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Title
Always Judging

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PROGRAM NOTES

“Always Judging” for violin and piano

This piece was partly inspired after watching the TED talk “The Neuroscience of Decision-Making: Are We Foul or Fair?” by Kimberly Papillon. Facial features, accents or just a name can change our decisions dramatically. Two equally qualified persons can be either accepted or rejected for a job due to implicit associations of their names. Accents can create unconscious bias of intelligence and competence. Facial features can skew us in our judgement of someone’s trustworthiness.

Judging can be taken at multiple dimensions. The score starts off with repetitive quarter notes before progressing in complexity. My challenge was to convey the idea “Never judge a music by the score”. I wanted the players to perceive classical Mozart as equally challenging as modern complex scores like Ferneyhough and Xenakis. I have encountered numerous complex scores involving quintuplets, septuplets etc. which are impossible to be precise and in-sync with other human players. Here, I challenge myself to limit this score to the basic rhythms: duplets, triplets and quadruplets.

Another judging dimension occurs in the performance aspect. A tight-knit duo is mandated by the precise interactions between the violinist and pianist. This creates the vision of two players as one single entity.

Judging from the opening music, the listener (with no access to the score) forms preconceived notions about the minimalistic approach of the remainder of the piece. This is similar to how we rapidly form definitive first impressions about someone from non-verbal observations. Each listener holds a different schema and judges how the music will progress - as anticipated or with surprises. My belief of the ideal would be a healthy balance of both.

Always Judging

Kangyi Zhang

In the same spirit, in unity

♩ = 110 ca (max 120)

♩ = 110 ca (max 120)

⋆ Default: All notes accented / slightly accented
(unless indicated otherwise)

Violin

Piano

8va

f *mp*

4

no ped. (first pedal at D)

Pno.

f *p* *f* *mp* *p*

A

7

Vln.

mp *duo matching dynamics*
(play by ear)

Pno.

f *p* *mp* *f* *p* *f* *mp*

A

10

Vln.

f *p*

Pno.

f *p*

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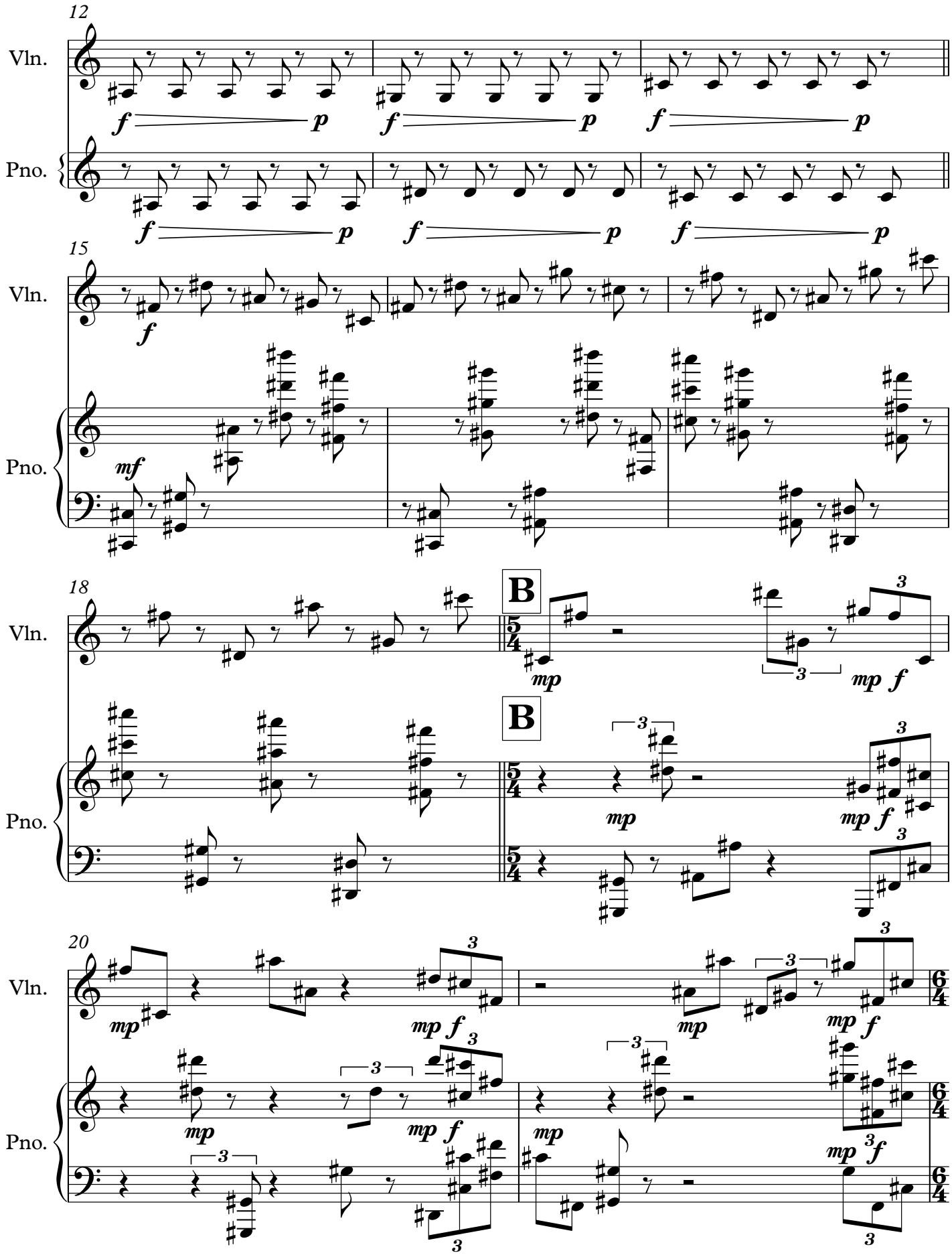
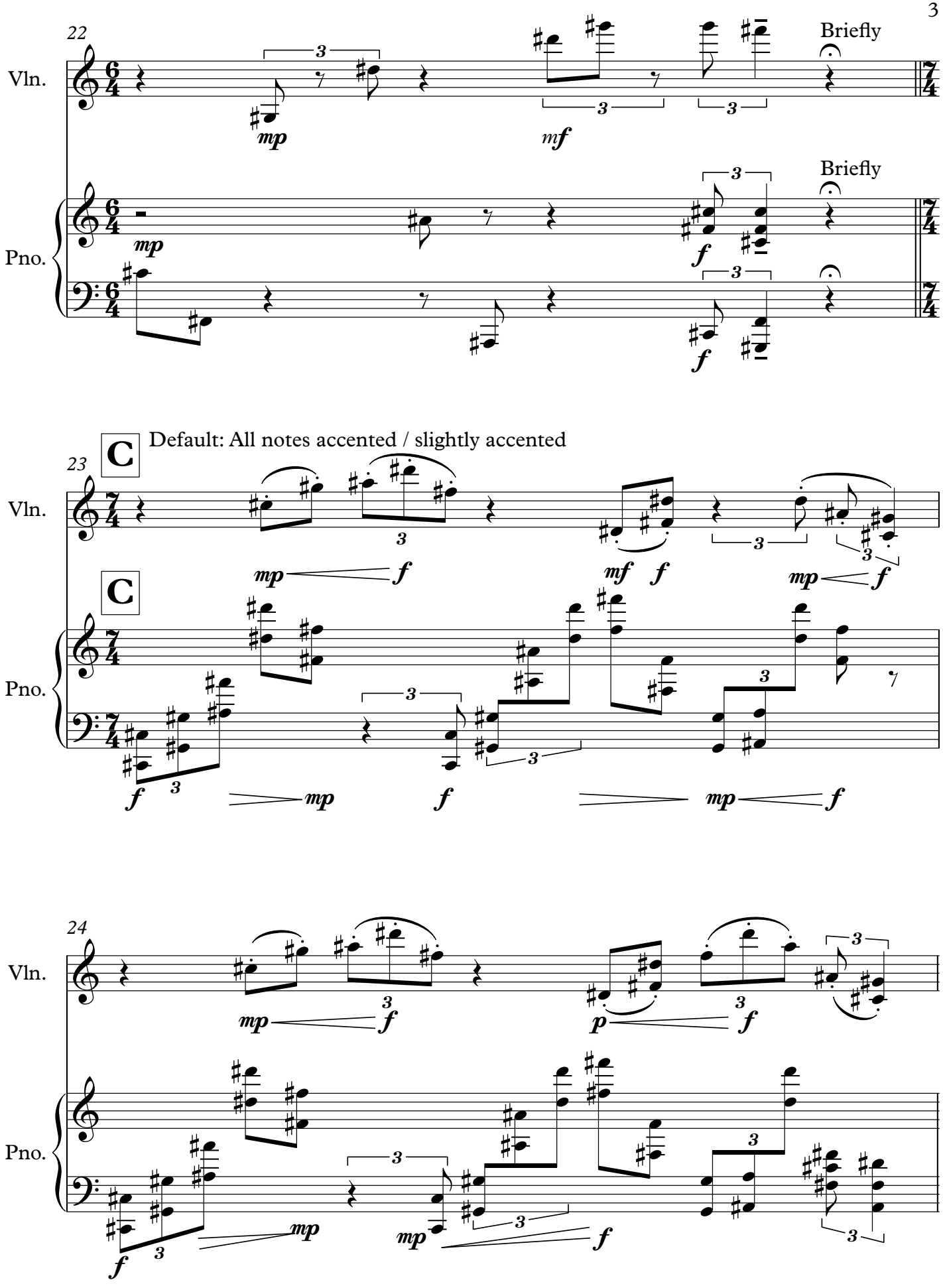
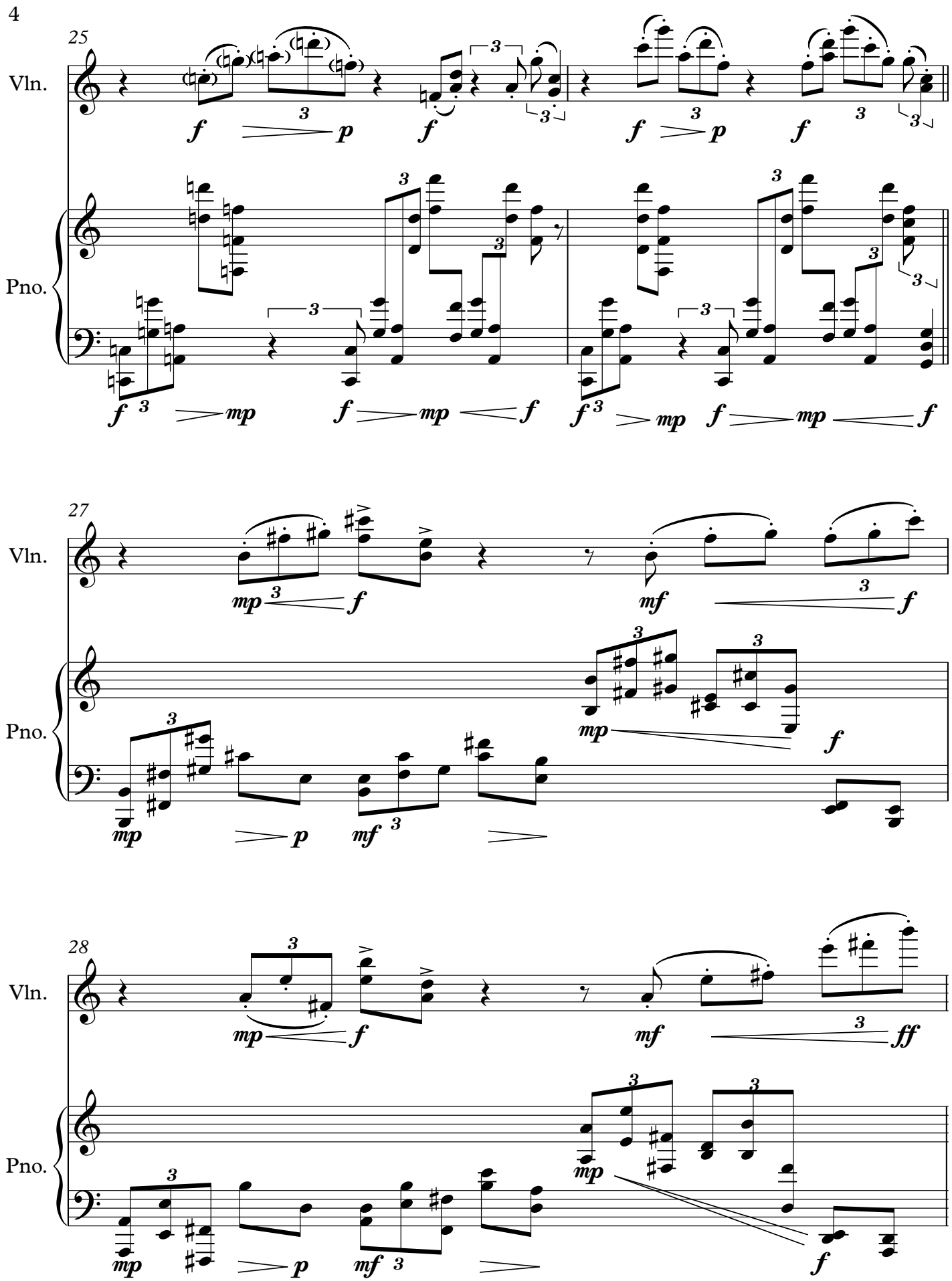
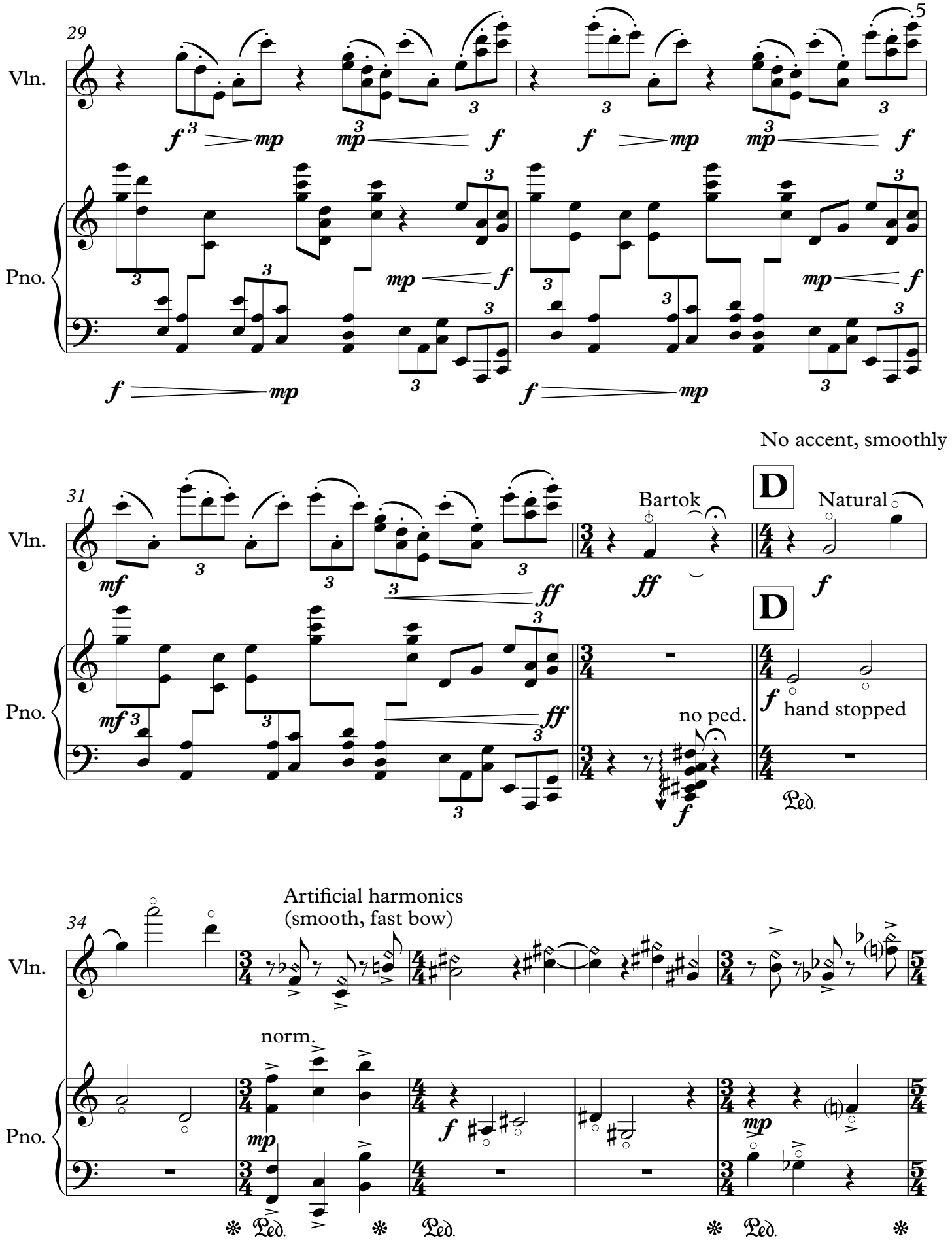
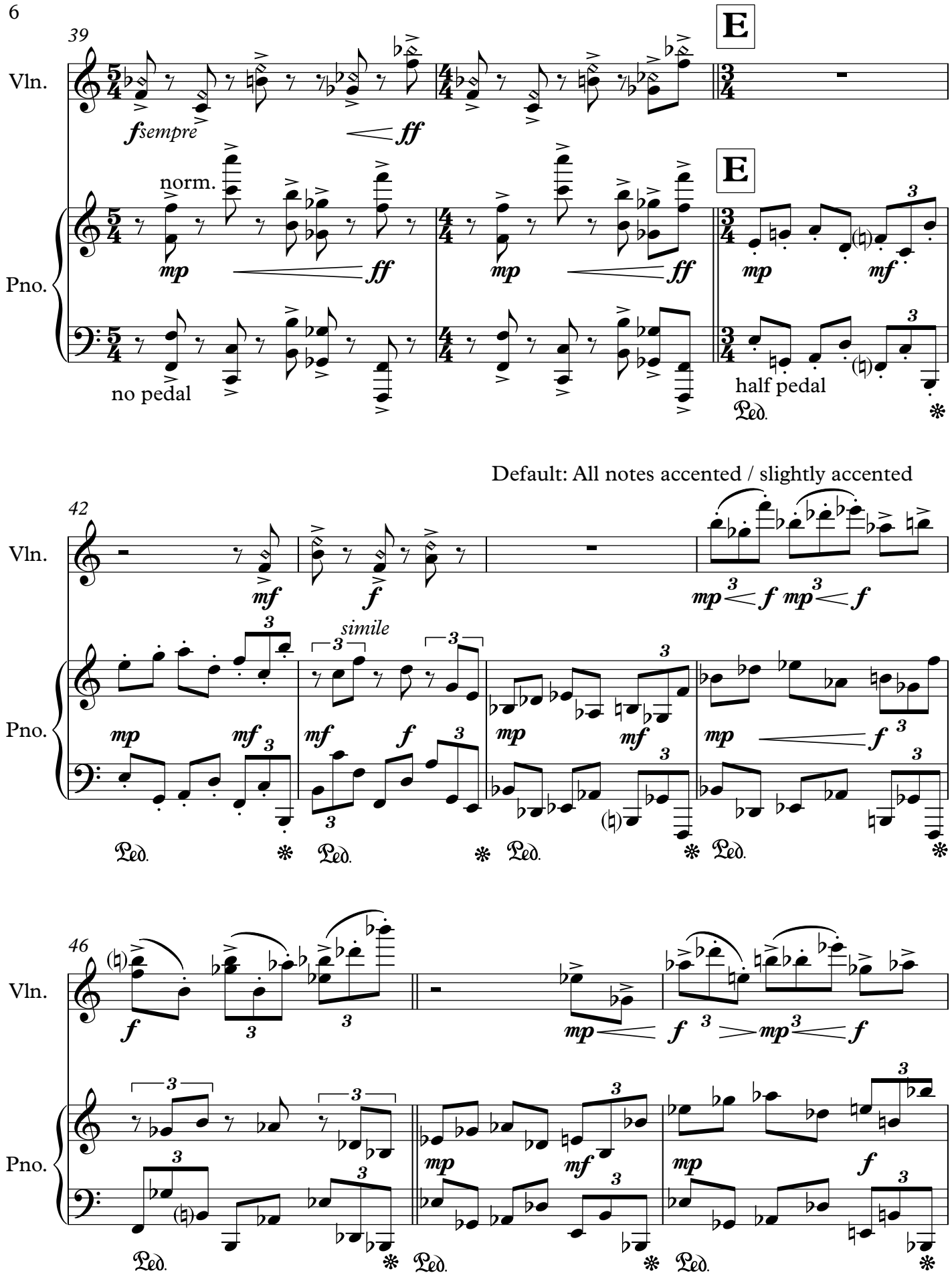
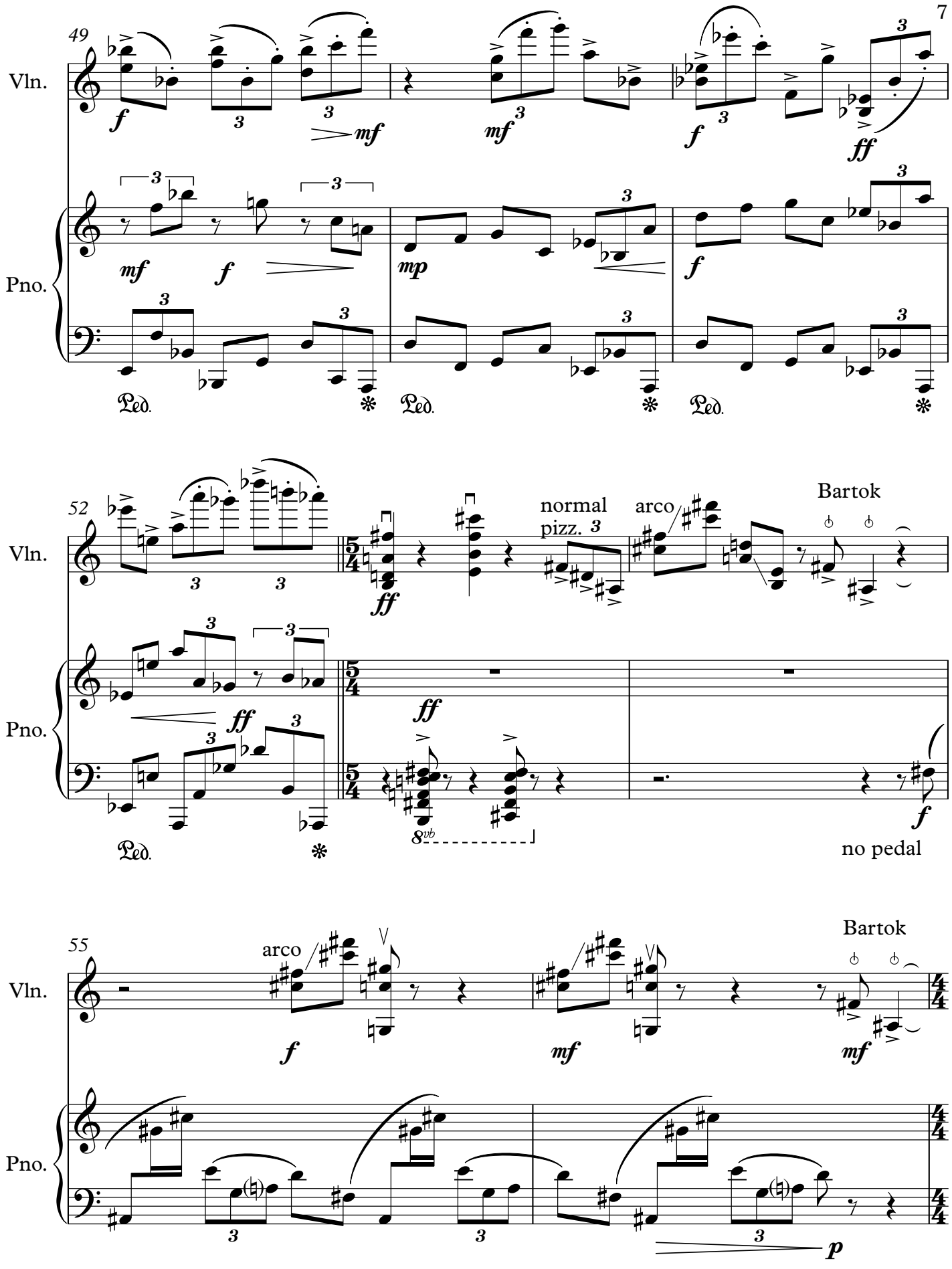

12
Vln.
Pno.
15
Vln.
Pno.
18
Vln.
B
Pno.
B
20
Vln.
Pno.

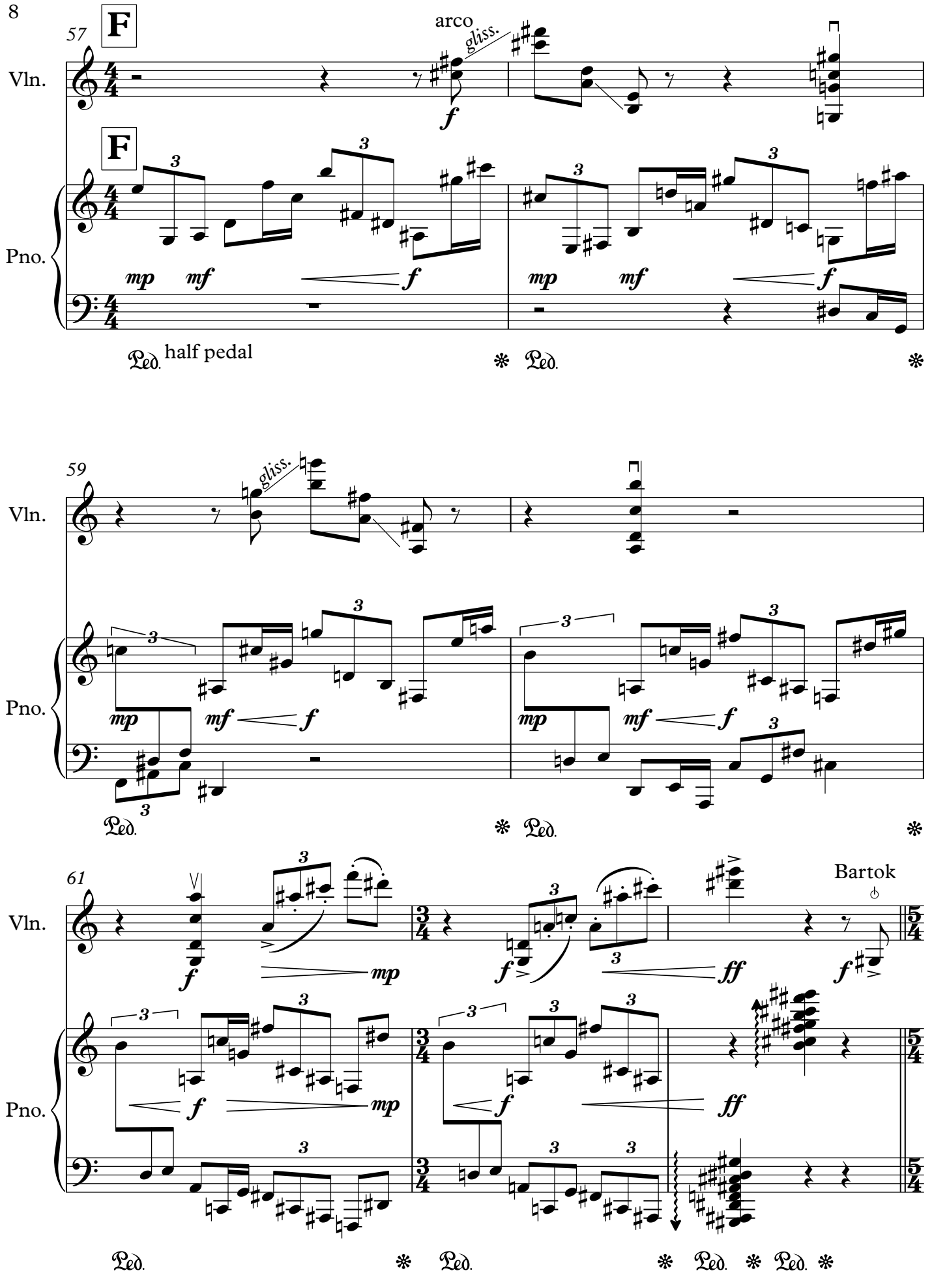

22
Vln.
Pno.
Briefly
Briefly
C
Default: All notes accented / slightly accented
23
24

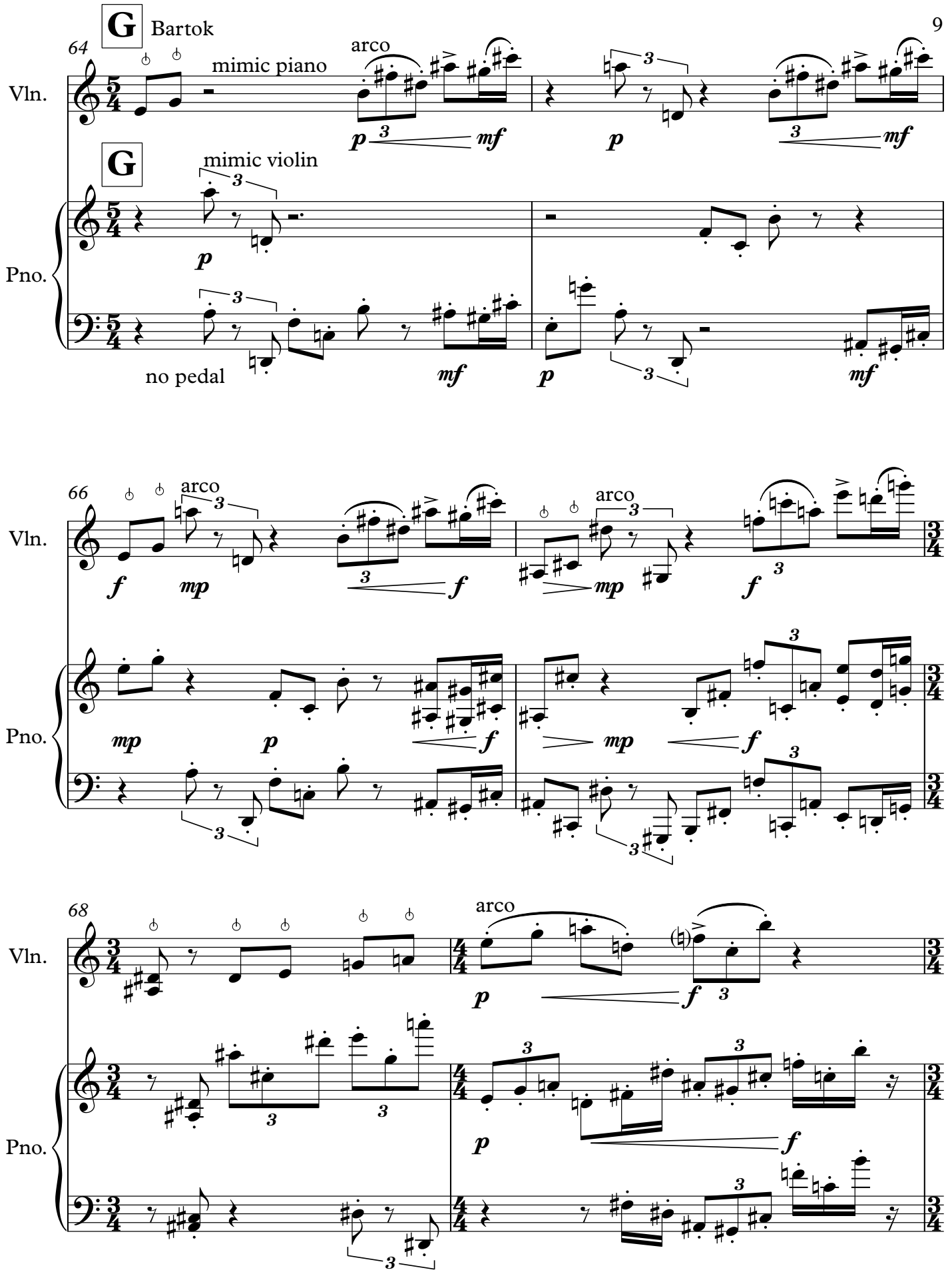

25
Vln.
Pno.
27
Vln.
Pno.
28
Vln.
Pno.

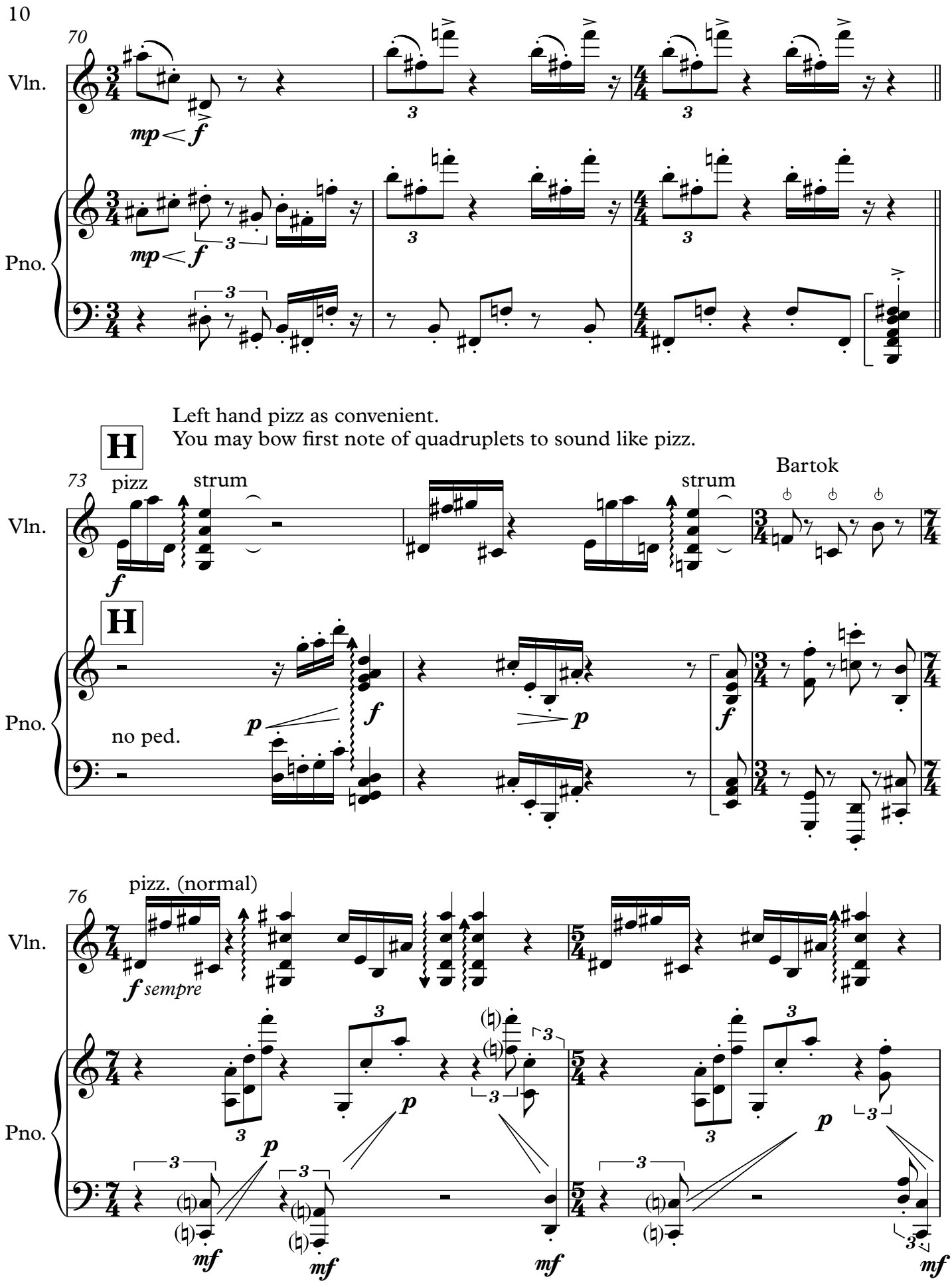

29
5
Vln.
Pno.
No accent, smoothly
31
Bartok
D
Natural
hand stopped
no ped.
34
Artificial harmonics
(smooth, fast bow)
norm.

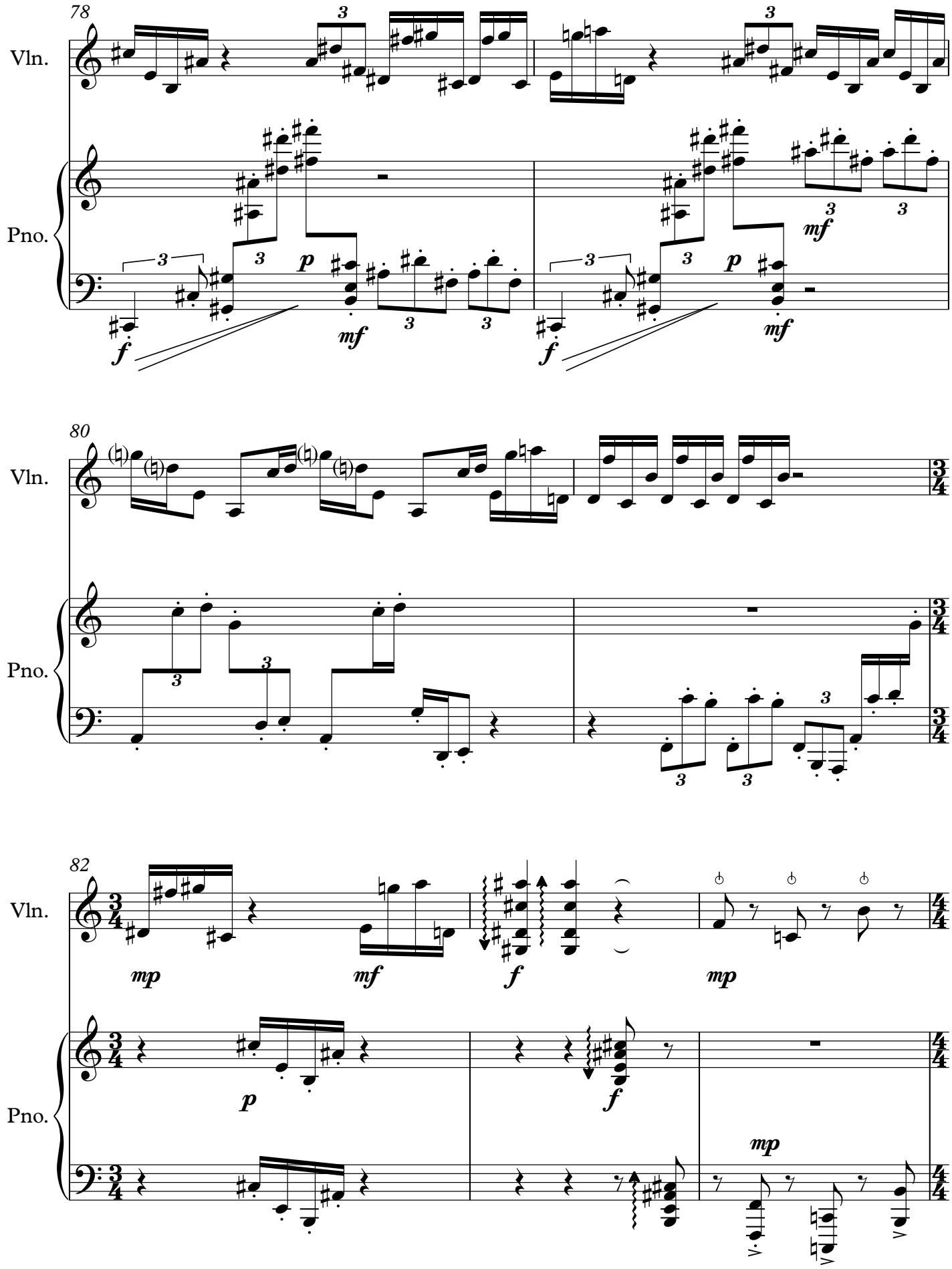

39
Vln.
Pno.
E
fsempre
ff
norm.
mp
no pedal
half pedal
Ped.
Default: All notes accented / slightly accented
42
mf
f
mp
simile
46

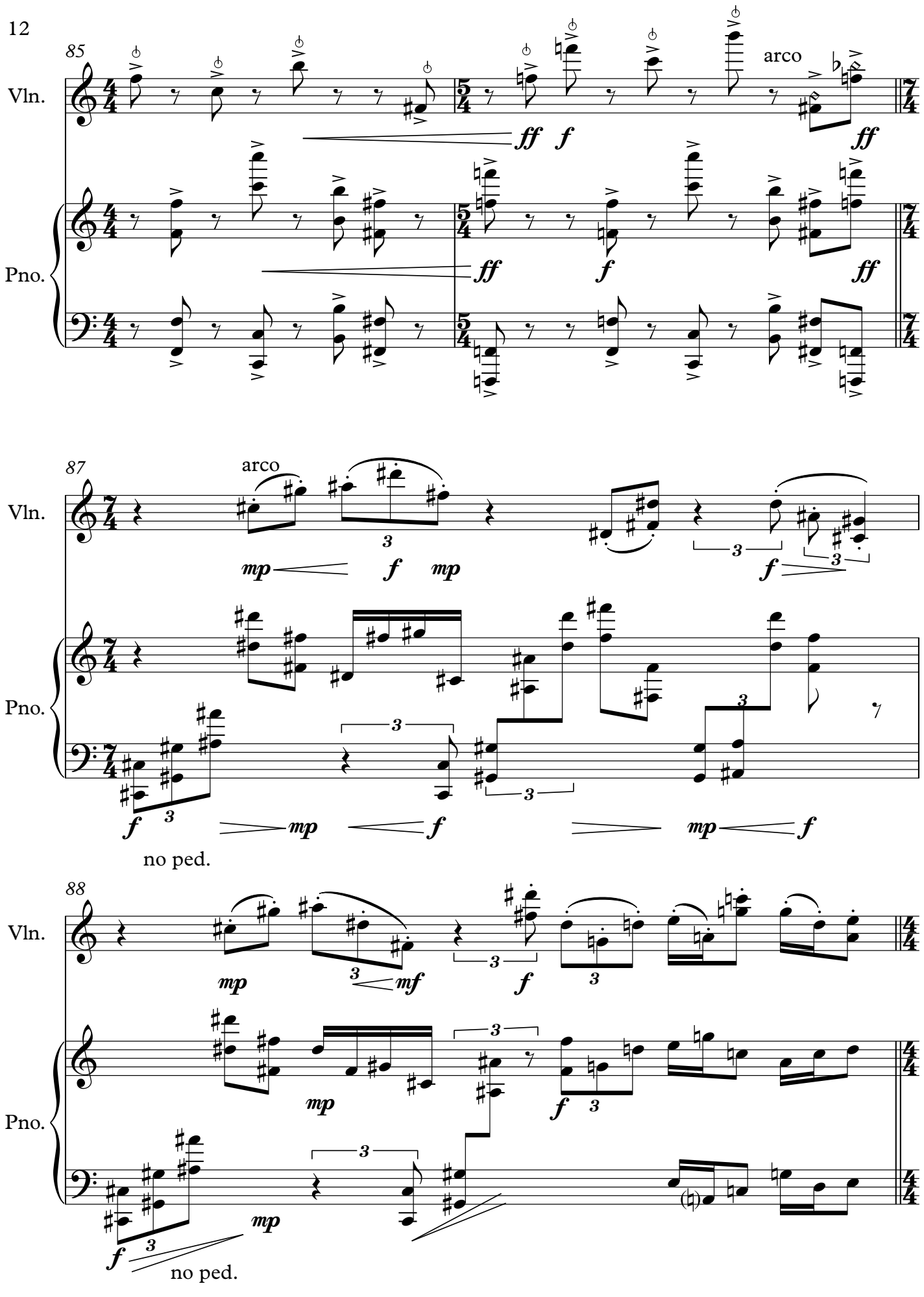

49
Vln.
Pno.
52
normal
pizz.
arco
Bartok
no pedal
55
arco
Bartok

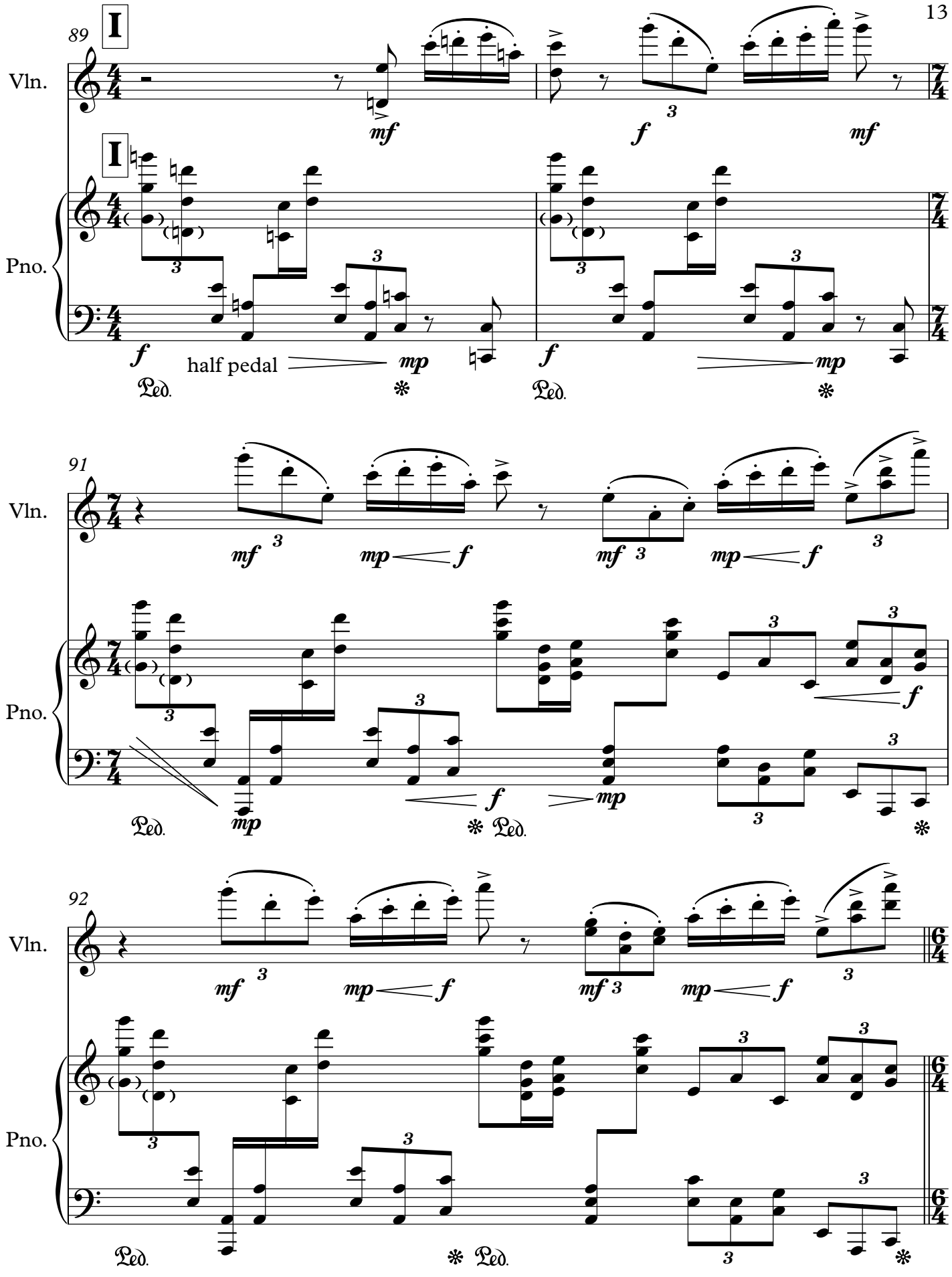

57
F
arco
gliss.
Vln.
F
Pno.
mp
mf
f
Ped.
half pedal
59
gliss.
61
Bartok
ff

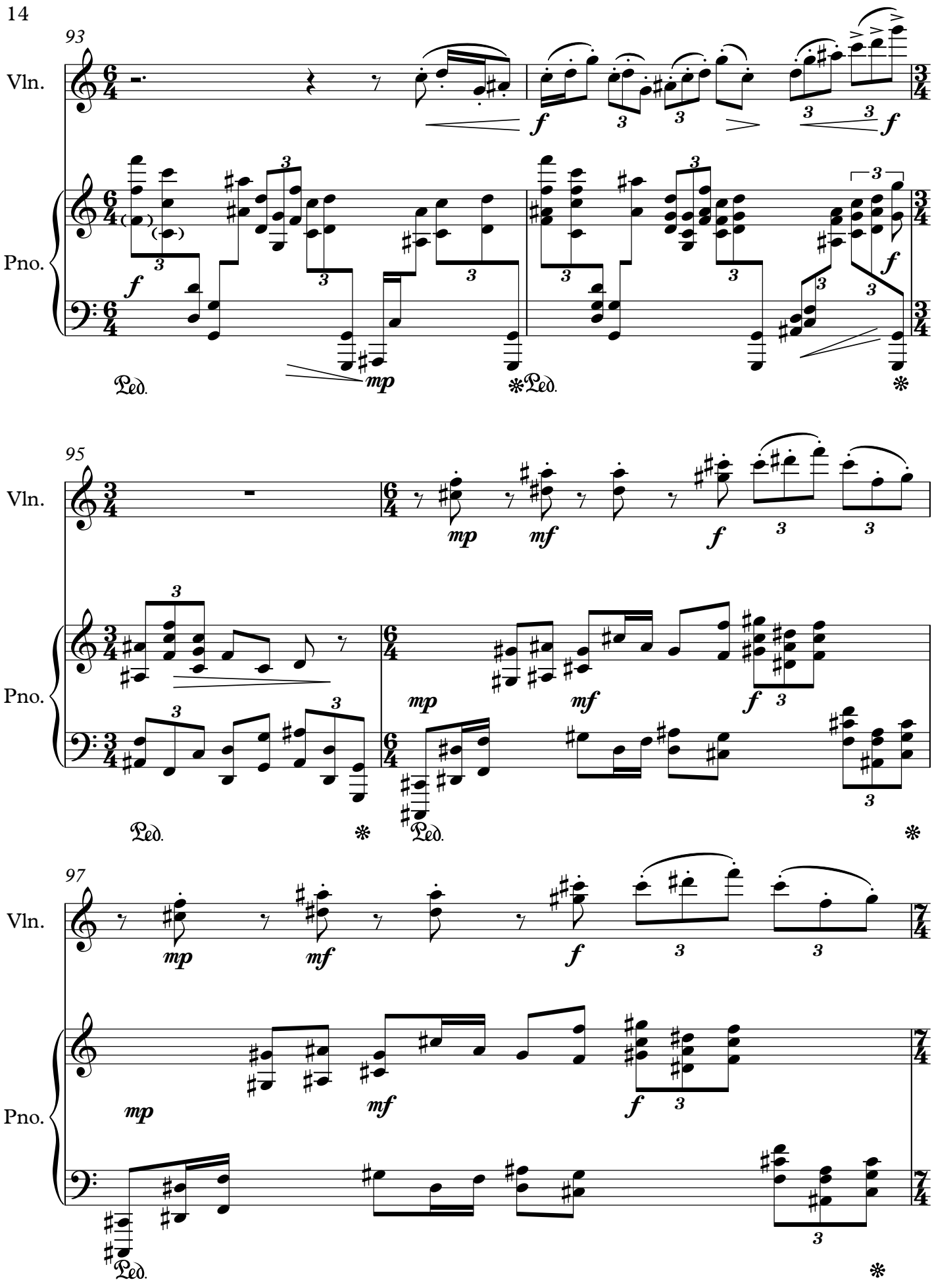

G
Bartok
64
Vln.
mimic piano
arco
p
mf
G
mimic violin
Pno.
no pedal
66
arco
f
mp
66
68
arco

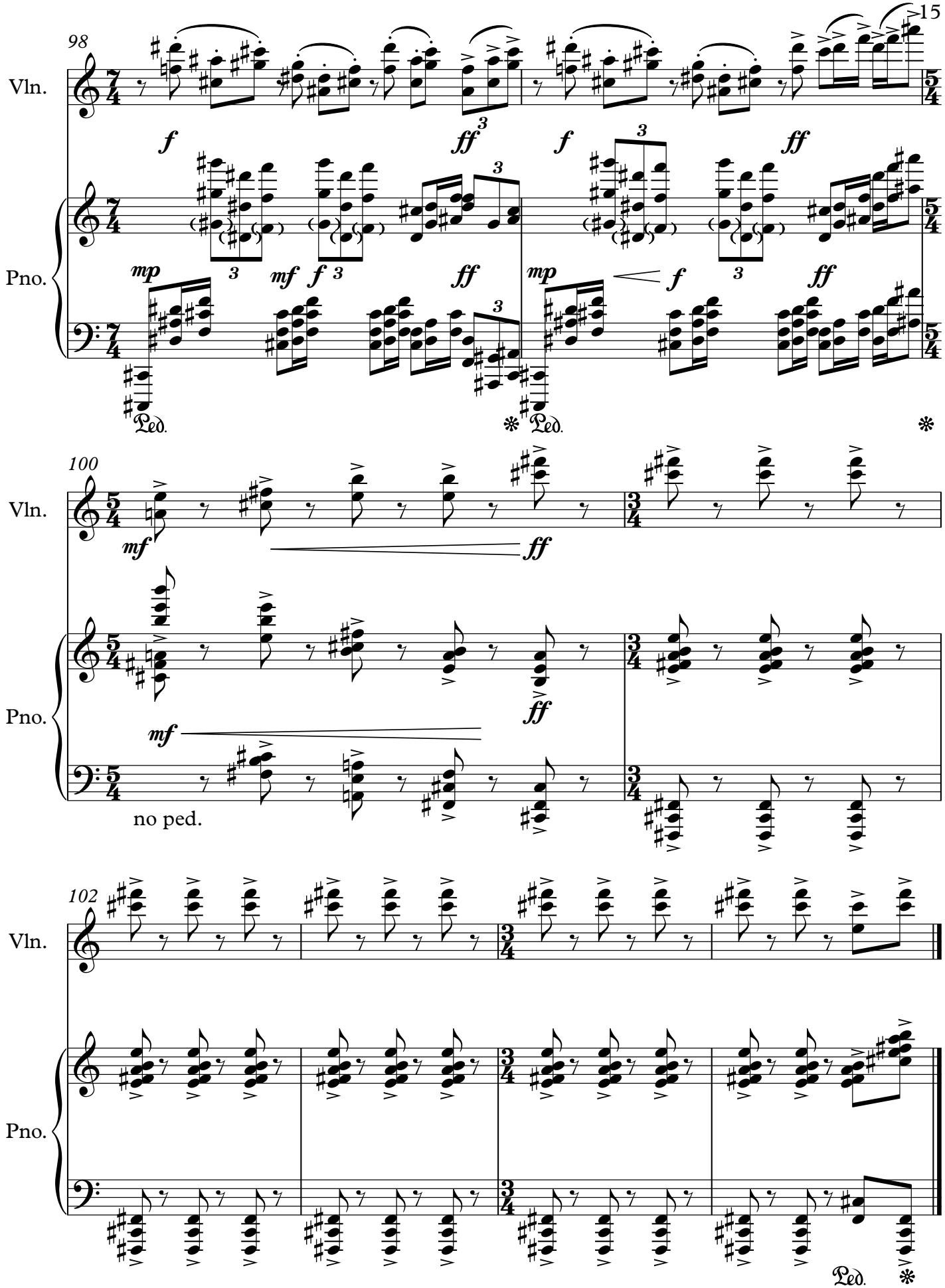

70
Vln.
Pno.
mp < f
3
Left hand pizz as convenient.
You may bow first note of quadruplets to sound like pizz.
H
73
pizz
strum
strum
Bartok
f
p
no ped.
76
pizz. (normal)
f sempre
mf


78
Vln.
Pno.
80
Vln.
Pno.
82
Vln.
Pno.


85
Vln.
Pno.
arco
87
arco
no ped.
88
no ped.


89
I
Vln.
Pno.
mf
f
mf
half pedal
mp
Ped.
91
92


93
Vln.
Pno.
Ped.
95
97


98
Vln.
Pno.
100
Vln.
Pno.
no ped.
102
Vln.
Pno.