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Shape Shifter

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Author
Weston, Trevor

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Shape Shifter

(The Angry Bluesman)

Violoncello

Trevor Weston

Performance Notes

Although the overall notation indicates a certain amount of freedom for the performer, the sections with the foot stamp should be performed with clockwork-like regularity.

Rehearsal C. If the tempo marking is too fast, the performer should perform this section as fast as possible.

𝓧 indicates a foot stamp

Program Note

Shape Shifter (The Angry Bluesman)

I began working on **Shape Shifter** with the intention of writing a piece for solo cello from a machine's point of view. Throughout the Twentieth Century, composers have created music with machines and for machines. I thought that it might be interesting to attempt to write music from the aesthetic vantage point of a machine. I know that there are numerous computer programs that can generate sounds and create incredible pieces of music, but my goal was to try to create a piece in what I imagined to be an inherent musical language created by machines. My guiding belief was that machines could not create subtle changes in expression like humans so their expressivity would come from the juxtaposition contrasting musical ideas. This approach resulted in non-linear musical expression containing sequences of seemingly unrelated musical events. Most Pop Musicians use machines to create music. More than 30 years after the ascent of DJing in Hip Hop music, turntablists and music producers have connected samples of different musics together with machine-like nonlinearity for so long that this form of musical expression is commonplace in American Popular music. Samplers, drum machines, etc. are used by professional and amateur musicians alike to create music.

The idea of a mythical **Shape Shifter**, a being that can change its form/shape rapidly, became an appropriate title for this piece. The abruptly changing "shapes" in this work stem from the same pitches or DNA. As I continued to write the piece, the melodic vocabulary increasing included inflections of the blues, flatted thirds and fifths (hence the subtitle), along with mechanical rhythmic ideas. So, the two ideas merged: blues-like performance practices, foot stomping (as if playing blues guitar or piano), along with music that seems to toggle between different ideas mechanically. The Shape Shifter is an angry bluesman because most American Pop music still relies on the legacy of the blues although the contributions of the solitary itinerant Bluesman seem to have been forgotten.

TREVOR WESTON

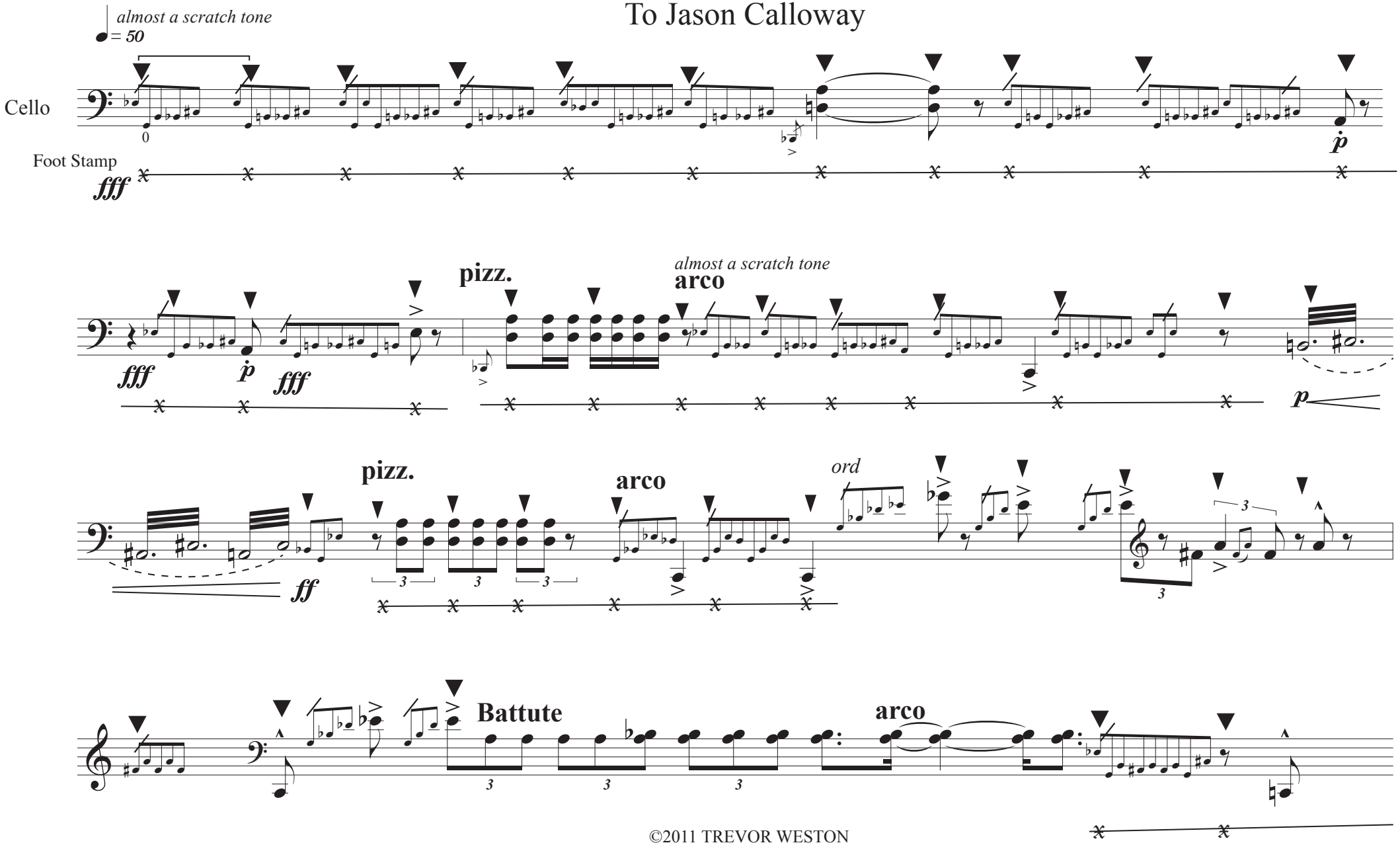
Shapeshifter

(The Angry Bluesman)

TREVOR WESTON

To Jason Calloway

Violent



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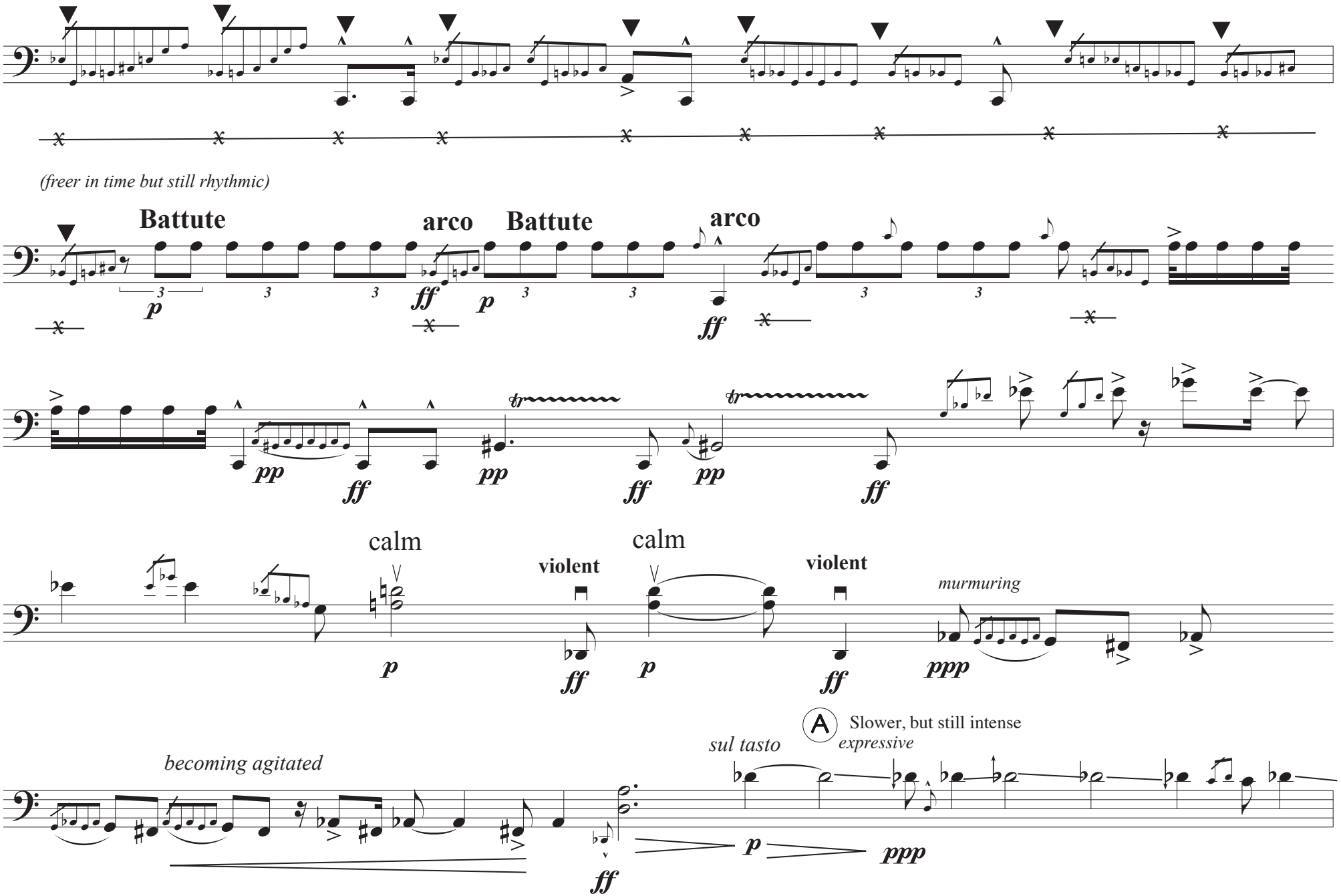
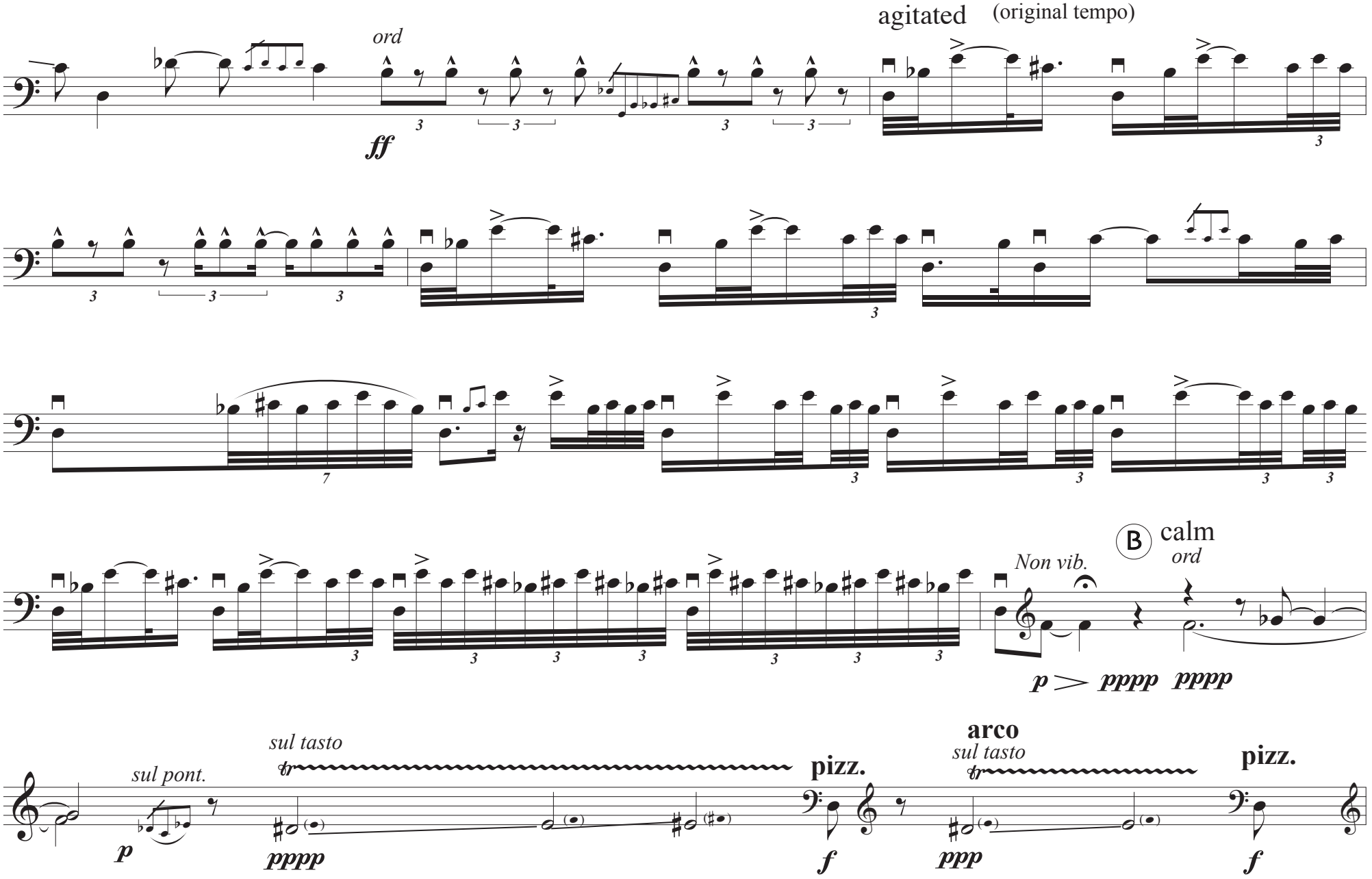
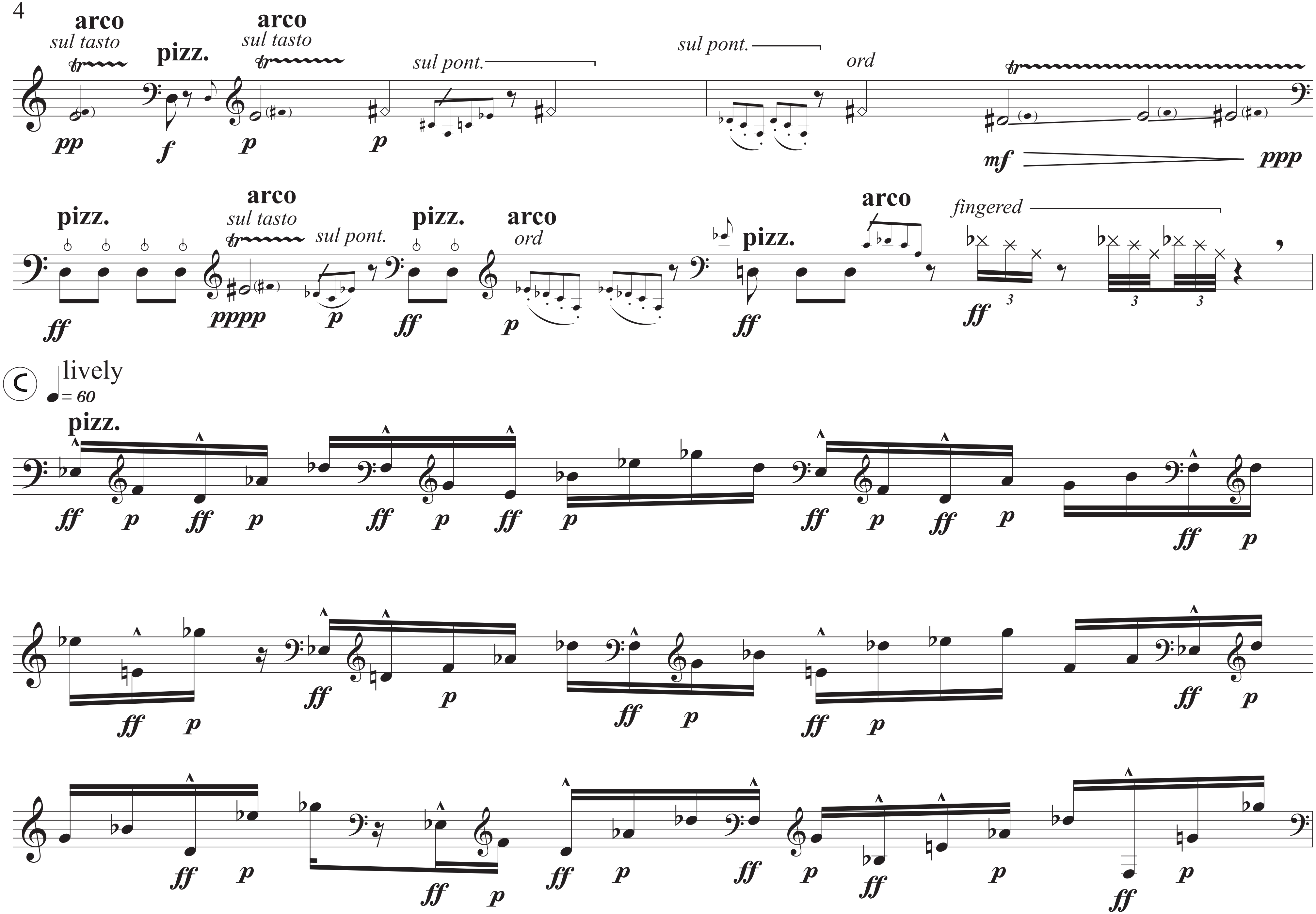
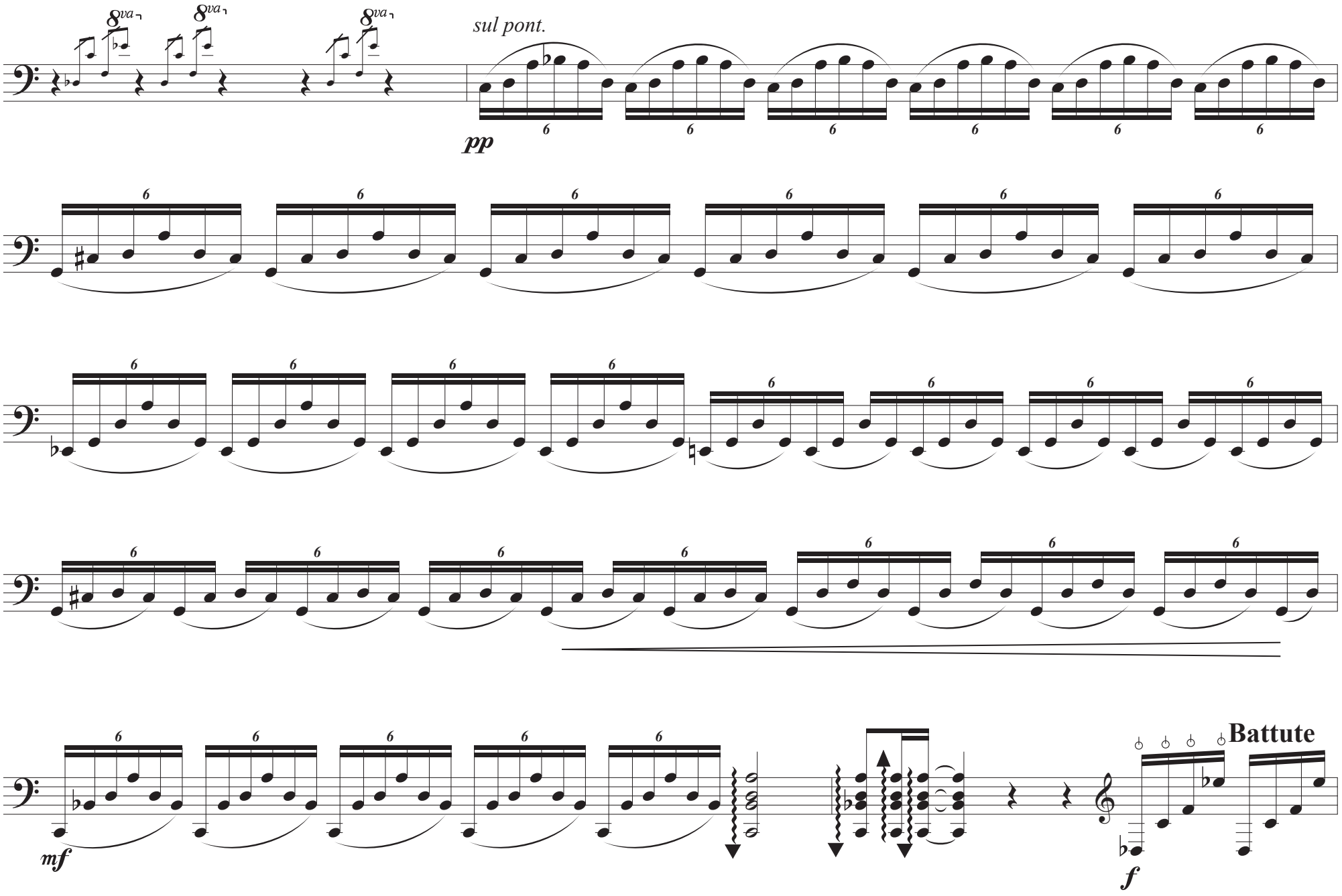
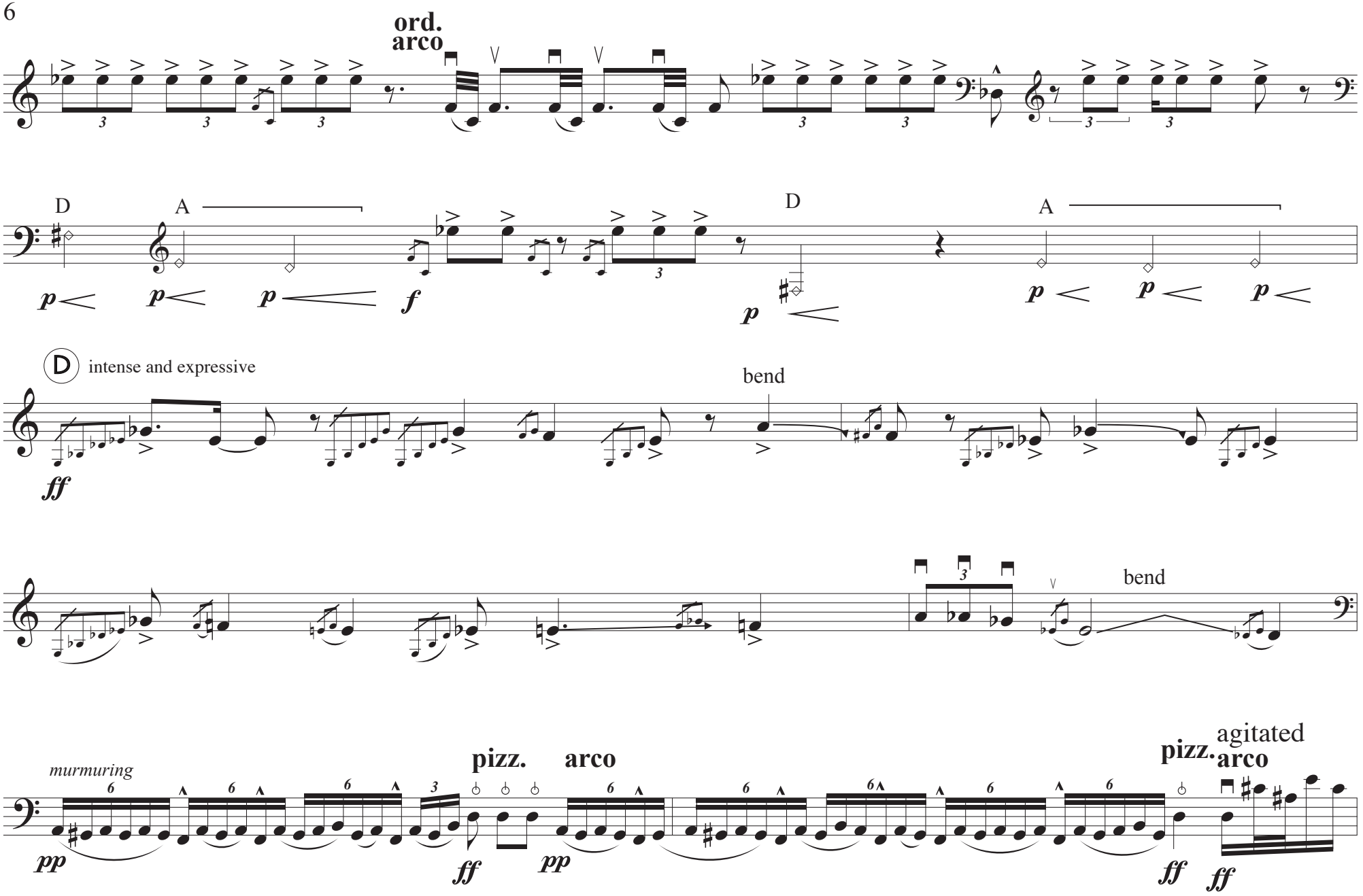
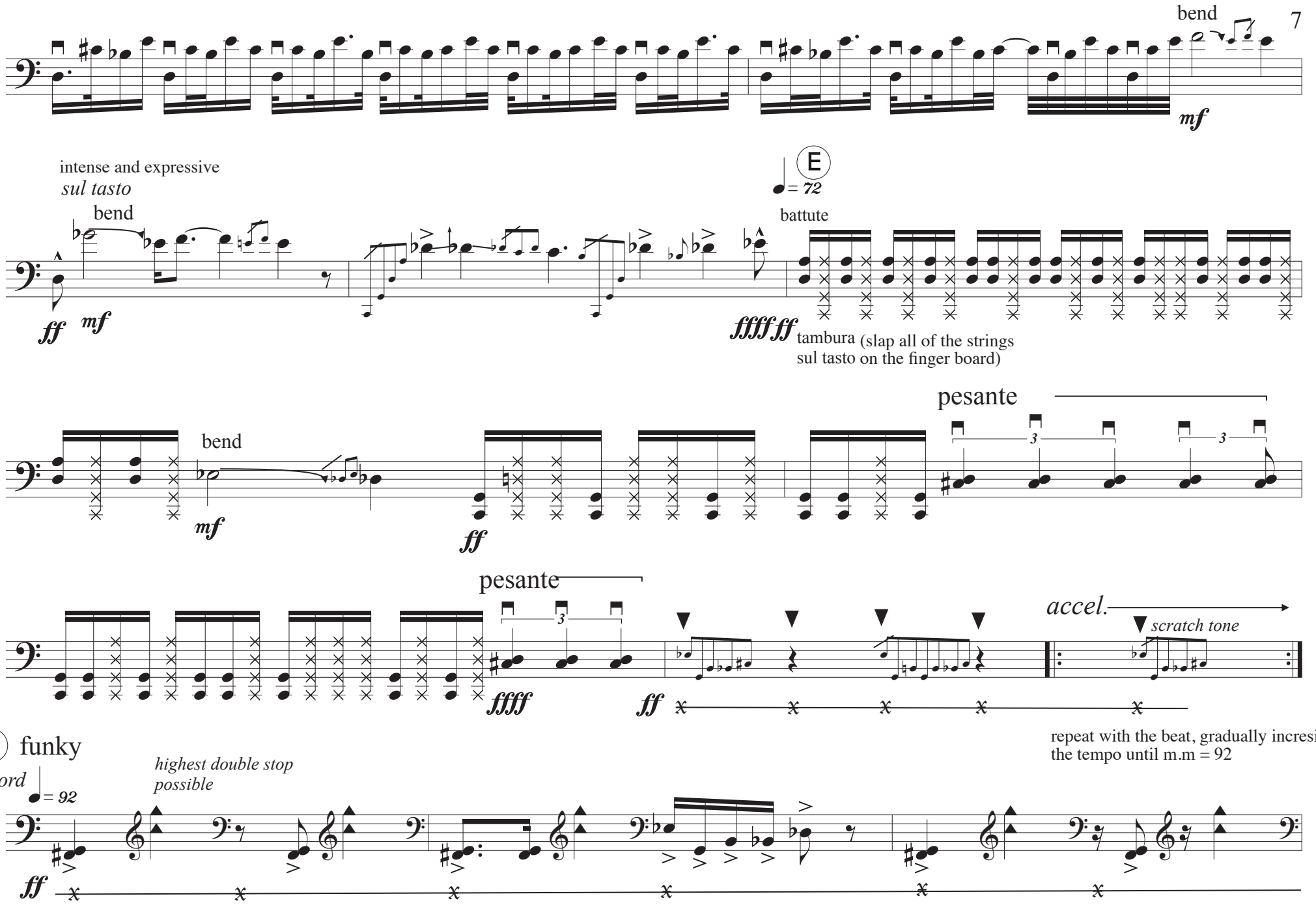

(freer in time but still rhythmic)
Battute
arco
Battute
arco
calm
violent
calm
violent
murmuring
becoming agitated
A
Slower, but still intense
expressive
sul tasto

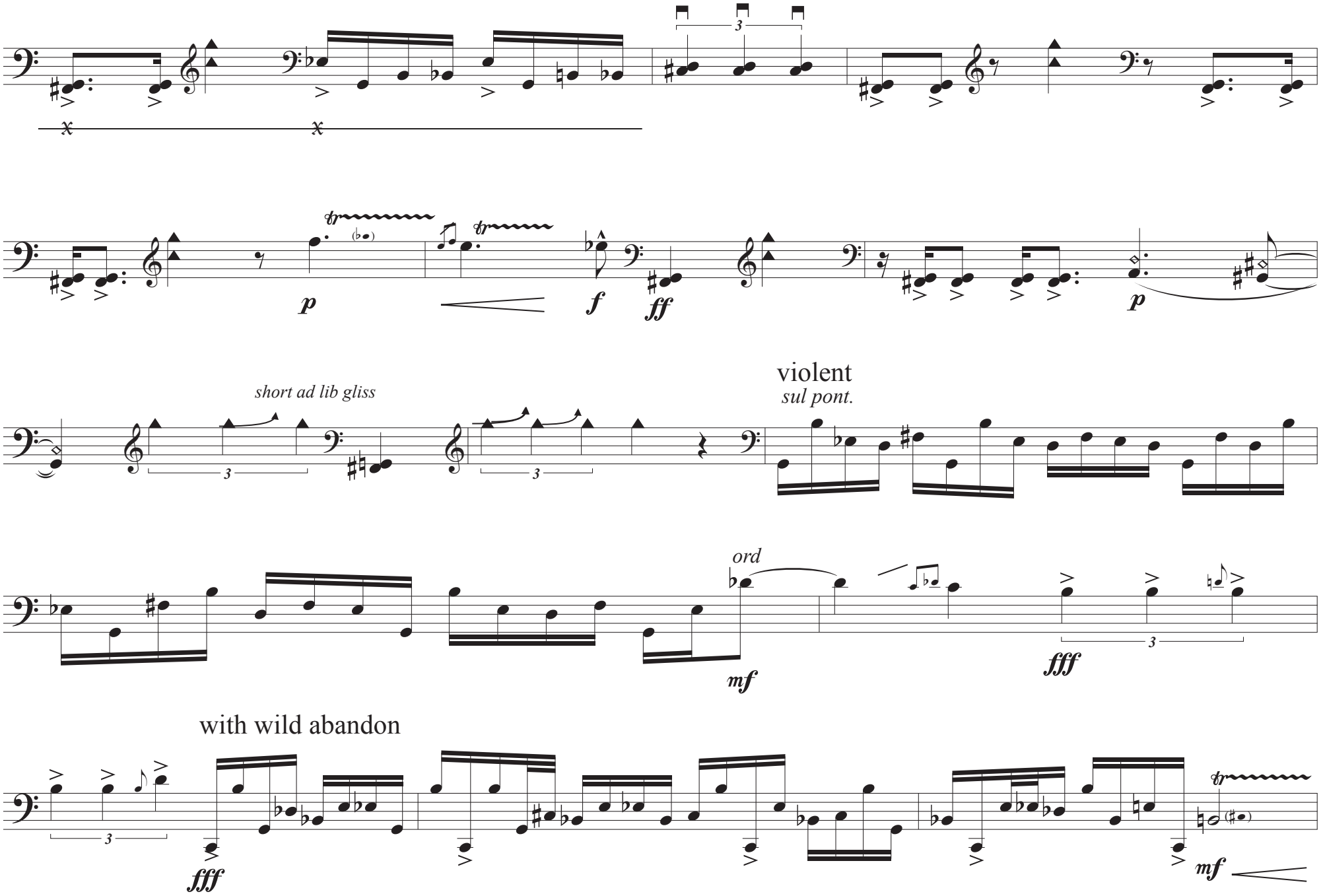

agitated
(original tempo)
ord
ff
B
calm
ord
Non vib.
p > pppp pppp
sul pont.
p
sul tasto
pppp
pizz.
f
arco
sul tasto
ppp
pizz.
f

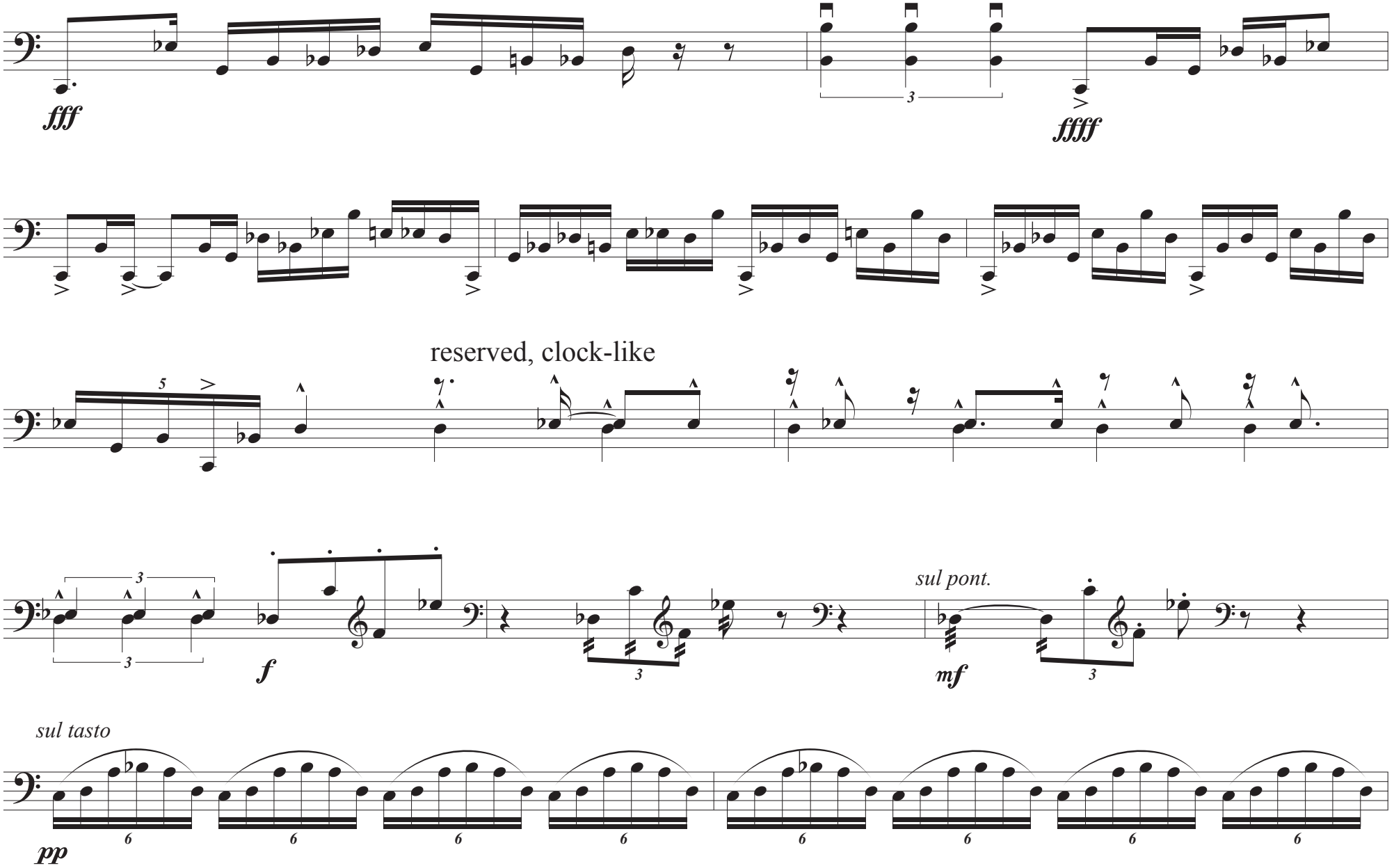

arco
sul tasto
pizz.
arco
sul tasto
sul pont.
sul pont.
ord
pp f p p mf ppp
pizz.
arco
sul tasto
sul pont.
pizz.
arco
ord
pizz.
arco
fingered
ff pppp p ff p ff ff
C
lively
= 60
pizz.

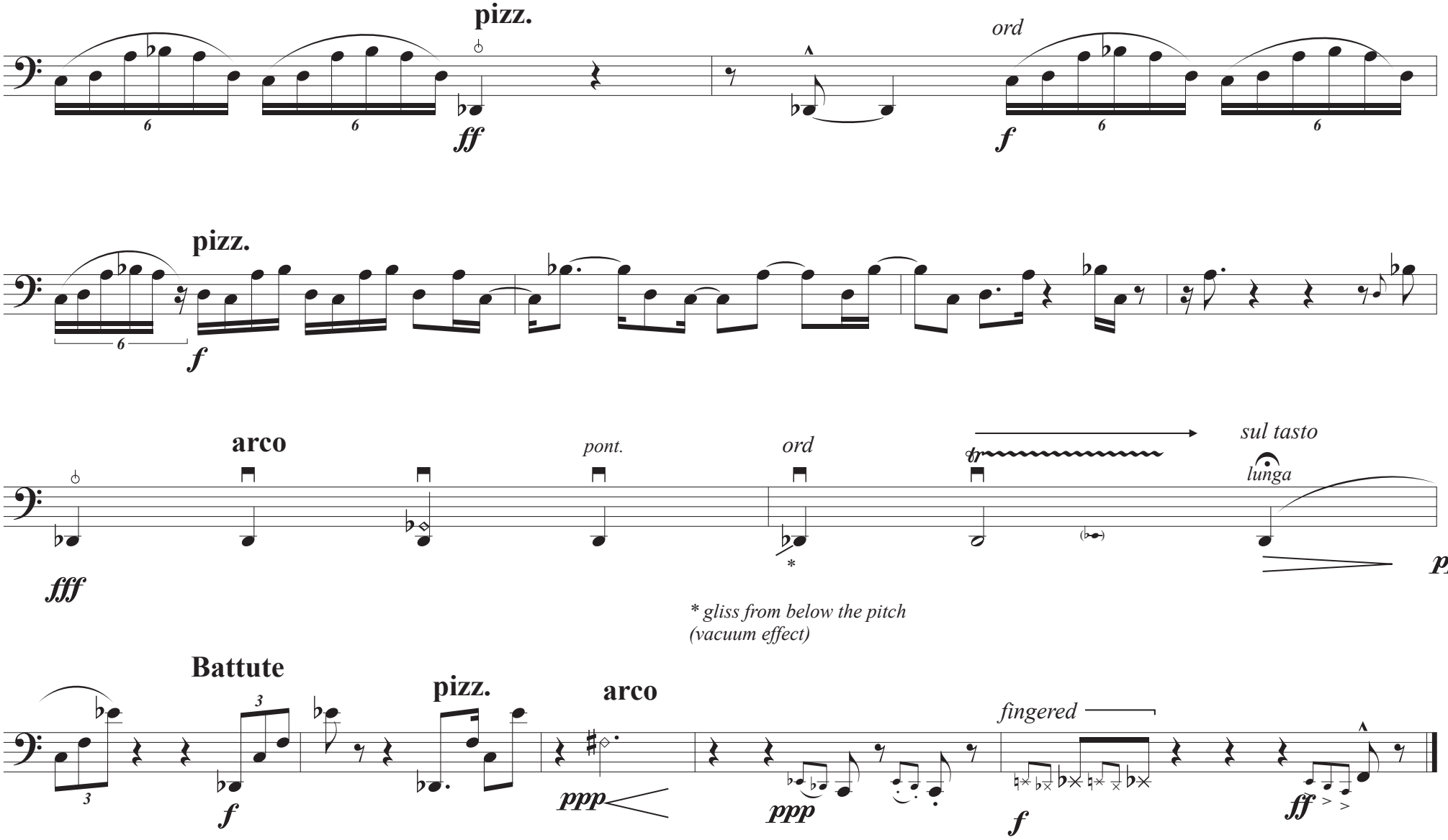

8va
8va
8va
sul pont.
pp
mf
Battute
f


ord.
arco
D
A
p
p
p
f
D
p
A
p
p
p
D
intense and expressive
ff
bend
bend
murmuring
pp
pizz.
arco
ff
pp
pizz.
agitated
arco
ff
ff


bend
mf
intense and expressive
sul tasto
bend
ff
mf
E
♩= 72
battute
fffff ff
tambura (slap all of the strings
sul tasto on the finger board)
bend
mf
ff
pesante
3
3
pesante
3
ffff
ff
accel.
scratch tone
F
funky
ord
♩= 92
highest double stop
possible
ff
repeat with the beat, gradually incresing
the tempo until m.m = 92


p
f
ff
p
short ad lib gliss
violent
sul pont.
ord
mf
fff
with wild abandon
fff
mf


fff
ffff
reserved, clock-like
f
sul pont.
mf
sul tasto
pp


pizz.
ord
ff
f
pizz.
f
arco
pont.
ord
sul tasto
lunga
fff
pp
* gliss from below the pitch
(vacuum effect)
Battute
pizz.
arco
fingered
f
ppp
ppp
f
ff