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Tinnitus

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ARASH MAJD

Tinnitus

for string quartet

Written for Lyris Quartet

Premiered by Lyris Quartet on June 06, 2019, during the Lyris Quartet residency at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Program Notes:

Tinnitus is the medical term for noises heard within the brain or head, such as hissing, roaring, ringing, or "crickets," when there are no external physical sounds present. It is estimated that 50 million American adults currently experience some degree of tinnitus.

For the majority of these 50 million, tinnitus is no more than an occasional nuisance. However, the volatility of tinnitus means the condition can change from day to day—even hour to hour—as the noises can vary in location, pitch, and volume, turning suddenly from a low roar to a high squeal or whine. In more mild manifestations, these noises can be annoying or distracting, and when they become severe, may cause serious disruptions, such as anxiety, loss of concentration, and sleep interruption.

In March 2018, I was diagnosed with tinnitus. In my head, I hear an indefinite pedal consisting of very high-pitched textures. These textures shift to higher pitches when I consume caffeine or sweets. The noises also become louder and more dissonant when I experience stress. Sometimes, the noises in my head wake me up in the middle of the night do not allow me to go back to sleep for quite a while. I have asked for counsel from multiple doctors, but they are helpless to help me. In the darkest of these times, I accepted tinnitus as a parasite to my existence.

About six months after my diagnosis, and tired of feeling like a victim of my own brain, I decided to use my tinnitus as inspiration and foundation for composition. I found the instruments closest to the noises in my head were string instruments, particularly violin, viola, and the high-pitch registers of cello.

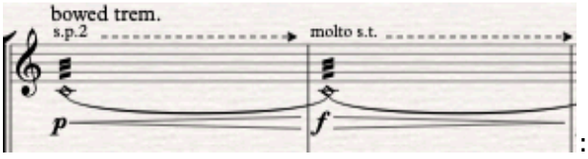
In my piece *Tinnitus*, I decided to use the indefinite pedal in my brain as a fluctuating background, fading in and out and layered beneath dynamic elements of resonance, volume, colors, textures, and timbre as alternating middle and foreground materials. My composition uses the sound of my indefinite pedal as a subject which transforms into other materials before morphing back to itself. In this way, *Tinnitus* is formed by a series of timbral transformational variations, and the presence of resonance, silence, and volume supports the function of timbre in this piece. Essentially, *Tinnitus* is a timbre-based composition that uses timber as the primary element of form.

I believe that if I remain passionate, committed, and curious about a goal, there is a power in the universe that will ultimately support me in achieving that goal. I believe in perseverance, and making the best of seemingly unpleasant events and hopeless situations. As a composer, I am committed to compositions that are both high quality and organic and authentic musical expressions. I have come to accept tinnitus as a gift, as part of my destiny, in building authentic sonic worlds in my compositions. I will use my symptoms as a source of inspiration to compose emotionally and intellectually engaging pieces for my listeners.

Performance Notes

Performance Notes for 1st & 2nd Violin:

s.p.3: sul ponticello, bow on the bridge.
s.p.2: sul ponticello, bow right before the bridge.
s.p.1: sul ponticello, bow right before s.p.2.
To see a video of different types of sul ponticello, click on the link below.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHPy0ecSav0&list=PL0_riGVa_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX&index=10



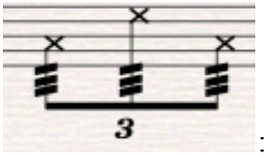
: Tremolo with right hand and trill with left hand. Start in s.p.2 and move the bow all the way up to the indicated pitch over the fingerboard.

Sea gull effect: Please see the blew link
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6l4SYXlSBCc

: Artificial harmonic. Slide up then slide down.

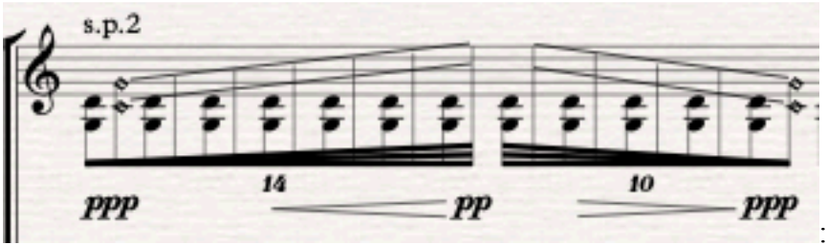
:Vibrato

: Wide Vibrato



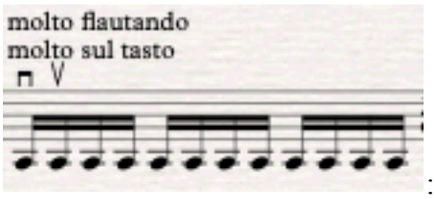
: Play beneath the bridge

: Snap Pizzicato



: Click on the link below to see the video of this motive.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBmiiPejcMM

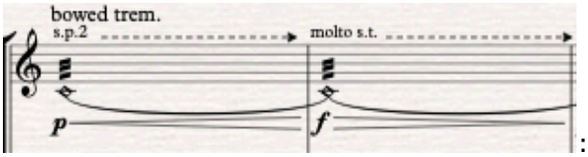


: Please click on the link below to see to see a video of this technique.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pLVZjwRslQ&index=2&list=PL0_riGVa_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX

Performance Notes for Viola:

s.p.3: sul ponticello, bow on the bridge.
s.p.2: sul ponticello, bow right before the bridge.
s.p.1: sul ponticello, bow right before s.p.2.
To see a video of different types of sul ponticello, click on the link below.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHPy0ecSav0&list=PL0_riGVa_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX&index=10



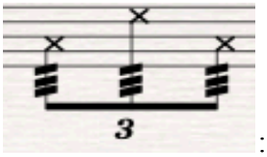
: Tremolo with right hand and trill with left hand. Start in s.p.2 and move the bow all the way up to the indicated pitch over the fingerboard.

Sea gull effect: Please see the blew link
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6l4SYXlSBCc

: Artificial harmonic. Slide up then slide down.

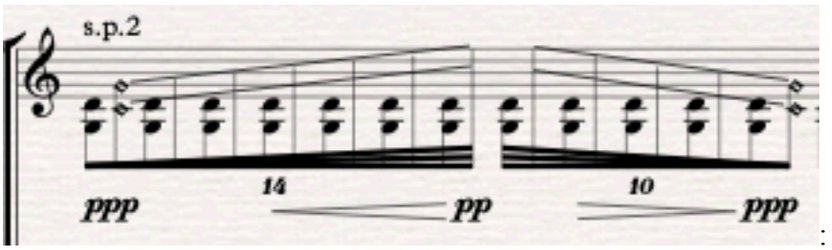
:Vibrato

: Wide Vibrato



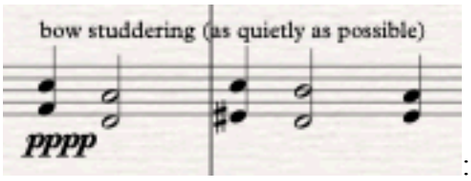
: Play beneath the bridge

: Snap Pizzicato



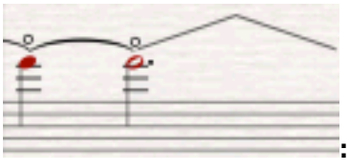
: Click on the link below to see the video of this motive.

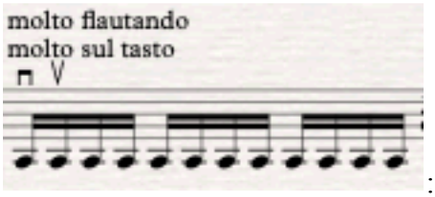
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBmiiPejcMM



: Please click on the link below to see to see a video of this technique. Forward the video to 3':54''

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LepZQu2tEZw&index=3&list=PL0_riGVa_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX


: Slide up and then down.

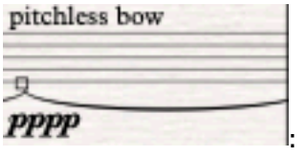


: Please click on the link below to see a video of this technique.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pLVZjwRslQ&index=2&list=PL0_riGVa_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX

Bar 71: Please click on the link below to see a video of the desired sound.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2GPTY_MYkM&index=4&list=PL0_riGVa_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX



: Please click on the link below to see a video of this technique. Forward the video to 3':00

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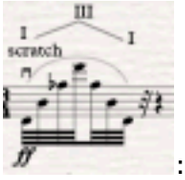


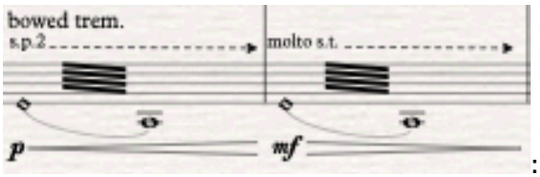
: Please click on the link below to see a video of this technique.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVz6B4_Ug1U

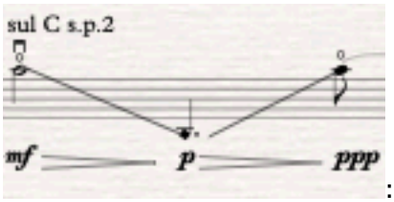
Performance notes for Cello:

s.p.3: sul ponticello, bow on the bridge.
s.p.2: sul ponticello, bow right before the bridge.
s.p.1: sul ponticello, bow right before s.p.2.
To see a video of different types of sul ponticello, click on the link below.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHPy0ecSav0&list=PL0_riGVa_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX&index=10



: Tremolo with right hand and trill with left hand. Start in s.p.2 and move the bow all the way up to the indicated pitch over the fingerboard.

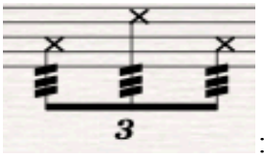


: Please click on the link below to see a video of this technique. Forward the video to 1:00

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awQBh9ADp98

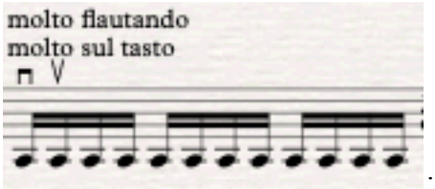
: Vibrato

: Wide Vibrato



: Play beneath the bridge

: Snap Pizzicato

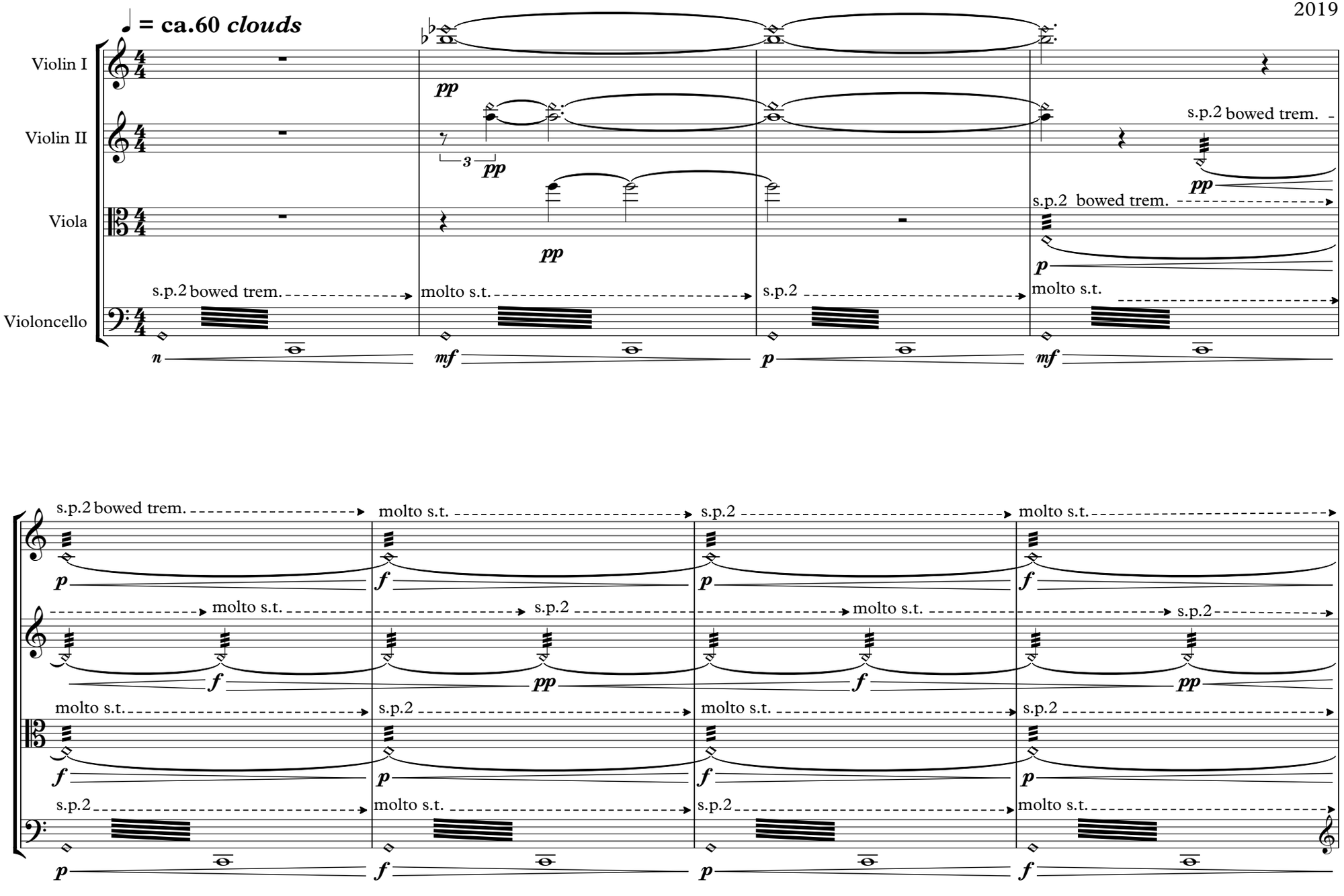


: Please click on the link below to see a video of this technique.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pLVZjwRslQ&index=2&list=PL0_riGVa_iQgKQLb1yZ4xj4vnbHoabTeX

Tinnitus

Arash Majd
2019



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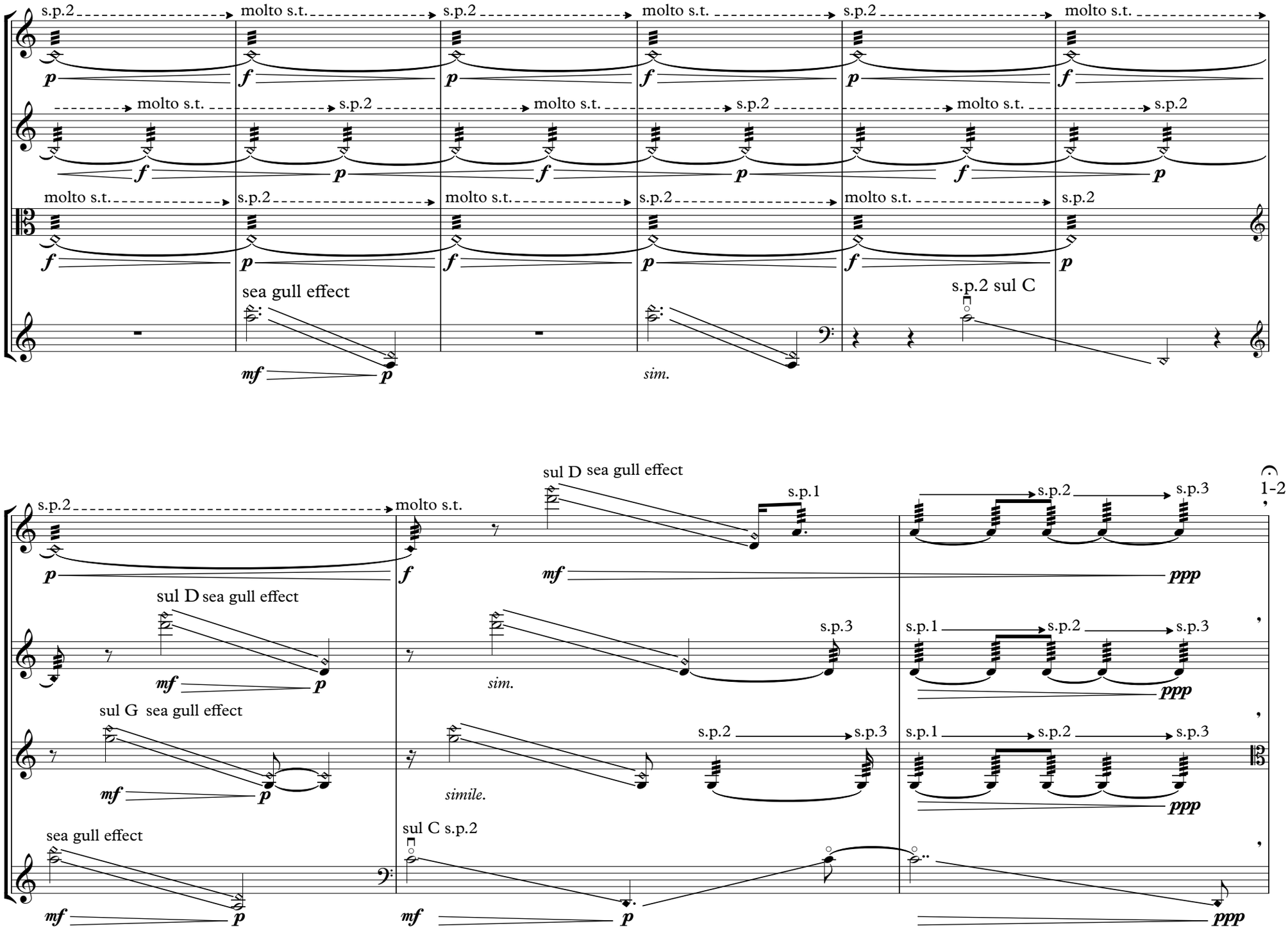
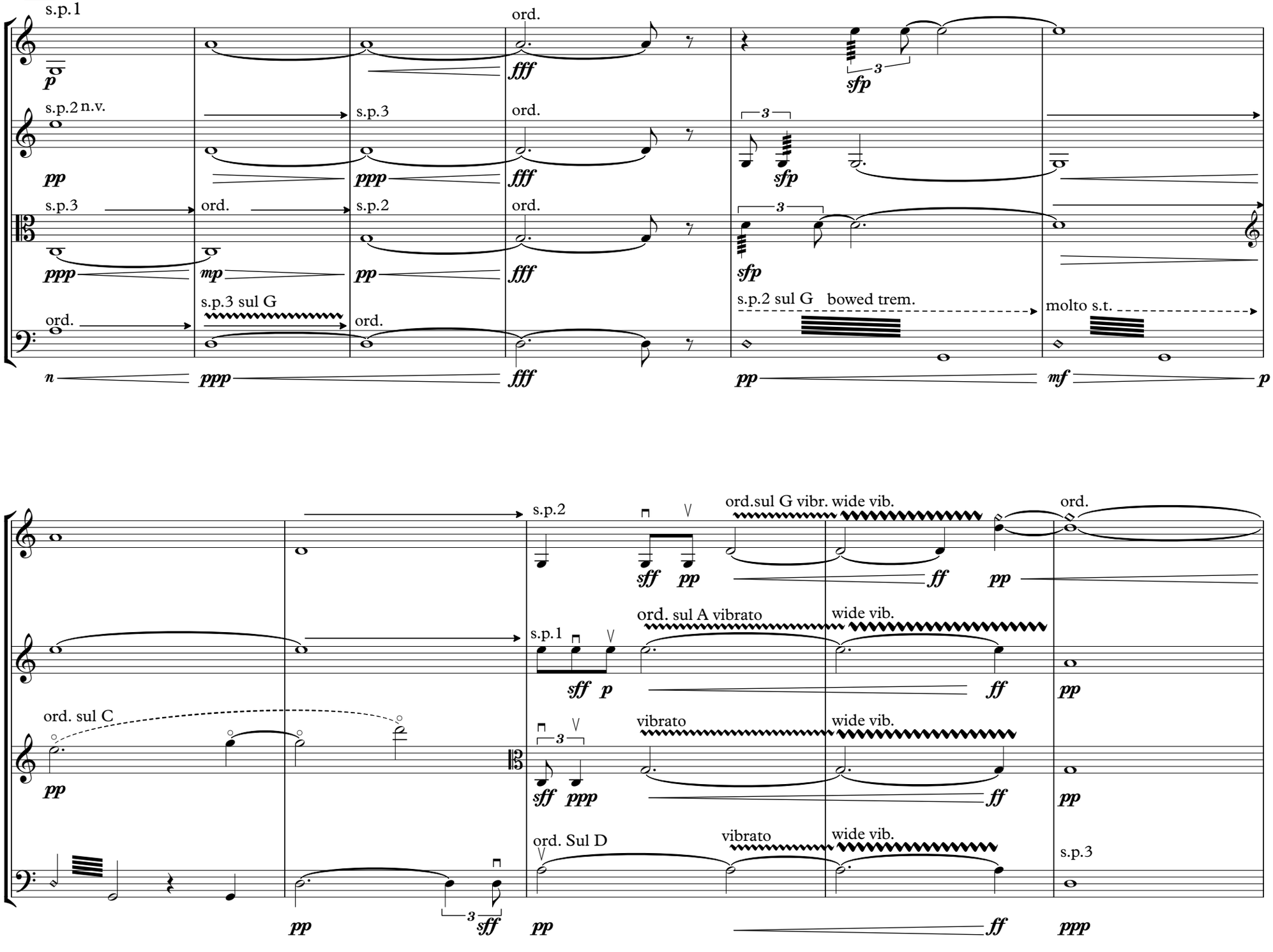
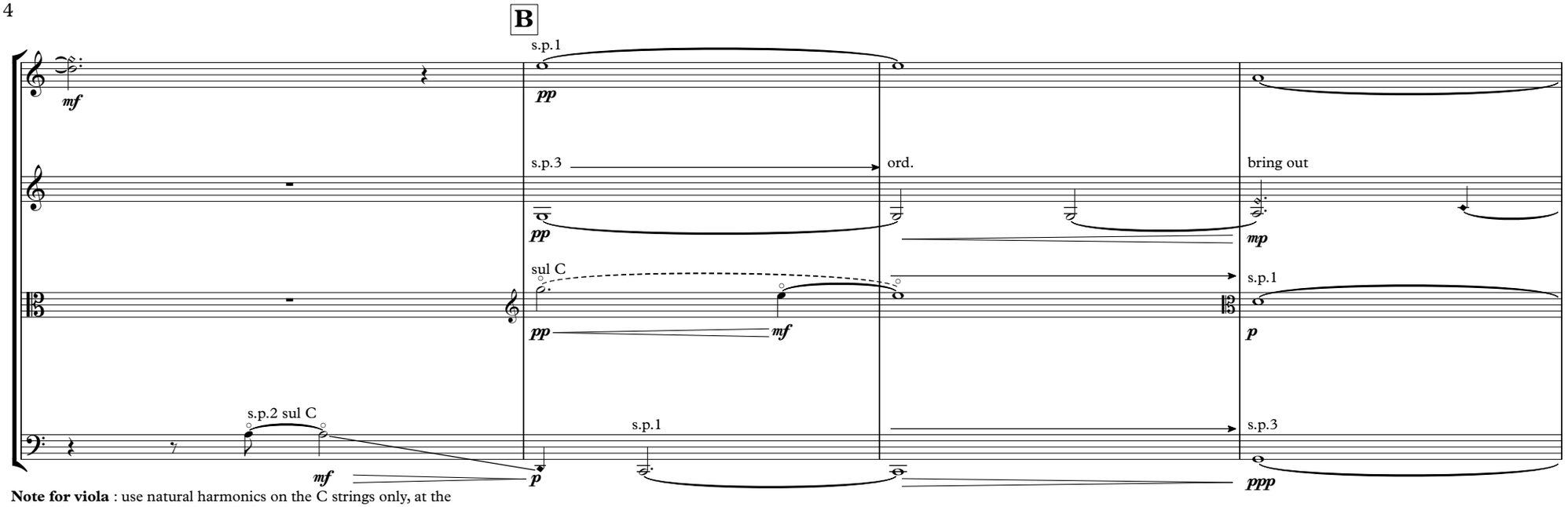
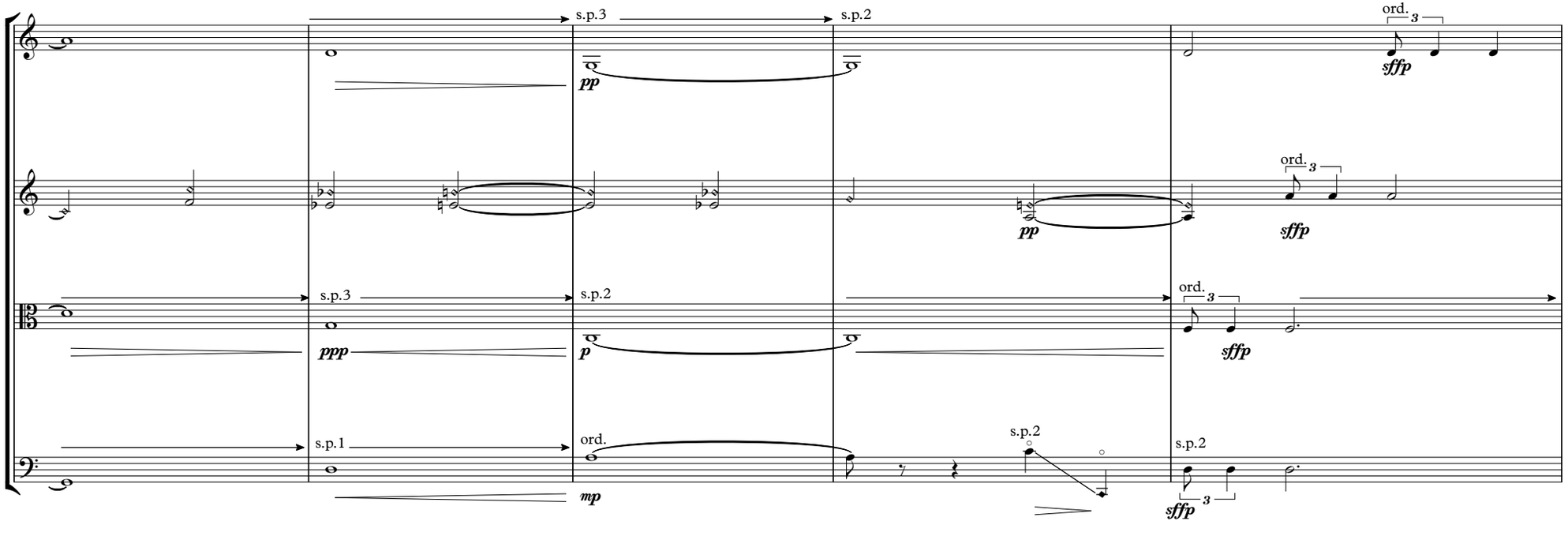

s.p.2
molto s.t.
sea gull effect
sim.
s.p.2 sul C
sul D sea gull effect
s.p.1
s.p.3
1-2
sul D sea gull effect
sul G sea gull effect
simile.
sea gull effect
sul C s.p.2

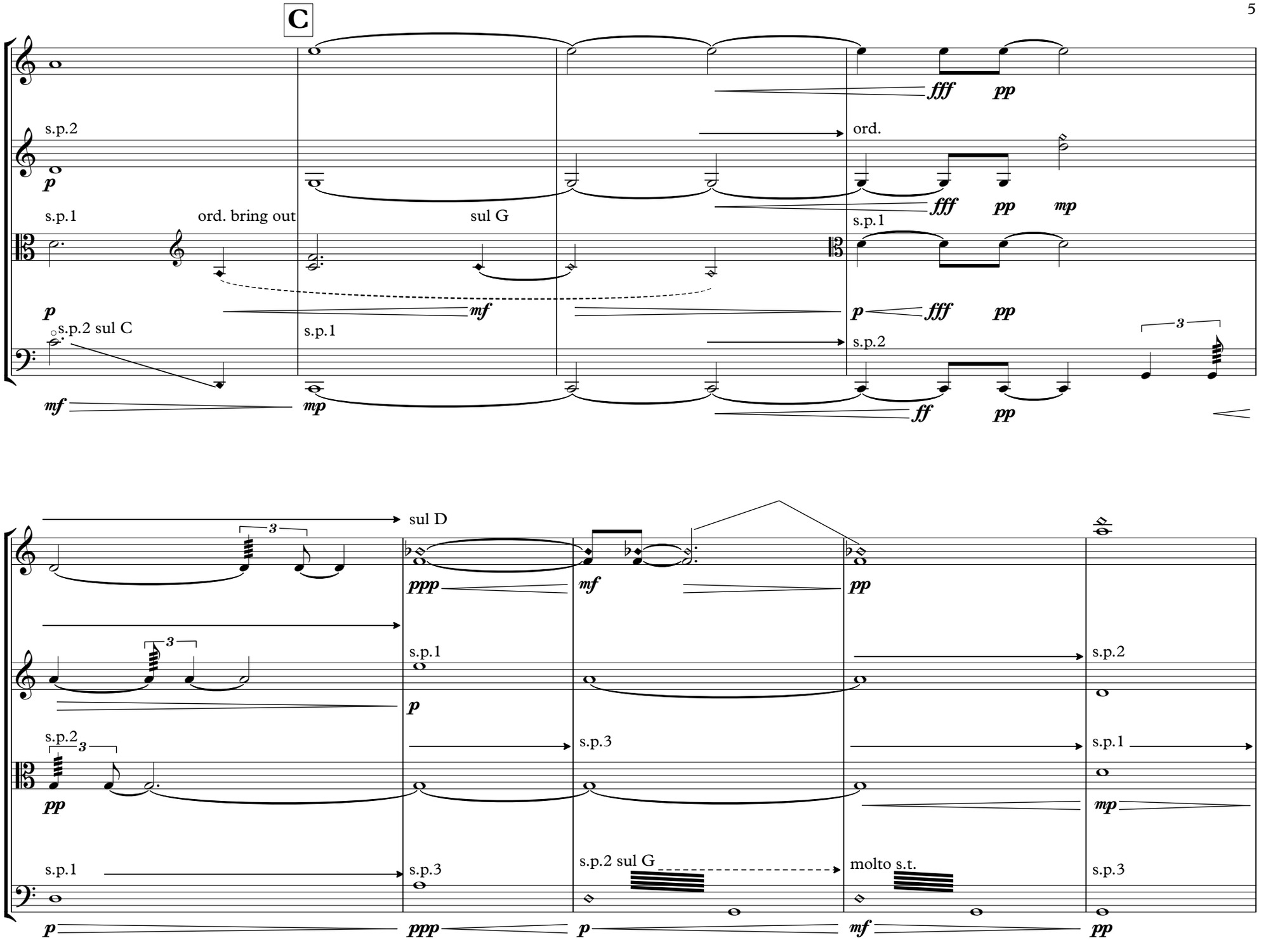
A


s.p.1
p
ord.
fff
sfp
s.p.2 n.v.
pp
s.p.3
ppp
fff
sfp
s.p.3
ppp
ord.
mp
s.p.2
pp
ord.
fff
sfp
ord.
n
s.p.3 sul G
ppp
ord.
fff
s.p.2 sul G bowed trem.
pp
molto s.t.
mf
p
s.p.2
sff
pp
ord.sul G vibr. wide vib.
ff
pp
ord.
s.p.1
sff
p
ord. sul A vibrato
wide vib.
ff
pp
ord. sul C
pp
sff
ppp
vibrato
wide vib.
ff
pp
ord. Sul D
pp
sff
pp
vibrato
wide vib.
ff
s.p.3
ppp



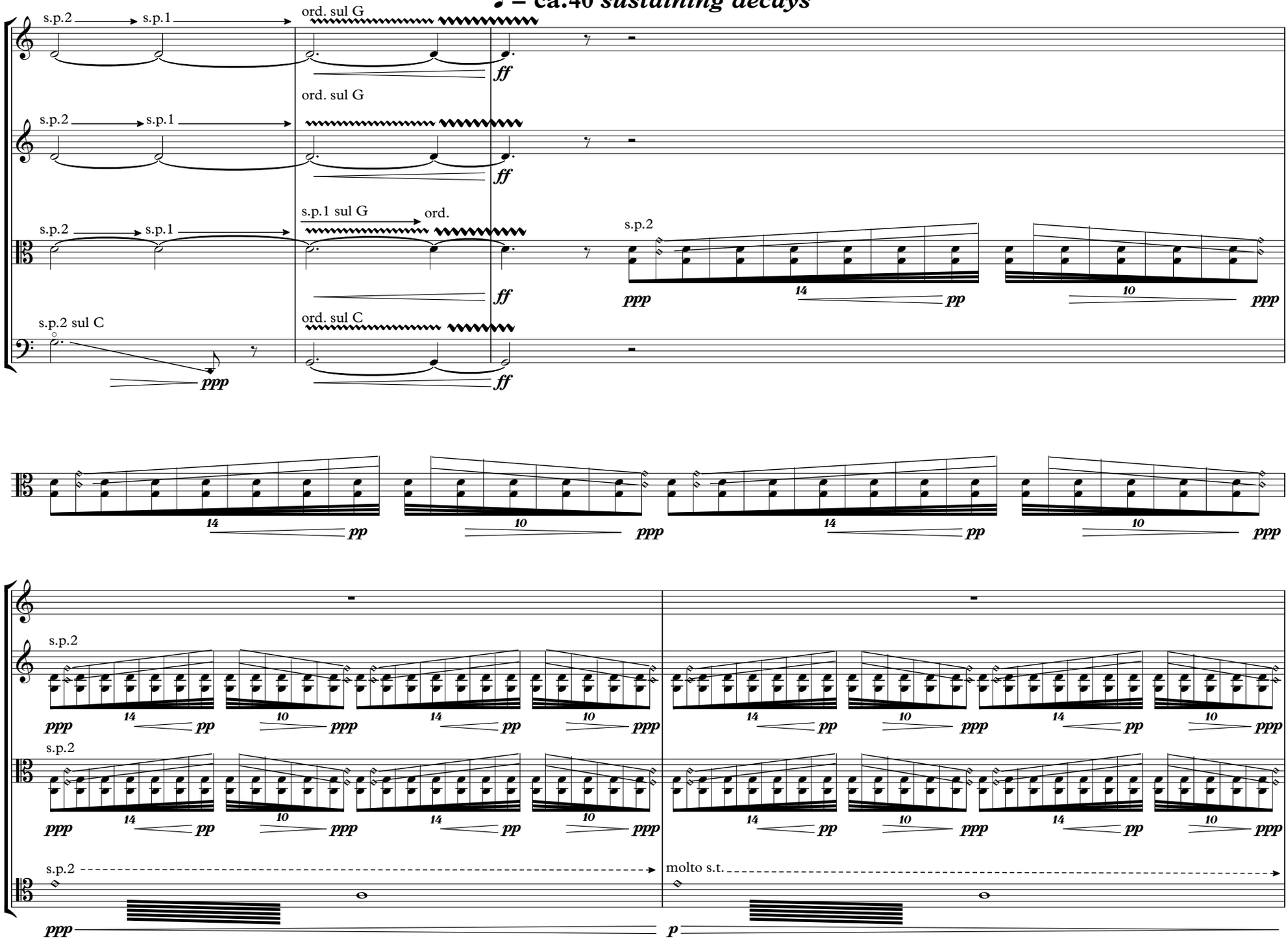
Note for viola : use natural harmonics on the C strings only, at the end of the finger board and beyond if necessary. use one finger for the melody, sliding between pitches. the melody need not to be executed precisely. extraneous harmonics, particularly in passing between the notated pitches, are desirable "dirt" in the sound is also desirable, and can be used for expressive effect, particularly at the climax. This applies to bars 29, 71, and 84 as well.




C
s.p.2
p
fff
pp
ord.
fff
pp
mp
s.p.1
ord. bring out
sul G
s.p.1
p
mf
p
fff
pp
s.p.2 sul C
s.p.1
s.p.2
3
mf
mp
ff
pp
sul D
3
ppp
mf
pp
3
s.p.1
p
s.p.2
s.p.2
3
s.p.3
s.p.1
pp
mp
s.p.1
s.p.3
s.p.2 sul G
molto s.t.
s.p.3
p
ppp
p
mf
pp

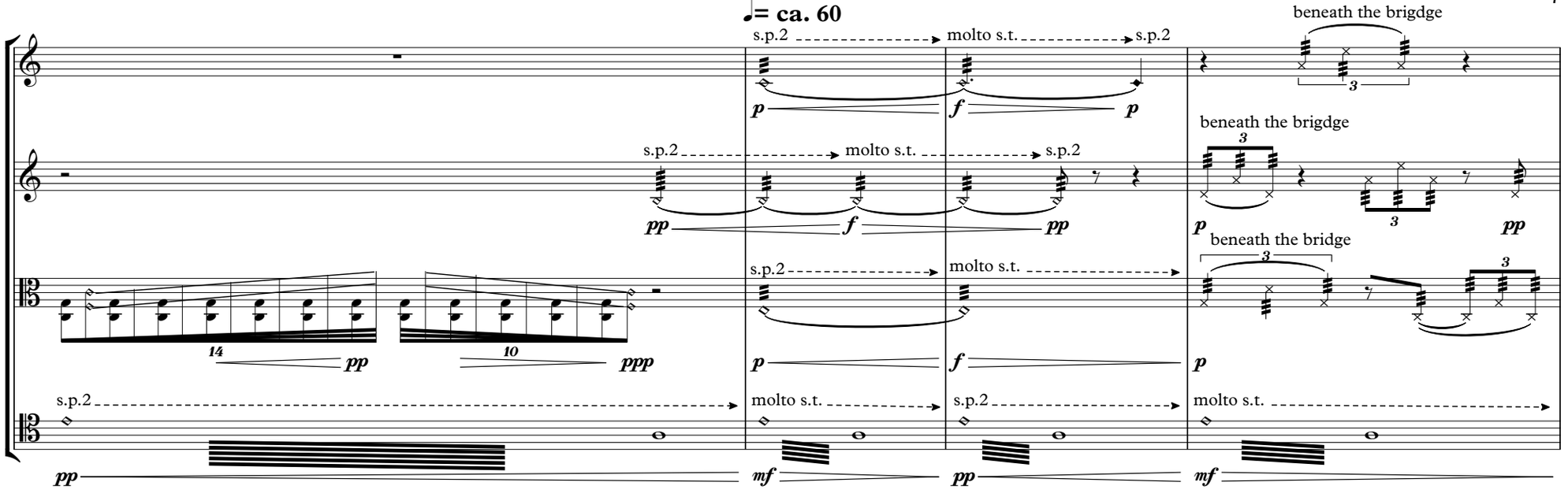
D

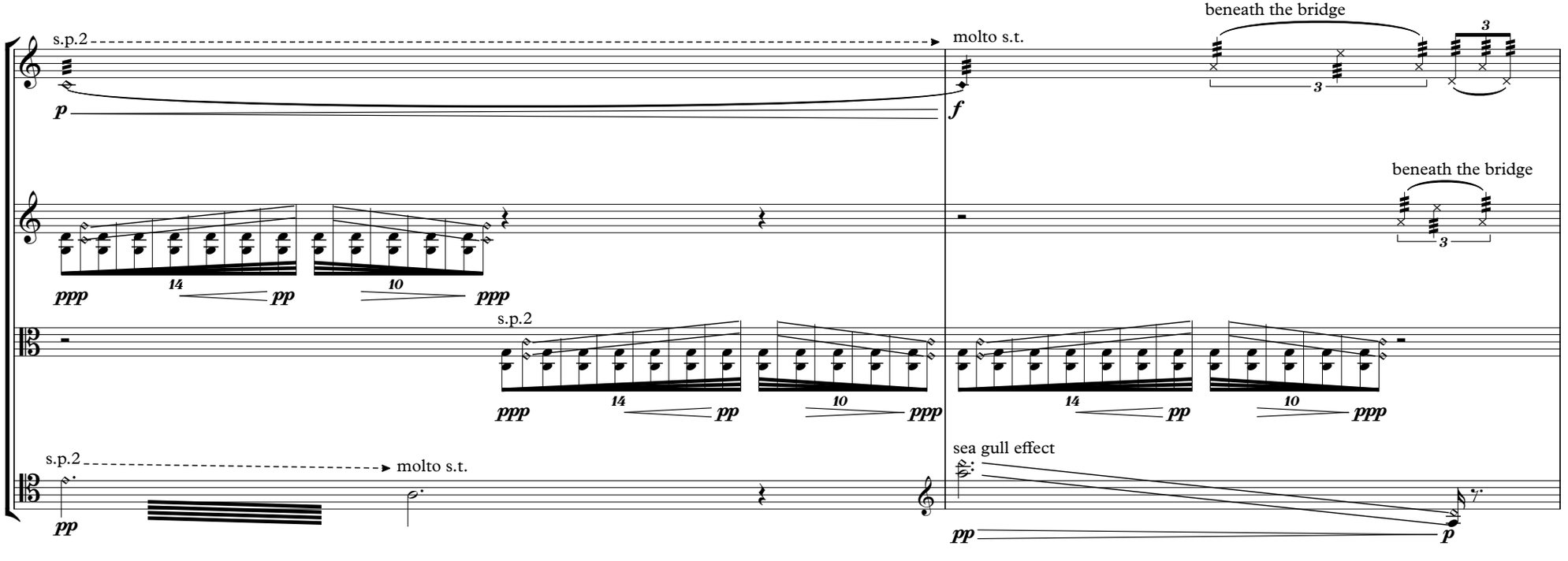
♩ = ca.40 ***sustaining decays***

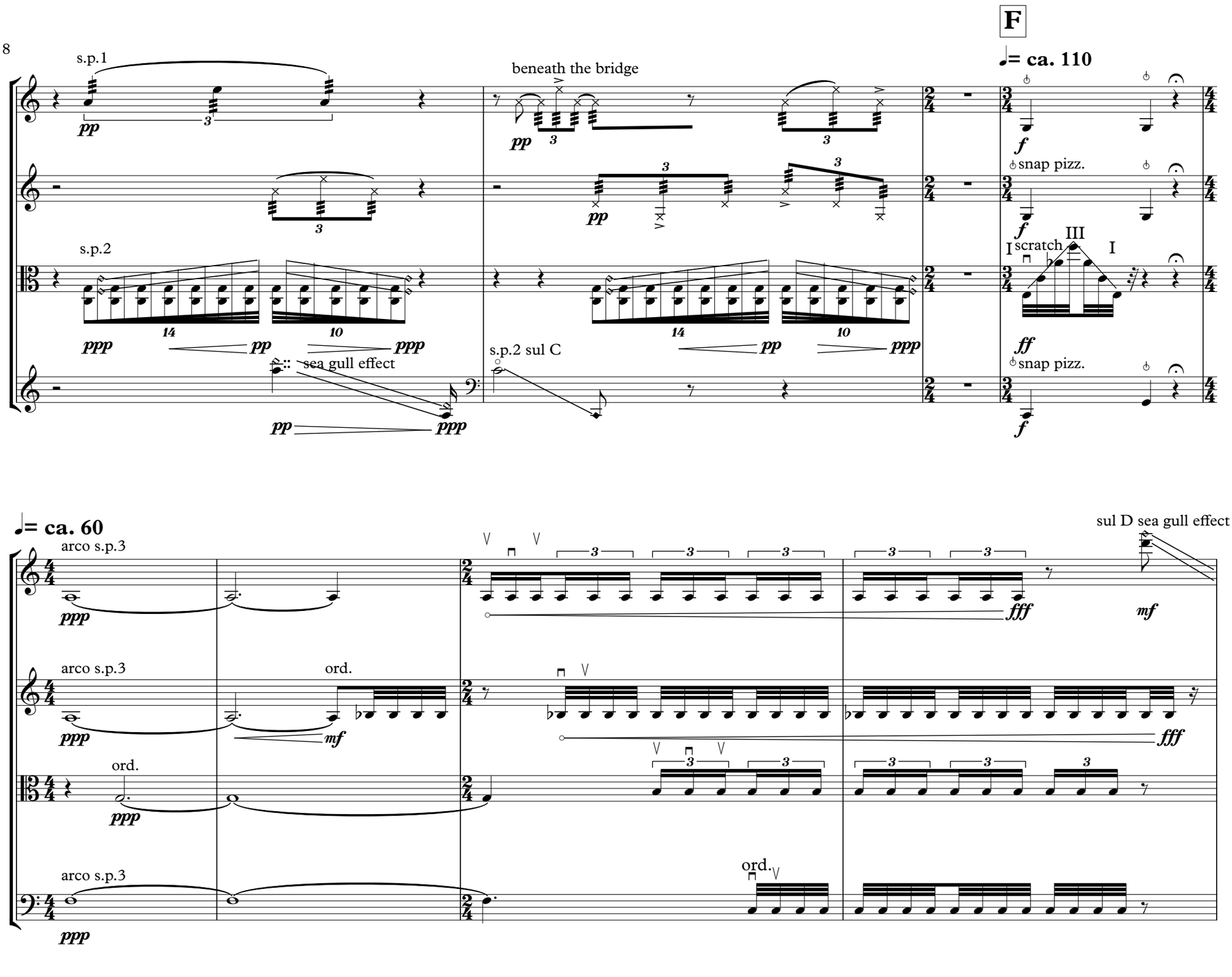


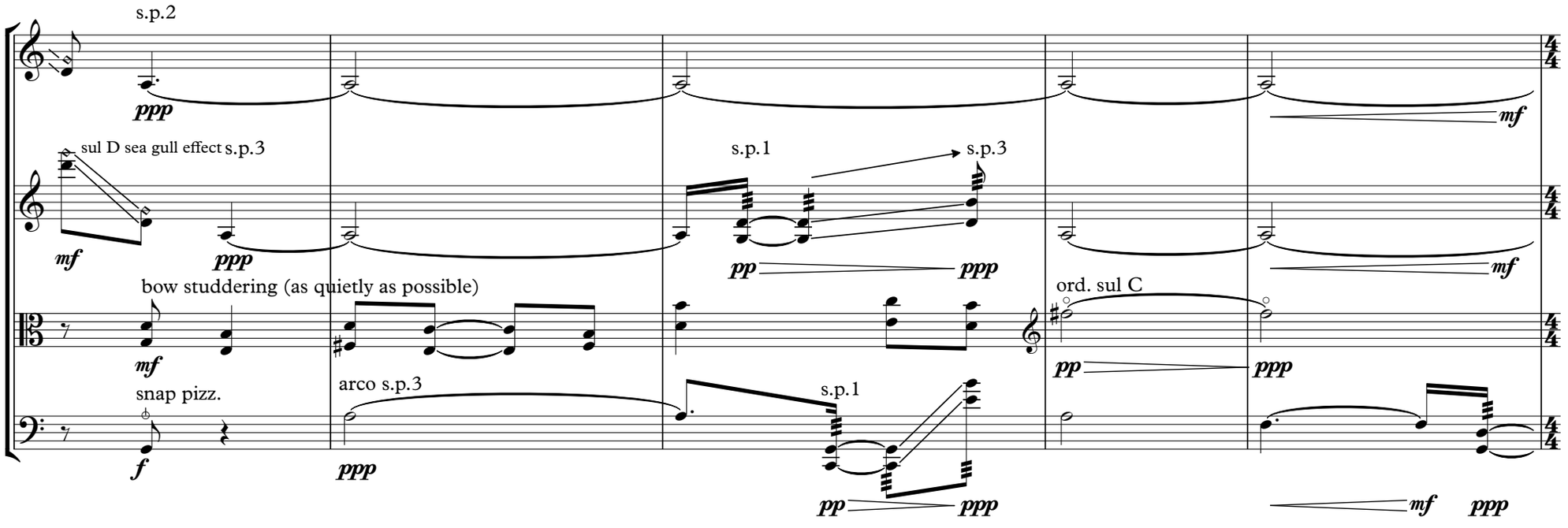
E

♩= ca. 60

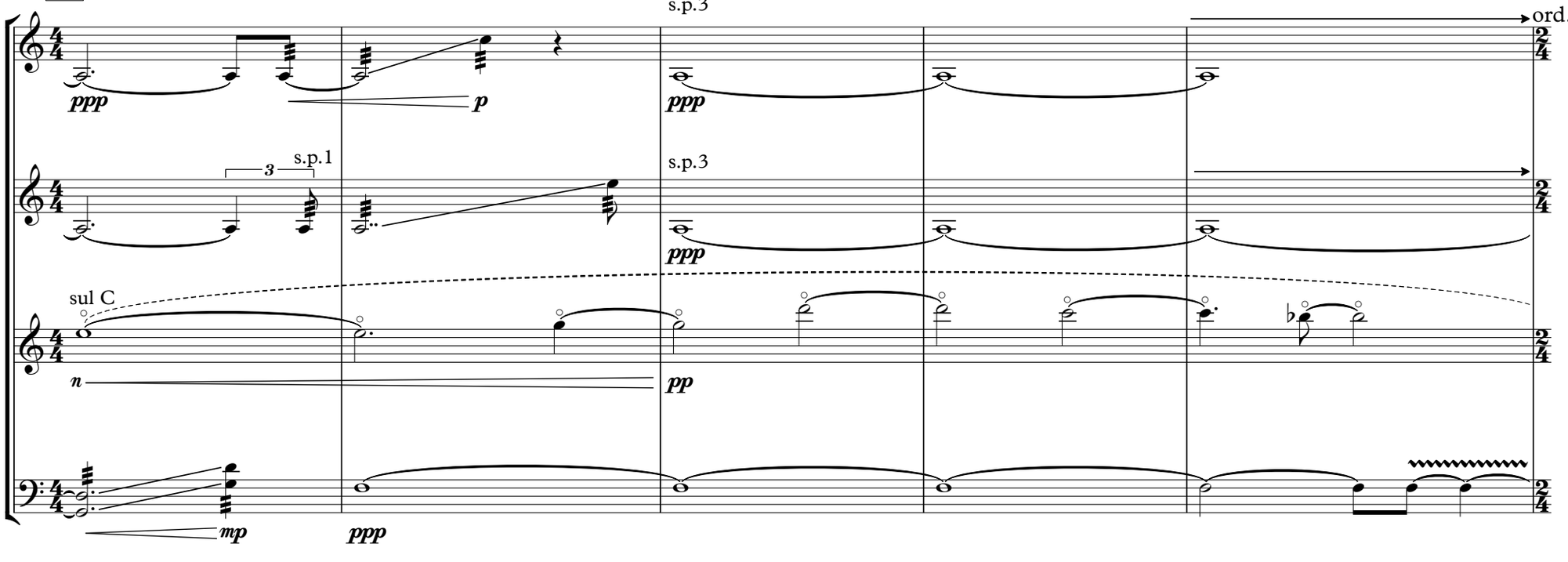

s.p.2
molto s.t.
s.p.2
beneath the brigdge
beneath the brigdge
beneath the bridge
14
10
pp
ppp
mf

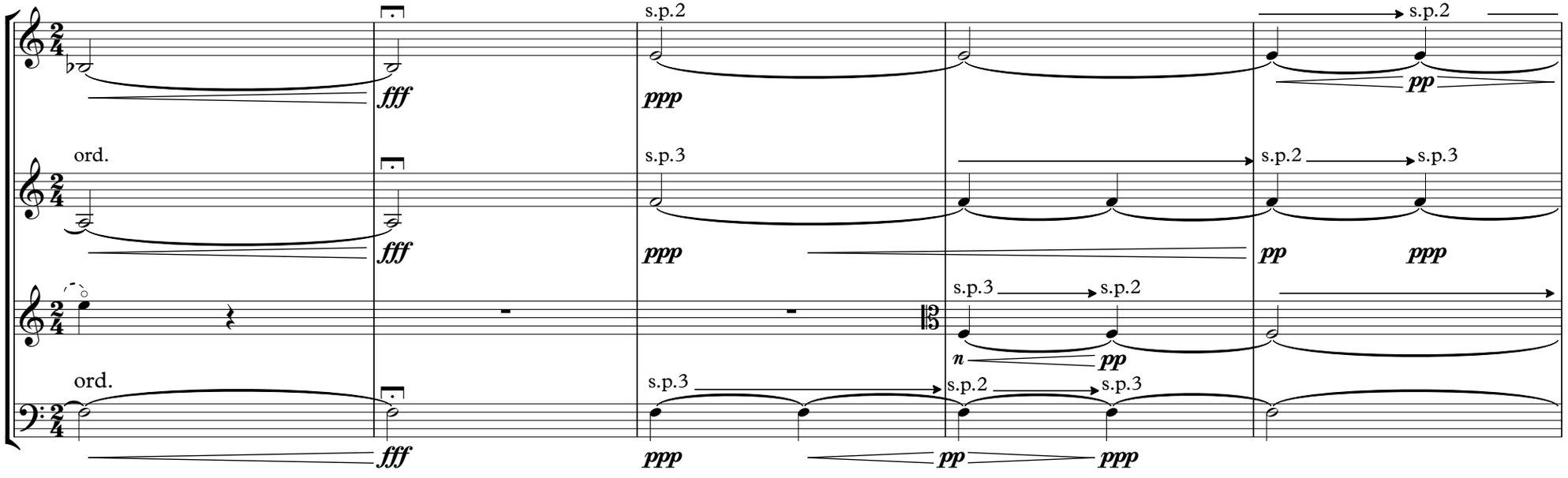

s.p.2
molto s.t.
beneath the bridge
beneath the bridge
14
10
pp
ppp
sea gull effect

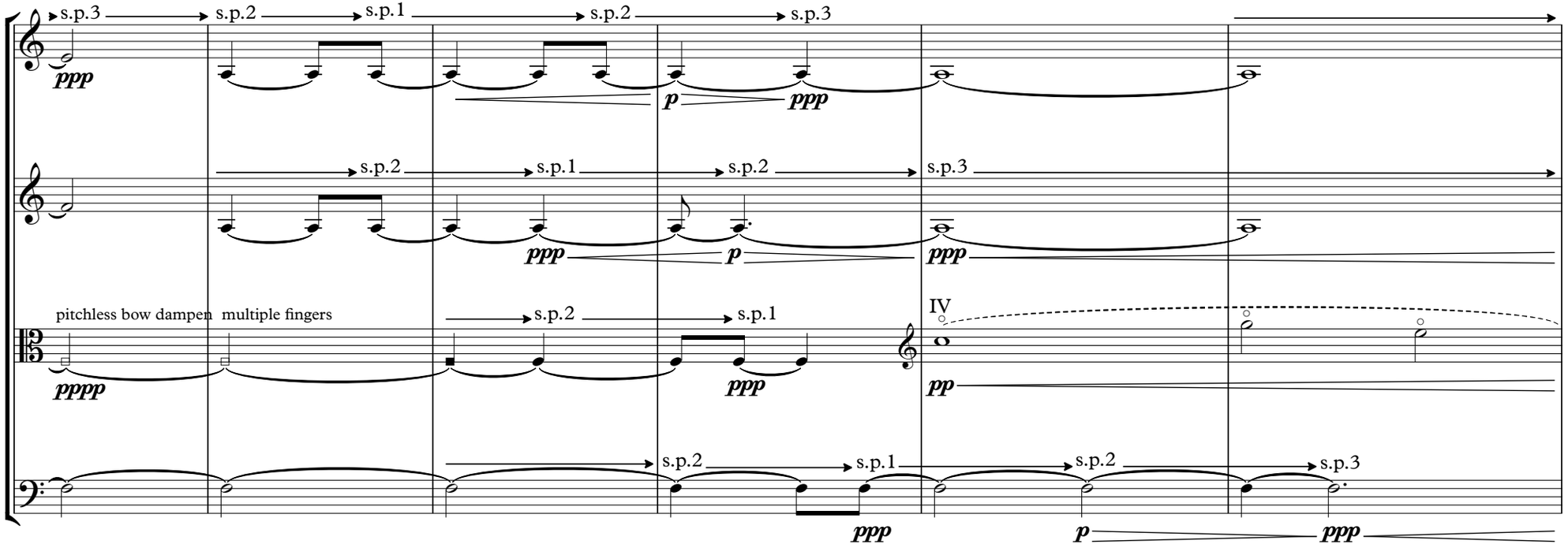

F
s.p.1
beneath the bridge
♩= ca. 110
snap pizz.
s.p.2
scratch
sea gull effect
s.p.2 sul C
snap pizz.
♩= ca. 60
arco s.p.3
sul D sea gull effect
ord.
arco s.p.3
ord.
arco s.p.3
ord.

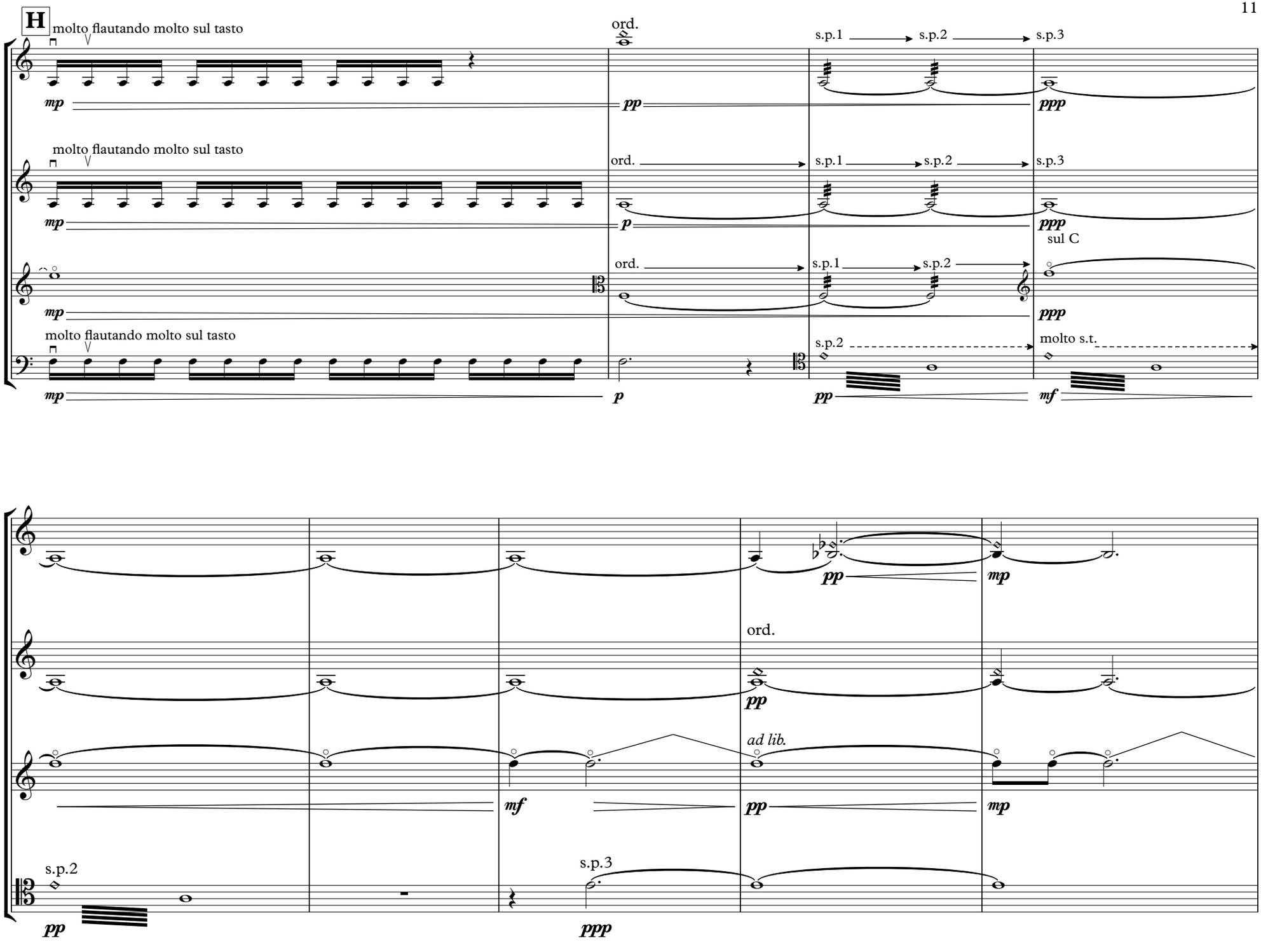


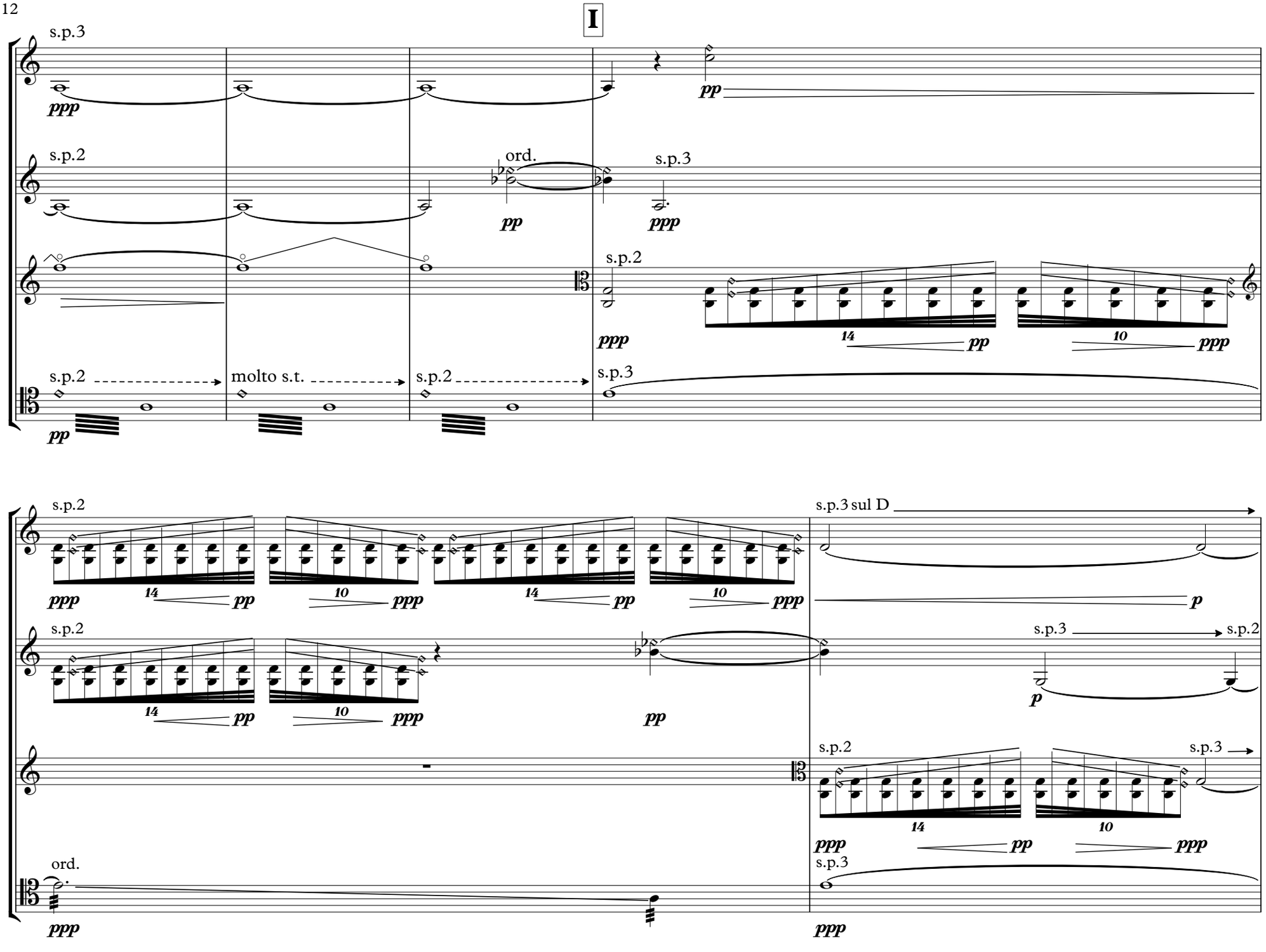
G ***throat singing in distance***




ord.
ord.
fff
ppp
pp
s.p.2
s.p.3
n

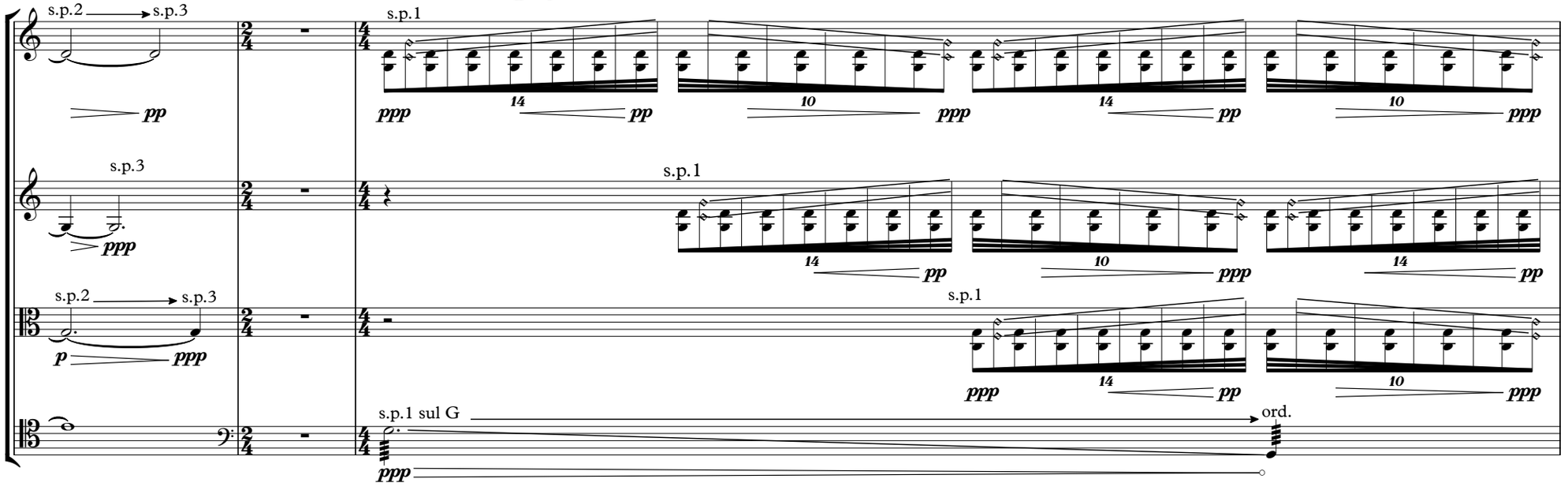

s.p.1
s.p.3
pitchless bow dampen multiple fingers
pppp
p
IV

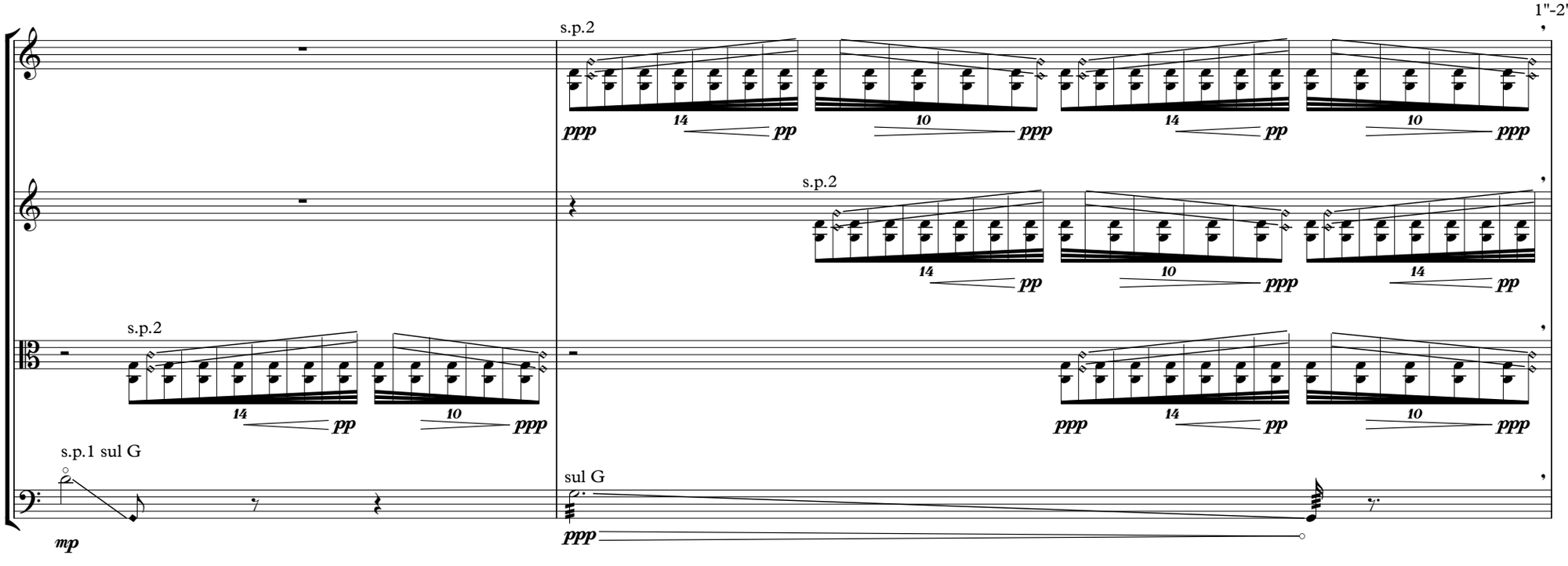

H
molto flautando molto sul tasto
ord.
s.p.1
s.p.2
s.p.3
sul C
molto s.t.
ad lib.

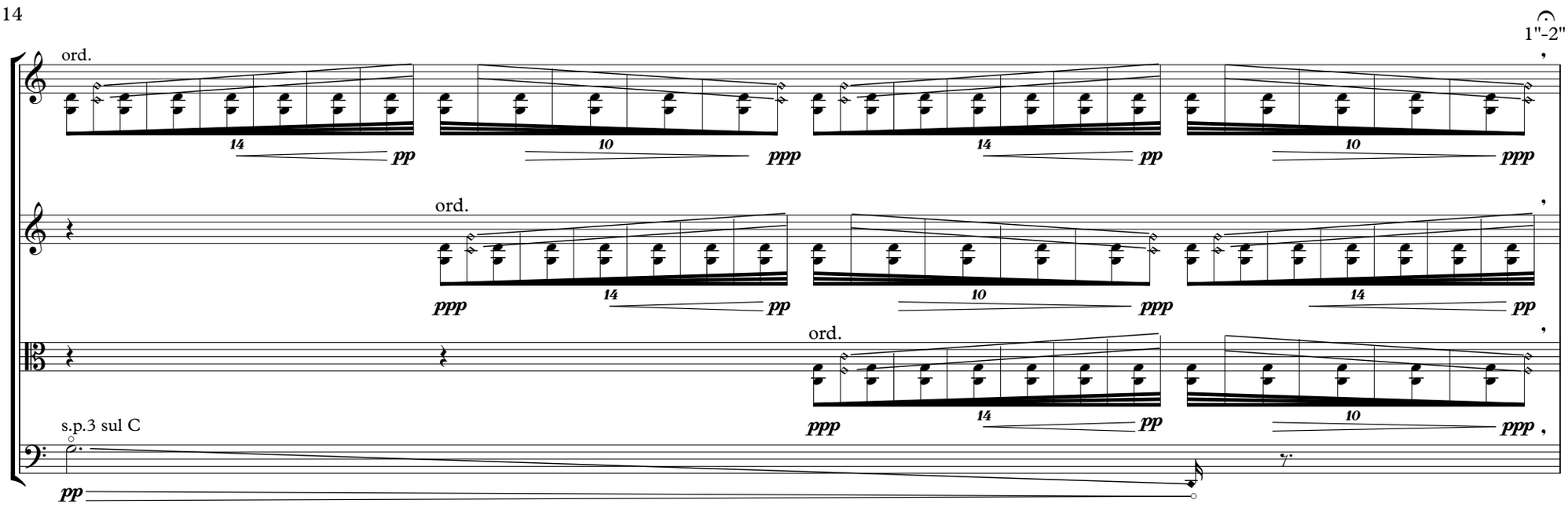

I
s.p.3
ppp
pp
s.p.2
ord.
pp
s.p.3
ppp
s.p.2
ppp
14
pp
10
ppp
s.p.2
pp
molto s.t.
s.p.2
s.p.3
s.p.2
ppp
14
pp
10
ppp
14
pp
10
ppp
s.p.3 sul D
p
s.p.2
14
pp
10
ppp
pp
s.p.3
s.p.2
p
s.p.2
s.p.3
14
10
ppp
pp
ppp
ord.
ppp
s.p.3
ppp

J

♩=ca.40 ***emerge from silence***

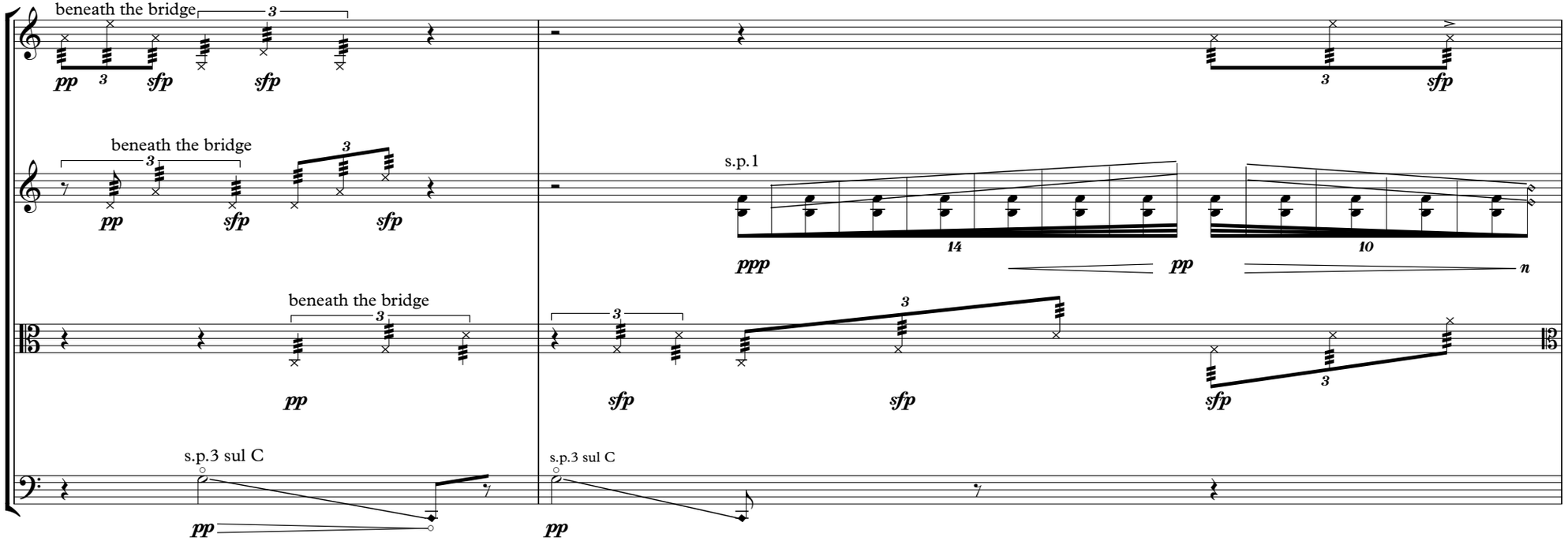


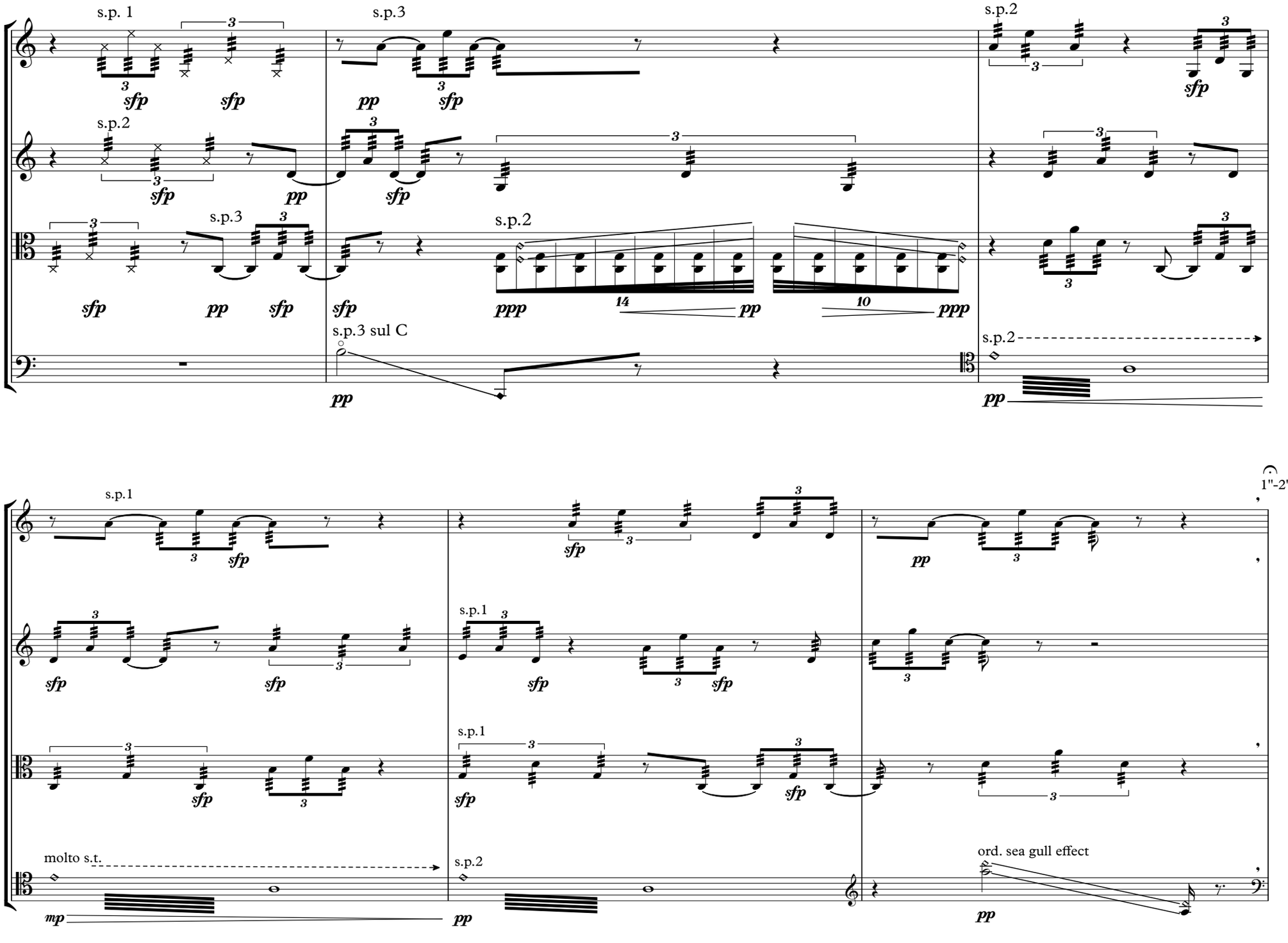




K

♩=ca.60 *chanting birds*

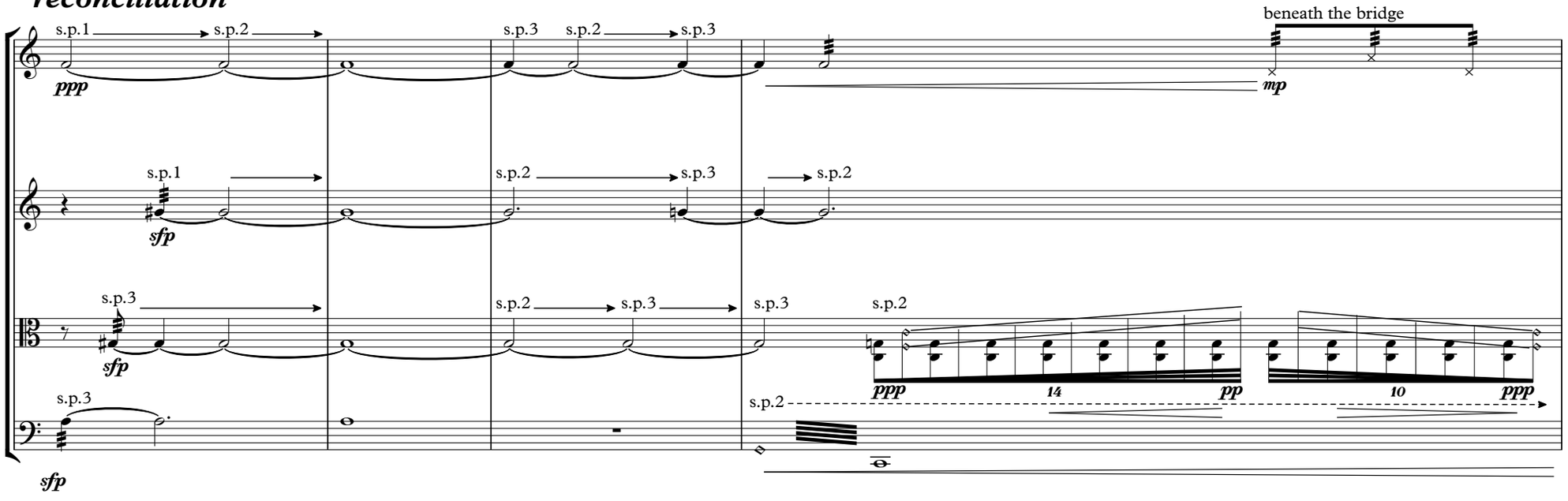



s.p. 1
s.p.3
s.p.2
sfp
pp
s.p.2
s.p.3
s.p.2
ppp
14
10
ppp
s.p.3 sul C
s.p.2
s.p.1
1"-2"
s.p.1
s.p.1
molto s.t.
s.p.2
ord. sea gull effect
mp
pp

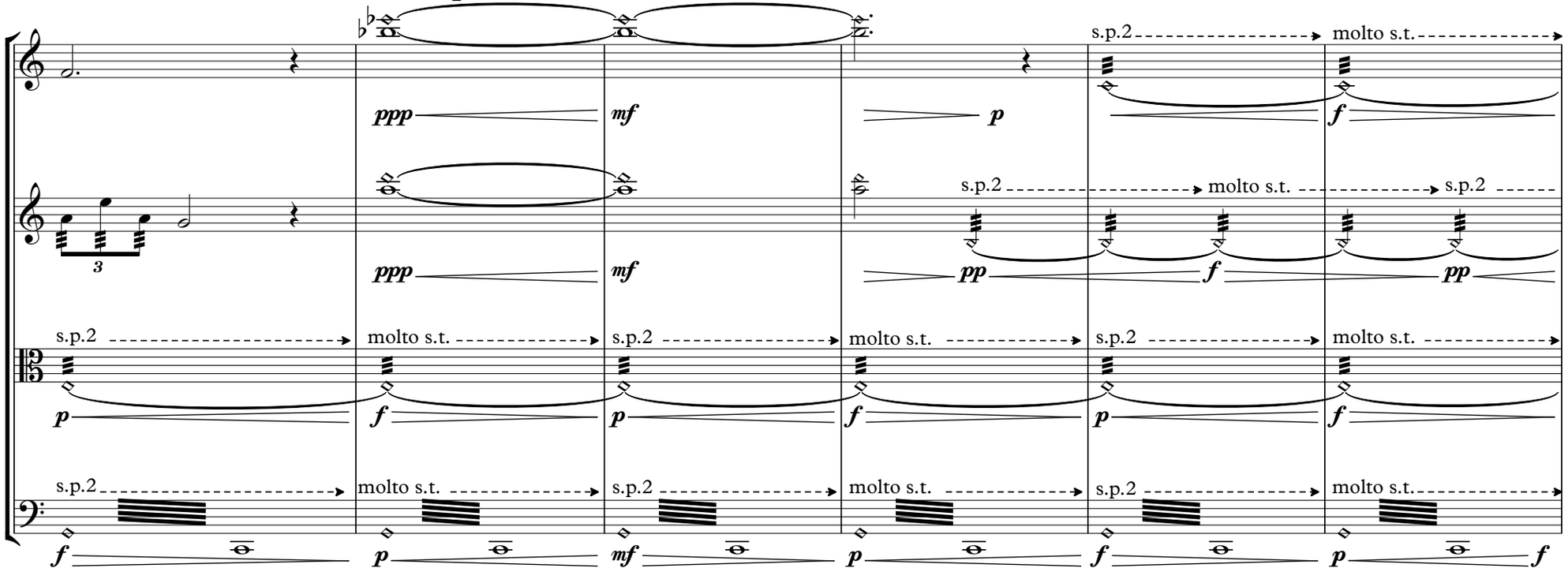
L

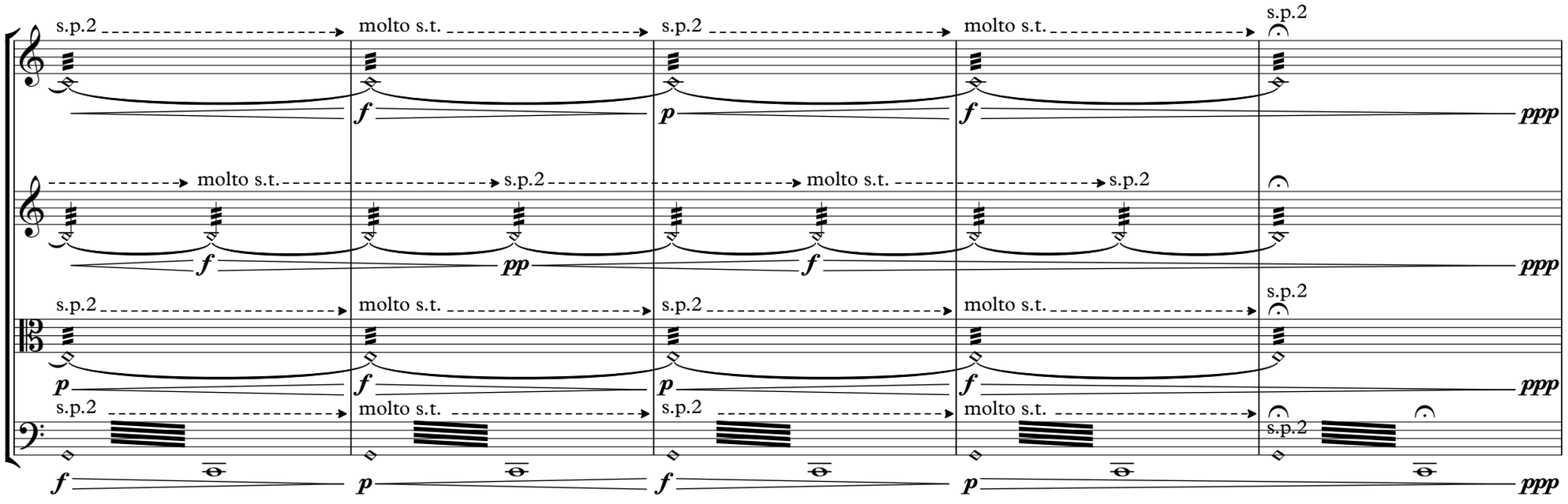
reconciliation

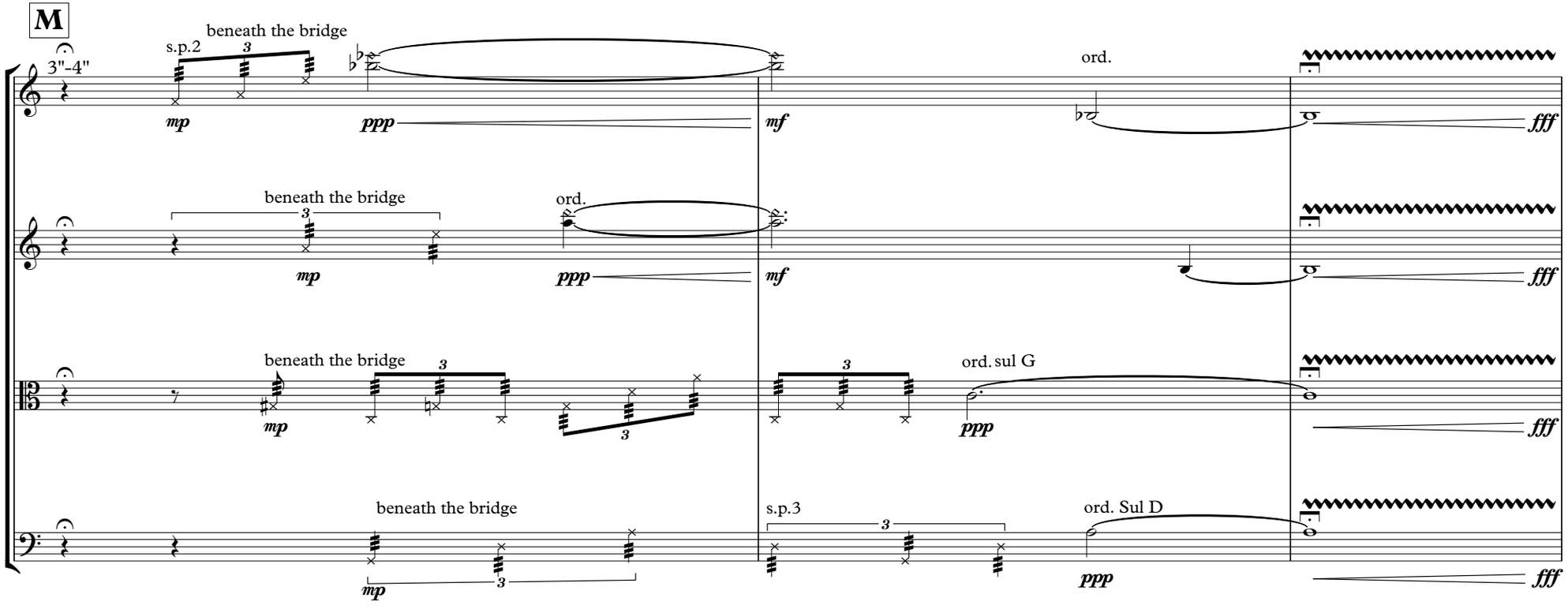
poco accel.

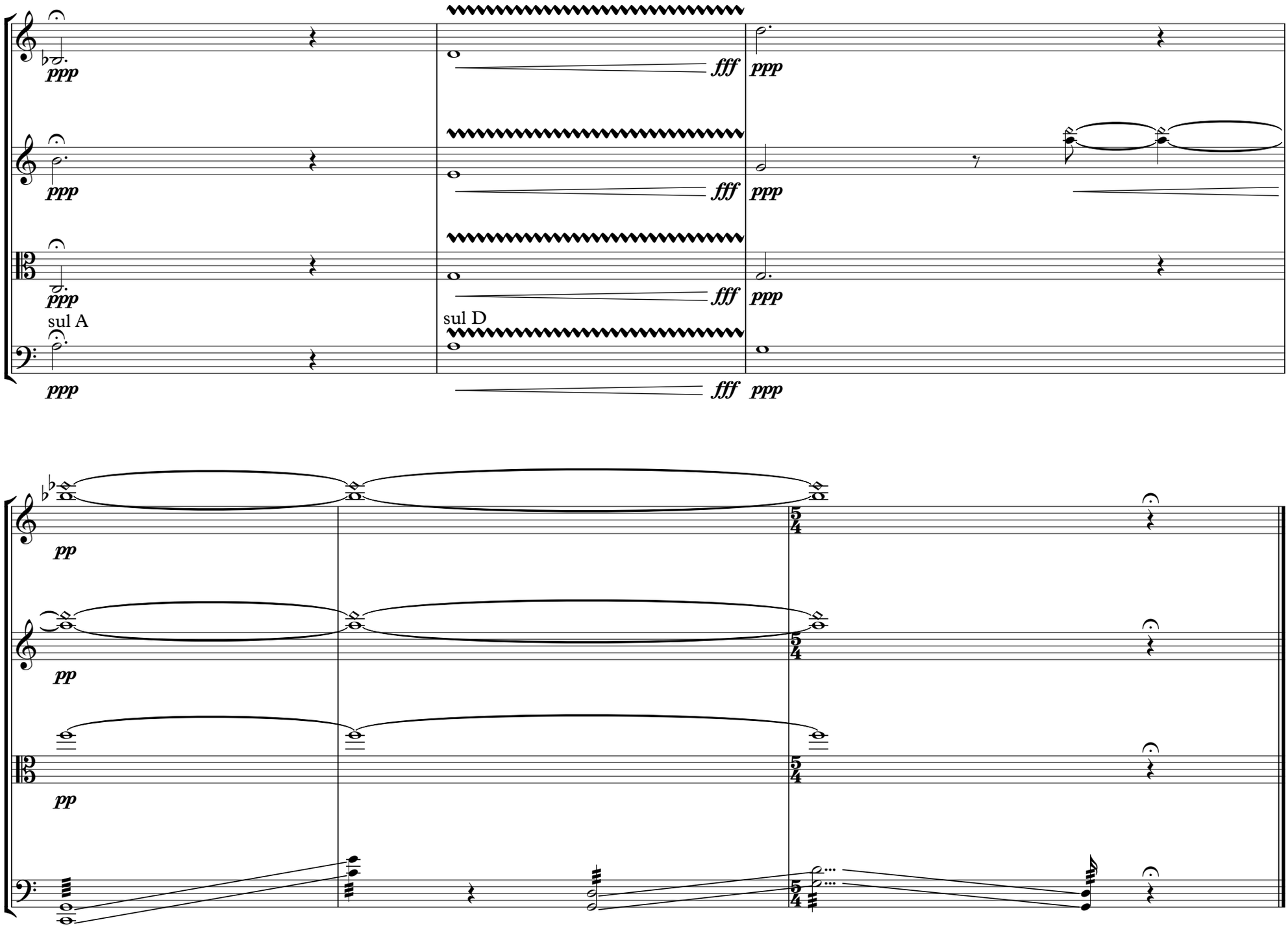


a tempo




s.p.2
molto s.t.
s.p.2
molto s.t.
s.p.2
f
p
f
ppp
molto s.t.
s.p.2
molto s.t.
s.p.2
f
pp
f
ppp
s.p.2
molto s.t.
s.p.2
molto s.t.
s.p.2
p
f
p
f
ppp
s.p.2
molto s.t.
s.p.2
molto s.t.
s.p.2
f
p
f
p
ppp


M
3"-4"
s.p.2
beneath the bridge
mp
ppp
mf
ord.
fff
beneath the bridge
ord.
mp
ppp
mf
fff
beneath the bridge
mp
ord. sul G
ppp
fff
beneath the bridge
mp
s.p.3
ord. Sul D
ppp
fff


ppp
fff
ppp
sul A
sul D
pp
5/4