amongst it all, some occasional moments of respite

/ James Saunders

/ 2023

It’s great when you find a moment to stop, when some space opens up where you are briefly free of any responsibilities and jobs. I get very excited when this happens, especially if it is unexpected, and I get a moment to do what I want. In *amongst it all, some occasional moments of respite* (2023), the organist has three parallel looping lines that create many different paths to follow. They must navigate a route through each of the lines, with the feet and each hand working independently, trying to find a point of rest where all three parts coincide. The piece is a labyrinth, with the organist making choices that impact on the efficiency with which they manage to locate these places of repose.

organ

duration: variable

Written for Huw Morgan and first performed by him at *mainly slow organ music*, All Saints Clifton, Bristol on 15 April 2023

PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS

The piece requires an organ with two manuals and pedals.
The two manuals and pedals are each notated on a separate stave.

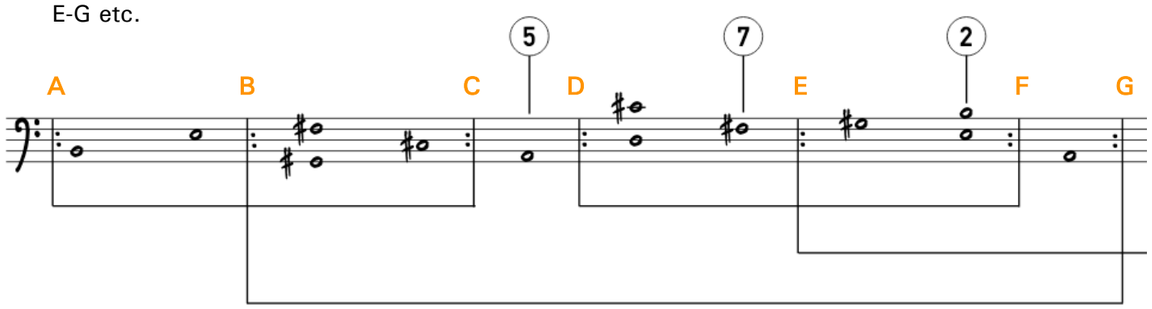
The sounds should generally be flute-like, with an absence of reediness, so that the three voices blend together.

The piece involves proceeding independently through the three parts, trying to find a route so that all three voices arrive at the same circled number (which have the same pitch or interval).
The voices may arrive at the same number at the same time, or in a more staggered arrangement.
When all three voices have arrived at the same number, wait a moment (sustaining the pitches), and then continue on to the next number in the sequence in the same manner.

This process requires a constantly shifting focus between the three parts.
Parts may move together or with one or more moving independently.
The movement is mainly slow, at c.2-5 seconds per pitch, or much longer. Movement may be regular or irregular.
At least one part should be audible at all times.

The loop brackets constrain the paths through the material, making it more of a puzzle to find a way to reach the next numbered point.
The brackets interlock, providing ways to move forwards or jump backwards through the material.
For example, in the excerpt below, the following repeats are possible:

A-C
B-C
B-G
D-F
E-F
E-G etc.



So to move from the low A at the end of the excerpt to the A at number 5, the route could be G-E-F-D-G-B-C-B-[5], or other more circuitous routes.

Repeats may happen any number of times, or be ignored and played through to the next pitch.

The piece may finish on reaching any of the numbered points.
For longer performances, either find more circuitous routes or continue until one of the higher numbers is reached.
Hold the final numbered pitch for c.10 seconds, or longer.

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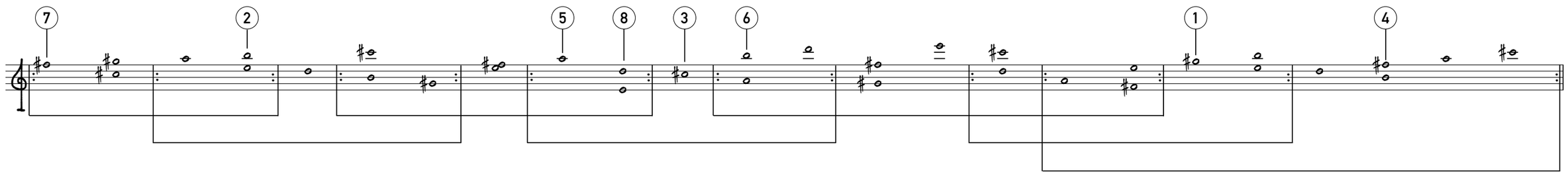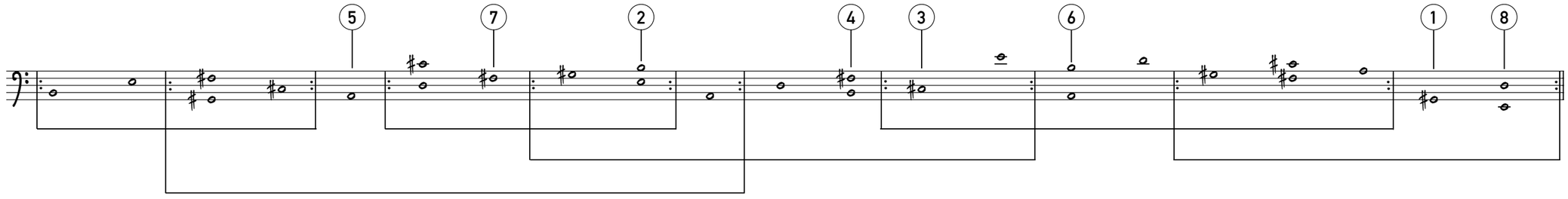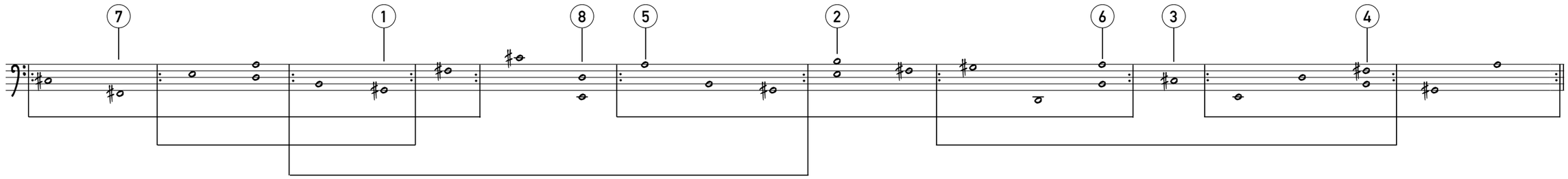
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