空
Śūnyatā

For Sextet

(2023)

Kenrick Ho

Preface

The material in *Śūnyatā* is generated from the Chinese translation of the *prajnaparamita hrdaya sutra* (般若波羅密多心經)*,* which is sometimes known as the Buddhist Heart Sutra. The structure of the piece is derived from the irregular but repetitive phrase structure of the text, and the pitch material corresponds to the text's Cantonese pronunciation. Hence, there are frequent usages of glissandi and occasional percussive sounds that come from the six tones and nine sounds of the Cantonese language.The title 'Śūnyatā' (शून्यता) comes from the text itself, and it is the Sanskrit word for emptiness, openness, or voidness. Since the generation of the piece came intrinsically from the text and that it is left open for performers to interpret, it is as manifested in the sutra— 'form (as in existence) is emptiness, that which is emptiness form'.

Performance Note

A stopwatch is needed to perform the piece. The score is in space-time notation where each page is 30 seconds long and the note durations are represented spatially by the distance between notes. In the part score, each system is one minute long.

It is worth noting that the score is not intended to be read with exact precision. Rather, I would encourage players to interpret the spatial proportions loosely according to what feels 'right' at the moment during the performance. So for example, notes in the middle of the page does not neccesarily have to come in at the 15 second mark. It can be earlier or later within the page depending on where the window to enter presents itself.

As such, wind players may decide to play longer durations than what the score implies. When that happens, feel free to stagger breaths (fade out and in again) to continue holding the note.

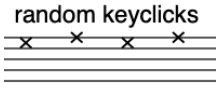
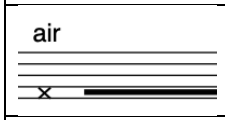
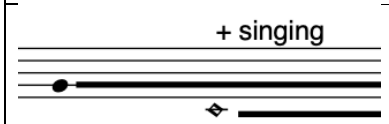
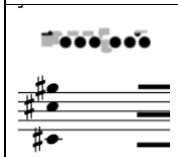
String instruments should change bows as subtly as possible when playing for an extended duration.

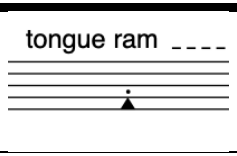
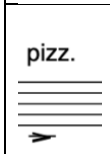
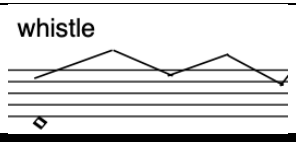
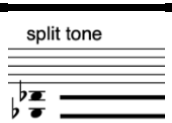
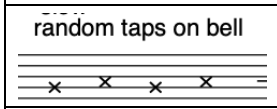
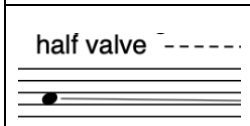
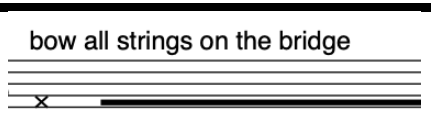
Instrumentation:

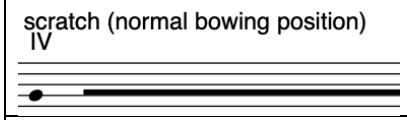
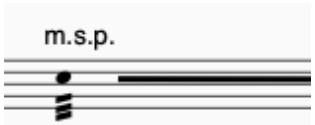
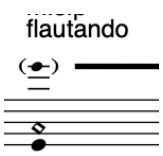
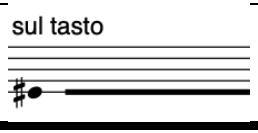
Renaissance flute (switching to modern alto flute)
Modern bassoon
Natural Horn in F (switching to the modern horn in F)
Acoustic Guitar (I wrote the part for the guitar but I'm open to trying the Theorbo or the Oud)
Modern Violin (I would love to try baroque bows in the workshop)
Modern Cello (as above, I would love to try using baroque bows in the workshop)

c.a. 12'30"

Notation Key

	Notation	Technique	Remarks
Overall		Key Clicks	Clicking unspecified keys on the instrument, sometimes with speed specified.
		Air sounds	Blowing into the instrument, sometimes specified to include a sense of pitch.
		Glissando	Players are free to choose who glissandi are achieved, i.e. or by embouchure changes or by gradual finger movement.
		Vibrato	Players are free to choose their preferred method for vibrato, either by shaking the instrument or by embouchure. The speed of vibrato is specified in some cases.
		Singing and playing	Sing the diamond notes into the instrument while playing the normal notes.
		Multiphonics	Playing two or more notes simultaneously using the given fingering.

Flute		Tongue Ram	Covering the embouchure hole completely with lips and attacking forcefully into the hole using the tongue.
		Lip Pizz	A strong ‘pa’ sound created by a quick burst of air.
		Whistle Tones	Exhale quietly into the instrument to approximate the shape of the line above the stave.
Bassoon		Colour trills	Tremolo on the same note using different fingerings decided by the performer.
F. Horn		Split Tone	Separating a tone into two specific pitches by having different vibrations on the upper and lower lips.
		Tap on bell	Tapping on the bell of the instrument.
		Half valve	Pressing valves halfway to alter timbre.
Guitar		Bowing	Bowing the instrument preferably using a cello or double bass bow.

Strings		Scratch	Applying extreme pressure and bowing slowly to create a squeaking sound.
		Molto sul ponticello	Bowing on the bridge
		Flautando	Bowing lightly, aiming to sound like a flute, on the fingerboard (unless specified otherwise).
		Sul tasto	Bowing on the fingerboard

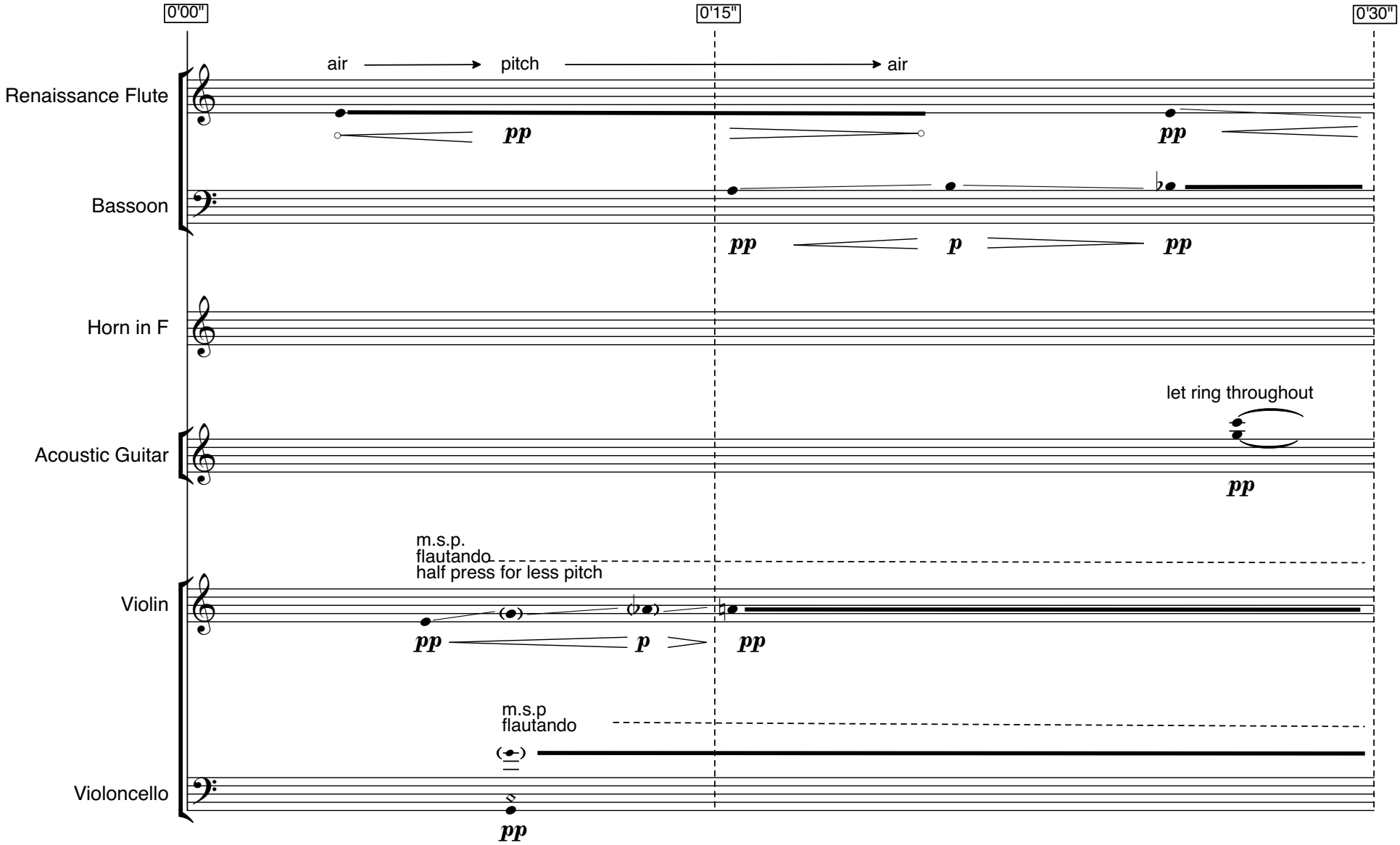
For Ensemble Linea, Ciel Academy 2023

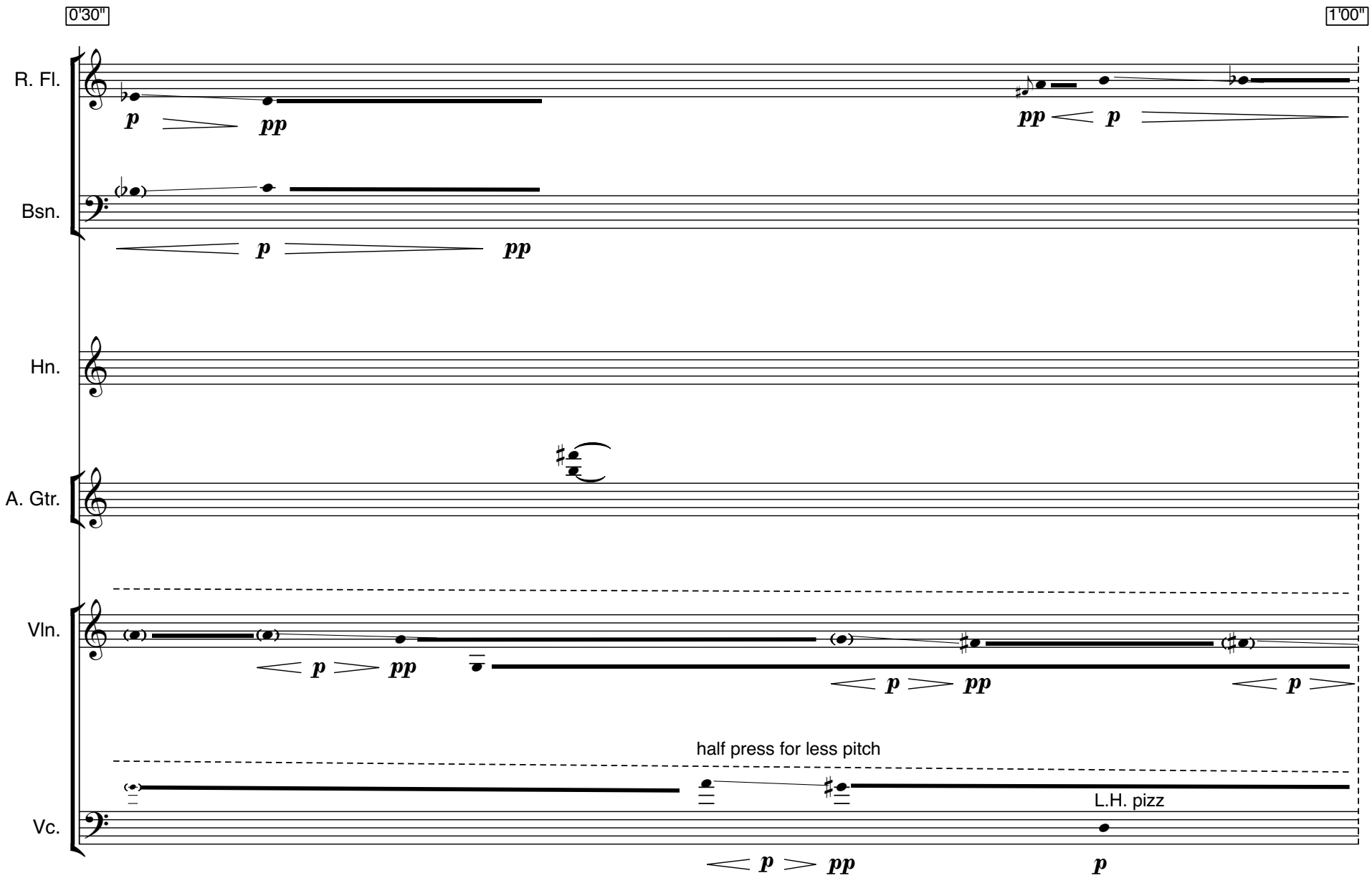
空

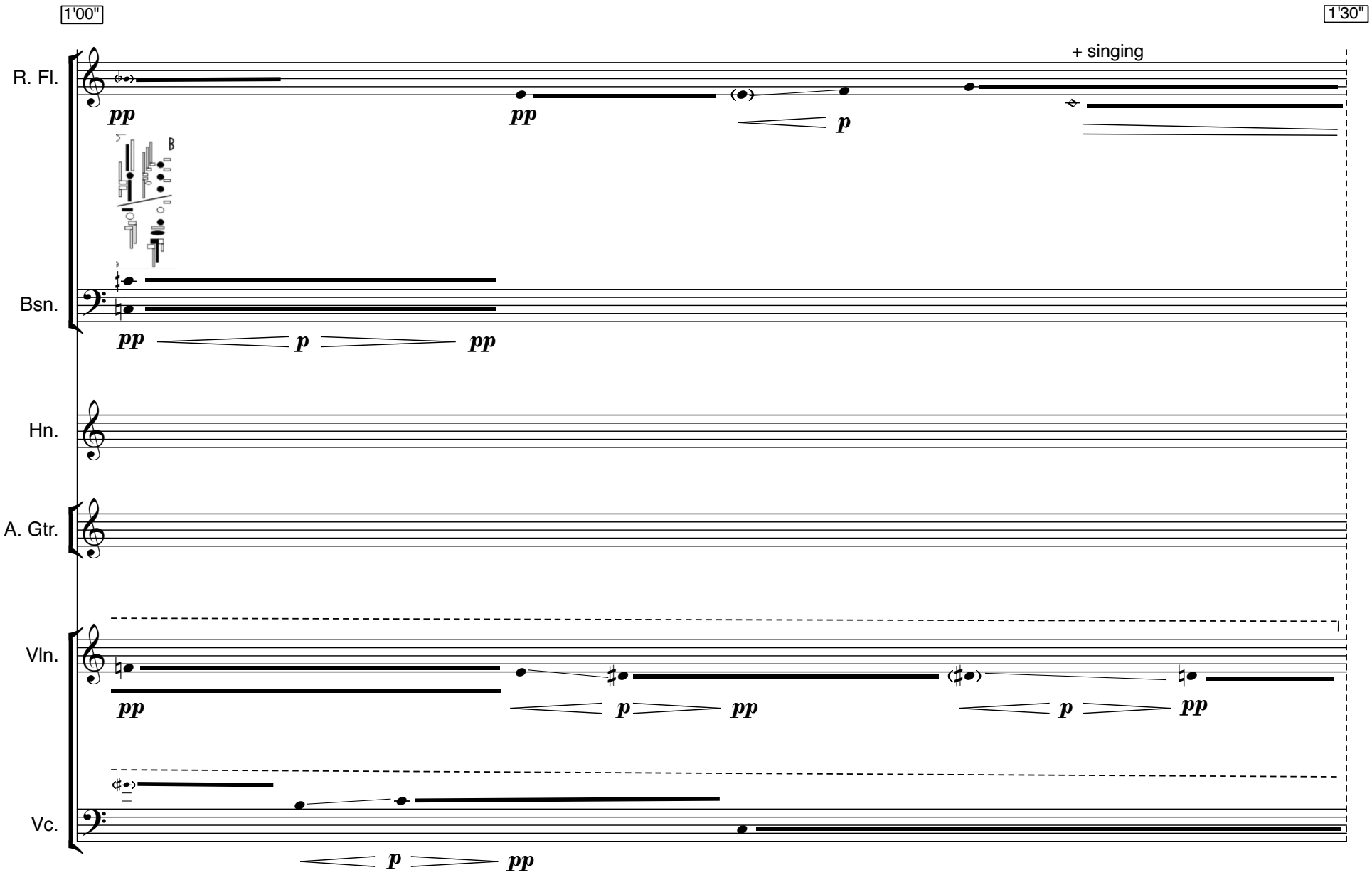
Śūnyatā

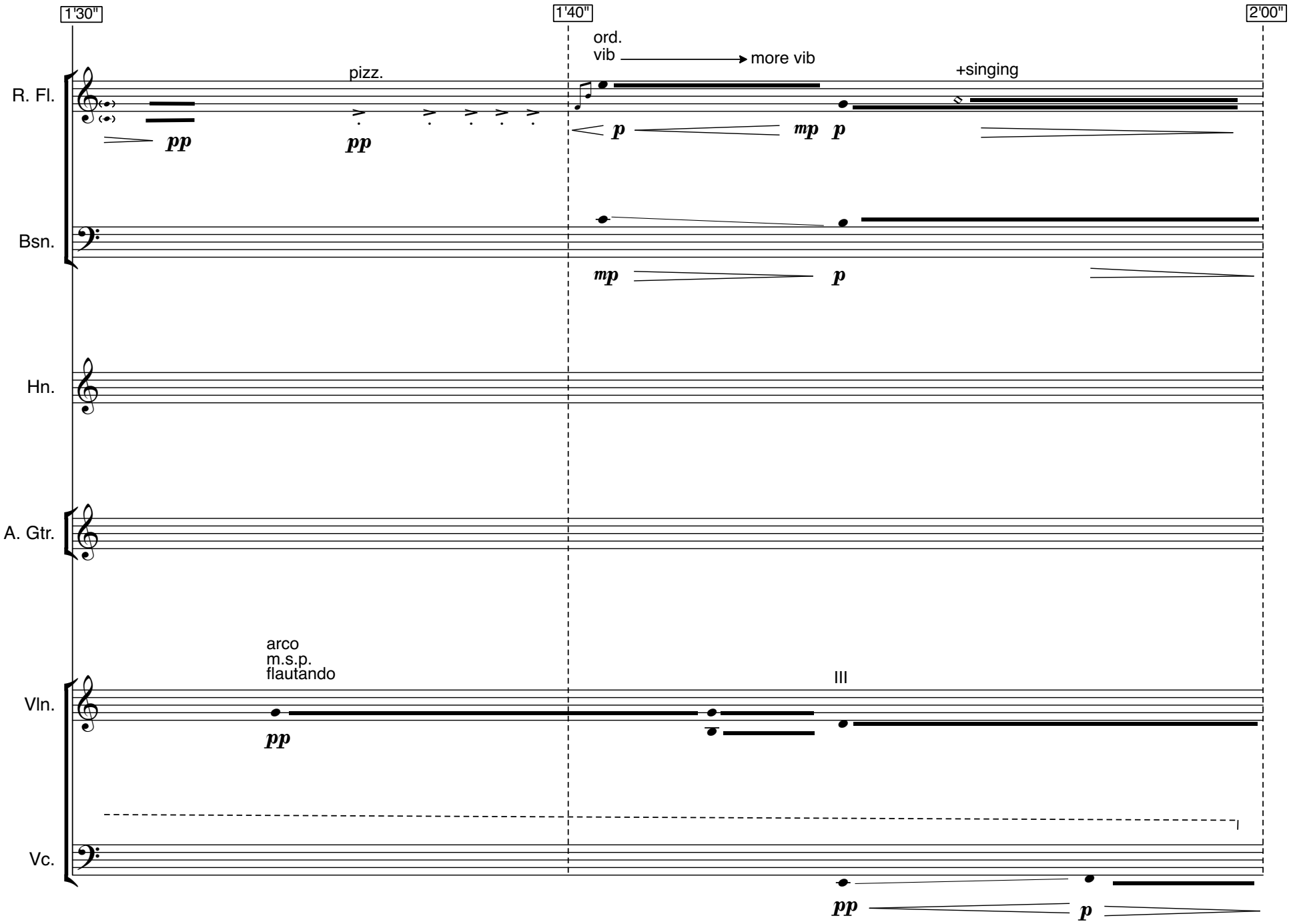
Score in C

Kenrick Ho




0'30"
1'00"
R. Fl.
Bsn.
Hn.
A. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
p
pp
half press for less pitch
L.H. pizz


1'00"
1'30"
+ singing
R. Fl.
Bsn.
Hn.
A. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
pp
p
B


1'30"
1'40"
2'00"
R. Fl.
pizz.
ord.
vib
more vib
+singing
pp
pp
p
mp
p
Bsn.
mp
p
Hn.
A. Gtr.
arco
m.s.p.
flautando
III
Vln.
pp
Vc.
pp
p

2'00"

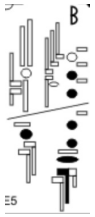
2'30"

R. Fl.

whistle

(cont. unspecified whistles)

pp



Bsn.

(stagger breathing to hold for 30 sec.)

pp

Hn.

air

(stagger breathing to hold for 30 sec.)

pp

A. Gtr.

bow all strings on the bridge

pp p pp

Vln.

scratch (normal bowing position)

IV

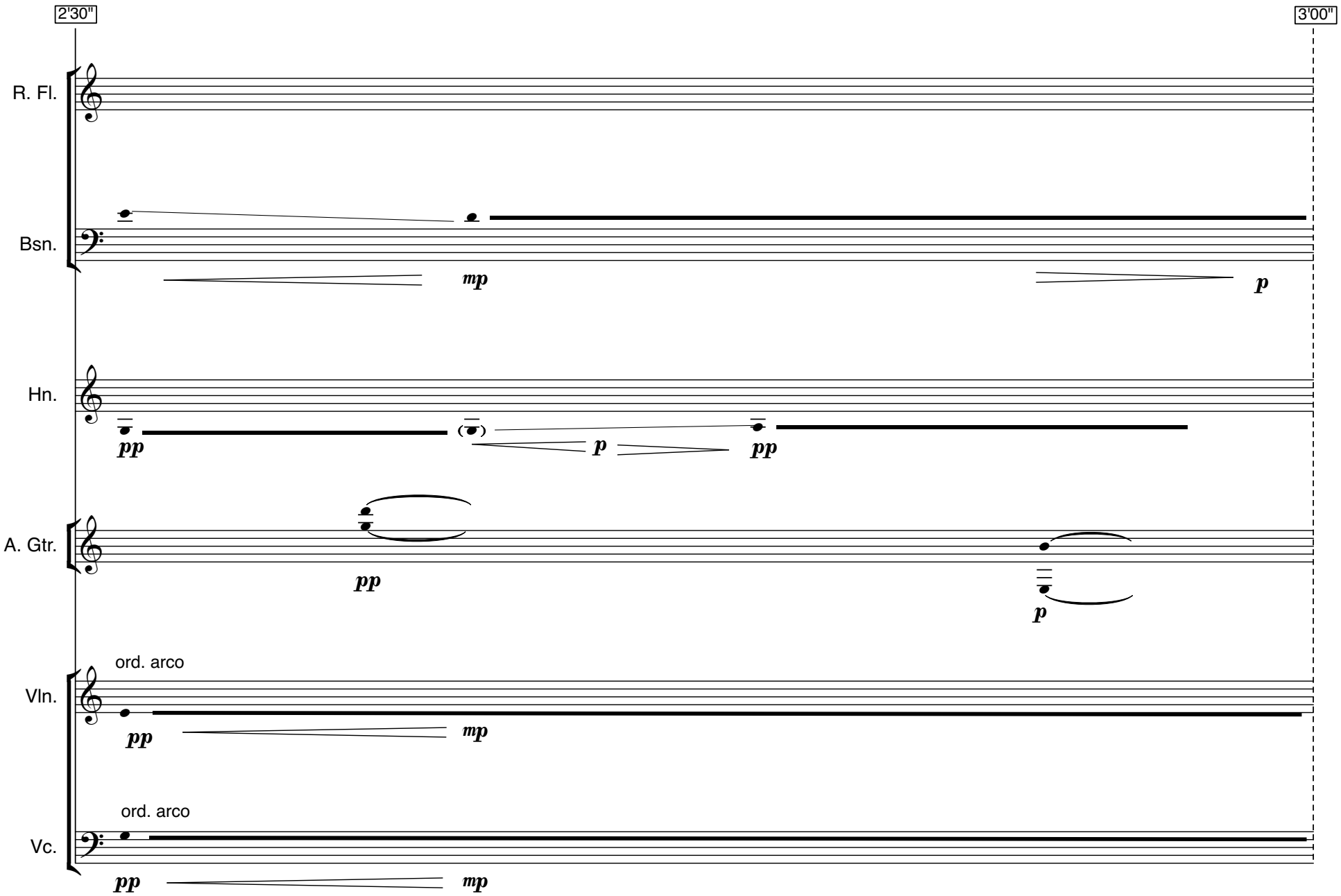
pp p

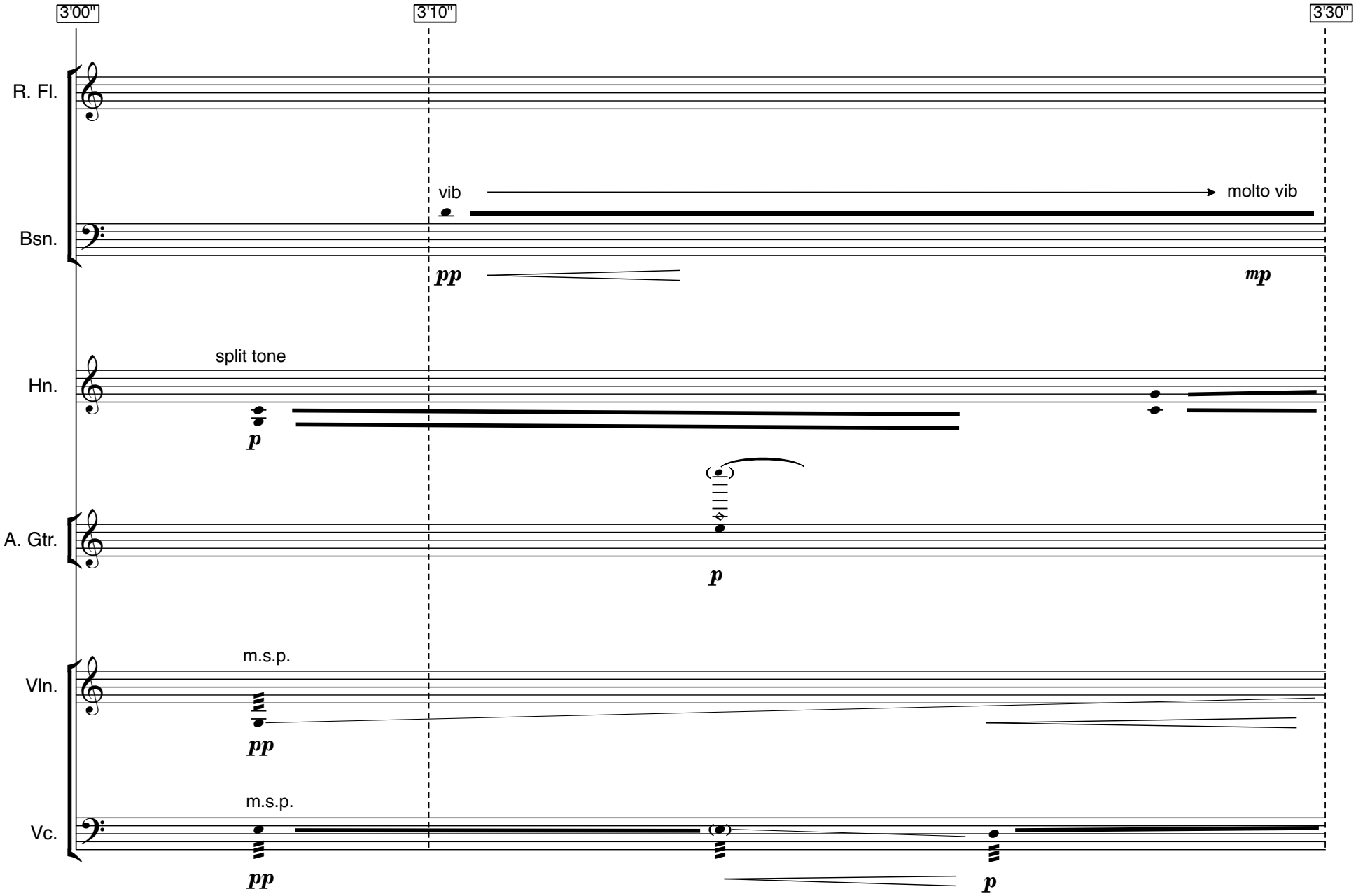
Vc.

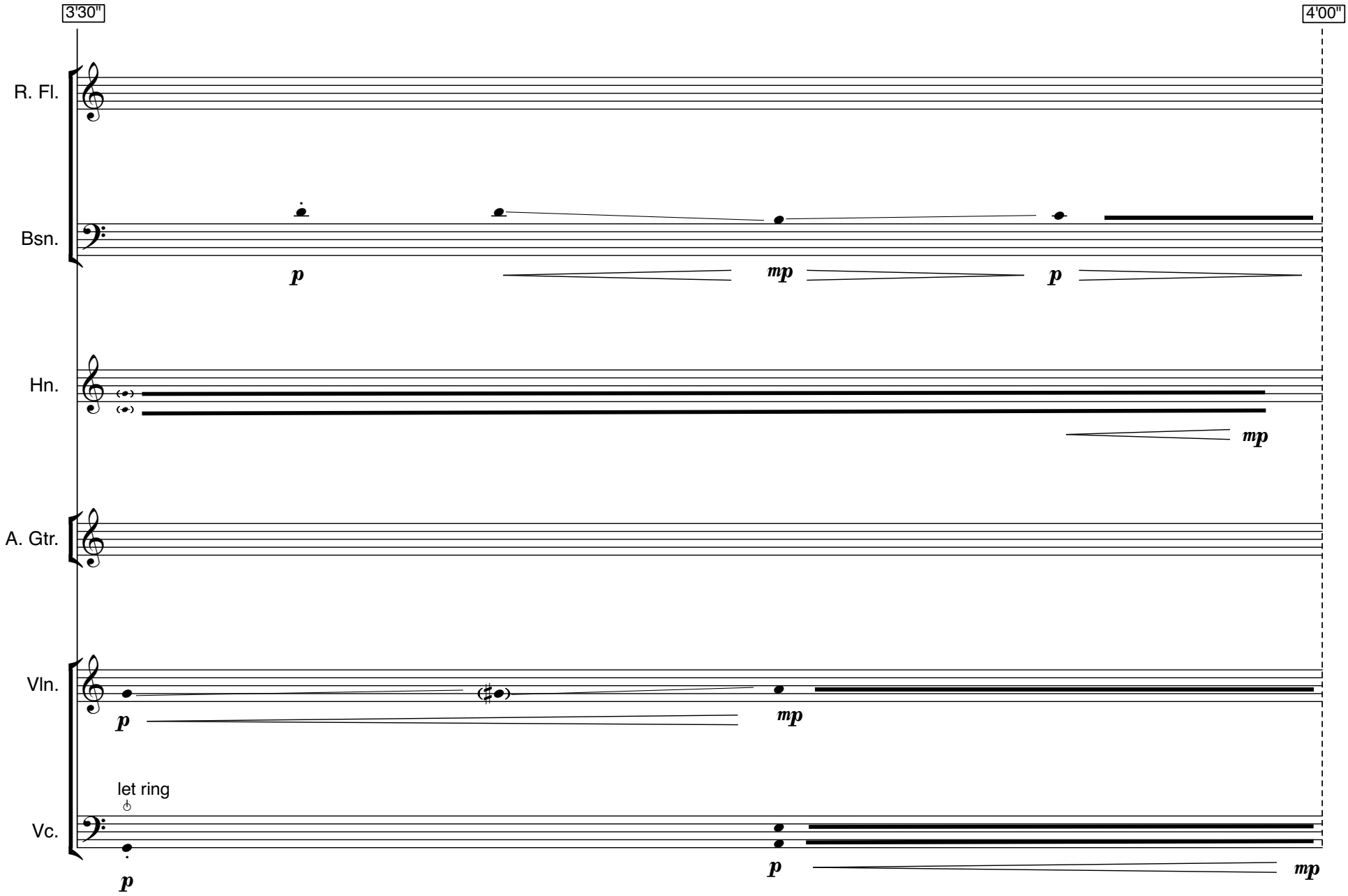
scratch (normal bowing position)

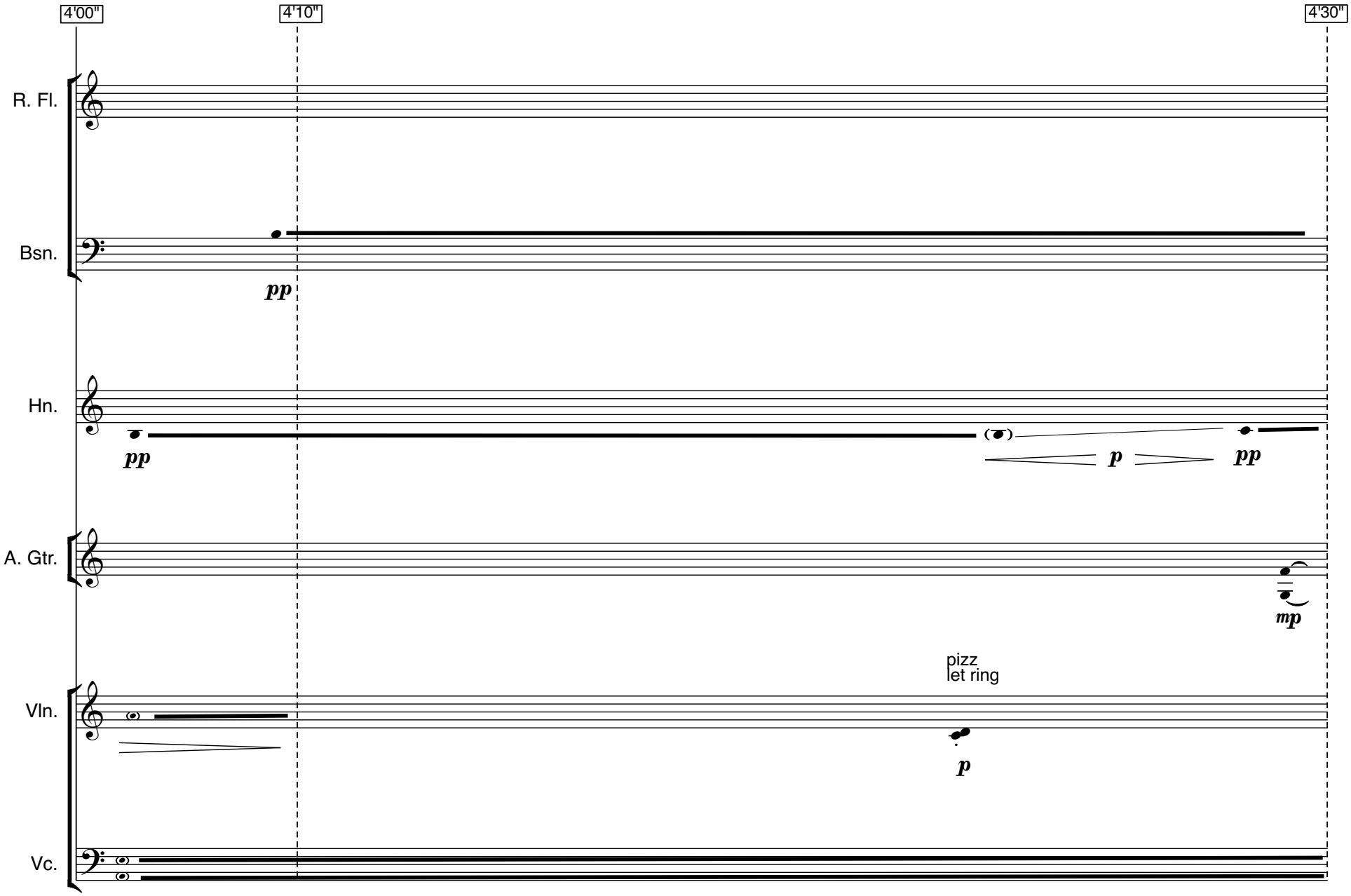
IV

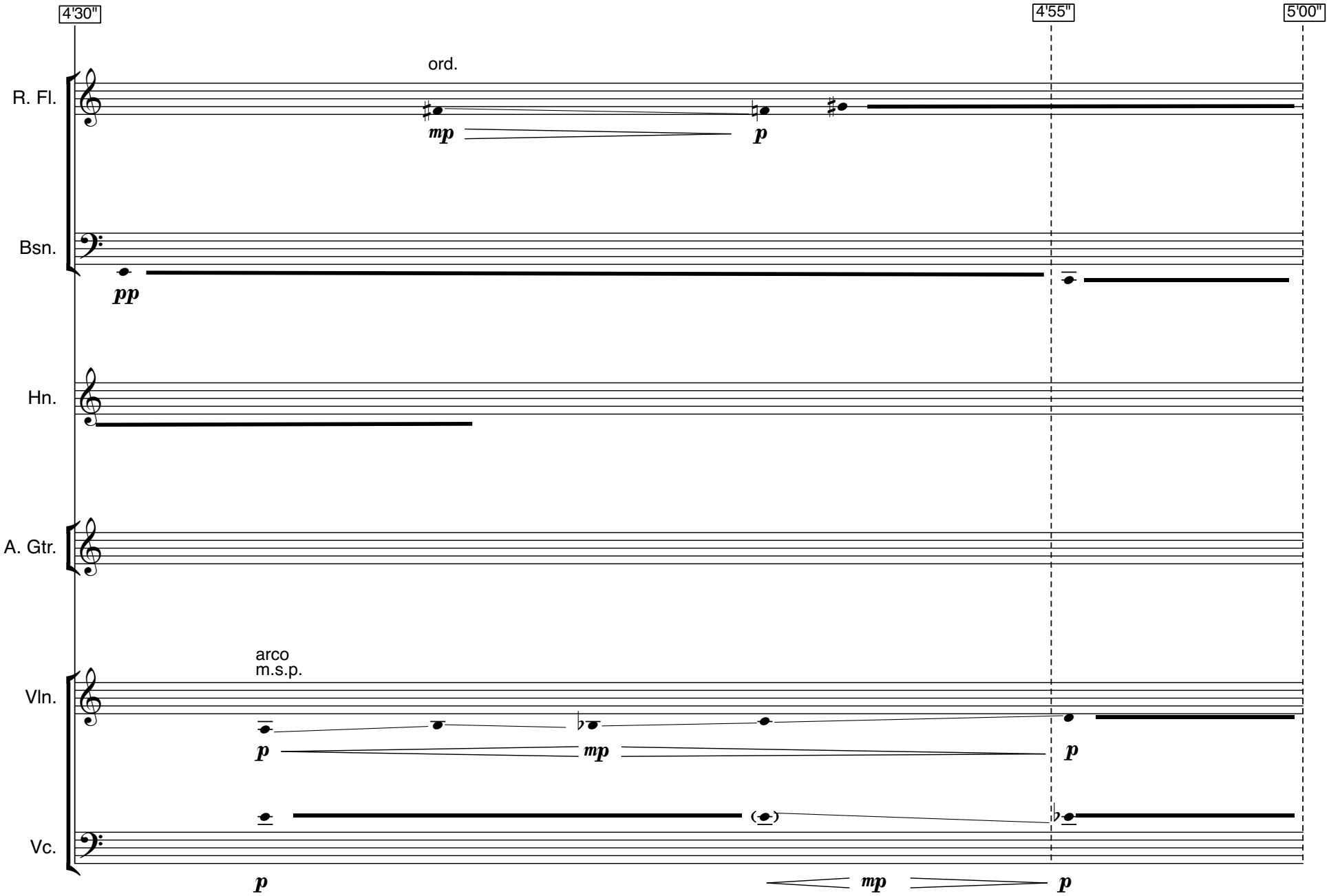
pp p

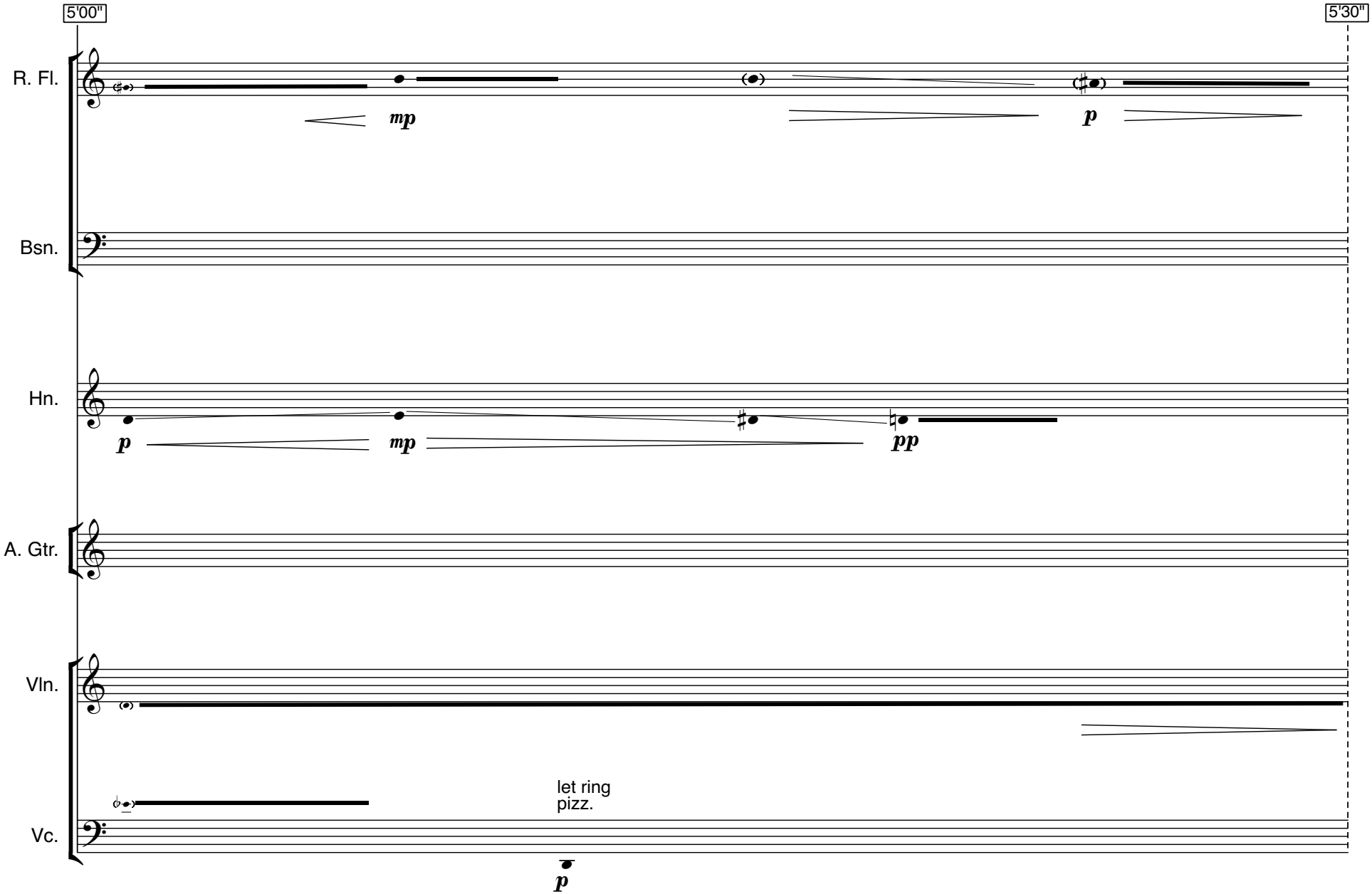

2'30"
3'00"
R. Fl.
Bsn.
mp
p
Hn.
pp
p
pp
A. Gtr.
pp
p
ord. arco
Vln.
pp
mp
ord. arco
Vc.
pp
mp

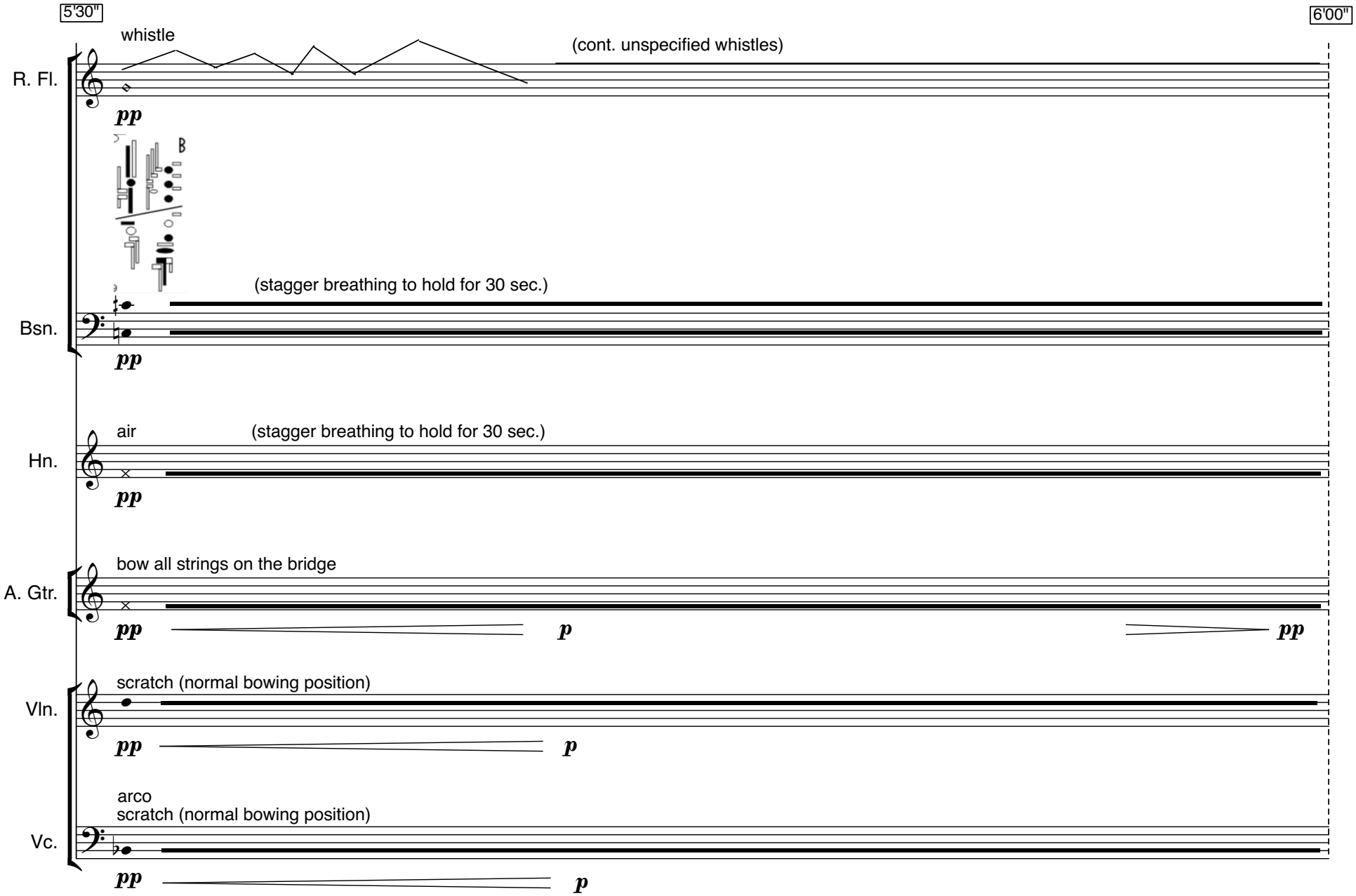

3'00"
3'10"
3'30"
R. Fl.
Bsn.
vib
molto vib
pp
mp
Hn.
split tone
p
A. Gtr.
p
Vln.
m.s.p.
pp
Vc.
m.s.p.
pp
p

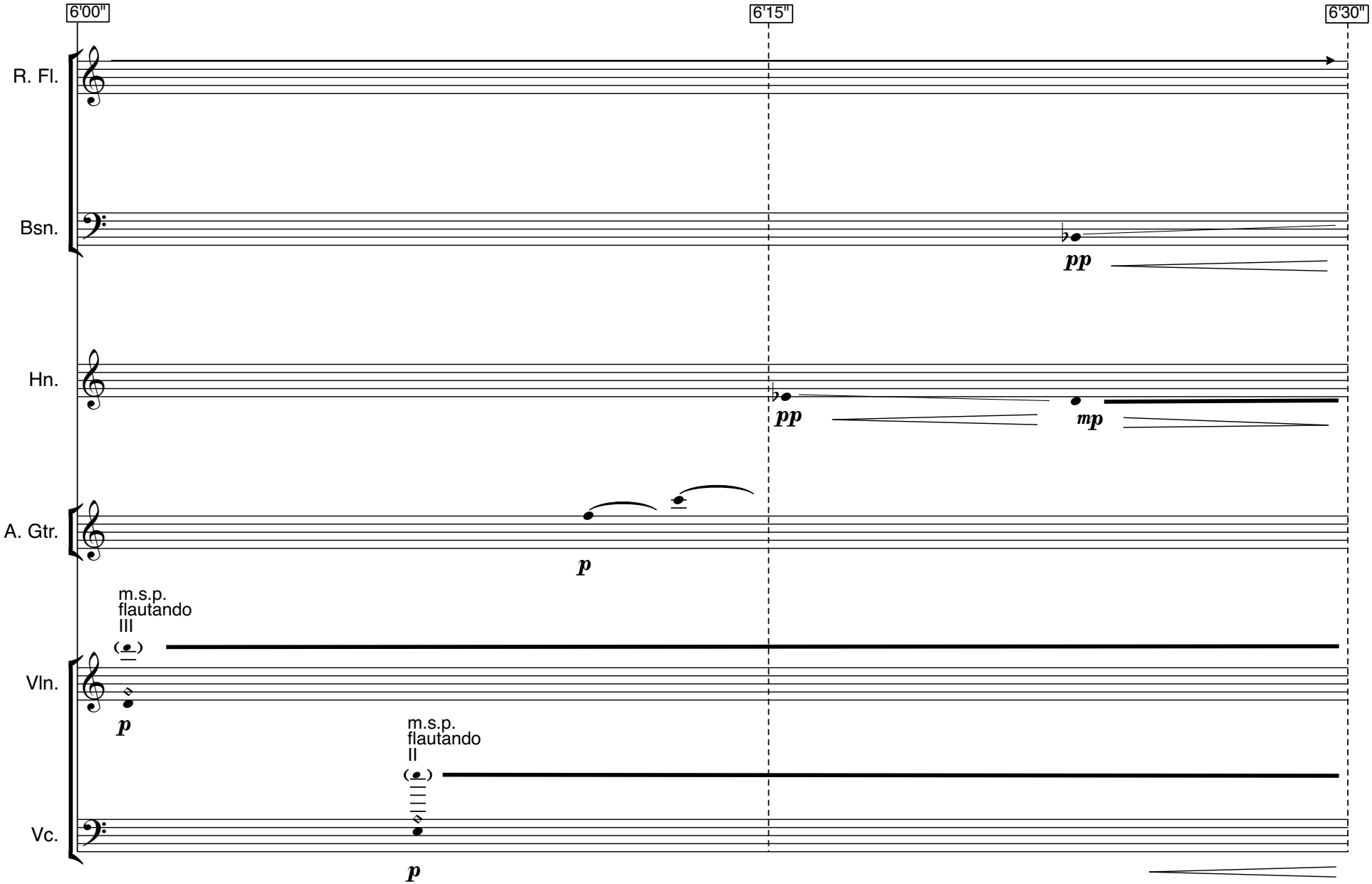

3'30"
4'00"
R. Fl.
Bsn.
p
mp
p
Hn.
mp
A. Gtr.
Vln.
p
mp
let ring
Vc.
p
p
mp

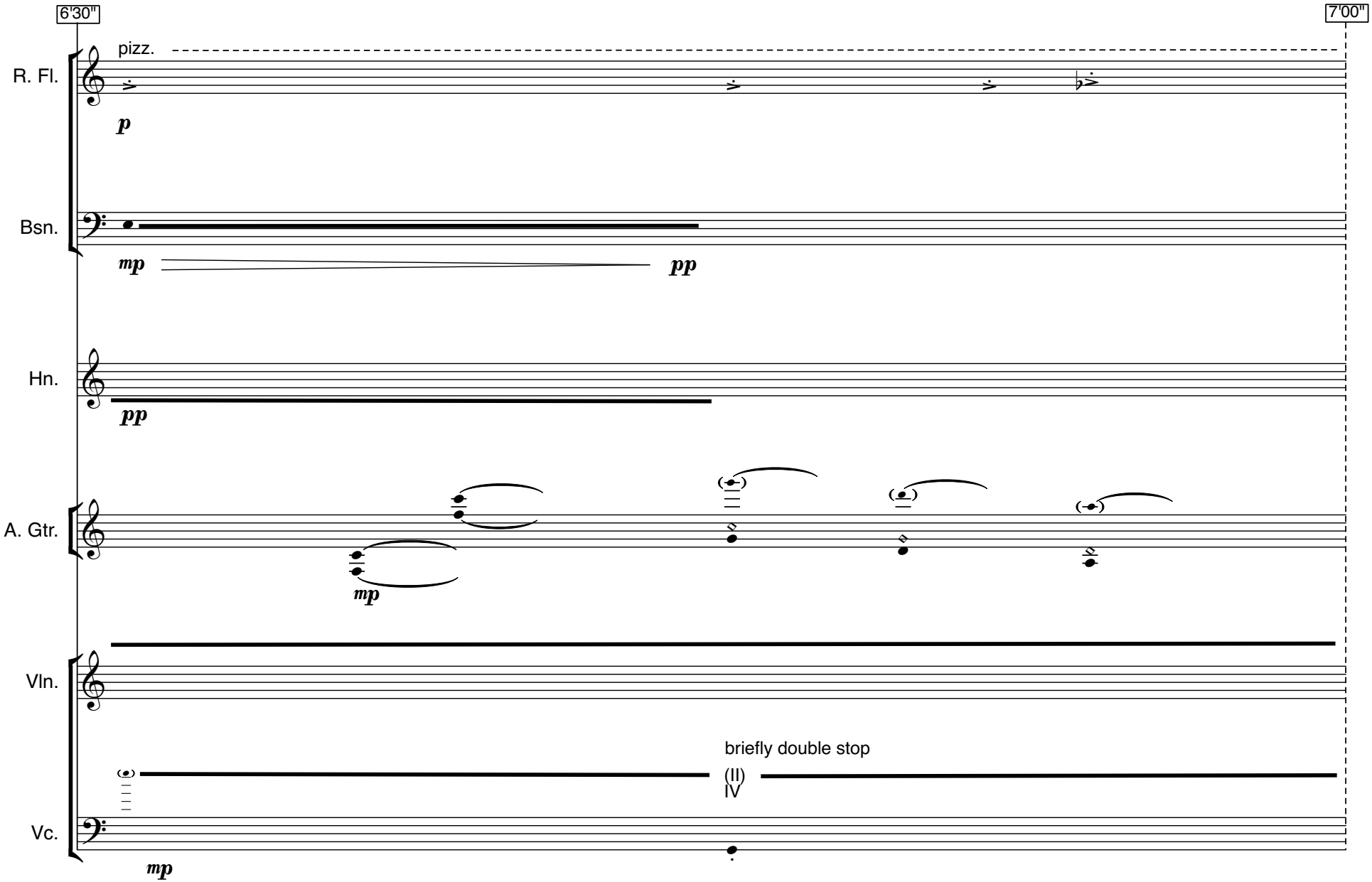

4'00"
4'10"
4'30"
R. Fl.
Bsn.
pp
Hn.
pp
p
pp
A. Gtr.
mp
pizz
let ring
Vln.
p
Vc.

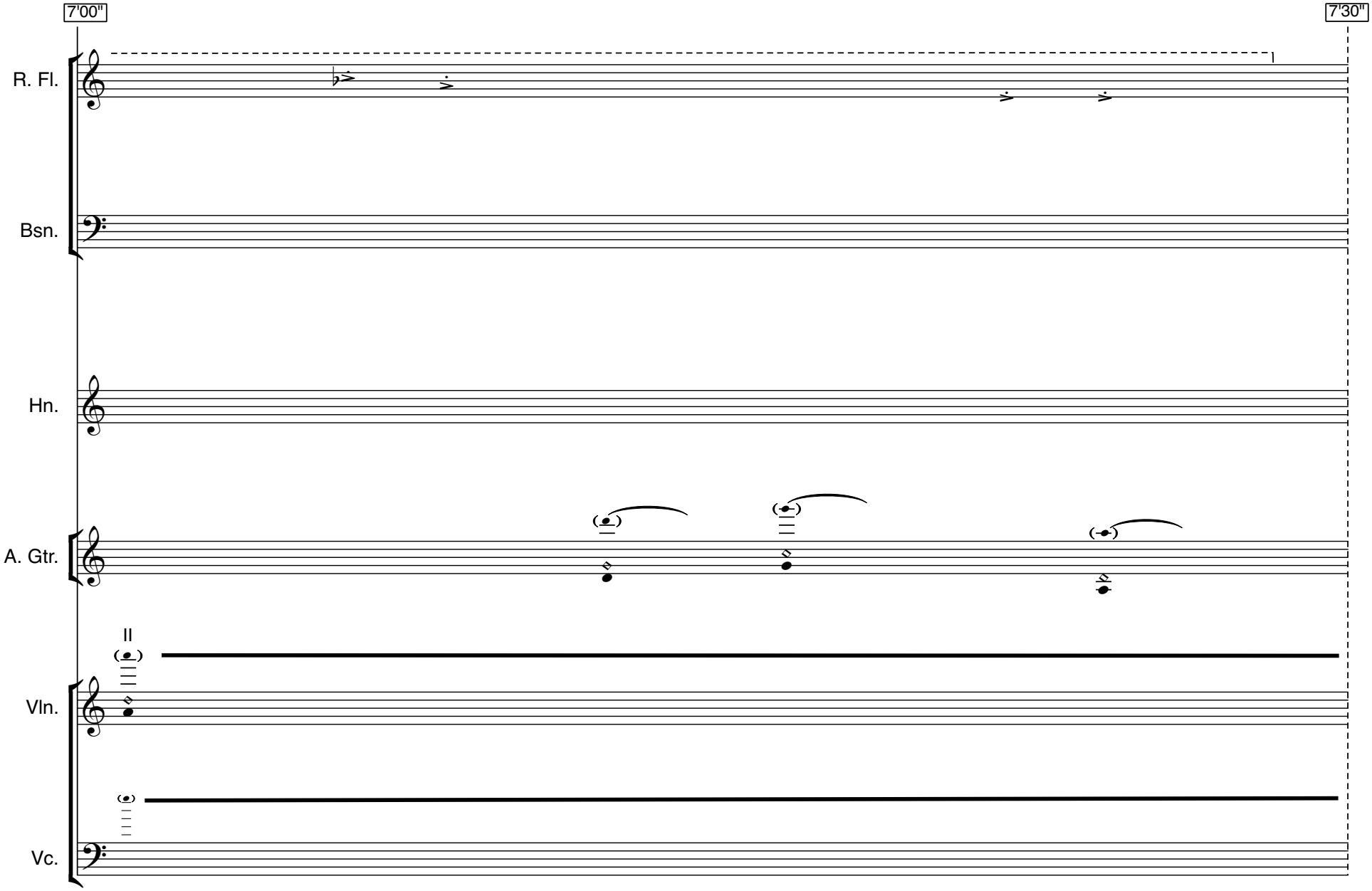

4'30"
4'55"
5'00"
R. Fl.
ord.
mp
p
Bsn.
pp
Hn.
A. Gtr.
Vln.
arco
m.s.p.
p
mp
p
Vc.
p
mp
p

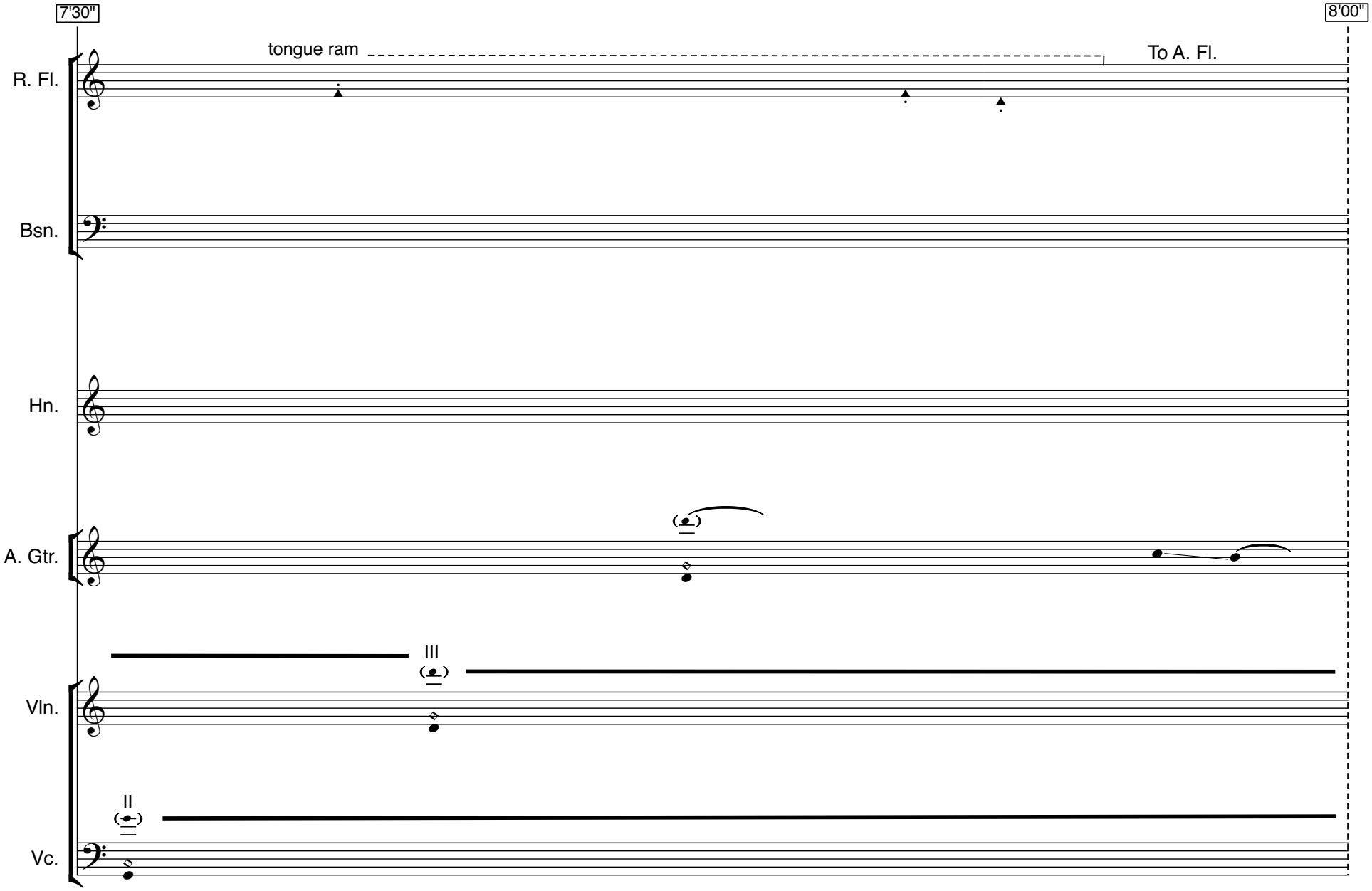

5'00"
5'30"
R. Fl.
mp
p
Bsn.
Hn.
p
mp
pp
A. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
let ring
pizz.
p

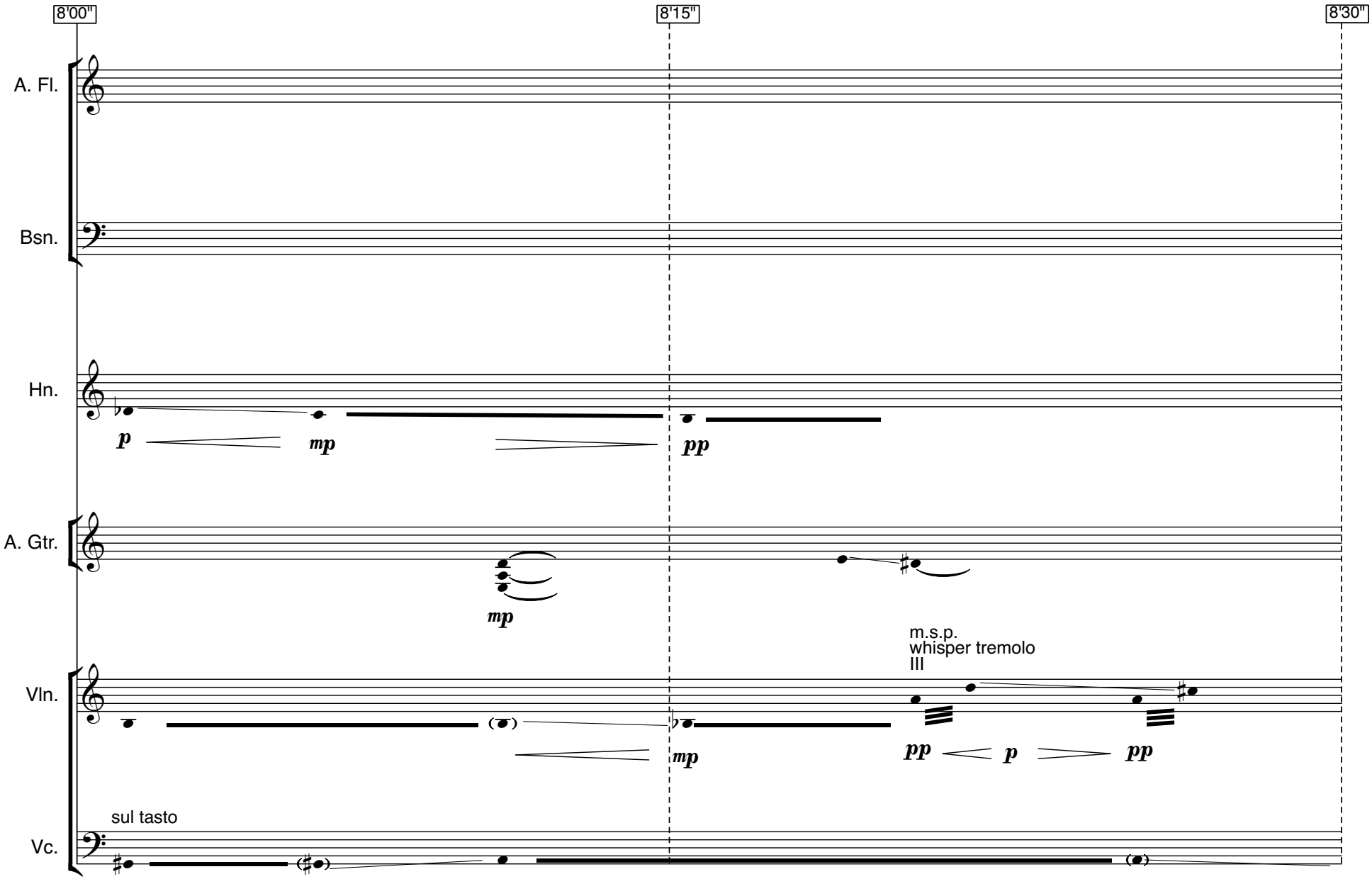

5'30"
6'00"
whistle
(cont. unspecified whistles)
R. Fl.
pp
B
(stagger breathing to hold for 30 sec.)
Bsn.
pp
air
(stagger breathing to hold for 30 sec.)
Hn.
pp
bow all strings on the bridge
A. Gtr.
pp
p
pp
scratch (normal bowing position)
Vln.
pp
p
arco
scratch (normal bowing position)
Vc.
pp
p

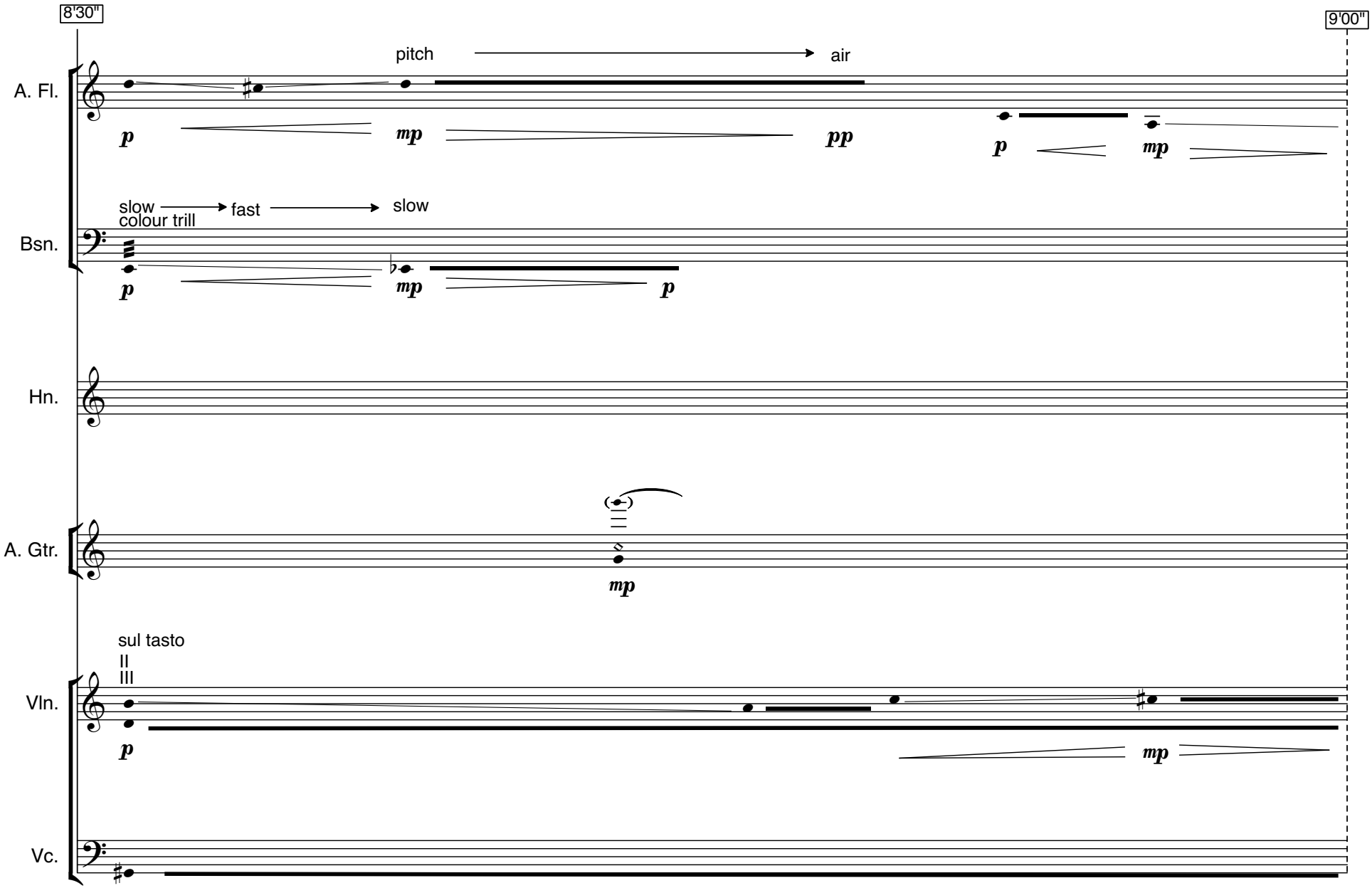

6'00"
6'15"
6'30"
R. Fl.
Bsn.
pp
Hn.
pp
mp
A. Gtr.
p
m.s.p.
flautando
III
Vln.
p
m.s.p.
flautando
II
Vc.
p

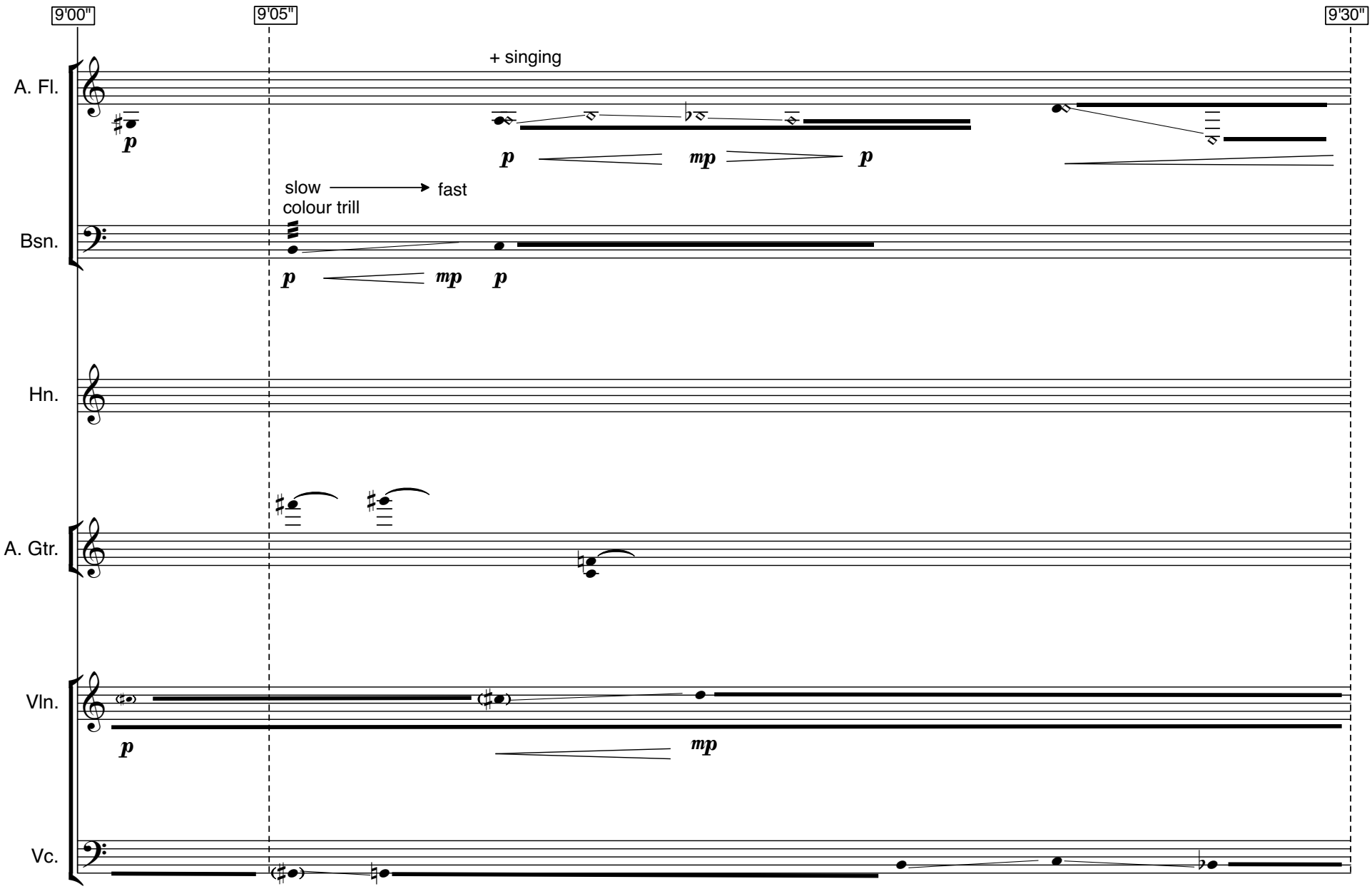

6'30"
7'00"
pizz.
R. Fl.
p
Bsn.
mp
pp
Hn.
pp
A. Gtr.
mp
Vln.
briefly double stop
(II)
IV
Vc.
mp

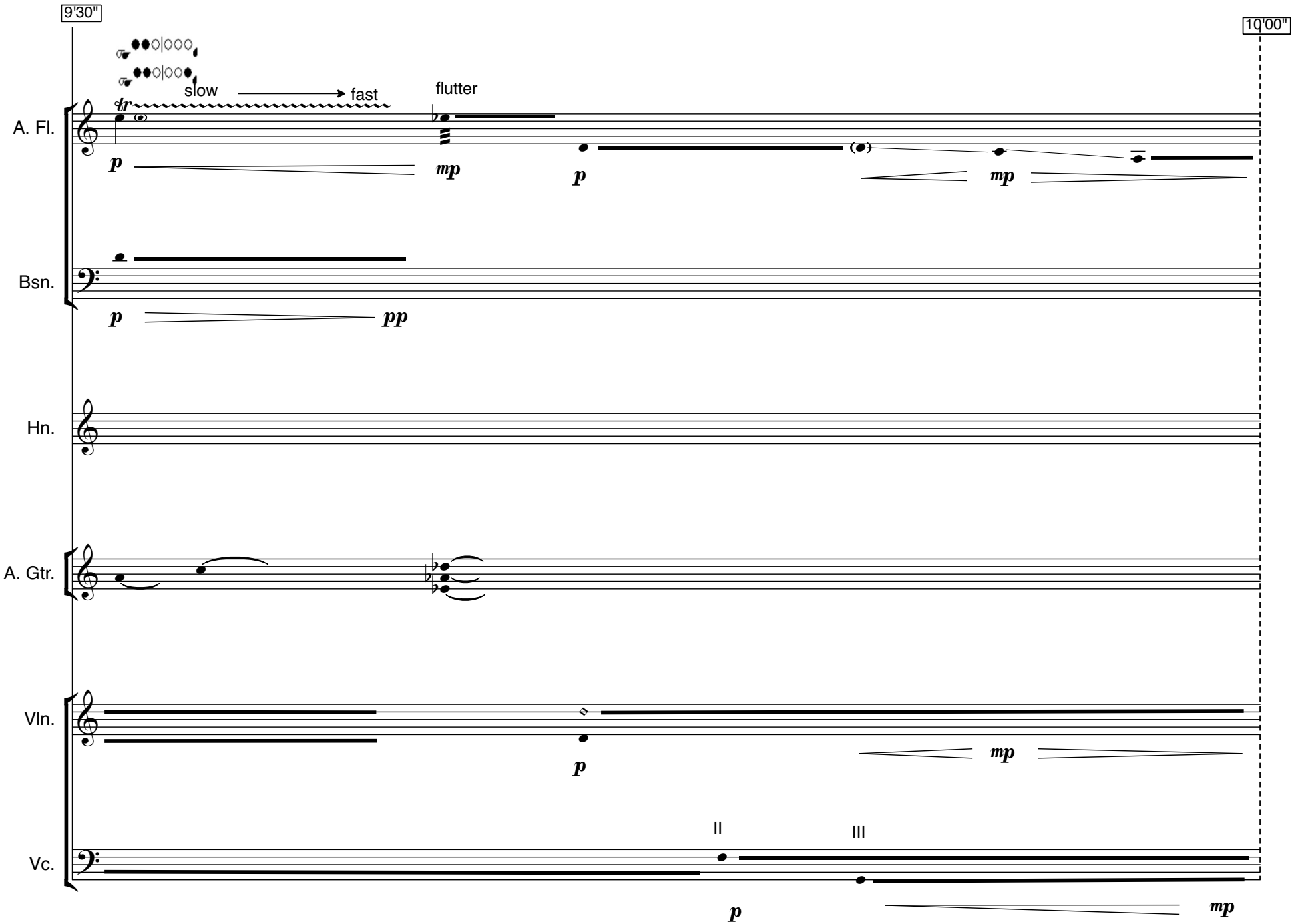

7'00"
7'30"
R. Fl.
Bsn.
Hn.
A. Gtr.
II
Vln.
Vc.

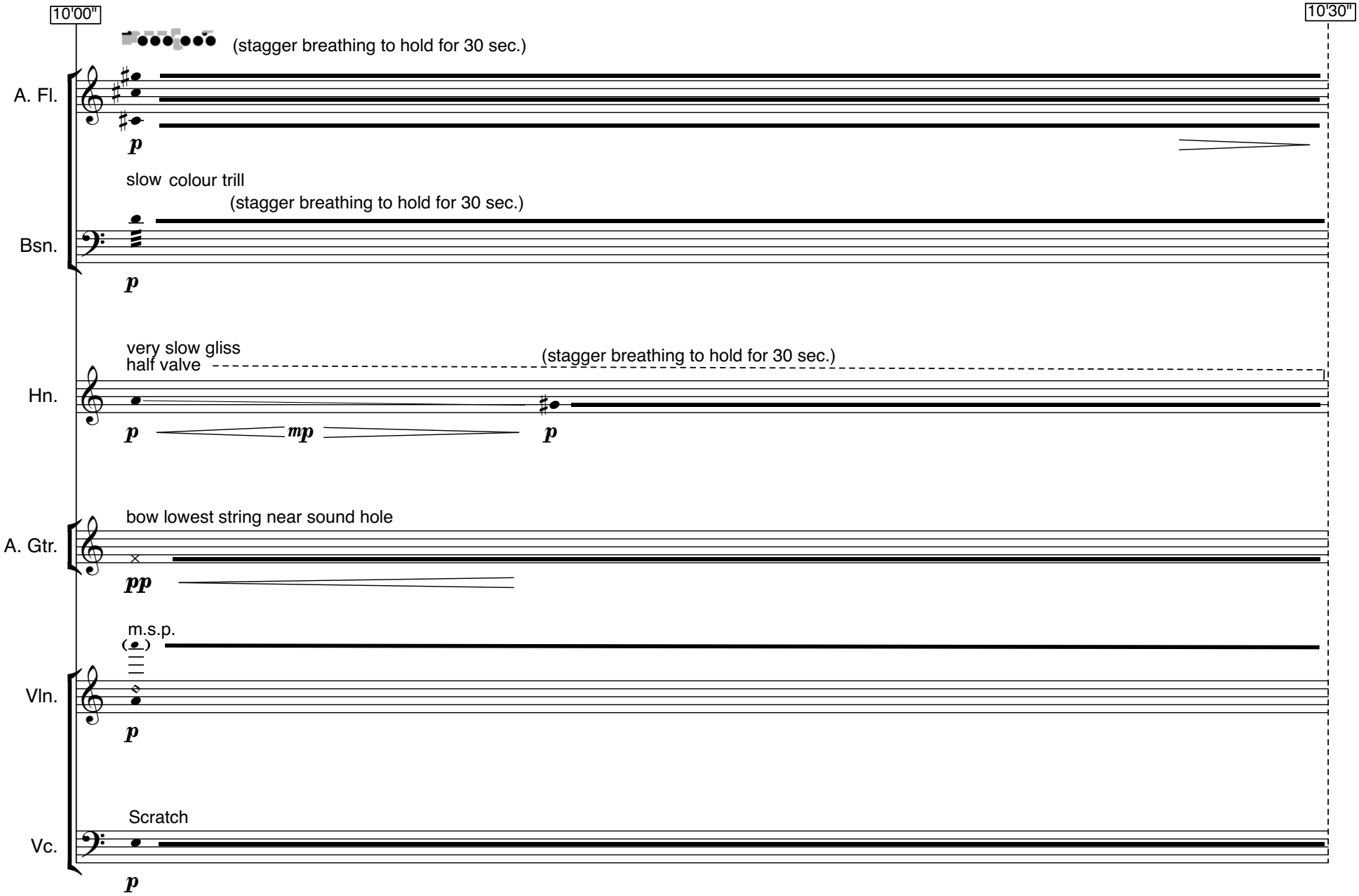

7'30"
8'00"
tongue ram
To A. Fl.
R. Fl.
Bsn.
Hn.
A. Gtr.
III
Vln.
II
Vc.

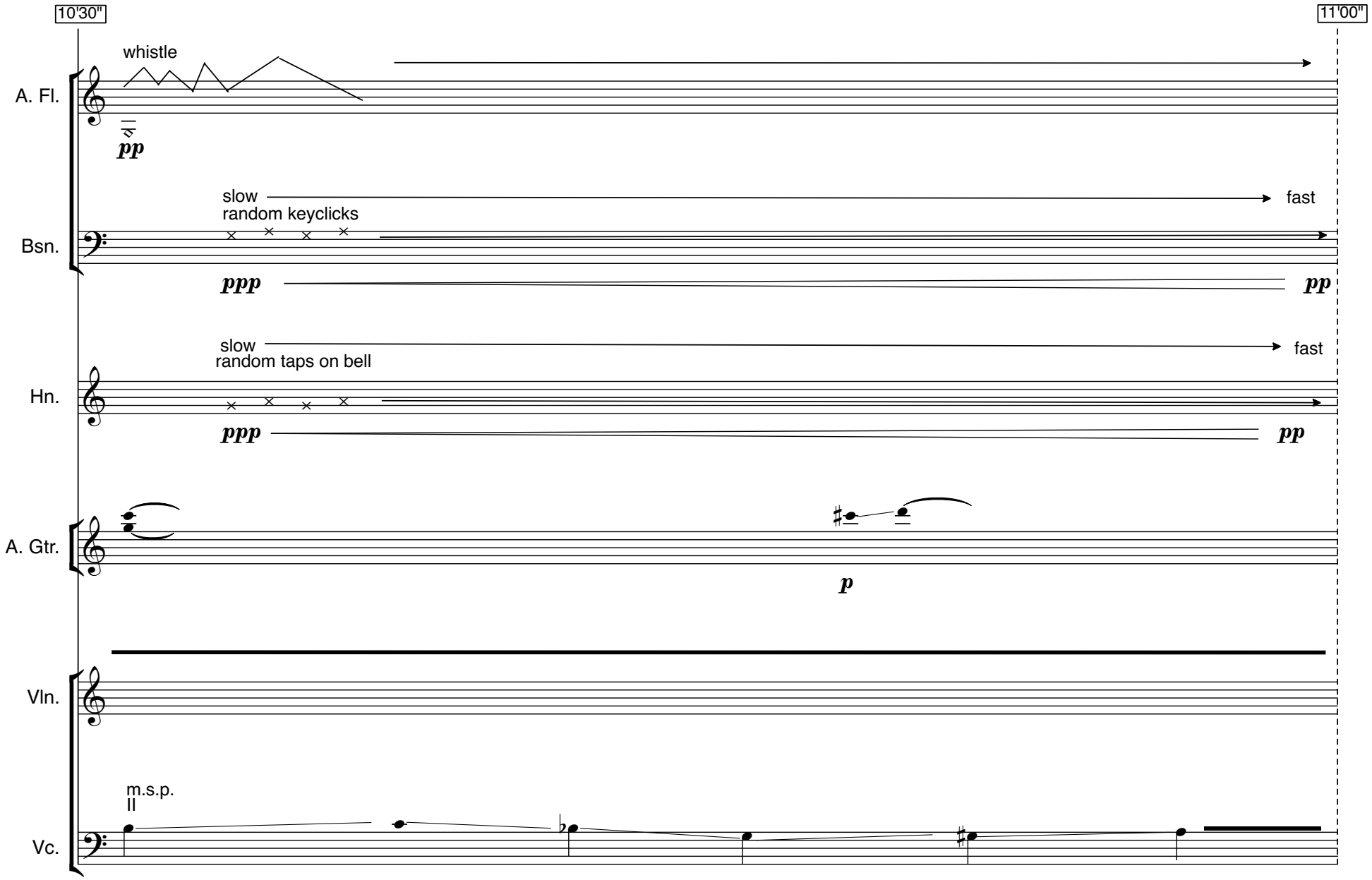

8'00"
8'15"
8'30"
A. Fl.
Bsn.
Hn.
p
mp
pp
A. Gtr.
mp
m.s.p.
whisper tremolo
III
Vln.
mp
pp
p
pp
sul tasto
Vc.

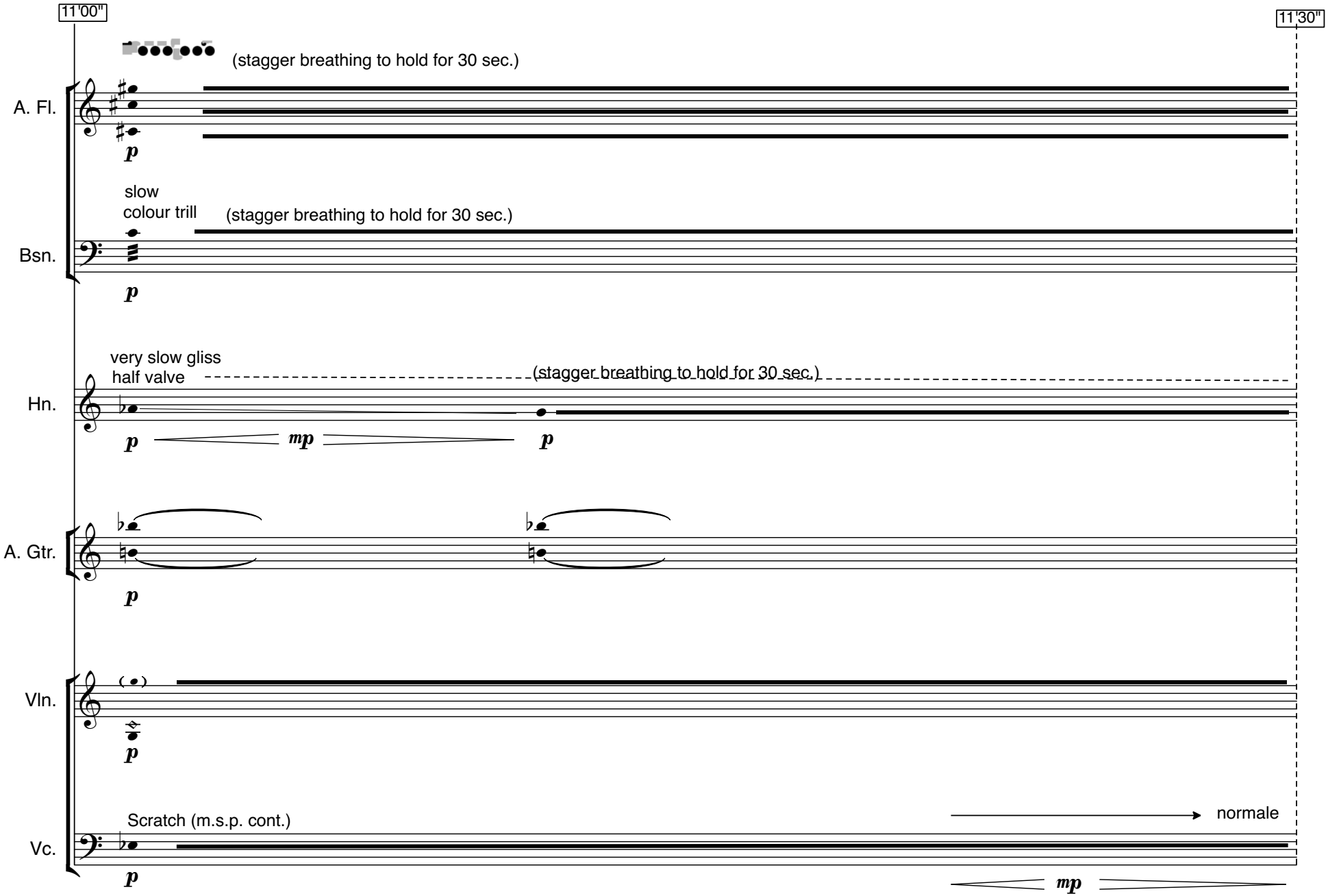

8'30"
9'00"
A. Fl.
pitch
air
p
mp
pp
p
mp
Bsn.
slow
fast
slow
colour trill
p
mp
p
Hn.
A. Gtr.
mp
Vln.
sul tasto
II
III
p
mp
Vc.

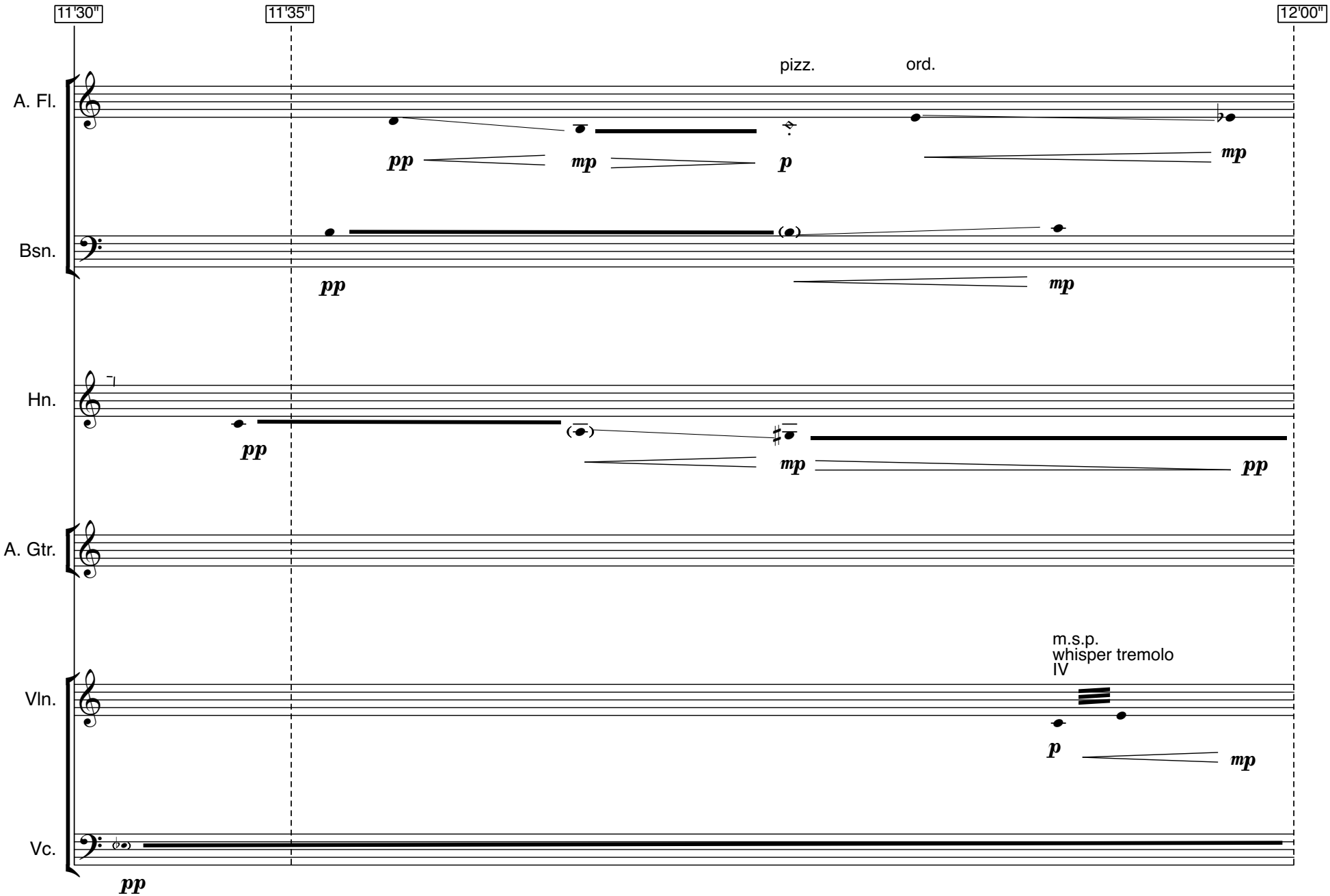

9'00"
9'05"
9'30"
A. Fl.
+ singing
p
p
mp
p
Bsn.
slow
fast
colour trill
p
mp
p
Hn.
A. Gtr.
Vln.
p
mp
Vc.

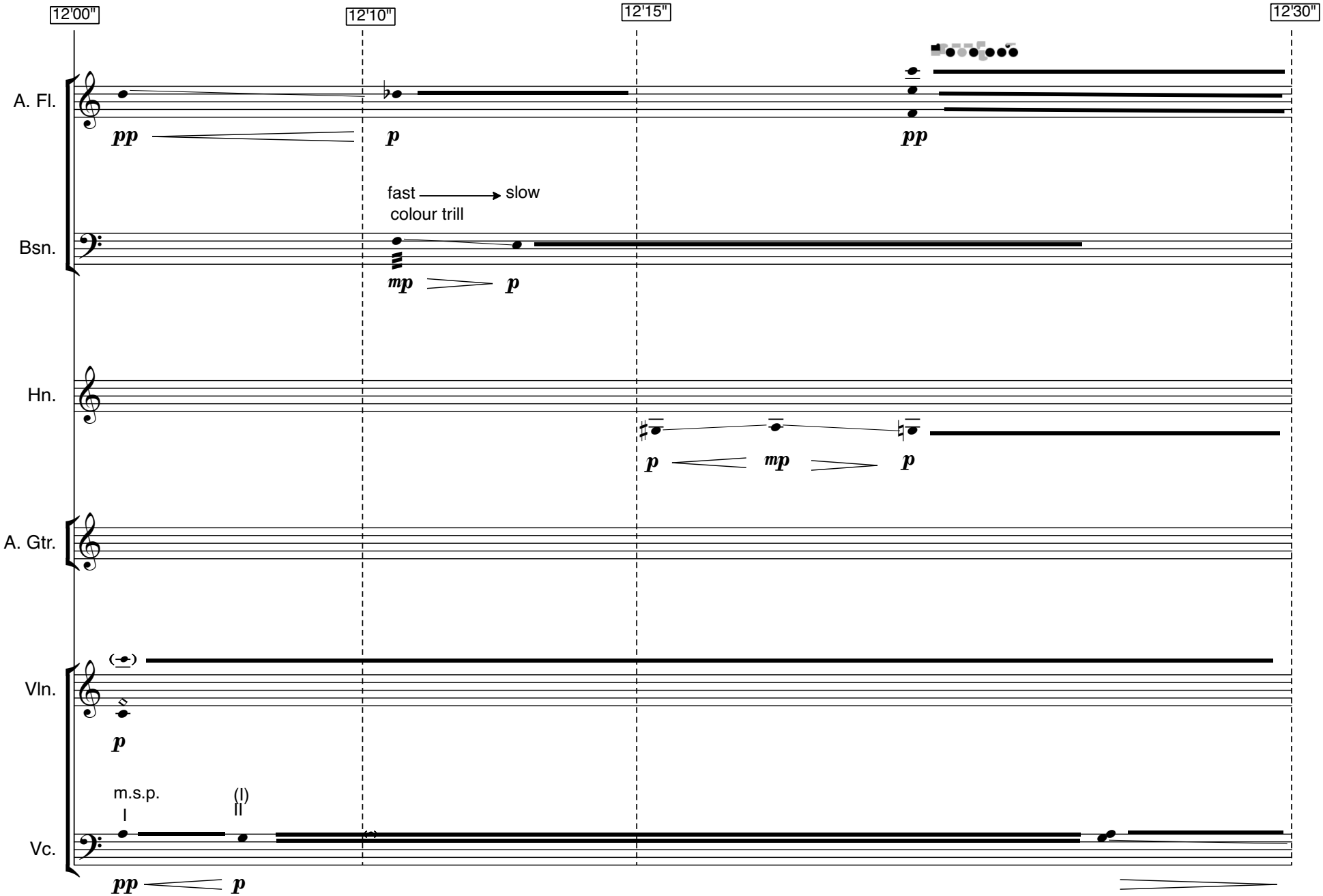

9'30"
10'00"
slow
fast
flutter
A. Fl.
Bsn.
Hn.
A. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
II
III
p
mp
pp

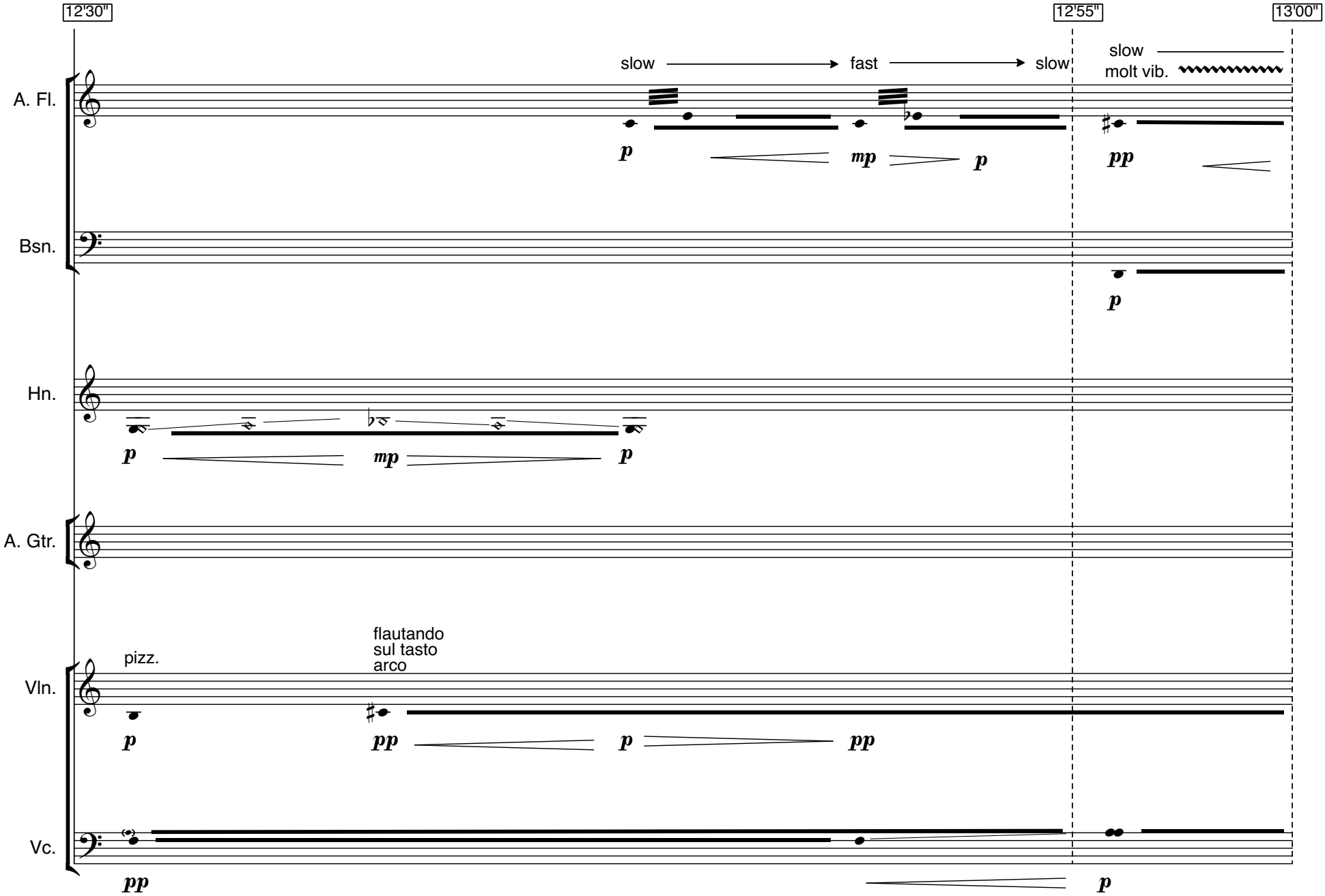

10'00"
10'30"
(stagger breathing to hold for 30 sec.)
A. Fl.
p
slow colour trill
(stagger breathing to hold for 30 sec.)
Bsn.
p
very slow gliss
half valve
(stagger breathing to hold for 30 sec.)
Hn.
p
mp
p
bow lowest string near sound hole
A. Gtr.
pp
m.s.p.
Vln.
p
Scratch
Vc.
p

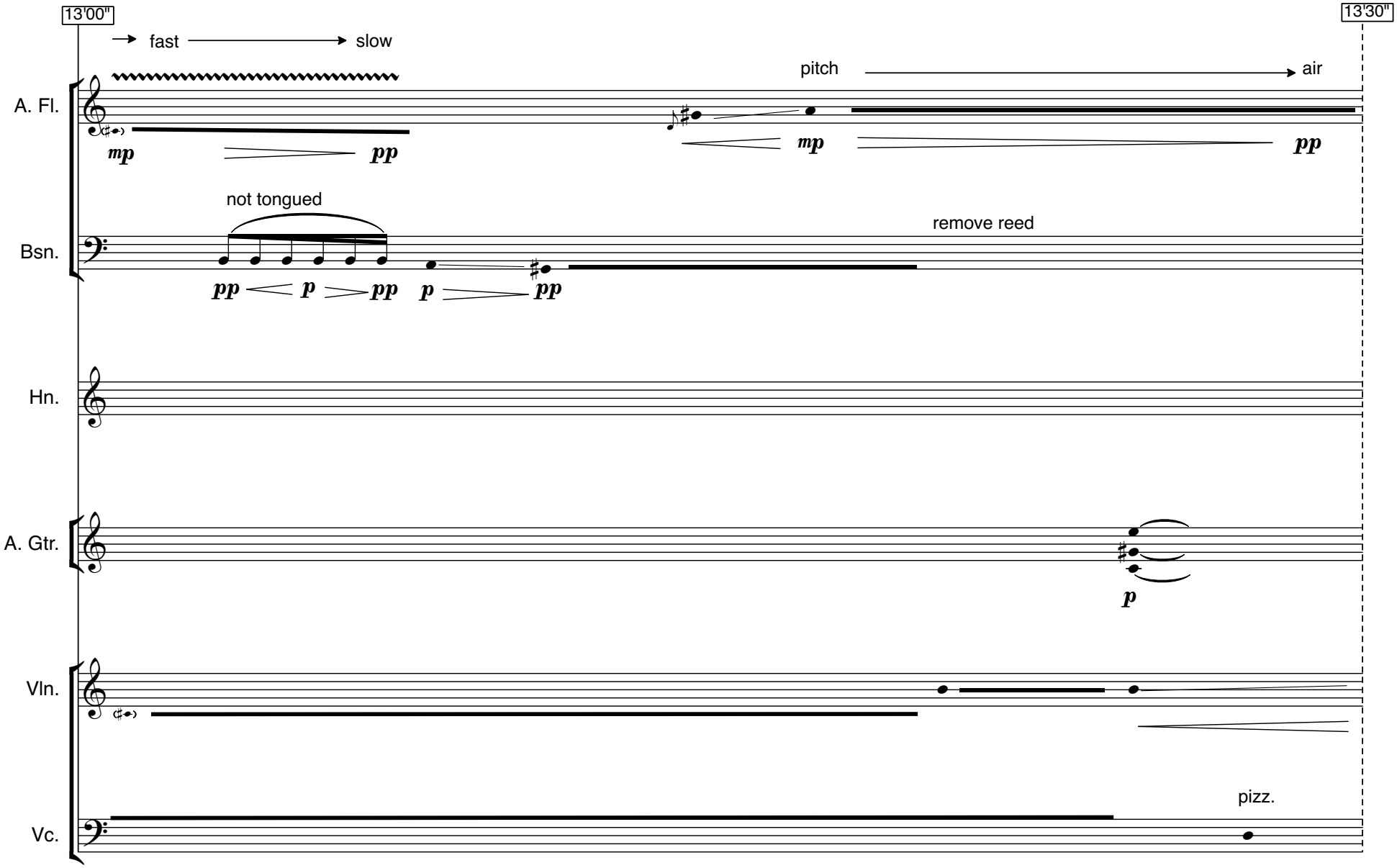

10'30"
11'00"
A. Fl.
whistle
pp
Bsn.
slow
fast
random keyclicks
ppp
pp
Hn.
slow
fast
random taps on bell
ppp
pp
A. Gtr.
p
Vln.
Vc.
m.s.p.

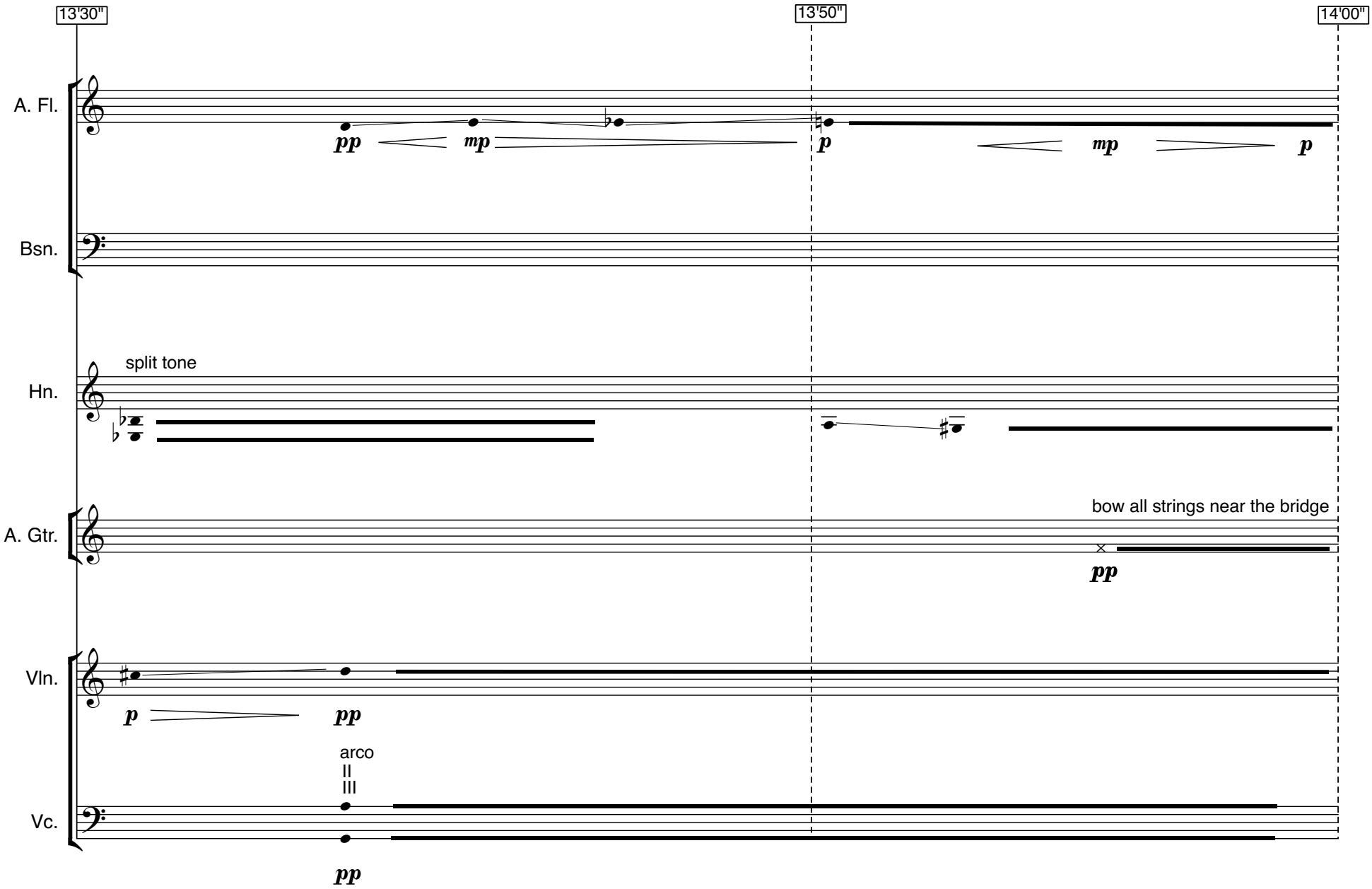

11'00"
11'30"
(stagger breathing to hold for 30 sec.)
A. Fl.
p
slow
colour trill
(stagger breathing to hold for 30 sec.)
Bsn.
p
very slow gliss
half valve
(stagger breathing to hold for 30 sec.)
Hn.
p
mp
p
A. Gtr.
p
Vln.
p
Scratch (m.s.p. cont.)
normale
Vc.
p
mp

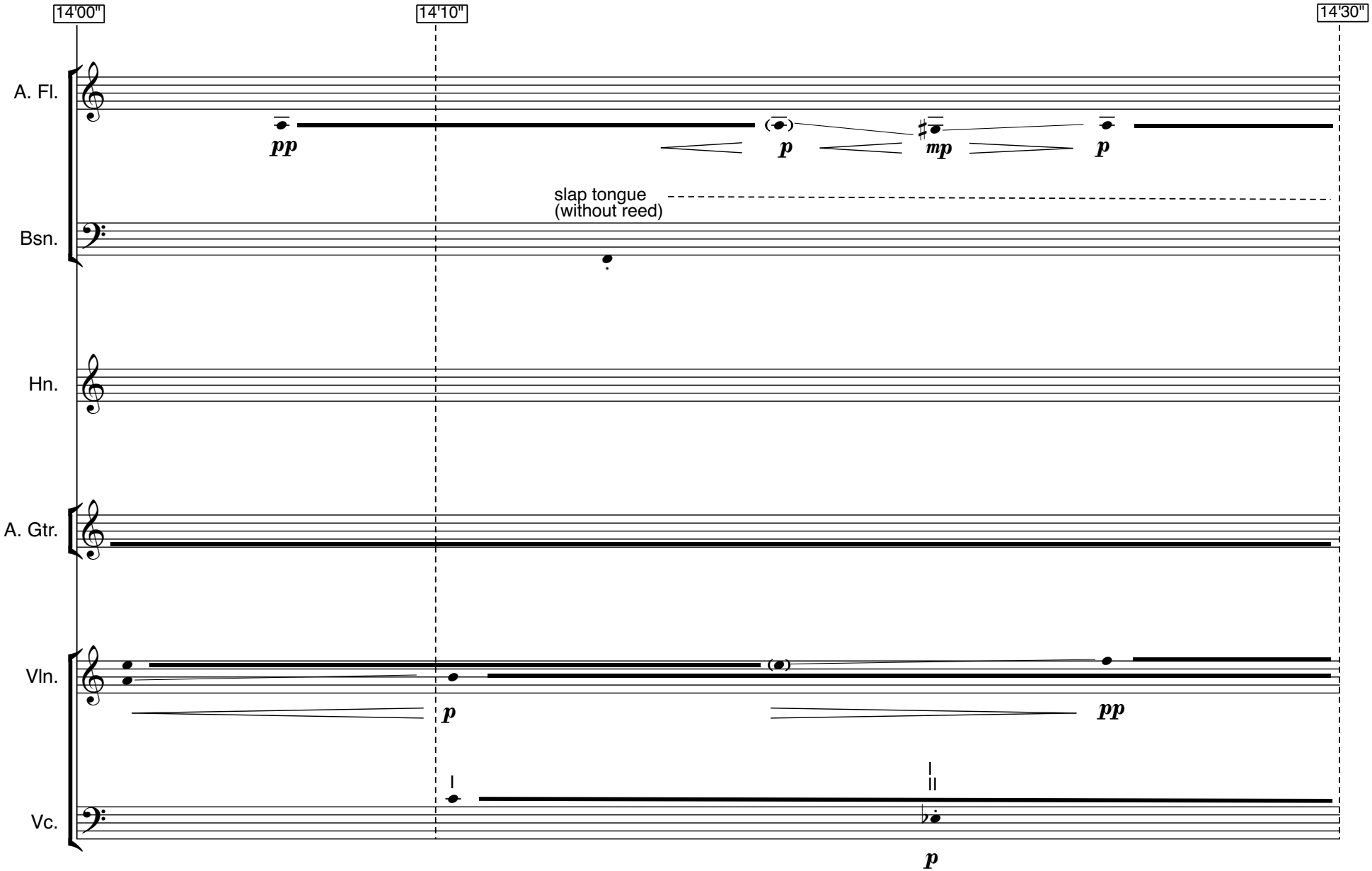

11'30"
11'35"
12'00"
A. Fl.
pizz.
ord.
pp
mp
p
mp
Bsn.
pp
mp
Hn.
pp
mp
pp
A. Gtr.
Vln.
m.s.p.
whisper tremolo
IV
p
mp
Vc.
pp

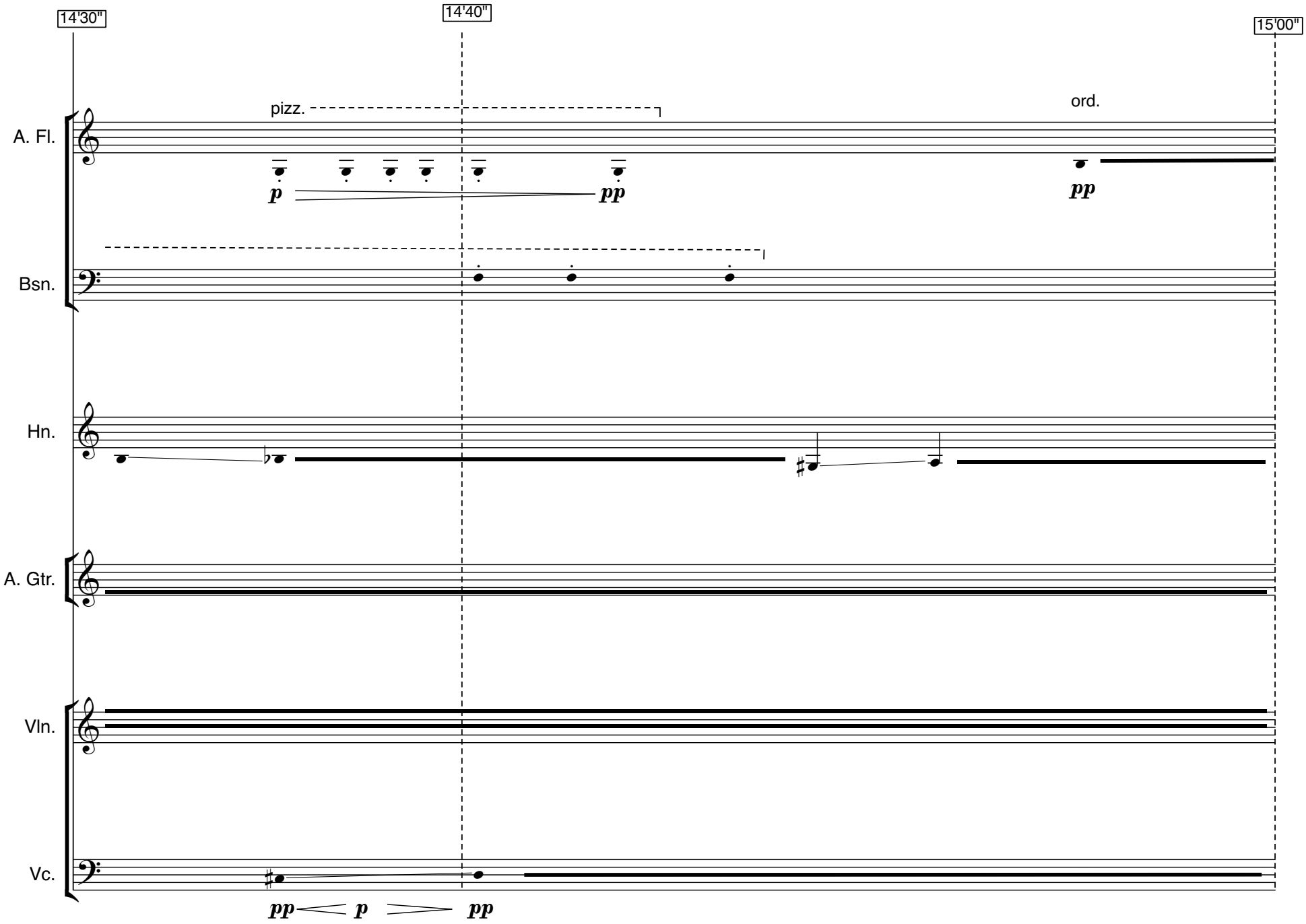

12'00"
12'10"
12'15"
12'30"
A. Fl.
pp
p
pp
fast
slow
colour trill
Bsn.
mp
p
Hn.
p
mp
p
A. Gtr.
Vln.
p
m.s.p.
I
(I)
II
Vc.
pp
p

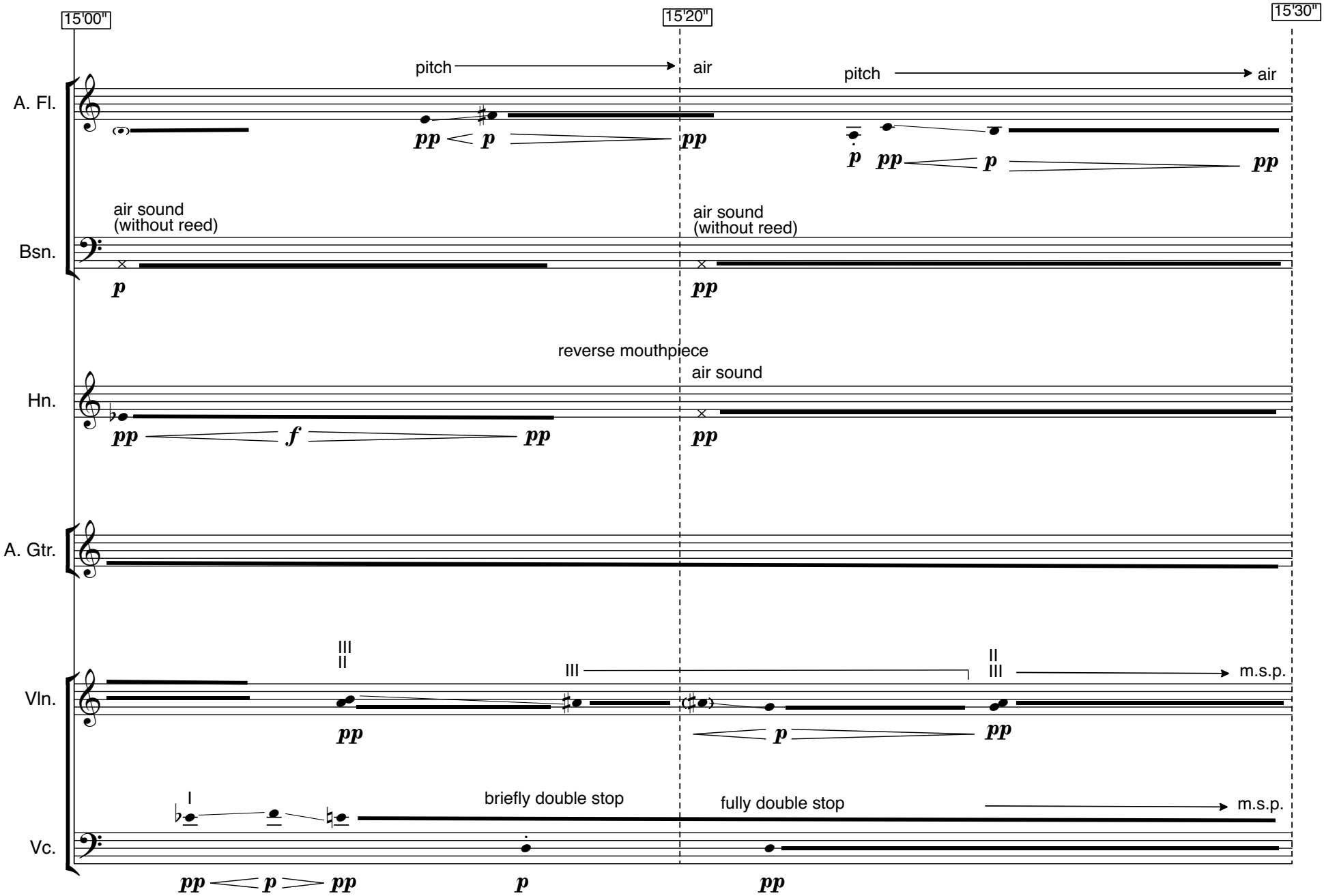

12'30"
12'55"
13'00"
A. Fl.
slow
fast
slow
slow
molt vib.
p
mp
p
pp
Bsn.
p
Hn.
p
mp
p
A. Gtr.
Vln.
pizz.
flautando
sul tasto
arco
p
pp
p
pp
Vc.
pp
p


13'00"
13'30"
fast
slow
pitch
air
A. Fl.
mp
pp
mp
pp
not tongued
remove reed
Bsn.
pp
p
pp
p
pp
Hn.
A. Gtr.
p
Vln.
pizz.
Vc.


13'30"
13'50"
14'00"
A. Fl.
pp
mp
p
mp
p
Bsn.
split tone
Hn.
A. Gtr.
bow all strings near the bridge
pp
Vln.
p
pp
arco
II
III
Vc.
pp


14'00"
14'10"
14'30"
A. Fl.
pp
p
mp
p
slap tongue
(without reed)
Bsn.
Hn.
A. Gtr.
Vln.
p
pp
I
I
II
Vc.
p


14'30"
14'40"
15'00"
A. Fl.
pizz.
ord.
p
pp
pp
Bsn.
Hn.
A. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
pp
p
pp


15'00"
15'20"
15'30"
A. Fl.
pitch
air
pp
p
pp
pitch
air
p
pp
p
pp
Bsn.
air sound
(without reed)
p
air sound
(without reed)
pp
Hn.
reverse mouthpiece
air sound
pp
f
pp
pp
A. Gtr.
Vln.
III
II
pp
III
II
III
m.s.p.
p
pp
Vc.
I
briefly double stop
fully double stop
m.s.p.
pp
p
pp
p
pp

15'30"
until all instruments come to silence
A. Fl.
air sound only, stagger breathing, fading out gradually
pp
Bsn.
air sound only, stagger breathing, fading out gradually
pp
Hn.
air sound only, stagger breathing, fading out gradually
pp
A. Gtr.
bow on bridge, no pitch, stagger bowing, fading out gradually
pp
Vln.
m.s.p., no pitch, stagger bowing, fading out gradually
pp
Vc.
m.s.p., no pitch, stagger bowing, fading out gradually
pp