

swell

for brass quintet

by k.m.gardner

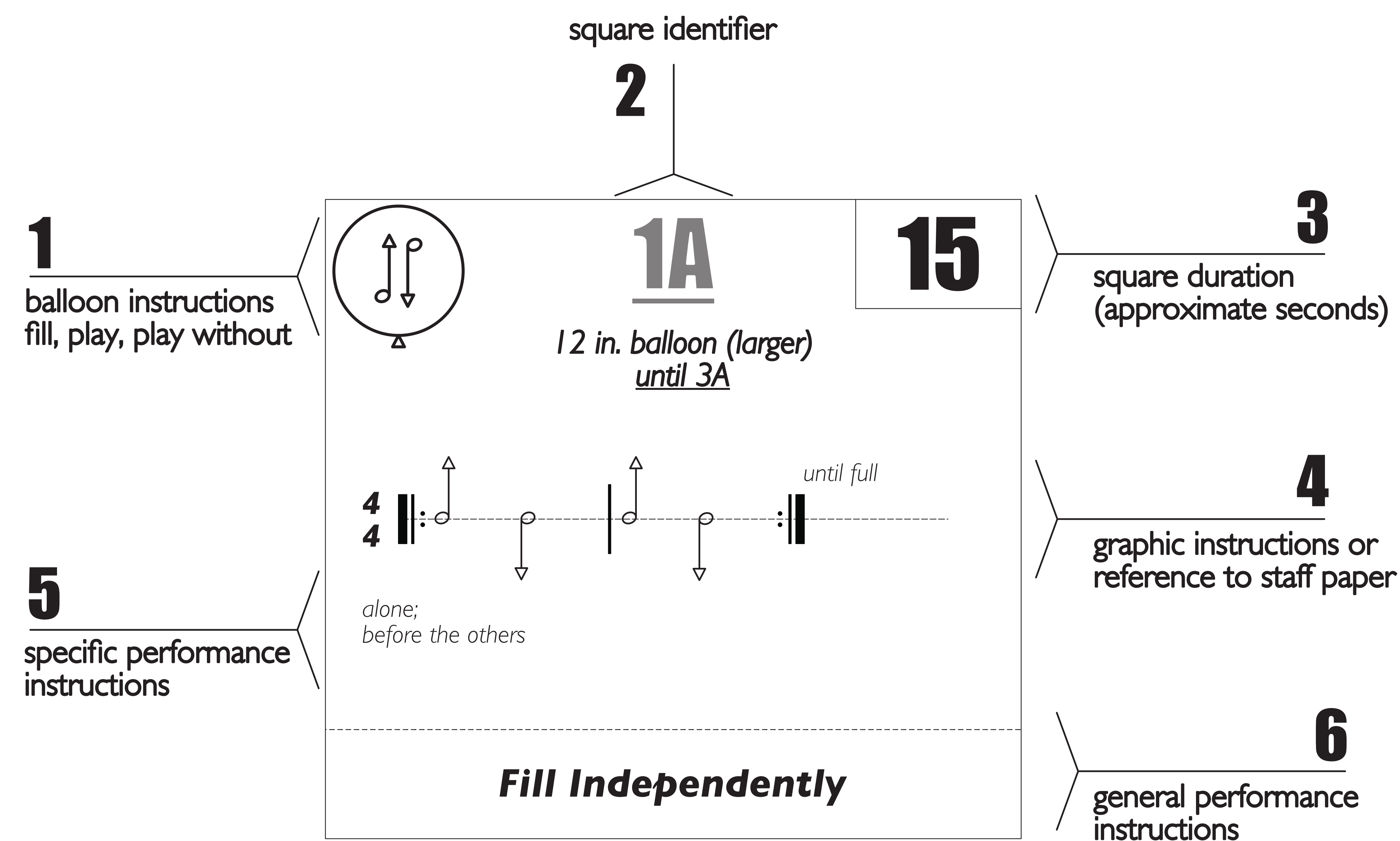
in collaboration with
Cordi DeDecker
Bella Kolasinski
Daniel Nkazono
Todd Oehler
Sam Revis

Swell is written for brass quintet and balloons.

The object of its performance is to bring the delightful informalities of a rehearsal space into the concert hall...
...and a handful of balloons.

If the performance notes are read carefully and the individual musicians familiarize themselves with the possibilities of the balloons, this piece only requires that 1/4th of its contents are rehearsed as a group before a performance, i.e., squares 1D, 2D and 3C.

The score is comprised of 12 squares and a few lines of standard notation on staff paper; these 12 squares and separate staff lines are specific to each instrumentalist, but the duration of each section and the sequence in which the squares are read will be the same for each performer. Each aspect of the squares will be discussed in detail, but it is important to remember that this piece is centered upon spontaneity, improvisation, and indulgence. The composer's notes and descriptions are intended to inspire conversation and unique interpretations that should take place in a performance.



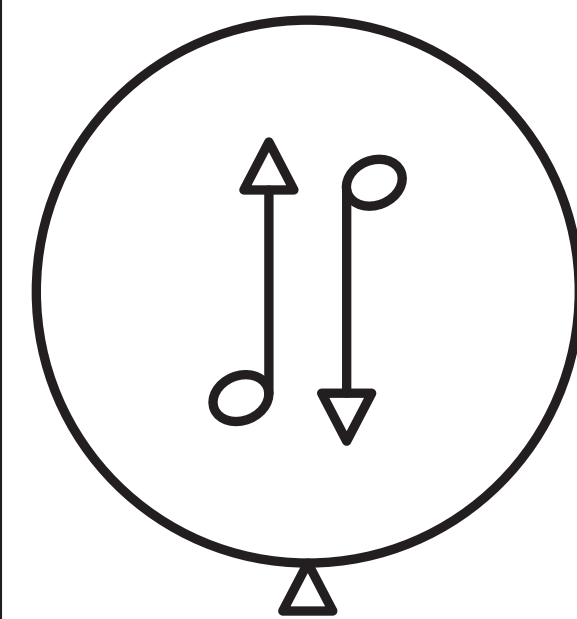
CHEAT SHEET

square identifier

2

1

balloon instructions
fill, play, play without



1A

*1 2 in. balloon (larger)
until 3A*

15

3

square duration
(approximate seconds)

1

what to play (balloons or not)

2

when to play (sequence)

3

how long to play (seconds)

4

how to play (character)

5

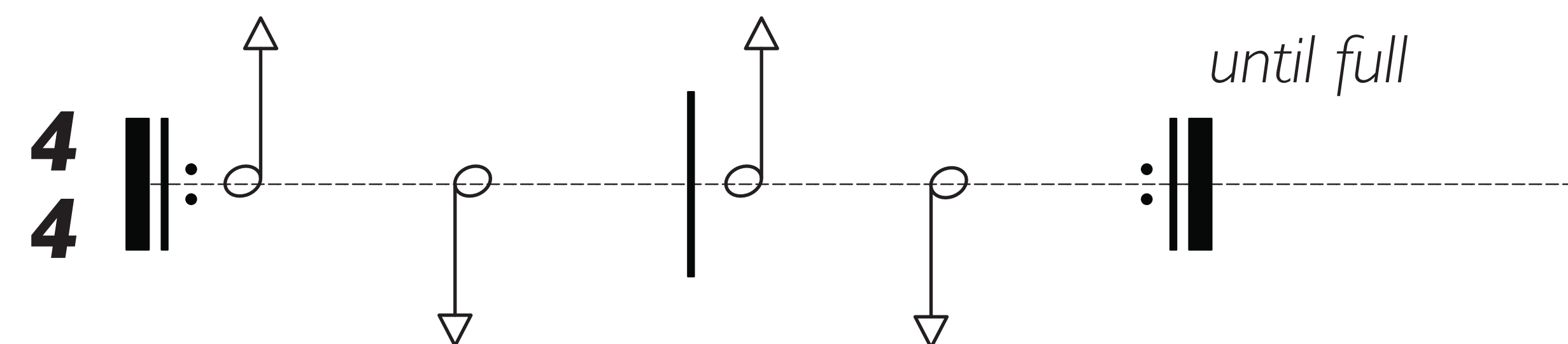
who to play with and other notes

6

general principle/quality

5

specific performance
instructions



*alone;
before the others*

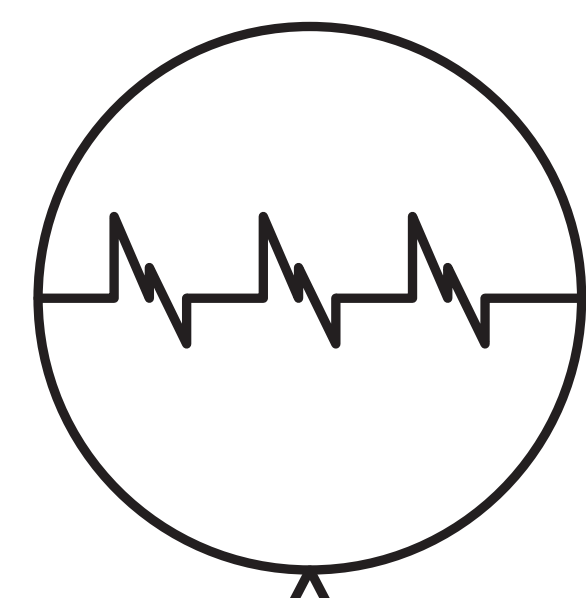
4

graphic instructions or
reference to staff paper

6

general performance
instructions

Fill Independently



sustaining sound



changing timbre



altering pitch



thumb valve
horn

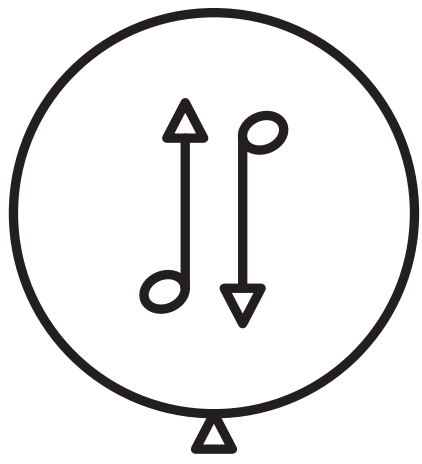
2C



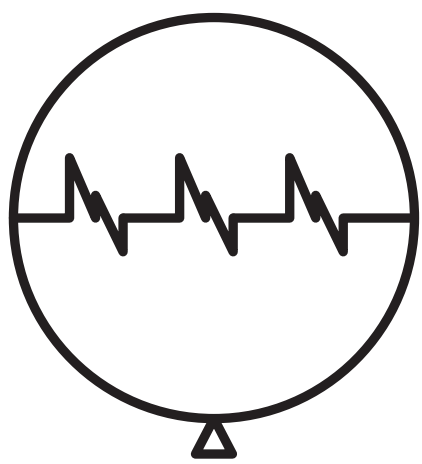
see staff paper
horn, trombone, tuba

Performance Notes

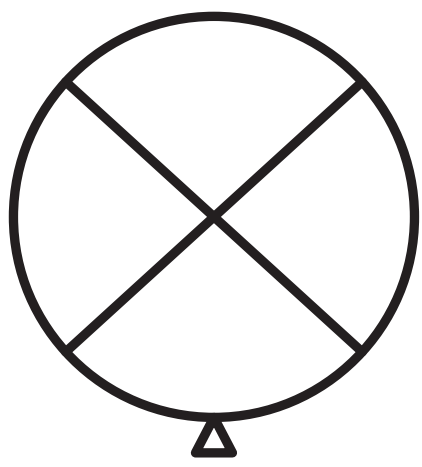
1. balloon instructions



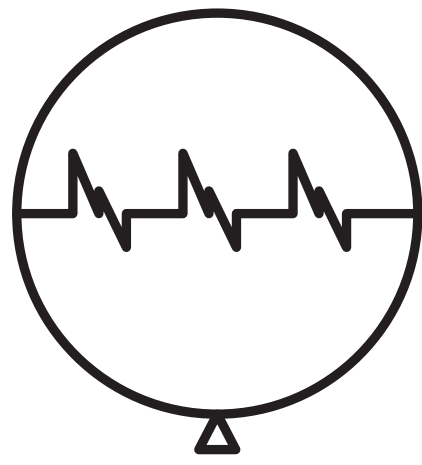
Fill the balloon; up stems indicate inhalation, down stems indicate exhalation - all of these squares should be coordinated as indicated by note durations, time signatures, and/or written instructions.



Play instrument with the balloon; see item 4 for details of graphic representation in these squares



Play instrument without the balloon; implies setting the balloon aside and reattaching the mouthpiece



Option to remove balloon and play from staff paper (with corresponding square identifier). For horn, trombone and tuba only. Only available during the square in which it appears; to be treated as if playing the balloon, not to overpower the balloons in volume or versatility.

2. square identifier

1A

Squares are read from left to right and top to bottom on the page. Start with 1A then 1B, 1C, and 1D; then play 2A, 2B, and so on. All performers will be reading from the same square (or square identifier on the staff paper) at the same time.

3. square duration

15

Each square will last for an approximate number of seconds, listed at the top right corner of each square. When referenced to the staff paper each section will last the same duration as noted in the corresponding square. These durations are approximate, but may be treated as proportional as well. Ex.

A square indicating balloon play for 60 seconds may last for 120 seconds, but the following square indicating no balloons for 45 seconds should not last longer than 120 seconds. Use the durations as a *minimum guideline* for the actual playing time.

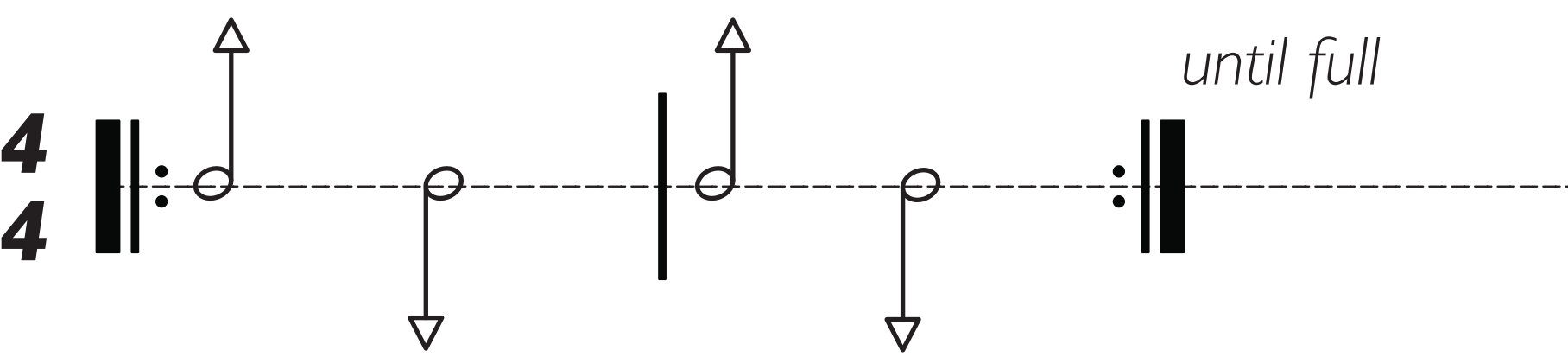
4. graphic instructions or reference to staff paper

It is important to note that graphic representations are *not a prescriptive, linear report* of sounds demanded by the composer; a square of 45 seconds in duration is not to be read from left to right, interpreting each graphic line as a proportional unit to be explored within that timeframe. Instead, the graphic representations are a *descriptive and non-sequential display* of recommended sounds, to be arranged and explored by the performer as they choose. The vertical dimension of the squares that involve playing with the balloons are *loosely* related to pitch, using higher graphics for higher pitches, lower graphics for lower pitches. Even with extensive practice to achieve a literal interpretation of the pitches indicated on the vertical dimension of the square, *this is not the composer's wish*. Below is a key by which each graphic will be assigned a description (not a definition) which will reiterate how the graphics should be read:

Performance Notes (continued)

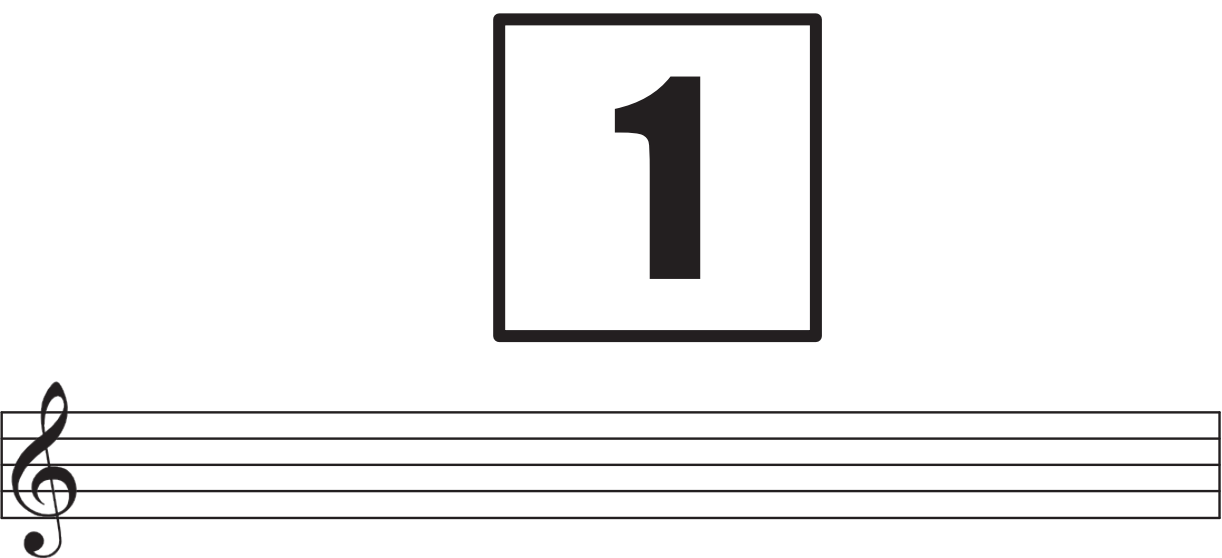
4. graphic instructions or reference to staff paper

4a. graphics for **all** instruments

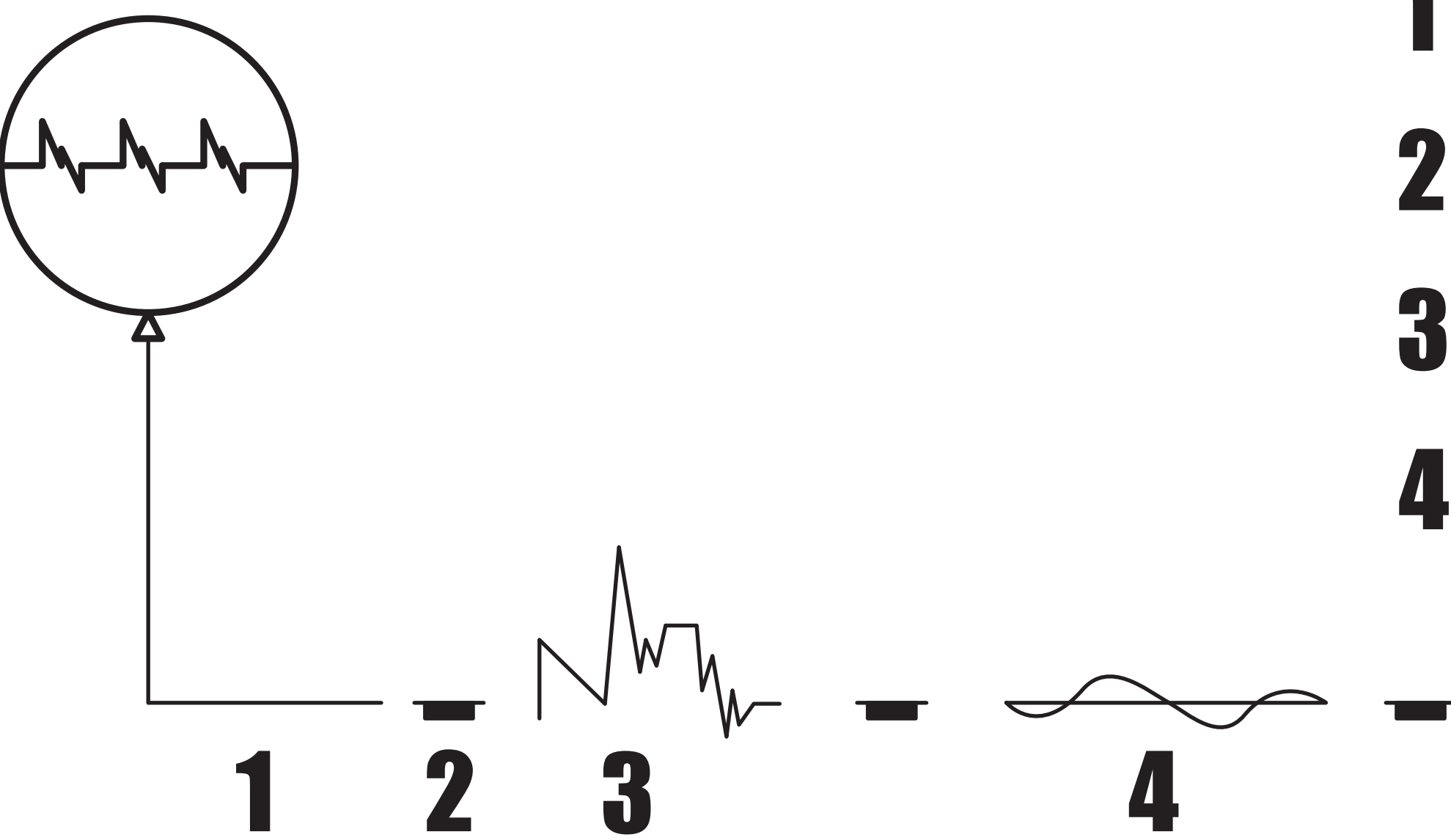


rhythmic filling of the balloons; written words give further information on coordinating the act of filling the balloons.

stems *up* indicate *inhalations*, stems *down* indicate *exhalations*.



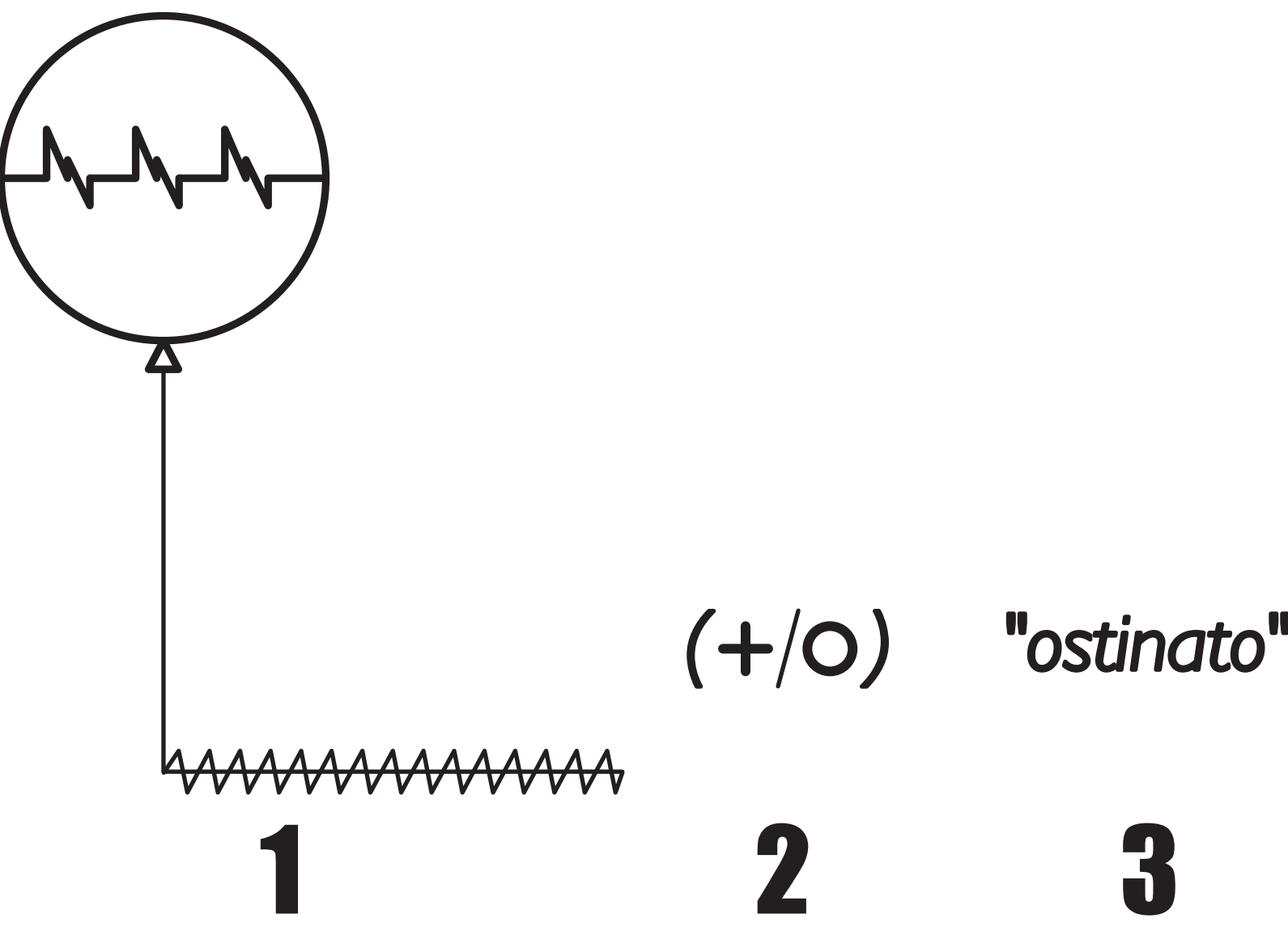
a reference to the staff paper for **all** performers; durations of these squares will apply to the corresponding notation on the staff paper.
moving into and out of these sections should be coordinated, following the lead of one player.
conversations should trail into these squares until all performers have reattached their mouthpieces and are ready to play.



- 1 straight line: striving for sustained pitches without much variation in pitch or timbre; embracing change, not inciting it.
- 2 a rest: not merely a rest, but a reminder to listen; being aware of the other sounds around you by supporting them through the silence of your instrument.
- 3 jagged, chaotic line: striving for variations in *timbre*; exciting change and short bursts of rapid fluctuation, moments of malcontent, pitch is a secondary function.
- 4 straight, waving line: striving for variations in *pitch*; employing movement of valves or the balloon, exploring a timbral output through variations of pitch.
- (avoid approaching the variations in pitch with a mind for melodic phrasing; favor general gestures such as ascending, descending, trilling, accenting, etc.)

Please note that these squares and their graphic lines are meant to allow individual exploration of your instrument; however, after finding sounds you enjoy, explore them in the context of the full quintet. Squares 2C and 3B explicitly demand more intentional listening and coordinated combinations respectively, but don't resist spontaneous moments of enjoyable blending, contrasting, or complementing throughout the piece.

4b. graphics and instructions for **horn only**



- 1 straight, jagged line: using the thumb valve to produce rapid vibrations.
- 2 stopped/open horn: the stopped "+" symbol alone indicates favoring the low and quiet pitches of the stopped horn, "O" alone is used to indicate louder, contrasting sounds of the open horn, and "(+/O)" is used as a reminder to vary between open and closed positions throughout.
"+" figures should be explored thoroughly, but playing open or closed is generally up to the performer throughout the piece.
- 3 "ostinato": this word appears throughout the horn part with varying instructions attending it; because of the variety and versatility observed in the horn's compatibility with the balloons, the horn player will decide upon an ostinato figure, a series of notes or phrases that will be repeated throughout the piece.
- The ostinato figure should be determined by the horn player before a performance, allowing optimum conditions for repeating the phrase in various contexts to be achieved. The ostinato is the only intentional repetition during use of the balloons and the attending instructions should be observed throughout the score.

Performance Notes (continued)

4. graphic instructions or reference to staff paper

4c. graphics and instructions for **horn, trombone and tuba only**



- a reference to the staff paper: optional notation available for normal playing (without the balloons) during a given square.
performers may freely fluctuate between playing the notated figure or playing with the balloons, as long as they are synchronized with the rest of the group when moving to the next square.

5. specific performance instructions



written instructions appearing near graphic representations within a square offer helpful notes for individual parts and coordination throughout the group.

6. general performance instructions

Fill Independently

written instructions appearing at the bottom of each square offer general, supplemental guidance for that section.

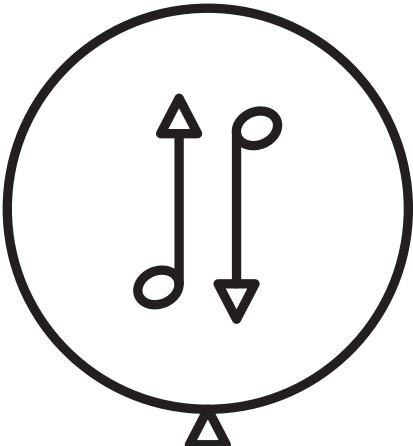
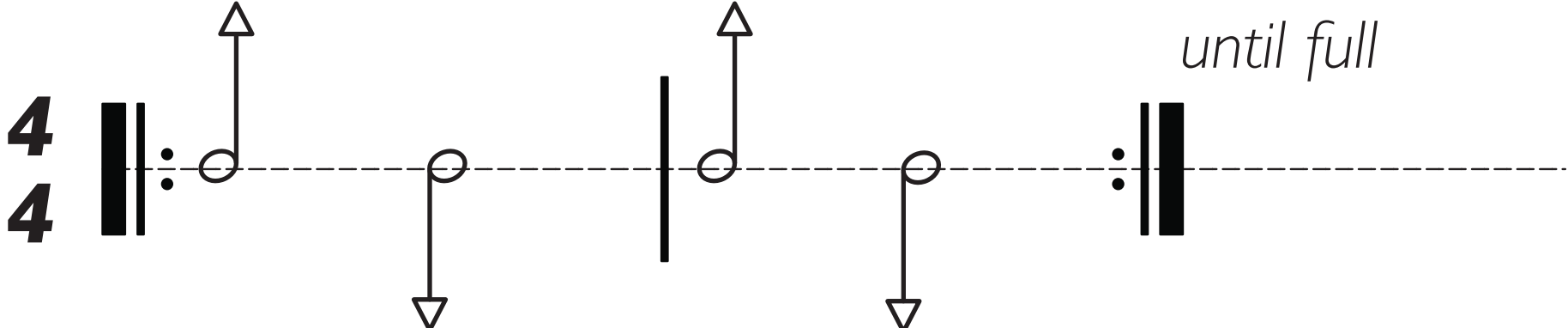
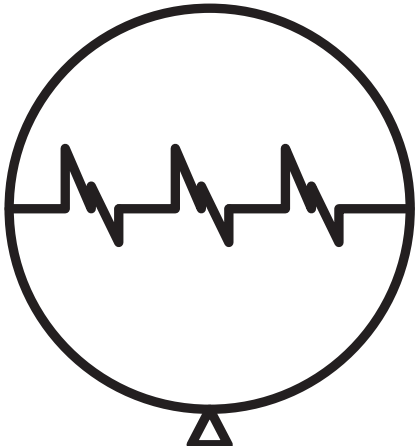
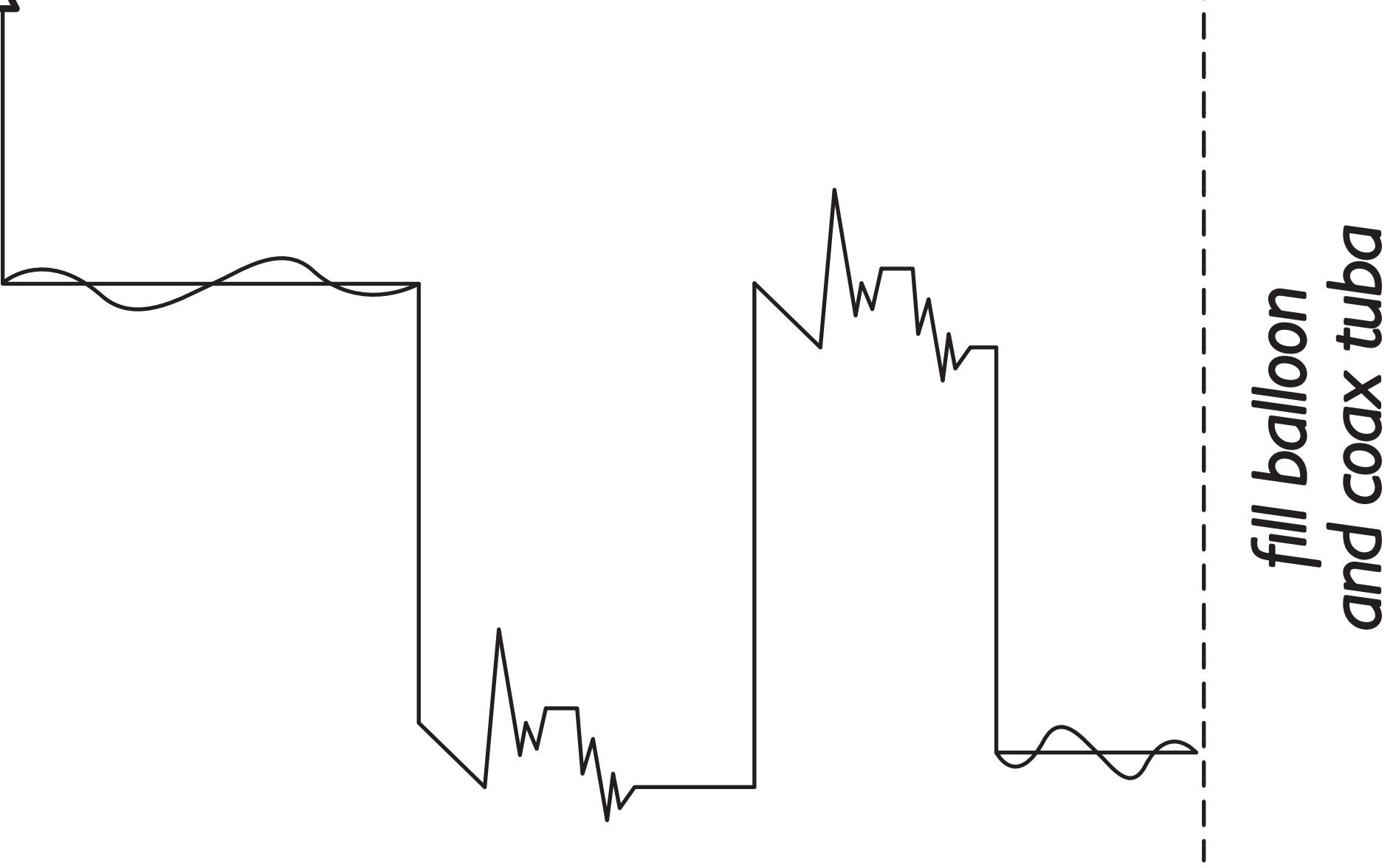
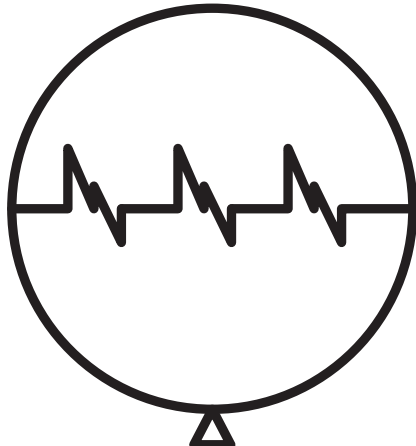
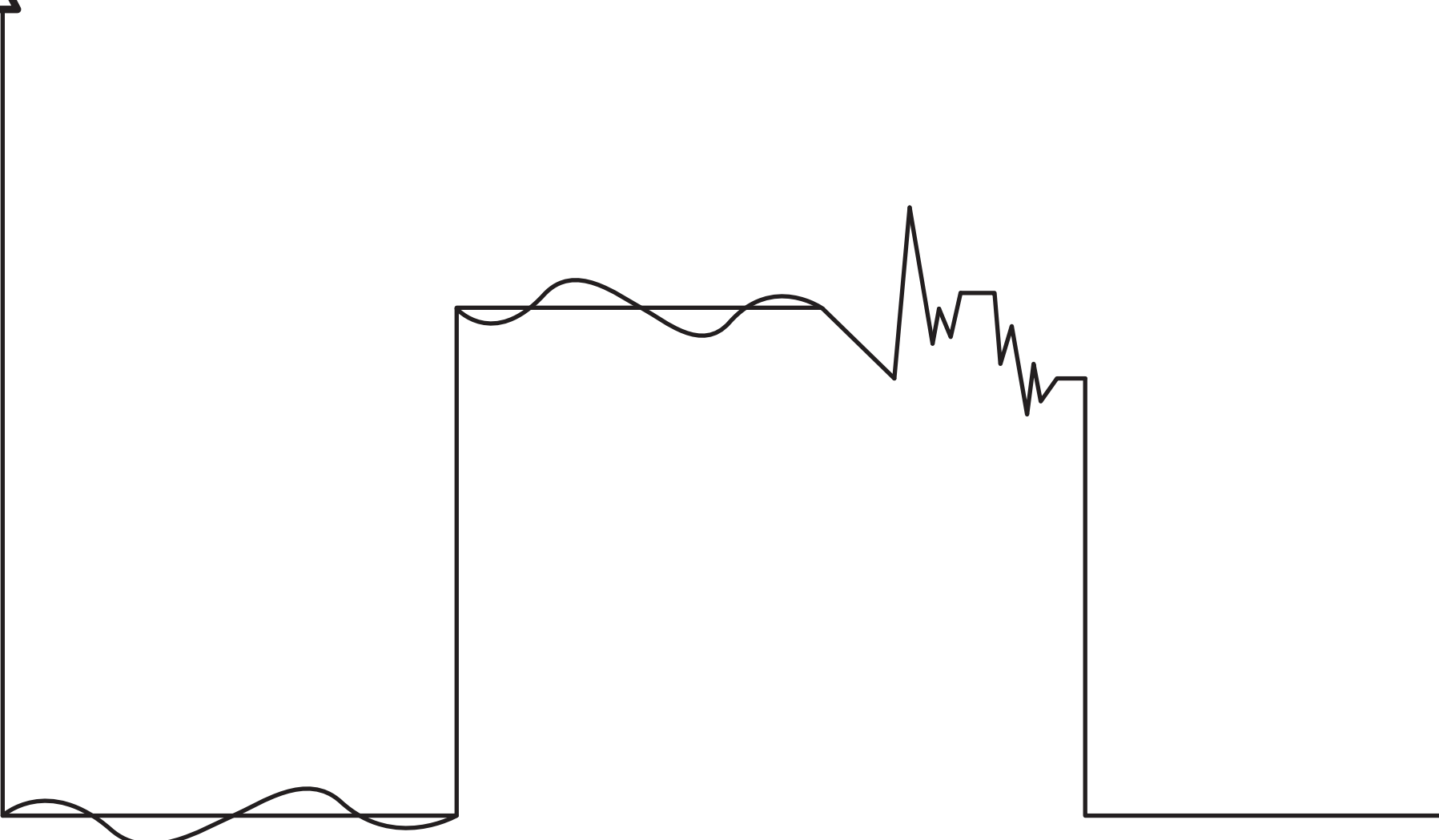
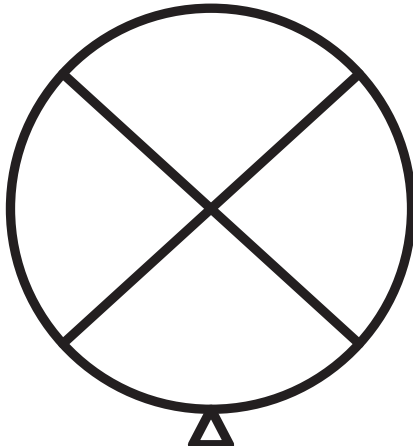
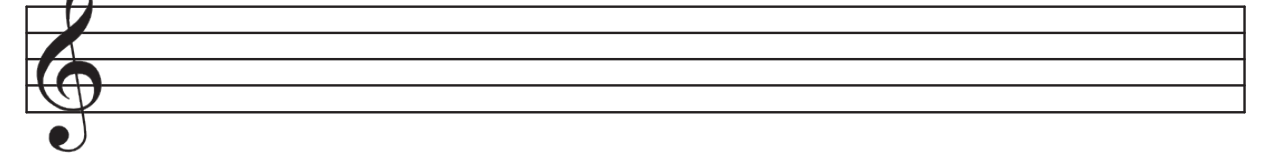
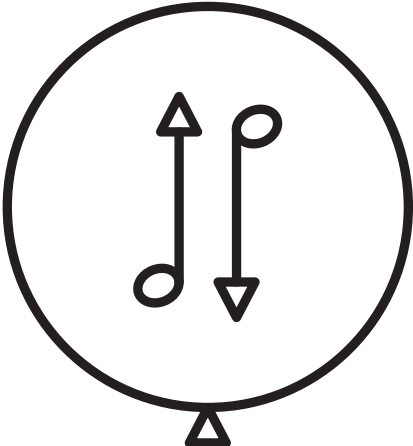
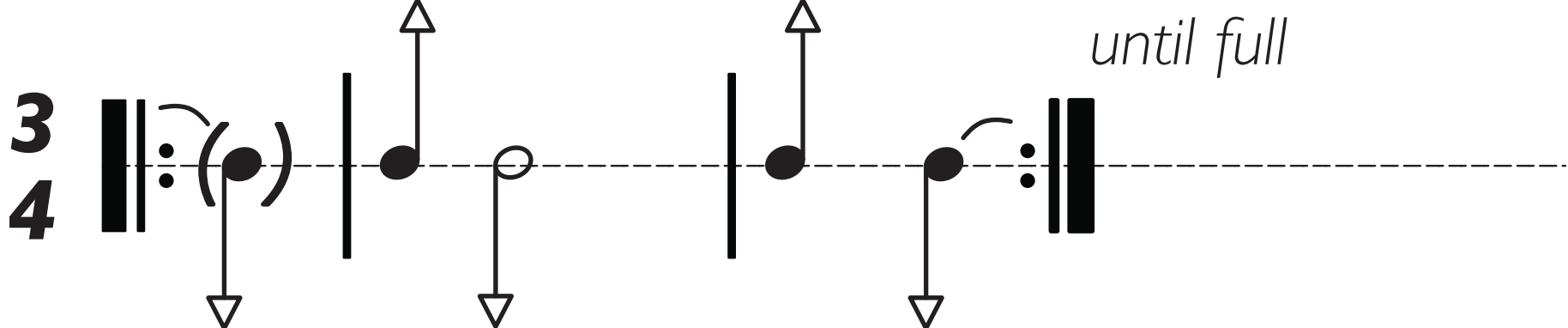
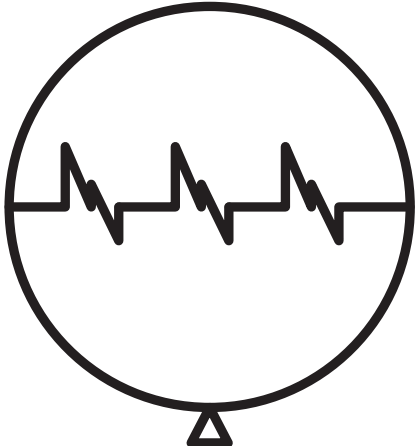
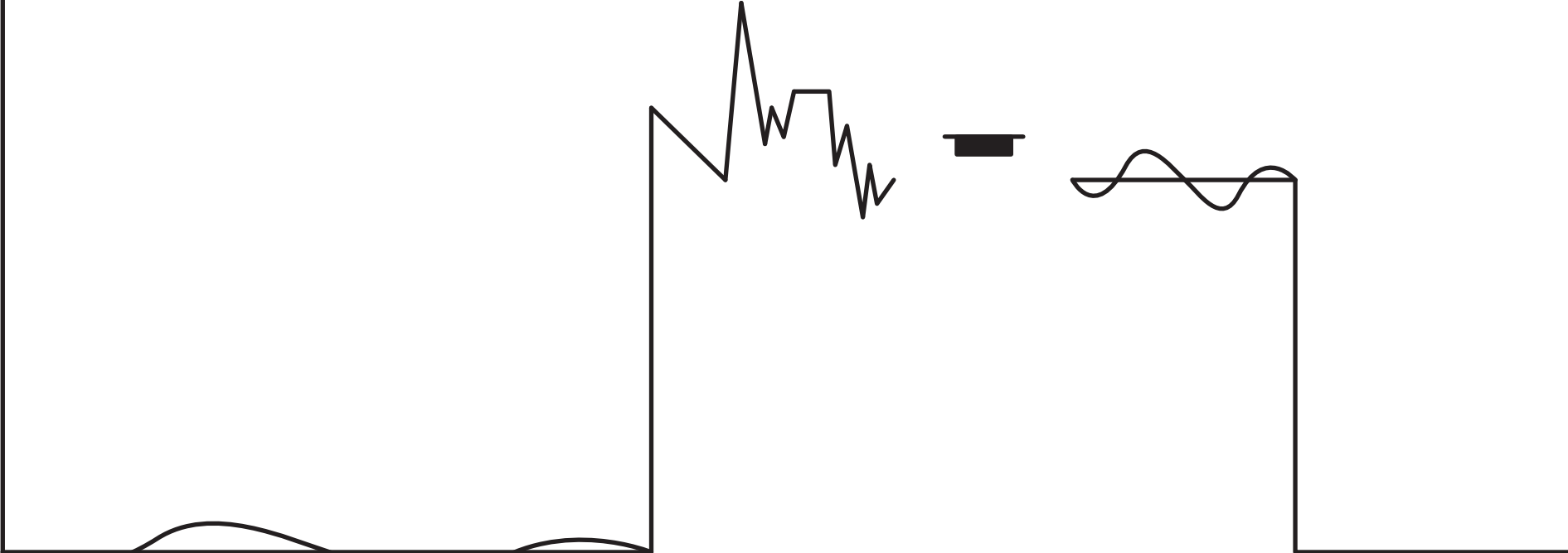
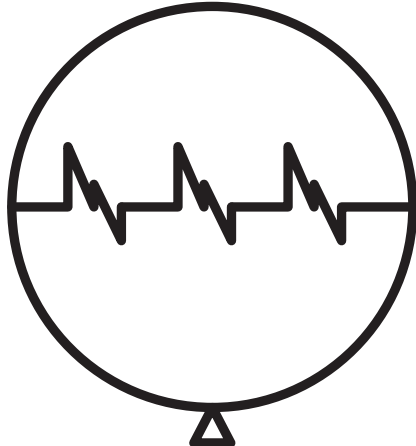

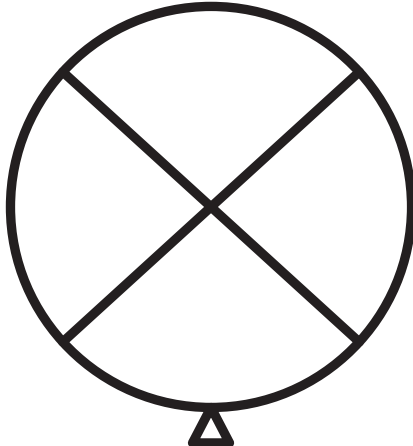
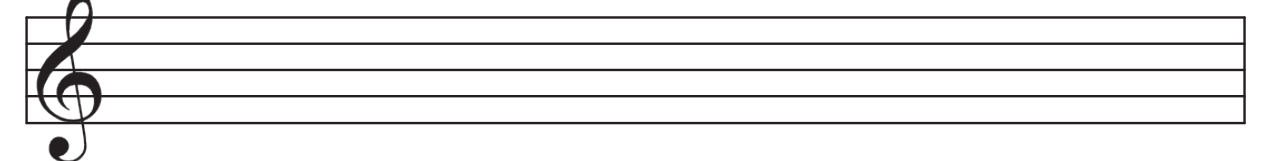
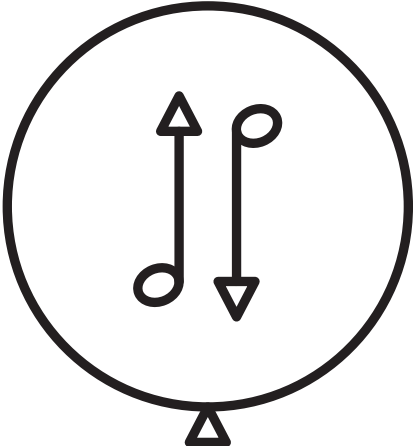
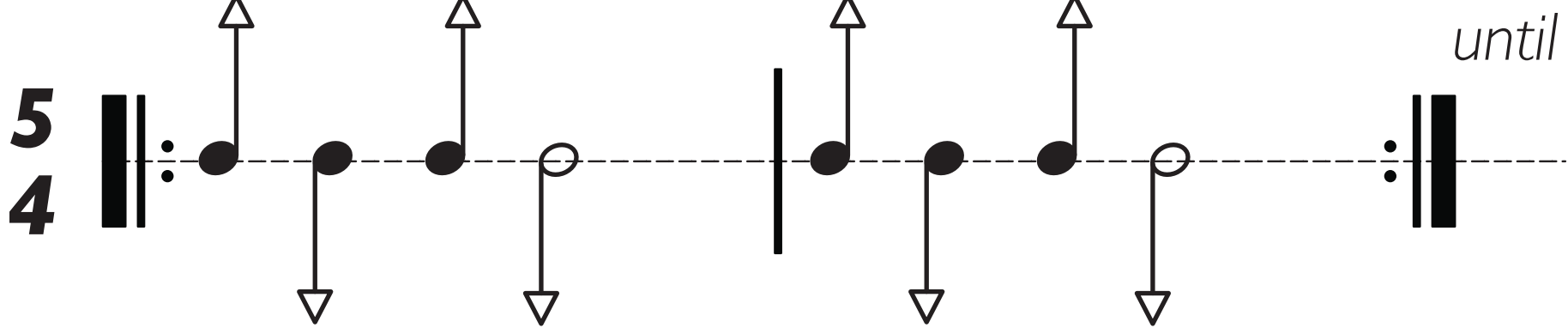
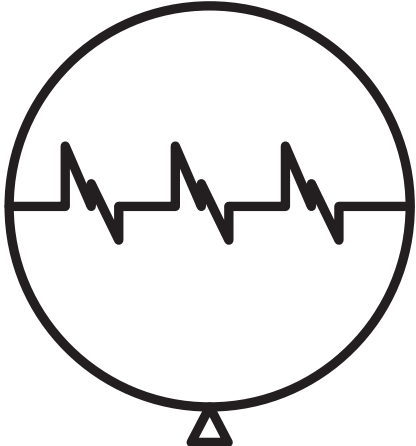
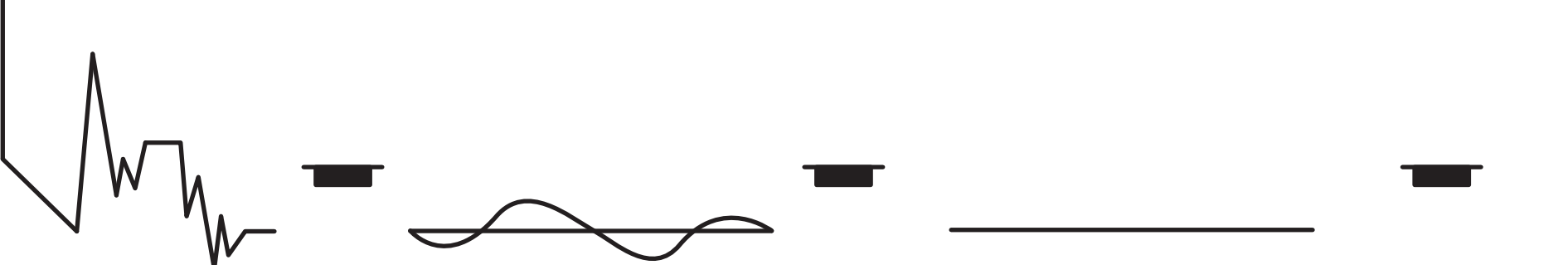
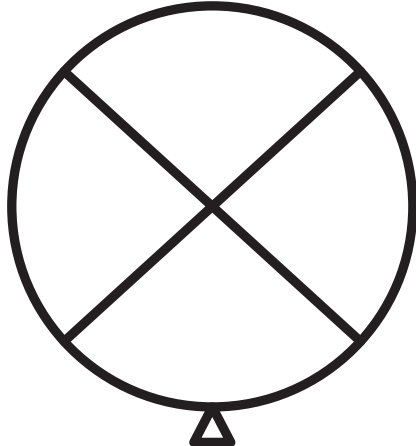
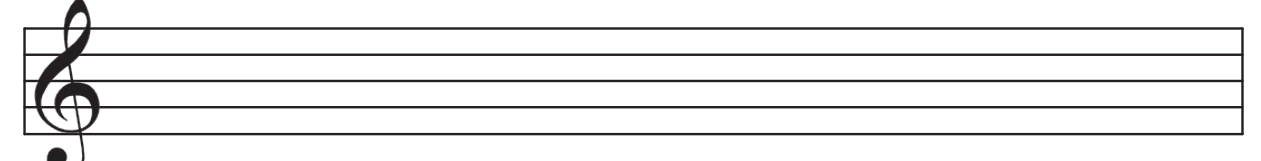
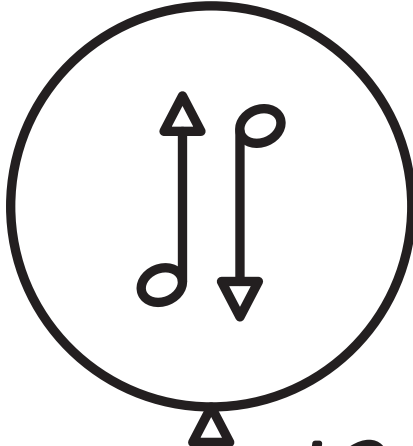
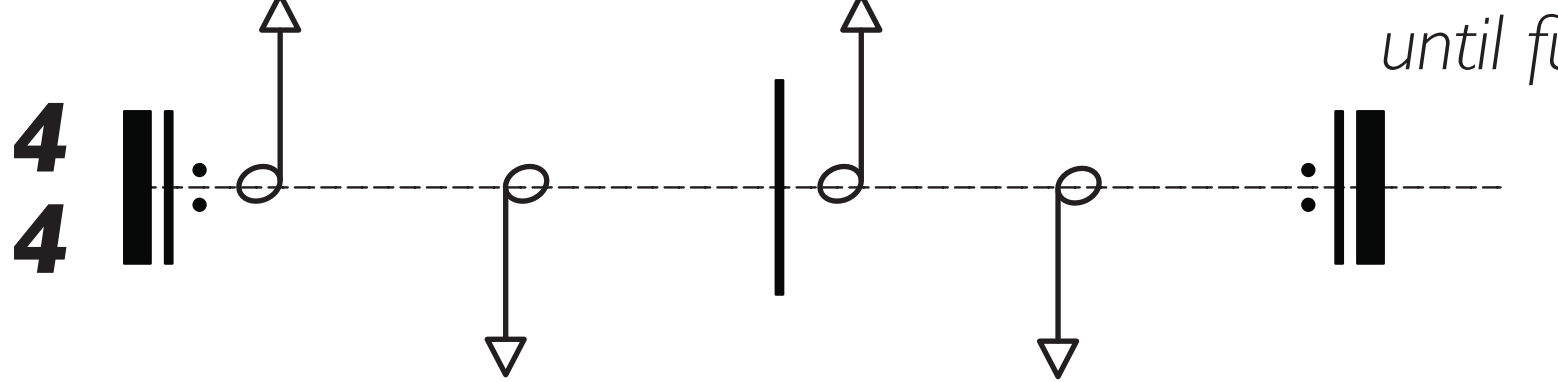
Special Note: The instruction "converse freely" indicates *actual conversation* throughout the given square. Though very generally identified and not dynamically distributed throughout the score, this conversational aspect of the piece is of *great importance*. The conversation aspect is meant to be an extension of the performers' first group interaction with the balloons. Wild laughter in reaction to hearing the balloons through each other's instruments is encouraged. Commentary on your own instrument's interaction with the balloons as well as on each other's is encouraged. Discussions should be had across the ensemble, not only with the person sitting next to you. A performance of this work should appear to the audience as a frivolous break during the ensemble's rehearsal time, a small glimpse at what goes on off stage. The ensemble's conversation and interaction should present itself as naturally as possible and, observing general courtesy towards others, should exhibit a less serious side of each individual and the ensemble as a whole.

* It is recommended that the performers begin the piece with an informal bow, where the first trumpet leads in a proper bow and all other performers strike a comical pose instead. Dialogue may also be generated beforehand and used as a sort of script, relaying jokes or beginning conversations throughout the piece.

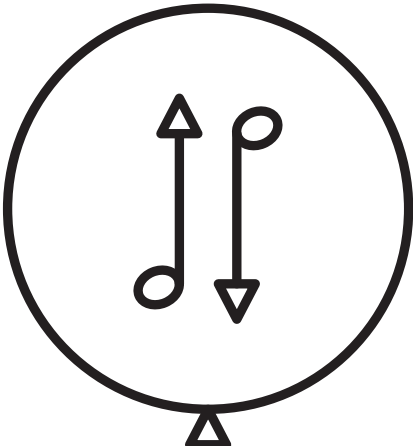
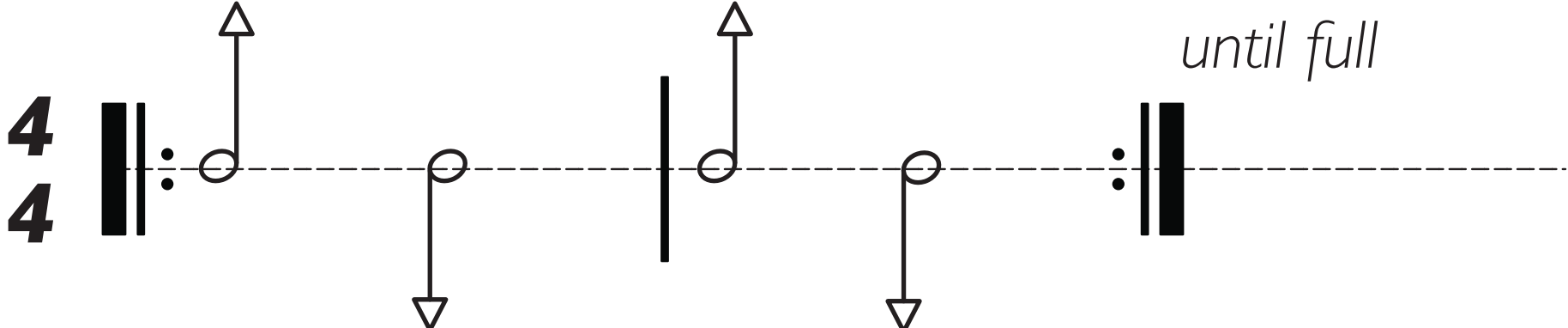
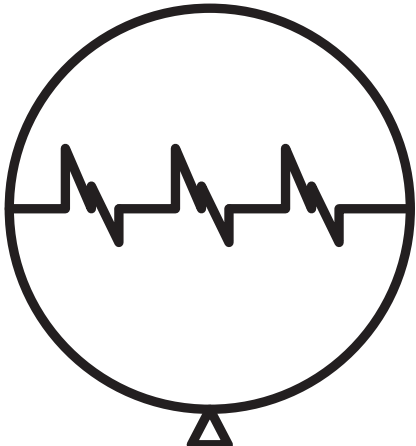
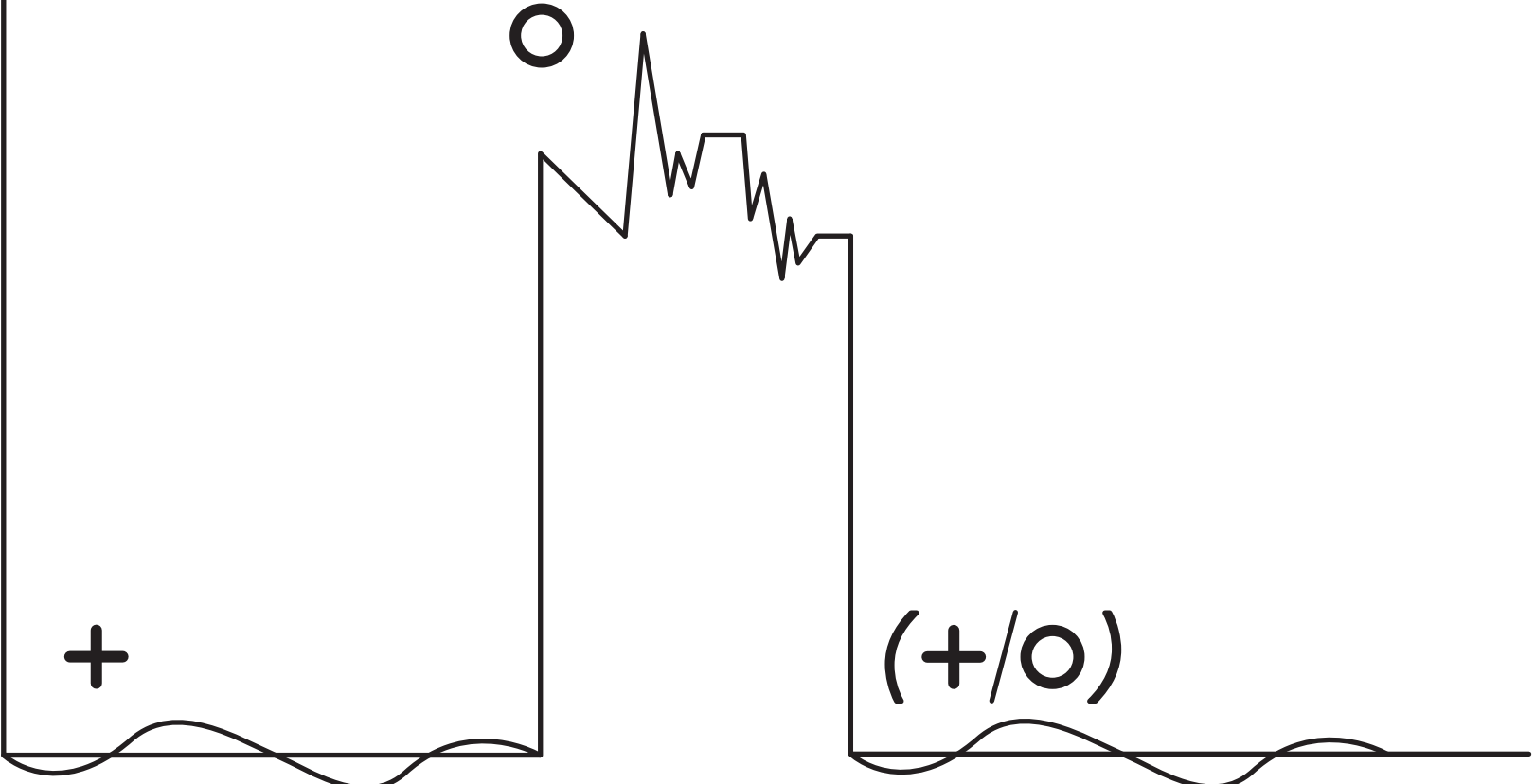
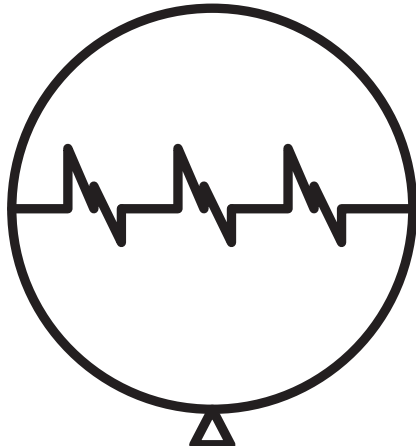
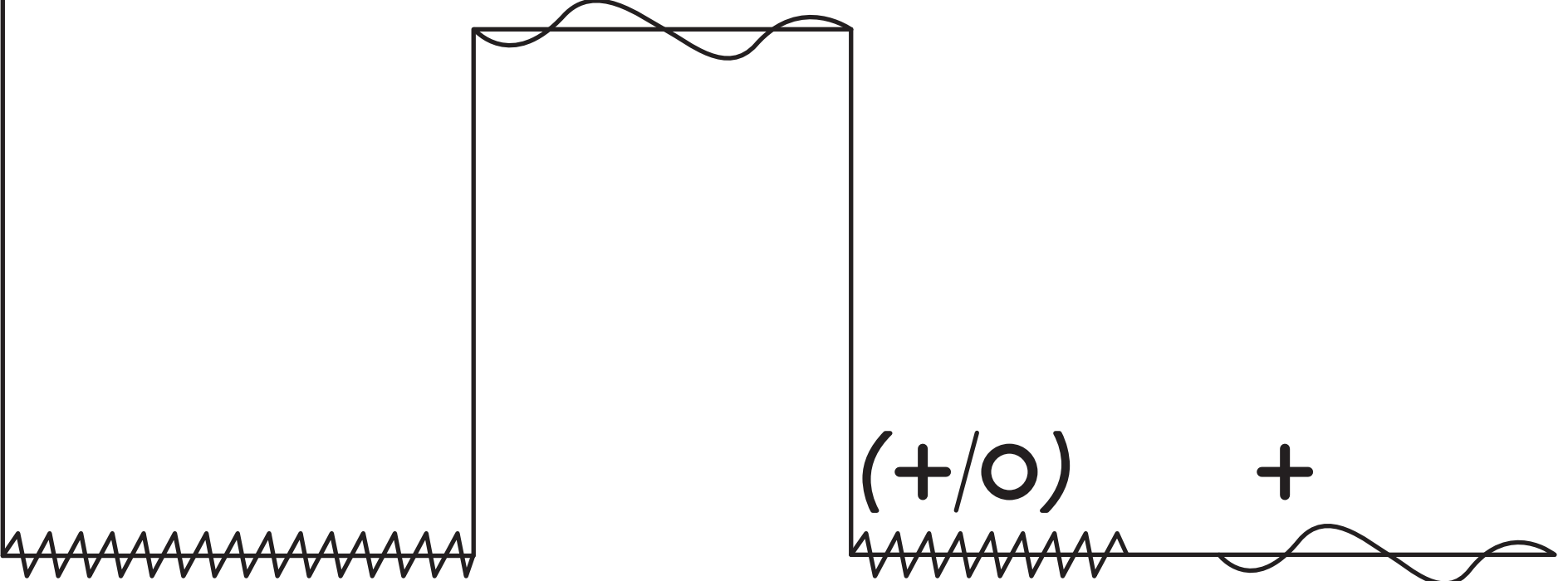
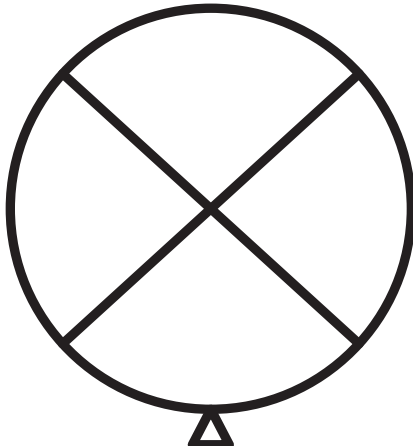
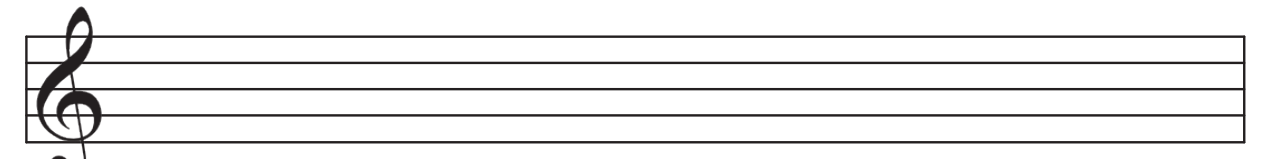
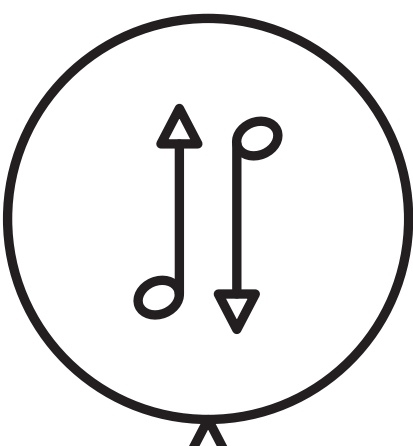
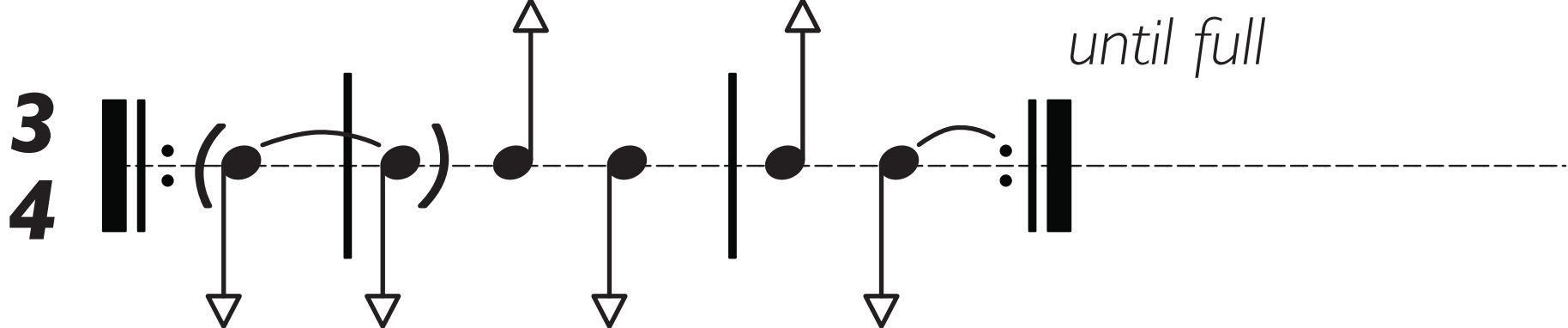
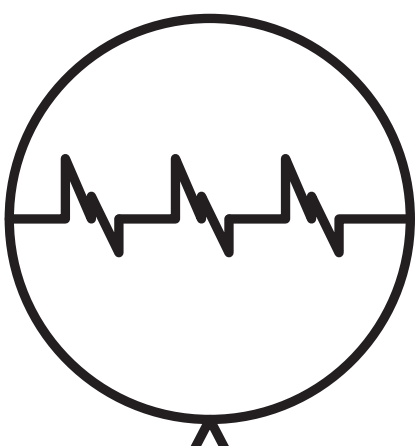

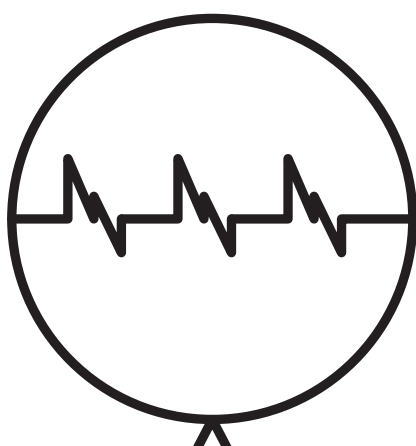

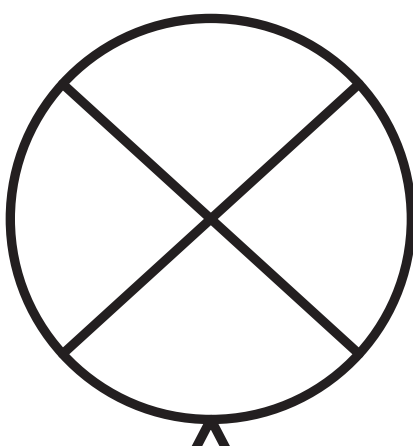
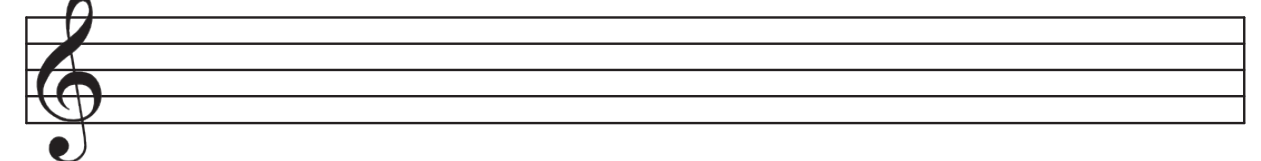
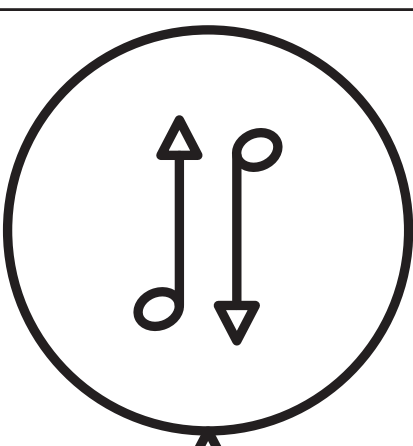
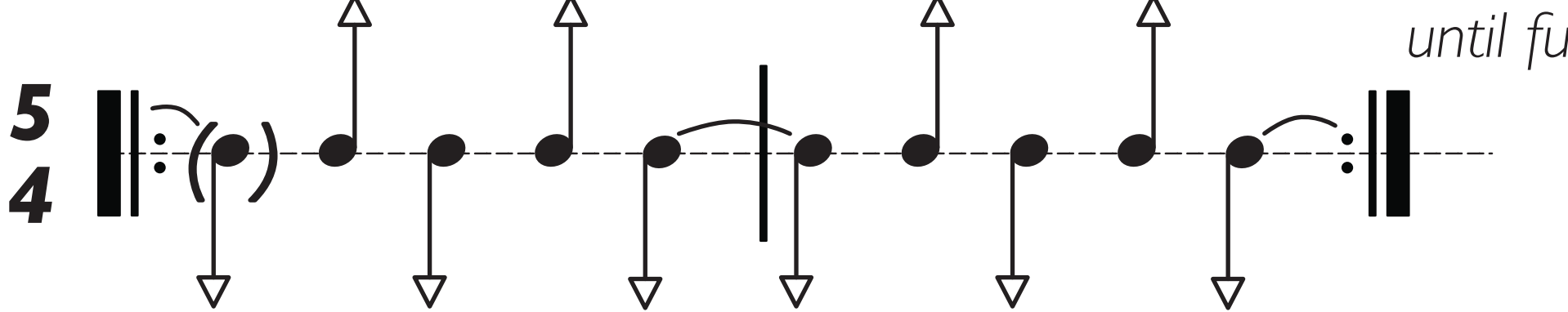
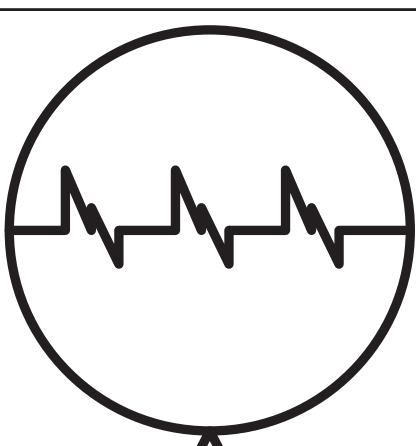

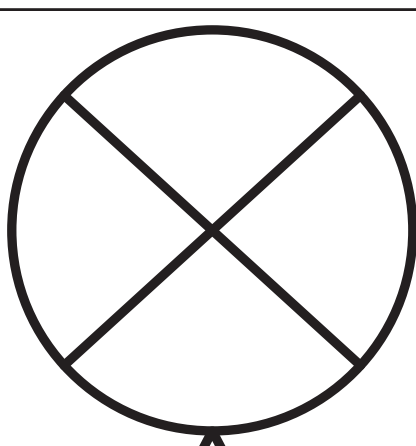
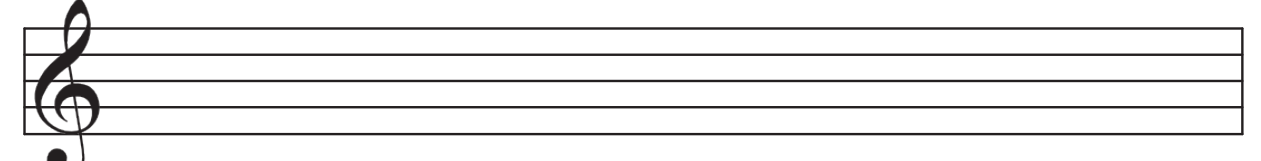
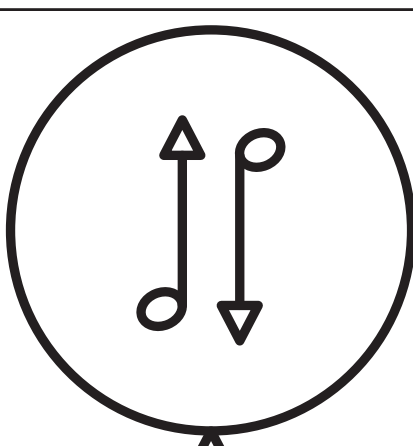
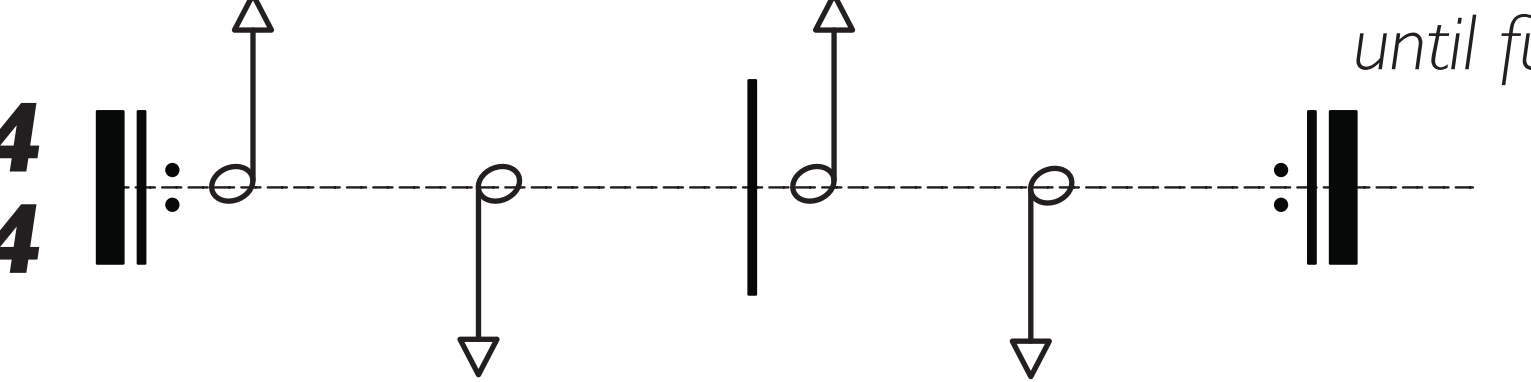
While instructions to "converse freely" will not be possible in certain squares, i.e., filling the balloons or playing through the mouthpiece, the conversational aspect should cross over into other squares as the performers see fit. Similarly, the instruction to "listen intently," "coordinate combinations" and other indications of a rest might suggest the conversation ought to end. This is not the case. Just as the graphic representations are suggestions of sounds, possibilities and recommendations of what to strive for, the instructions to rest or listen do not demand a silencing of the conversation. In fact, coordinating combinations should be a verbal process, whether the combinations are coordinated spontaneously or if they are planned before a performance. Listening to one another during these sections should emphasize silence without explicitly demanding it.

<div><div></div><div><div>1A</div><div>15</div></div><div><div>12 in. balloon (larger) until 3A</div><div><div>4 4</div><div></div><div>until full</div><div>alone; fill at your own pace, uncoordinated with the others</div></div></div><div>Fill Independently</div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>1B</div><div>30</div></div><div><div></div><div>Converse Freely</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>1C</div><div>45</div></div><div><div></div><div>Converse Freely</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>1D</div><div>30</div></div><div><div><div>1</div><div></div></div><div>Breathe Discreetly</div></div></div>
<div><div></div><div><div>2A</div><div>15</div></div><div><div><div>3 4</div><div></div><div>until full</div><div>alone; before the others</div></div></div><div>Fill in Syncopation</div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>2B</div><div>45</div></div><div><div></div><div>Converse Freely</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>2C</div><div>60</div></div><div><div></div><div>Listen Intently</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>2D</div><div>45</div></div><div><div><div>2</div><div></div></div><div>Diverge Secretly</div></div></div>
<div><div></div><div><div>3A</div><div>15</div></div><div><div><div>9 in. balloon (smaller) until 3D</div><div><div>5 4</div><div></div><div>until full</div><div>with trumpet 2; before the others</div></div></div><div>Fill in Opposition</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>3B</div><div>75</div></div><div><div></div><div>bodily communication</div><div>Coordinate Combinations</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>3C</div><div>45</div></div><div><div><div>3</div><div></div></div><div>Intensify Collectively</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>3D</div><div>20</div></div><div><div><div>no mouthpieces</div><div><div>12 in. balloon (larger)</div><div><div>4 4</div><div></div><div>until full</div><div>in unison; leading the others, ending together</div></div></div><div>release the balloons together</div><div>Fill in Unison</div></div></div></div>

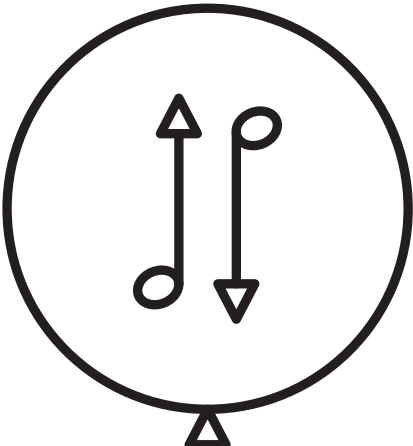
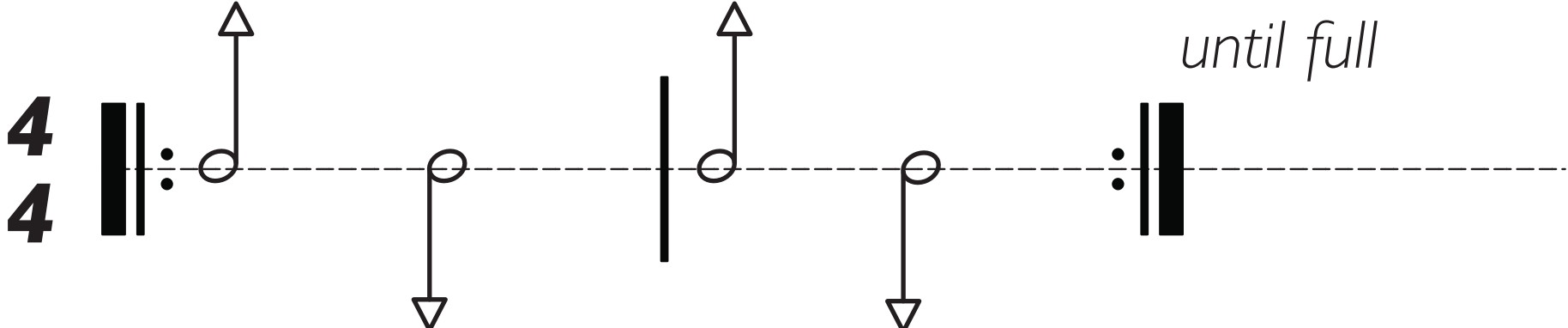
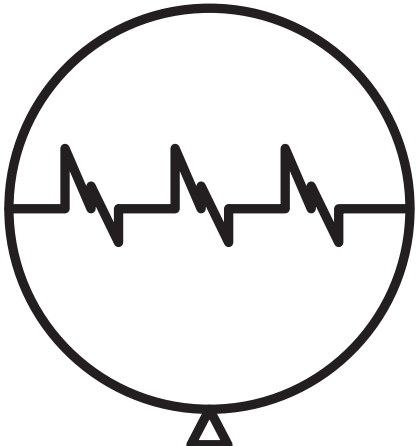
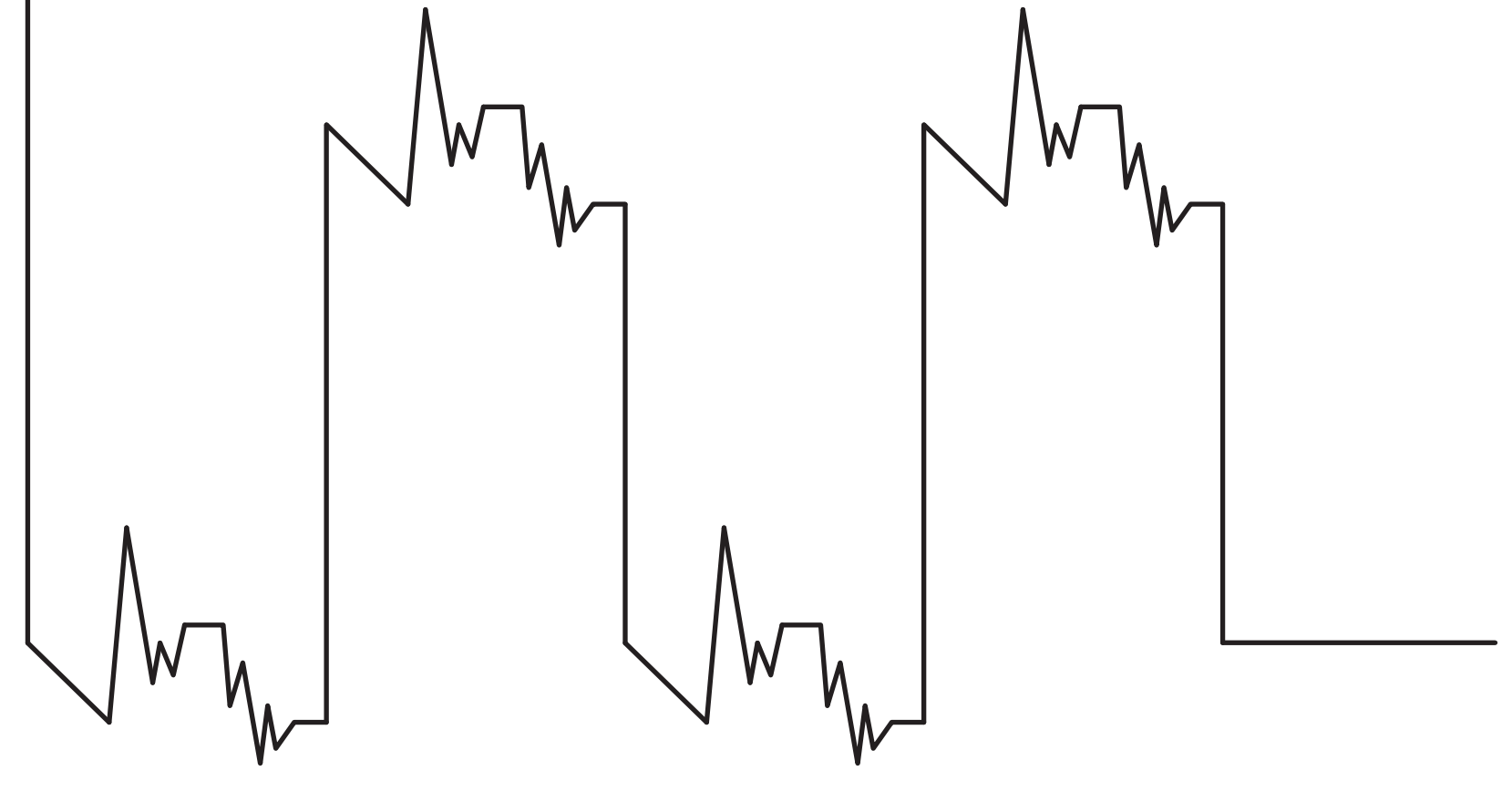
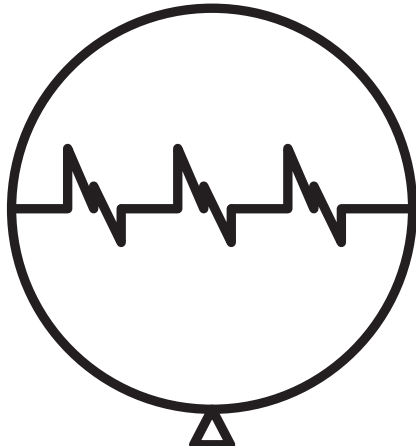
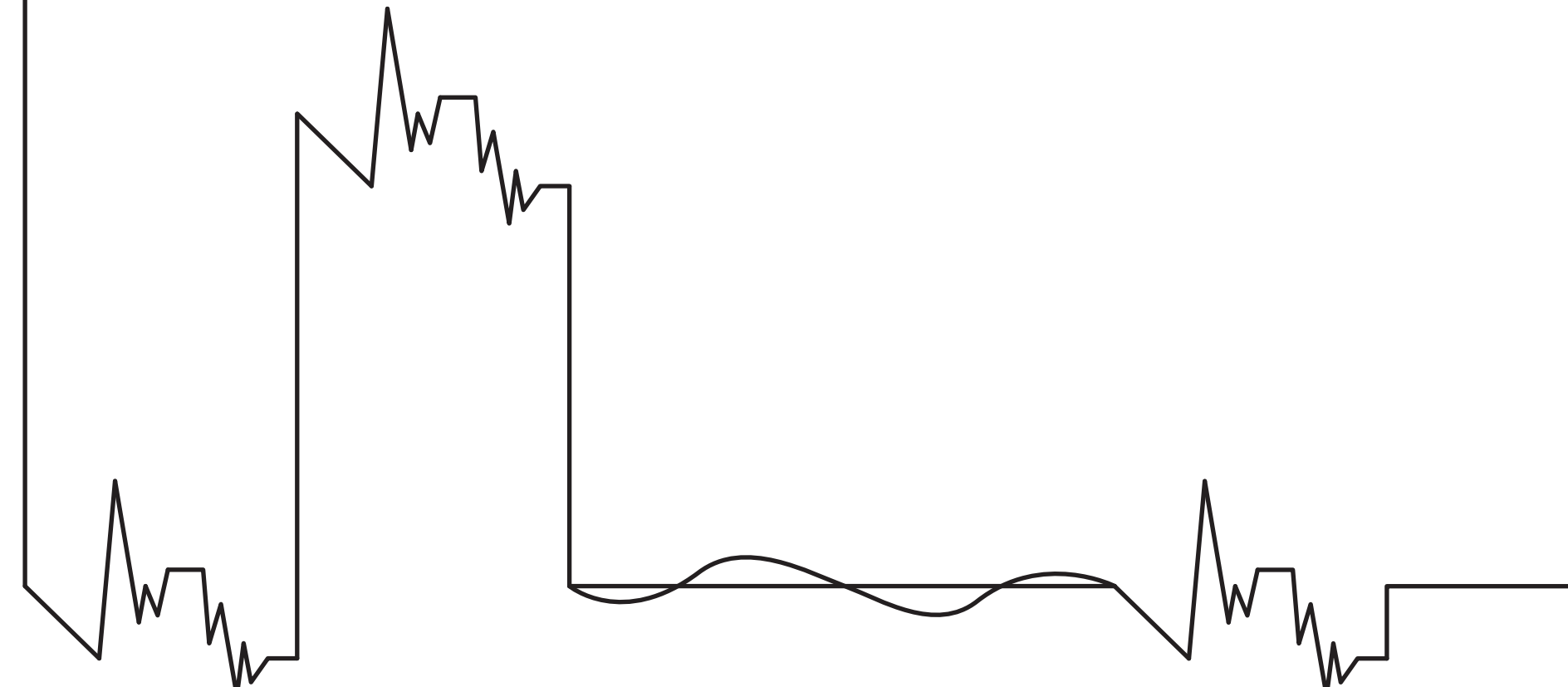
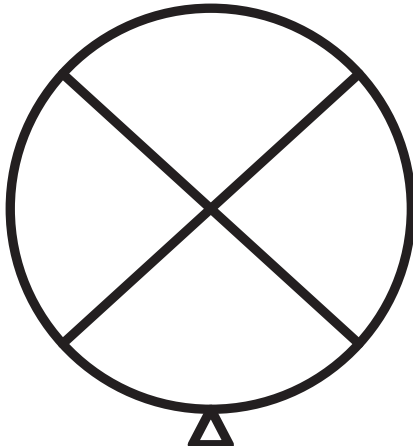
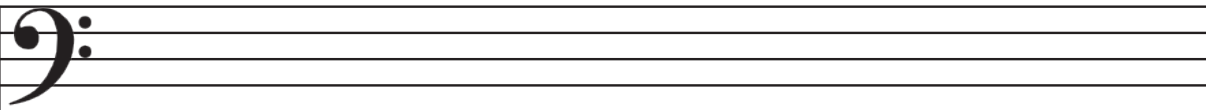
Trumpet in Bb 2

<div><div><div>1A</div><div>15</div></div><div><p>12 in. balloon (larger) until 2C</p><p>alone; fill at your own pace, uncoordinated with the others</p></div></div>	<div><div><div>1B</div><div>30</div></div><div><p>fill balloon and coax tuba</p></div></div>	<div><div><div>1C</div><div>45</div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div><div>1D</div><div>30</div></div><div><div>1</div></div></div>
Fill Independently	Converse Freely	Converse Freely	Breathe Discreetly
<div><div><div>2A</div><div>15</div></div><div><p>alone; after trumpet 1</p></div></div>	<div><div><div>2B</div><div>45</div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div><div>2C</div><div>60</div></div><div><p>9 in. balloon (smaller)</p></div></div>	<div><div><div>2D</div><div>45</div></div><div><div>2</div></div></div>
Fill in Syncopation	Converse Freely	Listen Intently	Diverge Secretly
<div><div><div>3A</div><div>15</div></div><div><p>9 in. balloon (smaller) until 3D</p><p>with trumpet 1; before the others</p></div></div>	<div><div><div>3B</div><div>75</div></div><div><p>bodily communication</p></div></div>	<div><div><div>3C</div><div>45</div></div><div><div>3</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>3D</div><div>20</div></div><div><p>12 in. balloon (larger) no mouthpieces</p><p>in unison; watch trumpet 1, ending together</p><div>release the balloons together</div></div></div>
Fill in Opposition	Coordinate Combinations	Intensify Collectively	Fill in Unison

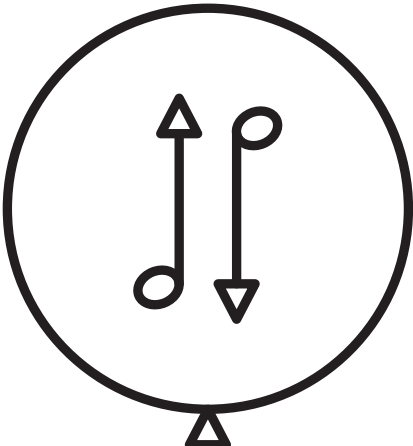
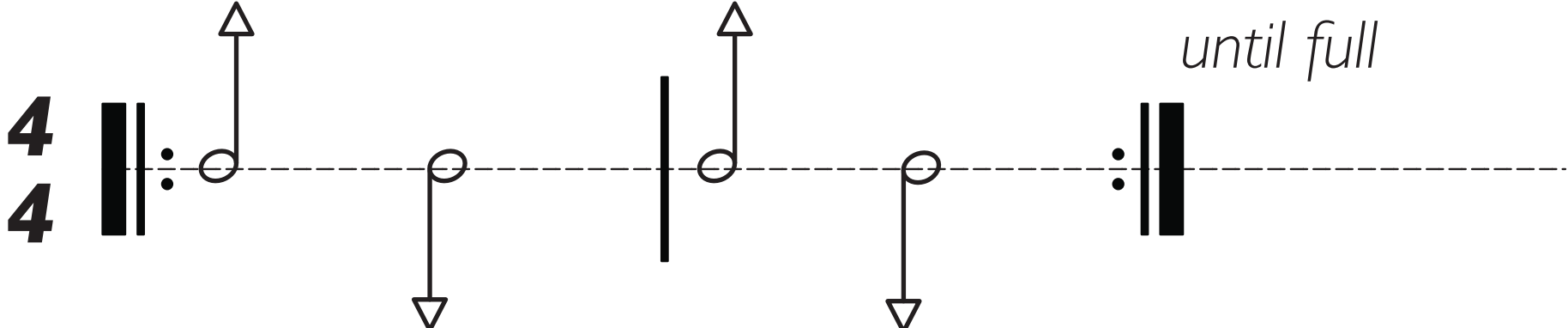
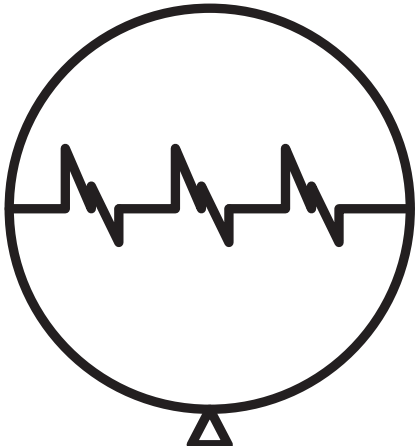
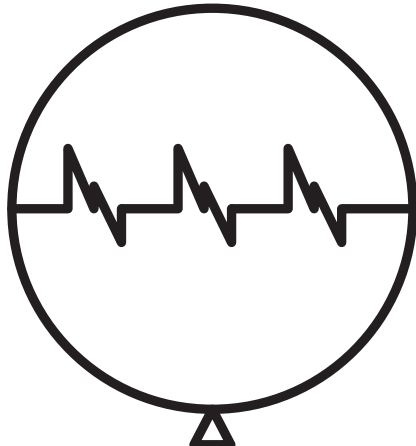
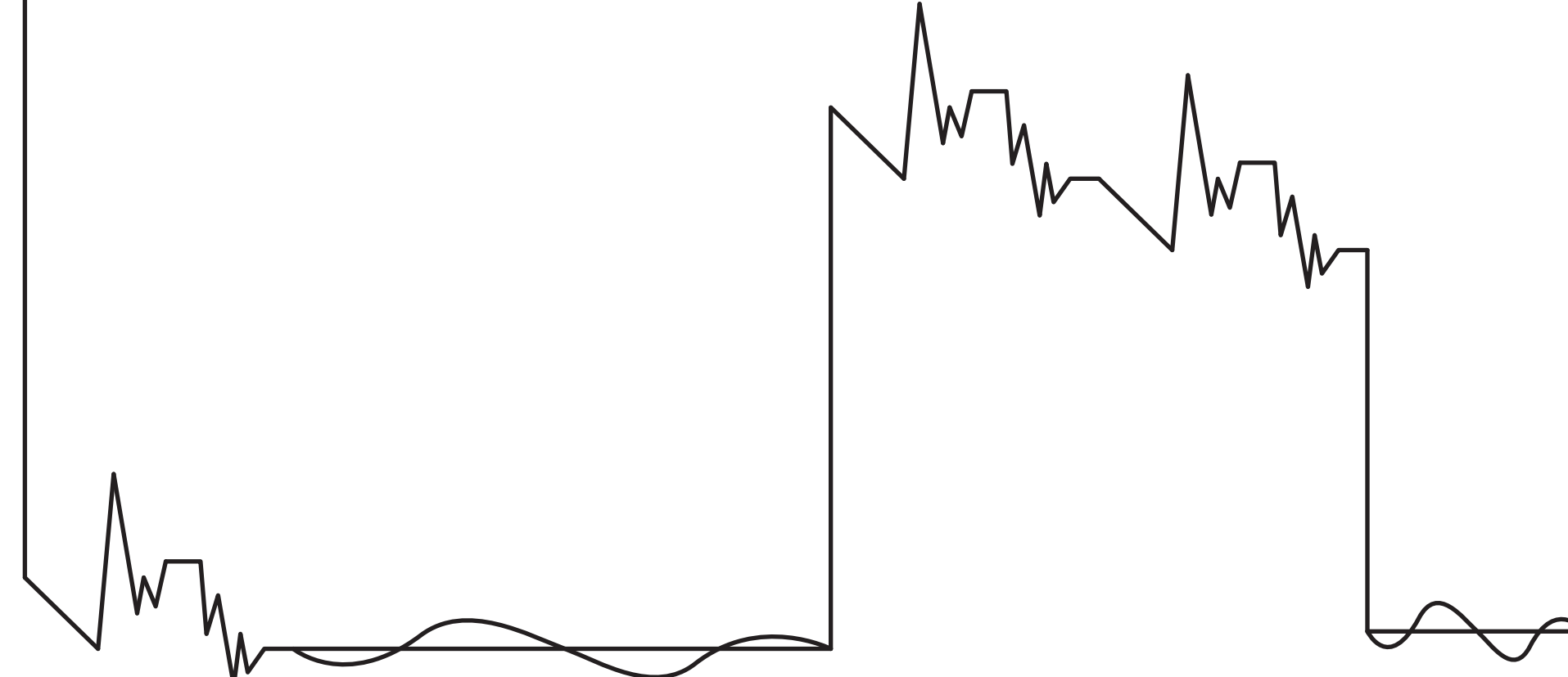
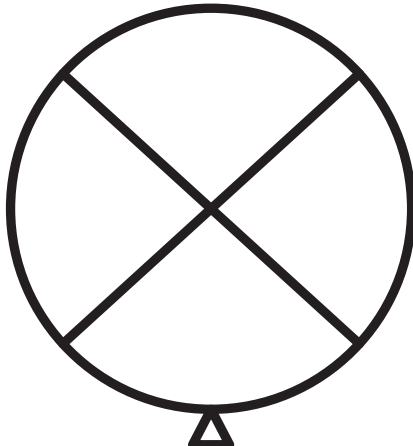
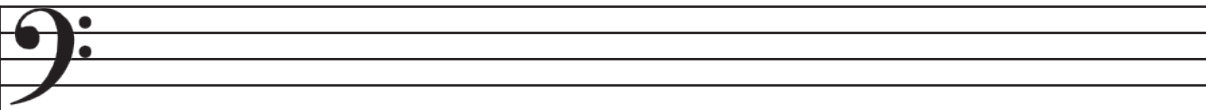
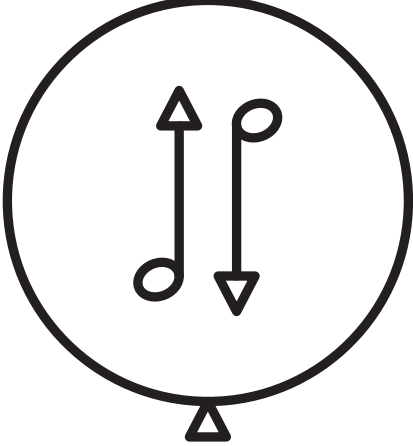
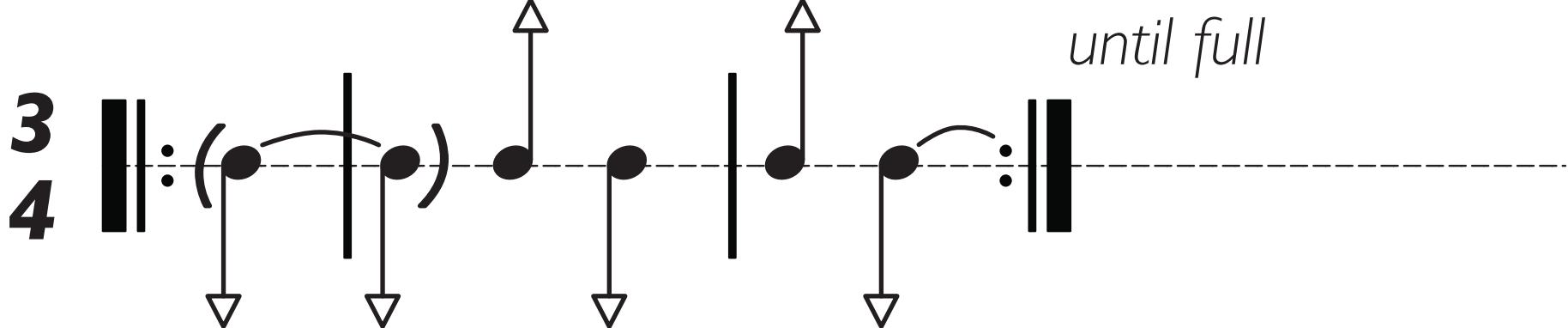
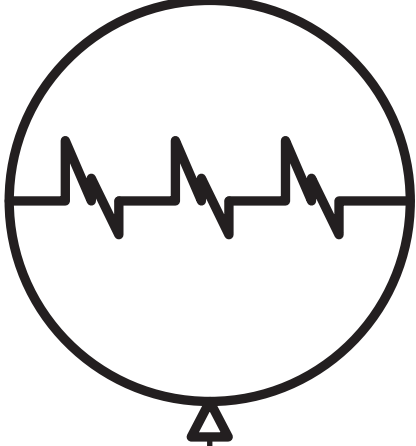
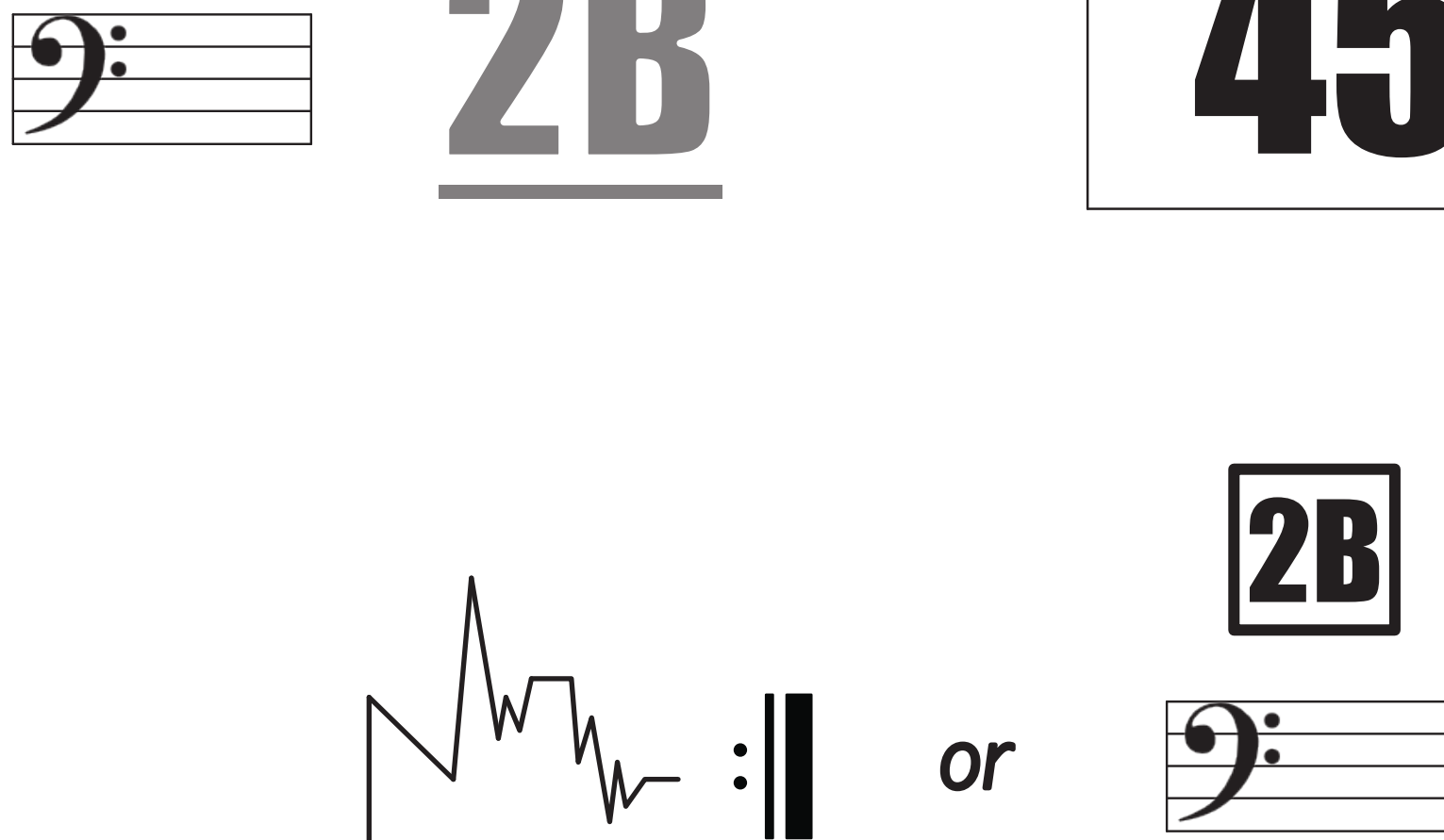

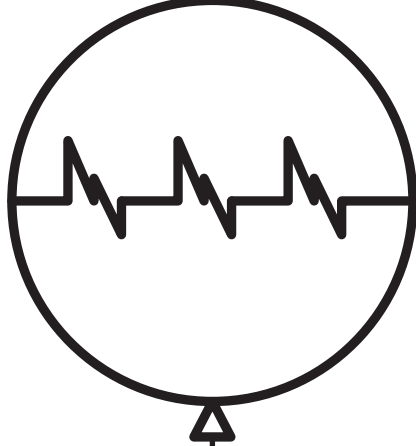
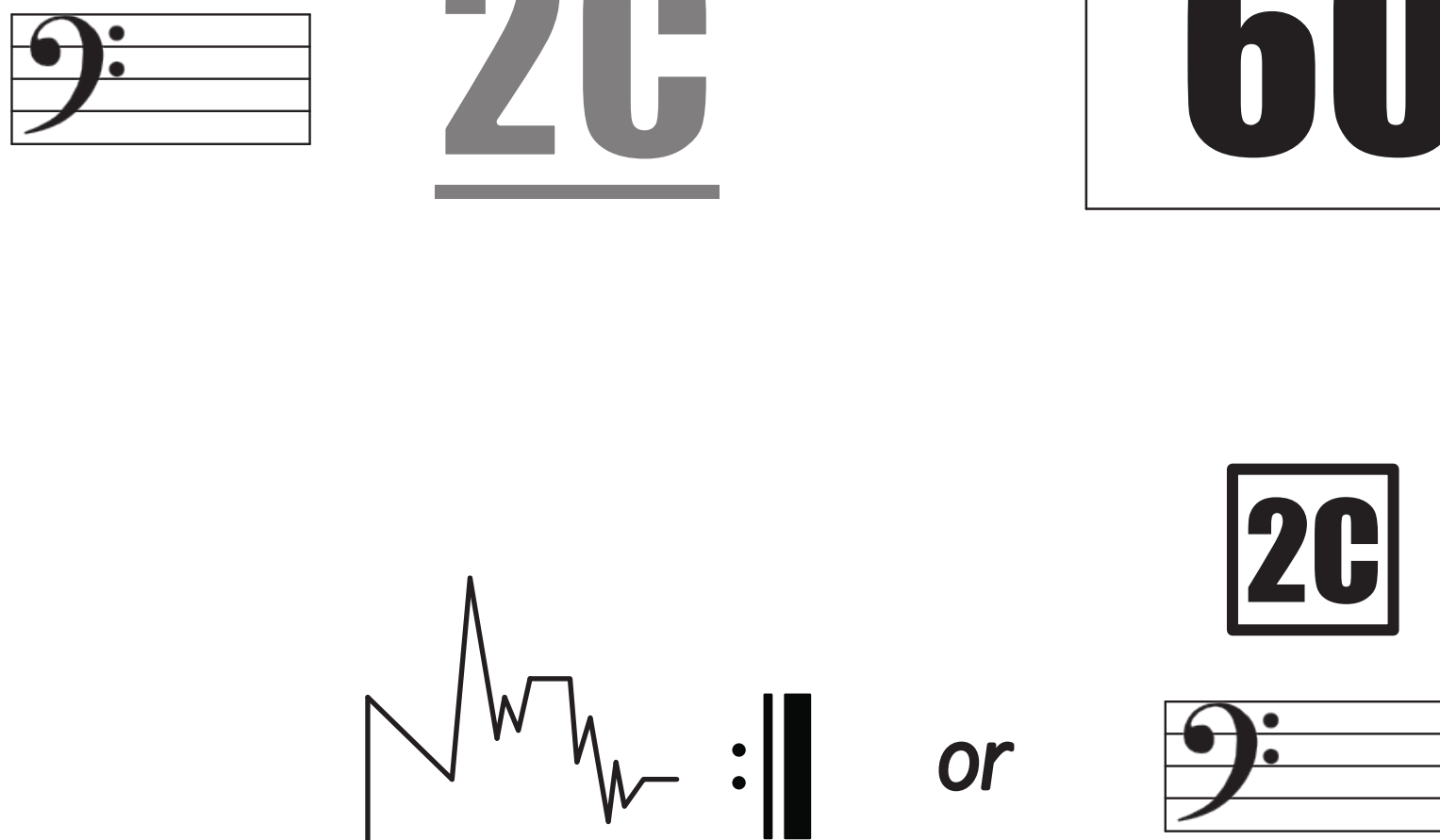

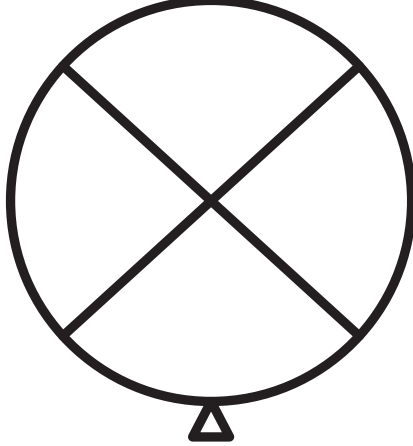
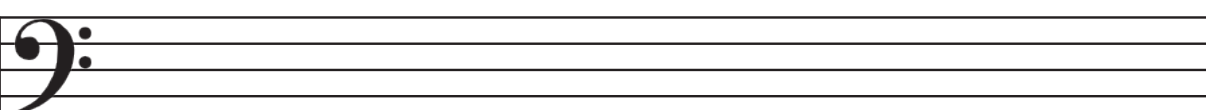
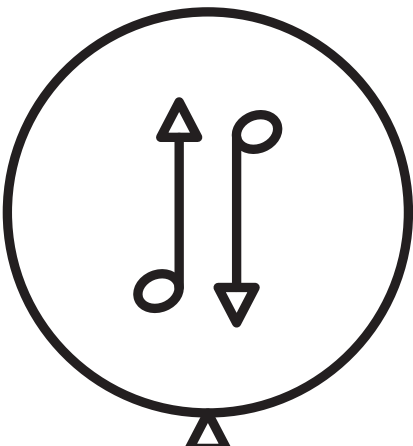
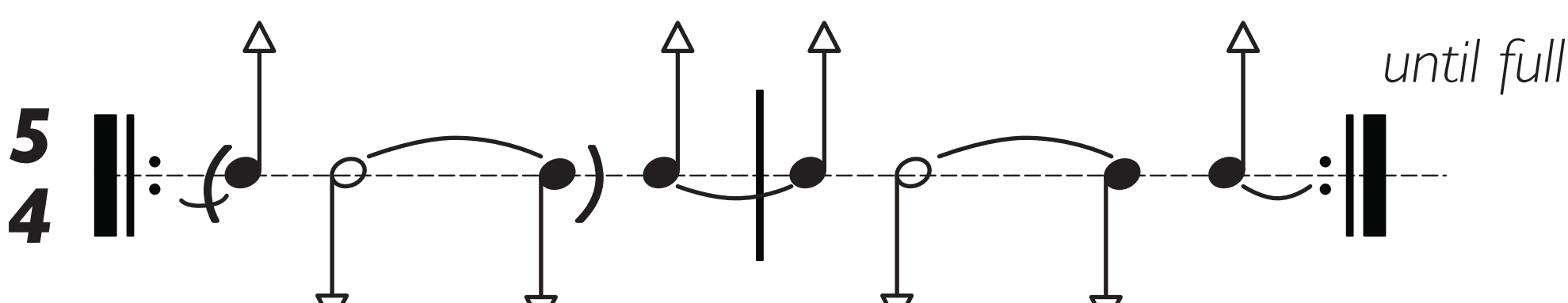
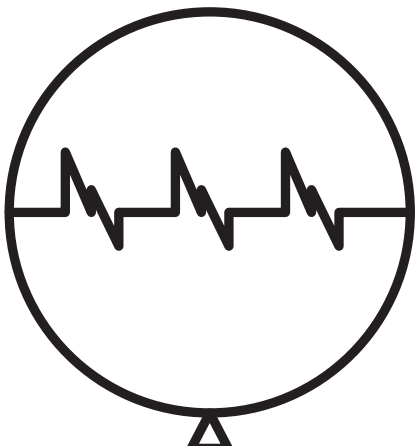
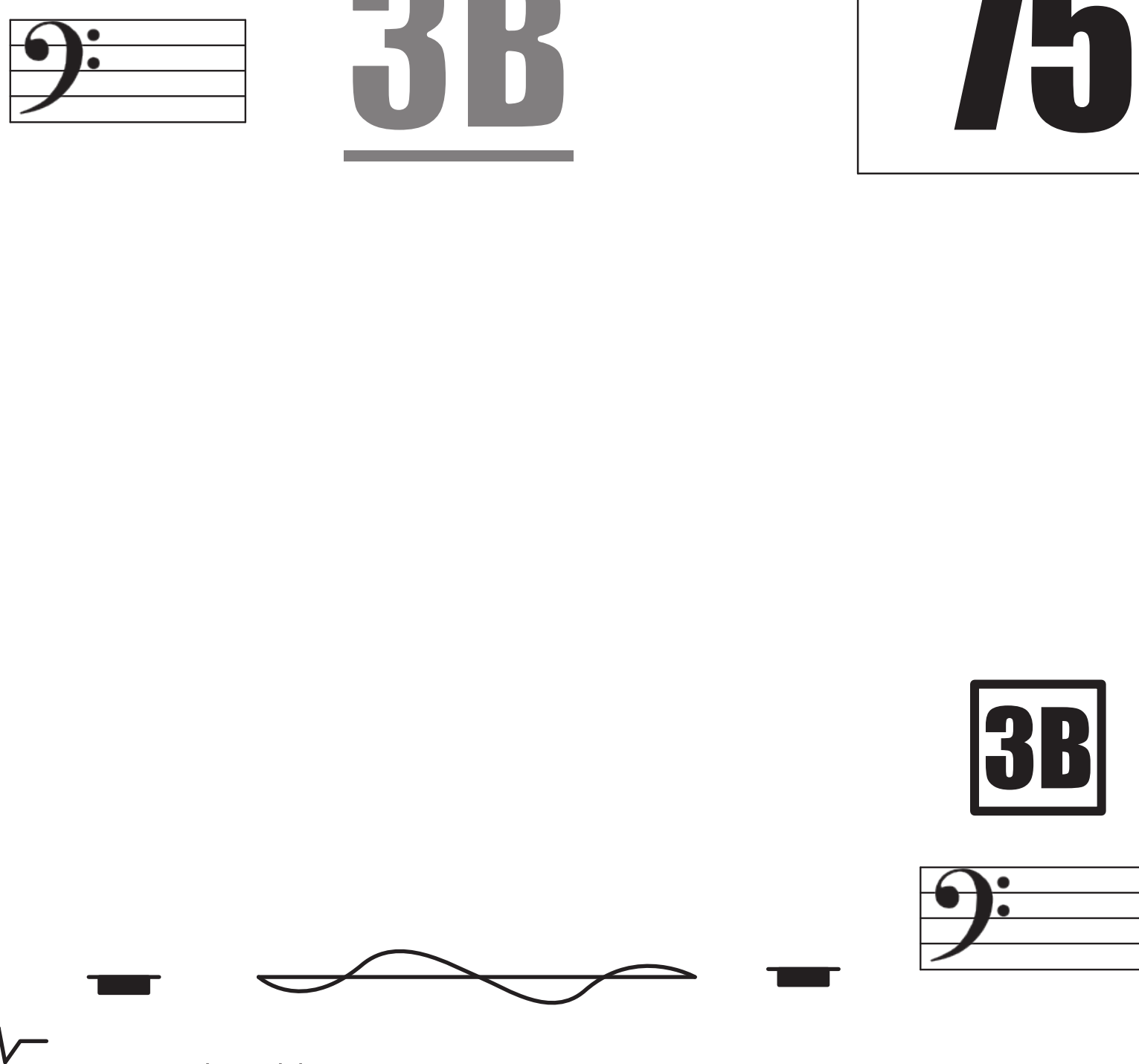
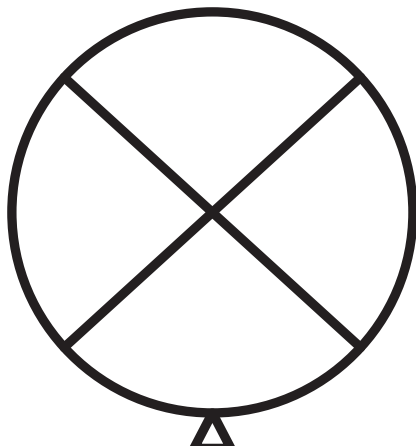
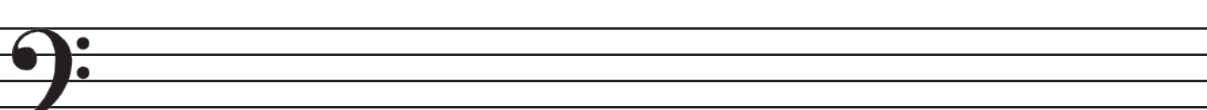
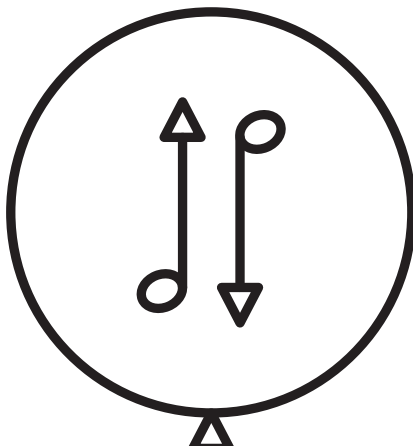
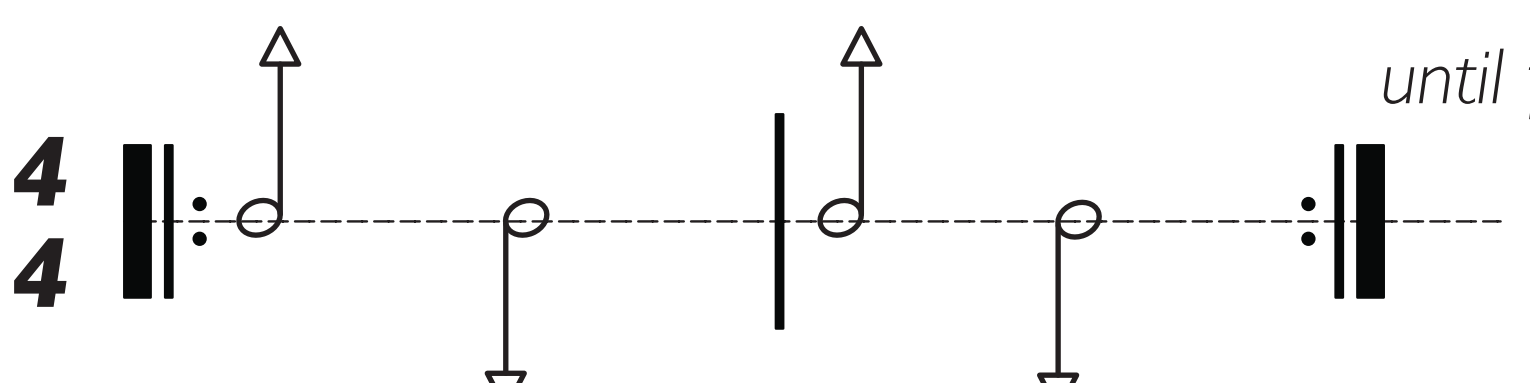
Horn in F

<div><div><div>1A</div><div>15</div></div><div><p>12 in. balloon (larger) throughout the piece</p><p>alone; fill at your own pace, uncoordinated with the others</p></div></div>	<div><div><div>1B</div><div>30</div></div><div><p>fill balloon and coax tuba</p></div></div>	<div><div><div>1C</div><div>45</div></div><div><p>avoiding full statements of ostinato</p><p>(+ / o) +</p></div></div>	<div><div><div>1D</div><div>30</div></div><div><div>1</div></div></div>
Fill Independently	Converse Freely	Converse Freely	Breathe Discreetly
<div><div><div>2A</div><div>15</div></div><div><p>with trombone and tuba; after trumpet 2</p></div></div>	<div><div><div>2B</div><div>45</div></div><div><p>revealing the ostinato; exploring it in full</p></div></div>	<div><div><div>2C</div><div>60</div></div><div><p>using less and less ostinato; focusing more on low, stopped pitches</p><p>- +</p></div></div>	<div><div><div>2D</div><div>45</div></div><div><div>2</div></div></div>
Fill in Syncopation	Converse Freely	Listen Intently	Diverge Secretly
<div><div><div>3A</div><div>15</div></div><div><p>with trombone; after trumpets</p></div></div>	<div><div><div>3B</div><div>75</div></div><div><p>explore other sounds in combinations before using the ostinato</p><p>bodily communication</p></div></div>	<div><div><div>3C</div><div>45</div></div><div><div>3</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>3D</div><div>20</div></div><div><p>no mouthpieces</p><p>in unison; watch trumpet 1, ending together</p></div></div>
Fill in Opposition	Coordinate Combinations	Intensify Collectively	Fill in Unison

Tenor Trombone

<div></div> <div><div><u>1A</u></div><div>15</div></div> <div><p>12 in. balloon (larger) throughout the piece</p><p>alone; fill at your own pace, uncoordinated with the others</p></div>	<div></div> <div><div><u>1B</u></div><div>30</div></div> <div><p>fill balloon and coax tuba</p></div>	<div></div> <div><div><u>1C</u></div><div>45</div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div><div><u>1D</u></div><div>30</div></div> <div><div>1</div></div>
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C-Tuba

<div><div><div><u>1A</u></div><div>15</div></div><div><p>12 in. balloon (larger) throughout the piece</p><p>alone; fill at your own pace, uncoordinated with the others</p></div></div>	<div><div><div><u>1B</u></div><div>30</div></div><div><p>balloon attached and ready, don't play until the others call on you</p><p>slouching over the tuba, stare blankly at the audience - as if in a trance or a daydream</p><div><p>snap out of it and let the air blow freely</p></div></div></div>	<div><div><div><u>1C</u></div><div>45</div></div></div>	<div><div><div><u>1D</u></div><div>30</div></div><div><div><div>1</div></div></div></div>
Fill Independently	Stare Dreamily	Converse Freely	Breathe Discreetly
<div><div><div><u>2A</u></div><div>15</div></div><div><p>with horn and trombone; after trumpet 2</p></div></div>	<div><div><div><u>2B</u></div><div>45</div></div><div><p>or</p></div></div>	<div><div><div><u>2C</u></div><div>60</div></div><div><p>or</p></div></div>	<div><div><div><u>2D</u></div><div>45</div></div><div><div><div>2</div></div></div></div>
Fill in Syncopation	Converse Freely	Listen Intently	Diverge Secretly
<div><div><div><u>3A</u></div><div>15</div></div><div><p>alone; after horn and trombone</p></div></div>	<div><div><div><u>3B</u></div><div>75</div></div><div><p>bodily communication</p></div></div>	<div><div><div><u>3C</u></div><div>45</div></div><div><div><div>3</div></div></div></div>	<div><div><div><u>3D</u></div><div>20</div></div><div><p>no mouthpieces</p><p>in unison; watch trumpet 1, ending together</p><div><p>release the balloons together</p></div></div></div>
Fill in Opposition	Coordinate Combinations	Intensify Collectively	Fill in Unison