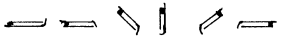
Danaë

Martin Iddon (2009–10)

General remarks

Except in extremely resonant spaces, the performers may find amplification necessary. In an unamplified performance, a seating arrangement which equalizes the differences in acoustic volume between the instruments should be preferred; i.e. the violin should be positioned nearest to the audience and the cello furthest away;
The violin and viola should be played in 'gamba' position throughout, with the body of the instrument in the performer's lap or between his/her legs;
Each performer uses two bows throughout, one in each hand: the upper staff for each instrument denotes the left hand; the lower denotes the right. At no point in the piece is 'ordinary' fingering utilised. Bow hair should be slightly over tightened;
The piece's physical theatre should be regarded as being of the utmost importance: as far as possible, the physical gestures denoted should be undertaken with the same sort of control reserved for dance or for martial arts such as tai chi.

Symbols used in the score



elp vlp lp mp hp vhp ehp

V ⊓ S

multiphonic

(hair/wood 'roll')

These denote bow angles. Occasionally, very slight divergence from the specific angle notated will help to avoid bow collision;
Rather than dynamics, bow pressures from extremely light to extremely heavy are indicated. There is not necessarily any correspondence between pressure and the resulting volume;
As well as the usual indications of bow direction, the symbol S denotes that the bow is static, moving in neither an upward nor a downward direction. The bow may nevertheless be dragged longitudinally along the string at either the heel or in the middle of the bow;
At particular combinations of bow pressure and speed, particularly with the bow close to the nut on the viola and cello, multiphonics can be made to speak. Some experimentation will be required, since the specificities differ from instrument to instrument;
The static bow should be slowly rotated ('rolled') down the string: flat hair, then hair and wood, then wood, the wood and hair, before returning to hair. This should be repeated until the bridge is reached. The rotation does not denote the number of rotations, only the time taken from nut to bridge.

A variety of body clefs are used in the score to denote where the bow should be positioned on the body of the instrument. Many of these should be clear from the score, but some require particular explanation:

This indicates that the bow should be in contact with the bridge; the clef's highest string also indicates the highest-pitched string. The bow position notated should be attended to carefully: sometimes the bow should be in contact with a string, sometimes only with the wood of the bridge;

This clef indicates the area between the bridge and the tailpiece. A diagonal bow is necessary in order to play the instrument's lowest string. This position also enables the performer simultaneously to bow the string and the side of the bridge;

The area between the nut and the tuning pegs should be bowed with the side of the bow hair (roughly ¼ hair). A further line below this (in line with the marking 'clt') indicates that the wood of the bow should be drawn across the strings below the nut while the hair is still in contact above it;

This denotes an unmeasured 'scrubbing' between the nut and the tuning pegs. The bow should remain static in the lateral direction at all times and should also be at the heel. The bow should simply move up and down along — without leaving — the string;

Similar to the above, this denotes an unmeasured 'scratch' between the bridge and the tail piece. The bow should remain static in the lateral direction at all times and should also be at the heel. The bow should move only down along the string, being 'retaken' after each scratch;

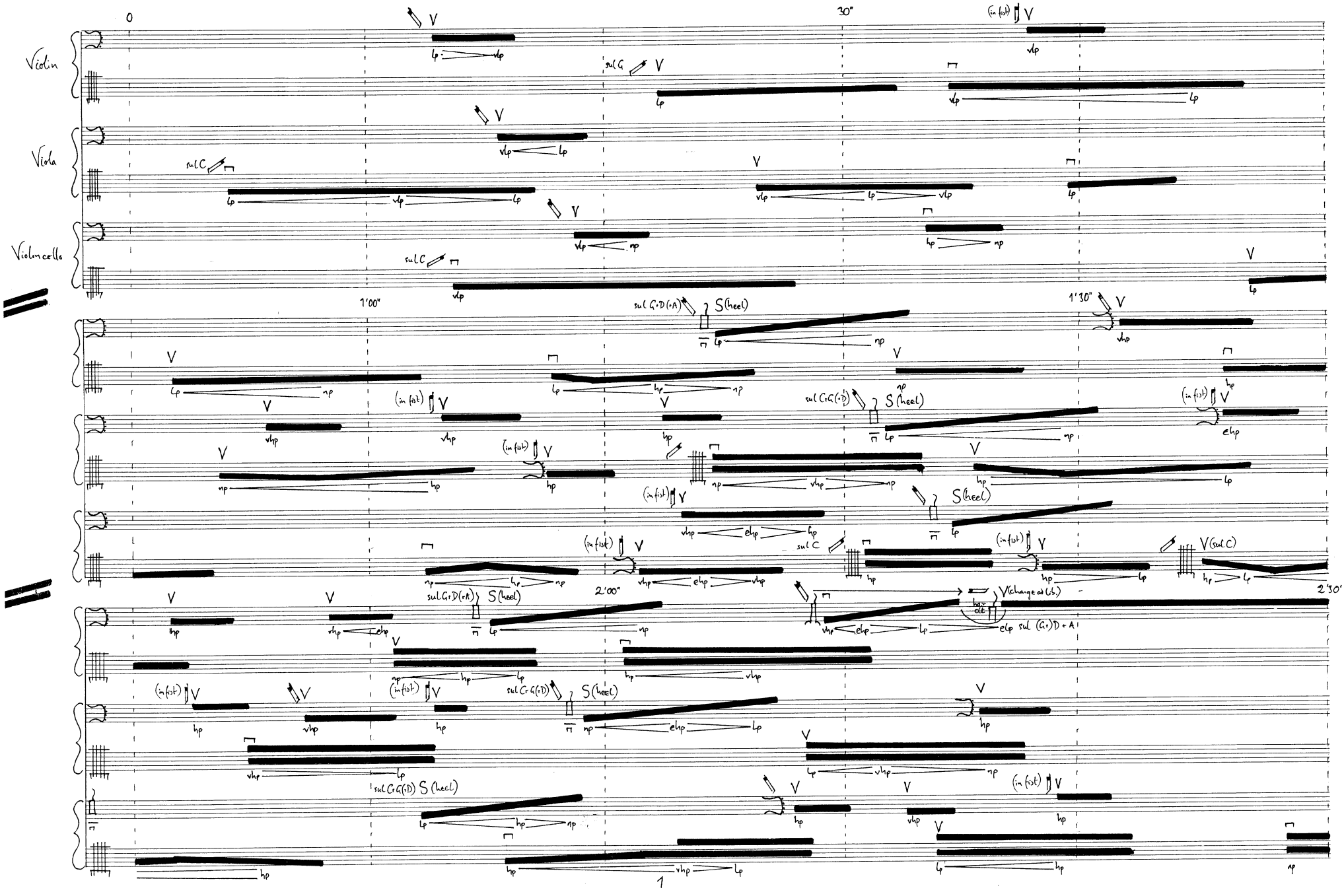
These denote static 'drags' of the bow along the body of the instrument at the position specified. Typically, the bow should be between the middle and the heel of the bow, but experimentation will help find the best results on a particular instrument;

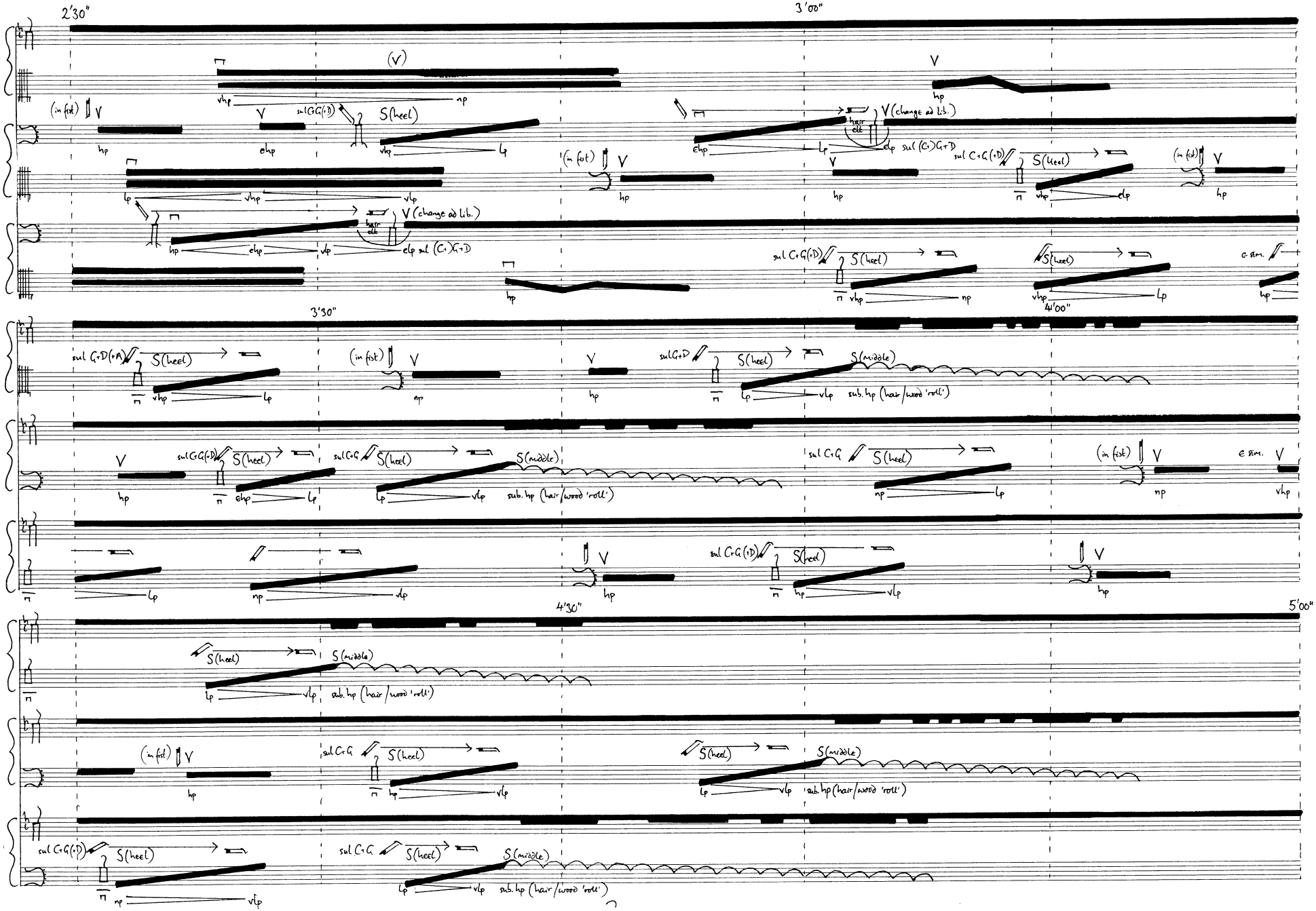
This denotes that the body of the instrument itself should be bowed (at right angles to the instrument) at the point indicated;
The bow should be on the tailpiece. The middle line of the staff indicates where the string is flat against the tailpiece. On most instruments it is important that there are no adjusters in the tailpiece;

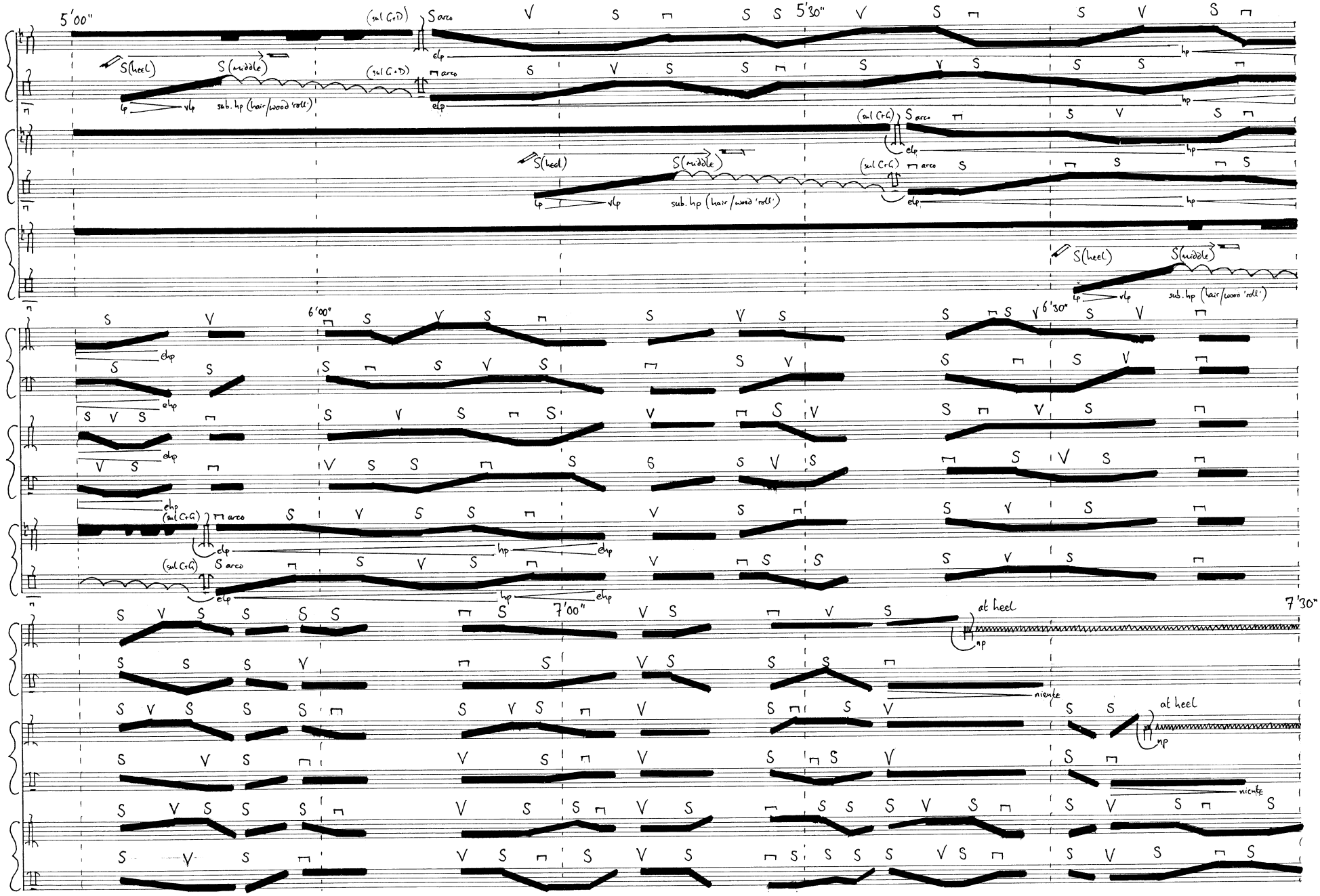
The hair of the bow is left static on the bridge and the hand rocked over such that the wood stops the string beyond the bridge.

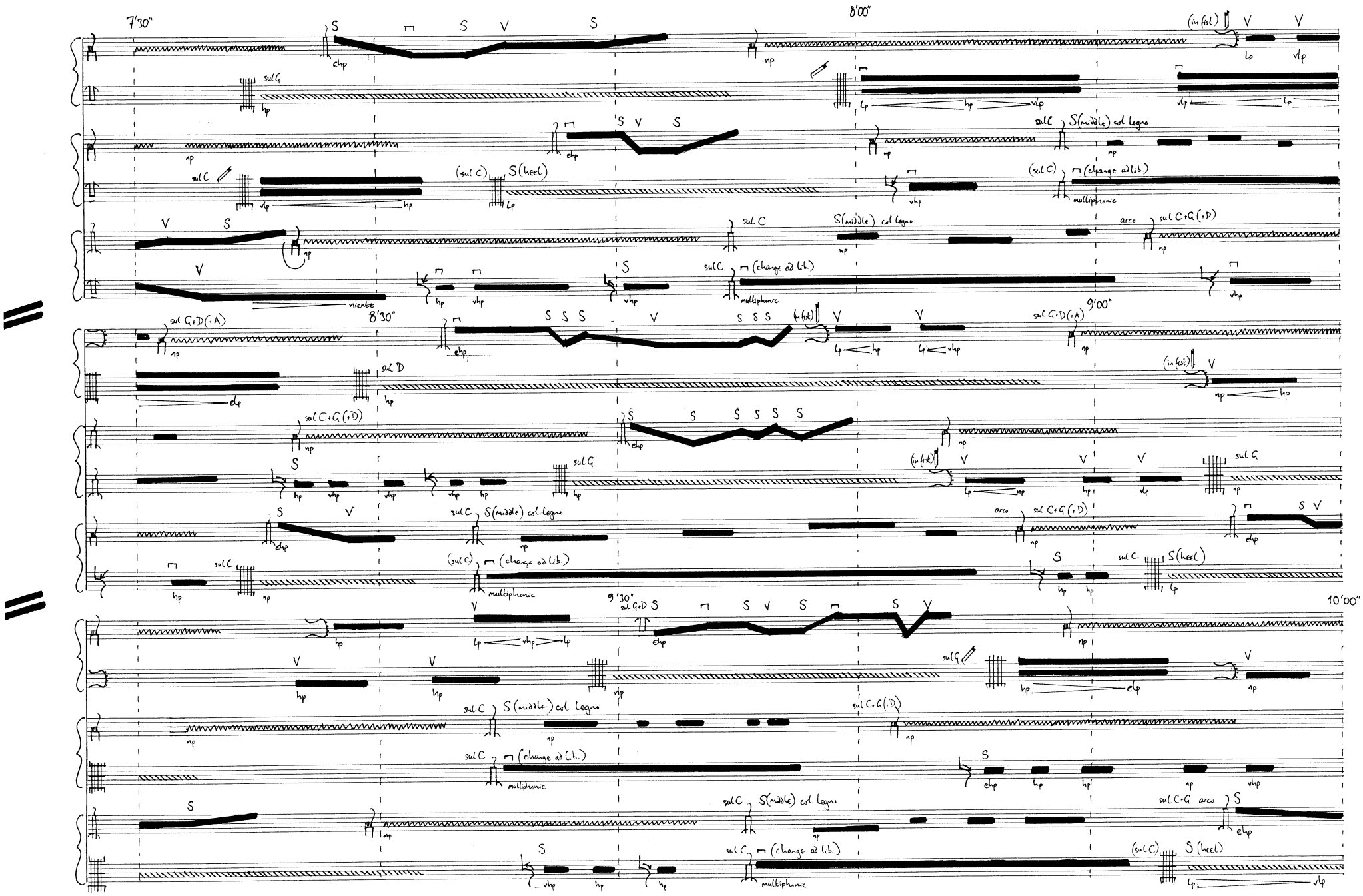
Danaë

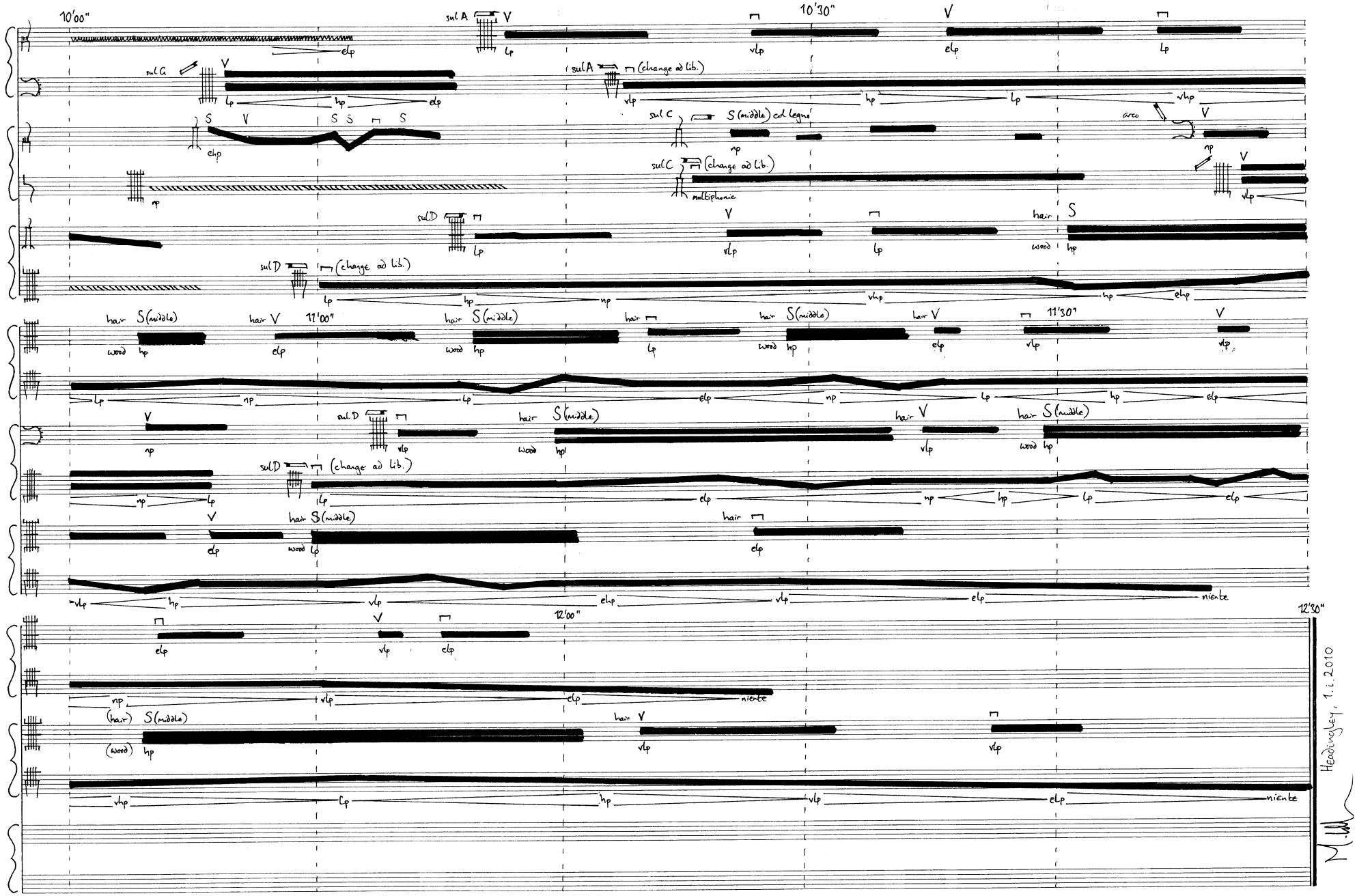
Martin Moon (2009–10)




2'30"
3'00"
3'30"
4'00"
4'30"
5'00"
(in fist)
V
S(heel)
S(middle)
V (change ad lib.)
hair elt
sub. hp (hair/wood 'roll')
e sim.


5'00"
5'30"
6'00"
6'30"
7'00"
7'30"
(sul G+D)
S arco
S(heel)
S(middle)
sub. hp (hair/wood 'roll')
(sul C+G)
elp
hp
ehp
at heel
niente


7'30"
8'00"
8'30"
9'00"
9'30"
10'00"
(in fast)
sul G
sul C
(sul C)
S(heel)
S(middle) col legno
(change ad lib.)
multiphonic
arco
sul C+G(:D)
sul G:D(:A)
sul D
niente


10'00"
10'30"
11'00"
11'30"
12'00"
12'30"
sul A
sul G
sul C
sul D
(change ad lib.)
S (middle) col legno
multiphonic
arco
hair
wood
niente
Headingley, 1.i.2010