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String Quartet

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SCORE

STRING QUARTET

JON PAUL MAYSE

Program Notes

In 1939, when he began the painting *The Sunlit Terrace*, Pierre Bonnard and his partner, Marthe de Méligny, of 50 years lived in Normandy, France. The next year, the Nazis would invade France, forcing Bonnard and his wife, in their 70s, to flee to Vichy. Between 1939 and 1946, Bonnard lived under Nazi occupation and would lose a close friend, his brother, and then his wife. From his destroyed home in Normandy, after his return, he finished *The Sunlit Terrace.*

The painting, however, reflects none of that experience. In orange- and violet-reds, it is a wide landscape of a garden on a summer day. On either side of the garden are two sides of a house, one with an awning and one with a window looking into a room where someone is reading. It is a picturesque scene and typical of Bonnard, lush with color and framed by architecture. Like most of his other paintings, it is likely painted from memory. His output is filled with candid paintings of his wife in domestic tranquility, memories of happy days, though his life was often complex and his relationships strained. Bonnard's paintings are manufactured memories, idealized renderings of hoped-for realities.

Johannes Brahms, as a young pianist-composer, befriended two of the most prominent musicians in Germany: Robert and Clara Schumann. Robert, a journalist as well as composer, reviewed Brahms as, "fated to give expression to the times in the highest and most ideal manner." As Brahms got closer to the Schumanns, he developed a very passionate, platonic relationship with Clara. When Robert attempted suicide in 1854, Brahms was working on his op. 9 *Variations on a Theme by Schumann*. The work stems from Schumann's own usage of the variation form, miniature works of fantasy and character. In the first half, Brahms follows Schumann's form, even marking the manuscript with **B** for Brahms and **Kr** for Kreisler, a reference to Schumann's *Kreisleriana*, a set of miniatures Schumann saw as a self-portrait. In the second half, the rhetoric changes. Brahms remembers Robert, tracing his life through music. Is Brahms reacting to Robert's suicide, memorializing his friend? The final variation is a soft, funereal chorale, with emptiness between the chords in the right hand.

His *Piano Sonata no. 30 in E Major, op. 109* is one of Beethoven's last piano sonatas, written after he had stopped performing due to his deafness. There is a rumor that the low trills of the B-section are the only sounds Beethoven, now significantly deaf, could hear, and only because of the incredible vibrations they would have caused. There is little to substantiate that claim, but what would hearing music have been like for Beethoven? No doubt that his inner ear was extraordinary, but his music must have sounded distant and muffled, like an echo of a distant love.

I have a very clear memory of walking with my now-fiancée on a warm, summer night in center city Philadelphia, right before we graduated, her passionately detailing the Beethoven, it's beauty, structure, lore, and the feeling of playing it. I can't not hear the piece without thinking of her, about Philadelphia, and about that time in our relationship and our lives.

This string quartet is, ultimately, about memory, about how we remember, hear, process, and forget music. When, after the actual sounds have long died away, we try to recall a long-forgotten melody, and it comes back transfigured by time and distance, what does this music sound like?

-Jon Paul Mayse, London

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General Notes

This work is about the bow. Every variation or idea has, at its core, a particular bow technique. They are as follows:

Theme	Parallel & Circular Bowing
Variation I	Fast, light bows & *jete*
Variation II	Col Legno and the bow as accent
Variation III	Fast, off the string bows; *sfz* bow speed; & transformations between noise/pitch
Variation IV	Full, double-stop bowing & the varieties of bow noise
Variation V	Portato, staccato, and legato bowings
Interjection	Overbow and Air Bows
Interaction I	Distance from to string and bowing parameters
Interaction II	Bowing Angle
Interaction III	Varieties of Bow Sounds

The 'Primer' sections relate to memory triggers. They serve, in some way, to introduce the next variation and to provide contrast with the variations. Emphasize the difference between pizzicato and arco sound. Much like the Variations and Interactions, these also explore various pizzicato techniques

Primer I	Body Percussion
Primer II	Behind the bridge
Primer III	Pizz. Angle
Primer IV	'Bell' Sound: Bartok Pizz. on Natural Harmonics
Primer V	Standard pizz., prepares the rhythmic element of the next variation

NOTATION

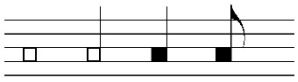
Abbreviations:

c.l.b./c.l.t.	Col Legno Battuto/Col Legno Tratto
h.p l.h. or l.h. pizz.	Hammer Pizzicato. Slam the fingers of the left hand down on the fingerboard, creating a dry, percussive sound. This sound is not loud, but try to play as loudly as possible.
ST/N/SP/X	Sul Tasto, Normal, Sul Ponticello, and On the Bridge. Exaggerate these positions.
VVS, VS, S, M, F, VF, VVF	V = Very; S = Slow; M = Moderate F = Fast. Relates to bow speed, e.g. VVS means Very Very Slow Bow.

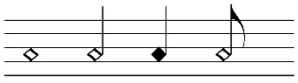
Circular Bowing: Arrows indicate direction; up = away from bridge, down = towards bridge Beginning at middle of bow, bow half-bow and back while simultaneously moving bow along strings. Bowings should last the duration of the note. A single curve indicates bow that direction for that note, while two arrows indicate a complete circle, with the moving away and back to its original position over the duration of the note. Sound should be an even transition between noise and pitch.

Parallel Bowing: Brush along strings with bow, up is away from bridge, down is towards bridge. A single arrow indicates bow in one direction, two arrows indicates move up and down over the same note. Bowings should be quick and do not need to last the duration of the note. Little to no pitch should be heard.

Other Bowings: **Interaction II** asks for triangle and square bowing. Triangle bowings involves two movements at 45° along/across the string and one parallel bowing across the string, making a triangle shape with the bow. A square bow is a movement across the string, followed by a movement along, moving between **SP** and **ST**.



Muffled Notes: Mute the strings by placing all four fingers on the strings at harmonic pressure. No pitch should sound, only noise, even when bowed normally. Durations shown: whole, half, quarter, eighth



Harmonic Notes: Standard harmonic technique. Durations shown: Whole, Half, Quarter, and Eighth. Note the difference between the half (empty) and quarter (filled) notes.

Individual Variations

Theme

Based on the Theme from the Beethoven.

Cello brushes along the strings with the left hand, creating a gesrtued airy sound with no pitch.

M. 11: The 'flaut.' with glissandi creates a similar sound as the cello from before, but with more volume. Bow should be whole bow, very fast.

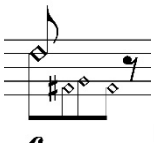
M. 16: This should sound like a rolled chord on a piano. Hammer the notes with the left hand, then catch the sound with the bow, like if you were to play a note on the piano and catch it with the sustain pedal. If there are issues with coordination or sound in a space, replace the hammered pizz. with col legno.

Variation I

From the first variation of the Beethoven

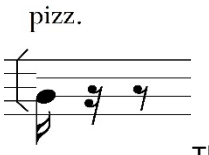
The 'flaut' gesture in this movement is airy, as before, but without the gesture

Viola: Exaggerate the *jete*. It should be elegant, but forceful. This is the octaves from the Beethoven.



For these gestures, the larger note should be more prominent and ring out over the grace notes. Sustain the larger note either by playing it as a double stop and crossing the strings to reach the other notes or by letting it ring out. These gestures should be done in one fast bow.

Primer II



This clef indicated behind the bridge. Each line indicates a string. In the example shown, the player should pluck their D string (or G if vla/vcl) past the bridge

Try to coordinate each pair. This gesture comes back later in **Interactions III**: **Flood**

Variation II

Exaggerate the differences between hammered notes and notes with bow usage.

The empty square noteheads in this movement mean hammered pizz.

Primer III

Tremolo pizz. the note, changing the angle of your finger from along the string to across it.

Variation III

The clefs indicate **two octaves (15) and three octaves (21) over the standard treble clef**. These notes are extremely high, natural harmonics, played on your highest strings. Each harmonic may not sound or may only sound partially, that is okay.

Bow speeds here should be fast. *sffz* is achieved here through extremely fast bow speed at the onset of a note.

Staccatos are off the string.

The transitions from harmonic notehead to square notehead indicates a move from harmonic sound to air sound. This can be achieved by muting the string with more fingers behind the noted pitch or a lighter bow pressure. Experiment with what works best for your instrument, ensemble, and space.

M. 118: Violin I, Viola, and Cello should continue playing the compound eighths on the pitches indicated, only switching on beats.

Primer IV

Snap pizz. the harmonics as one chord and let ring. Should sound like a bell.

Variation IV

Dig into the string with the bow at the onset. Tone should be biting at beginning and brilliant throughout.

When parallel bowing is indicated, experiment with the speed of the bow along the strings and with which part of the bow is in contact with the strings (tip, middle, frog). Try to find a unique sound from the other players.

M. 190-194: Play the double stops like breath, crescendoing and descrescendoing. Stop the bow on the string during the rests. Throughout the rests, gliss. extremely slowly, so that, when you resume bowing, each moving note is somewhere between the starting and ending pitches.

Cello, M. 190-194: Detune **IV** string to B natural over the four measures. If you find you have over or undershot the pitch, tune during m. 194. This is important for the next variation.

Variation V

From the sixth variation of the Beethoven.

The techniques here should be mostly standard techniques.

Viola M. 236: Cataclysmic overbow. Should disrupt the entire flow of the variation.

Interjection

During this section, the viola scratch tone lessens and is met with air sounds from the rst of the ensemble.

This is modeled after the Bonnard painting, when he experienced great upheavals in his life. This is the moment when the rhetoric of the piece shifts. After this, the ensemble must 'recreate' the original material.

Interactions I: Convergence

This is an extremely quiet texture, mostly silent. Allow the bow to hover over the string and let the natural spasm of your bow hand drop the bow onto the string. Don't try to force it, focus instead on trying to match bow style with another player.

Interactions II: Revelation

This is almost a mediation. Try to find your own space with your bow in relation to the other players. Focus as much as you can on the transition from pitch to noise and vice versa, making that as dynamic as you can.

The focus aurally is the variety of bow noises. Explore as many different sounds as you can within the parameters.

The overall dynamic should be very quiet as well, but there should be constant activity. However, if you feel that the quartet is building, drop out and let the texture thin out before coming back in.

Interactions III: Flood

Focus on trying to trick or sabotage each other. If you are the leader, try to surprise the followers with the suddenness of your calls. If you are an antagonist, try to see what interjections actually distract the other players.

Until the closing, this movement is also quiet, though less so and less rigorously. Try to maintain that low dynamic, but high rate of activity. If, as antagonist, you want get louder for a short time, feel free to do so.

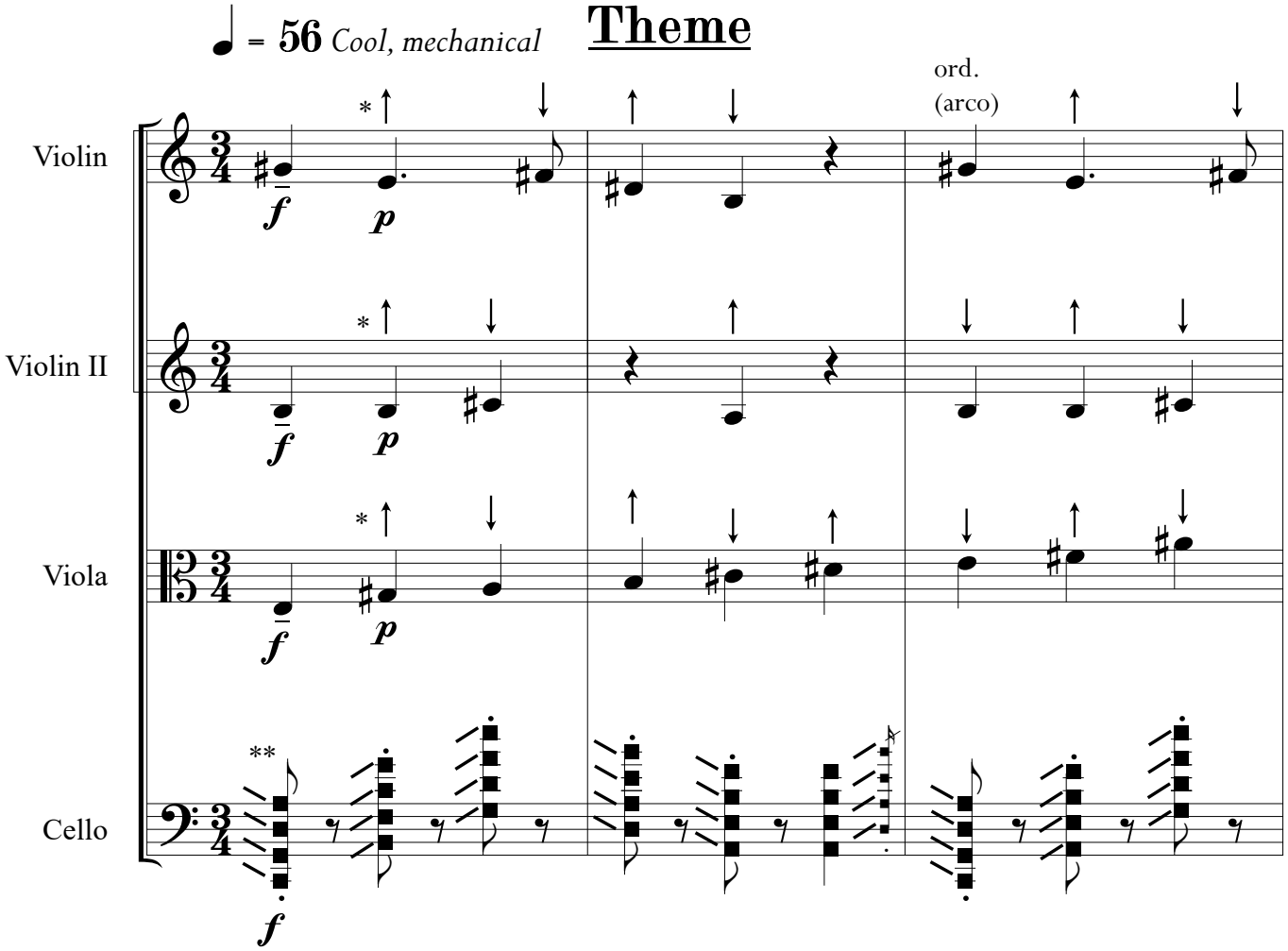
Score

STRING QUARTET

THE SUNLIT TERRACE

Dedicated to
Hanna Salmon

Jon Paul Mayse



* Brush **along** strings with bow, up is away from bridge, down is towards bridge. Little to no pitch should be heard

** Exaggerated brush along strings with left hand (NO BOW!) Gestured airy sound results, actual pitches are not important, only the movement along the fingerboard

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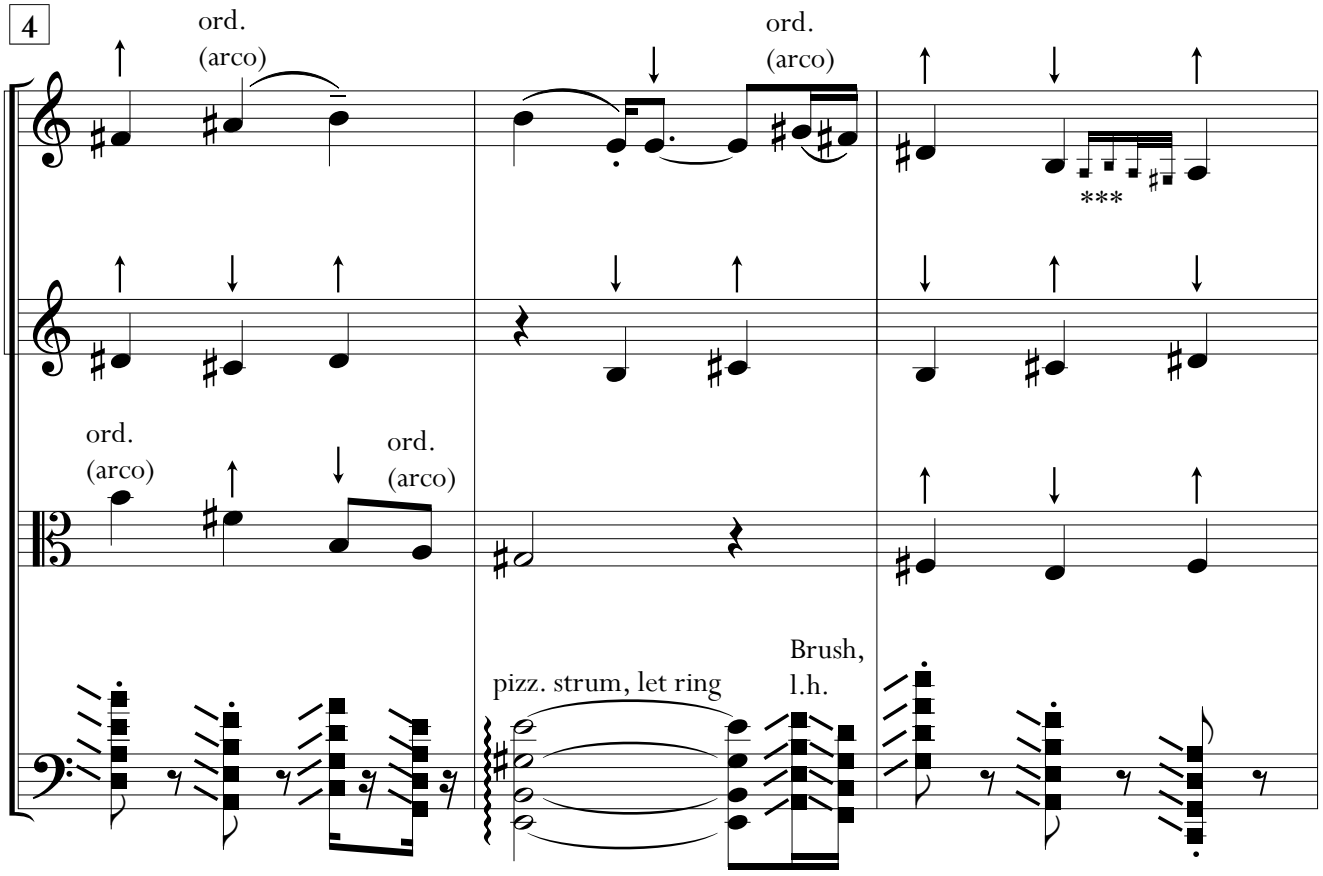
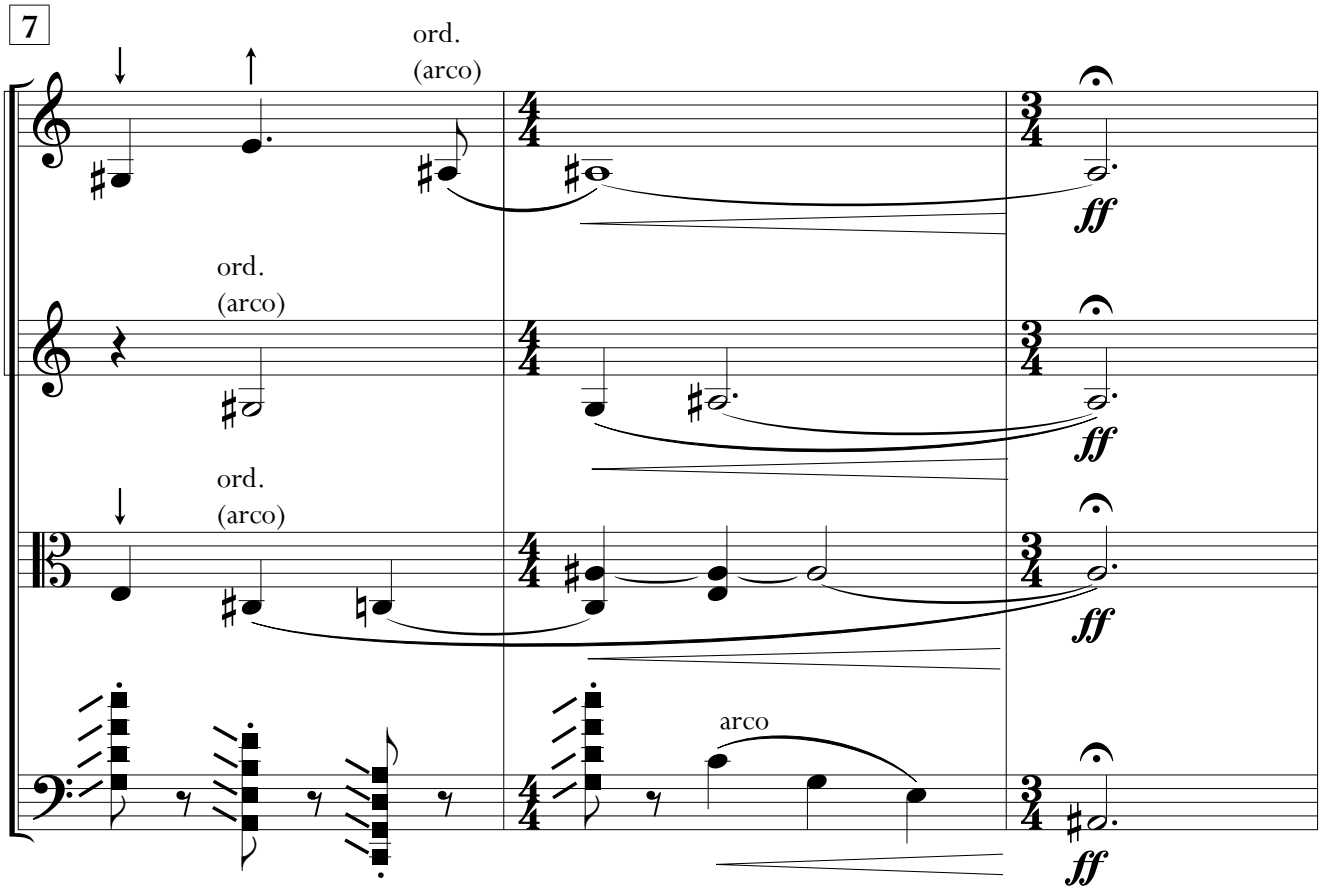
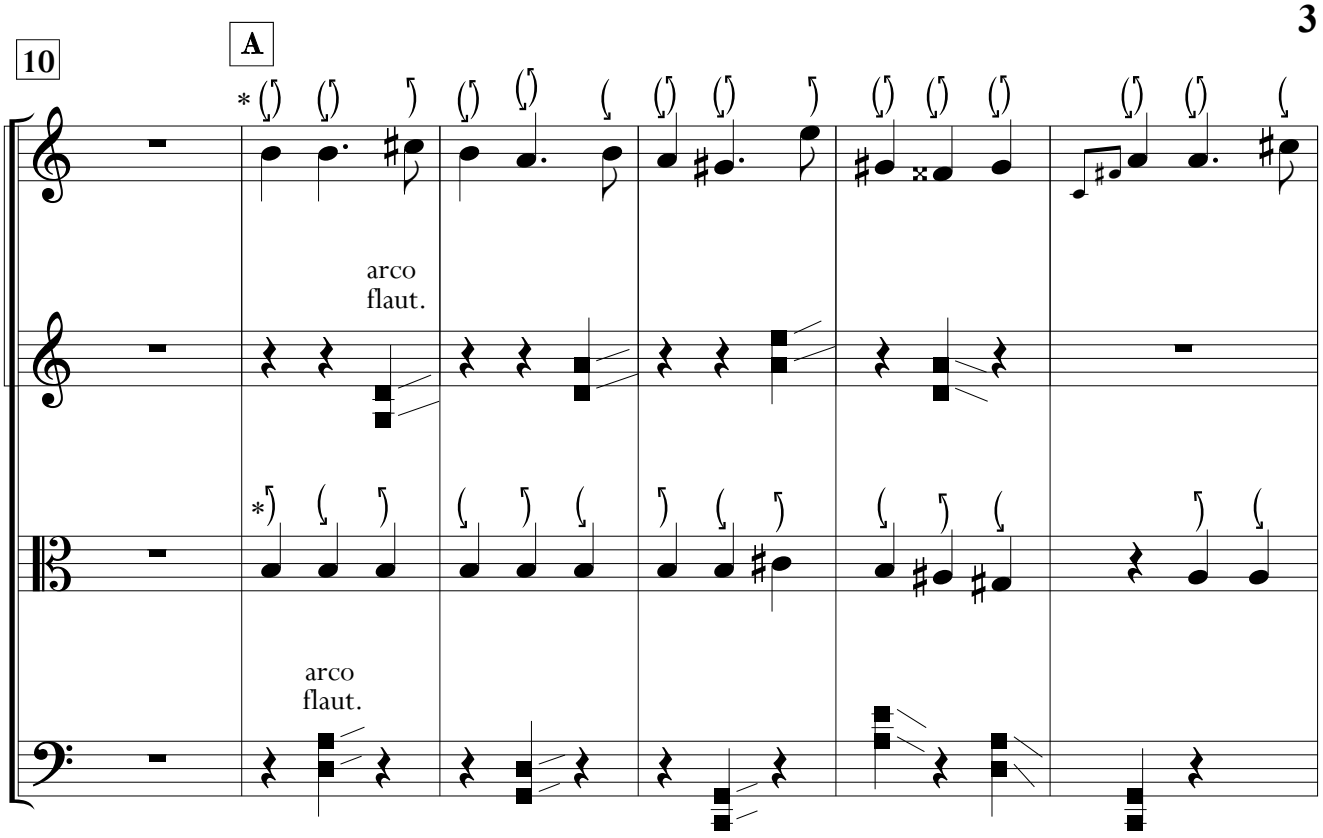
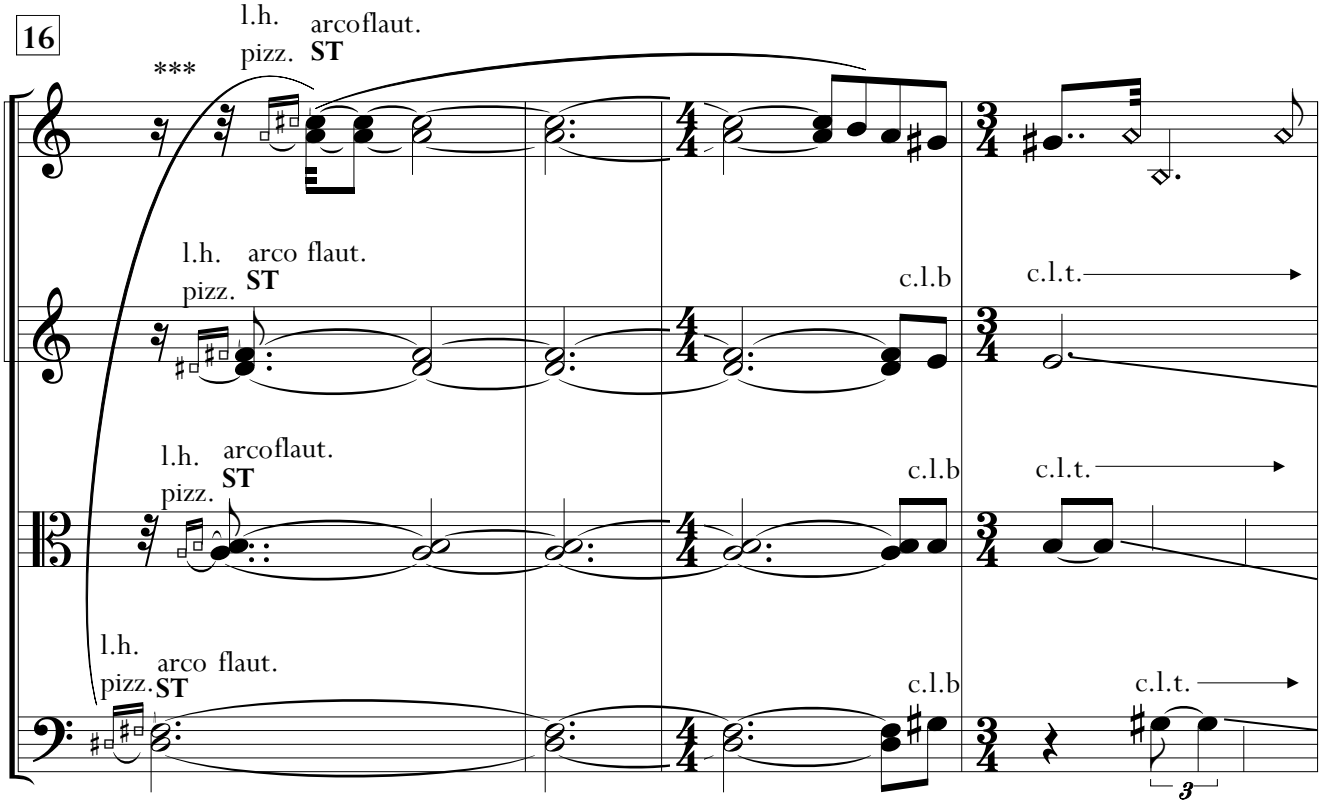




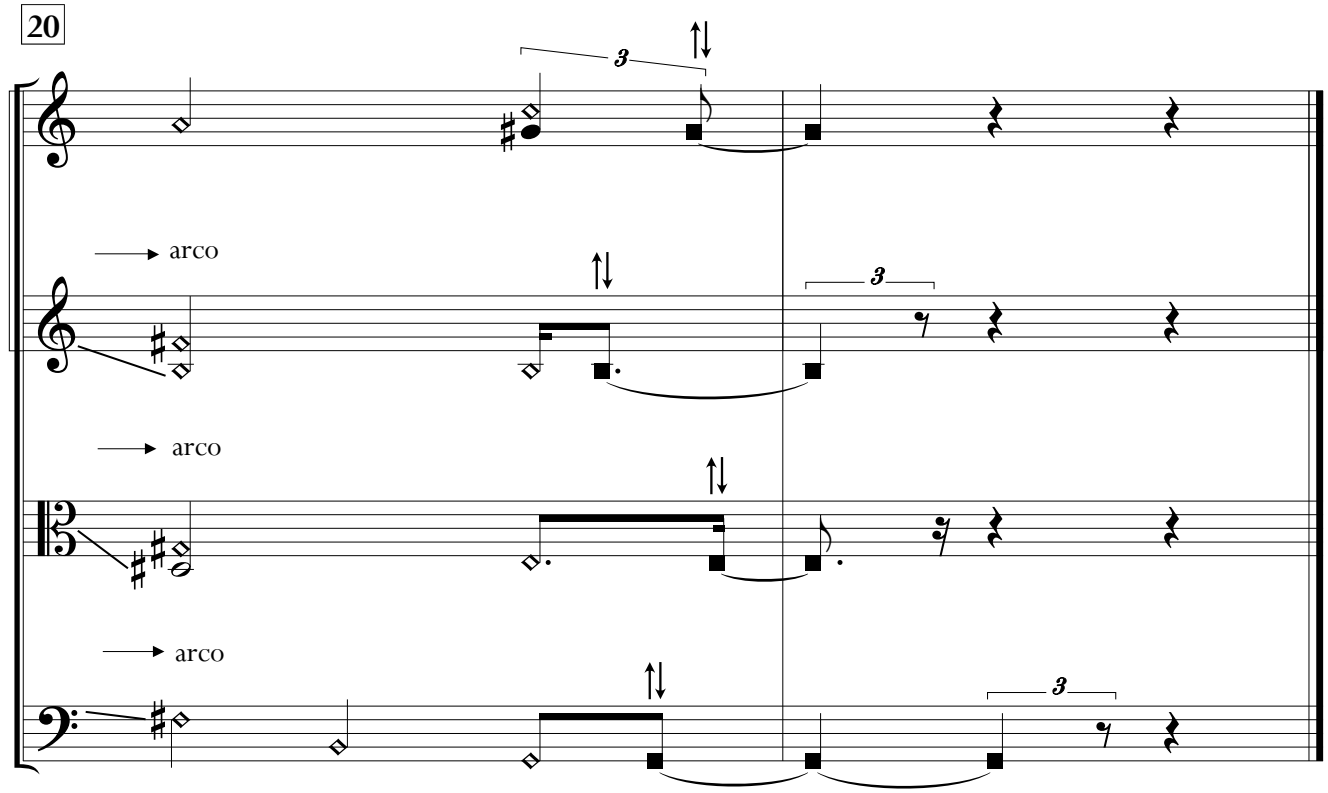
*** hammer notes with l.h. and now bow. Percussive sound, little to no pitch.



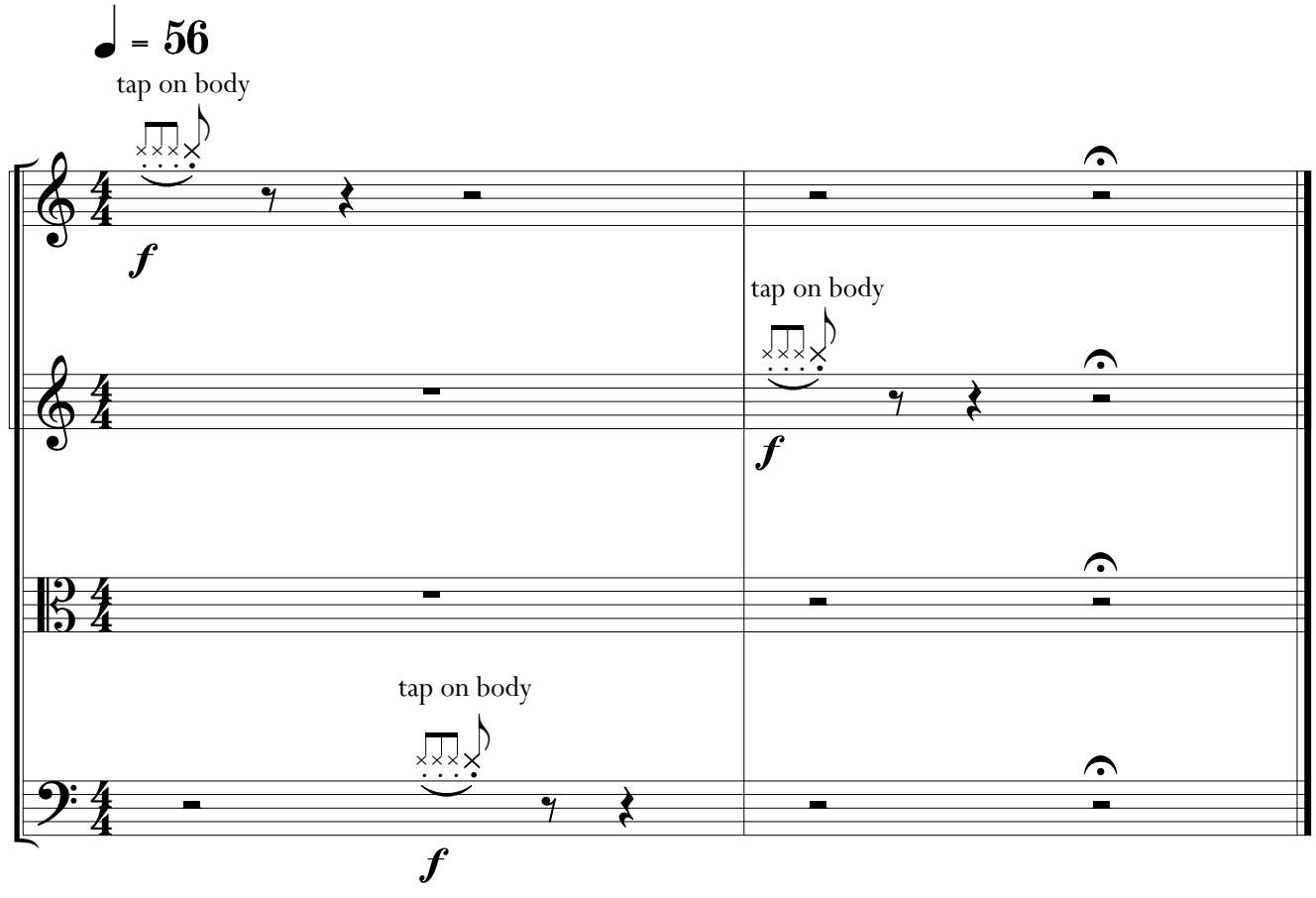
* Circular bowing: Arrows indicate direction (up = away from bridge, down = towards bridge)
Beginning at middle of bow, bow half-bow and back while simultaneously moving bow along strings



*** Arpeggiate, a la piano
Hammer Pizz. Left Hand, then softly bow, hiding bow attack, as if catching a sound with the sustain of the piano

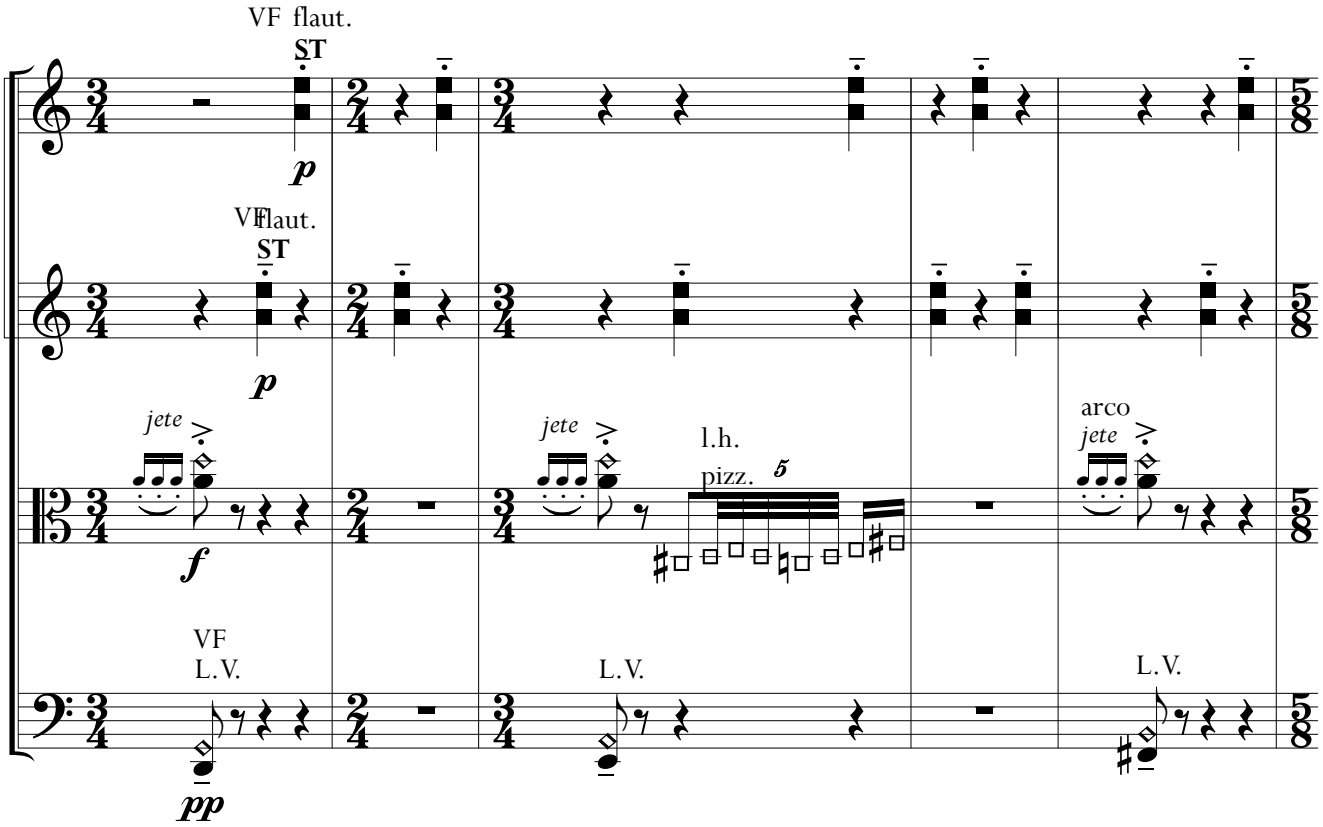


Primer I



Variation I

♩ = 56 *Steady, with increasing energy*



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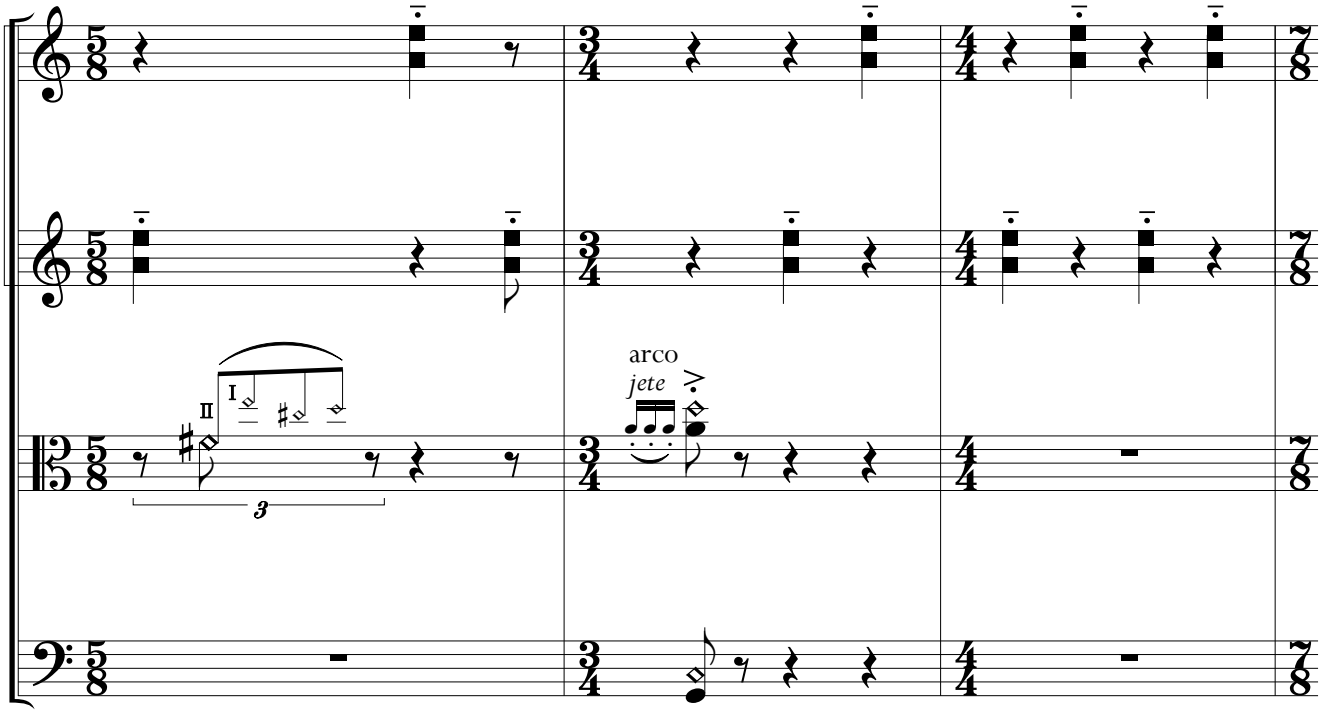

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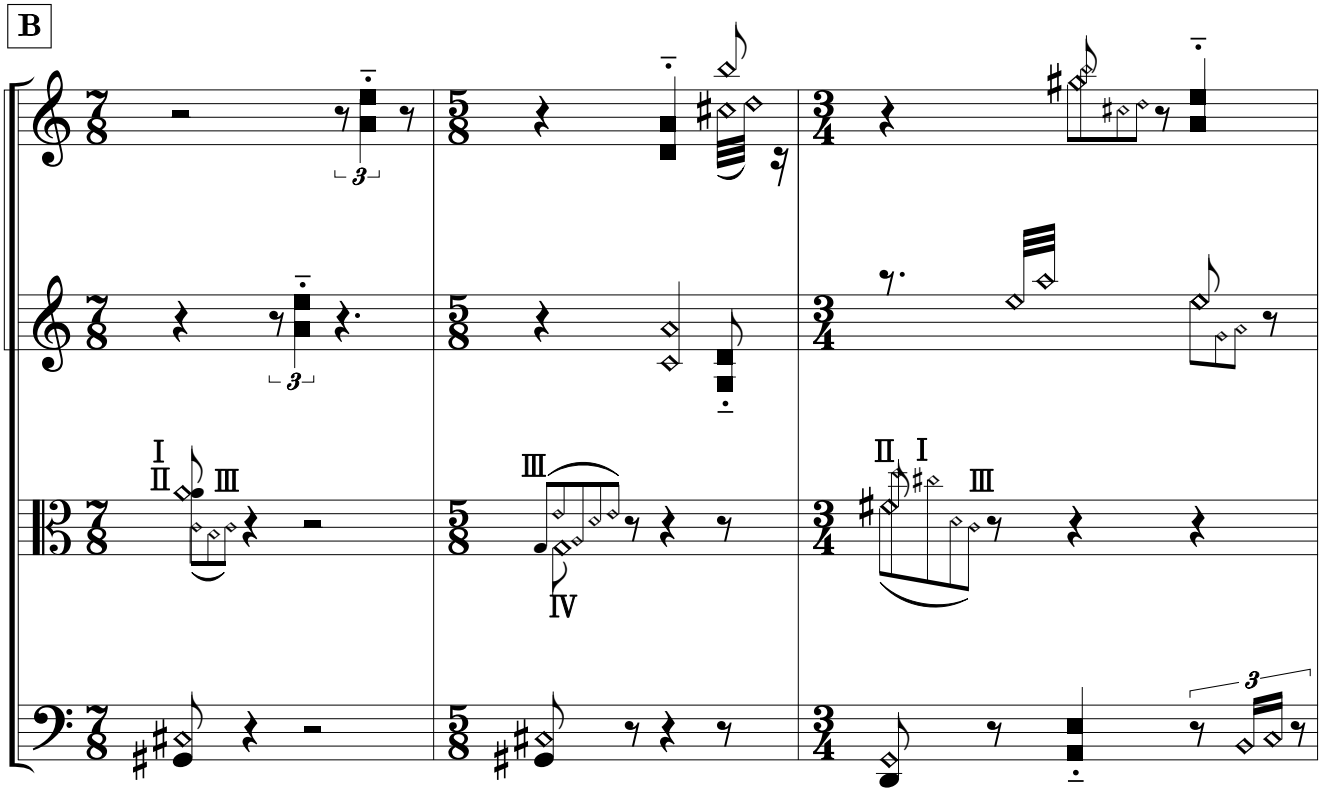

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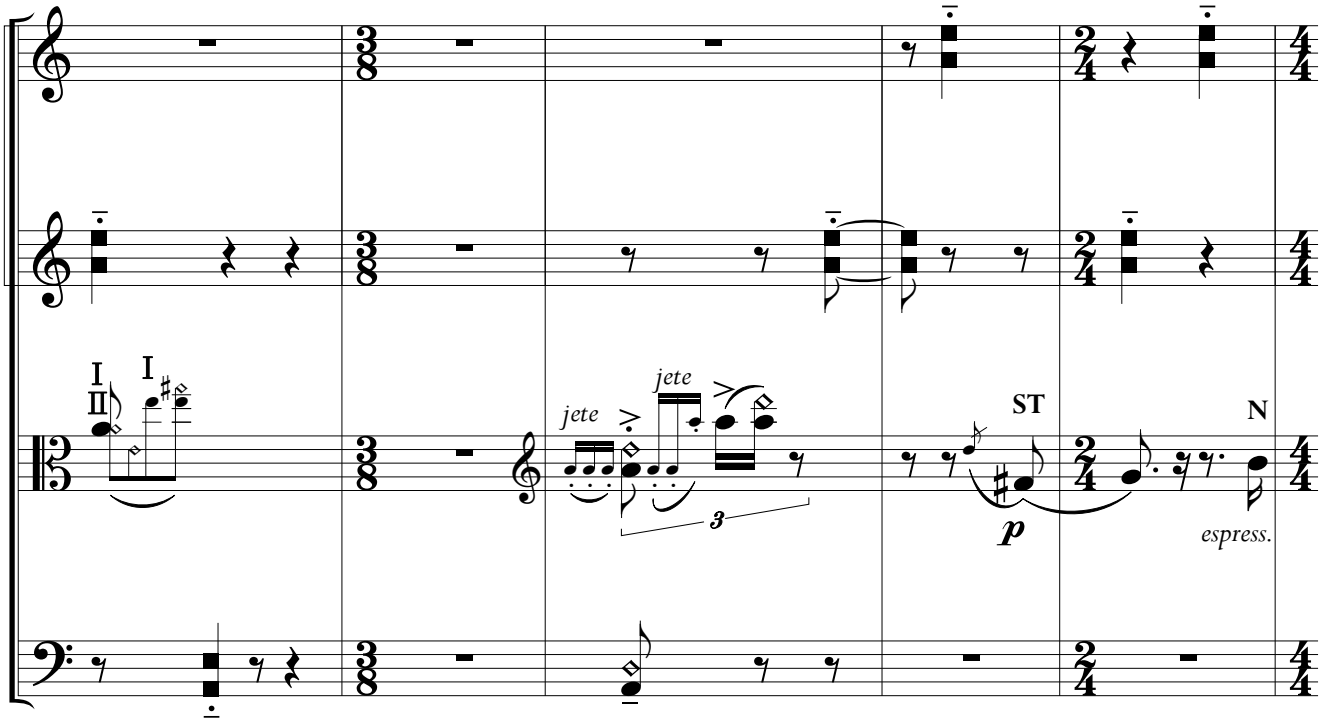

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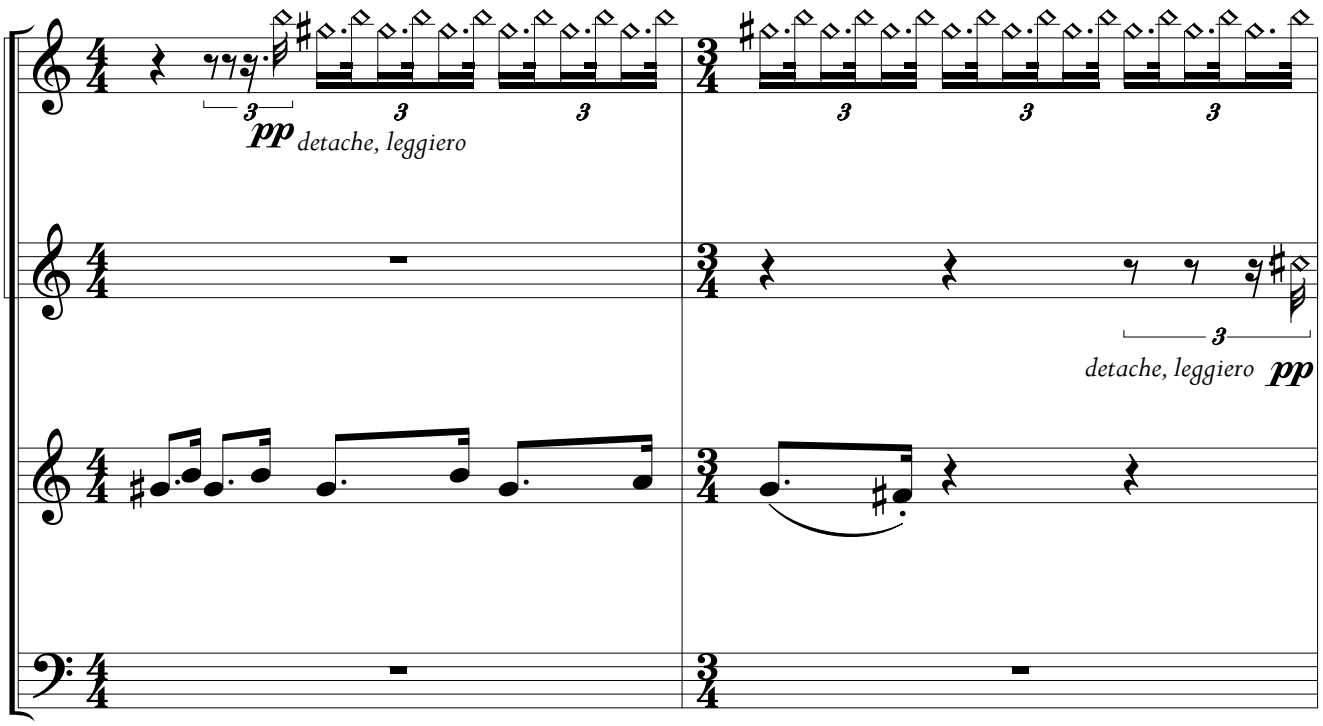
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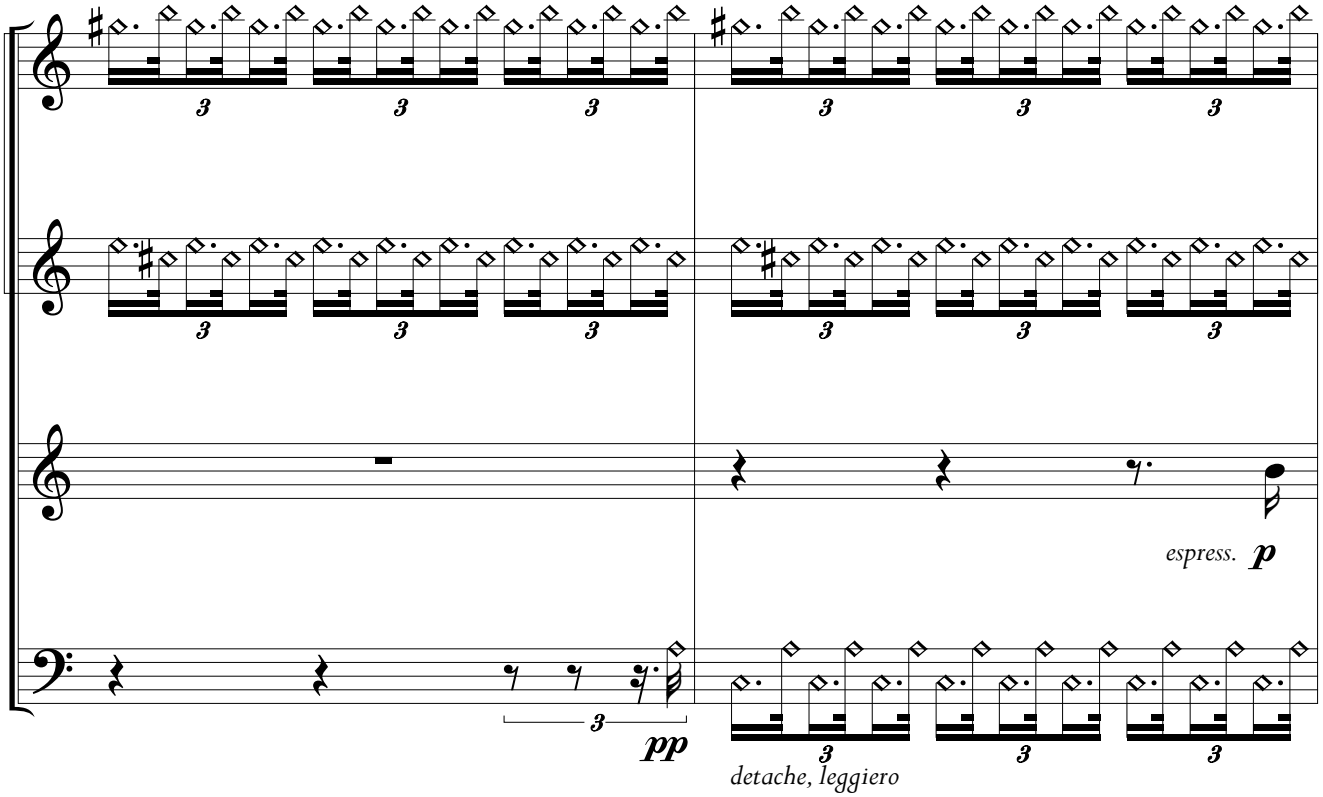
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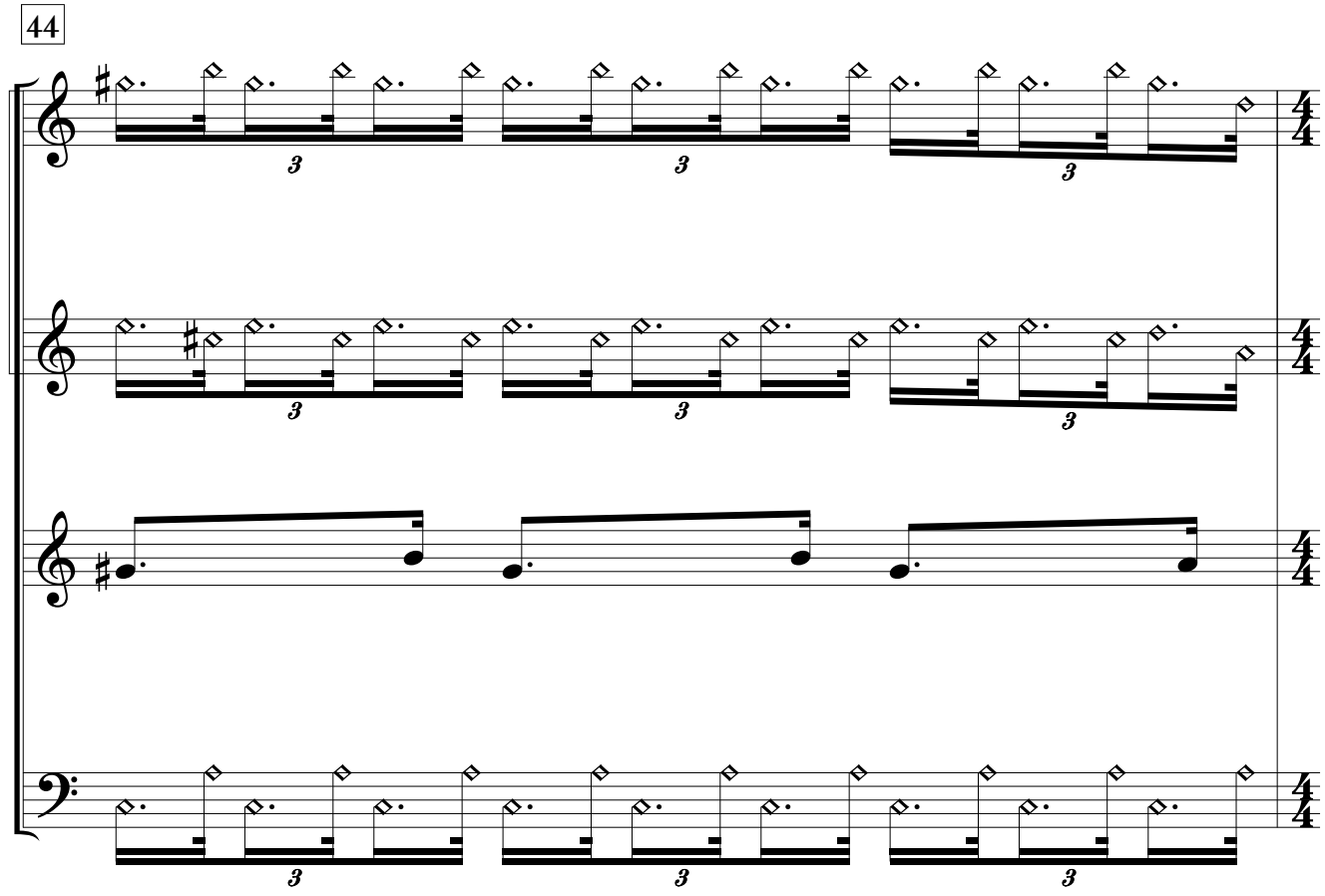
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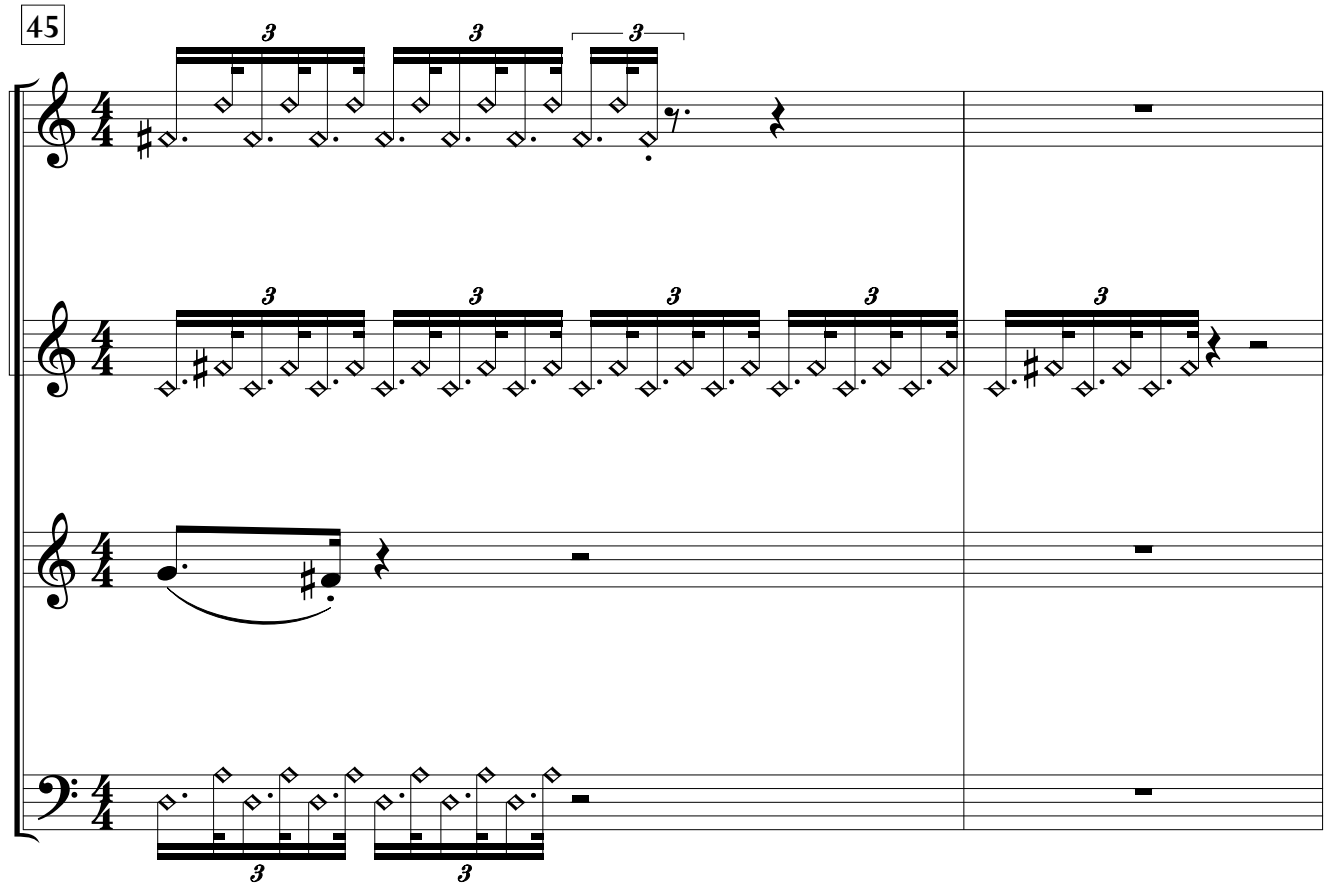
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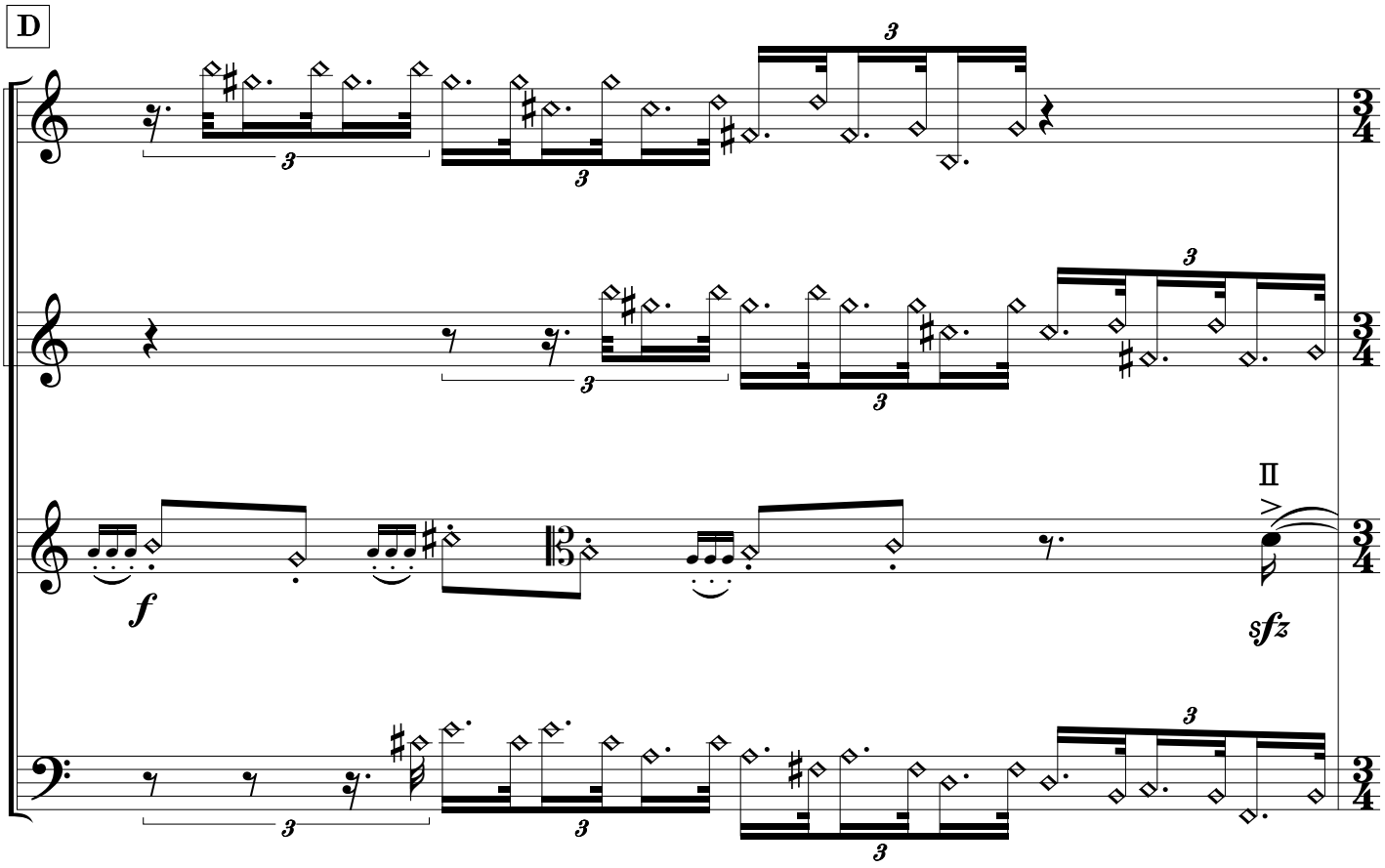
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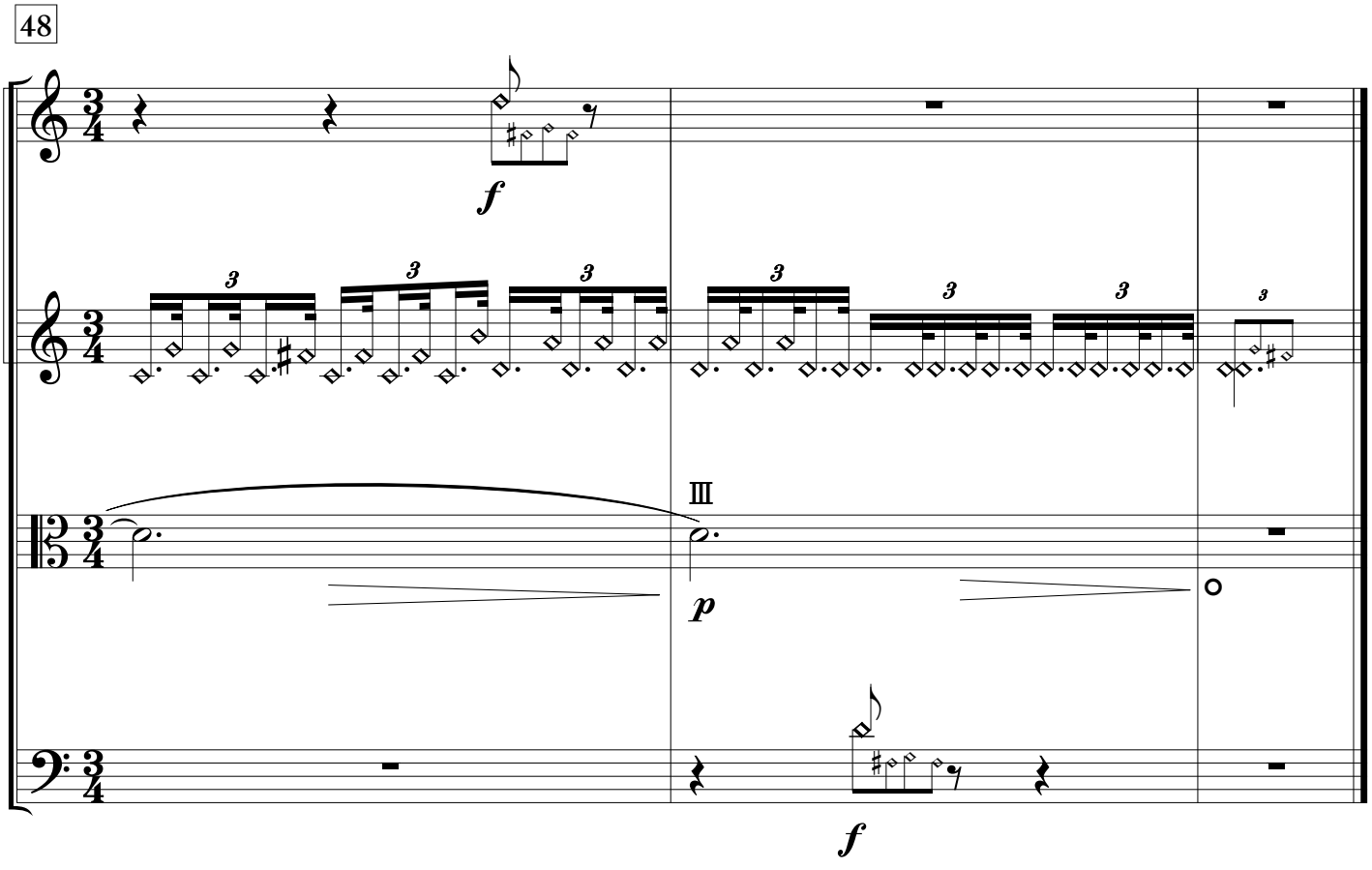

48
III

Primer II

51 ♩ = 56 *With Space*

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

Variation II

53 ♩ = 120 *Dry, with sudden bursts of comical emotion*

arco l.h. c.l.b. h.p. arco c.l.b. c.l.b. c.l.b.

pp *sempre*

arco l.h. c.l.b. h.p. arco c.l.b. c.l.b. c.l.b.

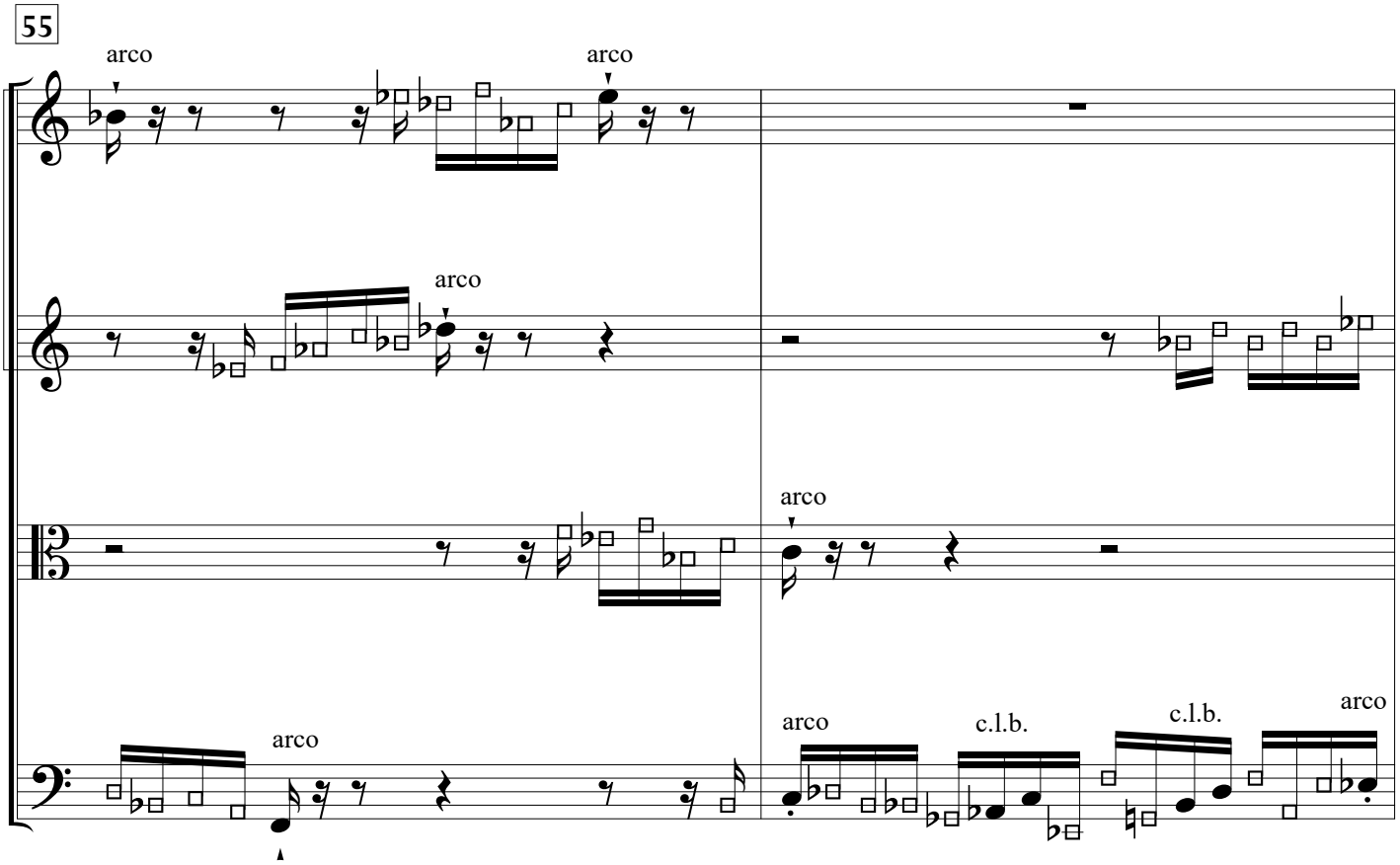
pp *sempre*

arco l.h. c.l.b. h.p. arco c.l.b. c.l.b. arco

pp *sempre*

arco l.h. c.l.b. h.p. arco c.l.b. c.l.b. c.l.b. arco

pp *sempre*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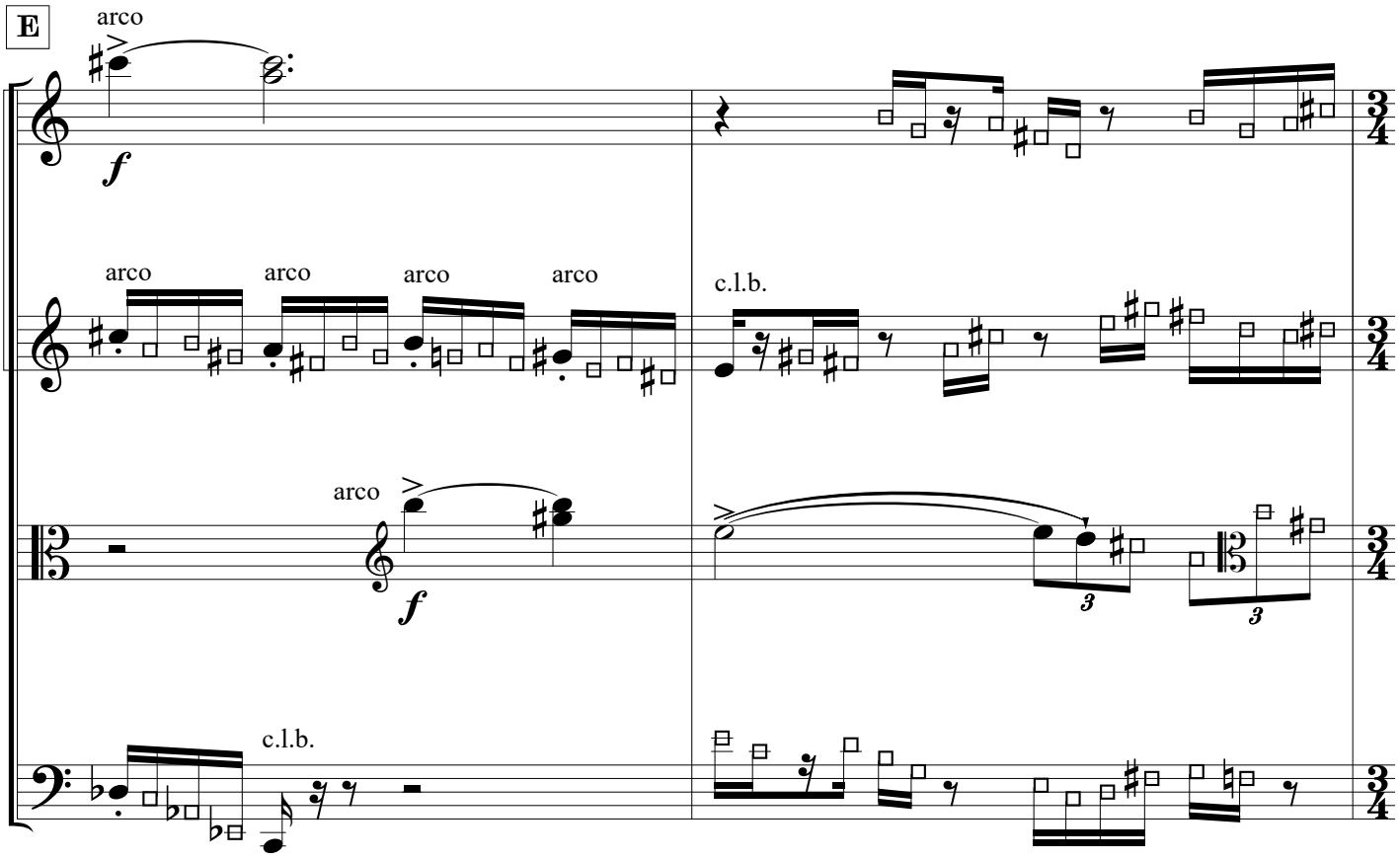
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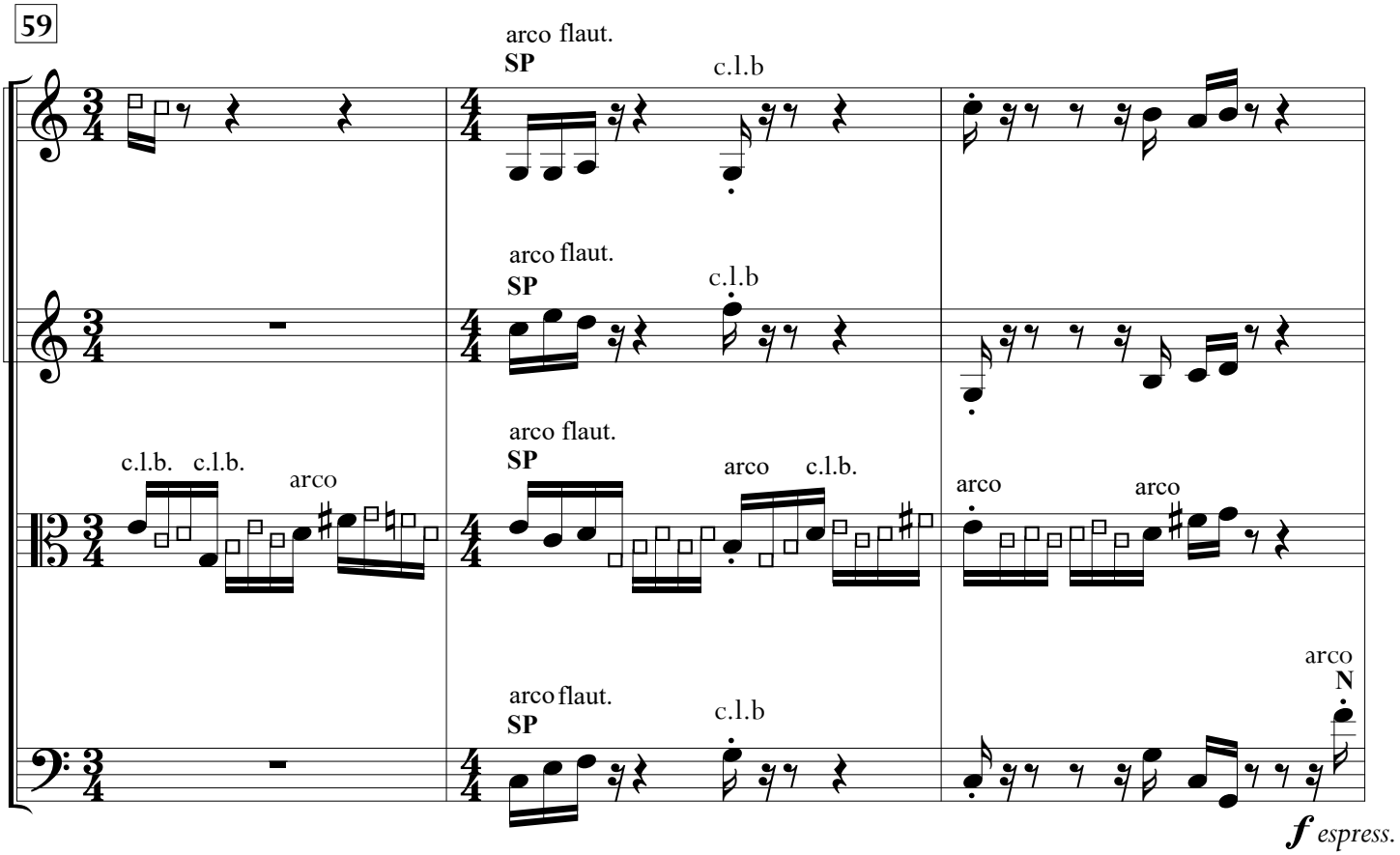
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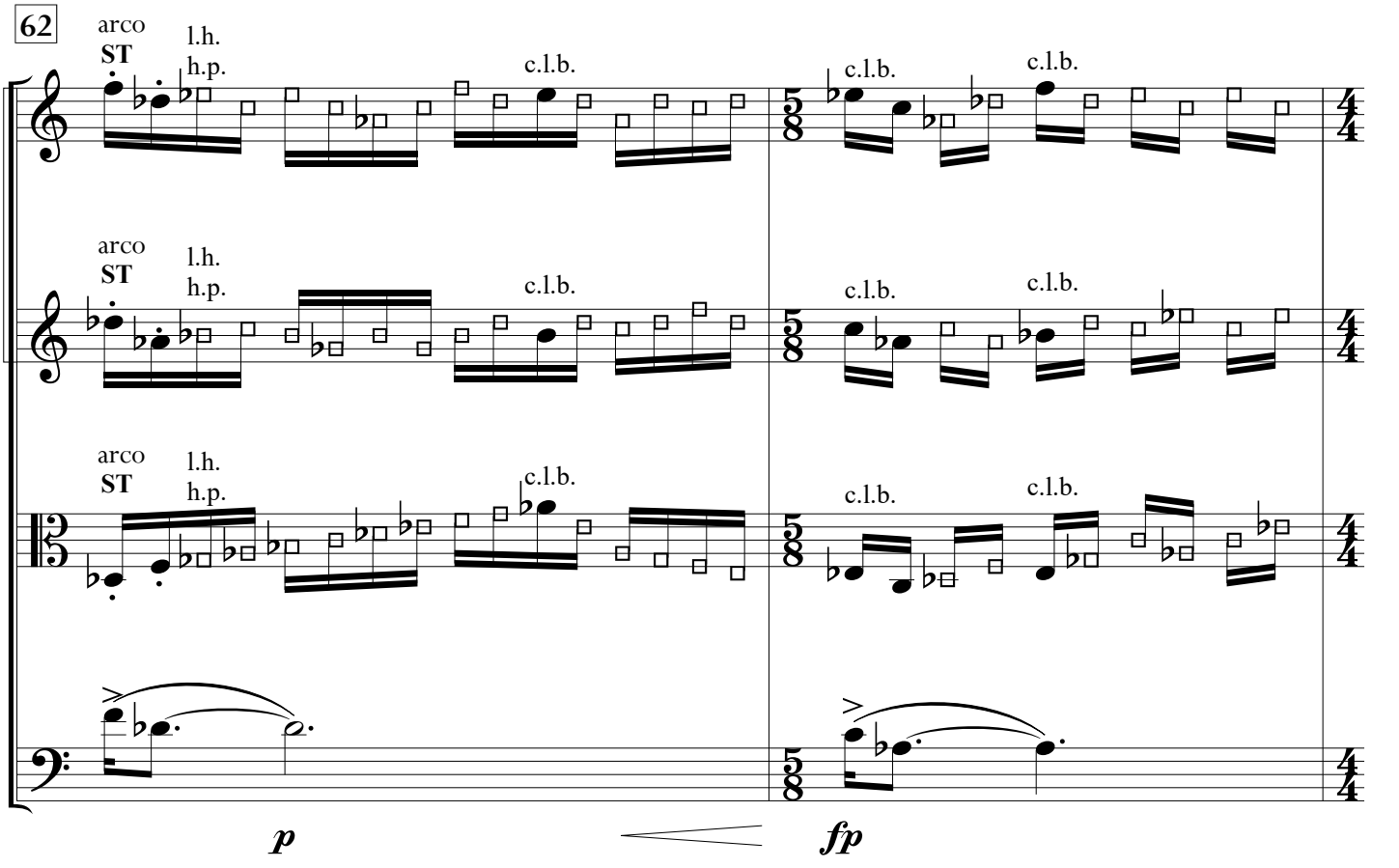
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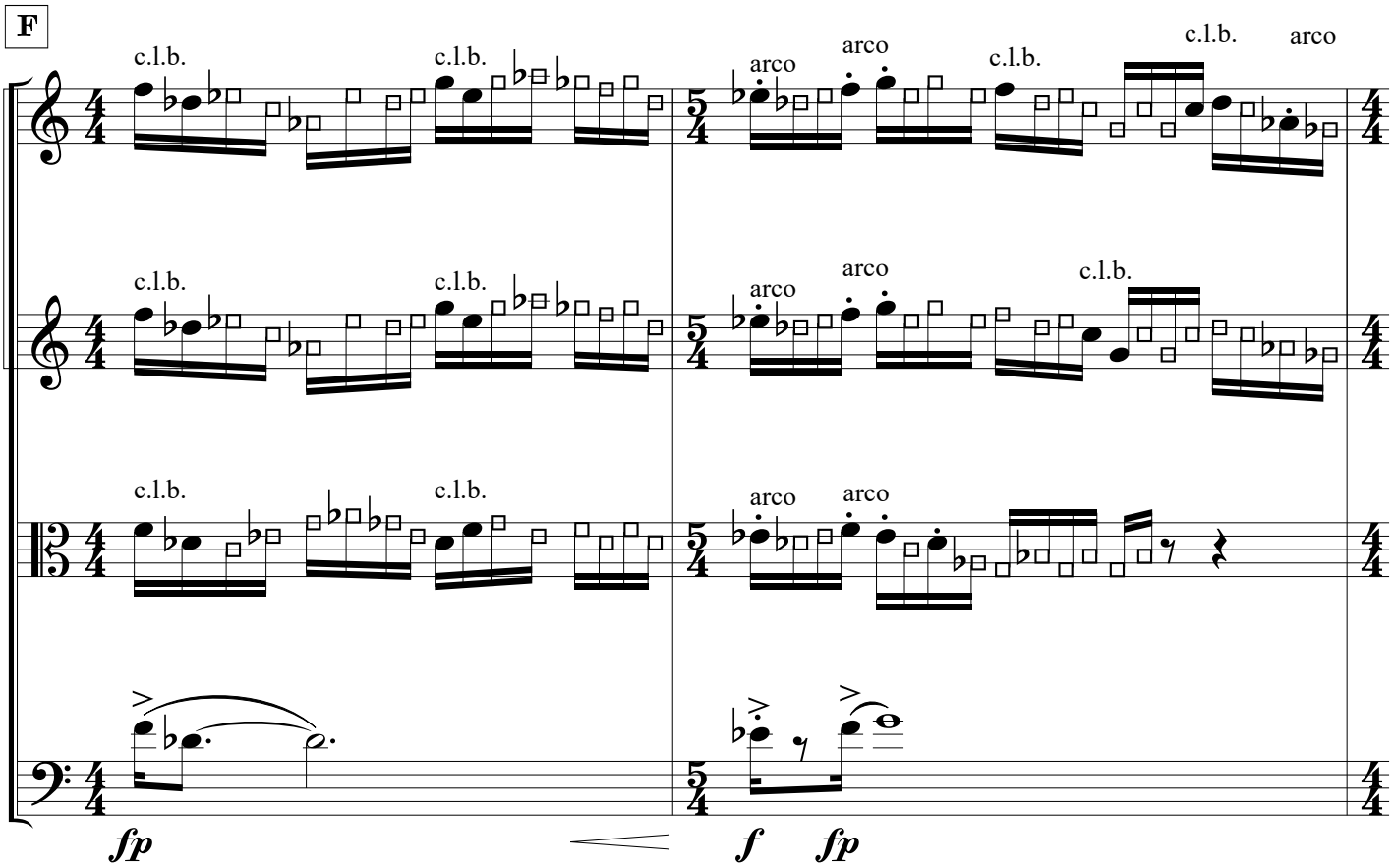
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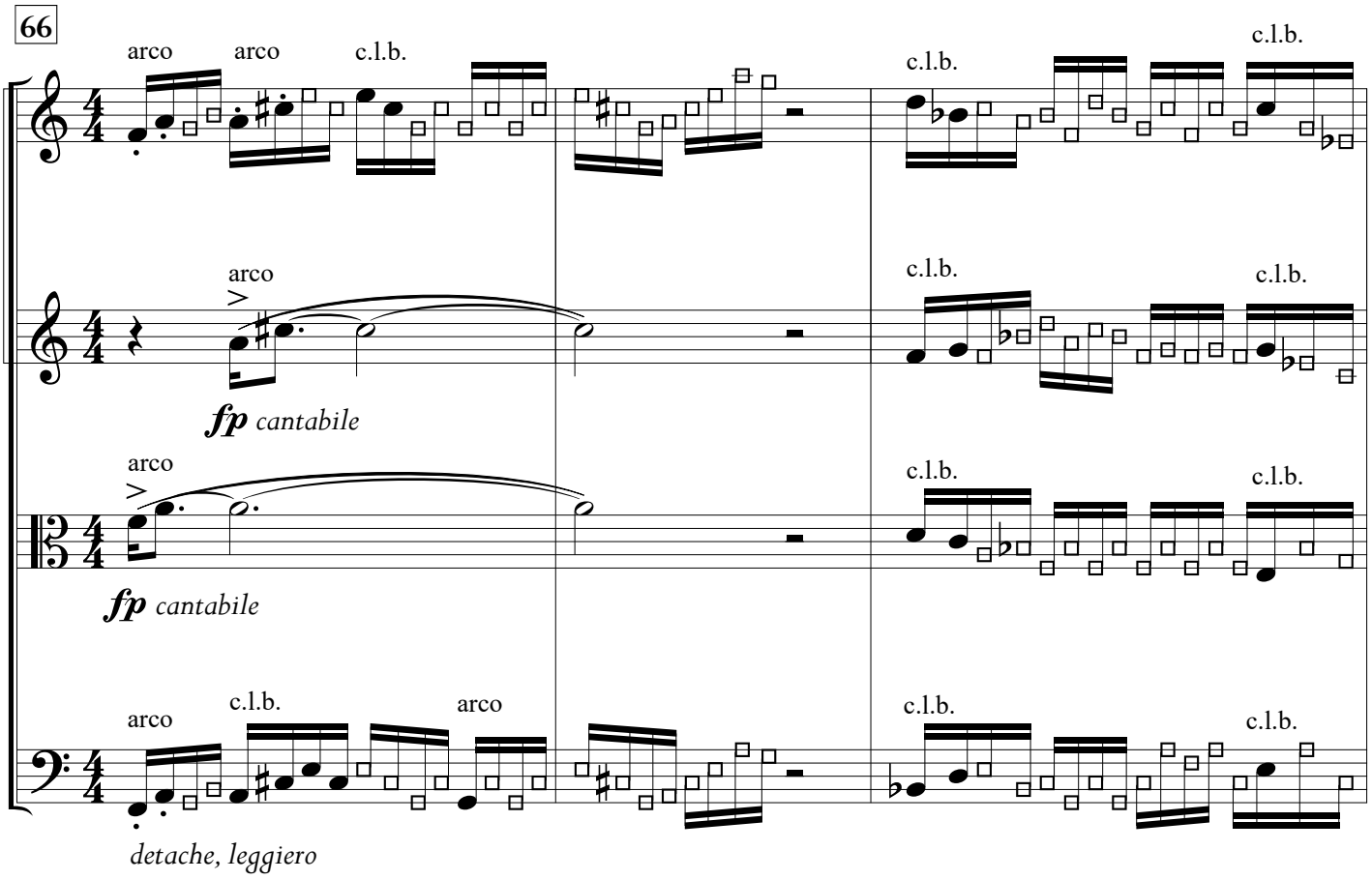
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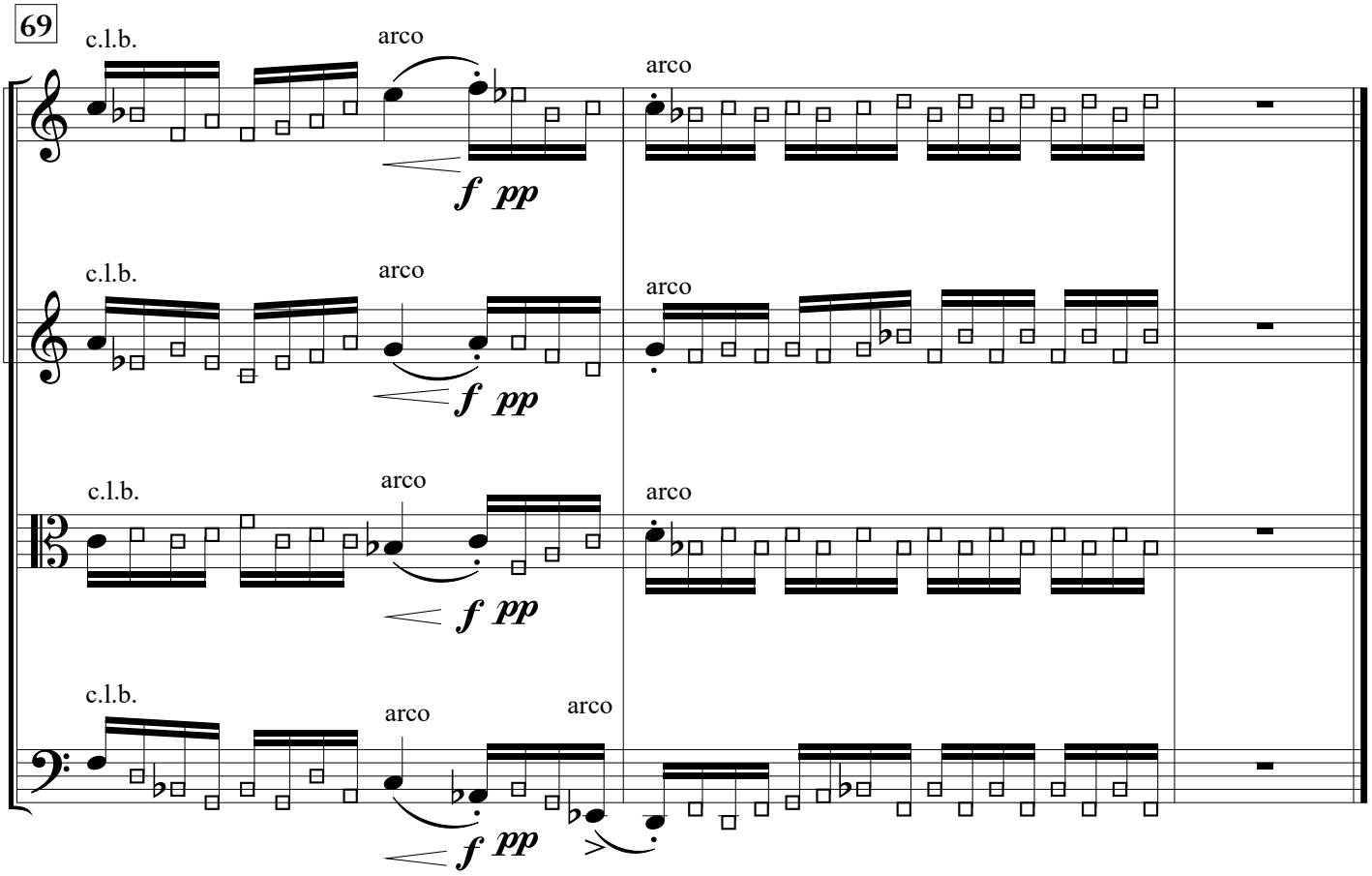
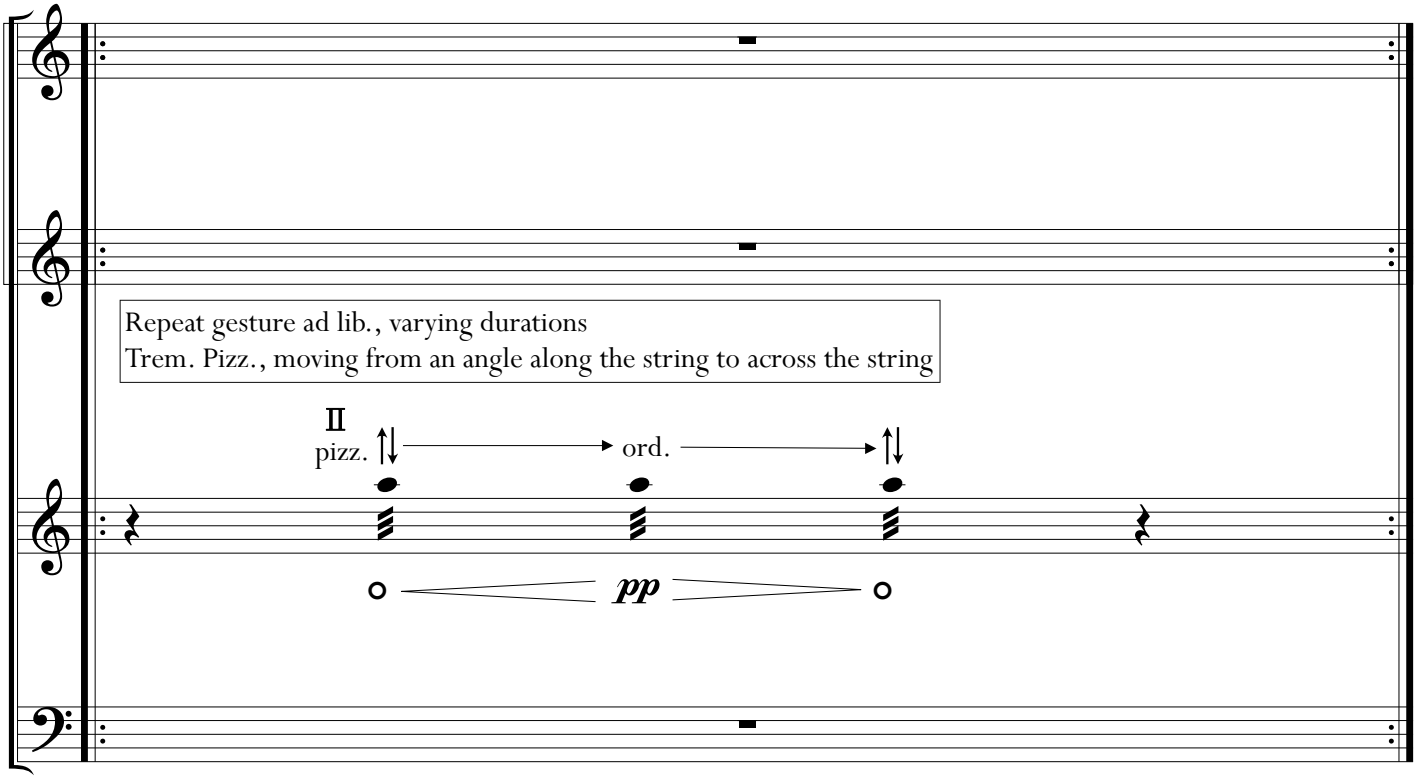


Primer III

20"

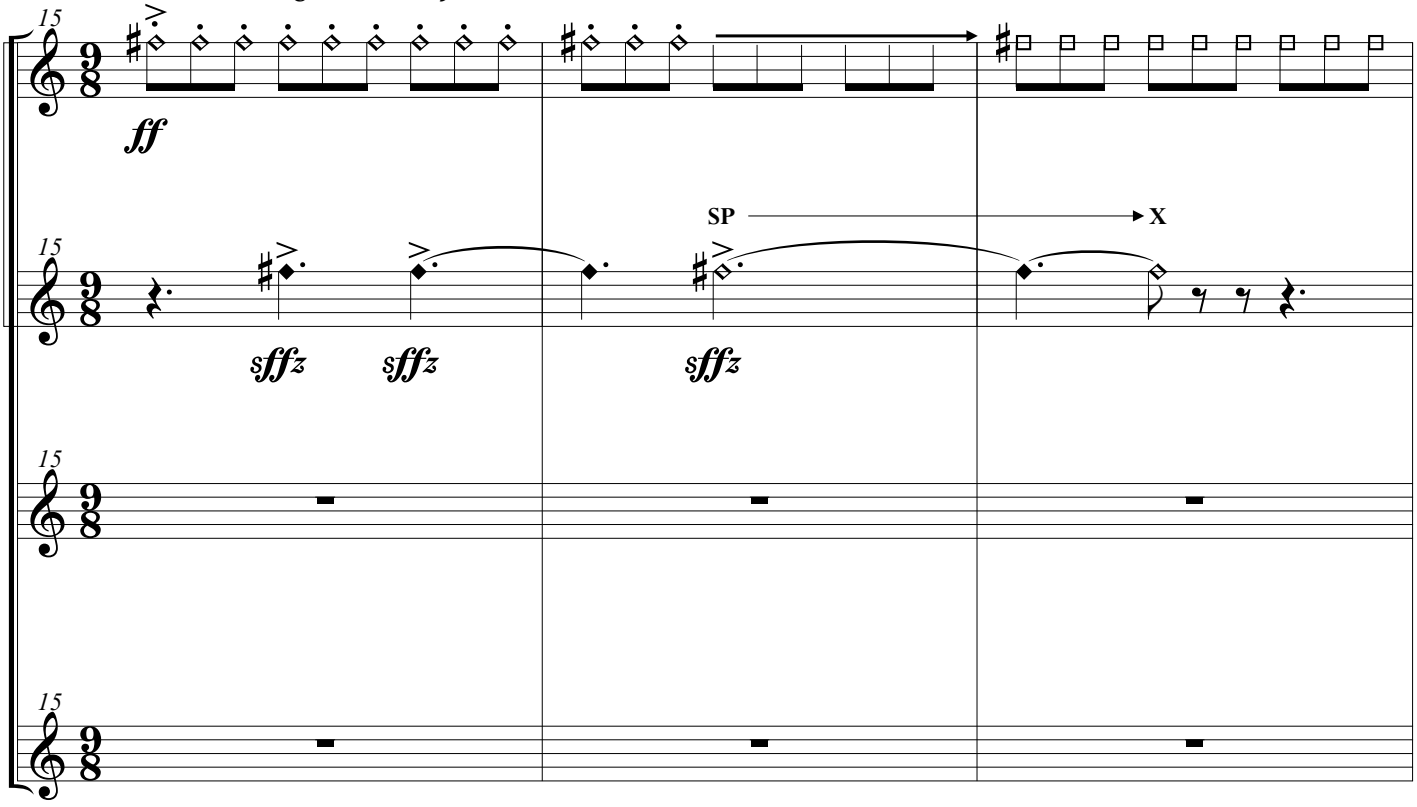
72

Unmeasured Time

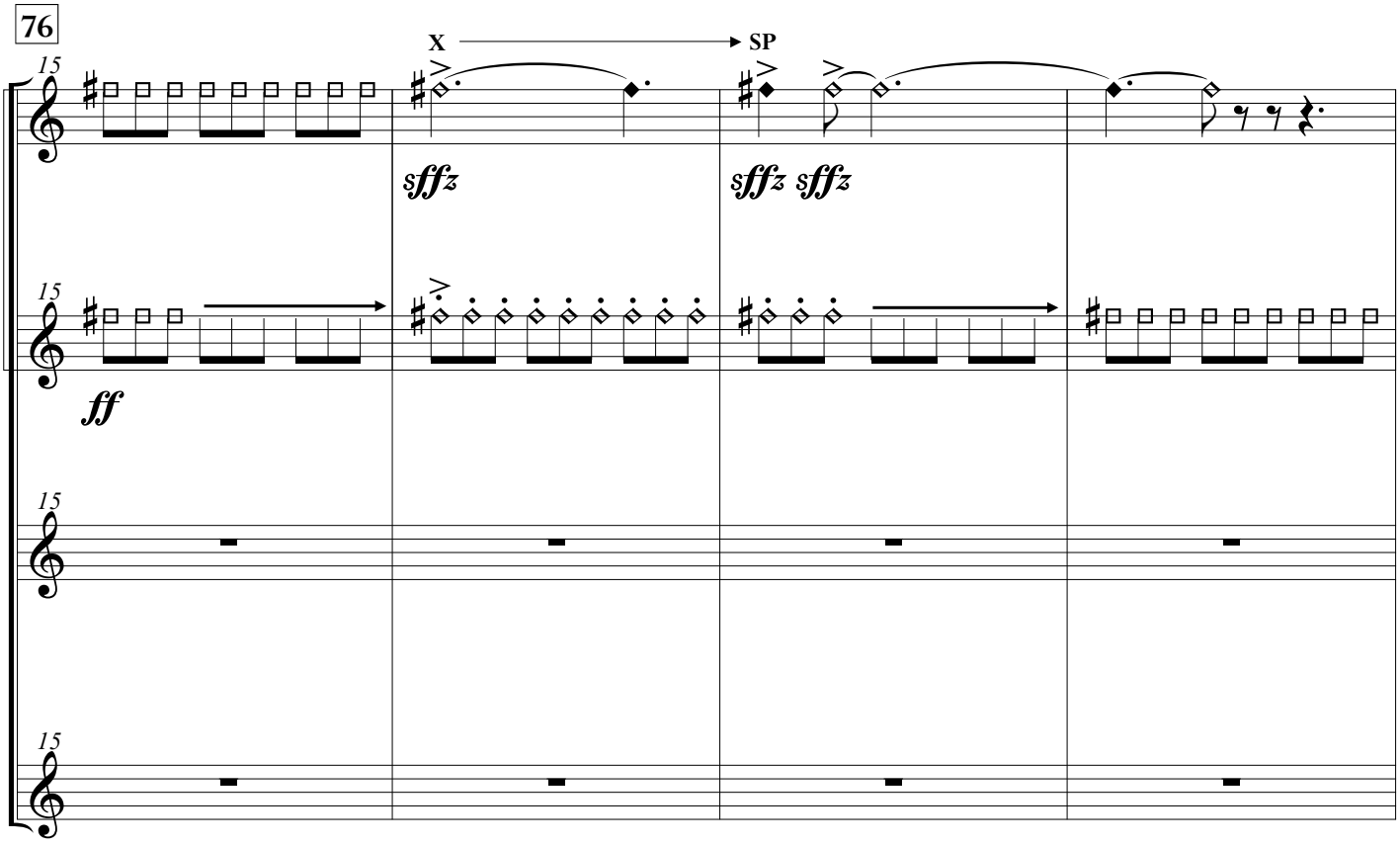


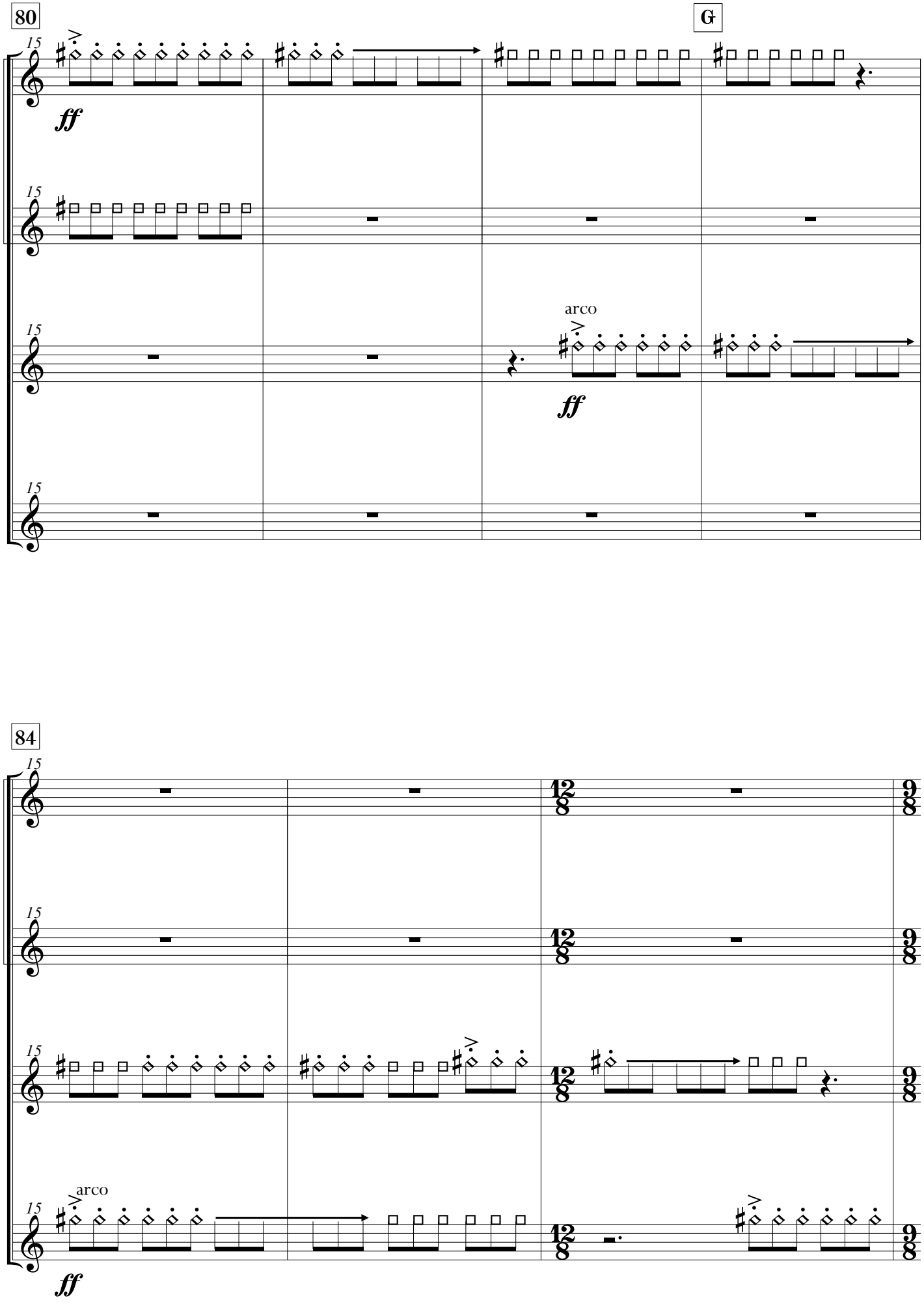
Variation III

73 ♩. = 132 *Light and Airy, Staccato*

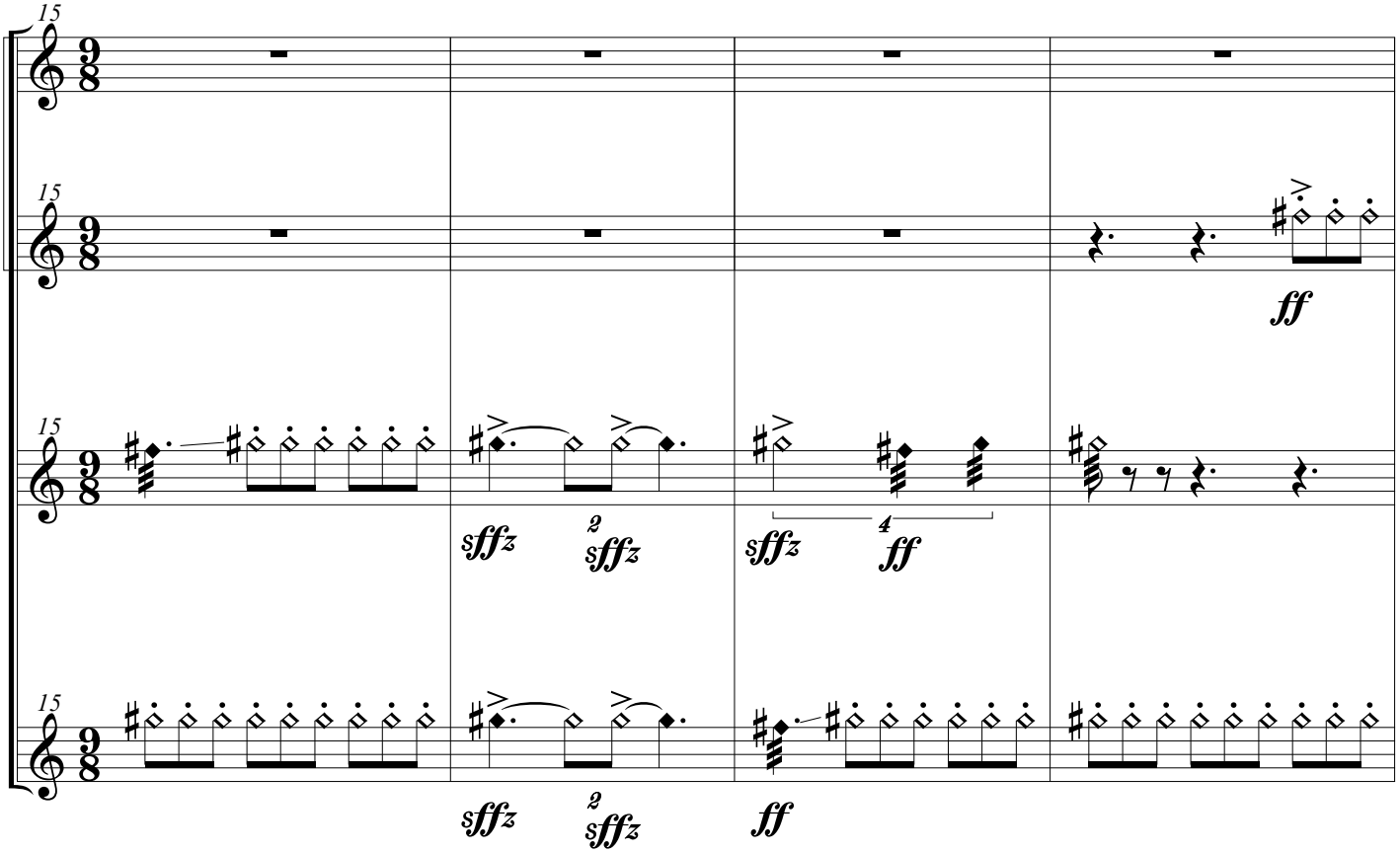


76

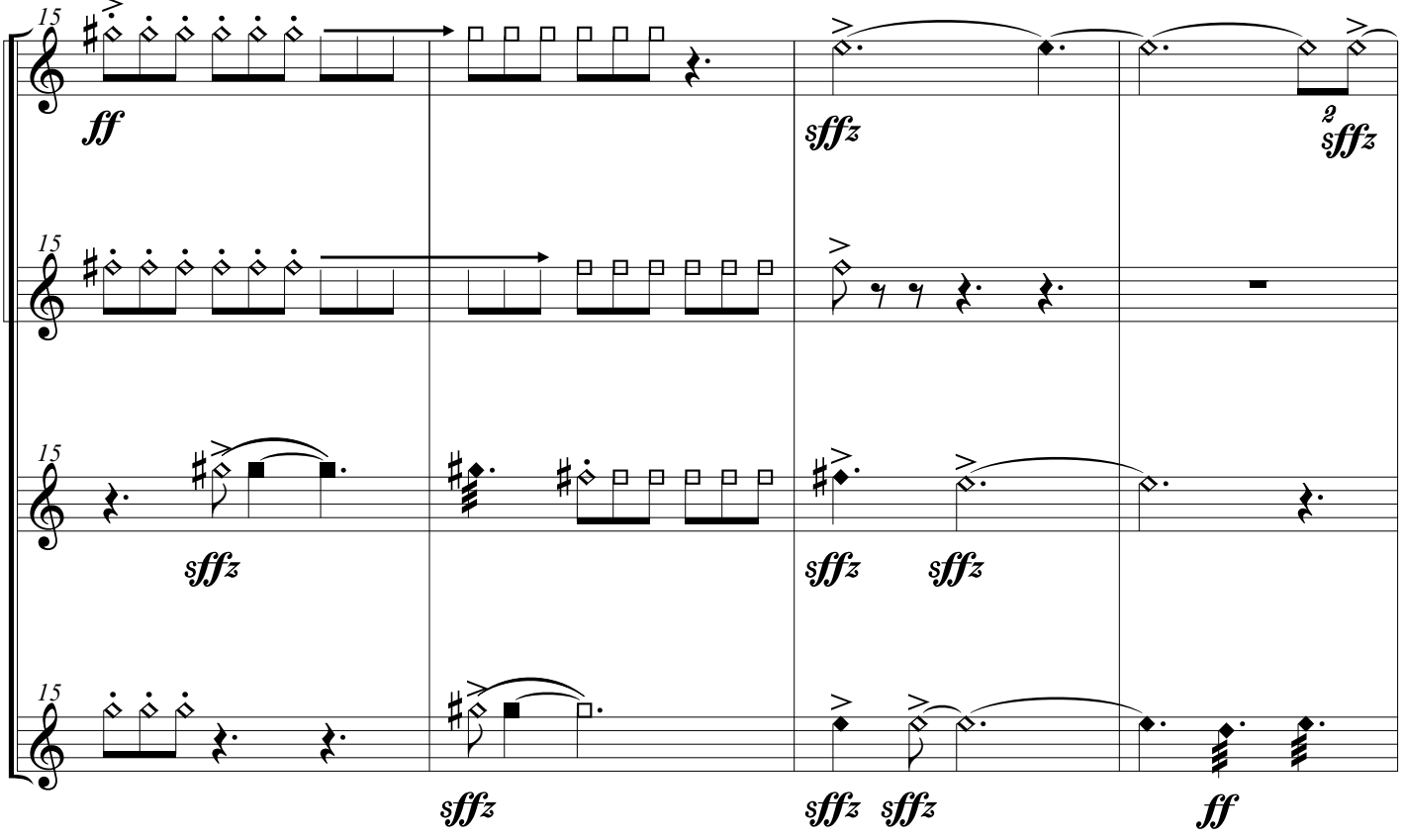


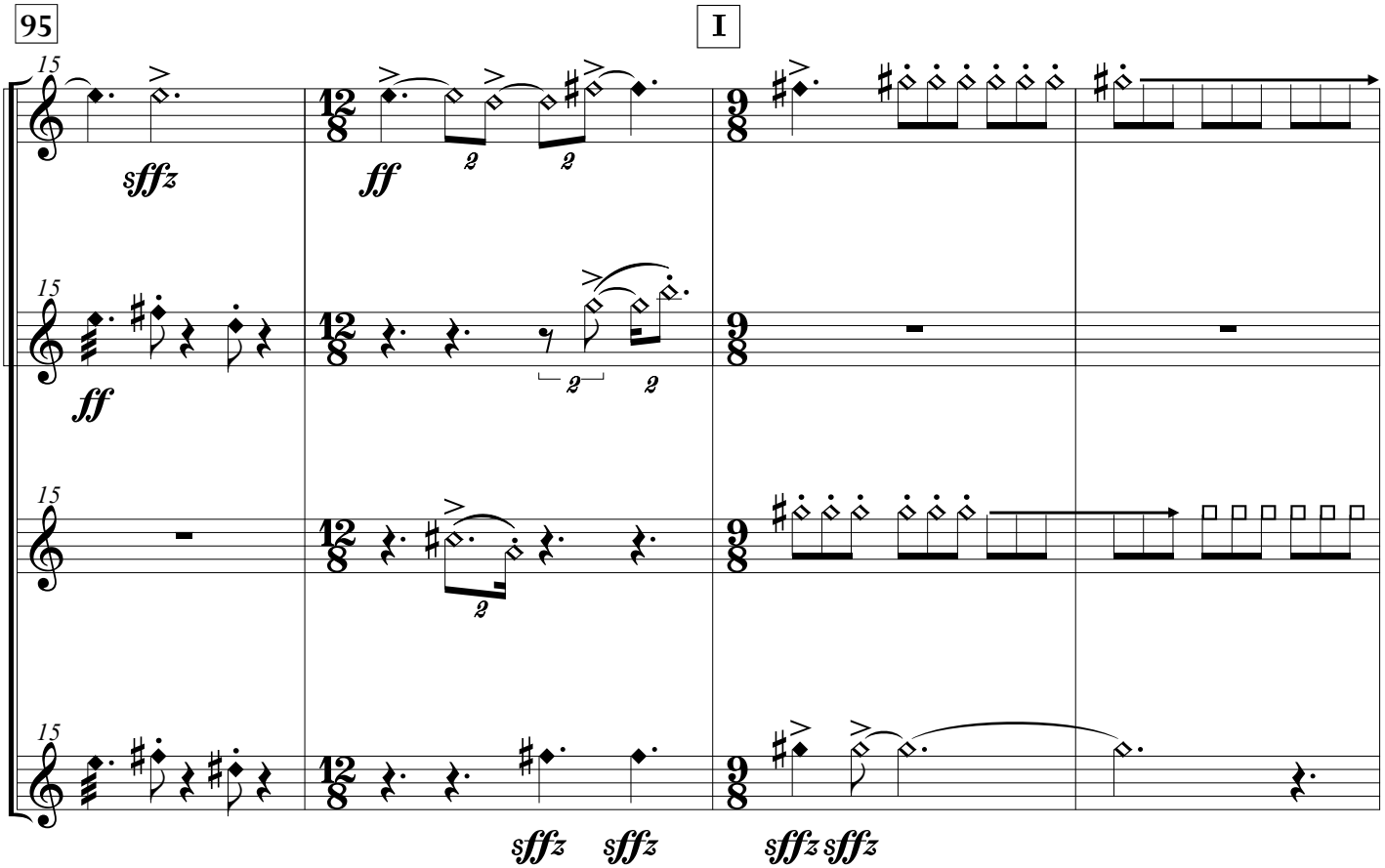

80
G
15
ff
arco
84
12/8
9/8

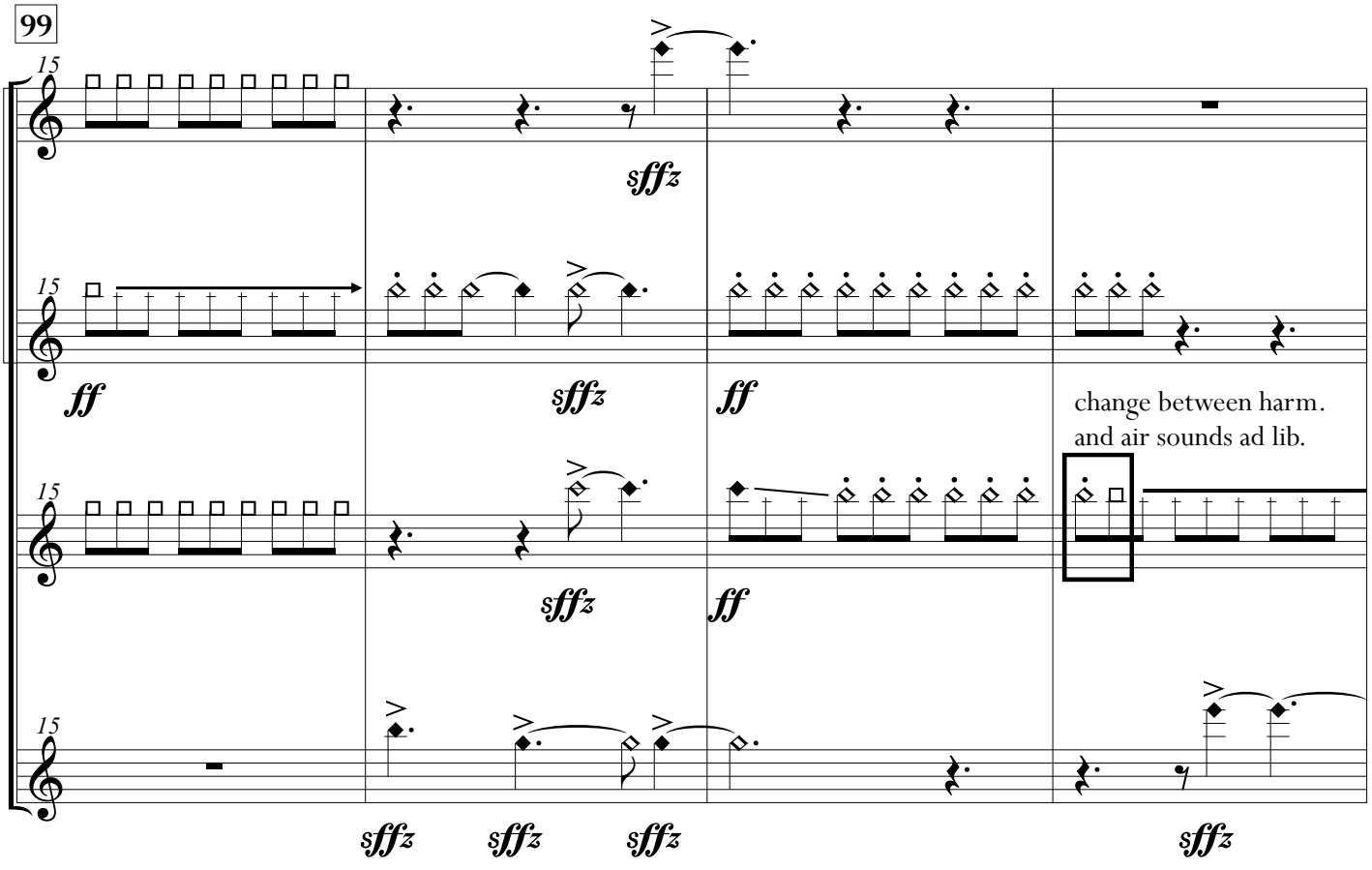
87

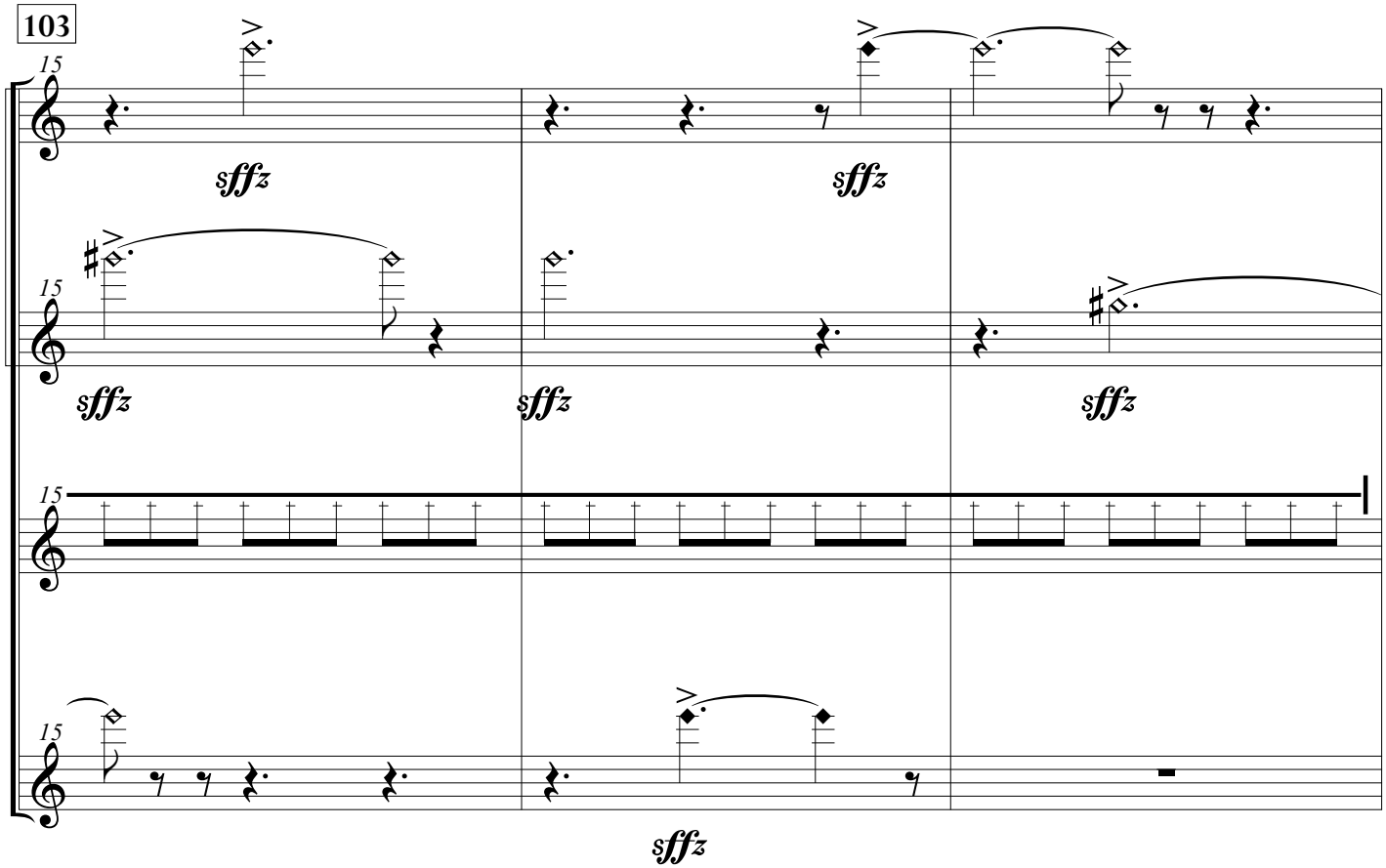


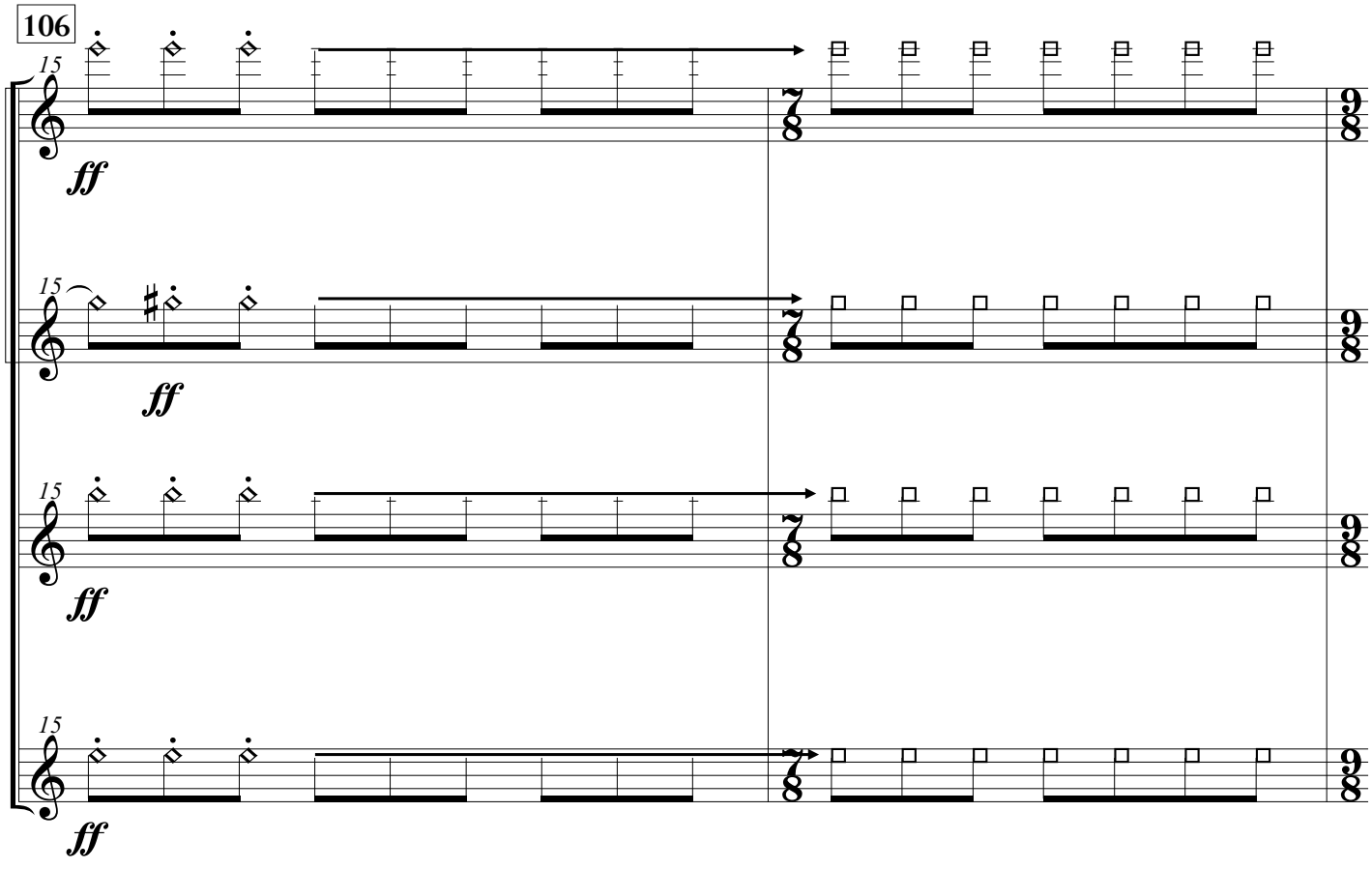
H

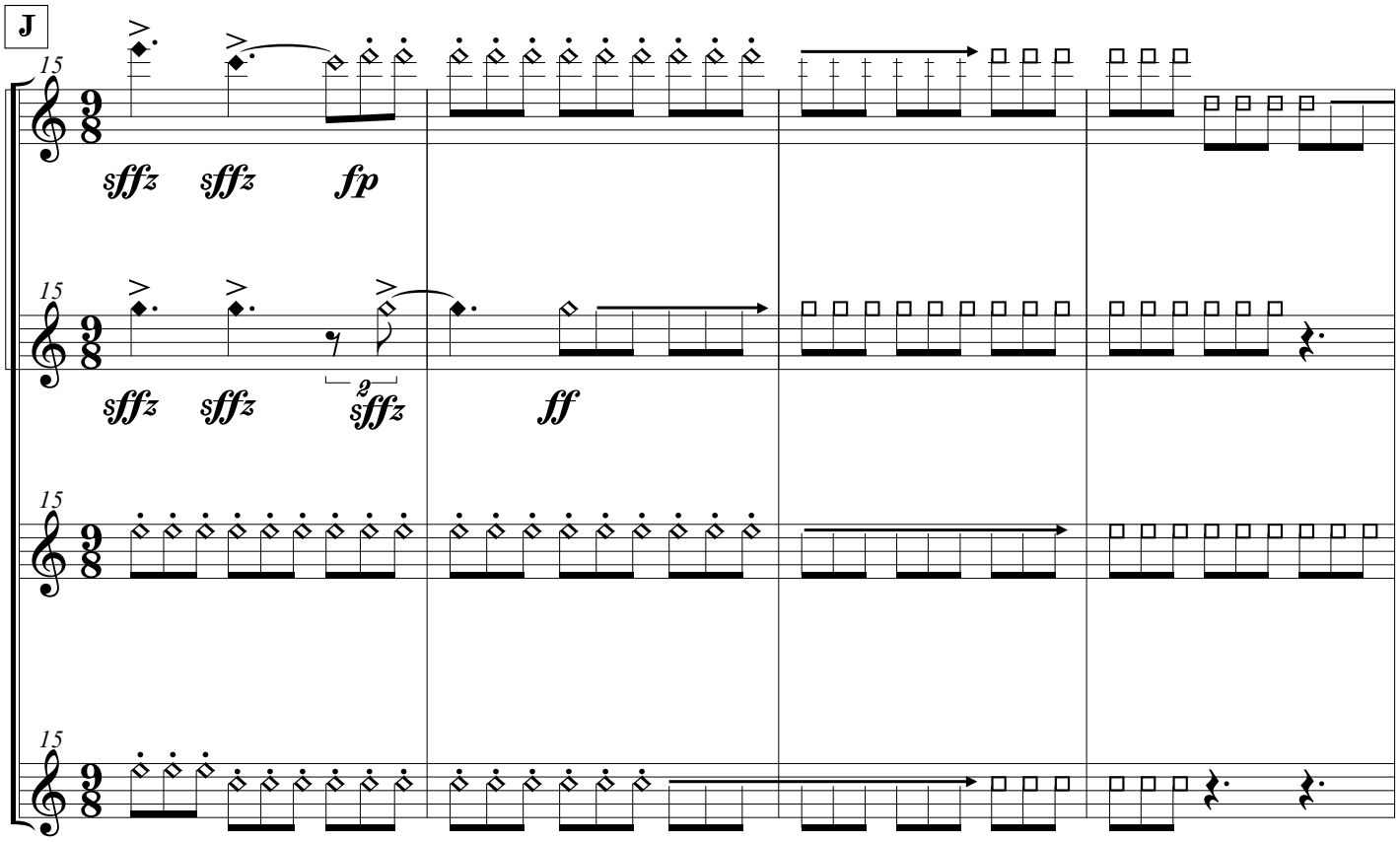


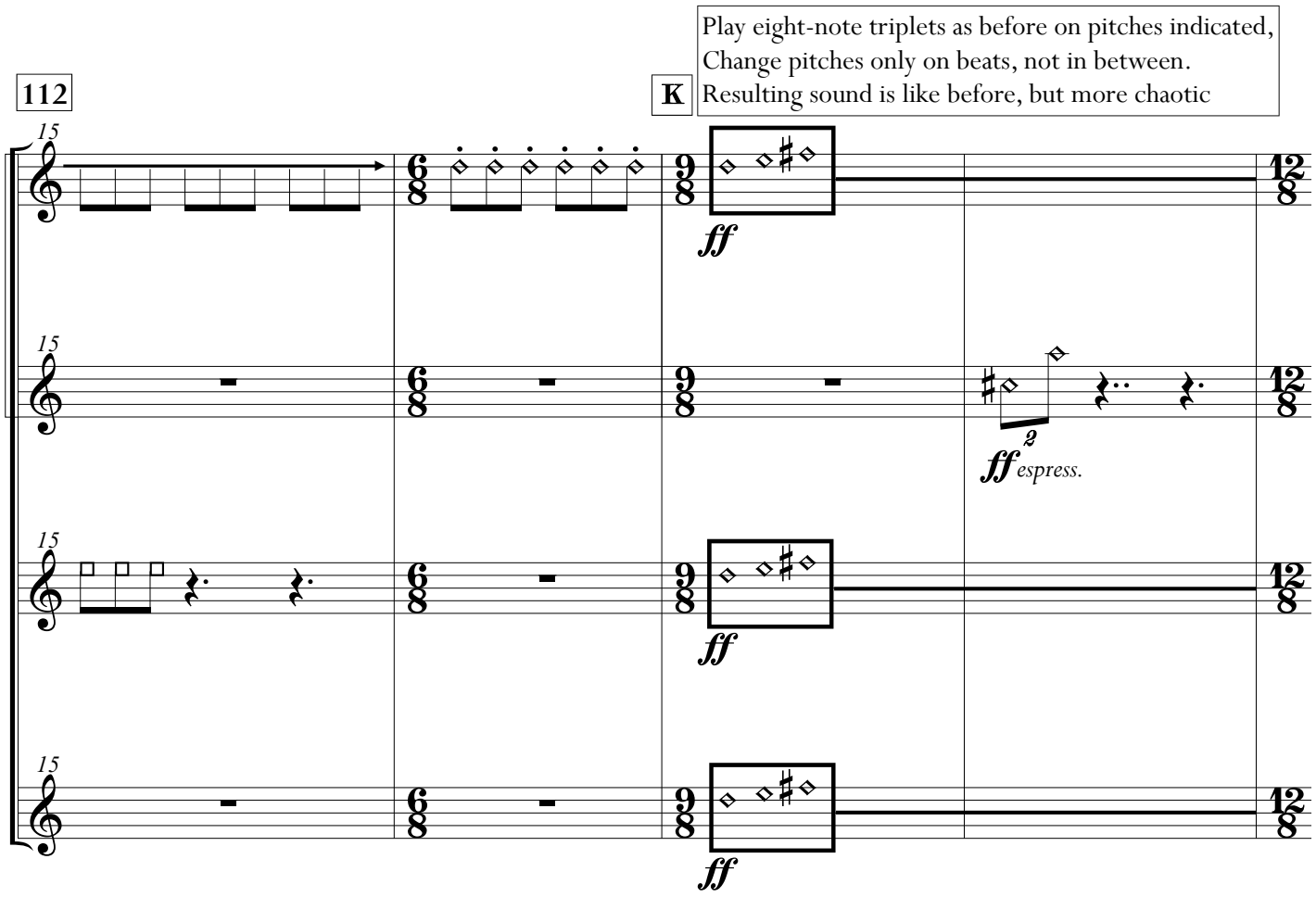

95
I
sffz
ff
sffz sffz
sffz sffz


99
sffz
ff
sffz
ff
change between harm.
and air sounds ad lib.
sffz
ff
sffz sffz sffz
sffz

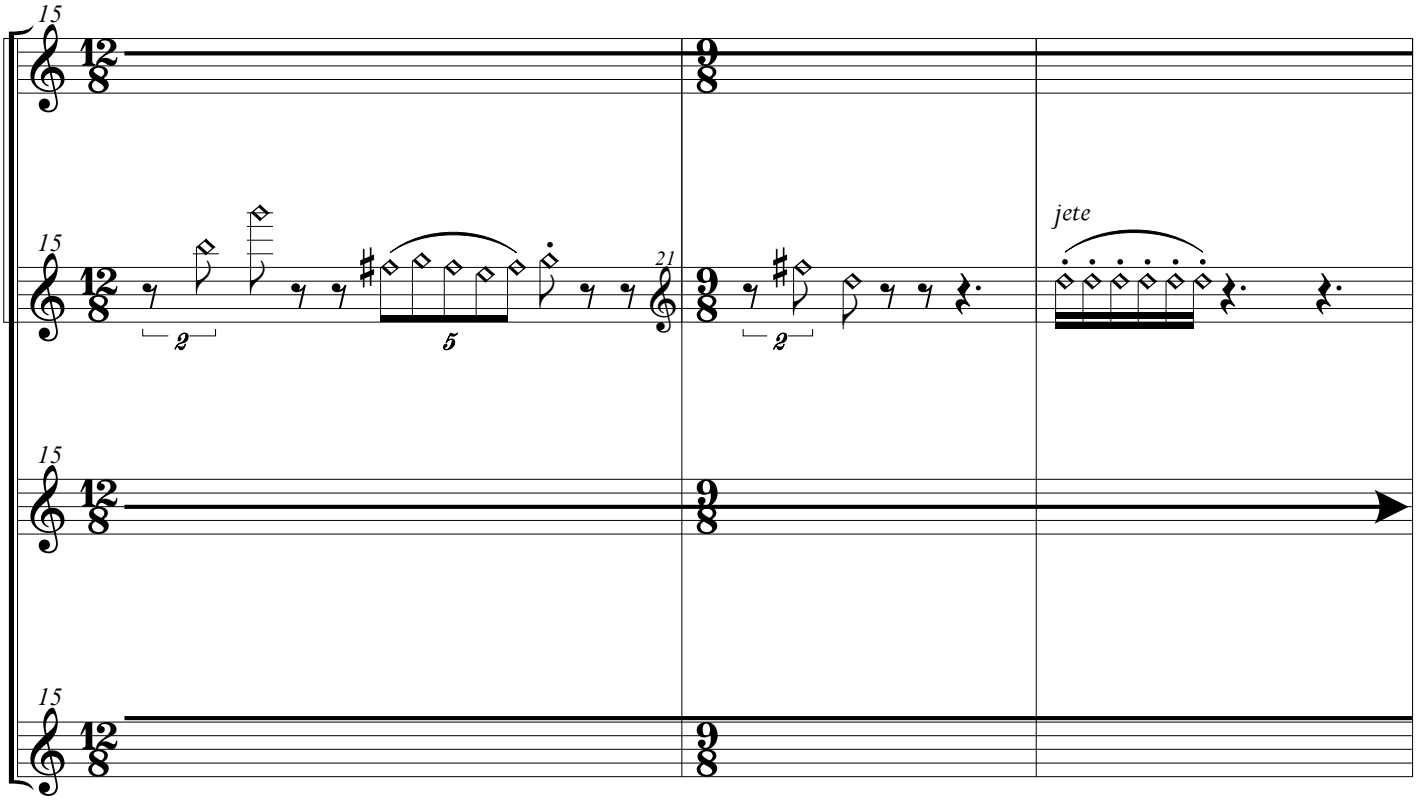

103
15
sffz
sffz
15
sffz
sffz
sffz
15
15
sffz


106
15
ff
15
ff
15
ff
15
ff

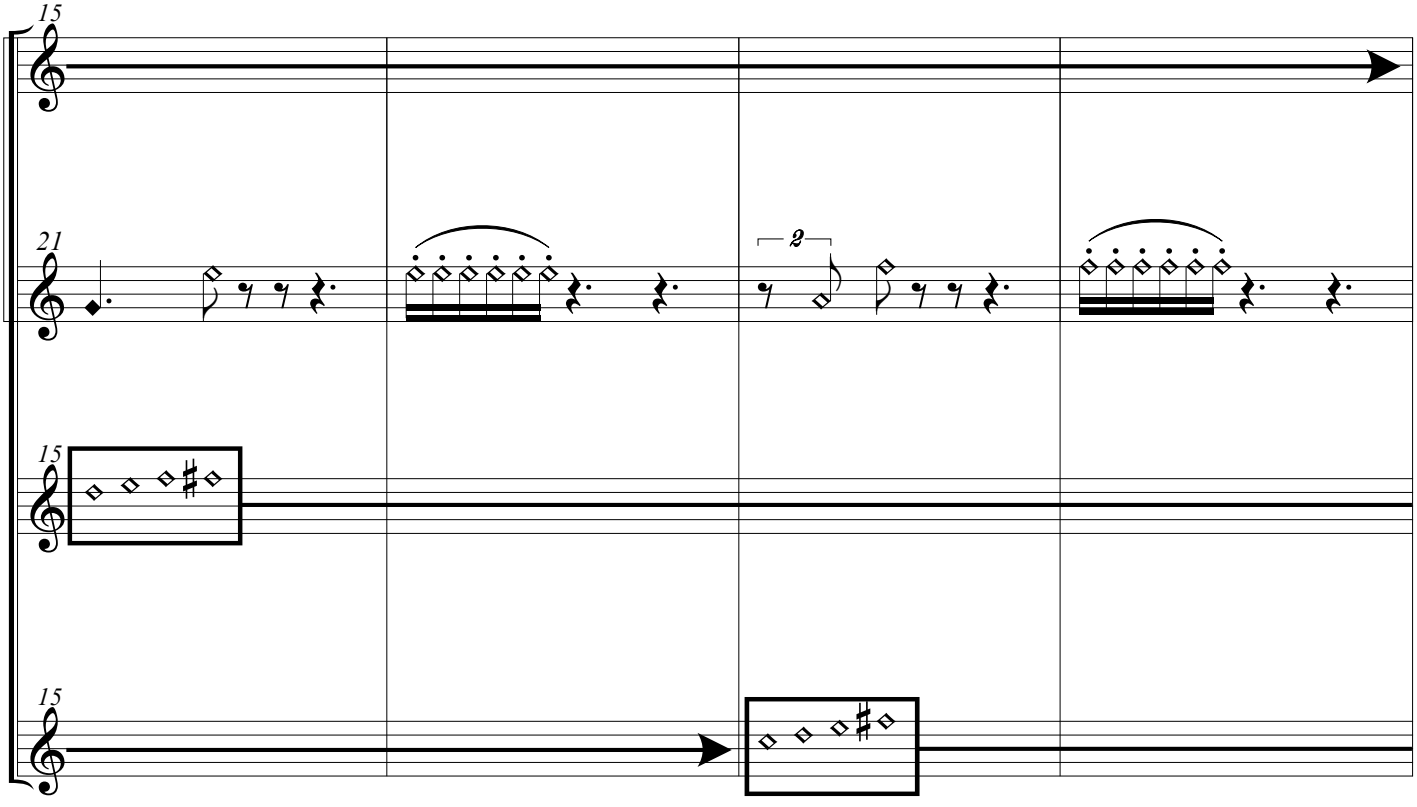

J
15
sffz
sffz
fp
15
sffz
sffz
2
sffz
ff
15
15

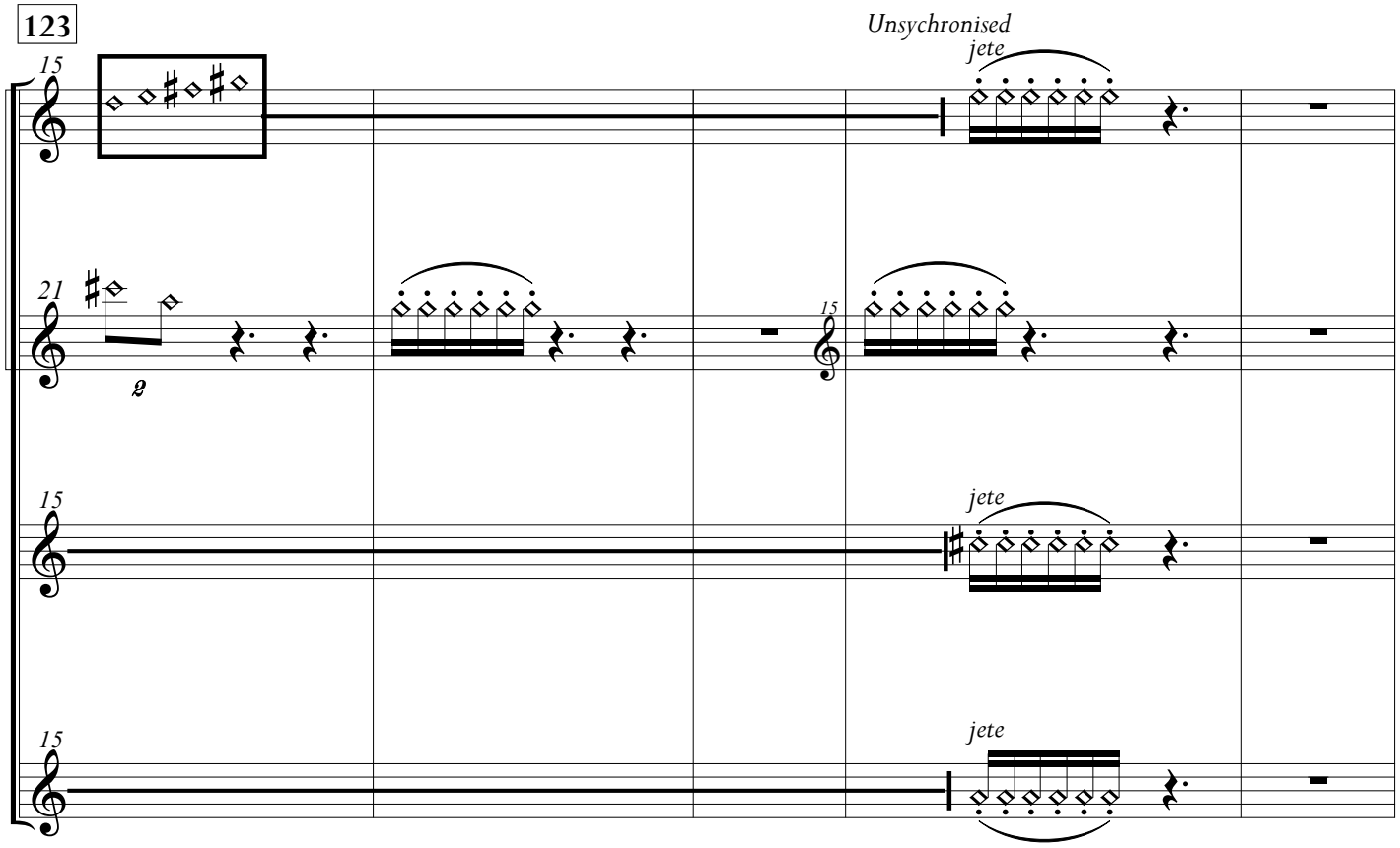

112
K
Play eight-note triplets as before on pitches indicated,
Change pitches only on beats, not in between.
Resulting sound is like before, but more chaotic
15
ff
15
2
ff espress.
15
ff
15
ff

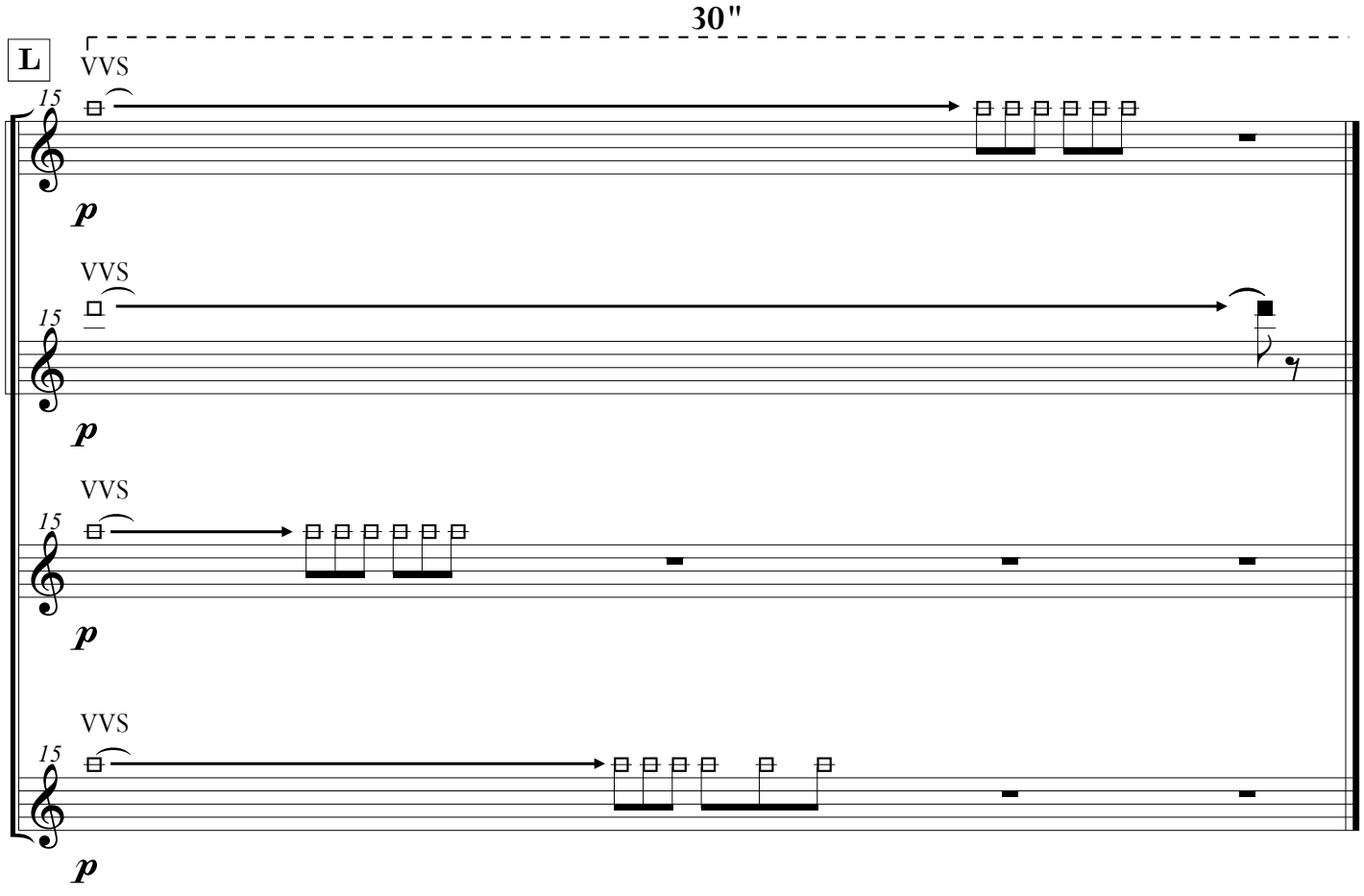
116



119

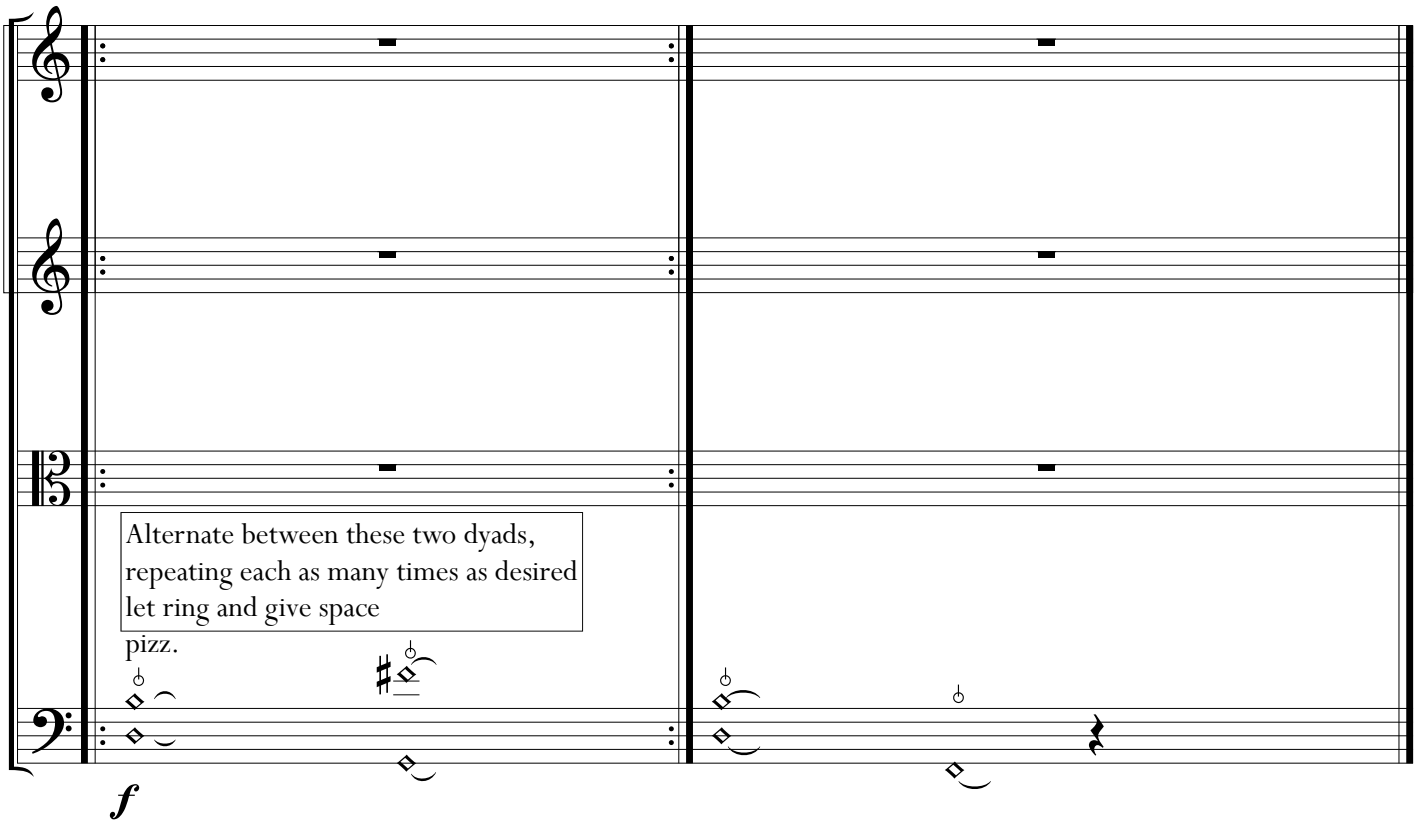



123
Unsychronised
jete
jete
jete


30"
L
VVS
VVS
VVS
VVS
p
p
p
p

Primer IV

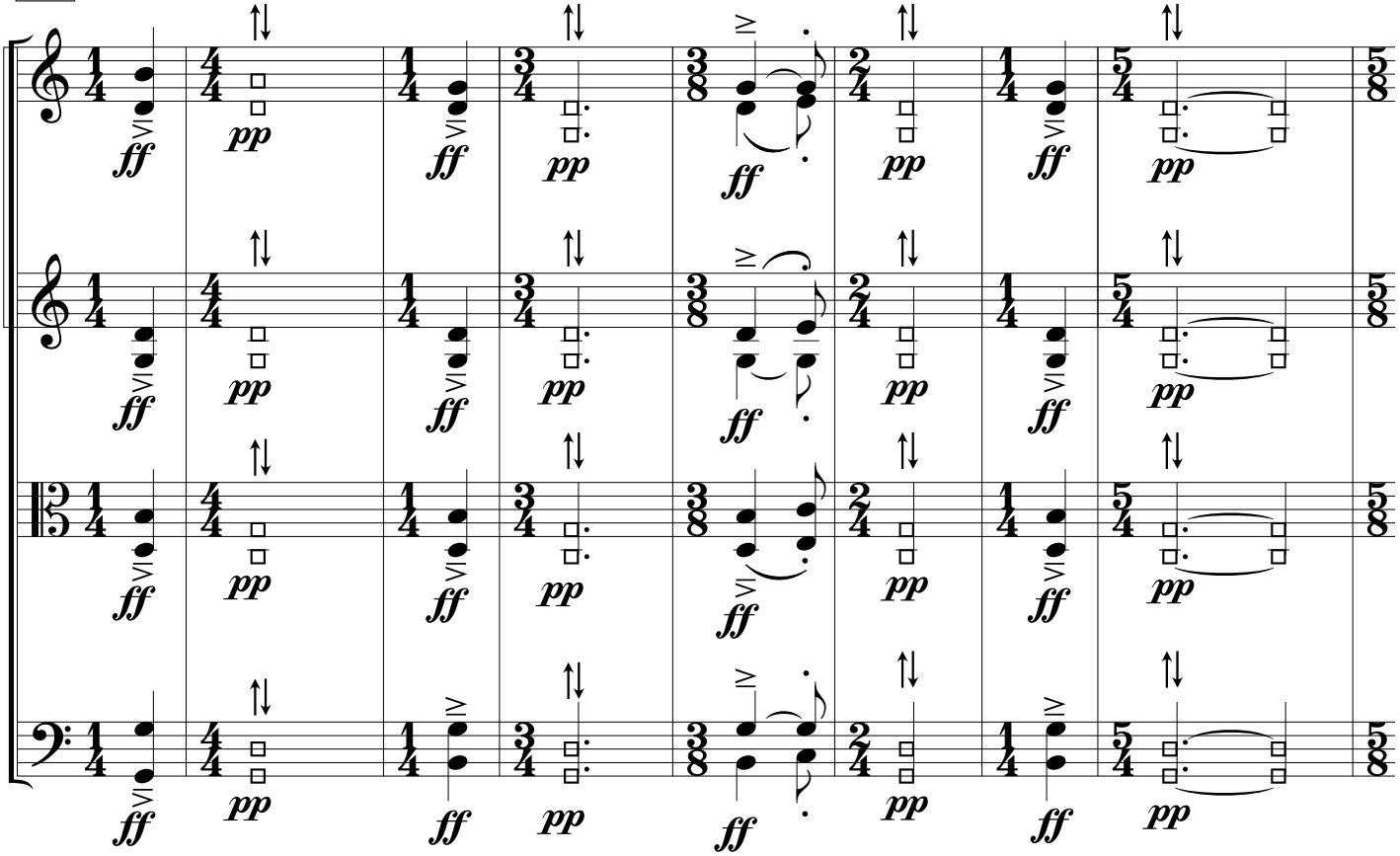
133 **Unmeasured Time** 30"

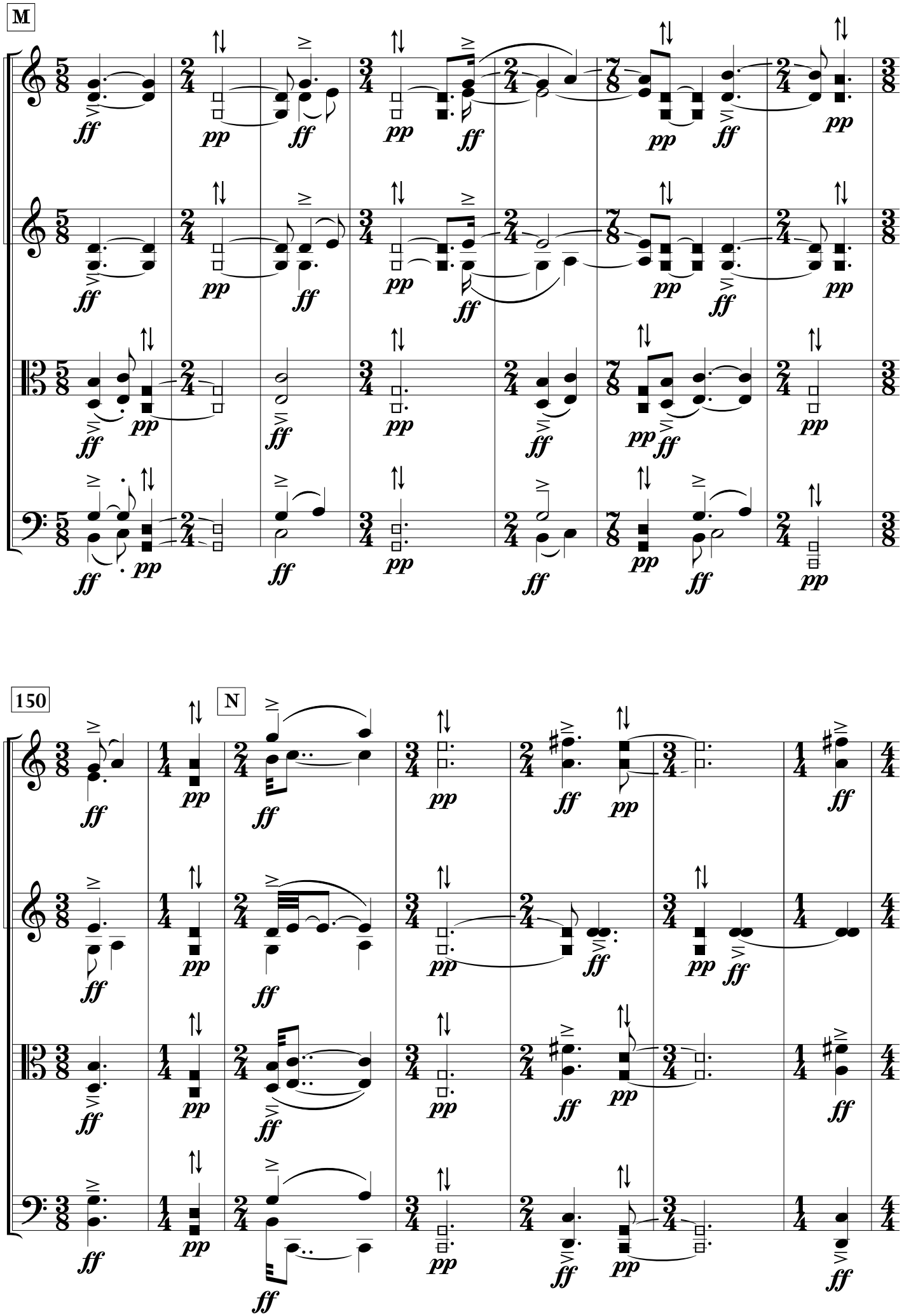


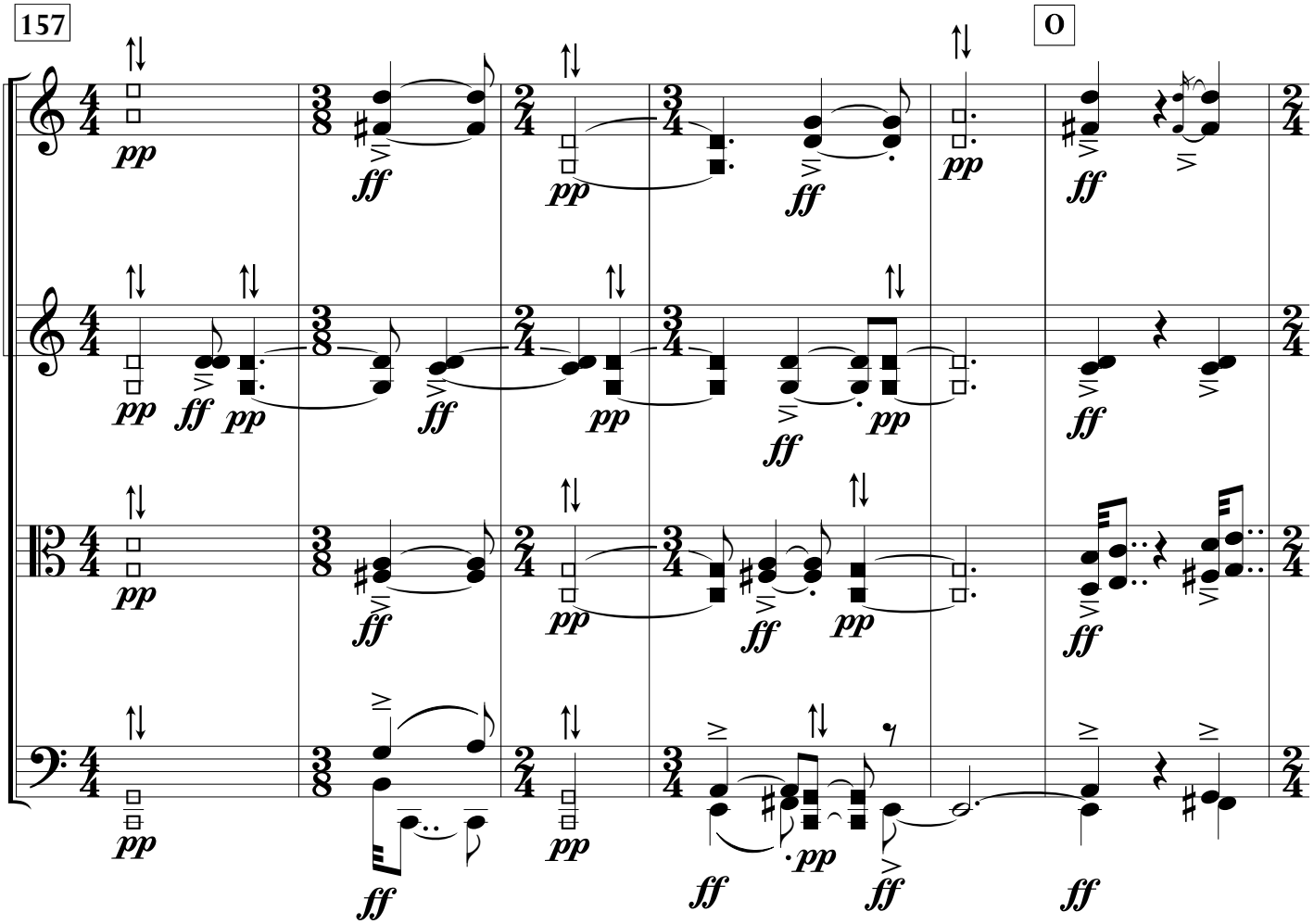
Variation IV

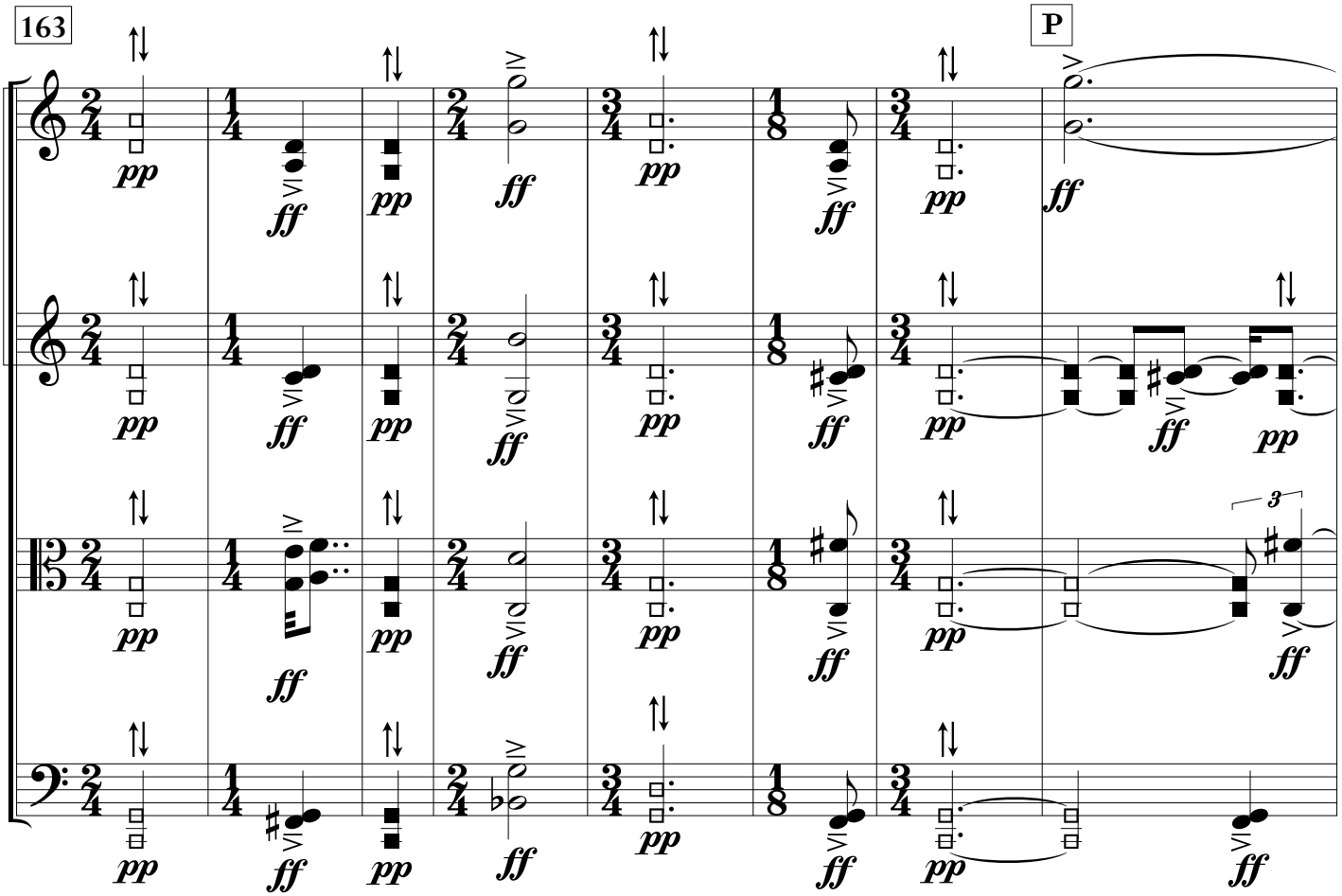
135 ♩ = 68

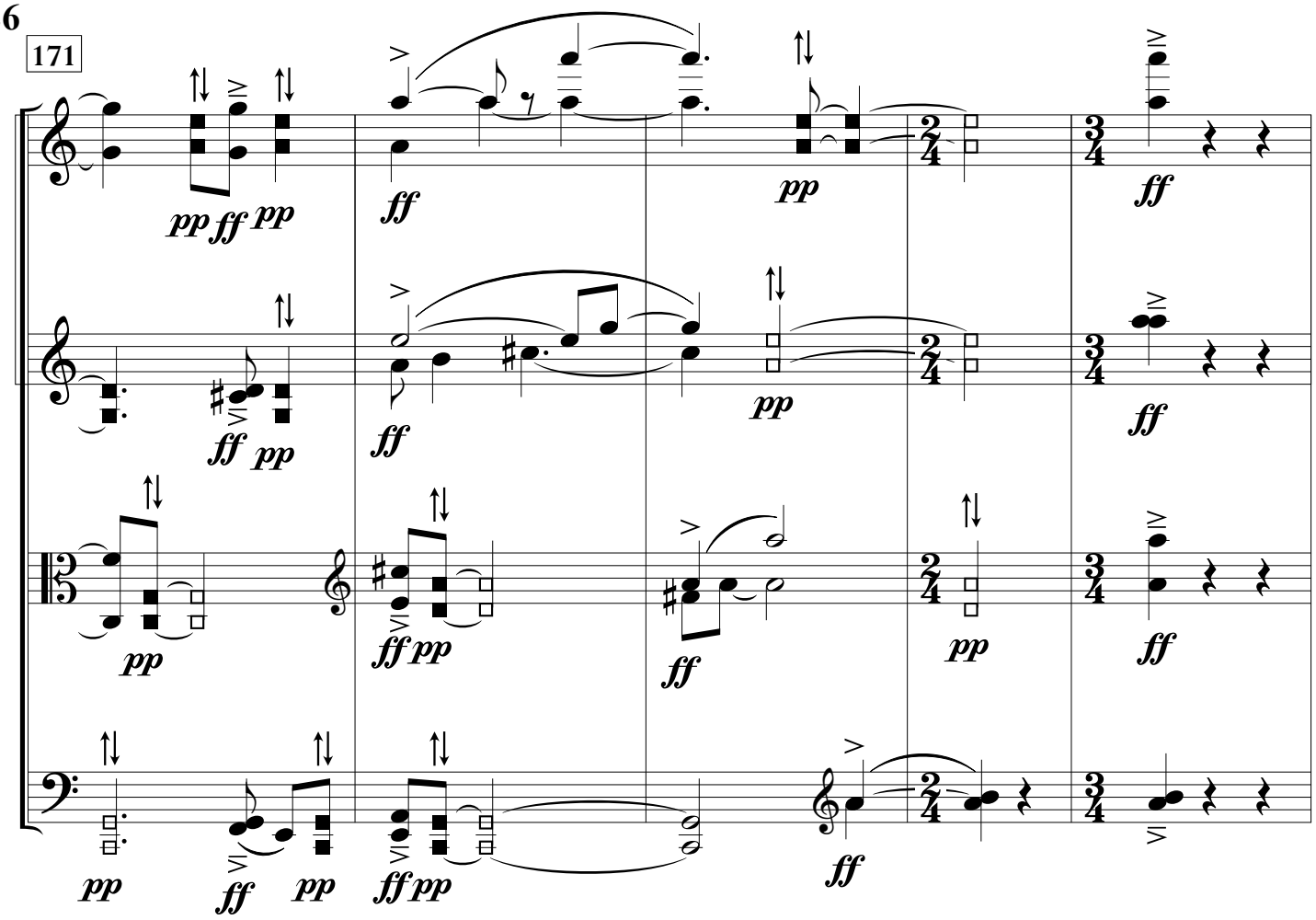
Bow along string, vary speed
of bow between interations

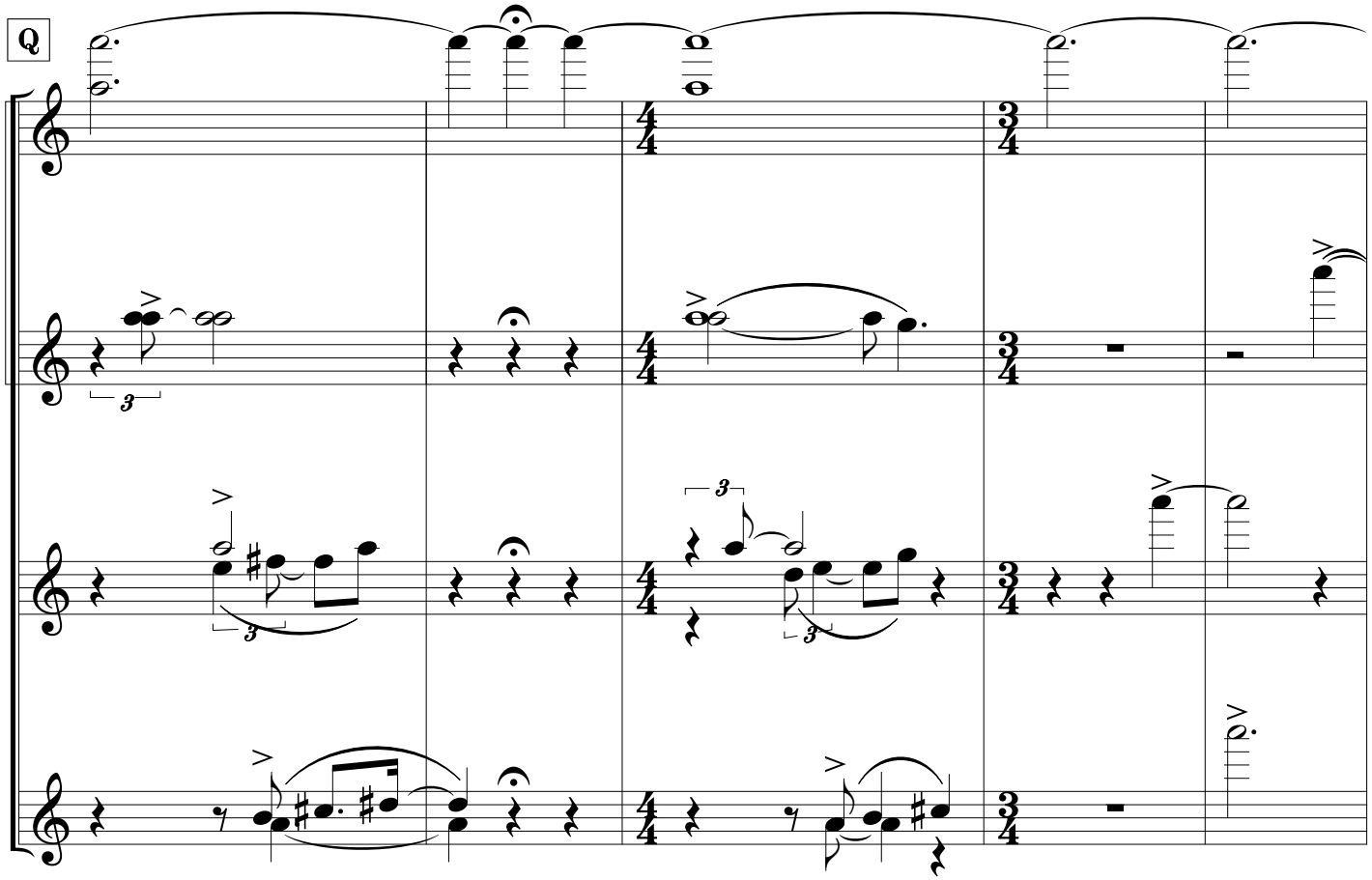


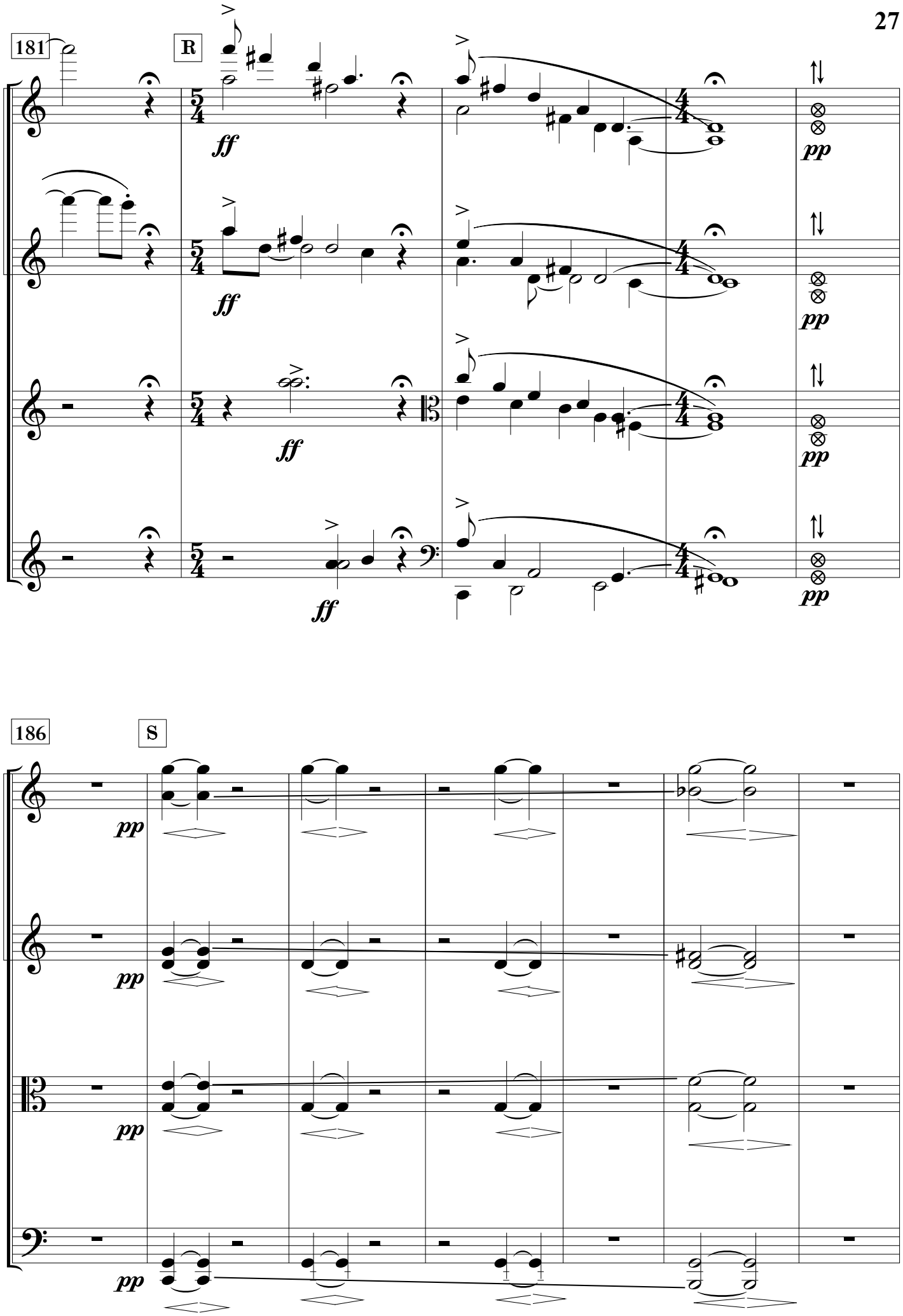

M
150
N


157
O


163
P

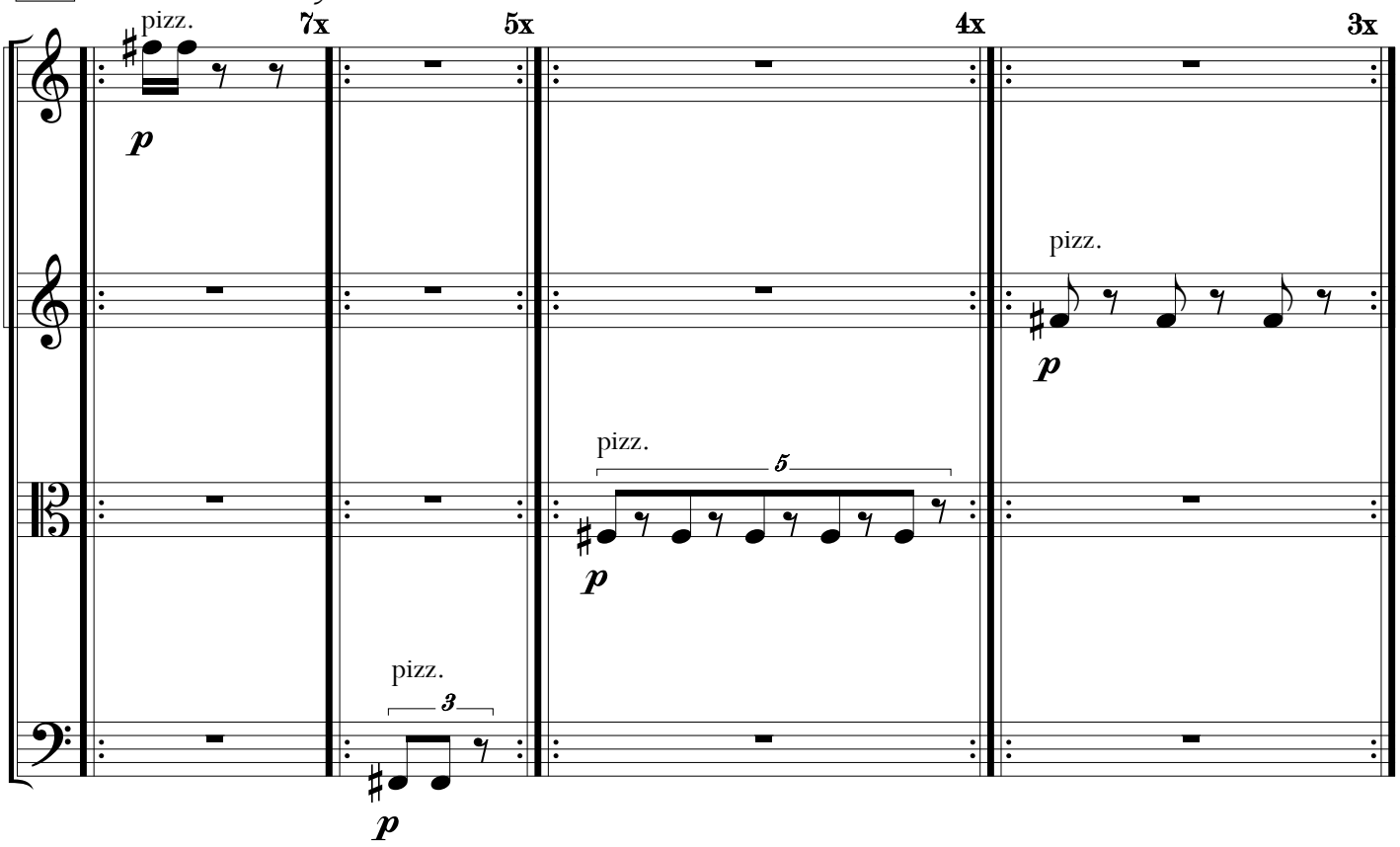

171
pp ff pp
ff
pp
ff
ff pp
ff
pp
ff
pp
ff pp
ff
pp
ff
pp
ff pp
ff pp
ff


Q
3
3
3
3


181
R
ff
pp
186
S
pp

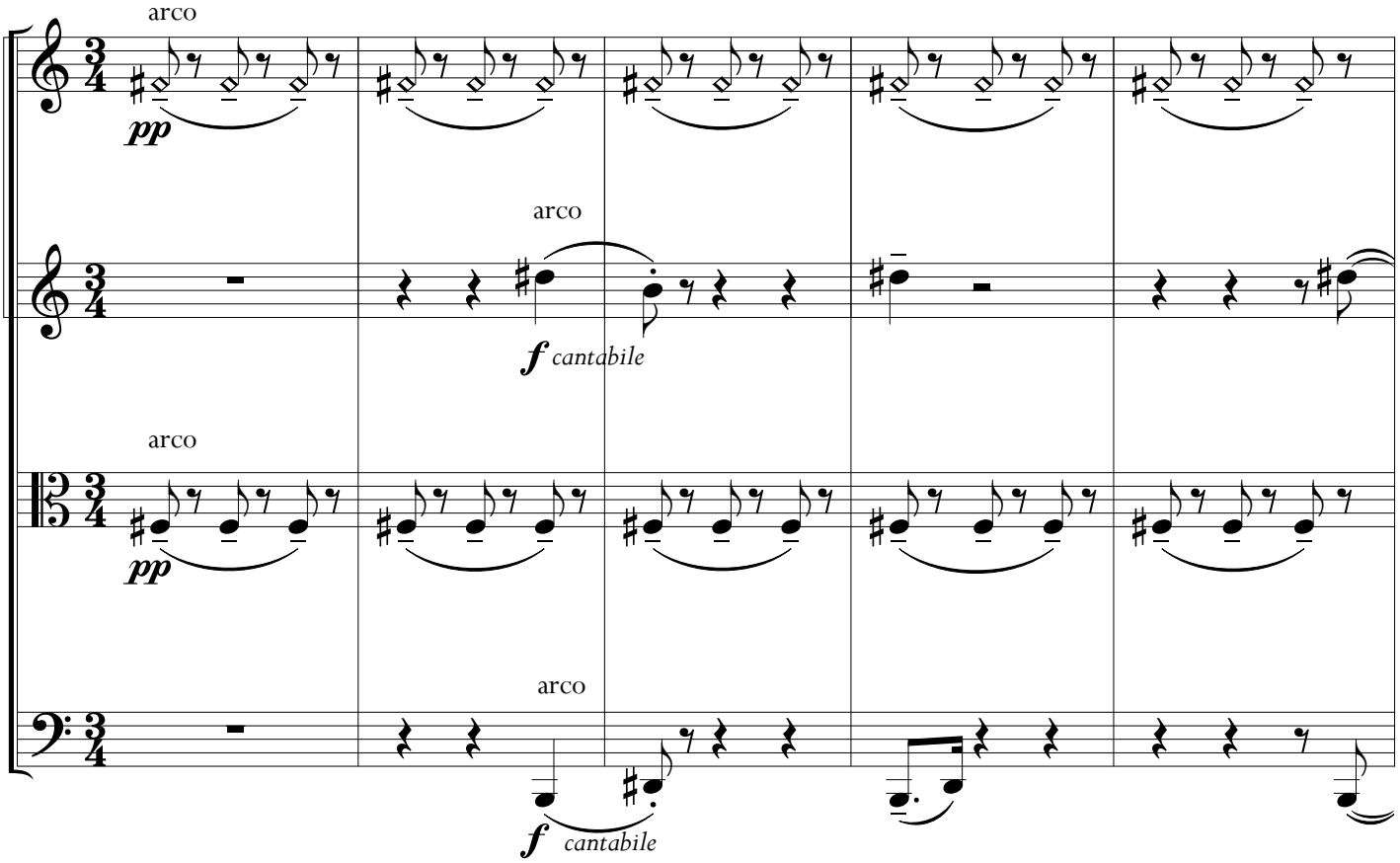
Primer V

193 ♩ = 56 *Steady*



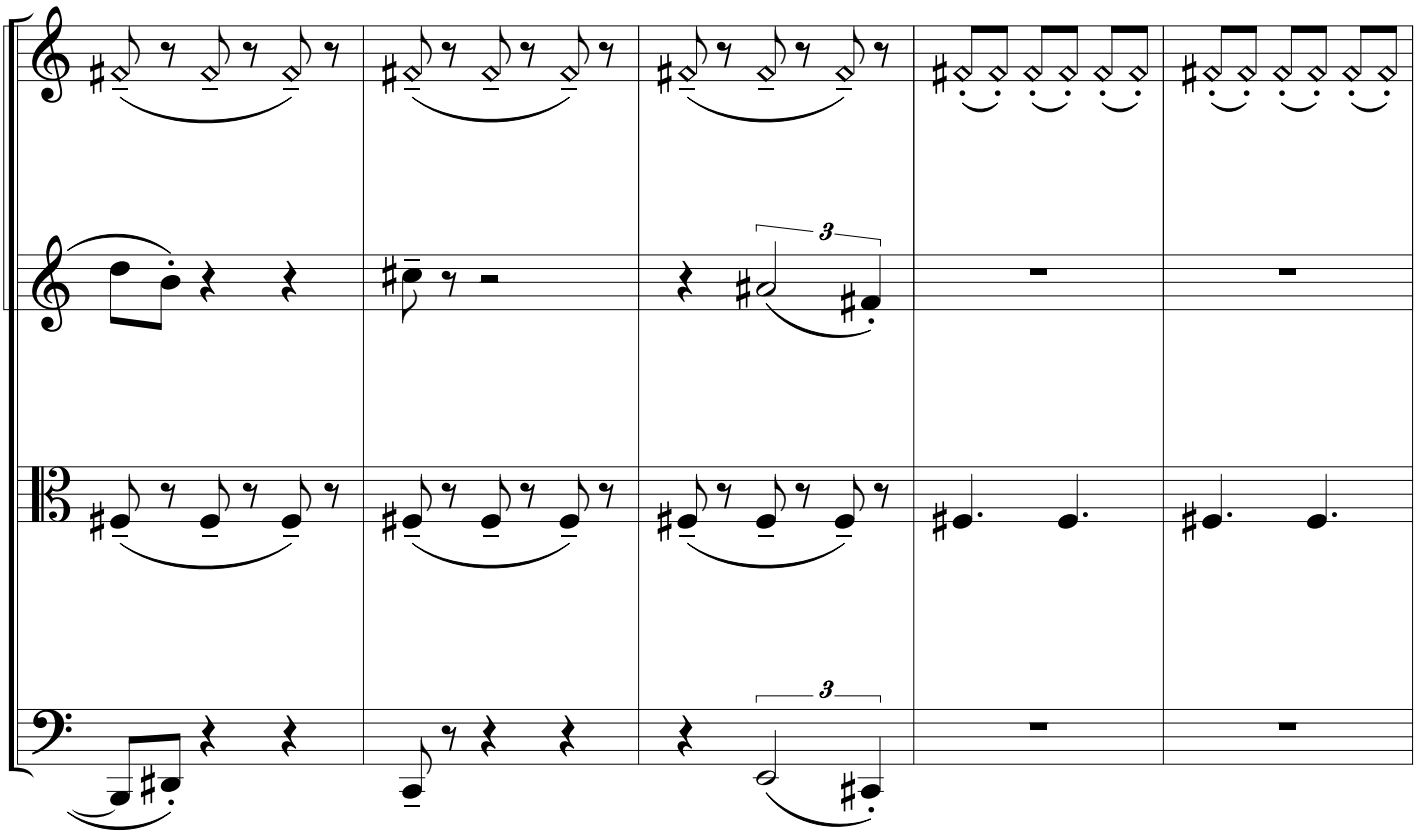
Variation V

197 ♩ = 56 *Steady, with increasing energy*



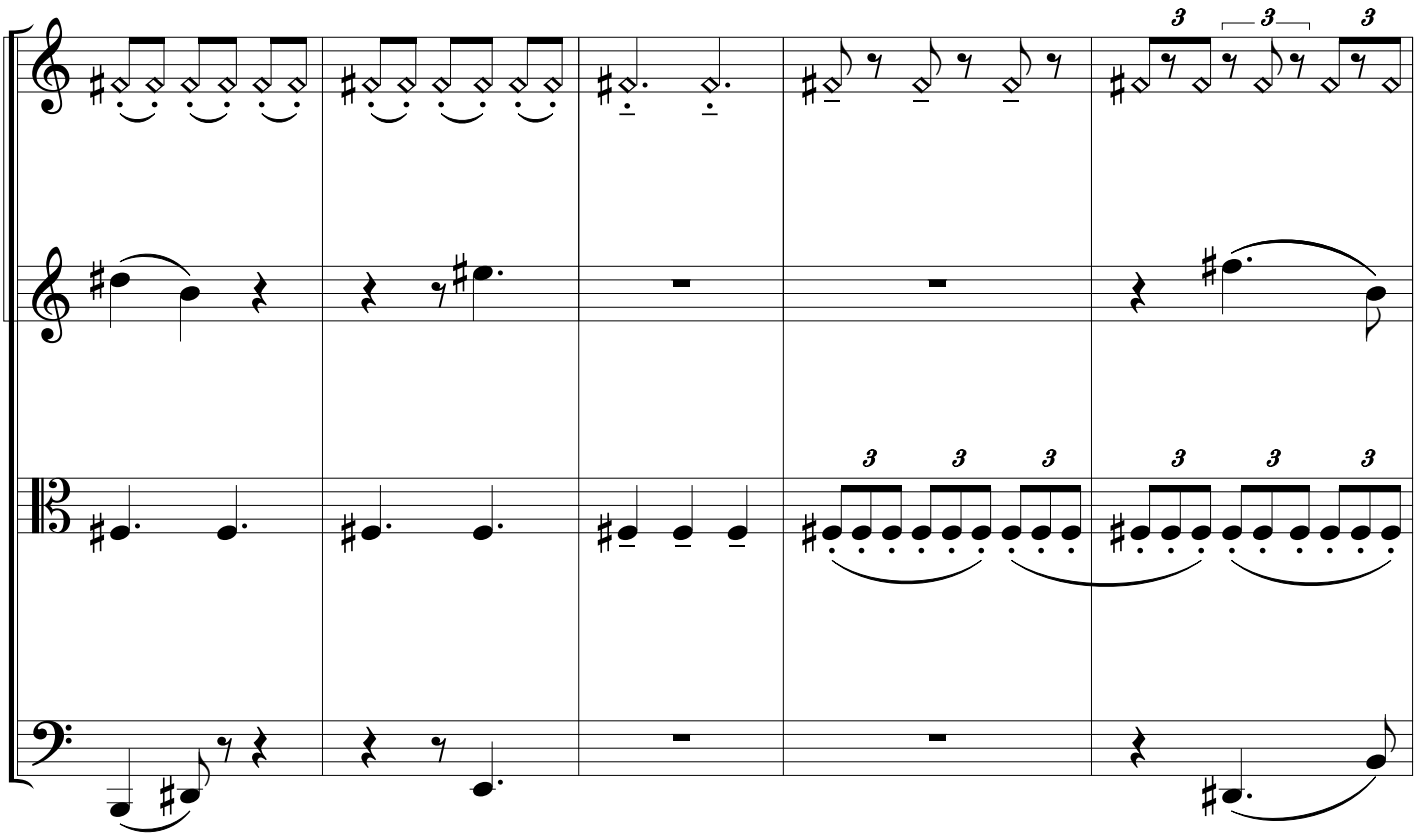
202

T

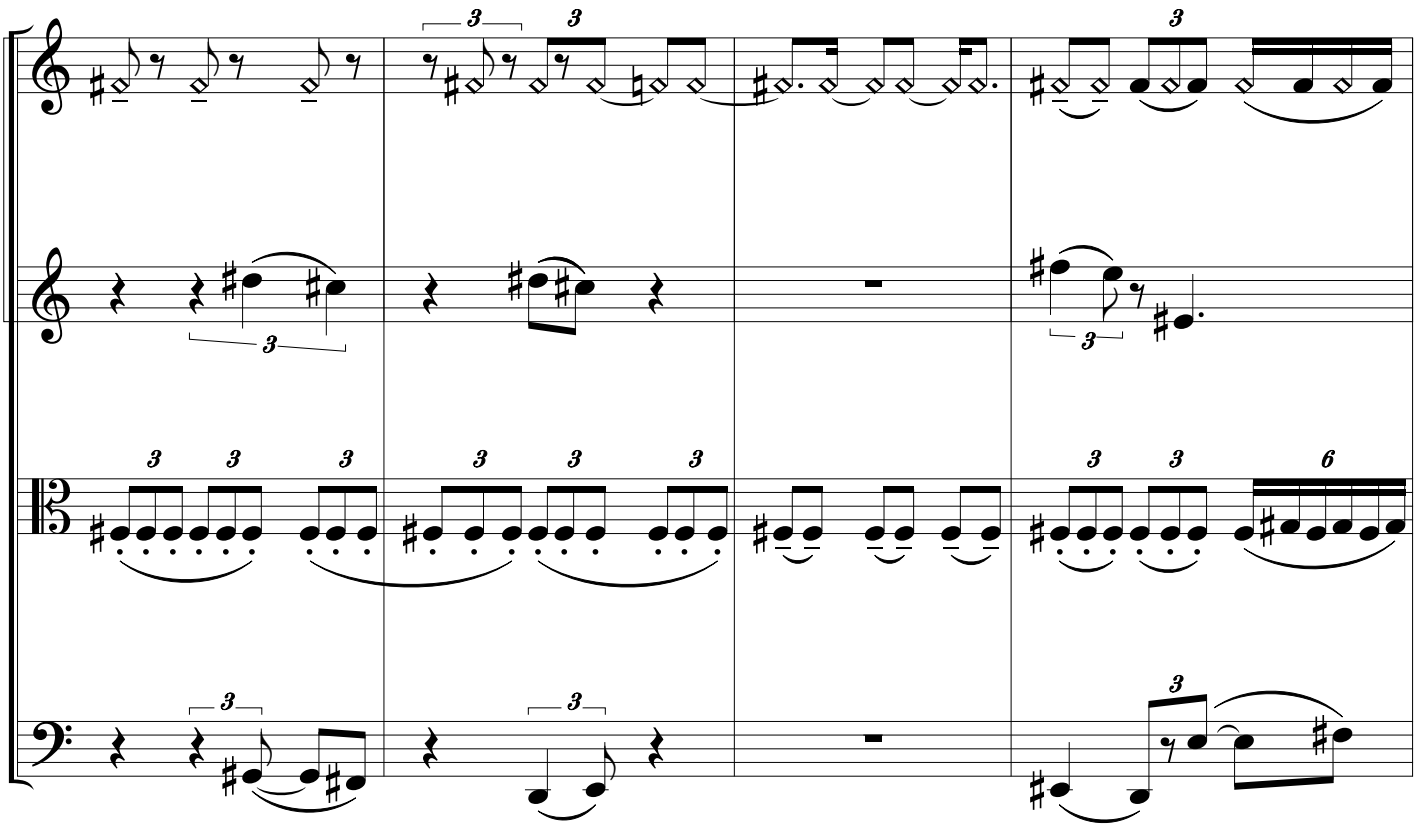


207

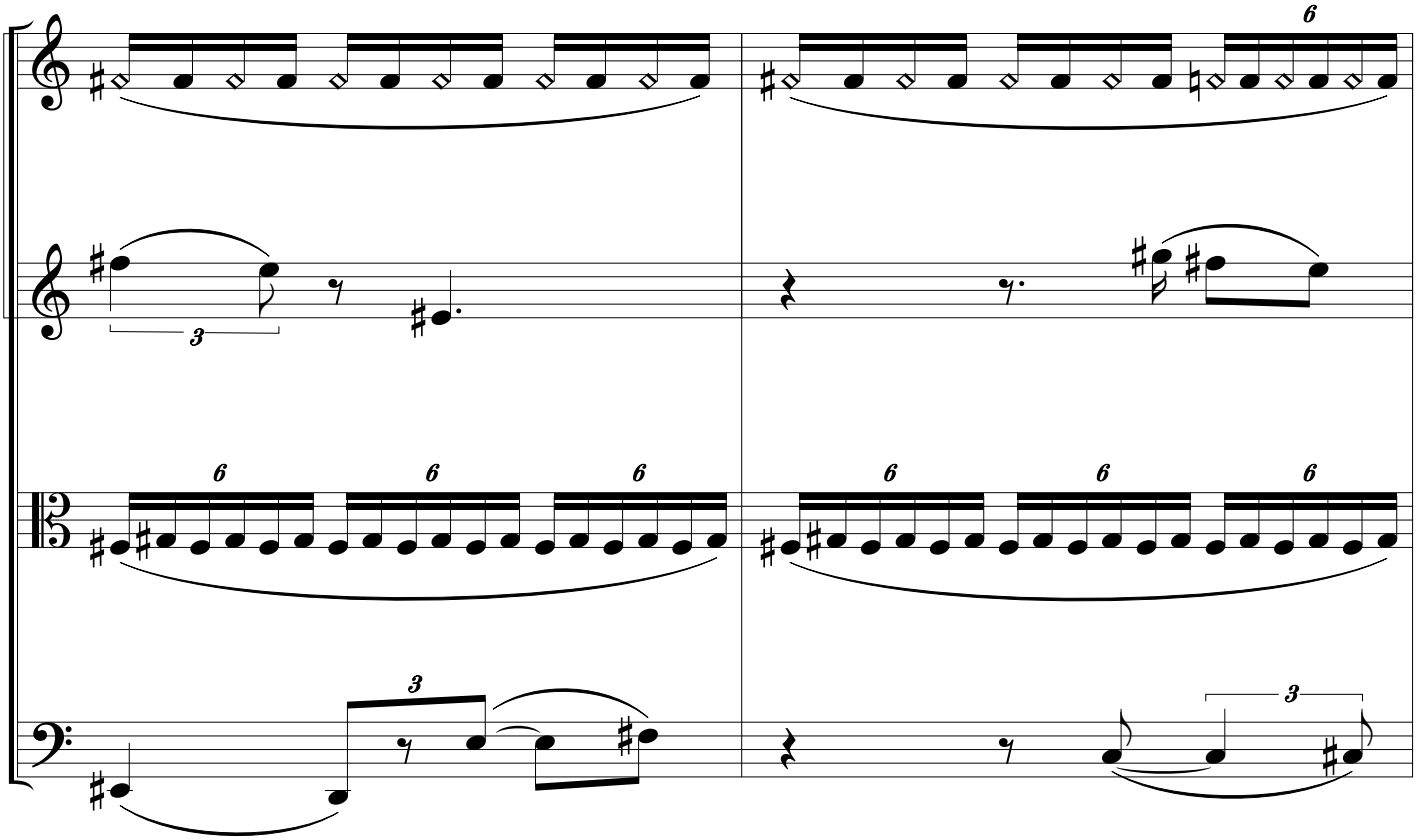
U

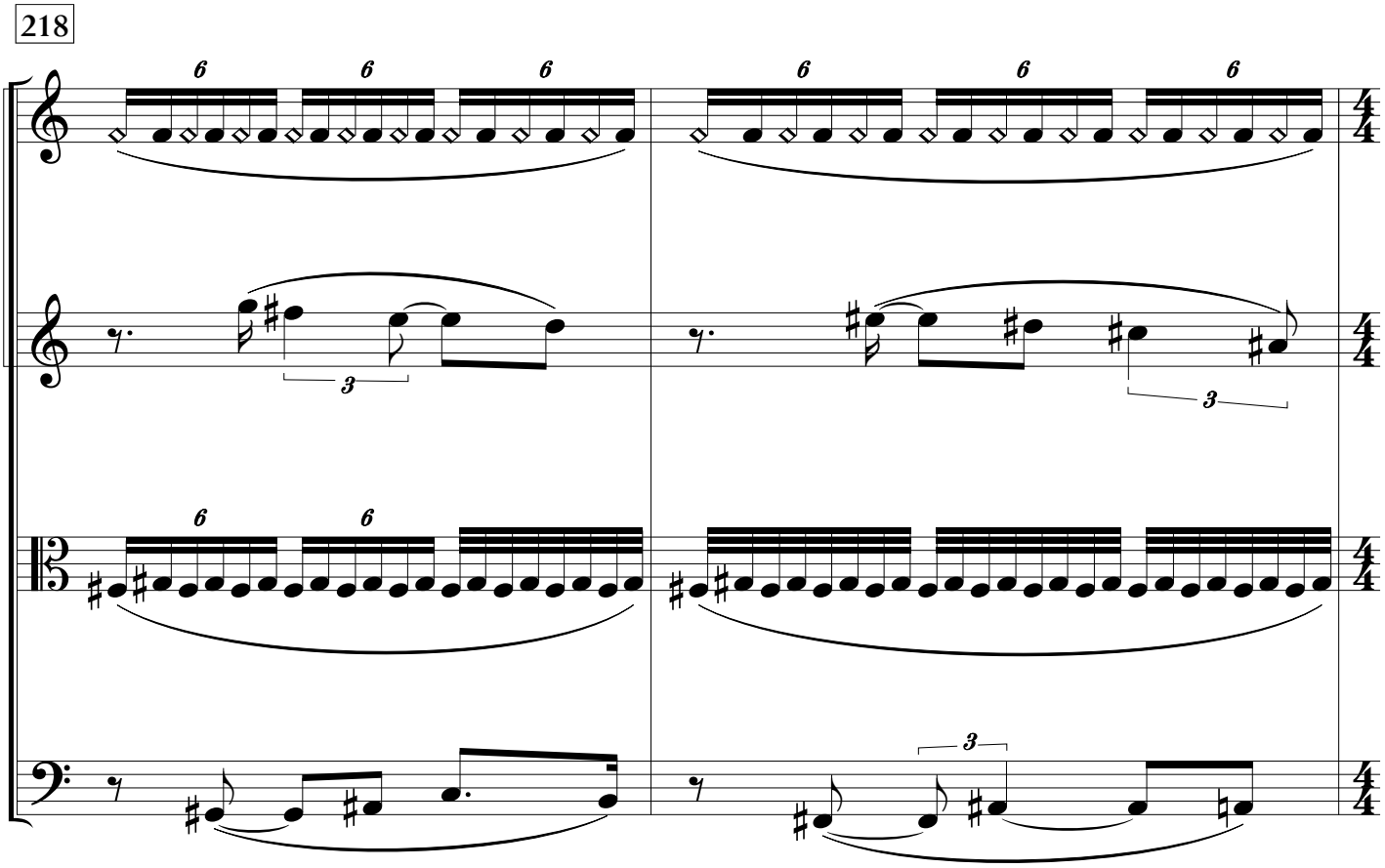


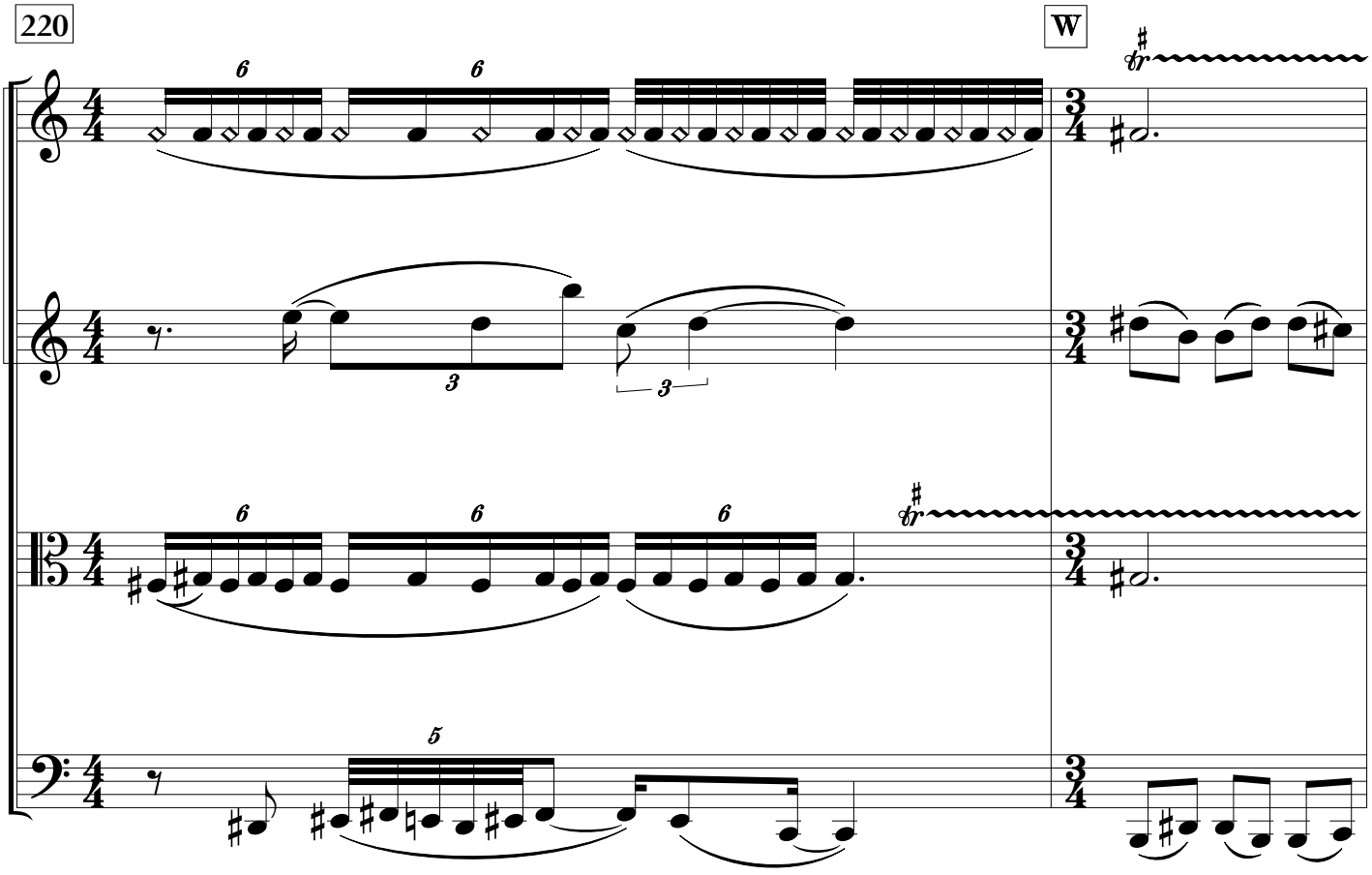
212

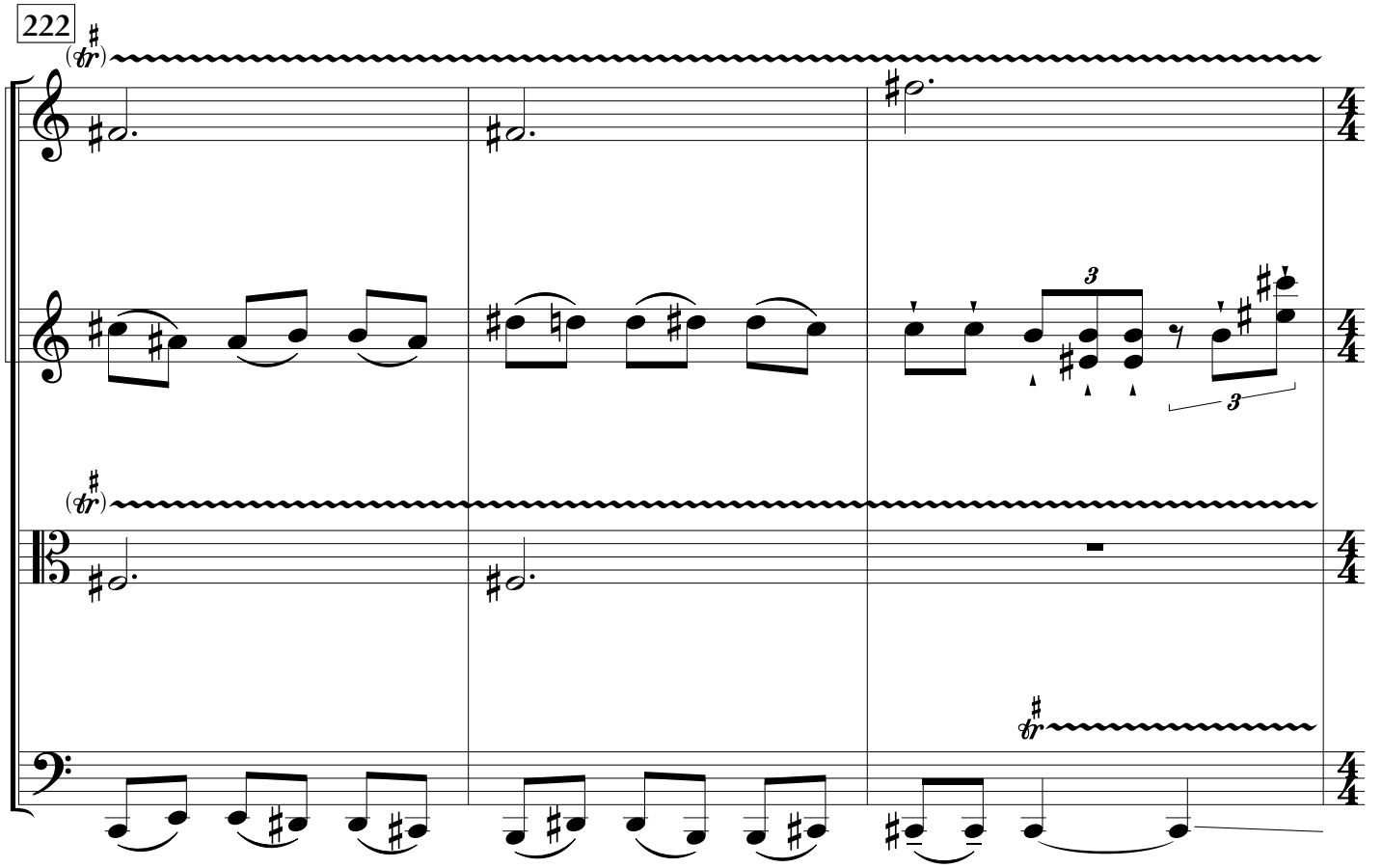


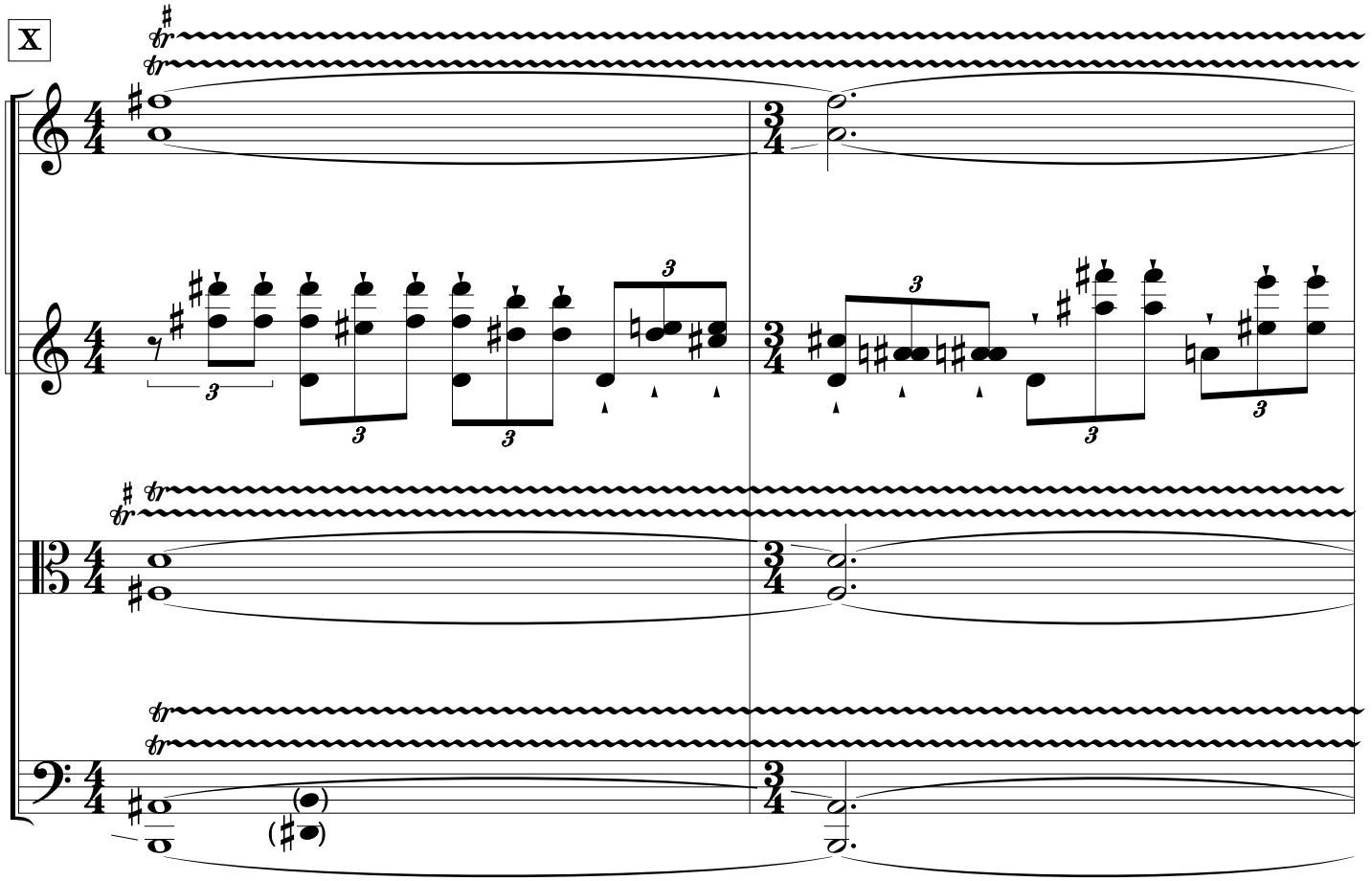
V

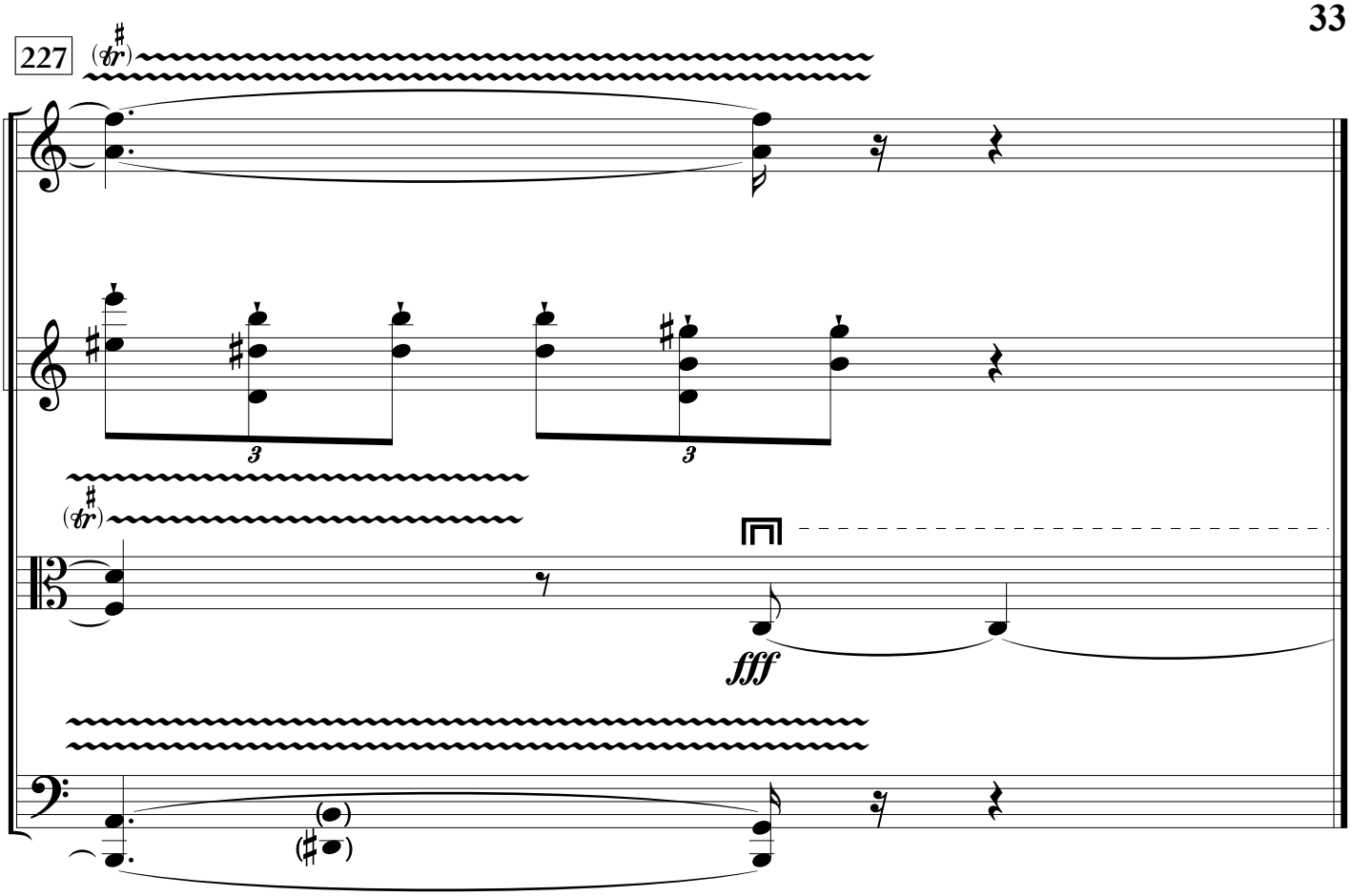



218

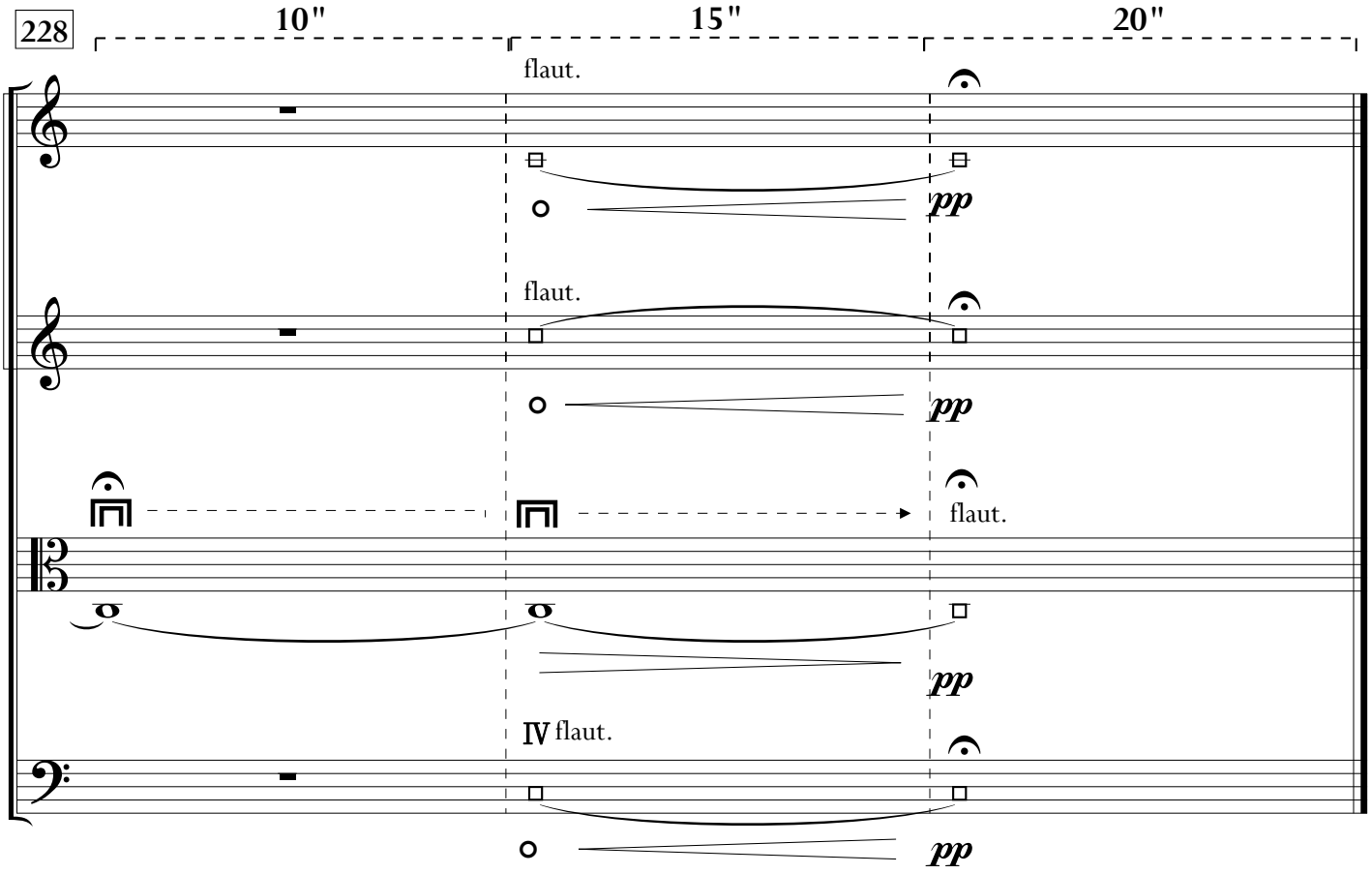

220
W


222


X



Interjection



Interactions I: Revelation

This is a meditation, find your space.

Bow very, very slowly, softly, and evenly producing a soft air, constant noise.

Maintain both constant activity, but extremely soft dynamics.

Move your bow in either a parallel, triangle, square, or circular bow pattern. Try not to be moving in the same way as someone else.

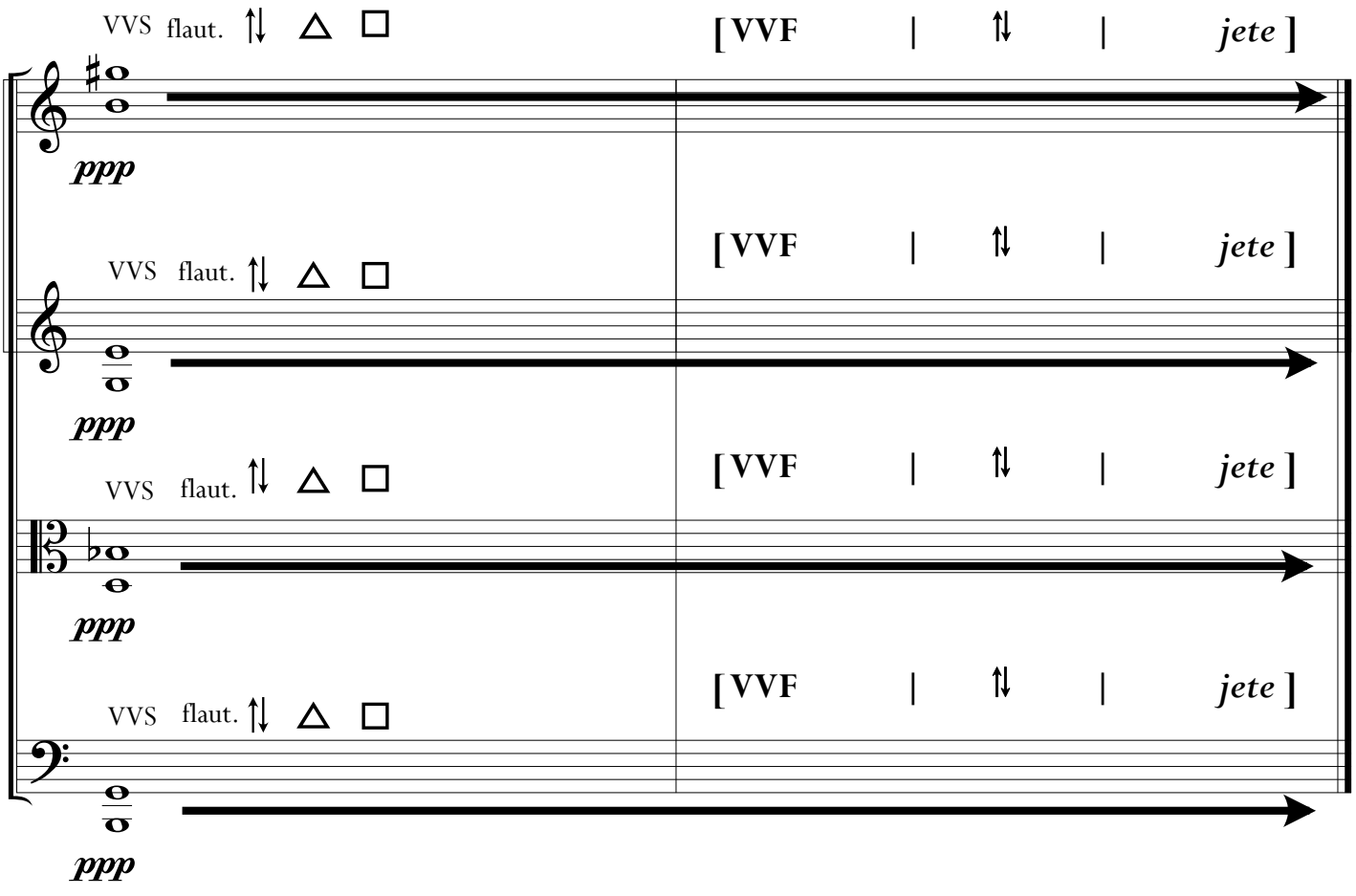
Change your bow rotation (hair to col legno), as desired

As your angle changes, part of the sound is revealed.

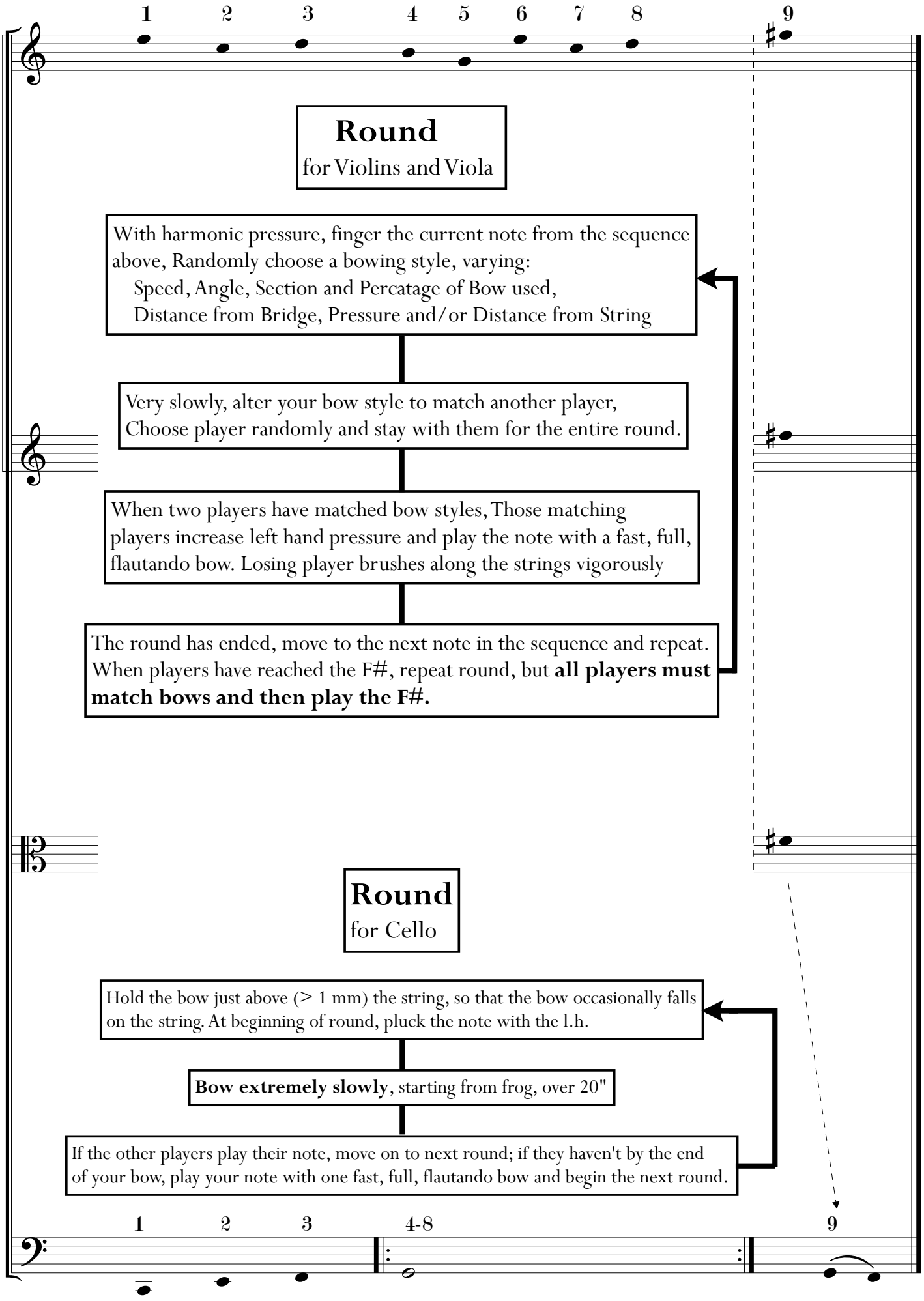
Stop your bow on the string, especially if the texture is too busy or loud, so as to give space.

As desired, insert a sudden, short gesture (< 1/2 sec.) into your bowing:
- VVF, super short, either continuing your current movement or moving across the string
- Tremolo along the string (Windshield wiper)
- *jete*

If you hear one of these gestures, repeat it, then continue with your prior bowing.



Interactions II: Convergence



Interactions III: Flood

One player leads each round. Other players follow.

After being lead 3 times, a player becomes an antagonist, playing air bow noise and materials from the call and response ad lib. They are trying to disrupt the other players

Round:

Leader plucks 2 B's. then picks an air bowing style at random,

Other players must match the bowing style,

At will, the leader plays a call and the other players must play the corresponding response.

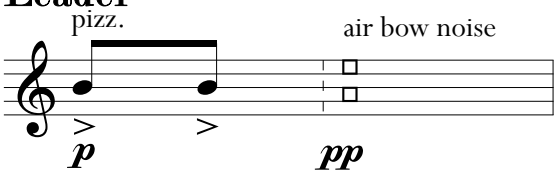
The last player to respond or a player which playes the wrong response becomes the next leader. If there is a conflict, listen to who you think is leader.

Closing:

After all players have been leader 3 times, each player repeats the last response they played, crescendoing to *fff* and then playing any materials from pg. 37 ad lib for 15".

The last leader then plays a snap pizz.chord twice, cueing a general pause in the ensemble.

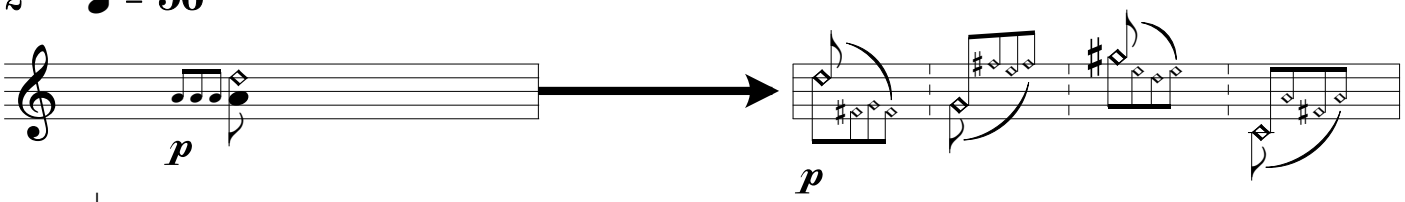
Leader



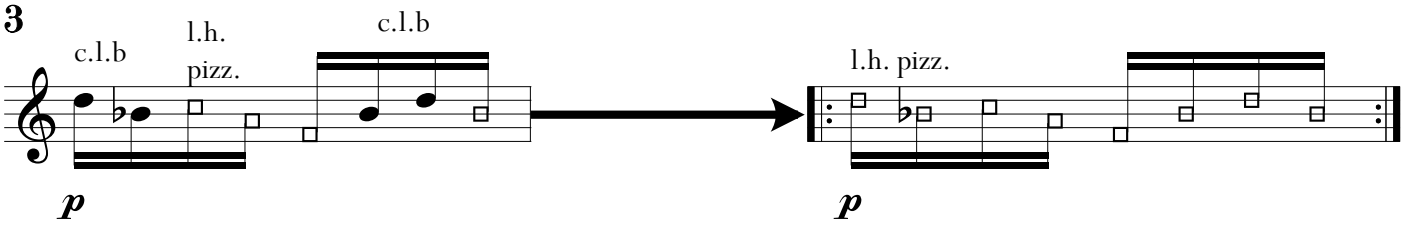
Calls Responses

1 ♩ = 56

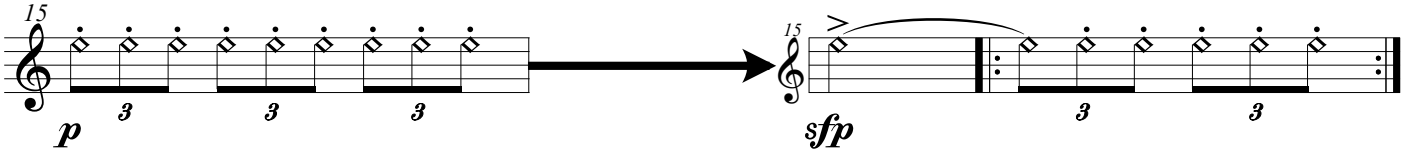
2 ♩ = 56



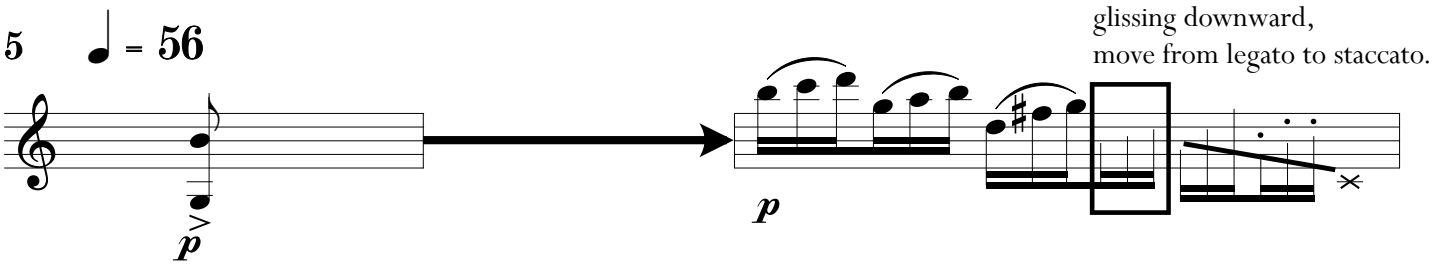
3 ♩ = 120



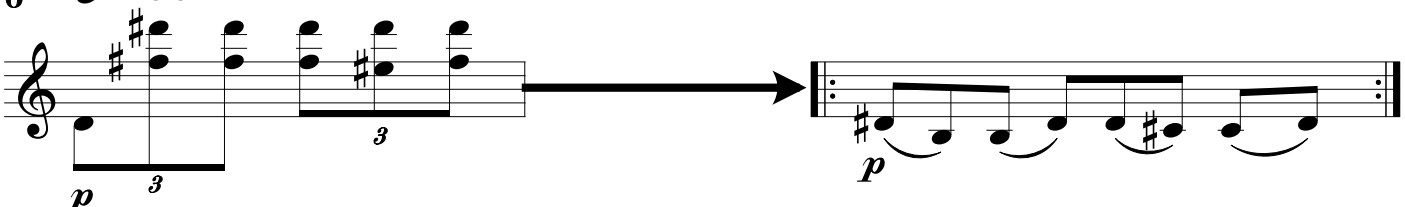
4 ♩. = 132



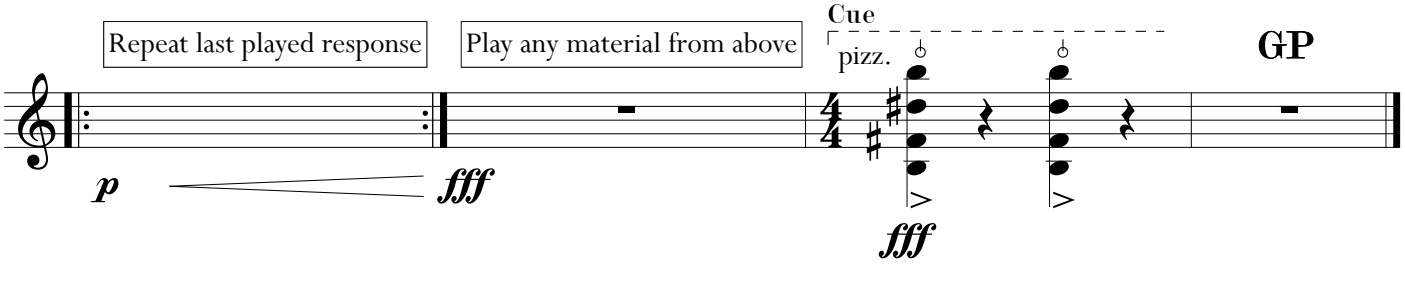
5 ♩ = 56



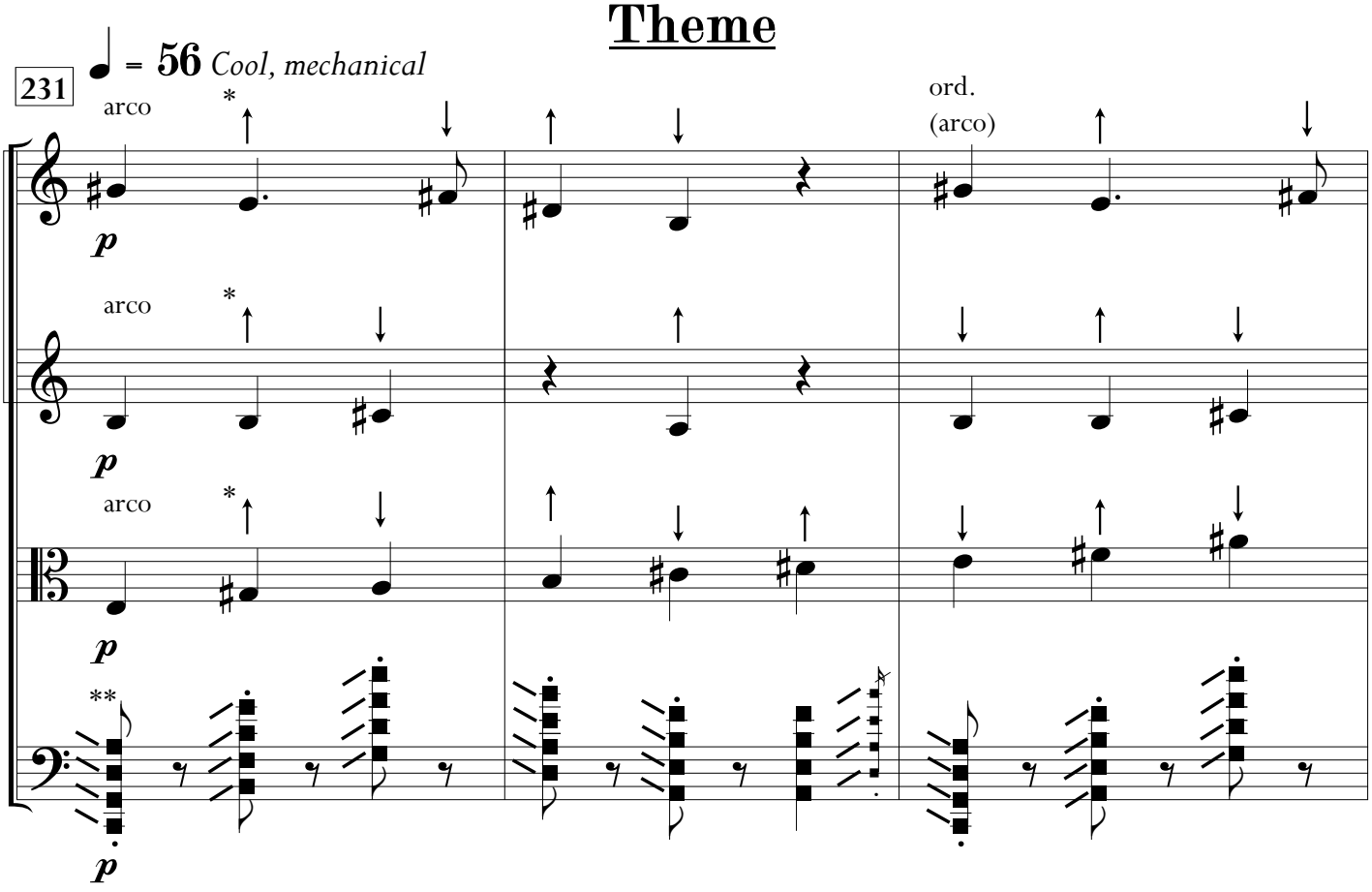
6 ♩ = 56

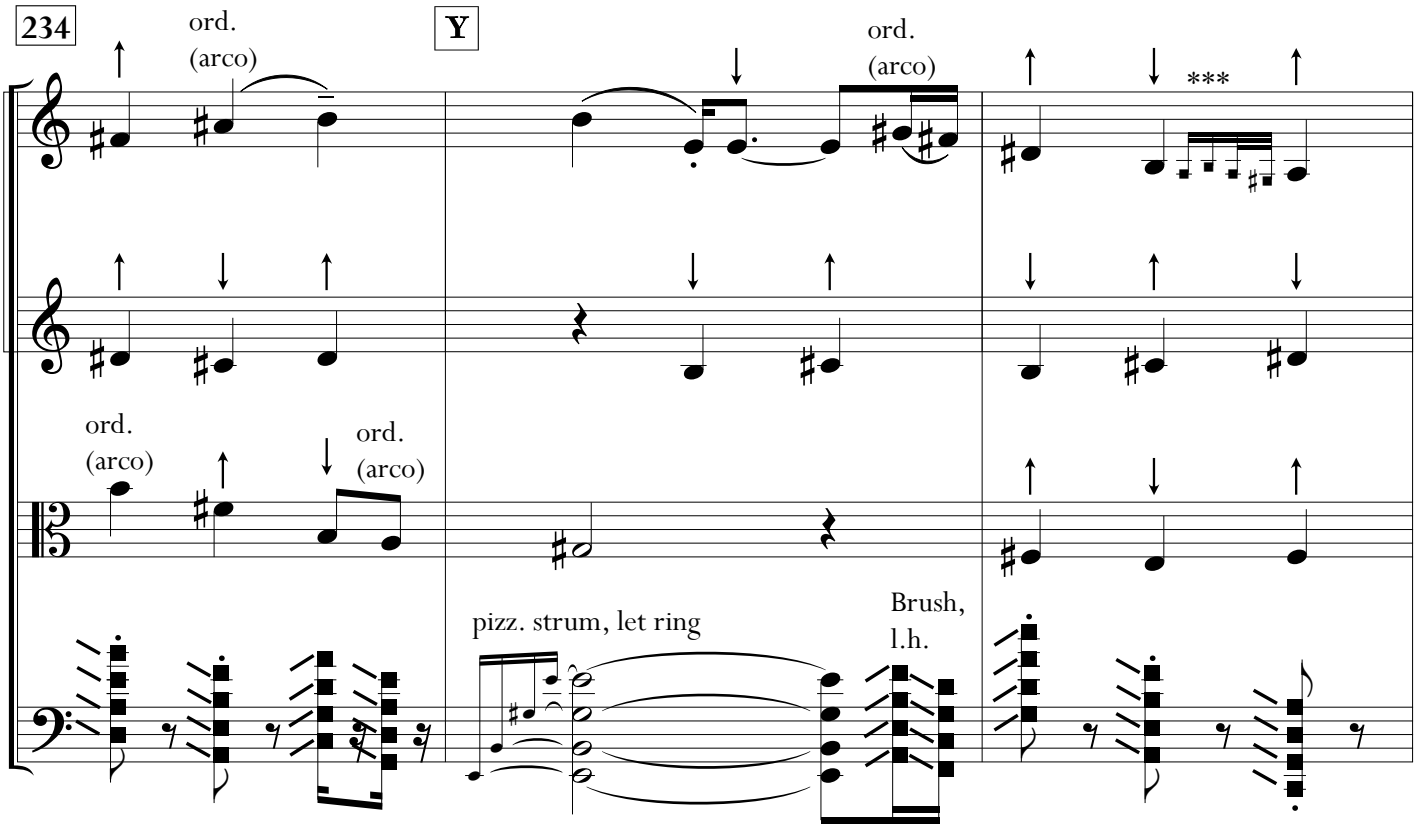


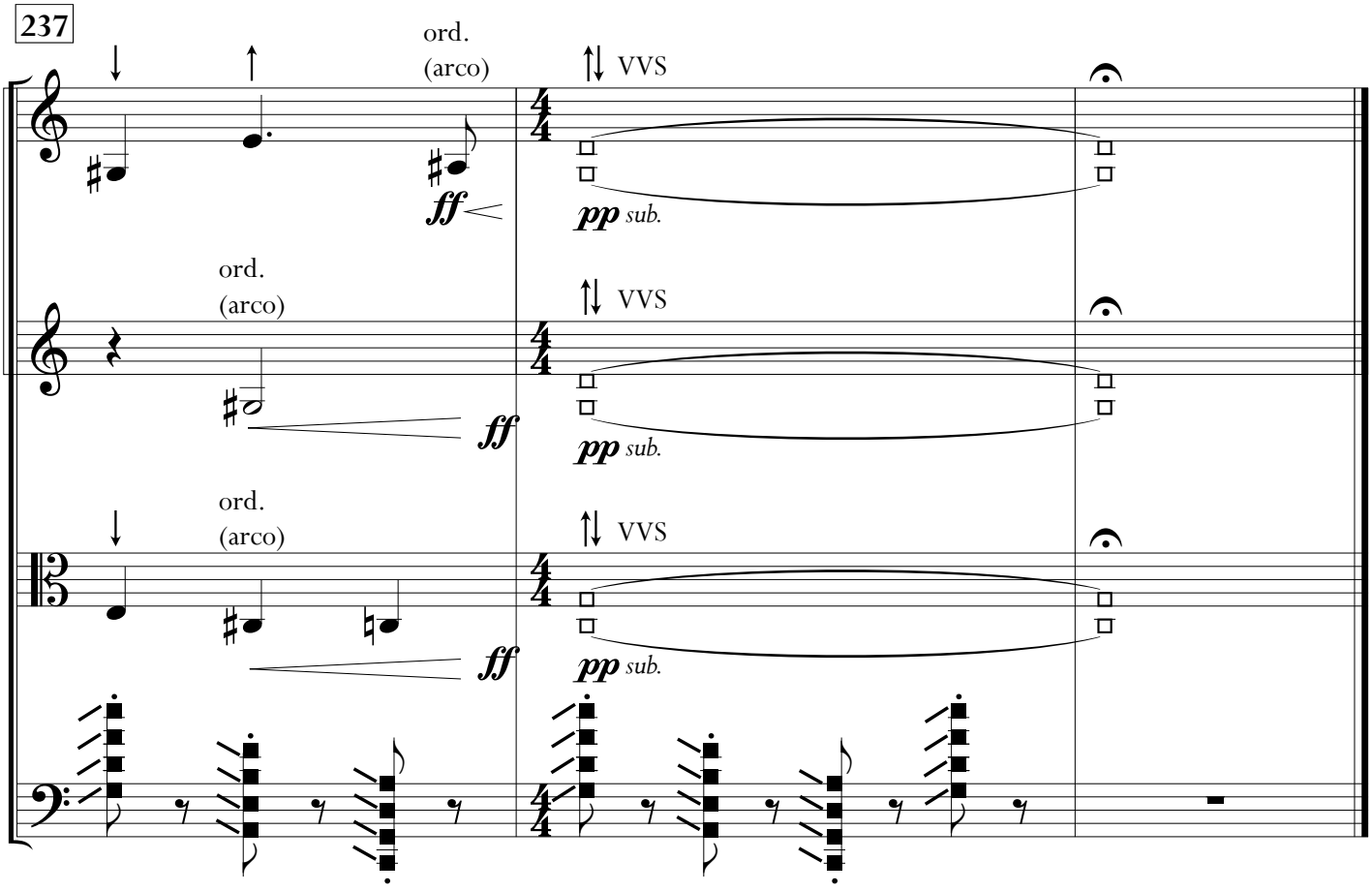
Closing Gesture



Theme


231
♩ = 56 Cool, mechanical
arco
ord.
(arco)
p
*
**


234
ord.
(arco)
Y
***
pizz. strum, let ring
Brush,
l.h.



London/Austin
May 2019