SIMON EMMERSON

SENTENCES

(soprano and live electronics)

(1990/91)

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VERSION 1.0 JANUARY 1991

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NOTES

Notation

x - speech : x+ - heightened speech : ⊗ - whisper

⌈ - absolutely unaspirated, enunciated entirely in the vocal cavity and hence merely 'coloured' consonants

These symbols once given apply until contradicted.

All accidentals apply only to the individual notes they precede.

⟵ - longer notes held according to the horizontal line
⌈ - shorter, but not very short
↑ - very short but always clearly articulated, not hurried.
Groups of these notes stand outside the time points indicated above the stave.

Time scale indications: at all times the indications are to be interpreted freely; the soprano always leads, the electronics operator follows. The indications above the stave are 'very approximate seconds' to be freely interpreted.

⌈ ⌈ / > > - a cresc/dim (sfzp) *within* a held note

L/C/R : Left, centre and right microphones. When not indicated the use of the L and R mic.s should be free, theatrical but not over histrionic.

(:L-R:) etc. : repeat left/right movement

Performance

Song 1
Speak clearly and rhythmically, rather like an early American circus presenter but perhaps not quite so 'salesman'. Address the audience directly, interpret the rhythmic notation freely without appearing constrained by it in any way.
NB. 'mirages': as in French, lose the 'e', pronounce as singular; the American 'butte' is virtually as the colloquial English 'beaut', the shortened form of 'beauty'.

Song 2
Lyrical and sustained, increasingly melismatic setting. Distinguish between the syllabic ⌈ and the melismatic ⌈⌈⌈ .

Song 3
Light and dark! Changing mood from light (senza vib.) to a heavier *bel canto*, to whisper etc. with great agility. Final *vocalise* very whistful and distant.

Song 4
Theatre but no story: words struggle to be heard, from voiced fragments to unvoiced sentences. Spit out unvoiced consonants (to trigger effects!).

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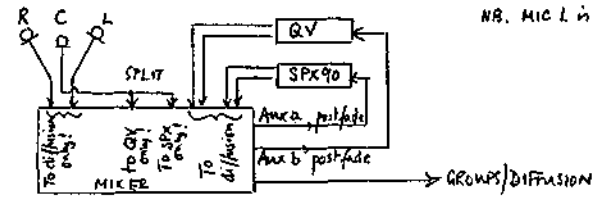
Technical Notes



NB. MIC L is panned R on mixer! & vice versa!

1. Set up the circuit as shown, positioning the Quadraverb and the SPX90 such that programme advance controls are within easy reach, the pedal controller should be beneath the mixer for ease of use while moving fader levels, and the Modulation Wheel within easy reach.

2. Route the stereo pair of mic.s (1 and 2) as indicated to the main diffusion and set fader to some convenient set level and adjust the master rotary gains appropriately. The 3rd central mic is split as indicated and *neither input channel should be routed to any diffusion!* The left channel feeds the Quadraverb, the right the SPX90. Set both faders to the 'zero' mark and adjust rotary pots to a reasonable gain; then adjust each of the QV's and SPX's own input control levels for saturation at an ff singing level. This established 'zero' level on the fader movement then represents the 'maximum' line as indicated in the score.

3. In turn, adjust the QV and SPX output return levels with mf material. These should be altered only minimally in performance - the most important variable is the *input*. (As in 2 above.)

4. Carefully check each programme on the QV and SPX individually; details of each are given below. Most especially those which involve trigger levels: these may need to be adjusted, or more likely the input level to the device overall. (The trigger level on the QV cannot be adjusted - check very carefully that the input level is sufficient.)

5. Details of the QV and SPX patches are given in the numerical order in which they occur in the score. The performer must enter the specific memory location numbers for these on the machines in question on the score as a check. Suggested names are given though these need not be entered.

6. The score: this is notated on four lines: two for the input levels to the Quadraverb and SPX90 (marked 'QV' and 'SPX'), one for general information on programme changes and settings ('PRG') and the lowest for any Controller settings and levels (Pedal or Modulation Wheel), though this is not often used. The ideal time for any programme change is given with a short double stroke on the line. Some actions are 'tied' to soprano performance actions with a dotted line.

7. The operator should note on the score the programme numbers on the specific machines in use. These are arbitrarily given as '1-9 (or 10)' below.

Programme details for the Quadraverb and SPX90

XX= *setting doesn't matter* - as it is inoperative
ETC: XX = all subsequent pages (on the QV) inoperative

Song 1:	Quadraverb:	Programme 1
	SPX90:	Programme 1
Song 2:	Quadraverb:	Programme 2
	SPX90:	Programme 2
Song 3:	Quadraverb:	Programmes 3-5
	SPX90:	Programmes 3-6
Song 4:	Quadraverb:	Programmes 6-9
	SPX90:	Programmes 7-11

QUADRAVERB PROGRAMMES

SCORE PROGRAMME 1 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

'ECHO1' : GRAPHIC EQ-DELAY

MIX:
Master effects=+99
EQ o/p=0
Delay o/p=+99

EQ:
Not used

DELAY:
Ping-Pong Delay
Delay i/p:Pre-EQ
Delay time=700ms
Feedback=99%

MOD:
(1):Pitch Bend:Delay Feedback:-99

SCORE PROGRAMME 2 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

'EQFLANGE2' : EQ-PCH-DL-REVERB

MIX:
Direct:Post-EQ
Master effects=+99
EQ o/p=0
Pitch o/p=0
Delay o/p=+99
Reverb o/p=0

EQ:
Lo: 150Hz:-14dB
Mid: 200Hz:Q=0.2:+14dB
Hi: 8kHz:-14dB

PITCH:
Stereo Flange
Pitch i/p:Post-EQ
LFO Speed=01
LFO Depth=50
Pitch feedback=99%
Trigger flange:OFF

DELAY:
Stereo Delay
Delay i/p 1:XX
Delay i/p mix: 99>Pitch
L Delay Time=40ms
L Feedback=0
R Delay Time=80ms
R Feedback=0

REVERB:
Not used

MOD:
(1):C004:Mid Eq
Freq:+50
(2):C001:Delay Mix
Level:-99
(3):C001:EQ Mix
Level:+99

SCORE PROGRAMME 3 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

'SUSTDRIFT3' : 3 BAND EQ-REVERB

MIX:
Direct:Pre-EQ
Direct =0
Master effects=+99
Reverb o/p=+99

EQ:
Not used

PITCH:
Chorus: ON
LFO Shape=Triangle
LFO Speed=99
LFO Depth=99

REVERB:
Room2
Reverb i/p: Pre-EQ
Pre-delay=1ms
Pre-delay mix 99>POST
Decay=99
Diffusion=1
Density=1
Low freq. decay=0
High freq. decay=0
Reverb gate: OFF
ETC:XX

MOD:
Not used

SCORE PROGRAMME 4 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

'EQDETUNE3' : EQ-PCH-DLY-REV

MIX:
Direct:Post-EQ
Master Effects=+99
EQ o/p=+99
Pitch o/p=+99
Delay o/p=0
Reverb o/p=0

EQ:
Lo: 150Hz:-14dB
Mid: 200Hz:Q=0.2:+14dB
Hi: 8kHz:-14dB

PITCH:
Detune
Pch i/p:Post-EQ
Amount=0

DELAY
Not used

REVERB
Not used

MOD:
(1):C001:Detune
Amount:+50
(2):C004:Mid Eq
Freq:+50

SCORE PROGRAMME 5 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

'ECHO3' : GRAPHIC EQ-DELAY

MIX:
Master effects=+99
EQ o/p=0
Delay o/p=+99

EQ:
Not used

DELAY:
Ping-Pong Delay
Delay i/p:Pre-EQ
Delay time=700ms
Feedback=99%

MOD:
(1):Pitch Bend:Delay Feedback:-99

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SCORE PROGRAMME 6 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

'REVERB4' : 3 BAND EQ-REVERB

MIX:
Direct Signal: XX
Master effects=99
EQ o/p=0
Reverb o/p=99

EQ:
Lo: 150Hz:-14dB
Mid: 200Hz:Q=0.2:+14dB
Hi: 8kHz:-14dB

REVERB:
Chamber 2
Reverb i/p:Post-EQ
Rev pre-delay=0.1ms
Predelay mix:99>Post
Rev decay=80
Rev diffn=9
Rev density=9
Low freq decay=0
High freq decay=0
Reverb gate: OFF
ETC: XX

PITCH:
Reverb Chorus:OFF
ETC: XX

MOD:
(1):C004:Mid EQ
Freq:+60

SCORE PROGRAMME 7 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

'SUSTDRIFT4' : 3 BAND EQ-REVERB

MIX:
Direct:Pre-EQ
Direct =0
Master effects=+99
Reverb o/p=+99

EQ:
Not used

PITCH:
Chorus: ON
LFO Shape=Triangle
LFO Speed=99
LFO Depth=99

REVERB:
Chamber 2
Reverb i/p: Pre-EQ
Pre-delay=1ms
Pre-delay mix 99>POST
Decay=99
Diffusion=1
Density=1
Low freq. decay=0
High freq. decay=0
Reverb gate: OFF
ETC: XX

MOD:
Not used

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SCORE PROGRAMME 8 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

'GATEREVERB4' : EQ-PCH-DL-REVERB

MIX:
Direct Signal: XX
Direct Sig level=0
Master Effects=+99
Pitch o/p=0
Delay o/p=0
Reverb o/p=99

EQ:
Not used

PITCH:
Mono Chorus
Pitch i/p:Pre-EQ
LFO Shape:Square
LFO Speed=01
LFO Depth=01
Pitch feedback=99%

DELAY:
Not used

REVERB:
Room 1
Rev i/p 1: XX
Rev i/p 2:Ptch o/p
Rev i/p mix:99>2
Rev predelay=1ms
Predelay mix:99>post
Rev decay=60
Rev diffusion=9
Rev density=9
Low frq decay=0
High frq decay=0
Rev gate:ON
Rev gate hold=10
Rev gate release=99
Rev gated level=0%

MOD:
Not used

SCORE PROGRAMME 9 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

'DELAYRES4' : EQ-PCH-DL-REVERB

MIX:
Direct Signal:Pre-EQ XX
Direct Sig level=0
Master Effects=+99
Pitch o/p=0
Delay o/p=0
Reverb o/p=+99

EQ:
Not used

PITCH:
Stereo Flange
Pitch i/p:Pre-EQ
LFO Speed=01
LFO Depth=30
Pitch feedback=99%
Trigger flange:OFF

DELAY:
Stereo Delay
Delay i/p 1:XX
Delay i/p mix:99>Pitch
Left delay time=10ms
Delay feedback L=99%
Right delay time=20ms
Delay feedback R=99%

REVERB:
Plate 1
Rev i/p 1: XX
Rev i/p 2:Dly o/p
Rev i/p mix:99>2
Rev predelay=1ms
Predelay mix:99>post
Rev decay=55
Rev diffusion=9
Rev density=9
Low frq decay=0
High frq decay=0
Rev gate:OFF
ETC: XX

MOD:
Not used

SPX90 PROGRAMMES

SCORE PROGRAMME 1 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

GATE REVERB
Reverse/Room Size=10/Liveness=10/Delay=0.1ms/LPF=THRU

SCORE PROGRAMME 2 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

REV 1 HALL
Rev Time=99s/Hi=1.0/Delay=30ms/HPF=THRU/LPF=THRU

SCORE PROGRAMME 3 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

GATE REVERB
Plate/Room Size=20/Liveness=10/Delay=40ms/LPF=THRU

SCORE PROGRAMME 4 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

DELAY L,R
L Delay=500ms/L Feedback=76%/R Delay=490ms/R Feedback=0%/High=1

SCORE PROGRAMME 5 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

ADR-NOISE GATE
Trg level=50/Trg delay=0ms/Trg msk=105ms/Attack=5ms/Decay=5ms
Decay lvl=100%/Hold=30ms/Release=5ms/MIDI trg=OFF

SCORE PROGRAMME 6 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

PAN
Speed=4.5Hz/Direction L<>R/Depth=100%

SCORE PROGRAMME 7 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

PITCH CHANGE C
L Pitch=-12 : L Fine=+5 : L Dly=0.1ms
R Pitch=-12 : R Fine=0 : R Dly=0.1ms

SCORE PROGRAMME 8 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

PITCH CHANGE A
Pitch=-12 : Fine=-10 : Delay=100ms : F.B. Gain=80% : Base Key=XX

SCORE PROGRAMME 9 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

STEREO FLANGE B
Mod Frq=0.1Hz : Mod depth=2% : Mod Dly=29ms : F.B. Gain=99%

SCORE PROGRAMME 10 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

TRIGGERED PAN
Trg Level=75 : Trg delay=0ms : Trg mask=131ms
Attack=5ms : Panning=75ms : Release=5ms
Direction L>R : L/R Balance=50% : MIDI Trg=OFF

SCORE PROGRAMME 11 — MACHINE PROGRAMME

REVERB & GATE
Rev time=99s : High=1.0 : Delay=0.1ms : HPF=THRU : LPF=THRU
Trg level=70 : Hold=1ms : Release=420ms : MIDI trg=OFF

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SIMON EMMERSON

SENTENCES (soprano and live electronics)

Programme Note

Sentences was composed between November 1990 and January 1991 to a commission from Nicola Walker Smith with funds made available by the Arts Council of Great Britain. It is for solo soprano and live electronics (two signal processing units and sound projection). The work is essentially for two performers, the live electronic part being detailed and exacting.

Texts were chosen from Whitman (an extract from 'Passage to India'), Thoreau ('Woof of the Sun') and Shakespeare ('Full Fathom Five' - more accurately a deconstruction/reconstruction of this poem). The vocal material for the fourth song was constructed from isolated elements of the previous three, largely abstract and unrecognisable, fragments of words reordered and reassembled.

The work seeks to mediate several 'poles': the obvious onomatopoeia linked to word association - 'mimesis' - with the more abstract demands of electroacoustic sounds and their combination. So the cycle moves from the declamation of the Whitman - an influence on the Futurists and hence the *lettriste* tradition - through the symbolic impressionism of the Thoreau to the increasingly fragmented 'deconstruction' of the Shakespeare, in which single words conjure up whole images, to the final dissolution into 'semantic noise' (Berio's phrase).

The work was written specifically for the idiosyncracies of two well-known sound processors of the 1980s (the Alesis *Quadraverb* and Yamaha's ubiquitous *SPX90*) though future versions will be made as new equipment becomes available.

My thanks to Andrew Lovett and the Electroacoustic Music Studio at City University, London for technical assistance in the realisation of the piece.

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Texts for 'Sentences'

(1) Passage to India (extract) (Walt Whitman)

I see over my own continent the Pacific railroad surmounting
every barrier,
I see continual trains of cars winding along the Platte carrying
freight and passengers,
I hear locomotives rushing and roaring, and the shrill steam-
whistle,
I hear the echoes reverberate through the grandest scenery in the
world,
I cross the Laramie plains, I note the rocks in grotesque shapes,
the buttes,
I see the plentiful larkspur and wild onions, the barren
colorless, sage-deserts,
I see in glimpses afar or towering immediately above me the great
mountains, I see the Wind river and the Wahsatch mountains,
I see the Monument mountain and the Eagles's Nest, I pass the
Promontary, I ascend the Nevadas,
I scan the noble Elk mountain and wind around its base,
I see the Humboldt range, I thread the valley and cross the
river,
I see the clear waters of lake Tahoe, I see the forests of
majestic pines,
Or crossing the great desert, the alkaline plains, I behold
enchanting mirages of waters and meadows,

(2) Woof of the sun, ethereal gauze (Henry David Thoreau)

Woof of the sun, ethereal gauze,
Woven of Nature's richest stuffs,
Visible heat, air-water, and dry sea,
Last conquest of the eye;
Toil of the day displayed, sun-dust,
Aerial surf upon the shores of earth,
Ethereal estuary, frith of light,
Breakers of air, billows of heat,
Fine summer spray on inland seas;
Bird of the sun, transparent-winged
Owlet of noon, soft-pinioned,
From heath or stubble rising without song;
Establish thy serenity o'er the fields.

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(3) Fathom words adapted and reconstructed from Full Fathom Five (Shakespeare)

Hark! Hear them!
Ring
Nothing
Nothing lies
Nothing of him fade
Nothing of him into something strange
That were
That were made
That were his but doth change
That were his but doth suffer eyes

eyes/lies/dies/die/dying/ding

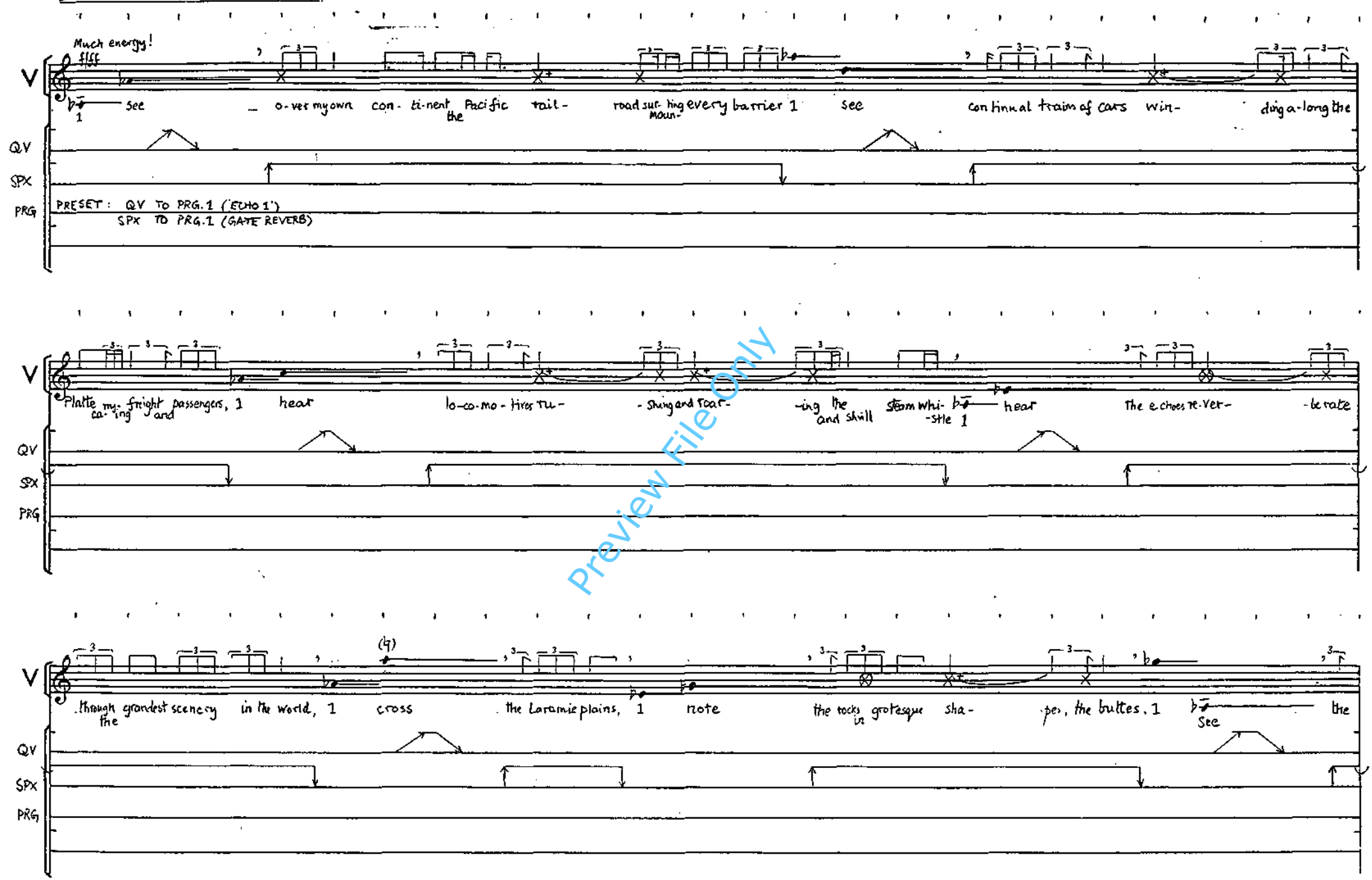
Sea rich pearls (parolle)
Coral bones
Full Fa--(m)

(4) Inferno (materials adapted from the above by the composer)

a/I/hear
I see/mountains/fath'm full fade
di-do-be-bo-co-bo-pe
(sentenzia)

(3), (4) © Simon Emmerson 1991

I: PASSAGE TO INDIA (excerpt) (WALT WHITMAN)



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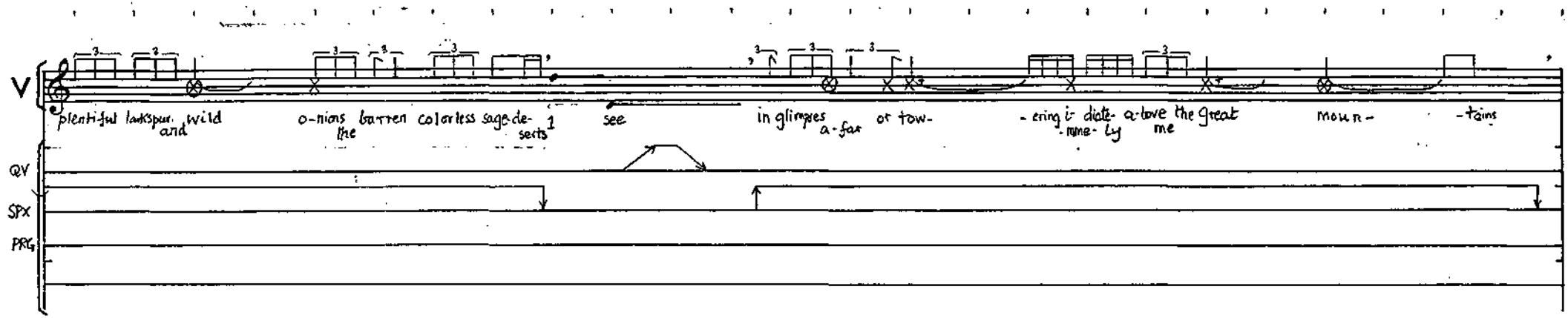

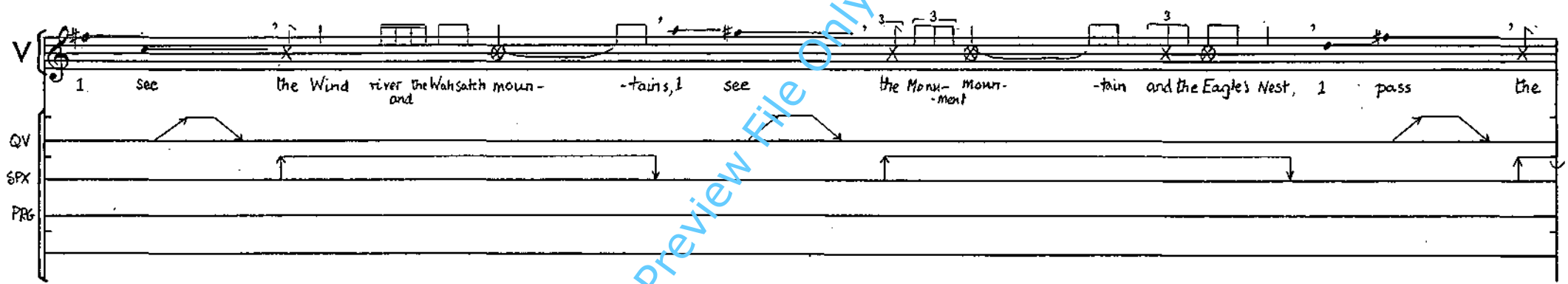

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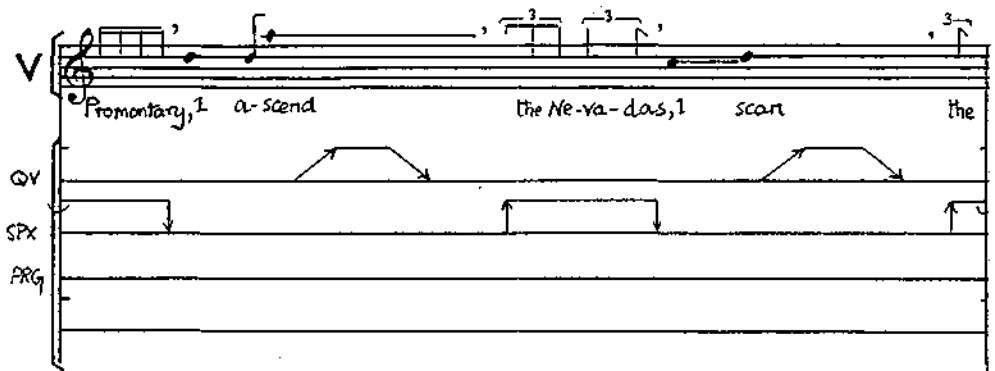

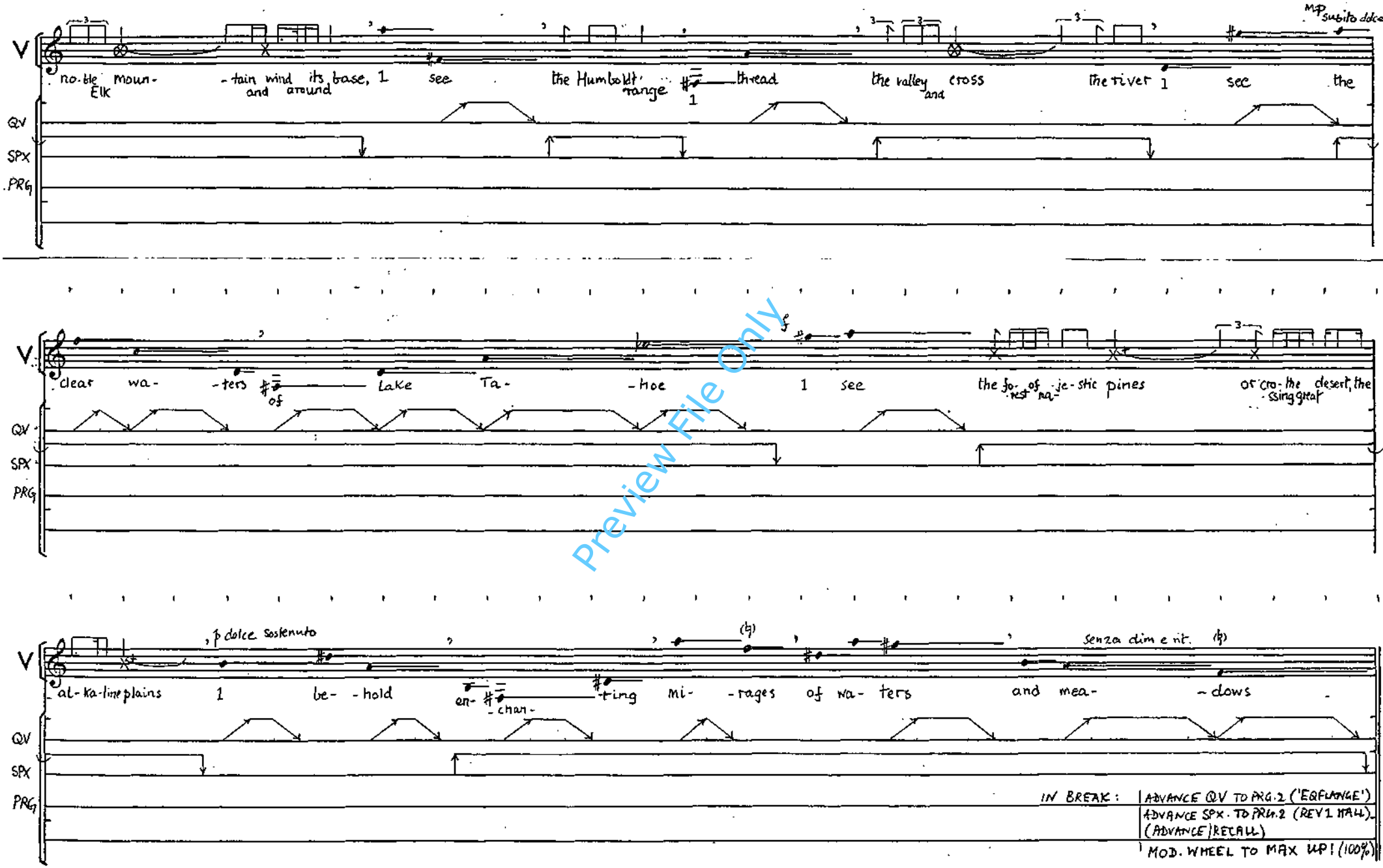

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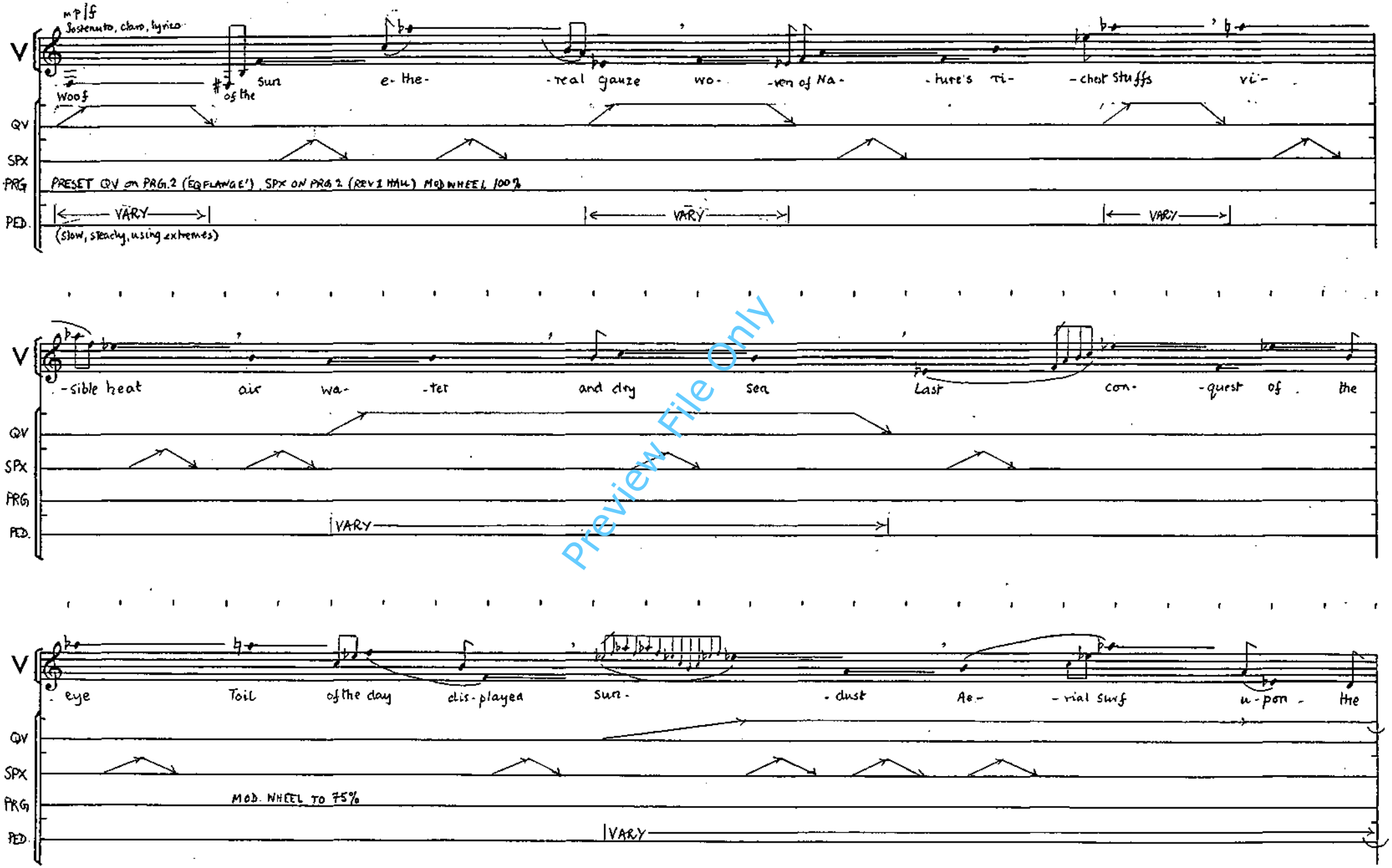
II: WOOF OF THE SUN, ETHEREAL GAUZE (HENRY DAVID THOREAU)



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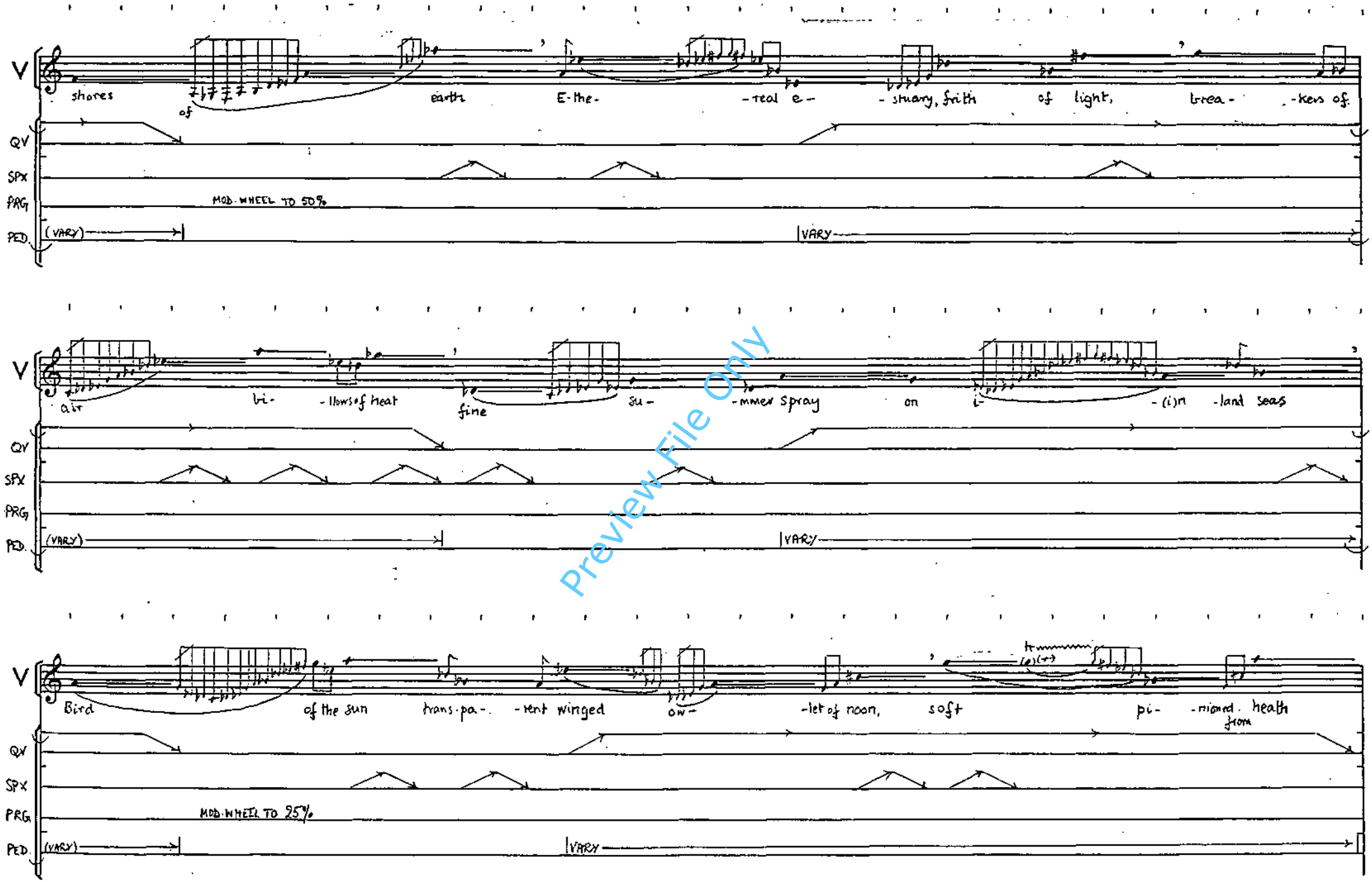

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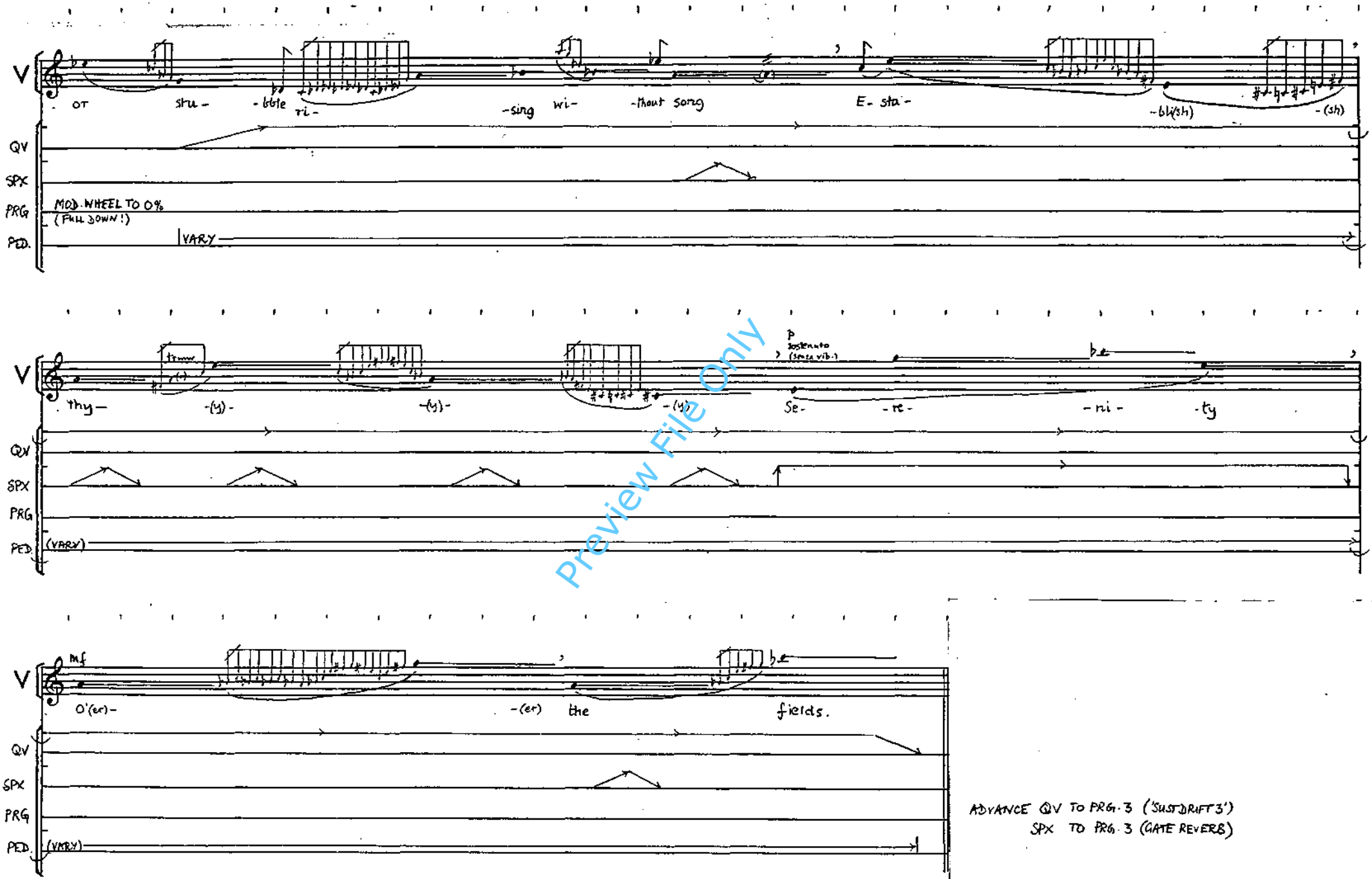

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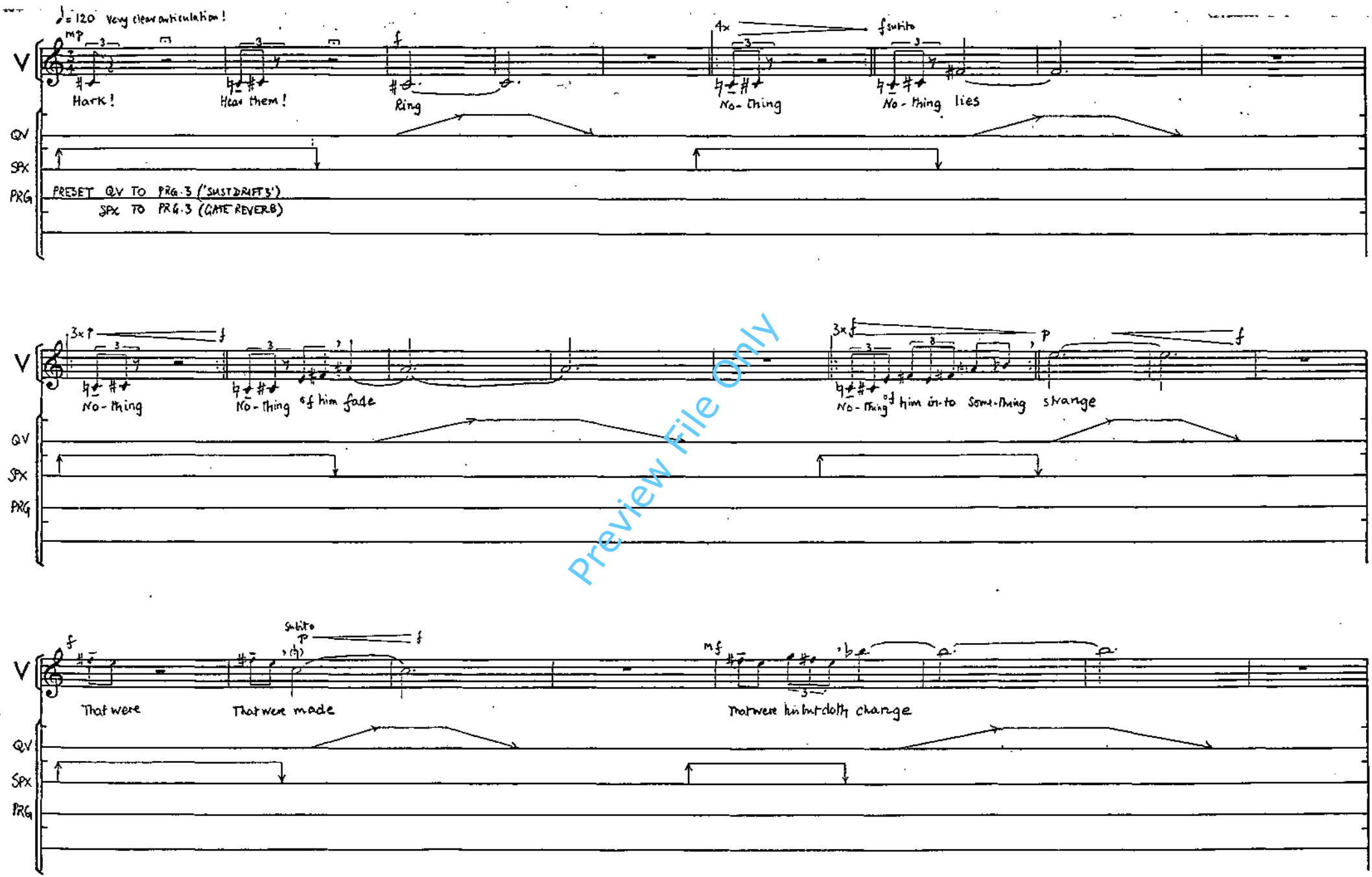
ADVANCE QV TO PRG. 3 ('SUST DRIFT 3')
SPX TO PRG. 3 (GATE REVERB)

III : FATHOM (after SHAKESPEARE)



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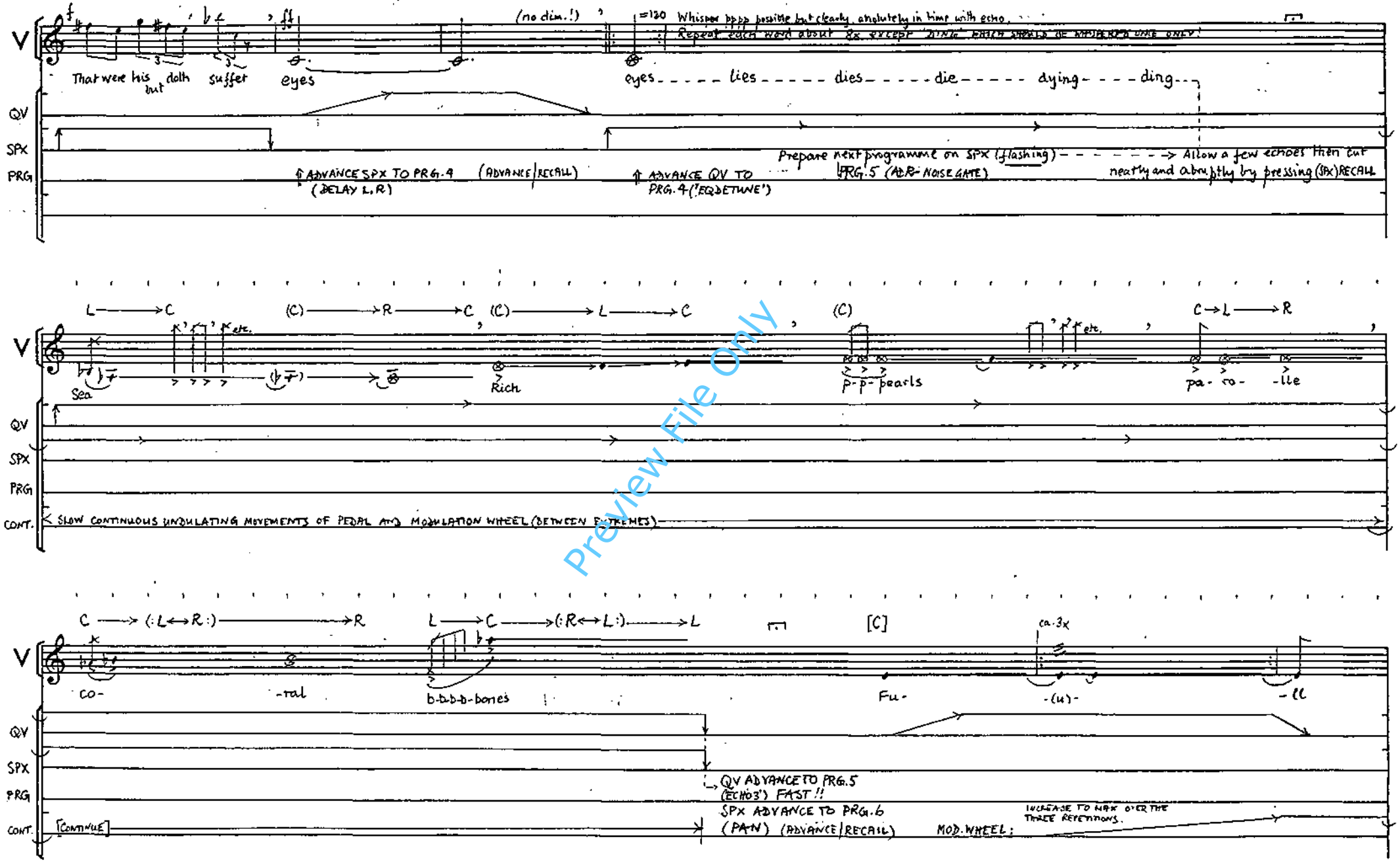

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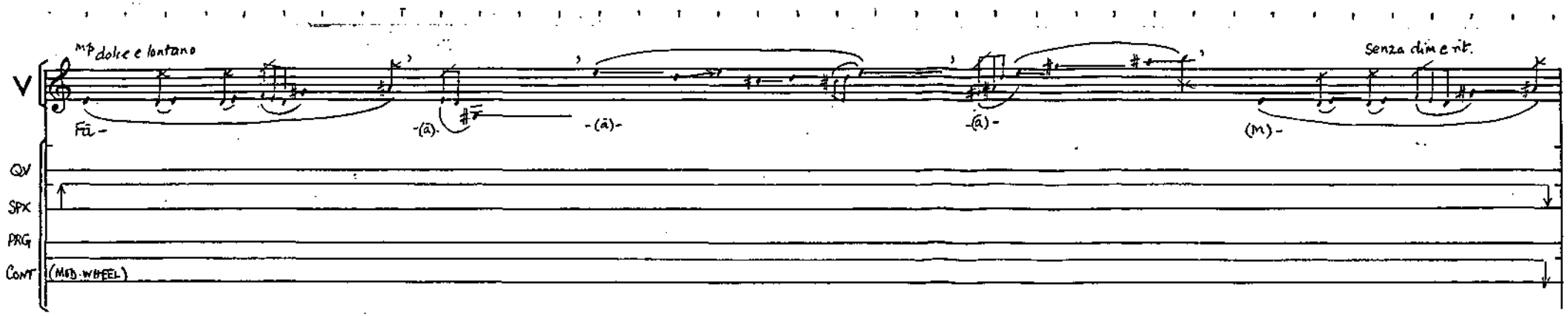

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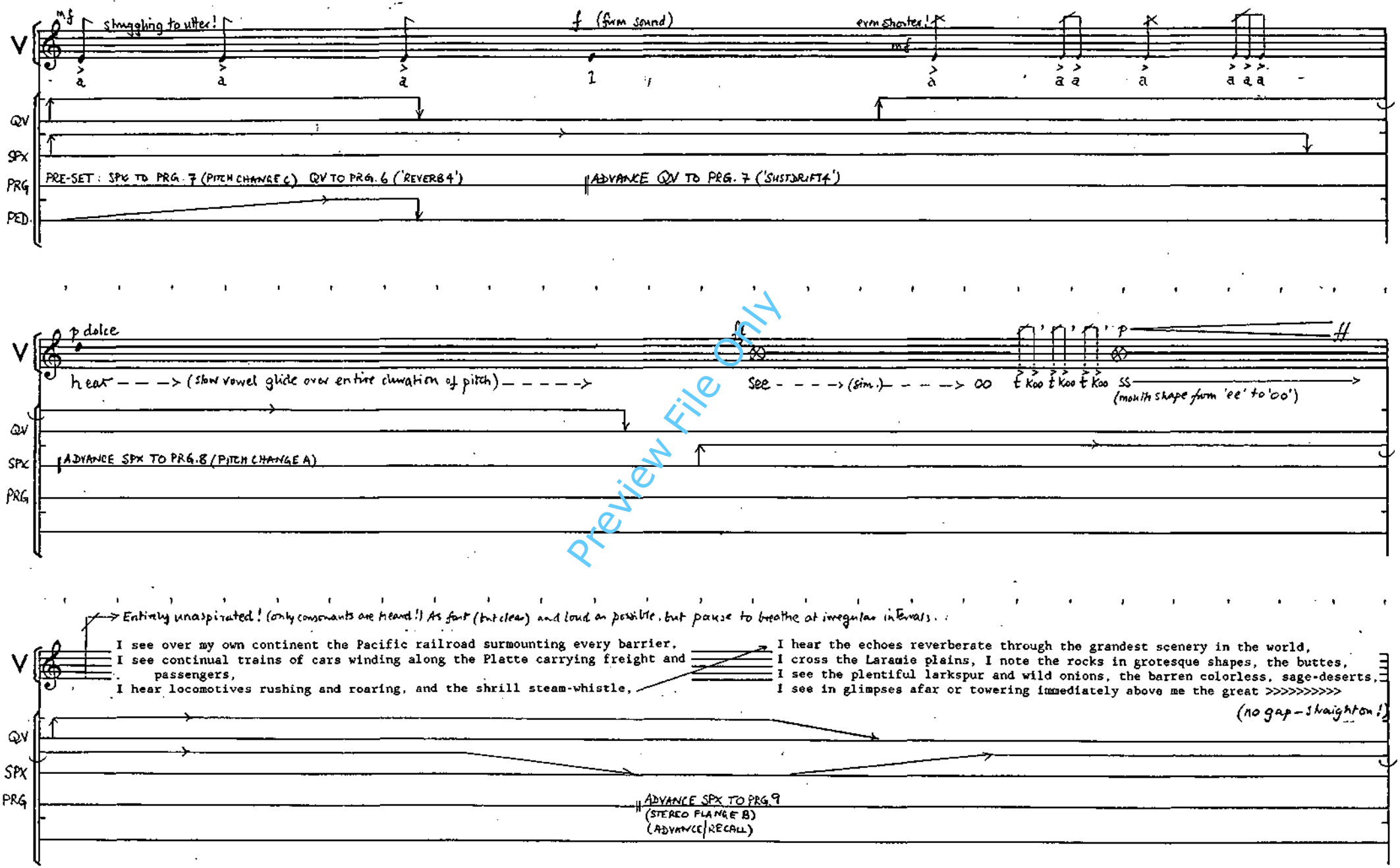
ADVANCE QV TO PRG. 6
('REVERB 4')

ADVANCE SPX TO PRG. 7
(PITCH CHANGE C.)

IV: INFERNO



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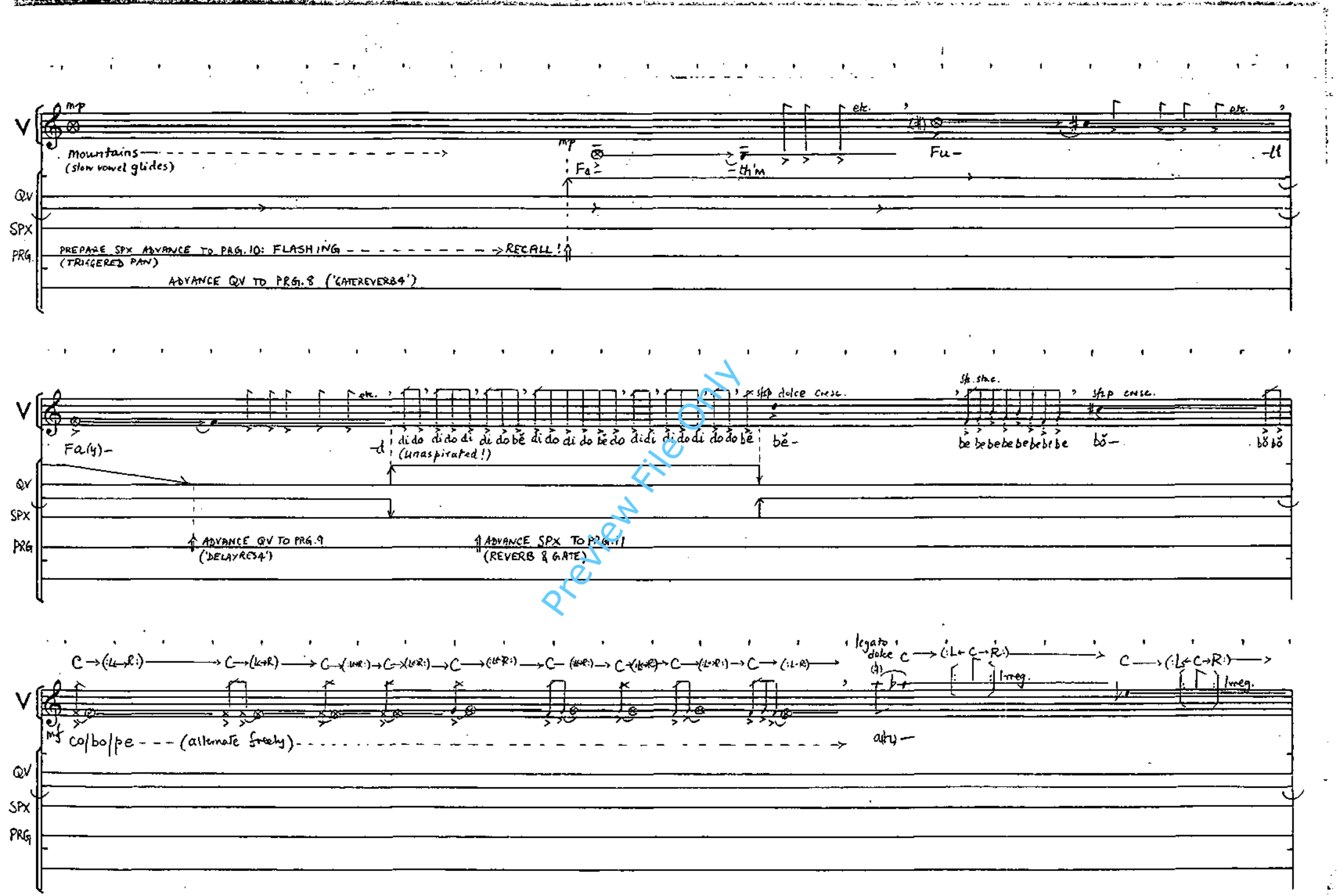

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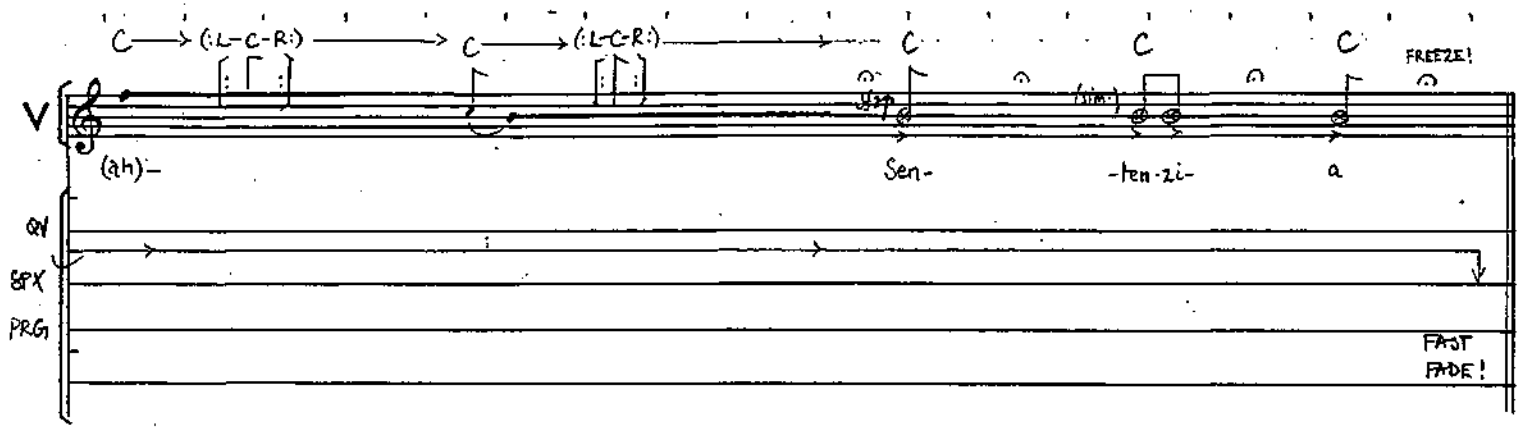

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