Continuous Blossom

For Piano Trio

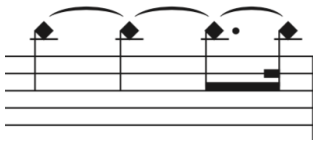
Michael Mills

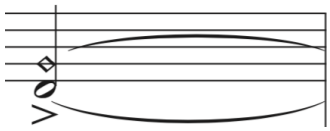
Notation

Noteheads and Stems

All Players

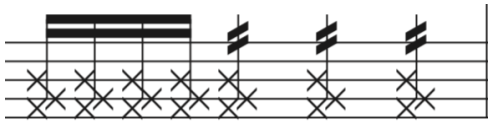
Diamond note heads indicate harmonics. For strings, all harmonics are natural harmonics unless accompanied by the touched interval of an artificial harmonic. For the pianist, they will press on the string on or near labeled partials to create the harmonic sound*



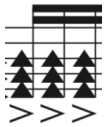


Piano Only

X note heads indicate for the pianist to strike the string(s) in the area in front of the hammers with their fingers, using skin



Triangle note heads indicate for the pianist to strike the string(s) in the area in front of the hammers with their fingers, using their nails

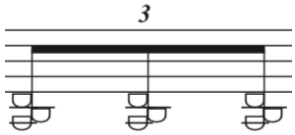


Open note heads occur in the reduced staff and indicate the desired sounding pitch*

Open slashed note heads occur in the reduced staff and indicate a pitch closest to the desired tone*

Open rectangle note heads occur in the reduced staff and indicate the general area in which a harmonic cluster should sound*

Flat top noteheads indicate for the pianist to create sound by pressing their fingers on the strings behind the dampers of the notated pitches and pulling off. The sound is created by the release as opposed to a striking motion. This will be extremely soft



Crooked stems indicate the pianist to run their nail down the string. A reduced staff is sometimes placed above to indicate the desired harmonic caused by this (hitting this exactly and

*Explained further in the **Piano Harmonics** section

consistently is very difficult. The scratching sound is the primary focus, it is okay if the harmonics are not achieved with this technique)

Lines

All players:

Solid Arrows indicate the progression from one performance direction to another

Tremolos with a single or double line are to be played in time. Three lines should be played unmeasured and as quickly as possible

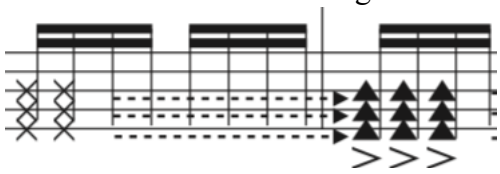
Strings only:

Trills are always played with the big note indicating the primary pitch from which the performer starts the trill. The note that the performer will trill to is always placed after the primary note in parenthesis. Accidentals are remarked for ease of reading

Glissandi are marked with solid lines connecting noteheads. Glissandi should occur over the duration of the first note the line is attached to except when notes are tied to show meter or clarify the location of other performance directions. In this exception, the tied notes that the glissando line goes through will have their noteheads removed and their durations considered part of the overarching glissando

Piano only:

Dashed Arrows indicate a gradual change in the quality of strike from the pianist



Abbreviations

Strings

s.p. = sul ponticello
s.t. = sul tasto
m.s.p. = molto sul ponticello
m.s.t. = molto sul tasto
norm. = normal
bow ad lib. = bow placement is to the discretion of the performer until otherwise notated

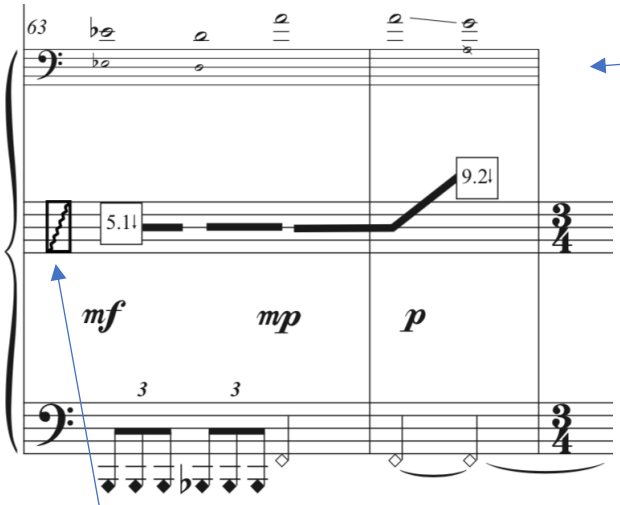
Piano

fr. = front

md. = middle
bk. = back
pedal ad lib. = use of the pedal is at the discretion of the performer until otherwise notated

Piano Harmonics

When the piano harmonic is created in the typical manner, both a reduced staff (to indicate desired sound pitch) and finger positioning are offered. It appears as follows:



Shows desired pitches (larger noteheads have more importance)

The boxed figure indicates the partial to be struck. The location on the staff is a relative hand placement

Shows which keys to be struck

Indicates that the staff will now show relative hand placement on the strings instead of a standard cleff: Higher on the staff correlates to reaching further along the strings and lower on the staff indicates a closer proximity to the hammers

You are a flower, but you are not delicate.
~ Compassionate ~
~ Considerate ~
Yes.
But you are not delicate.

You are a flower, but not because of your beauty…
…and you are beautiful…
what banal comparison
could even begin to illustrate
the shades with which you paint?

You are a flower, but you are not dainty.
~ Charming ~
~ Clever ~
Of course.
But you are not dainty.

You are a flower, but not because of your radiance...
… and you are radiant…
what words are there among us
that have the depth to illuminate
the light your life creates

- But I say -

You are a flower because you blossom…
…and blossom…
…and blossom…

- Every day -
- Every moment -

And when it seems impossible
for all the petals of your person
to form a more perfect bloom,
I am consistently,
completely,
confoundedly amazed

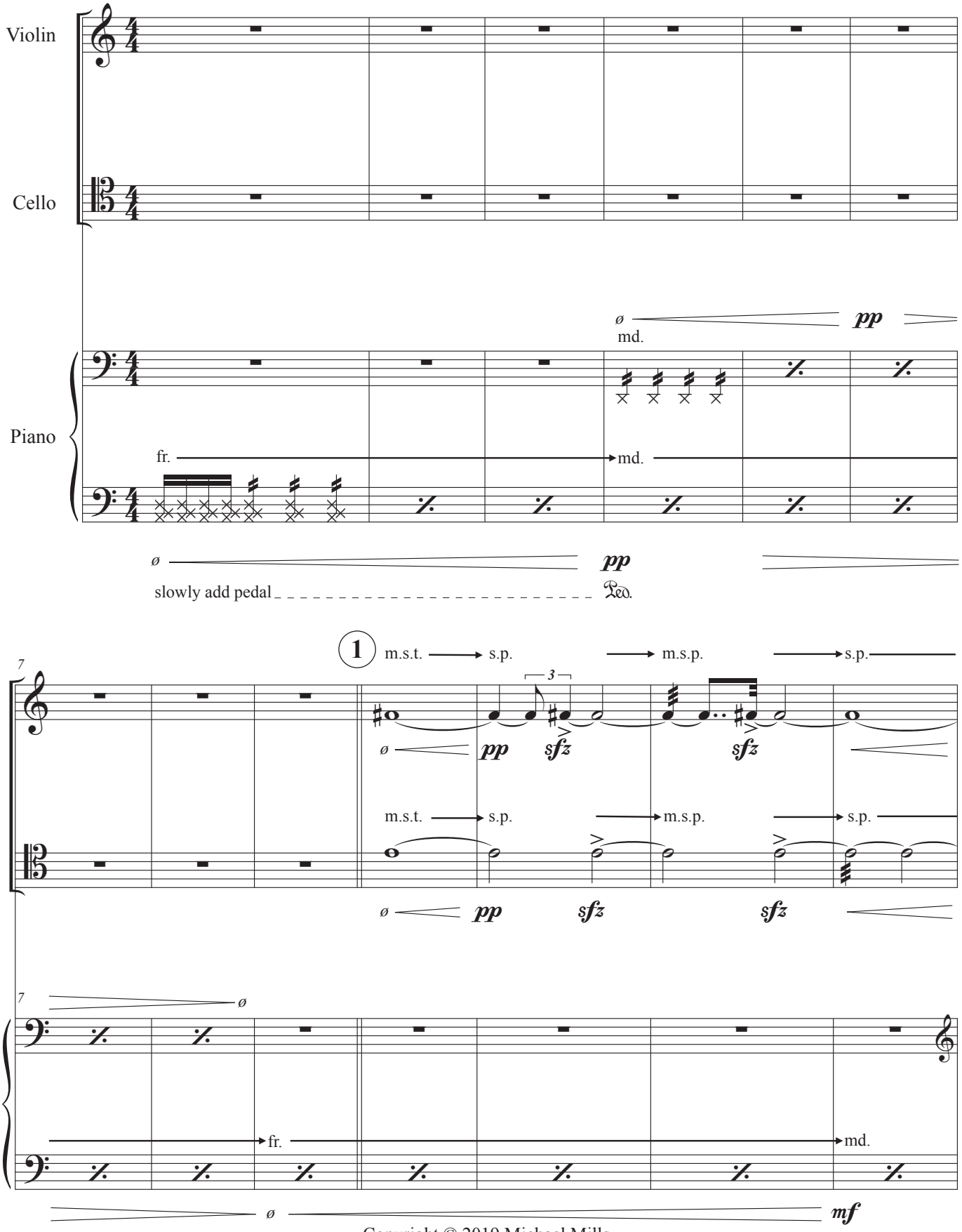
by the flower that is you.

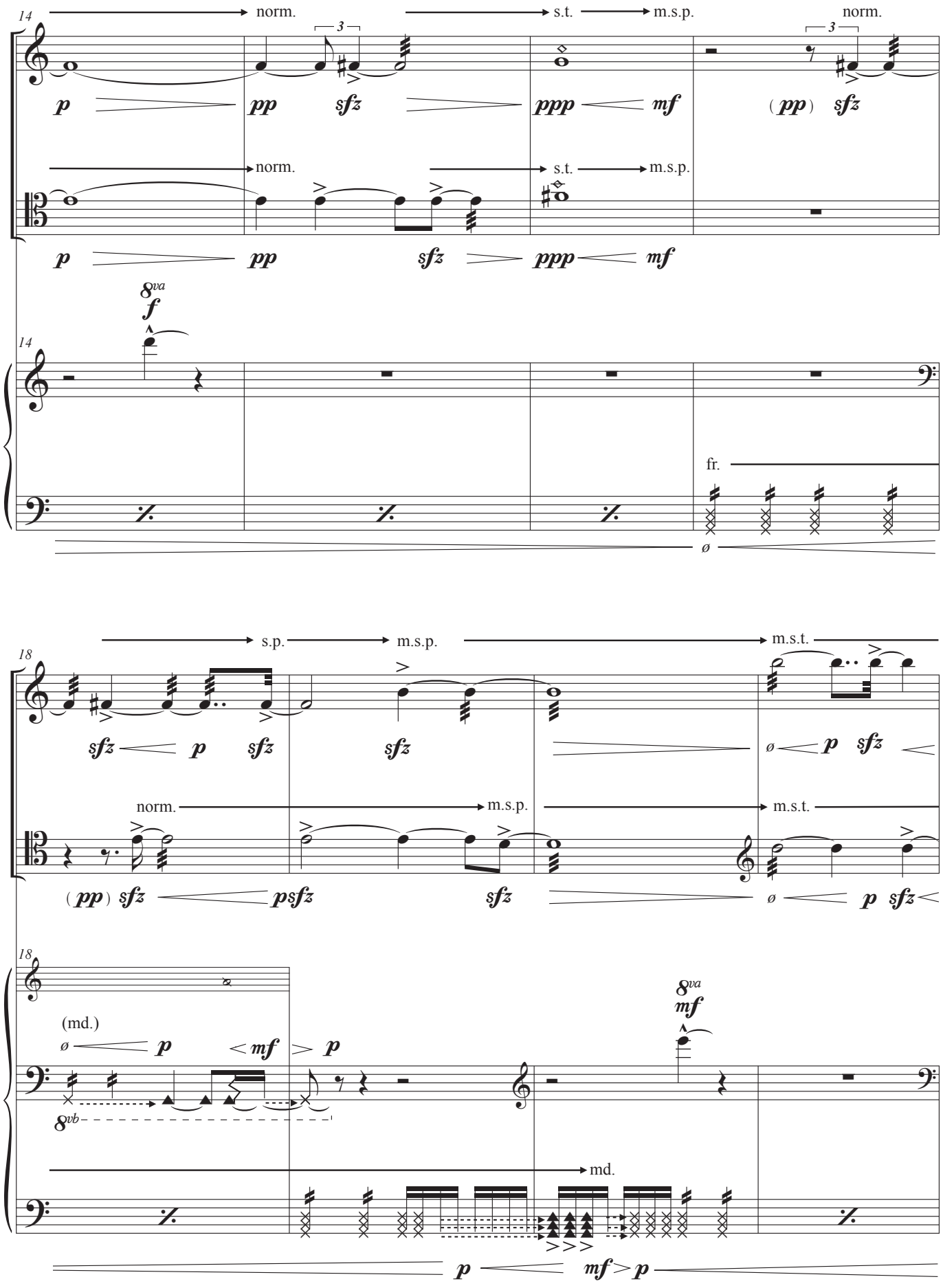
Score

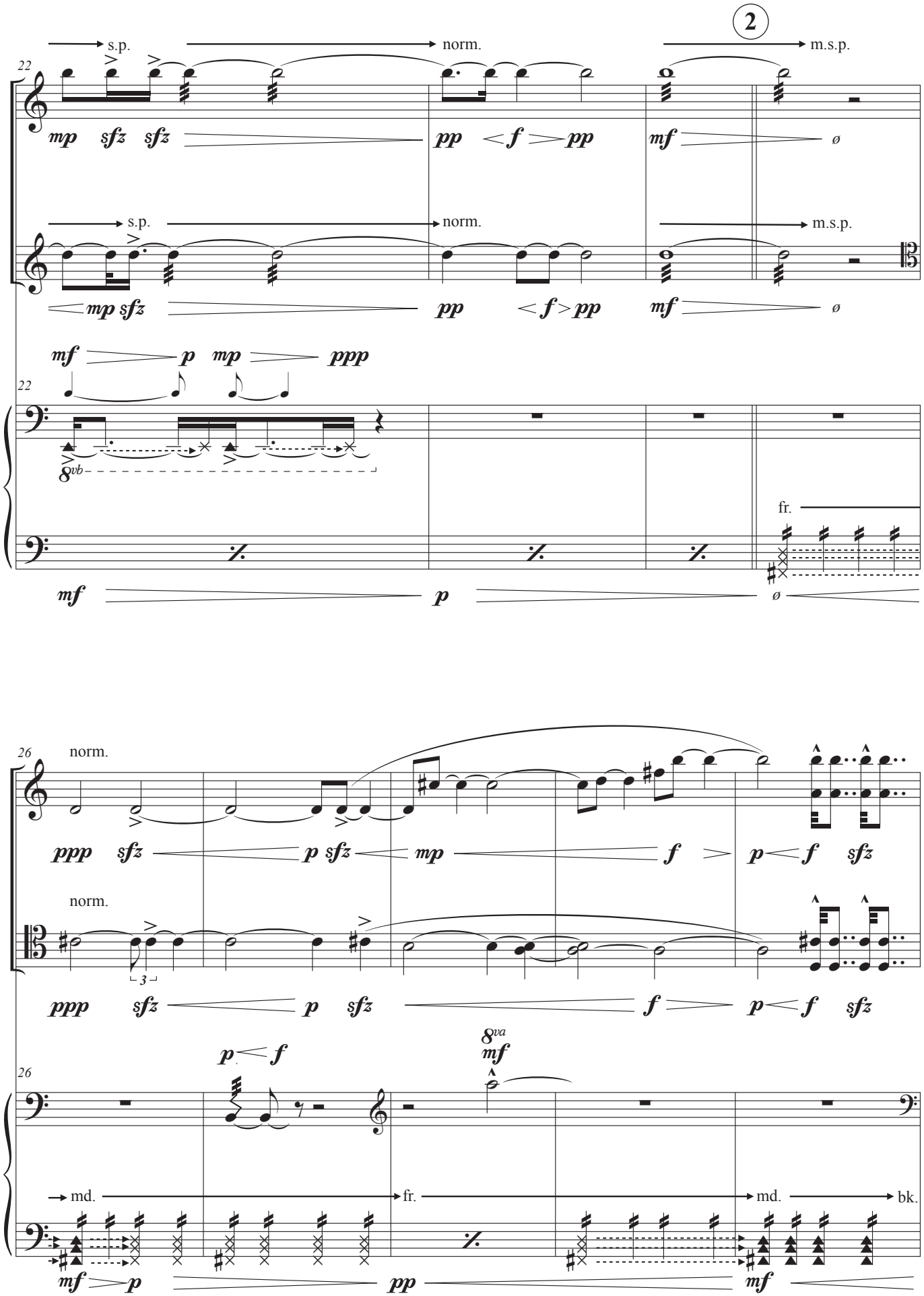
Continuous Blossom

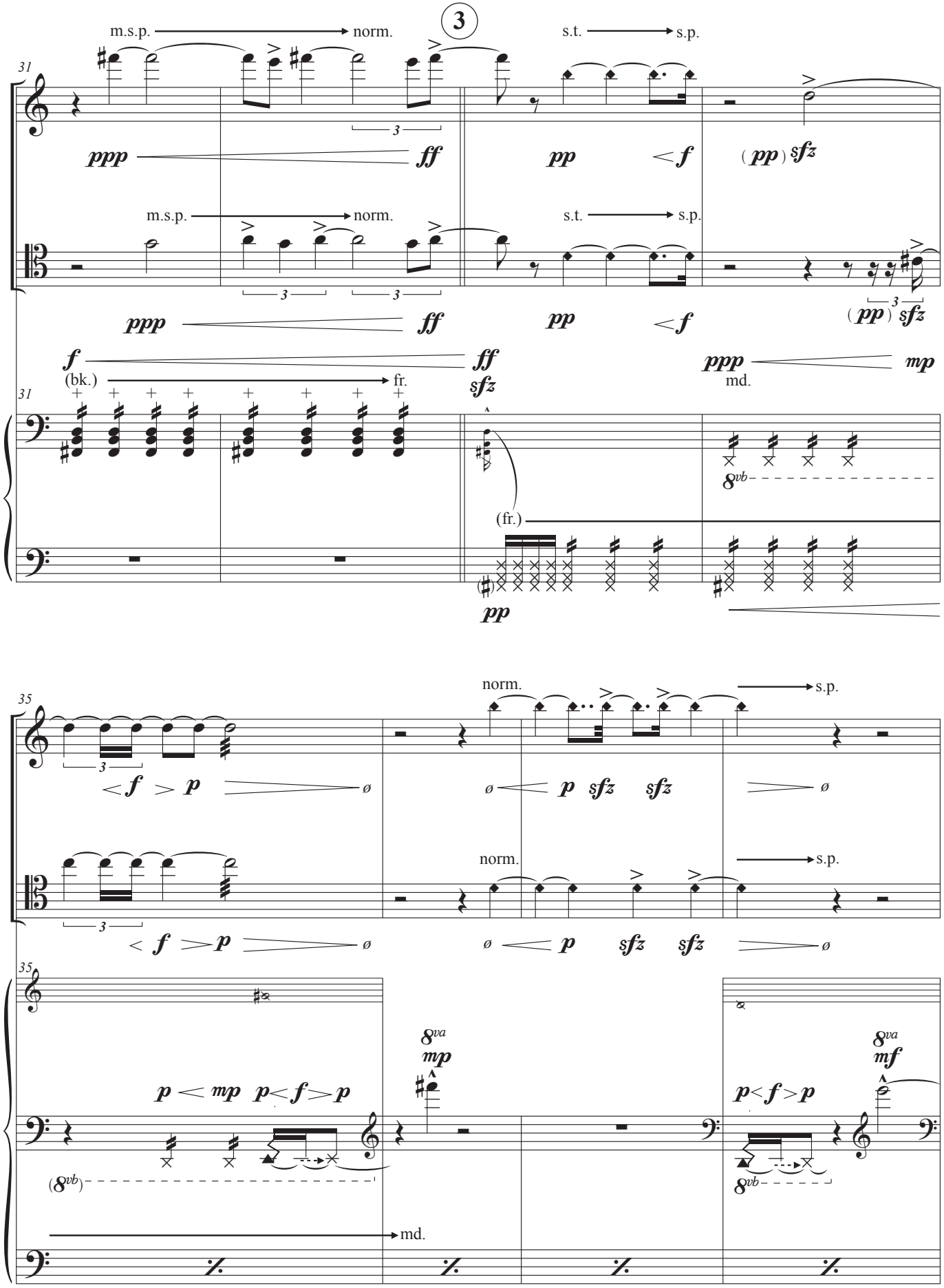
Michael Mills

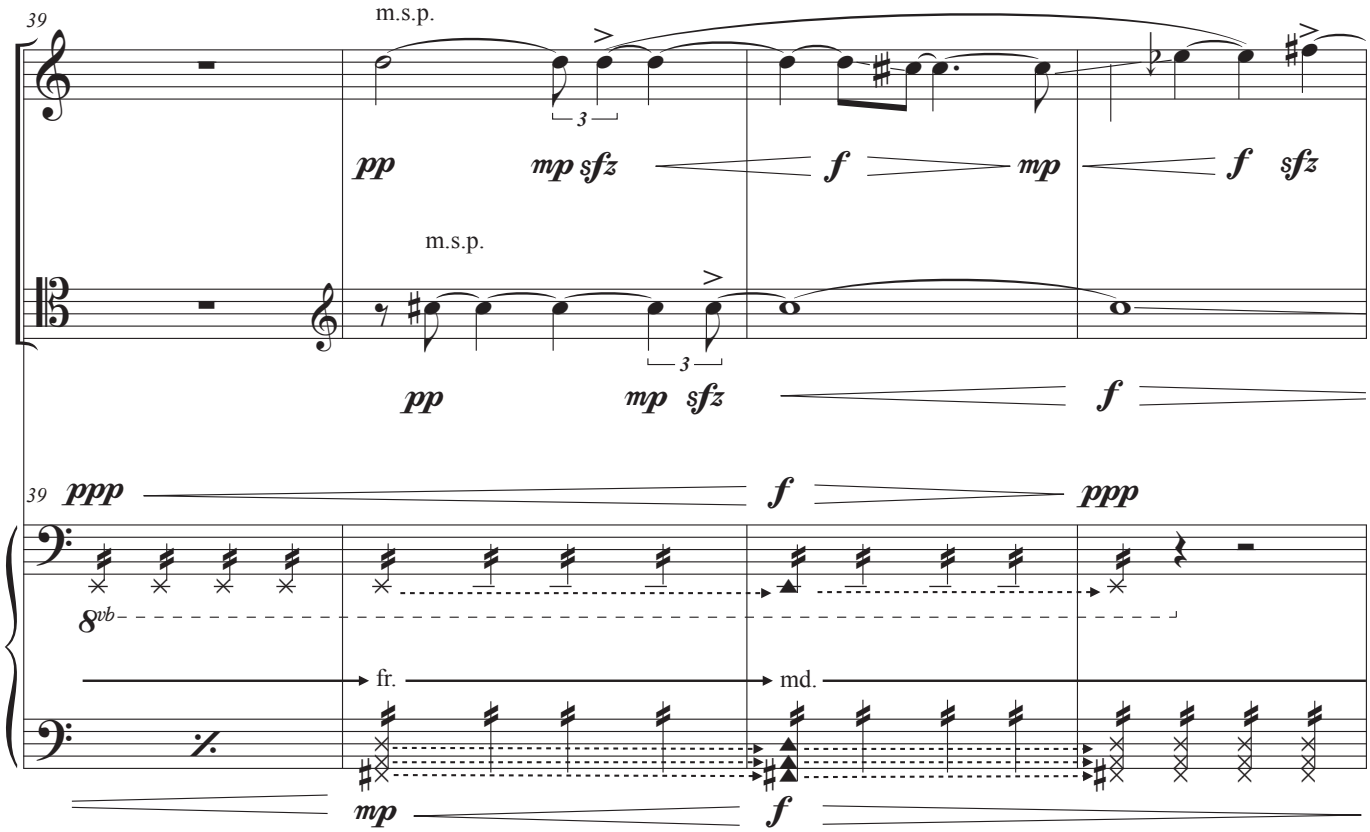
♩ = 80 **Beautiful even when dissonant; strong even when fragile**

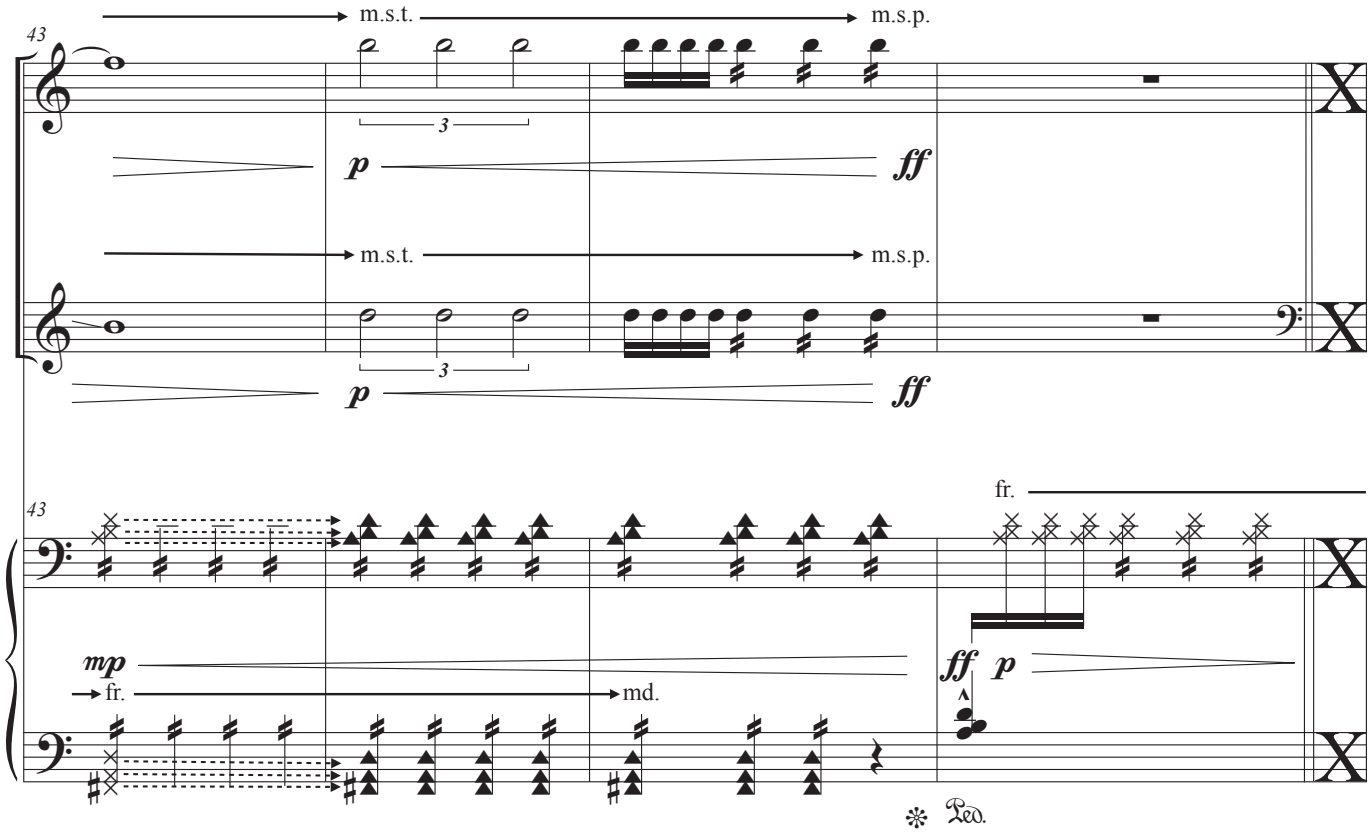


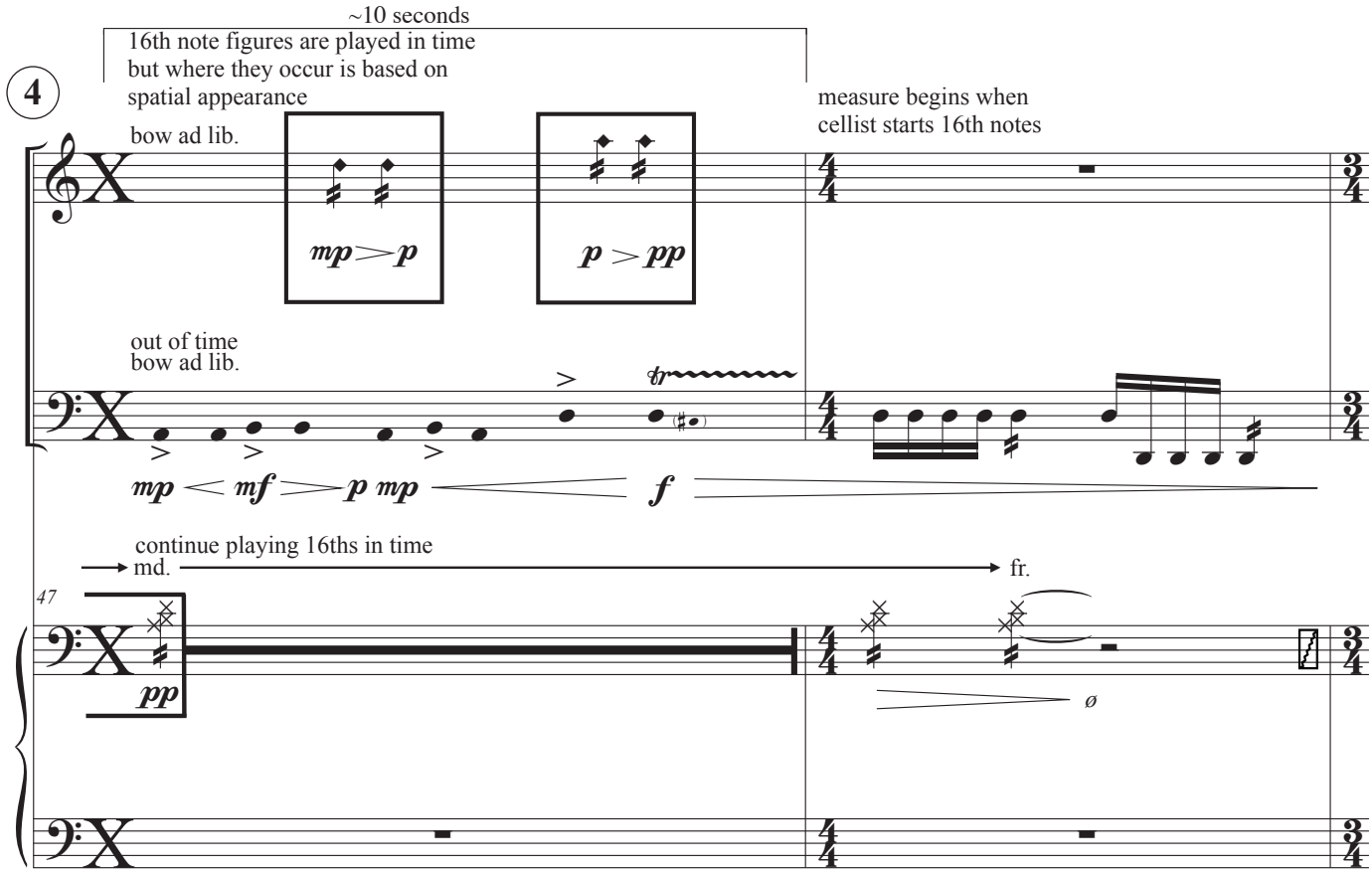

14
norm.
s.t.
m.s.p.
norm.
3
p
pp
sfz
ppp
mf
(pp)
sfz
norm.
s.t.
m.s.p.
p
pp
sfz
ppp
mf
8va
f
14
fr.
ø
18
s.p.
m.s.p.
m.s.t.
sfz
p
sfz
sfz
ø
p
sfz
norm.
m.s.p.
m.s.t.
(pp) sfz
psfz
sfz
ø
p
sfz
18
(md.)
ø
p
mf
p
8vb
8va
mf
md.
p
mf
p

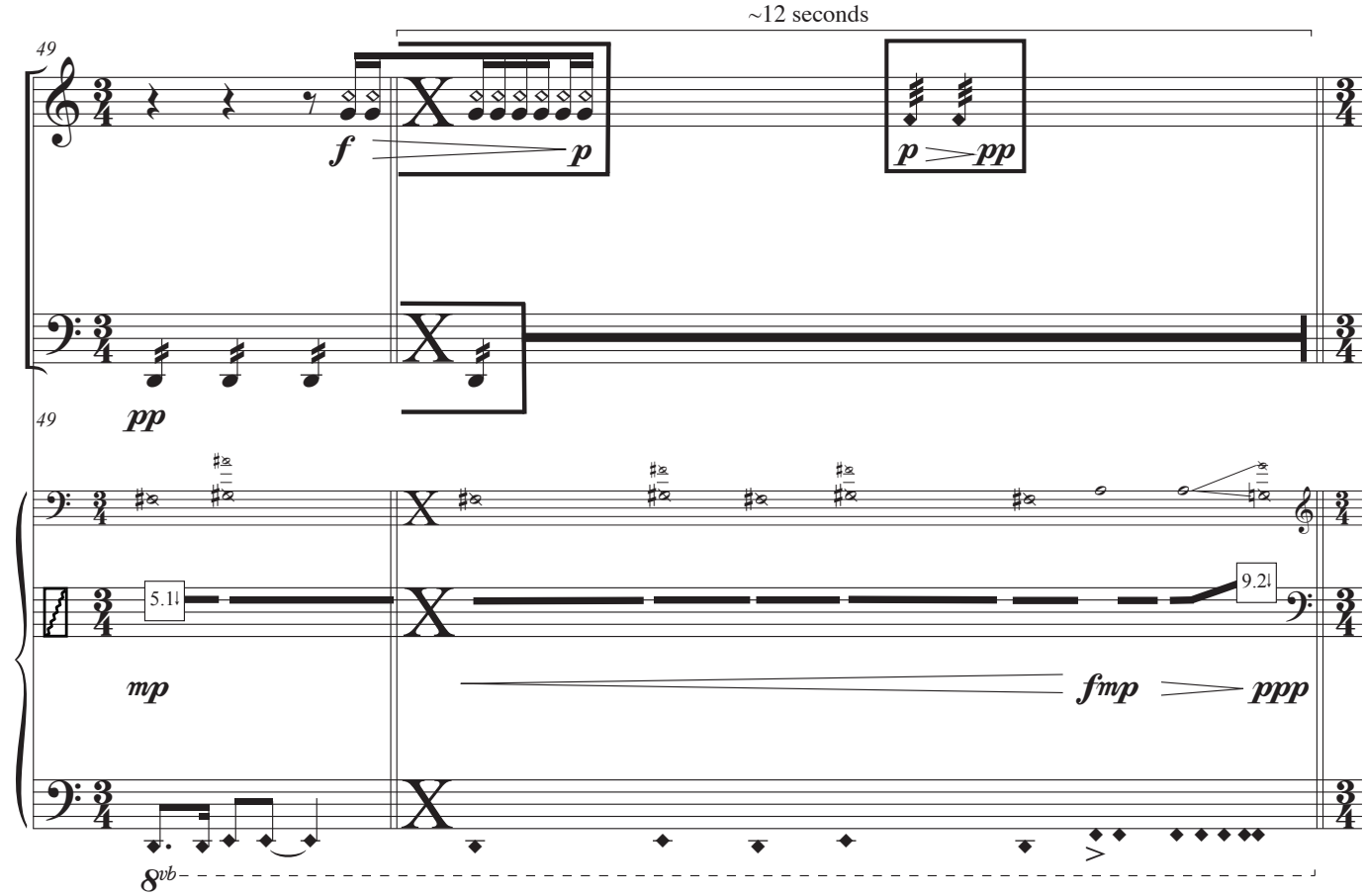

2
s.p.
norm.
m.s.p.
22
mp sfz sfz
pp < f > pp
mf
ø
s.p.
norm.
m.s.p.
mp sfz
pp < f > pp
mf
ø
mf p mp ppp
22
8vb
fr.
mf
p
ø
26
norm.
ppp sfz
p sfz
mp
f
p < f sfz
norm.
3
ppp sfz
p sfz
f
p < f sfz
p < f
8va
mf
26
md.
fr.
md.
bk.
mf p
pp
mf

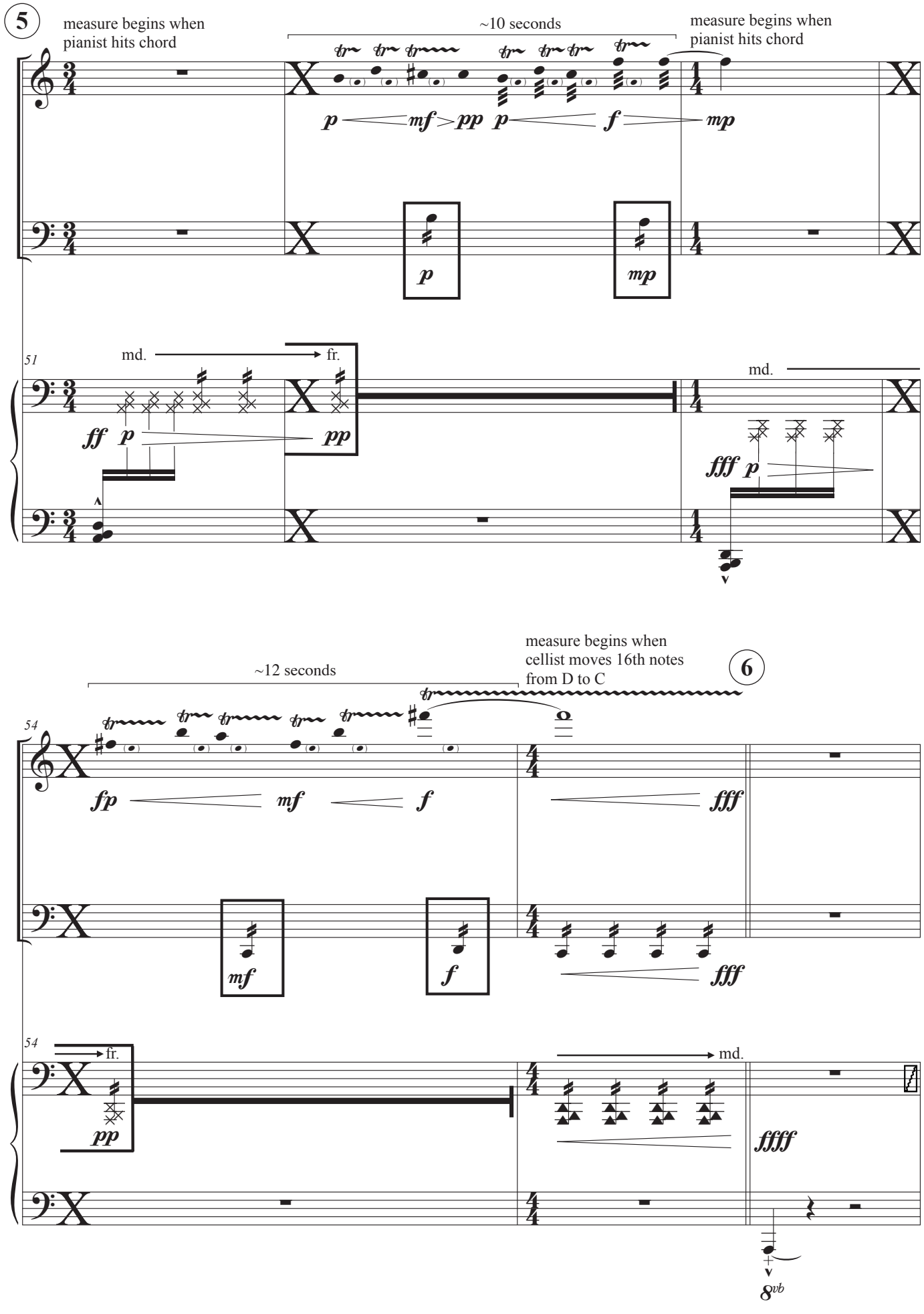

3
31
m.s.p.
norm.
s.t.
s.p.
ppp
ff
pp
f
(pp) sfz
(bk.)
fr.
sfz
md.
mp
8vb
(fr.)
35
ø
sfz
8va
mp
mf
(8vb)
md.

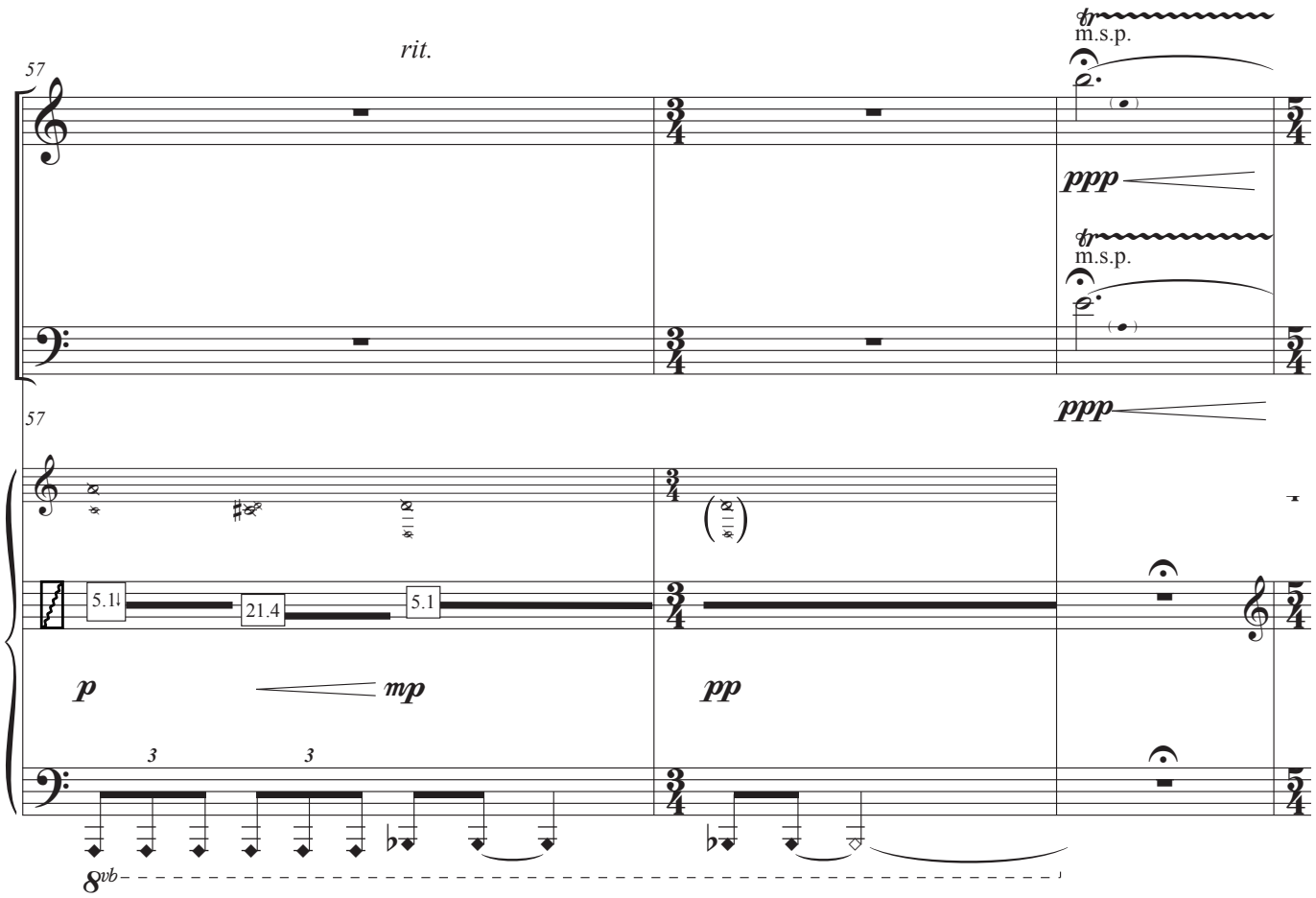

39
m.s.p.
pp
mp sfz
f
mp
f sfz
m.s.p.
pp
mp sfz
f
39
ppp
f
ppp
8vb
fr.
md.
mp
f

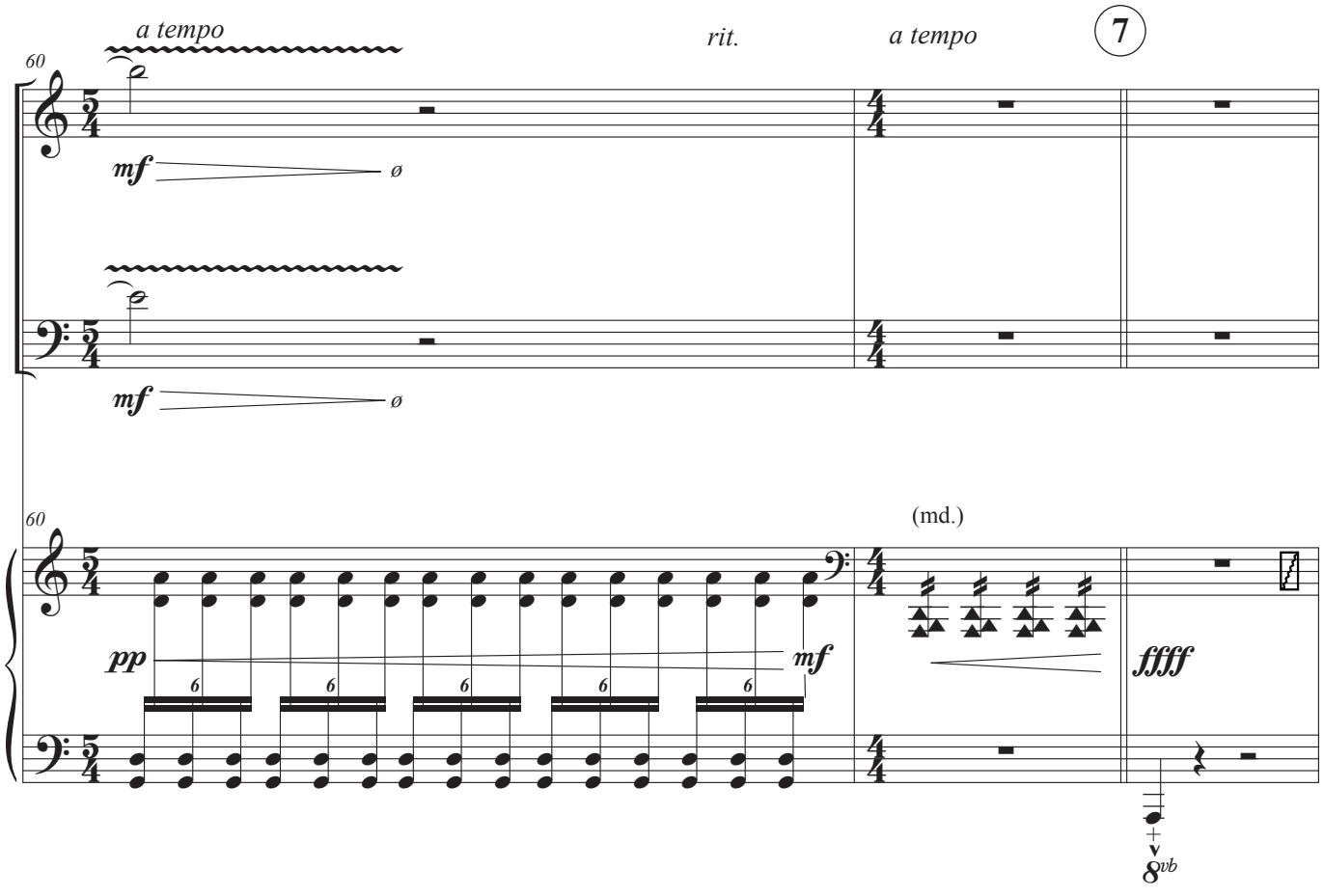

m.s.t.
m.s.p.
43
p
ff
m.s.t.
m.s.p.
p
ff
43
fr.
mp
fr.
md.
ff p
Ped.

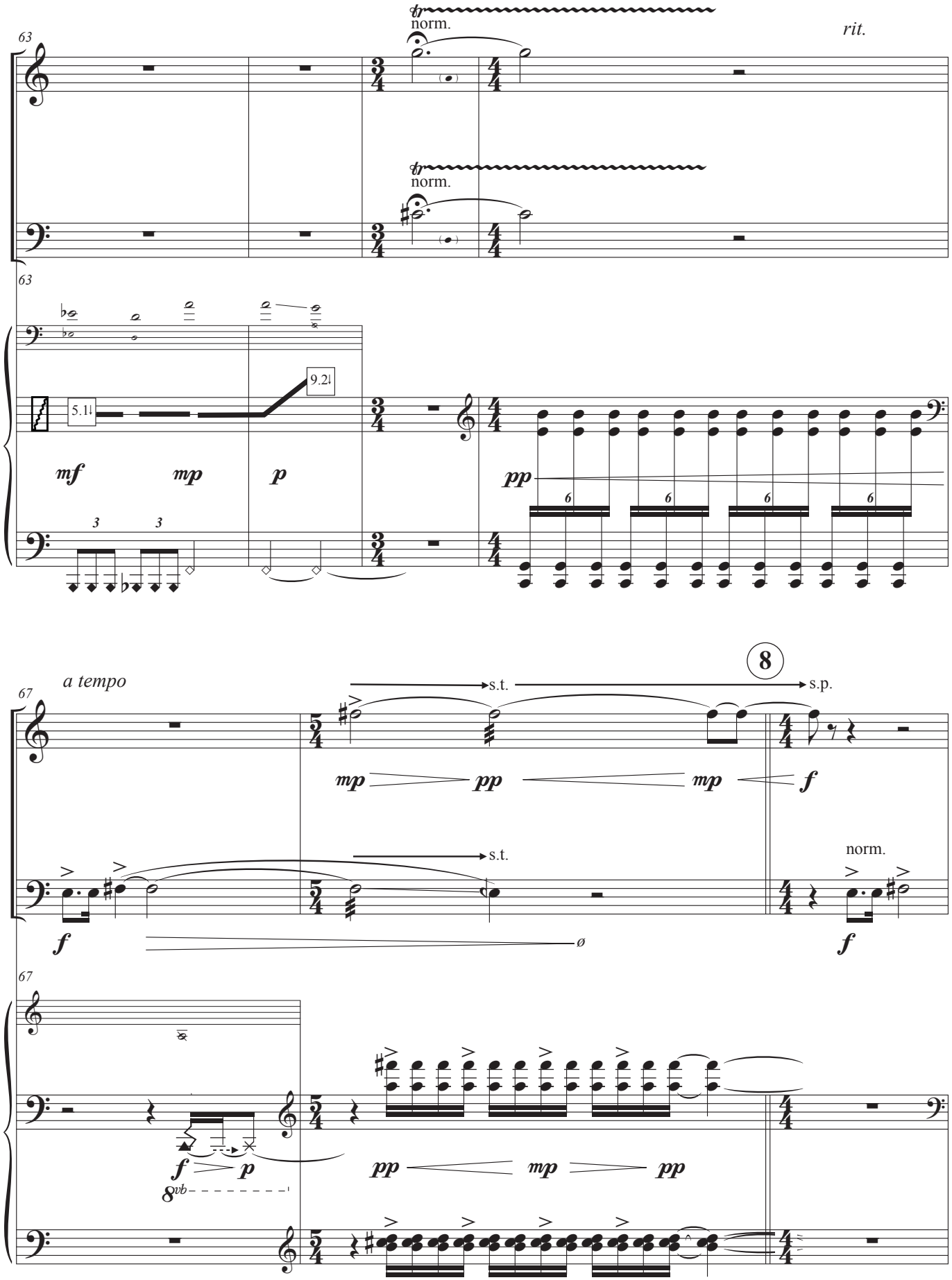

~10 seconds
16th note figures are played in time
but where they occur is based on
spatial appearance
4
bow ad lib.
mp > p
p > pp
measure begins when
cellist starts 16th notes
out of time
bow ad lib.
mp < mf > p mp
f
continue playing 16ths in time
md.
fr.
47
pp
ø

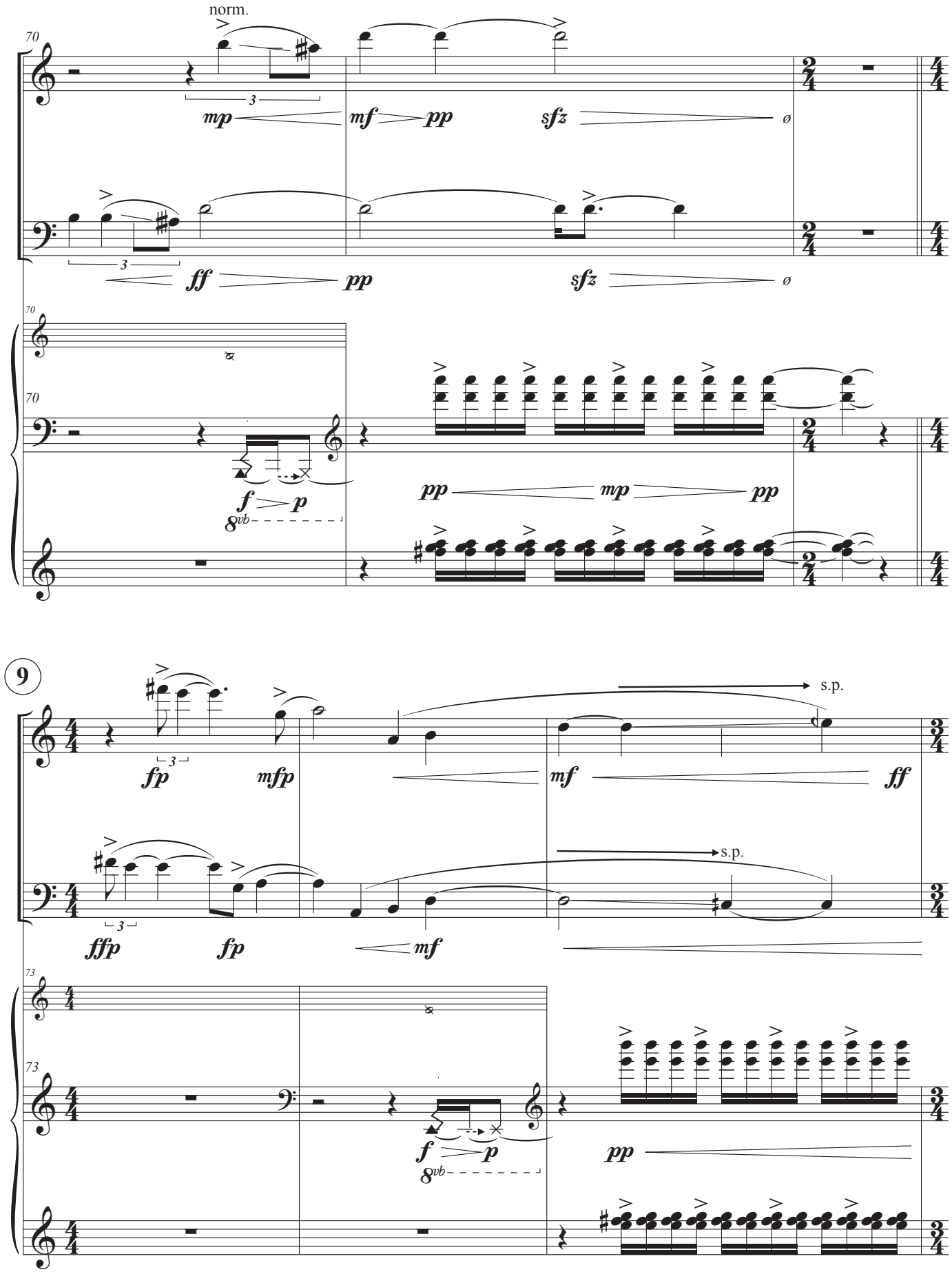

~12 seconds
49
f
p
p > pp
49
pp
5.11
9.24
mp
fmp
ppp
8vb

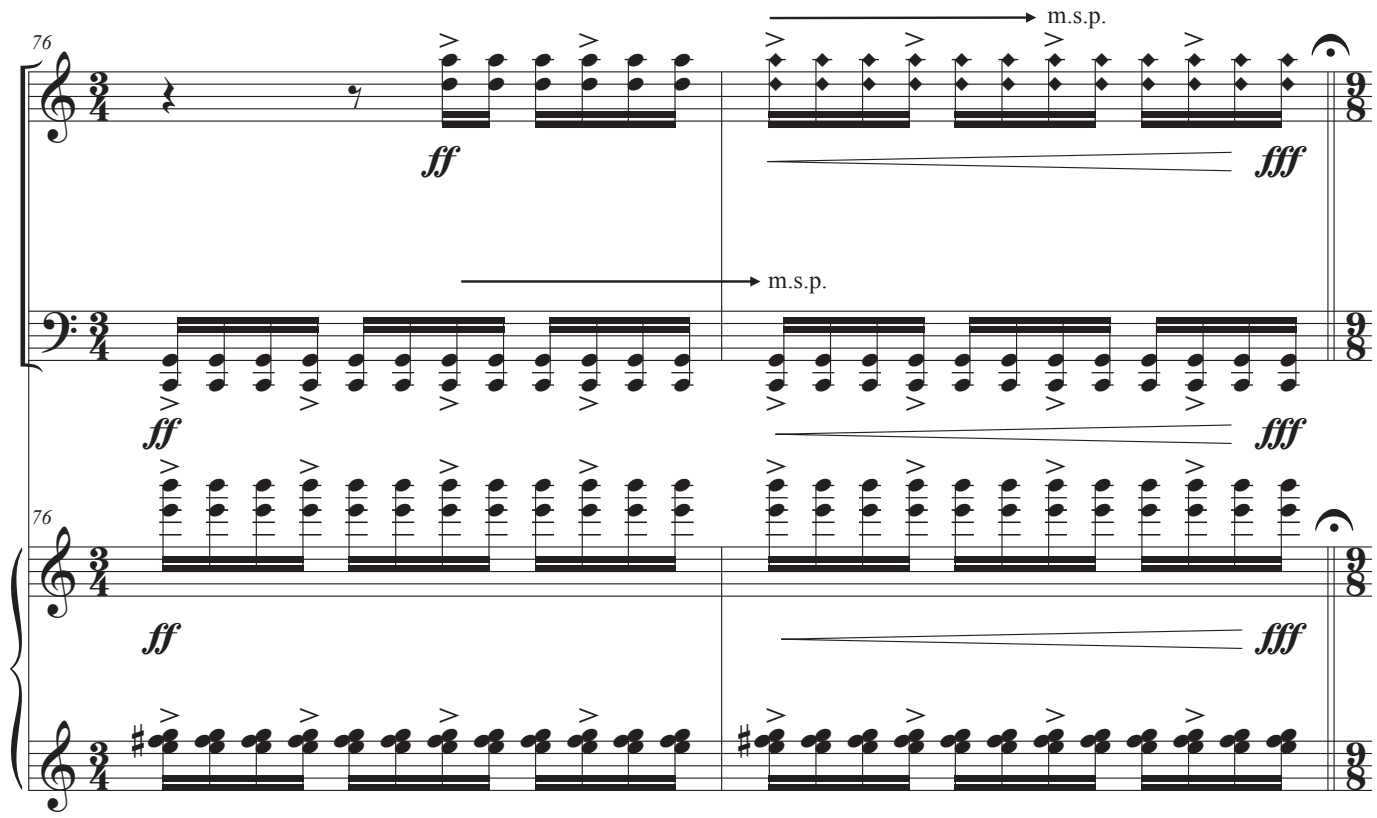

5
measure begins when pianist hits chord
~10 seconds
measure begins when pianist hits chord
p mf pp p f mp
p
mp
51
md.
fr.
md.
ff p pp
fff p
~12 seconds
measure begins when cellist moves 16th notes from D to C
6
54
fp mf f
fff
mf
f
fff
54
fr.
md.
pp
ffff
8vb


rit.
m.s.p.
ppp
m.s.p.
ppp
57
57
5.1
21.4
5.1
p
mp
pp
3
3
8vb


a tempo
rit.
a tempo
7
60
mf
ø
mf
ø
60
(md.)
pp
6
6
6
6
6
mf
ffff
8vb

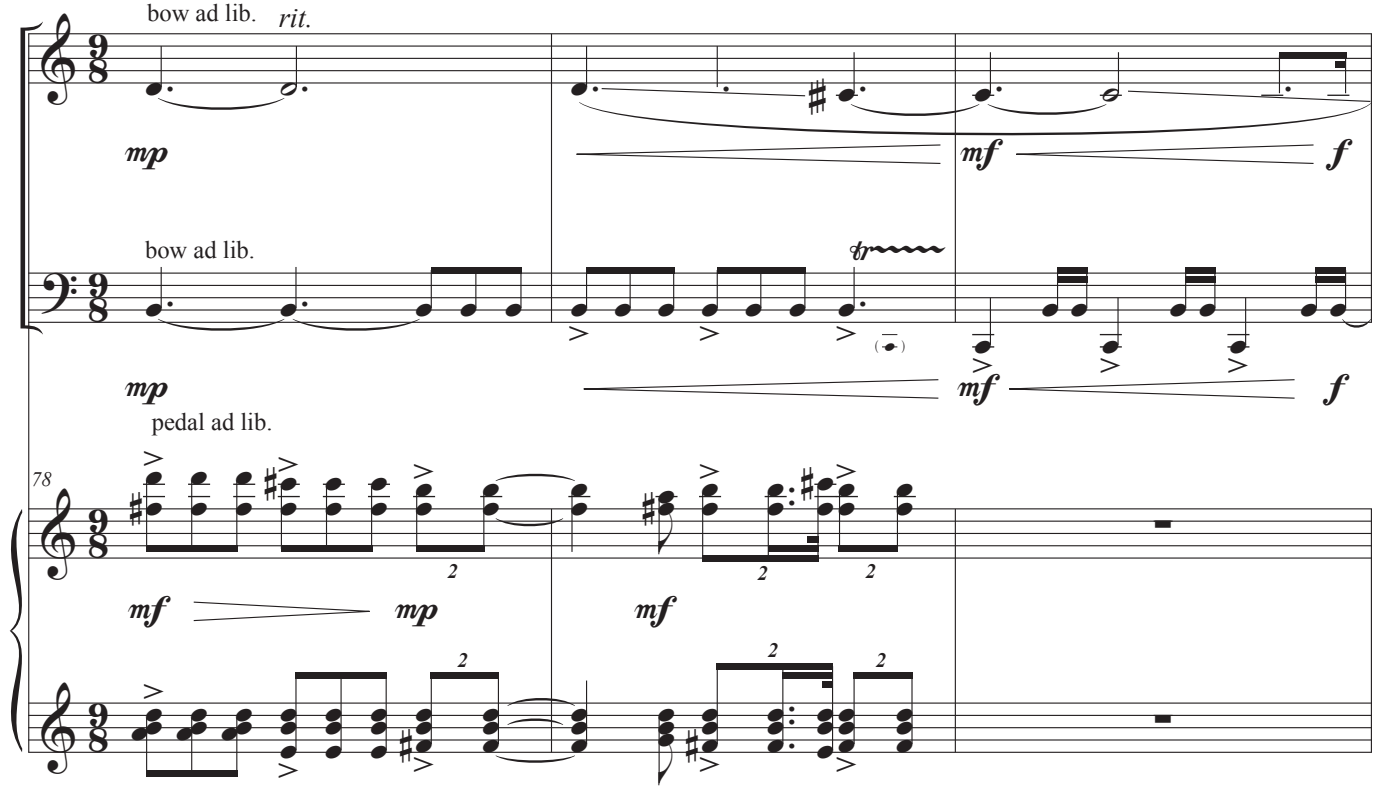

63
norm.
rit.
63
5.1
9.2
mf
mp
p
pp
6
6
6
6
3
3
8
67
a tempo
s.t.
s.p.
mp
pp
mp
f
s.t.
norm.
f
ø
f
67
f
p
8vb
pp
mp
pp

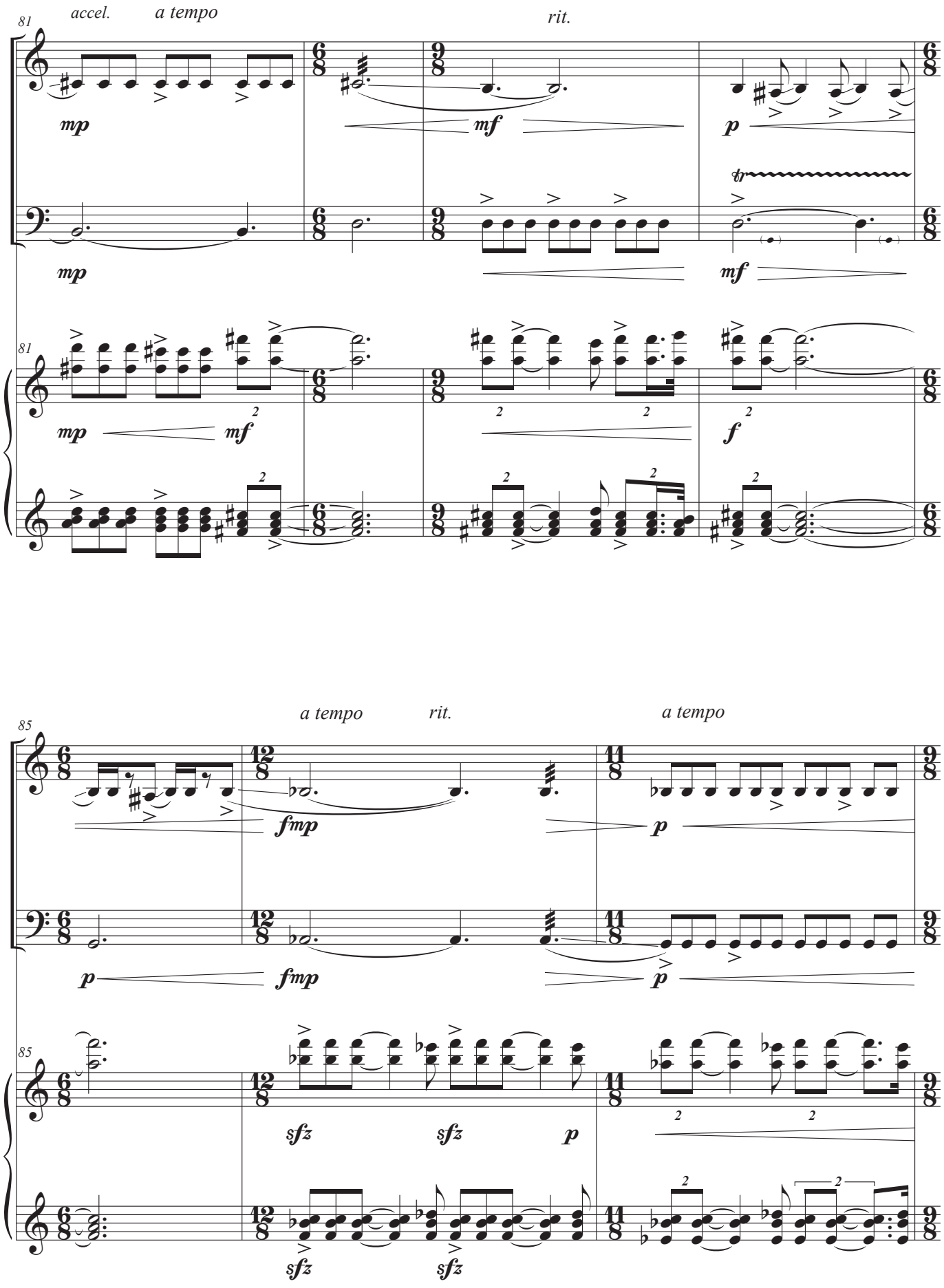

norm.
70
mp
mf
pp
sfz
ff
pp
sfz
f
p
8vb
pp
mp
pp
9
fp
mfp
mf
ff
s.p.
ffp
fp
mf
s.p.
73
f
p
8vb
pp

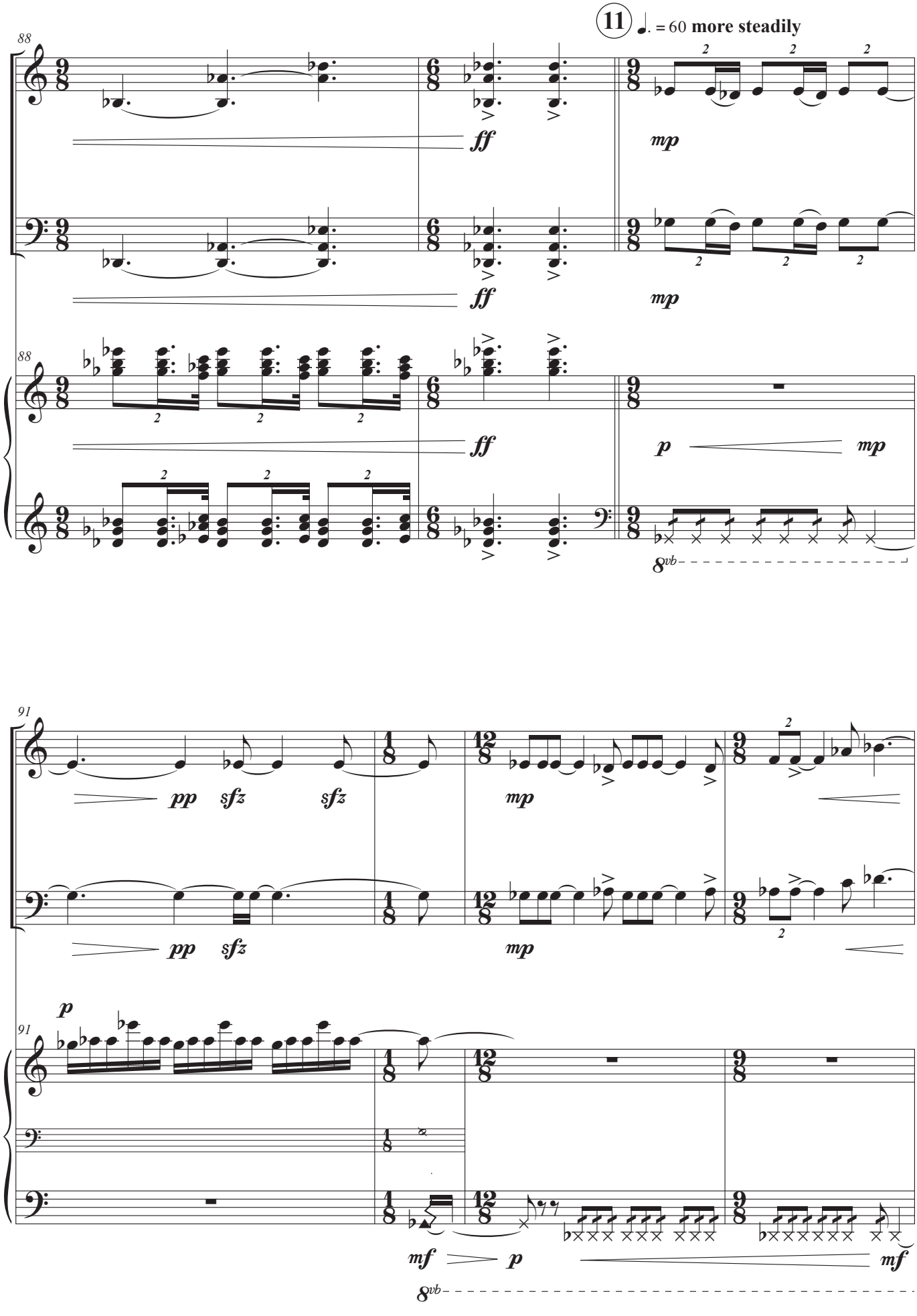


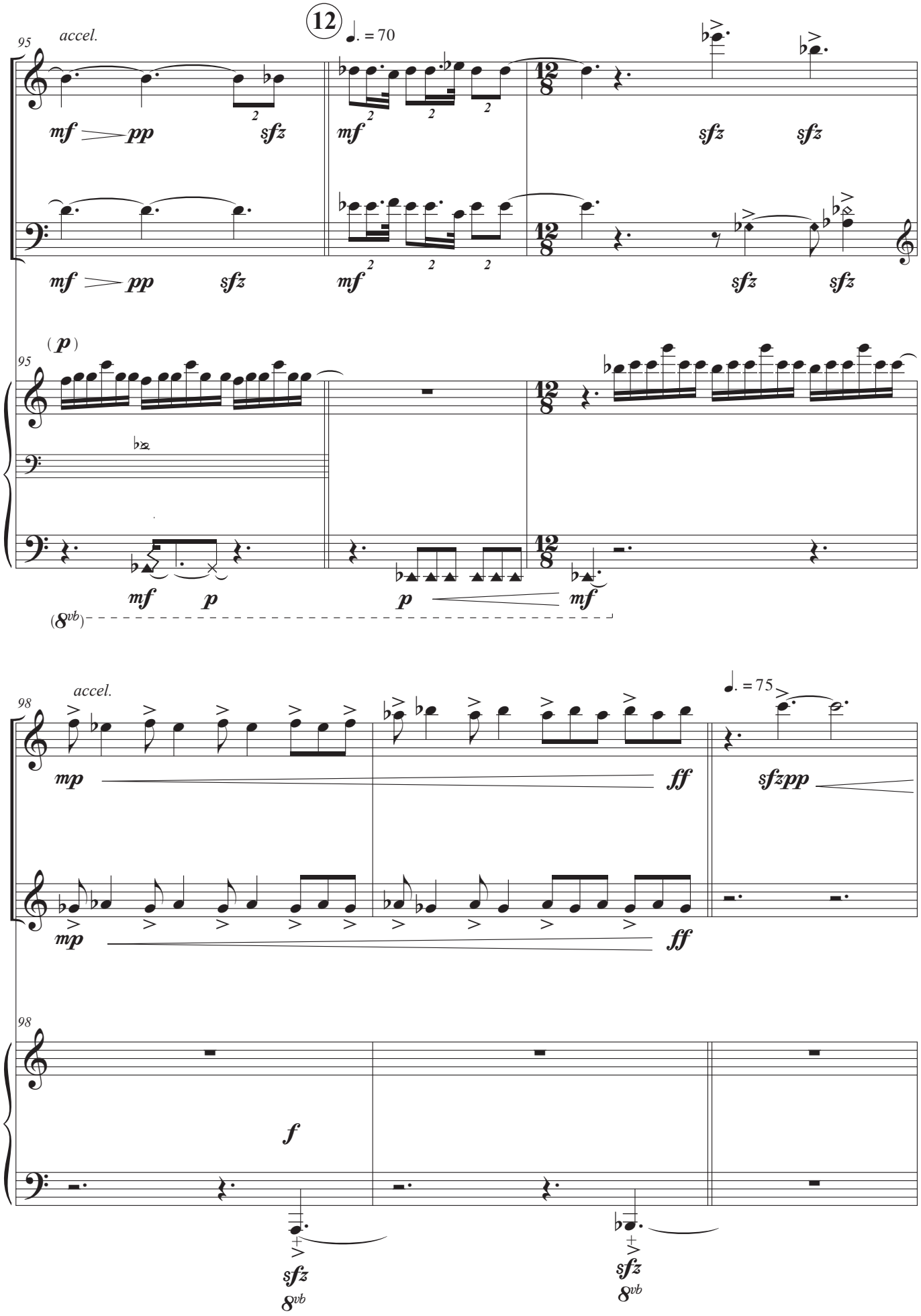
10

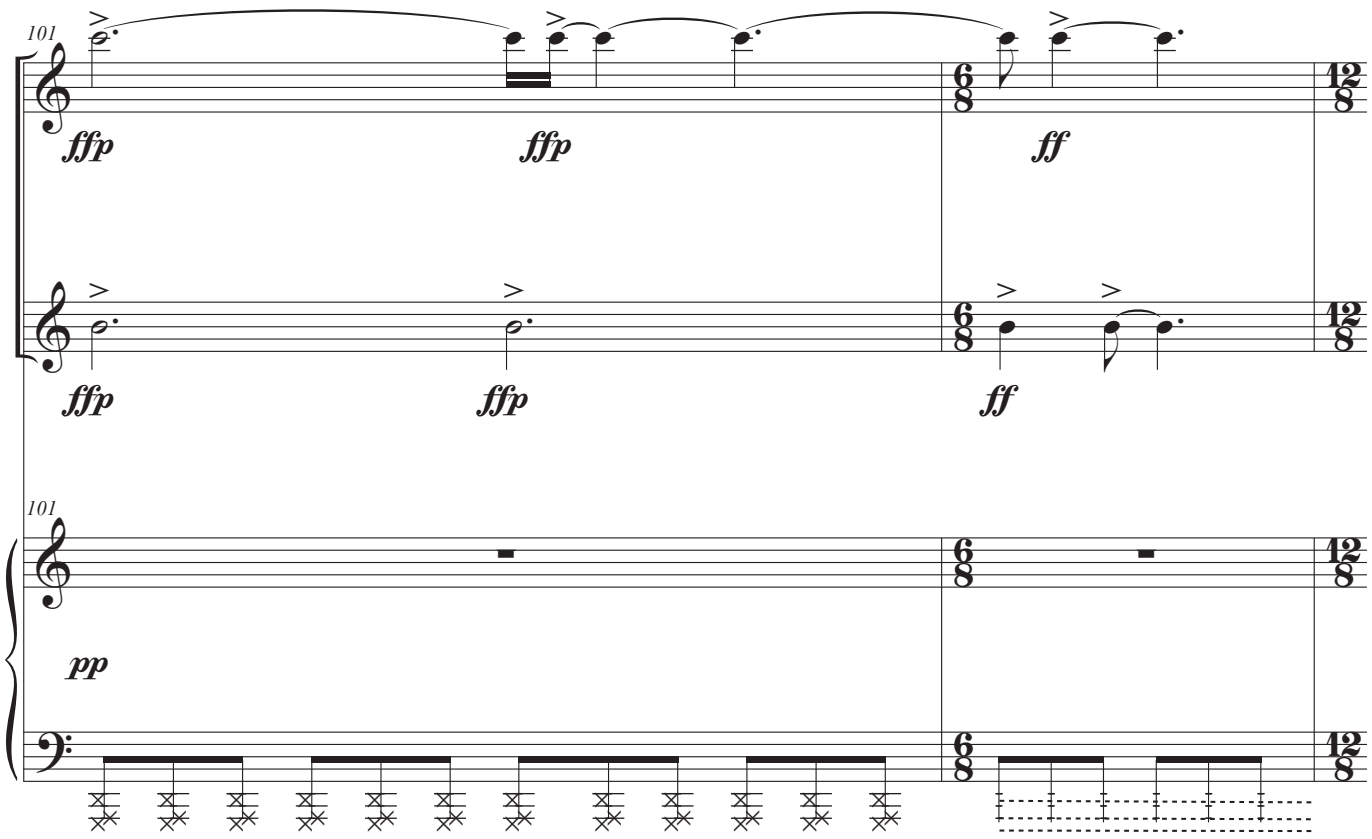
♪=♪ with very expressive tempo fluctuations

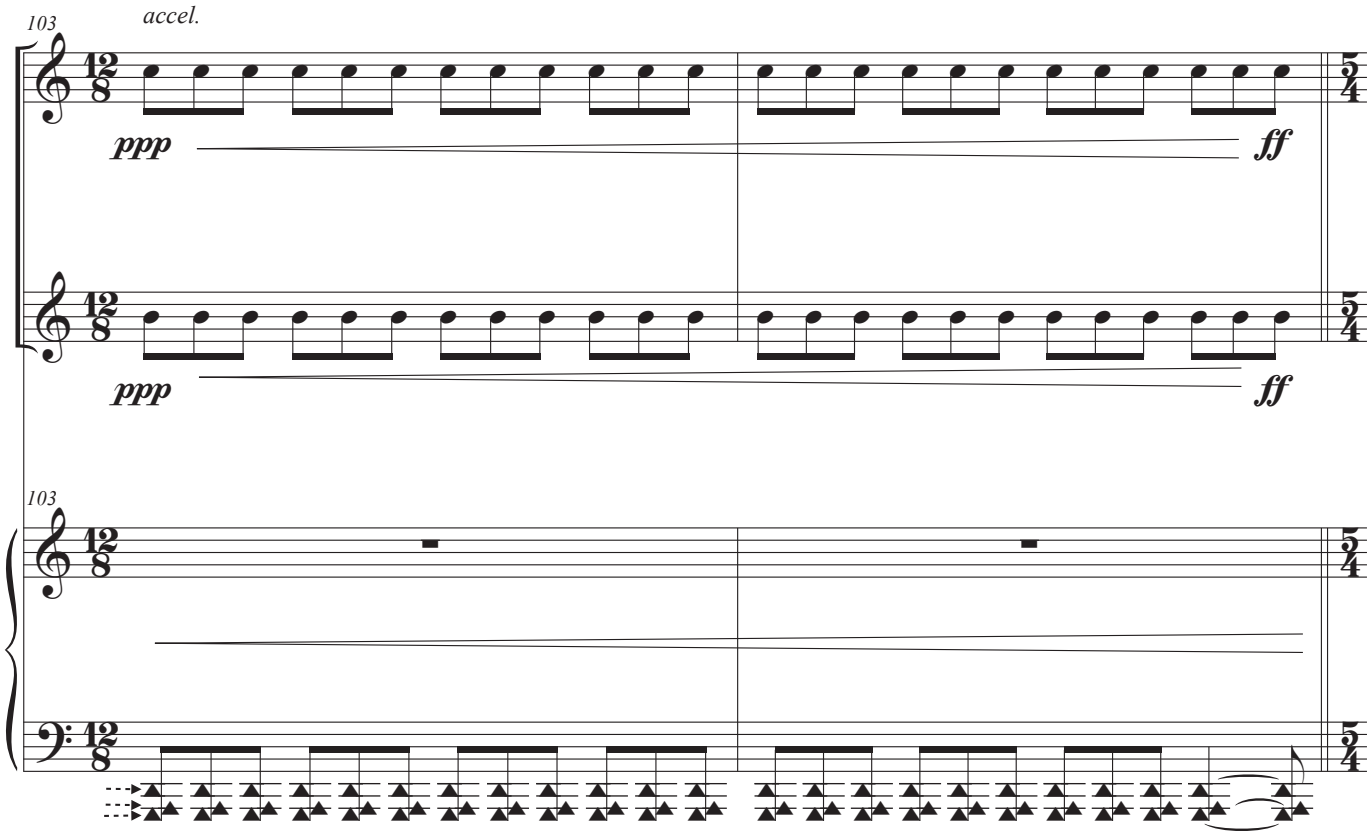


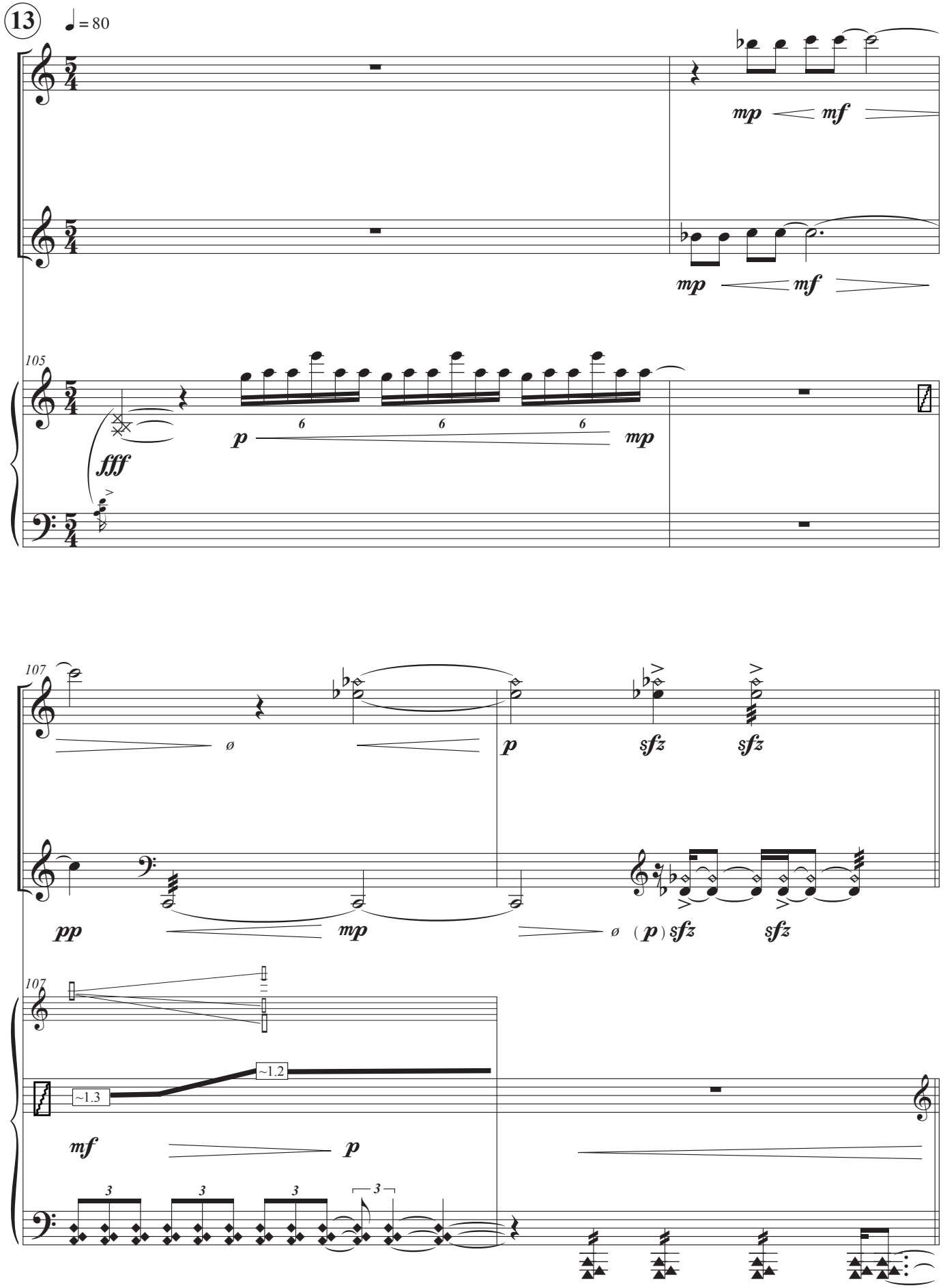

81
accel.
a tempo
rit.
mp
mf
p
tr
mp
mf
81
mp
mf
f
2
85
a tempo
rit.
a tempo
fmp
p
fmp
p
85
sfz
sfz
p
sfz
sfz
2

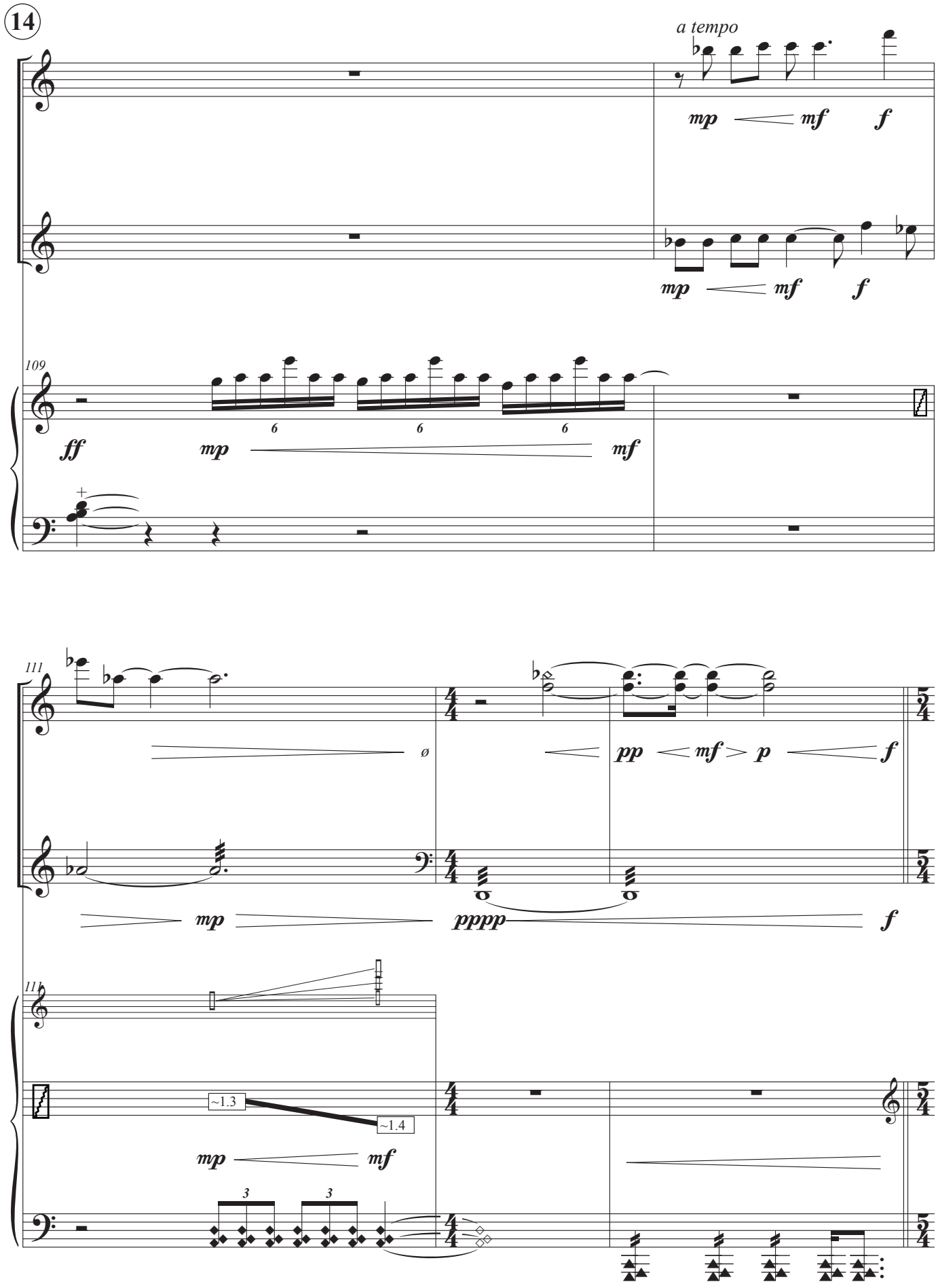

11
♩. = 60 more steadily
88
ff
mp
p
91
pp
sfz
mf
8vb

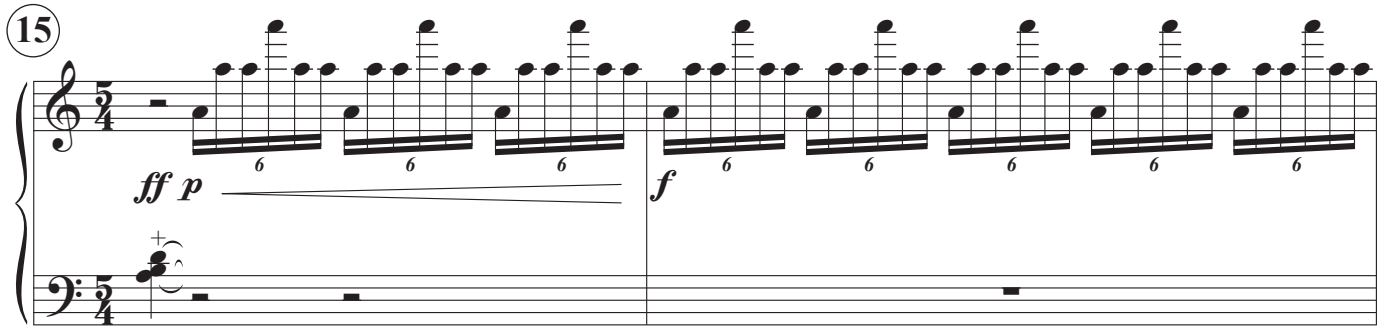

12
accel.
95
mf pp sfz
mf
sfz sfz
(p)
(8vb)
98
mp
ff
sfzpp
f
sfz
8vb


101
ffp
ffp
ff
ffp
ffp
ff
101
pp


103
accel.
ppp
ff
ppp
ff
103

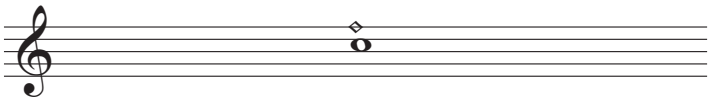

13
♩ = 80
mp
mf
mp
mf
105
fff
p
6
6
6
mp
107
ø
p
sfz
sfz
pp
mp
ø
(p)
sfz
sfz
107
~1.3
~1.2
mf
p
3
3
3
3


14
a tempo
mp
mf
f
mp
mf
f
109
ff
mp
mf
6
6
6
111
ø
pp
mf
p
f
mp
pppp
f
111
~1.3
~1.4
mp
mf
3
3

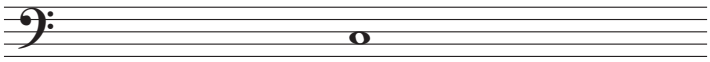


Cell 1 (10 - 20 seconds)

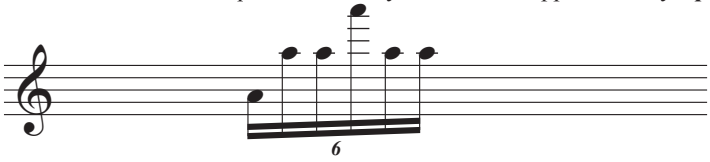
Start Cell 1 with the notated pitch crescendoing from ***pppp*** to ***mp***. Play connected sfz attacks without implying any metter or pattern. These attacks should interact with the cello's but **do not** synchronize. Begin these attacks sparsely and increase their occurence until Cell 2. Cell 2 begins when the piano's pattern changes



Start Cell 1 with the notated pitch crescendoing from ***pppp*** to ***mp***. Play connected ***sfz*** attacks without implying any metter or pattern. These attacks should interact with the violin's but **do not** synchronize. Begin these attacks sparsely and increase their occurence until Cell 2. Cell 2 begins when the piano's pattern changes

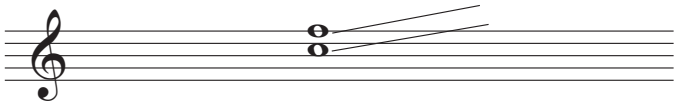


Continue playing pattern consistently in rhythm, dynamic, and articulation. Lead the change to Cell 2 when the ***sf*** attacks from the violin and cello are frequent and at a dynamic that is approximately ***mp***



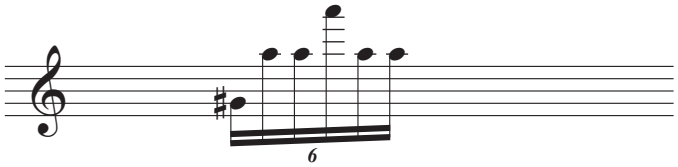
Cell 2 (10 - 25 seconds)

After the start of section 2, ***sfz*** attacks should quickly dissipate until only a sustain remains (still the same pitch from Cell 1). After a brief sustain. begin a slow glissando towards the pitch in Cell 3. Be patient; explore stopping or even going the wrong direction briefly. **Do not** reach the final pitch before the cello; the arrival at the new pitch must be synchronized as the start of Cell 3. Cell 2 starts at ***mp*** and crescendos to ***f*** at the start of Cell 3



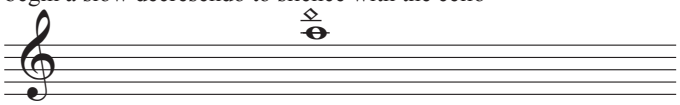
After the start of section 2, ***sfz*** attacks should quickly dissipate until only a sustain remains (still the same pitch from Cell 1). After a brief sustain. begin a slow glissando towards the pitch in Cell 3. Be patient; explore stopping or even going the wrong direction briefly. **Do not** reach the final pitch before the violin; the arrival at the new pitch must be synchronized as the start of Cell 3. Cell 2 starts at ***mp*** and crescendos to ***f*** at the start of Cell 3

Continue as before but with new pattern. Synchronize start of Cell 3 with the violin and cello

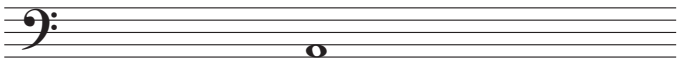


Cell 3 (15 - 30 seconds)

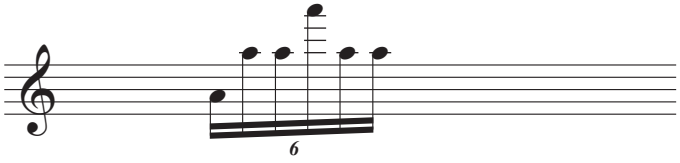
Sustain the new note for a short period of time. Slowly move to a pulse every beat (one pulse for every sequence of the piano pattern). The stroke for the pulse should increase in size and the dynamic should crescendo from ***f*** to ***fff*** at the middle of Cell 3. The start of Cell 4 melds with the end of Cell 3. After the pianist starts Cell 4, begin a slow decresendo to silence with the cello



Sustain the new note for a short period of time. Slowly move to a pulse every beat (one pulse for every sequence of the piano pattern). The stroke for the pulse should increase in size and the dynamic should crescendo from ***f*** to ***fff*** at the middle of Cell 3. The start of Cell 4 melds with the end of Cell 3. After the pianist starts Cell 4, begin a slow decresendo to silence with the violin



Continue as before but with the new pattern. Once the violin and cello have reached a steady pulse and a dynamic of approximately ***fff*** fade to silence. After reaching silence, begin Cell 4



Cell 4 (10 - 100 seconds)

TACET

TACET

Improvise softly with the following sounds as material: 1. Create sound by pressing fingers on the strings behind the dampers of the notated pitches and pulling off. This sound is created by the release of the fingers as opposed to a striking motion (it will be extremely soft). 2: quickly move fingers down the strings to create a "whistling" sound. 3: play harmonic chords on the notated strings. **Notice:** sounds 1 and 2 may not be possible in some venues due to the softness of sound 1 and the inability for some pianos to create sound 2. If this is the case, continue on with sound 3 only. A triplet pulse should be incorporated in the improvisation and the pedal should be held down throughout