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Juiced

for string quartet

Brendon Randall-Myers

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Juiced

Brendon Randall-Myers

Program Note

I've always been fascinated by people that push against their own physical limitations, whether it's bodybuilders, marathoners, people with eating disorders, or concert violinists and metal drummers. There's something magical and exciting about transforming your body into something better, but also something grotesque and terrifying about the things people do to actually accomplish that. Such frightening activities include running 140 miles a week, throwing up your dinner, taking steroids, or practicing for 10 hours a day.

My piece *Juiced* responds to this attempted pursuit of physical perfection. I tried to channel the moments of performance (whether musical or athletic) where one is moving very quickly, but time seems to slow down. I also tried to write music near the edge of what the performers can do both as individuals and as an ensemble. The quartet plays a LOT of notes, and also plays extremely tricky rhythms in complete unison throughout a large part of the piece. Many passages are written with the knowledge that they are essentially impossible to play perfectly.

It's tough, because as performers we spend so much time trying to sound good, to look good, to control our bodies. But that control is fleeting in the best cases: we and our bodies will all fail in one way or another eventually. However, striving for perfection even when we know it isn't possible is part of what makes us human, and for me, is thrilling to watch.

Juiced was co-commissioned by the Norfolk Summer Festival and Friction Quartet.

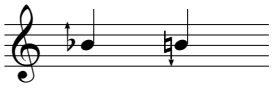
Duration: ca. 18'30"

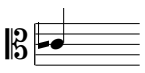
The piece is in six sections, which should be played without pause.

Performance Notes

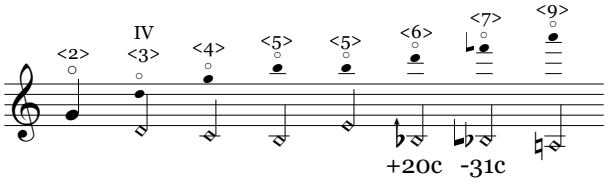
Microtonal accidentals and general harmonic notation:

I use two microtonal accidentals adapted from Helmholtz-Ellis Just Intonation notation:


5-limit intervals raise/
lower a pitch by 15-20c.


7-limit intervals lower
a pitch by 31c.

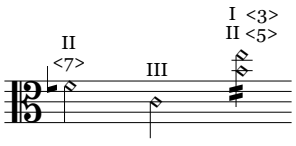
Harmonics up to partial 9 are used. They are always notated at fingered pitch, as in this example on the violin's G string:



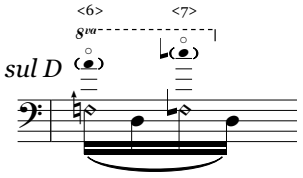
The fingered pitch for partial 6 sits ca. 20c above equal-tempered Bb.

The fingered pitch for partial 7 sits ca. 30c below equal-tempered Bb.

In the score, sounding-pitch information is generally not included, and harmonics look as follows:



However, it is used ocasionally for clarity, as in this figure in which the fingered pitches sit a quarter tone apart:



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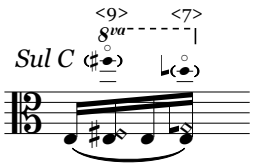
Performance Notes (continued)

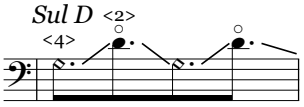
Extended techniques and unusual notation

Upper-partial artificial harmonics:



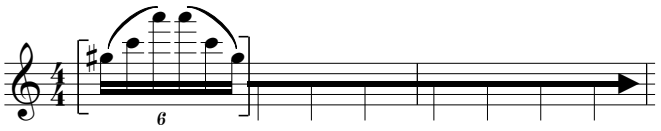
Executed like normal touch 4 artificial harmonics, but with higher partials. The harmonic numbers correspond to the lower fingered pitch. A certain amount of instability in the resulting pitches is expected.

Harmonic glisses:



Continuous gliss using very light finger pressure so all harmonics in between the written notes speak.

Bracketed material:

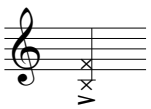


Material in brackets is repeated in metered time, but is gradually altered or distorted per directions in the score. Each stem is a rearticulation of entirety of bracketed material.

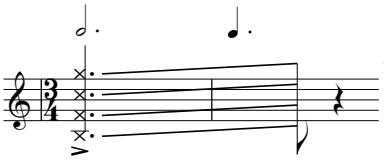
Unusual glissando notation:

Unless otherwise noted, glissandi should be continuous over the course of the notated duration. In figures like these, bow articulation is read as normal from stems and slurs.

Scratch tones:



Apply fairly heavy pressure using flat part of the left hand fingers and a heavy, slow bow to produce a rough sound without a discernable pitch.

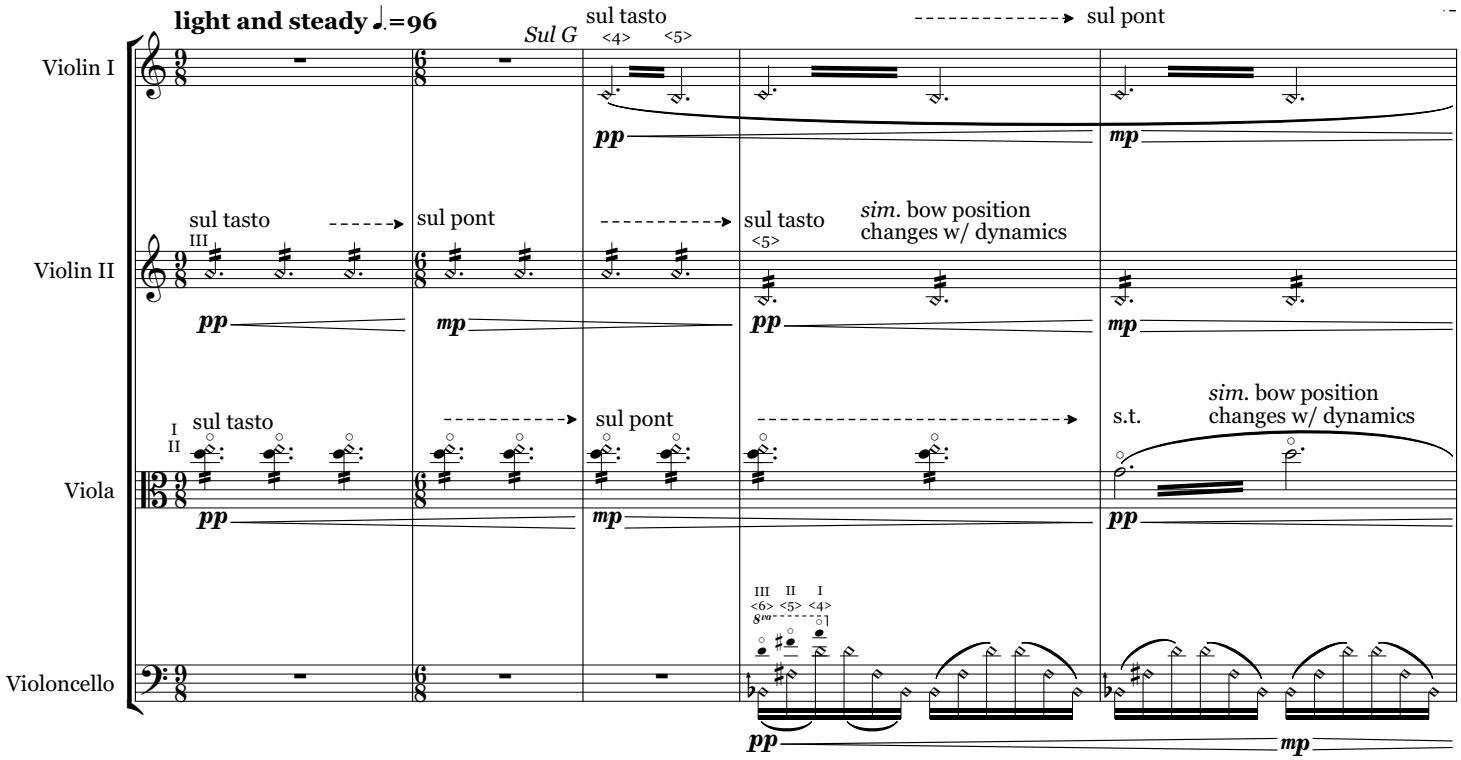


When the combination of noteheads and glisses obscures the rhythm, note lengths are indicated above the staff.

Juiced

Brendon Randall-Myers

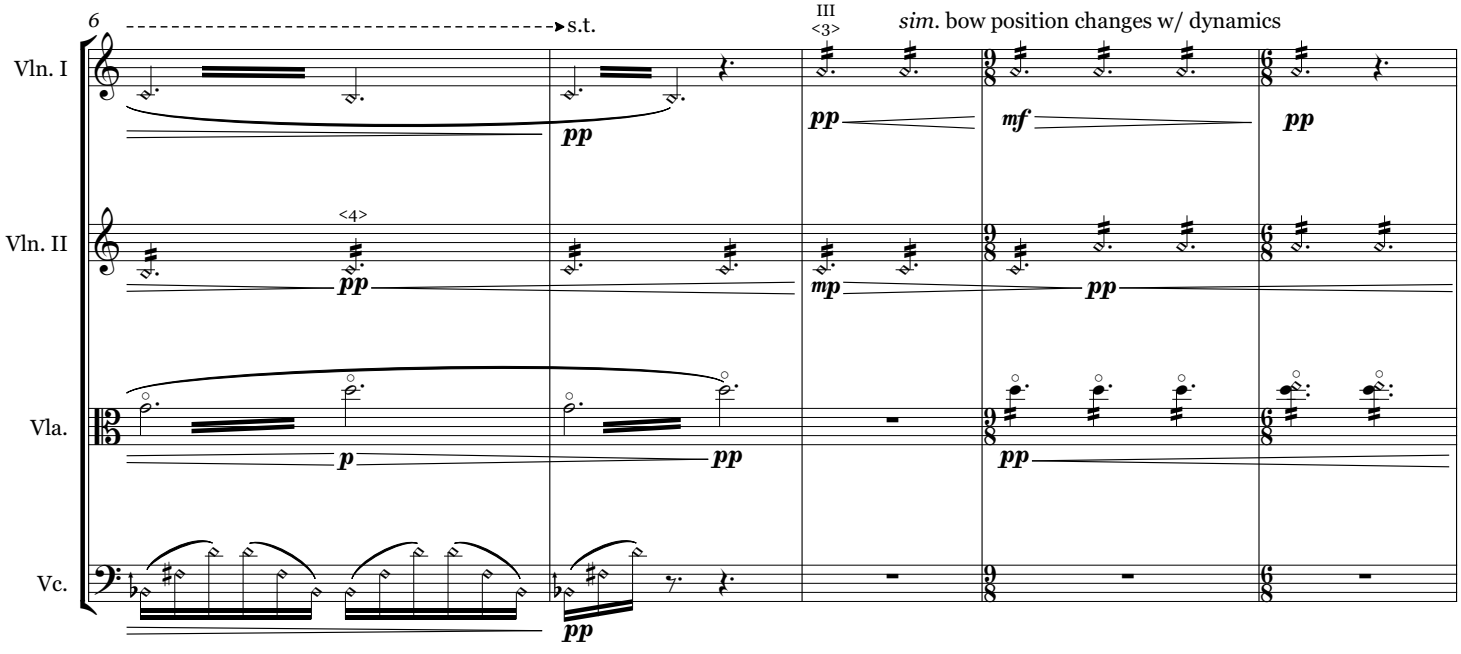
intro: warmup/ghost



All movements are played attacca, with only very short pauses when indicated.

Throughout this section, all tremolos are measured, and the players should pay careful attention to rhythmic placement of dynamics and bow techniques to create a subtly-yet-clearly shifting texture. The pulse should feel present from the beginning, and giving a little natural agogic accent on big beats will help rhythmically anchor the opening 29 bars. The texture and rhythm should naturally come more into focus throughout the section as playing techniques shift from harmonics towards normally-played notes.

See performance notes for explanations of non-standard upper-partial harmonics techniques and notation.



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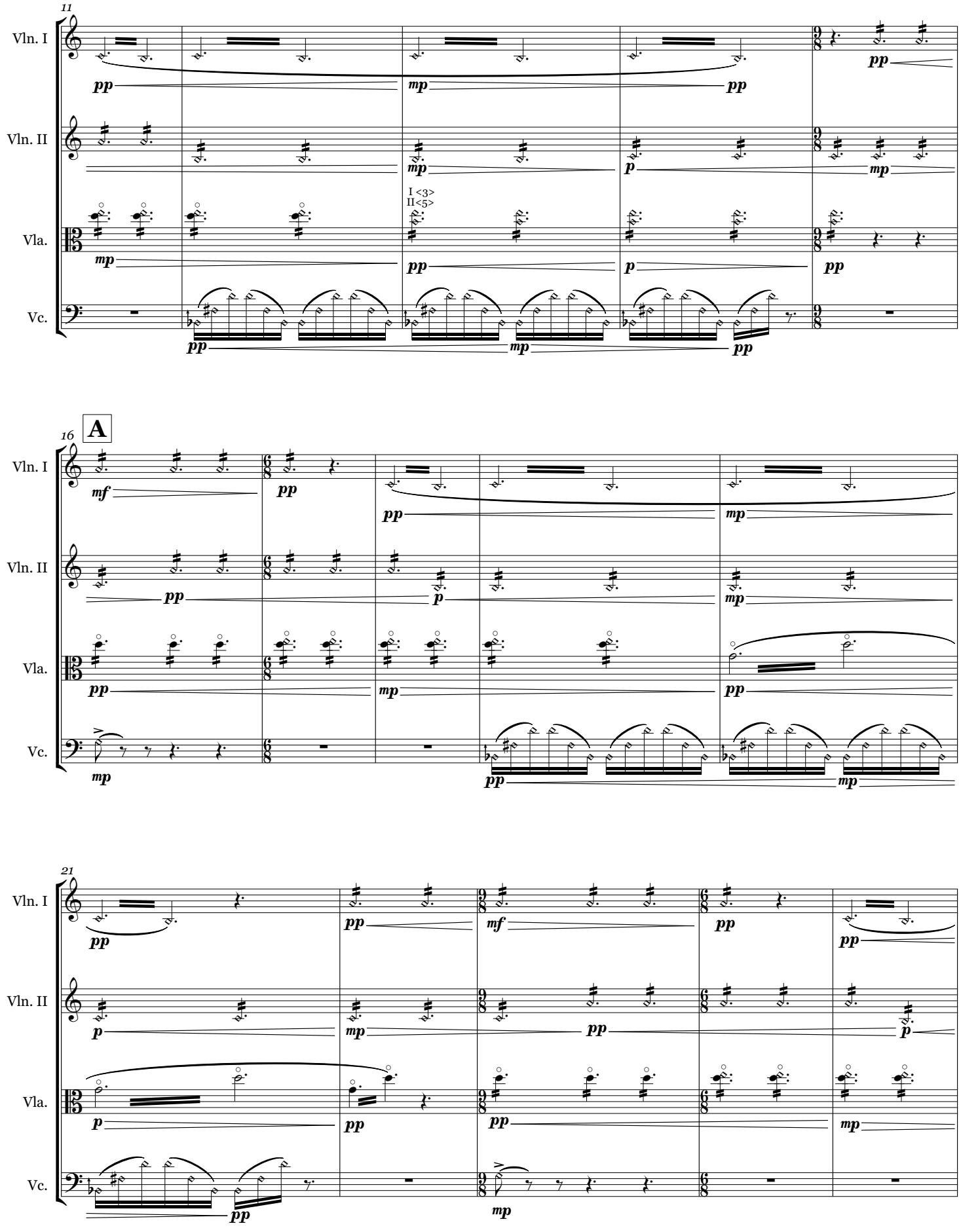
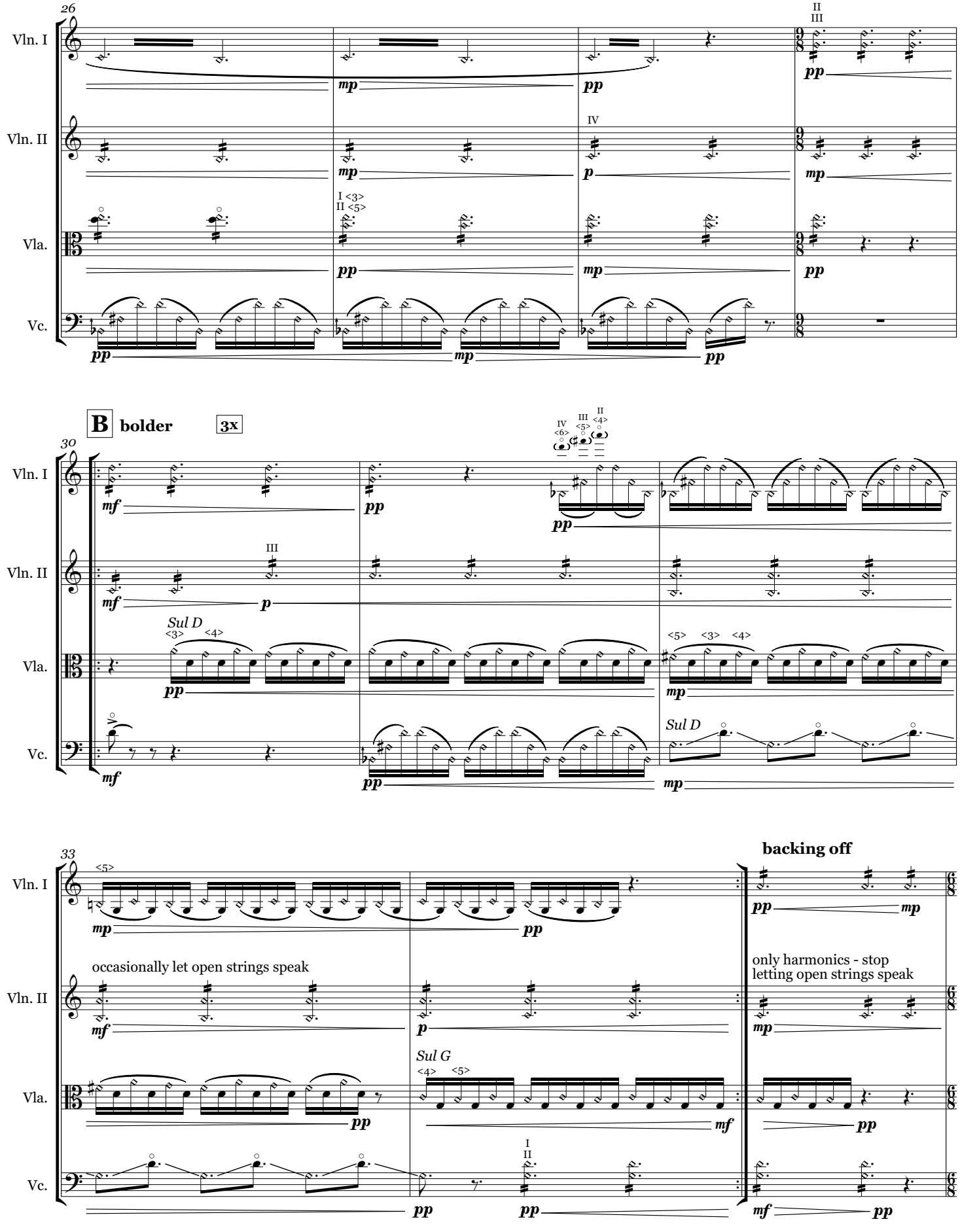
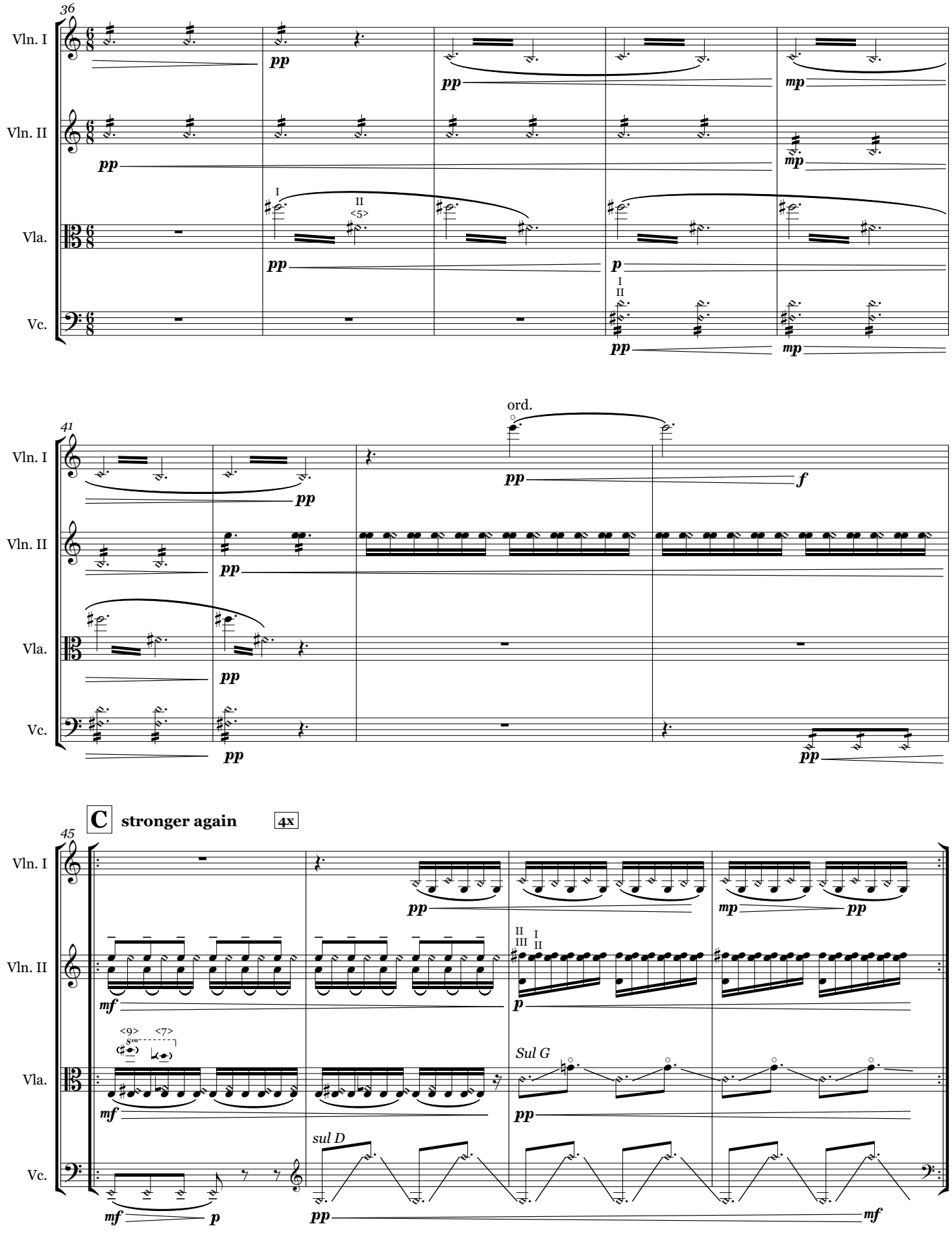
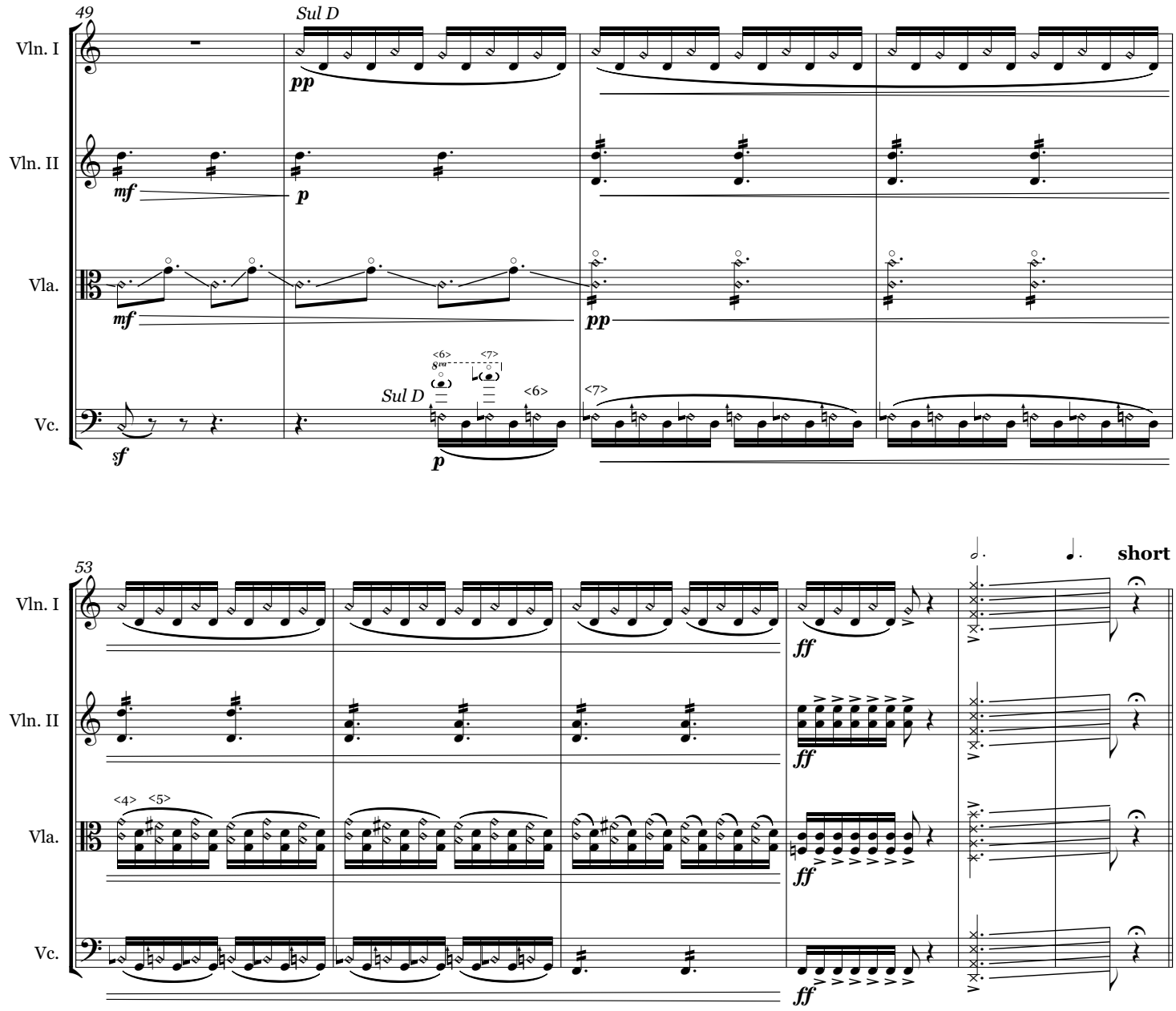
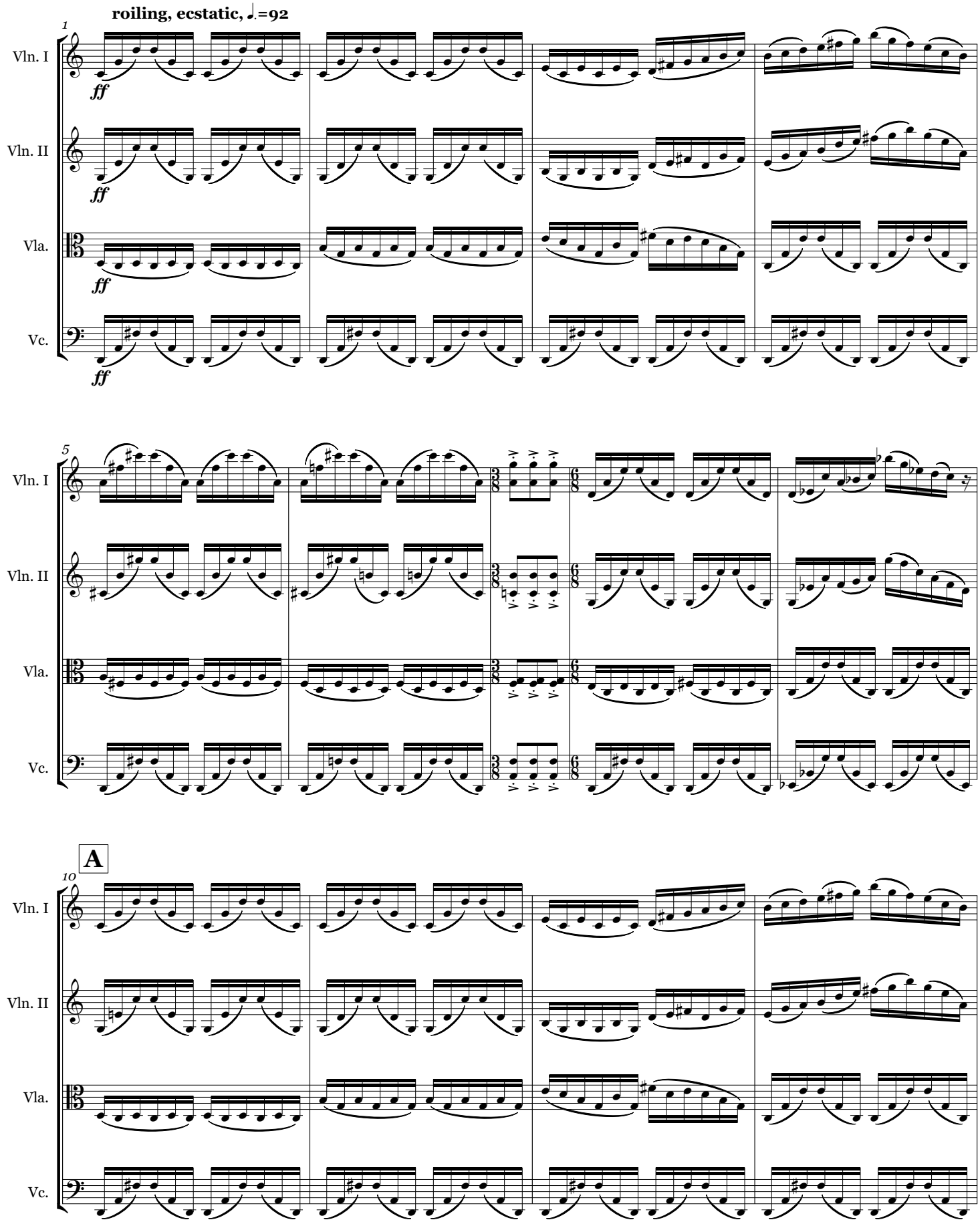

11
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
I <3>
II<5>
16
A
21

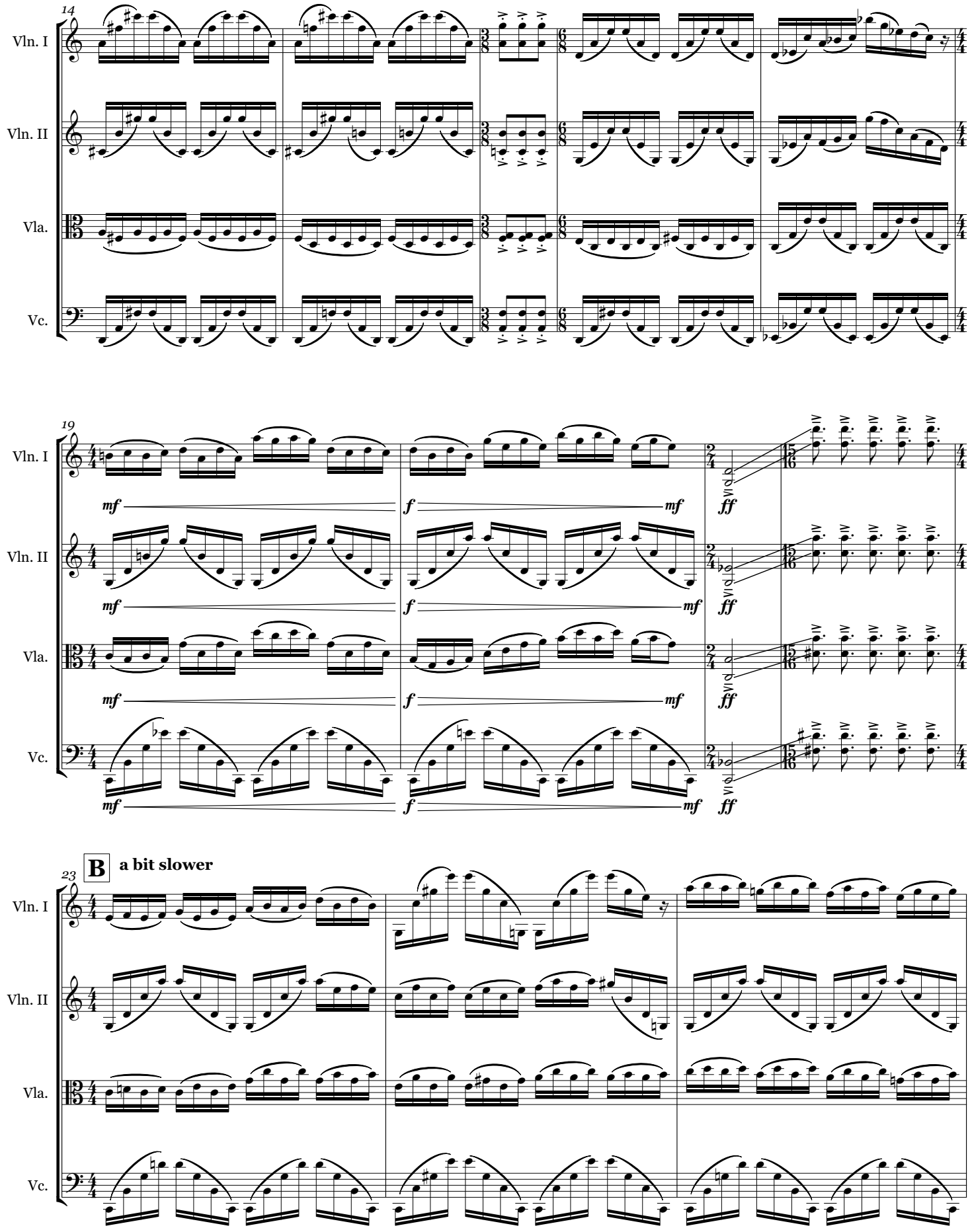

26
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
II
III
IV
I <3>
II <5>
pp
mp
B bolder
3x
30
mf
III
Sul D
<3>
<4>
<5>
IV <6>
III <5>
II <4>
33
backing off
occasionally let open strings speak
only harmonics - stop letting open strings speak
Sul G
I
II

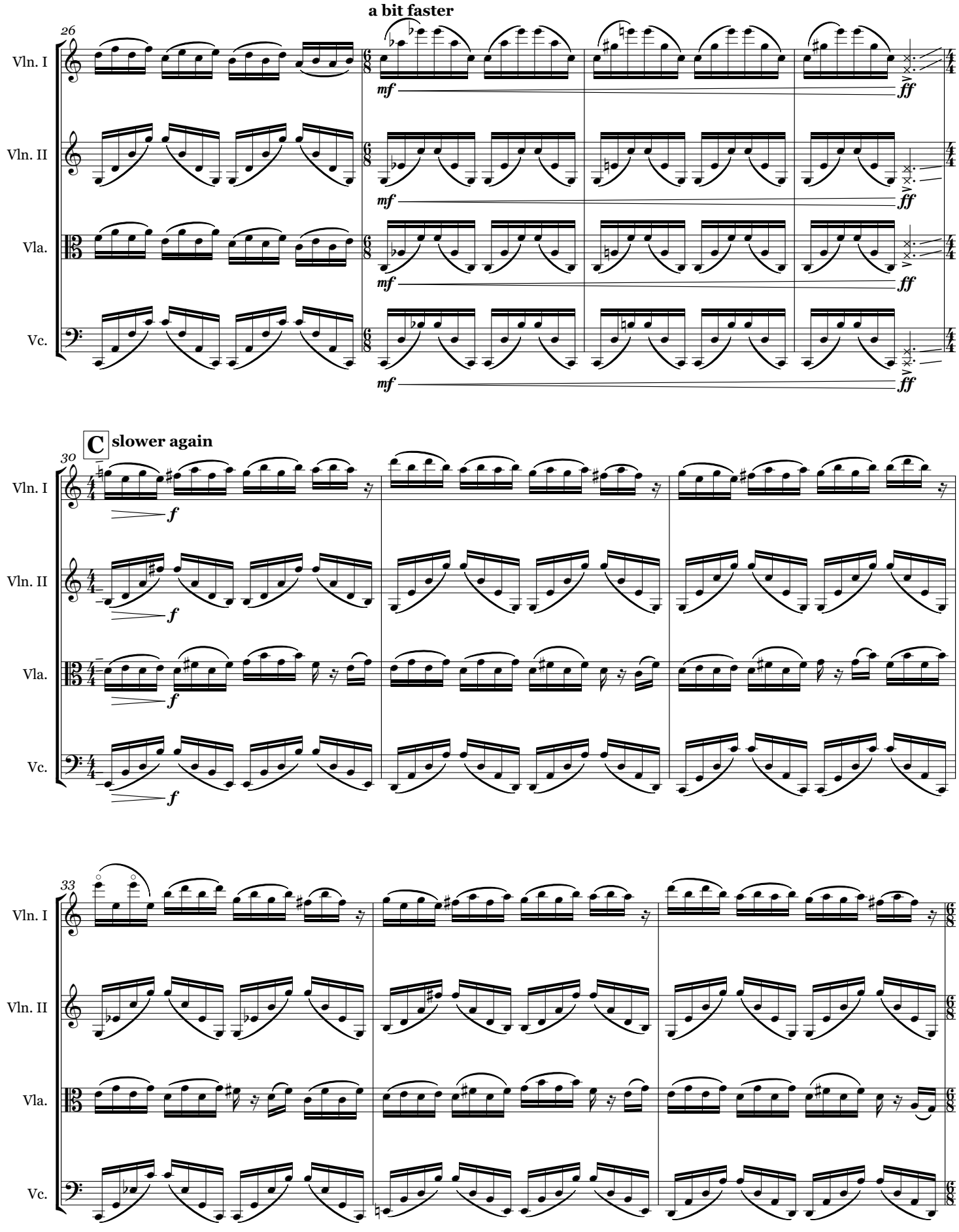

36
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pp
mp
p
I
II
<5>
41
ord.
f
C
stronger again
4x
45
<9>
<7>
8va
Sul G
sul D
mf

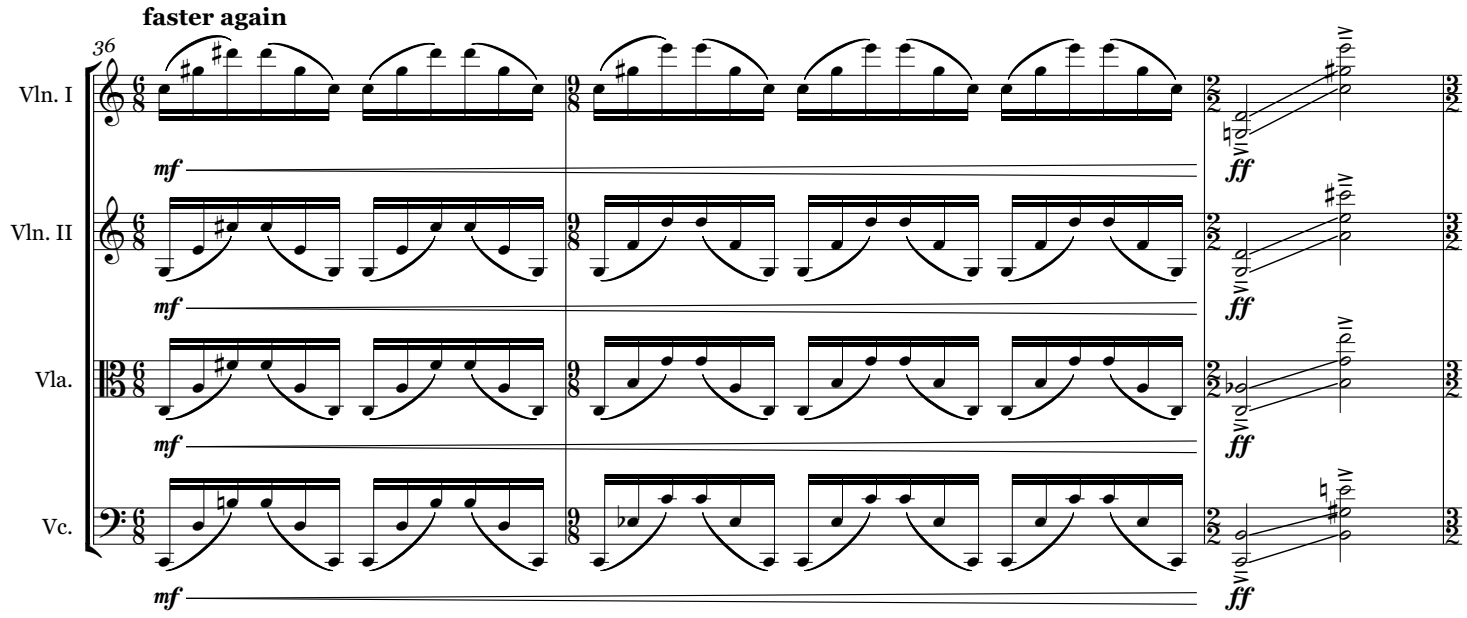

49
Sul D
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pp
mf
p
mf
pp
sf
Sul D
p
53
short
ff
ff
ff
ff

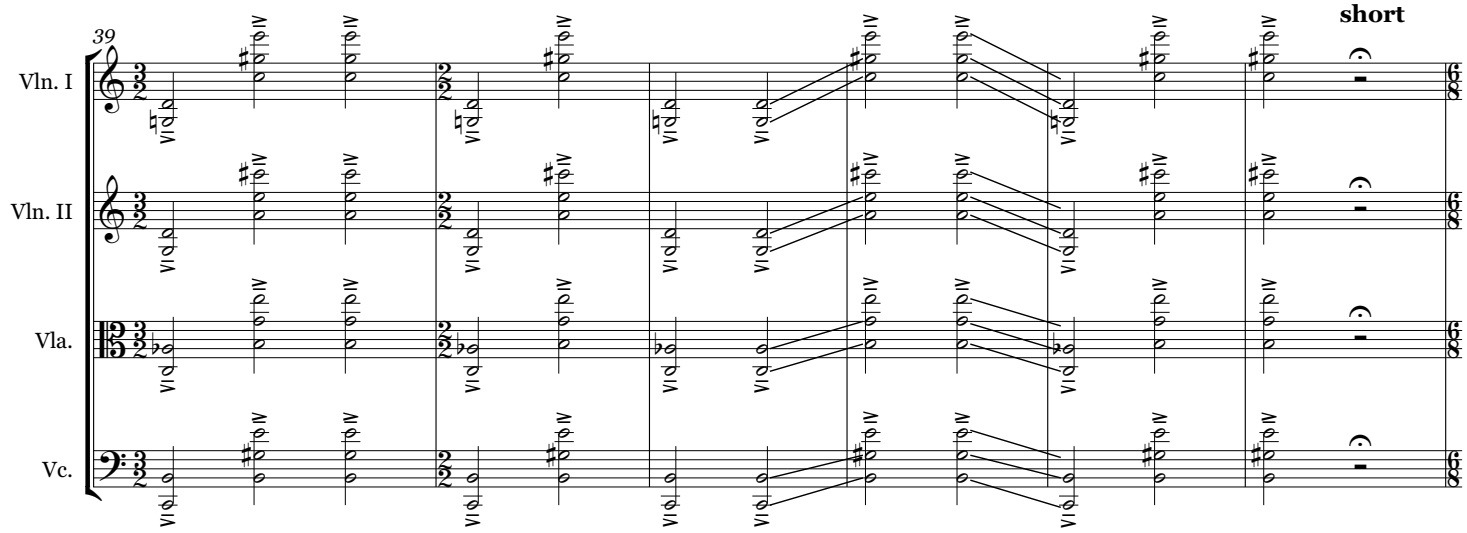
I. intervals to exhaustion

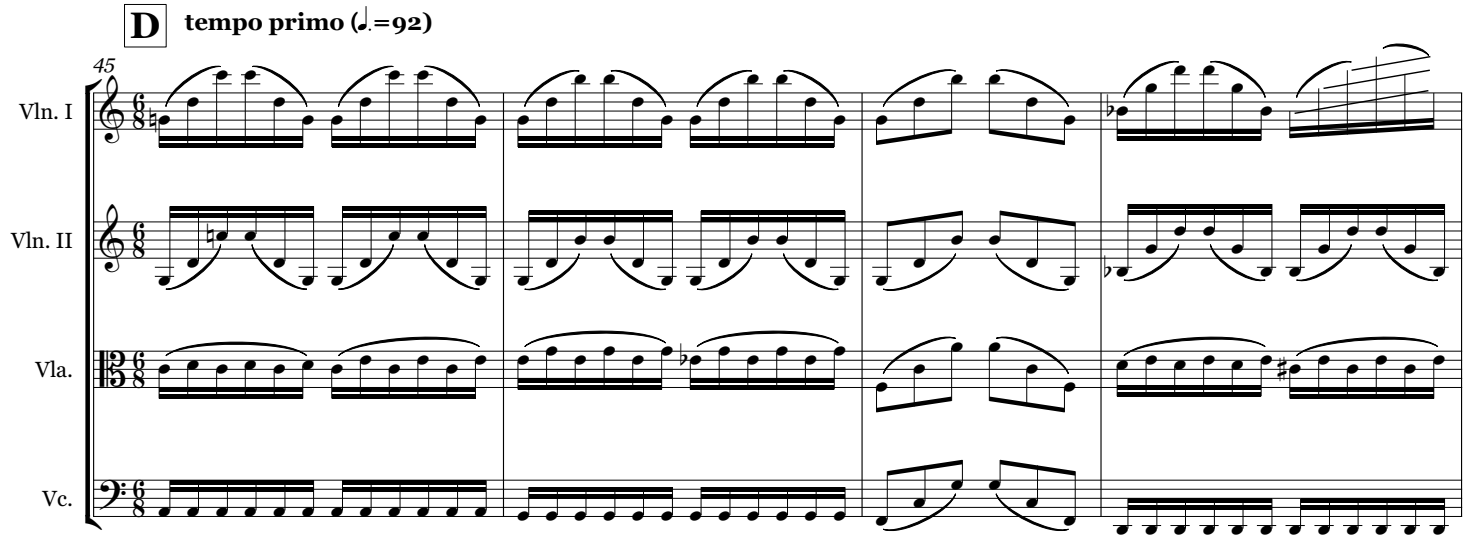


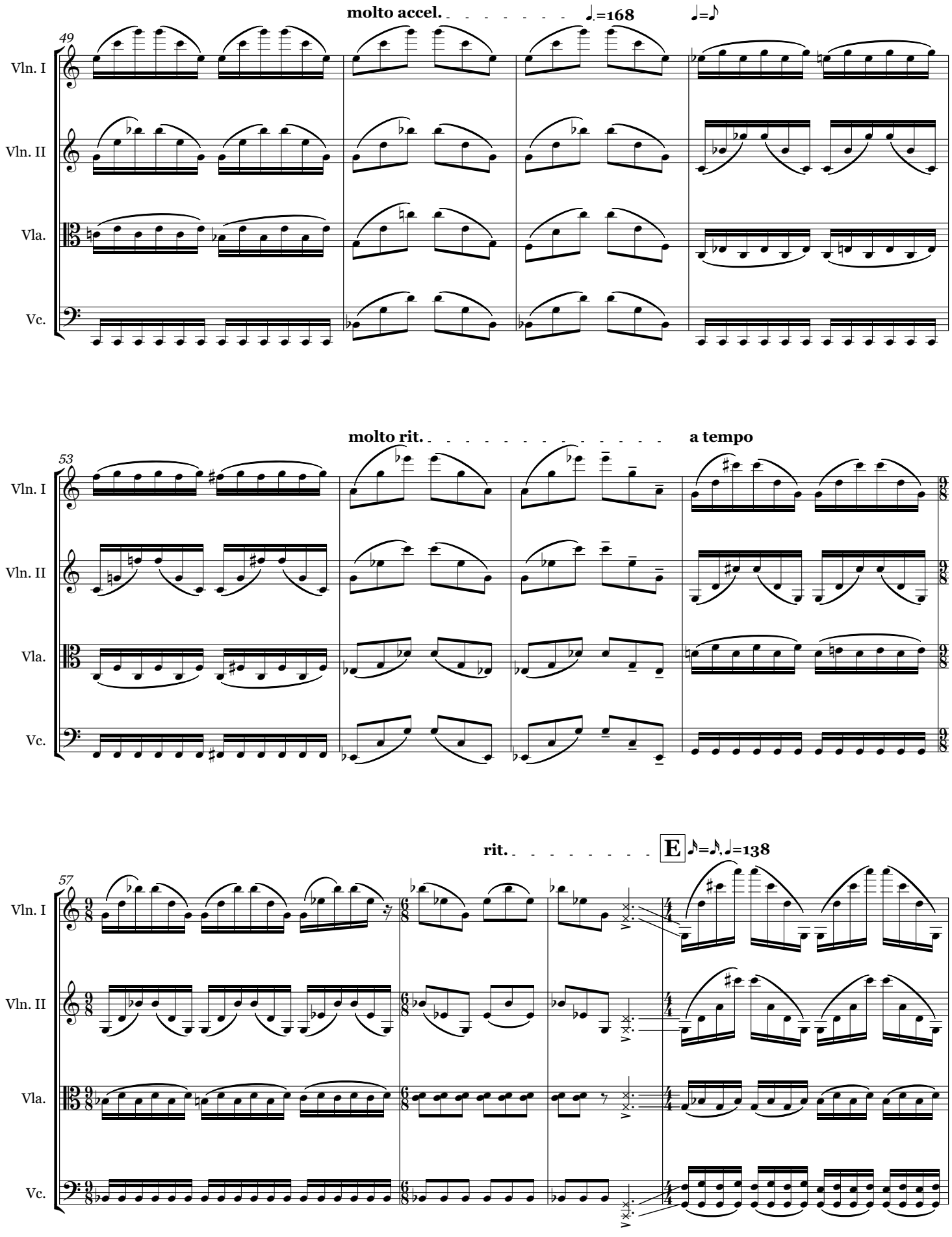

14
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
19
mf
f
mf
ff
23
B
a bit slower

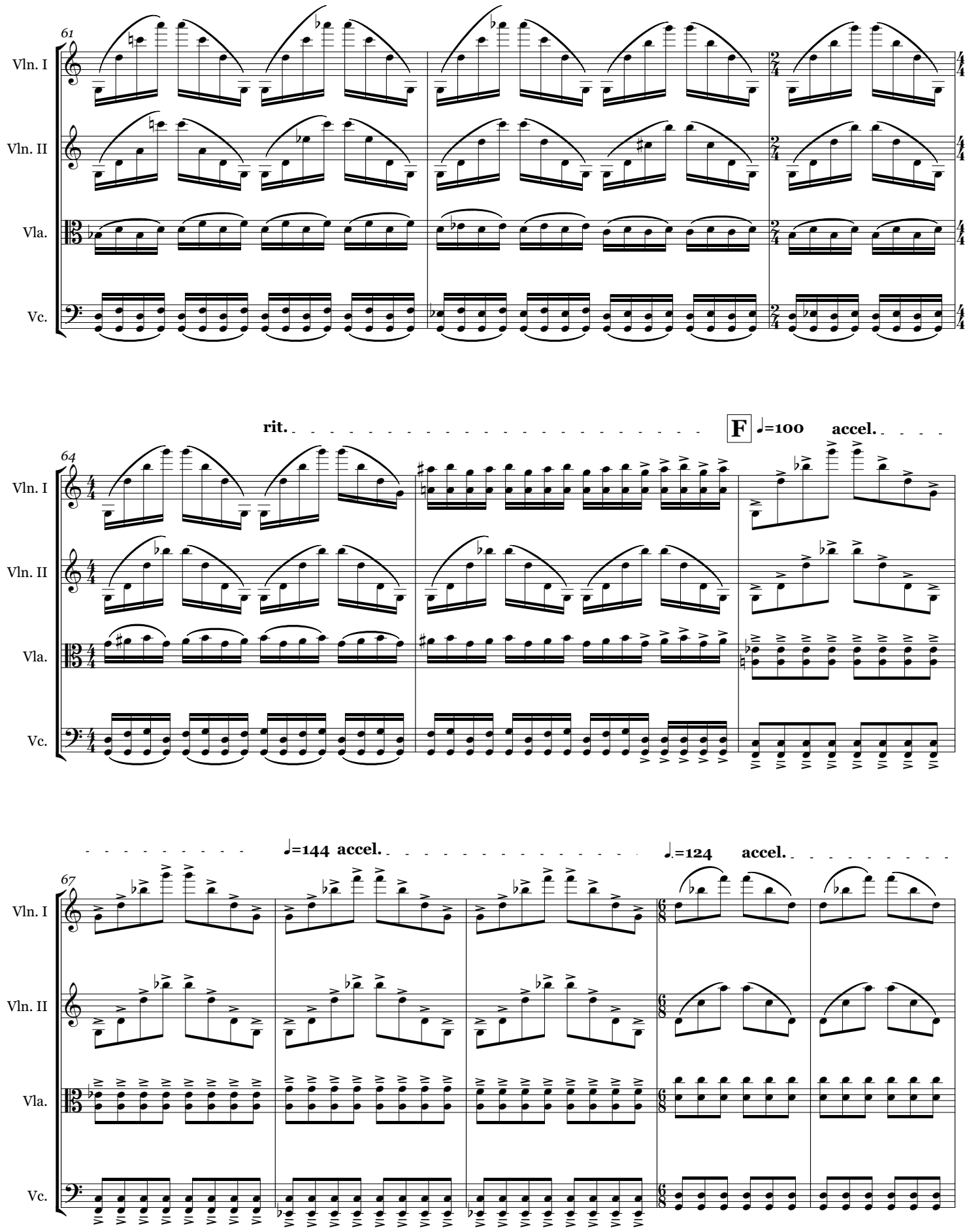

a bit faster
26
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
ff
C
slower again
30
f
33

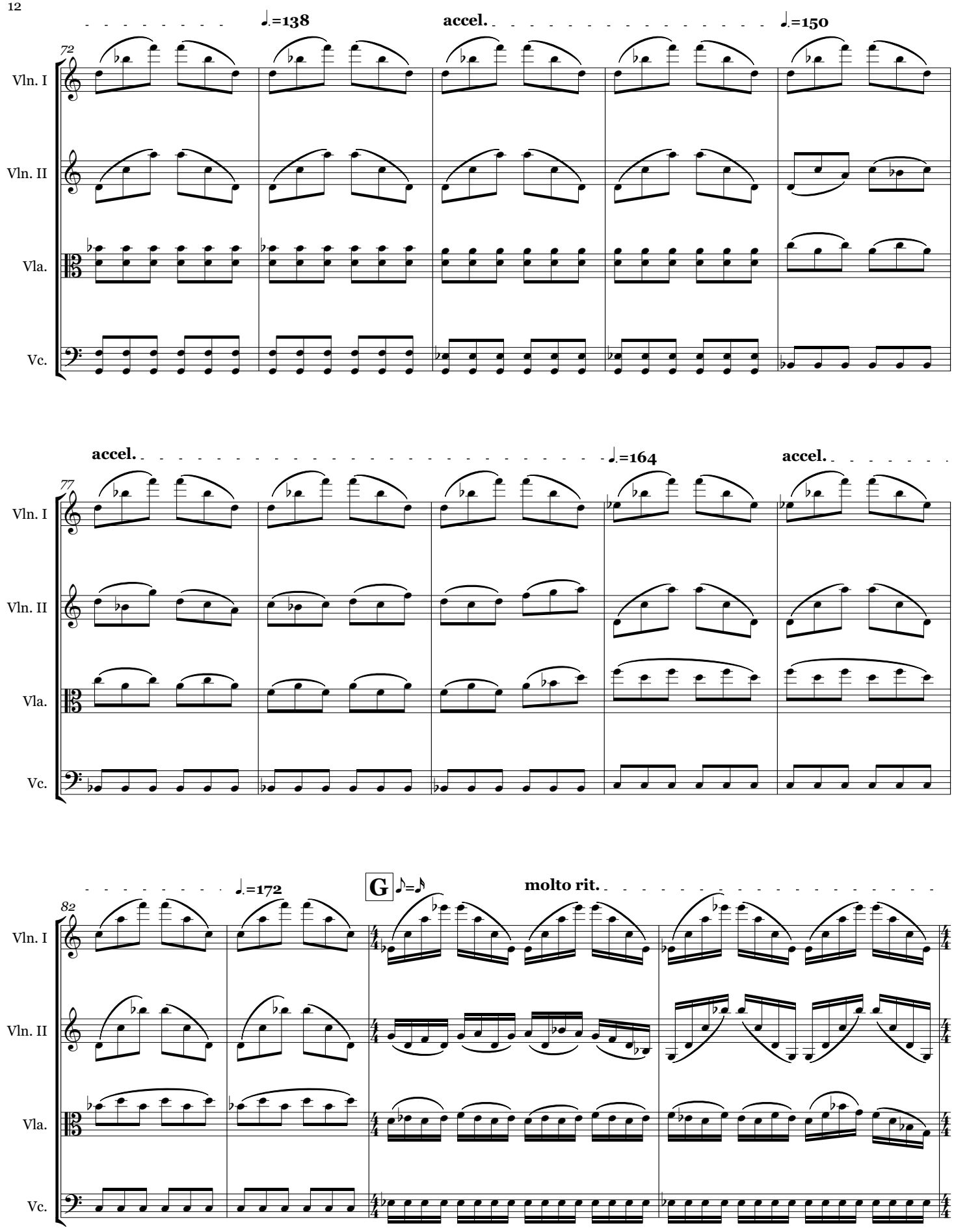

faster again
36
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
ff

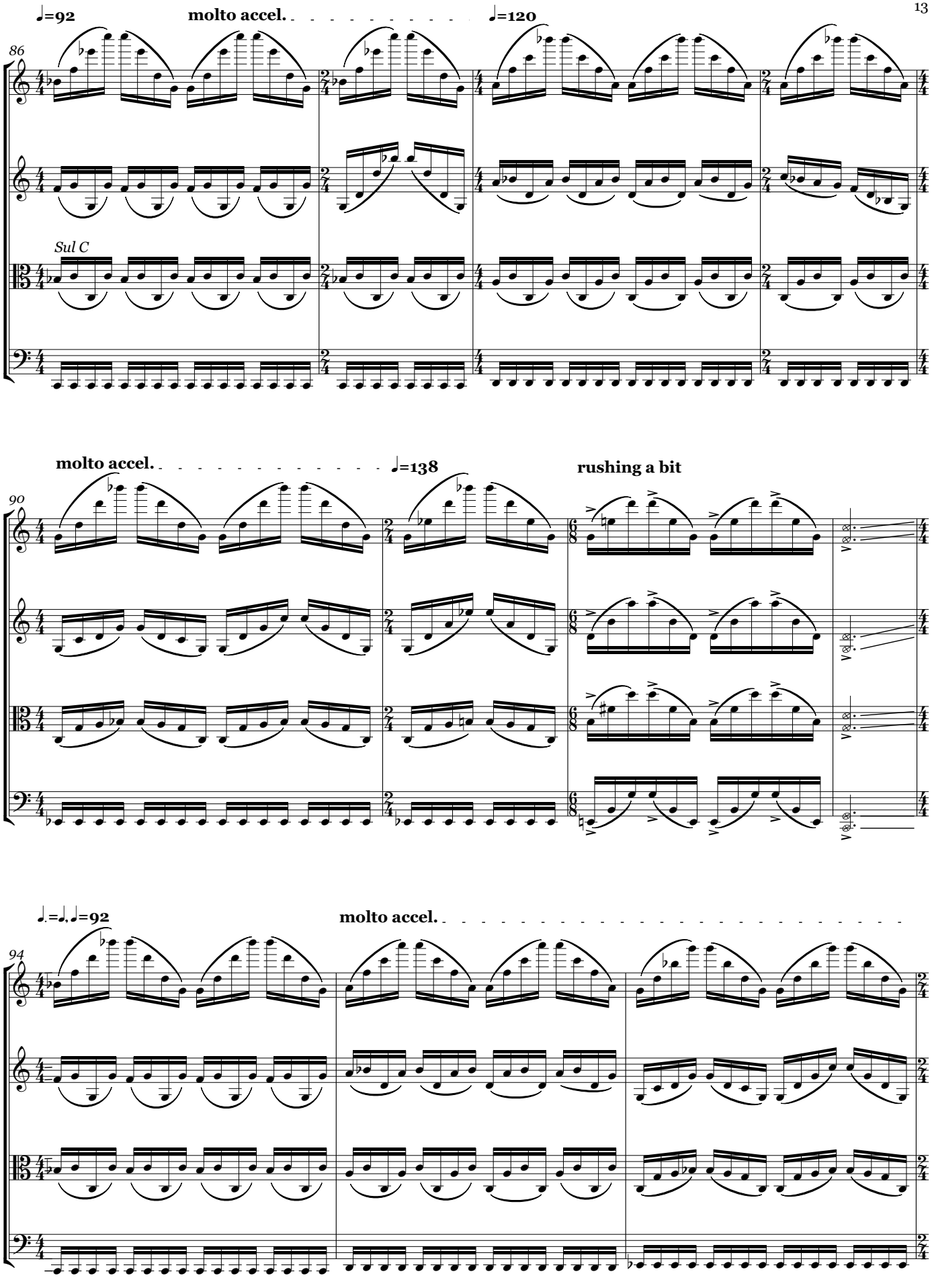

short
39
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

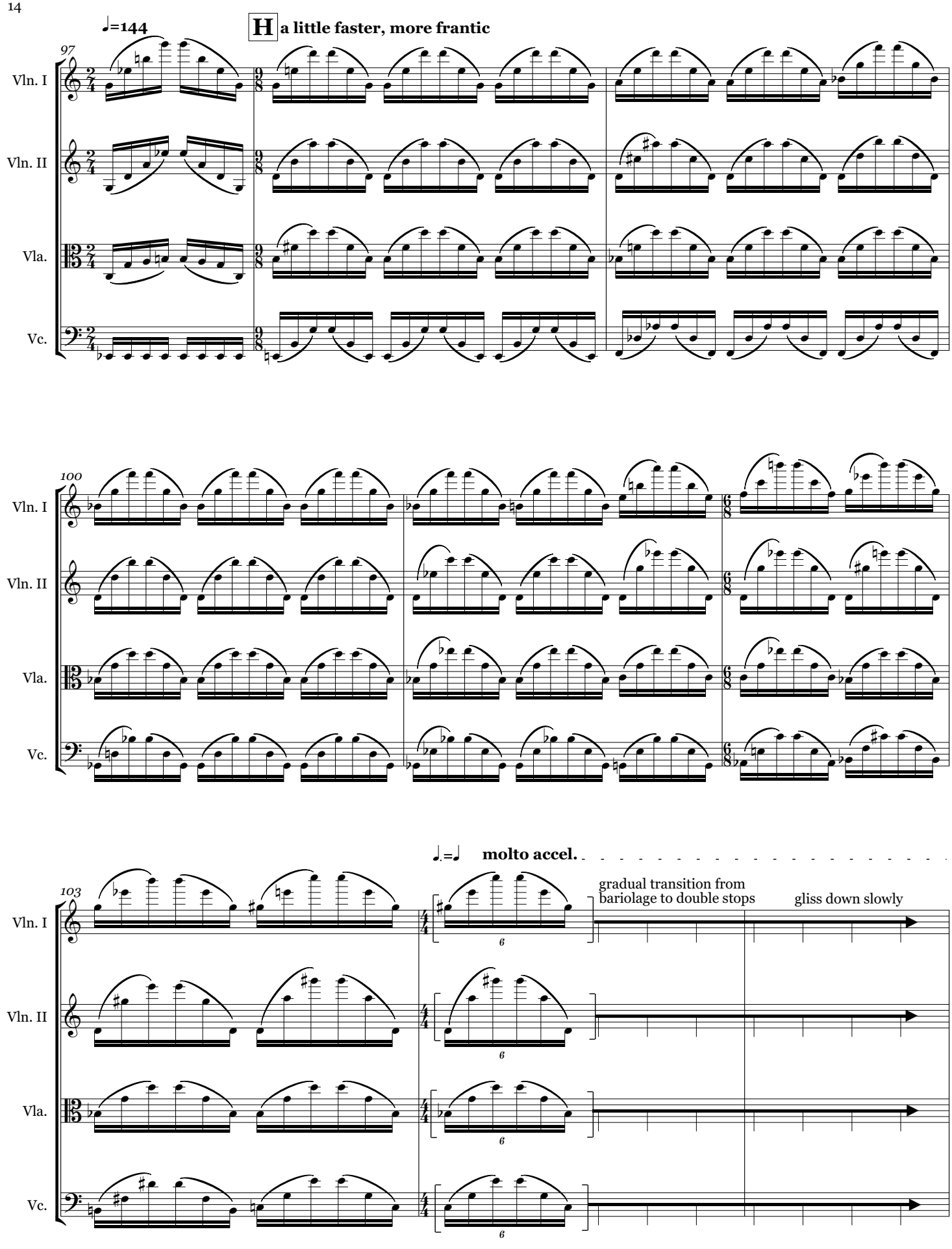

D
tempo primo (♩.=92)
45
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

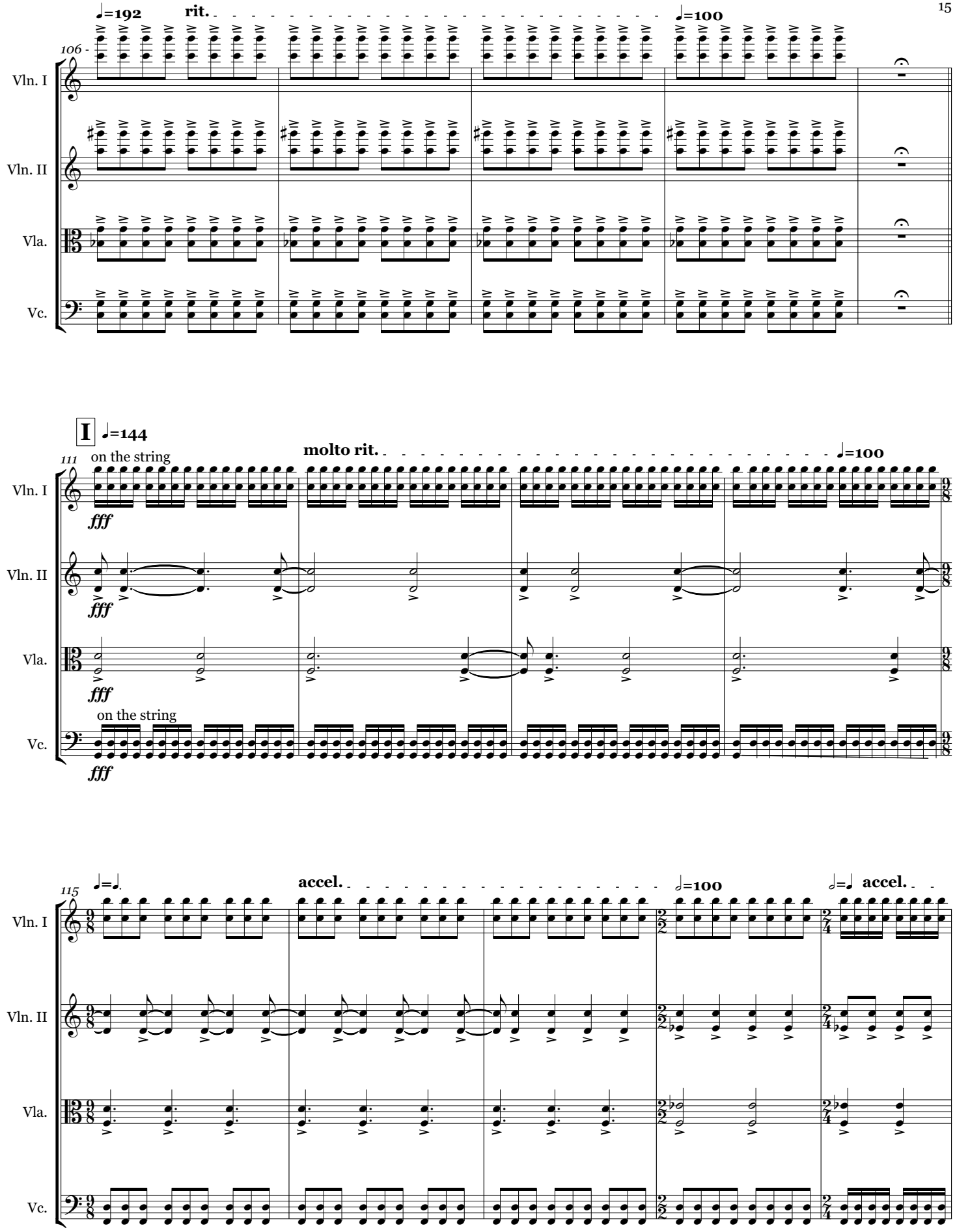

molto accel.
♩.=168
♩=♪
49
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
molto rit.
a tempo
53
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
rit.
E
♪=♪.♩=138
57
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

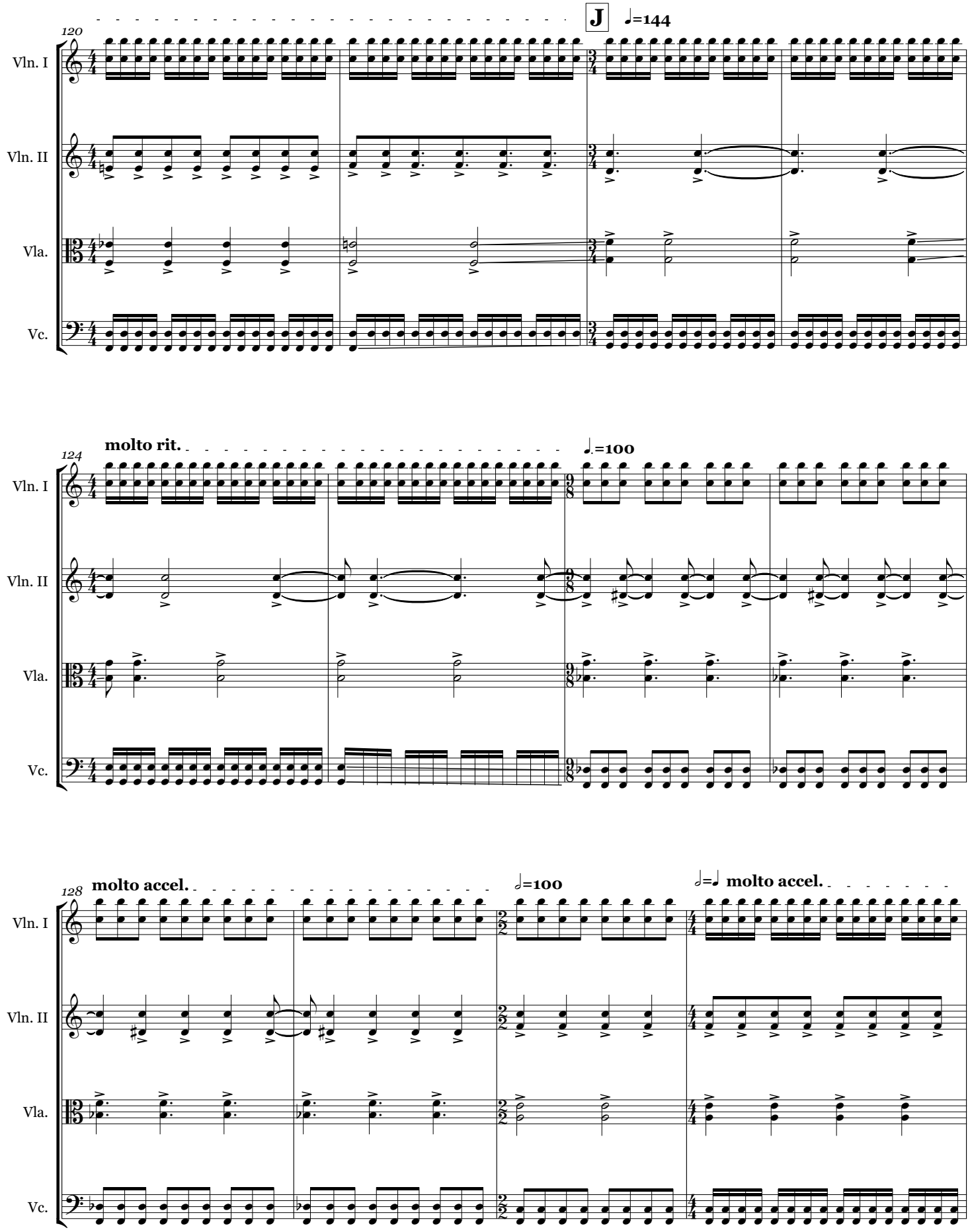

61
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
rit.
F
♩=100
accel.
64
♩=144 accel.
♩.=124
accel.
67

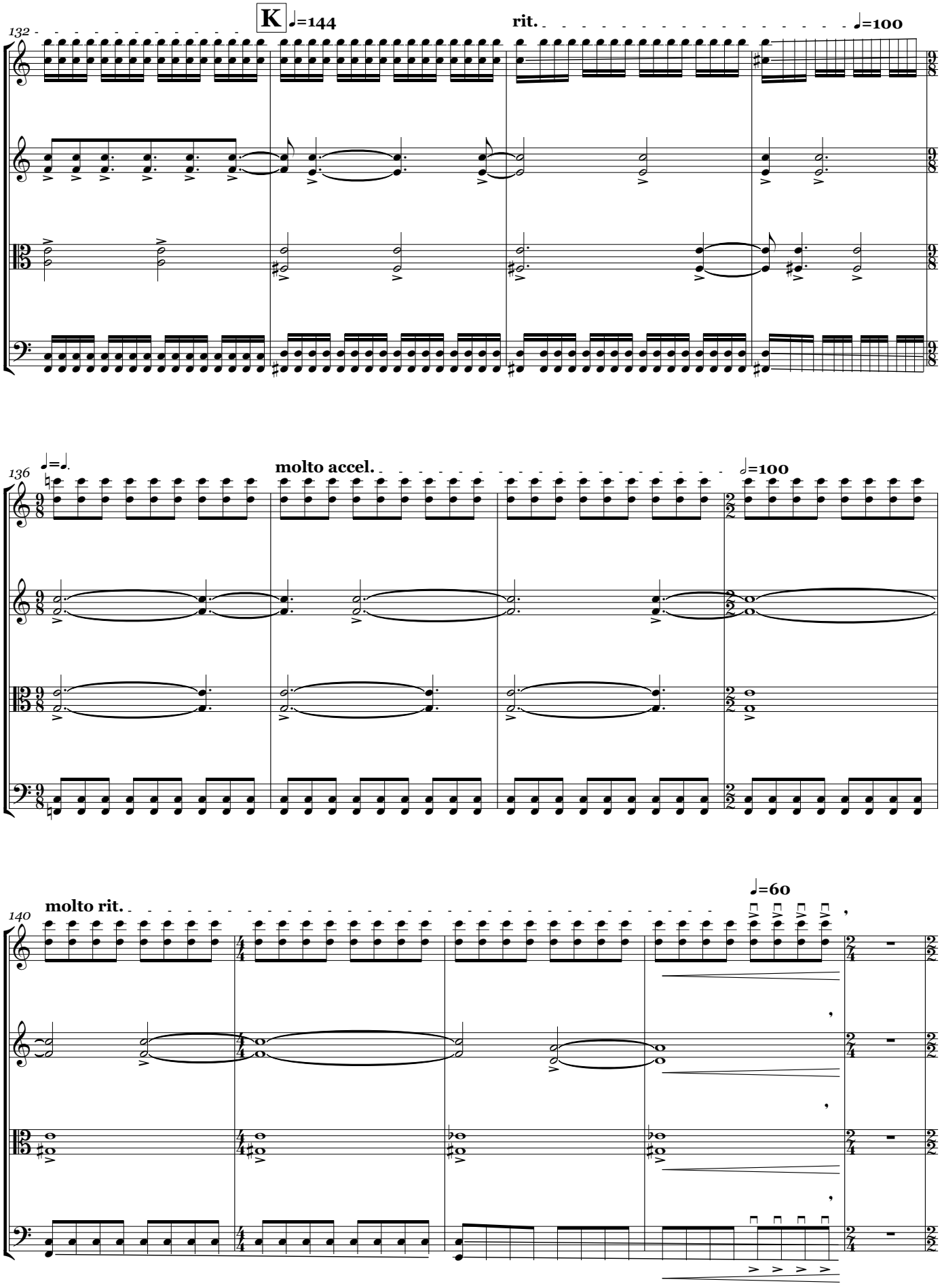

72
♩.=138
accel.
♩.=150
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
accel.
77
♩.=164
accel.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
82
♩.=172
G
♪=♪
molto rit.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

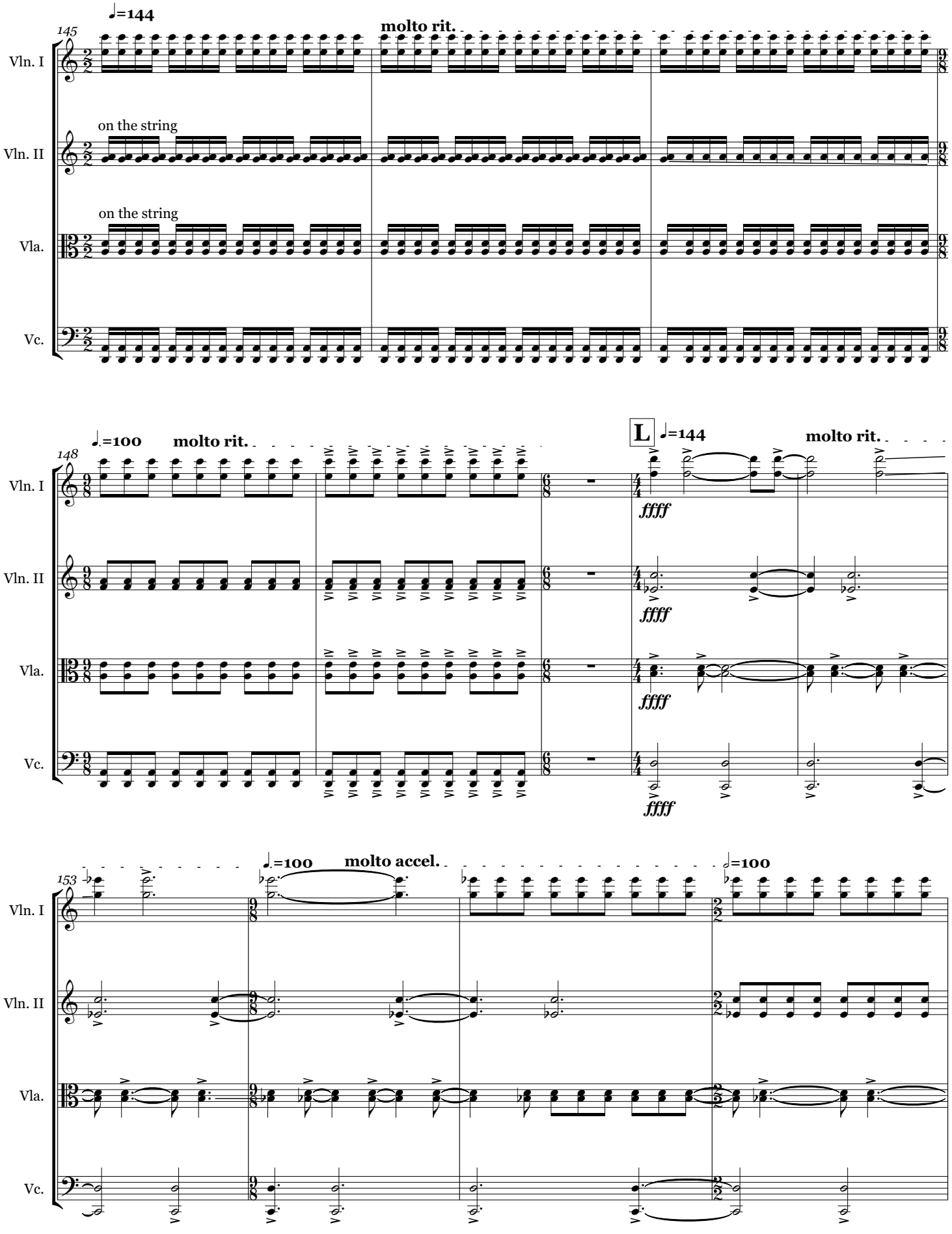

♩=92
molto accel.
♩=120
86
Vln. I
Vln. II
Sul C
Vla.
Vc.
molto accel.
♩=138
rushing a bit
90
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
♩.=♩.♩=92
molto accel.
94
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

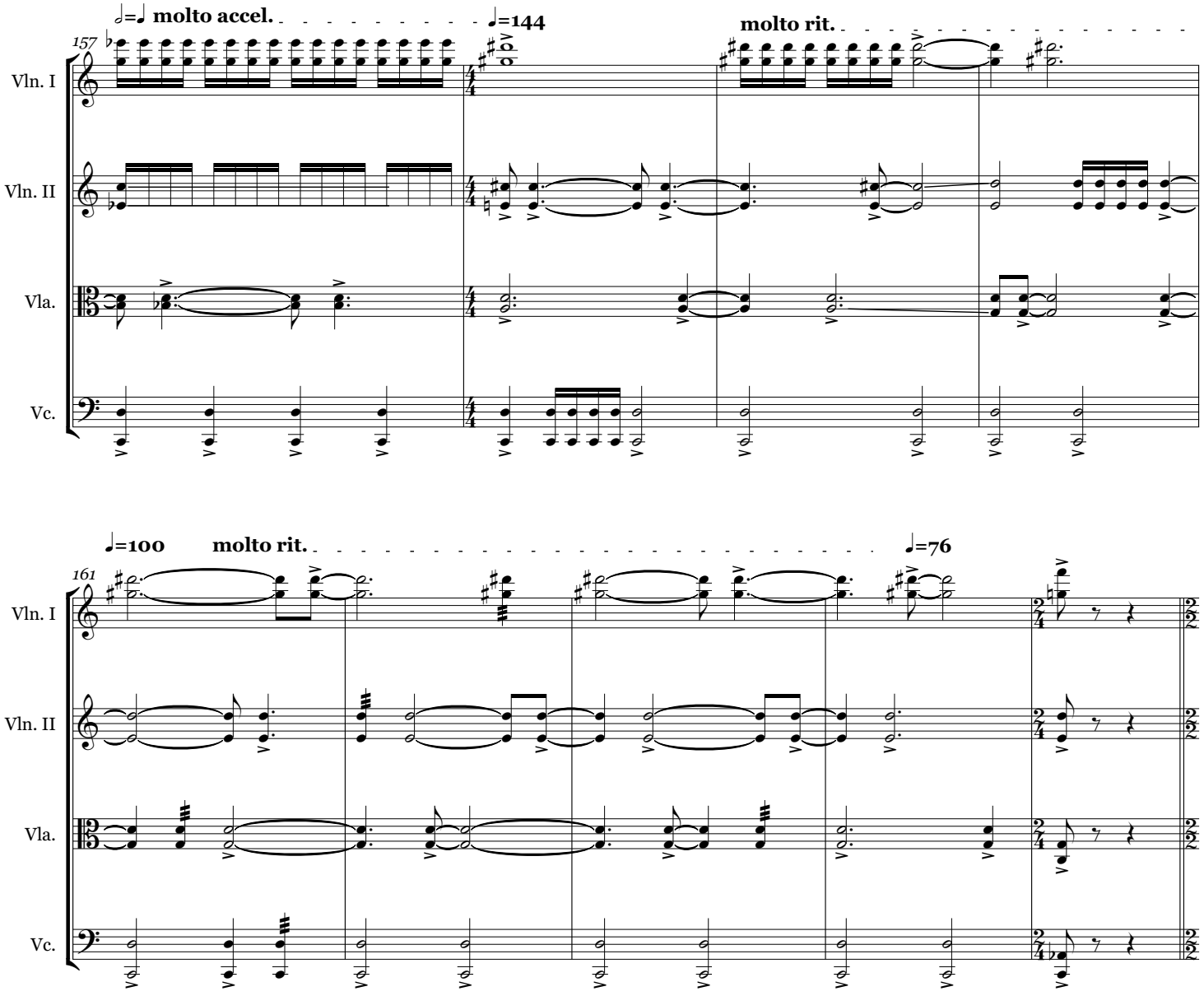

♩=144
H a little faster, more frantic
97
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
100
103
♩.=♩ molto accel.
gradual transition from bariolage to double stops
gliss down slowly


♩=192
rit.
♩=100
106
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
I
♩=144
molto rit.
♩=100
111
on the string
fff
on the string
fff
♩=♩.
accel.
𝅗𝅥=100
𝅗𝅥=♩ accel.
115

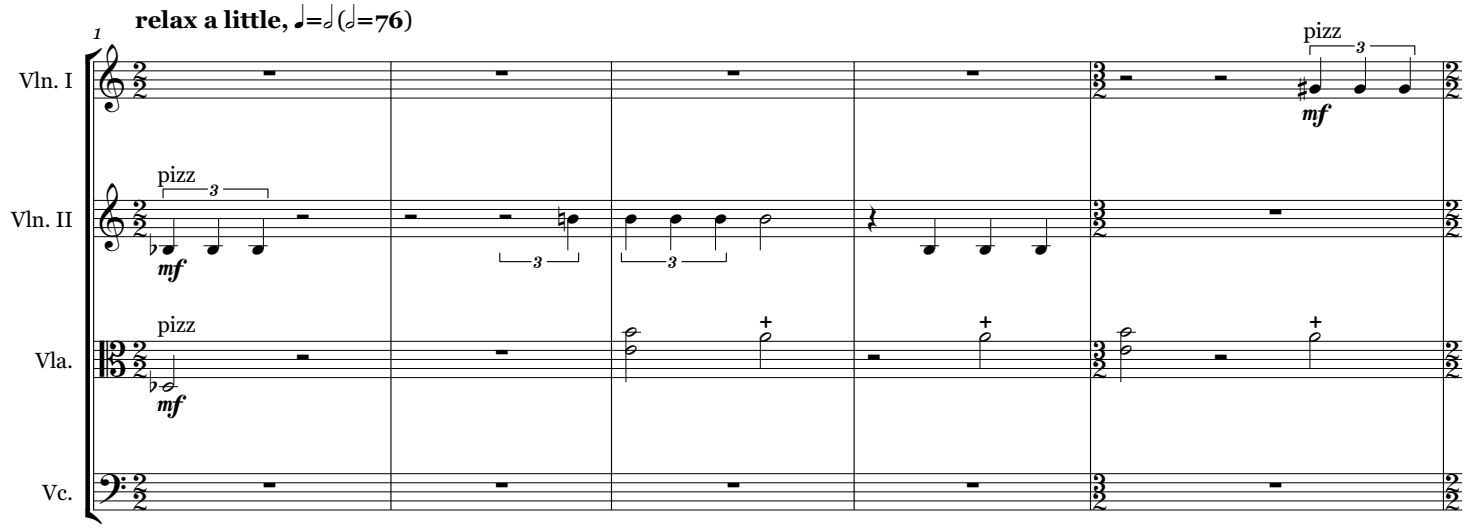

120
J
♩=144
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
124
molto rit.
♩.=100
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
128
molto accel.
𝅗𝅥=100
𝅗𝅥=♩ molto accel.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


132
K
♩=144
rit.
♩=100
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
136
♩=♩.
molto accel.
𝅗𝅥=100
140
molto rit.
♩=60

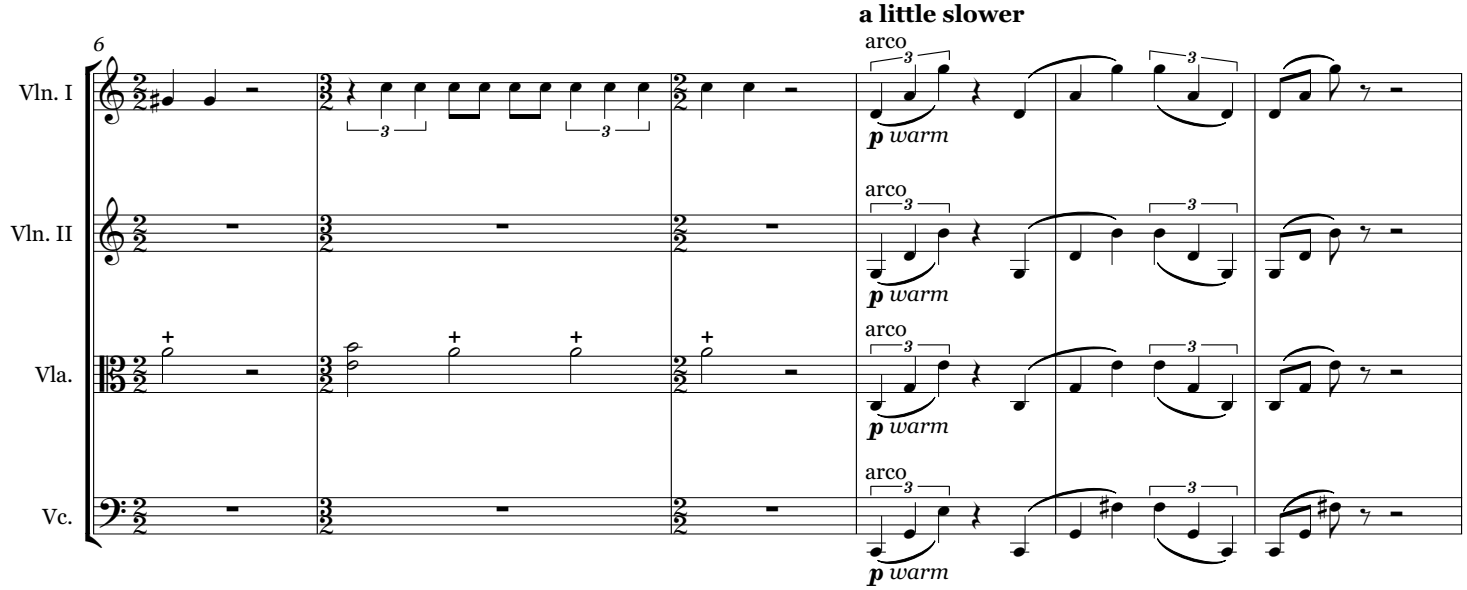

145
♩=144
molto rit.
Vln. I
Vln. II
on the string
Vla.
on the string
Vc.
148
♩.=100
molto rit.
L
♩=144
molto rit.
ffff
153
♩.=100
molto accel.
♩=100

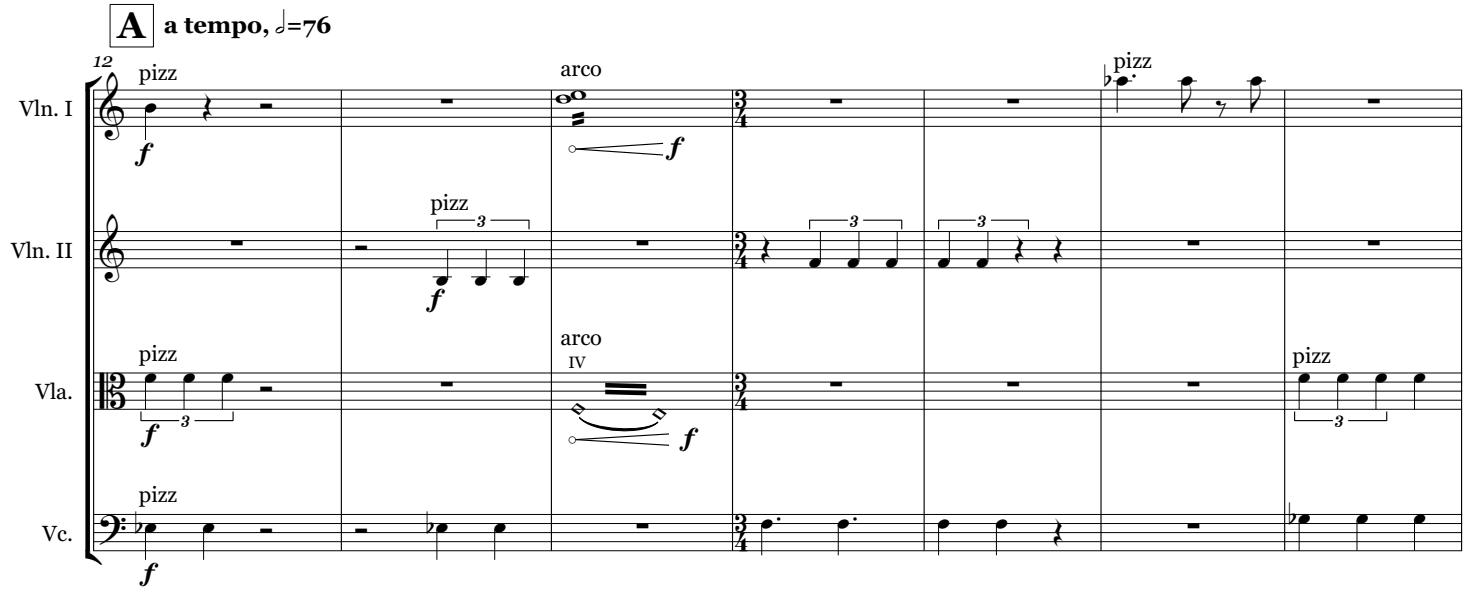

157
𝅗𝅥=𝅘𝅥 molto accel.
𝅘𝅥=144
molto rit.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
161
𝅘𝅥=100
molto rit.
𝅘𝅥=76
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

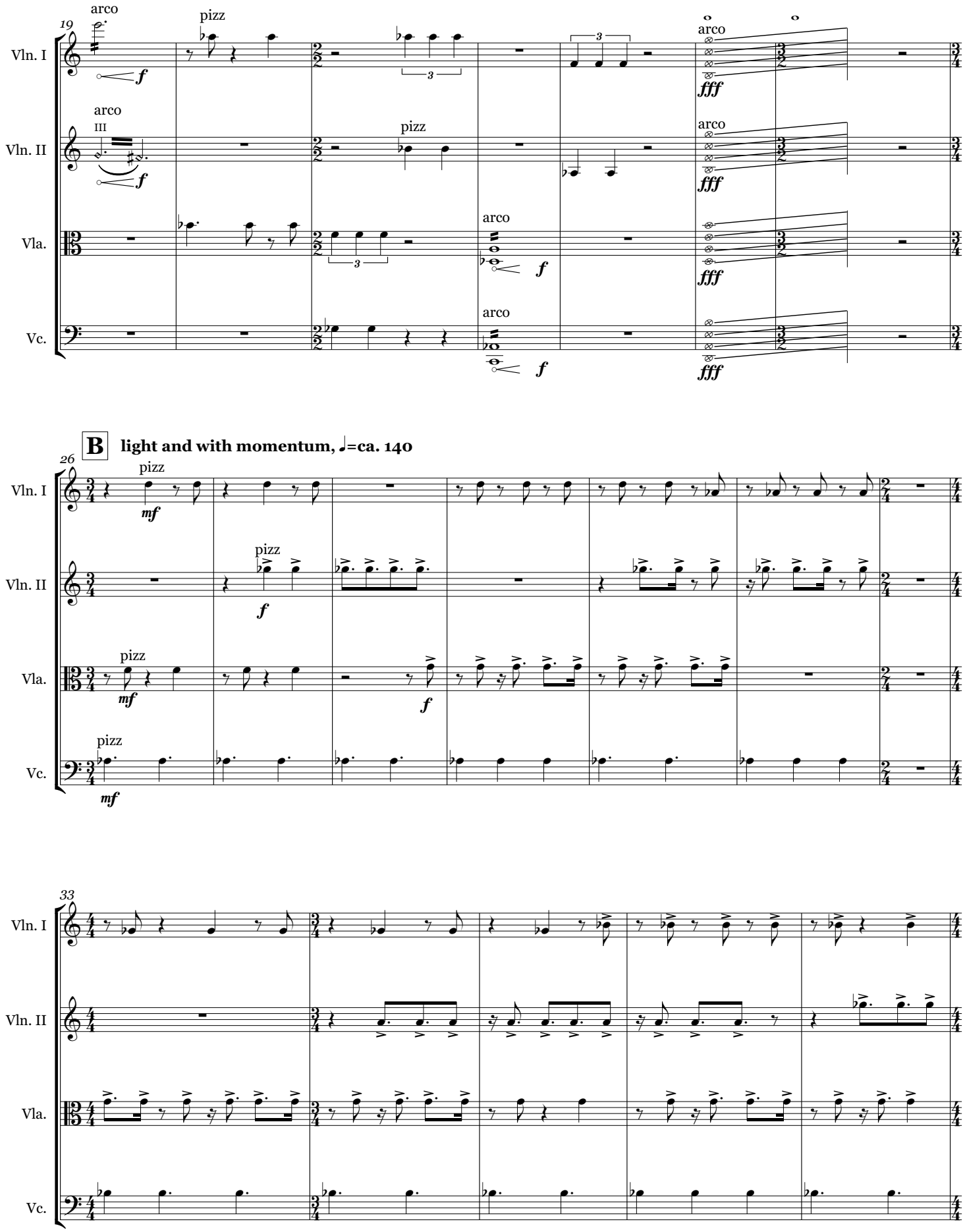
II. instructions for disassembly

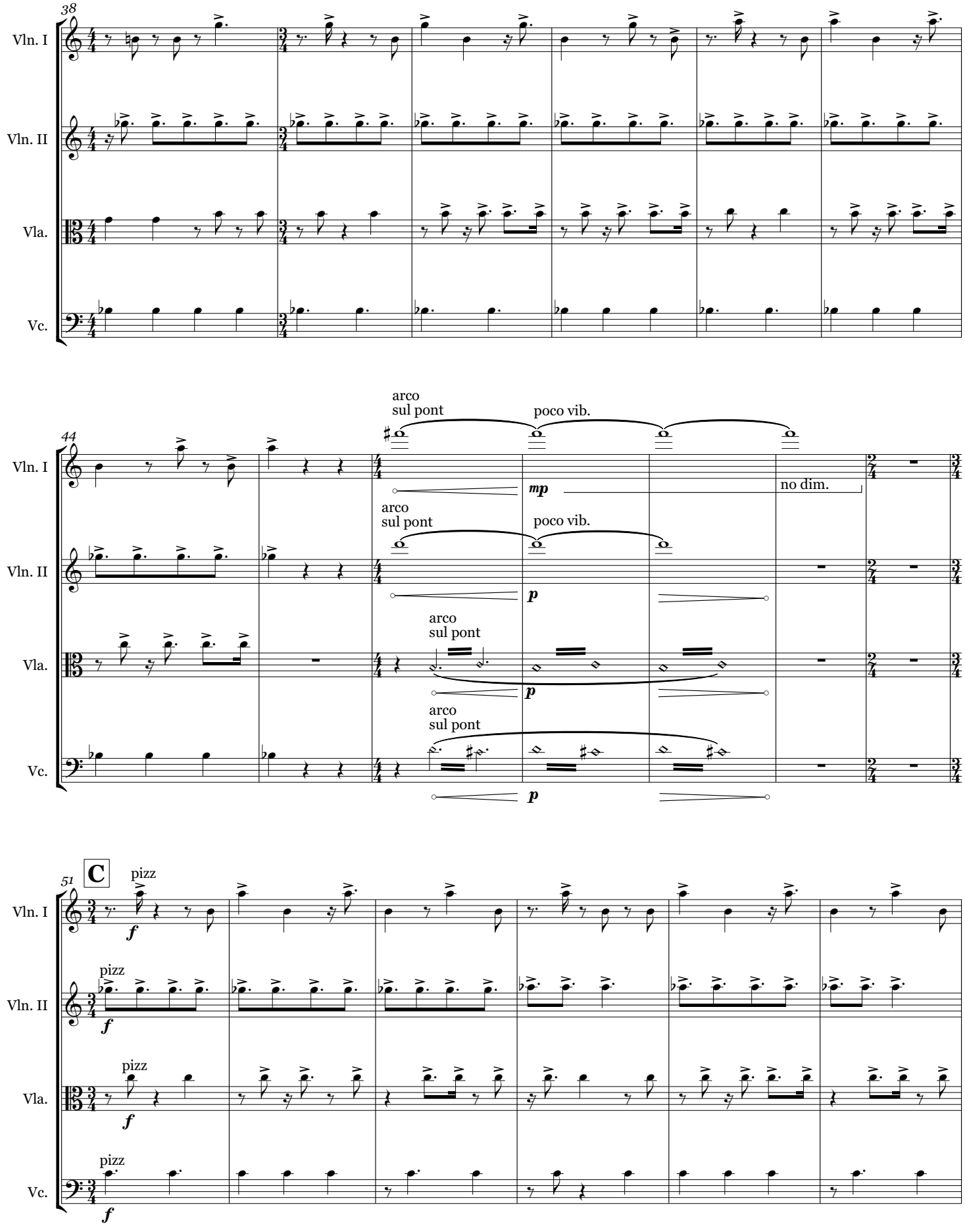


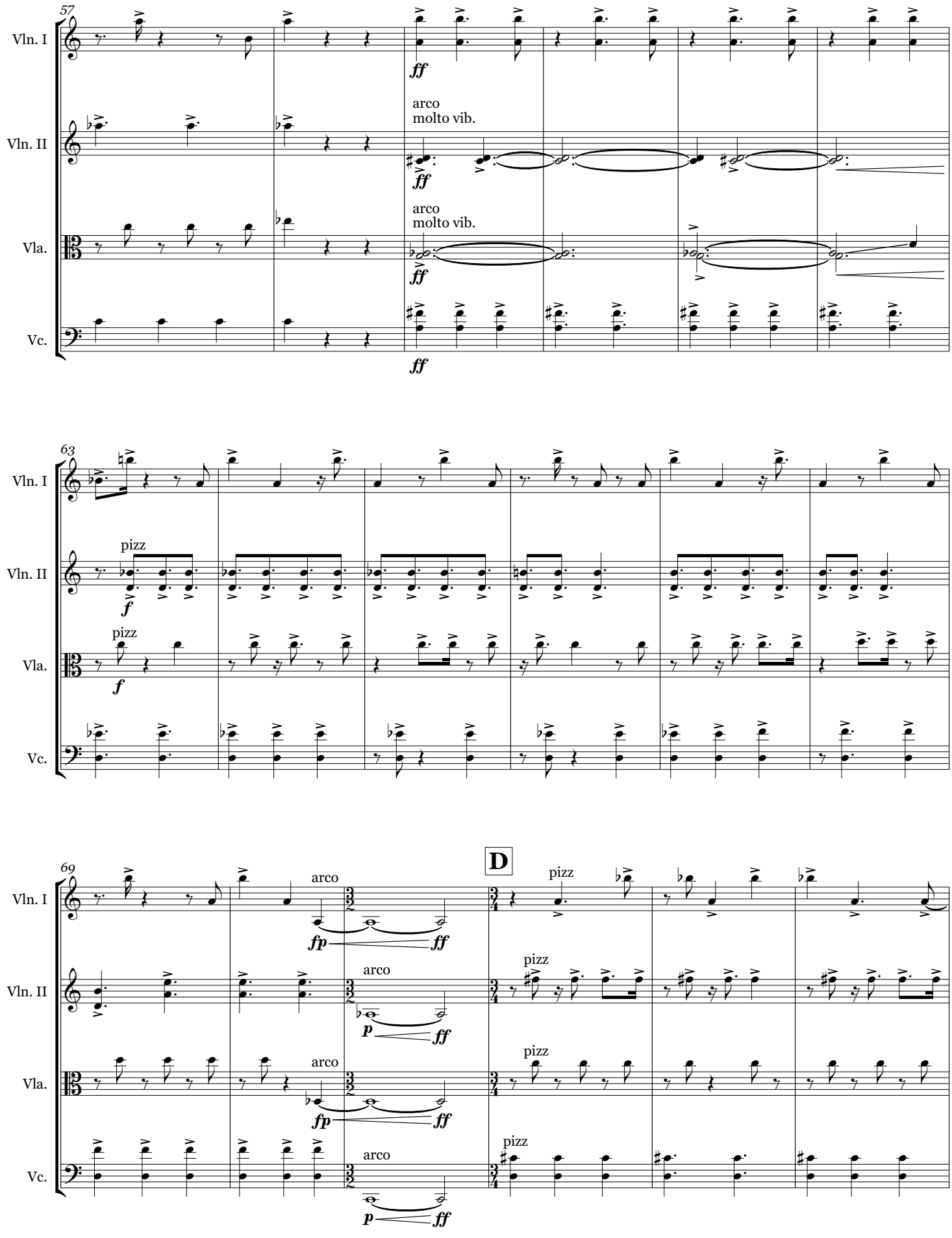
All trills and tremolos in this section are unmeasured.

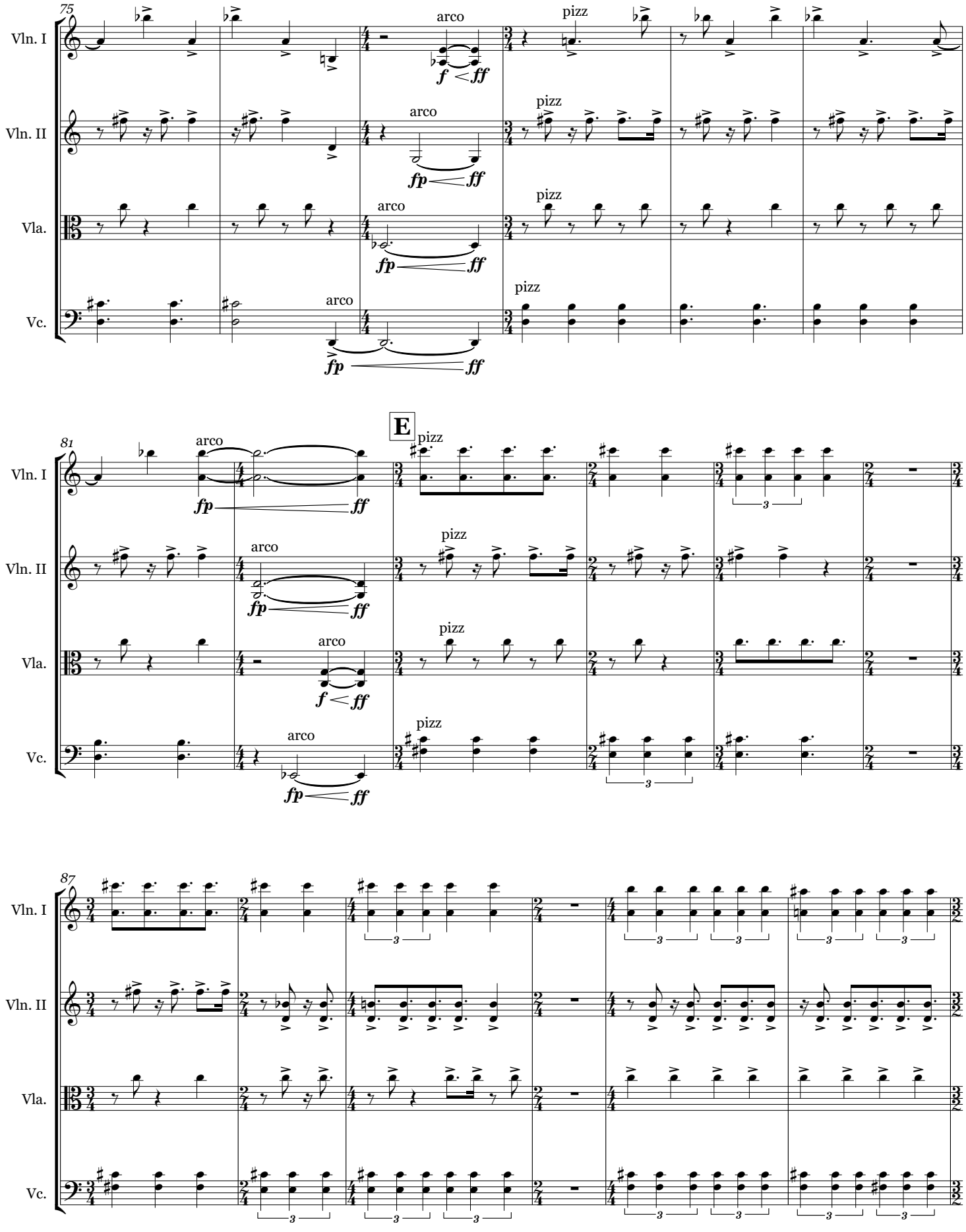


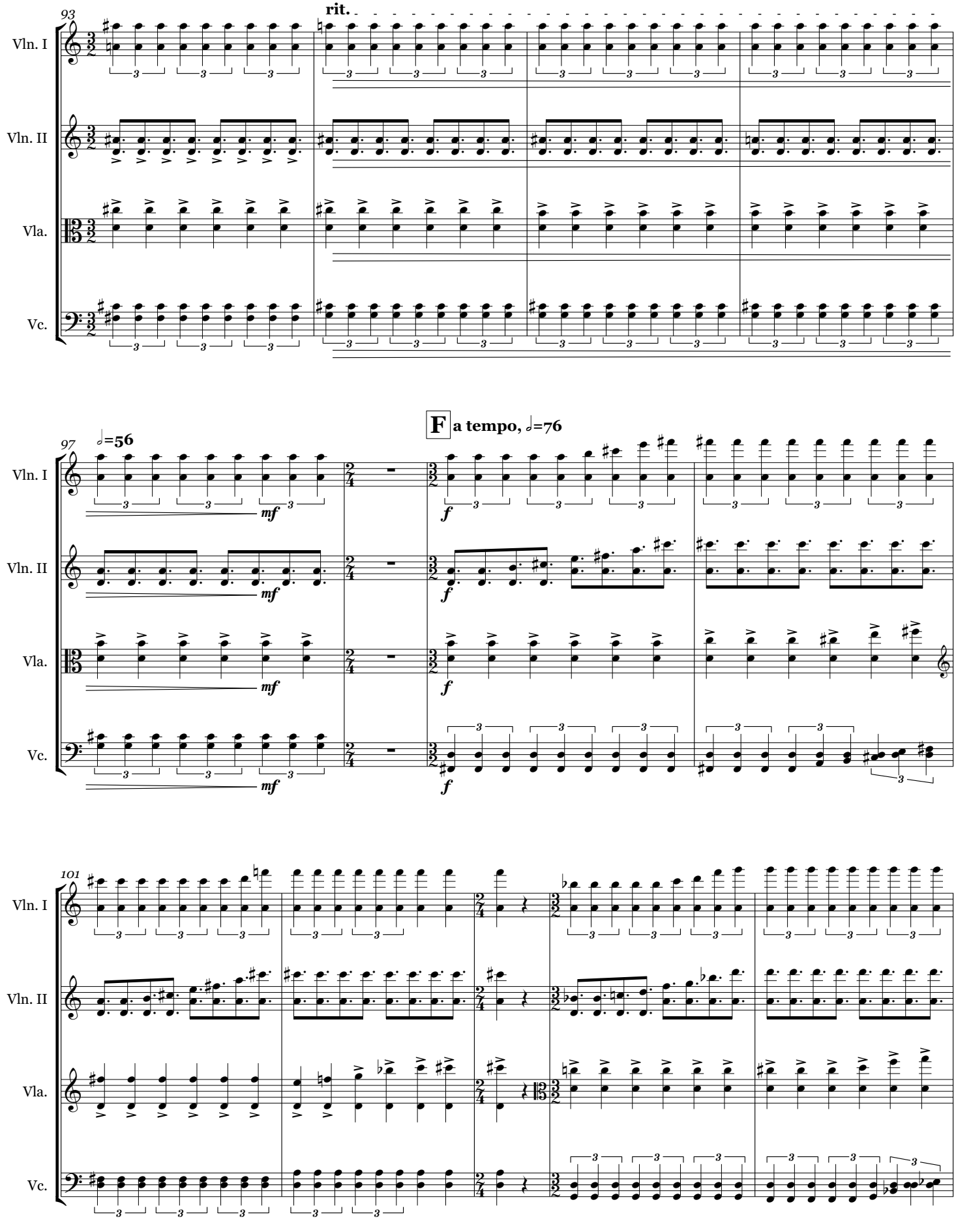


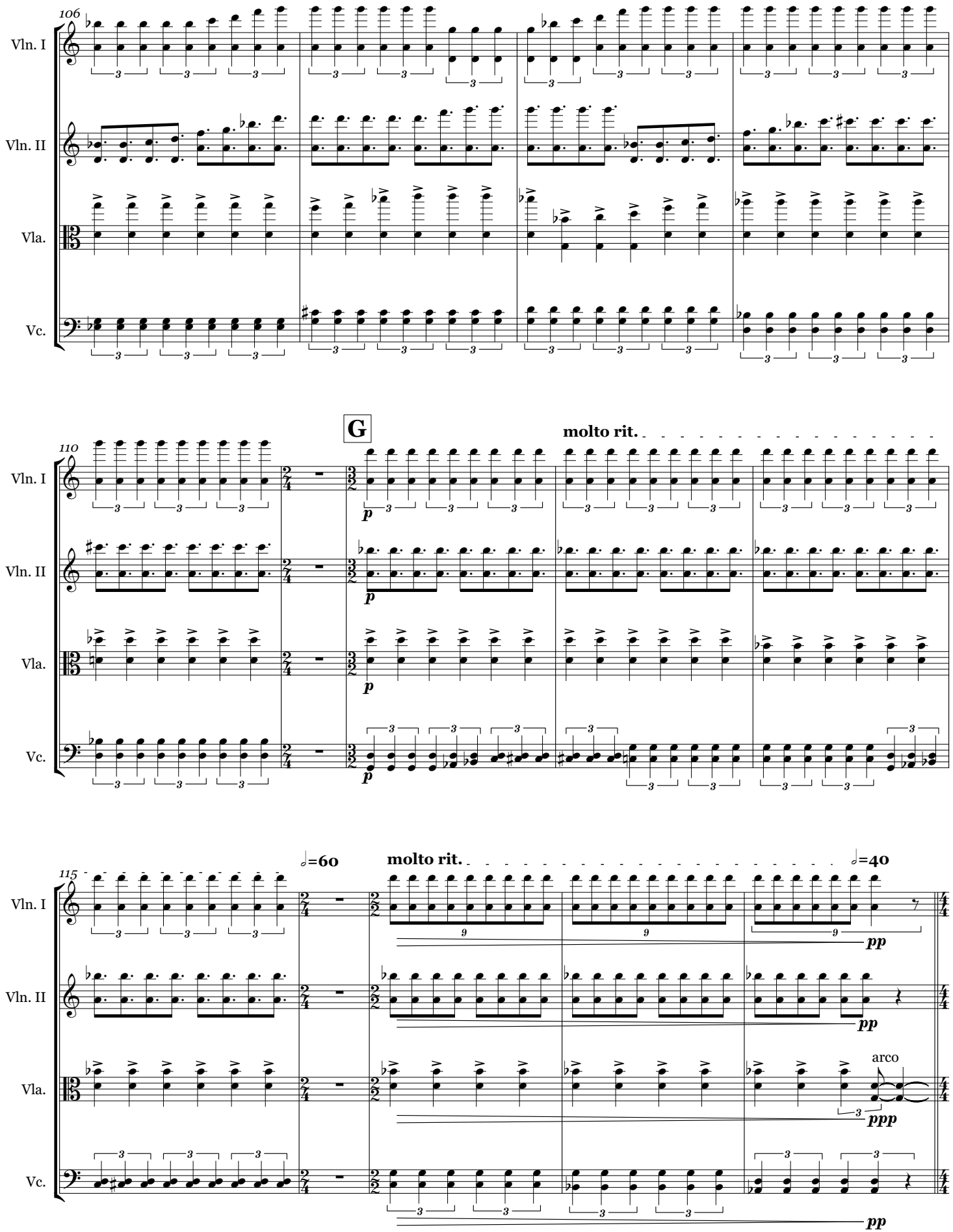

19
arco
pizz
Vln. I
Vln. II
III
Vla.
Vc.
f
fff
B
light and with momentum, ♩=ca. 140
26
mf
33


38
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
44
arco
sul pont
poco vib.
mp
no dim.
p
51
C
pizz
f

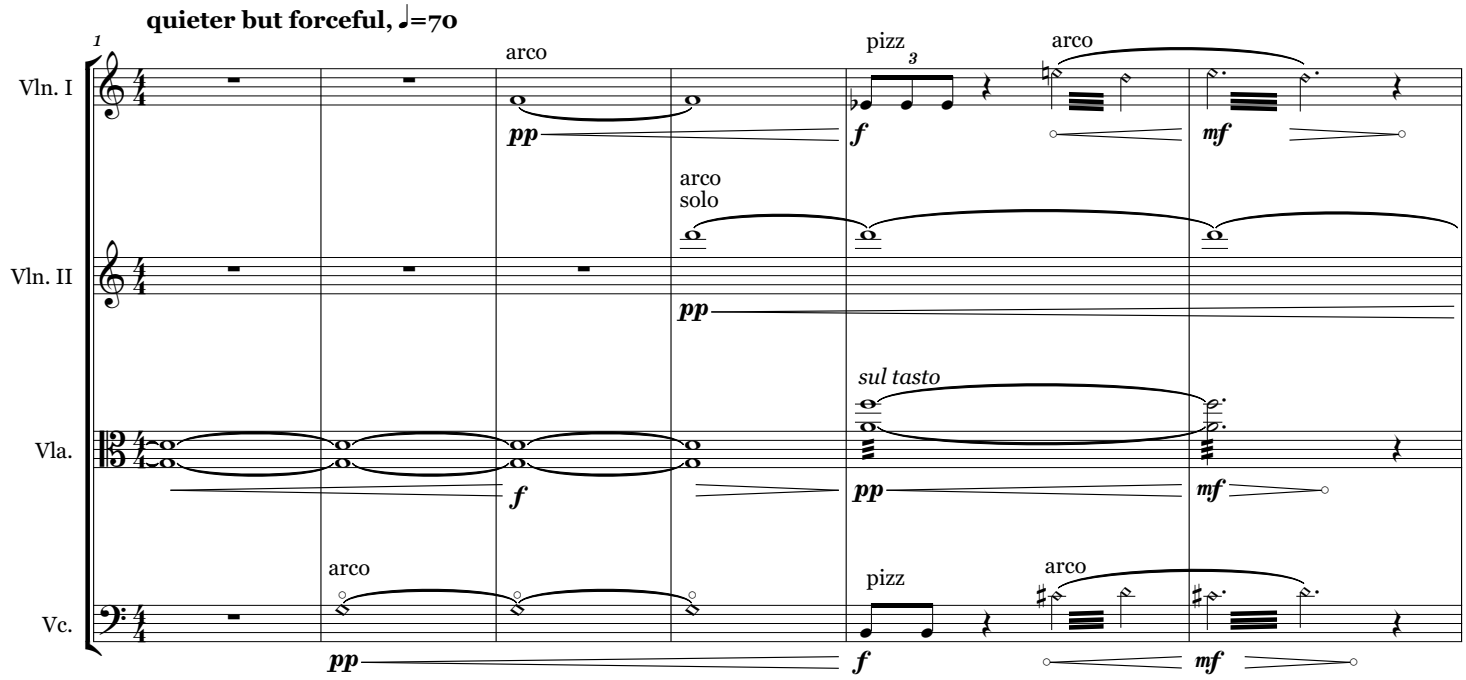

57
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
molto vib.
arco
molto vib.
ff
63
pizz
f
pizz
f
69
D
arco
fp
ff
pizz
arco
p
ff
arco
fp
ff
pizz
arco
p
ff
pizz


75
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
pizz
f < ff
fp < ff
fp
ff
E
81
87


93
rit.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
97
𝅗𝅥=56
mf
F a tempo, 𝅗𝅥=76
f
101


106
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
G
molto rit.
110
p
115
𝅗𝅥=60
molto rit.
𝅗𝅥=40
pp
arco
ppp

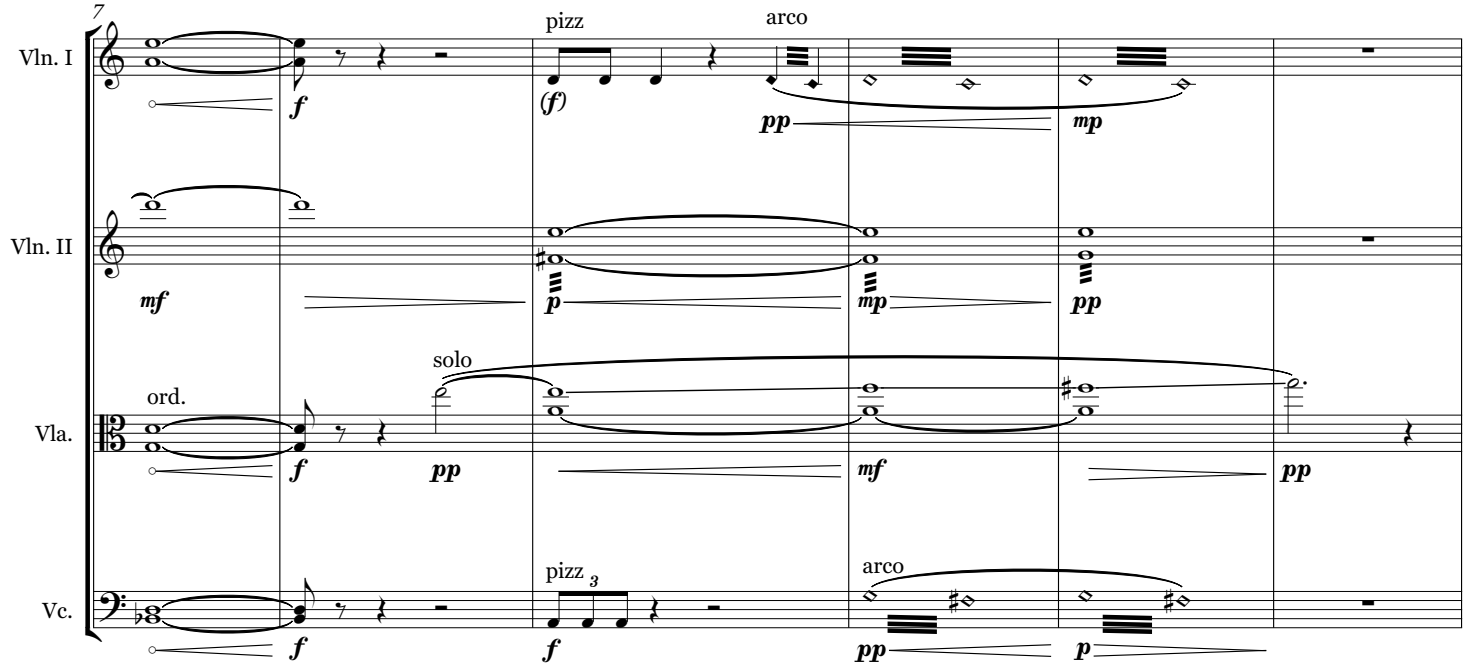
III. imagined moments of perfection

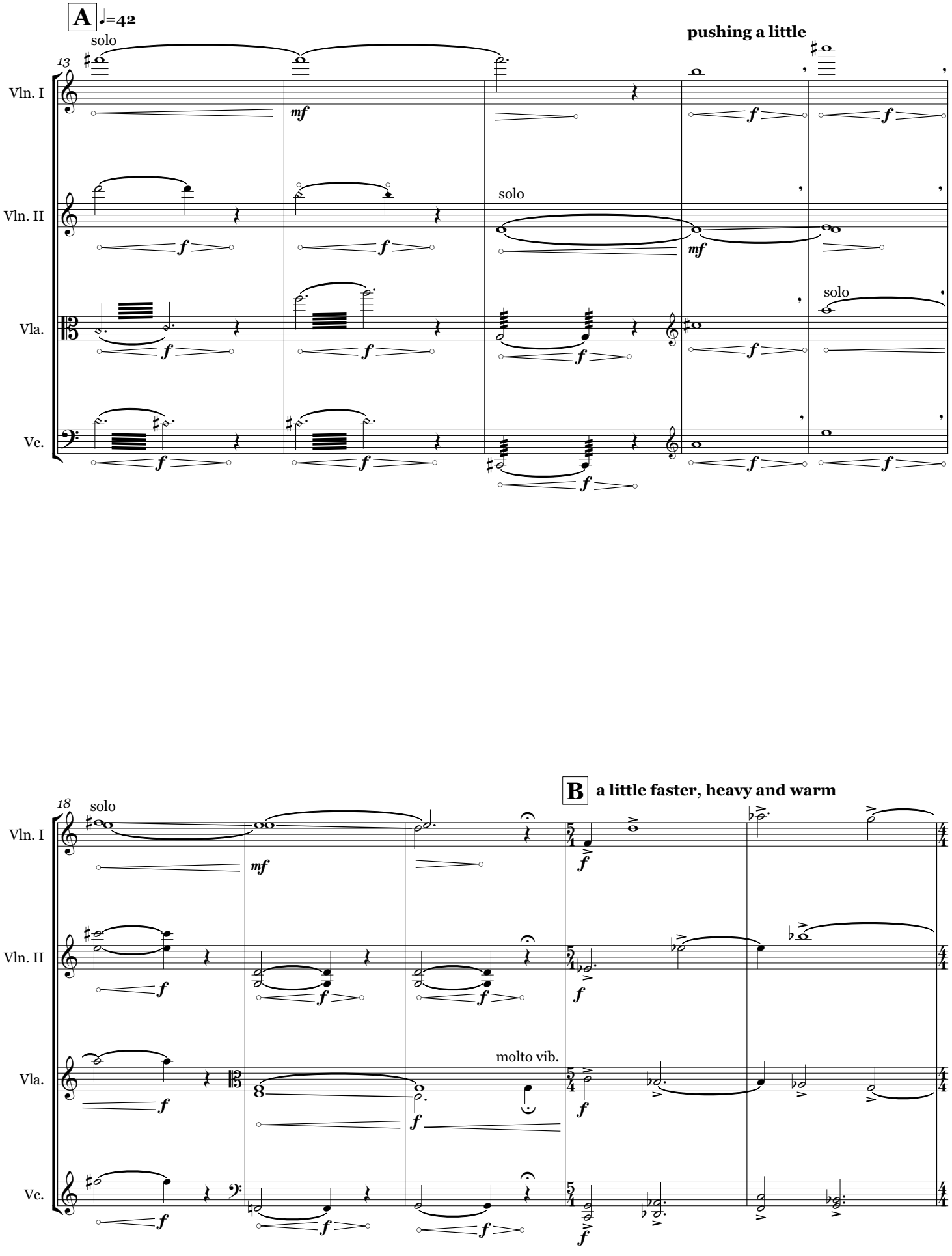


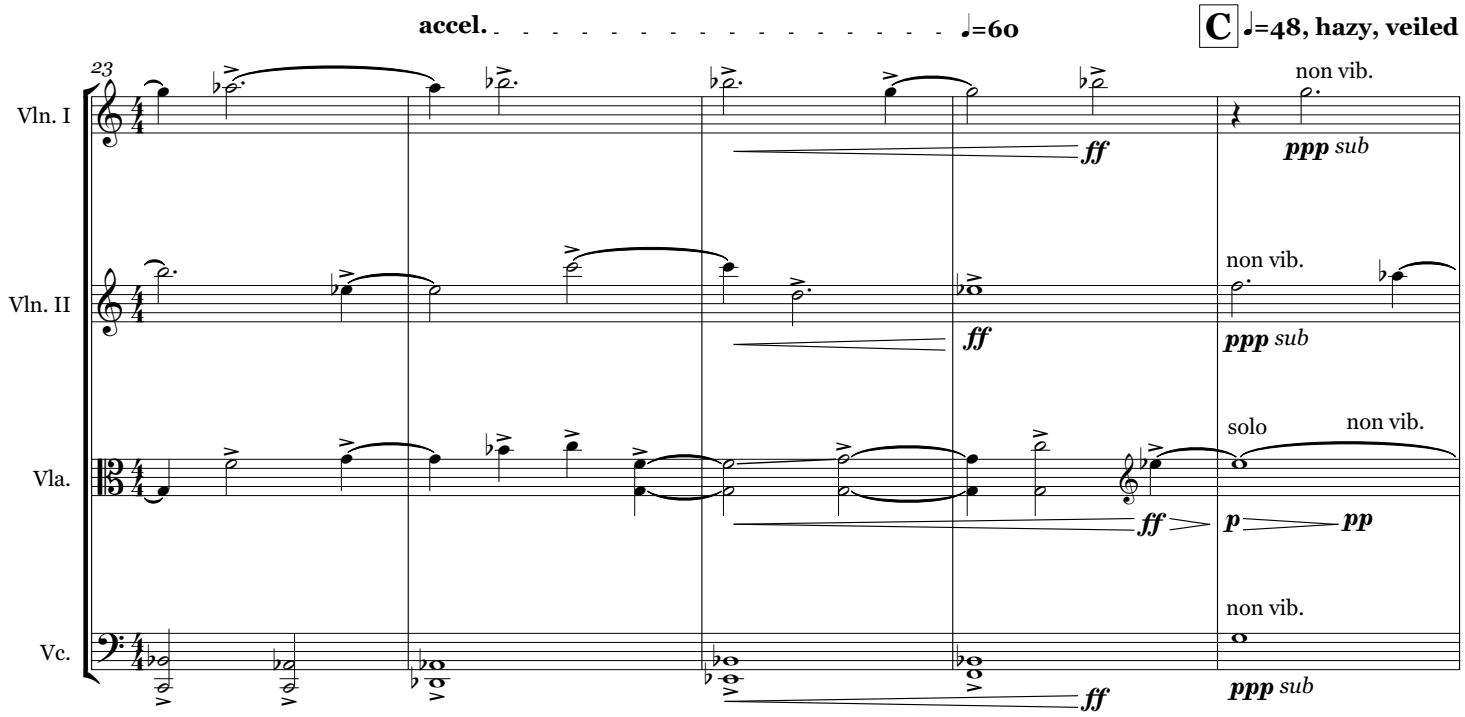
Throughout this section, use more traditional vibrato where possible, and treat the glisses as expressive, portamento gestures that happen towards the end of each note, rather than a continous motion between pitches.

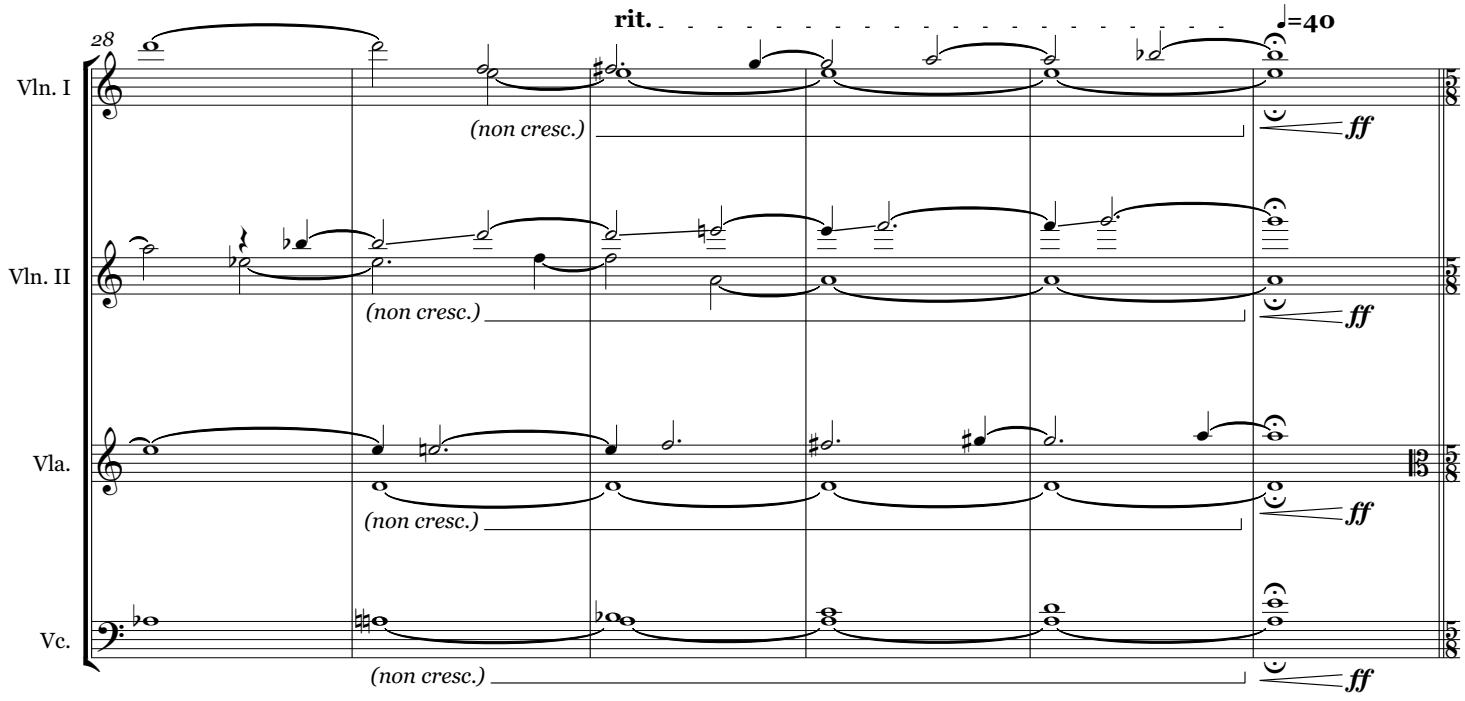
Notes or phrases marked 'solo' should be played *espressivo*, even if they get momentarily covered by other players.

All trills and tremolos in this section are unmeasured.



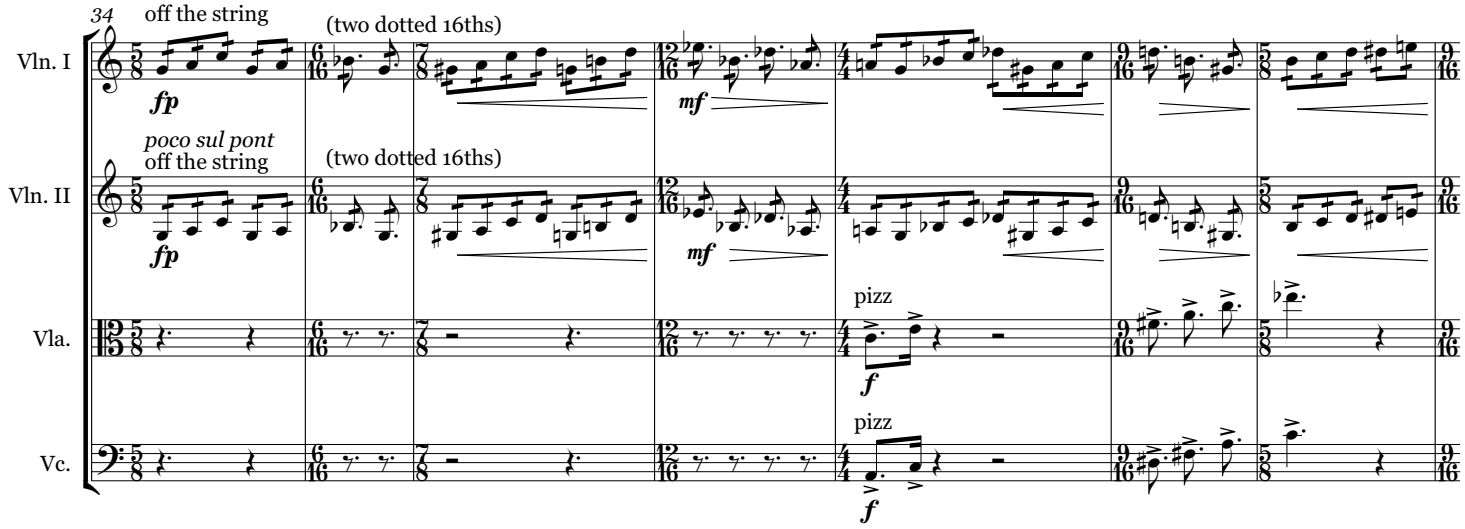

A ♩=42
pushing a little
13
solo
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
f
solo
solo
B a little faster, heavy and warm
18
molto vib.


accel.
♩=60
C
♩=48, hazy, veiled
23
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
non vib.
ff
ppp sub
solo
p
pp


rit.
♩=40
28
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
(non cresc.)
ff

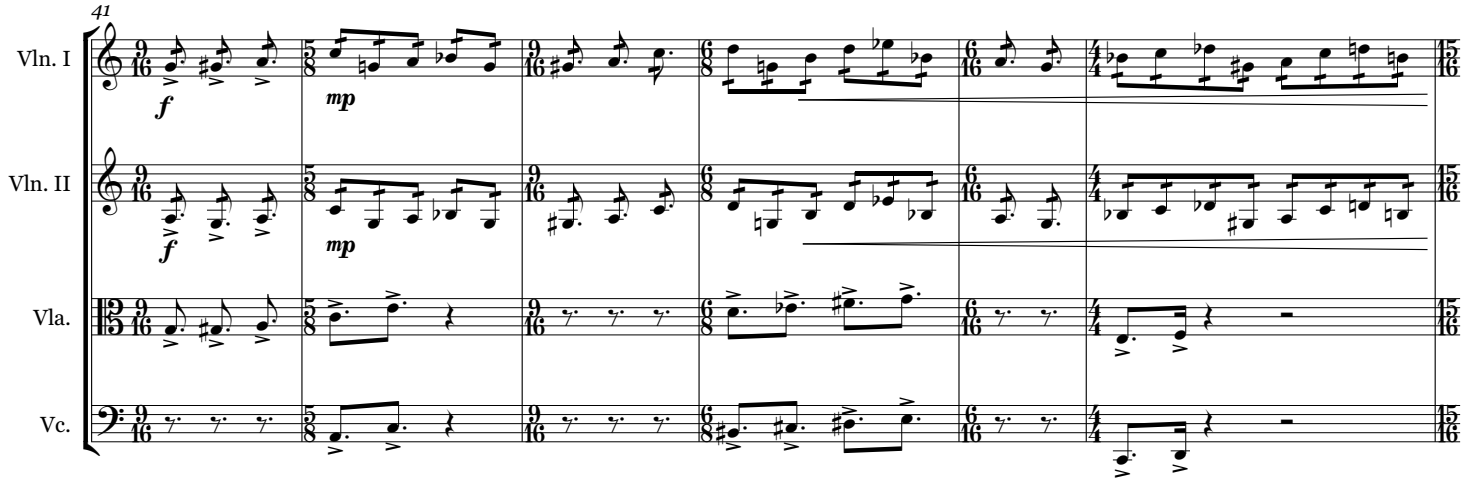
IV. two things at once/racing for home

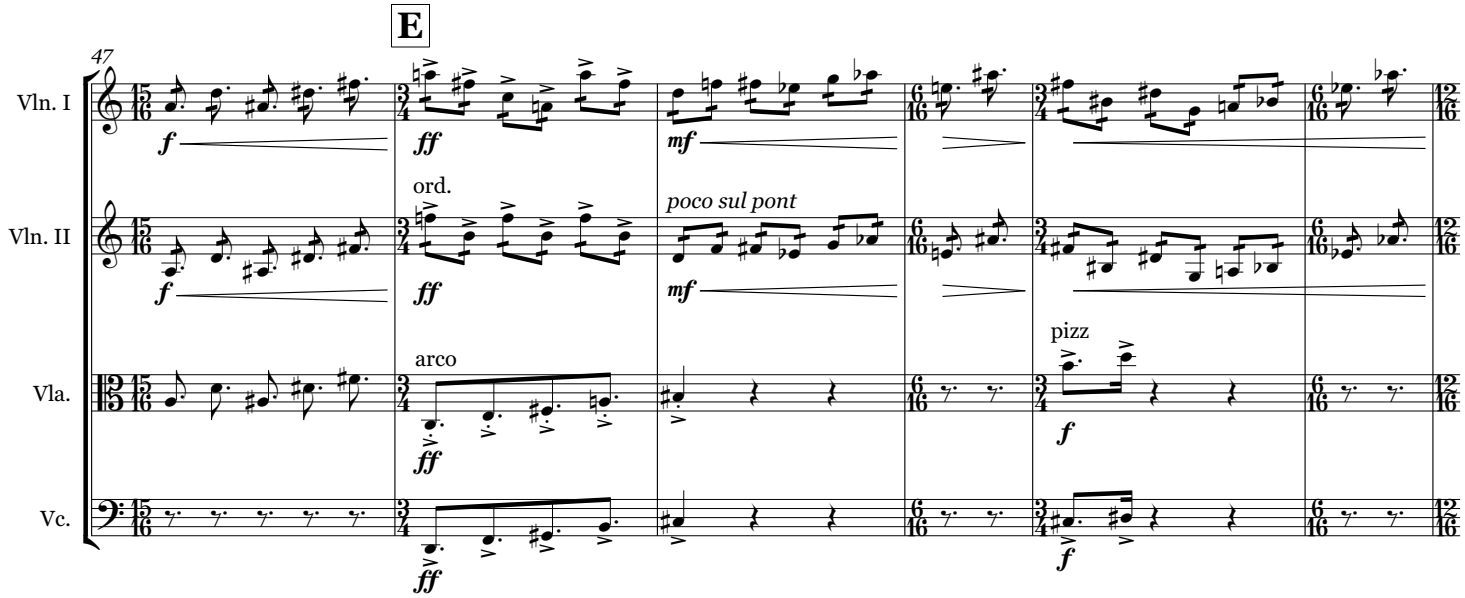
D **vicious and focused, ♩=138**

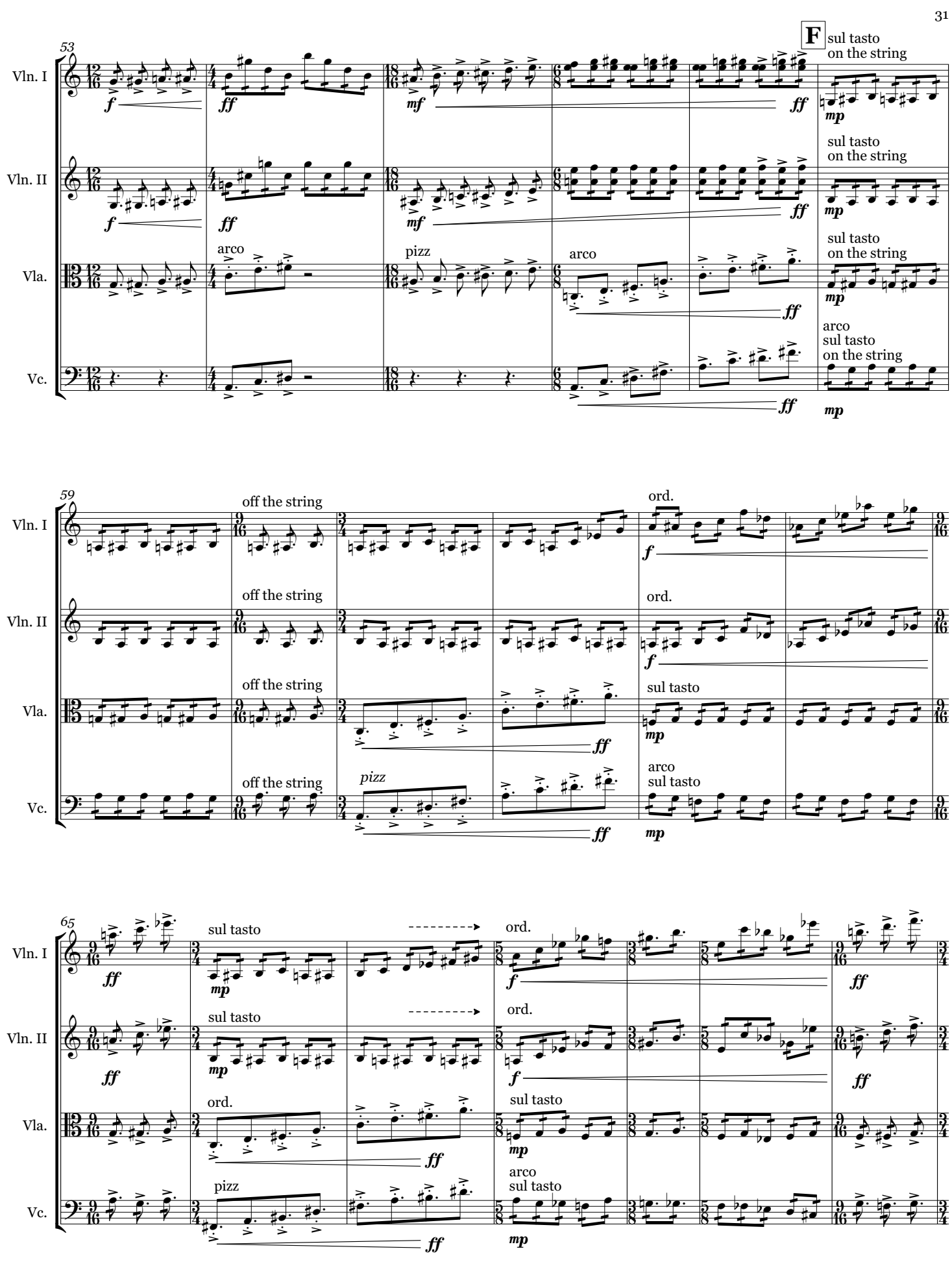


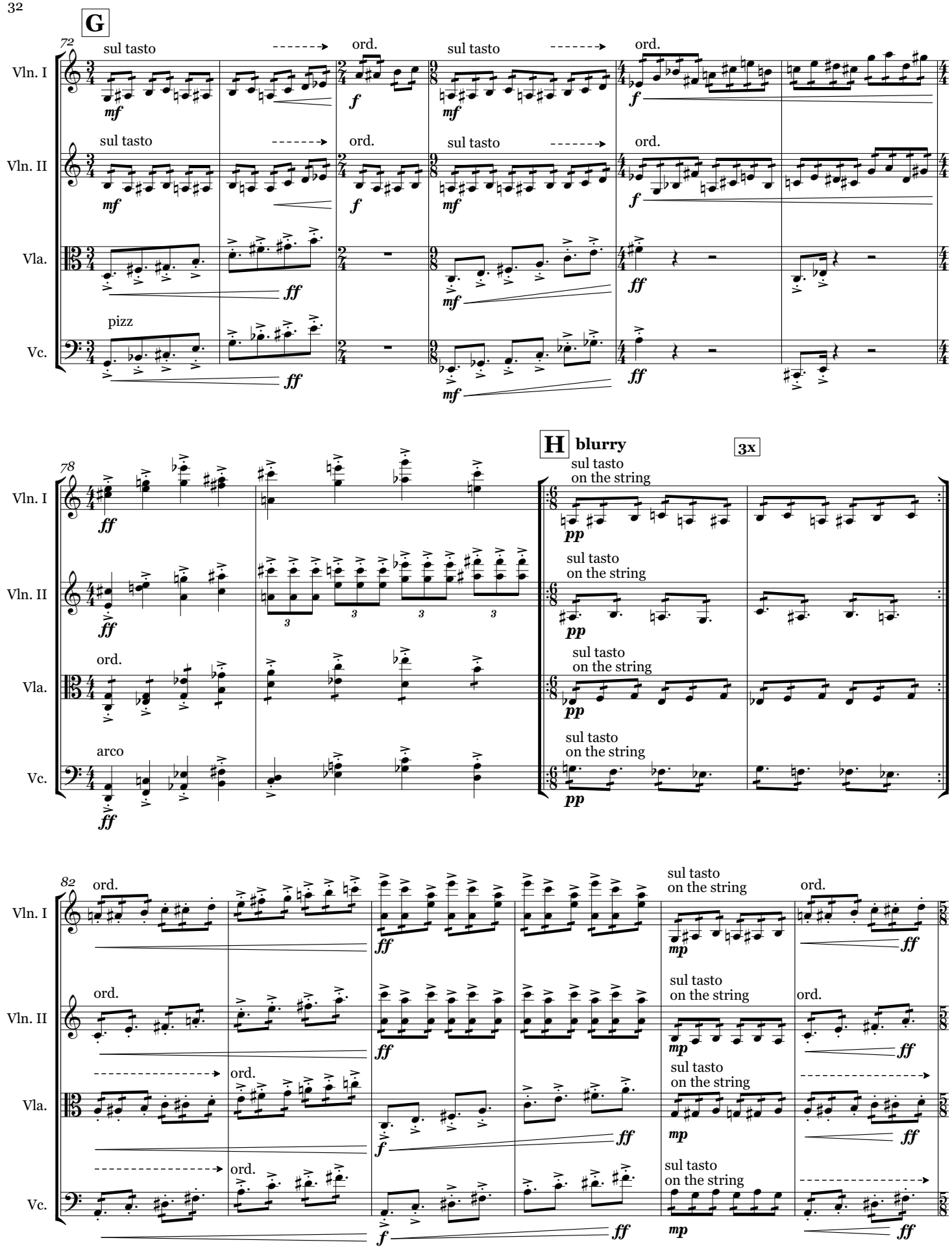
All tremolos in this section are measured. Dotted 8th notes marked with a tremolo should be played as two dotted 16th notes.

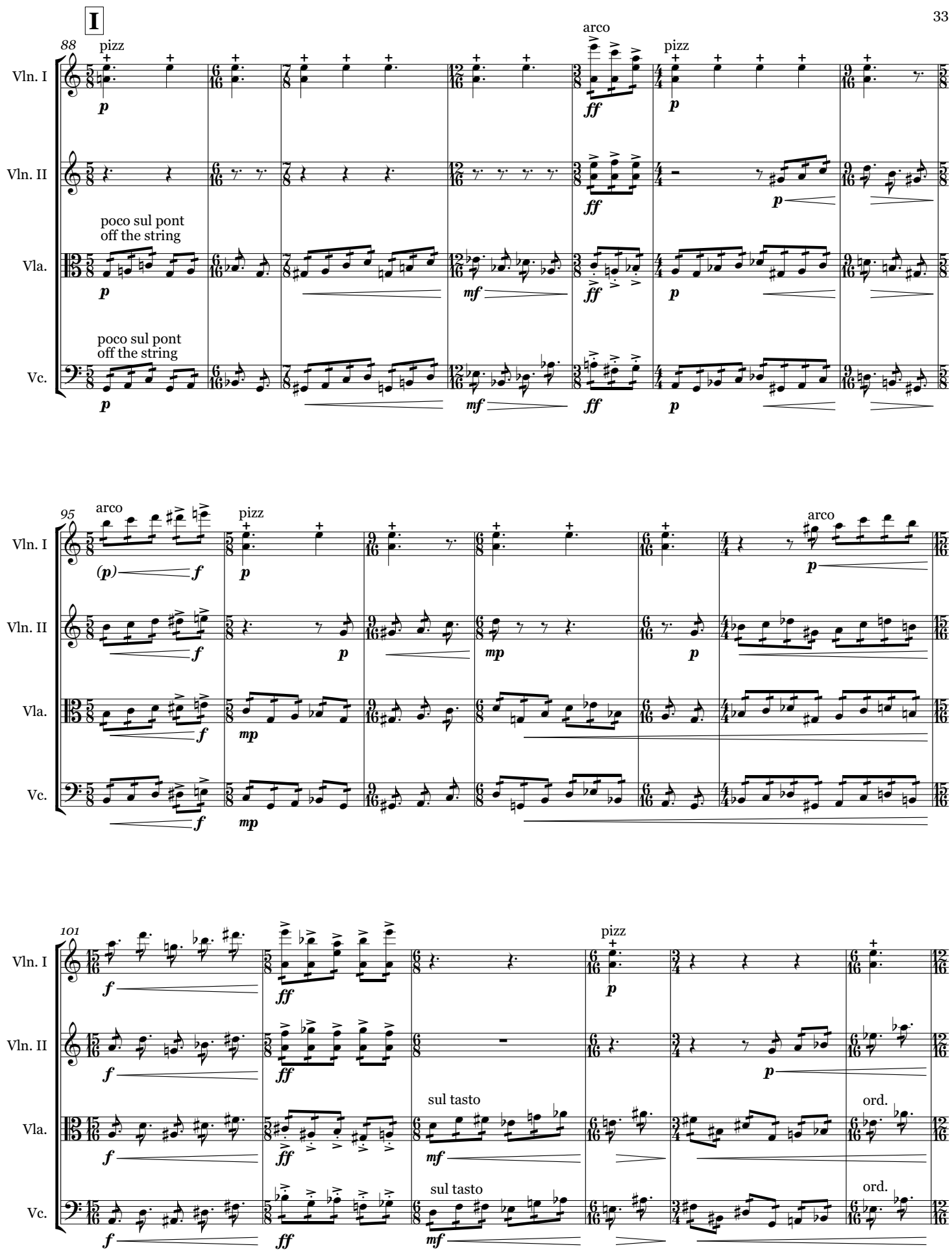
All metric subdivisions of odd-number bars (e.g. 7/8 as 2+2+3 vs. 3+2+2) are shown with beaming and rests.

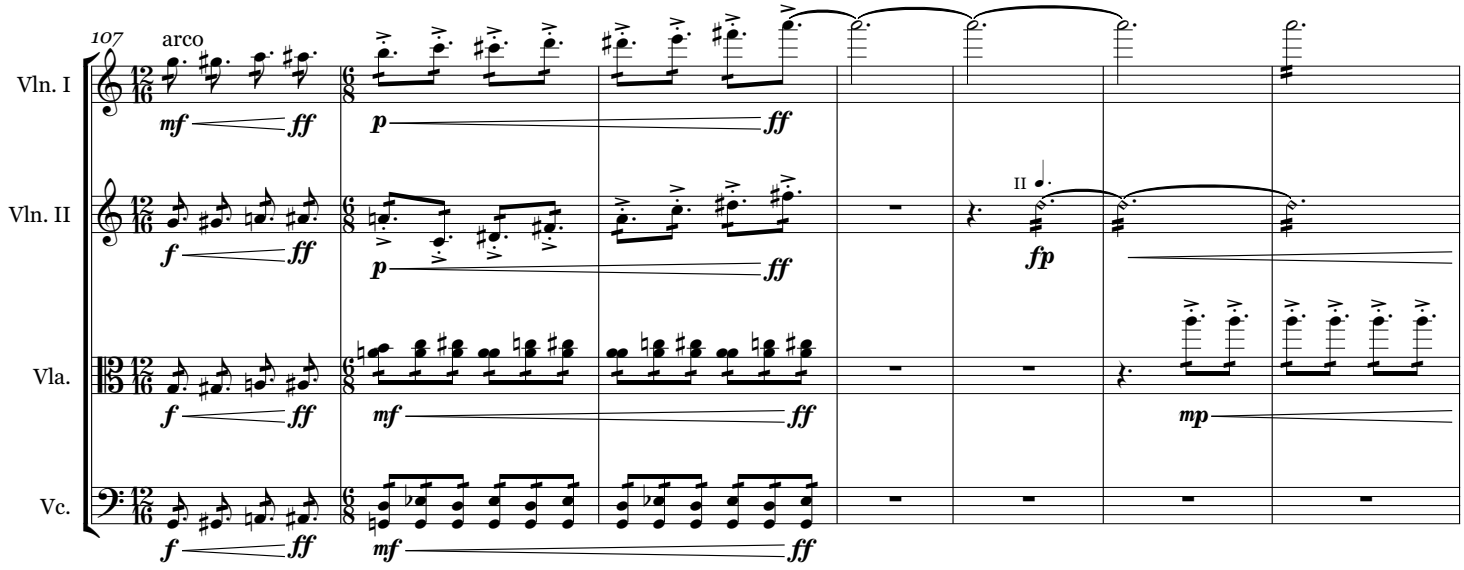




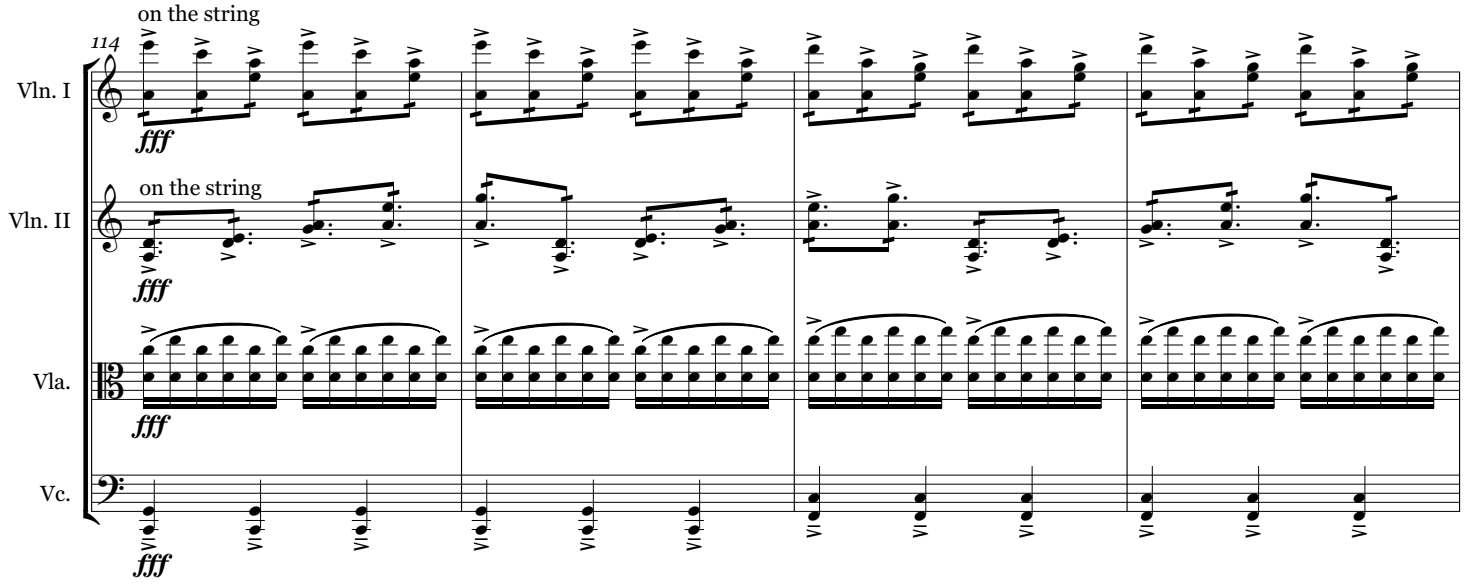

53
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
sul tasto
on the string
arco
pizz
arco
sul tasto
on the string
59
off the string
ord.
sul tasto
arco
sul tasto
65
sul tasto
ord.
pizz
arco
sul tasto

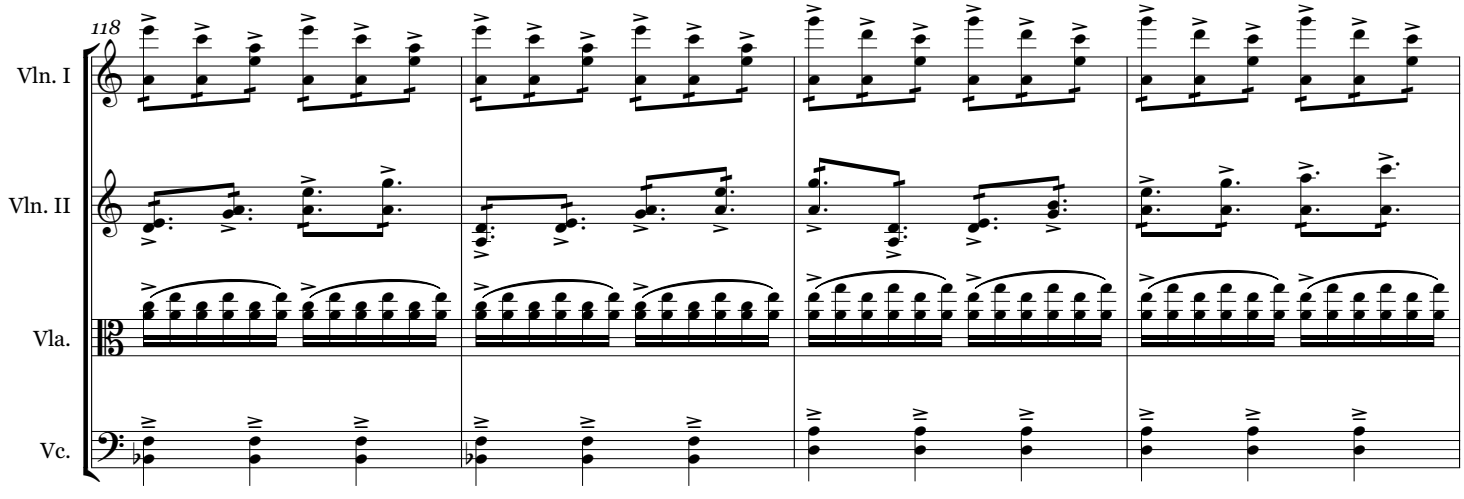

G
72
sul tasto
ord.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz
mf
f
ff
H
blurry
3x
78
sul tasto
on the string
pp
arco
82
mp

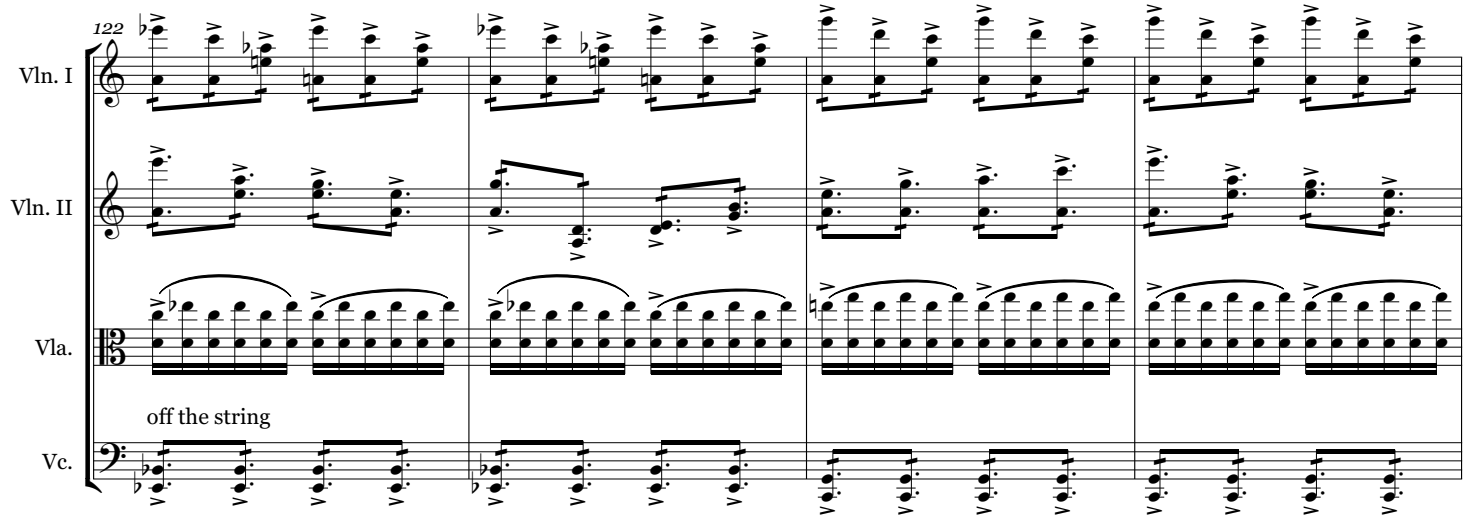

I
88
pizz
arco
pizz
Vln. I
Vln. II
poco sul pont
off the string
Vla.
poco sul pont
off the string
Vc.
95
arco
pizz
arco
101
pizz
sul tasto
ord.
sul tasto
ord.

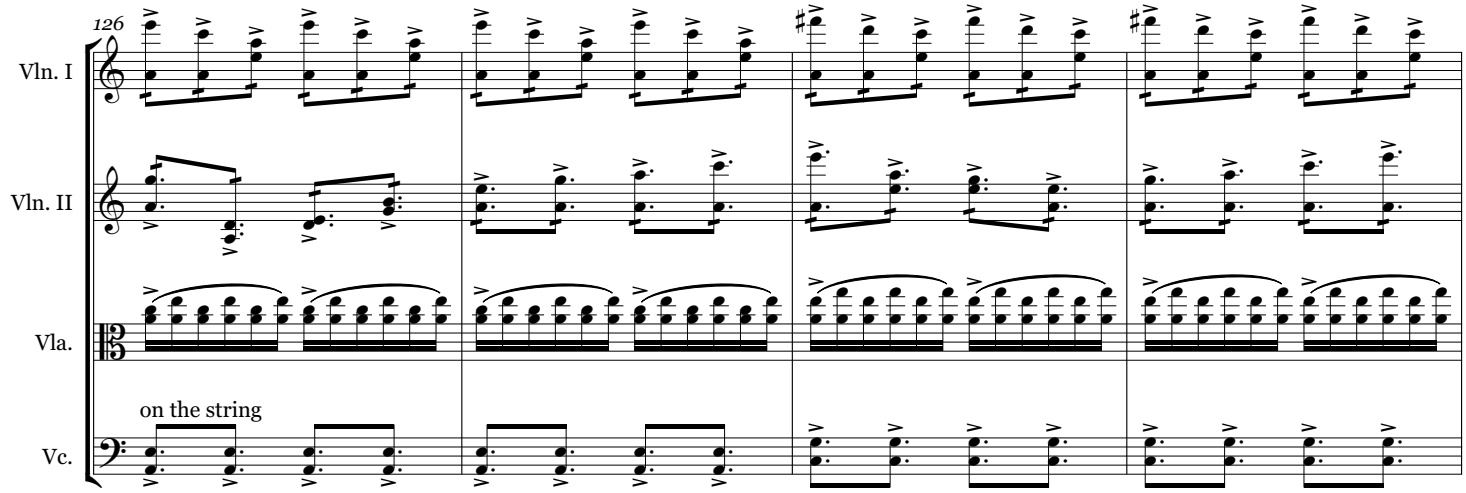


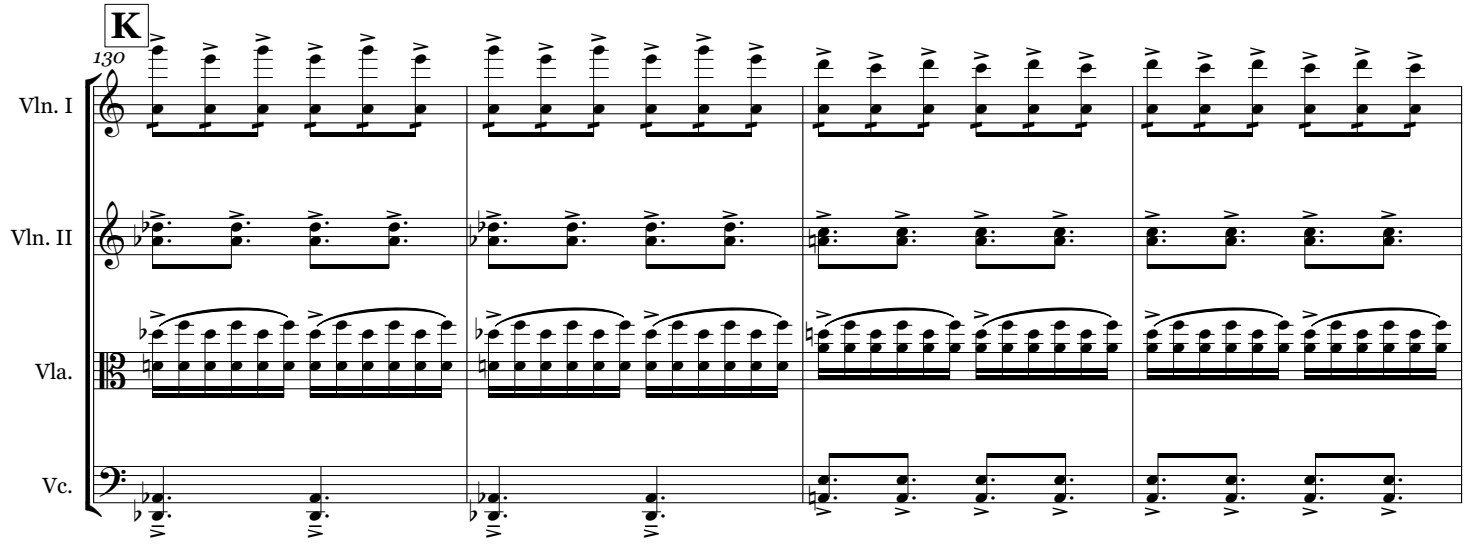
J **a little slower, churning and resonant**

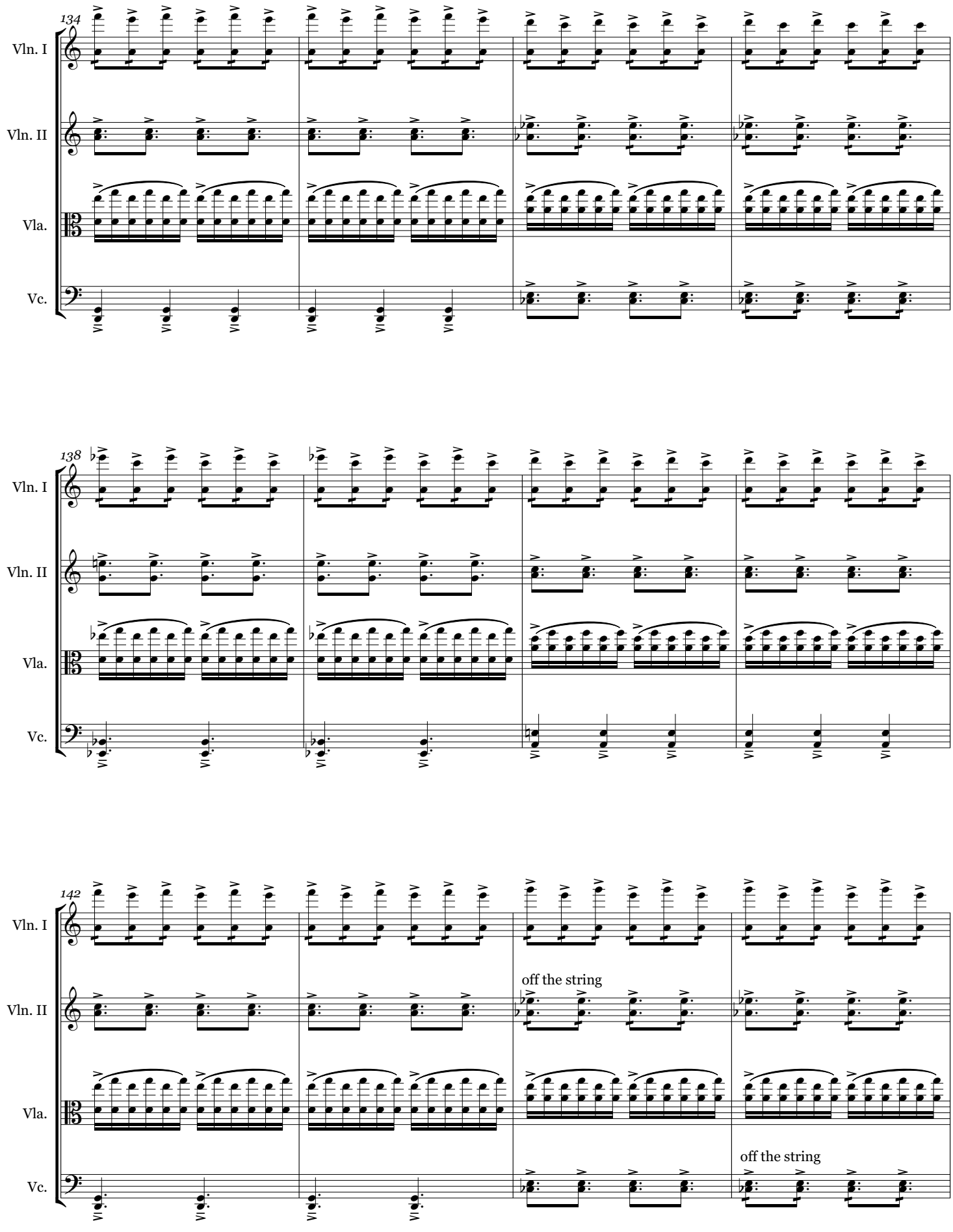


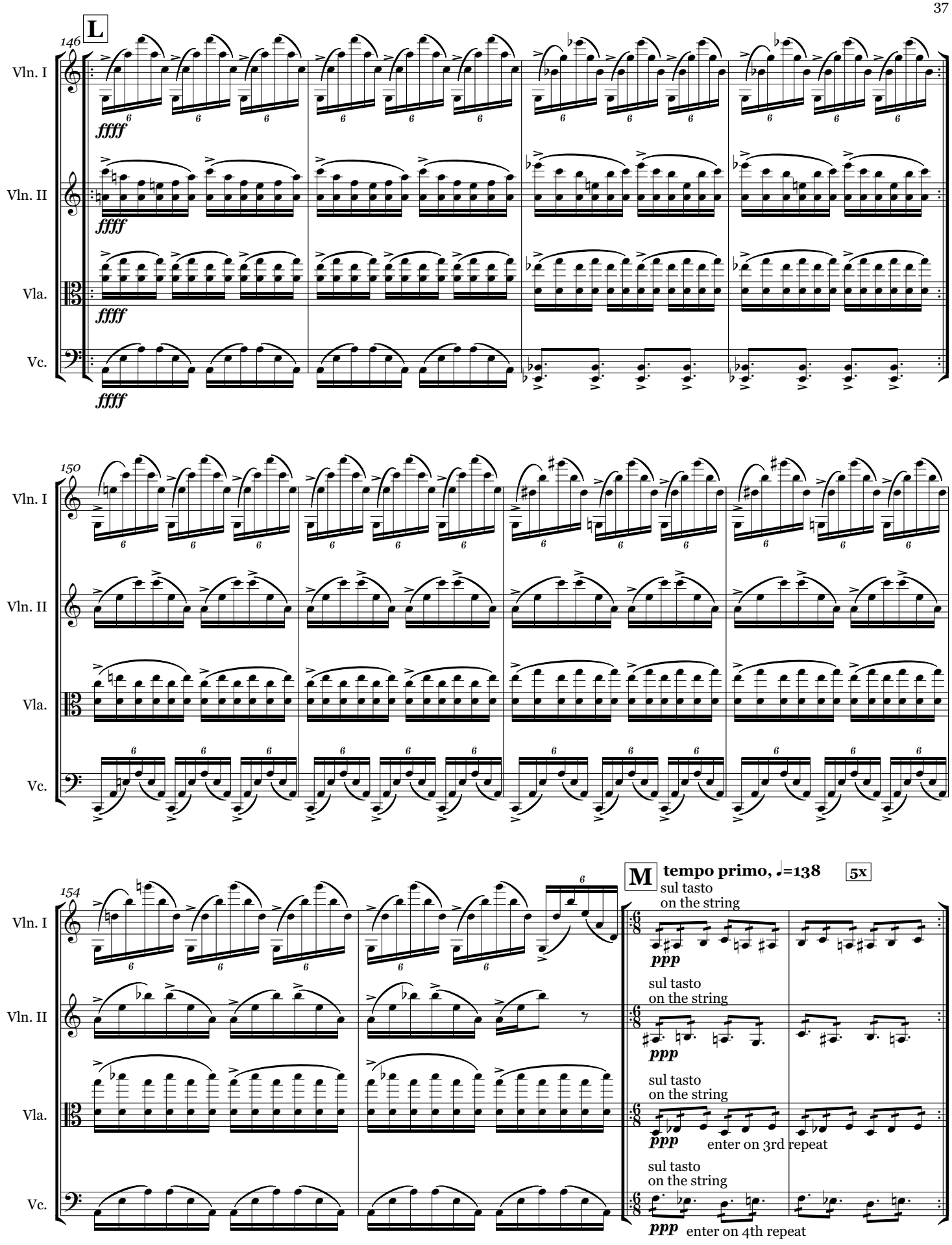


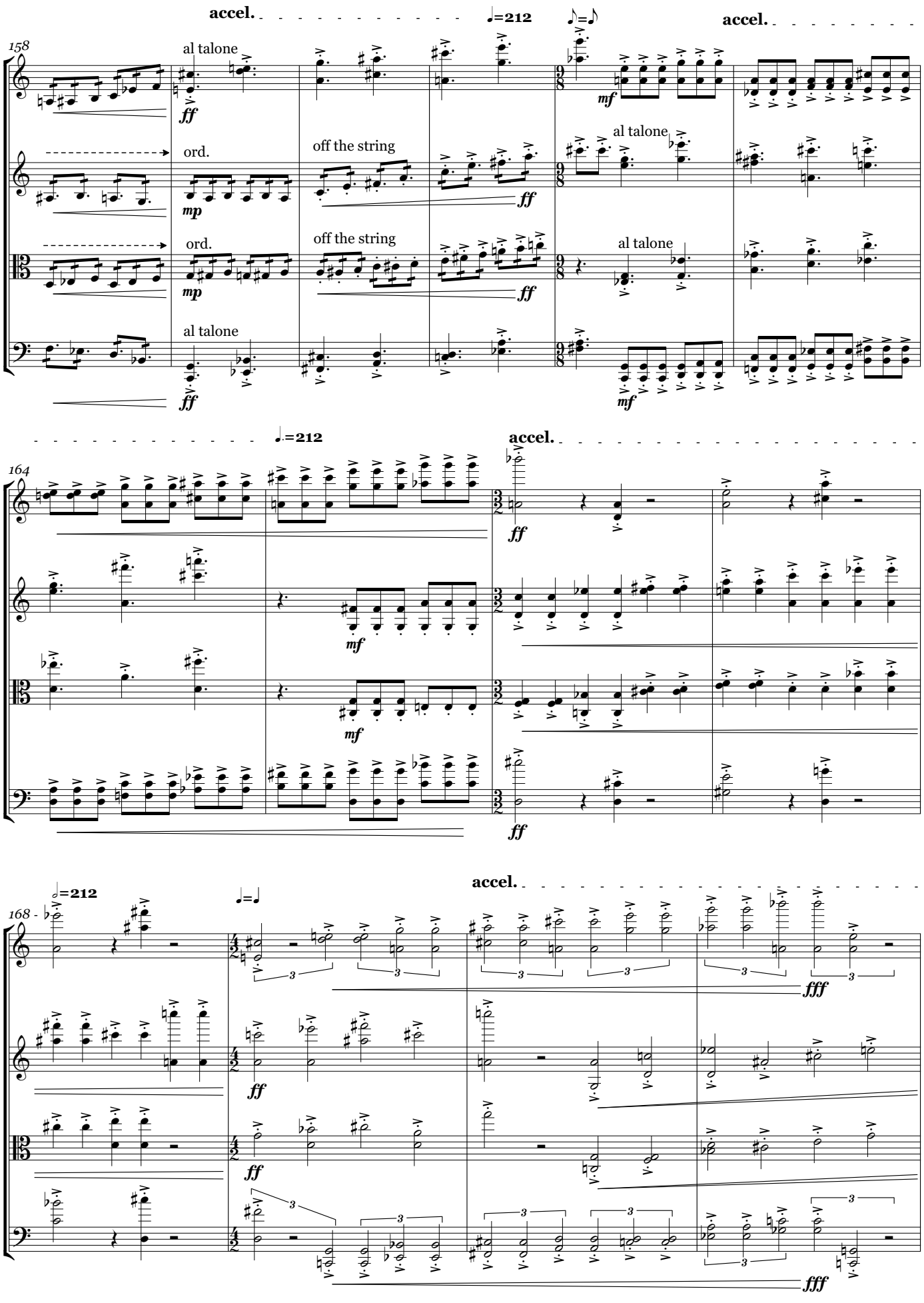

122
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
off the string
Vc.

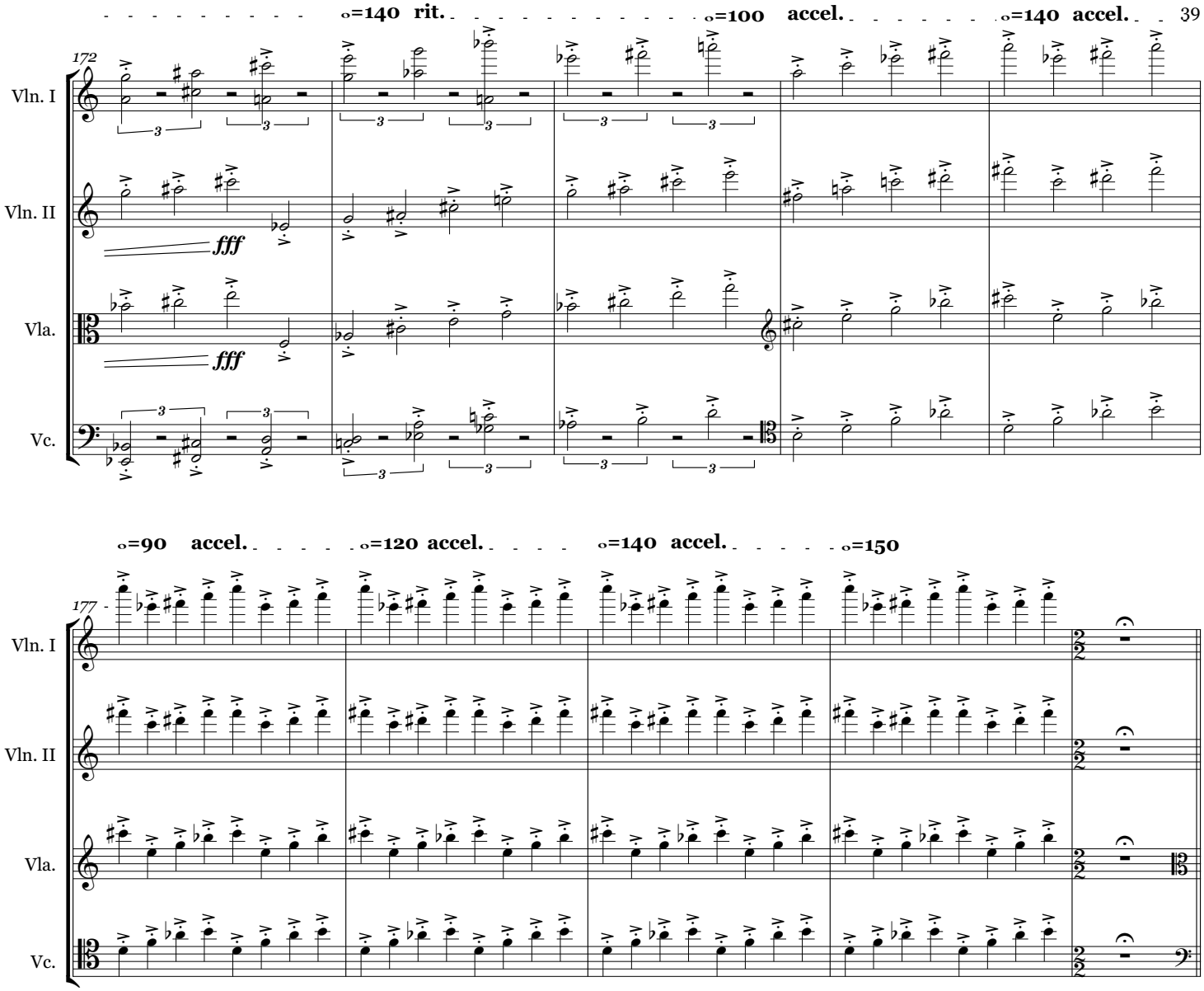

126
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
on the string
Vc.


K
130
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


134
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
138
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
142
Vln. I
Vln. II
off the string
Vla.
Vc.
off the string


146
L
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ffff
150
154
M
tempo primo, ♩=138
5x
sul tasto
on the string
ppp
enter on 3rd repeat
enter on 4th repeat

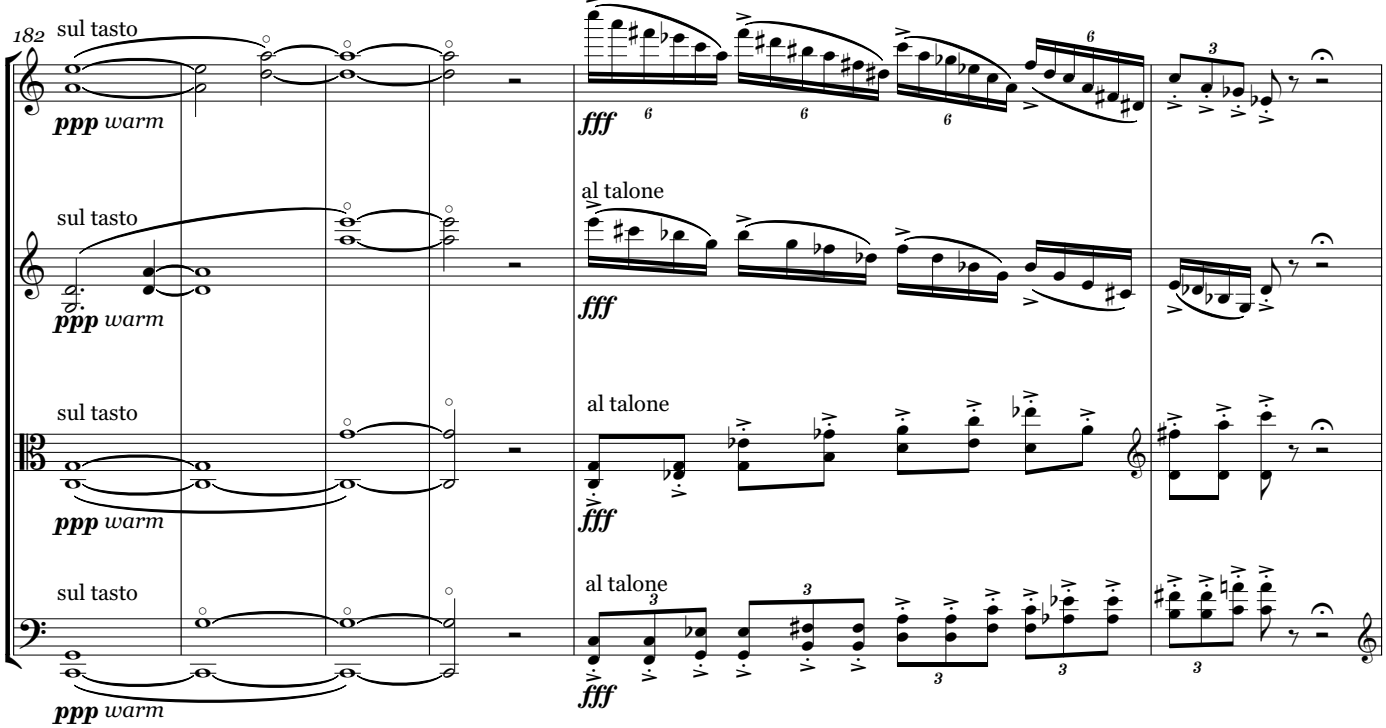

accel.
♩=212
♪=♪
accel.
158
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
al talone
ff
mf
ord.
mp
off the string
ff
al talone
ord.
mp
off the string
ff
al talone
al talone
ff
mf
♩=212
accel.
164
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ff
mf
mf
ff
𝅗𝅥=212
♩=♩
accel.
168
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
fff
ff
ff
fff


♩=140 rit.
♩=100 accel.
♩=140 accel.
172
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
fff
fff
♩=90 accel.
♩=120 accel.
♩=140 accel.
♩=150
177
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

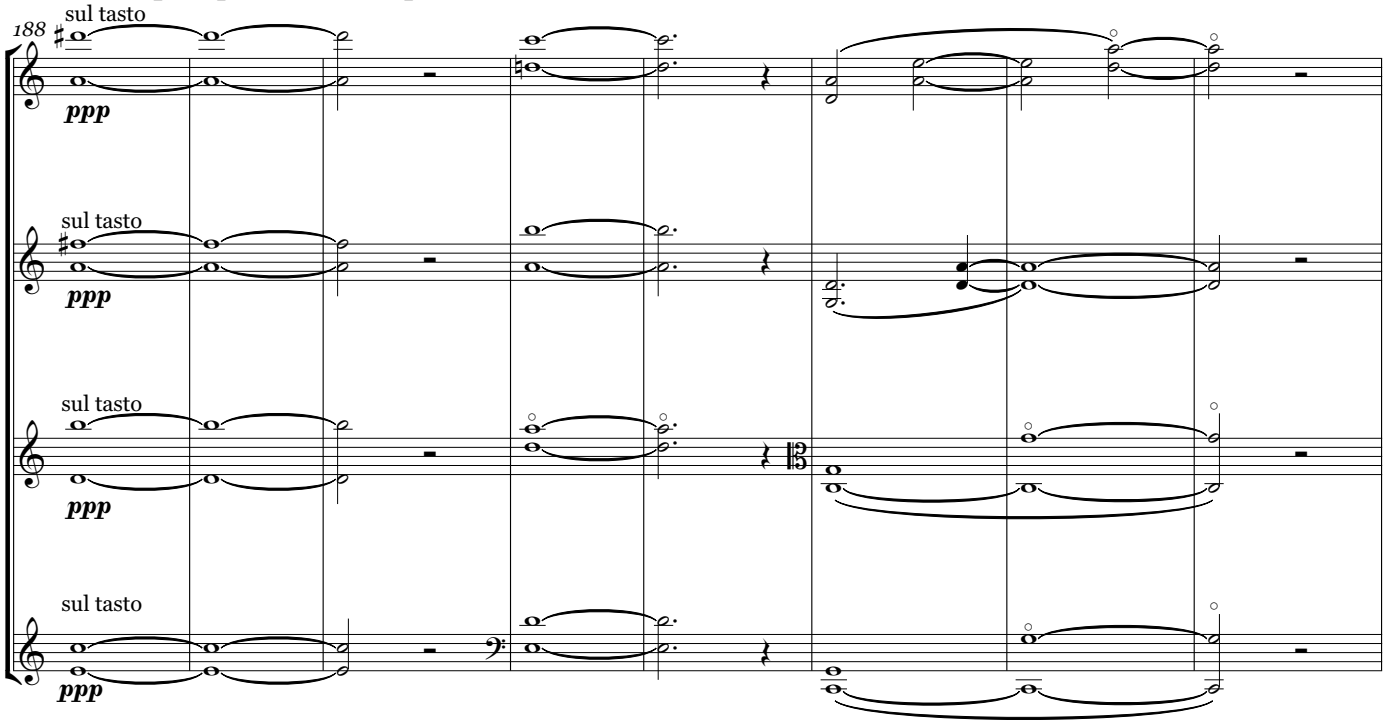
coda: your skinny arms

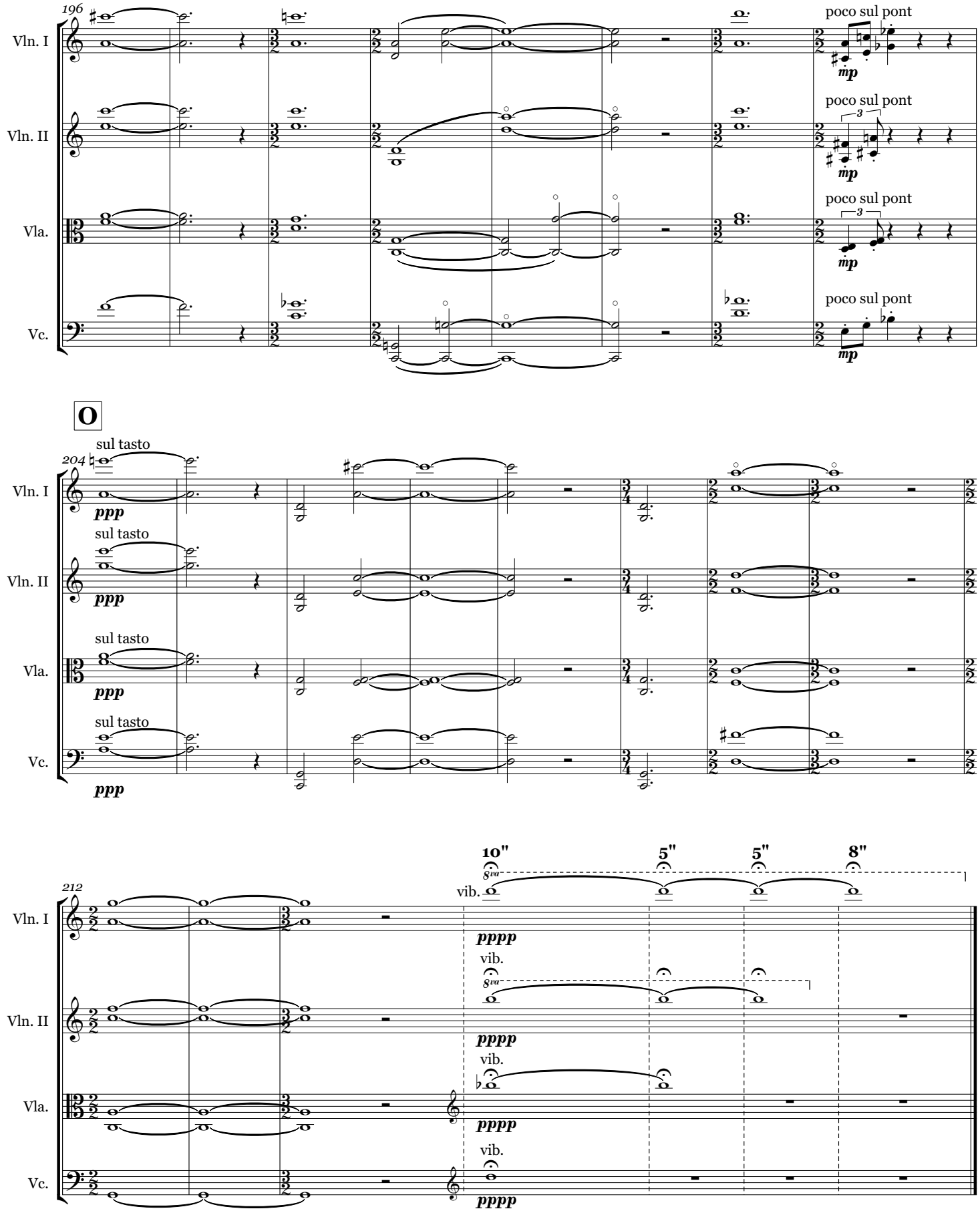
N 𝅗𝅥=50, quasi senza tempo

a tempo



come sopra, quasi senza tempo




196
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
poco sul pont
mp
O
204
sul tasto
ppp
212
10"
5"
5"
8"
8va
vib.
pppp