

The Earliest Seduction

for improvisers and electronics

Chris Fisher-Lochhead

The Earliest Seduction [2023] for improvisers and electronics

written for the EOS Ensemble

Spoken language is a medium overflowing with sonic variety and nuance. The billions of people on the planet who speak every day of their lives are regularly engaging in a practice that, if it were framed as music, would defy all norms of technical virtuosity and explode the normative categories that enact a hygienic partitioning of sounds into “musical” and “non-musical.” Language’s capacities for sense-making rely on subtle variations of timbre in noise and tone, and on minute inflections of pitch. Yet, because speech is cognitively encountered merely as a vehicle for the meaning it conveys, we so often disregard both its sonic richness and the physical dynamics of its embodied articulation.

Written for my colleagues at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, *The Earliest Seduction* is an attempt to recuperate this richness. The piece’s generative material is derived from a detailed transcription of text from Paul Preciado’s *Testo Junkie* as spoken by Stephanie Loveless: “The earliest seduction is a thorn planted in the somatic field of the mind, around which the subject develops like a callosity.” Time-stretched by a factor of 60, this text becomes a terrain upon which the improvisers can play.

This piece was developed collaboratively with the members of the ensemble over a period of months, and I want to gratefully acknowledge their contributions and their support throughout the process.

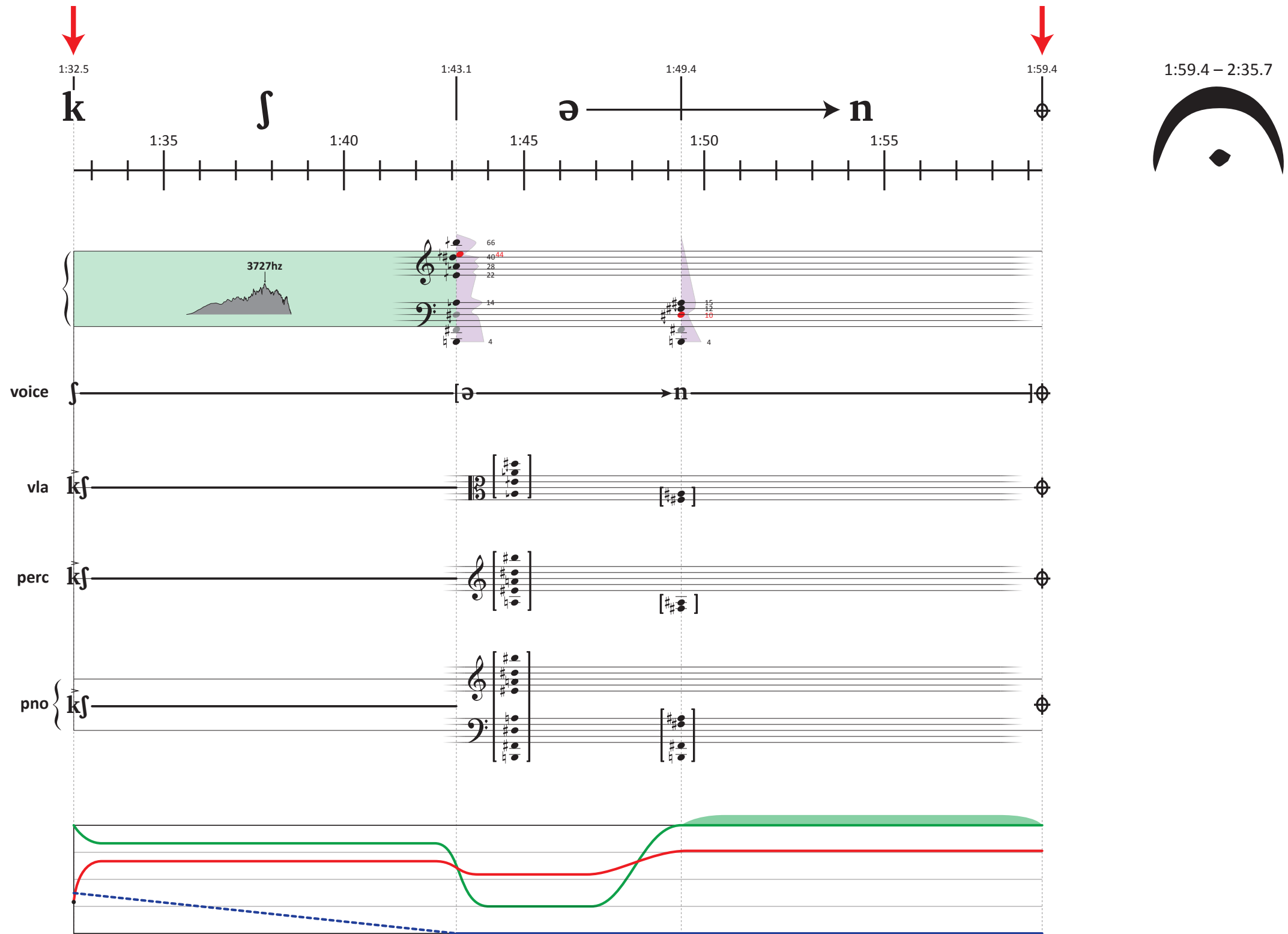
Matthew Goodheart, piano and gong tech
Stephanie Loveless, gong consonants
Robert Whalen, percussion
Rob Hamilton, electronics

The image displays a complex musical score for the piece "The Earliest Seduction". It features a vocal line at the top with lyrics in IPA transcription: "ði ʔaɪ-ɪ-ɪ s ts ə dɔ kʃ ə-n nɛ ə θ ʔə-n p læ-nt i r m θə s əm æ ri kʃ i-ɪ d ʔəv θə m ə-ɪ-n d ʔaɪ a-u-n dw i tʃ θə s ə-ɪ dʒe kt dav ε lə ps lə-ɪ k ʔə kə lu s i t i". Below the vocal line are several staves for piano and gong accompaniment, and a bottom staff showing electronic processing with various sound waveforms and patterns. The score is marked with time signatures such as 3/16, 7/4, 5/3, 5/4, 7/6, 3/2, 9/8, 7/8, and 3/16. It also includes dynamic markings like *f* and *s*, and articulation symbols like accents and slurs. The piece is divided into measures numbered 0 through 13.

The Earliest Seduction was premiered by the EOS Ensemble at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute’s Chapel & Cultural Center on October 18, 2023.

Duration: 13 minutes

The image displays a musical score for the word "stads" with a spectrogram and a timeline. The timeline at the top shows time markers from 0:47.8 to 1:32.5. The word "stads" is written above the timeline, with phonetic symbols: 's' at 0:50, 't' at 1:00.6, 's' at 1:05, 'ə' at 1:14.7, 'd' at 1:19.8, and 'ə' at 1:25. A red arrow points to the 't' at 1:00.6, and another red arrow points to the 'd' at 1:19.8. The spectrogram below the timeline shows frequency content, with peaks at 7617hz and 7289hz. The musical score includes staves for voice, vla (viola), perc (percussion), and pno (piano). The voice staff shows a sequence of notes: 's', 't', 's', 'ə', 'd', 'ə'. The piano staff shows chords for 'ts' and 'ts'. The percussion staff shows a sequence of notes: 'ts', 'd', '(t)'. The viola staff shows chords for 'ts' and 'ts'. The spectrogram shows a green shaded area for the 'st' part and a purple shaded area for the 'd' part. The bottom of the image shows a waveform with red, green, and blue lines.



3:22.9 – 4:22.7



4:22.7 4:27.0 4:29.7 4:35.9 4:40.8 4:44.0 4:55.8 5:00.1

4:25 4:30 4:35 4:40 4:45 4:50 4:55 5:00

voice [l æ n] [I]

vla p t r

perc p t r

pno p t r

50 40 27 18 15 52 39 26 20 49 38 29 22 18 53 58 42 32 26 23 16 11 12 9 4 8 4

The image displays a musical score for a vocal performance, annotated with phonetic and spectrographic data. The score is organized into four staves: voice, vla (viola), perc (percussion), and pno (piano). Above the voice staff, a timeline shows phonetic segments with their corresponding time markers: [I] (5:00.1-5:02.6), n (5:05), [ə] (5:08.1-5:09.4), s (5:11.9-5:15), [ə] (5:20.9-5:23.1), m (5:25-5:28.0), æ (5:30-5:35), [r] (5:37.8), and [I] (5:40-5:47.8). A red arrow points to the [r] segment at 5:37.8. The voice staff shows the phonetic transcription: [I] → n → [ə] | s → [ə] → m → æ → [I]. The vla, perc, and pno staves show the instrumental accompaniment, with the perc staff including a circled 'θ' symbol. A spectrogram is overlaid on the score, with a green box highlighting a peak at 7055hz. The bottom of the image features a waveform visualization with multiple colored lines (green, red, blue) and a dashed blue line, set against a background with orange and black shapes.

This figure displays a musical score and spectrogram analysis for the word "kifilid". The score includes staves for voice, viola (vla), percussion (perc), and piano (pno). The spectrogram at the top shows frequency components over time, with a green shaded area highlighting the initial burst of energy. Two red arrows point to specific time markers: 5:47.8 and 6:24.0. The word "kifilid" is written above the score, with phonetic symbols k , f , i , l , and d corresponding to the syllables. The spectrogram shows peaks at 1875hz and 15164hz. The score shows the voice part starting with a forte (f) dynamic and the instrumental parts starting with a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. The word "kifilid" is written above the score, with phonetic symbols k , f , i , l , and d corresponding to the syllables. The spectrogram shows peaks at 1875hz and 15164hz. The score shows the voice part starting with a forte (f) dynamic and the instrumental parts starting with a fortissimo (ff) dynamic.

Time markers: 5:47.8, 5:50, 5:55, 6:00, 6:05, 6:08.7, 6:10, 6:15, 6:20, 6:24.0, 6:25, 6:30, 6:32.0

Phonetic symbols: k , f , i , l , d

Frequency components: 1875hz, 15164hz

Instrumental parts: voice, vla, perc, pno

Dynamics: f , ff

Timeline with phonetic labels and time markers:

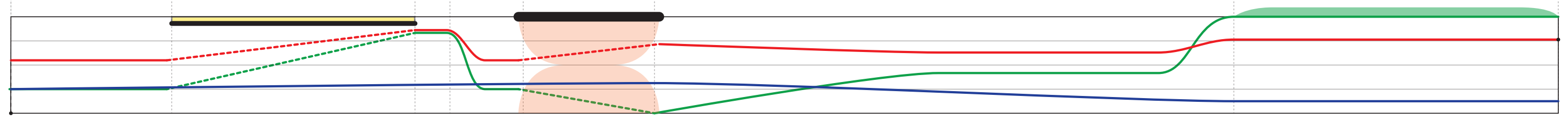
- 6:32.0: ?
- 6:35: ə
- 6:40: v̥
- 6:44.6: ð
- 6:45.6: ə
- 6:47.9: m
- 6:52.0: a
- 6:55: a
- 7:00: a
- 7:05: I
- 7:10: n
- 7:15: n
- 7:20: d
- 7:20.1: d

Piano accompaniment with frequency analysis:

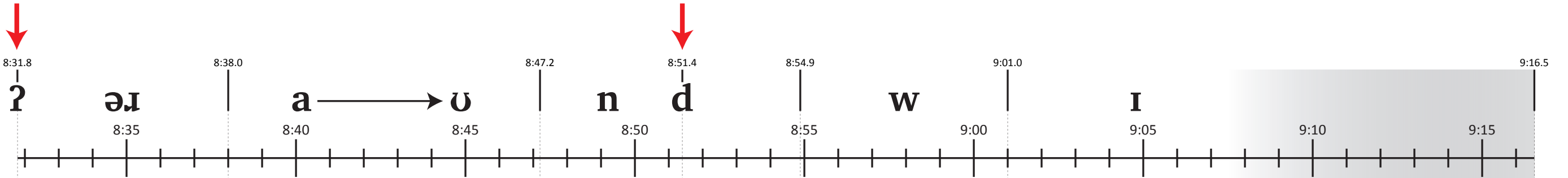
- 6:32.0: Harmonic structure with frequencies 58, 44, 34, 27, 21, 15, 11, 4.
- 6:37.0 - 6:44.6: Spectrogram showing 2063hz and 15023hz peaks.
- 6:44.6: Harmonic structure with frequencies 56, 46, 32, 26, 18, 12, 9, 4.
- 6:47.9: Harmonic structure with frequencies 56, 45, 35, 26, 15, 4.
- 6:52.0: Harmonic structure with frequencies 56, 46, 36, 19, 23, 6, 4.
- 7:00: Harmonic structure with frequencies 56, 47, 37, 28, 22, 18, 11, 6, 4.
- 7:05: Harmonic structure with frequencies 58, 45, 30, 24, 18, 10, 6, 4.
- 7:10: Harmonic structure with frequencies 56, 31, 22, 12, 4.

Multi-staff musical score:

- voice:** [ə] | v̥ (f) | [ə] → m | a | I | n
- vla:** ? | v̥ (f) | [chords]
- perc:** ? | v̥ (f) | (θ) | [chords]
- pno:** ? | v̥ (f) | [chords]



7:20.1 – 8:31.8



Piano (pno) score showing chord voicings and fingerings for the vocal segments.

voice

Vocal line with phonetic symbols: [əɪ] → a → u → n → [w] → i

vla

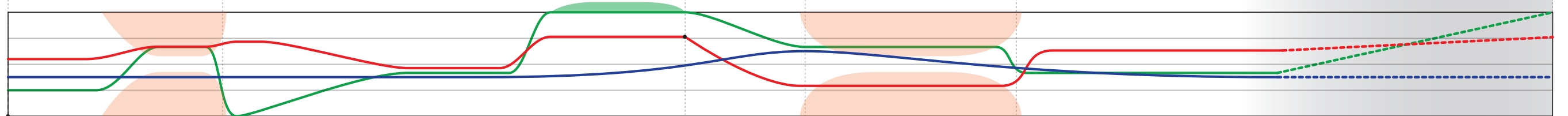
Violin (vln) score showing chord voicings.

perc

Percussion (perc) score showing rhythmic patterns and a (t) symbol.

pno

Piano (pno) score showing chord voicings for the lower register.



9:16.5 **t** 9:20 9:25 **s** 9:30 9:34.5 9:35 9:40 9:43.4 **ðə** 9:45 9:46.8 **s** 9:50 9:55.1 **ə** 9:59.6 **⊕** 10:00 10:04.4

voice **f** [ə] s [ə] ⊕

vla **tf** s ⊕

perc **tf** **ð** s ⊕
(θ)

pno **tf** s ⊕

3680hz

7383hz

50
40
26
18
15

10
4

10:04.4
b

10:07.9
d

10:10.9
ʒ

10:15
ε

10:20

10:23.9
(k)

10:25

10:28.2
t

10:30

10:35

10:40

10:42.6

voice [ε

vla b (p)

perc b (p) d (t)

pno b (p)

80
64
49
37
27
14
4

The image displays a musical score for a performance, featuring four staves: voice, vla (viola), perc (percussion), and pno (piano). The score is annotated with phonetic symbols and time markers. A timeline at the top shows time points from 10:42.6 to 11:29.3. Phonetic symbols include **d**, **ə**, **v**, **ε**, **l**, **ə**, **p**, and **s**. The voice staff shows a sequence of vowels: [ə] → [ε] → [l] → [ə] → [s]. The perc and pno staves show percussive sounds labeled (t) and (f), and piano sounds labeled ps. A spectrogram at the bottom shows frequency content over time, with a peak at 7383hz. A red arrow points to the time 10:42.6. A grey shaded region covers the time from 11:05 to 11:29.3. A green shaded region covers the time from 11:10 to 11:27.2. A red arrow points to the time 11:27.2.

The image displays a musical score for a voice and piano ensemble, with a focus on phonetic analysis. The score is divided into four systems: voice, vla (viola), perc (percussion), and pno (piano). The time axis at the top ranges from 11:29.3 to 12:10.6, with major ticks every 5 seconds and minor ticks every 1 second. A red arrow points to a specific time point, 11:52.0, which is marked with a vertical dashed line and a 'k' phonetic label. Above the voice staff, phonetic annotations 'l', 'a', and 'I' are shown with arrows indicating their duration. The piano part consists of four chords, each with a bracketed list of notes and fingerings. The percussion part shows rhythmic patterns for each of the four chords. At the bottom, a waveform plot shows the amplitude of the sound over time, with a prominent peak at the 11:52.0 mark. The waveform is color-coded: green for the first two chords, red for the third, and blue for the fourth. The peak at 11:52.0 is marked with a 'k' phonetic label and a red arrow.

11:29.3 11:33.5 11:30 11:35 11:40 11:45 11:50 11:52.0 11:55 12:00 12:05 12:10

voice [l a I]

vla [] [] [] [] k

perc [] [] [] [] k

pno [] [] [] [] k

This musical score includes phonetic annotations and a spectrogram. The phonetic annotations at the top are: **ʔ** (12:10.6), **ə** (12:15), **k** (12:16.8), **ə** (12:20), **l** (12:22.4), **ɪ** (12:25), **ɑ** (12:26.3), **s** (12:30), **s** (12:34.5), and **ɪ** (12:41.7). The spectrogram shows a peak at 7266hz. The score is divided into sections for voice, vla, perc, and pno.

voice

vla

perc

pno

12:10.6 12:15 12:16.8 12:20 12:22.4 12:25 12:26.3 12:30 12:34.5 12:41.7 12:45.2

54 53 32 29 17 20 55 54 34 29 15 56 46 35 25 17 56 44 33 22 17 52 27 19 15 11 4

7266hz

The image displays a musical score for a performance, featuring a timeline at the top and four staves below. The timeline spans from 12:45.2 to 13:10, with major ticks every 5 seconds (12:50, 12:55, 13:00, 13:05) and minor ticks every 1 second. A red arrow points to the start of the score at 12:45.2. The score includes:

- voice:** A single note 'i' starting at 12:45.2 and ending at 13:05.
- vla:** A treble clef staff with a 't' at the start and a chord of G4, A4, B4, C5.
- perc:** A treble clef staff with a 't' at the start and a chord of G4, A4, B4, C5.
- pno:** A grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a 't' at the start and a chord of G4, A4, B4, C5.

At the bottom of the score, there is a graph with three lines: a solid red line, a dashed green line, and a dashed blue line. The red line starts at a high level and remains constant. The green line starts high and drops to a lower level. The blue line starts low and remains constant.

Arlington, Vermont—2023

