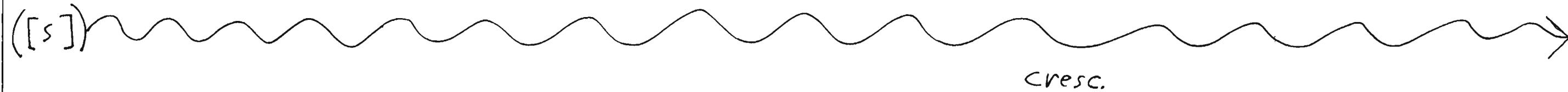
0:18

Lead  
 Chewer

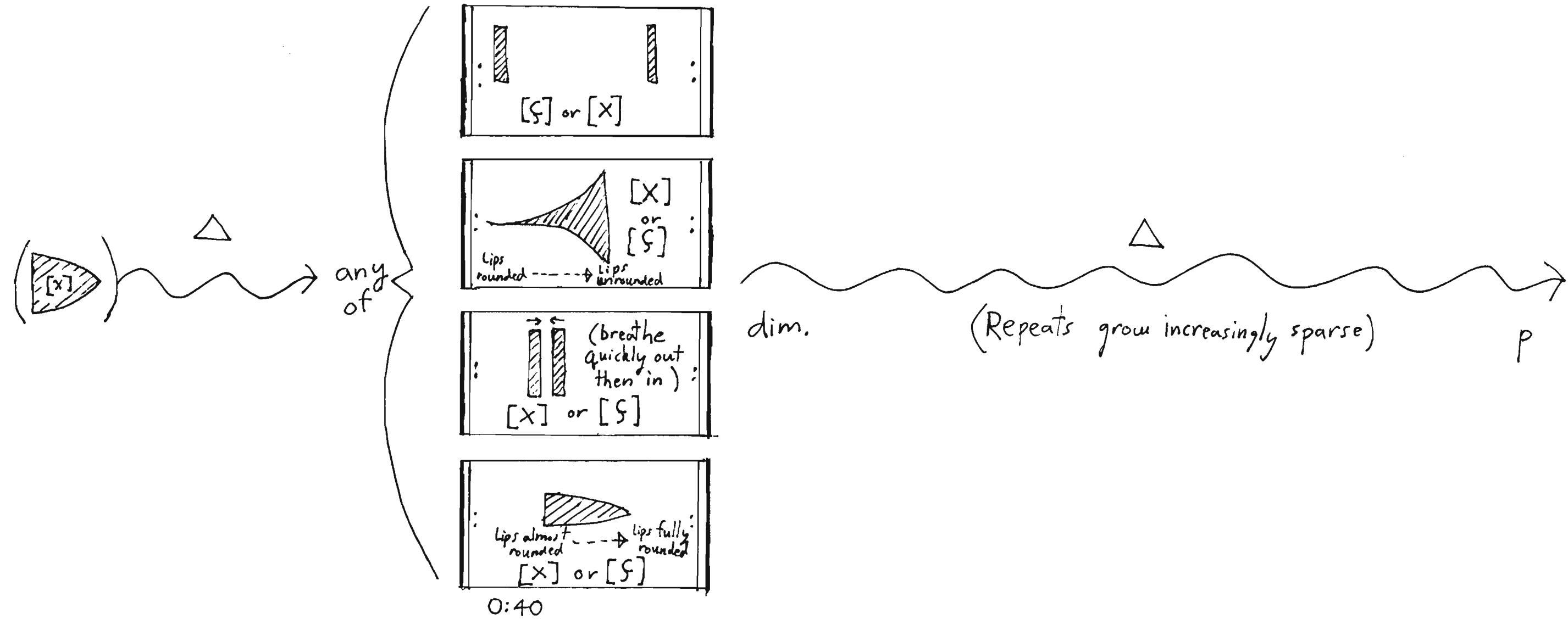
- \* Pause Briefly (no hurry)
- \* Take a slow sip of water
- \* Sound G bowl
- \* Raise up rice

\* Begin chewing rice





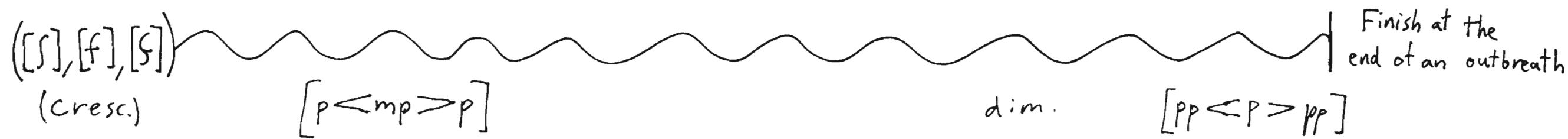
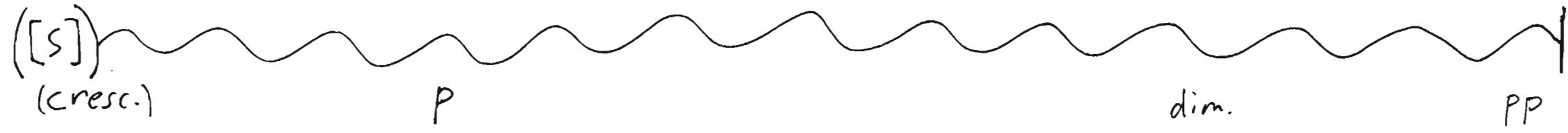
Choir



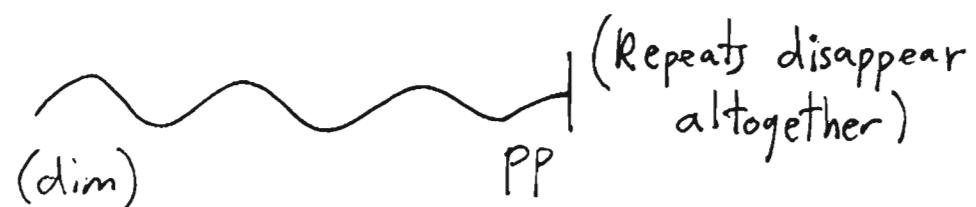
Lead  
Chewer

(Listen to the chewing)

(19)



Choir



1:10

1:25

Lead  
Chewer\*Finish  
Chewing

(Digest slowly)