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Composing for Voices
for 8 solo voices

Composing for Voices

Matthew Geer, 2019

First workshopped by EXAUDI in November 2019 at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London

Running time: c. 5 minutes

For eight solo voices:

Soprano 1
Soprano 2
Mezzo-Soprano
Countertenor
Tenor 1
Tenor 2
Bass 1
Bass 2

Abstract:

Written while experiencing psychosis, this piece embodies the process of writing for voices while hearing voices. During my compositional practice, I often use meditation and mindfulness to help with my concentration during episodes of hallucinations and paranoia. I never finished the piece I was attempting to write during the episode, so this new work is based on fragments of the compositional results. The singers will both respond to auditory hallucinations I was hearing at the time and sing the music that was written down during the episode.

Audio file links:

Soprano I

<https://bit.ly/34OVz0y>



Soprano II

<https://bit.ly/34PONbf>



Mezzo-Soprano

<https://bit.ly/2NPpQWg>



Countertenor

<https://bit.ly/2Q3jk0l>



Tenor I

<https://bit.ly/2qCoC8b>



Tenor II

<https://bit.ly/33xR2j9>



Bass I

<https://bit.ly/2pNP5k6>



Bass II

<https://bit.ly/2Nwur09>



Performance instructions:

- Each singer uses a specially prepared audio file. Before the piece begins, each singer puts on a pair of headphones connected to a device which plays back the prepared audio file. A link and a QR code to the files is on the next page.
- The singers should start playing the audio file from any point within the duration of the track, but must not begin within 15 minutes of the end of the track. This is to ensure that the track doesn't run out before the end of the performance. The start position of the audio track is not fixed and can change from performance to performance. Even when singers are not singing, they should sit or stand while focusing on the sound in their headphones.
- The score consists of two elements. The first are the parts for the individual singers, and the second is the conductor's score. The singer does not have a copy of the conductor's score, and the conductor does not have to refer to the singer's parts during the performance.
- The singers only sing when indicated to do so by the conductor. Each singer has two periods in the piece where they sing. The conductor indicates the start and stop points for the singers, following the timings in the conductor's score.
- The audio track contains two elements which alternate; a cacophony of speech (auditory hallucinations) and a metronome. During the speech sections, if a singer is performing, they should allow their ear to latch onto any phrases or words they might notice. They should vocalise and imitate these in any way they see fit, either sung or spoken. They are also allowed to respond or answer back to what the voices are saying, like they are having a dialogue with the voices.
- Before the metronome, there is a countdown which is at the same tempo as the metronome. During the metronome sections, singers should, if performing, sing the melody on their notated part, with the metronome indicating crotchet beats and the numbers below the notes indicating the lyrics sung. The notes should be sung *detaché* and at a medium volume (equidistant between *mp* and *mf*). Tuning forks can be used during the count-in to the metronome sections.
- In a single section of metronome music, an individual singer might not get through the whole page; at the next section of metronome music he or she should pick up where they left off.

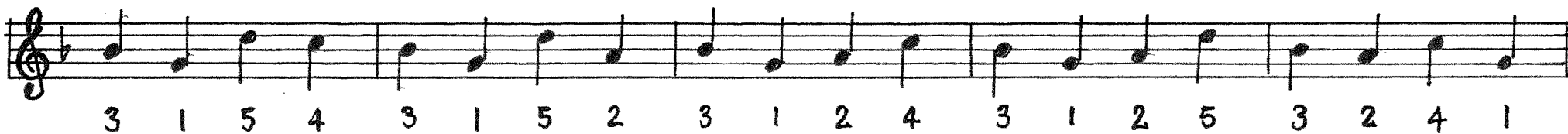
Soprano I

detaché



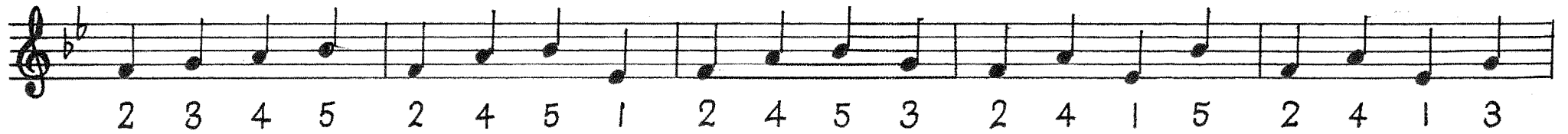
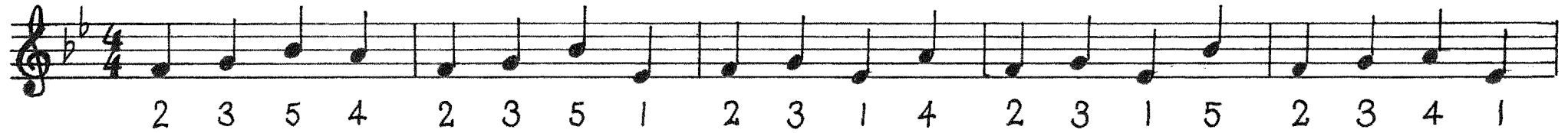
Soprano 2

detaché



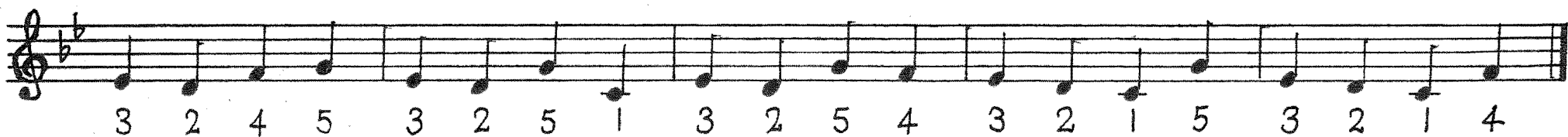
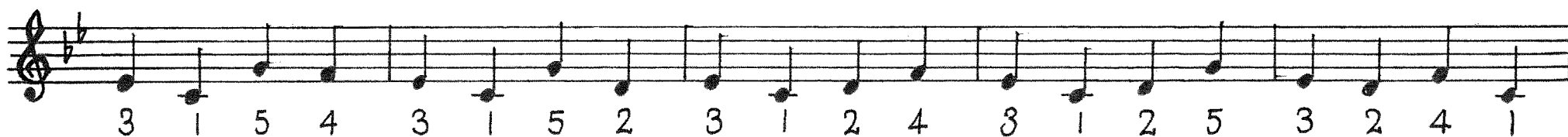
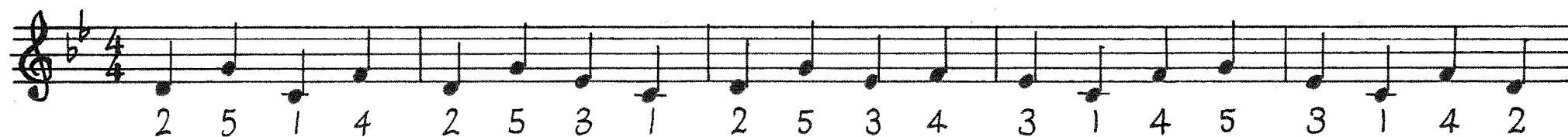
Mezzo soprano

detaché



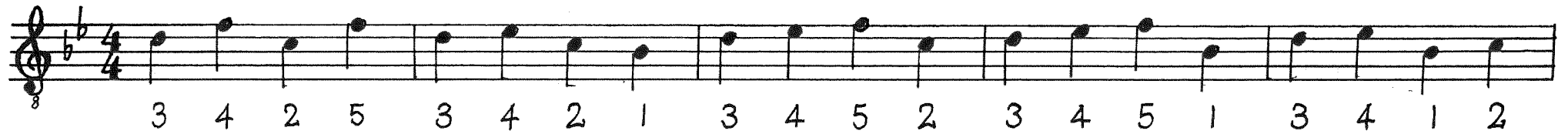
Counter-tenor

detaché



Tenor 1

detaché



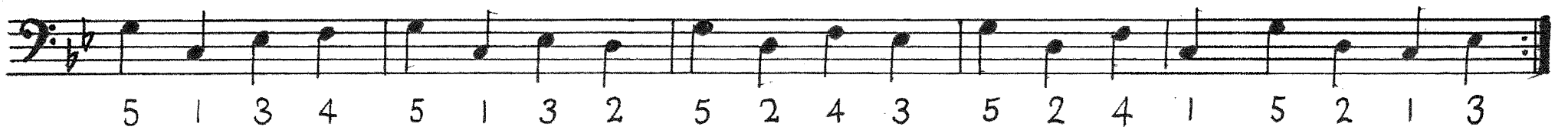
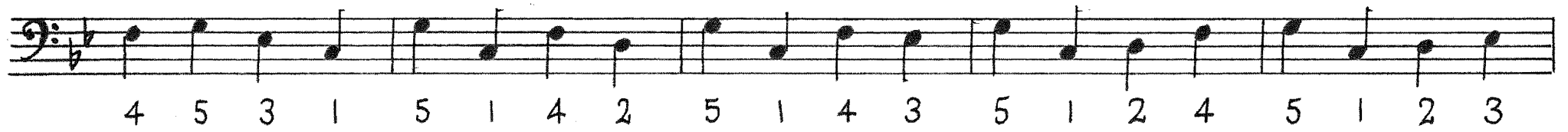
Tenor 2

detaché



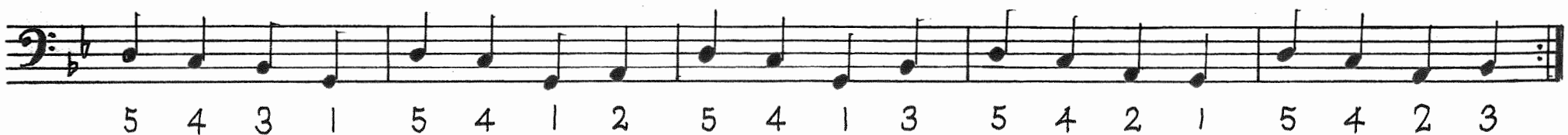
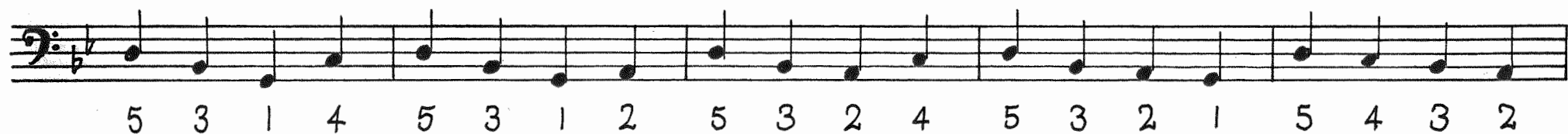
Bass I

detaché



Bass 2

detaché



Conductors Score

