Greg Sandow

Quartet for Anne

on her birthday, June 22, 2001

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duration: about six minutes

for my wife Anne Midgette, a surprise birthday gift

world premiere in our living room, June 22, 2001

first public performance

by the Fine Arts Quartet

Helene Zelazo Center for the Performing Arts
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

September 17, 2003

Notes on the Quartet

I wrote this short quartet in 2001, as a surprise birthday present for my wife, Anne Midgette. And I do mean surprise — Anne didn't know I'd written the piece until she woke up in the morning, and musicians came to our apartment to play it for her. That was a very special (and very romantic) day for both of us, though just a little tricky to arrange. We lived in a standard New York apartment, none too large, and I had to find a way to tell Anne that company was coming — so she'd be presentable when the musicians showed up — without giving even a hint about who the visitors might be.

The quartet is based on music of mine that Anne already knew, starting with pages from an opera in progress, based on Shakespeare's *As You Like It.* The final section is the climax of a song I'd written for another one of Anne's birthdays, and at the very end comes a fragment from a nonsense rhyme I once made up for her.

I had fun recomposing the opera music, skewing the rhythms and adding some counterpoint, so the quartet would sound like an instrumental piece, not a string of opera excerpts. And I rearranged the song, too. The melody, in the section I borrowed, had a very simple accompaniment. When I rewrote it for string quartet, I gave it a more varied inner life, so that each of the four players would have something individual to play. (Later I transferred some of that to the piano part.)

Anne, I should add, has been well known in the classical music world, first as a classical music critic for the *New York Times,* and then as chief classical critic for the *Washington Post.* She's also written two books, one with Leon Fleisher and the other with Herbert Breslin, Pavarotti's irreverent manager.

I'm deeply grateful to violinist Meesun Hong, who when she was a Juilliard student and took one of my courses, organized and led the quartet that surprised Anne with this piece. I'm grateful, too, to the Fine Arts Quartet, who gave the first public performance, and continued to keep it in their repertoire.

And I'm grateful to Entcho Todorov, Hiroko Taguchi, Jonathan Dinklage, and Peter Sachon, who played this quartet at another birthday of Anne's, in 2015, when I gave her a surprise party. And played it again in April 2016, at a concert of my music at the Mansion at Strathmore.

If you'd like to hear the quartet, here are two links:

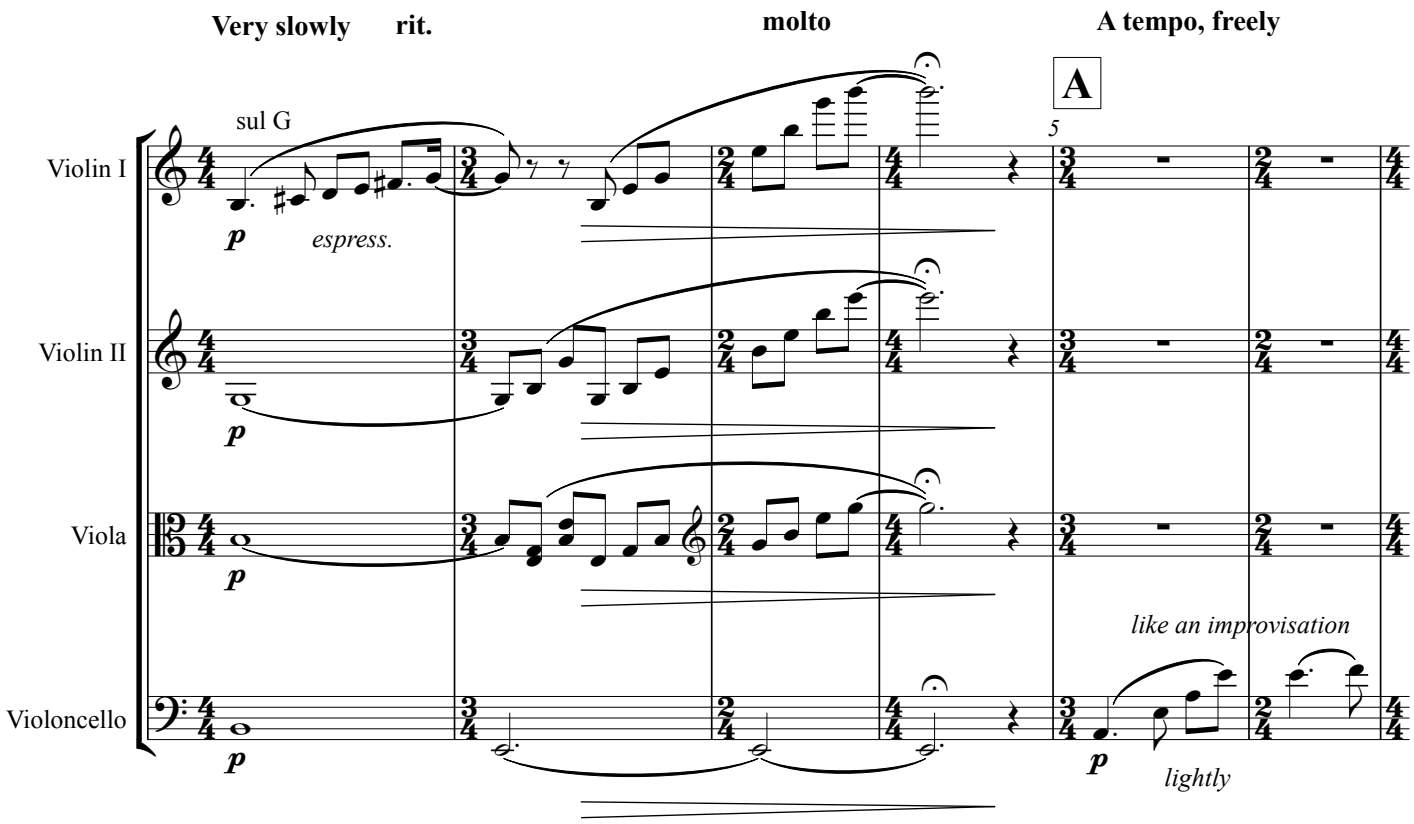
A broadcast by the Fine Arts Quartet:
http://www.gregsandow.com/media/QuartetForAnne-broadcast.mp3

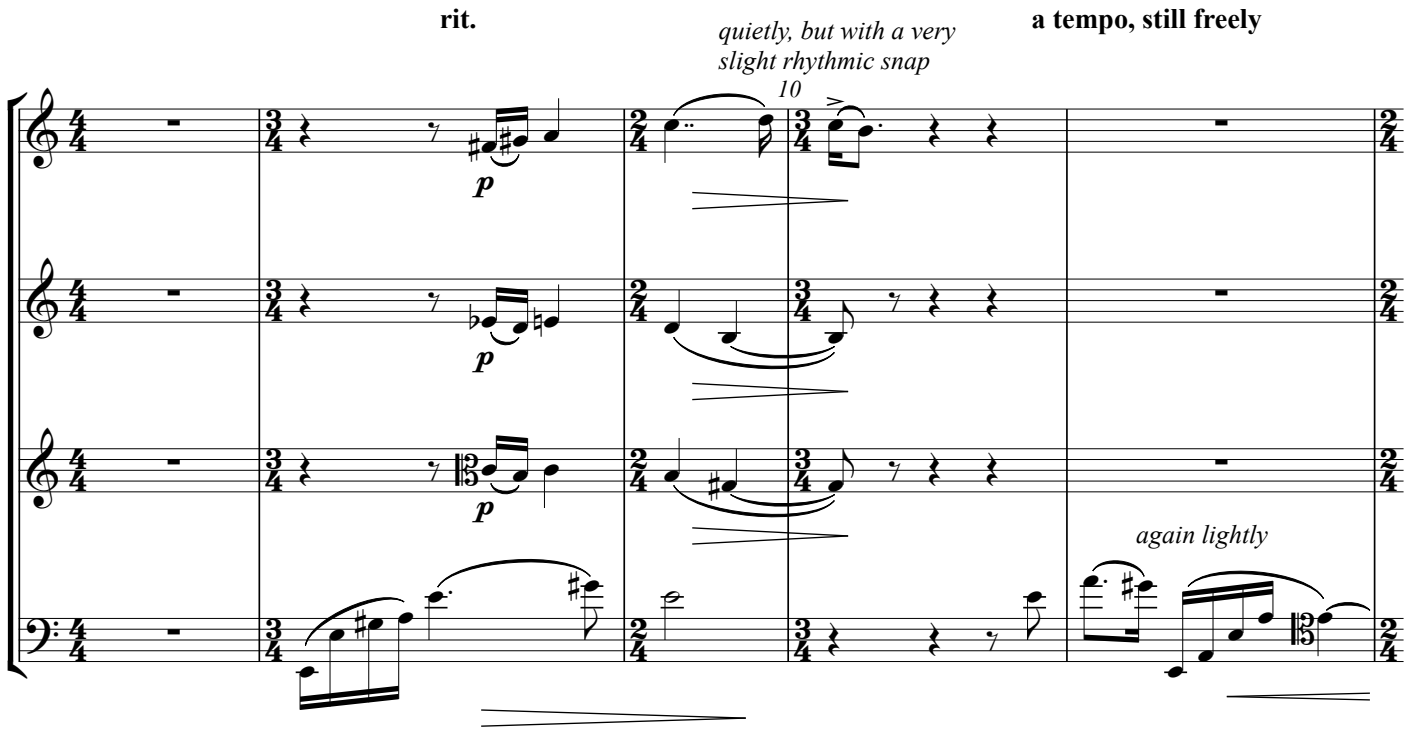
A video of the Strathmore performance:
https://youtu.be/Ii4XcYVlY7Q

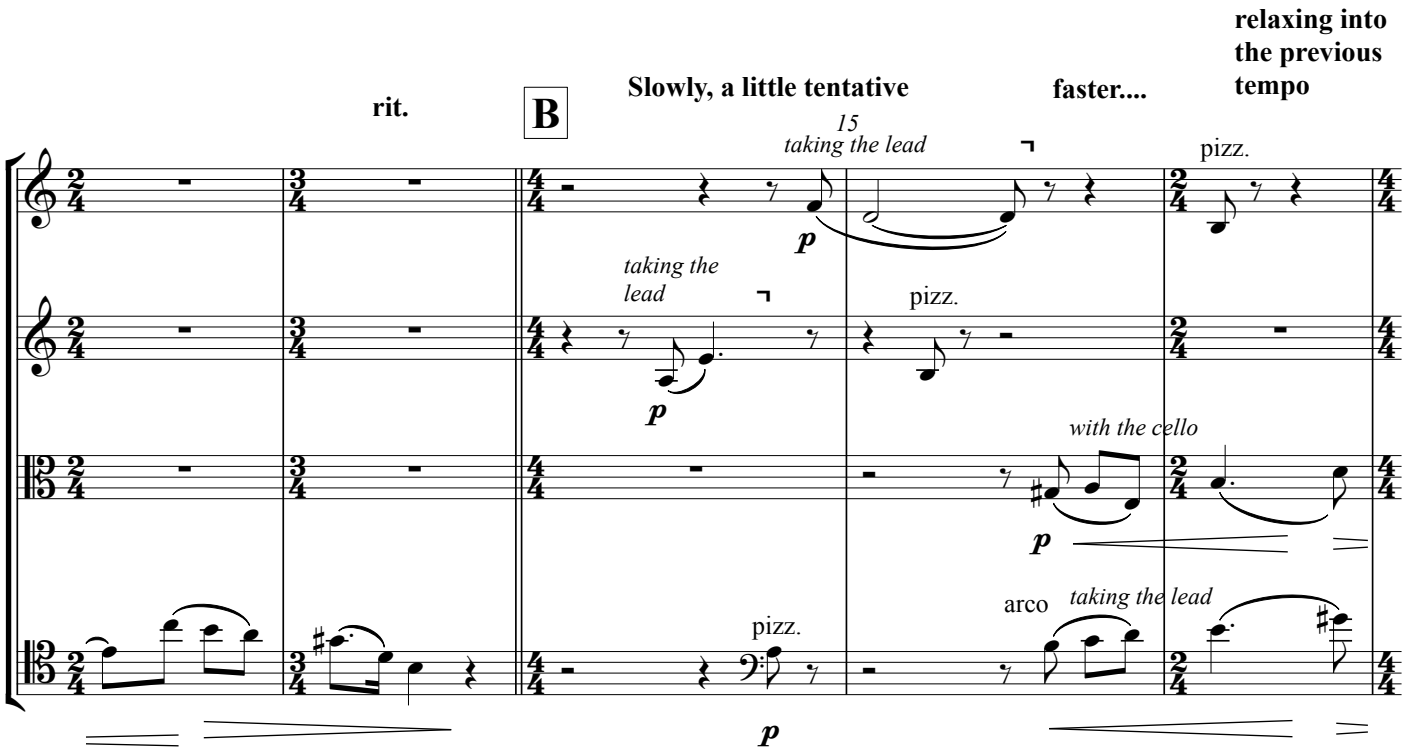
And if you'd like to hear the music the quartet is based on, here are videos from the Strathmore performance:

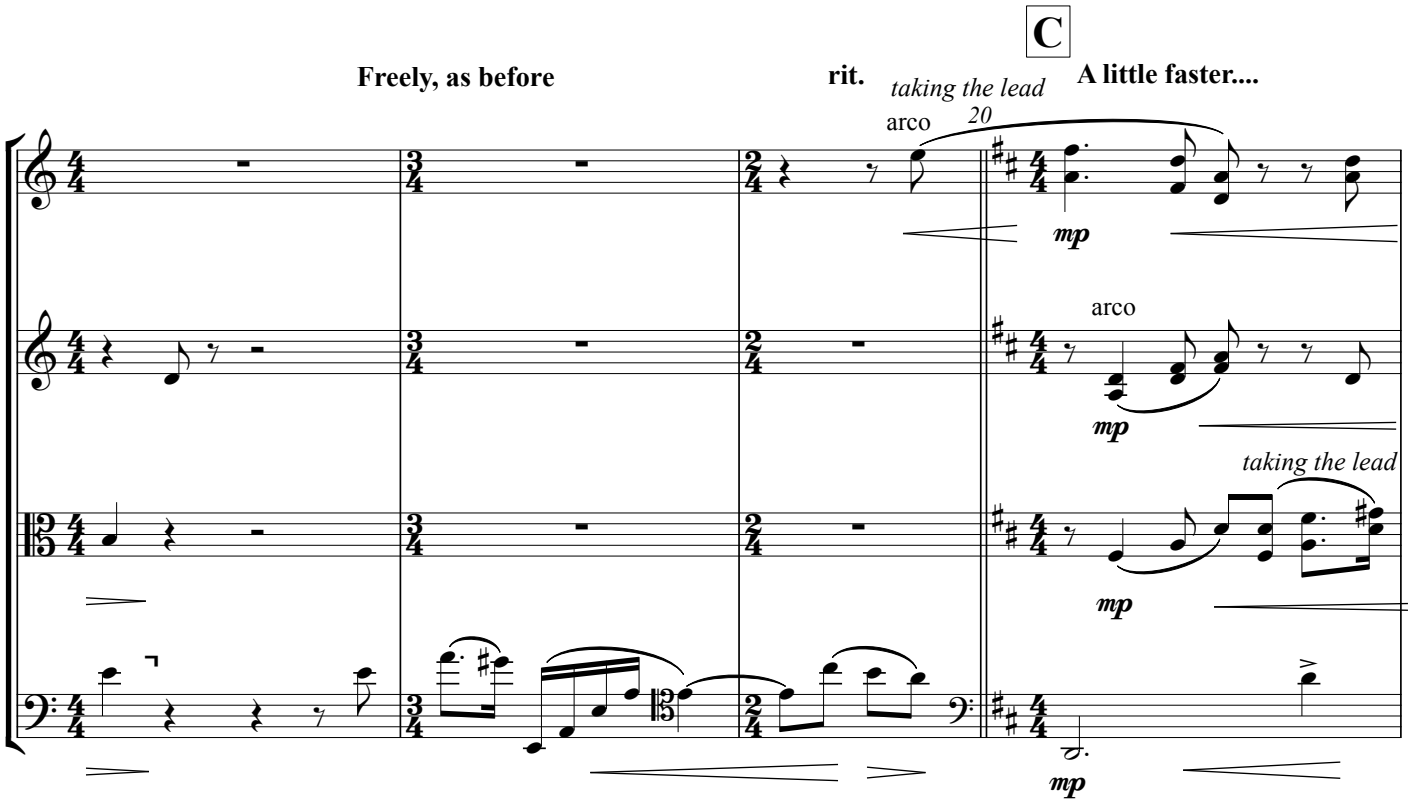
> "Hang There, My Verse" (arioso for tenor, from *As You Like It):*
> https://youtu.be/PnAAbutJqcw
>
> Scene for Rosalind and Orlando (from *As You Like It*):
> https://youtu.be/DLmSXDJtq9s
>
> "Ich bin, du Ängstlicher" (song to a Rilke text, with the expanded piano part):
> https://youtu.be/oEB-oB4H4S4

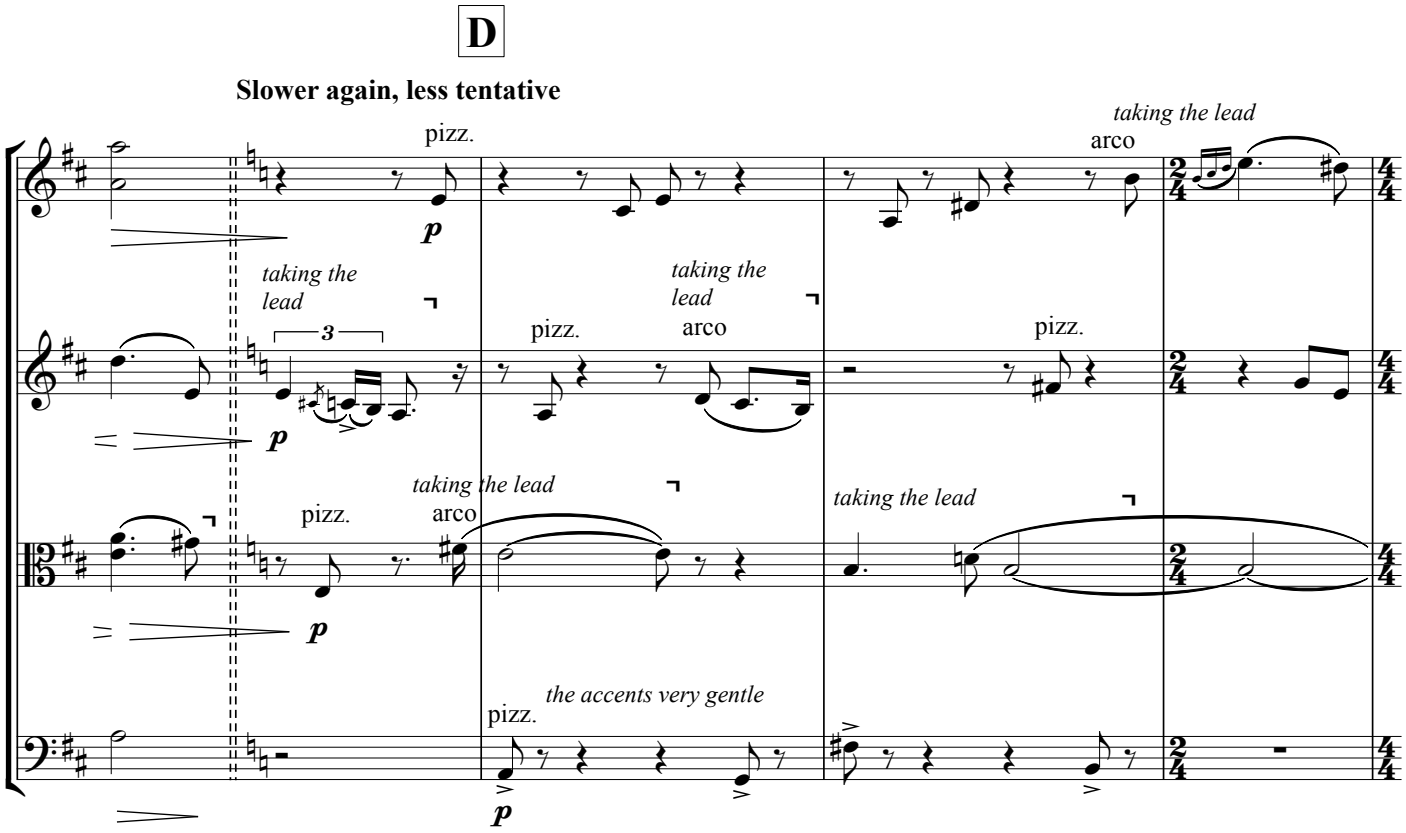
Quartet for Anne

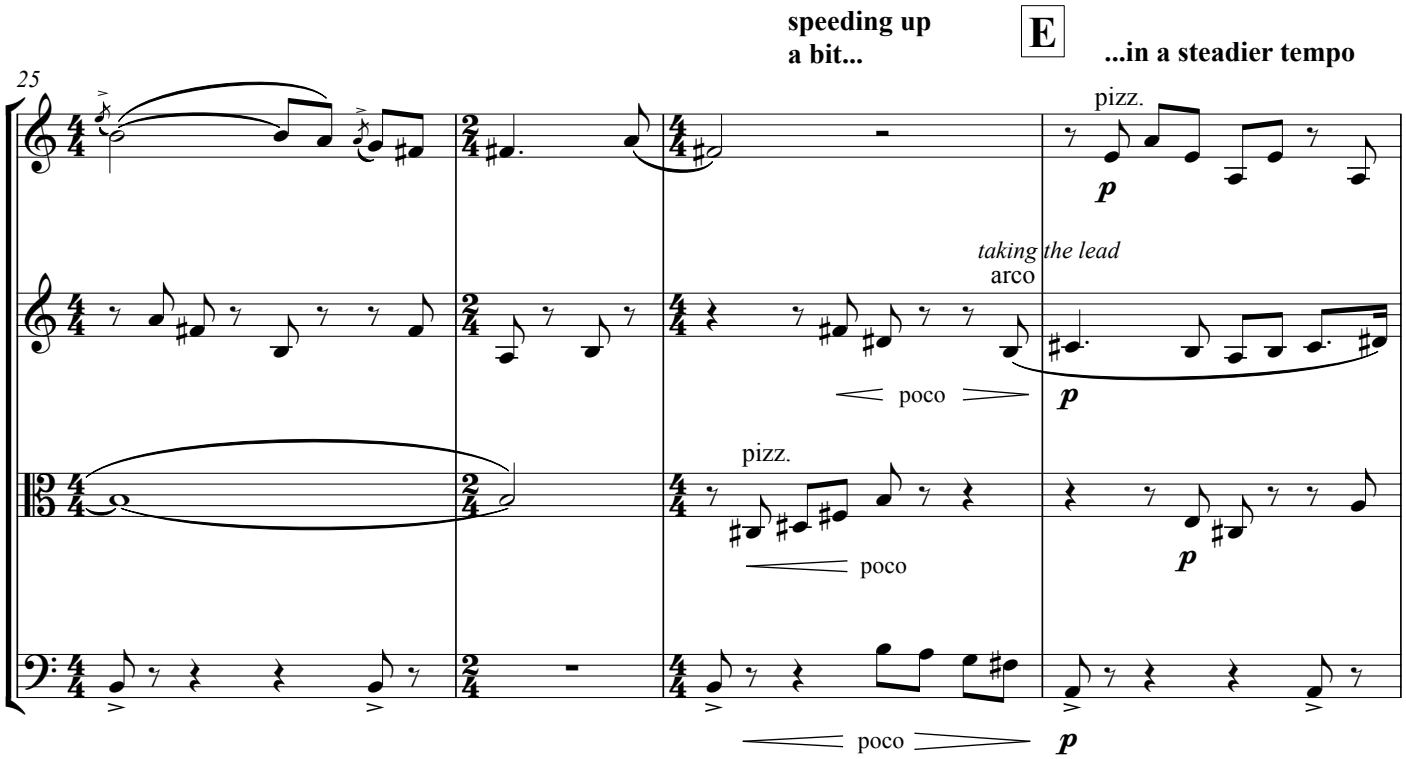


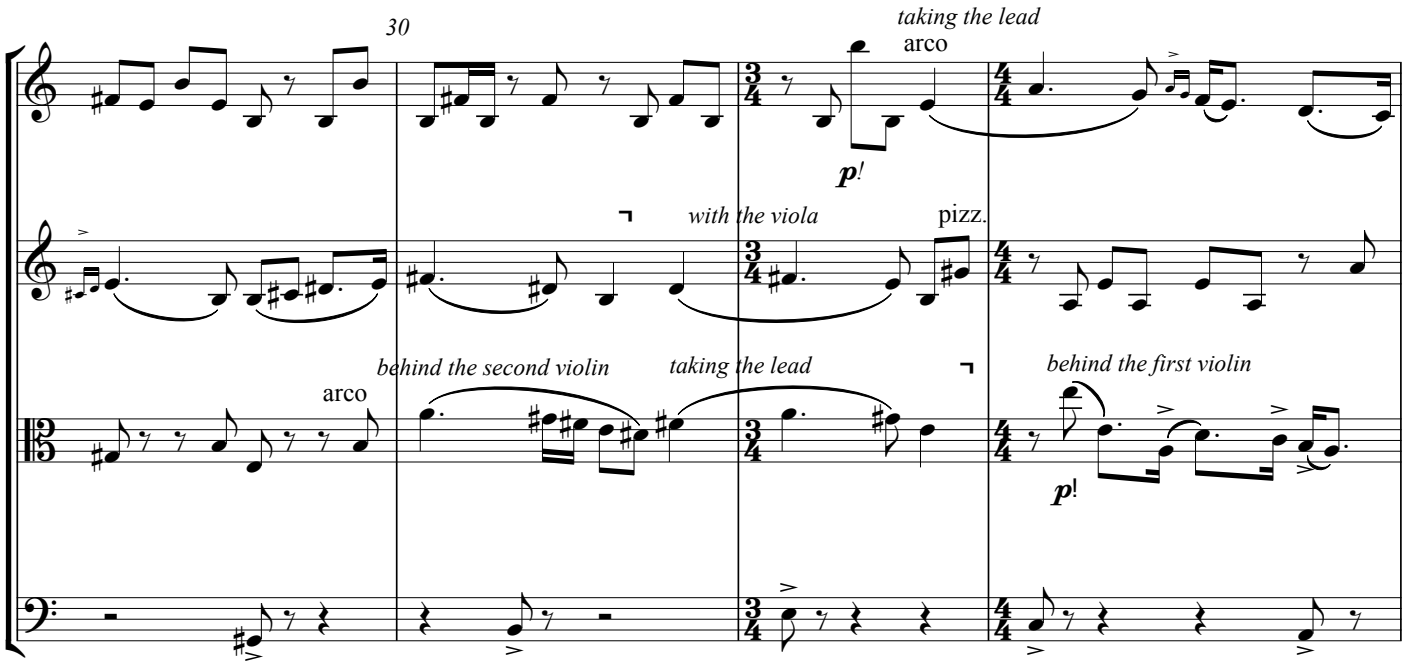


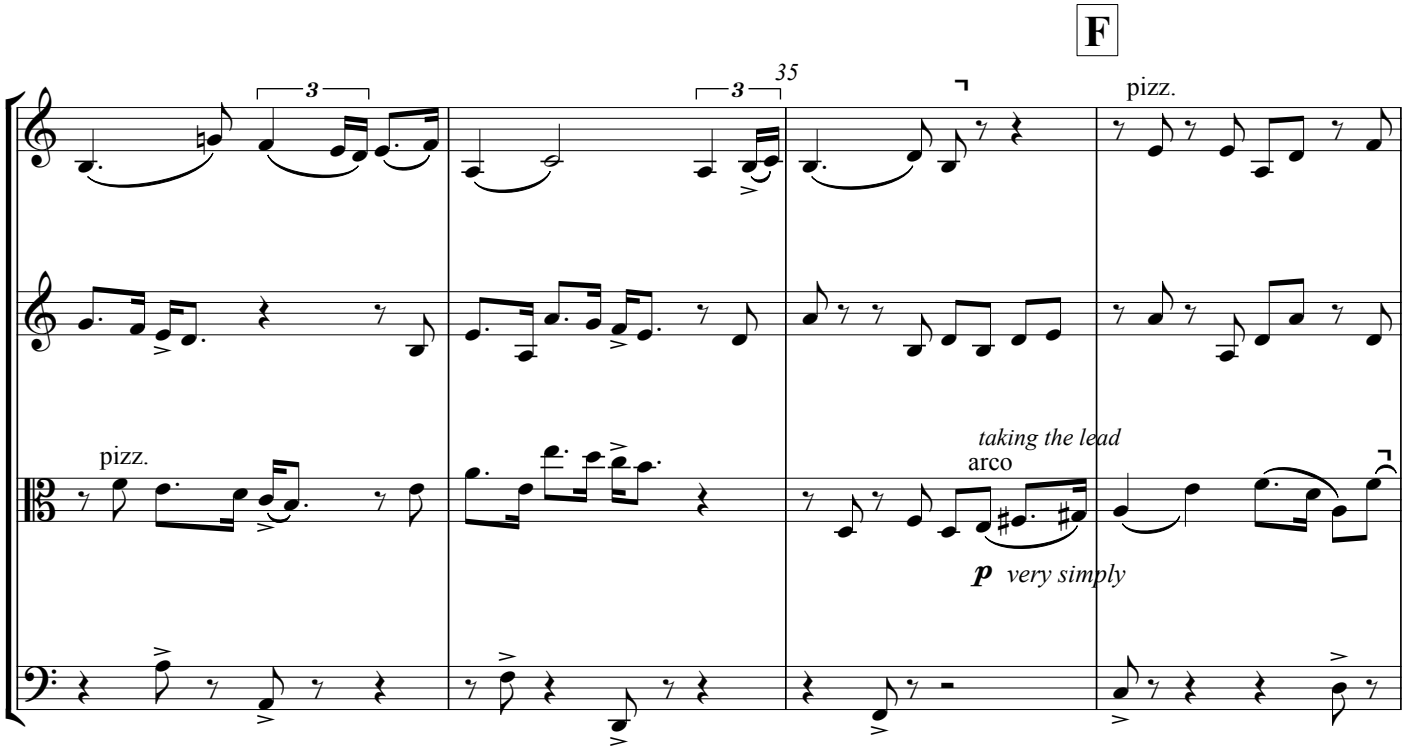

rit.
B
Slowly, a little tentative
15
taking the lead
faster....
relaxing into the previous tempo
pizz.
p
taking the lead
pizz.
p
with the cello
p
arco
taking the lead
pizz.
p

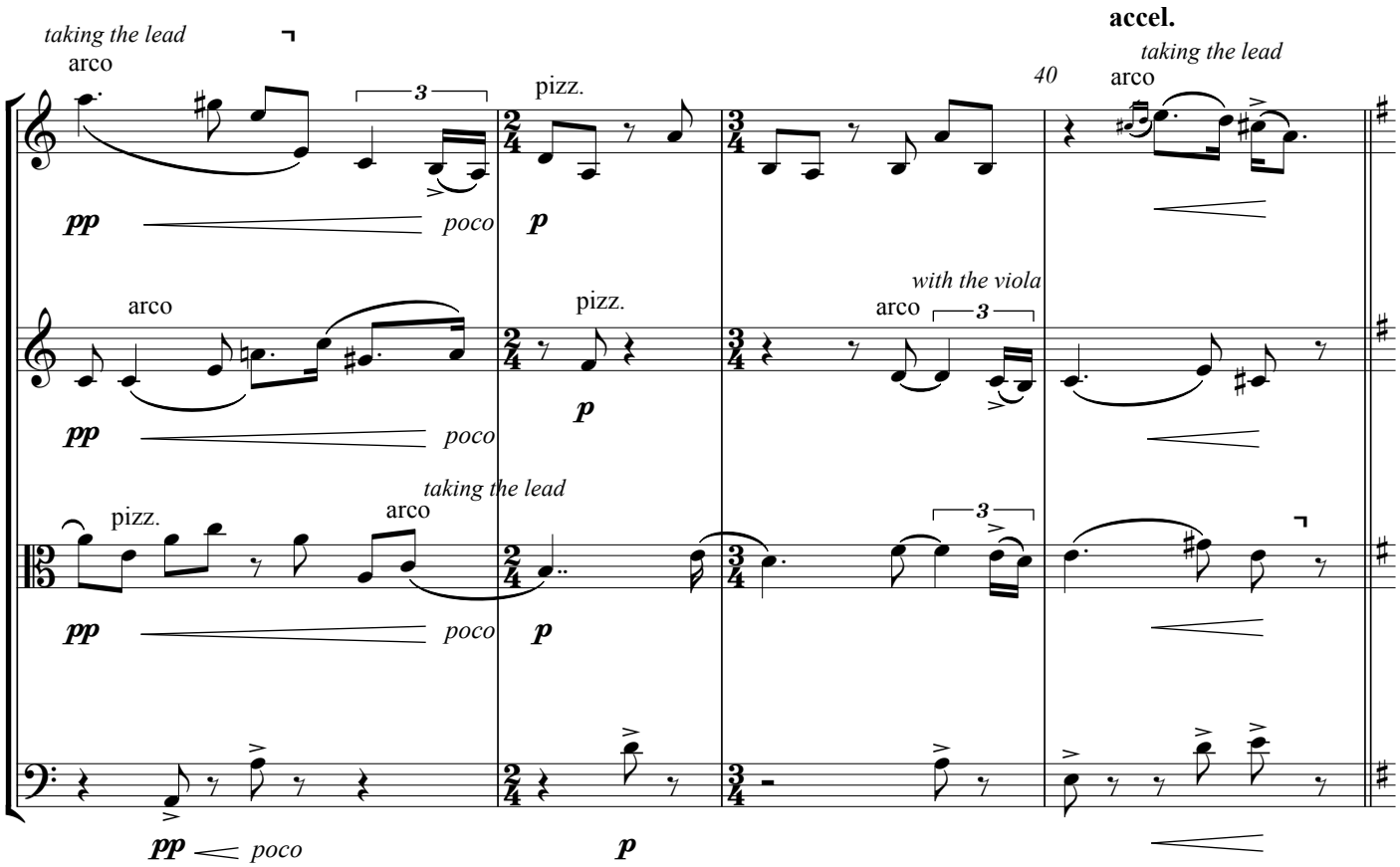

Freely, as before
rit.
taking the lead
arco
20
C
A little faster....
mp
arco
mp
taking the lead
mp
mp

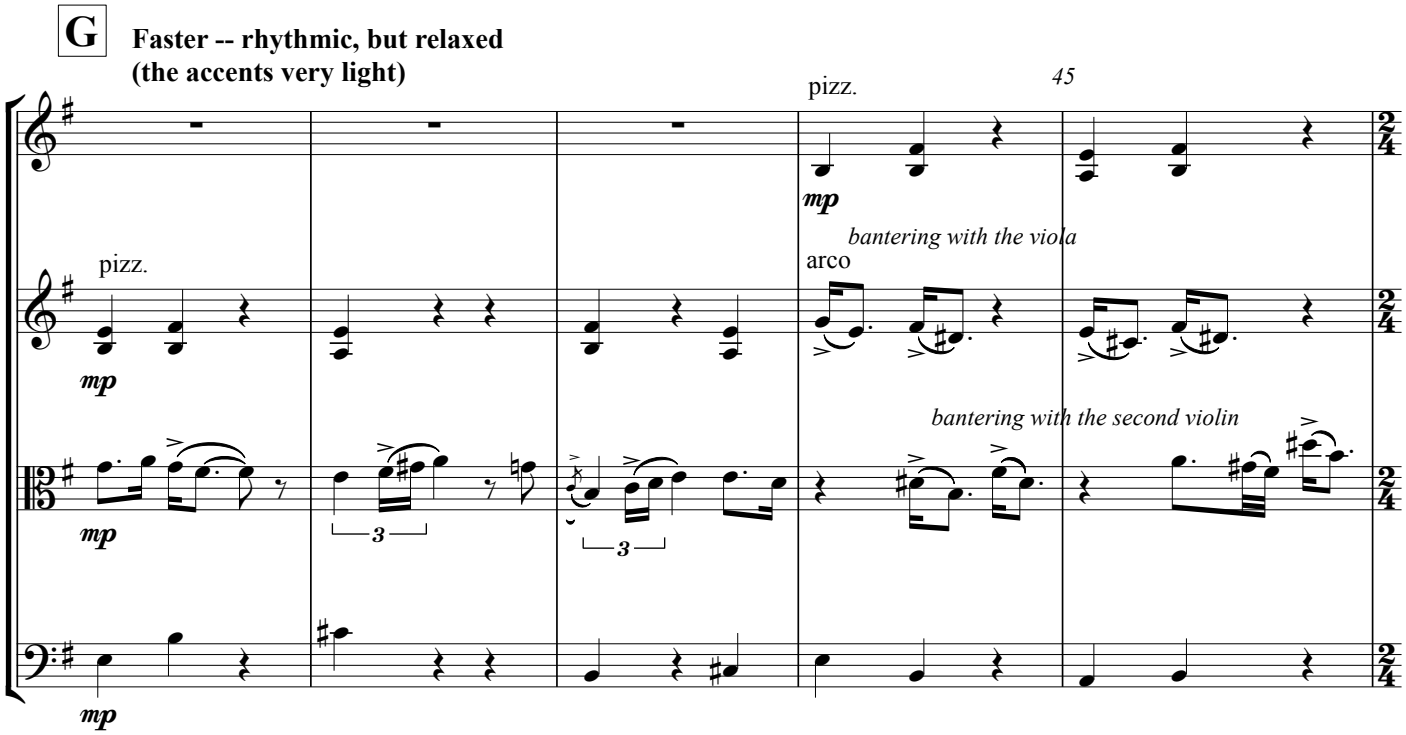

D
Slower again, less tentative
pizz.
taking the lead
arco
taking the lead
3
pizz.
taking the lead
arco
pizz.
pizz.
taking the lead
arco
taking the lead
pizz.
the accents very gentle

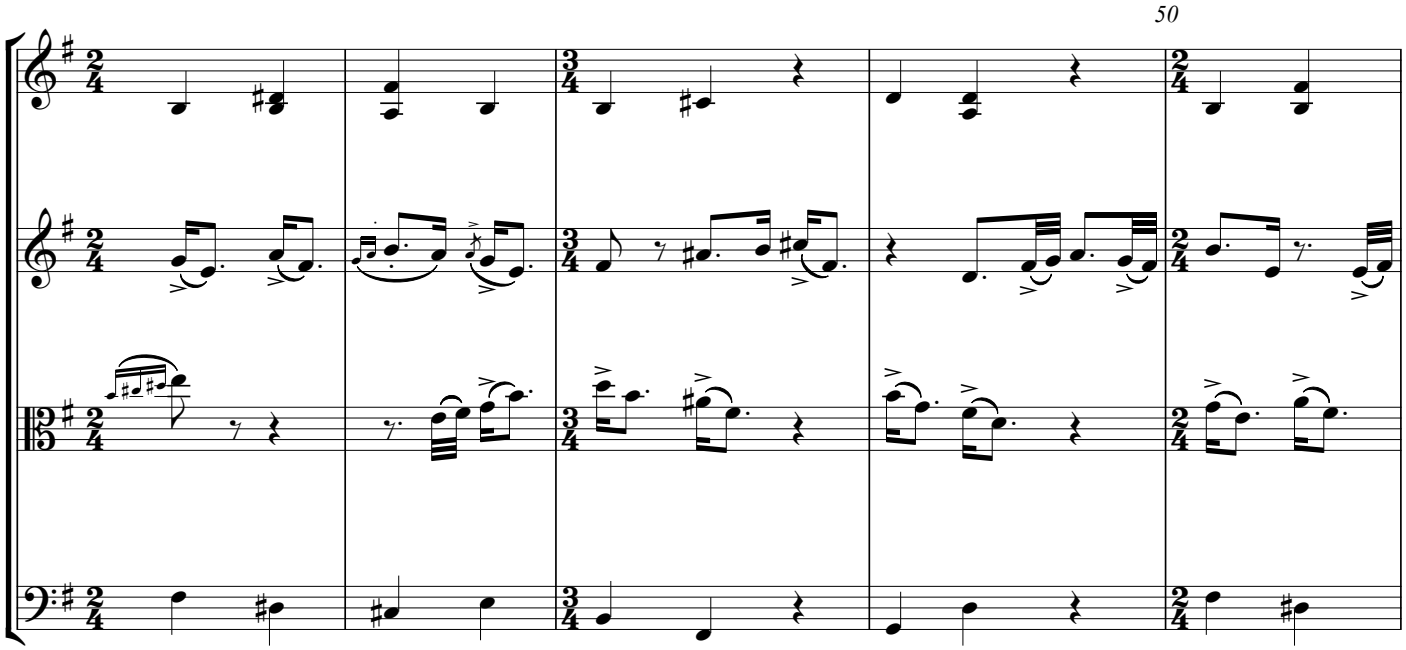

25
speeding up
a bit...
E
...in a steadier tempo
pizz.
taking the lead
arco
poco
pizz.
poco
poco

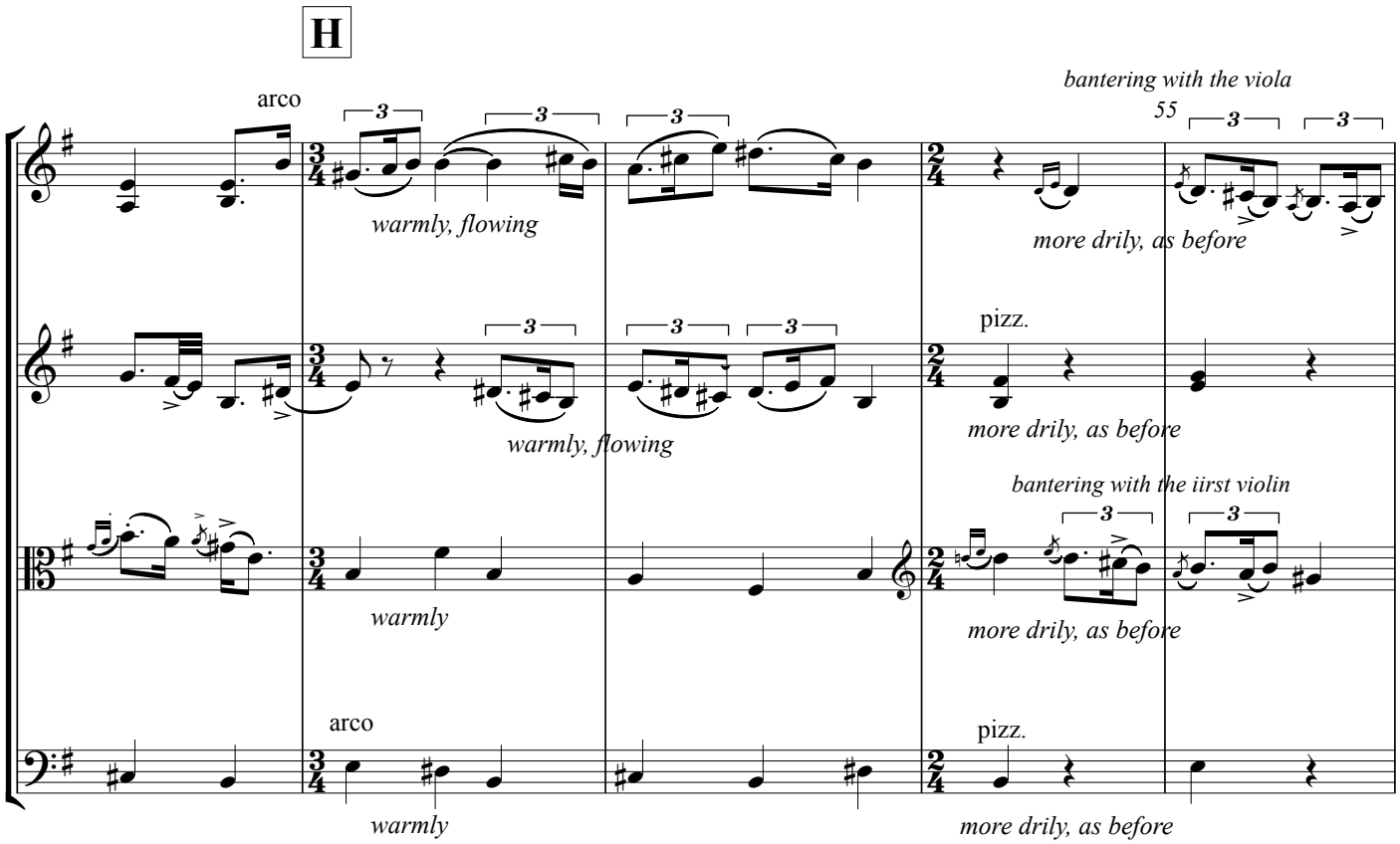

30
taking the lead
arco
p!
with the viola
pizz.
behind the second violin
taking the lead
behind the first violin
arco
p!

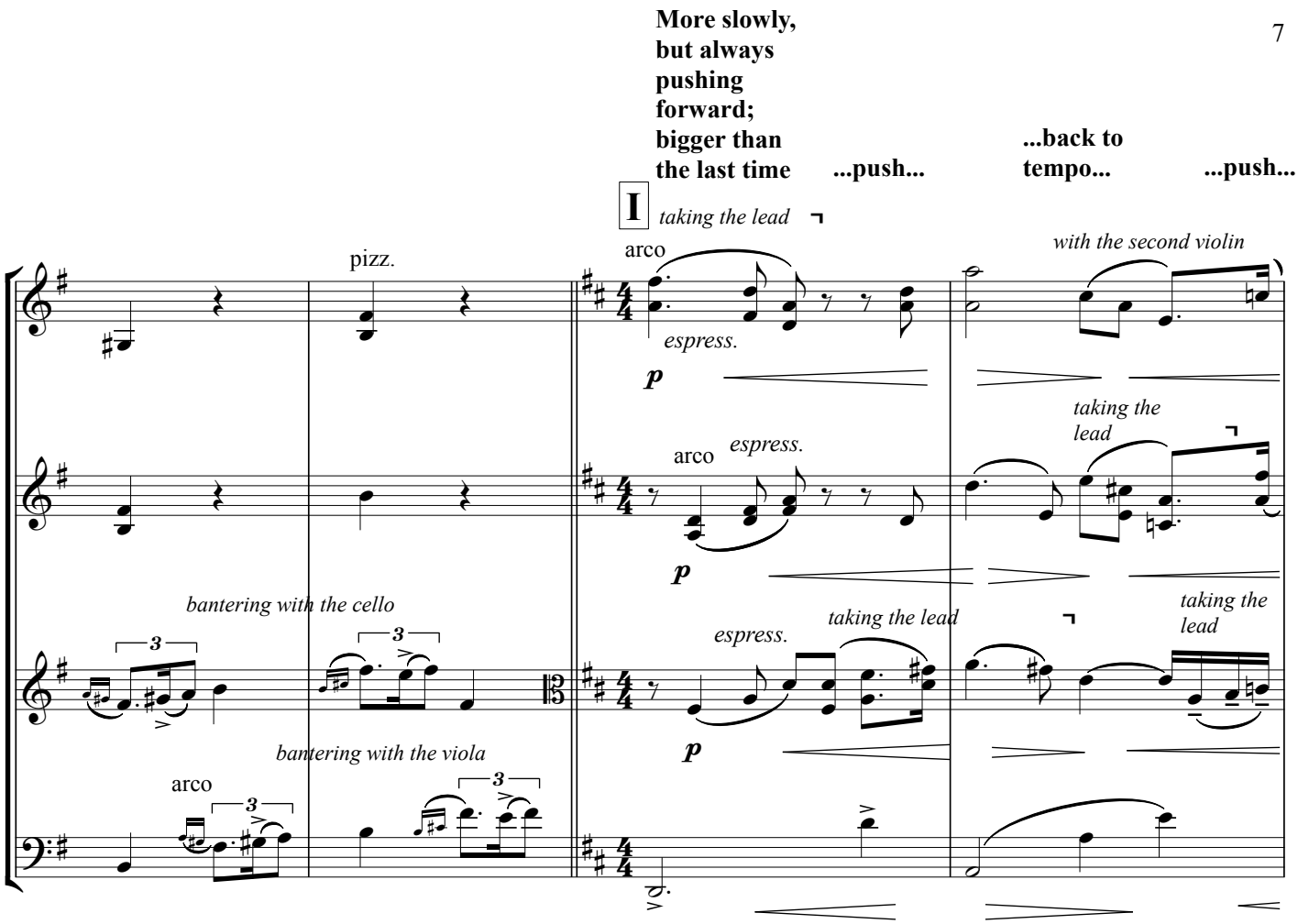

F
35
pizz.
pizz.
taking the lead
arco
p very simply

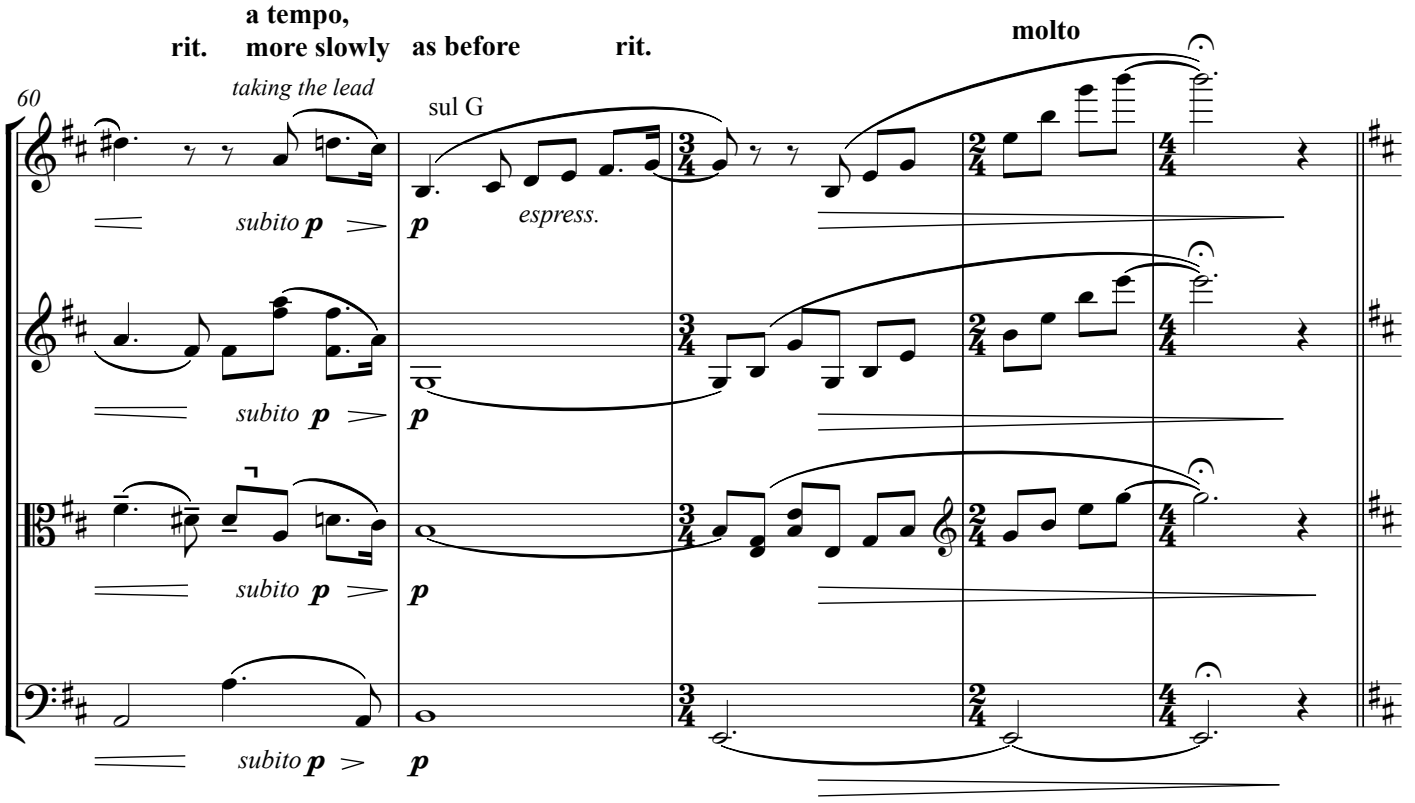

taking the lead
arco
pp
poco
pizz.
p
40
accel.
taking the lead
arco
arco
pp
poco
pizz.
p
with the viola
arco
pizz.
taking the lead
arco
pp
poco
p
pp
poco
p

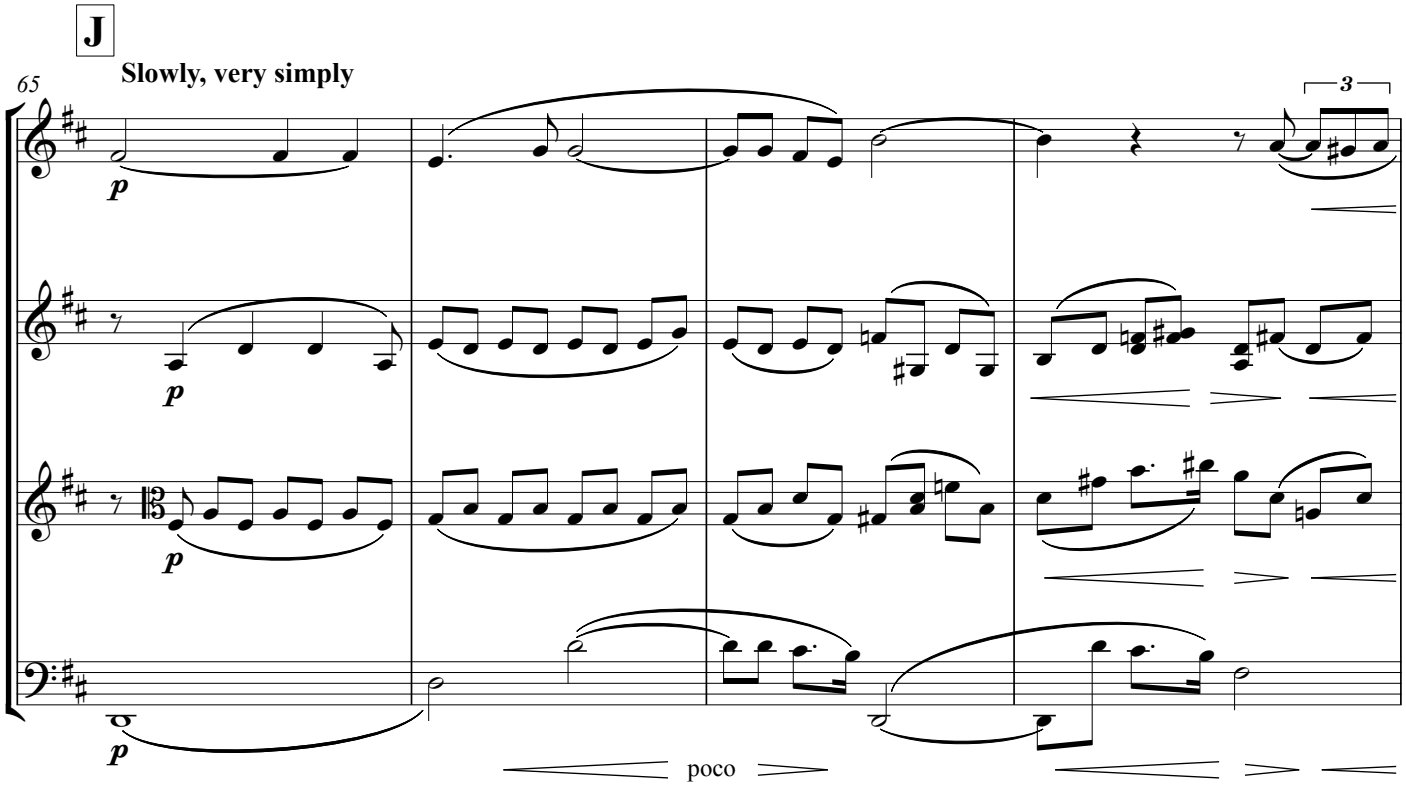

G
Faster -- rhythmic, but relaxed
(the accents very light)
pizz.
mp
45
pizz.
mp
bantering with the viola
arco
bantering with the second violin
mp
mp

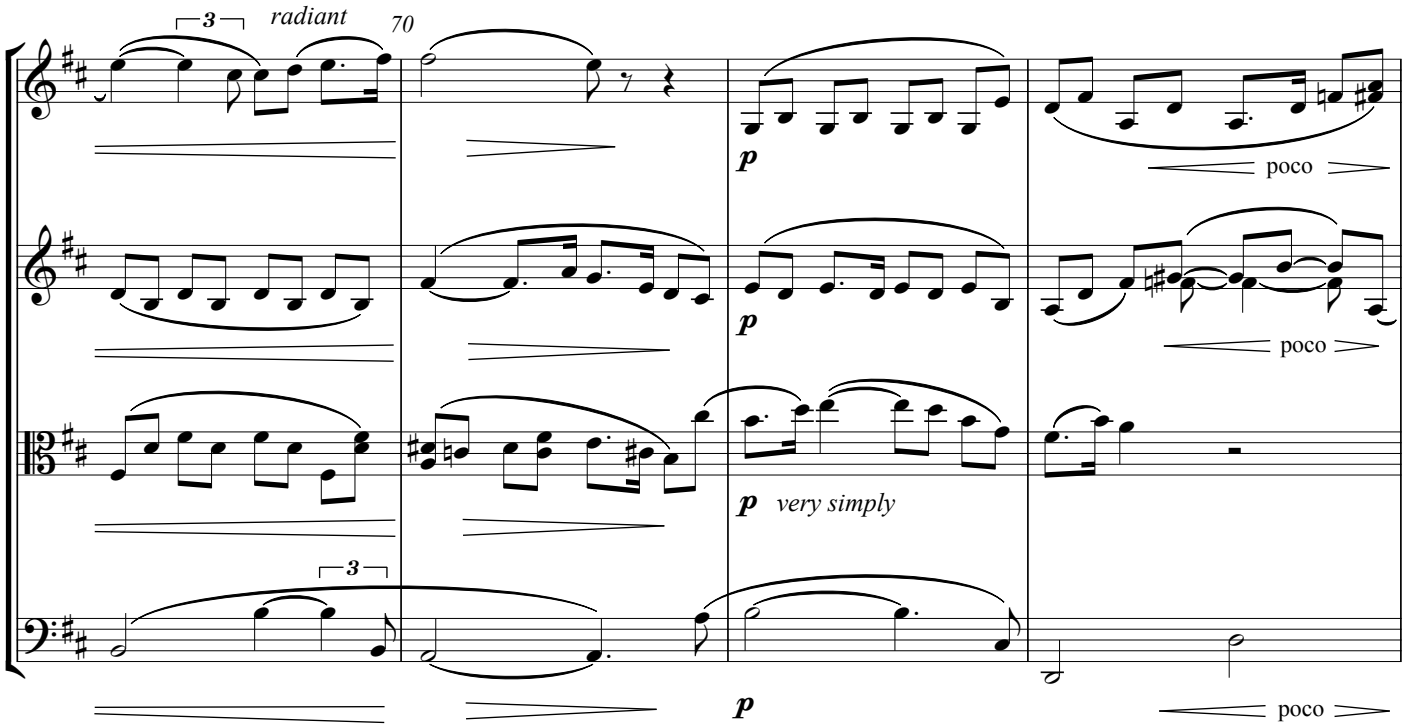

50

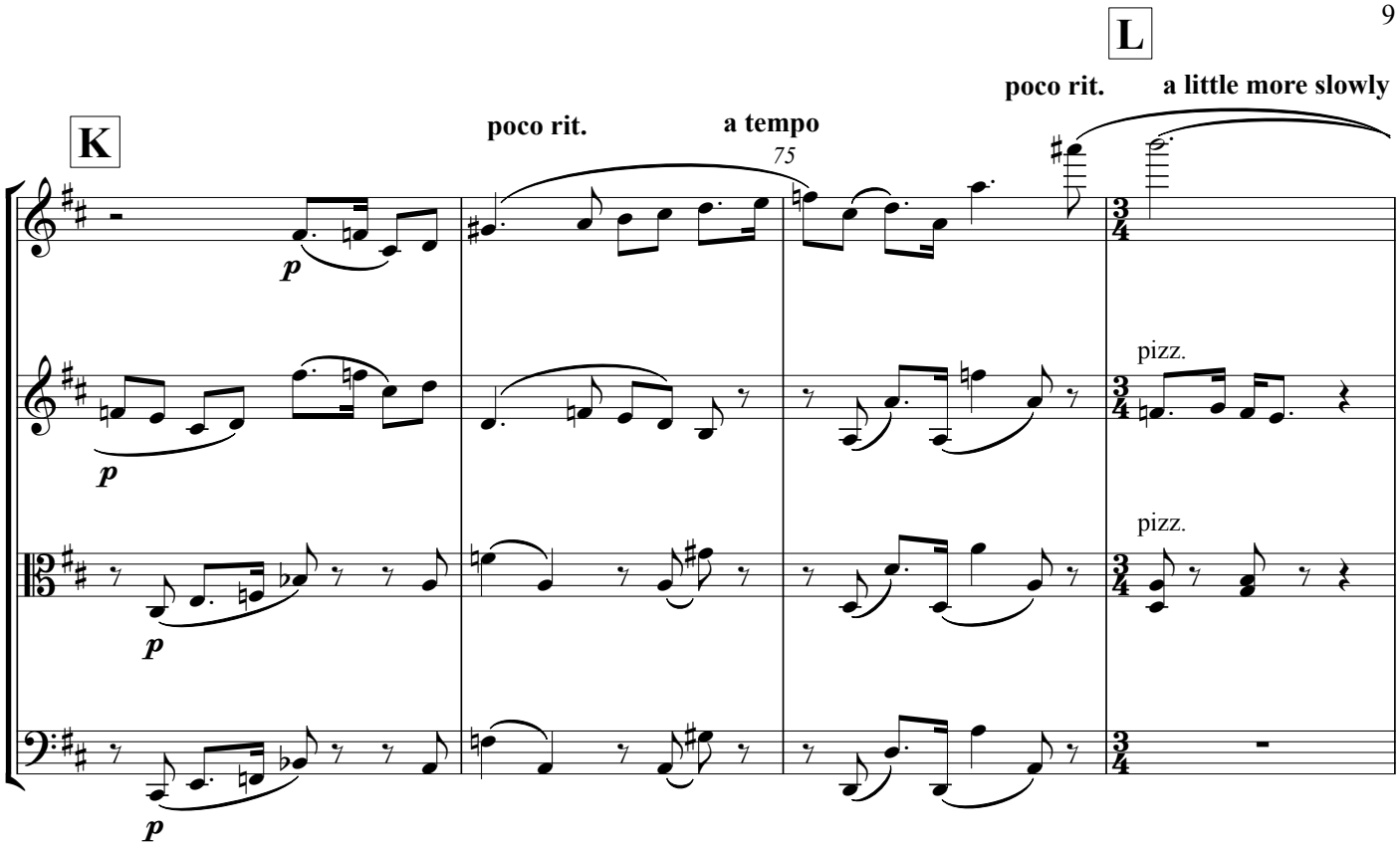

H
arco
warmly, flowing
warmly, flowing
warmly
arco
warmly
bantering with the viola
55
more drily, as before
pizz.
more drily, as before
bantering with the iirst violin
more drily, as before
pizz.
more drily, as before

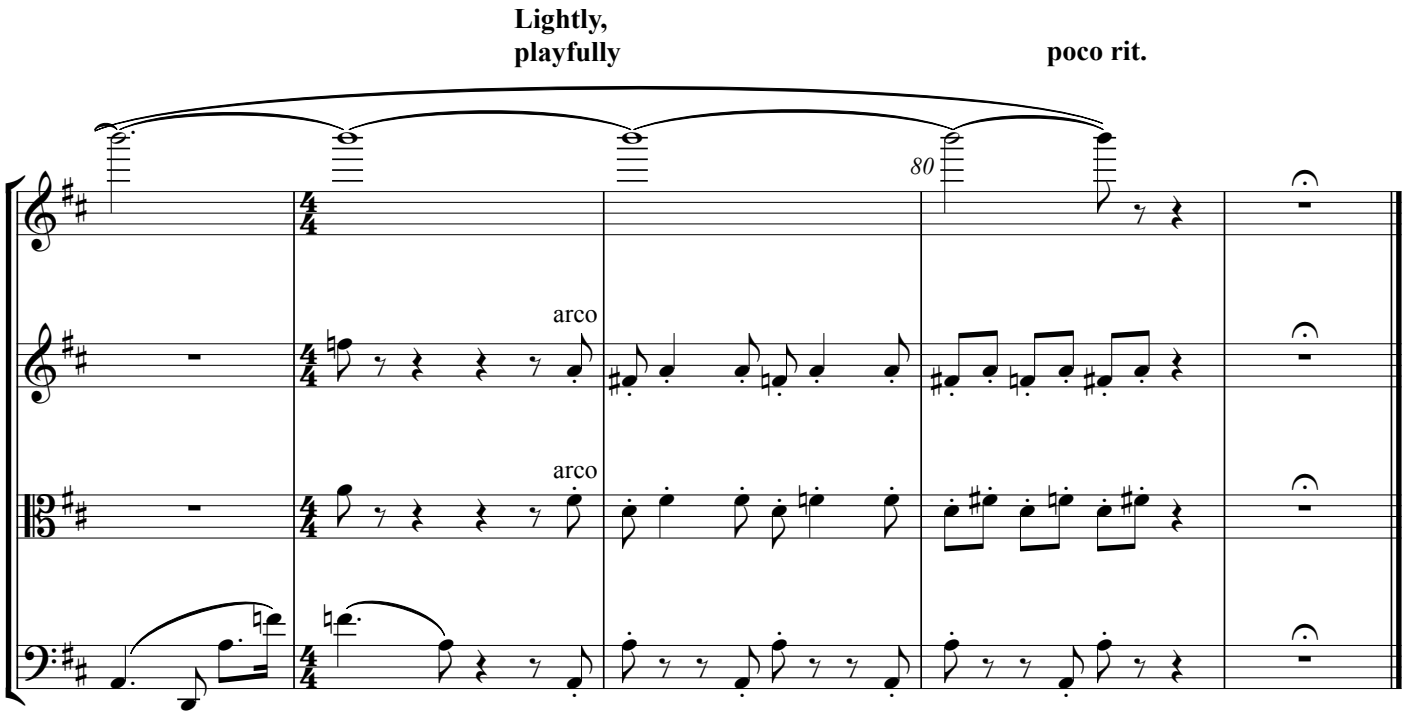

More slowly, but always pushing forward; bigger than the last time
...push...
...back to tempo...
...push...
I
taking the lead
arco
pizz.
espress.
p
with the second violin
taking the lead
bantering with the cello
bantering with the viola
3


60
rit.
a tempo, more slowly
as before
rit.
molto
taking the lead
sul G
espress.
subito p
p


J
Slowly, very simply
65
p
3
poco


3
radiant
70
p
poco
very simply





New York 2001