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Waiting for the Future to Start

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Publication Date
2020

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Waiting for the Future to Start

For String Quintet and Guitar

Melika M. Fitzhugh

2018

Waiting for the Future to Start

For String Quintet and Guitar

Written for the Quarteto Larianna, Gustavo Fontes, and Daniel Murray
for performance during the Sao Paulo Contemporary Composers Festival

Musings about the Piece:

We can feel any number of ways about the future: excited, hopeful, eager, resigned, fearful. The entire gamut of emotions can be in play. Here, we begin by marking that breadth of range with low growls exchanged between the bass and cello soon paired with the high shimmer of the violin, while the guitar runs a literal gamut.

With the pitch-space demarcated, the ensemble begins to shape it in different ways.

[Bar 22...] The violin introduces a gentle rhythmic element. The guitar takes up a version of that rhythm and extends it with consistent eight notes throughout the bar of 7/8. The rest of the instruments thread gestures around this frame almost playfully. Here, the future feels full of delightful possibilities.

[C] But then a thought intrudes, stopping us in our tracks. Uncertainty. The entire ensemble plucks at their strings, trying to find each other, but somehow always missing. It has a restless yet emotionally pacing, where the durations of notes and rests are never quite where we expect.

[D] We're interrupted again, and a new pattern emerges. The guitar plays an even, repeated sequence of notes that holds the rhythm and harmonic space steady while strings pull away into fancies of their own, seeking for resolutions that never arrive.

[E] It becomes more urgent. The guitar's easy ground shifts into a faster kopanitsa tempo, but holds the steady rhythm, occasionally punctuated by the bass. Meanwhile, a series of variations unspools among the violins, viola, and cello, sometimes in solos, sometimes in duets.

[H] The abstract notion of ground solidifies into a chaconne, this time introduced in the violins. Now in familiar territory, they push forward confidently, with support from the guitar. Upon that solid foundation, the other instruments can start to build by adding their solos and duets. But just as the first intrusive thought knocked the rhythm ever so slightly off kilter, now it's the harmonic structure. It is clearly the chaconne ground, but some elements clash against it, turning the familiar into the strange. What would otherwise be an easy stroll becomes a struggle, where expectations fight against what's poised just out of sight.

Can we win that struggle? Not entirely. But before closing the piece, the instruments find their way to speak with one voice. Discordant and harsh, clear and confident. The future never arrives, by definition, but we find some clarity of vision.

Text by Lisa D. Gay

Performance Notes

Regarding the C Bouts: turns out, the “waists” of violin family instruments are called c bouts! When vigorously bowed, instruments make a wonderful, shushing/sea shore type of sound. . .lovely!

Regarding the mutes: I have requested 3 different “strengths” of mutes, noted by the materials of the ones I own for violin/viola: light (rubber) produces some timbral change and a small reduction in decibel level; medium (wood) produces a bit more timbral change and slightly greater reduction of decibels; heavy (metal) has a profound change in timbre and a significant reduction of decibels. The actual material of the mutes used by the ensemble is not crucial; the timbre change/decibel reduction is paramount.

In bars 95-103 for the contrabass: please start with a finger on the nut, and lightly slide up and down the D string over two measures. The rhythms notated are approximations.

Regarding tuning: I would like to try the piece in standard just intonation, temperament root D=288Hz. So, if they could please try tuning their open strings as follows

Just Intonation, D4=288; A4=432

Guitar:	Violin/Viola:	Violoncello:	Contrabass:
E2=81Hz	C3=128	C2=64	E1=40.5
A2=108Hz	G3=192	G2=96	A1=54
D3=144Hz	D4=288	D3=144	D2=72
G3=192Hz	A4=432	A3=216	G2=96
B3=240Hz	E5=648		
E4=324Hz			

There is a particular "hollowness" to the sound of strings in that tuning that I would quite like for the piece.

For further reference, frequency approximations for some of the half steps:

C4	256	middle C
C#	267	
D4	288	
D#	300	
E4	324	
F4	346	
F#	360	
G4	384	
G#	405	
A4	432	
A#	461	
B4	480	
C3	512	
C#	540	
D3	576	

Suggested seating: an arc of Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Guitar, Violoncello, Contrabass.

Programme Note

The piece begins in a fairly stern, somewhat foreboding way before starting to lighten a bit with repeated ascending passages. This gives way to harmonics followed by a flurry of pizzicato, which in turn yields to dance-like sections that evince greater hope and intensity.

Duration: 7 minutes

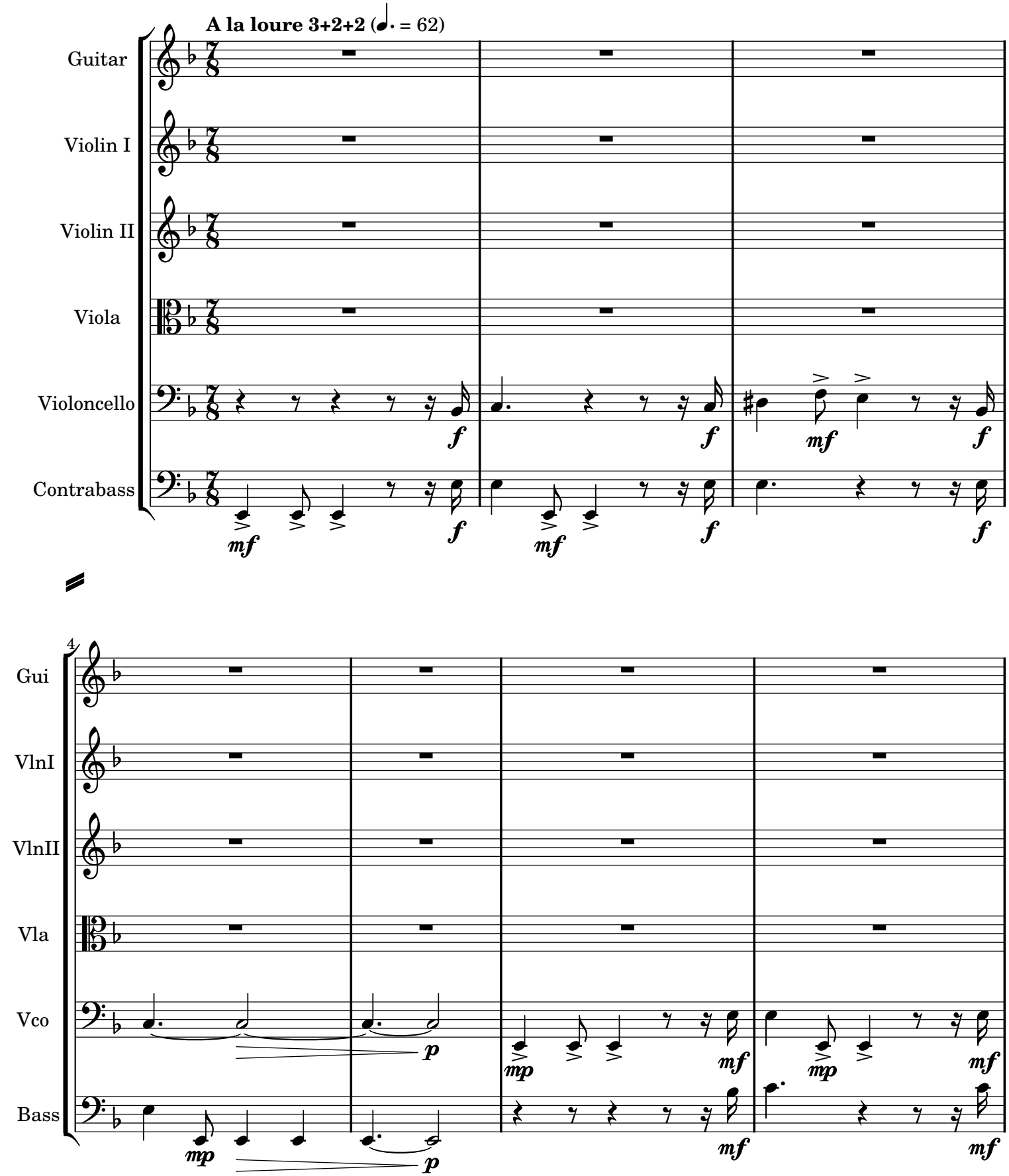
July 2018

For the Quarteto Larianna, Gustavo Fontes, and Daniel Murray

Waiting for the Future to Start

For String Quintet and Guitar

Melika M. Fitzhugh (2018)



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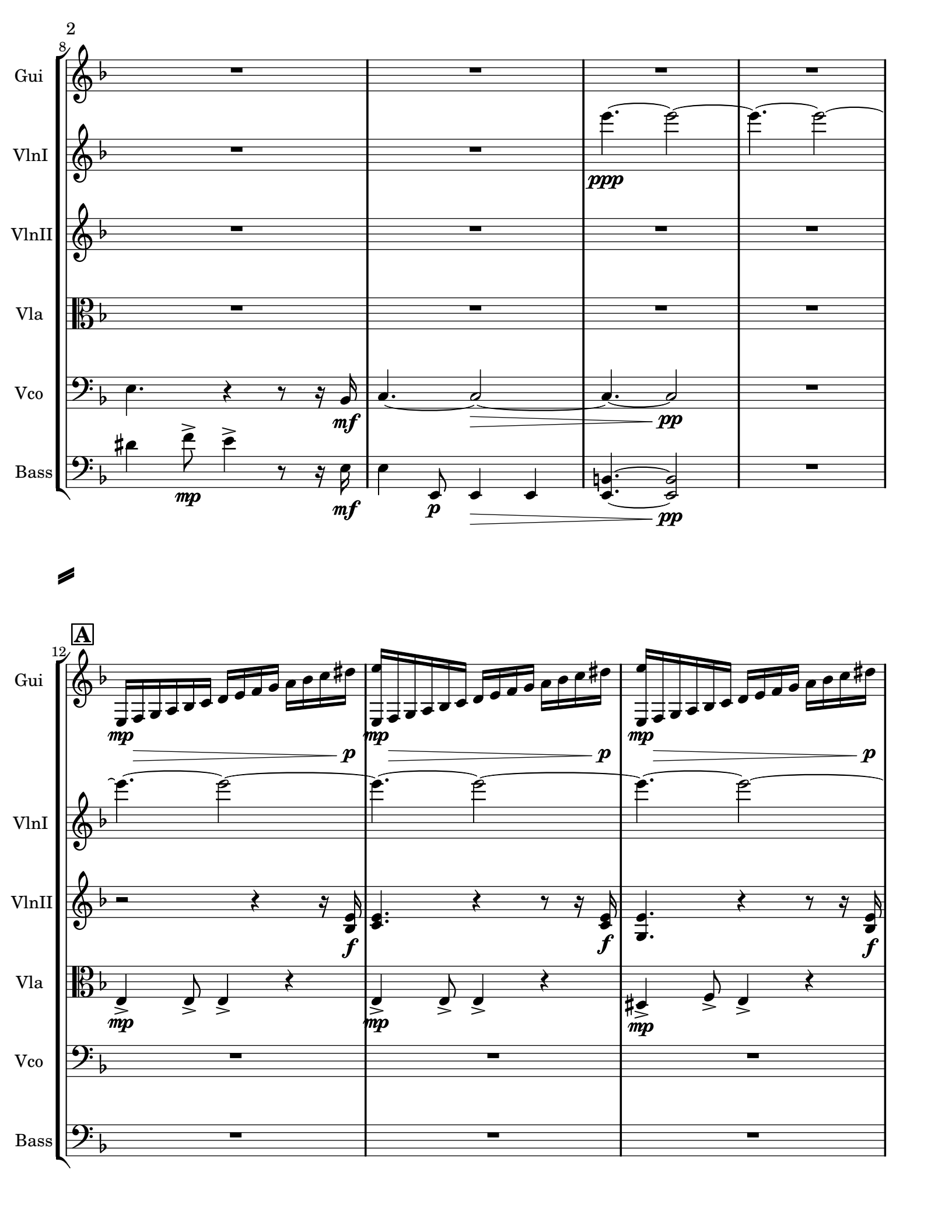
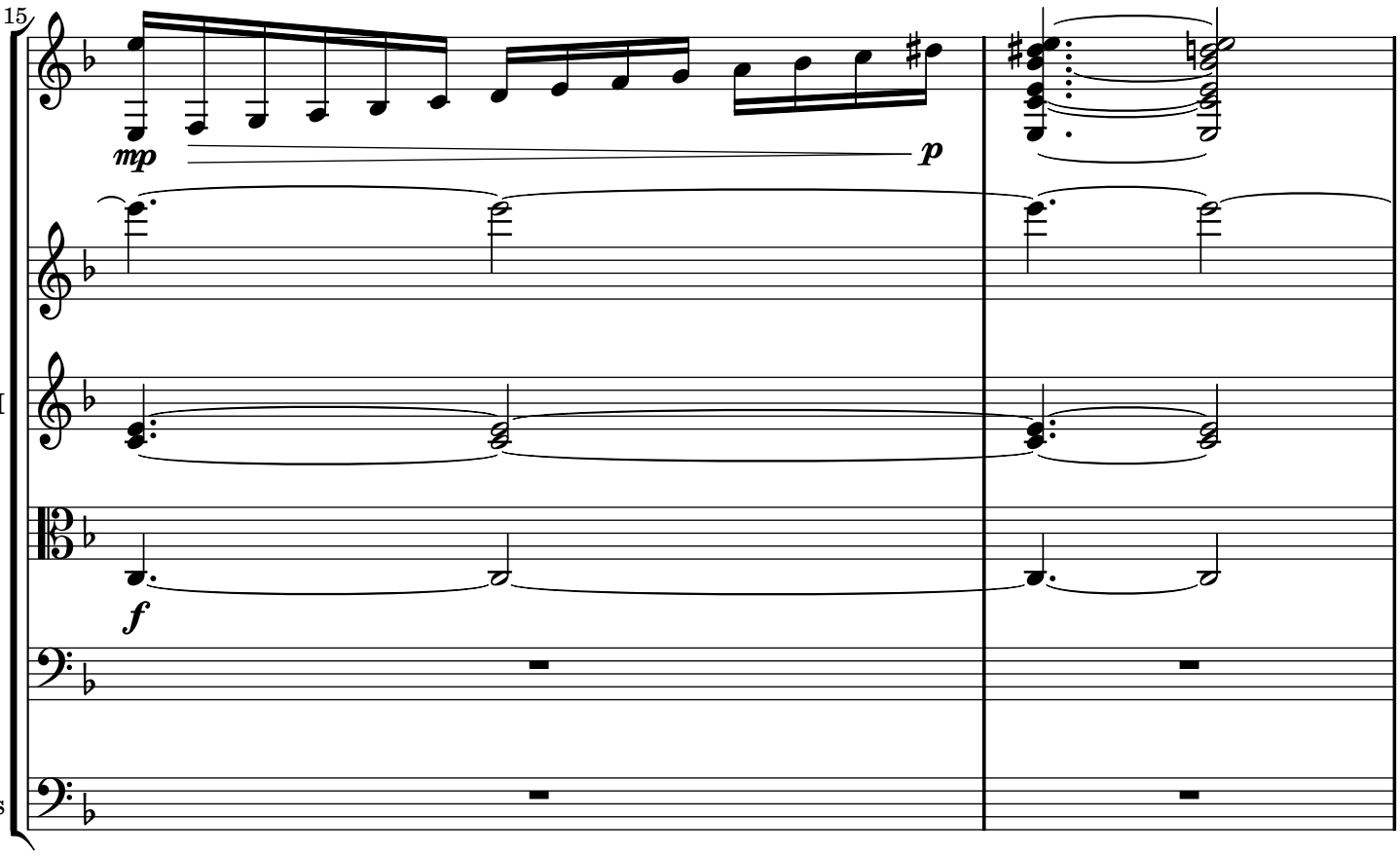
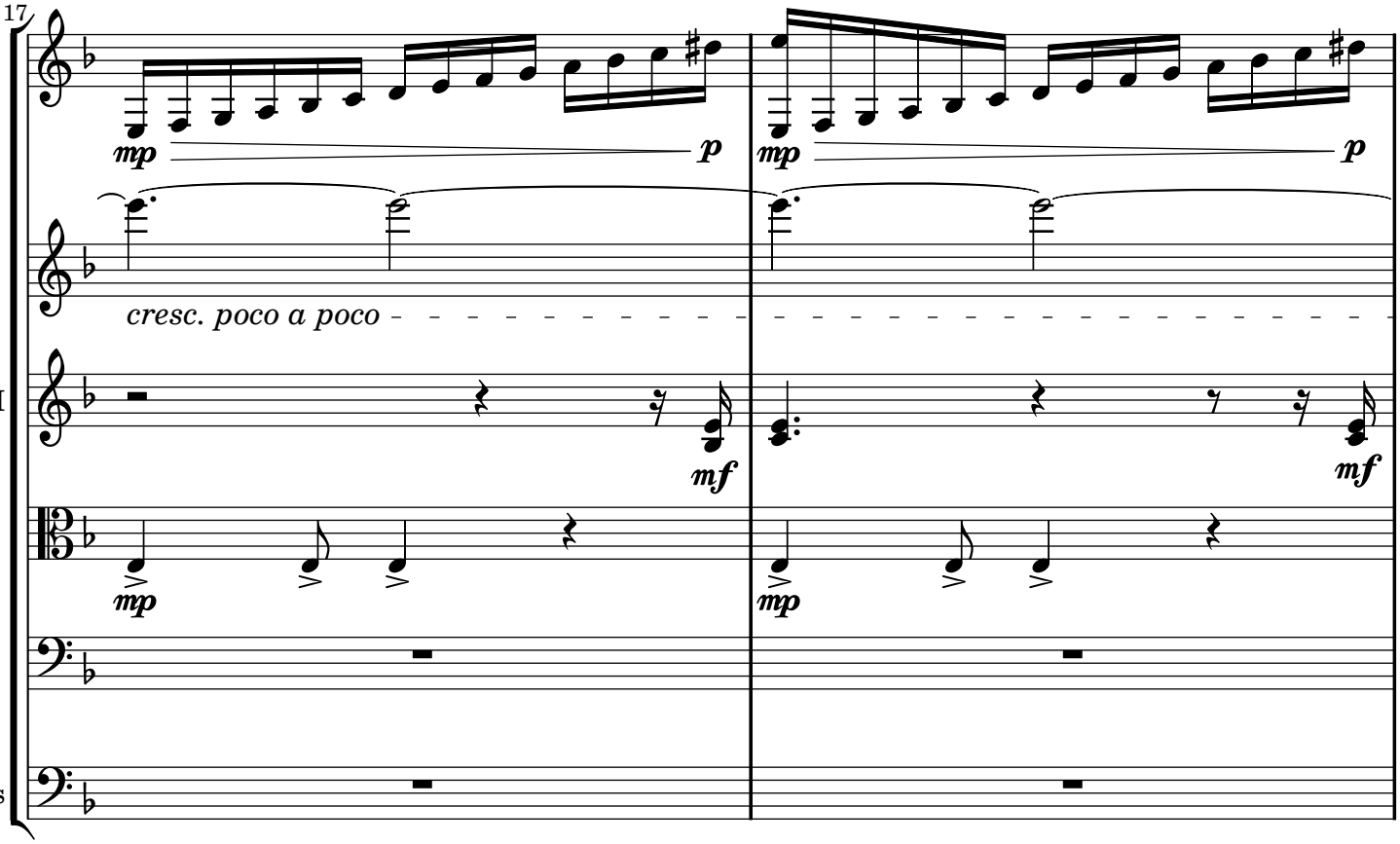
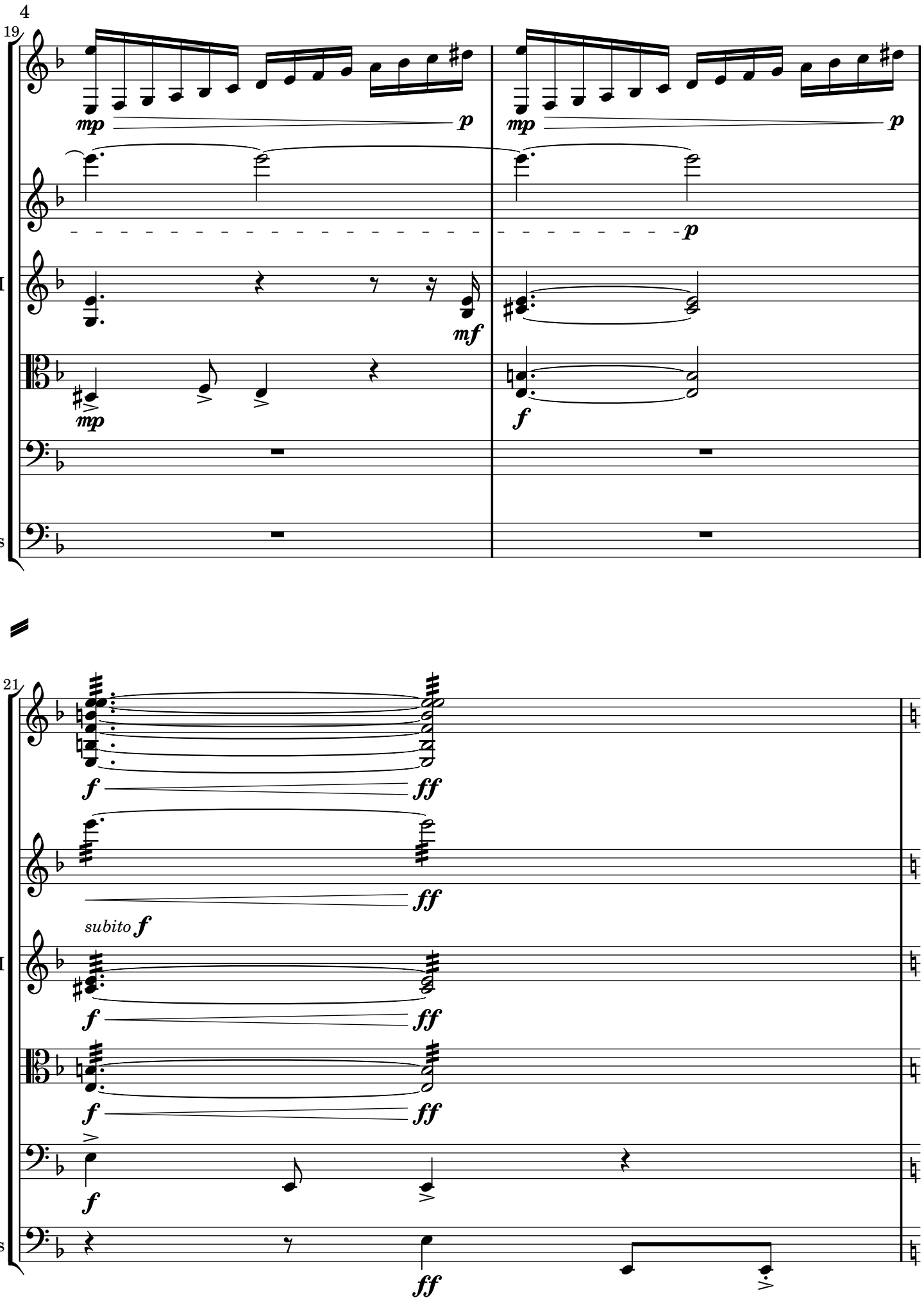

2
8
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
ppp
mf
pp
mp
mf
p
pp
A
12
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
mp
p
mp
p
mp
p
f
f
f
mp
mp
mp


15
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
mp
p
f


17
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
mp
p
cresc. poco a poco
mf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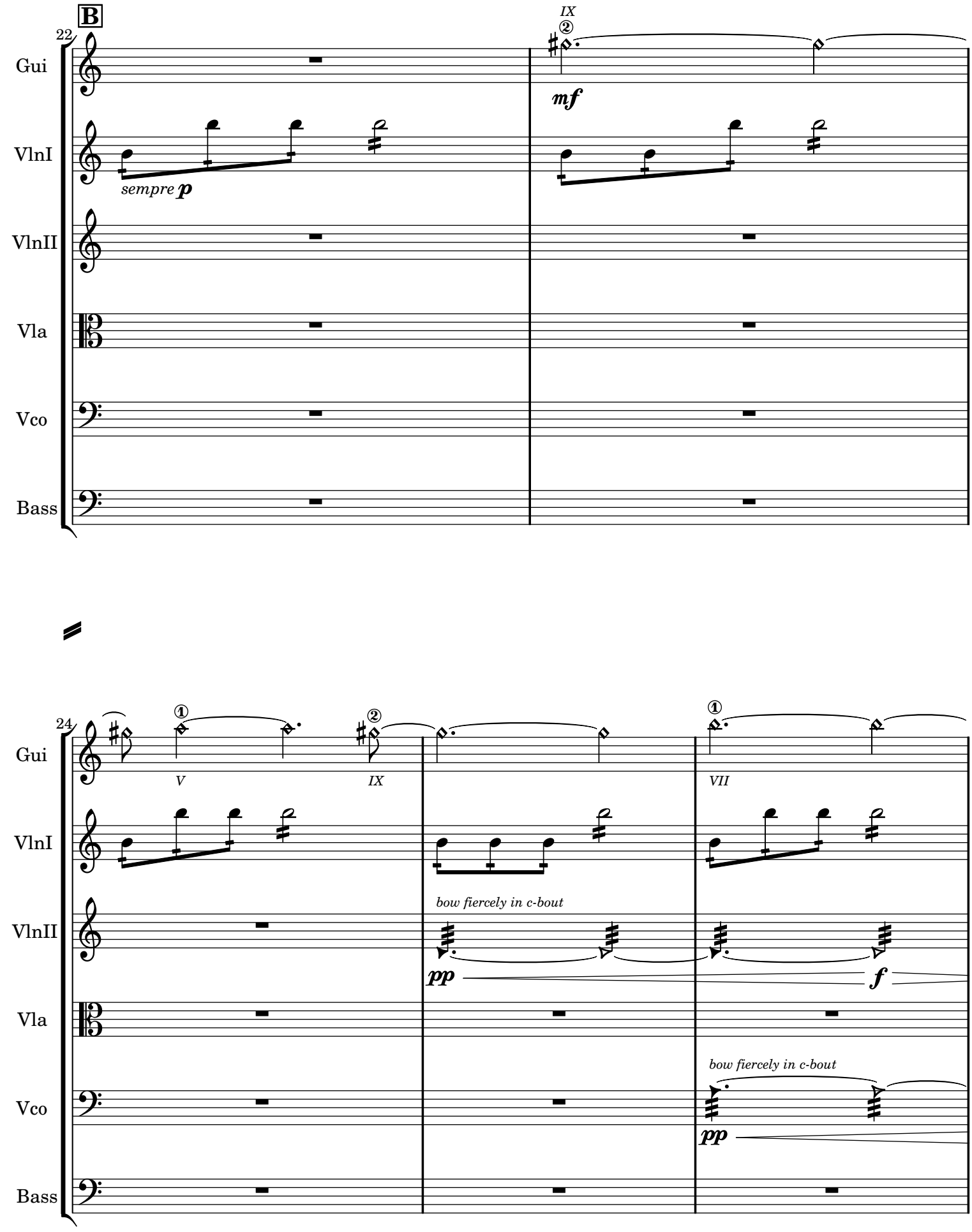
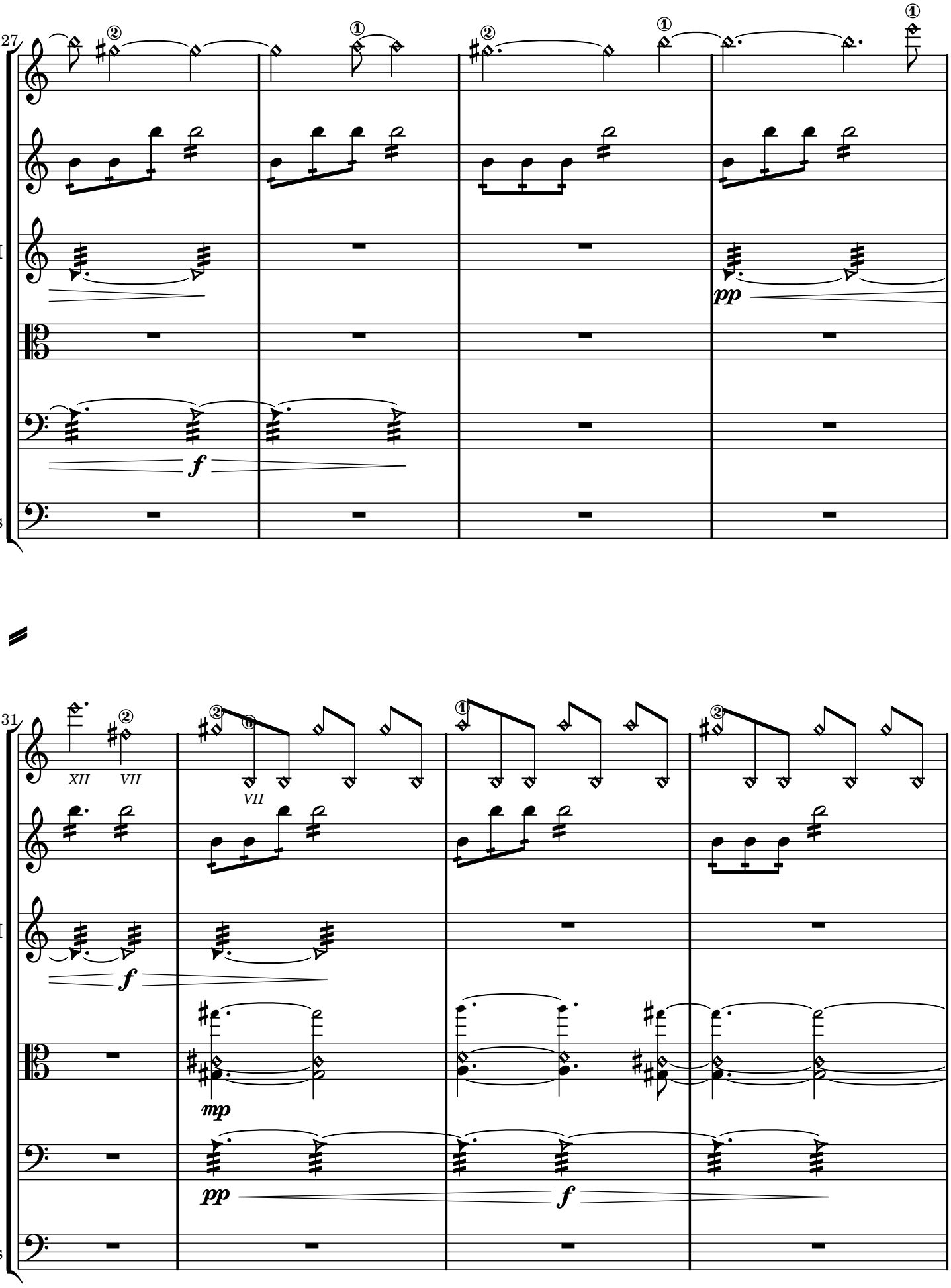
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
mp
p
mf
f
21
ff
subito f


B
22
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
IX
②
mf
sempre p
24
①
②
V
IX
VII
bow fiercely in c-bout
pp
f
bow fiercely in c-bout
pp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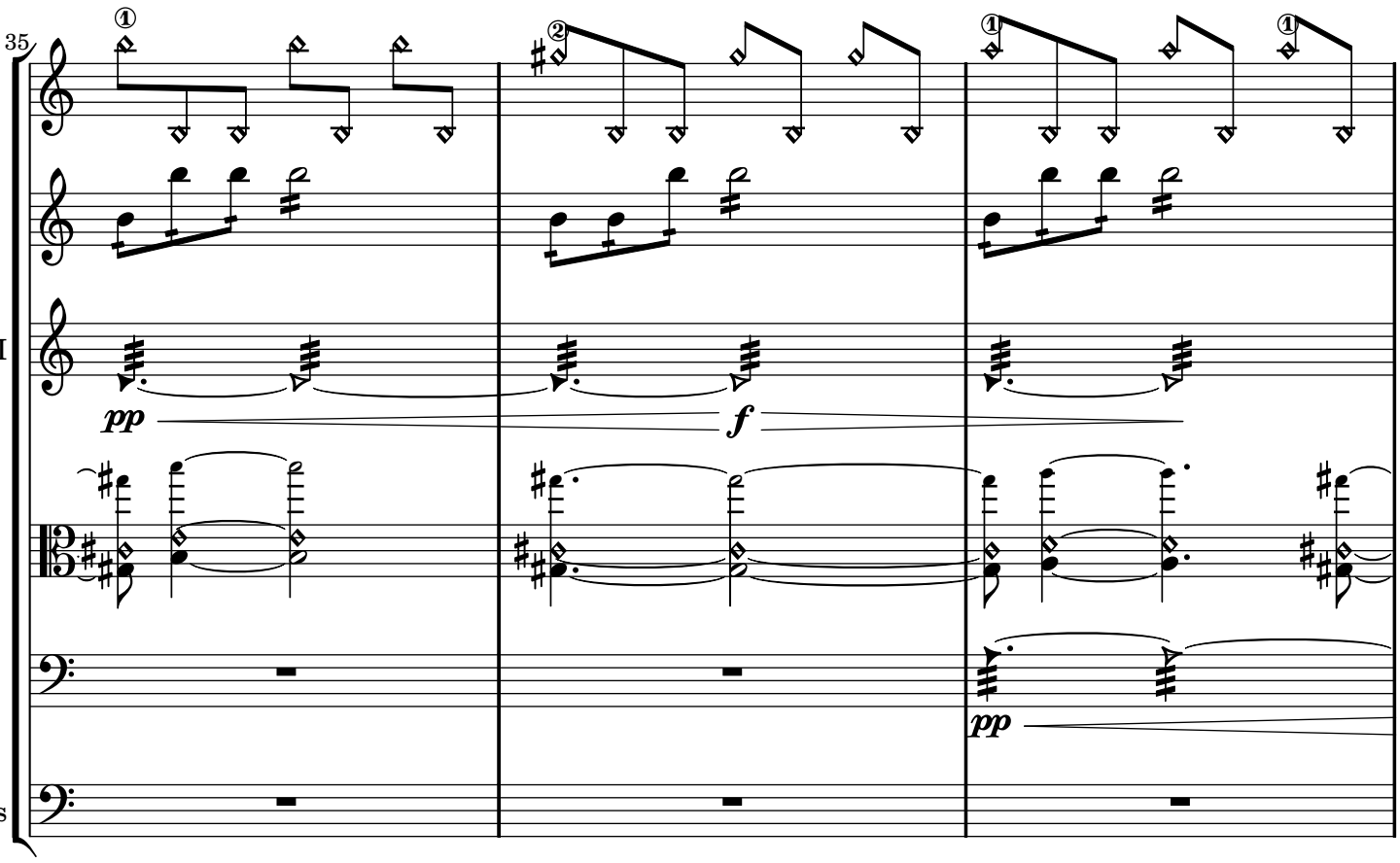
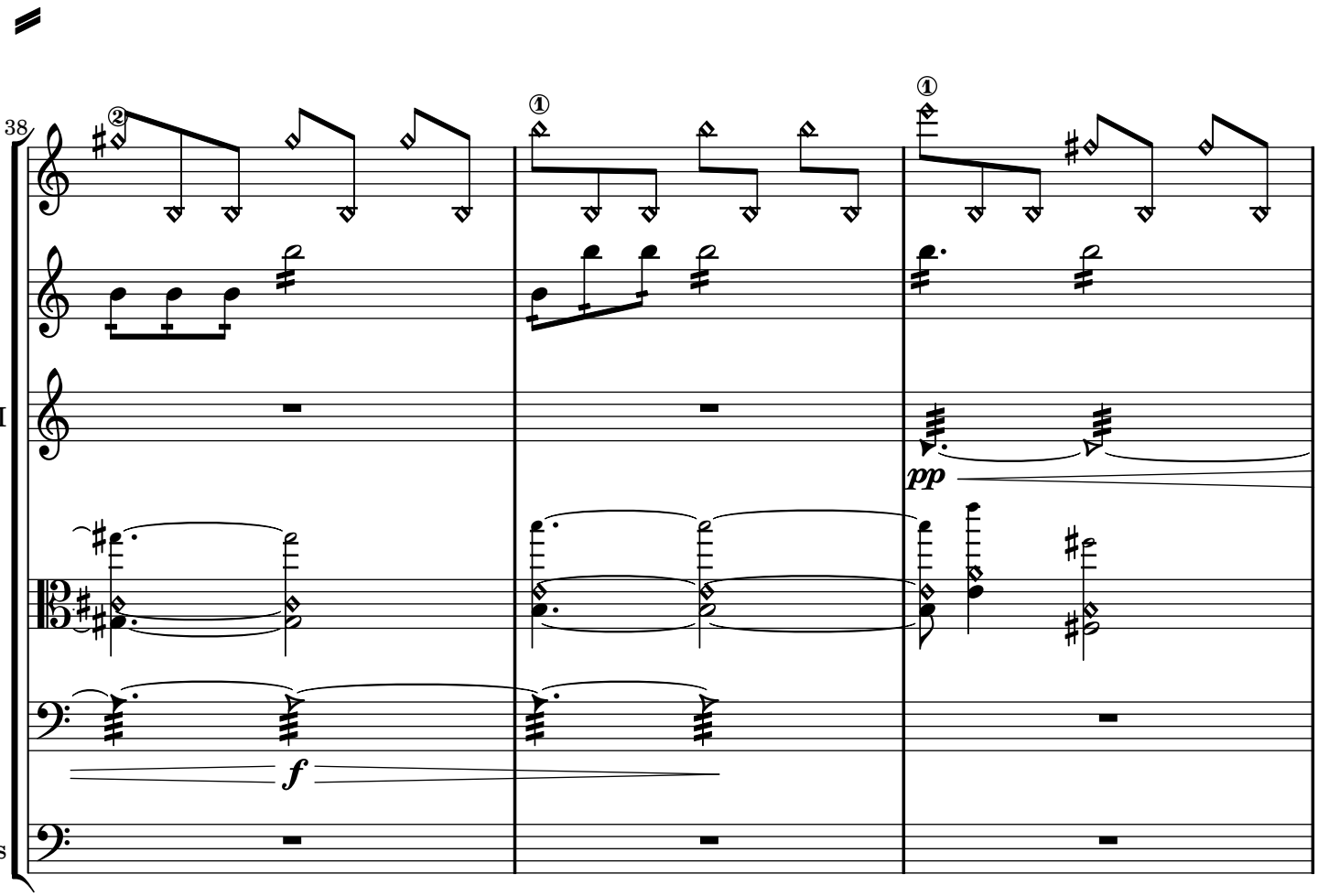
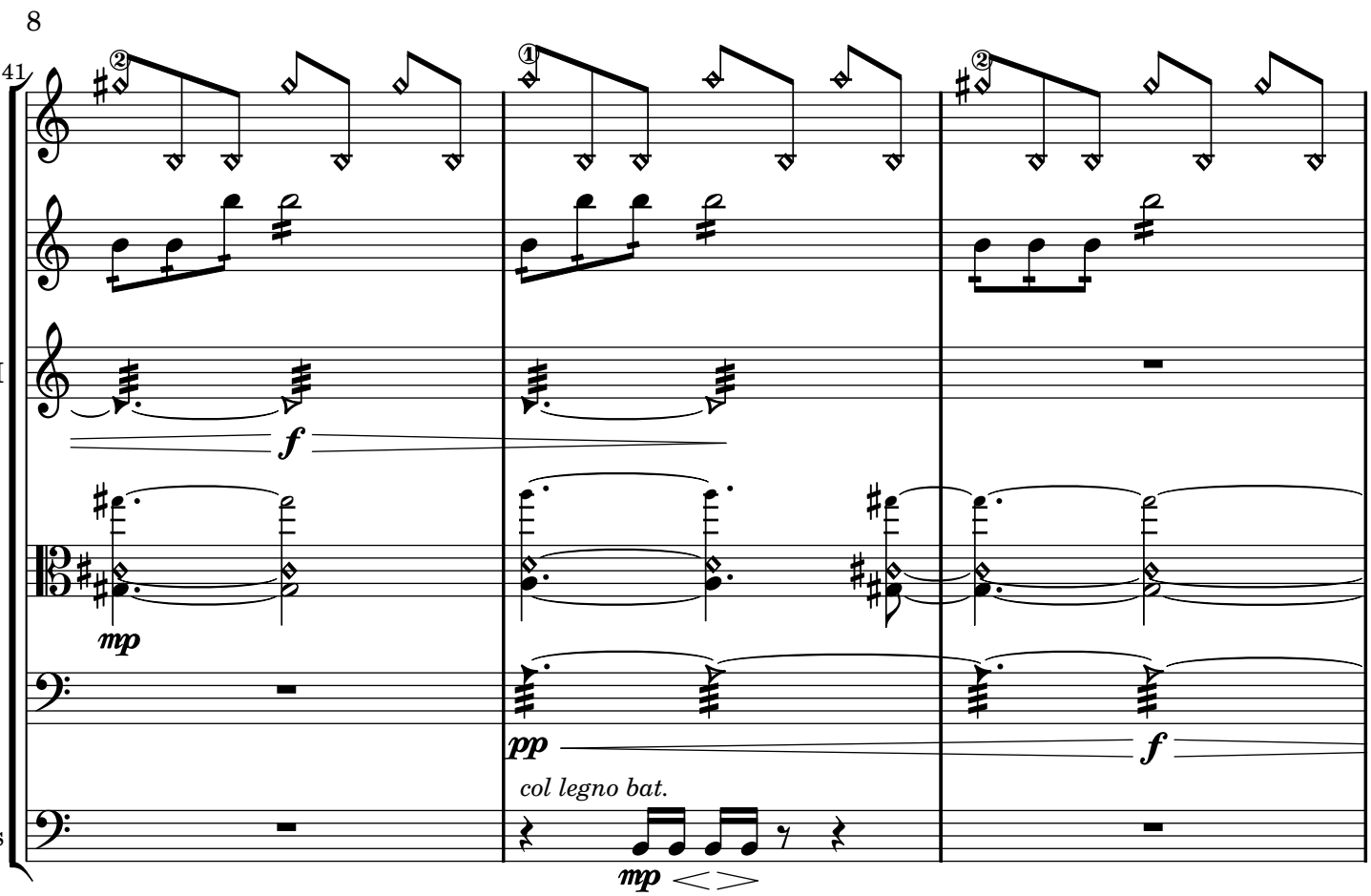
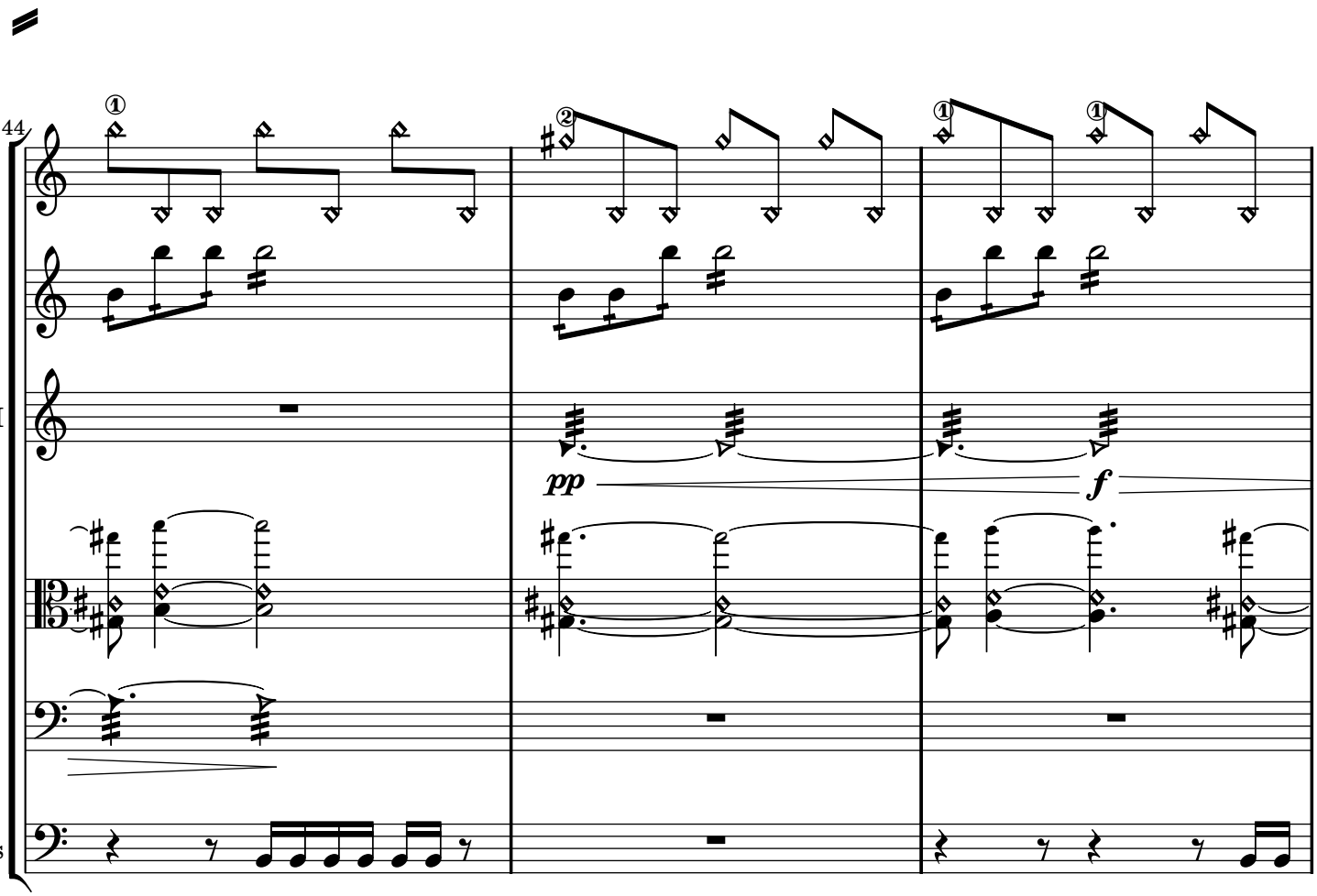
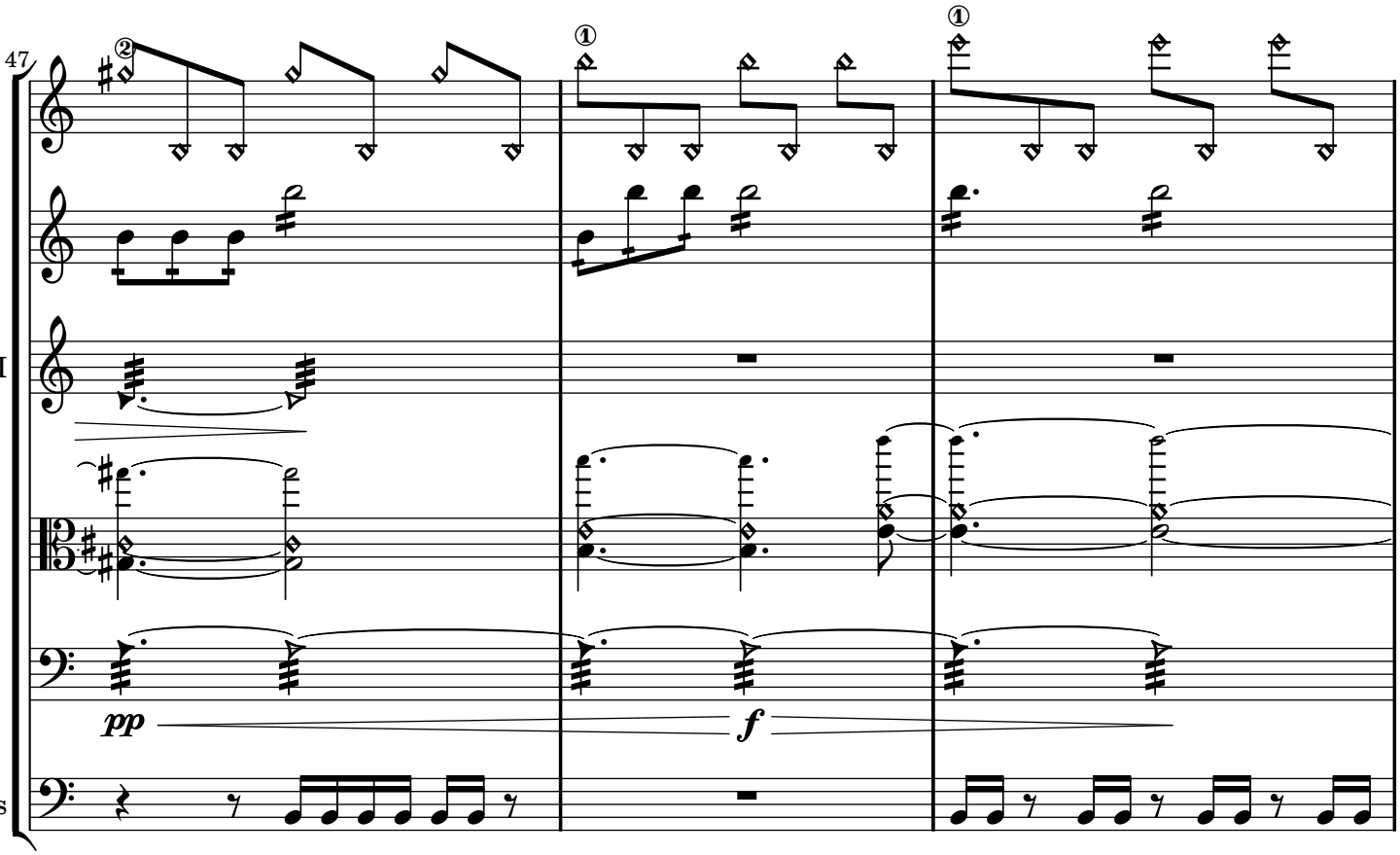
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
pp
f
31
XII
VII
VII
mp
pp
f

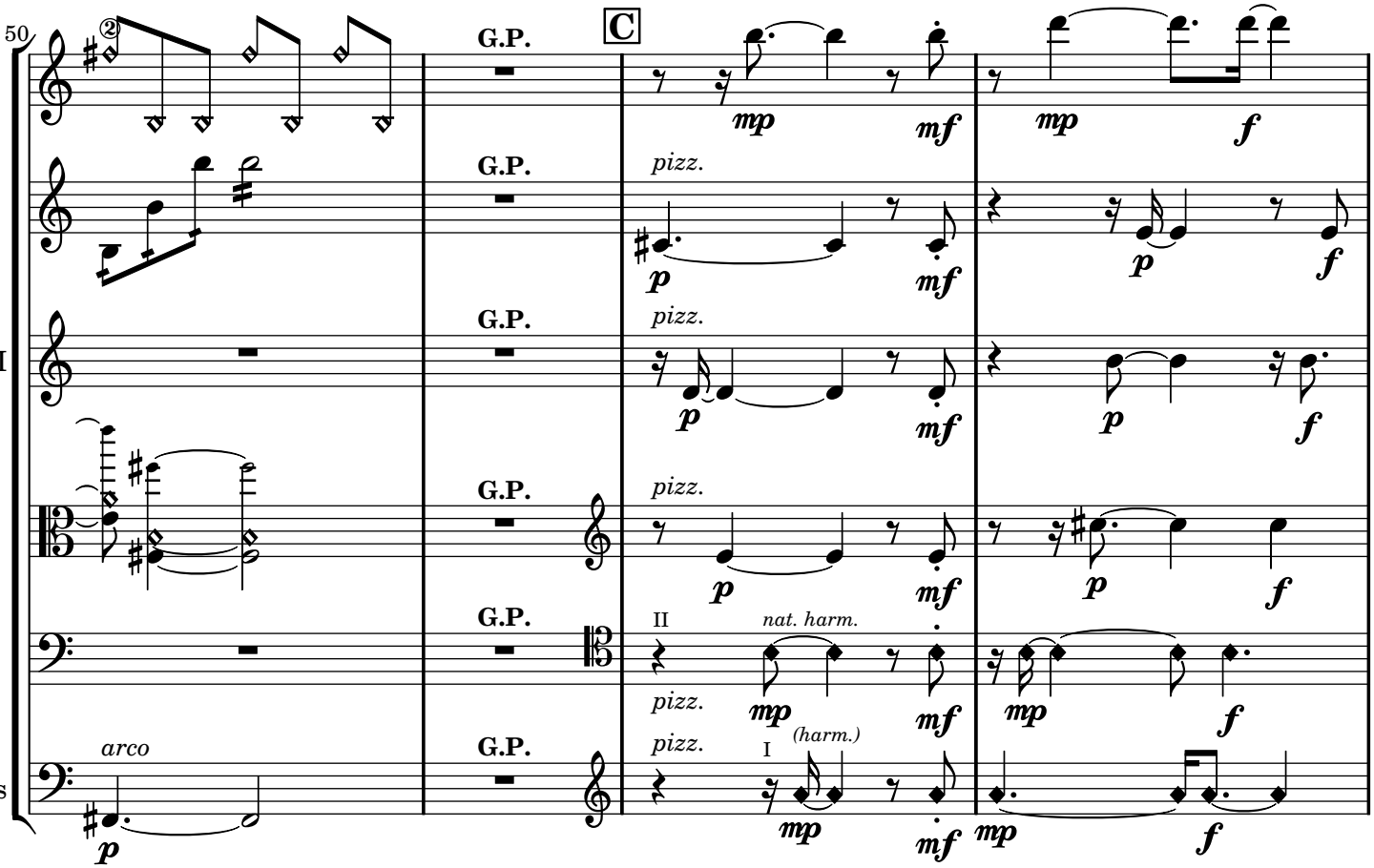

35
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
pp
f
pp

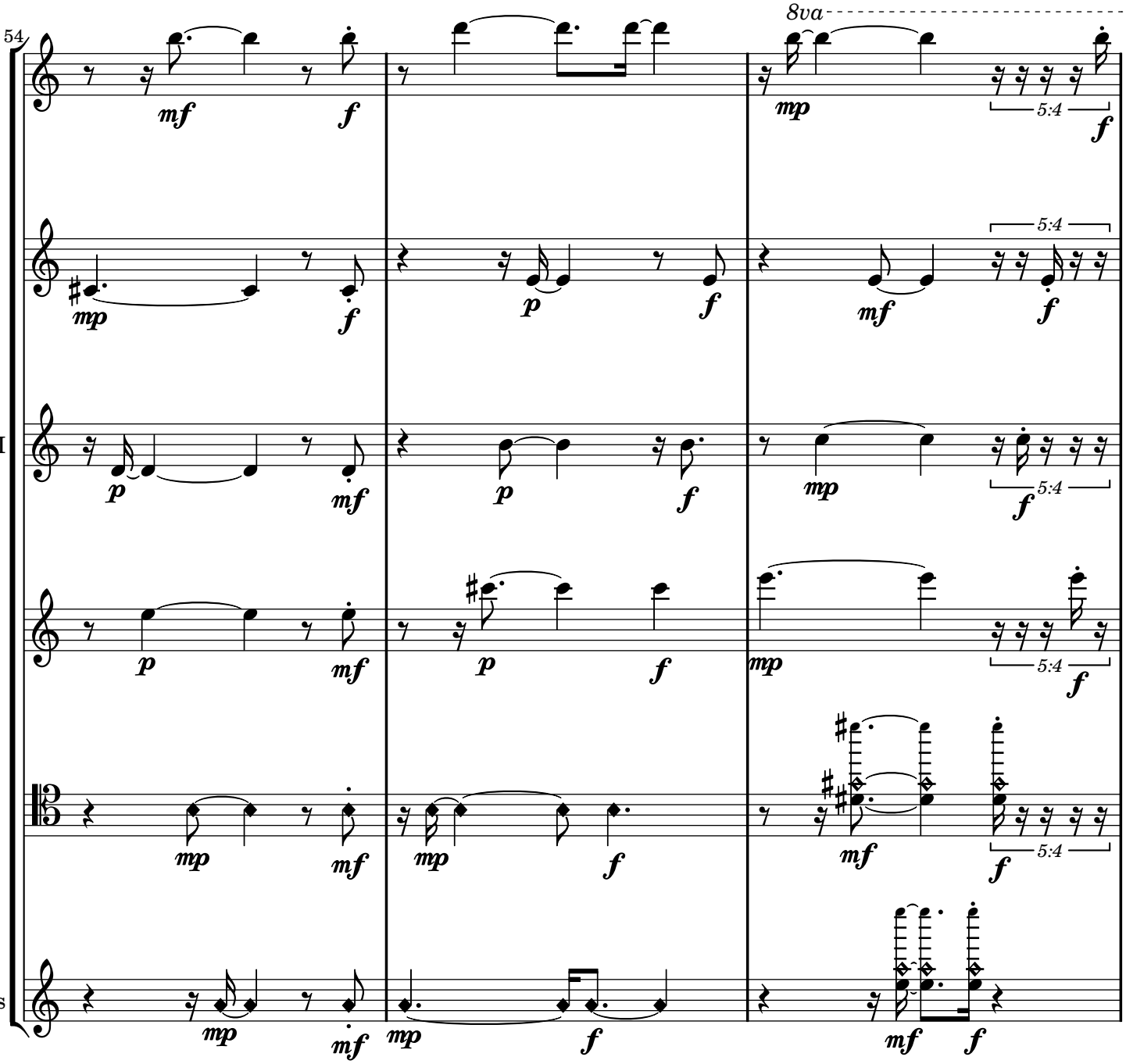

38
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
pp
f

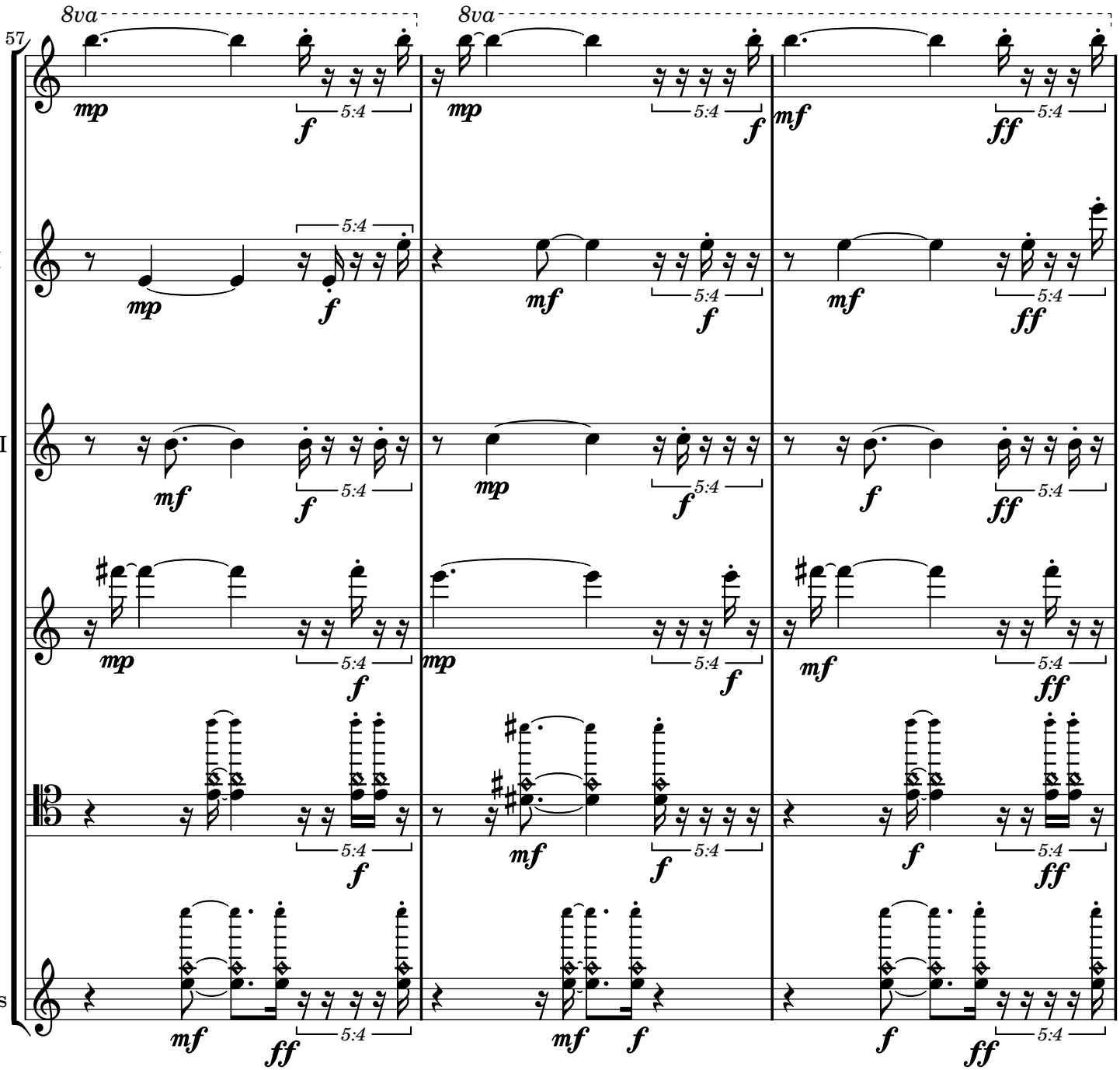

41
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
f
mp
pp
f
col legno bat.
mp

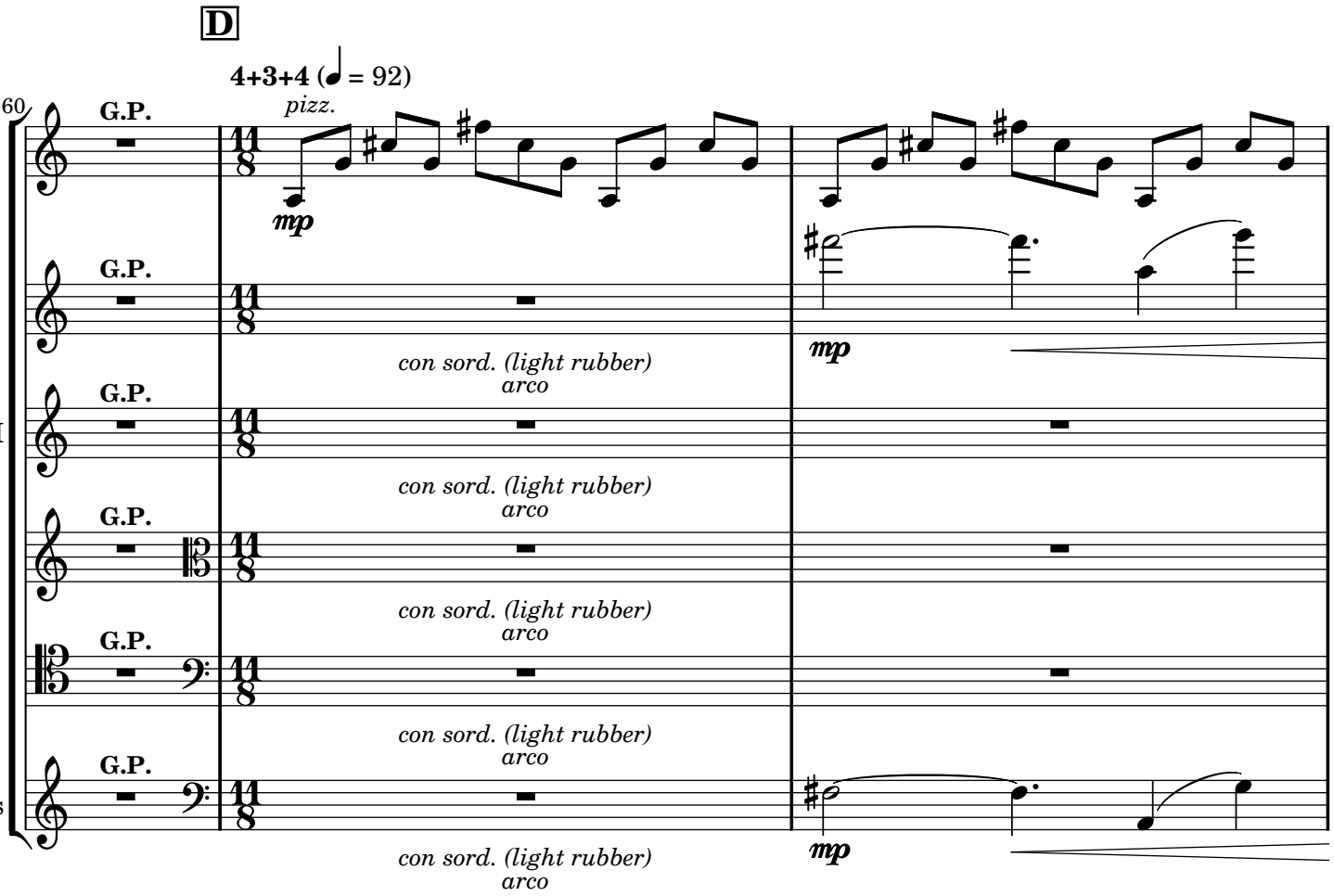

44
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
pp
f

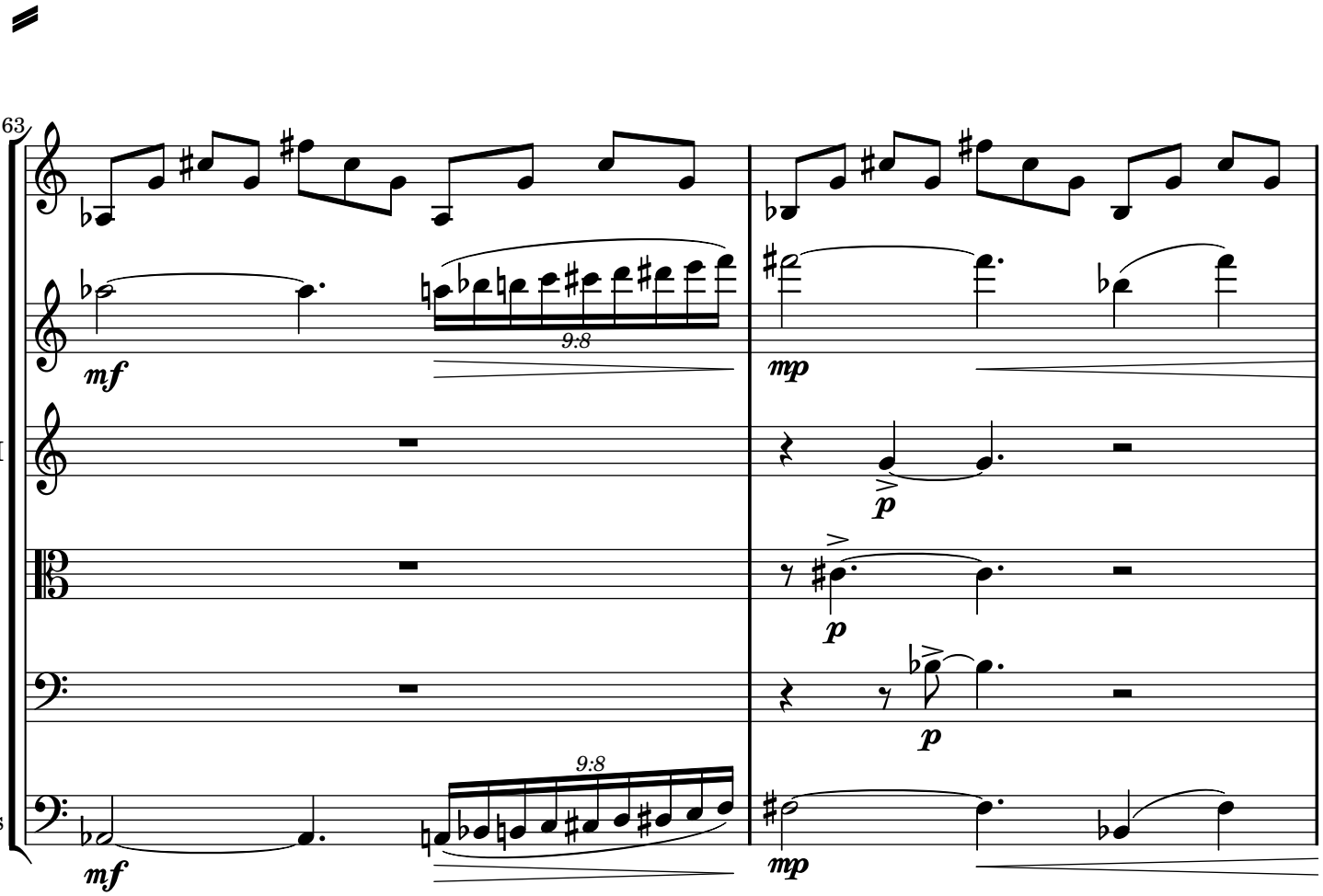

47
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
pp
f

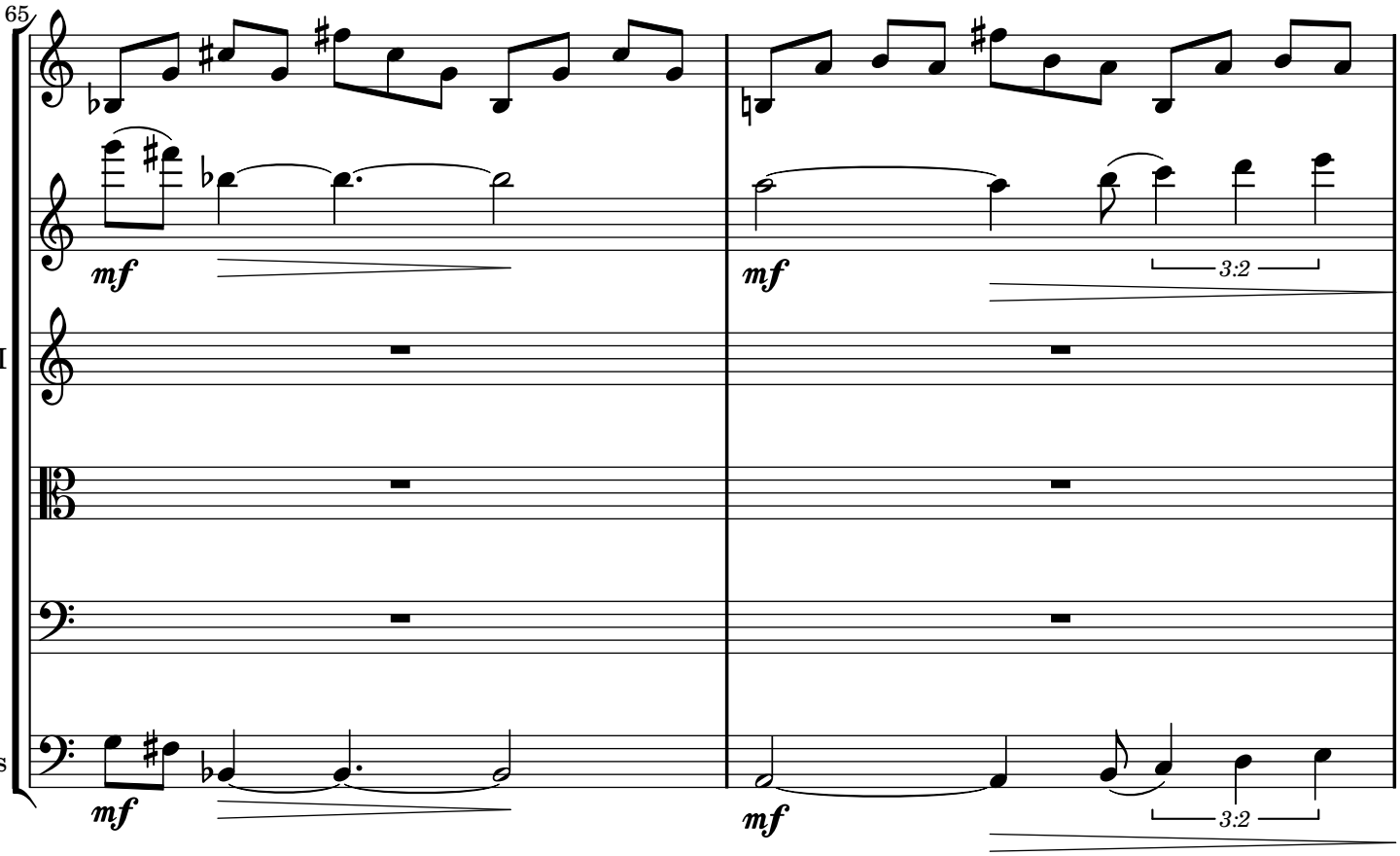

50
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
G.P.
C
pizz.
arco
nat. harm.
(harm.)
p
mp
mf
f

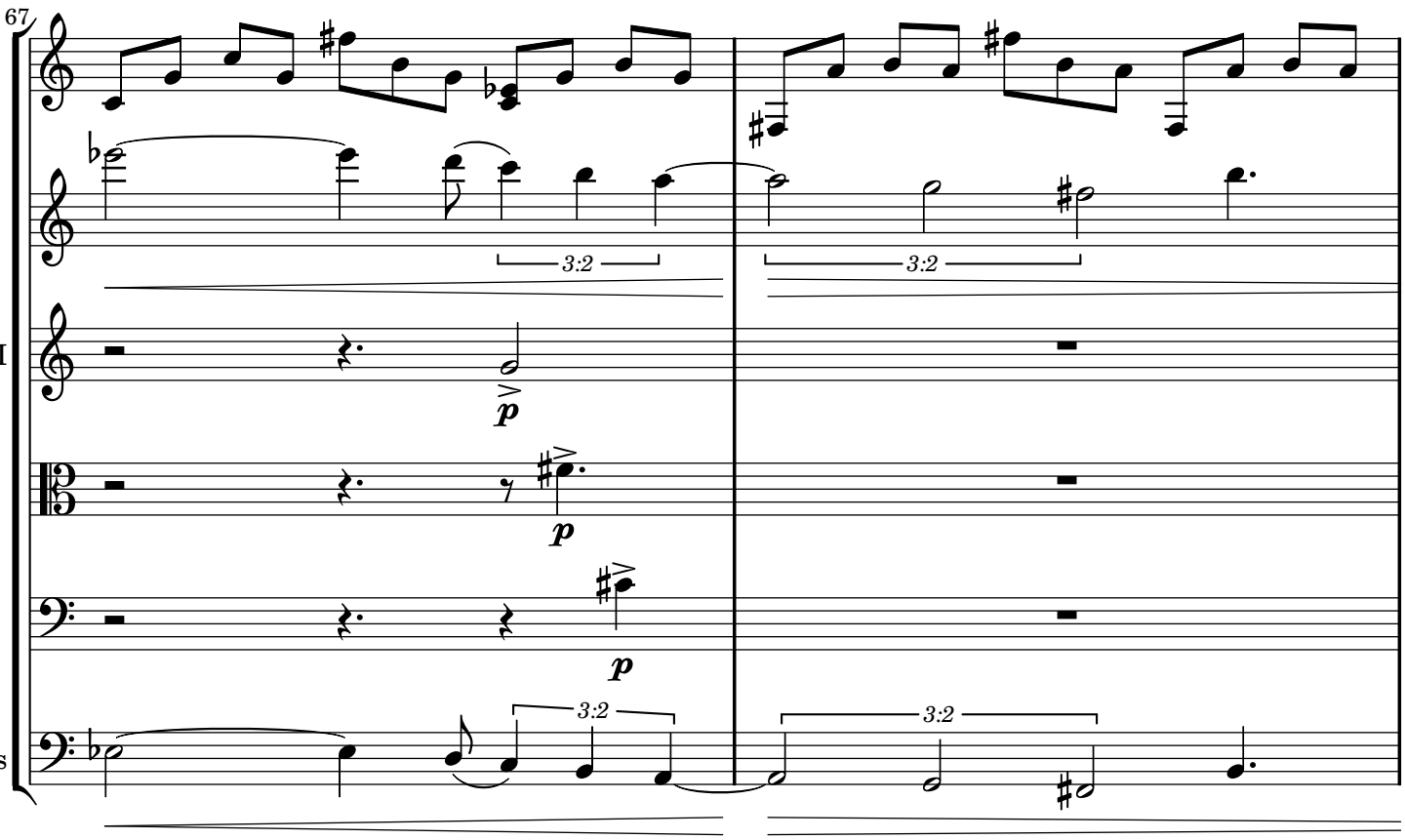

54
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
8va
5:4

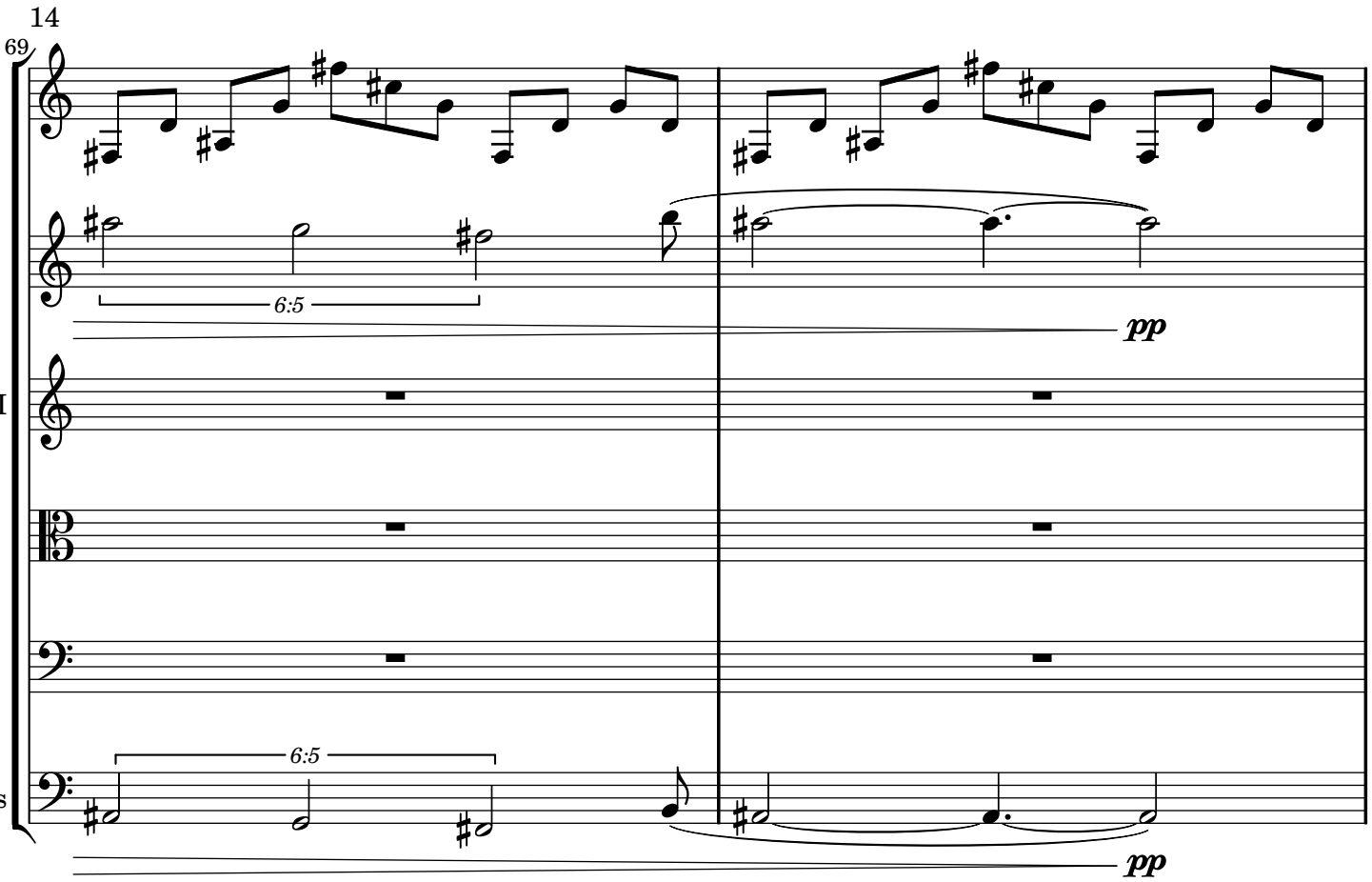

57
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
8va
8va
5:4

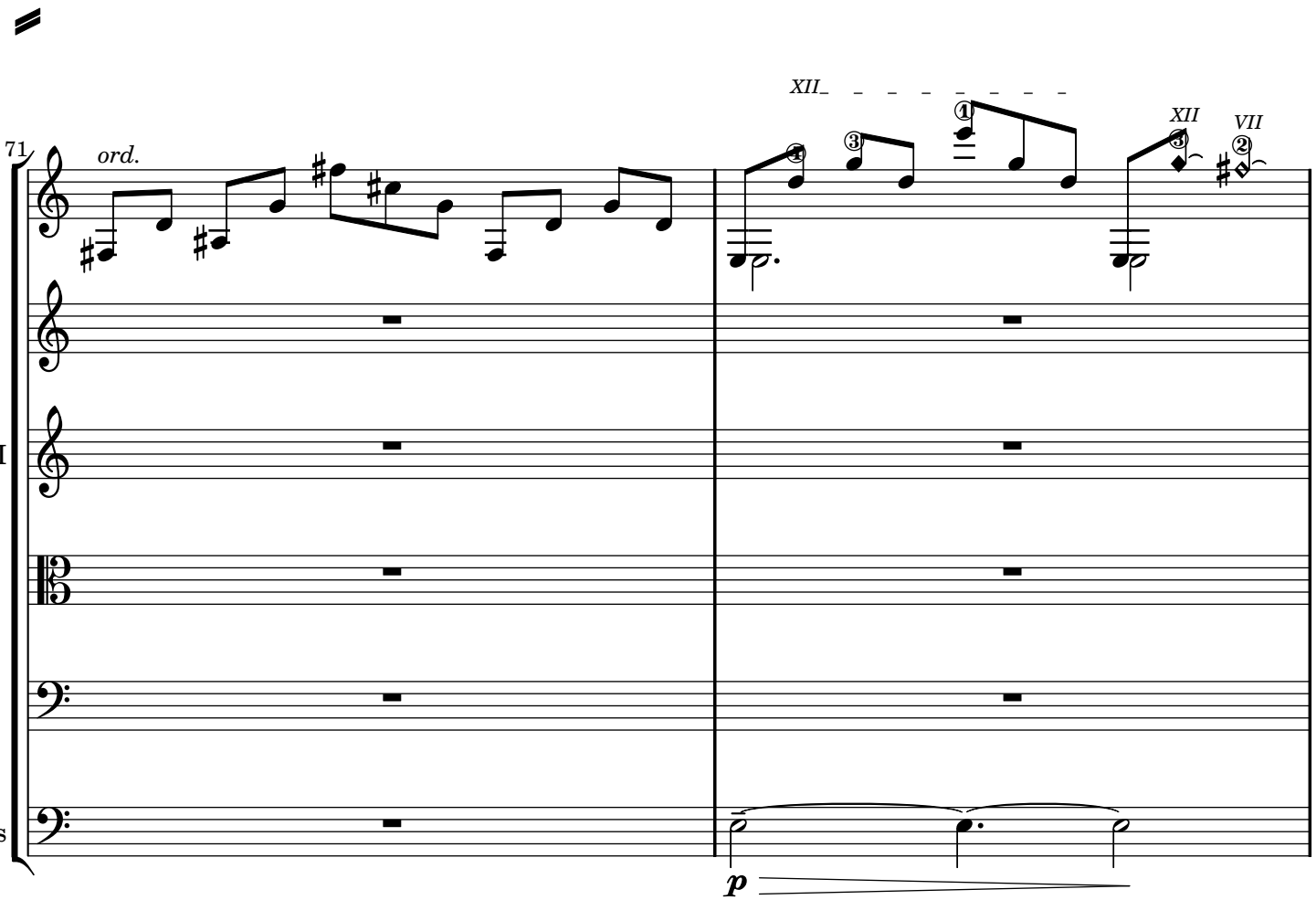

D
4+3+4 (♩ = 92)
60
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
G.P.
pizz.
mp
con sord. (light rubber)
arco

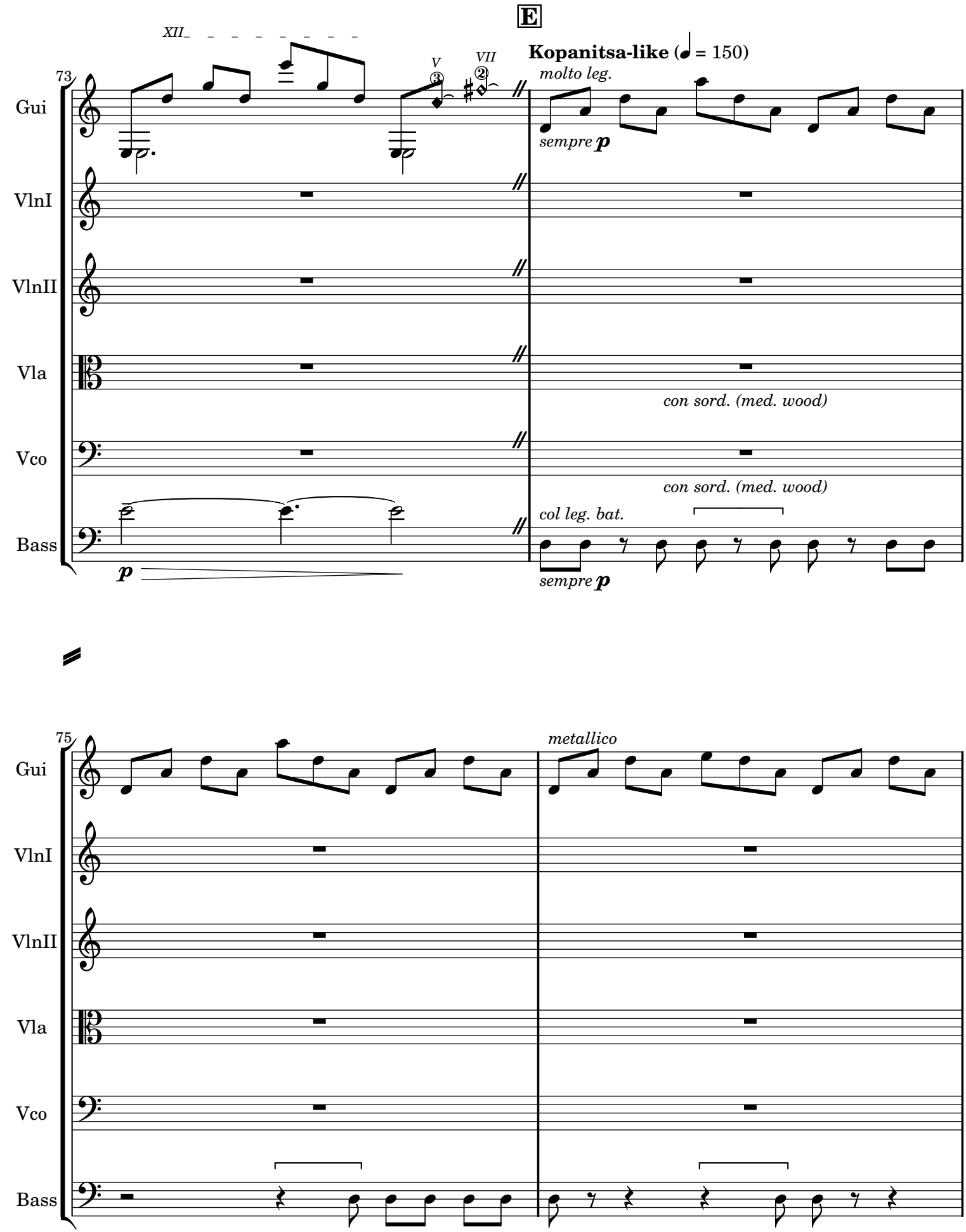

63
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
mf
mp
p
9:8

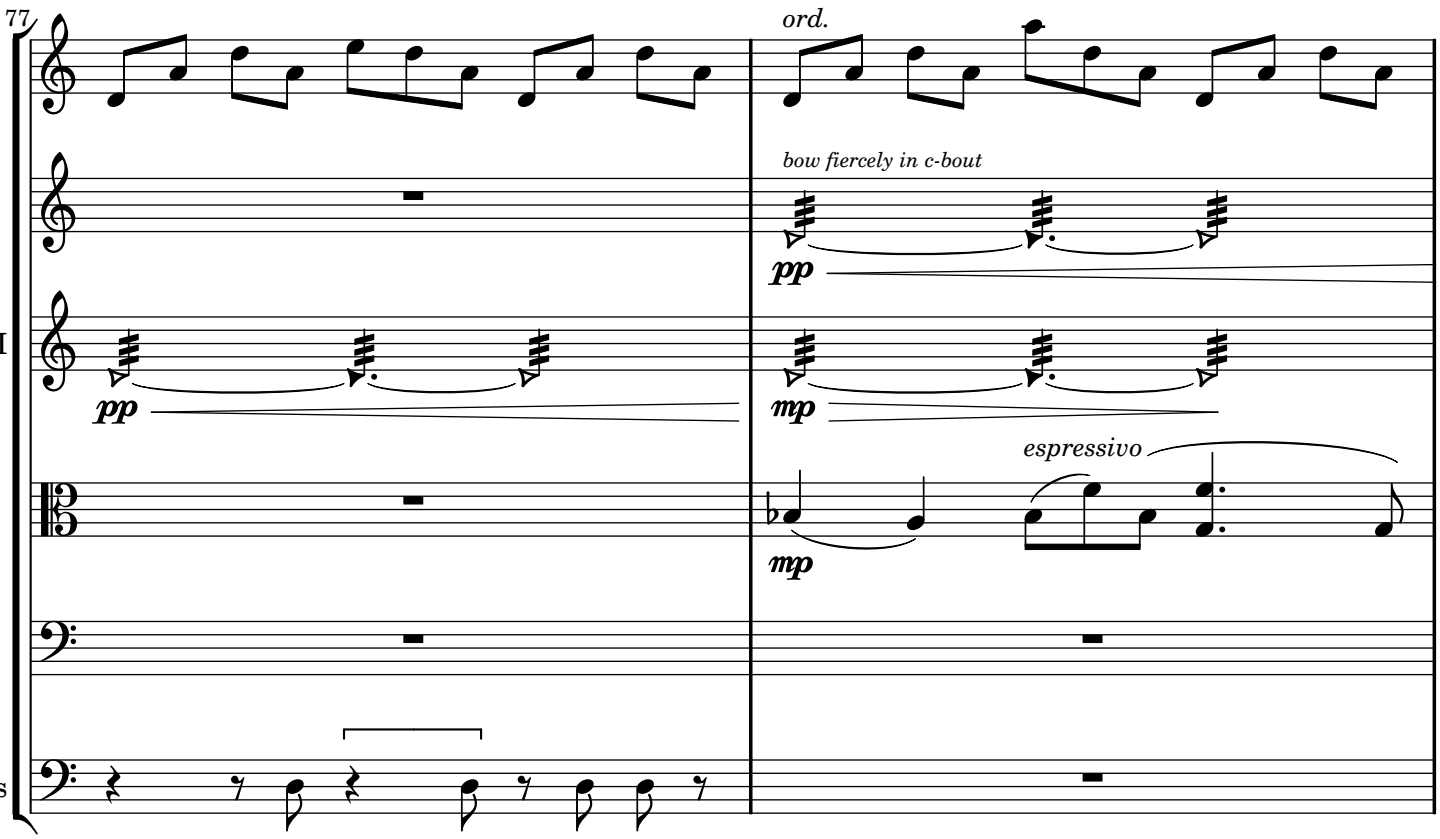

65
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
mf
3:2

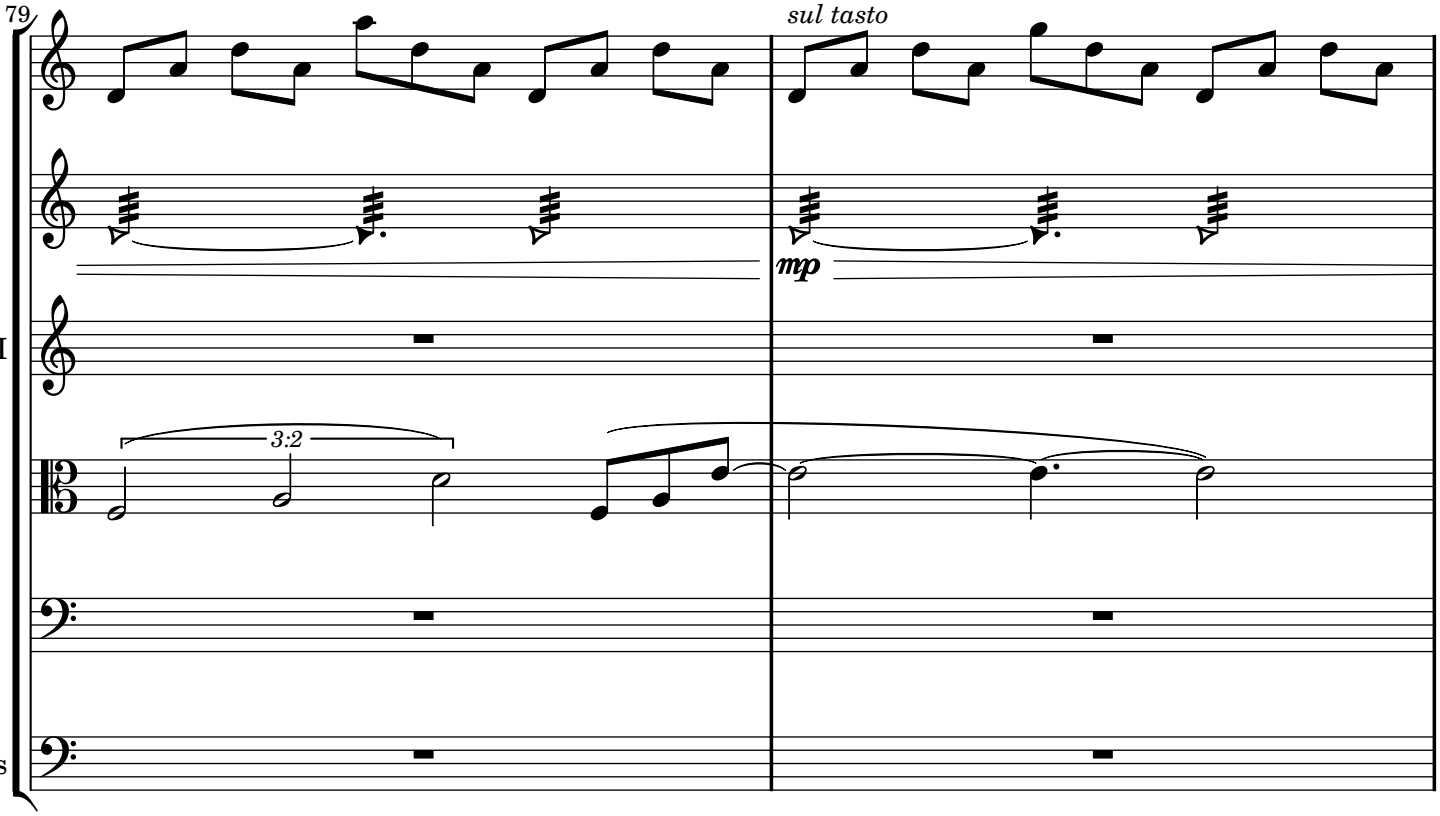

67
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
3:2
p

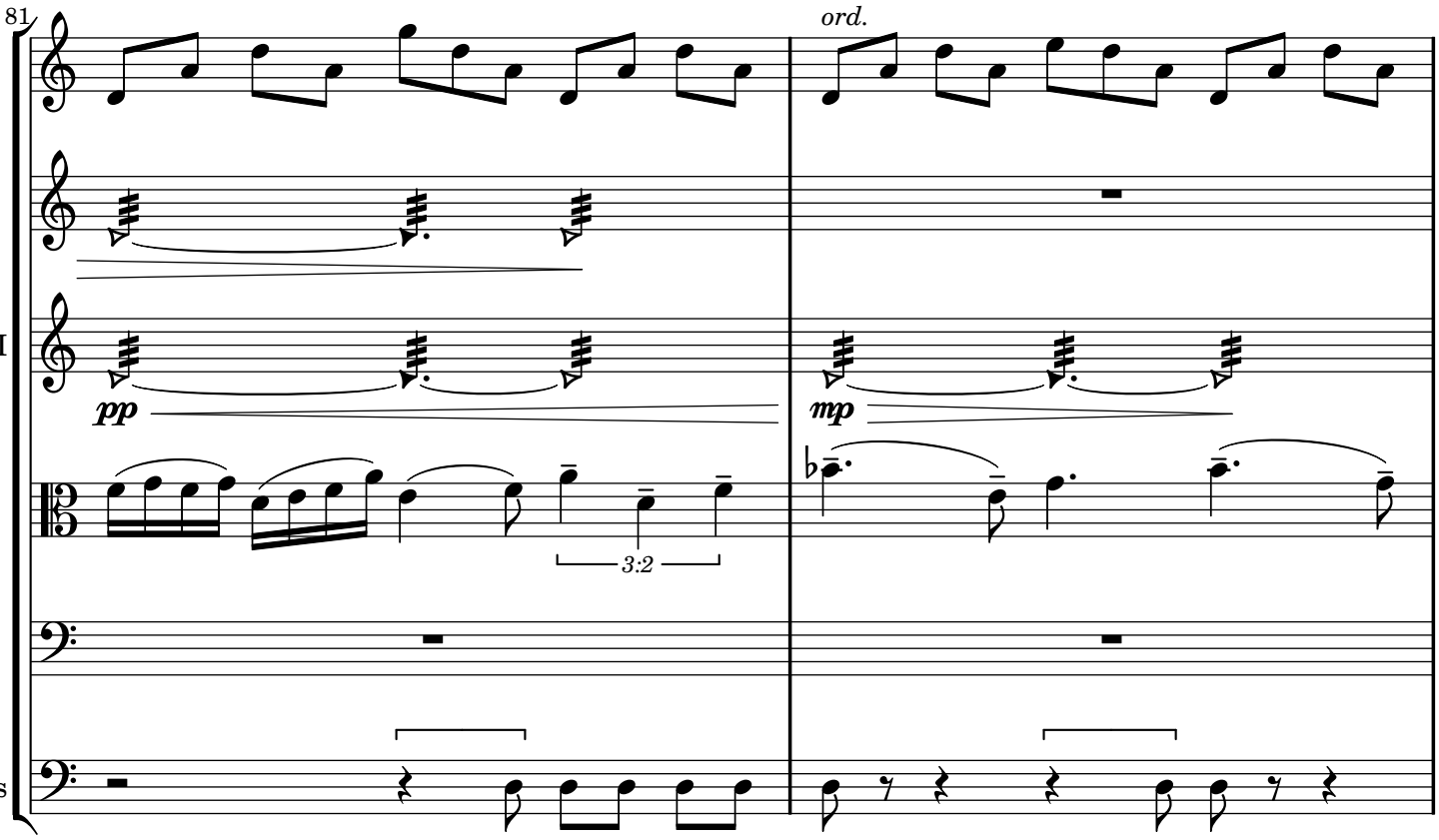

69
Gui
VlnI
6:5
pp
VlnII
Vla
Vco
6:5
Bass
pp

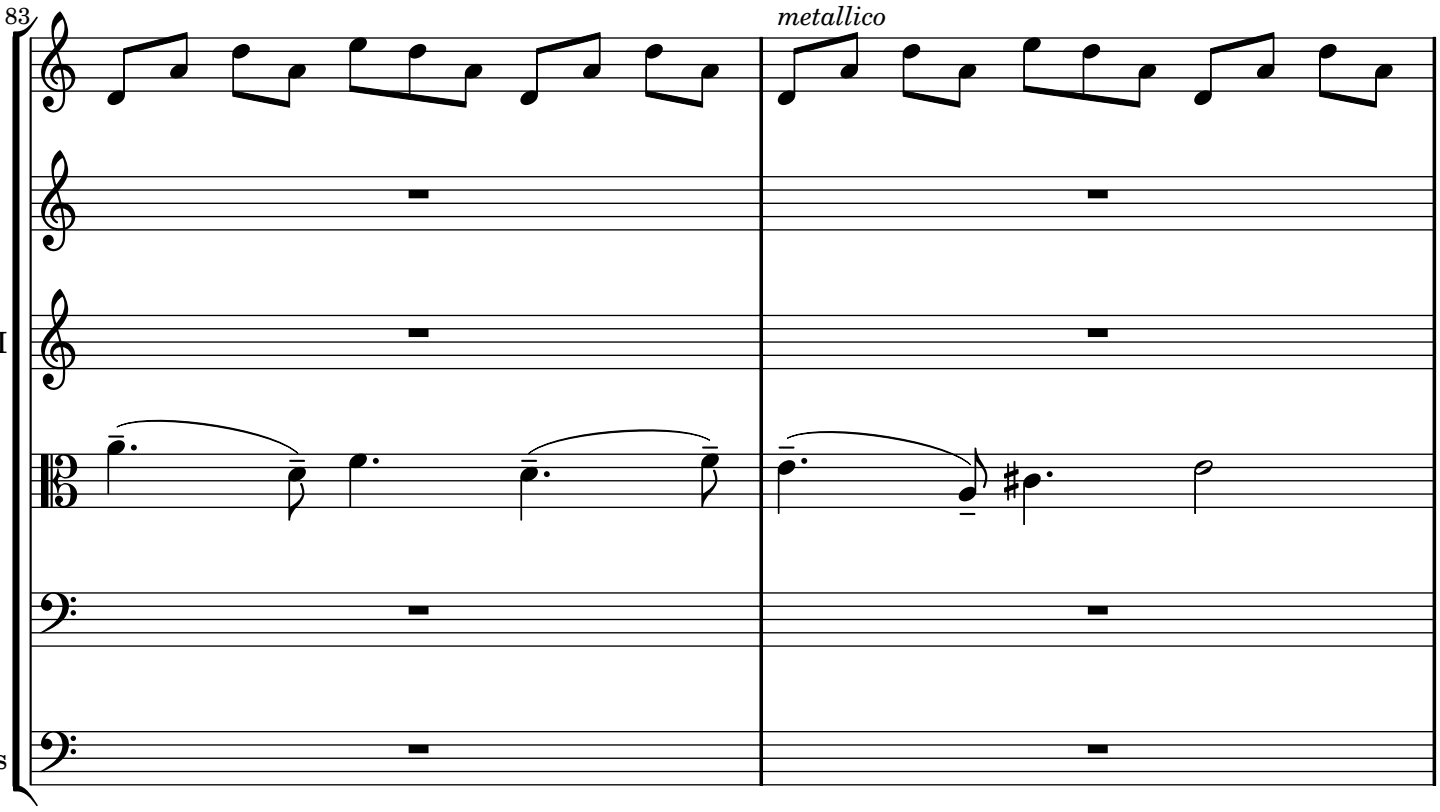

71
ord.
XII
XII
VII
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
p

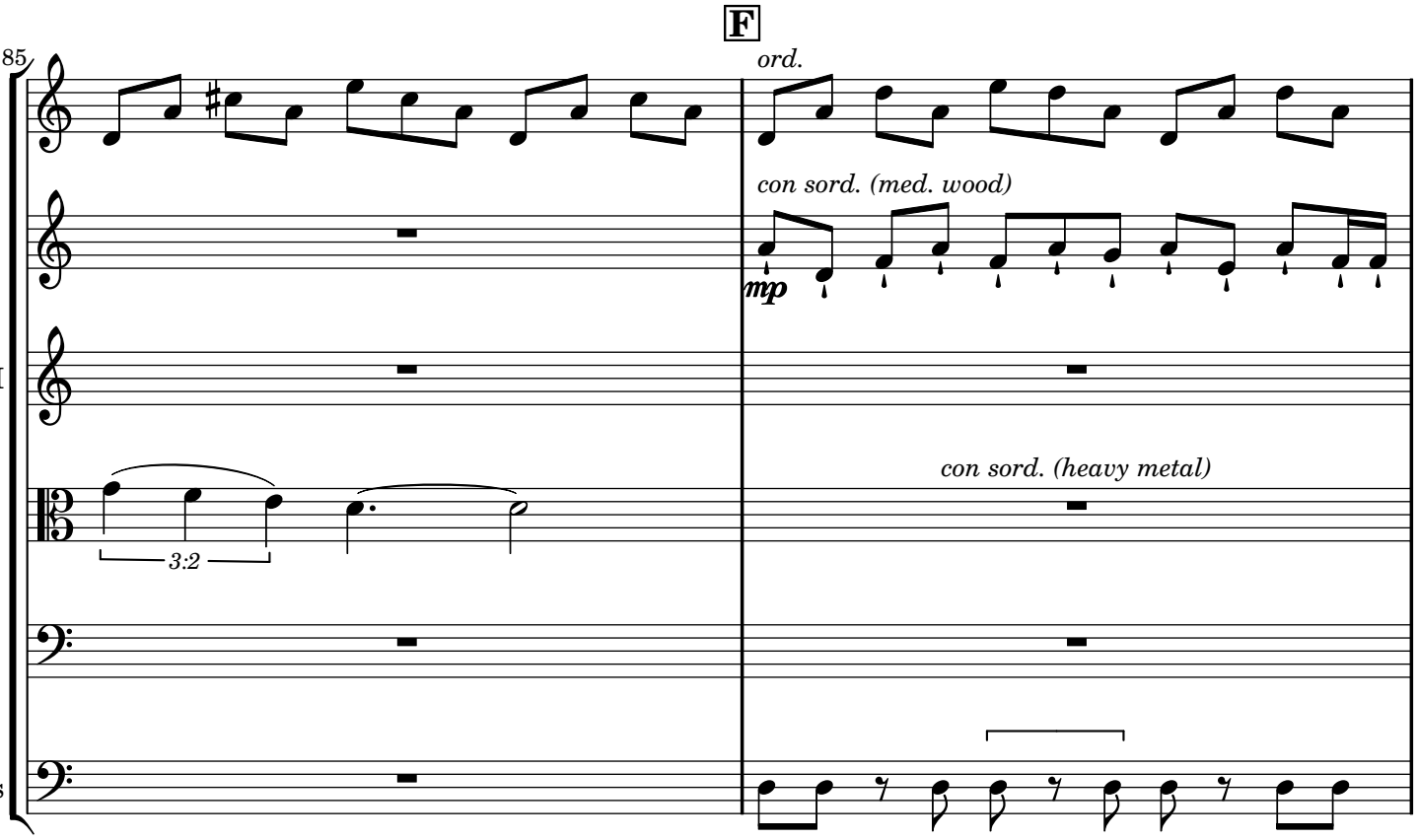

E
Kopanitsa-like (♩ = 150)
73
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
XII
V
VII
molto leg.
sempre p
con sord. (med. wood)
con sord. (med. wood)
col leg. bat.
sempre p
p
75
metallico

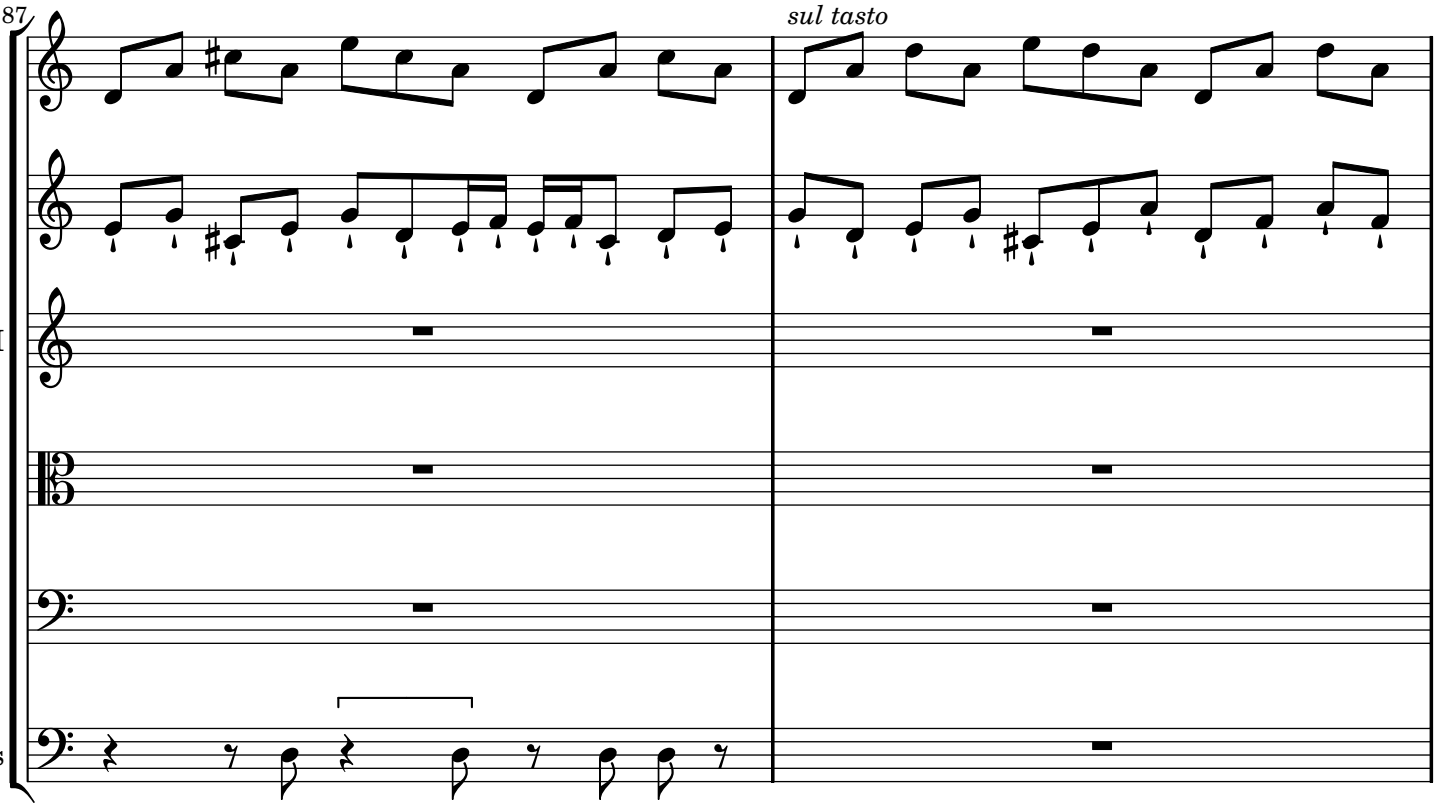

77
Gui
ord.
VlnI
bow fiercely in c-bout
pp
VlnII
pp
mp
espressivo
Vla
mp
Vco
Bass

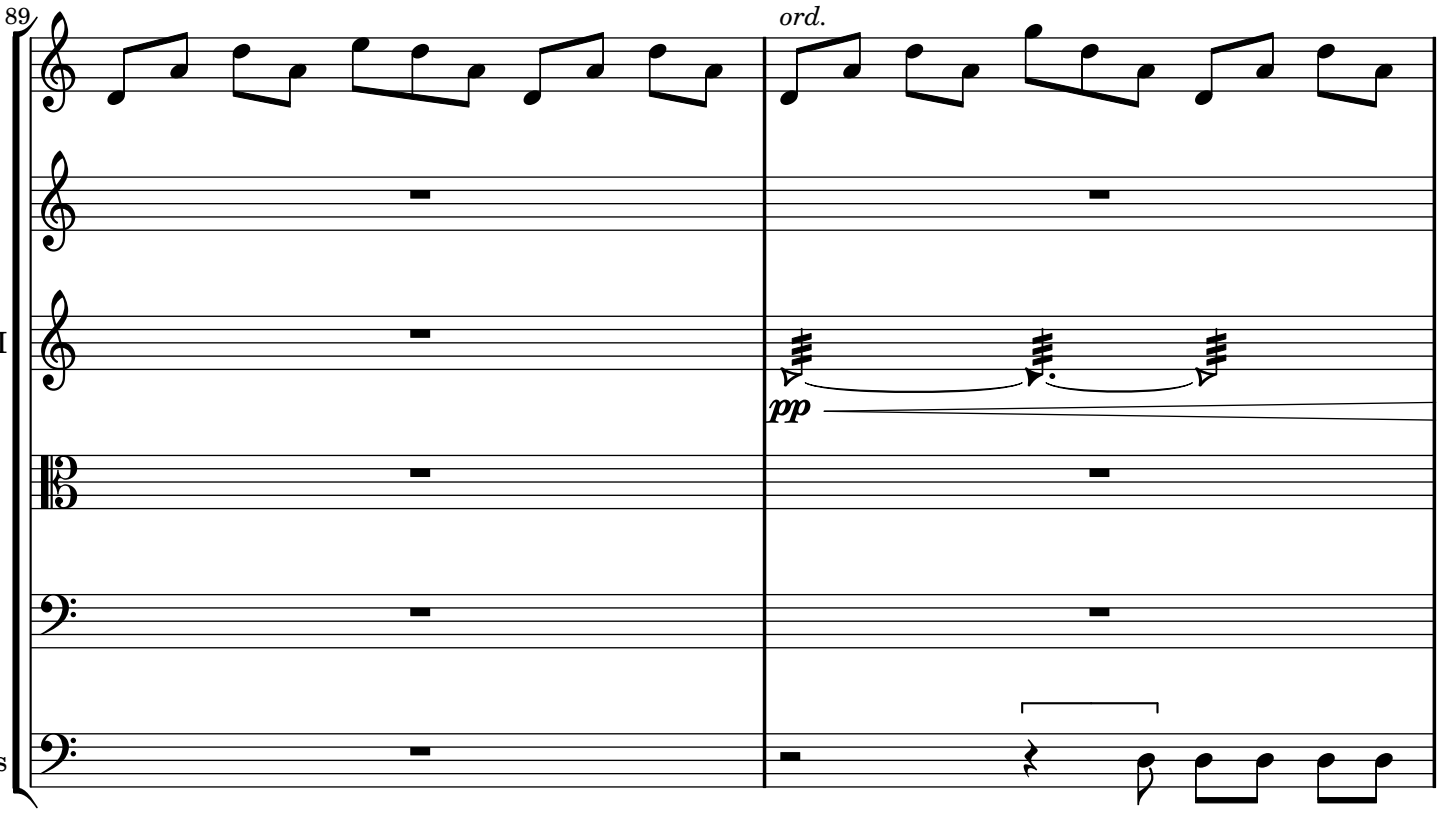

79
Gui
sul tasto
VlnI
mp
VlnII
3:2
Vla
Vco
Bass

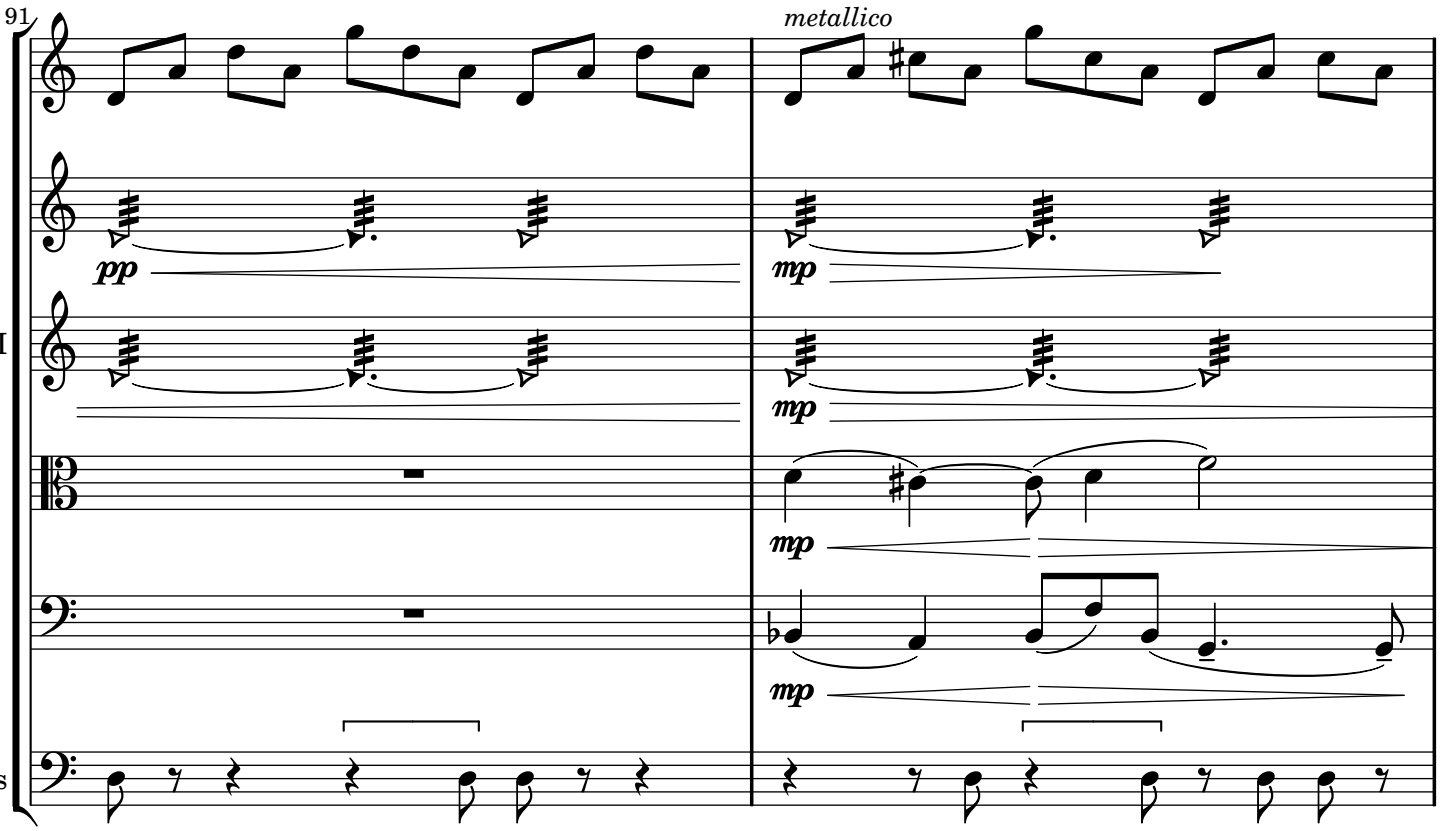

81
ord.
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
pp
mp
Vla
3:2
Vco
Bass

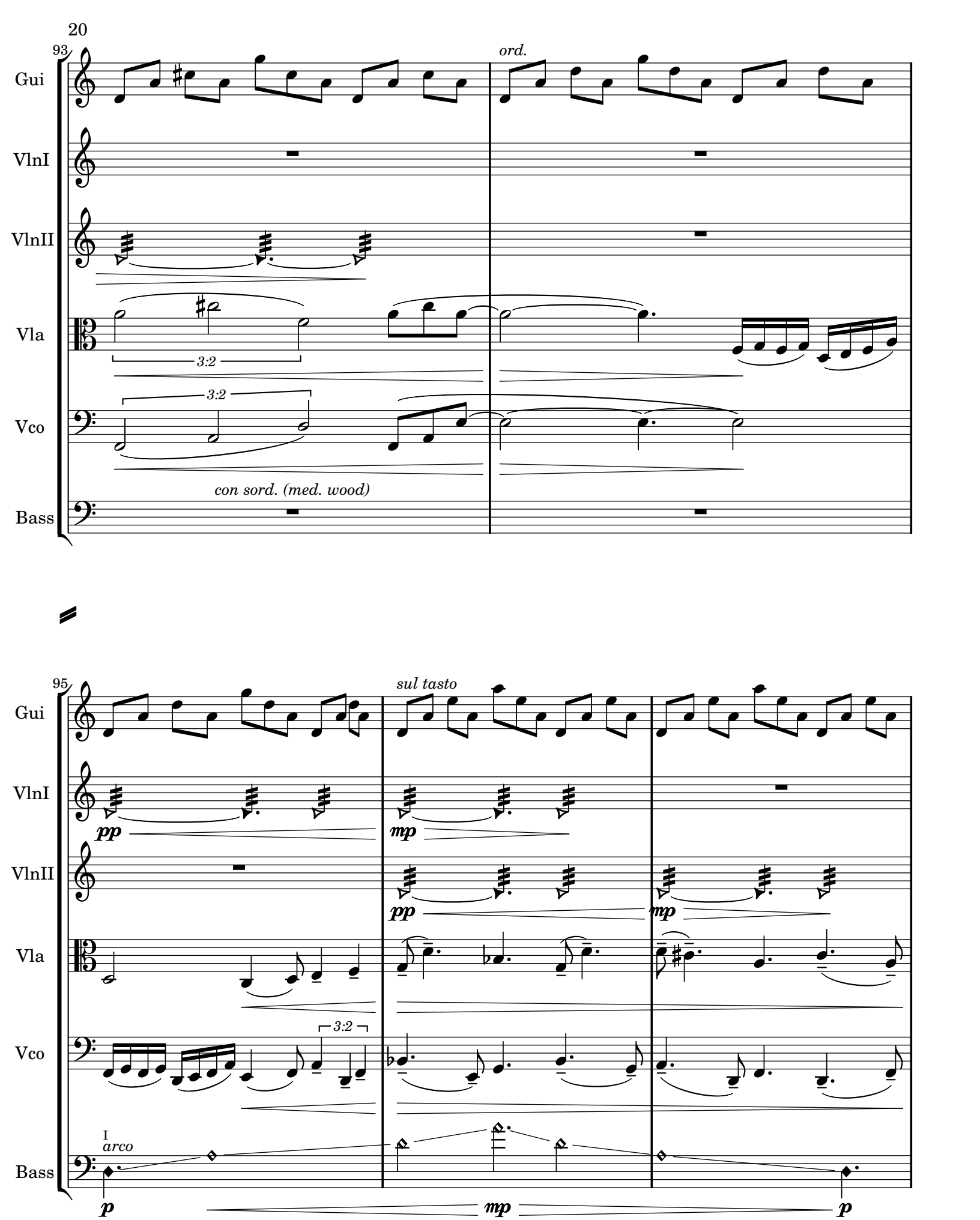

83
metallico
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass

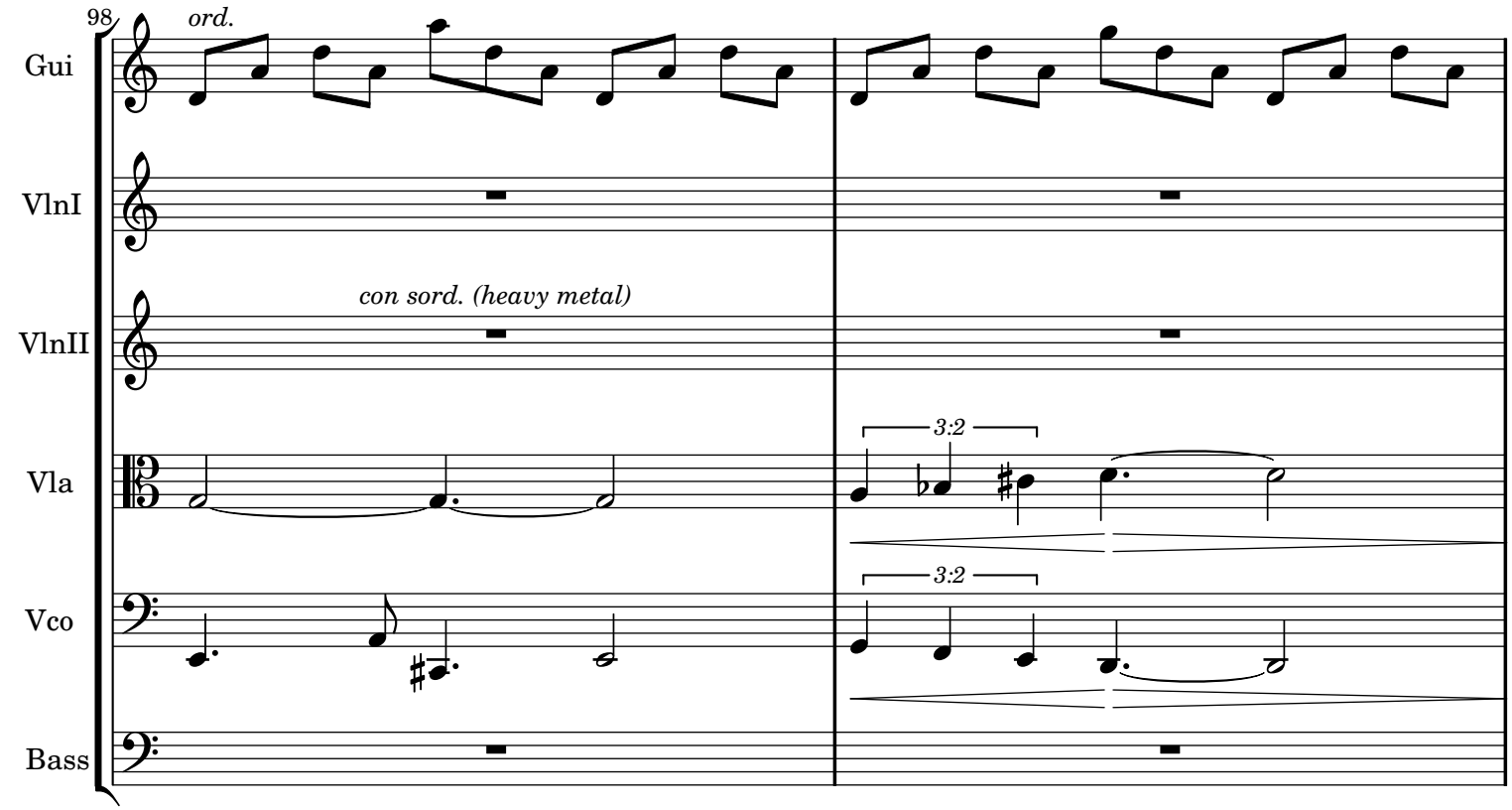

F
85
Gui
ord.
VlnI
con sord. (med. wood)
mp
VlnII
Vla
con sord. (heavy metal)
3:2
Vco
Bass

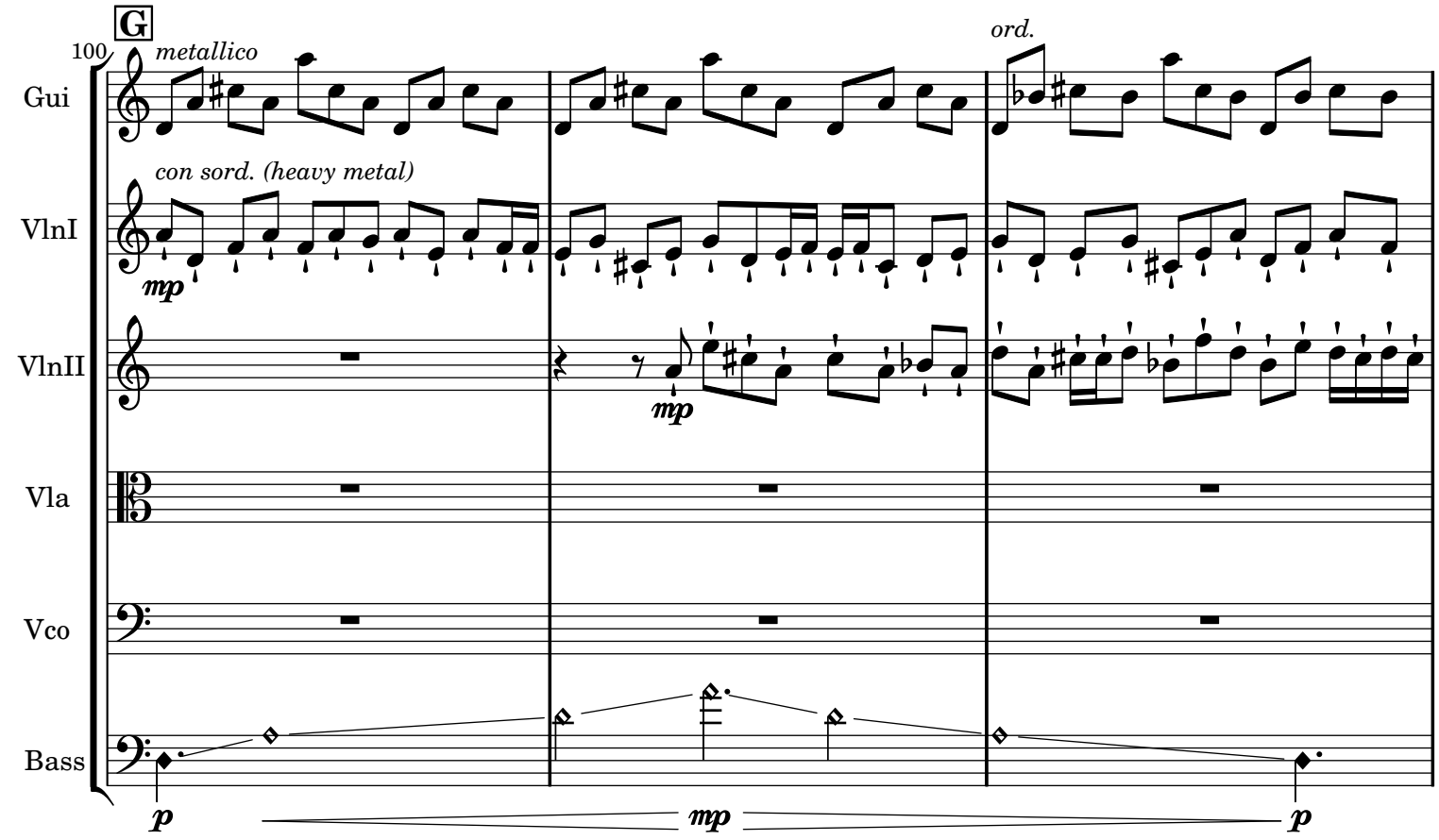

87
Gui
sul tasto
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass

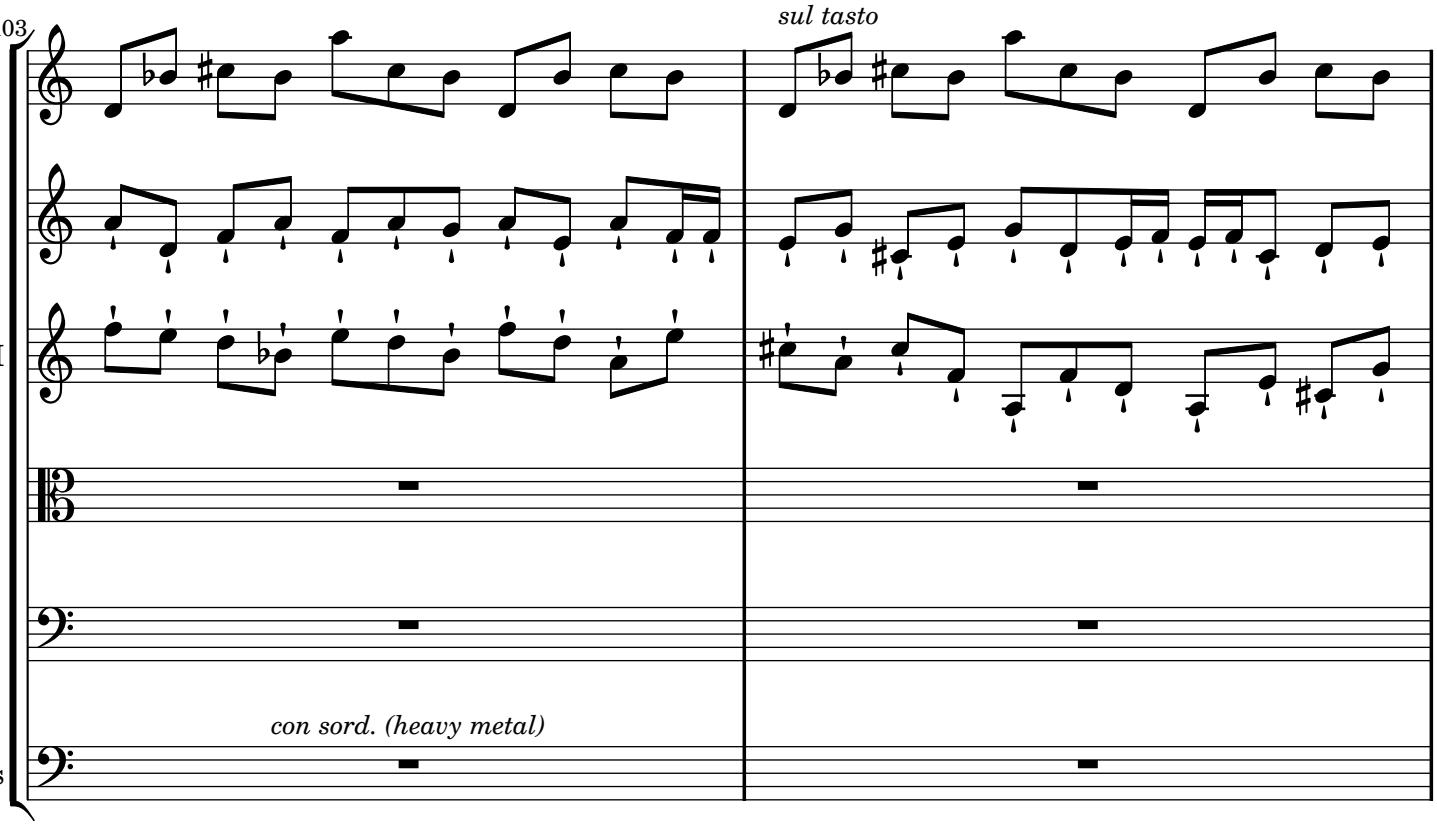

89
ord.
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
pp

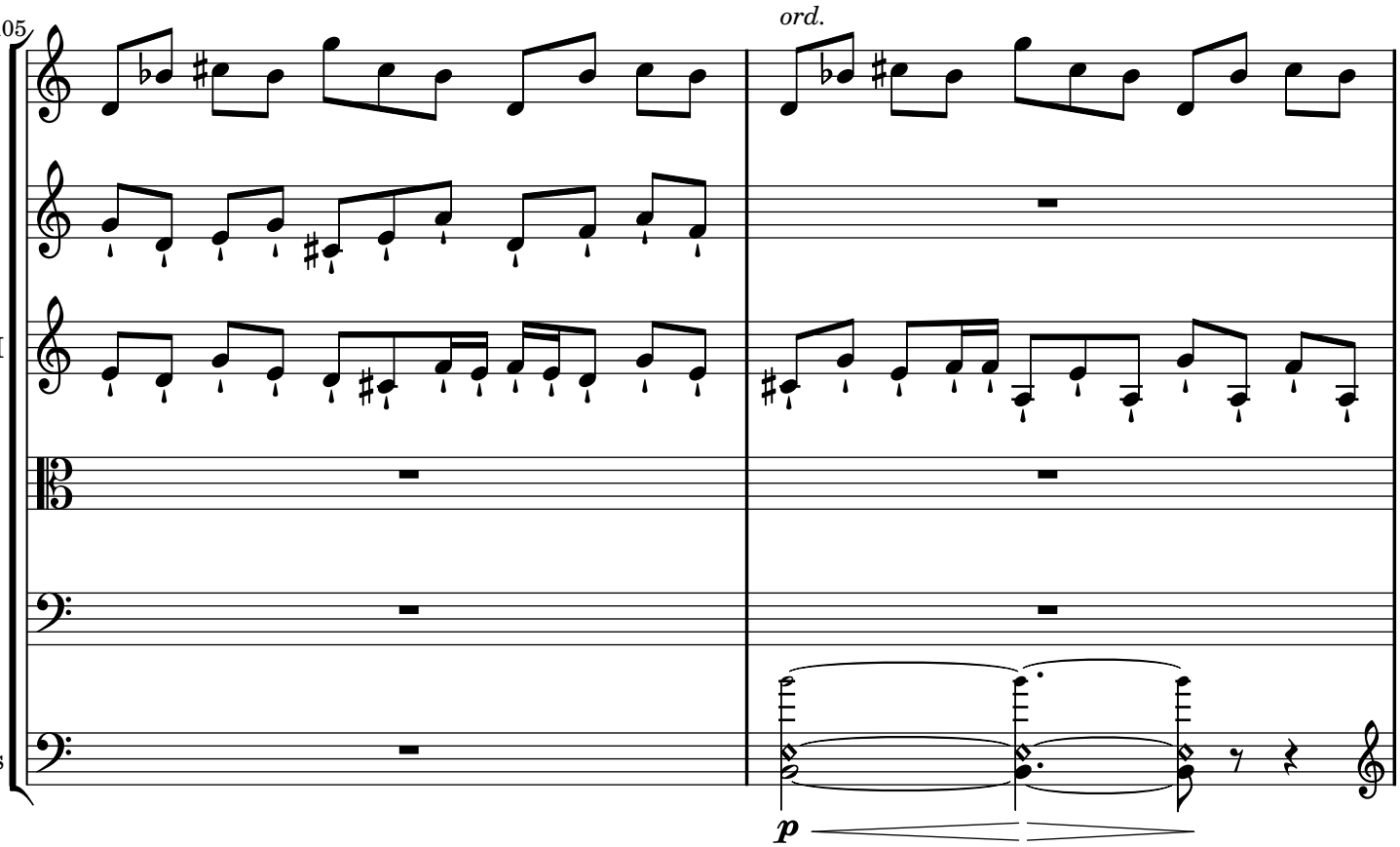

91
metallico
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
pp
mp
mp
mp
mp

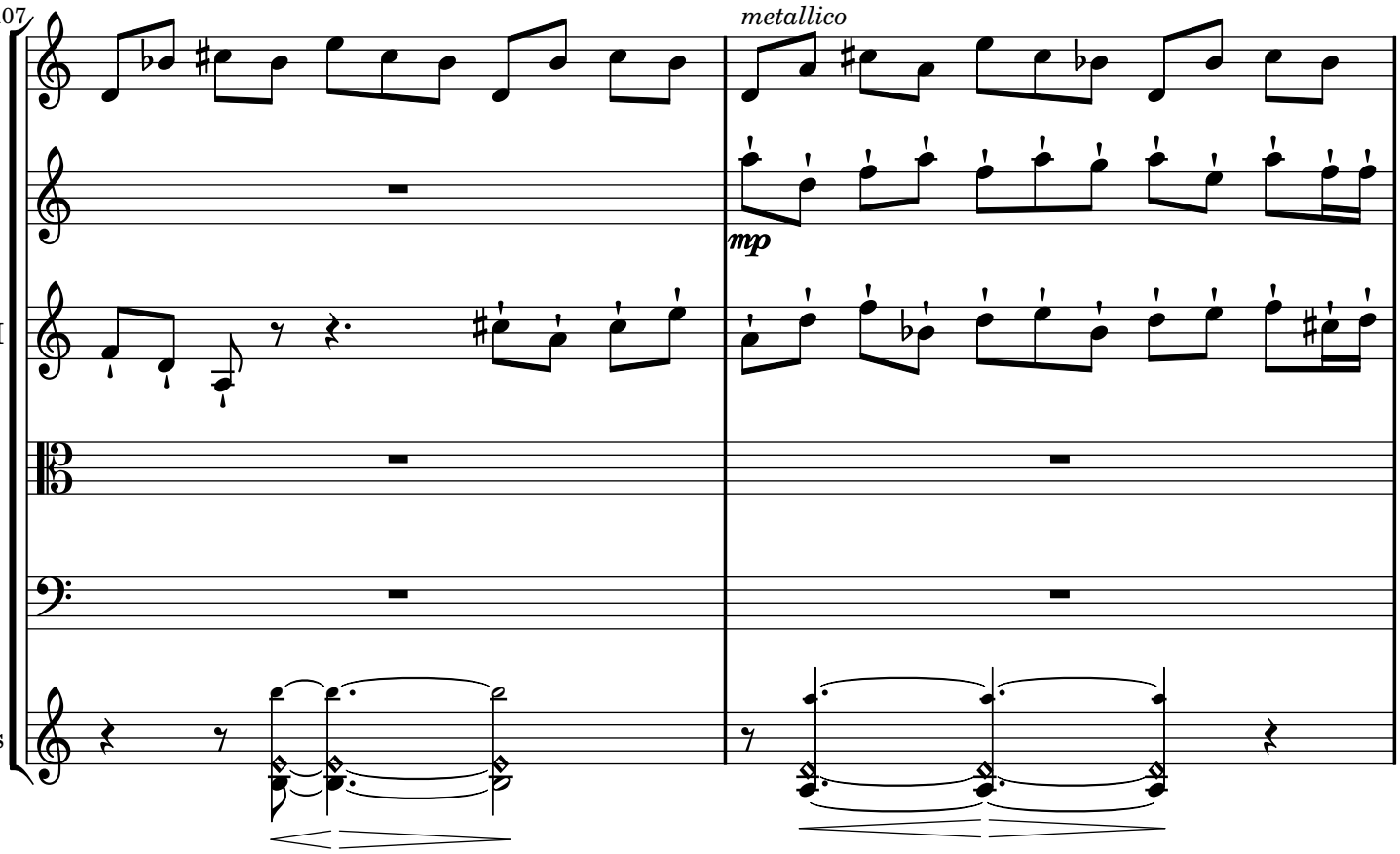

93
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
ord.
3:2
3:2
con sord. (med. wood)
95
sul tasto
pp
mp
pp
mp
3:2
I
arco
p
mp
p
slow gliss.; light touch; sul D; ad lib.

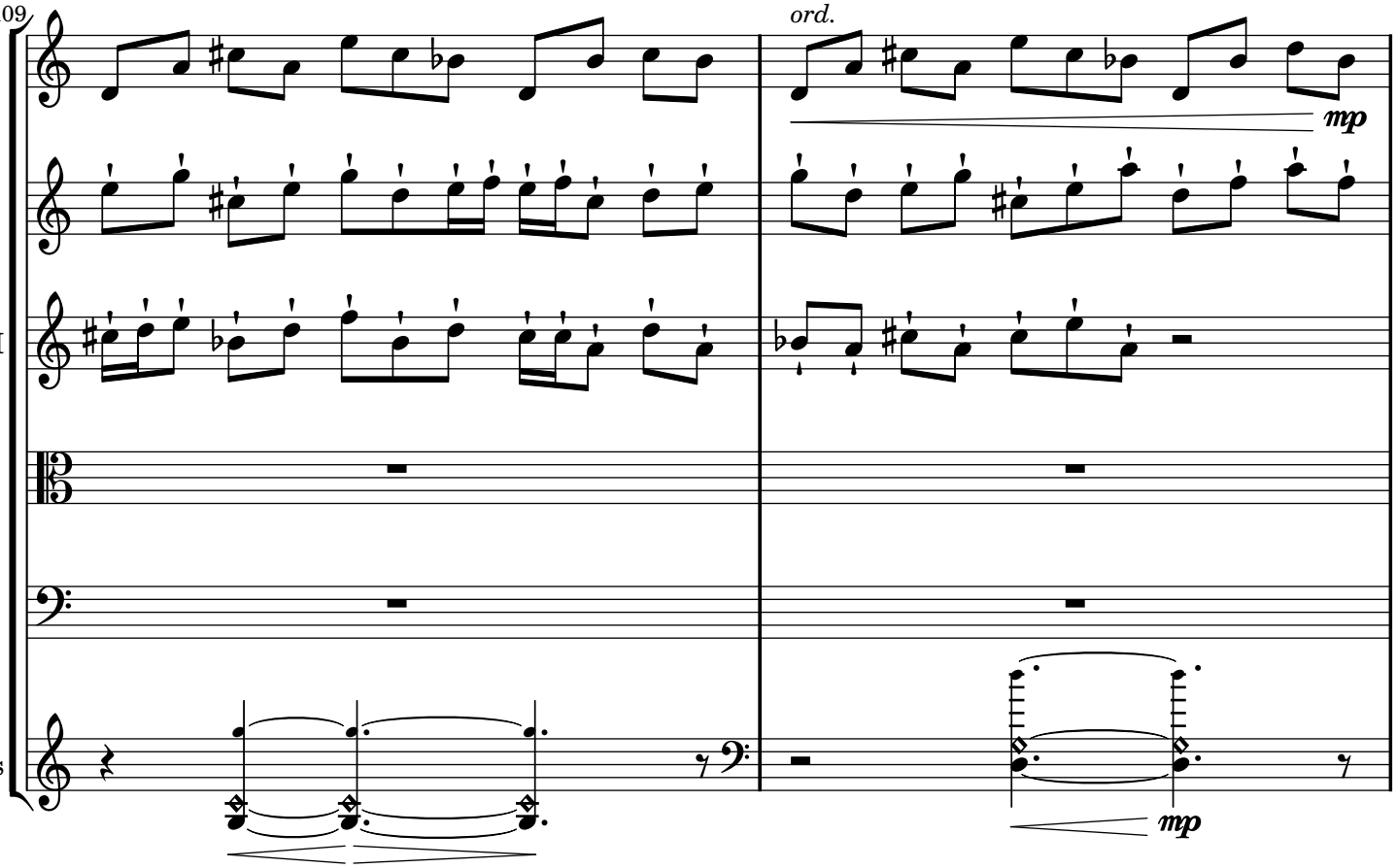

98
ord.
Gui
VlnI
con sord. (heavy metal)
VlnII
3:2
Vla
3:2
Vco
Bass

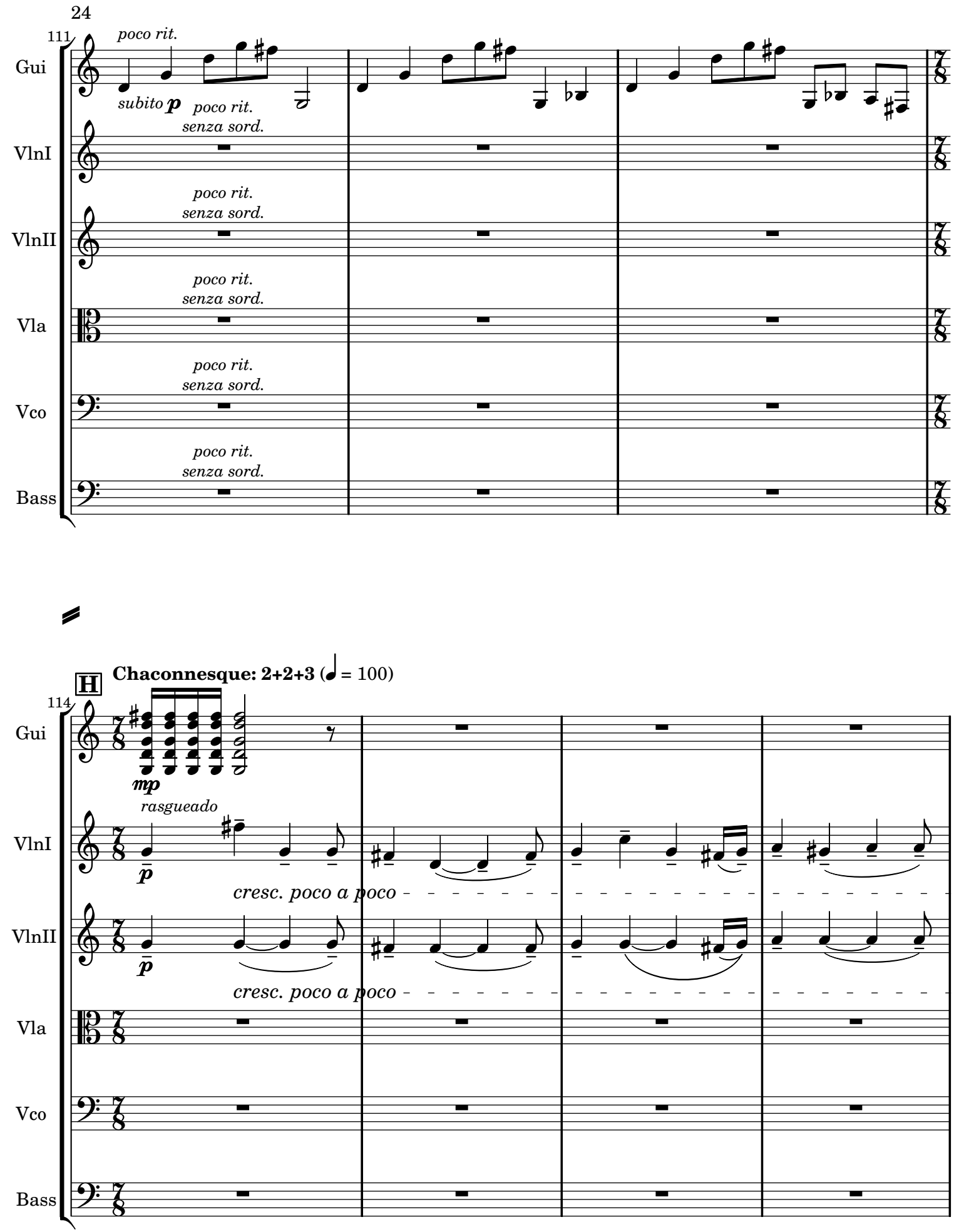

G
100
metallico
ord.
Gui
con sord. (heavy metal)
mp
VlnI
mp
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
p
mp
p

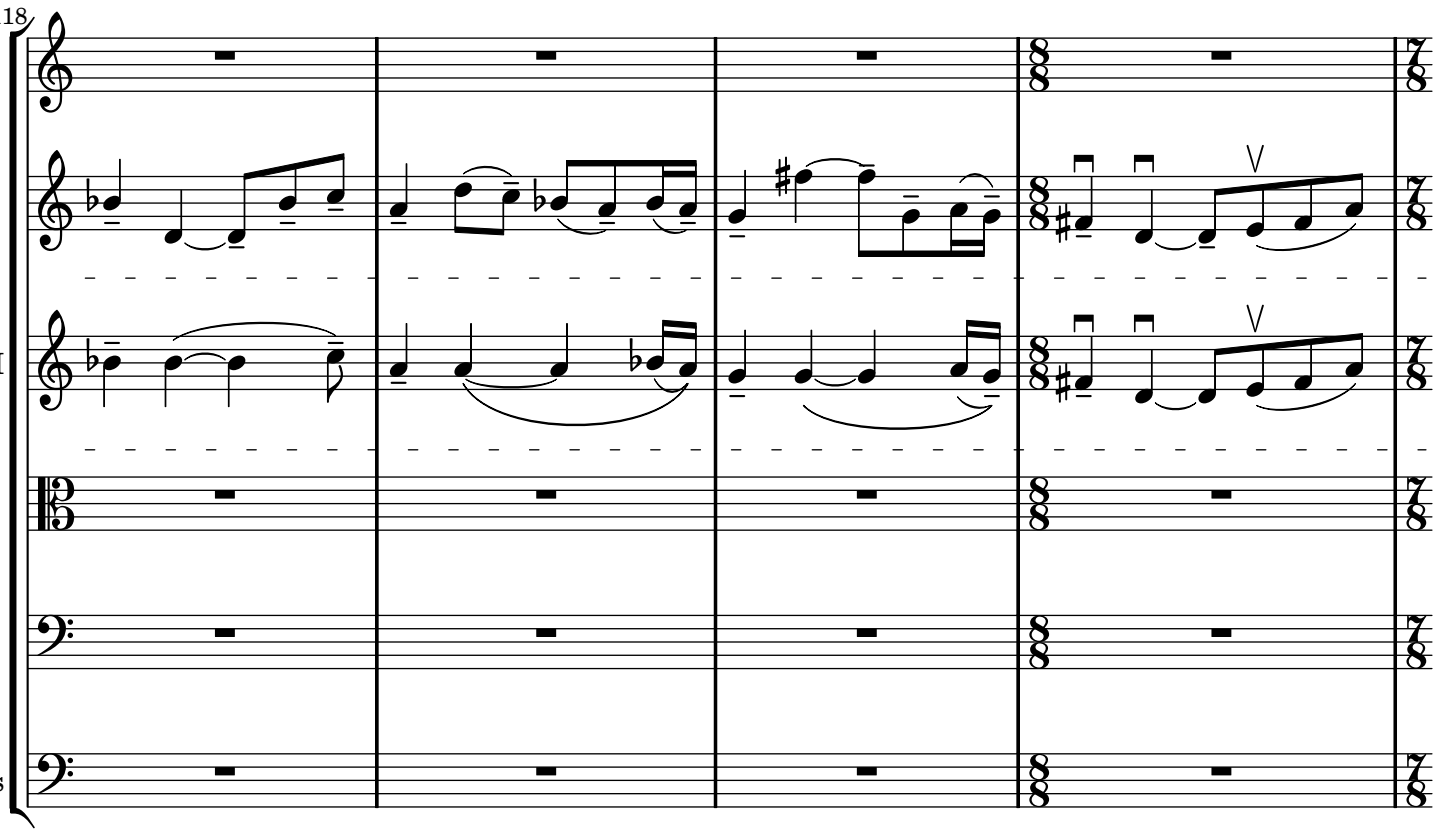

103
sul tasto
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
con sord. (heavy metal)
Bass

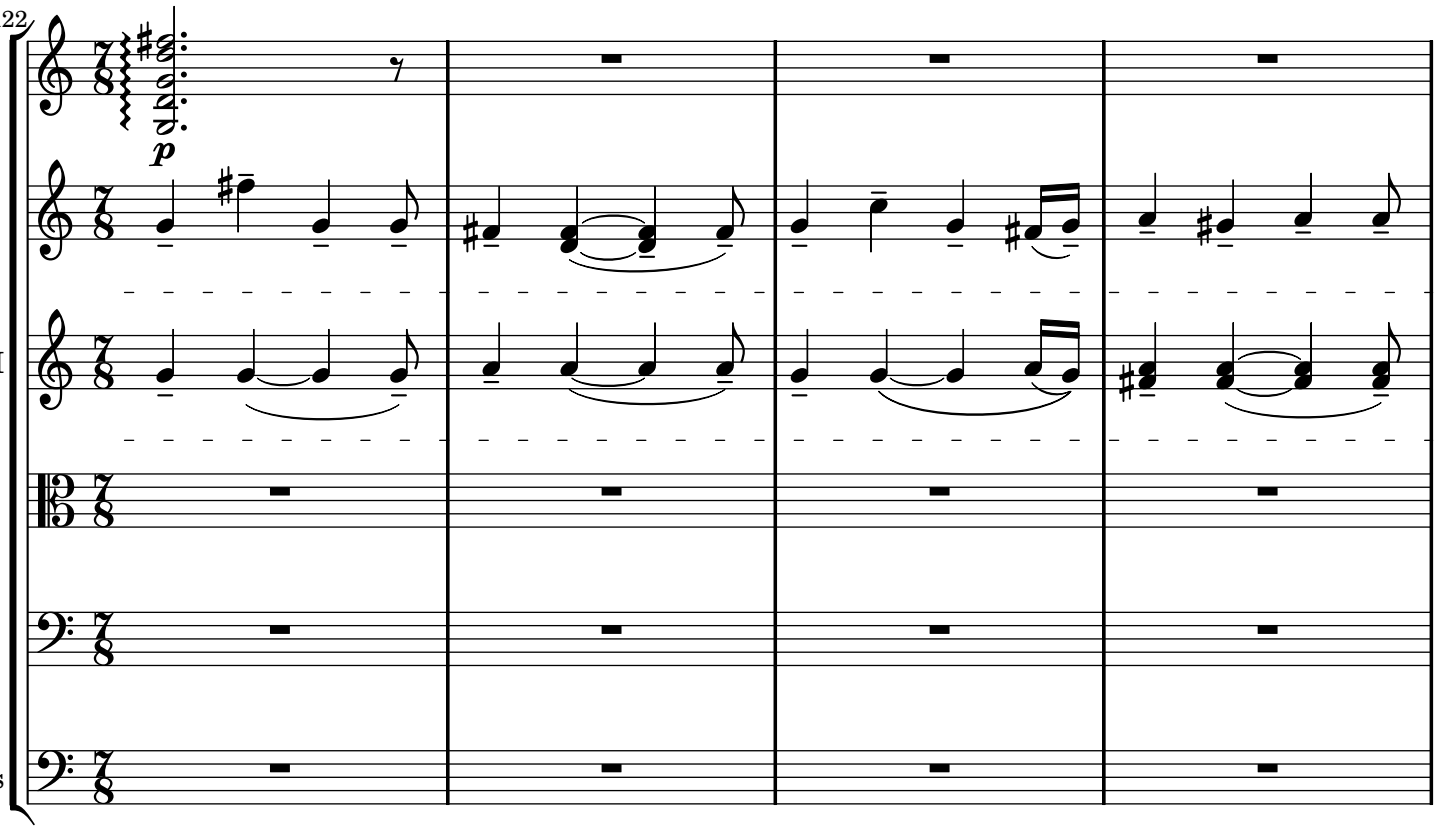

105
ord.
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
p

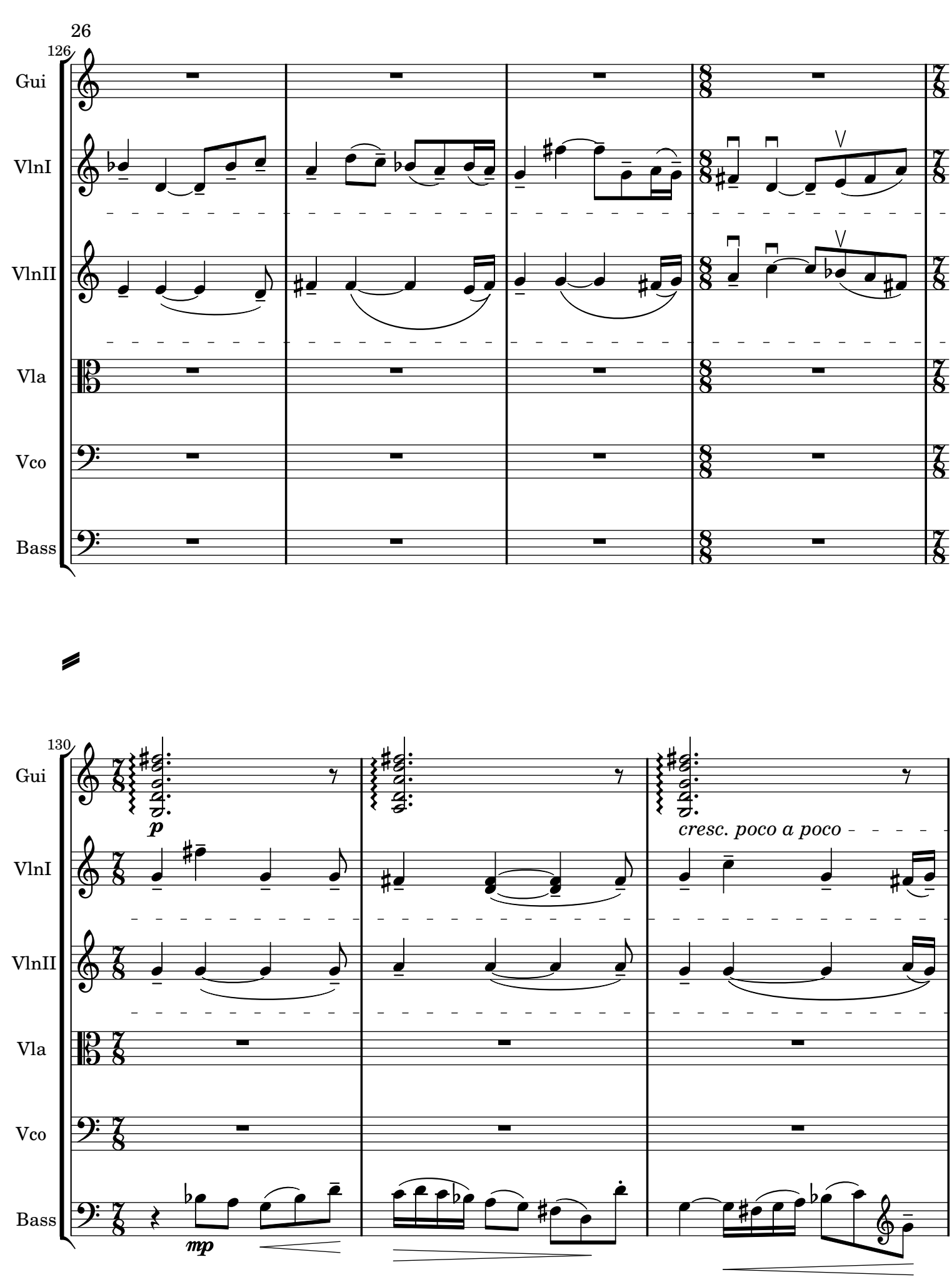

107
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
metallico
mp

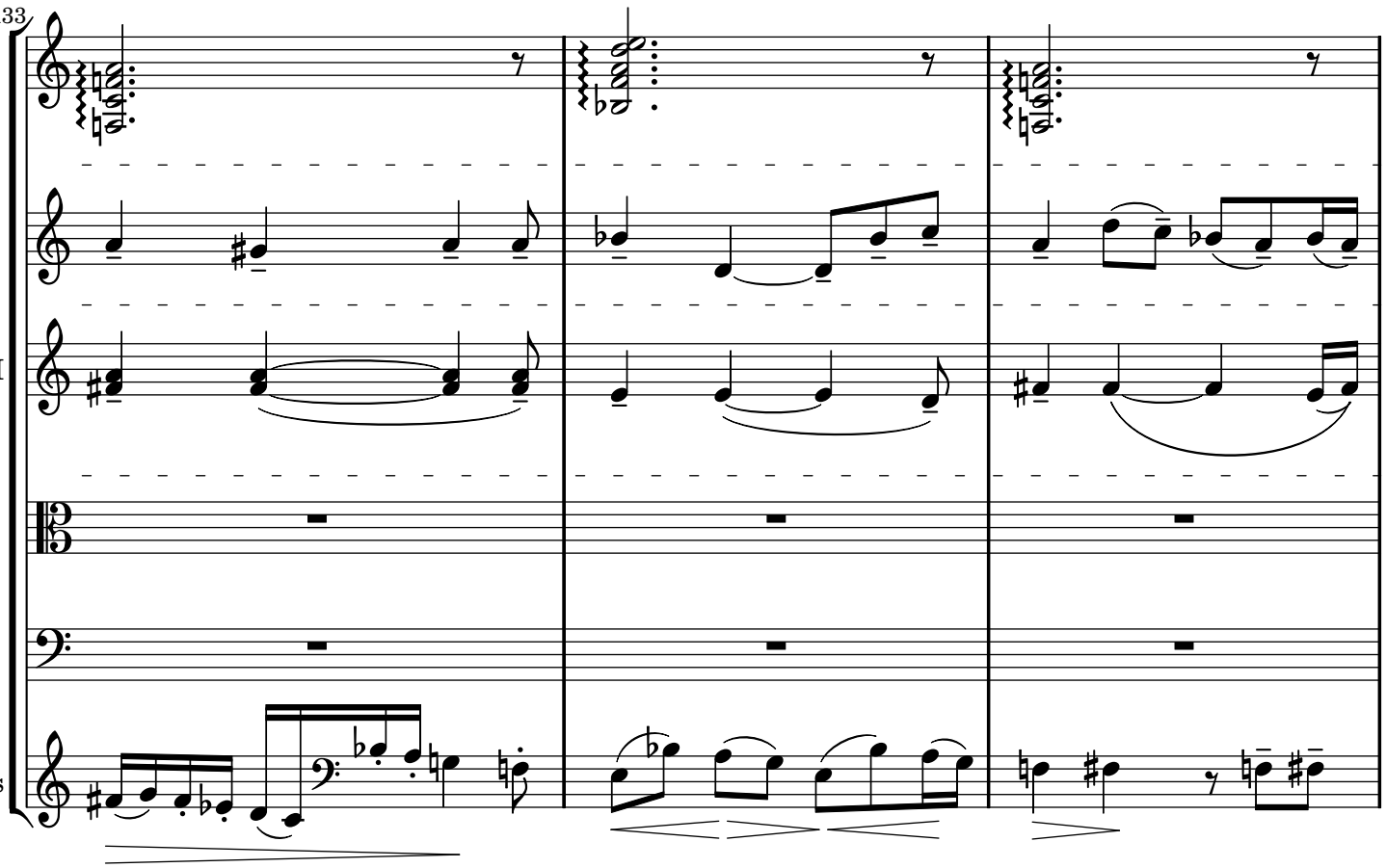

109
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
ord.
mp
mp

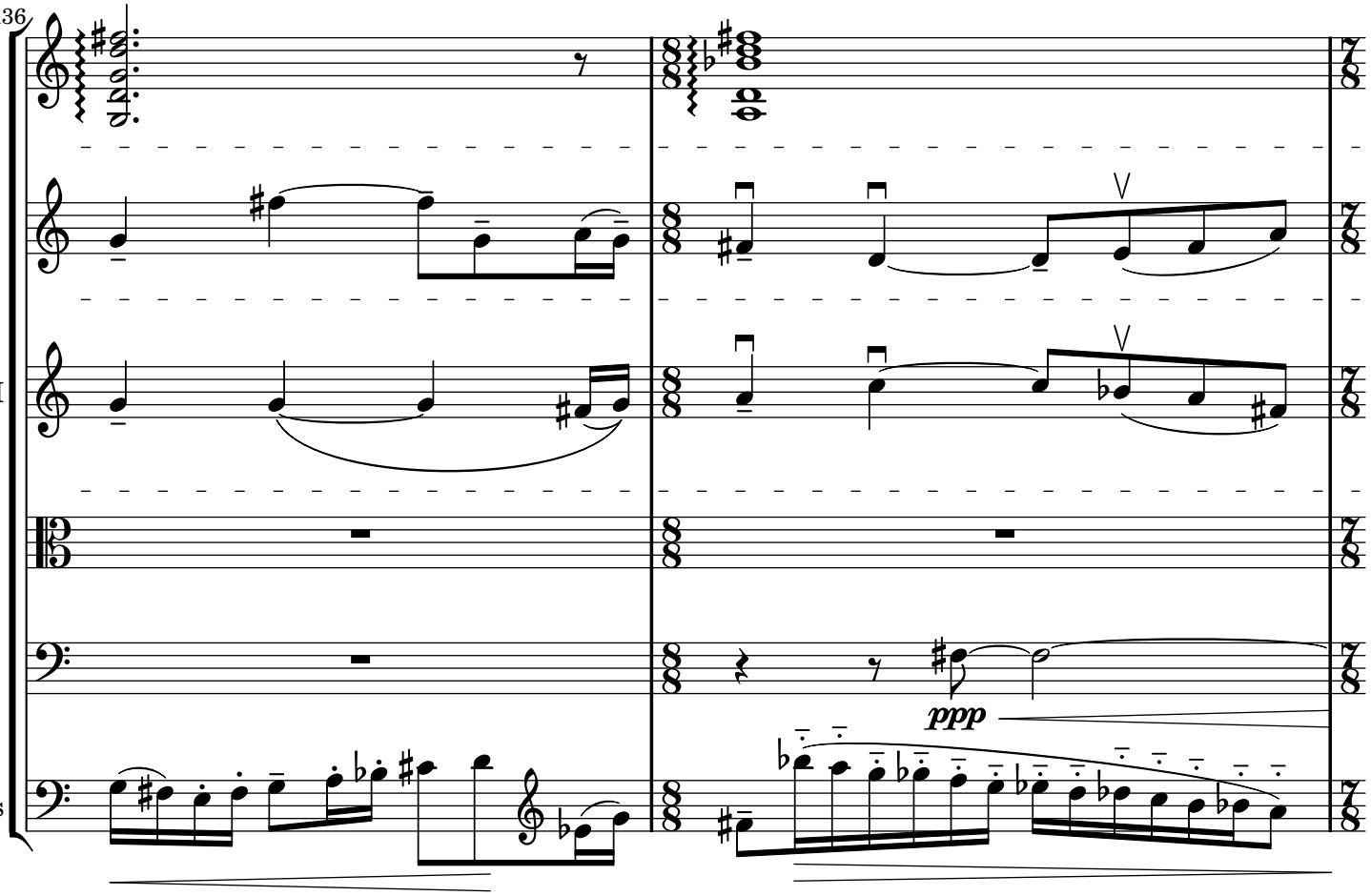

111
poco rit.
Gui
subito p
poco rit.
senza sord.
VlnI
poco rit.
senza sord.
VlnII
poco rit.
senza sord.
Vla
poco rit.
senza sord.
Vco
poco rit.
senza sord.
Bass
H
Chaconnesque: 2+2+3 (♩ = 100)
114
Gui
mp
rasgueado
VlnI
p
cresc. poco a poco
VlnII
p
cresc. poco a poco
Vla
Vco
Bass

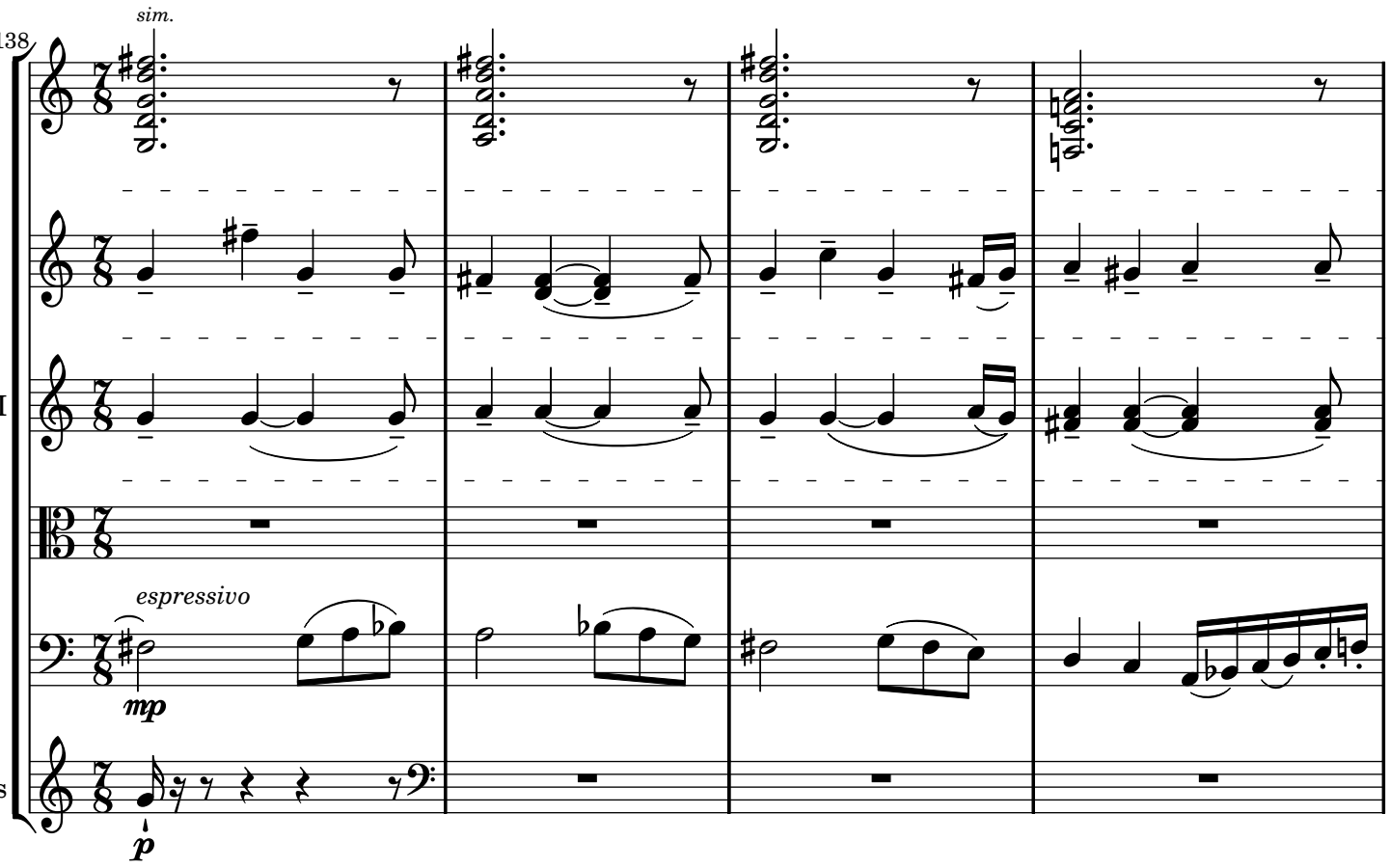

118
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass

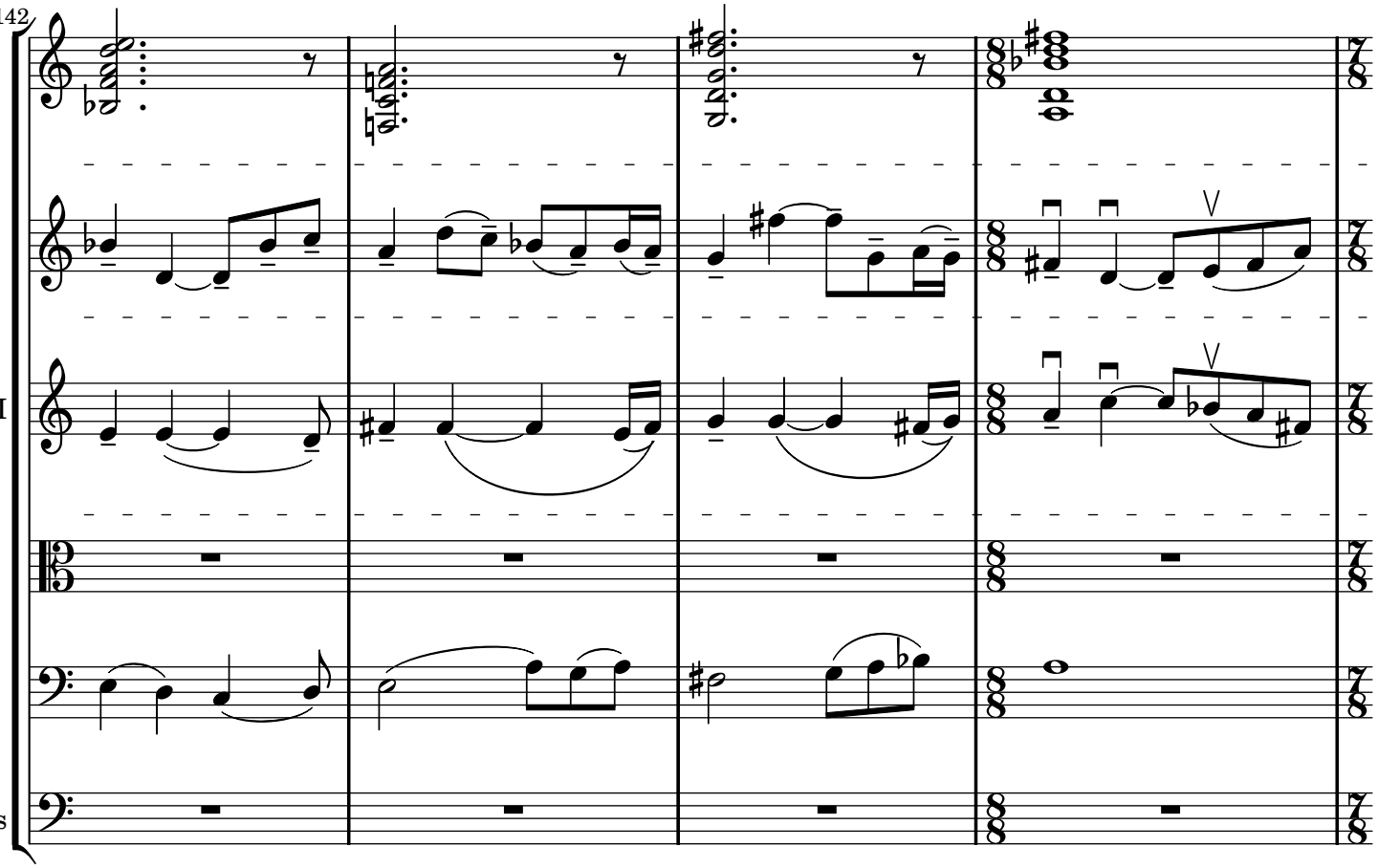

122
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
p

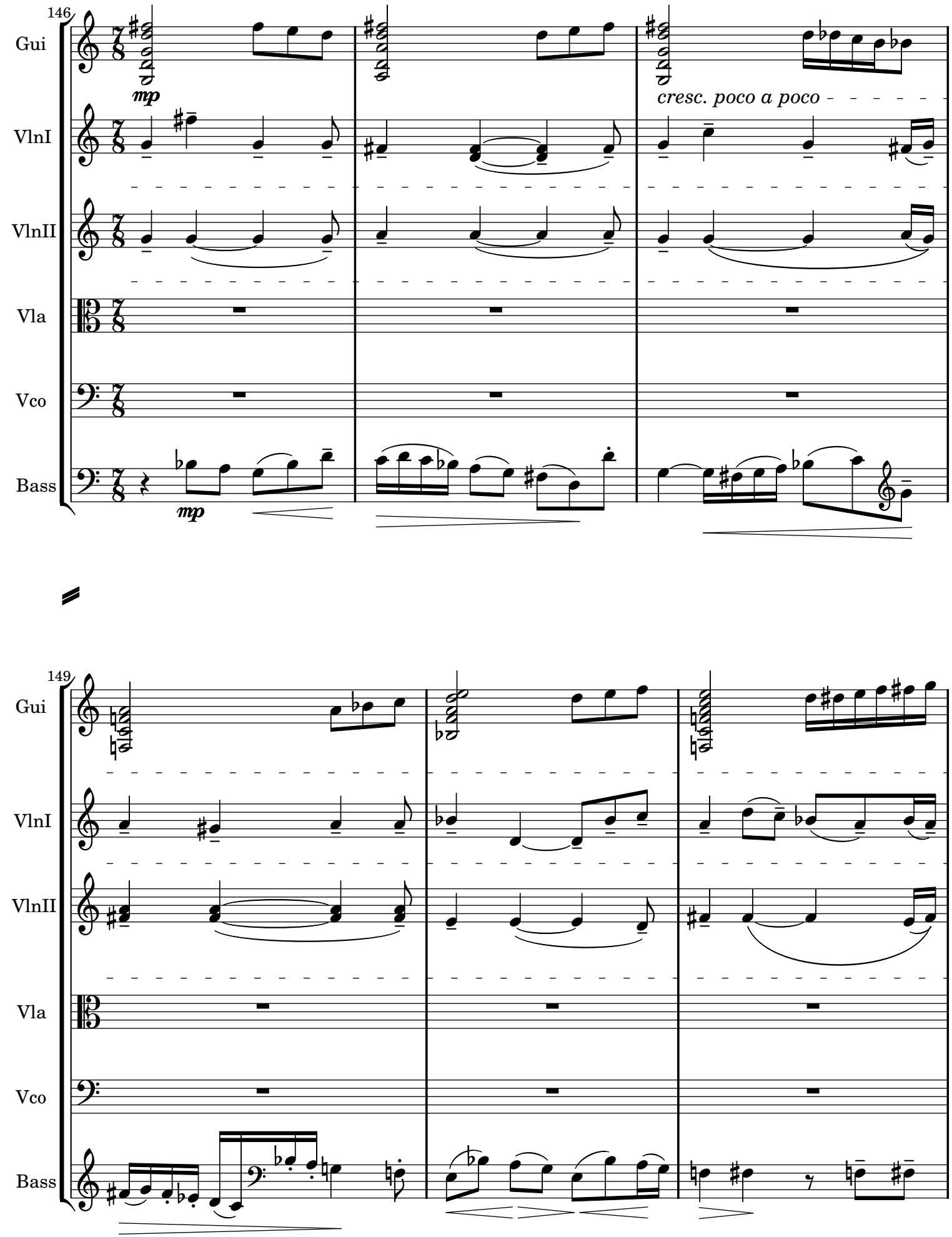

126
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
130
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
p
cresc. poco a poco
mp

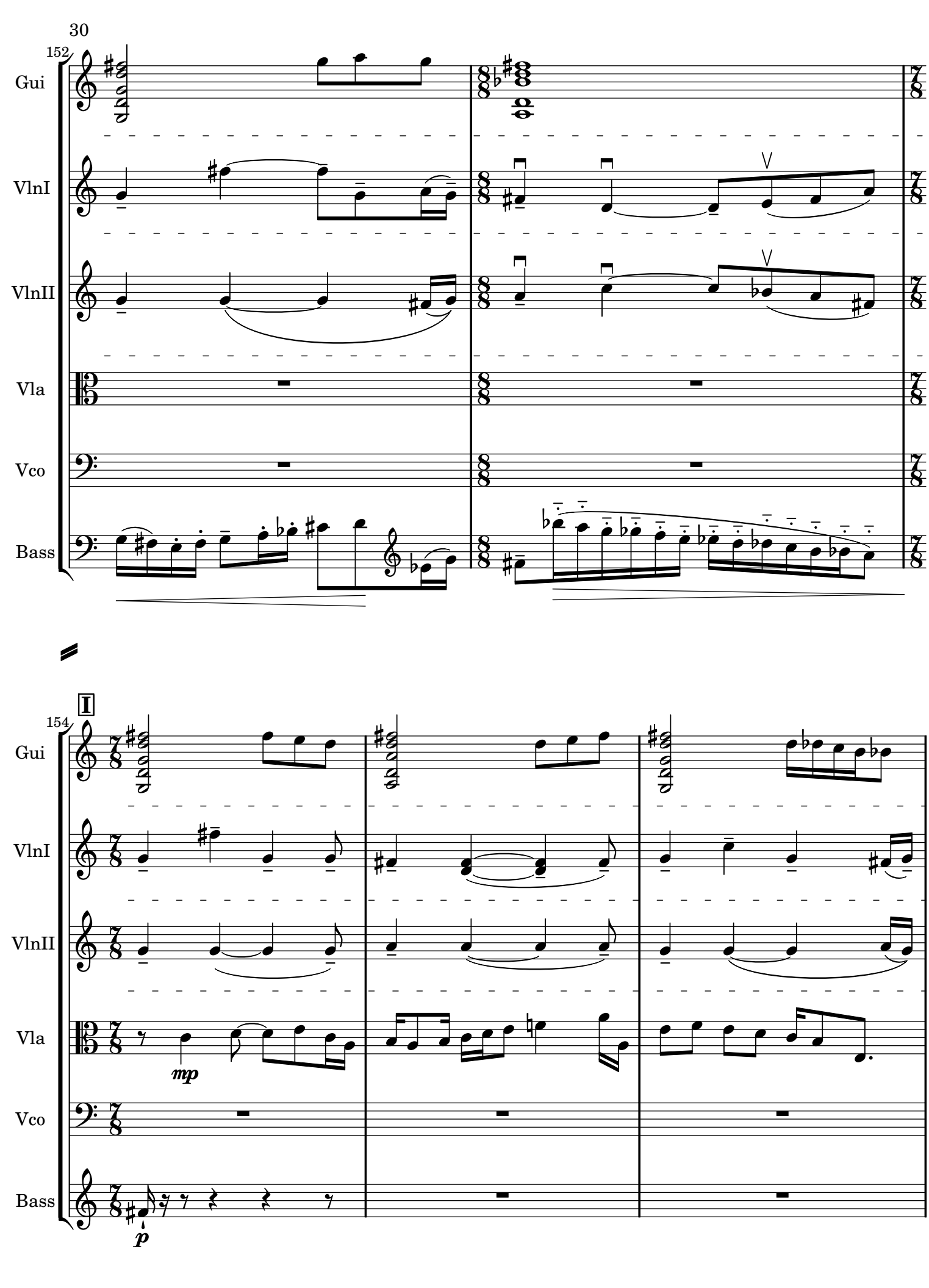

133
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass

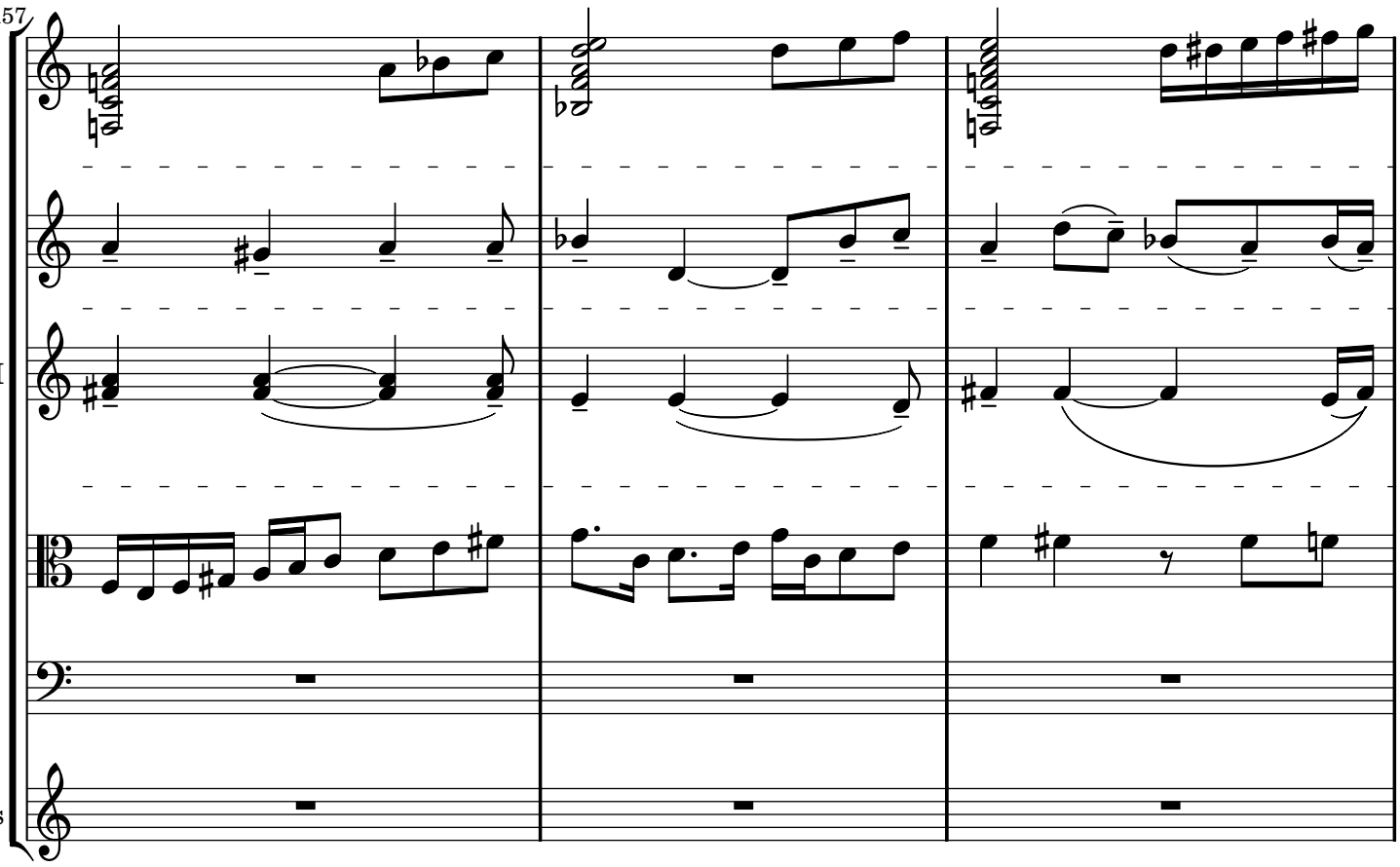

136
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
ppp

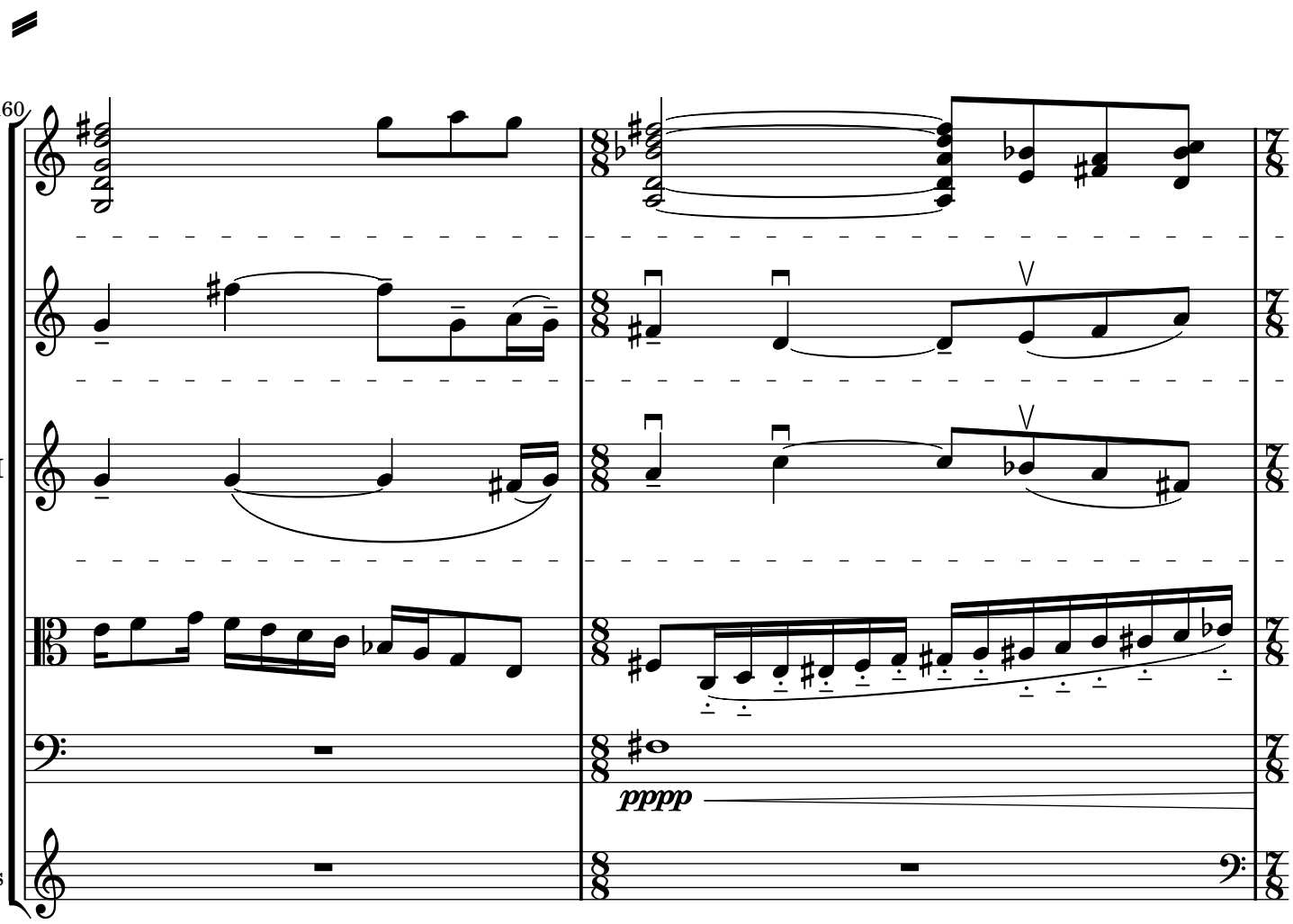

138
sim.
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
espressivo
mp
Vco
Bass
p

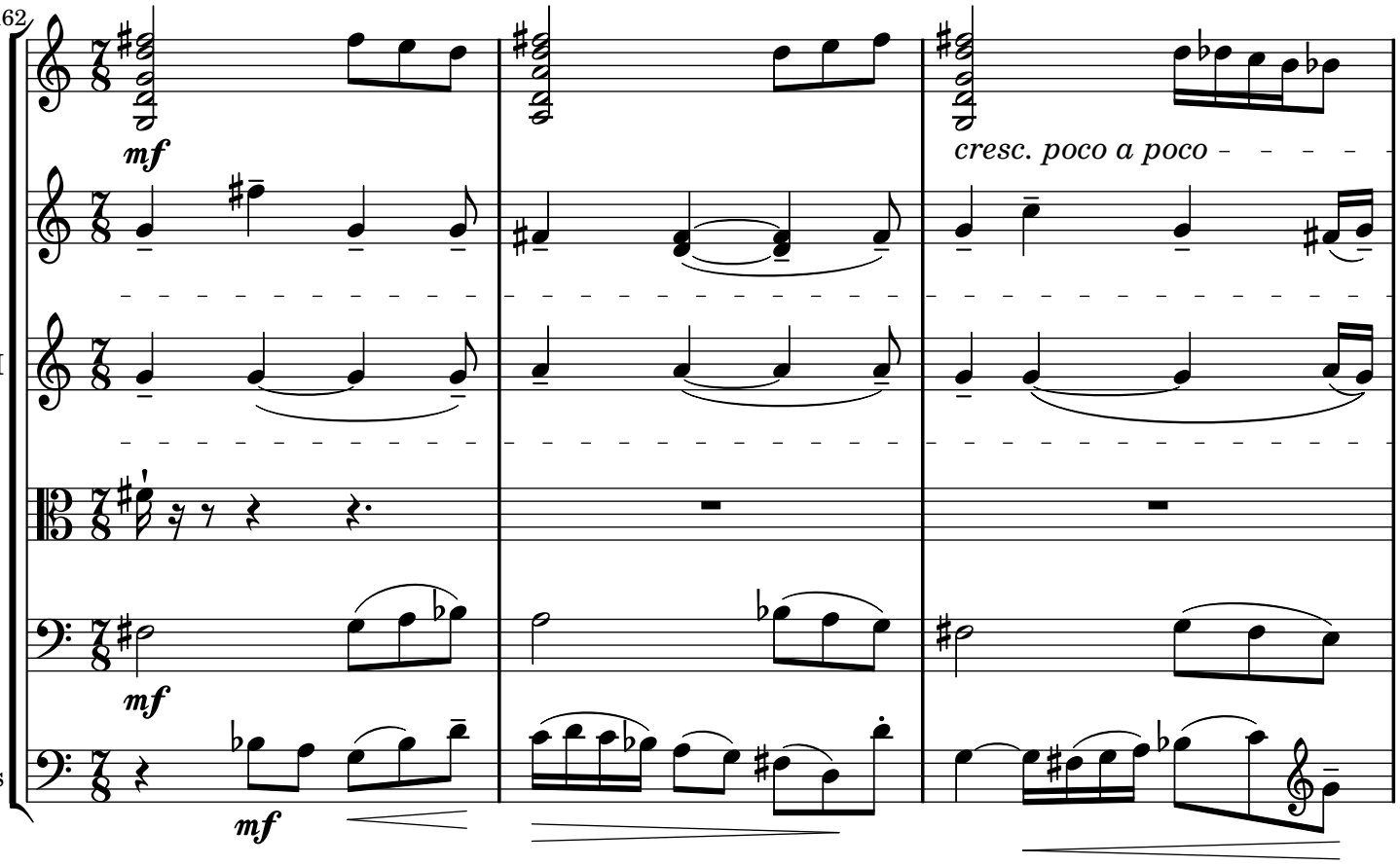

142
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass

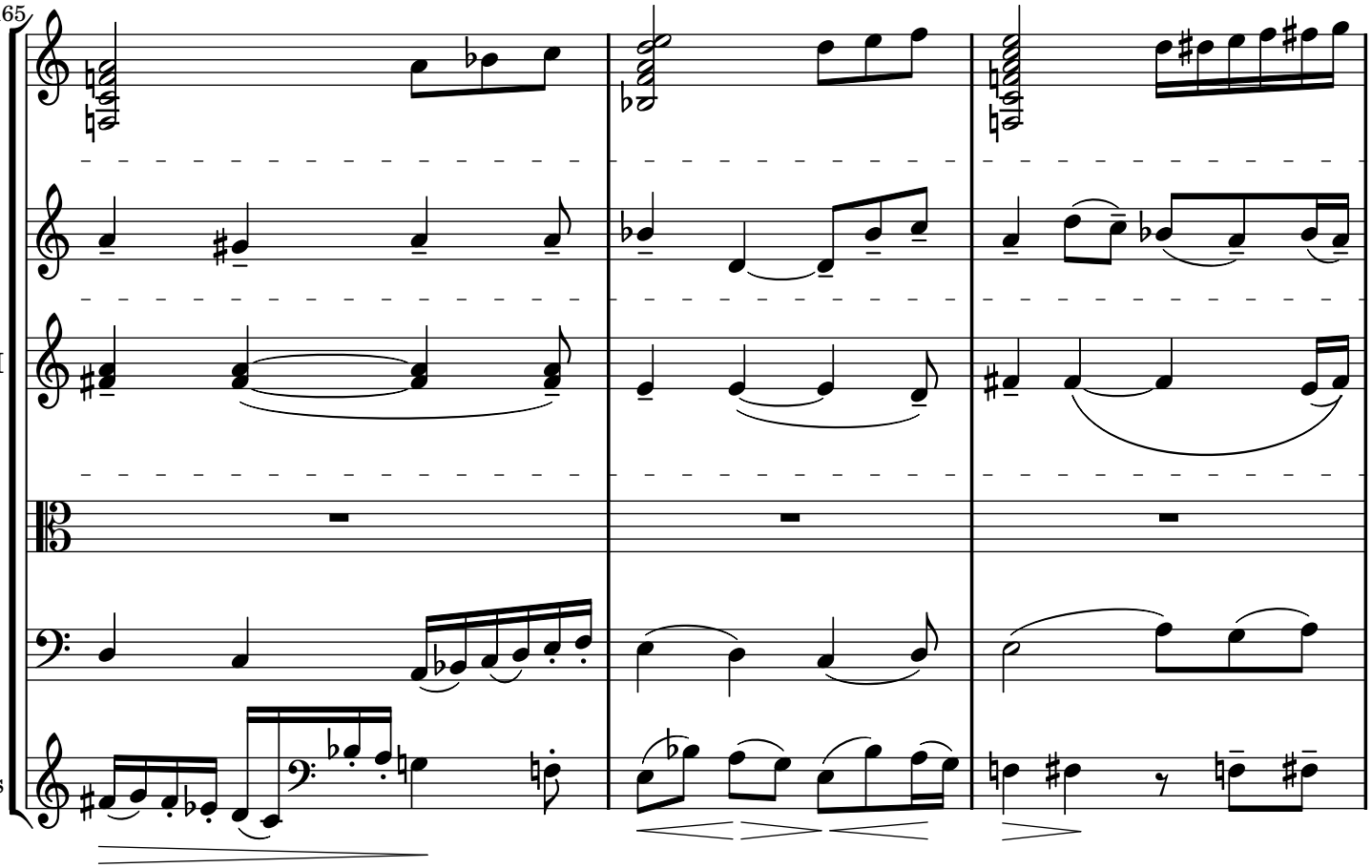

146
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
mp
mp
cresc. poco a poco
149
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass

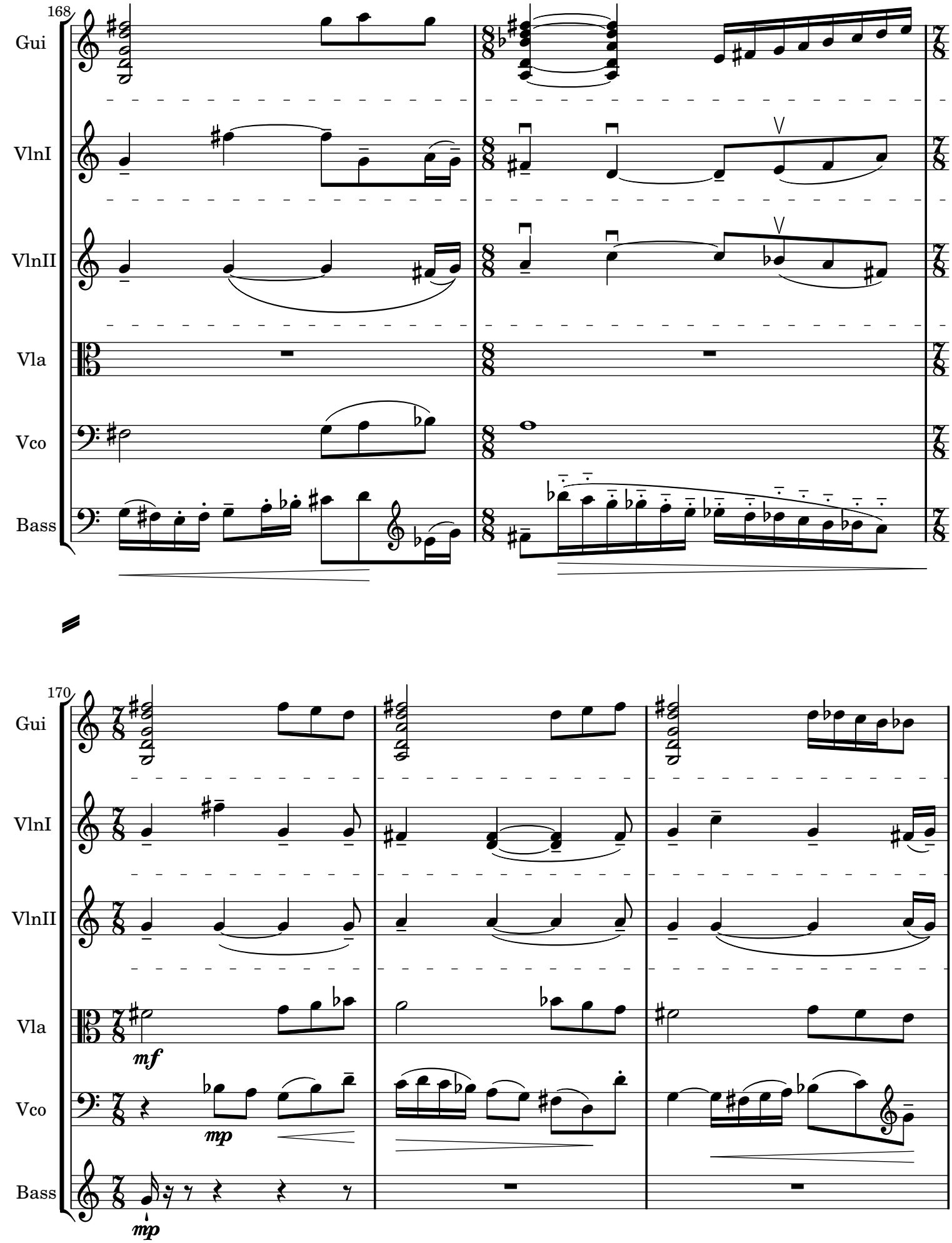

152
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
I
154
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
mp
p

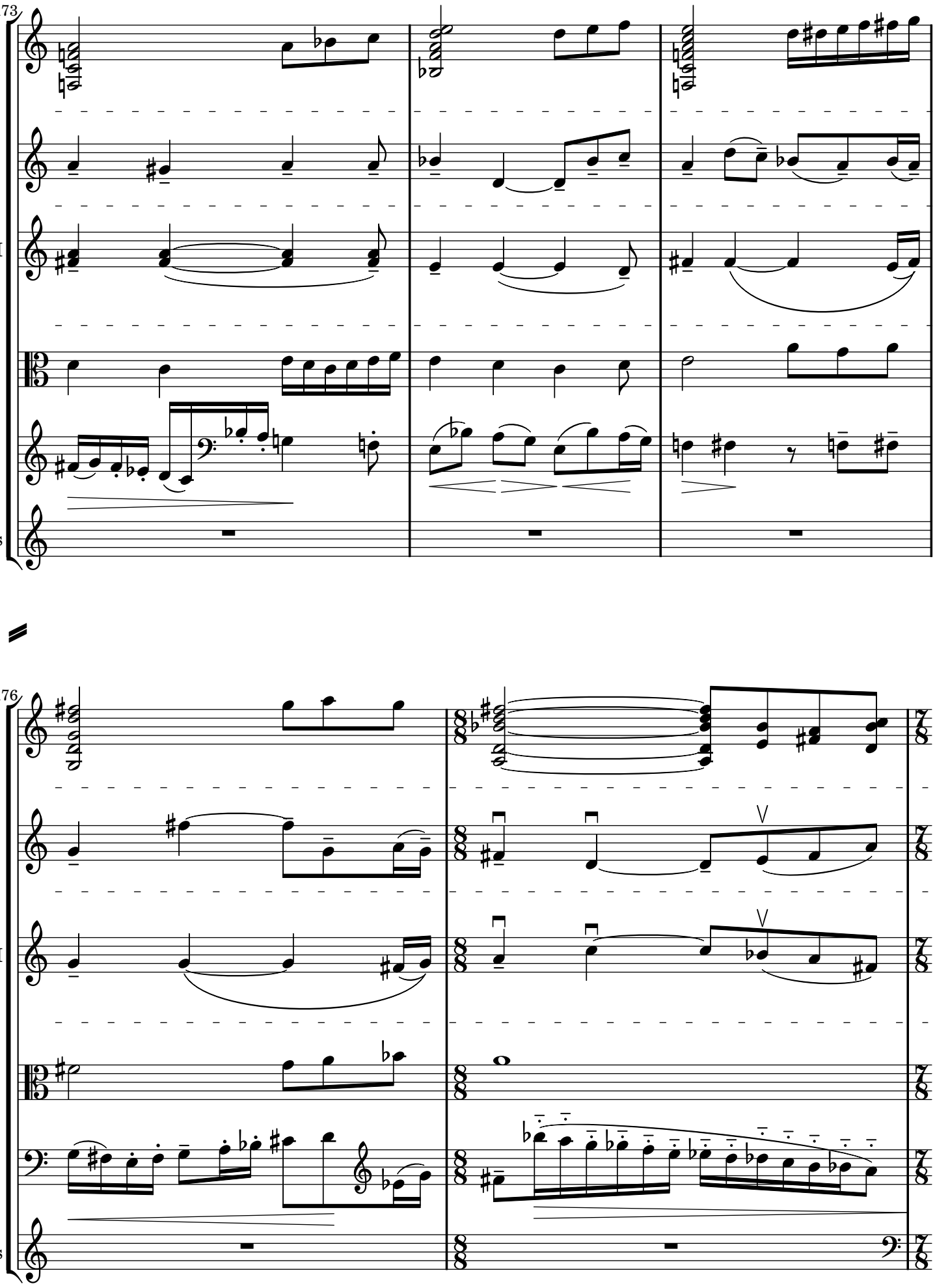

157
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass

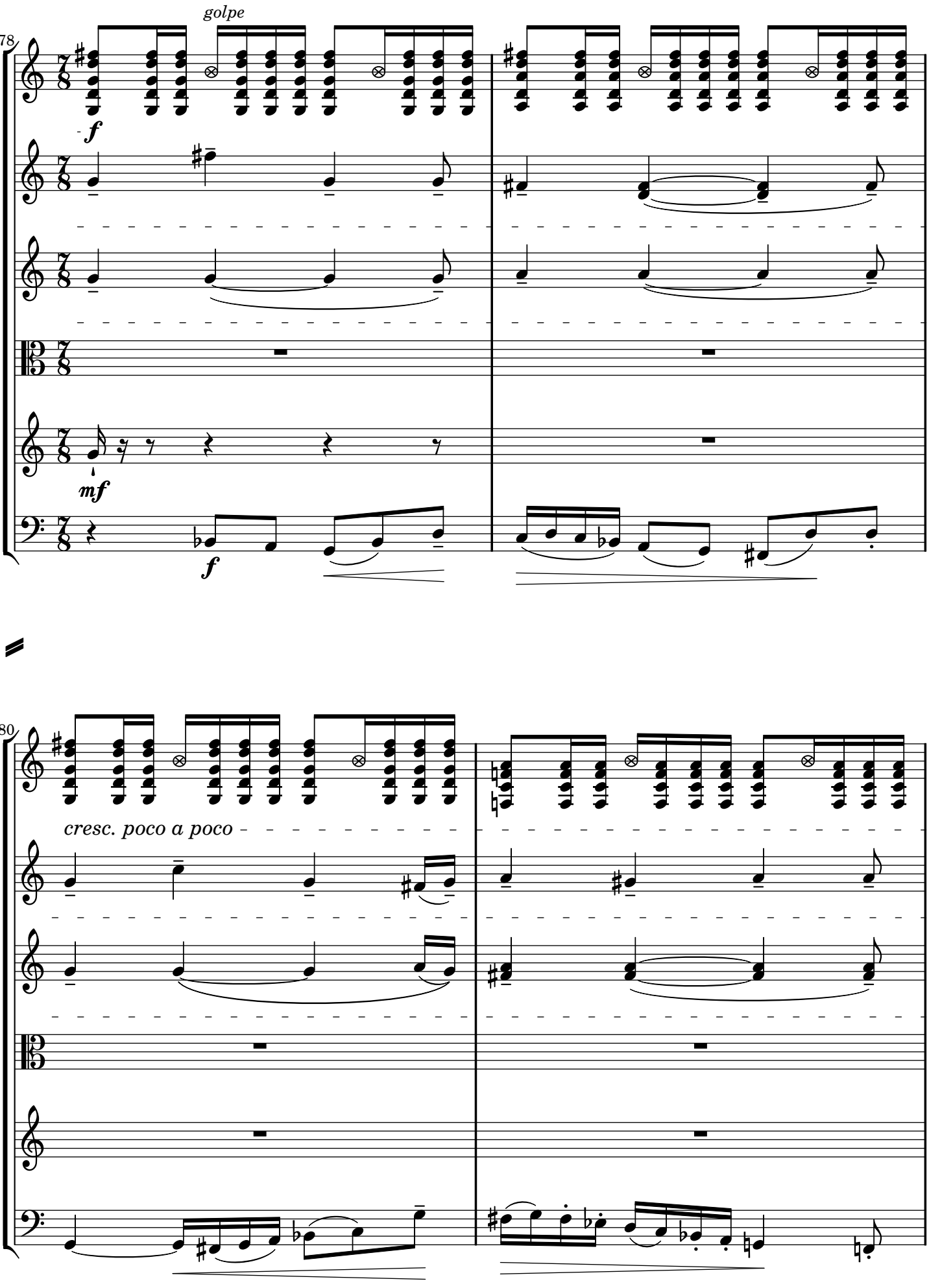

160
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
pppp
Bass

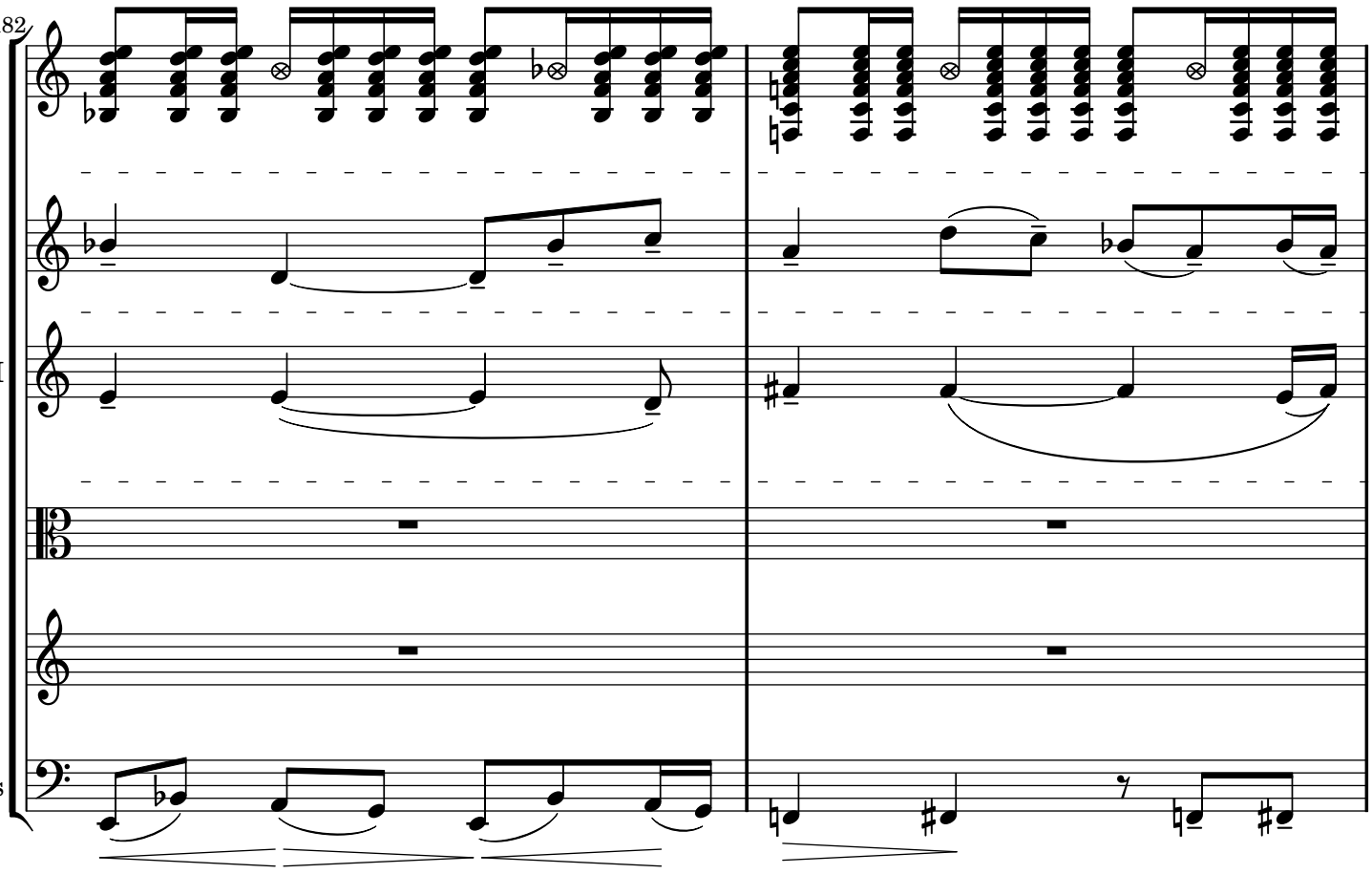

162
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
mf
cresc. poco a poco

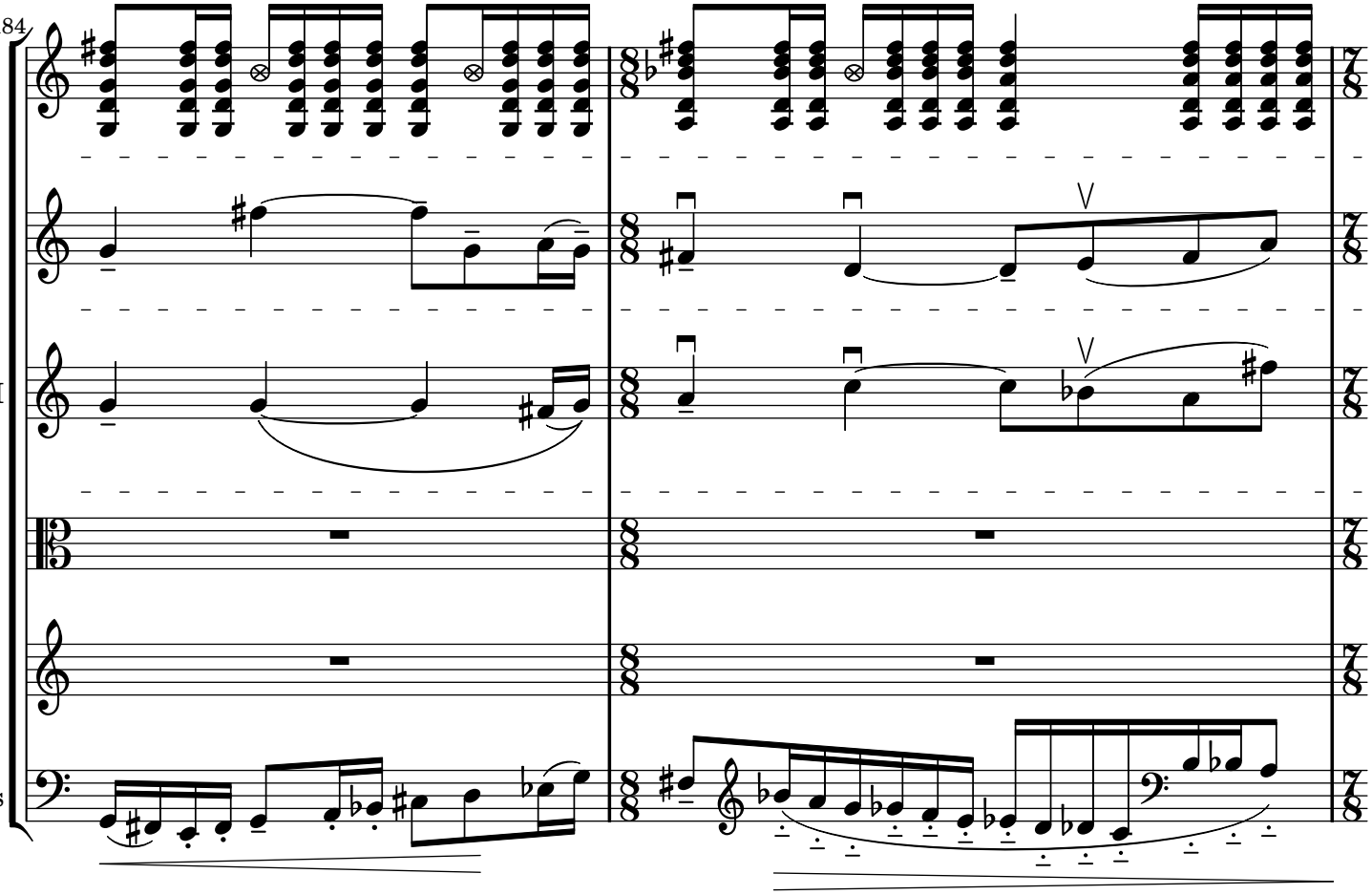

165
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass

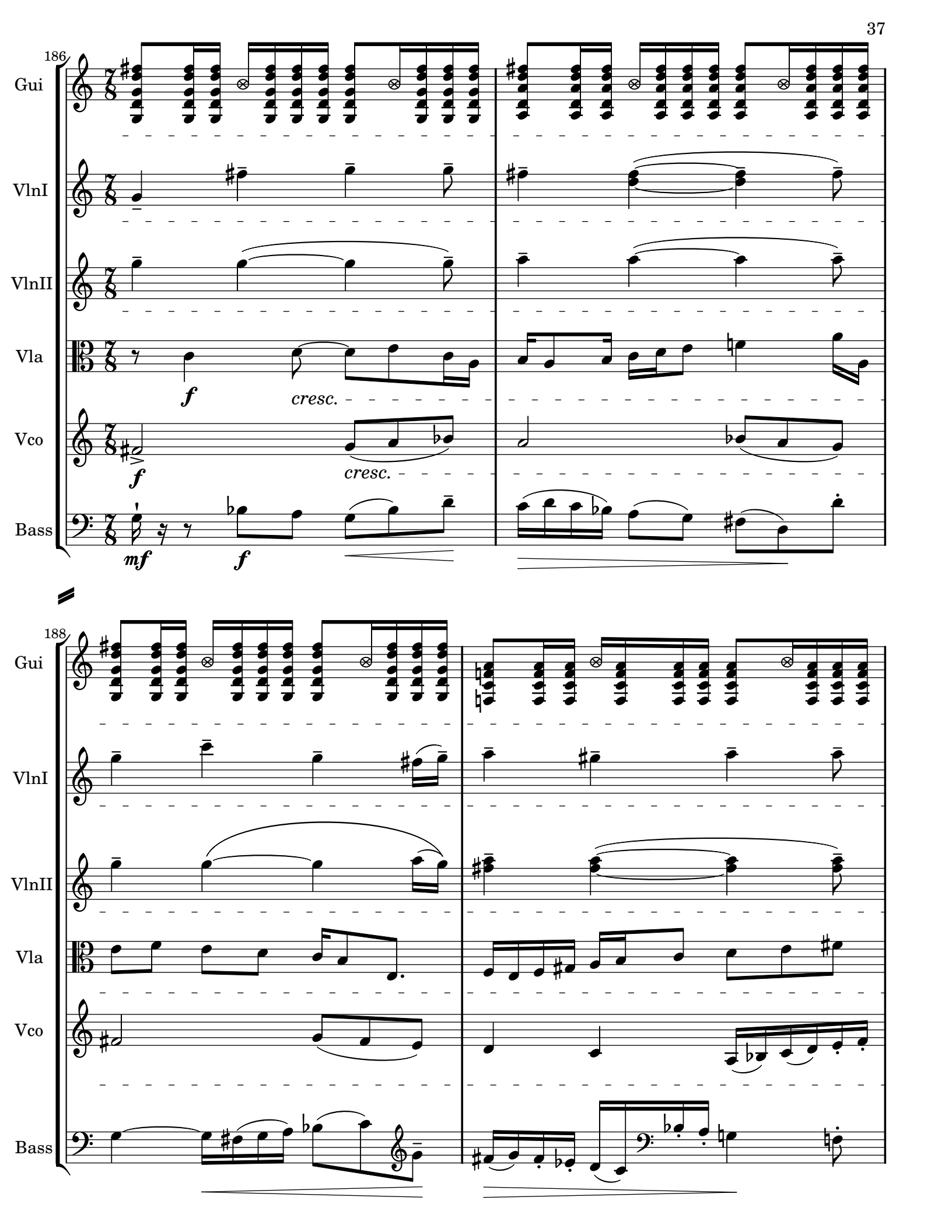

168
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
170
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
mf
mp
mp

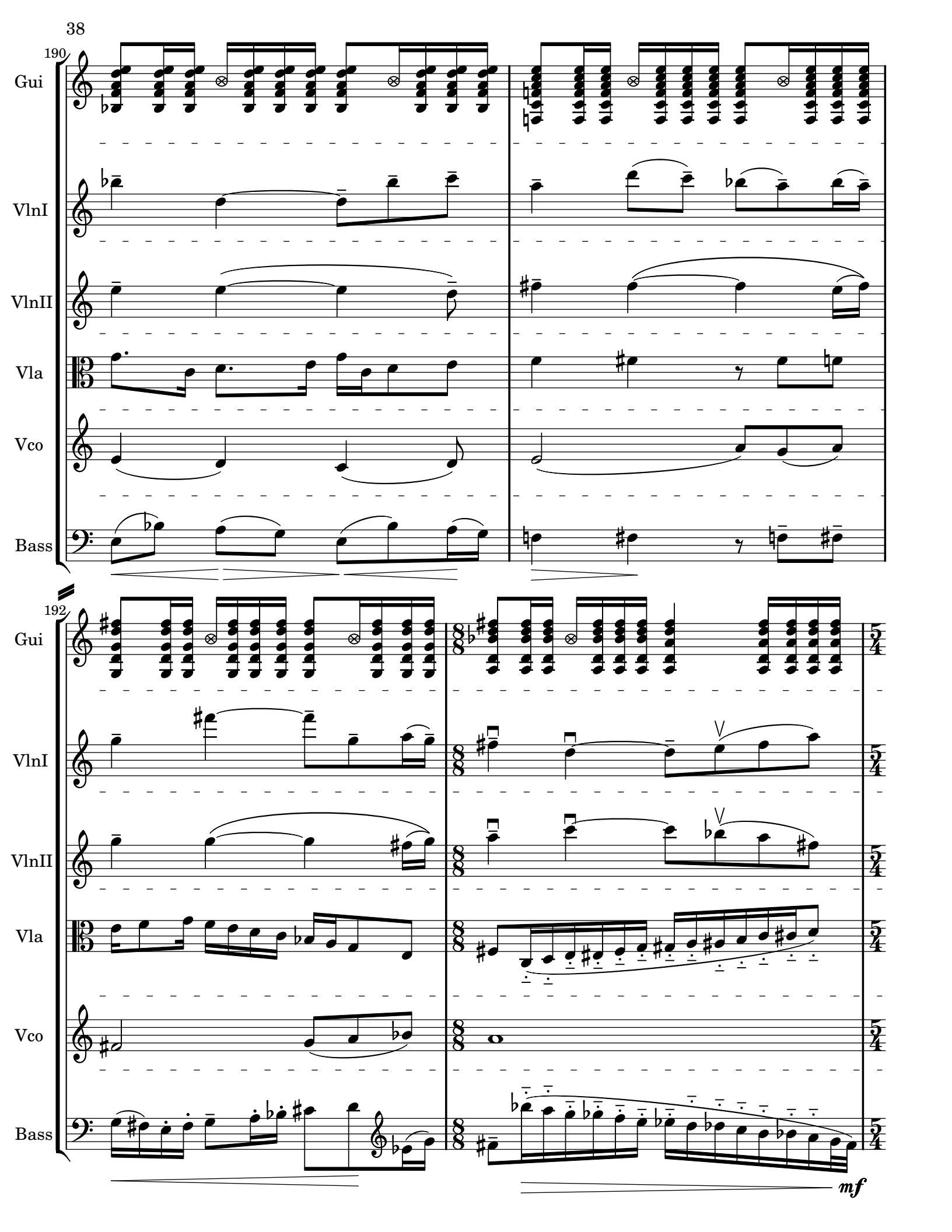

173
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
176
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass

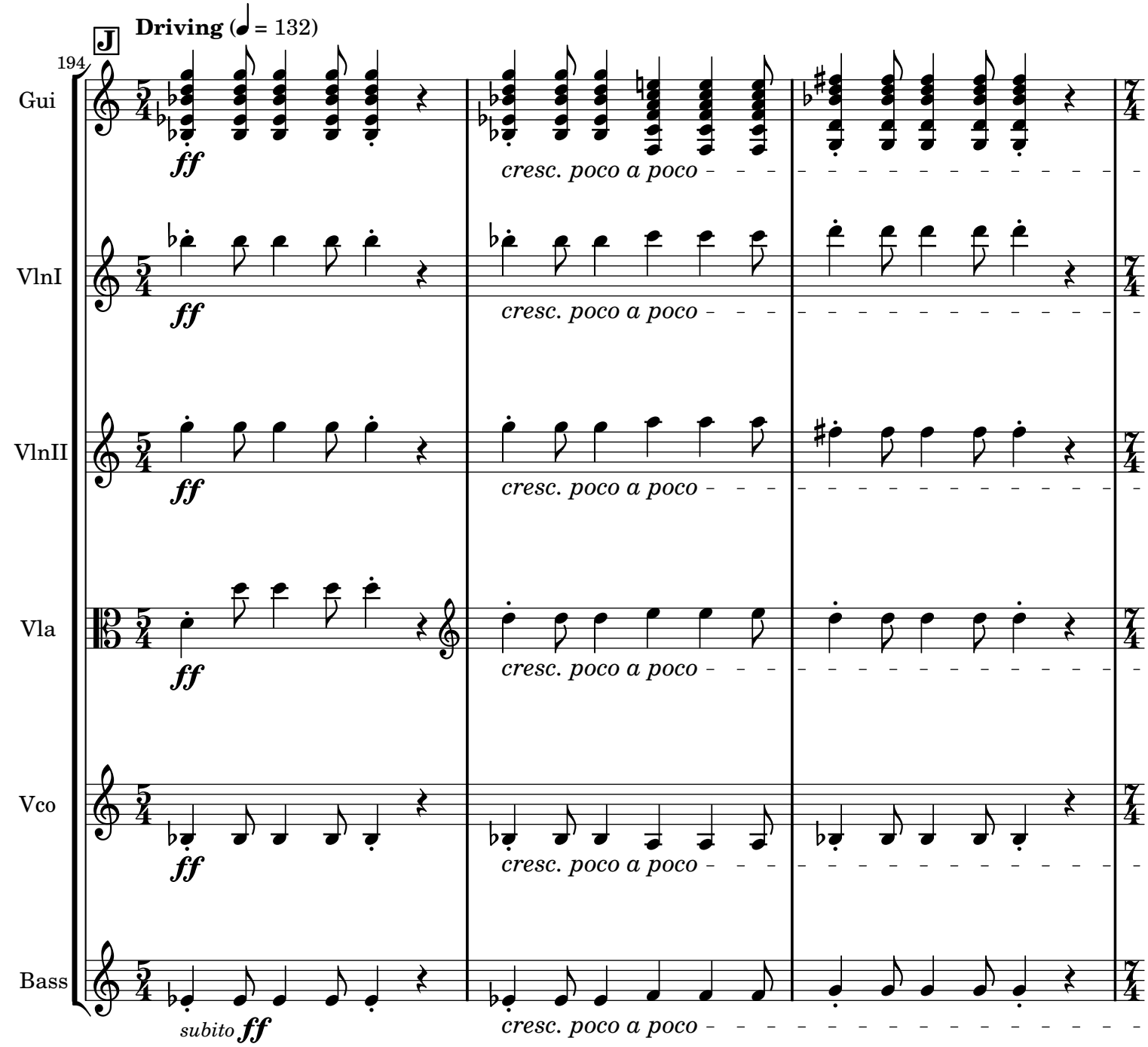

178
golpe
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
180
cresc. poco a poco

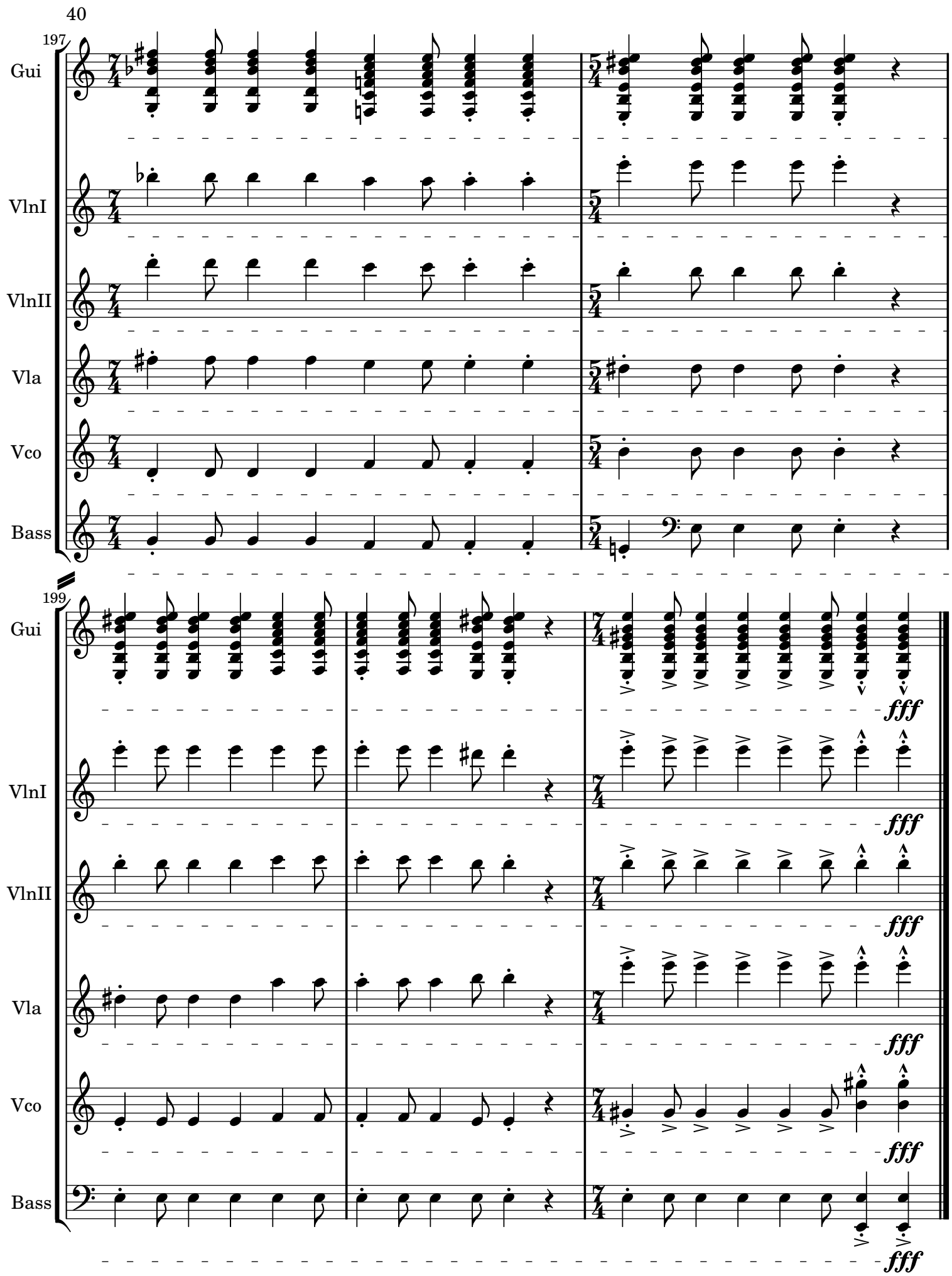

182
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass


184
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass


186
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
f
cresc.
mf
188


190
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
192
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
mf


J
Driving (♩ = 132)
194
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
ff
subito ff
cresc. poco a poco

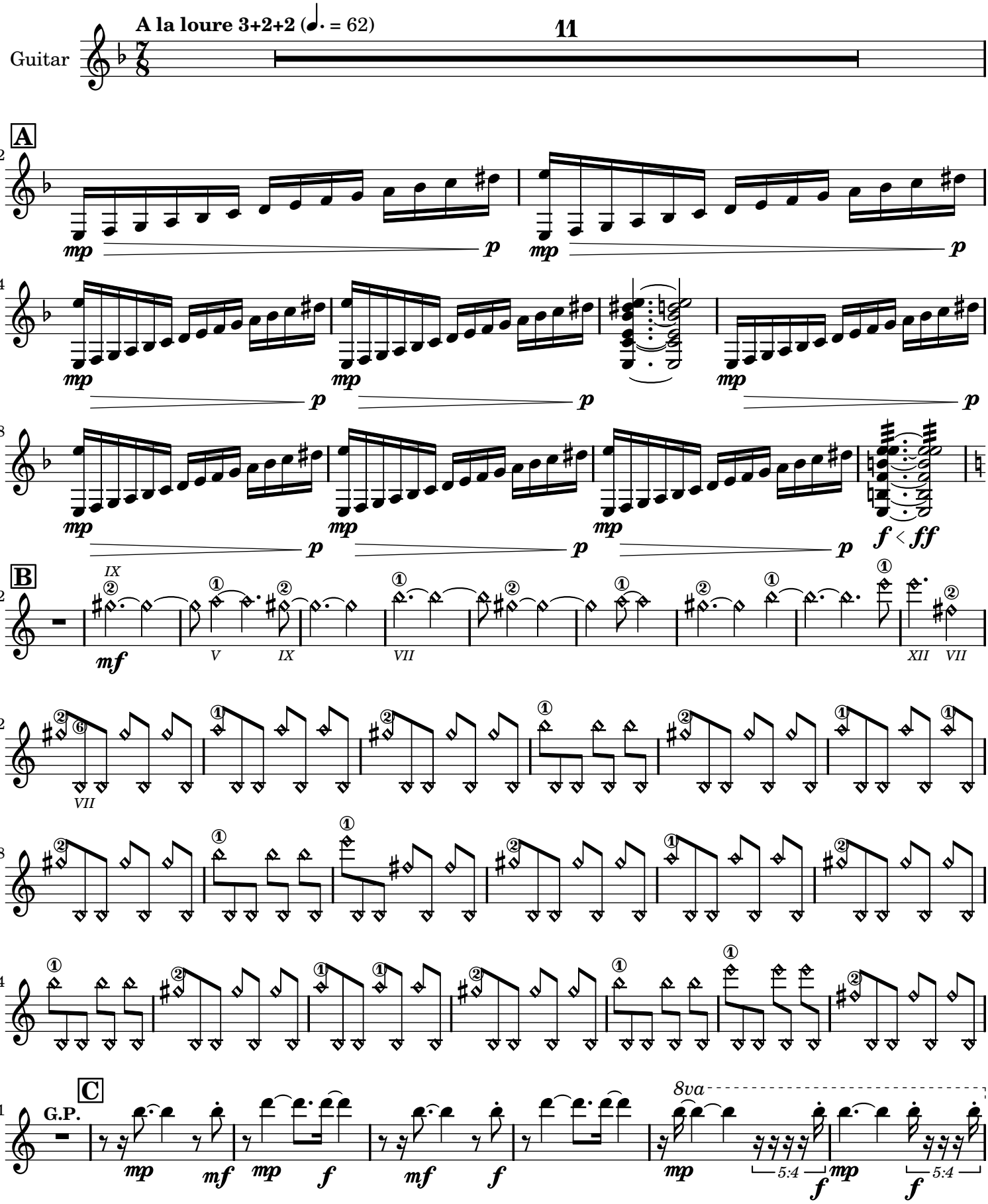

197
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
199
Gui
VlnI
VlnII
Vla
Vco
Bass
fff

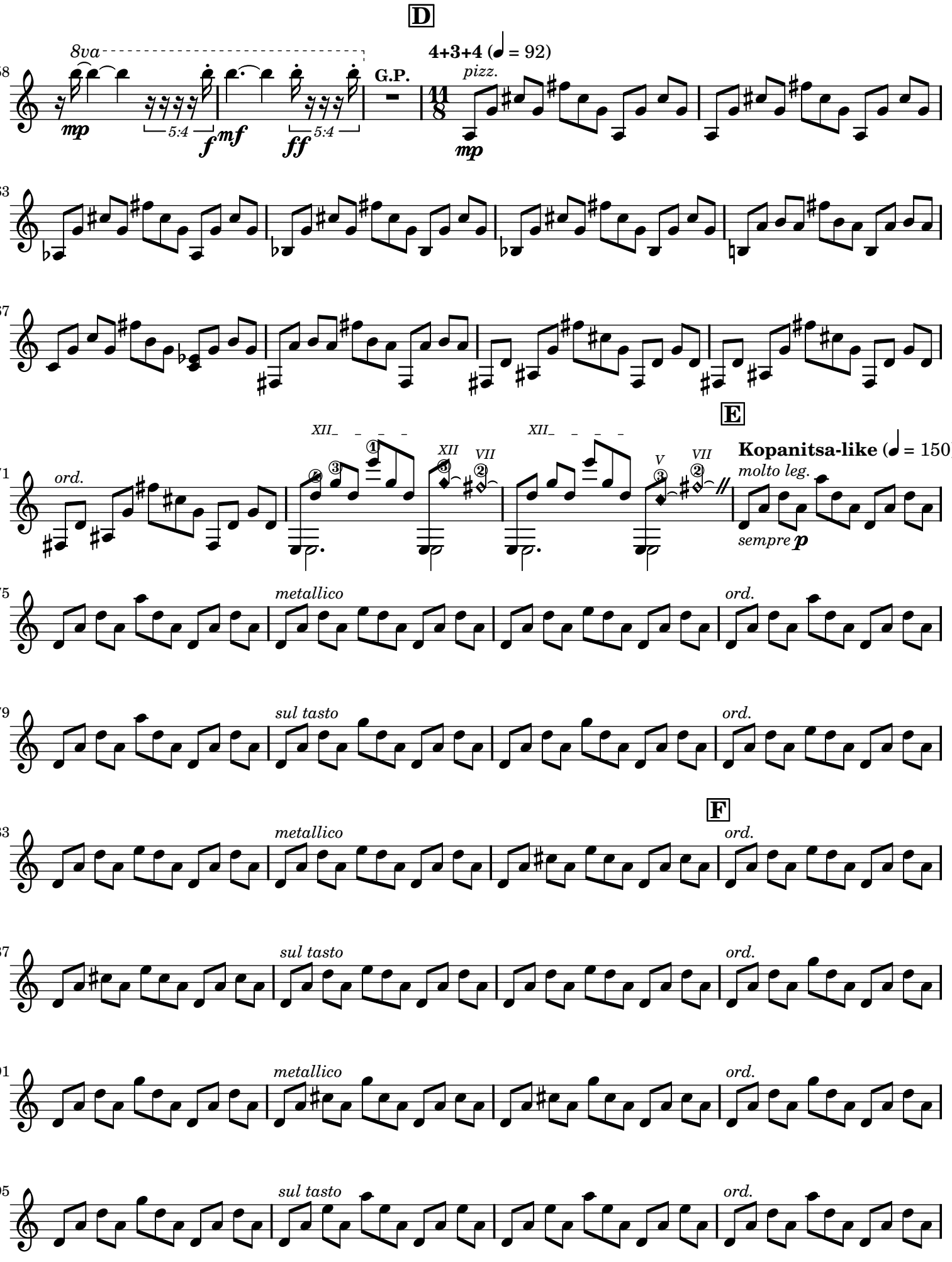
For the Quarteto Larianna, Gustavo Fontes, and Daniel Murray

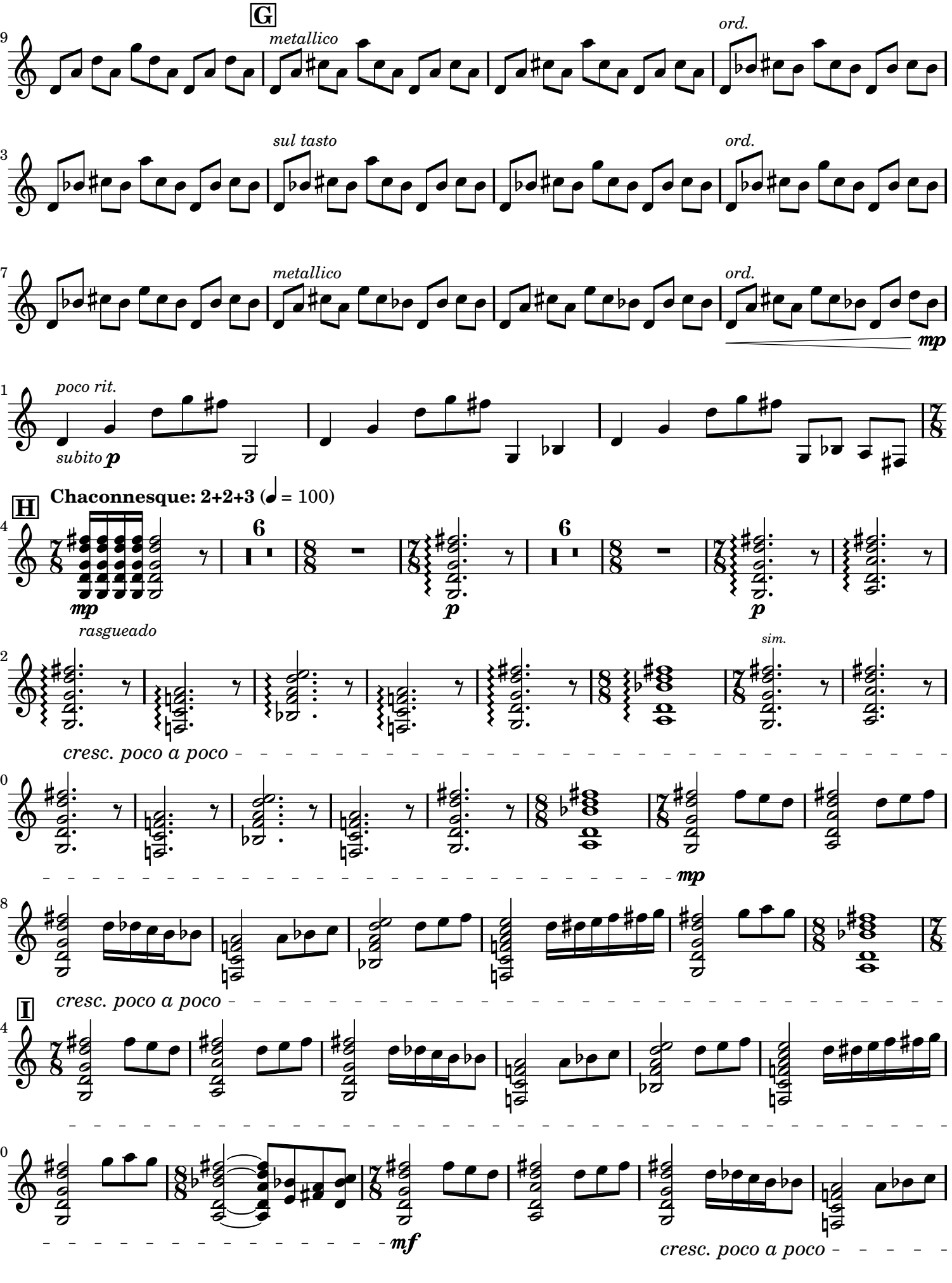
Waiting for the Future to Start

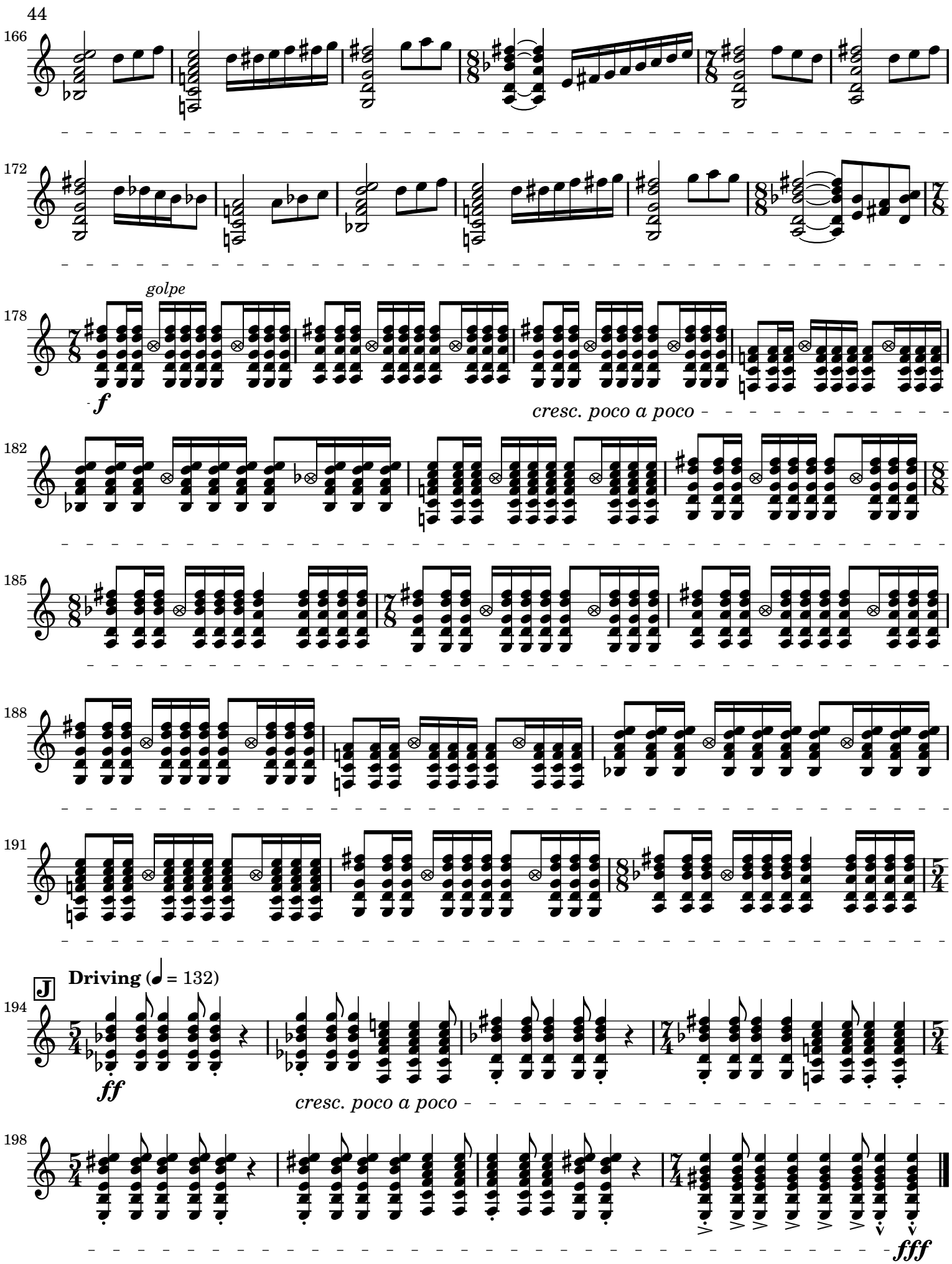
For String Quintet and Guitar

Melika M. Fitzhugh (2018)




D
8va
58
mp
5:4
f
mf
ff
5:4
G.P.
4+3+4 (♩ = 92)
pizz.
mp
63
67
E
71
XII
XII
VII
XII
V
VII
ord.
Kopanitsa-like (♩ = 150)
molto leg.
sempre p
75
metallico
ord.
79
sul tasto
ord.
F
83
metallico
ord.
87
sul tasto
ord.
91
metallico
ord.
95
sul tasto
ord.


G
metallico
ord.
sul tasto
ord.
metallico
ord.
mp
poco rit.
subito p
H
Chaconnesque: 2+2+3 (♩ = 100)
mp
p
p
rasgueado
sim.
cresc. poco a poco
mp
cresc. poco a poco
I
mf
cresc. poco a poco

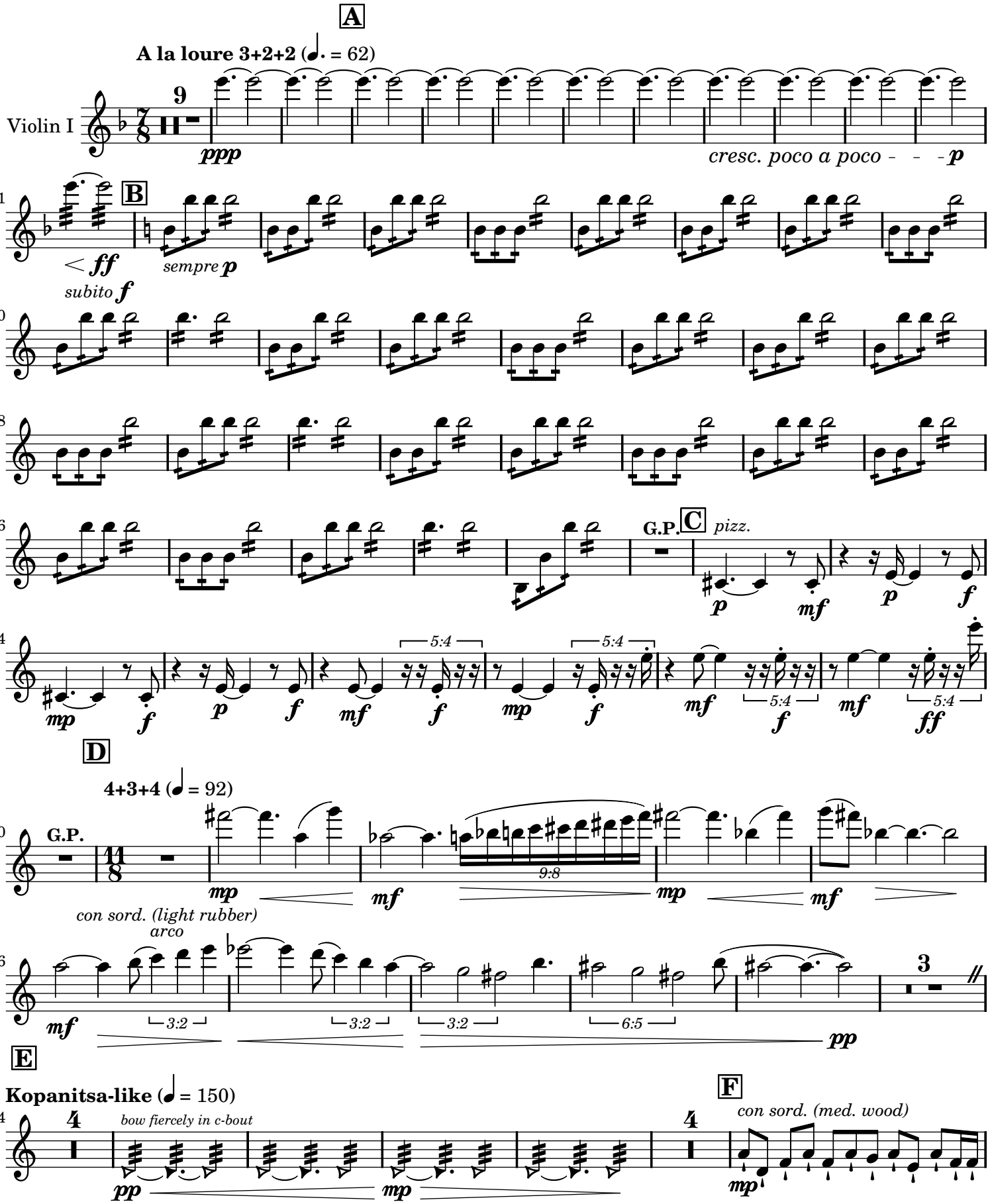

166
172
178
golpe
f
cresc. poco a poco
182
185
188
191
J
Driving (♩ = 132)
194
ff
cresc. poco a poco
198
fff

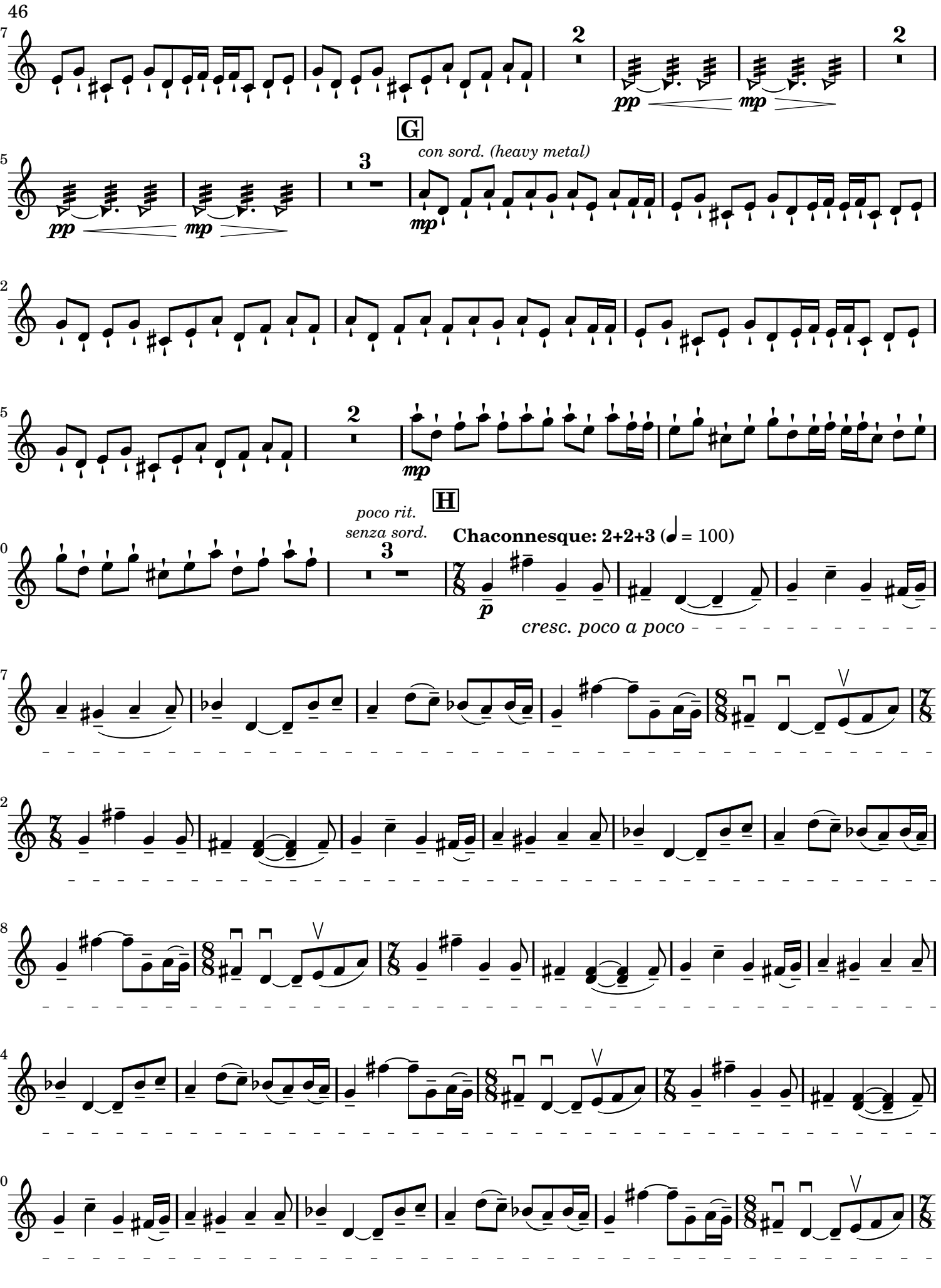
For the Quarteto Larianna, Gustavo Fontes, and Daniel Murray

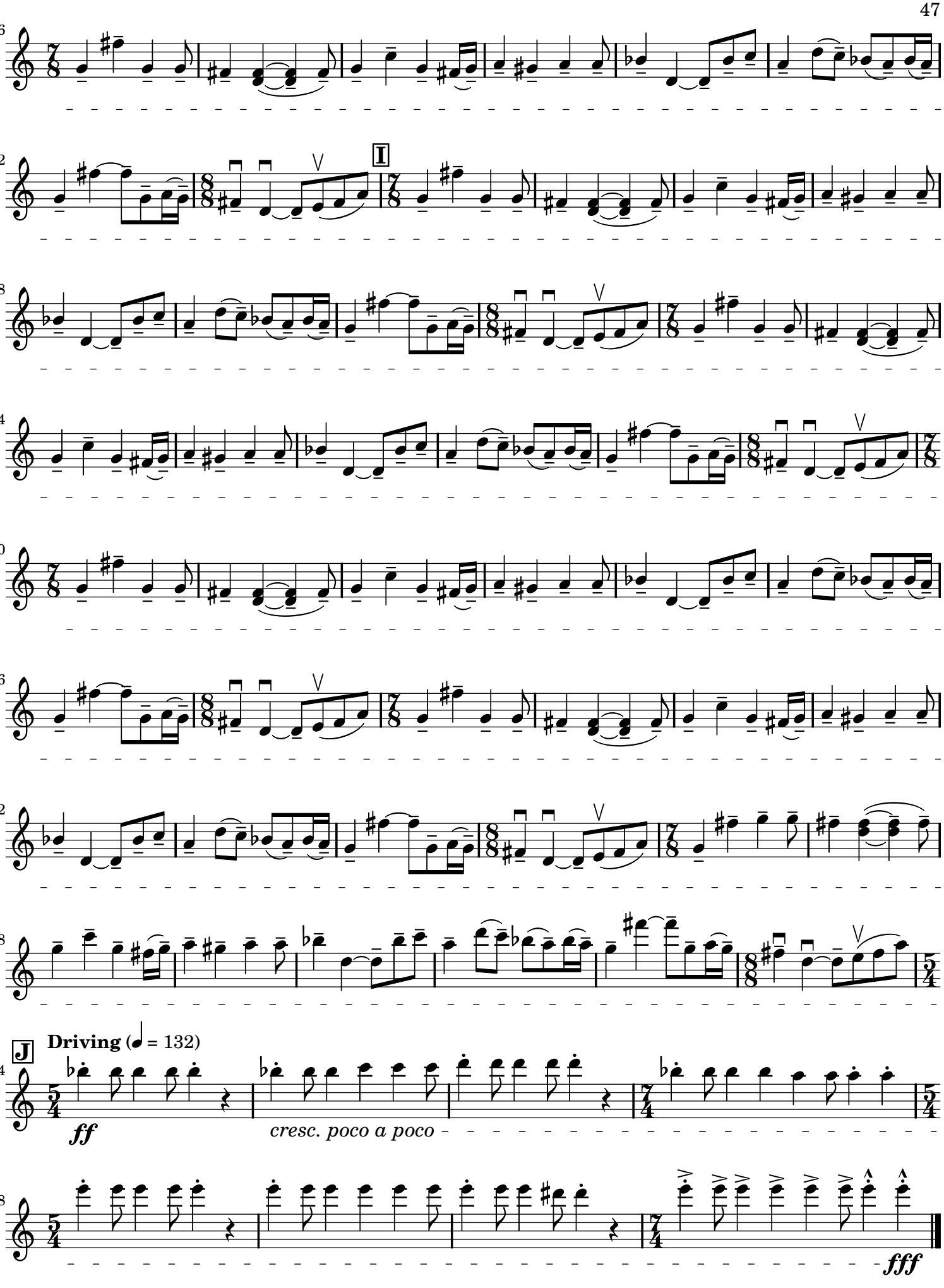
Waiting for the Future to Start

For String Quintet and Guitar

Melika M. Fitzhugh (2018)




87
2
pp
mp
2
G
95
con sord. (heavy metal)
3
pp
mp
mp
102
105
2
mp
H
poco rit.
senza sord.
3
Chaconnesque: 2+2+3 (♩ = 100)
110
p
cresc. poco a poco
117
122
128
134
140

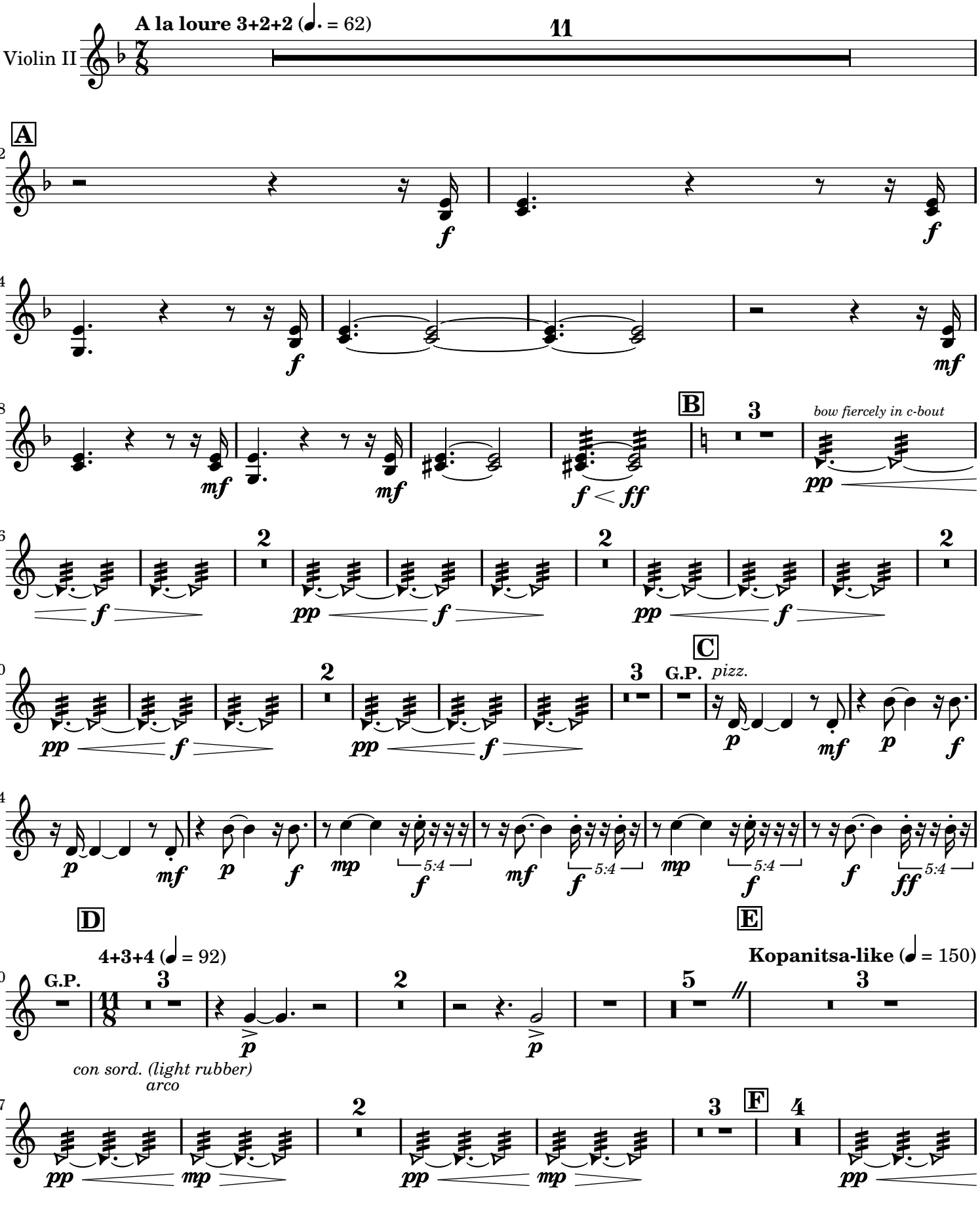

146
152
I
158
164
170
176
182
188
J
Driving (♩ = 132)
194
ff
cresc. poco a poco
198
fff

For the Quarteto Larianna, Gustavo Fontes, and Daniel Murray

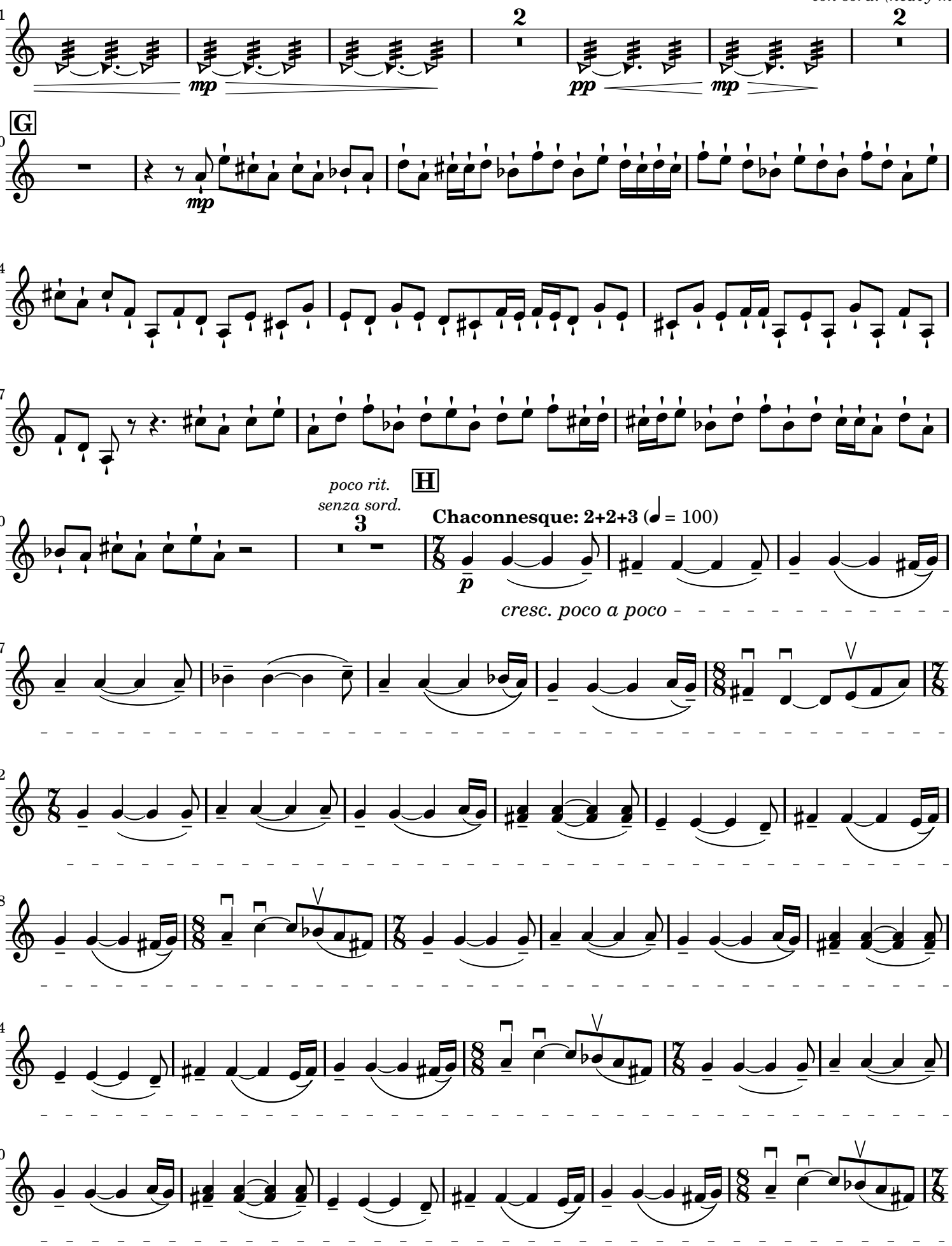
Waiting for the Future to Start

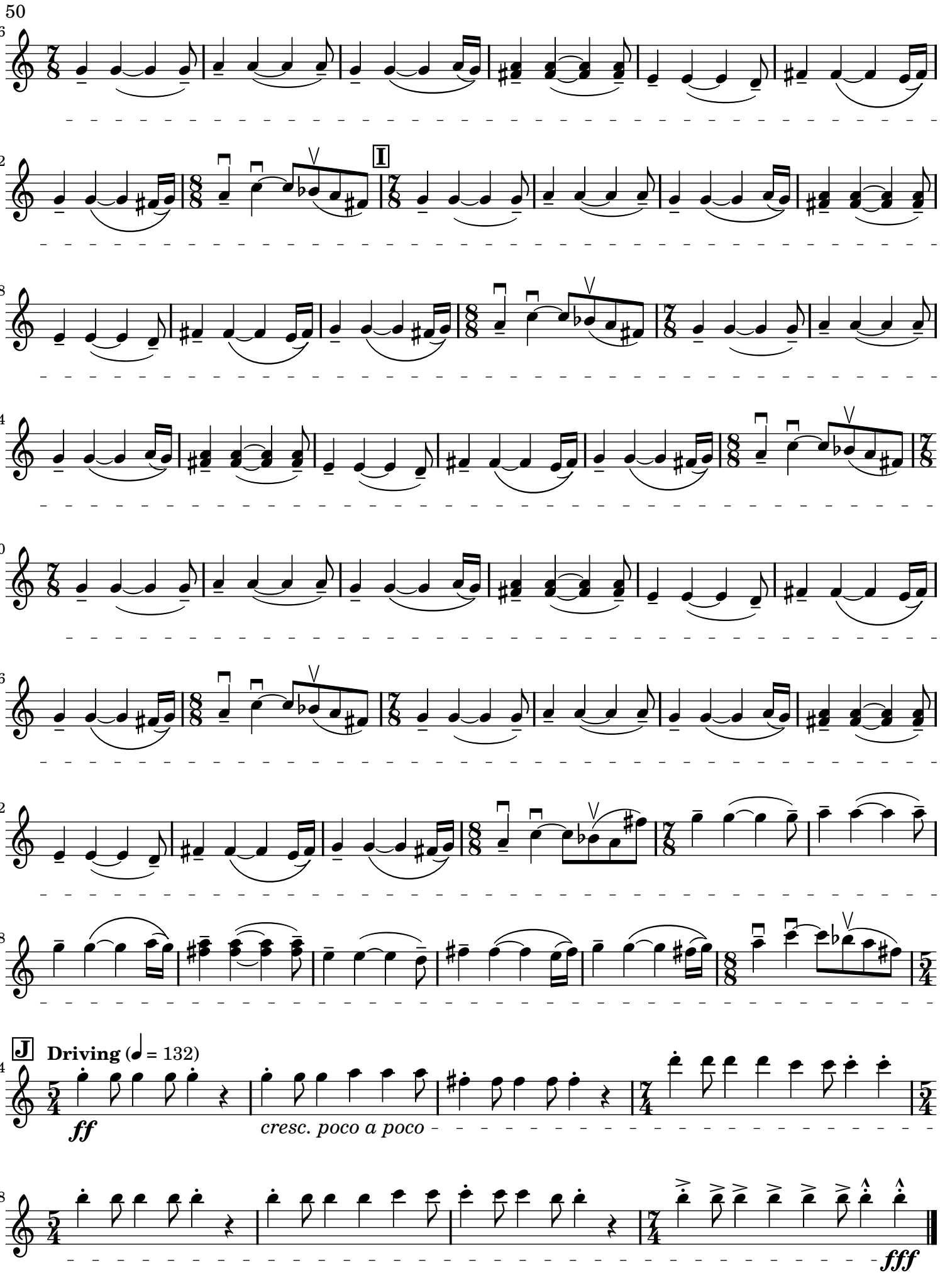
For String Quintet and Guitar

Melika M. Fitzhugh (2018)



con sord. (heavy metal)



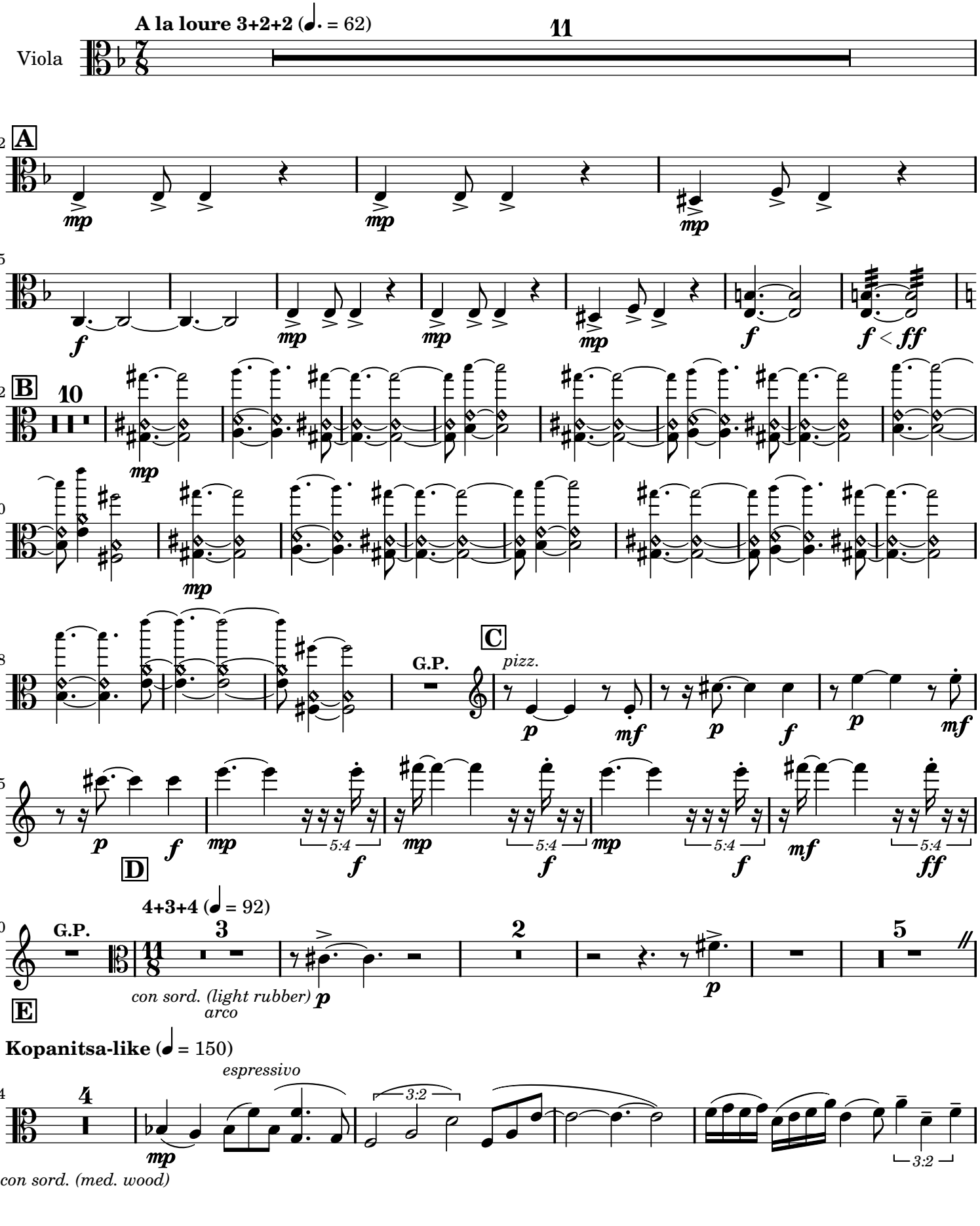

146
152
I
158
164
170
176
182
188
J
Driving (♩ = 132)
194
ff
cresc. poco a poco
198
fff

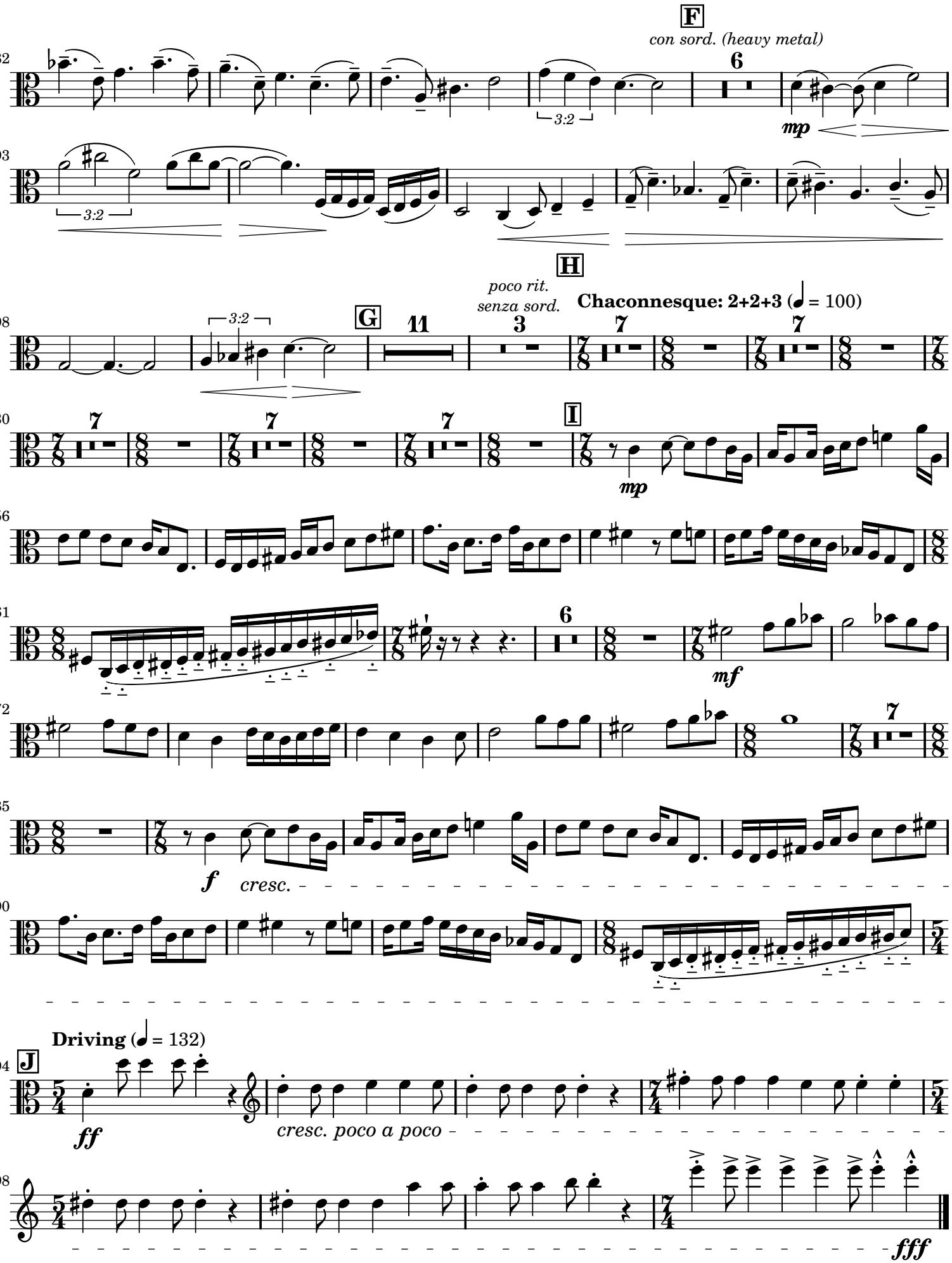
For the Quarteto Larianna, Gustavo Fontes, and Daniel Murray

Waiting for the Future to Start

For String Quintet and Guitar

Melika M. Fitzhugh (2018)



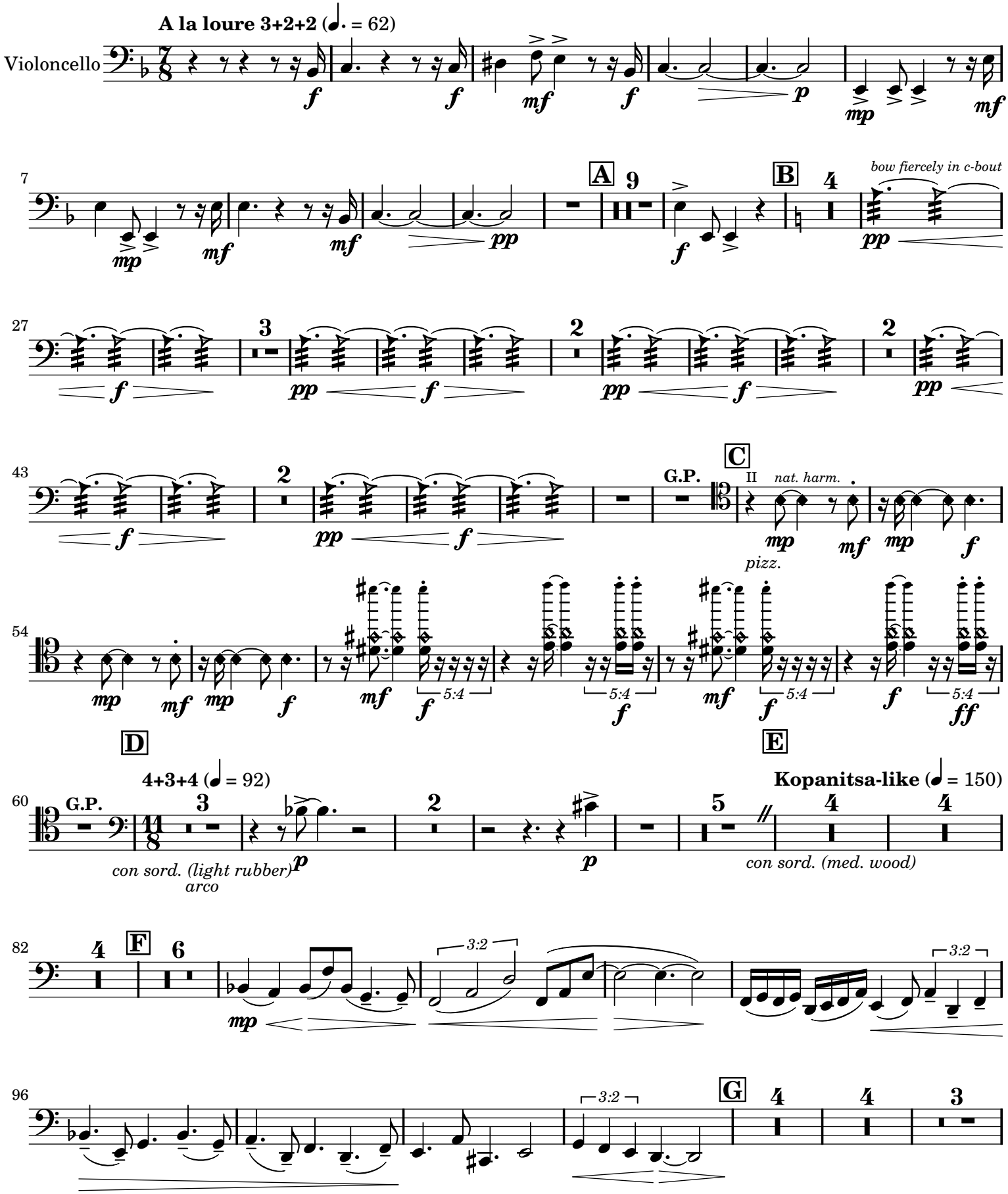

F
con sord. (heavy metal)
6
mp
3:2
H
poco rit.
senza sord.
Chaconnesque: 2+2+3 (♩ = 100)
G
11
3
7
I
mf
f
cresc.
Driving (♩ = 132)
J
ff
cresc. poco a poco
fff

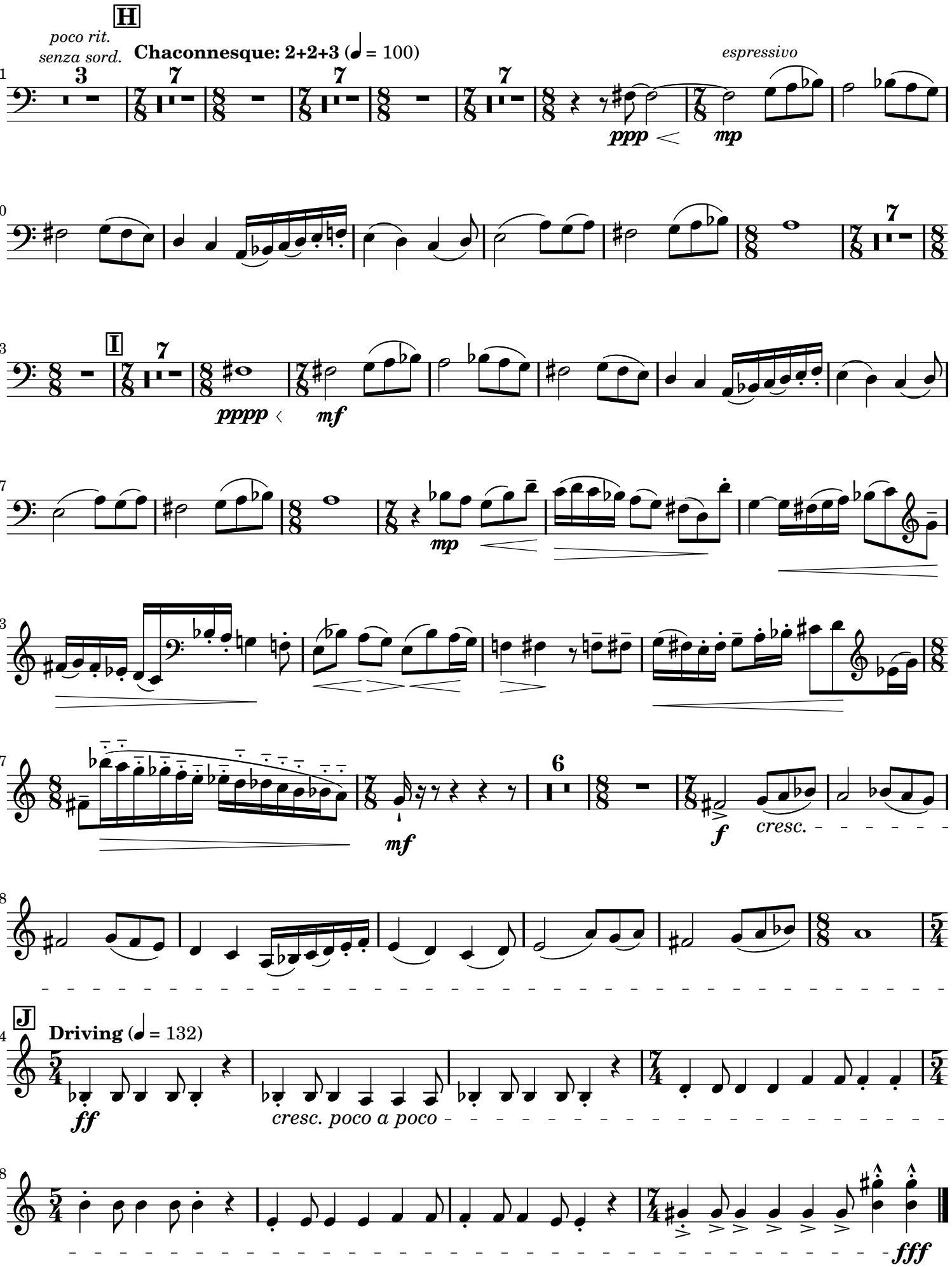
For the Quarteto Larianna, Gustavo Fontes, and Daniel Murray

Waiting for the Future to Start

For String Quintet and Guitar

Melika M. Fitzhugh (2018)



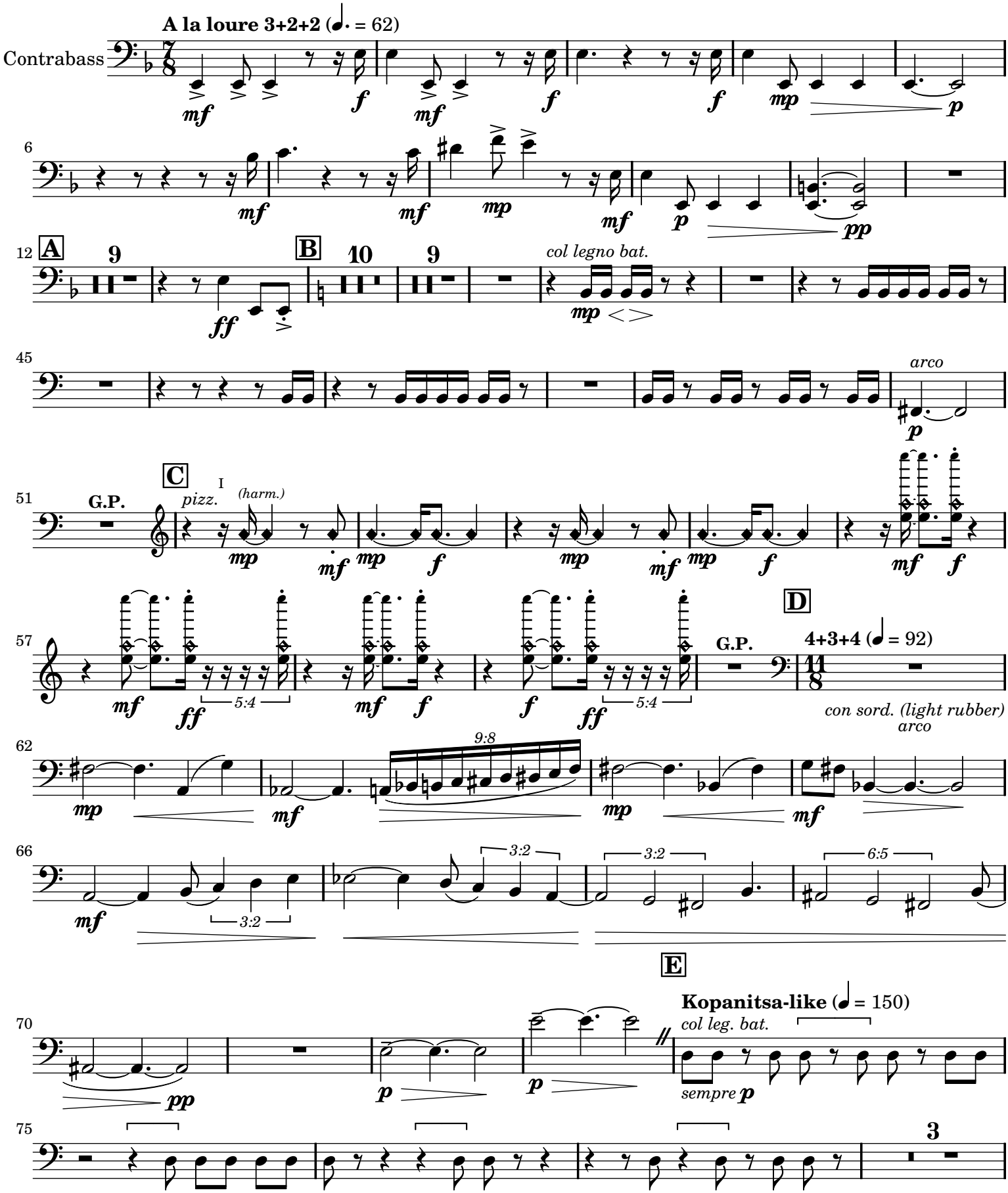

H
poco rit.
senza sord.
Chaconnesque: 2+2+3 (♩ = 100)
espressivo
ppp
mp
I
pppp
mf
mp
mf
f
cresc.
6
J
Driving (♩ = 132)
ff
cresc. poco a poco
fff

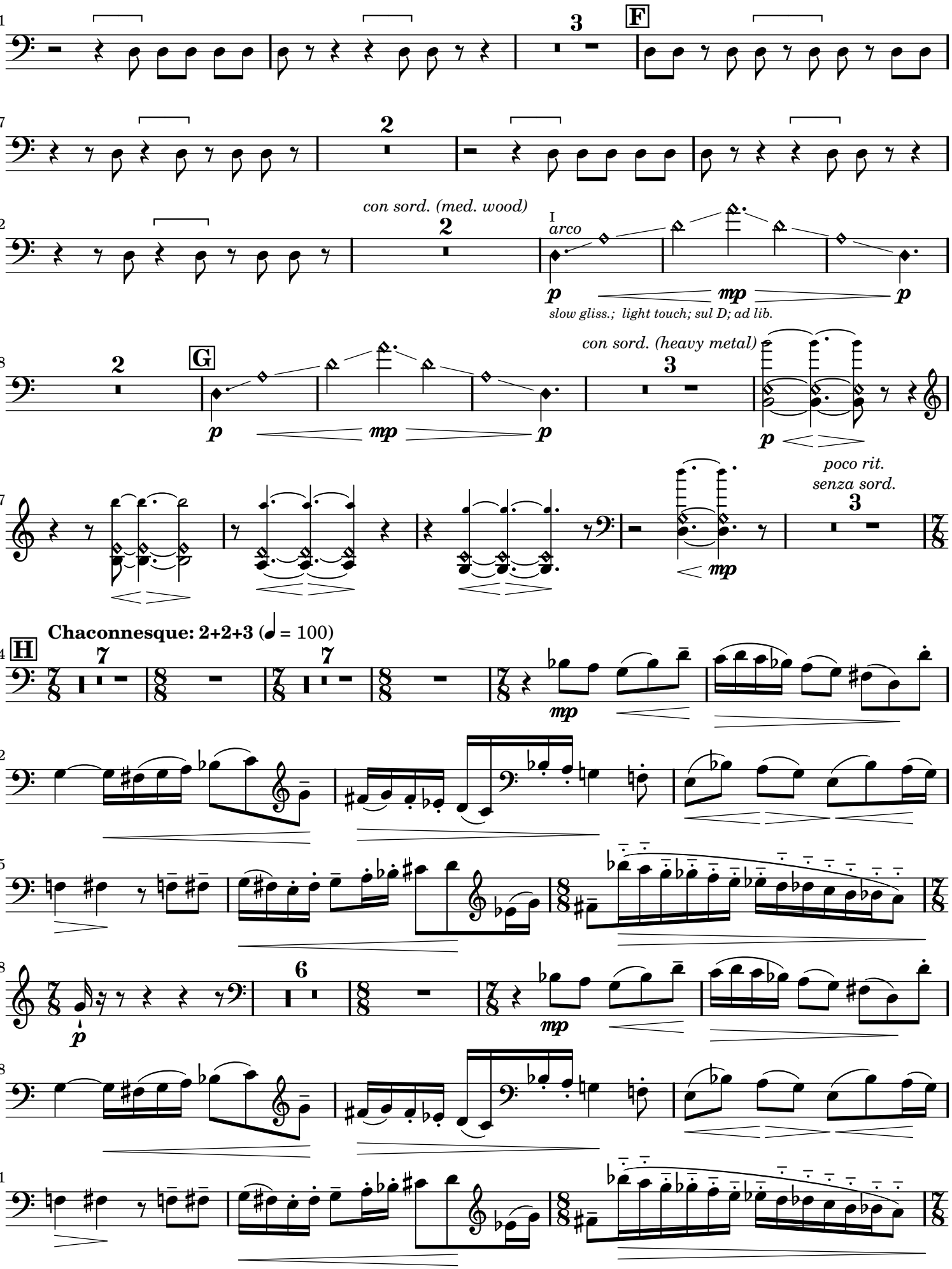
For the Quarteto Larianna, Gustavo Fontes, and Daniel Murray

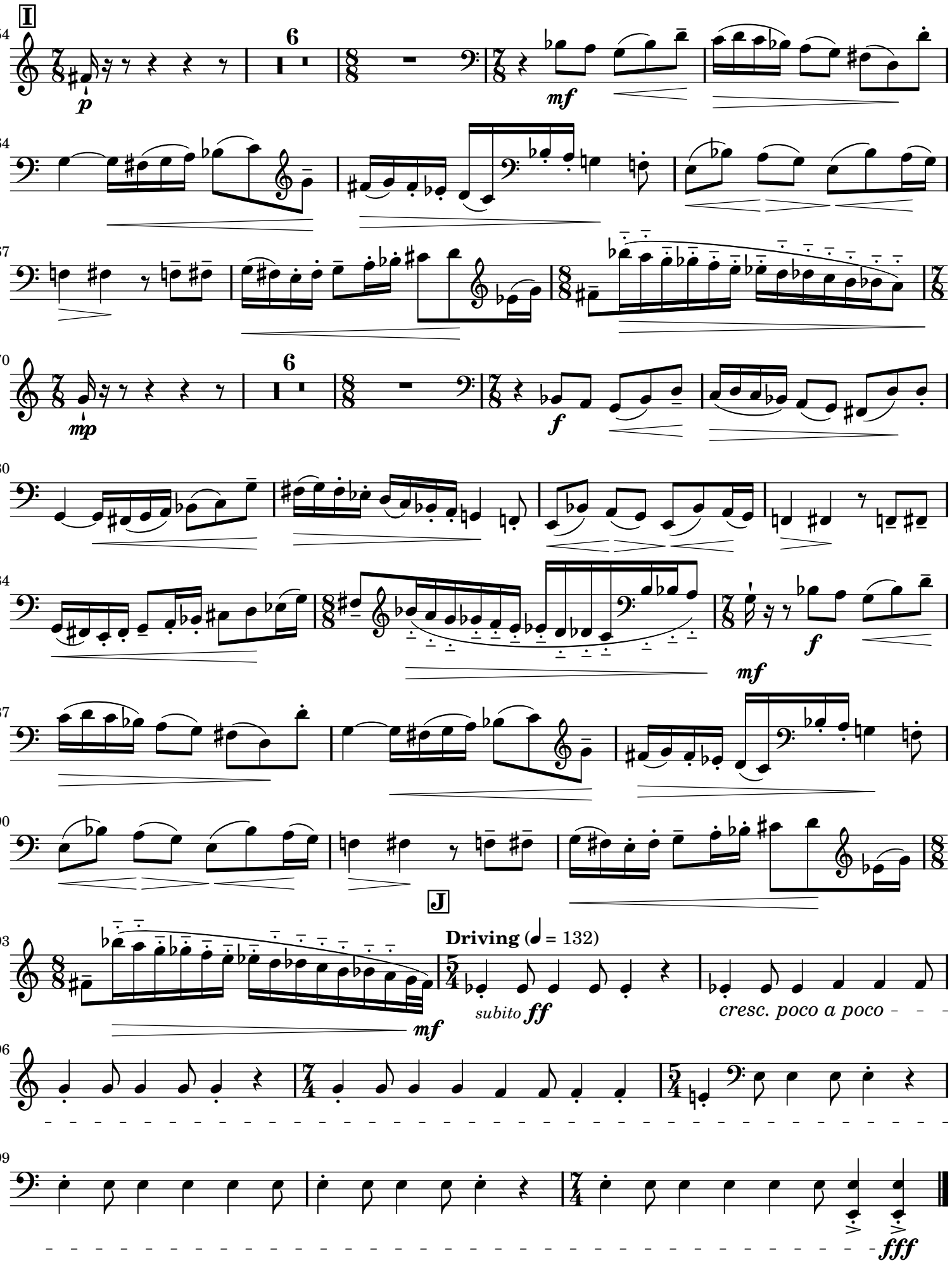
Waiting for the Future to Start

For String Quintet and Guitar

Melika M. Fitzhugh (2018)




81
F
87
92
con sord. (med. wood)
I
arco
p
mp
p
slow gliss.; light touch; sul D; ad lib.
98
G
con sord. (heavy metal)
poco rit.
senza sord.
107
Chaconnesque: 2+2+3 (♩ = 100)
114
H
132
135
138
148
151


I
154
6
p
mf
164
167
170
6
mp
f
180
184
f
mf
187
190
J
193
Driving (♩ = 132)
mf
subito ff
cresc. poco a poco
196
199
fff