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Chopsticks

for Soldier's Tale Septet

Brendon Randall-Myers

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Chopsticks

for Solider's Tale Septet

Brendon Randall-Myers

Program Note

Chopsticks is part a set of pieces about memory and technology. Each of these pieces draws on older music that I know and love, and uses technology to reimagine, amplify, and distort that music. This particular piece started with my childhood memories of hammered dulcimer music and barn dances in West Virginia, filtered through a propensity for modifying instruments and a love of Scelsi and mosh pits. The sonic focus of the piece is an acoustic guitar both prepared and played with chopsticks, run through a 4W tube amplifier.

Chopsticks was commissioned by Exceptet and MATA.

Duration: ca. 8'45"

Instrumentation: violin, double bass (doubling woodblocks), Bb clarinet, bassoon, trumpet (doubling picc. trumpet), trombone, percussion (acoustic/electric guitar, see below)

Performance Notes

General notes:

- All instruments should be miked and amplified for balance. The violin and double bass should match the volume of the brass.
- Repeat numbers indicate total numbers of times to play a cell - e.g. 3x means play the material in repeats a total of three times.
- The bass player begins the piece playing two woodblocks, ideally sitting on a high stool on their right side.

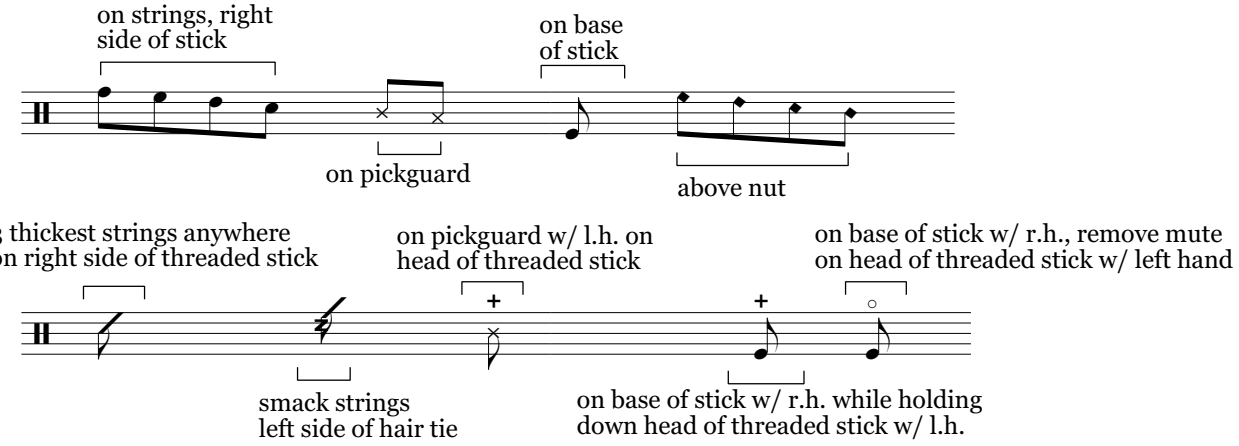
Percussion preparation and amplification:

The percussion part for this piece is played entirely on an acoustic/electric steel-string guitar laid flat on its back on a table and played like a hammered dulcimer using chopsticks. The guitar needs to be prepared and amplified as follows:

- The guitar should be tuned to an open D Minor chord (low to high DADFAD) and prepared with a hair tie wrapped loosely around the 5th fret, and a chopstick threaded over/under through all six strings at the node where the 24th fret would be.
- The guitar should be amplified using the output from the guitar's quarter inch output, run into a lunchbox guitar tube amp to distort the sound a bit. The amp needs to be low enough wattage (1-4W) that it starts distorting at a volume low enough to balance with brass. The amp itself should be miked for balance with the rest of the ensemble.
- You should use light, cheap wooden chopsticks for both preparation and playing, which shouldn't damage the strings or pickguard. I personally like to use a flatter chopstick for preparation and rounder chopsticks to play.
- Though the chopsticks shouldn't damage the pickguard or strings, they may harm the finish of the guitar. Therefore the guitar should be a cheap one that you (and/or the owner) don't mind beating on a bit.

- For more detailed instructions and photos of preparations and playing techniques, please visit: www.brendonrandallmyers.com/chopsticks-guitar-prep
- For a live recording that gives a good sense of audio balance (and how the guitar should sound), please visit: youtu.be/WB7d6QTw2vA
- If you have questions, you should feel free to contact the composer at brendon.randallmyers@gmail.com.

Percussion key and techniques:



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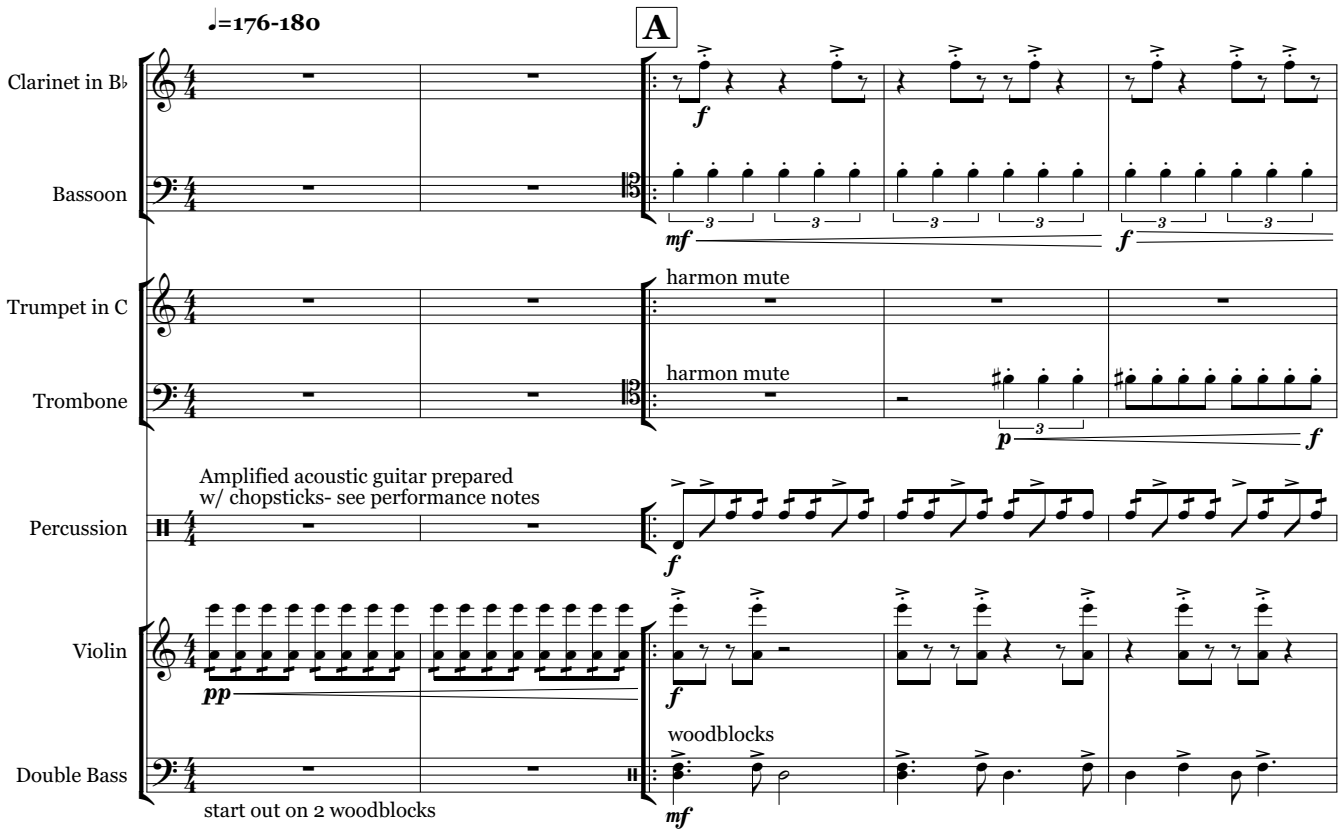
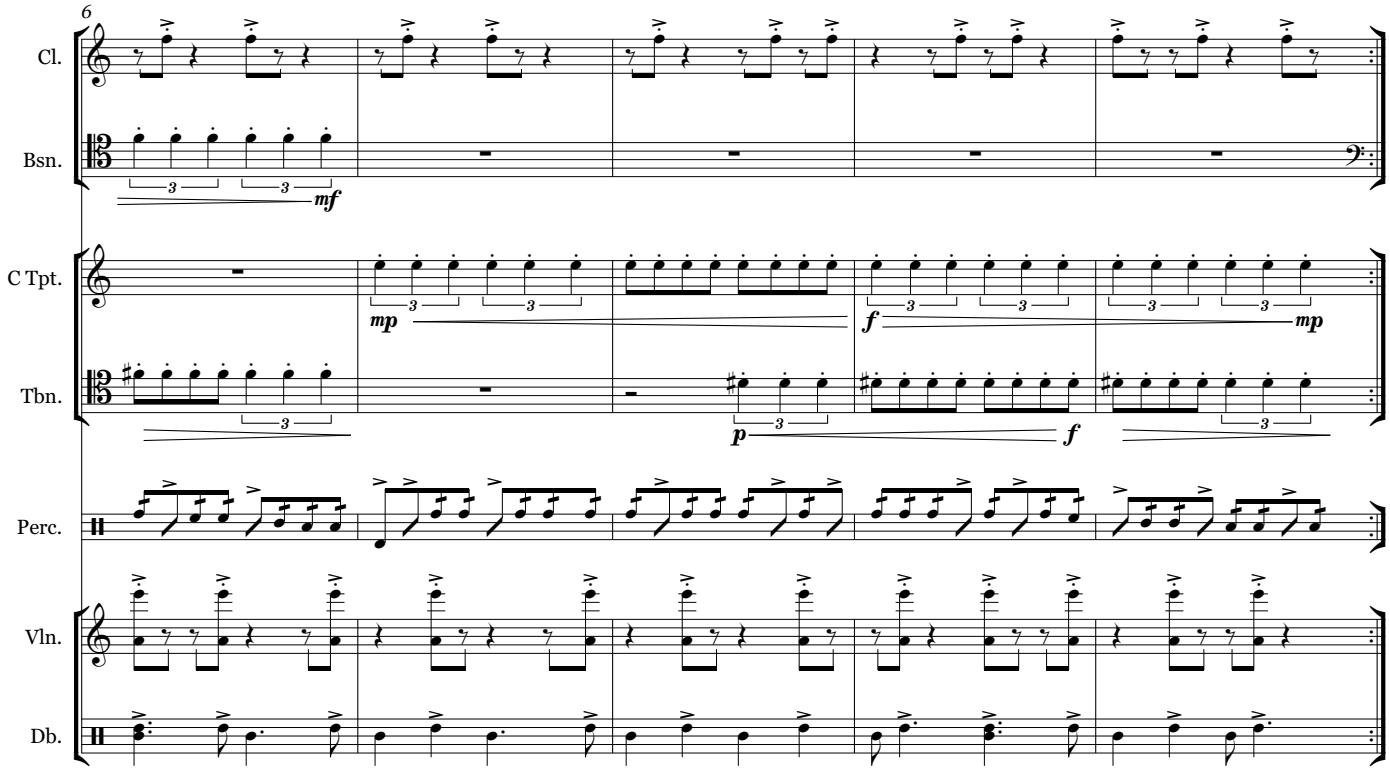
Chopsticks

Score in C

Brendon Randall-Myers





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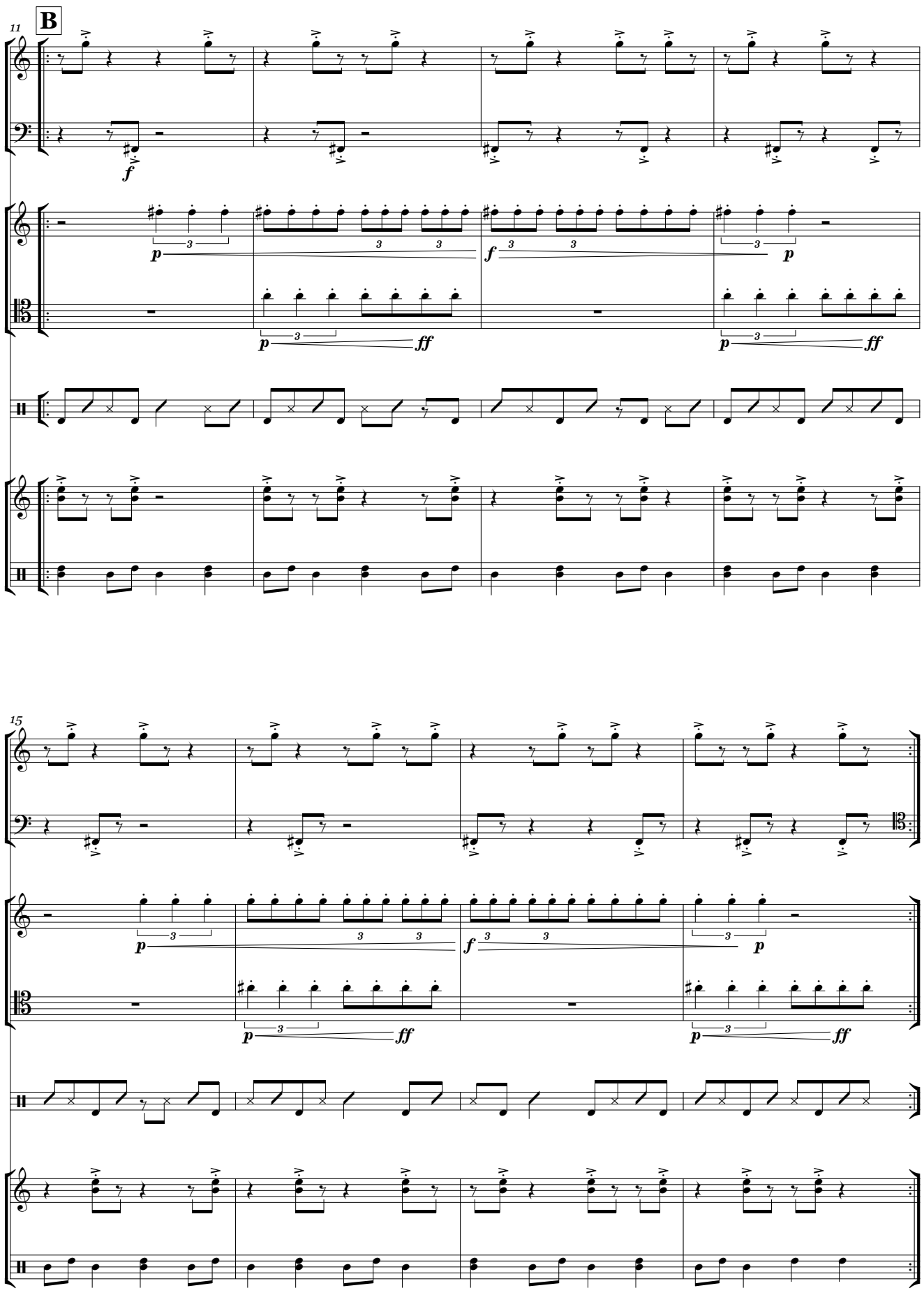
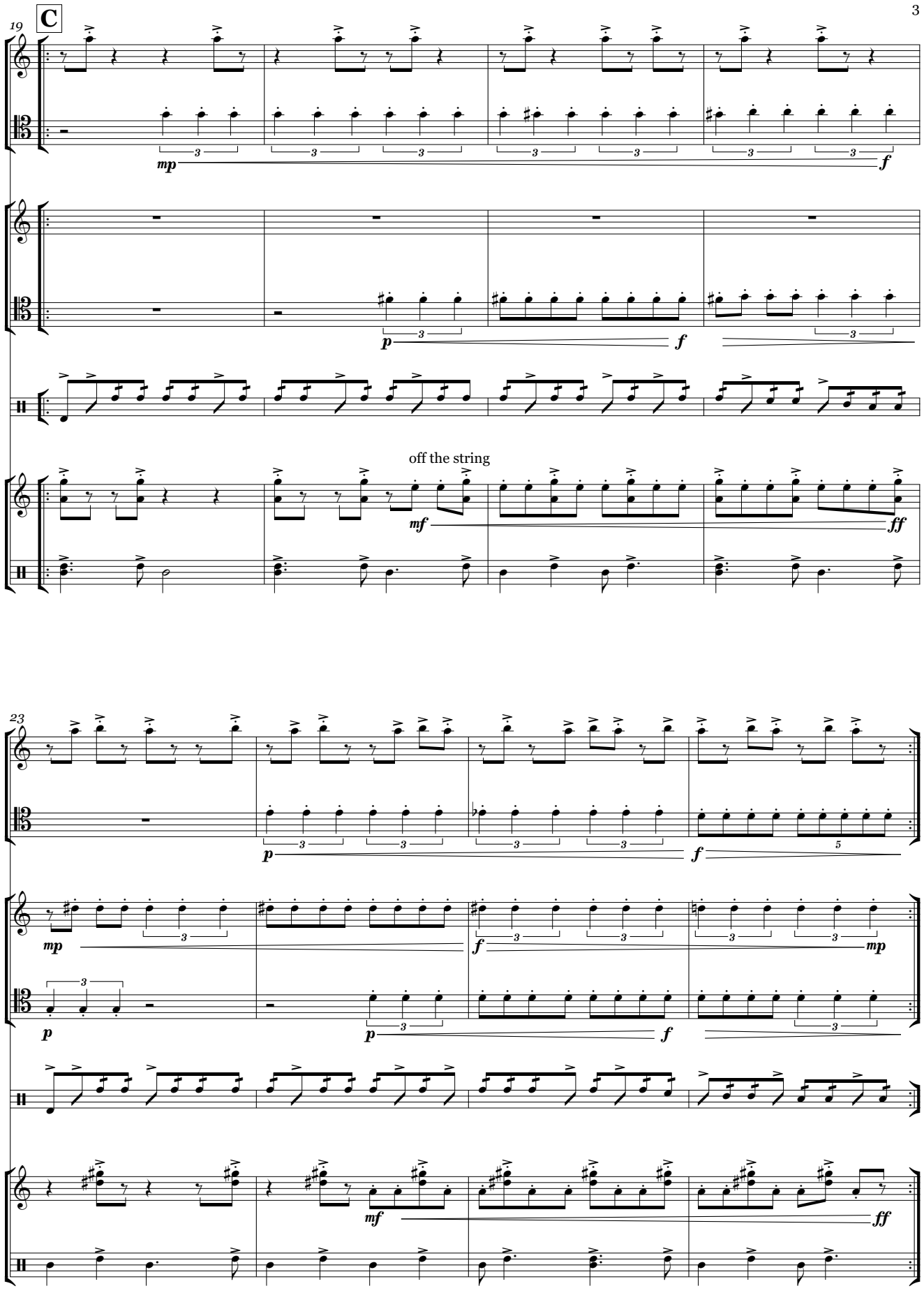
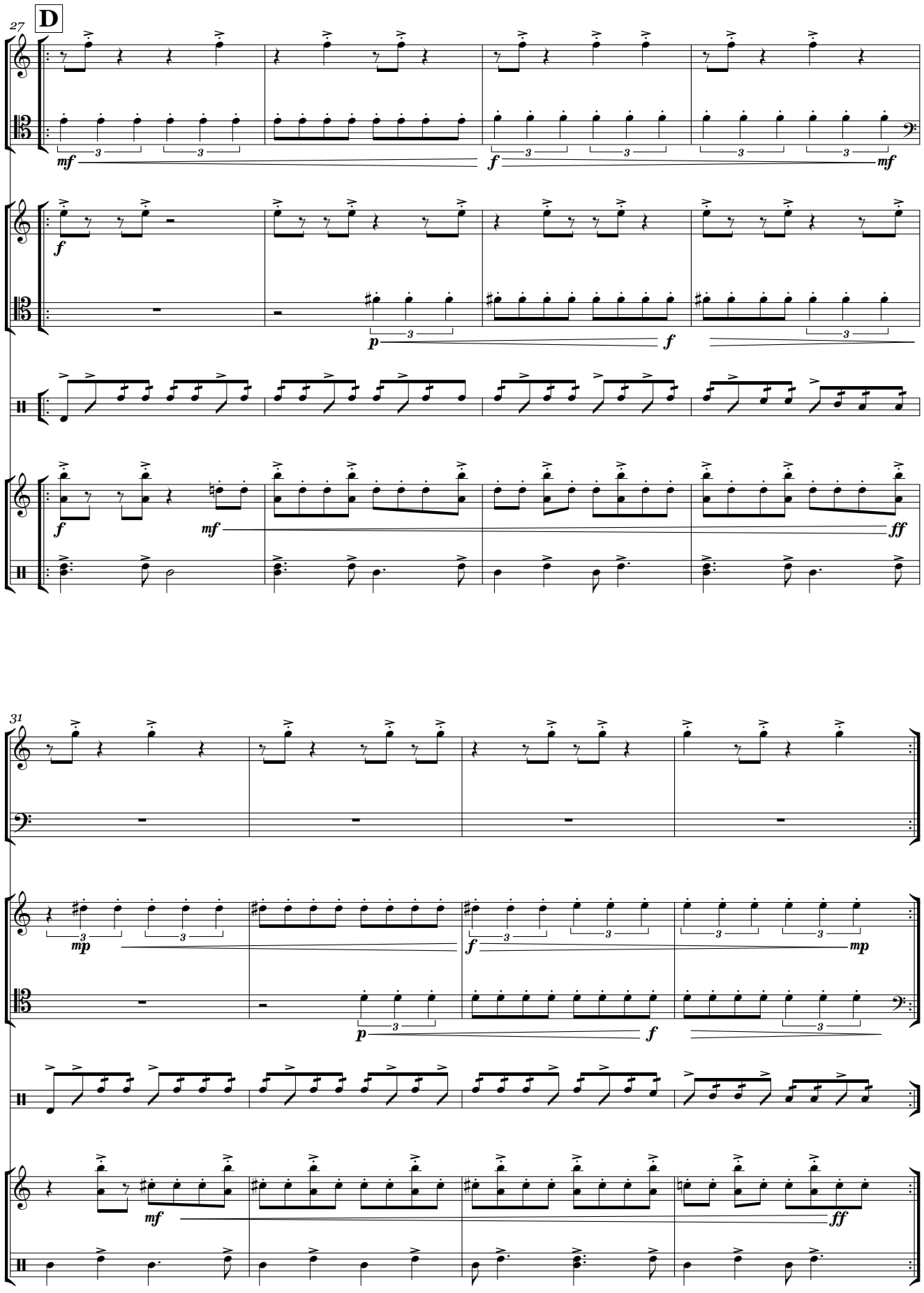
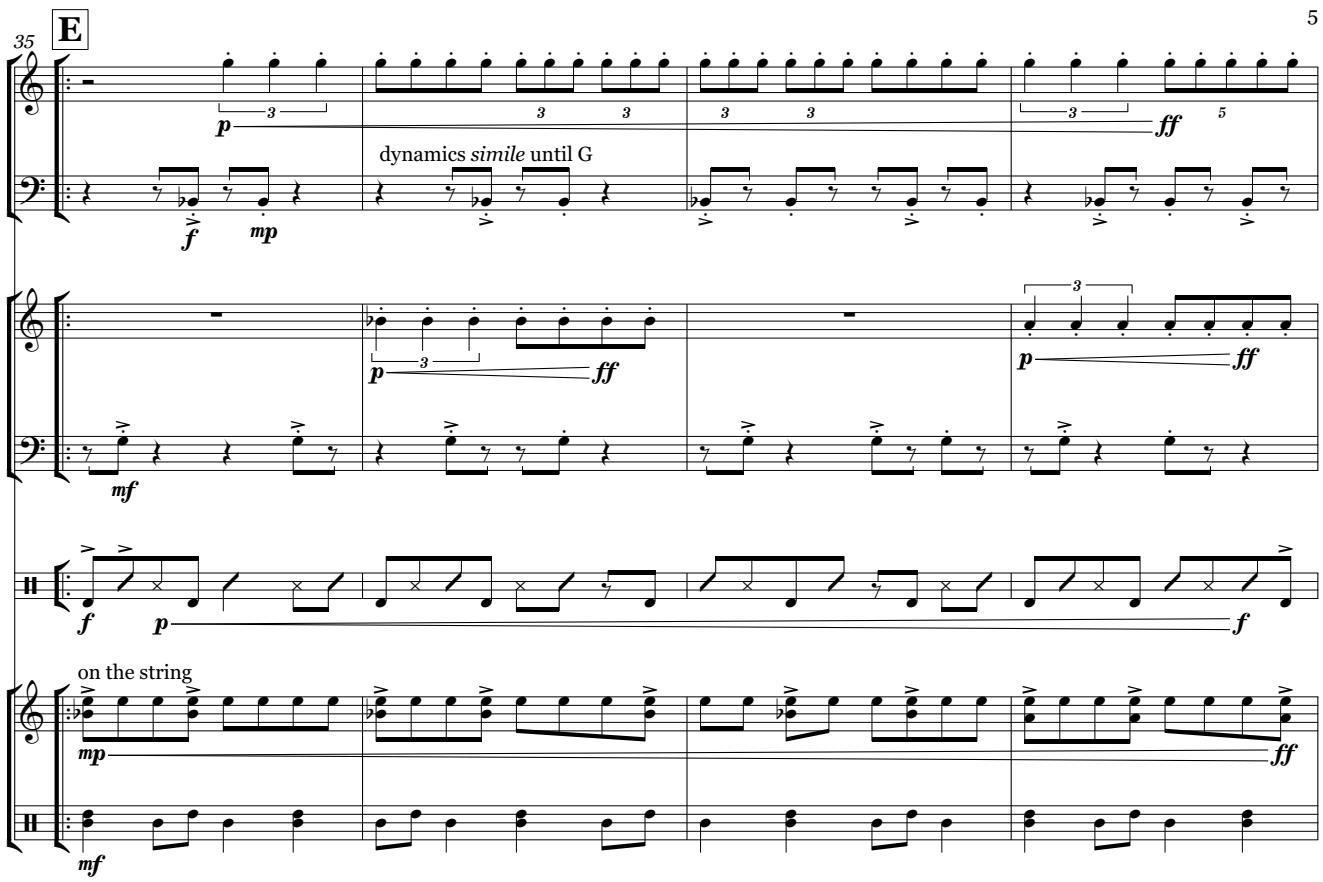
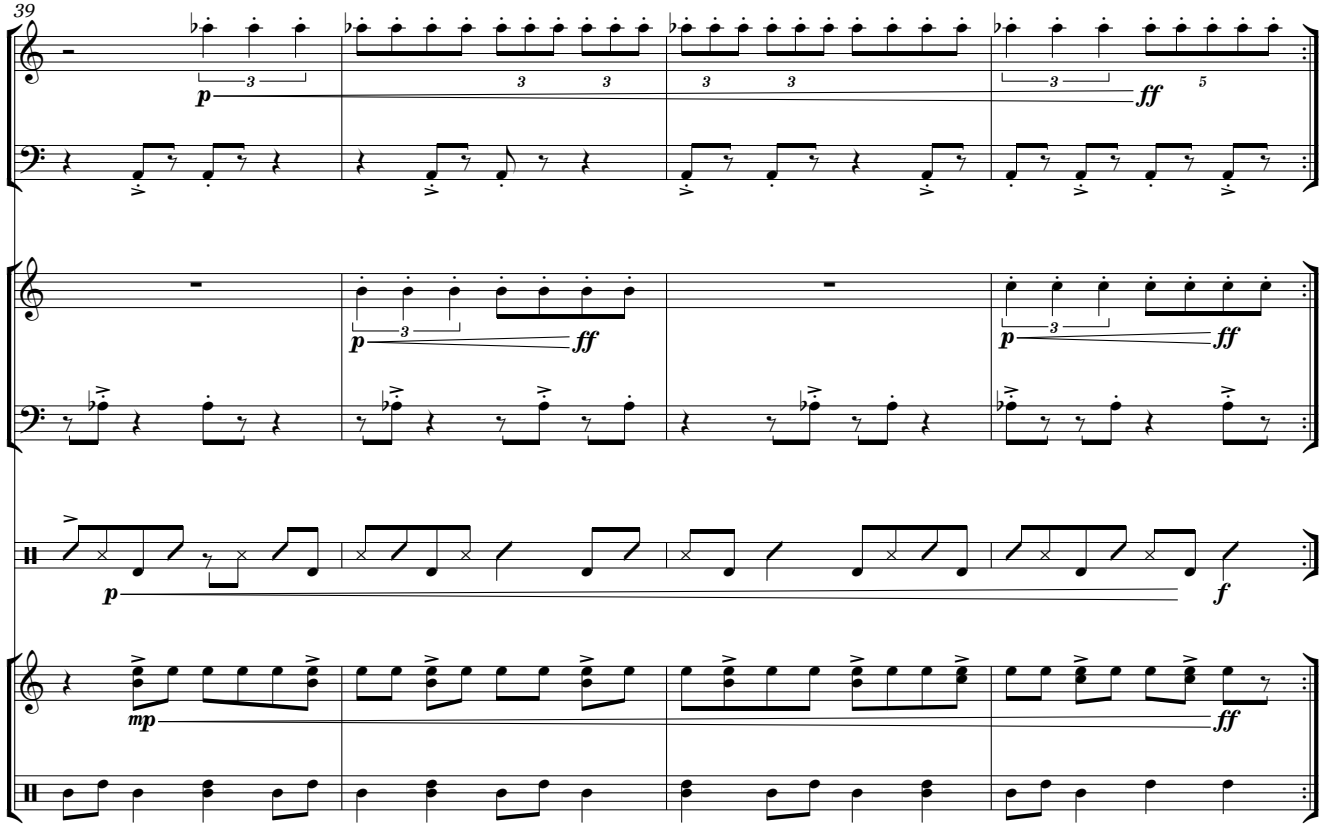
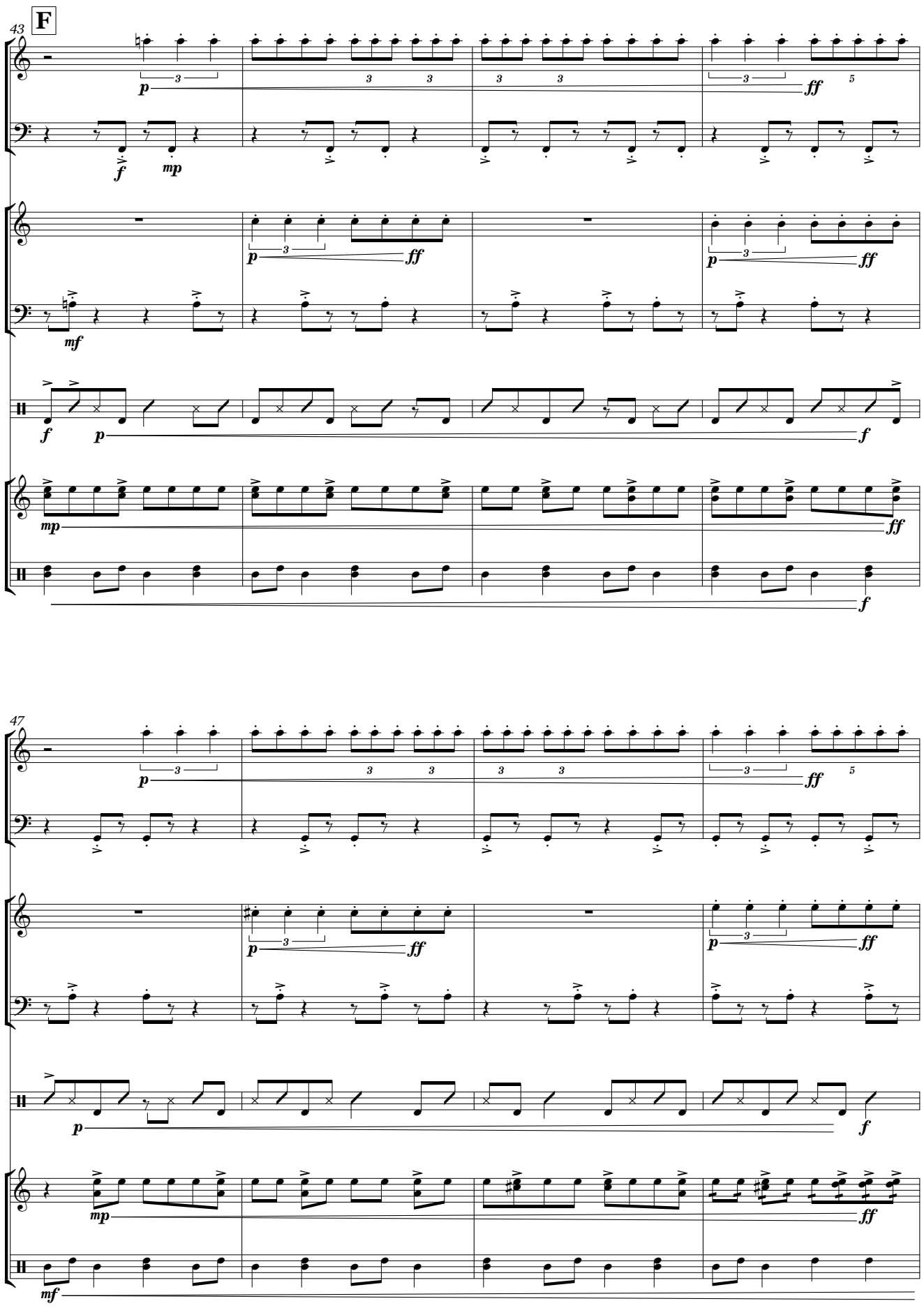

11
B
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
15
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.

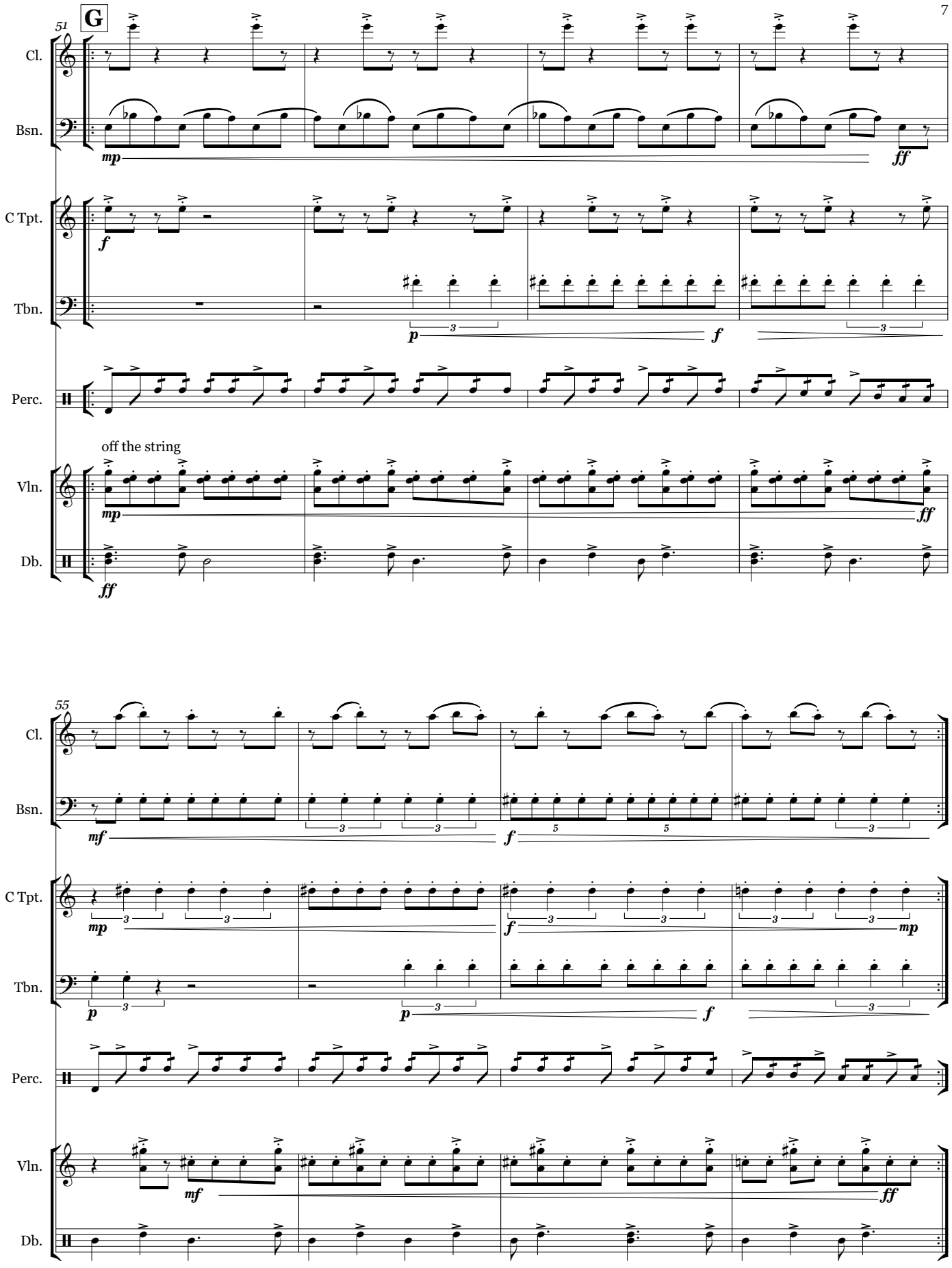

19
C
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
off the string
Vln.
Db.
23
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.

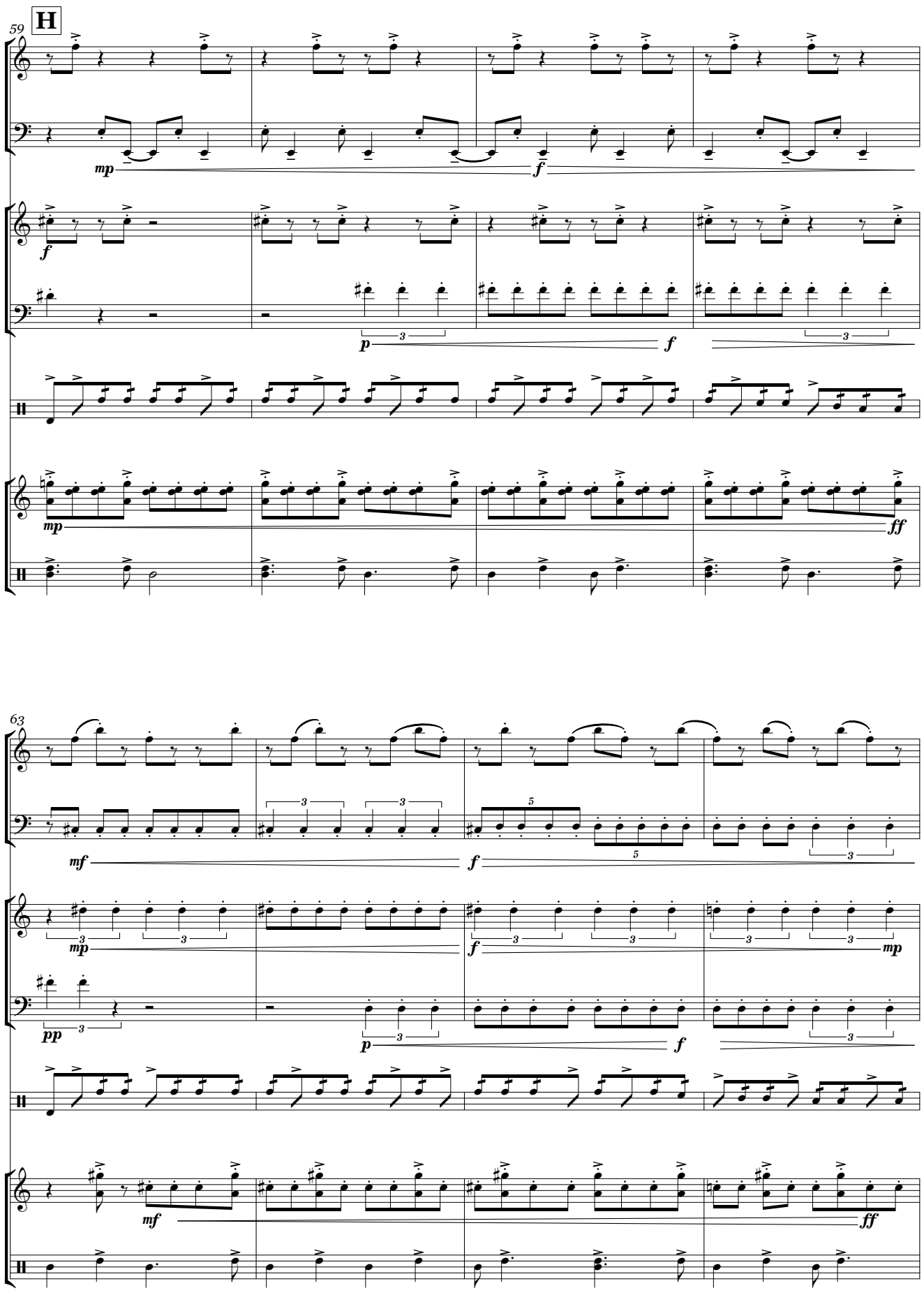

D
27
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
mf
f
mf
f
p
f
f
mf
ff
31
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
mp
f
mp
p
f
mf
ff

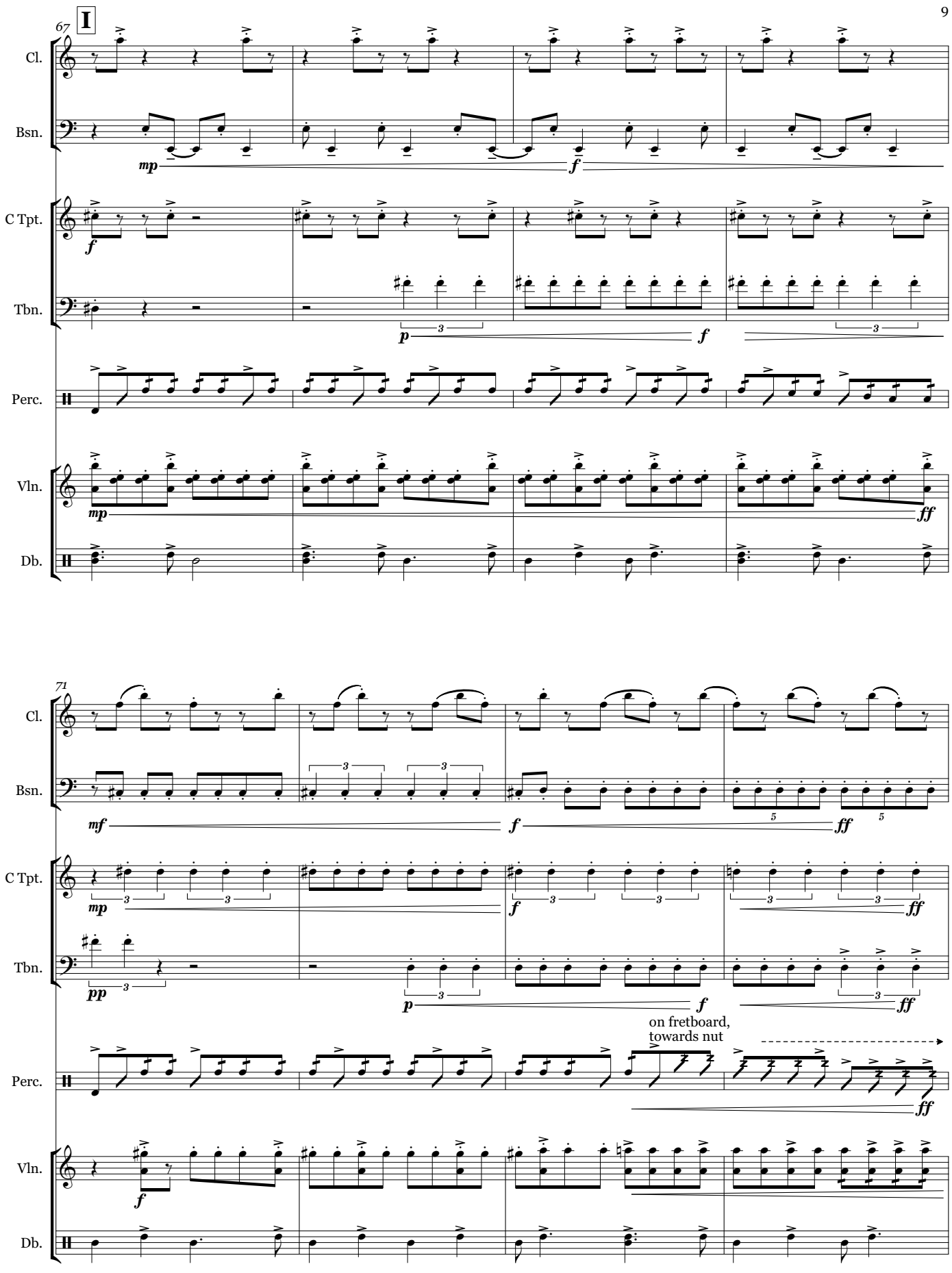

E
35
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
dynamics *simile* until G
on the string

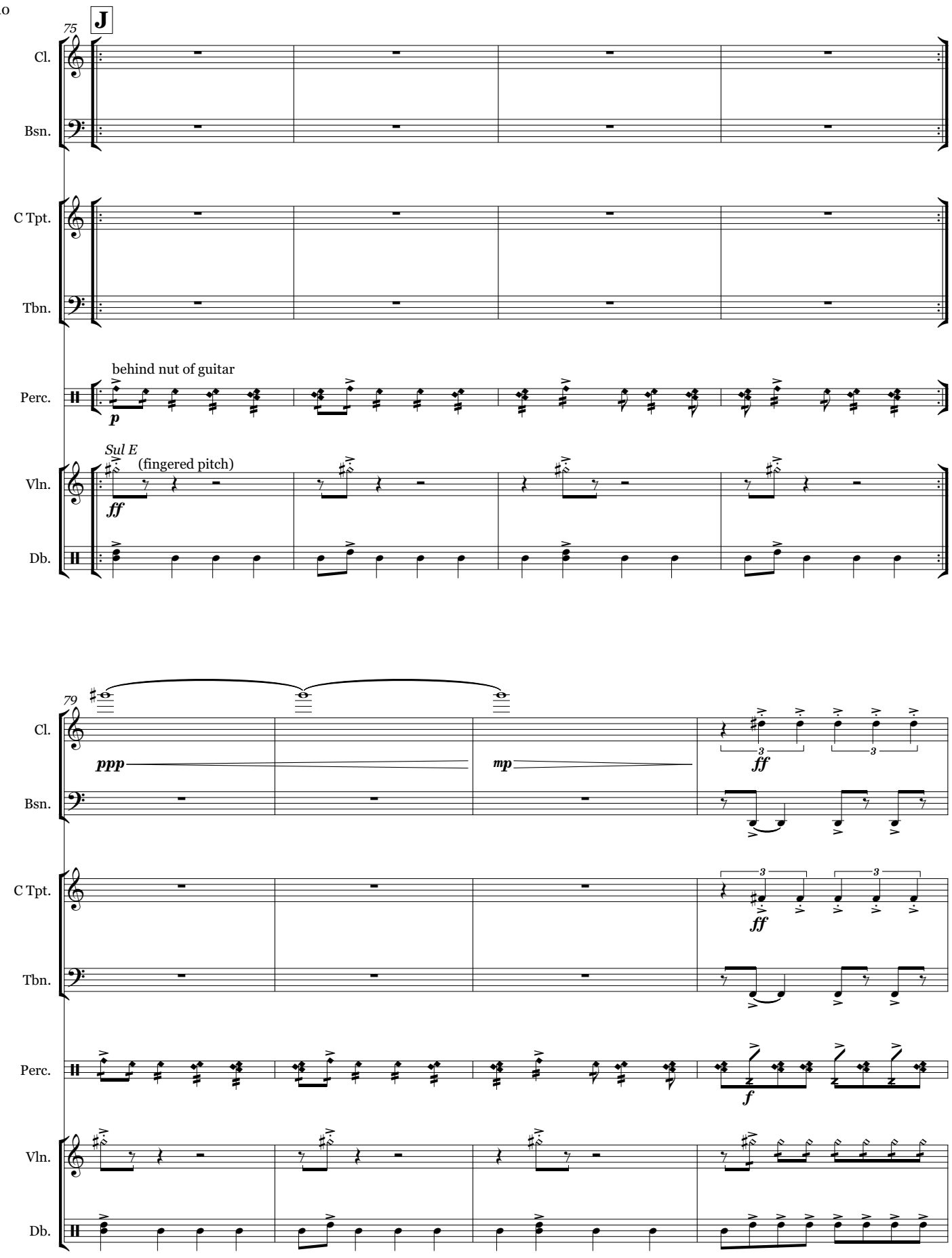

39
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.

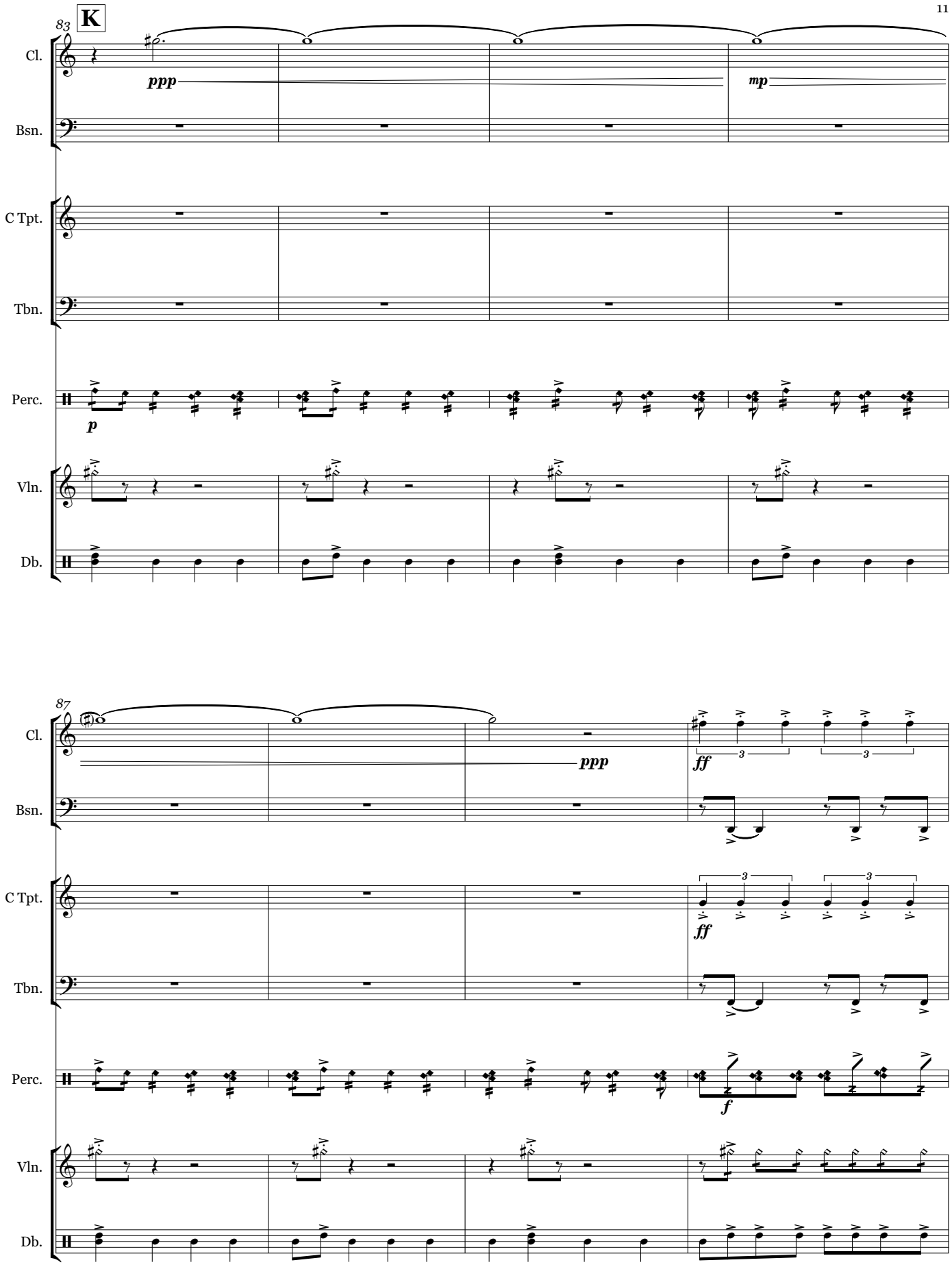

43
F
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
47
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.

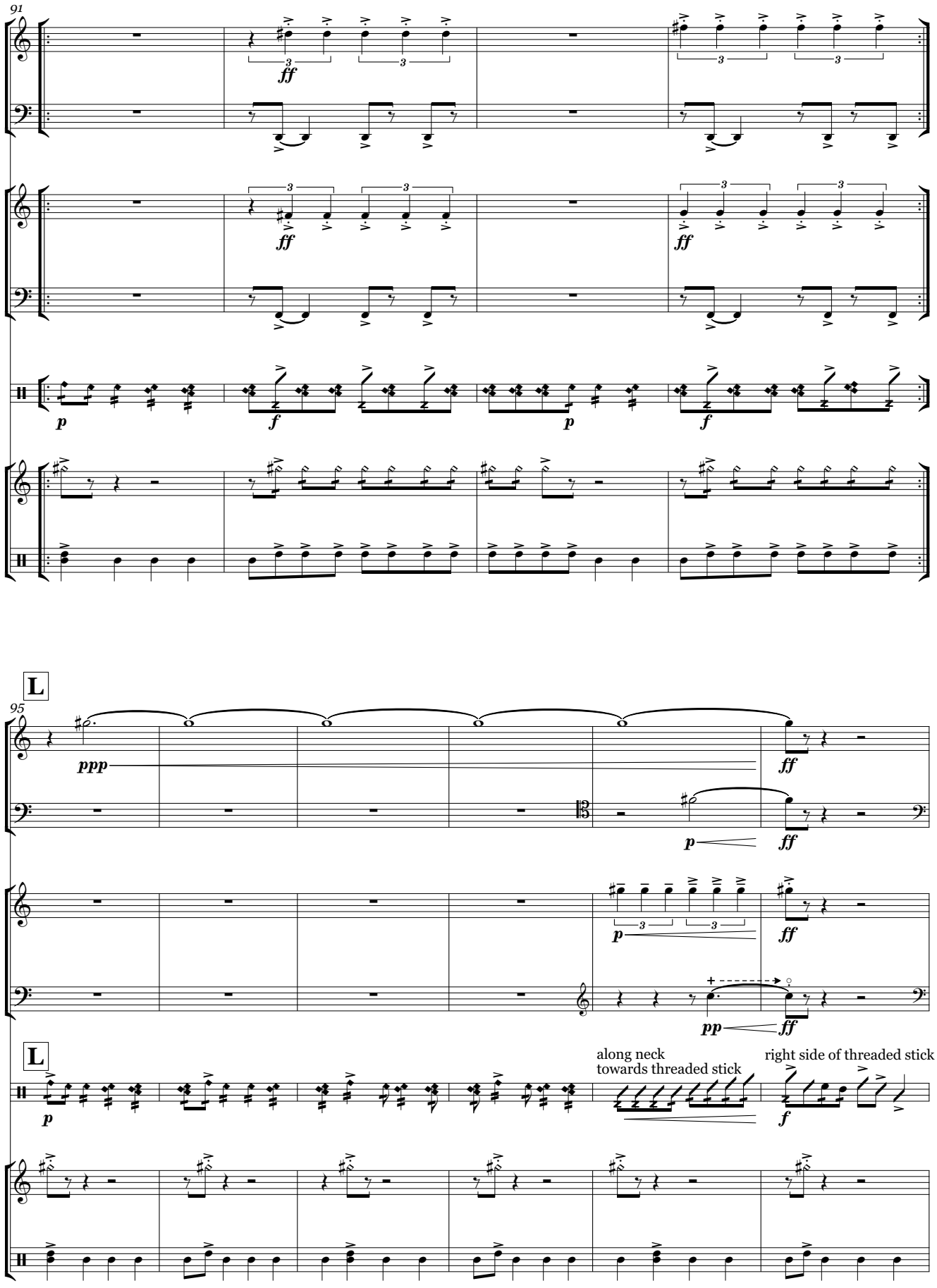

51
G
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
off the string
Vln.
Db.
55
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.

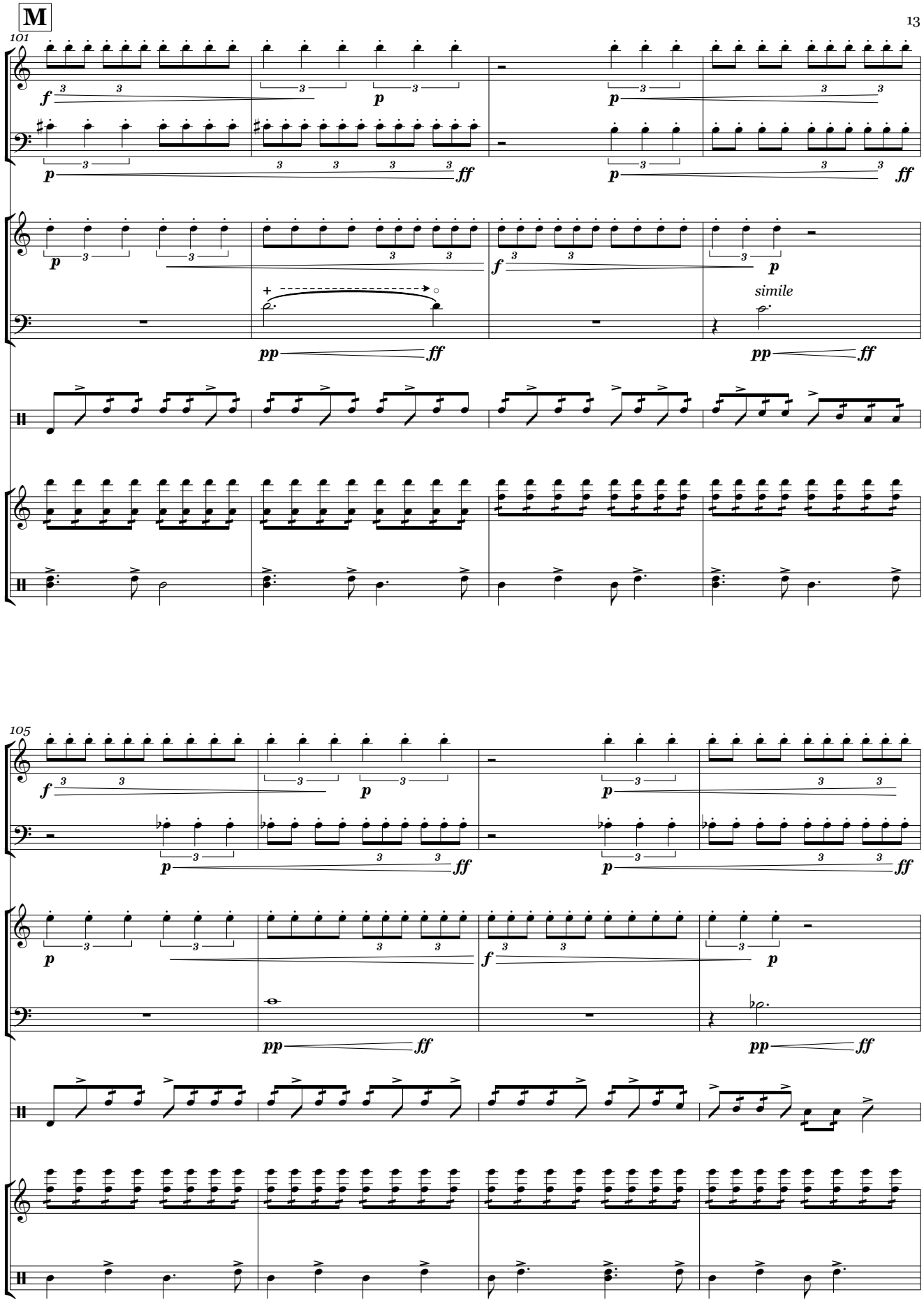

H
59
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
mp
f
p
ff
63
mf
pp

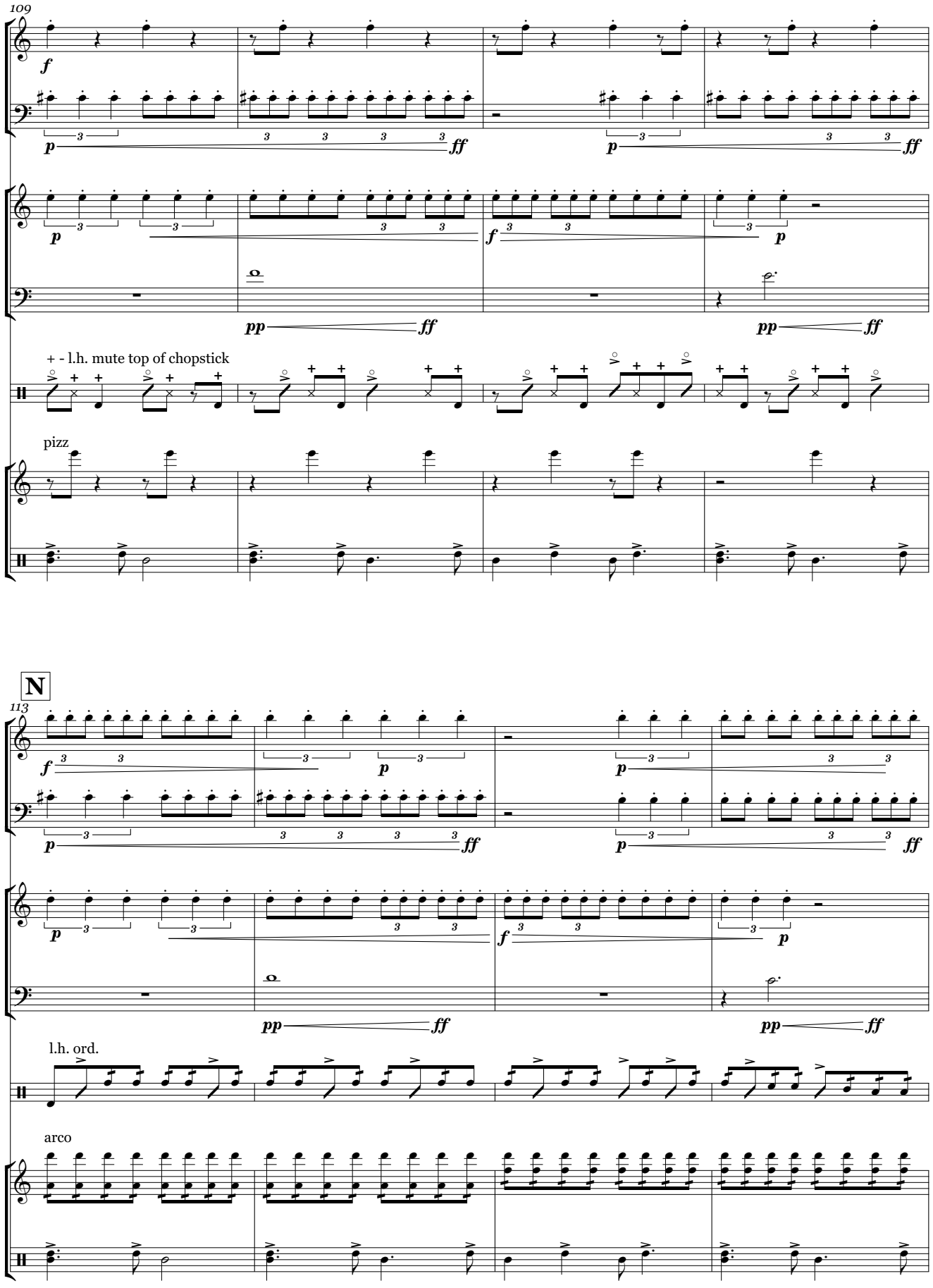

67
I
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
mp
f
p
ff
71
mf
pp
on fretboard,
towards nut

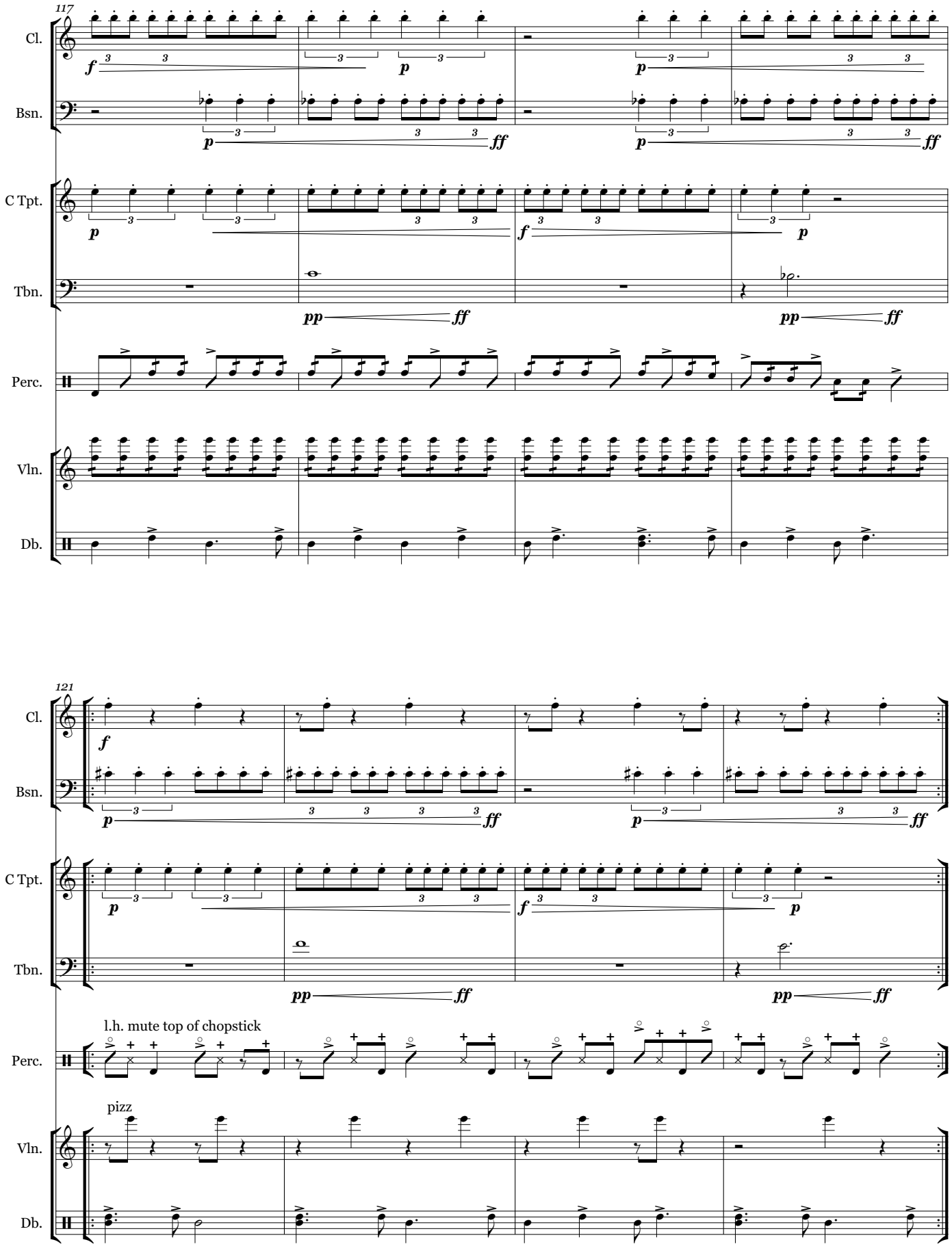

75
J
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
behind nut of guitar
Perc.
p
Sul E
(fingered pitch)
Vln.
ff
Db.
79
Cl.
ppp
mp
3
ff
Bsn.
C Tpt.
3
ff
Tbn.
Perc.
f
Vln.
Db.

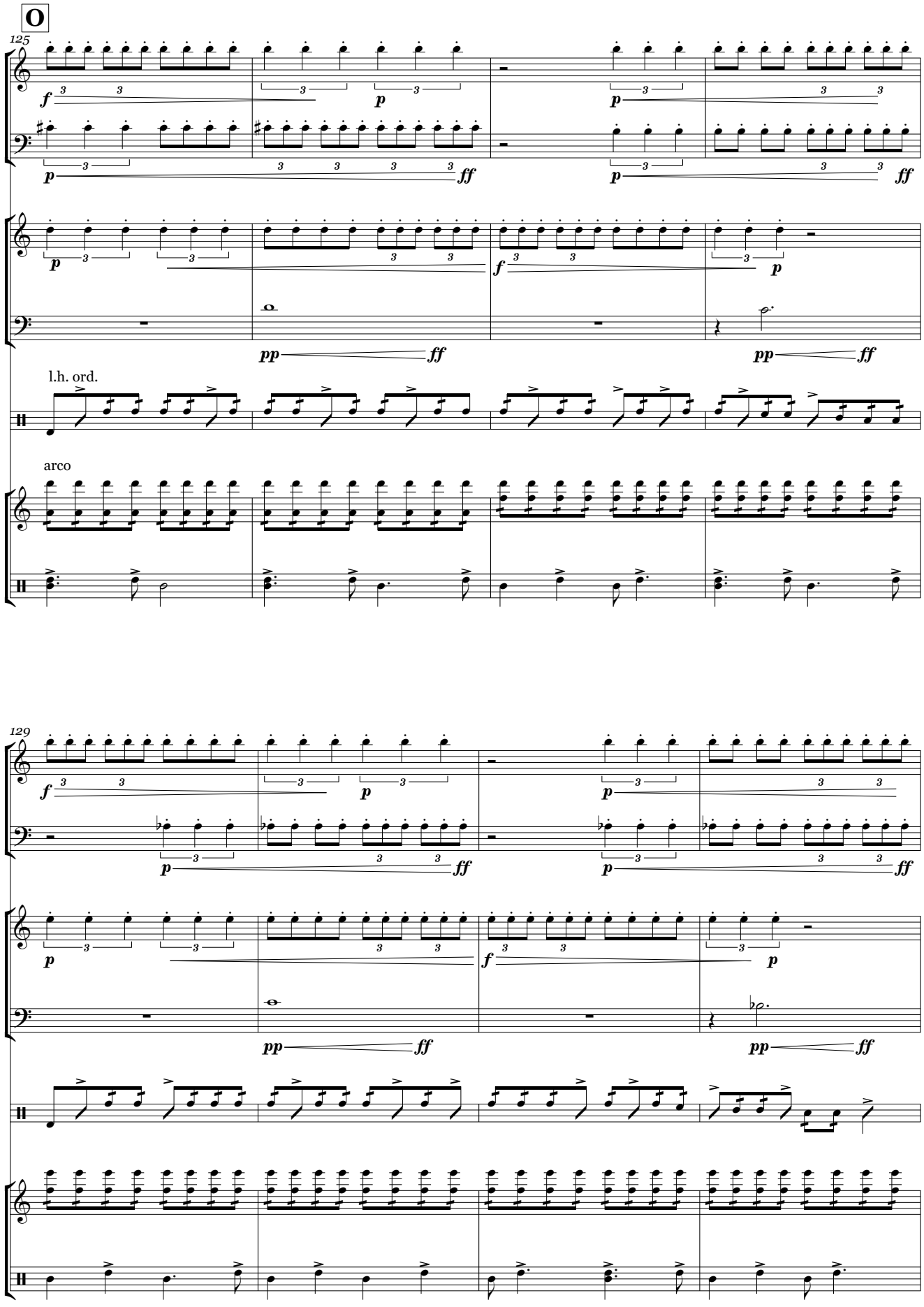

K
83
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
ppp
mp
p
87
ppp
ff
3
f

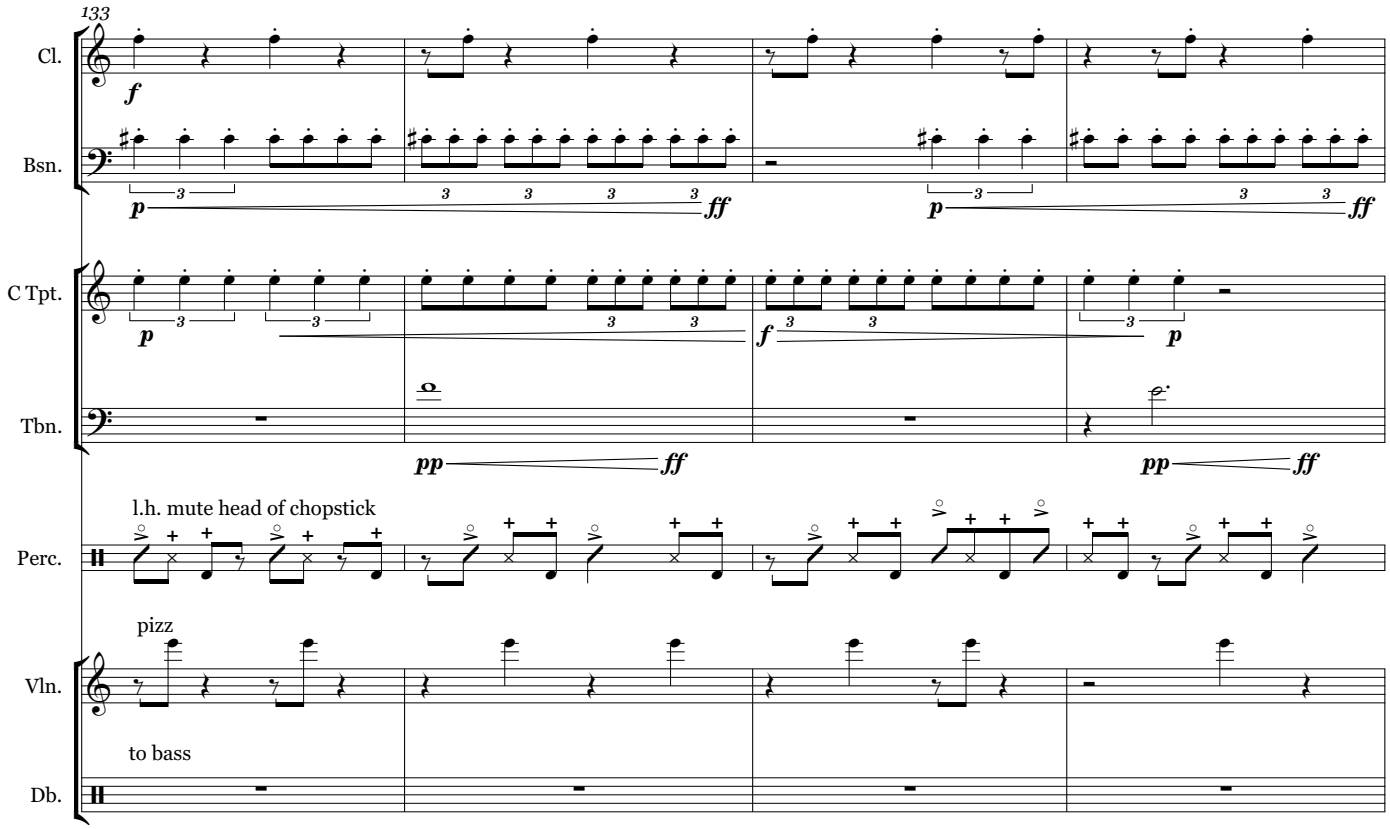

91
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
ff
p
f
L
95
ppp
pp
along neck
towards threaded stick
right side of threaded stick

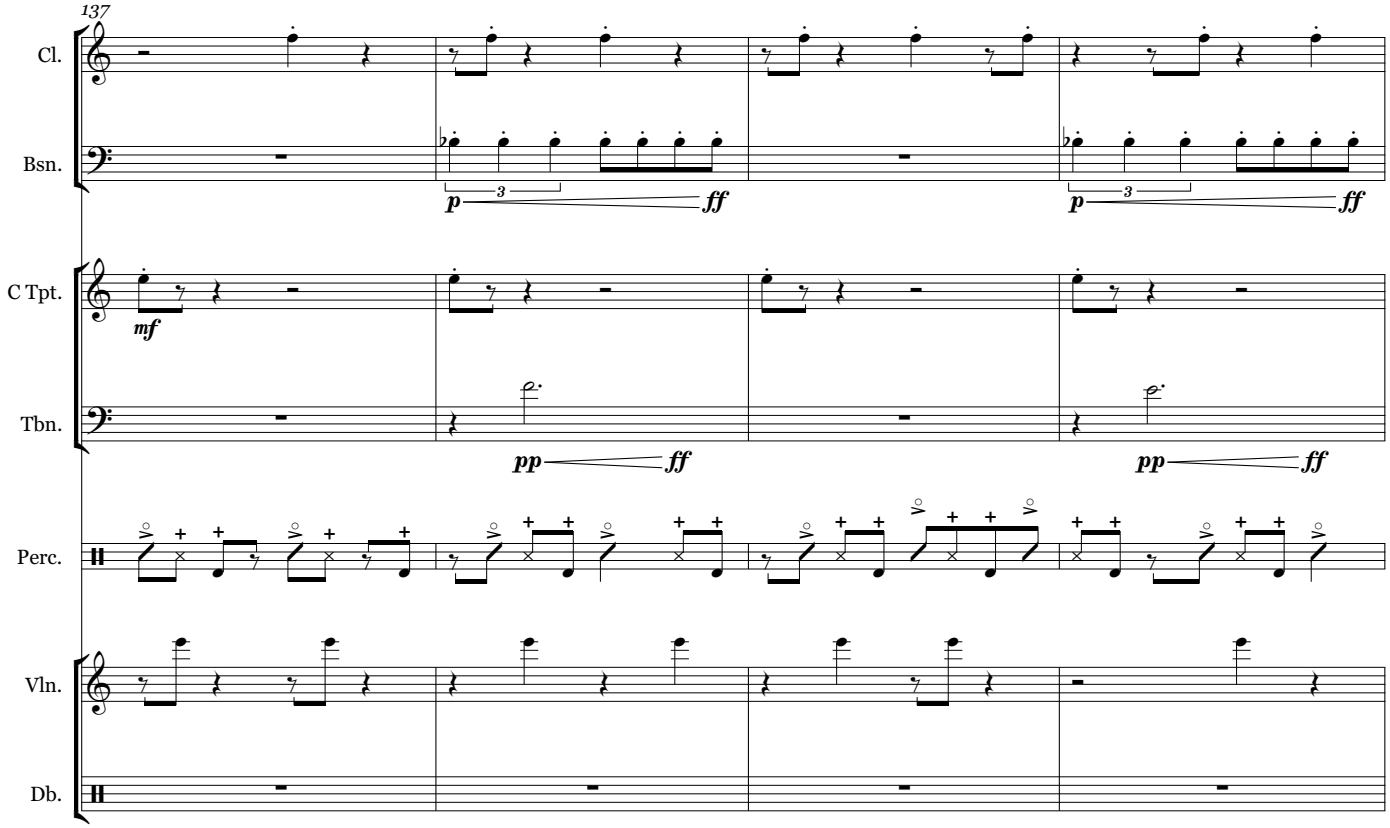

M
101
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
simile
105

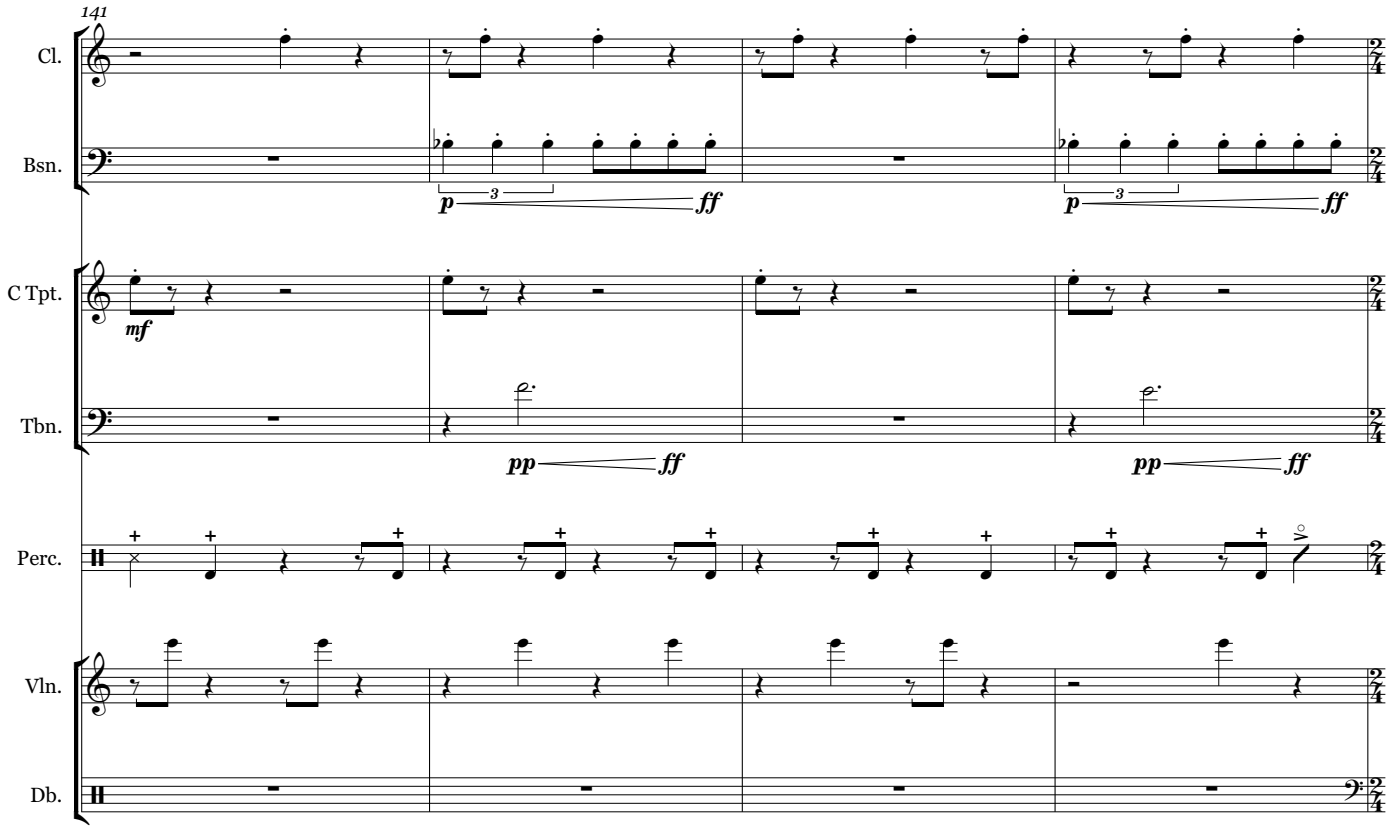

109
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
+ - l.h. mute top of chopstick
Perc.
pizz
Vln.
Db.
N
113
l.h. ord.
arco

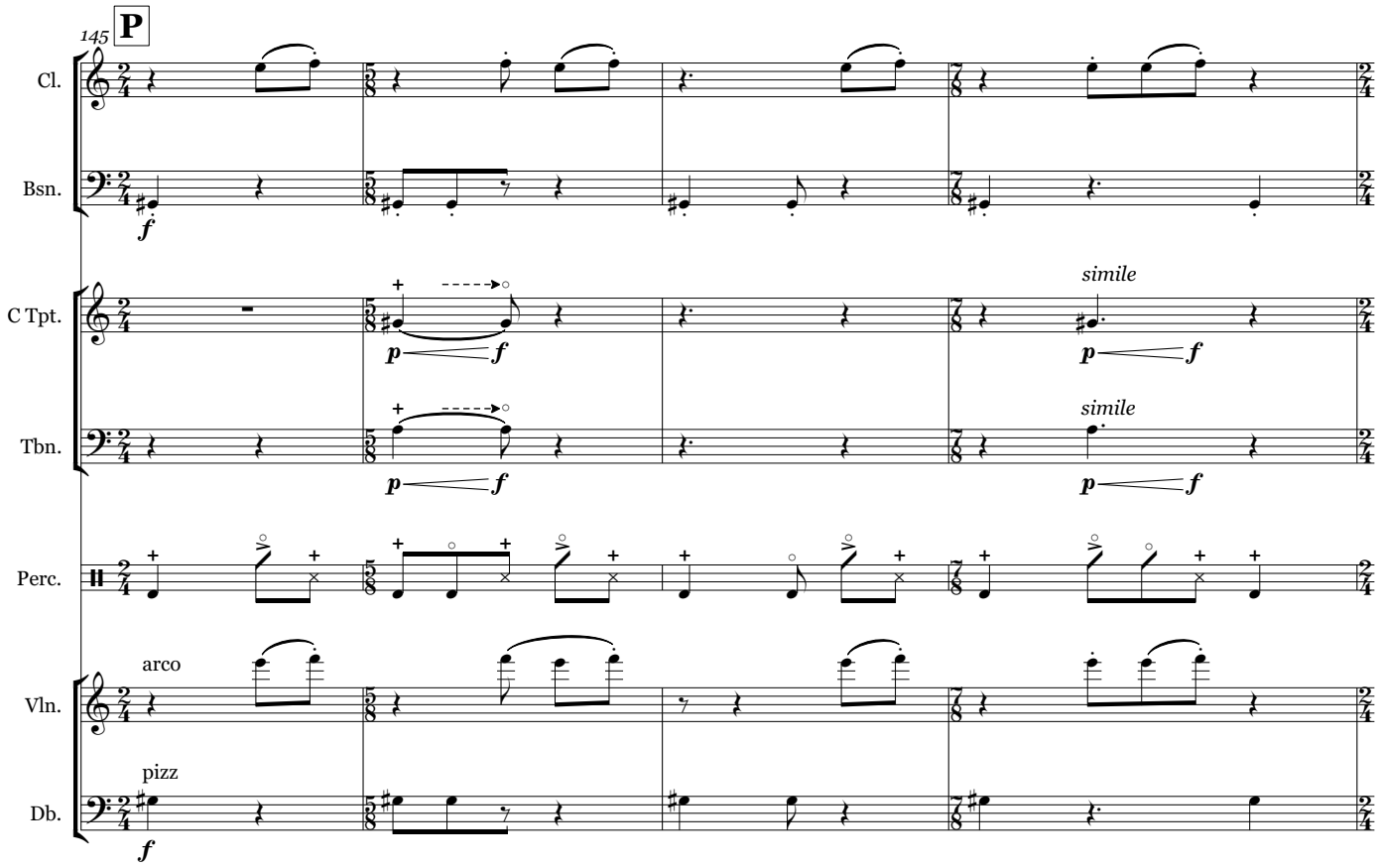

117
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
121
l.h. mute top of chopstick
pizz

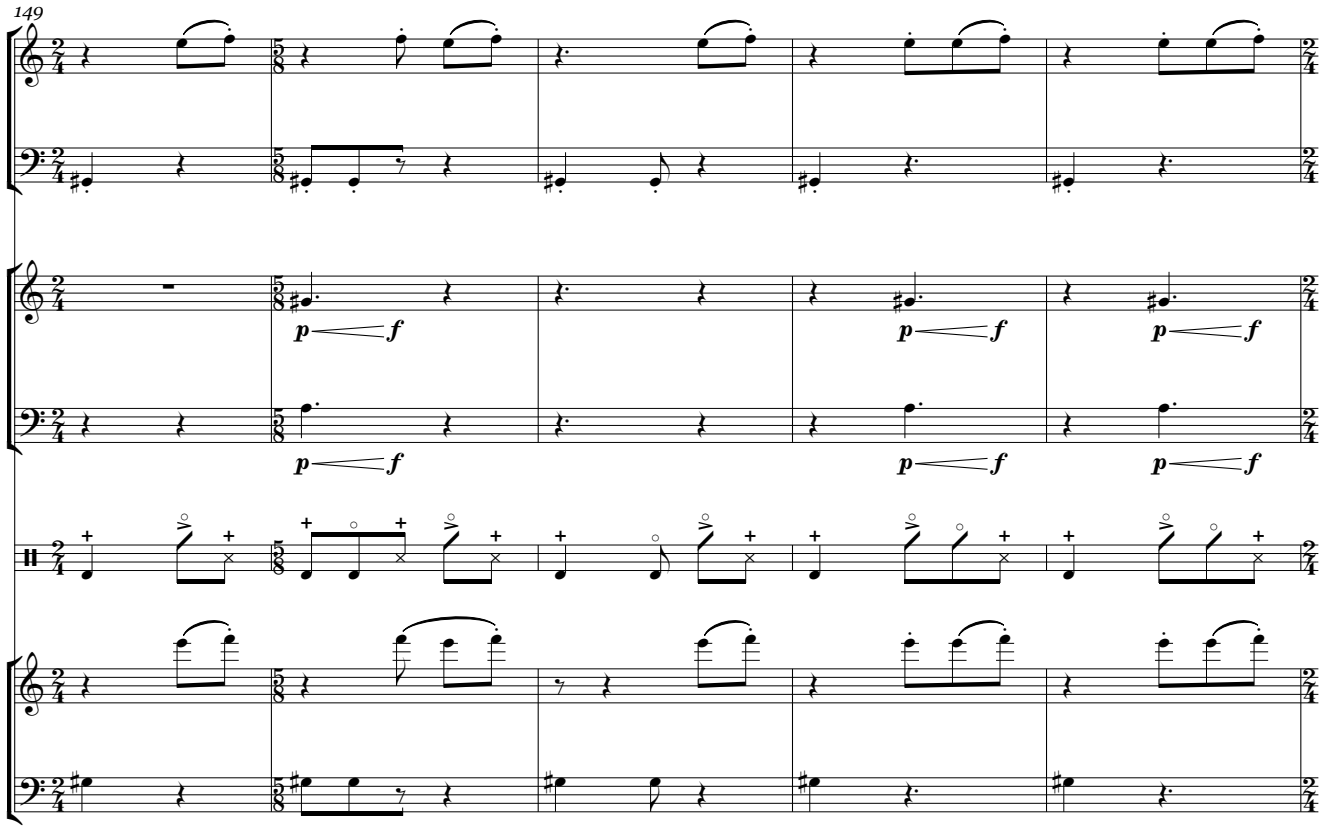

O
125
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
l.h. ord.
Perc.
arco
Vln.
Db.
129
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.

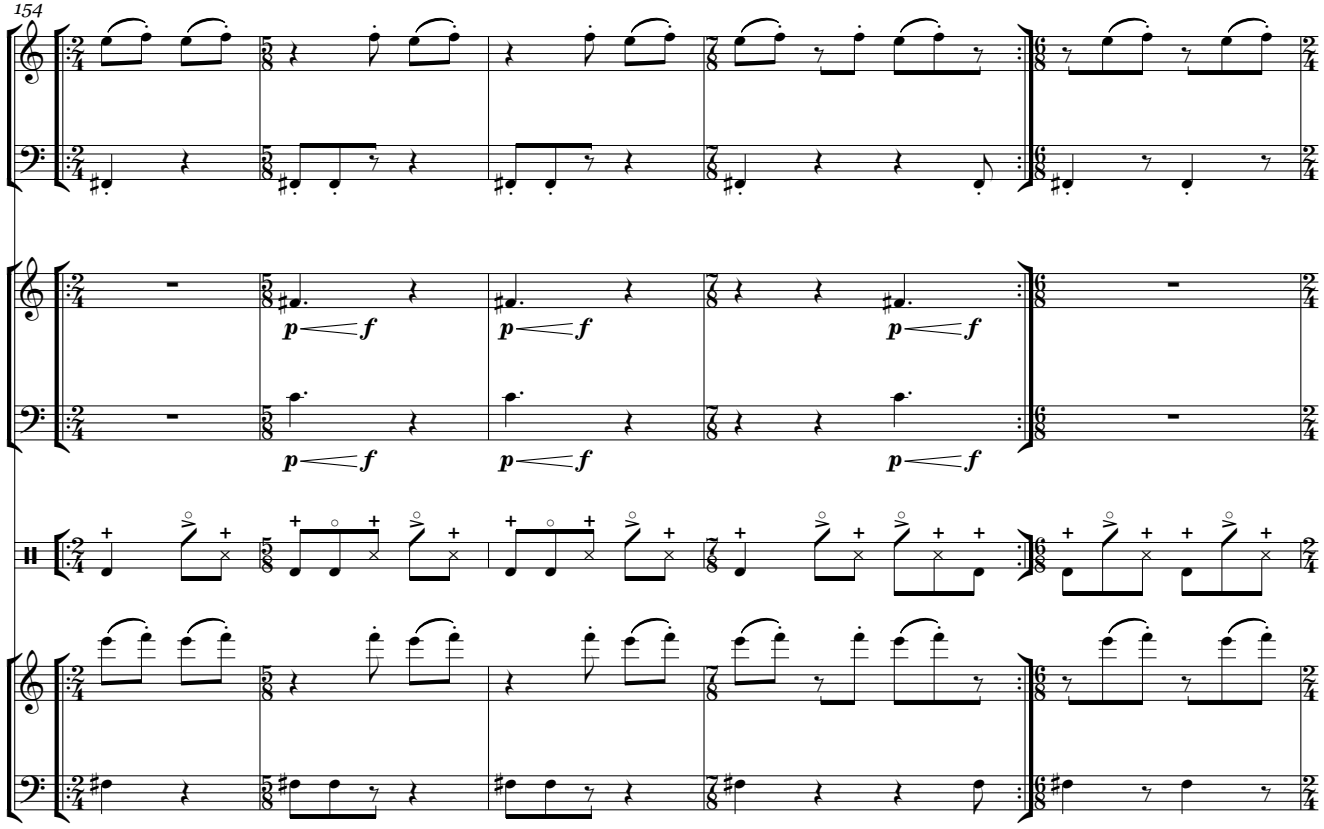

133
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
l.h. mute head of chopstick
Perc.
pizz
Vln.
to bass
Db.

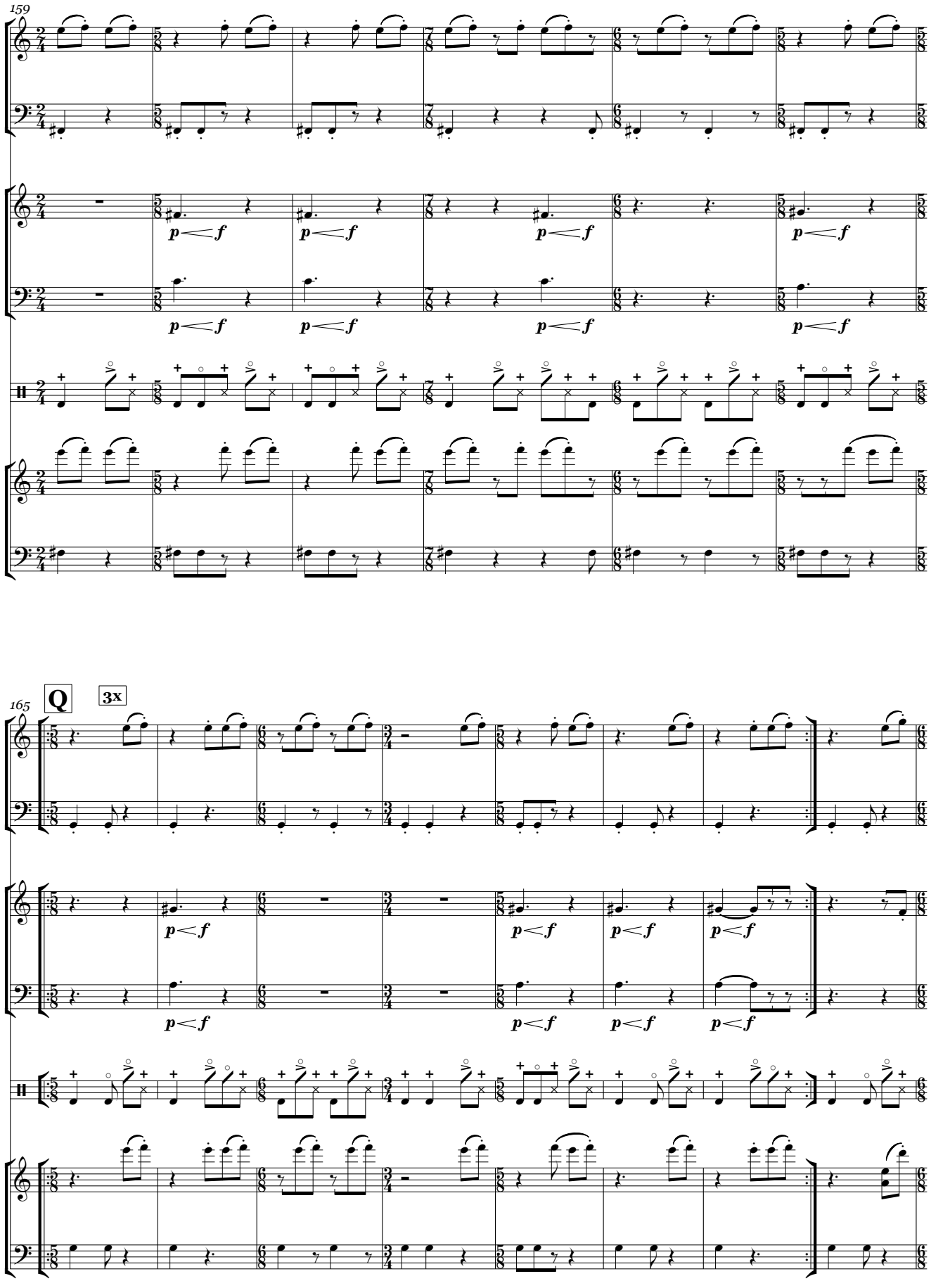

137
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.

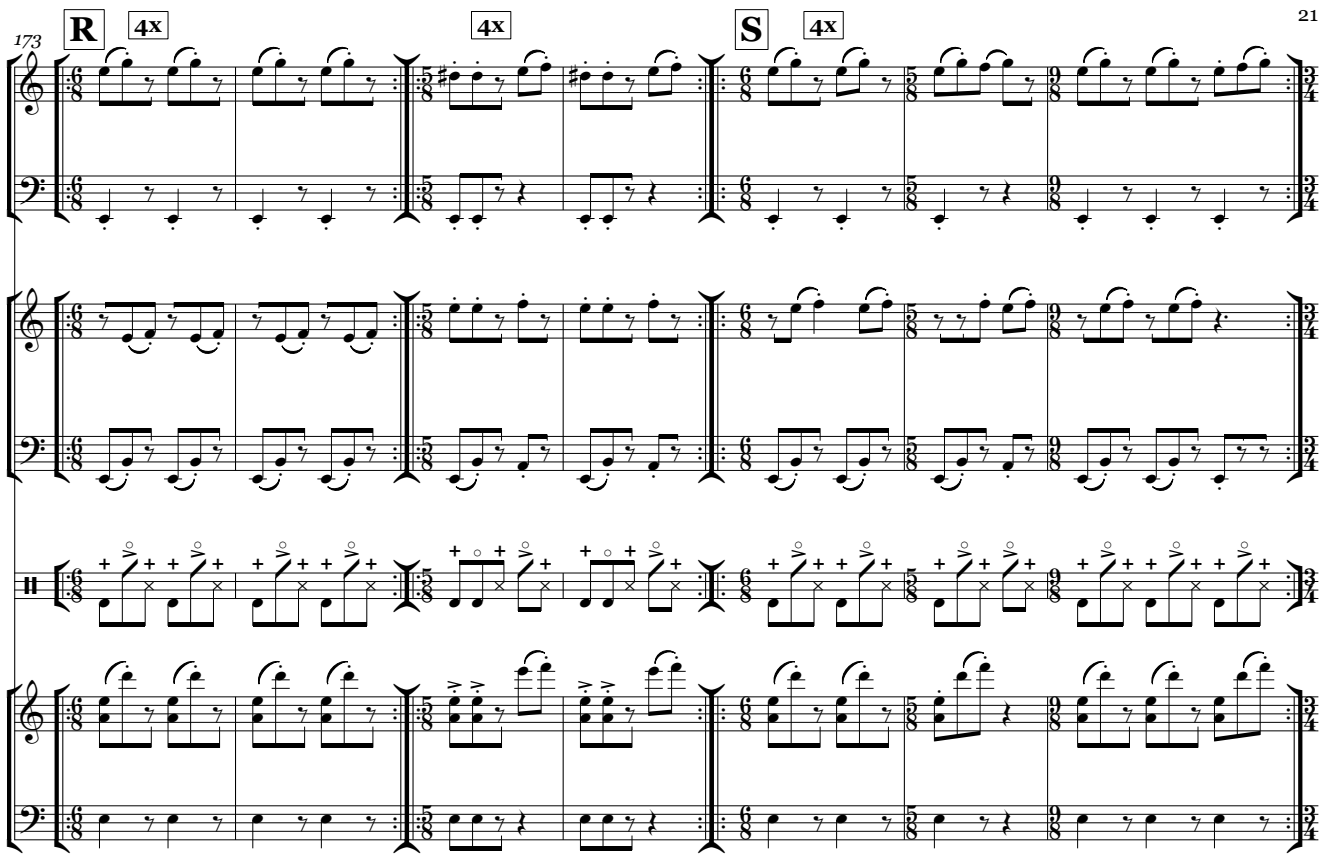

141
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
p
ff
mf
pp

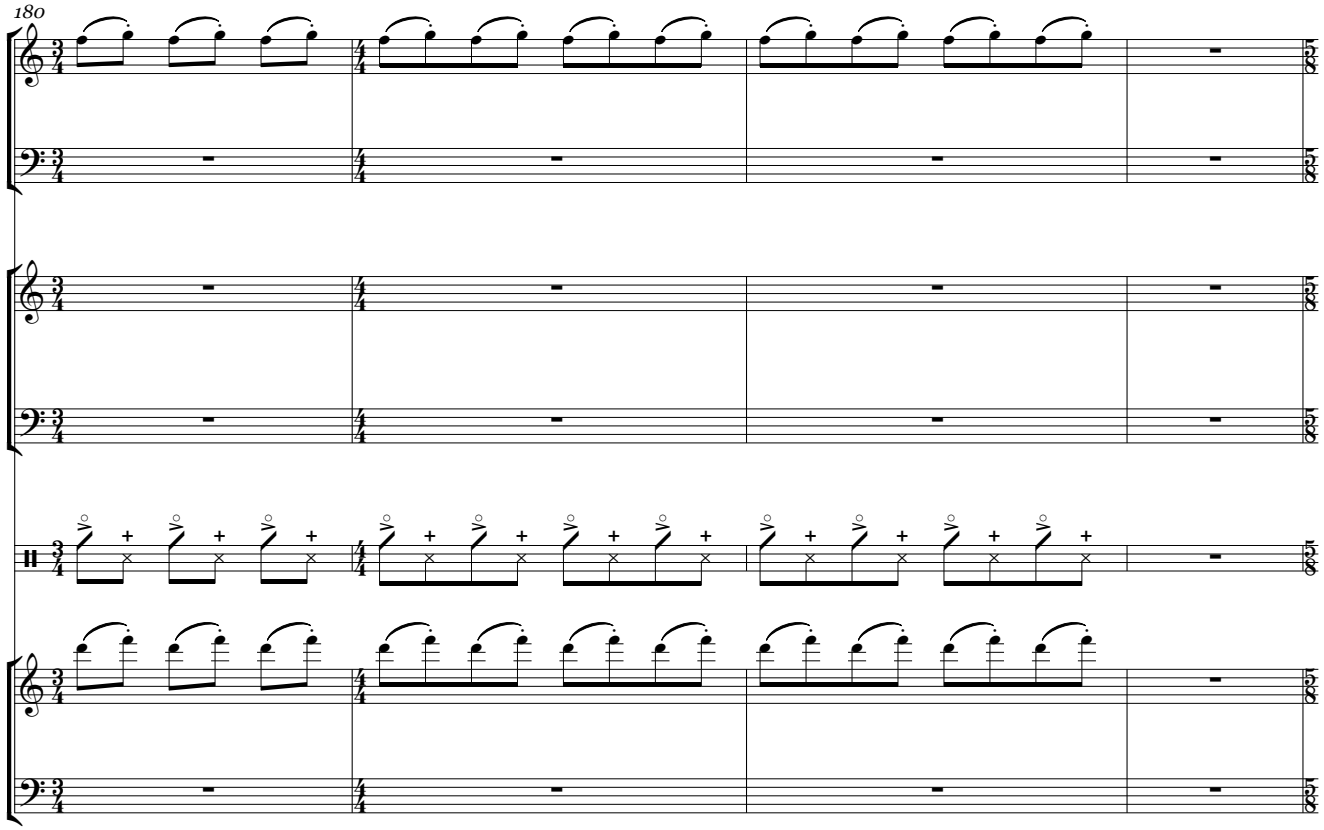

145
P
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
simile
arco
pizz
f
p

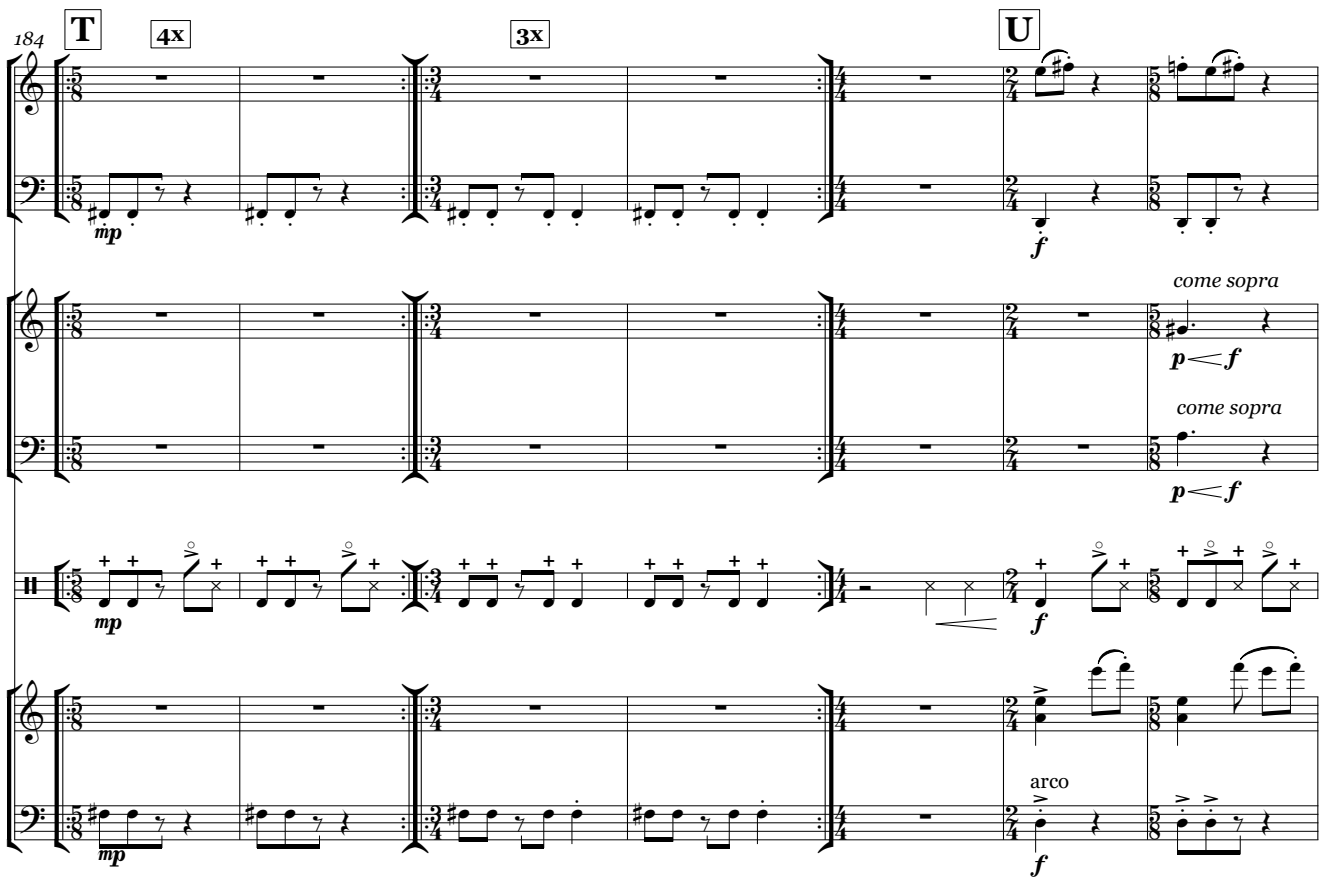

149
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.

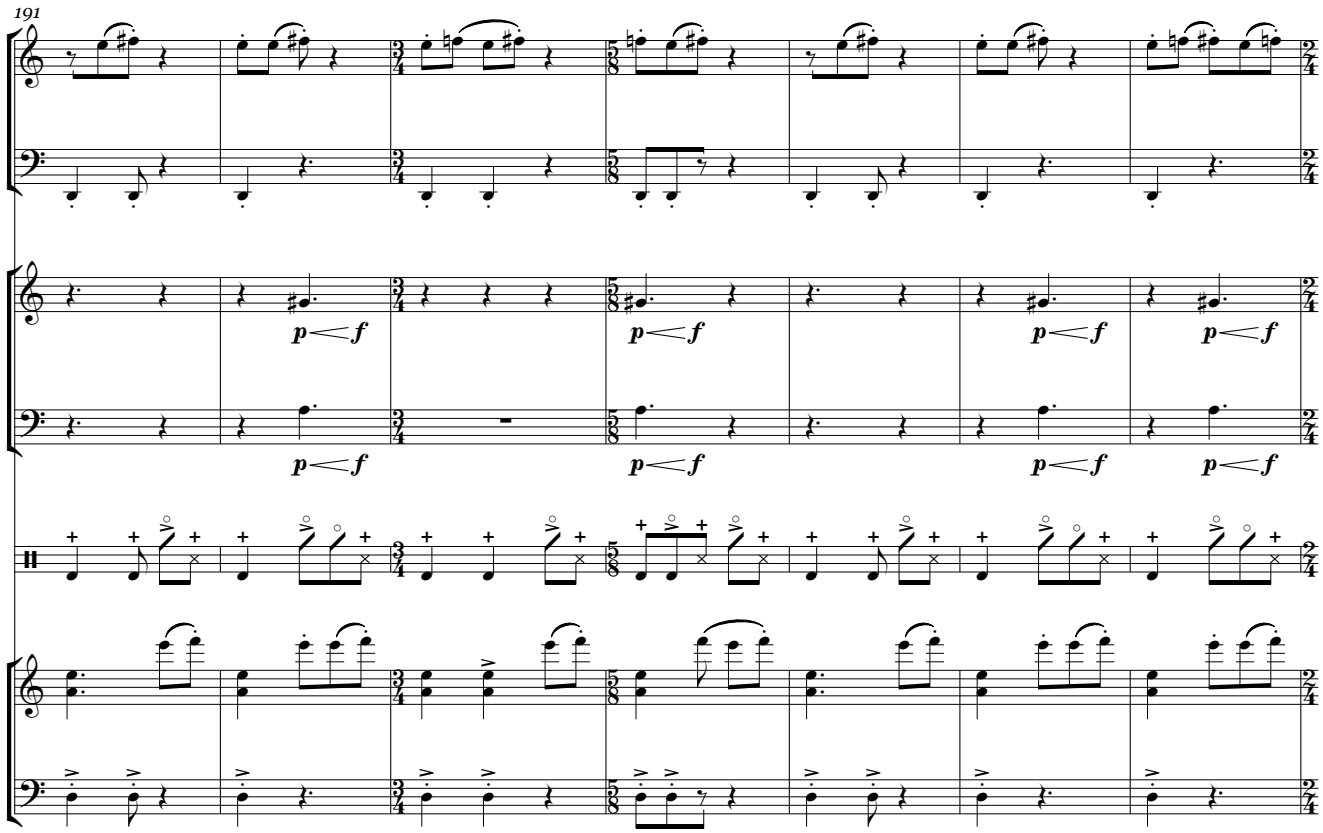

154
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.

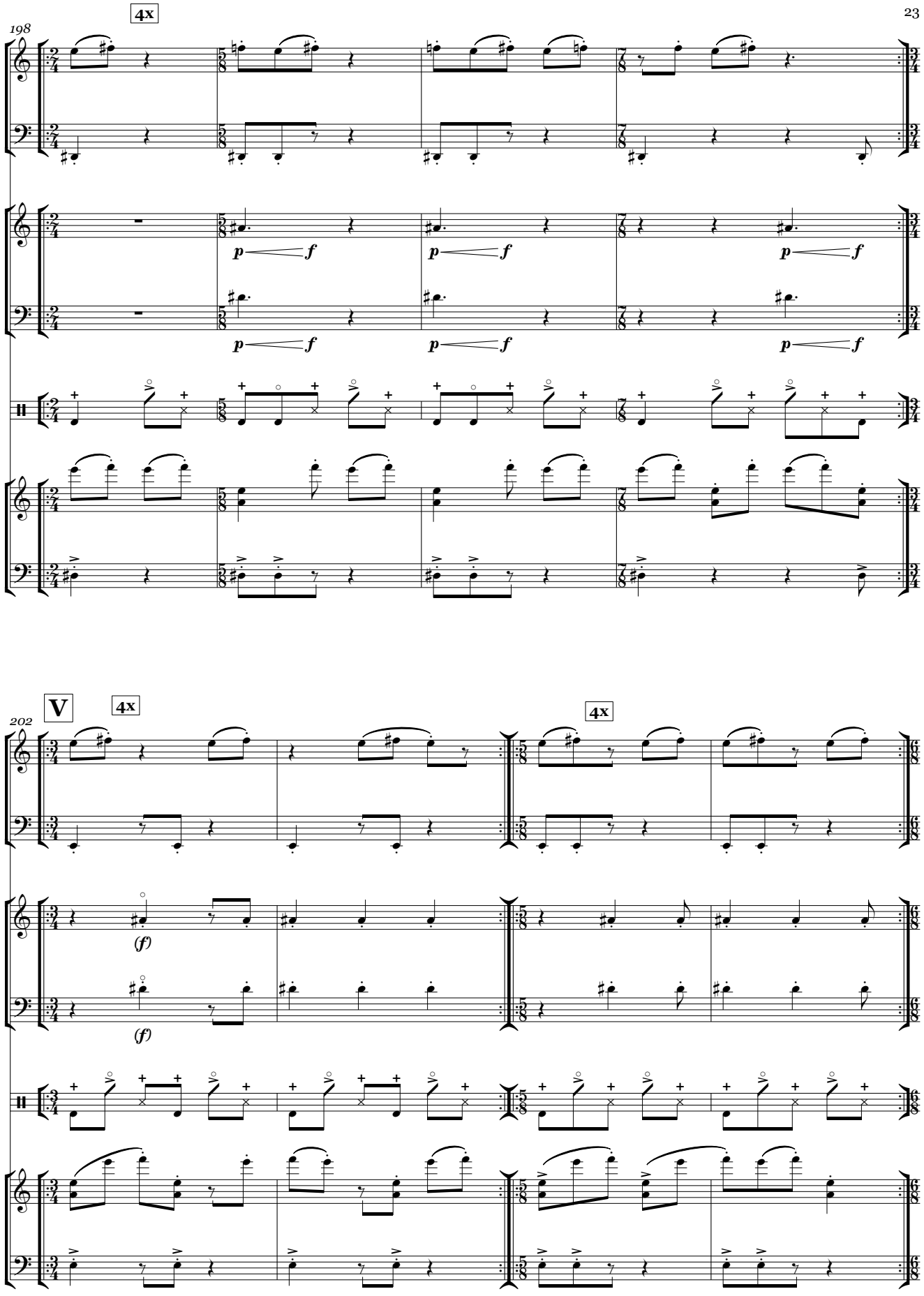

159
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
p < f
165
Q
3x

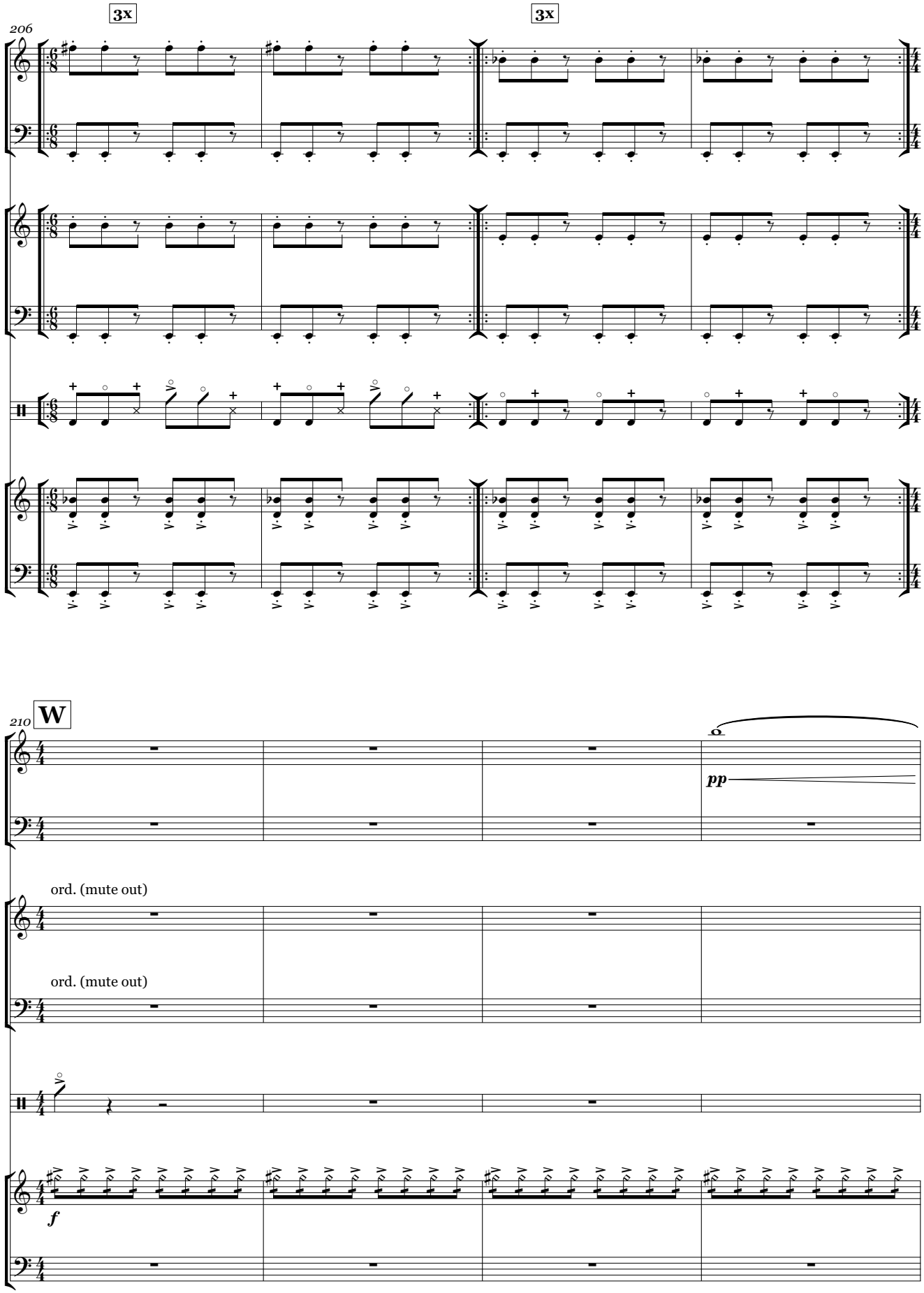

173
R
4x
4x
S
4x
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.

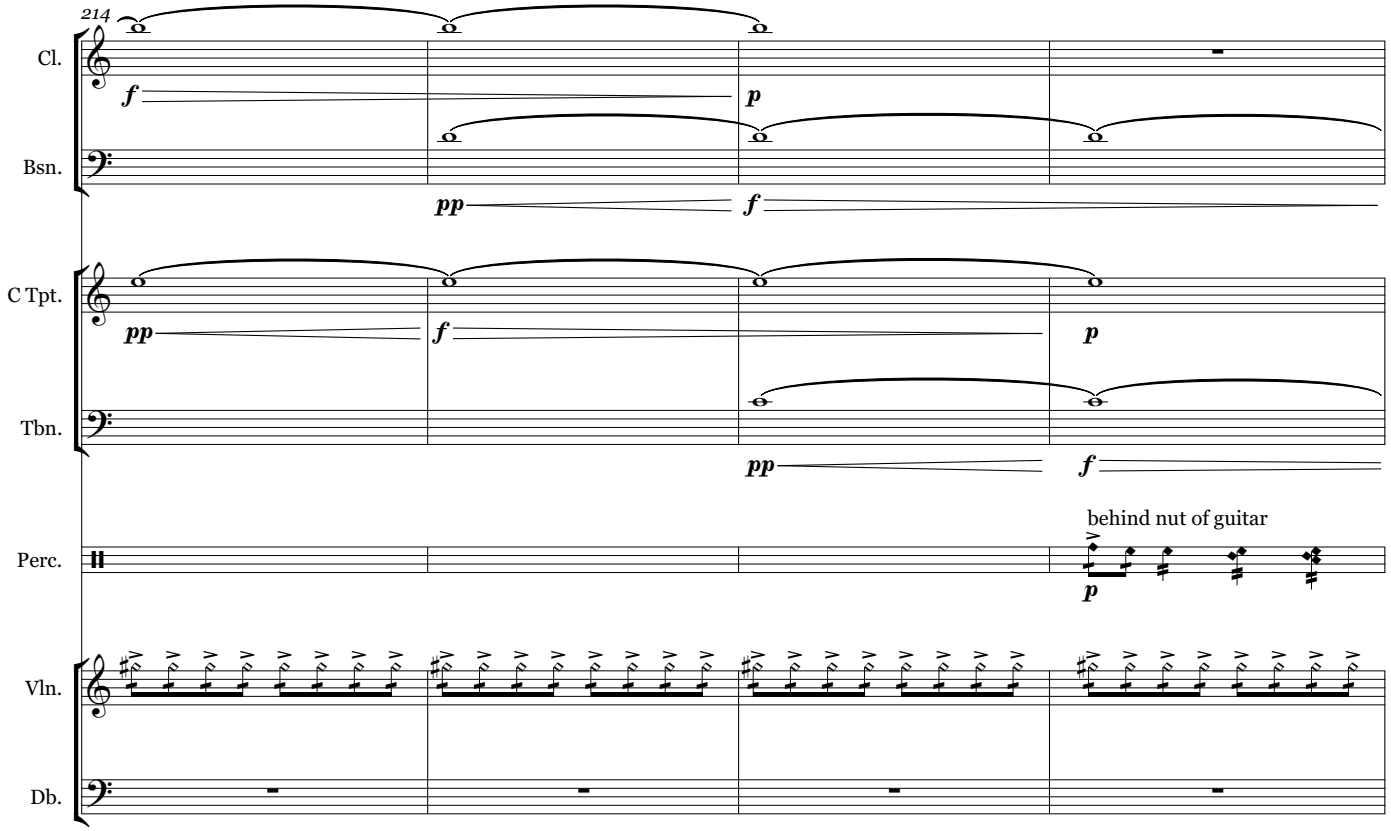

180
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.

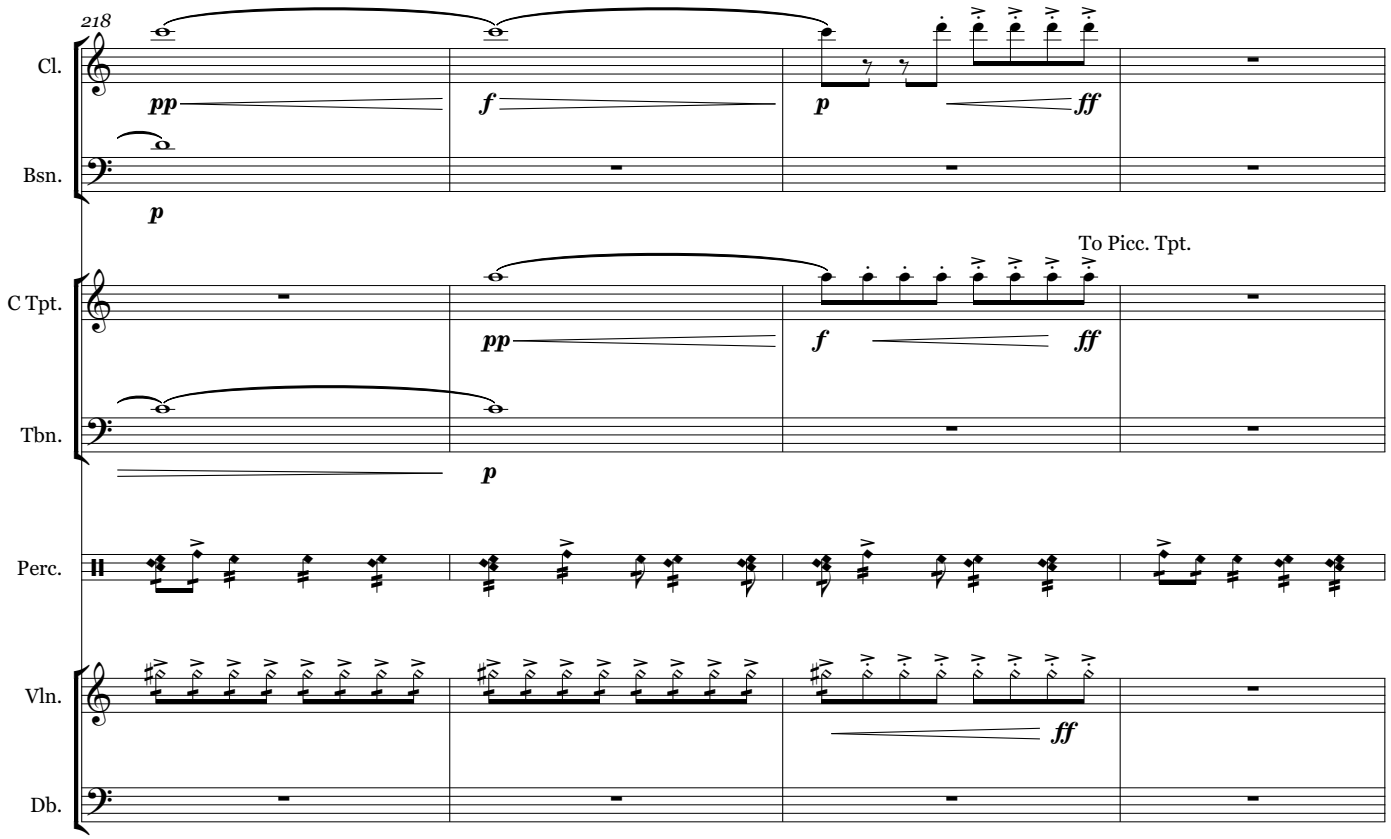

184
T
4x
3x
U
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
mp
f
come sopra
p < f
arco

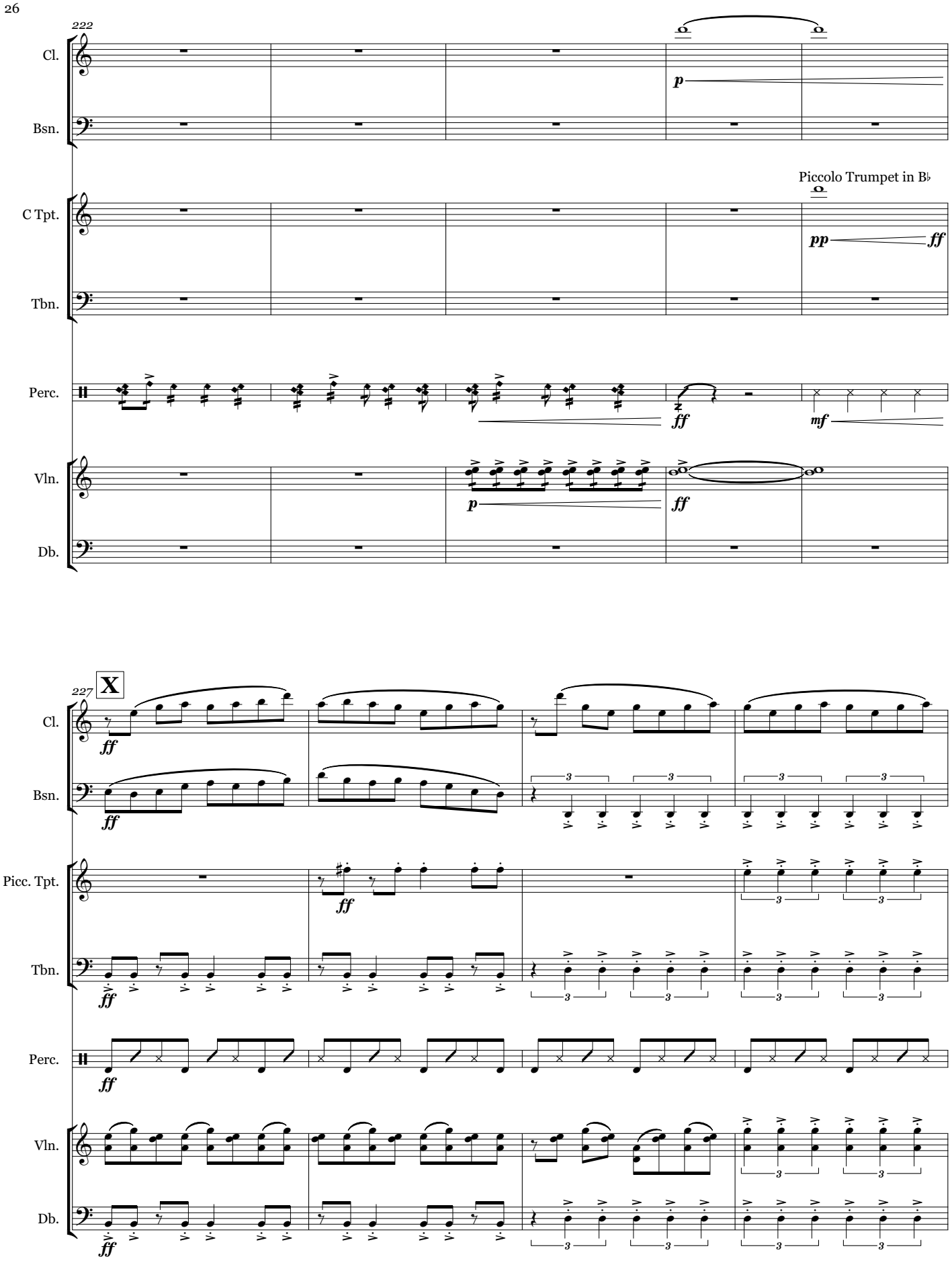

191
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
p < f

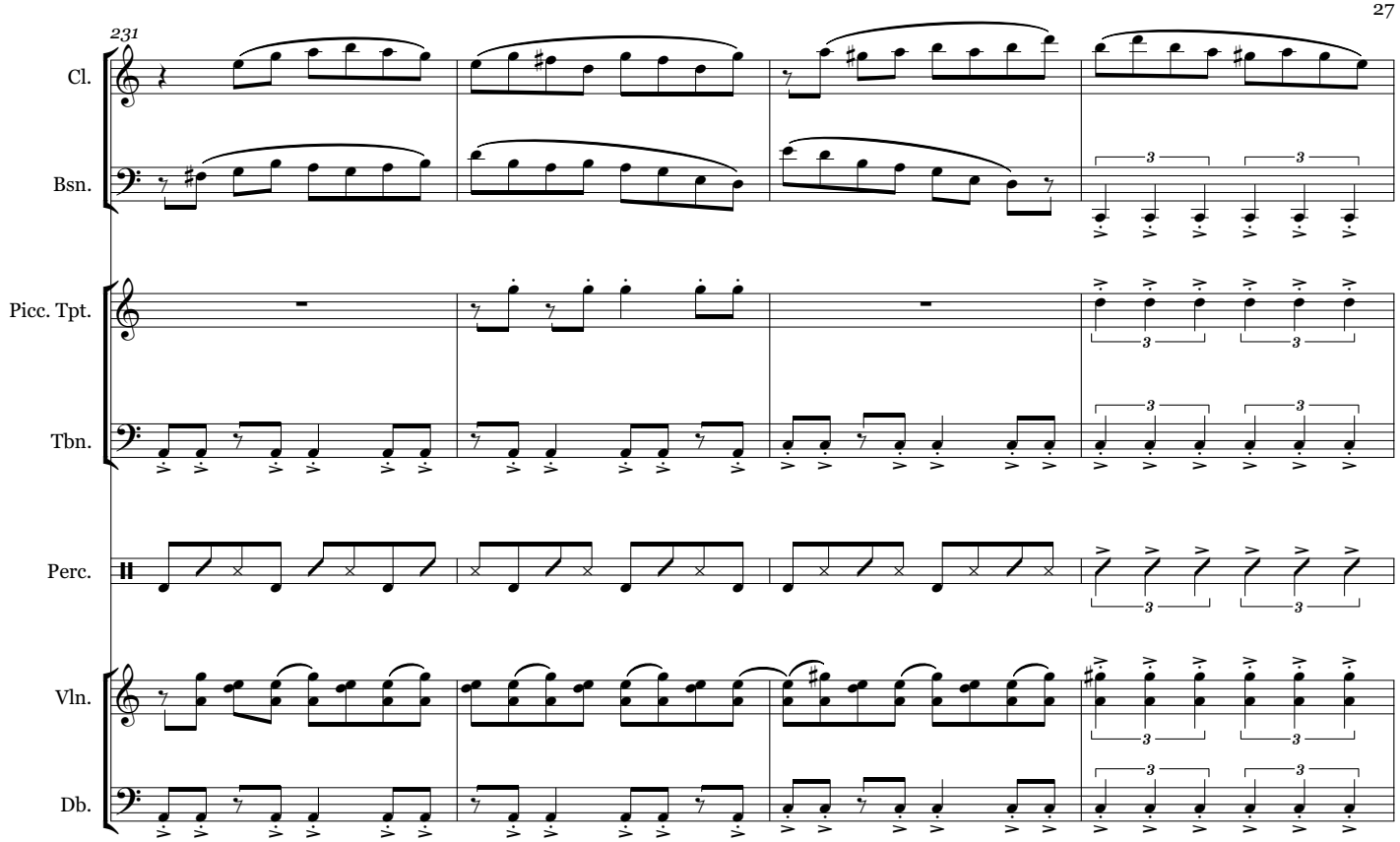

198
4x
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
p
f
V
202
4x
4x
(f)

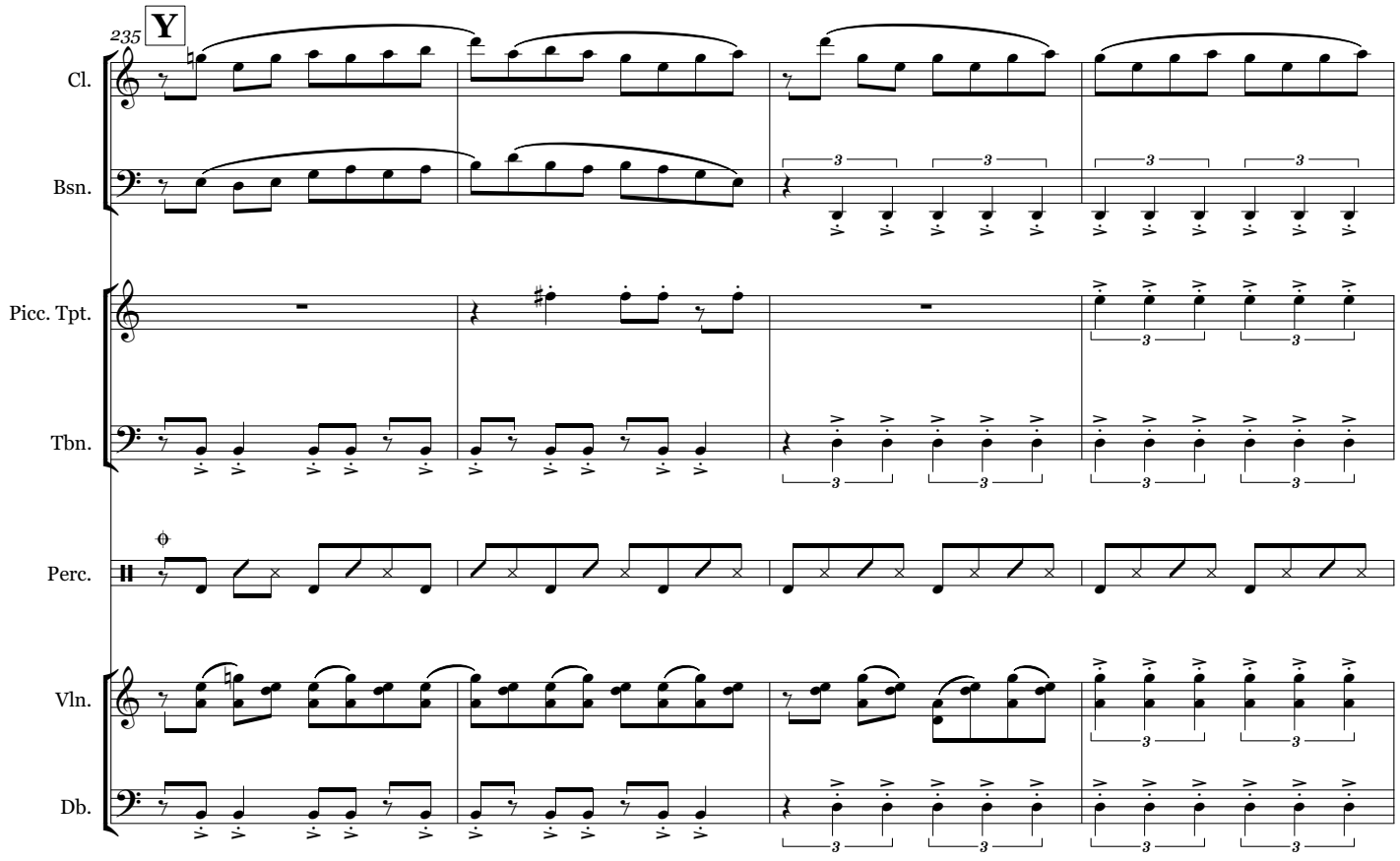

206
3x
3x
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
210
W
pp
ord. (mute out)
ord. (mute out)
f


214
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
behind nut of guitar


218
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
To Picc. Tpt.


222
Cl.
Bsn.
Piccolo Trumpet in B♭
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.
p
pp
ff
mf
227
X
Picc. Tpt.


231
Cl.
Bsn.
Picc. Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln.
Db.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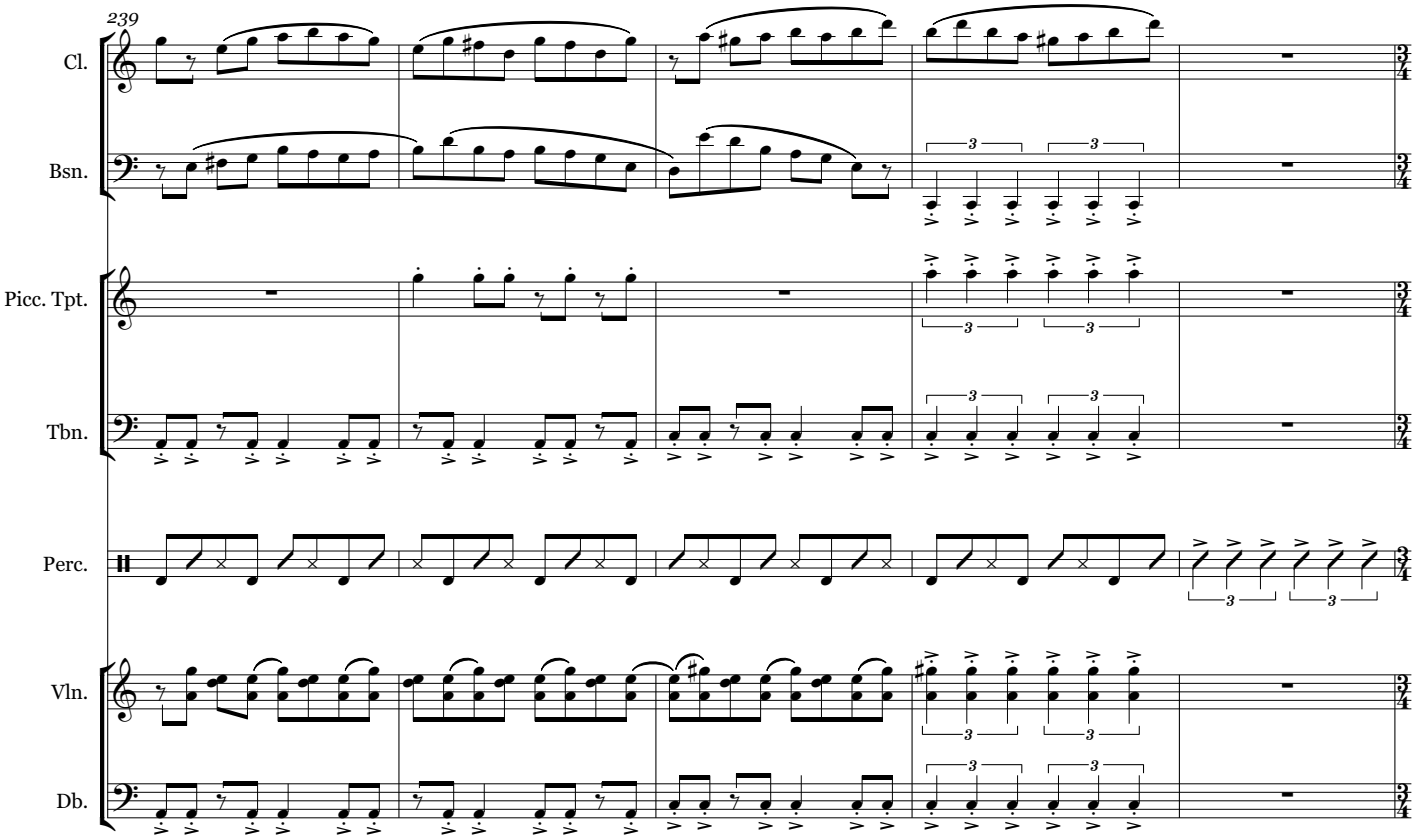
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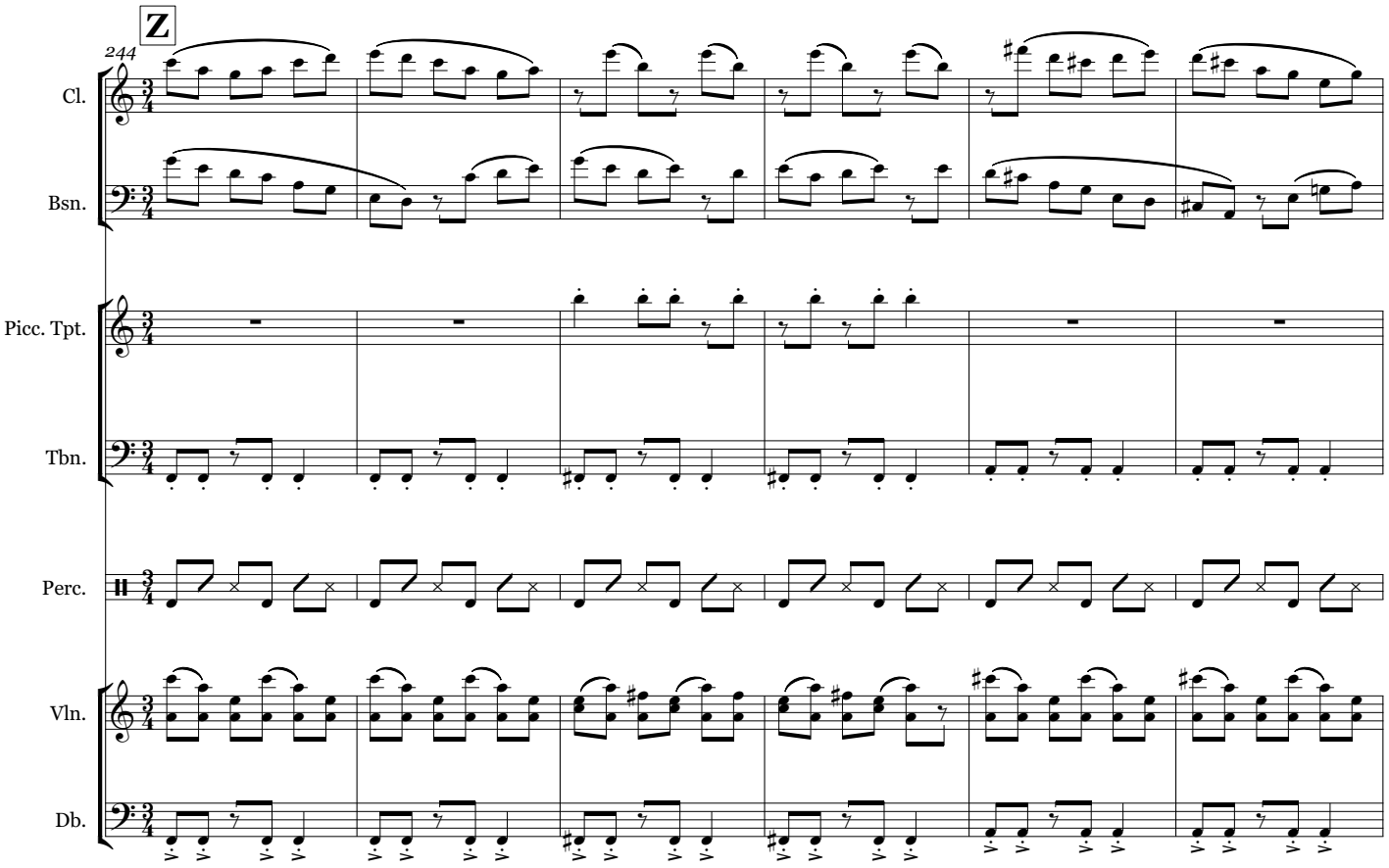
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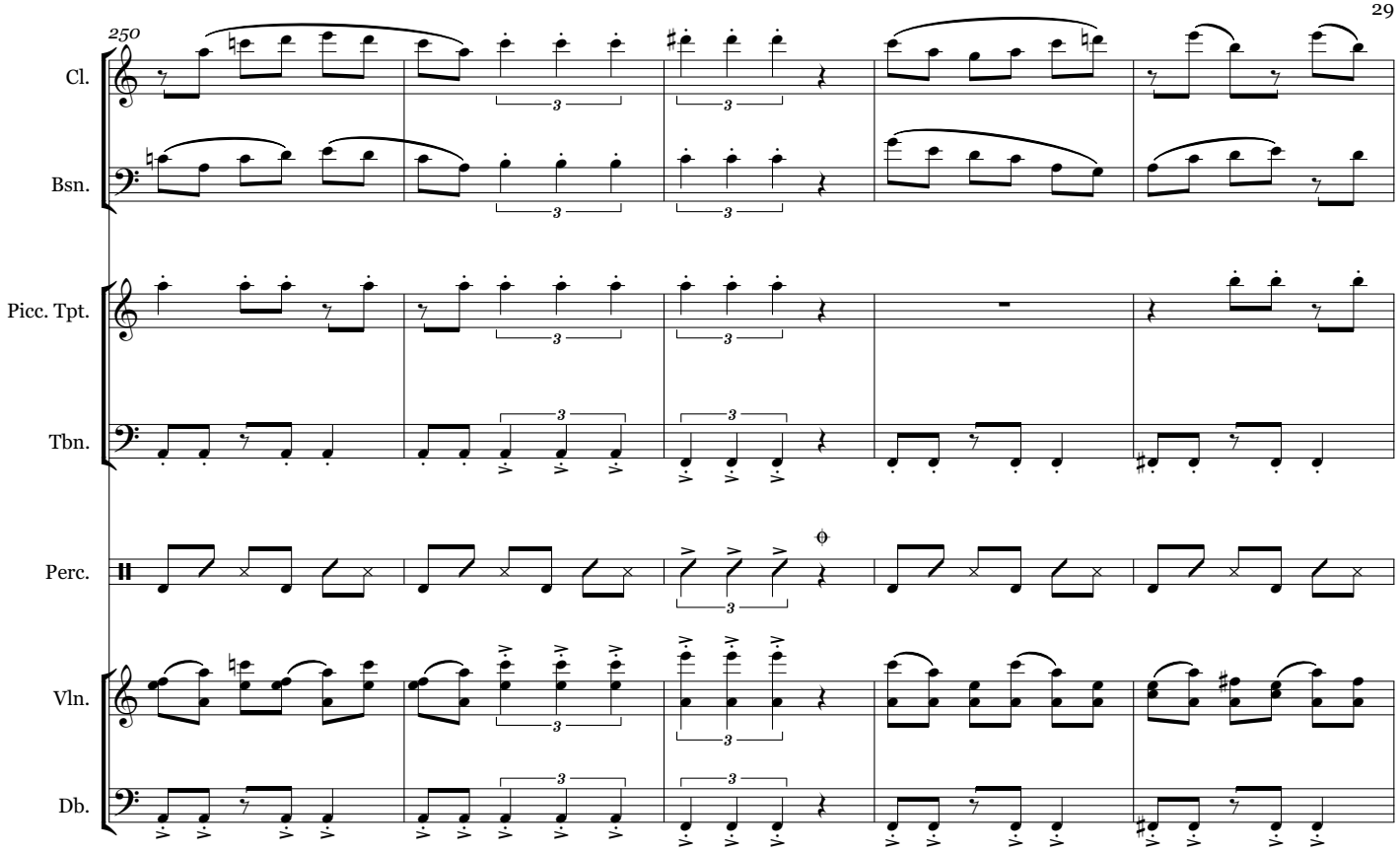
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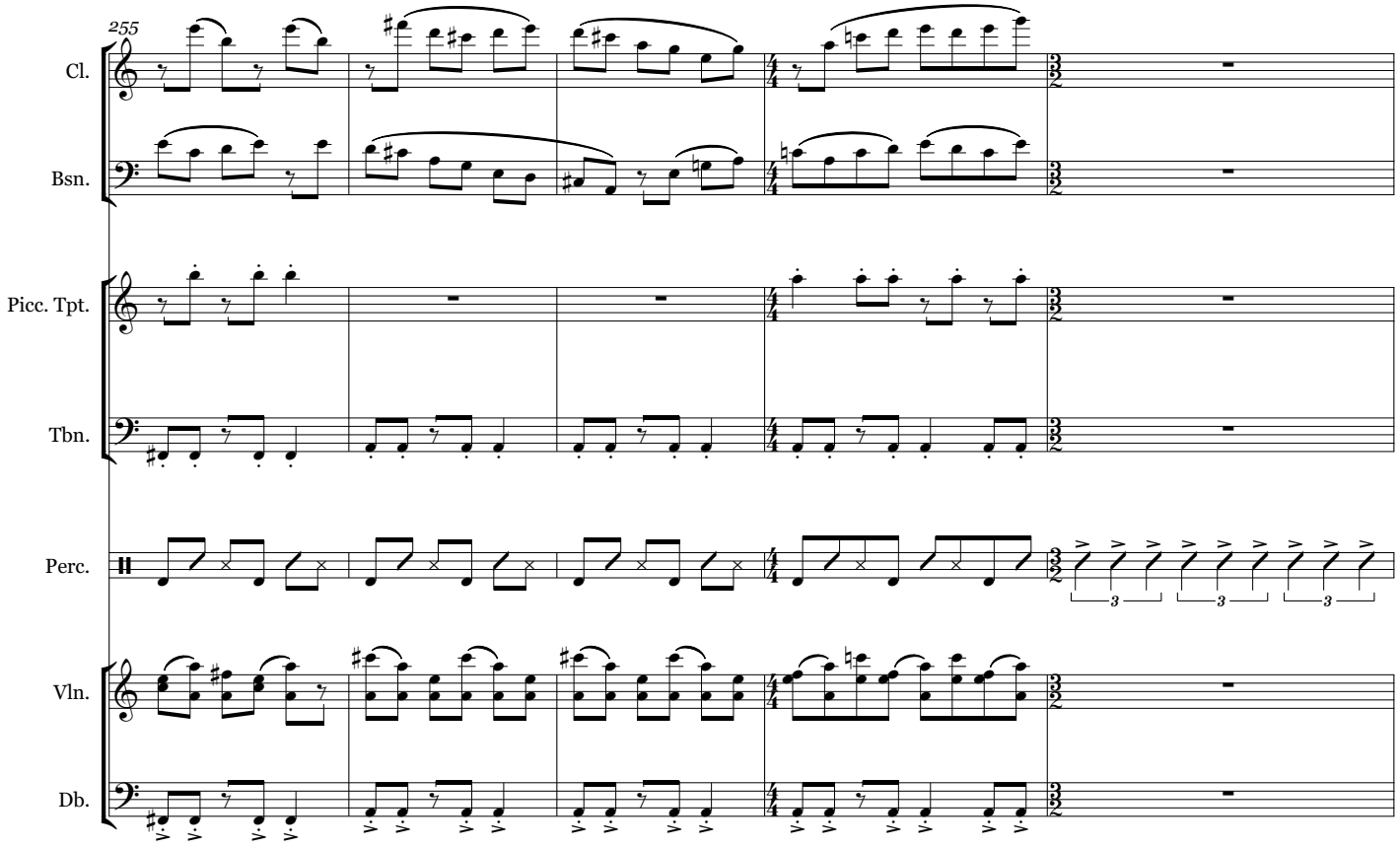
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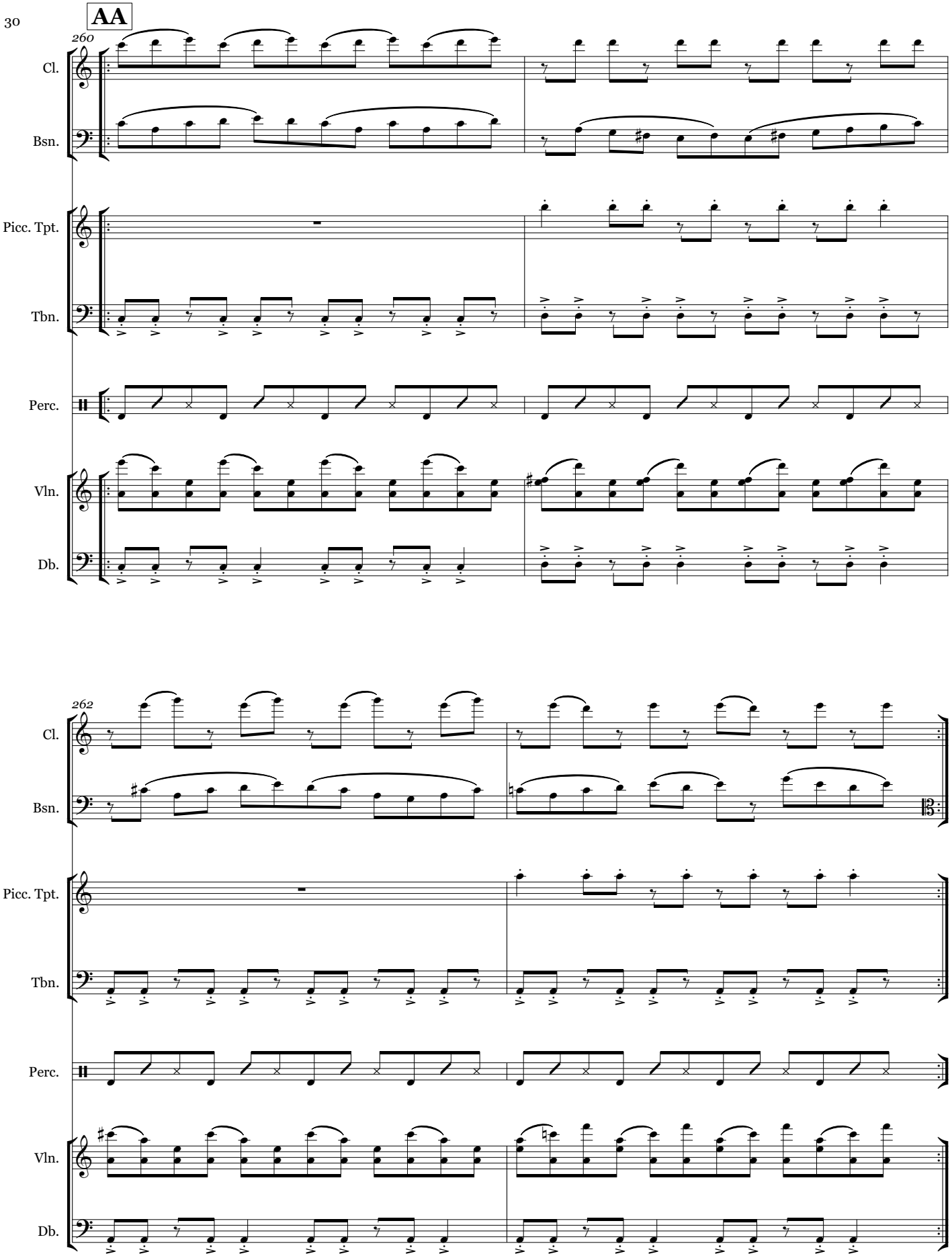
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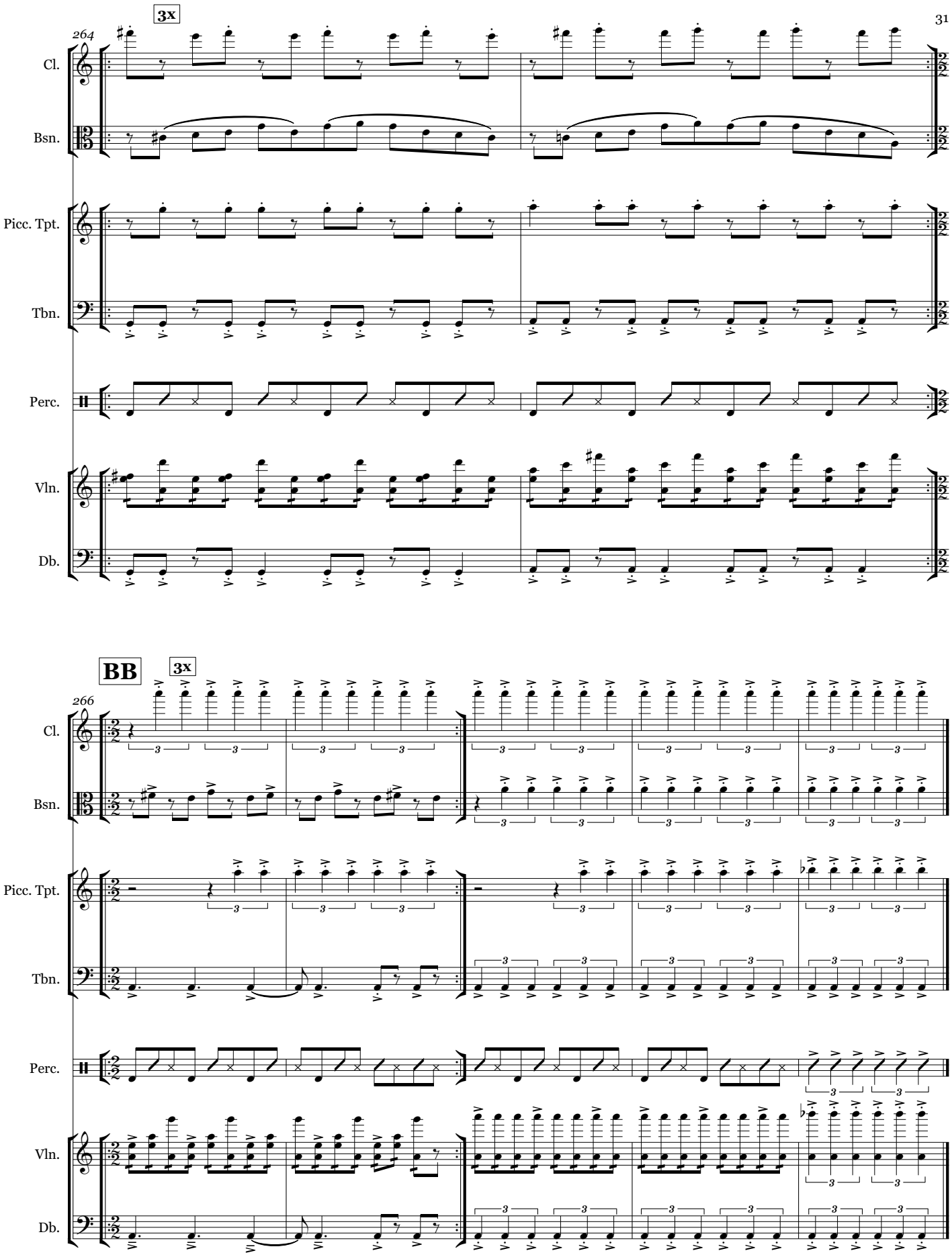
Db.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