A Bridge Between Heaven and Earth

String Quartet

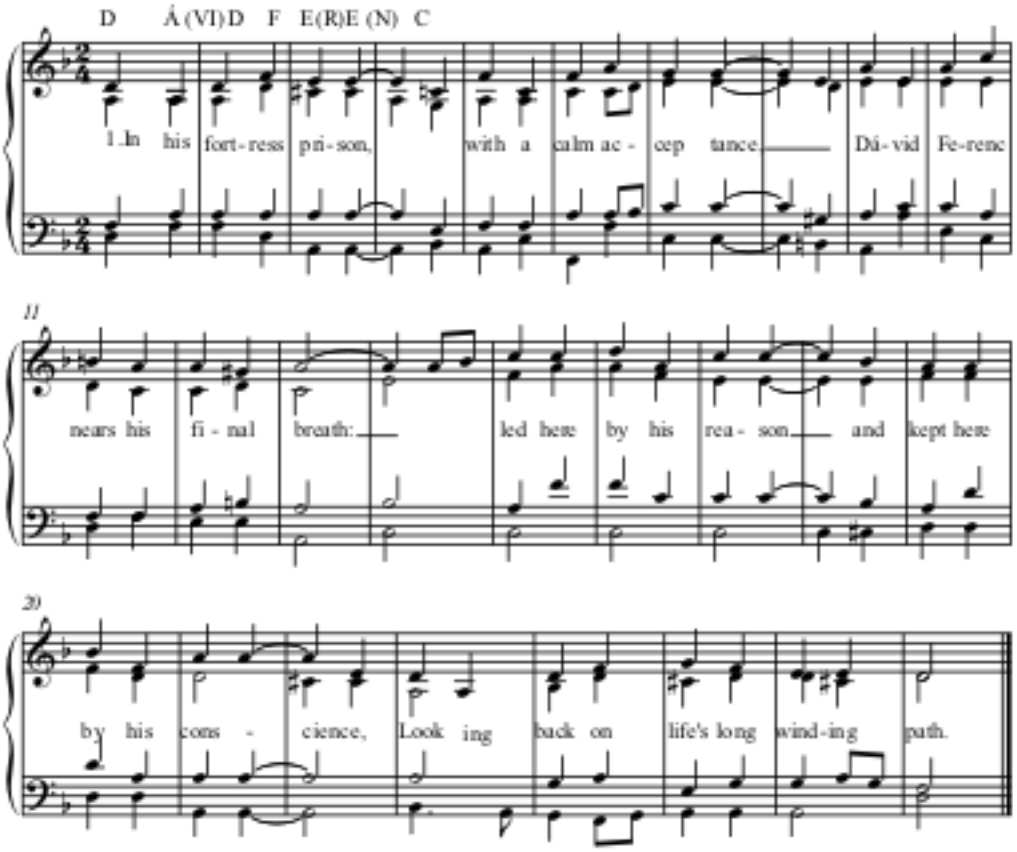
Commissioned for the 450th Anniversary of the Edict of Torda
by the Hungarian Unitarian Church

Alan Edward Williams

The quartet is based on a hymn tune, which can be found as the epilogue at the end of the quartet:

Dávid Ferenc Memorial Hymn

words and music A.E.Williams



2. Student, priest and pastor,
Endlessly rethinking,
Following his conscience where it led;
Overturning dogma
Fearlessly debating
Seeking truth where others feared to tread.

3. Challenging, persuading
People and the princes
Dávid preached the truth that he perceived
Convincing some to follow
Stirring thought in others
Arguing for freedom of belief.

The intention is that the audience or congregation should sing this hymn before or after the performance of the quartet.

The main hymn theme is the name of Dávid Ferenc (or in English, Francis David, leader of the anti-trinitarian side at the Diet of Torda which eventually proclaimed, for the first time in Europe, religious toleration in 1568) coded as D-A-D F-E-E-C. The German variant of his name, Franz Hertel, coded as F-A-Eflat-B-E-E forms the theme to the third movement. The other main pieces of material make reference to musicians connected with Unitarianism. A 12-note row based on augmented triads is an oblique reference to Franz Liszt, on whom - it is believed - Aladár Körösfõi-Kriesch based his portrait of Dávid, because Liszt's *Faust-Symphonie* uses a 12-note theme made of 4 augmented triads. The second movement begins with a quotation from John Ireland's *Sonatina for Piano*, which both follows the pitch contour of the Dávid hymn, and the major third construction of the Liszt *Faust* theme. Co-incidentally John Ireland's father was one of the founding members of Dunham Rd Unitarian Chapel, in Altrincham, Greater Manchester, which I attended as a boy. A further stylistic reference is made in the last movement to Bálint Bakfark, court lutenist and composer to János Zsigmond II, Prince of Transylvania, who issued the edict of Torda, having been convinced by Dávid to do so and became a Unitarian. It's pretty doubtful if Bakfark himself ever espoused Unitarian principles, but in any case, having been terrible at 16th century counterpoint at university, I tried to make ammends here by making the Dávid hymn theme work in four part polyphony on the model of Bakfark's *Krakow lute book*.. Overt reference to the most obvious composer with Unitarian connections, Béla Bartók (who actually was a Unitarian), was unnecessary, since his music is so much in evidence in my language anyway.

The piece was premiered in January 2018 in Kolozsvar/ Cluj-Napoca by the Concordia String Quartet.

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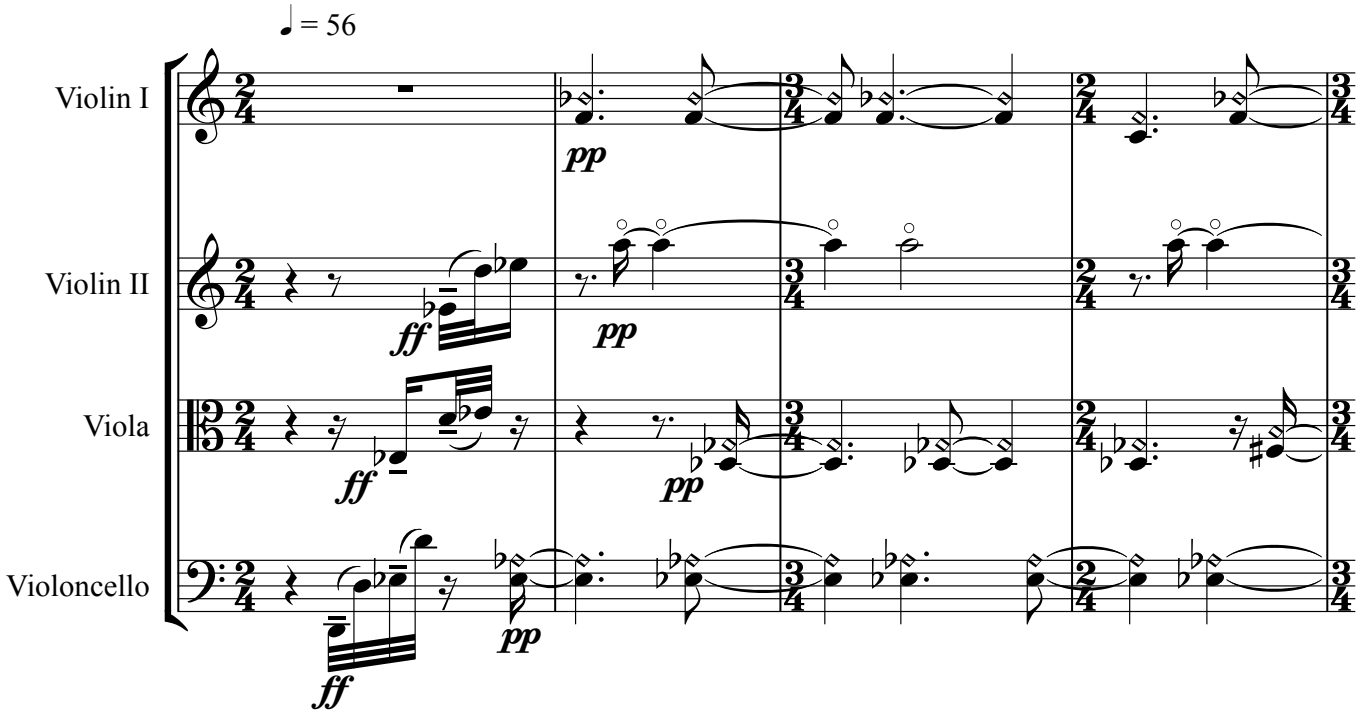
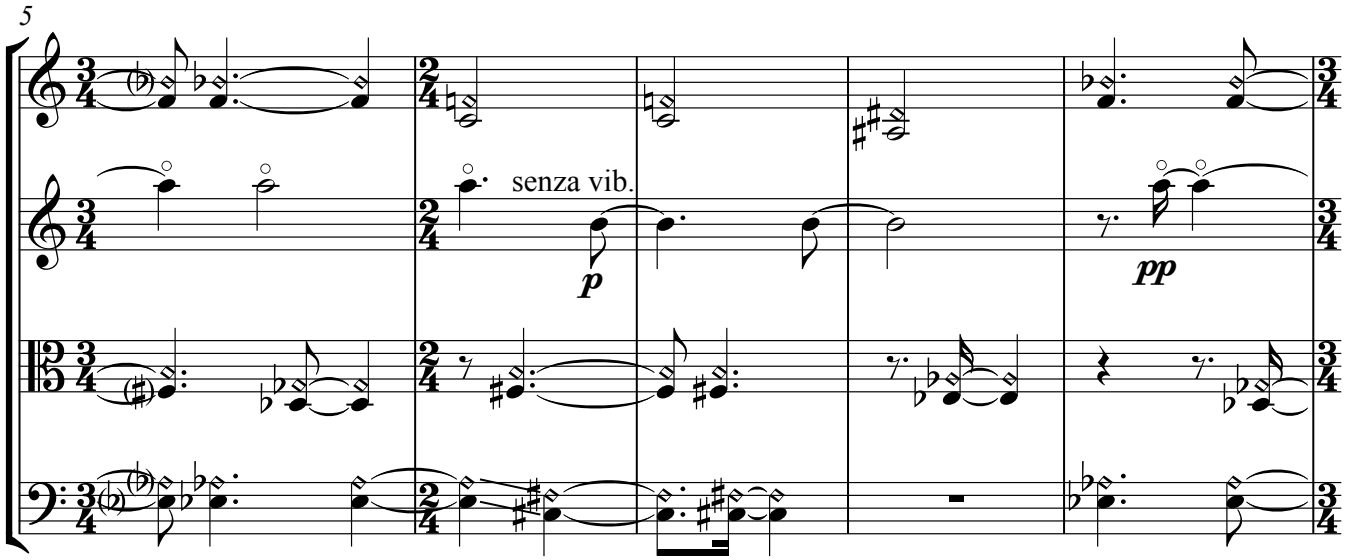
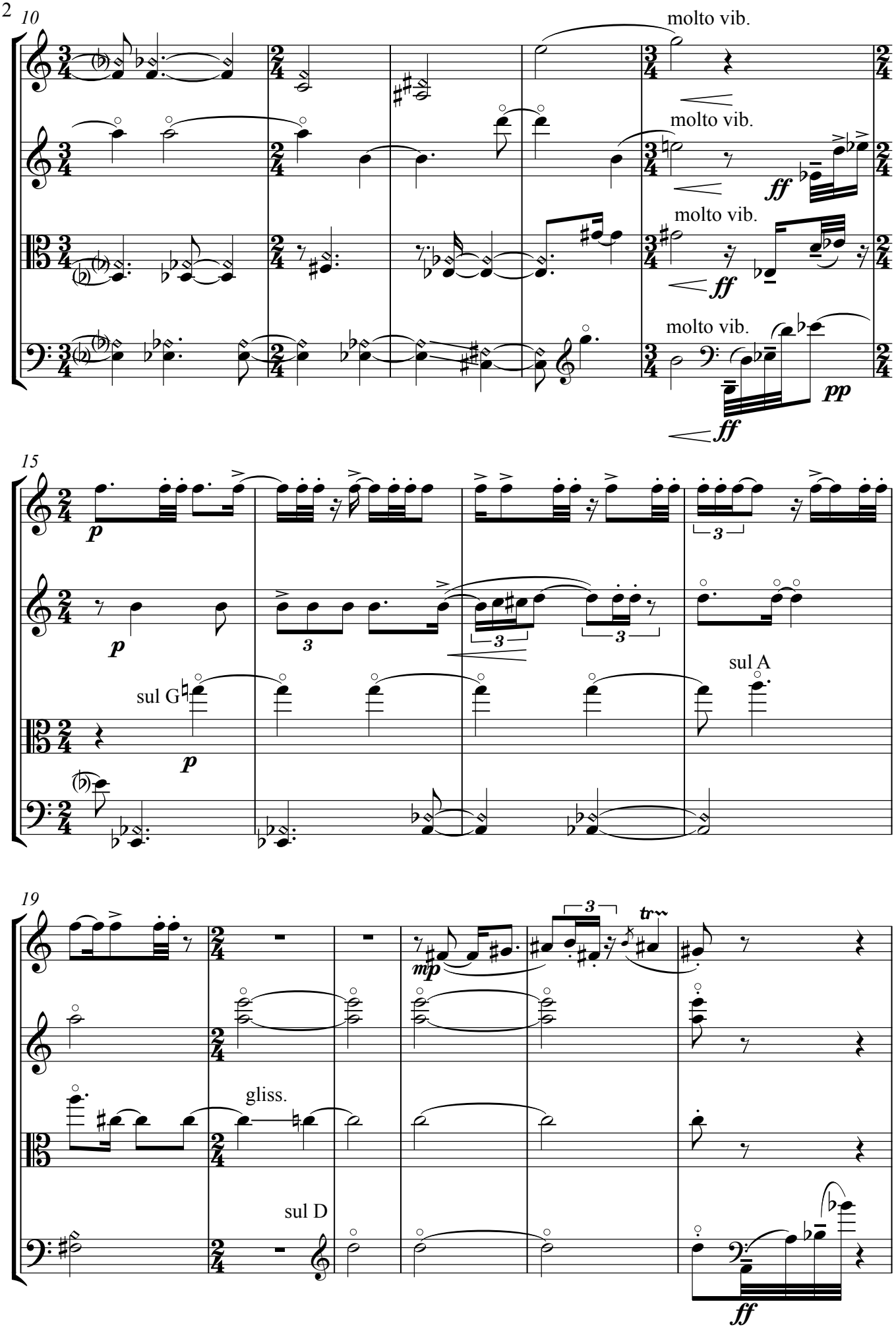
I

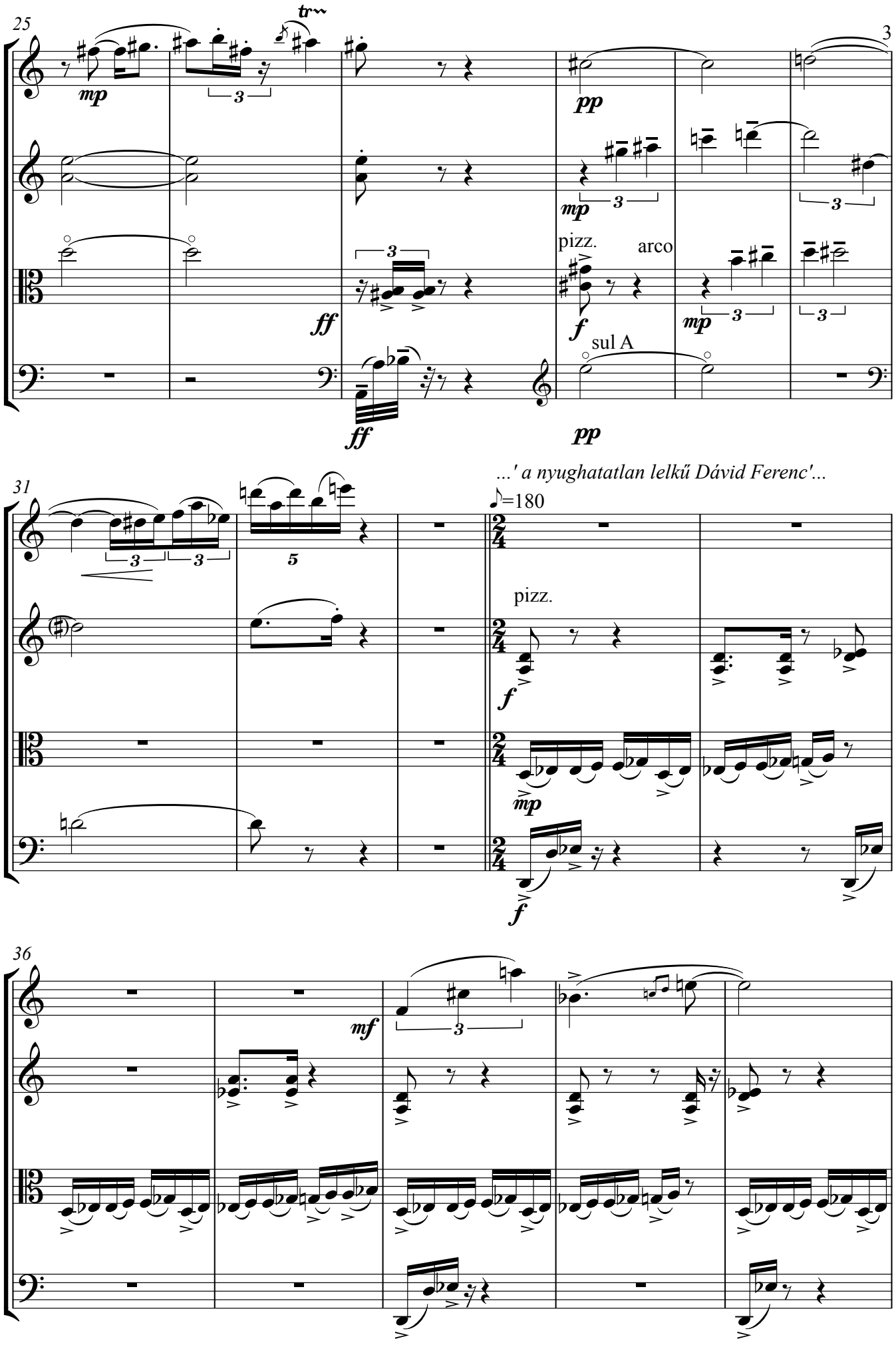
...Dávid Ferenc a Dévai várban...

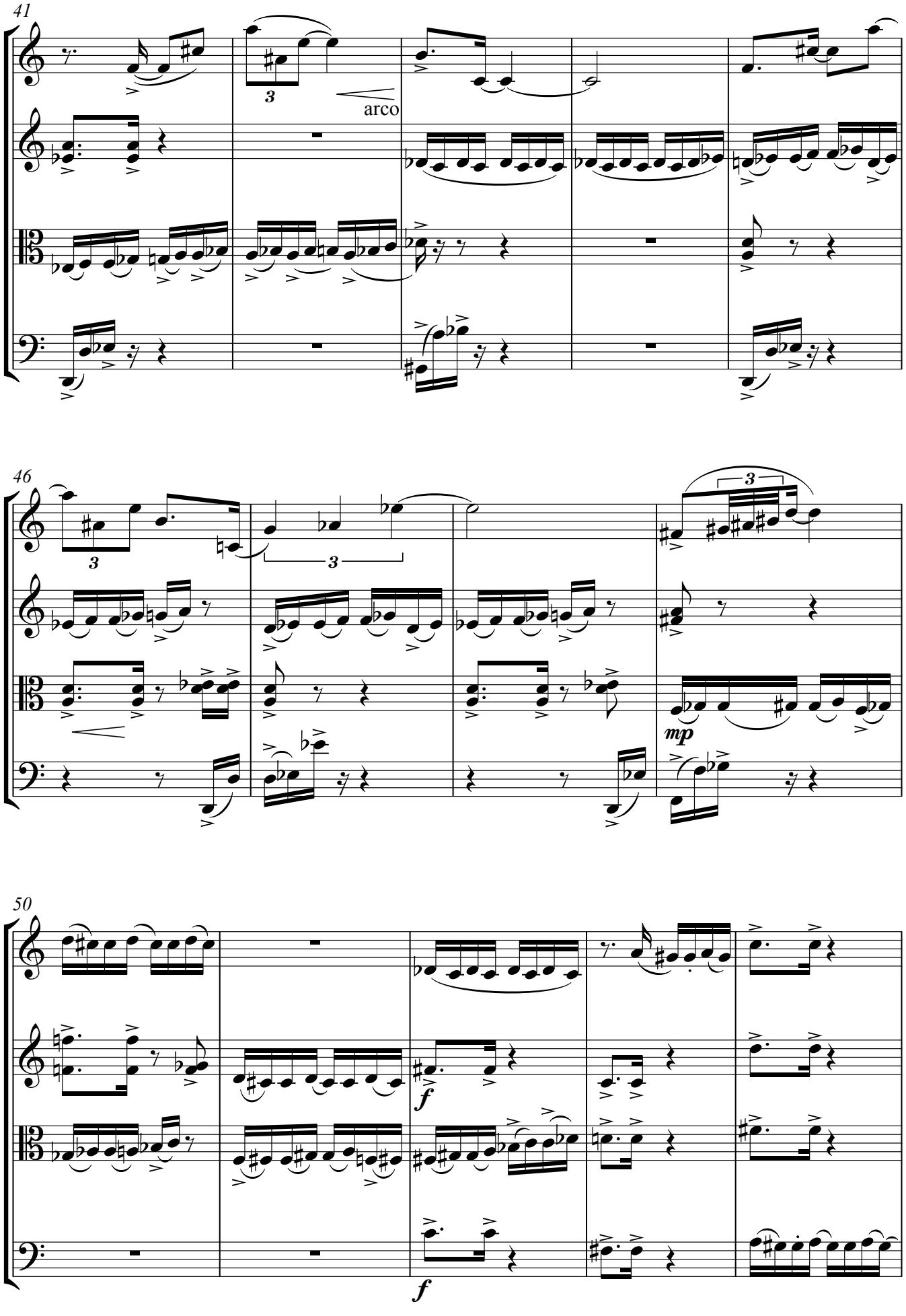
Alan Edward Williams

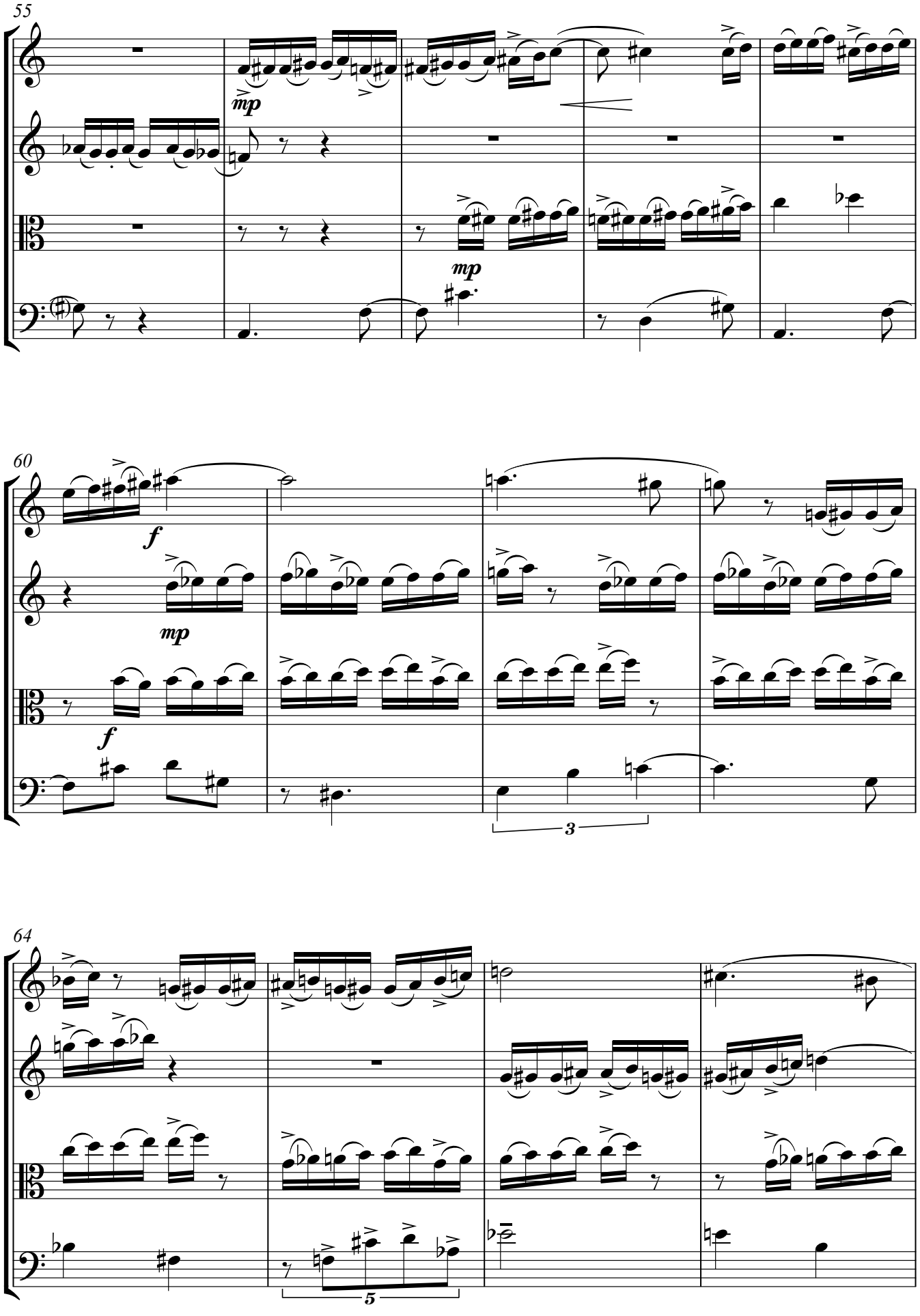


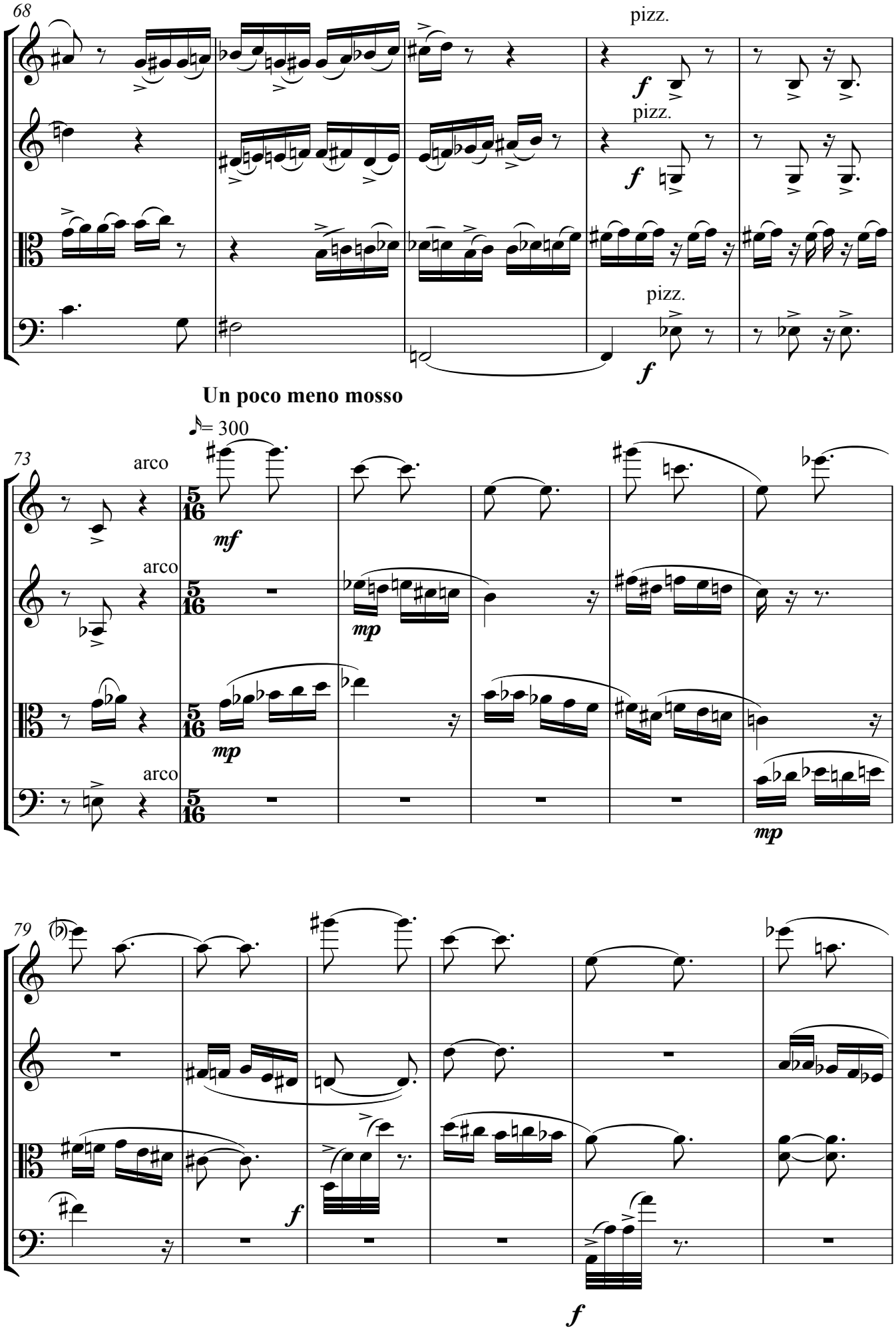


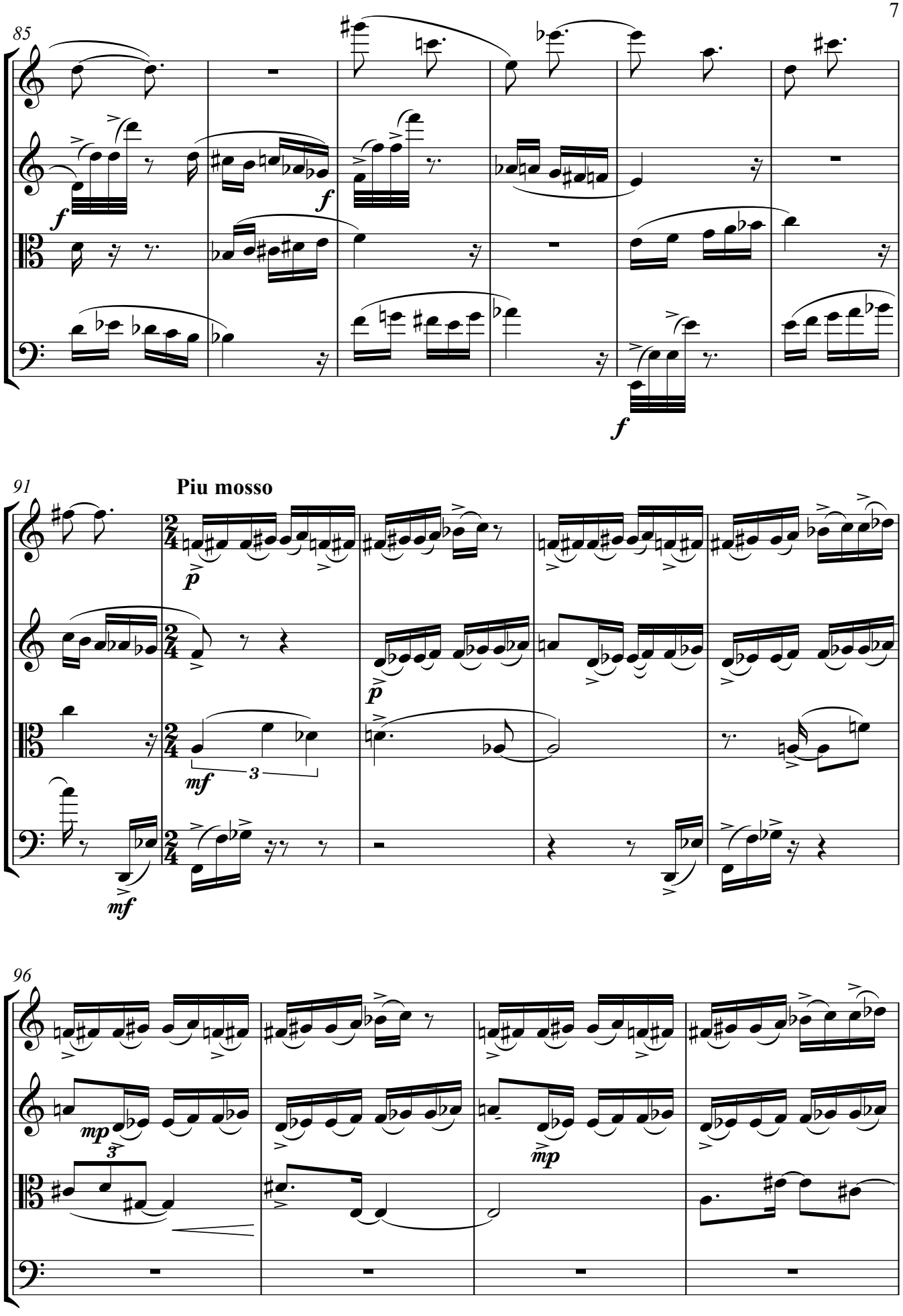

10
molto vib.
molto vib.
molto vib.
molto vib.
ff
ff
ff
pp
15
p
p
p
3
3
3
3
sul G
sul A
19
mp
3
tr
gliss.
sul D
ff

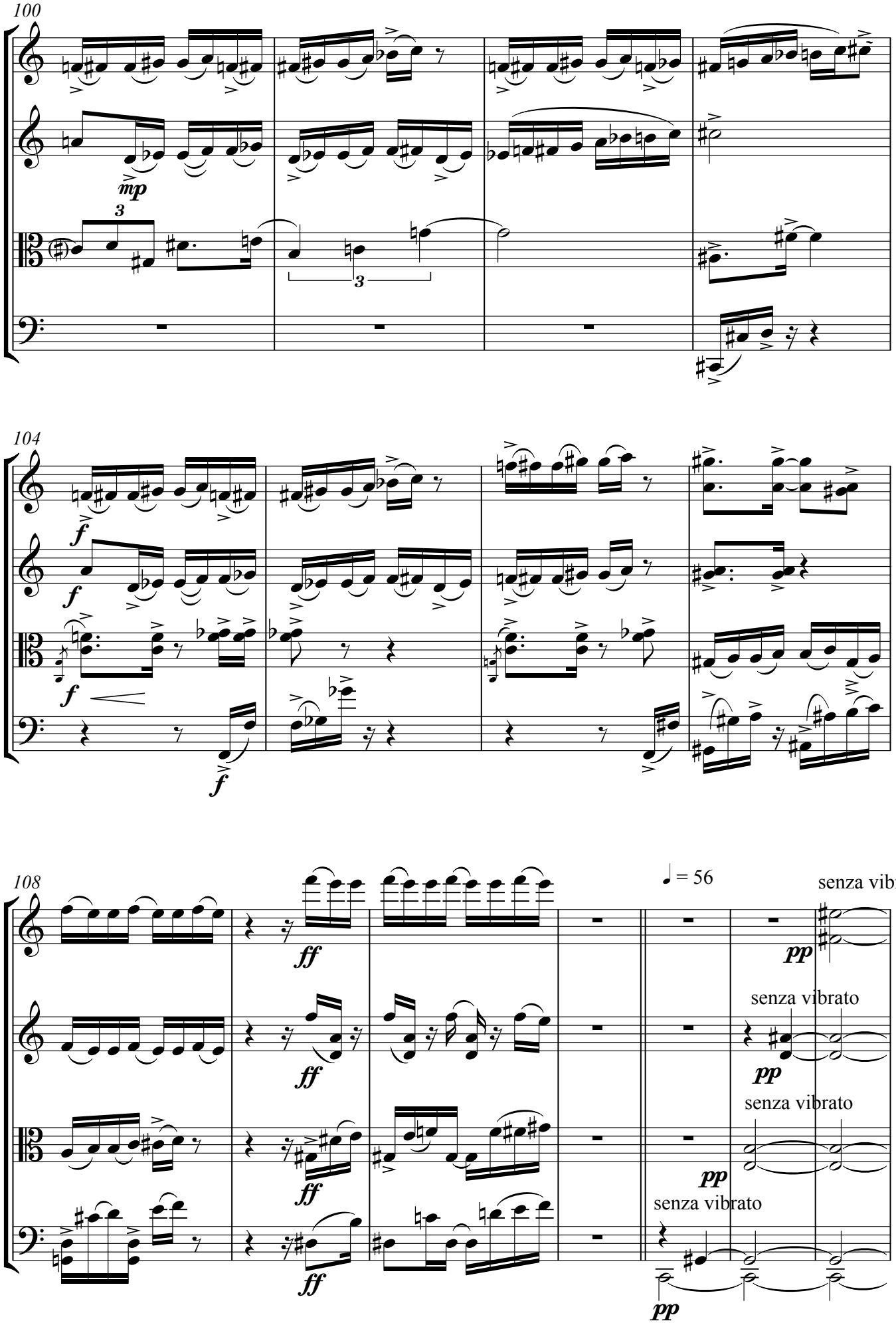

25
3
mp
pp
mp
pizz.
arco
ff
f
mp
sul A
ff
pp
31
...' a nyughatatlan lelkű Dávid Ferenc'...
♪=180
pizz.
f
mp
f
36
mf

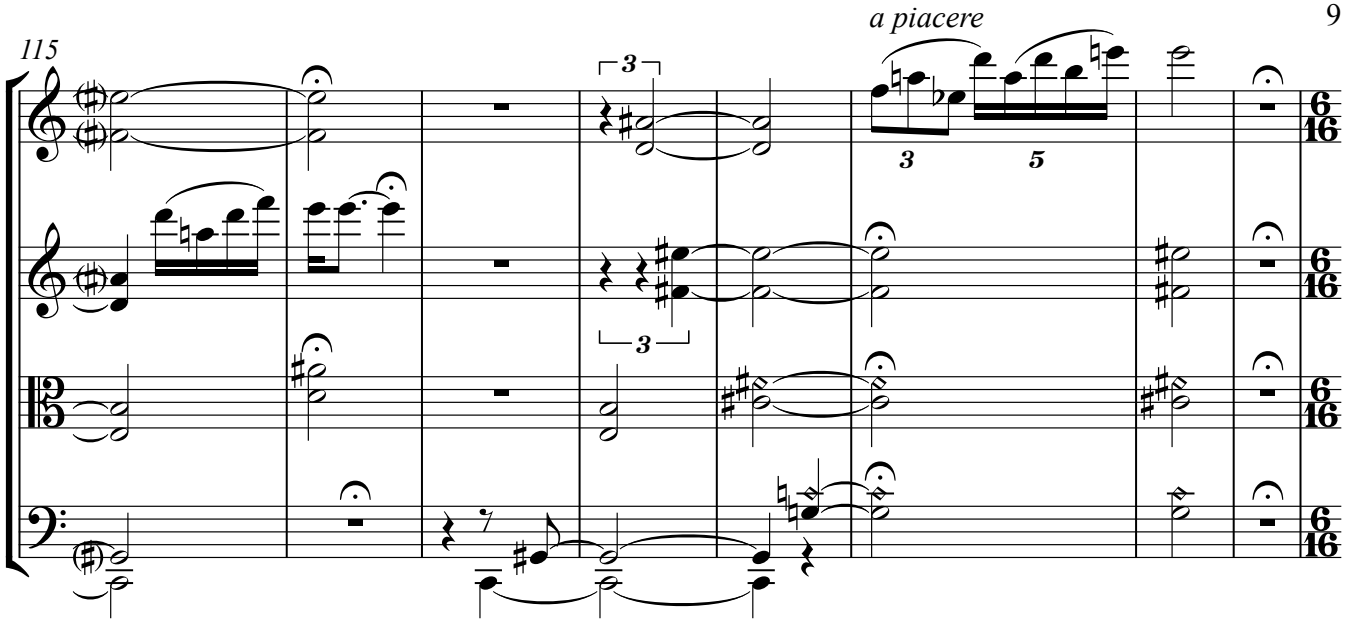

41
arco
46
mp
50
f
f


55
mp
mp
60
f
mp
f
3
64
5

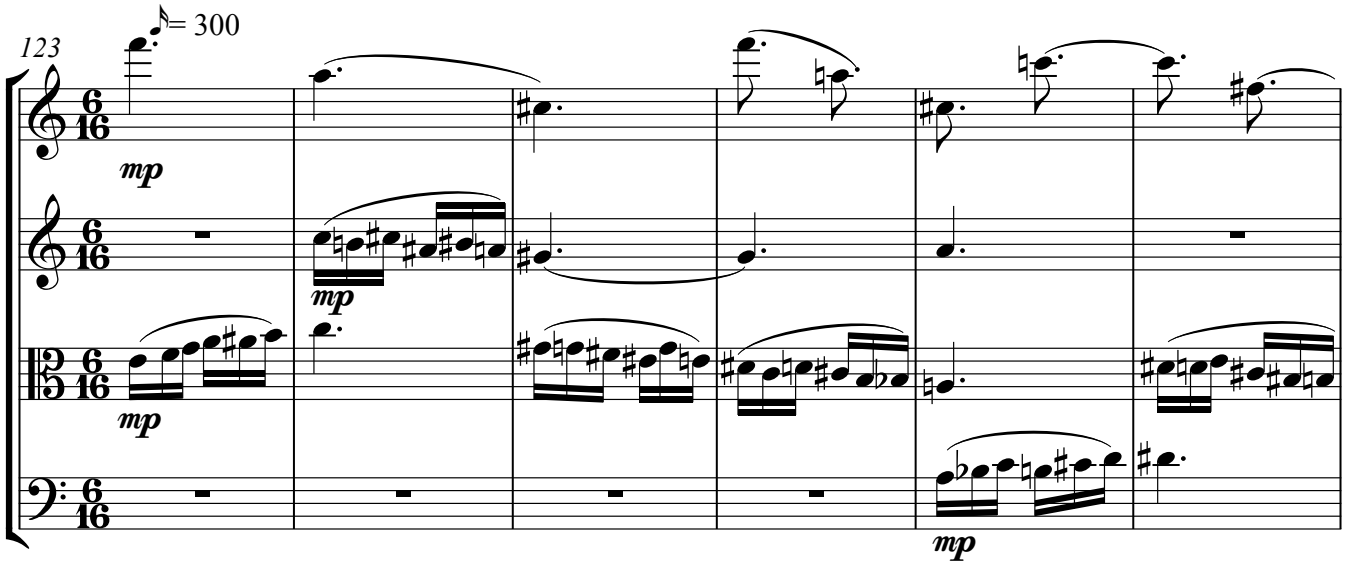

68
pizz.
pizz.
pizz.
Un poco meno mosso
73
arco
arco
arco
79

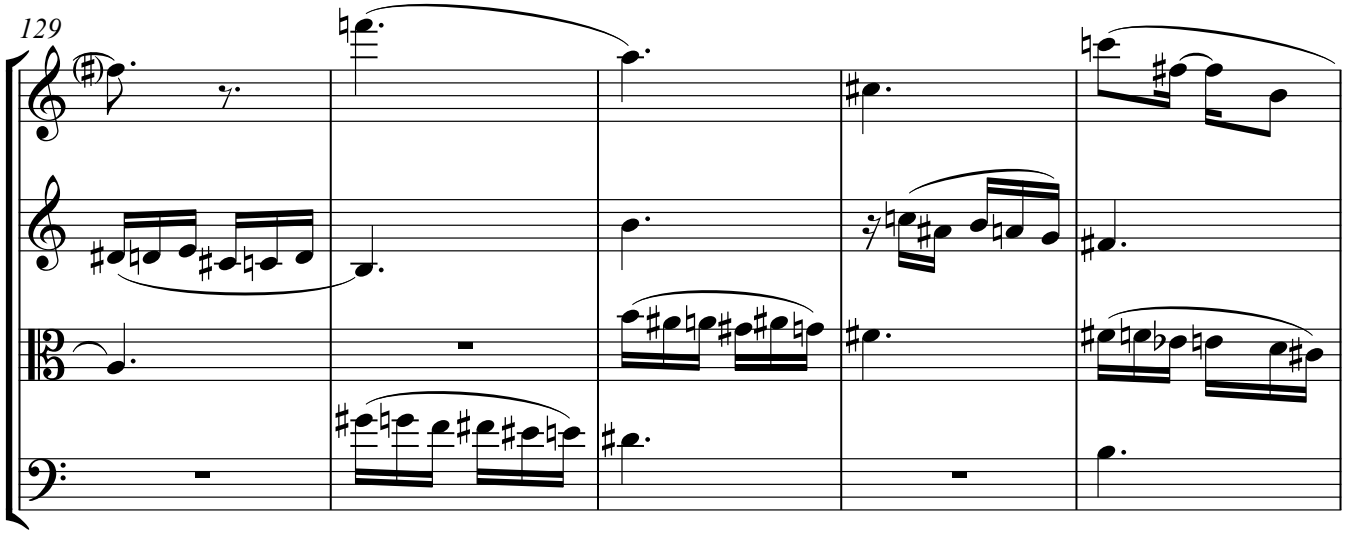

85
f
f
f
91
Piu mosso
p
p
mf
3
mf
96
mp
3
mp

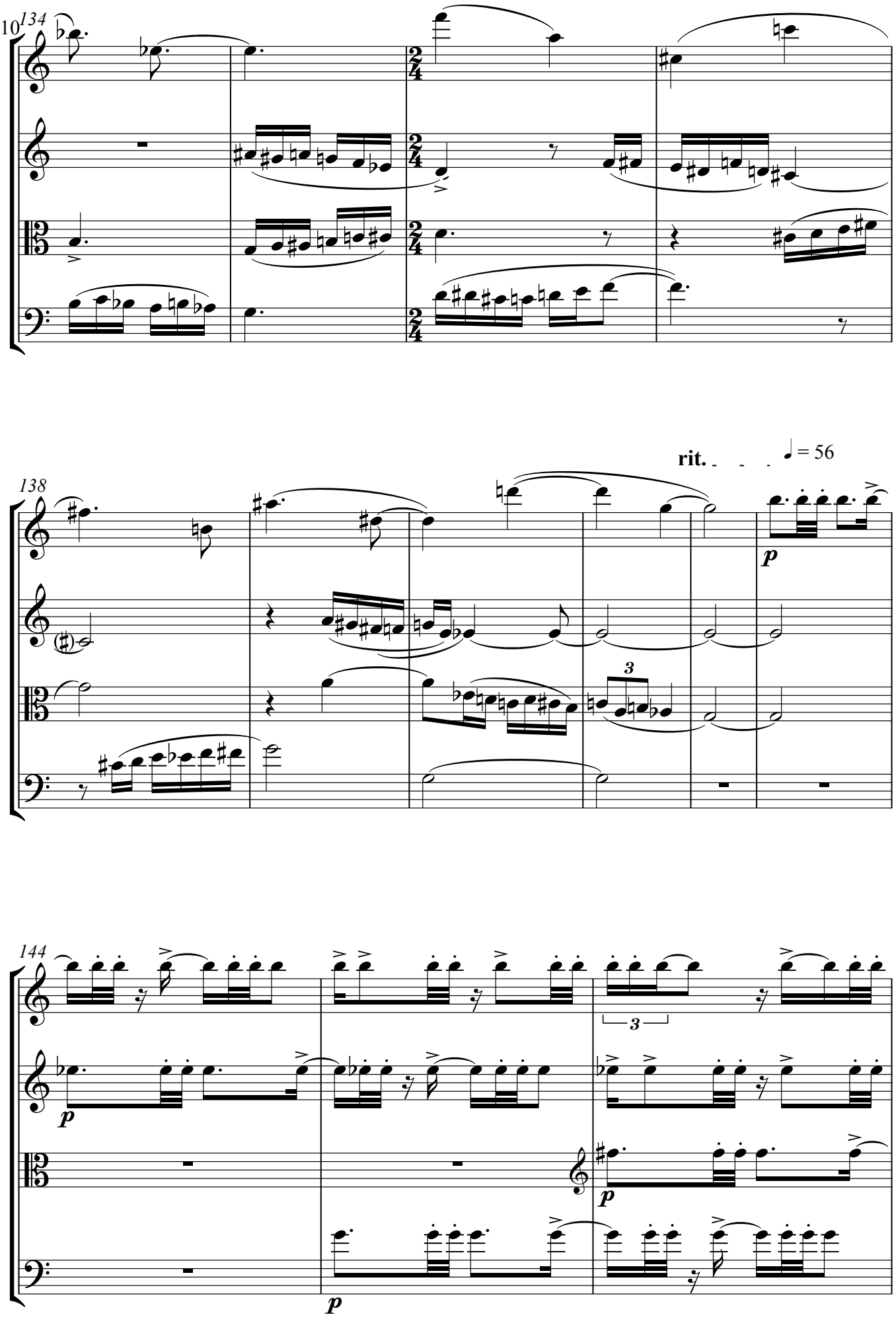

100
mp
3
3
104
f
f
f
f
108
ff
ff
ff
ff
♩ = 56
senza vibrato
pp
senza vibrato
pp
senza vibrato
pp
senza vibrato
pp

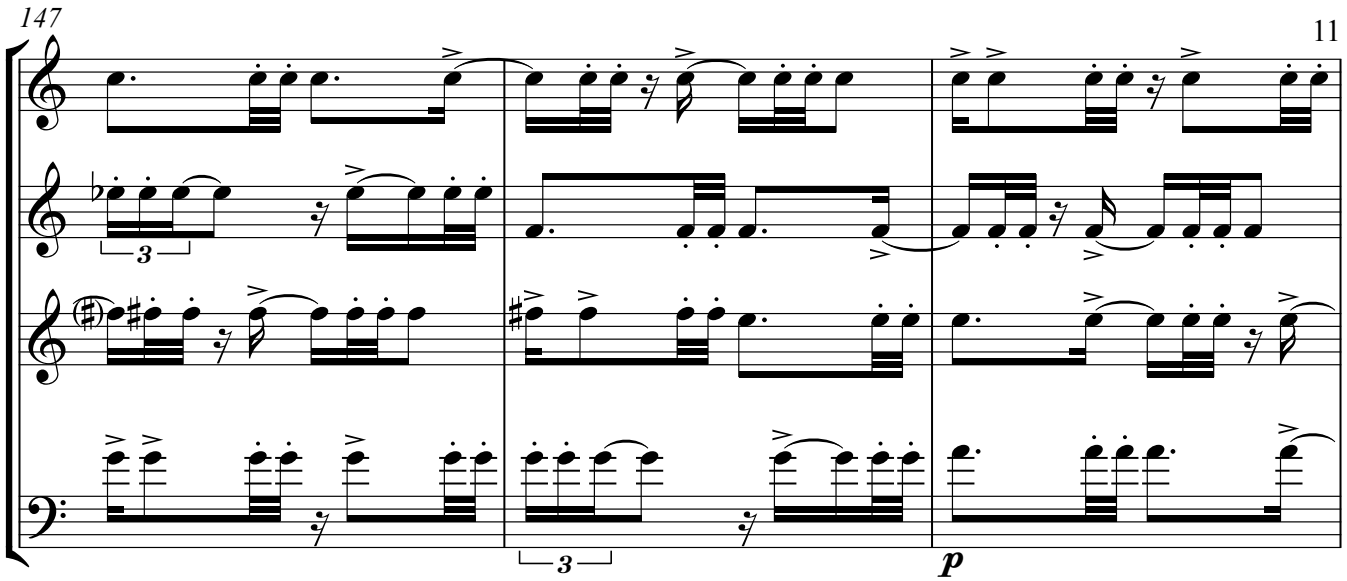


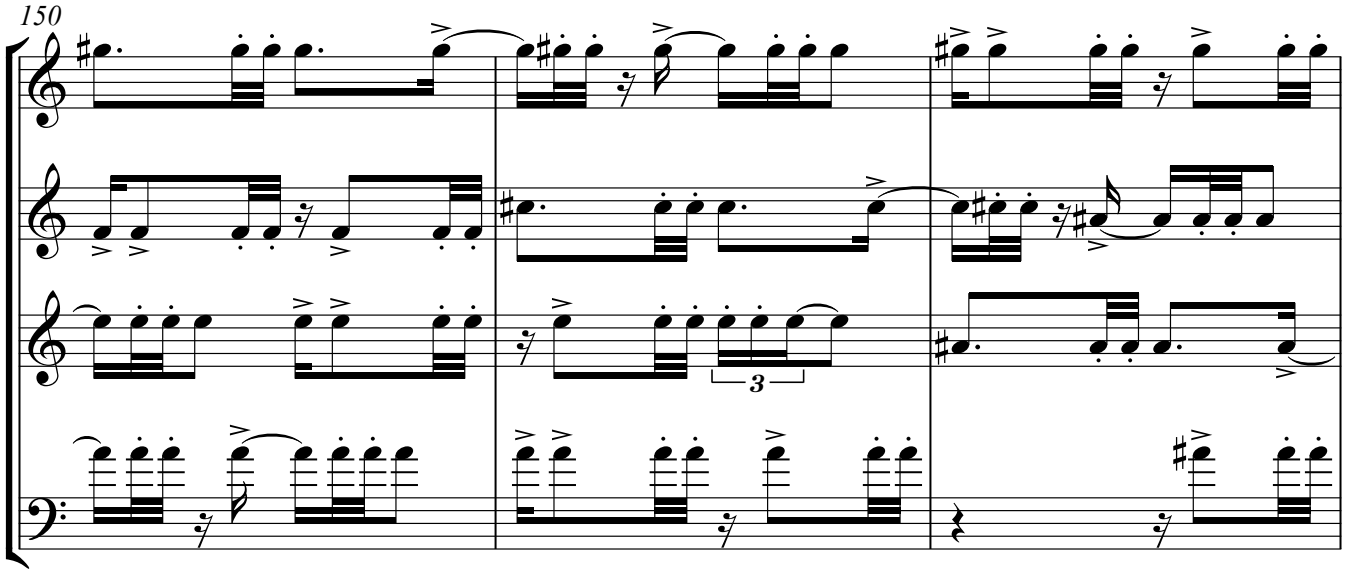
Un poco meno mosso

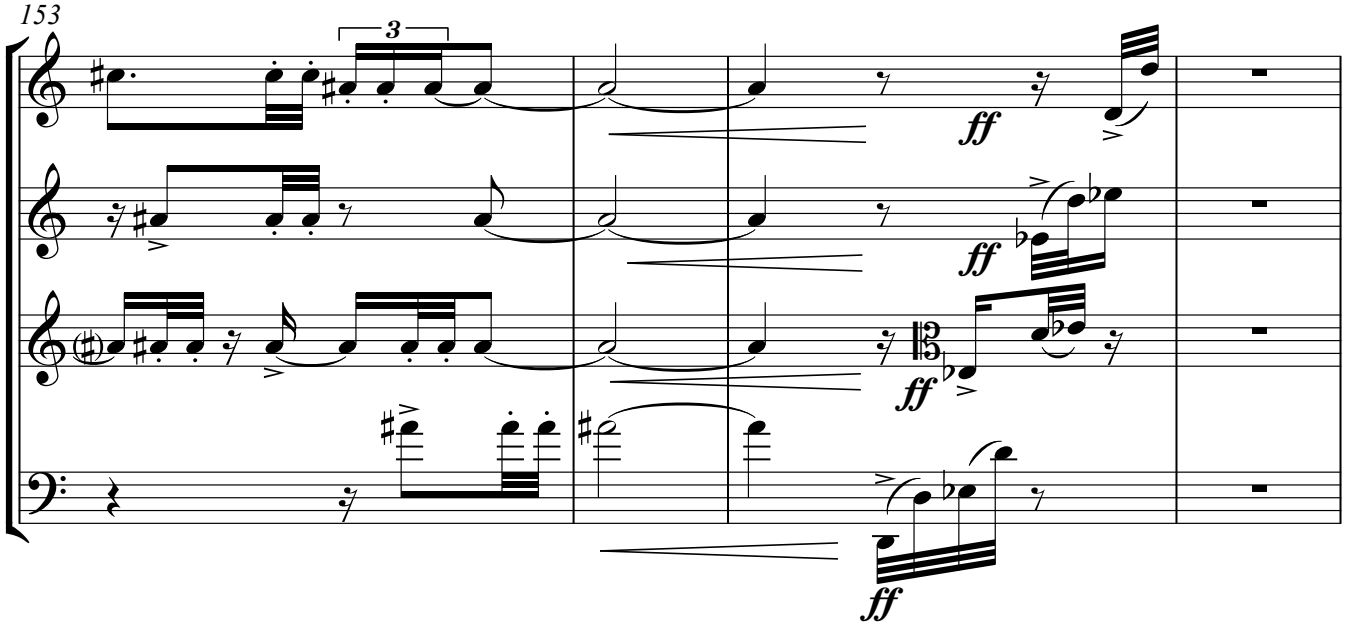


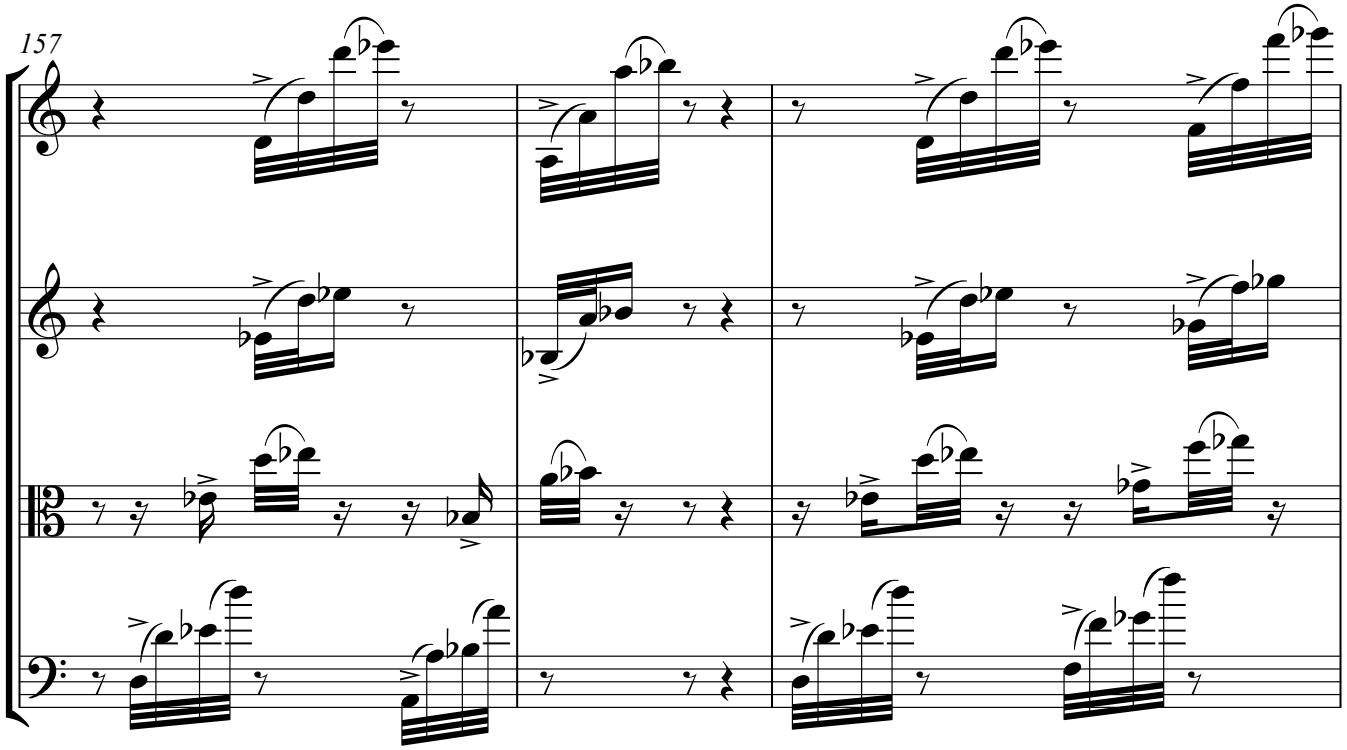


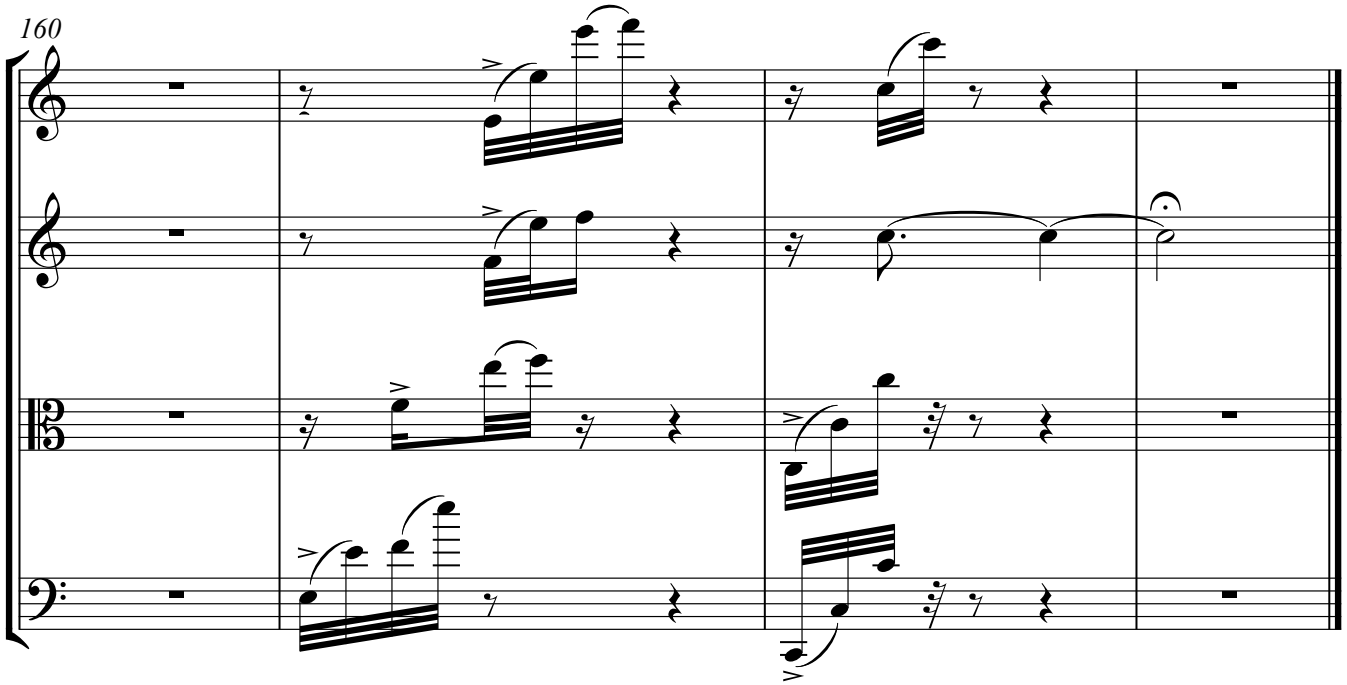

10
134
138
rit.
♩ = 56
144
p
3


147
3
3
p


150
3


153
3
ff
ff
ff
ff

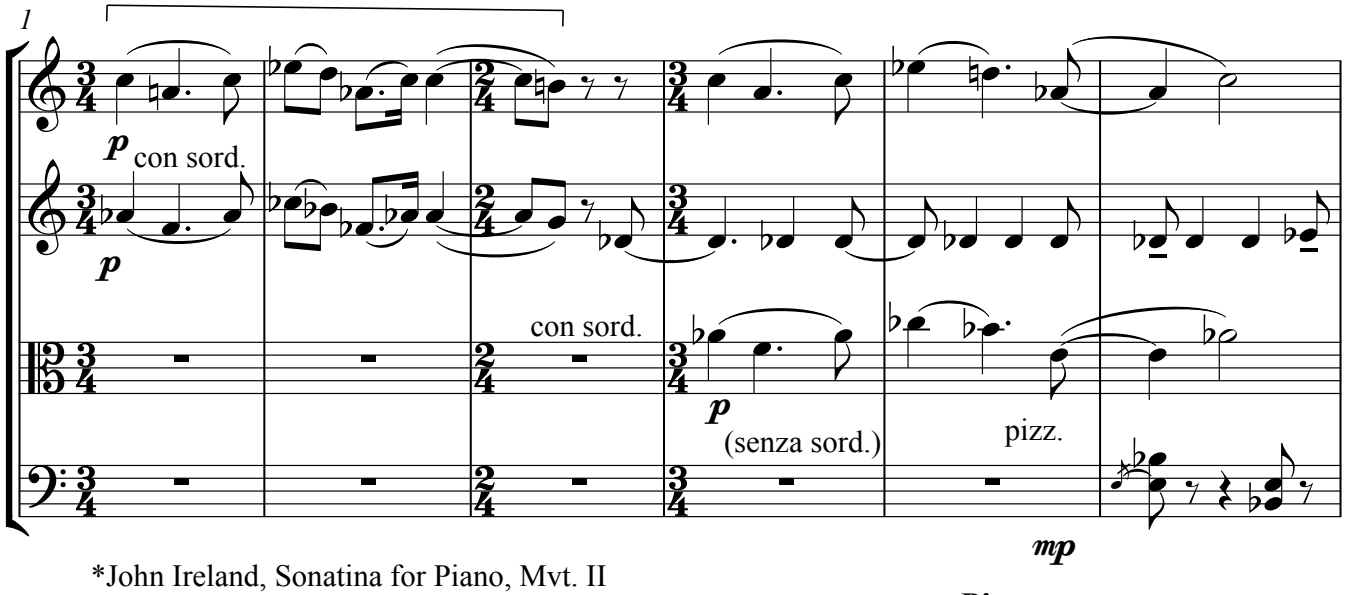

157


160

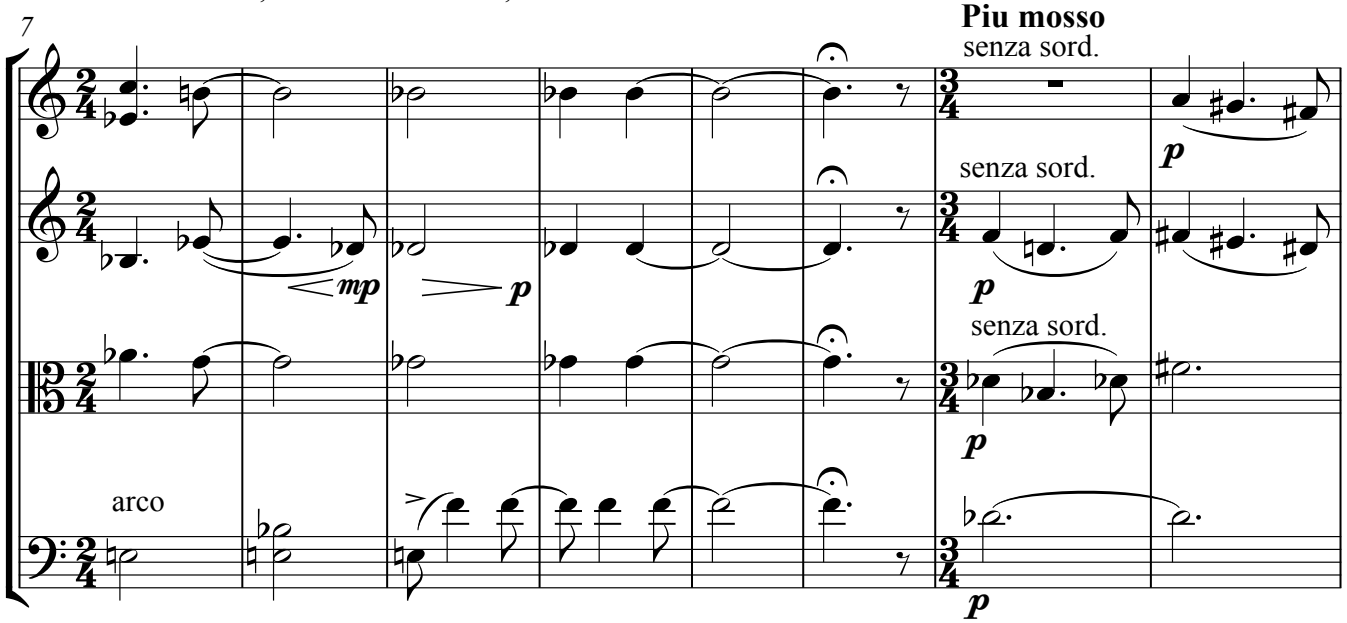
II

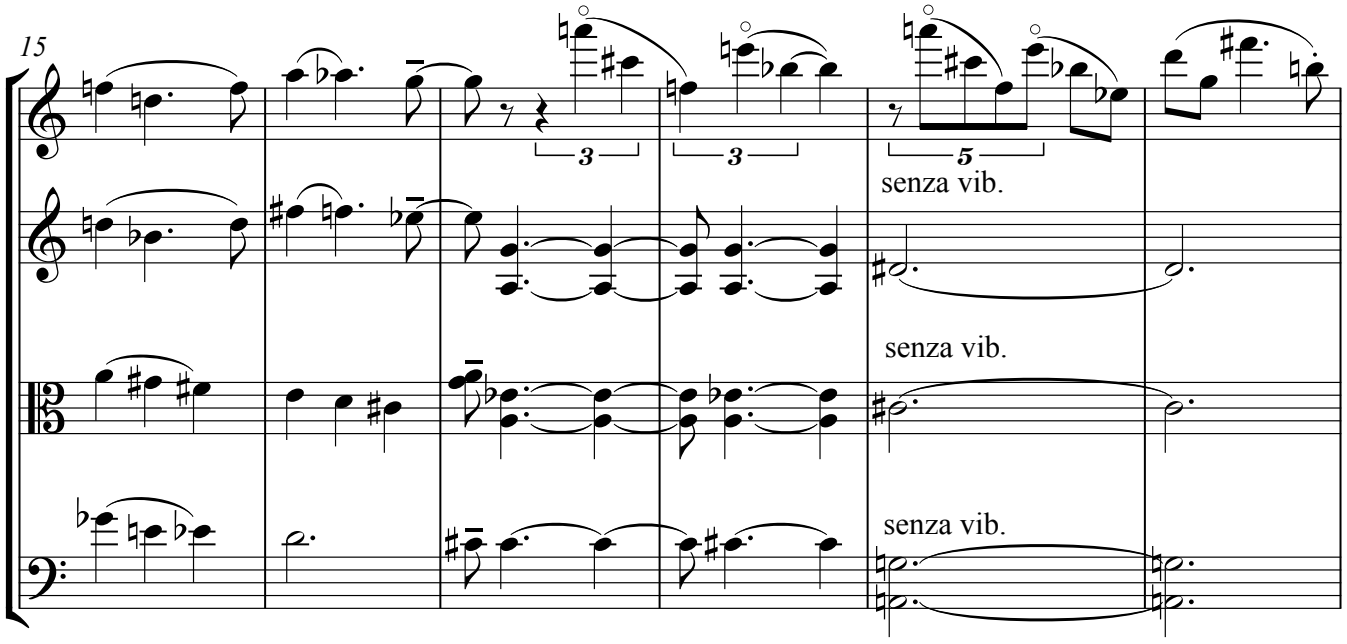
♩ = 56

a szabad lelkiismeret

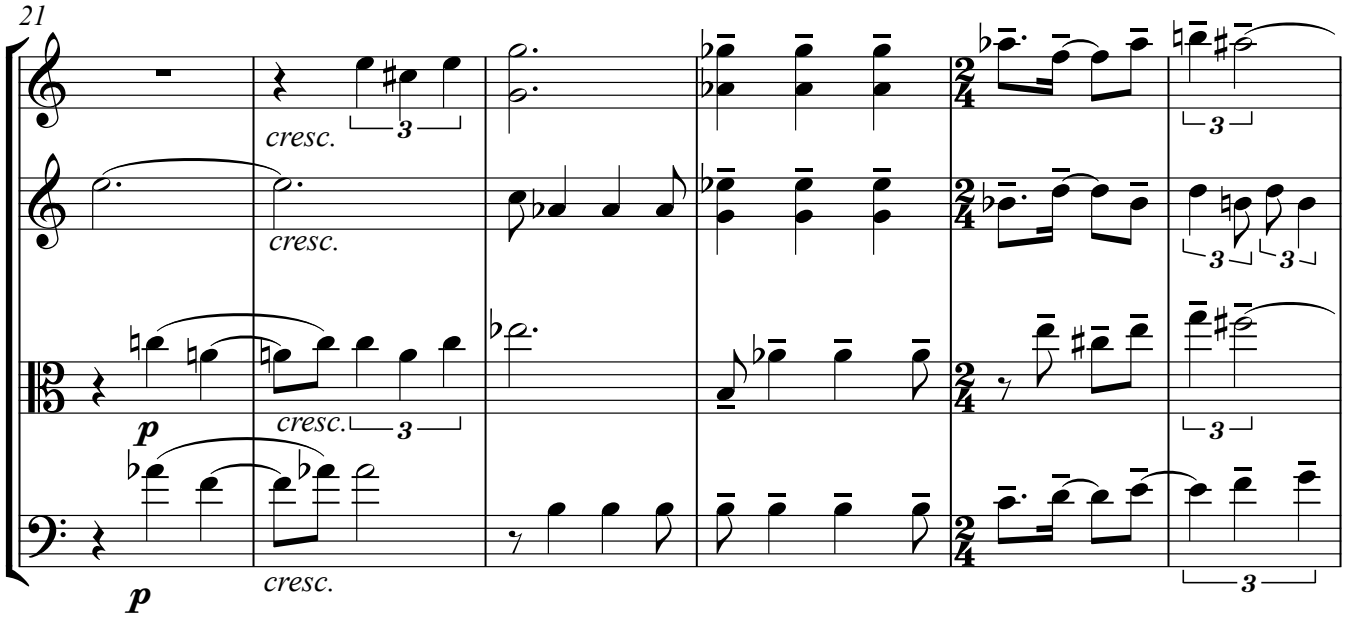


*John Ireland, Sonatina for Piano, Mvt. II

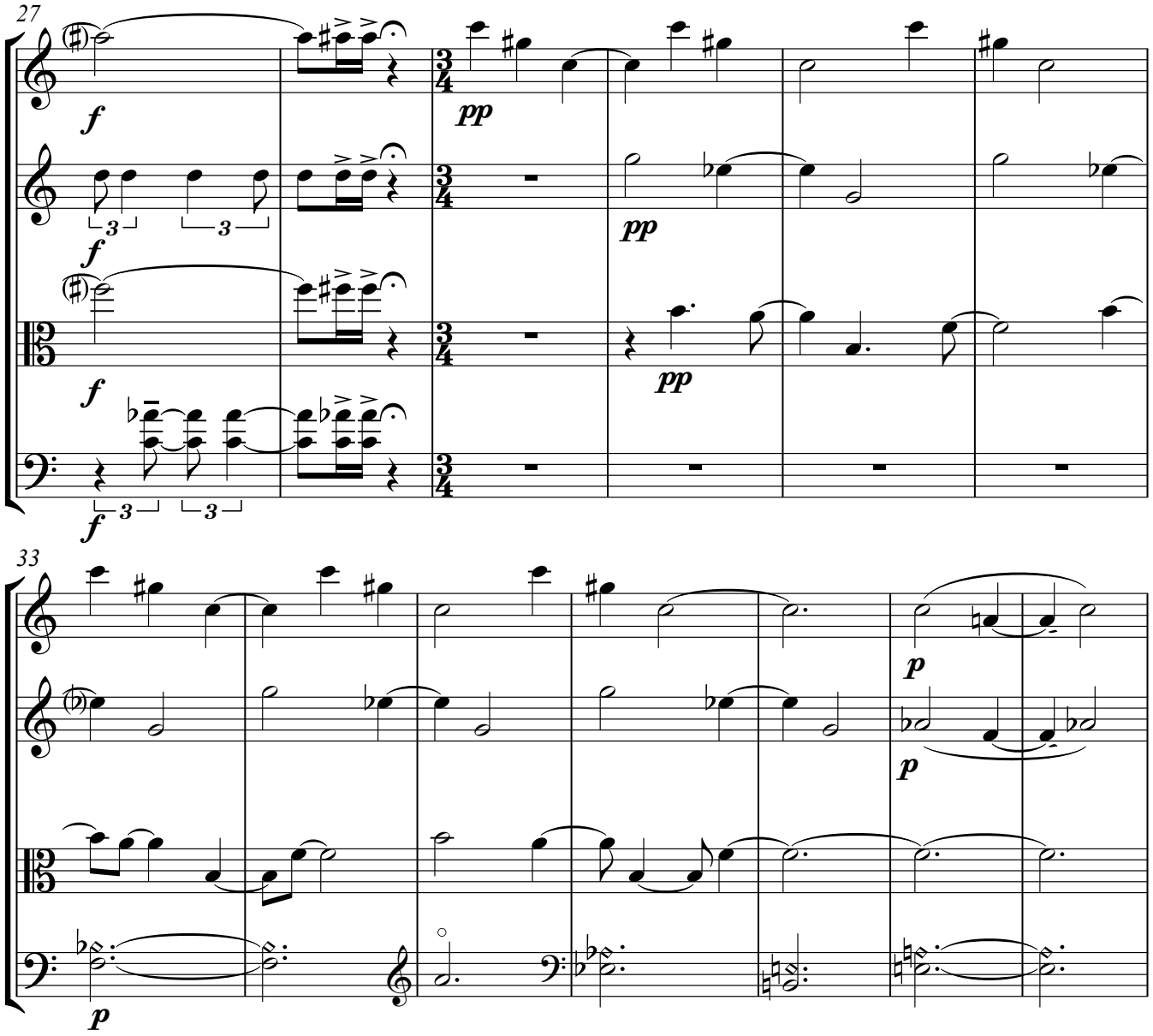


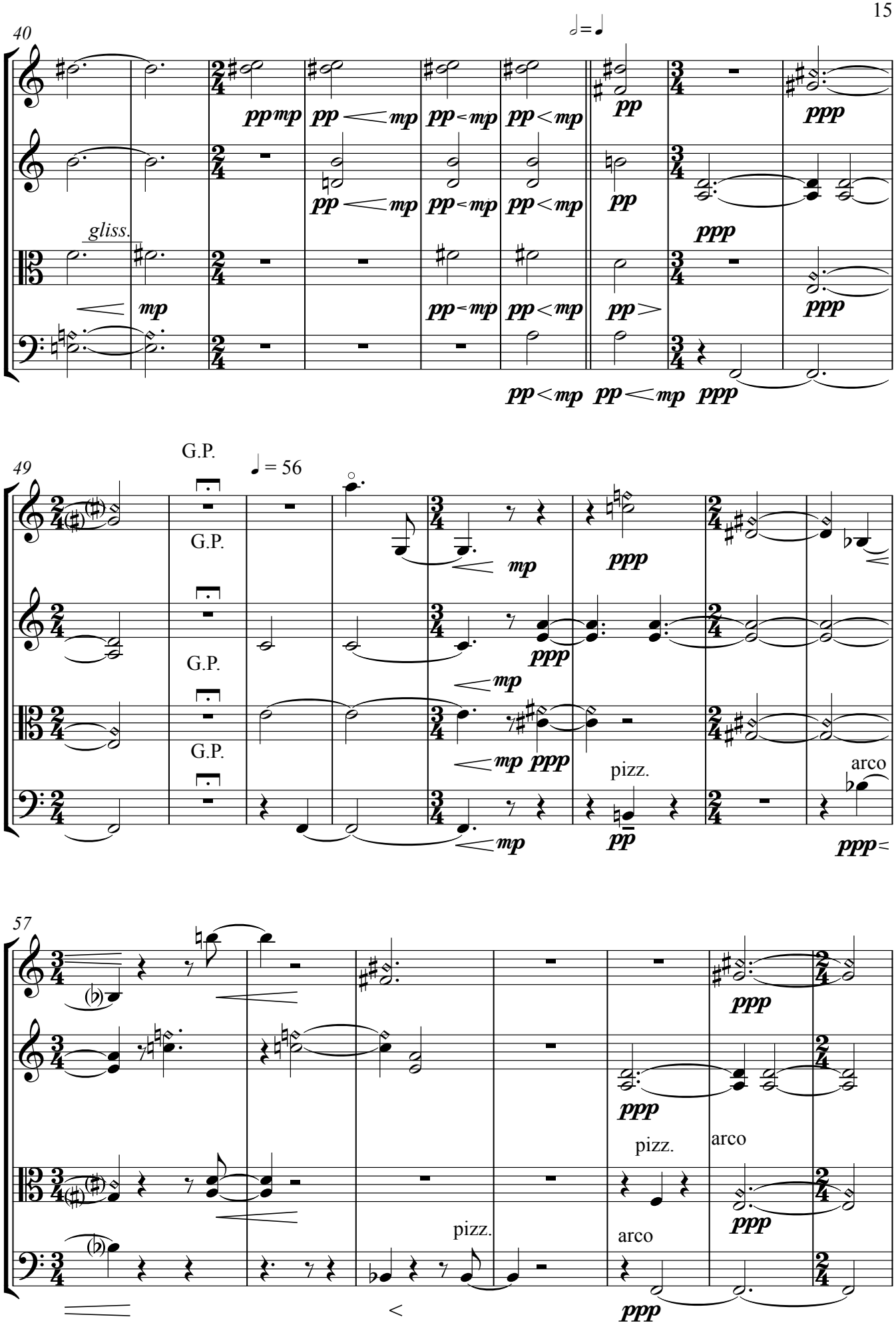


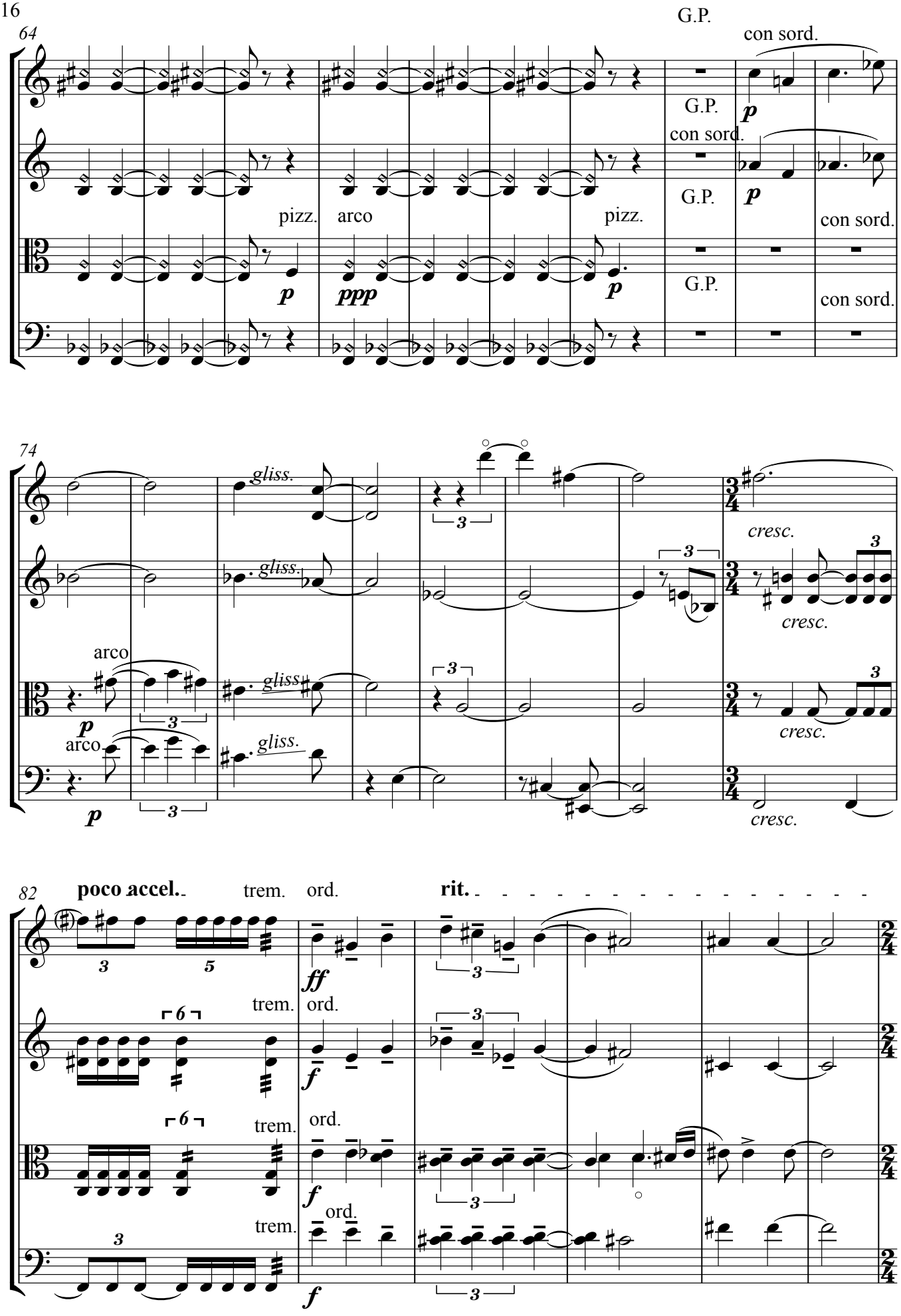
poco accel.

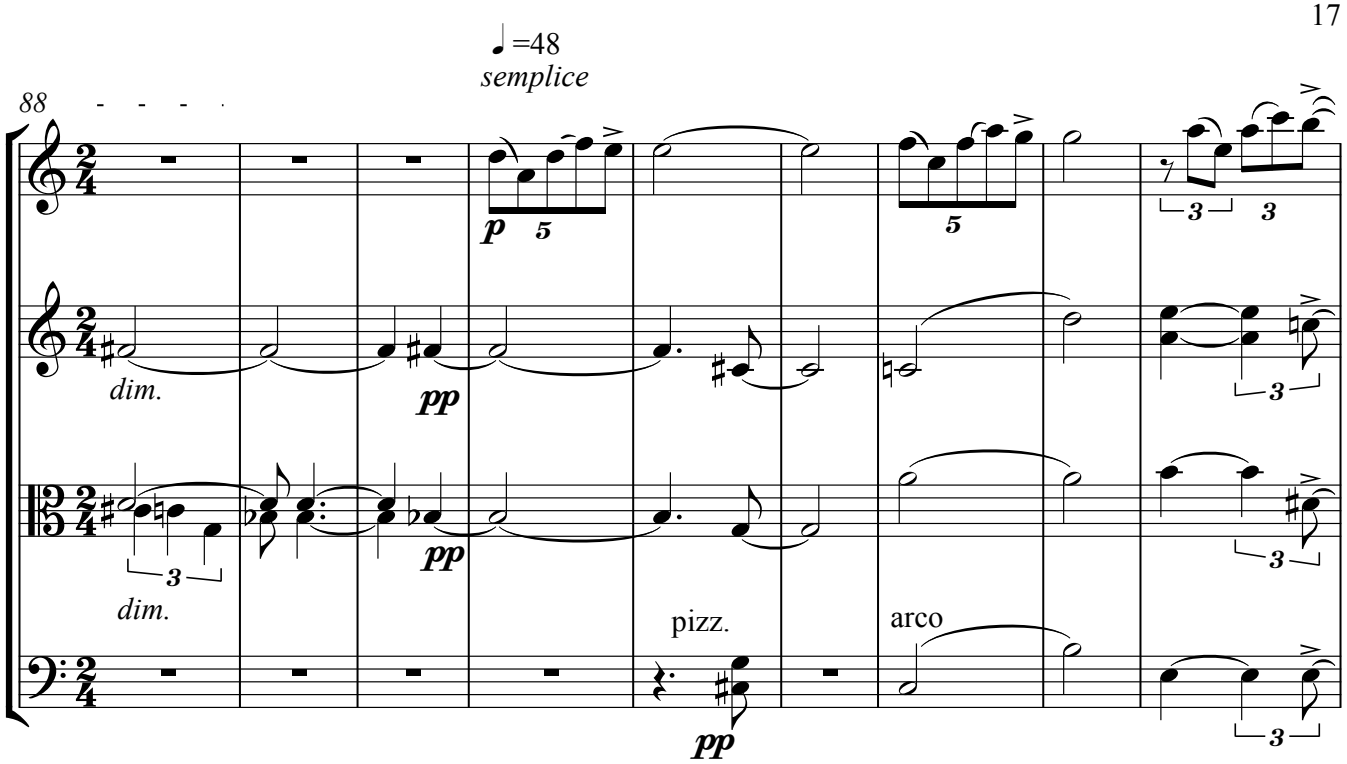


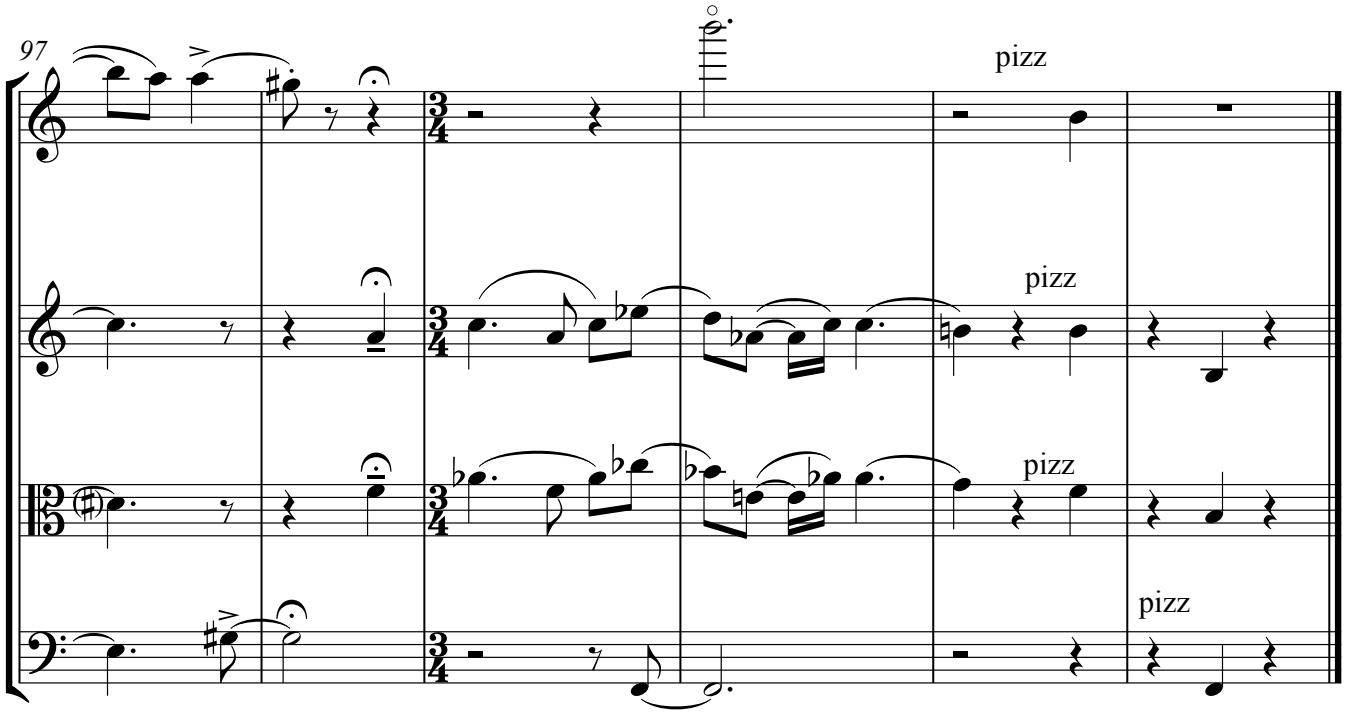
♩ = 126



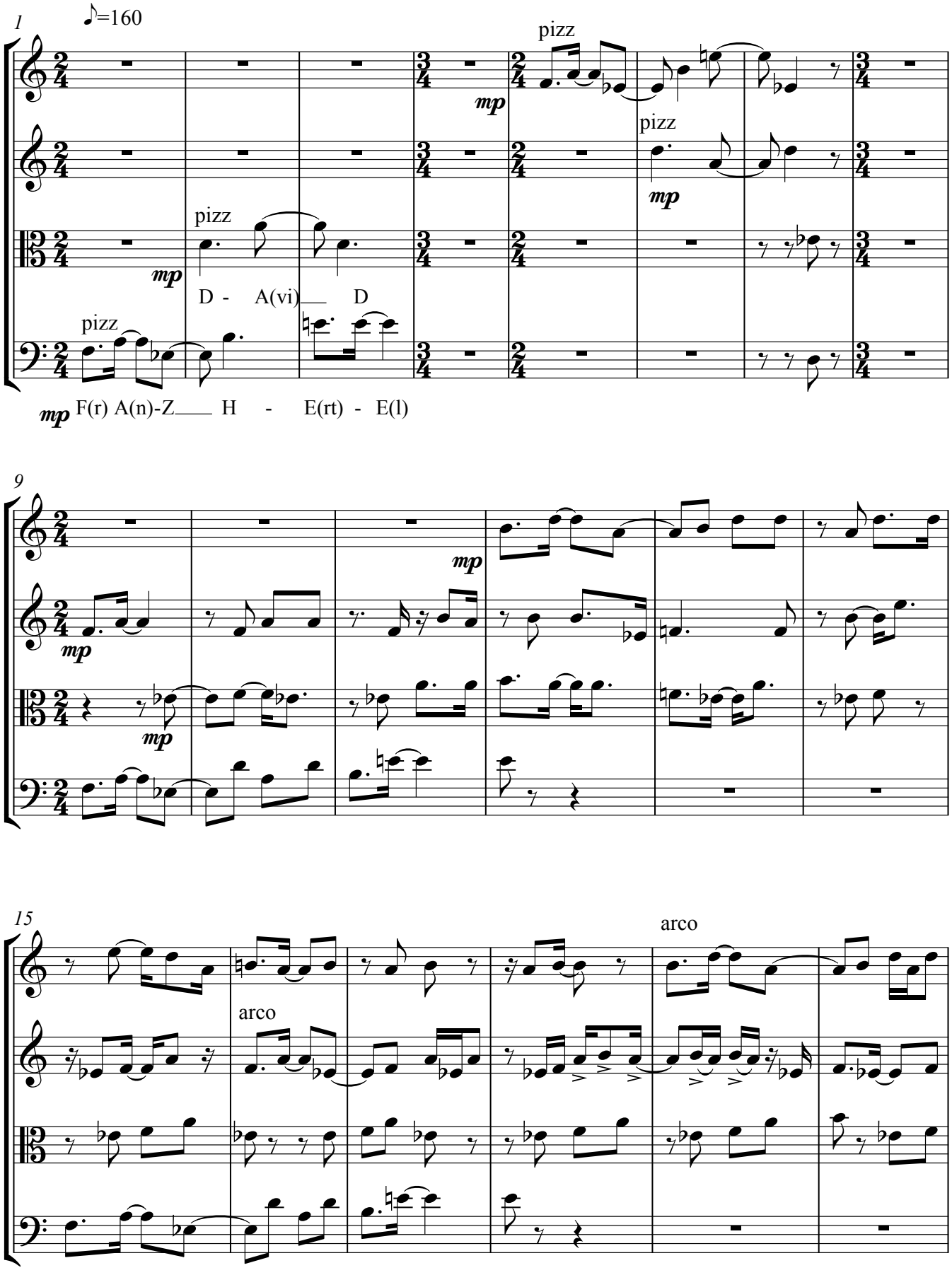

40
gliss.
49
G.P.
= 56
pizz.
arco
57
pizz.
arco

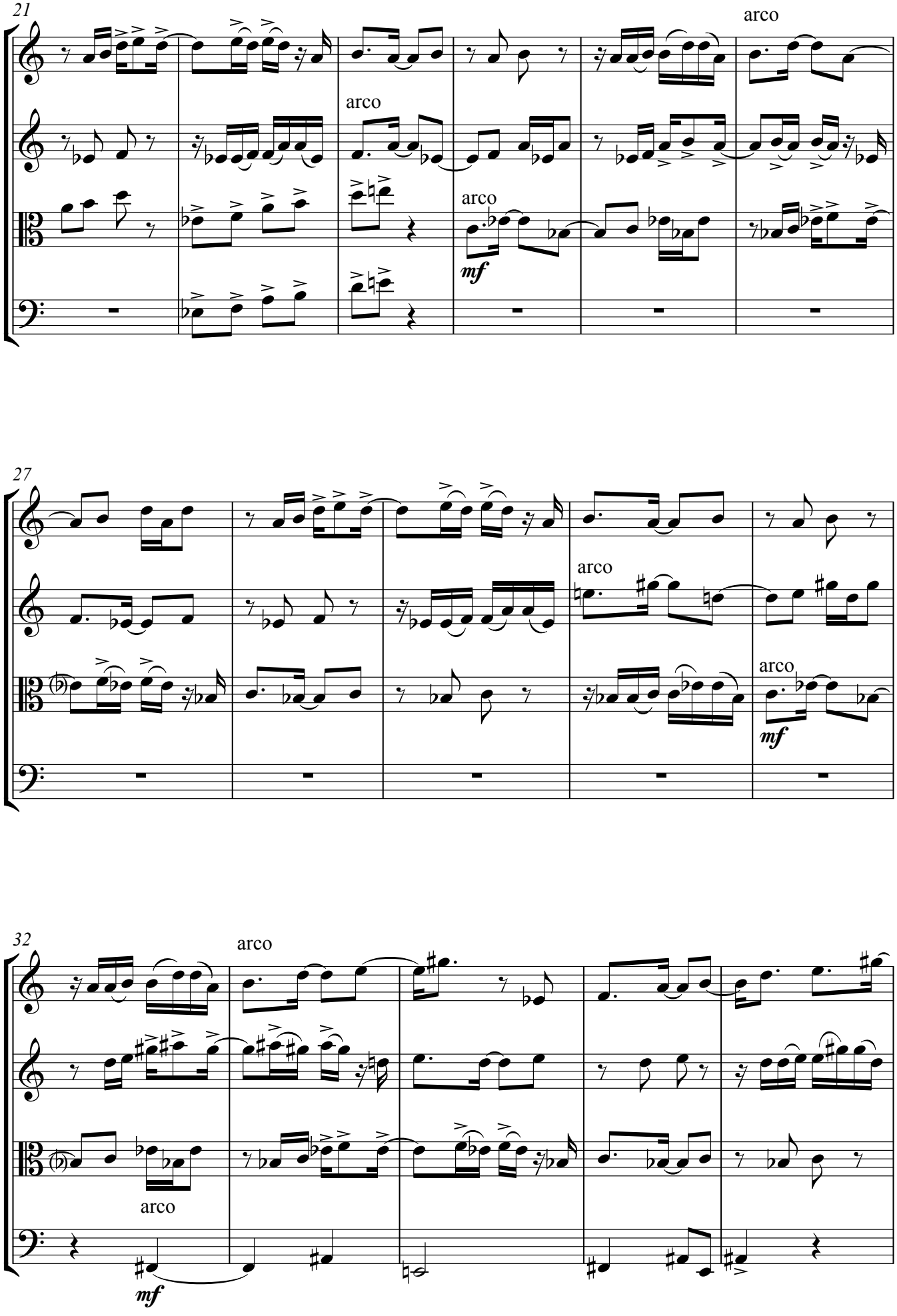

64
G.P.
con sord.
G.P.
p
con sord.
pizz.
arco
pizz.
G.P.
con sord.
p
ppp
p
G.P.
con sord.
74
gliss.
gliss.
arco
gliss
arco
gliss.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
82
poco accel.
trem.
ord.
rit.
ff
trem.
ord.
f
trem.
ord.
f
trem.
ord.
f

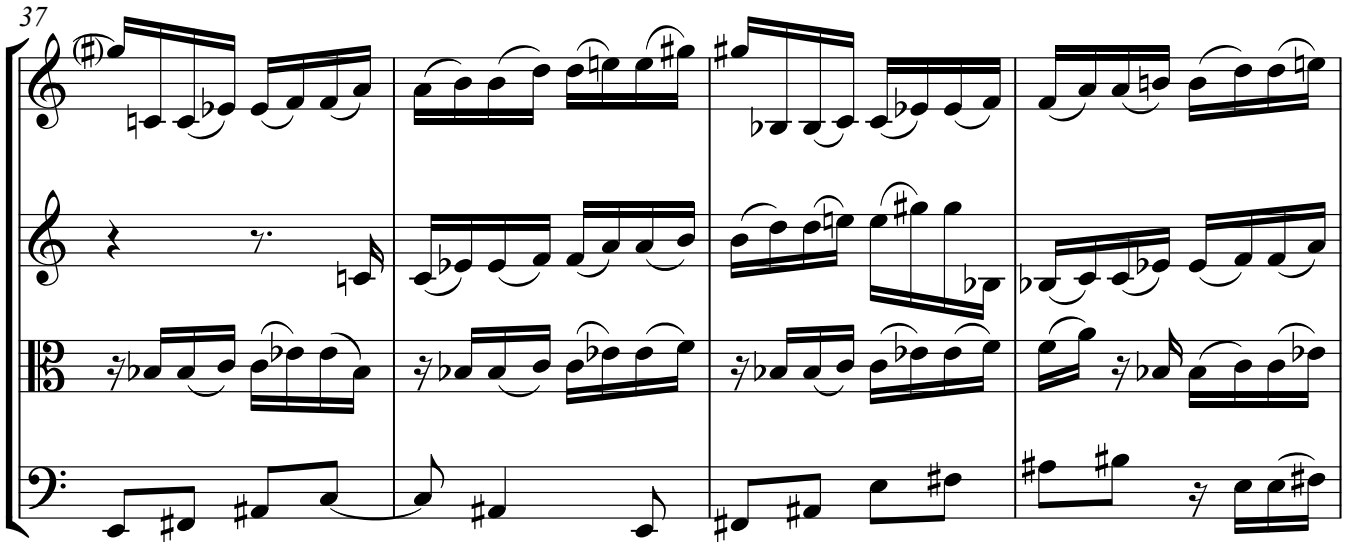

♩=48
semplice
88
dim.
dim.
pizz.
arco

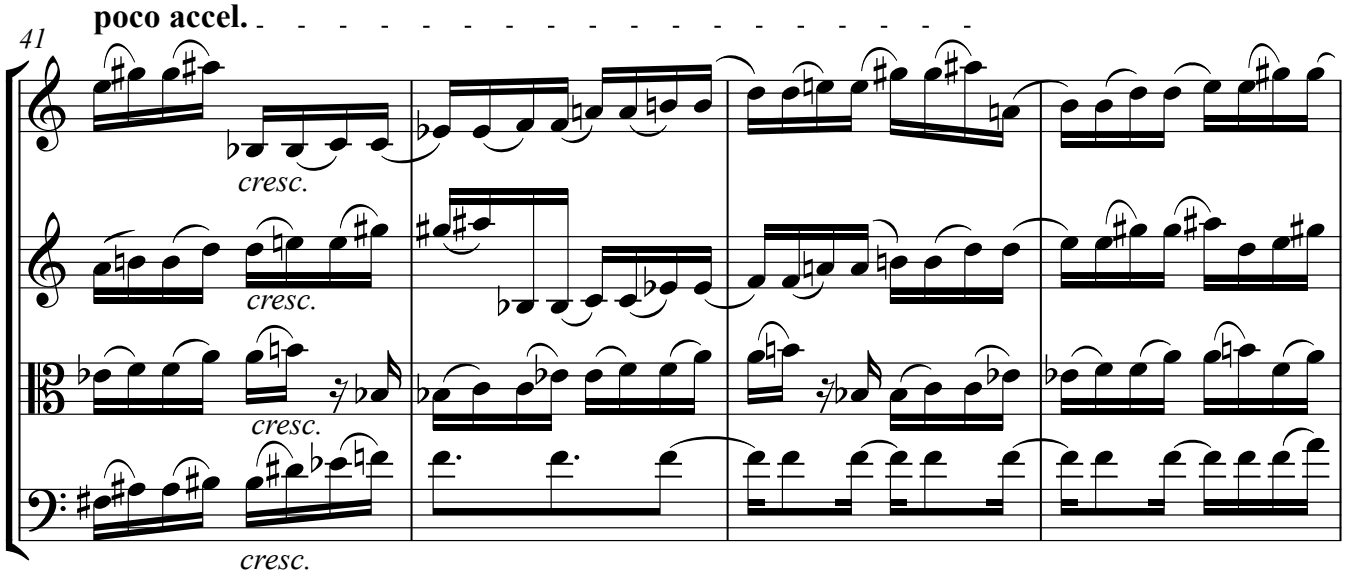

97
pizz
pizz
pizz
pizz

III

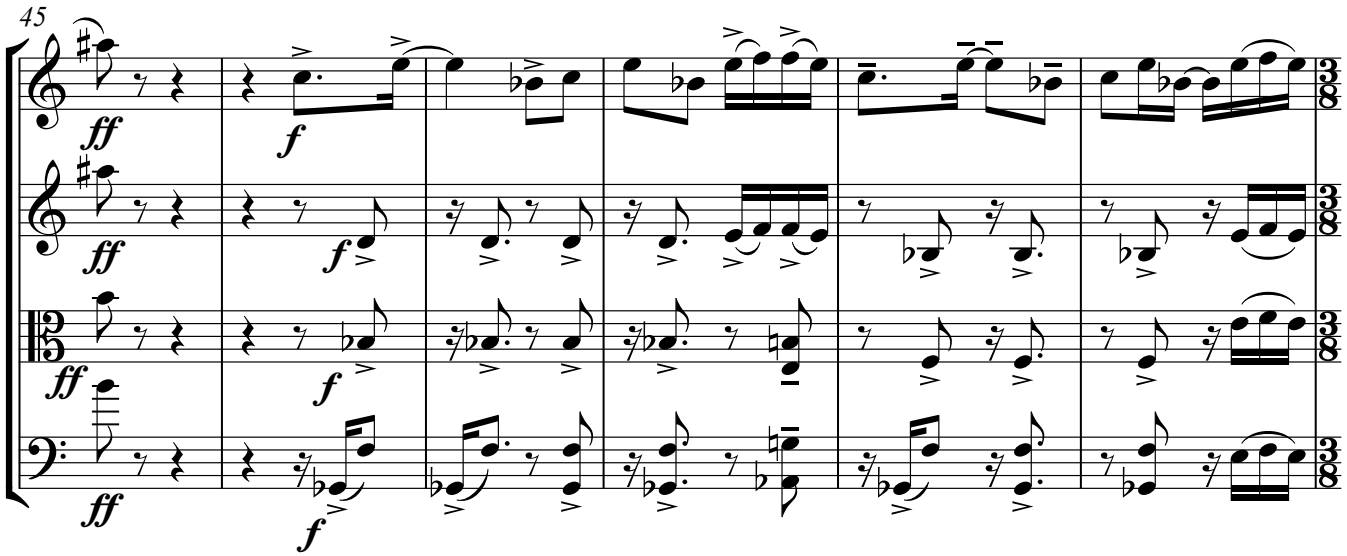

1
♪=160
pizz
mp
pizz
mp
pizz
mp
D - A(vi) D
pizz
mp F(r) A(n)-Z H - E(rt) - E(l)
9
mp
mp
mp
15
arco
arco

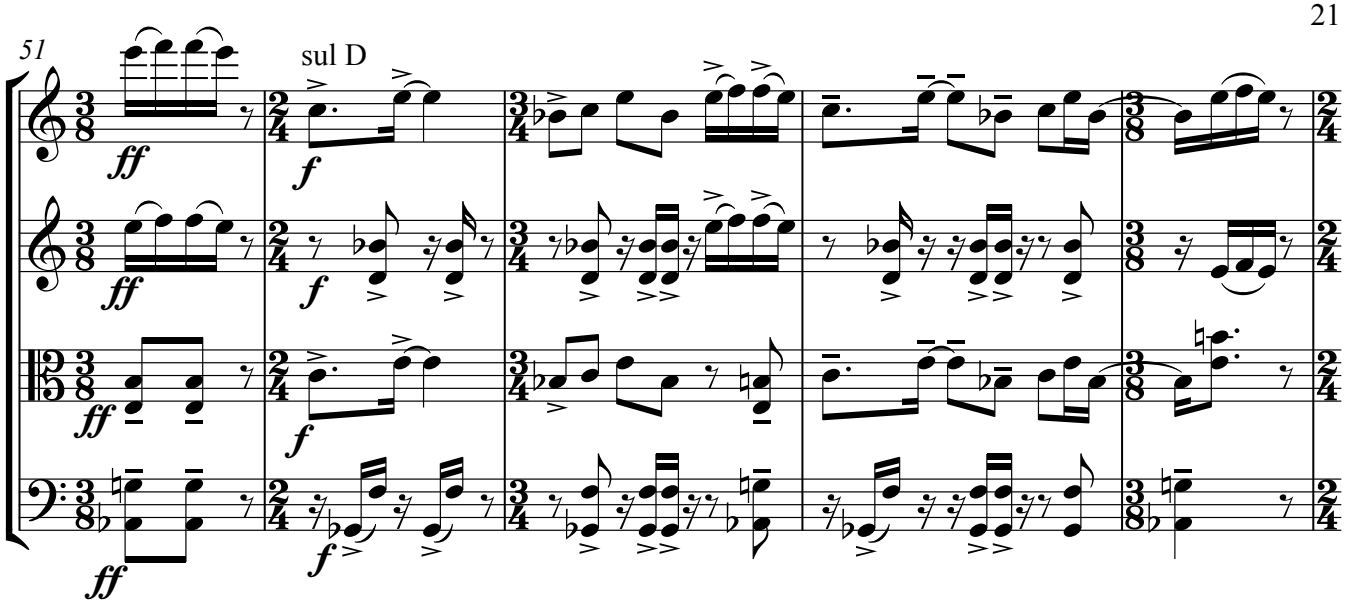

21
arco
arco
arco
mf
27
arco
arco
mf
32
arco
arco
mf

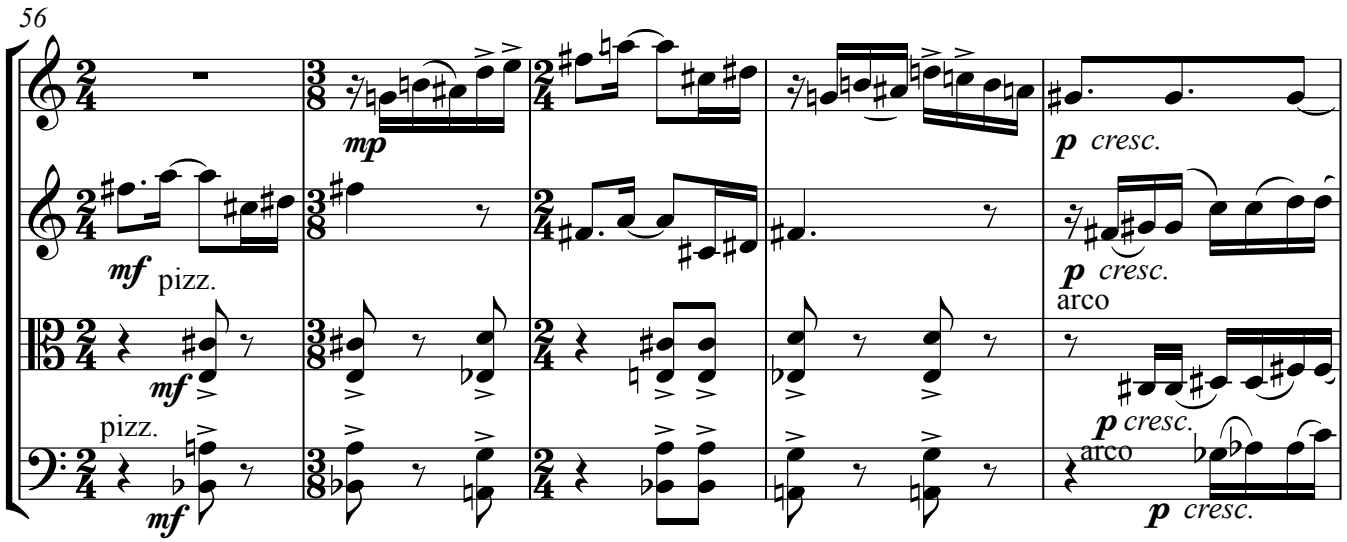


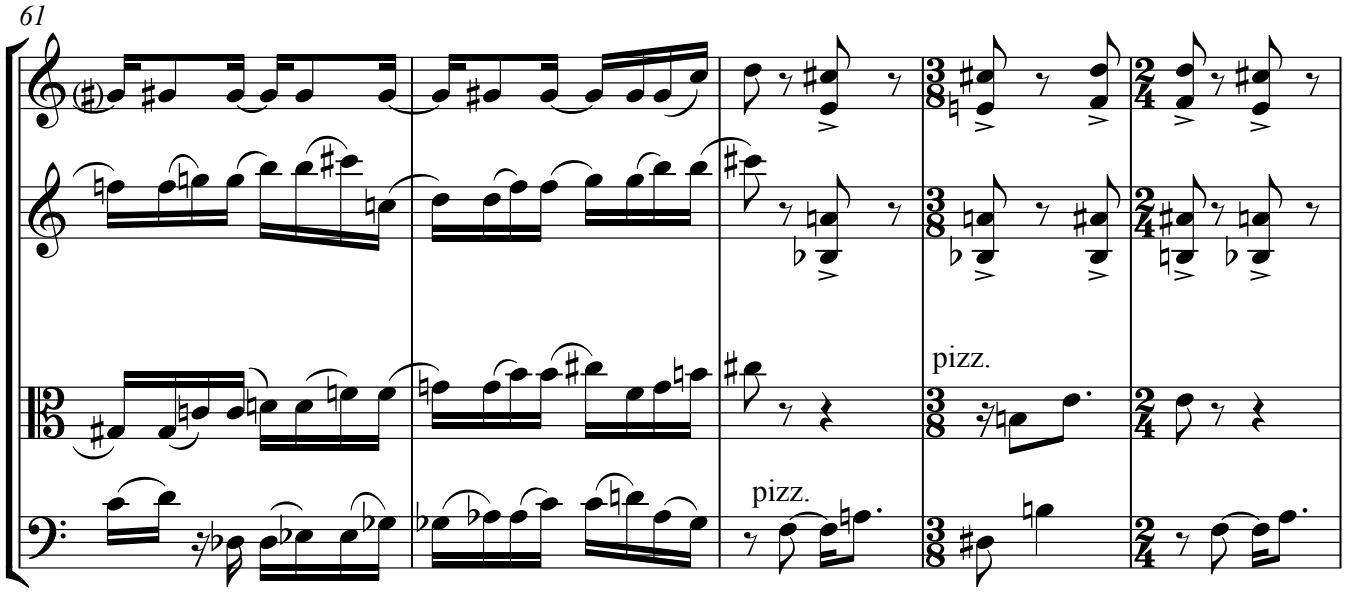


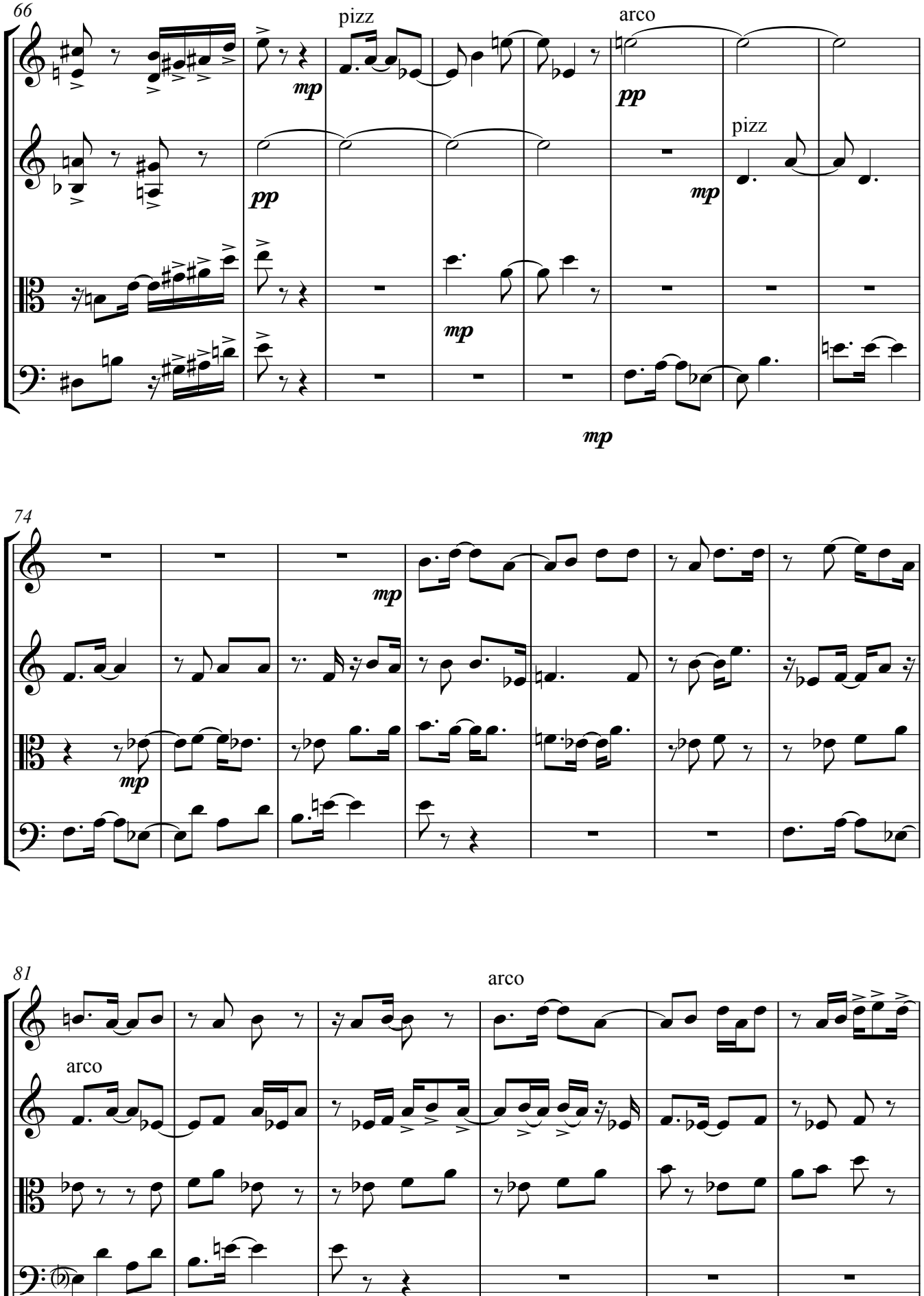
♪=168

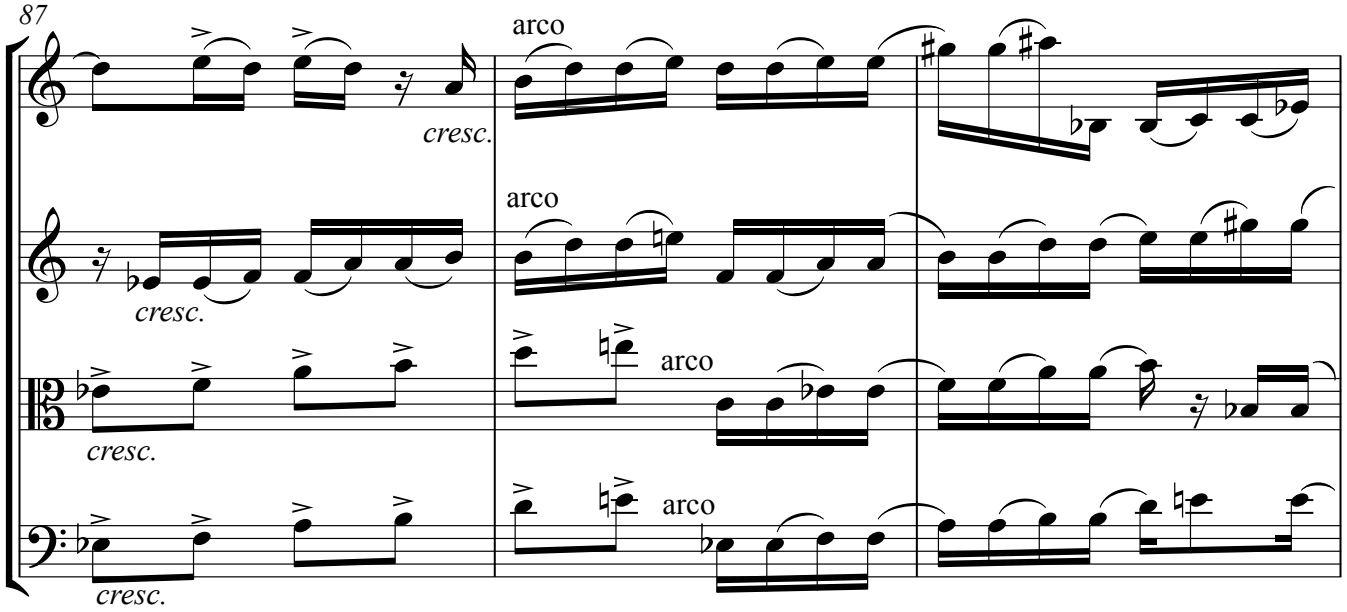


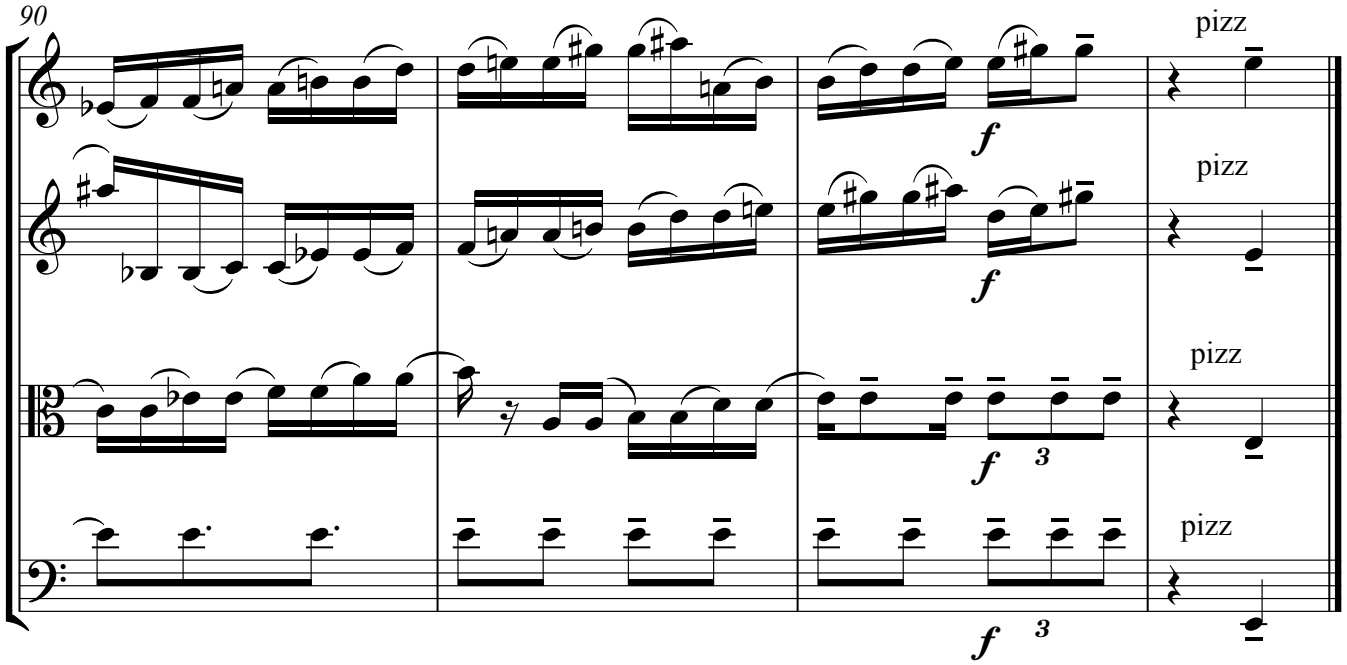

51
sul D
ff
f


56
mp
mf
pizz.
p cresc.
arco

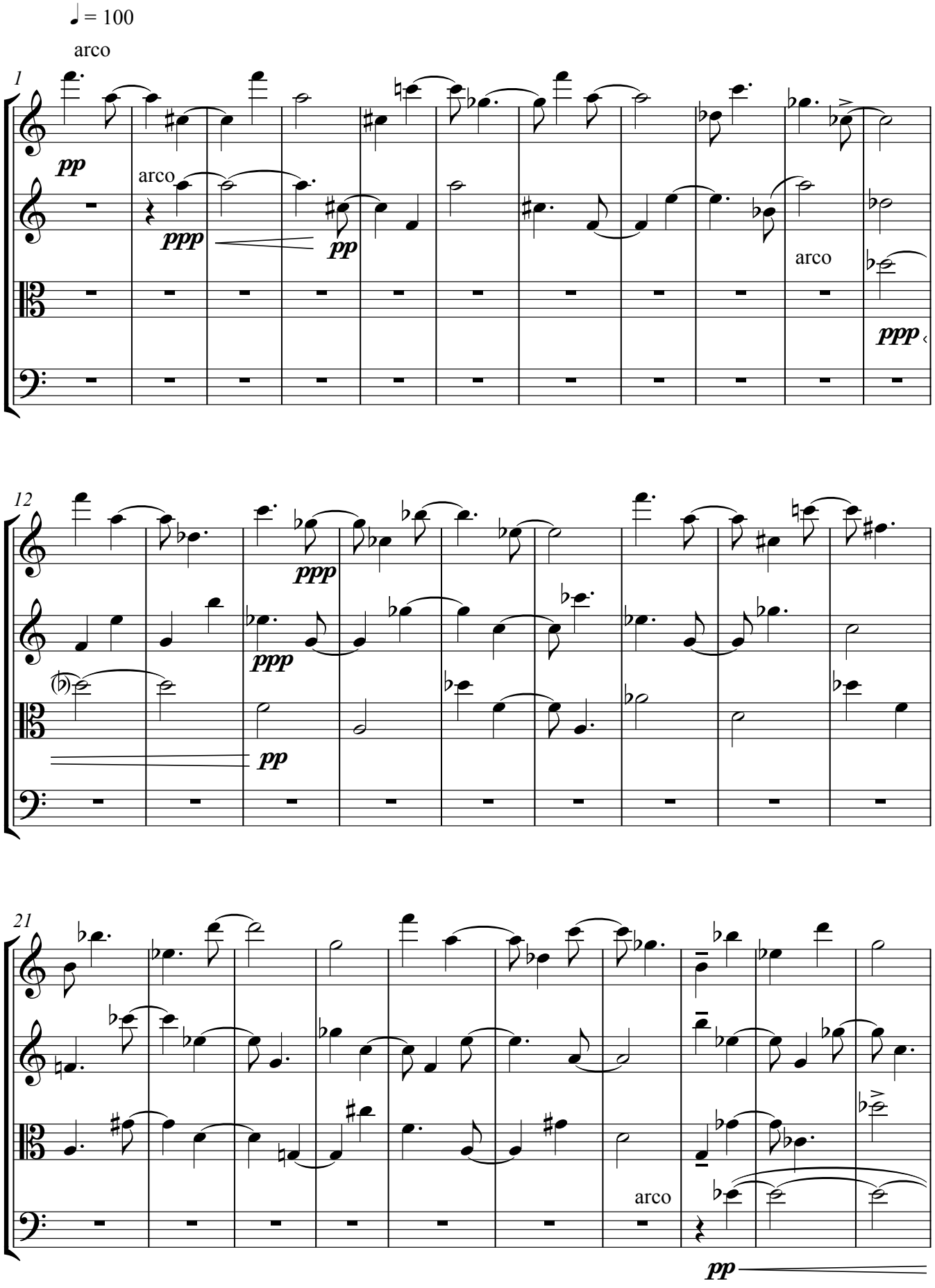

61
pizz.

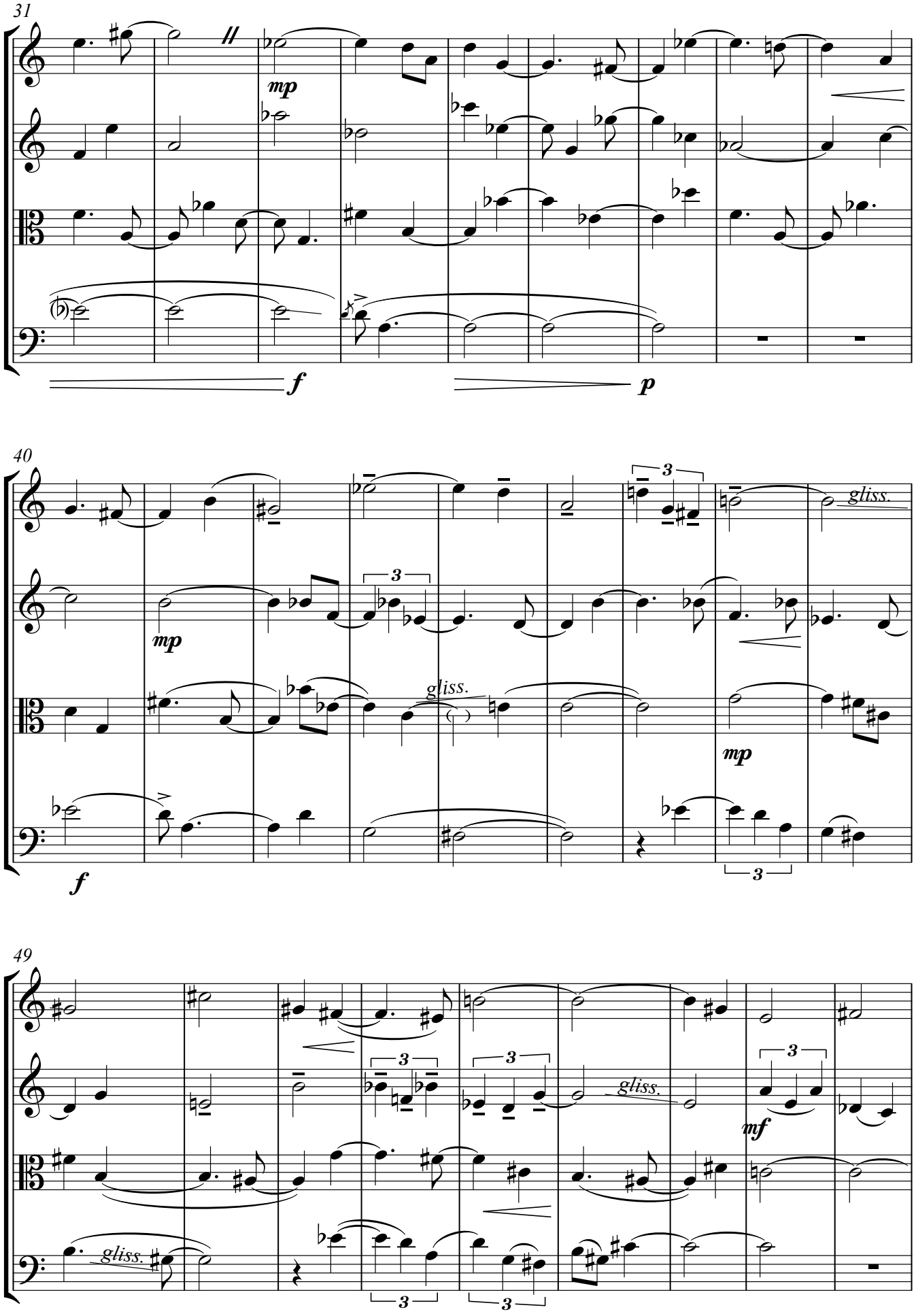

66
pizz
arco
pizz
74
81
arco
arco

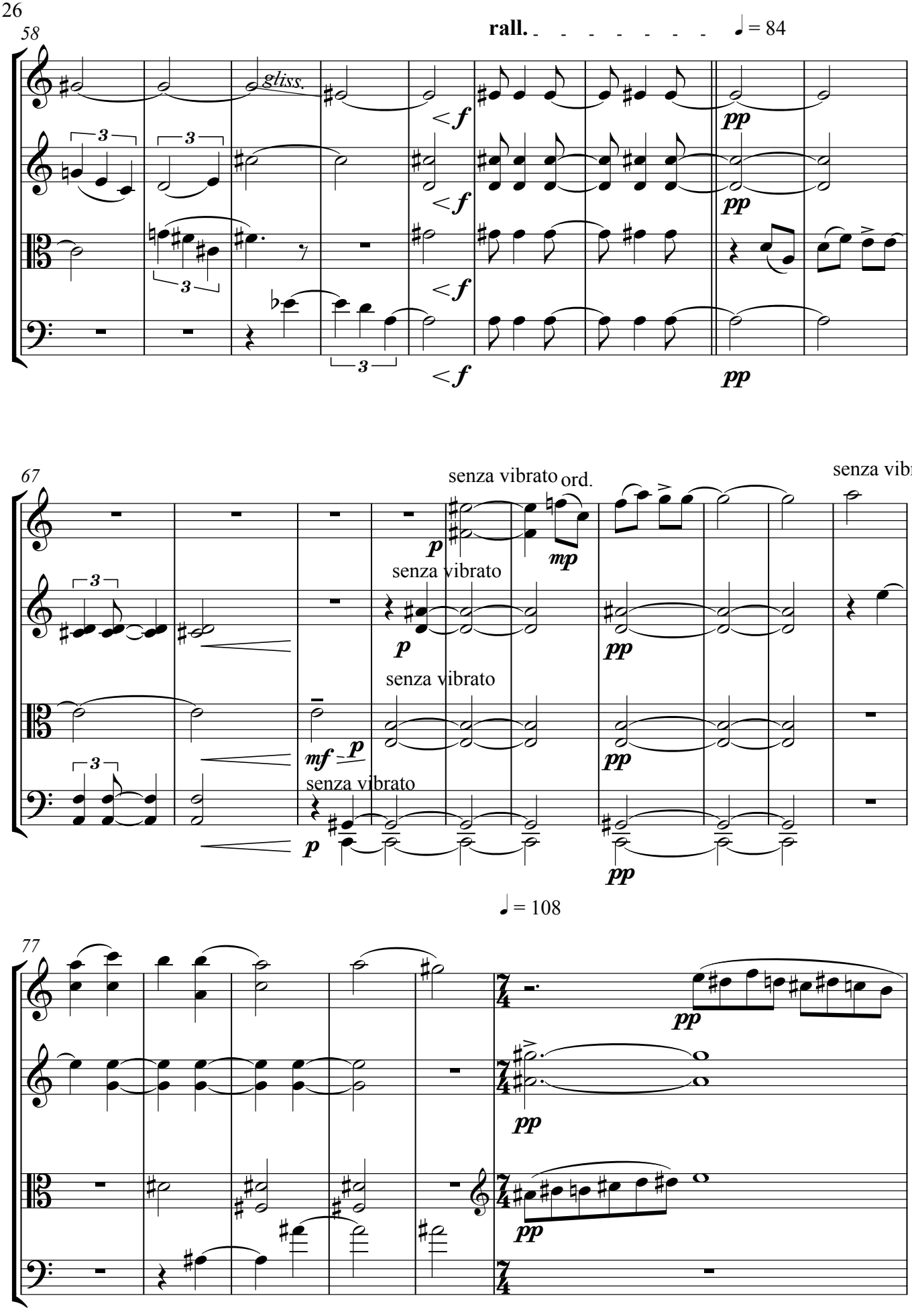

87
cresc.
arco
cresc.
arco
cresc.
arco
cresc.
arco

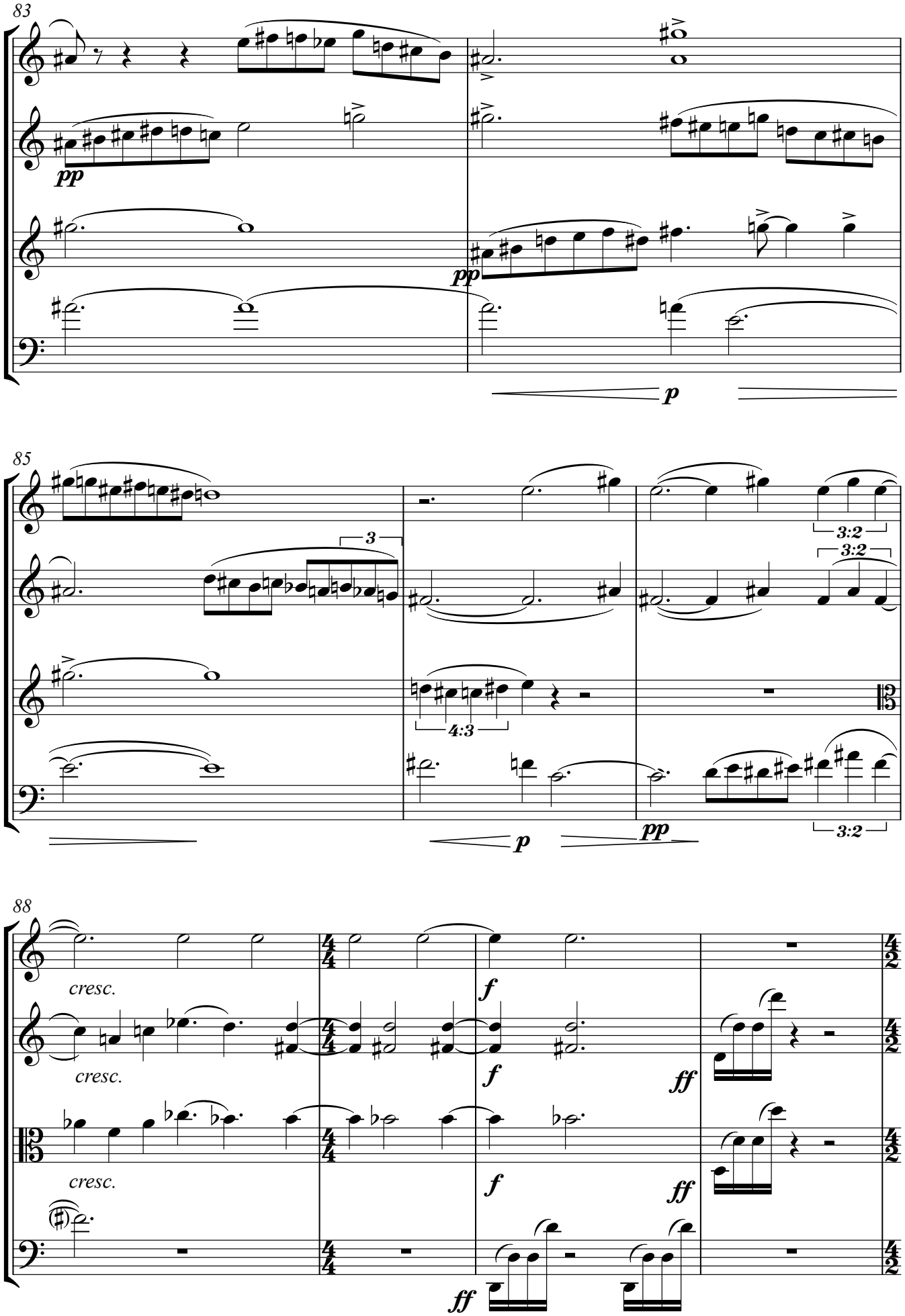

90
f
pizz
f
pizz
f
3
pizz
f
3
pizz

IV




31
mp
f
p
40
mp
gliss.
f
49
gliss.
mf


58
rall.
♩ = 84
gliss.
67
senza vibrato
ord.
senza vibrato
senza vibrato
senza vibrato
senza vibrato
♩ = 108
77


83
pp
pp
p
85
3
3:2
3:2
4:3
p
pp
3:2
88
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
f
f
f
ff
ff
ff

92 ♩=72

poco vib. *molto sostenuto*

mp

pp

poco vib. *molto sostenuto*

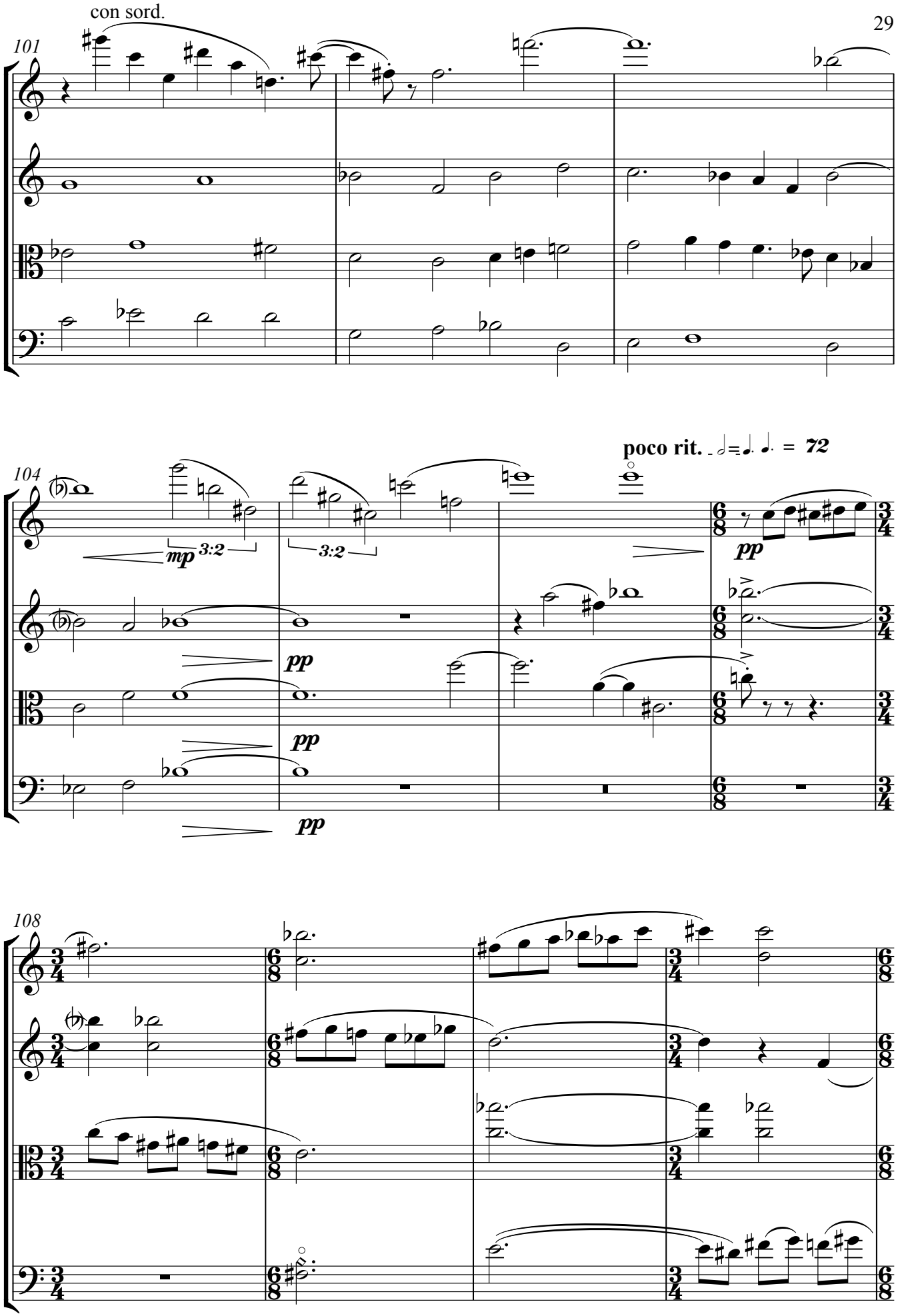
mp

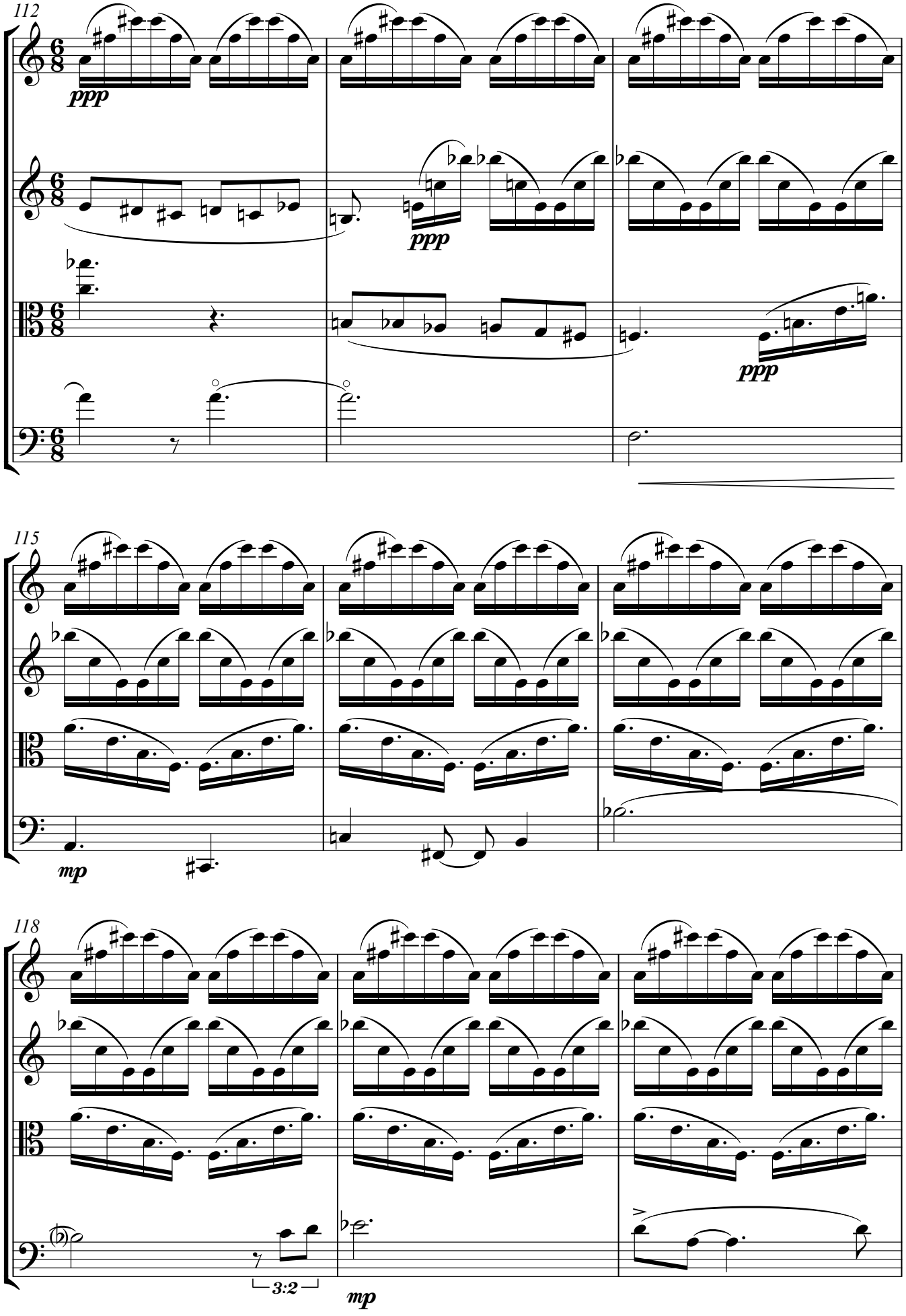
95

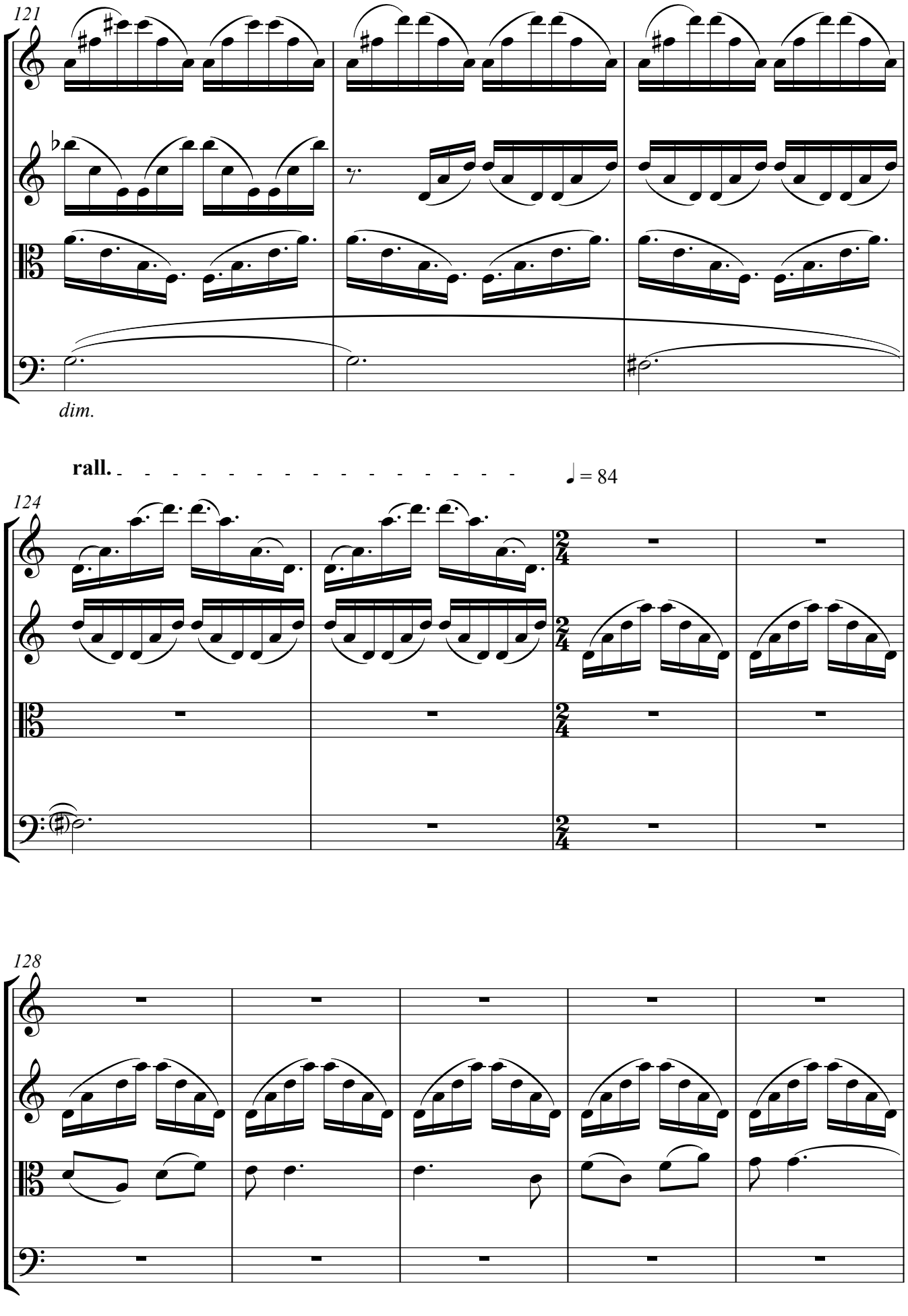
poco vib. *molto sostenuto*

mp

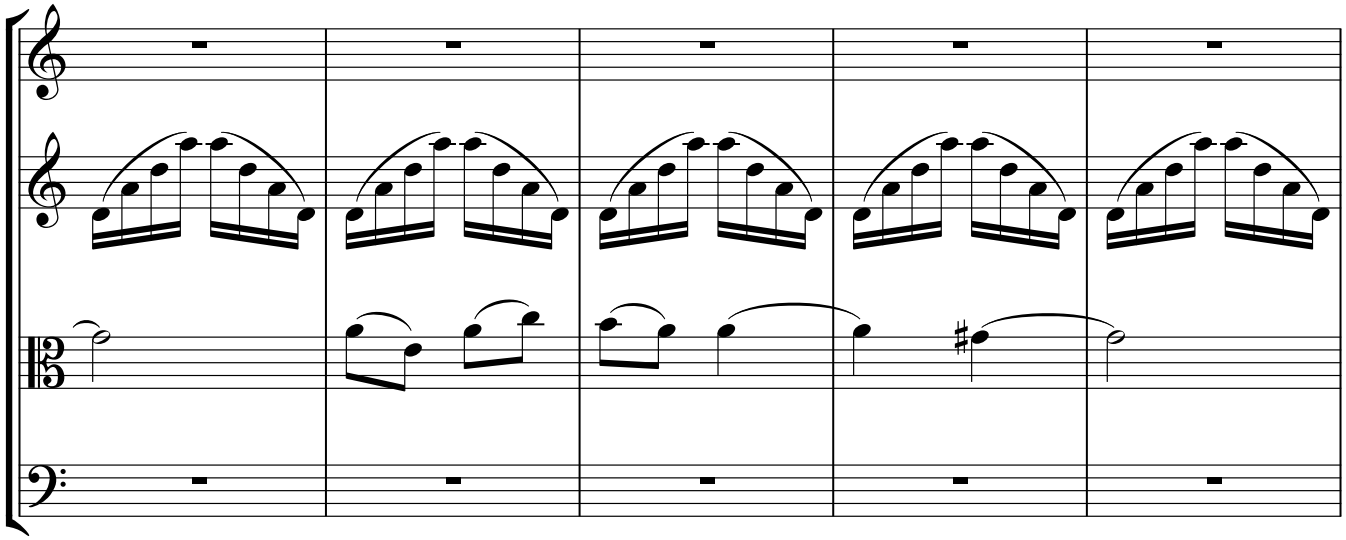
98


con sord.
101
104
poco rit.
72
mp
3:2
3:2
pp
pp
pp
pp
108

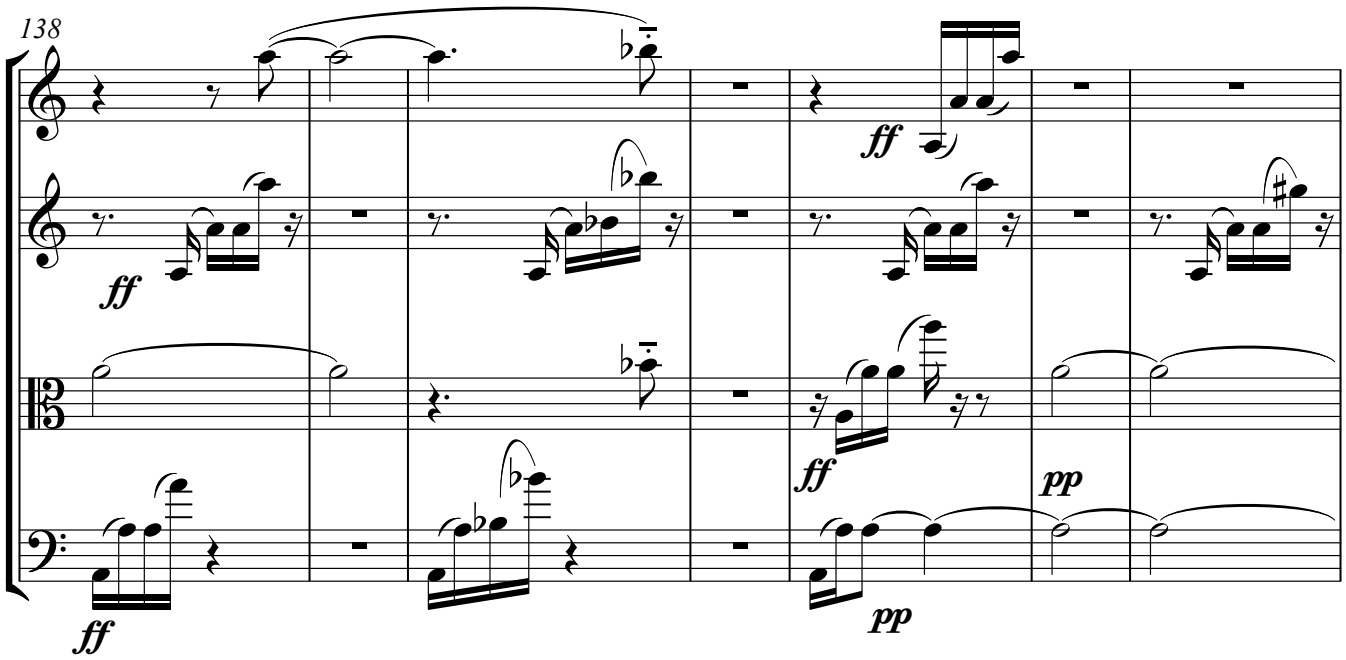

112
ppp
ppp
ppp
115
mp
118
3:2
mp


121
dim.
rall.
♩ = 84
124
128

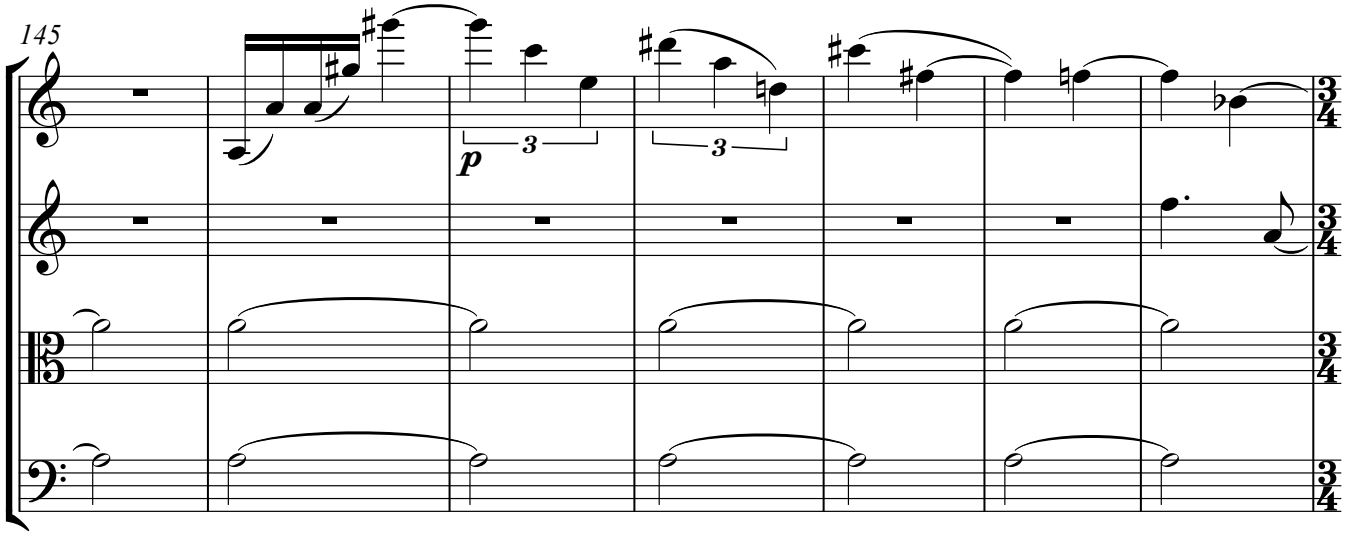
133

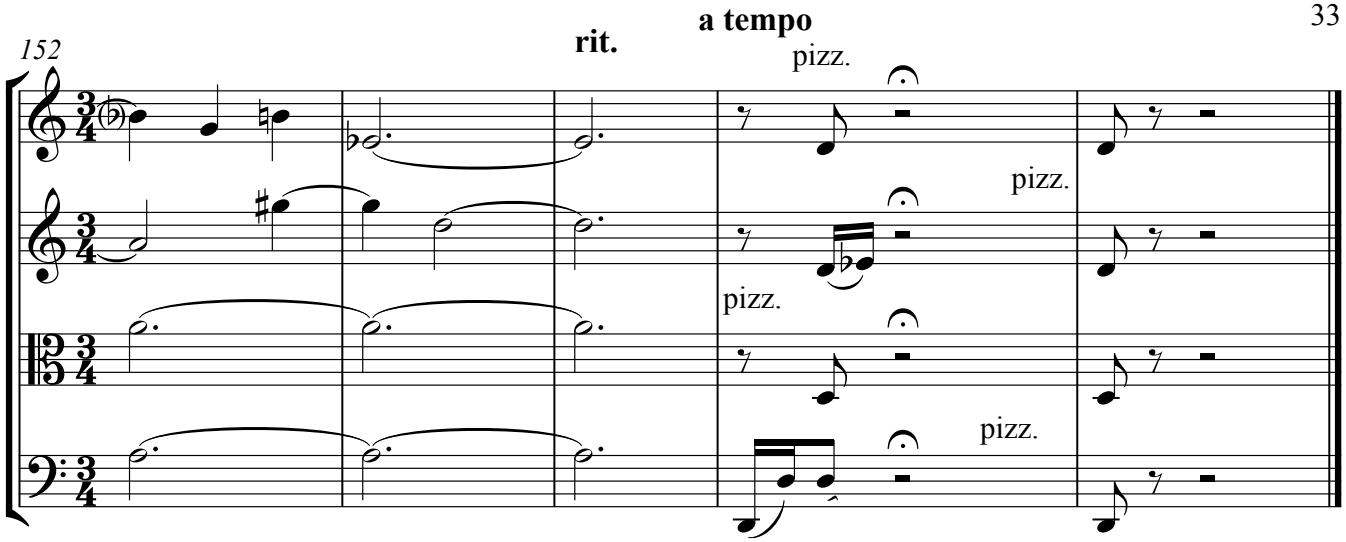


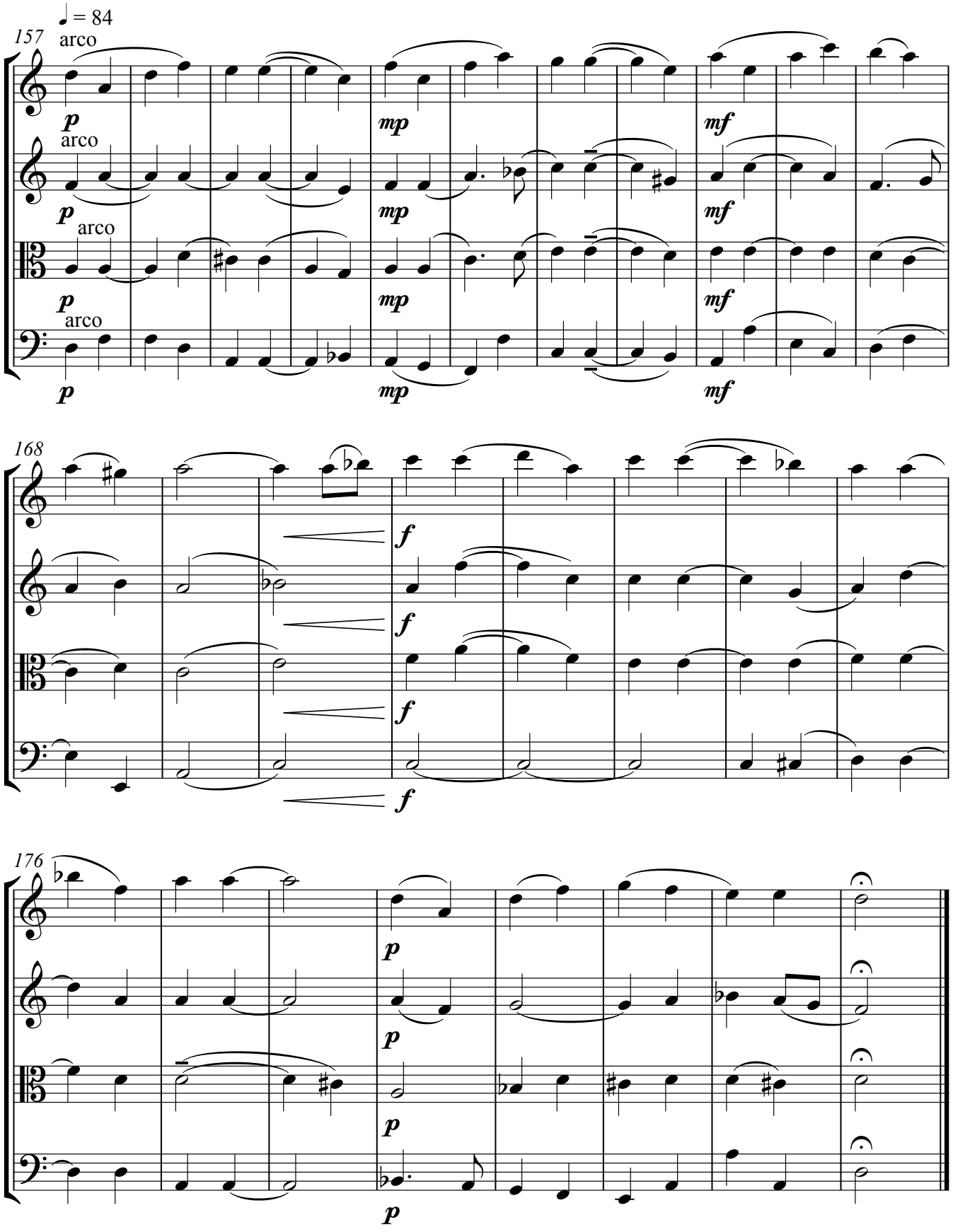
138



145




152
rit.
a tempo
pizz.
pizz.
pizz.
pizz.

Epilogue: Hymn

The congregation or audience sing this hymn as well (3 verses)