AIR MOMENT (1973)

for

11 to 33 flutes

Commissioned by

The New York Flute Club

Composed by

ELEANOR HOVDA

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AIRMOMENT (1973) for 33 flutes

COLL119_B9_F2-001-01A

AIR MOMENT

for 33 flutes in C

This piece was commissioned by the NY Flute Club in 1973 for a concert of [redacted] nor of Otto Luening. Since the Flute Club had scheduled Luening's "38 flutes" piece, which is very much a pitch/pulse canon, I decided to enlarge on an area that had been fascinating me for some time: the acoustic articulation of "the sound around the sound". Not only would this make a nice contrast to Mr. Luening's wonderful piece, but would allow me to work in some directions that had been intriguing me. David Gilbert, flutist and inspiration for many of the techniques, conducted.

Essentially, the piece is played from full score. There are 11 distinct parts, and these parts can be doubled/tripled, etc. up to probably not more than 44 total players. However, anyone who wants to try 11 on each part for a total of 121 is welcome to try!

At no time, in this piece, is an "out and out pitch" blown. The piece is built on the idea of amplifying breath resonances caused by vowel and consonant sounds plus variation of dynamics, and use of fluttertongue. The sole instance of "almost clear pitch" is the "dove sound" sections where "subtone" blowing and use of trill keys produces a hollow, reedy, "dove-like sound". (George Crumb is responsible for calling these sounds "dove sounds").

Timing is by breathflow and the process of proceeding through the piece. The conductor is involved to choosing when to make changes and for engendering "connectedness" amongst the ensemble.

Following are techniques to be used in the flute playing:

NOTES ON THE SCORE:

(m.o.) — (modo ordinario) normal manner of playing

(1) — traverse air sound-relaxed embouchure

(2) — covered air sound-mouth completely covering embouchure hole

(3) — covered air sound-Inhaled (same as 2, Exhaled)

N.B.: 2 and 3 are interchangeable and should be used as needed.

(mo)-(1)-(2)-(3)-(1)-(3)-(1) - indicates unbroken, flowing transition from one manner of playing to another.

- flutter tongue

(ā) (ē) (ă) (ō) (ū) vowels } used melodically to color air sounds.
(sh) (h) (t) consonants }

"subtone" or "covered tone" - used often in low mo sequences. "practice tone".

[sing] — hum while playing flute:
~~~~~~ - waver or bend pitch

IMPORTANT: Always keep inhale/exhale flow and always use inhale as part of composition. Do not "run out of breath" - always inhale when needed and weave it into the whole.

Observe dynamics, timbral directions, vib/nonvib very strictly. Duration & speeds vary with performer.

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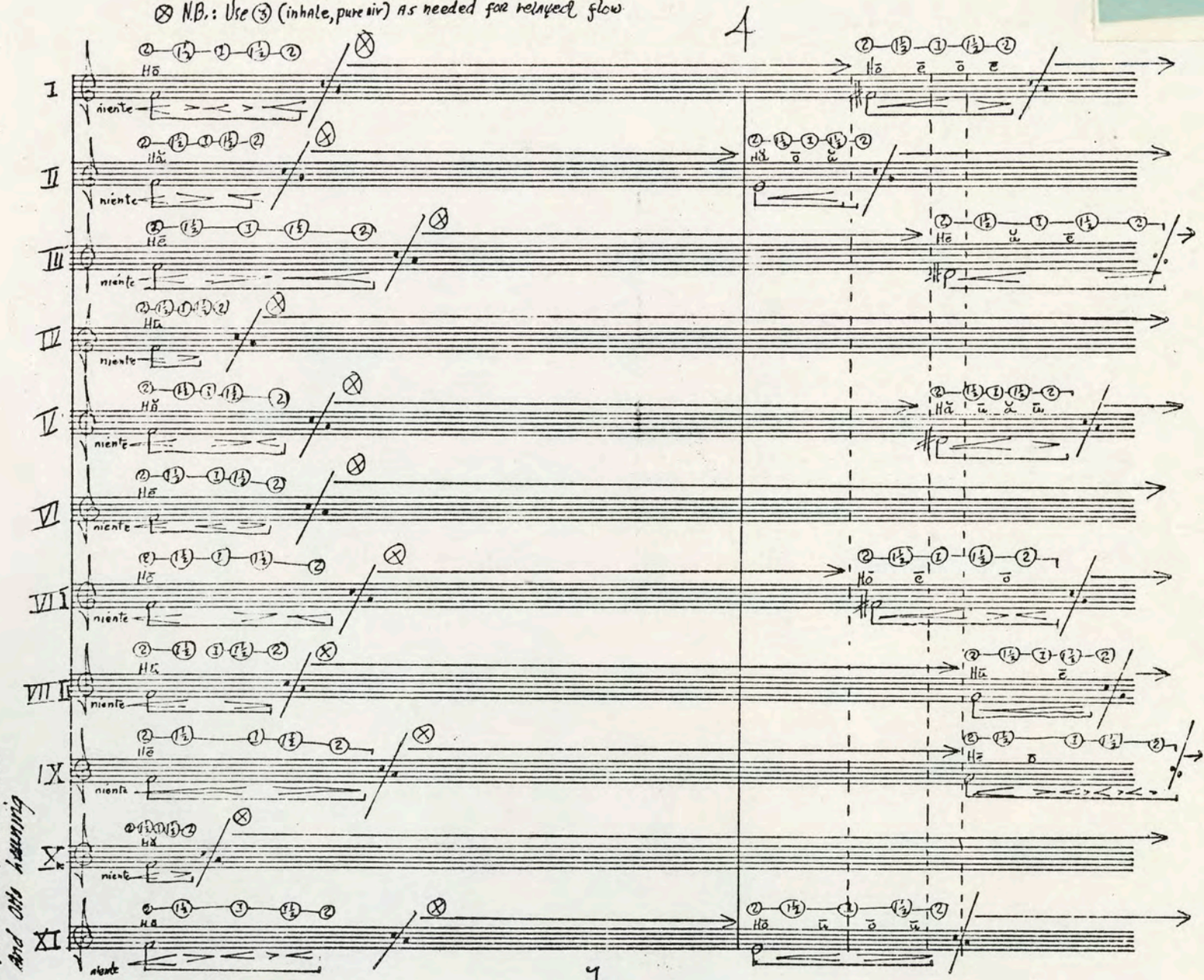
Air Moment

⊗ N.B.: Use ③ (inhale, pure air) as needed for relaxed flow



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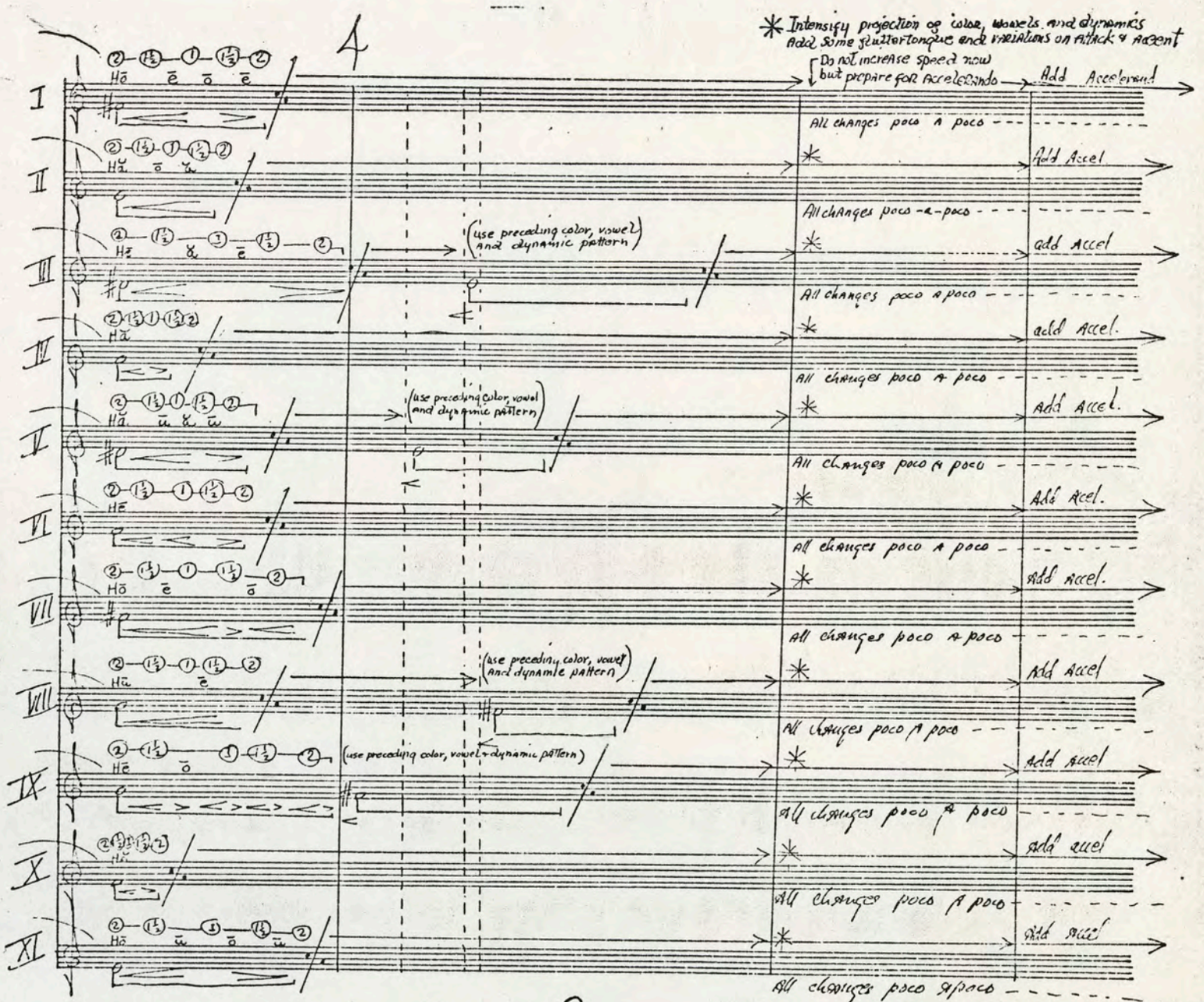
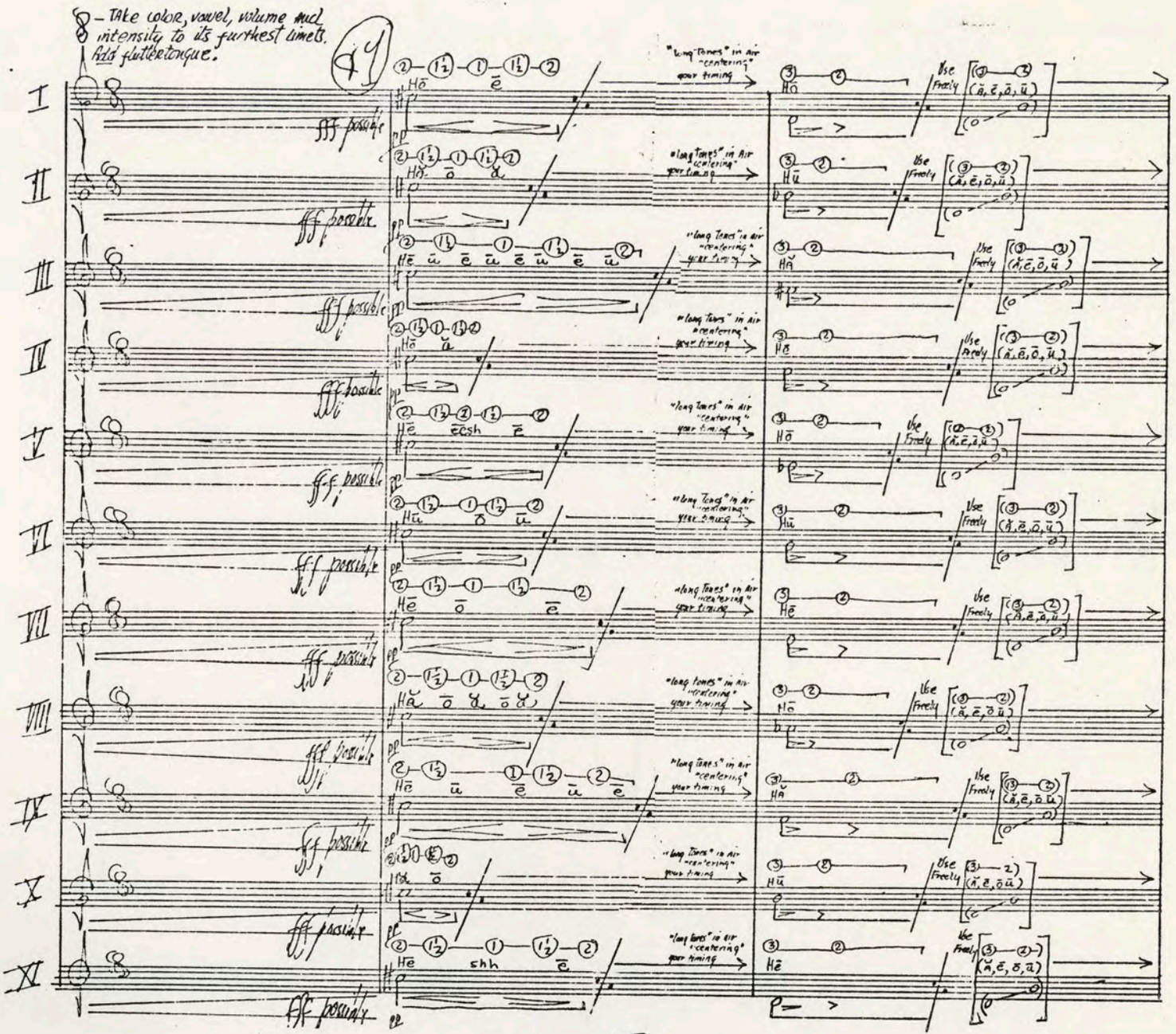
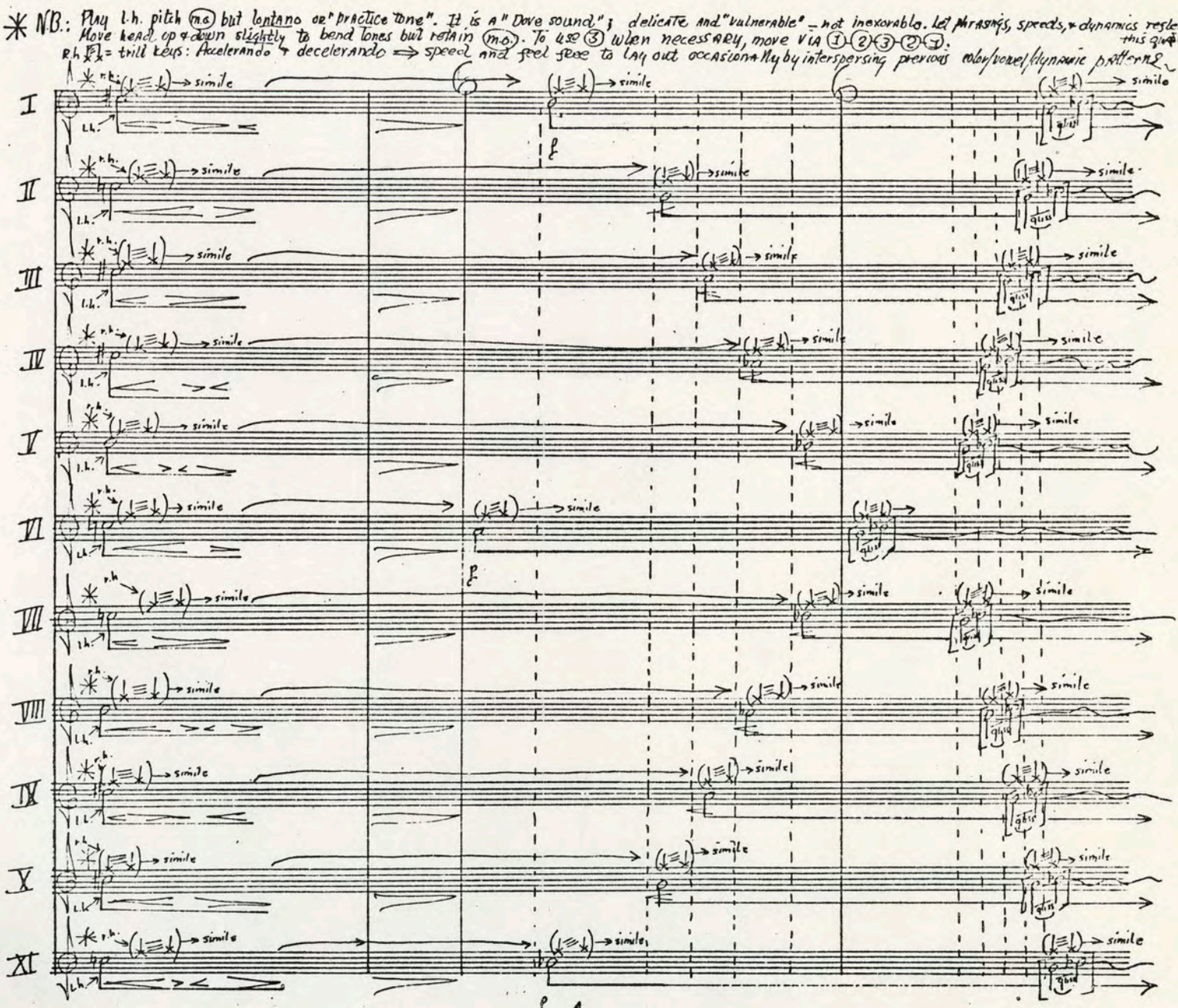
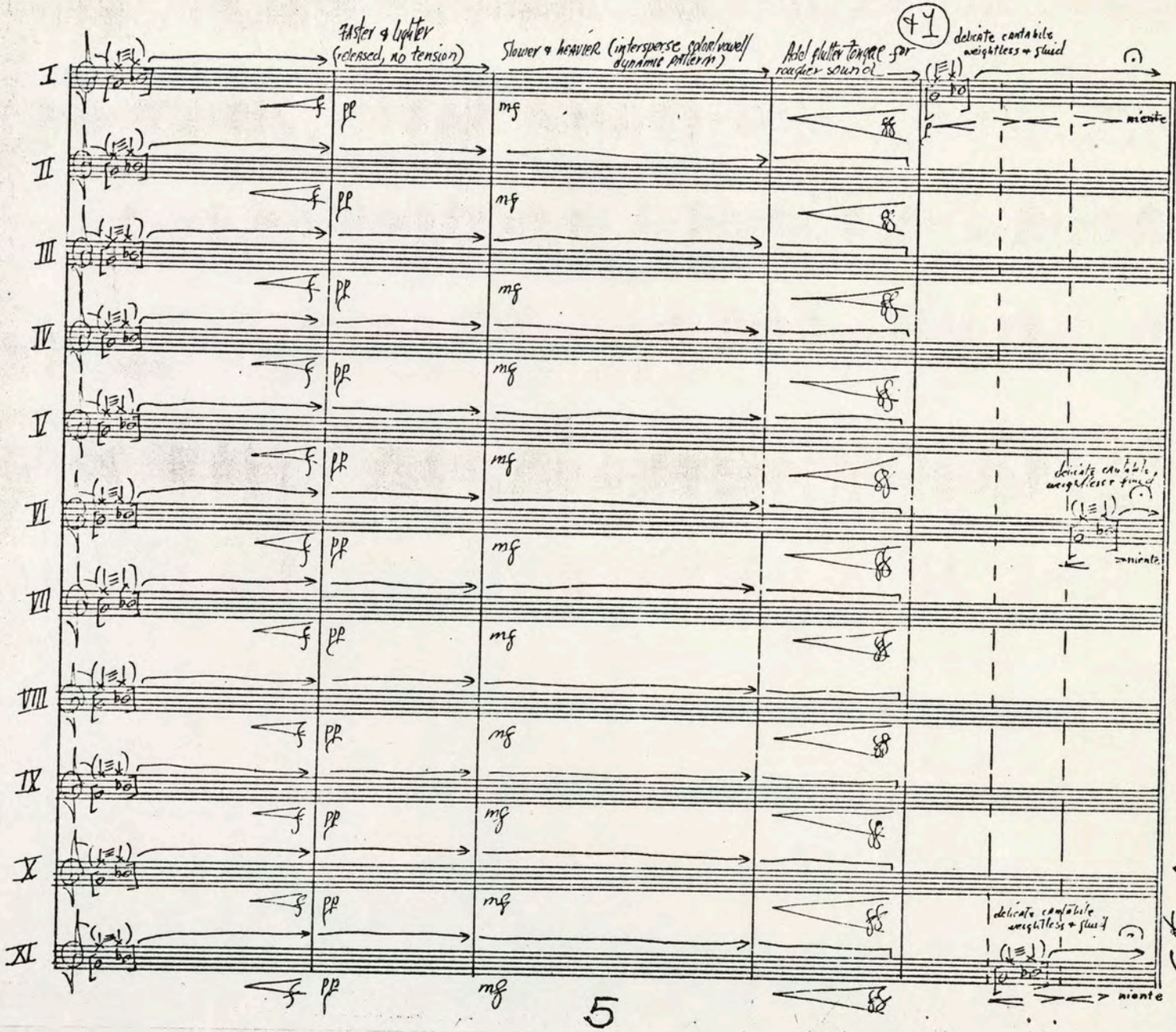

4
* Intensify projection of color, vowels and dynamics
Add some flutter tongue and variations on attack & accent
Do not increase speed now
but prepare for accelerando
Add Accelerand
I
II
III
IV
V
VI
VII
VIII
IX
X
XI
All changes poco a poco
Add Accel
(use preceding color, vowel
and dynamic pattern)
(use preceding color, vowel + dynamic pattern)
2


8 – Take color, vowel, volume and intensity to its furthest limits. Add flutter tongue.
41
I
II
III
IV
V
VI
VII
VIII
IX
X
XI
fff possible
"long tones" in air "centering" your timing
Use Freely


* NB.: Play l.h. pitch (no.6) but lontano or "practice tone". It is A "Dove sound"; delicate and "vulnerable" – not inexorable. Let phrasings, speeds, & dynamics reflect this quality –
Move head up & down slightly to bend tones but retain (no.6). To use (3) when necessary, move via (1)(2)(3)(2)(1).
R.h. [tr] = trill keys: Accelerando & decelerando ⇒ speed and feel free to lay out occasionally by interspersing previous color/vowel/dynamic patterns.
I
II
III
IV
V
VI
VII
VIII
IX
X
XI
simile
l.h.
r.h.
f



6 December, 1973, NYC