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Noctuary

for Two String Quartets

Carl Schimmel

composed 2014

commissioned by the Ciompi Quartet

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Performance Notes

- For simplicity and ease of notation, all natural harmonics (including octave harmonics) are indicated as a diamond notehead at the fingered pitch.
- Slashed beams indicate that the beamed notes should be played as fast, or nearly as fast, as possible.
- Gestures in box notation should be repeated until the end of the arrow which follows. Note that the gesture may or may not be slurred. After m. 187 ("Just before the dawn") all notes in boxed notation, including the harmonic glissandi, are slurred.

Program Notes

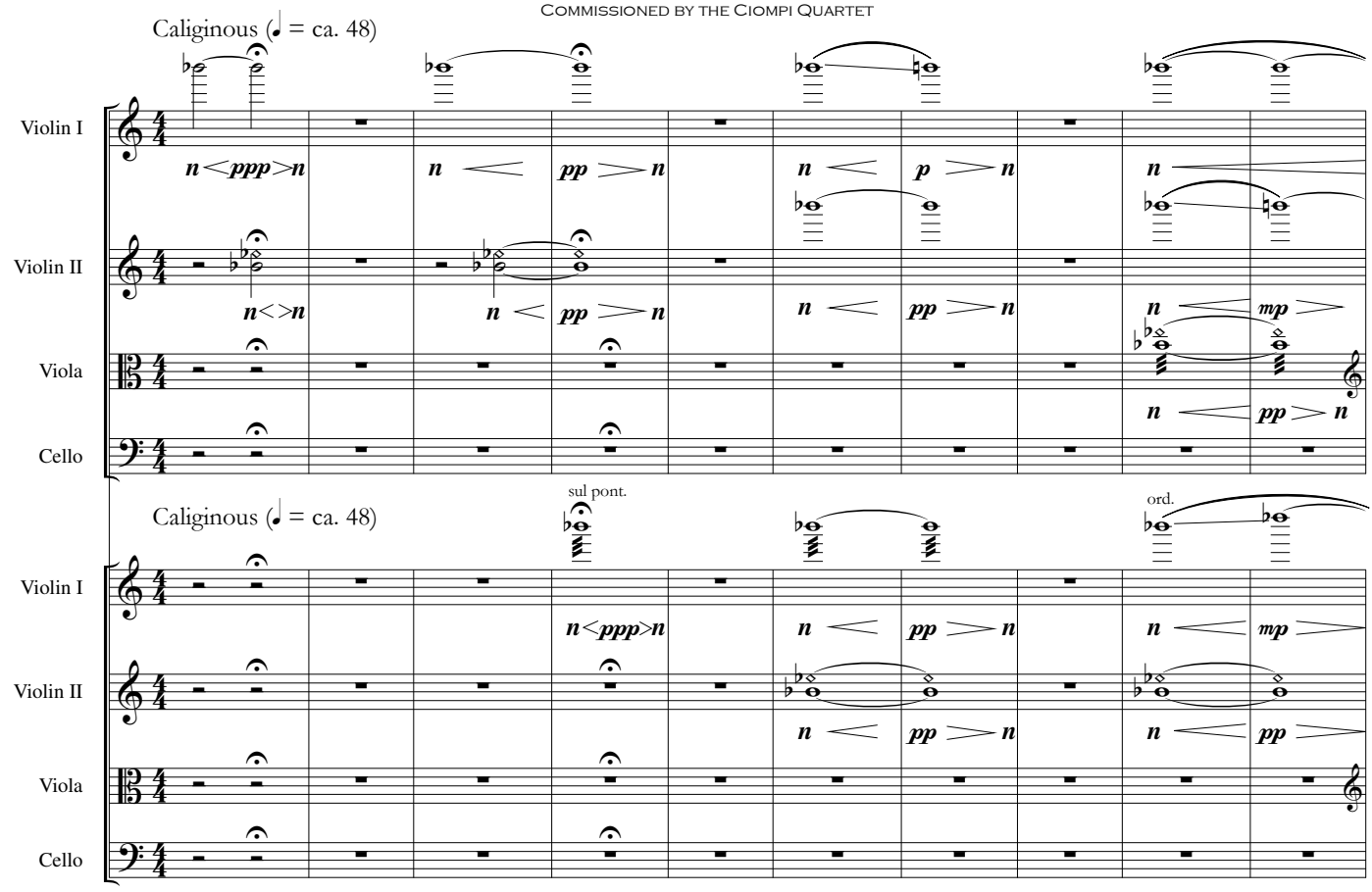
For some time now, I have been interested in exploring some variations on composer Henri Dutilleux's ideas (borrowed from Marcel Proust) about the concept of memory as applied to music. How is a musical idea the same or not the same as, related or not related to, another musical idea, remembered from earlier in the piece? And, in a less narrow – and more personal – sense, to what extent do musical ideas from my own past compositions re-emerge and manifest themselves in my new compositions? This latter question pertains essentially to style, and it also is relevant to Dutilleux's own approach to composition, which often relied upon the reuse of materials. Dutilleux's masterful string quartet *Ainsi la nuit* ("*Thus the night*"), constructed primarily from a set of ideas introduced at the opening of the piece, is an excellent example of a composition in which change takes place via development of a small number of ideas – and their identities are clarified through variation. It is because of *Ainsi la nuit* that I was inspired to choose the title *Noctuary* for this piece – a "noctuary" is a record of what passes in the night. In this work, I drew upon my own stylistic markers, my own "compositional memory," and developed them spontaneously, rather than planning out the work in detail as is my usual practice. In composing in a way that is less structured, and yet more clearly rooted in aspects of my personal musical style, in *Noctuary* I have attempted to more deeply probe my own musical subconscious. *Noctuary* was commissioned by the Ciompi Quartet, for first performance by the Ciompi Quartet and Amernet String Quartet.

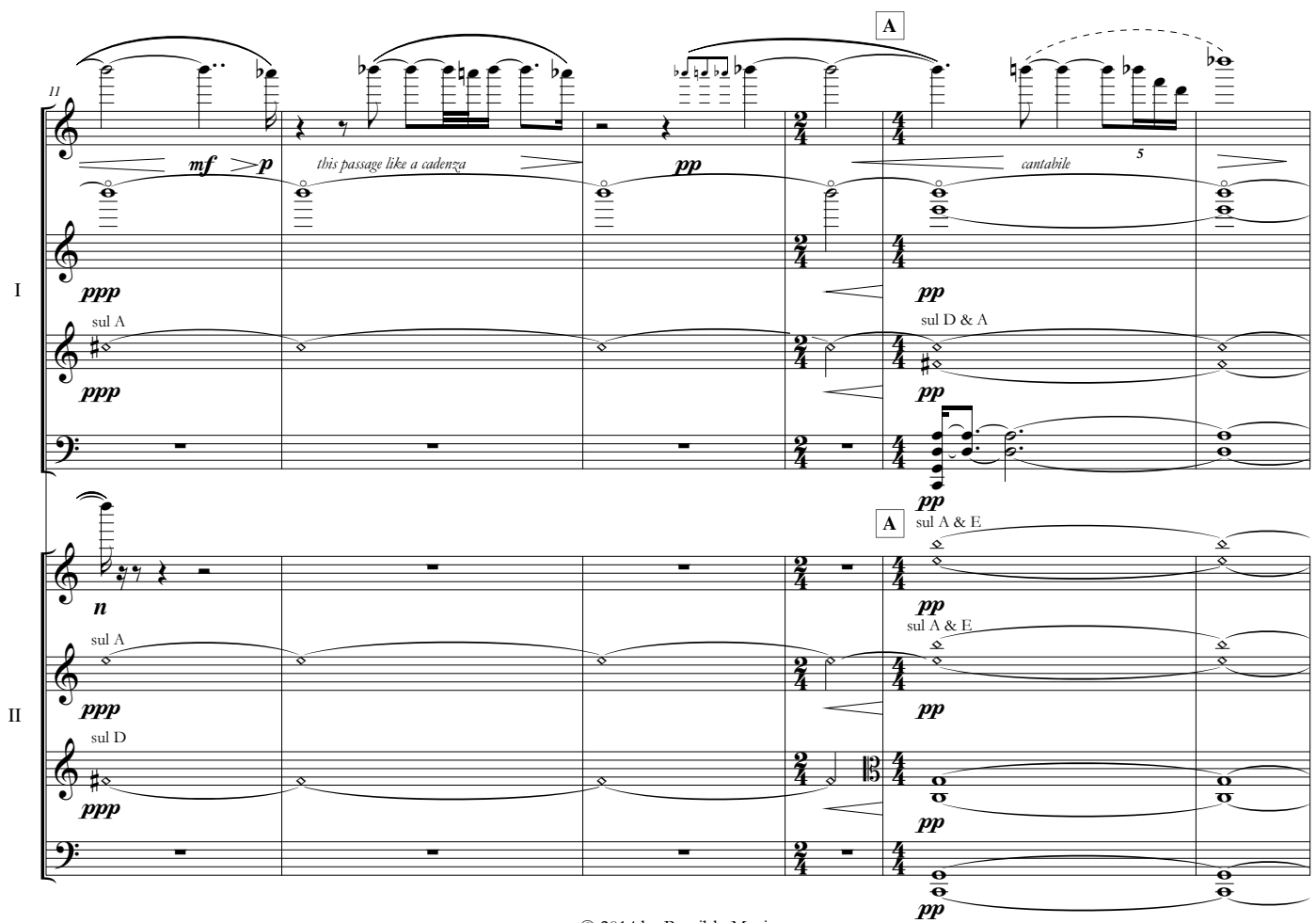
Noctuary

FOR TWO STRING QUARTETS

Carl Schimmel

Commissioned by the Ciompi Quartet





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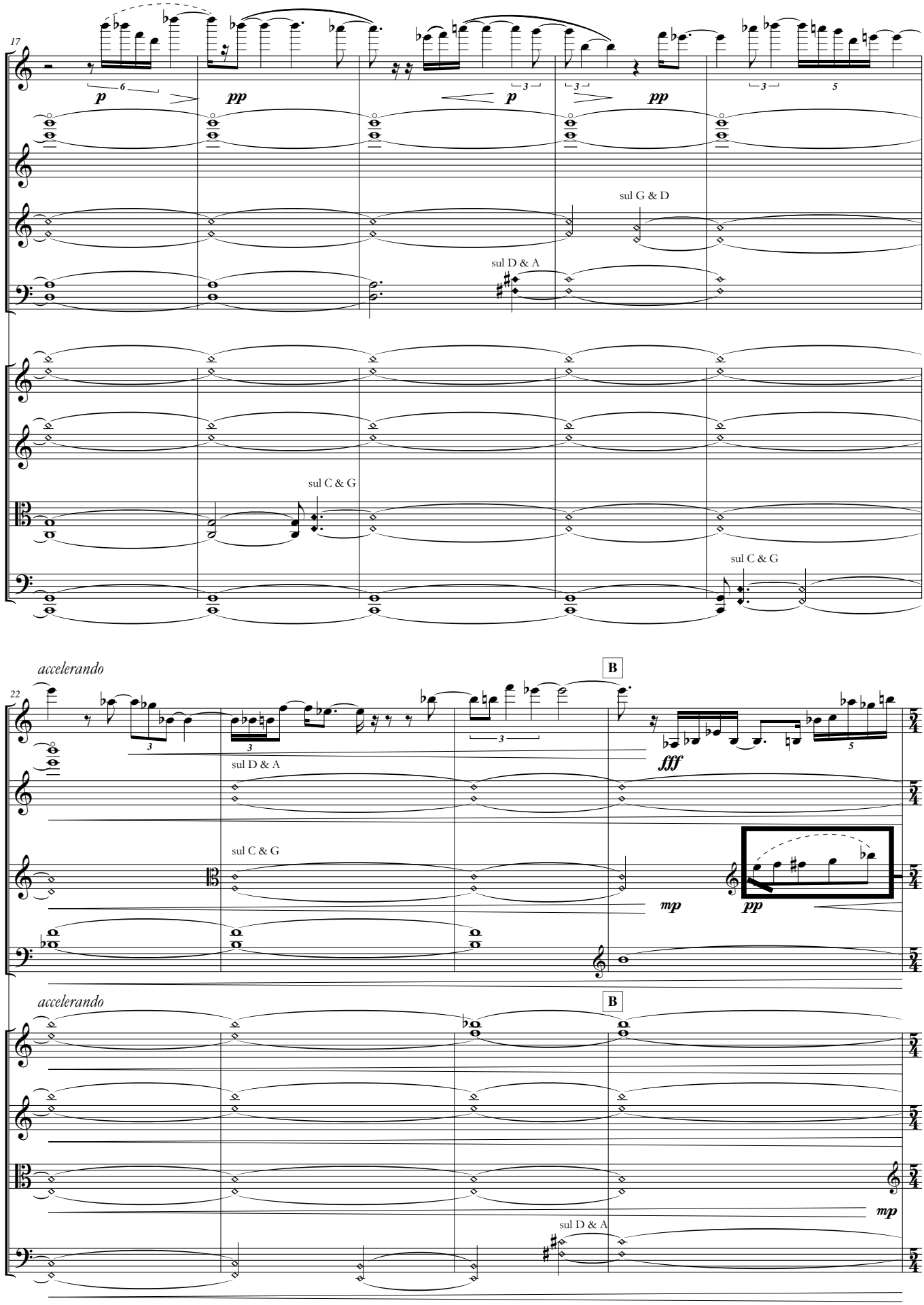
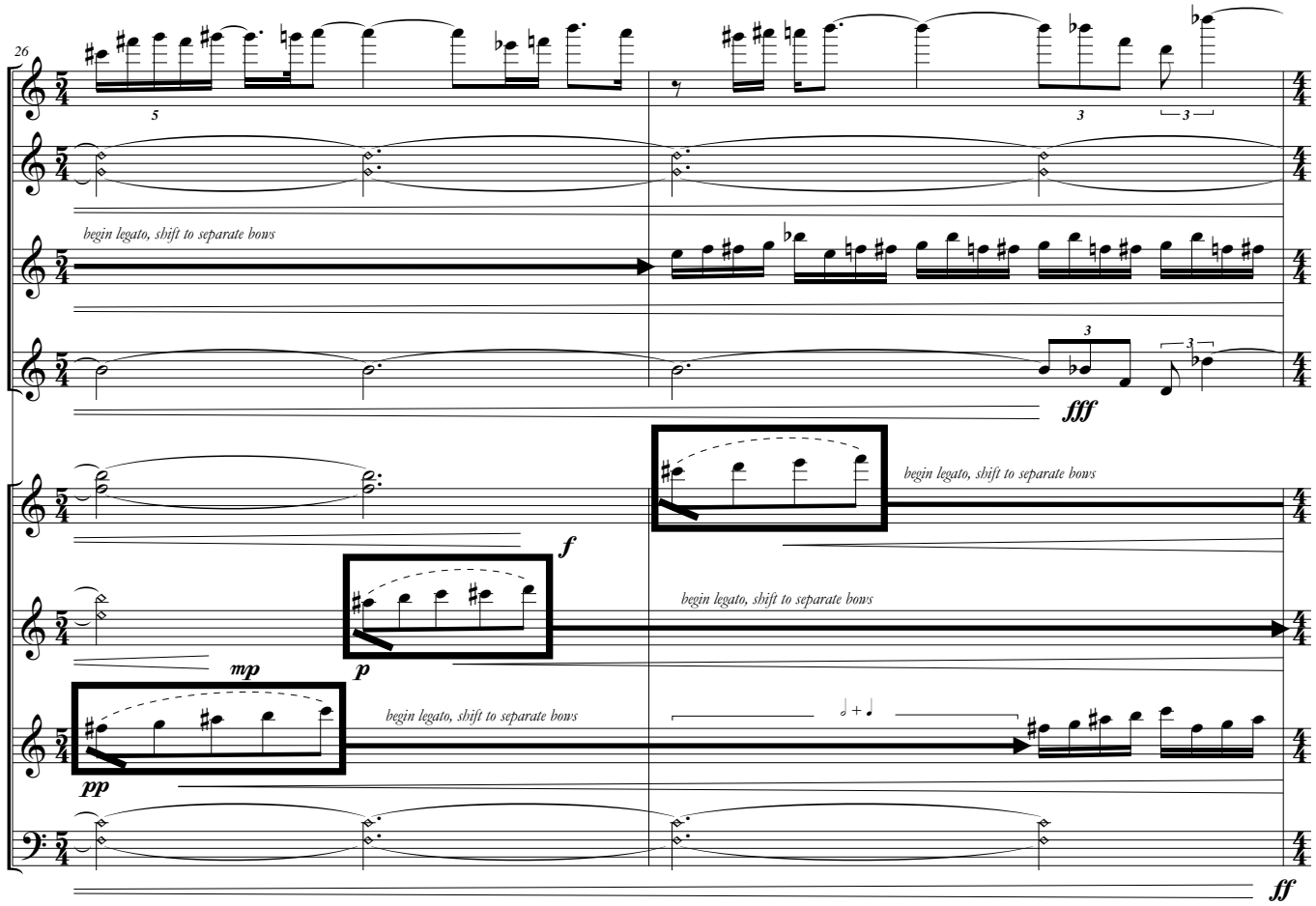
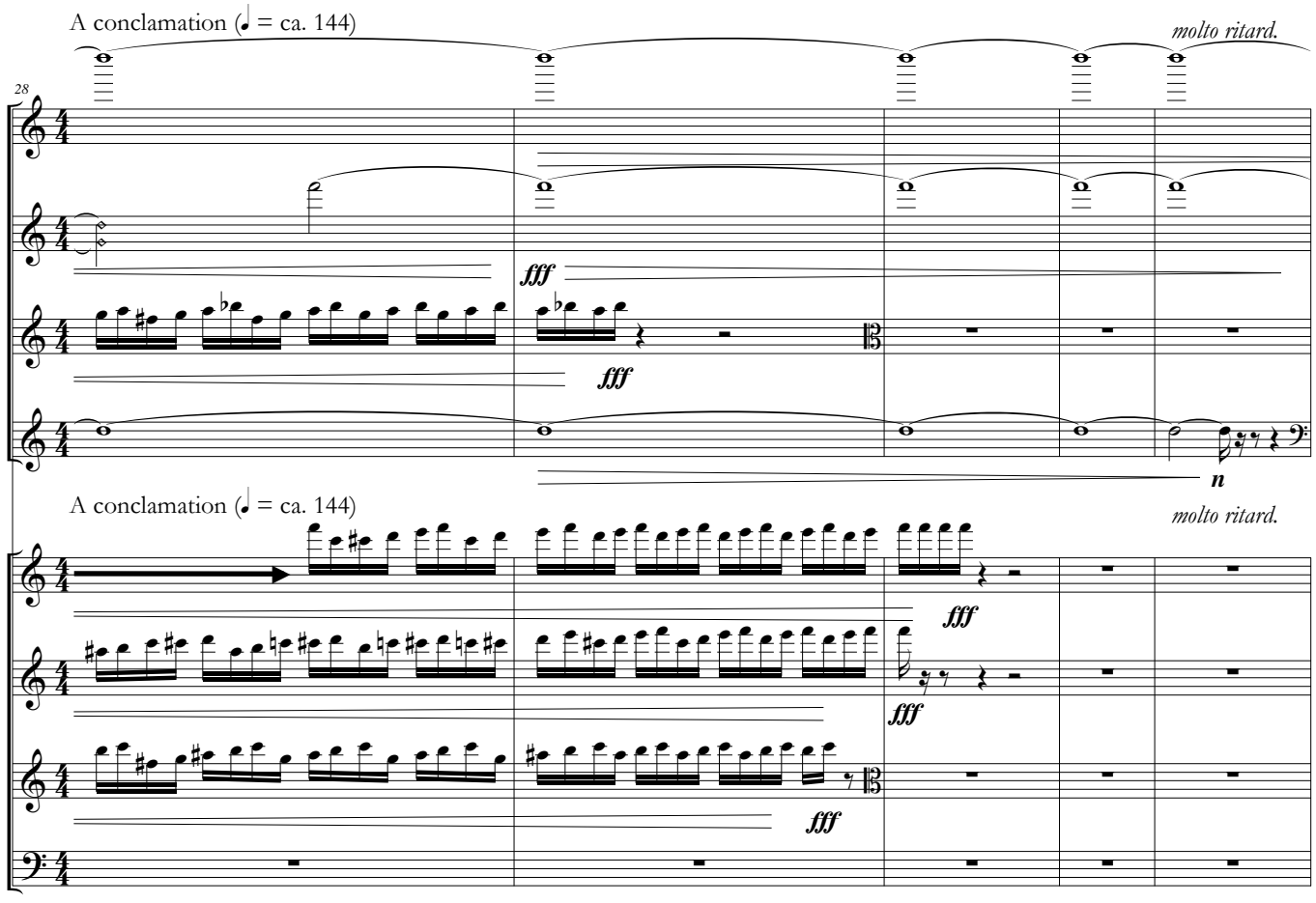
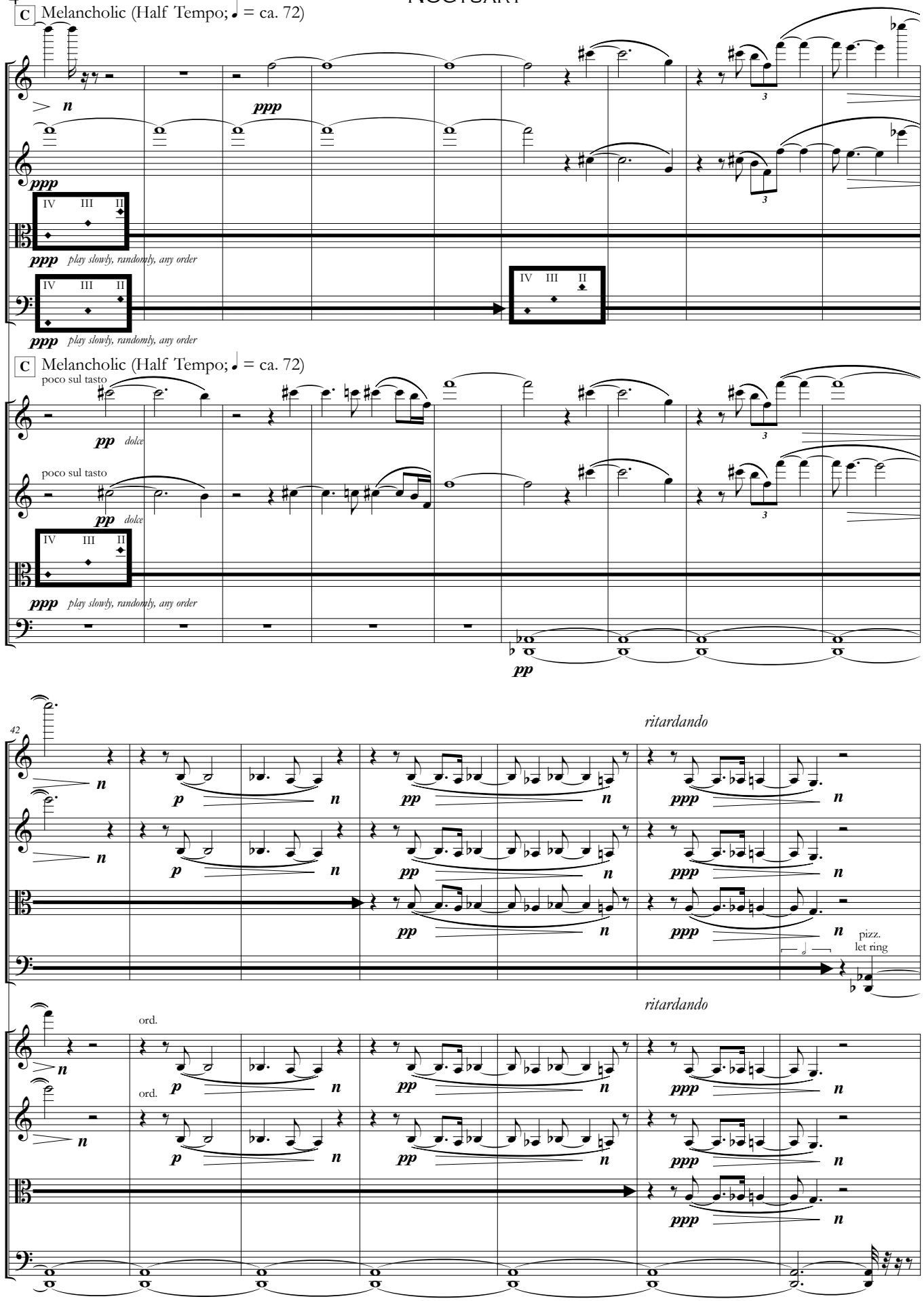
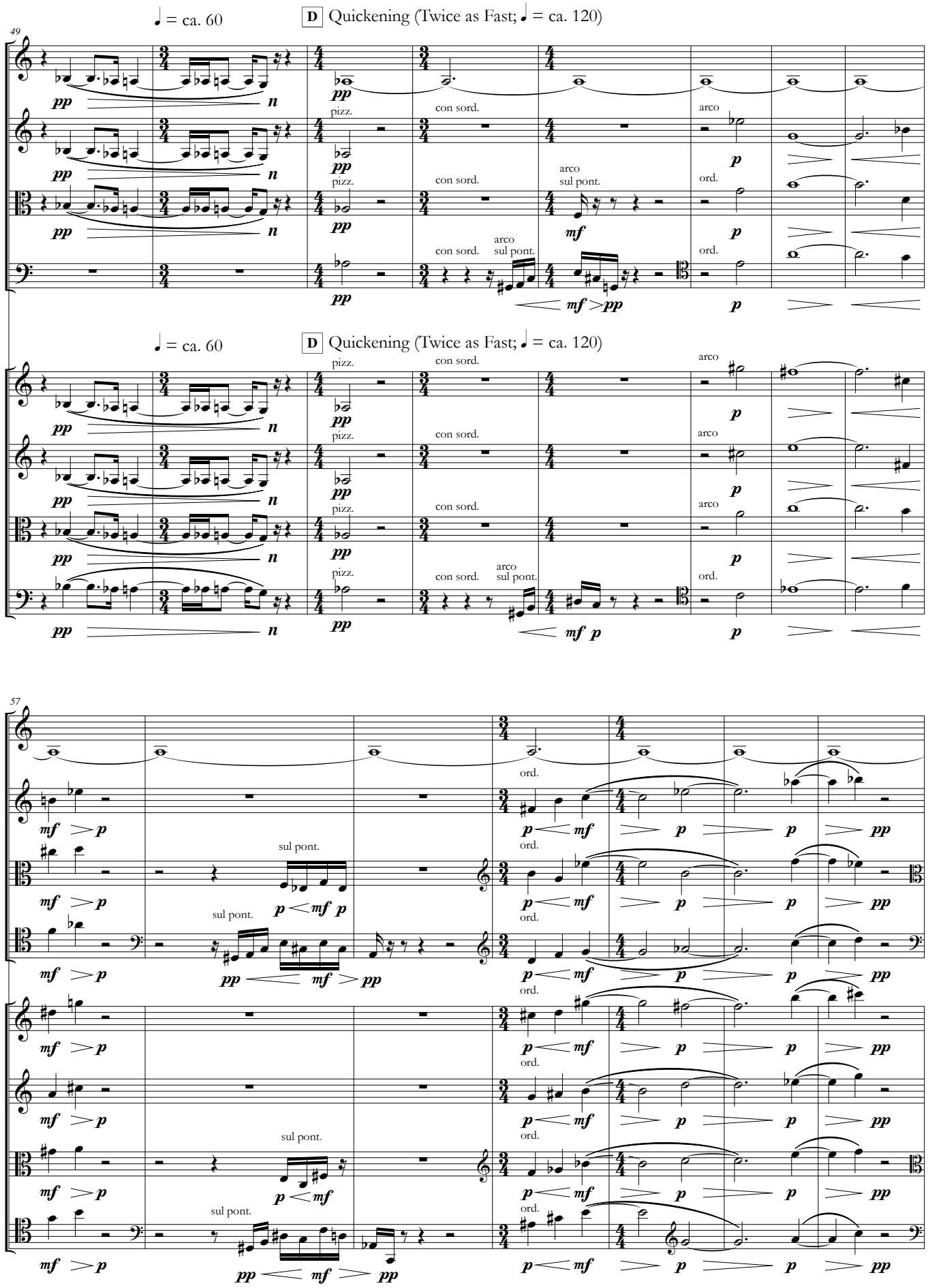
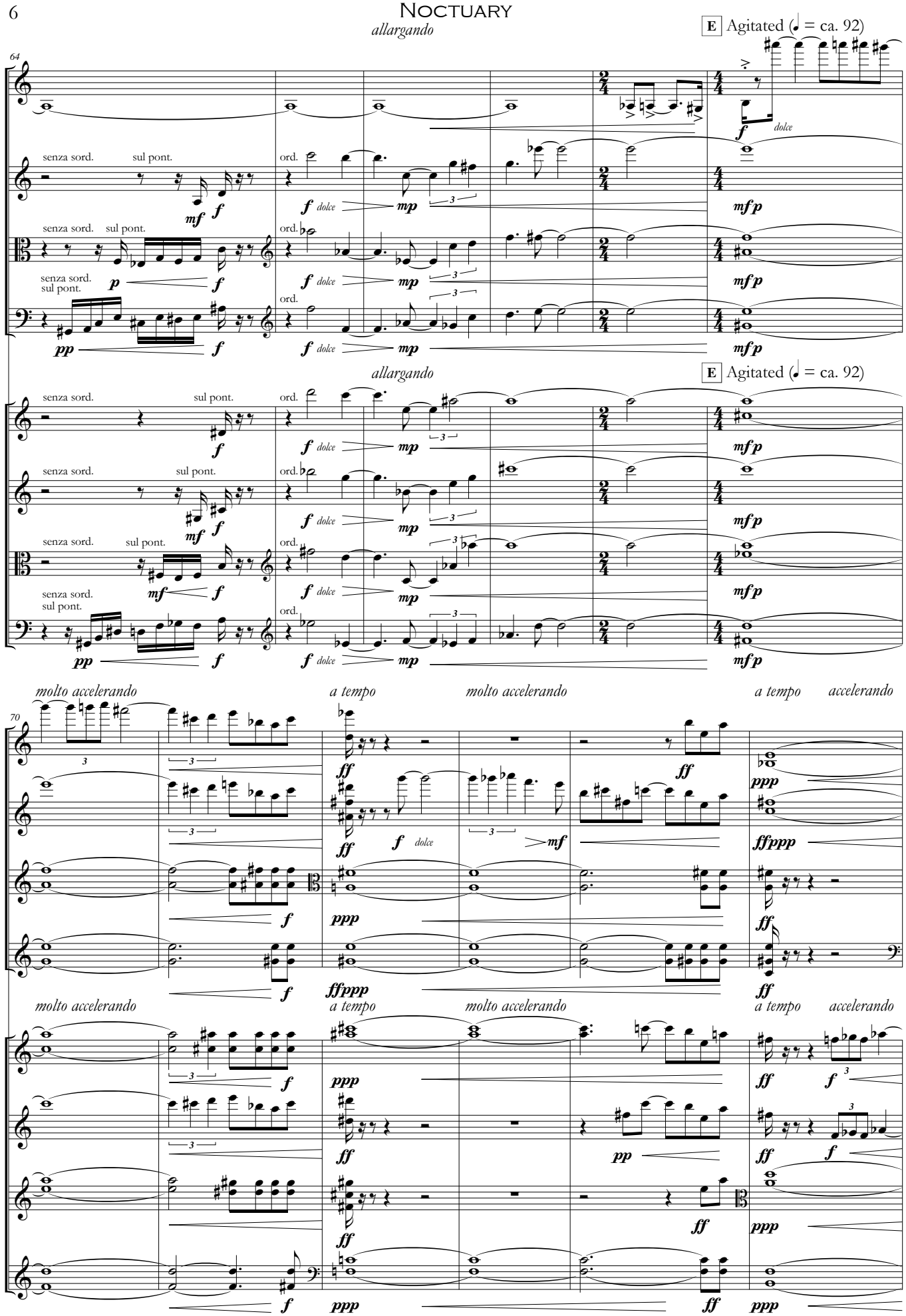

17
p
pp
p
pp
I
sul G & D
sul D & A
II
sul C & G
sul C & G
accelerando
22
B
fff
I
sul D & A
sul C & G
mp
pp
accelerando
B
II
mp
sul D & A

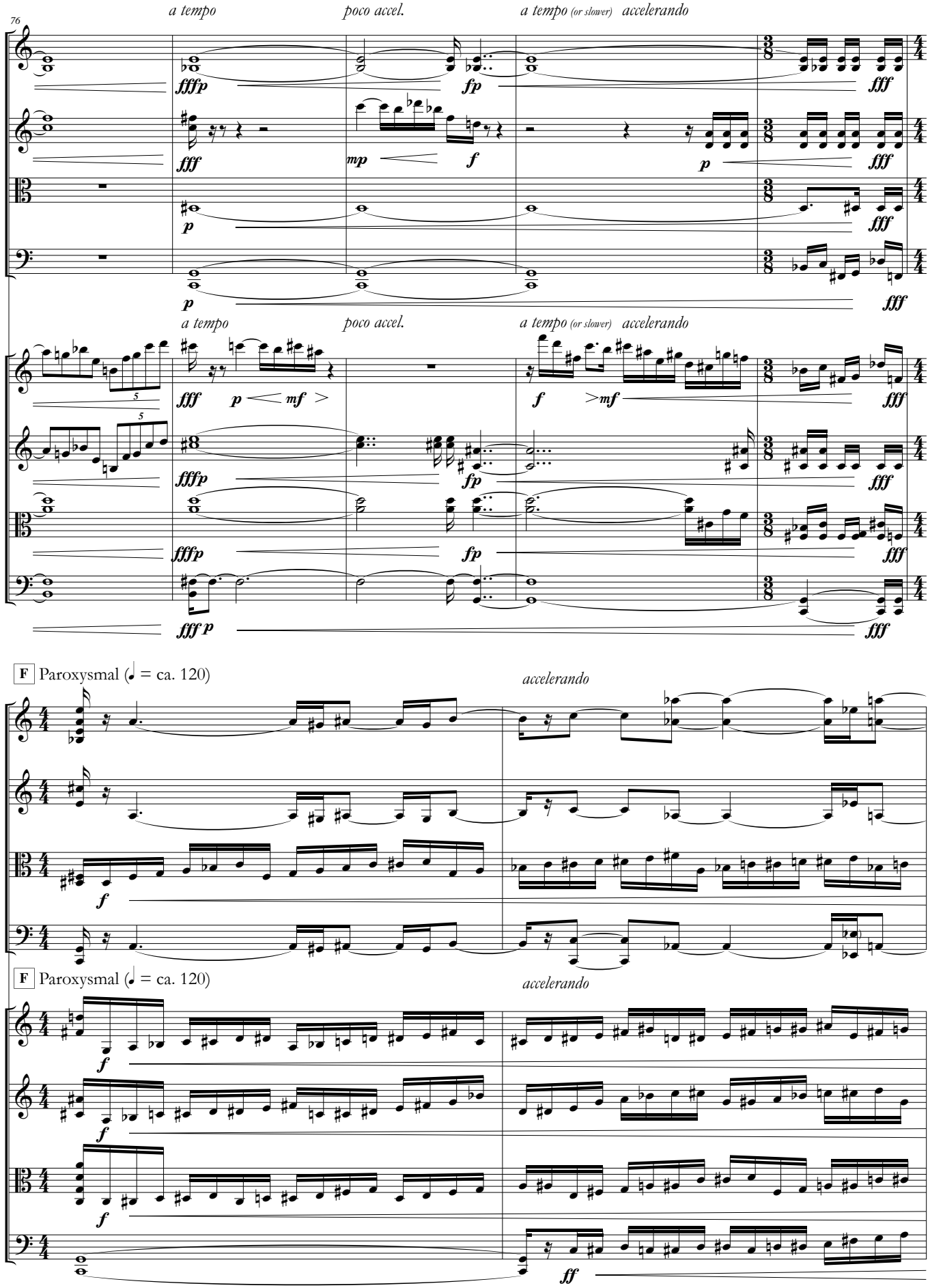

26
I
II
begin legato, shift to separate bows
fff
f
p
mp
pp
ff

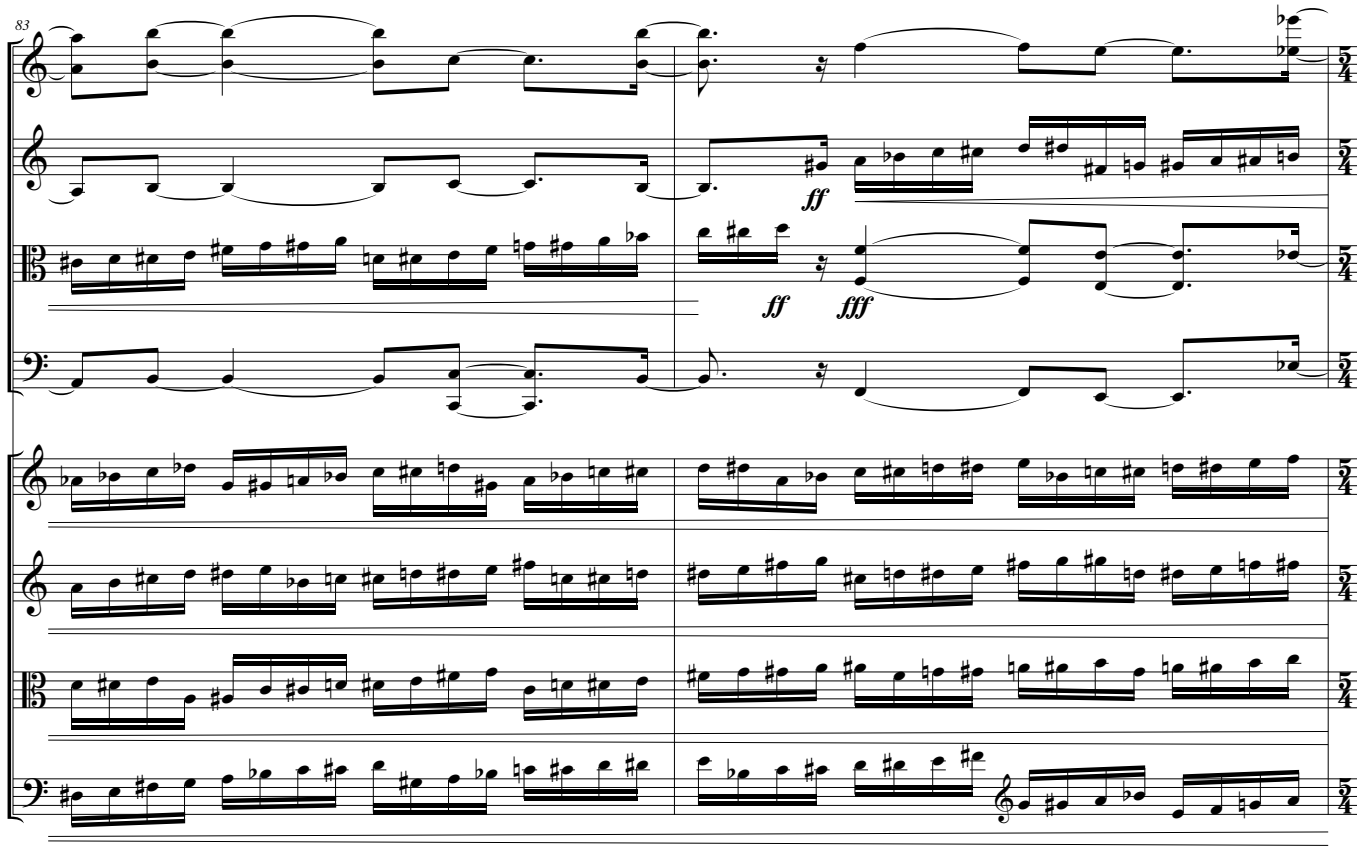

A conclamation (♩ = ca. 144)
molto ritard.
28
I
II
fff
n

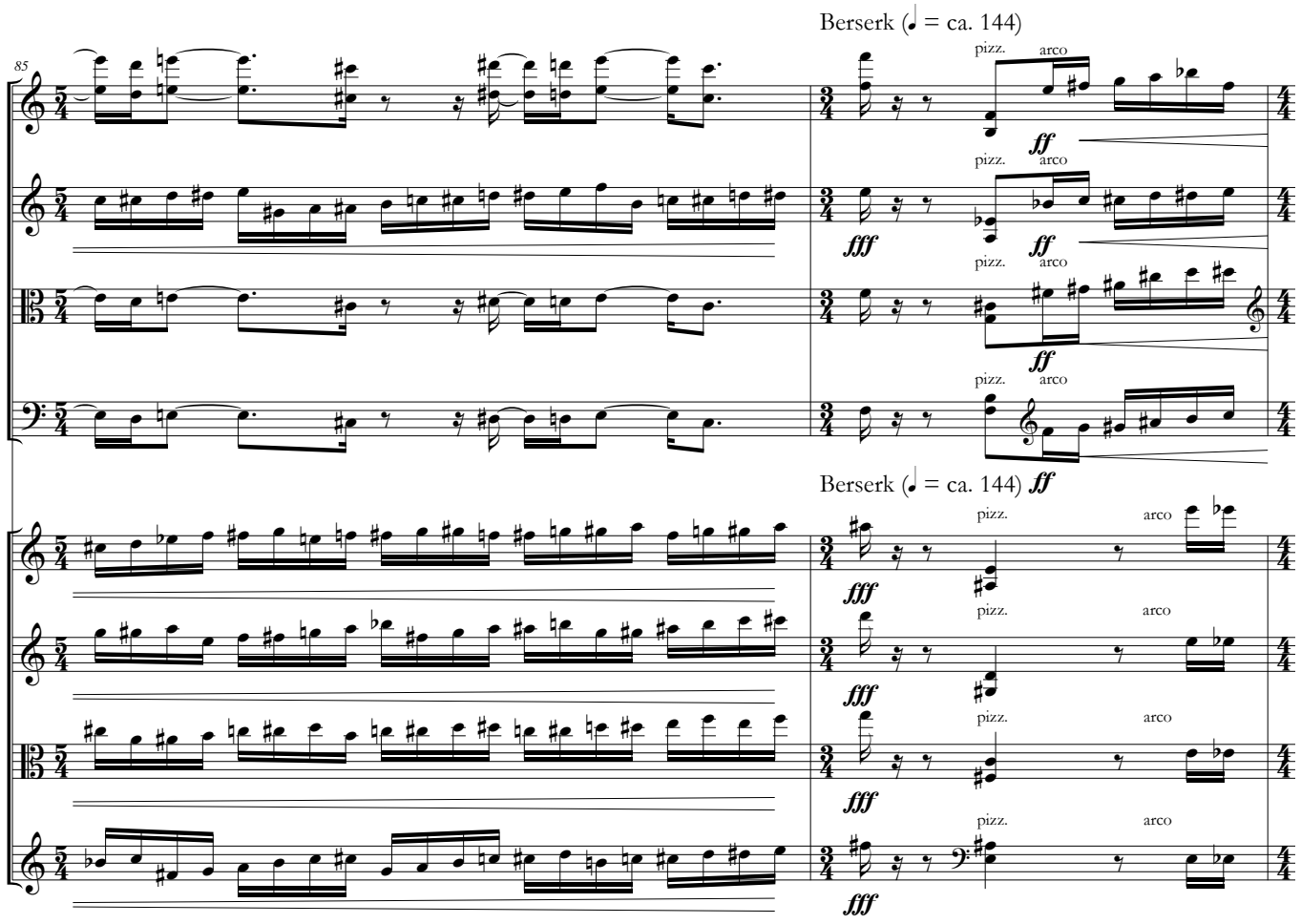

C Melancholic (Half Tempo; ♩ = ca. 72)
I
IV III II
ppp play slowly, randomly, any order
C Melancholic (Half Tempo; ♩ = ca. 72)
poco sul tasto
pp dolce
II
42
ritardando
pizz.
let ring
ord.

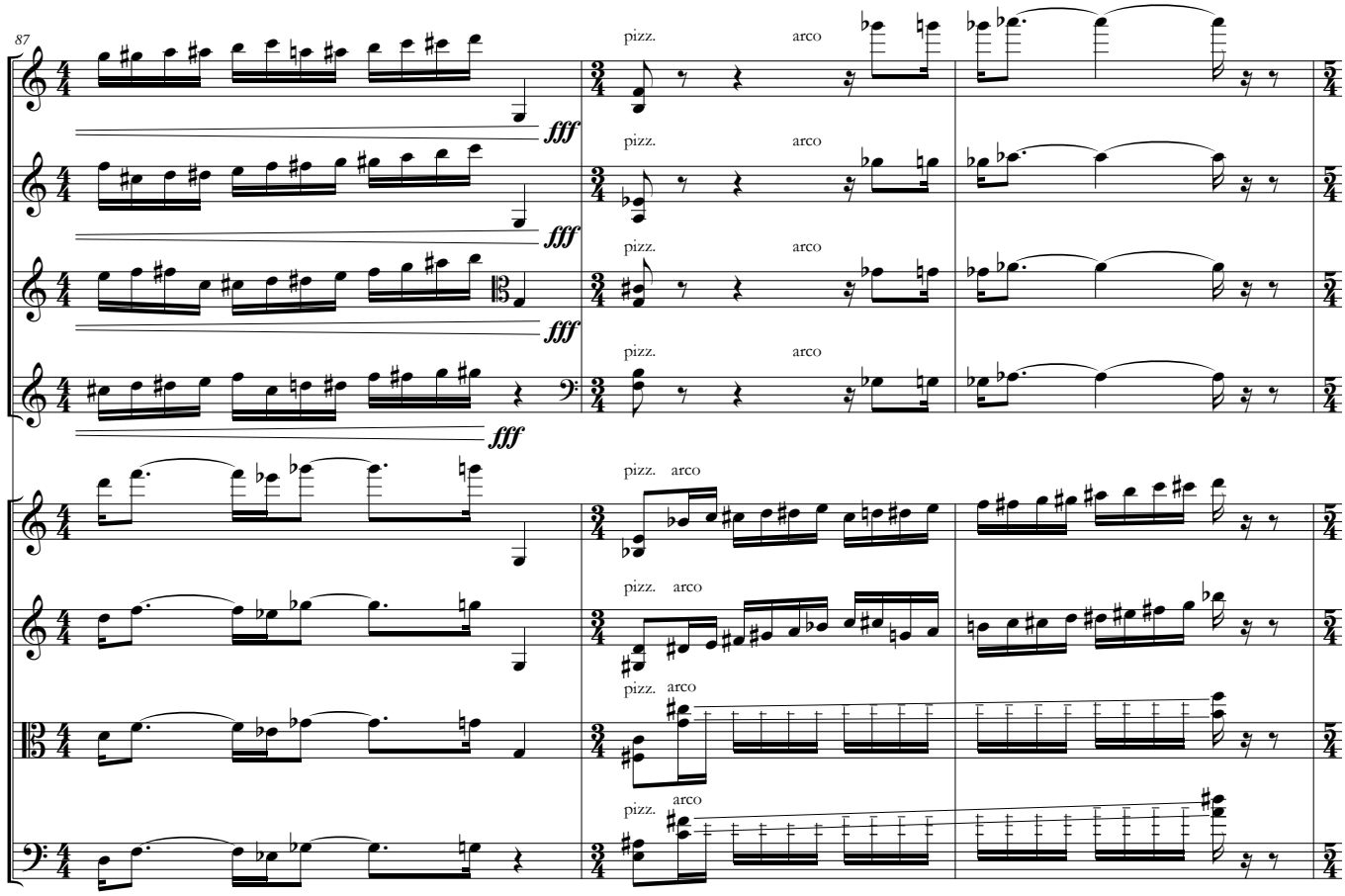

49
♩ = ca. 60
D Quickening (Twice as Fast; ♩ = ca. 120)
I
II
pizz.
con sord.
arco
sul pont.
ord.
57

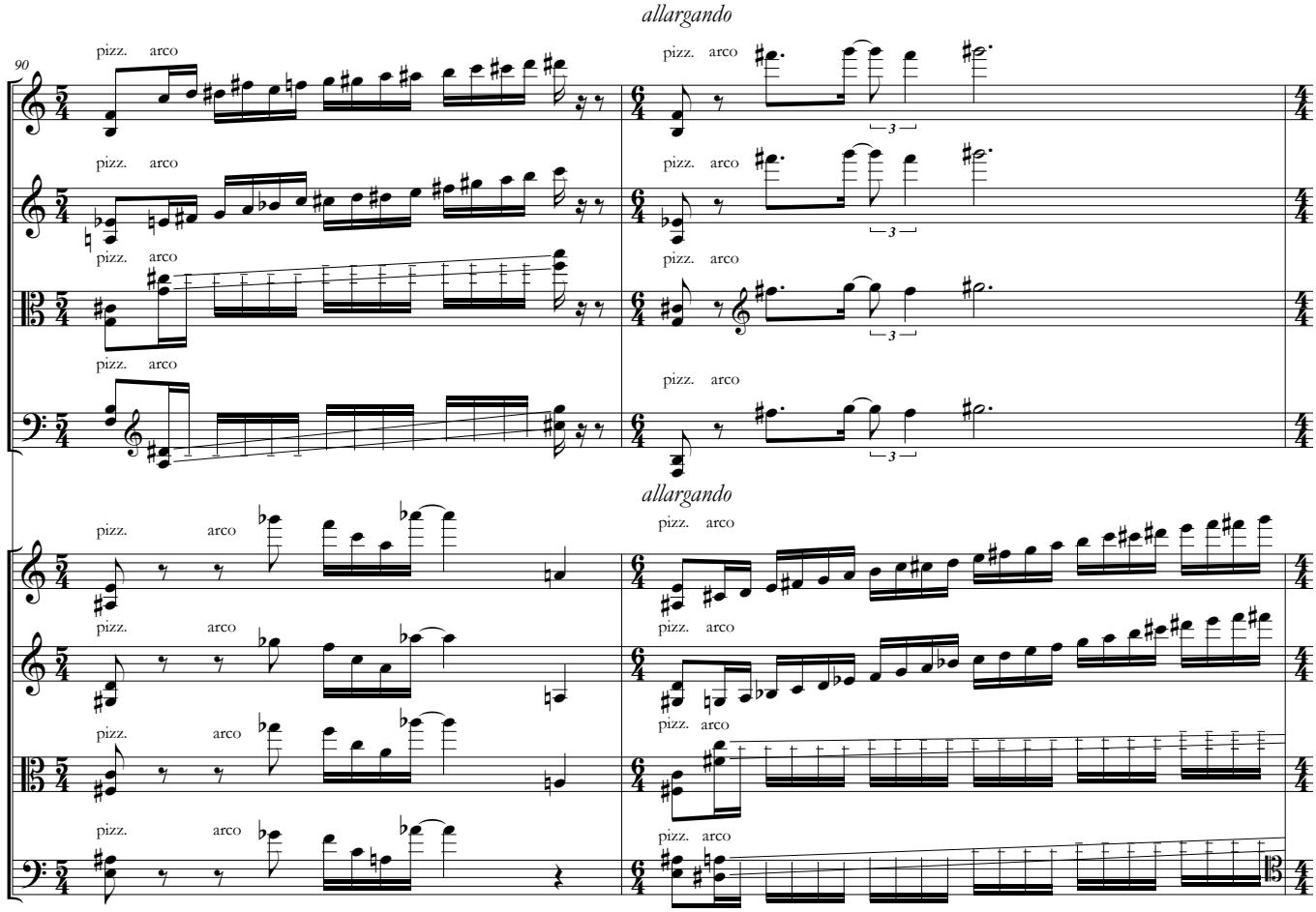

allargando
E Agitated (♩ = ca. 92)
64
I
II
senza sord.
sul pont.
ord.
dolce
molto accelerando
a tempo
accelerando
70

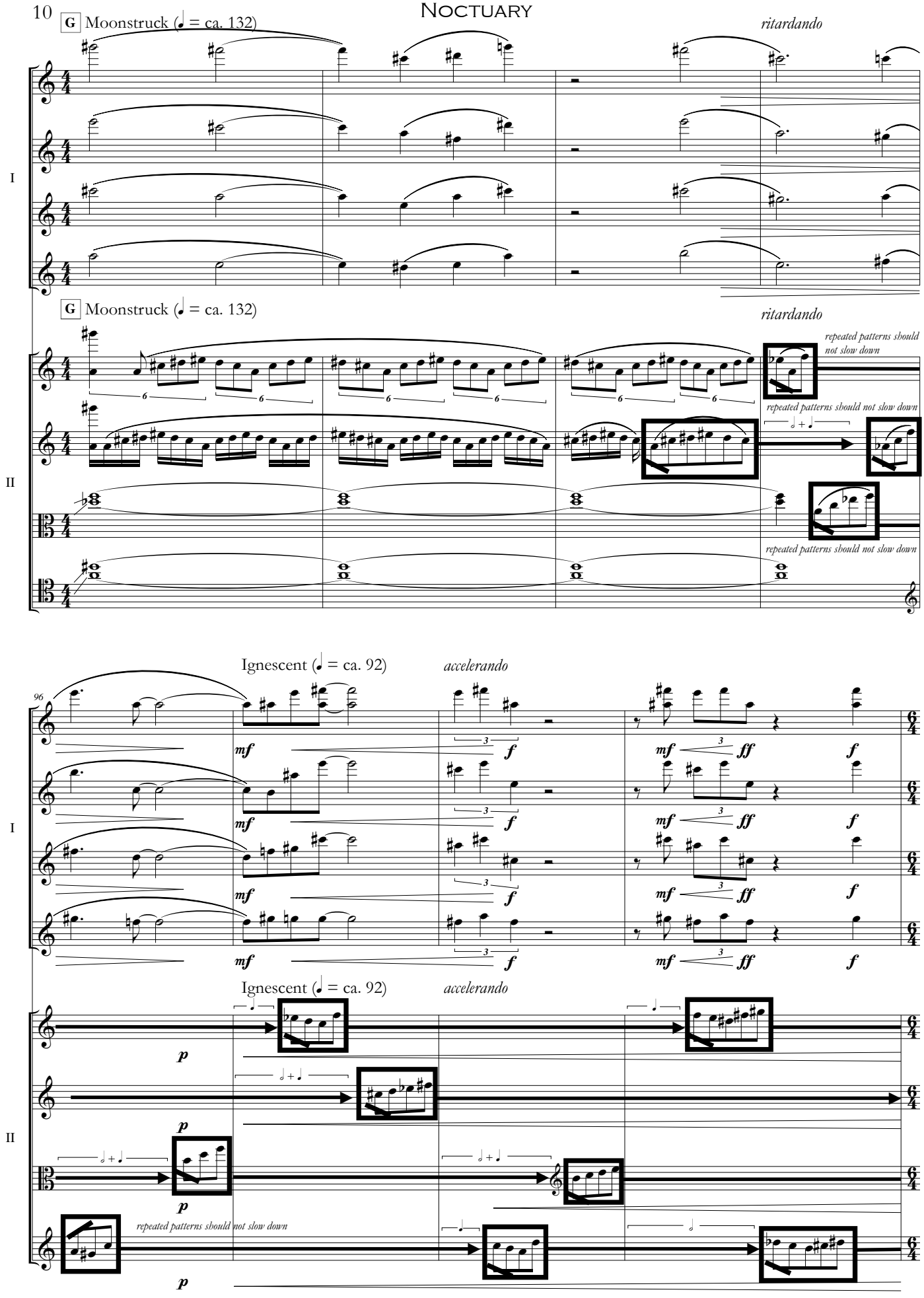

76
a tempo
poco accel.
a tempo (or slower)
accelerando
I
II
F Paroxysmal (♩ = ca. 120)
accelerando

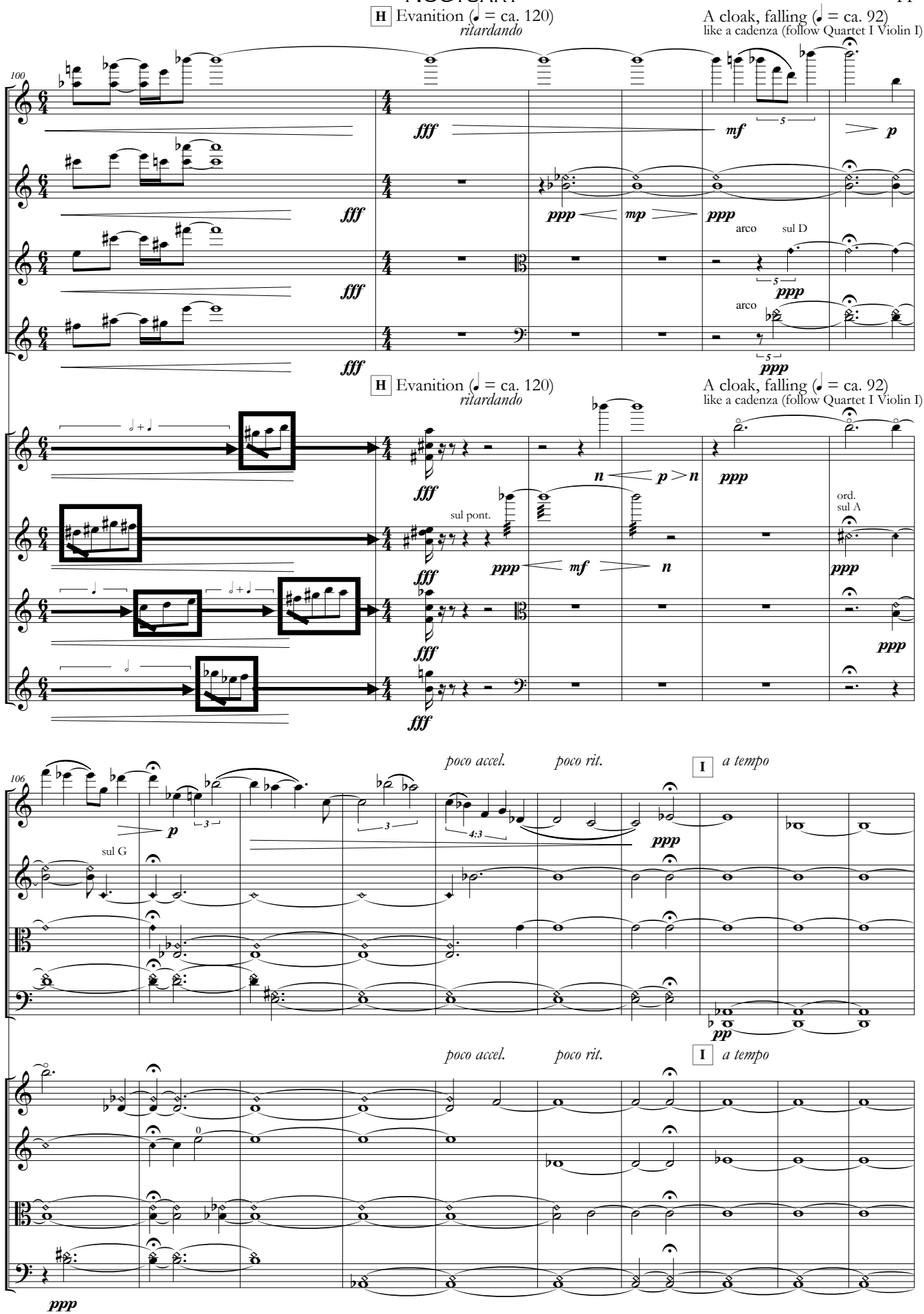

83
I
II
ff
fff

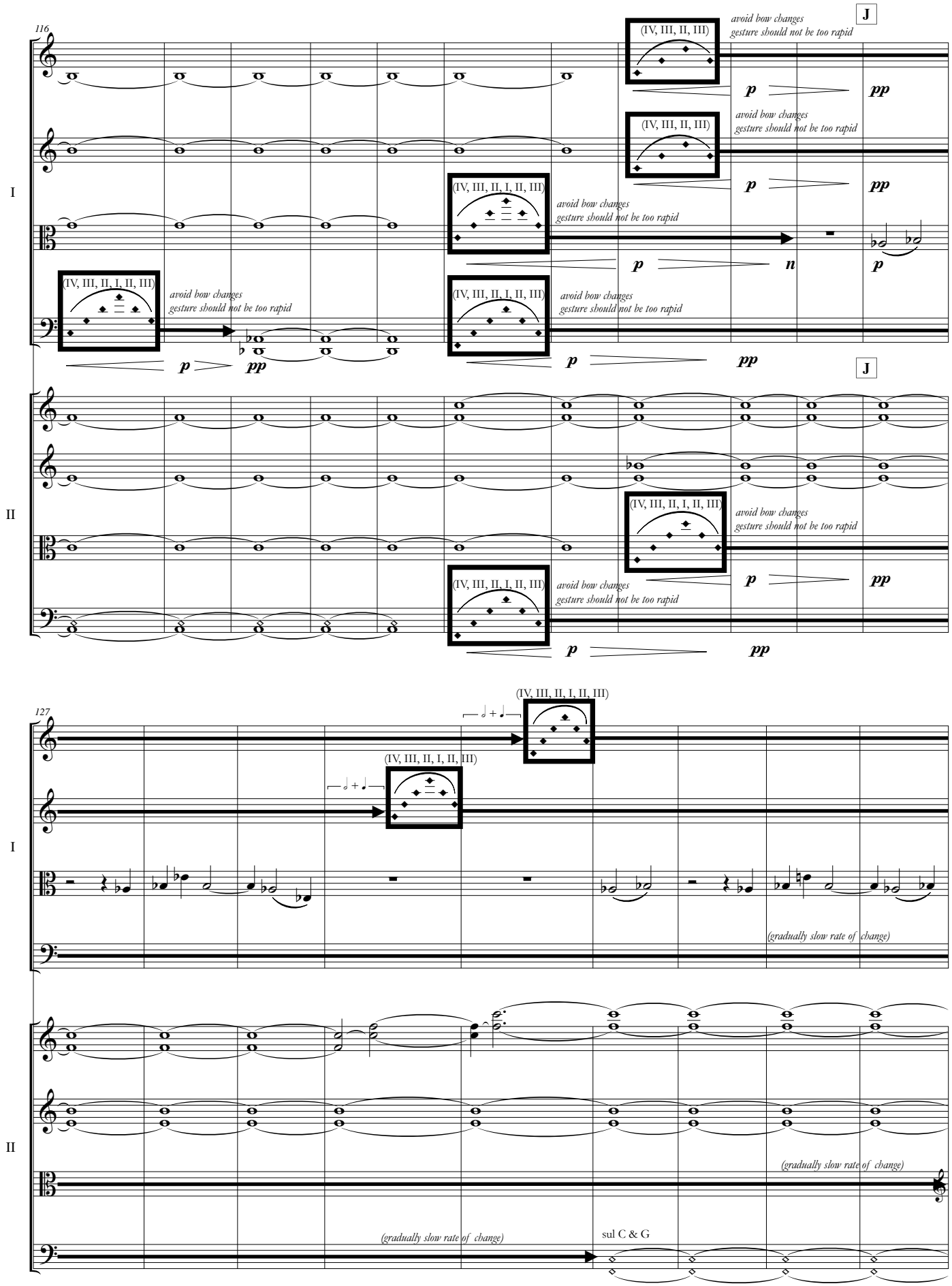

Berserk (♩ = ca. 144)
85
I
II
pizz.
arco
ff
fff
Berserk (♩ = ca. 144) ff

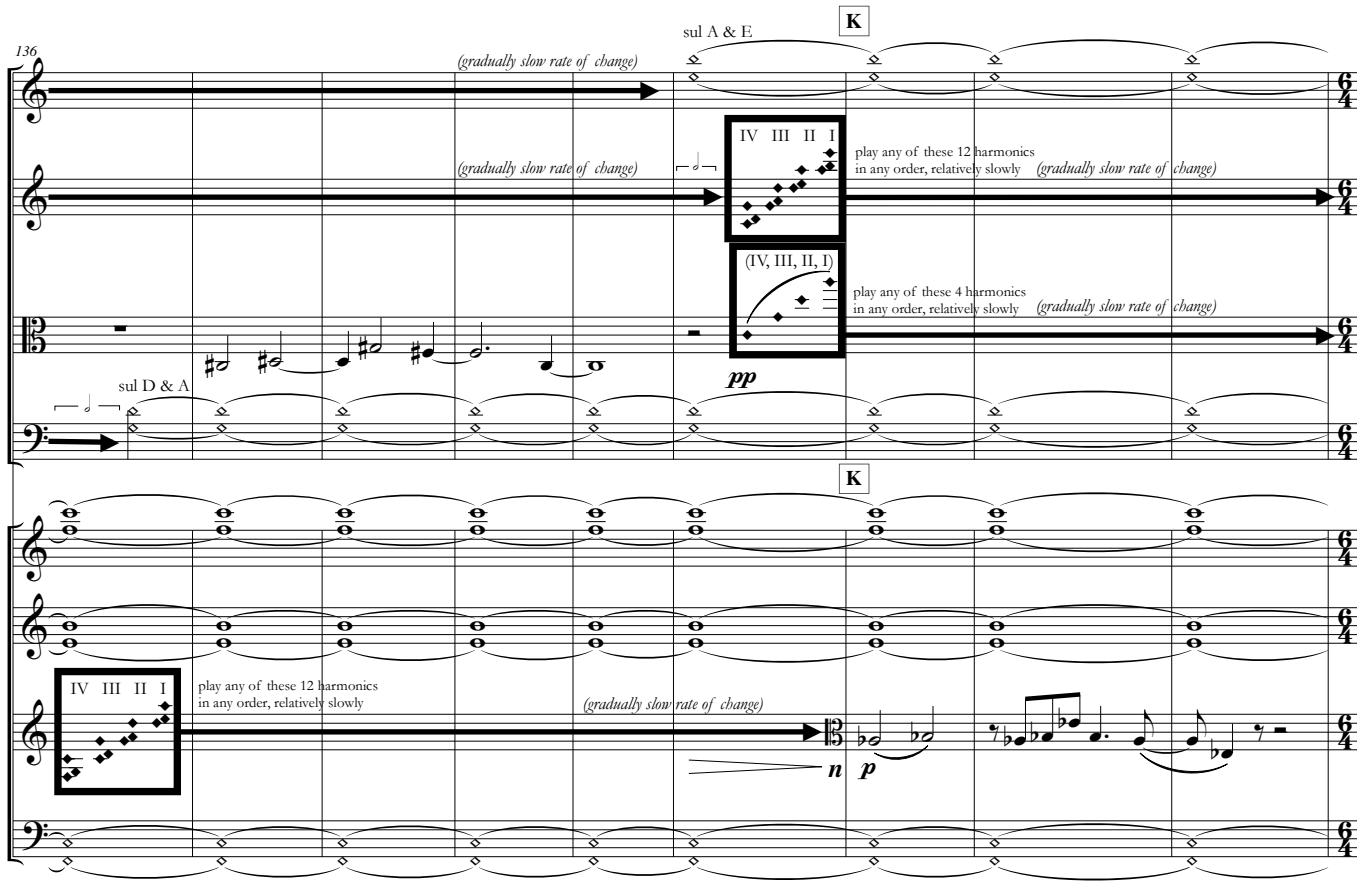

87
I
II
fff
pizz.
arco

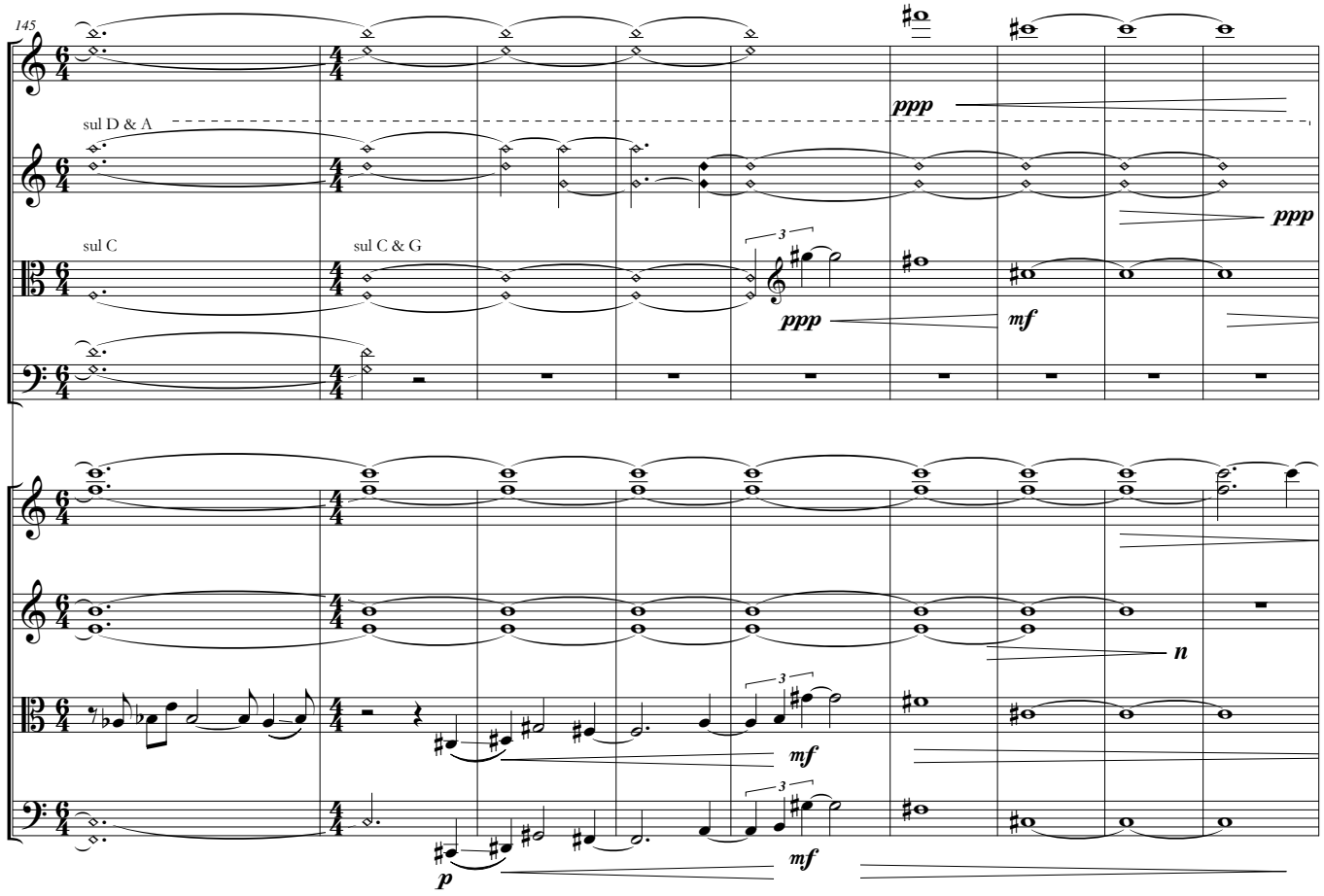

90
allargando
I
II
pizz.
arco
3

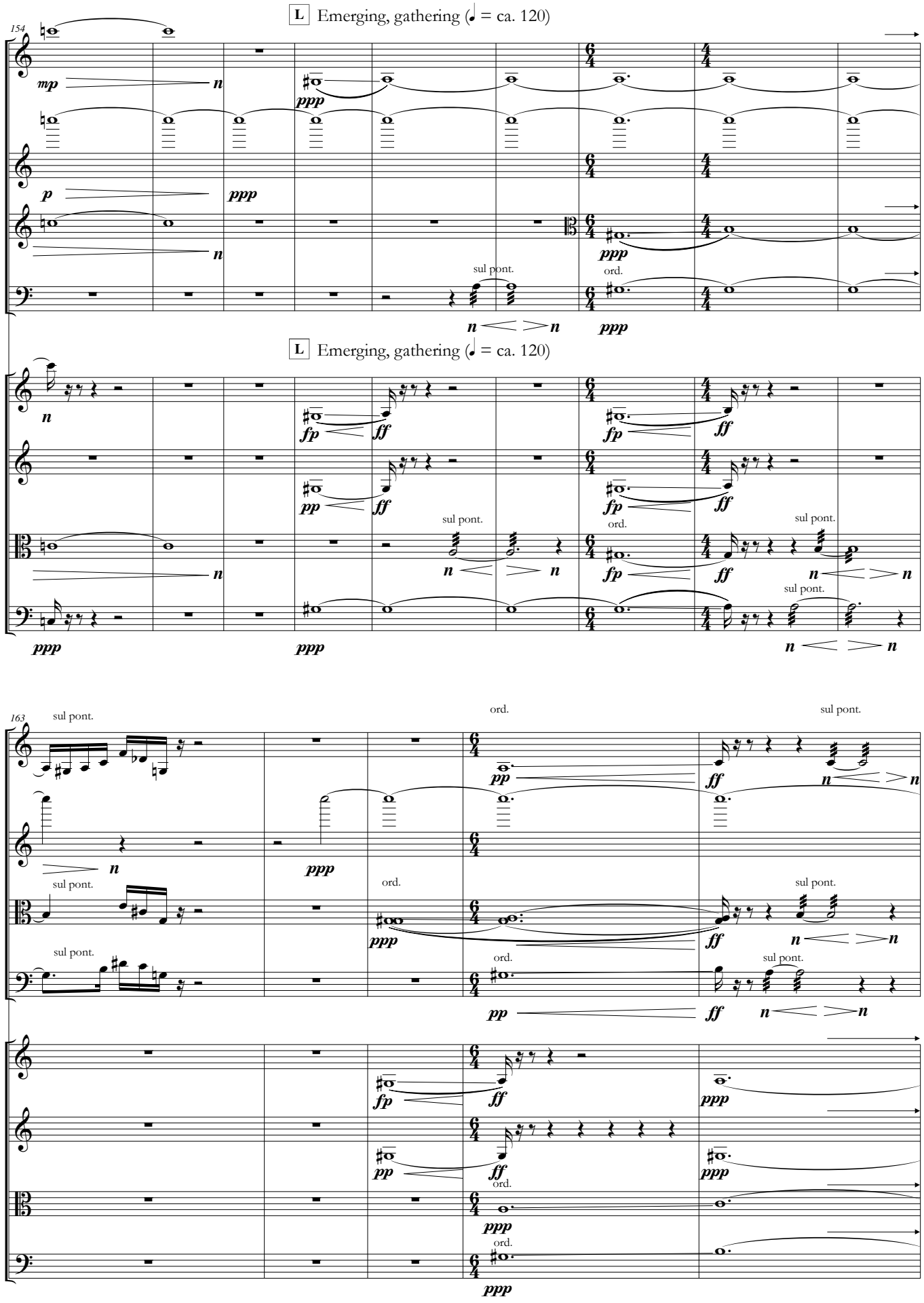

G Moonstruck (𝅗𝅥 = ca. 132)
ritardando
I
G Moonstruck (𝅗𝅥 = ca. 132)
ritardando
repeated patterns should not slow down
repeated patterns should not slow down
II
repeated patterns should not slow down
Ignescent (𝅗𝅥 = ca. 92)
accelerando
96
mf
f
ff
I
Ignescent (𝅗𝅥 = ca. 92)
accelerando
p
II
repeated patterns should not slow down

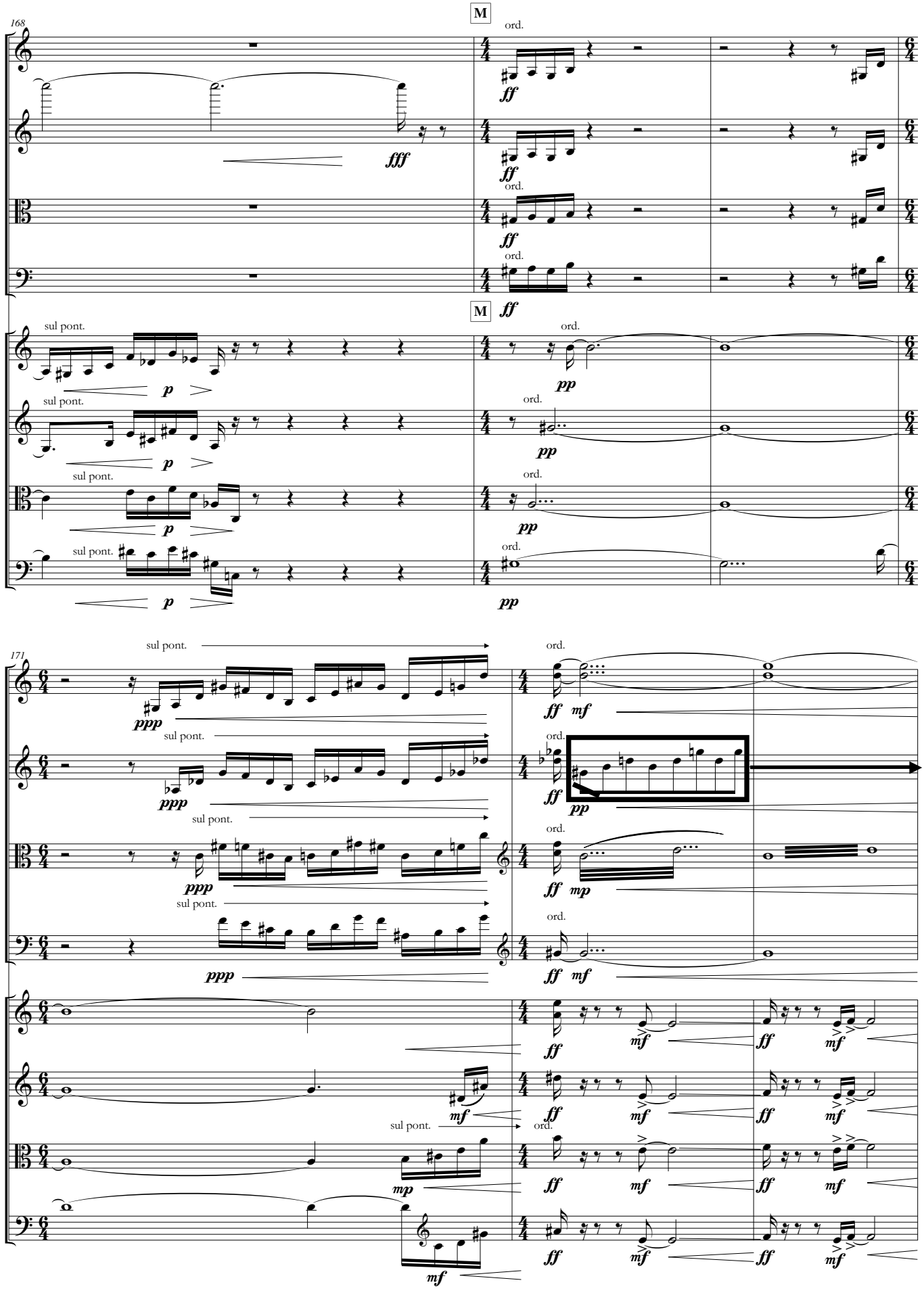

H Evanition (♩ = ca. 120)
ritardando
A cloak, falling (♩ = ca. 92)
like a cadenza (follow Quartet I Violin I)
100
I
II
fff
mf
p
ppp
mp
arco
sul D
sul pont.
ord.
sul A
n
106
poco accel.
poco rit.
I a tempo
sul G
4:3
pp

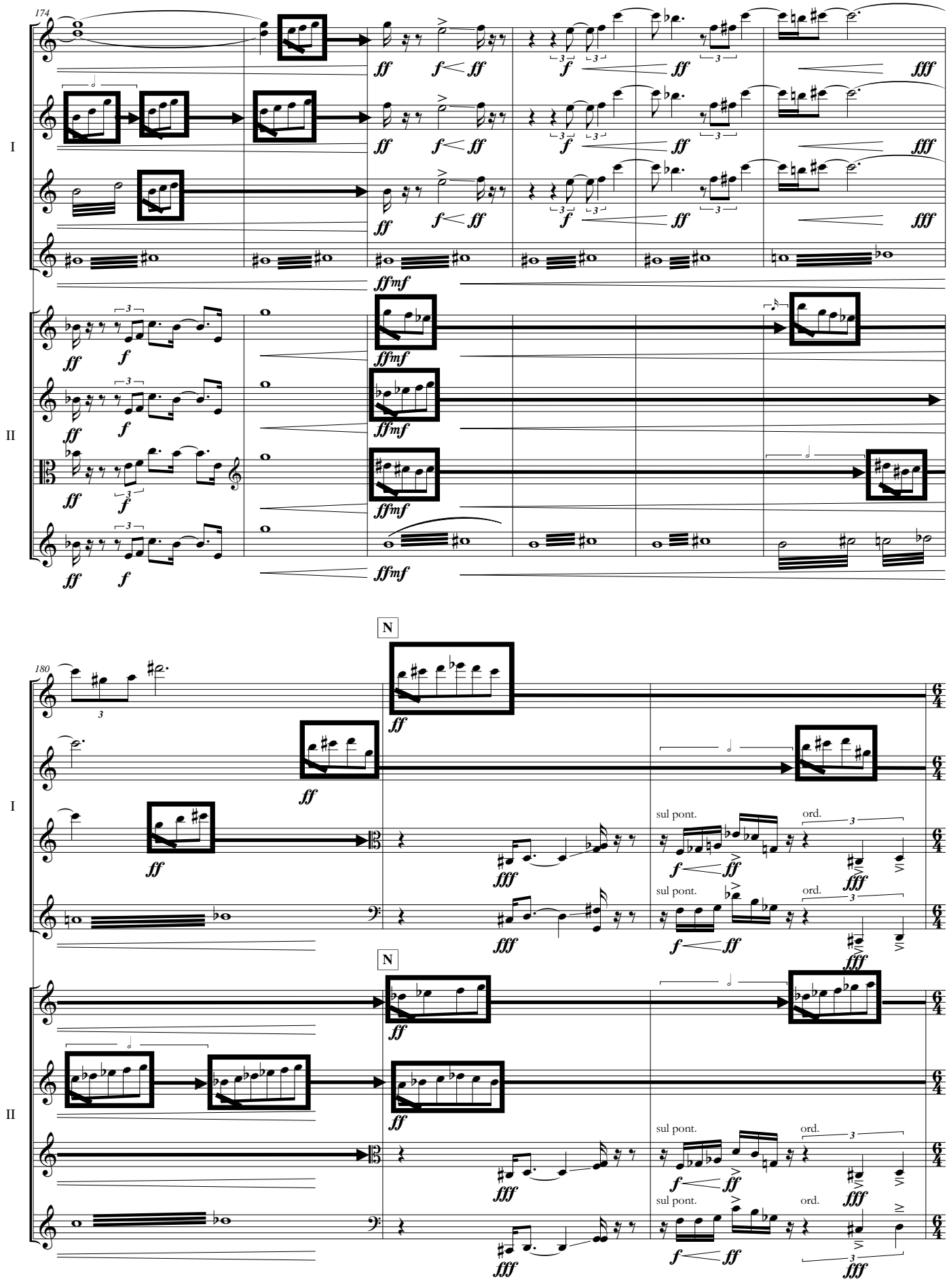

116
I
II
J
(IV, III, II, III)
(IV, III, II, I, II, III)
avoid bow changes
gesture should not be too rapid
p
pp
n
127
(gradually slow rate of change)
sul C & G

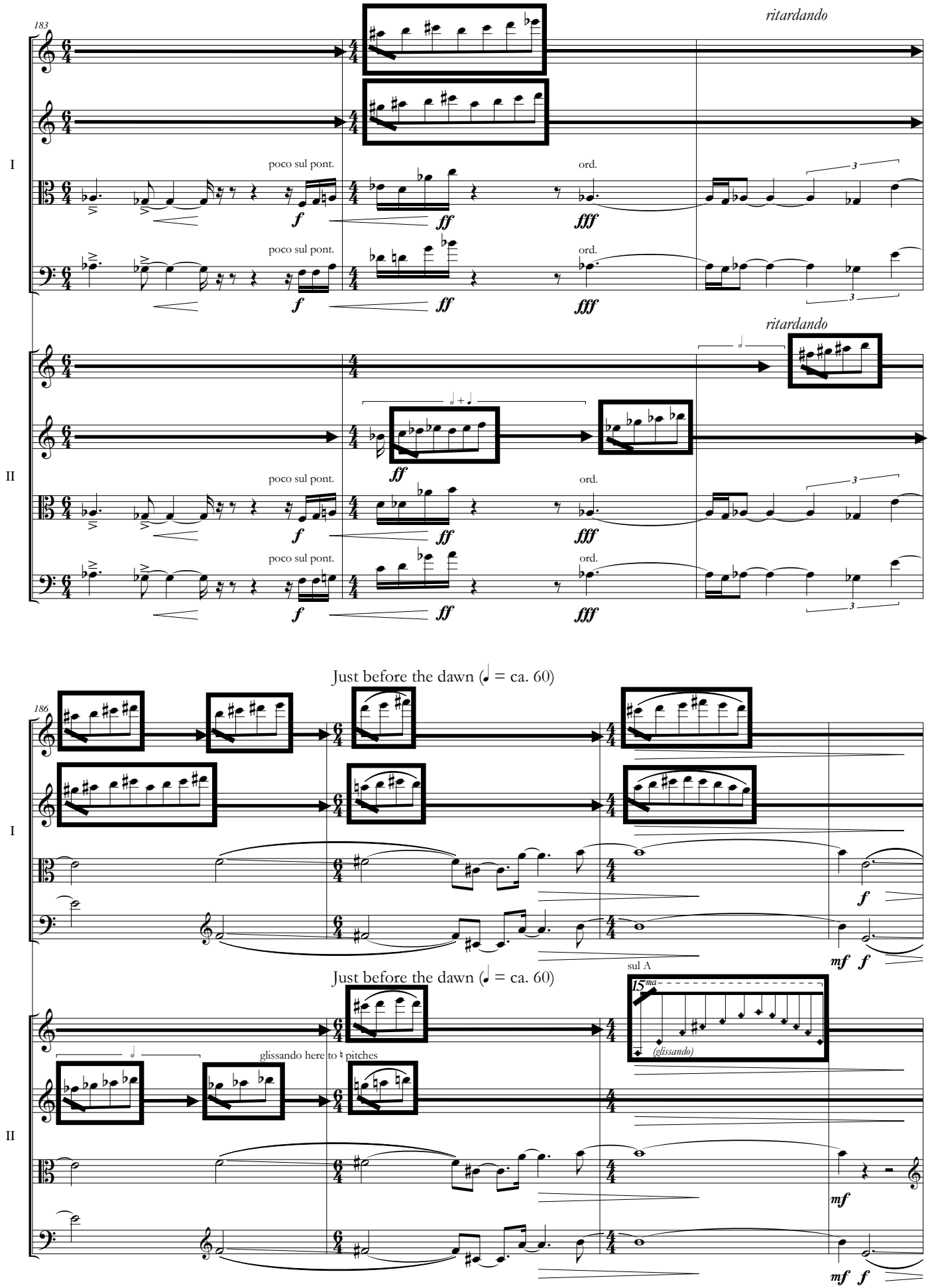

136
K
sul A & E
(gradually slow rate of change)
IV III II I
play any of these 12 harmonics
in any order, relatively slowly
(gradually slow rate of change)
I
(IV, III, II, I)
play any of these 4 harmonics
in any order, relatively slowly
(gradually slow rate of change)
pp
sul D & A
K
II
IV III II I
play any of these 12 harmonics
in any order, relatively slowly
(gradually slow rate of change)
n
p

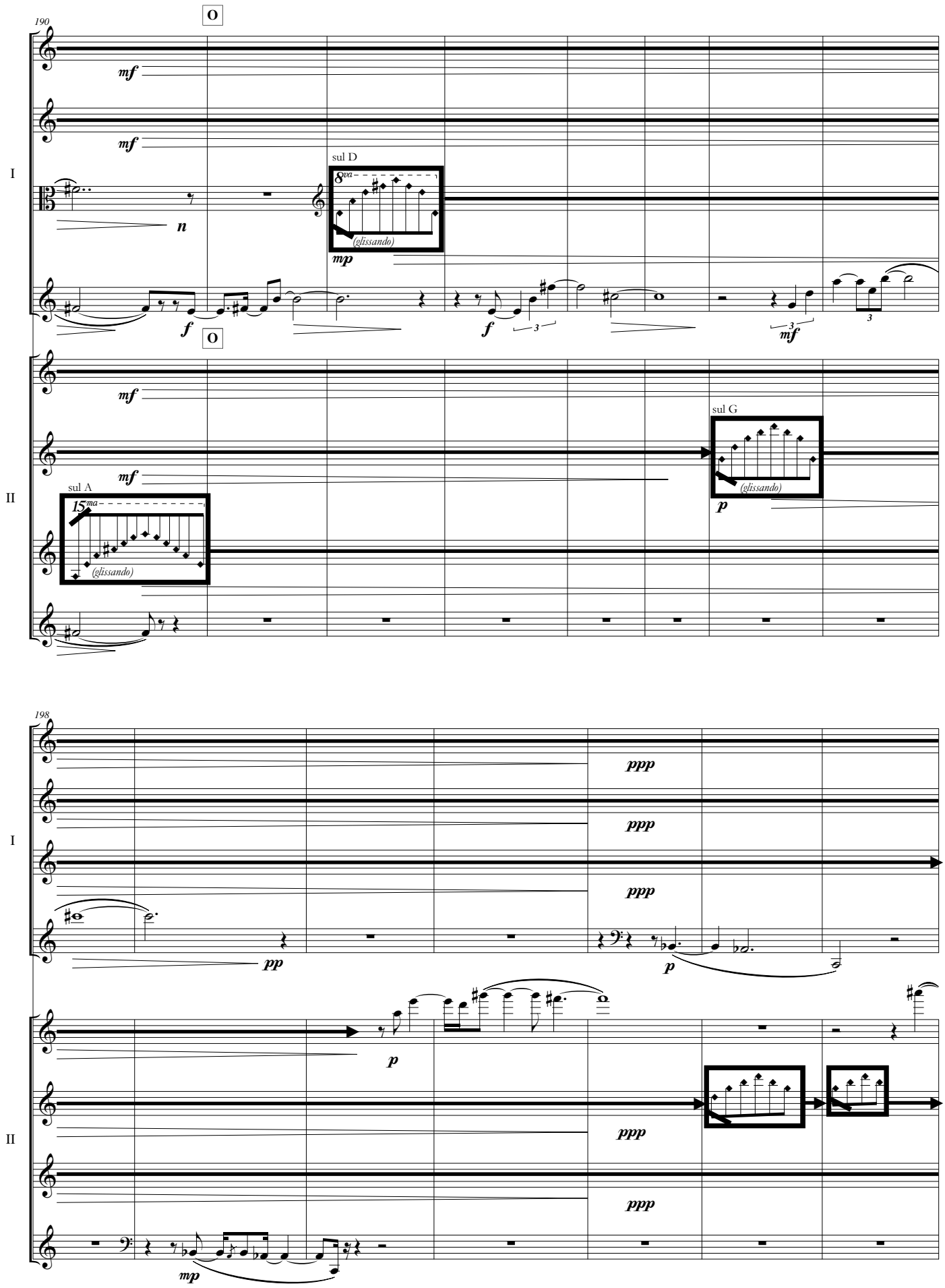

145
ppp
sul D & A
I
ppp
sul C
sul C & G
3
ppp
mf
II
n
3
mf
3
mf
p

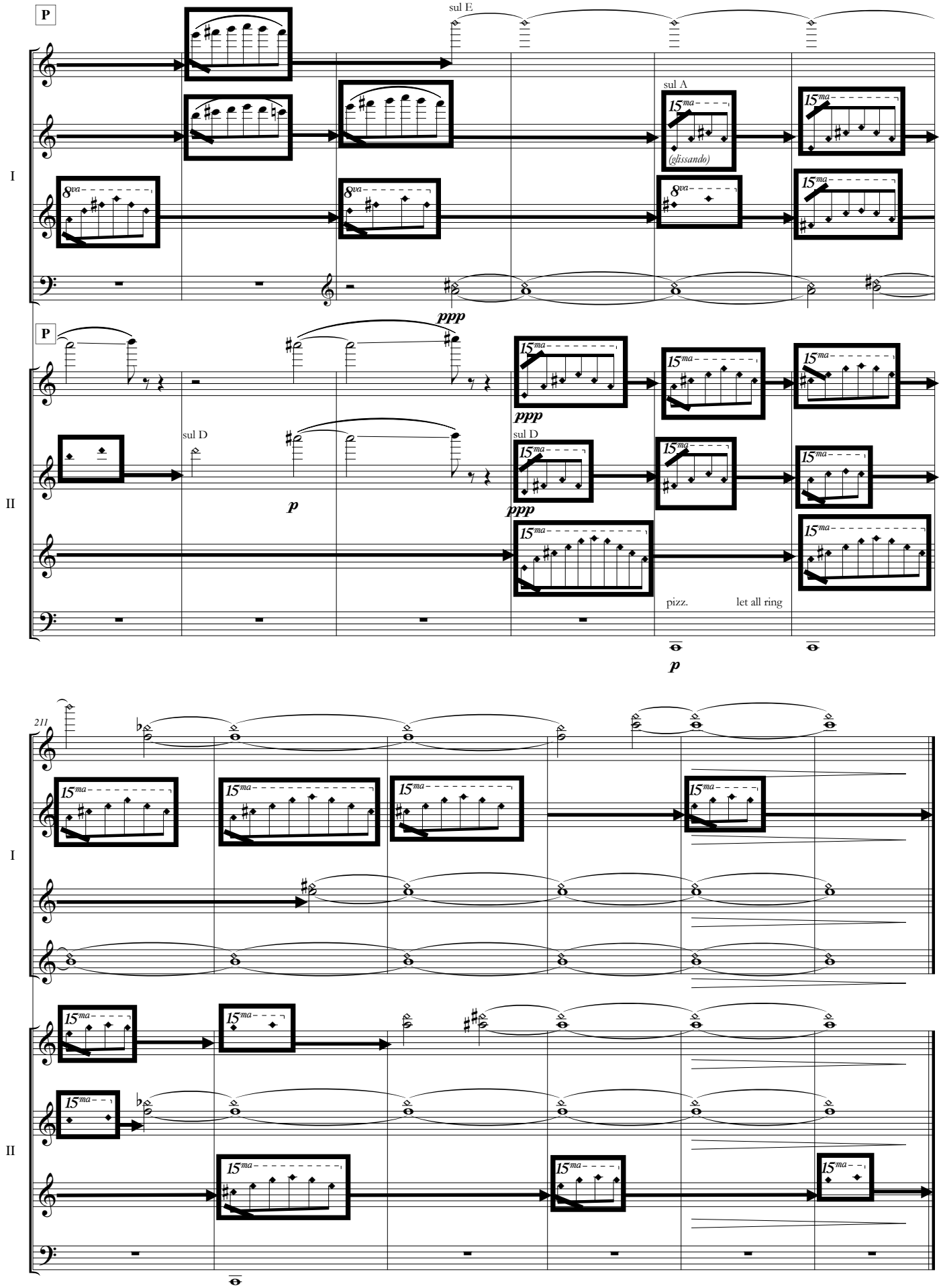

L Emerging, gathering (♩ = ca. 120)
154
I
II
sul pont.
ord.
163


168
M
ord.
ff
fff
I
sul pont.
p
pp
II
171
ppp
mf
mp


174
I
II
ff
f
ffmf
180
N
sul pont.
ord.
fff


183
ritardando
I
poco sul pont.
ord.
f
ff
fff
II
ritardando
186
Just before the dawn (♩ = ca. 60)
sul A
15ma
(glissando)
glissando here to ♮ pitches
mf


190
O
mf
mf
I
sul D
8va
(glissando)
mp
n
f
f
3
3
mf
O
mf
mf
sul G
(glissando)
p
II
sul A
15ma
(glissando)
198
ppp
ppp
ppp
I
pp
p
p
ppp
ppp
II
mp


P
sul E
sul A
(glissando)
I
ppp
P
sul D
p
ppp
sul D
ppp
II
pizz.
let all ring
p
211
I
II