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MTO 14.4 Examples: Burns, Lafrance, and Hawley, Musical Expressions of PJ Harvey and Björk

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)
http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.08.14.4/mto.08.14.4.burns_lafrance_hawley.php

Example 1. Lyrical materials and musical materials

Analytic concepts	Lyrical Materials and Strategies	Musical Materials and Strategies
Content	**Verbal Content**	**Sonic Content**
• elements • context • structure	• vocabulary, symbols • topics, themes • form, phrase	• pitch and rhythm • timbre and texture • phrase and form
Settings	**Lyrical Settings**	**Musical Settings**
• voice • story • address	• subject • story and narrative • delivery	• "voice" (vocal and instrumental timbres, arrangement) • form and gesture • mediation
Dynamic Expression	**Dynamic Lyrical Expression**	**Dynamic Musical Expression**
• subjectivity • attitude • position • intentionality	• agency: role, subjectivity • stance: status, perspective • contact: temporality, distance • utterance: action, engagement	• gesture: motion, direction • quality: effects, articulation • interactions: balance, space, texture • intensity: markedness, tension, focus

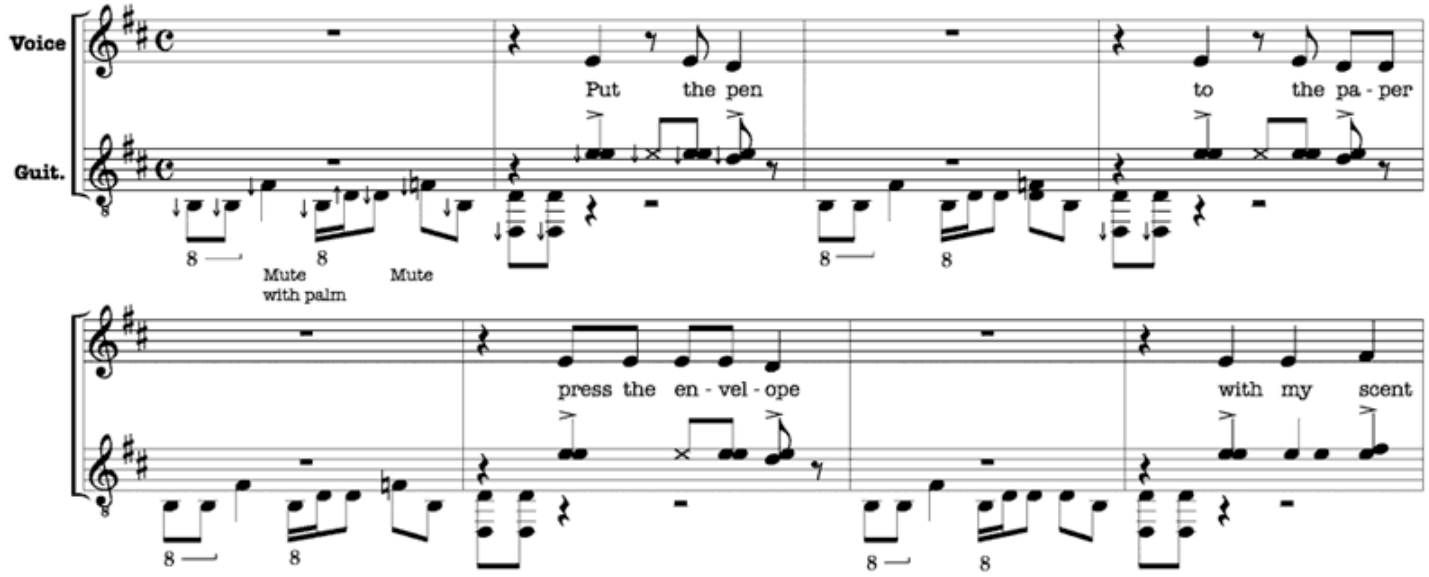
Example 2. "The Letter," musical and lyrical content

Formal Section/CD cue	Lyrics (and vocal production emphasis)	Sonic Content	Verbal and Vocal Content
	/ = broken phonation *italics* = tension (pharyngial stricture) ***bolditalics*** = tension with higher rate of air flow _ _ _ _ _ = raspy ..... = breathy **bold** = emphasis on stop consonant ~~~~~~~~~~ = head voice		
Verse 1 00:00-00:17 Tempo 112 4/4 8-bar phrase	Put the pen To / the *paper* Press the *envelope* With my *scent*	**Electric Guitar**: call and response formula with voice; rhythmic riff that places agogic emphasis on beat 2; enhanced bass frequencies, played through an over-driven amp to create a "warm," "crunchy" distortion; bass string tuned down from E to low B, to create a "rattle-y" sound	**Voice:** speech-like, responds to guitar with very basic melodic gestures in syllabic treatment, no melodic sustain; very centered, very focused, forward, dry, no reverb, straight delivery, flat (not bright, not enhanced) tone quality; in the diction the plosives are dense and thick because the low frequencies have not been equalized out **Emphasis**: Fairly raspy sound with phrase endings featuring pharyngial stricture, and with broken phonation between certain words (/)
Verse 2 00:18-00:33 8-bar phrase	Can't / you see In my handwriting The curve of my *g*? The ***longing***	**Electric Guitar**: continues as in Verse 1 **Bass Drum and Snare**: complements electric guitar riff, centered but in background; alternating pattern between bass and snare to create active kit sound **High Hat**: rhythmic counterpoint to bass drum	**Emphasis**: Raspiness on "my scent," "my hand. . ." Emphasis on "curve" through a stronger consonant attack, raspiness on the "of" that follows "curve" and raspiness on "The" in the last line leading to the increased stricture on "longing" which is sustained into the beginning of the Chorus
Bridge 1:42-1:59	I need you The *time* is *running* out *Oh baby* *Can't* you hear me call?	**Electric Guitar**: responds to voice with mocking effect—falling B–F sharp alternation in high register **Kit**: continues with **Tambourine** as in Chorus	**Voice**: higher register and greater tension, some use of head voice; rising chromatic melodic motion, directed to B

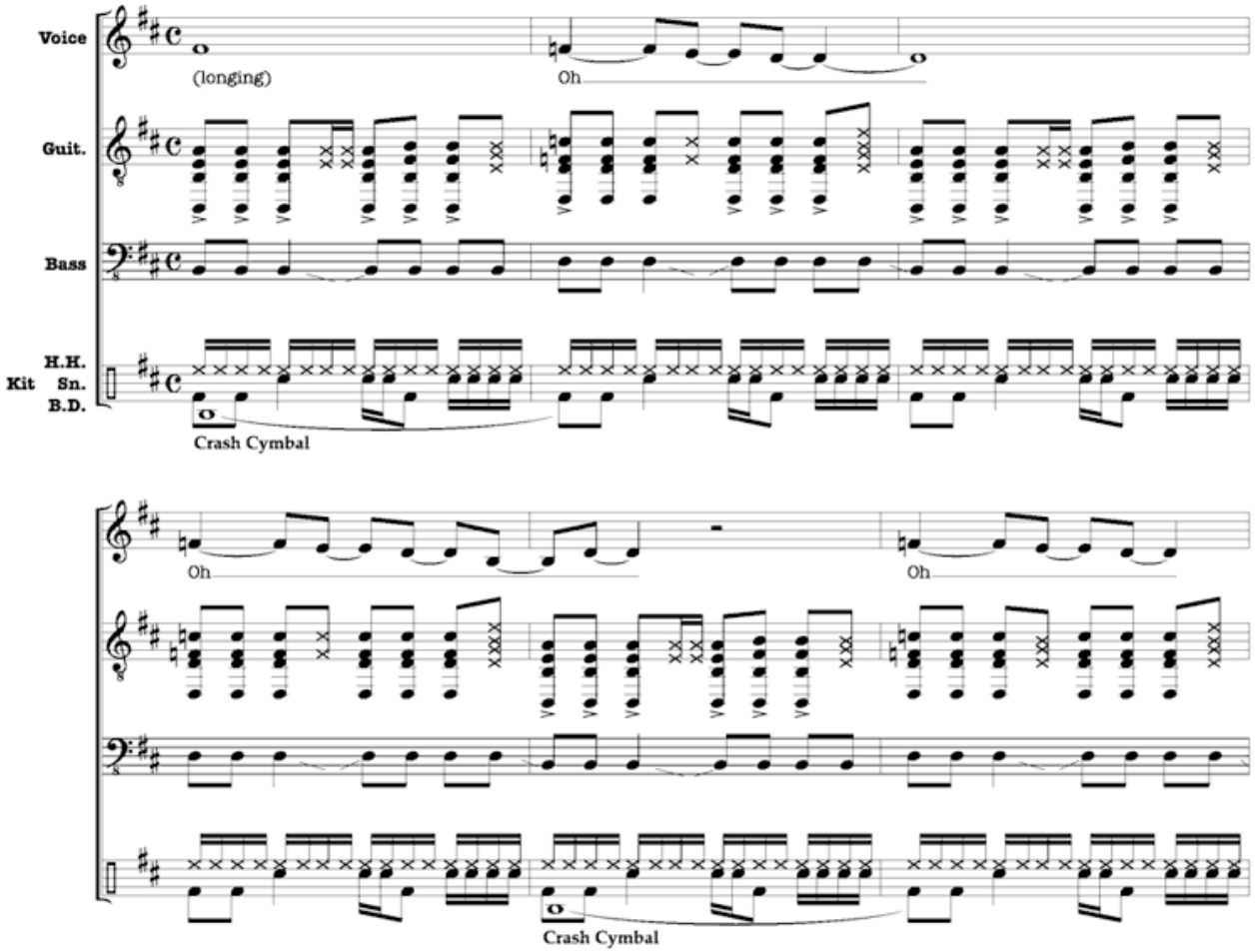
Chorus 00:34-00:50 two 4-bar phrases	Oh	**Guitar**: rhythmic chords **Bass Guitar**: enters in same rhythm as guitar, moves from low tonic B to minor third D. **Bass Drum and Snare and High Hat:** continue **Crash Cymbal:** attacks at opening of chorus, and at second phrase **Tambourine**: steady sixteenths; interacts with the High Hat and the Crash cymbal to create an interesting timbre	**Voice**: melismatic melodic expression that features sustain and legato; holds scale 5th (F sharp) from close of V 2 for full bar, then descends with syncopated pattern from flat 5th (F) through E to 3rd (D); the F-E-D pattern becomes motivic with the "Oh" phrasing; very long reverb creates large chamber for voice
Verse 3 00:51-1:07	Who / is left That writes these days? But you and me We'll be different	**Electric Guitar, Bass Guitar, Bass Drum, Snare and High Hat:** as in Verse 2	**Voice**: as in Verses 1-2; Back-up **bass vocal** interacts with bass guitar on low B and with voice on E – D gesture
Verse 4 1:08-1:24	Take / the cap Off your **pen** *Wet the envelope* *Lick* and *lick* ***it***	as in Verse 2	
Chorus 1:25-1:41	Oh	as in Chorus 1	

Link 2:00-2:06		**Electric Guitar**: material from Verse 1 with **Bass Drum, Snare, High Hat**: activity from Verse 2	
Verse 5 1:59-2:24	It turns me on To i*magine* Your *blue eyes* On my *words*	as in Verse 1	**Voice** as in Verses 1-2 Back-up **female vocal** in mid-register, alternating E – D in straight quarter-note motion while the Voice delivers each line
Verse 6 2:25-2:40	Your *beau*tiful **p**en *Take the cap off* Give *me a sign* And I'd come ***running***	as in Verse 2	Back-up **female vocal** continues Back-up **bass vocal** returns, as in Verse 3
Chorus and Outro 2:41-3:16	Oh *It's you* *I want you* *Oh it's you*	as in Chorus 1	**Voice** in a very high register and high degree of tension for the outro lyrics

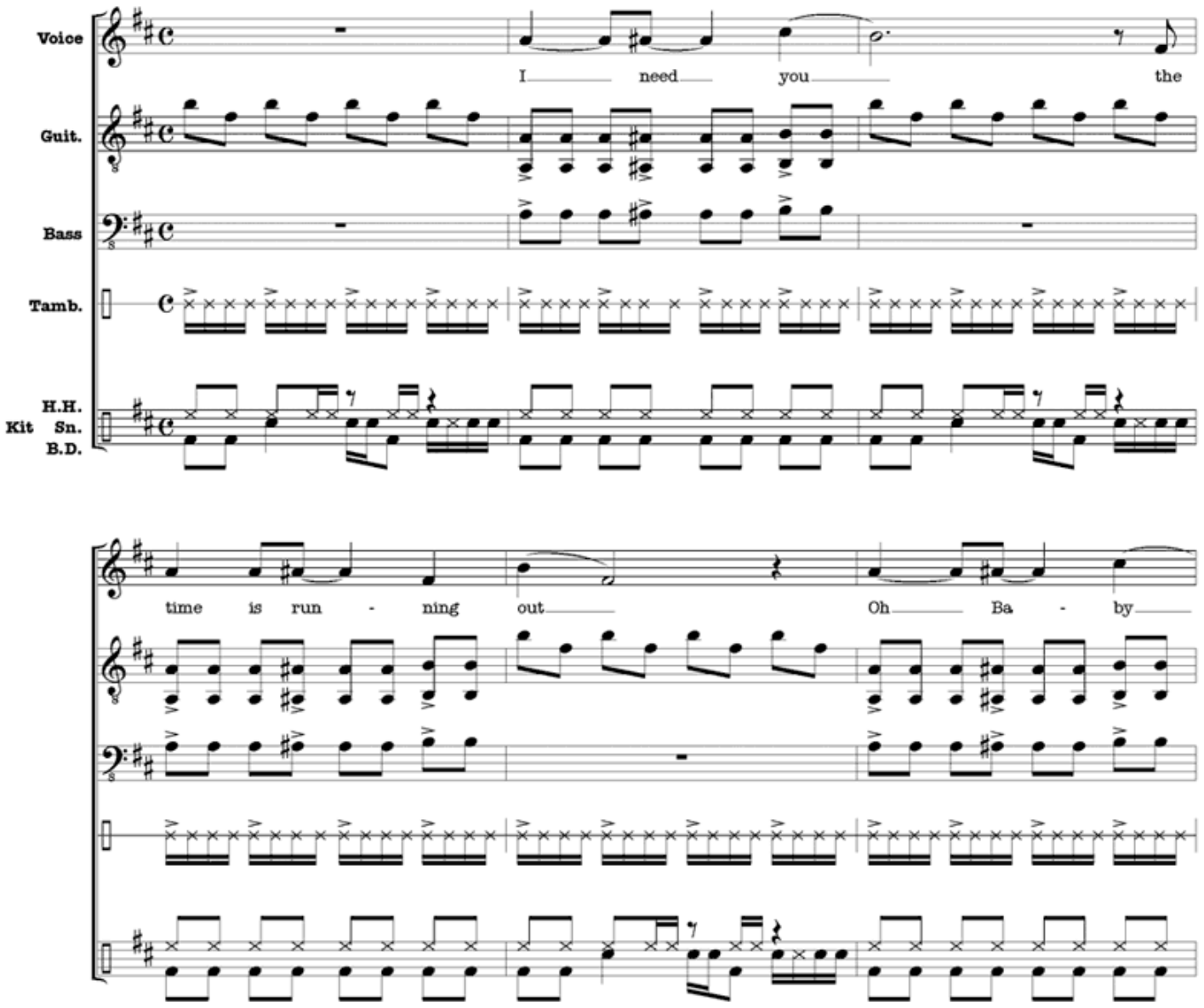
Example 3. Transcription of opening verse, "The Letter"

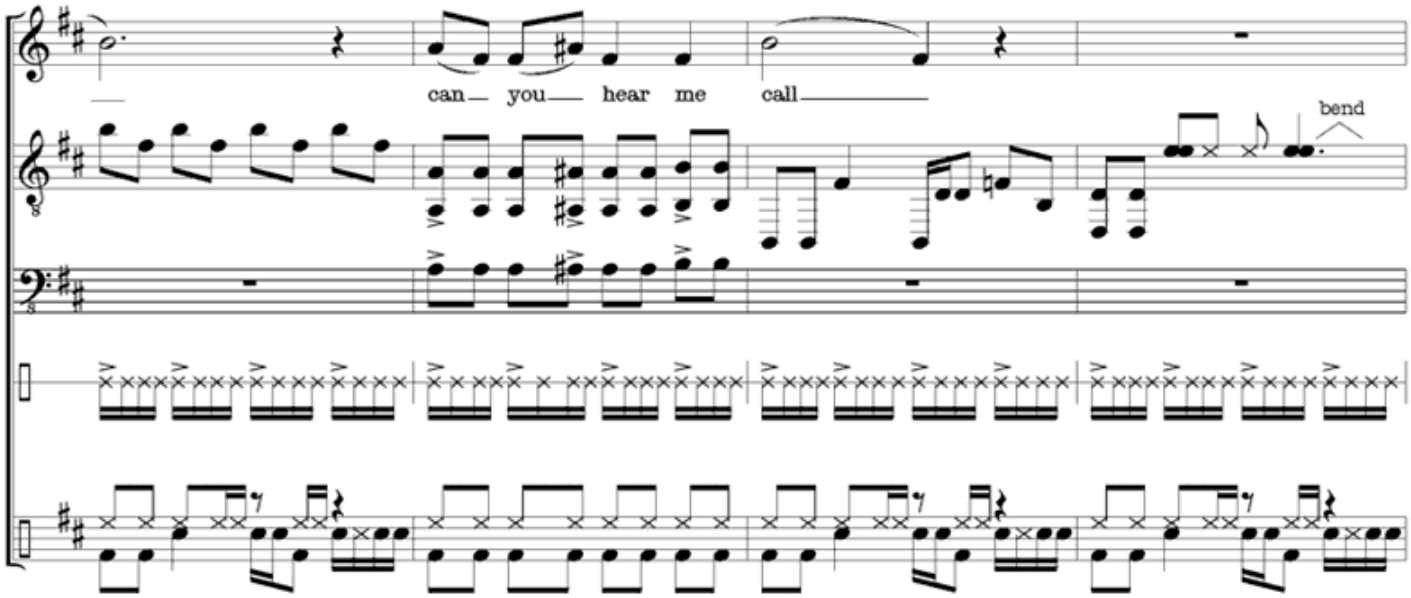


Example 4. Transcription of opening Chorus, "The Letter"



Example 5. Transcription of bridge, "The Letter"

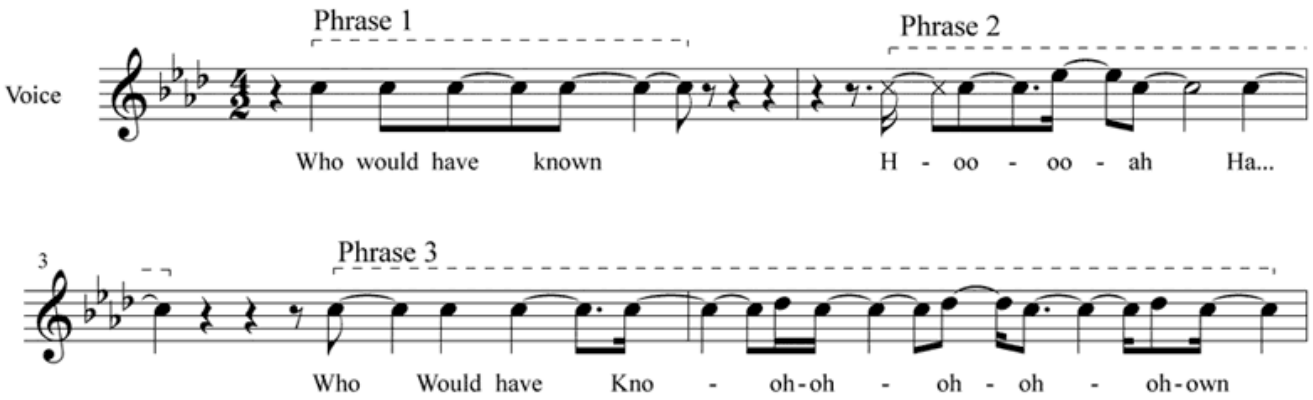



can you hear me call
bend

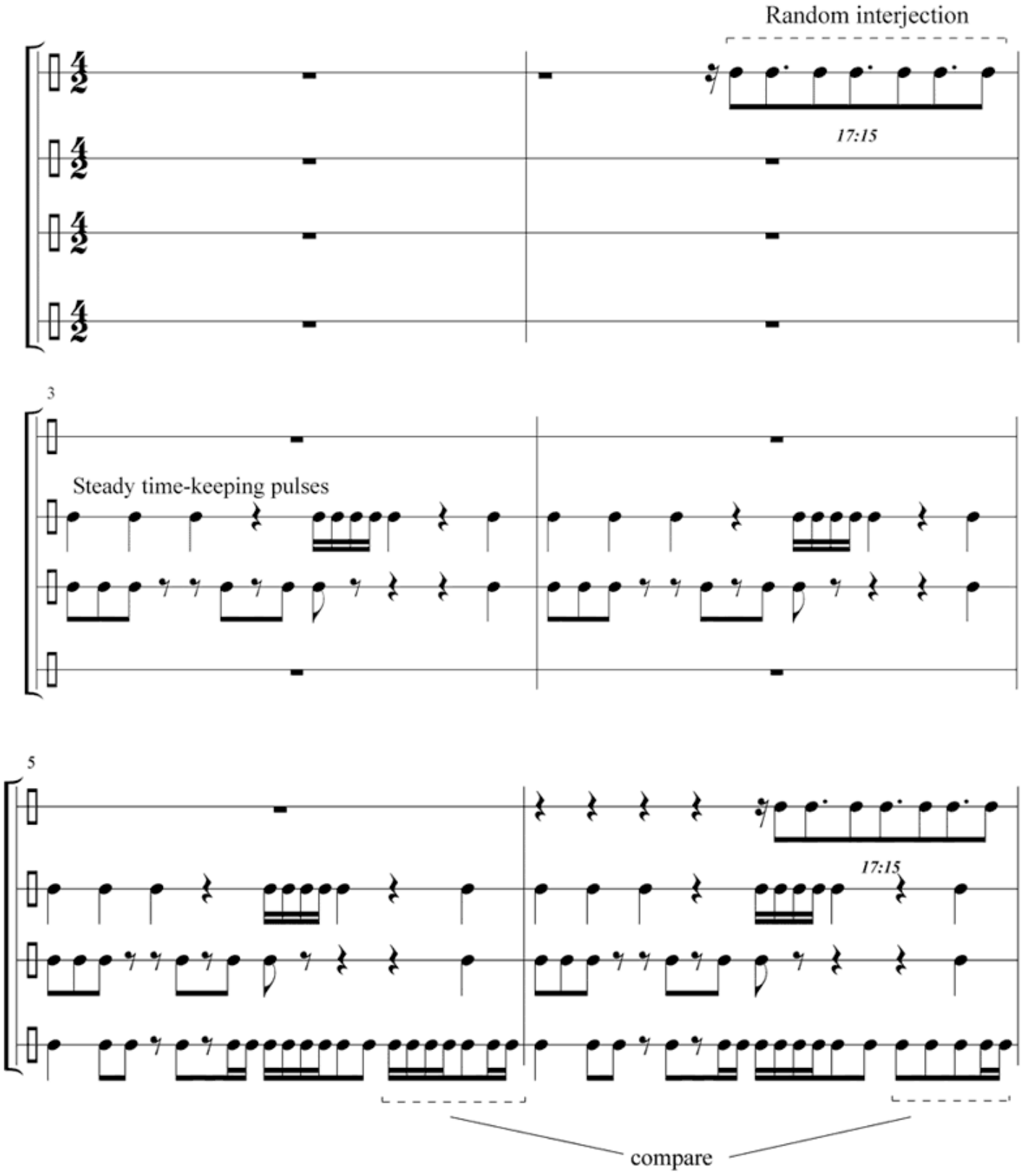
Example 6. Summary of analytic data for "The Letter"

Lyrical Materials and Strategies	Musical Materials and Strategies
Verbal Content	**Sonic Content**
• *Vocabulary*: concrete materials of writing (pen, paper) combined with sensual actions (press, lick) • *Topics, themes*: desire expressed across distance through form of a letter • *Form, phrase*: direct simple statements describing letter in Verse; non-verbal "Oh" in Chorus; statement of appeal in Bridge	• *Pitch*: guitar plays with B minor vs B diminished harmonic outline, voice has simple melodic gesture in a narrow range in Verse, an elaborated descending line in Chorus, and a rising higher-pitched line in Bridge • *Timbre and texture*: over-driven guitar sounds distorted in relation to un-enhanced voice in Verse; more enhancement (reverb) in Chorus and Bridge • *Rhythm, phrase, form*: playful guitar call and vocal response in Verse; melodic freedom of voice with supporting guitar in Chorus; mocking call with syncopated vocal response in Bridge
Lyrical Settings	**Musical Settings**
• *Subject*: female subject projecting desire for a distant male • *Story and narrative*: erotic act of writing a letter to affirm desire and call for response • *Delivery*: immediate and intimate	• *Voice*: singer's voice features tension, graininess; guitar is enhanced and over-driven • *Form and gesture*: call and response in verse, fuller rock texture in chorus, increased intensity of call and response in bridge • *Mediation*: embodied and dynamic interaction between singer's edgy, sensual voice and over-driven guitar

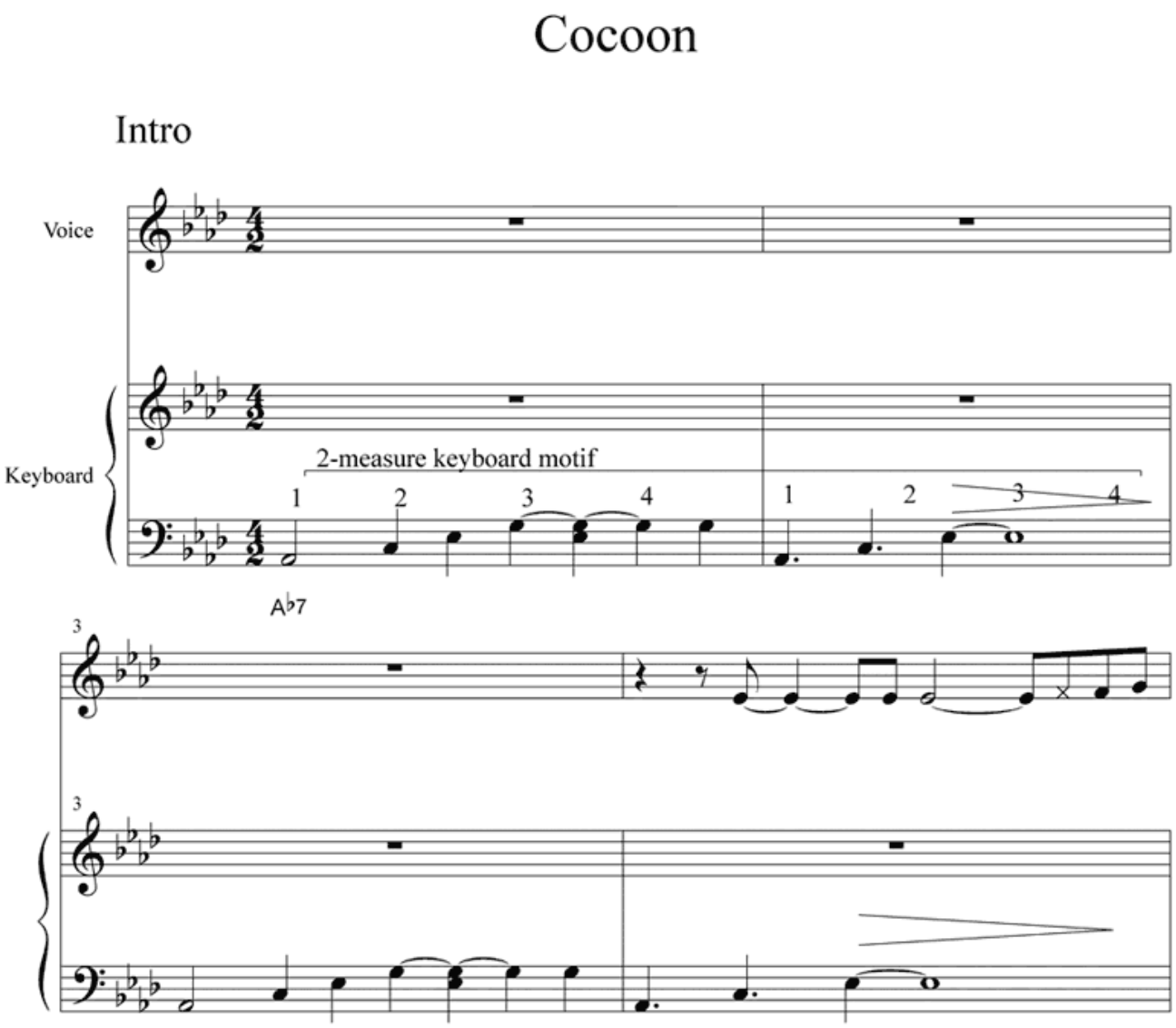
Example 7. Transcription of opening break, "Cocoon"

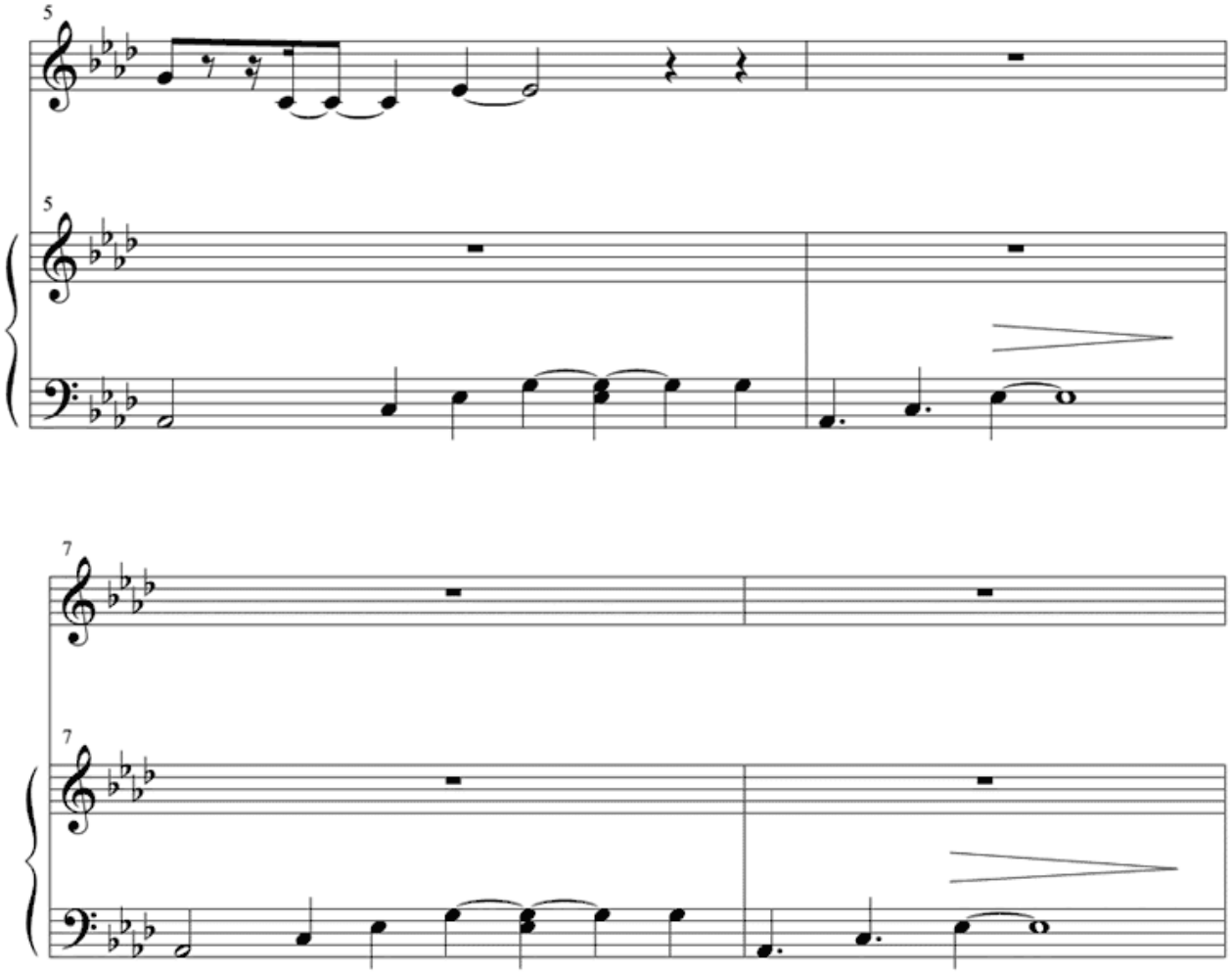


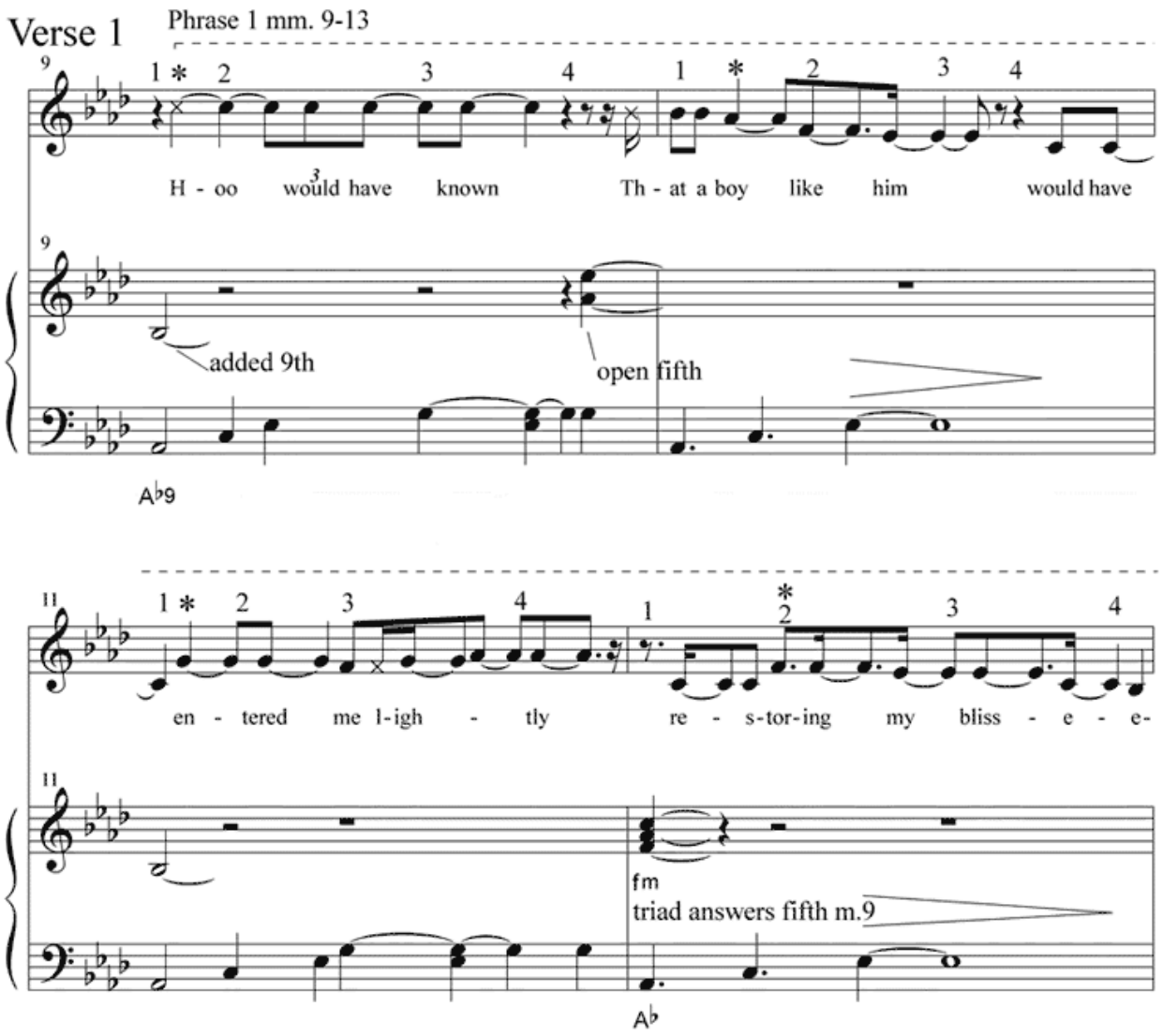
Example 8. Transcription of found sounds, "Cocoon"

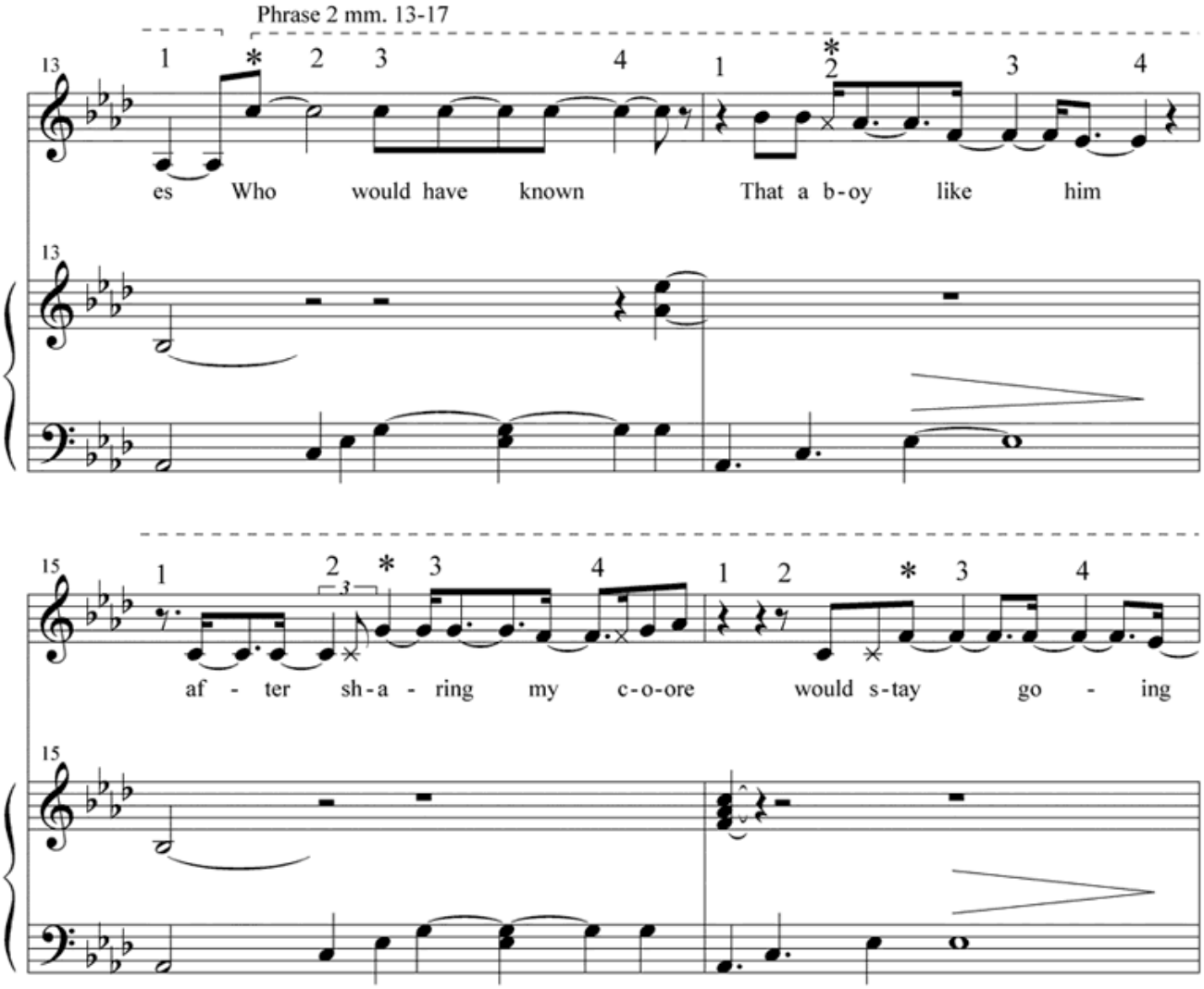


Example 9. Transcription of introduction, verse 1 (mm. 9–17) and verse 2 (mm. 21–29), "Cocoon"



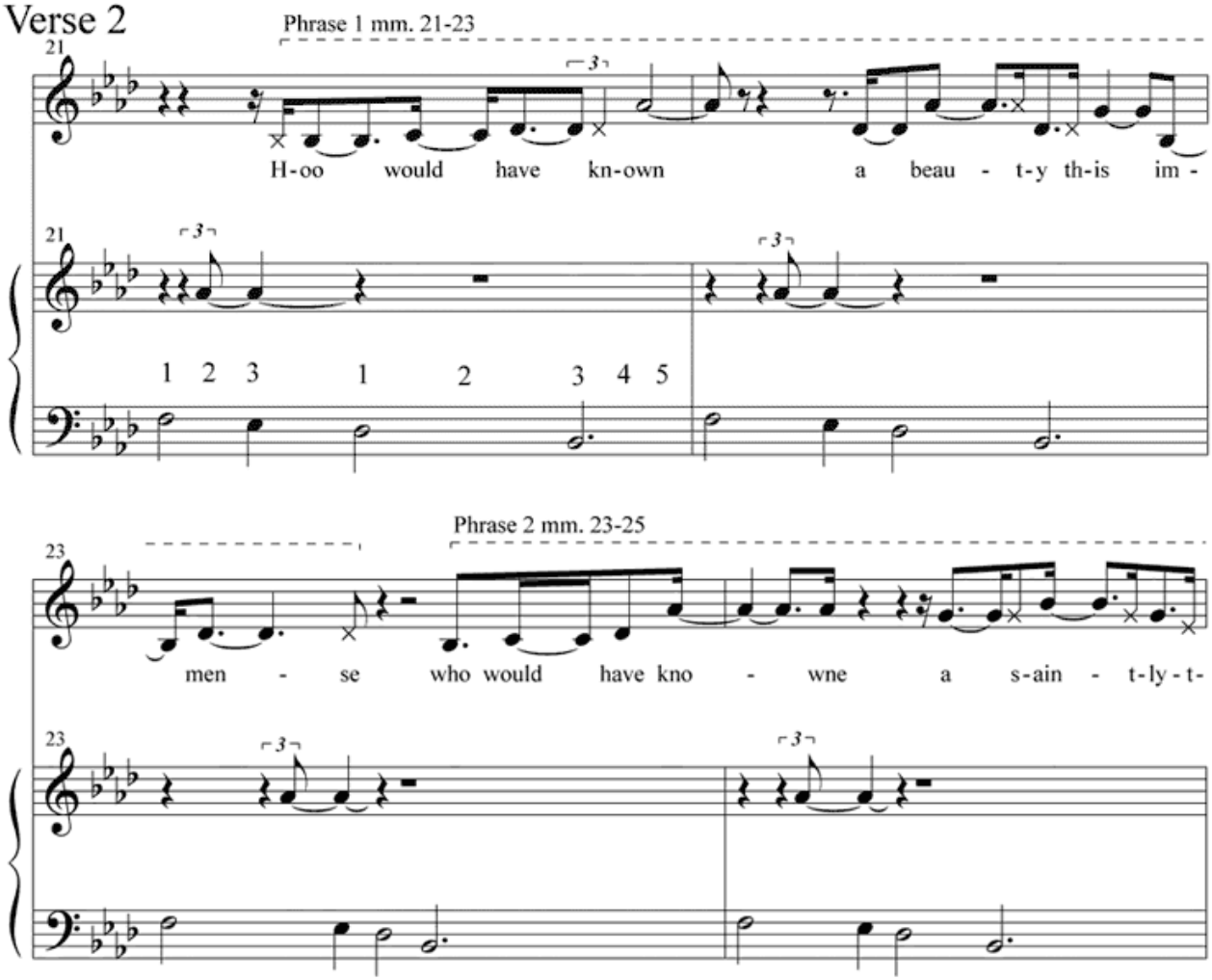


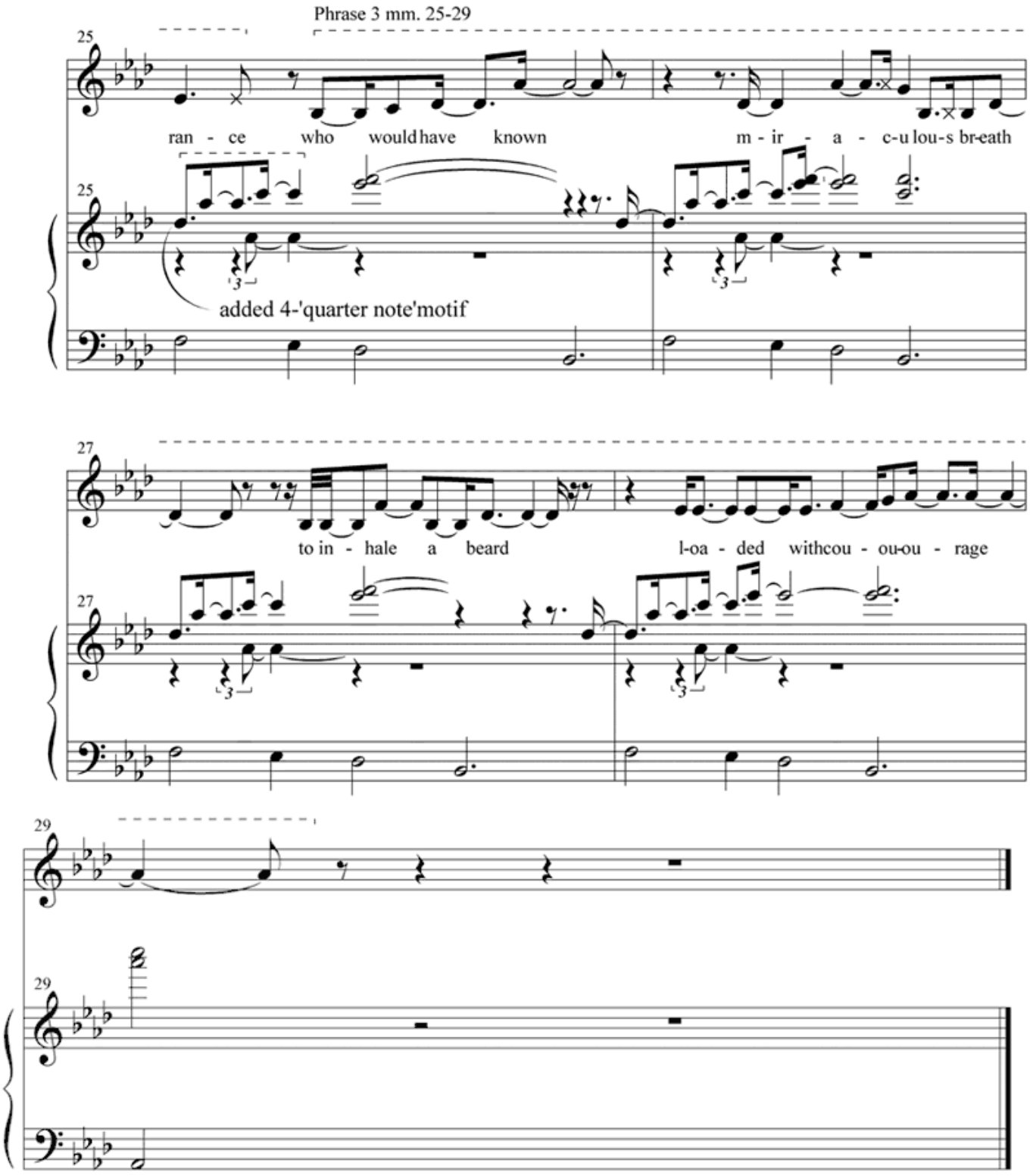
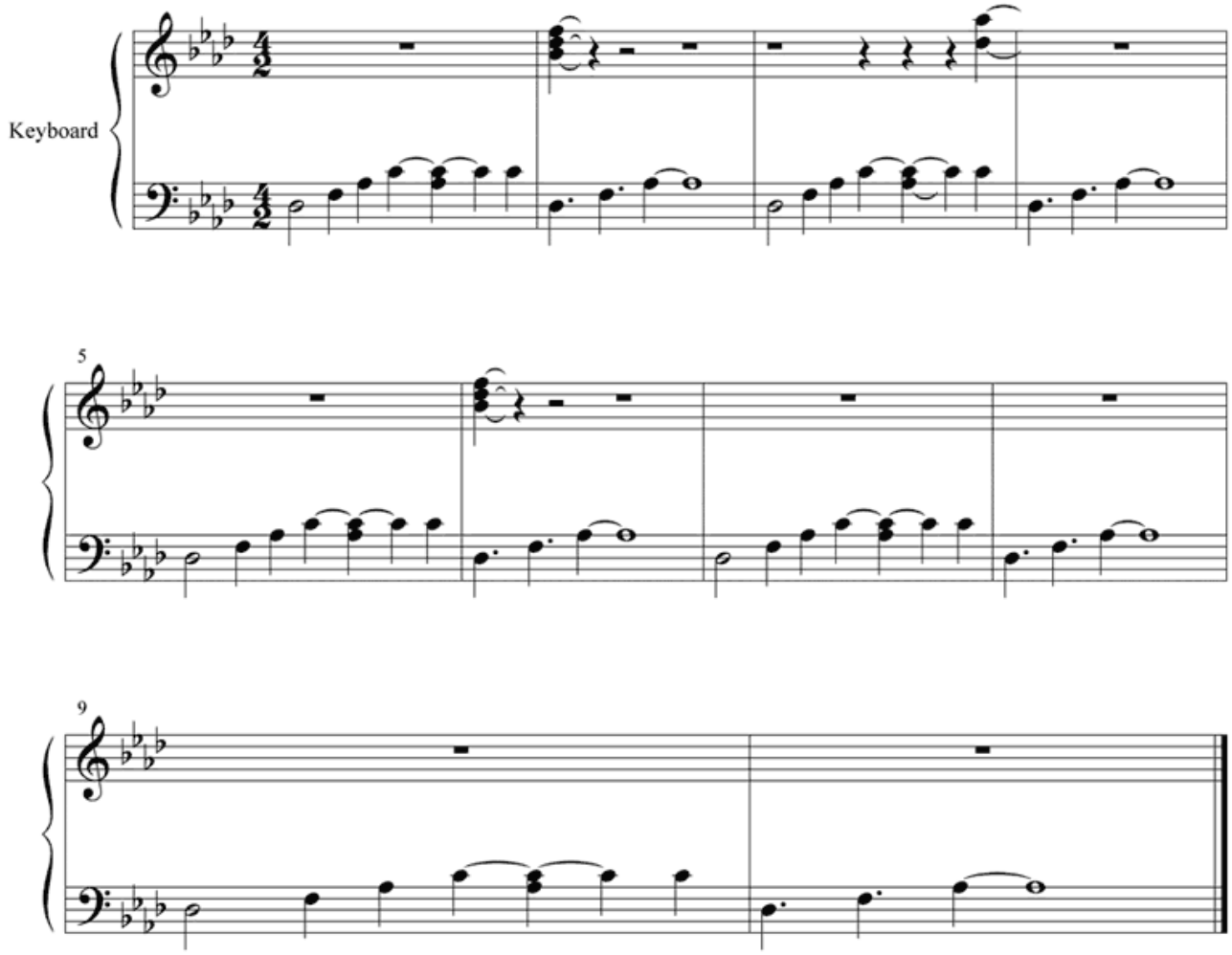

Verse 1
Phrase 1 mm. 9-13
H - oo would have known Th - at a boy like him would have
added 9th
open fifth
A♭9
en - tered me l-igh - tly re - s-tor-ing my bliss - e - e-
fm
triad answers fifth m.9
A♭


Phrase 2 mm. 13-17
13
1 * 2 3 4 1 * 2 3 4
es Who would have known That a b-oy like him
13
15
1 2 * 3 4 1 2 * 3 4
af - ter sh-a - ring my c-o-ore would s-tay go - ing
15

17
no - whe - - - - - e - ere
(whispering)
17
19
(whispering)
19

Verse 2


Phrase 1 mm. 21-23
21
H-oo would have kn-own a beau - t-y th-is im -
1 2 3 1 2 3 4 5
Phrase 2 mm. 23-25
23
men - se who would have kno - wne a s-ain - t-ly - t-


Phrase 3 mm. 25-29
25
ran - ce who would have known m - ir - a - c-u lou-s br-eath
added 4-'quarter note'motif
27
to in - hale a beard l-oa - ded withcou - ou-ou - rage
29

Example 10. Transcription of coda, "Cocoon"