Christopher Best

Fragilities

for alto flute (doubling bass flute) and violoncello

2013

bpf Supported by the Britten-Pears Foundation

INTRODUCTION

Fragilities was commissioned by William Sleath and Rohan de Saram through the generosity of The Britten Pears Foundation. The first performance took place at the Performance Centre, Falmouth University on November 27th 2014.

KEY TO SYMBOLS

Common:

A quarter tone sharp and flat (e.g. 11th natural harmonic)

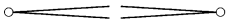
A shade sharper (around 30 cents)

A shade flatter (around 30 cents, e.g. 7th natural harmonic)

s.v. — Senza vibrato

p.v. — Poco vibrato

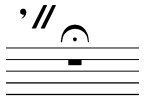
s.v.- - - - ➤ p.v. — Move gradually from s.v. to p.v.



Crescendo from nothing, diminuendo to nothing. Care should be taken not to rush from the borders of audibility

Continue according to the previous boxed instruction

Note head gives pitch only (though white notes are longer than black). Duration is governed by the length of the beam, sometimes also indicated by the number of seconds, the length of a breath, the length of a bow, etc.



(In the **Senza tempo** section) Comma = short break, double slash = medium break, fermata = longer or unspecified break (usually determined by the next cue)

Longer than standard fermata

Flute:

[t] [d] etc. — Consonant added to attack

t.s. — Timbral substitution (alternative fingering of pitch). Resultant small changes in intonation should not be corrected

Flautist should give cue to the cellist

Wait briefly after being cued (waiting time sometimes shown)

Flute takes cue from cello

Key taps

pre-bend down a semitone — Angle the mouthpiece prior to playing in order to achieve notes that would otherwise be outside the instrument's range

Cello:

Cellist should cue the flautist

Cello takes cue from flute

Wait briefly after being cued (waiting time sometimes shown)

Increase bow pressure momentarily (accent)

(D-4) etc. — Play the fourth natural harmonic on the D string (diamond headed note shown is sounding pitch)

PAGE TURNS

The score should be printed on A3 paper (or if an A3 printer is unavailable, printed on A4 and enlarged to A3 on a photocopier), as a series of separate sheets (not stapled) in landscape format, each holding two consecutive pages of score. Each player should use two music stands that allow two A3 sheets to sit side by side. The first A3 sheet (score page 1) should be placed on the left; all the others in order on the right. The first three score pages are therefore visible to the players at the start. Where indicated on the score, the player should slide the right hand A3 sheet silently over to the left, thereby covering the music already played and revealing the next two score pages on the right. This should avoid any need for having to take music off the stands or employ page turners. Pages may be folded down the middle to form a booklet and stored inside the title sheet.

Fragilities

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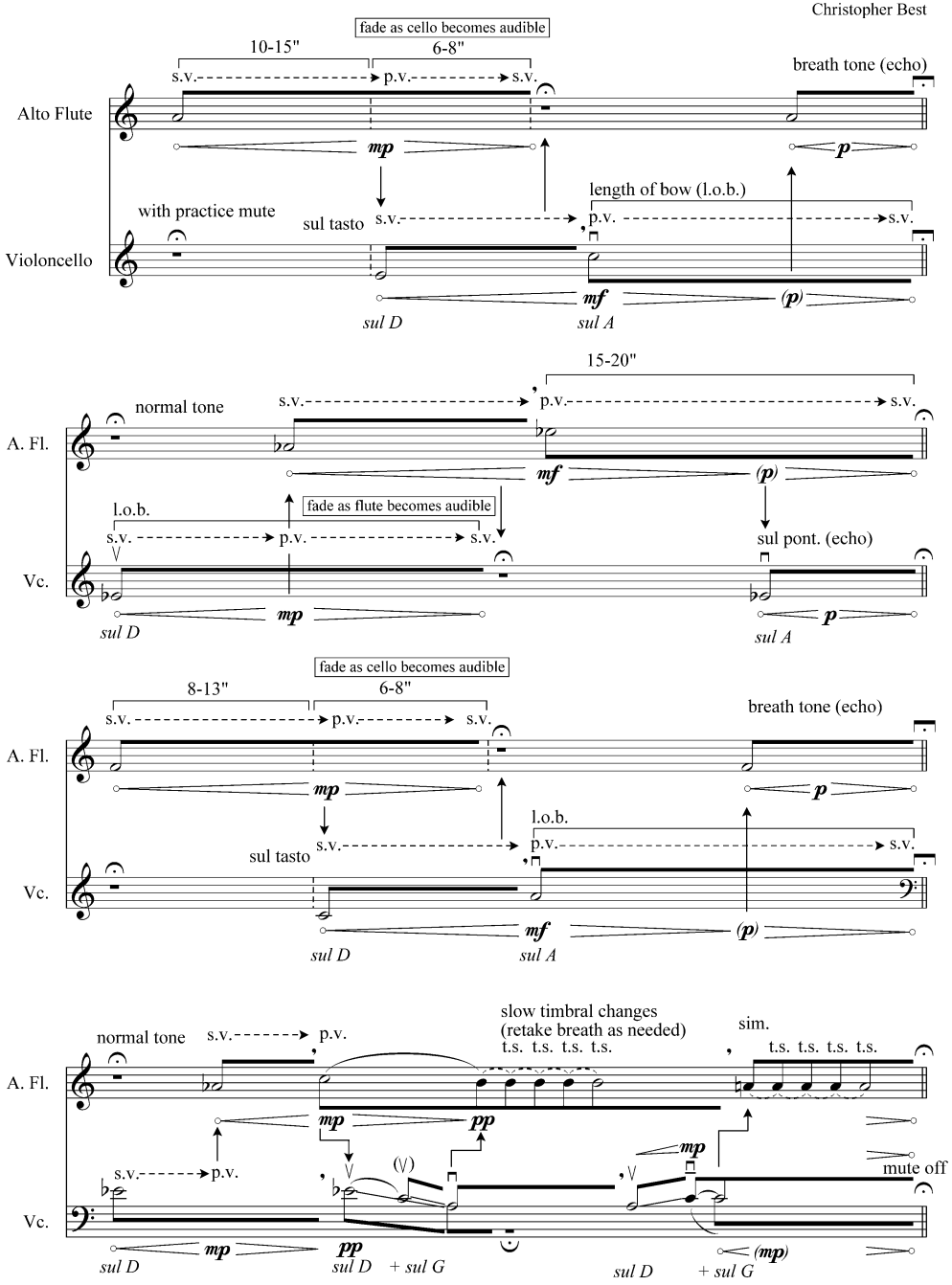

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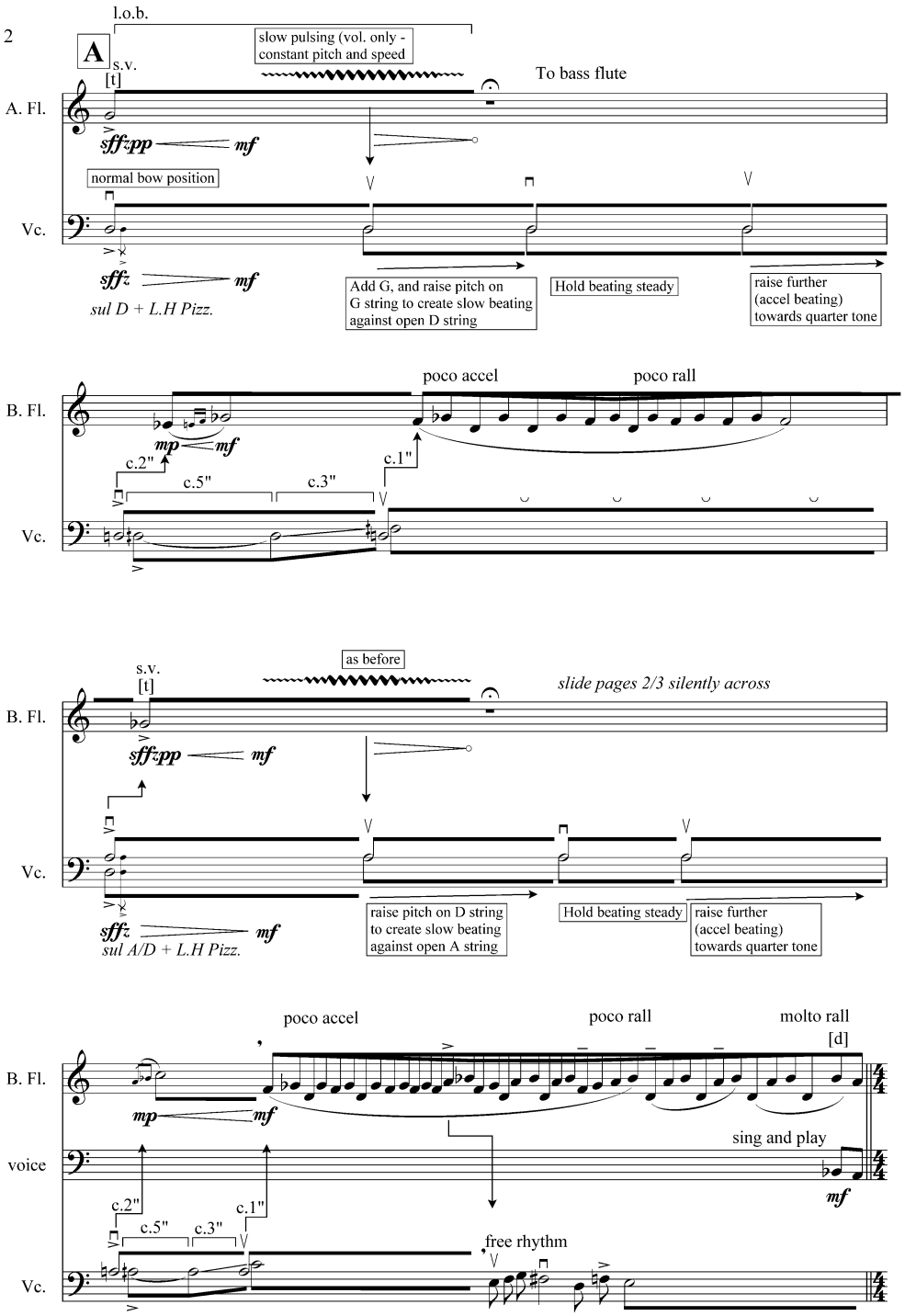
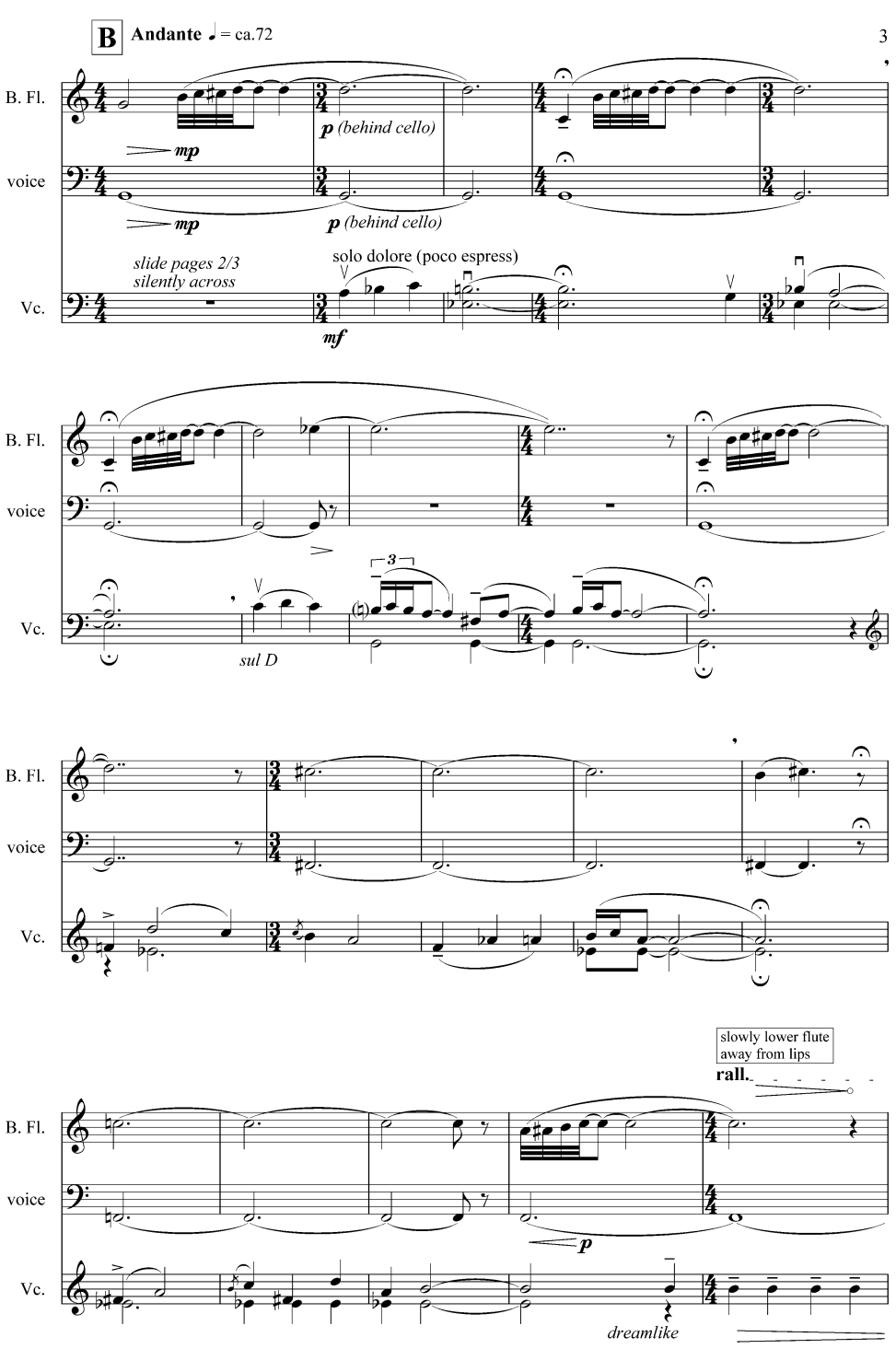

l.o.b.
A
slow pulsing (vol. only - constant pitch and speed
s.v.
[t]
To bass flute
A. Fl.
sff:pp
mf
normal bow position
Vc.
sff
mf
sul D + L.H Pizz.
Add G, and raise pitch on G string to create slow beating against open D string
Hold beating steady
raise further (accel beating) towards quarter tone
poco accel
poco rall
B. Fl.
mp
mf
c.2"
c.5"
c.3"
c.1"
Vc.
as before
s.v.
[t]
slide pages 2/3 silently across
B. Fl.
sff:pp
mf
Vc.
sff
mf
sul A/D + L.H Pizz.
raise pitch on D string to create slow beating against open A string
Hold beating steady
raise further (accel beating) towards quarter tone
poco accel
poco rall
molto rall
[d]
B. Fl.
mp
mf
voice
sing and play
mf
c.2"
c.5"
c.3"
c.1"
free rhythm
Vc.


B
Andante ♩ = ca.72
B. Fl.
p (behind cello)
mp
voice
mp
p (behind cello)
slide pages 2/3 silently across
solo dolore (poco espress)
Vc.
mf
B. Fl.
voice
Vc.
3
sul D
B. Fl.
voice
Vc.
slowly lower flute away from lips
rall.
B. Fl.
voice
p
Vc.
dreamlike

C **Meno mosso** ♩ = ca.60

B. Fl.

voice

Vc.

p

p = cello

p

p = cello

with practice mute

pp

p

poco rall.

B. Fl.

voice

Vc.

ossia 8vb

D **Adagio rubato** ♩ = ca.56
(silent beats in strict tempo)

colla parte

slide pages 4/5 silently across

B. Fl.

tentatively (rubato - as though searching to find harmonics)

(D-3) (D-8)

(D-8)

(D-7)

more assured

Vc.

p

(G-7)

(G-6)

(L'istesso tempo)

Strict tempo (♩. = ca.37)

Flz

B. Fl.

p

8va (D-16)

(D-7/G-6)

tentatively again

Vc.

p sempre

(G-14)

L.H.Pull off Pizz.

sim.

ppp

ppp sempre

B. Fl.

more assured, little by little

(D-14)

(D-13)

Vc.

(G-12)

(G-14)

B. Fl.

(D-12)

Vc.

(G-10)

B. Fl.

(D-11)

(D-11/G-12)

slide pages 4/5 silently across

Vc.

(G-12)

B. Fl.

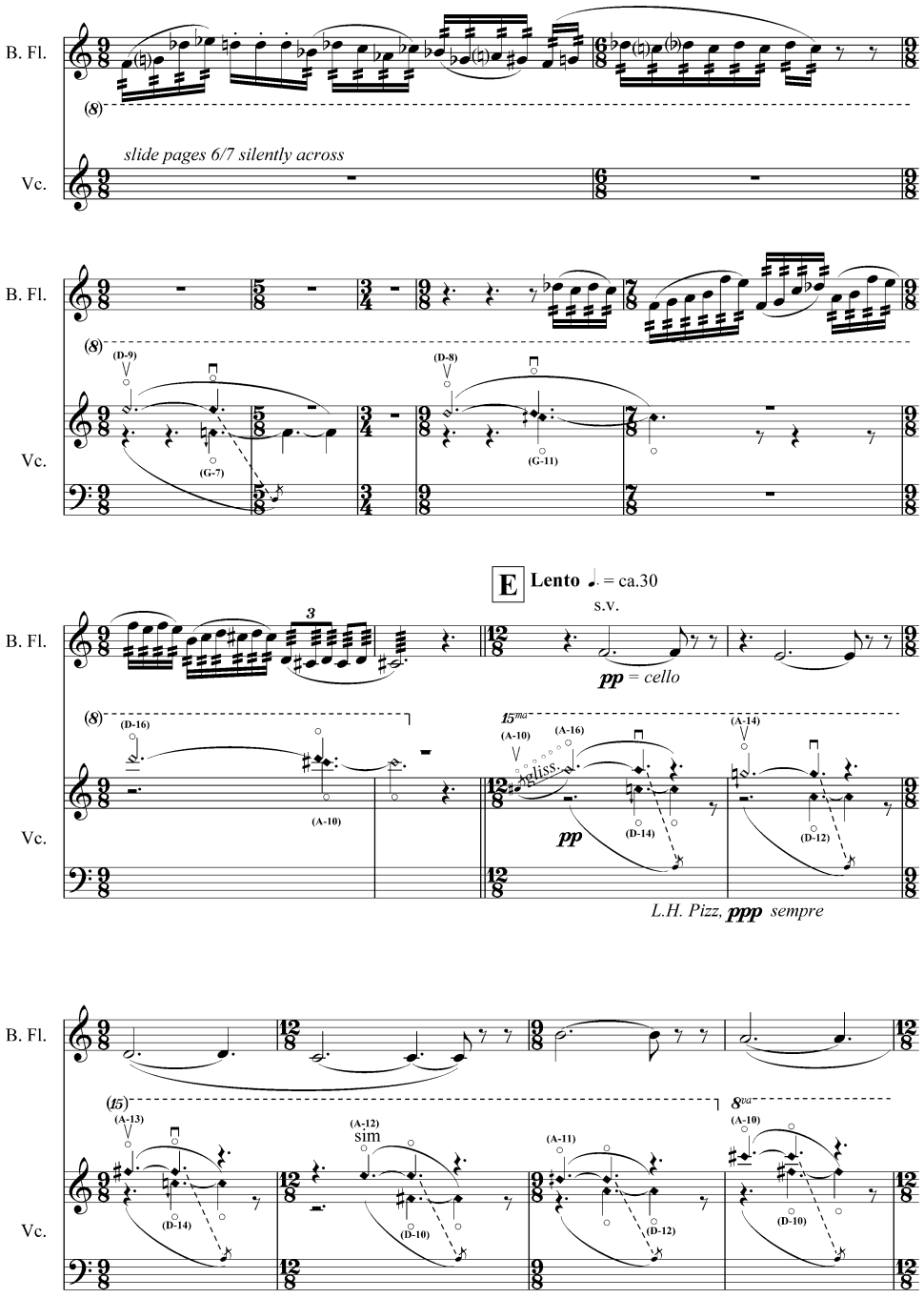
pp

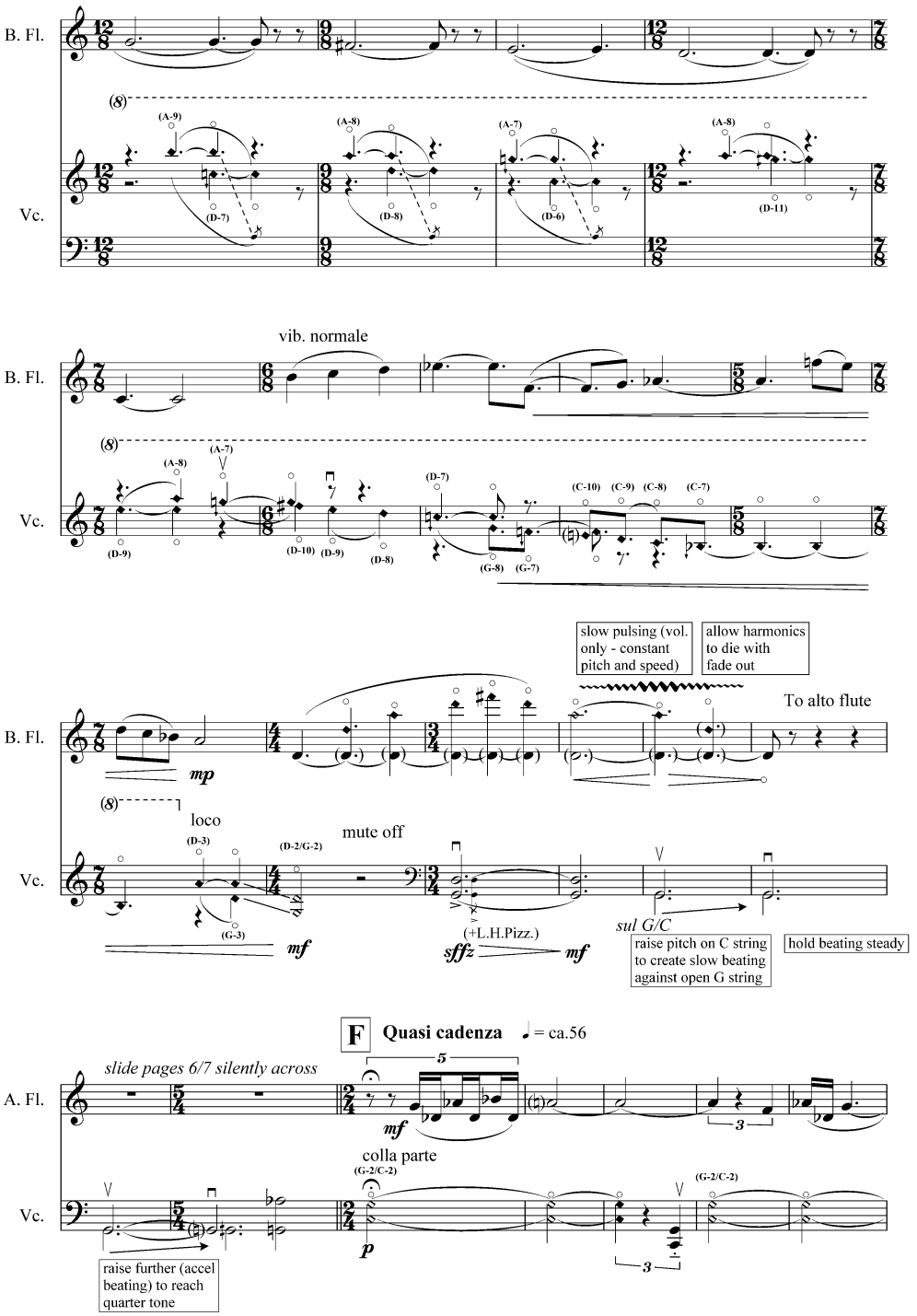
p

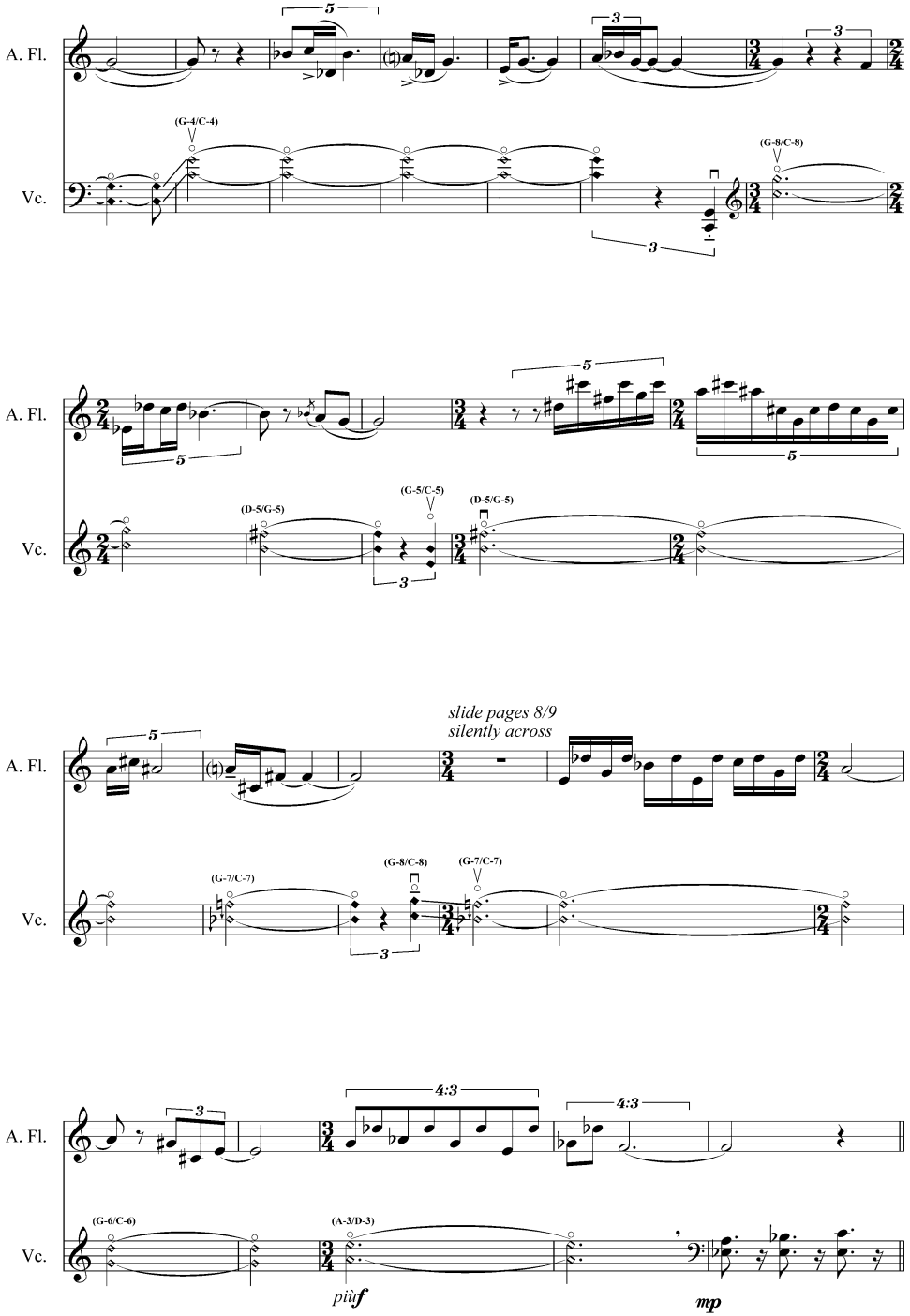
Vc.

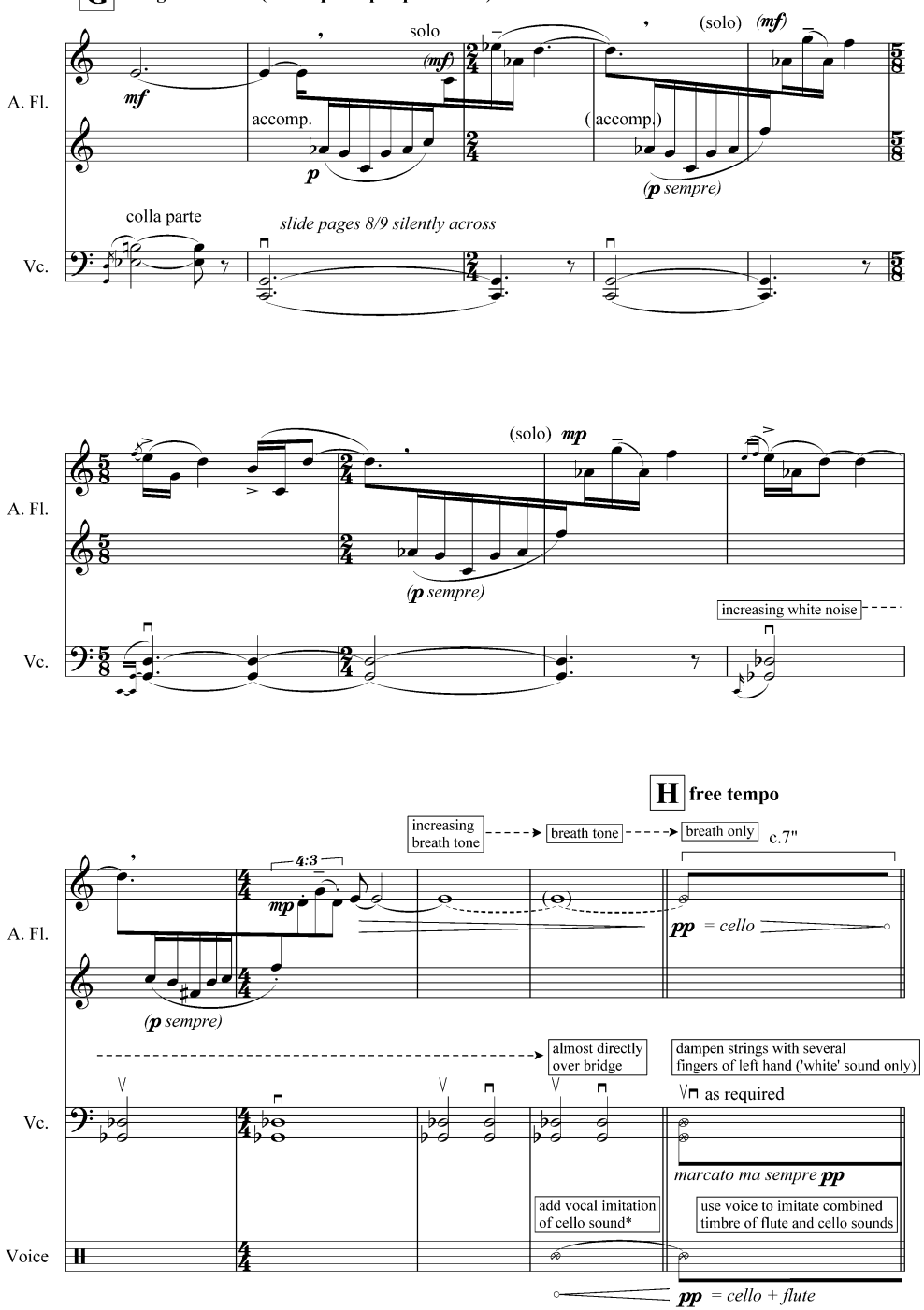
(D-10)

(G-10)


B. Fl.
Vc.
slide pages 6/7 silently across
E Lento ♩. = ca.30
S.V.
pp = cello
L.H. Pizz, ppp sempre
sim

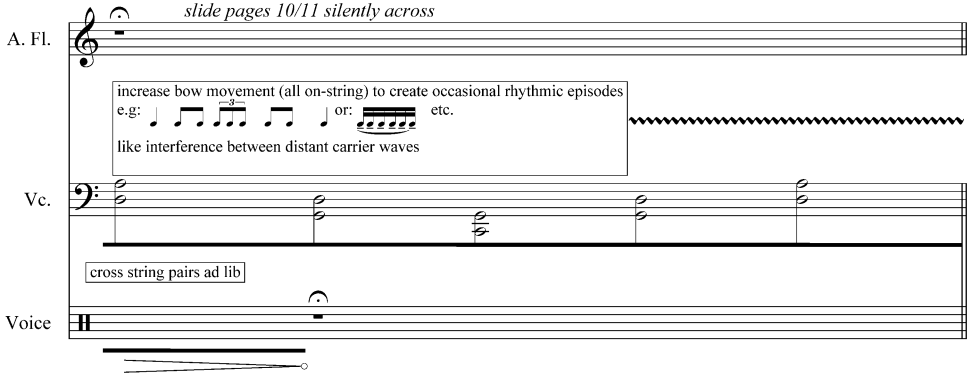

B. Fl.
Vc.
vib. normale
slow pulsing (vol. only - constant pitch and speed)
allow harmonics to die with fade out
To alto flute
loco
mute off
(+L.H.Pizz.)
sul G/C
raise pitch on C string to create slow beating against open G string
hold beating steady
F Quasi cadenza ♩ = ca.56
A. Fl.
slide pages 6/7 silently across
colla parte
raise further (accel beating) to reach quarter tone



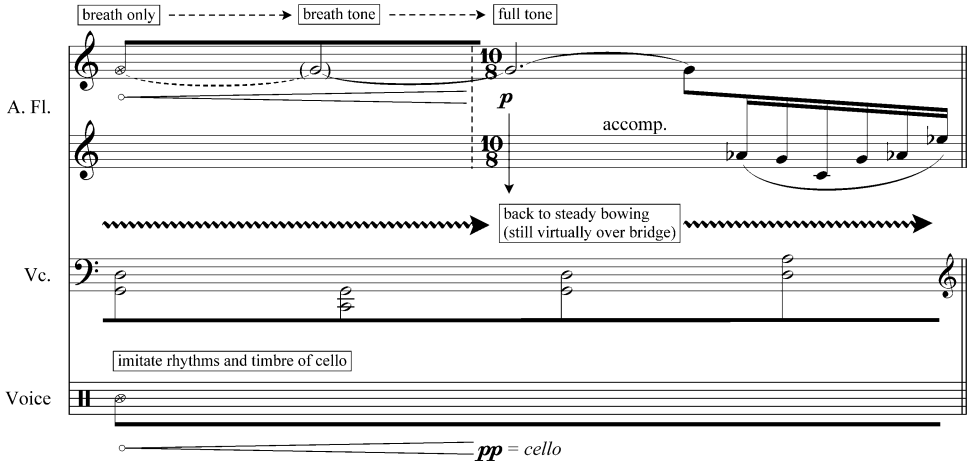


* mouth/tongue shape somewhere between an 'FFF' sound and when blowing out a candle

like inter-station noise on a VHF radio c.15-20"

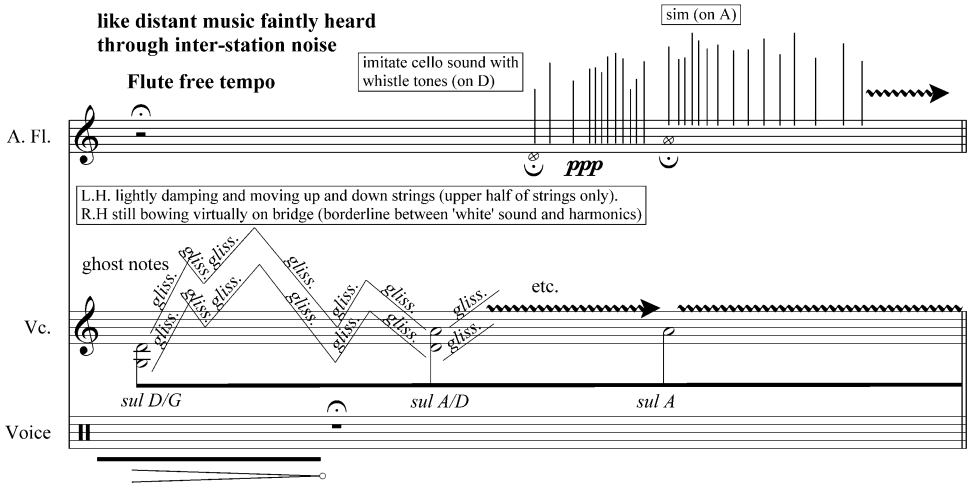


Flute a tempo ♩ = ca.40 **(accomp. più mosso)**

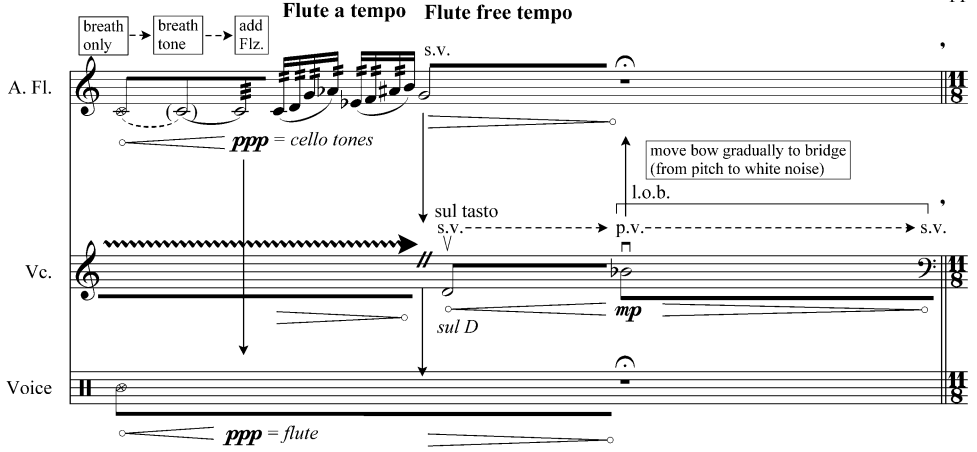


like distant music faintly heard through inter-station noise

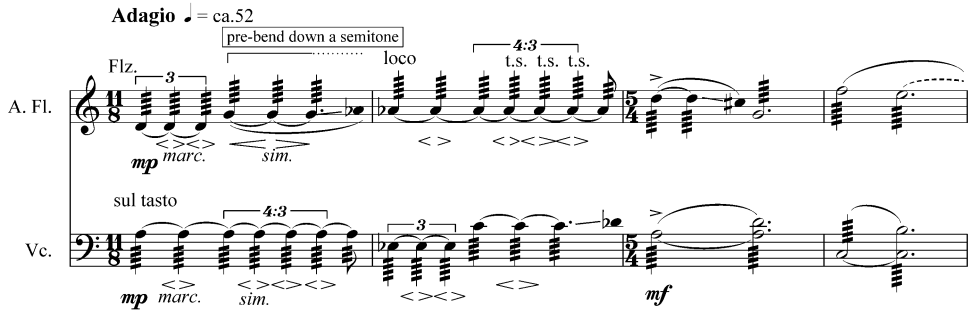
Flute free tempo



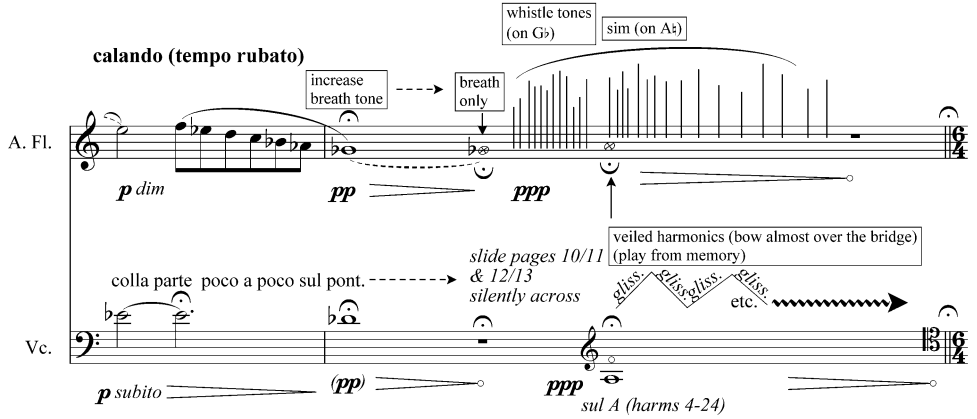
Flute a tempo **Flute free tempo**

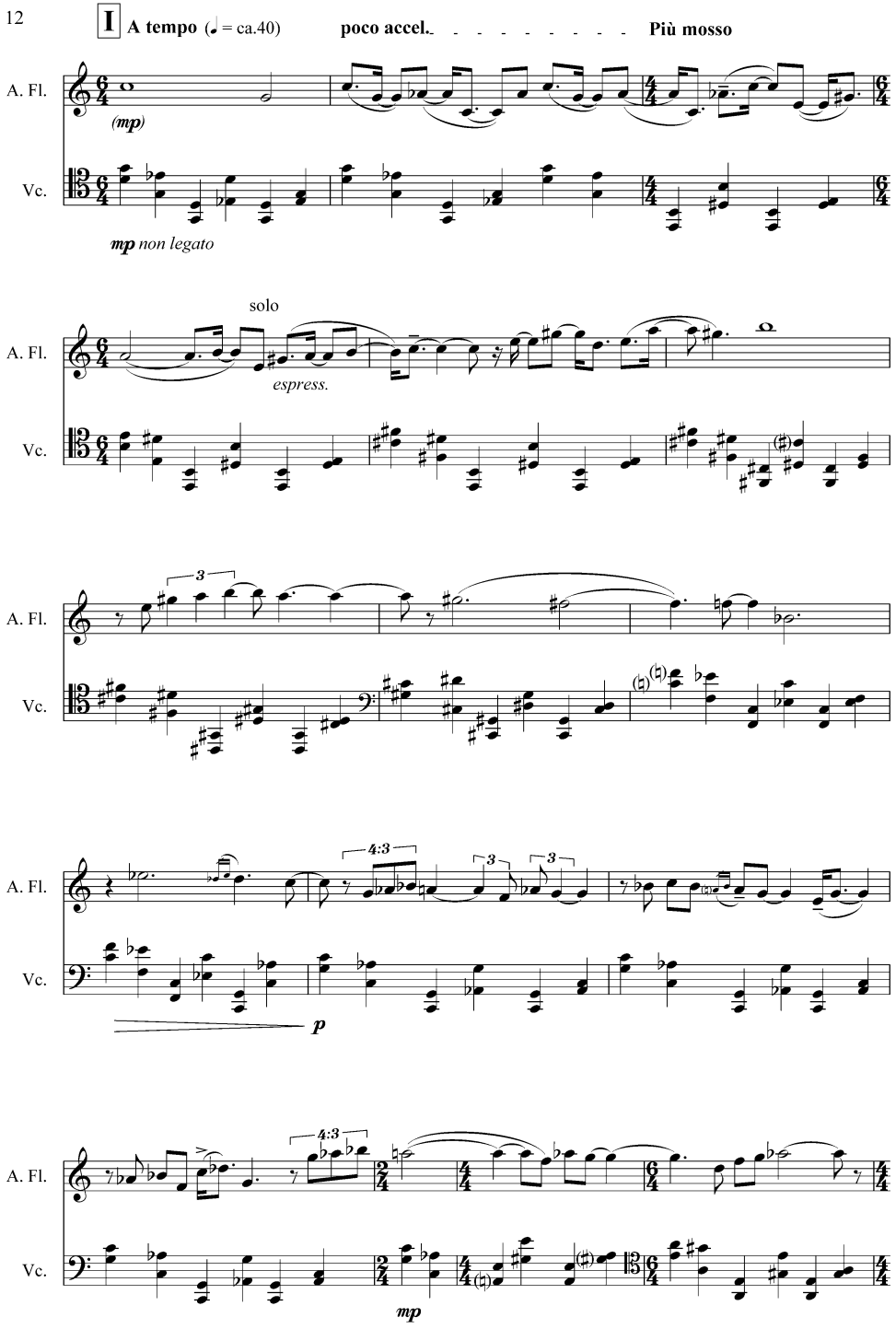


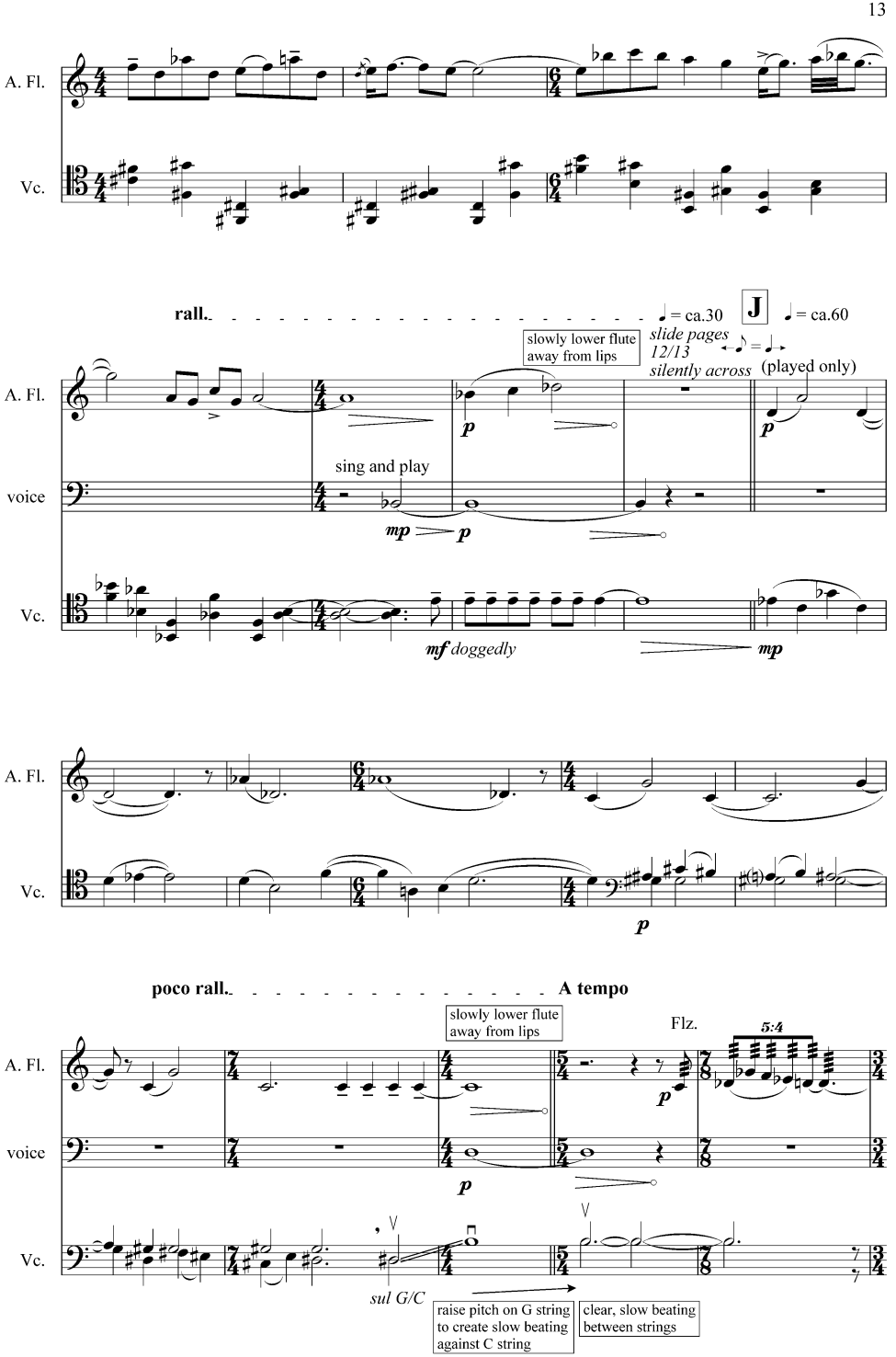
Adagio ♩ = ca.52

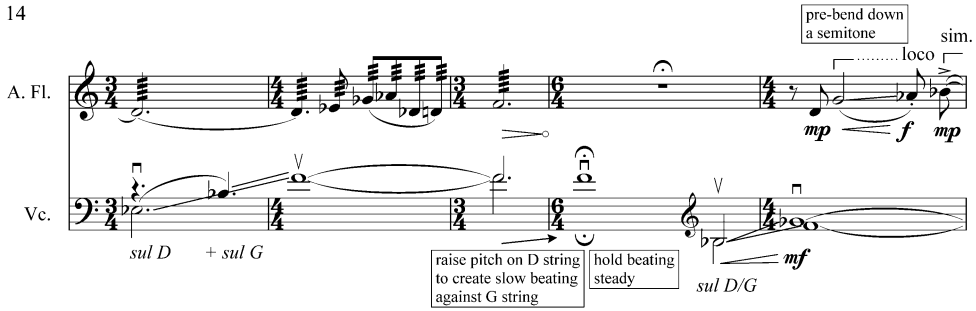


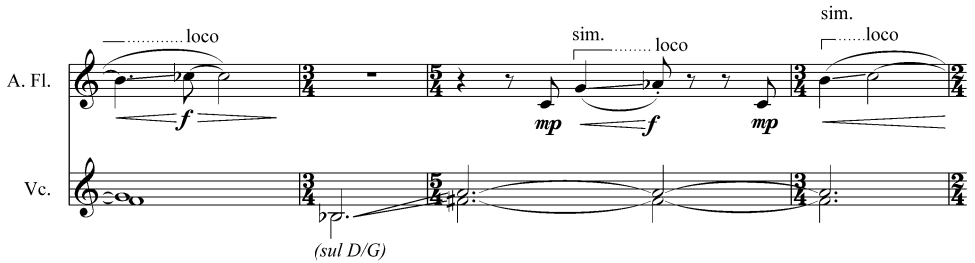
calando (tempo rubato)

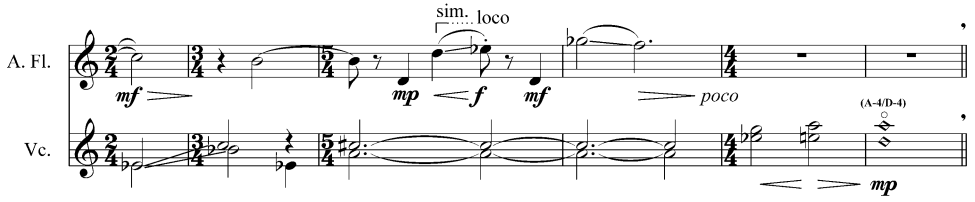



I
A tempo (♩ = ca.40)
poco accel.
Più mosso
A. Fl.
Vc.
(mp)
mp non legato
solo
espress.
3
4:3
p
mp


A. Fl.
Vc.
rall.
♩ = ca.30
J
♩ = ca.60
slowly lower flute away from lips
slide pages 12/13 silently across
(played only)
voice
sing and play
mp
p
mf doggedly
poco rall.
A tempo
Flz.
5:4
sul G/C
raise pitch on G string to create slow beating against C string
clear, slow beating between strings

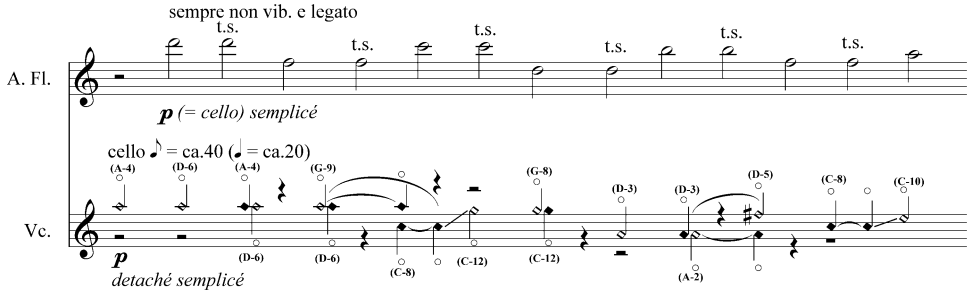


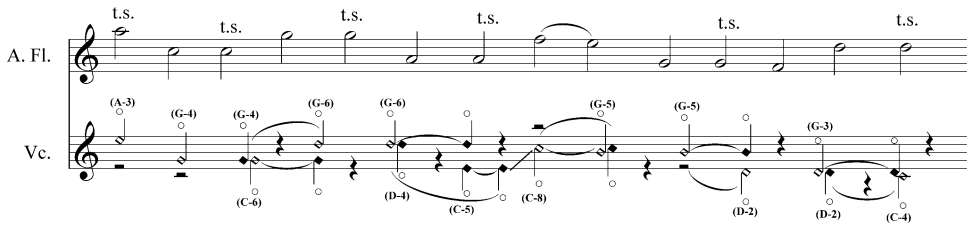


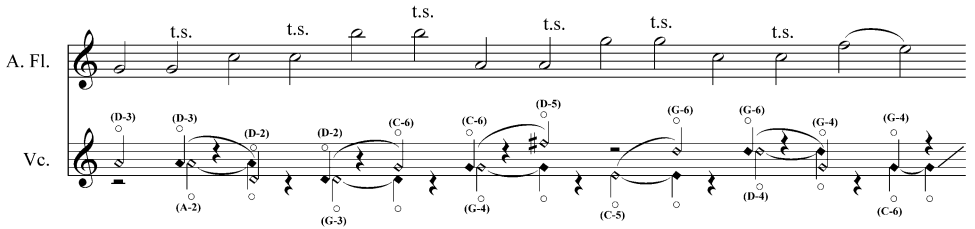


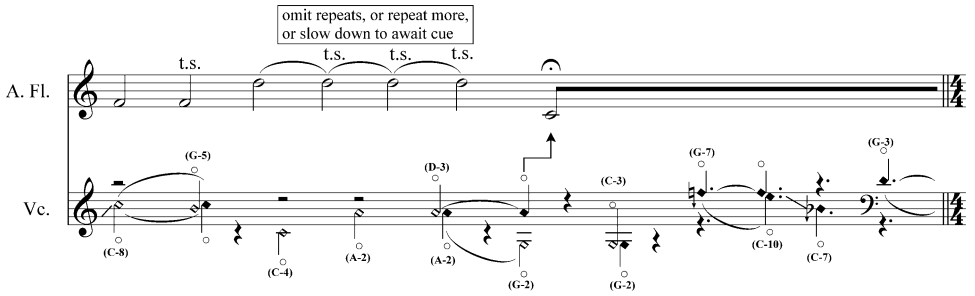
K **Molto lento, ma flauto un poco più mosso dal cello**

flute ♪ = ca.48 (♩ = ca.24)

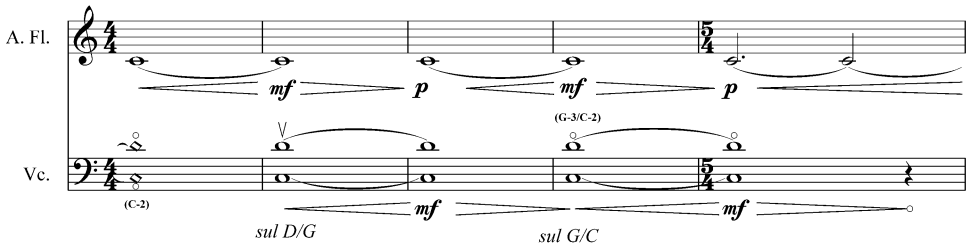


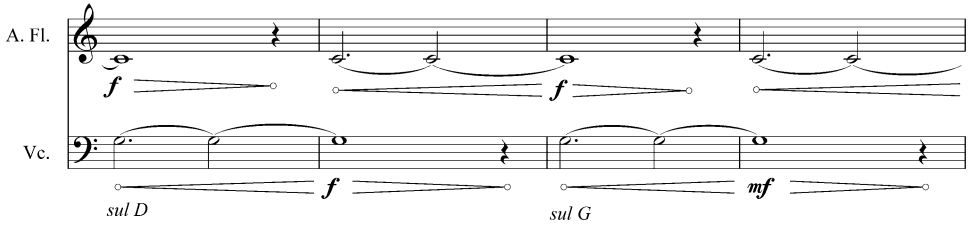




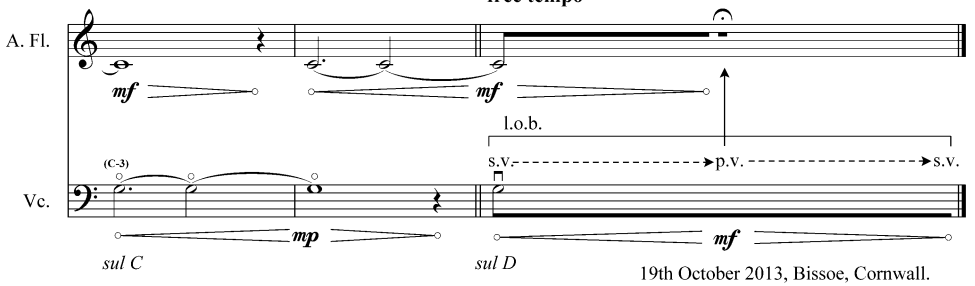


L **Flauto e cello più mosso** ♩ = ca.40





free tempo



19th October 2013, Bissoe, Cornwall.

…Truly original and idiomatic… William Sleath **'Fragilities'**

…**'How Great, How Fall'n'** created a lot of interest from both audience and performers alike. [It] was exactly the type of new music that JAM prides itself on supporting… Edward Armitage, Chairman John Armitage Memorial Concert Series 2004

…An idiosyncratic blend of stylistic types- Gamelan/folk…the music comes across vividly… SPNM Reading panel **'Dolya Nash Krai'**

…**'Playfall'** is a mature and powerful work, able to portray the dark shadows of loss that can unexpectedly creep into even the most joyful moments in life… Dance Europe

…**'Night Walking'** impressed me because it combined lightness and warmth. Here was proof that contemporary music can succeed on all fronts; it required concentration but was also exhilarating…. Artistic Director SPNM 1997

…**'Another Kind of Air'** is courageous in its simplicity and deserves to be heard…The sharp focus of the thematic material combines with the transparent medium to make for a piece that proclaims an unambiguous space… SPNM Reading panel

…This is lovely music for dance and it develops in a delightful way… I particularly liked the pizzicato section… composer Howard Skempton **'Life Before Birth'**

…The piano command is impressive… the pieces make a satisfying arch in terms of mood… SPNM Reading panel, **'Then Again…'**

…**'Triaphony'** showed competence in the handling of a difficult medium… the climax to the third movement was highly effective… Cambridge Evening Telegraph

…Best has previously written, with verve, for traditional forces… **['Cue-Play-Review']** seemed so clearly bound up with human responses… but the finale to this concert was his electronic tape **'From Steel to Stone'**. In the darkened studio, its shifting layers made a shapely and animating effect… Nottingham Evening Post

Christopher Best is a freelance composer based in the South West of England. Major works have been commissioned by *'Emilyn Claid and Co'*, *'Scottish Dance Theatre'*, *'Bimba Dance Theatre'*, *'Jamaican National Dance'* and the *'SPNM'*. Works have been especially written for ensembles including *'Aquarius'*, *'Jane's Minstrels'*, *'Kokoro'*, the choir of Selwyn College Cambridge and *'Onyx Brass'*, plus a host of distinguished soloists. His compositions have received considerable critical acclaim and been performed all over the world.

Recent output includes; *'Terra al Sol'* for voices, string trio and accordion (commissioned by the Fisarchi Ensemble of Florence), *'How Great, How Fall'n'* (orchestral version premiered by the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra in 2011 at the Teatru Manoel, Valletta, original version for brass, voices and organ given by JAM in 2004), *'Echoes of a Lost Music'* for electric guitar (UK tour 2011-12, New Zealand tour 2009), *'Still Beating'* for Clarsach harp (premiered by Ruth Wall in 2007 at Wapping Power Station, London) and *'Panaura'* for orchestra (premiered by the Kokoro ensemble in 2006 at Dartington Hall).

Since 2010, Chris has held a senior lectureship in music composition at Falmouth University, having formerly been Reader in music composition at Dartington College of Arts in Devon. He has taught extensively abroad, and co-directed residential music and dance exchanges in Devon, London and Madrid.

For further information, scores, parts and recordings of music by Christopher Best visit www.christopherbest.net. You can contact the composer by e-mail: chrisbestmusic@aol.com or write to:

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