PIANO CONCERTO NO 1 (opus 15) by John Simon

This three-movement piano concerto was composed in the village of Kingsclere, Berkshire, England in 1969-70 and rewritten in 1981, 1991 and 2003. The 2003 version is the fourth and definitive version. The third version of the concerto was approved for performance on three occasions by the BBC London's reading panel, but the composer decided to withhold it pending further improvements. The concerto was eventually premiered in 2004 with Nina Schumann as soloist with the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra.

Movement 1 (8'18") is in sonata form. Most of the musical material is derived from the 12-note figure stated on clarinets at the outset; however, a second unrelated subject announced by violins immediately following the soloist's first entry plays a significant role throughout the movement. The piano's role in the movement is essentially a decorative one, adding as it does a virtuoso quality to the texture. The soloist is given a chance to introduce a perky theme of its own (at bar 65).

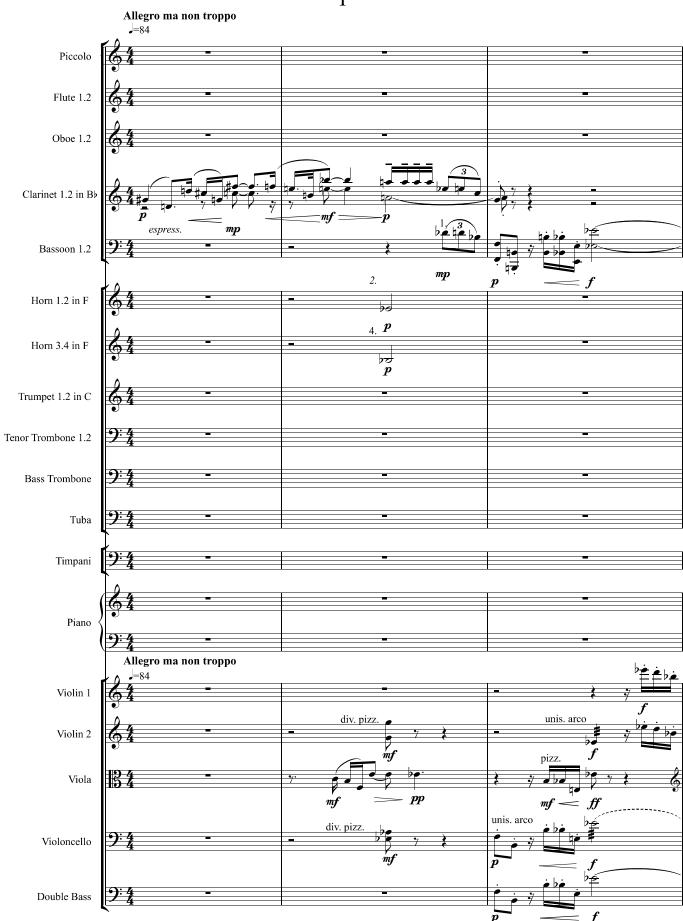
The long exposition gives way to the development which sees soloist and orchestra joining together in a triumphant statement of the opening subject, now on brass, now on woodwinds, now on strings. The development is rounded off with a highly dissonant slow cadenza for piano -violins and violas playing the 12-tone row in counterpoint. The foreshortened recapitulation, a mere 27 bars in length, sees the oboe re-introducing the main theme, before piano and timpani round the movement off.

Movement 2 (5'31") is a slow hommage à Schönberg, which makes use of some of the chords of the last of that composer's Sechs Kleine Klavierstűcke. After its statement of Schönberg's chords the piano introduces a theme of its own, which the orchestra eventually takes up. Towards the latter part of the movement there is a short scherzando section followed by a cadenza for solo piano. The movement ends with Schönberg's chords played pianissimo on high divided strings, the soloist picking out each of the individual notes that make up these chords.

Movement 3 (7'59"), generally in lighter vein, is a *rondo allegro* with a touch of burlesque. The movement, which is prefaced by an introduction, sees the piano introducing the movement's airy main theme at bar 40. A second theme, which uses longer, syncopated notes, is introduced by piano and winds in bar 75. A third theme, marked *lento appassionato* on piano and strings, is no stranger, being the concerto's opening idea, this time played in slow motion. Towards the middle of the movement there is a dramatic episode which reconsiders in detail this 12-note figure. This is followed by a cadenza for the soloist.

The latter part of the rondo sees the movement's main theme transformed into a sad little waltz, followed by a recall of some of the first movement's grander moments, matters being rounded off by a statement of the finale's quirky main theme.

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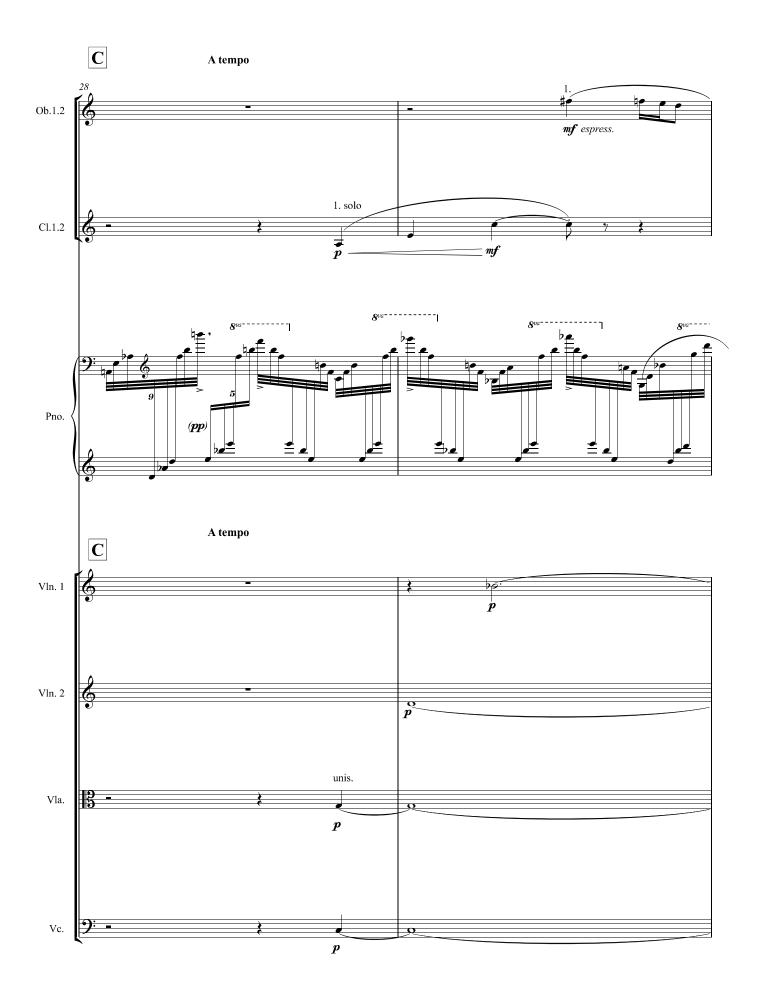






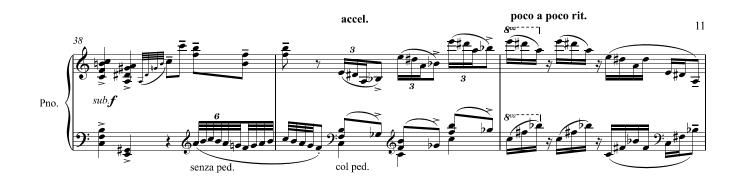


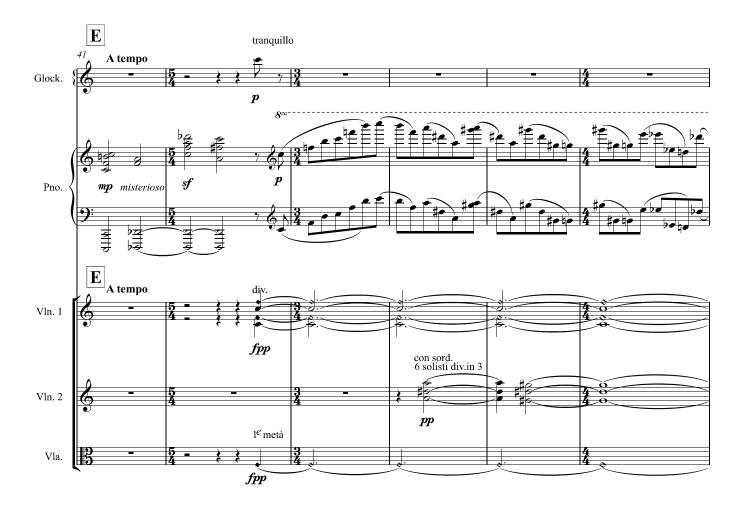






















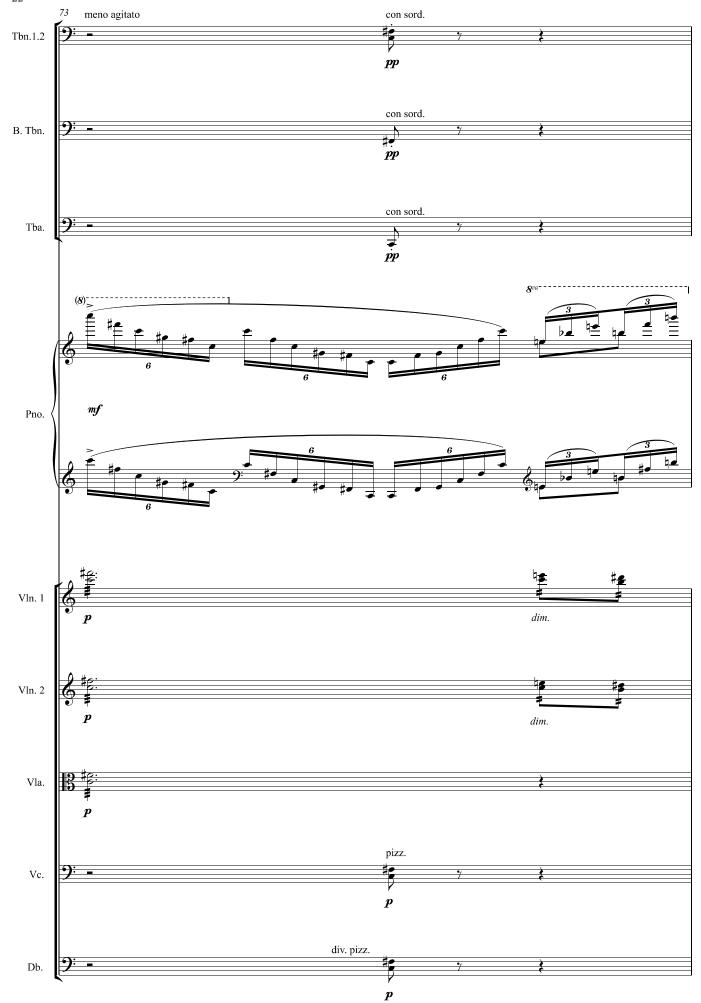




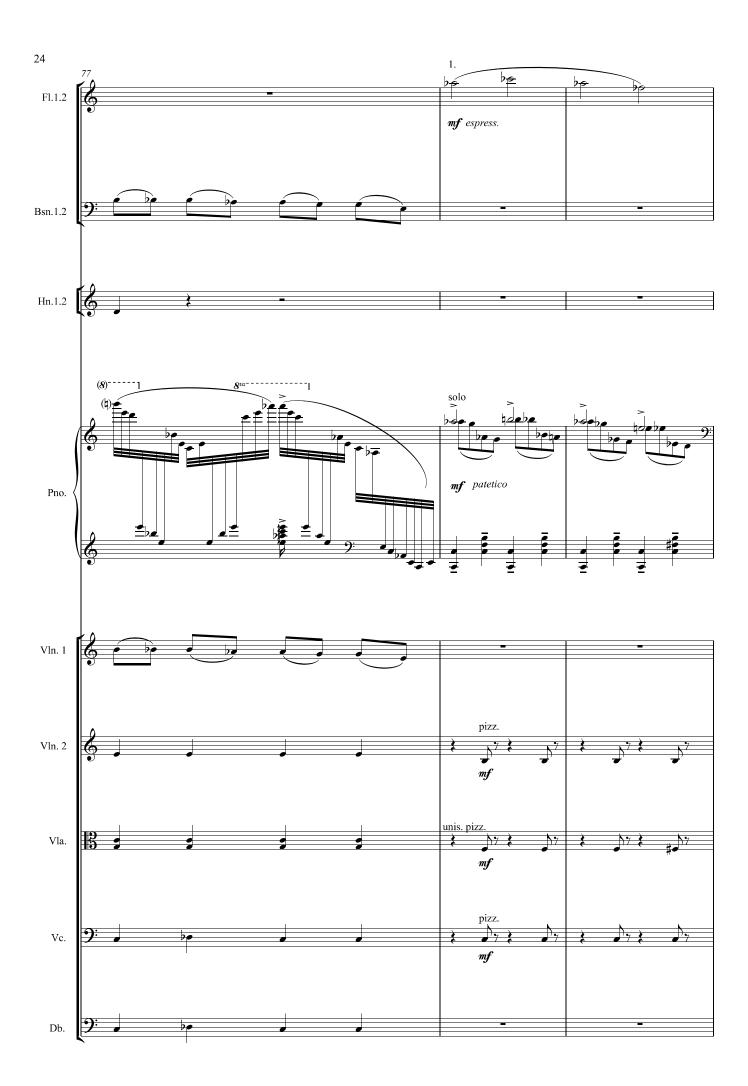






























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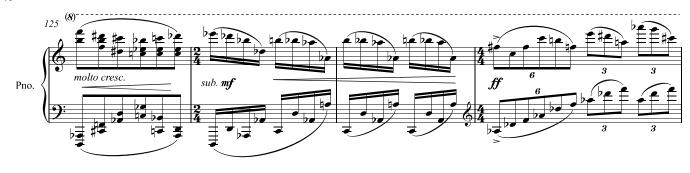


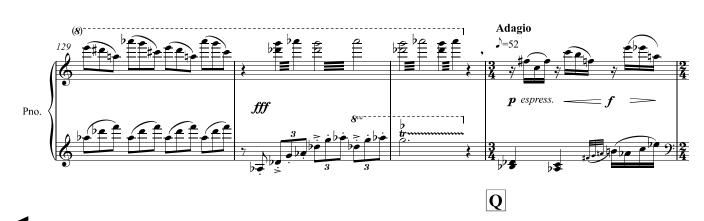


























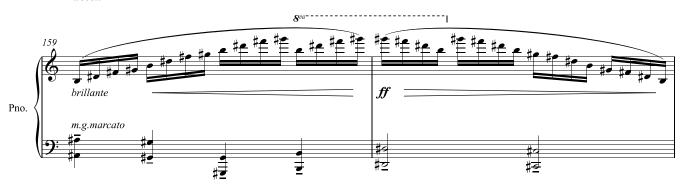


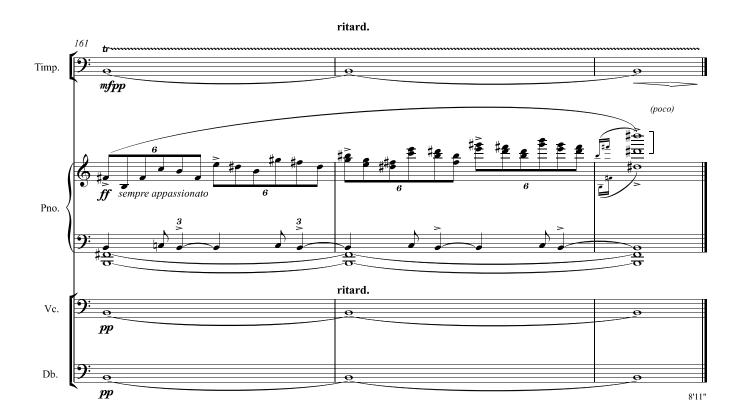






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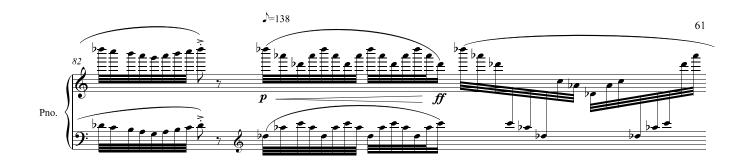


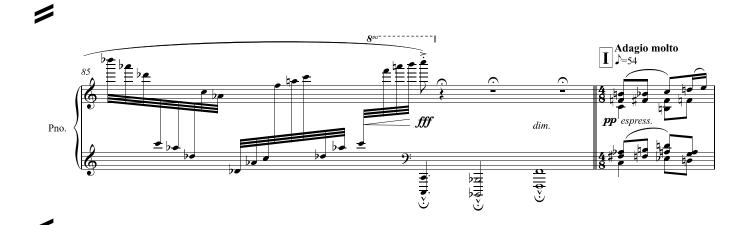


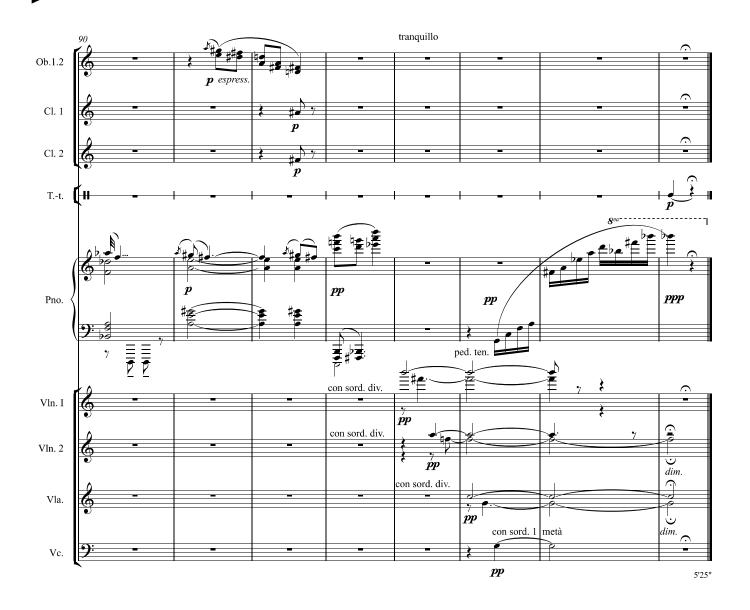




































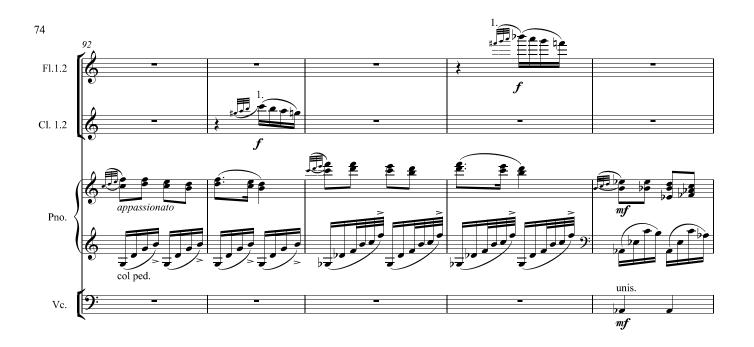






















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pp

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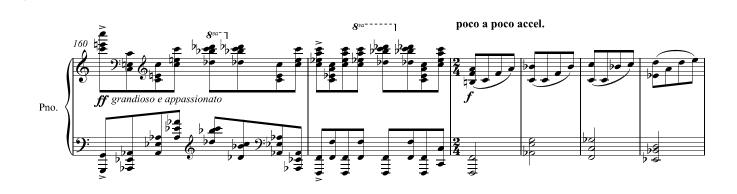


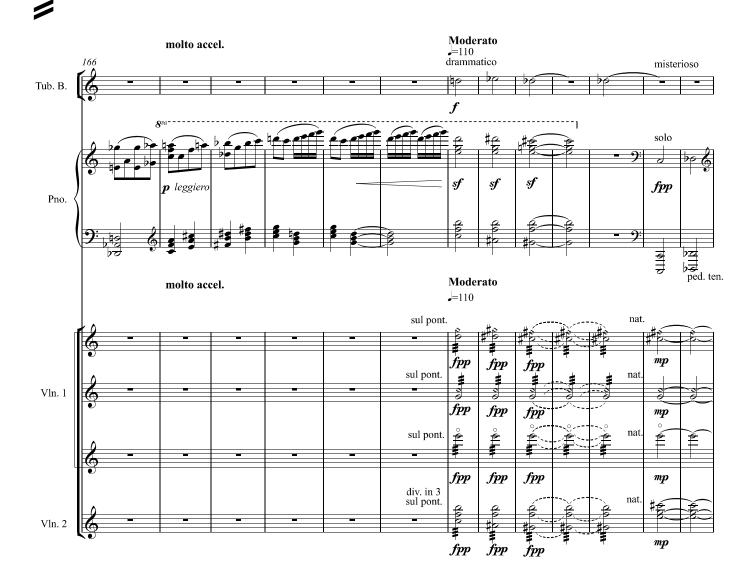












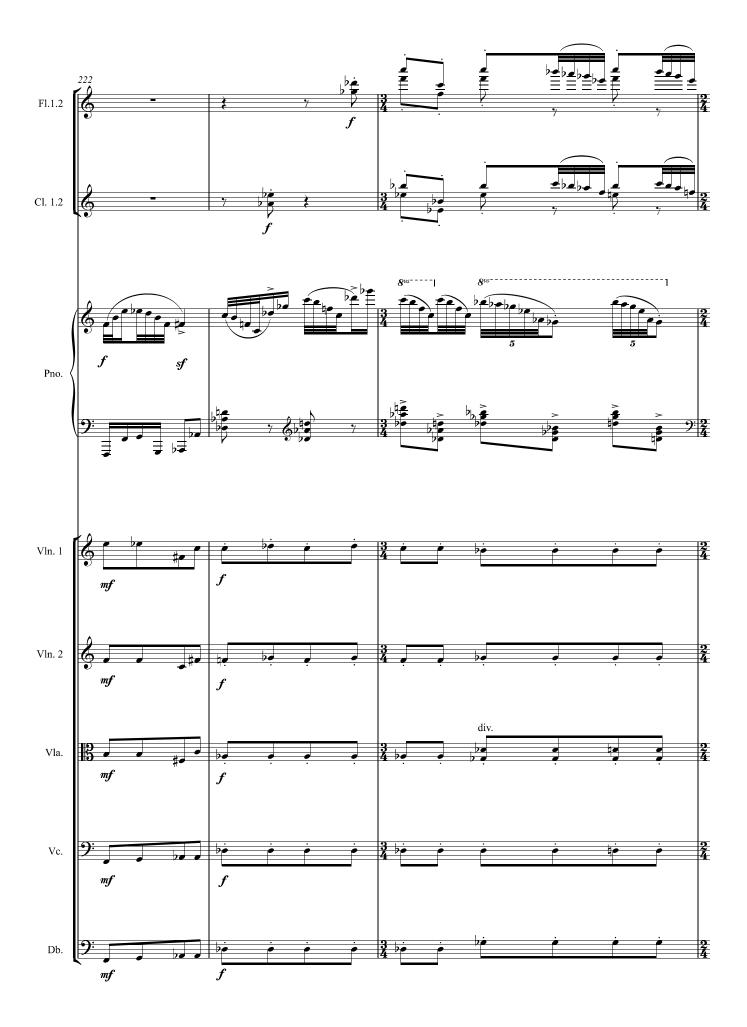








































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Vc.

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