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# you are embodied air, afloat

*for solo viola and pre-recorded track*
**2020**


# Rylan Gleave
(b.1997)

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## Program notes

*you are embodied air, afloat* was written specifically for Rufus Isabel Elliot, as a means of gratitude for its friendship and support.

The original recordings came from time spent in Cornwall in the south of England, and were exclusively recorded on Mother Ives and Constantine Bay. Whilst The Merope Rocks cushion Mother Ives Bay from wind, in gales swimmers can be swept out. I happened to be recording the sounds from the beach when my cousin Kia was pulled out of his depth*, and although too far away to pick up any speech, there is a (perhaps imagined) dark and brooding atmosphere captured by the recordings, especially as the track progresses.

*N.B. the Coast Guard was alerted in time to pick him up. He has since made many jokes about the sea being 'a cruel mistress', and is relatively unscarred by the incident.

*Score sketch by Rylan Gleave.*

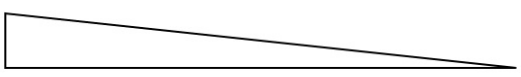
## Performance notes

There are several gradations of bow position in the viola part; in addition to the conventional *sul tasto* (s.t.) and *sul ponticello* (s.p.), *molto sul tasto* (m.s.t.) and *molto sul ponticello* (m.s.p.) are specified. Arrows between these indicate a gradual shift to that position, and the term *pos. ord* indicates a return to ordinary bowing. An arrow pointing up notehead is to indicate the highest pitch that you can make the instrument produce.

Bow pressure is notated above the stave by solid wedges to indicate intensity.

add bow pressure to produce a scratching sound; replace pitch with noise

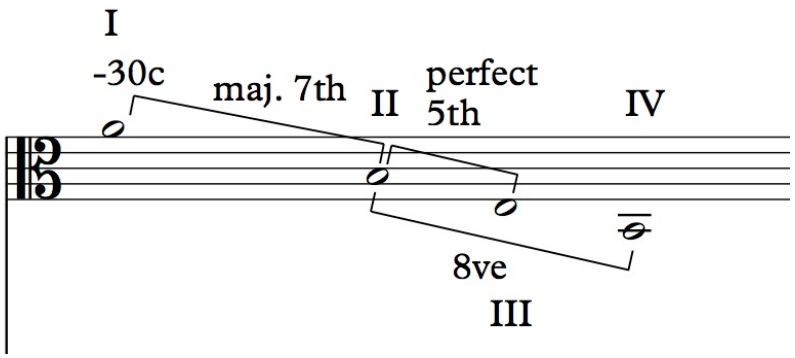
as above but move back from noise to pitch again



decrease bow pressure to create soft, airy sound

as above but move from airy sound to normal bow pressure

Scordatura tuning notated below.




Boxes around music indicate one (1) phrase. Any phrases may be repeated, adapted, fragmented, or developed at the player's leisure. Boxes may run into other boxes with no issue, and the material can be arranged to the player's comfort, whether that be mostly following the given material, or only very loosely. Whilst not every pitch is specified, observe the length of the note stems as a rough guide pertaining to where a headless pitch might sit. Sounds that you may pick up from the track could inform your choice of pitches, or you may choose to disregard them. N.B. the score spacings are not durational.

The violist should cue the track themselves with a foot pedal, if possible, or signal another (offstage) to cue the track when they are ready to move to the second section. The track lasts around 10'40", but there is no pre-determined stopping point for the performer.

The violist should be amplified with a contact microphone, with the option of a small amount of reverb, to blend better with the tape and bring out small details.

## A note on the pre-recorded track

All of the recordings were taken in Mother Ives, Cornwall in 2019, with the only editing being noise reduction for heavy wind. The track moves from recording to recording with overlaps as follows;

00:08-01:06 soft, gentle rain, occasional footsteps

00:54-02:28 the sea lapping gently, some louder splashes

02:18-03:07 wind, an exclamation, the trickling of seawater into a rockpool

03:03-06:17 wind, the sea crashing faraway, seagulls crying

05:54-07:50 the sea swirling close by, occasional footsteps

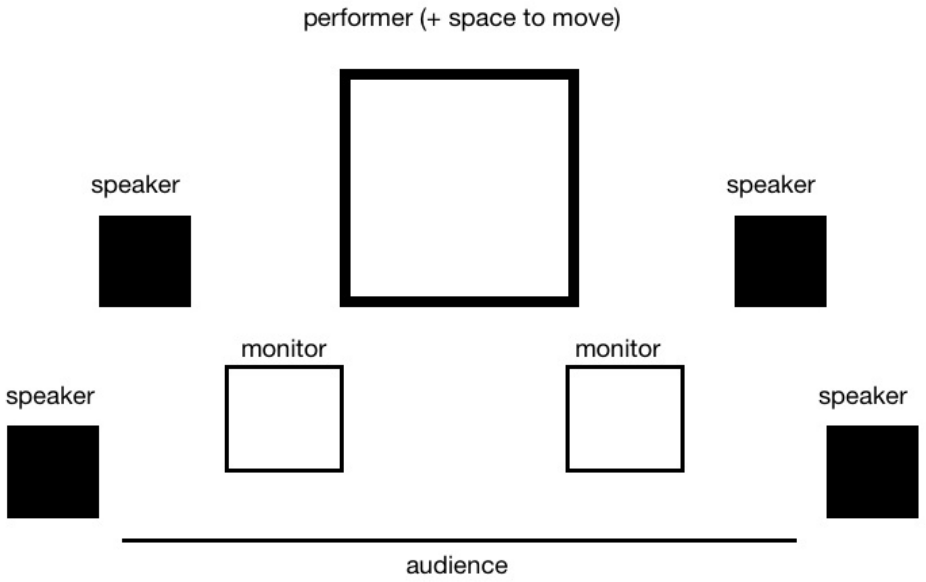
07:50-08:04 silence

08:04-08:22 seagulls crying

08:21-10:40 wind, the sea crashing faraway

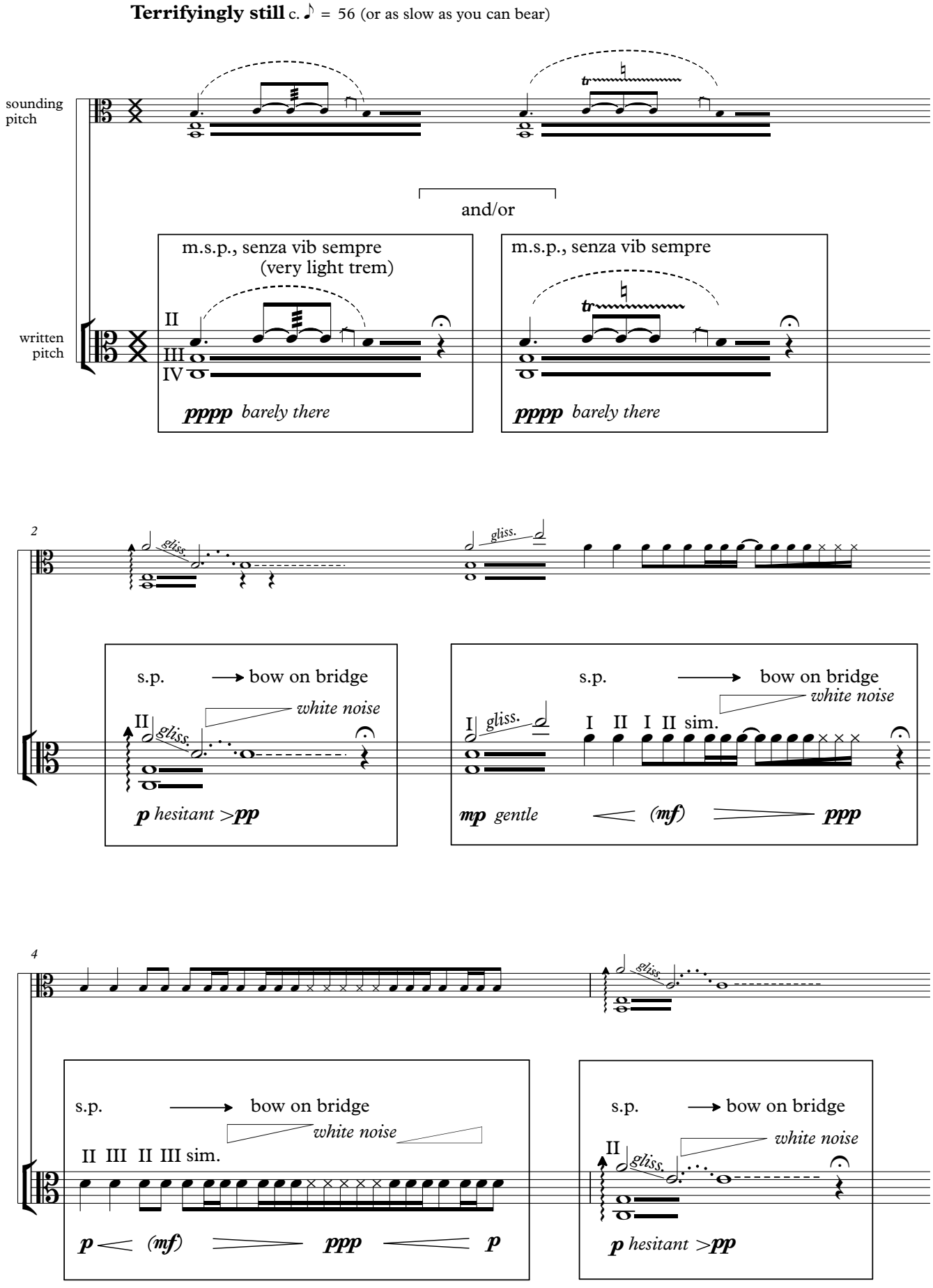
There is no need for a digital timer or stopwatch unless the performer feels more comfortable with one. The pre-recorded track matches the piece at any point, and whilst the performer may wish to be aware of when the recordings change, there is no obligation to move to a new phrase, or to rush through the movements when these do occur. The performer may also choose to cue the track in a place they feel is more suitable to match their playing, as opposed to the one notated.

## Stage setup




*Demo recording by Rufus Isabel Elliot, Glasgow, 2020.*

# 1. The body floats better

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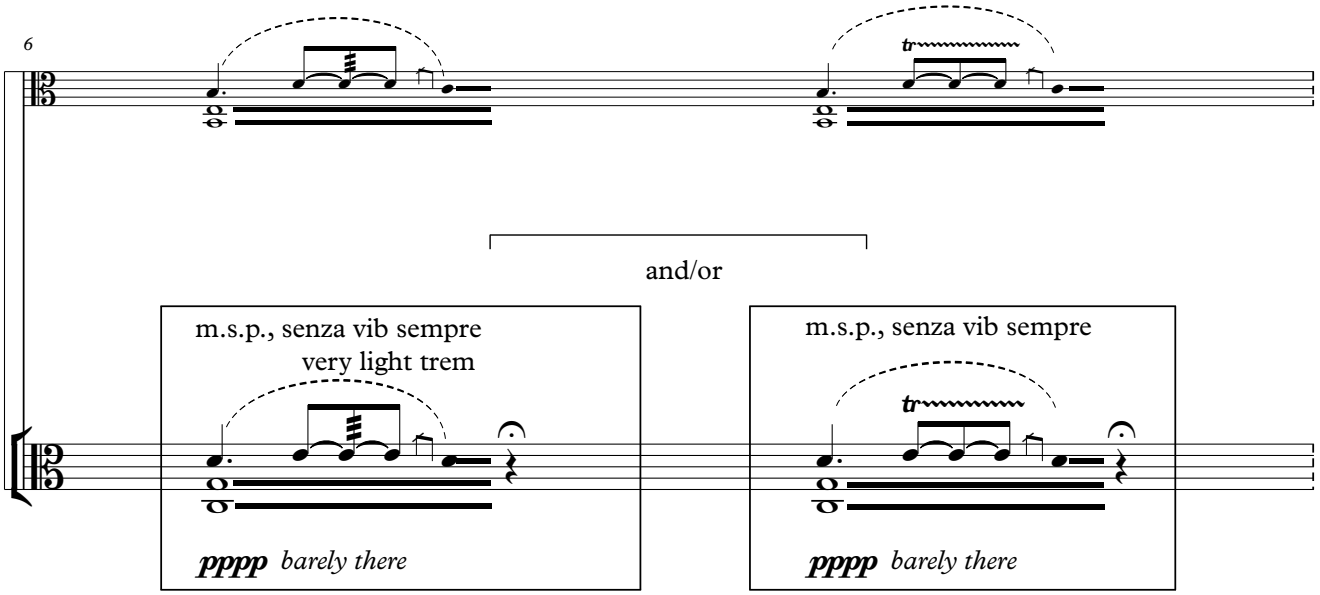
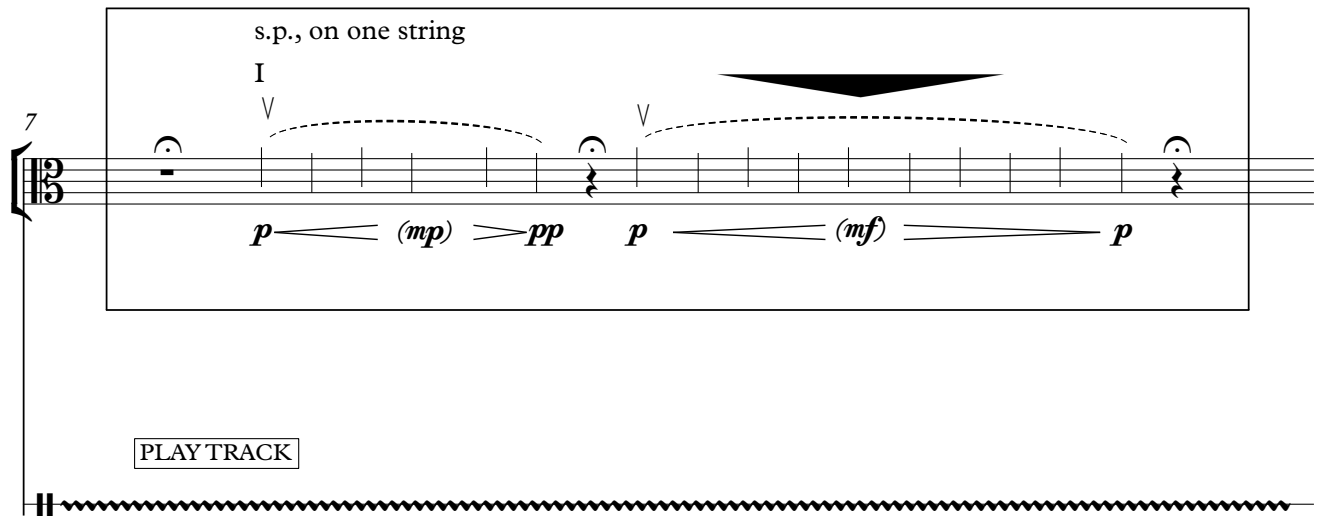
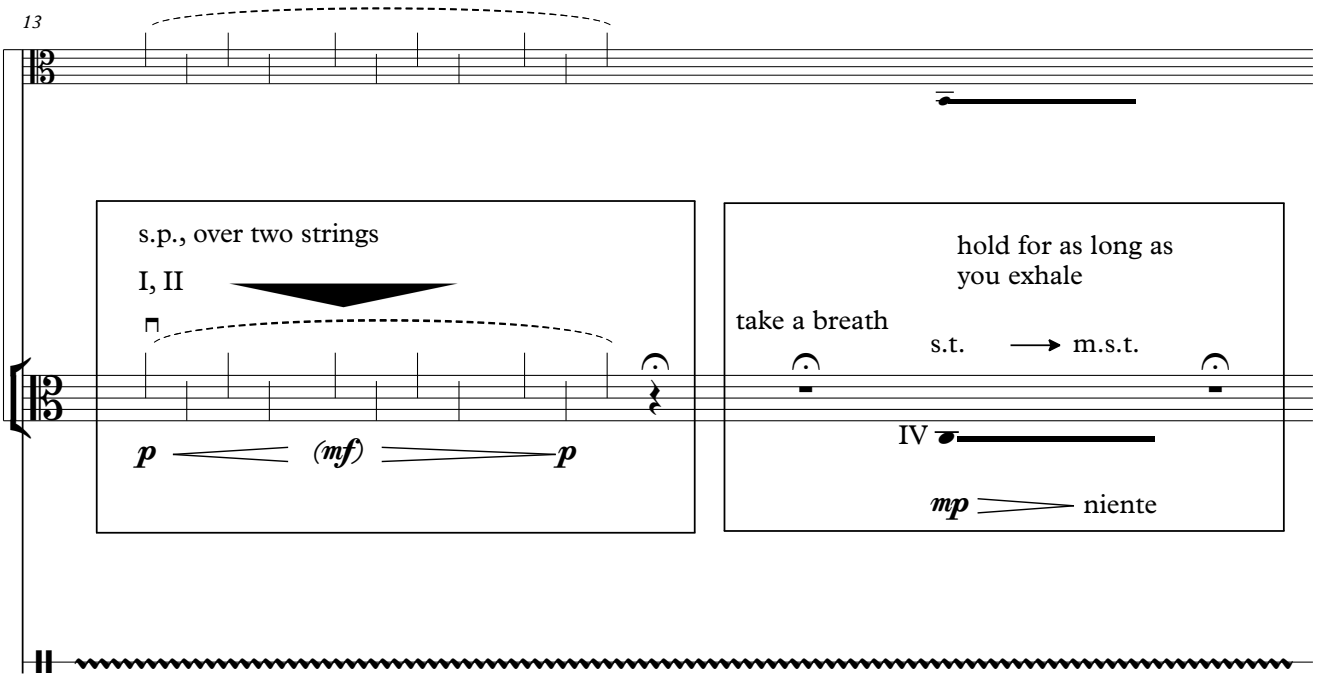
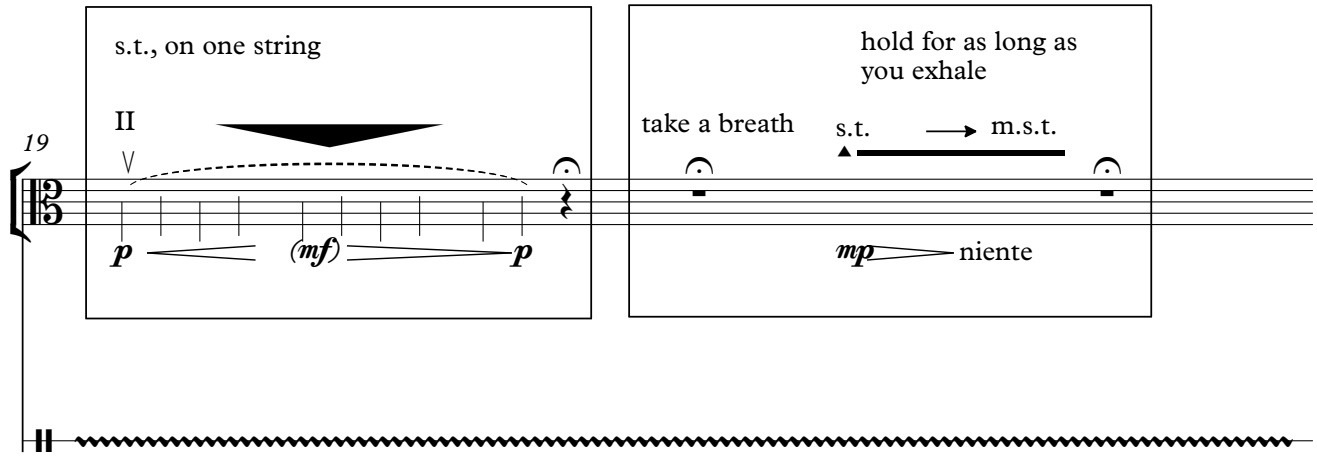


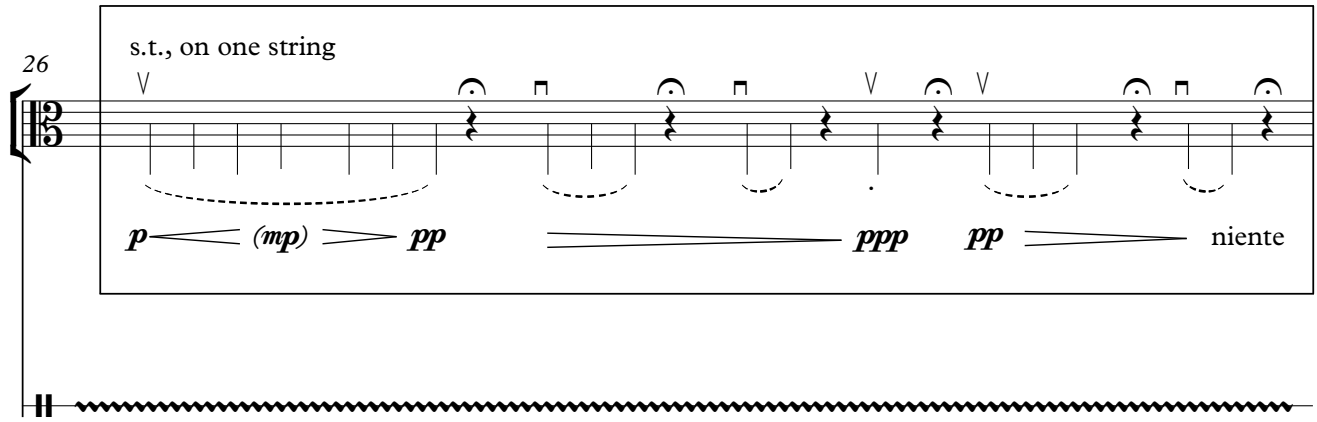

## 2. Toss away what may sink

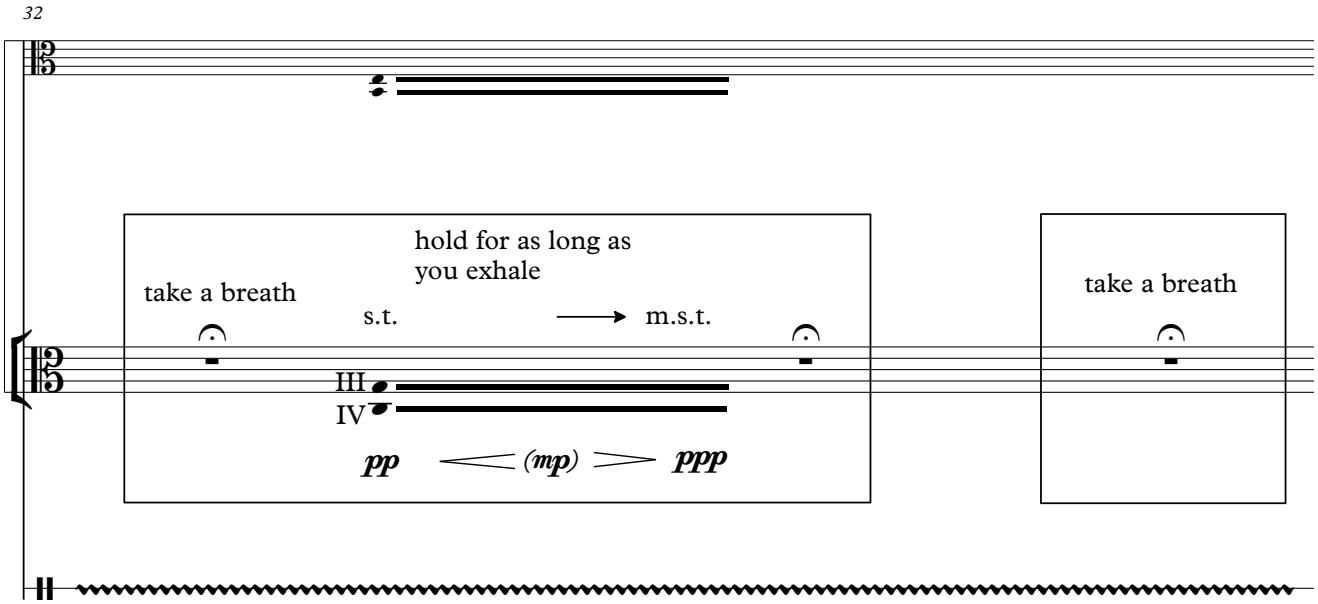
**Gently rolling** c. ♩ = 44

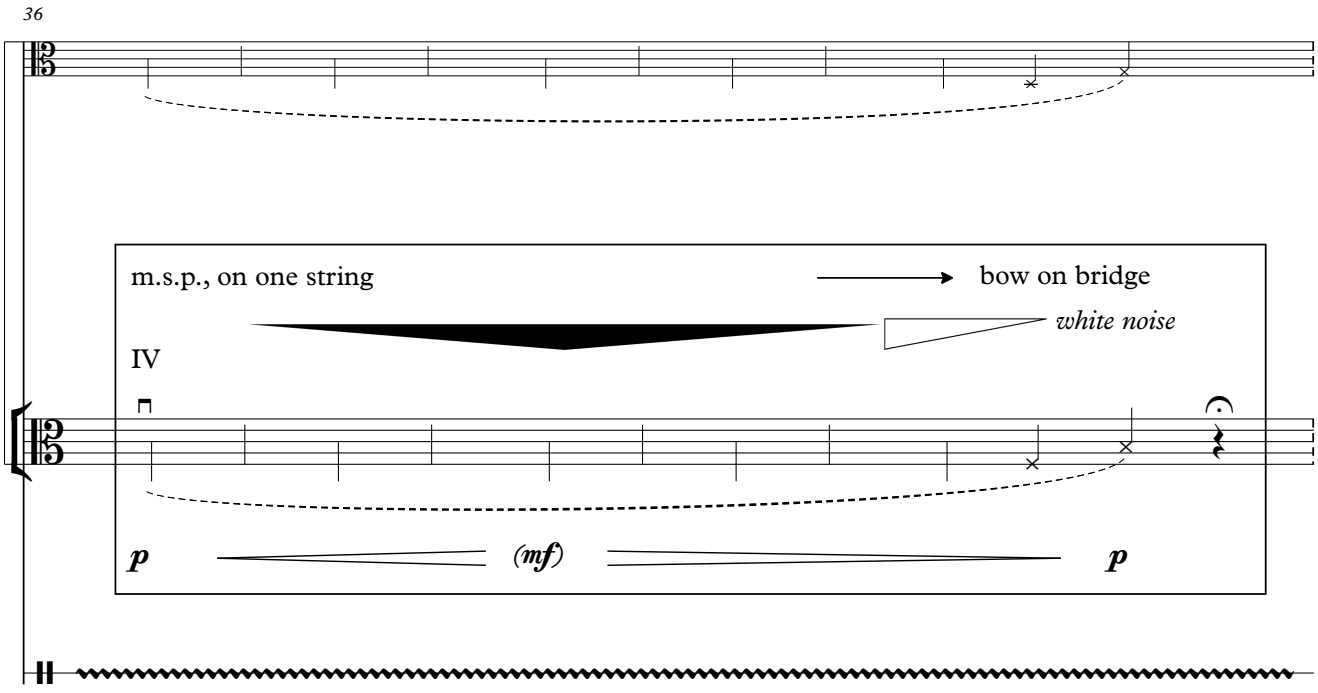



13
s.p., over two strings
I, II
p
(mf)
p
take a breath
hold for as long as
you exhale
s.t.
m.s.t.
IV
mp
niente

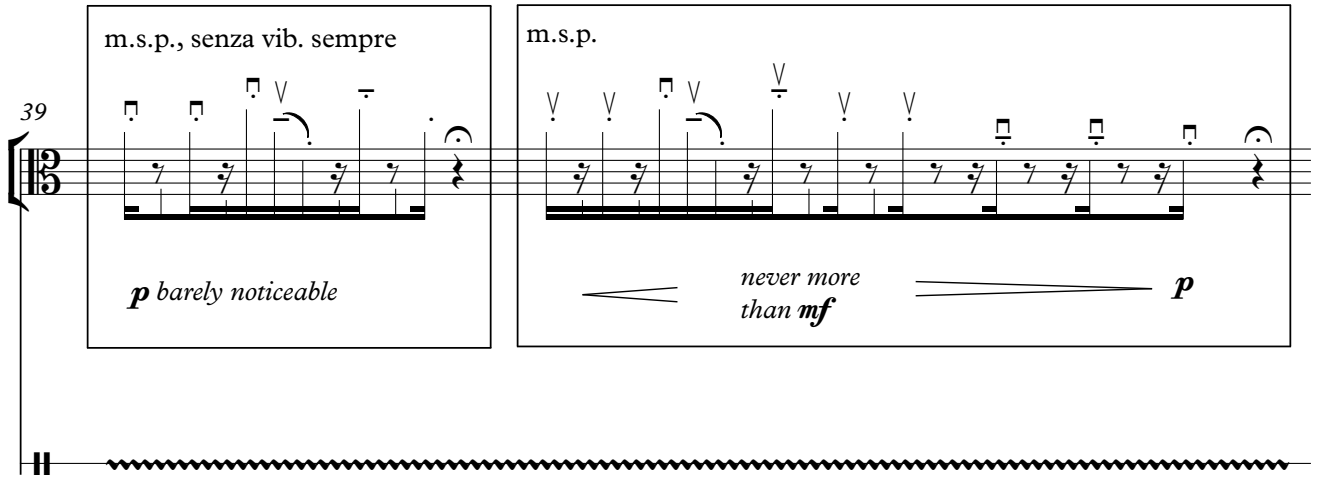

19
s.t., on one string
II
p
(mf)
p
take a breath
hold for as long as
you exhale
s.t.
m.s.t.
mp
niente

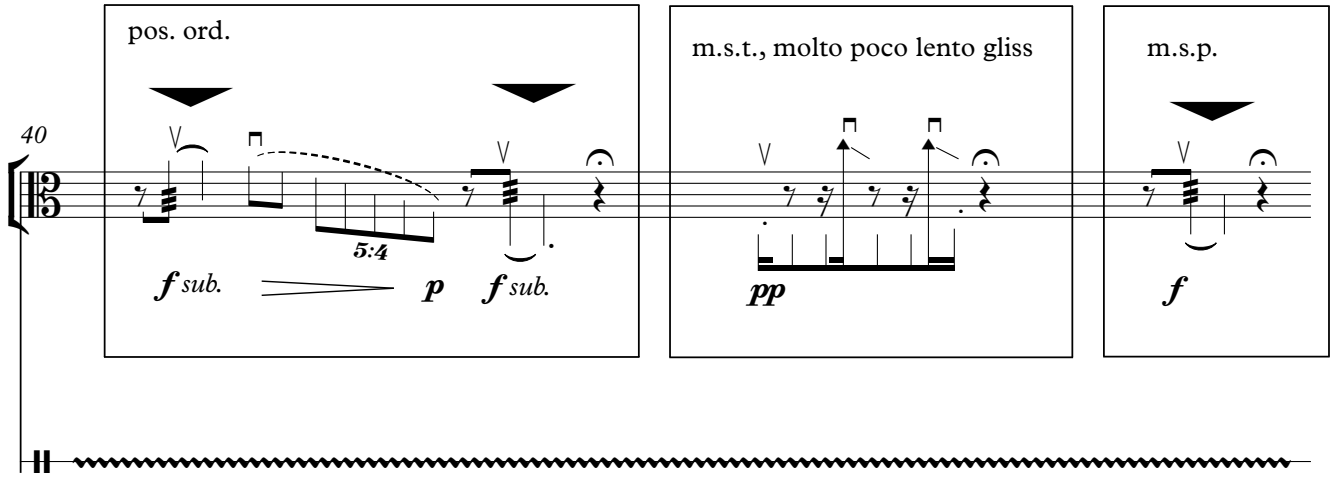

26
s.t., on one string
p
(mp)
pp
ppp
pp
niente

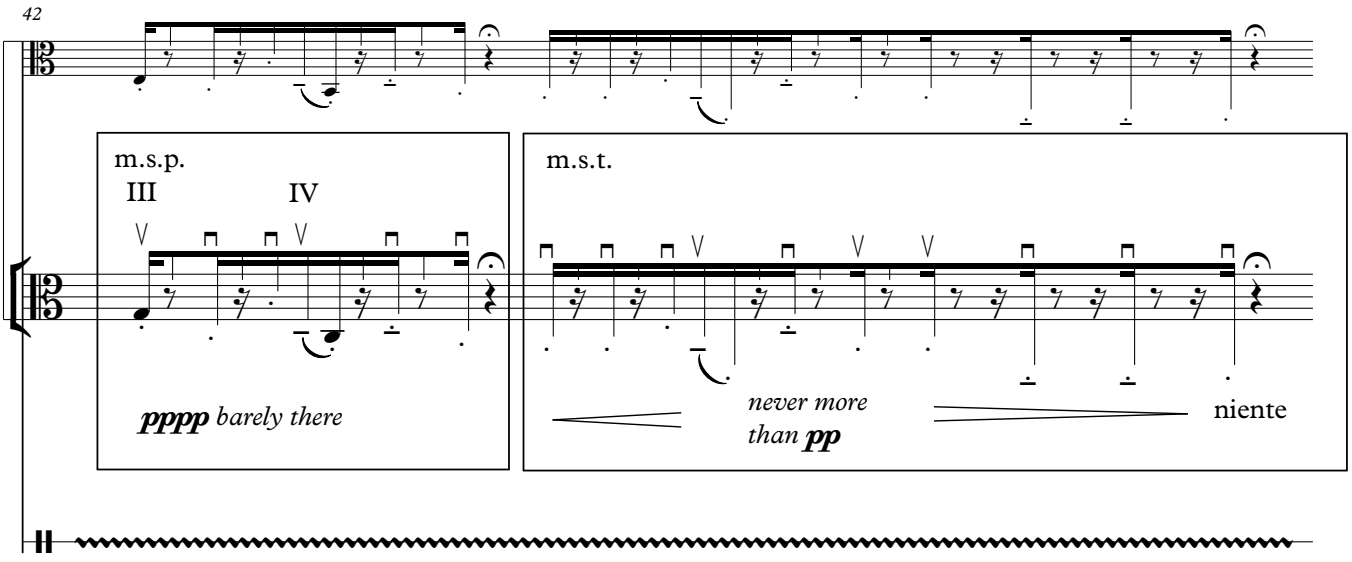

32
take a breath
hold for as long as
you exhale
s.t.
m.s.t.
take a breath
III
IV
pp
(mp)
ppp

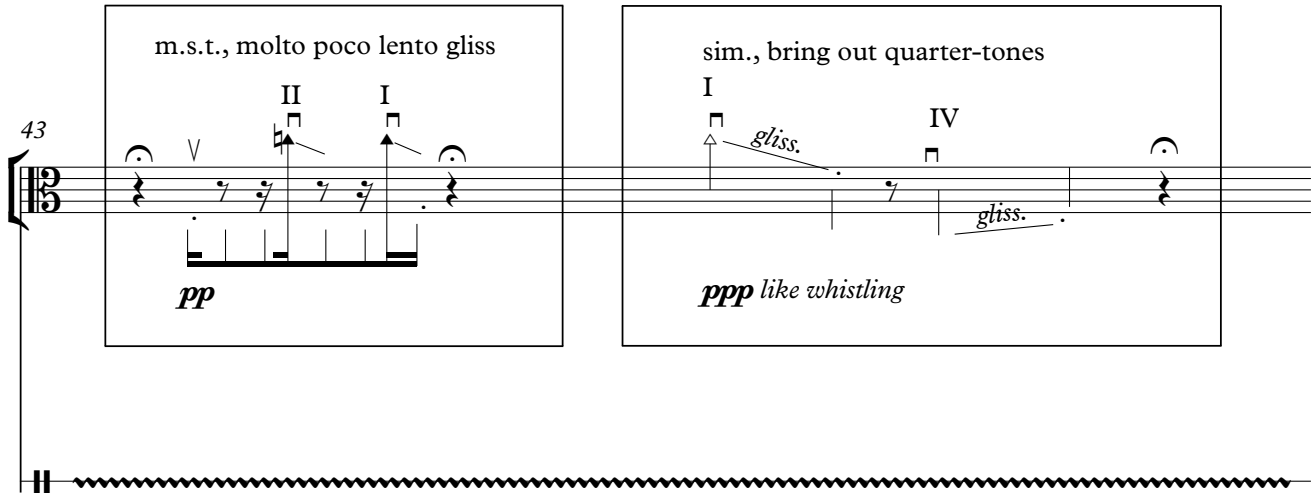

36
m.s.p., on one string
bow on bridge
white noise
IV
p
(mf)
p

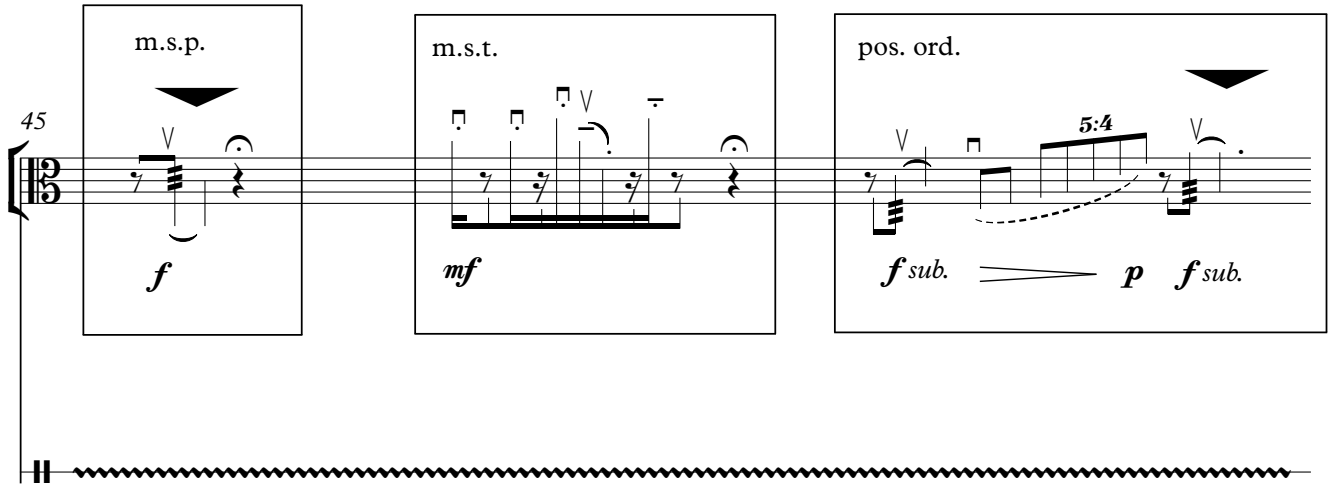
**With a little more bite** c. ♩ = 58

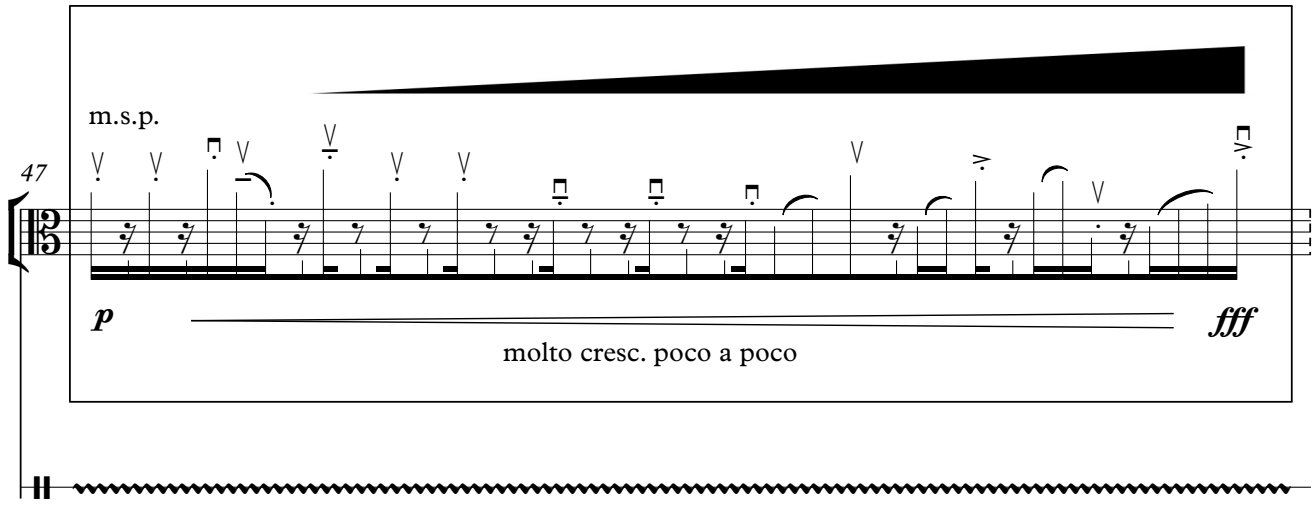


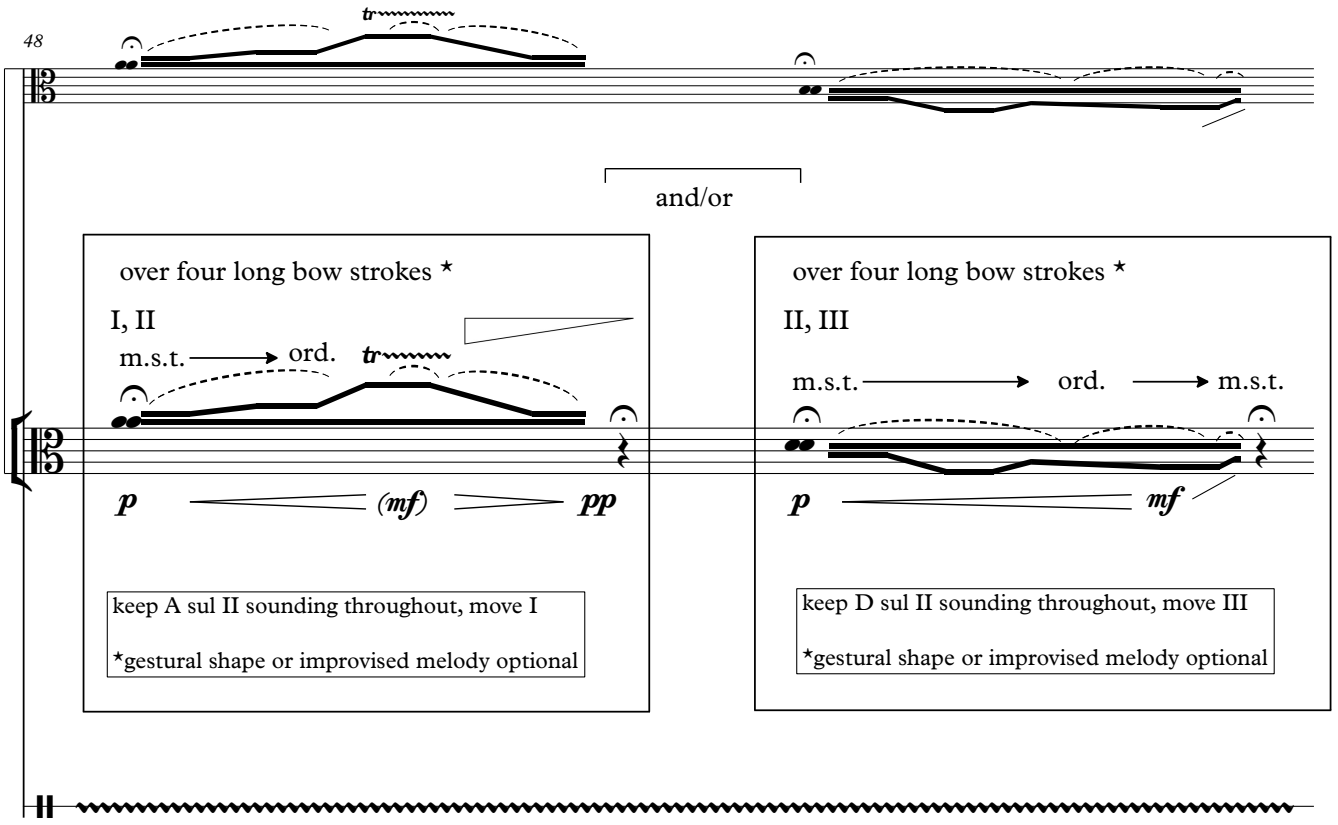

43
m.s.t., molto poco lento gliss
II
I
pp
sim., bring out quarter-tones
I
IV
gliss.
gliss.
ppp like whistling

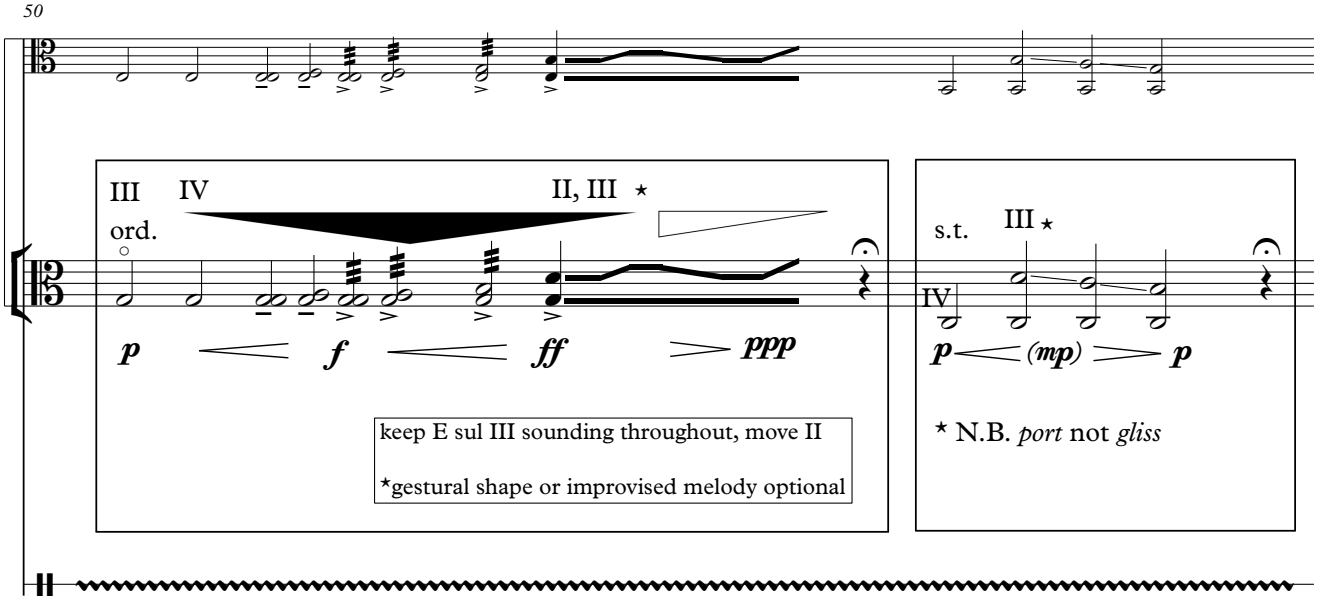

45
m.s.p.
f
m.s.t.
mf
pos. ord.
5:4
f sub.
p
f sub.

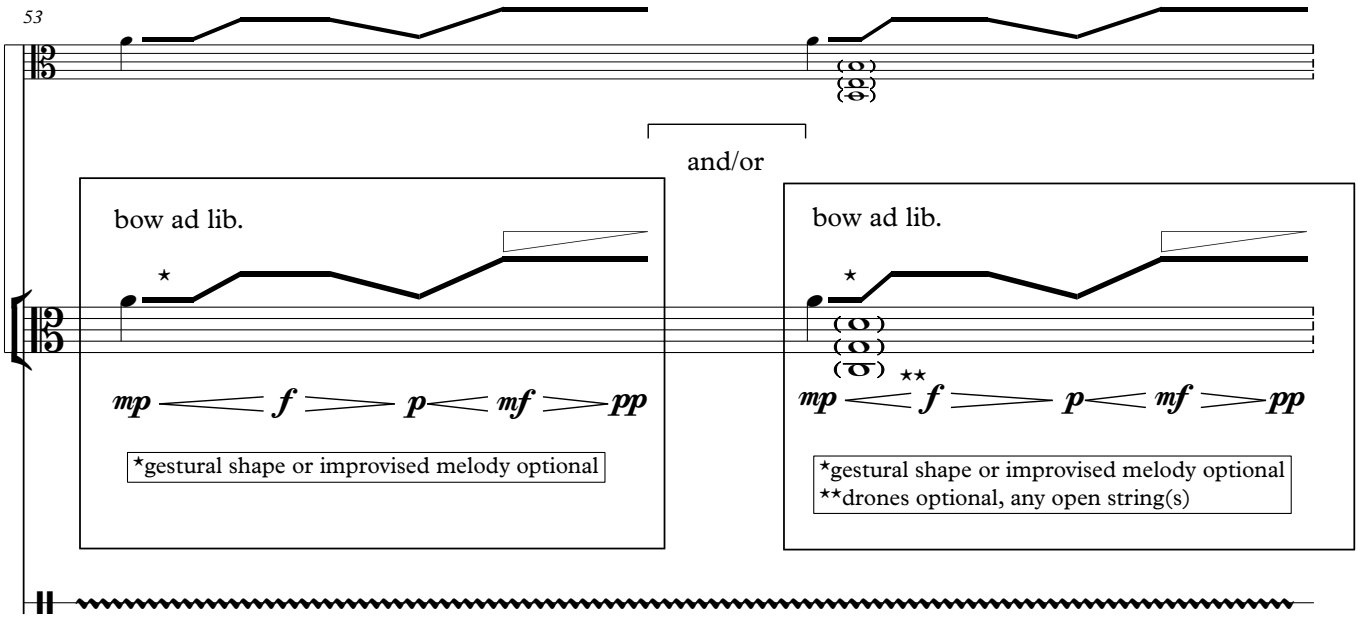

47
m.s.p.
p
molto cresc. poco a poco
fff

## 4. The need for suplemental oxygen

**Lilting** c. ♩ = 44

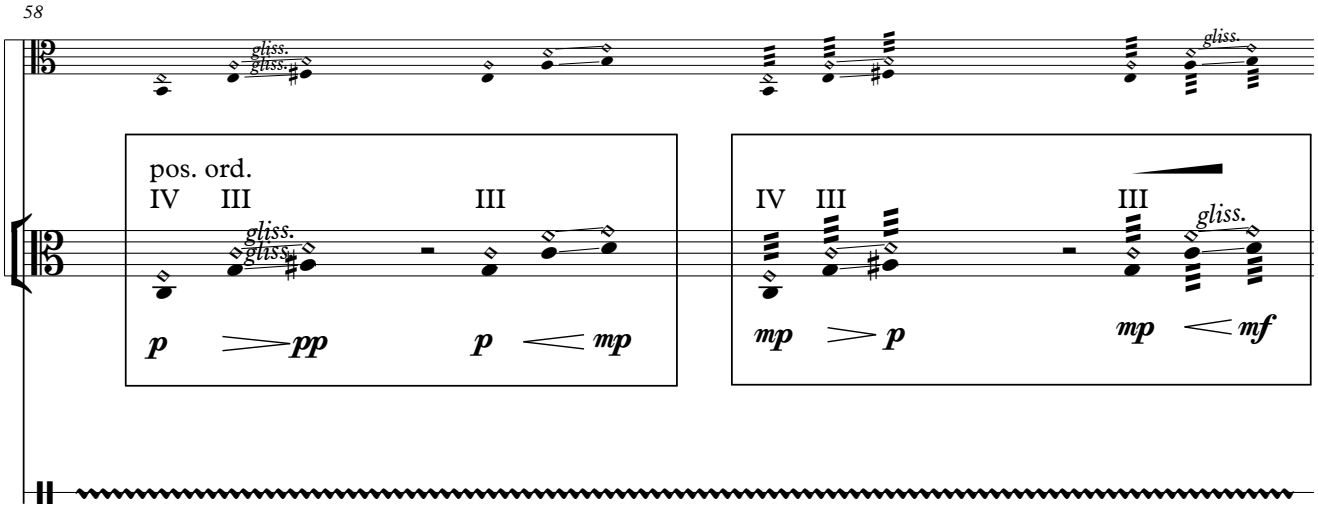


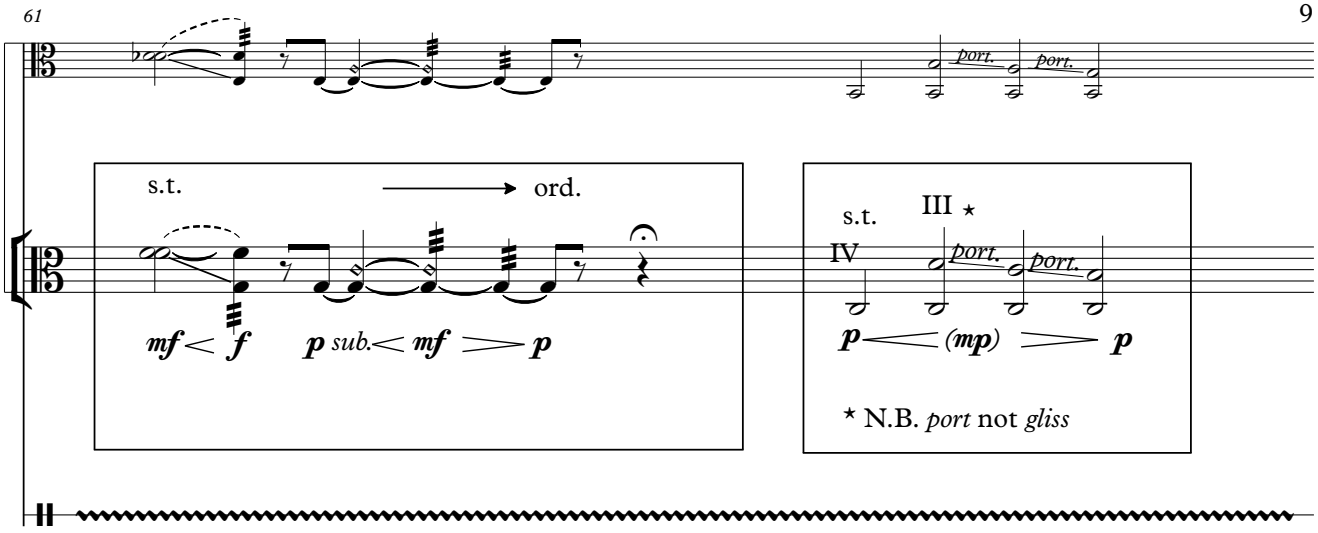



## 5. So that your eyes can look up at the sky

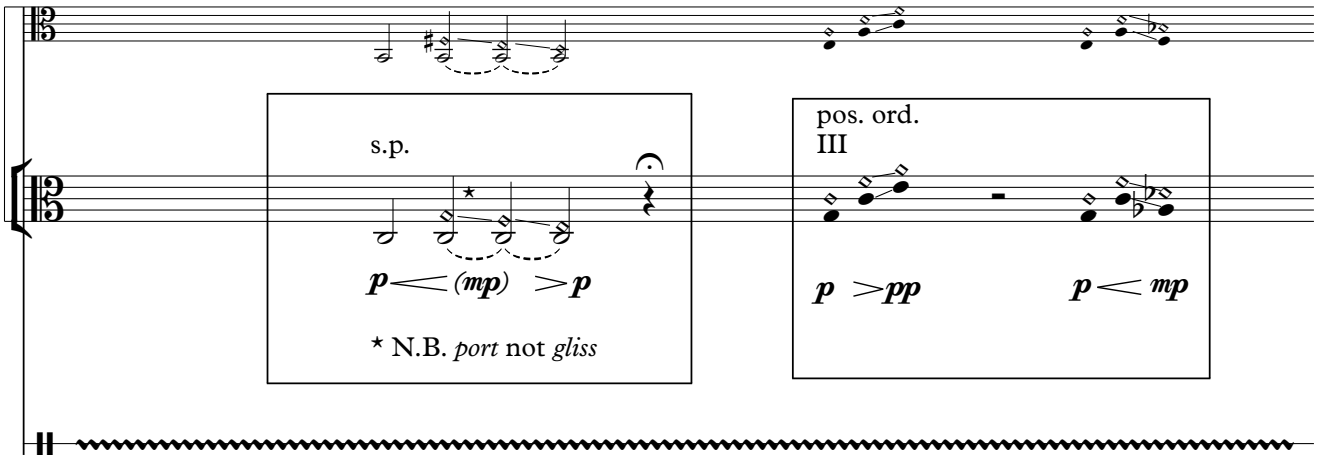
**With hope** c. ♪ = 56 (or as slow as you can bear)



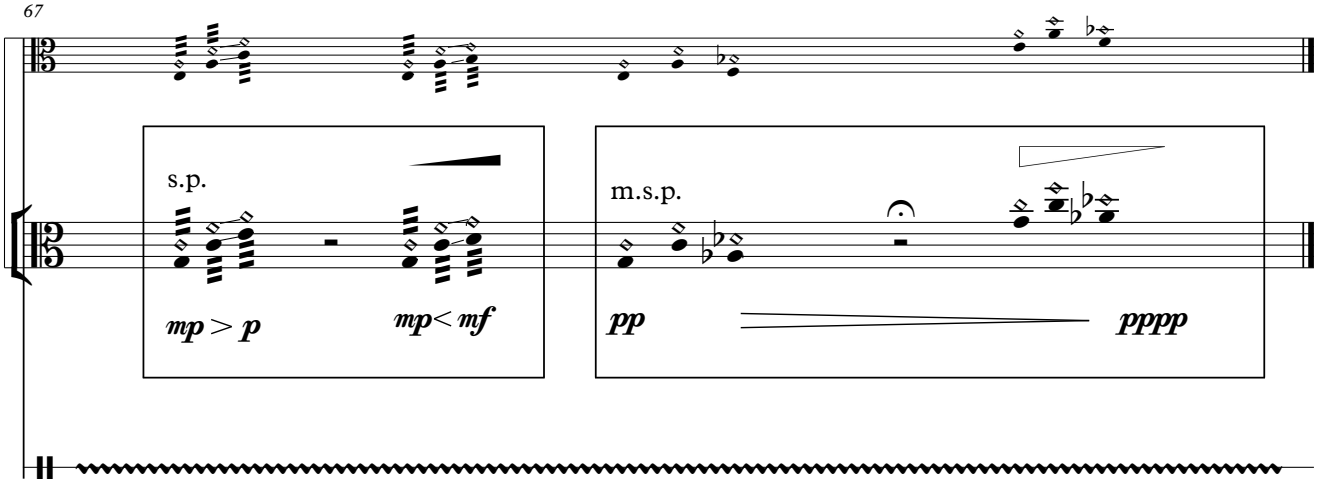
61


port.
port.
s.t.
ord.
mf < f
p sub. < mf > p
s.t.
III ⋆
IV
port.
port.
p < (mp) > p
⋆ N.B. port not gliss

63


s.p.
p < (mp) > p
⋆ N.B. port not gliss
pos. ord.
III
p > pp
p < mp

67


s.p.
mp > p
mp < mf
m.s.p.
pp
pppp