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MILLER JR., KEITH EMMANUEL D.M.A. Concertino for Double Bass and Orchestra. "E.L.M." (2013)
Directed by Marjorie Bagley. 83 pp.

In my musical experience as a double bassist and as a composer, I have engaged primarily with "cross-genre" music. Many of my compositions bring together influences from a wide range of world music traditions. The assimilation of and ability to authentically perform these differing idioms by musicians in large ensembles, such as the symphony orchestra, is today in its infancy. I set out to write a concertino for double bass that would provide musicians with a cross-genre musical experience, and lead them to play such idioms in a convincing manner. In creating the piece, I use the skills I have acquired as a double bassist, along with my affinity for certain musical idioms, such as church music, jazz, bluegrass, classical music and so on.

The musical goals of the first and third movement spring from associations with a specific musical idiom. The first movement conveys the mood of the Testimony service found in the African-American Pentacostal Church. This is accomplished by transcribing recordings of vocal examples and transforming the results into my own original composition. The second movement is an interlude that prepares the listener for the third movement, forming a seamless connection between the first and last. The third movement is based on groove-oriented popular dance music. The idea here was to create music for a large ensemble that would have the freedom and flexibility of a smaller combo. The musical notation for this movement required the use of descriptive phrases and non-standard notation and musical structures.

This project involved composing and performing the concertino. In rehearsals and performance, the musicians were successfully able to perform in many of the styles indicated in the musical score. Some indications were more difficult for them to assimilate, and further refinement of the notational strategies will need to be addressed in subsequent compositions.

This study will provide useful information to other composers seeking to write cross-genre pieces for large ensembles. It also provides information for performers who are looking to branch out into different styles of playing.

CONCERTINO FOR DOUBLE BASS AND ORCHESTRA. “E.L.M.”

by

Keith Emmanuel Miller Jr.

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Musical Arts

Greensboro
2013

Approved by

_____
Committee Chair

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation by KEITH EMMANUEL MILLER JR. has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair _____

Committee Members _____

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_____
Date of Acceptance by Committee

_____
Date of Final Oral Examination

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CHAPTER I

CONCERTINO FOR DOUBLE BASS AND ORCHESTRA. “E.L.M.”

Instrument List:

Solo Bass

Flute (1)

Oboe (1) - 3rd. mvt. only

Clarinet (1) - 1st mvt. (2) - 3rd mvt. Bassoon (1)

Horn (1)

Piano

Percussion (Cajon, Tambourine) Violin (1)

Violin 2 (1)

Viola (1)

Bass (1-2)

Duration - approximately 20 minutes

Improvisational Instructions

1st and 2nd Movements

Measure 1 - Most of the embellishments are written. For examples of a Black Gospel Style, refer to the following links:

Marvin Sapp "I Need Thee" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZ7R4OIqhy8

Bessie Griffin "The Old Time Moan" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef0-9g8e5_4

Marion Williams "The Moan" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xldEqiP4zX0

Measure 23 - Improvise around a minor pentatonic scale (with a flat 5)

The style is similar to the above examples but aggressive.
Refer to the following recording for an example:

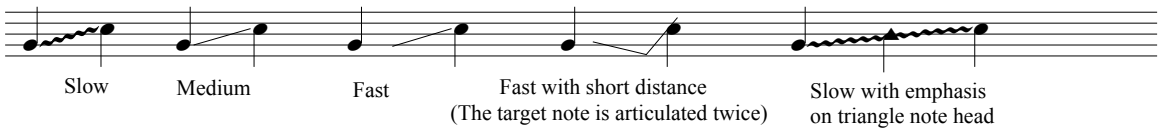
Brown, Ray, John Clayton and Christian McBride, Super Bass 2. "Mysterioso," by Thelonius Monk. Telarc Jazz, 2002.

Measure 80 - This is open and free. Play written music and improvise as desired. The same minor pentatonic mode is suggested.
Refer to following link:

Fairfield Four "Lonesome Valley" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GI0aTGKDueQ

Measure 93 - Open Improvisation. The soloist can choose to be lyrical, rhythmic or both. However, the soloist should eventually
outline the indicated chordal progression to usher in the winds (who have the same material) in measure 109.
At measure 101, play in tempo and in 4/4 (conductor begins conducting). Continue to improvise until measure 119.

Explanation of Glissandi



3rd Movement

Refer to the following link for examples of all measures listed below:

http://soundcloud.com/kemiller/sets/keith-miller-concertino-for

Measure 11 - The soloist improvises with written bass notes. Improvise anticipating the written music in measure 12. (Keeping a consistent quarter note tempo and being aware of the 7/16 meter will help aid in direction and phrasing)

Measure 39 - Similar to the improvisation in measure 11 but longer duration.

Measure 77 - Improvise according to chord progression and groove of the orchestra.

Measure 134 - Draw from measures 93-96 for improvisational material. The cadenza is open improvisation.

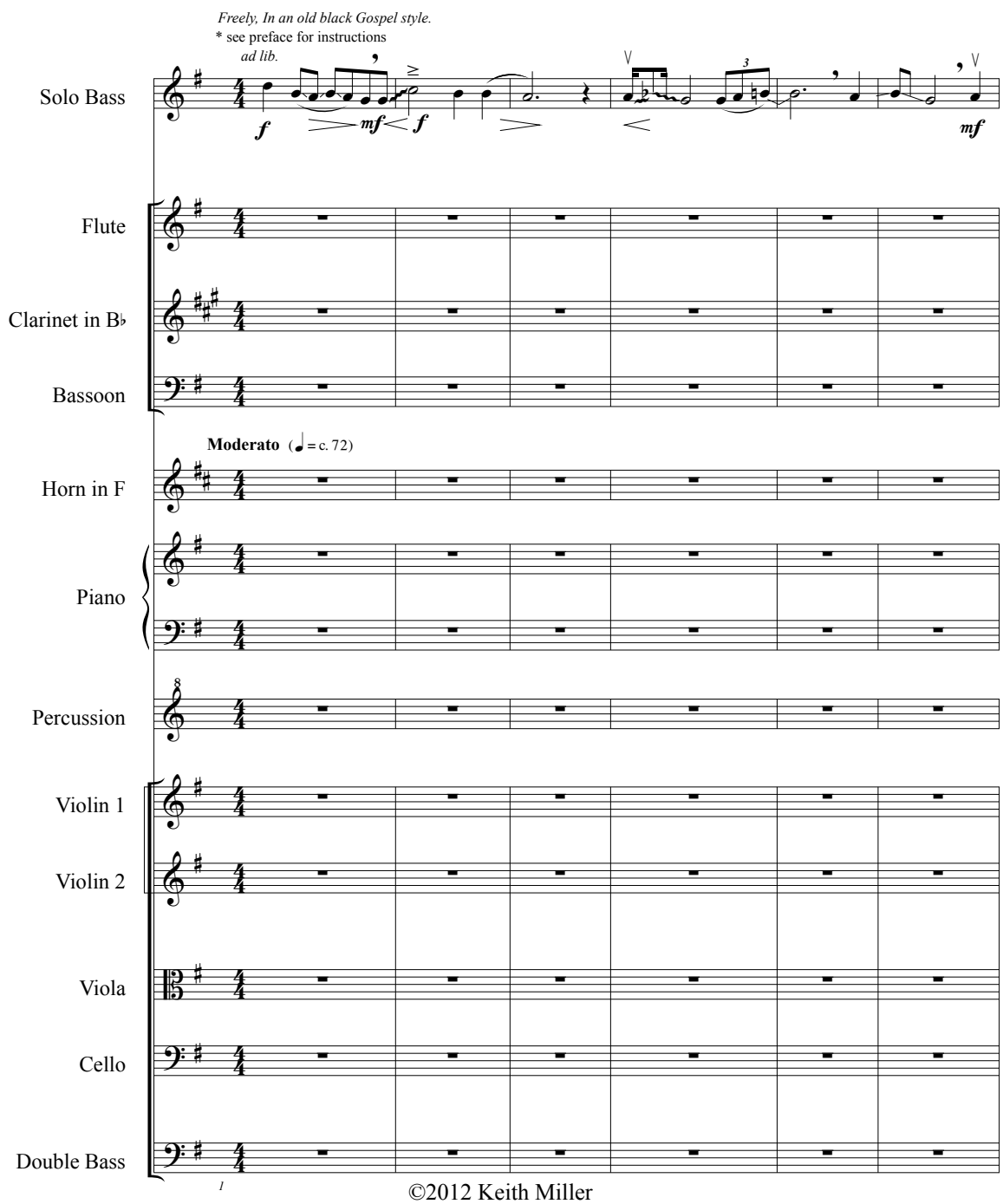
Concertino for Double Bass "E.L.M."

Transposed Score

I.

"I Need Thee All"

Keith Miller



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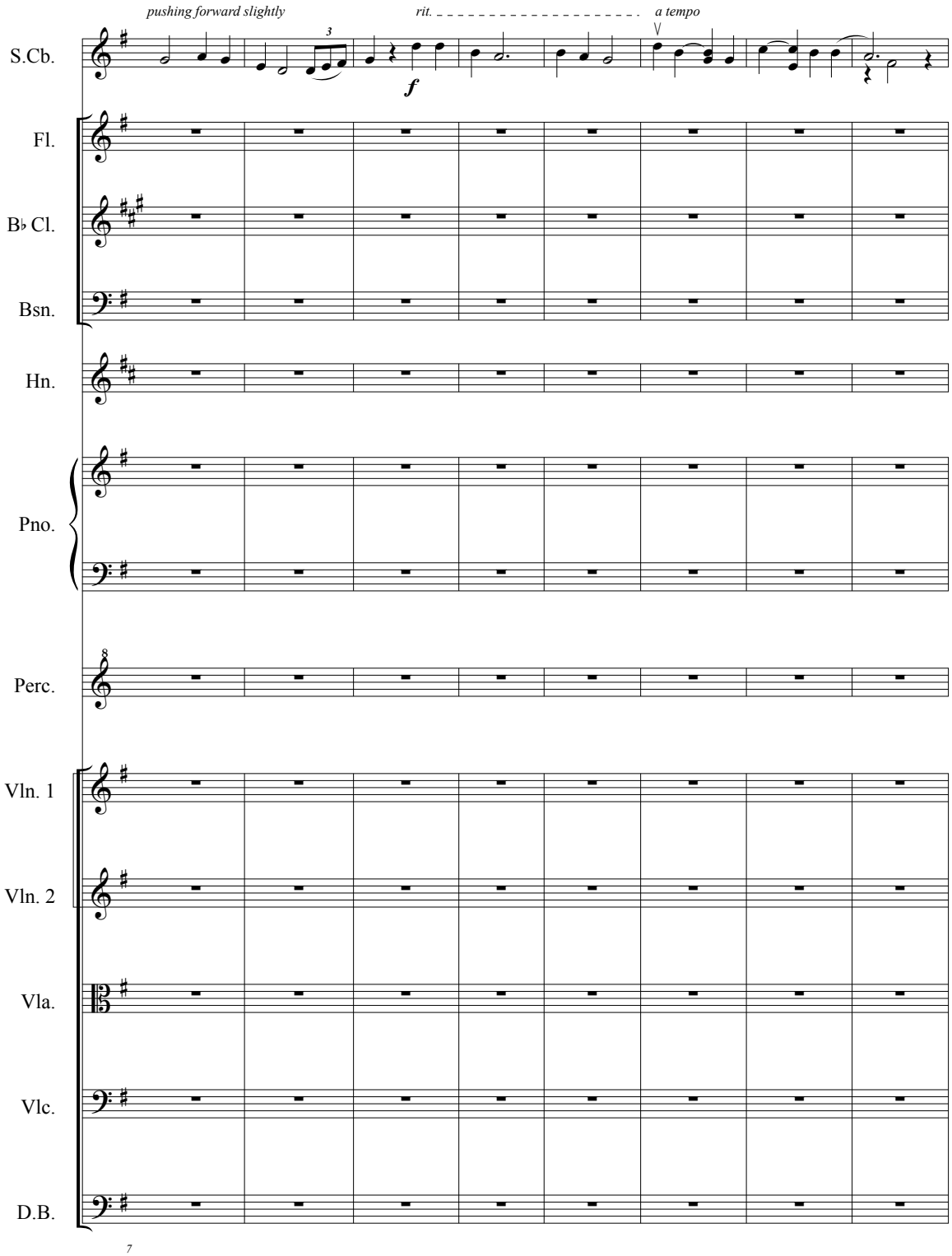
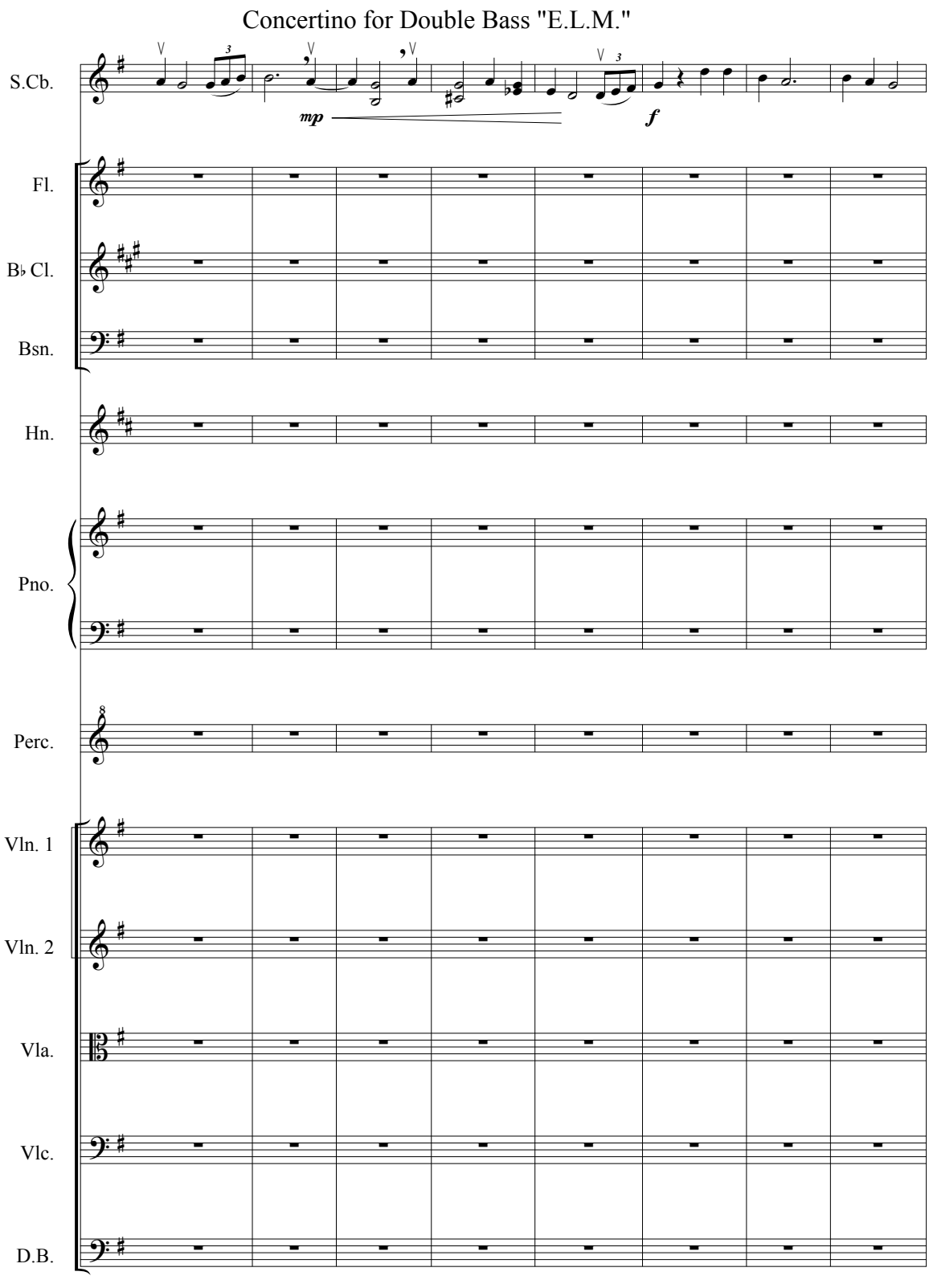
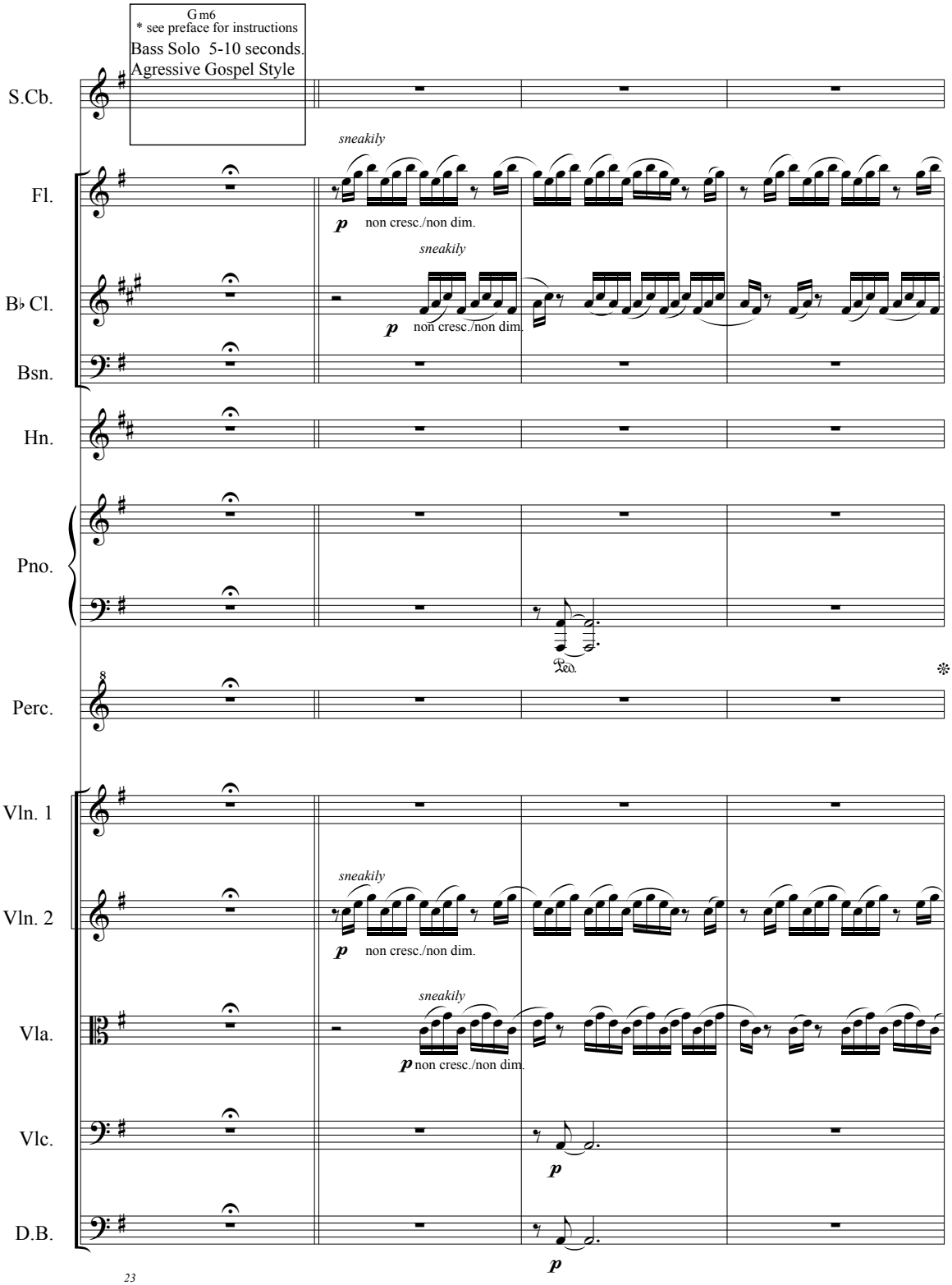
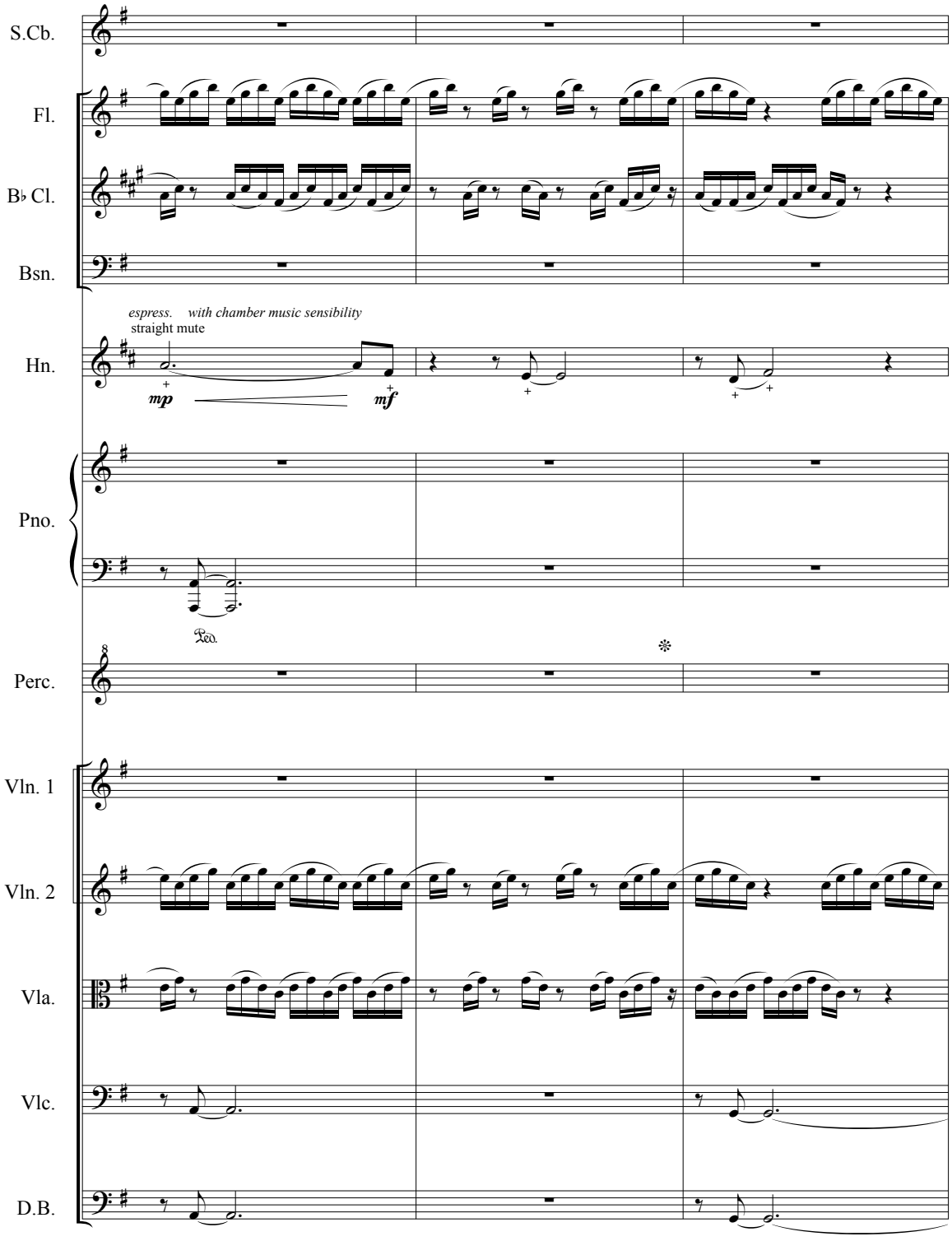
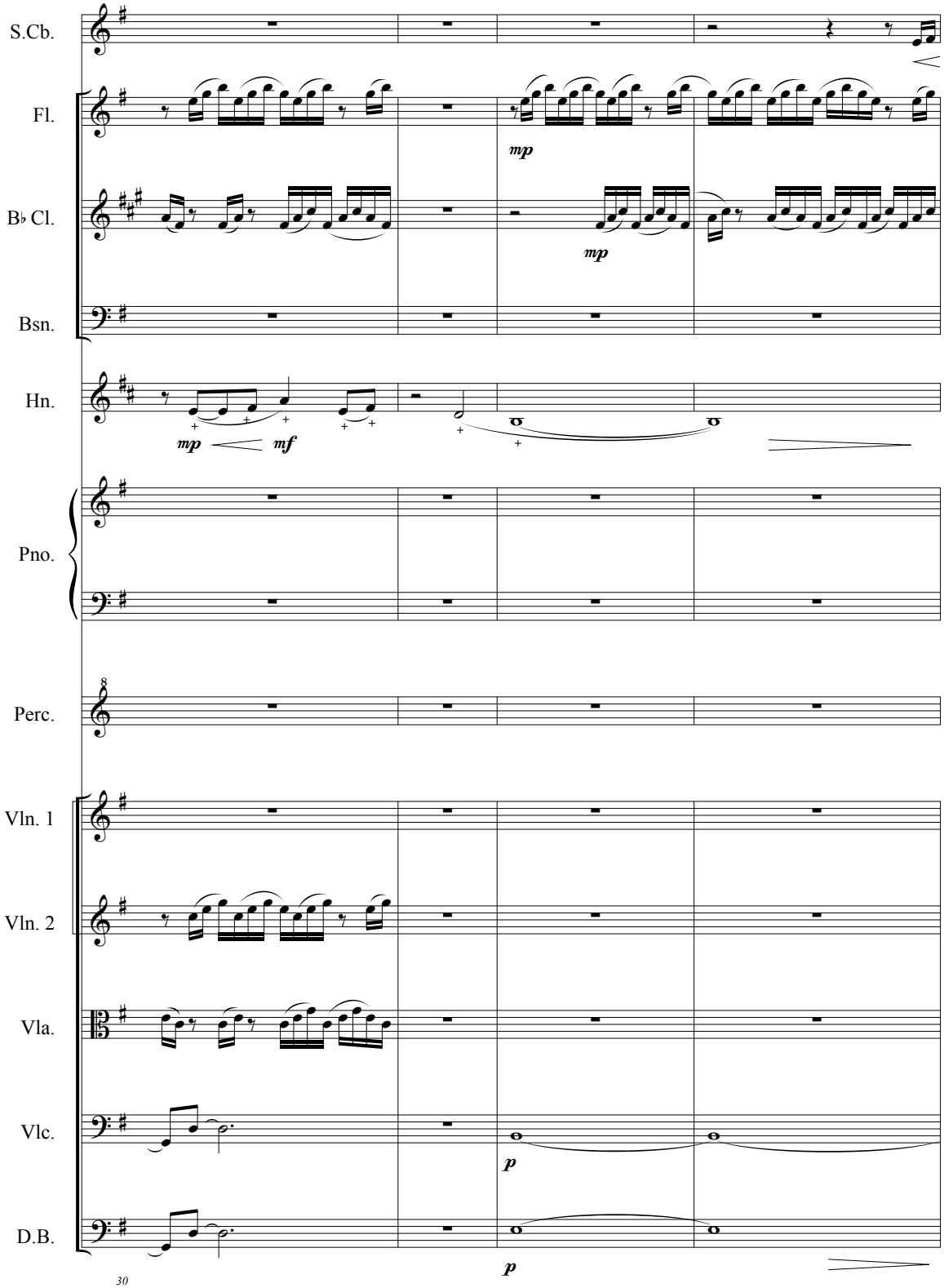
Concertino for Double Bass "E.L.M."

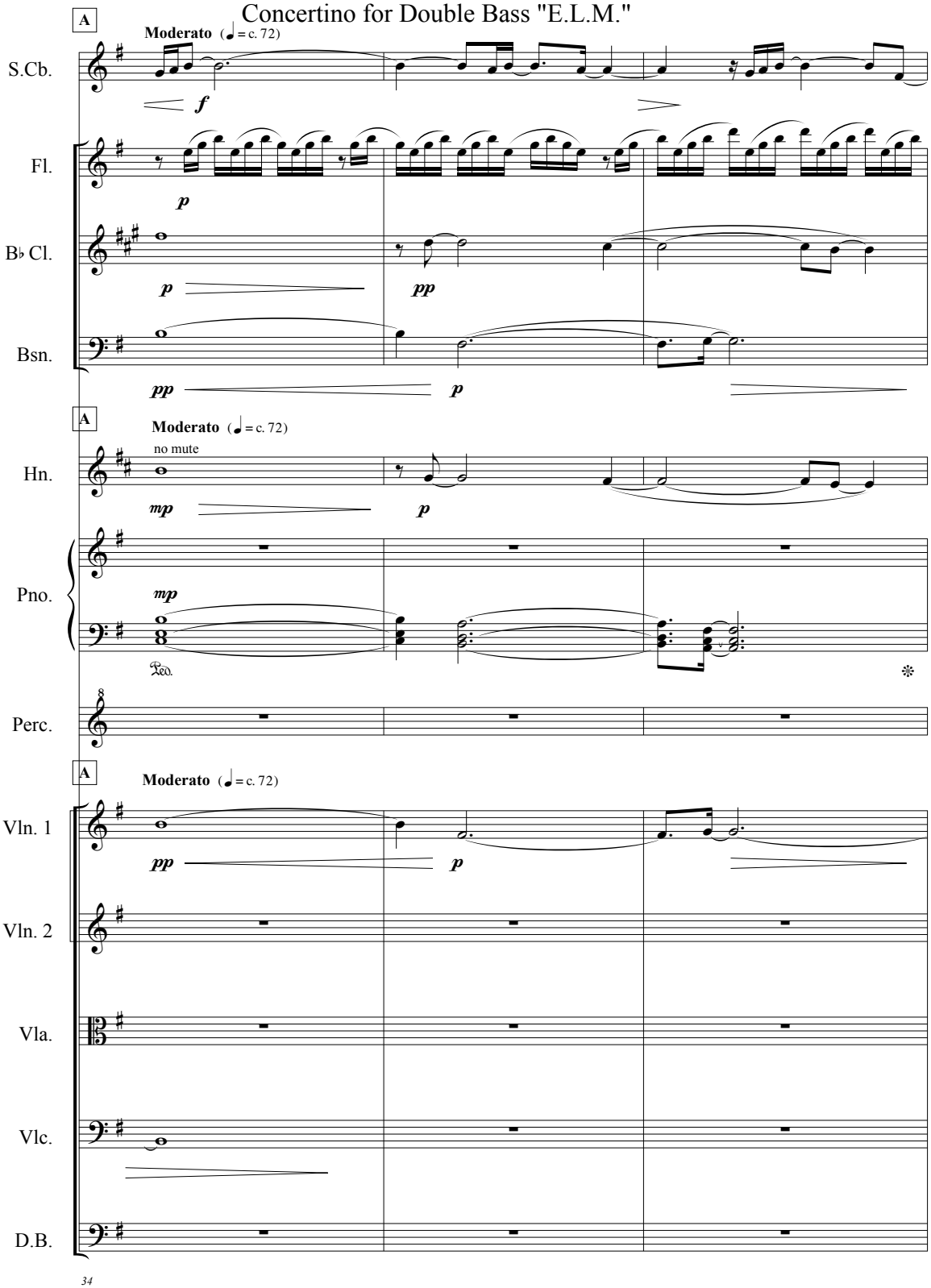


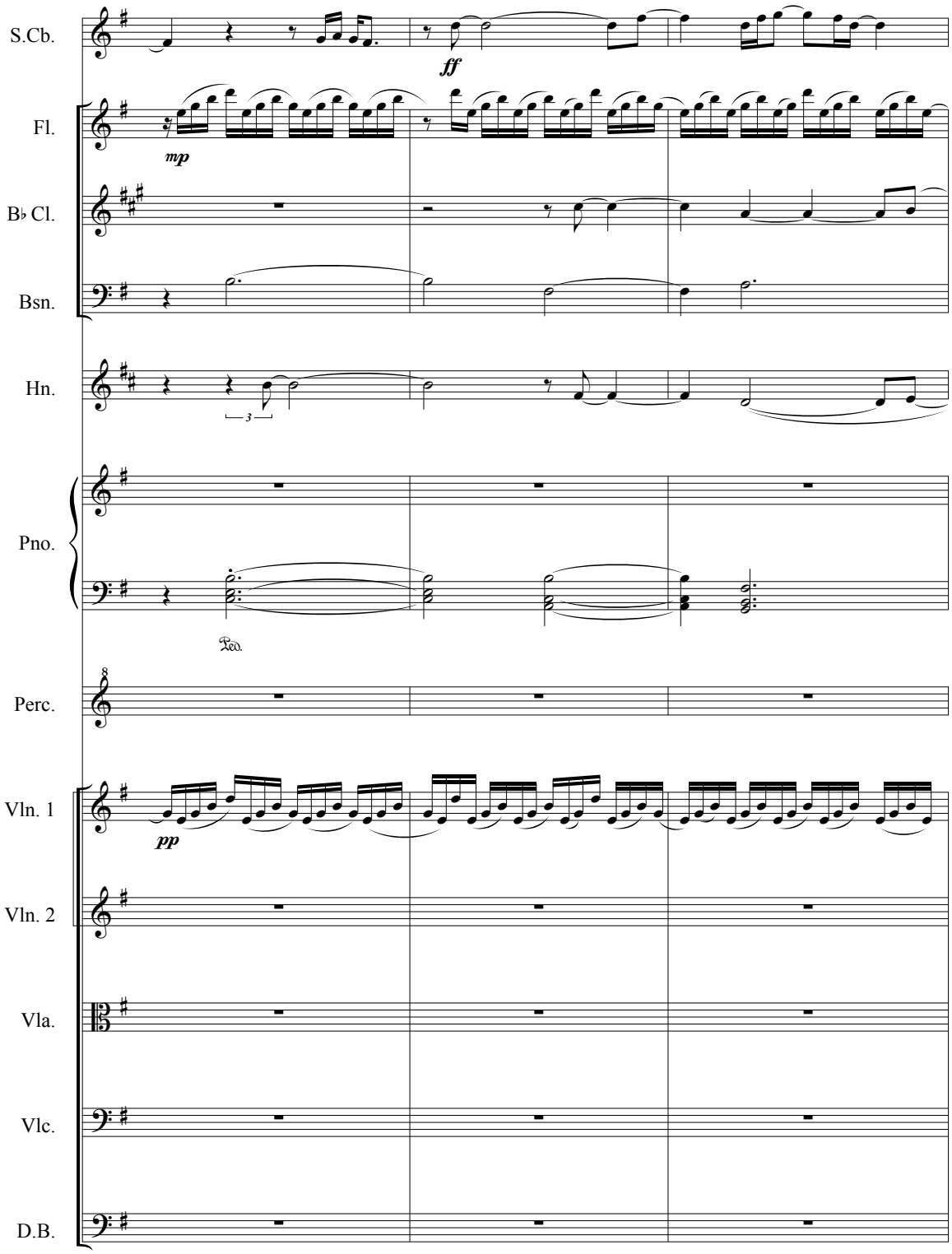

Concertino for Double Bass "E.L.M."
S.Cb.
mp
f
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Pno.
Perc.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
15

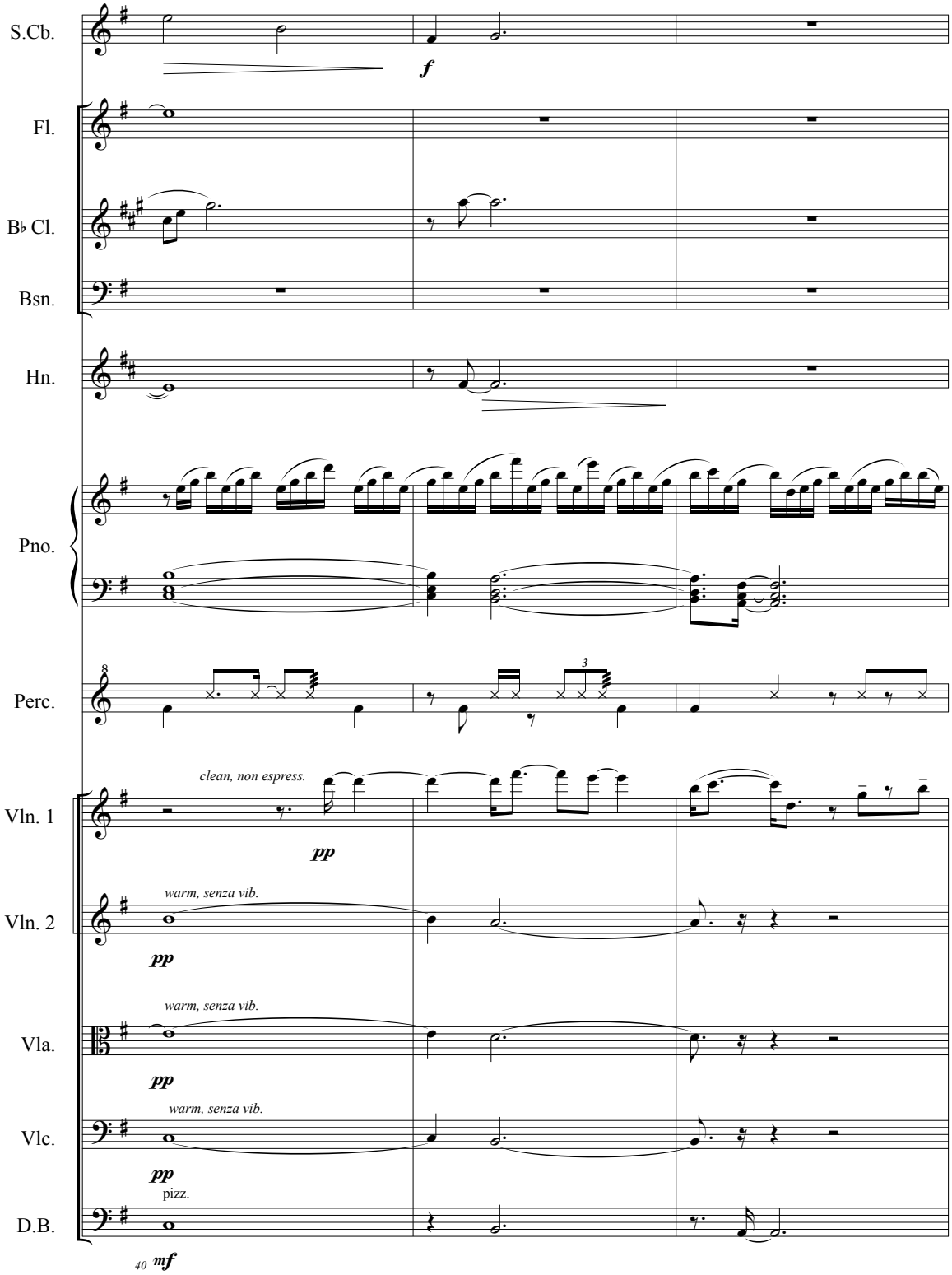

G m6
* see preface for instructions
Bass Solo 5-10 seconds.
Agressive Gospel Style
S.Cb.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Pno.
Perc.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
sneakily
p non cresc./non dim.
Ped.
23

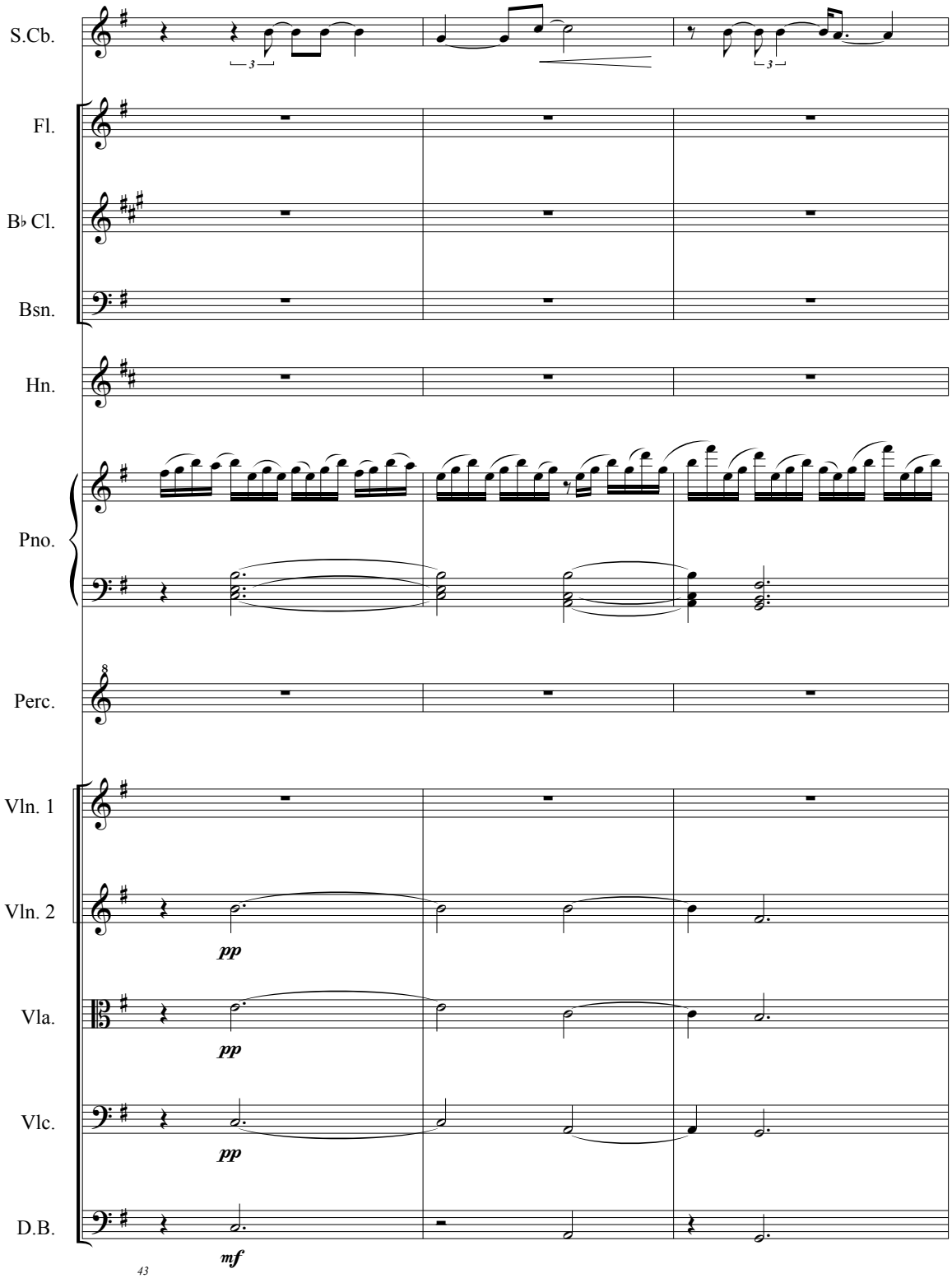

S.Cb.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
espress. with chamber music sensibility
straight mute
Hn.
mp
mf
Pno.
Ped.
Perc.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
27

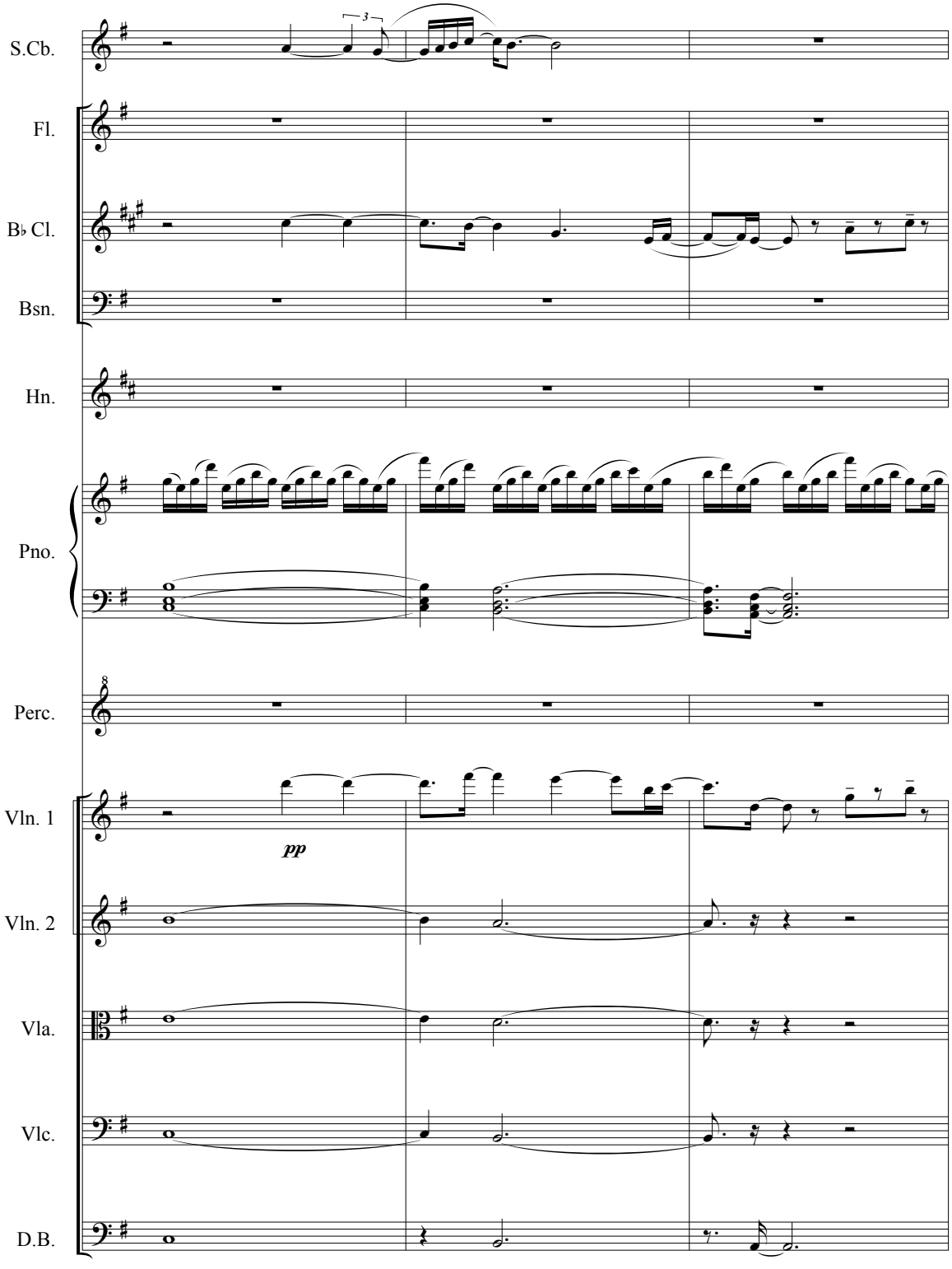

S.Cb.
Fl.
mp
B♭ Cl.
mp
Bsn.
Hn.
mp
mf
Pno.
Perc.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
p
D.B.
p
30

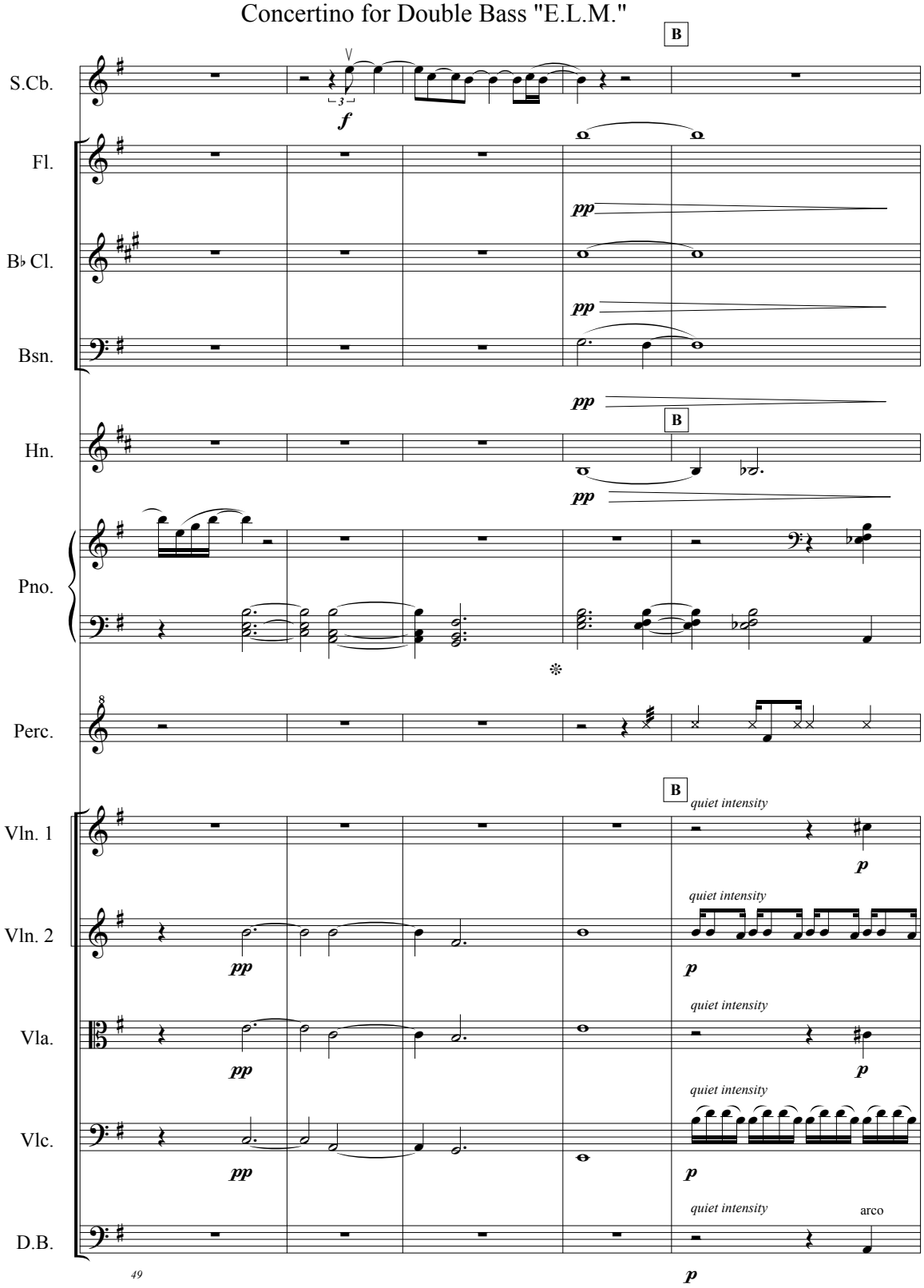

A
Moderato (♩= c. 72)
S.Cb.
f
Fl.
p
B♭ Cl.
p
pp
Bsn.
pp
p
A
Moderato (♩= c. 72)
no mute
Hn.
mp
p
Pno.
mp
Ped.
Perc.
A
Moderato (♩= c. 72)
Vln. 1
pp
p
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
34

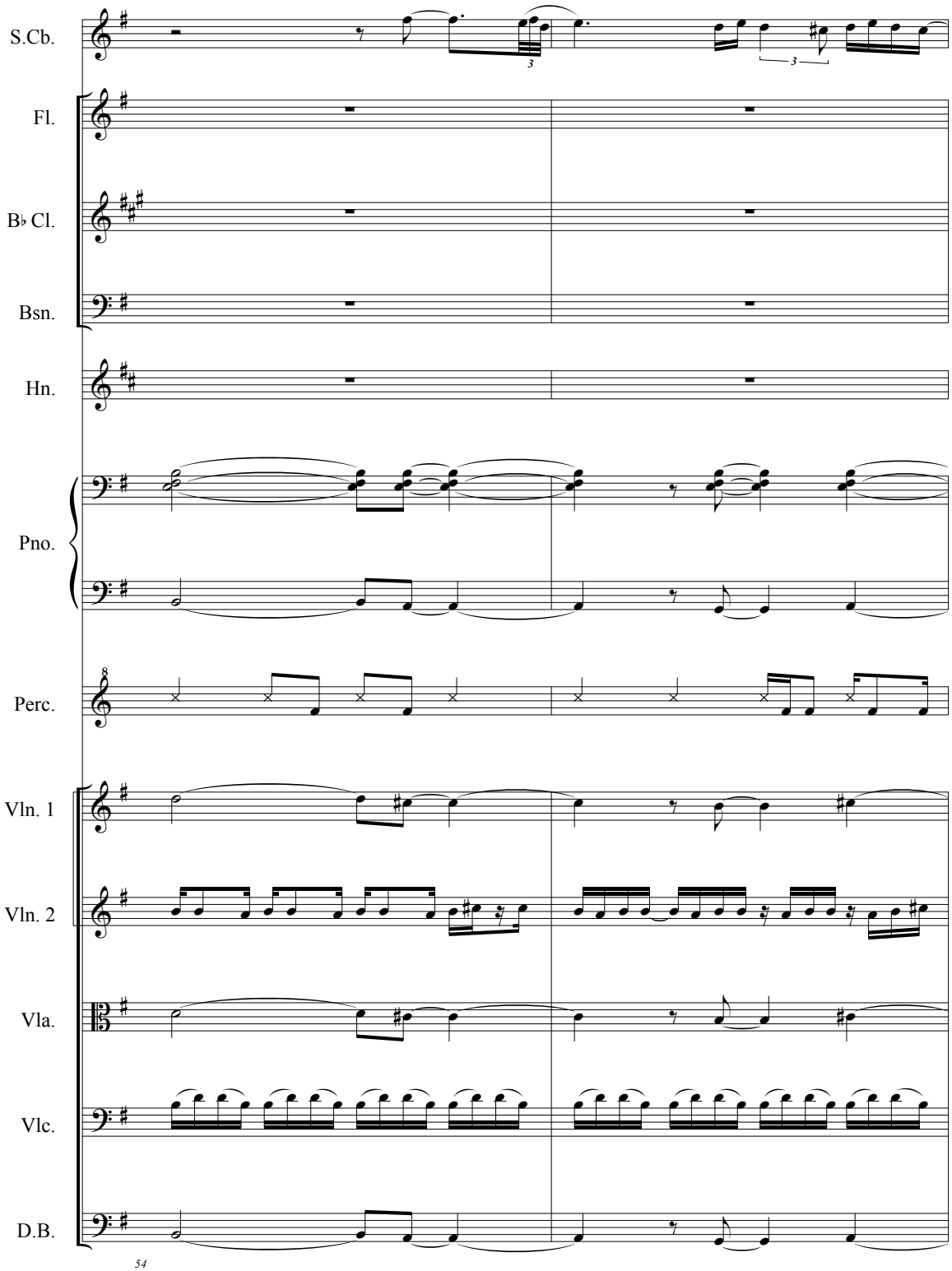

S.Cb.
ff
Fl.
mp
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
3
Pno.
Ped.
Perc.
8
Vln. 1
pp
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
37

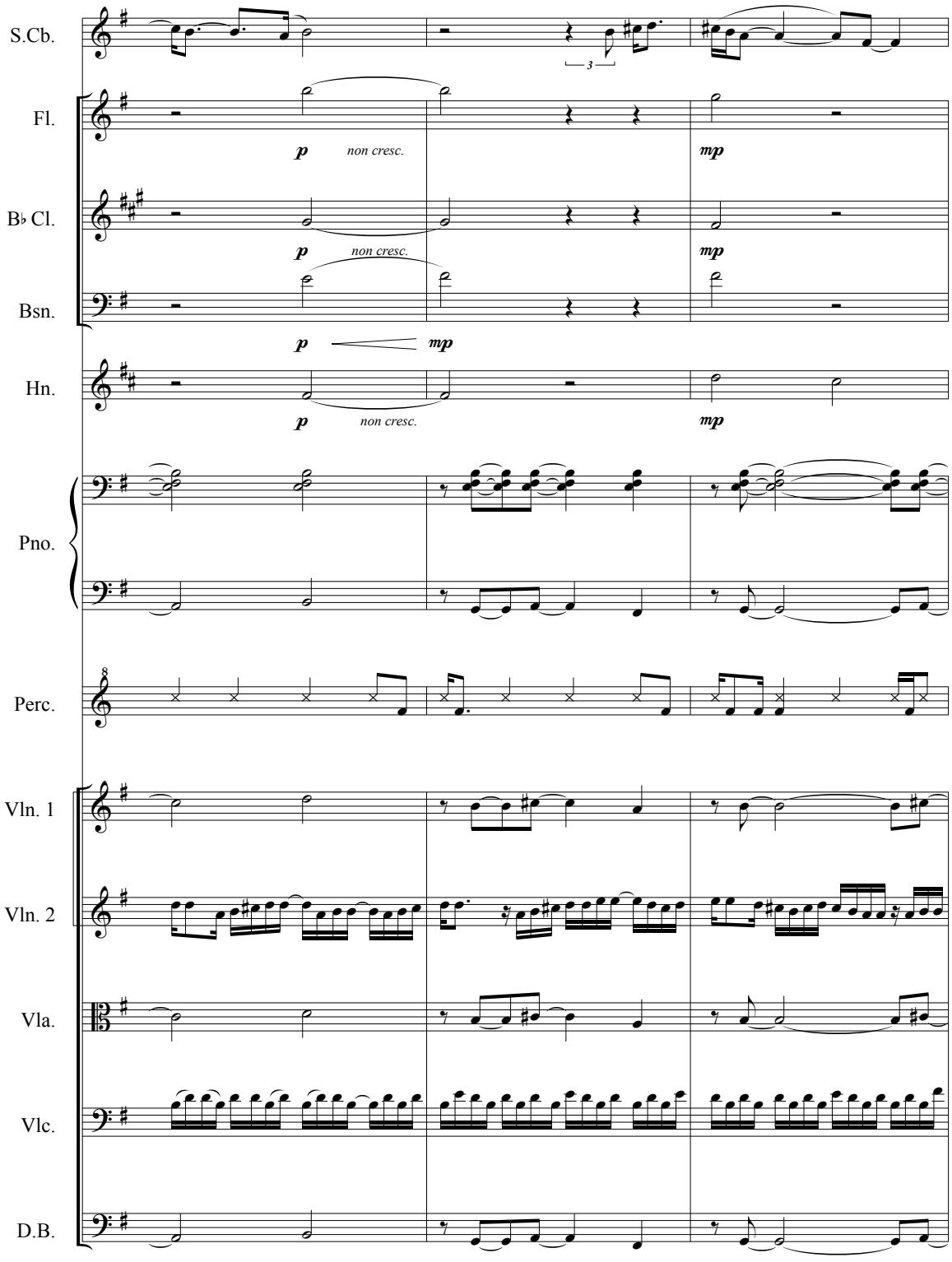

S.Cb.
f
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Pno.
Perc.
3
clean, non espress.
pp
Vln. 1
warm, senza vib.
Vln. 2
pp
warm, senza vib.
Vla.
pp
warm, senza vib.
Vlc.
pp
pizz.
D.B.
40
mf

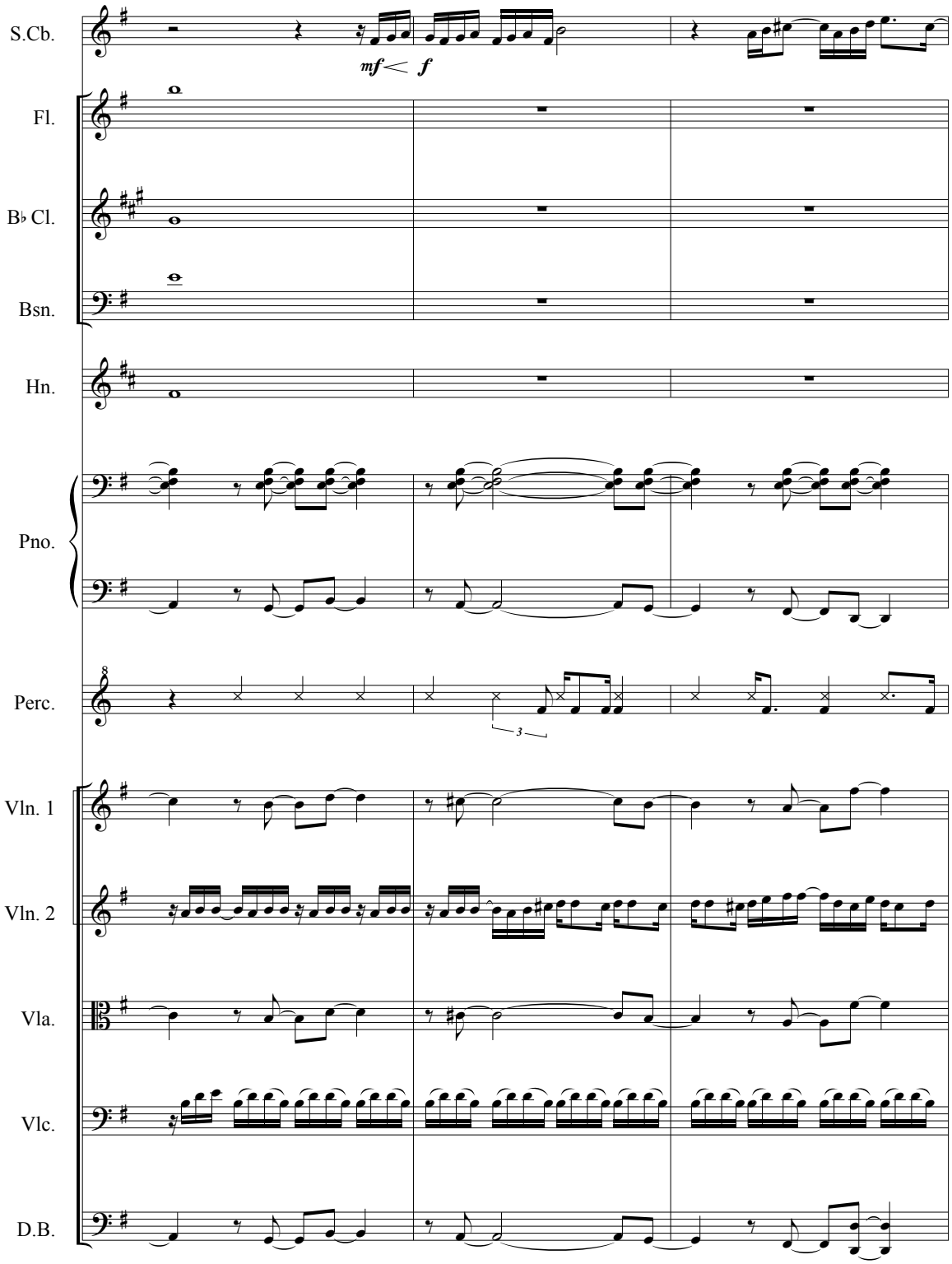

S.Cb.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Pno.
Perc.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
pp
pp
pp
mf
43

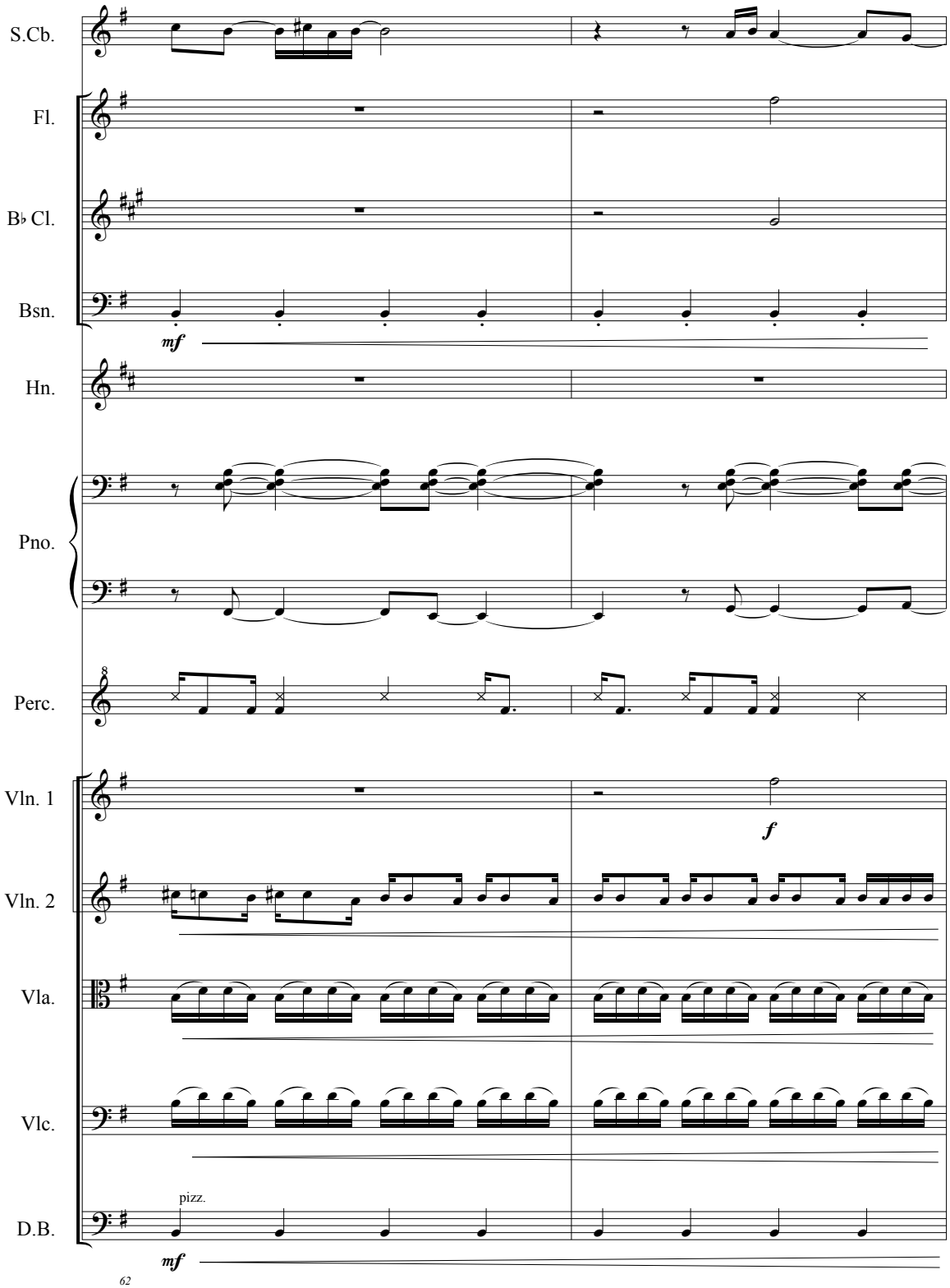

S.Cb.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Pno.
Perc.
Vln. 1
pp
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
46

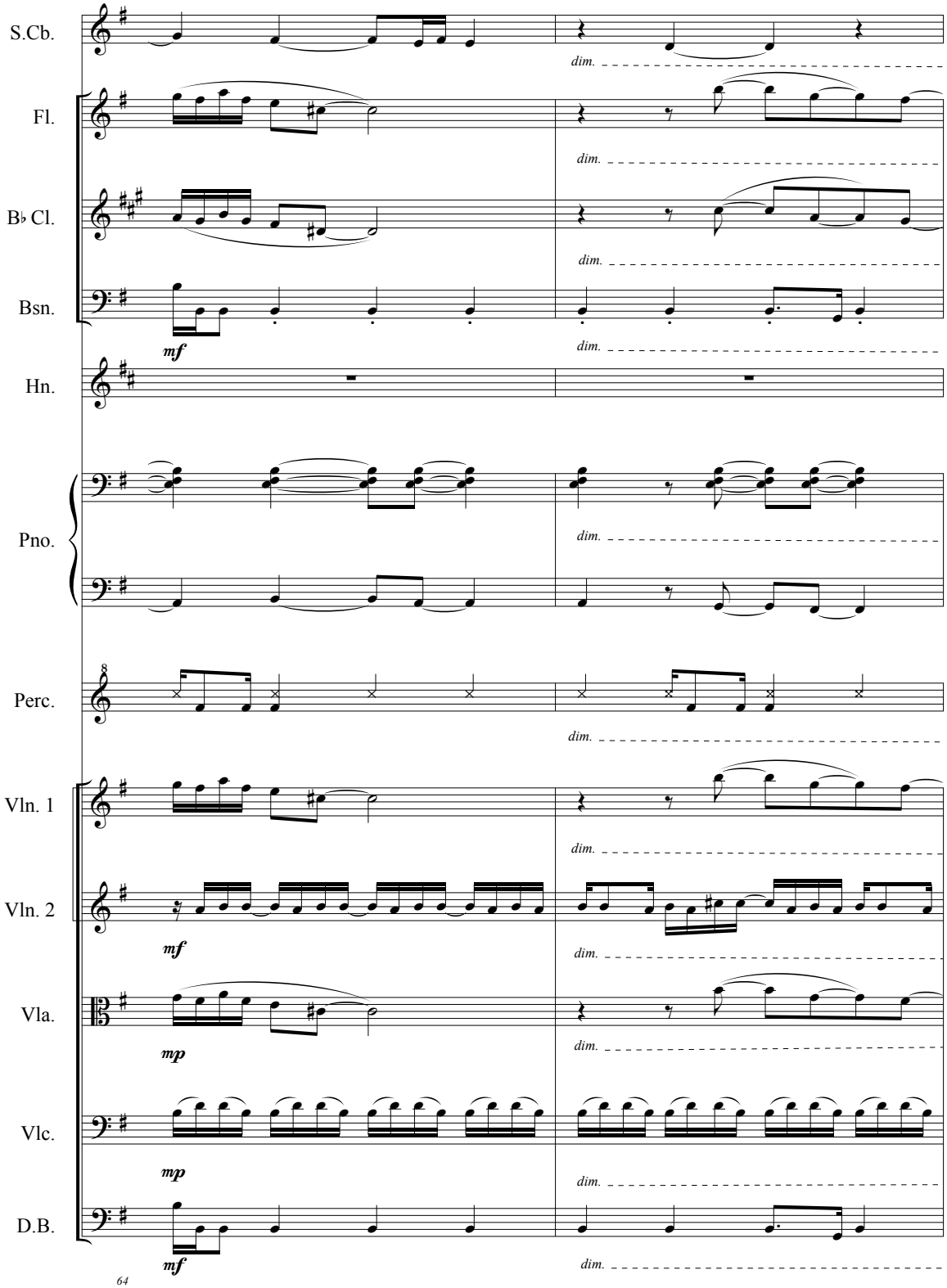

B
S.Cb.
f
Fl.
pp
B♭ Cl.
pp
Bsn.
pp
B
Hn.
pp
Pno.
Perc.
B
quiet intensity
Vln. 1
p
quiet intensity
Vln. 2
pp
p
quiet intensity
Vla.
pp
p
quiet intensity
Vlc.
pp
p
quiet intensity
arco
D.B.
49
p

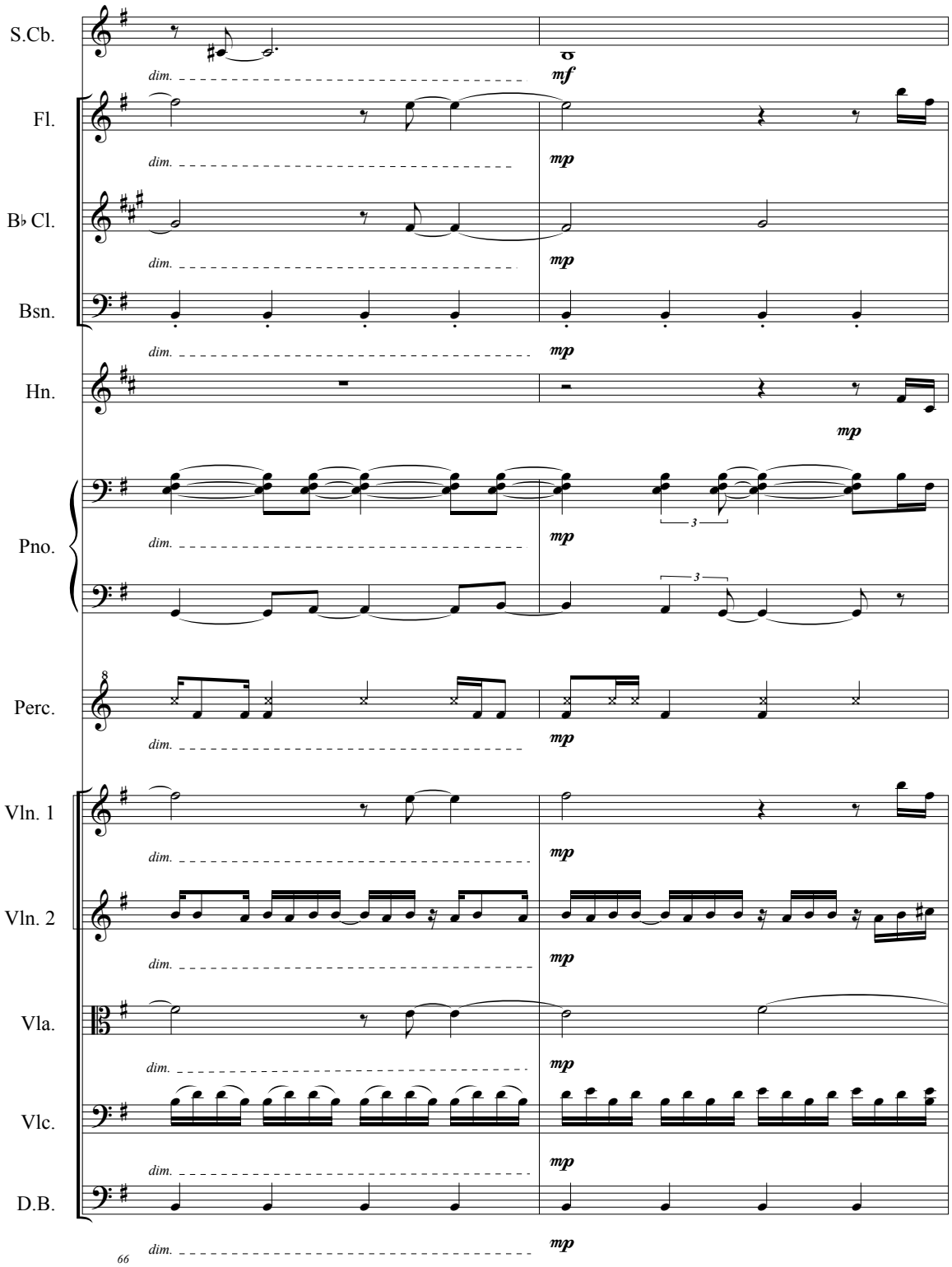

S.Cb.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Pno.
Perc.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
54

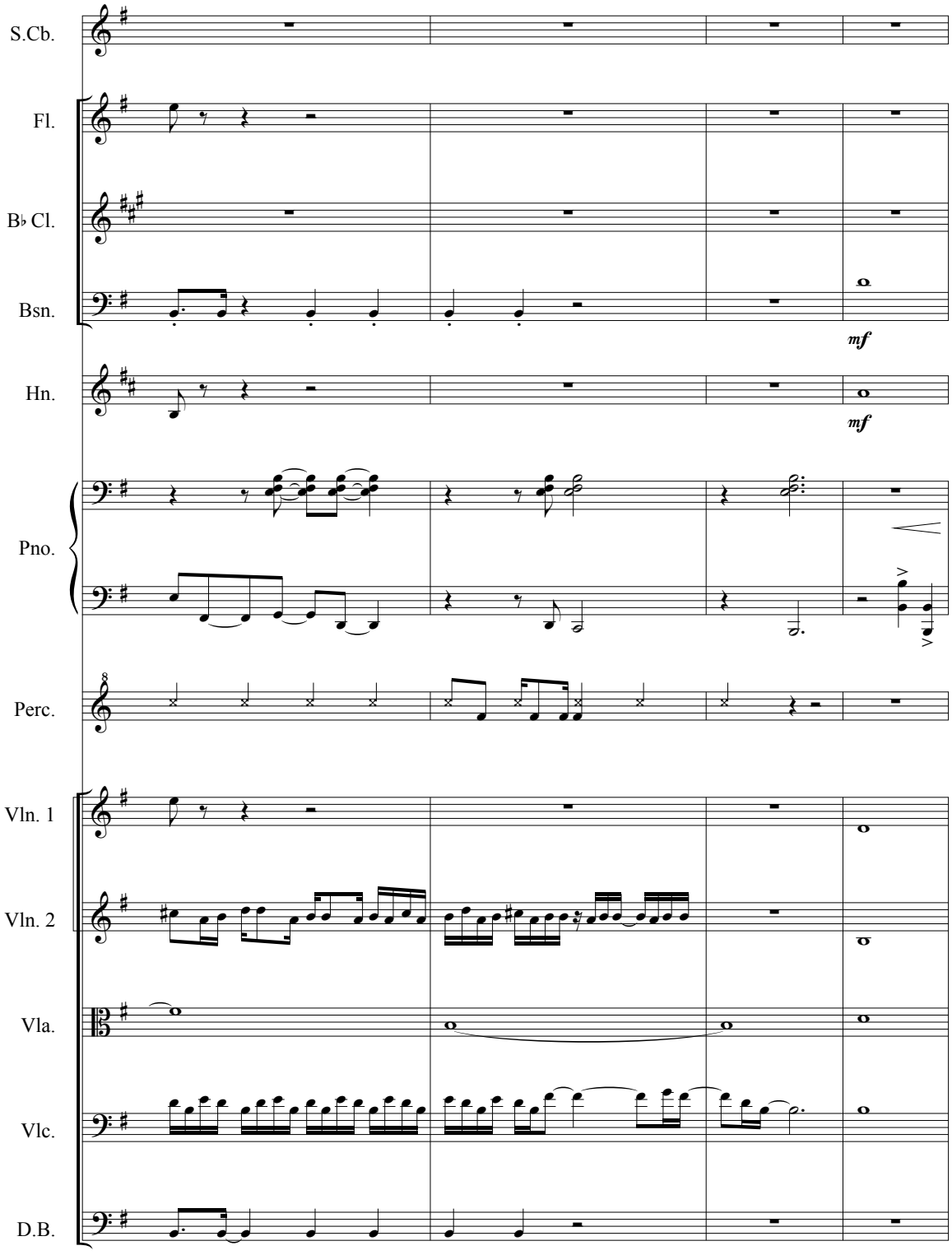

S.Cb.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Pno.
Perc.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
p
non cresc.
mp
56

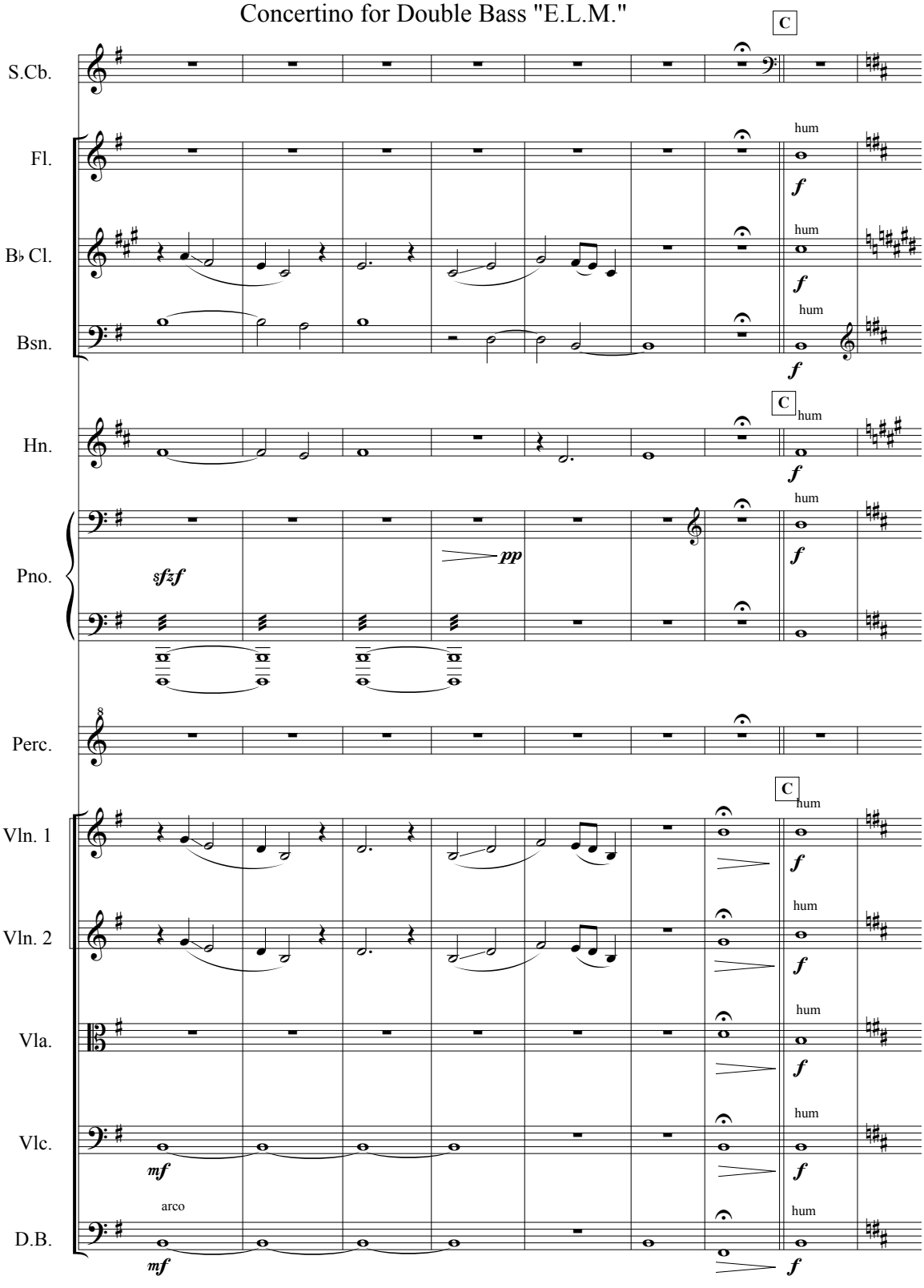

S.Cb.
mf
f
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Pno.
Perc.
3
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
59

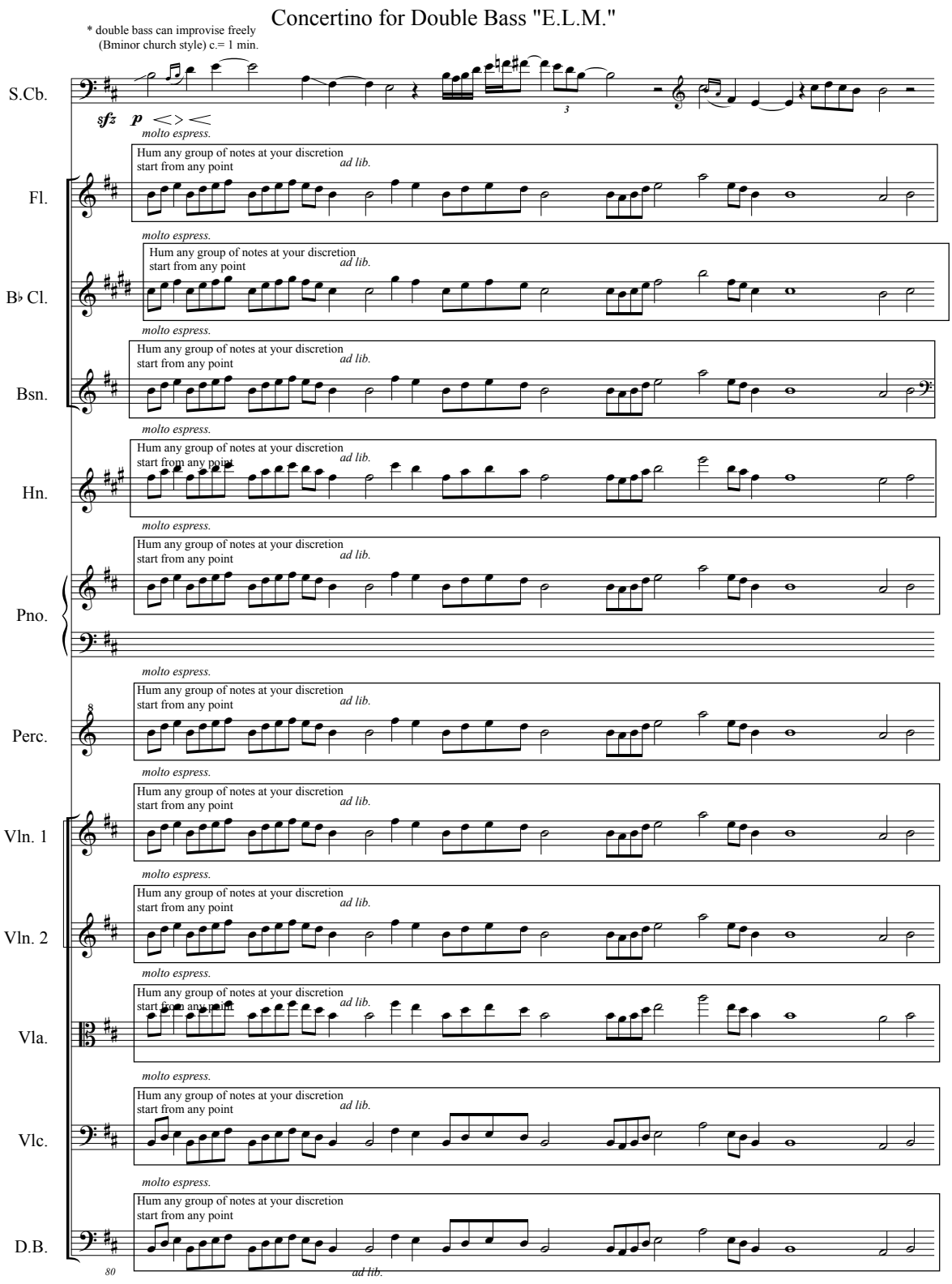

S.Cb.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
mf
Hn.
Pno.
Perc.
Vln. 1
f
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
pizz.
D.B.
mf
62


S.Cb.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Pno.
Perc.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
mf
mp
dim.
64


S.Cb.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Pno.
Perc.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
dim.
mf
mp
3
8
66

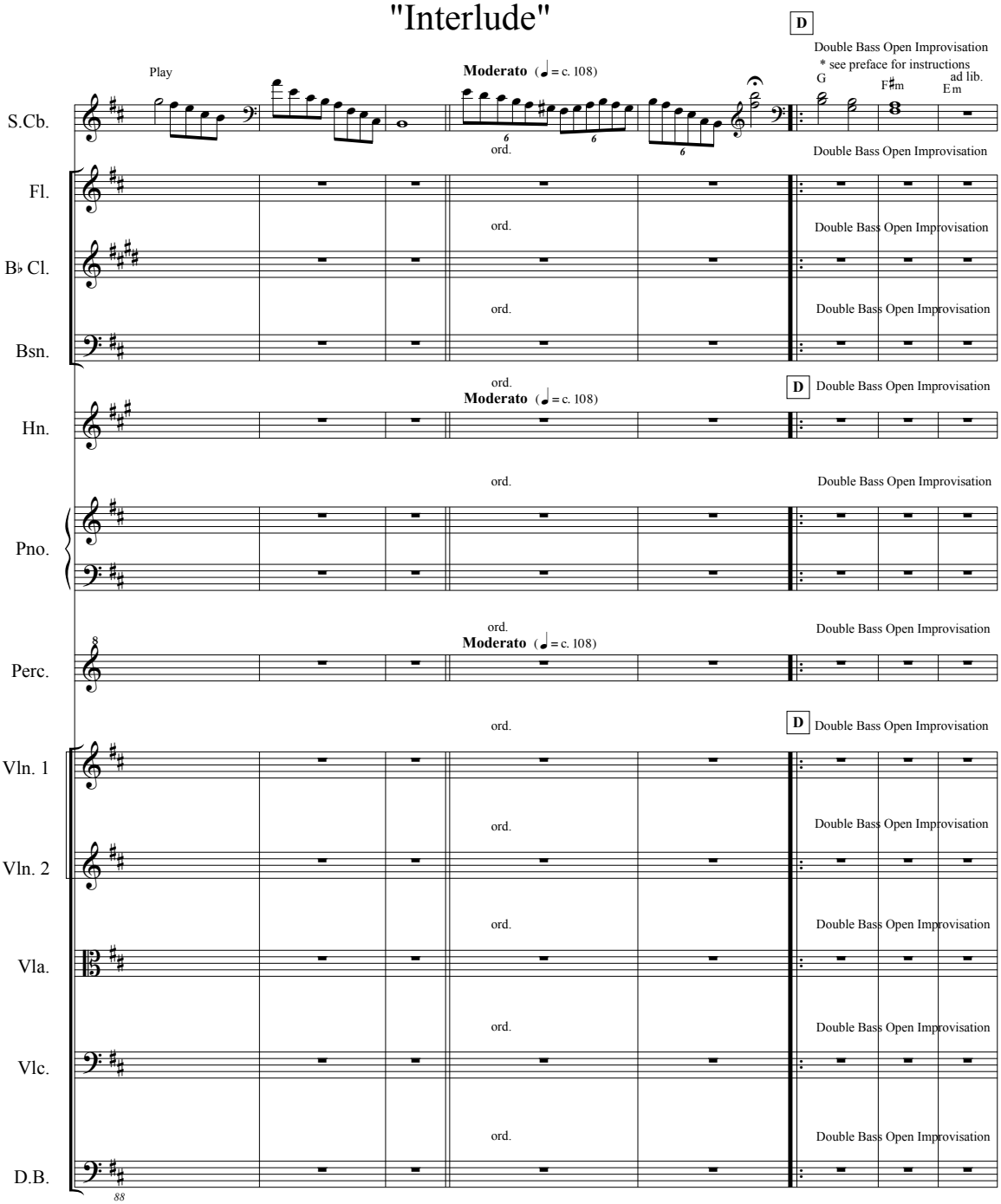

S.Cb.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
mf
Hn.
mf
Pno.
Perc.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
68

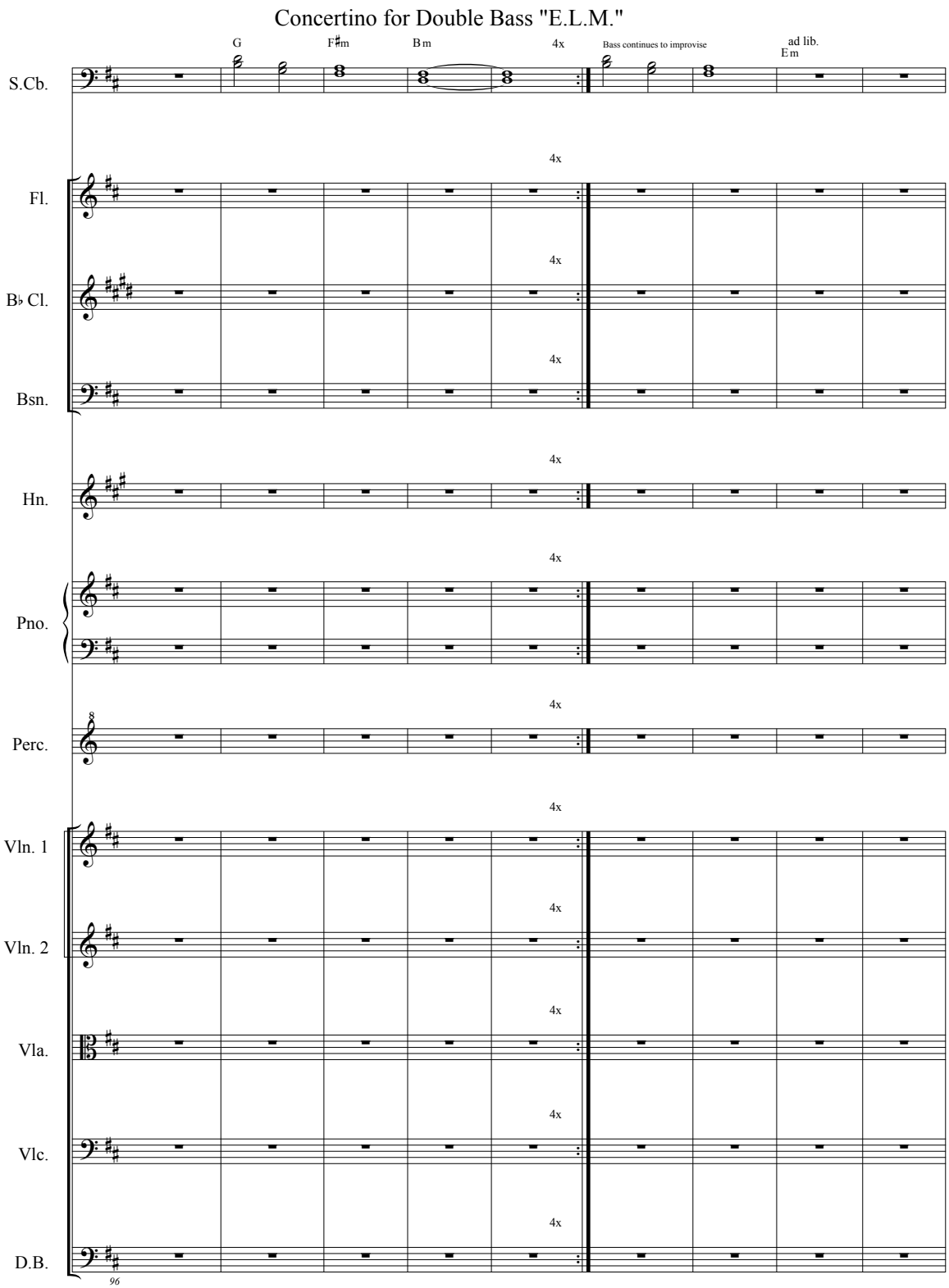

C
S.Cb.
Fl.
hum
f
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Pno.
sfzf
pp
Perc.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
mf
arco
D.B.
72

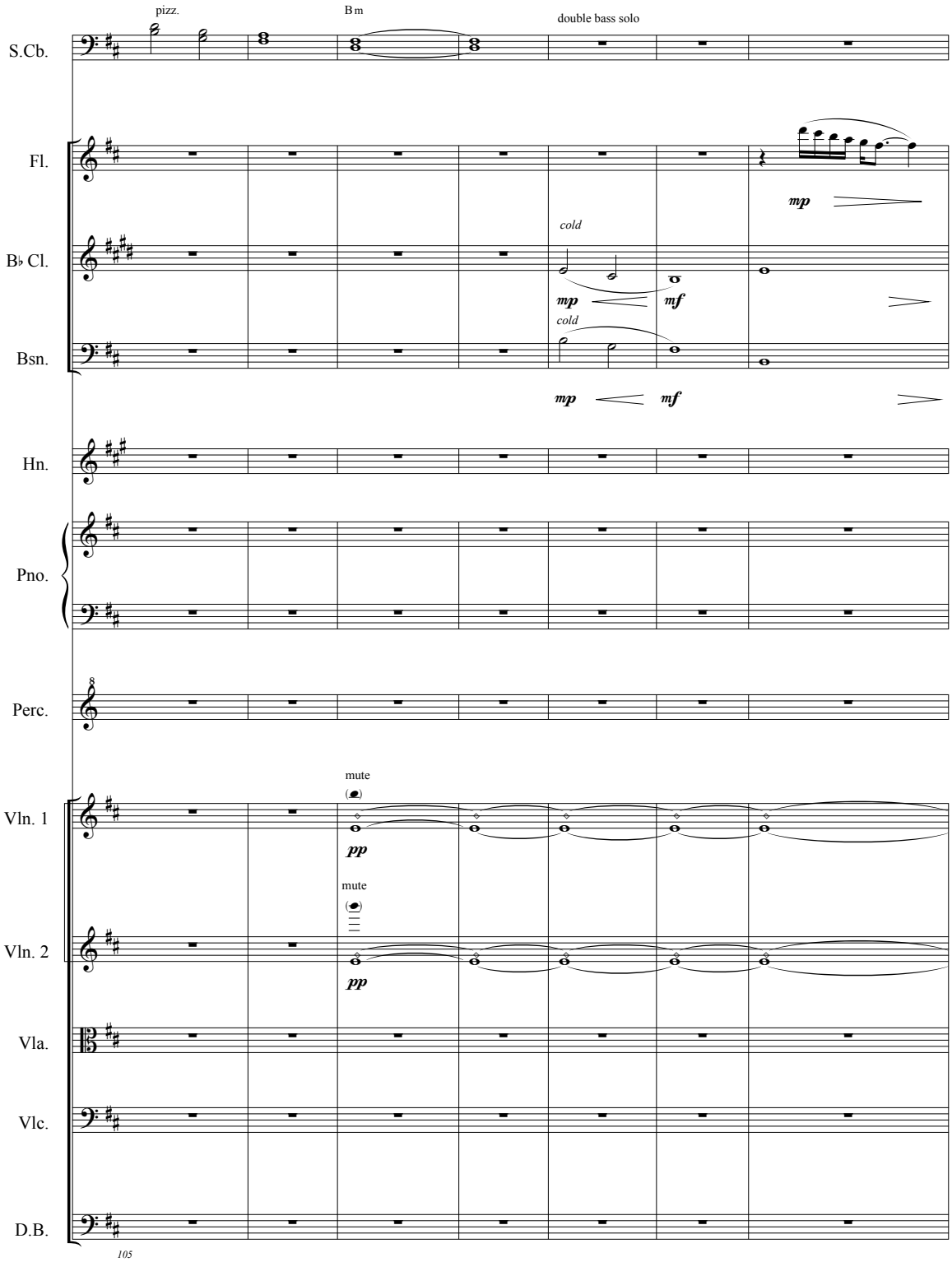

Concertino for Double Bass "E.L.M."
* double bass can improvise freely
(Bminor church style) c.= 1 min.
S.Cb.
sfz
p
molto espress.
Hum any group of notes at your discretion
start from any point
ad lib.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Pno.
Perc.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
80

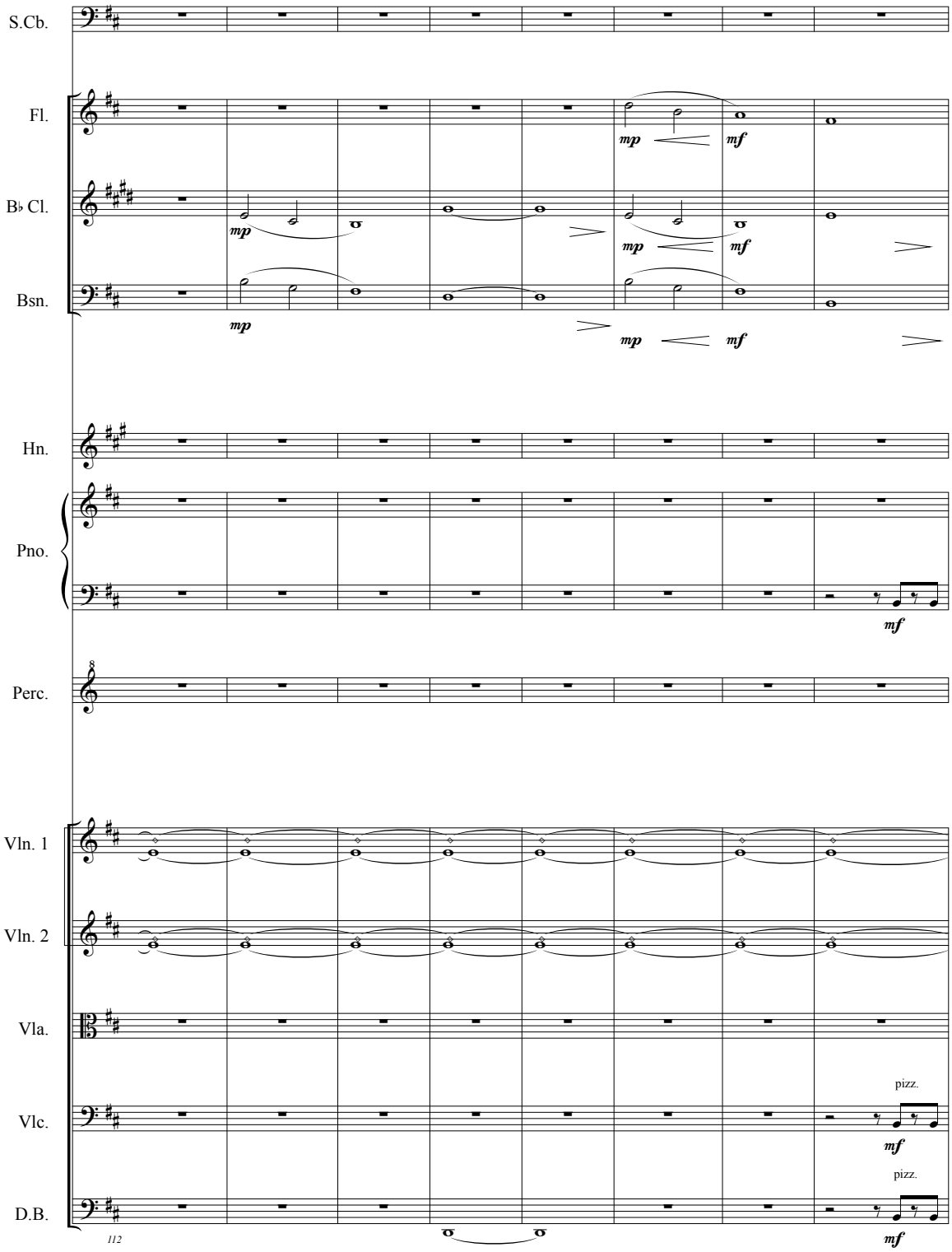
Concertino for Double Bass "E.L.M."

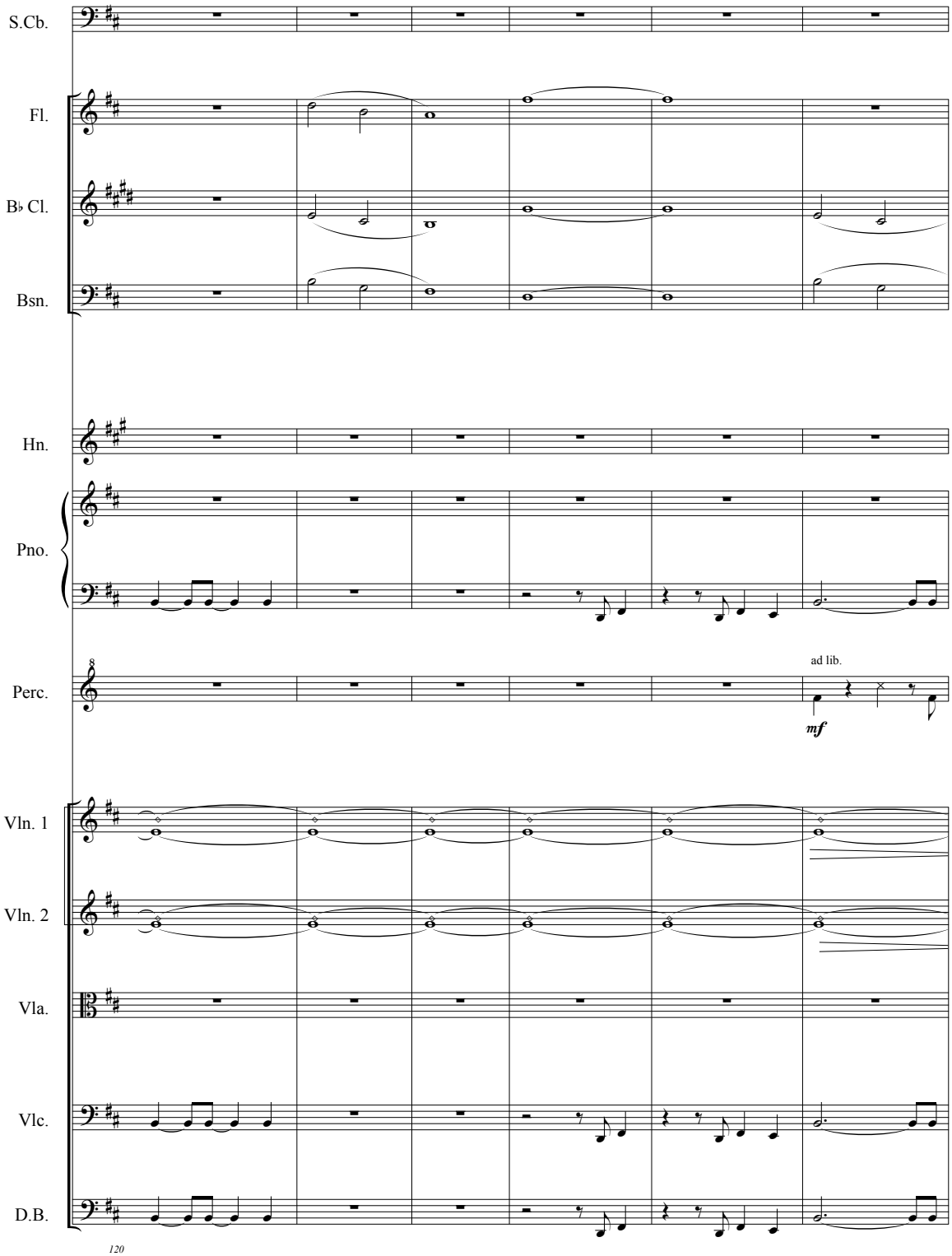
II.
"Interlude"

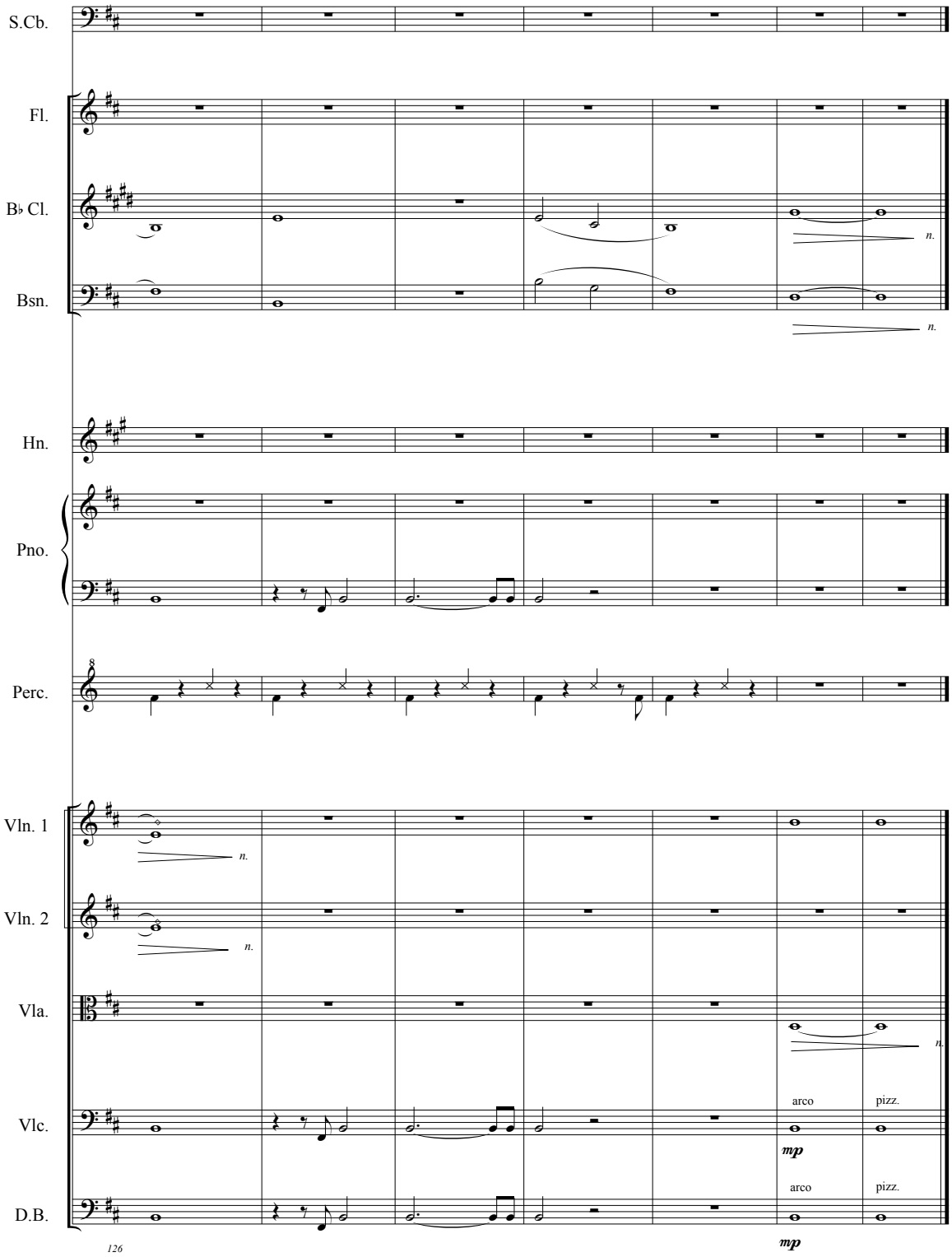



Concertino for Double Bass "E.L.M."
G
F♯m
B m
4x
Bass continues to improvise
ad lib.
E m
S.Cb.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Pno.
Perc.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
96


pizz.
B m
double bass solo
S.Cb.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Pno.
Perc.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
cold
cold
mp
mf
mp
mf
mp
mute
pp
mute
pp
105

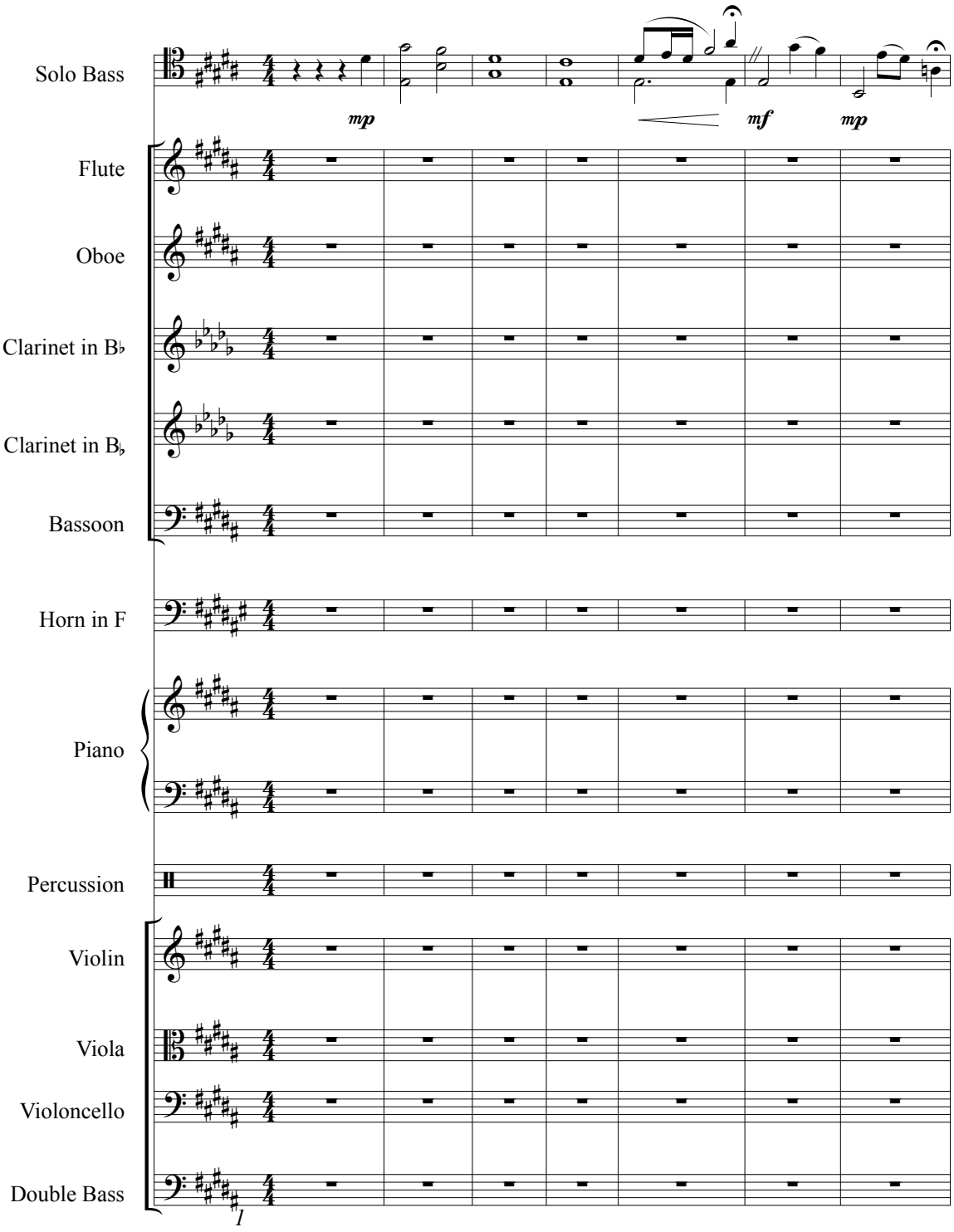

S.Cb.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Pno.
Perc.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
mp
mf
pizz.
112


S.Cb.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Pno.
Perc.
ad lib.
mf
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
120

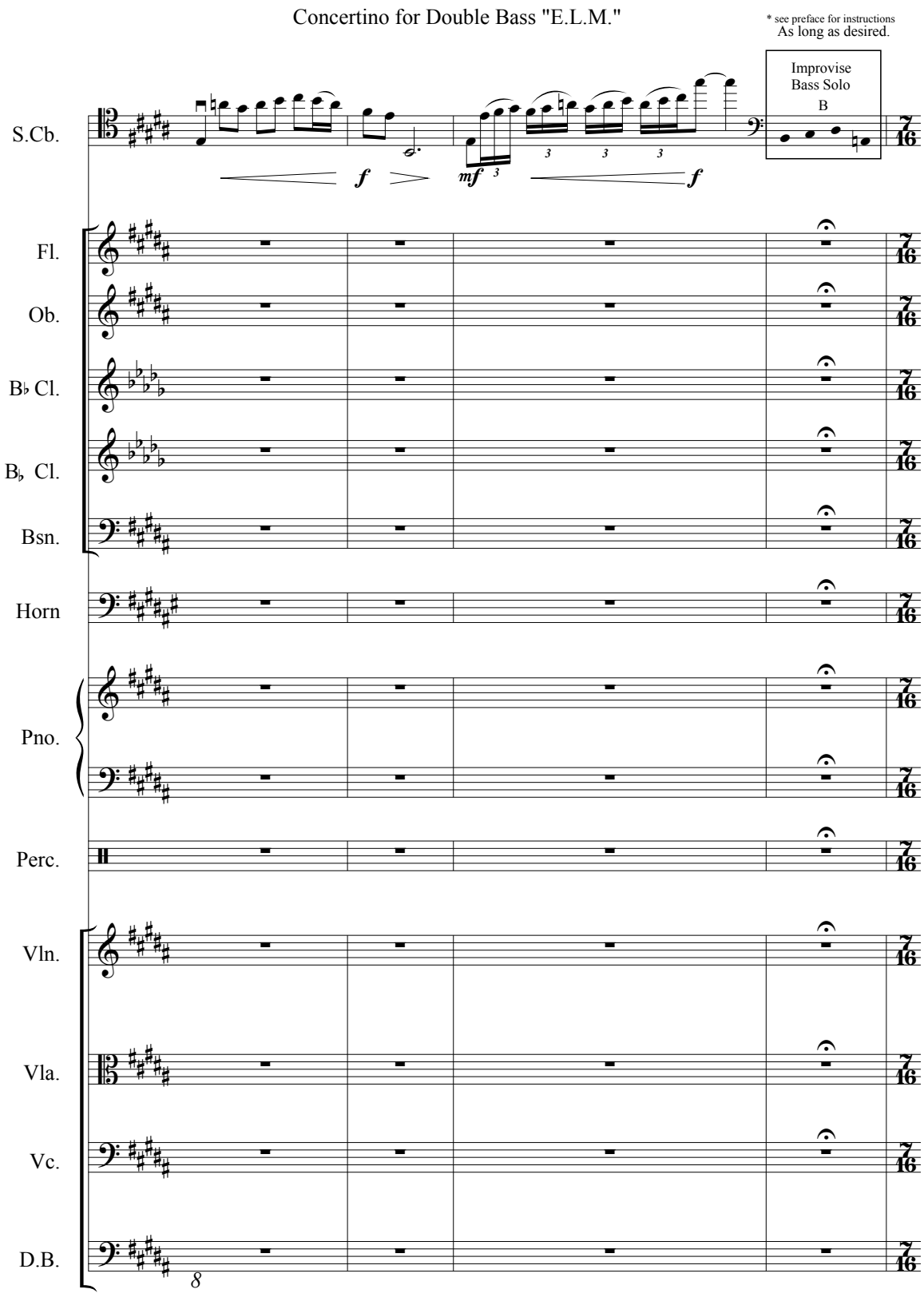

S.Cb.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Pno.
Perc.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.
n.
arco
pizz.
mp
126

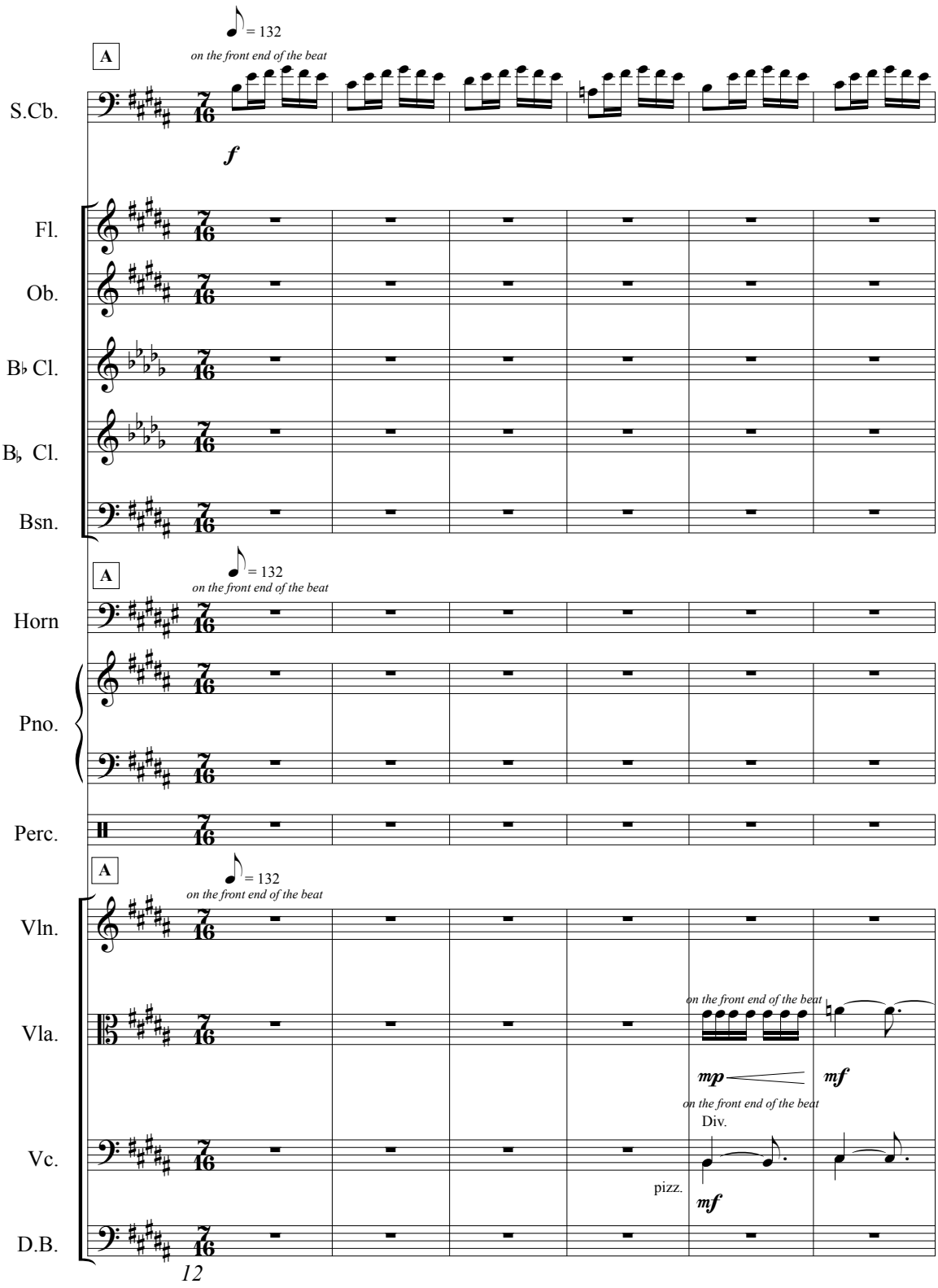
Concertion for Double Bass "E.L.M."

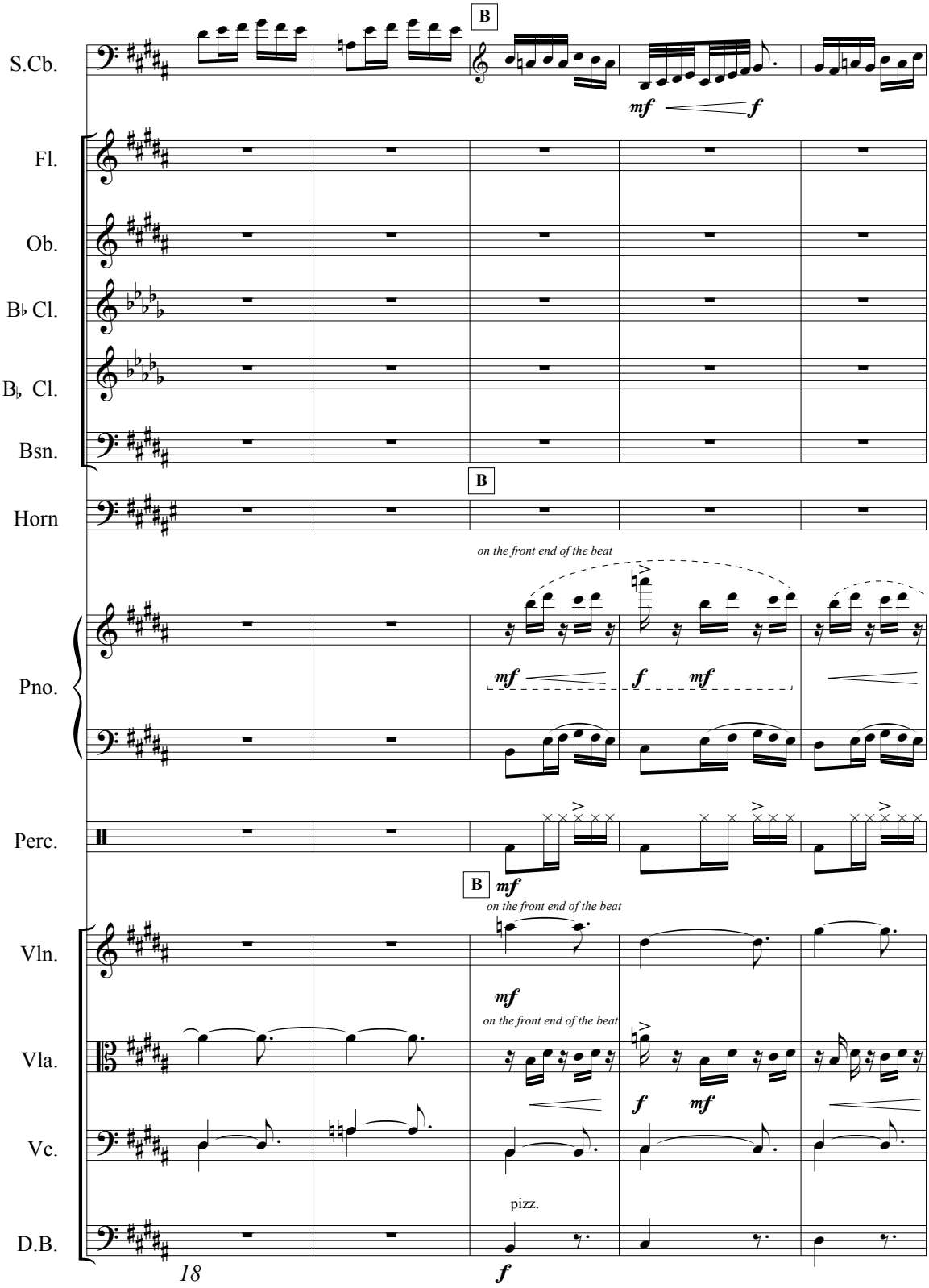
III.

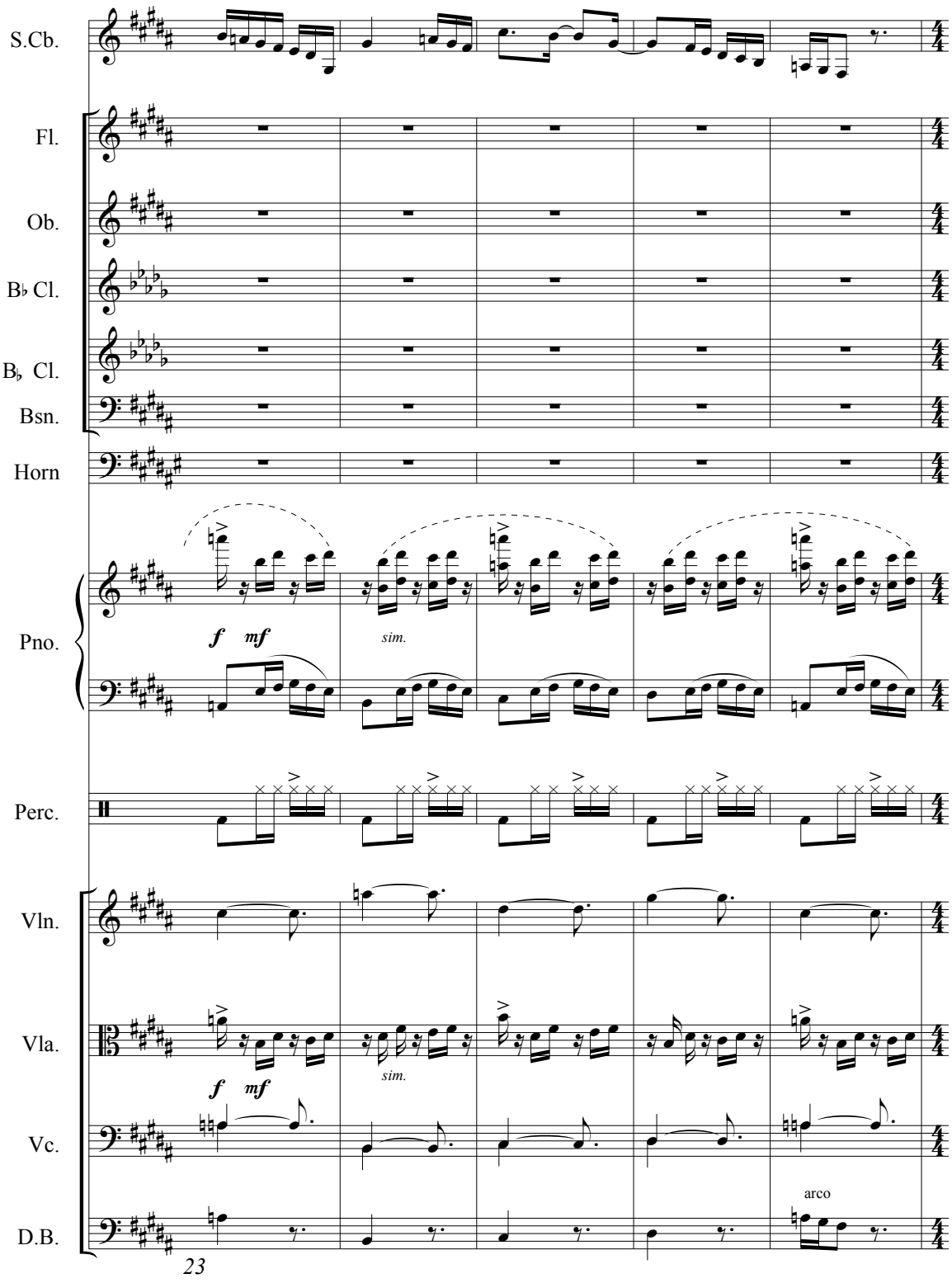


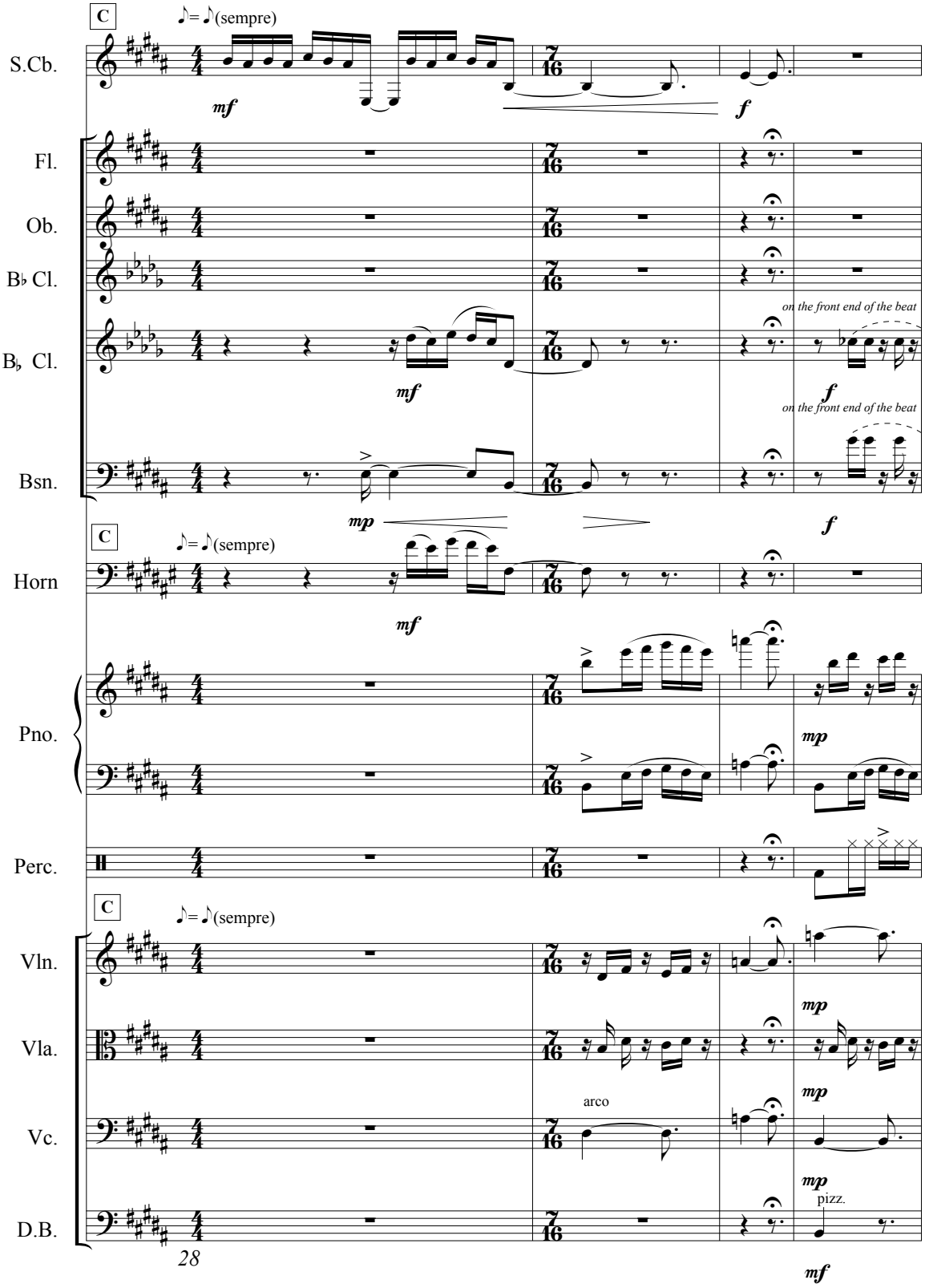
Concertino for Double Bass "E.L.M."

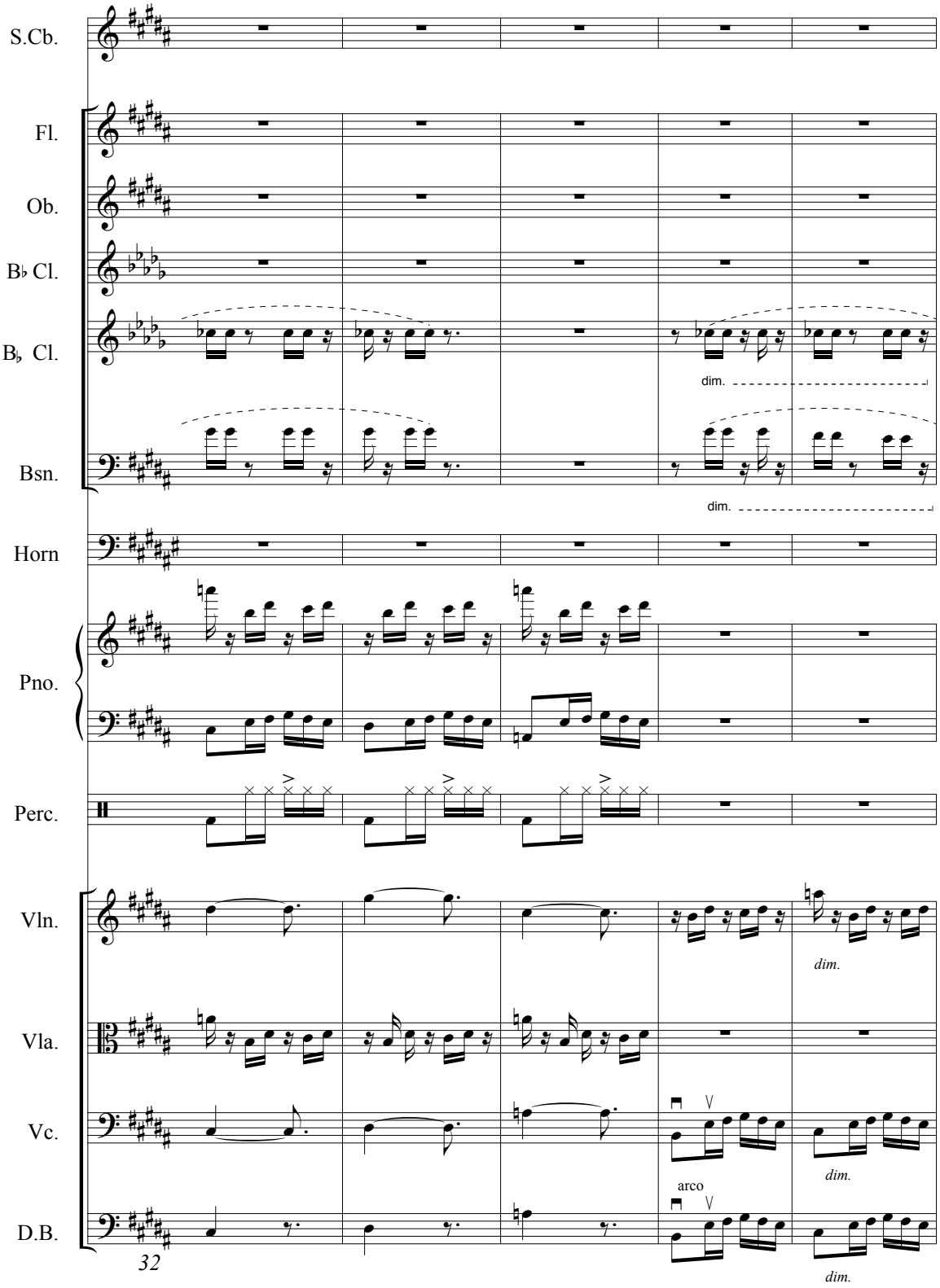


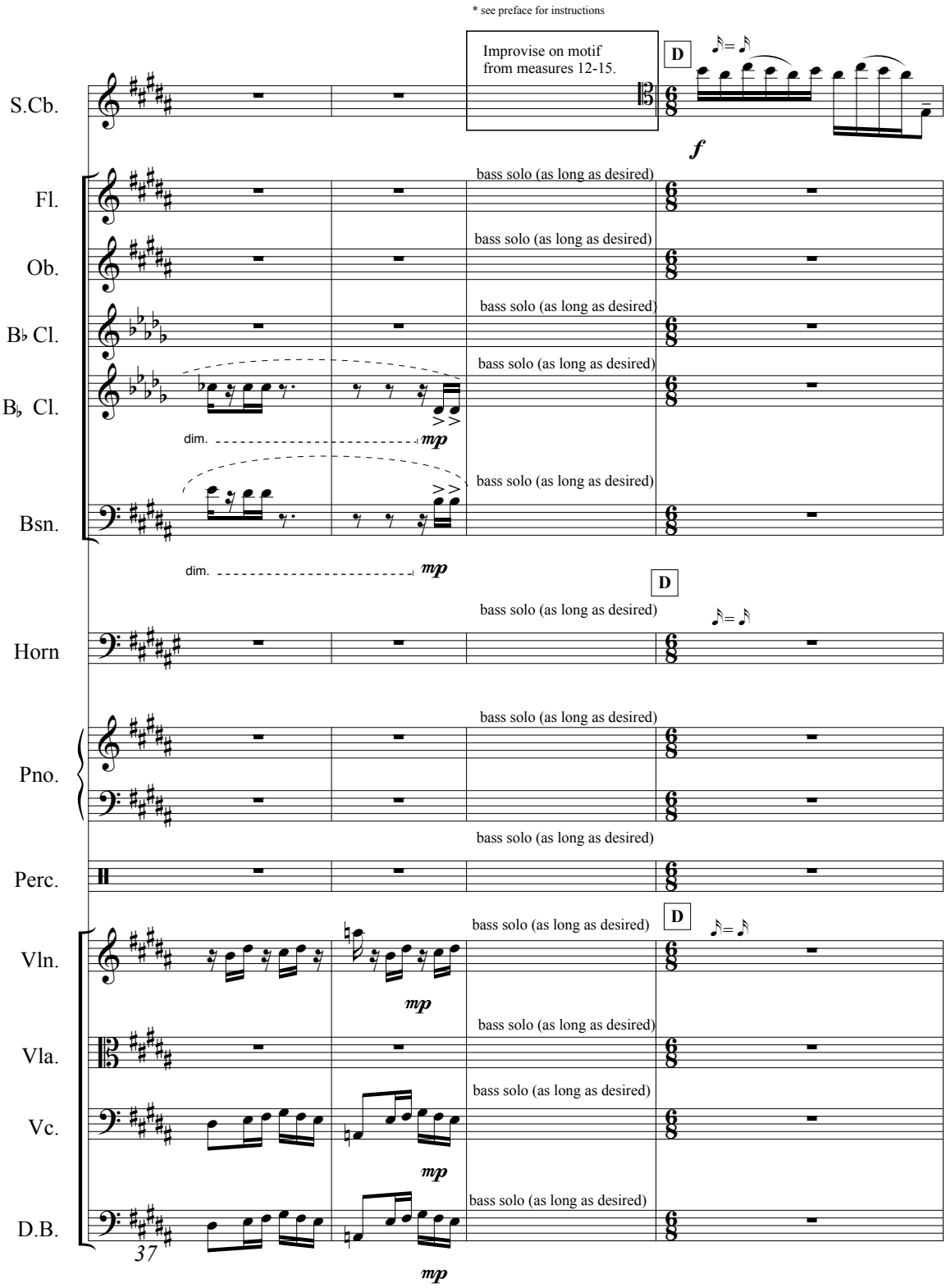

= 132
A
on the front end of the beat
S.Cb.
f
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
A
= 132
on the front end of the beat
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
A
= 132
on the front end of the beat
Vln.
Vla.
on the front end of the beat
mp
mf
on the front end of the beat
Div.
Vc.
pizz.
mf
D.B.
12

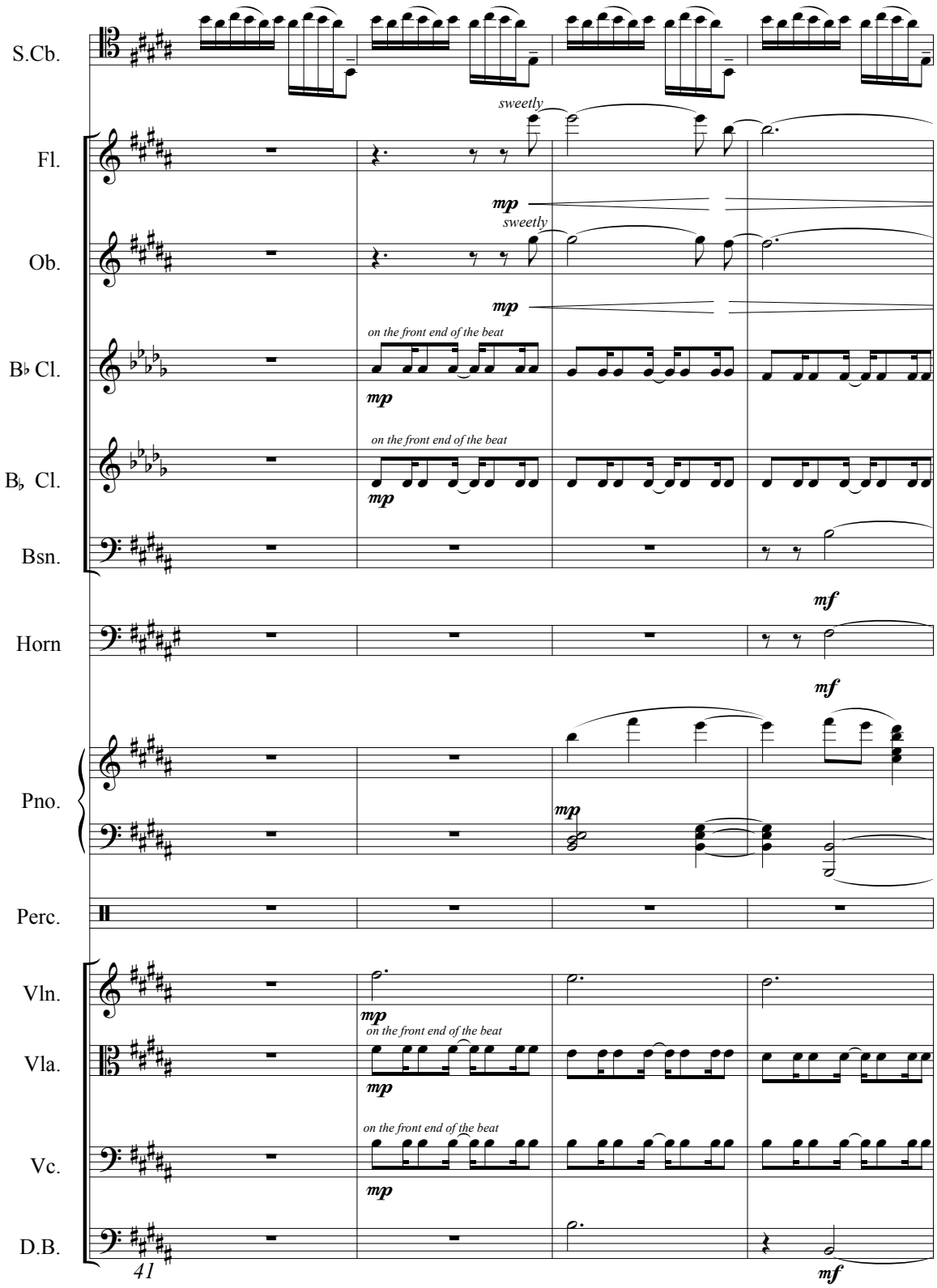

B
S.Cb.
mf
f
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
B
Horn
on the front end of the beat
Pno.
mf
f
mf
Perc.
B
mf
on the front end of the beat
Vln.
mf
on the front end of the beat
Vla.
f
mf
Vc.
pizz.
D.B.
18
f

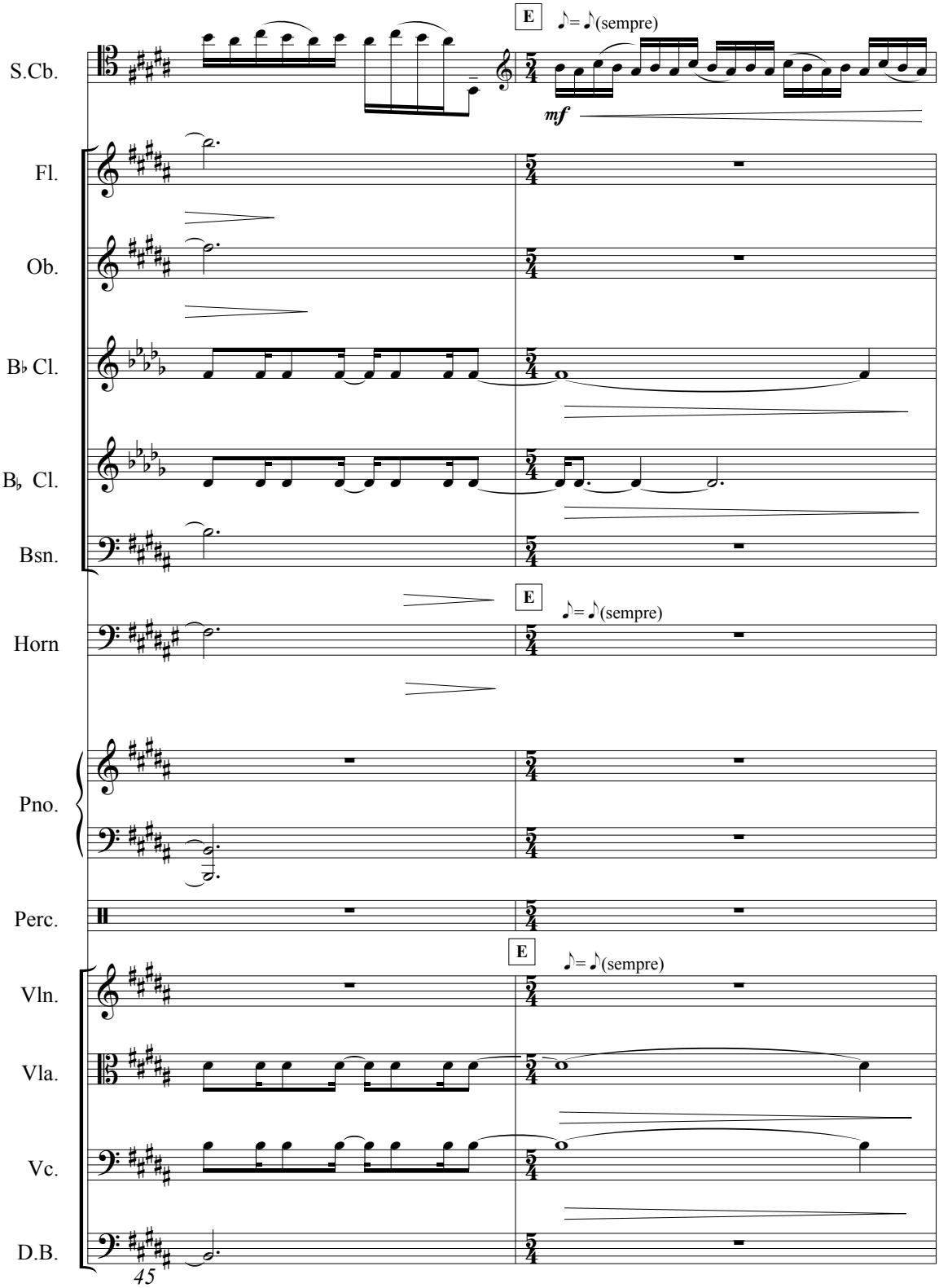

S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
f
mf
sim.
f
mf
sim.
arco
23

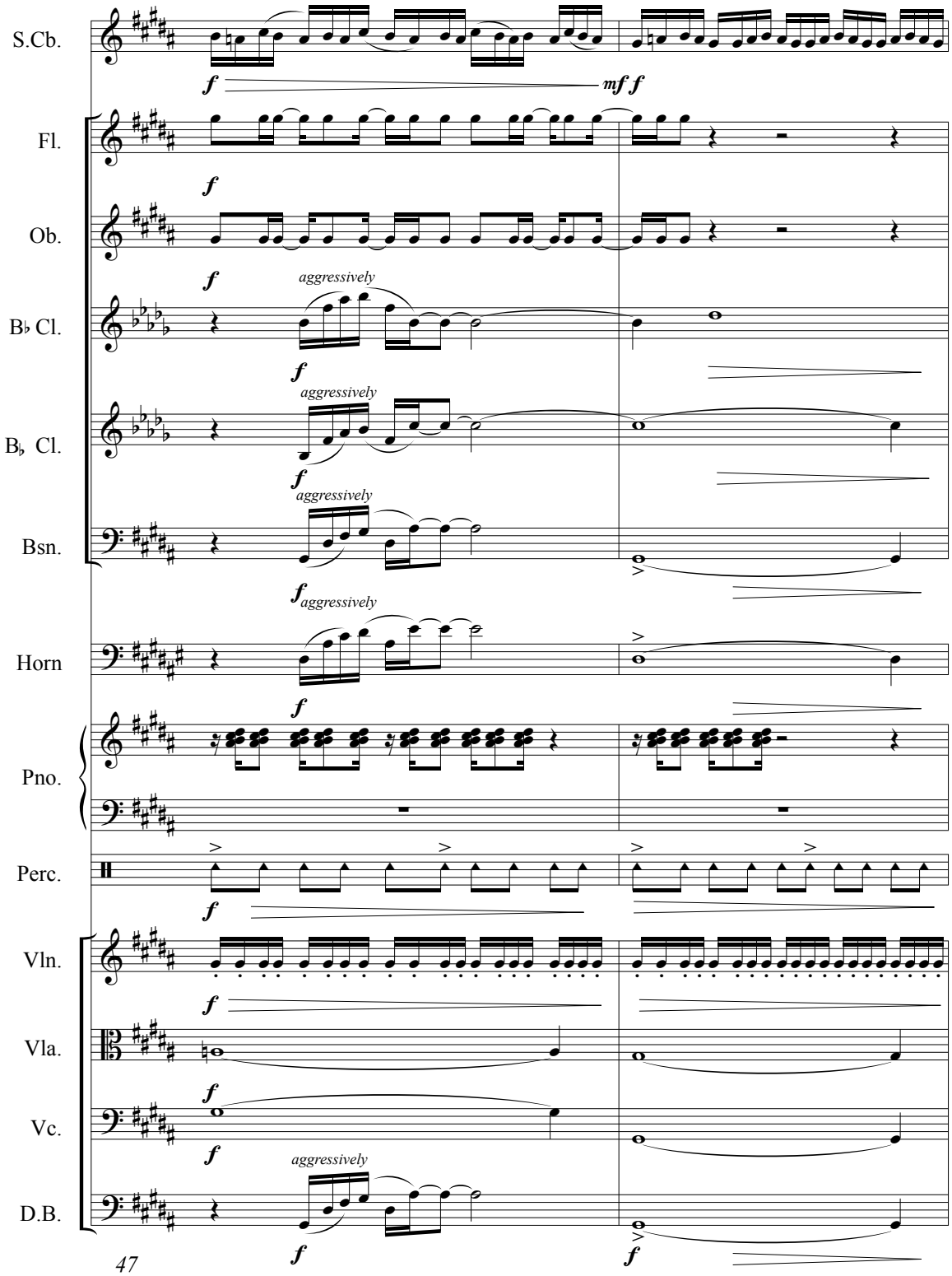

C
♪= ♪(sempre)
S.Cb.
mf
f
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
on the front end of the beat
mf
f
on the front end of the beat
Bsn.
mp
f
C
♪= ♪(sempre)
Horn
mf
Pno.
mp
Perc.
C
♪= ♪(sempre)
Vln.
mp
Vla.
mp
arco
Vc.
mp
pizz.
D.B.
28
mf

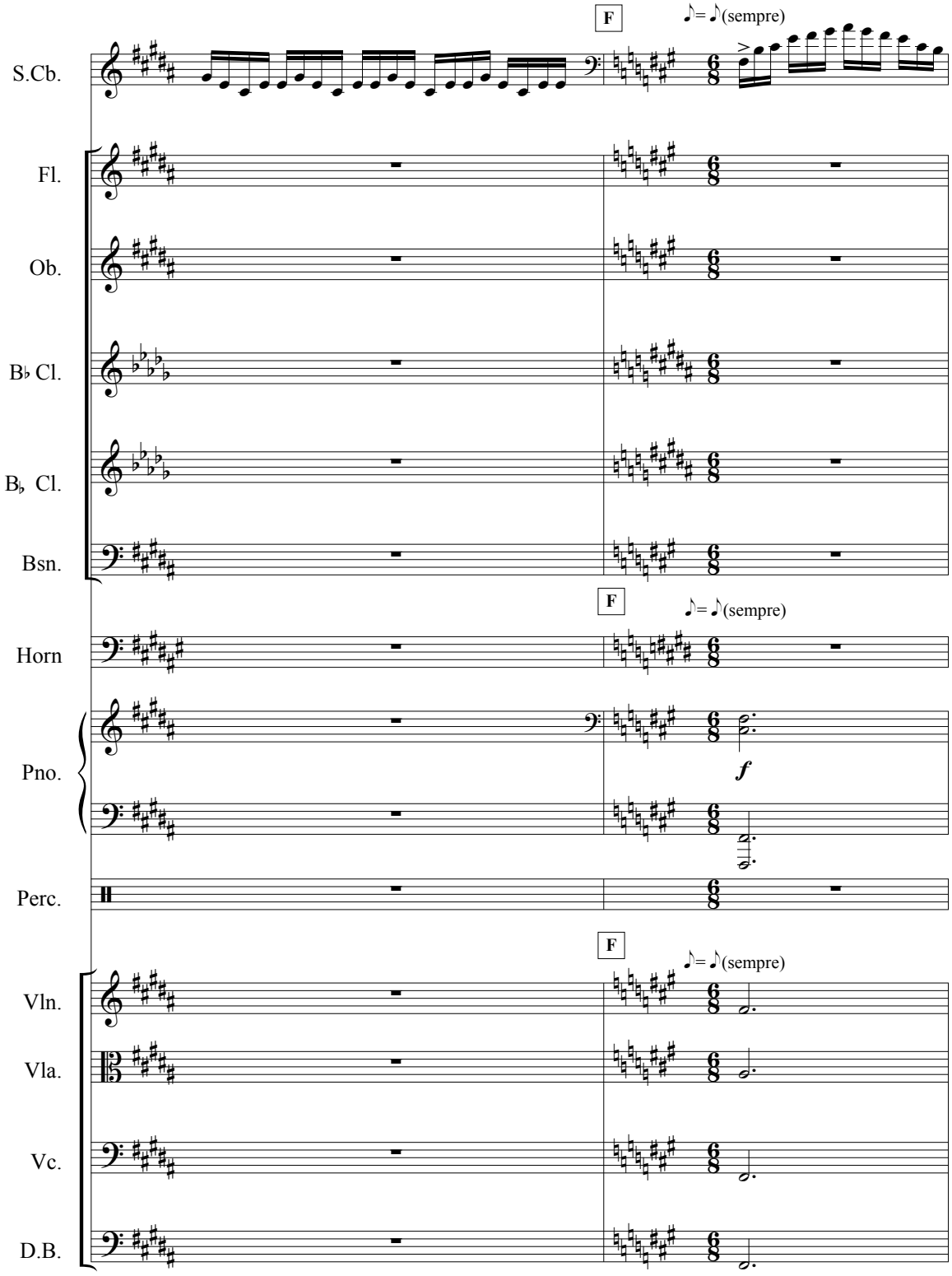

S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
dim.
Bsn.
dim.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
dim.
Vla.
Vc.
dim.
arco
D.B.
dim.
32


* see preface for instructions
Improvise on motif
from measures 12-15.
D
S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
bass solo (as long as desired)
dim.
mp
f
37

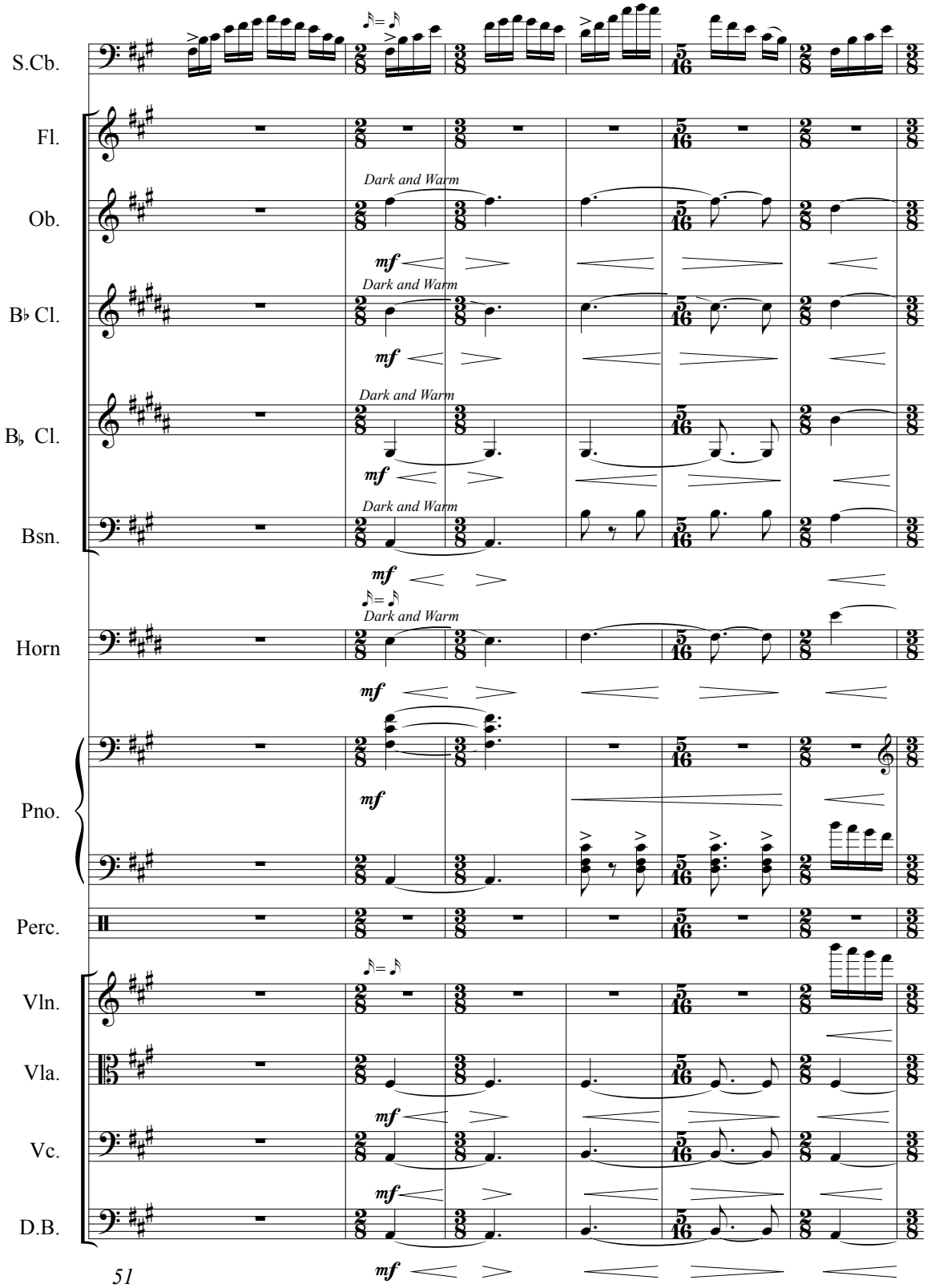

S.Cb.
sweetly
Fl.
mp
sweetly
Ob.
mp
on the front end of the beat
B♭ Cl.
mp
on the front end of the beat
B♭ Cl.
mp
Bsn.
mf
Horn
mf
Pno.
mp
Perc.
Vln.
mp
on the front end of the beat
Vla.
mp
on the front end of the beat
Vc.
mp
D.B.
41
mf

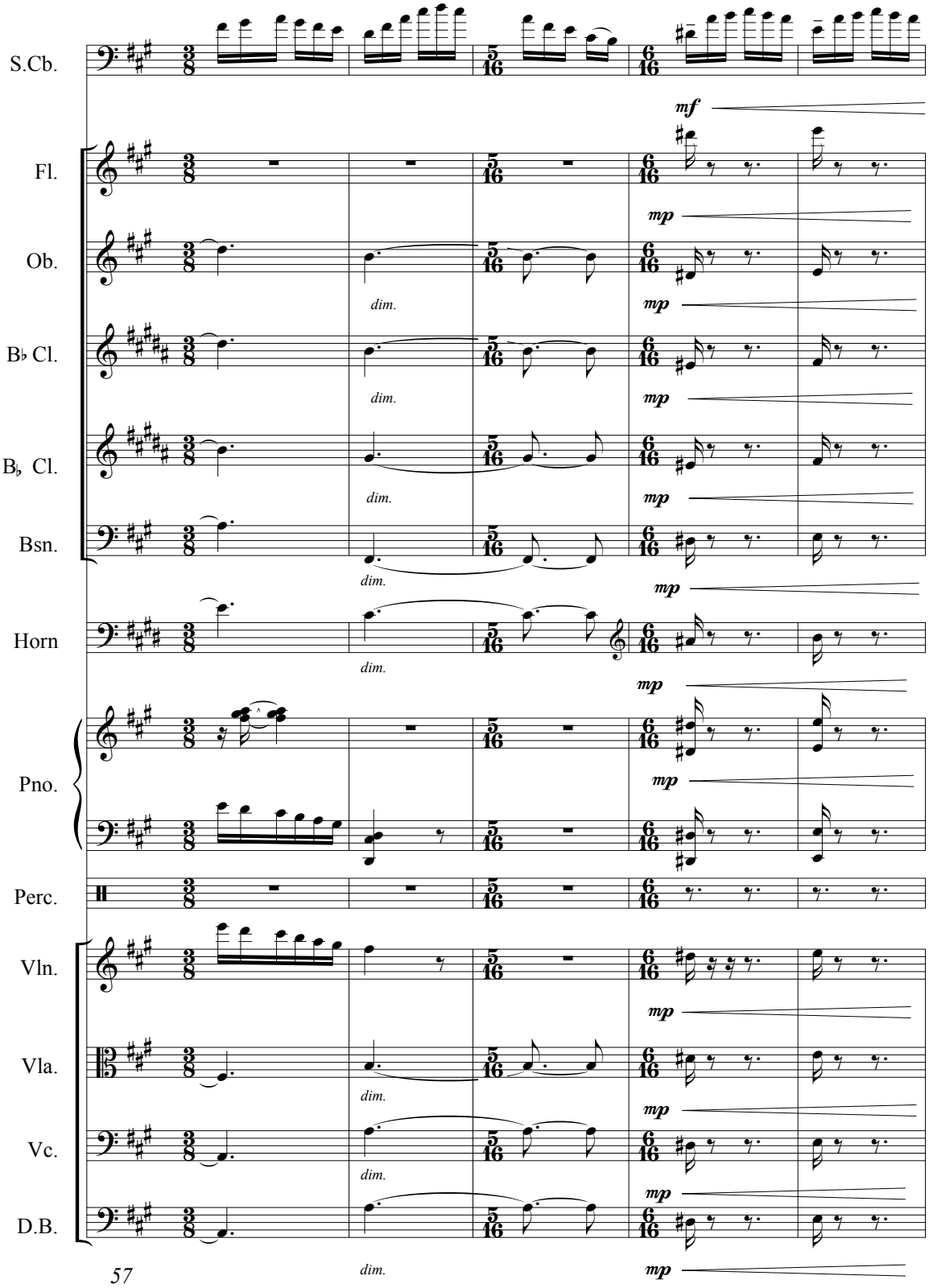

E
♪= ♪(sempre)
S.Cb.
mf
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
E
♪= ♪(sempre)
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
E
♪= ♪(sempre)
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
45

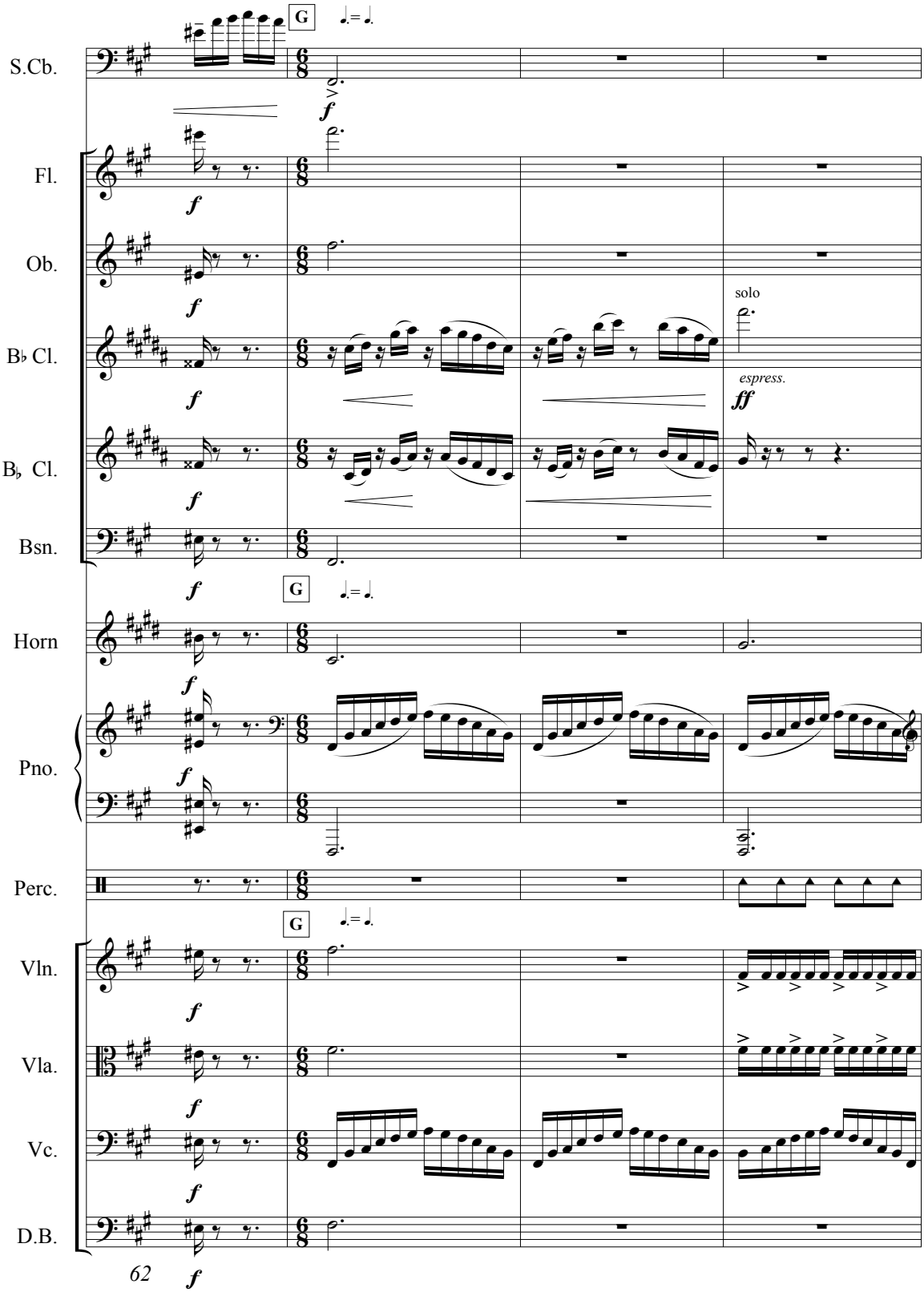

S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
aggressively
47

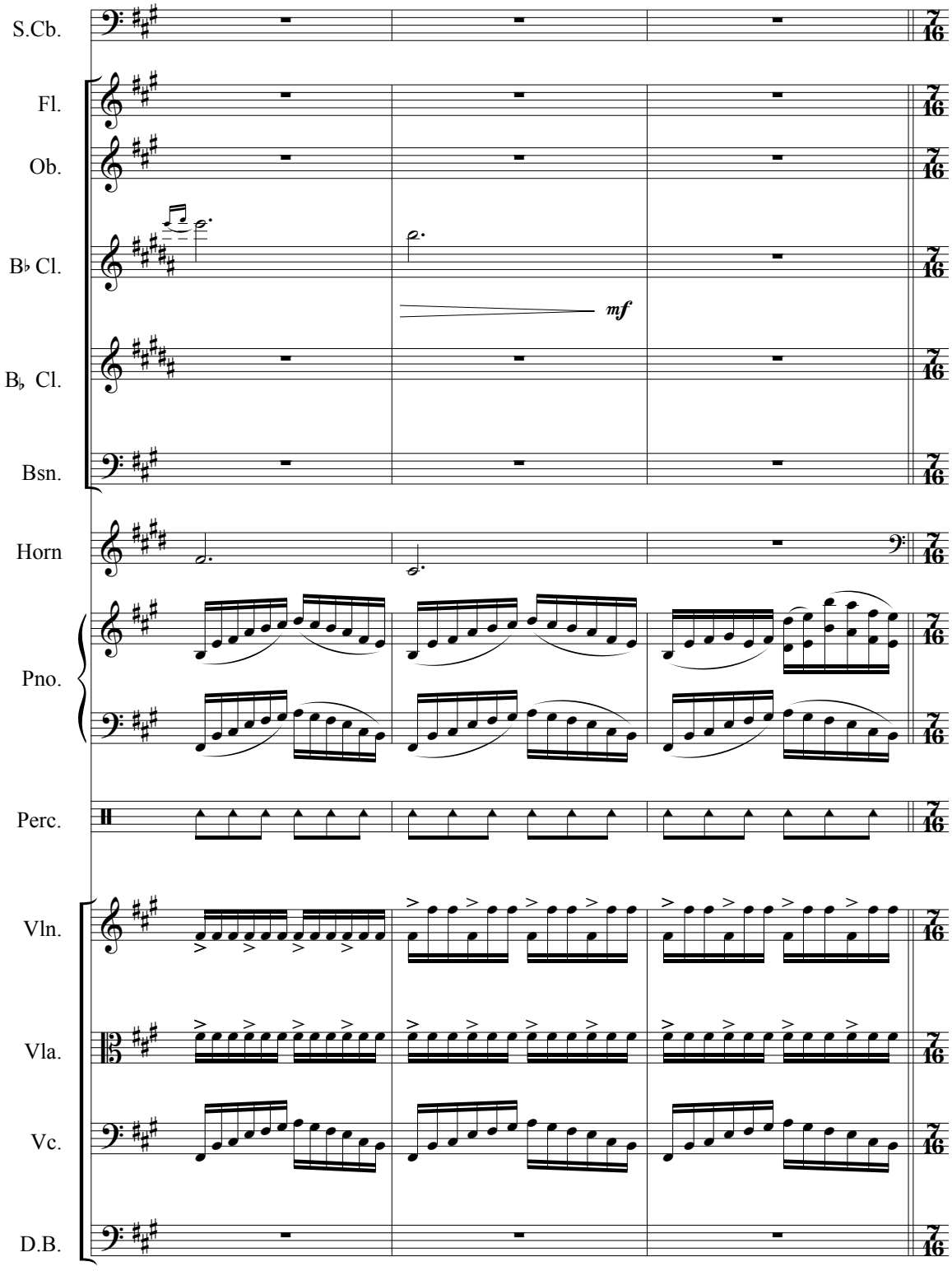

F
♪= ♪(sempre)
S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
F
♪= ♪(sempre)
Horn
Pno.
f
Perc.
F
♪= ♪(sempre)
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.

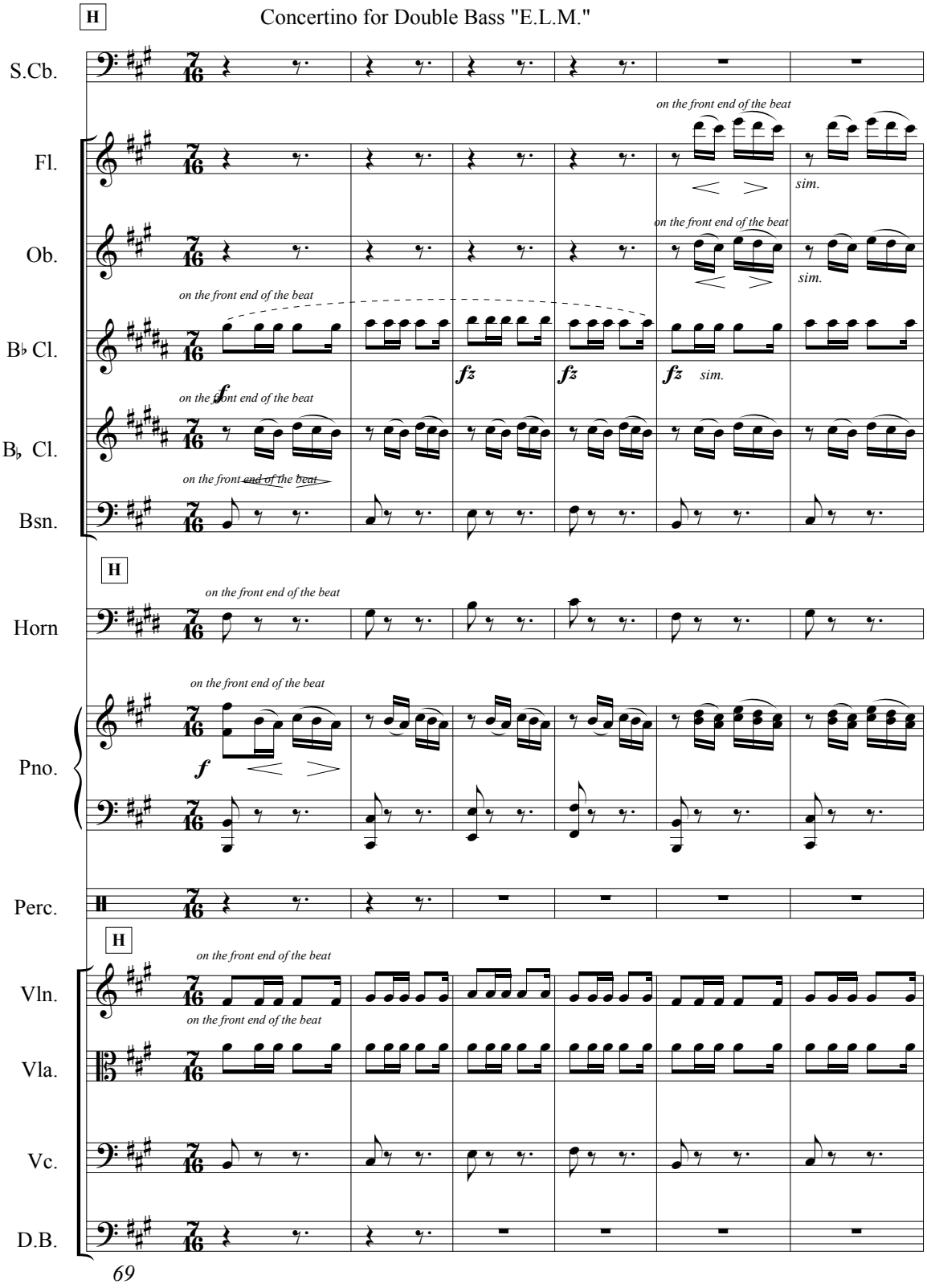
49

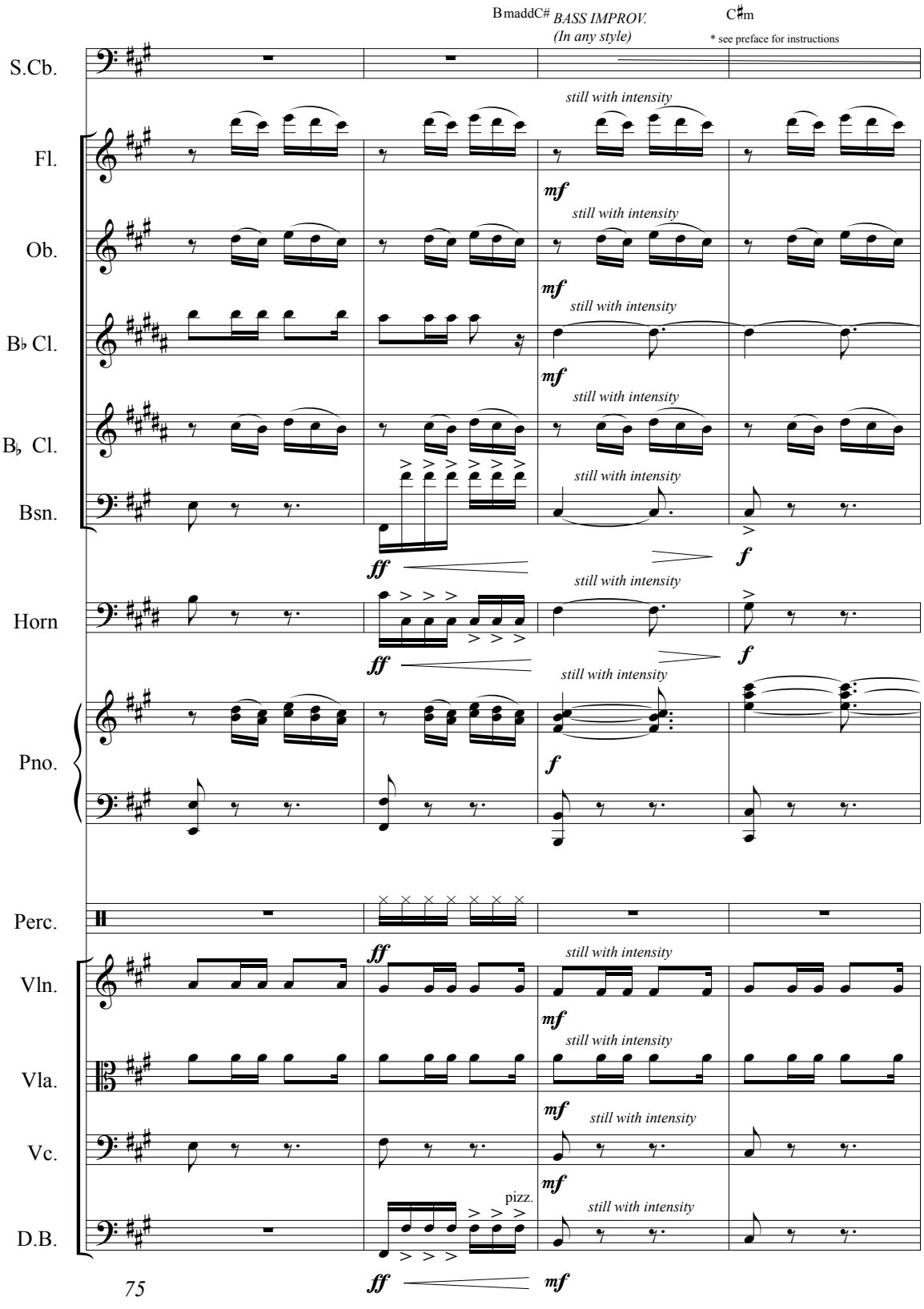

S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
Dark and Warm
mf
51

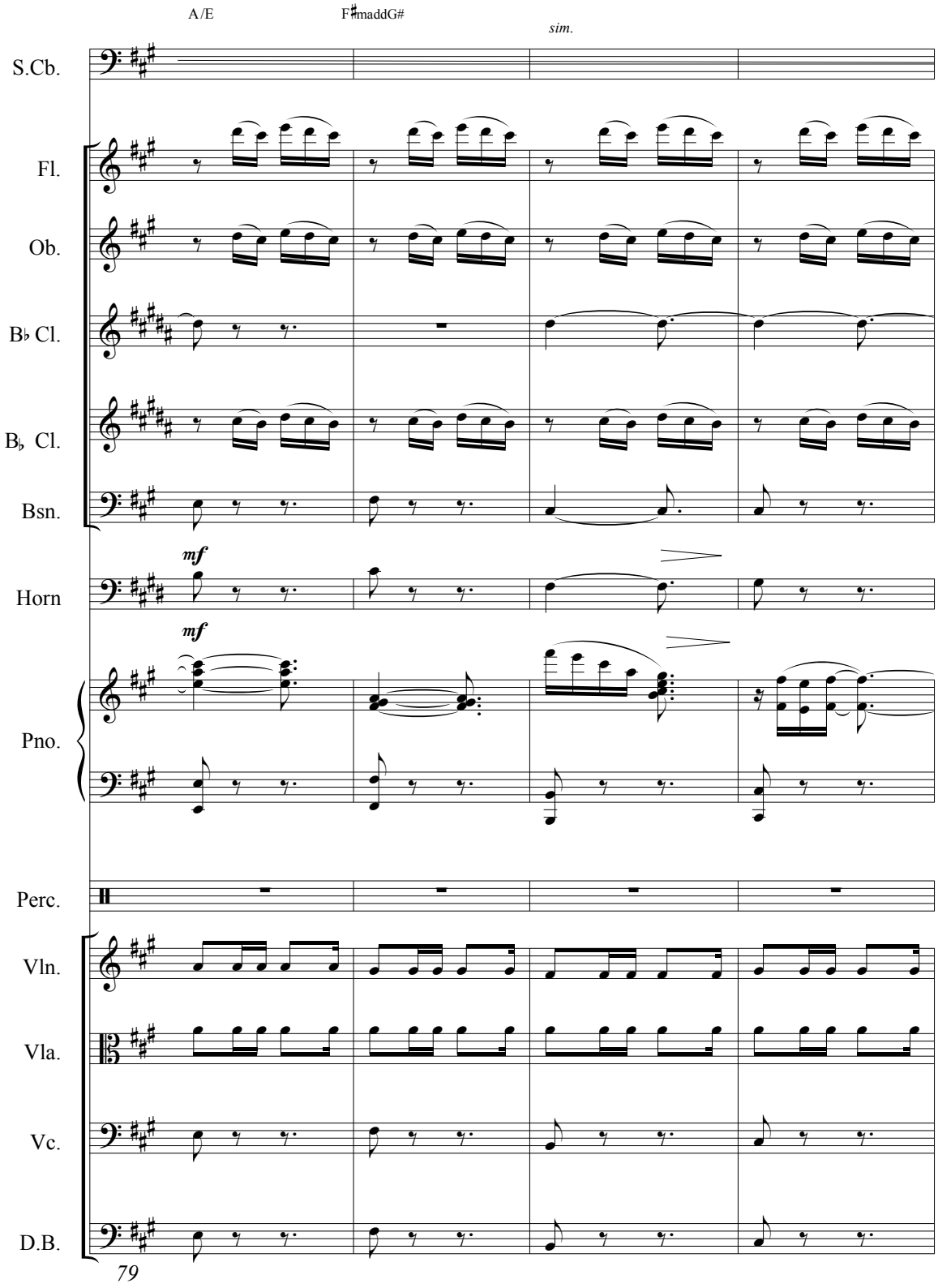

S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
mp
dim.
57

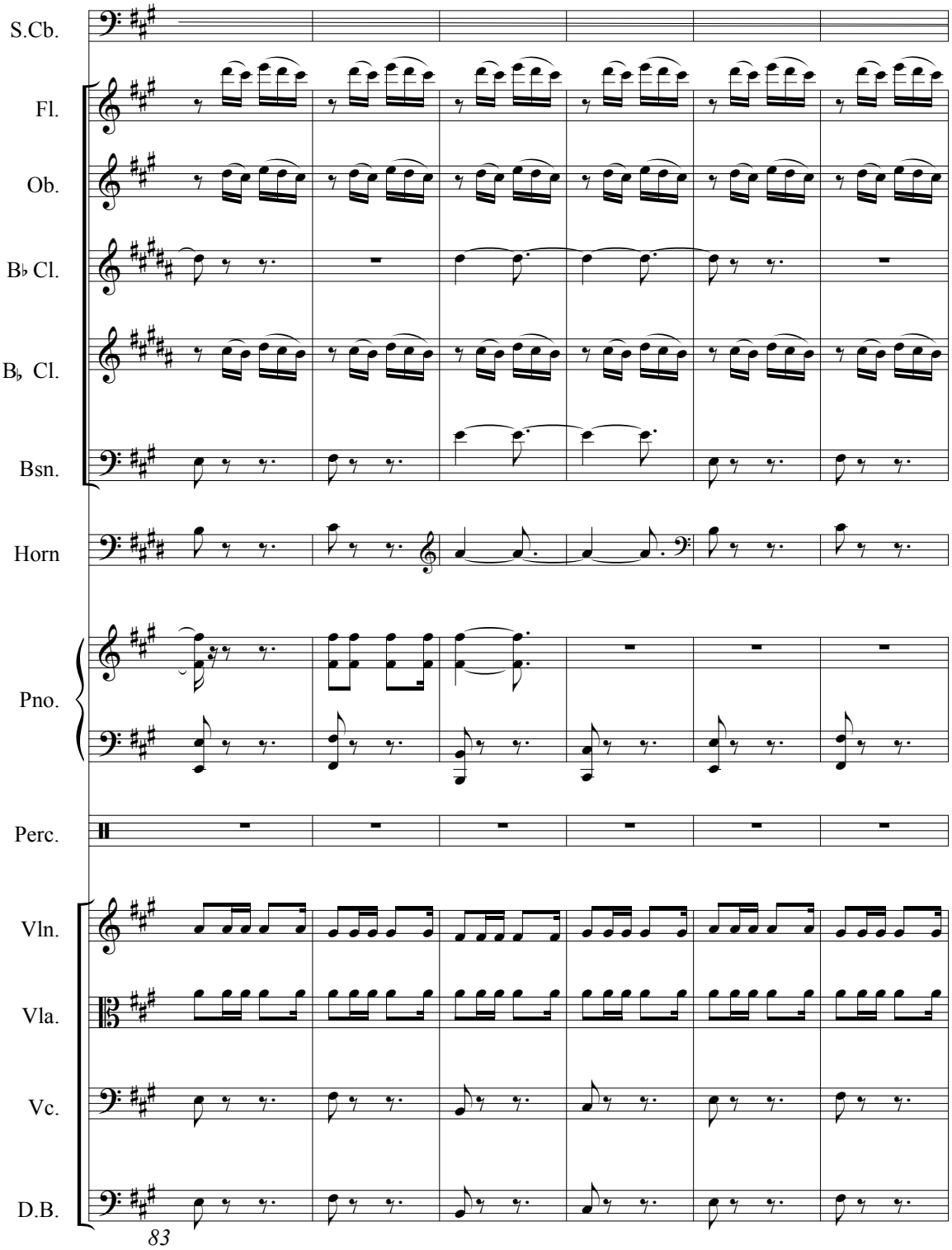

S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
G
solo
espress.
62

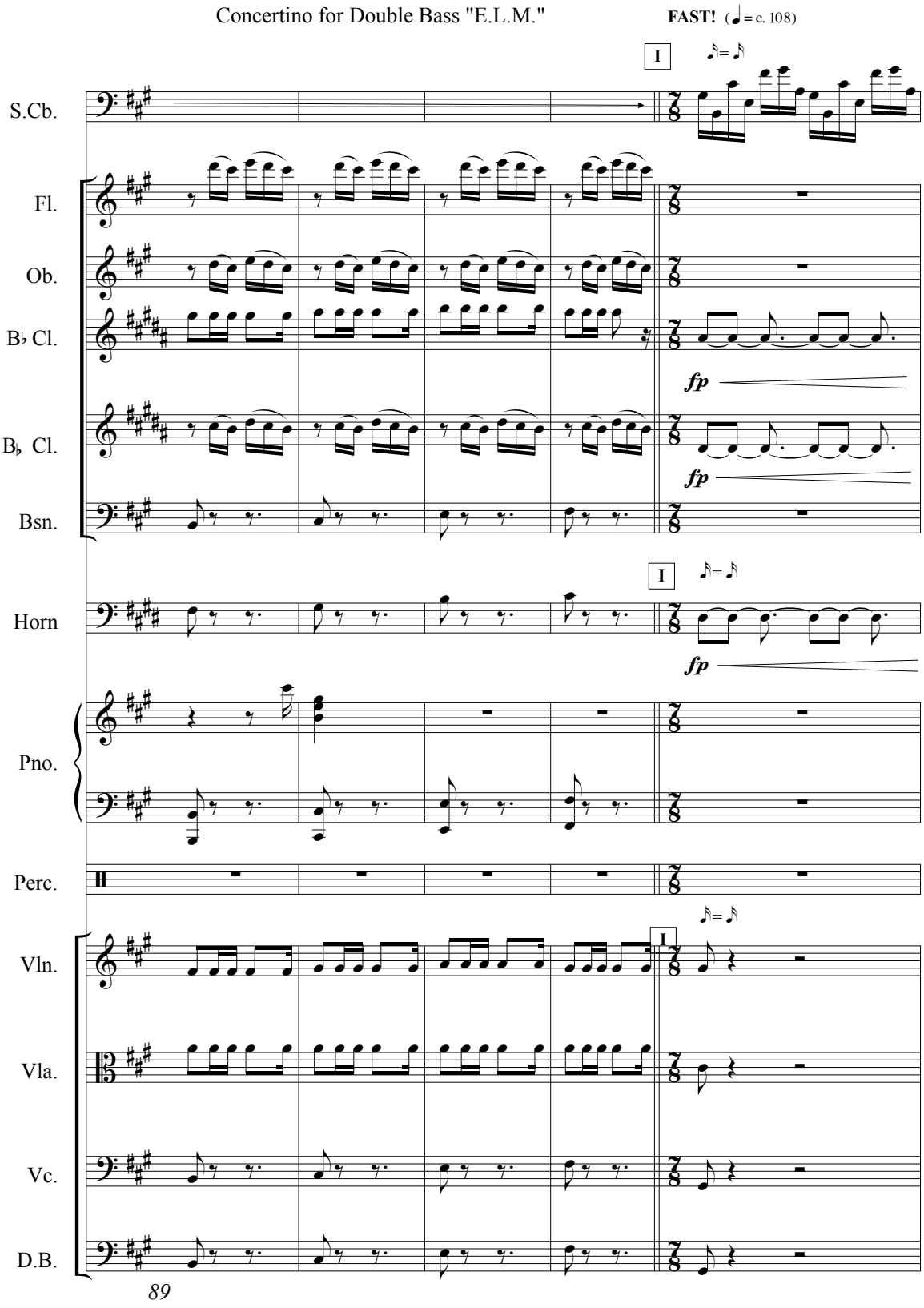

S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
mf
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
66

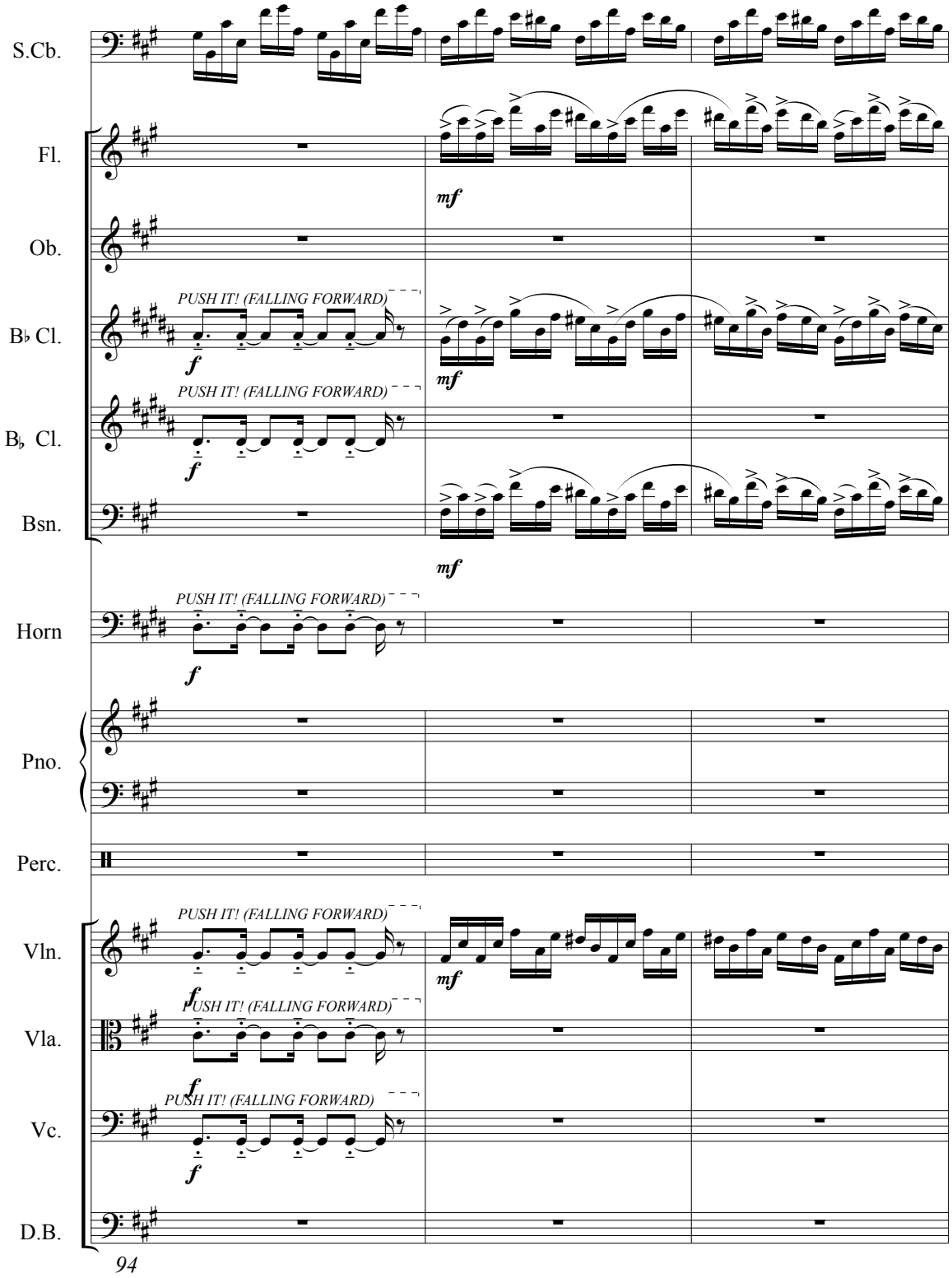

H
S.Cb.
Fl.
on the front end of the beat
sim.
Ob.
on the front end of the beat
sim.
B♭ Cl.
on the front end of the beat
fz
fz
fz sim.
B♭ Cl.
f
on the front end of the beat
Bsn.
on the front end of the beat
H
Horn
on the front end of the beat
Pno.
on the front end of the beat
f
Perc.
H
Vln.
on the front end of the beat
Vla.
on the front end of the beat
Vc.
D.B.
69

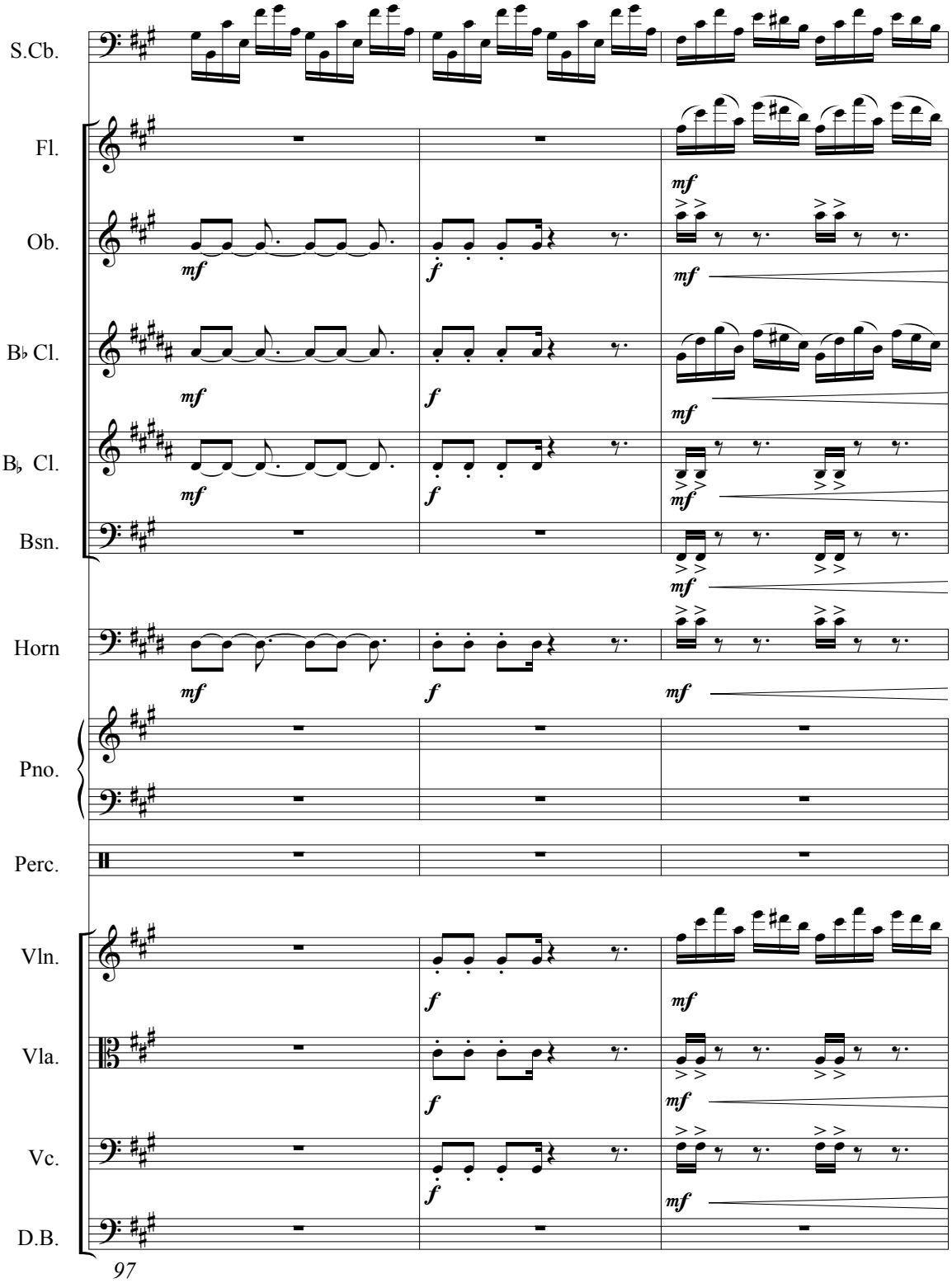

B maddC#
BASS IMPROV.
(In any style)
C♯m
* see preface for instructions
S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
still with intensity
pizz.
75

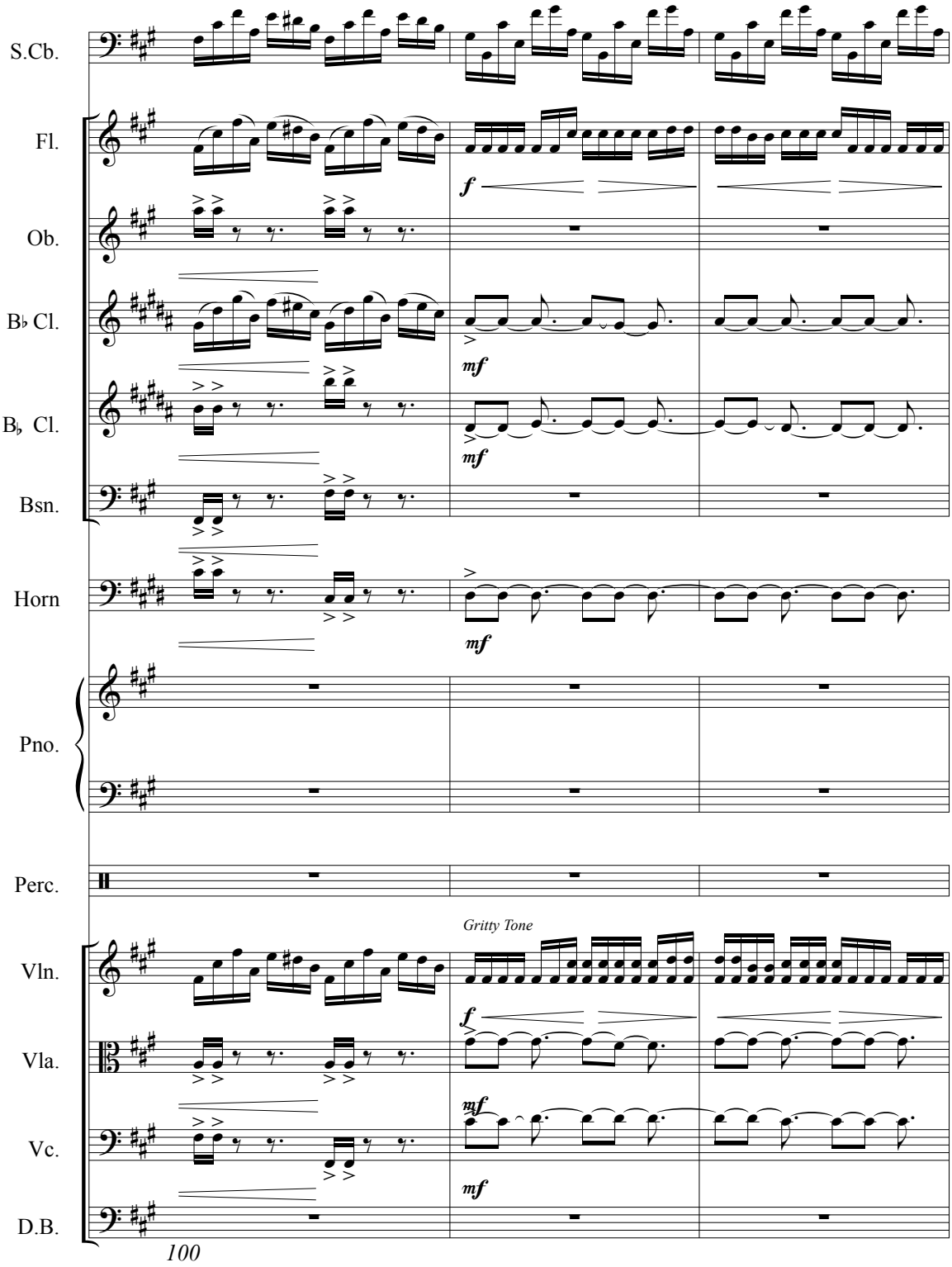

A/E
F♯maddG#
sim.
S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
mf
Horn
mf
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
79

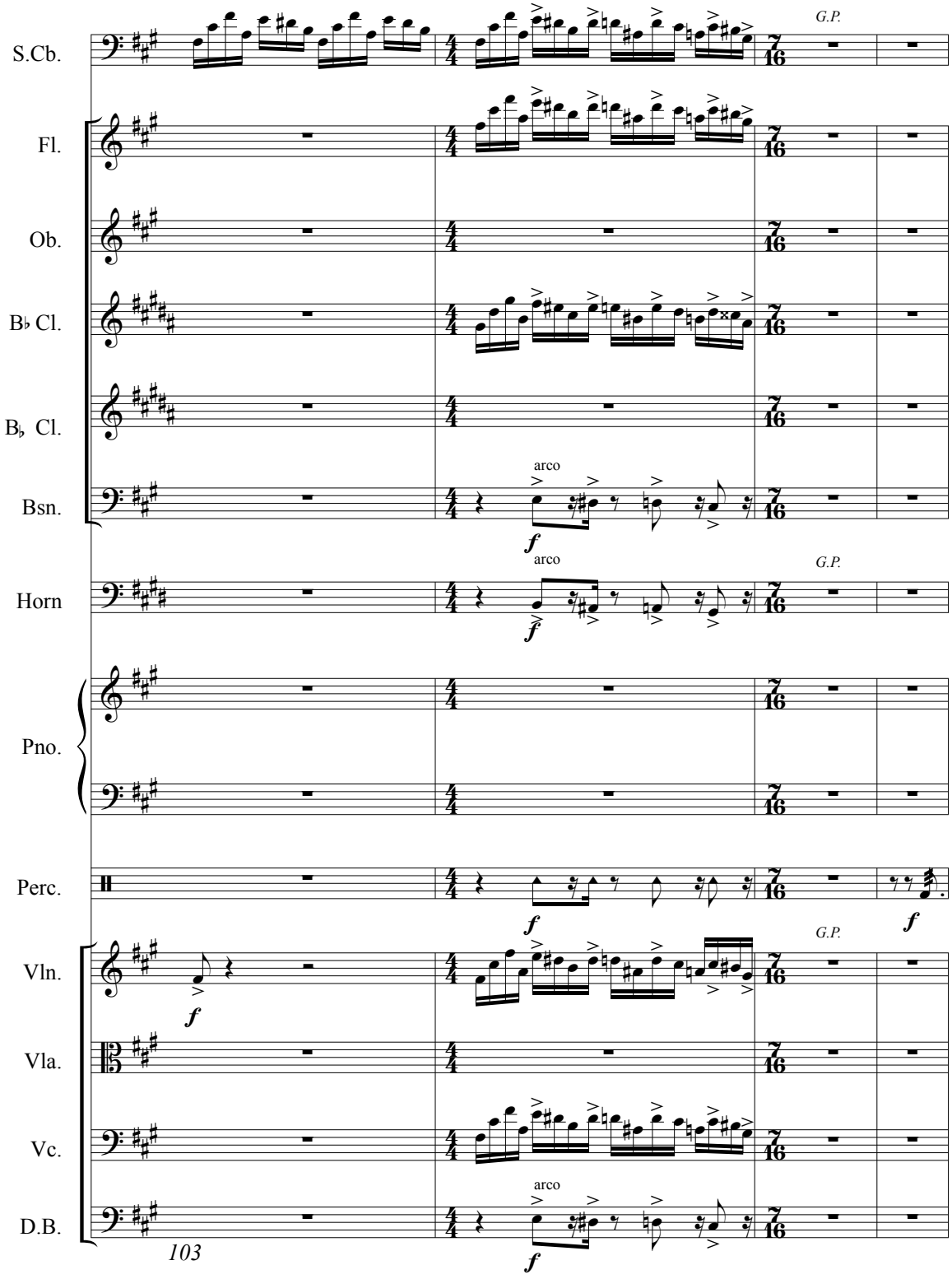

S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
83

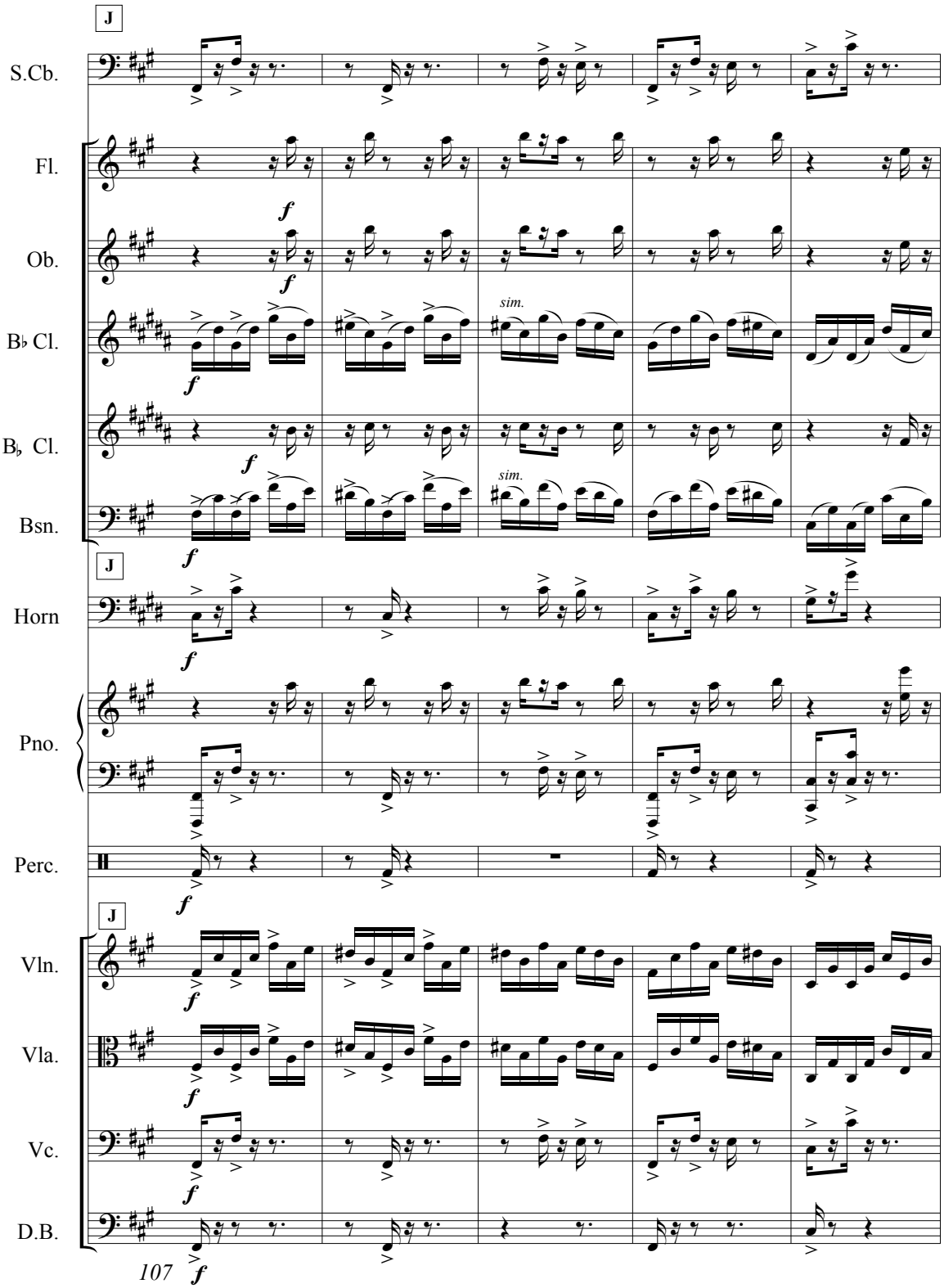

FAST! (♩= c. 108)
I
S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
fp
B♭ Cl.
fp
Bsn.
I
Horn
fp
Pno.
Perc.
I
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
89

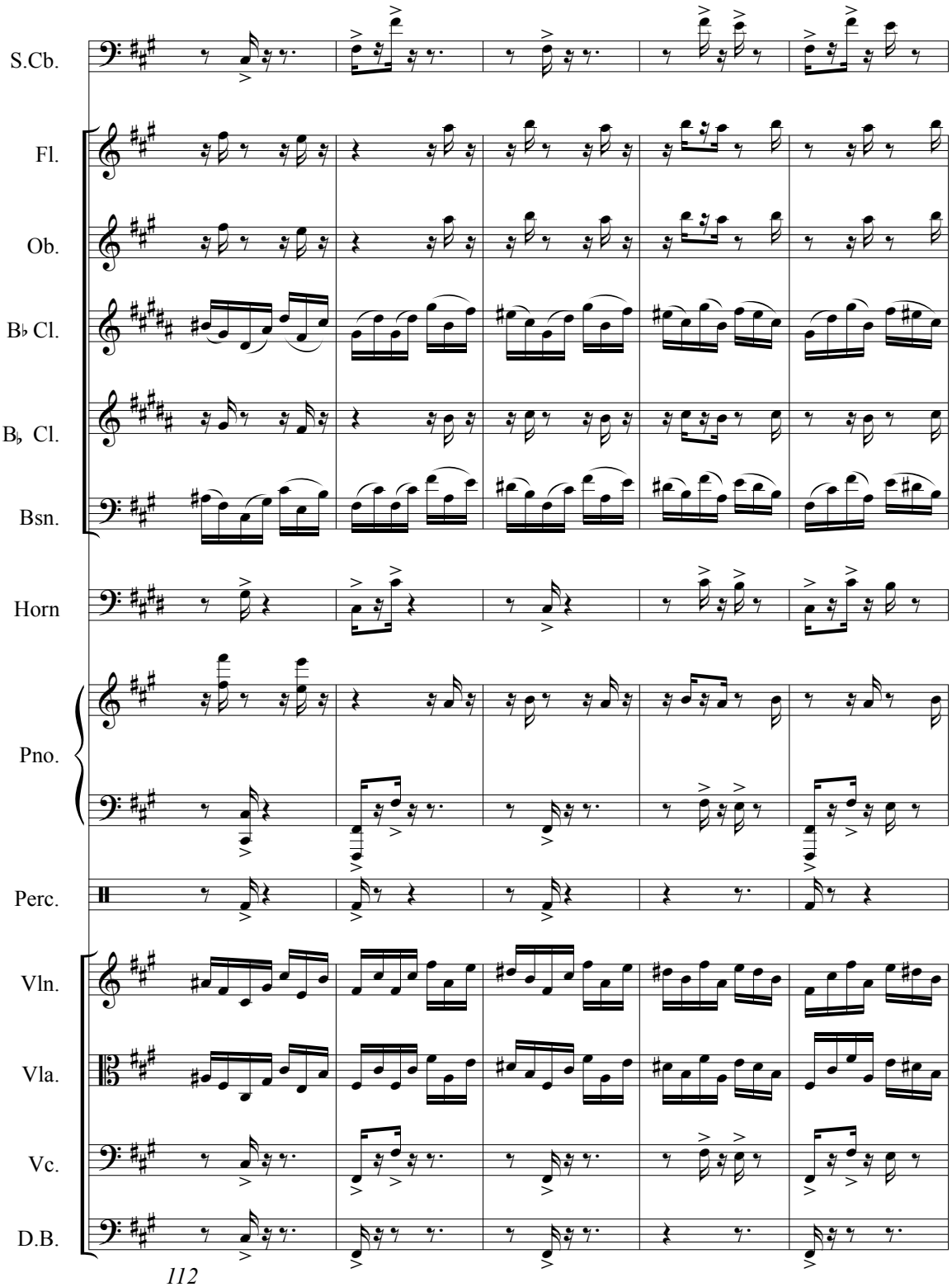

S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
PUSH IT! (FALLING FORWARD)
f
mf
94

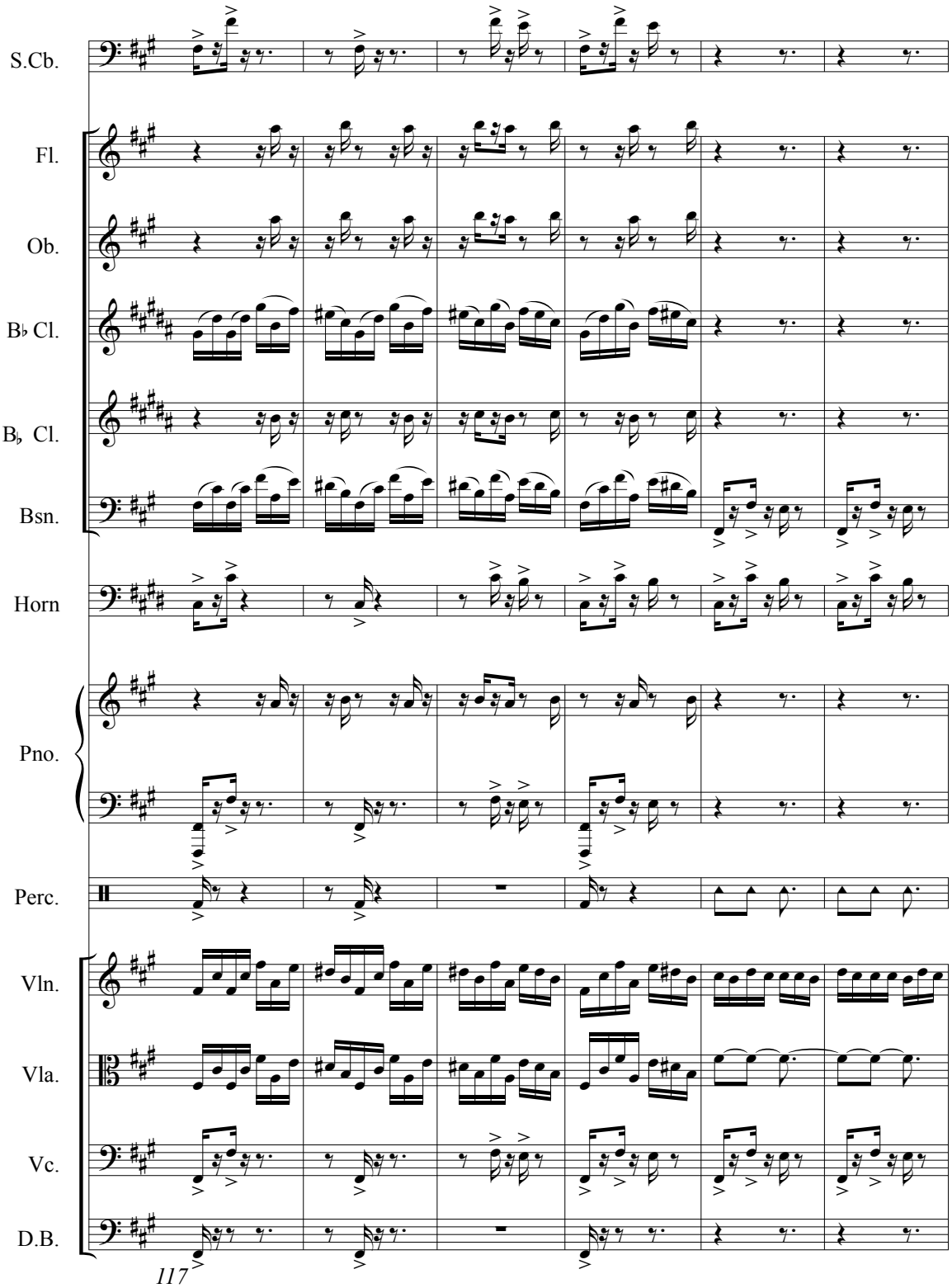

S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
97

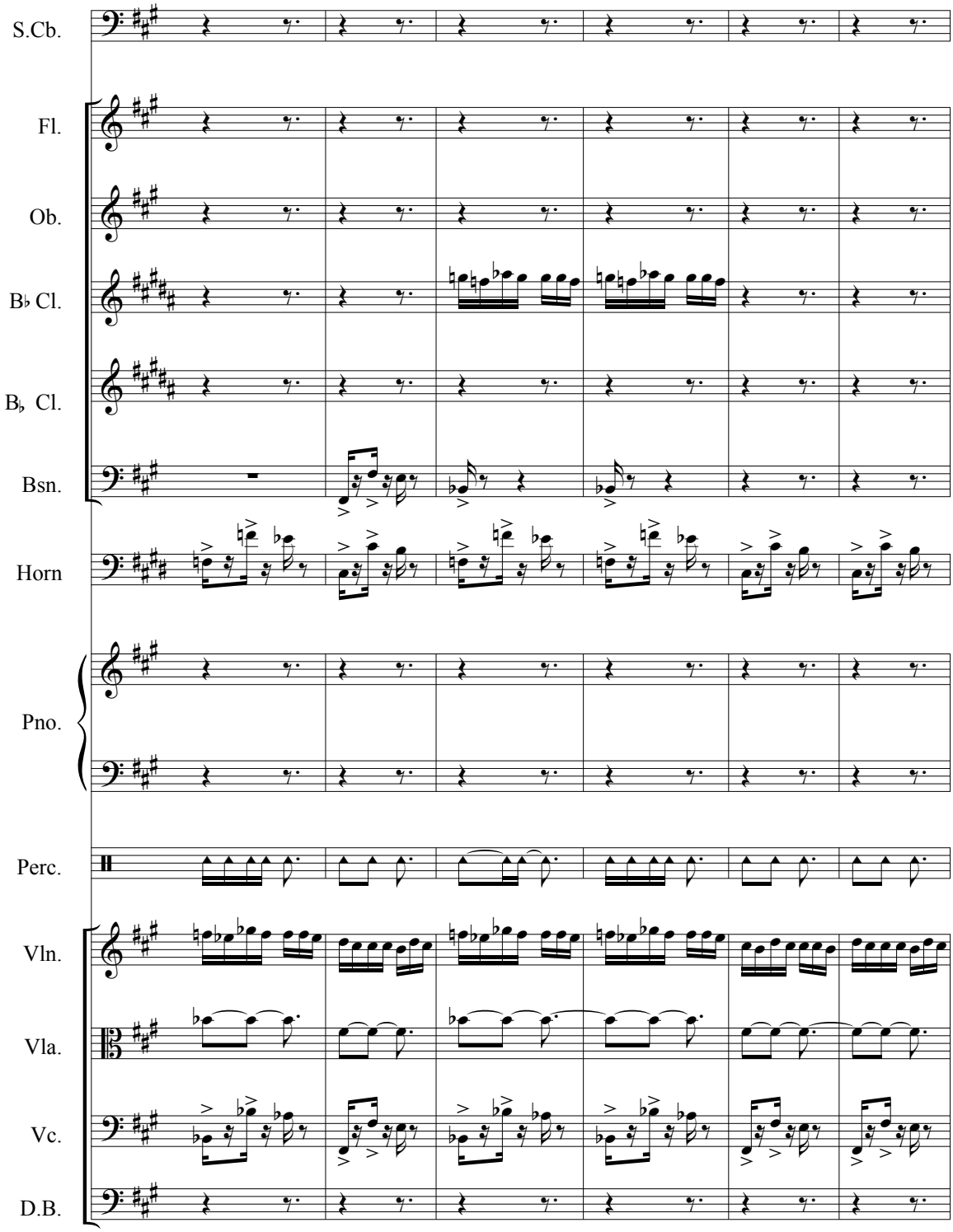

S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
f
mf
mf
mf
Gritty Tone
f
mf
mf
100

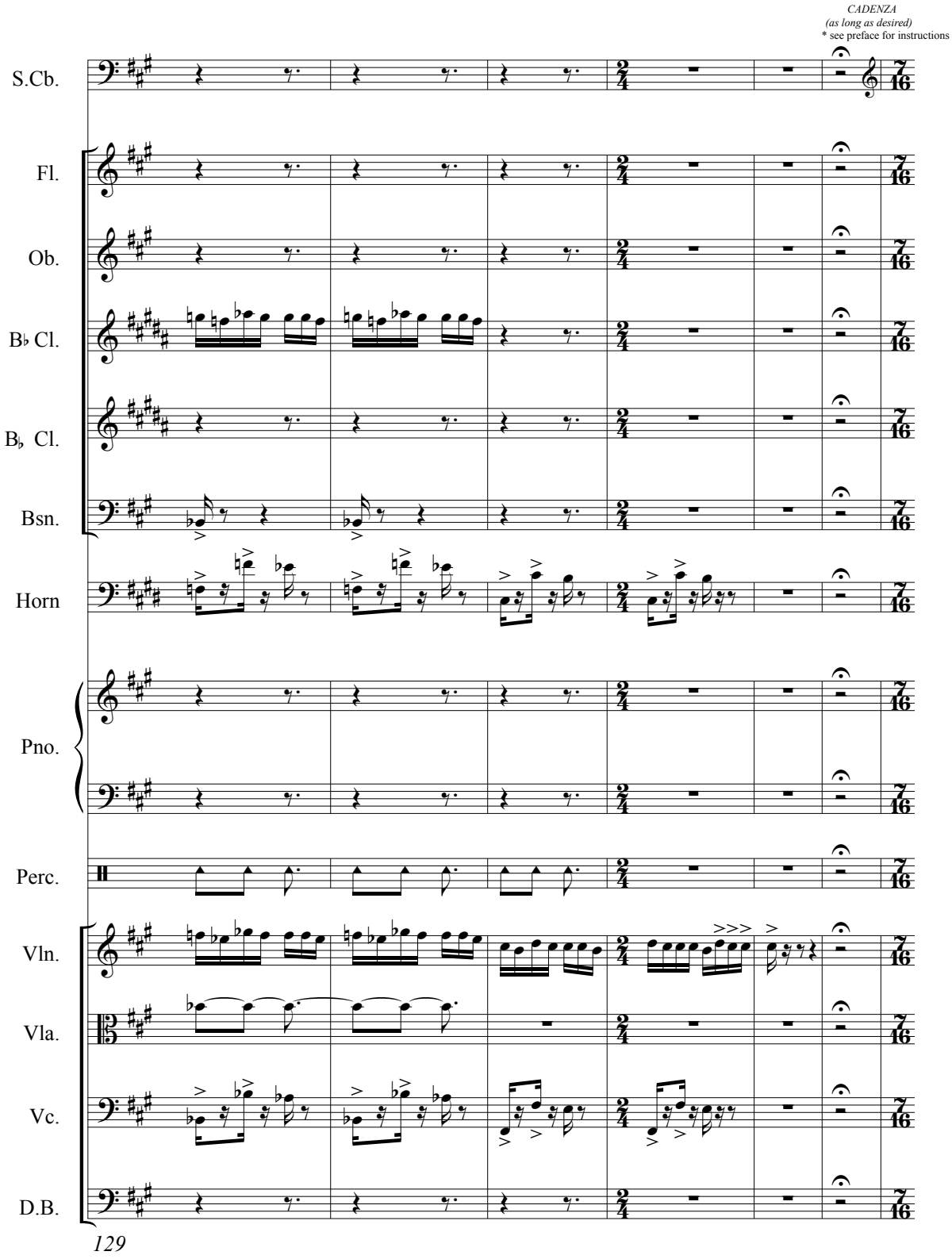

S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
G.P.
arco
f
103

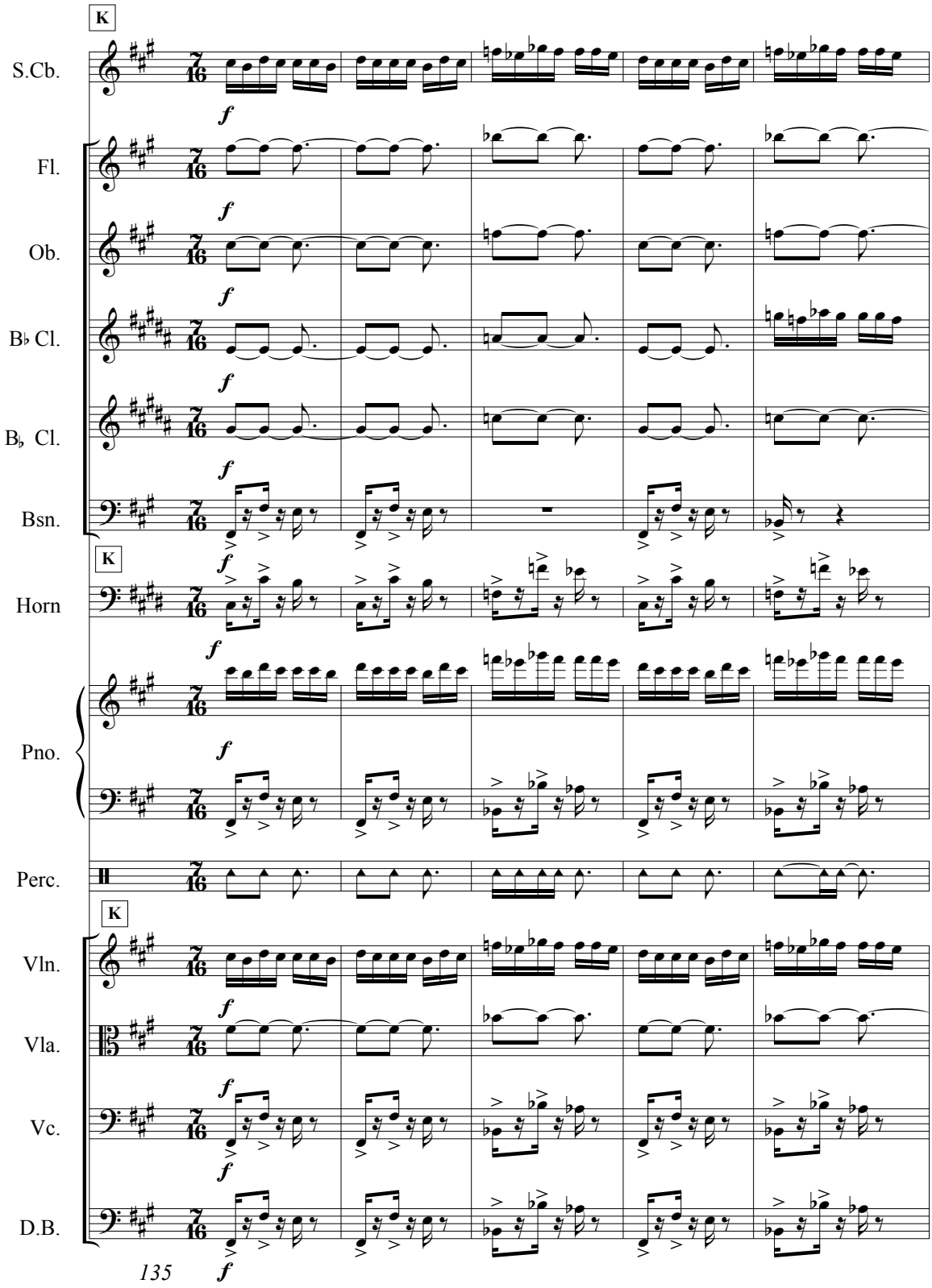

J
S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
sim.
sim.
J
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
J
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
107
f

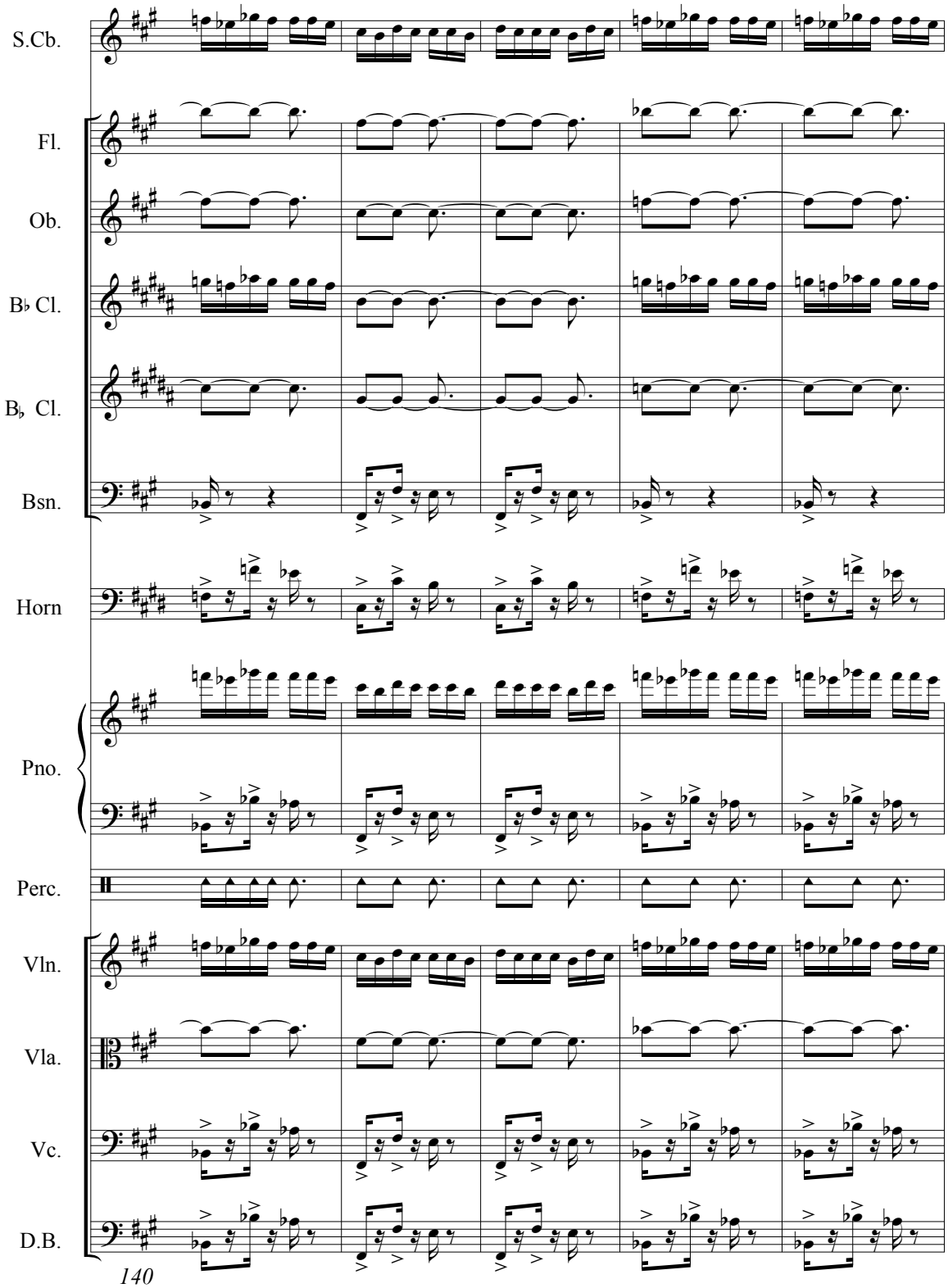

S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
112

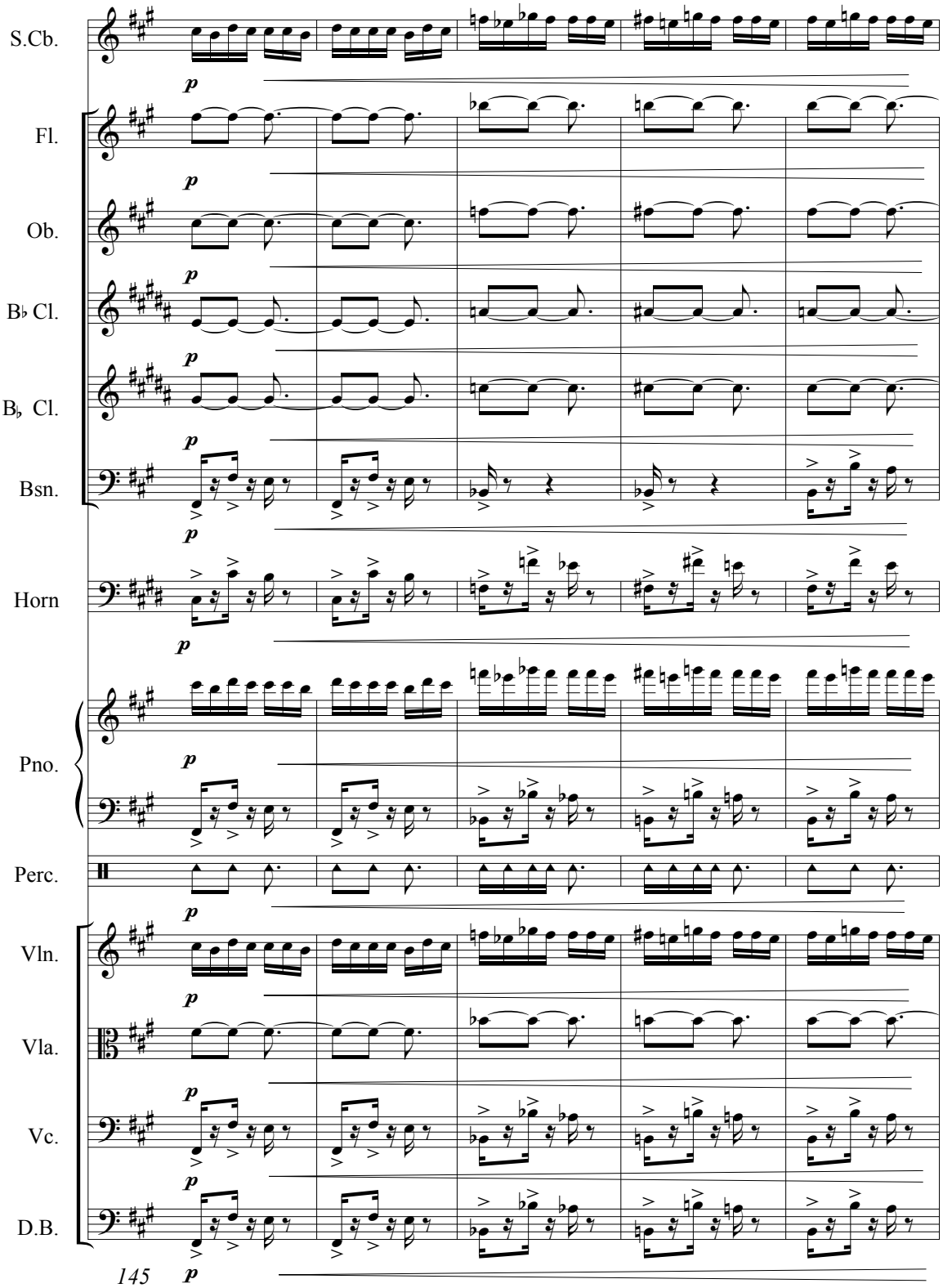

S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
117

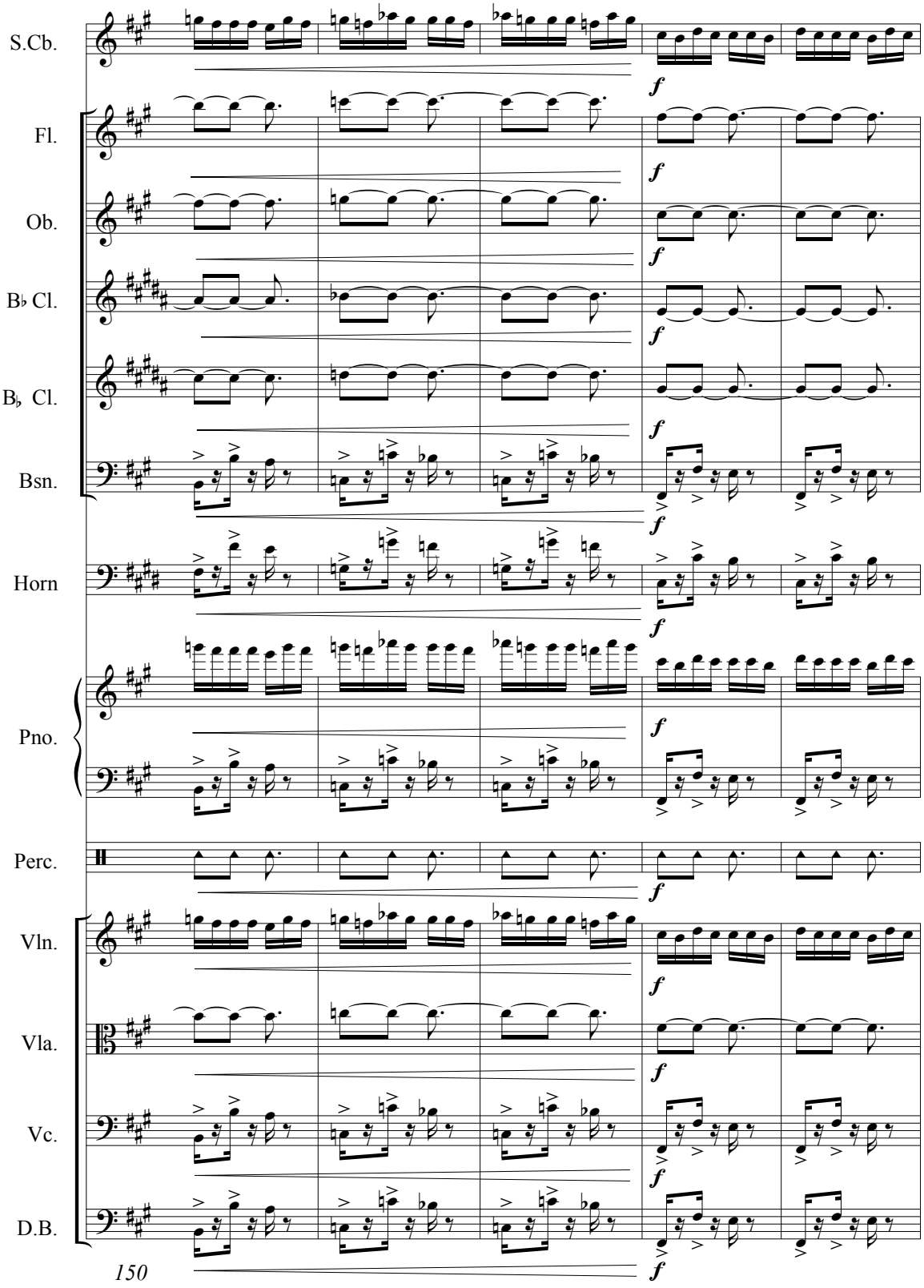

S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
123

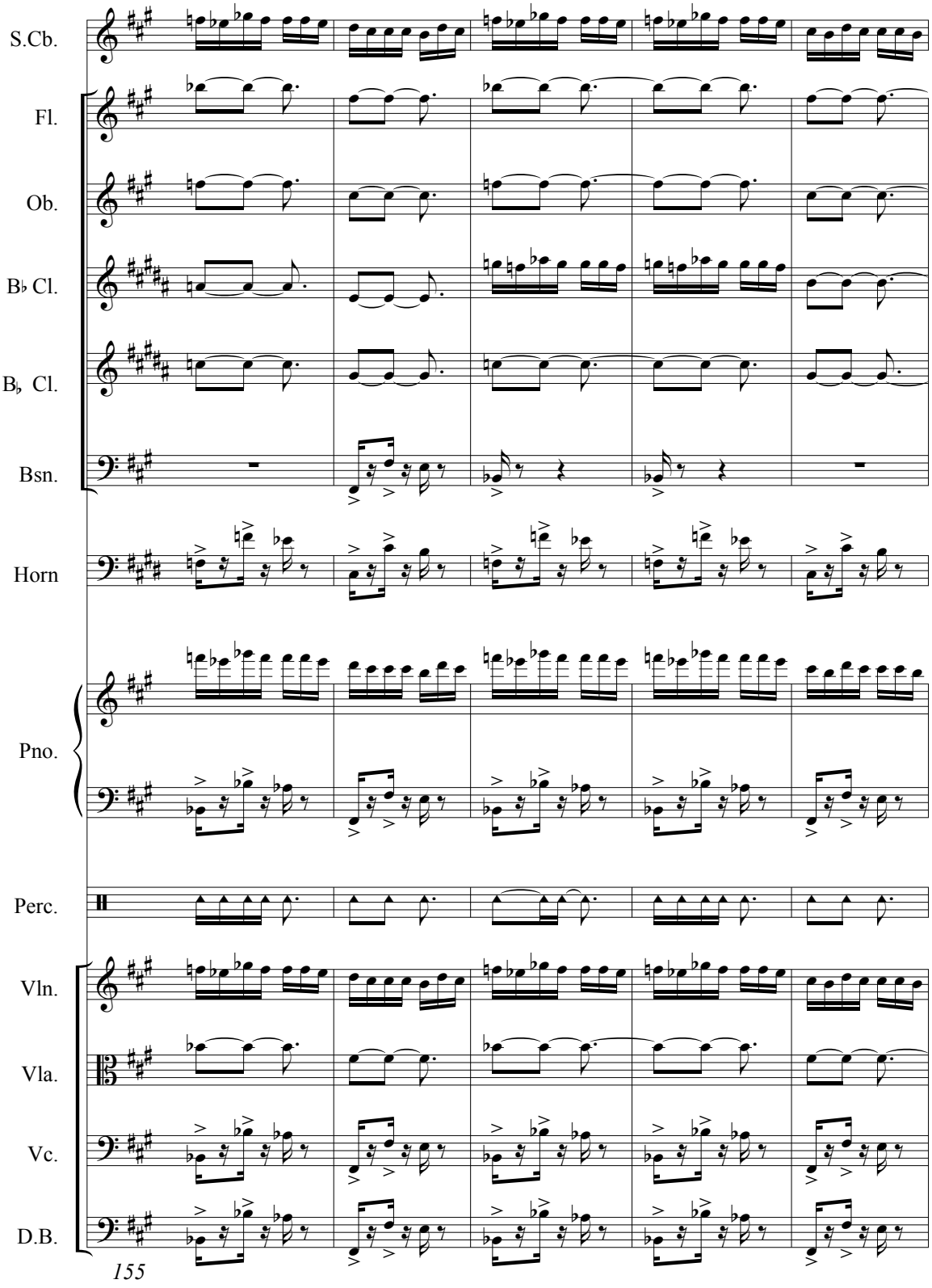

CADENZA
(as long as desired)
* see preface for instructions
S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
129

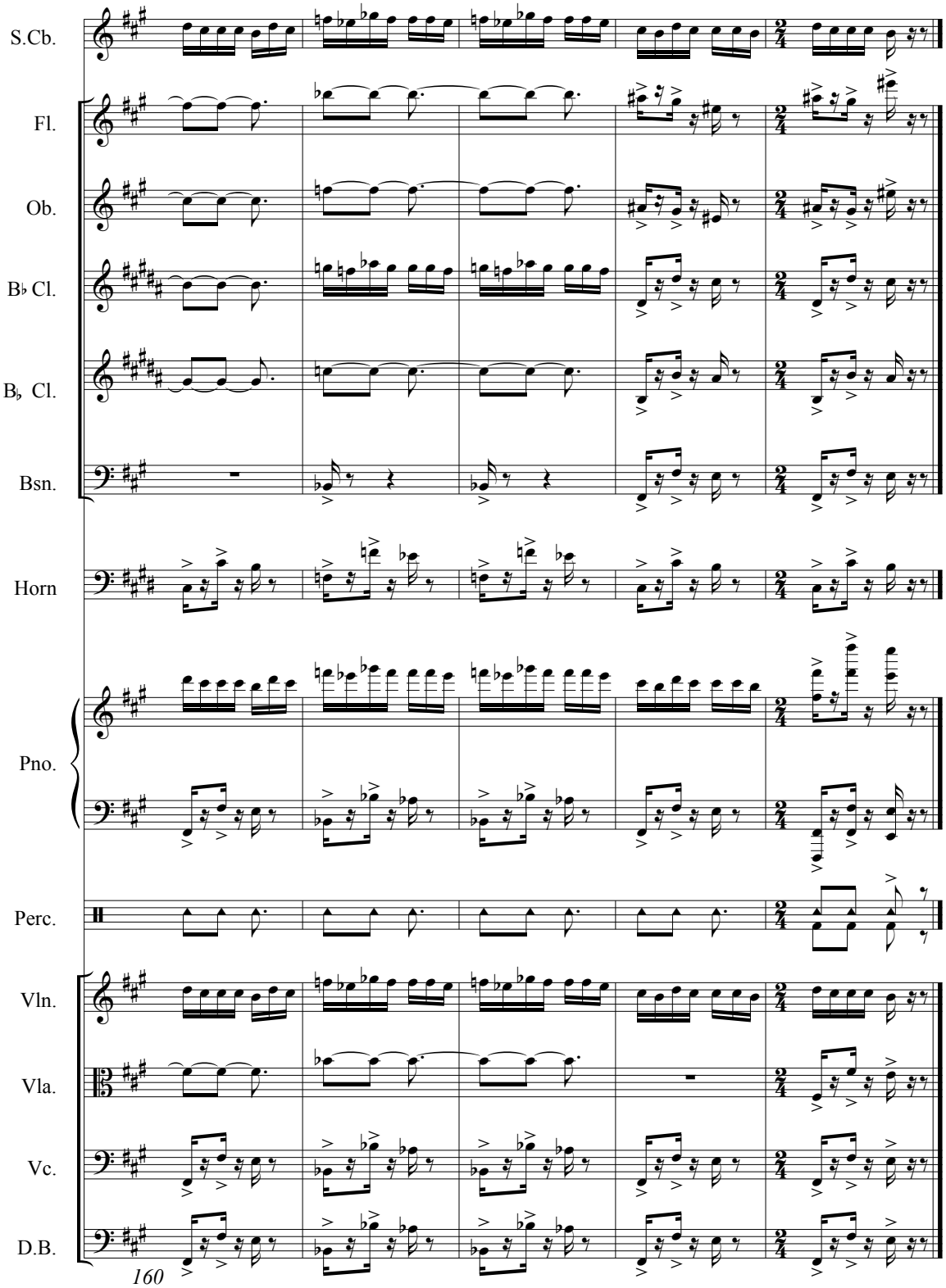

K
S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
K
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
K
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
135
f


S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
140


S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
145


S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
f
150


S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
155


S.Cb.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Horn
Pno.
Perc.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
160

CHAPTER II

CONTEXTUALIZATION

E.L.M., a concertino for the double bass, combines diverse musical idioms. Musical artists who are categorized as cross-genre or crossover influenced the compositional process of this piece. Specific examples of these cross-genre influences include Edgar Meyer, Yo-Yo Ma, and Charles Lloyd. During the composition of *E.L.M.*, I found that cross-genre music presents particular challenges for large institutional ensembles such as orchestras (30+ musicians). Chamber groups, which usually consist of two to eight musicians, are more able to effectively perform this music because of their emphasis on personal engagement. In *E.L.M.,* I transferred my experience with cross-genre music in small ensembles into a mid-size ensemble (10-15 musicians) to potentially give other cross-genre composers some insight on writing for larger groups.

The first and second movements emulate a ceremony that is called "testimony service," in an African-American Pentecostal church.[1] In these testimony services someone often begins by "testifying" about what God has done for them or with singing a song.[2] The song chosen is representative of the testimony. Depending on the mood and atmosphere of the congregation, the song eventually leads into more aggressive or

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[1] "Real Testimony Service Pt. 1 (New Sweet Home T.O.D. COGIC)," http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lC8nEdurJWI&feature=related (accessed November 26, 2012).

[2] Ibid.

mournful music.[3] The first movement of the Concertino flows in the same manner by having sudden changes in musical material while still trying to convey a progression of mood.

I identified the sound that I wanted by listening to other composers' portrayal of an African-American gospel sound. One recording I referenced was Perkinson Coleridge-Taylor's *Alla Burletta,* which is found in his *Sinfonietta No.2* for strings.[4] Coleridge-Taylor's portrayal of "black" music sounds far too rigid when compared to the music one hears in an African-American Pentecostal church. To avoid rigidity, I considered the stylistic components of Black Gospel music. To understand these components, I called upon my upbringing in Black Pentecostal churches and drew from several recordings. I began with the hymn, *I Need Thee Every Hour*.[5] I began by playing this melody in different areas and keys on the double bass. The objective was to find comfort in the left hand and find a range that is resonant on the double bass. One of the key comfort factors that I attempted to find is the ease of the minor pentatonic scale and a natural fluidity of scale degrees 2-3-4 and flat 5 within the minor pentatonic scale. This combination is a staple in black gospel and blues music. After finding a comfortable area on the double bass I incorporated embellishments into the music to convey an African-American

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[3] Marion Williams, "The Moan," http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xldEqiP4zX0 (accessed November 26, 2012) and Bessie Griffin, "The Old Time Moan," http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef0-9g8e5_4 (accessed November 26, 2012).

[4] Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, *Sinfonietta No.2, "Generations": III. All Burletta* from *African Heritage Symphonic Series Volume III*. (Cedelle Records, 2000).

[5] Marvin Sapp, "I Need Thee," http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZ7R4OIqhy8 (accessed November 26, 2012).

gospel style in the solo part. I began by writing down various rhythmic interpretations of the melody without embellishments. This allowed me to get a sense of phrasing. I added embellishments based on my own improvisations on the double bass. The goal in this stage of composing was to meld the stylistic components of African-American gospel music with my own improvisational style and compositional desires.

The first group of written embellishments contain small pockets of possible material for the non-improvising musician. However, trying to apply these embellishments at random points in the melody disrupts the phrasing and motion. My solution was to transcribe Bessie Griffin singing the *The Old Time Moan.*

Figure 1. Group of Written Embellishments

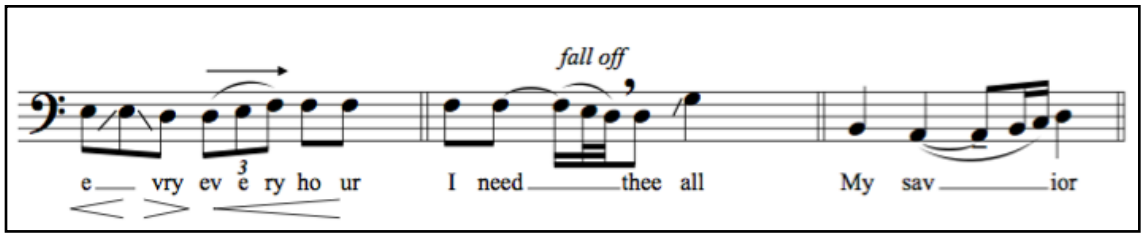
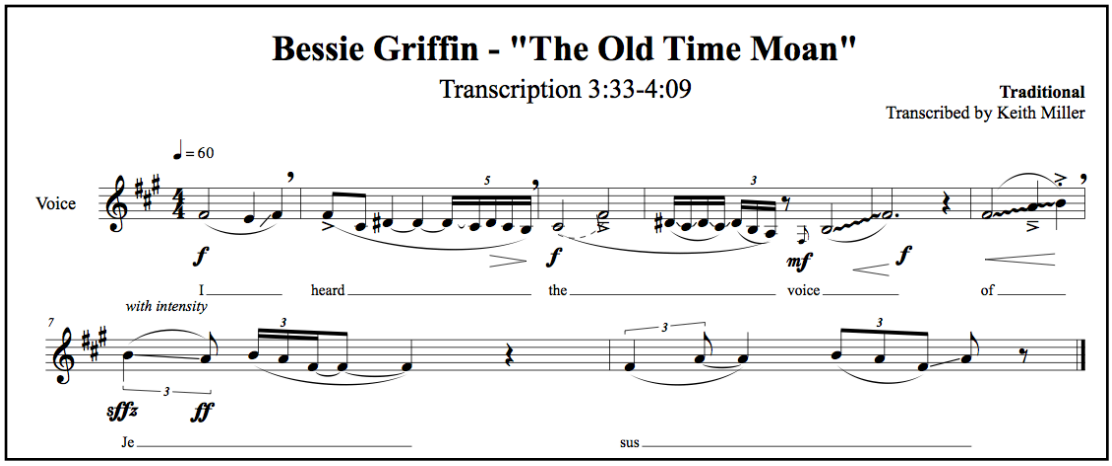


Figure 2. Transcription of Bessie Griffin "The Old Time Moan"

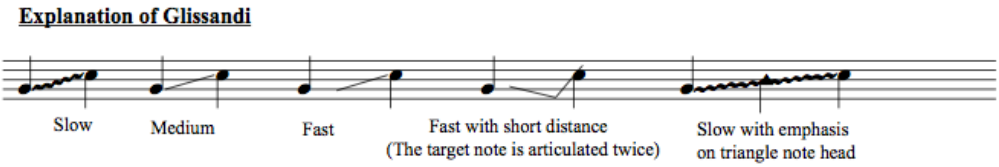


This transcription illustrates how Griffin uses embellishments, but still maintains a sense of direction. At first hearing, I assumed that I would have to write this in an open meter because it seemed to lack a consistent pulse. However, I found that Griffin was mostly singing in a consistent tempo. Once I was able to establish the tempo and transcribe the embellishments I had an understanding of how the music seems to flow freely. For example, the transition from the fourth measure to the fifth measure is accompanied by a long glissando. Griffin's glissandi are expressive and give the music a sense of tension and release, also referred to as expressive-microtiming. This term was introduced to me by the work of Vijay Iyer. Iyer believes that the way one perceives music is a whole body experience. In other words, we perceive music through our sensorimotor apparatus, which has a direct link to expressiveness.[6] This translates into a

[6] Vijay Iyer, "Embodied Mind, Situated Cognition, and Expressive Microtiming in African-American Music." http//www.vijay-iyer.com/writings.html (accessed February 9, 2010).

"pushing" and "pulling" of rhythm and tempo that cannot be notated. However, in *E.L.M.*, I convey expressive-microtiming with a series of glissandi and by encouraging the soloist to play "freely", or "push forward slightly." This provides ample flexibility for improvisation and the diversity of interpretation of various players.

Figure 3. Types of Glissandi



After the introduction, the orchestra enters. The sound of a blues organ was the inspiration for the opening orchestral accompaniment.[7] Incorporating this sound into the orchestra produced the effortful sound I wanted to avoid. Because the organ is controlled by one performer, there is often more musical flexibility that cannot be reproduced in a large ensemble. As a result, I orchestrated a texture that allows the soloist to transition into the orchestra's sound in measure 24. In order to do this, I created a sonic quality that would not overpower the bass, but still propel the music forward.

I also had to keep in mind that I wanted the music to emulate the *testimony service*. Early in the process, I thought of how I would convey a sense of freedom, but still have direction that was close to what often happened during *testimony service*. In order to have freedom and direction, I included, in my sketches, the possibility of

[7] "Gospel Organ Solo," http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMhAM5aicvI (accessed November 26, 2012).

improvisation as a compositional device. In *E.L.M.*, improvisation is directed by the restrictions and freedoms that I arranged.

I developed my usage of improvisation by studying music within the Pan-African construct, which includes gospel music. In his essay, "*Transmissions of an Interculture,"* Jason Stanyek argues that improvisation is a constitutive component in Pan-African music:

> I advance the notion that a highly dialogic brand of improvisation is at the center of Pan-African music making. The tendency to use improvisation not just as a means of generating sonic structures but also as a constitutive tactic in the creation of spaces for intercultural communication was (and still is) a core part of a sensibility that helped diasporic Africans sonically activate and come to grips with the massively complex life they have faced in diaspora.[8]

As a result, I imagined the orchestra as the "congregation" and the solo bass as the "worship leader" that directs *testimony service*. This is apparent in measures 53-70 of *E.L.M*. This section represents the time period when preachers or worship leaders stop to talk, but the music continues to play.[9] This tradition began with slaves in the United States who would lead or communicate to a congregation of slaves through call and response (lining out).The music often has a quiet, but intense energy. I recreate this mood with the capabilities of the instruments involved. This means that the music would not

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[8] Jason Stanyek, *Tranmissions of an Interculture: Pan-African Jazz and Intercultural Improvisation* in *The Other Side of Nowhere: Jazz, Improvisation, and Communities in Dialogue*, Daniel Fischlin and Ajay Heble ed. (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press 2004).

[9] Marion Williams, "The Moan," http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xldEqiP4zX0 (accessed November 26, 2012).

sound the same, but it would have the same characteristics. I kept the same harmonic structure in *E.L.M.* (measures 53-70), which is primarily a drone on the tonic with the instruments playing around a minor sixth chord. The soloist and musicians generally peek out of the texture for short periods. This is primarily done in the first and second violins, and winds.

Measures 53-70 eventually lead to a section of improvised heterophonic humming beginning in measure 79. In many instances of *testimony service* the service would end with music that seemed mournful and expressive. It eventually relaxes in intensity to prepare for other portions of the church service. This section is successfully introduced into the orchestra by the uniformity of the same instrument (voice). I drew from a recording of the Fairfield Four singing *Lonesome Valley.*[10] In order to have the performers attempt to recreate this sound it was necessary to write more restricting improvisational music. Musicians who are not familiar with Black Gospel style can follow the instructions that are listed in the parts, and have the freedom to improvise if desired. The humming section also serves as the beginning of the transitional material leading into the second movement.

Solo improvisation in the double bass transitions the first movement into the second movement. This is accomplished by improvising on and introducting thematic material from the second movement (measures 80-100). The sylistic components of the second movement are noticibly different from the first movement. The second movement

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[10] Fairfield Four, " The Lonesome Valley," http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtg0C3gx44k (accessed November 26, 2012).

serves as a transition, preparing the listener for the third movement. I accomplished this with the use of a sparse musical texture combined with open improvisation in the solo double bass.

The improvisation required of the bassist in the first movement should not require significant preparation. However, the composition includes a preface that would give the soloist the information needed (through examples and written instruction) in order to improvise in a manner that would enhance the performance. I have developed improvisational techniques through a practice regimen of scales, modes, arpeggios and various sequential patterns. Furthermore, transcriptions of various recordings aid an improviser in developing a vocabulary that can be used in performance.

There are a number of recordings that I would recommend the soloist listen to that aid in developing an appropriate black gospel style for double bass, such as Christian McBride's bowed solo on the album *Super Bass 2* in the track *Misterioso,* by Thelonius Monk. This recording is more closely linked to the driving blues feel which is directly linked to an African-American church style. The improviser who is developing a style from this recording and similar recordings should be aware of how McBride shapes phrases with various accents during embellishments. Additionally, the use of the minor pentatonic or blues scale is required to convey an African-American gospel style in this instance.

The third movement is a departure from African-American gospel music and is based on Hip-hop, jazz, and funk grooves. Guy Madison defines groove as "a quality of

music that makes people tap their feet, rock their head, and get up and dance."[11] In 2006, Madison conducted a study that described groove using a number of adjectives. He then played several different styles of music for several subjects. These subjects picked from a list of adjectives based on how they perceived the music. "[The] factors are interpreted as reflecting psychological dimensions independent of music genre and style." [12] The results of the study demonstrate that all styles and genres of music have the potential for groove. It does not identify the sound signal properties that affect the experience of groove. However, the study does indicate that adjectives describing groove had mostly to do with the sonic qualities of music. The adjectives with the highest mean value are as follows: driving, flowing, intensive, steady, and having swing.[13]

The groove-oriented music in this movement serves as a steady accompaniment that provides the soloist with a framework to display improvisational skills. It is important to explain groove to musicians who may not have much performance experience with popular groove-oriented dance music. Having indications of the type of groove is necessary for musicians to understand that there is a quality to the music that cannot be notated. When incorporating descriptive words into a score for the purpose of clarifying performance practice, nuance can be lost. I found that adjectives as well as

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[11] Guy Madison, "Experiencing Groove Induced by Music: Consistency and Phenomenology," *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal,* Vol. 24, No,2 (December 2006): 201.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid, 205.

descriptive phrases are more effective. For example in measure 20, I used phrases such as "on the front end of the beat," to describe music that is both driving and flowing.

Although these terms are helpful in explaining how the music should feel, it is counterproductive if several musicians have a different idea of what "the front end of the beat" means. To provide clarity, I carefully examined some recordings of classical musicians attempting to compose and perform in a Jazz style. One of the most useful resources is found in the works of Nicolai Kapustin who combined many groove-oriented rhythms with classical music. [14] From studying Kapustin's scores I notice that he is very meticulous about articulation and duration choices.[15] In the various attempts I have heard of classical musicians trying to play in a Jazz style, I have noticed that many shorten the duration of syncopated rhythms. As a result, music that should be "driving" or "swinging," based on the popular dance music idiom, sounds out of place. Kapustin was able to remedy this by insisting on notes (especially tied syncopations) being held for the full duration. The proper stylistic interpretation depends on the performer interpreting the notation as literally as possible. As a result, the composer must structure the music in a way that allows the music to "play itself."

In the groove sections of the third movement of my concertino I reduce interpretive errors by having note choices (especially in the bass instruments) that help propel the music forward. I also fill the spaces by having a repetitive motif in some of the

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[14] Marc-Andre Hamelin, "Kaputsin Concert Etude No. 1," http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Do1NJL4SIwE (accessed November 26, 2012).

[15] Ibid.

winds. The 7/16-meter (starting in measure 69) allows for repeated notes to have more forward motion without sounding labored. The metric grouping creates the perception of a strong down beat every four measures and a stronger down beat every eight measures. My note choices B-natural, C-sharp, E-natural and F-sharp are intentionally chosen to rise and build tension that would be released every four measures. To aid this forward moving motion, I instructed the middle and upper voices to play "on the front end of the beat." I consider this type of arrangement a simple groove because the foundational components (the bass notes and repetitive motifs) are in the forefront of the audience's perception.

Beginning in measure 93 I employed a more complex groove. It has the characteristics of driving and steady, but the parts that give it those characteristics are hidden in the solo double bass. This groove is intended to be a call and response pattern. The call is in the first two measures and the answer is in the following two. It isn't until measure 135 that I begin to break down the foundation of the groove which is found in the double bass, cello, left hand piano and horn. This material comes from extracting the bass notes from the "answer" portion of the groove. When extracted from the perpetual motion sixteenth notes, the bass notes clearly outline and repeat a 2+2+3 pattern, giving a consistent and driving feel.

The objective of this movement is to showcase the improviser (soloist). I developed groove-oriented music based on popular dance music and jazz idioms. I improvised various combinations of bass note patterns, and then arranged them in

different meters to see which would be the most comfortable and freeing for me to improvise over. I found meters in seven to be particularly comfortable because they naturally fit into improvisational techniques that I have practiced throughout the years. Most of this technique was developed from listening to various recordings of the bassist and composer Edgar Meyer. Meyer's music tends to incorporate a variety of mixed and odd meters. I have learned from practicing his style of improvisation that odd and mixed meters can help develop improvisational material that may not have occurred in an even meter. For instance, the material in the solo bass starting in measure 12 is a strict representation of the improvisation that happens in measure 11. While improvising, the soloist should anticipate the music in measure 12. I base my improvisation by "feeling" three groups of four and one group of two while being aware of the written seven meter. This always informs my phrasing and embellishments to accentuate four measure groupings, and I will often add in mixed meters before returning to the B-natural. This is possible by consistently feeling four. This is the same information that I use when improvising at measure 39. However, the difference is that I take more rhythmic liberties.

In performance one has to keep in mind that the solo part is intended for musicians who wish to improvise. It will require the soloist to work at developing his/her own compositional vocabulary. Furthermore, an improviser will, over time, develop specific performance material for this piece.

Conclusion

I used a number of resources to combine music idioms. Perhaps one of the most useful is improvisation. Improvisation allows experimentation in combining different idioms and it often leads one to transcribe music from a specific style in order to become familiar with that style. When transcribing, the composer begins to think of ways to translate non-classical styles for classical musicians and vice versa. In transcribing, one often finds (in terms of orchestration) elements of non-classical styles that will not transfer to the orchestra. When referring to the recording of my concertino, I believe that I was successful in arranging the orchestra in a way that would support the combination of idioms. I primarily accomplished this by composing around a groove-oriented framework. However, I believe that some of the groove-oriented sections are still interpreted in more than one way.

I also refer to a number of cross-genre composers when trying to combine musical idioms. I attempted to emulate the same effortlessness, in a large ensemble, that these composers do in smaller ensembles. It is imperative that cross-genre composers reevaluate ideas that seem common to them to explain (in the score) stylistic components that are often lost in the compositional process. Some of these reevaluations may also involve orchestrating in a manner that would achieve the desired results.

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