

Gravity
for orchestra or other
large instrumental ensemble

Michael Boyd
2022

Basic Information

This piece is for orchestra or other large instrumental ensemble comprised of 17 or more performers (any instruments that can produce pitched sounds, noises, and approximate glissandi are permissible). Its length can range from 30 seconds to 16 minutes, with duration typically falling between 2 and 12 minutes. Performance length is ensemble-determined and can be decided in advance or allowed to arise organically during performance.

Performance Score

The performance score is comprised of five pages. The first page, which features a large table, should be printed on paper. The following four pages, which feature circle and line networks, should be printed on transparent plastic sheets.

Each member of the ensemble uses any one (and only one) of the four transparent sheets at a time. The utilized transparency should be placed on top of the page that features the table in any orientation (it may be turned upside down, flipped, or both). The edges of the page with the table and the transparency should be vertically and horizontally aligned.

If printable transparencies are not available (or if one or more ensemble members use a tablet or other digital device for performance), the final sixteen pages of this document provide all possible overlays of the circle/line networks on the table. These pages may be printed on paper or viewed electronically.

Performance Process

The transparencies feature circles (6, 8, 12, and 16), each of which corresponds to a sonic gesture that may last for five to fifteen seconds. The particular transparency chosen by each performer thus determines how many gestures that individual will perform, and the ensemble's collective choice of transparencies sets a duration range for a given performance. Players may use different transparencies. While ensemble size ensures that some performers will need to simultaneously use the same page/transparency configurations, a modest attempt should be made to employ as many different configurations as possible at the same time.

Beginning with the checkered circle, the circles found on each transparency are connected by lines/arrows that, when superimposed over this page, create a path through the table. The nature of a sonic gesture (circle) is determined by its position in the table, which indicates its dynamic envelope and sound-type. Columns are associated with different dynamic envelopes that are depicted graphically. Angled lines indicate a gradual crescendo and/or decrescendo, while vertical lines indicate a sudden beginning and/or ending (dynamic range: ppp to mf or louder). Rows are associated with different sound-types: noise (bow grinding, excessive tremolo, flutter tongue, multiphonics, overblowing, pedal tones, etc.), pure tone (sine tone-approximating high-ish pitches), and glissandi in both directions. Each square in the table thus represents a unique combination of a dynamic envelope and sound, based on the intersecting column and row.

The path highlighted by the employed transparency thus presents each performer with a series of six to sixteen gestures to perform. While sound-type and dynamic envelope are specified, any other parameters such as pitch should be freely chosen during performance (as mentioned previously each gesture should last for five to fifteen seconds). The ensemble need not

coordinate in any specific manner (players may start at different times), and brief silences between gestures are permissible.



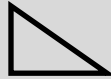
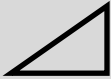
Ensemble members may each use up to four different page configurations to create longer performances. Multiple page configurations can be used one after the other in a relatively continuous manner. Alternately, the performance may be broken up in to two to four movements in which performers employ one page configuration per movement. When a performance is divided in this manner, at least one movement should feature the entire ensemble, and at least one movement should feature a subset of the ensemble. The piece ends when all ensemble members have performed all of the gestures highlighted by their chosen transparency or transparencies. Performers may end more or less together or at separate times.

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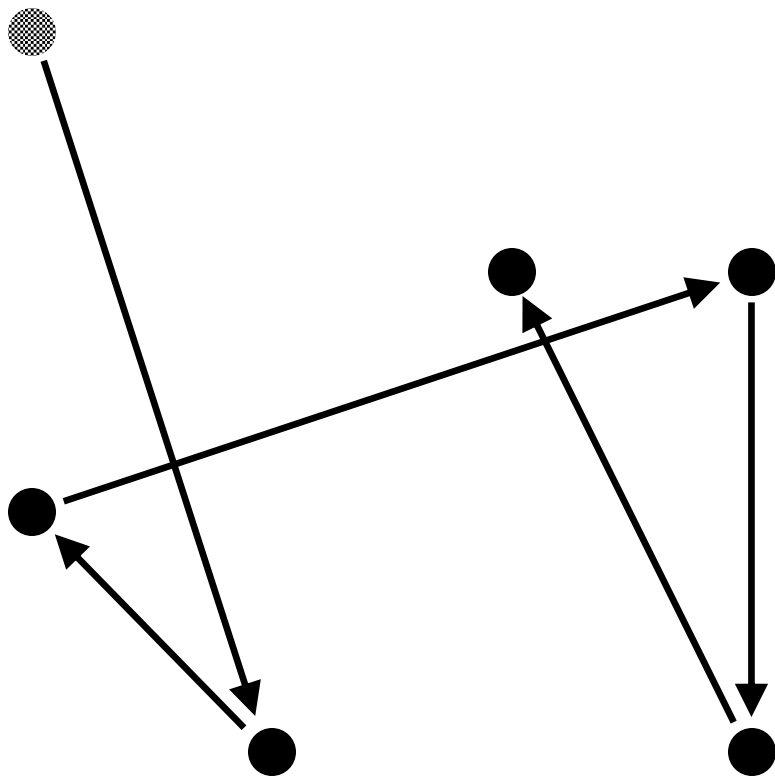
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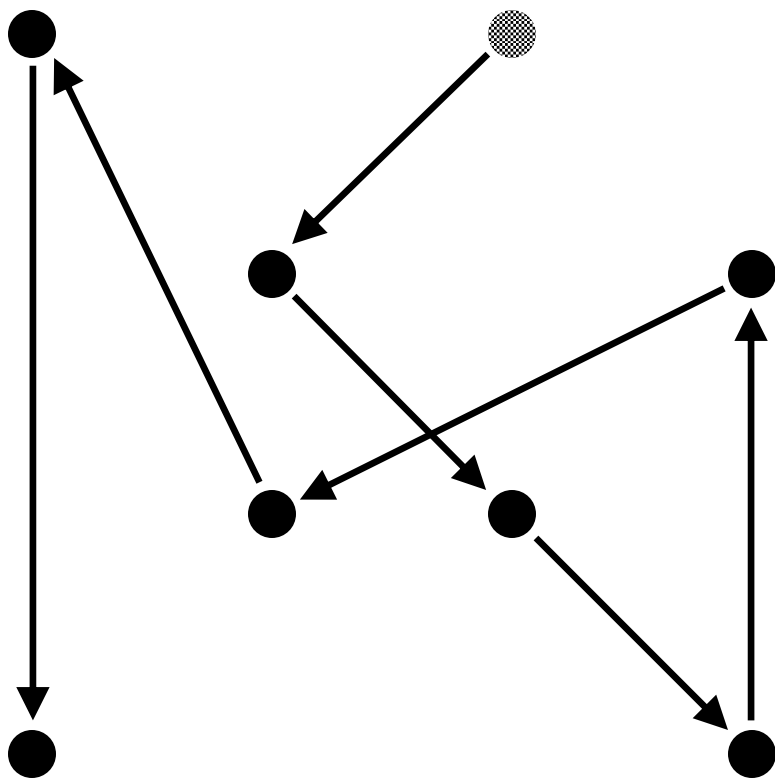
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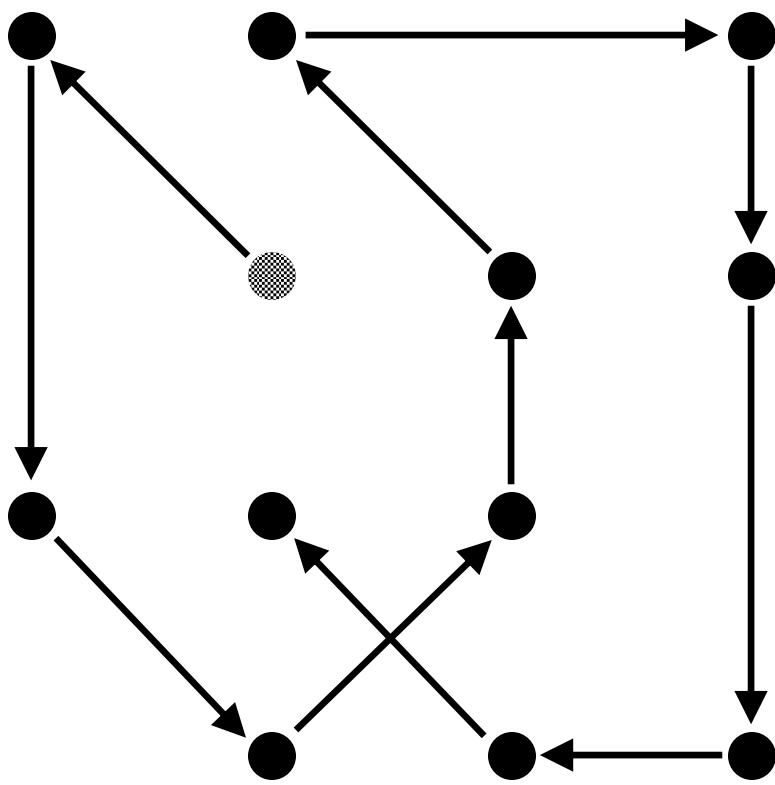
		Envelope			
					
Sound	Noise				
	Pure Tone				
	Gliss Up				
	Gliss Down				

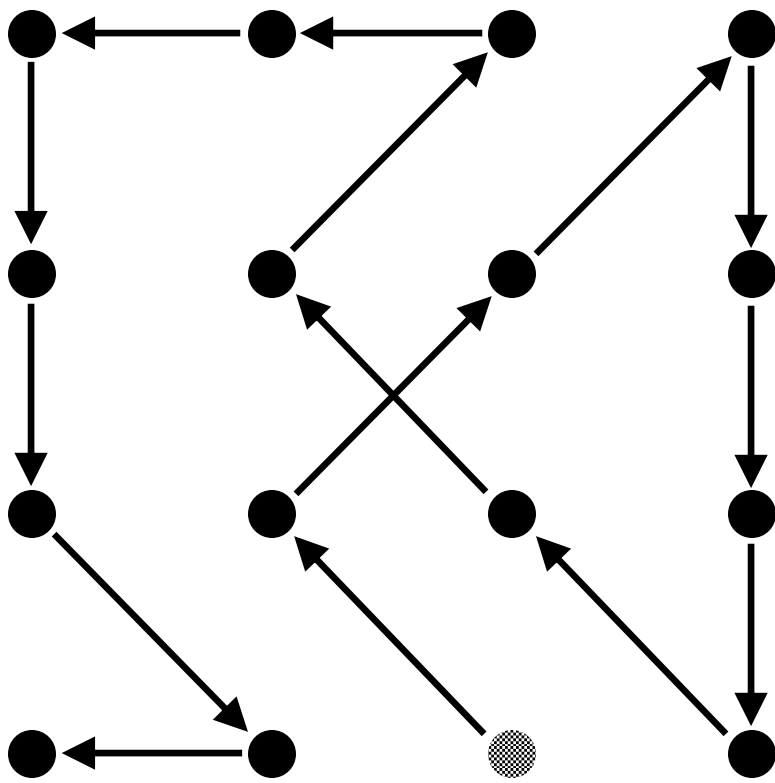
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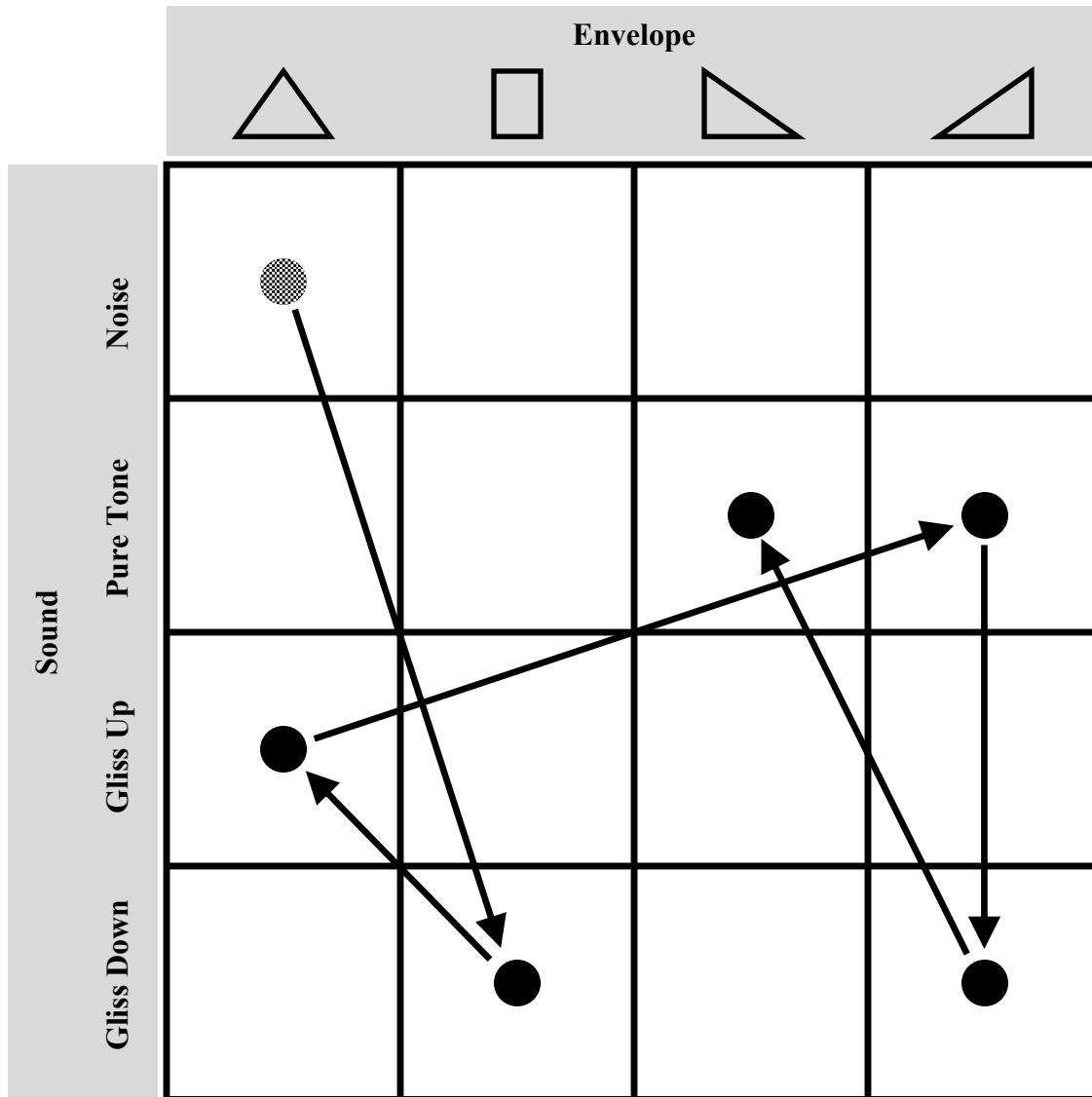






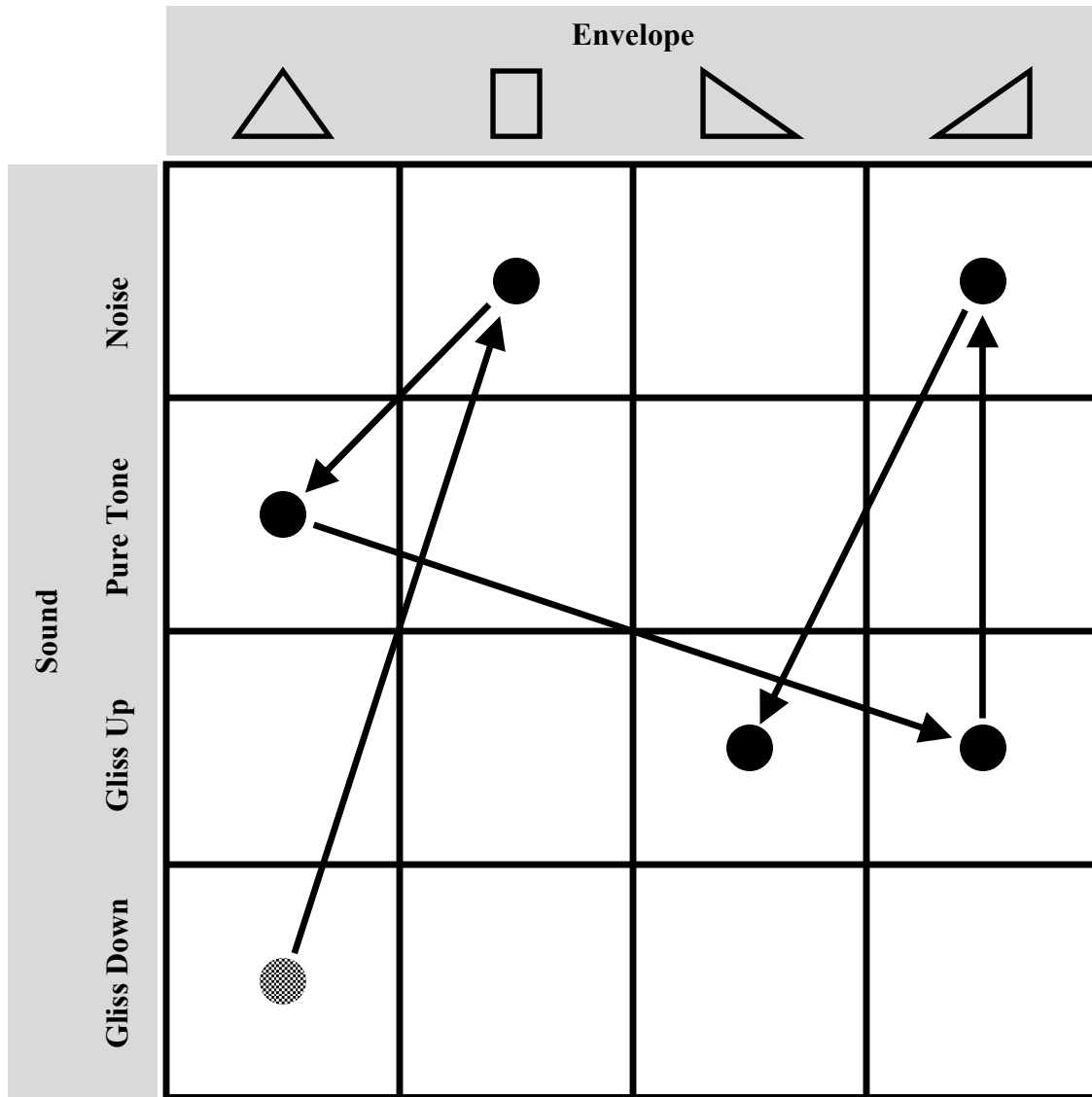


Preconfigured Performance Parts



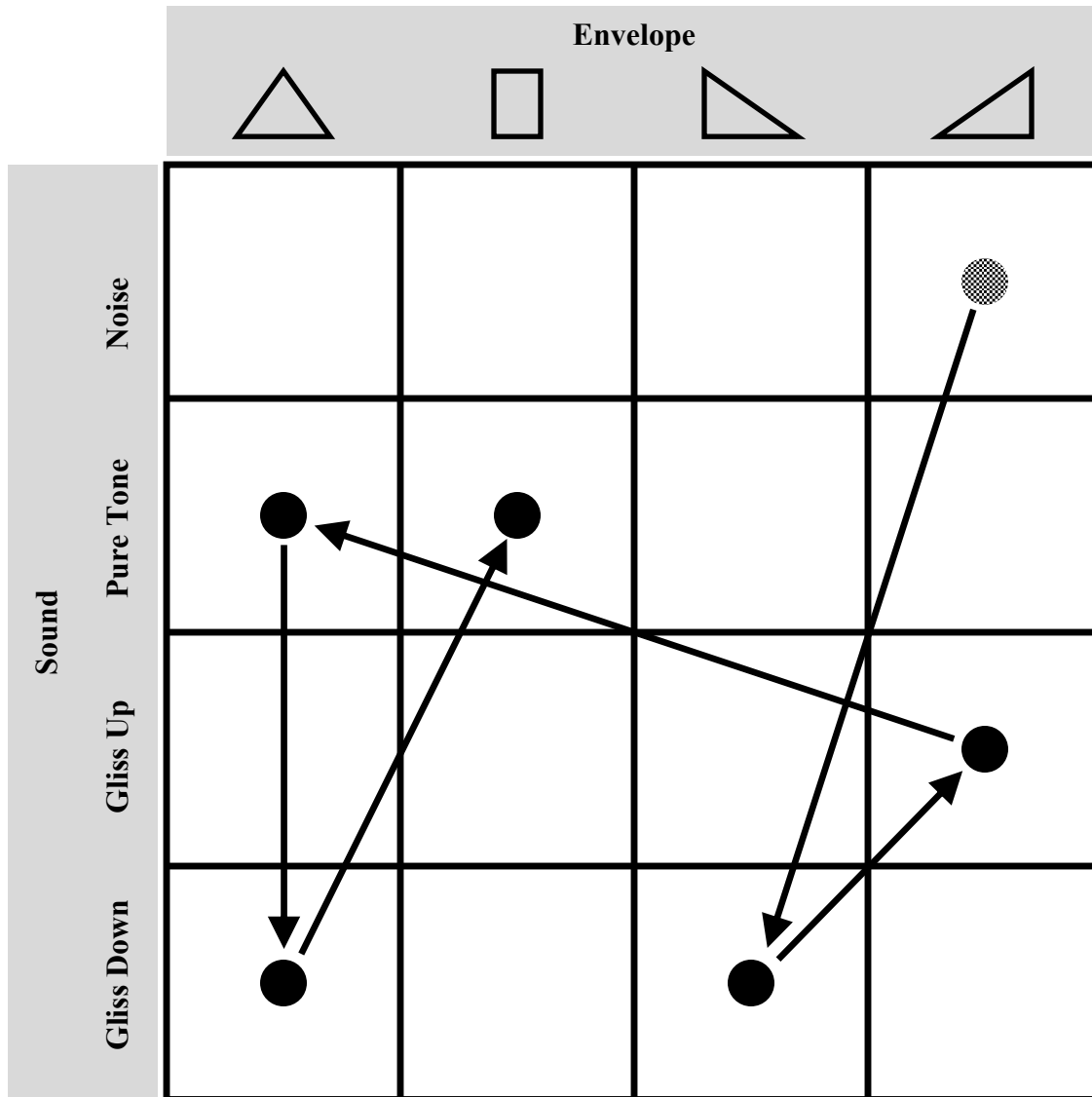
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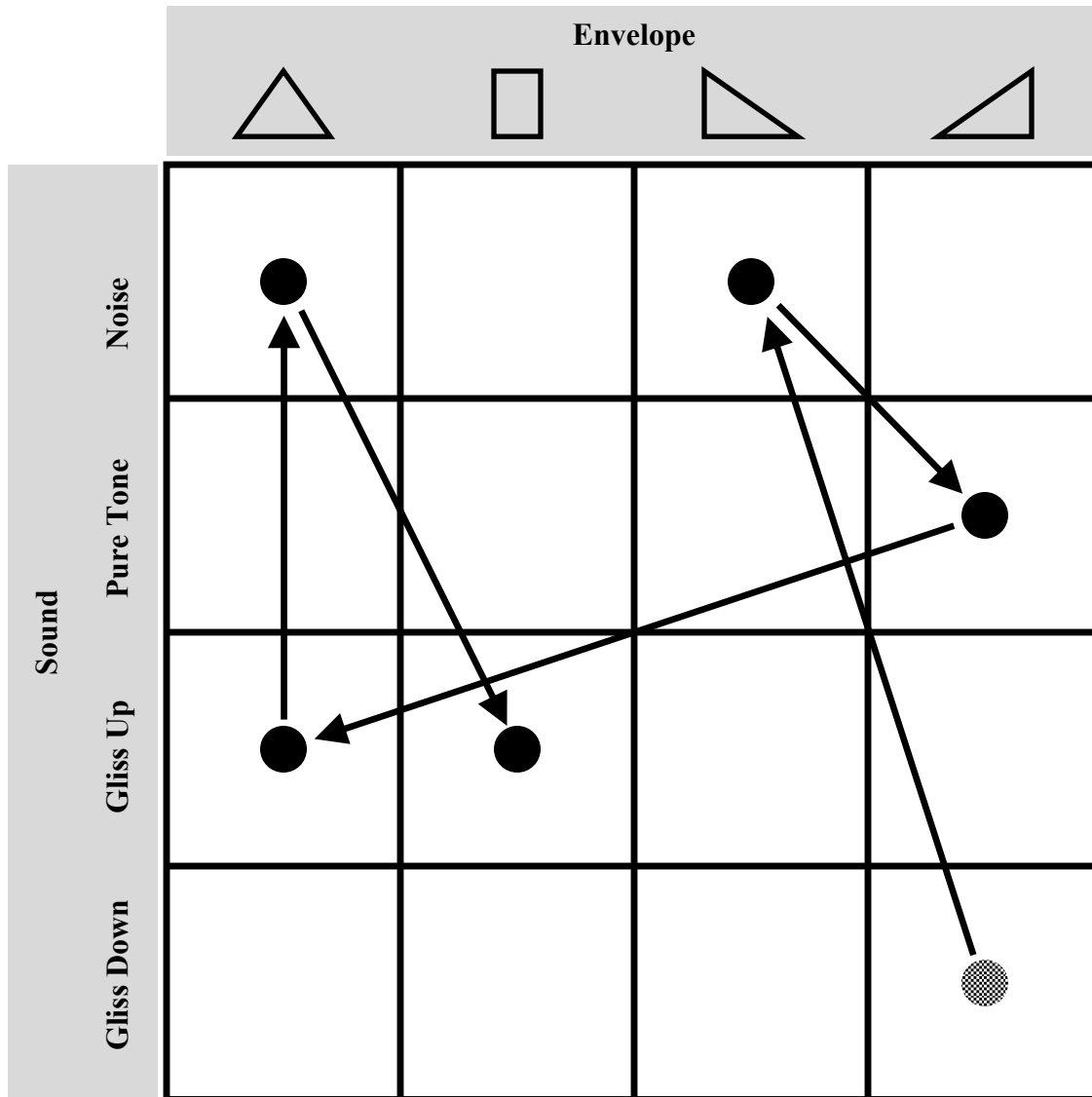
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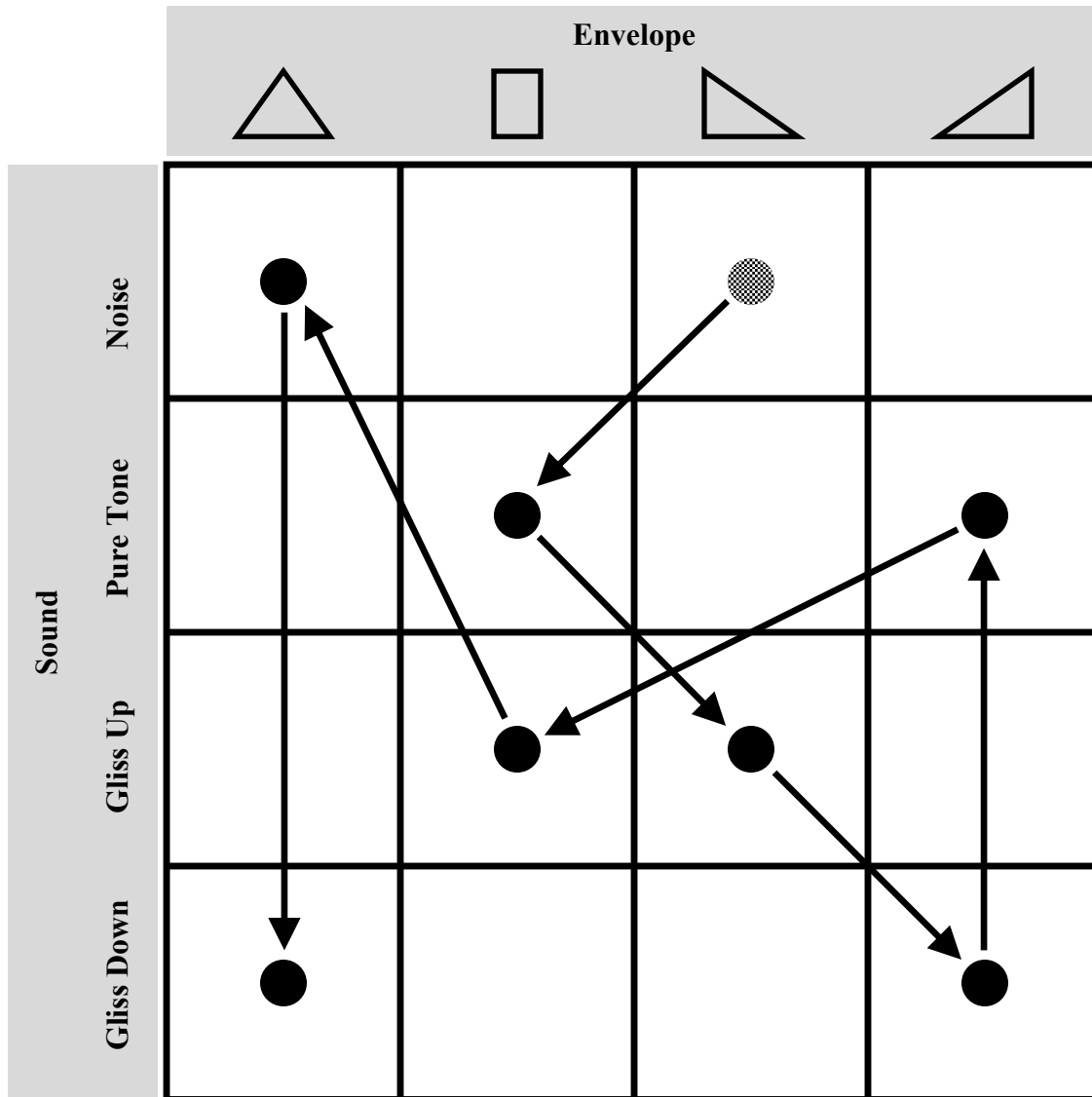
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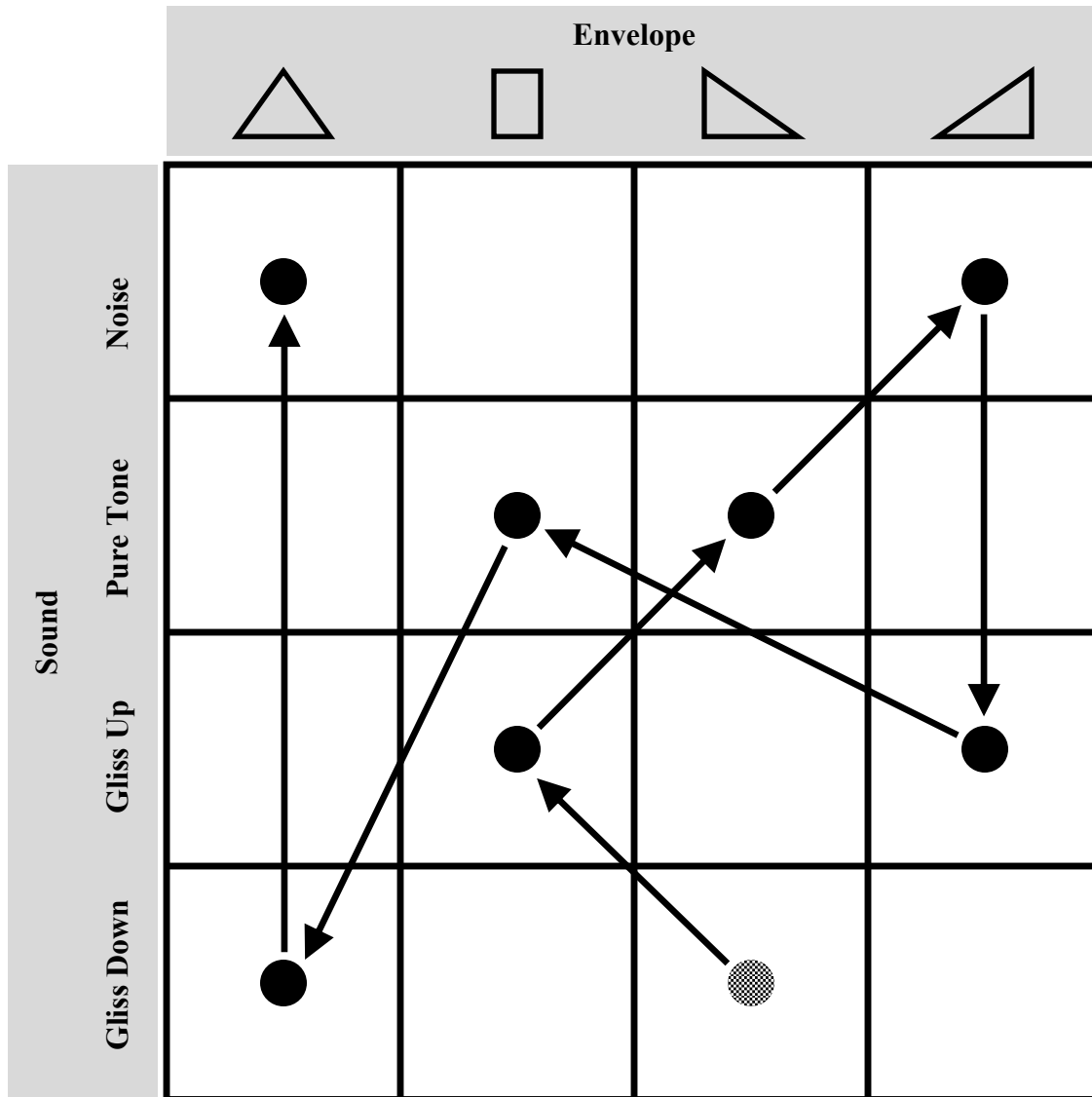
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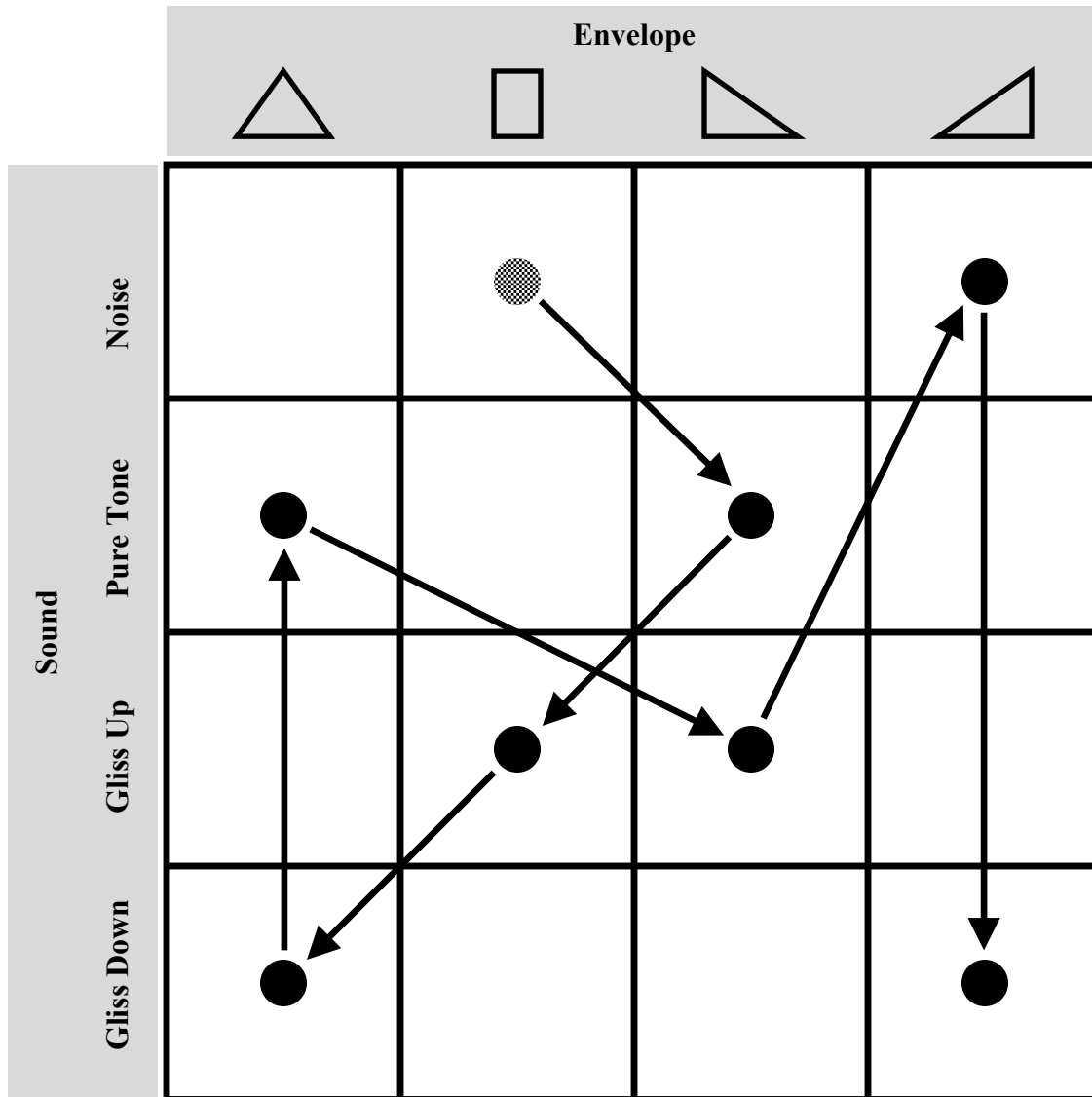
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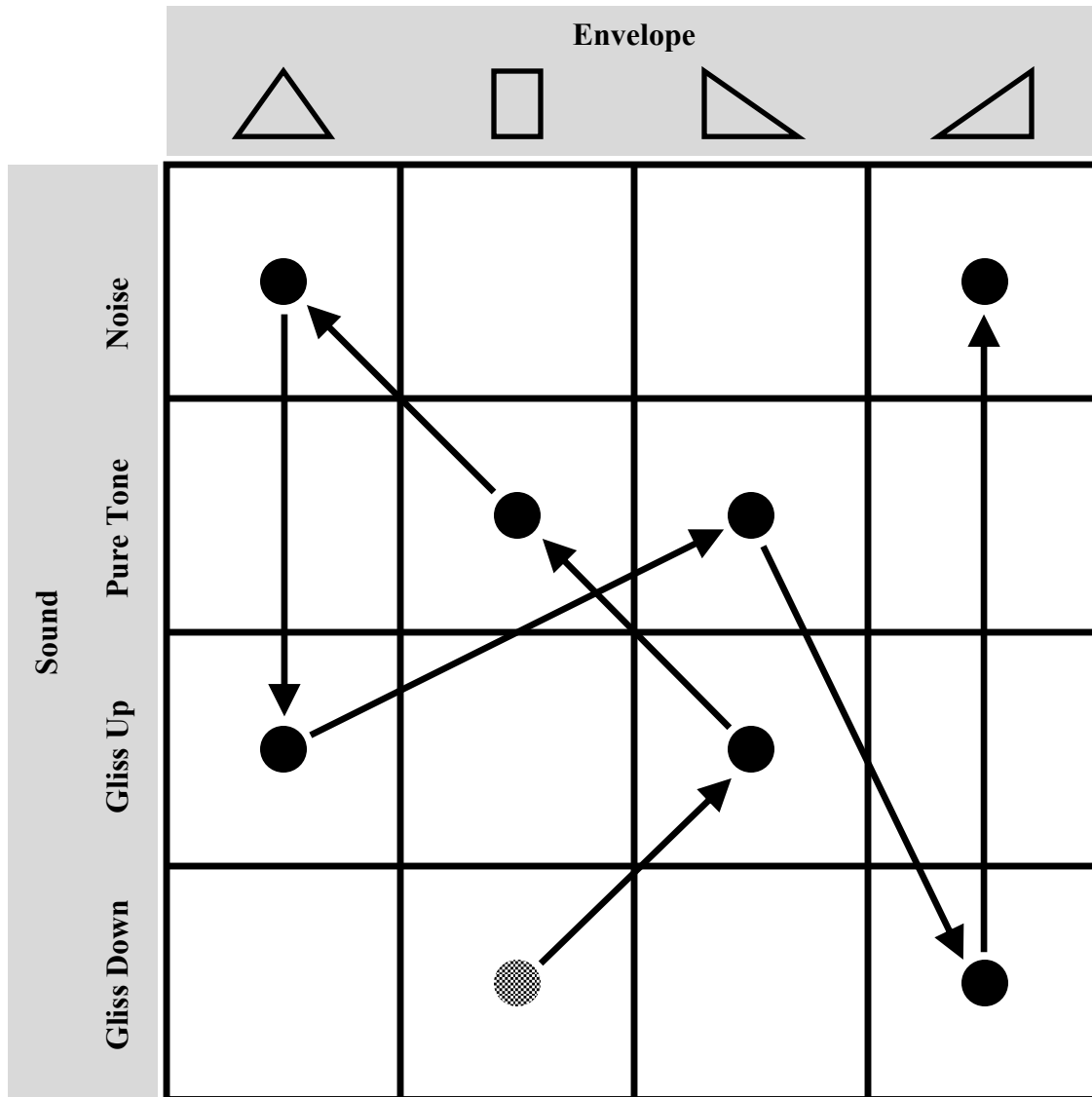
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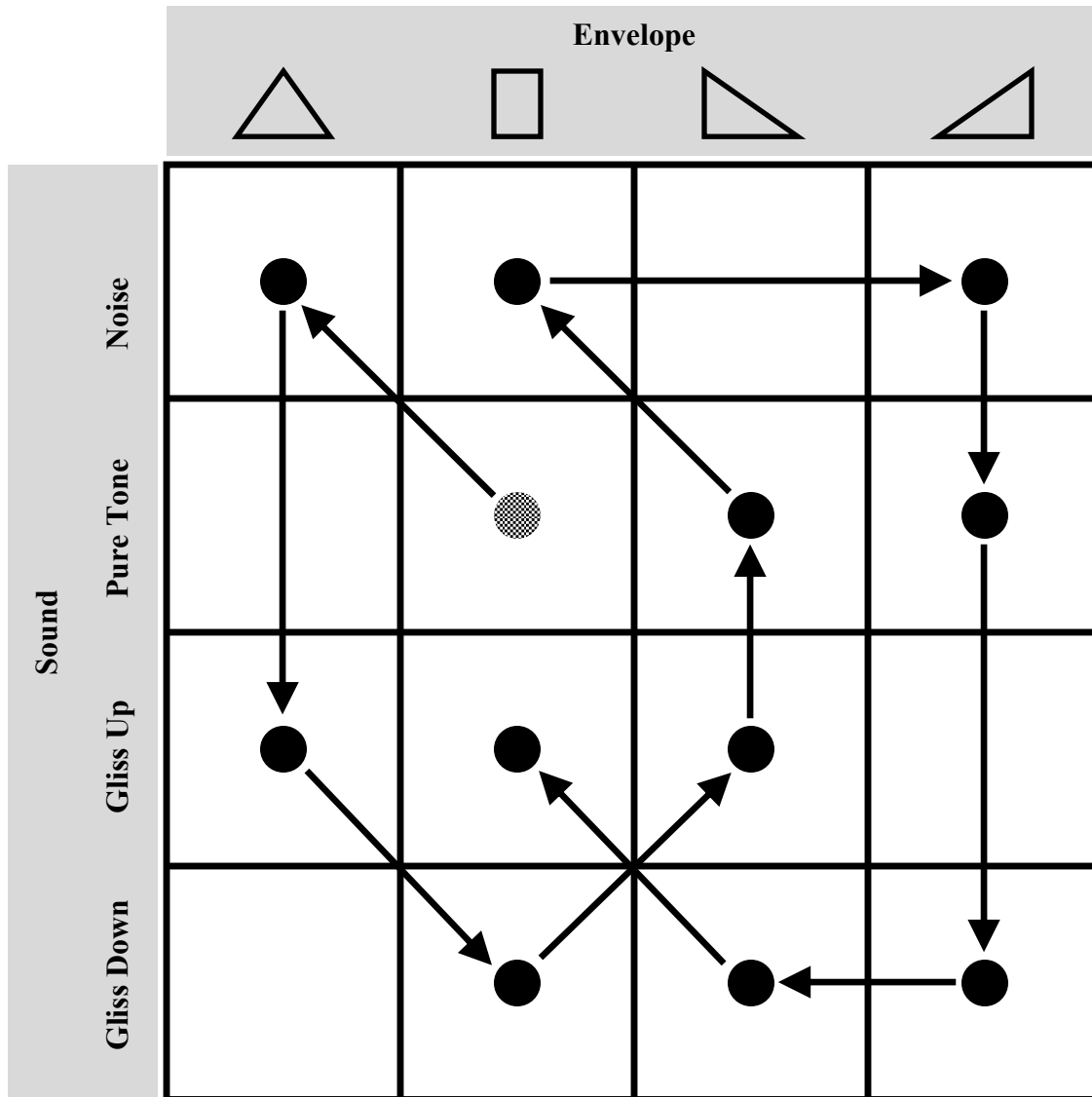
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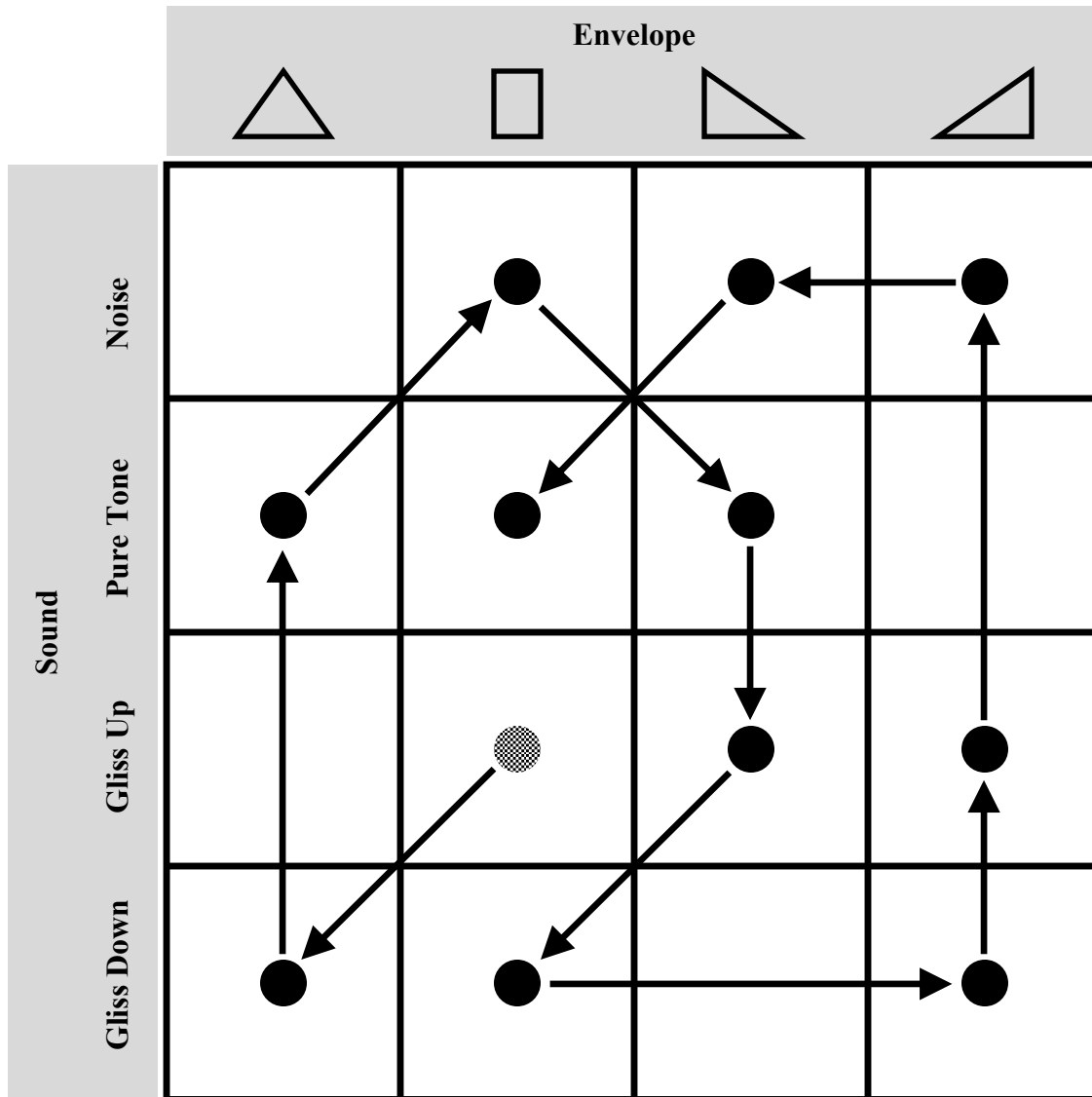
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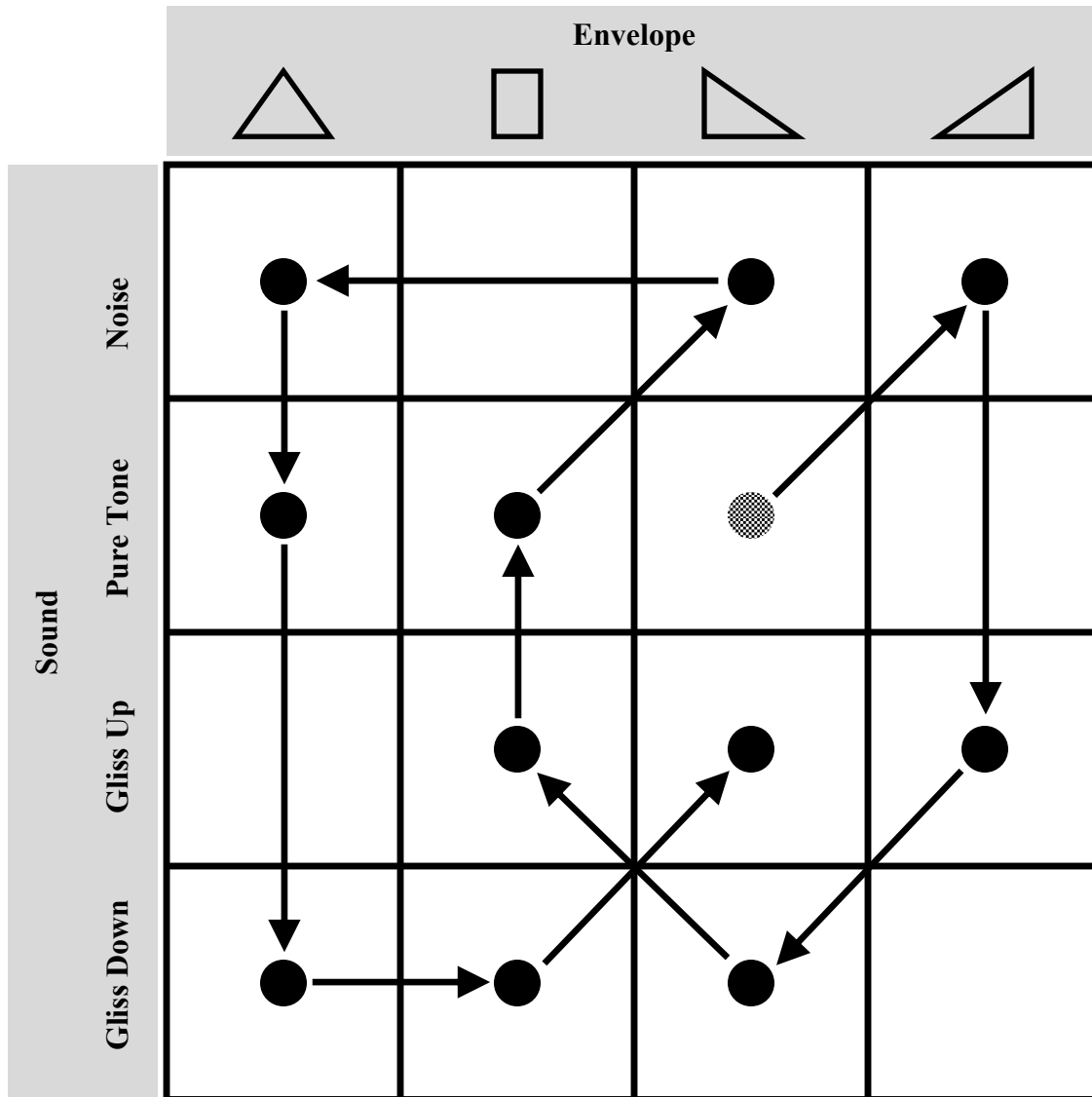
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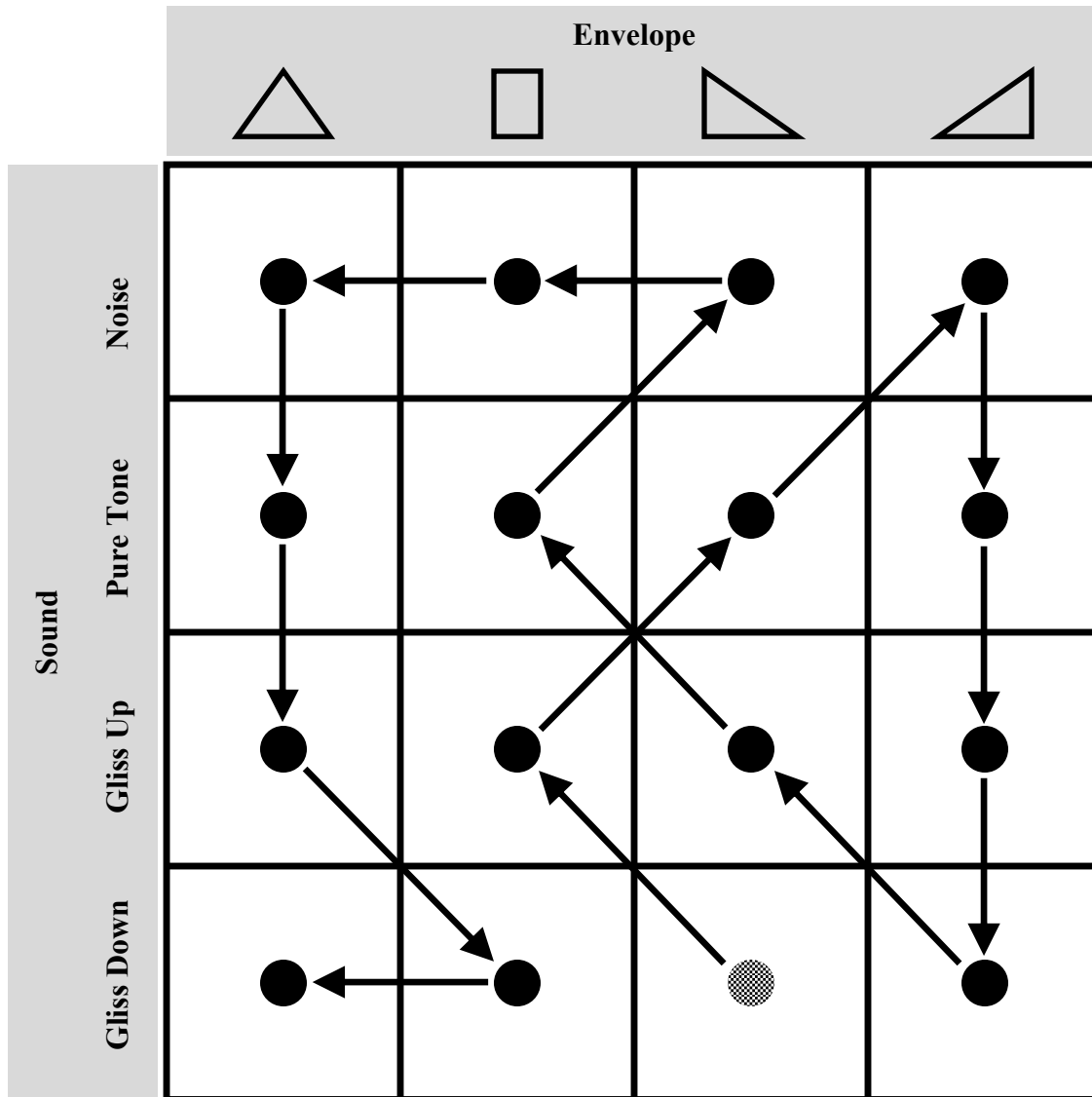
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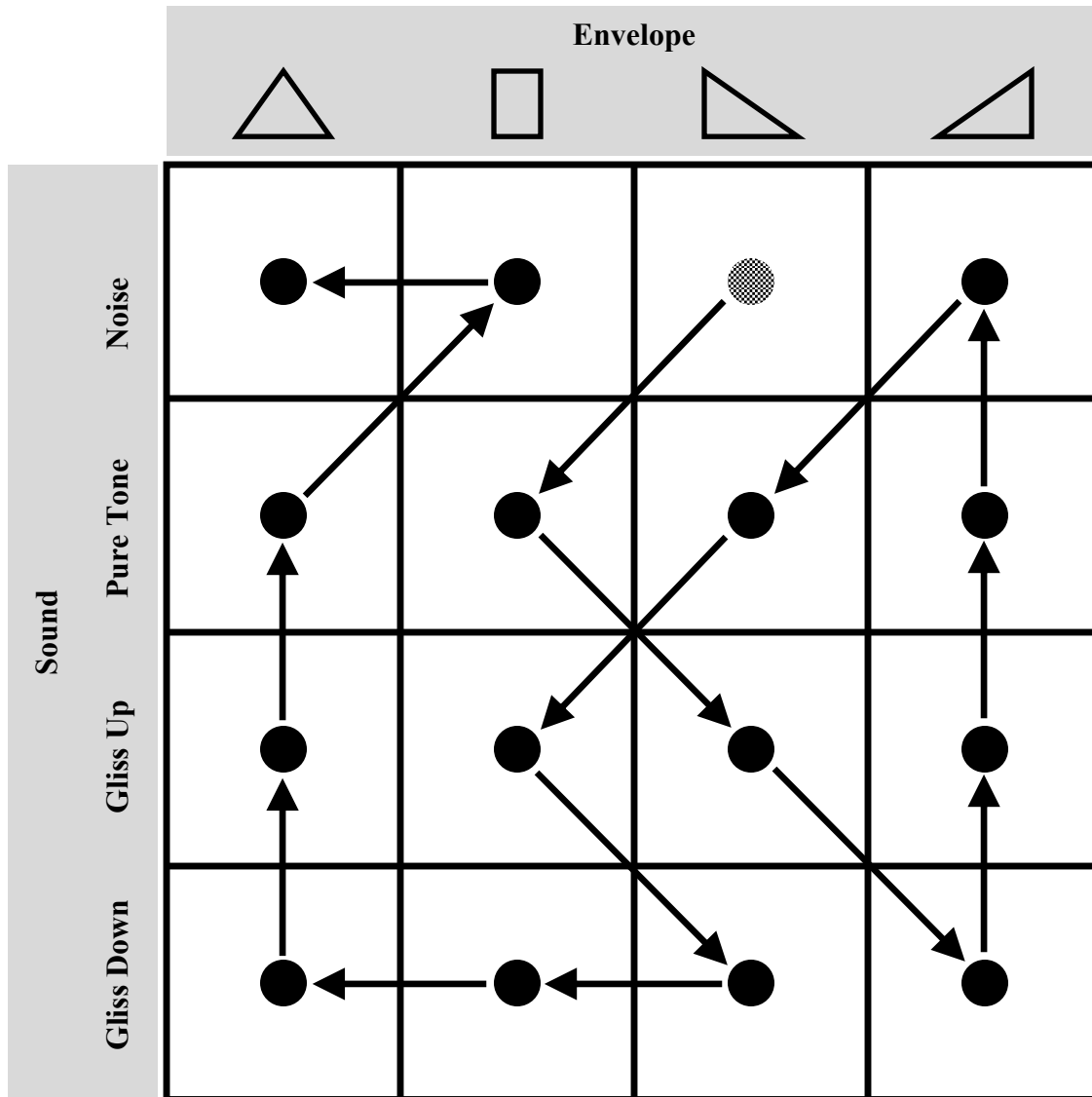
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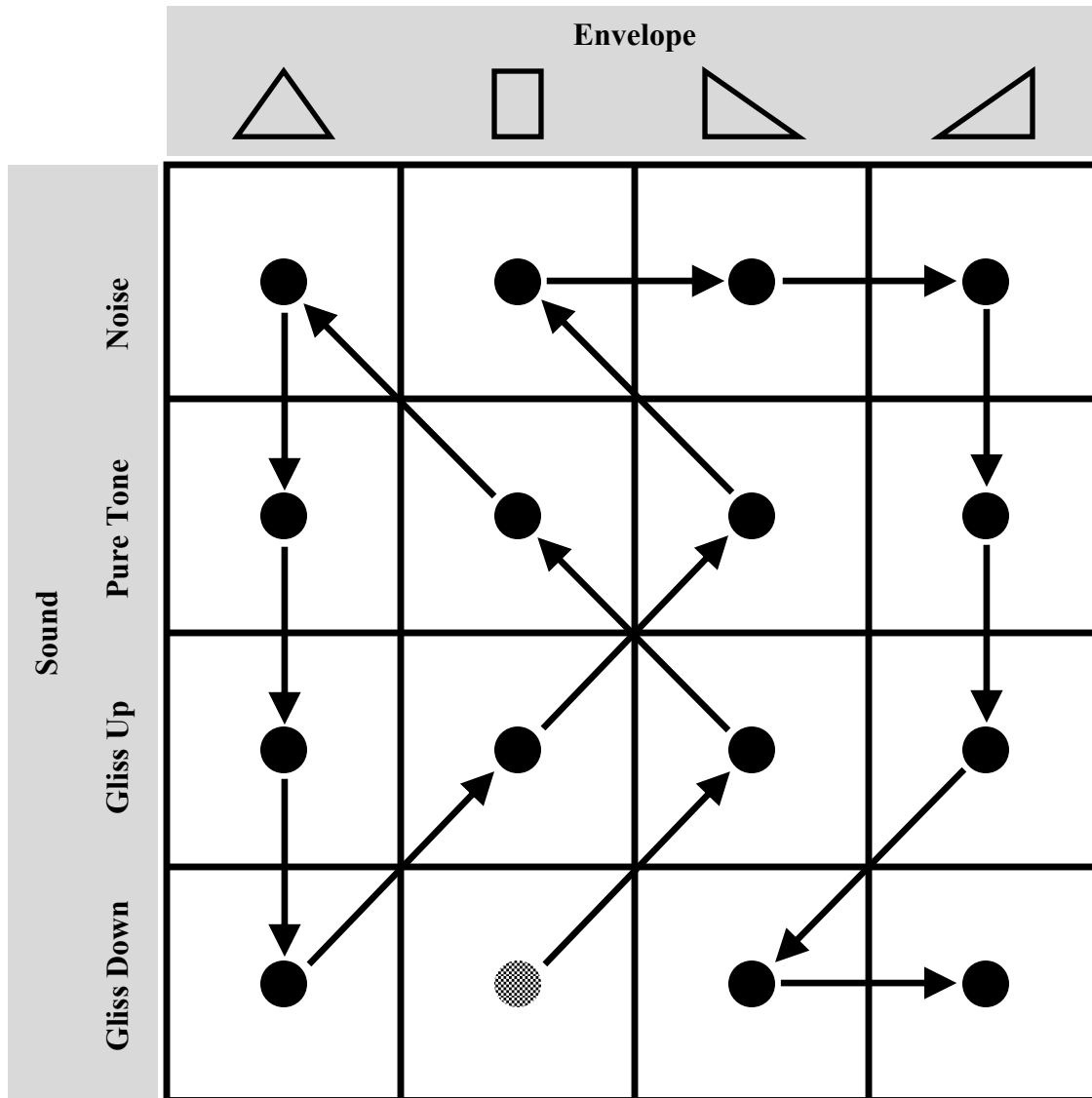
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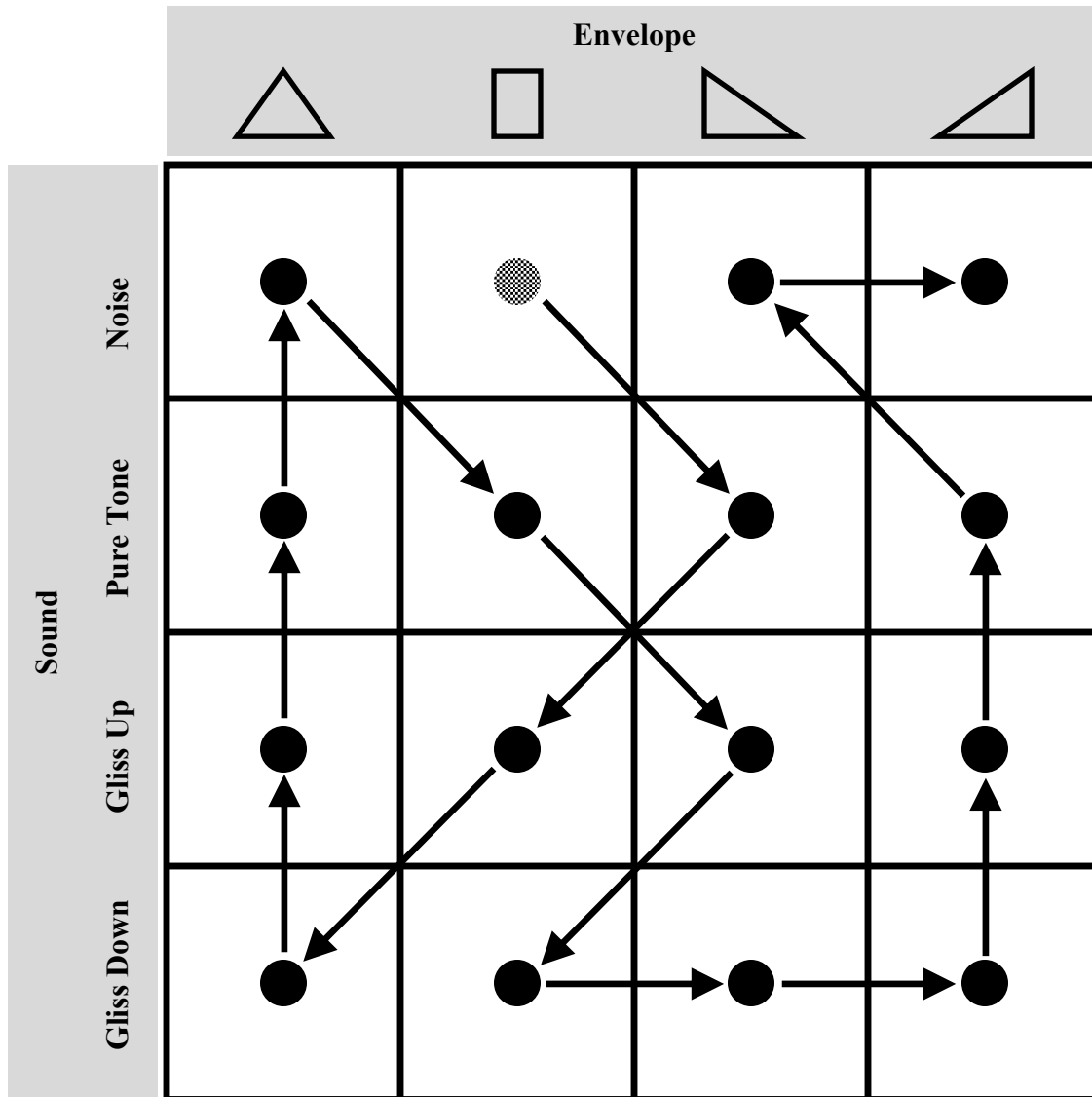
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