FREDRICK GIFFORD

MOBILE 2017

STELE

for
two similar instruments

for Matthew Oliphant and Kevin Harrison

[MOBILE 2017]
STELE

PROGRAM NOTE

Stele, in Greek, refers to a column, often erected as an elaborate grave marker. Stelae can be found in cultures as diverse as those of the ancient Egyptians, Mayans and Chinese. In Latin, it is a variant of the word, *stella*, meaning star (i.e., a fixed, luminous point in the sky).

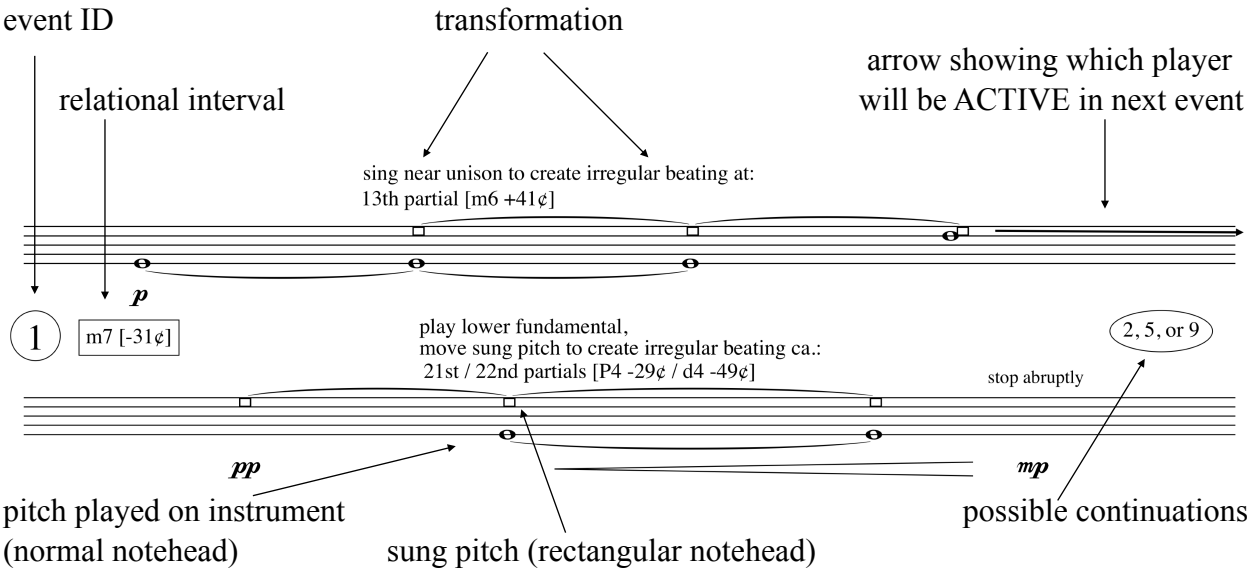
INSTRUMENTATION

Mobile 2017 is an open work. Its instrumentation is not specified, but should employ performers with instruments possessing similar timbres and the ability to blend. The two instruments should have some registers which overlap. [NB: one set of notated materials follows, it will need to be copied and rearranged following the guidelines.]

NOTATION

Mobile 2017 does not have a score in the traditional sense. Instead, parts and specific relations are given. Listening and reacting create the unique harmonic and timbral relationships for a given performance. There are 13 notated (polyphonic) events; each contains two layers. The upper layer indicates the ACTIVE performer for the event; the lower layer the REACTIVE performer. The ACTIVE performer begins an event; the REACTIVE player listens to this event in order to determine their harmonic relation (all notated intervals [M2, M3, P5, d5, m6, m7] sound in just intonation and should be present within the current sound). Each event has an initial state, a transformation, and a final state (some transformational states contain multiple events).

EXPLANATION OF EVENT NOTATION



Event ID & Continuation of Phrase: The number at the beginning identifies each event for ease of rehearsal and ordering. The numbers in the ellipse at the end of each event indicate items that may follow to continue the musical phrase (see "creating a sequence").

Relational Interval: shows the harmonic relationship for the REACTIVE performer.

This performer first listens to the ACTIVE sound and plays a pitch at the indicated interval (in Event 1, this is a 7th-partial relation, or a minor seventh that is 31 cents smaller than in equal temperament.)
The sounding pitch may be understood to be the fundamental or the indicated partial.
[For example, if the pitch middle C is sounding, the REACTIVE player may decide that it is the seventh partial and play its fundamental note, D; OR that middle C is the fundamental and play its 7th partial, Bb.]

Transformation: always involves listening, singing and playing in relation to one's own sound:

Both performers must listen to their own sound and create the type of harmonic or inharmonic relation indicated: with their voice (sung pitches are represented by rectangular noteheads), or their instrument (pitches played on instruments are represented by normal noteheads). *The sounding pitch that they are already playing or singing may be interpreted as either the fundamental or the indicated partial.*

Each event concludes with an arrow showing which player will be ACTIVE in next event. The arrow also shows that the last sound of one event is the first sound of the next. (Occasionally, one event may end with a sung and played unison sound, in which case performers are free to continue both singing and playing or isolate one aspect as the next first sound.)

REGISTER

As much as possible, indicated registers should be respected, but when an instrument's range or performer's voice makes the exact register impossible to perform, octave transposition is desirable. [NB: choices regarding whether a sound will be interpreted as a fundamental or a partial may be made in order facilitate staying in a performable register as much as possible.]

TIMING

Tempo is free. Listening and isolating harmonic sounds will require time, but care should be taken to do this as fluidly as possible (never to point of rushing). The natural timings that result in order to listen, isolate sounds and let transformations speak, will create variety among events.

CREATING A SEQUENCE

Performers should choose and rehearse the sequence of phrases in advance: Any event can begin the work. The ACTIVE performer will need to choose a starting pitch for this first event. Each event contains possible continuations at its close. The continuations should be arranged and performed without a pause, since the last sound of one event *becomes* the first of the next event (it is not rearticulated). When all possible continuations have been heard, a phrase has ended. At the end of a phrase, the performers may end, or may pause and continue with a new event that has not yet been heard (a new first pitch may be chosen or one of the last pitches heard may be used). The piece must end when all events have been heard: no event is repeated.

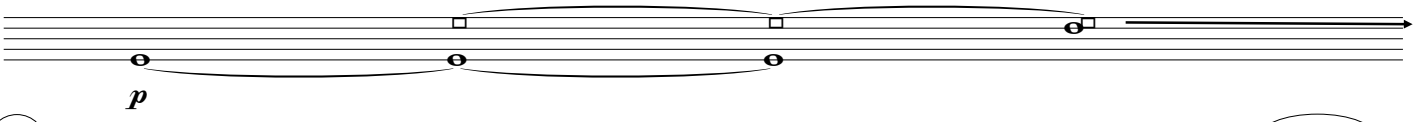
PERFORMER DECISIONS

The players may choose to contravene the basic mechanisms of this piece, by exercising each of the following exemptions once during a performance:

1) Any player may choose to be silent during any event.

2) Any player may choose to play only the first indicated sound and maintain it unchanged (without transformation). If this player is the active layer, this first sound will then become the next linking sound.

sing near unison to create irregular beating at:
13th partial [m6 +41¢]

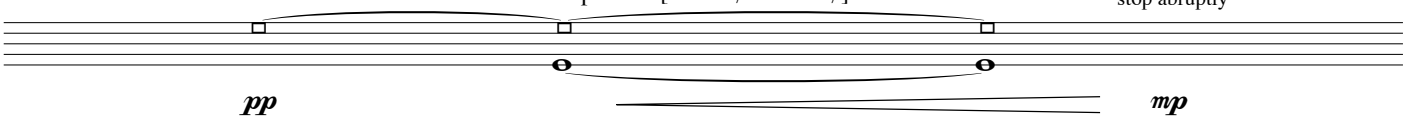


1 m7 [-31¢]

play lower fundamental,
move sung pitch to create irregular beating ca.:
21st / 22nd partials [P4 -29¢ / d4 -49¢]

2, 5, or 9

stop abruptly

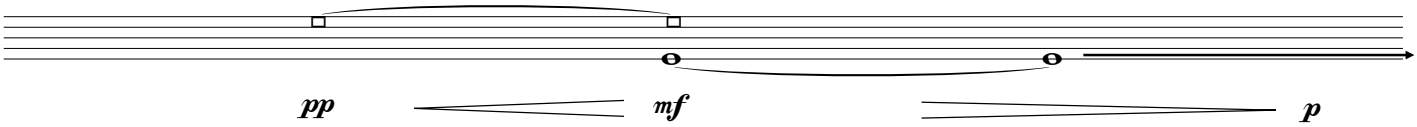


sing to reinforce:
5th partial [M10 -14¢]

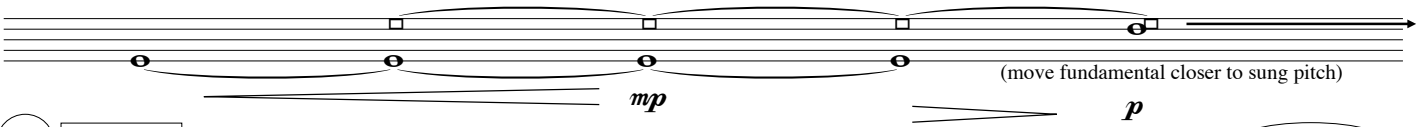
2 d12 [-49¢]

play lower fundamental, sung pitch becomes:
6th partial [P12th]

3, 6, 12, or 13



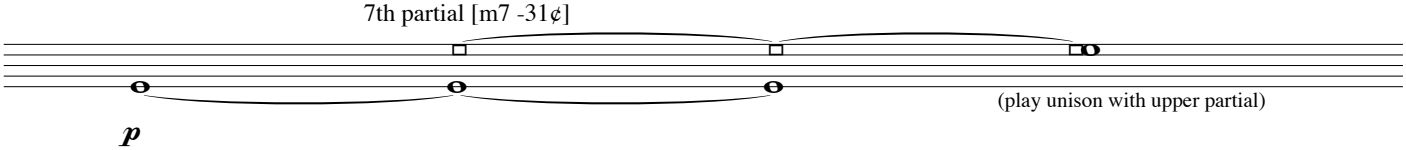
sing to create a quiet, inharmonic sound:



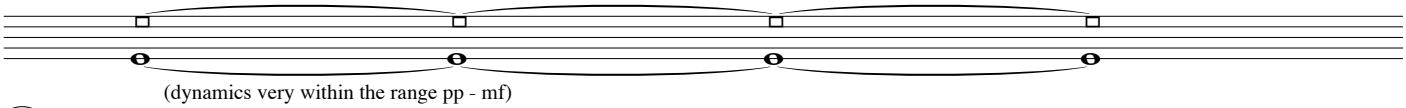
3 m6 [+41¢]

sing to reinforce:
7th partial [m7 -31¢]

4, 7, 10, or 11



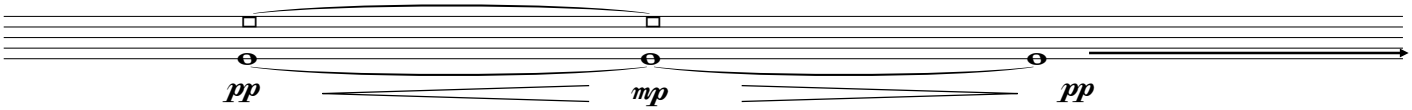
sing, with slow, small glissandos, to create an inharmonic sound:



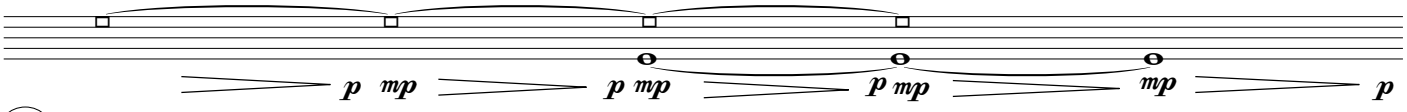
4 M2

5, 7, or 9

sing to create a quiet, inharmonic sound:



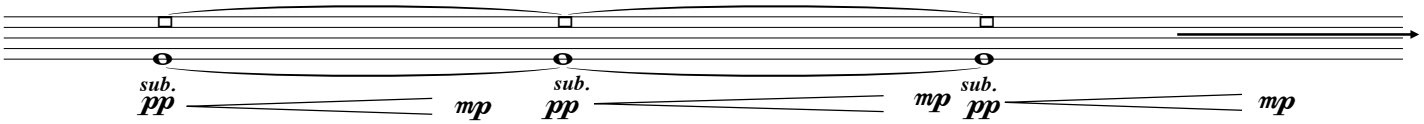
play lower fundamental, move sung pitch to create regular beating ca.:
21st / 22nd partials [P4 -29¢ / d4 -49¢]



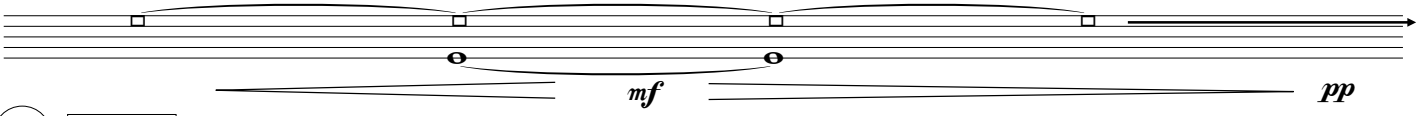
5 m7 [-31¢]

1, 6, 8, or 13

sing, with slow, small glissandos, to create an inharmonic sound:



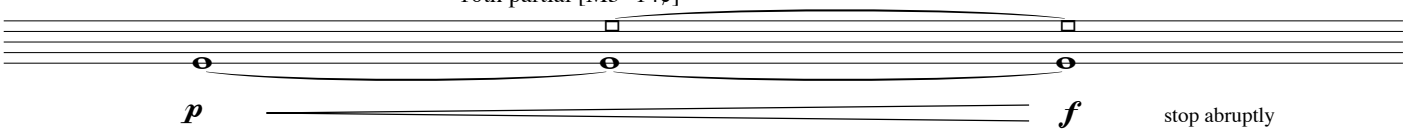
play lower fundamental, sung pitch becomes:
3rd partial [P5]



6 d5 [-49¢]

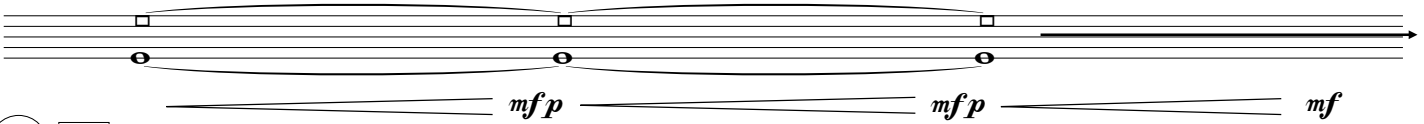
2, 10, or 11

sing to reinforce:
10th partial [M3 -14¢]



stop abruptly

sing, with slow, small glissandos, to create an inharmonic sound:



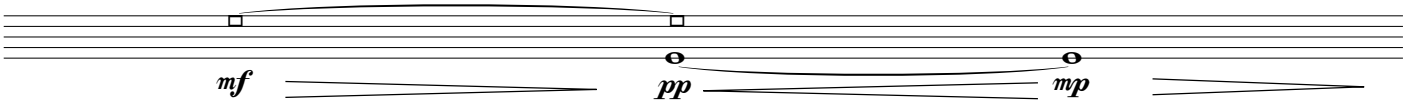
7 M2

4, 5, or 9

sing to reinforce:
7th partial [m7 -31¢]

(play unison with upper partial)

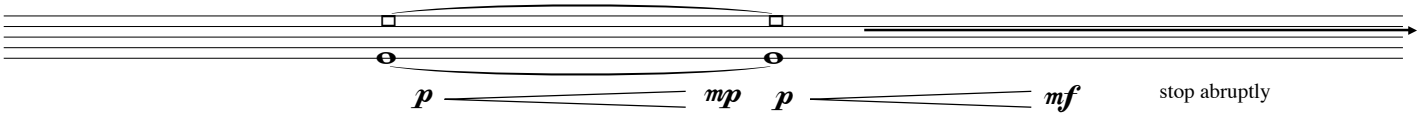
play lower fundamental, sung pitch becomes:
13th partial [m6 +41¢]



8 m7 [-31¢]

2, 5, or 9

sing to create an inharmonic sound:



stop abruptly