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String Quartet No. 2 "After Stonewall"

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String Quartet
No. 2

(After Stonewall)

J. Alexander Brown
(2018)

I first set to compose this *String Quartet* a few years ago after the marriage equality decision was handed down by the Supreme Court in 2015. This new precedent seemed to be a turning point in both our political and social culture, that queer identity and relationships were shifting from the closet to the mainstream. Needless to say, though it was an exciting moment, I could not fully express what I was feeling through music at the time. One year later, 49 people were killed and 53 were wounded during a mass shooting at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando and in my shock and horror, I think I understood where my reticence lay. Even with campaigns that tell us it gets better, queer people remain targets of hate and violence and we as a community did not have the luxury of resting on the laurels of a single cultural victory.

Since that tragedy, I have processed and reflected on it and my community, eventually finding the language to express my fear, sadness, and also catharsis. Taking two touchstone moments in history, the Stonewall Riots of 1969 and the Pulse shootings, I have developed my own meditation on the violence felt by the queer community via the state and by private citizens. The first movement takes its subtitle from the first night of the riots, moving from moment to moment of tension and anxiety until the final bars ("With Anger!"). The second, "One Pulse," maintains a strict, slow tempo, with all voices moving in unison, and for me is not only a type of prayer for those lost, but also means to symbolize the need to unify as a strong community.

J. Alexander Brown
(Brooklyn, NY 2018)

Performance Notes:

Movement I is built on repeated cells. The number of repetitions are indicated by a **numberX + …** For example: 4x+... means that the cell is to be repeated at least 4 times, but may be repeated more than 4 times at the discretion of the players.

The players should determine how many repetitions each cell should include if more than the indicated minimum. Players are also encouraged to bring out different phrases during repetitions rather than playing everything in a strictly homogenous form. The intent is that the cells and overall movement will not necessarily sound exactly the same from performance to performance.

Dynamics indicated are suggestions and are flexible, except for the *molto crescendo* before rehearsal N.

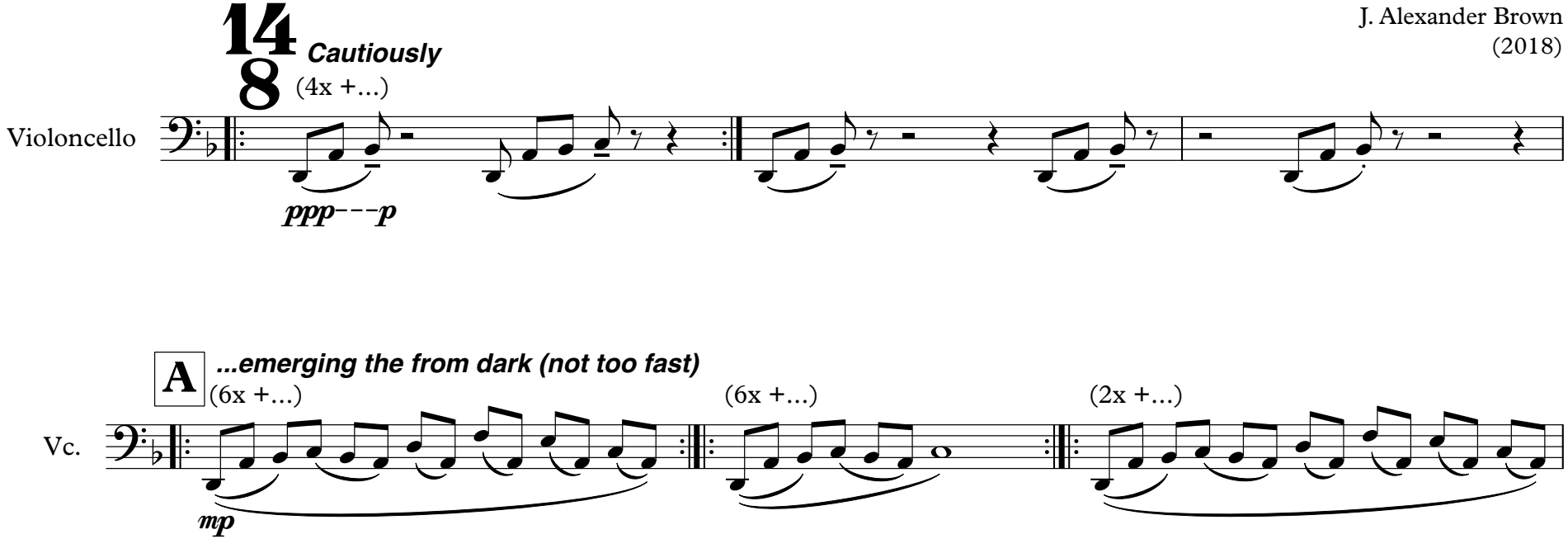
Movement II remains steady and slow, the tempo never fluctuating.

Due to the flexible structure, there is no specific duration.

String Quartet

I. *Saturday June 28, 1969... (New York City)*

J. Alexander Brown
(2018)



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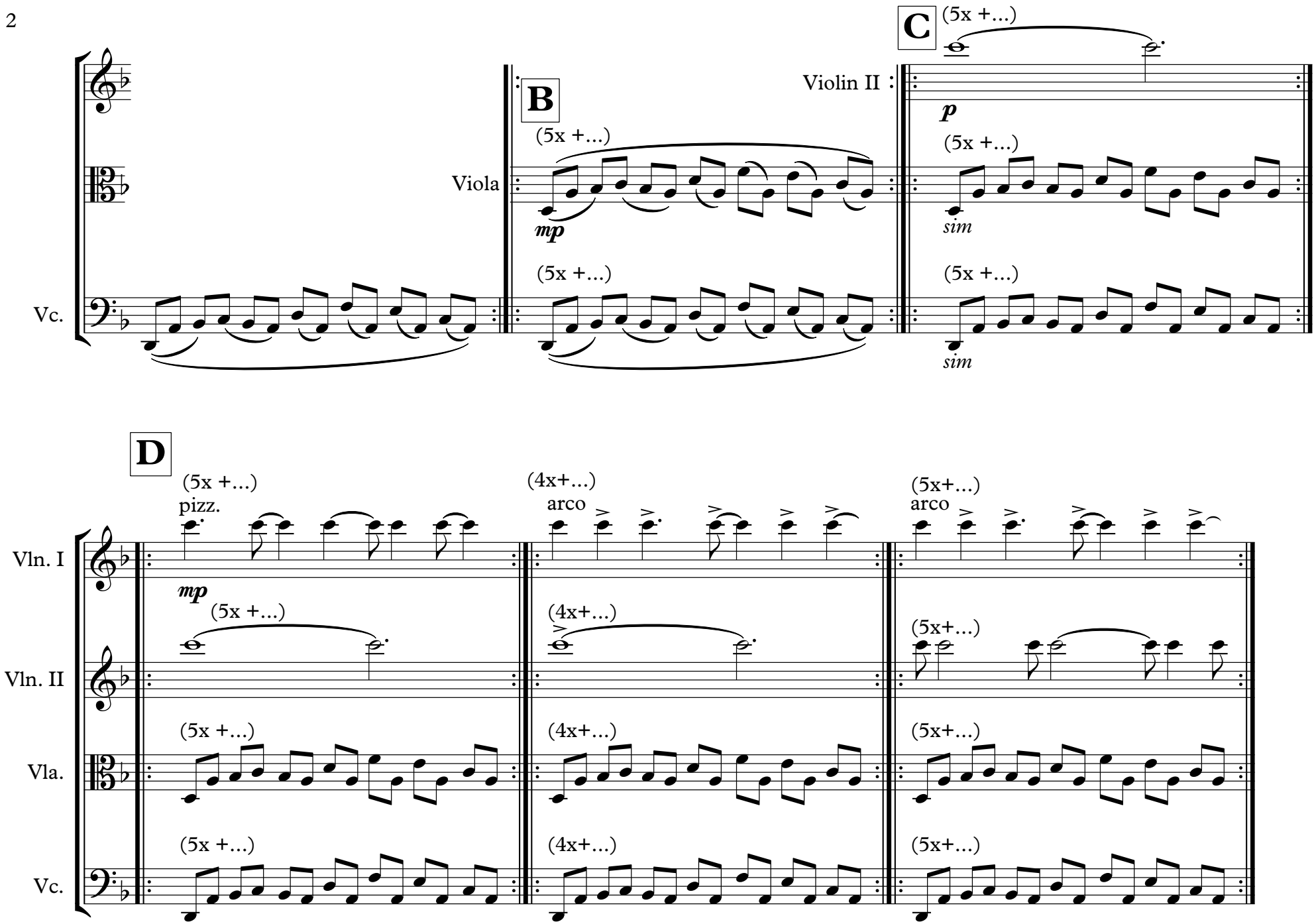
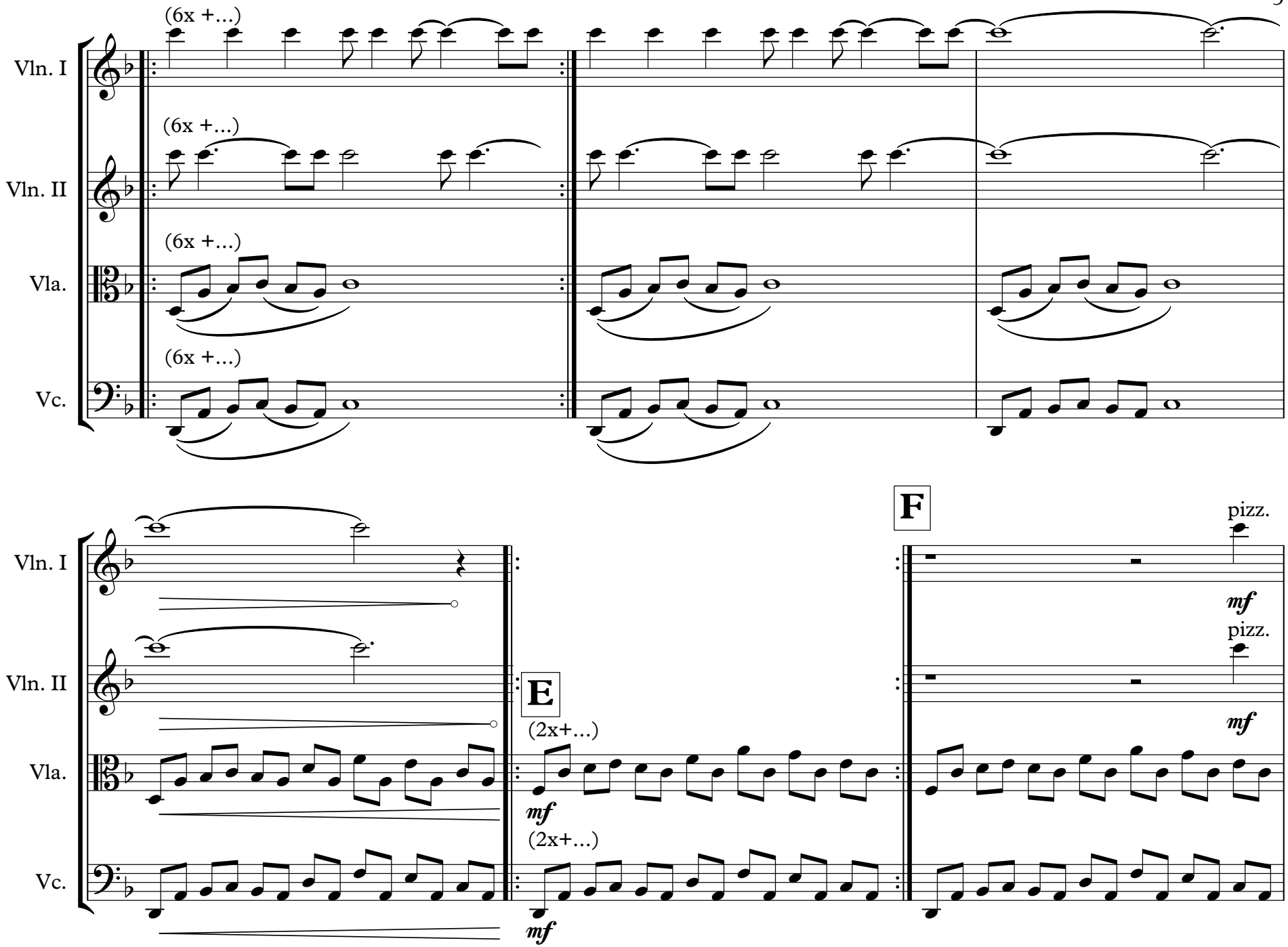
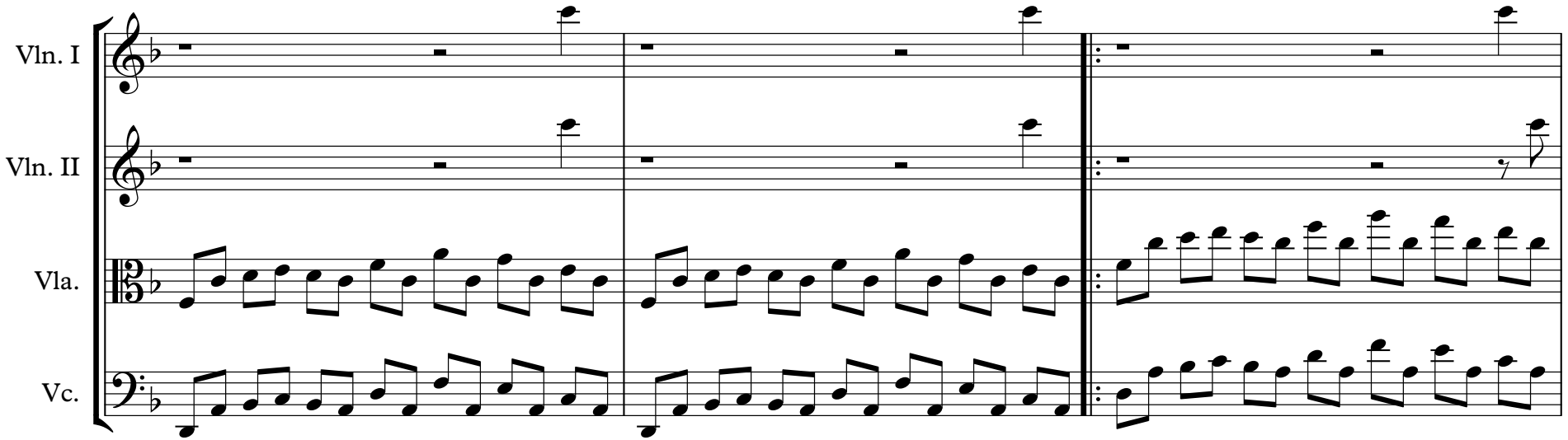
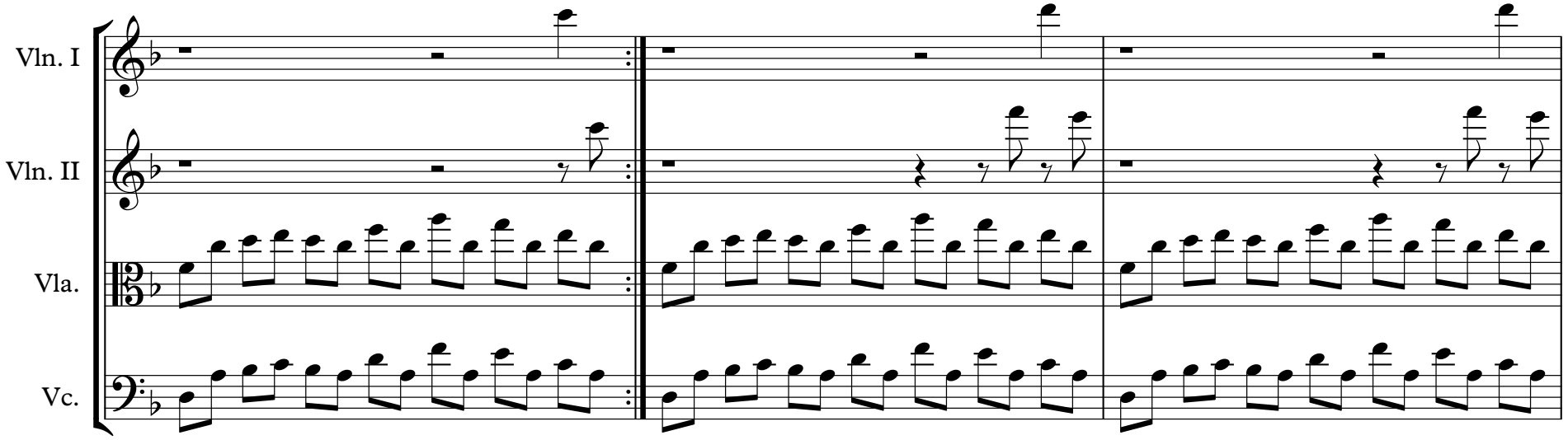
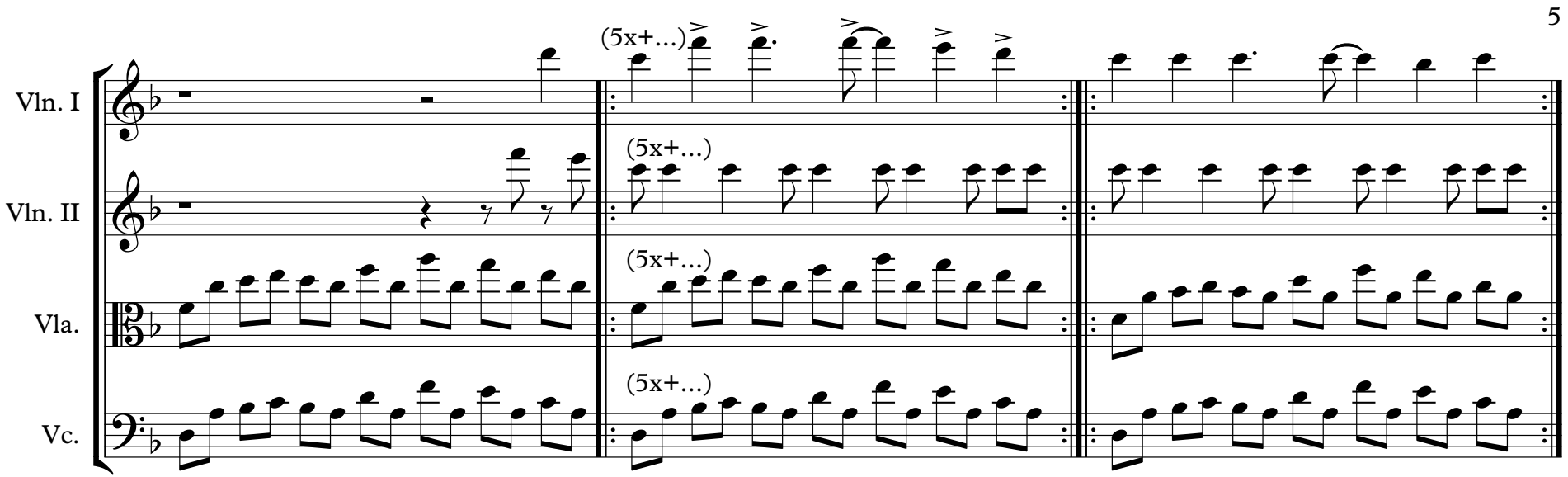
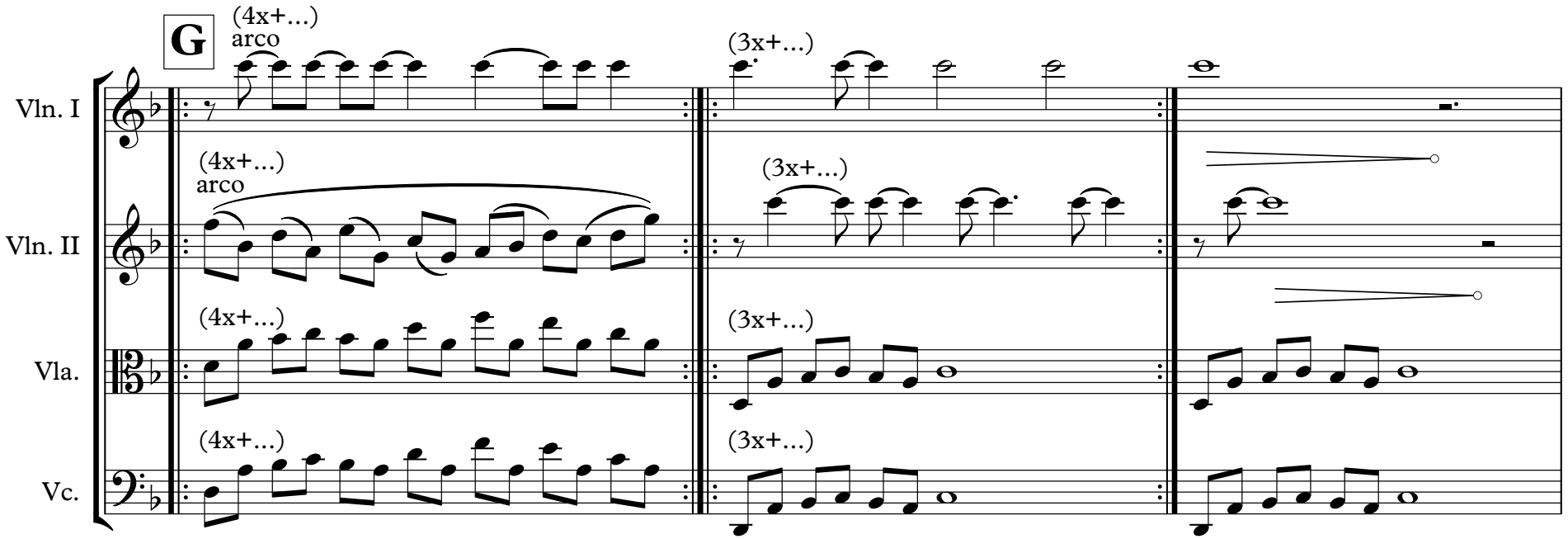

B
C
D
Viola
Violin II
Vc.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
(5x +...)
(4x+...)
(5x+...)
mp
p
sim
pizz.
arco

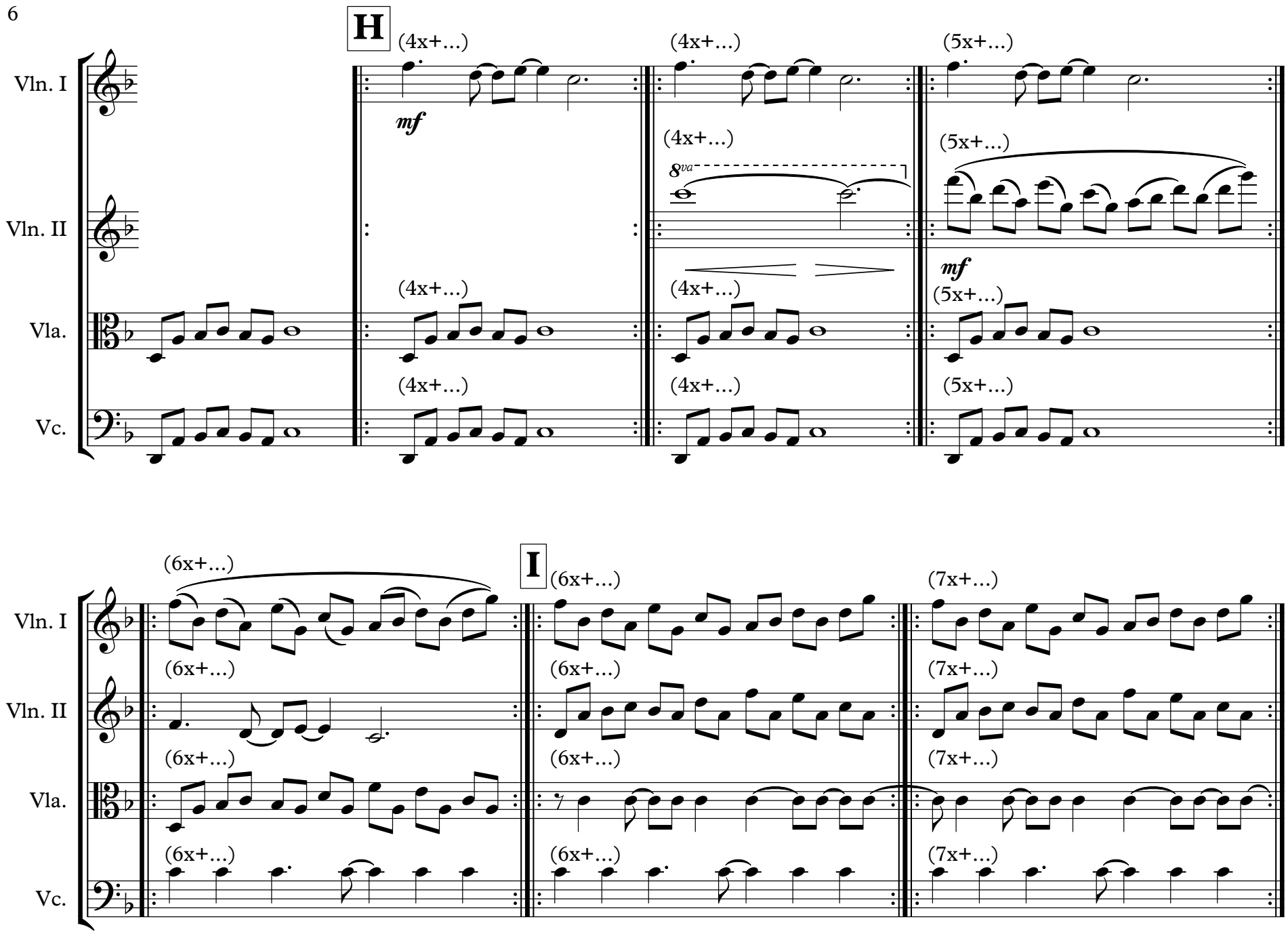

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
(6x +...)
(6x +...)
(6x +...)
(6x +...)
E
(2x+...)
(2x+...)
F
pizz.
pizz.
mf
mf
mf
mf

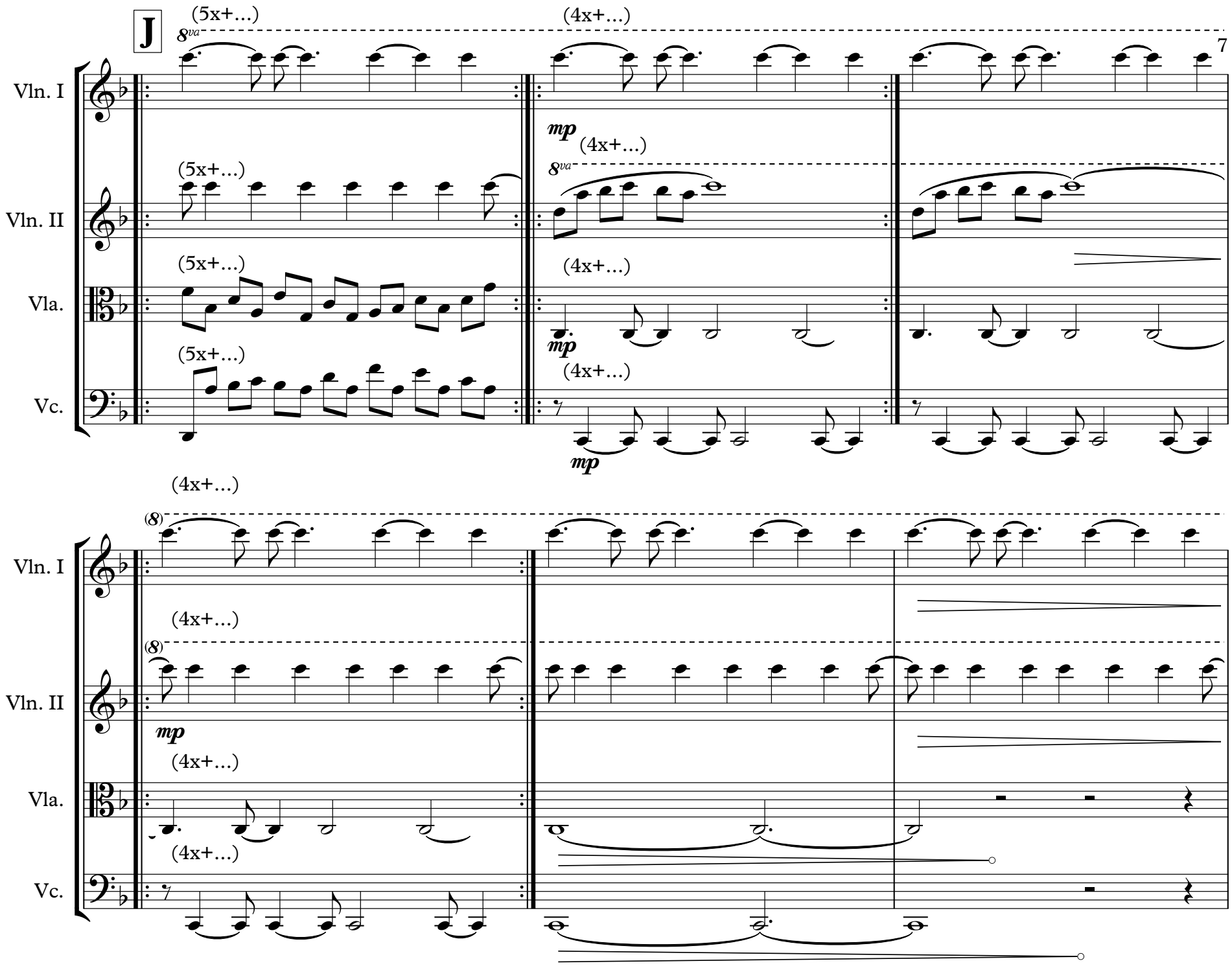

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

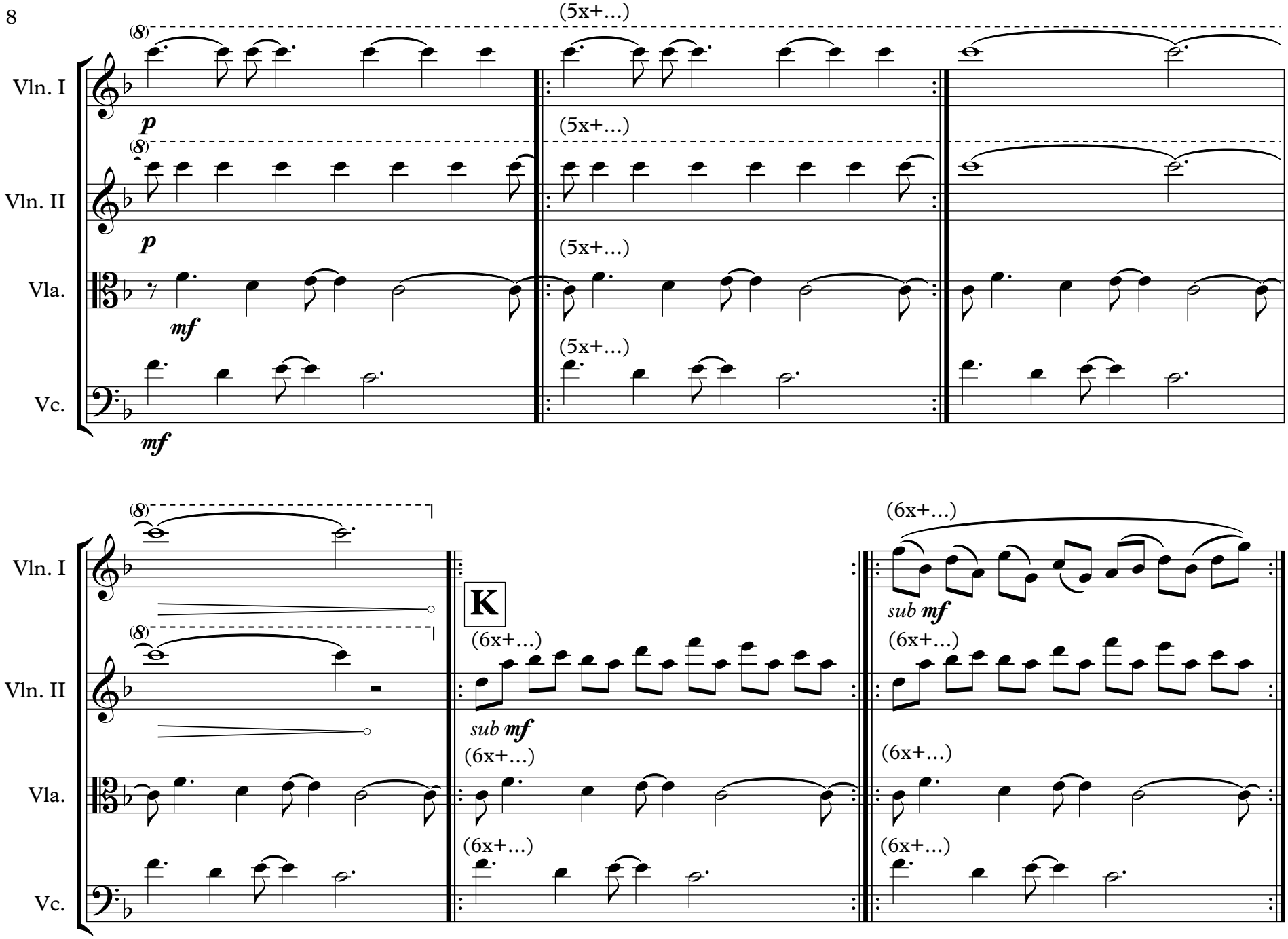

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

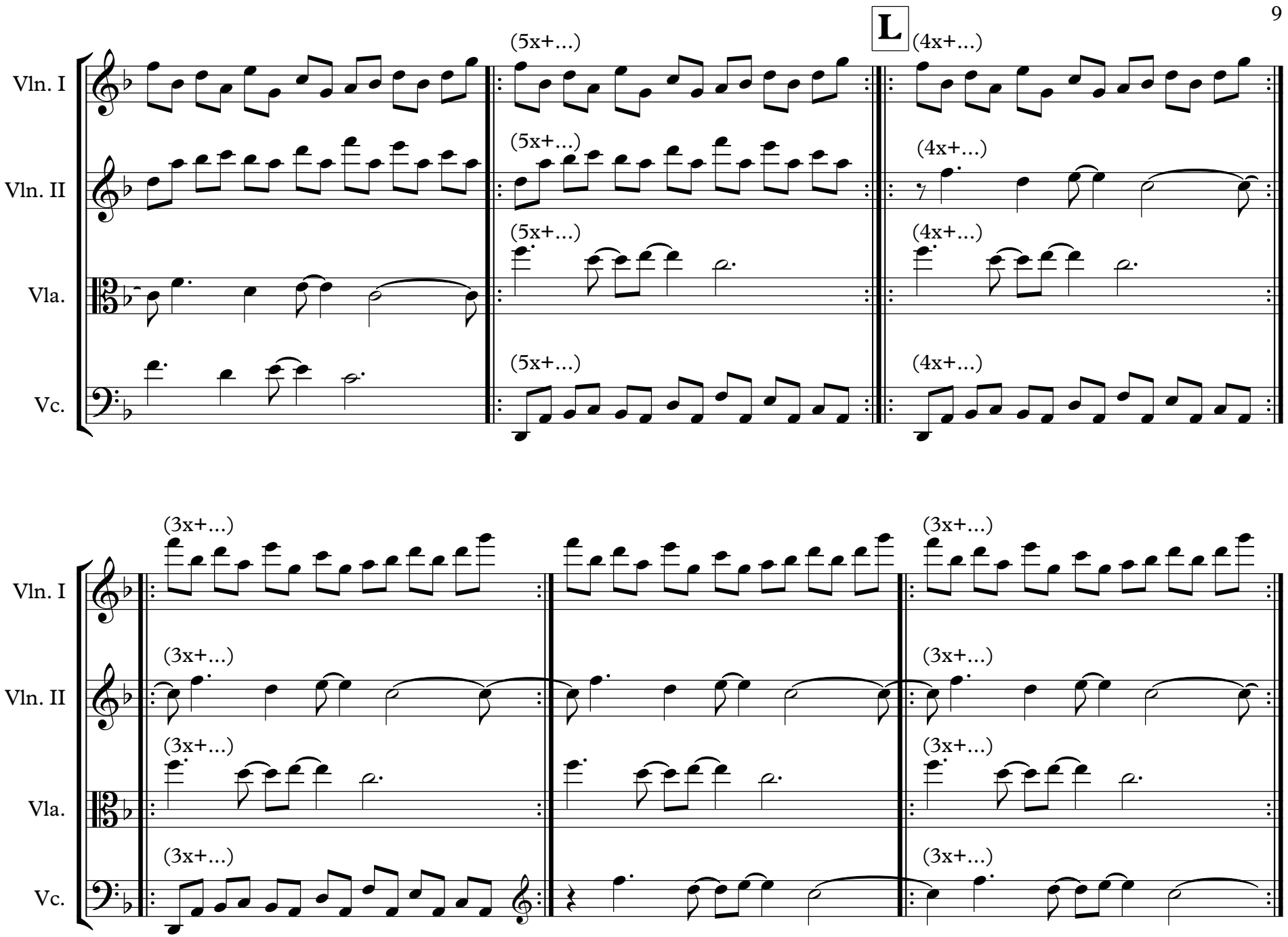

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
(5x+...)
(5x+...)
(5x+...)
(5x+...)

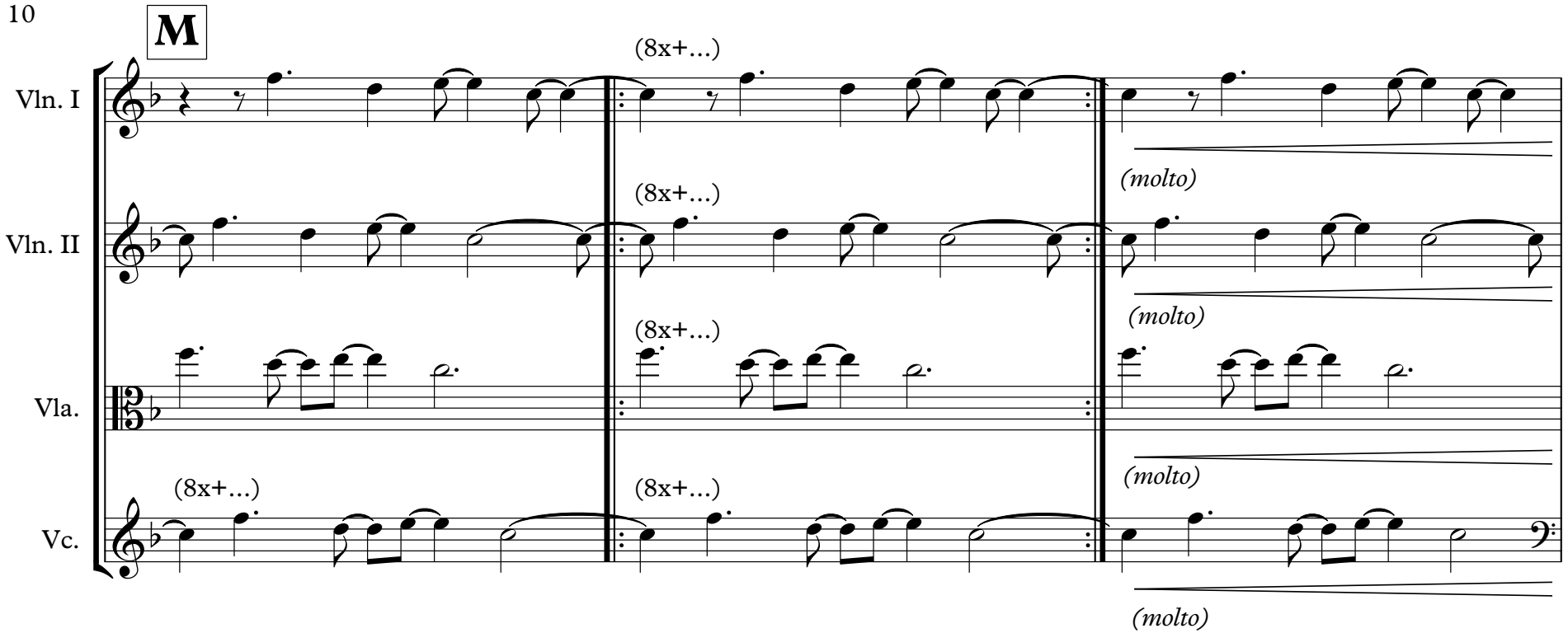

G
(4x+...)
arco
(3x+...)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
(4x+...)
arco
(3x+...)
(4x+...)
(3x+...)
(4x+...)
(3x+...)

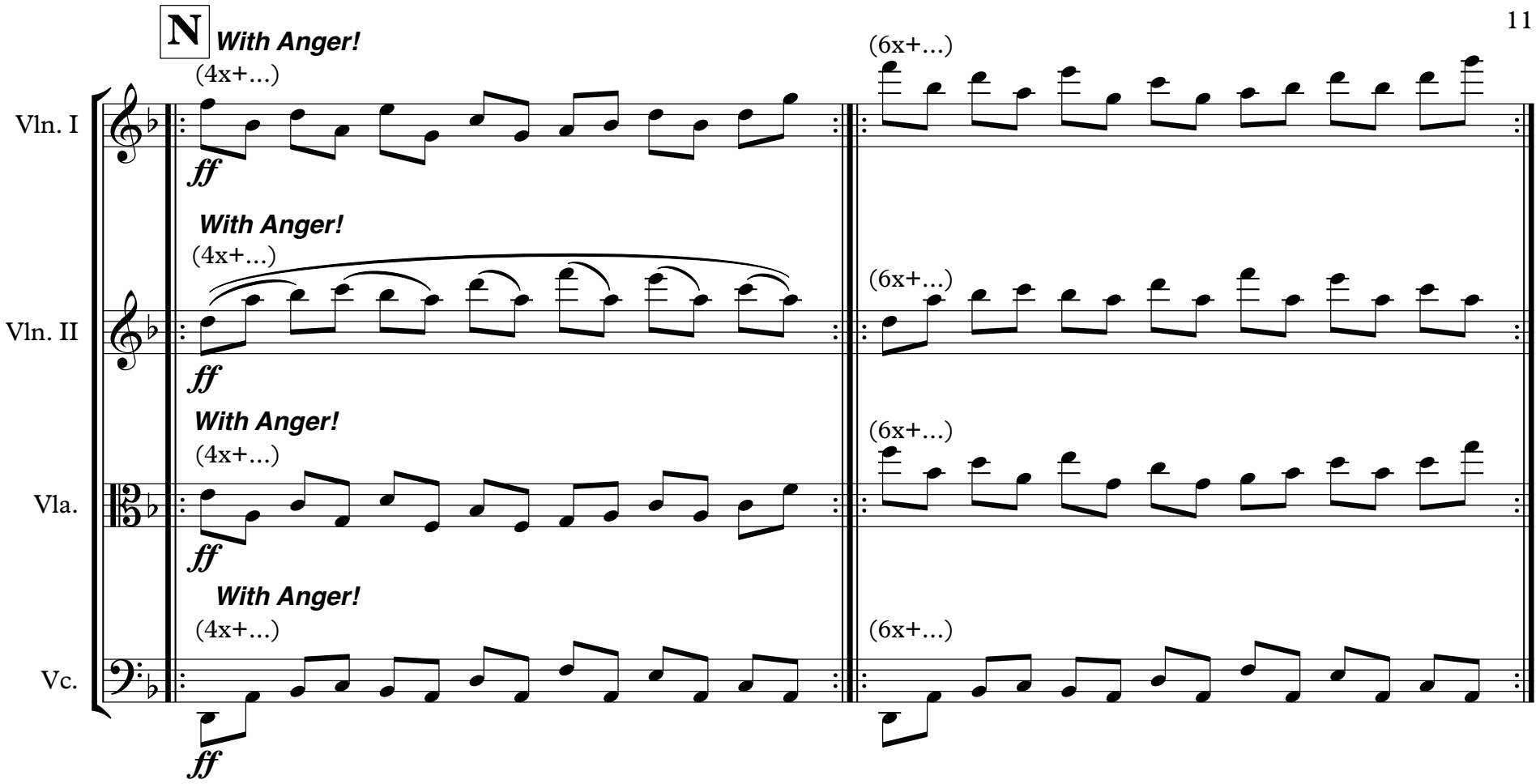

H
I
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
(4x+...)
(5x+...)
(6x+...)
(7x+...)
mf
8va

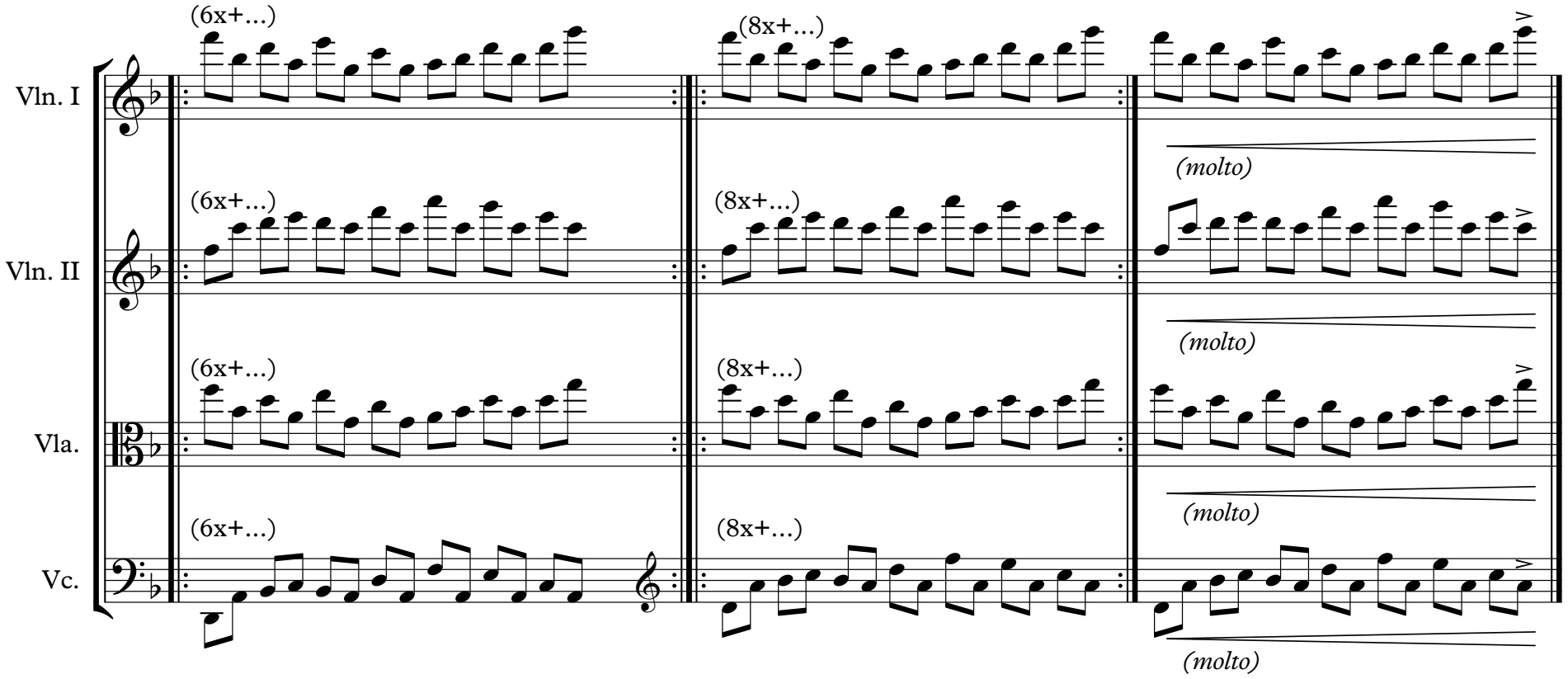

J
(5x+...)
(4x+...)
7
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
8va
mp
(4x+...)
(5x+...)
(8)


(5x+...)
(8)
Vln. I
p
(5x+...)
(8)
Vln. II
p
(5x+...)
Vla.
mf
(5x+...)
Vc.
mf
(8)
Vln. I
(8)
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
K
(6x+...)
sub mf
(6x+...)
(6x+...)
(6x+...)
(6x+...)
(6x+...)
sub mf
(6x+...)
(6x+...)
(6x+...)

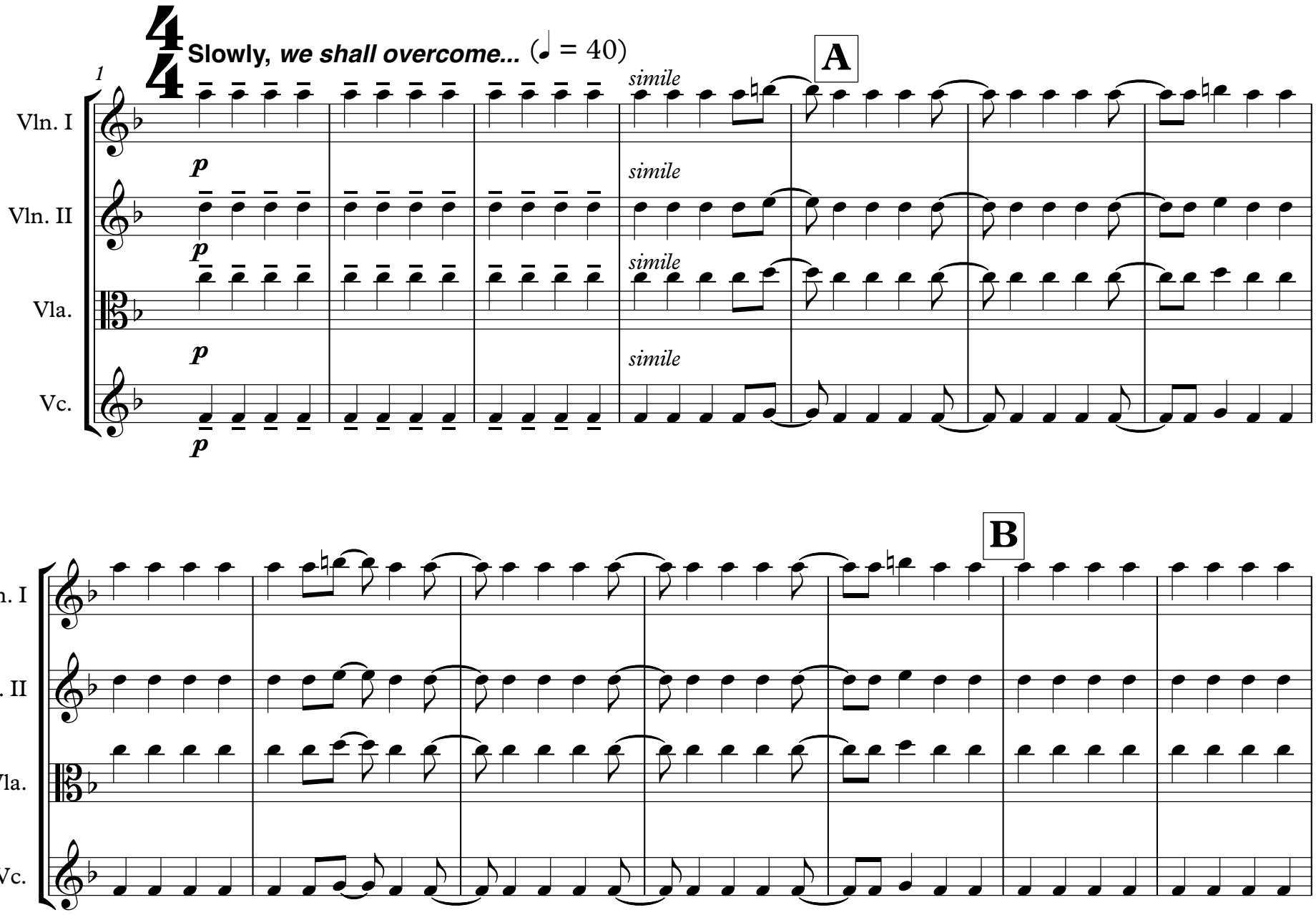

L
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
(5x+...)
(4x+...)
(3x+...)

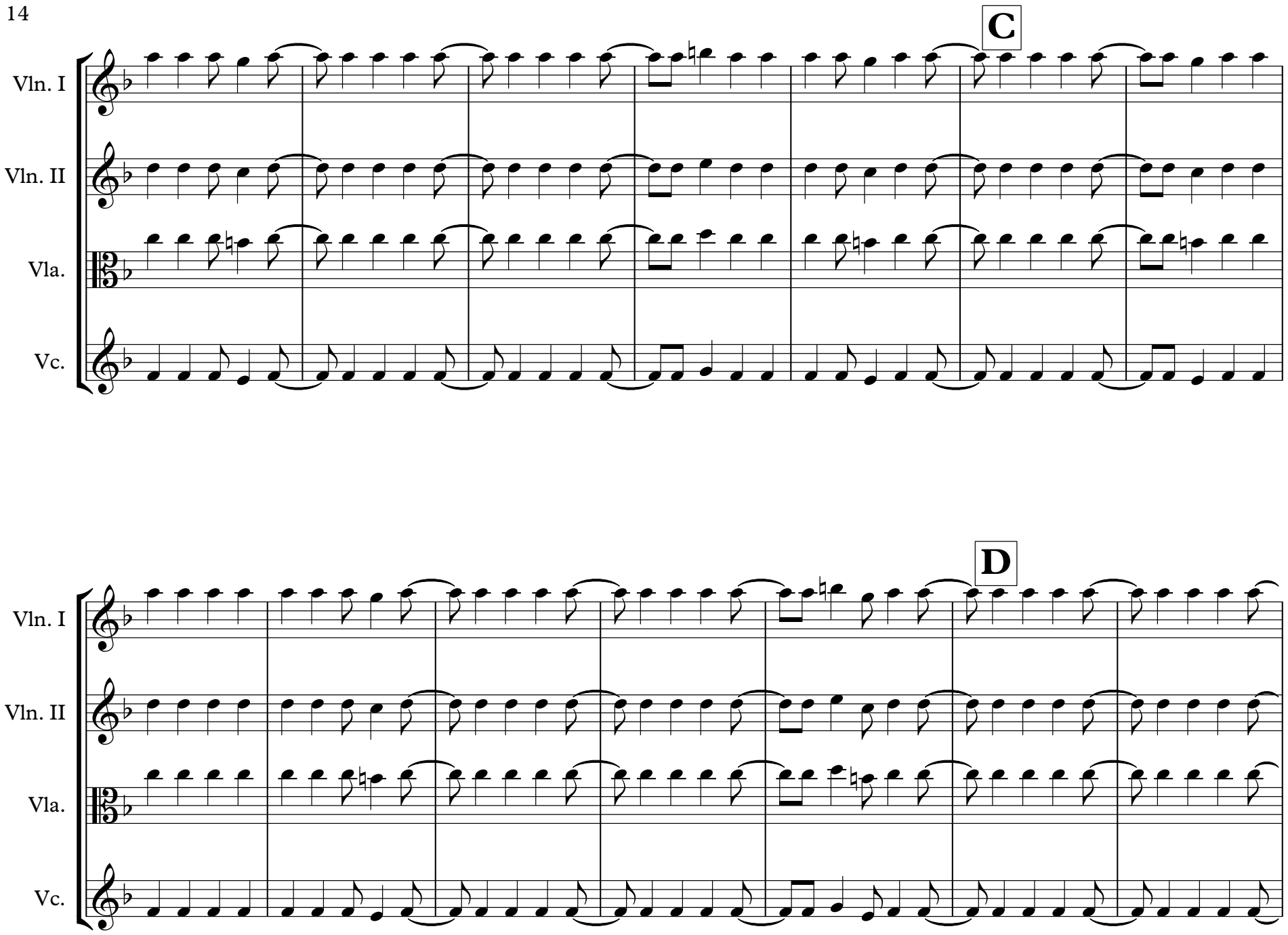

M
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
(8x+...)
(8x+...)
(8x+...)
(8x+...)
(molto)
(molto)
(molto)
(molto)

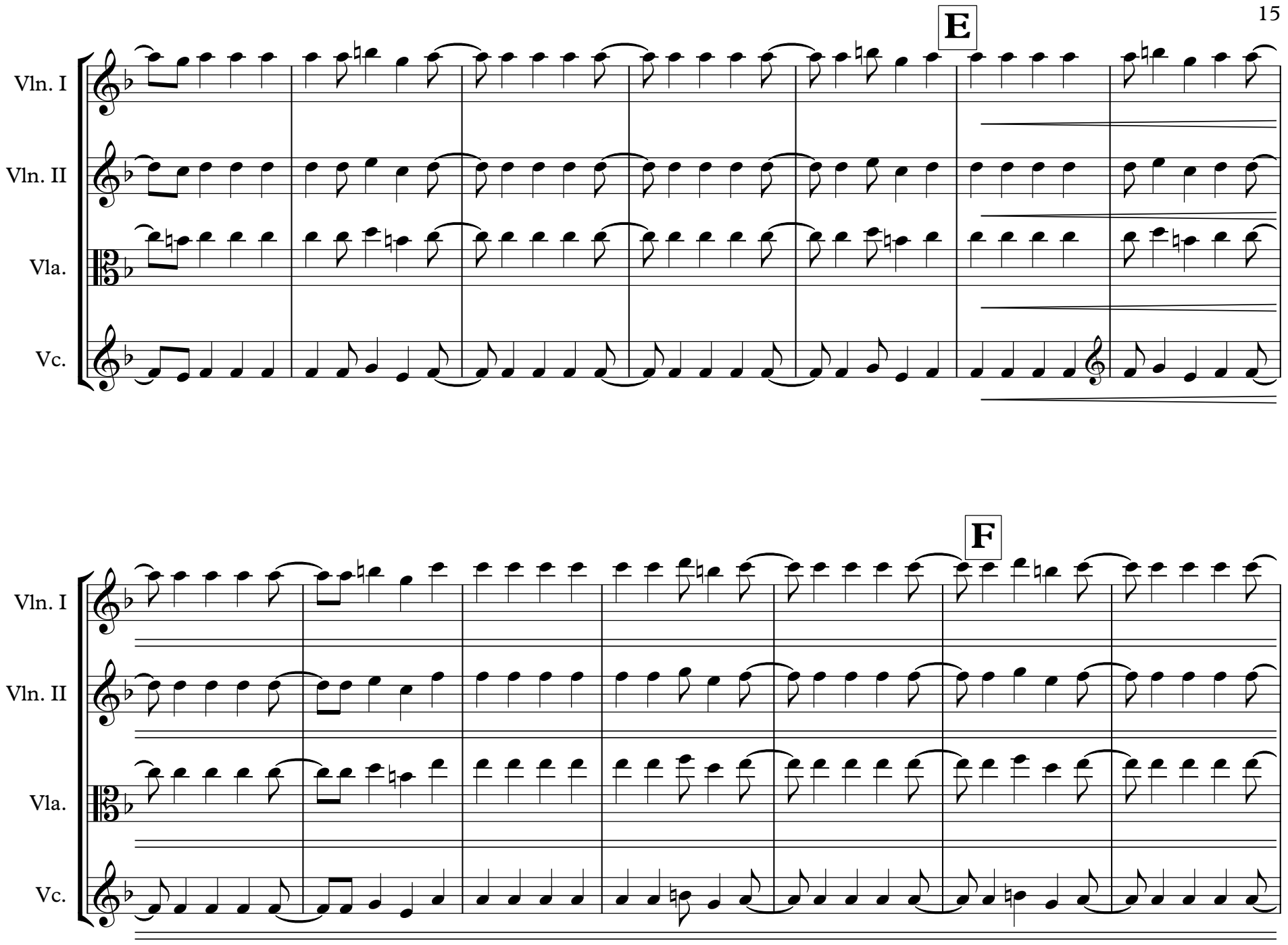

N
With Anger!
(4x+...)
(6x+...)
Vln. I
ff
With Anger!
(4x+...)
(6x+...)
Vln. II
ff
With Anger!
(4x+...)
(6x+...)
Vla.
ff
With Anger!
(4x+...)
(6x+...)
Vc.
ff

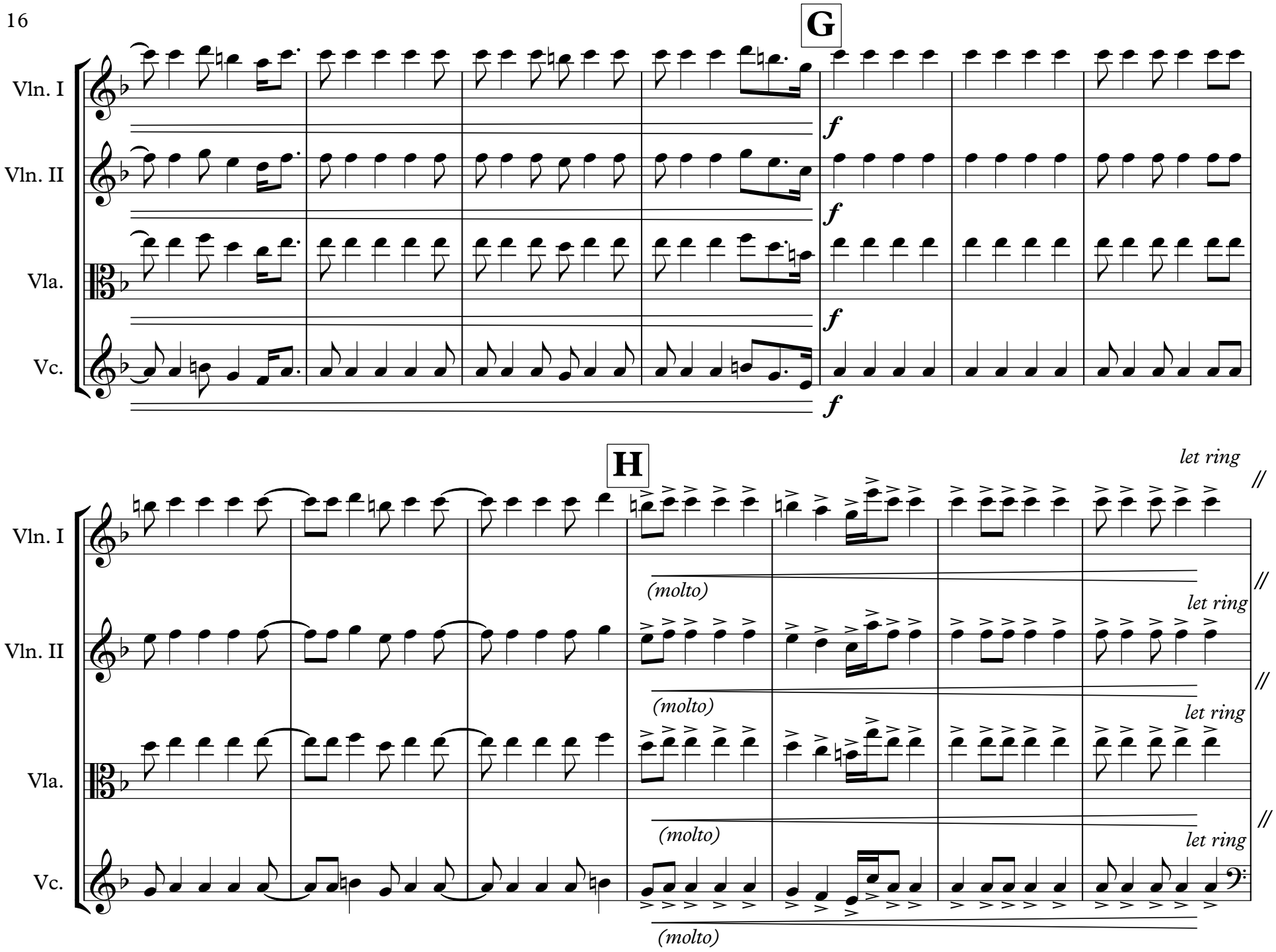

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
(6x+...)
(8x+...)
(molto)

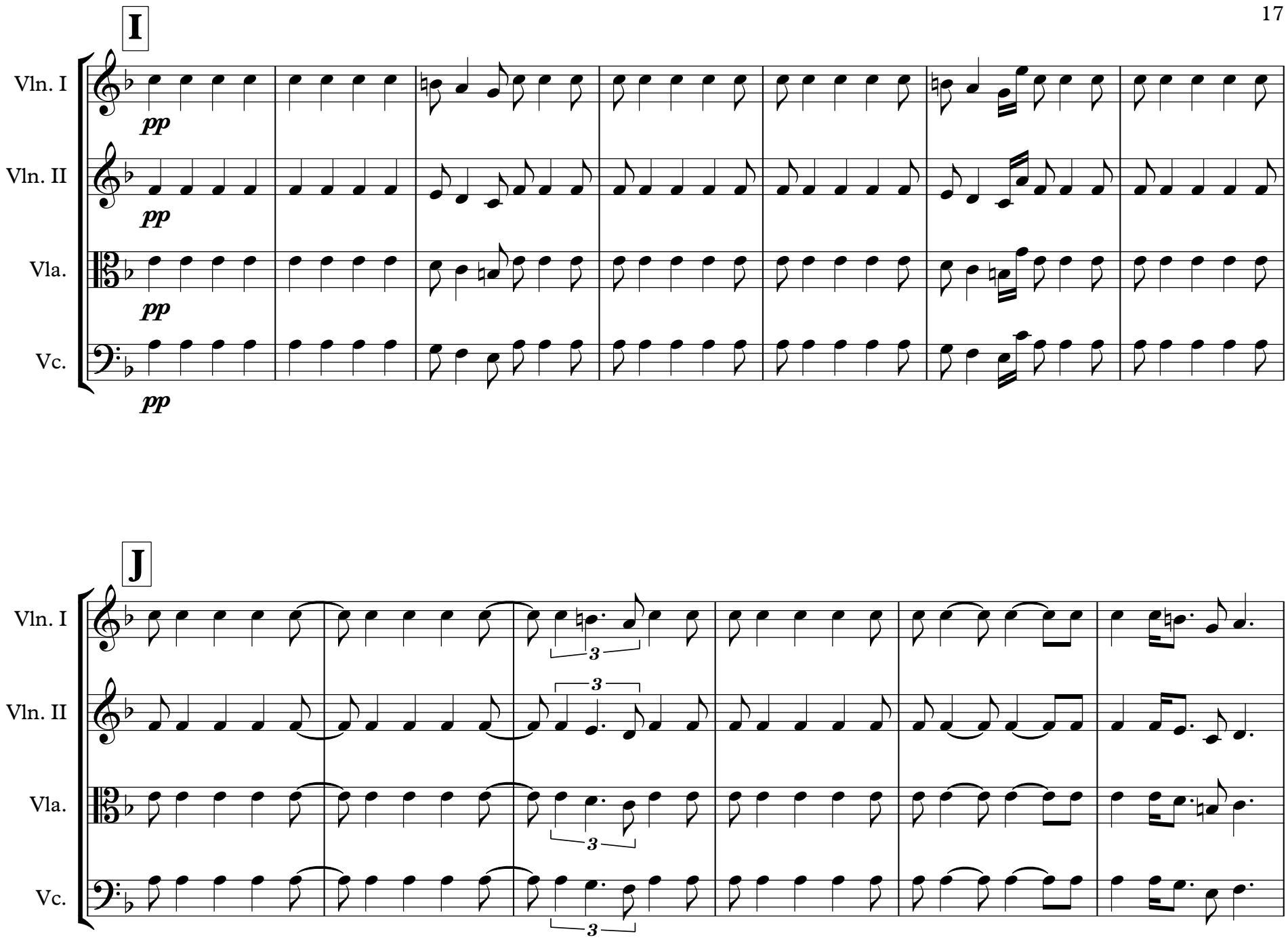
II. *One Pulse...*

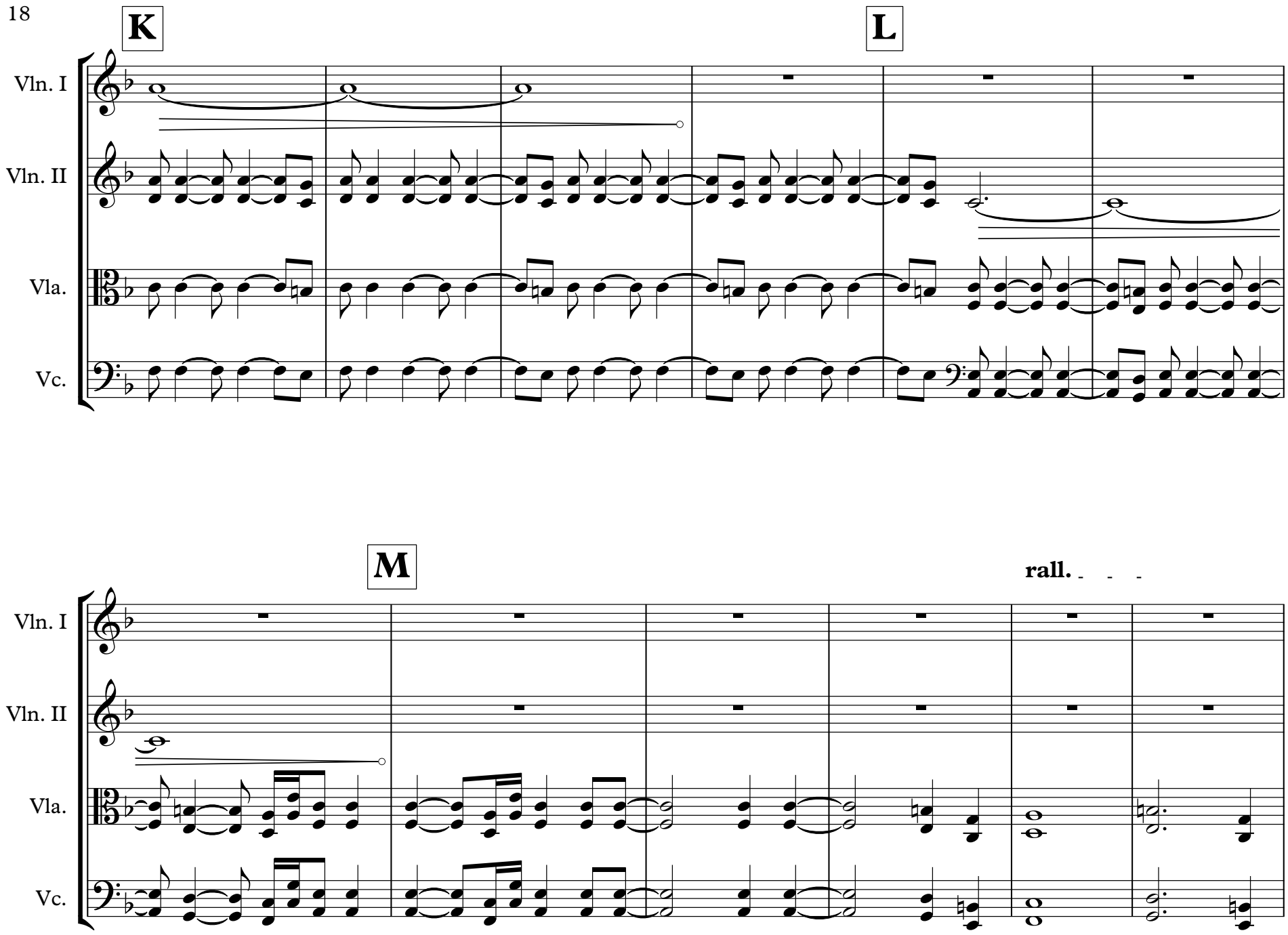


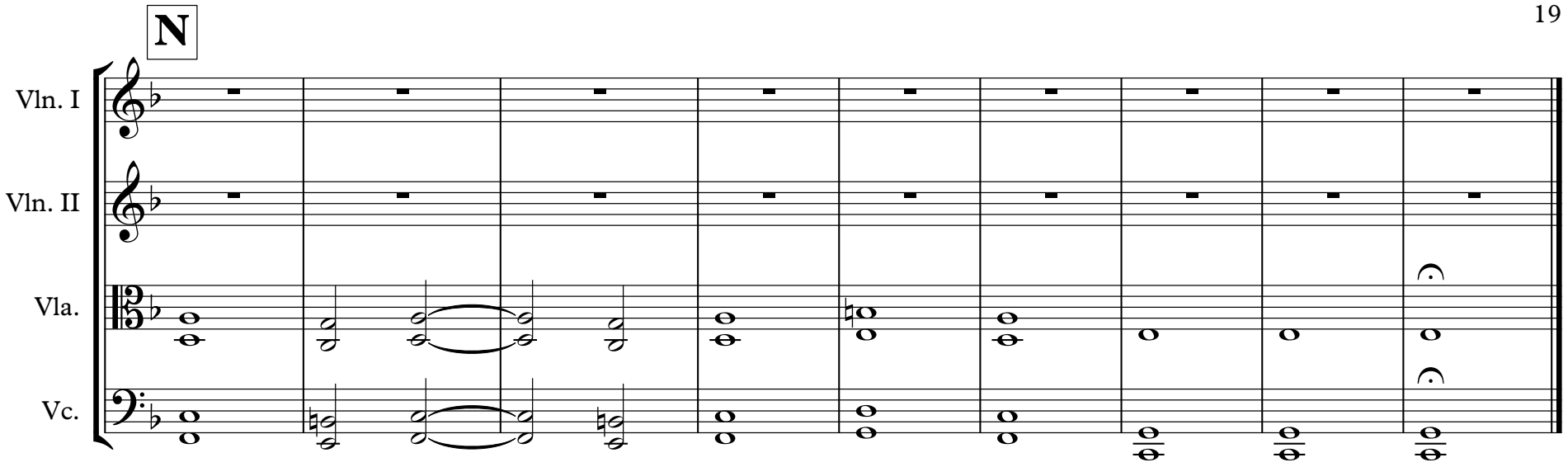

C
D
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


E
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


G
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
f
H
let ring
(molto)
//


I
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pp
J
3


K
L
M
rall.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.



Jesse Alexander Brown
Brooklyn, NY 2018