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**Title**

Tinnitus

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2020

# ARASH MAJD

## Tinnitus

for string quartet

**Written for** Lyris Quartet

**Premiered** by Lyris Quartet on  
June 06, 2019, during the Lyris  
Quartet residency at the  
University of California, Los  
Angeles.

## Program Notes:

Tinnitus is the medical term for noises heard within the brain or head, such as hissing, roaring, ringing, or “crickets,” when there are no external physical sounds present. It is estimated that 50 million American adults currently experience some degree of tinnitus.

For the majority of these 50 million, tinnitus is no more than an occasional nuisance. However, the volatility of tinnitus means the condition can change from day to day—even hour to hour—as the noises can vary in location, pitch, and volume, turning suddenly from a low roar to a high squeal or whine. In more mild manifestations, these noises can be annoying or distracting, and when they become severe, may cause serious disruptions, such as anxiety, loss of concentration, and sleep interruption.

In March 2018, I was diagnosed with tinnitus. In my head, I hear an indefinite pedal consisting of very high-pitched textures. These textures shift to higher pitches when I consume caffeine or sweets. The noises also become louder and more dissonant when I experience stress. Sometimes, the noises in my head wake me up in the middle of the night do not allow me to go back to sleep for quite a while. I have asked for counsel from multiple doctors, but they are helpless to help me. In the darkest of these times, I accepted tinnitus as a parasite to my existence.

About six months after my diagnosis, and tired of feeling like a victim of my own brain, I decided to use my tinnitus as inspiration and foundation for composition. I found the instruments closest to the noises in my head were string instruments, particularly violin, viola, and the high-pitch registers of cello.

In my piece *Tinnitus*, I decided to use the indefinite pedal in my brain as a fluctuating background, fading in and out and layered beneath dynamic elements of resonance, volume, colors, textures, and timbre as alternating middle and foreground materials. My composition uses the sound of my indefinite pedal as a subject which transforms into other materials before morphing back to itself. In this way, *Tinnitus* is formed by a series of timbral transformational variations, and the presence of resonance, silence, and volume supports the function of timbre in this piece. Essentially, *Tinnitus* is a timbre-based composition that uses timber as the primary element of form.

I believe that if I remain passionate, committed, and curious about a goal, there is a power in the universe that will ultimately support me in achieving that goal. I believe in perseverance, and making the best of seemingly unpleasant events and hopeless situations. As a composer, I am committed to compositions that are both high quality and organic and authentic musical expressions. I have come to accept tinnitus as a gift, as part of my destiny, in building authentic sonic worlds in my compositions. I will use my symptoms as a source of inspiration to compose emotionally and intellectually engaging pieces for my listeners.

# Performance Notes

## Performance Notes for 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Violin:

s.p.3: sul ponticello, bow on the bridge.

s.p.2: sul ponticello, bow right before the bridge.

s.p.1: sul ponticello, bow right before s.p.2.

To see a video of different types of sul ponticello, click on the link below.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHPy0ecSav0&list=PL0\\_riGVa\\_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbH0abTeX&index=10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHPy0ecSav0&list=PL0_riGVa_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbH0abTeX&index=10)



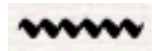
: Tremolo with right hand and trill with left hand. Start in s.p.2 and move the bow all the way up to the indicated pitch over the fingerboard.

**Sea gull effect:** Please see the blew link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6l4SYXISBCc>



: Artificial harmonic. Slide up then slide down.



: Vibrato



: Wide Vibrato



: Play beneath the bridge

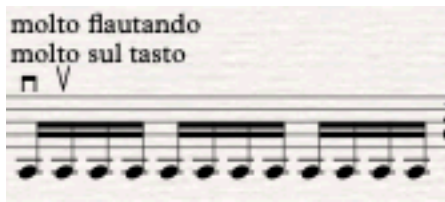


: Snap Pizzicato



: Click on the link below to see the video of this motive.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBmiiPejcMM>



: Please click on the link below to see to see a video of this technique.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pLVZjwRslQ&index=2&list=PL0\\_riGVa\\_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pLVZjwRslQ&index=2&list=PL0_riGVa_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX)

## Performance Notes for Viola:

s.p.3: sul ponticello, bow on the bridge.

s.p.2: sul ponticello, bow right before the bridge.

s.p.1: sul ponticello, bow right before s.p.2.

To see a video of different types of sul ponticello, click on the link below.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHPy0ecSav0&list=PL0\\_riGVa\\_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX&index=10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHPy0ecSav0&list=PL0_riGVa_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX&index=10)



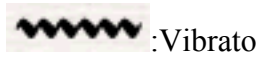
: Tremolo with right hand and trill with left hand. Start in s.p.2 and move the bow all the way up to the indicated pitch over the fingerboard.

**Sea gull effect:** Please see the blew link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6l4SYXISBCc>



: Artificial harmonic. Slide up then slide down.



: Vibrato



: Wide Vibrato



: Play beneath the bridge

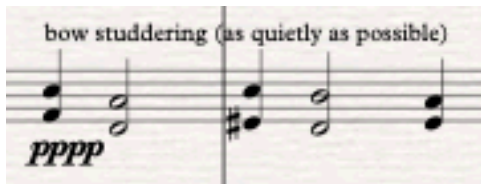


: Snap Pizzicato



: Click on the link below to see the video of this motive.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBmiiPejcMM>

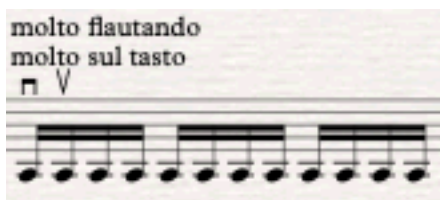


: Please click on the link below to see to see a video of this technique. Forward the video to 3':54''

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LepZQu2tEZw&index=3&list=PL0\\_riGVa\\_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LepZQu2tEZw&index=3&list=PL0_riGVa_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX)



: Slide up and then down.

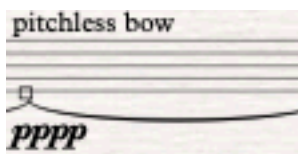


: Please click on the link below to see a video of this technique.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pLVZjwRslQ&index=2&list=PL0\\_riGVa\\_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pLVZjwRslQ&index=2&list=PL0_riGVa_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX)

**Bar 71:** Please click on the link below to see a video of the desired sound.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2GPTY\\_MYkM&index=4&list=PL0\\_riGVa\\_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2GPTY_MYkM&index=4&list=PL0_riGVa_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX)



: Please click on the link below to see a video of this technique. Forward the video to 3':00

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2GPTY\\_MYkM&index=4&list=PL0\\_riGVa\\_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2GPTY_MYkM&index=4&list=PL0_riGVa_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX)



: Please click on the link below to see a video of this technique.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVz6B4\\_Ug1U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVz6B4_Ug1U)

## Performance notes for Cello:

s.p.3: sul ponticello, bow on the bridge.

s.p.2: sul ponticello, bow right before the bridge.

s.p.1: sul ponticello, bow right before s.p.2.

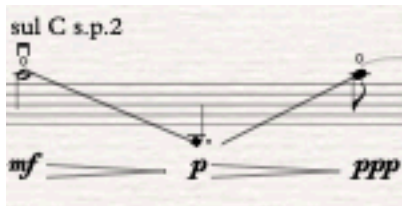
To see a video of different types of sul ponticello, click on the link below.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHPy0ecSav0&list=PL0\\_riGVa\\_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX&index=10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHPy0ecSav0&list=PL0_riGVa_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX&index=10)



: Tremolo with right hand and trill with left hand.

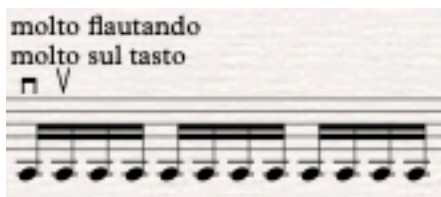
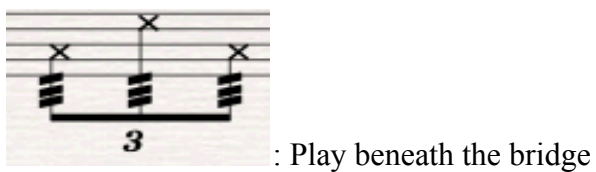
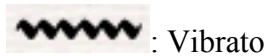
Start in s.p.2 and move the bow all the way up to the indicated pitch over the fingerboard.



: Please click on the link below to see a video of this technique.

Forward the video to 1:00

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awQBh9ADp98>



: Please click on the link below to see a video of this technique.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pLVZjwRslQ&index=2&list=PL0\\_riGVa\\_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pLVZjwRslQ&index=2&list=PL0_riGVa_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX)



# Tinnitus

Arash Majd  
2019

**♩ = ca.60 clouds**

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*p*

*p*

*n*

*mf*

*p*

*mf*

s.p.2 bowed trem.

molto s.t.

s.p.2

molto s.t.

s.p.2 bowed trem.

s.p.2 bowed trem.

s.p.2 bowed trem.

molto s.t.

s.p.2

molto s.t.

*p*

*f*

*p*

*f*

molto s.t.

s.p.2

molto s.t.

s.p.2

*f*

*pp*

*f*

*pp*

molto s.t.

s.p.2

molto s.t.

s.p.2

*f*

*p*

s.p.2

molto s.t.

*p*

*f*

*p*

*f*

The first system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The music is divided into six measures by vertical bar lines. Above the staves, performance instructions are indicated by dashed arrows: *s.p.2* and *molto s.t.* alternate between measures. Dynamic markings include *p* (piano) and *f* (forte) on the top staves, and *f* and *p* on the bottom staves. In the second measure, the word *sea gull effect* is written above the bass staff with lines pointing to specific notes. In the fifth measure, *s.p.2 sul C* is written above the bass staff. At the bottom of the system, there are two dynamic markings: *mf* and *p* on the left, and *sim.* (simile) in the center.

The second system of the musical score continues with four staves. It is divided into three measures. The first measure has *s.p.2* and *molto s.t.* markings above the staves, with dynamics *p* and *f* on the top staves, and *mf* and *p* on the bottom staves. The second measure features *sul D sea gull effect* above the top staff, *mf* and *p* dynamics, and *sim.* below. The third measure includes *sul G sea gull effect* above the top staff, *mf* and *p* dynamics, and *simile.* below. The right side of the system shows a sequence of notes with *s.p.1*, *s.p.2*, and *s.p.3* markings above them, and *ppp* (pianissimo) dynamics below. At the bottom of the system, there are two dynamic markings: *mf* and *p* on the left, and *mf* and *p* on the right. A circled number '1-2' is located at the top right corner of the system.



**B**

The first system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top staff (Violin I) begins with a *mf* dynamic and a half note. The second staff (Violin II) has a *pp* dynamic and a half note. The third staff (Viola) has a *pp* dynamic and a half note, with a *mf* dynamic later in the measure. The bottom staff (Cello/Double Bass) has a *mf* dynamic and a half note. Performance instructions include *s.p.1* (sul ponticello) for the Violin I and Cello/Double Bass, *s.p.3* (sul ponticello) for the Violin II, *ord.* (ordine) for the Violin II and Cello/Double Bass, *sul C* (sul tasto) for the Viola, and *bring out* for the Violin II. Dynamic markings include *pp*, *mp*, *p*, and *ppp*.

**Note for viola :** use natural harmonics on the C strings only, at the end of the finger board and beyond if necessary. use one finger for the melody, sliding between pitches. the melody need not to be executed precisely. extraneous harmonics, particularly in passing between the notated pitches, are desirable "dirt" in the sound is also desirable, and can be used for expressive effect, particularly at the climax. This applies to bars 29, 71, and 84 as well.

The second system of the musical score continues with four staves. The top staff (Violin I) has a *pp* dynamic and a half note. The second staff (Violin II) has a *pp* dynamic and a half note. The third staff (Viola) has a *ppp* dynamic and a half note. The bottom staff (Cello/Double Bass) has a *mp* dynamic and a half note. Performance instructions include *s.p.3* (sul ponticello) for the Violin I and Viola, *s.p.2* (sul ponticello) for the Violin II and Cello/Double Bass, and *ord. 3* (ordine) for the Violin II and Cello/Double Bass. Dynamic markings include *pp*, *p*, *mp*, and *sffp*.

C

Violin I (s.p.2): *p*, *fff*, *pp*, *ord.*

Violin II (s.p.1): *ord. bring out*, *sul G*, *fff*, *pp*, *mp*

Viola (s.p.1): *mf*, *fff*, *pp*

Cello/Double Bass (s.p.2 sul C): *p*, *mf*, *fff*, *pp*, *s.p.2*, *3*

Violin I (s.p.1): *3*, *ppp*, *mf*, *pp*, *sul D*

Violin II (s.p.2): *3*, *p*, *s.p.2*

Viola (s.p.2): *3*, *pp*, *s.p.3*, *s.p.1*, *mp*

Cello/Double Bass (s.p.1): *p*, *s.p.3*, *s.p.2 sul G*, *molto s.t.*, *s.p.3*, *pp*

**D**

**♩ = ca.40 sustaining decays**

s.p.2 → s.p.1 → ord. sul G  
 s.p.2 → s.p.1 → ord. sul G  
 s.p.2 → s.p.1 → s.p.1 sul G → ord.  
 s.p.2 sul C → ord. sul C

ff  
 ff  
 ff  
 ppp  
 14  
 pp  
 10  
 ppp

14 pp  
 10 ppp  
 14 pp  
 10 ppp

s.p.2  
 ppp 14 pp 10 ppp 14 pp 10 ppp  
 s.p.2  
 ppp 14 pp 10 ppp 14 pp 10 ppp  
 s.p.2 → molto s.t.  
 ppp p

♩ = ca. 60

s.p.2 -----> molto s.t. -----> s.p.2  
 s.p.2 -----> molto s.t. -----> s.p.2  
 s.p.2 -----> molto s.t. -----> s.p.2  
 s.p.2 -----> molto s.t. -----> s.p.2 -----> molto s.t. ----->

*pp* *mf* *pp* *mf*  
*pp* *ppp* *p* *f* *p* *p* *pp*

14 *pp* 10 *ppp*  
 14 *ppp* 10 *pp* 10 *ppp* 14 *pp* 10 *ppp*

beneath the bridge  
 beneath the bridge  
 beneath the bridge  
 beneath the bridge

3 3 3 3

s.p.2 -----> molto s.t. ----->

*p* *f*

*ppp* *pp* *ppp*  
*ppp* 14 *pp* 10 *ppp*  
*ppp* 14 *pp* 10 *ppp* 14 *pp* 10 *ppp*

s.p.2 -----> molto s.t. ----->

*pp* *pp*

sea gull effect  
*pp* *p*

beneath the bridge  
 beneath the bridge

3 3







This system contains four staves of music. The first two staves are in treble clef with a 2/4 time signature. The first staff has a *fff* dynamic marking. The second staff is marked "ord." and also has a *fff* dynamic marking. The third staff is in bass clef with a 2/4 time signature, also marked "ord." and *fff*. The fourth staff is in bass clef with a 2/4 time signature. Above the staves, there are several horizontal lines with arrows indicating phrasing or articulation, labeled with "s.p.2", "s.p.3", and "pp".

This system contains four staves of music. The first two staves are in treble clef with a 2/4 time signature. The first staff has a *ppp* dynamic marking. The second staff has a *ppp* dynamic marking. The third staff is in bass clef with a 2/4 time signature, marked "pitchless bow dampen multiple fingers" and *pppp*. The fourth staff is in bass clef with a 2/4 time signature. Above the staves, there are several horizontal lines with arrows indicating phrasing or articulation, labeled with "s.p.1", "s.p.2", "s.p.3", "p", and "pp".

**H** molto flautando molto sul tasto

mp

ord.

s.p.1 → s.p.2 → s.p.3

pp

ppp

molto flautando molto sul tasto

mp

ord.

s.p.1 → s.p.2 → s.p.3

p

ppp sul C

ord.

s.p.1 → s.p.2

ppp

molto flautando molto sul tasto

mp

p

s.p.2

pp

mf

Detailed description of the first system: This system contains four staves. The top staff is marked 'mp' and 'molto flautando molto sul tasto'. The second staff is marked 'mp' and 'molto flautando molto sul tasto'. The third staff is marked 'mp' and 'molto flautando molto sul tasto'. The bottom staff is marked 'mp' and 'molto flautando molto sul tasto'. The system is divided into three measures. The first measure is marked 'ord.' and 'pp'. The second measure is marked 's.p.1', 's.p.2', and 's.p.3', with dynamics 'pp' and 'ppp'. The third measure is marked 's.p.1', 's.p.2', and 's.p.3', with dynamics 'ppp sul C' and 'ppp'. The bottom staff has a dynamic of 'p' in the first measure, 'pp' in the second, and 'mf' in the third.

pp

mp

ord.

pp

ad lib.

pp

mf

mp

s.p.2

pp

s.p.3

ppp

Detailed description of the second system: This system contains four staves. The top staff has dynamics 'pp' and 'mp'. The second staff is marked 'ord.' and 'pp'. The third staff is marked 'ad lib.', 'pp', and 'mf'. The bottom staff is marked 's.p.2', 'pp', 's.p.3', and 'ppp'. The system is divided into four measures. The first measure has dynamics 'pp' and 'mp'. The second measure has dynamics 'pp' and 'mf'. The third measure has dynamics 'pp' and 'mp'. The fourth measure has dynamics 'ppp' and 'mf'.

I

s.p.3  
*ppp*  
 s.p.2  
 ord.  
*pp*  
 s.p.3  
*ppp*  
 s.p.2  
*ppp*  
 14 *pp*  
 10 *ppp*  
 s.p.2  
 s.p.3  
 s.p.2  
 molto s.t.  
 s.p.2  
*pp*

s.p.2  
*ppp*  
 14 *pp*  
 10 *ppp*  
 14 *pp*  
 10 *ppp*  
 s.p.2  
 14 *pp*  
 10 *ppp*  
*pp*  
 s.p.3 sul D  
*p*  
 s.p.3  
*p*  
 s.p.2  
 s.p.3  
 14 *ppp*  
 10 *pp*  
 10 *ppp*  
 ord.  
*ppp*  
*ppp*

**J**

*ca.40 emerge from silence*

The first system of music consists of four staves. The first three staves are in treble clef, and the fourth is in bass clef. The time signature changes from 2/4 to 4/4 at the beginning of the second measure. The first staff has dynamics *pp* and *ppp*, with markings for *s.p.2* and *s.p.3*. The second staff has dynamics *ppp* and *pp*, with a marking for *s.p.3*. The third staff has dynamics *p* and *ppp*, with markings for *s.p.2* and *s.p.3*. The fourth staff has a dynamic of *ppp* and a marking for *s.p.1 sul G*. The music features a series of chords with a tremolo effect, indicated by the numbers 14 and 10. The dynamics range from *ppp* to *pp*. The first measure is a whole note chord, and the subsequent measures are half notes.

The second system of music consists of four staves. The first three staves are in treble clef, and the fourth is in bass clef. The time signature is 4/4. The first staff has dynamics *ppp* and *pp*, with a marking for *s.p.2*. The second staff has dynamics *pp* and *ppp*, with a marking for *s.p.2*. The third staff has dynamics *ppp* and *pp*, with a marking for *s.p.2*. The fourth staff has a dynamic of *mp* and a marking for *s.p.1 sul G*. The music features a series of chords with a tremolo effect, indicated by the numbers 14 and 10. The dynamics range from *ppp* to *pp*. The first measure is a whole note chord, and the subsequent measures are half notes. The system ends with a fermata and a marking for *1"-2"*.

ord.

pp ppp pp ppp

ppp pp ppp pp

ppp pp ppp

s.p.3 sul C

pp

**K**

*ca.60 chanting birds*

beneath the bridge

pp 3 sfp sfp

pp sfp sfp

pp sfp sfp

s.p.1

ppp pp pp

pp sfp sfp sfp

s.p.3 sul C

pp



16 **L**  
*reconciliation*

*poco accel.*

Musical score for measures 16-25. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo is *poco accel.*. The score includes dynamic markings: *ppp*, *mp*, *sfp*, *pp*, and *ppp*. Performance instructions include *beneath the bridge* and *ppp* with a hairpin. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4. Slurs and phrasing marks are present. The bottom staff has a double bar line with a diamond symbol and a circled 'e' below it.

*a tempo*

Musical score for measures 26-31. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo is *a tempo*. The score includes dynamic markings: *ppp*, *mf*, *p*, *f*, and *pp*. Performance instructions include *molto s.t.* and *molto s.t.*. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4. Slurs and phrasing marks are present. The bottom staff has a double bar line with a diamond symbol and a circled 'e' below it.



musical score for four staves. The first staff (treble clef) has dynamics *f*, *p*, *f*, *f*, *ppp* and instructions *s.p.2*, *molto s.t.*, *s.p.2*, *molto s.t.*, *s.p.2*. The second staff (treble clef) has dynamics *f*, *pp*, *f*, *f*, *ppp* and instructions *molto s.t.*, *s.p.2*, *molto s.t.*, *s.p.2*. The third staff (bass clef) has dynamics *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *ppp* and instructions *s.p.2*, *molto s.t.*, *s.p.2*, *molto s.t.*, *s.p.2*. The fourth staff (bass clef) has dynamics *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *ppp* and instructions *s.p.2*, *molto s.t.*, *s.p.2*, *molto s.t.*, *s.p.2*. The score features slurs and dynamic hairpins across the staves.

**M**

musical score for four staves. The first staff (treble clef) includes instructions *3"-4"*, *s.p.2*, *beneath the bridge*, *3*, *ord.*, and dynamics *mp*, *ppp*, *mf*, *fff*. The second staff (treble clef) includes *beneath the bridge*, *3*, *ord.*, and dynamics *mp*, *ppp*, *mf*, *fff*. The third staff (bass clef) includes *beneath the bridge*, *3*, *ord. sul G*, and dynamics *mp*, *ppp*, *fff*. The fourth staff (bass clef) includes *beneath the bridge*, *s.p.3*, *3*, *ord. Sul D*, and dynamics *mp*, *ppp*, *fff*. The score features slurs, triplets, and dynamic hairpins.

The first system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The first staff begins with a *ppp* dynamic marking. The second staff also begins with *ppp*. The third staff begins with *ppp* and the instruction "sul A". The fourth staff begins with *ppp*. The second measure of the system contains a *fff* dynamic marking in the first, second, and third staves, and "sul D" in the fourth. The third measure of the system contains a *ppp* dynamic marking in the first, second, and third staves, and *fff ppp* in the fourth. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, slurs, and tremolos.

The second system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top three staves are in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The first three staves begin with a *pp* dynamic marking. The first measure of the system contains a *pp* dynamic marking in the first, second, and third staves. The second measure of the system contains a *pp* dynamic marking in the first, second, and third staves. The third measure of the system contains a *pp* dynamic marking in the first, second, and third staves. The fourth measure of the system contains a *pp* dynamic marking in the first, second, and third staves. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and time signature changes to 5/4.