Gabriel Almazan

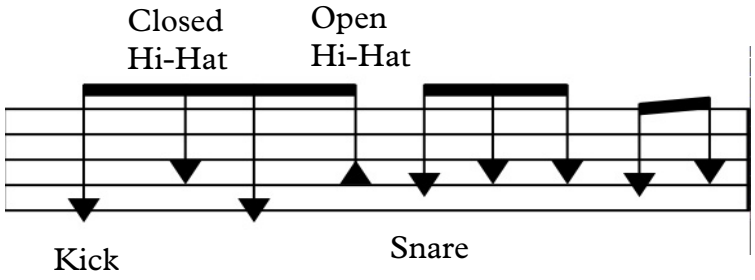
Train of Thought

For Vocal Sextet

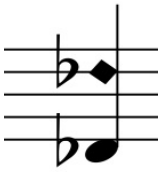
2018

Train of Thought:
For Vocal Sextet (Soprano, Alto, Countertenor, Tenor, Baritone, & Bass) and Optional Piano
Duration: approx. 3'45"

Beatbox Legend:



Diamond heads signify overtone to be sung over fundamental pitch:



I started writing this piece while I was on a cross-country train ride from Washington D.C. to Los Angeles. I decided to use my own words for the text setting, and to start coming up with ideas for lyrics, I started an exercise in writing stream-of-consciousness. I found what I needed in the exercise ranging from meta humor to deep introspection. I continued the stream-of-consciousness writing for a couple more days at home, and when I felt I had a significant enough amount of material, I started amending, expanding, deleting, and setting my text for the music I had been composing.

This piece was composed for a call for scores from HEX, a vocal sextet from California. The call intrigued me with its encouragement of virtuosic and "outside-the-box" compositional aesthetics, so I decided to use some compositional techniques that I love from hip-hop and combine them with the techniques that I love to use in my classical writing.

Train of Thought
by Gabriel Almazan

Semi stream of consciousness rap,
although the rhythm was predetermined.
Twelve minutes til midnight; I awoke from my nap
My hands are super dry, so I reach for my lotion.
"Lotion up" is accompanied by this emoji. [☝] Odd to have an emoji without emotion.
As I see fit, lines will be amended;
Allow me to try and create something on the spot, or at least partly; see, this amendment came from home.
Distracted by social media. Surprise! Updates by those I've friended.
I feel weird about leaving my stuff unattended.
I should've kept this without edits; though, I changed up that last sentence from whence I roamed.
This is getting meta "as fuck," and I want the air quotes.
I make the rules;
I can call this all part of the process, regardless what I wrote
or how I utilize my tools.
Maybe I'm out of my element;
maybe my art is irrelevant;
maybe this and that is piss and crap, and in the room, I am the elephant.
I doubt it,
and for the record; I don't really know where to go from this monologue that I've spouted.
I'm putting down my hammers, as Gilda would say;
it's out there, see?
Somehow, I need to shout that I'm okay,
but will my artistic voice carry?
Will I really stay up all night to LA?
My eyes are getting weary...
Why do we try to be clever?
Why do we share this endeavor?
Change our train of thought to amuse whomever?
I would call it cocky to claim cleverness as completely connatural. (Praise me, please!)
Well, I didn't use it all,
but I guess that's not the point.
This writing was an odd beast.
Hope it's worthy of the call
and good enough to be enjoyed.
I'm done; I've said my piece.

Train of Thought

Gabriel Almazan

♩ = 110-130

4 + 3 + 2, except in meter changes

mf Unpitched beatbox; use crisp articulations

Gabriel Almazan

Soprano

Alto

f hold on 'zz'

This is

Countertenor

f hold on 'zz'

This is

Tenor

f pronounced mah-ee; hold on 'ee'

This is m-y

Baritone

f hold on 'zz'

This is

Bass

f hold on 'zz'

This is

♩ = 110-130

Piano (Optional)

p

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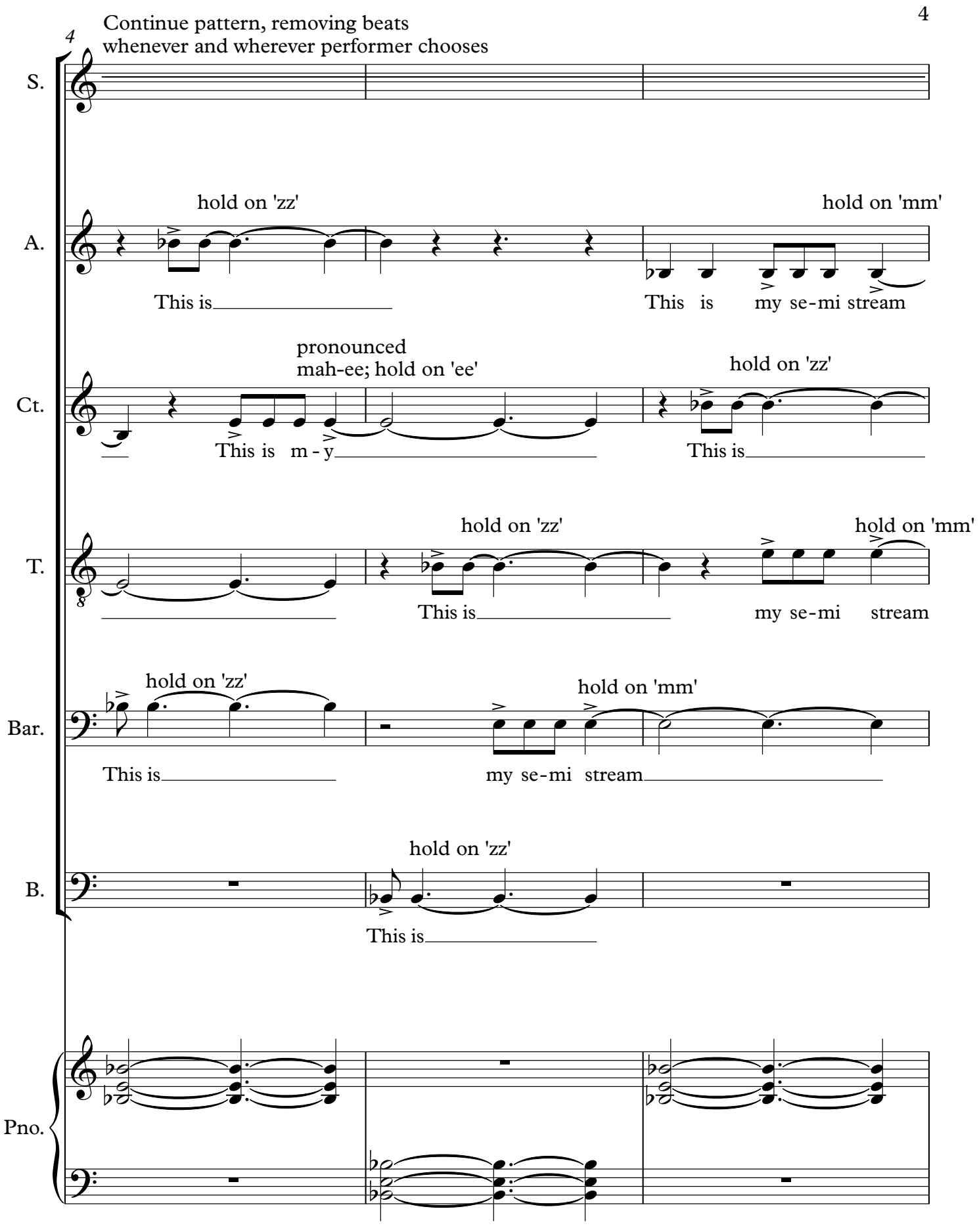
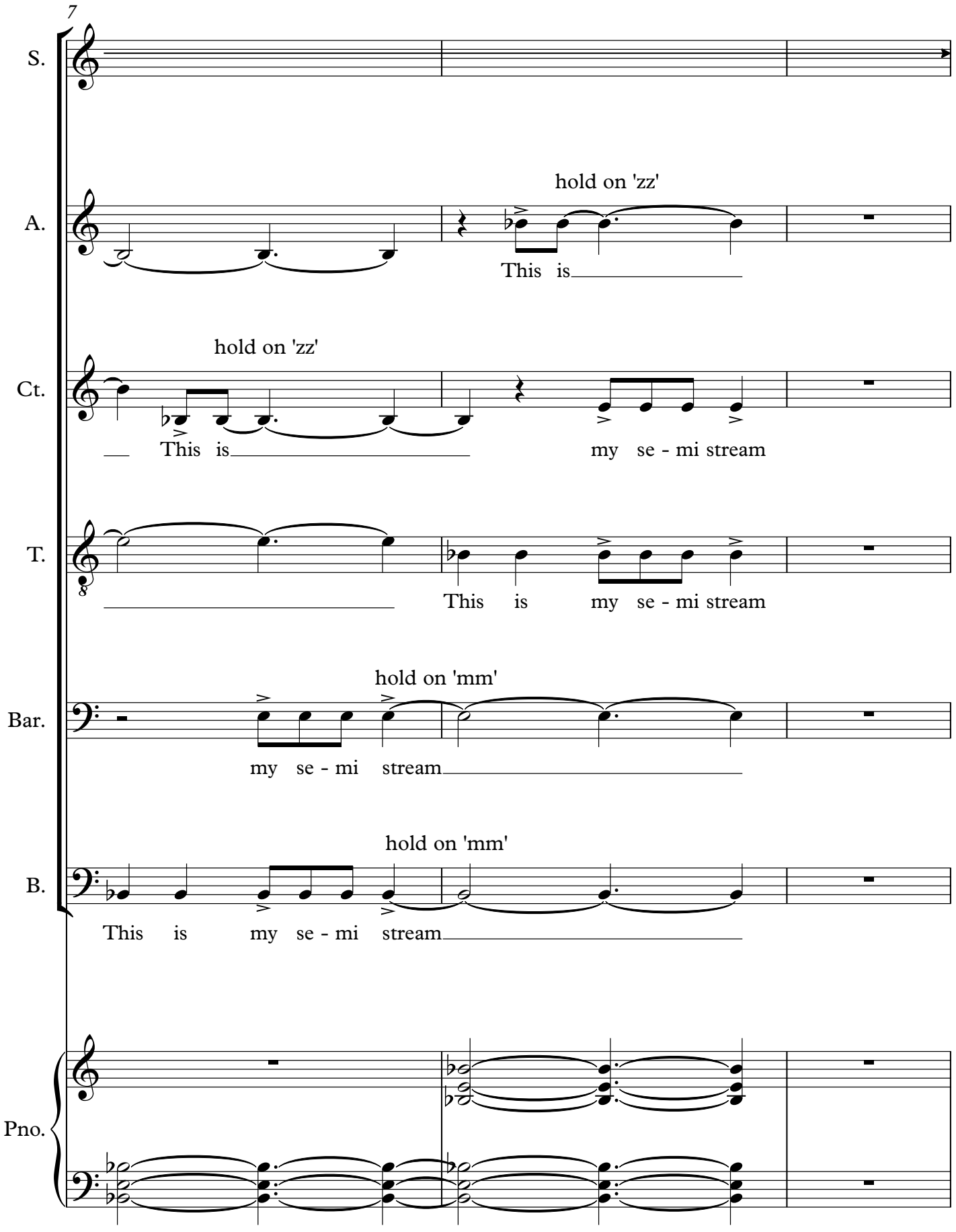
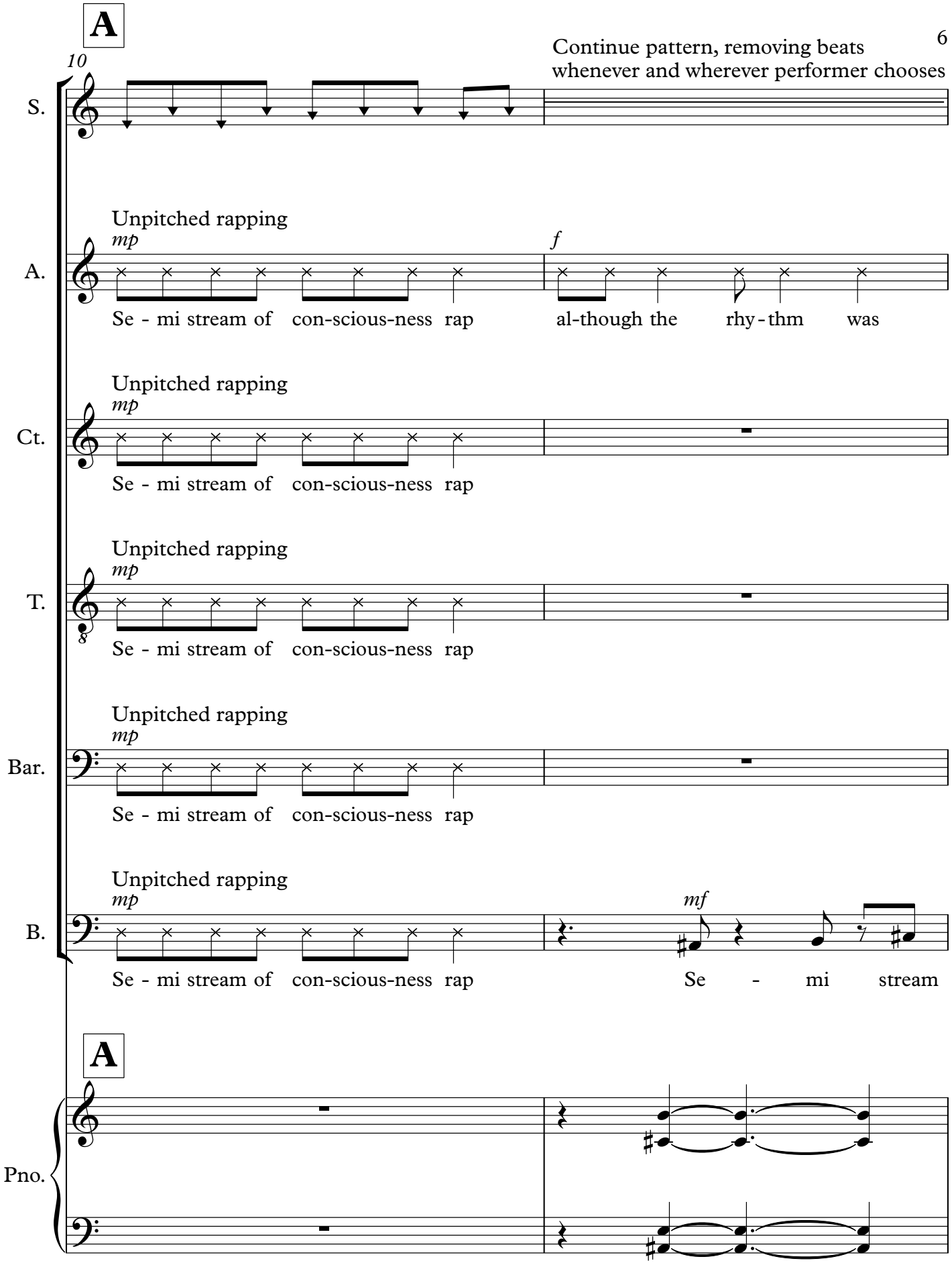
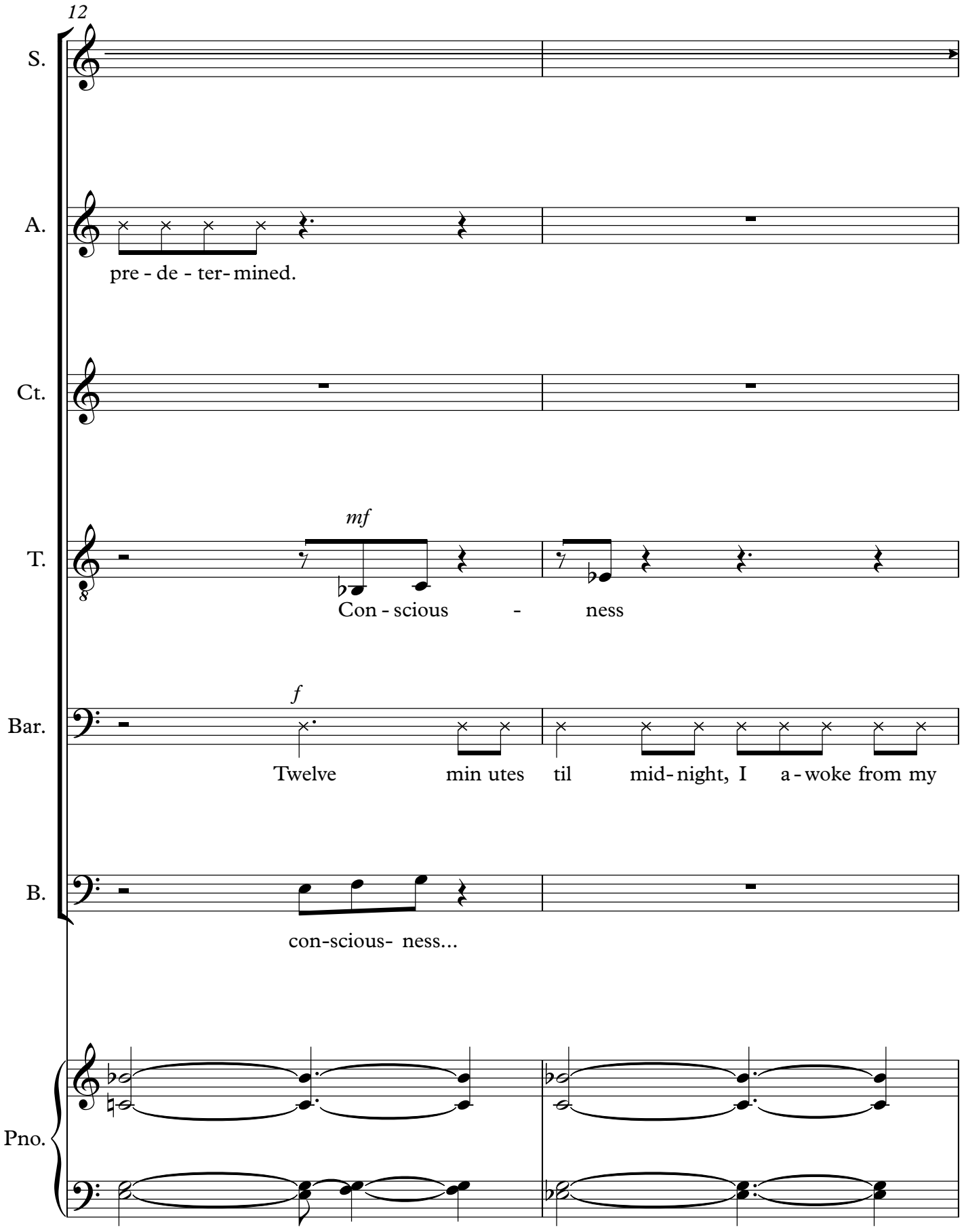
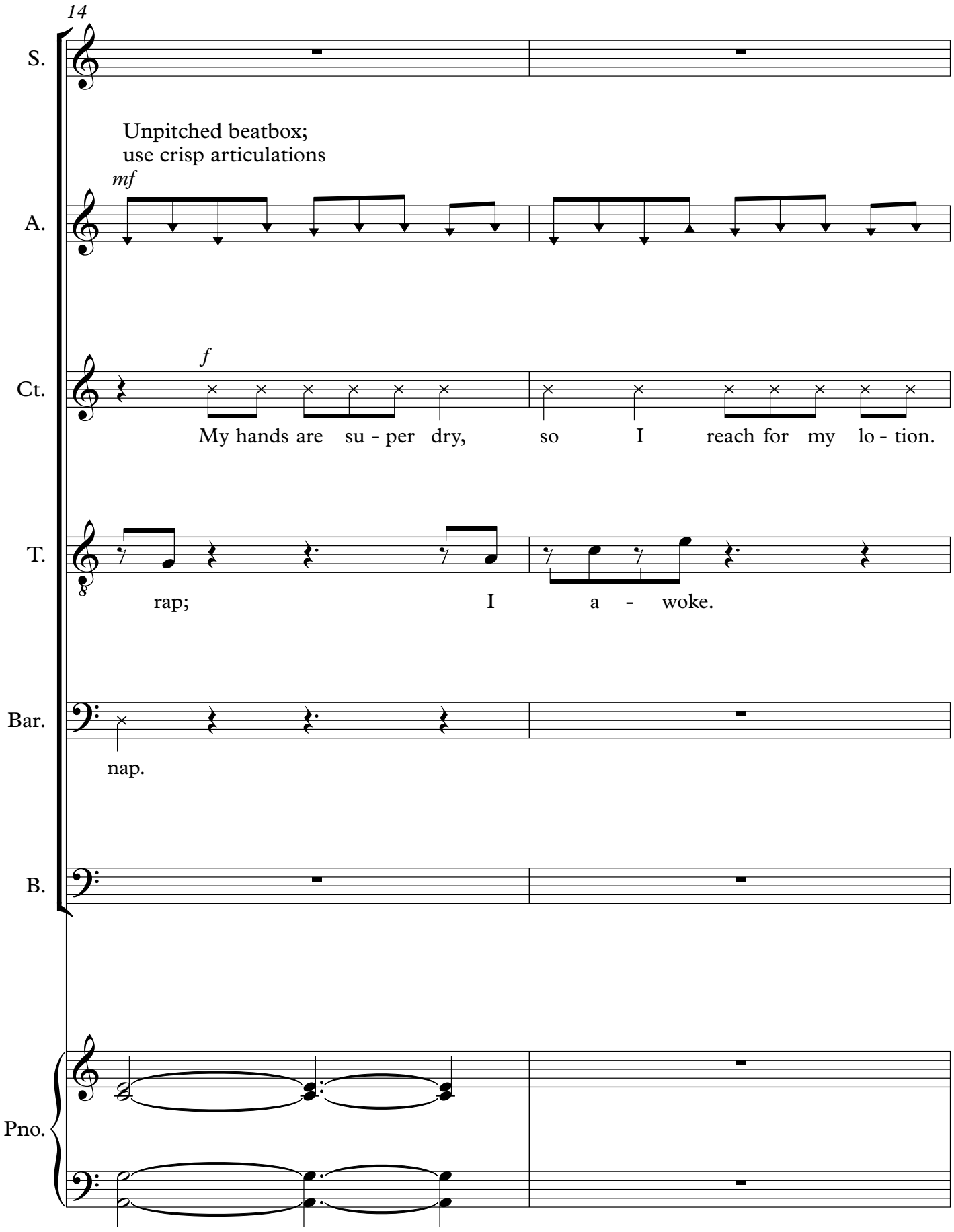
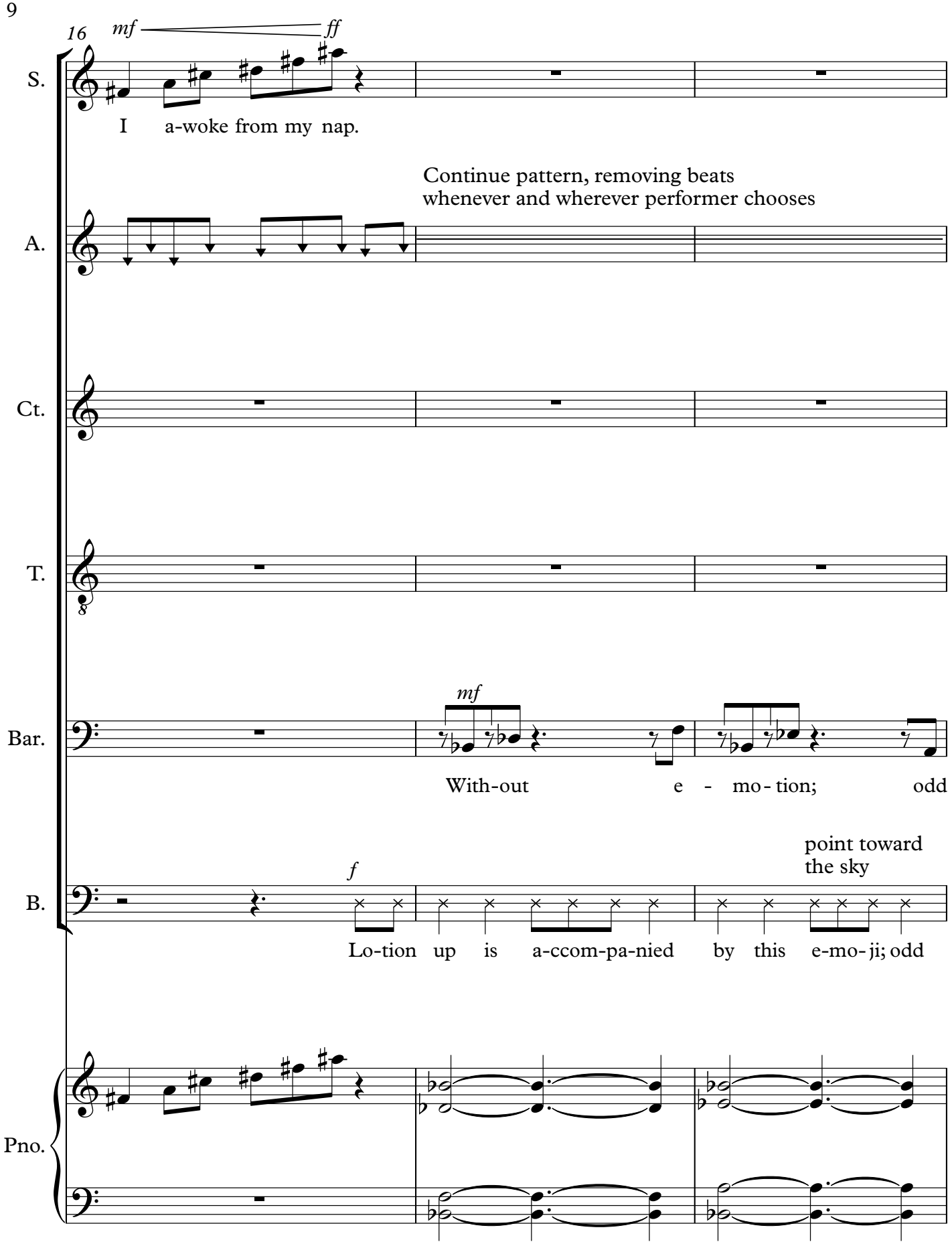

4
Continue pattern, removing beats
whenever and wherever performer chooses
S.
A.
hold on 'zz'
hold on 'mm'
This is
This is my se-mi stream
Ct.
pronounced
mah-ee; hold on 'ee'
hold on 'zz'
This is m - y
This is
T.
hold on 'zz'
hold on 'mm'
This is
my se-mi stream
Bar.
hold on 'zz'
hold on 'mm'
This is
my se-mi stream
B.
hold on 'zz'
This is
Pno.

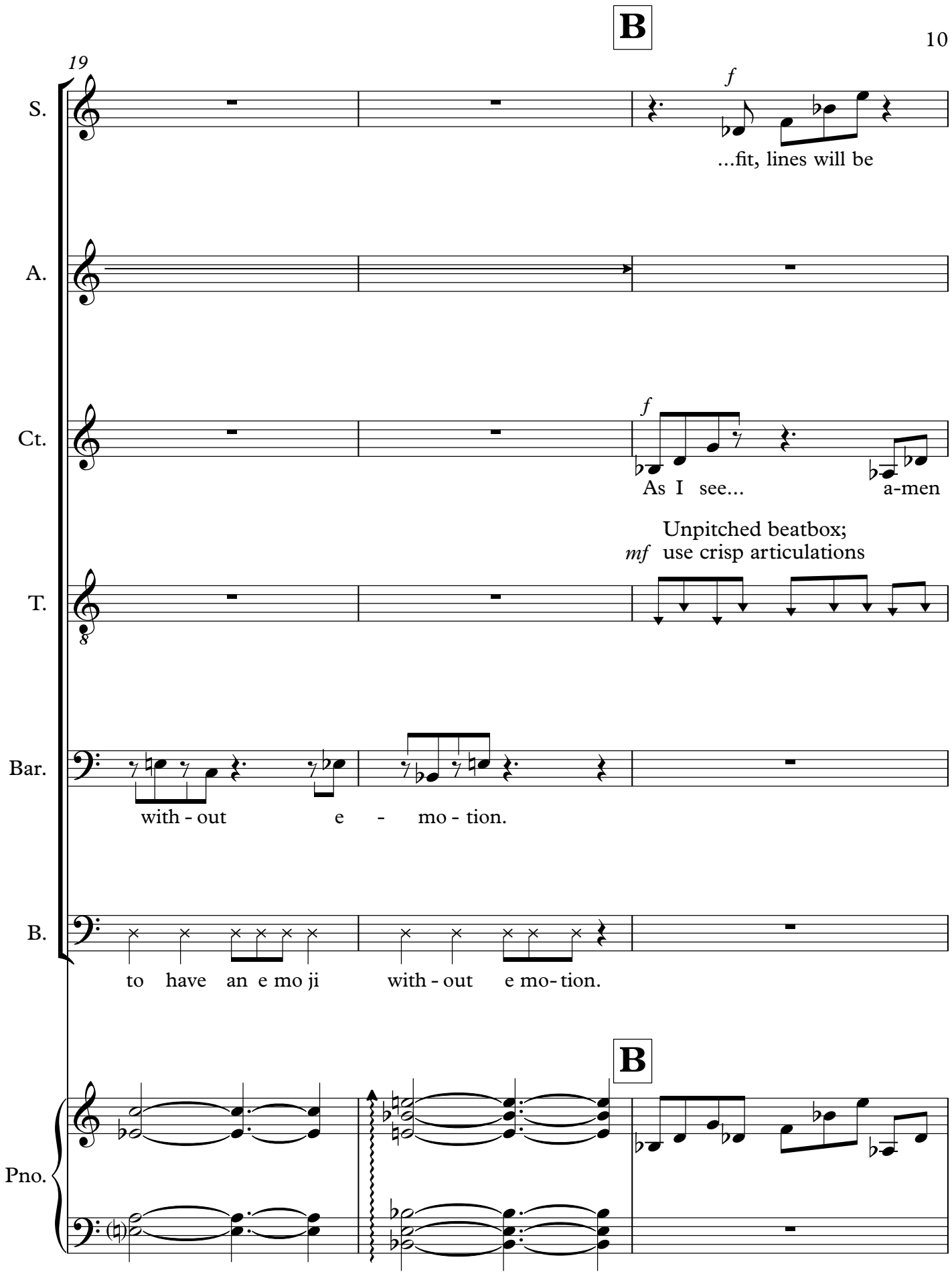

7
S.
A.
hold on 'zz'
This is
Ct.
hold on 'zz'
This is
my se - mi stream
T.
8
This is my se - mi stream
Bar.
hold on 'mm'
my se - mi stream
B.
hold on 'mm'
This is my se - mi stream
Pno.

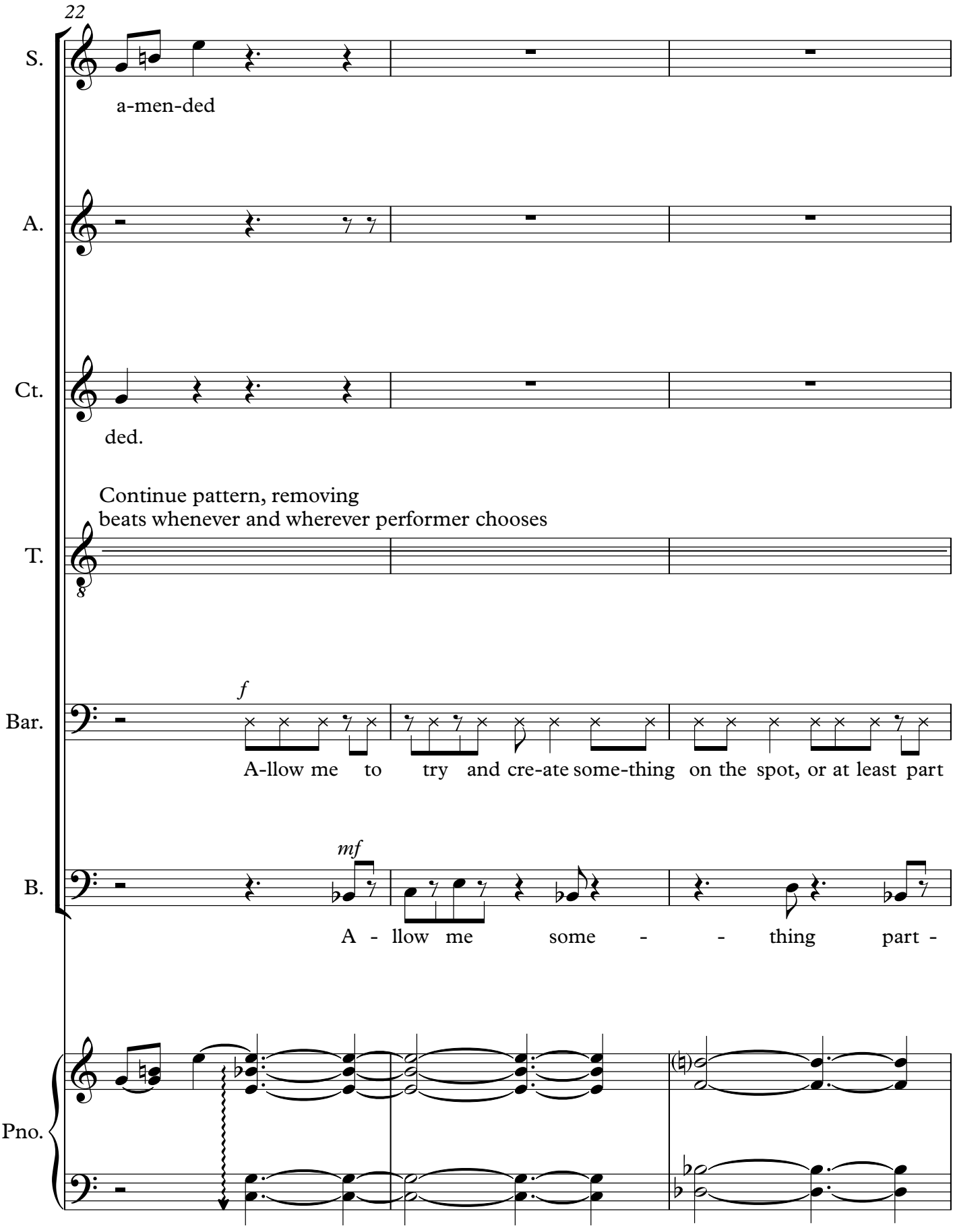

A
10
Continue pattern, removing beats
whenever and wherever performer chooses
S.
Unpitched rapping
mp
f
A.
Se - mi stream of con-scious-ness rap
al-though the rhy - thm was
Unpitched rapping
mp
Ct.
Se - mi stream of con-scious-ness rap
Unpitched rapping
mp
T.
Se - mi stream of con-scious-ness rap
Unpitched rapping
mp
Bar.
Se - mi stream of con-scious-ness rap
Unpitched rapping
mp
mf
B.
Se - mi stream of con-scious-ness rap
Se - mi stream
A
Pno.

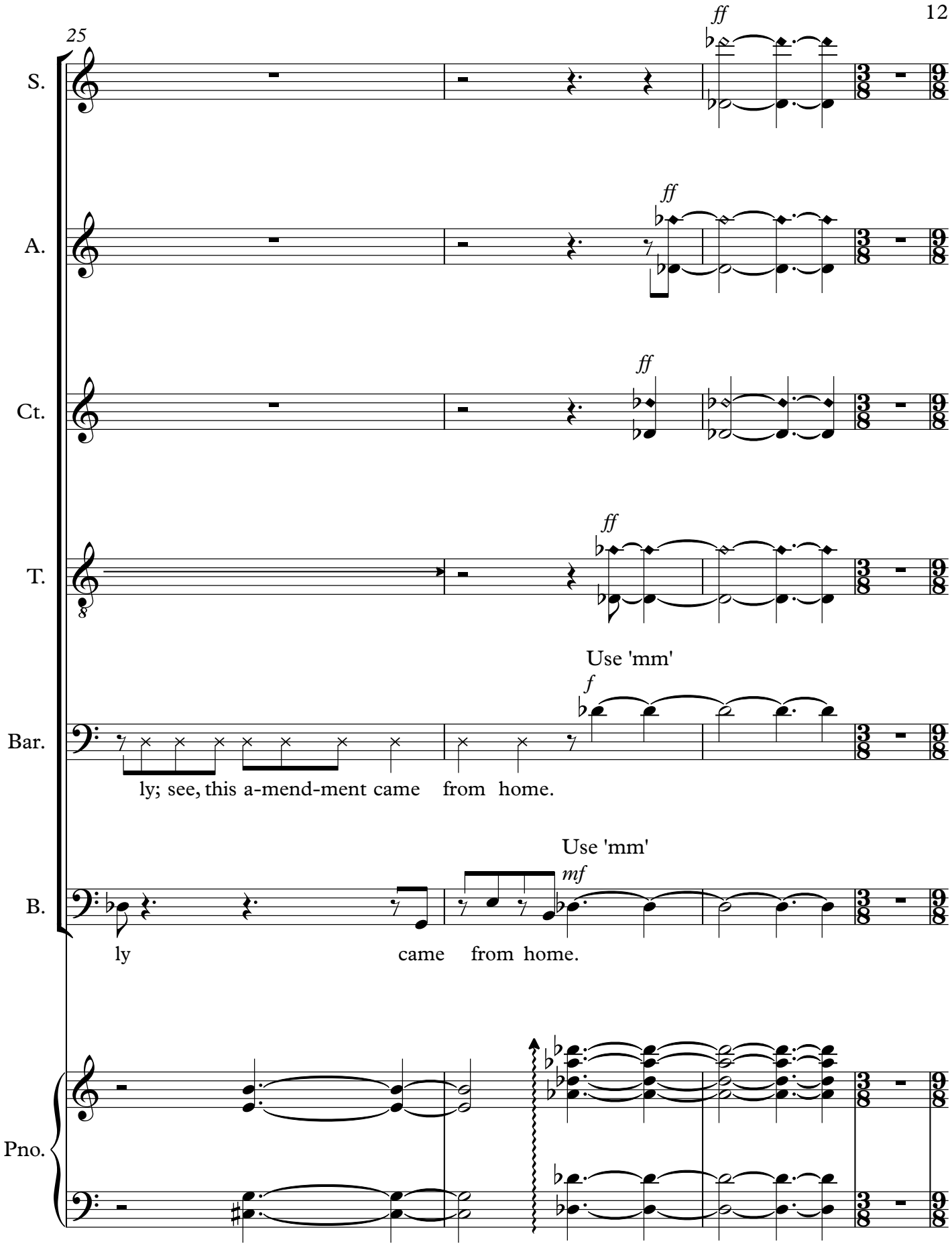

12
S.
A.
pre - de - ter- mined.
Ct.
T.
mf
Con - scious - ness
Bar.
f
Twelve min utes til mid- night, I a - woke from my
B.
con-scious- ness...
Pno.

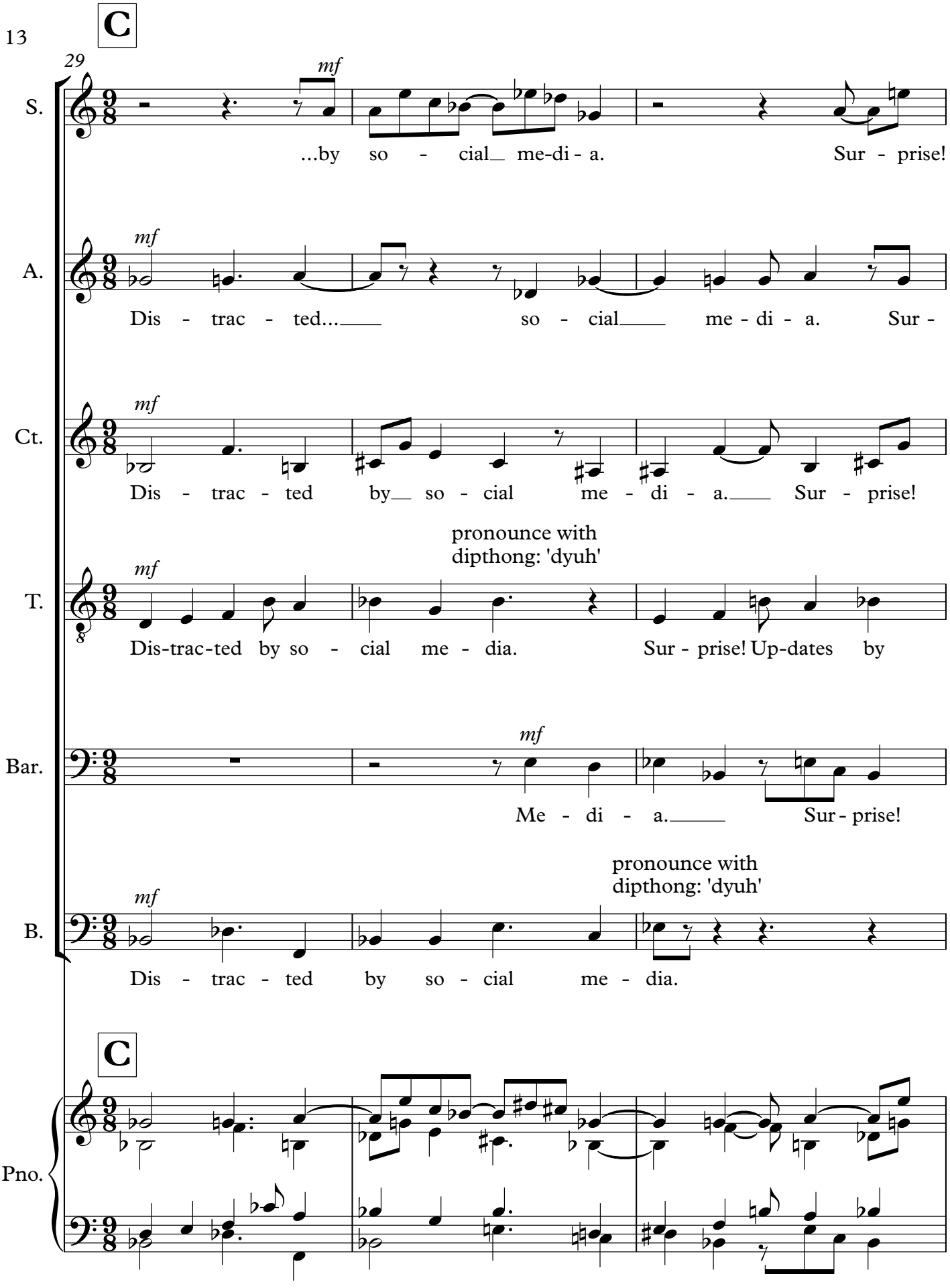

14
S.
Unpitched beatbox;
use crisp articulations
mf
A.
f
Ct.
My hands are su - per dry, so I reach for my lo - tion.
T.
rap; I a - woke.
Bar.
nap.
B.
Pno.

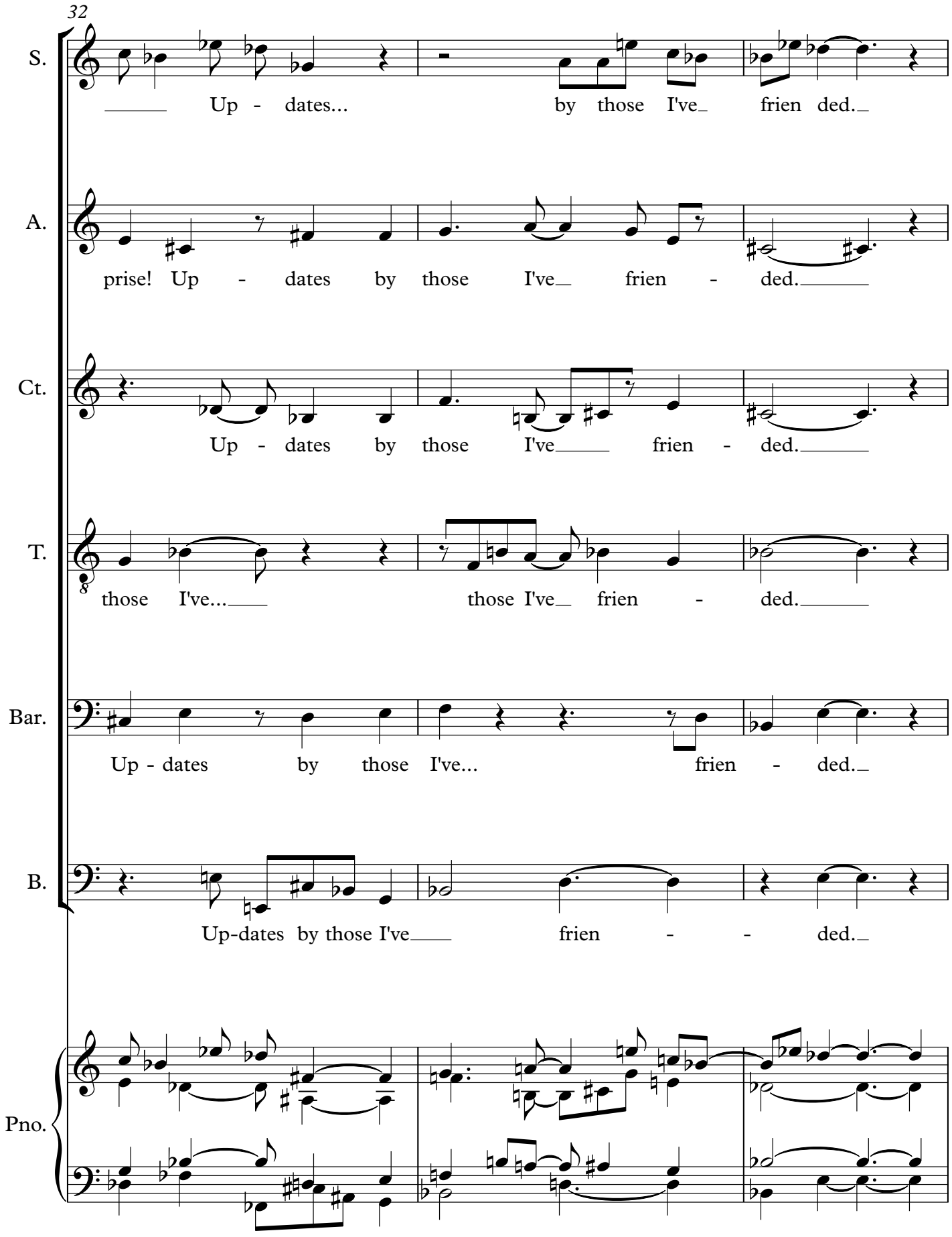

16
mf
ff
S.
I a-woke from my nap.
Continue pattern, removing beats
whenever and wherever performer chooses
A.
Ct.
T.
8
mf
Bar.
With-out e - mo - tion; odd
point toward
the sky
f
B.
Lo-tion up is a-ccom-pa-nied by this e-mo-ji; odd
Pno.

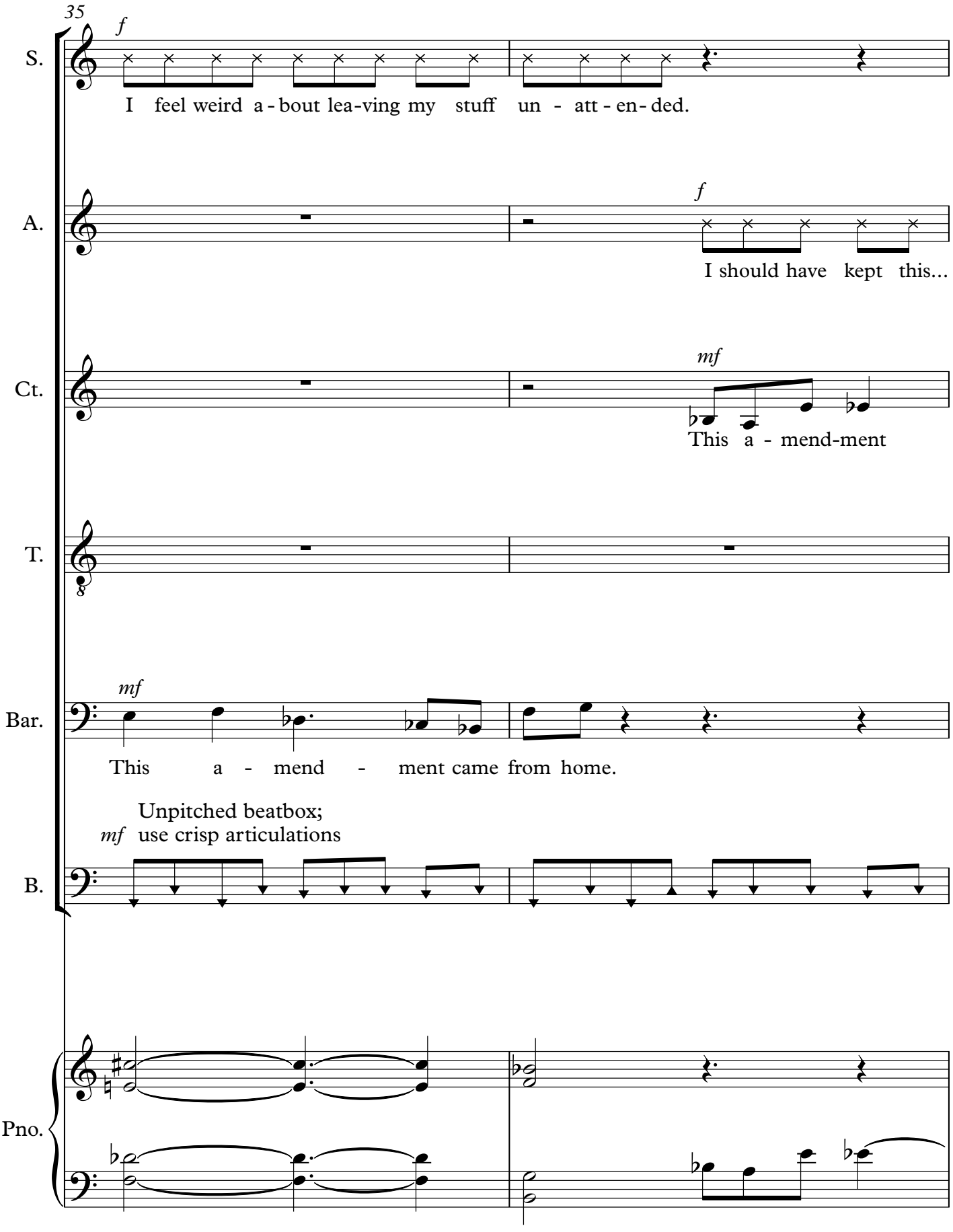

B
19
S.
f
...fit, lines will be
A.
Ct.
f
As I see...
a-men
Unpitched beatbox;
mf use crisp articulations
T.
Bar.
with - out e - mo - tion.
B.
to have an e mo ji with - out e mo - tion.
B
Pno.

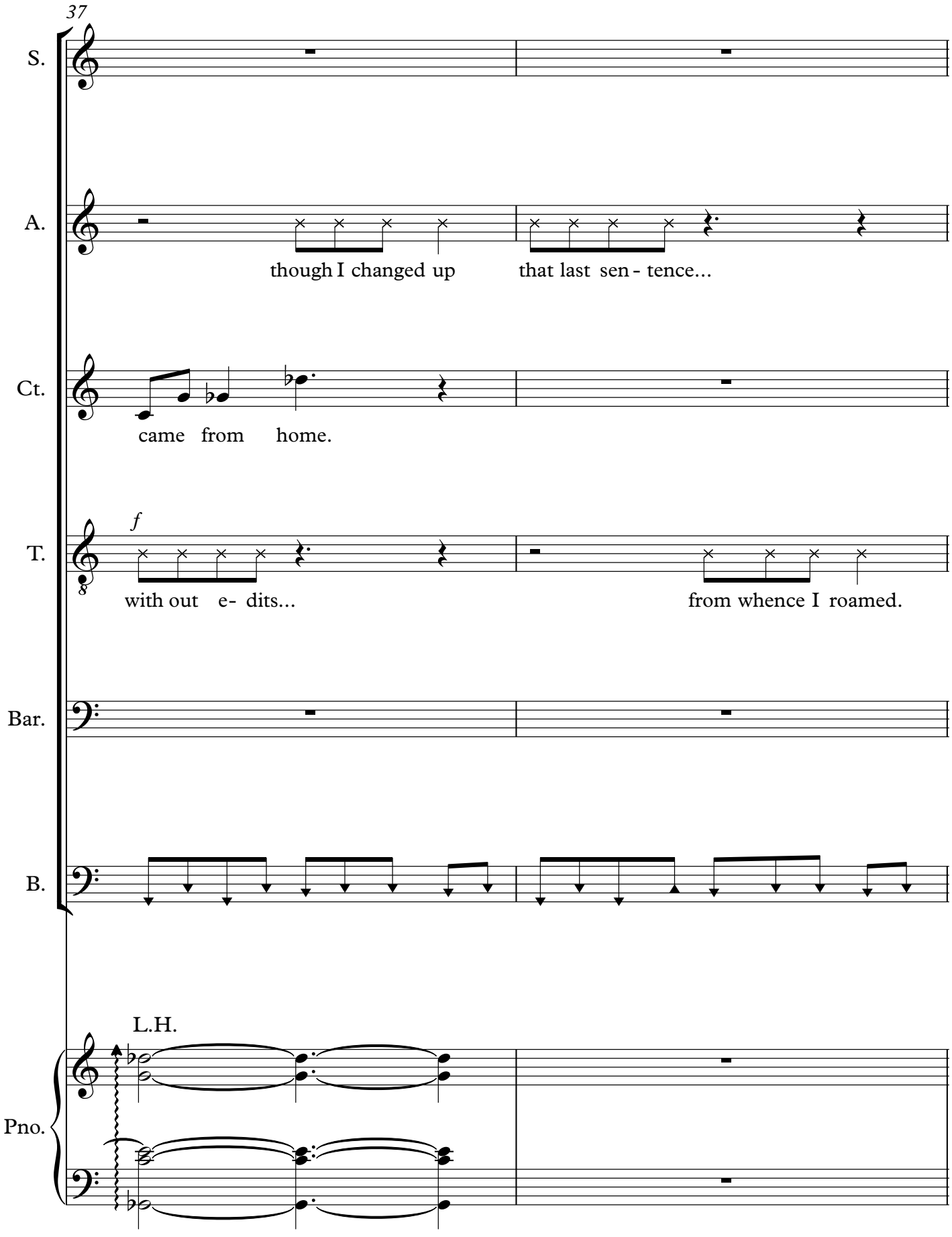

22
S.
a-men-ded
A.
Ct.
ded.
Continue pattern, removing
beats whenever and wherever performer chooses
T.
8
Bar.
f
A-llow me to try and cre-ate some-thing on the spot, or at least part
B.
mf
A - llow me some - - thing part -
Pno.


25
S.
A.
Ct.
T.
Bar.
B.
Pno.
ff
Use 'mm'
f
mf
ly; see, this a-mend-ment came from home.
ly came from home.


C
29
mf
S.
...by so - cial me-di - a. Sur - prise!
A.
Dis - trac - ted... so - cial me - di - a. Sur -
Ct.
Dis - trac - ted by so - cial me - di - a. Sur - prise!
pronounce with
dipthong: 'dyuh'
T.
Dis-trac-ted by so - cial me - dia. Sur - prise! Up-dates by
Bar.
Me - di - a. Sur - prise!
pronounce with
dipthong: 'dyuh'
B.
Dis - trac - ted by so - cial me - dia.
C
Pno.


32
S.
Up - dates... by those I've frien ded.
A.
prise! Up - dates by those I've frien - ded.
Ct.
Up - dates by those I've frien - ded.
T.
those I've... those I've frien - ded.
Bar.
Up - dates by those I've... frien - ded.
B.
Up-dates by those I've frien - - ded.
Pno.


35
S.
f
I feel weird a - bout lea-ving my stuff un - att - en- ded.
A.
f
I should have kept this...
Ct.
mf
This a - mend-ment
T.
8
Bar.
mf
This a - mend - ment came from home.
B.
Unpitched beatbox;
mf use crisp articulations
Pno.


37
S.
A.
though I changed up
that last sen - tence...
Ct.
came from home.
T.
f
with out e- dits...
from whence I roamed.
Bar.
B.
L.H.
Pno.