enlightenment

solo harp and optional fixed media

John Hails

Enlightenment

Simon Howard

the purpose of the machine
was to demonstrate
the purposelessness of the machine
~
we stand around
amazed, naked,
finery swept from our backs
by the tempest
~
savagely
o
so savagely
rain falls
on the disappeared house
~
none of us sleep
which is why we were dreaming
when ...
~
the purpose of the machine
is to demonstrate
its non-existence;
only the sleeping, dreamless,
creatures that cry out
in the night,
find its cogs & wheels &
starting handles
to be of a beauteous
& straightforward
utility
~
gently
o
so gently
rain falls
on the disappearing house

Pedalling has not been notated, although the spelling of notes has been planned carefully to reduce the number of pedal changes. During the fifth section (4'14"-4'57"), the number of pedal changes increases significantly. Please do not attempt to minimise noise and pitch distortion that results from this.

Glissandi and microtones (quarter- and eighth-tones) are to be achieved through movements of the pedal. This is not envisioned as an accurate or 'clean' process, and any buzzes and imprecisions that result from this are expected. Where a glissando terminates with a bracketed notehead, the string should be dampened at this point.

Duration is not notated, however a time-stamp for each bar-line has been provided. This is not intended to provide a rigid framework, but to give guidelines for the performer.

Slurs fulfil two functions: primarily, they indicate that notes are to be played as if in a melody (and thus dampened when the following note is played)[1], but they also serve to join grace notes to their 'parent' note. In these instances, the grace note should have as short a duration as possible, but should be dampened only when the 'parent' note is dampened. Dashed slurs are employed when the subsequent notes in a phrase are performed on the same string. These notes should not be dampened before the string is sounded again, and a slight portamento effect should be created due to the movement of the pedal.

In two instances, a drumstick notation is used to indicate the Salzedo 'gong' effect, where a 'pencil or ivory stick' is used to strike the string. Please feel free to experiment with a suitable object to create a resonant gong-like effect.

Dynamics are not provided and although the basic level is quiet, the performer should feel free to interpret the score as they see fit.

[1] An exception to this is when a glissando is notated within a slur, in which case do not dampen the string until the glissando is complete.

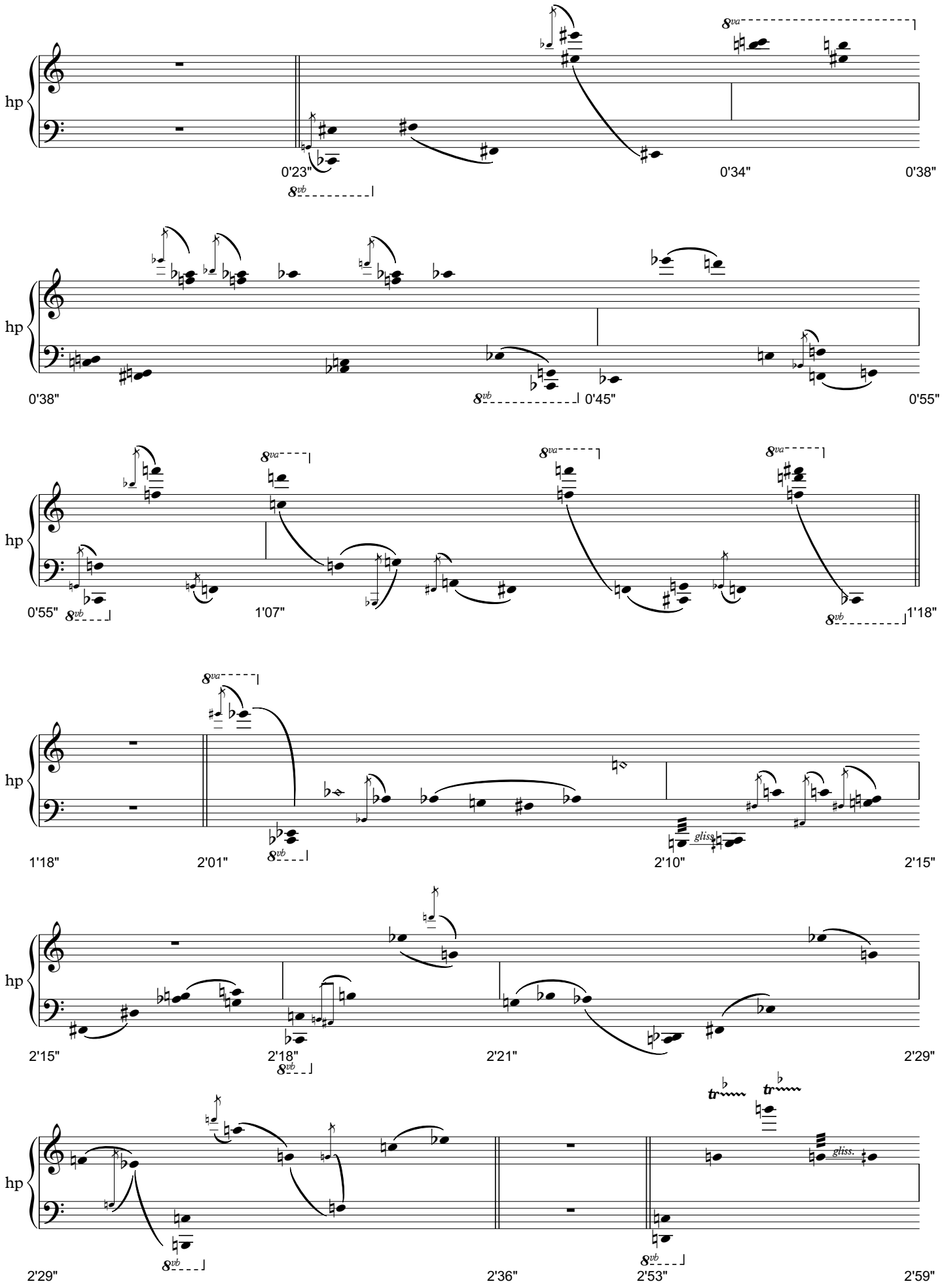
The notated pitches are a transcription of the poem, using an excerpt from the harmonic series compressed into different ranges of the harp. Simon and I had corresponded about transcribing in this sort of way, and some of his poems that I had begun setting had been created by using a translation algorithm into a second language and then back into English. The conflict between the tuning of the compressed harmonic series and that of the harp results in a compositional tension, but I also wanted to give the impression that the instrument was beginning to remake itself so that it can render the transcription as it was originally. The buzzes, failed microtones, pedal noise, and wolf tones that result are a reflection of this remaking and becoming.

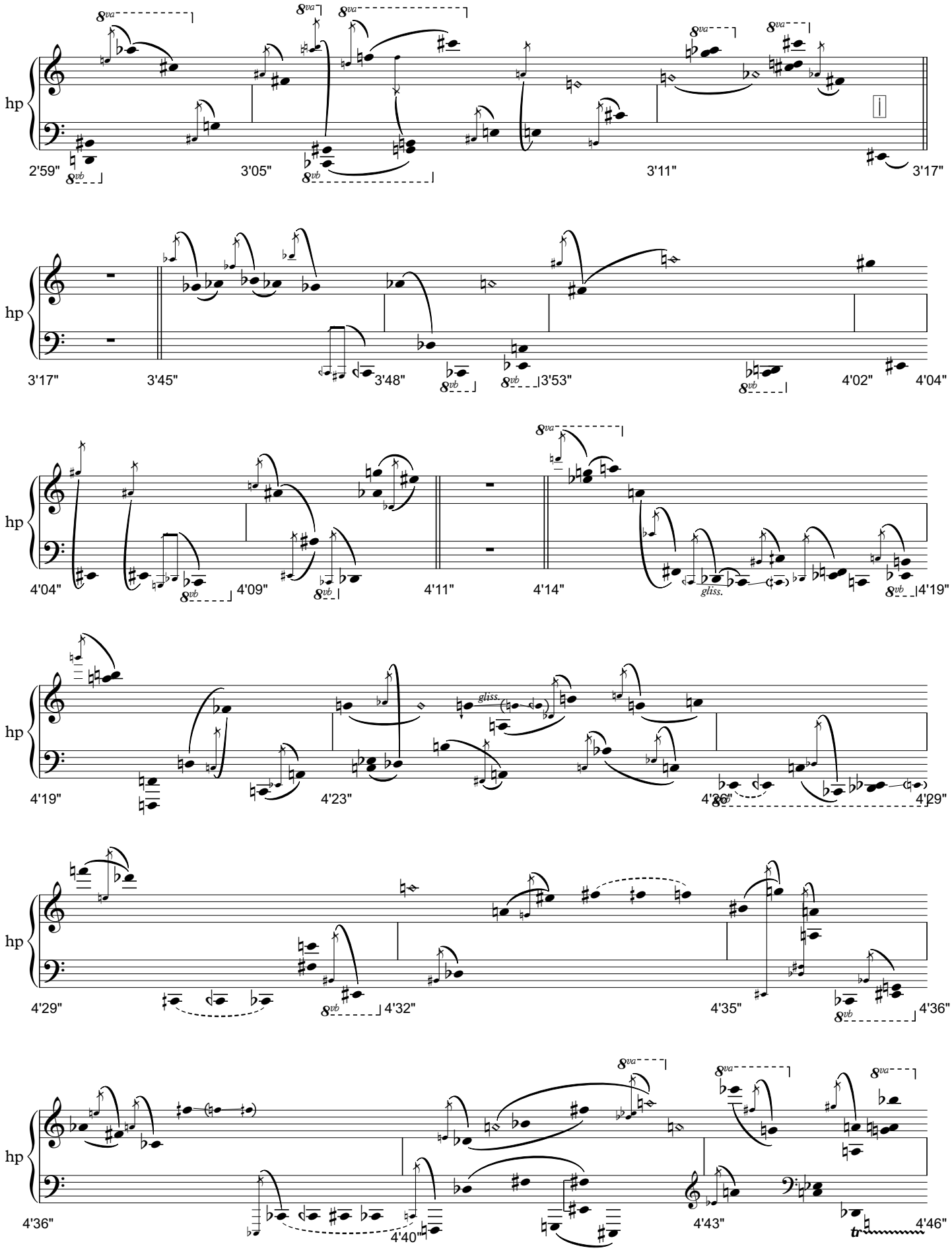
for Simon

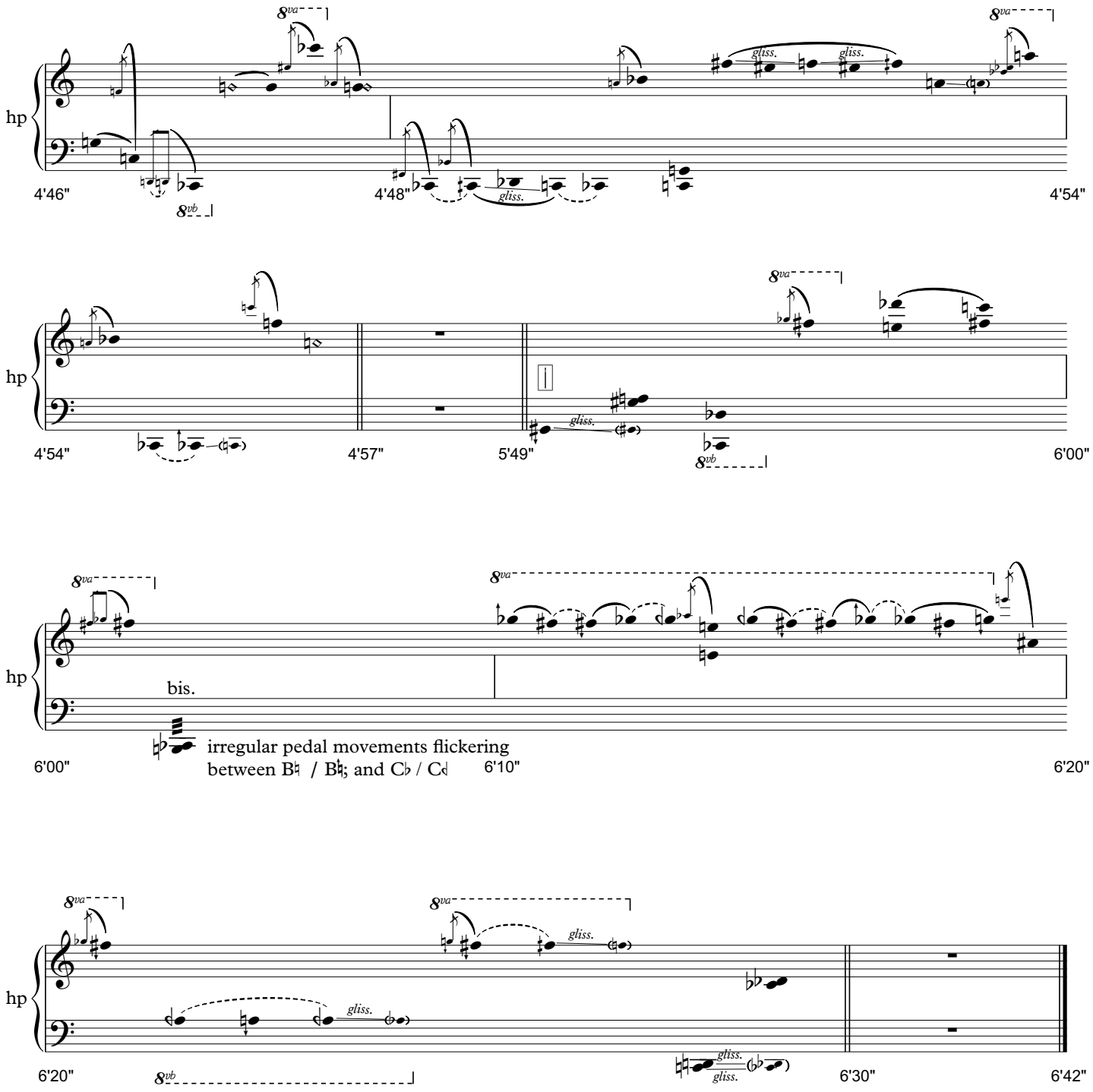
enlightenment

harp and electronics

John Hails




hp
8va
8vb
2'59"
3'05"
3'11"
3'17"
3'45"
3'48"
3'53"
4'02"
4'04"
4'09"
4'11"
4'14"
gliss.
4'19"
4'23"
4'26"
4'29"
4'32"
4'35"
4'36"
4'40"
4'43"
4'46"
tr


hp
8va
8vb
gliss.
4'46"
4'48"
4'54"
4'54"
4'57"
5'49"
6'00"
bis.
irregular pedal movements flickering
between B♮ / B♯; and C♭ / C♮
6'00"
6'10"
6'20"
6'20"
6'30"
6'42"