Durata: ca 6 min.

Tombeau de Copernicus

per Violoncello

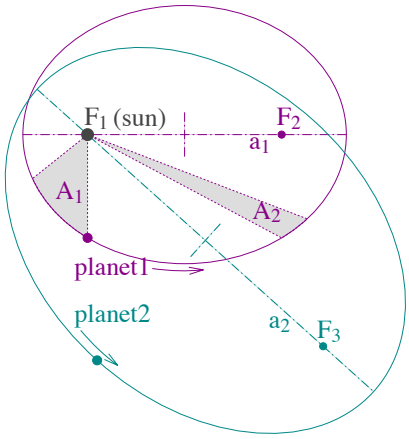
Peter Swinnen

2017-2020

Program Notes

Tombeau de Copernicus was born out of my interest in the Harmony of Spheres. Originally presented by the ancient Greek philosopher Pythagoras (6th century BC), who calculated that all planets and the sun move in resonant circles around the Earth, it has been refined by Copernicus (On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres 1453), Kepler (Harmonies of the World 1619) and Newton (Philosophiæ Naturalis Principe Mathematica 1687), who successively improved the calculations of the elliptical orbits of the planets around the sun. 1687 is also the publication date of Marin Marais' Tombeau de Lully, which gave rise to the basic idea of this piece: an imaginary journey, inspired by Viola da Gamba techniques, where the player's right arm movements are based on the elliptical orbits of planets around their suns, so that the notes represent the positions of the planets at different moments in time, leading us gradually through galaxies further and further away.

Happy listening.



Notes for the Performer

The score is written in proportional notation. The indicated width in the first bar corresponds to approx. a second. 'Empty bars' are silences. Dynamics are indicated by the relative size of the notes. The smaller the note, the softer it should be played; the larger the note, the louder.

Each group of notes is to be considered as an autonomous (broken) chord, to be played with as much resonance and vertical coherence as possible within the given playing technique. This implies for the left hand that fingers need to be held as long as possible, even during the ‘empty bars’. Bowing is free.

Peter Swinnen
20/05/2020

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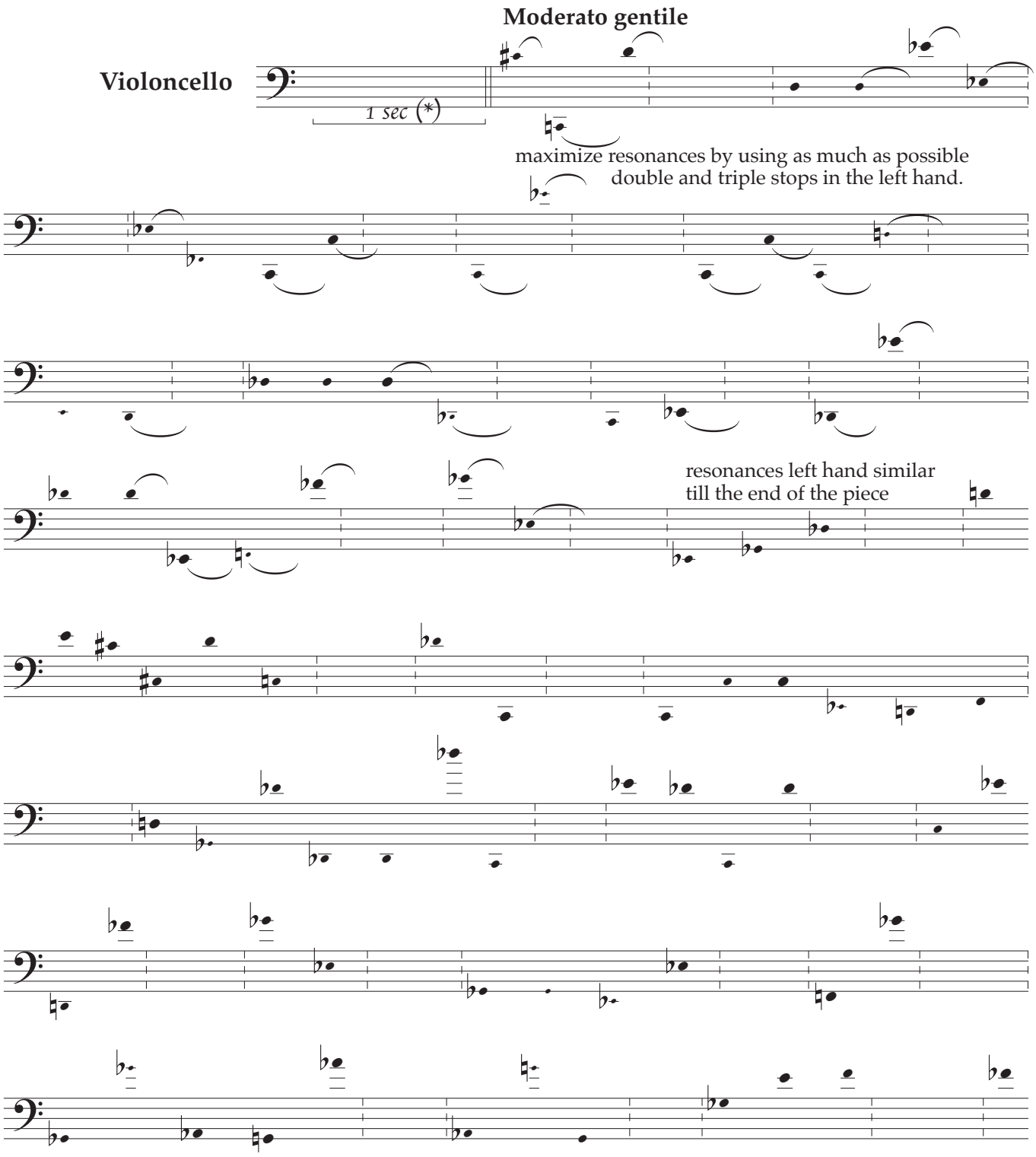
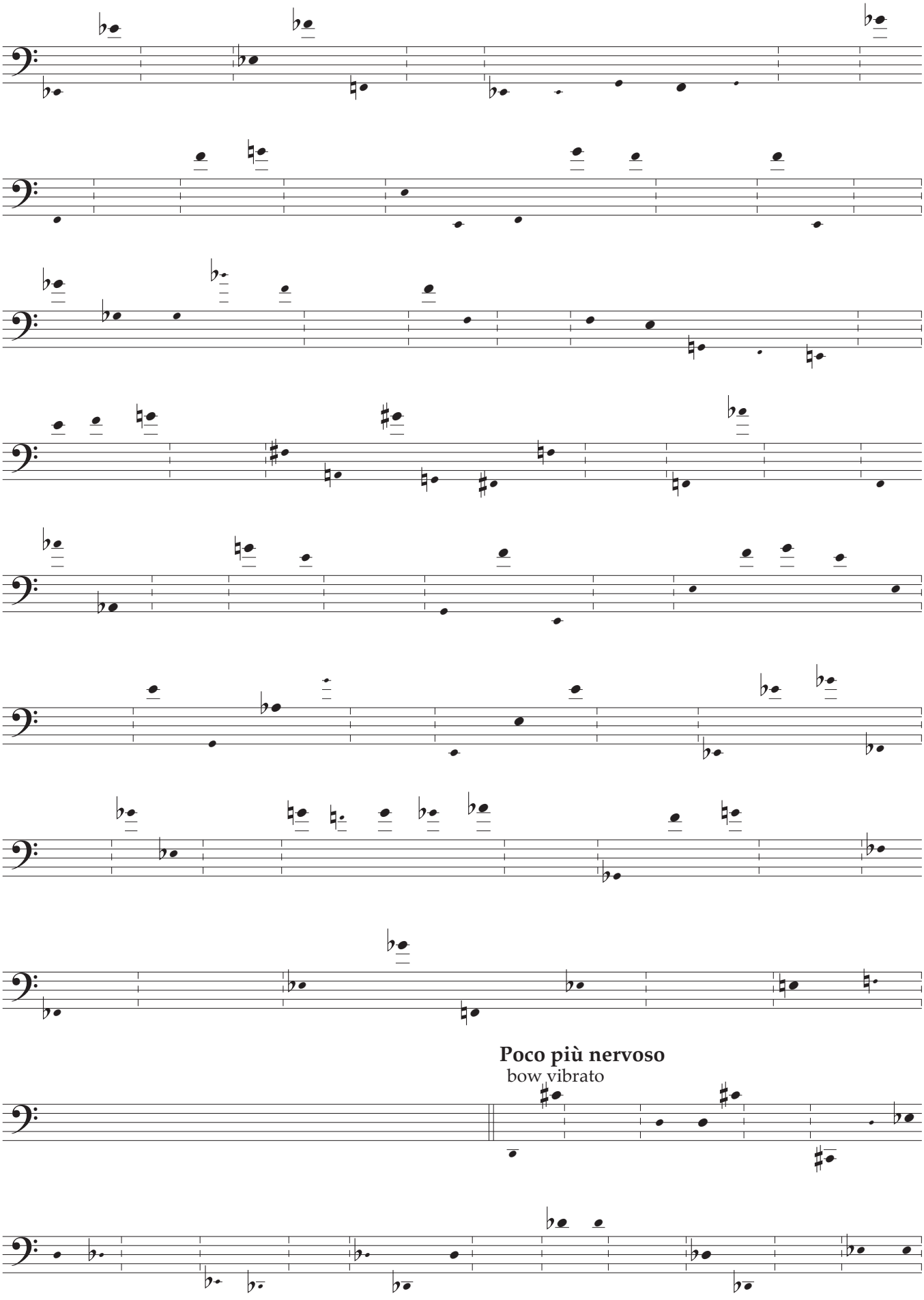
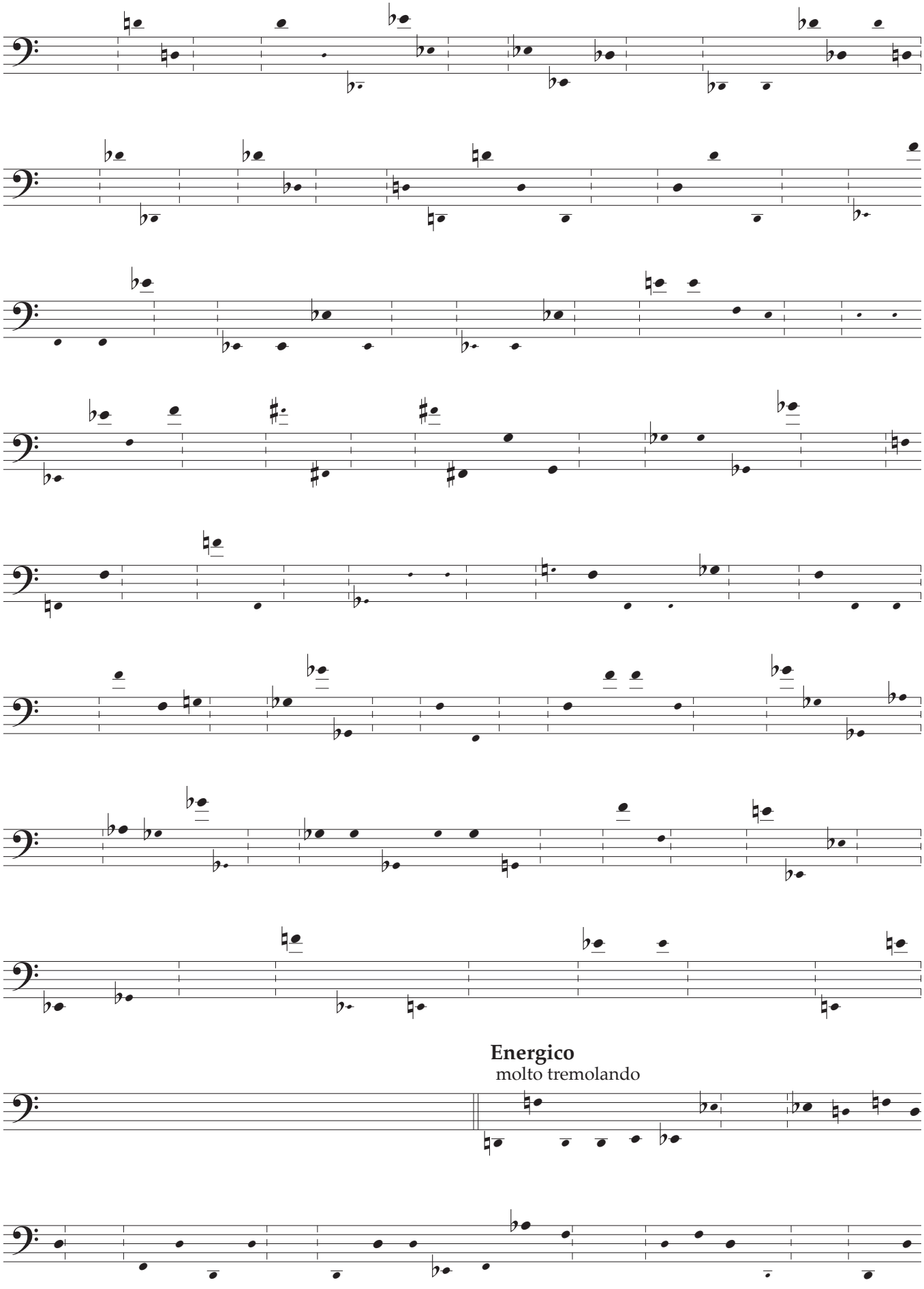
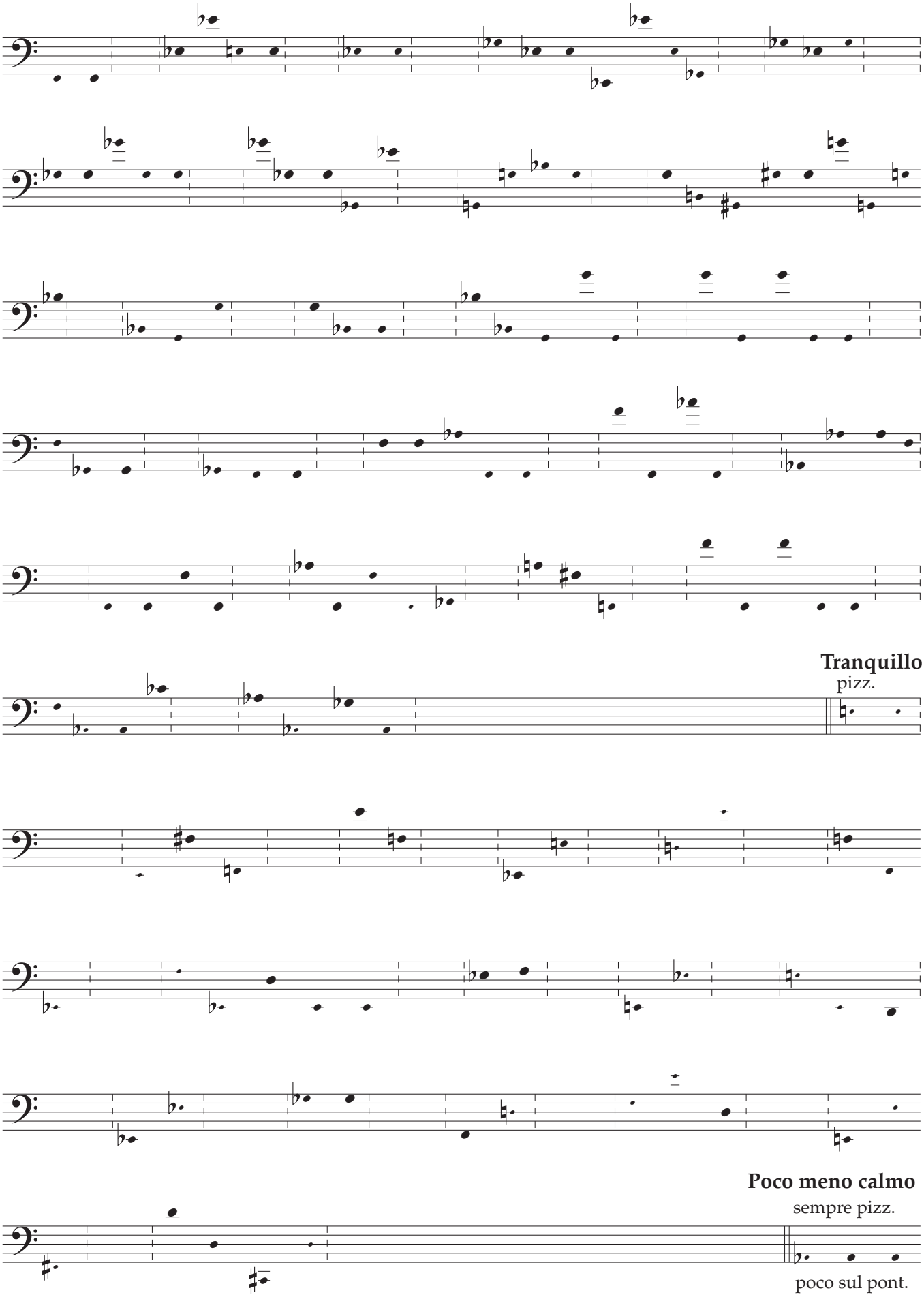
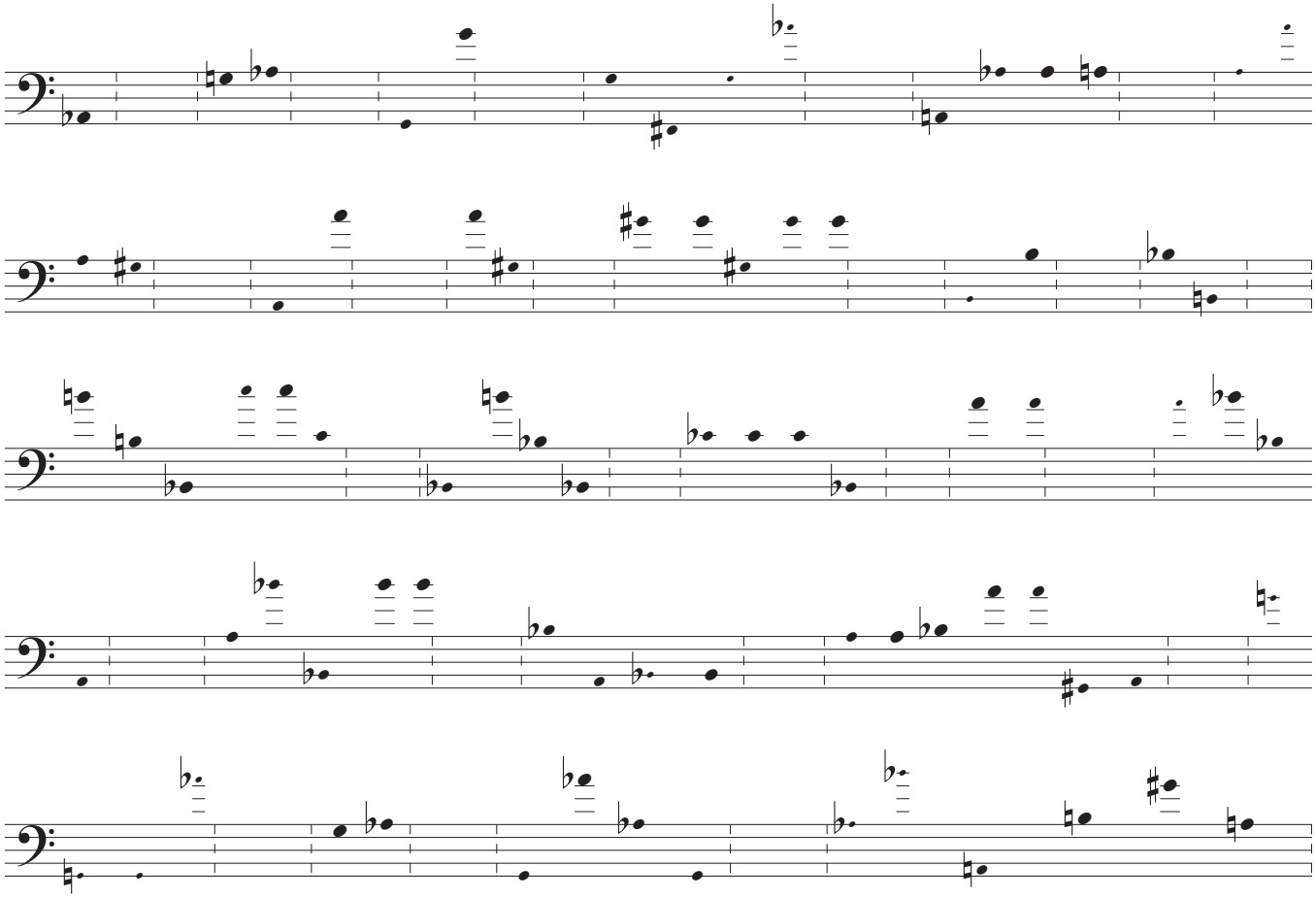


(*) The score is written in proportional notation. The indicated width in print corresponds to approx. a second. 'Empty bars' are silences. Dynamics are indicated by the relative size of the notes. The smaller the note, the softer it should be played; the larger the note, the louder.


Poco più nervoso
bow vibrato

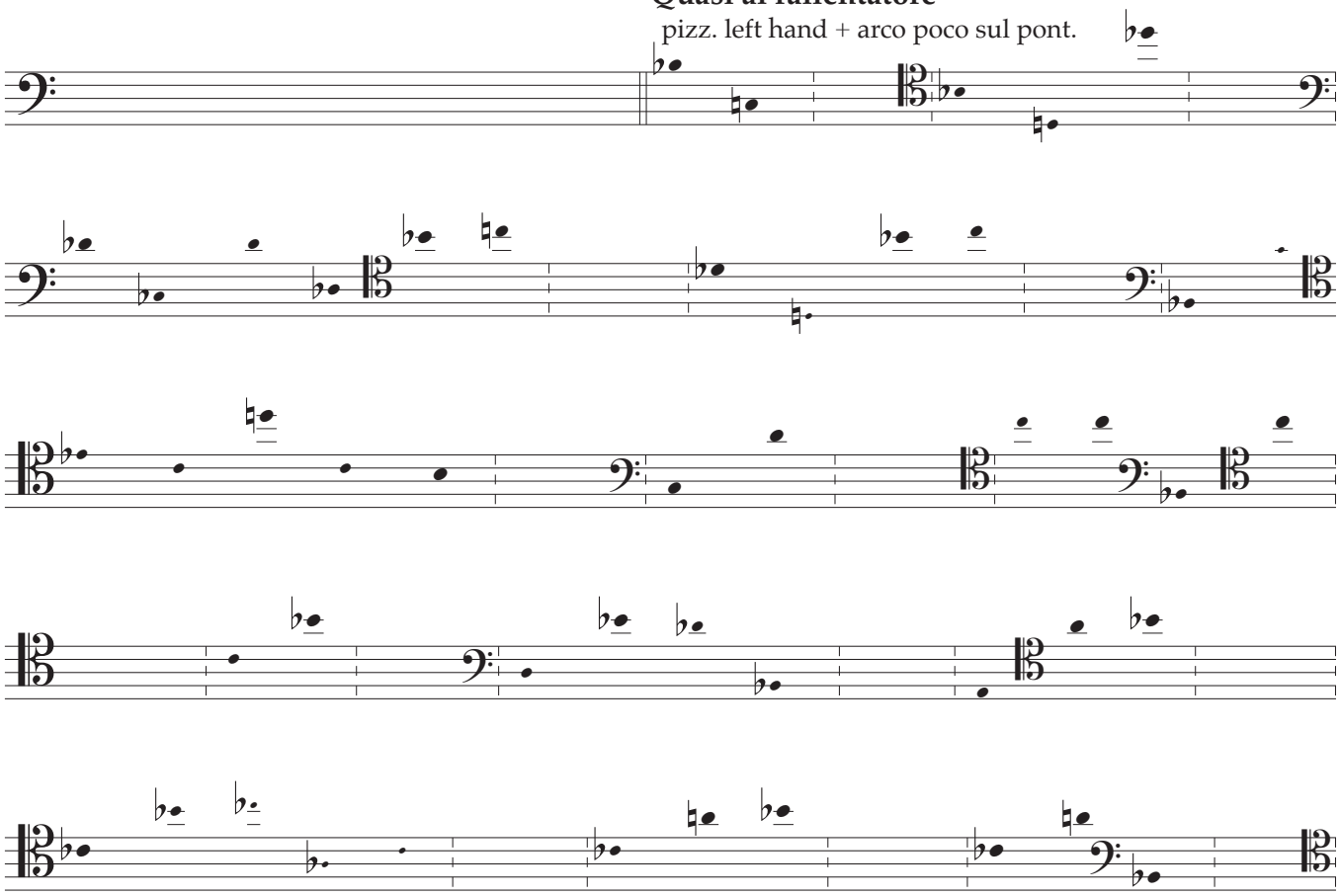

Energico
molto tremolando

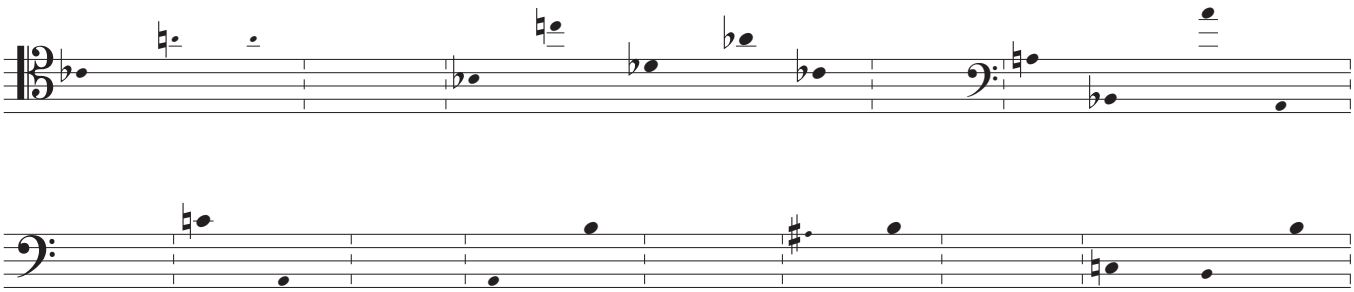

Tranquillo
pizz.
Poco meno calmo
sempre pizz.
poco sul pont.



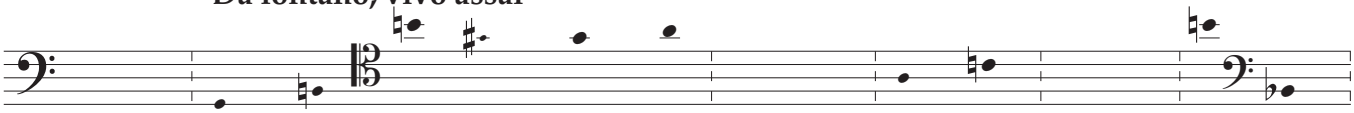
Quasi al rallentatore

pizz. left hand + arco poco sul pont.

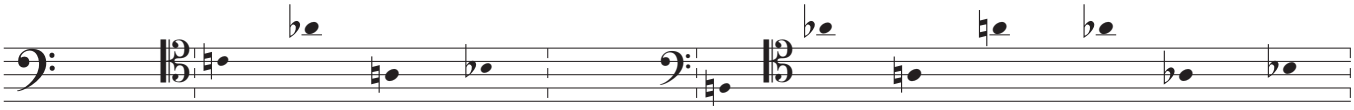


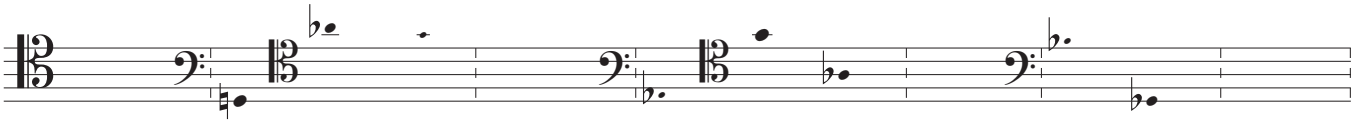


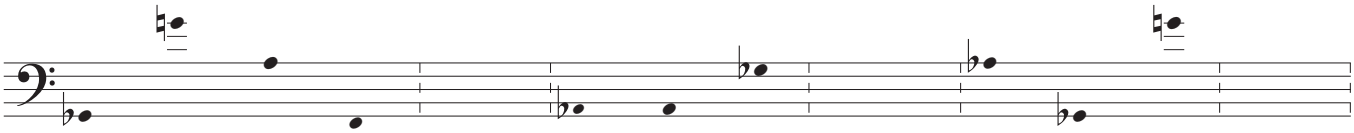
Da lontano, vivo assai

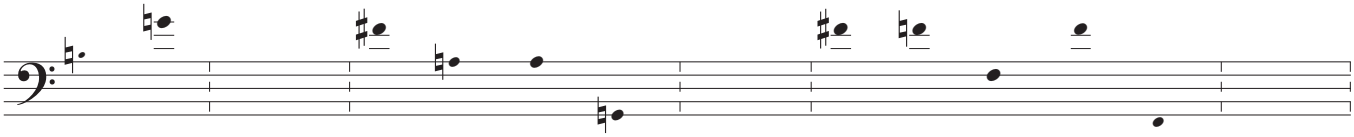


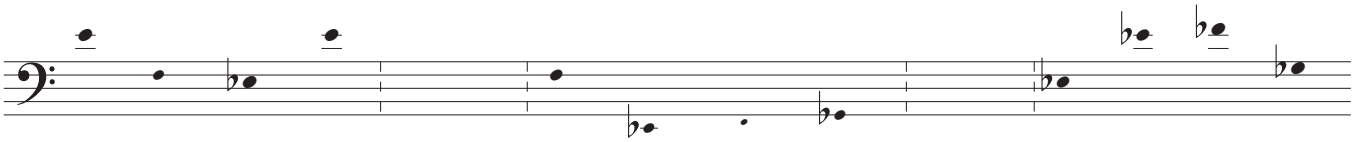
arco più sul pont. poco tremolando
poco a poco più calmando e flautando fino alla fine

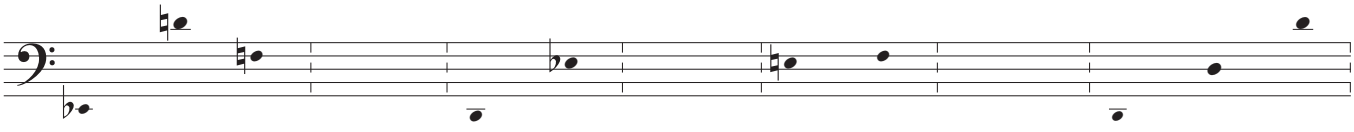






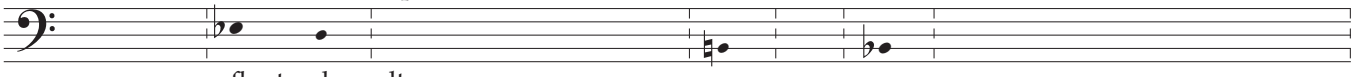
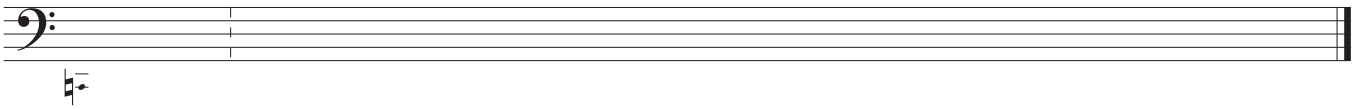






Da molto lontano, sempre vivo assai

arco molto sul pont. molto tremolando



flautando molto
morendo