Little Maggie

solo violin

Larry Polansky

1984

LITTLE MAGGIE
Performance Notes

SINGING

The violinist should sing all the verses. It is not necessary, in fact it is not preferred, that the violinist be a trained singer in any way. What is looked for is a natural, rather informal singing style, the most important quality being a relaxed and uninhibited manner. The notation for the voice should serve as a guide, but the performer may take liberties with it if he/she wants. The voice part may be sung in any octave. Since the voice notation is largely drawn from the singing of bluegrass bands, and in particular, the Stanley Bros. performance of "Little Maggie", vocal ornamentation within that style can serve as a model for the violinist.

CHORDAL ACCOMPANIMENT

Below each line of music, in (mostly) uppercase letters, the chord changes of the piece are provided. Ideally, these chords should be played by the violinist, on a detacheable footpedal device of the kind that rock organists frequently use. In this case, only the roots of the chords (and possibly fifths, if the footpedals are so equipped), are necessary. The accompaniment might also be played by a separate accompaniest, on a simple sounding organ, Casio or other electronic keyboard, harmonium, or any other sustaining instrument with a relatively simple waveform and no vibrato. The dynamics of the accompaniment should vary slightly in response to the violin part --for example, softer in Variation III, louder at the end and in the Introduction. In general, however, they should be fairly constant--soft enough so as not to interfere with the nuances of the violin part, but loud enough to be heard and felt clearly. If the violinist is miked (which is preferable in a large hall, and even in a small one to allow the player more dynamic freedom, especially in the soft sections), the accompaniment should be combined in the output mix so that it blends spatially with the violin. Throughout most of the piece, the chords consist of major triads, but in certain variations (like II), more extended chords are used. The accompaniest or violinist might also take certain liberties with the rhythmic feel of the chords---syncopating slightly to taste, and in response to the rhythmic movement of the piece, but in general the chords should

change on the indicated beats. Voicings of the chords are left to the player. If a string instrument is used (like an autoharp, pedal steel, dobro, or even guitar), simple interconnecting runs between the chords may be played, but with discretion. The accompaniest should also take care to follow the violinist's tempi closely.

HARMONICS

All harmonics are notated by their sounding pitch, the "node" (diamond shaped note in parentheses), and the string (in roman numerals). This fingering schema is often omitted if the harmonic is a second (octave), in which case there is only one way to play it on the indicated string, and when a given harmonic is used frequently in succession. Since many of the harmonics, especially the higher ones (4th, 5th, 6th and 7th), have several (n-1) places where they might be played, the notated fingerings are to be taken as suggestions only. Even the string on which a harmonic is played (for example, the high D which is the same on the IV and III string) can often be changed if the violinist feels it necessary. Since many of the harmonics are quite dificult to produce, their reliability will vary greatly from violin to violin, bow to bow, and player to player, and the violinist may occasionally substitute artificial harmonics or even fingered pitches as a last resort. For many of the higher harmonics, a rather tenuous sound (hard to avoid) is desired—with a high percentage of bow noise (this is especially true in Variation III and in parts of the Introduction). Open strings are notated in the same fashion as harmonics, but without a node of course.

TEMPI

The entire piece should be played in a fast fiddle-tune tempo, though there is room for a great deal of liberty from variation to variation, and even within the variations. The Introduction and Fiddle Tune (at the end) should both be quite fast, but Variations III and V, for example, might be played slower to bring out the sonorities more. Variation IV should be played as fast as possible.

PIZZICATI

Several styles of pizzicati are used in the piece—from normal pizz. to thumbed strumming and even the use of a plectrum. Often, the violinist might find it expedient to switch the position of the instrument for the extended pizzicato sections (Variation I; Verse V; Variation V), but this is left to the player. If Variation V (or even Variation I) is played with a plectrum, either a plastic or hard felt type may be used. If any of the pizzicato harmonics prove to difficult to

sound at the indicated tempi, the player may substitute a different fingering (string), or even play them as stopped pitches rather than break the tempo.

INTRODUCTION

Only two pitches are used in the Introduction, G and C#, and there is only one chord (G).

DYNAMICS

Two types of dynamics, parenthetical and not, are used. Parenthetical dynamics signify slight changes within the prescribed markings, and might almost be considered phrasing or "breathing" suggestions to the player.

INTONATIONS

In Variation II, the intonations of pitches should correspond as closely as possible to the harmonic series on G (as indicated in the footnote in that variation). In the Introduction, the C# might be played consistently flat about a quarter-tone (or as an 11th harmonic to G), but this is optional. Throughout the rest of the piece, intonation should more closely resemble that of traditional fiddling than 12-tone equal tempered, for example: slightly flat (just) thirds (about 14 cents), flat sevenths (seventh harmonics, about 31 cents narrow of tempered), and true fifths. This should not be done in any mechanical fashion, or even considered to be "microtonal", but rather naturally by ear, and the playing of Tommy Jarrell and others might be used as an aural model

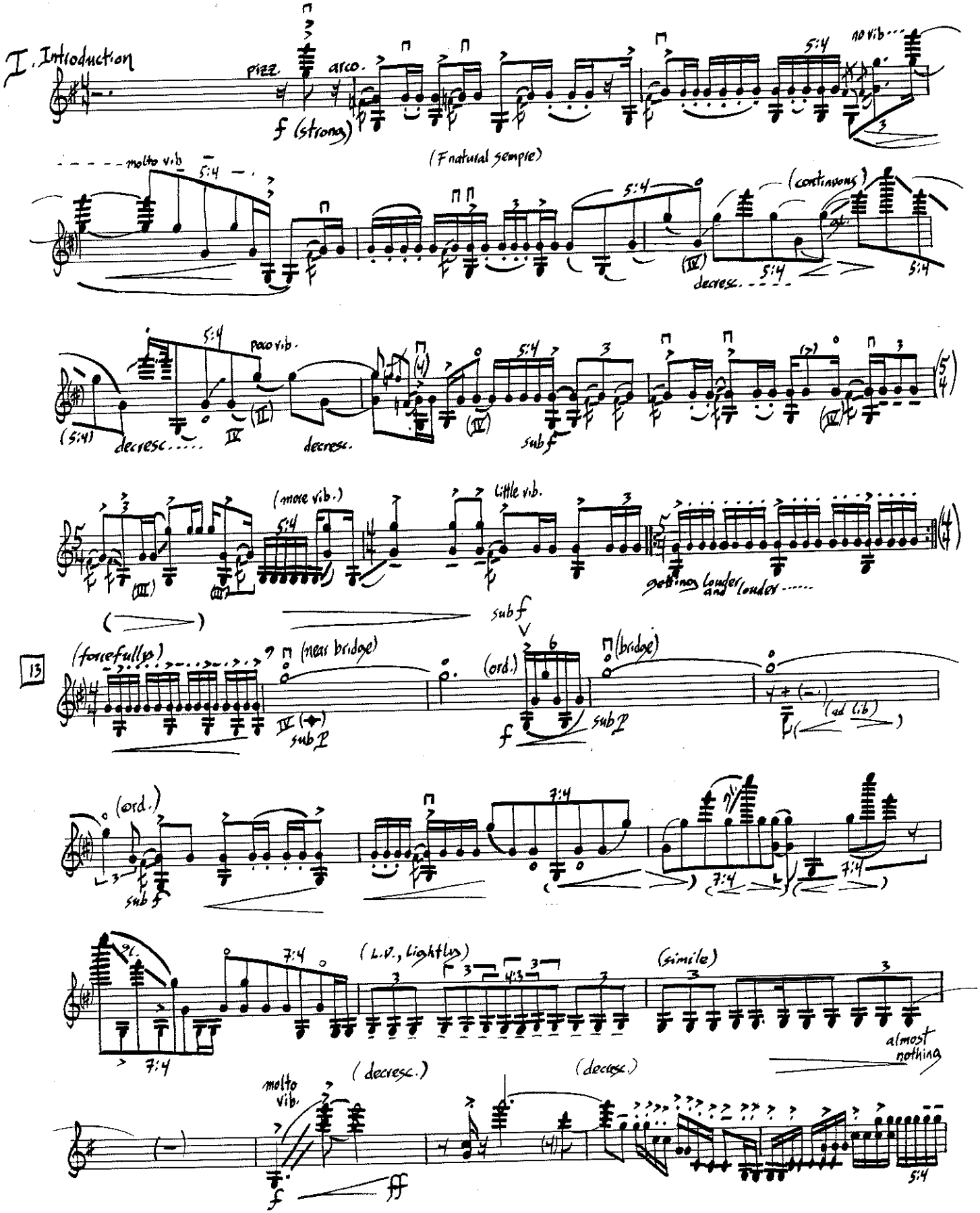
SLURS AND PHRASINGS

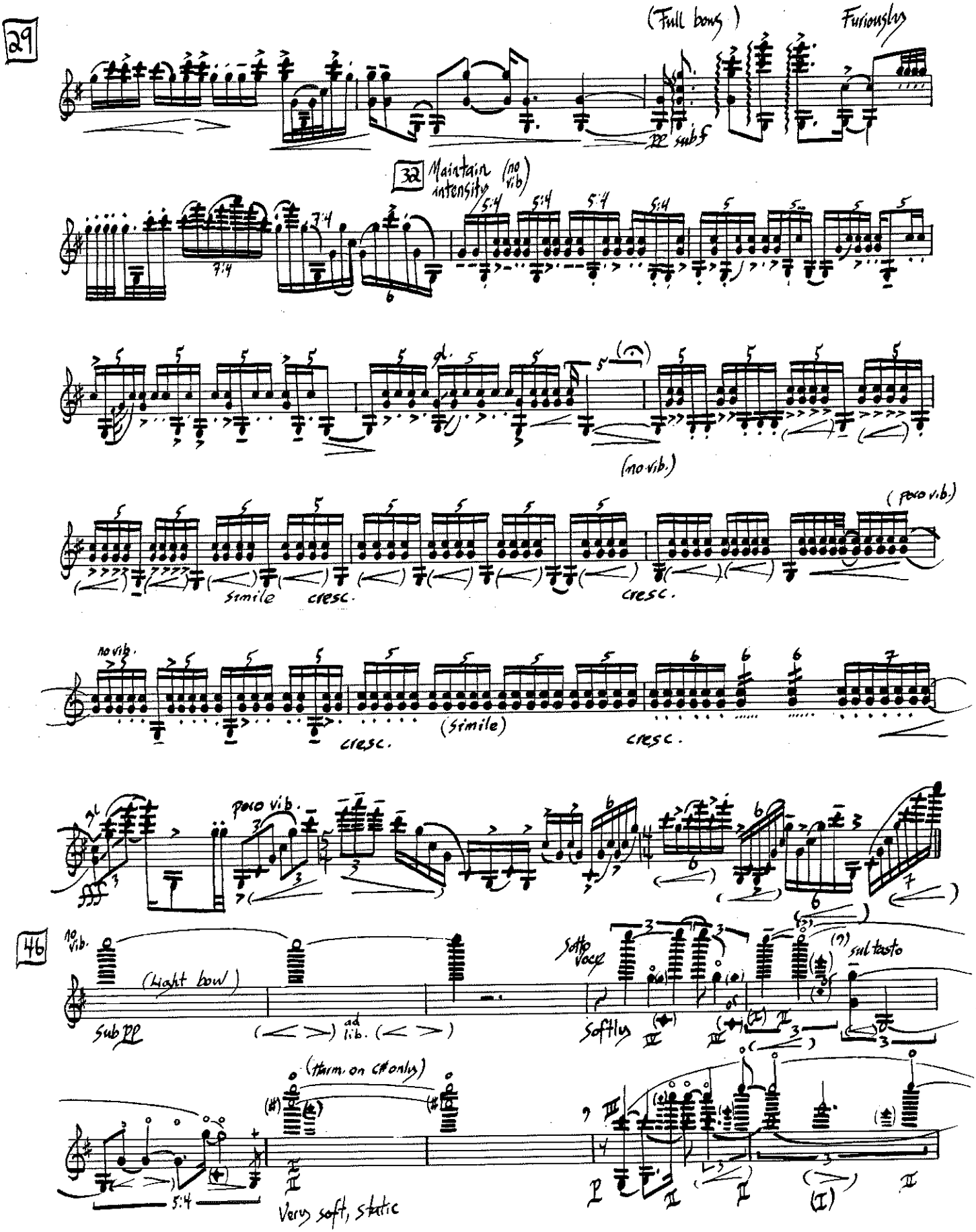
Slur markings do not necessarily indicate bow changes, but are meant to simply give a sense of the desired phrasing. In addition, the indicated bowings may be altered slightly at the players' discretion, although in certain cases, when there is an obvious "motivic" reason for them, they should be respected even if they prove difficult. The same applies to indicated fingerings--the player may take certain liberties with them, but not without some consideration as to their musical purpose!

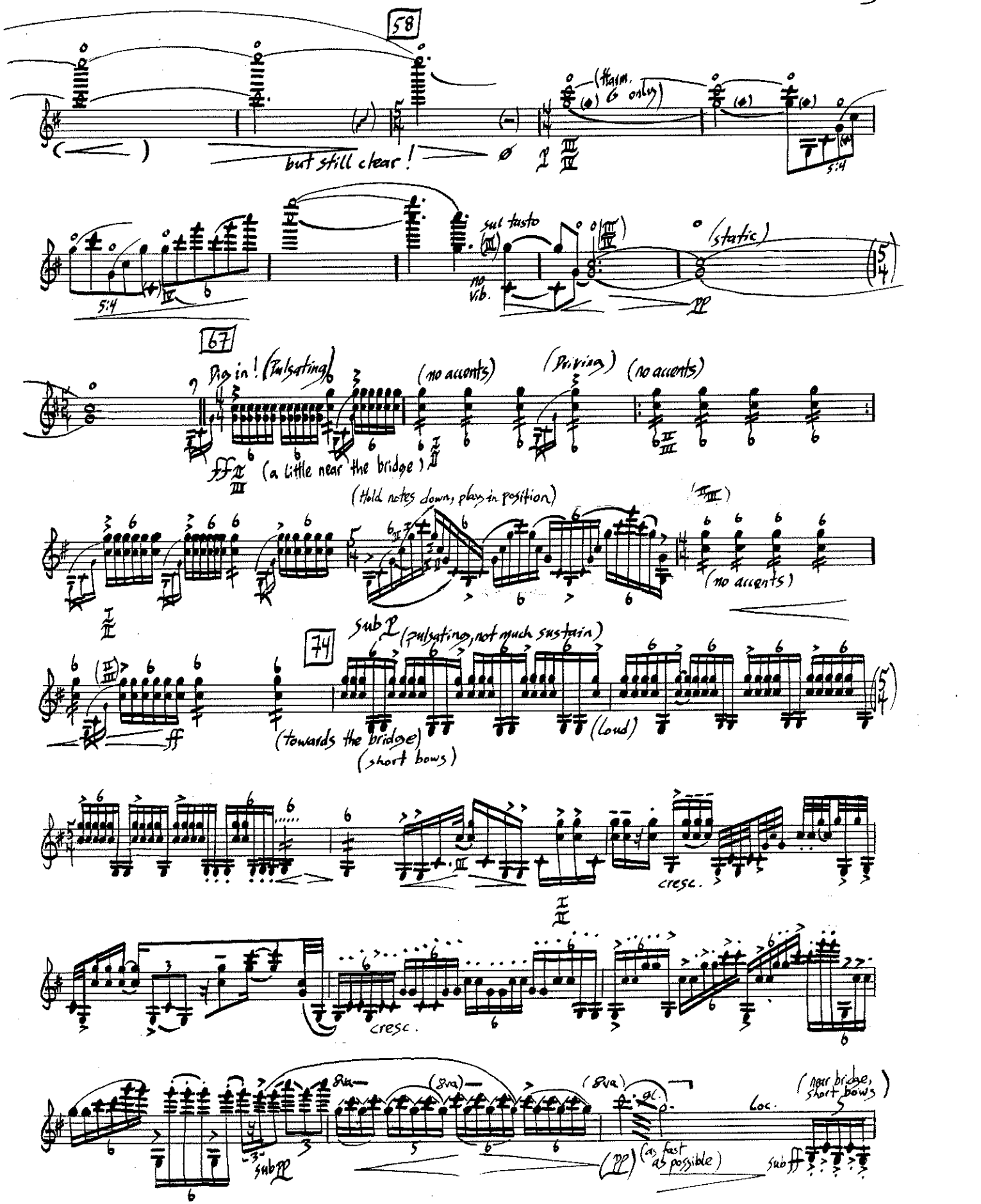
Thanks to Malcolm Goldstein for originally suggesting and inspiring the piece, and to Jody Diamond for her care and support during its composition.

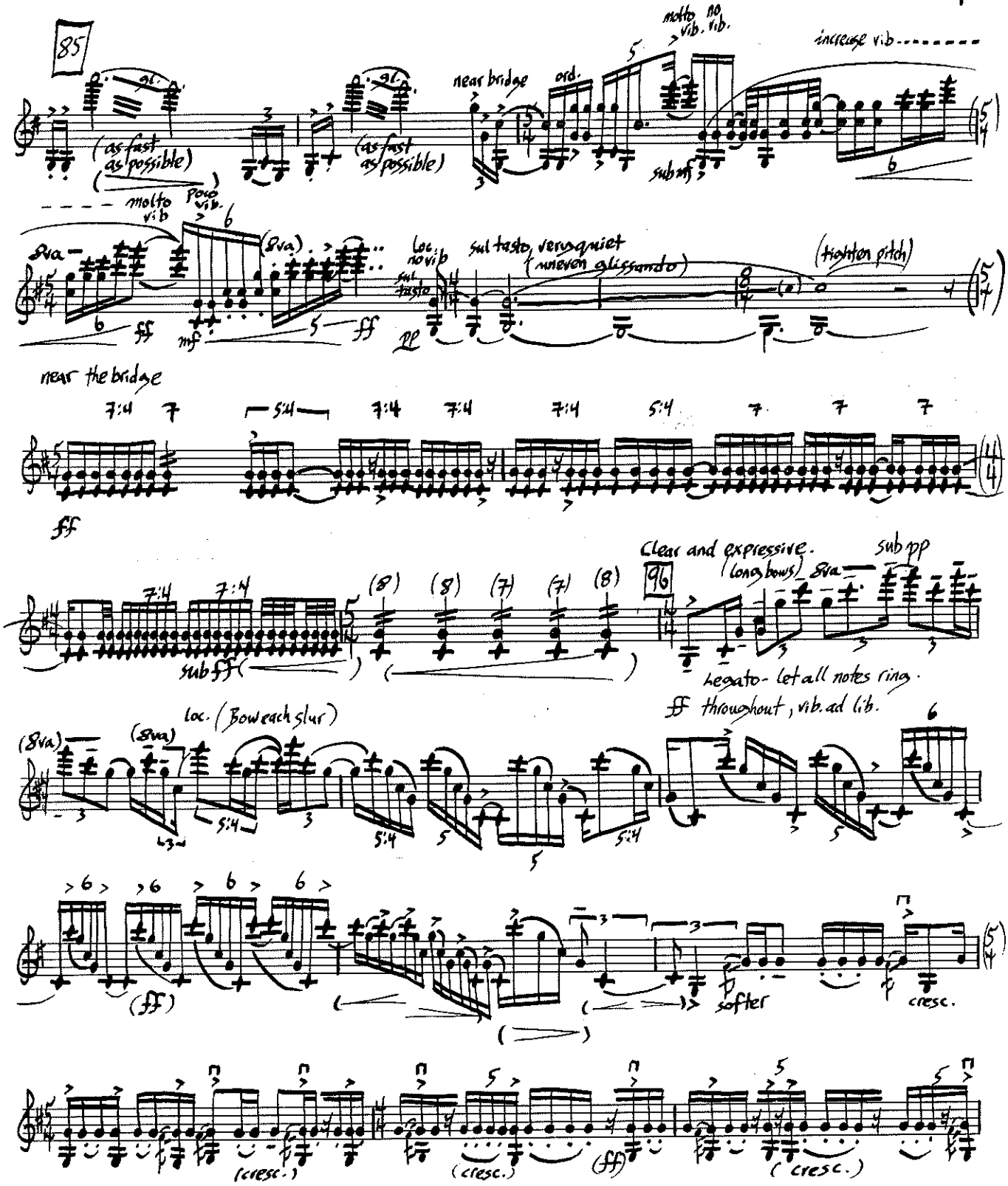
Larry Polansky (Boston, 1981---Berkeley, 1984)

♩≈100-120, but variable. In general fast, like a fiddle tune.

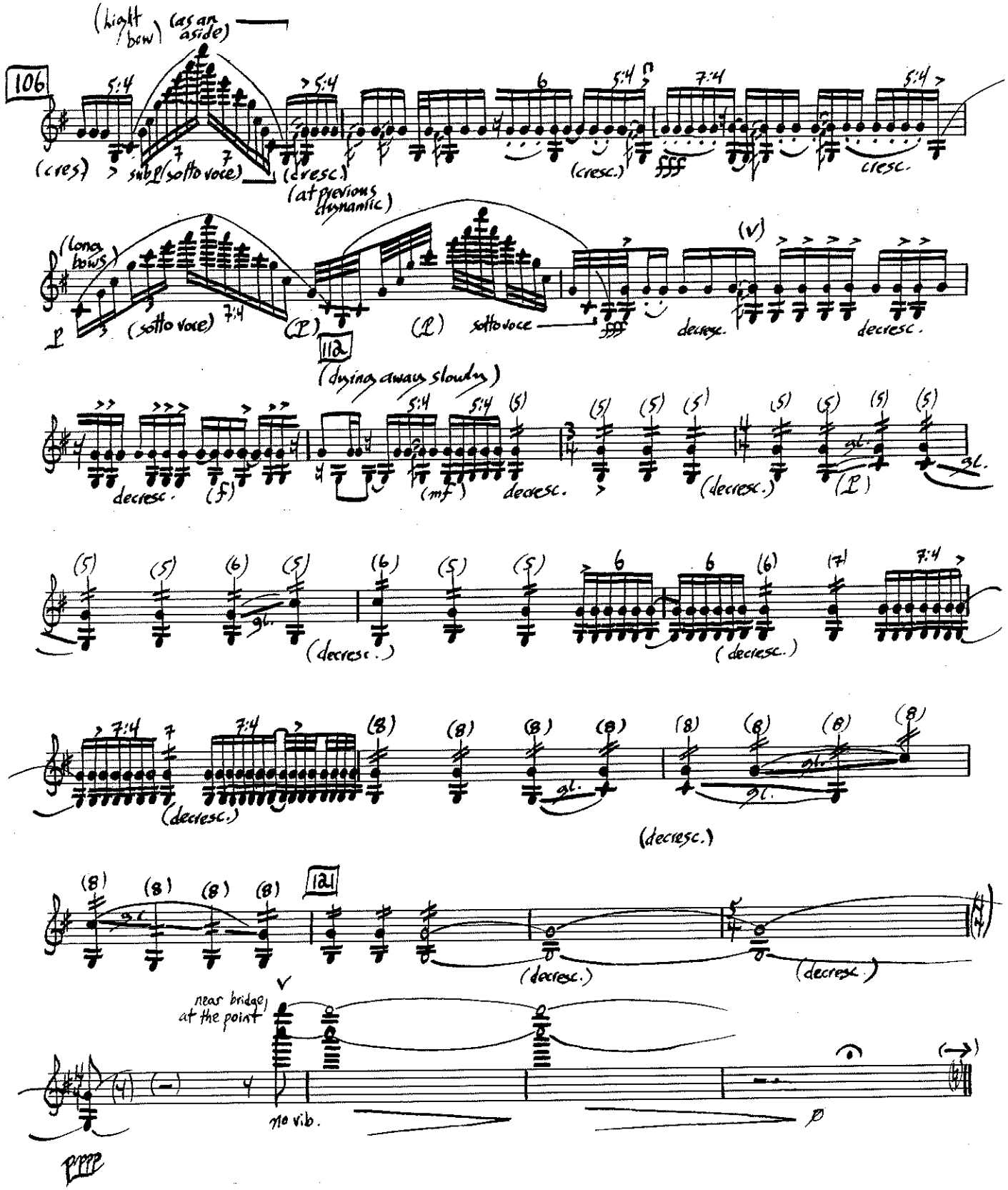


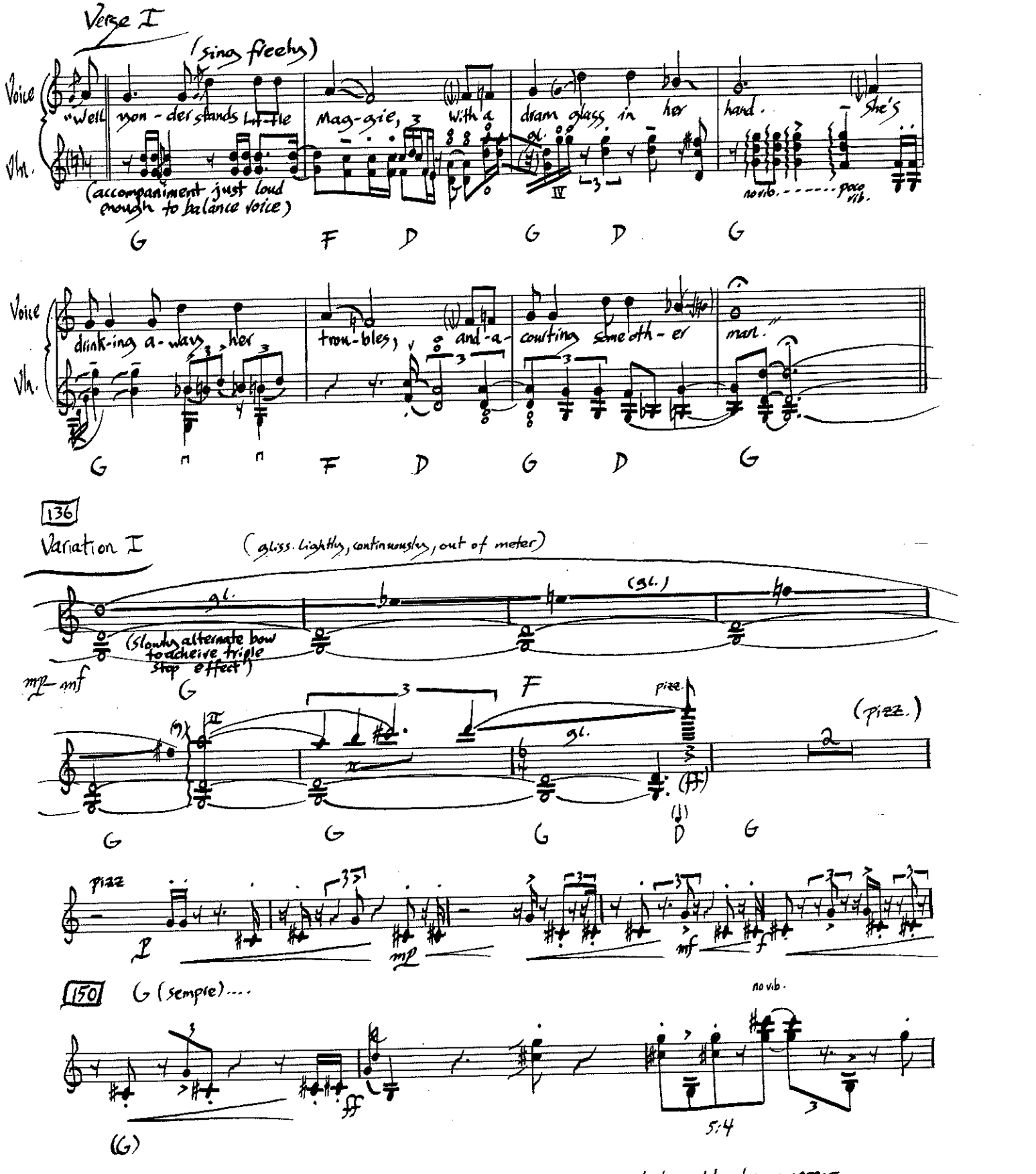

29
(Full bows)
Furiously
pp subf
32
Maintain intensity
(no vib)
5:4
7:4
(no vib.)
(poco vib.)
simile
cresc.
cresc.
no vib.
cresc.
(simile)
cresc.
poco vib.
46
no vib.
(Light bow)
Sub pp
ad lib.
Softly
Sotto voce
sul tasto
(thirm. on C# only)
5:4
Very soft, static


58
but still clear!
(Harm. G only)
5:4
sul tasto
no vib.
(static)
67
Dig in! (Pulsating)
(no accents)
(Driving)
(no accents)
(a little near the bridge)
(Hold notes down, play in position)
(no accents)
74
sub p (pulsating, not much sustain)
(towards the bridge)
(short bows)
(Loud)
cresc.
cresc.
8va
(8va)
(8va)
gl.
Loc.
(near bridge, short bows)
sub pp
(pp) (as fast as possible)
sub ff

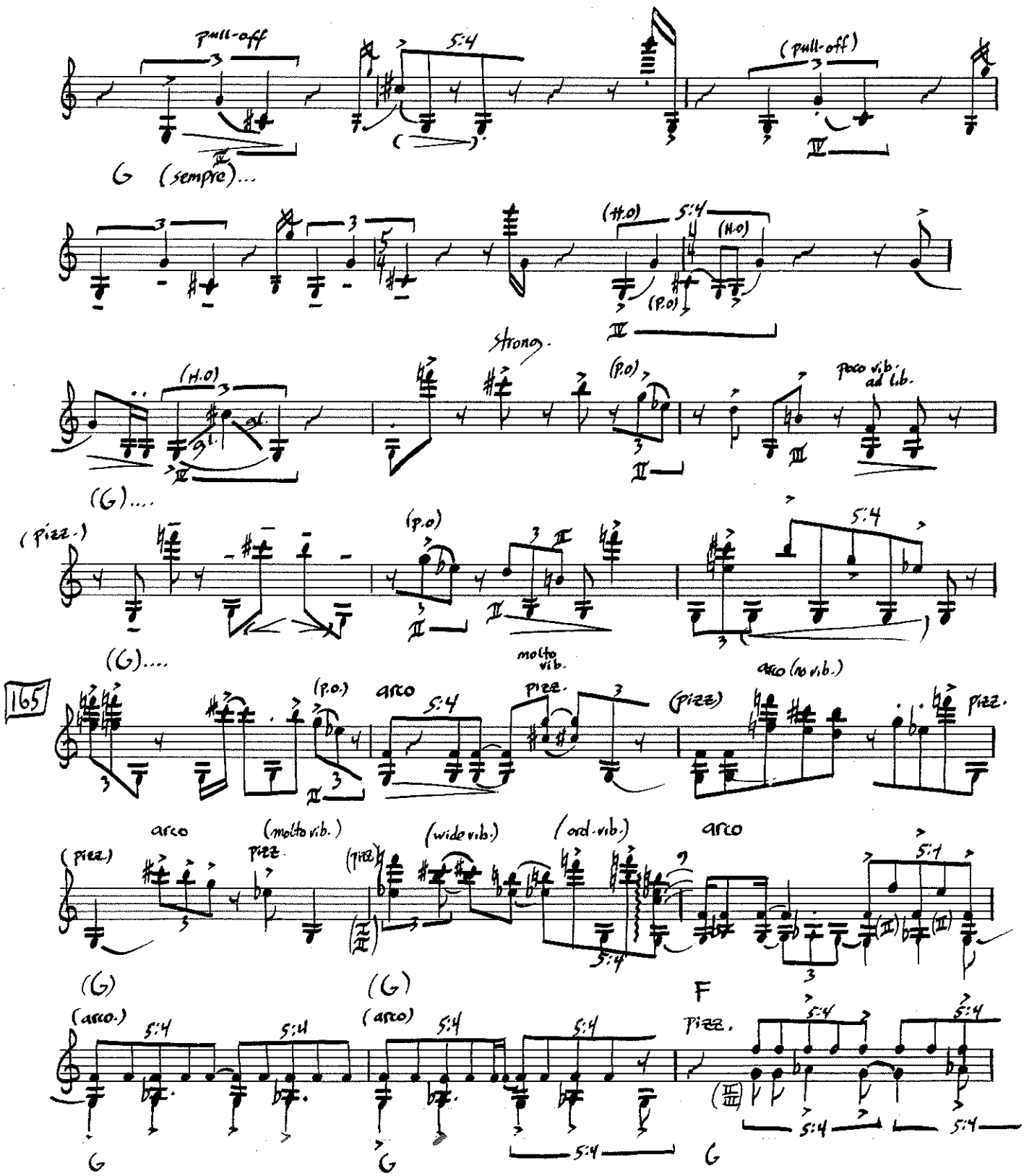


N.B. Mvs. 96-101 should be played "in position" as much as possible - so that the sound will be continuous.

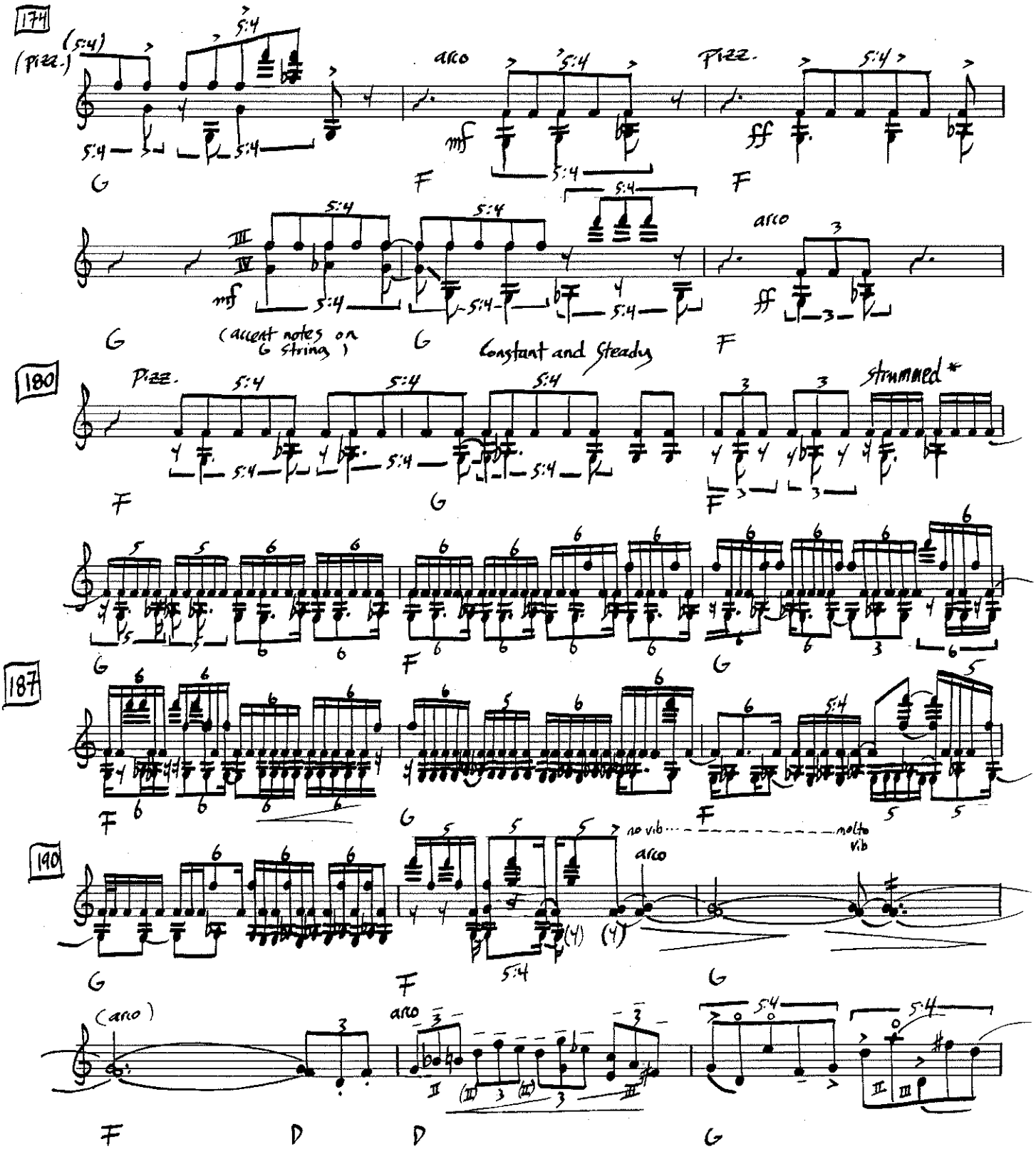

(light bow)
(as an aside)
106
(cres)
sub p (sotto voice)
(cresc.)
(cresc.)
cresc.
(at previous dynamic)
(long bows)
(sotto voice)
(P)
(P)
sotto voce
(V)
decresc.
decresc.
112
(dying away slowly)
decresc.
(f)
(mf)
decresc.
(decresc.)
(P)
(decresc.)
(decresc.)
(decresc.)
121
(decresc.)
(decresc.)
near bridge
at the point
no vib.
ppp



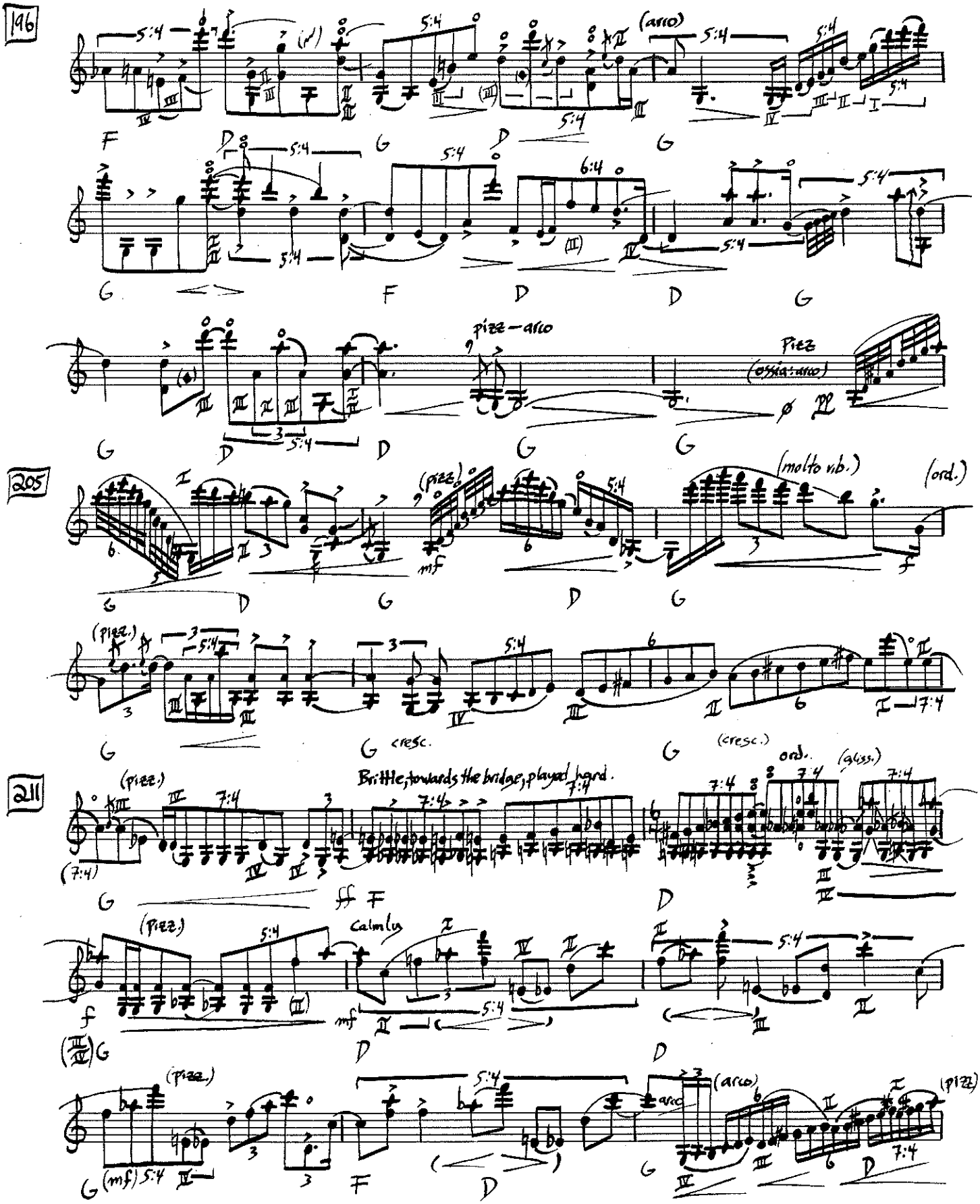
N.B. Chord symbols always appear below the measure.

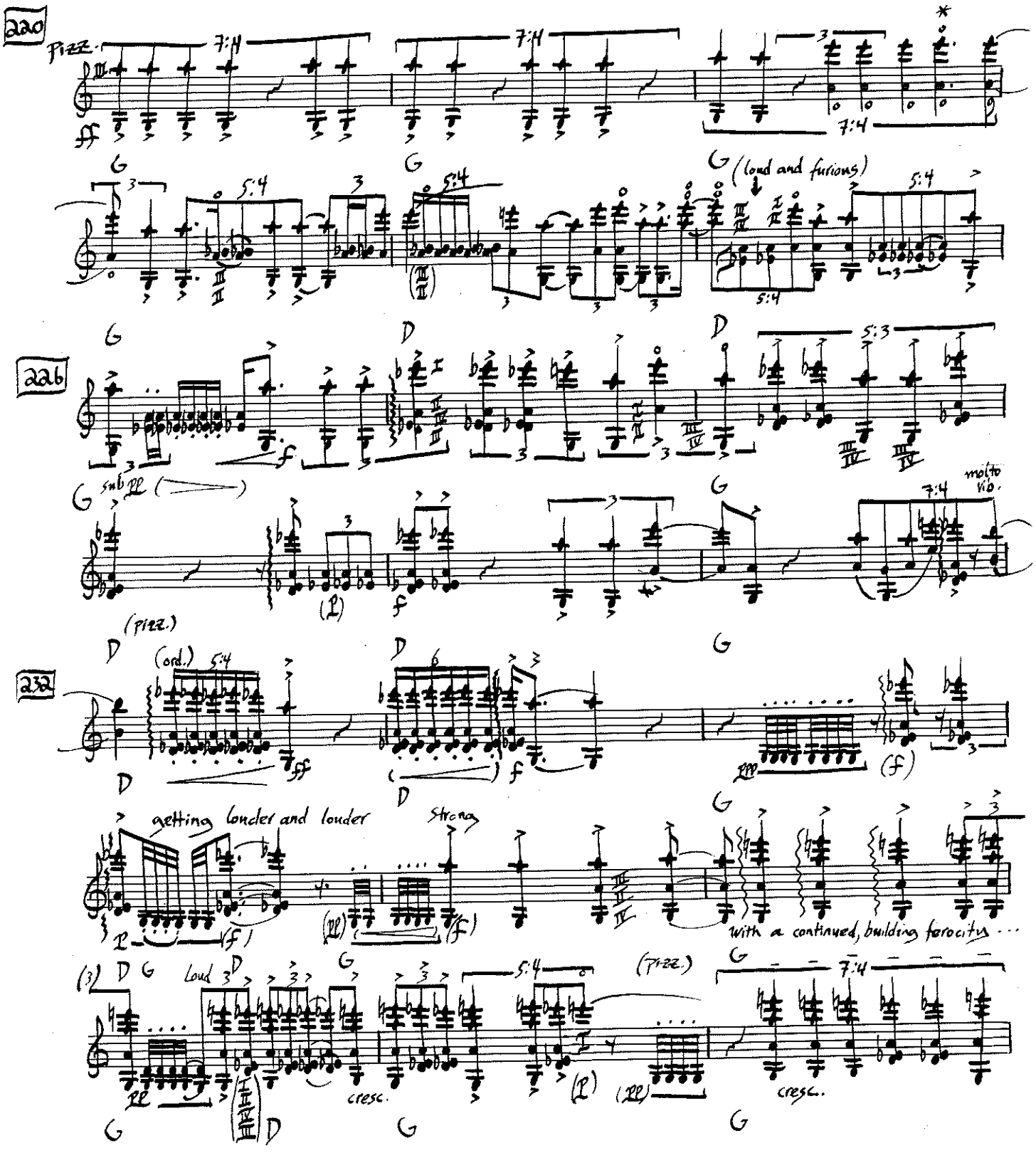


N.B. Pull-off (P.O.): second note is not plucked by right hand but sounded by Left-hand "hammer" or "pull-off" motion, in guitar/mandolin/banjo style.
Hammer-On (H.O):

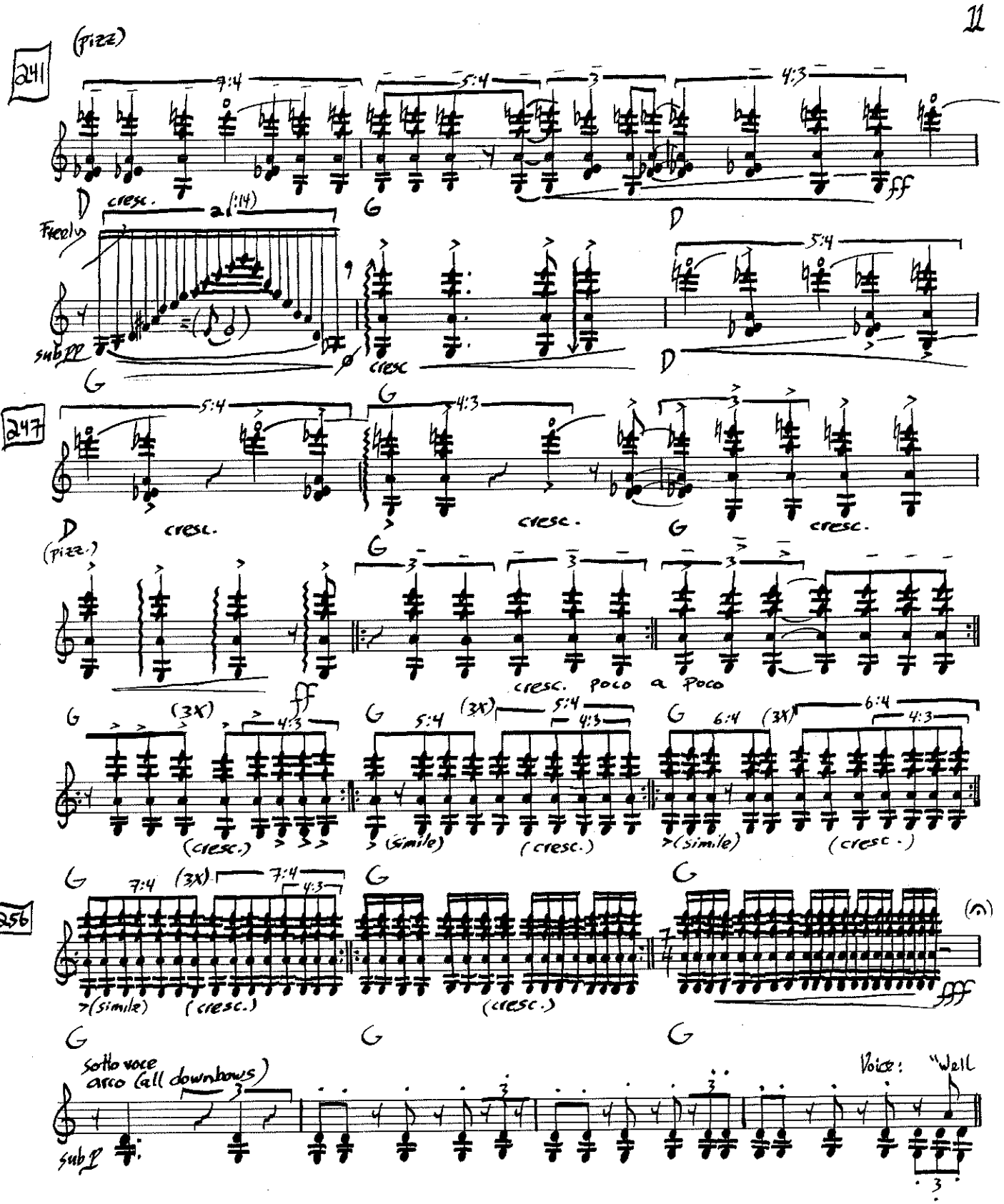


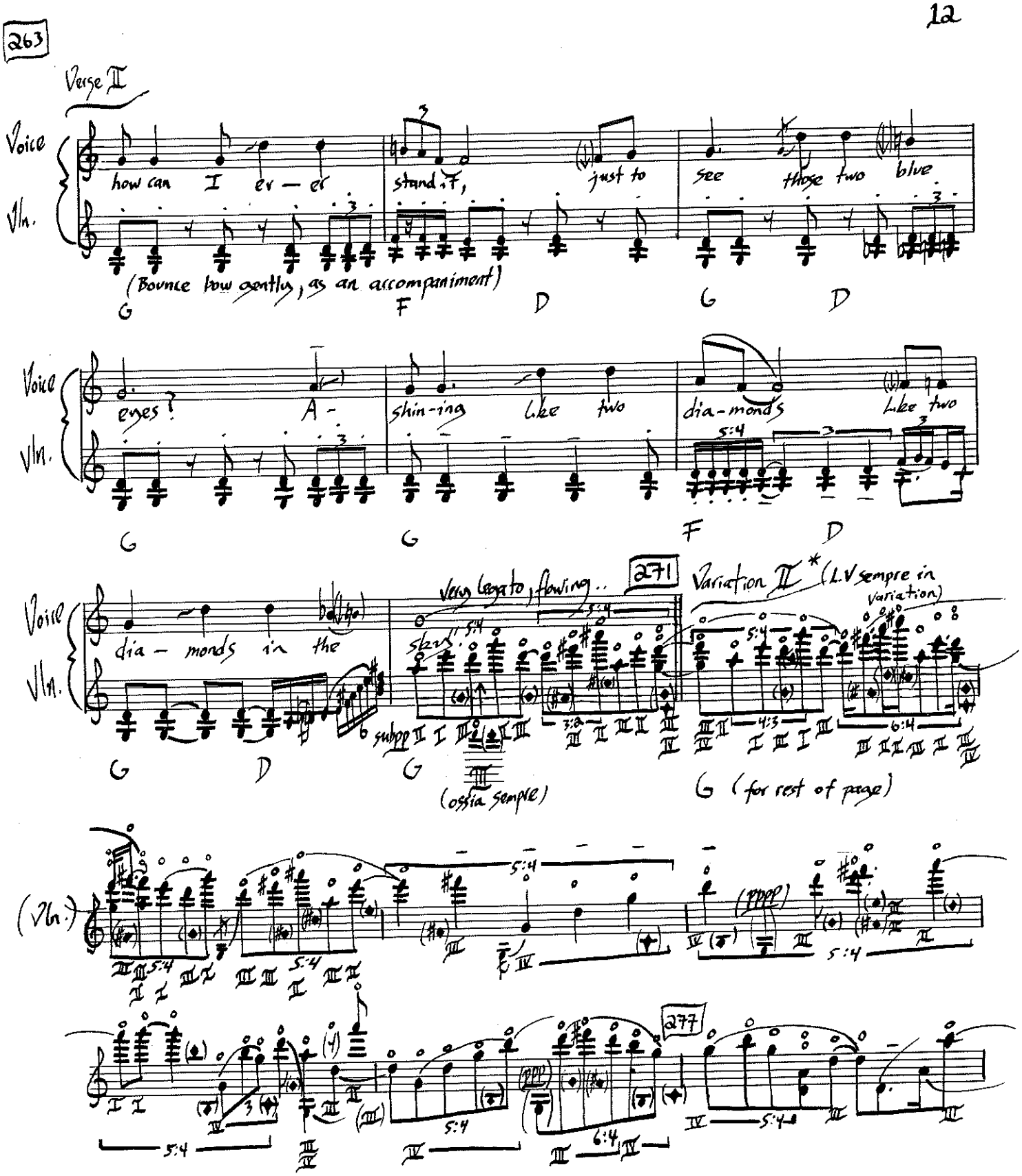
* N.B (mm. 182-191) This passage may be too difficult - too fast - to play in normal position. The violinist may find it necessary to hold the instrument like a mandolin, and pizzicatto with the thumb in a rapid, alternating strum. The heel could also be held against the chest (as in some traditional fiddling) to facilitate the transitions to and from arco. The passage may, as a last resort, be played arco.


196
(arco)
pizz–arco
Pizz
(ossia: arco)
205
(molto vib.)
(ord.)
(pizz.)
cresc.
(cresc.)
211
(pizz.)
Brittle, towards the bridge, played hard.
ord.
(gliss.)
calmly
(pizz.)
(arco)
(pizz.)

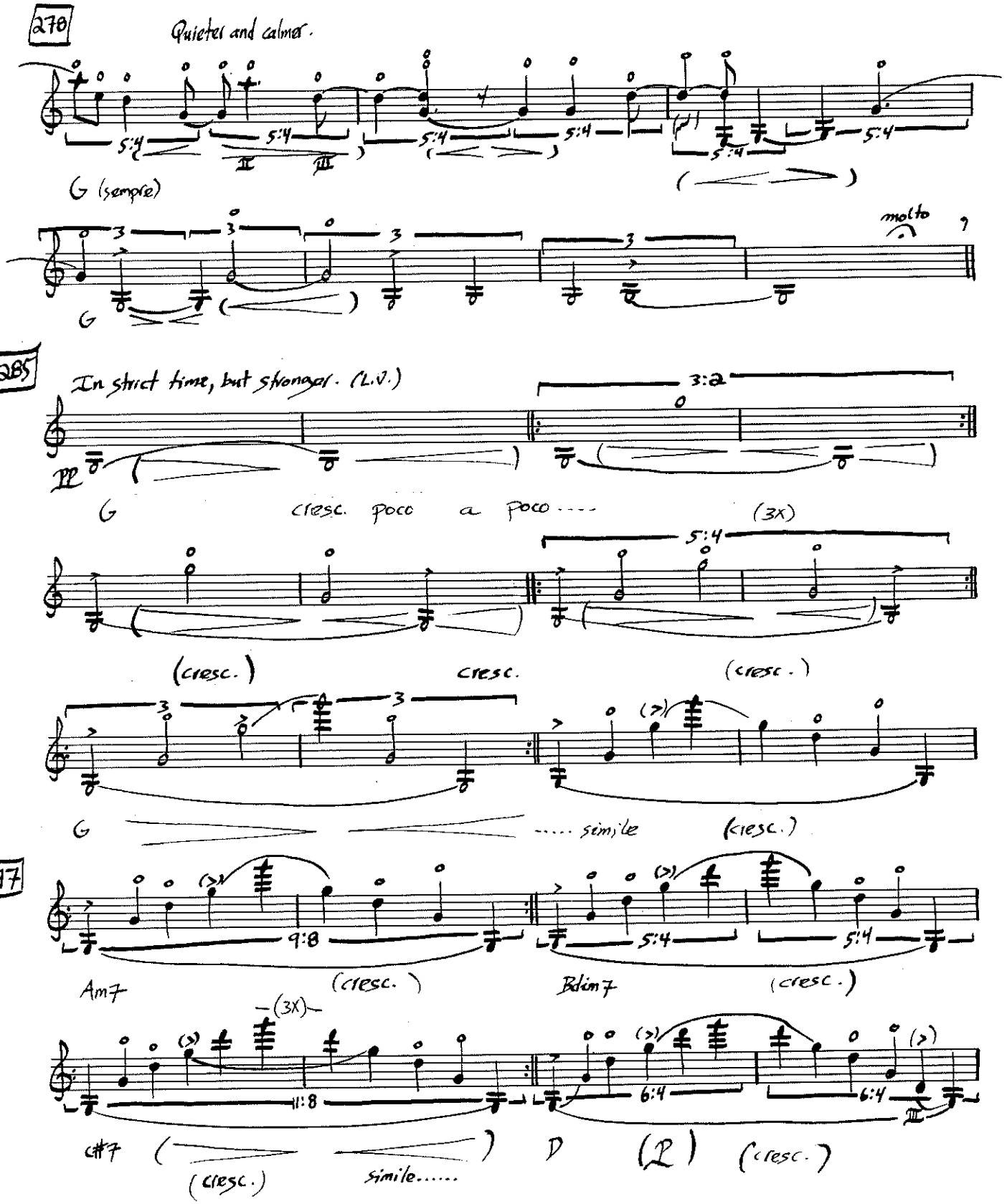


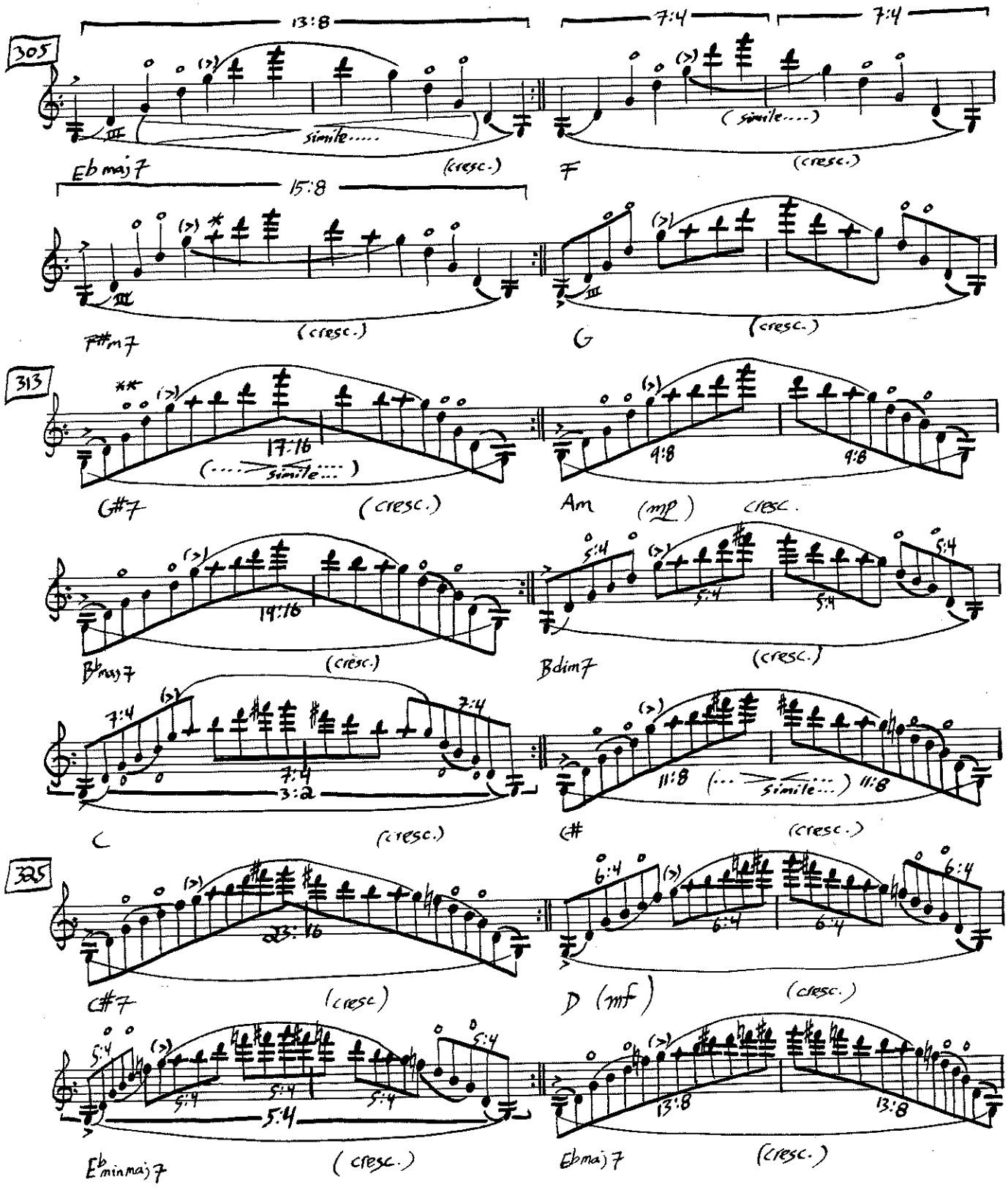
*N.B. Pizzicato harmonics may be played as stopped pitches if they prove too difficult to sound.


241
(pizz)
7:4
5:4
4:3
D
cresc.
G
D
ff
Freely
al (:14)
sub pp
cresc
5:4
247
5:4
4:3
D
cresc.
cresc.
G
cresc.
(pizz.)
cresc. poco a poco
ff
(3x)
4:3
5:4
6:4
(cresc.)
(simile)
256
7:4
(3x)
(simile)
(cresc.)
fff
sotto voce
arco (all downbows)
sub p
Voice: "Well



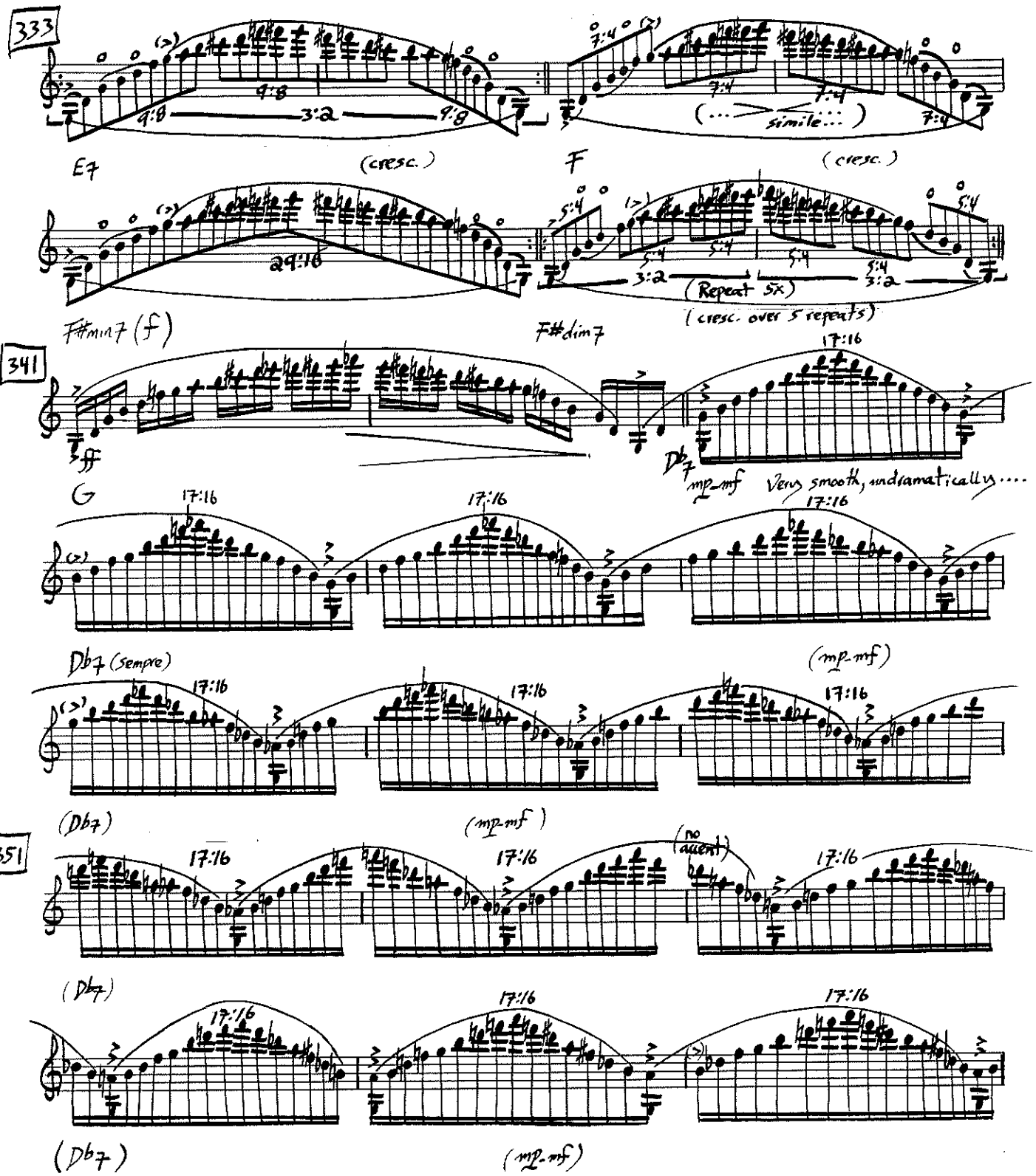
* Until 285, tempo may be rubato, even a little slow.

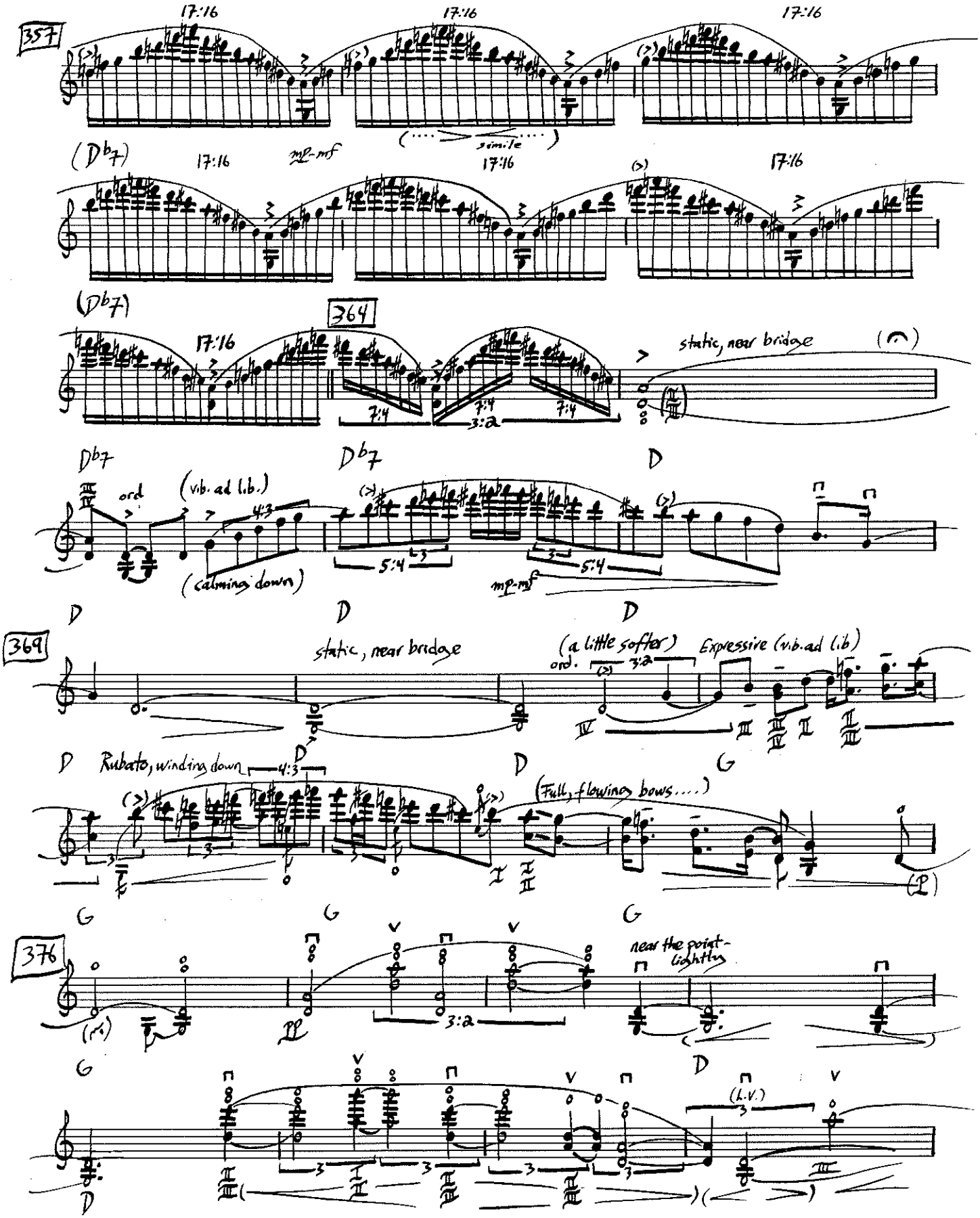

278
Quieter and calmer.
5:4
G (sempre)
molto
285
In strict time, but stronger. (L.V.)
3:2
G
cresc. poco a poco....
(3x)
5:4
(cresc.)
cresc.
(cresc.)
G
..... simile
(cresc.)
297
9:8
(cresc.)
Am7
5:4
Bdim7
(cresc.)
(3x)
11:8
C#7
(cresc.)
simile.....
D
6:4
(cresc.)

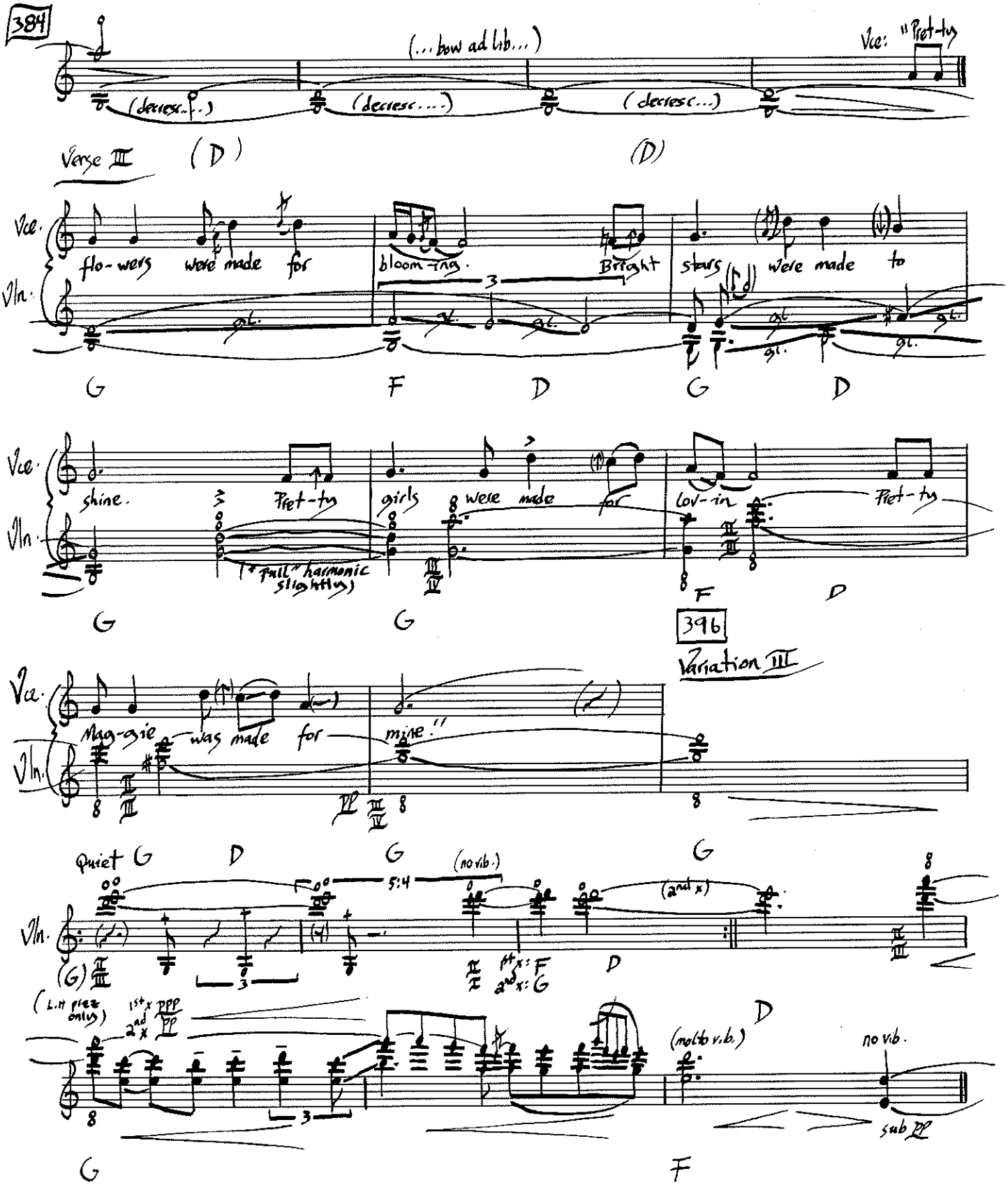


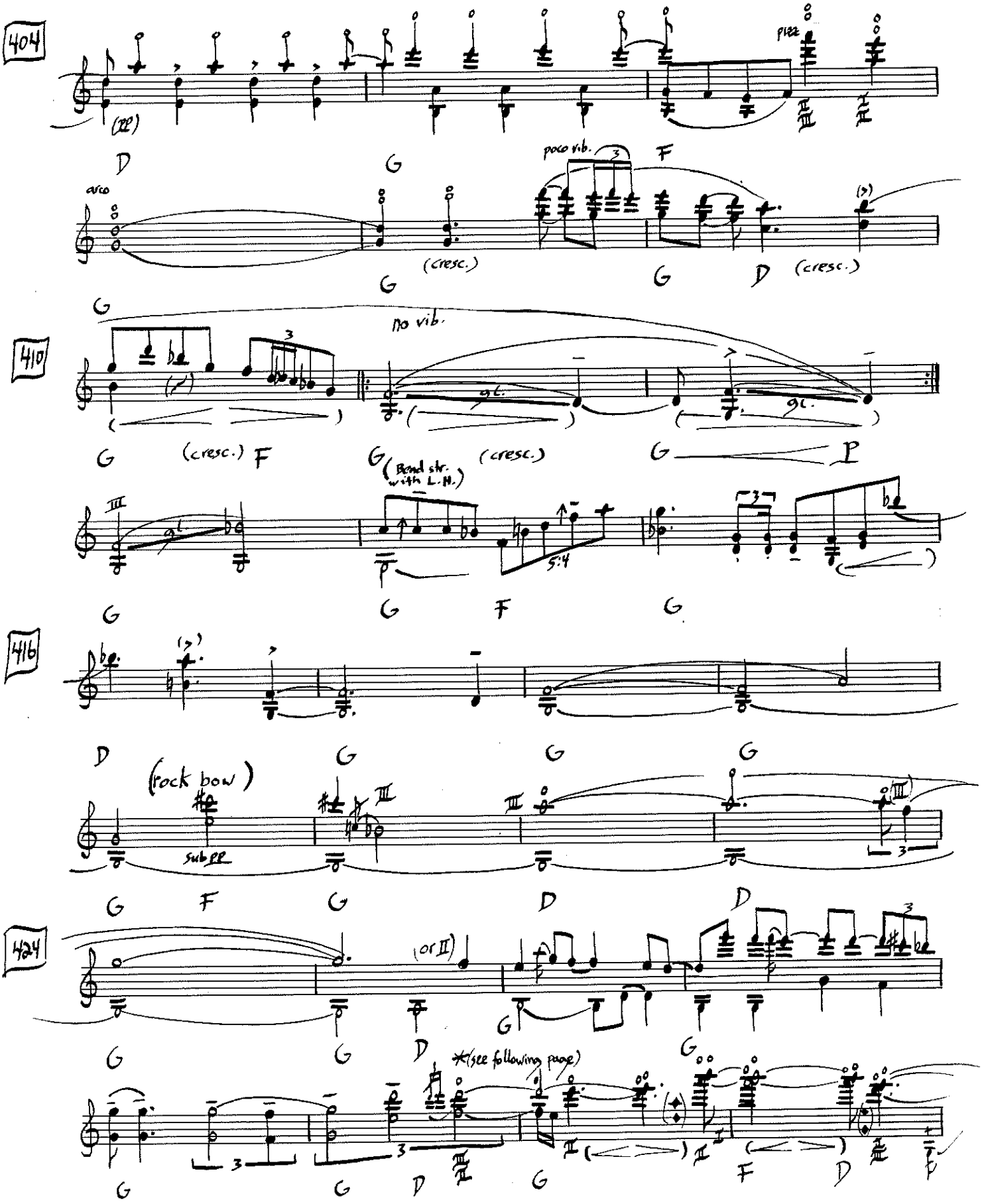
* In this variation, intonations should be as close to the harmonic series (above) as possible.

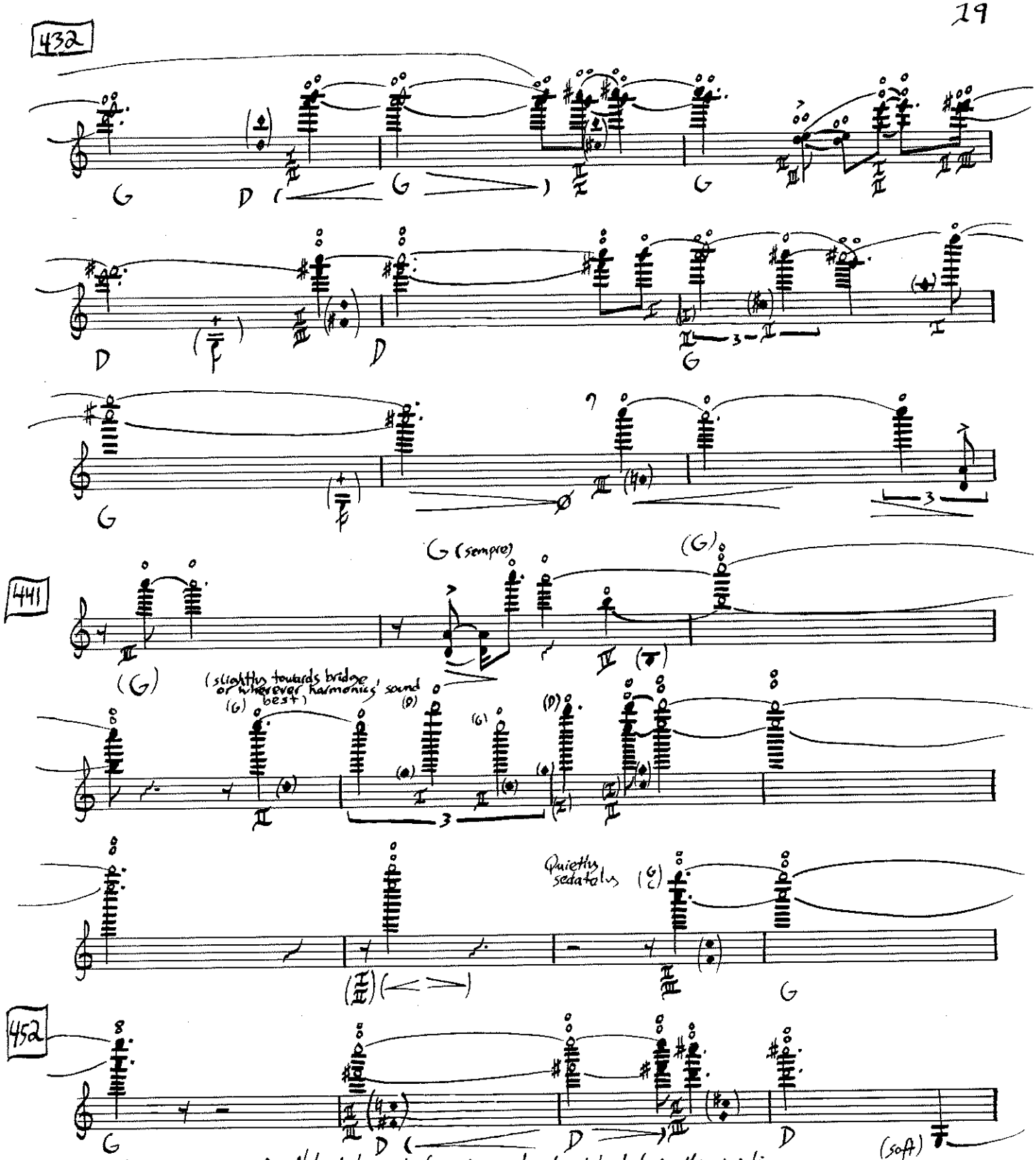
** G and D harmonics optional from this point on...


333
E7
(cresc.)
F
(cresc.)
9:8
3:2
7:4
(... simile ...)
F#min7 (f)
F#dim7
5:4
(Repeat 5x)
(cresc. over 5 repeats)
341
ff
G
17:16
Db7
mp-mf
Very smooth, undramatically....
Db7 (Sempre)
(mp-mf)
(Db7)
(mp-mf)
351
(no accent)
(Db7)
(Db7)
(mp-mf)

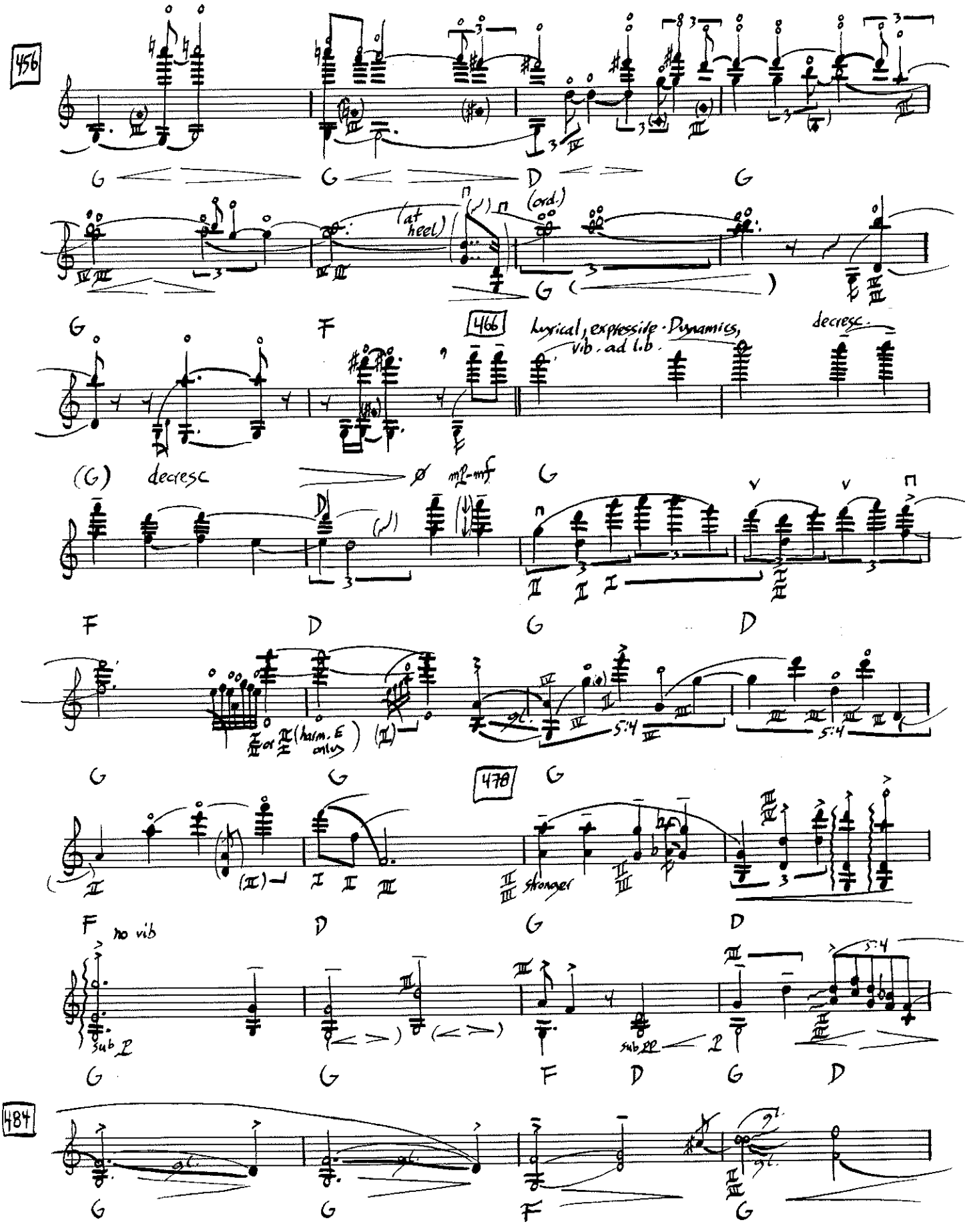

357
17:16
17:16
17:16
(Db7)
17:16
mp-mf
17:16
17:16
(Db7)
364
17:16
static, near bridge
7:4
7:4
3:2
7:4
Db7
ord.
(vib. ad lib.)
4:3
(calming down)
Db7
5:4
5:4
mp-mf
D
D
D
369
static, near bridge
(a little softer)
ord.
3:2
Expressive (vib. ad lib)
D
Rubato, winding down
4:3
D
D
G
(Full, flowing bows....)
G
G
G
376
near the point-
lightly
3:2
G
D
(L.V.)

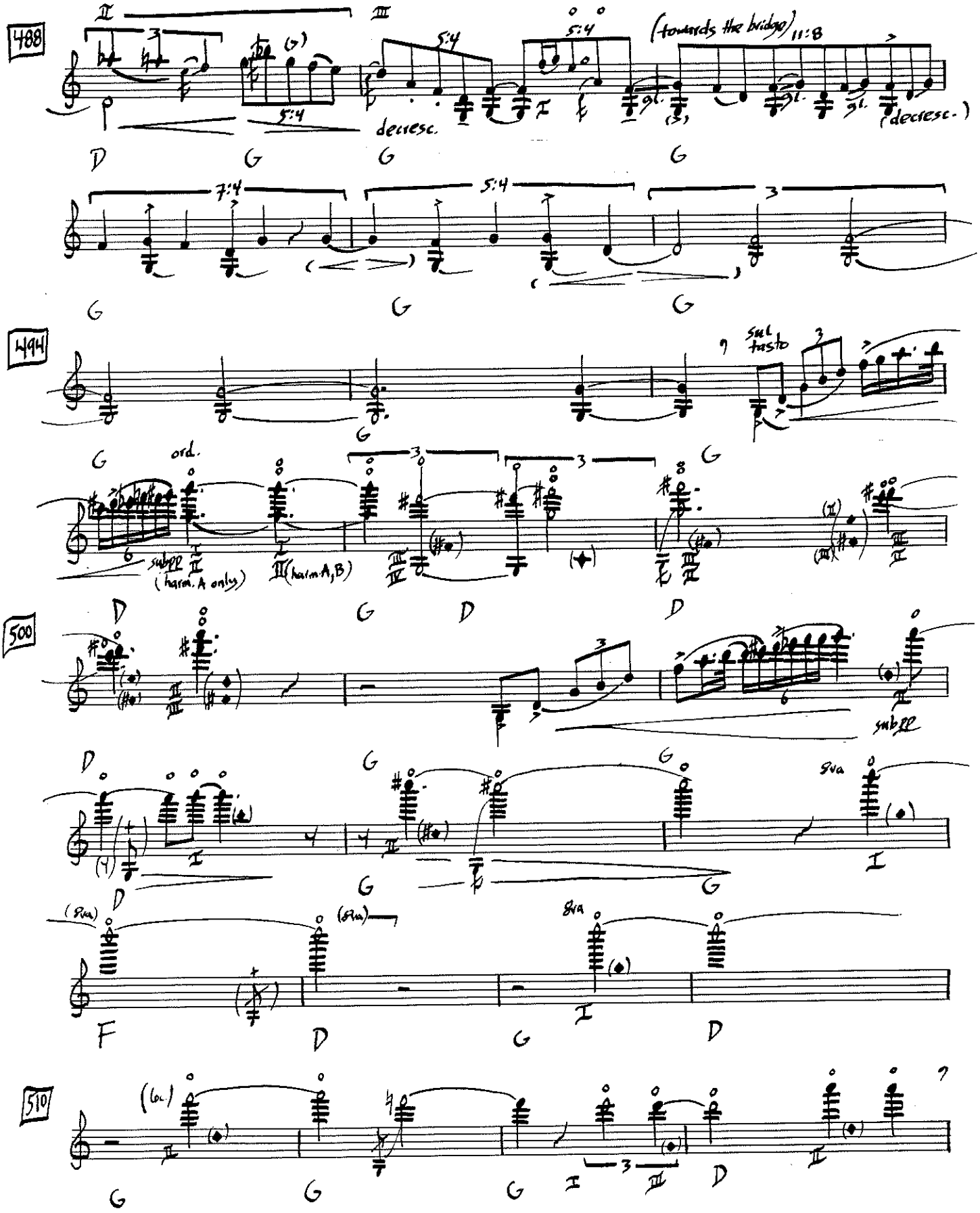

384
(...bow ad lib...)
Vce: "Pret-ty
(decresc...)
(decresc....)
(decresc...)
Verse III
(D)
(D)
Vce.
Vln.
flo-wers were made for
bloom-ing.
Bright
stars were made to
G
F
D
G
D
shine.
Pret-ty
girls were made for
lov-in
Pret-ty
("full" harmonic slightly)
G
G
F
D
396
Variation III
Mag-gie was made for
mine."
Quiet
G
D
G
G
(no vib.)
5:4
(2nd x)
(G)
1st x: F
2nd x: G
D
(L.H. piz. only)
1st x
2nd x
ppp
pp
D
(molto v.b.)
no vib.
sub pp
G
F

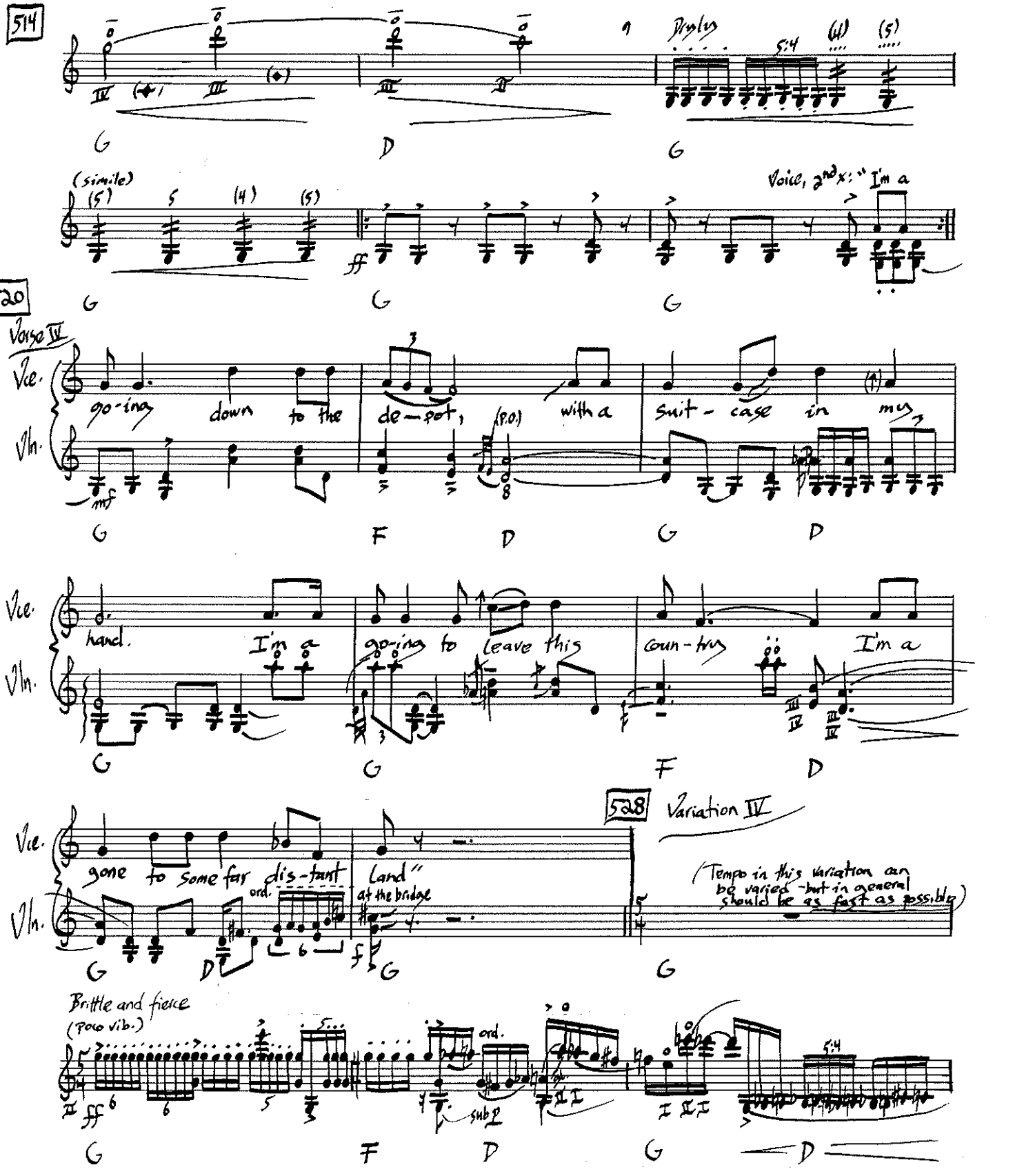

404
(22)
pizz.
D
G
arco
poco vib.
3
F
(cresc.)
G
G
D
(cresc.)
410
G
3
no vib.
gl.
(cresc.)
F
G
(Bend str. with L.H.)
(cresc.)
G
P
III
5:4
G
G
F
G
416
D
(rock bow)
sub pp
G
G
G
III
III
(III)
3
G
F
G
D
D
424
(or II)
G
G
D
G
G
*(see following page)
G
G
D
II
II
F
D

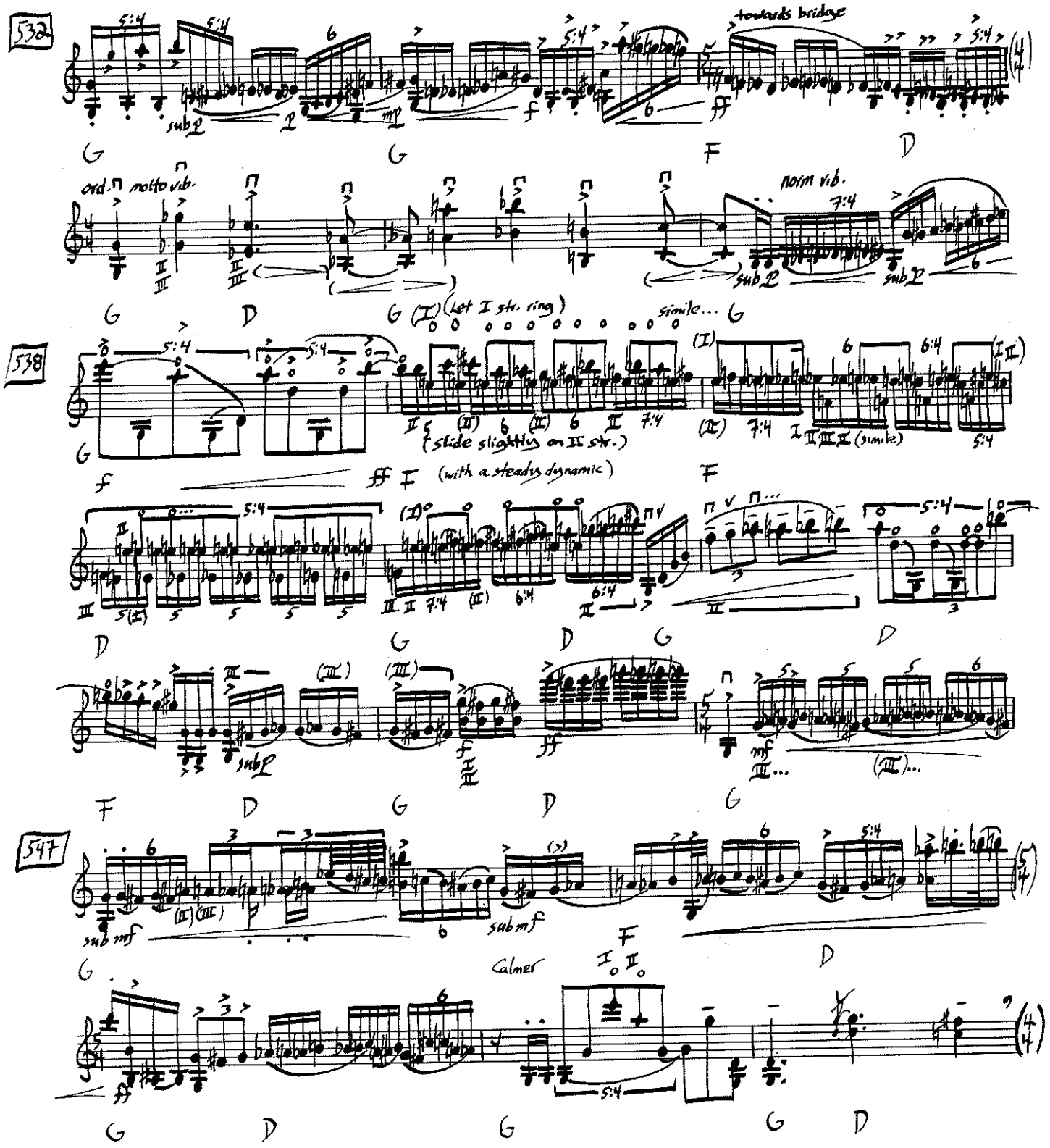


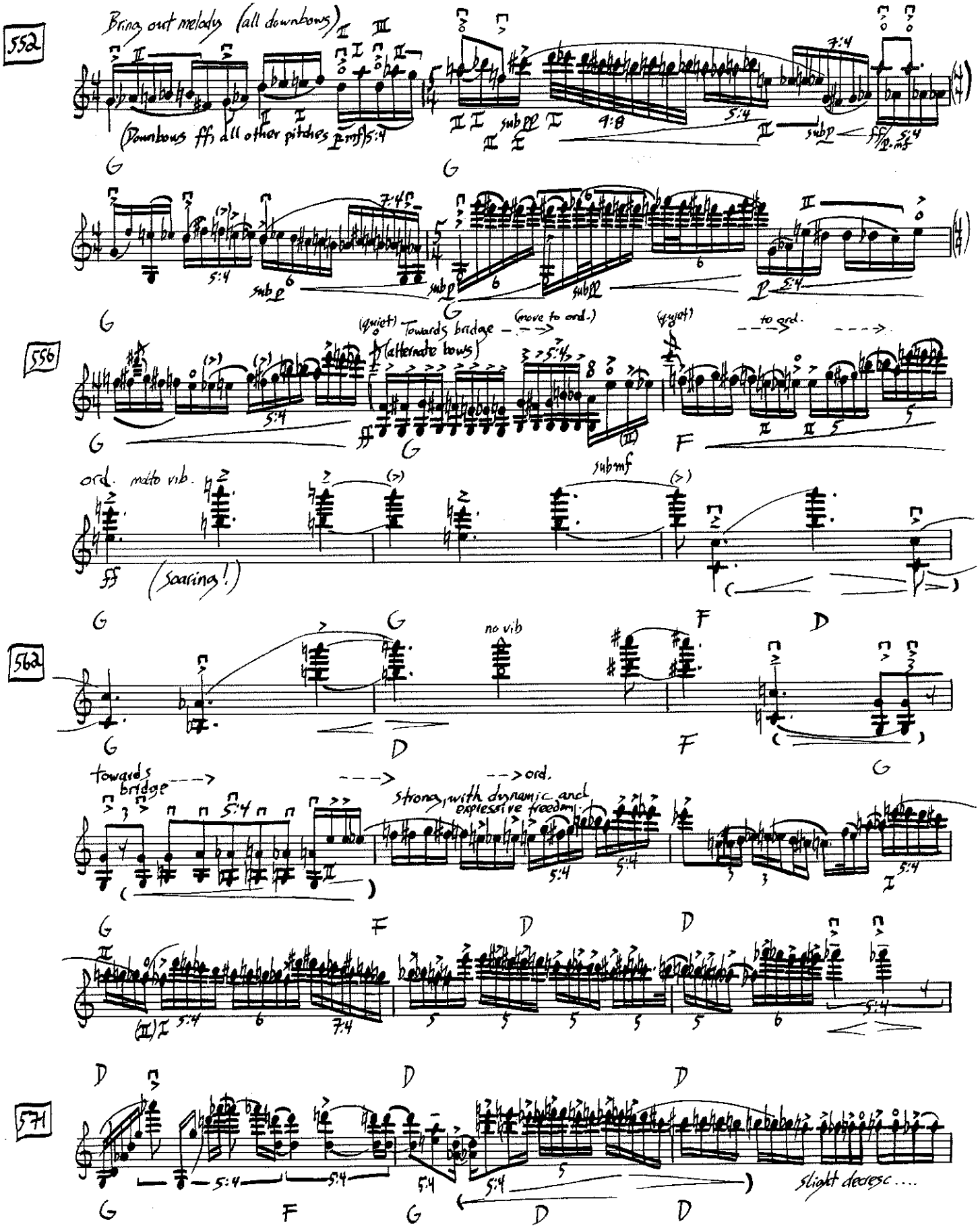
* (From previous page): Natural harmonic fingerings and nodes indicated in this variation can be taken as suggestions. For example, any of the six nodes on the III string producing high C (7th harmonic) as a natural harmonic will suffice - and the player should use that which presents the easiest fingering and/or strongest sonority. String indications should be adhered to.
In general, rather tenuous non-vibrato sounds with a lot of bow-noise are not only unavoidable but desirable.

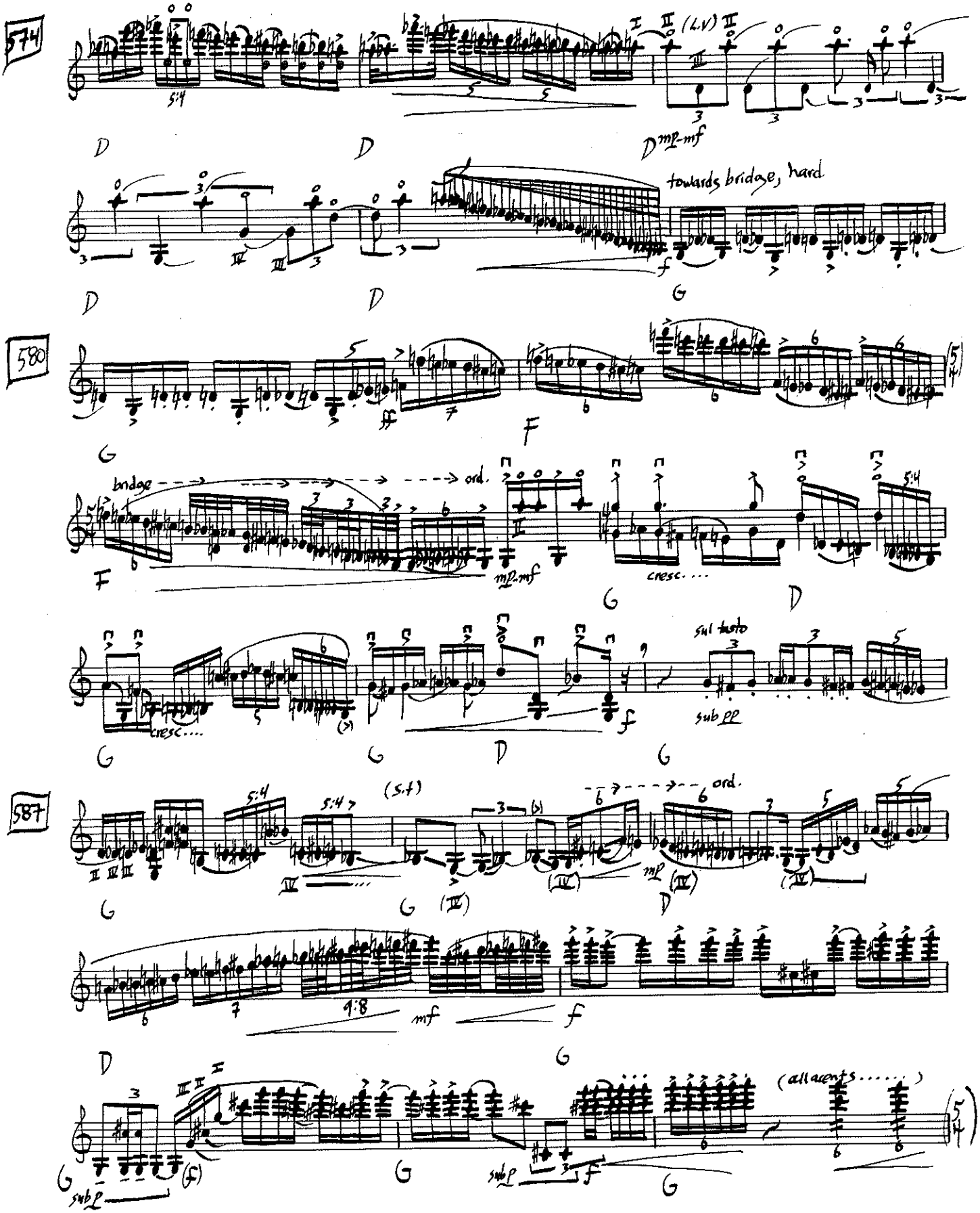

456
G
G
D
G
(at heel)
(ord.)
G
G
F
466
Lyrical, expressive · Dynamics, vib. ad lib.
decresc.
(G)
decresc
mp-mf
G
F
D
G
D
(harm. E only)
5:4
5:4
G
G
478
G
stronger
F
no vib
D
G
D
sub p
sub pp
5:4
G
G
F
D
G
D
484
G
G
F
G

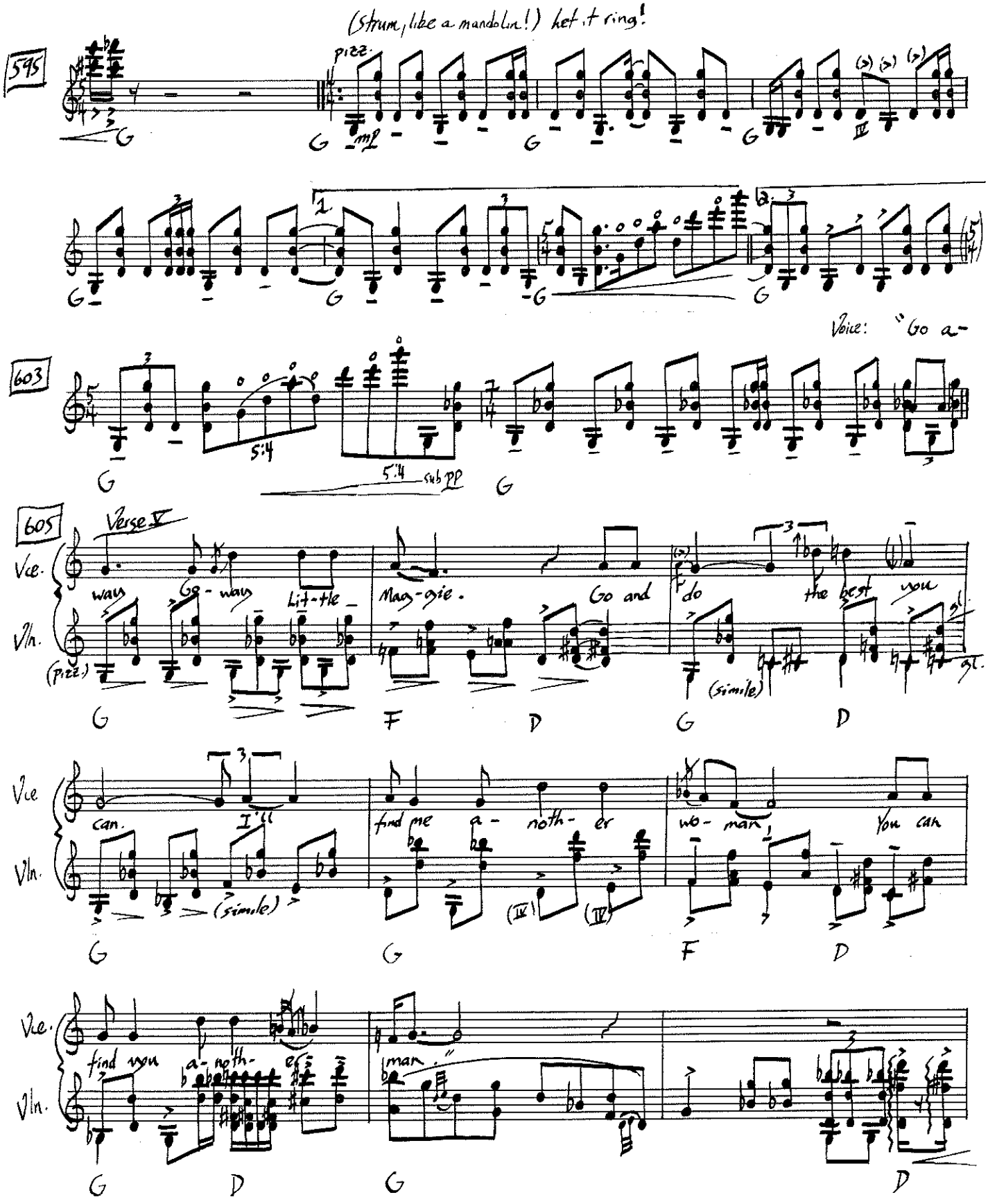

488
(towards the bridge)
decresc.
(decresc.)
494
sul tasto
ord.
subpp
(harm. A only)
III (harm. A, B)
500
subpp
8va
(8va)
510
(loc.)


514
Drysly
(simile)
Voice, 2nd x: "I'm a
520
Verse IV
Vce.
Vln.
go-ing down to the de-pot, with a suit-case in my
(P.O.)
hand. I'm a go-ing to leave this coun-try I'm a
gone to some far dis-tant land"
ord.
at the bridge
528
Variation IV
(Tempo in this variation can be varied - but in general should be as fast as possible)
Brittle and fierce
(poco vib.)
ord.
sub p

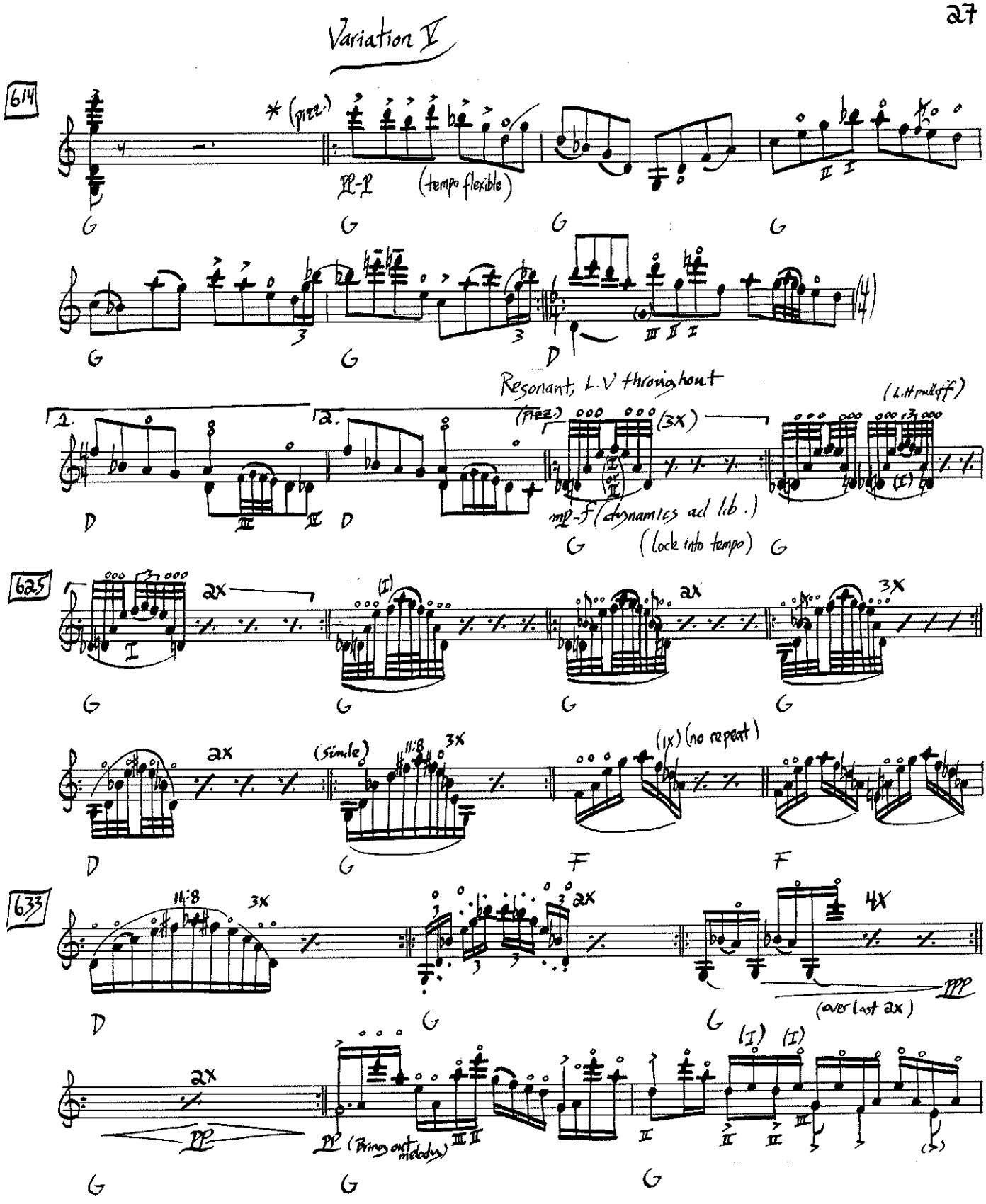

532
towards bridge
ord.
molto vib.
norm vib.
(let I str. ring)
simile...
538
(slide slightly on II str.)
(with a steady dynamic)
(simile)
547
Calmer


552
Bring out melody (all downbows)
(Downbows fff, all other pitches mf)
556
(quiet) Towards bridge
(move to ord.)
(alternate bows)
(quiet)
to ord.
ord. molto vib.
(soaring!)
562
towards bridge
ord.
strong, with dynamic and expressive freedom
no vib
571
slight decrese....

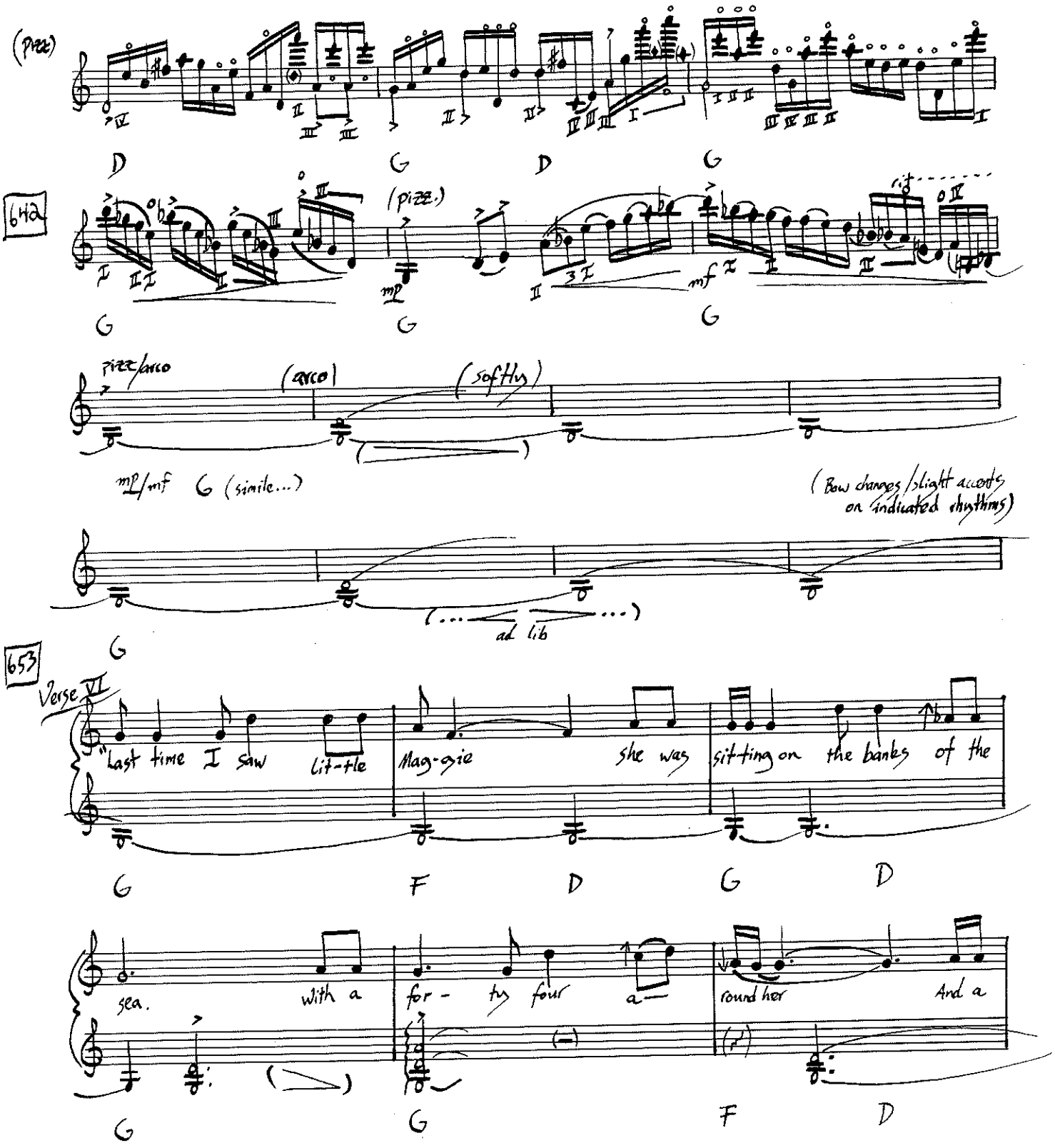

574
580
587
towards bridge, hard
bridge
ord.
cresc.
sul tasto
sub pp
(s.t)
(all accents)

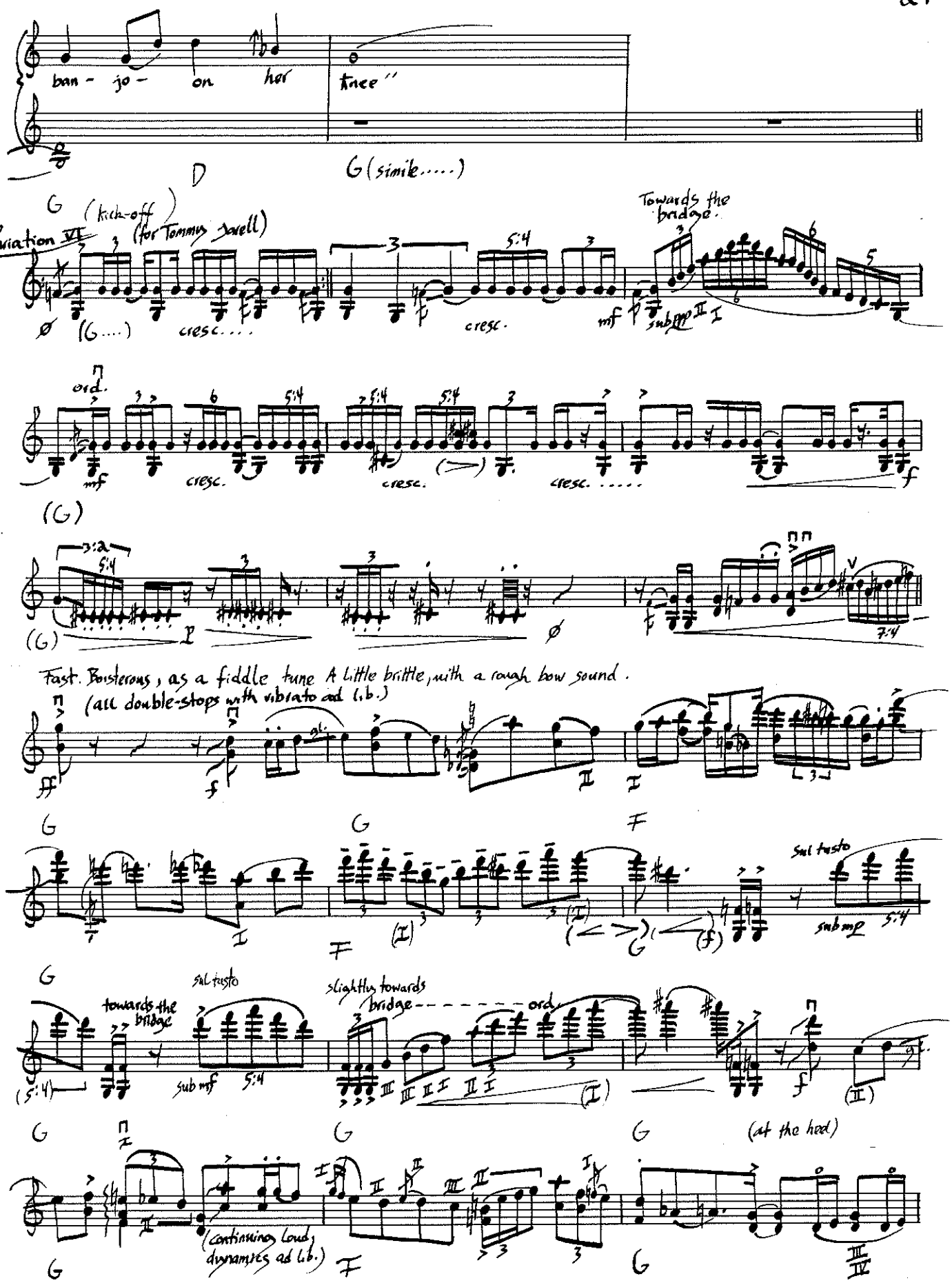

(Strum, like a mandolin!) let it ring!
595
pizz.
mf
603
5:4
sub pp
Voice: "Go a-
605
Verse V
Vce.
Vln.
way
Go - way
Lit-tle
Mag-gie.
Go and
do
the best
you
(pizz.)
(simile)
can.
I'll
find me
a - noth - er
wo - man,
You can
find you
a - noth - er
man."

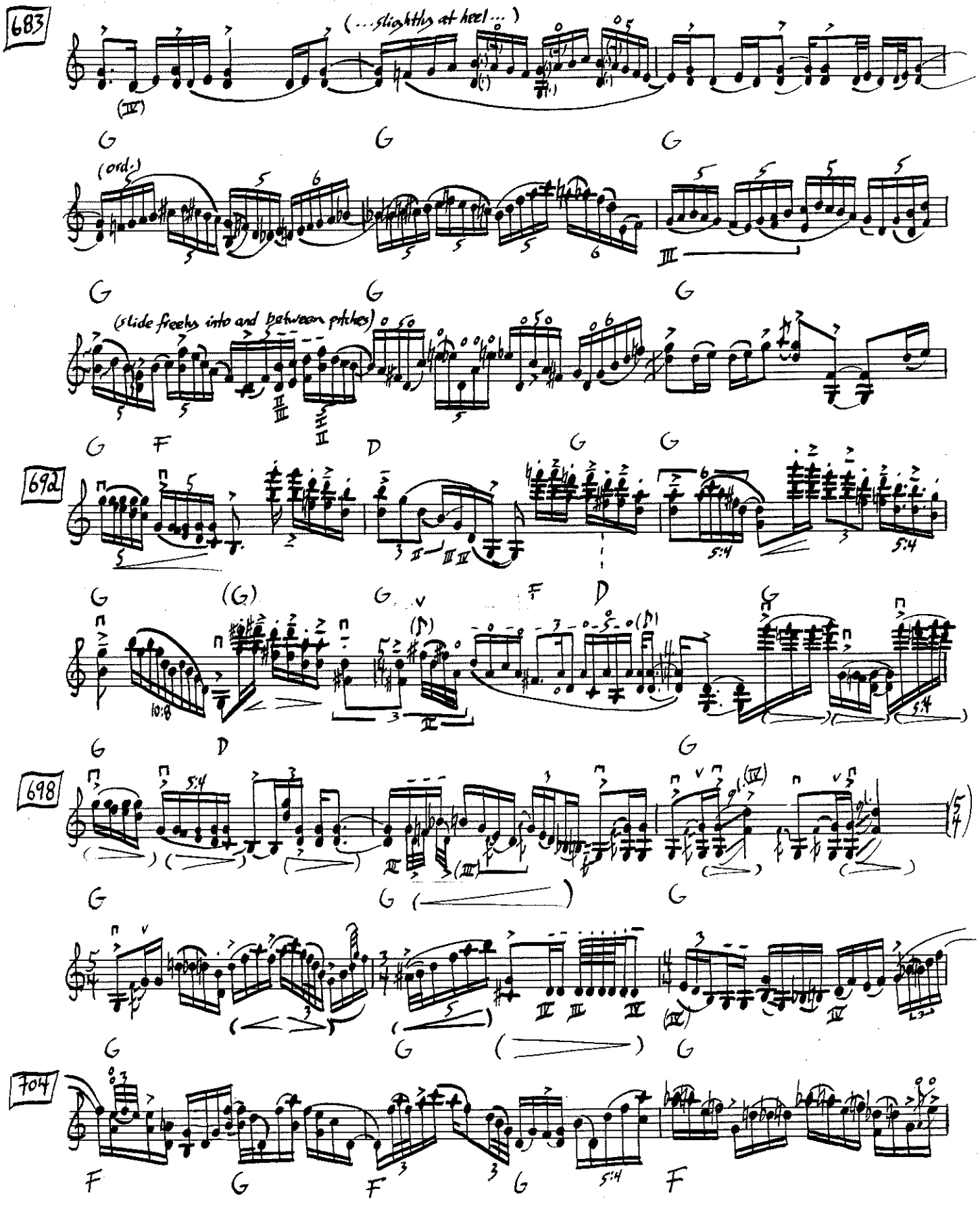
Variation V

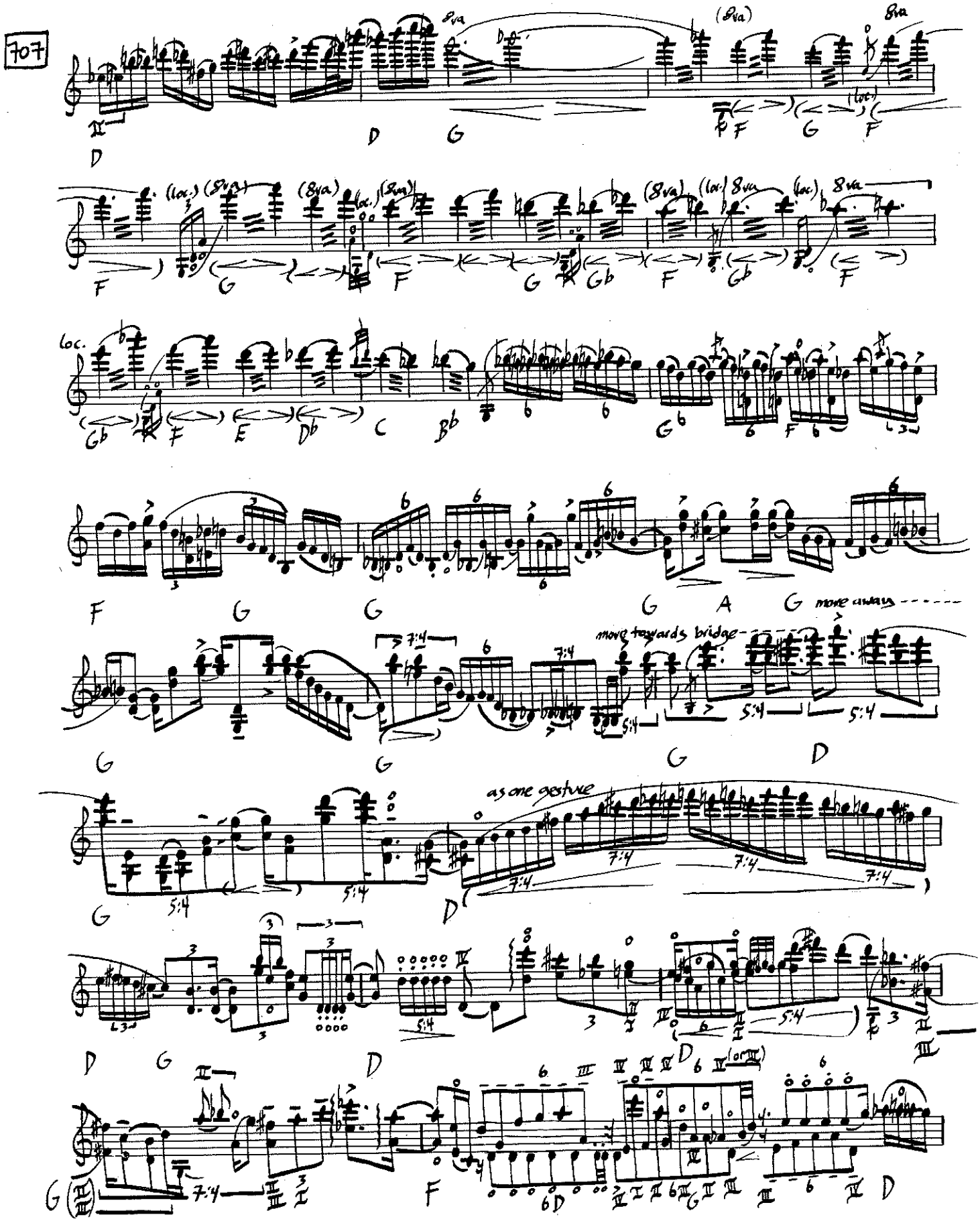


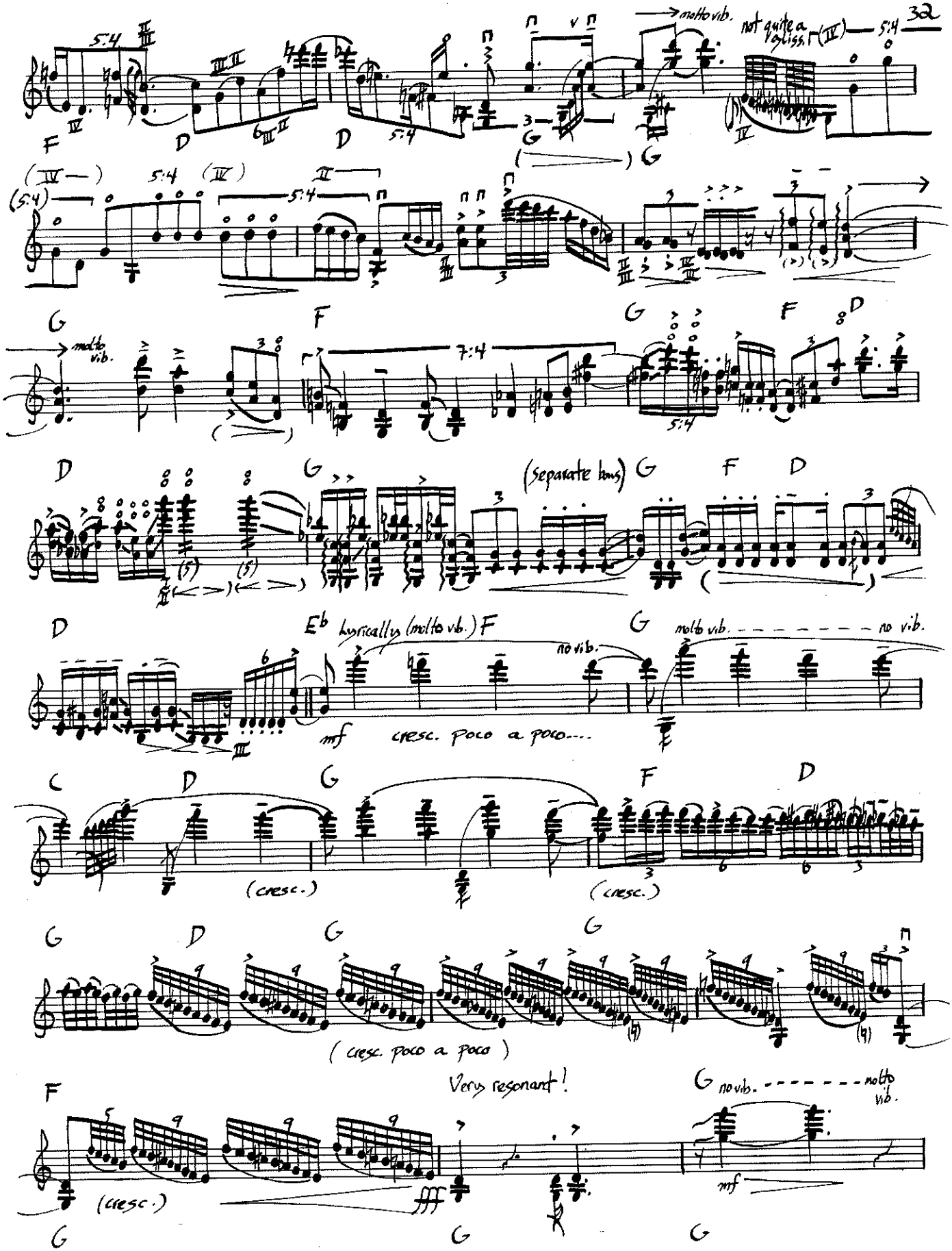
* this entire variation may be played with a plectrum.

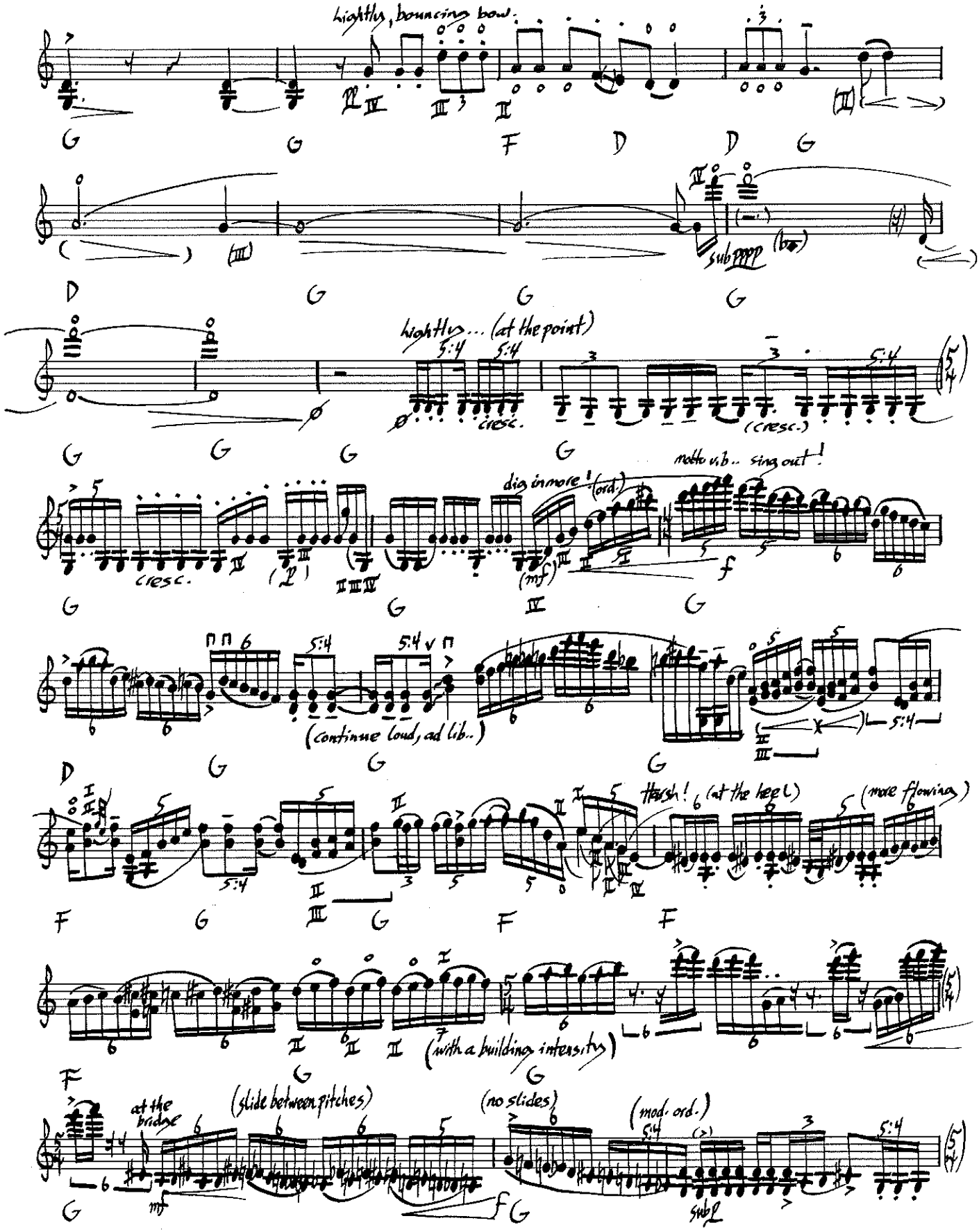

(pizz)
D
G
D
G
642
(pizz.)
mp
mf
G
G
G
pizz/arco
(arco)
(softly)
mp/mf G (simile...)
(Bow changes/slight accents on indicated rhythms)
(... ad lib ...)
G
653
Verse VI
"Last time I saw little Mag-gie she was sitting on the banks of the
G
F
D
G
D
sea. with a for- ty four a round her And a
G
G
F
D

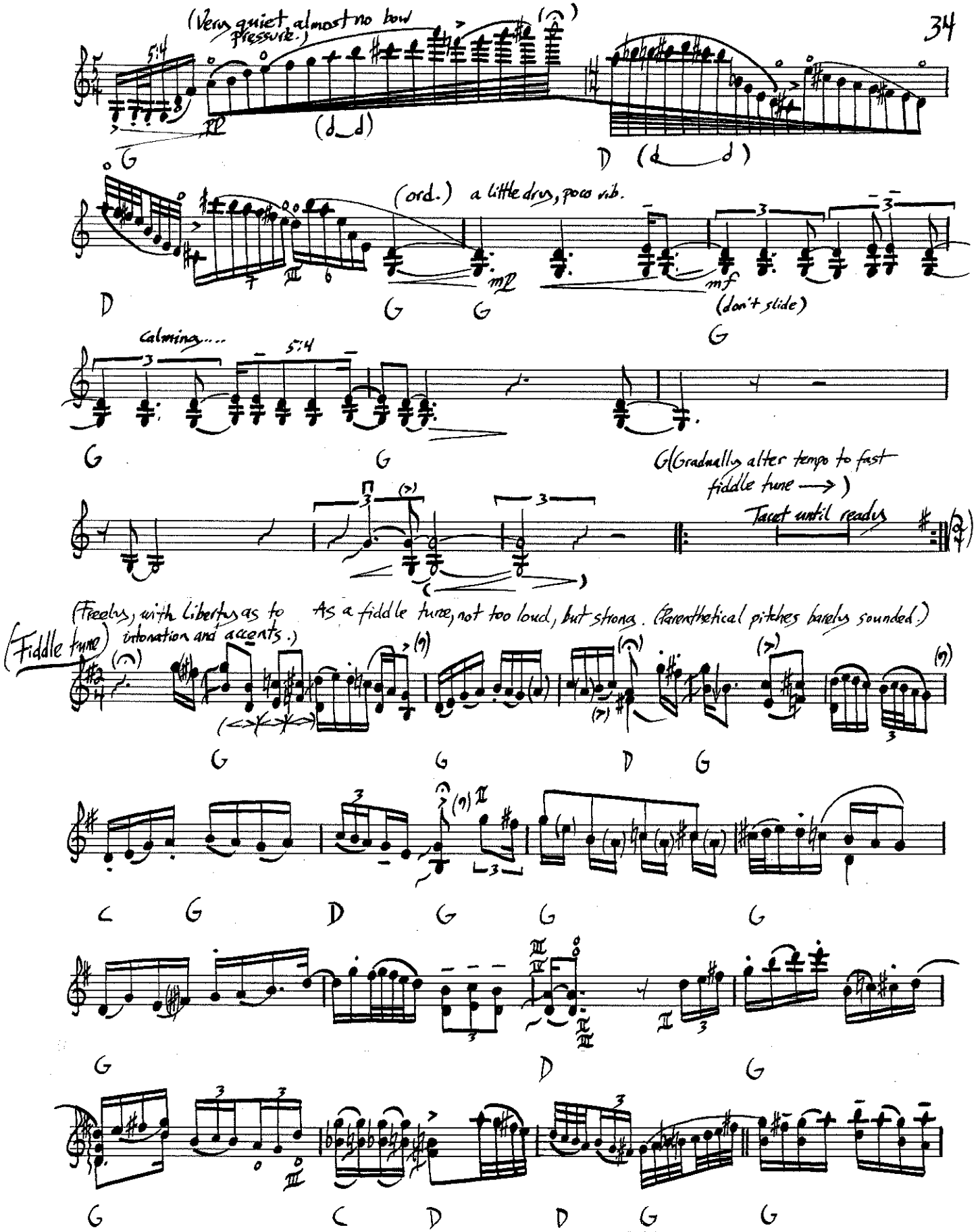

ban - jo - on her
knee"
D
G (simile.....)
662
G (kick-off)
Variation VII
(for Tommy Jarell)
Towards the bridge.
(G....)
cresc....
cresc.
mf
sub pp
ord.
mf
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
f
(G)
668
(G)
Fast. Boisterous, as a fiddle tune. A little brittle, with a rough bow sound.
(all double-stops with vibrato ad lib.)
ff
f
G
G
F
Sul tasto
sub mp
677
towards the bridge
Sul tasto
sub mf
slightly towards bridge
ord.
(I)
(II)
(at the heel)
(continuing loud dynamics ad lib.)
G
G
F
G

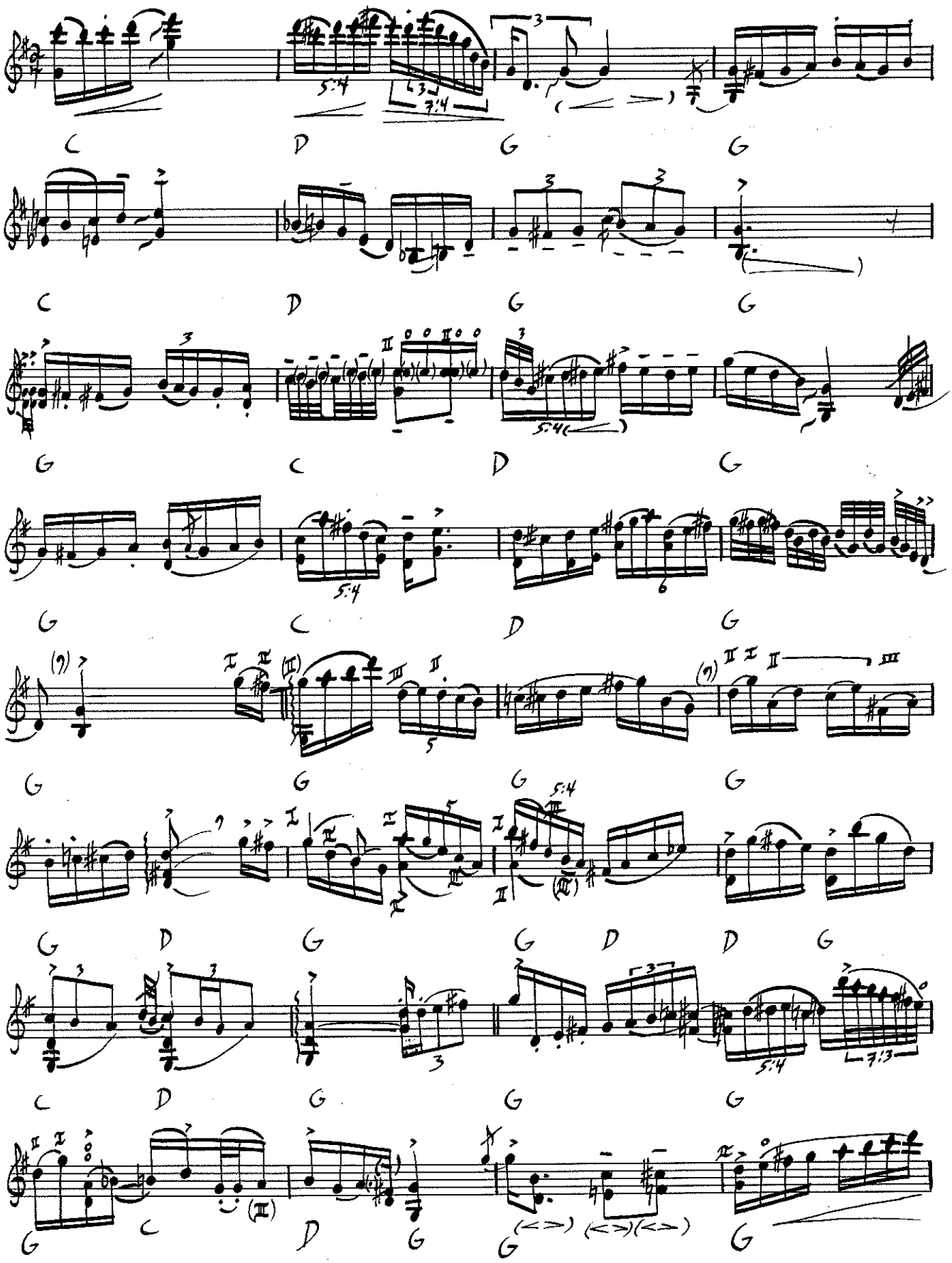

683
(...slightly at heel...)
(ord.)
(slide freely into and between pitches)
692
698
704

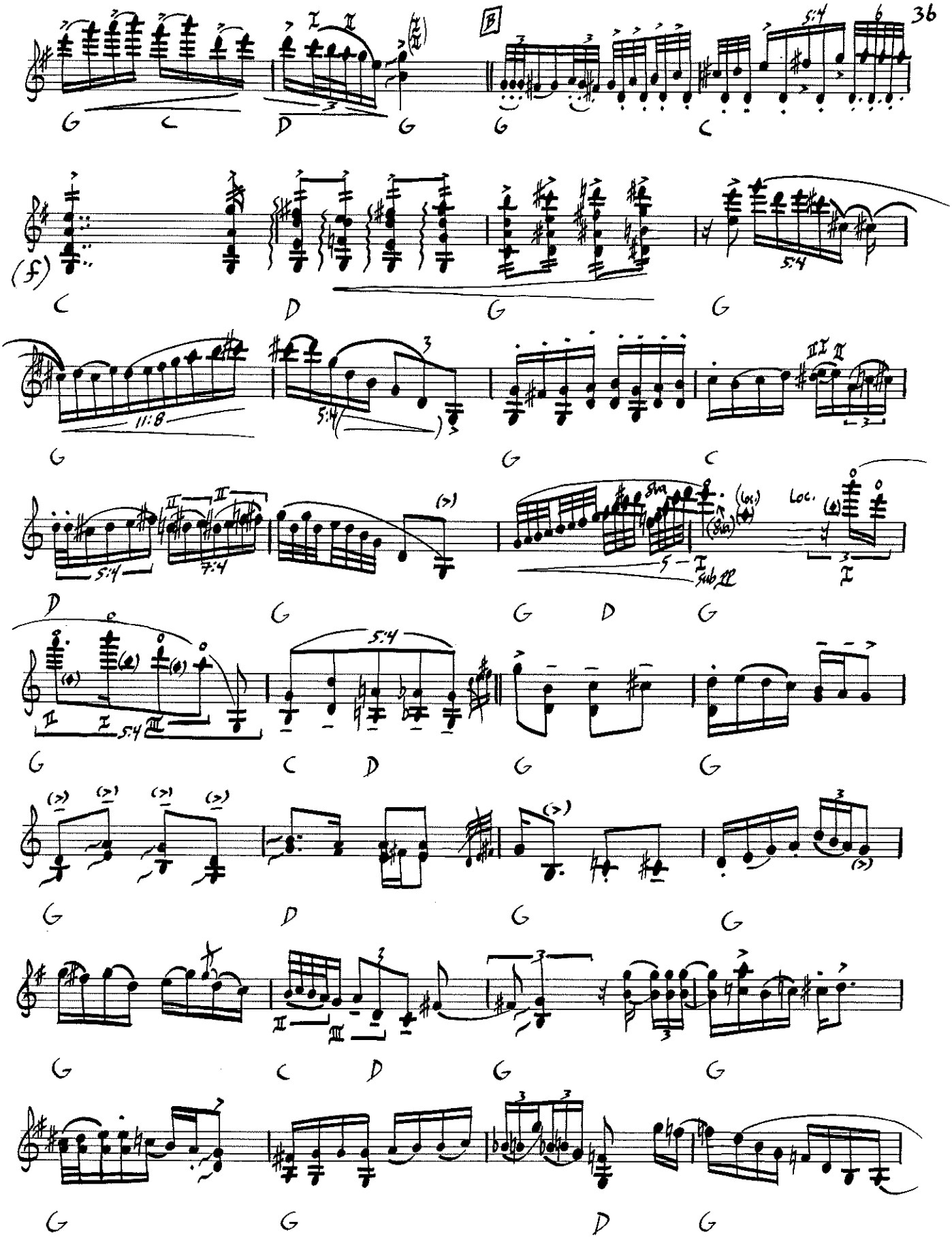

707
8va
(8va)
(loc.)
move away
move towards bridge
as one gesture

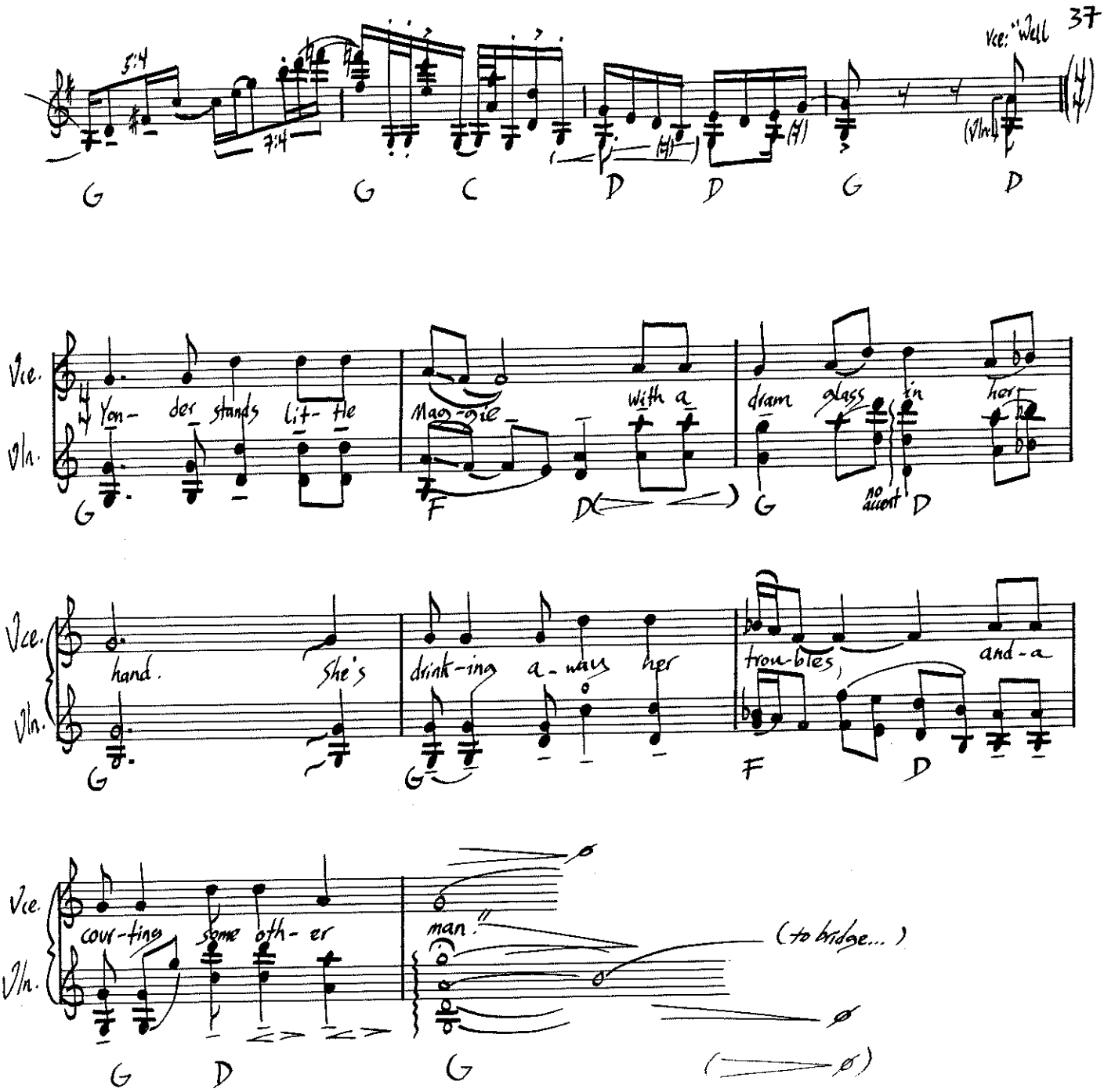

molto vib.
not quite a gliss.
(separate bows)
Eb lyrically (molto vib.) F
no vib.
molto vib. - - - - - - - - no vib.
mf cresc. poco a poco....
(cresc.)
(cresc.)
(cresc. poco a poco)
Very resonant!
G no vib. - - - - - - - molto vib.
(cresc.)
mf


lightly, bouncing bow.
G G F D D G
D G G G
lightly... (at the point)
5:4 5:4
cresc.
(cresc.)
G G G G G
cresc.
dig in more!
(ord.)
molto v.b.. sing out!
(mf)
f
G G
D G G G
(continue loud, ad lib..)
5:4
F G G F F
harsh!
(at the heel)
(more flowing)
F G G
(with a building intensity)
F G
at the bridge
(slide between pitches)
(no slides)
(mod. ord.)
mf
f
G
sub p


(Very quiet, almost no bow pressure.)
(ord.) a little drus, poco vib.
(don't slide)
Calming....
5:4
Gradually alter tempo to fast fiddle tune →
Tacet until reader
(Freely, with liberty as to intonation and accents.)
As a fiddle tune, not too loud, but strong. (Parenthetical pitches barely sounded.)
Fiddle tune


C D G G
C D G G
G C D G
G C D G
G G G G
G D G G D D G
C D G G G
G C D G


B
G C D G G C
(f)
C D G G
G G C
D G G D G
G C D G G
G D G G
G C D G G
G G D G


Vce: "Well
5:4
7:4
G G C D D G D
Vce.
Vln.
Yon- der stands lit- tle Mag-gie with a dram glass in her
G F D G no accent D
hand. She's drink-ing a-ways her trou-bles, and-a
G G F D
cour-ting some oth- er man."
(to bridge...)
G D G

1.1
1.2