**UCLA**
**Contemporary Music Score Collection**

**Title**
La'ib an-nard (The Dice Player)

**Permalink**
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7xx088kq

**Author**
Seif, Sami

**Publication Date**
2020

eScholarship.org Powered by the California Digital Library
University of California

# لاعب النرد

# La’ib an-nard

## The Dice Player

For Viola, Cello, and Bass

(2019)

Sami SEIF

سامي سيف

Duration: 12 minutes

Copyright © 2019, Sami Seif

# Program notes:

This piece is loosely based on Mahmoud Darwish's poem which is titled "La'ib an-nard" (The Dice Player). Mahmoud Darwish was born in 1941 in the small village of Al Birwa. At the age of seven, he fled his native Palestine to Lebanon. His village was destroyed soon afterwards. The destruction of his village is mentioned several times in this poem. This poem was written in 2008, the same year of his death. It was his final artistic statement.

The dice player is a metaphor that Darwish uses in order to depict the random elements of life, those outside the locus of one's control: family, hereditary diseases, natural talents, place of birth, biological sex at birth and other circumstances. The text is essentially a reflection on the role of chance and luck in life.

The poem is long – a 23 minute recitation – and difficult to summarize. However, it is a deeply personal, contemplative and expressive narrative, peppered with wise proverbs. Perhaps that is why it continues to be so convincing. Darwish discusses several near-death experiences, his thoughts on femininity and on religion, referencing both Christianity and Islam.

My piece is not intended to be a setting of the words. Rather, it is a commentary. The form of the music is entirely independent from that of the poem. Musically, the first three sections of the piece each cover one distinct element. Though unrelated, all the elements ultimately coalesce and fully integrate into one another.

*La'ib an-nard* was selected as a finalist for the 2019 Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra Call for scores from a pool of more than 2200 entries from more than 90 countries as well as the second prize in Webster University's Young Composers Competition.

# Performance notes:

Whenever the music is unmetered, the performers are given rhythmic flexibility in their realization of the piece. Performers should not count whilst realizing this piece. Rather, they should approximate the rhythm, even stretch it out or condense it for expressive purposes. The most important thing is that the piece moves its audience. Rubato may thus be used freely.

In the first section, the players' barlines do not always align. Therefore, performers are meant to cue and interact with each other. Small tempo indications accompany some of the gestures on the score. These indicate the approximate tempo at which the figure is supposed to be played. That tempo is independent of the general tempo, which is the one always used to determine how long to wait in between figures. Therefore, we have a "main" tempo, and a secondary one in effect at once.

Indications of time in seconds are approximate.

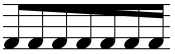
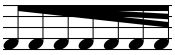
*ahap* as high as possible

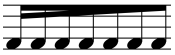
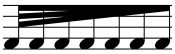
𝄲 quarter-flat: indicates that the note is to be lowered by slightly more than a quart-tone. For example, when this symbol precedes the note E, the desired pitch should be ever so slightly flatter than an exact quarter tone. The heard pitch would thus be closer to E♭ than E♮

(𝅝) indicates that a musical event or rest is supposed to last the approximate duration

⌐5"¬ indicates that what is within the bracket should last 5 seconds

X senza misura, cancels time signature



gradual increase in speed. The absolute note values do not necessarily need to be strictly observed.



gradual decrease in speed. The absolute note values do not necessarily need to be strictly observed.

crescendo from niente

decrescendo to niente

Horizontal arrows indicate a gradual shift from one playing technique to another.

Hairpins with no indication of dynamics are meant to be very light, "expressive" crescendos or decrescendos.

The singing that is required to be carried out is meant to color the sound, and only be on the verge of audibility to the audience. It may be done in any comfortable octave.
Whenever a drone is held, the player must gradually change the color of the sound by moving the bow (ever so slightly) up and down the string(s).

Music which is contained within a box is meant to be played throughout the indicated duration.

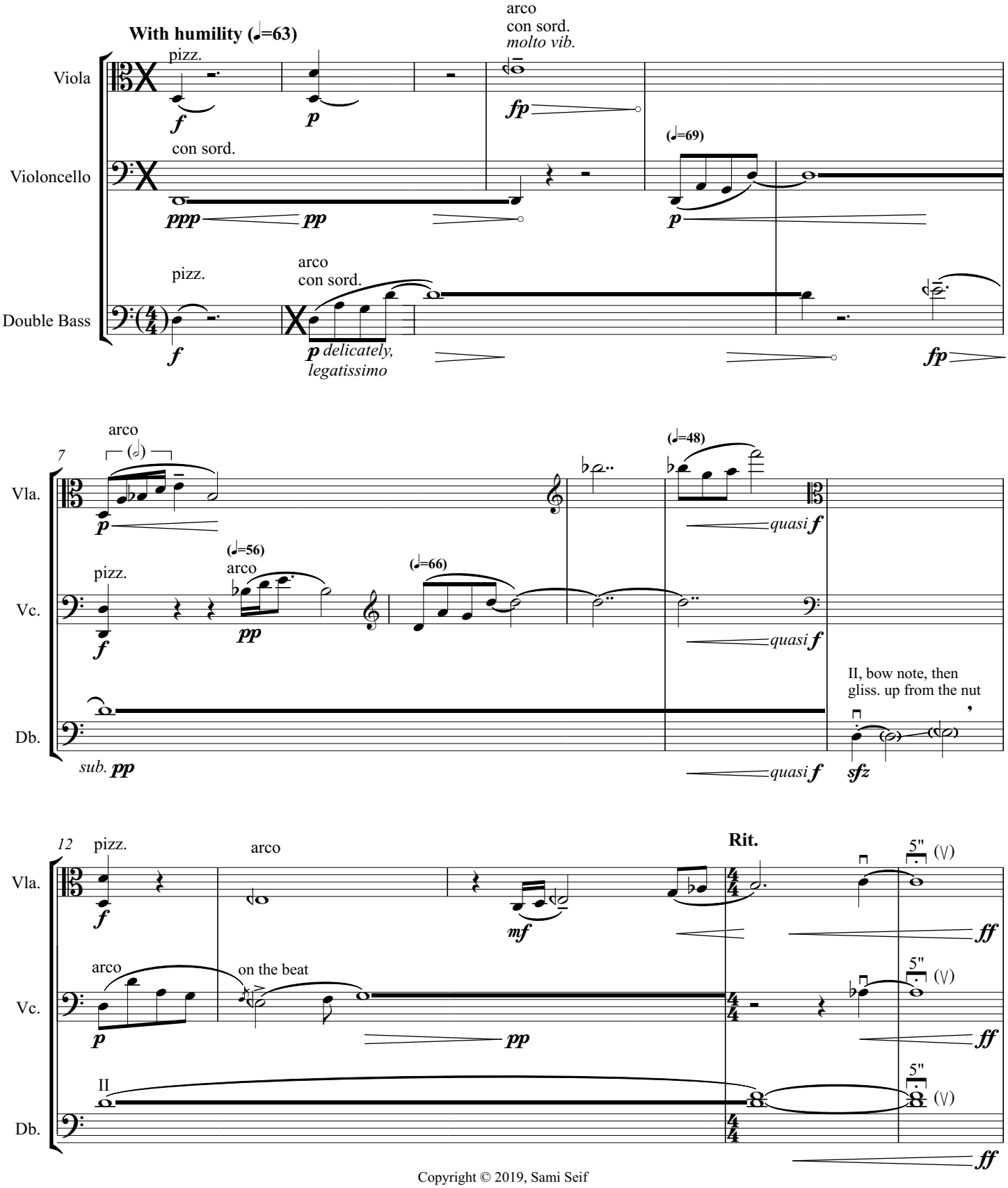
Measure 101 includes an effect which emulates an impulse complexe. An impulse complexe is a granular, electronic music effect pioneered by Karlheinz Stockhausen. It can be heard in the opening of his piece: *Gesang Der Jünglinge.*

# لاعب النرد

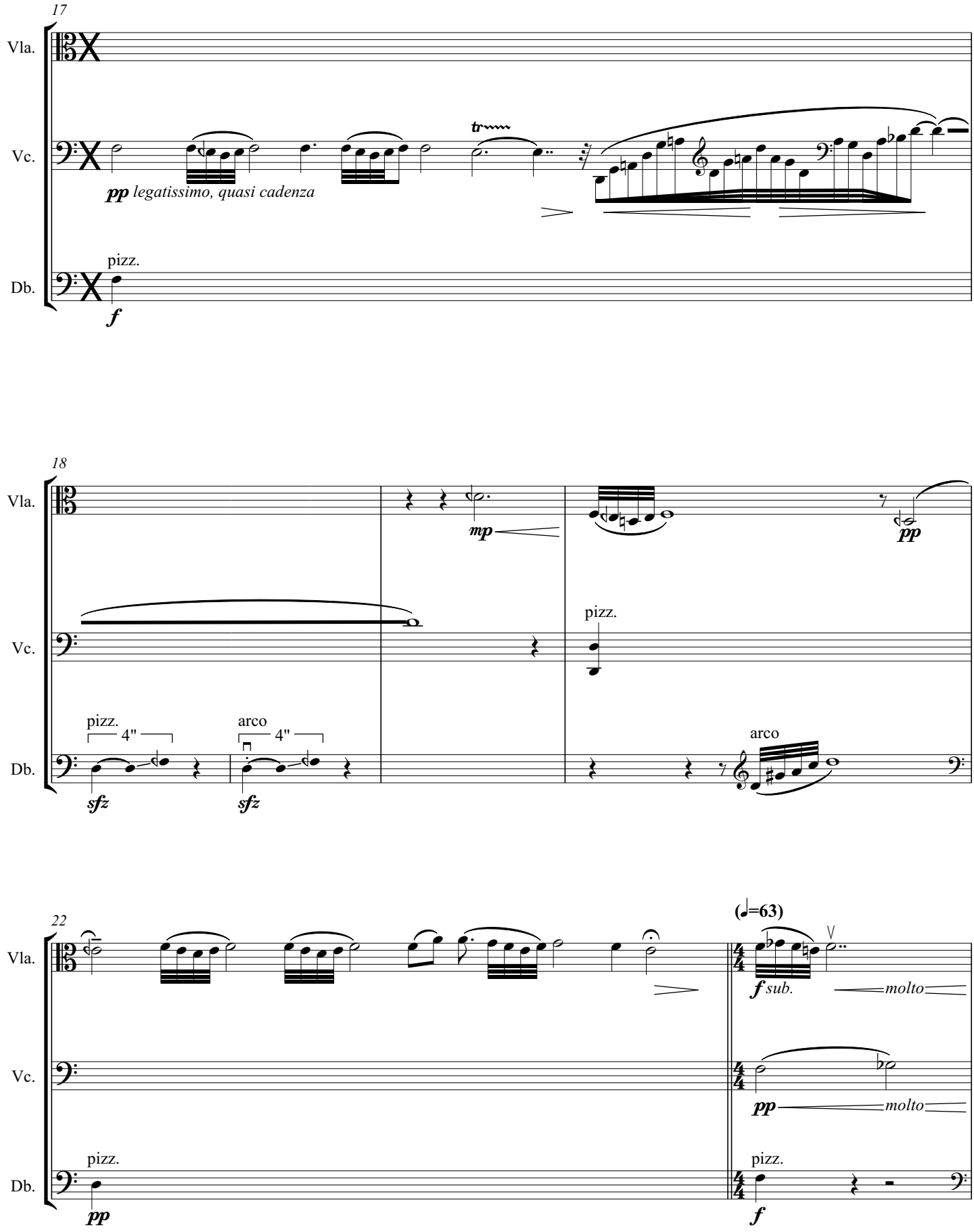
## The Dice Player

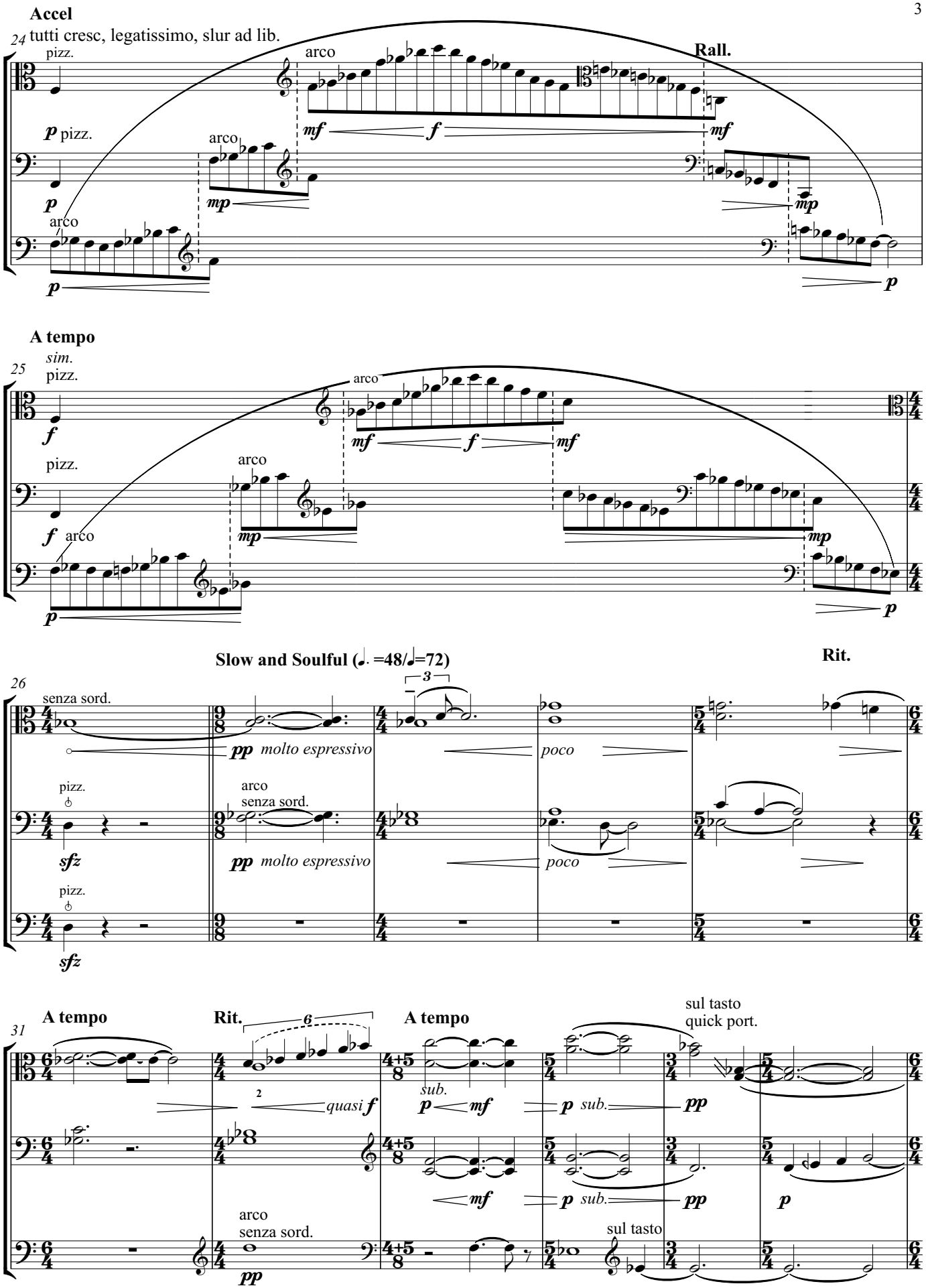
Inspired by Mahmoud Darwish's poem

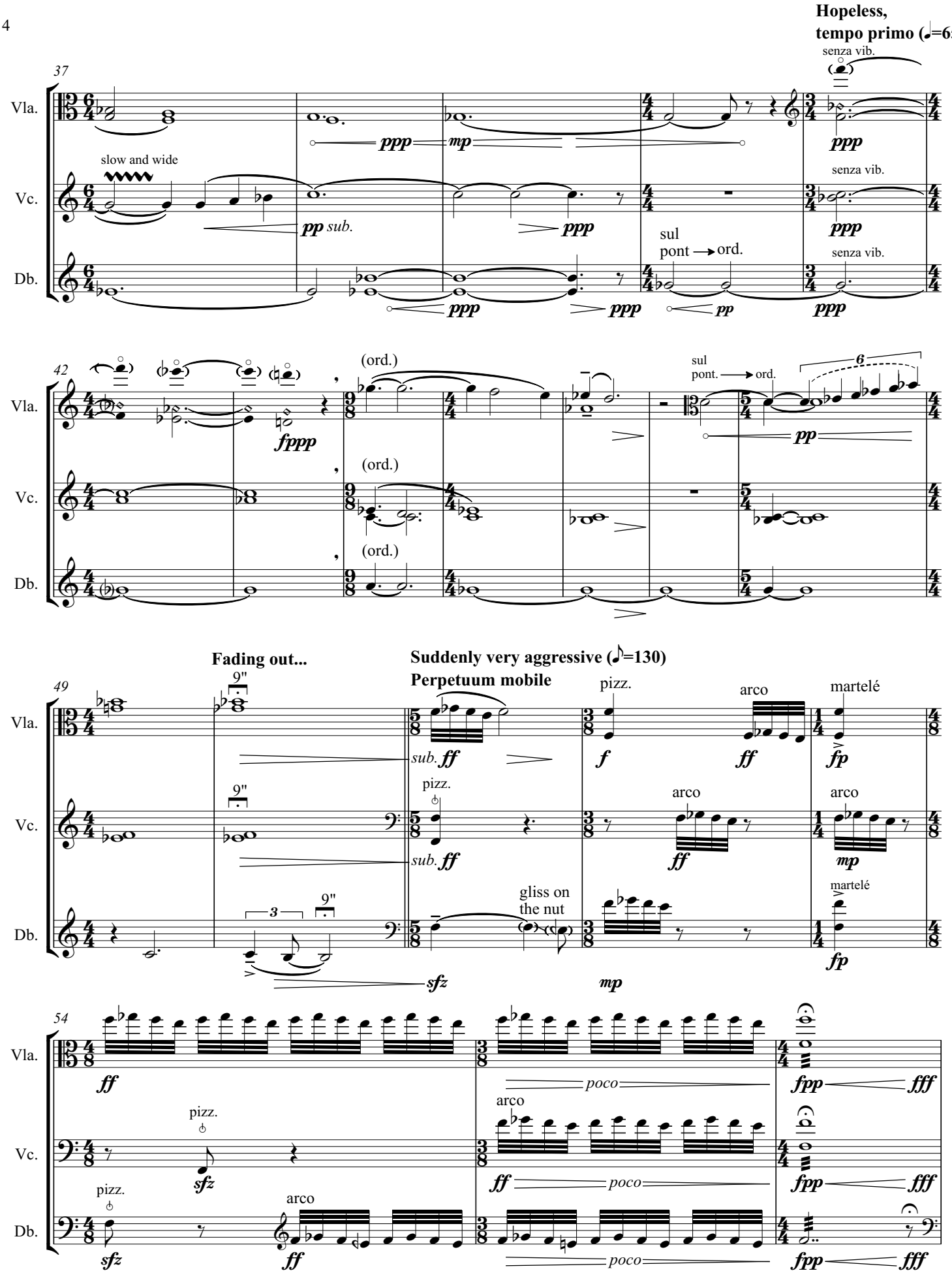
Sami Seif
سامي سيف




Copyright © 2019, Sami Seif


17
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
tr
pp legatissimo, quasi cadenza
pizz.
f
18
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
mp
pp
pizz.
pizz.
4"
arco
4"
sfz
sfz
arco
22
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
(♩=63)
f sub.
molto
pp
molto
pizz.
pp
pizz.
f


Accel
24
tutti cresc, legatissimo, slur ad lib.
Rall.
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
pizz.
arco
A tempo
25
sim.
26
Slow and Soulful (♩. =48/𝅗𝅥=72)
Rit.
senza sord.
molto espressivo
poco
sfz
31
quasi f
sub.
sul tasto
quick port.


Hopeless,
tempo primo (♩=65)
37
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
senza vib.
slow and wide
sul
pont → ord.
42
(ord.)
sul
pont. → ord.
Fading out...
9"
Suddenly very aggressive (♪=130)
Perpetuum mobile
pizz.
arco
martelé
gliss on
the nut
49
54
poco

**Bellicose and defiant**

57 **Perpetuum Mobile (♩=90)**

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

× = finger notes

59

**Slighlty faster (♩=96)**

molto

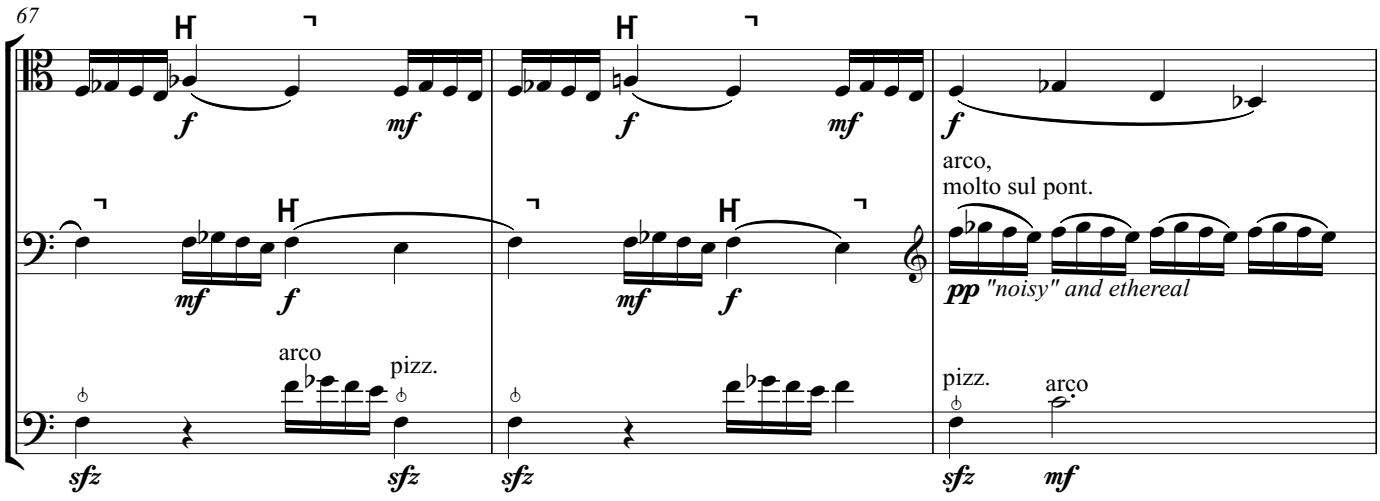
molto

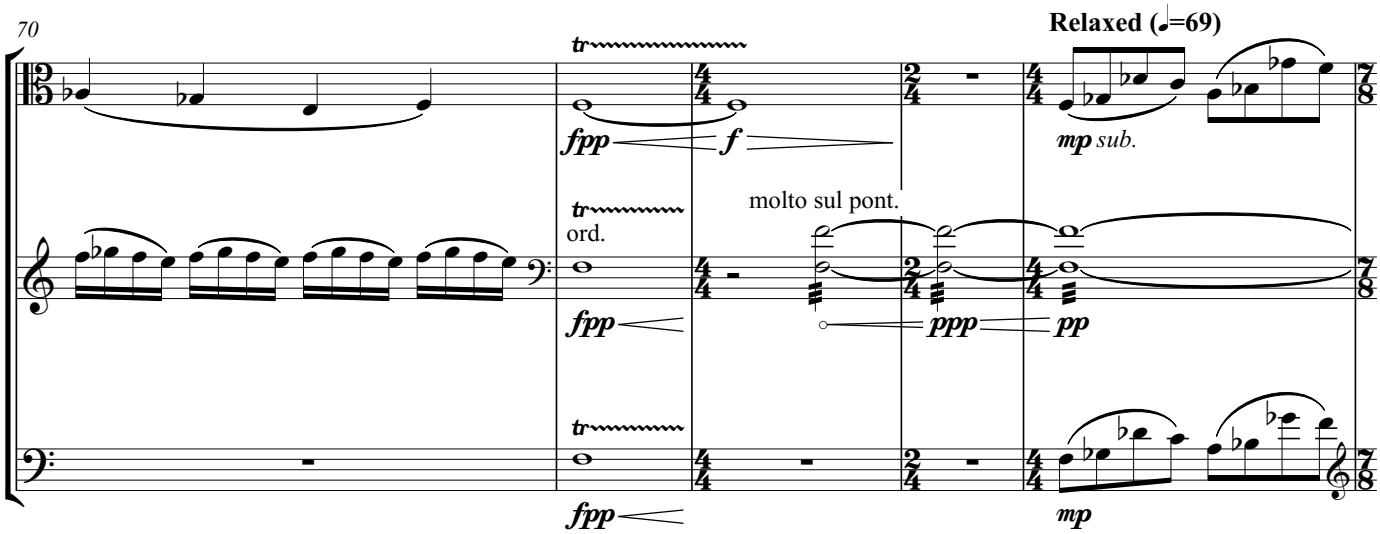
**accel.** (♩=104)

62

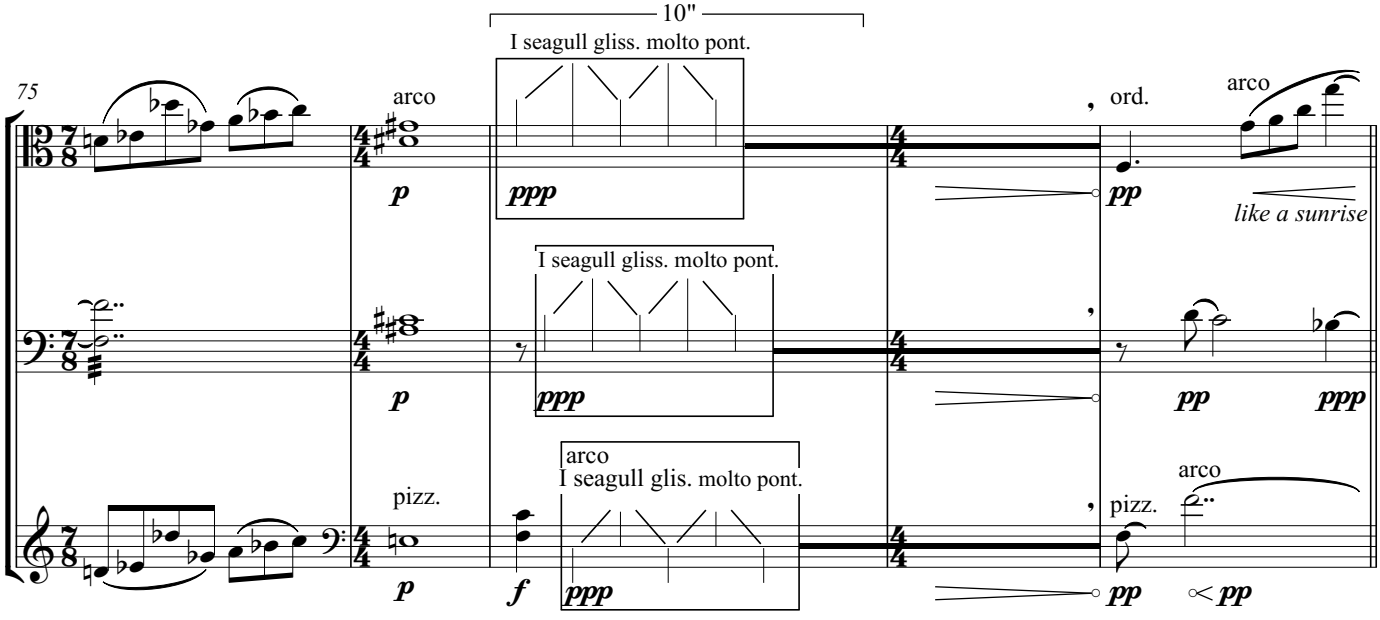
*p quasi cadenza*

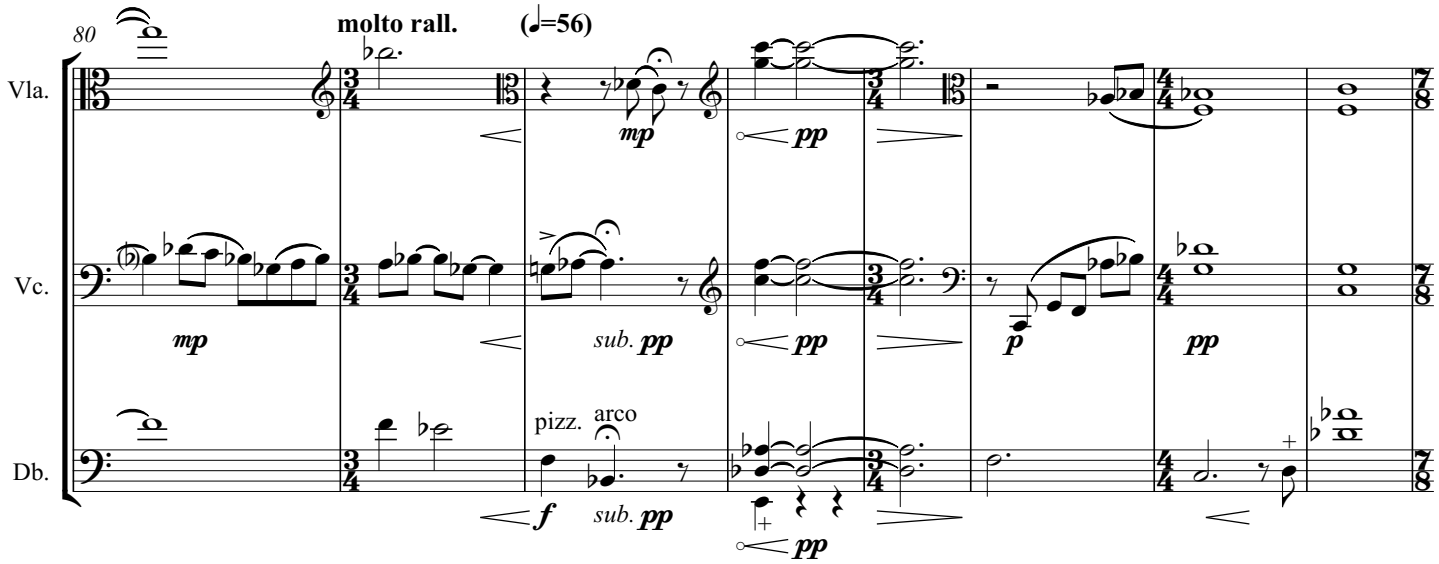
64 **With focus (♩=92)**

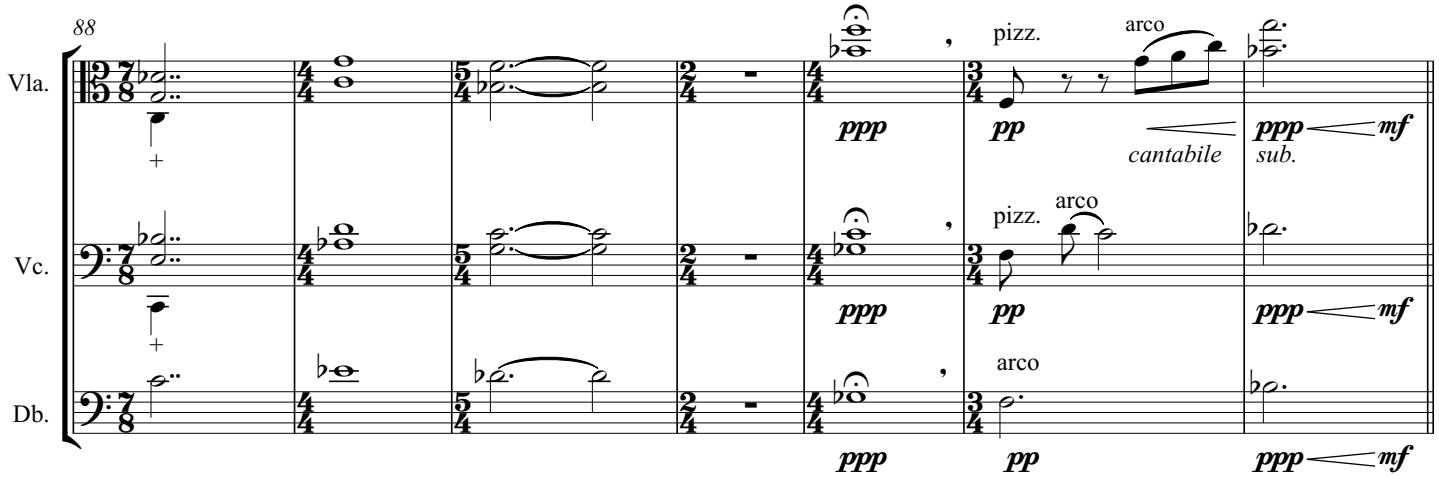


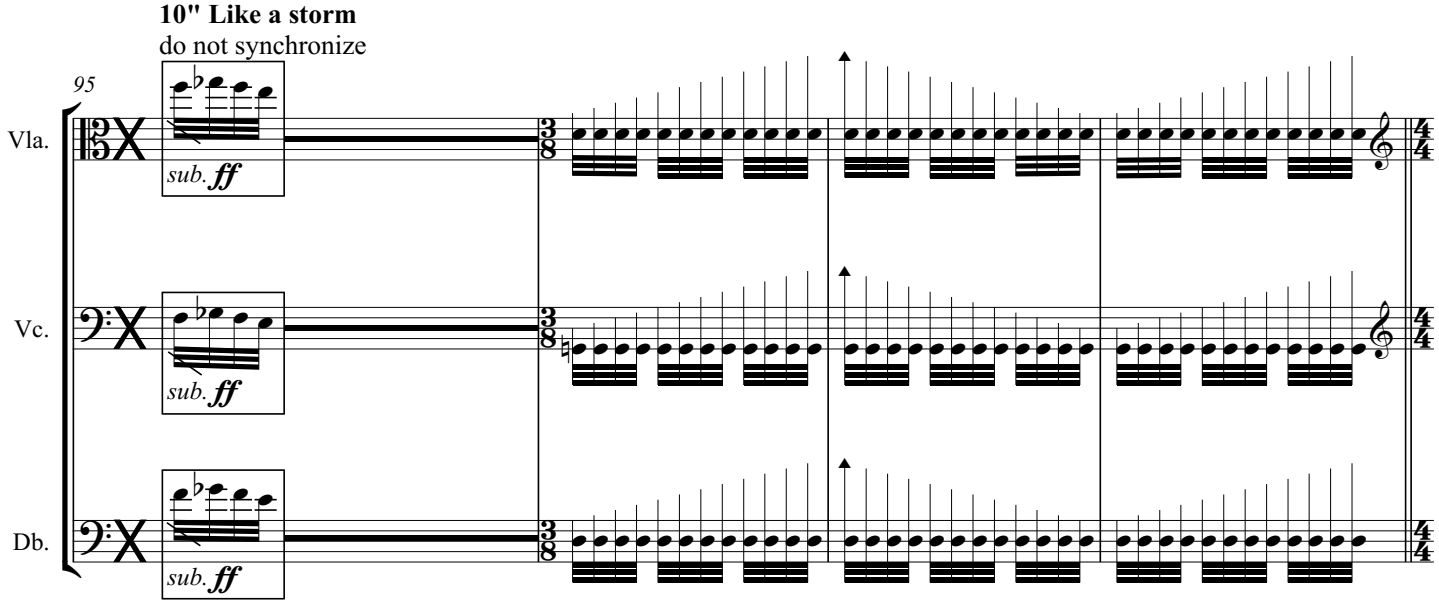



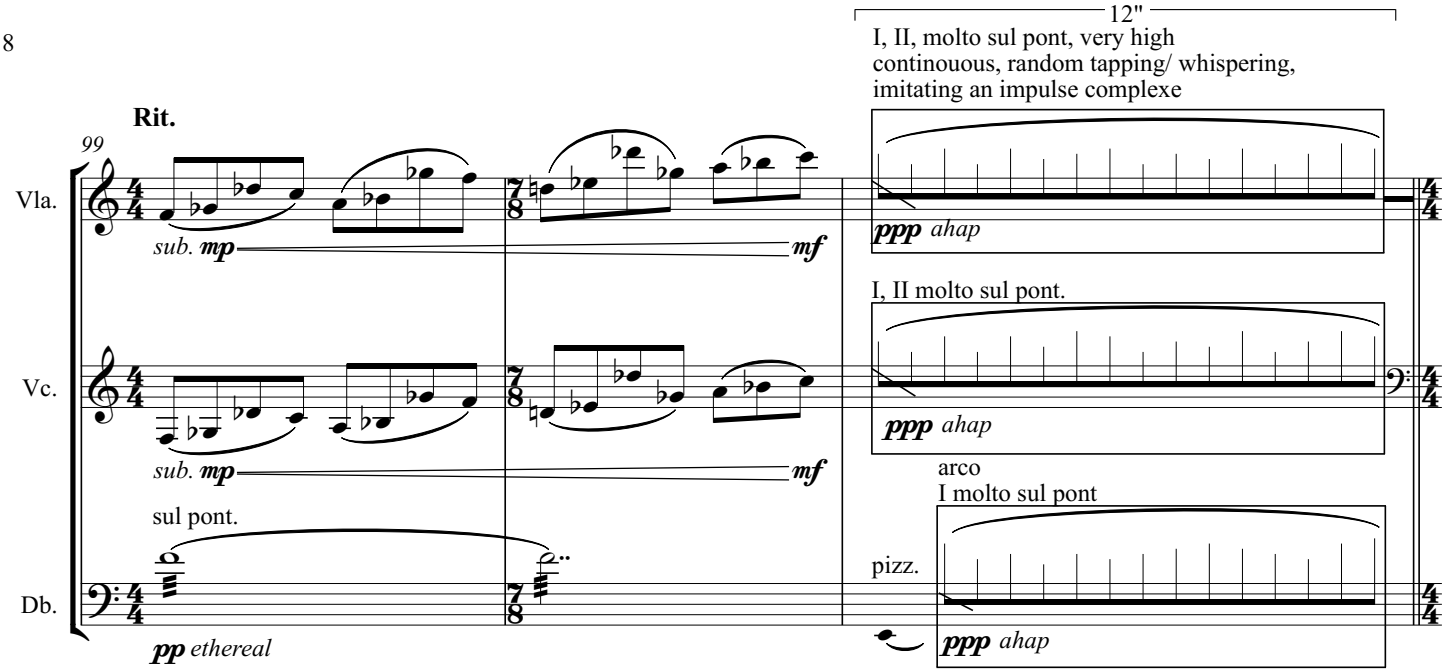

**Sea of Seagulls:** quick, staggered seagulls
Do not synchronize.

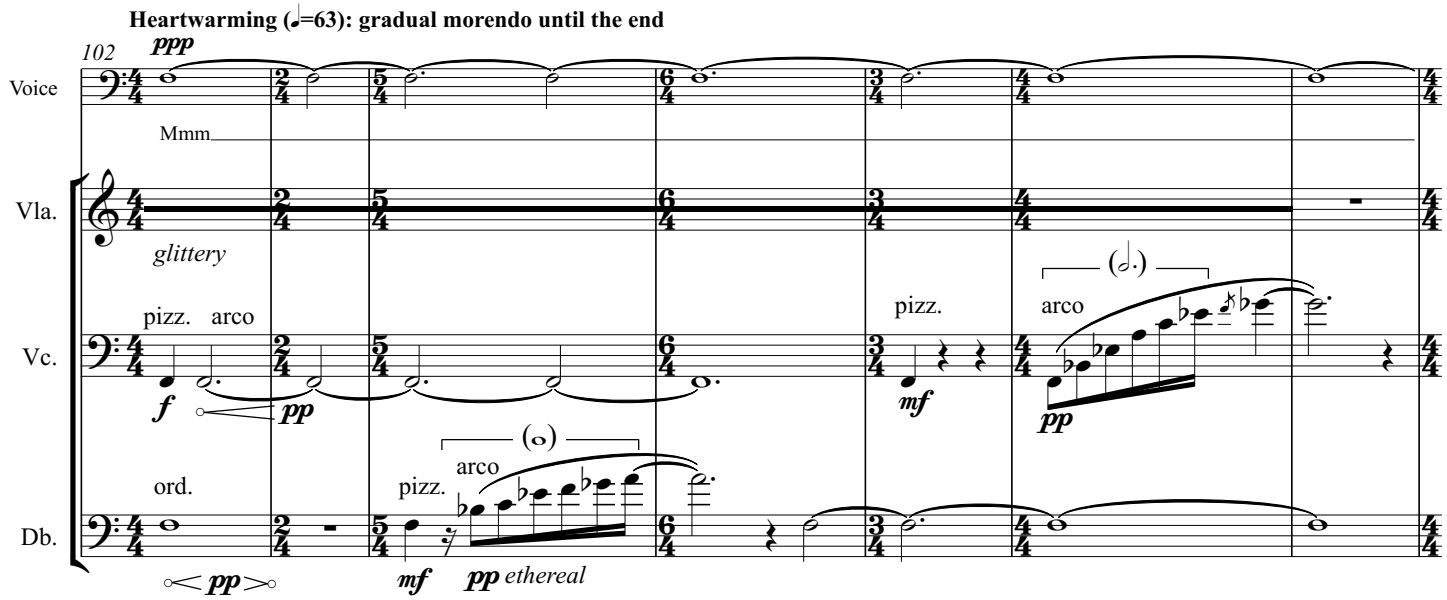


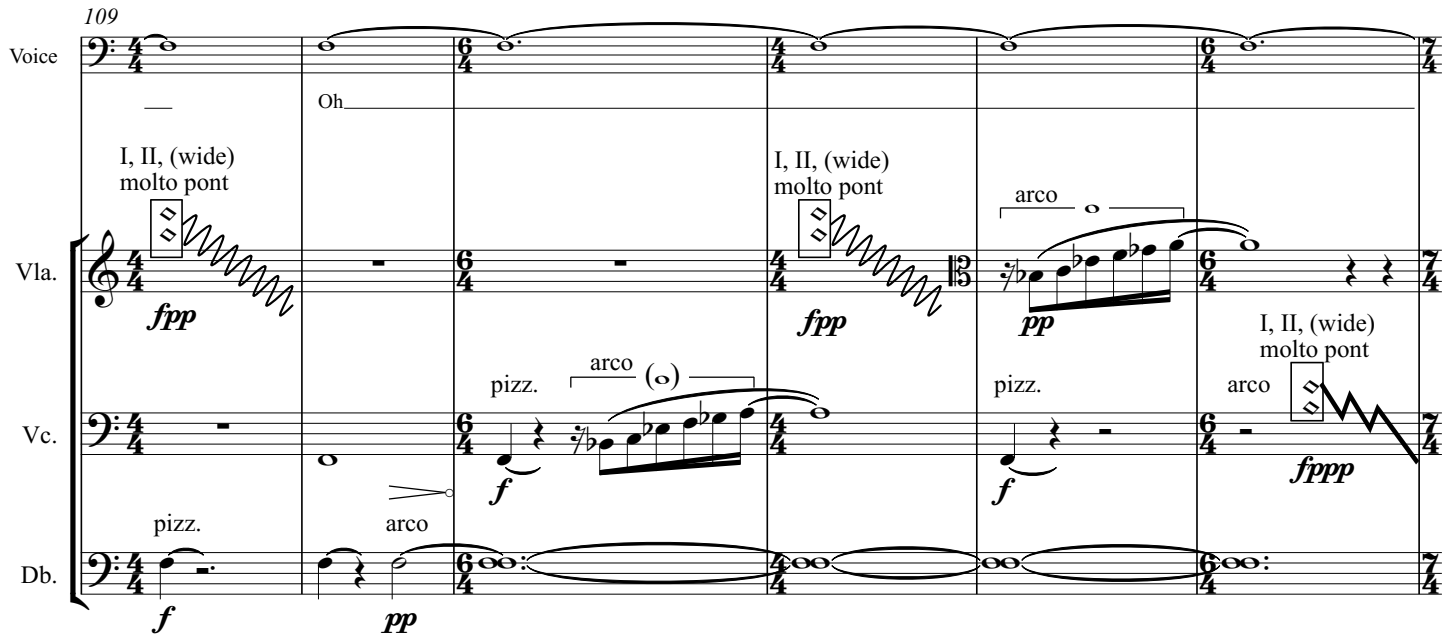

80
molto rall.
(♩=56)
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
mp
pp
sub. pp
p
pizz.
arco
f

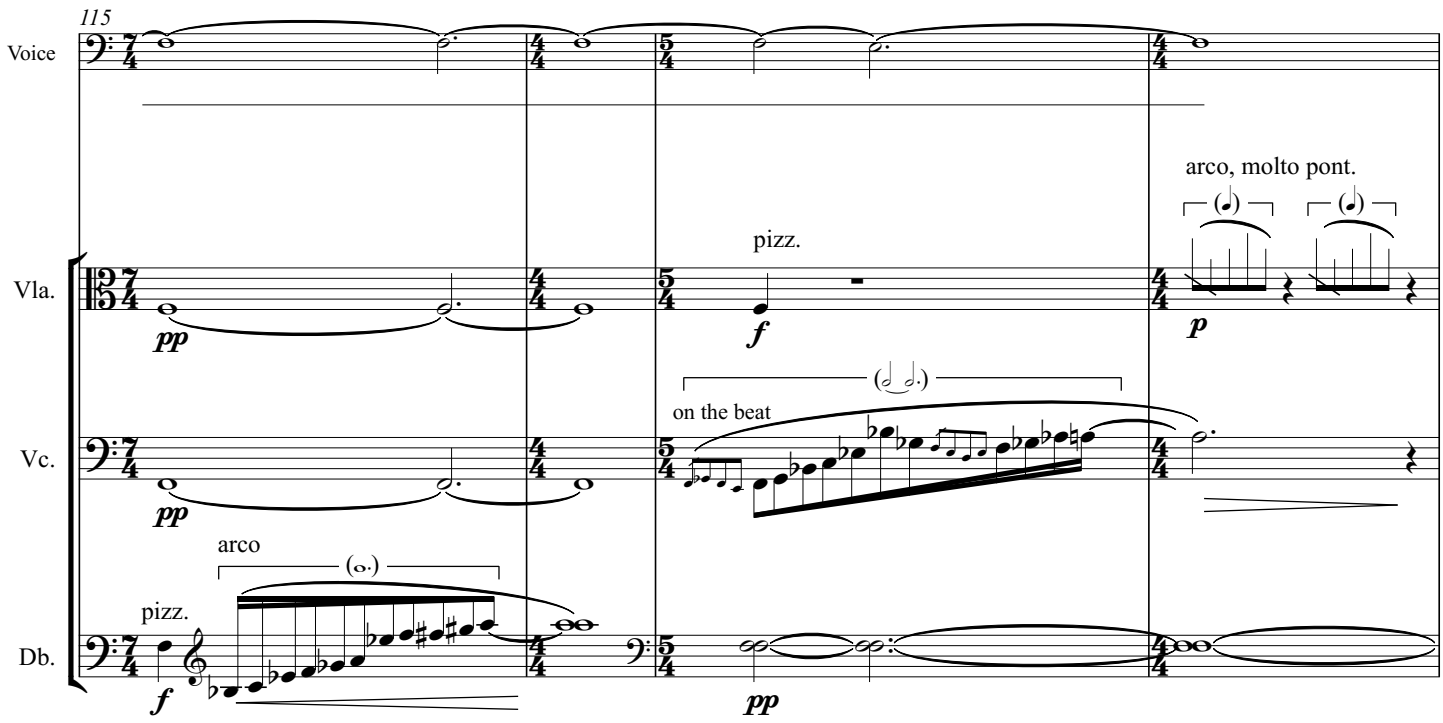

88
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
ppp
pp
pizz.
arco
cantabile
sub.
mf

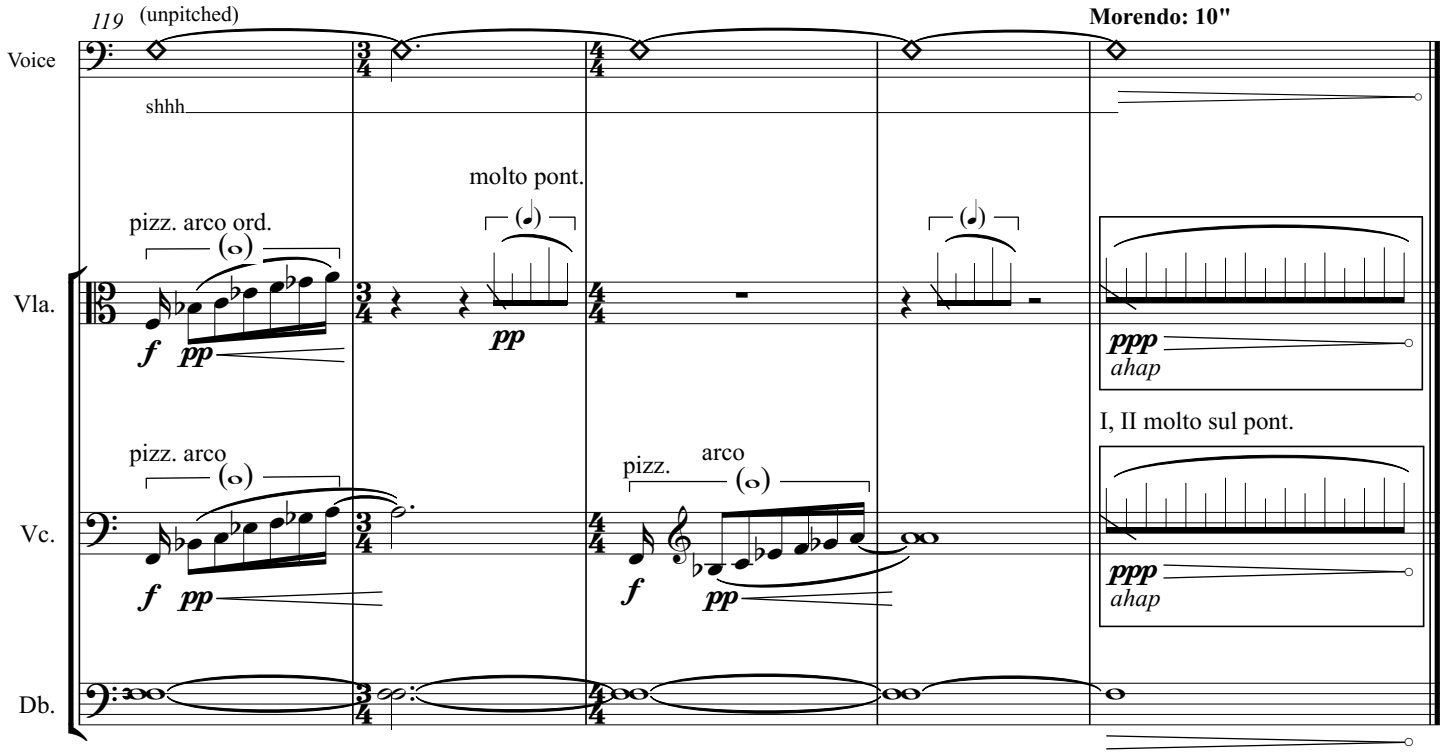

10" Like a storm
do not synchronize
95
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
sub. ff


12"
I, II, molto sul pont, very high
continouous, random tapping/ whispering,
imitating an impulse complexe
Rit.
99
Vla.
sub. mp
mf
ppp ahap
I, II molto sul pont.
Vc.
sub. mp
mf
ppp ahap
arco
I molto sul pont
sul pont.
pizz.
Db.
pp ethereal
ppp ahap


Heartwarming (♩=63): gradual morendo until the end
102
ppp
Voice
Mmm
Vla.
glittery
pizz. arco
Vc.
f
pp
pizz.
mf
arco
pp
ord.
Db.
pp
pizz.
arco
mf
pp ethereal


109
Voice
Oh
I, II, (wide)
molto pont
Vla.
fpp
I, II, (wide)
molto pont
fpp
arco
pp
I, II, (wide)
molto pont
Vc.
pizz.
arco
f
pizz.
f
arco
fppp
pizz.
Db.
f
arco
pp


115
Voice
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
pizz.
arco, molto pont.
on the beat
arco
pizz.


119
(unpitched)
Morendo: 10"
Voice
shhh
molto pont.
pizz. arco ord.
Vla.
ahap
I, II molto sul pont.
pizz. arco
pizz.
arco
Vc.
Db.