

Score

***[Sculpt] [Assemble]  
[Shade]***

for Baroque Violin

*by Aidan Gold*

*Duration - the performer can choose to play 1, 2, or all 3 parts*

*All 3 parts plus cadenzas: 16-18 min.*

*2 parts: 11-13 min.*

*1 part: 6 min.*

© Aidan Gold 2021. All Rights Reserved.

## 2 **Program Note and Thoughts on Performer Agency**

What do we mean when we say there is a *collaborative* relationship between composer and performer? This word might seem to be a strange one to use for a relationship that often can feel more one-sided than truly collaborative: the performer using their artistic ideas and skills to realize the composer's vision as best they can. In the case of living composers, it is often true that there can be lots of communication back and forth, but often it involves the performer making suggestions or changes for the explicit purpose of once again realizing the vision solely of the composer. This is not to say that the performer's artistic vision does not exist in a fixed work, but instead that the most often-expressed purpose of interpretation is in service of the composer's ideas.

In the case of long-dead composers, this idea of interpretation and realization of the composer's vision joins itself with the complex notion of historical performance practice. Often (though not always) the goal is stated that we should attempt to realize the piece "as the composer intended", or "as they would have heard it back in that time". However, when specifically thinking about improvisatory historical performance practice, this becomes especially strange - when the practice itself involves the performer freely expressing their own artistic vision (as in improvised cadenzas), do we have to limit our ideas and creativity to what we believe (with our modern biases) to be the ideas and creativity that a performer would have had at the time? What is our goal in improvisation? And what is the composer's goal in creating performer agency?

Performer agency exists in a complex relationship to these ideas of collaboration and the composer's artistic vision. Many types and facets of performer agency exist, but one found very commonly in new music is aleatoricism - the usage of "randomness" or the choice of a performer (such as "play notes using the following pitch collection extremely fast") to generate a specific, non-random musical effect. This is a kind of "false" agency, because in fact, if the performer correctly follows the directions, they have little actual choice over the outcome. Aleatoricism is a sort of shorthand - the composer wants to achieve a certain effect, and writes a notation that would result in it. The performer's choices, while they do exist, are in a sense not important - they do not affect the outcome of the piece.

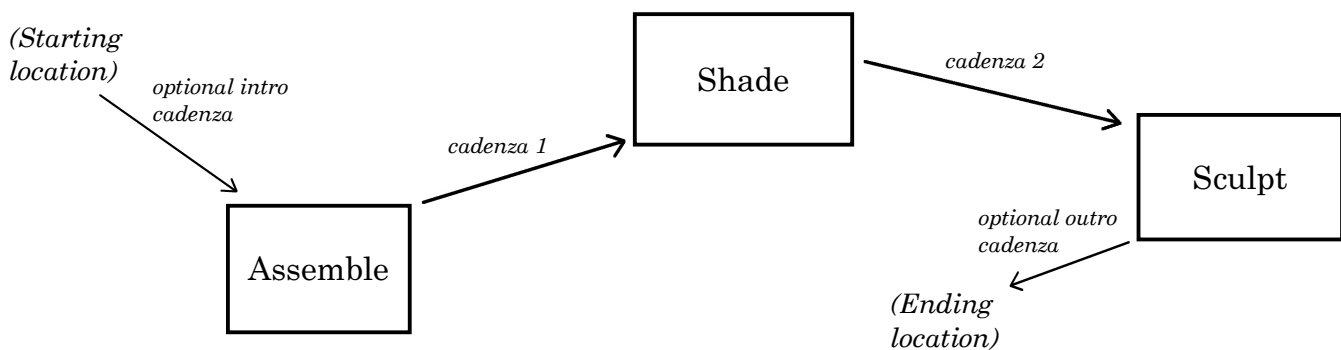
In many ways this piece is a reaction against that conception of the performer/composer relationship. In this piece, a wide variety of distinct and unusual parameters are left to be determined by the performer, and these parameters are deliberately structured so as to be important - crucial for how the music develops and progresses. It is very possible to create a version of this piece using the freedom given that may not musically work (though, of course, the idea of some interpretations "working" and some not is by itself a difficult concept to address). What this does is it gives the performer power to create their own artistic vision that may deliberately not be a vision that I as the composer expect or agree with, but that doesn't make it any less "right". The performer's artistry and ideas are not for the purpose of realizing or validating that of the composer's, but their own.

The piece features three sections that each present the performer with a different aspect of the music to control, from what strings to play on to how to arrange fragments together to what types of gestures to use. These sections are connected by improvised cadenzas based on short prompts. This piece draws loosely on elements and ideas from baroque performance practice such as the strategic dilemma of breaking large chords up that cannot be played simultaneously, string-independent tablature notation, and improvised cadenzas. However, it is not intended to emulate a baroque musical style or manner of performance; the purpose of these elements is to bring the piece into dialogue with notions of historical performance practice and how that affects, enables, and challenges performer agency; as well as give an opportunity to the performer to feature the unique sound and color of a baroque instrument in a perhaps somewhat unusual context.

Huge thanks to my amazing friend and violinist Judith Kim for her incredible artistry, support, and ideas. The creation of this piece would not have been possible without her.

# Structure and Staging of the Piece

The piece has three sections: Sculpt, Assemble, and Shade. The performer may play these three sections **in any order they choose** - they may choose a specific order beforehand, or choose randomly on the spot. If the performer wants to play a shorter piece, they may choose one or two of the sections to play instead of playing all three. The performer should play each section from a different location in the performance space. These three locations may be all on stage, or they could even be in different places around the audience if the performer so chooses, depending on the performance space. If the performer has access to lighting, they may even choose to spotlight the different locations with different colors. The order in which the performer plays the sections *changes the title of the piece as it appears on the program*. If the performer plays all three sections, then they should arrange the titles of the sections in the order that they are playing them in to form the title of their realization of the piece. For example, if the performer was playing Assemble first, then Shade and finally Sculpt, then the title of the piece would be ***Assemble Shade Sculpt***. If the performer plays only one or two of the sections, then the piece title in their program should be the combination of the titles of the sections that they are playing. The performer should connect the three sections with two cadenzas. These cadenzas should be based on short prompts listed on the last page of the score. The two cadenzas should each be based on a different prompt. They may be improvised or precomposed, and the prompts may be chosen beforehand or randomly on the spot. The cadenzas should be between around 45 seconds and 1.5 minutes long. They should transition the music from one section to the other (though the transition does not need to be a smooth one - the nature of the transition is up to the performer). Additionally, the performer may optionally choose to include short cadenzas at the beginning and end the piece (these optional cadenzas do not need to follow one of the prompts). These cadenzas should be performed while walking from one spot to another, to clearly differentiate them from the three main sections. Thus, one possible performance of this piece could look as follows:



## Real Time or Planned Out?

Should the performer attempt to decide in the moment when to switch strings? Should they pre-write their cadenzas in advance, or improvise them on the spot? Should they decide which figures to use in the rhythmic improvisation and create a notated version that they play which is the same every time, or just choose what they feel like playing when they get there?

These are two different approaches to interpretation, and both are equally valid and come with their own benefits. Making all the choices in advance gives one time to think carefully about what they want to do and why, allowing them to specifically shape everything towards their ideas. Doing everything in real time allows them to create many versions, and modify things based on how they feel in the moment or if they are struck with a flash of inspiration while performing.


For this piece, the performer may choose either approach for any of the improvisatory parts. The performer may also mix and match approaches for different sections as they prefer.


## Notation - General


$\frown$  = bow on the bridge, no pitch


m.s.t. = molto sul tasto

m.s.p. = molto sul ponticello


 = open meter. The pacing of the music in this measure is up to the performer. If a duration in seconds is given above, then the bar lasts that long. If no duration is given, it is up to the performer. In this meter, accidentals only carry over if the same note immediately follows it.


 = play this sequence of notes very quickly.


 = play random notes, approximately following the given contour


 = pitches which are specified by something else (e.g. by a certain hand position, the location of which is up to the performer, specified in the score)

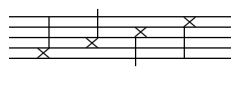
 = accel. or decel. freely within the timespace of the beam group

 = bow pressure change; the thicker the line, the stronger the pressure. In this case, this denotes a movement from normal pressure to overpressure (scratch tone) and back to normal pressure.

 = move smoothly from normal finger pressure to harmonic finger pressure, and back.


 = a finger pressure halfway between harmonic and normal pressure.

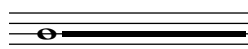
 = play a note with the finger near the end of the fingerboard, resulting in a high pitch (relative to whichever string this is done on).

 = bow on the strings behind the bridge. Lowest space = lowest string, highest space = highest string.

IV, III, II, I = specification of which strings to play on. If two of them appear on top of each other, that indicates which notes of the double stop to play on which string.

Microtonal notation:  $\flat$  = quarter flat;  $\sharp$  = quarter sharp;  $\flat$  = 3 quarters flat;  $\sharp$  = 3 quarters sharp

 = repeat the figure between the repeat signs for the duration of the solid line.





 = sustain the note for the duration of the solid line.

vibrato = at some points, senza vibrato, vibrato, or molto vibrato is specified. At the parts where it is not explicitly specified, the use and amount of vibrato is up to the performer.





Dynamics in this piece are written relatively - triple forte on a baroque violin won't be as loud as triple forte on a modern violin.

# Notation - Sculpt

This section is written in tablature notation, where the noteheads are replaced by numbers indicating which finger to use (0 = open string). The 'default hand position' is here specified to be the first finger a whole step above the open string, the 2nd finger a whole step higher, the 3rd finger a half step higher, and the 4th finger a whole step higher. Thus, in this notation system:

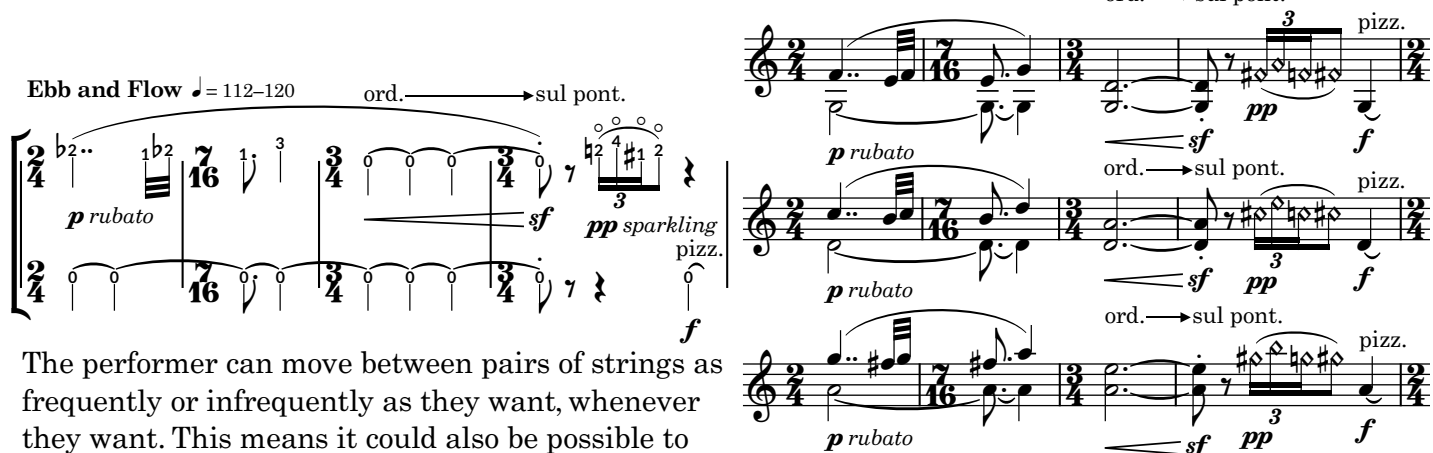
0 1 2 3 4 =  on the G string,  on the D string,  
 on the A string, and  on the E string.

Accidentals shift that finger's position relative to the 'default' position by a half step. Thus,

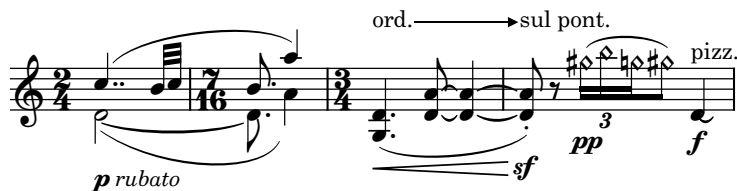
↑ b2 #3 b1 0 =  on the G string,  on the D string,  
 on the A string, and  on the E string.

In this section, the specific strings that the music is played on is up to the performer. Two adjacent staves indicate two adjacent strings, with the lower staff being the lower string. Thus, the opening of the section could be realized on the G and D strings, D and A strings, or A and E strings as follows:

**Ebb and Flow** ♩ = 112-120 ord. → sul pont.



The performer can move between pairs of strings as frequently or infrequently as they want, whenever they want. This means it could also be possible to realize this phrase like this:



When, where, and how often to switch strings, and which strings to switch to, is one of the main elements of the realization of this section by the performer.

↑ shift up, ↓ shift down, and ↓ return to 1st pos. are indications to change the position of the hand frame

on the fingerboard. The intervals between the fingers should remain the same - just their position relative to the open string has now changed. The distance shifted is up to the performer - it can be any interval, even a microtonal interval. However, it is recommended that all shifts should be less than a perfect fourth, or else the performer might find themselves running out of space on the fingerboard after shifting up too far and then being asked to shift up again. These shifts remain in effect until the next shifting indicator is reached.

As an example of how the shifting might be realized, here are two realizations of one passage involving shifting (for simplicity, realized only on the G and D strings - the performer can shift between pairs of strings at any point during the passage as well):

ord. ↑ shift up

*pp* *mp grad. more intense* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

1 b2 2 3 #3 4

= apply the finger positions in the box to the boxed noteheads in random order, using each finger position once.

$\overset{\circ}{\underset{2}{|}}$  = a harmonic. Note that this harmonic is notated at *fingered* pitch, not sounding pitch, even though it is notated with a circle above (this is because the notehead is the finger so it cannot be a diamond). In this section, all harmonics are notated at fingered pitch.

## Notation - Assemble

In this section, all grace notes should be played on the beat.

= place fingers in the same position as the bracketed pitches, but at an unspecified point further up the fingerboard, forming a transposed version of the bracketed chord.

= stutter bow. Interrupt the bow's sustain with a rapid series of jitters. Does not need to be a precise number of articulations.

The main part of this section that involves performer agency is a rhythmic improvisation using given small musical fragments. The directions for this are in the score for this section. The performer should move to the improvisatory section and back to the written section without pause. In order to help clarify the idea, I have included here an example realization of the start of the two improvisatory sections:

### *Start of Rhythmic Improvisation, Section 1: Example Realization*

*ff marcato* *sf* (3 descending augmented triads) *m.s.p.* *sf* *gliss.*

(3 descending augmented triads)

### Start of Rhythmic Improvisation, Section 2: Example Realization

### Notation - Shade

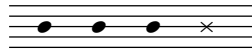
This section contains two alternating ideas: a improvisatory section based on large chords and a plainchant-style section with IPA vowels.

= denotes the possible pitches to use throughout the measure (ends at the next barline). While the bow is following the gestures (explained below), the left hand should finger various patterns in this collection of notes. The collection is grouped by string, but should not be used sequentially string by string - the pitches should be used freely throughout the measure.

= one of the possible bow gestures used with the above pitch sets. Each line represents a string from low to high.

In this gesture, fewer than 4 strings are given. This means that this gesture may be played on any two adjacent strings: G and D, D and A, or A and E. The performer may freely move between pairs of strings during and between this gesture.

These six gestures (notated at the beginning of the section) are to be moved between and repeated freely throughout the duration of the sections based on the pitch/chord sets. The performer should move fluidly from gesture to gesture without stopping. Here is an example realization of the opening bar of this section:



[a] [ɪ] [u] [θ]

In the 'plainchant'-like sections, IPA sounds are notated under the pitches. This is meant to be an abstract indication of 'tone color', the interpretation of which is up to the performer. It is not necessary that the violin sound exactly like that IPA sound, but it should instead be treated as a prompt for experimentation with tone color; to see what properties of that vowel sound can be incorporated into the tone color of that note. For instance, [a] is full and has many overtones, while [u] is darker, with few overtones, so the performer might choose to use a more *sul tasto* sound for [u], for example. [θ] is written with an x notehead because since it represents a "th" sound, it should be nearly pitchless. How it is produced is up to the performer.



= move very smoothly from one IPA-inspired tone color to another one.  
[a]-----[u]



= these small parenthized noteheads indicate pitches to emphasize in the chordal improvisatory sections. The performer should select fingerings and bow patterns that bring this note out of the texture, until the next parenthized note or the barline is reached.

The rhythm of the chant-like sections is notated roughly proportionally. The performer can choose to pace it however they prefer. No slurs are indicated, but the performer can slur and change the bow as desired in order to accommodate their phrasing and pacing ideas. The sound should be continuous, except at the breath marks, which should be realized as short pauses, as if taking a breath in a vocal chant.

The performer may also pause at double barlines in this section if they prefer, as if they were brief fermatas.



# Sculpt

**Ebb and Flow**  $\text{♩} = 112-120$  ord. → sul pont.

*p rubato* *sf* *pp sparkling* *f*

9 ord. → sul pont. pizz. **A** ord. arco

*pp* *sf* *f* *p*

17 rit. .... a tempo ord. → sul pont. sul pont. arco

*f* *p* *sf* *f* *pp* *f*

**Freely**  
(random fast harmonics on both strings)  
sul pont. → **B** sul tasto senza vib. poco rit. ....

*pp darker* *mf*

a tempo poco rit. .... a tempo  
grad. introduce vibrato sul tasto → ord. rit. ....

*f* *p* *p sub.* *allarg.*

**C** Pulling back, more intense  $\text{♩} = 96$

vib. accel.....

*f* intense *f* *f*

rit..... Tempo I  $\text{♩} = 112-120$  rit..... a tempo

$\text{♩} = 120$  vib.  $\rightarrow$  senza vib.  
ord.  $\rightarrow$  m.s.t.

*f* *ff* molto dim. *p*

**D**

Freely, flowing  $\text{♩} = 112-120$   
Grad. build all the way to letter H

sul pont. senza vib.  
ord. -

*ppp* steady; otherworldly *pp* *mp* mellow

Steady

**E** sul pont.

*mf* *p*

*ppp*

Flowing

vib. ord. shift up  $\uparrow$

*pp* *mp* grad. more intense *mf*

**F**

Meno  $\text{♩} = 72$   
return to 1st pos.  
sul pont.

shift up  $\uparrow$

*pp* *mf* *ppp*

81 sul pont.  $\rightarrow$  m.s.p.

*poco cresc.* **p**

**Tempo I**  $\text{♩} = 112-120$

shift up ord.

*p espr.*

shift up

*cresc.*

89

*mf*

*mf cresc.*

accel.....

**G** **Piu mosso**  $\text{♩} = 132$

shift up

*f passionate*

*sf*

accel.....

shift up

105

shift up

*sf*

shift up

*ff*

Rushing forward  $\text{♩} = 160$  **molto rit.**.....

111

shift up

**H**

117 Climax, Pesante  $\text{♩} = 96$

shift up

*fff*

*fff*

12 [Sculpt] [Assemble] [Shade]

Tempo I ♩ = 112-120 (use all the pitches from the box once (any order)

to fill the square noteheads in each measure

144

sul pont. arco  
pizz.  
mf  
f  
ord. arco  
ord. sul pont.  
pizz.  
f

**K** Calmer ♩ = 72

151

arco ord.  
pp  
dim.  
pizz.  
p

**L**

159

sul tasto arco  
p reluctantly  
pp distant  
ppp extremely distant  
rit.

(7th-partial harmonic, sounding 2 octaves and a (flat) minor seventh above the open string-finger wherever on string it speaks best)

♩ = 60  
170

pppp  
m.s.t.

# Assemble

Vehement, intense tone ♩ = 108

ord. → m.s.p. (grace notes on the beat) → ord. → sul tasto → ord. → slow, wide vib.

7 m.s.p. → ord. gradually increase vib.

10 ord. III speed fast vib. ord. III ord. III

15 (ord.) → sul pont. (behind bridge) A senza vib. ord. sul pont. →

20 (sul pont.) → ord. → m.s.p. Shorter B ord. → sul pont. →

26 m.s.p. I II III gliss. I II gliss. very slow arp. pizz. arco l.h. pizz. mp f sff mf < ff sfff p quizzically pp ff

33 C Settling into a groove m.s.p. arco ord. m.s.p. m.s.p. II III I II

The musical score is written in treble clef with a tempo of 108 beats per minute. It consists of several systems of music, each with specific performance instructions and dynamics. The first system (measures 1-6) starts with a forte dynamic (sfffz) and includes instructions like 'ord.', 'm.s.p.', 'stutter', and 'sul tasto'. The second system (measures 7-9) features a dynamic range from f to p and includes 'gradually increase vib.'. The third system (measures 10-14) has dynamics from f to ff and includes 'speed' and 'fast vib.'. The fourth system (measures 15-19) includes dynamics from p to ff and features 'sul pont.' and 'senza vib.'. The fifth system (measures 20-25) includes dynamics from pp to sf and features 'Shorter B', 'sul pont.', and 'm.s.p.'. The sixth system (measures 26-32) includes dynamics from mp to sfff and features 'm.s.p.', 'gliss.', 'I II III', 'very slow arp. pizz.', 'arco', and 'l.h. pizz.'. The seventh system (measures 33-38) includes dynamics from sfz to sf and features 'C', 'Settling into a groove', 'arco', 'ord.', and 'm.s.p.'. The score is annotated with various performance techniques such as glissandos, stutters, and sul tasto.

very high augmented triad  
(finger like bracketed chord,  
except very high up on any pitch)

**Meno mosso** ♩ = 92

sul pont.

**D** II III

**ff** **pp** **ppp trem rit.**

36

grad. slow ricochet

ord.

sul tasto

ord. I

**pp** **p** **mp** **mf**

40

**E** **A Tempo** ♩ = 108

**pp delicate** **ff sub. (make them jump)**

45

3 3 3 3

IV 3 3 3 3

Play for 6-8 iterations. Each bar, choose either **A** or **B**, and then immediately follow it with one of either **a**, **b**, **c**, or **d**. Remain in time, with a clear pulse (♩ = 108) throughout.

**A** **ff marcato**

**B** **ff marcato**

**a** **sf**

**c** (3 descending augmented triads) **ff**

**b** m.s.p. *gliss.* **sf**

**d** pizz. **sfz**

Sim. with new figures for 6-8 iterations. The **?** figure can be inserted at any point within the measure, even in the middle of one of the figures, and should be used either 0 or 1 times in each measure. Note that some of the figures are longer than others, causing some measures to be longer than others.

**A** **ff marcato**

**B** **ff marcato**

**?** **sf**

**a** *gliss.* **sf**

**c** pizz. **sfz**

**d** col legno **mf**

**b** III IV II III I II **sf** **sf** **sf**

**e** sul pont. **p** 3 3

Sim. with new figures for 6-8 iterations. Now there are two ? figures. A maximum of one of the ? figures can be used in each bar.

**A** *ff marcato*

**B** *ff marcato*

**a** *sul pont. sf*

**c** *very heavy scratch fff*

**e** *very high notes sul IV; follow contour ff*

**b** *ff wildly*

**d** *ff*

**f** *m.s.p. p ff*

**g** *sf*

**F** *rit.*

*f* *mf* *p* *mp*

grad. lighten finger pressure

(between ord. and harmonic pressure)

(shift to harmonic pressure)

*p* *pp*

*ppp* *pppp*

*gliss.*

**G** *Tempo I* ♩ = 108

*ricochet*

*pp* *delicate*

*Driving, piu mosso* ♩ = 120

*ff* *sub.* *sffz*



This section should be played as a *moto perpetuo* at  $\text{♩} = 120$ . A is the central figure, and the section should begin and end on it. A must be played between 2 and 6 times in a row before moving to one of the other figures. Then between 1 and 2 of the outer figures may be played (this can include playing the same outer figure twice), and then you must return to A, repeating the process. Thus, an example of how this might be realized is: AAAaAAeaAAAAcbAAaaAA etc. After around 20-30 seconds, move on to the next section. Dynamics are up to the performer.

Diagram showing musical figures a, b, c, d, and A. Figure A is the central figure, and a, b, c, d are outer figures. Lines connect A to each of the outer figures, indicating transitions.

Sim. with new figures, with one modification: you can now play up to 3 of the outer figures in a row before moving back to A.

Diagram showing musical figures a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, and A. Figure A is the central figure, and a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h are outer figures. Lines connect A to each of the outer figures, indicating transitions.

**H** (microtones do not need to be exact - just roughly inbetween the two adjacent chromatic pitches)

64 ord.  $\text{p cresc.}$   $\text{ff}$  m.s.p. ord.  $\text{p cresc.}$

67 (ord.)  $\text{ff}$  m.s.p. ord.  $\text{mf}$

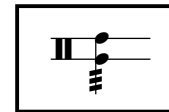
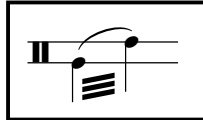
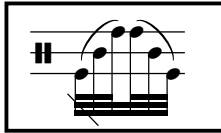
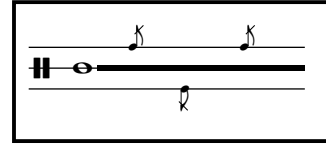
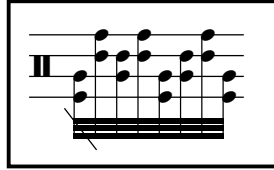
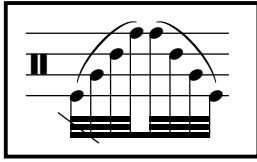
71  $\text{ff}$  sul pont.  $\text{mf}$   $\text{ff}$   $\text{p}$

Musical score for section H, measures 64-71. It features complex rhythmic patterns with microtones and dynamic markings.



# Shade

Use the following six figures to 'decorate' the chords in the chordal sections



15 sec. →

m.s.t. → ord.

*pp* *cresc. poco a poco* *ff*

2 [A] should sound like a vocal line - dynamics, pacing, phrasing up to the performer (accidentals carry over only when the note is immediately repeated)

*p* [a] [a]

[3]

[i] [u]

[B]

8 sec. → sul pont. → ord. 10 sec. →

4 sul tasto

*pp* *ff*

[C]

6 (short bursts of trem.) sul tasto

*pp* [i] [u] [i] [u] [i] [a] [i]

[7]

[a] [a] [i] [i] [u] [a] [u]

20 **D**

[Sculpt] [Assemble] [Shade]

7 sec. 8 sec.

sul pont. ————— ord. ————— sul tasto

(emphasize parenthesized pitches)

10 IV III II I IV III II I sul tasto

*ff* sub. *p* cresc. *f*

12 ord. ————— 12 sec. ————— ord. ————— sul pont. ————— sul tasto

IV III II I

*p*

13 **E**

[u] [ɪ] [a] [u] [u] [a] [a] [ɪ] [a] [u] [ɪ] [θ]

ord.

14 *f* [a] [u] [θ] [ɪ] *p* [a] [ɪ] [u] [a]

ord. ————— sul pont.

17 sul pont. ord.

[ɪ] [u] [a] [ɪ] [u] [θ] [u] [a] [u] [a] [u] [ɪ] [θ] [a] [u]

**F**

20 sec.

ord. ————— grad. less open strings ————— sul pont. ————— prefer higher harms. (on bridge, no pitch) ————— m.s.p.

24 IV III II I

*pp* sparkling

26 **G**

[u] [ɪ] [θ] [u] [ɪ] [θ] [u] [ɪ] [θ]

*p* *pp* *f* *pp*

30 [u] [ɪ] [θ] [u] [ɪ] [θ] [u] [ɪ] [θ]

*p* *ppp*

## Cadenza Prompts

*Play a cadenza in which the note G is sounding the entire time.*

*Play a cadenza without using the bow.*

*Play a cadenza using only five different pitches.*

*Play a cadenza that has more silence than sound.*

*Play a cadenza that uses the last note you played as a pitch center or tonic.*

*Play a cadenza entirely on one string.*

*Create a melody, or choose one from elsewhere in the piece. Play a cadenza consisting of a theme-and-variations on this melody, without altering the tempo of the melody.*

*Play a cadenza in steady, constant rhythm, where every note or gesture is the same length.*

*Play a cadenza in which you never apply pressure with your fingers to the strings (i.e. no normal fingered notes, but harmonics are ok)*

*Play a cadenza that includes sounds that are not produced by your violin (e.g. singing, bowing a music stand, etc.)*

*Play a cadenza using only one finger.*

*Play a cadenza where each note or gesture is higher than the one before.*

*Play a cadenza where each note or gesture is lower than the one before.*

*Play a cadenza using only the extreme (high and low) registers.*

*Play a cadenza in which the dynamics do not exceed piano.*

*Play a cadenza in which the dynamics do not decrease below forte.*

*Before you start your cadenza, place one finger on each string. Then play a cadenza where you never take any of your fingers off their strings.*