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Composition Portfolio

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of

Master of Music in Composition

at

The University of Waikato

by

Peter McKinnon

The University of Waikato

2011

Peter McKinnon

MMus Composition Portfolio 2011

Abstract

This portfolio of original compositions is made up of six works, two electroacoustic and four acoustic. Firstly a Piano suite for solo piano, composed of four different short works, exploring different themes and modes based on eight synthetic scales. Cello and cello is a work for two cellos, exploring the sometimes-dual nature of the mind and yourself. Composed in two movements and with the intention of having a slight theatrical aspect to it. An electroacoustic work, Kaffeine is a composition based around the process of coffee making and the effects it has on people who drink it. Made purely from samples collected from a home coffee machine using a digital recorder. Piaonics is another electroacoustic piece, this one focusing on subtle aspects of the pianos timbre. Two sets of synthetic scales where made, each of the notes in the synthetic scale where sampled on a grand piano to get the best quality samples. Pleonasm is an exploratory work for Viola, clarinet and cello. The work has aleotoric aspects to it, wherein parts don't always start or finish together and sometimes have different tempo markings. The final work in the portfolio is the classical symphony in E minor, written as an exercise to competently write in the style of a traditional classical symphony. The work is in four movements, fast, slow, fast, fast and takes inspiration from Haydn, Prokofiev and Mahler.

Acknowledgements

As with anything that takes a lot of time and effort to complete, you can't necessarily do it all on your own. Some realise this early on, others realise much later, but thankfully when studying at university there are many great people around to help you.
Not only is music something that you can't really force out of your head – well I haven't tried putting it in a vice yet anyway – but it takes a lot of contemplating and visualising in the mind before anything approaching notes, appear on the manuscript.
So with this in mind I really couldn't have completed this masters thesis without the help and support of all those that pushed and shoved me along.

Firstly I would like to acknowledge Martin Lodge who has been a great mentor and expertly guided me through this last year. Even in the toughest of circumstances he hasn't failed to provide the exact words and inspiration needed, keeping me from writing music that shouldn't have even come out of my head. Martin's great character and sense of humour allowed me to explore things that I had a desire to write, even though they may not have been the best things to pursue. Martin thanks a million (we get payed that each year after our masters right?) and I can't thank you enough for all your wisdom and kind words of encouragement.

Where would I be without Ian Whalley? Obviously I wouldn't be here writing this because without his endless patience – although I may have nearly found the end of that this year – I would have fizzled out into oblivion. If it were not for your amazing way of putting things simply and getting me to think in different ways about the music I wrote, well I probably wouldn't have finished what I set out to do. Thank you for your stern yet understanding way of dealing with me, I'm sure my composing skills now have a completely different side to them that I was unaware of until being taught by you. Thank you Ian for your constant guidance and support that have kept me going all year.

Even though only briefly having the chance to go through some of my work with Michael Williams, it certainly inspired me and gave me more enthusiasm to carry on with my portfolio. Who cannot help but smile when they come for a meeting with you? Your sense of humour is great and you have a very open and friendly way of communicating what needs correcting in my compositions.

To write compositions and have them played and performed is one of the many goals of a composer. Therefore my warmest regards goes out to James Tenant, Ying Te Liu and Lara Hall for giving me the chance to hear a piece that was pushing me out of my comfort zone. Your ability to sight read and perform is incredible and next time I will get someone who really knows how to compose to write a piece for you. Thank you for taking your valuable time to perform my work Pleonasm.

Without family members to provide feedback and support, completing a masters degree would be an even greater challenge. A big thanks goes out to my parents Ian and Patricia McKinnon for giving me that necessary encouragement and support. If you hadn't been their always telling me to hurry up and write all that music out I certainly wouldn't have finished in time. Many thanks to my Sister Sheena McKinnon who even though not close by, still checked to see I was composing and not off in town somewhere! Thankyou!

An extra special thanks goes to Maggie Yue for her unending support in helping me with my masters work. Always there to bounce ideas off you, you helped fine-tune my thoughts and ideas for my works. Just when I decide to give up on an idea or have got stuck with my work, you provided me with the encouragement to snap out of my mindset and carry on no matter what. I can't thank you enough Maggie.

Last and not least a big thanks to all the University of Waikato staff and fellow students that helped me out along the way. Thanks to the technicians who somehow managed to keep the computers going and to Kim Johnson for being such a super efficient and friendly administrator.

CD Track Listing

1 ***Suite for Piano*** *for solo piano*
(Midi recording)

5 ***Cello and cello*** *for two cellos*
(Midi recording)

7 ***Kaffeine*** *electroacoustic*

8 ***Piaonics*** *electroacoustic*

9 ***Pleonasm*** *for clarinet, viola and cello*
(Midi recording)

16 ***Classical symphony*** *for orchestra*
(Midi recording)

DVD Track Listing

1 ***Pleonasm*** *for clarinet, viola and cello*
(Recorded at The University of Waikato Performing Arts Centre 2010)

Introduction

The art of composing covers such a wide variety of musical aspects, sometimes it becomes a challenge to decide what is best and what isn't when writing up ideas for a composition portfolio. On one side you must write something acceptable and within the guidelines given, yet at the same time one must explore the individual characteristics that one has in him or her. This composition portfolio successfully demonstrates a variety of different compositional techniques and styles, writing for a number of different mediums with the intention to challenge and push current levels of abilities and thinking.

Suite for piano is a compilation of four short works for solo piano that is based around a set of eight different synthetic scales. Each piece takes between three to four of these scales according to their particular mode or sound and this becomes the basis for harmonic movement in the works. For each of the pieces a certain theme is explored, for instance in the first piece the theme is exploration, the second piece is calmness and deep thought, the third piece focuses on different paths and the forth piece on frustration and anger.

Cello and cello explores the relationship we have with our mind, how it can sometimes seem to be on our side, yet a lot of the time is actually just causing agitation. For this work there is a slight theatrical aspect to it, with the first cello sitting out front with a warm spotlight on them like a soloist. The second cello is behind a thin curtain with only the silhouette of the cello and performer being seen form the audience. In this way the concept of the mind is more clearly illustrated, having the second cello (which represents the mind) placed directly behind the first cello.

Kaffeine takes what is an everyday addiction for so many people and turns it into a work that explores the process of coffee making and the affects it has on people. After becoming addicted to coffee whilst studying at university it seems befitting to write a piece on this subject matter.

Composed of purely samples taken from a home coffee machine, the work begins with the clear coffee making process. Slowly moving out into the world of electroacoustic music, using many effects controlled in real time, building an illusory world of caffeine addiction.

Piaonics takes what is really a percussive instrument and turns it into an imagined extension of the piano as you know it today. With the ability to completely change the waveforms and attacks that are usually heard on the piano, the piece moves away from the normal conception of the piano. Based around two sets of synthetic scales, this creates a positive and negative aspect to the work. The intention in this work is to explore the sound that is heard after the hammer has struck the strings, bringing out the subtle harmonics that can't usually be heard.

Pleonasm is an experimental work that uses the performers interaction to initiate changes in the music, although only mostly between movements. The idea behind this work was to step outside the usual way of composing of having a lot of control over the outcome of the work, to letting go of the composers control over a number of aspects within the composition.

Classical symphony came about with the idea of composing a symphony similar to that of Prokofiev's Symphony Classic. An attempt has been made to follow as closely as possible the art of writing in the manner of a classical symphony. Achieving this by following the structure and general form of the classical symphonies, whilst at the same time allowing for current musical thinking and expressions to come out.

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Suite for Piano

for

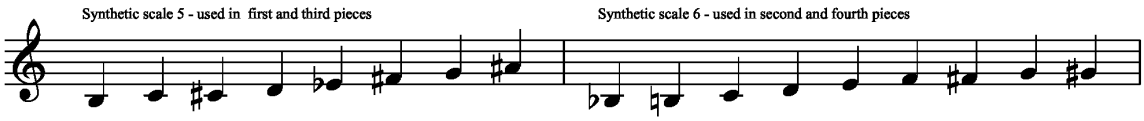
Solo piano

Suite for piano

for

Solo piano

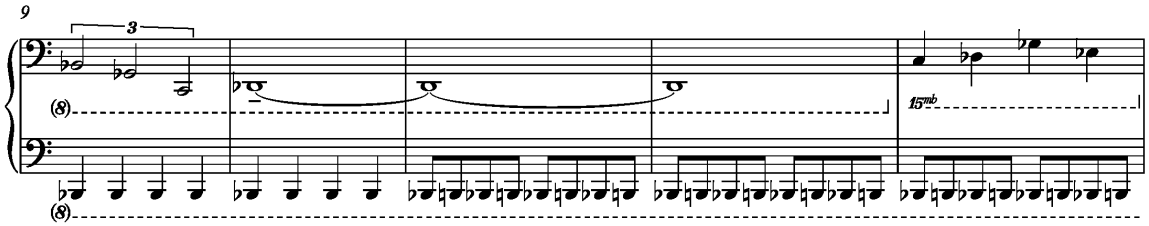
A suite of four pieces for solo piano, based on the idea of exploring a set of eight different synthetic scales,



using between three and four of them in each piece. The different pieces have a certain aspect or intention associated with them, for instance the second piece explores the idea of calmness and deep thought. In each piece the mood was carefully thought out, even changes of modes where drafted out, allowing the structure of the pieces to be planned before writing any notes. None of this was necessarily strictly followed, but made writing the music much more fluent.

The first piece takes on the thought of exploration, beginning with a running motif that climbs up the piano. This turns into a trill in thirds, increasing to double thirds before a falling motif takes it down into the bass. The nature of this piece is like that, exploring the registers of the piano and the different textures that can be made. The form of this piece is roughly ABB'A' with the B section making up the majority of the piece.

In the slower second piece rich chords make up the A section, followed by a mode change in bar 12 (B section) with faster crossing thoughts toying with the mind. When the A section returns, now developed with a slightly different mood to it, it sets the scene for more of the repeated notes and chords to return (B' section).

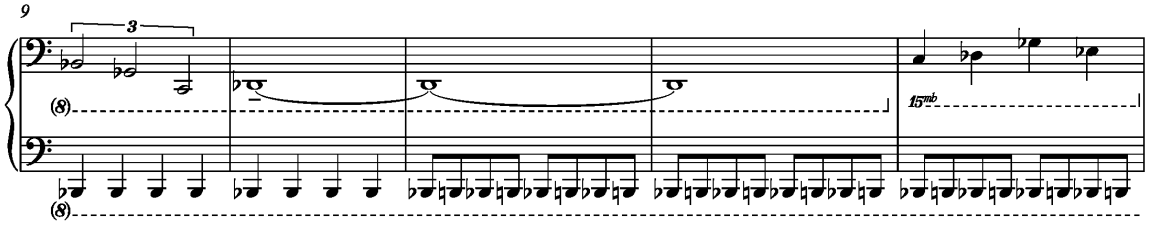


This is developed a lot more and gradually through the use of rhythms and chromatic notes, adds tension as it moves to the climax. The climax of the piece is right at the end, large forte chords rising up the piano and repeating between two top notes. The end is unfinished leaving suspense in the air for the next piece to fill.

Four bell like notes ring at the beginning of the third piece, giving way to fast running lines. Sometimes these are in both hands, sometimes only in one. The theme here relates to different paths opening and closing through a journey, some good and some bad but each continuing throughout the piece.

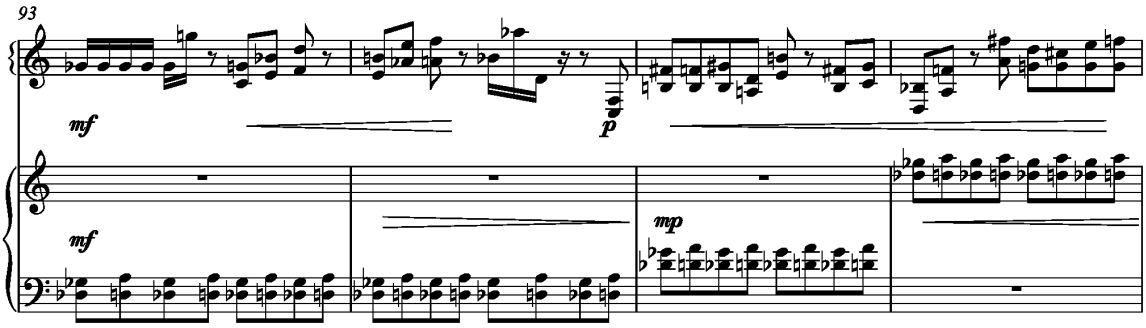
The slow section at bar 50 gives some relief from the driving force of the music. Structurally the piece is roughly ABCA'B' with no real conclusion about what the paths mean or which is best to take.

The structure of the forth piece can be looked at in two ways; firstly it can be seen as simply ABCD wherein the A section comprises the driving repeated notes all the way to bar 23.



The B section has trills in the left hand with generally rising motifs in the left, building to a fortissimo at bar 47 wherein it quickly fades away into the C section.

Here after briefly contemplating some interesting harmonies, repeated notes in the right hand high in the treble register take over. The mood suddenly changes half way through bar 79, the roles of repeated notes swap and the left hand takes over. The piece then builds with the use of short fragmented motifs in the right hand.



The climax at bar 99 gives way to a memory of the beginning of the B section with the repeated notes in the right hand, the theme in the left plays out and gradually slows to the end.

Duration: 14’14”

Piano Suite
1

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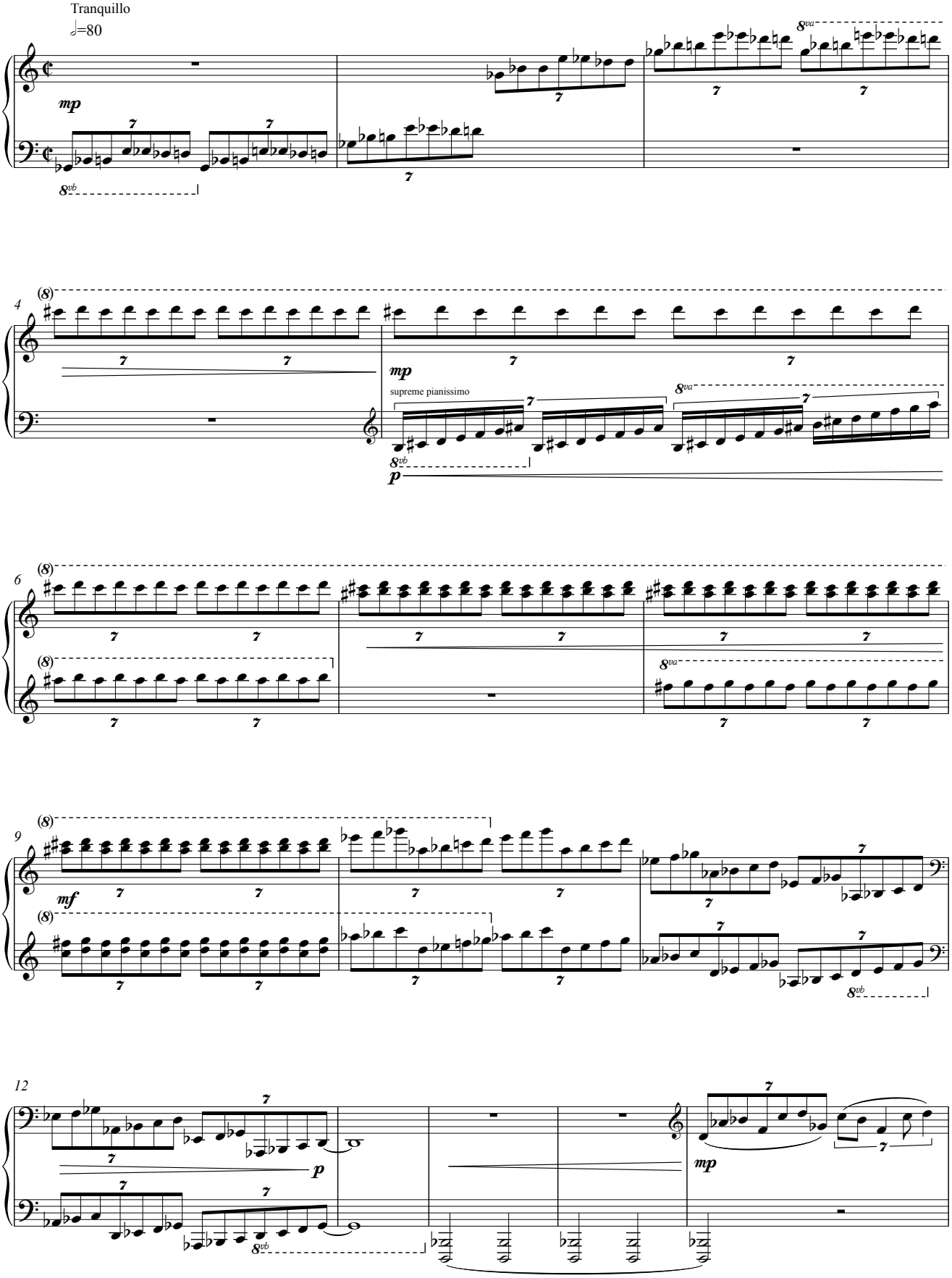

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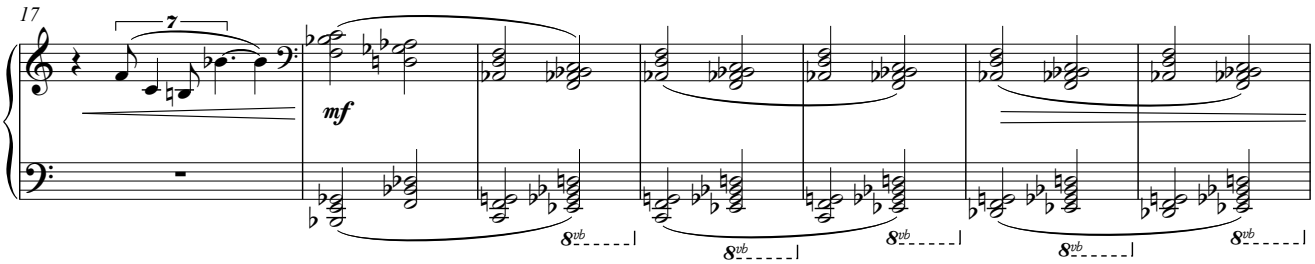
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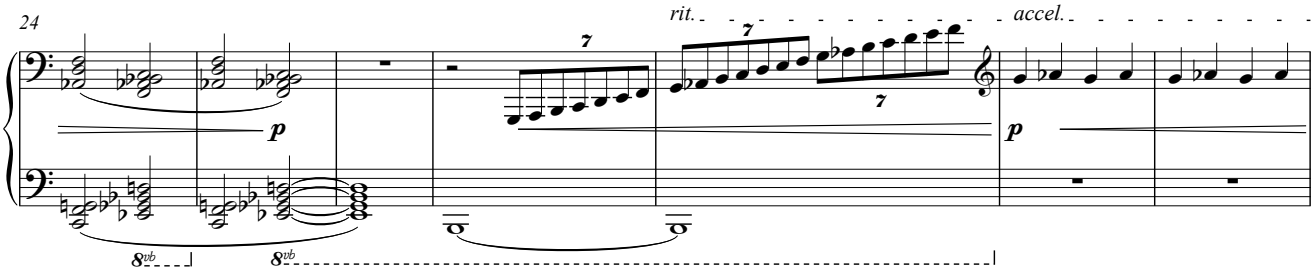
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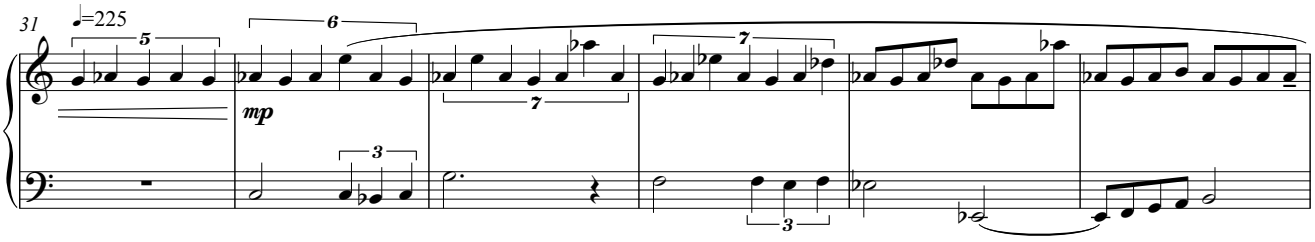
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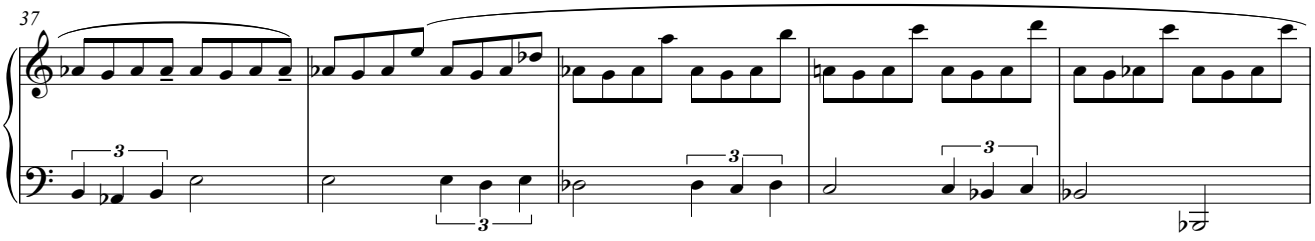
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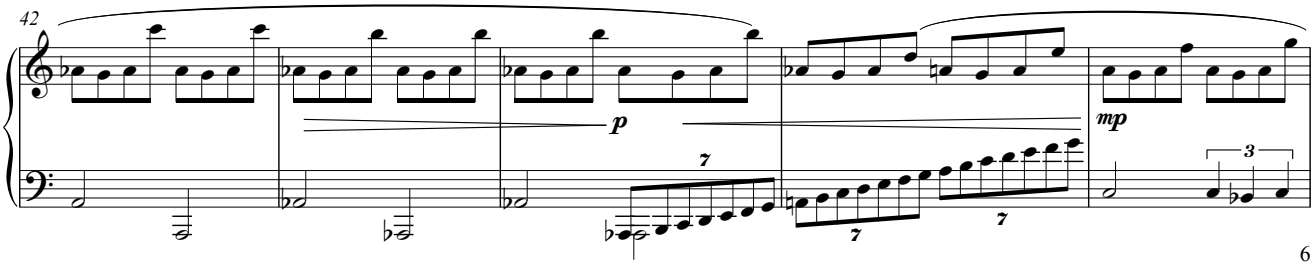
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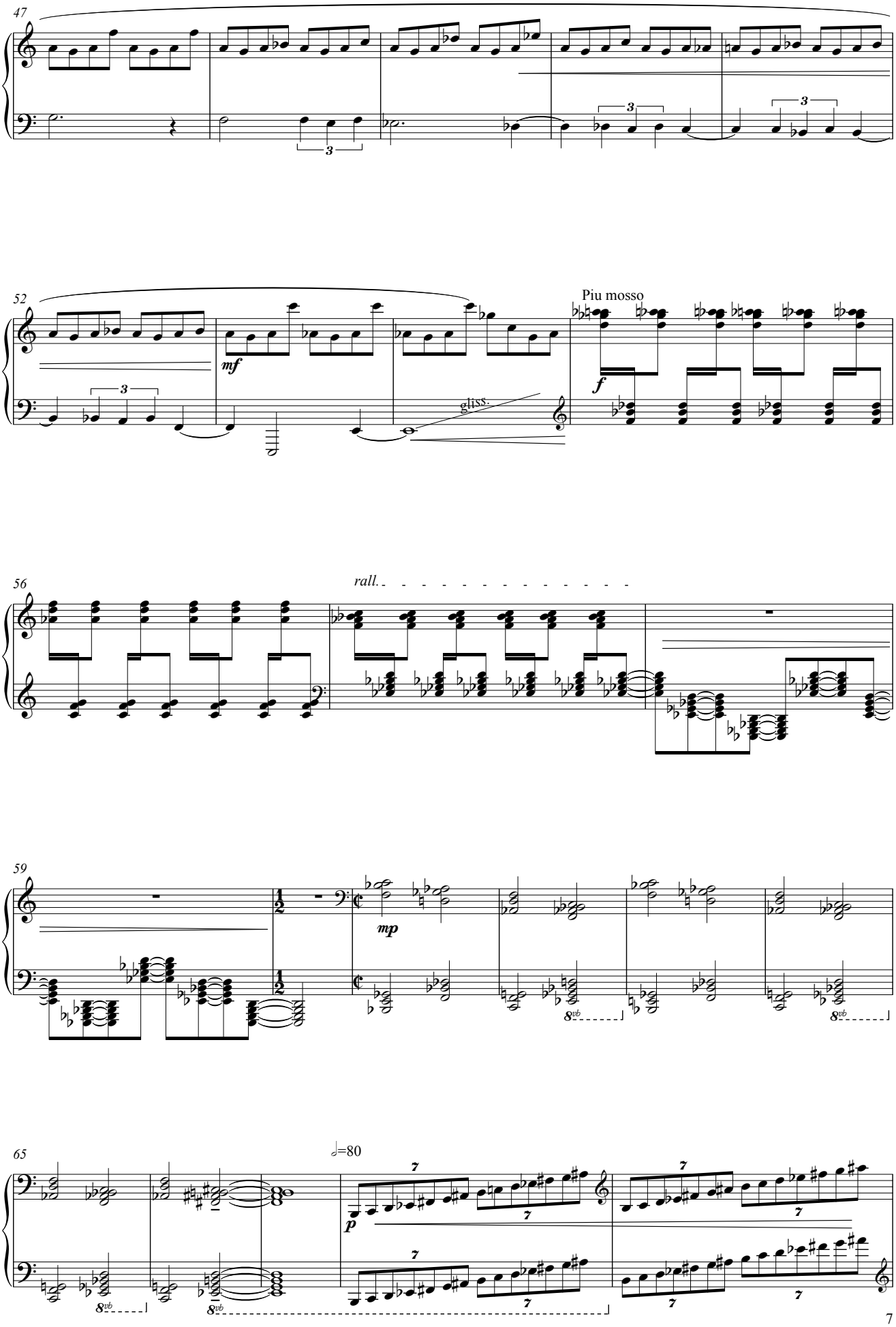
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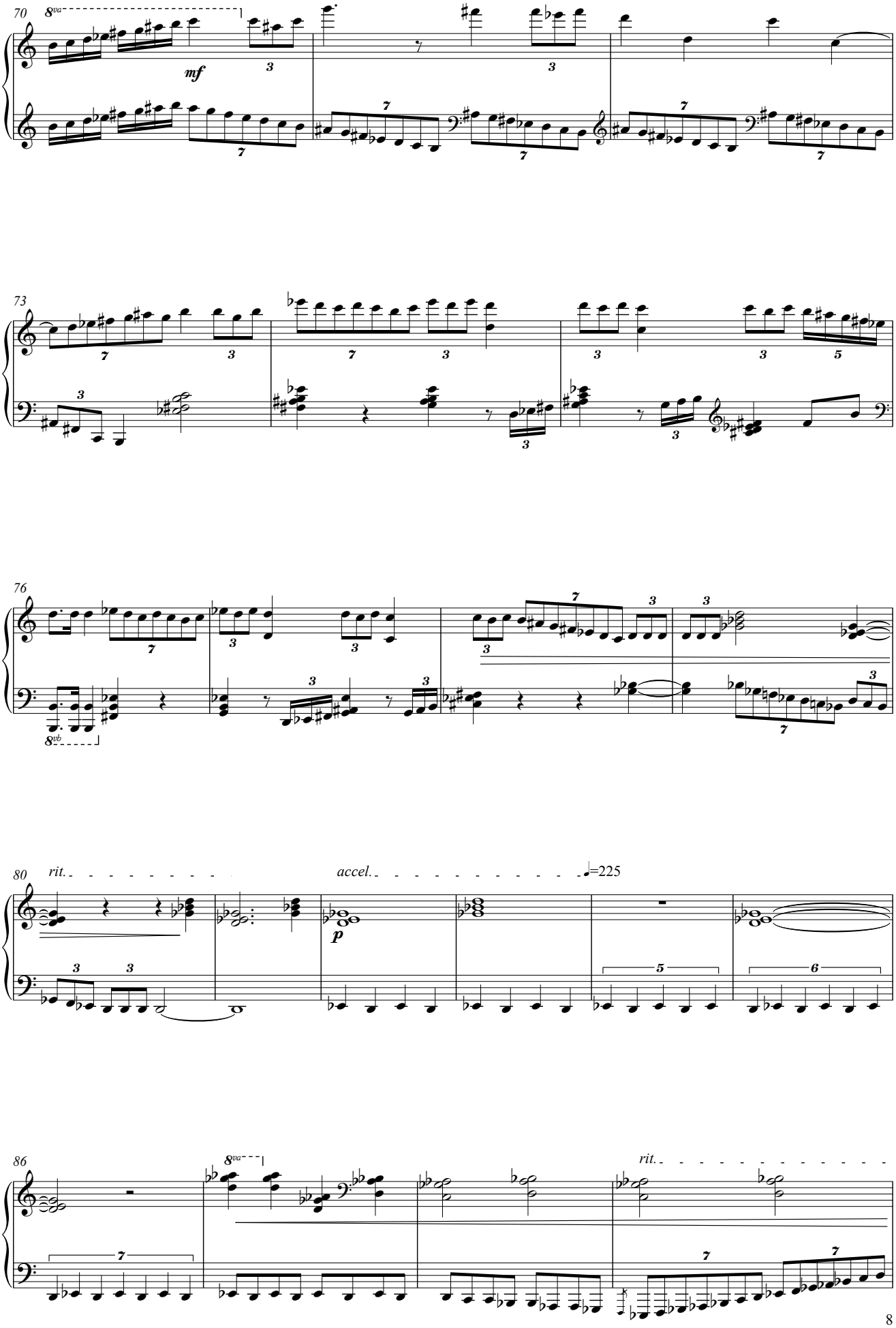
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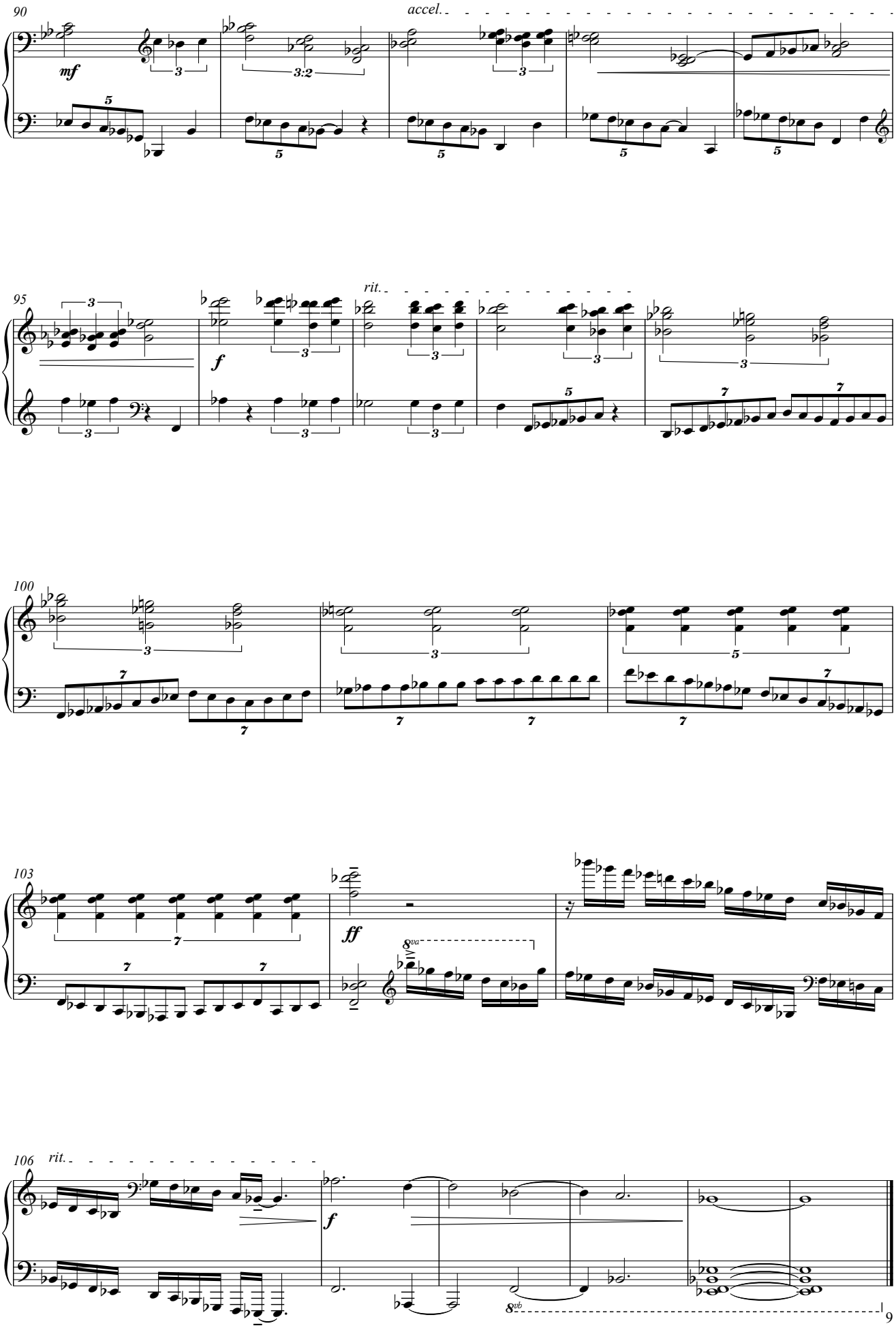
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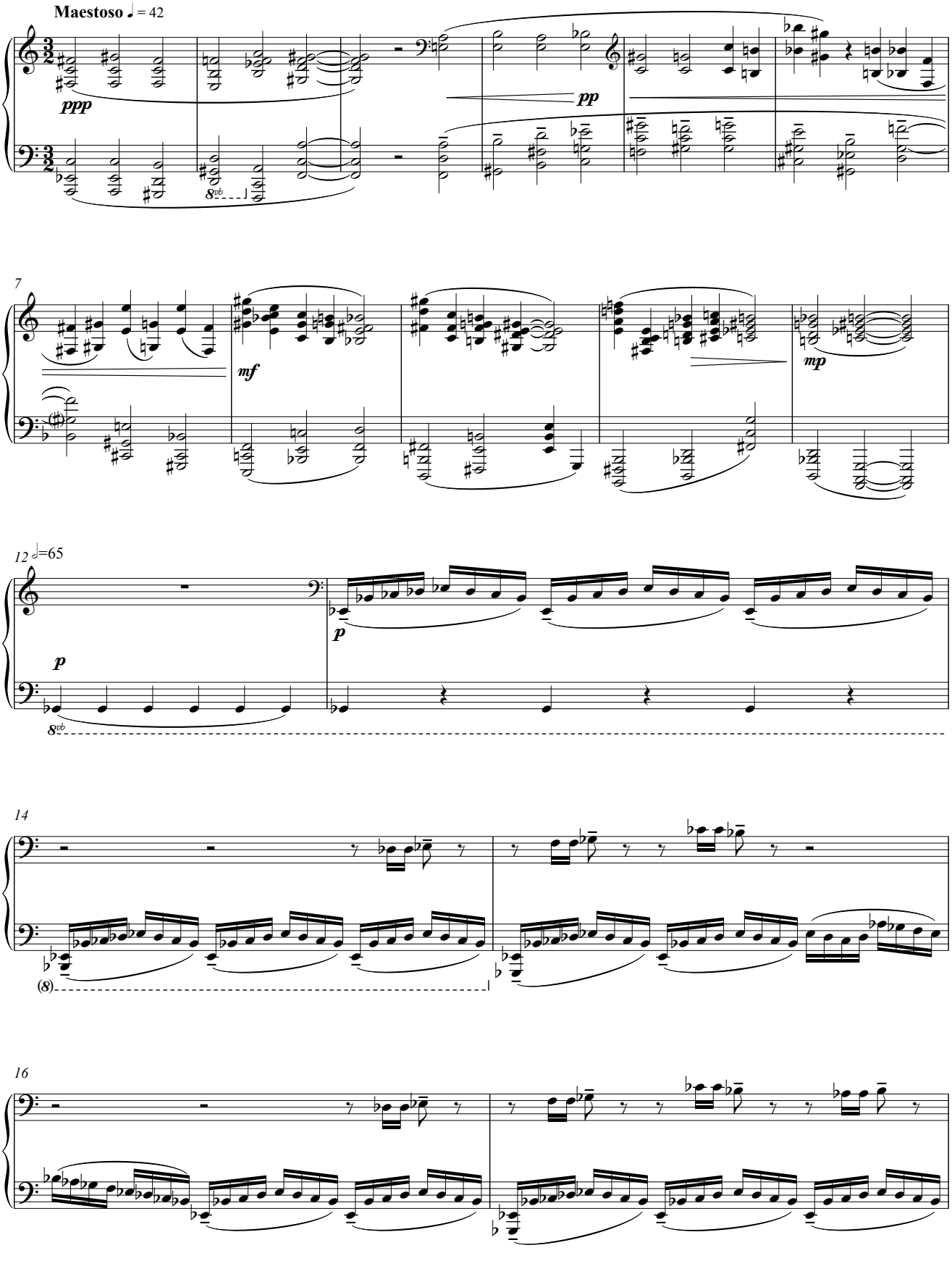

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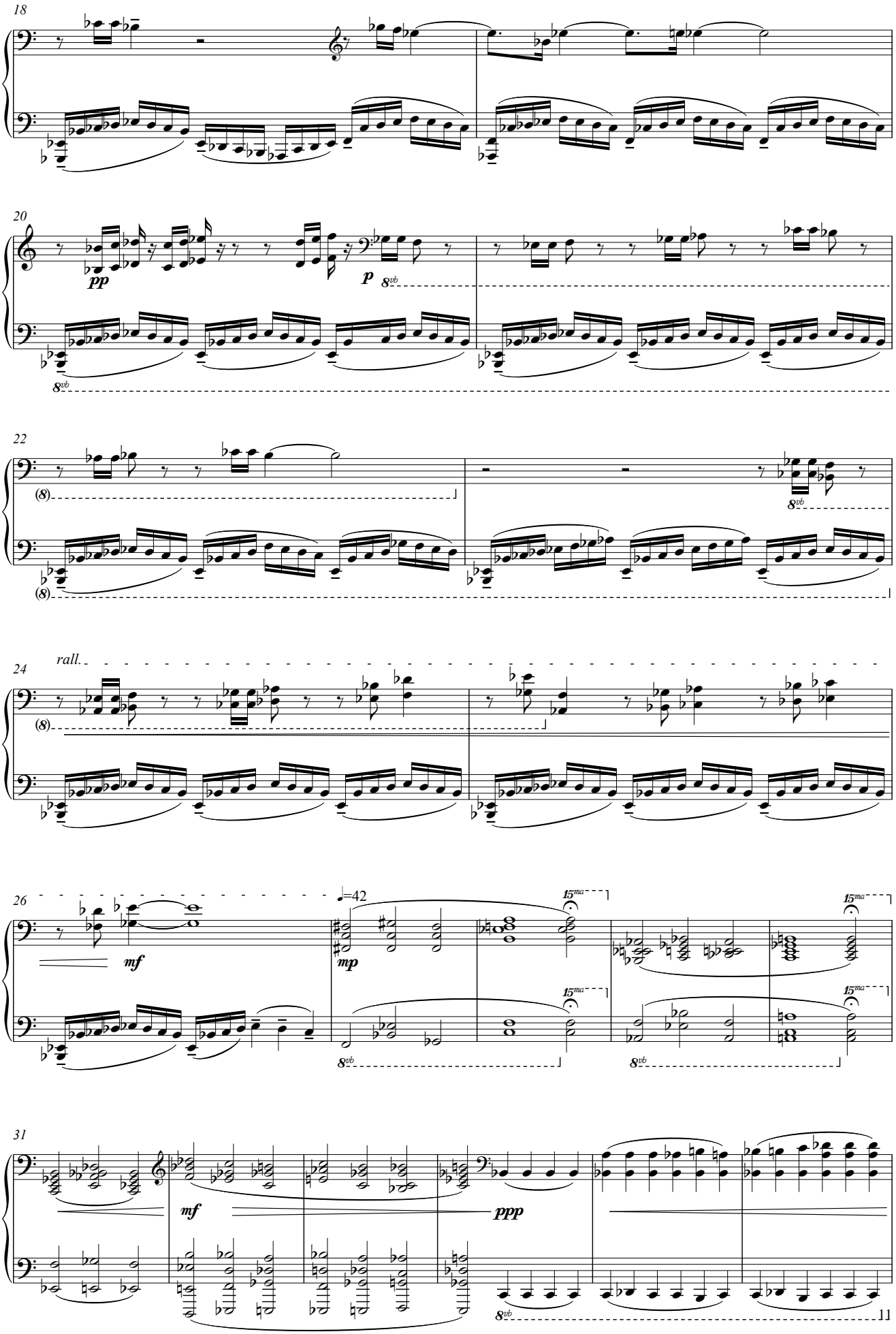
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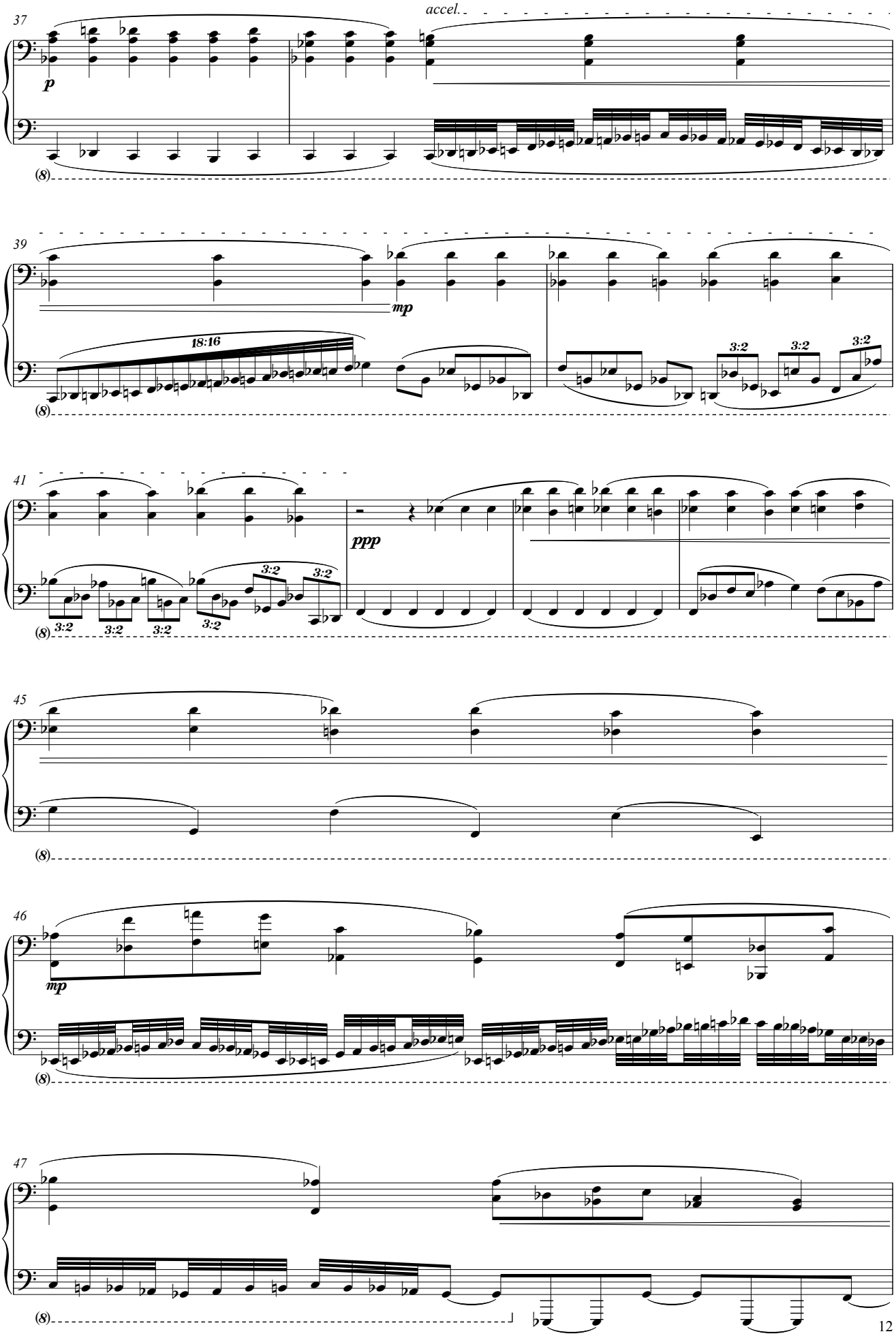
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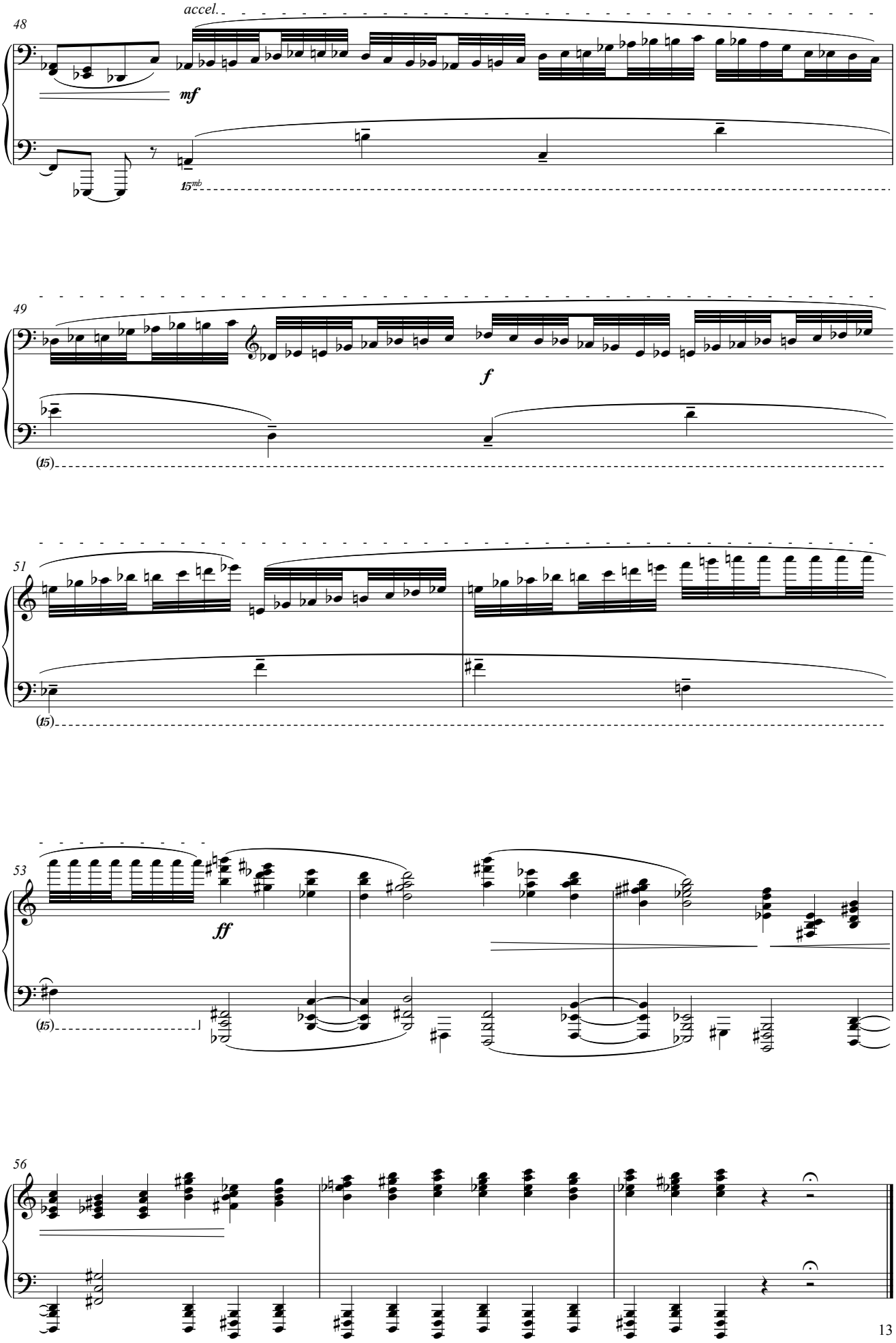
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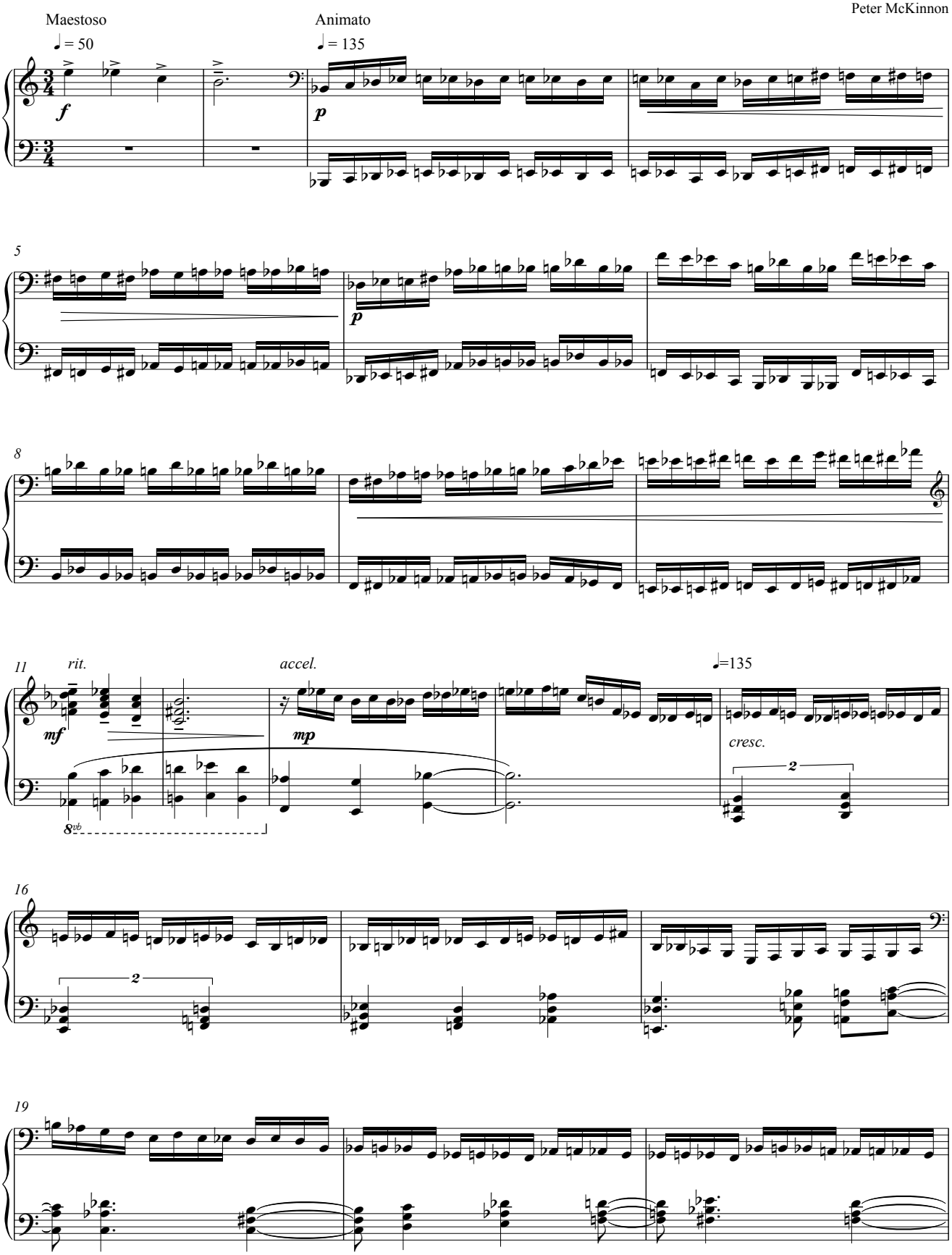

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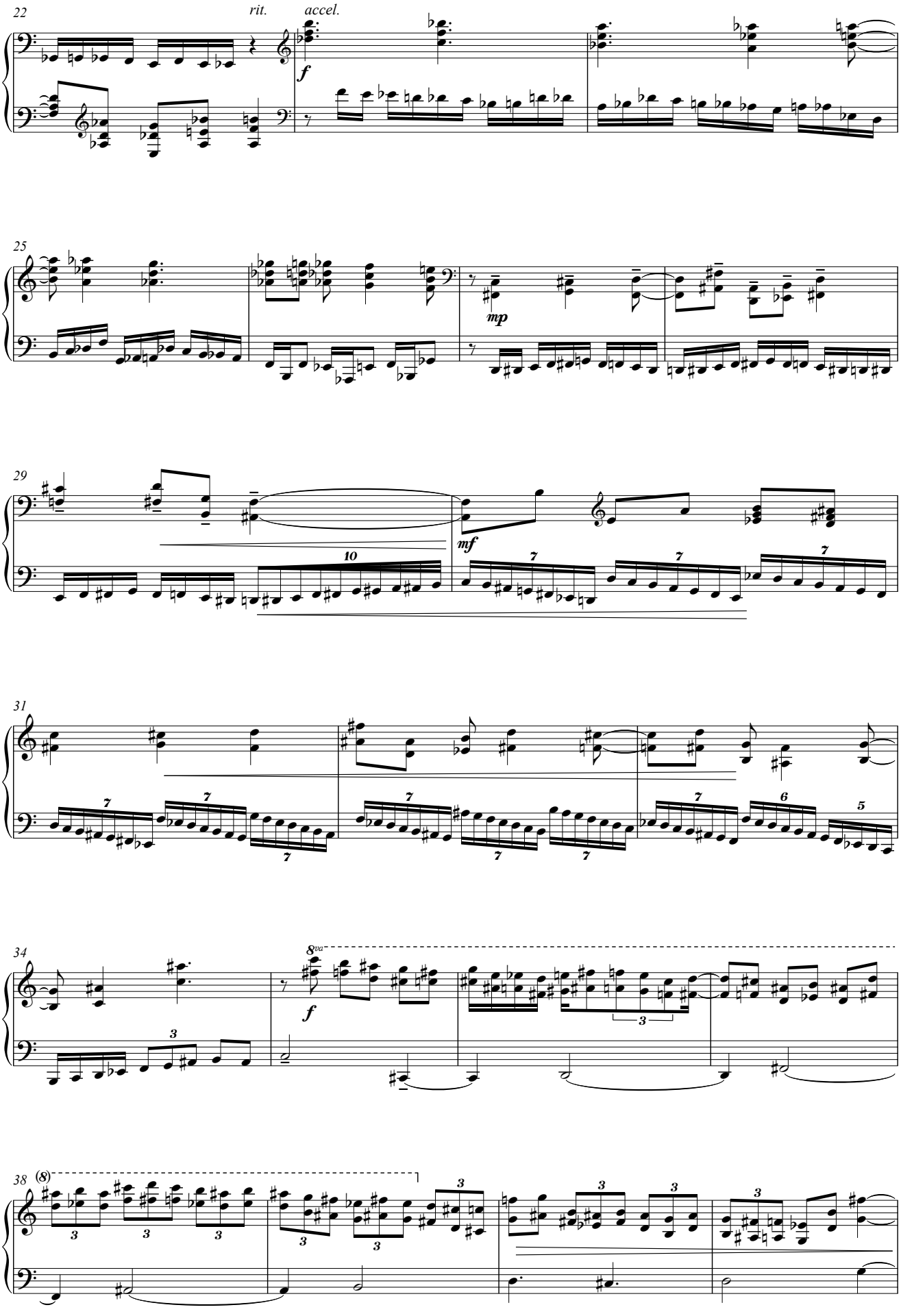
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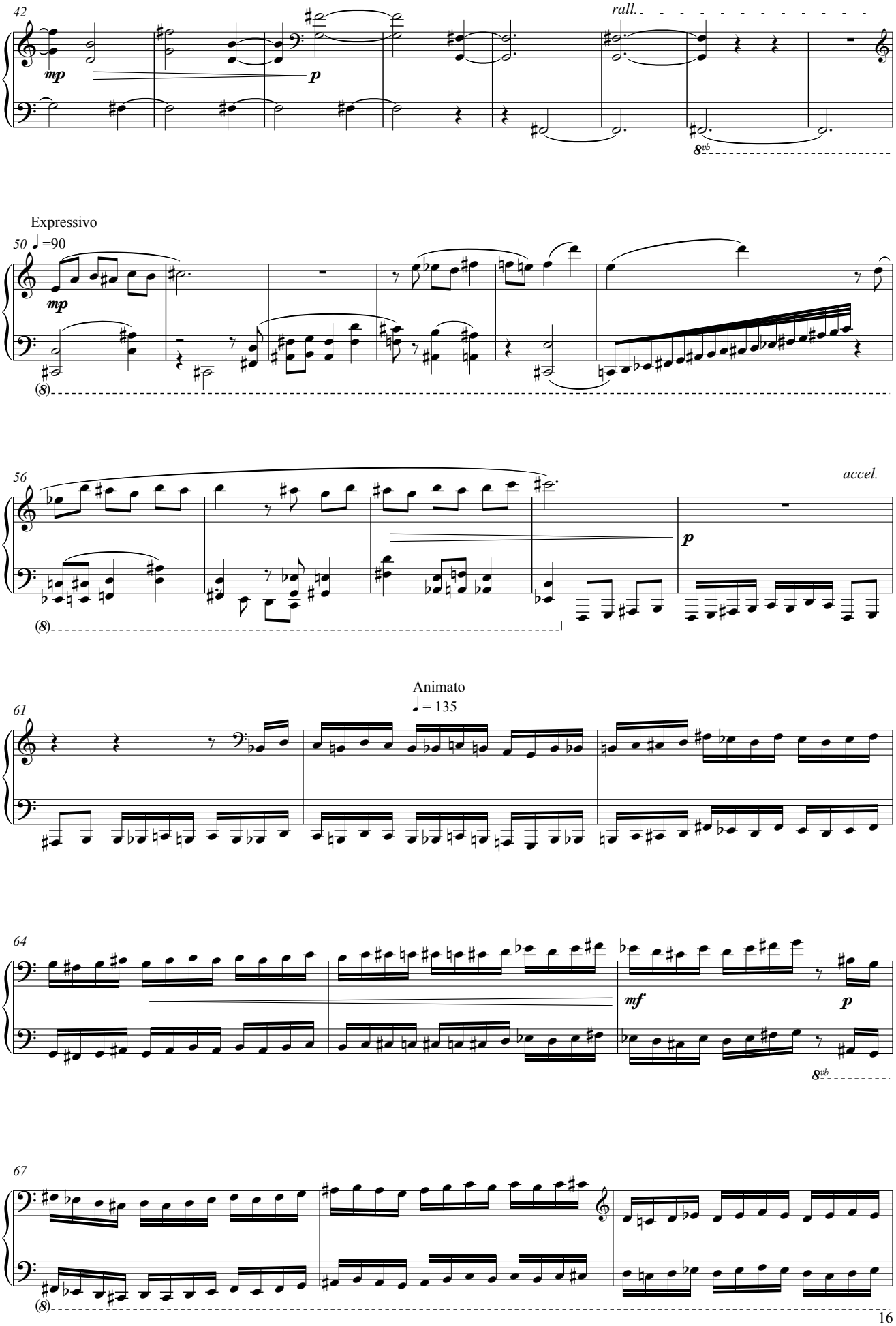
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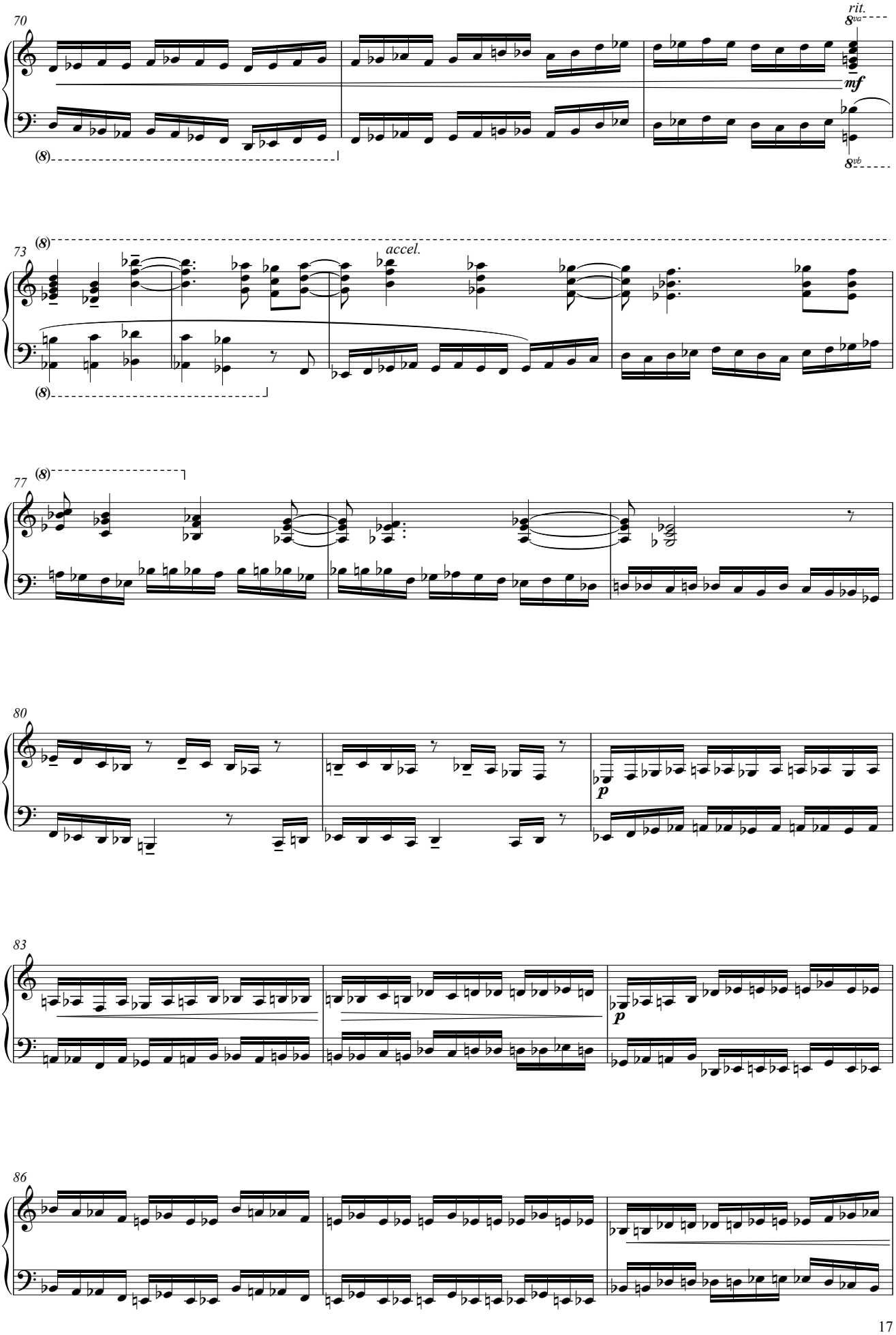
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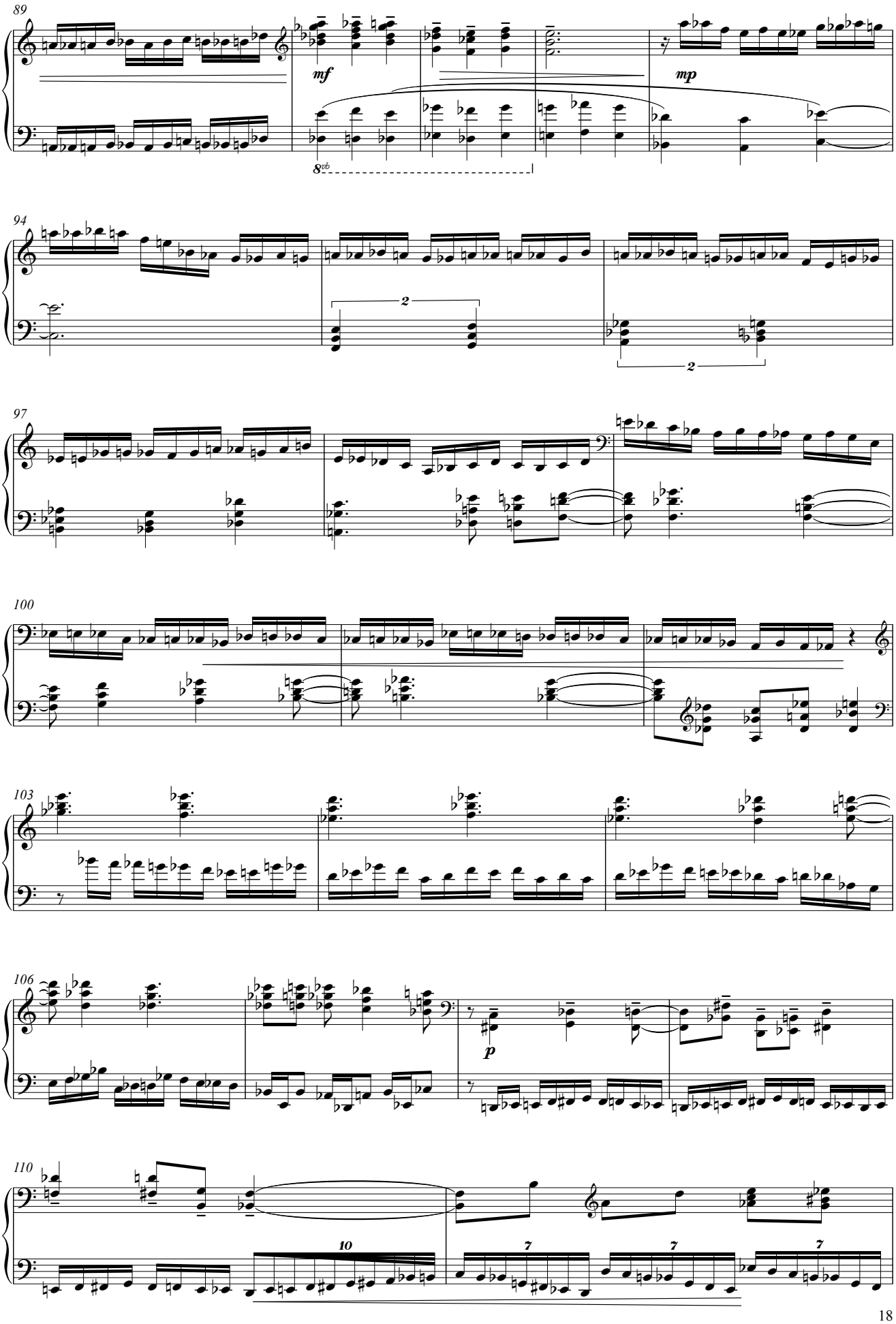
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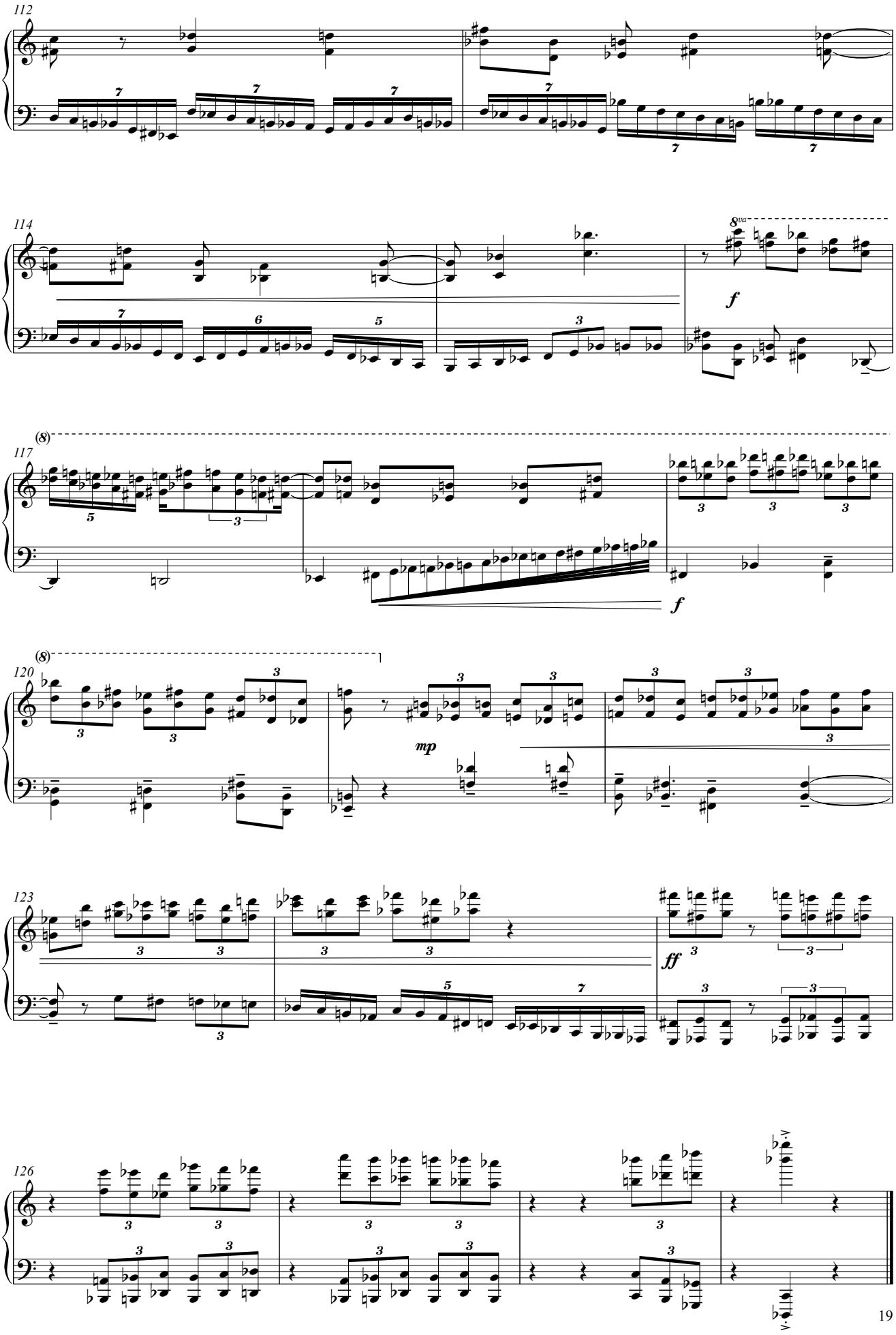
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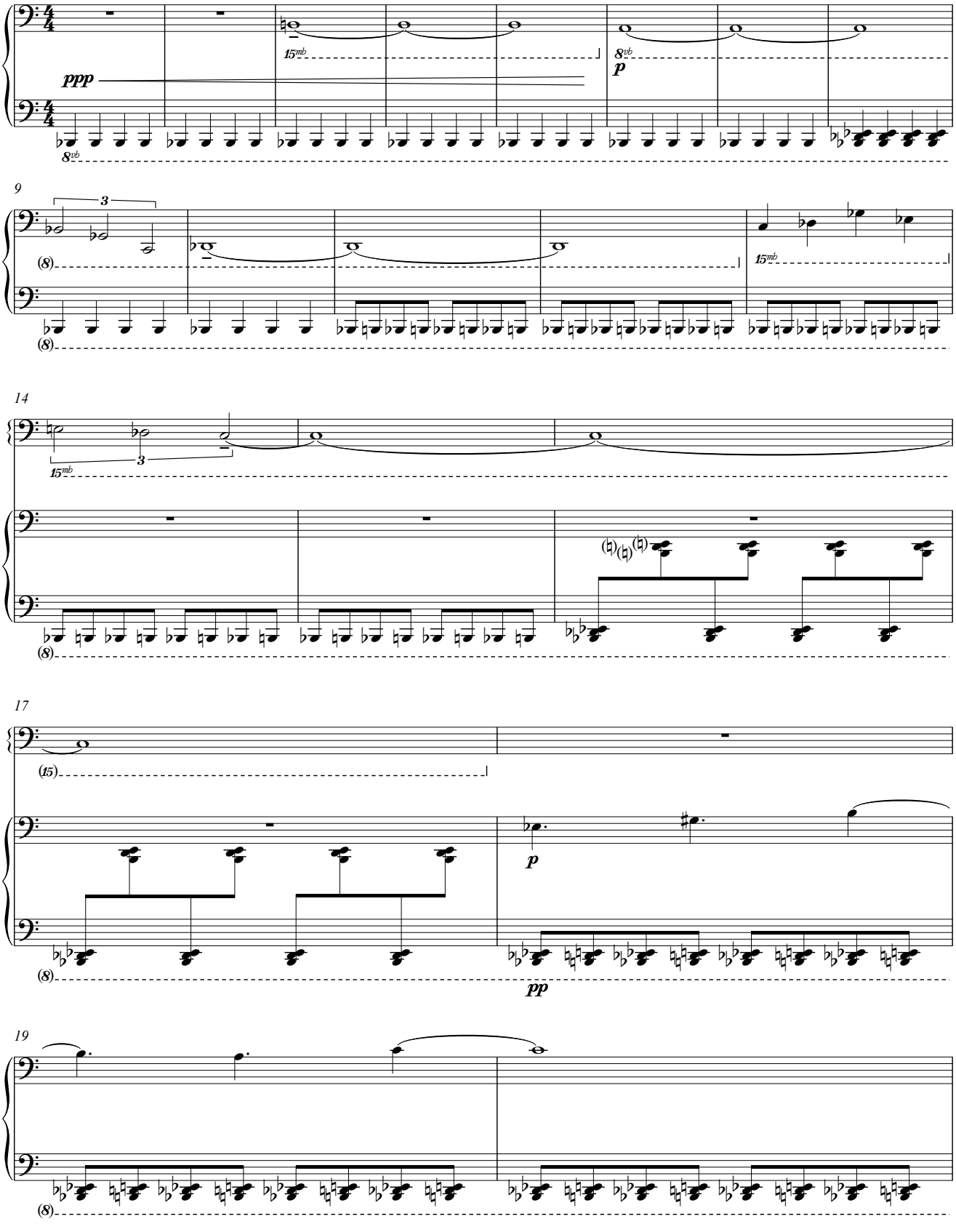
Peter McKinnon

Fuoco appassionato

♩ = 160



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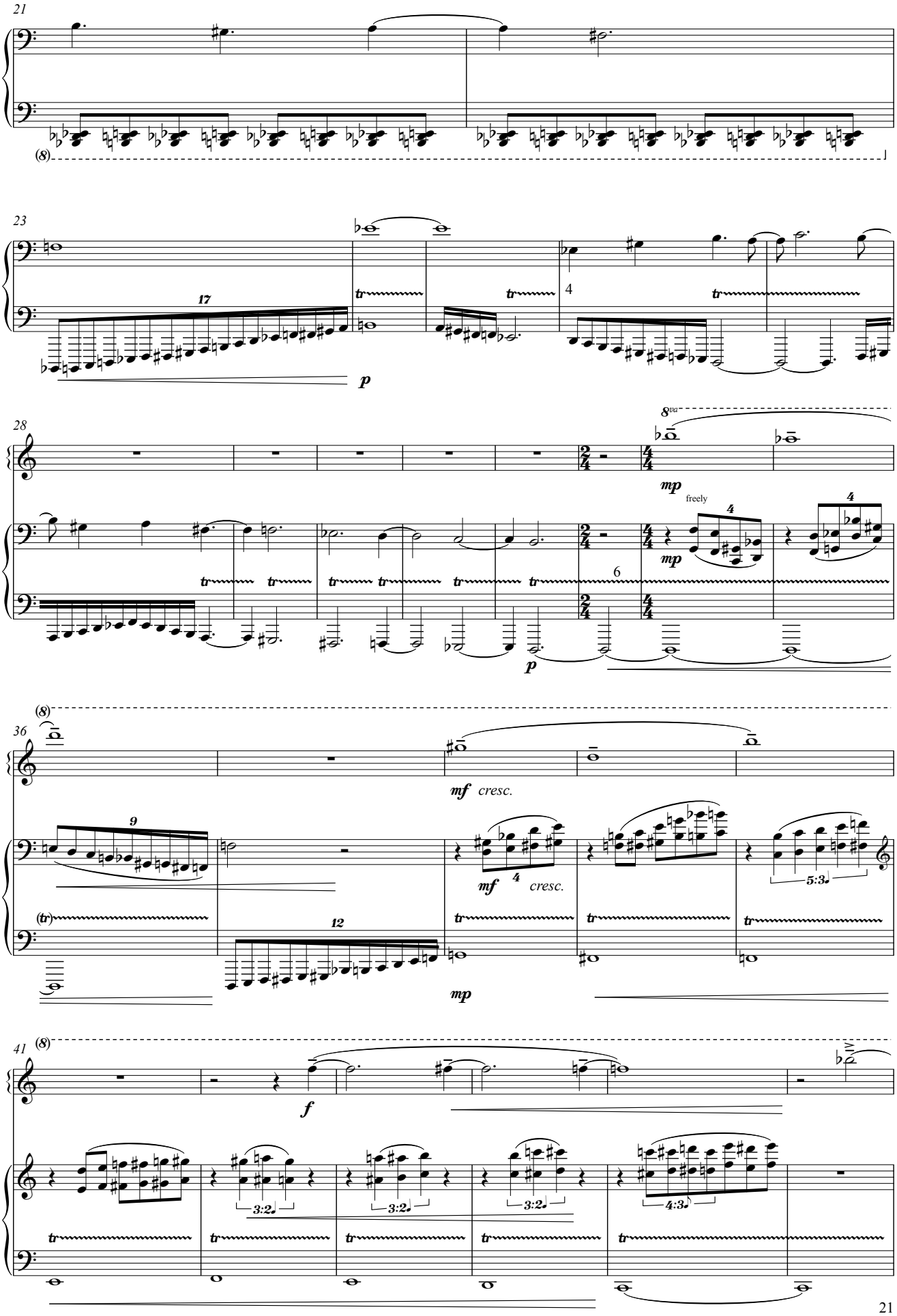
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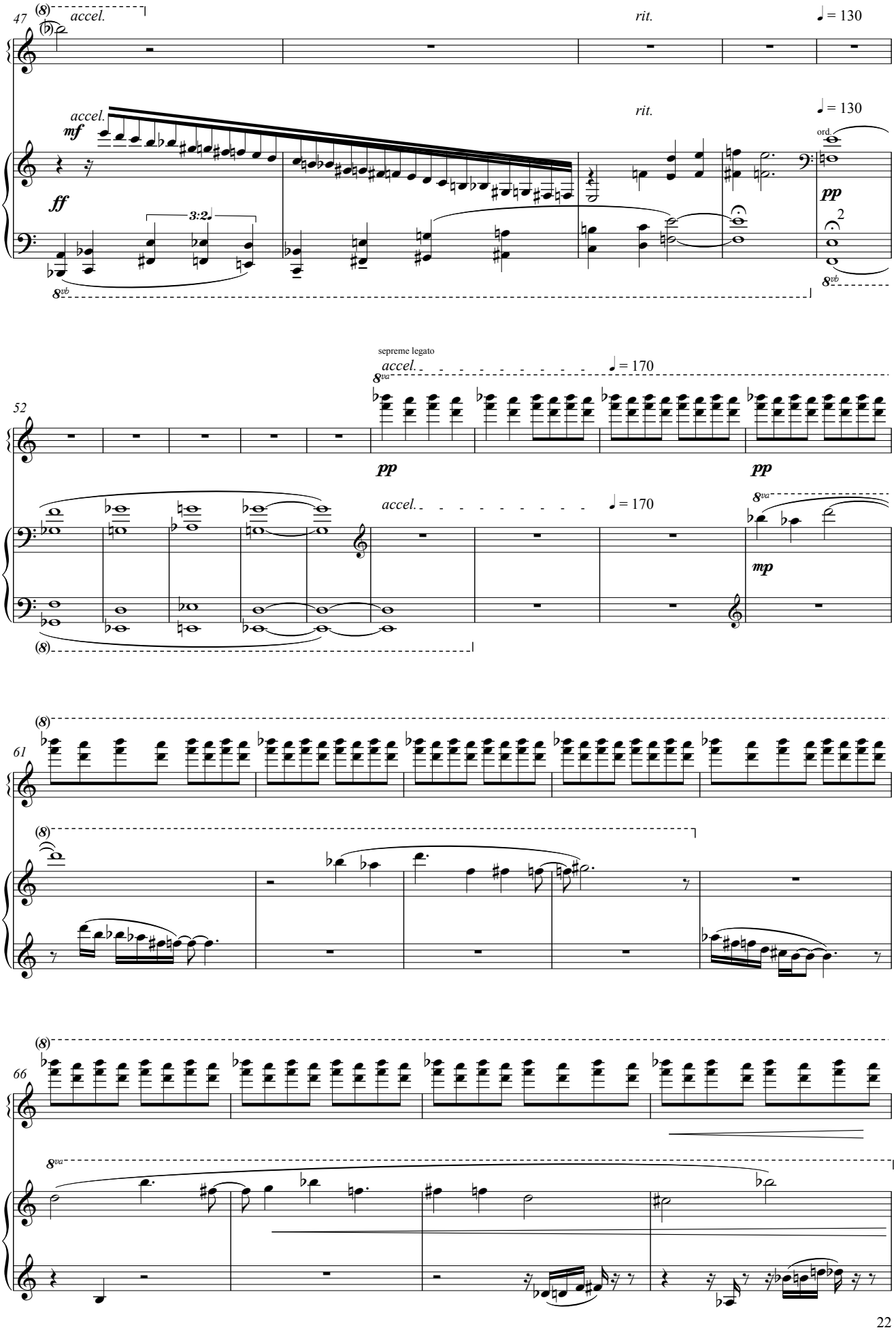
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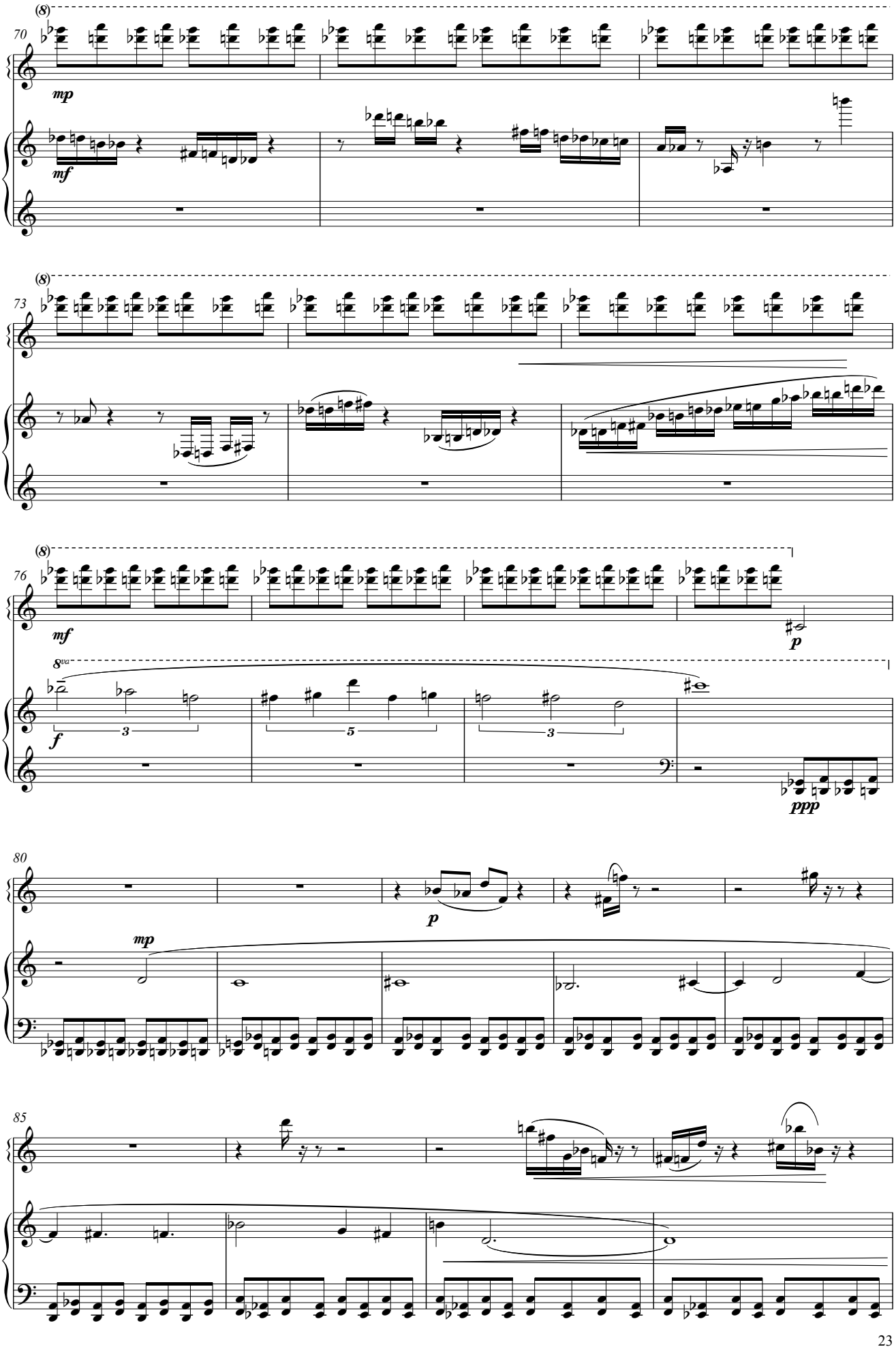
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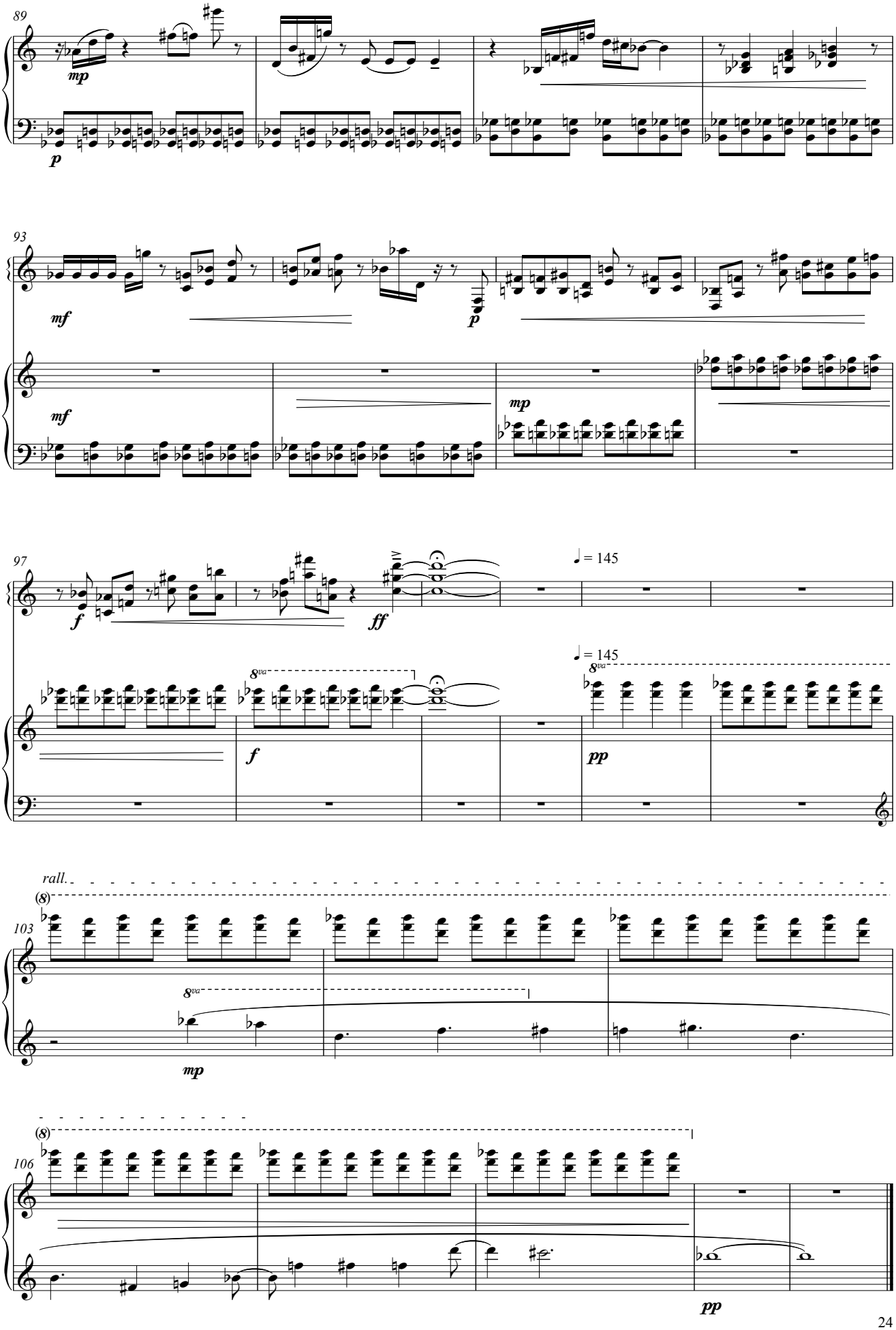
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mf
mf
p
mp
97
f
ff
♩ = 145
8va
f
♩ = 145
8va
pp
rall.
(8)
103
8va
mp
(8)
106
pp

Cello and cello

for

Two cellos

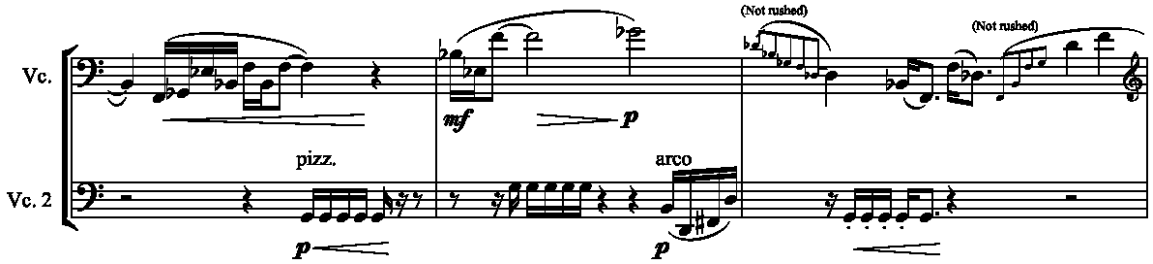
Cello and Cello

for

Two cellos

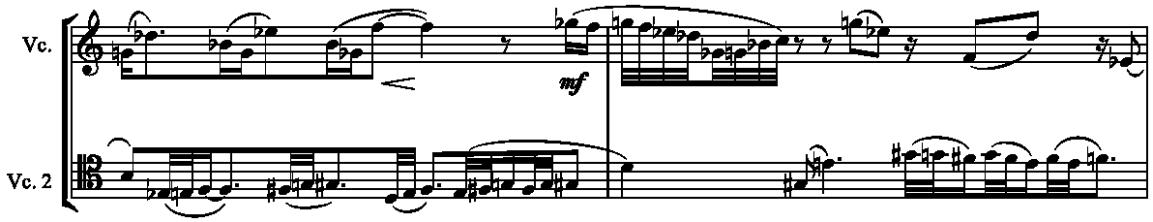
Originally conceived as part performance and part stage play, this work to enter into the mind of the performer and the chatter that goes on between him and the mind.
The idea is for the performer to have a spotlight on him/her and have a second cello (representing the mind) behind a white backdrop with only a shadow showing on the backdrop.
The audience will see mainly the first cello with the sounds of the second cello being slightly muted due to the backdrop.
In two movements, this piece explores the relationship we all have with our minds, briefly entering the chatter that goes on inside ourselves.

The piece is in two movements. The first could be likened to awakening and exploring, mixed with anger, dissatisfaction, optimism and eagerness. It begins with very little interaction between the two cellos, the first cello stating themes and exploring sounds until 1'07". Then the second cello enters and comments briefly on the first cello's music.



This is short lived though, cello 2 falling silent from 2'07" until 2'56". The first section aims to express sadness and loneliness through the use of certain intervals, all based on a synthetic scale made up of three sets of six notes and divided between each cello.

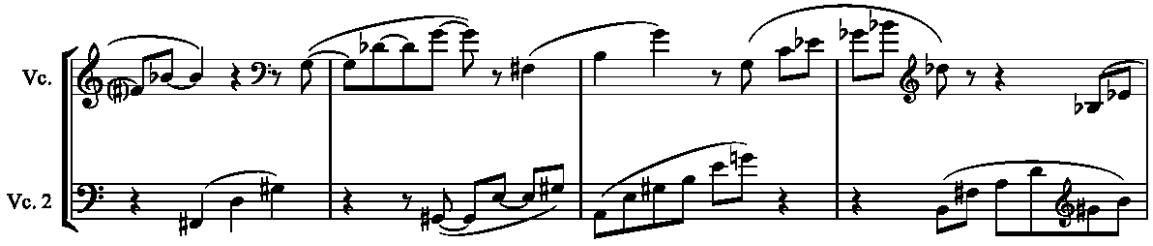
After 2'56" the second cello enters into more of a dialogue with the first cello, commenting, sometimes opposing, sometimes agreeing. At 3'53 the second part of the movement begins, the tempo increasing slightly and the dialogue taking on a more busy nature. Here the work explores dissatisfaction mixed with eagerness, using more complex rhythms and gradually accelerating to the end, becoming more restless and impatient.



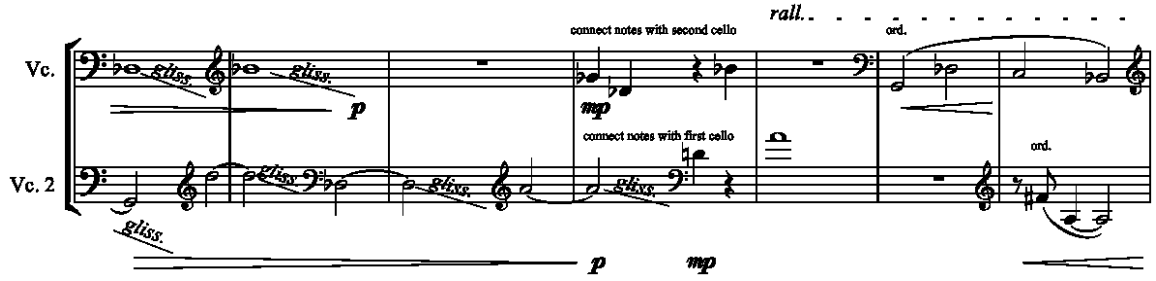
For the last two bars the second cello plays a trill - unsure what else to say it repeats the same thing. The piece then ends on a fortissimo pizzicato from each of the cellos.

The second movement explores different emotions in three sections, with the first of the sections touching on remorse, confusion and sadness. The second cello has much more dialogue in this movement, playing constantly until around 2'20", expressing what I think of as subconscious thoughts to the murmurs of the first cello.

The second section builds up tension, increasing the tempo and the cello parts overlap one another as they toy with the anger, impatience and distress. This all builds steadily with each part trying to win over the other, neither give up and they relentlessly play through the climax together.



At 4’23” the tension is slowly released with weeping whole notes in both cellos. An important theme is restated after the weeping notes;

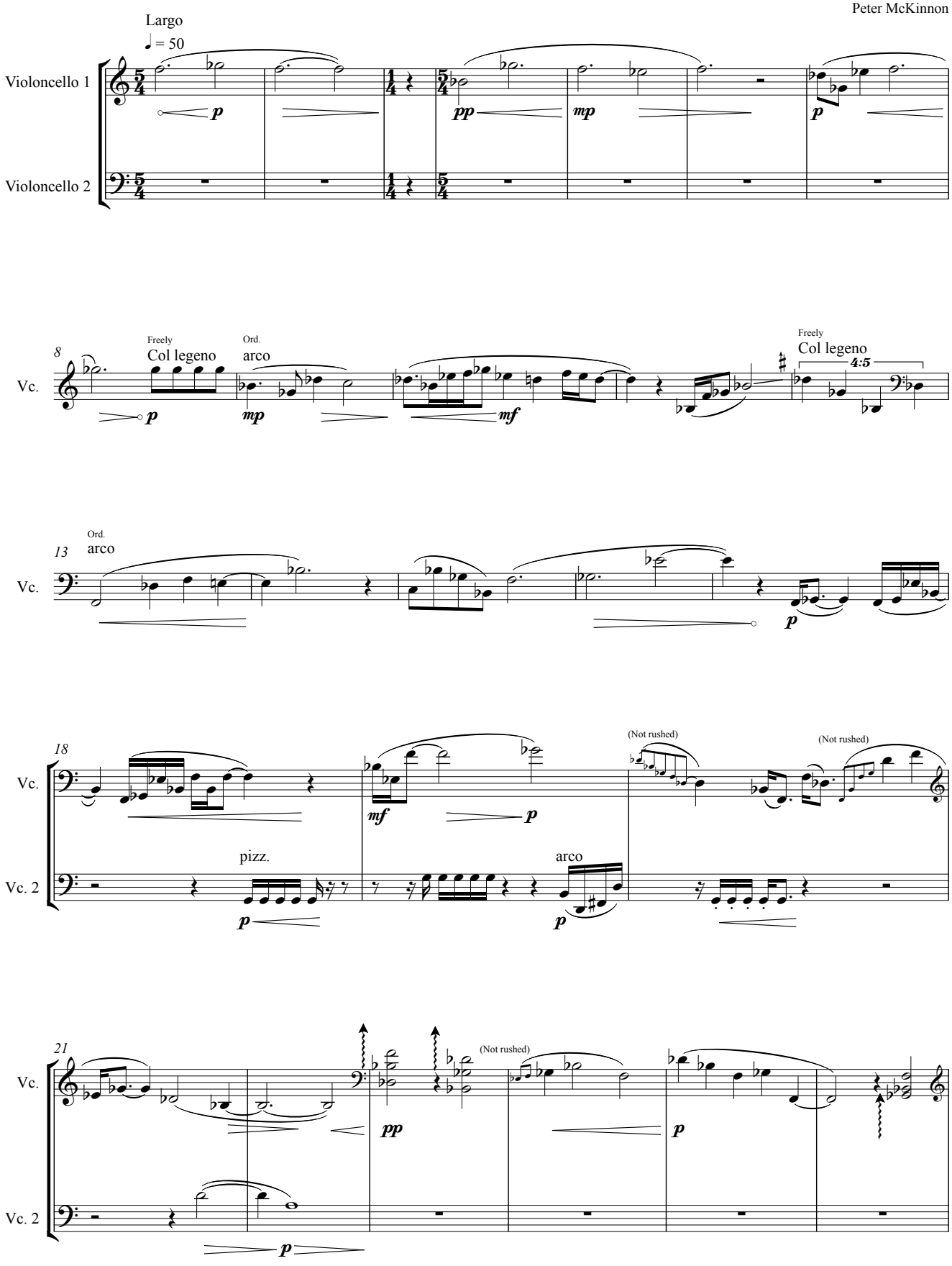


followed by a gradual slowing of tempo to the end and the final say from the first cello.

Duration: 10’09”

Cello and Cello

Peter McKinnon



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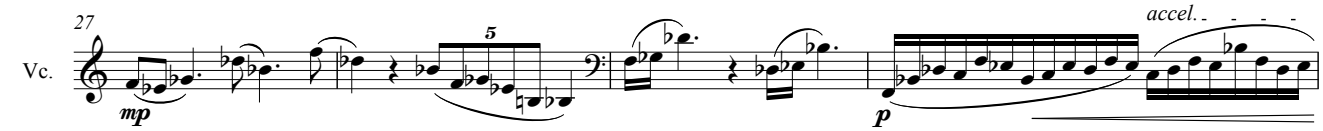
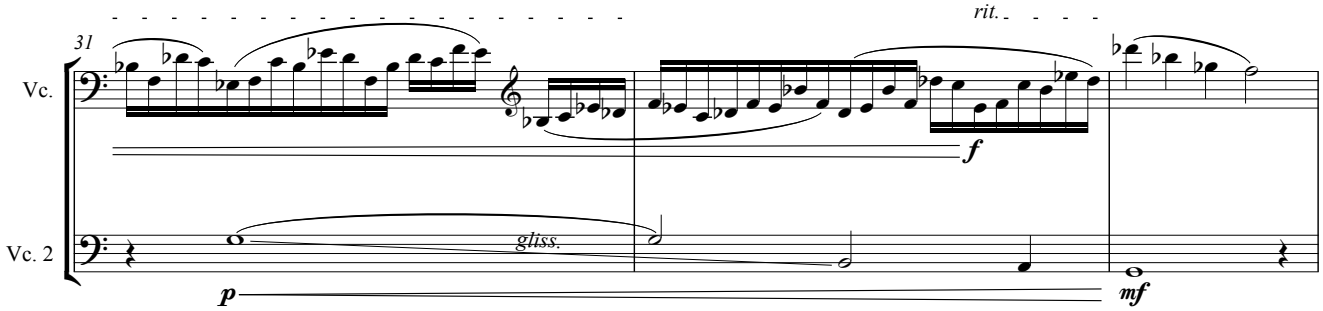
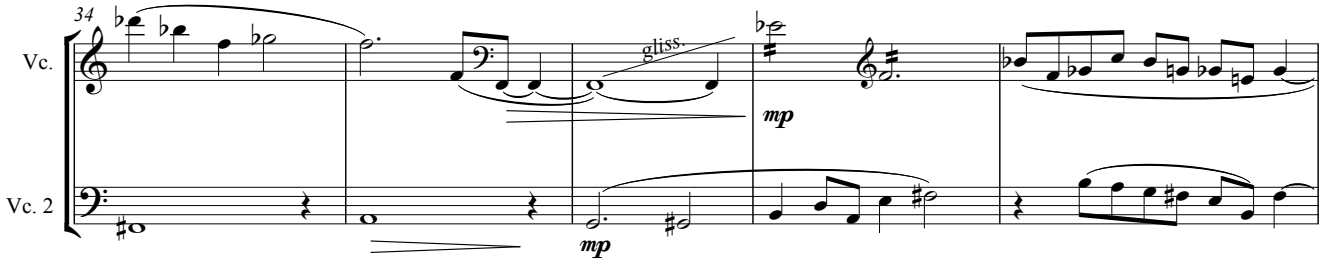
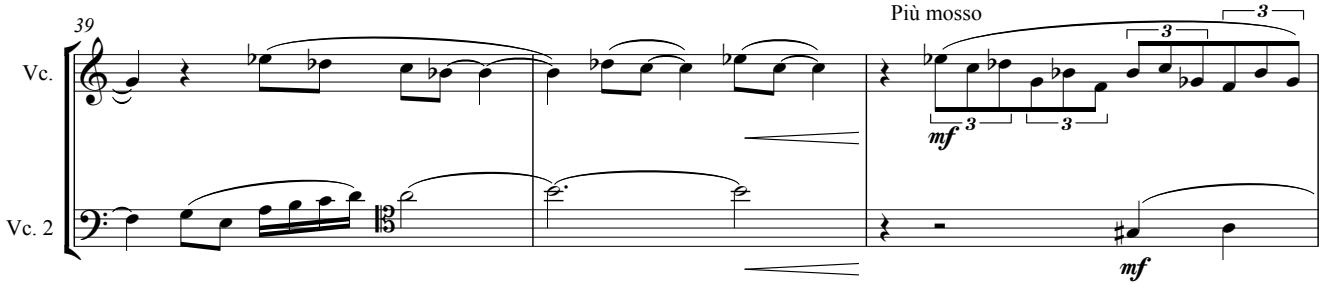
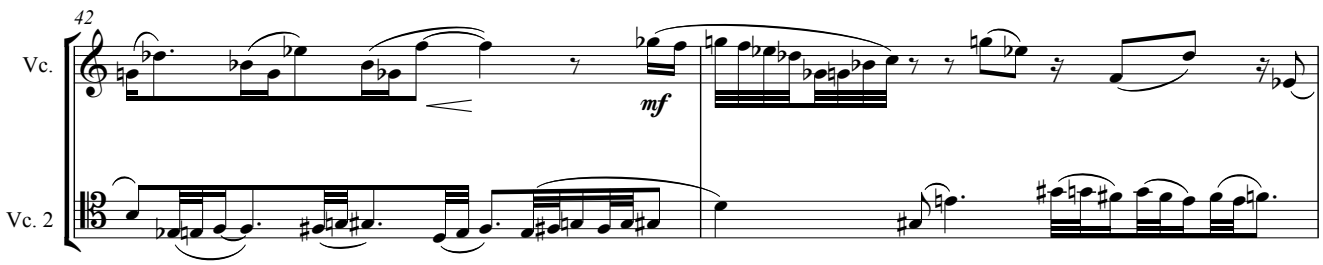
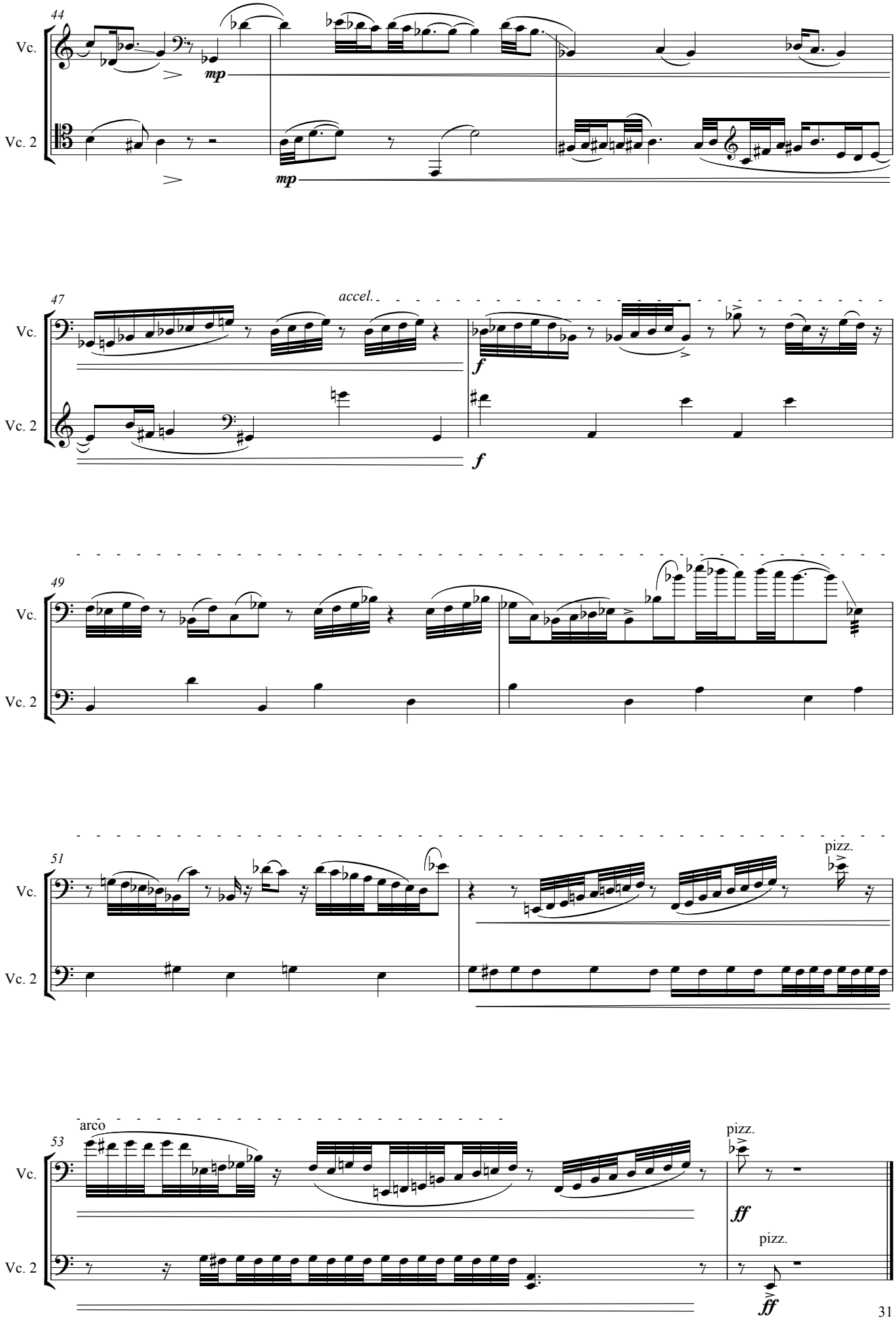

27
Vc.
mp
5
p
accel.


31
Vc.
Vc. 2
rit.
f
gliss.
p
mf


34
Vc.
Vc. 2
gliss.
mp
mp


39
Vc.
Vc. 2
Più mosso
3
3
mf
3
3
mf


42
Vc.
Vc. 2
mf


44
Vc.
Vc. 2
mp
mp
47
accel.
Vc.
Vc. 2
f
f
49
Vc.
Vc. 2
51
Vc.
Vc. 2
pizz.
arco
53
Vc.
Vc. 2
pizz.
ff
pizz.
ff

2

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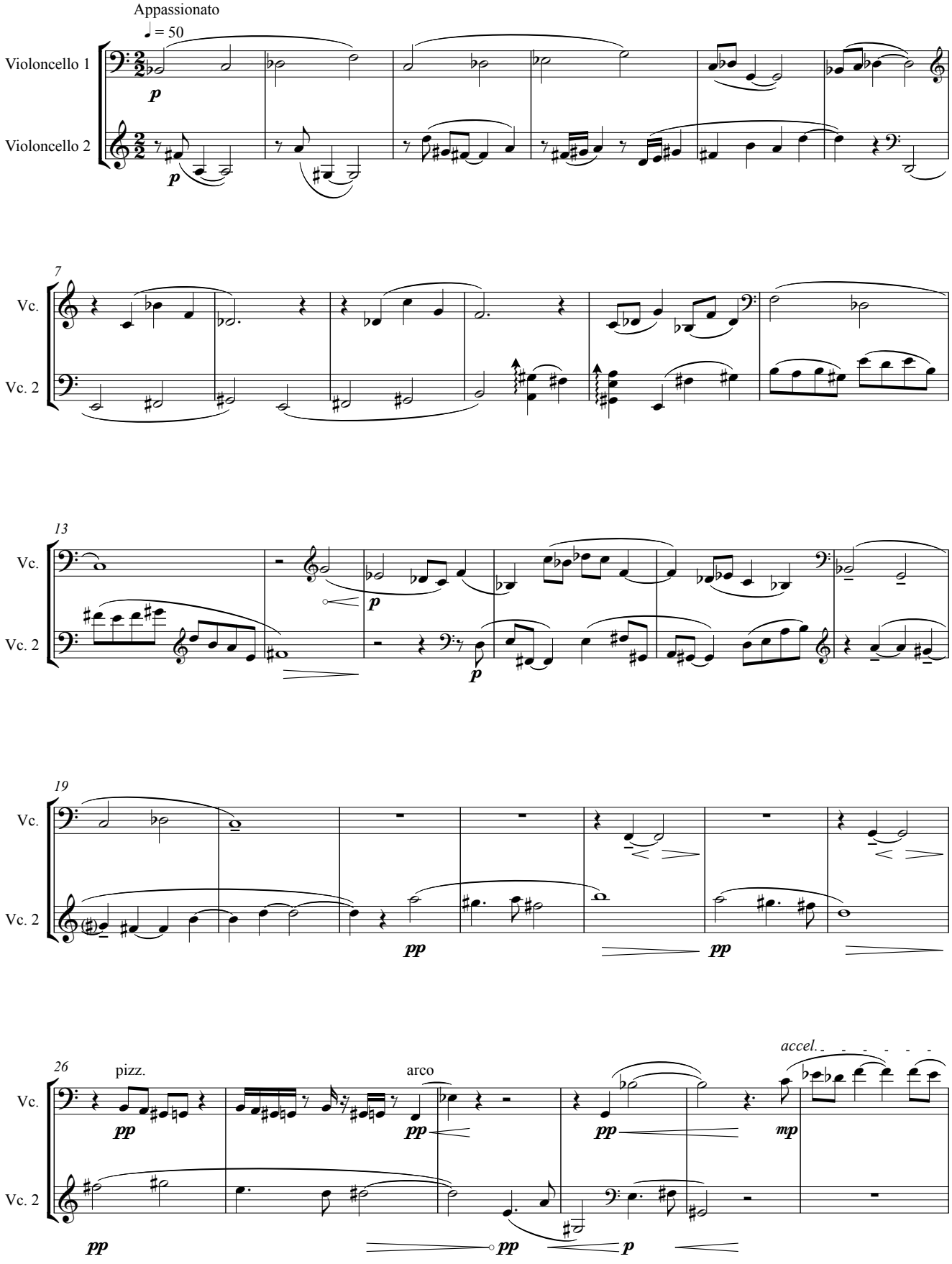

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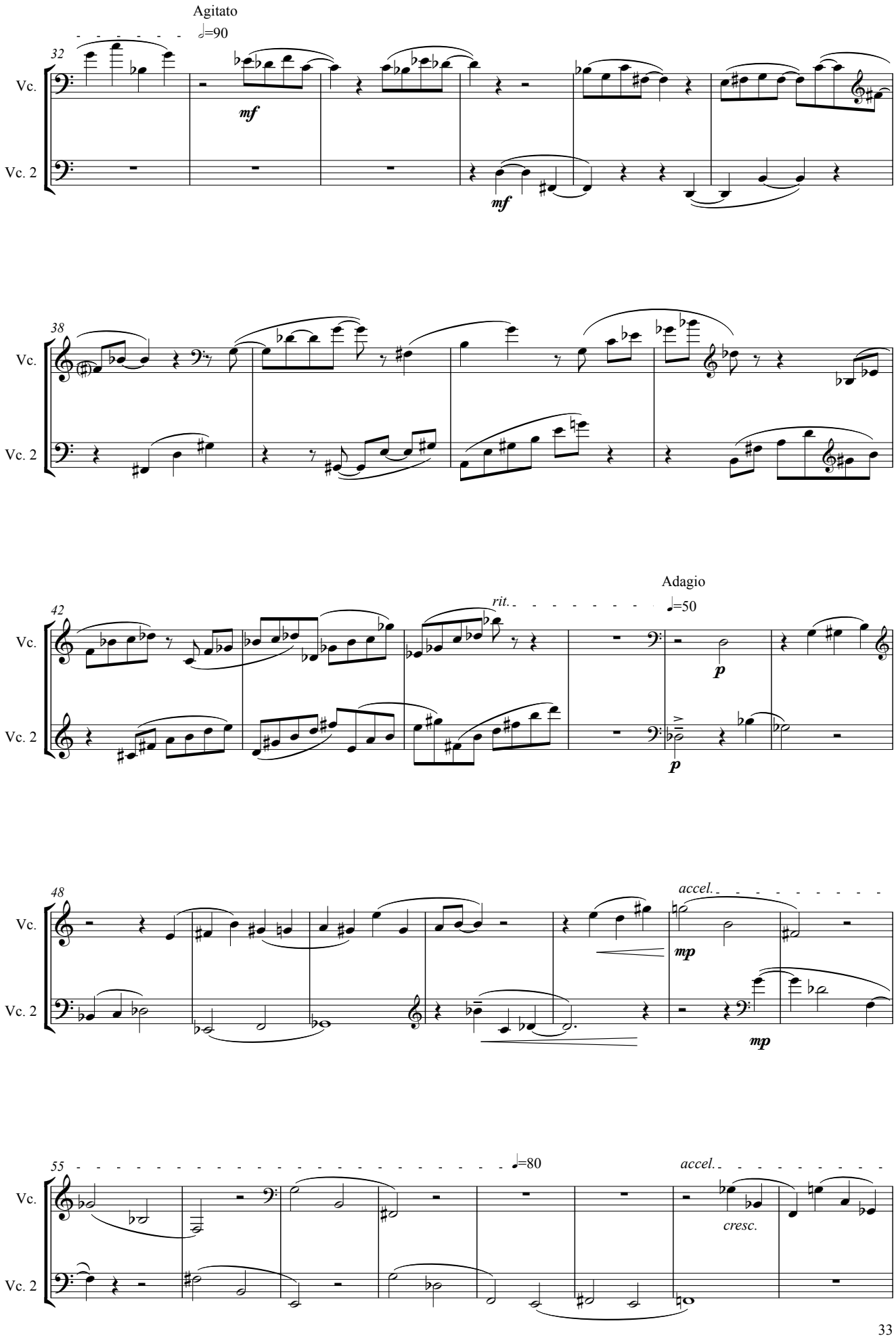
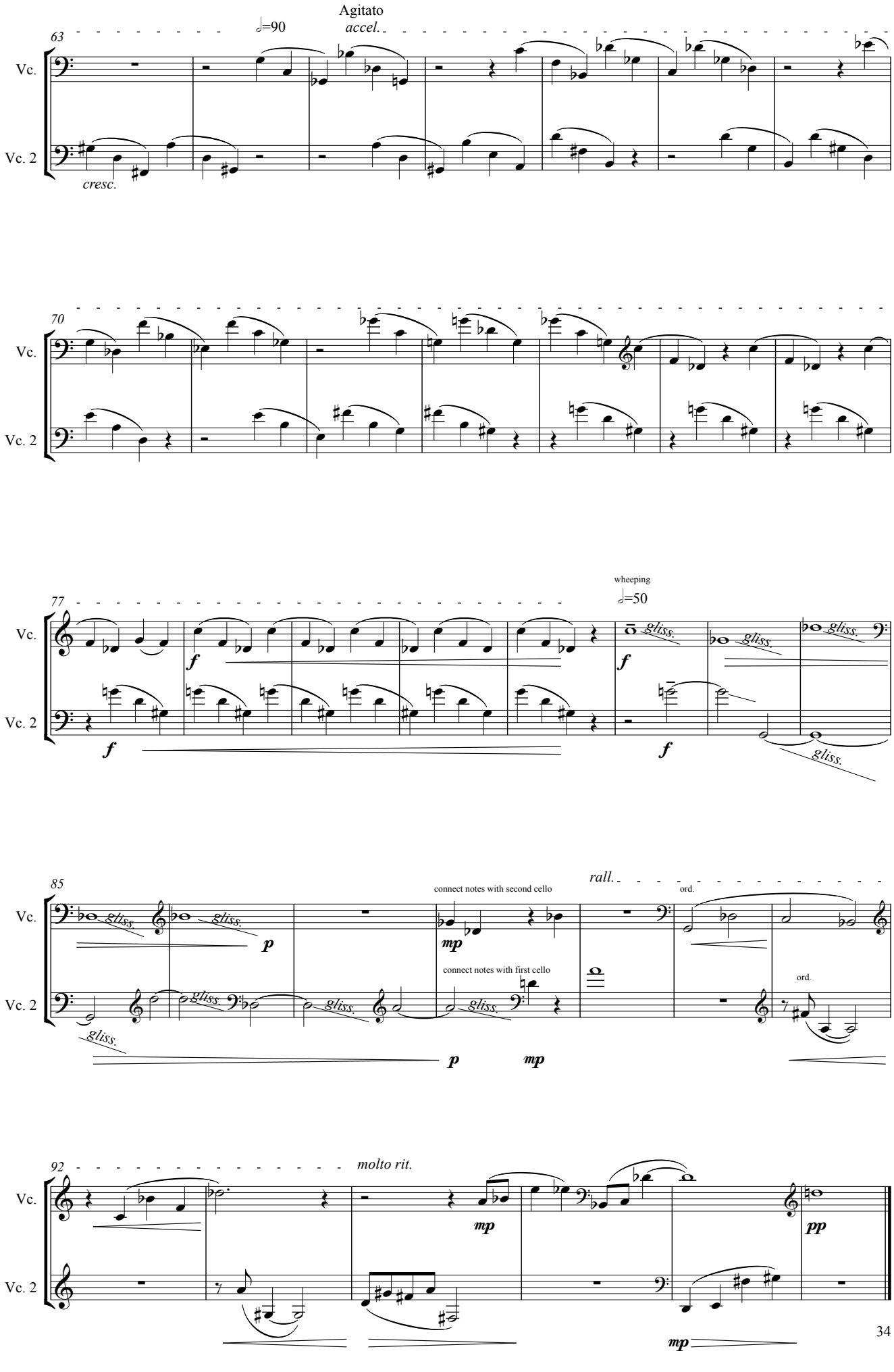

Agitato
♩=90
32
Vc.
Vc. 2
mf
mf
38
Vc.
Vc. 2
42
rit.
Adagio
♩=50
Vc.
Vc. 2
p
p
48
accel.
Vc.
Vc. 2
mp
mp
55
♩=80
accel.
Vc.
Vc. 2
cresc.


Agitato
accel.
63
Vc.
Vc. 2
cresc.
70
77
wheeping
gliss.
85
connect notes with second cello
connect notes with first cello
rall.
ord.
92
molto rit.

Kaffeine

Electroacoustic work

Kaffeine

Electroacoustic work 9'00"

This electroacoustic work is based on an obsession with coffee I had whilst studying at The University of Waikato. It draws on the process of coffee making, and the affect coffee has on people who indulge in it.

To construct the piece, samples were first taken from the coffee making machine, a Breville home coffee maker and recorded to a Tascam DR-07.

The samples were cleaned up and enhanced on Ableton Live 8, getting rid of any unwanted noise and correcting the volume. The majority of the work was created on Ableton Live, whilst mastering was done on both Ableton Live and Pro tools HD, making use of their different advantages. The work is constructed solely around the samples collected from the Breville coffee machine.

The structure of Kaffeine has a form of ABCB'C'B" wherein the initial A section doesn't need to be restated due to it being known and unnecessary.

The A section introduces the themes, through the coffee making process. The section builds intensity by using gestures that arrive quickly, creating a sense of movement. Gestures like the water pouring combined with pan and reverb create movement and direction. Rhythmical effects add variety and anticipation to the section.

Sweeping gestures in the B section, like thoughts, appear in the higher frequency range. At 3'40" the C section begins with a distant drum like gesture, again the falling rhythmical motif returns but this time dissolving into the air.

The altered B section (B') starts at 4'30" with a machine like gesture sweeping in and becoming slightly chaotic. Gestures are altered to create a sense of movement and tension, by changing frequencies, panning and the speed of them.
A mix of motifs combine to create a successful climatic point at 5'38", the frothing motif becoming dispersed at the climax to create a sense of release.

A brief calm spell gives the illusion of calmness and relaxation, beginning the C' section at 5'39". This is short lived and replaced with the brew motif entering from the right and releasing. Sweeping high frequency gestures enter along with an altered water motif and are combined with a distorted brew motif at 6'38" and a repeating rhythmical motif.

The final B" section begins with the brew motif returning. The pace picks up with rhythmical motifs building the tension. Panning is used to create movement along with a drone-like bass. At 8'03" the distorted machine motif returns, together with the brewing motif. This builds quickly and releases at 8'25, building again with the brewing and frothing motif only to be cut off at 8'54".

Piaonics

Electroacoustic work

Piaonics

Electroacoustic work 9'45"

The piano is generally classed as a percussive instrument, meaning you cannot change the volume and intensity of the notes once you have played them.
In this work for sampled piano I have explored the sounds that you don't often hear when playing the piano. The sound, or music, after the initial strike of the hammer is full of harmonics. I have brought these out, creating interesting sound fields.

Piaonics is created from two sets of synthetic scales, sampled note by note, and in clusters on the piano. The sampler was a Tascam DR-07. After creating a range of altered samples, an Ableton Live session was set up to compose the piece.
To master the work I used both Ableton Live and Pro tools HD to create a clear and well composed work.

The structure of *Piaonics* is ABCA'B'. The A section begins with the lifting of the damper pedal and followed by very rhythmical tapping on the strings.
The rhythmical motifs fade; some have reversed envelopes, creating a sense of moving backwards, whilst others have layers added to them, both high and low frequencies.
A slow hammering gesture changes into ringing harmonics, with distant busy tapping that slowly fade into reversed envelopes.

The B section begins with a rising piano trill and very distant bell like gestures, closely followed with a varied hammer motif at 2'20".
Notes from the synthetic scales are played first naturally and later as harmonics, the first note beginning at 2'28". Towards 3'00" the gestures start to rise and are followed with hollow sounding, sweeping gestures around 3'17".

The C section begins darker, with chaotic reversed gestures building to a pulsing high frequency motif at 4.20 and taken over with a more dominant dark theme, sounded low on the piano. At 5'00" sweeping gestures are used to create variation from the very rhythmical nature of the piece, followed with glissando sweeps with a hint of delay.
A combination of different rhythmical layers builds up the climax; some gestures low and slow while others faster and higher in pitch. A fast wavering gesture here helps to add tension and contrast with the slower motifs.

A developed A section sees the tapping gesture again return at 5'44" and gradually becomes more distorted. This builds and gets more chaotic towards the climax around 7'08" before relaxing.

The B section has longer gestures that become more peaceful, a large reversed envelope brings back the bell like gestures and rhythmical tapping at 8'03".
At 8'28" a short tapping motif fades into the distance with a low drone underneath, the piece recounts memories of the beginning with lots of reverb placed on the motifs. The final note is played in reverse along with the original tapping motif. These fade into a peaceful ringing sound, slowly disappearing into nothing.

Pleonasim

for

clarinet, viola and cello

Pleonasm

for

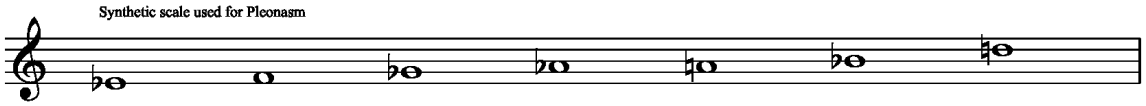
clarinet, viola and cello

Pleonasm means using more words than necessary. Not that this work has more notes than it should, but the name came to me whilst contemplating the idea behind the work. The concept is loosely related to three birds having conversations in the treetops.
It involves aleatoric aspects that allow the piece to have a less rigid structure than usual, combining synthetic scales to create certain moods in each of the seven movements.
Realising the piece involved a few experiments to determine how best to put the parts together and coordinate them, without over-controlling the work.

Pleonasm was roughly put together on Ableton Live, using midi scores created in Sibelius, giving some idea of how the piece could work and fit together. This enabled me to later make adjustments to it and it also gave a good indication of how it would sound when performed. Adjustments to the written score were made following that and a lot of time was spent working on Sibelius, getting it to do what I wanted and not the other way around.

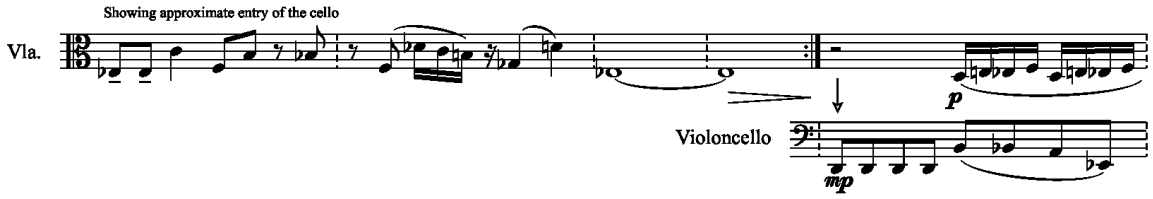
The piece was performed at The University of Waikato's Okta concert in September 2010 but for this concert, due to limited performer rehearsal time the order and number of movements was slightly different to the original composition. This performance can be found on the DVD included with this portfolio.

In each of the seven movements, material is derived from a synthetic scale with different inversions of this being used in the movements.



The order for playing the movements is randomly chosen before a performance, giving the work an unpredictable aspect to it.

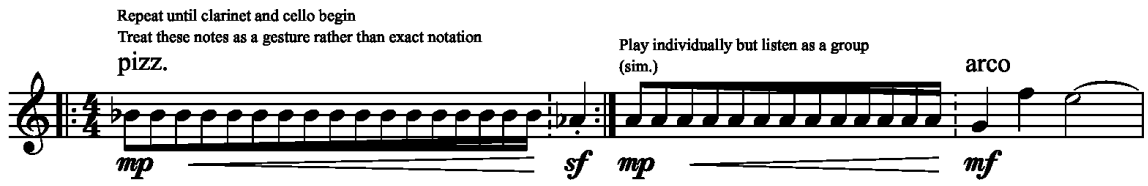
The movement Pl begins with the viola, stating the main theme, once this is stated the cello comes in, followed by the clarinet that only has a small amount of material.



The movement E has the viola with running semiquavers, combined with a gradually accelerating pizzicato passage on the cello and a more melodic line on the clarinet. The movement follows a hairpin dynamic shape to the middle and a reverse hairpin after the climax. This shape is most notable in the cello's pizzicato passage that gradually increases in speed to the climax before slowing towards the end.

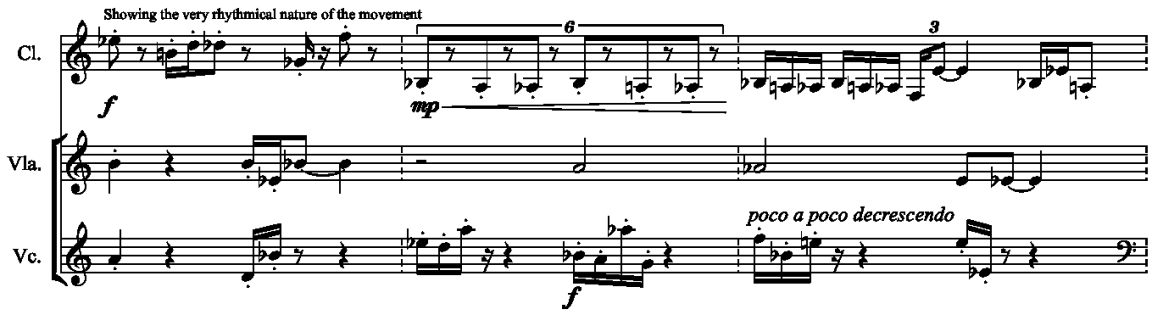
The movement O is characterized by its more sober nature. All the instruments start at the same time, but as the performance notes instruct, they are not to follow each other but rather to play separately. At the end of this movement the clarinet and cello finish together, whilst the viola carries on as if nothing had happened. After a short time the viola is to stop suddenly, even if in the middle of its phrase.

The next movement N has the viola plays a short pizzicato motif and repeats this until the others come in.



As in O, here the players are to play separately from each other.

Movement A takes on an even darker aspect, creating the body of the work. Characterized by its very rhythmical notation



they play independent from one another. The cello enters after roughly 19 bars with a repeating staccato theme, building from one note to three and back again. Towards the end of this movement the dynamics become very loud, reaching *fff* as the instruments try to out do each other.

Another competition occurs in the S movement. Here each instrument tries to play more sweetly than the other. As the movement draws to an end the performers play quieter and quieter until finally there is no more sound.

In the M movement all the instruments have the same notes and rhythms, but in a different order, some played backwards others forwards. The movement is characterized by ferocious speed, basically being an all out race to the end.

Pleonasm

performance notes

Performers are to put movement markings in a hat or something similar and once mixed up, draw out the order of performing them. This is to be done just prior to going onto the stage.

Entry points are indicated by hollow arrows. The instrument the arrow comes from must give a nod or indication to the other instrument to begin. Or it is indicated for the player waiting to begin to listen out for a cue.

Each movement has individual freedom for the instruments; there is no need to follow each other unless specifically mentioned in the score, but performers must listen to each other as a group.

Pl

The viola begins the movement alone. Repeating the first section three times, nodding to the cello sometime in the third repeat to begin. The second section is repeated until the others have finished, before completing the section it's on and finishing.
The cello enters in its own time after receiving a nod from the viola to begin.
The clarinet enters in its own time after hearing the viola and cello play pizzicato together.

E

The viola begins the movement. Repeats the last two bars until receiving a nod from the cello stating it's going to play its last note, and ends with the cello.
The cello enters after the viola's F (f2) above middle C or after two bars rest. The cello is to nod to the violist just before playing its last note and ends with the viola.
The clarinet enters after the 5th pizzicato on the cello. The clarinet repeats the second section until the others have finished, and ends three bars after they finish.

O

All start together.

Clarinet plays repeat until the cello gives nod, plays last bar together with the cello.

Cello gives nod to the clarinet just before its last bar, and plays the last bar together with the clarinet.

N

Viola repeats the first section until the clarinet and cello enter. Repeats the last bar until the cello has finished, when ready gives nod to the clarinet and finishes.

Clarinet and cello enter together anytime after getting sick of hearing the viola's repeat! Although starting together, both are to play in their own time yet listen together as a group. The clarinet waits for a nod from the viola and finishes.

A

The clarinet and viola begin together.

The cello enters in its own time after approximately seventeen bars rest or after hearing E natural (E2) above middle C.

The clarinet must be the last to finish.

S

The clarinet begins.

The viola enters in its own time after hearing A (A2) above middle C.

The cello enters in its own time after ten bars rest.

Each tries to play more sweetly and softly than the others.

M

An all-out race to the end!

Transposing score.

Duration: 12'-14'

Pl

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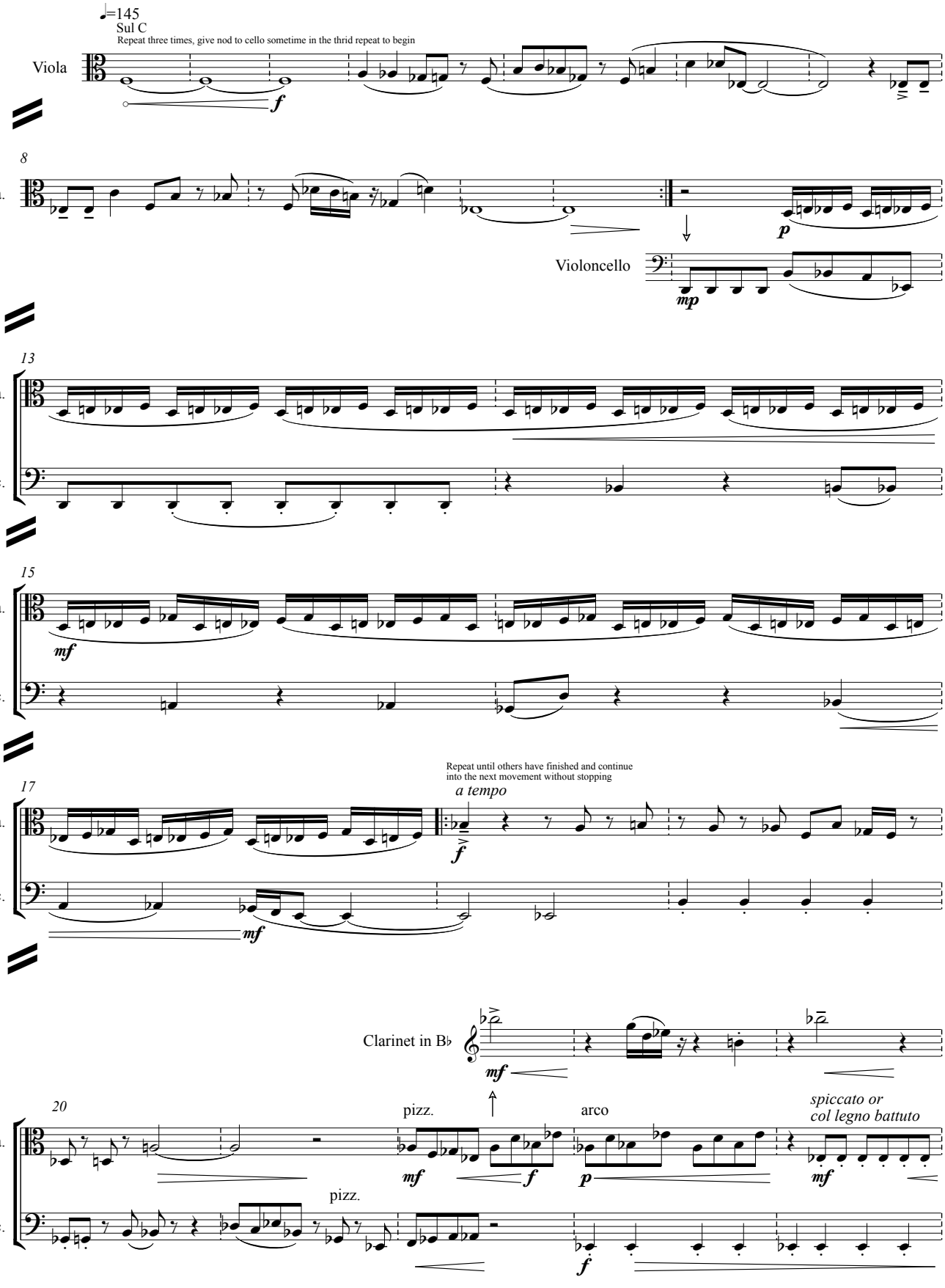

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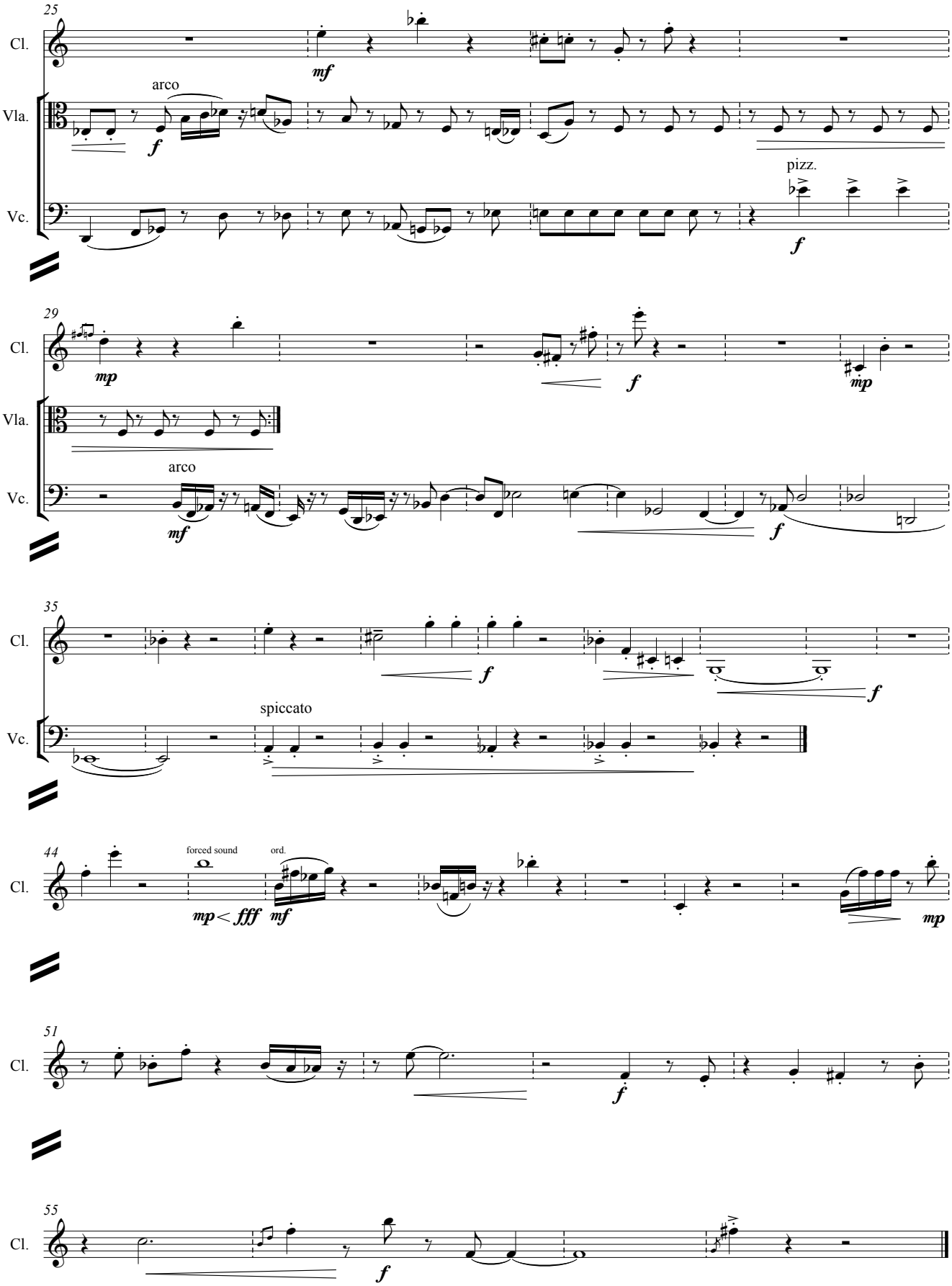
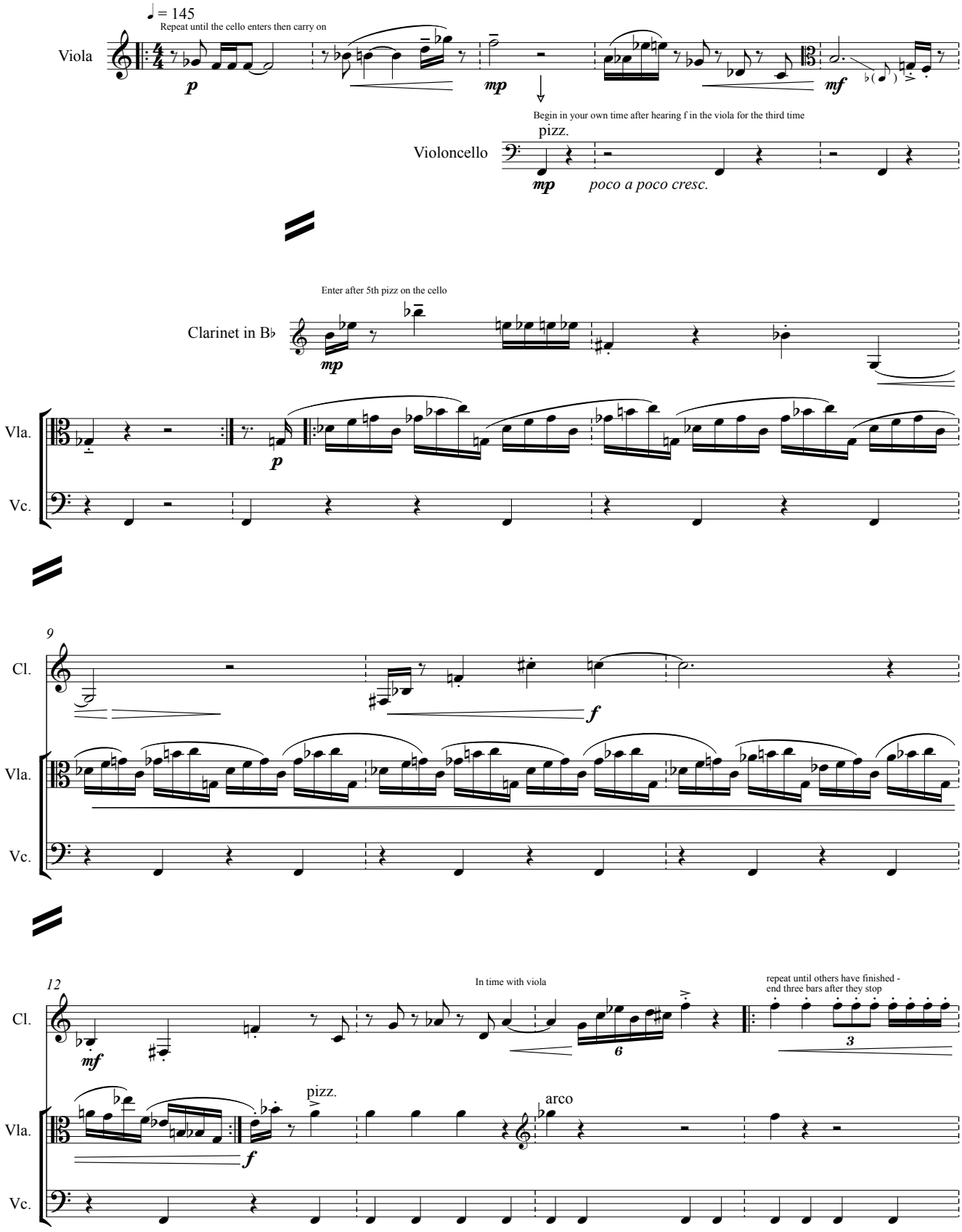

25
Cl.
mf
Vla.
arco
f
Vc.
pizz.
f
29
Cl.
mp
f
mp
Vla.
Vc.
arco
mf
f
35
Cl.
f
f
Vc.
spiccato
44
Cl.
forced sound
ord.
mp < fff
mf
mp
51
Cl.
f
55
Cl.
f

E

Peter McKinnon



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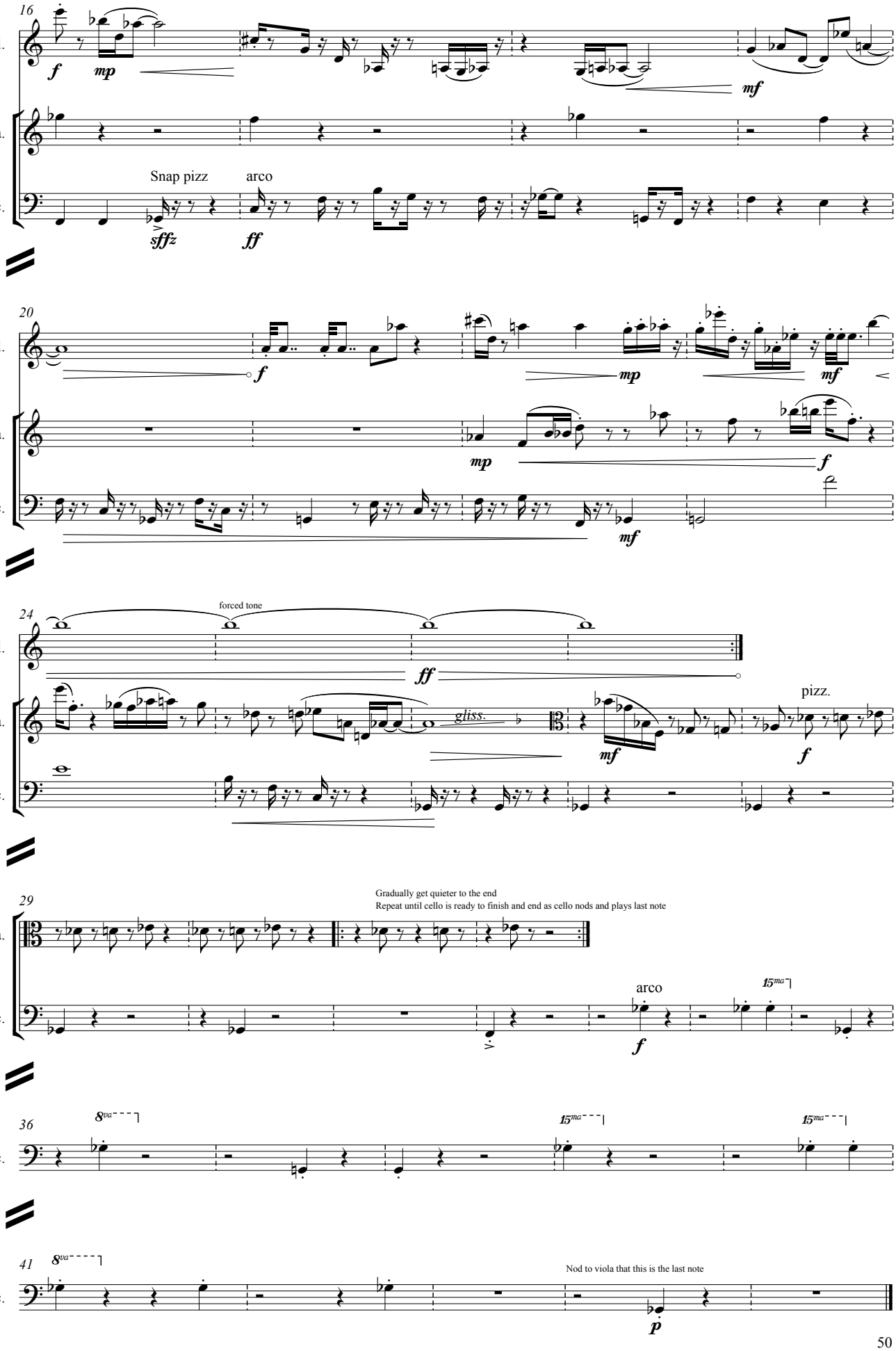
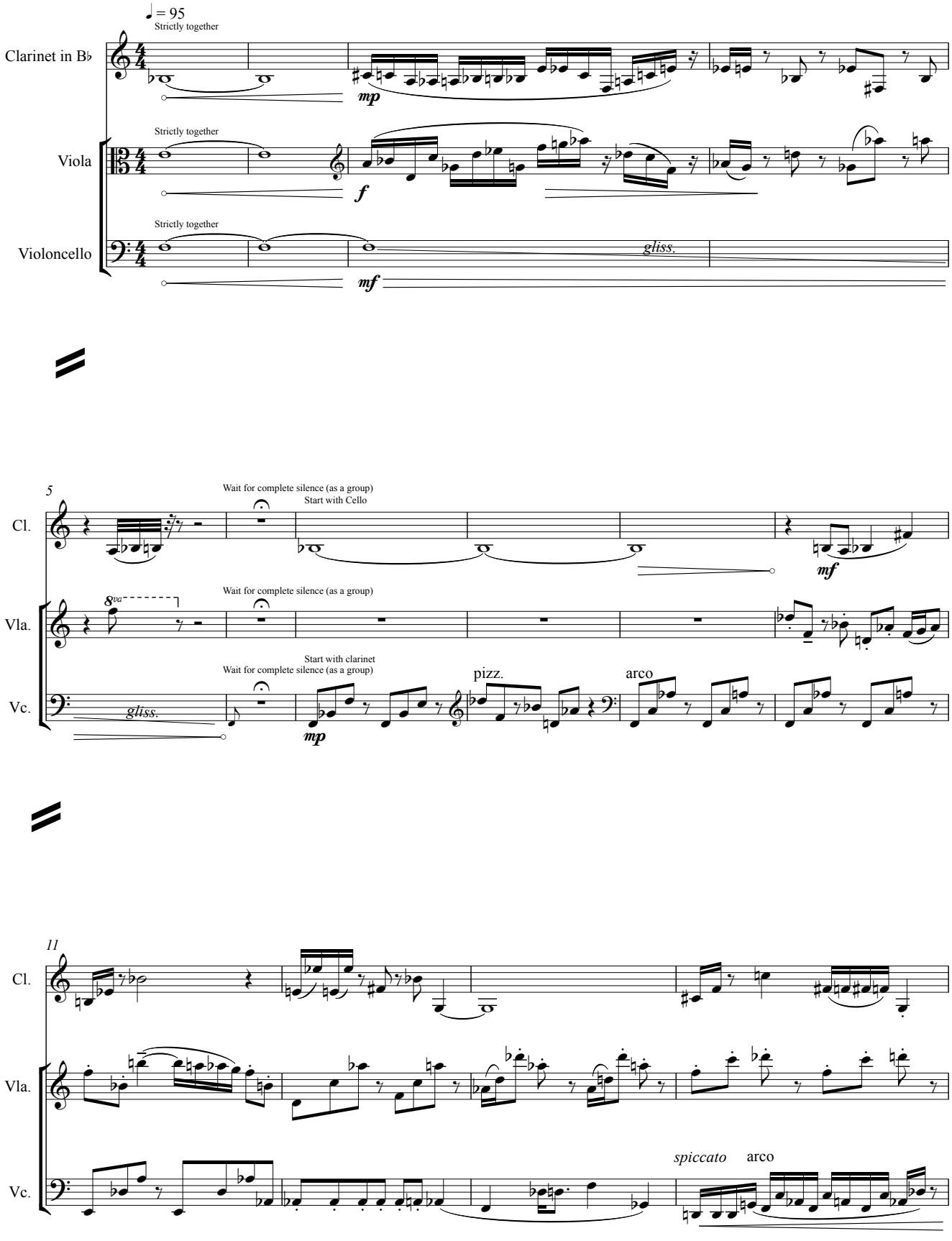

16
Cl.
Vla.
Vc.
Snap pizz
arco
20
forced tone
gliss.
pizz.
29
Gradually get quieter to the end
Repeat until cello is ready to finish and end as cello nods and plays last note
arco
36
41
Nod to viola that this is the last note

O

Peter McKinnon



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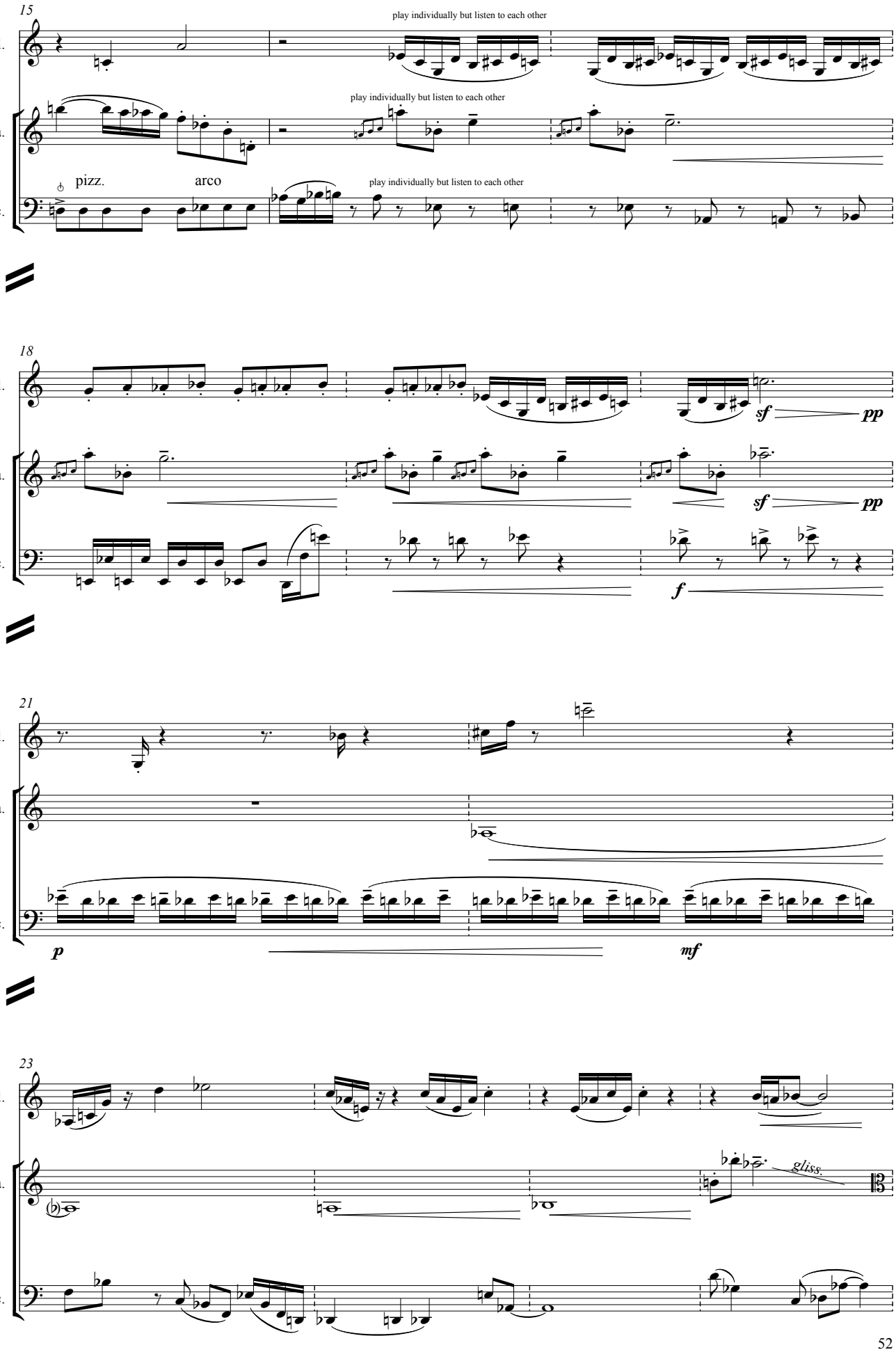
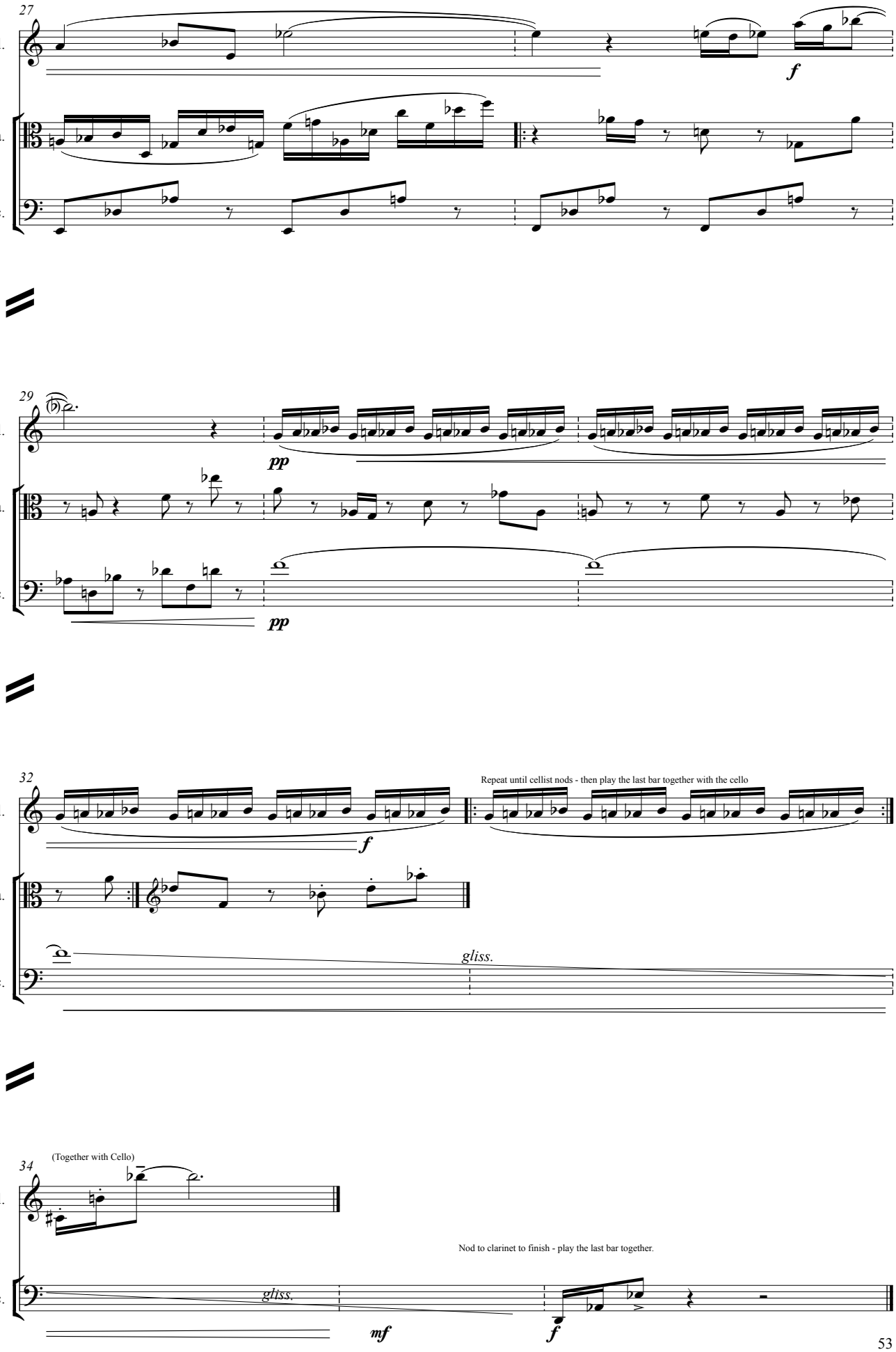
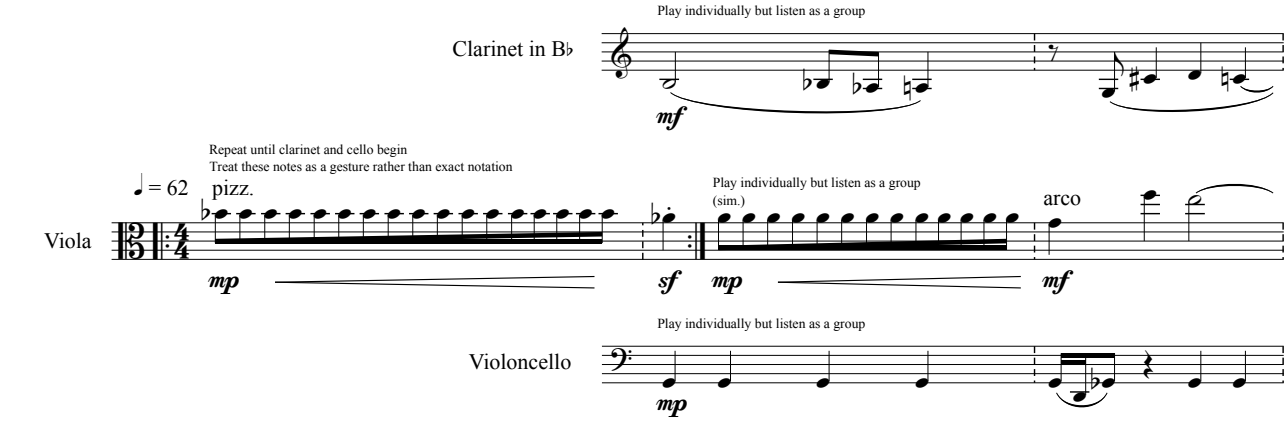
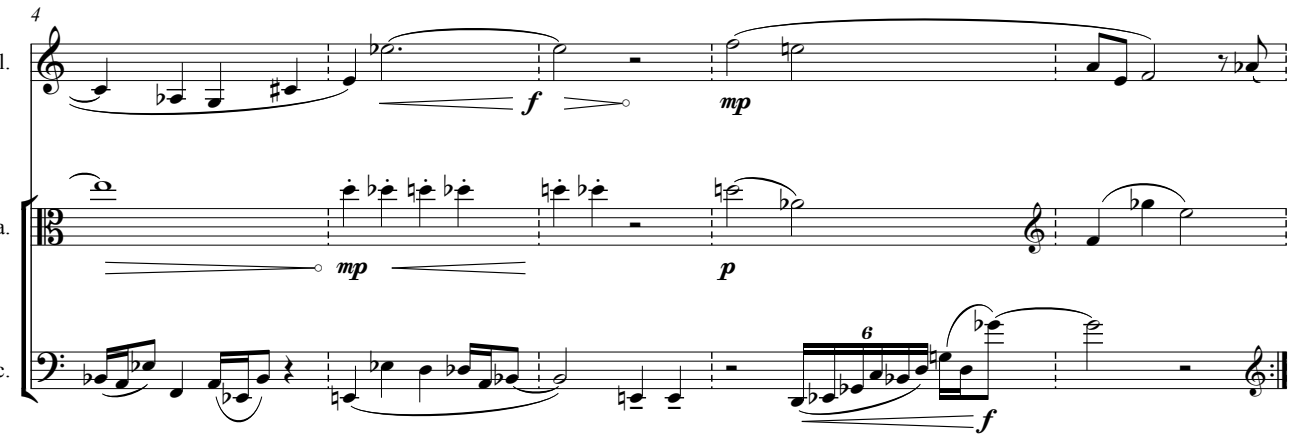

15
play individually but listen to each other
Cl.
play individually but listen to each other
Vla.
pizz.
arco
play individually but listen to each other
Vc.
18
Cl.
sf
pp
Vla.
sf
pp
Vc.
f
21
Cl.
Vla.
Vc.
p
mf
23
Cl.
Vla.
gliss.
Vc.

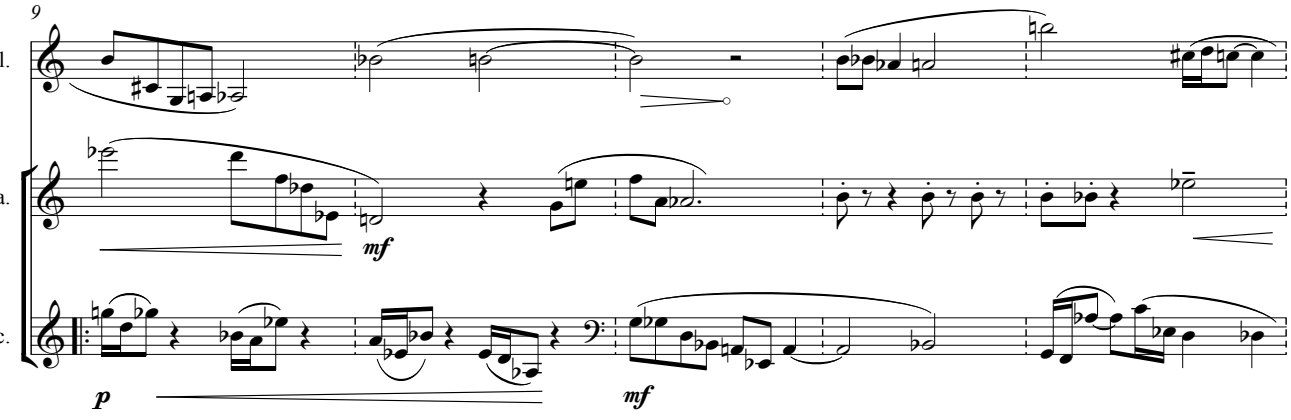

27
Cl.
Vla.
Vc.
f
29
pp
pp
32
Repeat until cellist nods - then play the last bar together with the cello
f
gliss.
34
(Together with Cello)
Nod to clarinet to finish - play the last bar together.
gliss.
mf
f

N

Peter McKinnon







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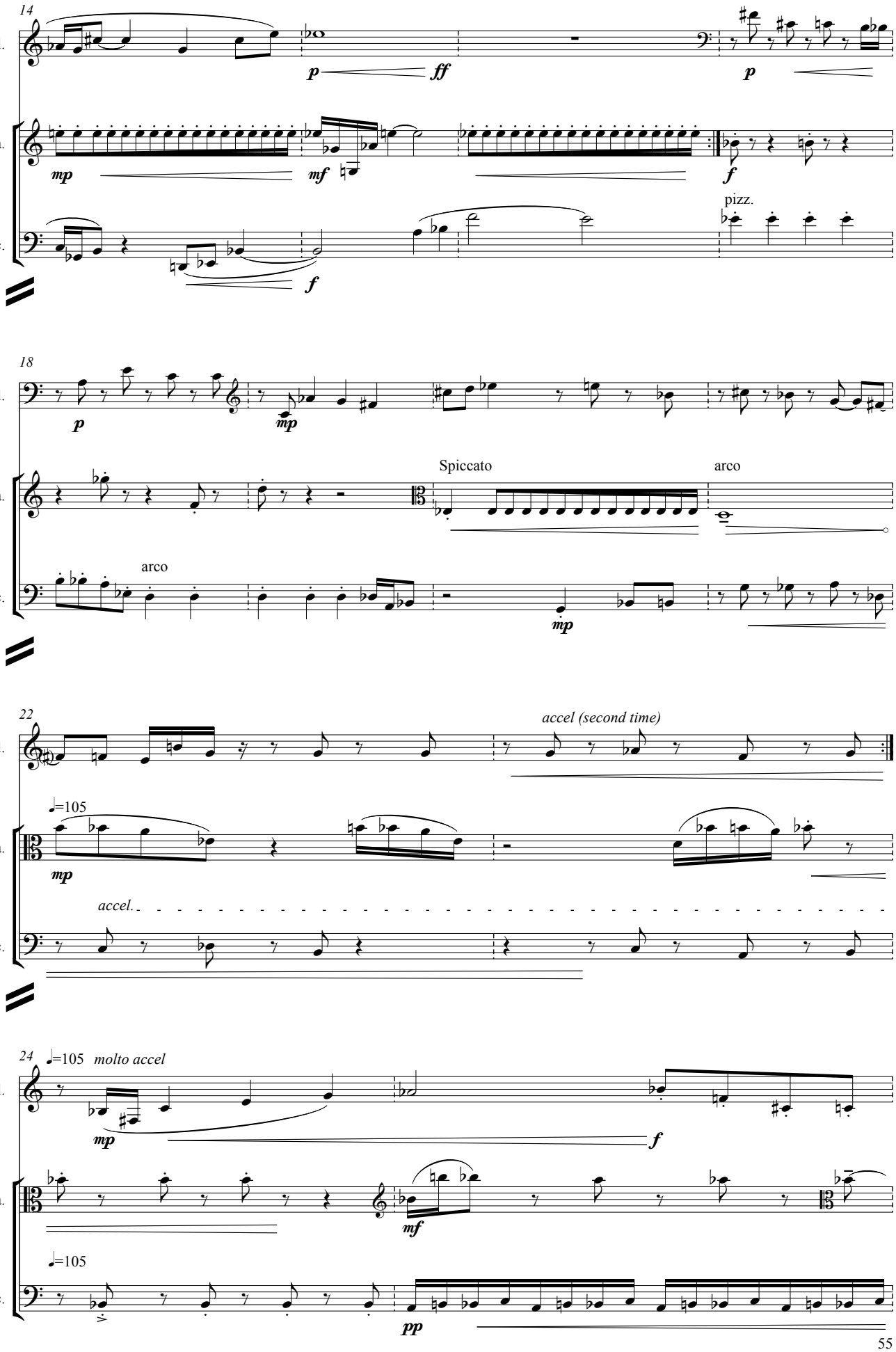
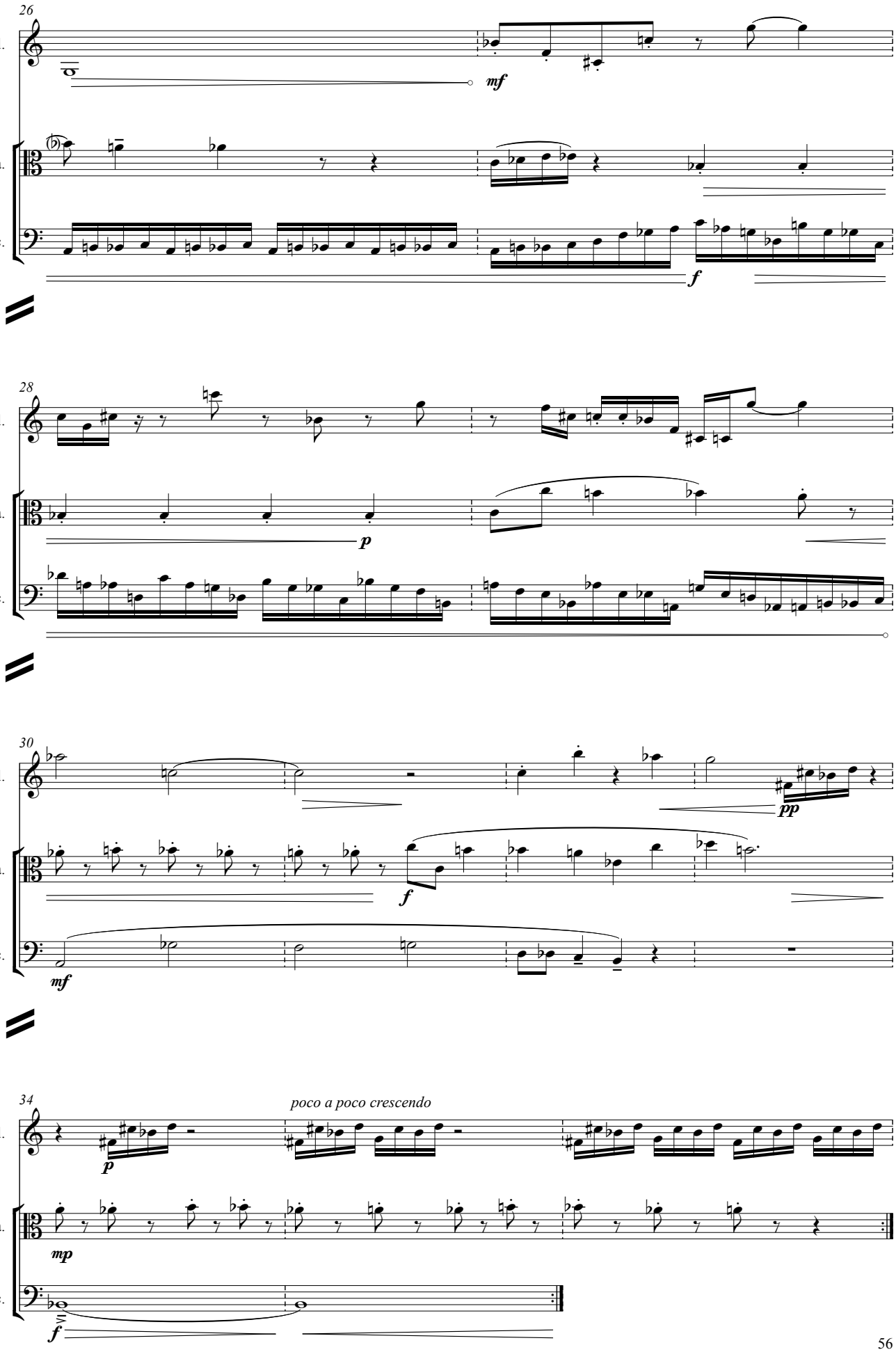
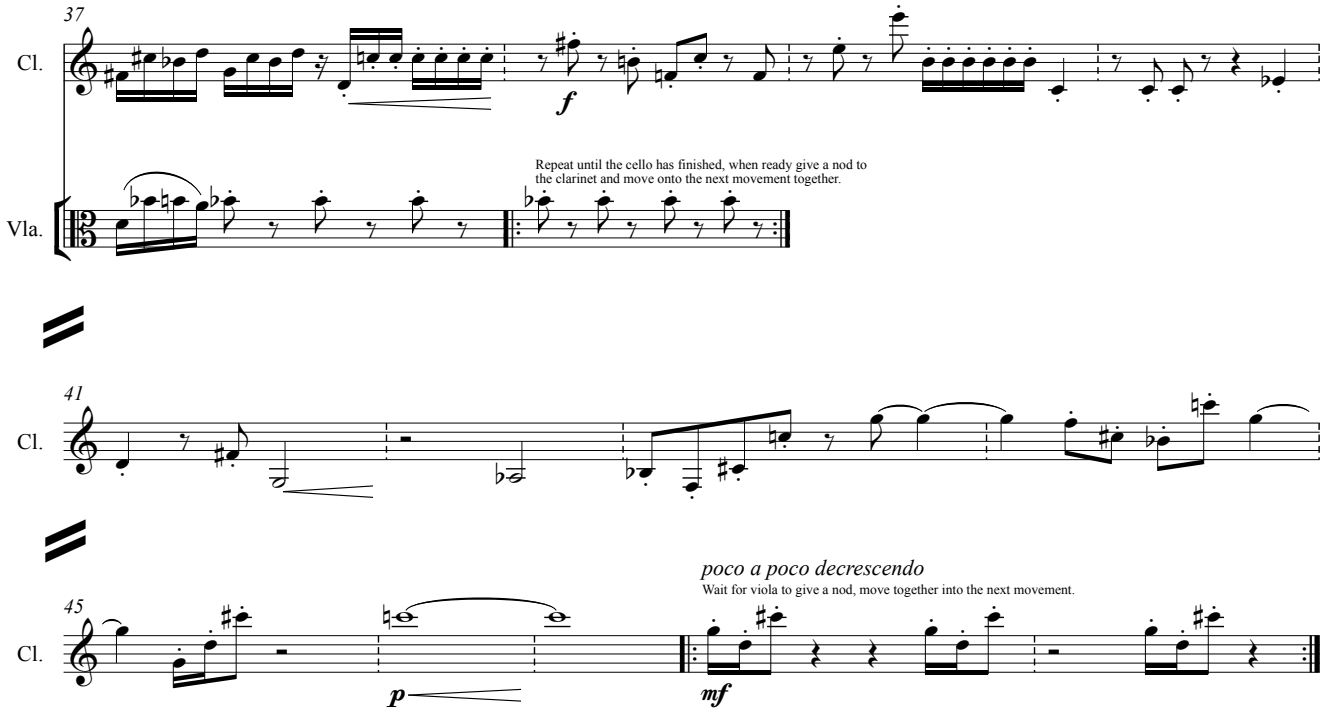

14
Cl.
Vla.
Vc.
p
ff
p
mp
mf
f
pizz.
f
18
Cl.
Vla.
Vc.
p
mp
Spiccato
arco
arco
mp
22
Cl.
Vla.
Vc.
accel (second time)
♩=105
mp
accel.
24
Cl.
Vla.
Vc.
♩=105 molto accel
mp
f
mf
♩=105
pp


26
Cl.
mf
Vla.
Vc.
f
28
Cl.
Vla.
p
Vc.
30
Cl.
pp
Vla.
f
Vc.
mf
34
poco a poco crescendo
Cl.
p
Vla.
mp
Vc.
f


37
Cl.
f
Vla.
Repeat until the cello has finished, when ready give a nod to
the clarinet and move onto the next movement together.
41
Cl.
45
Cl.
poco a poco decrescendo
Wait for viola to give a nod, move together into the next movement.
p
mf

A

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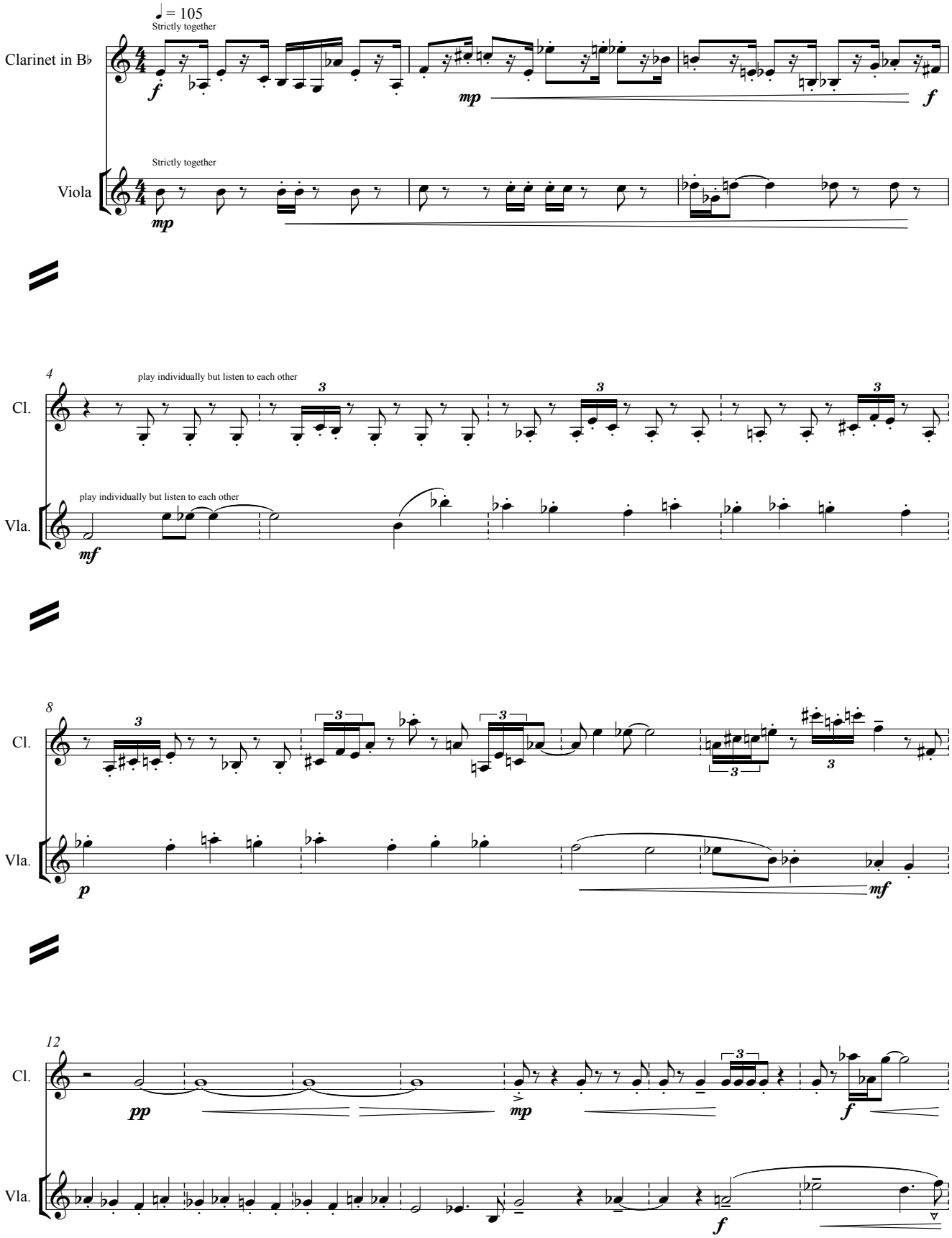

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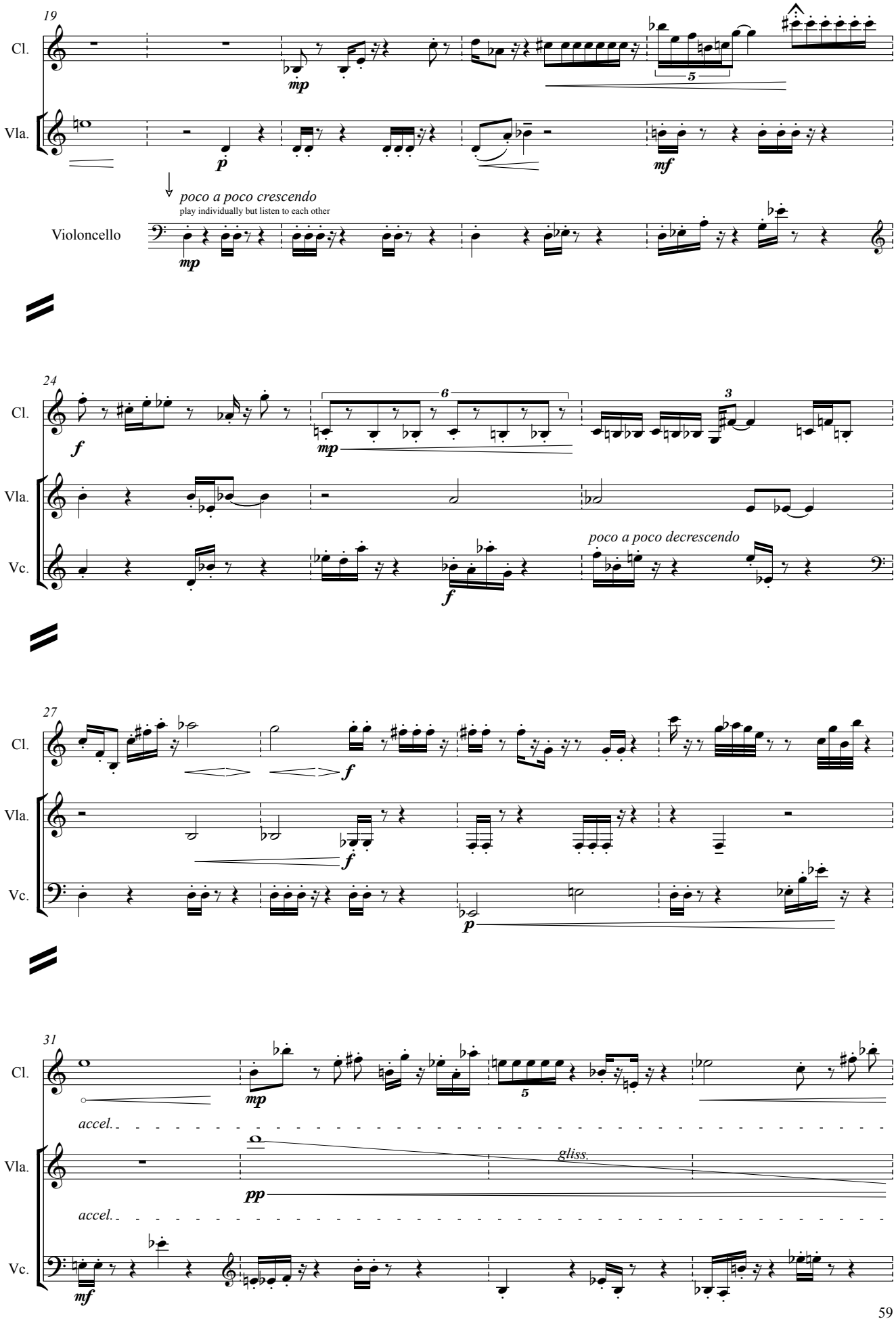
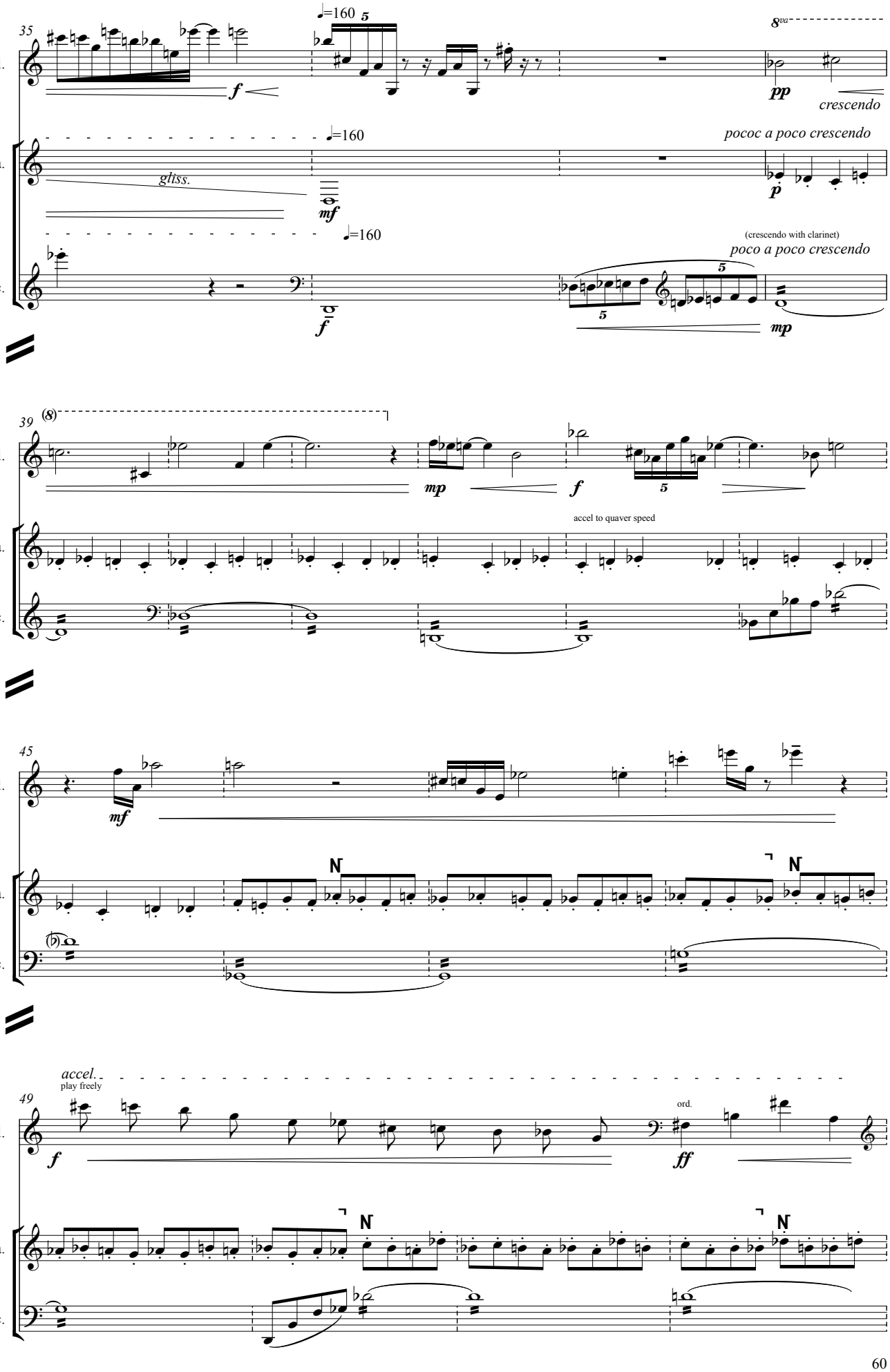
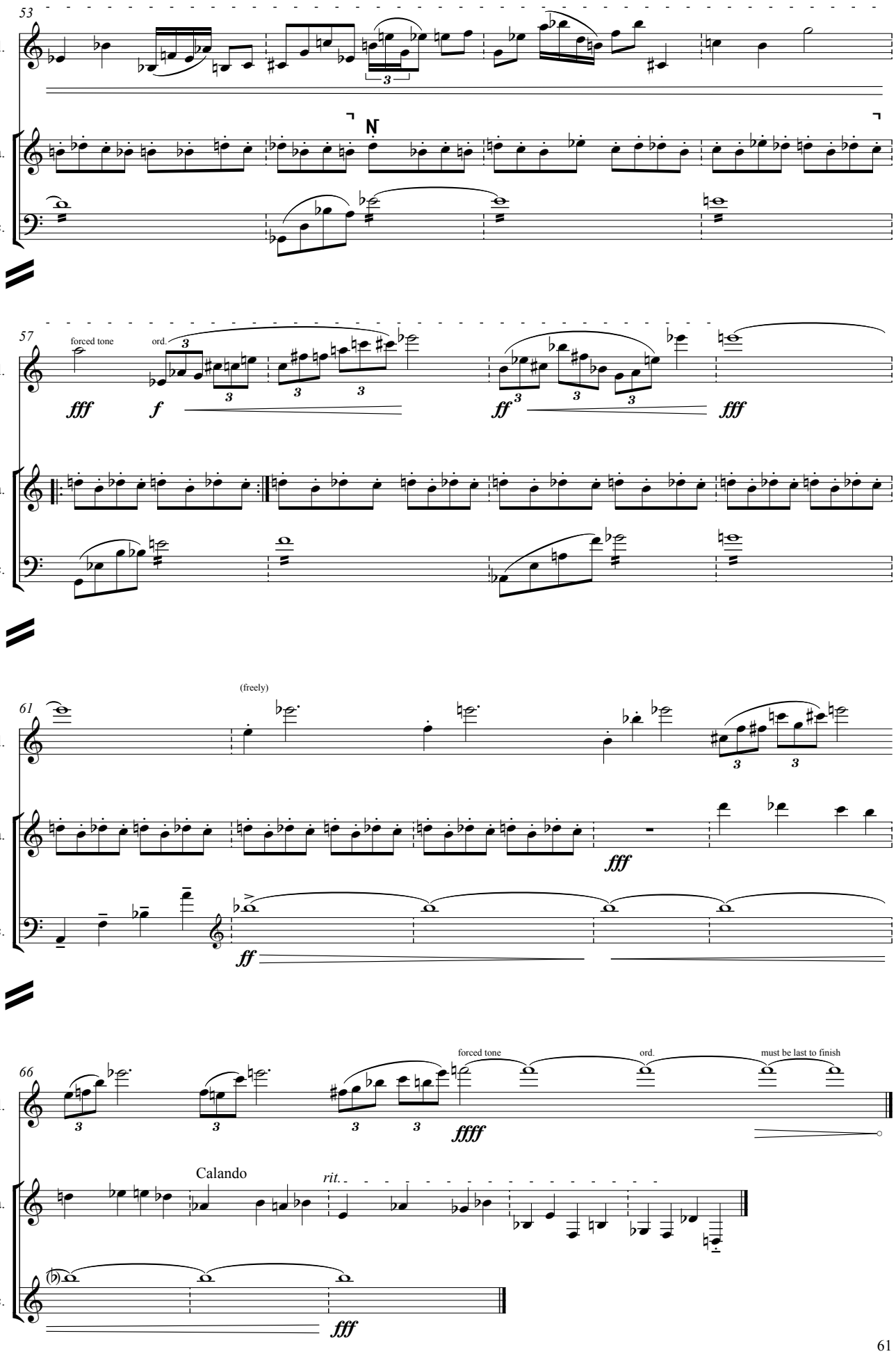
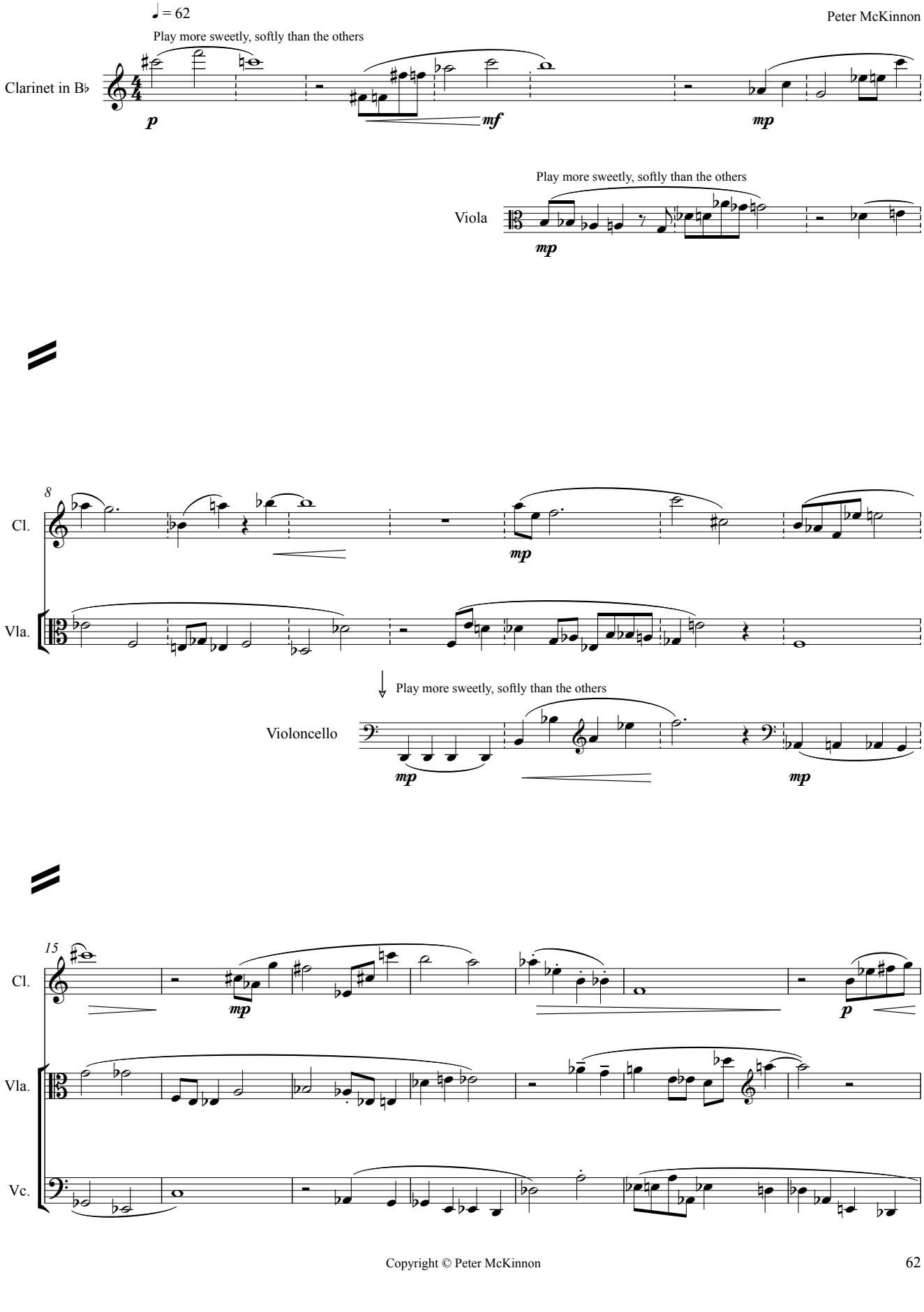

19
Cl.
Vla.
mp
p
mf
poco a poco crescendo
play individually but listen to each other
Violoncello
mp
24
Cl.
f
mp
Vla.
Vc.
poco a poco decrescendo
f
27
Cl.
f
Vla.
f
Vc.
p
31
Cl.
mp
accel.
Vla.
gliss.
pp
accel.
Vc.
mf


35
Cl.
♩=160
5
8va
f
pp
crescendo
Vla.
♩=160
pococ a poco crescendo
gliss.
mf
p
♩=160
(crescendo with clarinet)
poco a poco crescendo
Vc.
f
5
5
mp
39
(8)
Cl.
mp
f
5
accel to quaver speed
Vla.
Vc.
45
Cl.
mf
Vla.
Vc.
accel.
play freely
49
Cl.
f
ord.
ff
Vla.
Vc.


53
Cl.
Vla.
Vc.
N
57
forced tone
ord.
fff
f
ff
fff
61
(freely)
fff
ff
66
forced tone
ord.
must be last to finish
ffff
Calando
rit.
fff

S



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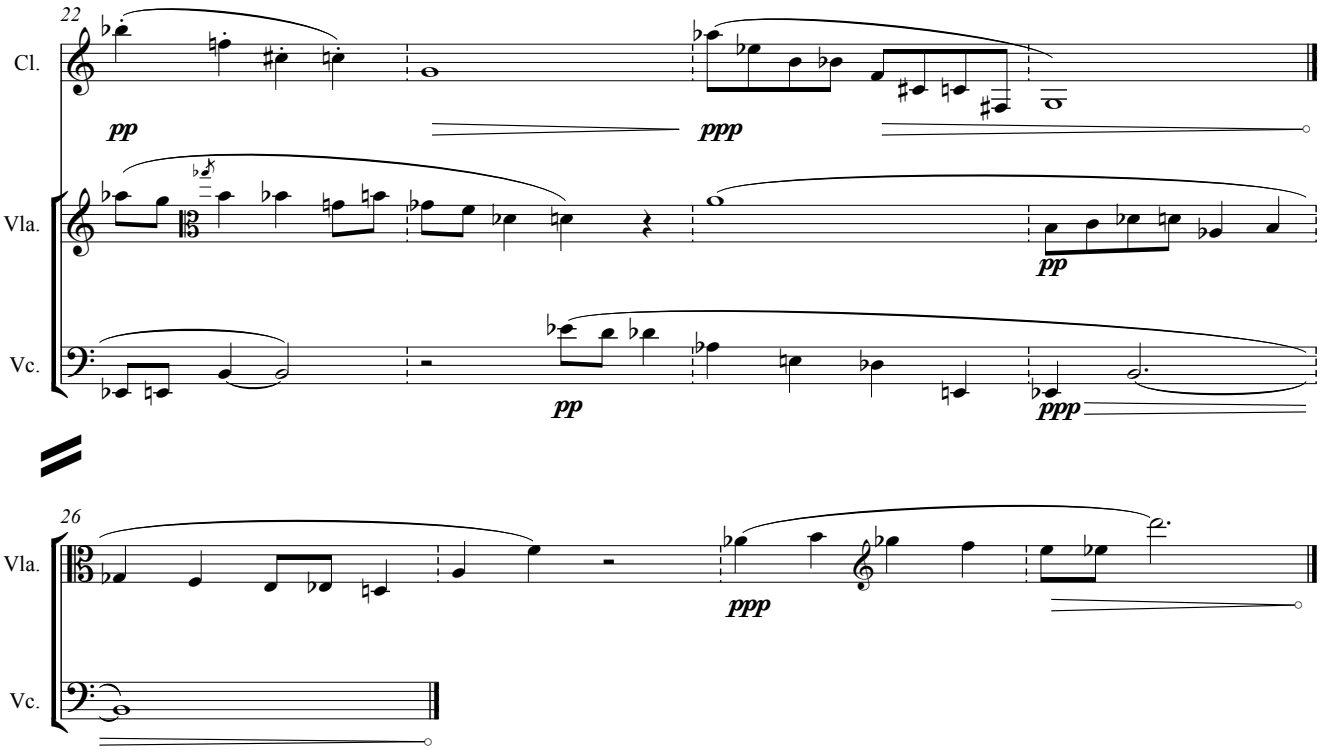
22
Cl.
pp
ppp
Vla.
pp
Vc.
pp
ppp

26
Vla.
ppp
Vc.

M

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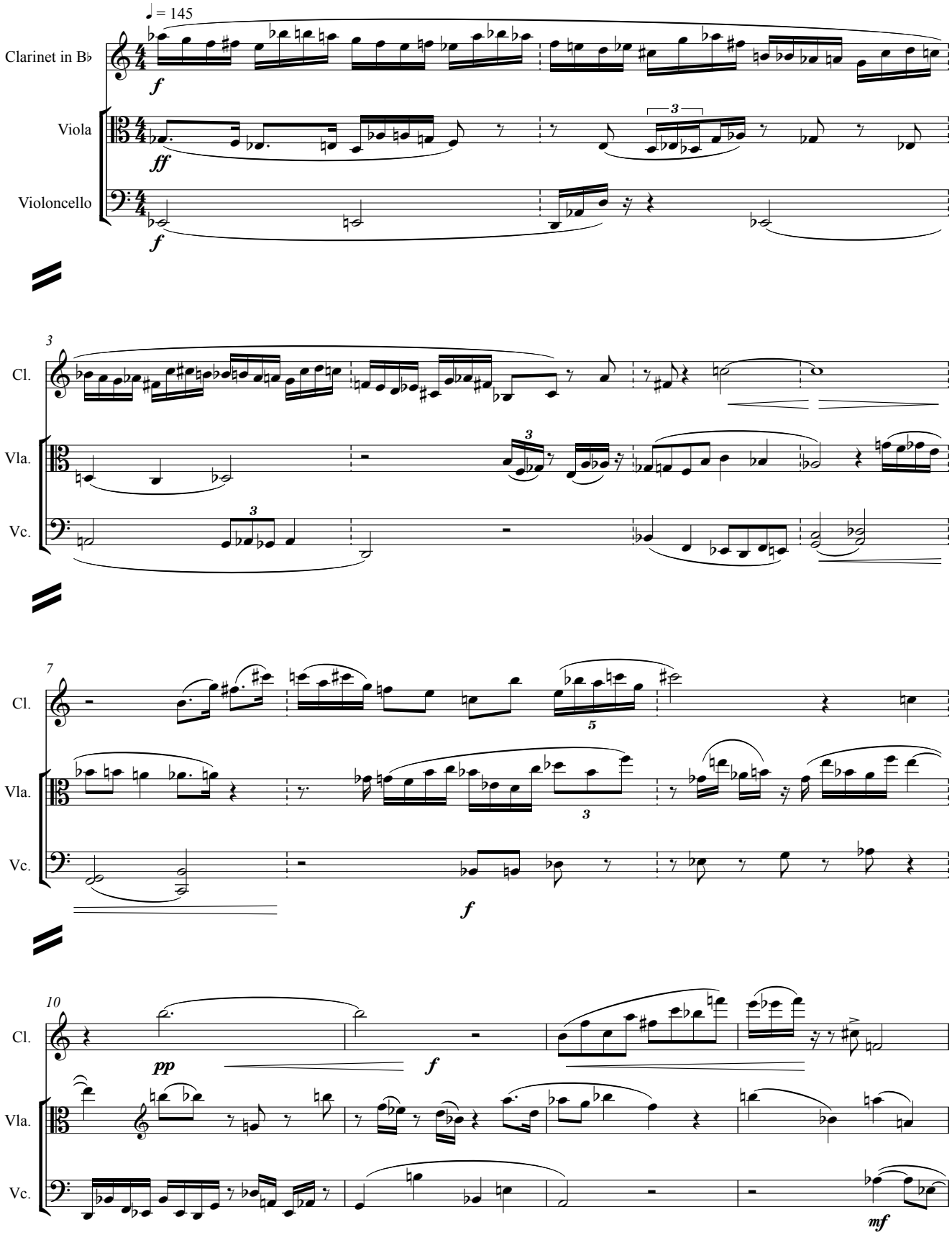

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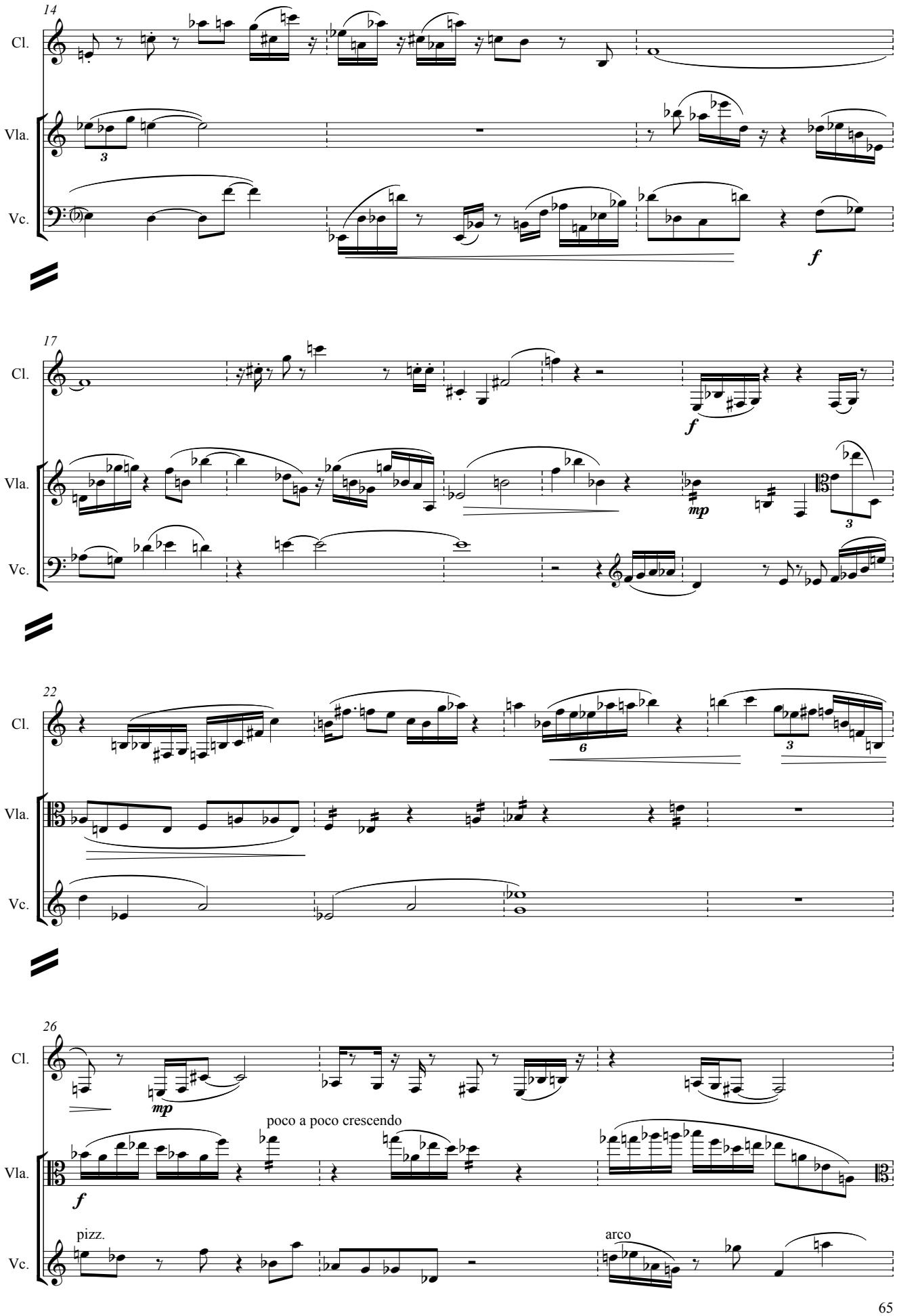
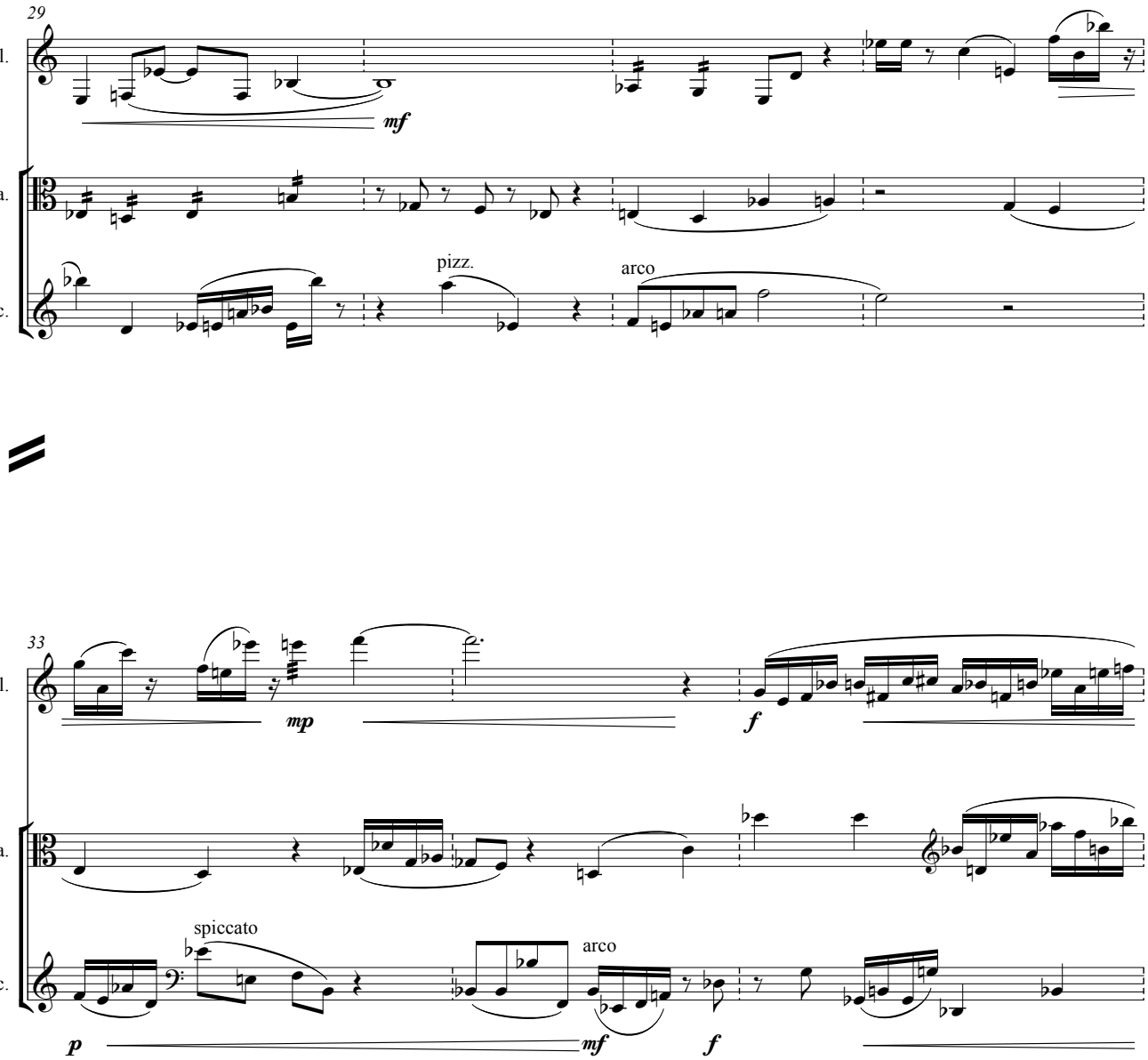
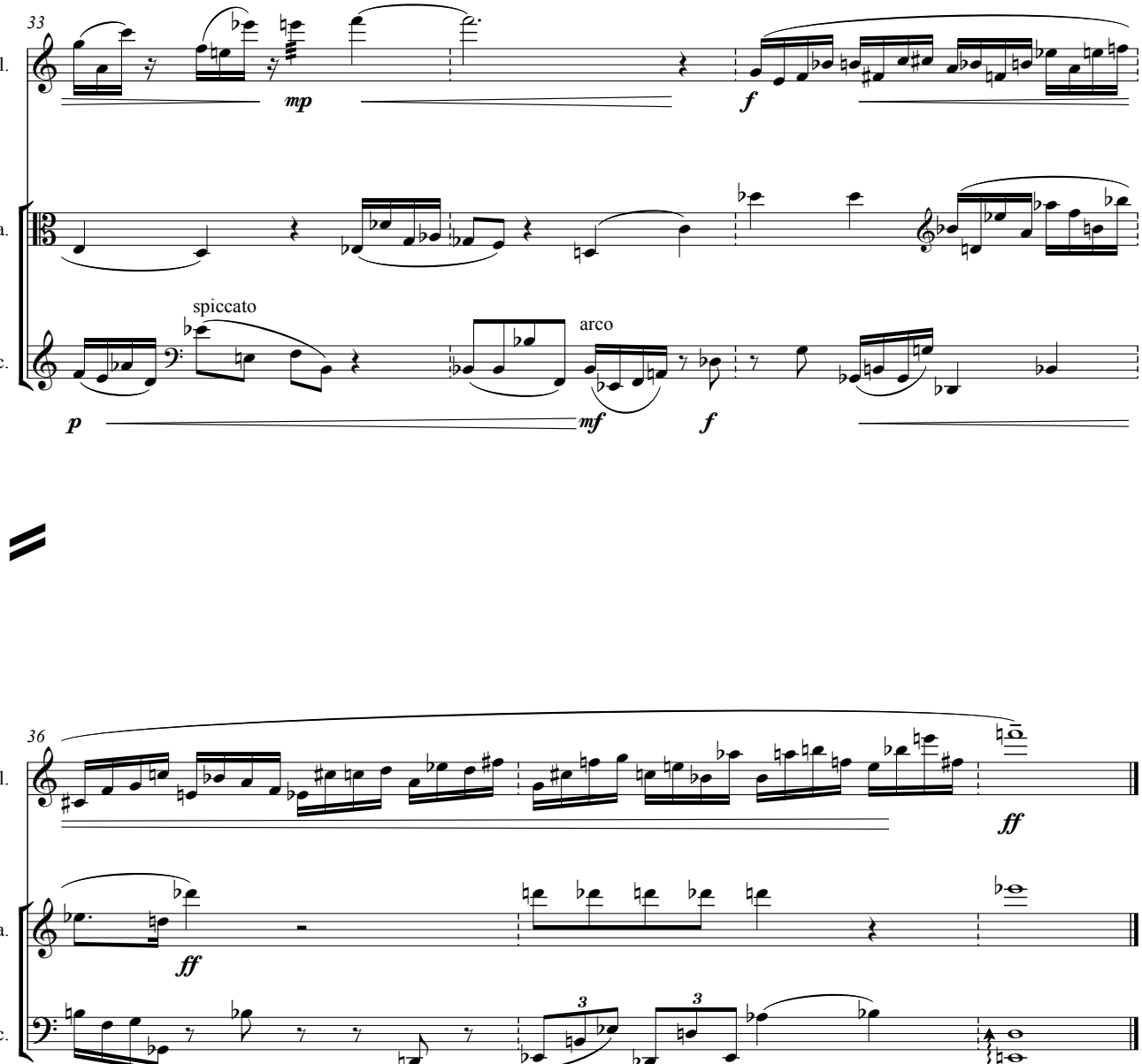
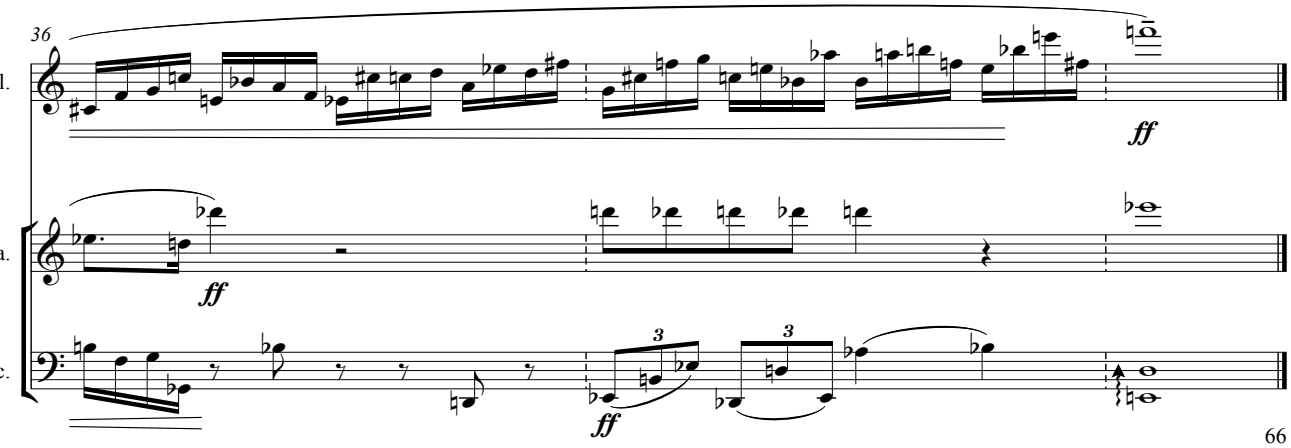

14
Cl.
Vla.
Vc.
f
17
Cl.
Vla.
Vc.
f
mp
22
Cl.
Vla.
Vc.
26
Cl.
mp
poco a poco crescendo
Vla.
f
pizz.
Vc.
arco


29
Cl.
Vla.
Vc.
mf
pizz.
arco


33
Cl.
Vla.
Vc.
mp
f
spiccato
arco
p
mf
f


36
Cl.
Vla.
Vc.
ff
ff
ff
3
3

Classical symphony

for

orchestra

Classical symphony

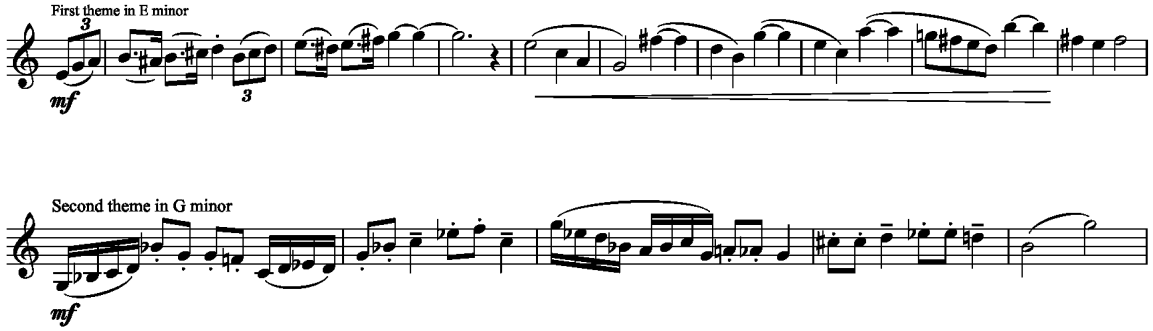
for

orchestra

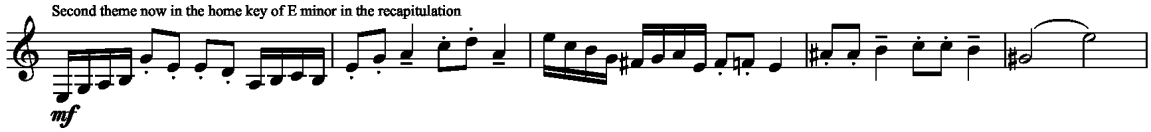
Conceived as an exercise in writing in the traditional form of a classical symphony, this work proved to be a great challenge and learning experience.
Taking inspiration from the great masters in symphony writing like, Haydn with his wonderfully composed London symphonies, Prokofiev with his 'Classical' Symphony and Mahler whose symphonies are all amazing feats in themselves, I set out to write my own.

In keeping with traditional symphonic form, the work is in four movements: fast, slow, fast, fast. The first movement is in sonata form, following closely the way Haydn wrote his London symphonies and referencing those against Prokofiev's Classical symphony. The aim was to write music that observed classical principles but also having my own contemporary style.

The first movement is in E minor, moving to G minor in the second theme and in the second subject.

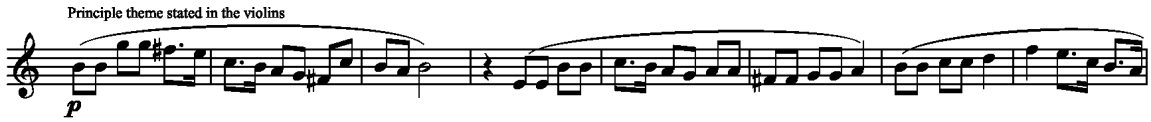


The development moves through G minor, B minor, G minor, B major and back to E minor. In the recapitulation the subject matter is kept firmly in the key of E minor



to balance out the use of G minor in the second theme of the first subject in the exposition.

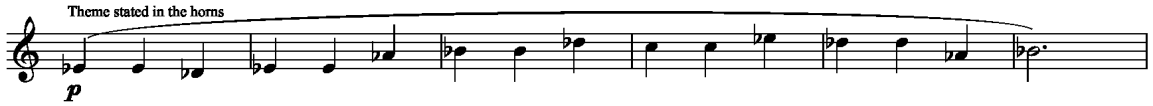
In the second movement two themes are stated in the cellos and double basses. However, although stated first these do not become the main themes for the movement. Instead the principle theme begins at bar 11.



This theme is treated like a small set of variations, the second variation beginning at bar 20. After that the body of the movement starts from bar 27, also being a variation of the main theme.

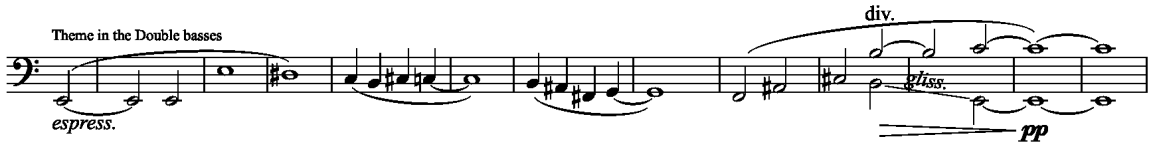
Gradually this theme is built up as well as having several other themes (including the first two themes heard) played around it. The texture builds from using just the string section, through to adding of the woodwinds and finally the brass near the climatic points.
The ending is comprised of a falling motif along with a few of the themes, which are elongated and are intended to slow the pulse of the movement down. The final sentence goes to the pizzicato notes from the cellos and double basses, with the last pizzicato note played in the first and second violins.

The third movement is a waltz, upbeat in character and with flowing melodic lines running through most of the instrumental families. The movement begins with overlapping running scales in the strings, after a brief sustained forte chord the main waltz is set in motion.
The strings give the main melody, briefly passing it to the woodwinds at bar 63. At bar 128 the piece takes a slightly darker turn and slows into a march like procession. The horns state the theme

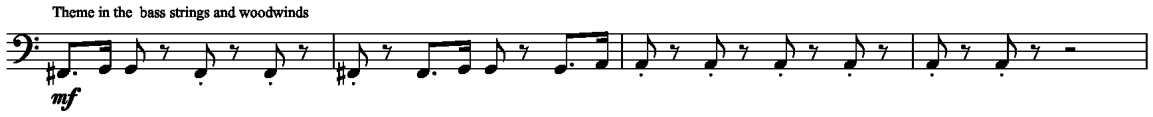


before the violins take over with a more ornamented version. Gradually this builds as the theme is passed between instruments and the texture thickened. The fortissimo climax arrives at bar 201-3 and releases into a descending motif in the woodwinds and strings. As the tension is released the movement takes on a different feel and the rising motif in the clarinet at bar 251 brings in the oboe melody at bar 254. A few memories from the earlier section bring back the march-like section. This builds rapidly in tempo and returns to one of the main waltz themes, acting as the recapitulation of the movement and building to a full orchestral ending.

Characterized by three short tutti chords at the beginning, the fourth movement's structure stems from them, its main theme arriving after running scale passages and trills in the string section at bar 15.



This theme is presented low in the double basses' register. After a short time the music builds to staccato tutti chords that are replaced by long chords and a fading flute line. A second main theme comes out of this in the oboe, which is then lengthened and given to the flute and violins. As the movement progresses a more aggressive rhythmical theme is played in the woodwinds and bass strings.



This sees a return of the original theme in the flutes at bar 104 but is cut off abruptly by a fortissimo blast form the brass section. The A section returns briefly and is varied considerably, moving through to the ending. Here a repeating motif in the strings is accompanied by the main theme, that moves quickly into tutti staccato chords again to finish in a slightly unexpected way.

Instrumentation

2 Flutes

2 Oboes

2 Clarinets in B flat

2 Bassoons

2 Horns in F

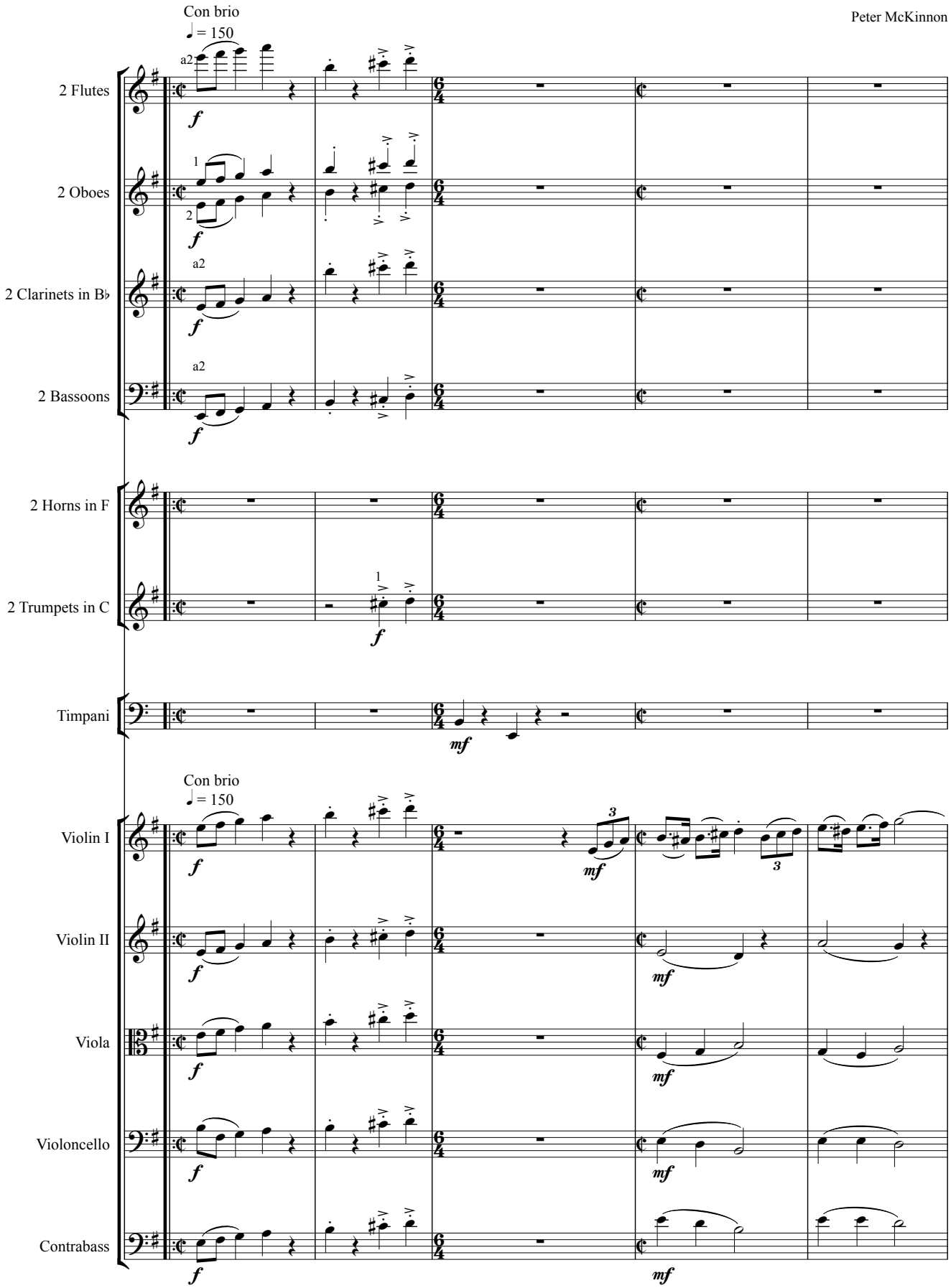
2 Trumpets in C

Timpani

Strings

Score in C
Duration: 24’

Symphony



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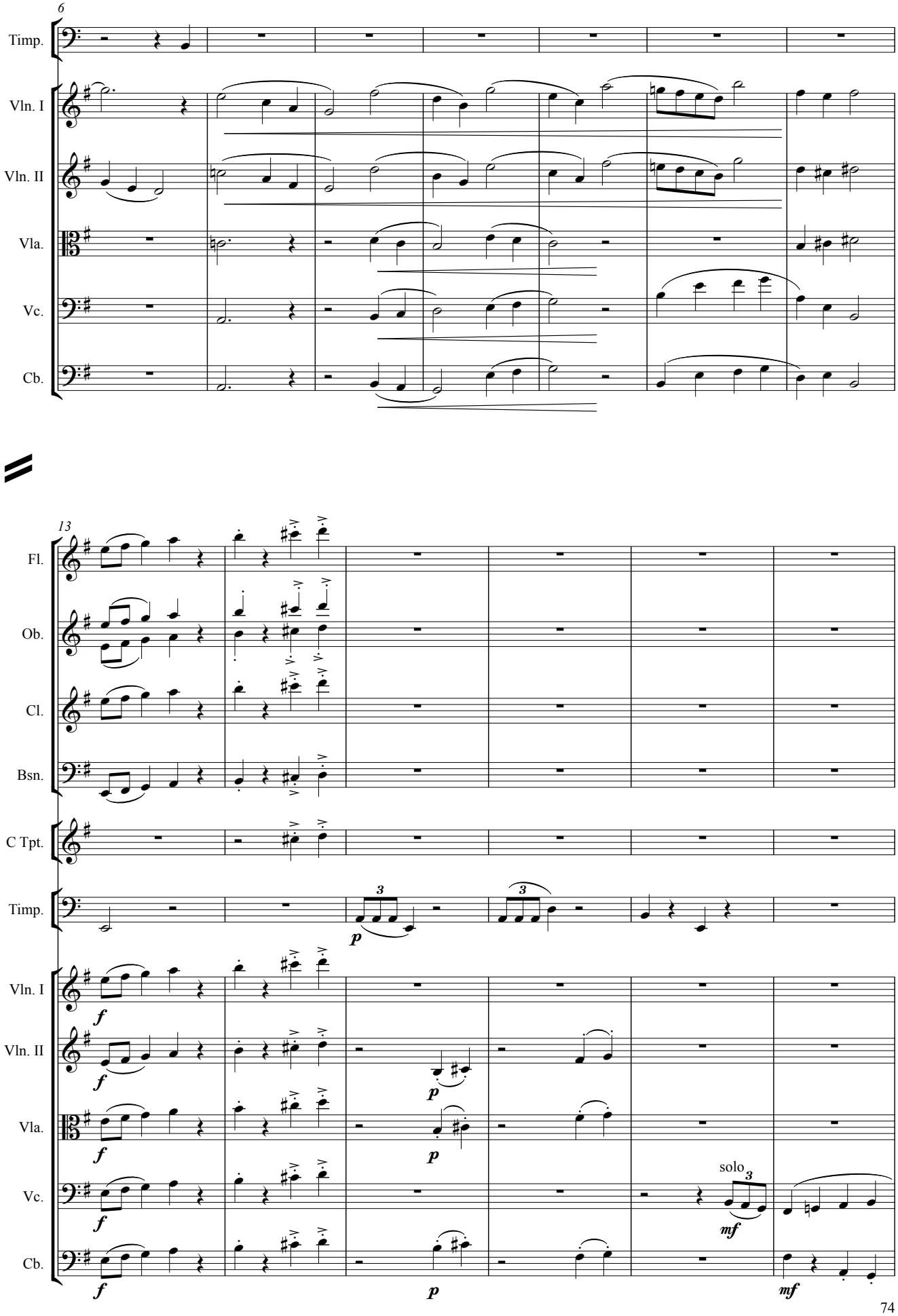
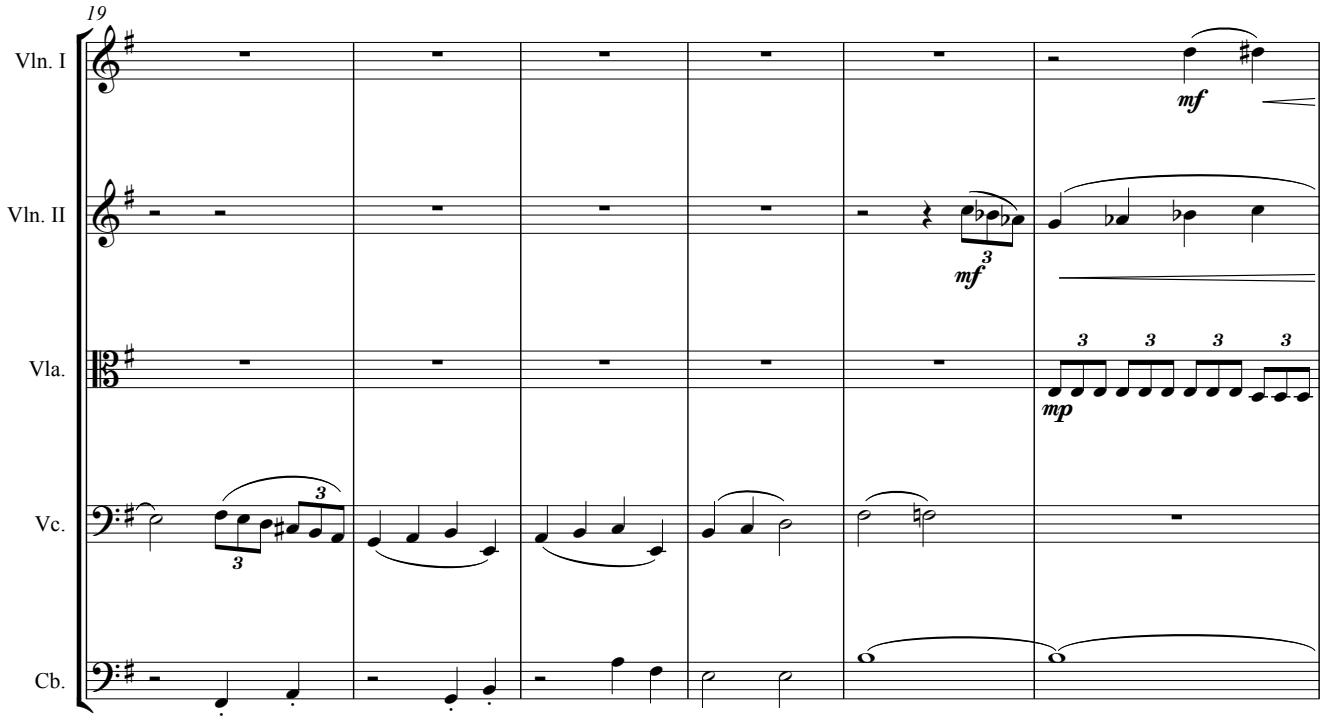
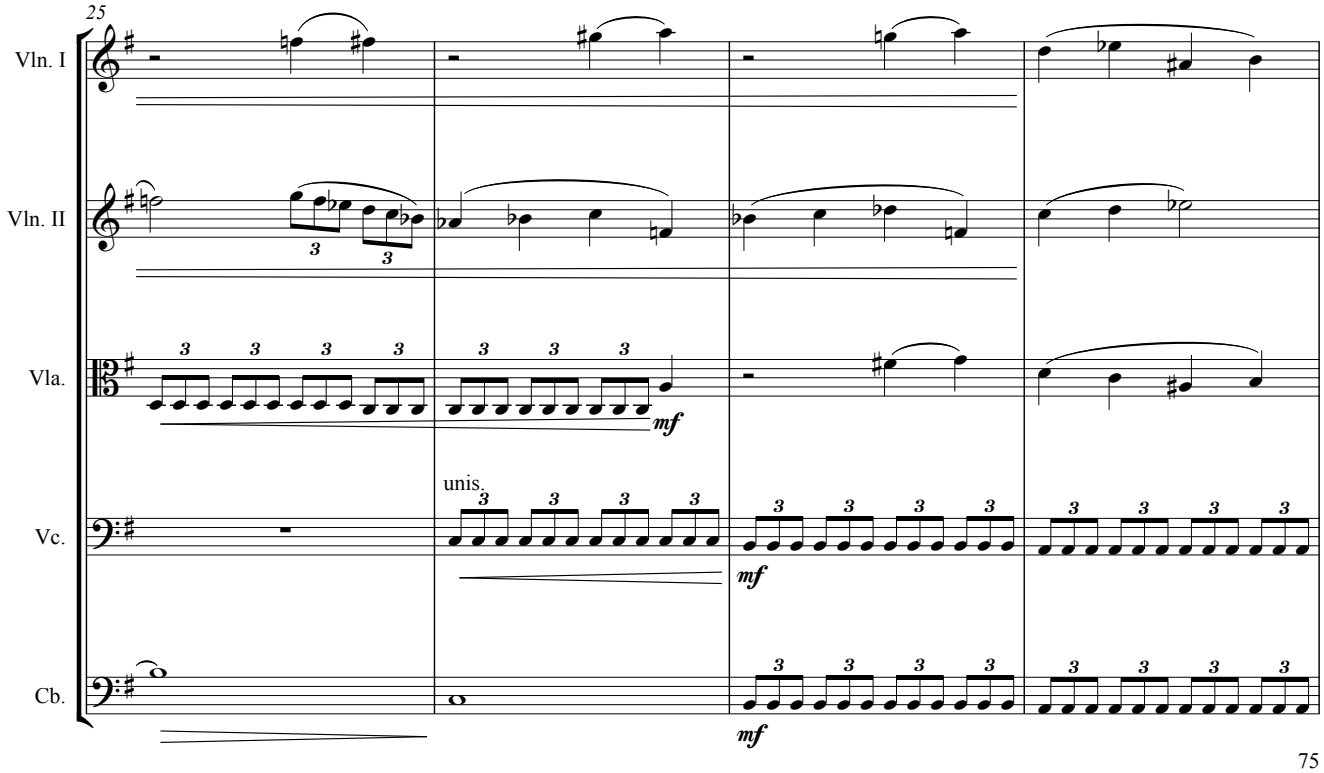
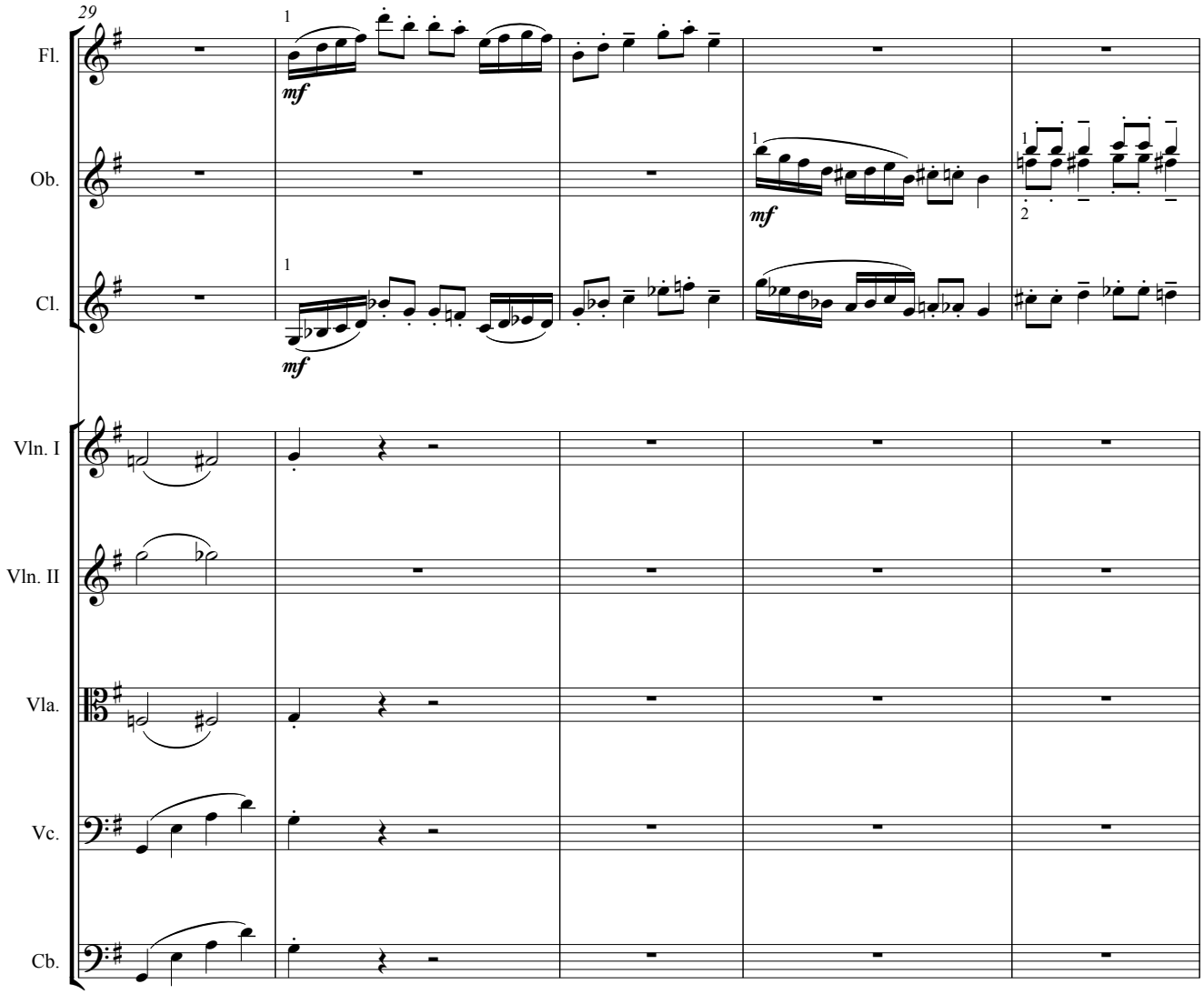
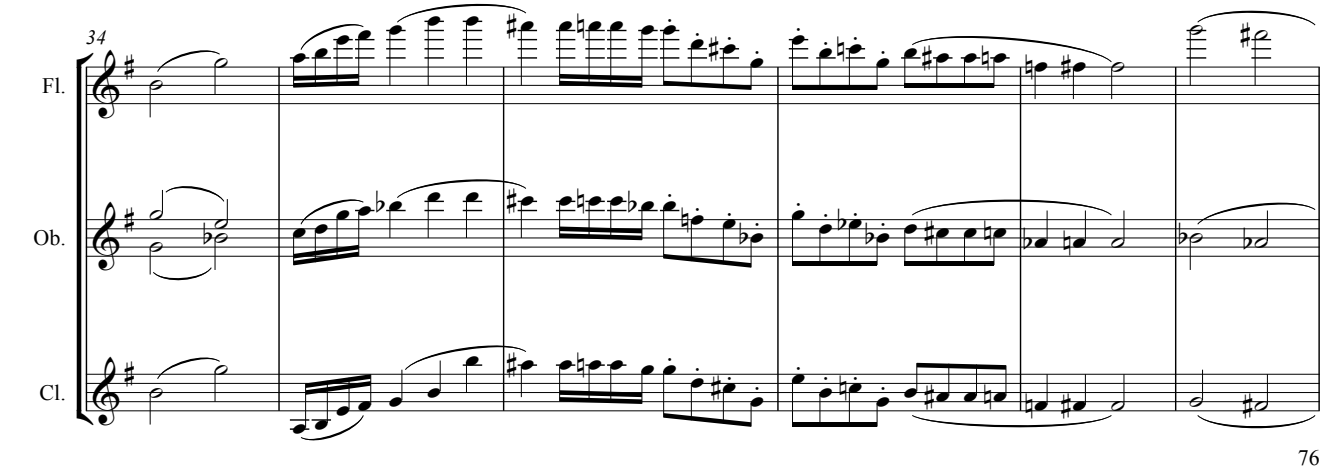
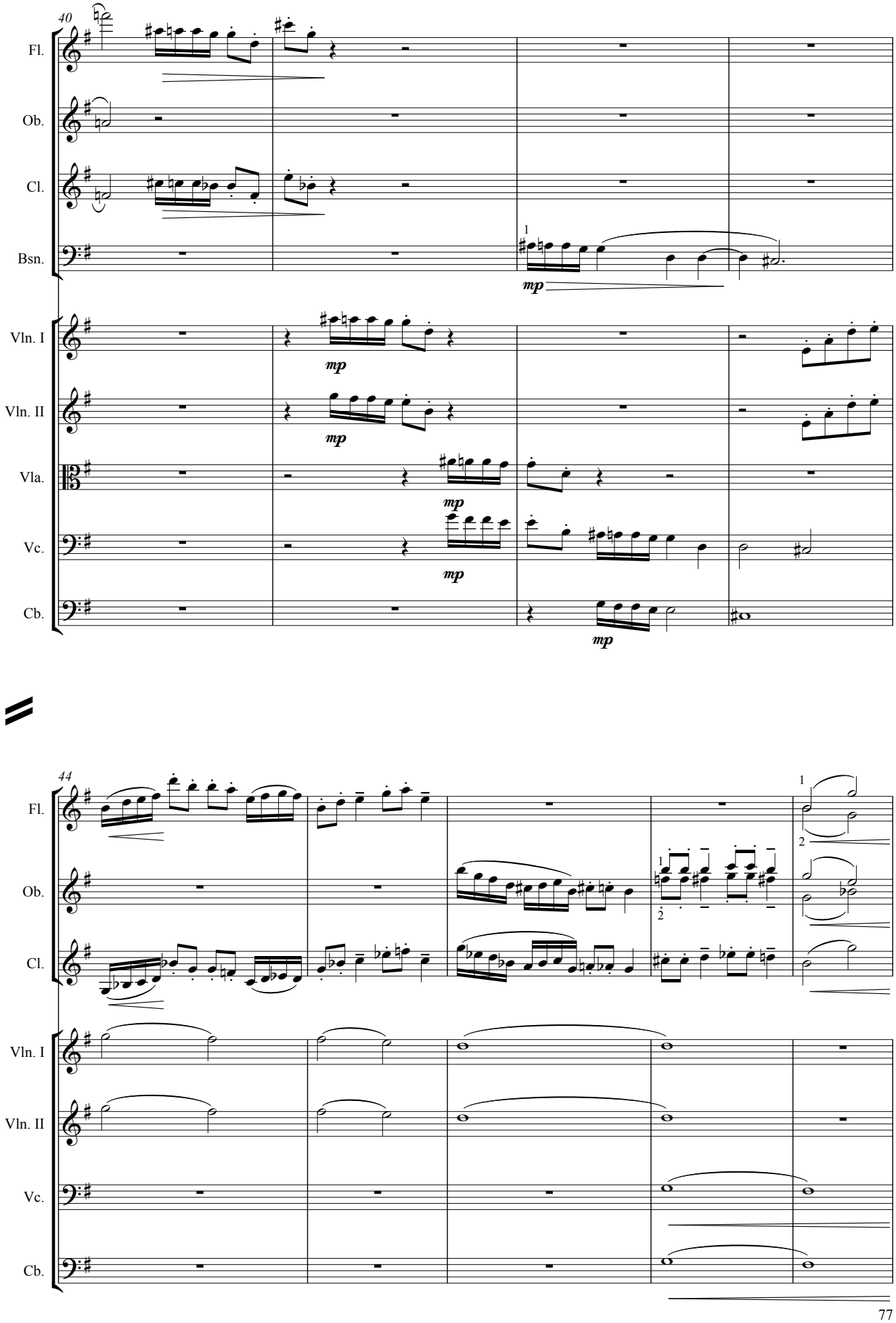

6
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
13
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
solo

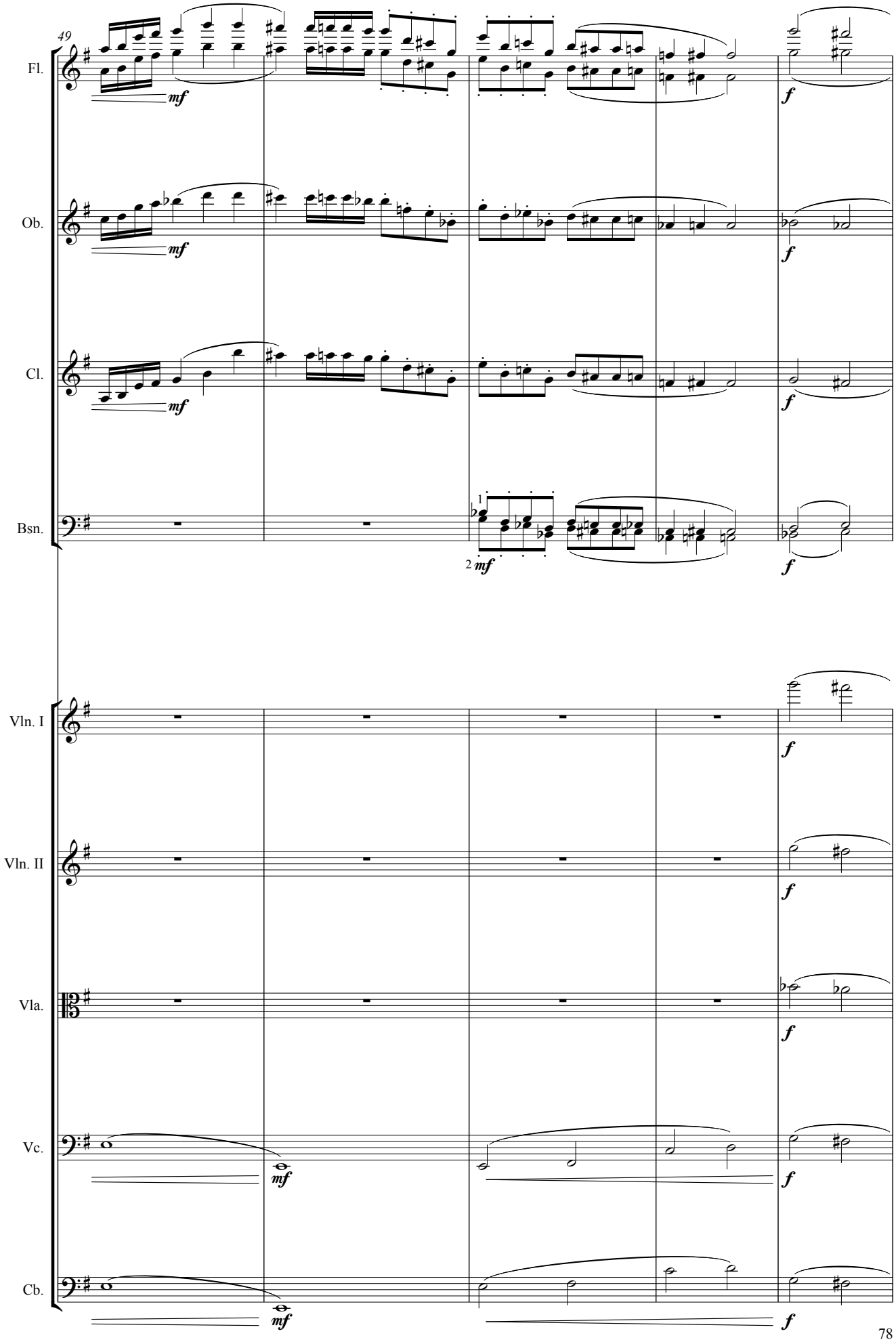

19
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
mf
mp

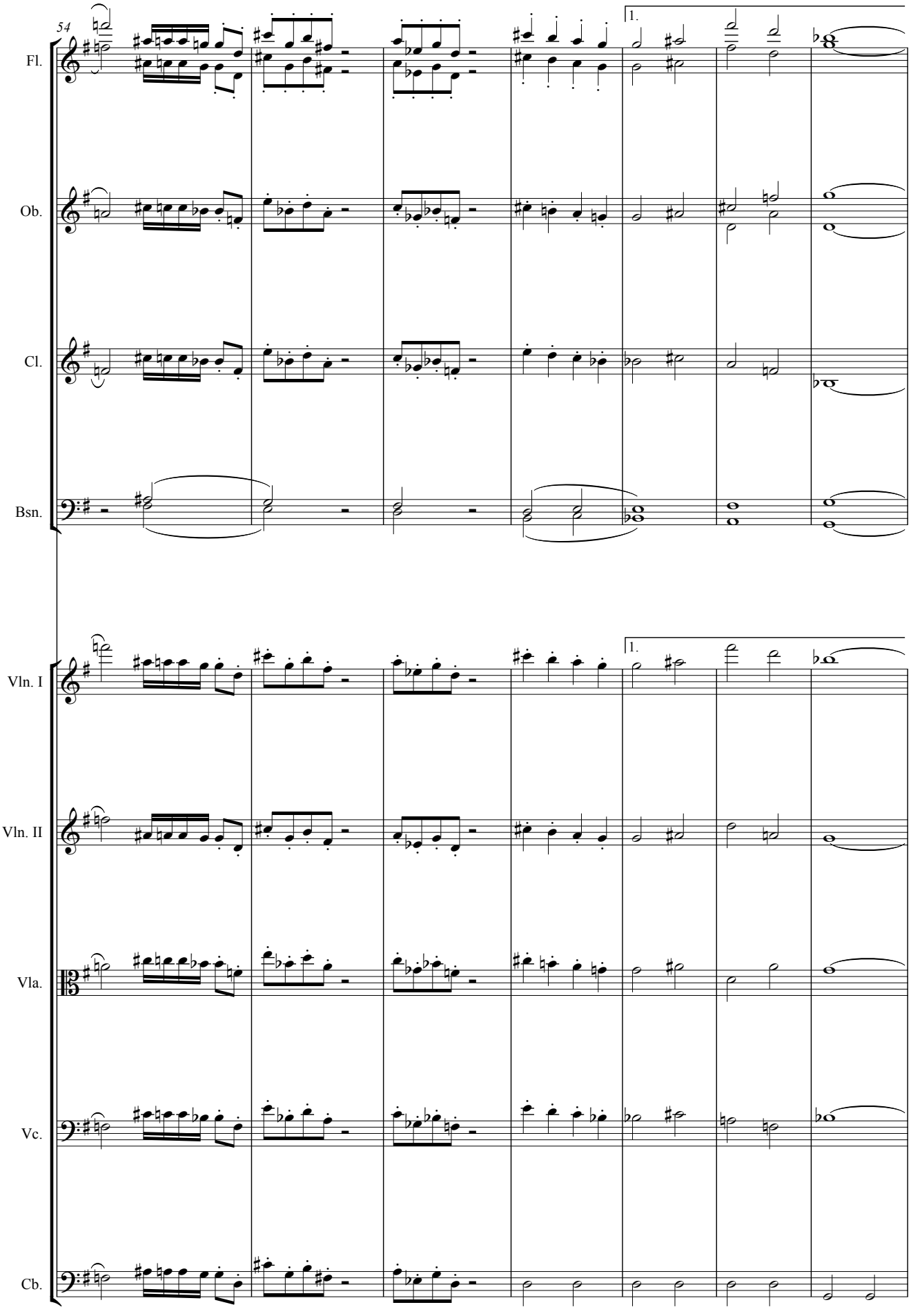

25
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
unis.
mf
mf

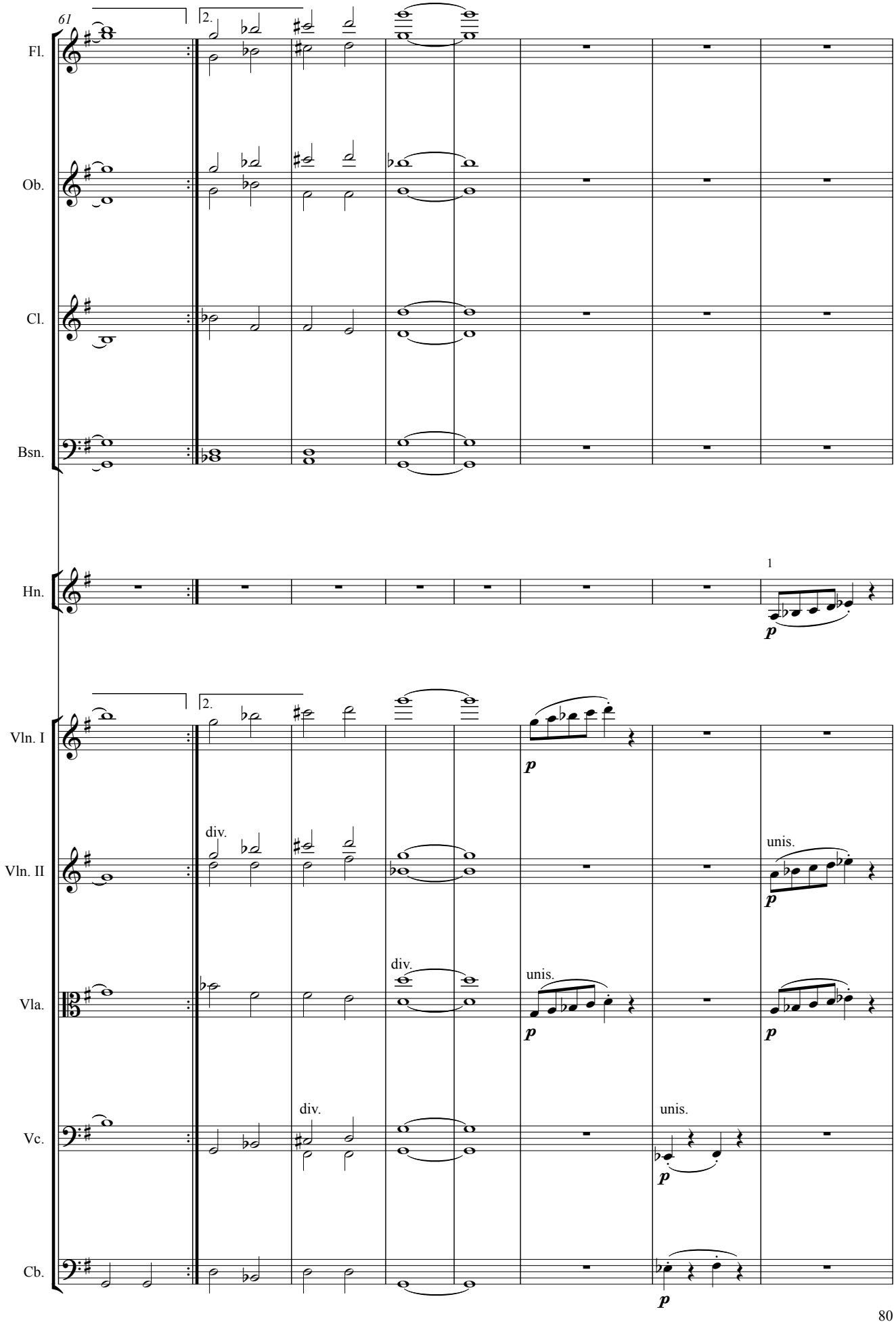

29
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
mf
mf

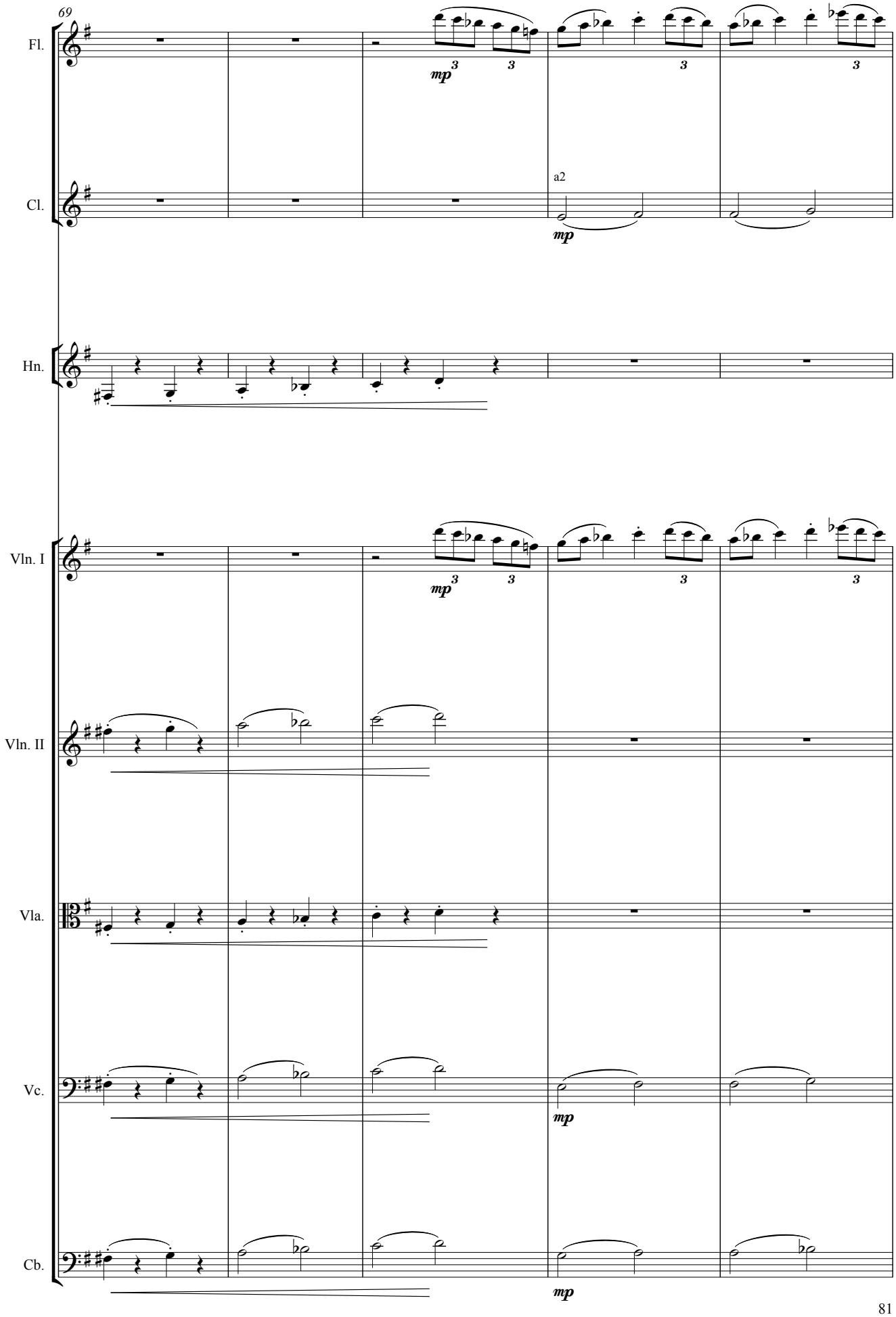

34
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.

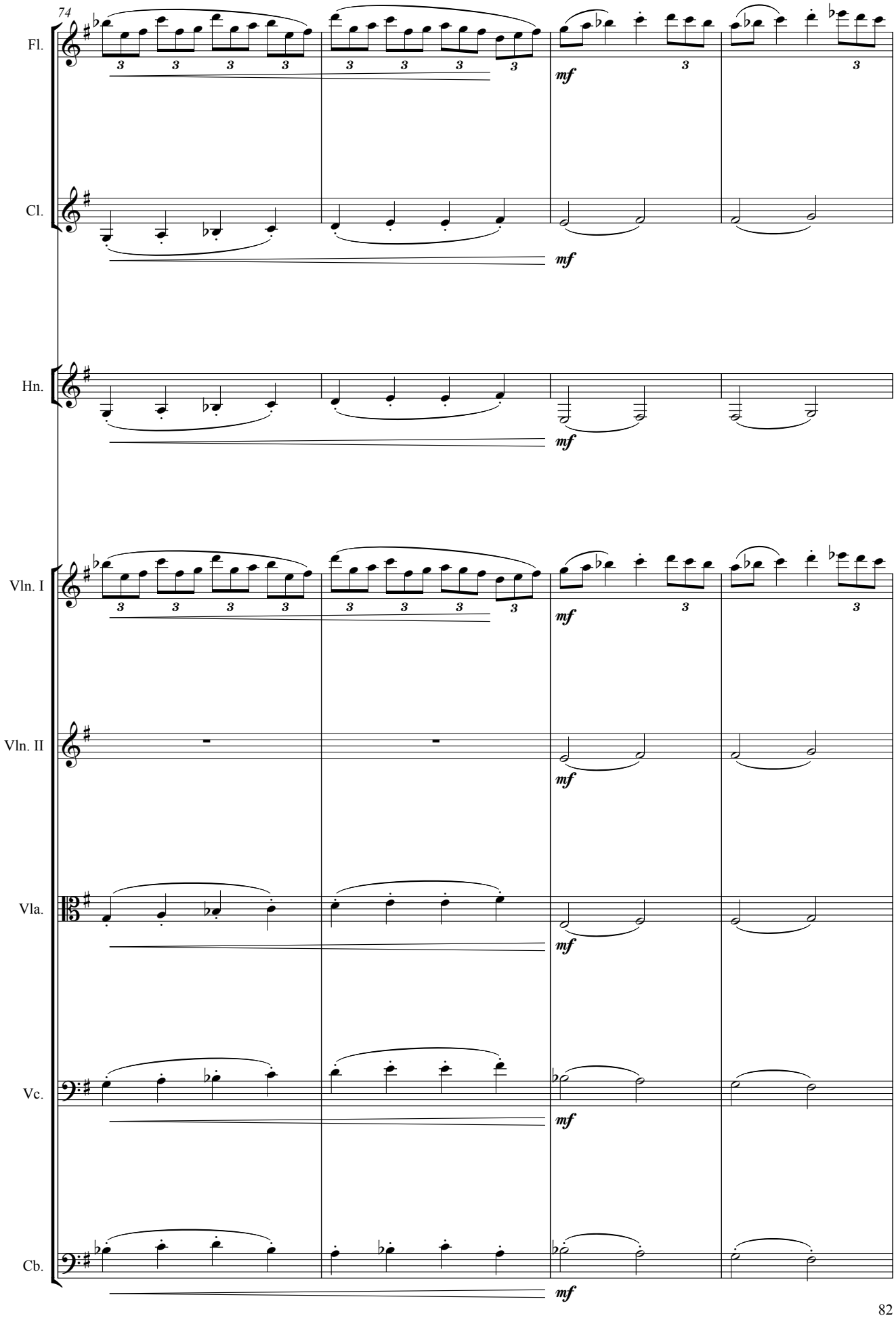

40
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mp
44

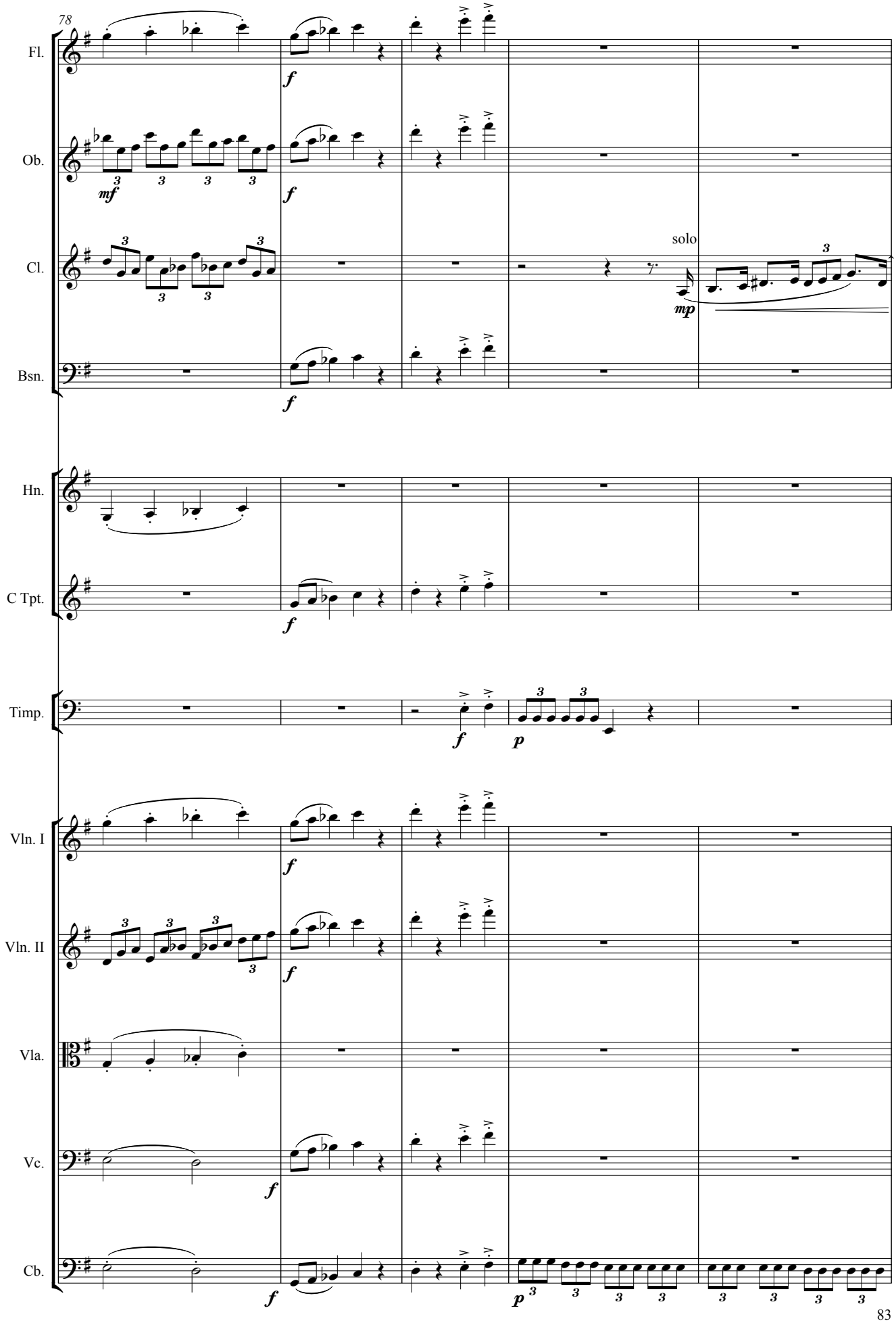

49
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
f
1
2

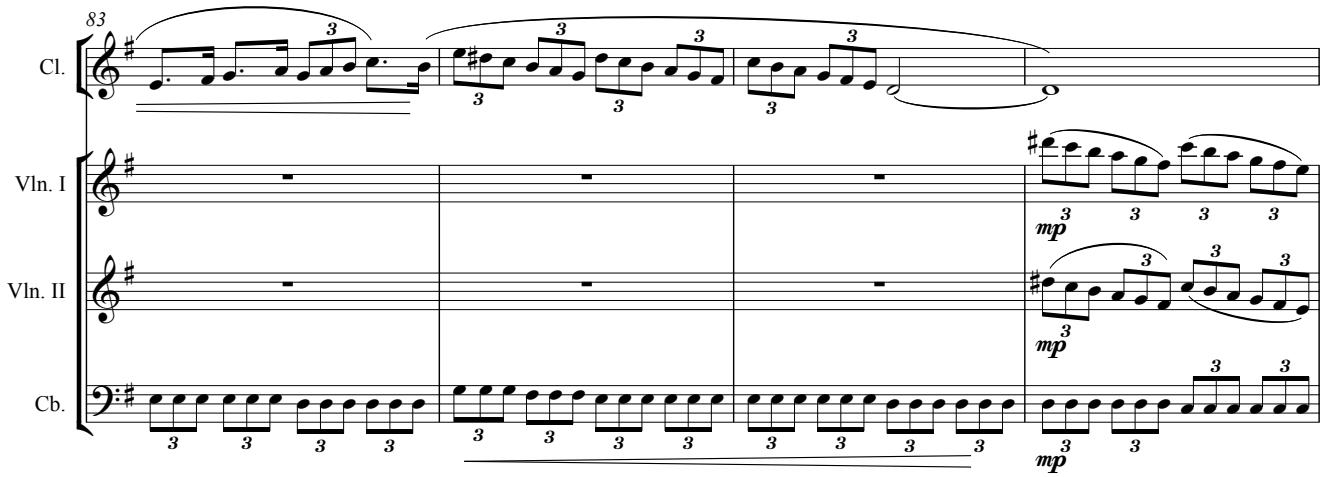

54
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
1.
1.

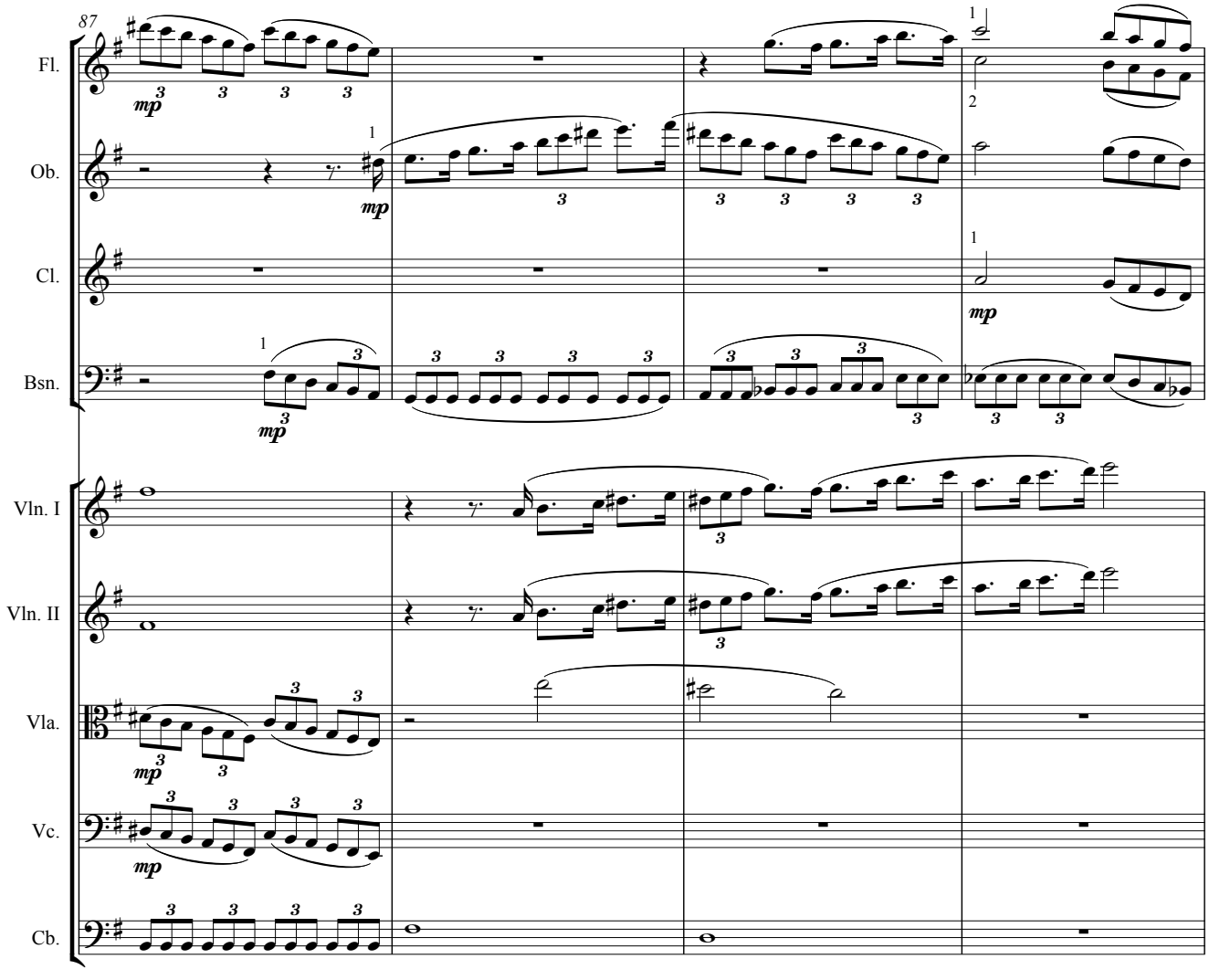

61
2.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
1
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
div.
unis.
p

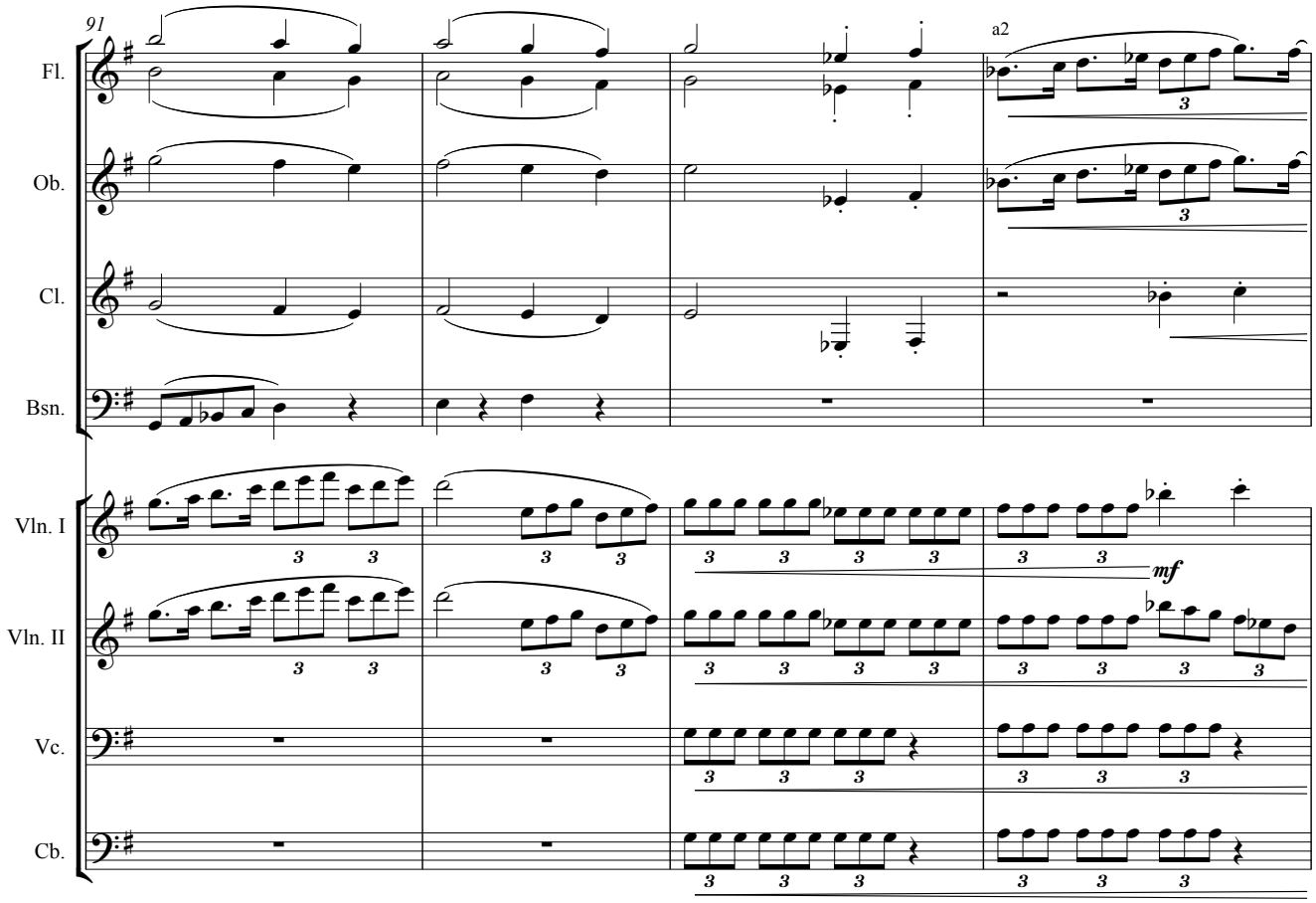

69
Fl.
Cl.
a2
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mp
3

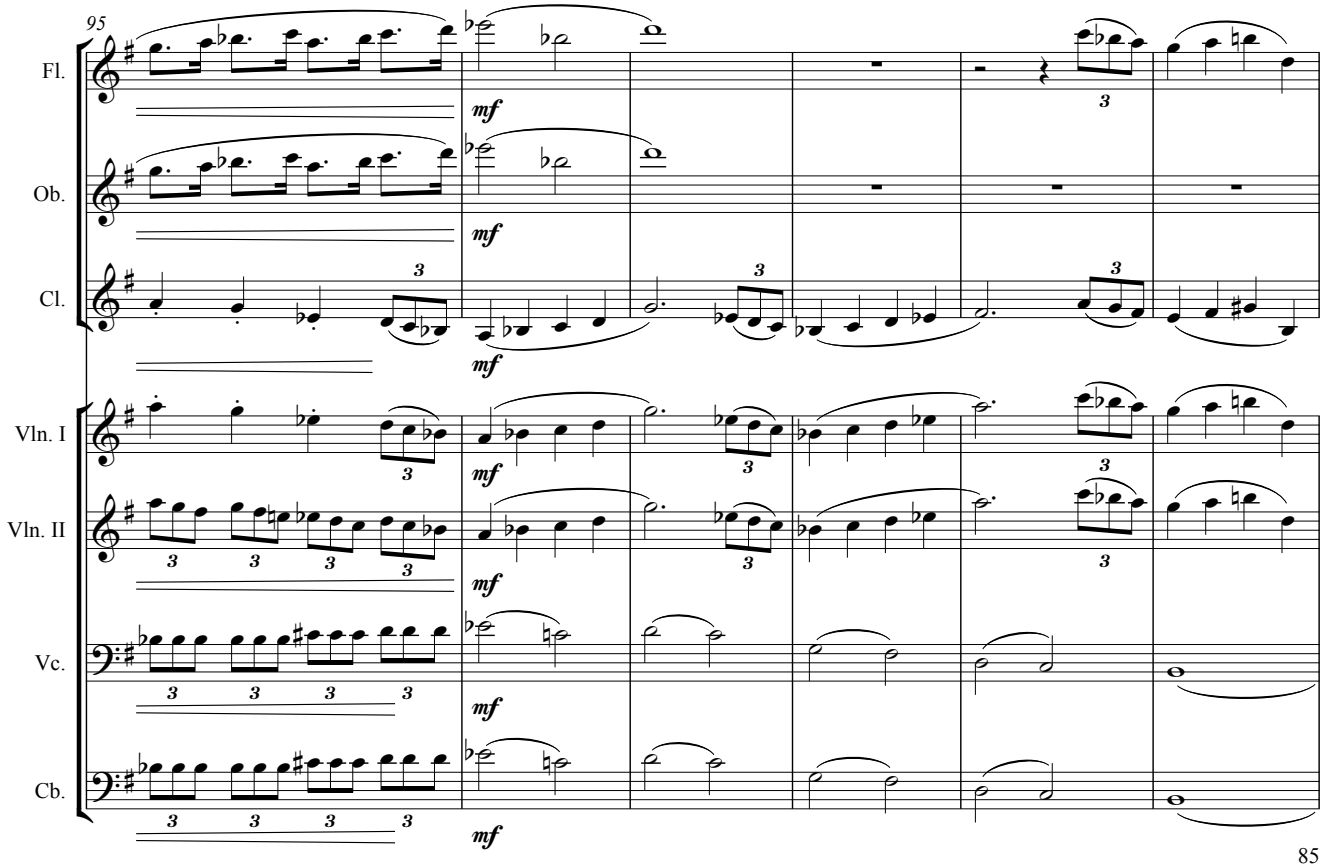

74
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf


78
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
solo


83
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Cb.
mp


87
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mp


91
a2
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vc.
Cb.
mf


95
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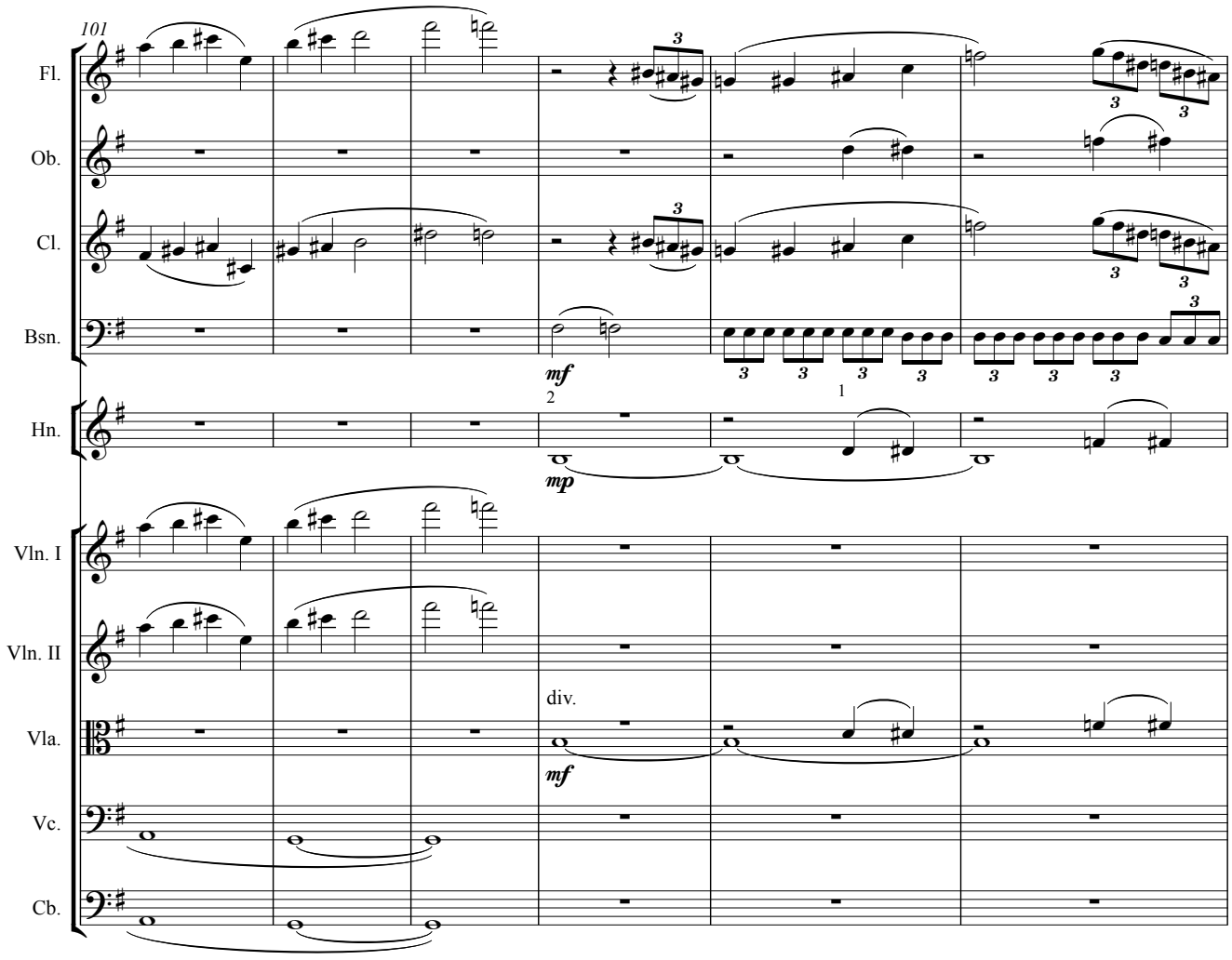
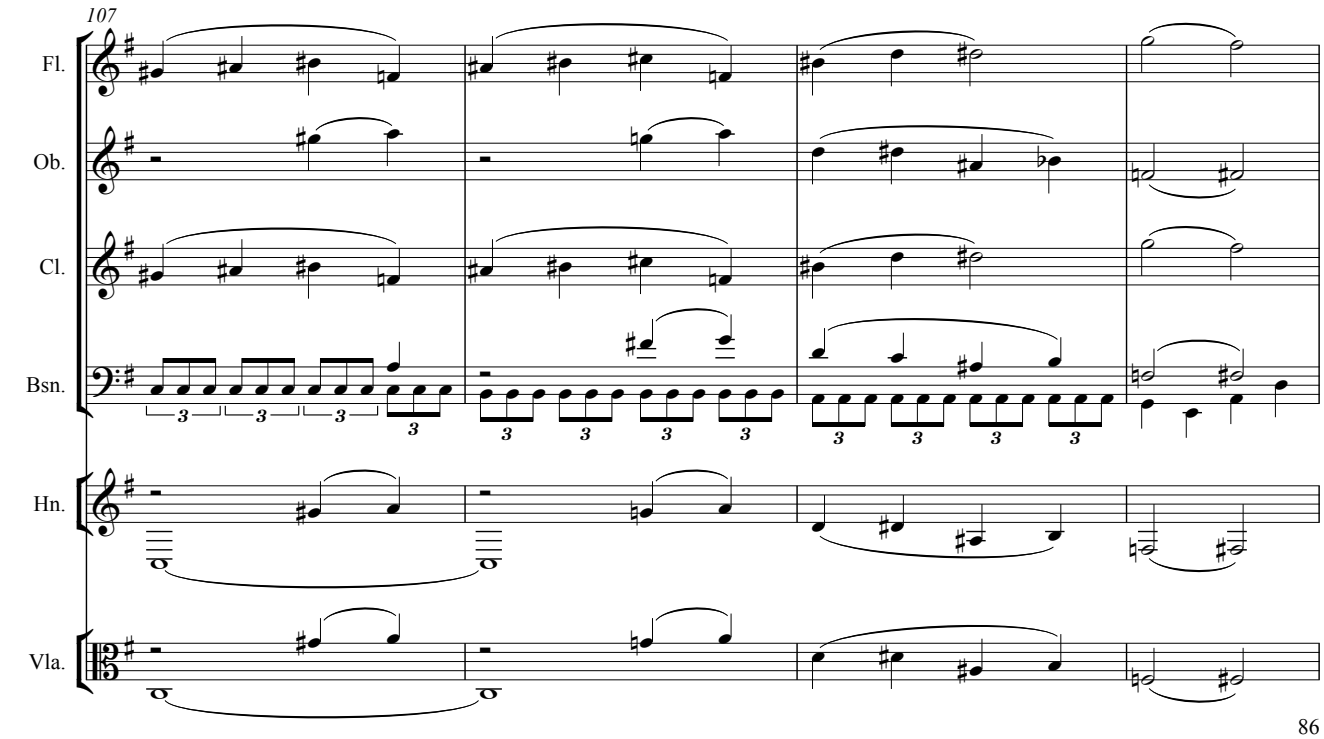
Ob.
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vc.
Cb.
mf


101
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
mp
mf
div.


107
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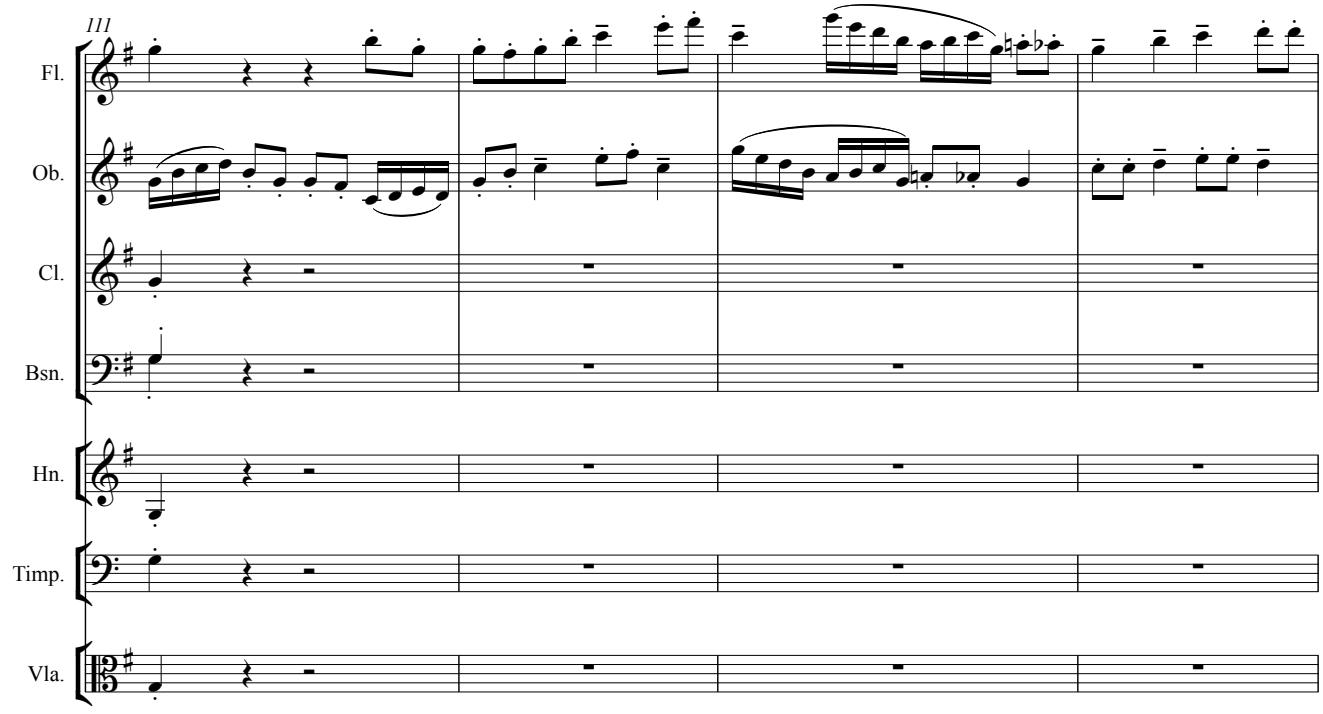
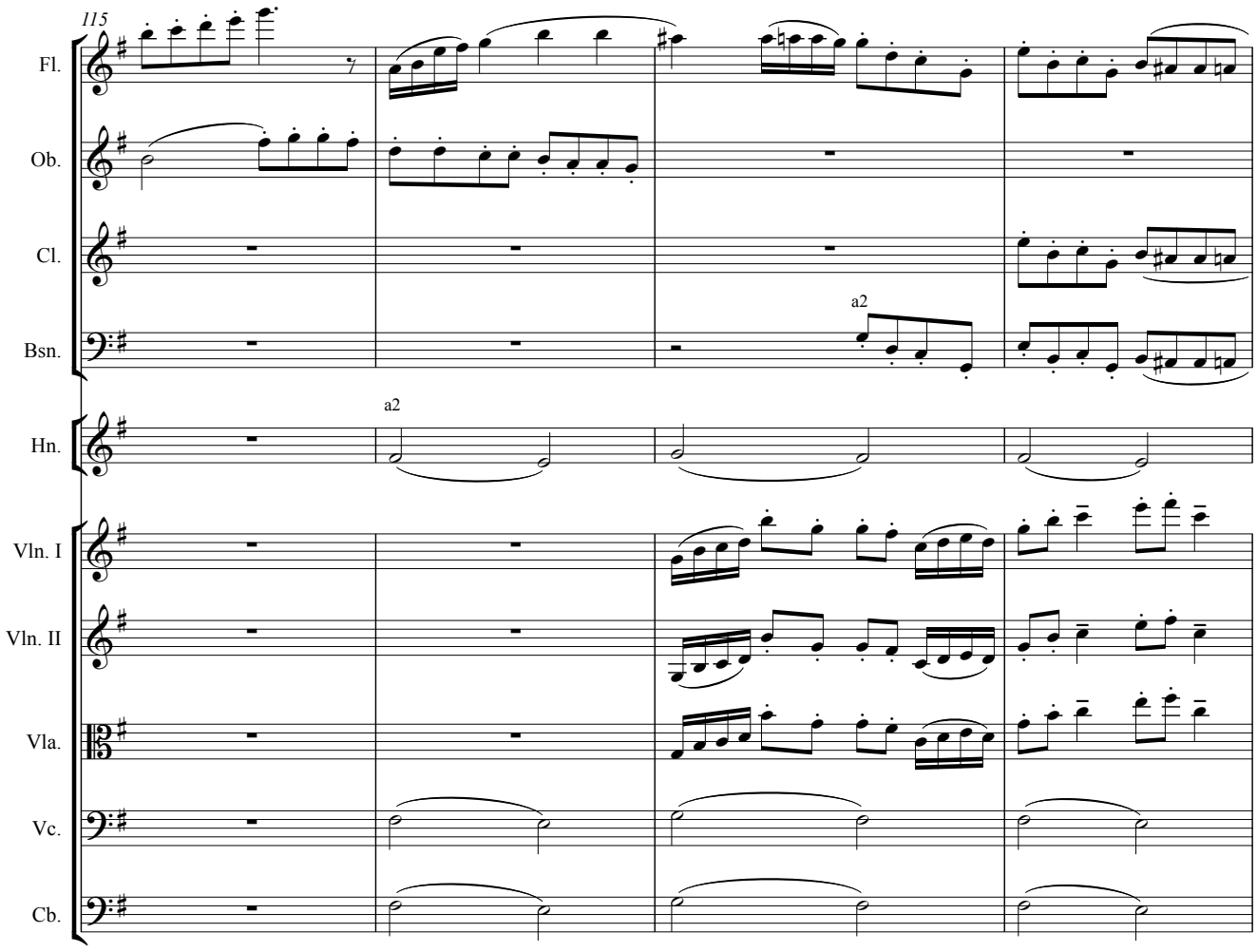
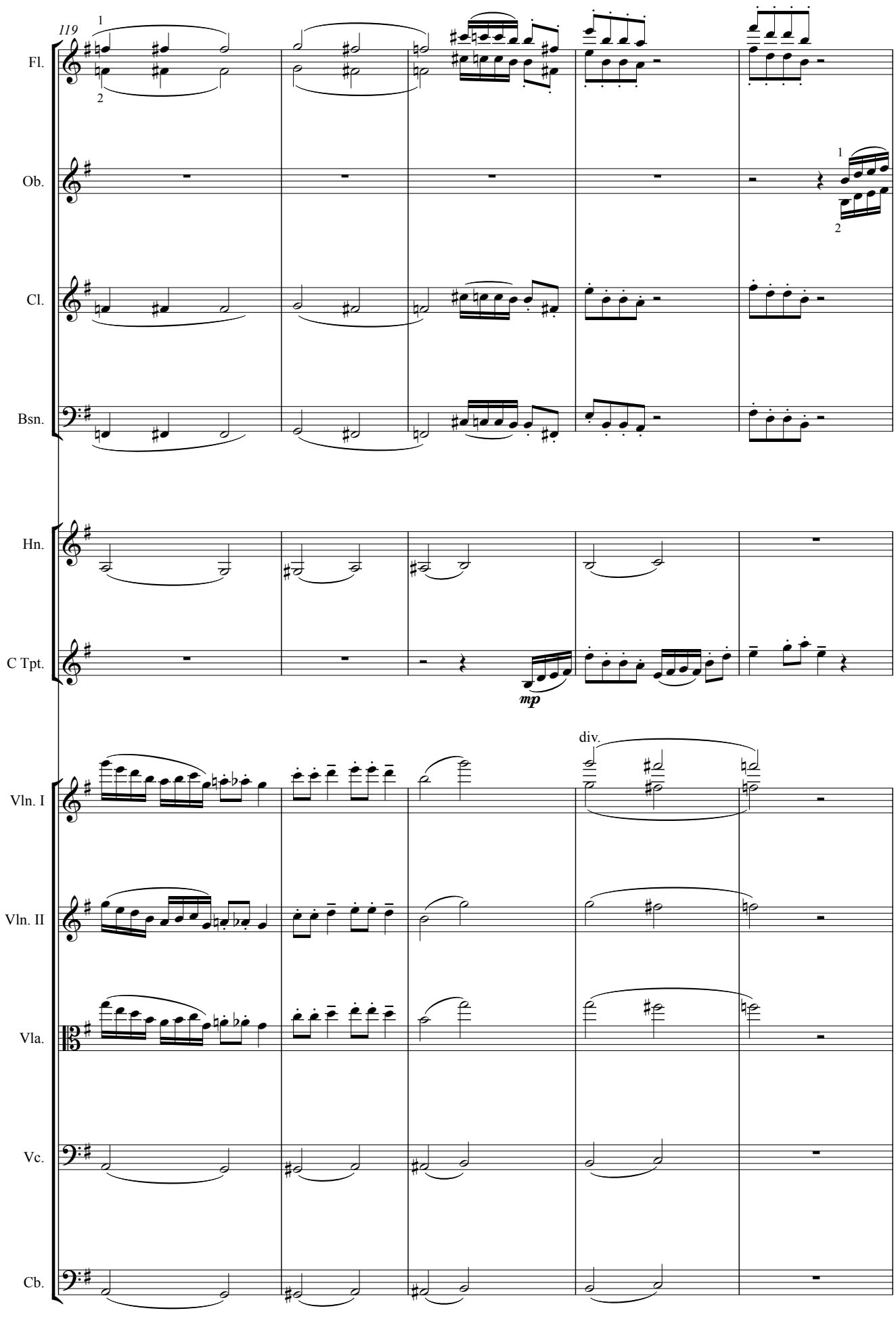
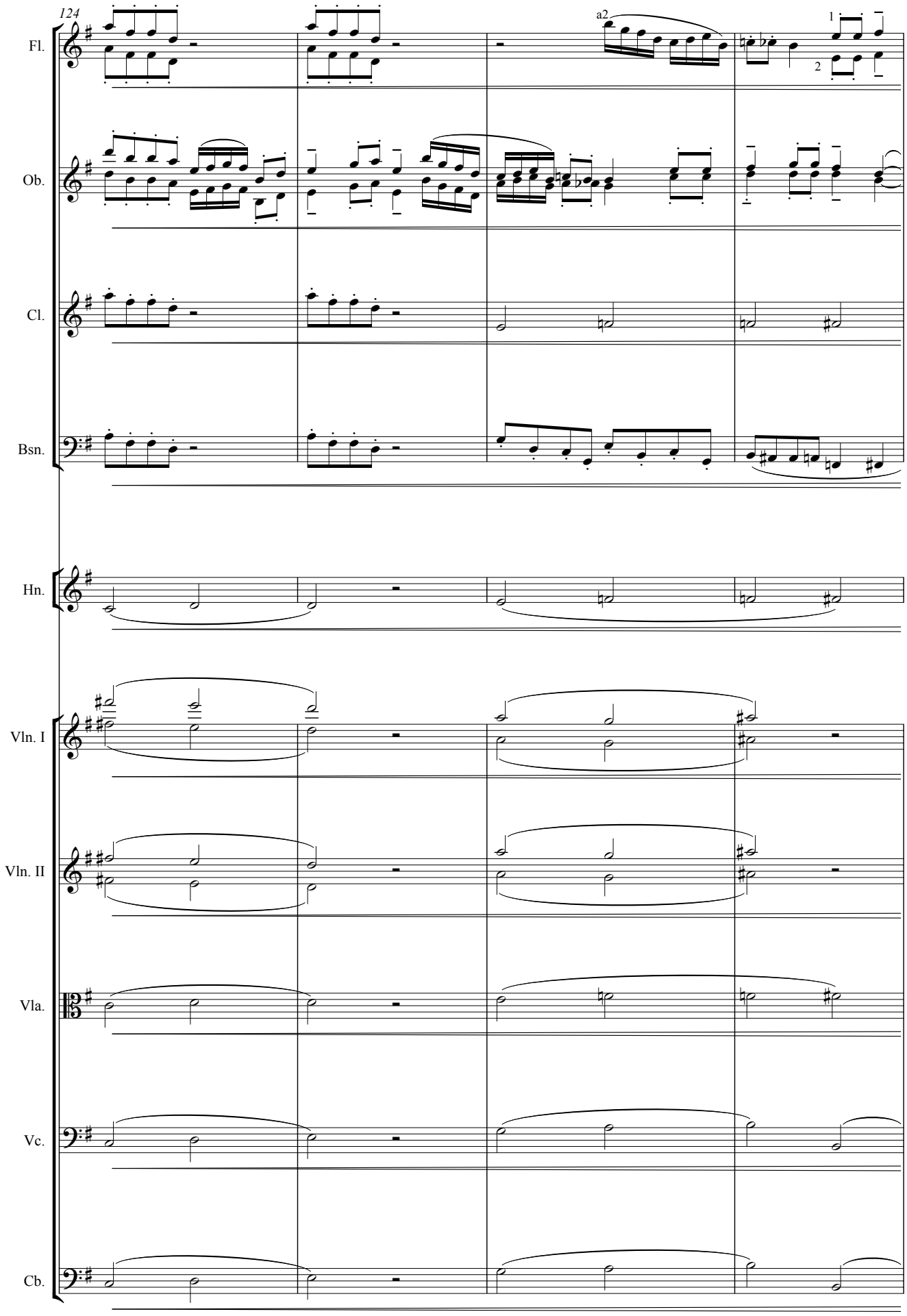
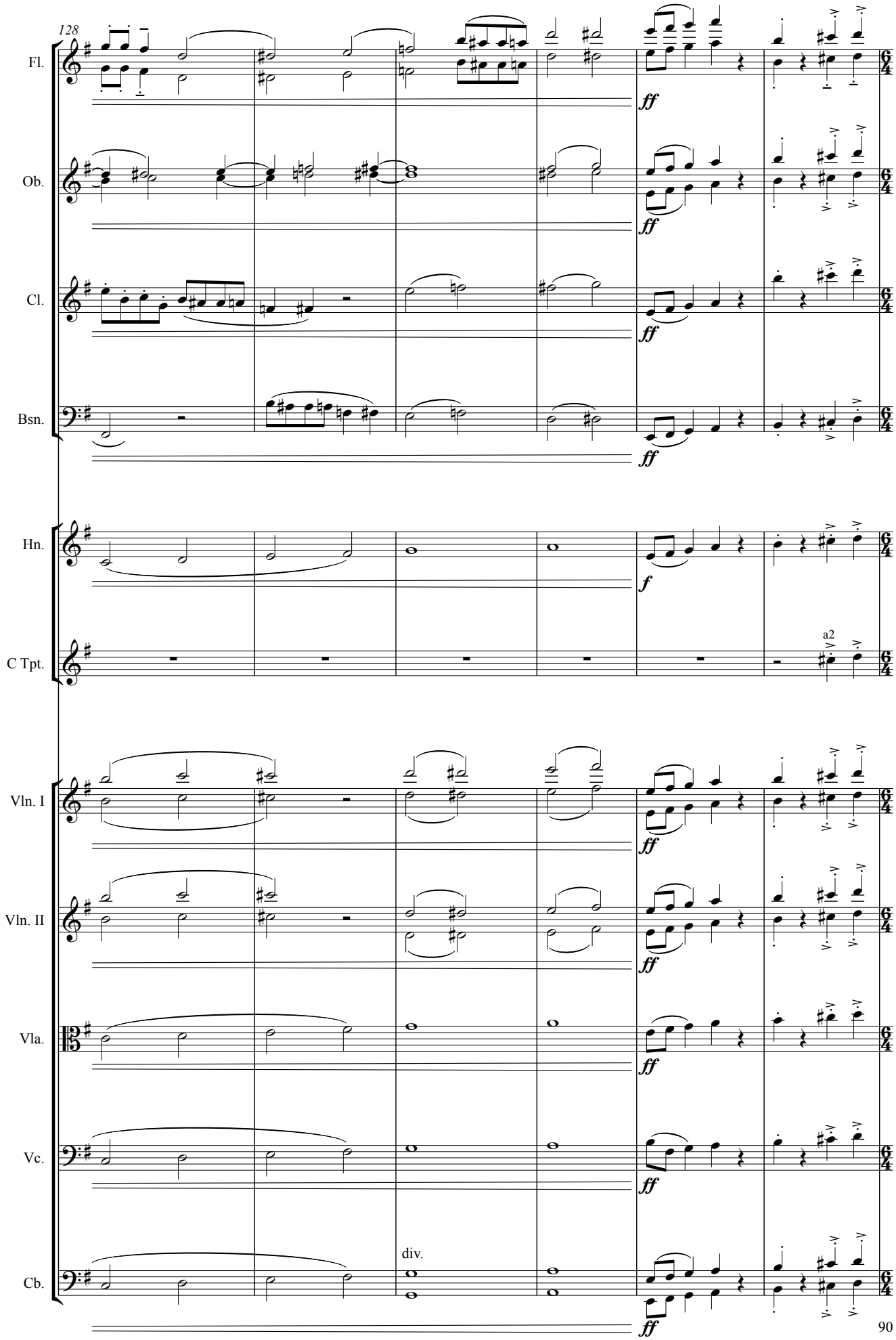
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vla.

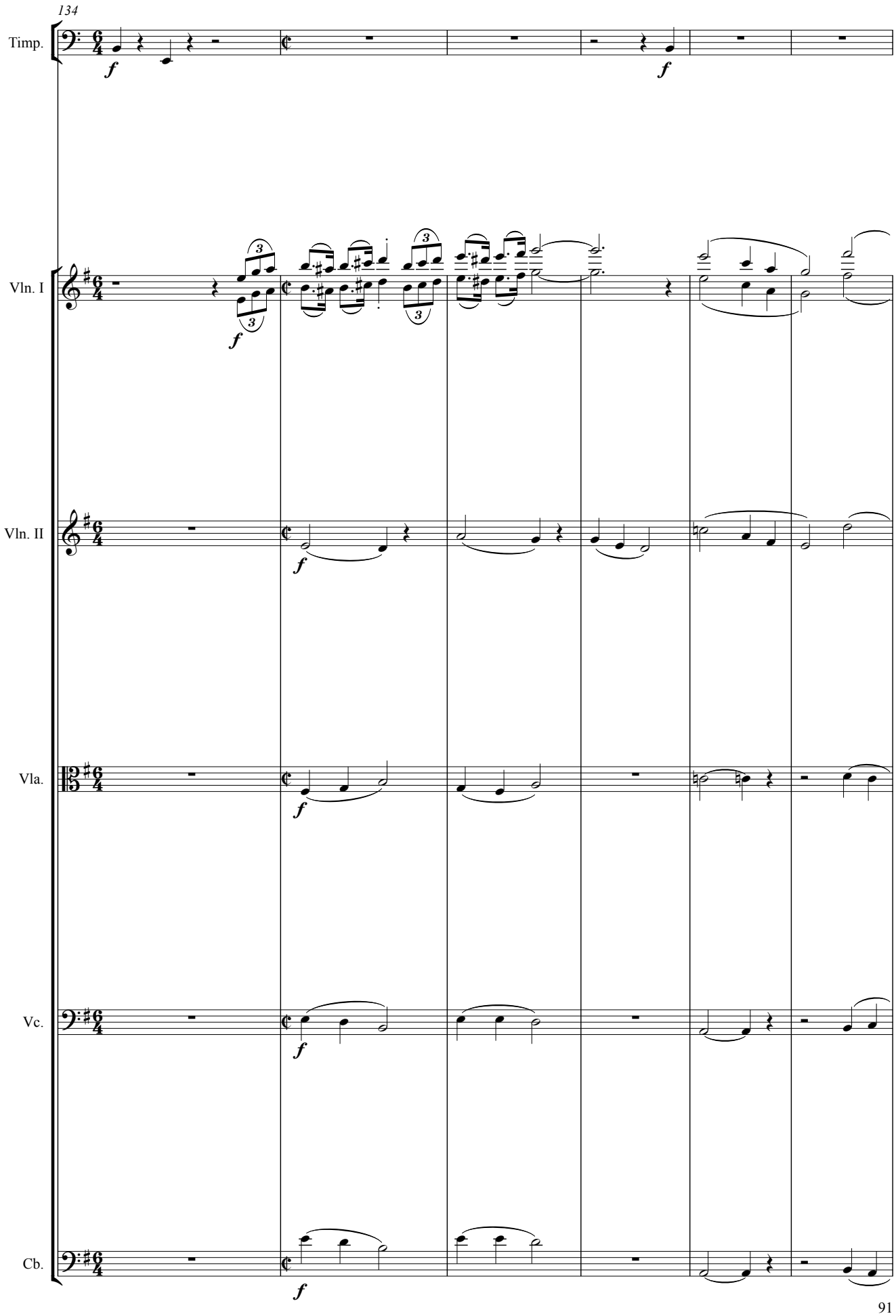

111
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Timp.
Vla.


115
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
a2
Hn.
a2
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.


119
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
mp
Vln. I
div.
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.


124
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
a2
1
2


128
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
ff
f
a2
div.


134
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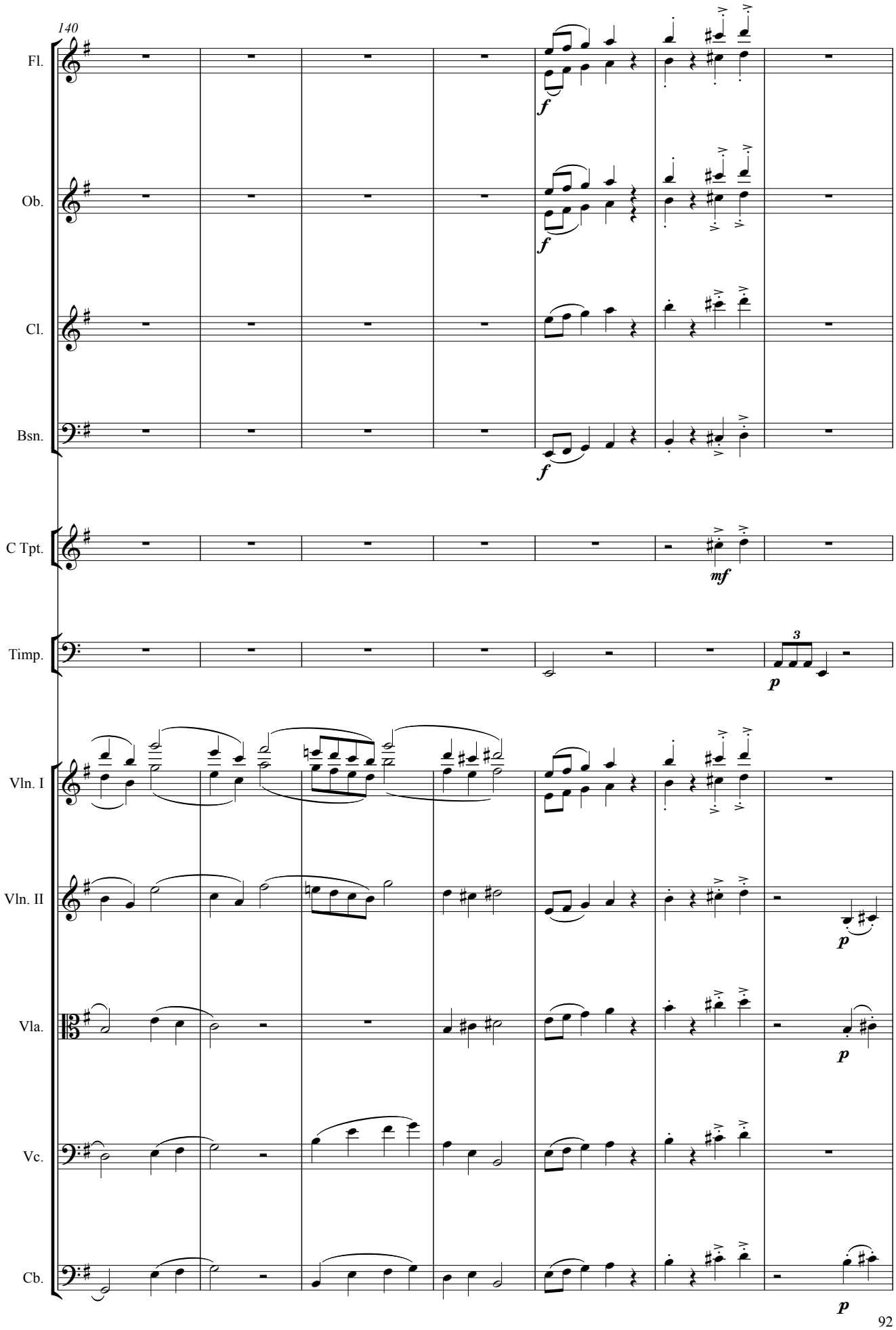
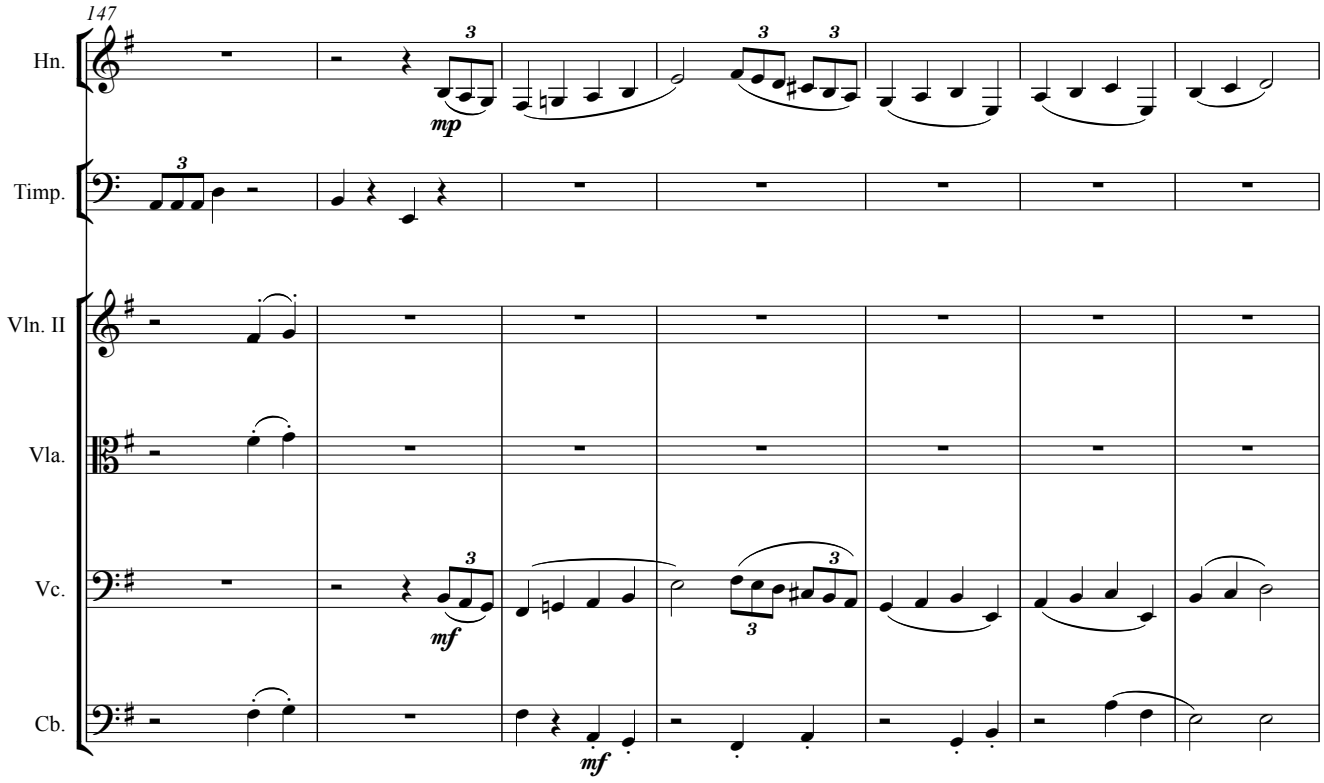
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.


140
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
f
mf
p
3


147
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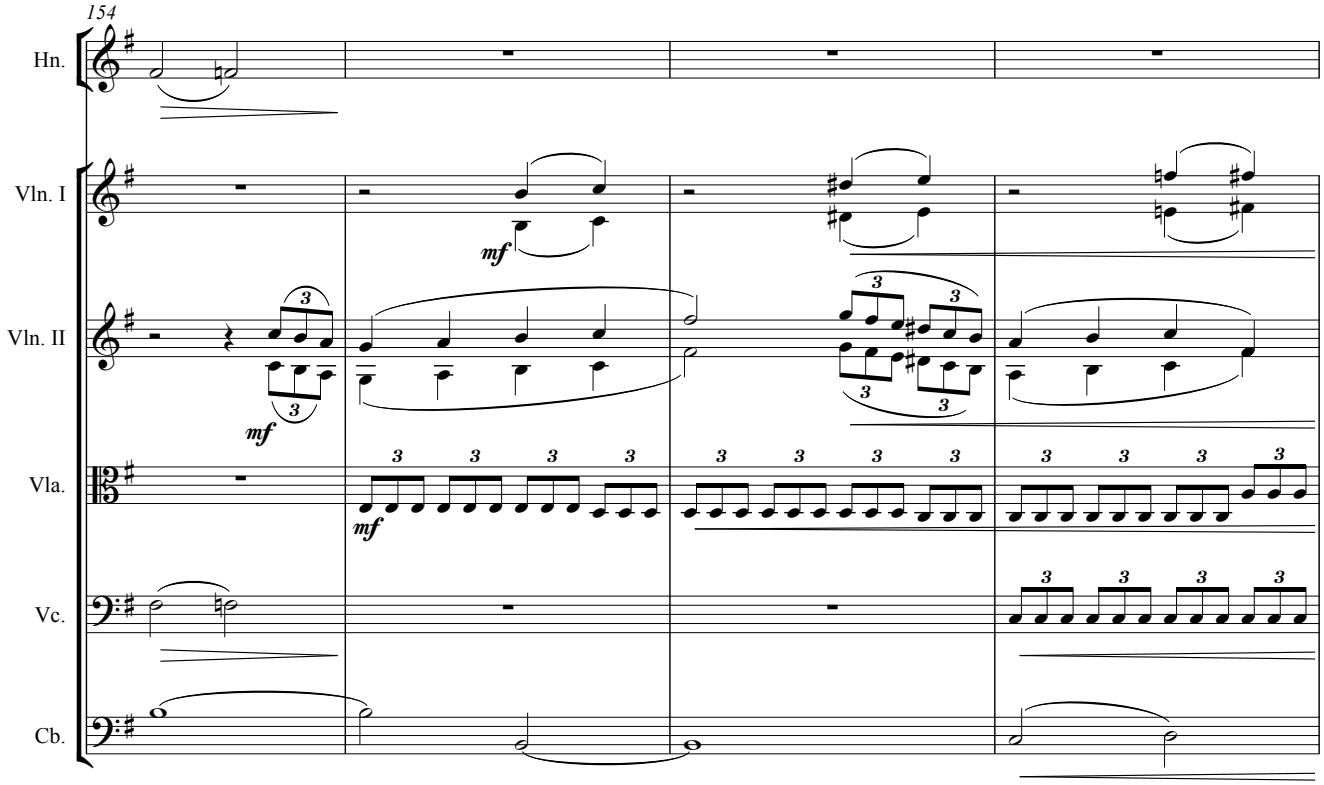
Timp.
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mp
mf
mf


154
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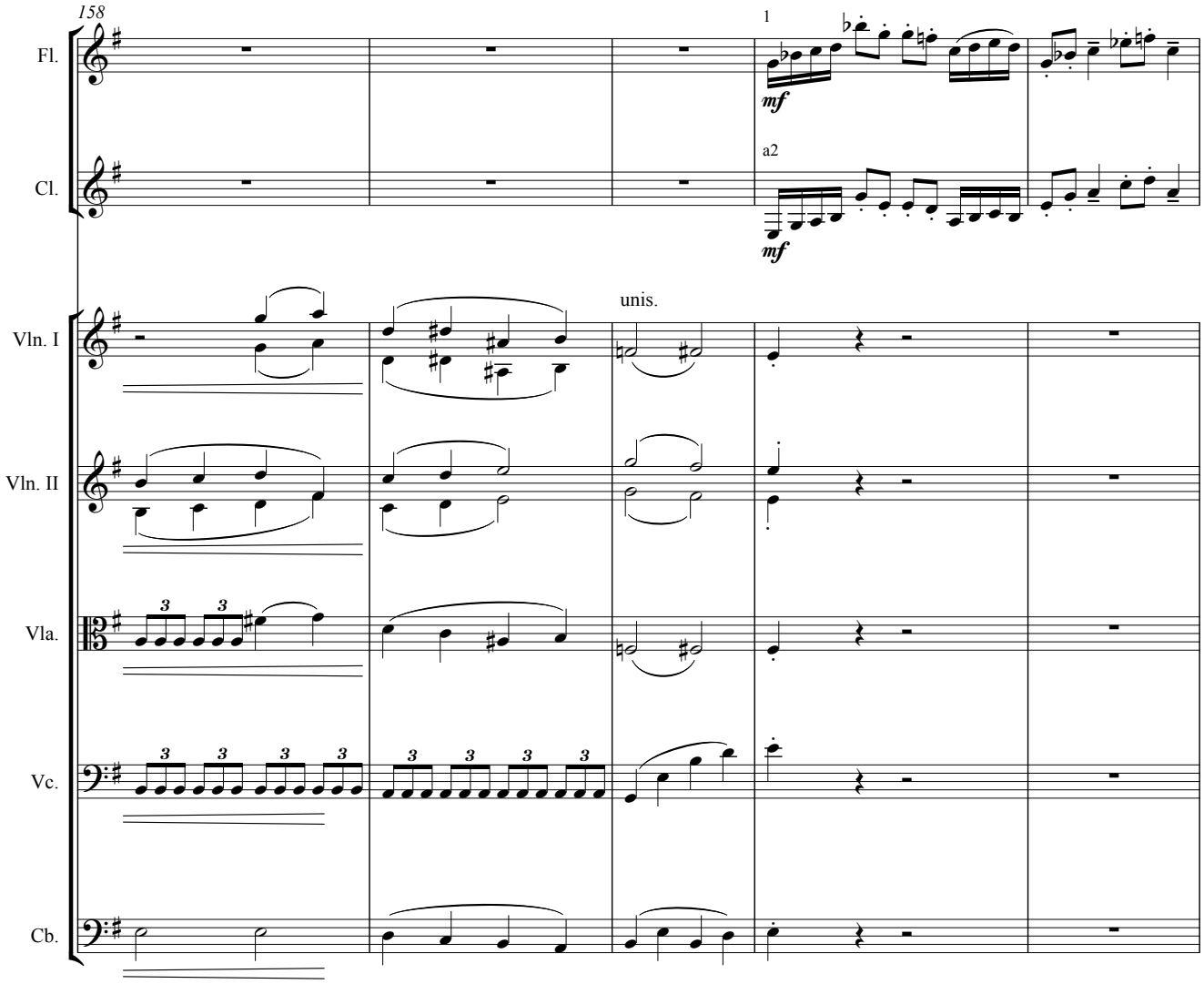
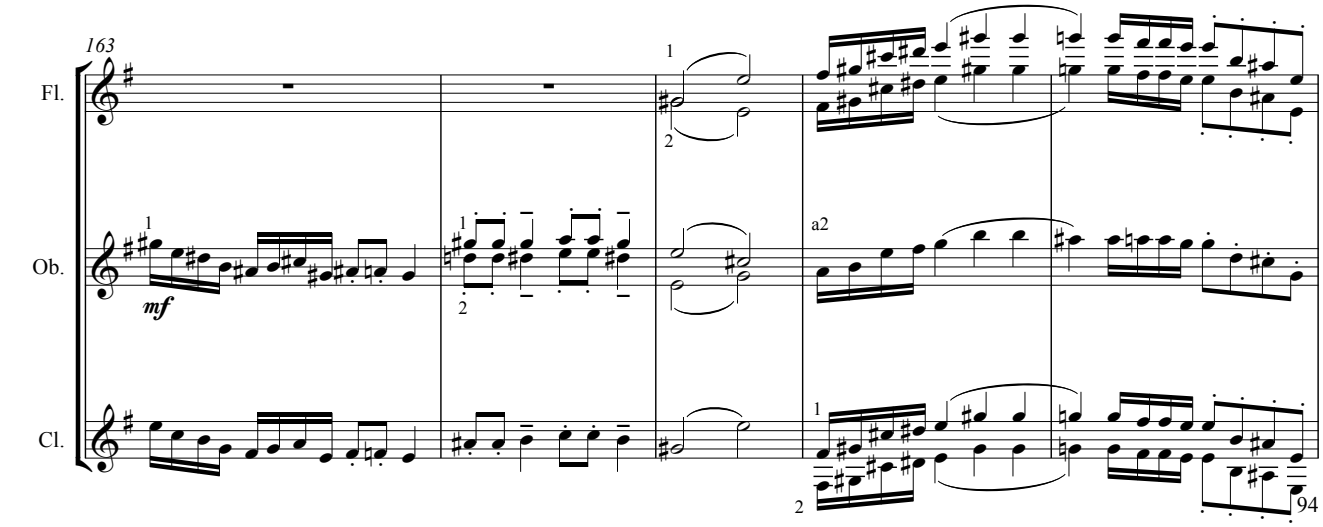
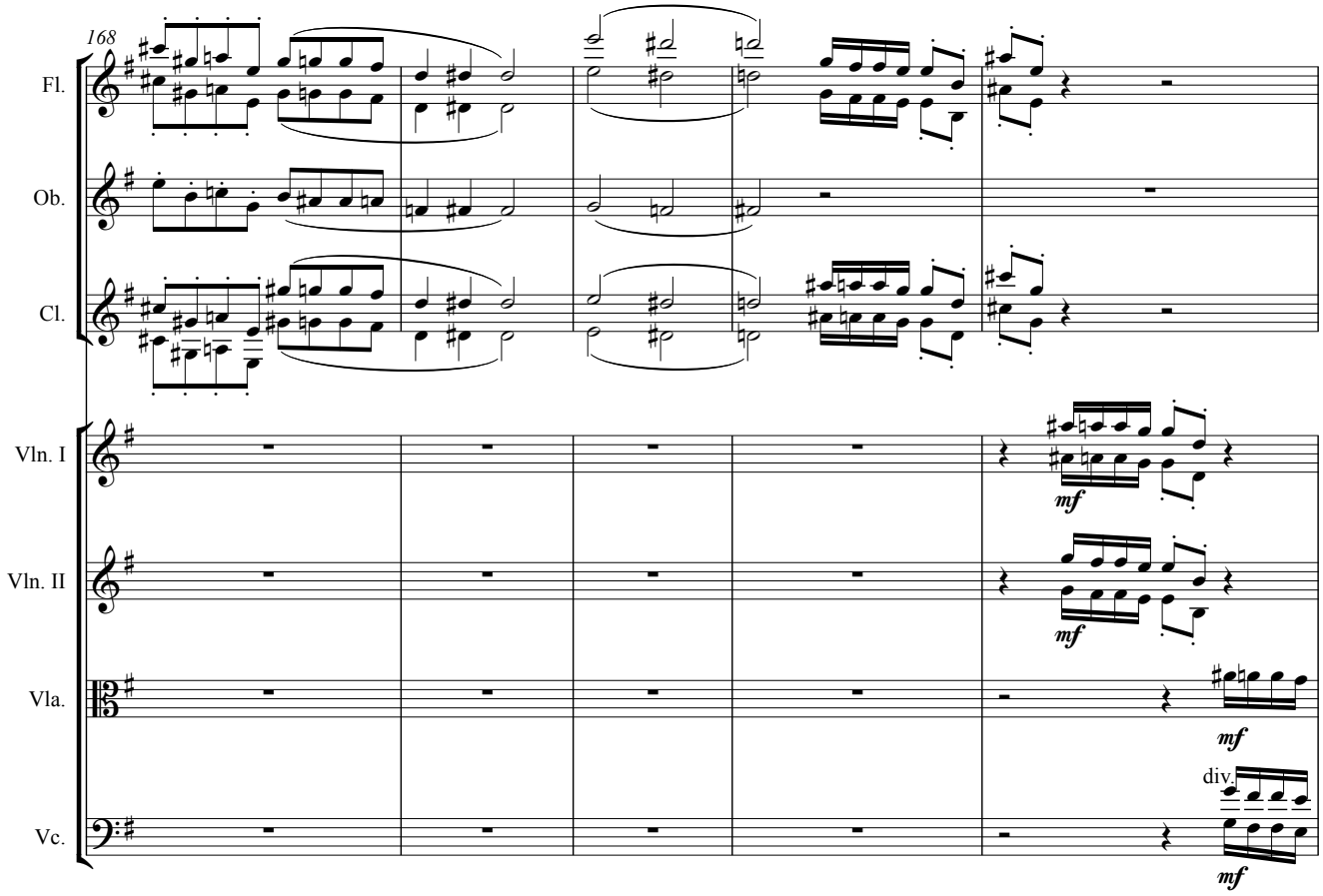
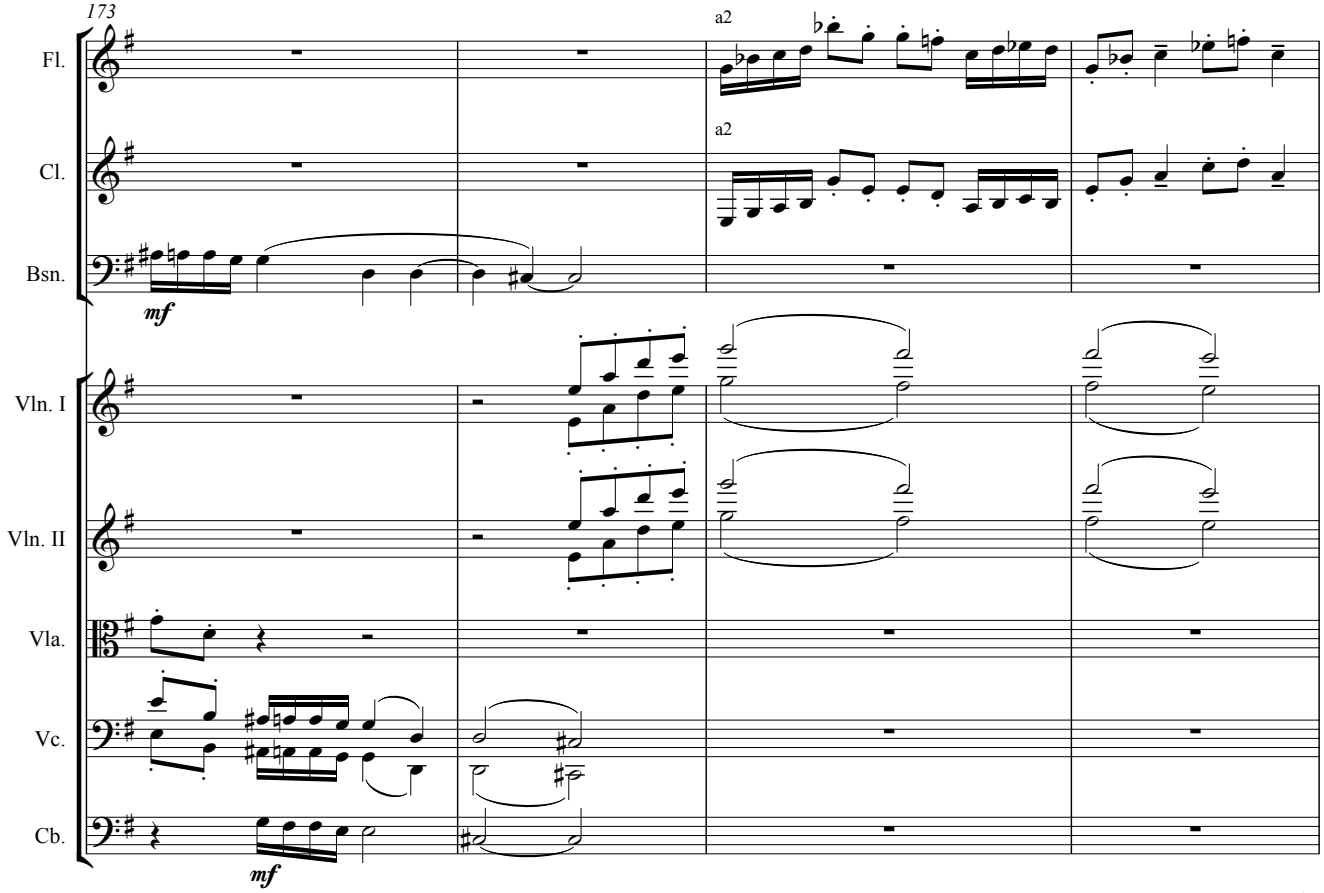
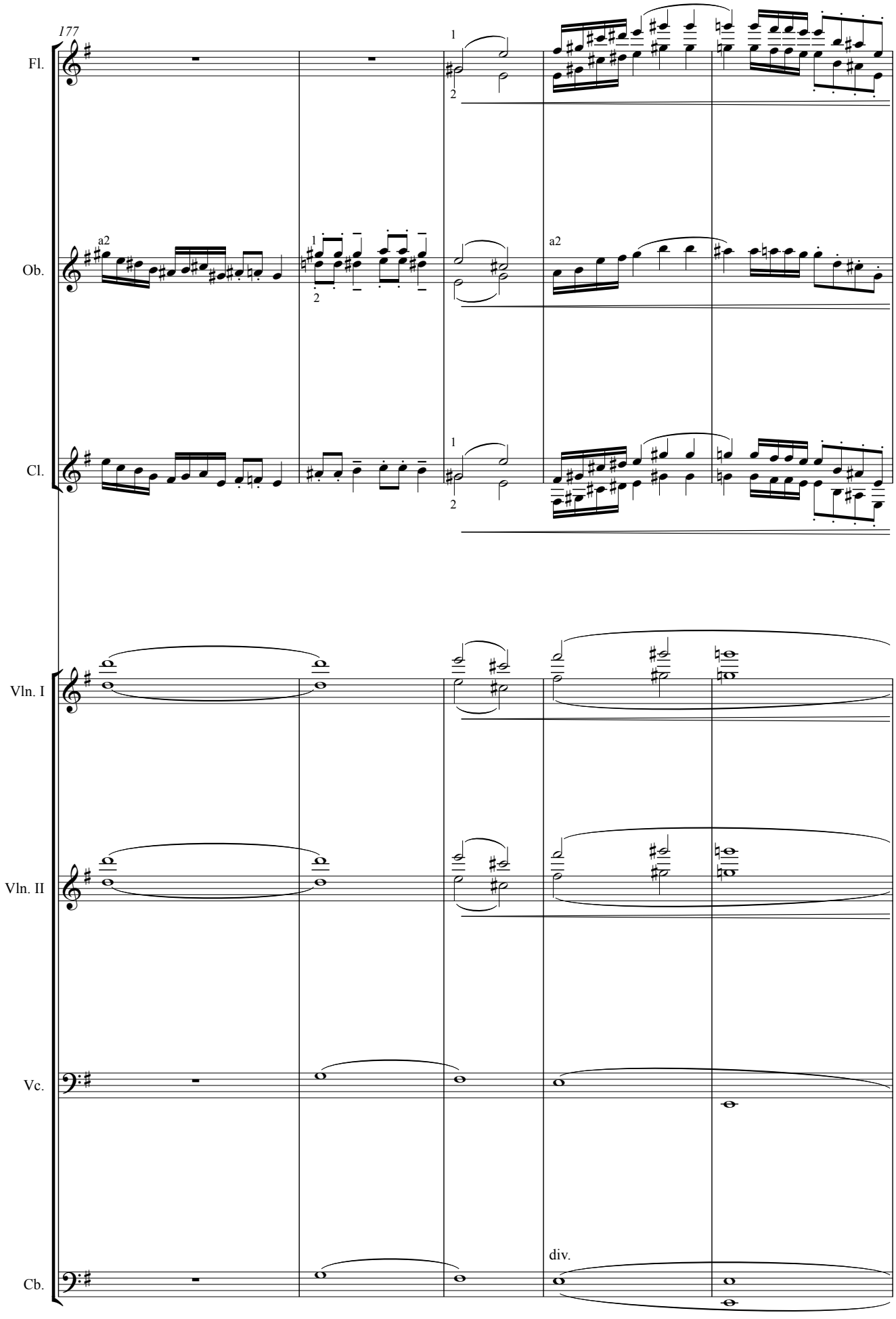
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
mf
mf

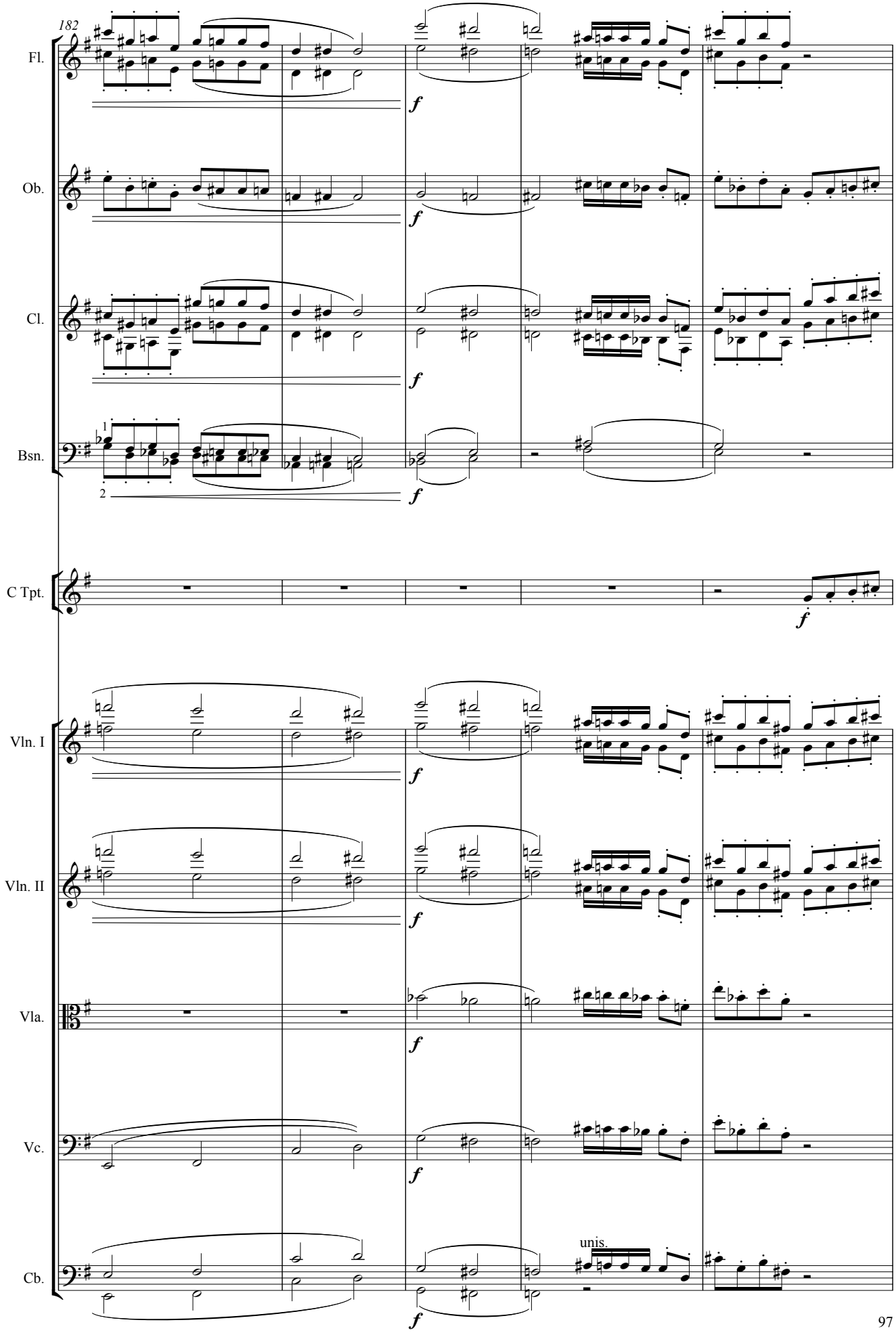

158
Fl.
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
1
mf
a2
mf
unis.

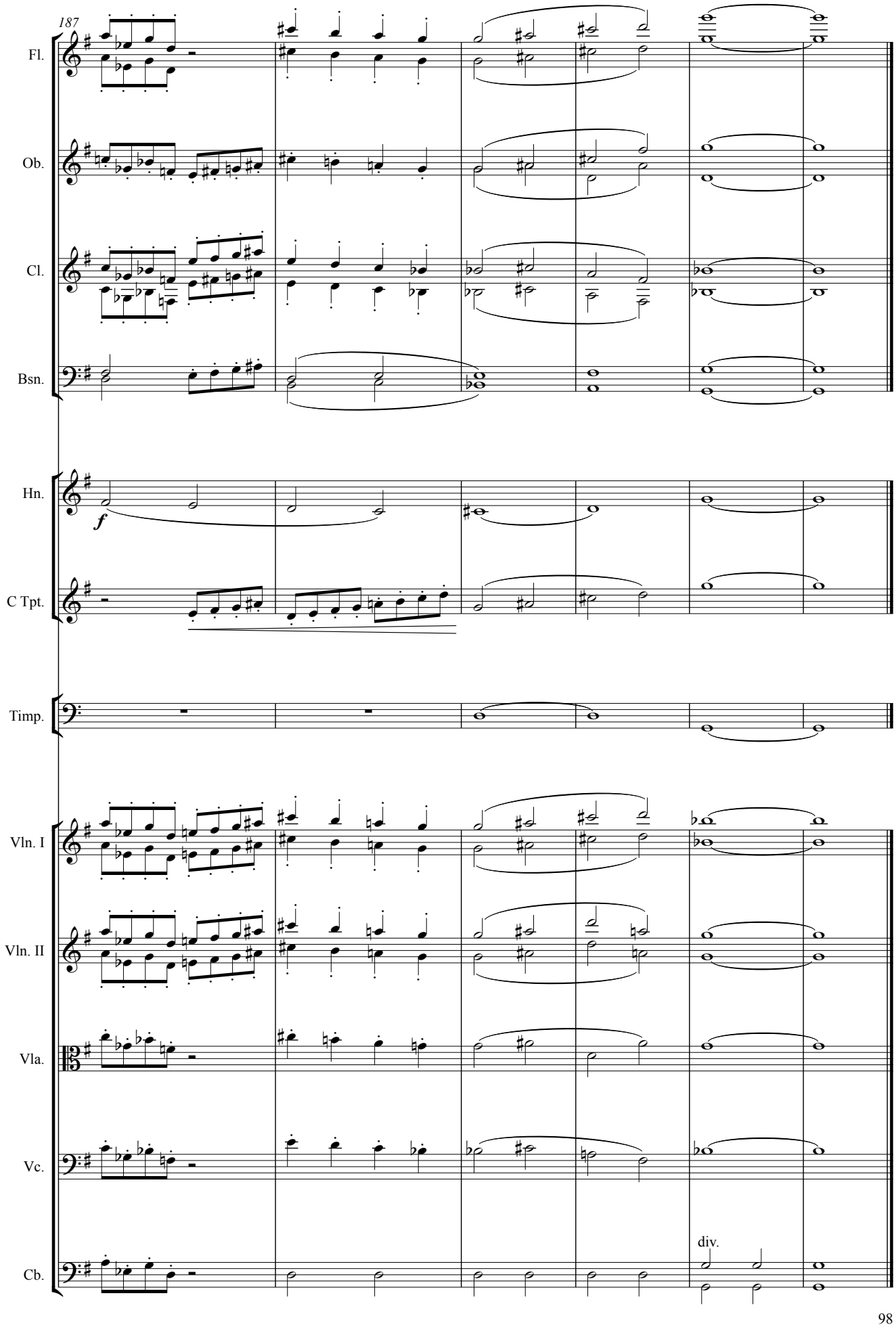

163
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
1
2
mf
a2


168
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
mf
mf
div.
mf


173
Fl.
Cl.
Bsn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
a2
a2
mf
mf


177
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vc.
Cb.
a2
1
2
div.


182
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
C Tpt.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
f
unis.


187
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
f
C Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
div.

the second movement

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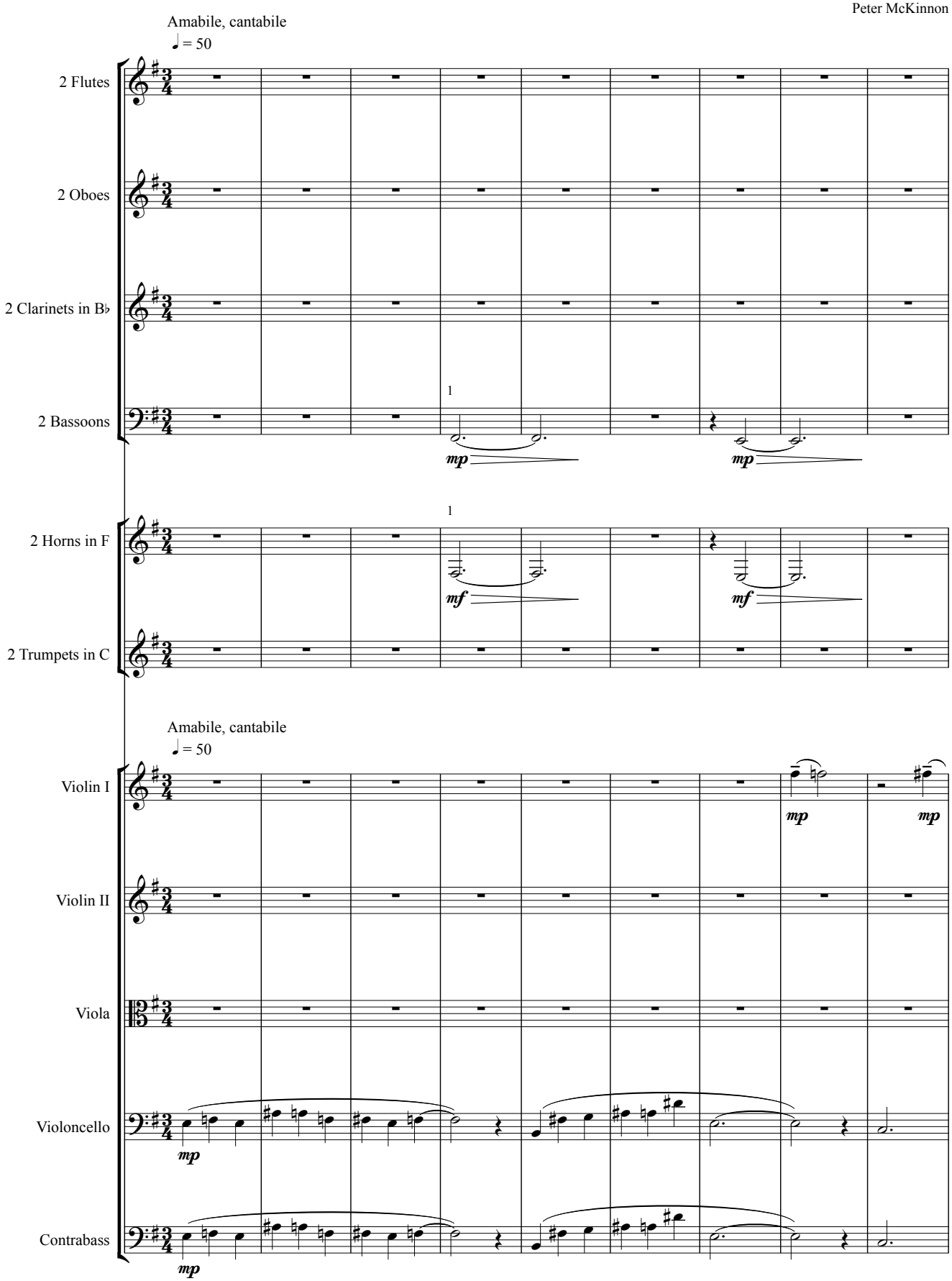

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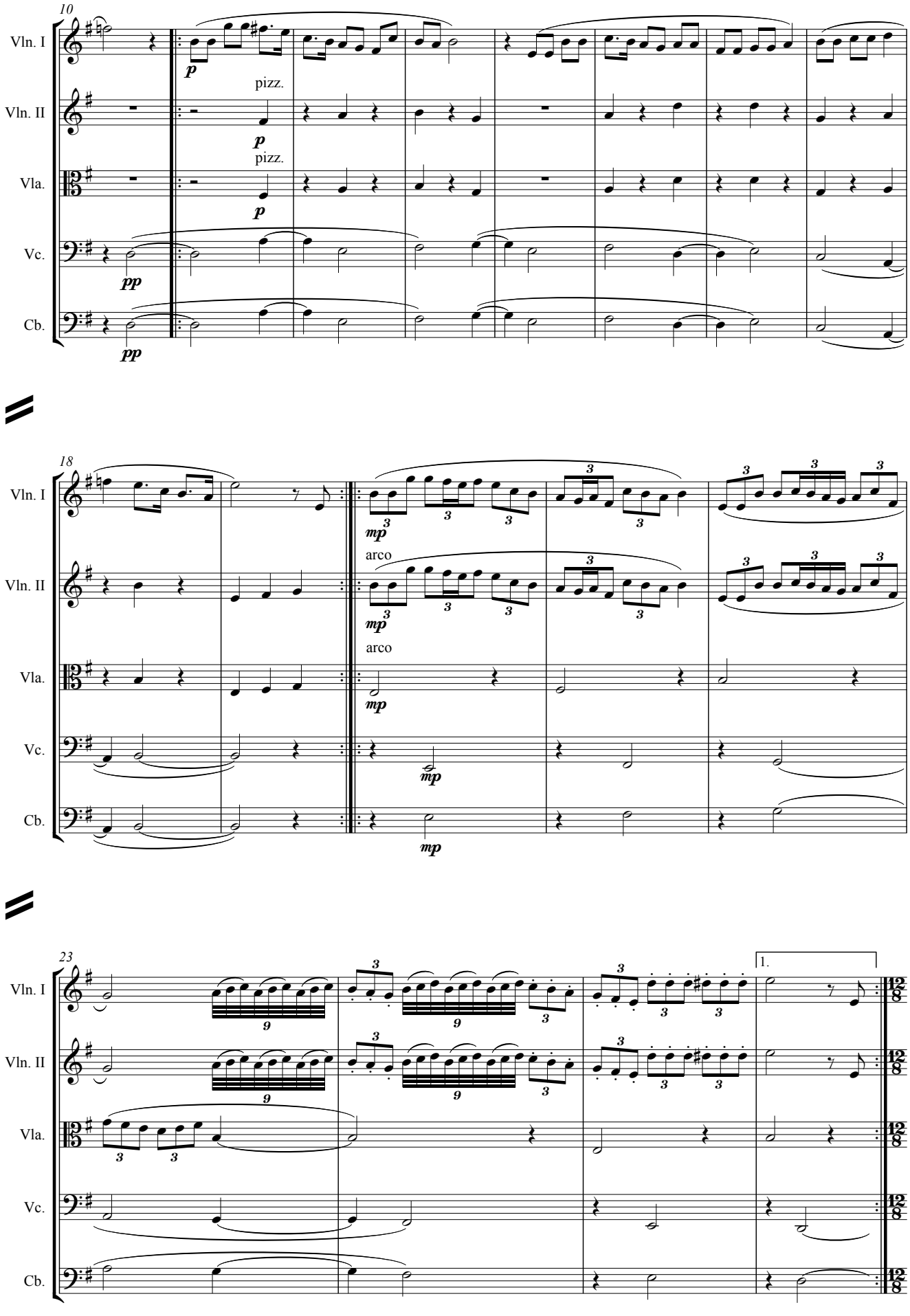
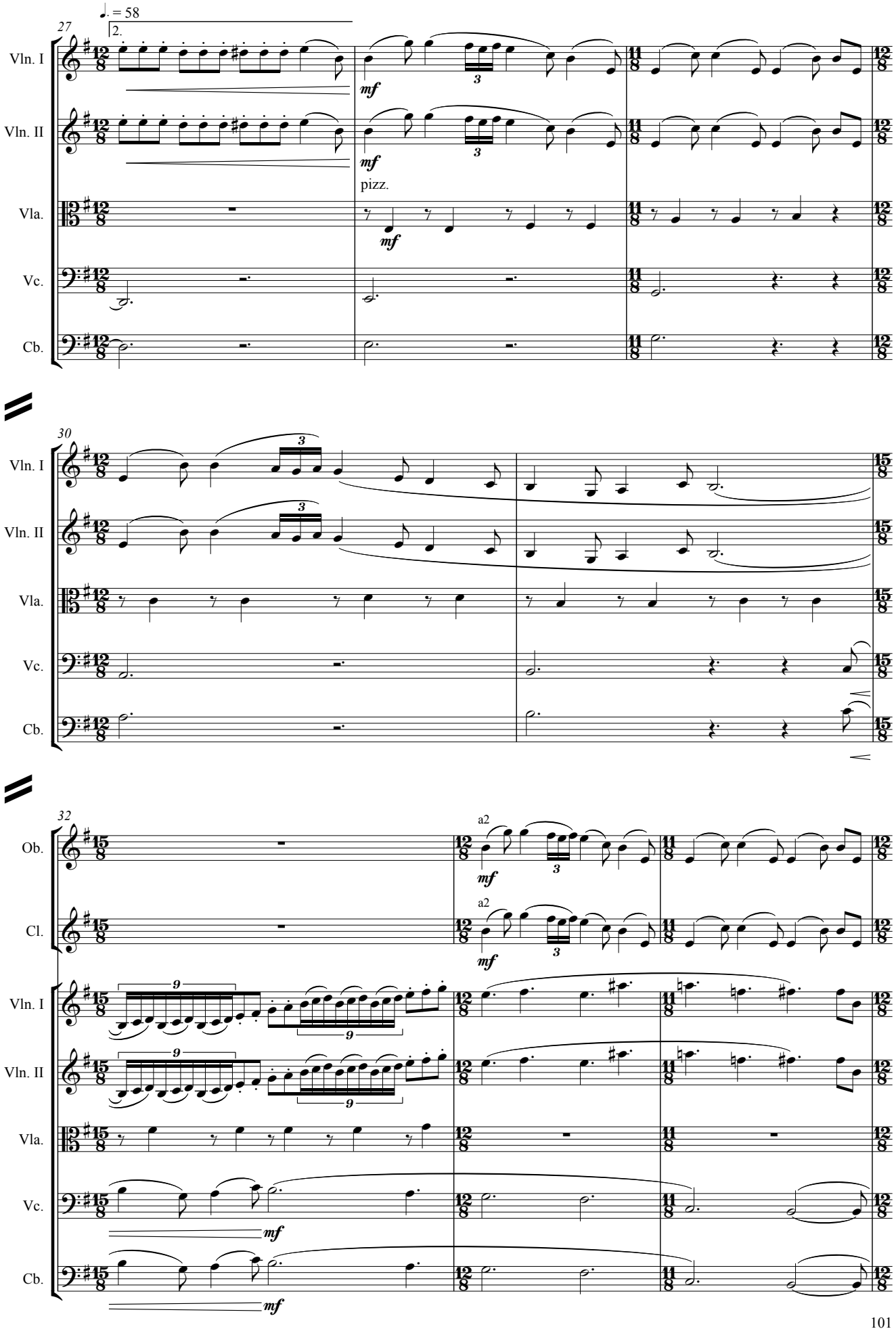
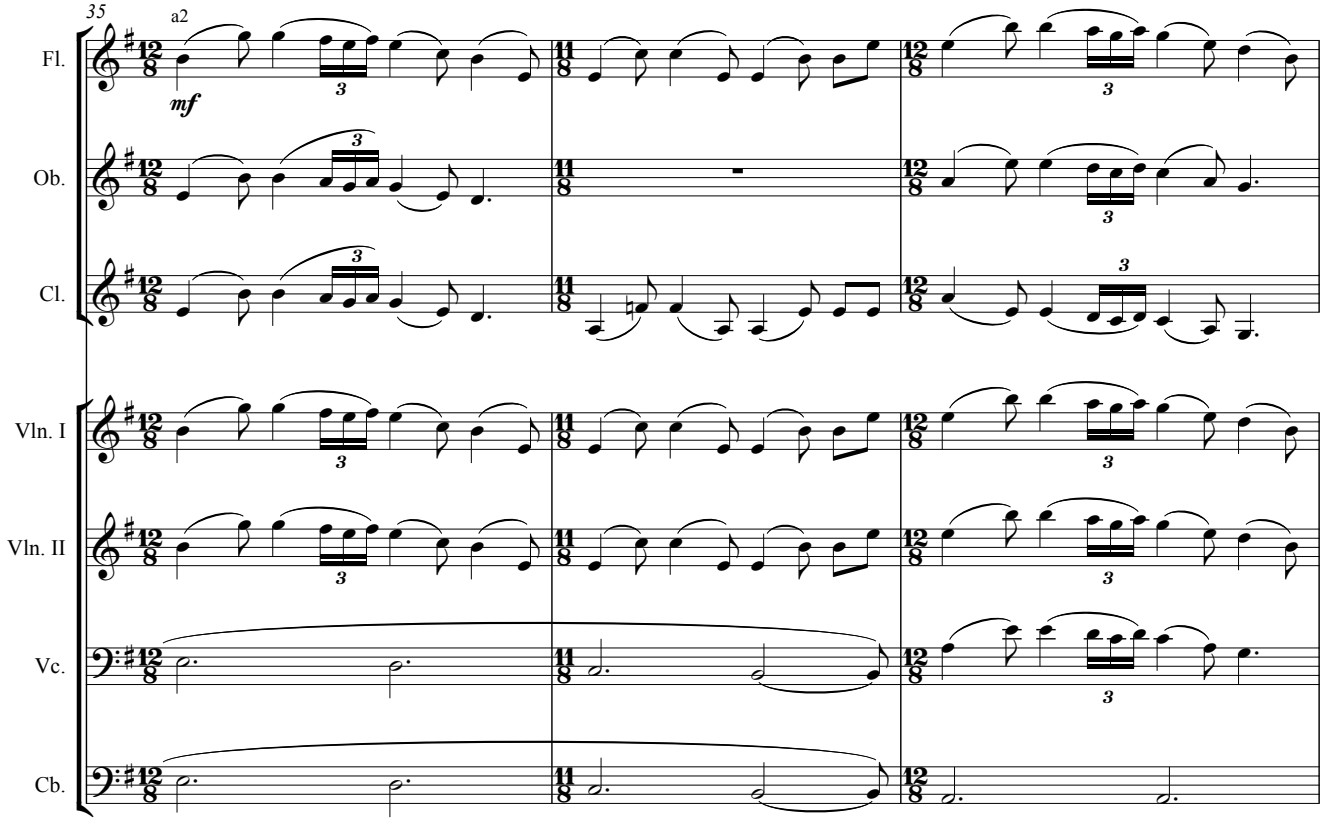
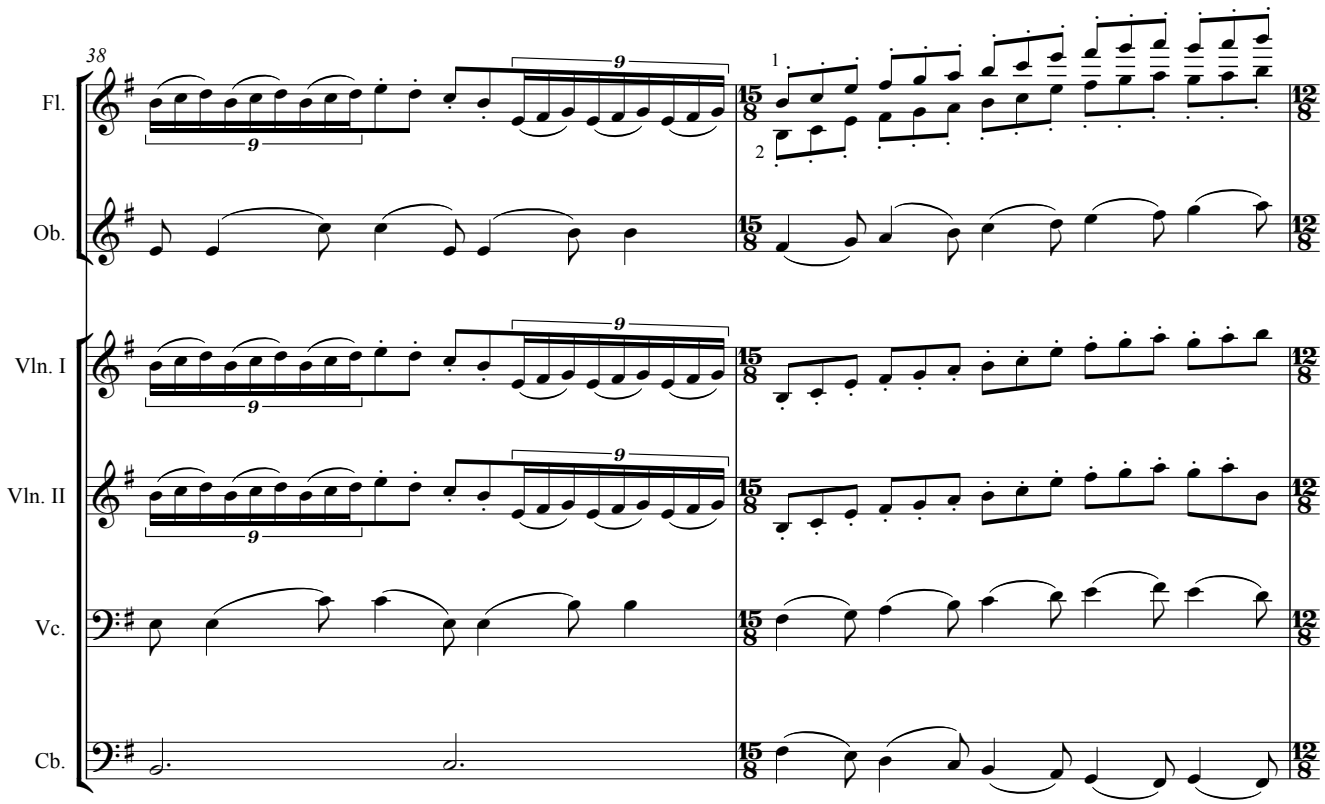
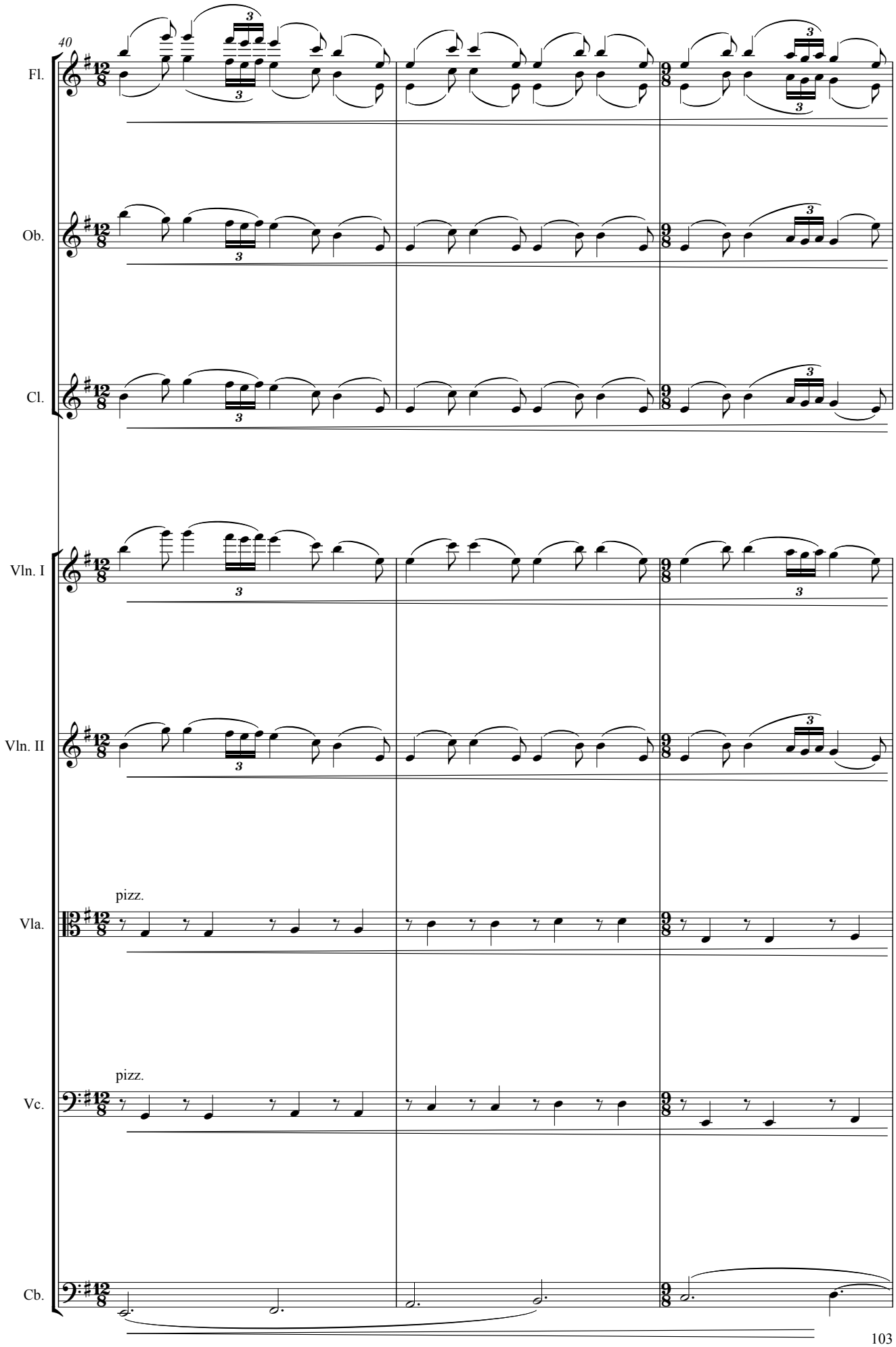
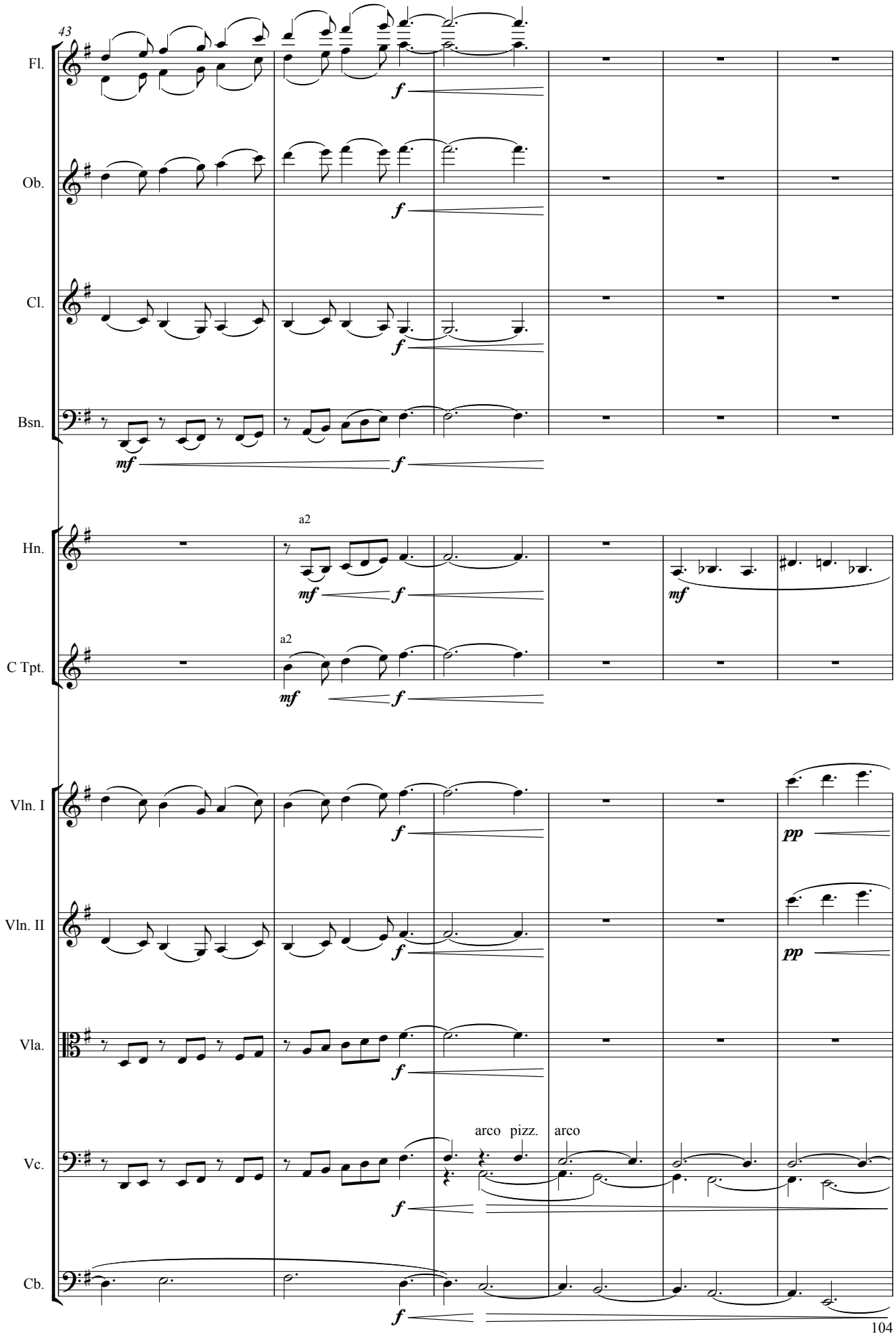

10
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
p
pizz.
pp
18
mp
arco
23
1.
12/8

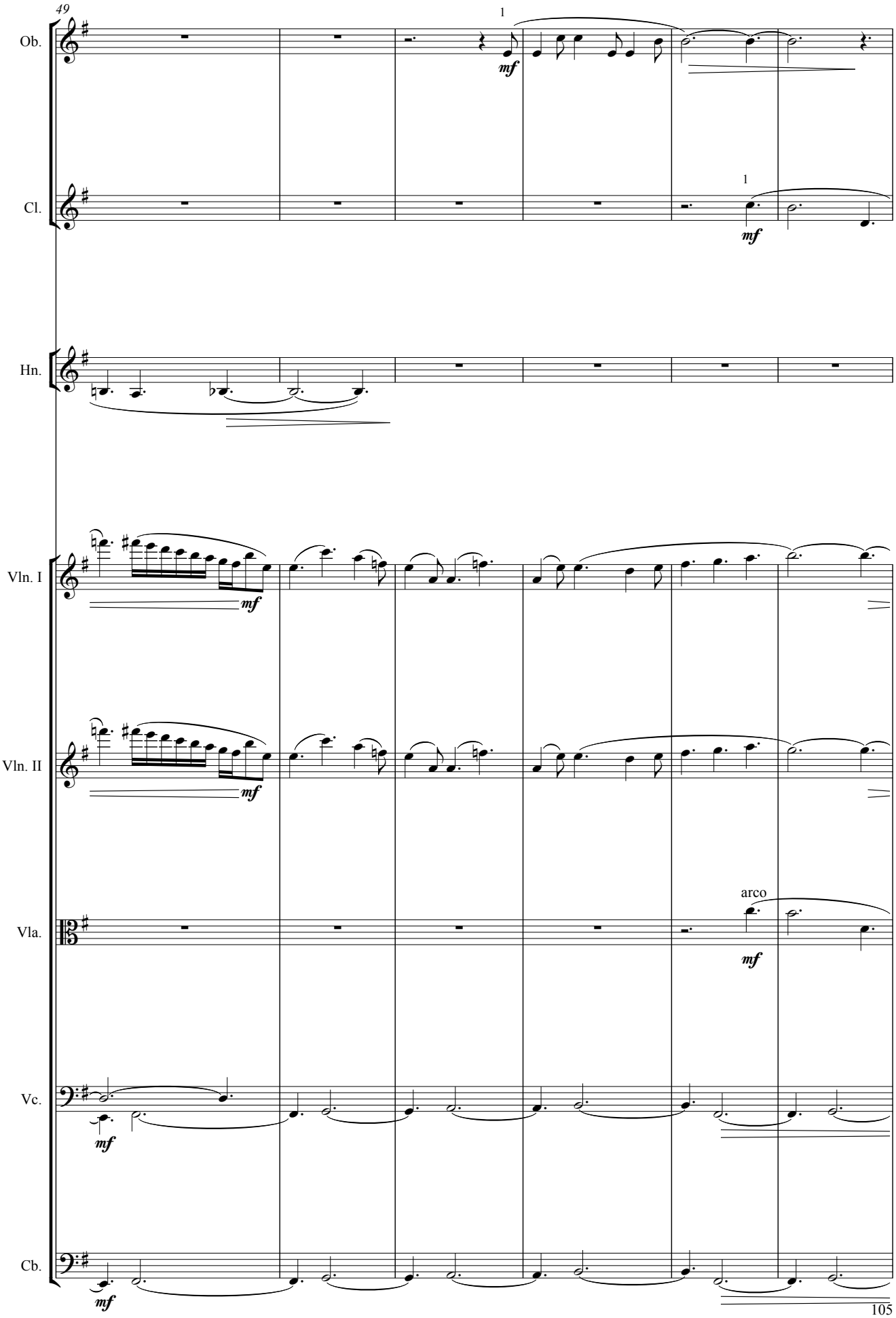

♩. = 58
2.
27
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
pizz.
30
32
Ob.
Cl.
a2
9

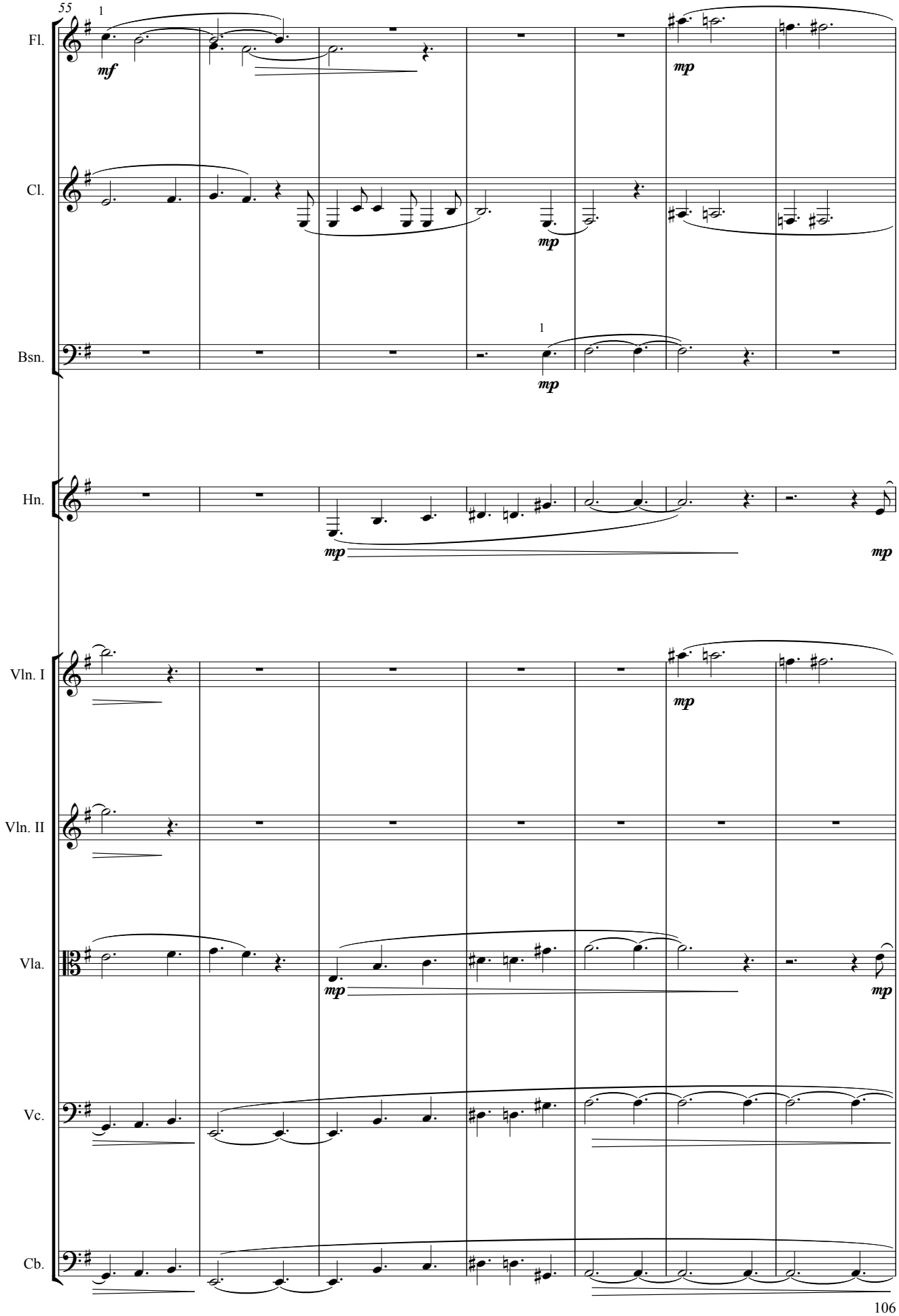

35
a2
mf
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vc.
Cb.

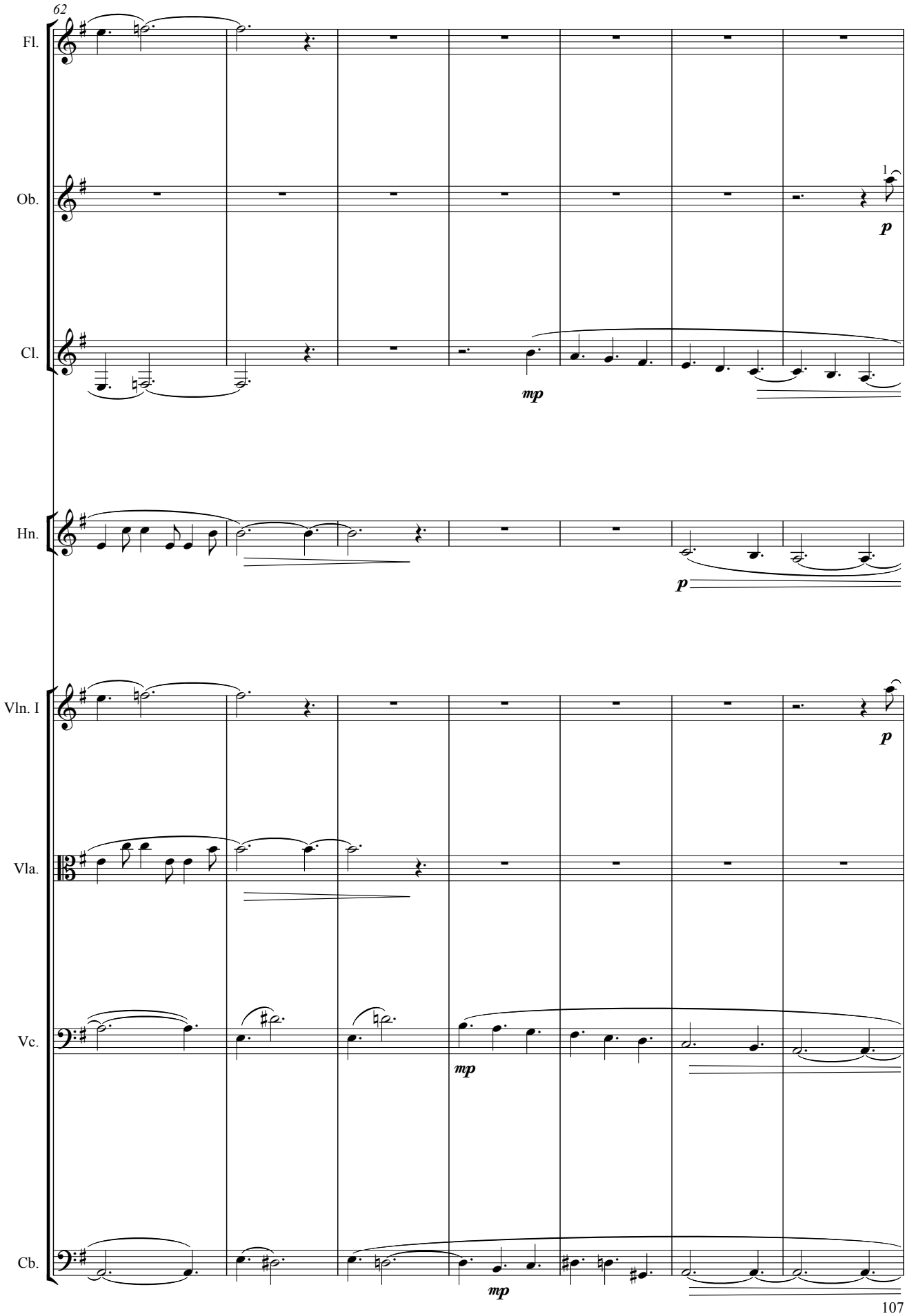

38
1
2
Fl.
Ob.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vc.
Cb.

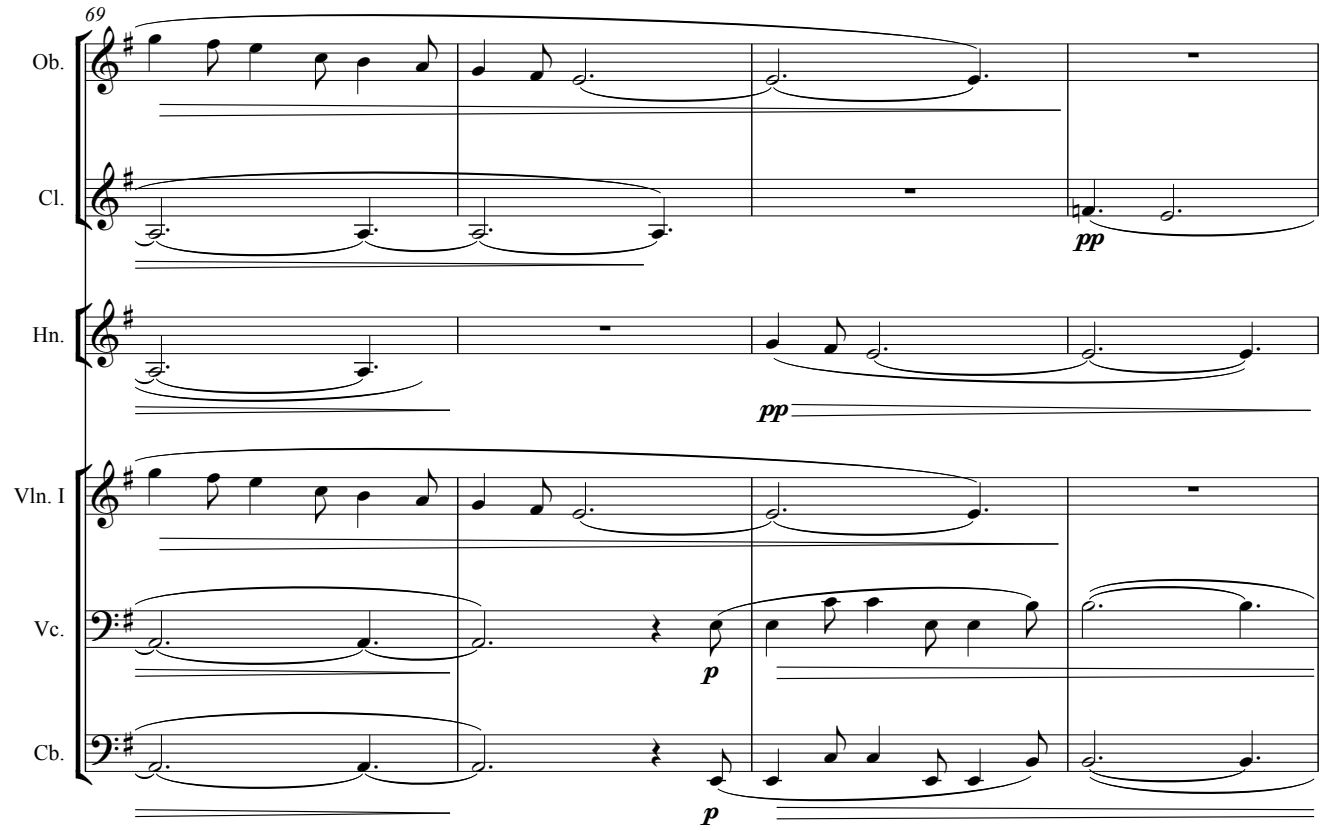

40
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
pizz.
Vc.
pizz.
Cb.

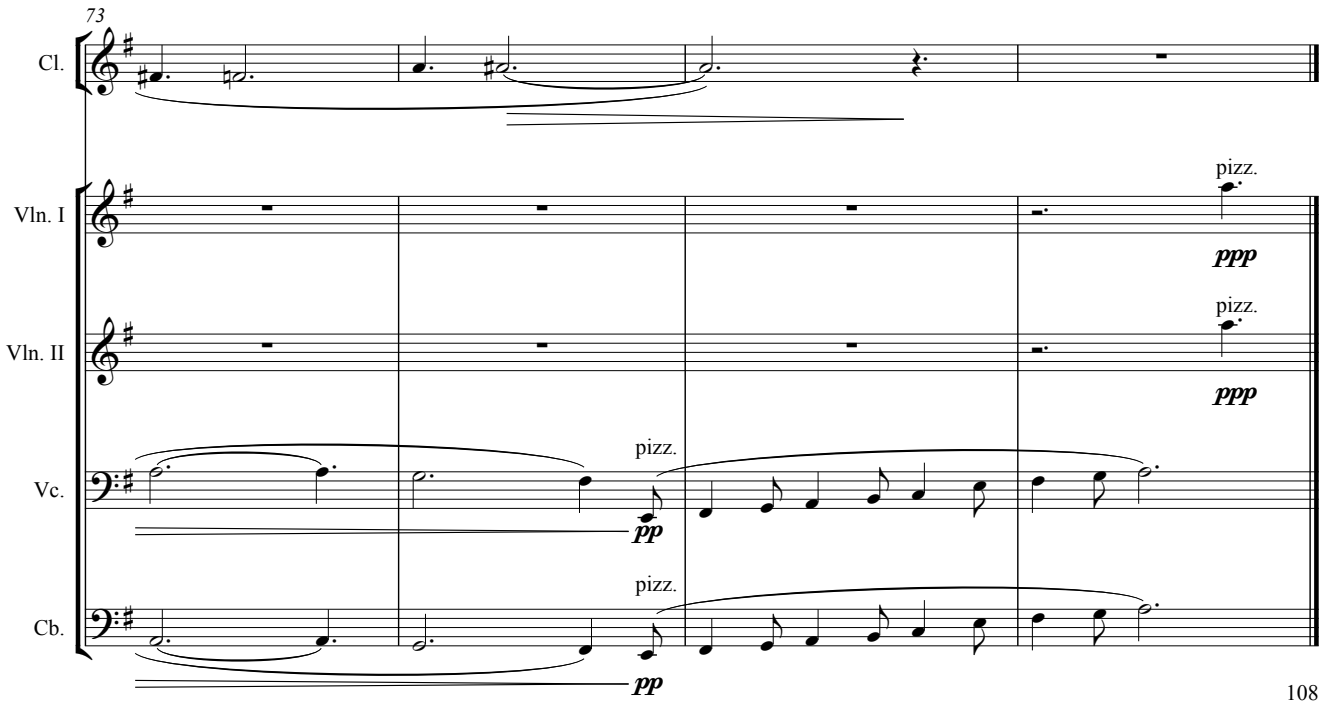

43
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
a2
a2
arco
pizz.
arco


49
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
1
mf
arco


55
1
Fl.
mf
mp
Cl.
mp
1
Bsn.
mp
Hn.
mp
mp
Vln. I
mp
Vln. II
Vla.
mp
mp
Vc.
Cb.


62
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
1
p
mp
p
p
mp
mp


69
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vc.
Cb.
pp
pp
p
p


73
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vc.
Cb.
pizz.
ppp
pizz.
ppp
pizz.
pp
pizz.
pp

the third movement

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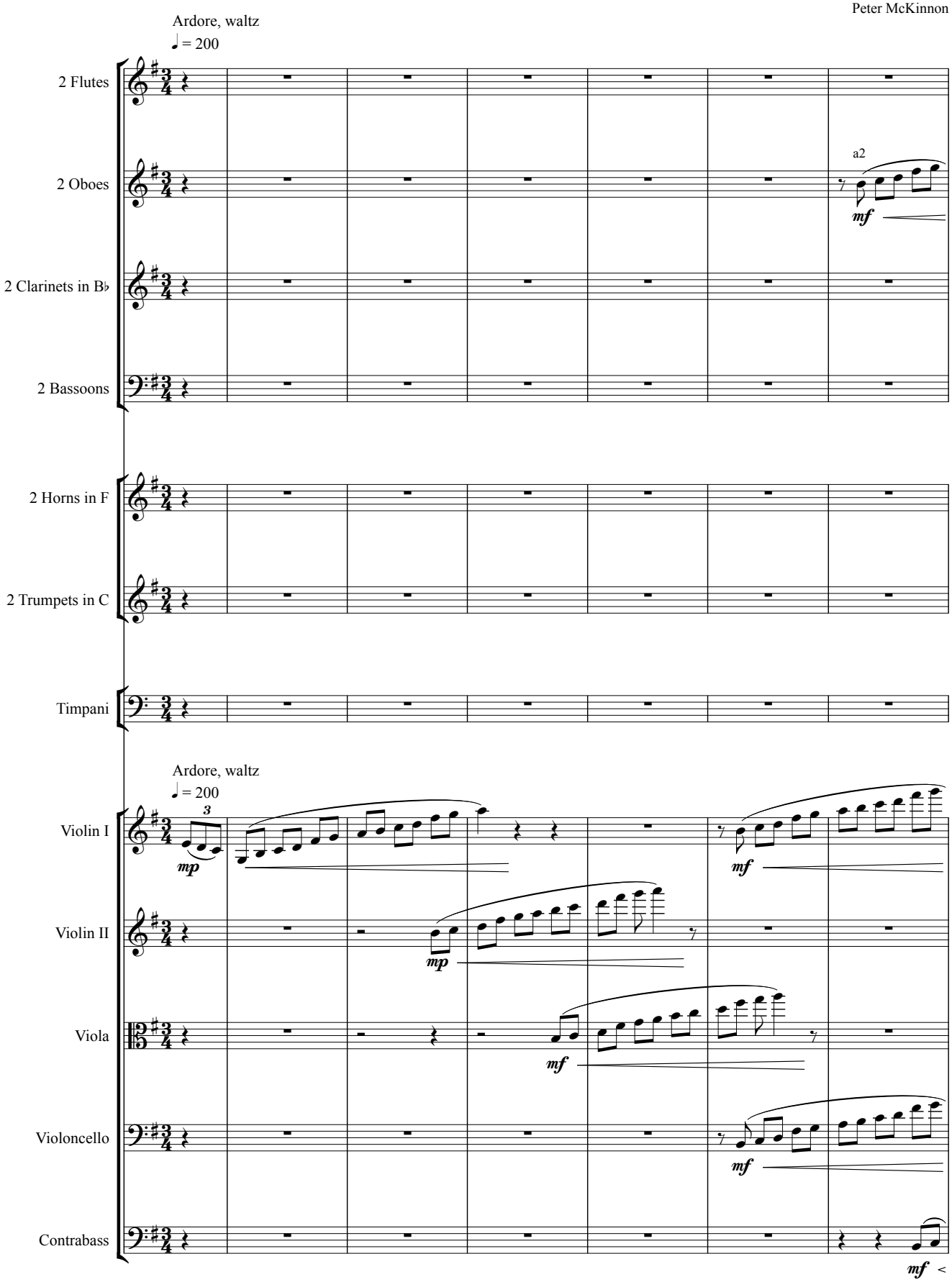

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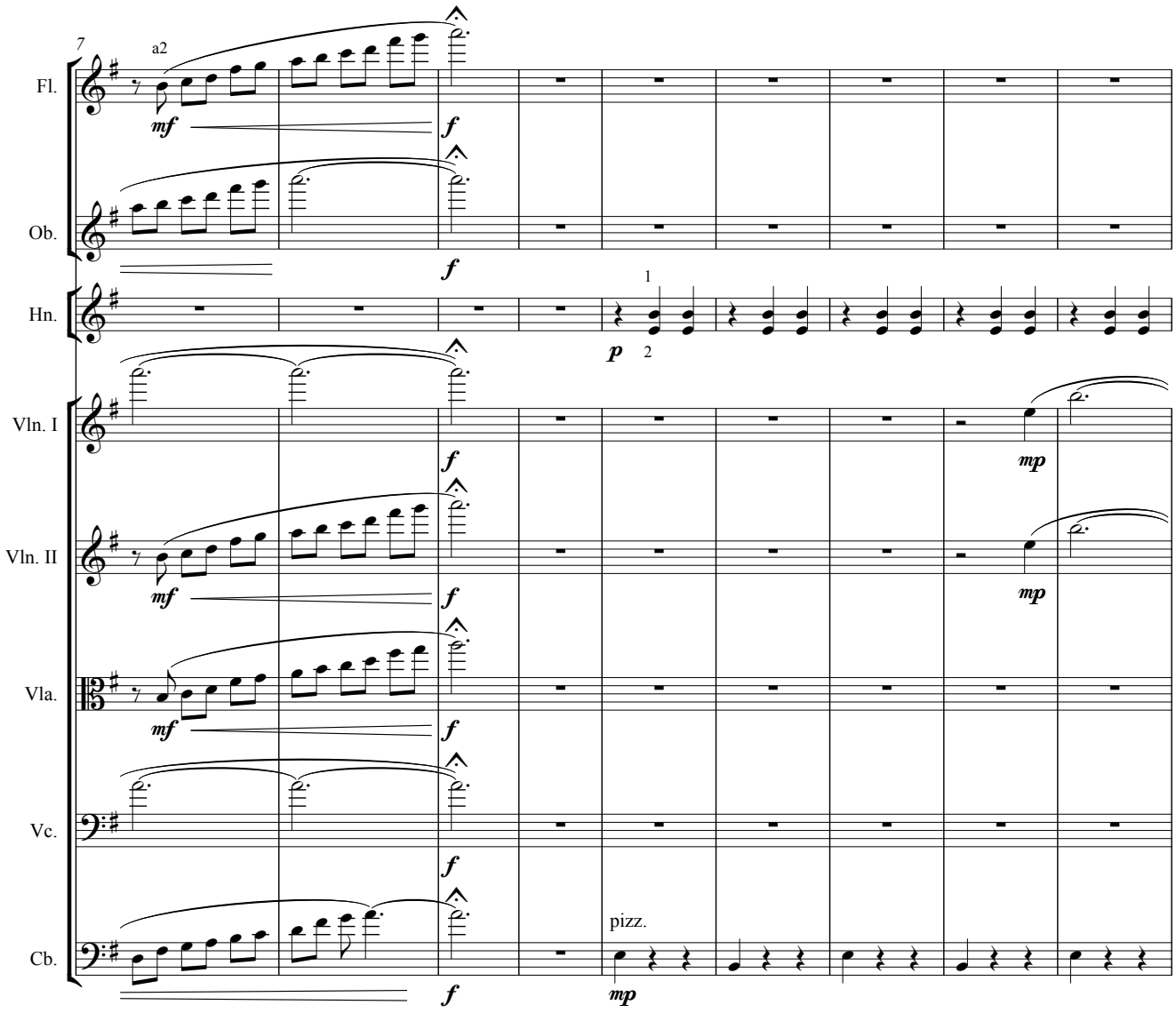
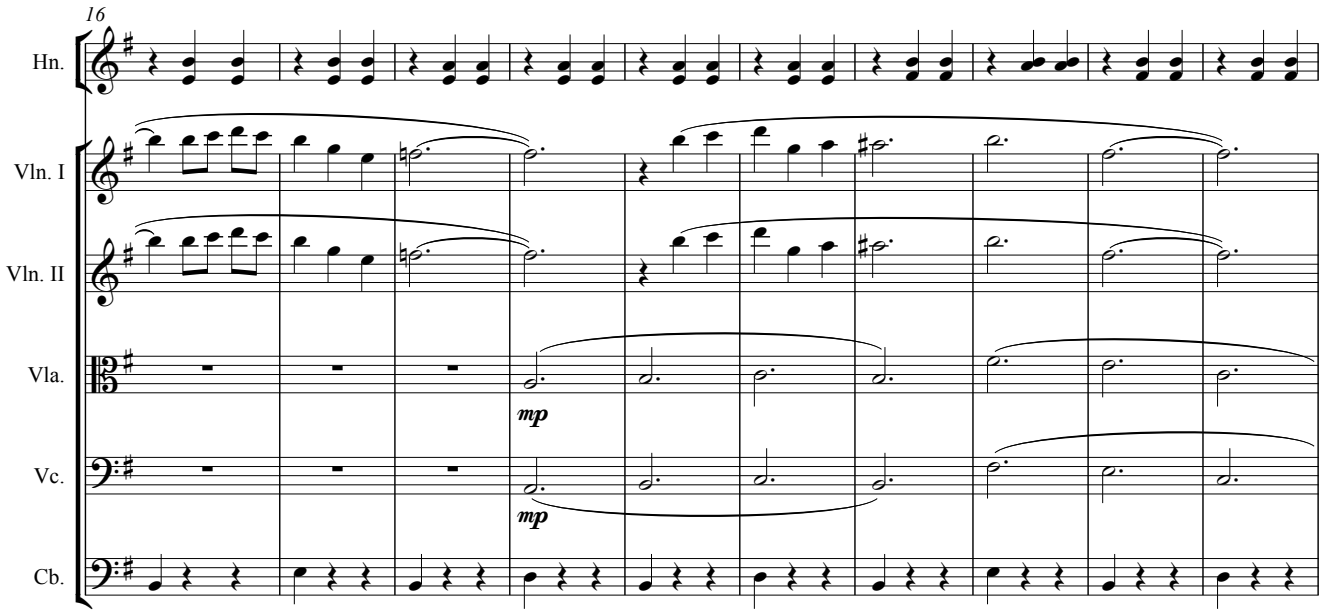
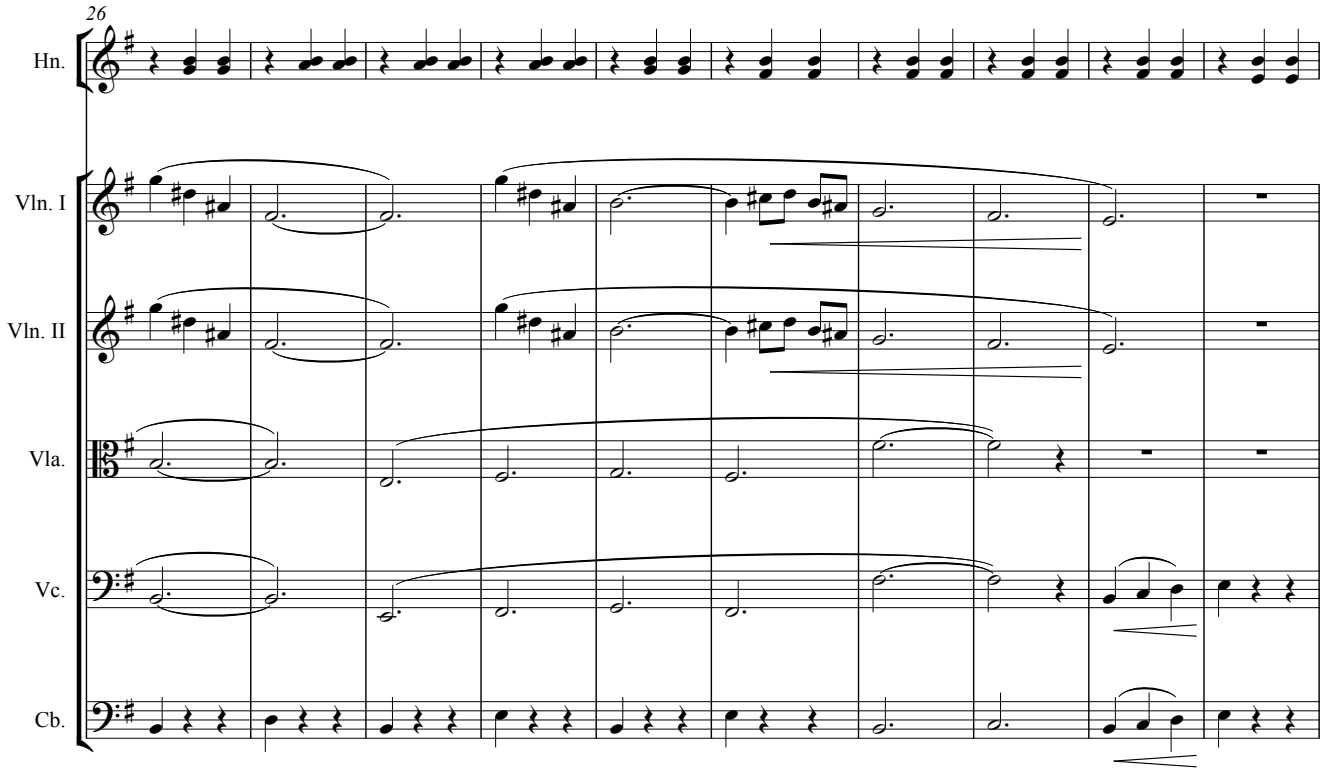
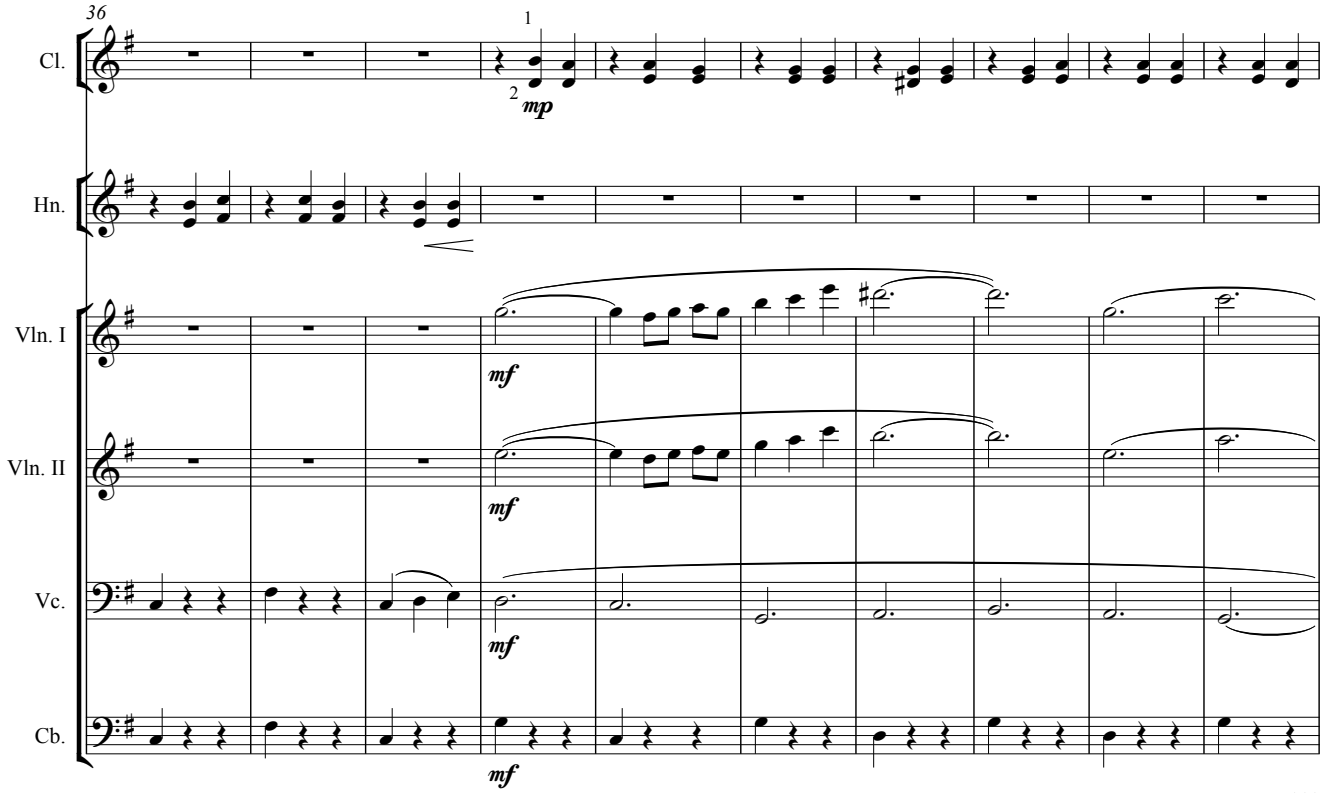
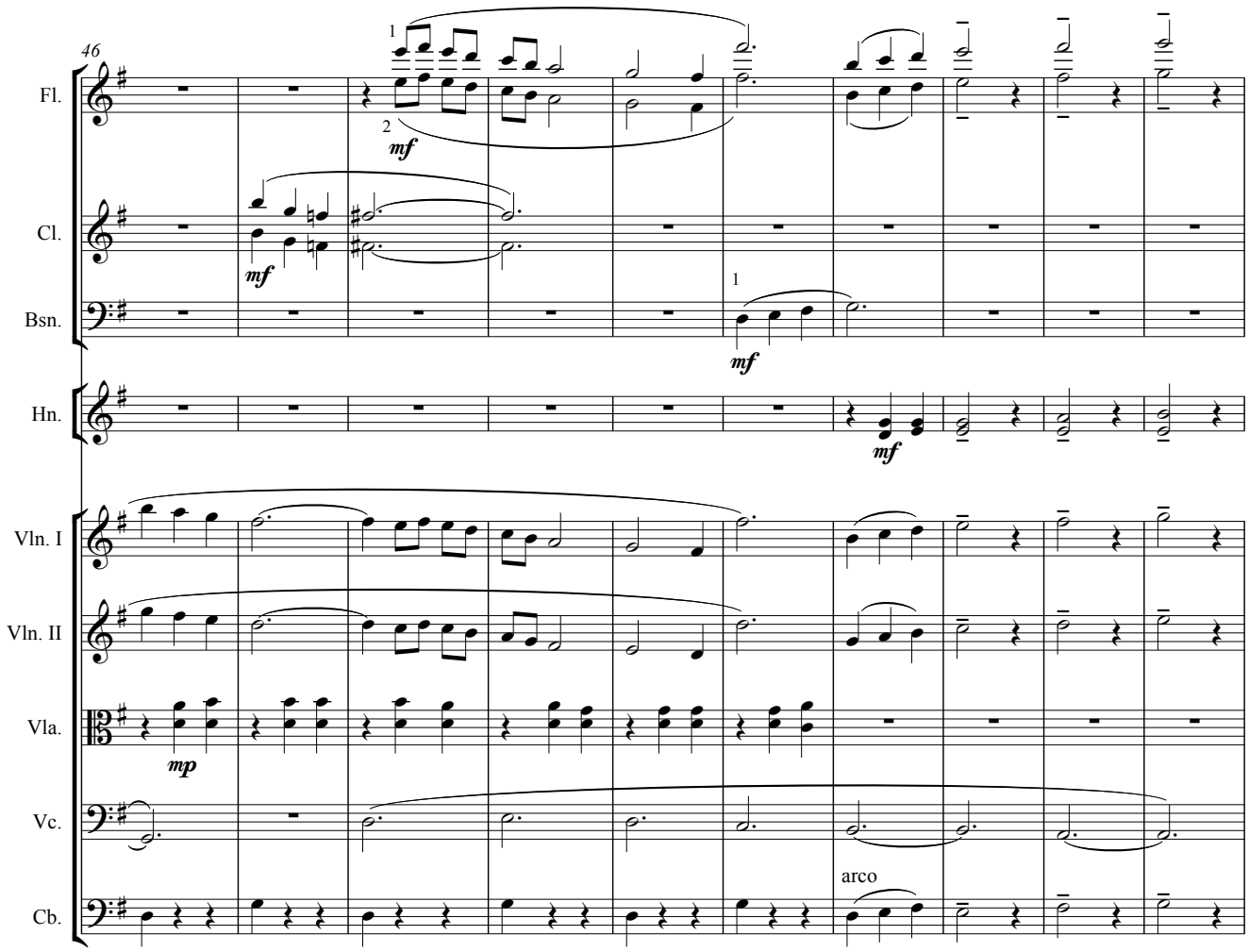
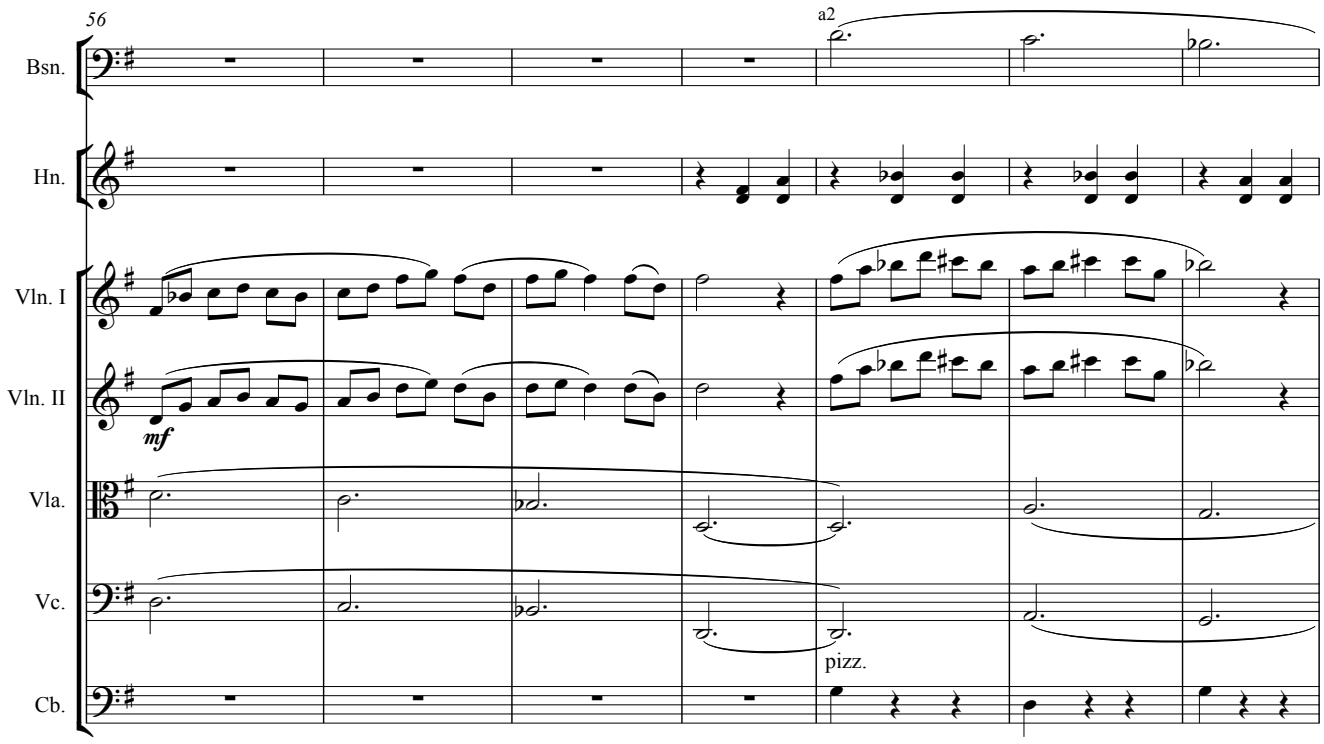

7
a2
Fl.
Ob.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
f
p
mp
1
2
pizz.

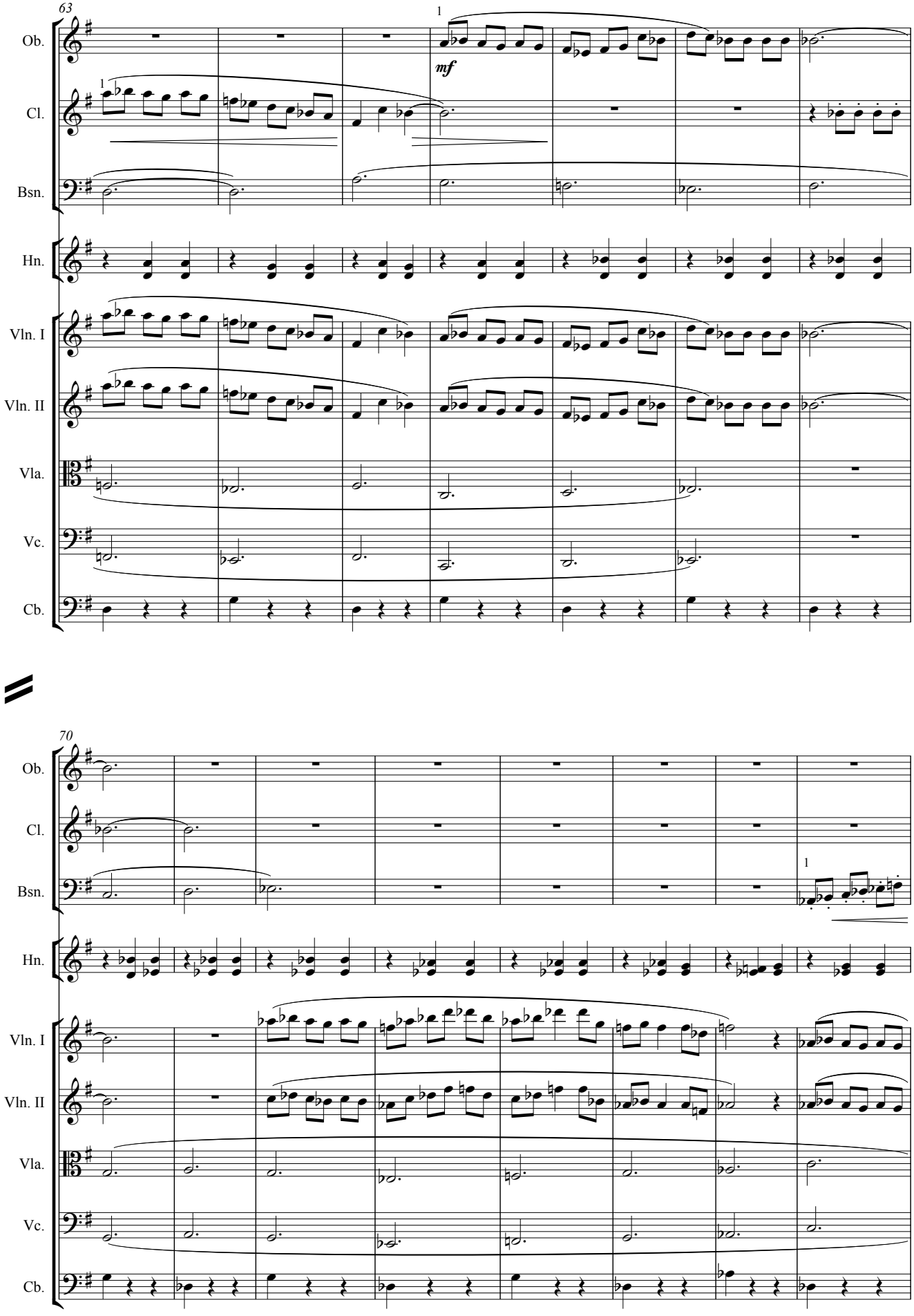

16
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mp

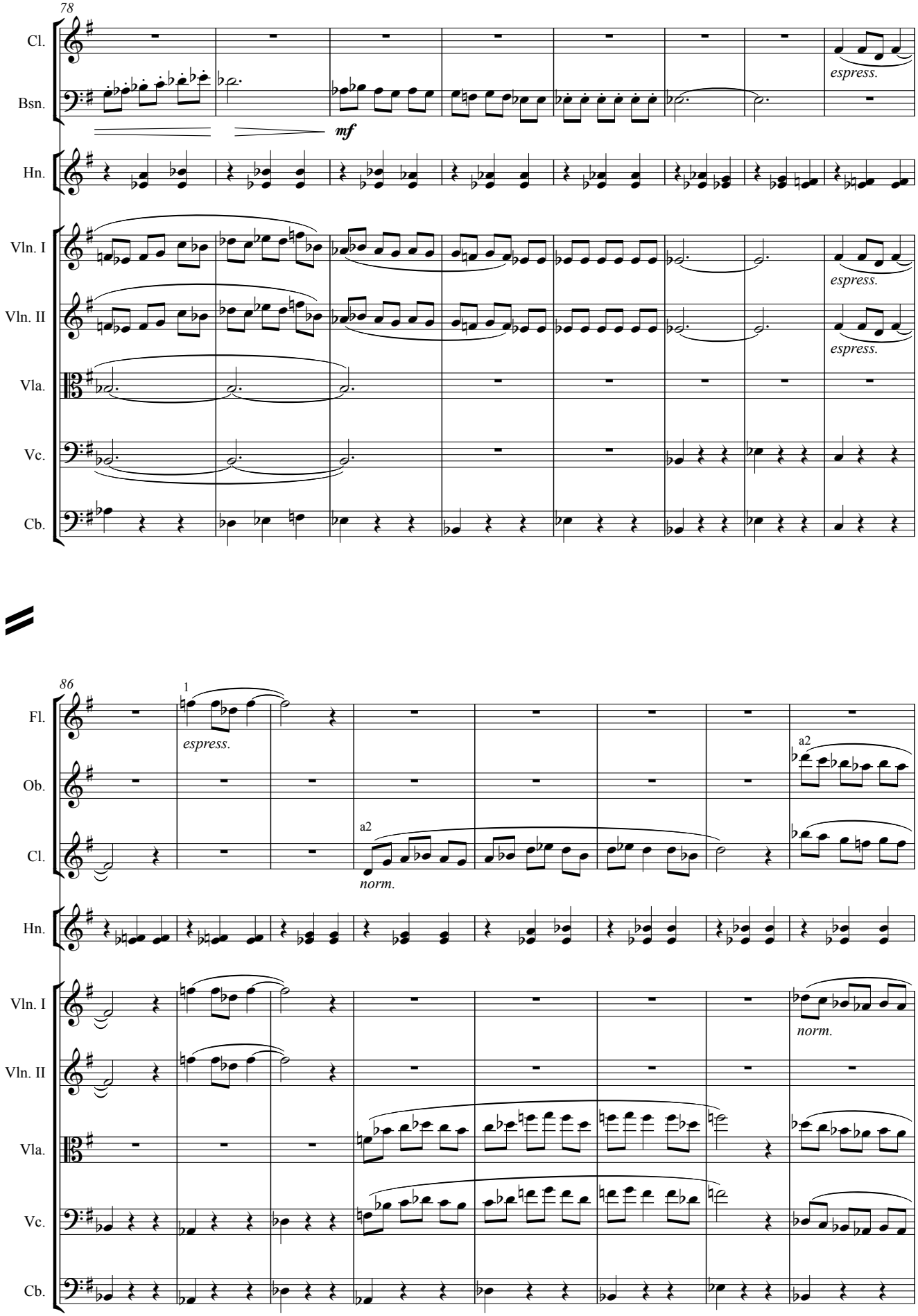

26
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

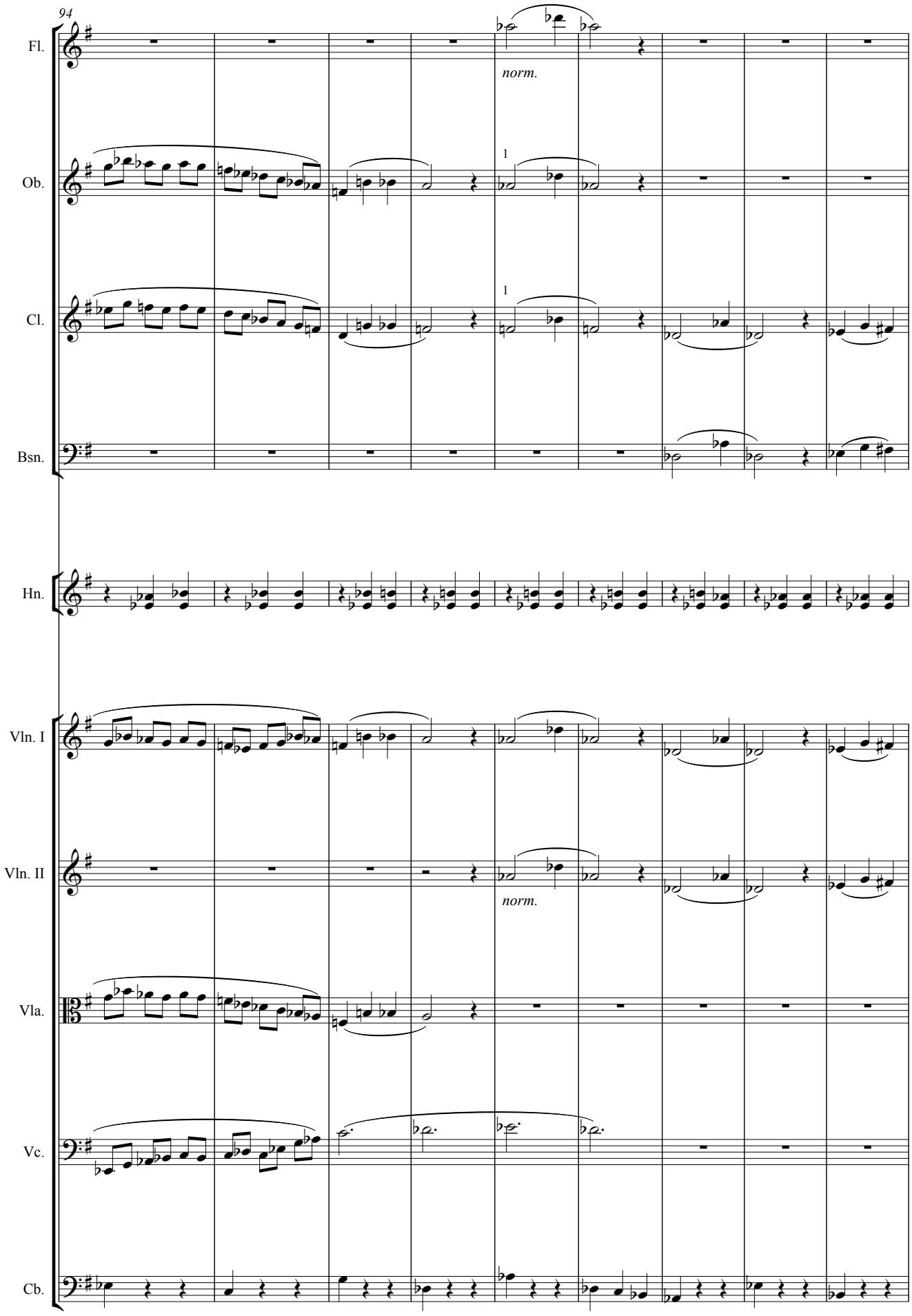

36
Cl.
1
2
mp
Hn.
Vln. I
mf
Vln. II
mf
Vc.
mf
Cb.
mf


46
Fl.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
1
2
mf
mf
1
mf
mf
mp
arco


56
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
a2
mf
pizz.


63
1
mf
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
70
1


78
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
espress.
espress.
espress.
86
1
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
espress.
a2
norm.
a2
norm.


94
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norm.
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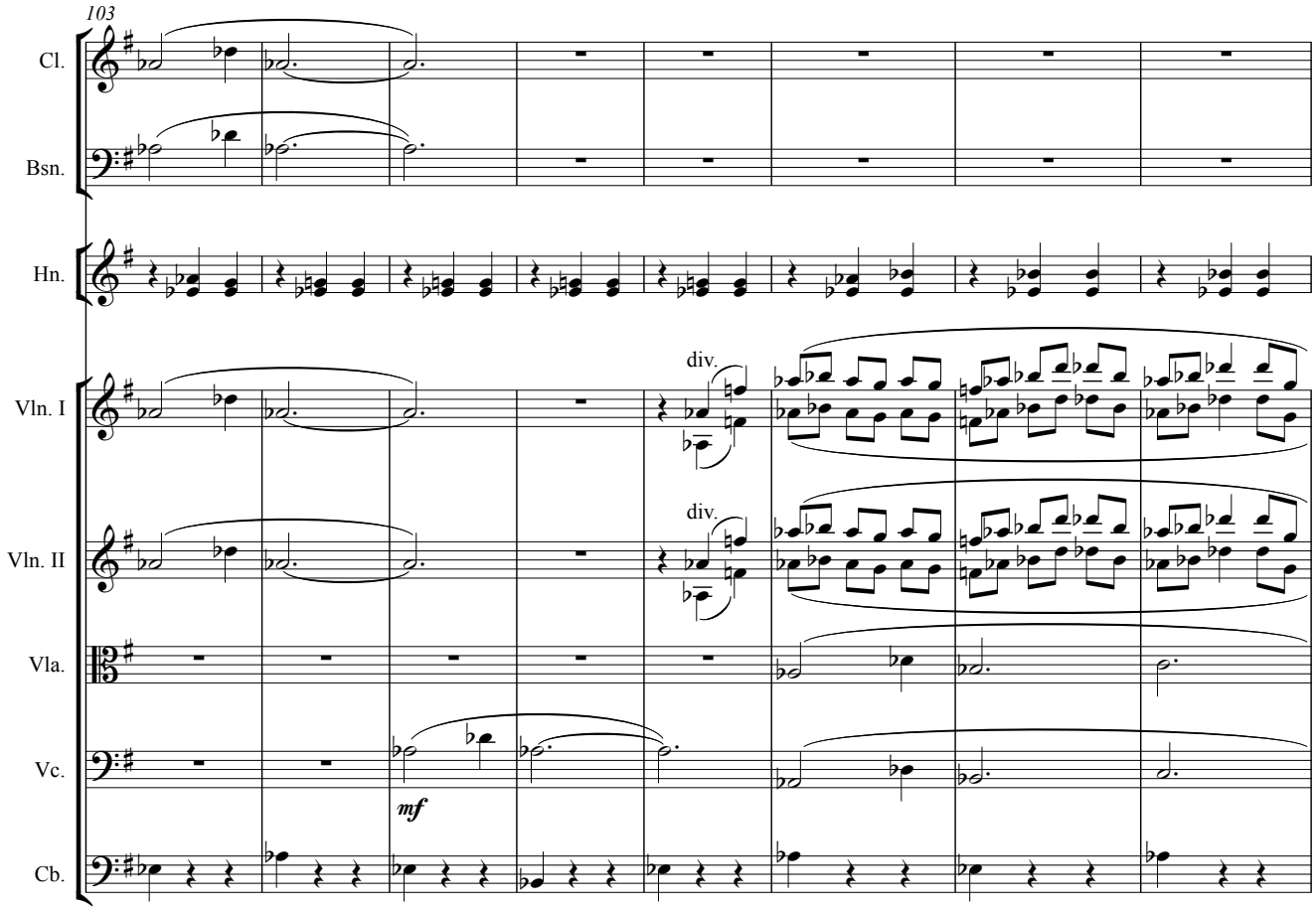
Cl.
1
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
norm.
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.


103
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Bsn.
Hn.
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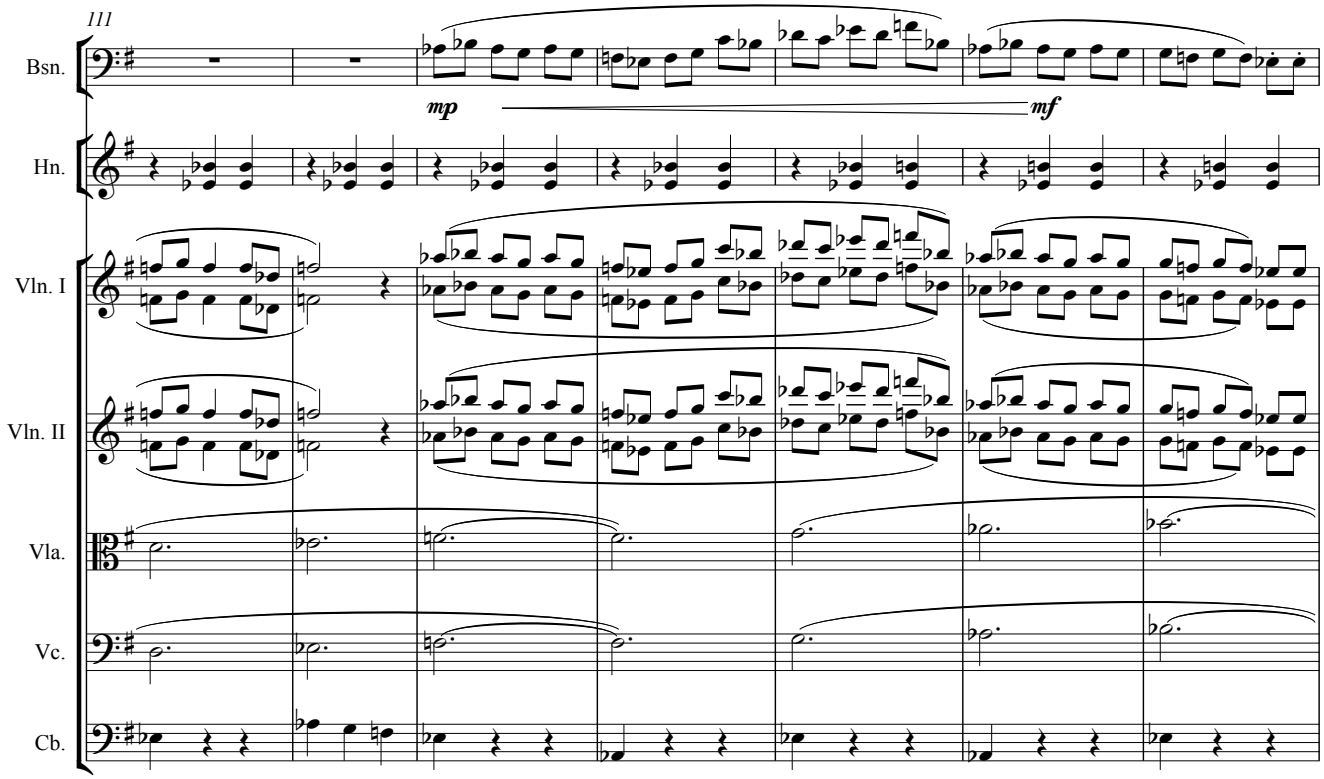
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
div.
div.
mf


111
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Vln. II
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Vc.
Cb.
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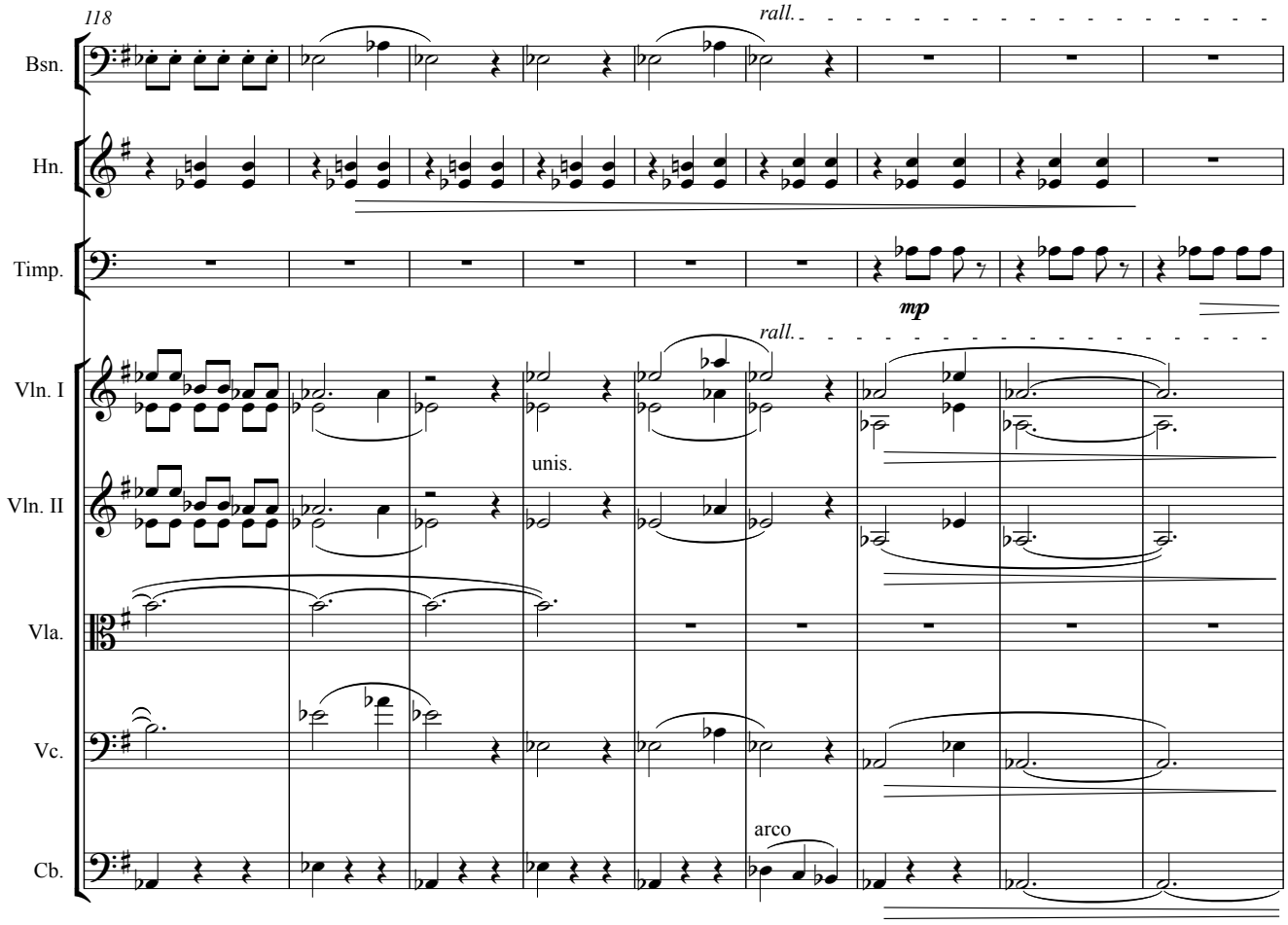
118
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Hn.
Timp.
mp
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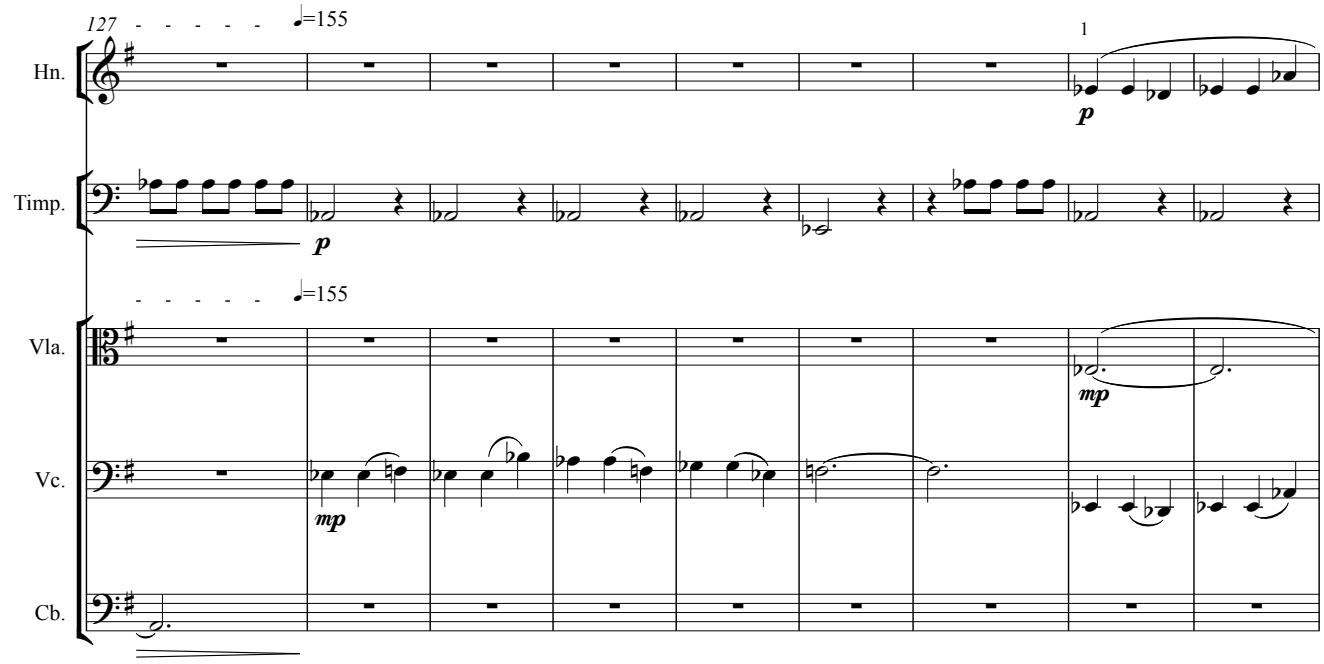
Vln. II
unis.
Vla.
Vc.
arco
Cb.


127
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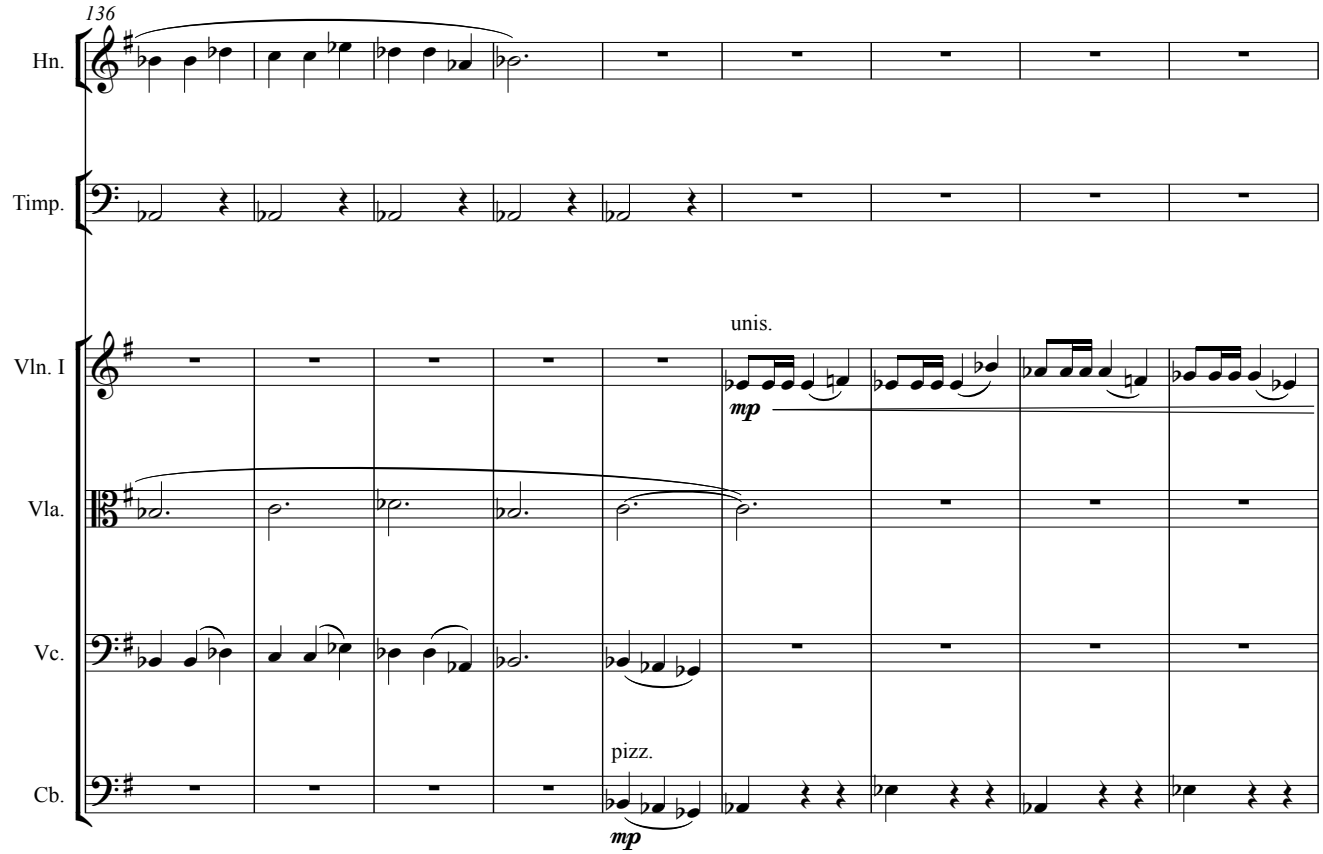
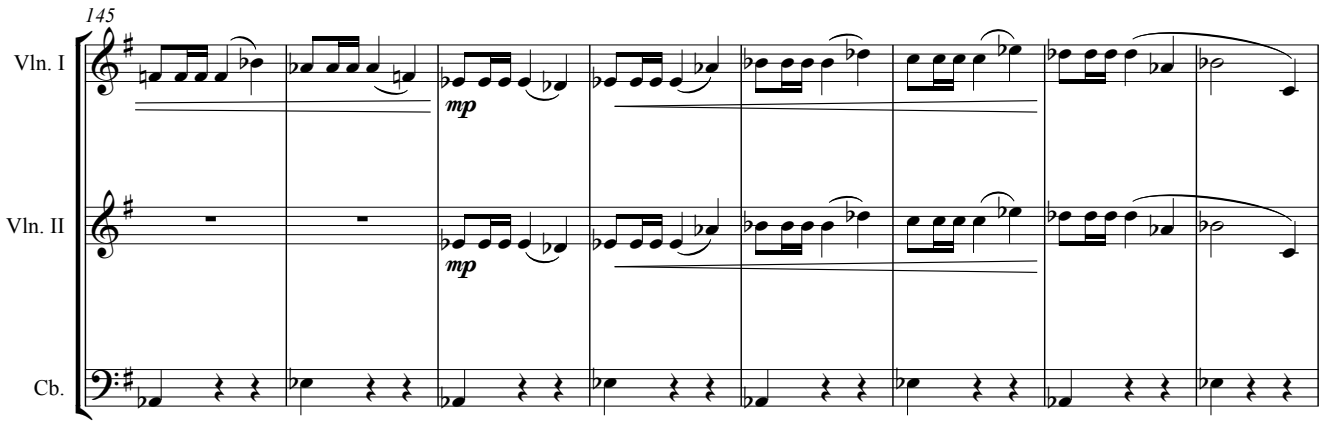
Cb.


136
Hn.
Timp.
Vln. I
unis.
mp
Vla.
Vc.
pizz.
Cb.
mp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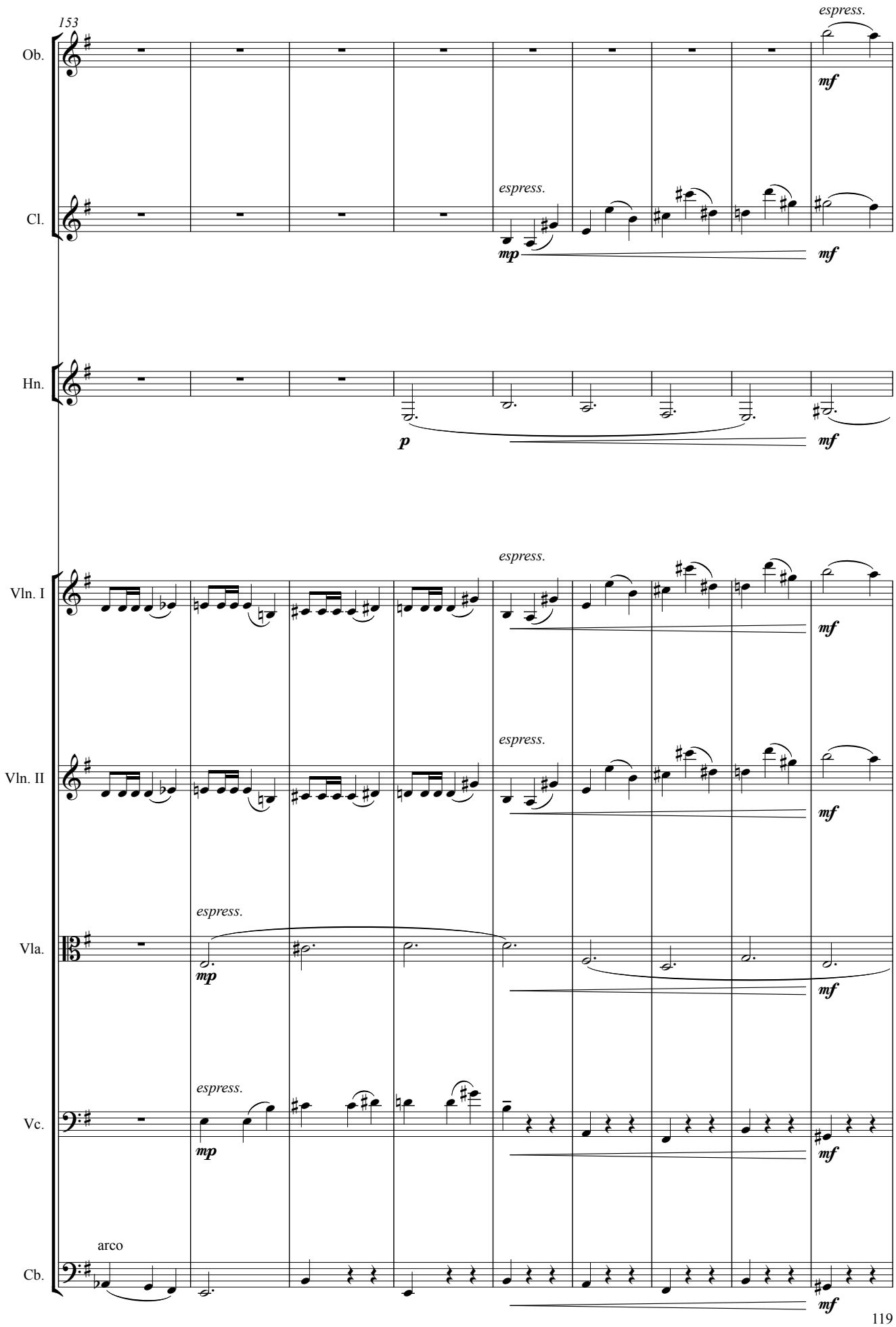
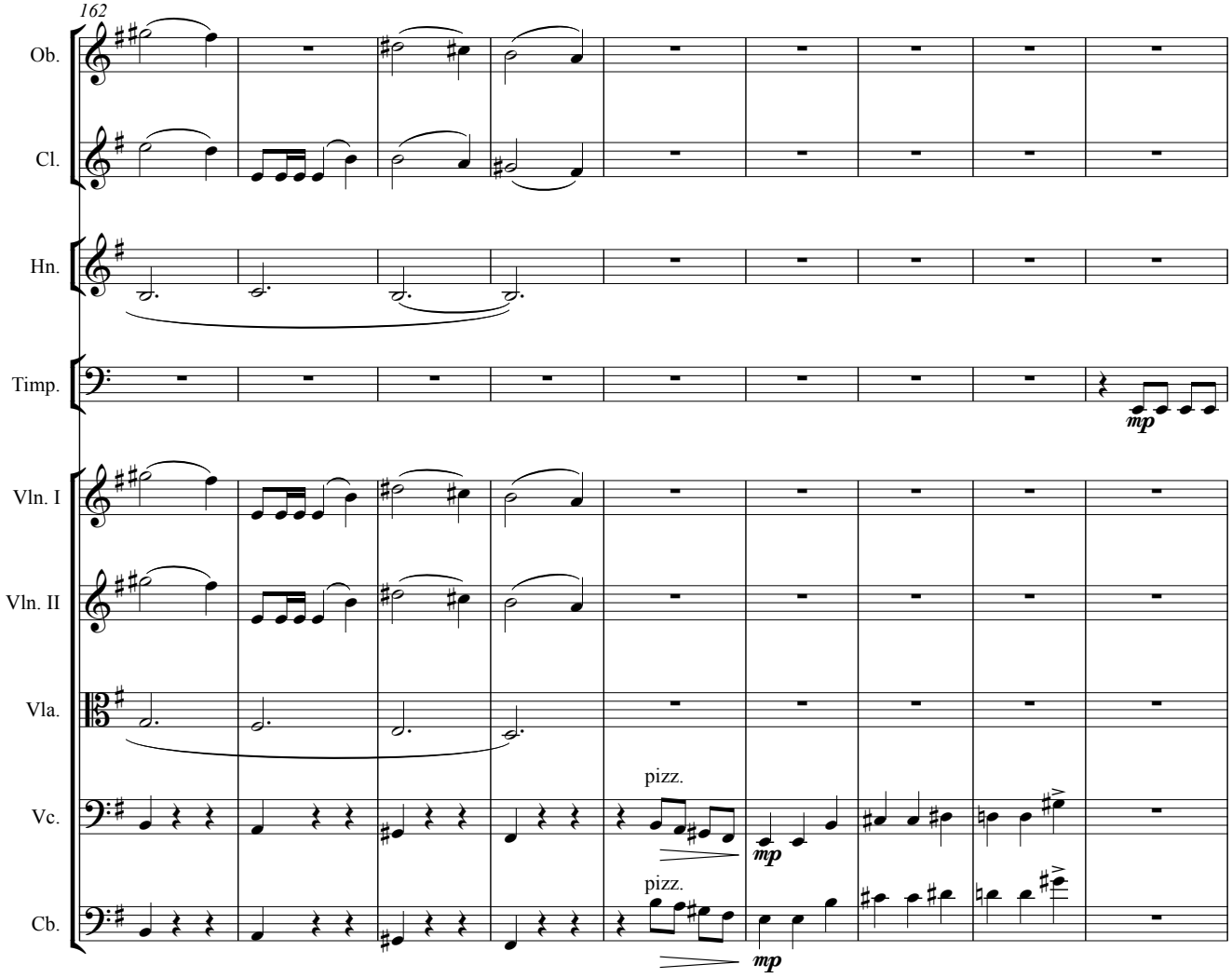
Vln. II
mp
Cb.


153
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
espress.
mp
mf
p
arco


162
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Cl.
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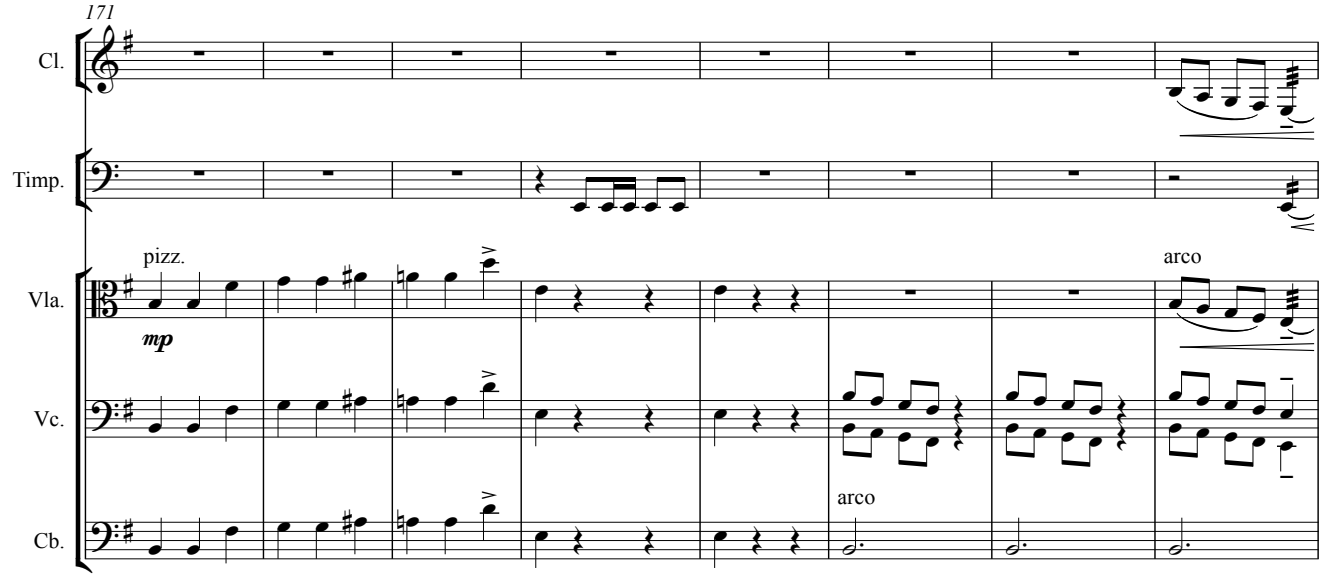
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
pizz.
mp
pizz.
mp


171
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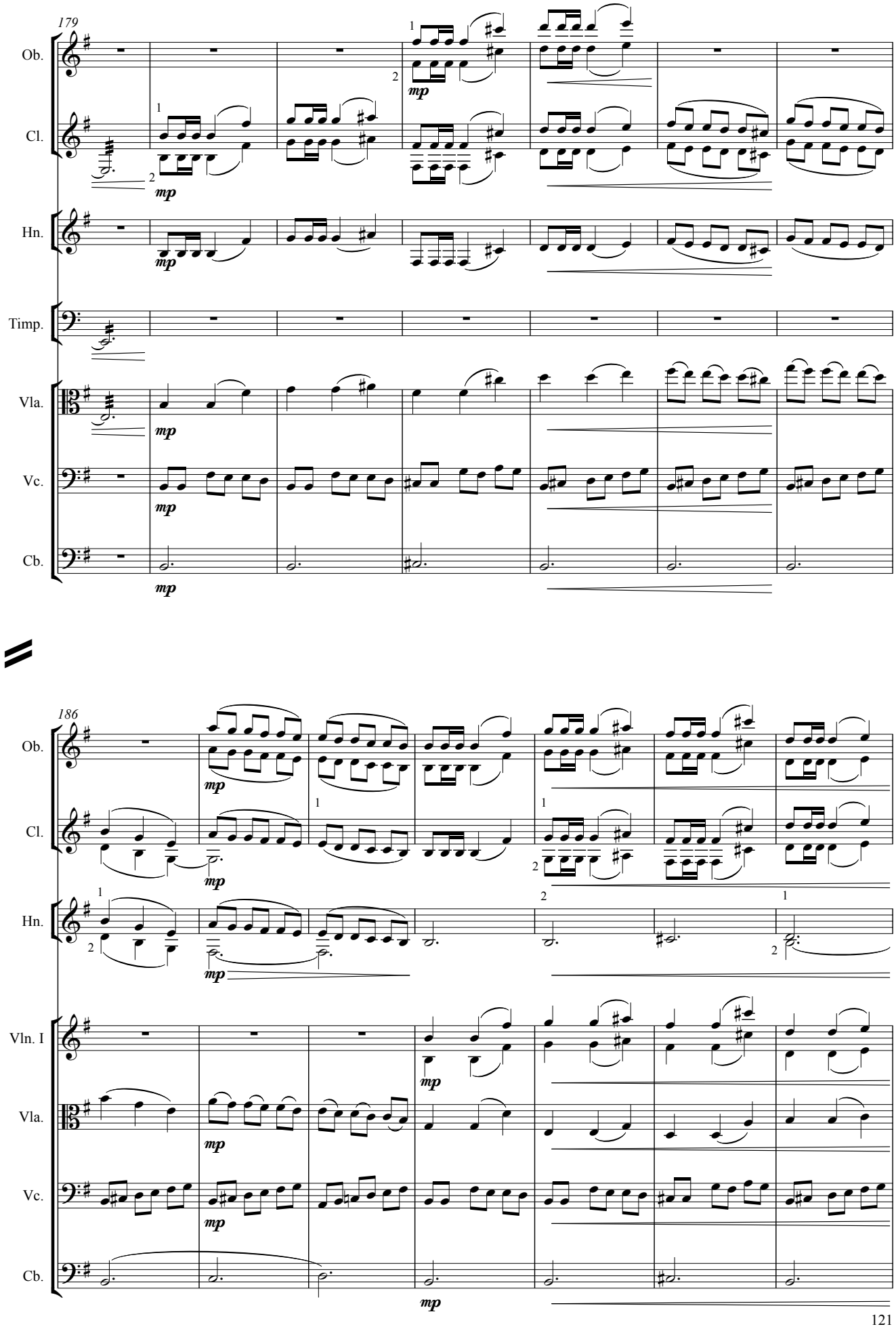
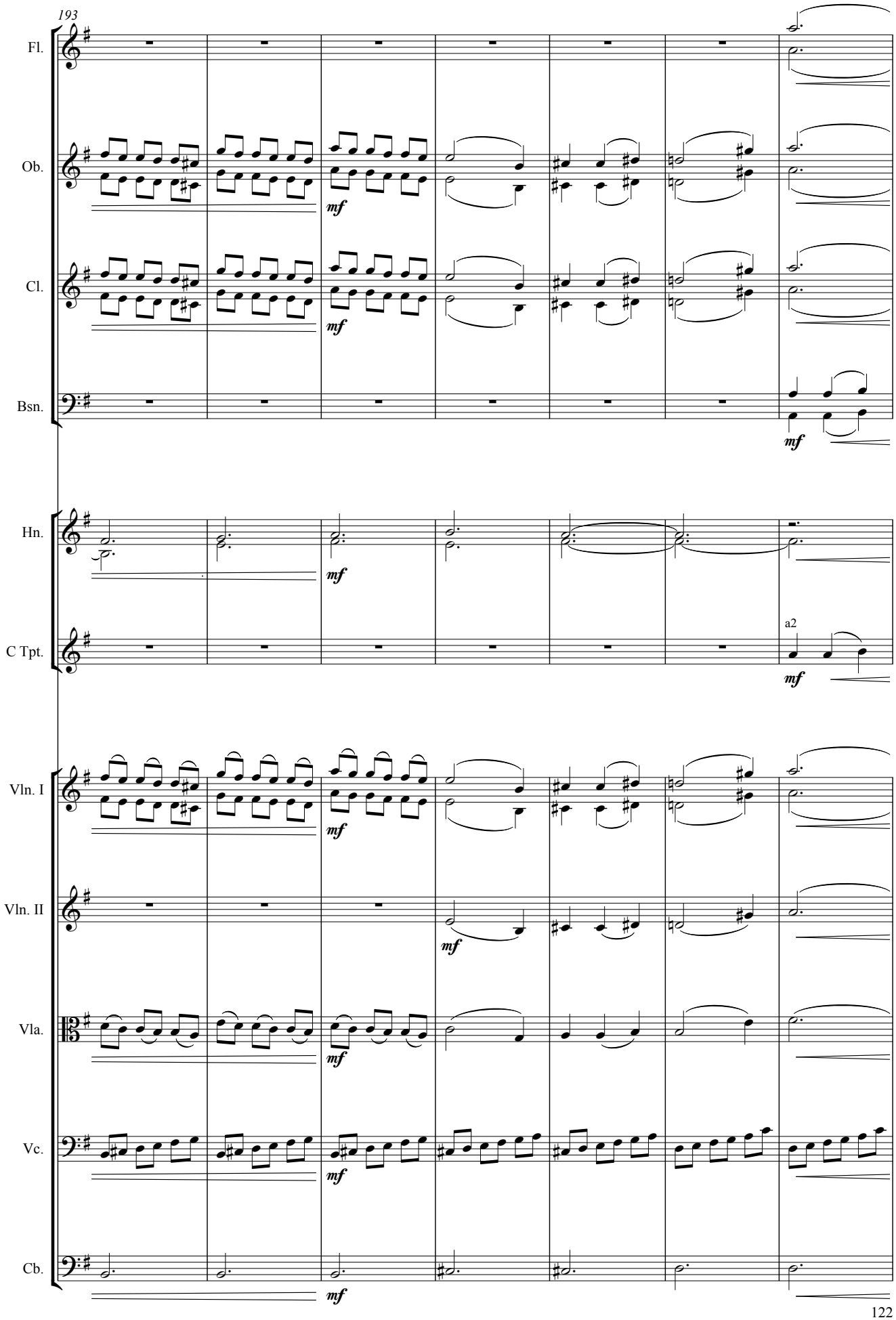
Timp.
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
pizz.
mp
arco
arco


179
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Timp.
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mp
186
Vln. I


193
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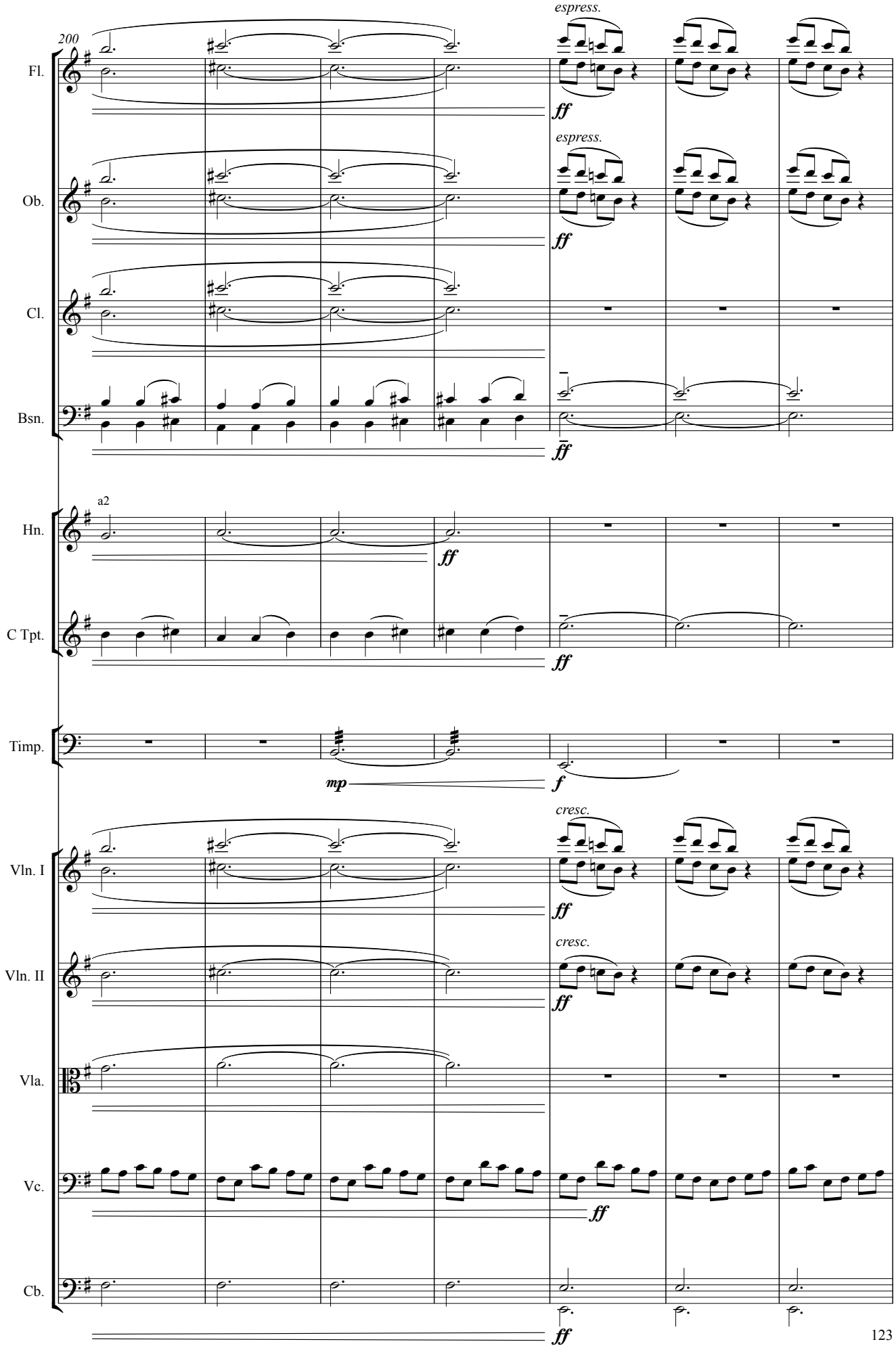
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
a2


200
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
Timp.
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Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
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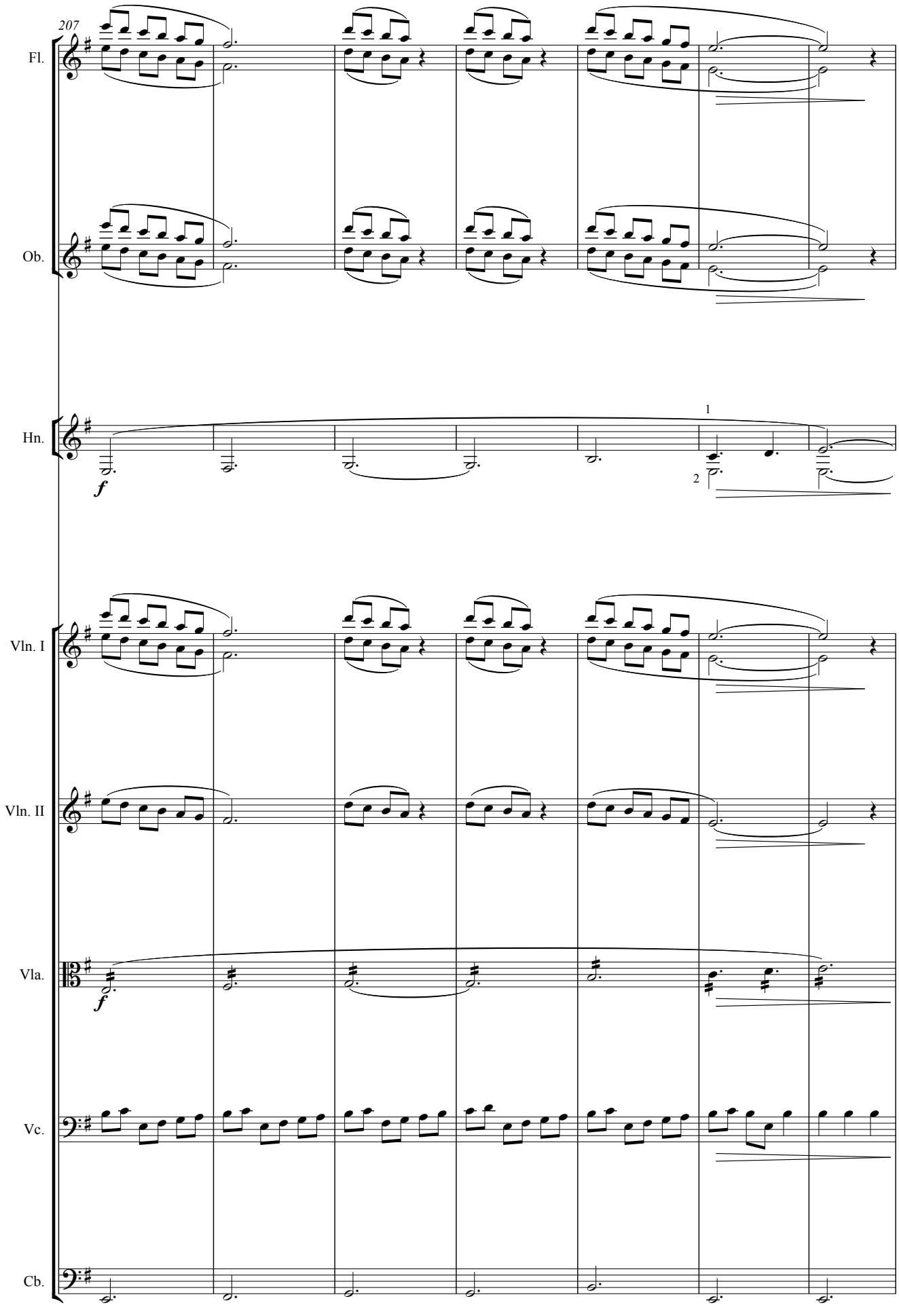
ff
mp
f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Ob.
Hn.
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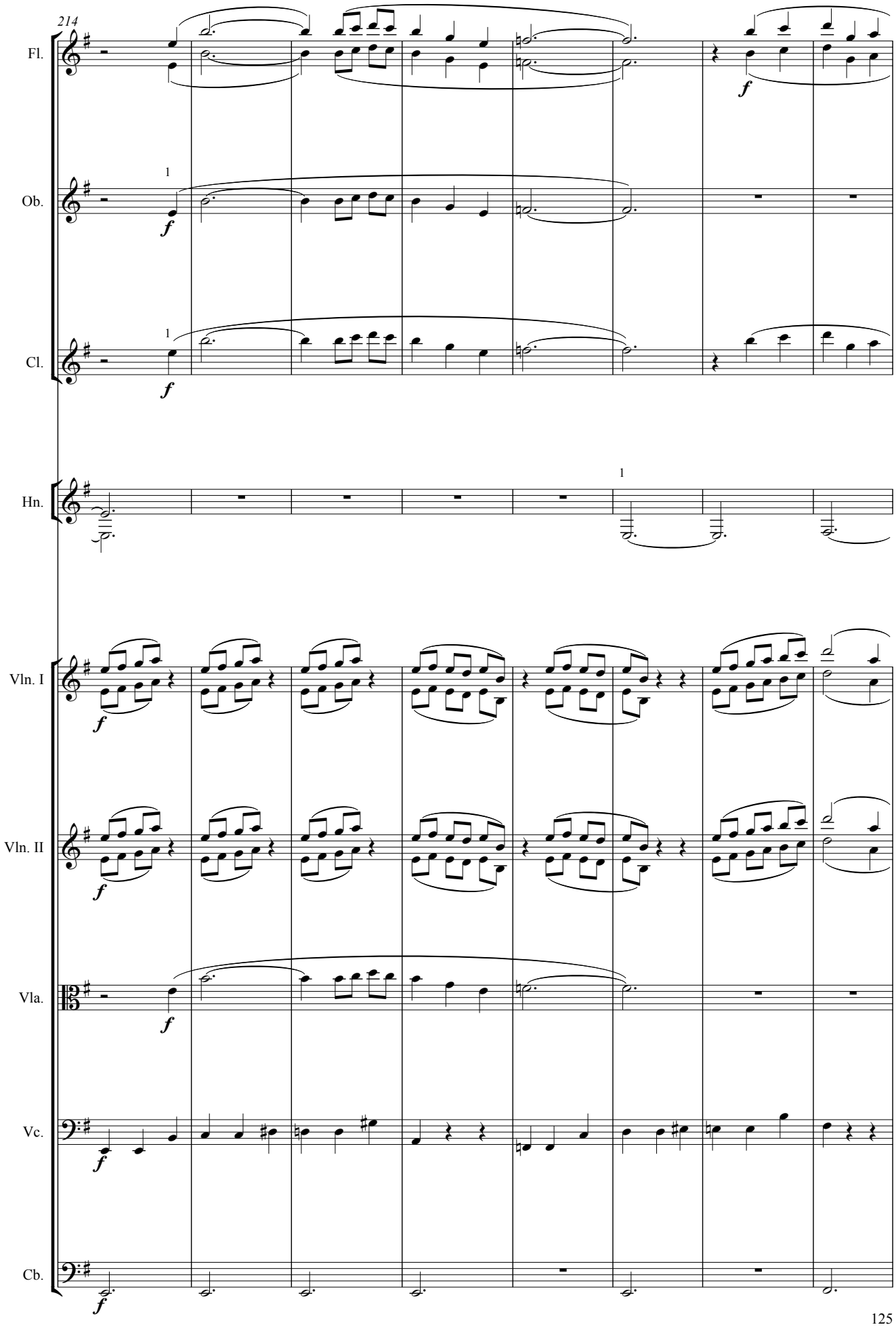
2
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
f
Vc.
Cb.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Ob.
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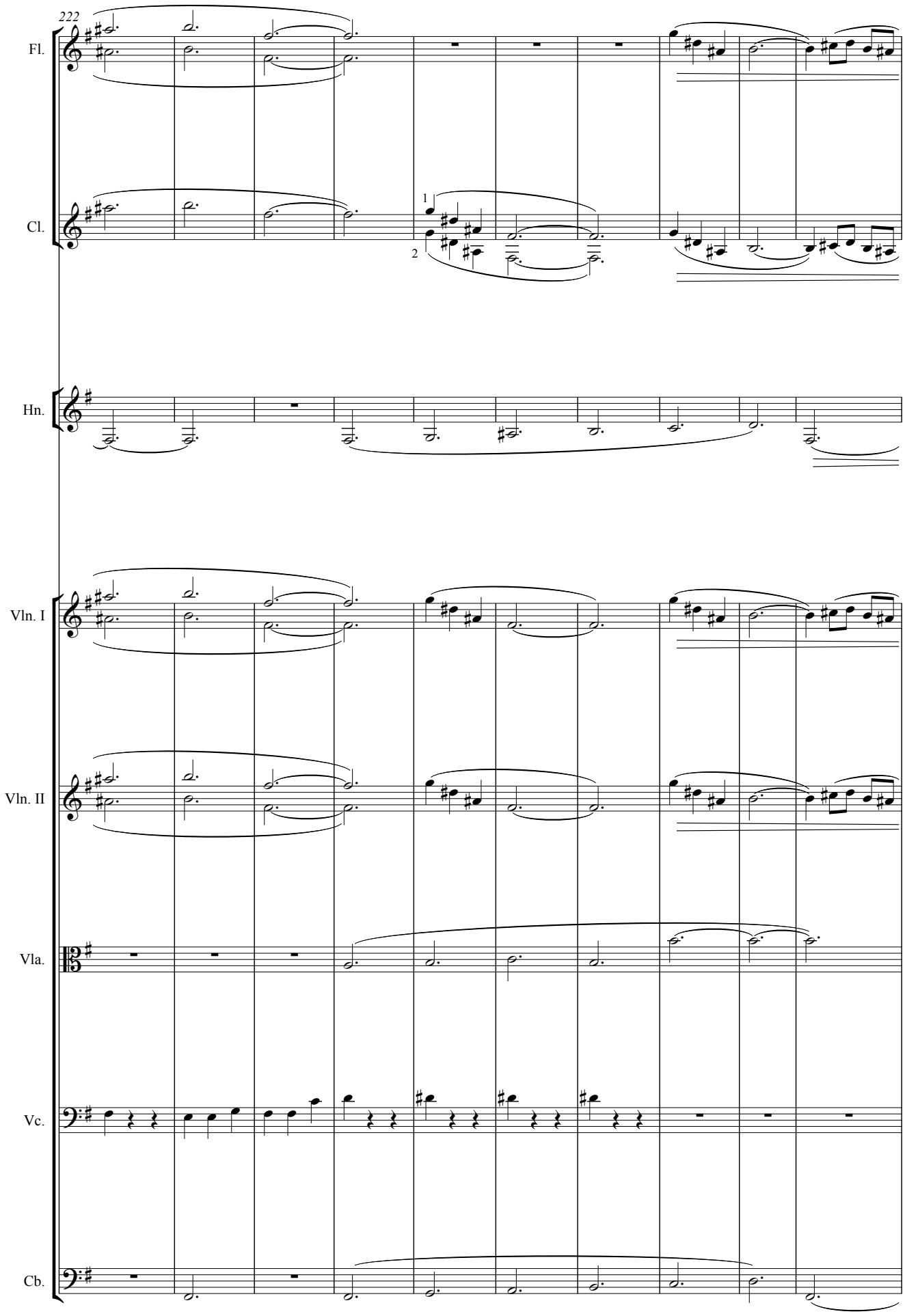
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
f
1


222
Fl.
Cl.
1
2
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

232
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
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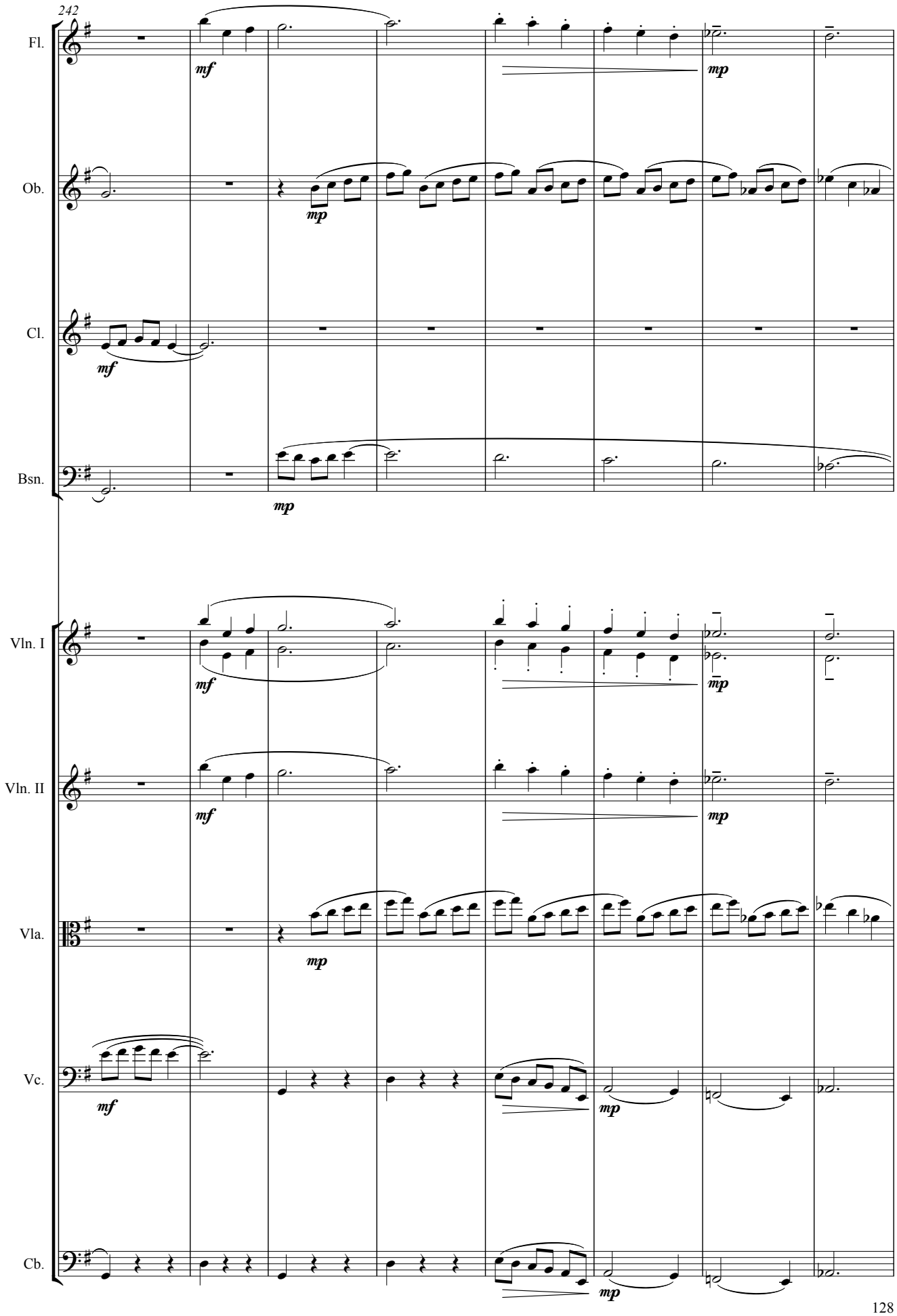
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
arco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Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
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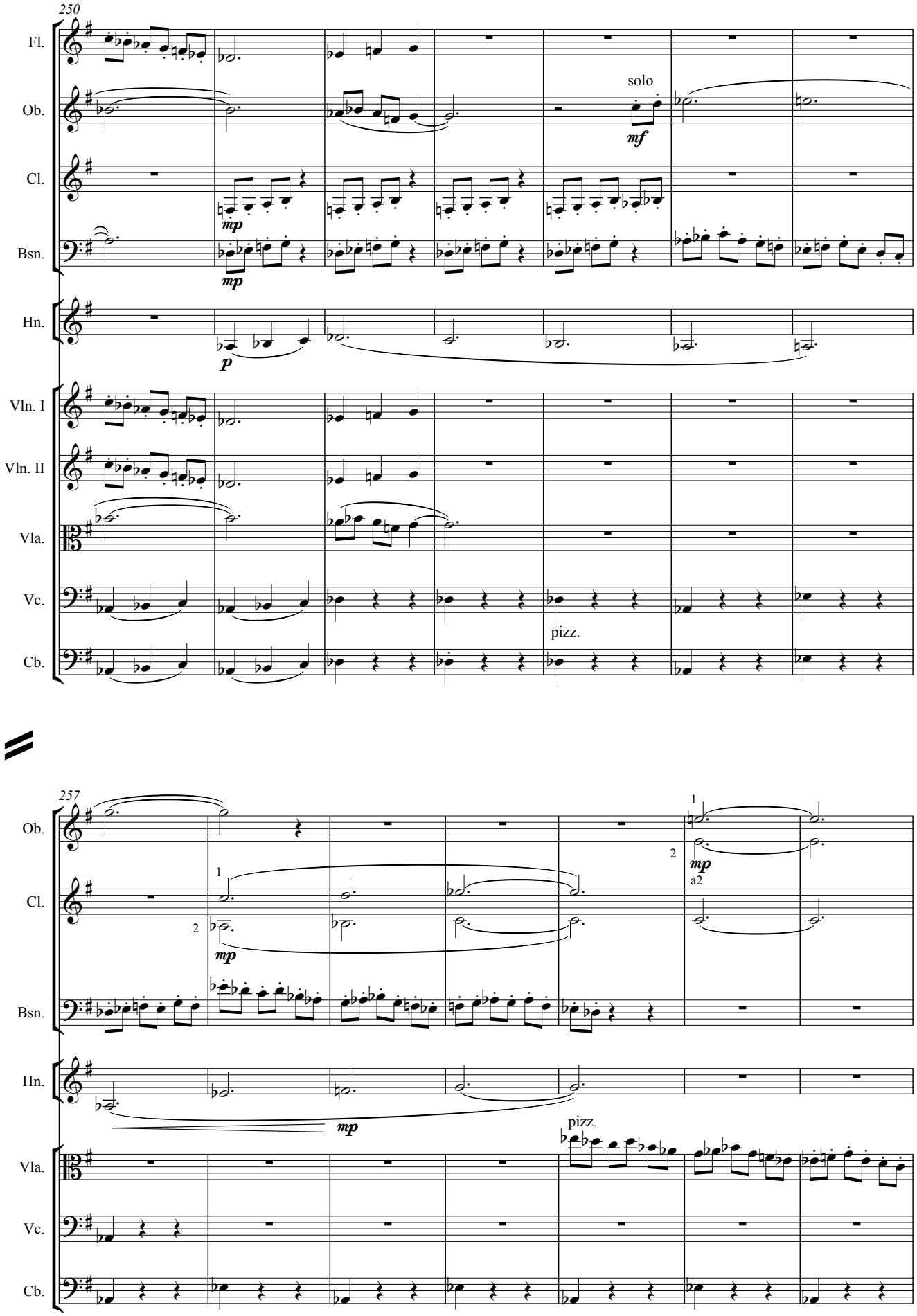
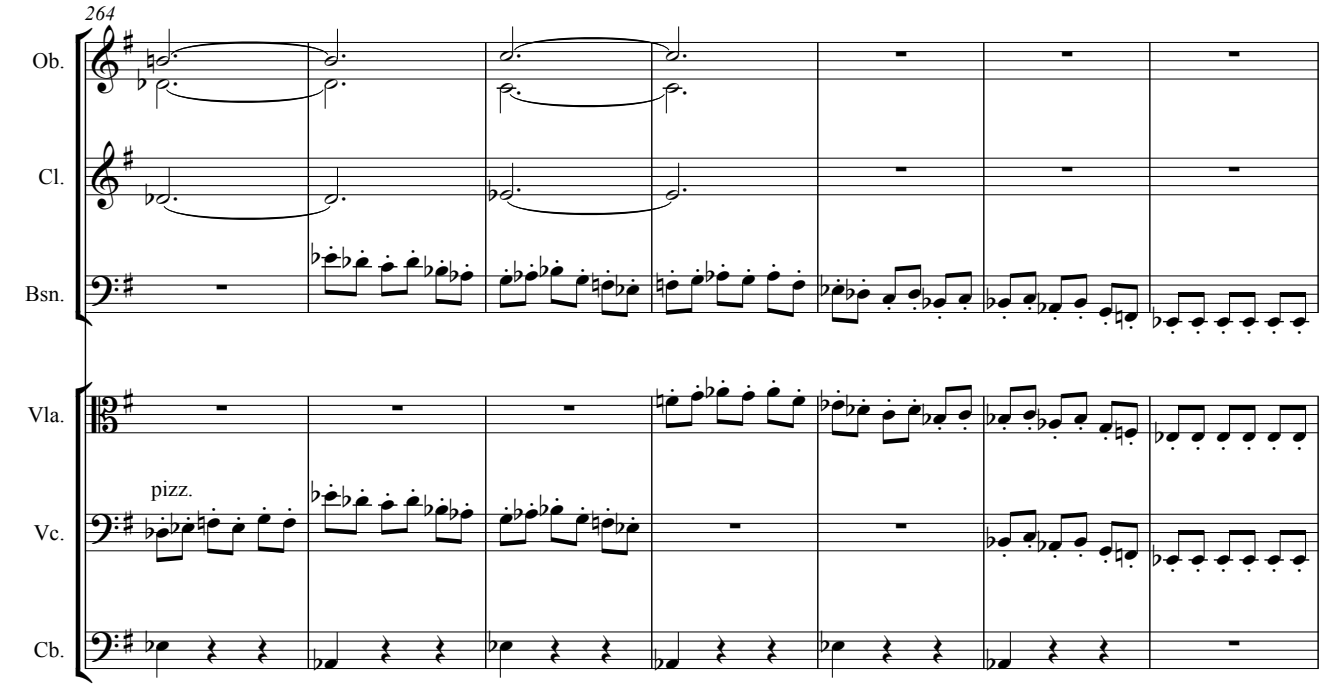
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
mp


250
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
solo
mf
mp
mp
p
pizz.
257
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
1
2
mp
mp
1
2
mp
a2
mp
pizz.


264
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Bsn.
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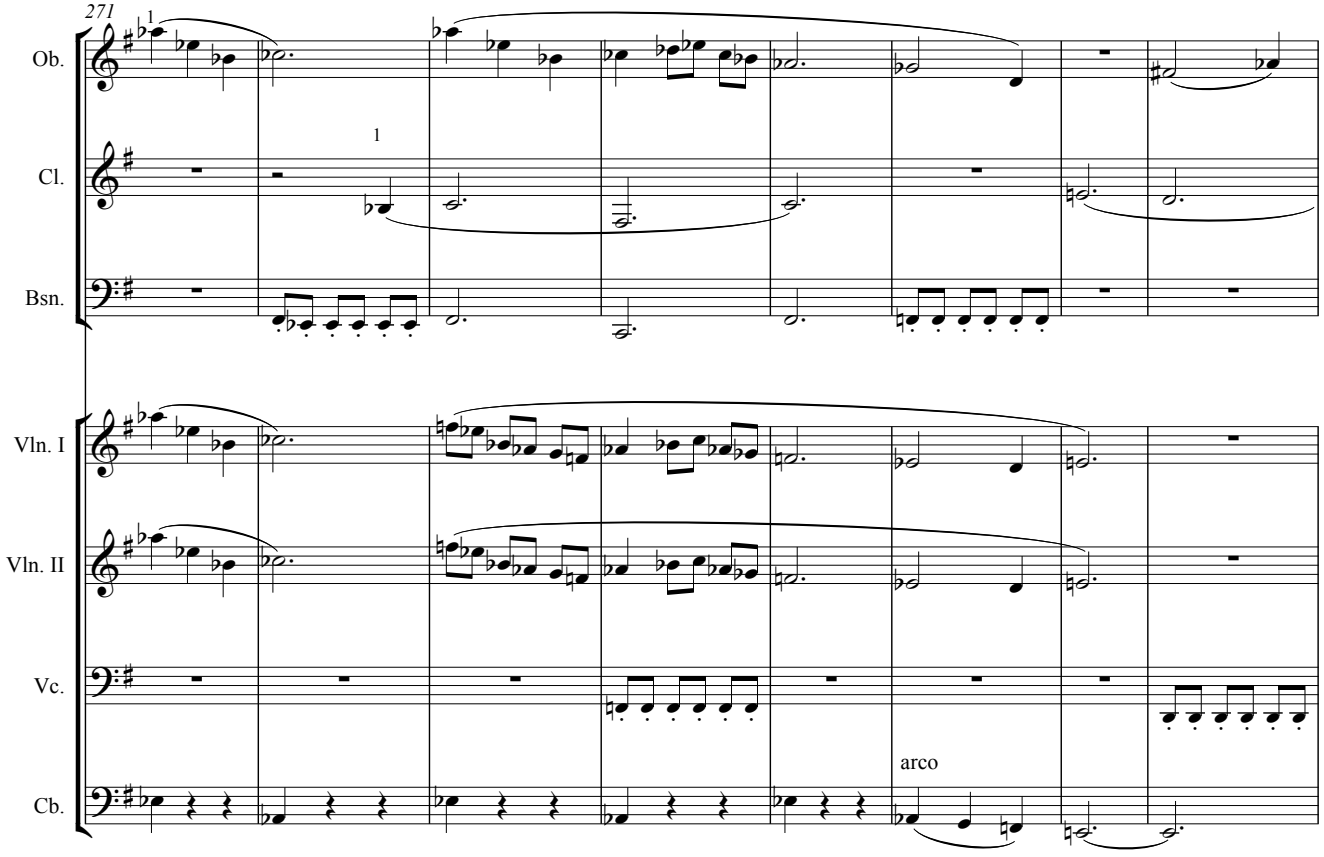
Vc.
Cb.


271
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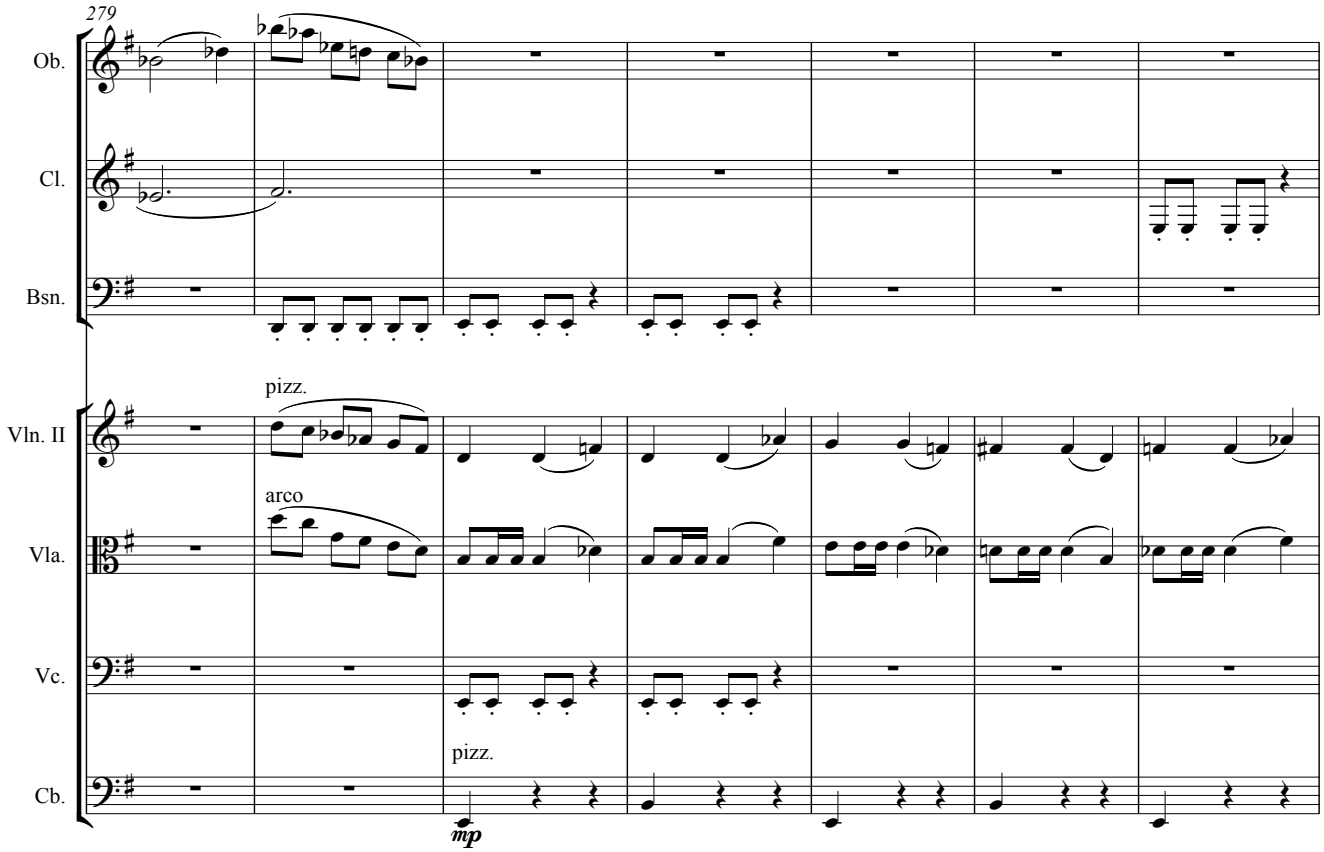
Ob.
1
Cl.
Bsn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vc.
arco
Cb.


279
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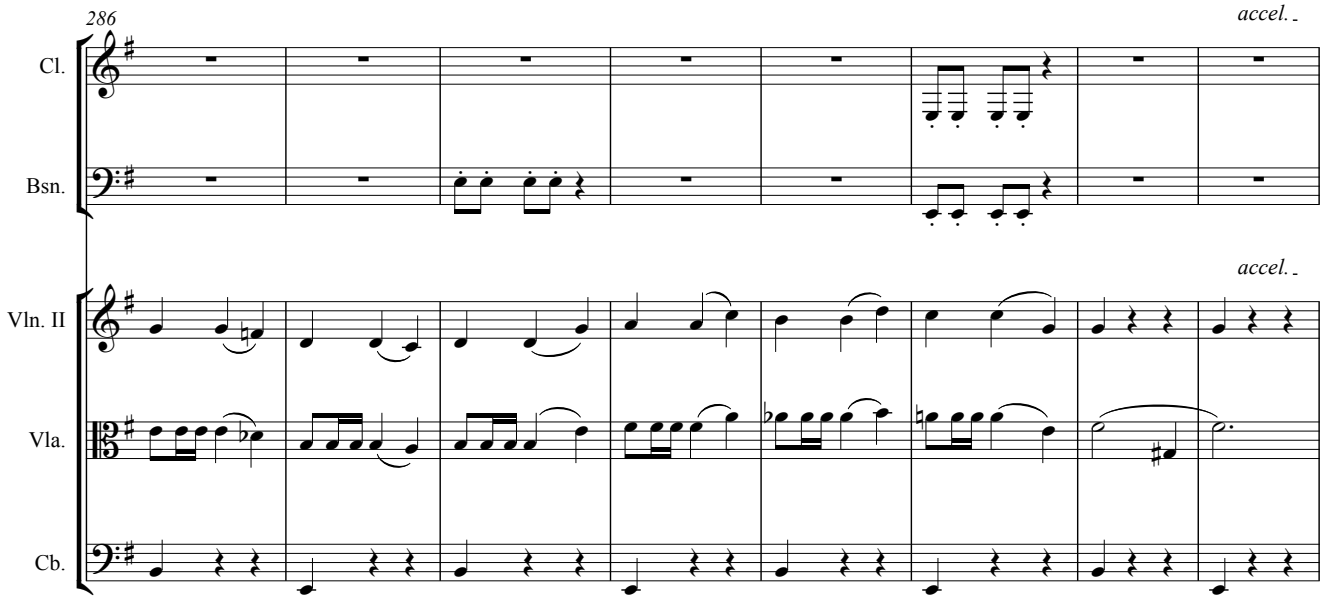
Cl.
Bsn.
pizz.
Vln. II
arco
Vla.
Vc.
pizz.
Cb.
mp


286
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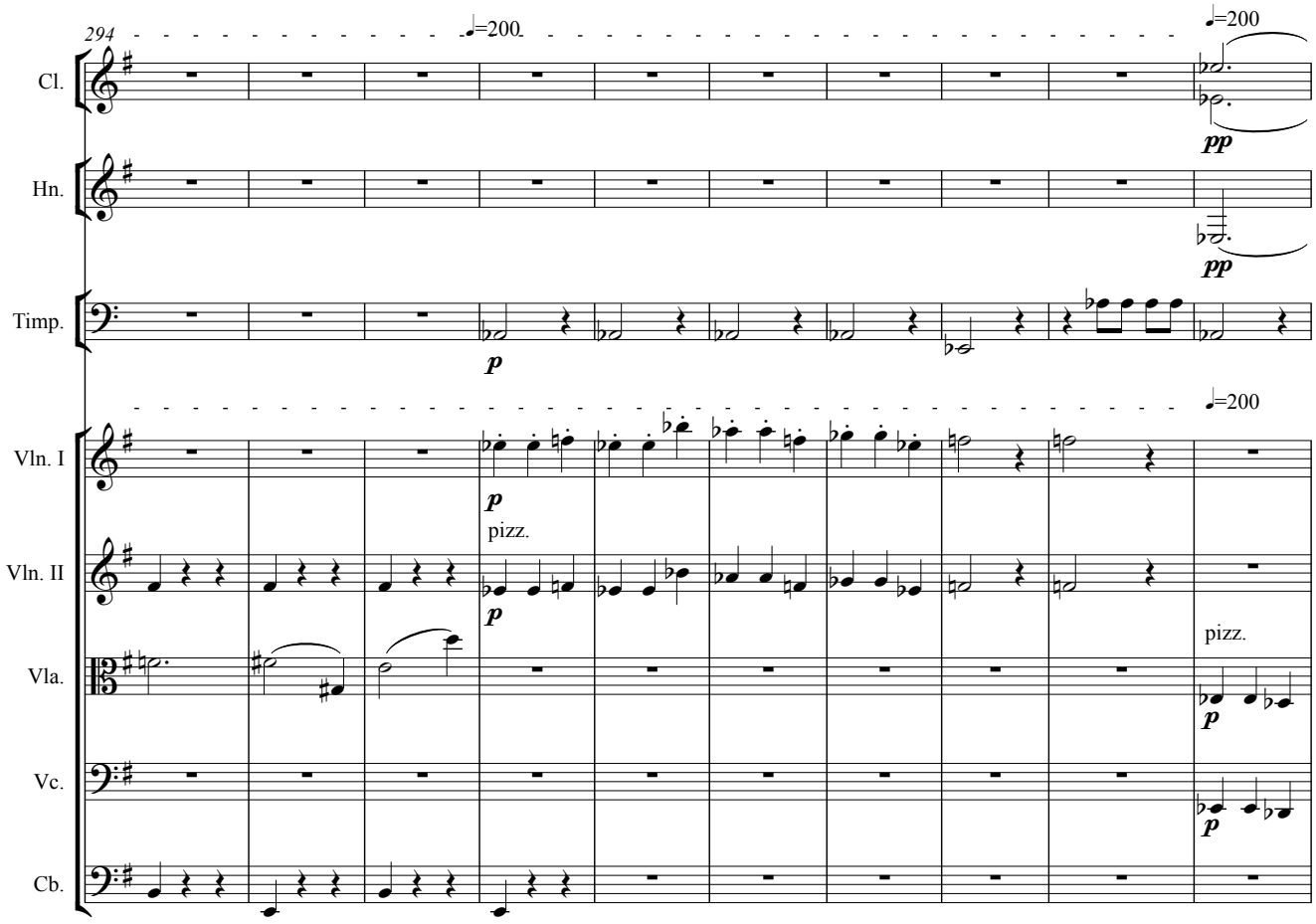
Cl.
Bsn.
accel.
Vln. II
Vla.
Cb.


294
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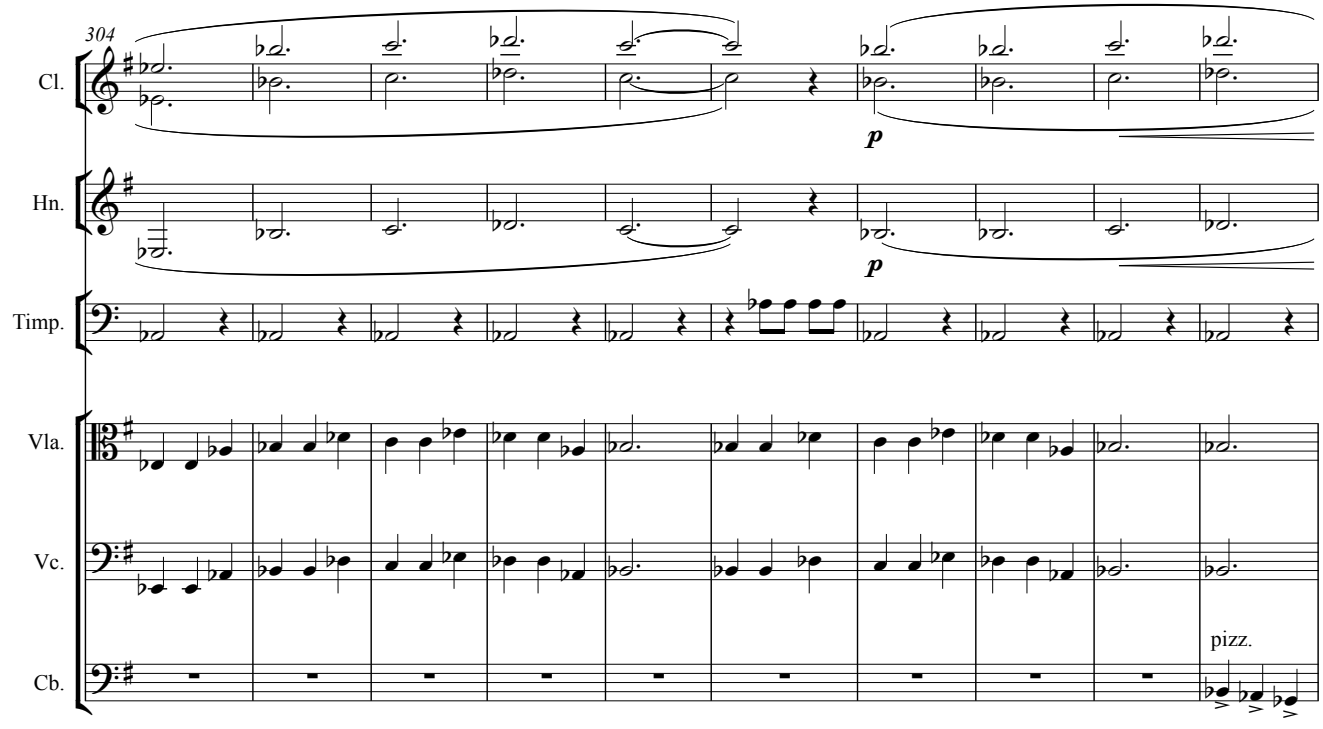
Hn.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
pp
p
pizz.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Timp.
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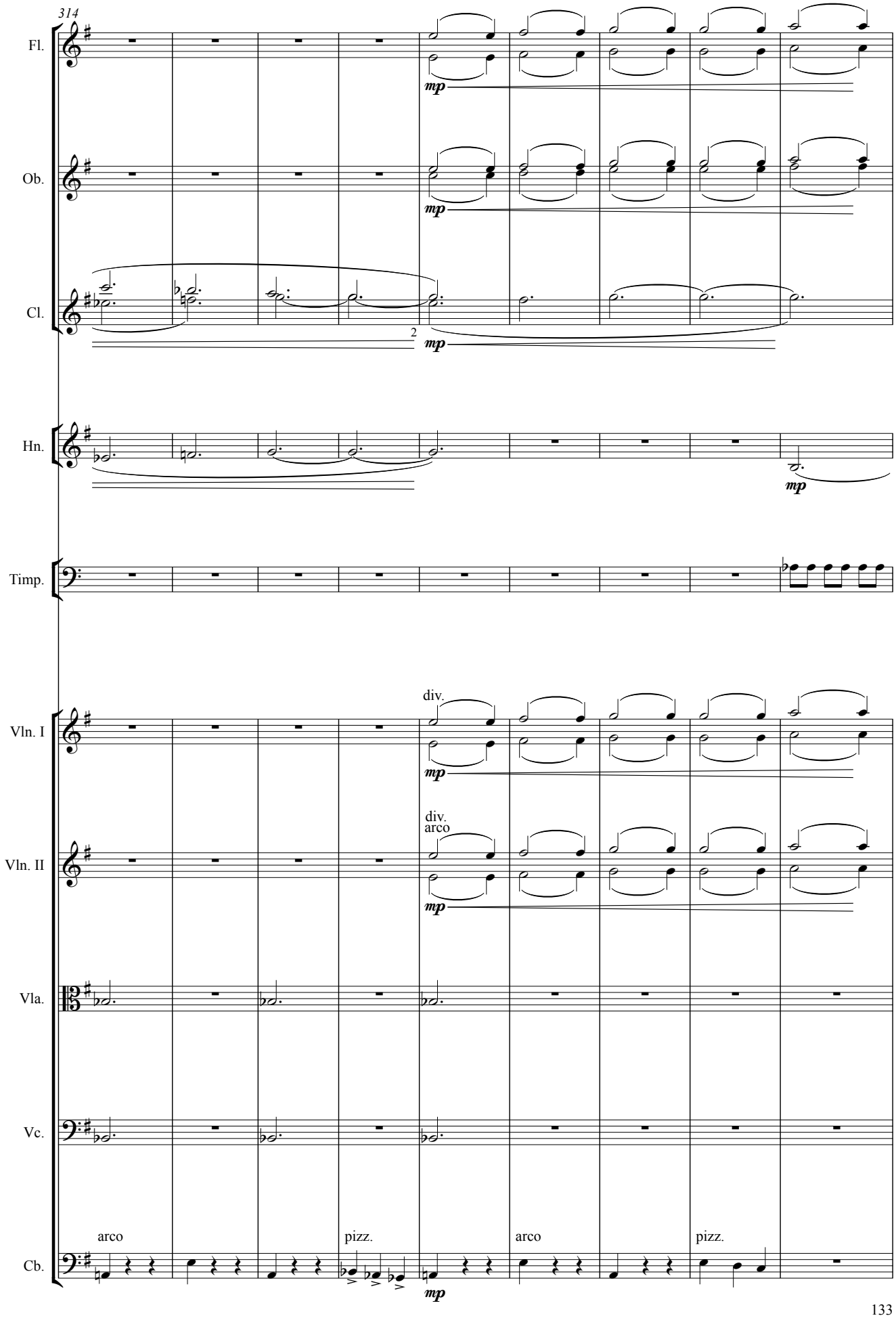
Vc.
Cb.
p
pizz.


314
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Ob.
Cl.
2
mp
Hn.
Timp.
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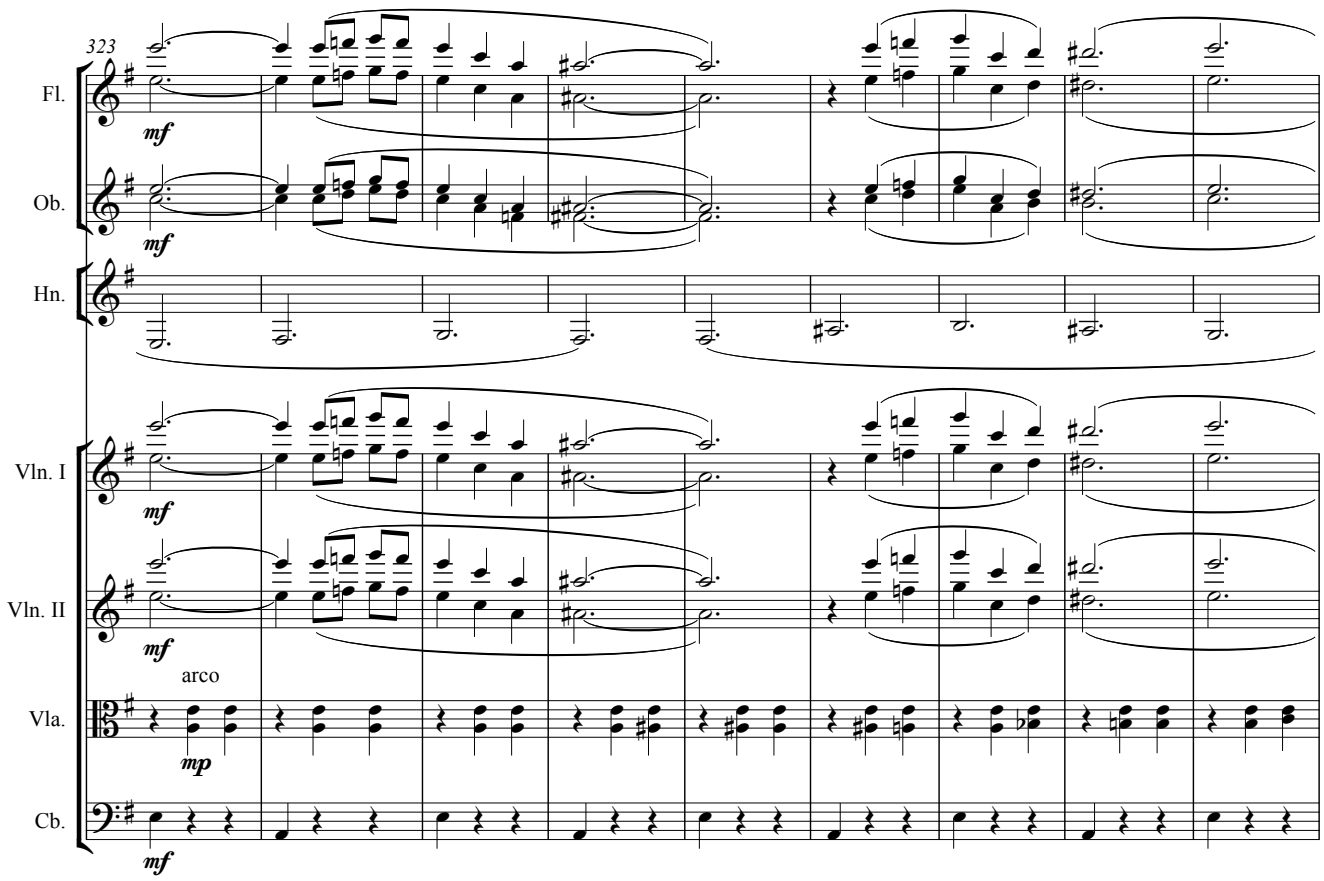
Vln. II
div.
arco
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.


323
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mf
Ob.
mf
Hn.
Vln. I
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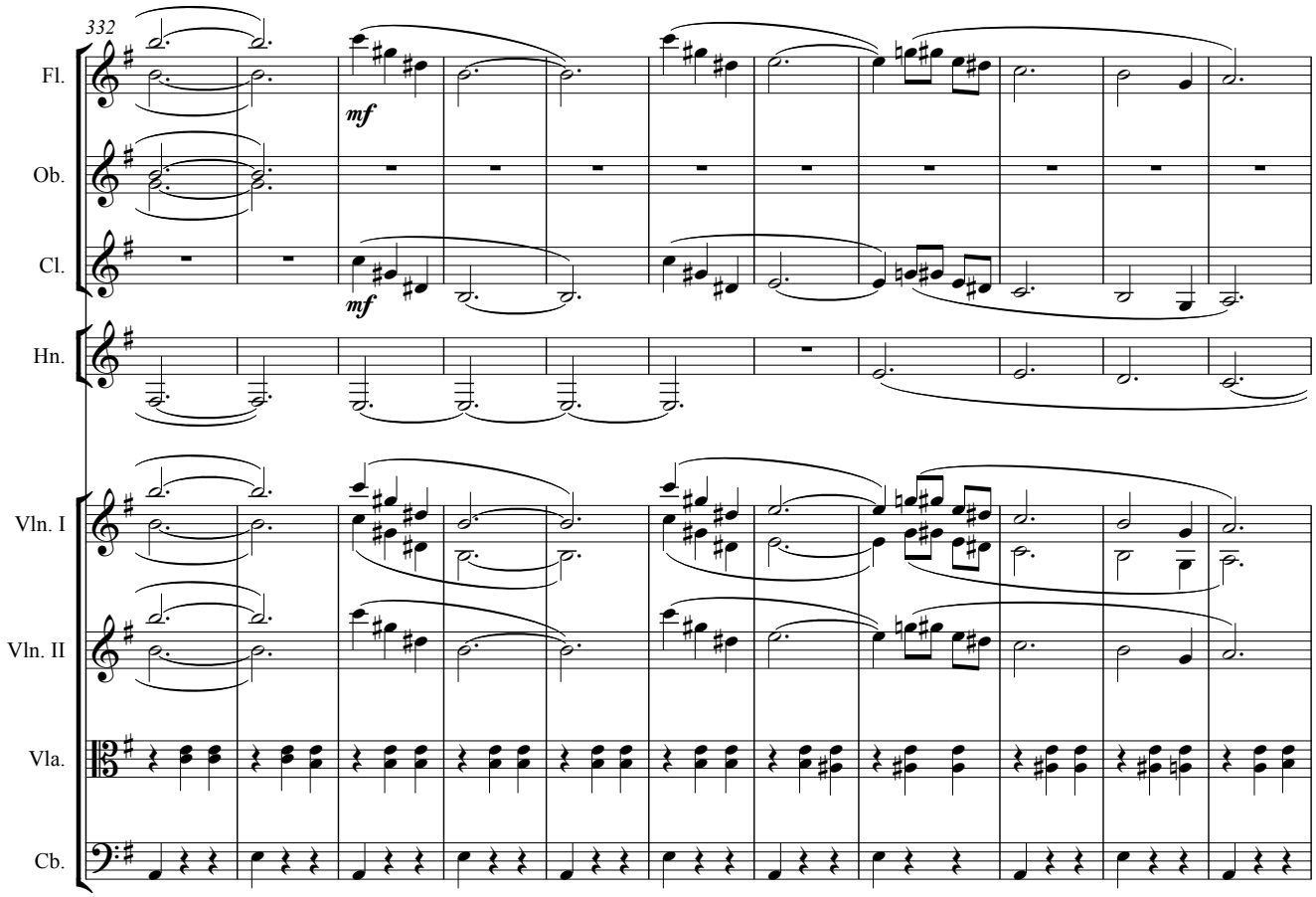
Vln. II
mf
arco
Vla.
mp
Cb.
mf


332
Fl.
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Ob.
Cl.
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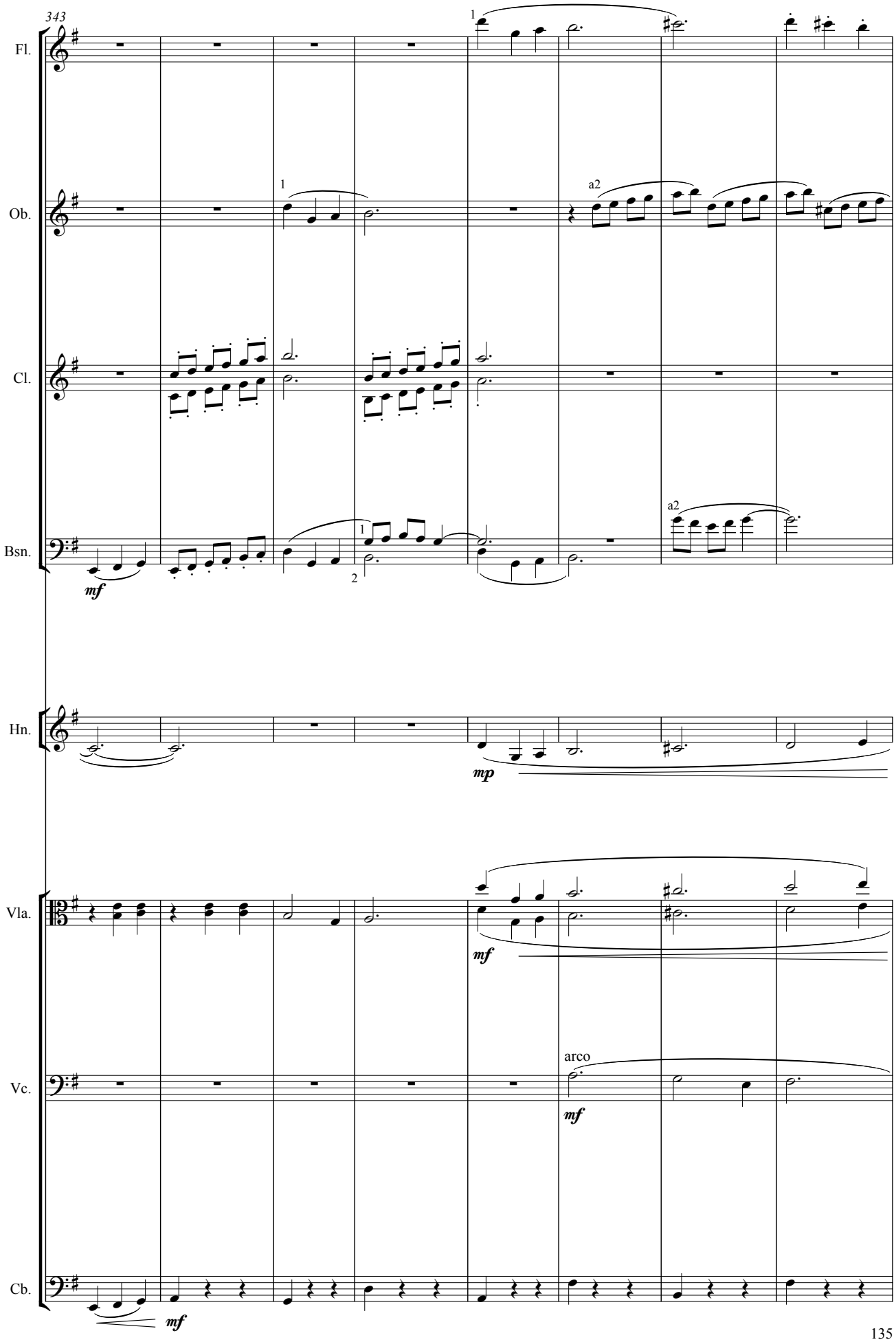
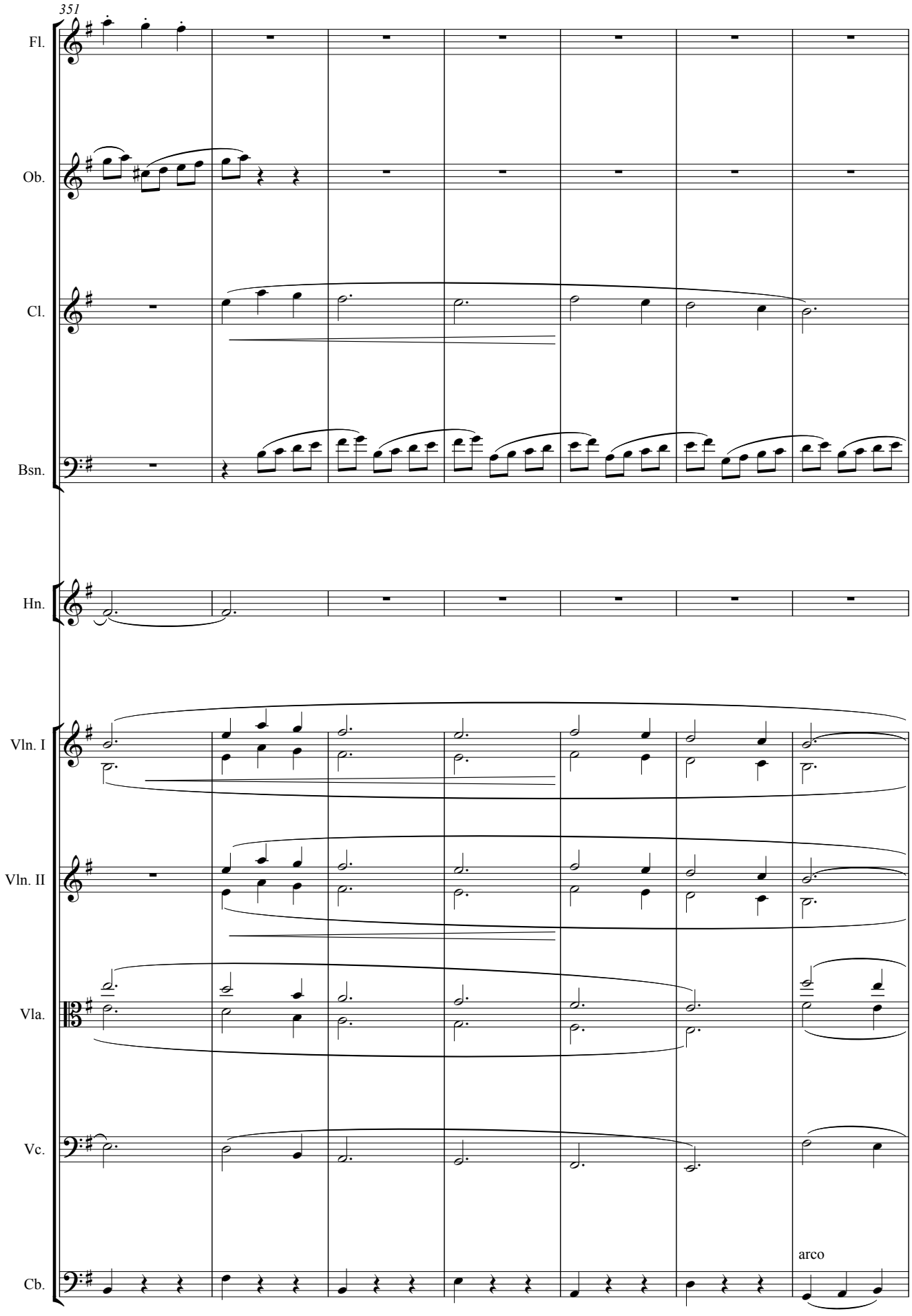
Vln. II
Vla.
Cb.


343
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
1
a2
2
mf
mp
arco


351
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Ob.
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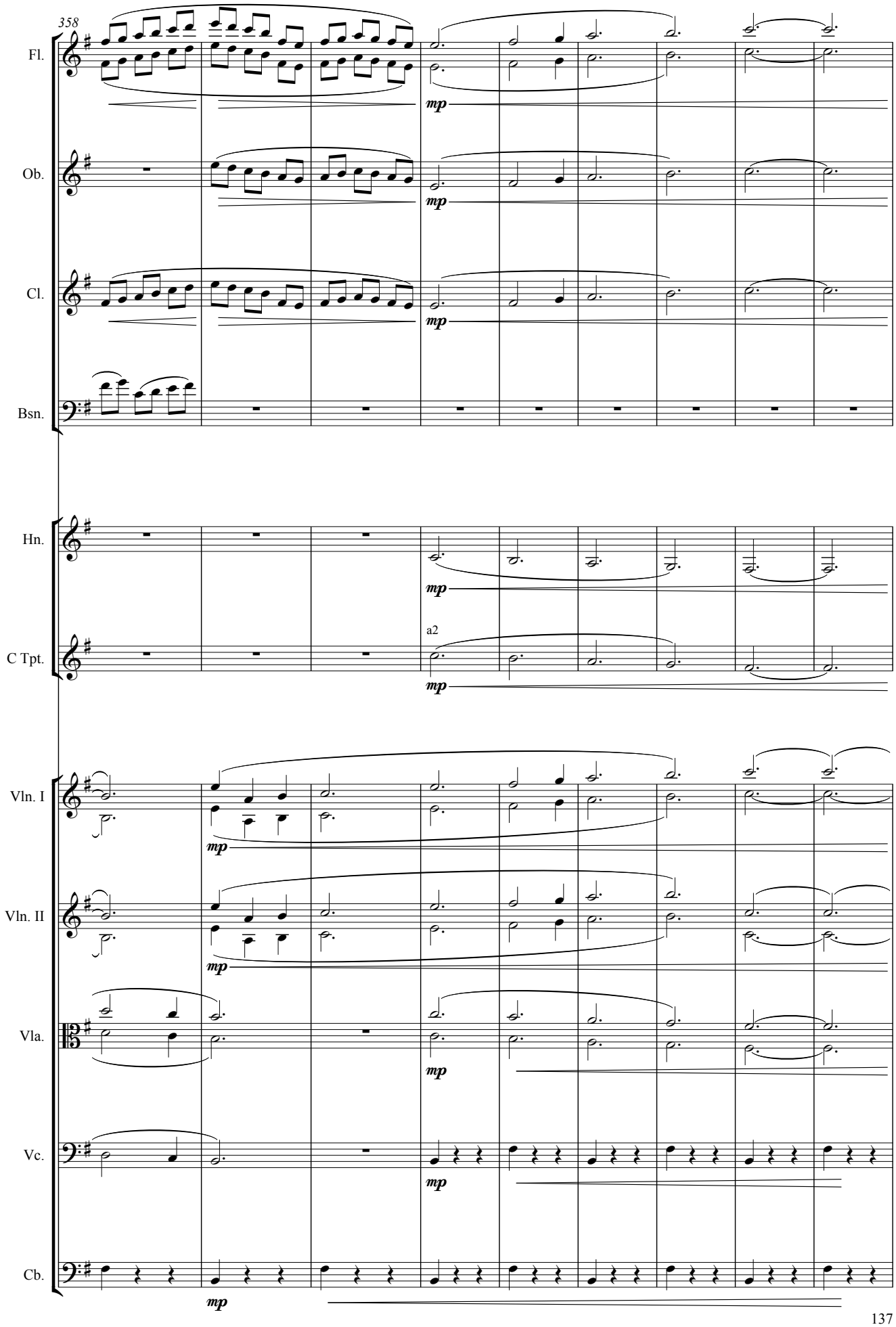
Cb.
arco


358
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Ob.
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Hn.
C Tpt.
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Vln. I
Vln. II
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Vc.
Cb.
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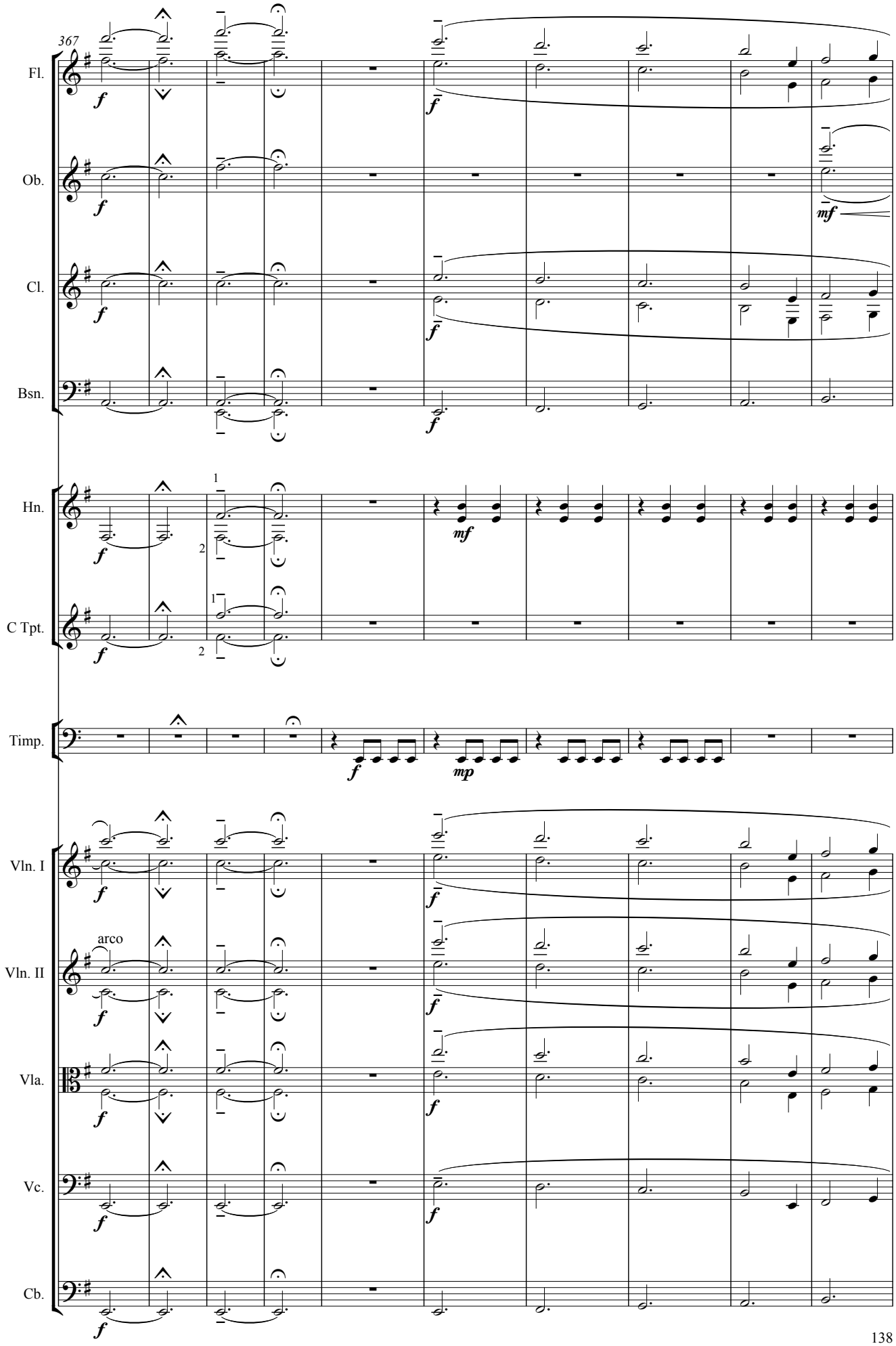
367
Fl.
Ob.
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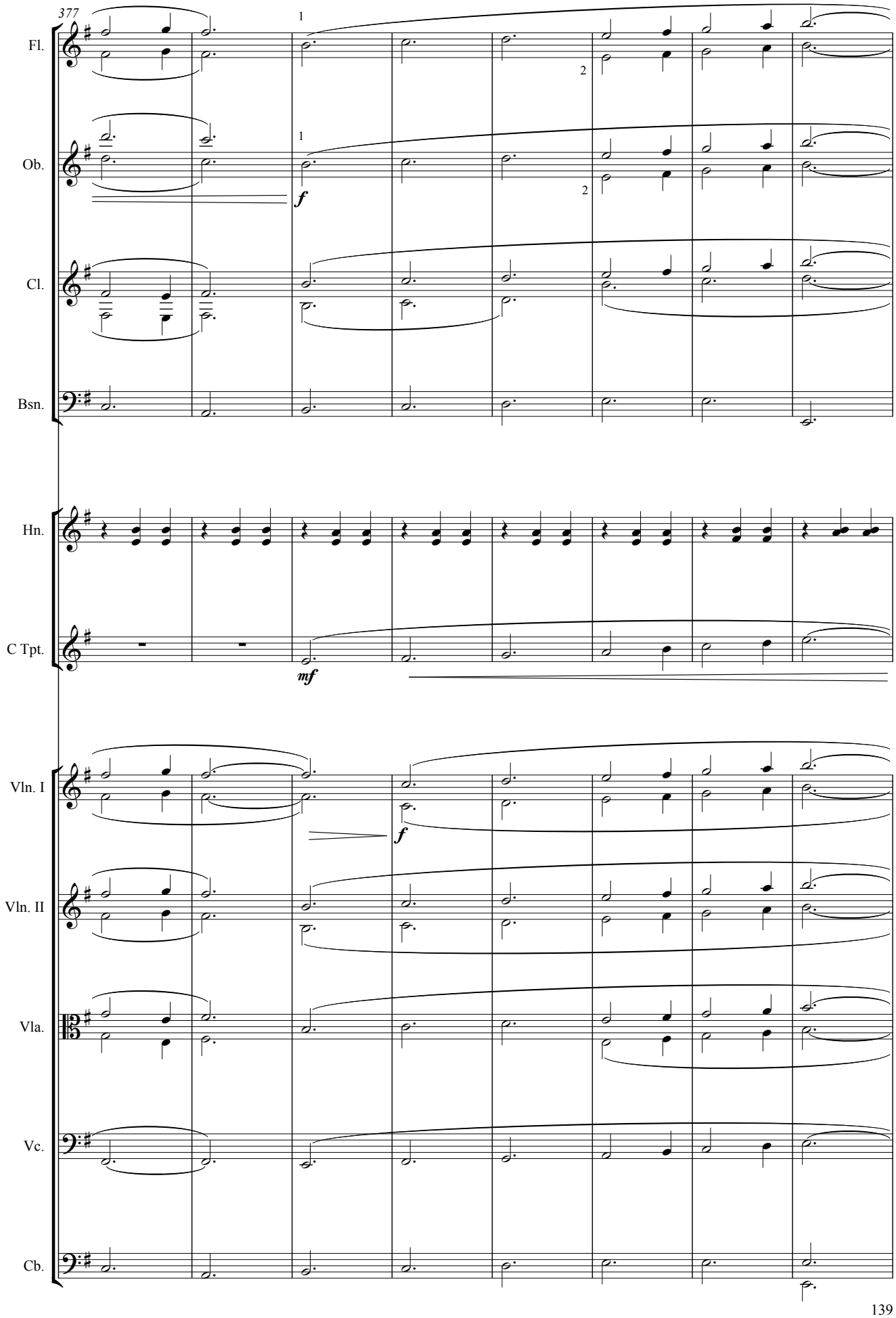
Hn.
C Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
arco


377
Fl.
Ob.
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C Tpt.
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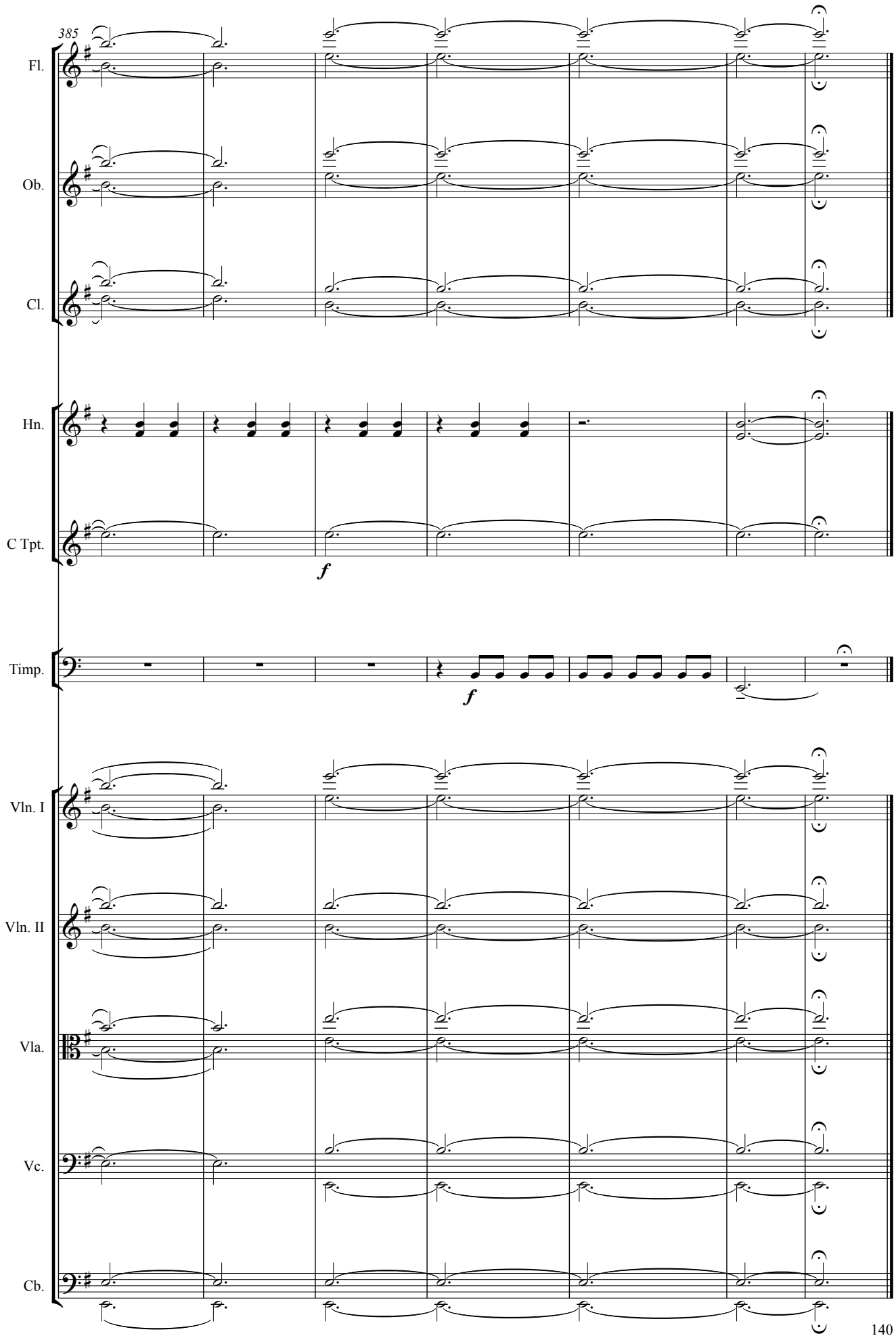
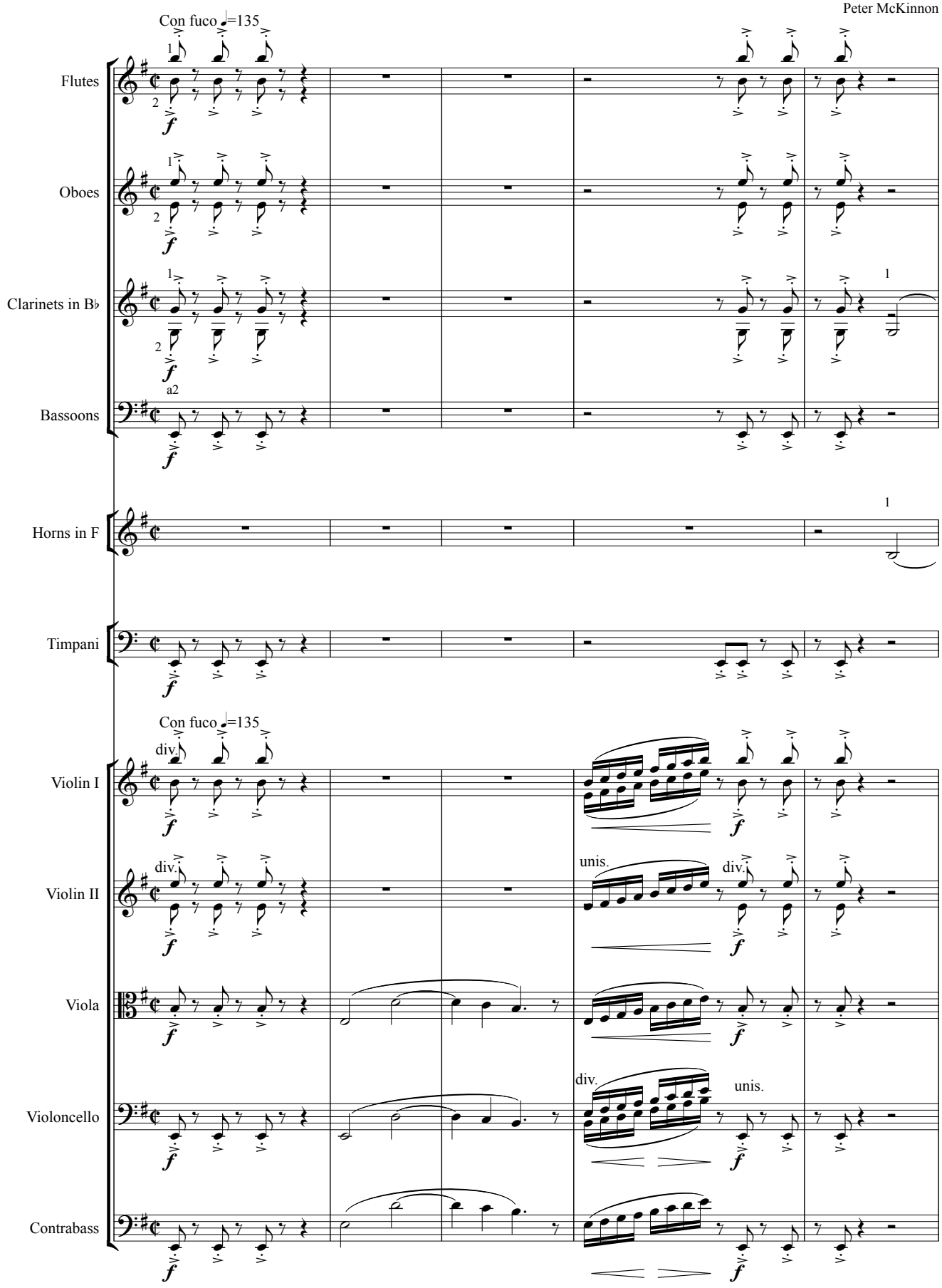
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
1
2
f
mf


385
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
C Tpt.
f
Timp.
f
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

the 4th movement

Peter McKinnon



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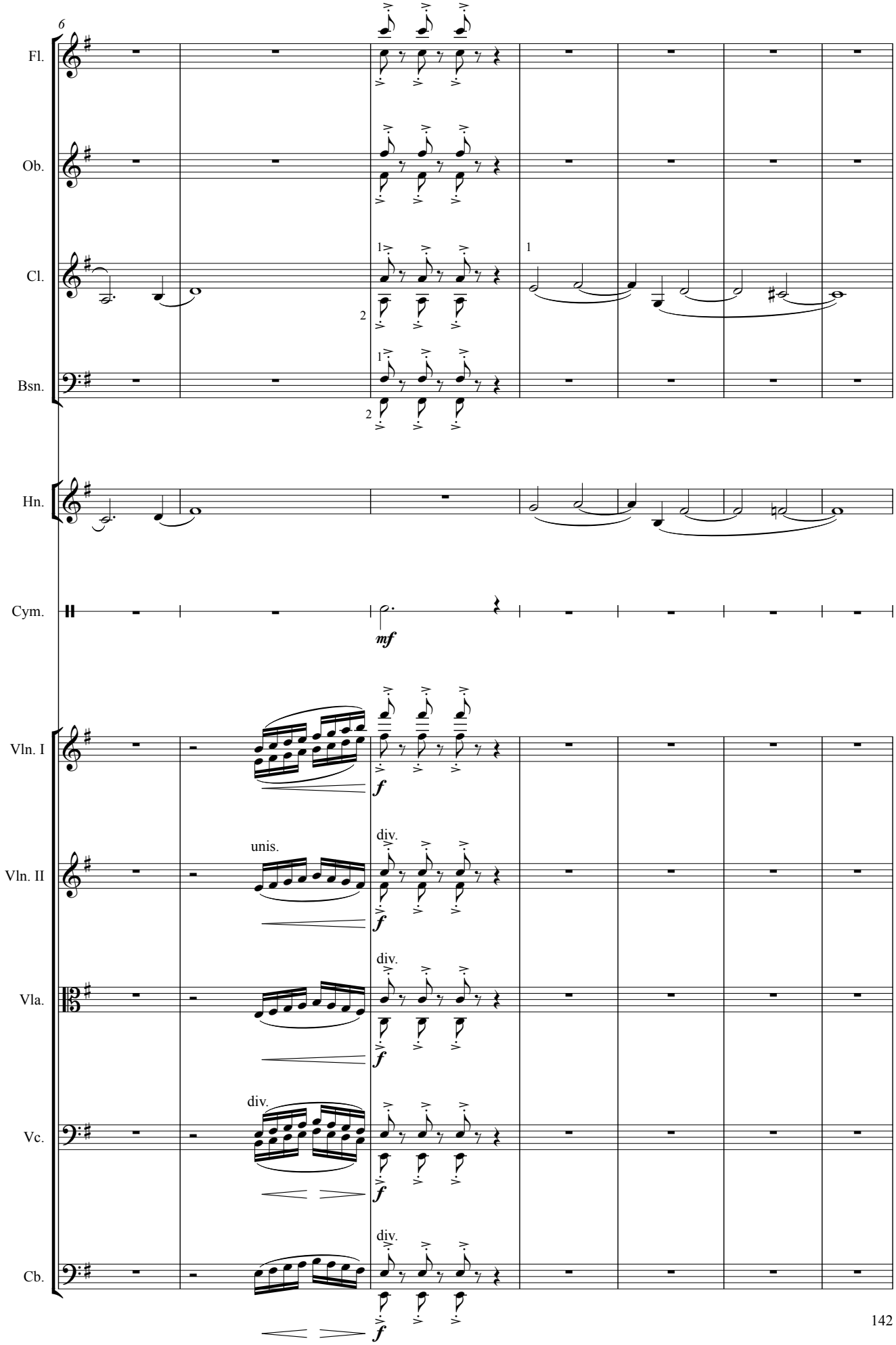
6
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
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Hn.
Cym.
mf
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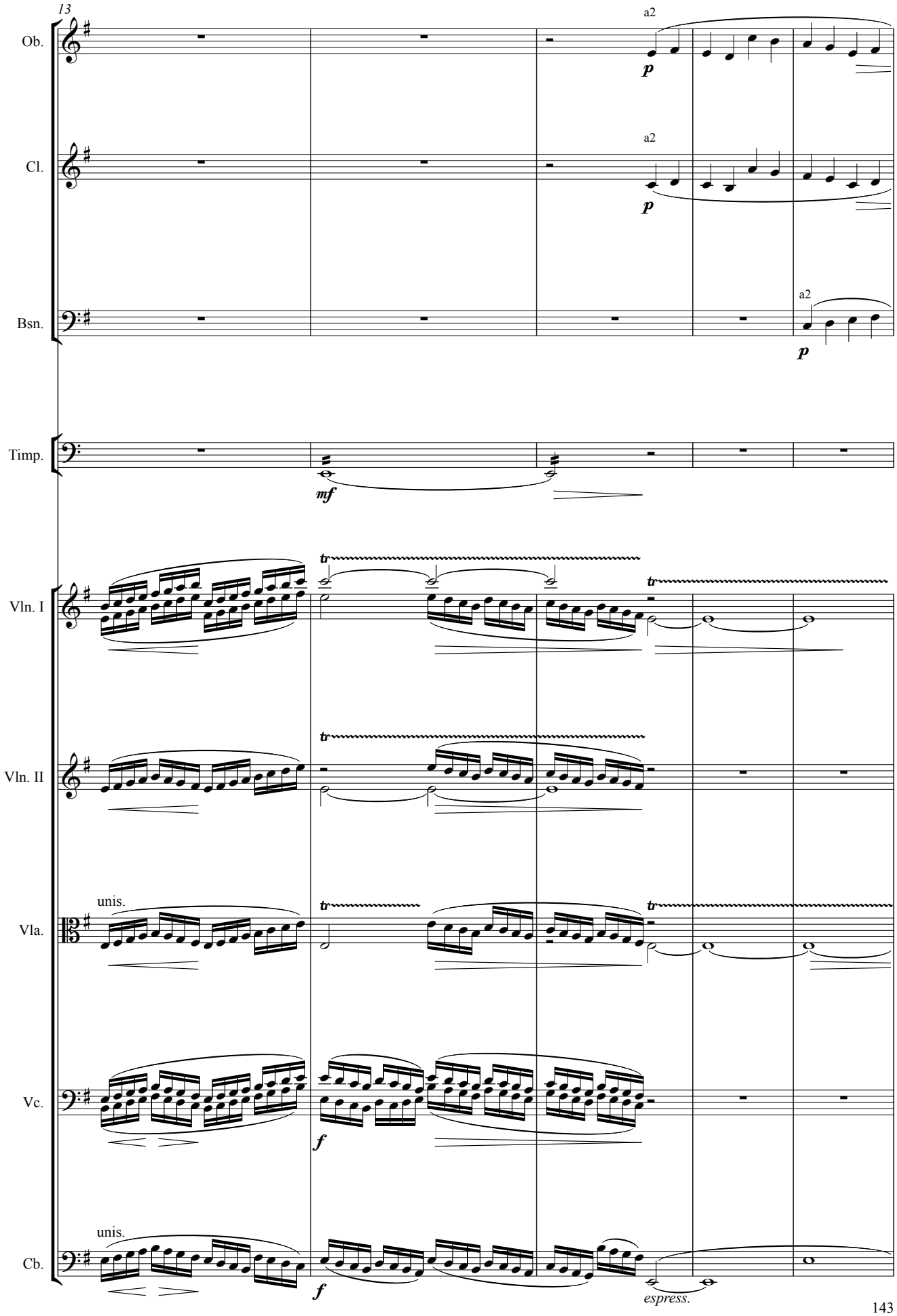
f
Vln. II
unis.
div.
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.


13
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
a2
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mf
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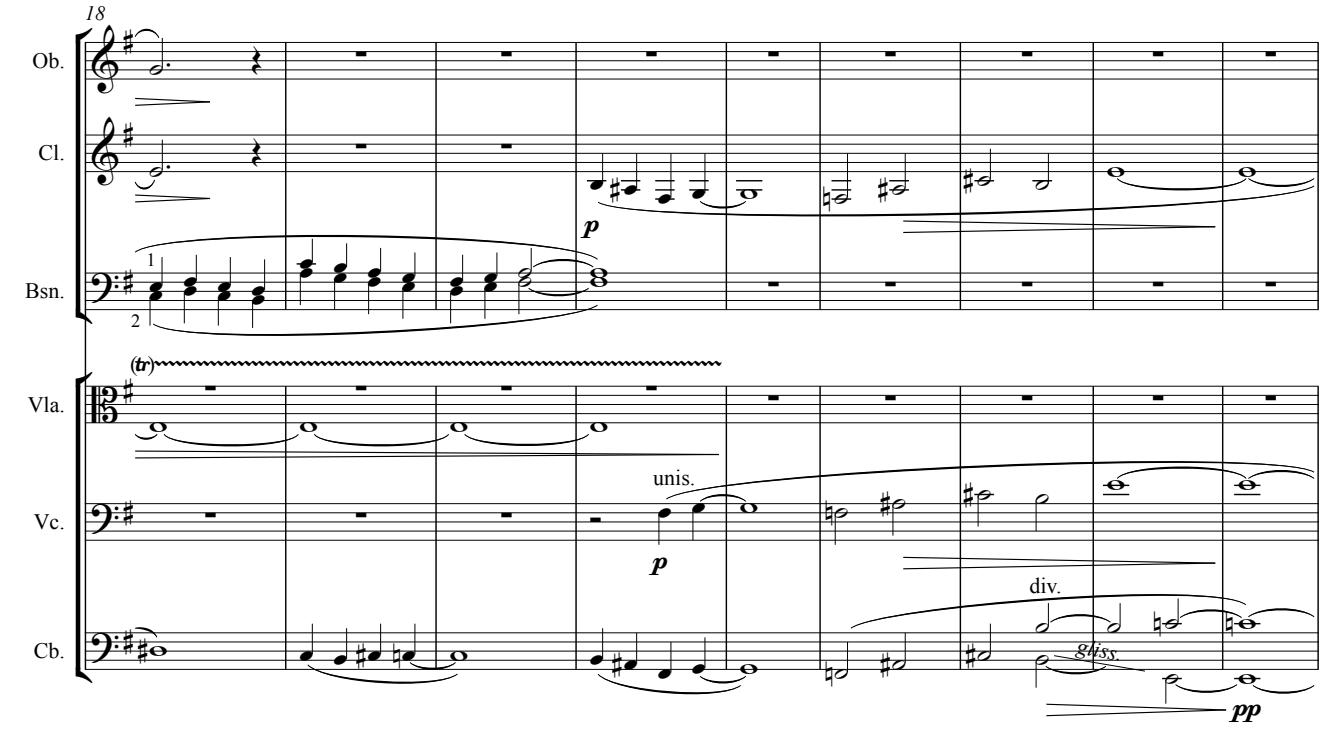
unis.
f
espress.


18
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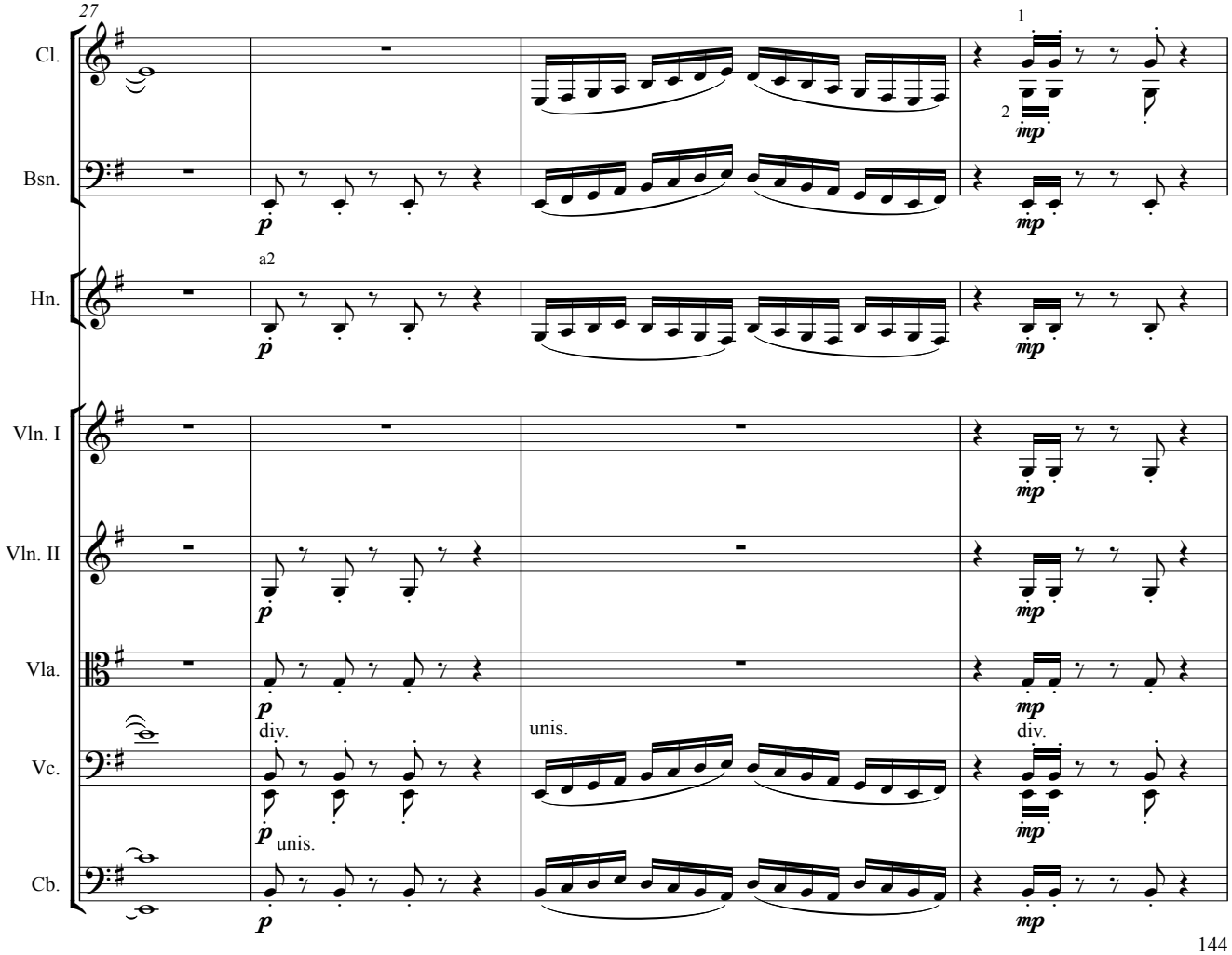
Cl.
Bsn.
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
(tr)
unis.
div.
gliss.
p
pp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Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
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Vc.
Cb.
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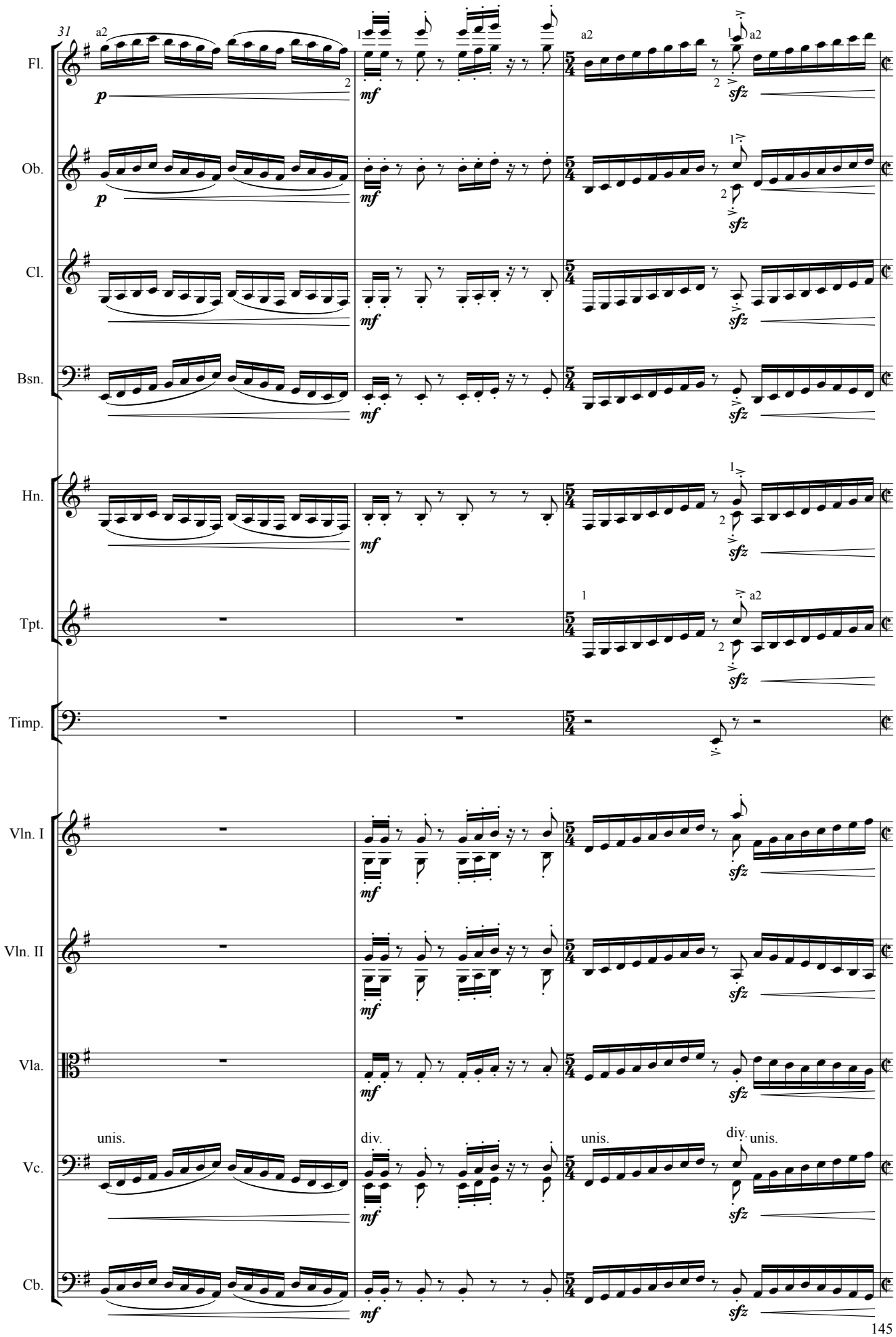
div.
unis.
p
mp


31
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
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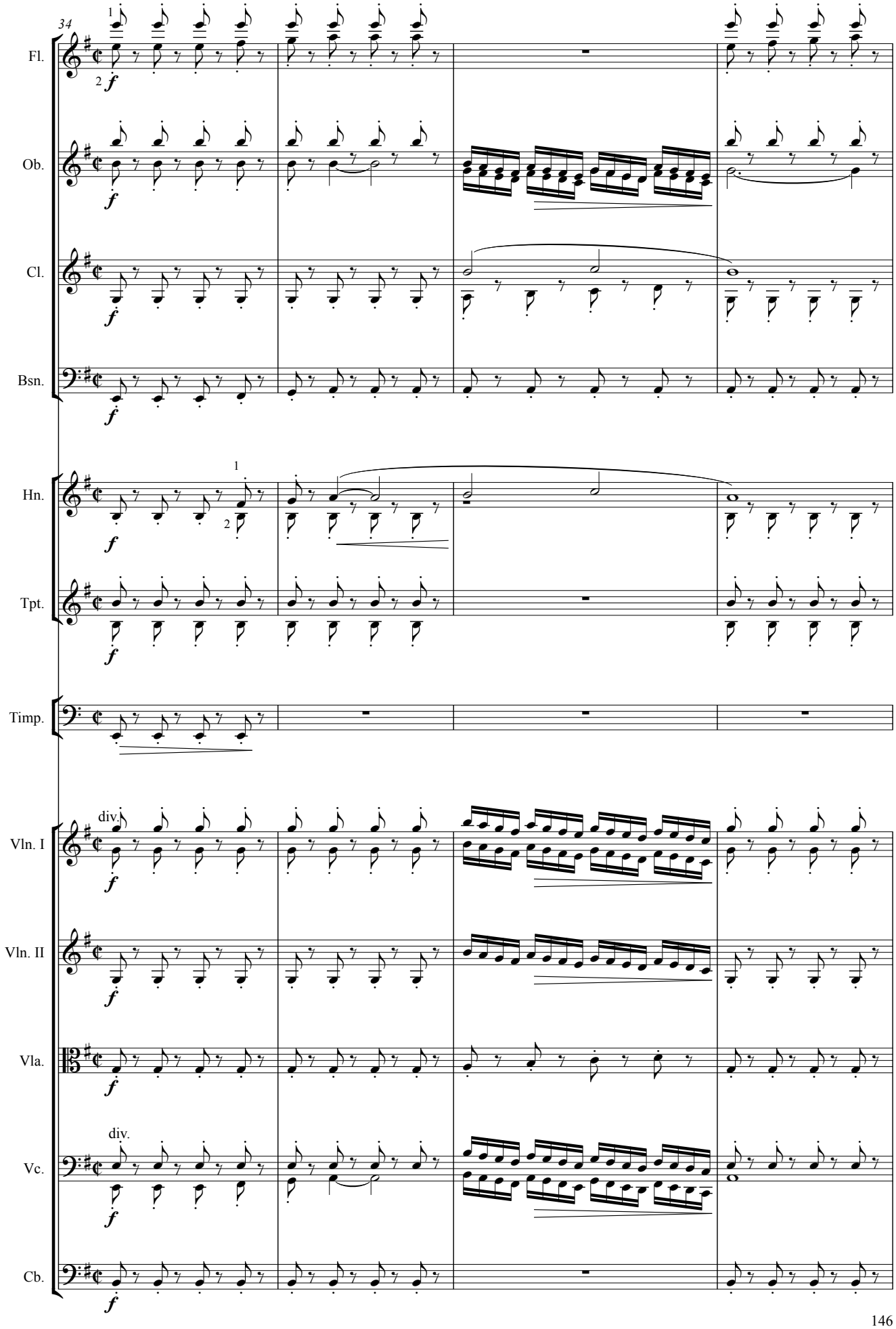
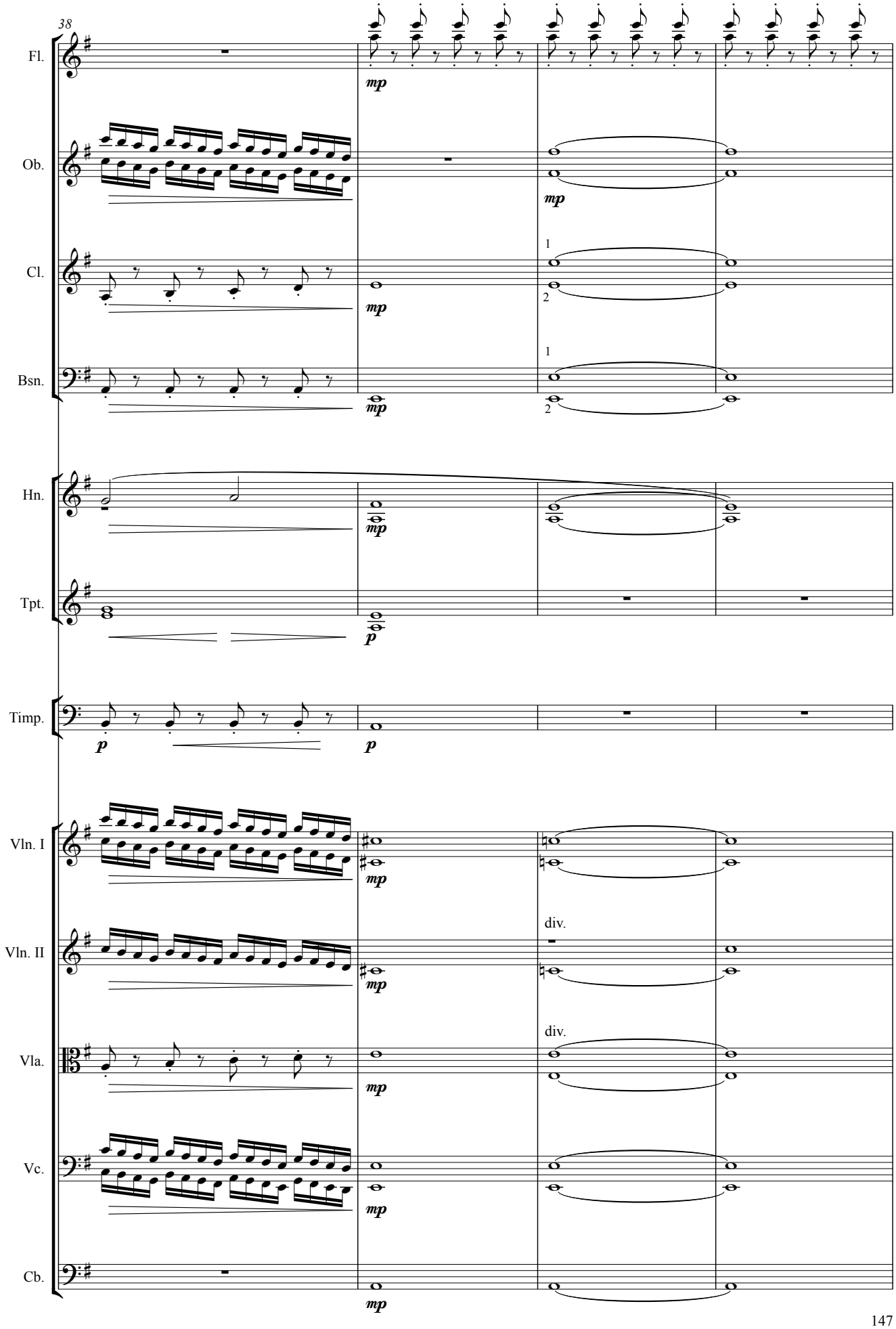
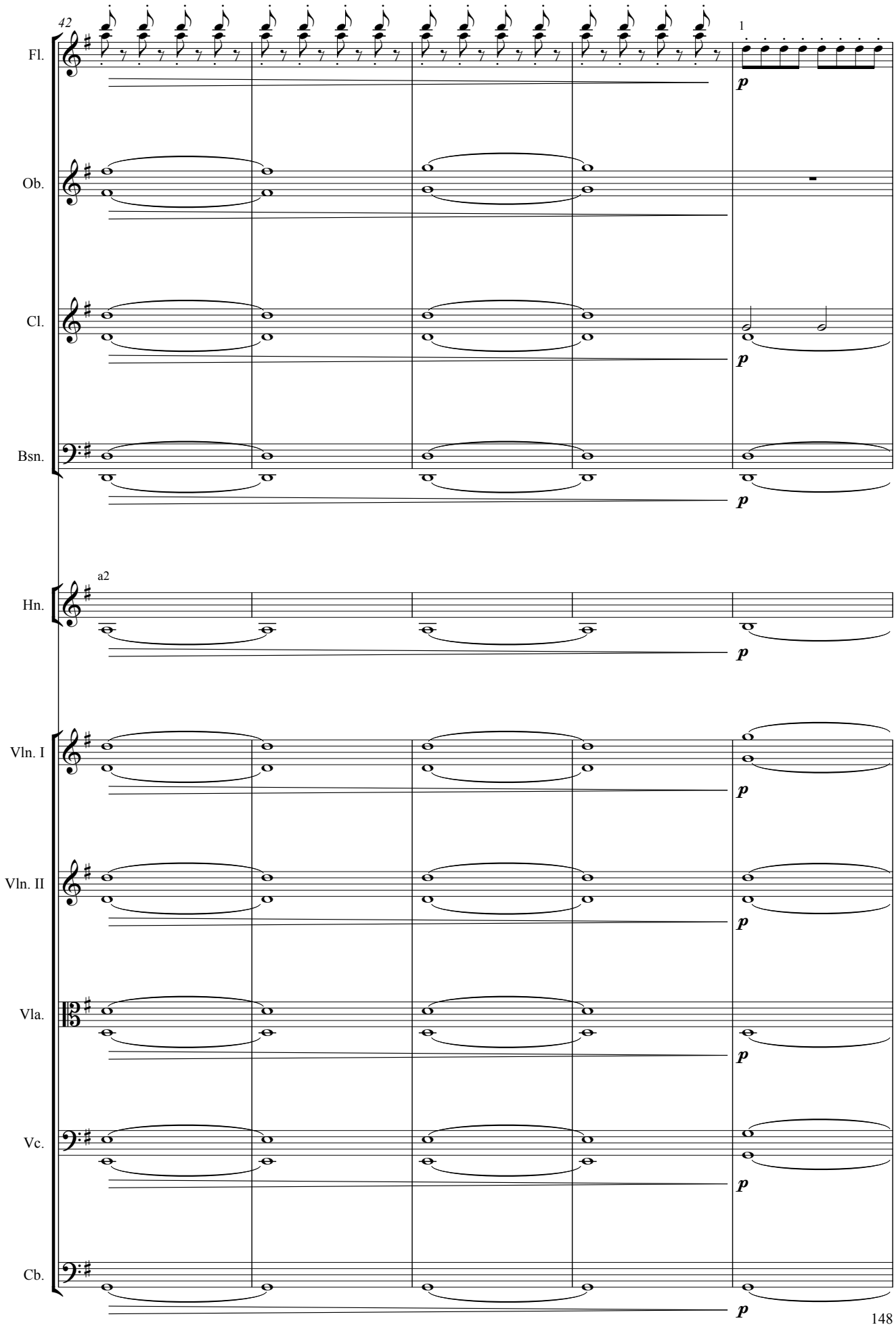
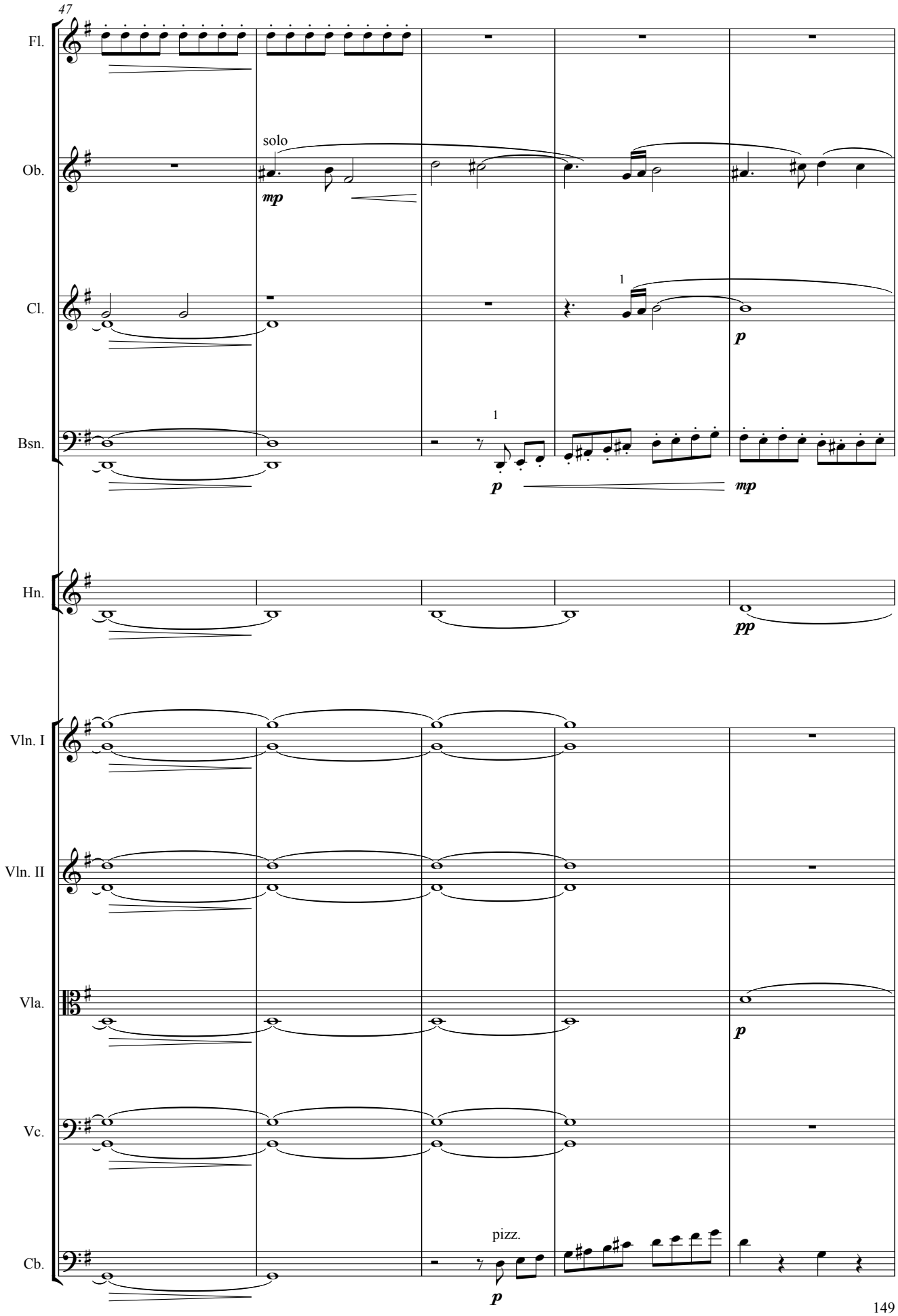
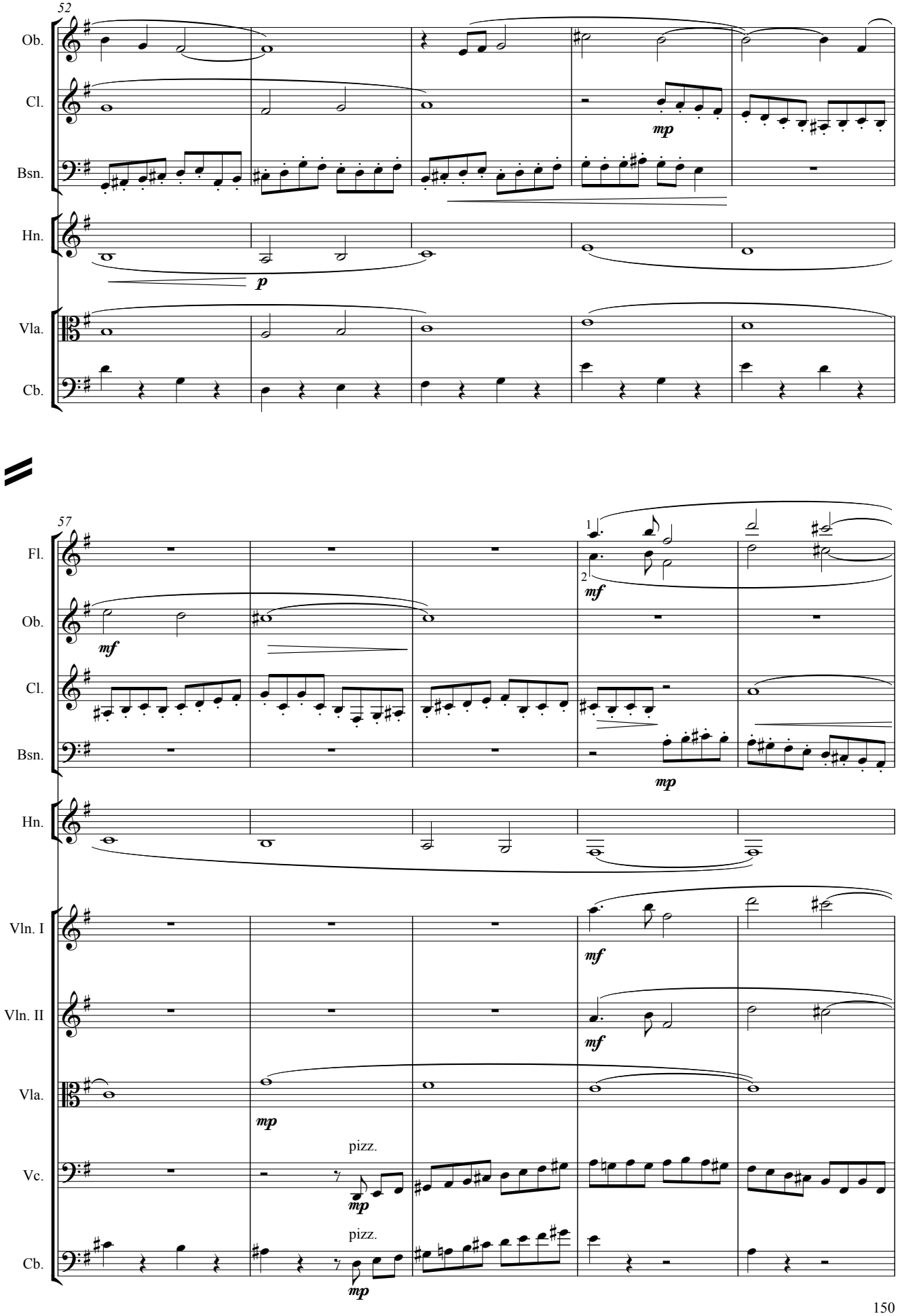
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
a2
unis.
div.
p
mf
sfz

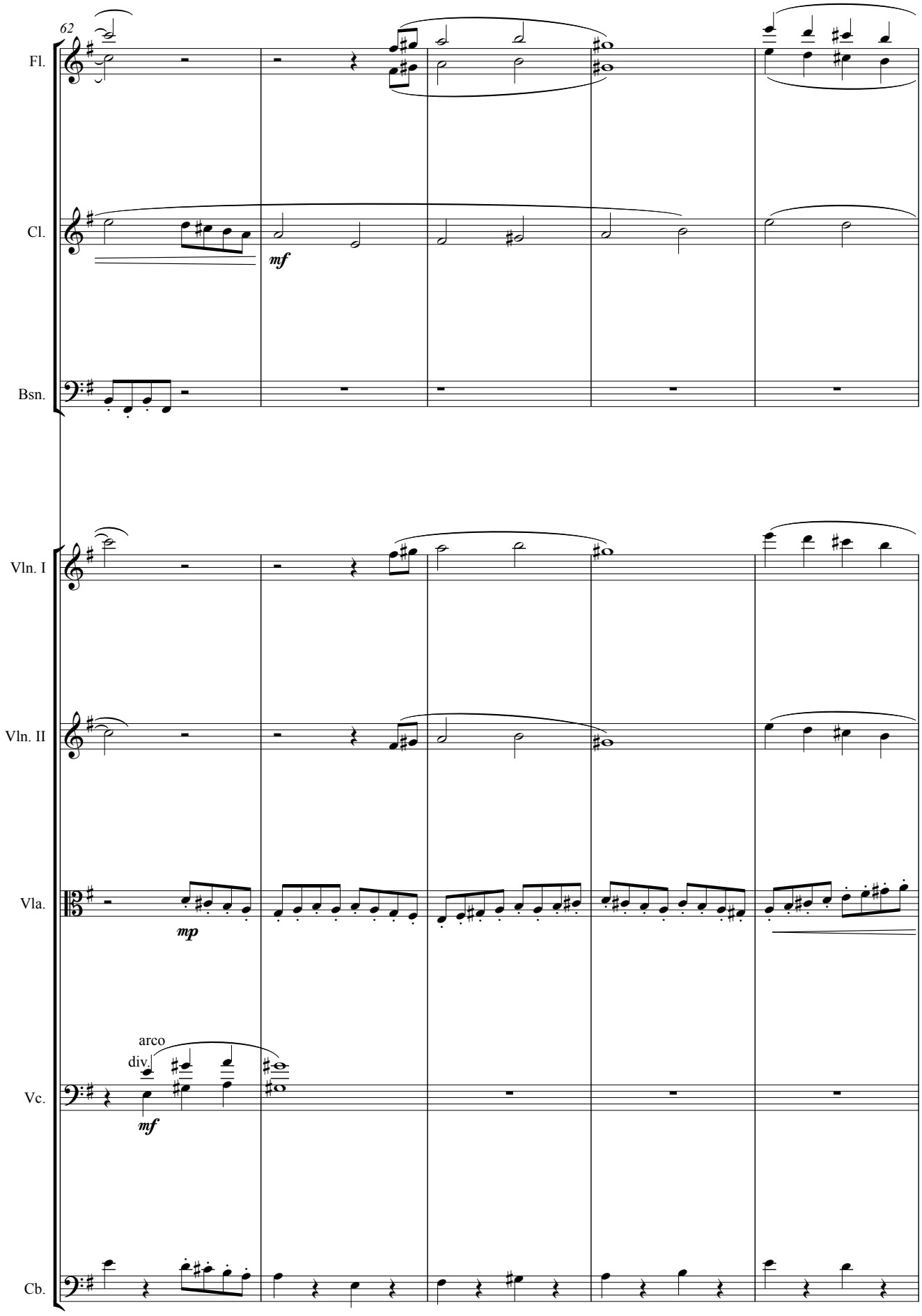

34
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
div.
div.

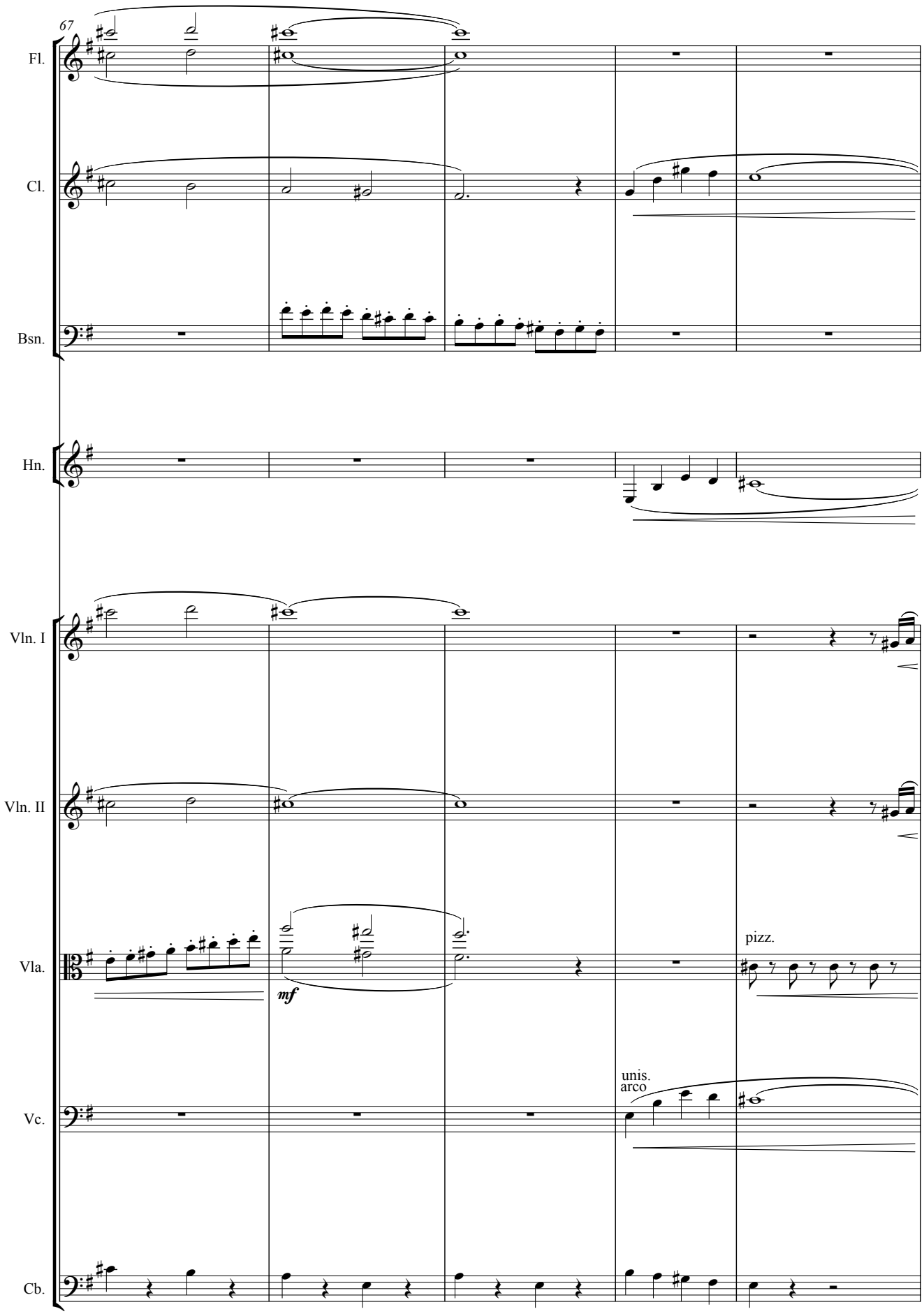

38
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mp
p
1
2
div.

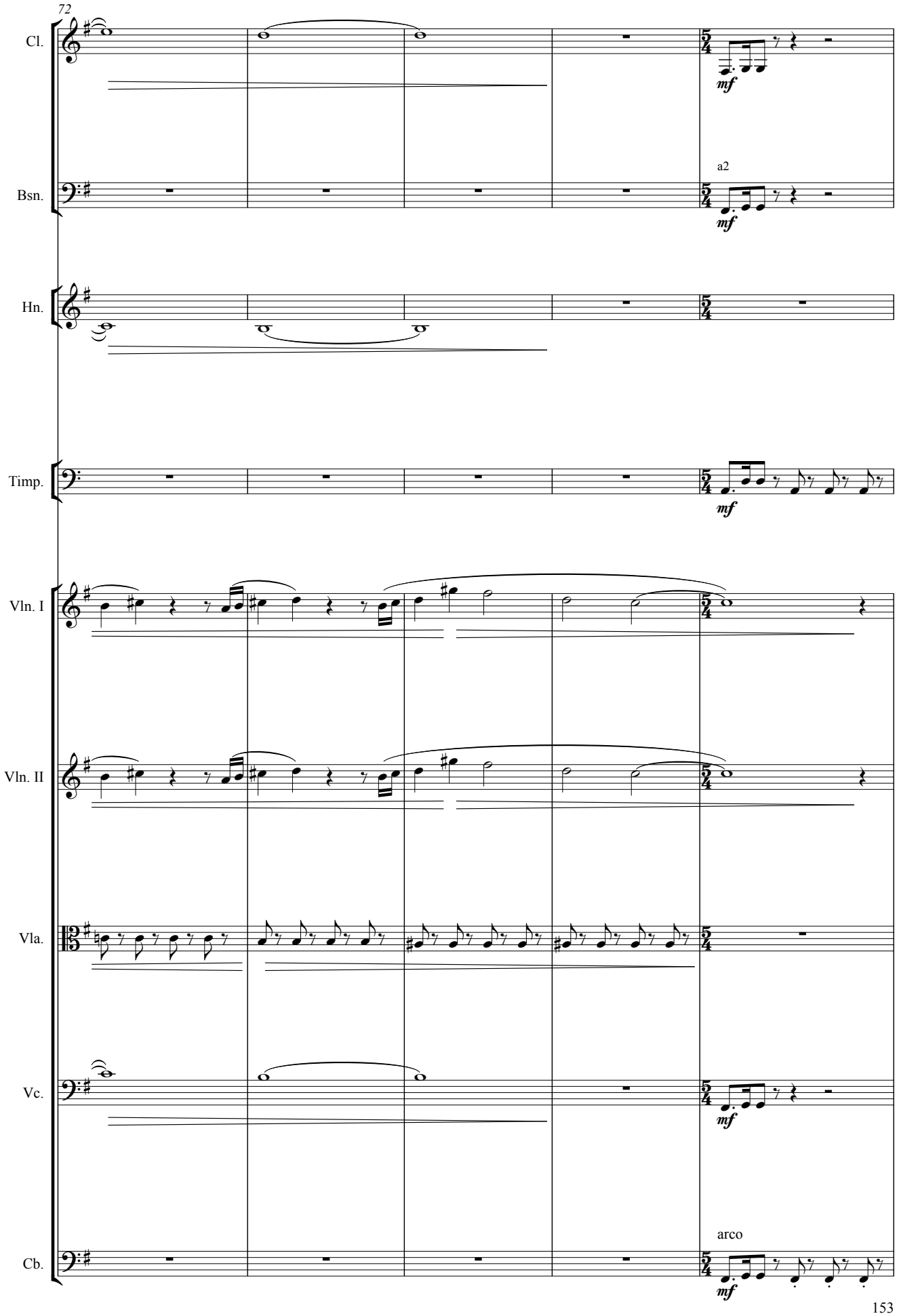

42
1
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
a2
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
p

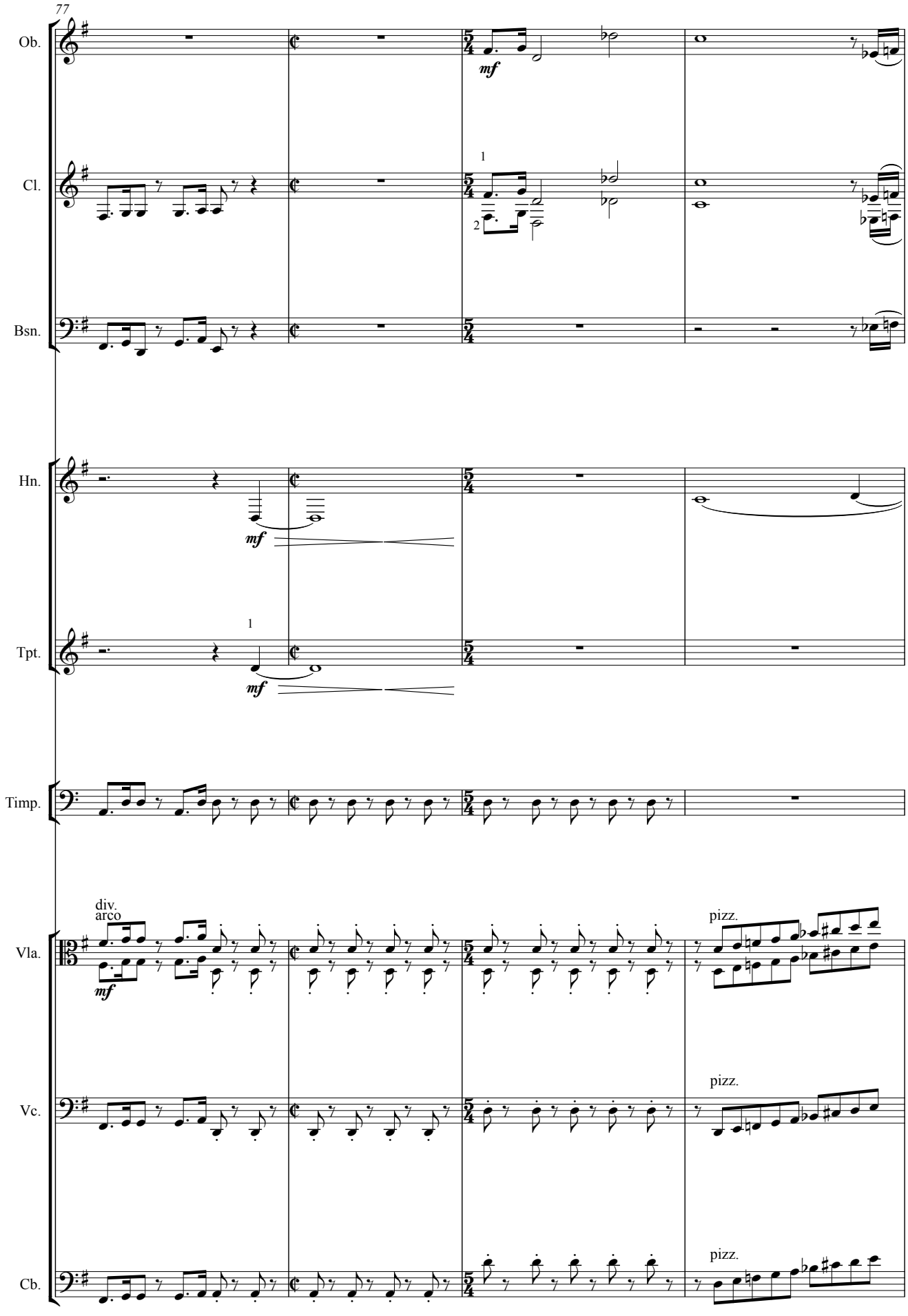

47
Fl.
Ob.
solo
mp
Cl.
1
p
Bsn.
1
p
mp
Hn.
pp
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
p
Vc.
Cb.
pizz.
p

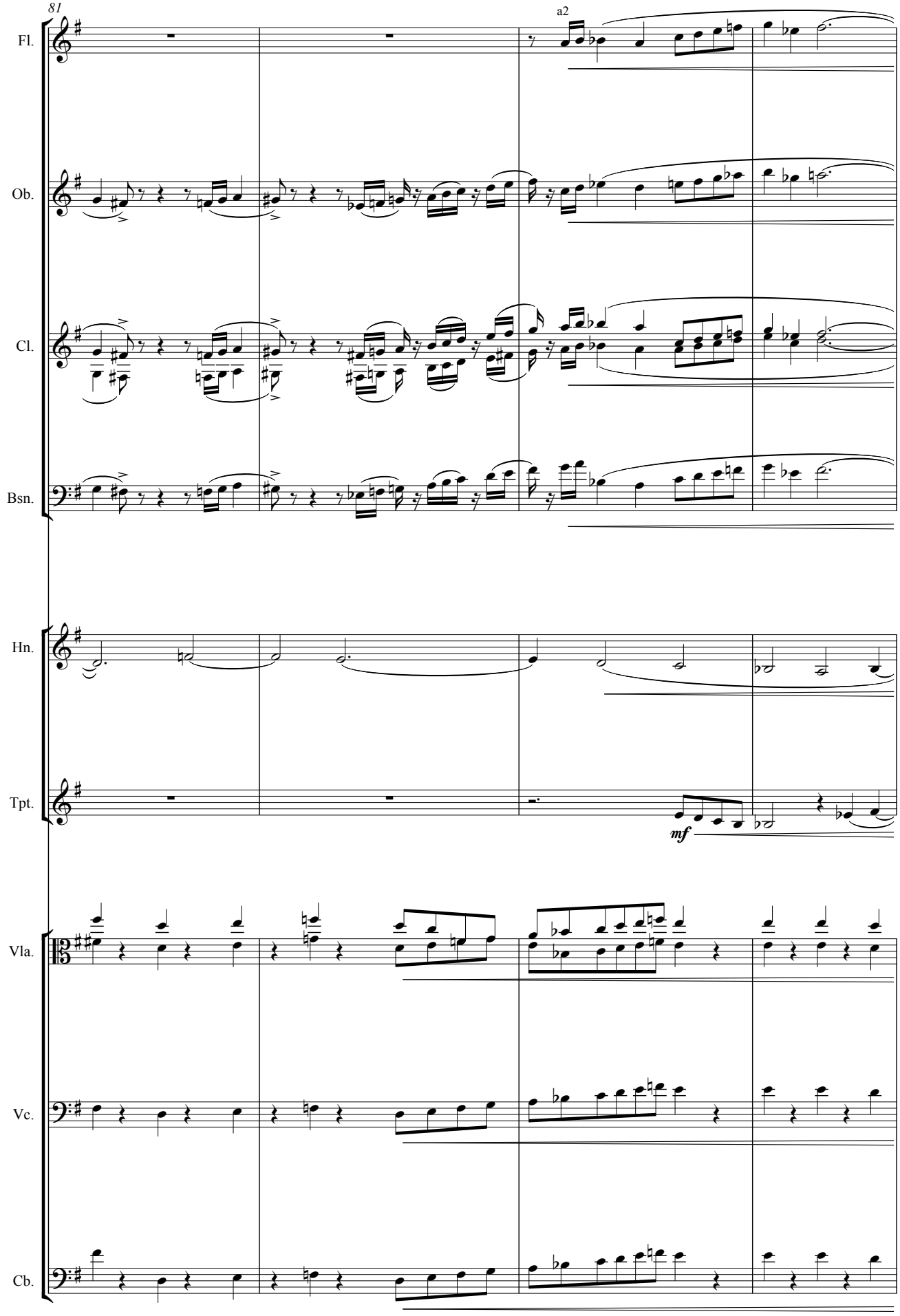

52
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vla.
Cb.
mp
p
57
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
1
2
mf
mp
pizz.

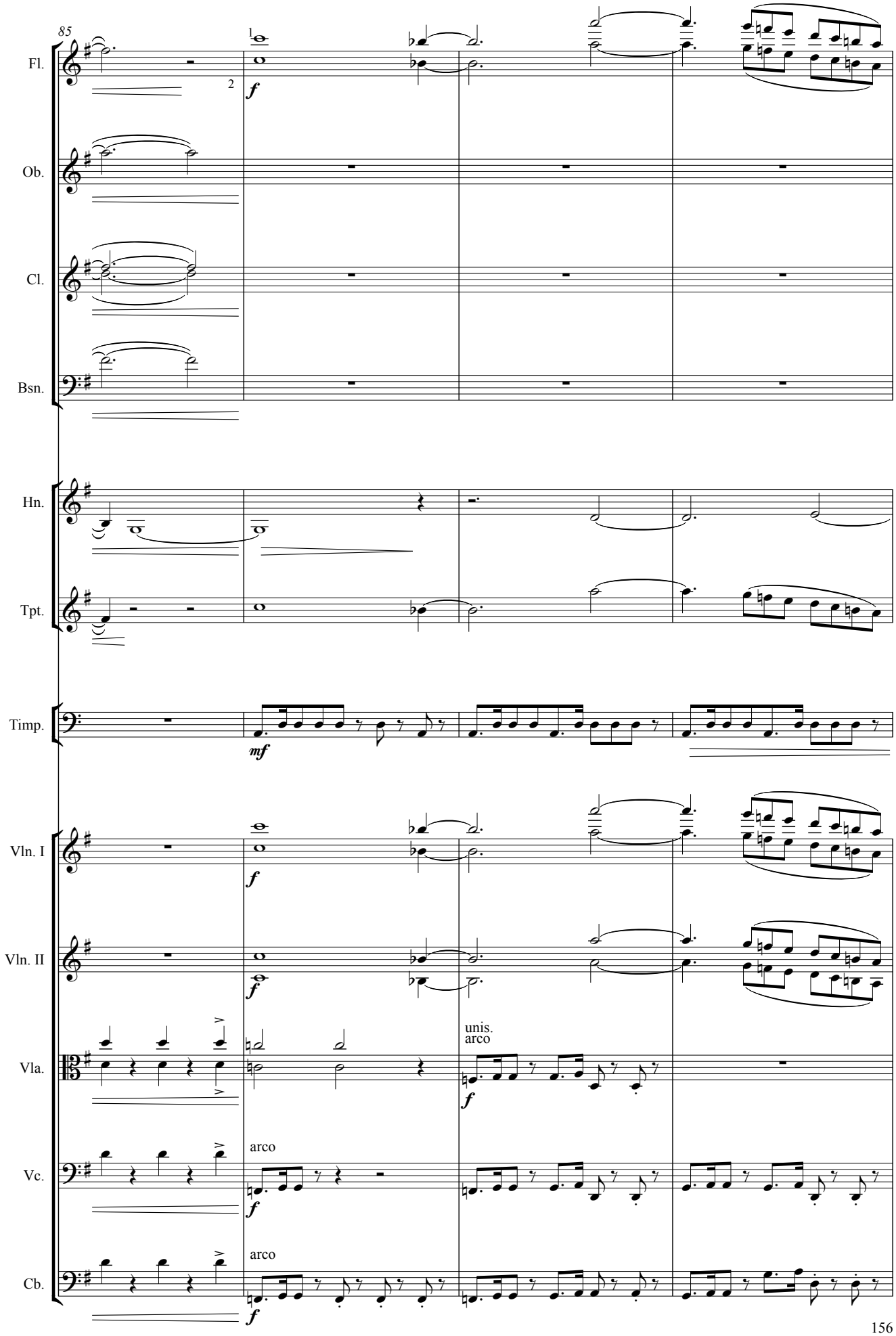

62
Fl.
Cl.
mf
Bsn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
mp
arco
div.
Vc.
mf
Cb.

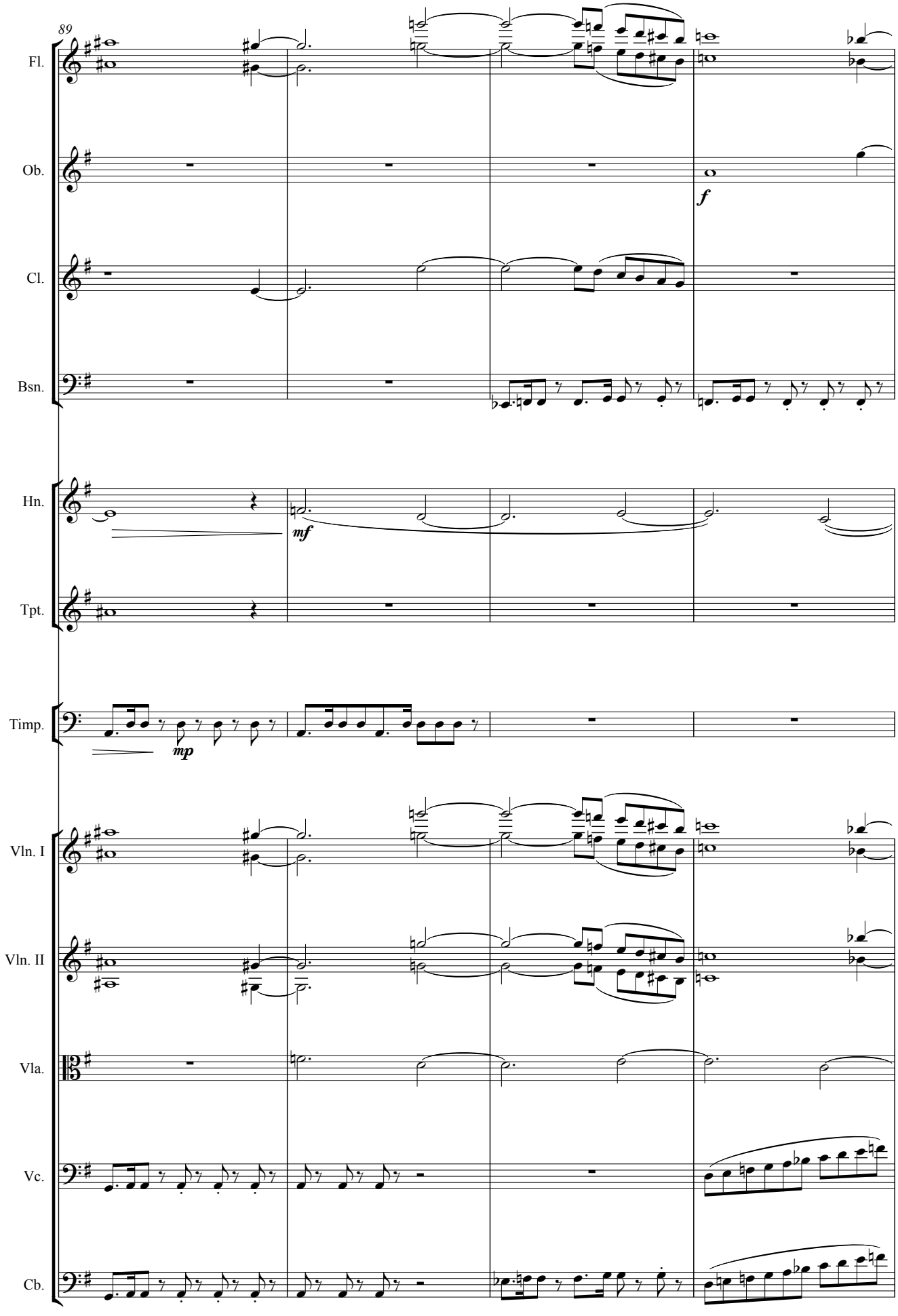

67
Fl.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
pizz.
unis.
arco

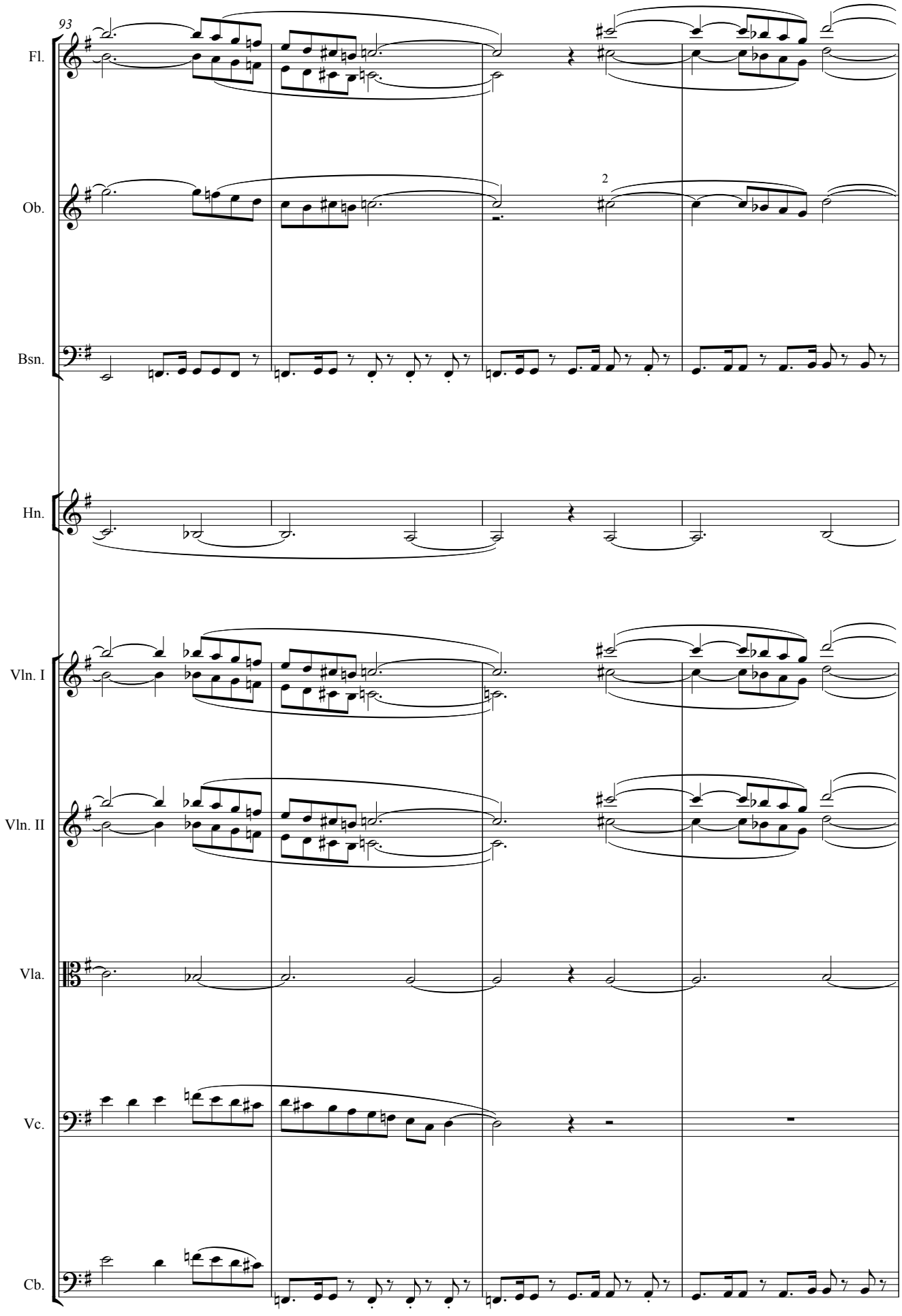

72
Cl.
Bsn.
a2
Hn.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
Cb.
mf

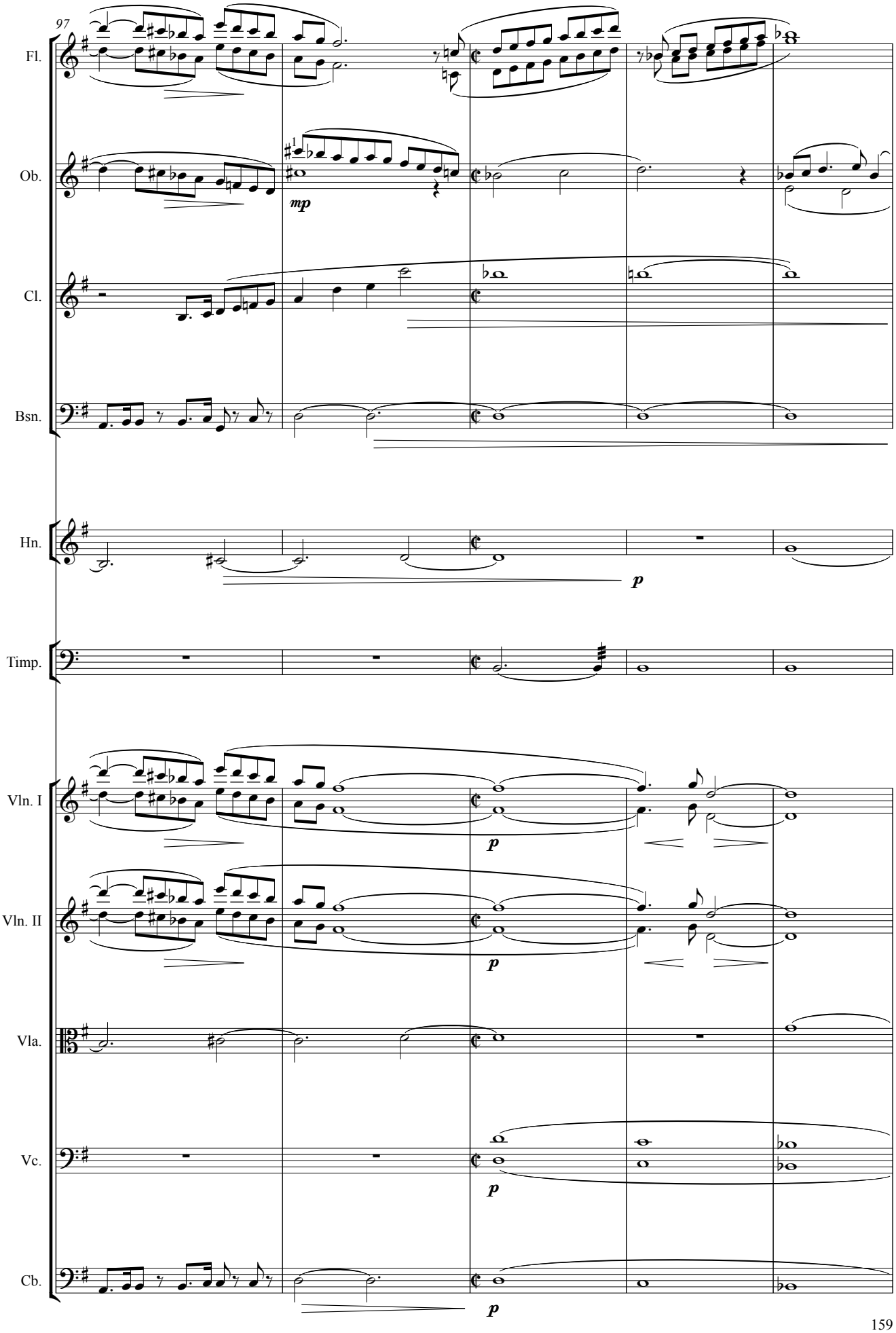

77
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
1
2
div.
arco
pizz.

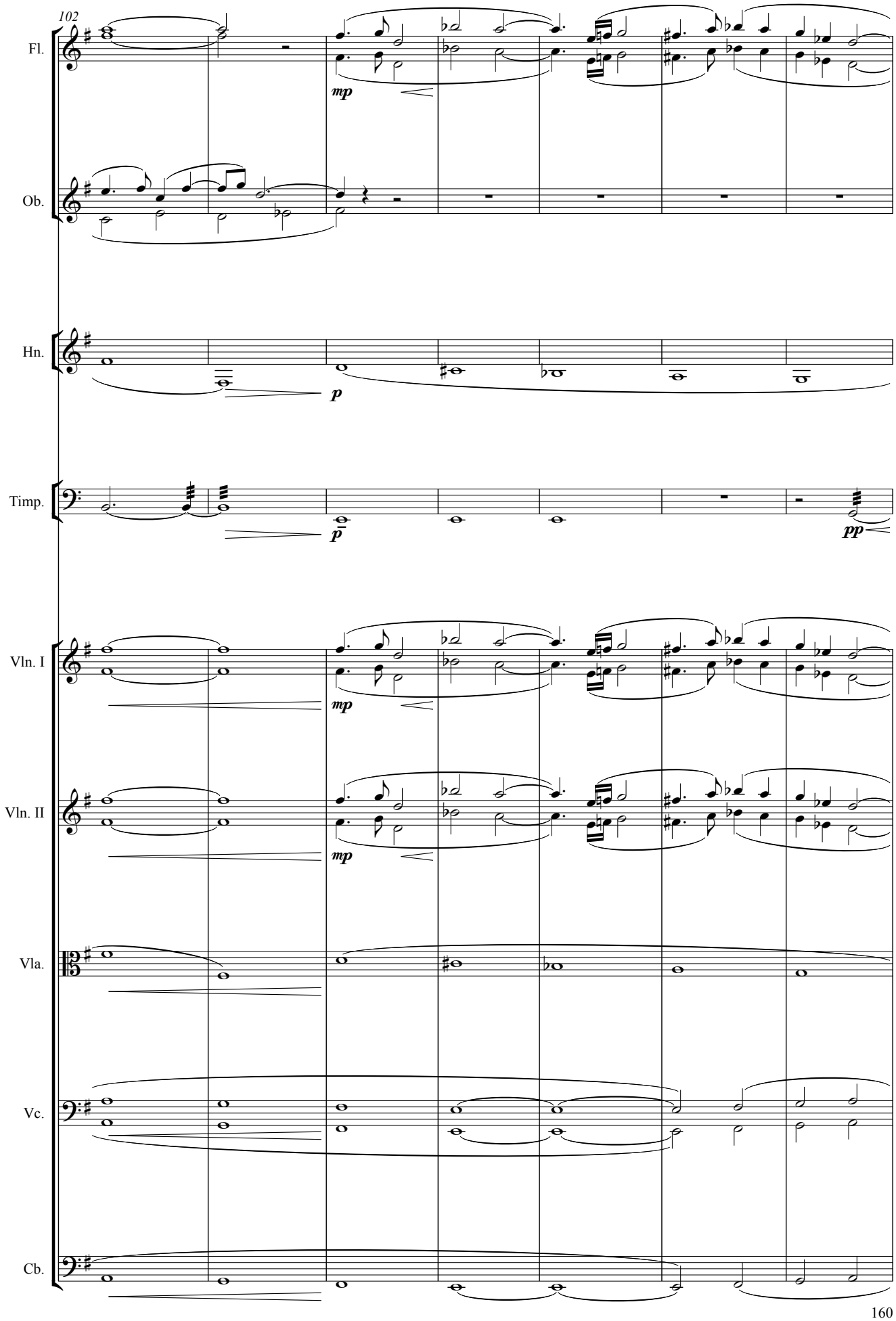

81
a2
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
mf
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

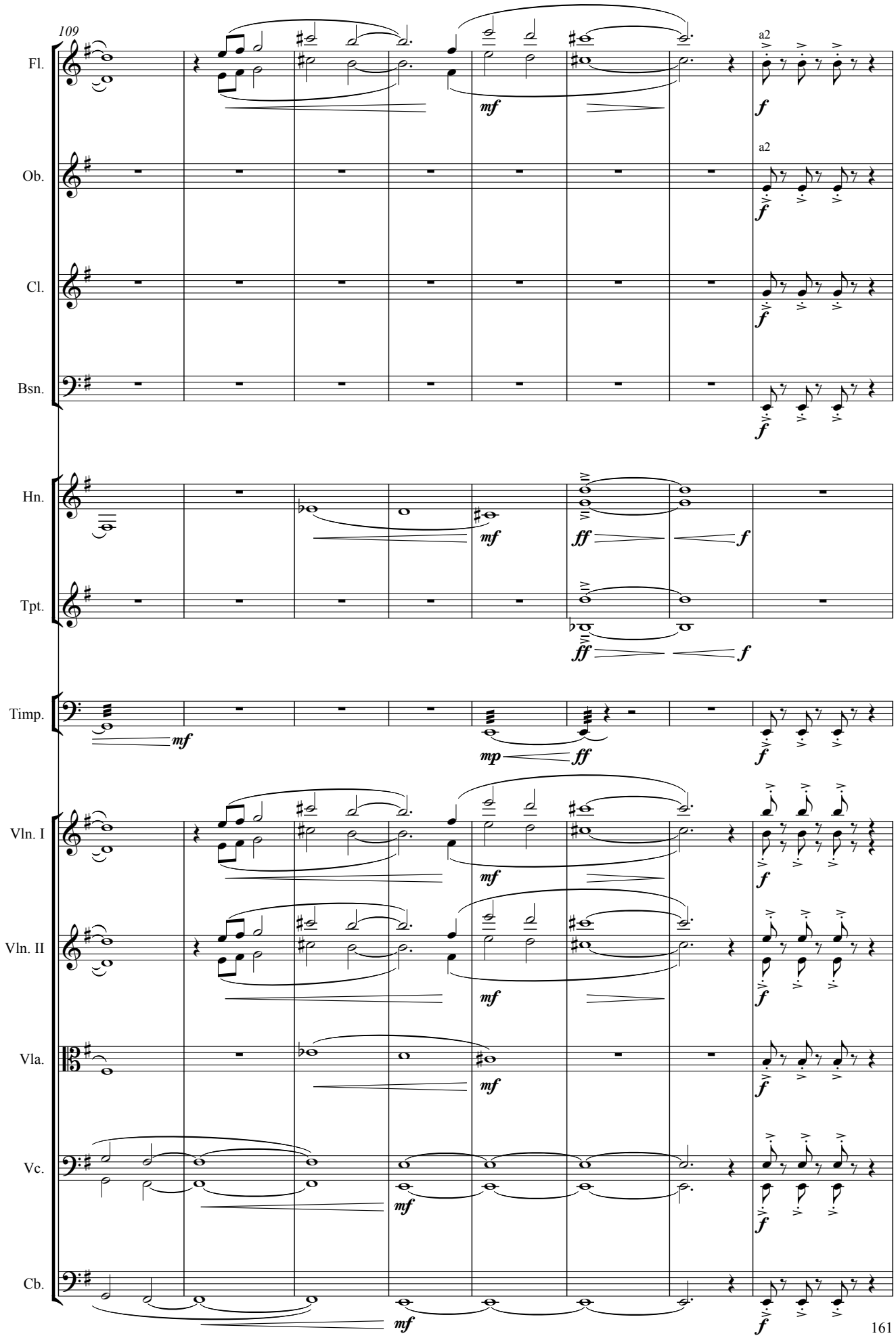

85
1
2
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
f
mf
unis.
arco
arco
arco

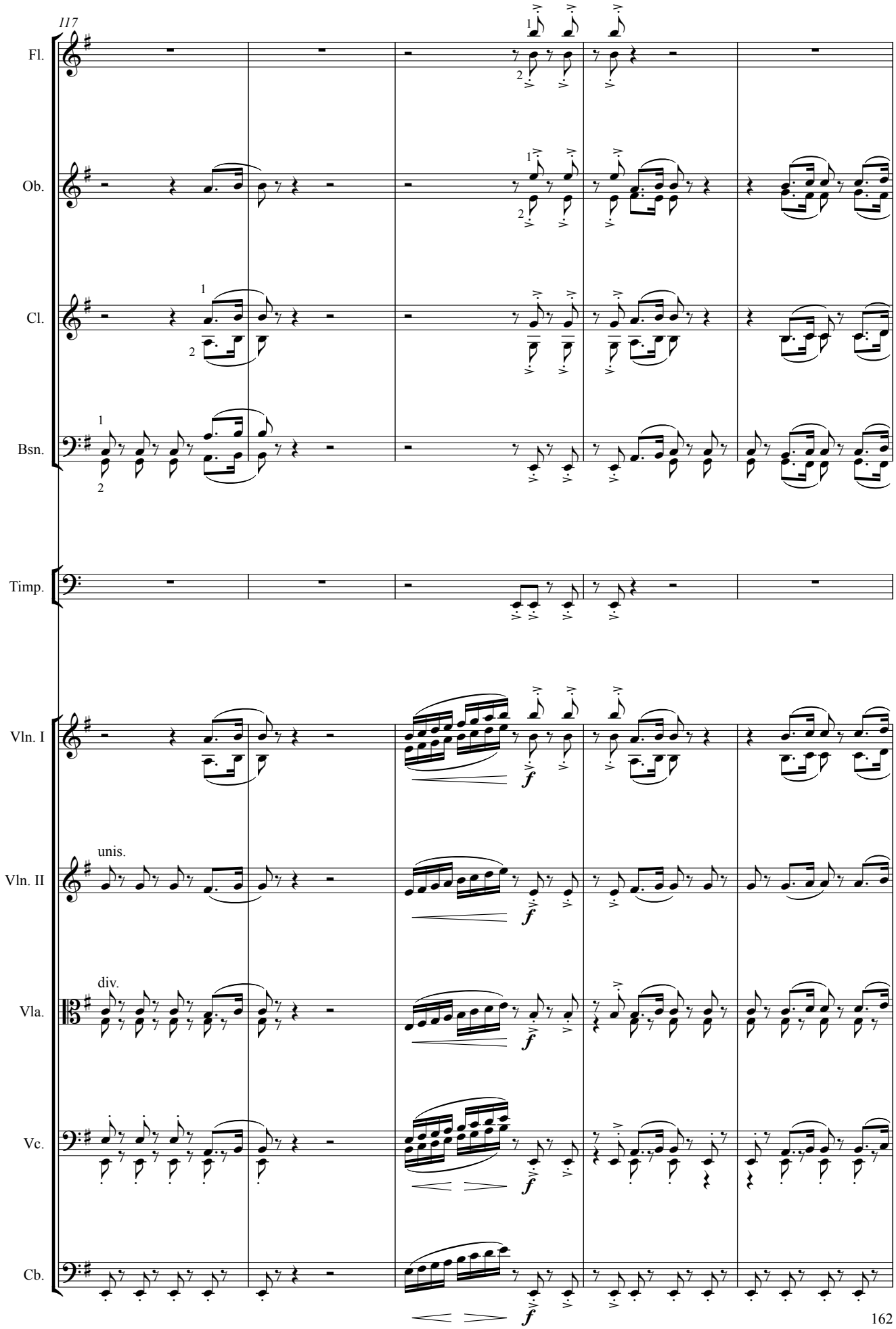

89
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
f
mf
mp

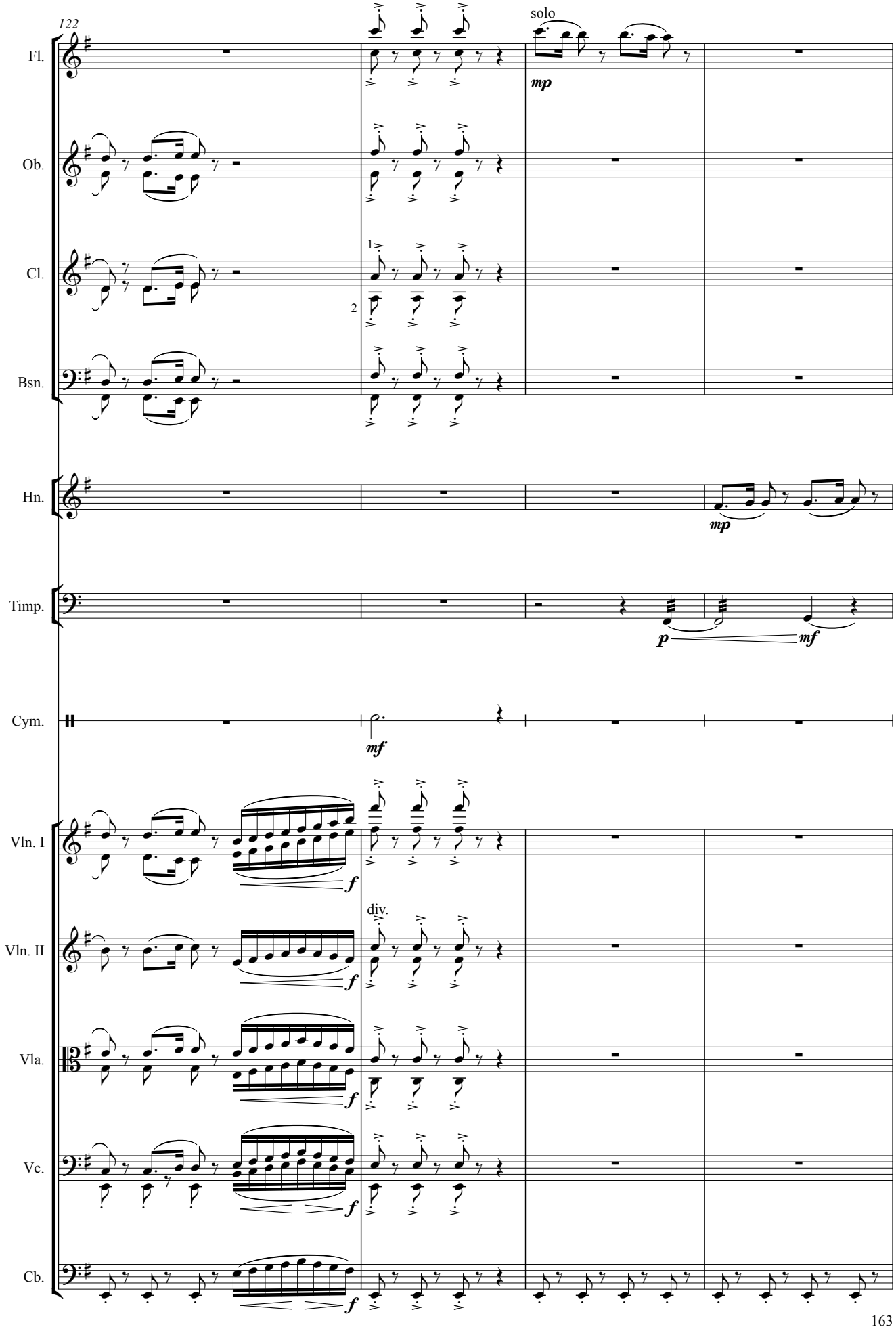

93
Fl.
Ob.
2
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

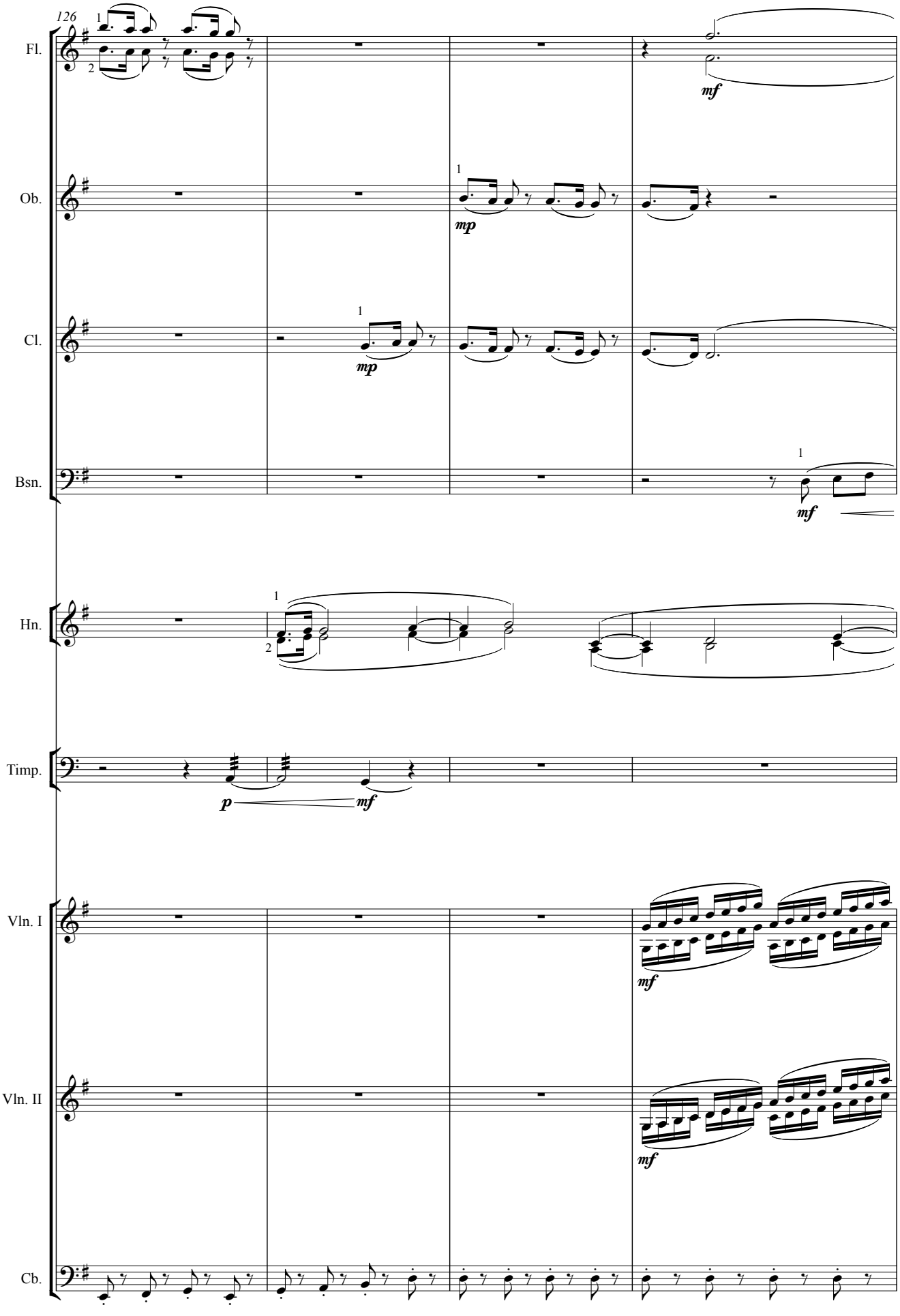

97
Fl.
Ob.
mp
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
p
Timp.
Vln. I
p
Vln. II
p
Vla.
Vc.
p
Cb.
p

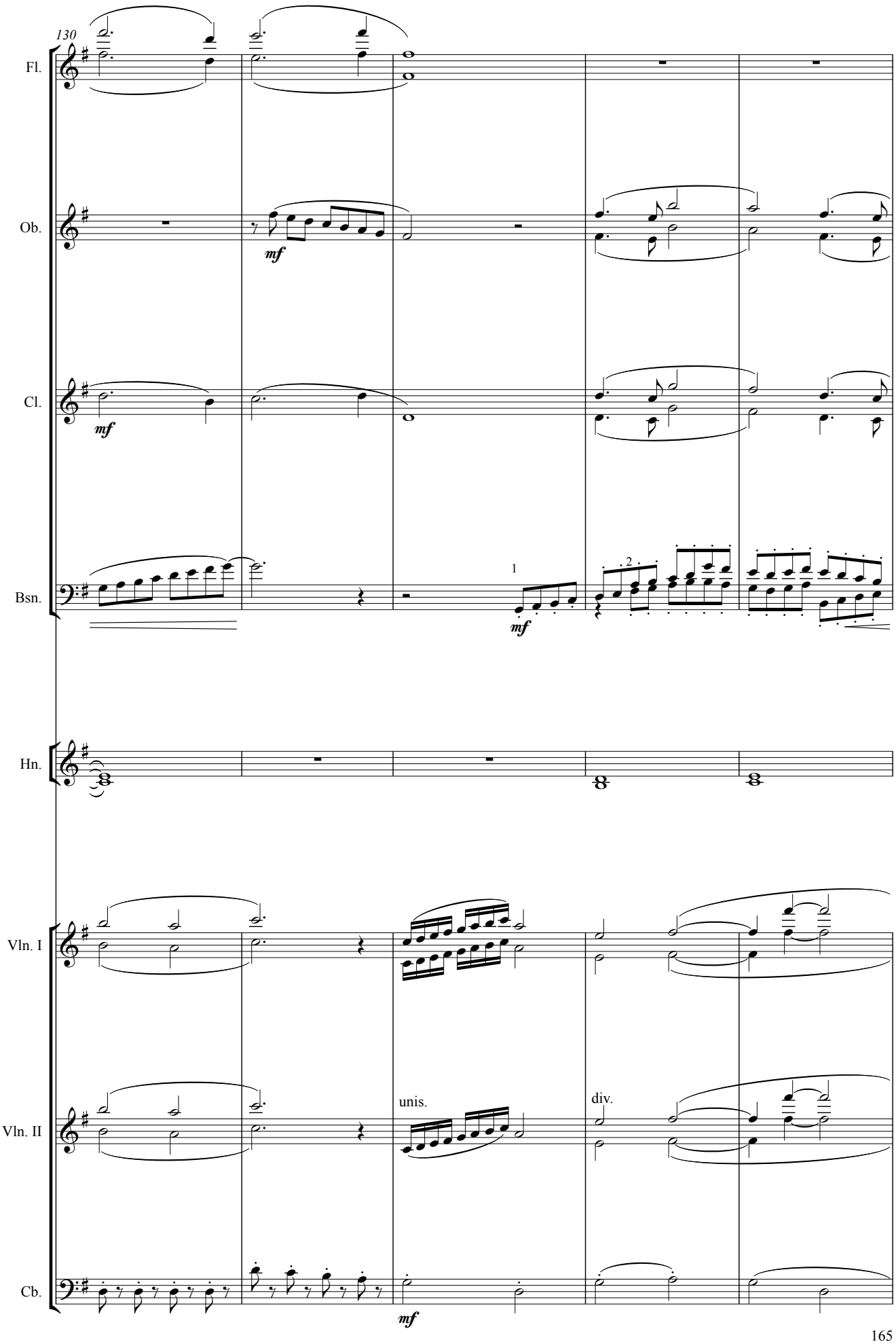

102
Fl.
Ob.
Hn.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mp
p
p
mp
mp
pp

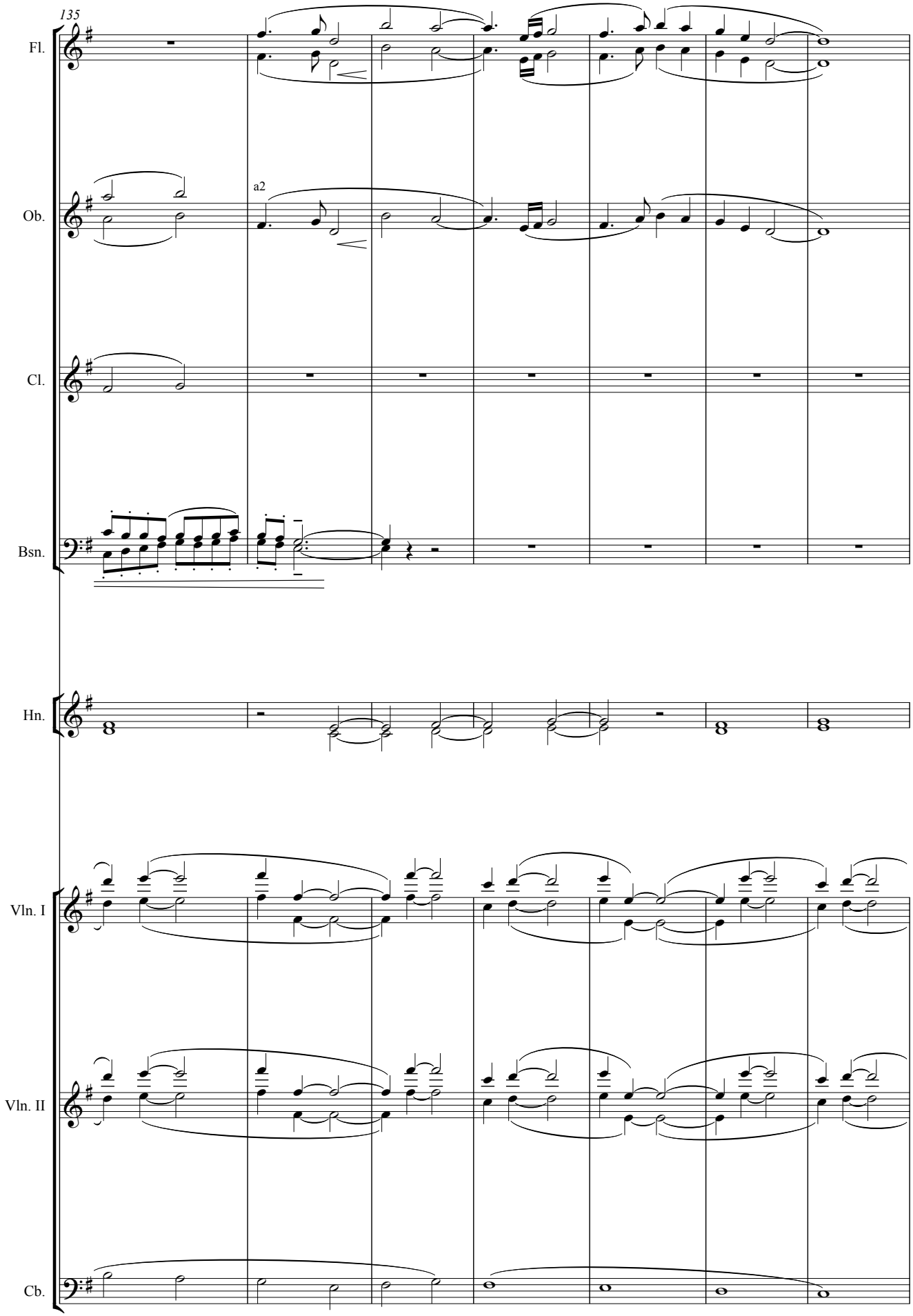

109
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
a2
mf
f
ff
mp

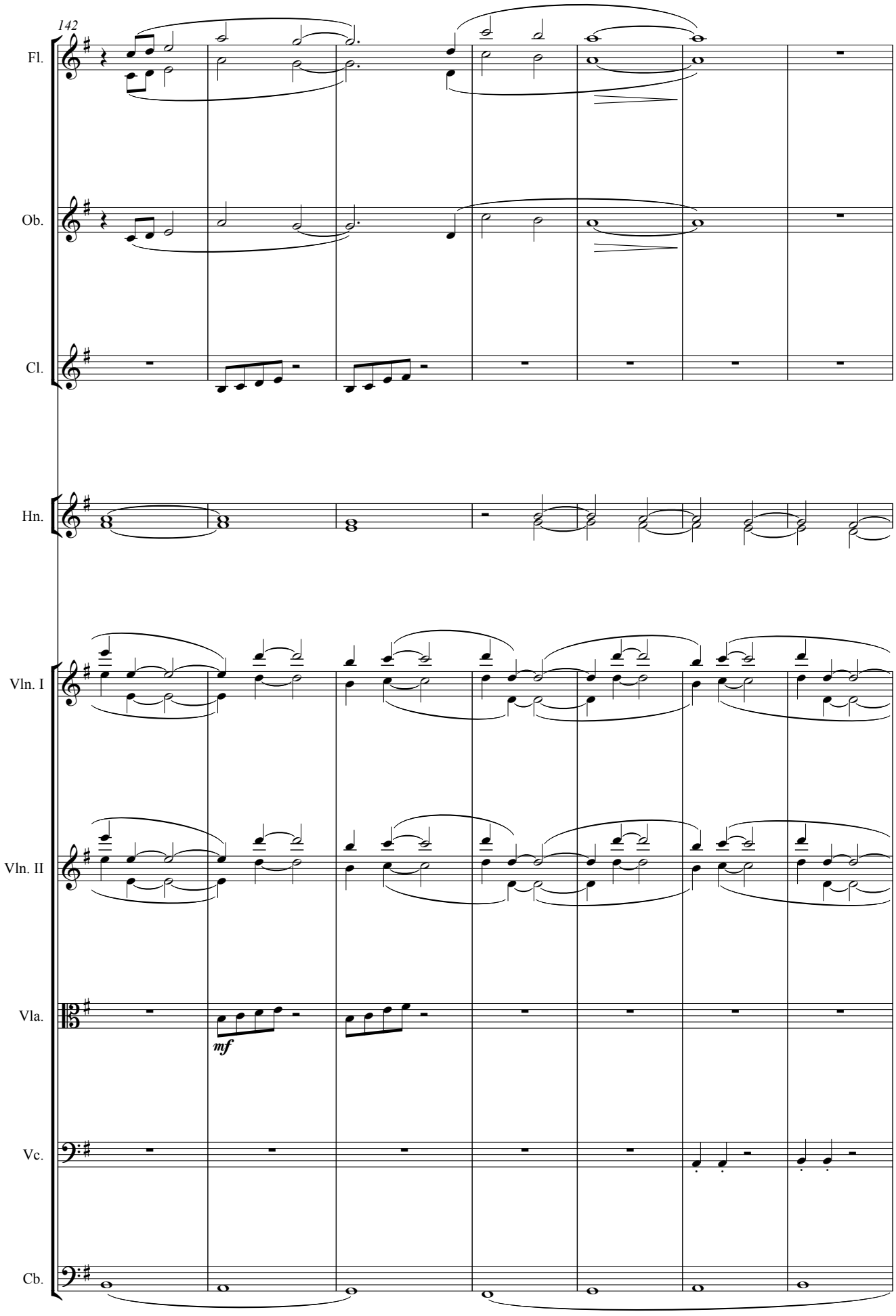

117
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
unis.
Vla.
div.
Vc.
Cb.
f

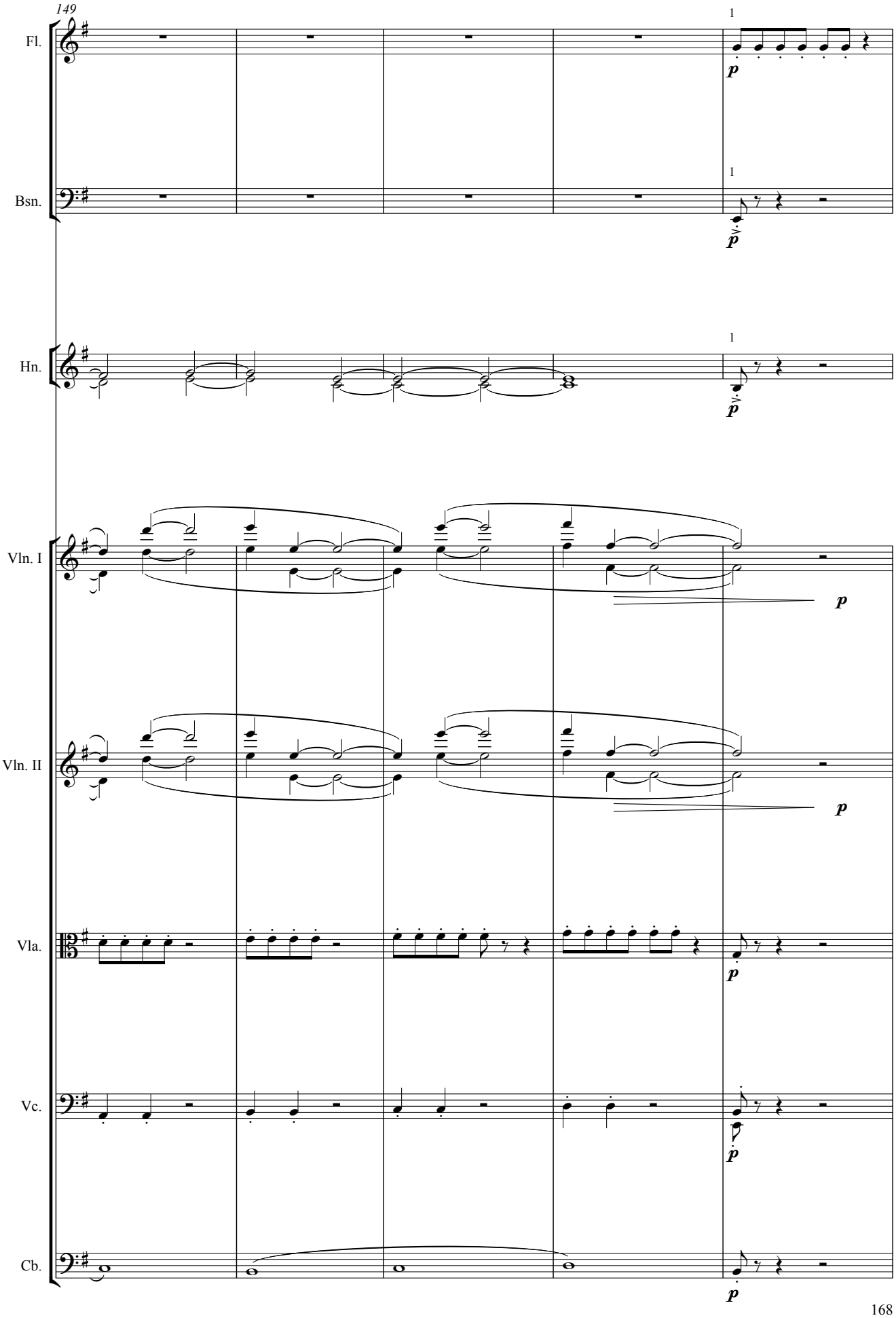

122
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Timp.
Cym.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
solo
mp
1
2
mp
p
mf
mf
f
f
f
f
f
div.

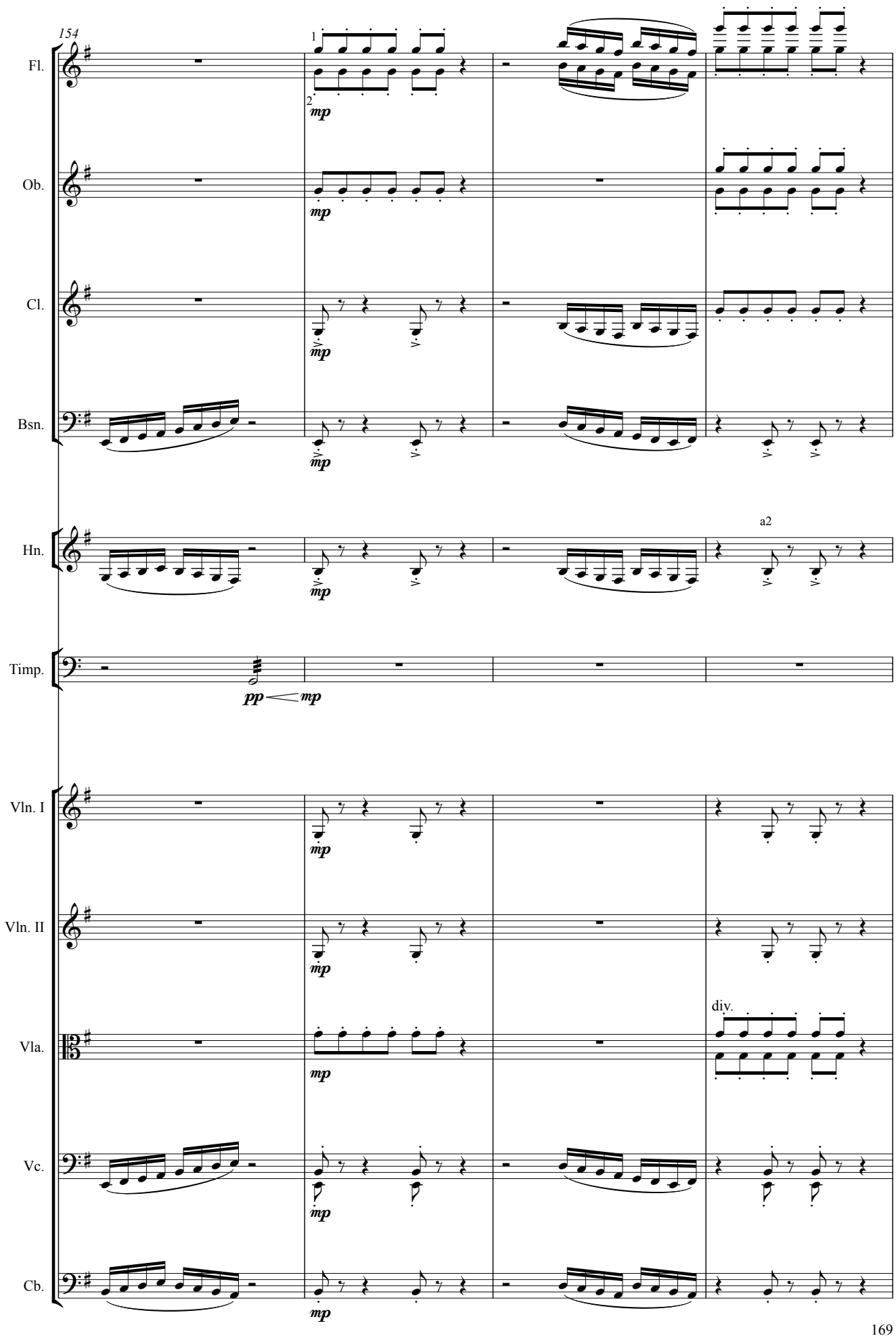

126
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Cb.
mf
mp
mp
mf
mf
p
mf
mf
mf

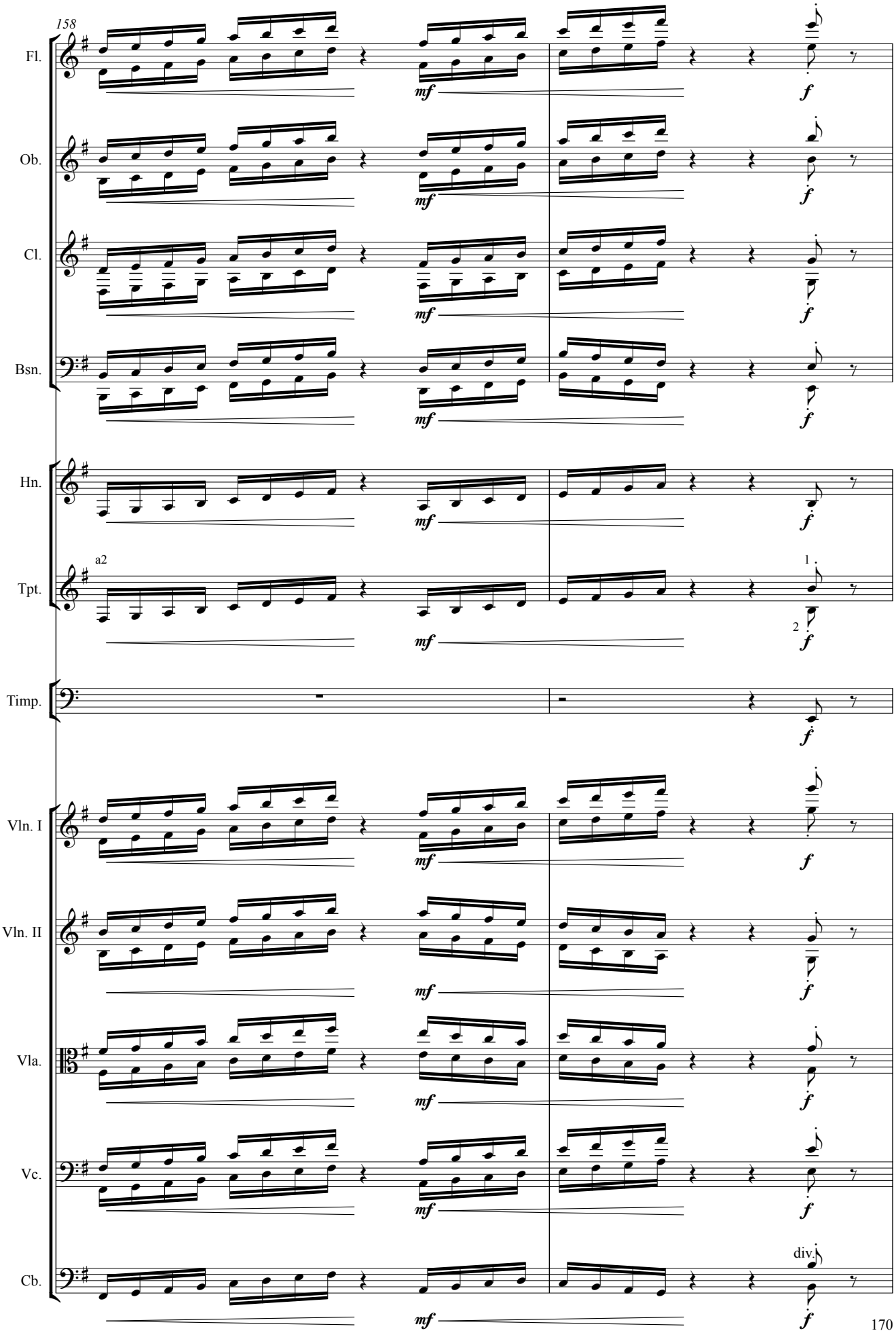

130
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Cb.
mf
1
2
unis.
div.

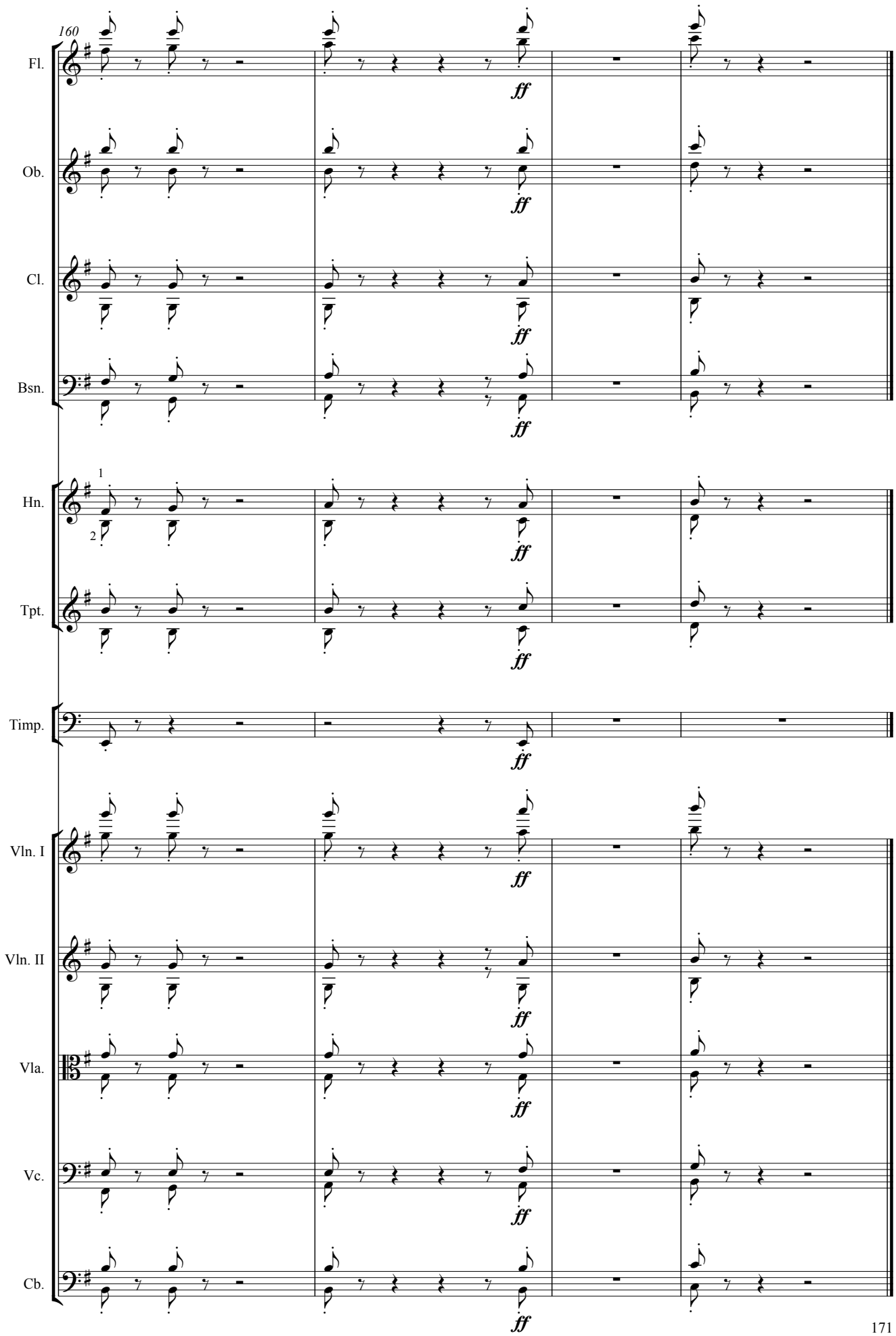

135
Fl.
Ob.
a2
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Cb.


142
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
mf
Vc.
Cb.


149
Fl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
1
p


154
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
1
2
mp
a2
pp
div.


158
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
a2
1
2
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
div.
mf
f


160
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
1
2
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
ff

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