VLADIMIR'S ROUND TABLE
by
STEFANS GROVÉ:

TRANSCRIPTION FOR TWO PIANOS

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Pectora roborant cultus recti

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Brendan Vincent Hollins 27 October 2009

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Abstract

The work represented here is a transcription for two pianos of *Vladimir's Round Table*, a relatively unknown, large-scale orchestral work by Stefans Grové.

This particular transcription involved an intensive study of the orchestral score in order to best reproduce the work in the most effective way possible for two pianos, as well as to create a sound and convincing work for the two-piano repertoire.

The process involved academic as well as pianistic substantiations regarding the inclusion or exclusion of various elements of the orchestral score. It is my hope that the final product is a good representation of a work supported by academic research but not so much as to exclude the possibility of freedom of performance.

The ultimate aim of this transcription is to hopefully re-ignite interest in the work as well as to expose it to a wider audience and, in turn, encourage performance of the work in its original form.

Opsomming

Die werk wat hiermee voorgelê word, is 'n transkripsie vir twee klaviere van Stefans Grové se minder-bekende orkeswerk, *Wladimir se Tafelronde* (die Afrikaanse titel wat op die titelblad van die manuskrip verskyn).

Die transkripsie het 'n deeglike studie van die orkespartituur behels om sodoende die werk ten beste in die klavier-duo genre weer te gee, en om 'n oortuigende dog bruikbare werk vir hierdie tipe repertorium te skep.

Ten einde die insluiting of weglating van bepaalde elemente van die orkespartituur teen mekaar op te weeg, is die proses deur sowel akademiese- en pianistiese oorwegings ingegee.

Ek hoop dat die finale produk verteenwoordigend is van 'n transkripsie wat deur 'n akademiese ondersoek ondersteun is, terwyl dit ruimte laat vir praktiese oorwegings wat met die uitvoeringsmoontlikhede en -beperkinginge van die klavier-duo weergawe ter sprake kom.

Die hoofdoel met die transkripsie is om hopenlik hernude belangstelling in Grové se orkeswerkte te wek; om dit aan 'n wyer publiek bekend te stel, en op sy beurt uitvoerings van die werk in sy oorspronklike gedaante aan te moedig.

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A. Critical Commentary

“With a creative career spanning more than fifty years, an impressive output covering the most important musical genres and media, and a style which is simultaneously unique and essentially South African, Stefans Grové is hailed as a leading exponent of South African serious music”(Grové, I, 1996). Winner of the Fulbright scholarship in 1953, he obtained his Master’s degree from Harvard University. Alongside many commissions by the SABC, Oude Libertas, SAMRO, Belgian Radio, and others, he has won numerous composition prizes in South Africa and abroad in addition to his recognition as an educator of repute which earned him an entry in the annual publication, *Outstanding Educators of America* (Rörich, 1987). Considering his large output, it is not difficult to understand why his works have been performed internationally since 1953.

Although much has already been written about him and his works, there is still so much to discover and unearth. After reading a great deal about the man and his compositions, with the purpose of finding a gap in the existing intellectual harvest, the decision was made to embark on something not entirely common. A transcription was a potentially appealing undertaking because as a pianist this would exercise and inflate knowledge bases of creative yet disciplined writing, orchestral practice, compositional study, and piano technique. Whether a transcription of an orchestral work can be considered as research (in the true sense of the word) or not has become a debateable point, just as much as the recognition and merit of music performances as valid research components has resulted in a wide-ranging discourse. Nonetheless, the aim of the Two Piano Transcription of *Vladimir’s Round Table* by Stefans Grové is two-fold: To introduce a new South African work to the Two Piano repertoire; and to expose a higher number of people to an important large-scale orchestral work from an earlier compositional period in Grové’s life, by introducing it in a smaller, cost effective, and intimate form - in this case, that of the Two Piano transcription.

The practice of transcription is often a thorny and troublesome undertaking. The question of transcription qualifying as research has been debated ardently by many a musicologist. According to Marcel Cobussen (2007, 19), a research project such as this falls under the category of Practice-based Research (PBR). By this, he means that “artistic experimentations are the source of data which will be used to answer initial research questions, themselves emanating from the artistic practice” (Cobussen, 2007). He is at pains to mention that because of the initial research, “there is a possibility that these works will also be the *results* of the research” and that “the final outcomes of the research project are…communicated through art and distributed by means of art works" (*ibid*). Cobussen goes further to explain that, in his view, while research is an important function in the area of transcription, knowledge itself

> can articulate itself outside of discursive practices, outside spoken and written language, and that this kind of knowledge cannot be generated otherwise than in or through the production of art. The art work is not a practical aid which rushes in to help the discursively presented conclusions; it is itself the statement and the conclusion. Furthermore, perhaps it is precisely the written thesis that somehow functions in the margins of the main thing, the artistic production (*ibid*).

His next question is: "What kind of knowledge is it that can be passed on only through art works?" This could be discussed *ad infinitum*, but with reference to Stefans Grové and this particular work (as well as its transcription for two pianos) it is most definitely composer- and style-specific. With regards to *Vladimir's Round Table*, a study such as this provides information concerning his pre-'African' period, a period into which the composer entered between 1983 and 1984. Concerning the 'African' period, there are many works published and freely available in our country's libraries. These range from works for piano, organ, and chamber ensembles to larger scale works such as symphonic poems, piano concertos, and works for dual choirs. The University of Stellenbosch, as an example, has a large collection of Grové's works in the Grové Collection. The collection holds manuscripts, manuscript copies, and published works alike, the latter originating mostly from the period under discussion. Despite the fairly recent availability of his works, there is still a fair amount of early work that remains scarce and, more importantly, unheard and under-performed. It may be understood that these would have been performed and discussed around the time of their creation but the historical musicological information appears to be absent. The wealth of information available on earlier composers like Shostakovich, Prokofiev, and even John Cage has accumulated over time. It is for this reason that we should contribute, little by little, to the significance of Grové's output through creative and intellectual study.

Back to Cobussen, regarding this knowledge, he asks if "we can speak of knowledge that somehow exists outside the language that seems to be specifically created and equipped to convey knowledge?" (*ibid*) In view of the transcription process, somehow the language we use to convey 'knowledge' in a written form seems only capable of explaining half of the insight we as musicians possess. For example, as a pianist, many standard models of passages (in terms of piano technique) were avoided during the process of this transcription. These standard models include typical arpeggio, cluster chord, and voicing models which are to be found in a great majority of piano works. These models were avoided because the concept of this transcription was to try and construct a fresh and uninfluenced work, which, in some cases, are devoid of the typical tonal or structural archetypes. Although the solutions provided for various problems would vary between pianists, each would initially approach the problems instinctively. These solutions are conformant to hand formations, structures, and techniques that students learn at different levels of study and which have their own brand of individualism attached to them. One doesn't ask an adult how they learnt to walk, or run, for that matter. How accurately would they be able to explain their learning process? Conversely, walking and running are possible to explain scientifically. Victor Hugo said: "Music expresses that which cannot be put into words". So, why would one want to write about music when it is sometimes looked down upon? "Writing about music is like dancing about architecture – it's a really stupid thing to want to do." A famous quote accredited to Elvis Costello in an interview (Callahan, 2005), this statement echoes Hugo's sentiments. Supporting these views, Cobussen (2007, 26) states plainly

> the problematic relation between music and language is at stake in PBR, in particular in the abiding question of how the discursive outcome of the research should relate to the artistic outcome. If it is fundamentally impossible to explain in language what is happening in the musical performance or composition, then a written thesis accompanying the musical product(ion), that serves as substitute for a major part of a "normal" dissertation, can never be (considered as) a mere elucidation of the artistic results. If what is stated above in one way or another matters to us, the attempt to reduce music to language is futile and unacceptable…every translation is a transformation – from one language to another, and even within one language. This means that something is always lost with every translation. Therefore, my conclusion is that, with regard to the distribution of knowledge (whatever this knowledge may be), we should make space for music … to express what cannot be expressed in any other way, if only because it would be a mistake to withhold certain non-discursive knowledge from the scientific world.

Considering Cobussen's argument, for a project such as this, explanations regarding transcription methods and historical compositional technique (with reference to Grové as well as other composers) are valid discussions. These would embody and emulate compositional practices by the individual composers, to best 'validate' any decisions made. Some transcriptions are a far cry from their original forms. Whether these transcriptions are produced academically or not does not make them 'inferior'. On the contrary, some transcriptions by gifted performers are breathtaking in either their simplicity, virtuosity, or even their compositional additions. These would vary according to the performer but the important element in each is that they are individual and, perhaps, experimental. This style cannot always be taught or explained, and this is the beauty of the human individualistic traits. Every person has different experiences affecting understanding, composition, and performance. Explaining this process in spoken or written language would fail to encapsulate the entire understanding of the idea with the view of imparting it to another. The same applies to a transcription and thesis of this nature.

After all, a “written thesis can never be a substitute for the artistic production, given the fact that the latter will contain ‘embodied knowledge’” (Cobussen, 2007).

Historically, in the Baroque period, the *transcription* was a way of paying homage to another composer from another city or country. For example, Bach transcribed ten of Vivaldi’s Concerti Grossi for the organ and harpsichord. These were not the only works by other composers that Bach arranged. He was constantly studying these composers’ works, either for performance, or for developing his own understanding of various styles. As a result, his own work was constantly stimulated through his growing familiarisation with these styles. Similarly, it is common knowledge that even though Händel lived and worked in England for most of his life, his study of Italian music led to a sizeable collection of Italian cantatas, operas, and arias. Snippets of the latter were transformed and edited for use in sections of *The Messiah* – particularly *For Unto Us a Child is Born.*

According to the definition in the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Second Edition, these works fall under the heading of *arrangement* which constitutes the “reworking of a musical composition, usually for a different medium from that of the original” (Sadie, 2001). *Arrangement* could also signify the elaboration or simplification of an existing work with or without changing the medium. In whichever form the arrangement is to take, it must be realised that there will indefinitely be an amount of re-composition taking place. More modern examples of this occurred with the pianists Vladimir Horowitz and Arcadi Volodos who have become as famous for their transcriptions as well as their fiery and flamboyant recitals. To these pianists, the difference between arrangements and transcriptions do not exist as their own interpretations of works often add larger and thicker chords, trills on difficult fingers, fiendish jumps to accommodate piccolo solos (in the case of Horowitz’s transcription of *The Stars and Stripes Forever*, by JP Sousa), and intricate newly-composed countermelodies for the inner fingers, or (literally) any available area on the hand (in the case of Volodos’ *Concert paraphrase* on Mozart’s *Rondo alla Turka*).

Another performer-composer who made use of transcriptions and arrangements for both the concert platform (as well as commercial gain) was Sergei Rachmaninov. In total, he transcribed eleven works, only two of which were his own original compositions. Perhaps his most famous (and no doubt most profitable) transcription is that of Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Flight of the Bumblebee,* the original of which has been arranged for almost every conceivable instrument or ensemble. As with the case of Horowitz and Volodos, Rachmaninov used these works to showcase his technique and astonishing creative compositional ability - demonstrated in the stunning arrangement of three movements from Bach’s

Partita #3 in E major BWV 1006. On the opposite end of the spectrum is Godowsky who rewrote Chopin's already challenging *Etudes* to produce a set of works that are so difficult they could be called satanic. Here was a performer who was able to make the piano sound as if it was being played by two people at the same time, on a level even beyond Horowitz and Volodos. Unfortunately these works, as spellbinding as they are to see and hear, don't succeed on the same level of beauty as those, for example, by Rachmaninov.

Another often less respected use of arrangement and transcription is the arrangement of vocal scores of operas, cantatas, and similar works where little skill is applied (and required) to reduce an opera score to a piano score. Often these arrangements are reduced beyond necessity: Vocal scores often completely ignore sections of written accompaniment and replace it with a sort of bastardised Alberti-bass figure. Other than these poor transcriptions, a transcribers intention can be, simply, to expand a limited repertoire of a specific instrument or to use the resulting work to introduce new composers to a wider audience (in the case of the work being on a fairly large scale). In some cases, as with the Bach/Rachmaninov *Partita* mentioned above, it is not unreasonable to consider that Rachmaninov thought he could make something beautiful out of something pre-existing without the intention of expanding the piano repertoire or the need to introduce the work to a wider audience.

Rachmaninov was at this stage not the first composer to arrange or transcribe a larger or smaller work for its entertainment value rather than more noble purposes. Of the 208 arranged works that Liszt completed, 52 are arrangements of his own works. In this large collection, according to Derek Watson (2000, 193), the transcriptions of Bach's organ works come closest to what he calls 'strict transcription/arrangements'. Watson goes further to say that these "'strict' arrangements may be compared in another sphere to the art of literary translation. But in using the word 'strict' it is important to understand that the art of transcription is re-creation: an adaptation to one musical medium of music originally conceived for another" (*ibid*). So some academics at least recognise that transcription is a fairly specialised process. The works presented in supporting the reason to transcribe *Vladimir's Round Table* are the collective transcriptions of Beethoven's nine Symphonies by Liszt. While this was a monumental task undertaken by Liszt, he seemed to be religious in the way he went about the process. Watson later goes on to say that although Liszt was faithful to the melodies, rhythms and harmonies of the symphonies, he allowed himself freedom in the process of capturing the orchestral textures on the piano (*ibid*). As he had already transcribed a number of Berlioz's orchestral works in an effective effort to widen the popularity of his friend, he undertook a similar project with the symphonies of Beethoven.

When Liszt first started working on these, Beethoven was not well known to many music lovers outside Vienna and especially not that popular yet in Paris. The first of these transcriptions (like the Berlioz works) started appearing in Liszt's recitals all over Europe and, in a sense, reinforced an interest in the recently-deceased composer. These recitals were known for creating quite a stir and at the time were unheard of. Vladimir Stasov (1824 - 1906), probably the most respected music and art critic of his time, attended Liszt's debut in St Petersburg in 1842. 'First of all,' he wrote,

> Liszt appeared alone on the stage throughout the entire concert – there were no other performers…This was something unheard of, utterly novel, even somewhat brazen. What conceit! What vanity! … And then, what music he chose for his programmes: not just piano pieces, his own, his true metier – no, this could not satisfy his boundless conceit – he had to be both orchestra and human voices. … He took large orchestral works, overtures, symphonies – and played them too, all alone, in place of a whole orchestra, without any assistance, without the sound of a single violin, French horn, kettledrum! And in such an immense hall! What a strange fellow! (Taruskin, 2005).

Included in these debut concerts were the last two movements from Beethoven's *Pastoral* Symphony and according to Richard Taruskin (2005, 3:273), the "inclusion of so much orchestral repertory in keyboard arrangement was partly Liszt's own predilection, partly a reflection of the 'provincial' venue (an outlying capital with, as yet, no full-time resident orchestra), and partly a concession to the expectations of an audience used to variety entertainment at public concerts." This variety was commonplace in public concerts and works like sonatas, preludes, nocturnes and scherzi were still almost exclusively being performed in salons and not on the public platform. It is clear that Liszt, the first true champion of performing transcriptions on stage, introduced future composers to a whole new medium whereby they could experiment with and develop compositional skill. So, by trying to serve and entertain audiences in far-flung regions, as well as to purge his own curiosity (and maybe even boredom) he managed to successfully and effortlessly perform three feats:

- Introduce and advocate new works and composers to new audiences
- Introduce new idiomatically-sound works for the instrument
- Introduce a high standard of transcription for future composers

Whether these were intentional or not, they further opened the door for other composers, as well as for himself. As mentioned, Liszt's work on the Beethoven symphonies was not embarked upon lightly. In one of his letters to a friend, Swiss linguist Adolphe Pictet, Liszt describes his attitude to the work on the *Symphonie fantastique* by Berlioz as conscientious – as important as that of transcribing the Holy Scriptures. According to Liszt,

> I sought to transfer not just the general structure of the music, but all its separate parts, as well as its many harmonic and rhythmic combinations . . . What I undertook in the Berlioz symphony I am now setting out to do for Beethoven. Serious study of his works, a deep appreciation of their almost limitless beauties, and on the other hand the devices with which I have become familiar owing to my constant piano practice, have made me perhaps less incapable than some others for this difficult task . . . The arrangements hitherto in use have now been rendered useless, one might better call them *derangements* (Watson, 2000)

His attempts were successful: When the transcription of the Ninth Symphony was published in 1851, Brahms and Clara Schumann were "among its admirers…who played it together." (*ibid*)

Interestingly, Liszt's aims regarding the successful transcription of the Beethoven symphonies are indicative of a deep respect for the scores. In the preface of the complete transcribed symphonies, published in 1865, Liszt wrote:

> My aim has been attained if I stand on a level with the intelligent engraver or the conscientious translator who comprehends the spirit of a work and thus contribute to the knowledge of great masters and to the formation of an appreciation of beauty. (Anon., 1865 cited in Watson, 2000, 198)

Watson's opinion of Liszt's work on the Beethoven transcriptions supports the central aim of the Grové transcription presented here. Watson believes that Liszt's "great skill is in creating appropriate sonorities to match orchestral parts that would sound weak if merely transcribed note for note" and that the "clarity of the part-writing is maintained by careful notation of note-stems, either up or down" (*ibid*).

The two factors mentioned by Watson above were the crucial aims in the transcription of Stefans Grové's *Vladimir's Round Table*. Predictably, other issues presented themselves during the process and these were dealt with in various ways according to the category of the issue, as well as the specific conditions surrounding the issue. It is hoped that these decisions collectively contribute to a convincing final product whereby the true characters of the orchestral timbres can be represented as closely as possible.

Introduction

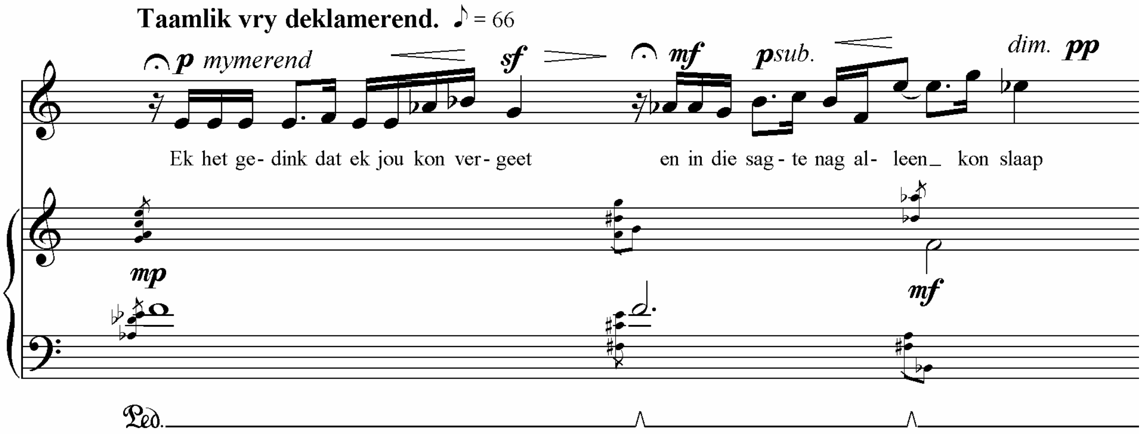
Written for large orchestra, *Vladimir's Round Table* (subtitled "A study in Russian style"), was commissioned by the SABC in 1982, dedicated to Izak and Felicity Grové, and completed in the same year. Like a substantial number of other Grové works, this suite has not yet been published (Levy, 1992). The premiere in 1982 was recorded, performed by the National Symphony Orchestra of the SABC conducted by Otmar Maga in Pretoria and released by the SABC on a cassette labelled "for study purposes only". Thereafter, it is uncertain how many times the work has been performed. What little information is available shows that the work was definitely performed on two occasions: the Otmar Maga performance and another by David de Villiers with the then Cape Town Symphony Orchestra. The work is one of five orchestral works (two of which are concertos) commissioned by the SABC between 1956 and 1983. Written exactly 20 years after *Symphony 1962*, it was composed after the well-known work *Kettingrye, Konsert vir Orkes*, and before *Stelling vir latere uitbreiding*, the latter of which was also commissioned by the SABC (Muller, 2006).

Vladimir's Round Table employs expanded string sections, triple winds, including the rarely used alto flute, piano, harp, celeste, as well as an active percussion section. The suite is in five movements, in which the end of each of the first four movements is marked *attacca,* and lasts approximately twelve-and-a-half minutes. In this time, Grové takes the listener on an exciting tour of impressions concerning the Russian king: *Reminiscences in the Festive Hall of the Knights*, *The Cunning Slaying of Yaropolk, The Wooing of Ragmilde, The Charge of Polotsk and Murder of Ragvald* and *Repentance under the Banner of the Cross.* Each of the movements has its own individual charm. The first is comparable to an orgy of sorts – with dance-like interjections from the lower brass as well as the strings, while the woodwinds play running scales. The second movement is delicate and vaporous in its composition and despite its reference to the process of someone being slain, seems to more effectively encapsulate the envisioned environment, (perhaps one of a full moon and mist) while sharp and short interjections from trumpets and horns momentarily indicate the supposed killing blow. This movement leads to the third, a recitative-like movement featuring the piccolo, cor anglais and alto flute solos accompanied by violin harmonics and harp. The brevity and emptiness of this movement seems to indicate a failed wooing attempt and perhaps effectively introduces warfare in the fourth movement. With its pulsating rhythms it is almost completely an agitated movement in which skilful orchestration is utilised to maximum effect. The movement eventually runs out of steam to violin tremolos, whereby the bare and bland sound of the solo trombone *cantus* brings the work to a close.

Initially, the clutter of confusion that is the first movement tends to cause one to close ones eye and flinch, but after more listenings, the *melange* becomes clearer, leading to some quite remarkable moments in South African orchestral music. Through the process of this particular transcription the work has certainly come alive; and through examination of the score any queries and/or interests in orchestration were satisfied by the fascinating techniques employed by Grové. It is hoped that through this project, the large work will earn the attention of its audiences and in turn, warrant further musicological interest and research.

Concerning this piano transcription, there was one prerequisite: Would this be an academic transcription, where Grové's style was studied and mimicked; or a free transcription, where a discernable degree of creative licence was allowed?

After investigating the available scores, Grové's style was better understood with regards to his pianistic compositional style. His use of acciaccaturas, pedalling, clusters as well as sparseness was easy to recognise early on, in *Ek het Gedink…*, the fourth movement from *Vyf Liedere,* for example.


Taamlik vry deklamerend. ♪ = 66
p mymerend
sf
mf
psub.
dim. pp
Ek het ge- dink dat ek jou kon ver- geet
en in die sag- te nag al- leen_ kon slaap
mp
mf
Ped.

IV - Ek het Gedink from *Vyf Liedere* b1

These 'Grové-nisms' provided guidance in decisions made during the transcription process even though they were not necessarily copied or reproduced exactly. As the orchestral score is so substantial it proved helpful to have an examples of Grové's original piano writing to refer to when reducing notes, mimicking an effect, or recreating other orchestral nuances foreign to the piano.

Although *Vyf Liedere* and other piano works written around the same time as *Vladimir's Round Table* were insightful for this transcription process, they were not drawn heavily upon. *Vyf Liedere* was by far the most useful; nevertheless, the aim of this transcription was never to rewrite one piano work into another.

The first practical aim was to transfer the orchestral score to an electronic format. This entailed copying all details as closely as possible to produce a result that is clearly legible, neat, and above all, correct. Despite the best intentions, inaccuracies were discovered along the way which appeared in the manuscript. The reason for this is that the original manuscript, commissioned and owned by the SABC, was photocopied for the conductor, Otmar Maga, for the premiere performance and this copy contained typical conductor markings and indications. The manuscript which was made available for this transcription was a second copy of the 'Maga' copy which caused even further 'decomposition' of the finely written notes through the photocopying process. Some markings in the original score, such as *a2*, indicating that two instruments were to be played, were now made illegible. It should be noted that although much effort was put into deciphering the many inkblots in order to best represent what the original score indicates, the printed orchestral score represented here is by no means available for publishing as this would require more research - and the aims of this transcription do not facilitate further study on the original score. Although this transfer to the electronic format could be considered a simple practice, the process itself was somewhat laborious but did, however, reveal much of Grové's orchestral writing skill and timbric languages, which proved insightful. During the transcription process, to keep track of all decisions made, an extra set of two-piano staves was added to the orchestral score to facilitate the visualisation of other sketches and permutations of a problematic or interesting passage. With these extra staves, commentary developed whereby the decisions ultimately made were compared, studied, re-arranged, and finally, substantiated.

In transcribing this work, it was clear from the beginning that certain 'destructive' decisions would need to be made. These decisions dealt with, in essence, minimising the thick orchestration at some points to preserve the colours of these specific points. Some instrumental parts were cut altogether, while others had small elements taken from them to add to the thicker texture and some were quoted in full representation. At these points it was necessary to determine, firstly, why this had to be done; and secondly, how the other instrumental parts would be affected by these decisions. Generally speaking, this was only an issue in the areas where large climaxes take place, where almost the full orchestra, including percussion, plays intricate chromatic figures which would not only be impossible to play in full and at speed on the piano, but also totally dampen any possible harmonic or melodic direction. These 'thinning' processes were done after a study of the chordal and harmonic structure, as well as secondary melodic themes to determine which of these many notes were 'disposable'.

As mentioned, various elements kept surfacing which demanded constant attention and care. These elements were repetitive in nature and all fell into one of several specific areas: Dynamics, articulation, percussive use of the piano, and finally, arrangement. It is for this reason that each of these musically-specific elements is to be separated and discussed individually.

In a work such as this, by an experienced and knowledgeable composer, it should be taken for granted that everything in the score is to serve a specific purpose. Grové's orchestration technique in this work is "economical" (Larkin, 1993) and therefore the *instrumentation* is not really critical to this study. Conversely, the translation of these various colourful sounds to the homophonic language of the piano is the issue here. The most common (albeit the most important) issue in this transcription was the issue of dynamics. Dynamic range, instrumental dynamic variants, articulative dynamics and 'effective' dynamics all have their own criteria which need to be met in order for these elements to exist. It is in this area where the most changes were made to the composers score, during the transcription process.

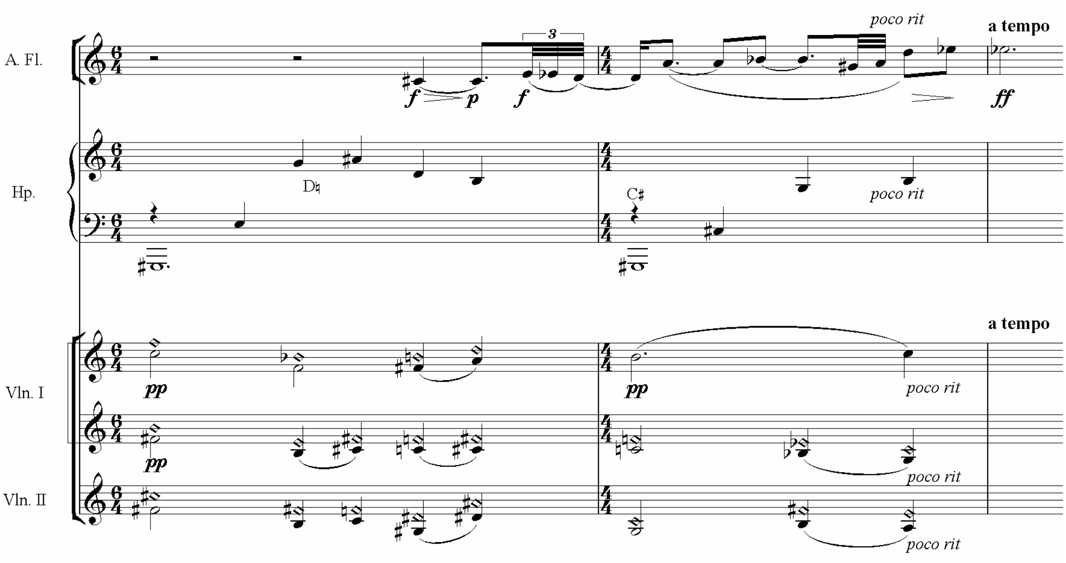
The next element was that of articulation. The two main differences between piano and orchestra are the differences in sustaining capabilities: the piano has a natural sound decay, as opposed to almost every orchestral instruments' ability to create a crescendo on a single note; and textural qualities: the orchestras ability to easily point a melody, harmony or effect is second to no individual instrument. While these shortcomings are obvious, they are the very reason that careful attention was paid to articulating the piano music in order to preserve clarity. Pedal markings are very rare and the piece almost demands clean legato playing *sans pedale*. If the performers choose, light pedalling may be used for very short periods – sometimes literally only one beat.

As the piano is naturally a percussion instrument in construction, it has innate abilities to mimic percussive sounds. In this area the transcription was made a little creative in some parts of the score. An important part of this work is the percussive drive: a cutting snare drum rhythm, a timpani glissando or quasi *Alberti bass* figure, distinctive tambourine *acciaccaturas* or even the unique ringing of the gong are all instruments that need consideration in the process of transcription. In some rare cases, a gong note was mimicked in the piano part, in octaves, while marked with an accent. Generally, it is hoped that the performers will have enough common sense to take note of the articulation and make use of the piano's percussive quality to its greatest advantage. In piano literature there is an expansive variety of works with a range of compositional styles that can all be placed under one category: The simple matter of pianism – Is a work written pianistically? Schubert's work, for instance, is renowned for its 'un-pianistic' writing – ask any pianist to compare piano music by Schubert and, for instance, Rachmaninov. Although Rachmaninov is considered to be more technically demanding than most composers, the music is still written in a pianistic vein. Schubert, however, composed with melody as the first priority while, one could argue, taking pianistic skill for granted. For example, *Die Erlkönig* is famous for its unrelenting triplet figures in the right hand. Unheard of in the 19th century, it is still a bone of contention for pianists today. The pianist is constantly challenged to create melodic contours within the restrictive confines of the written musical text. His output, however, strives for something beyond the means of a crude wooden construction. His melodic lines are in essence extremely vocal and many pianists aim to achieve this from an instrument constructed from hammers and strings. For *Vladimir's Round Table* it was necessary to, at times, stray from the pianistic background into the unknown territory of 'un-pianistic' writing as it were. Experimental and abnormal arranging techniques proved useful and educational at times when there seemed to be no possible solution in sight.

It was necessary, therefore, to stray from the 'true to the score' attitude at times to ensure musical clarity, pianistic possibility (in terms of the performer) or pianistic capability (which dealt with the mechanics of the instrument itself). These three guiding principles also apply greatly to the previously stated issues of dynamics, articulation and percussive elements, but they also are important enough to stand on their own. During the presentation of this arrangement, each issue will be addressed with examples of the problems encountered and the solutions that emerged.

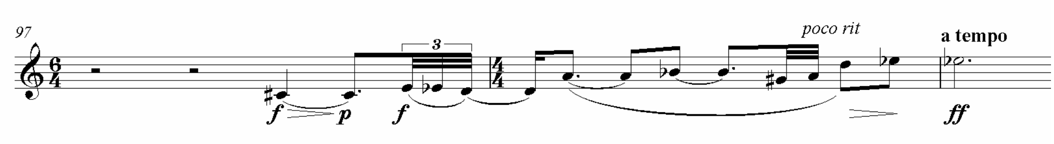
Dynamics

Considering the monumental orchestration of this work, it comes as no surprise that during the transcription process it was necessary to try and minimise the 'noise' to produce a work that would, most importantly, attract the listener. Thereafter, clarity of the melodic and harmonic lines was closely considered. It seems fairly obvious that one would reconsider the dynamic markings of the original score before transferring them directly to the piano transcription. However, before this can happen, all the instruments have to be reconsidered according to their specific appearances during the various stages of the unfolding of the work. For example, the Alto Flute is an instrument which rarely makes an appearance even in modern orchestral works. Ravel made use of it in *Daphnis et Chloë*, Stravinsky in *Le Sacre du Printemps* and of course Holst in *The Planets.* Other than that, its use is seemingly reserved for specific moods. Its use in *Vladimir's Round Table* is to assist in creating a haze of sound for atmospheres of suspense and/or calm by writing in the lower register. For its transcription to piano, the dynamics for this instrument were toned down to provide for the fact that the instrument is, by nature, not capable of very high dynamic levels in lower registers. In this example, taken from the 3rd movement, *The Wooing of Ragmilde*, the sounding G-sharp is accompanied by ***pp*** string playing harmonics and single harp notes.



III – The Wooing of Ragmilde b97 - 99

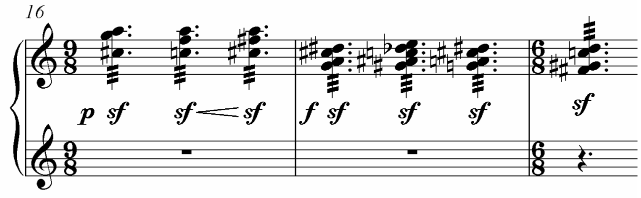
Even in ***f*** passages, the alto flute at this range has limited ability to play audibly over the rest of the orchestra. It is for this reason that for the transcription, ***f*** was replaced with ***mf***.



III – The Wooing of Ragmilde b97 - 99

For the first movement, *Reminiscences in the Festive Hall of Knights,* the constant hum of the string and harp tremolos, clarinet whirls and long muted horn lines proved a problem for the first original idea of being (as) true to the score (as possible). The sheer mechanics of having to play everything on the piano would be nothing short of miraculous. To imitate this, the harp part was drawn upon strongly, while the string parts were used in places to hold the tension created by the relentless tremolos. There are very few moments where there aren't any tremolo figures and even in these brief periods there is still a constant beat to drive the music forward.

To create an immediate foundation of sound to, at any level, try and compete with the effect of the opening chords in the orchestral setting, the dynamics were set at ***ff*** with a (rare) pedal marking. In bar 3, the prolongation of the ***p*** stopped horn is simulated by the tremolo in the 2nd Piano part. To facilitate a ***fp,*** the tremolos succeed in dropping the sound in a small amount of time, similar to the capability of the horns. Thereafter, the tremolo figures are generally kept at an audible but not overpowering level. They are, however, used to create sudden swells, as in bar 16, as alternate lines to the melodic and thematic material.

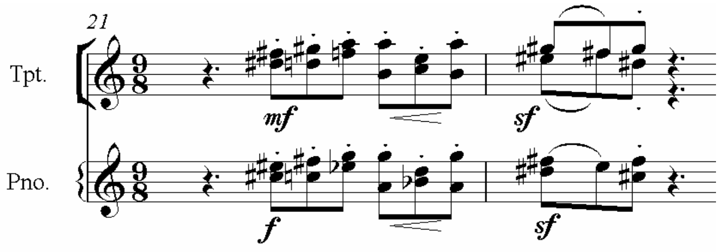


I – Reminiscences in the Festive Hall of the Knights b16 – 18

At the end of the movement, the tremolos are also used in the piano parts to suspend the continuation of the chromatic chord, as well as to have better control over the speed of the decay of sound.

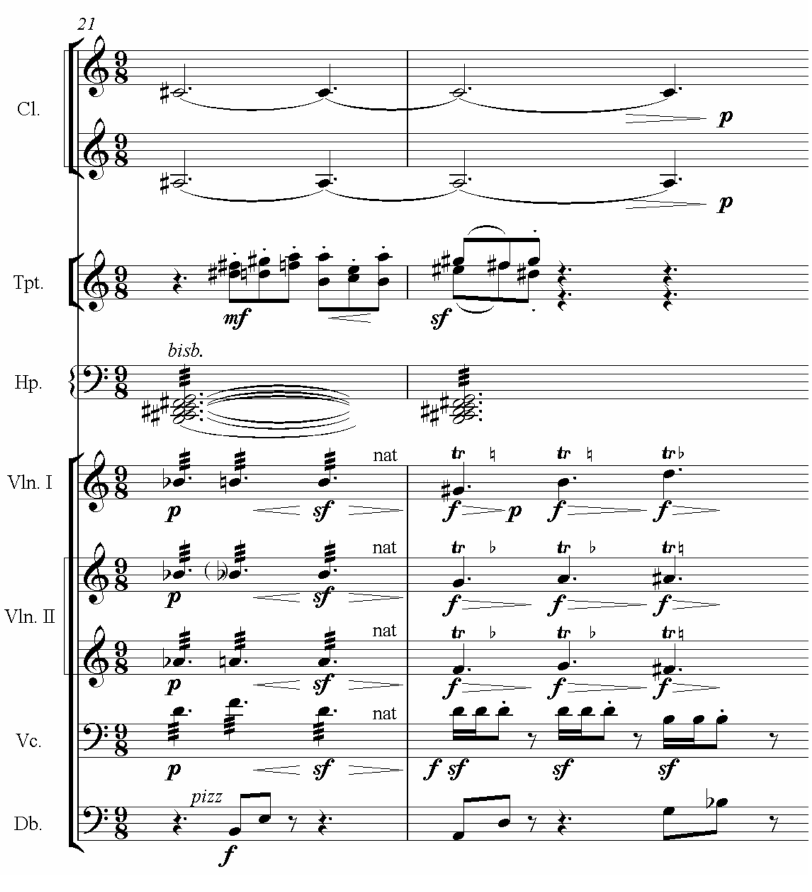
Returning to the issue of the various natural amounts of produced sounds from individual orchestral instruments, it was necessary to study every single instrument part at various specific points before making a decision regarding dynamic change, part omission or part thinning and/or doubling, as this would have greatly affected the clarity of the melodic character when performed on the piano. Being a somewhat 'monotonous' instrument, it was necessary to rethink the dynamics and dynamic range of the piano in a way that would facilitate ease of articulation and possibly, the use of pedalling. In these cases a fairly basic musical education dictated on which parts to place the most importance: Melody and harmonic foundation. These were paramount. Thereafter, any other counter-melodies and effect figures were treated according to the orchestration thickness and the availability of the pianists' fingers.

In the example below, the particular orchestration required that the trumpet part (in B flat), above, be more audible than ***mf***. It was necessary, therefore, to place a ***f*** in its place.


21
Tpt.
Pno.
mf
sf
f
sf

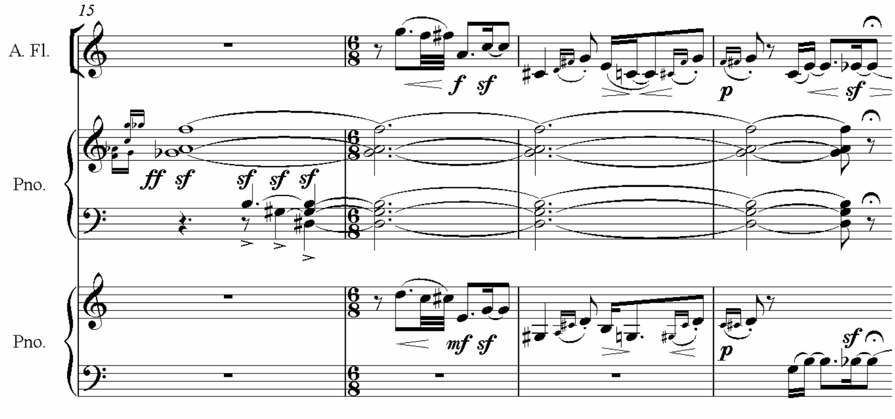
I – Reminiscences in the Festive Hall of Knights b21 – 22

This makes perfect sense when viewing the orchestration as a whole:


21
Cl.
p
p
Tpt.
mf
sf
bisb.
Hp.
Vln. I
p
sf
nat
tr
f
p
f
f
Vln. II
p
sf
nat
f
f
f
p
sf
nat
f
f
f
Vc.
p
sf
nat
f
sf
sf
sf
Db.
pizz
f

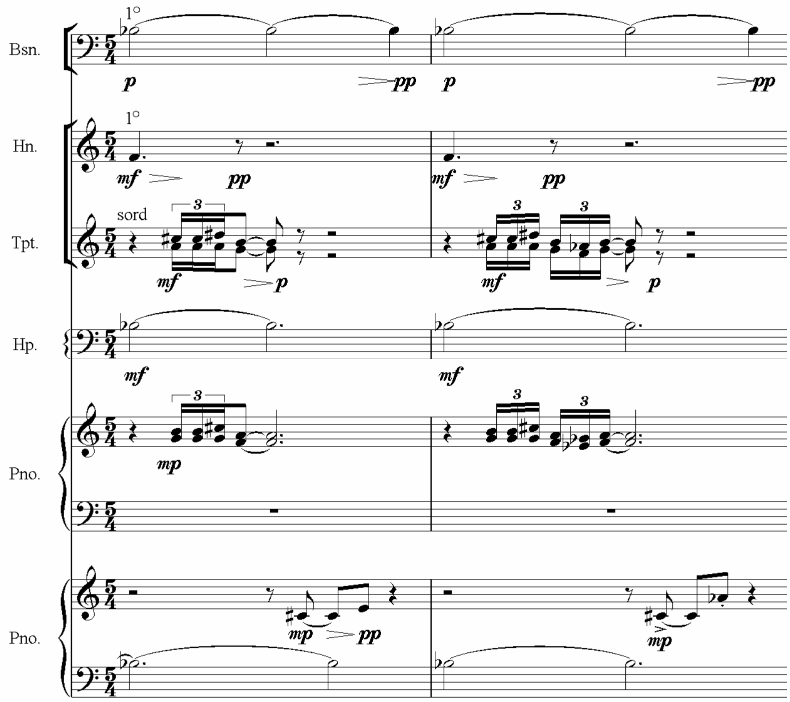
I – Reminiscences in the Festive Hall of Knights b21 – 22

Like the alto flute entry mentioned previously, the same approach was taken in the second movement, *The Cunning Slaying of Yaropolk*, where a somewhat tense and ghostlike alto flute solo enters with a crescendo to ***f***. Again, as in the third movement, the piano is given an ample ***mf*** as it matches more closely the volume production of the instrument at this range. Also, because of the 1st Piano's resonant suspended chords, it adds to this ghostly sound by creating just enough sound to be heard above the resonant quality.



II – The Cunning Slaying of Yaropolk b68 – 71

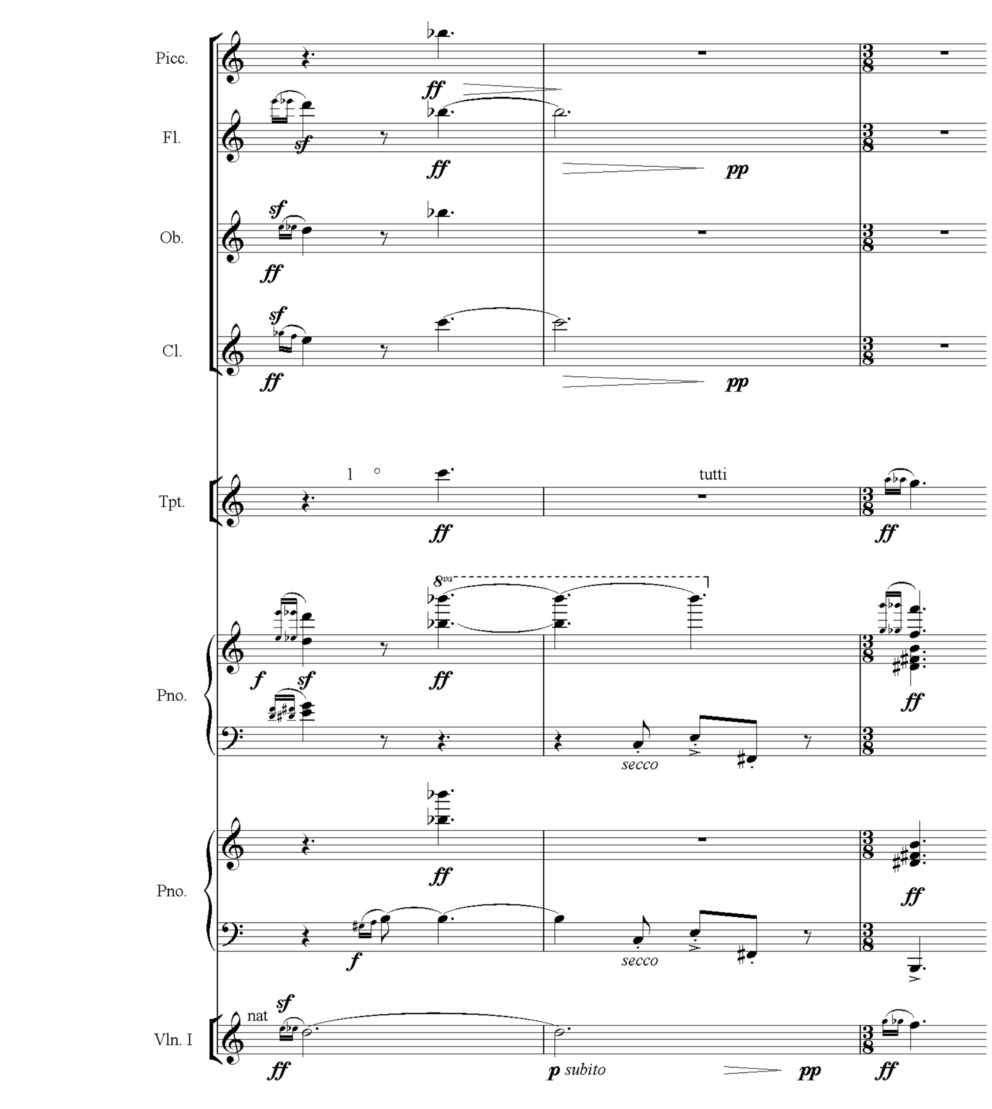
As much as dynamic markings are increased, they are also decreased. An example of this occurs in the beginning as well as a bar after the above example. The muted trumpets play the opening ominous theme alone at first but for this entry they are supported by solo horn, bassoon and harp with one single B-flat. To match this muted sound the dynamic needs to be set at ***mp*** to ensure that the mood is kept.



II – The Cunning Slaying of Yaropolk b72 – 74

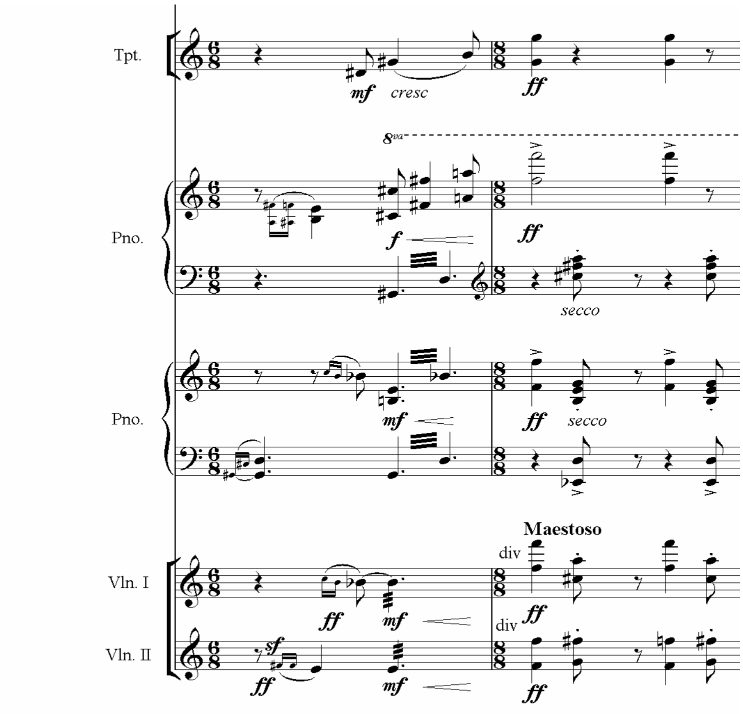
Another example of dynamic diminution occurs at the beginning of this movement's climax. The woodwinds and strings play a stab ***ff*** note introduced by two acciaccaturas. Because of the nature of the instruments, their natural volumes at these ranges and ability (or inability) to produce a large enough amount of sound, the dynamic is only ***f***.

A fairly effective mechanism to assist in creating an illusion of a greater diminuendo is seen in bar 76. Because of the sympathetic resonance of notes played in an octave, if one note is held longer while the other is released, the resonance from the previous bar is held in the note still being depressed. In this particular instance, it is used as a replacement of the flute and piccolo diminuendo.



II – The Cunning Slaying of Yaropolk b76 – 78

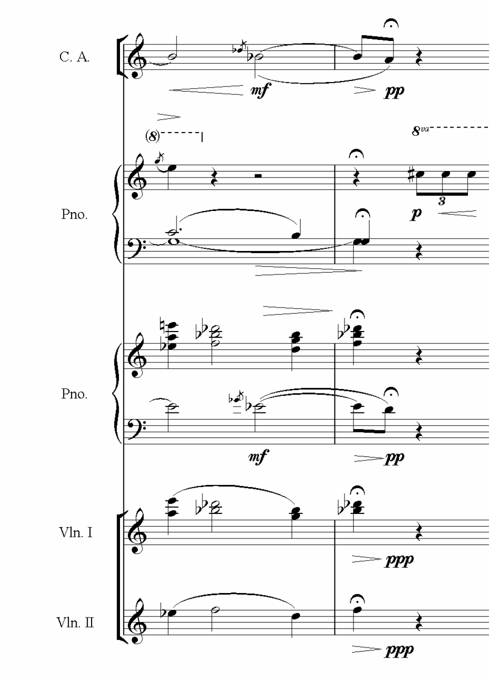
In the following bar, bar 78, a simple double octave in the 1st Piano is used to distinguish the double acciaccatura thematic element over and above the rest of the material. This is to take into account the piercing quality of the ***ff*** trumpet. Three bars later, another simple, yet effective decision aids the creation of a larger climax normally not that easy to accomplish in such a short space of time. Here, the pianos share a left hand tremolo leading to a ***Maestoso*** climax.



II – The Cunning Slaying of Yaropolk b80 – 81

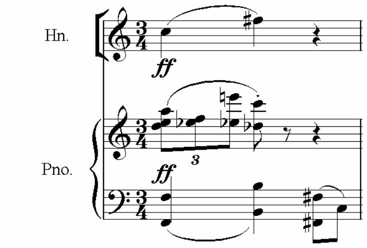
In the opening of the third movement, *The Wooing of Ragmilde*, the sustained and muted string notes last a full bar at a slow tempo yet they still need to support the piccolo line. In the piano part, because of the natural sound decay of the instrument the dynamic is set at ***pp*** as this would provide enough support with the 'cello line in the left hand. Also, following the piccolo entry, the 2nd Piano has a moving line and this provides a contrast between the two pianos and also helps the listener distinguish the different parts. As a result of the evocative nature of the movement, the choice of sound needs to be superficial in a way - the choice of dynamics for the entire movement is to assist in the creation of a blanket of sound to support the piccolo and cor anglais dialogues.

In some cases, where the orchestra's ability to diminuendo quickly on a single note is not easily translated into the piano version, diminuendo markings were brought forward by one, two or even three notes to clearly indicate sound decay.



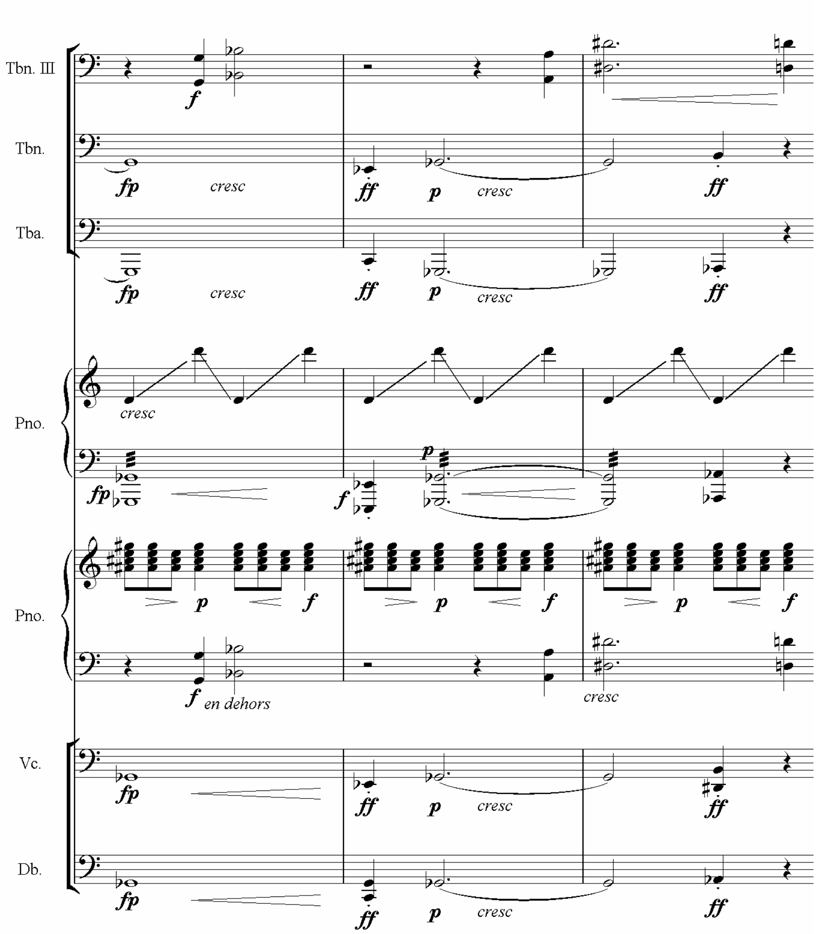
III – The Wooing of Ragmilde b95 – 96

The highly percussive and energetic fourth movement, *The Charge of Polotsk and Murder of Ragvald*, presents many challenges with regards to clarity. The score needs to be divided into melodic and effective material. From there it is possible to distinguish which parts need to be accentuated, doubled or emphasized in some way. An example of this occurs in bar 126, where the trumpets and flutes play fast triplet figures. The stability that the horn note is providing is important because it closes the lower woodwind, whereas the three-part trumpet and two-part flute figures are very much entries to assist in tension building rather than development of thematic material. It is for this reason the horn part is doubled in the 1st Piano part.



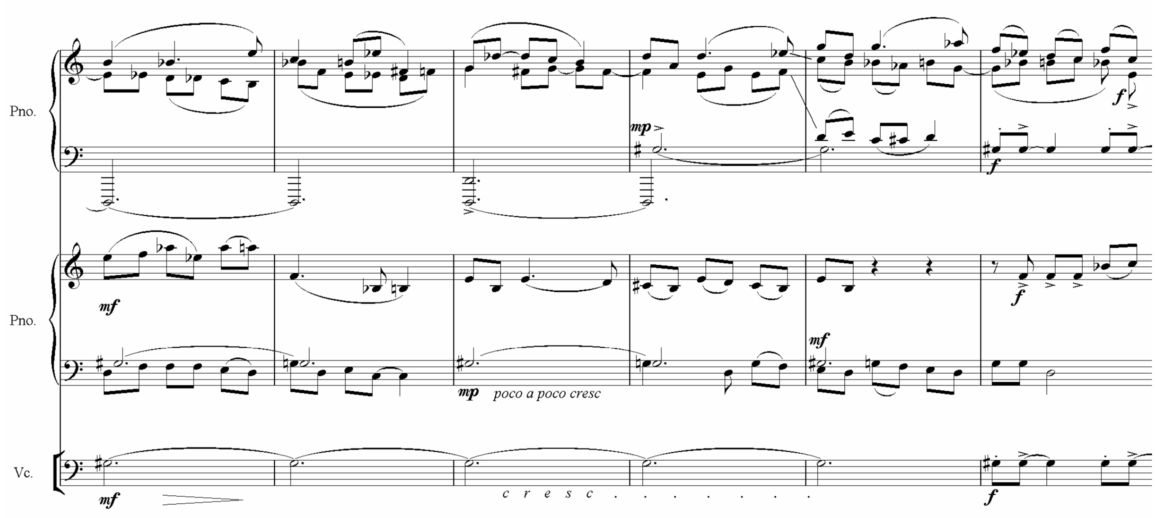
IV – The Charge of Polotsk and Murder of Ragvald b126

Later, as the movement climaxes, Grové adds the full power of the trombone and tuba in ***ff***. As much as this helps support the climax, the bass trombone is still able to project over the orchestra, in part due to the fact that the instrument is able to produce a large rich sound. Yet another factor to consider is that the trombone is able to point its bell directly forward, hereby magnifying its effect and ability to project its sound. At this point, the bass trombone solo is of utmost importance. For this to be conveyed successfully by two pianos, dynamic adjustment is necessary. As an extra reinforcement, *en dehors* is written below this solo to remove any doubt. As the 1st Piano is very busy with glissandi, which already will create a fair amount of sound whether the pianist wishes it or not, it would be overbearing to transfer the ***ff*** 'cello, bass, trombone and tuba parts directly to the piano. Again, the use of the tremolo assists in controlling the drastic volume fluctuation as this section requires careful control over the largest climax in the entire work.



IV – The Charge of Polotsk and Murder of Ragvald b165 – 167

The last movement, *Repentance under the Banner of the Cross*, presents a repeat of a problem already discussed and solved. In this case, however, to produce a single note crescendo by making use of a tremolo seems inappropriate for the mood and setting of this movement. Again, we have the atmospheric, almost supernatural sound provided by the fugal string entries. The sound, a muted ***p*** creates an incredible tension. Even when the strings crescendo to ***f*** the sound quality is still held. To carelessly throw in a tremolo for the sake of a crescendo seems a dismal and destructive solution. To counter this, the 5 bar 'cello crescendo in bar 16 on a G-sharp is simulated by a sort of increase in harmonic tempo. Rather than have the note replayed at the beginning of every bar, the 2nd Piano plays one for two bars duration and repeats this. The 1st Piano then repeats the note at the beginning of the fourth bar, followed by the 2nd Piano again at the fifth bar. With this method, the diminuendo and crescendo scored in the ‘cello part occurs naturally in the 2nd Piano.

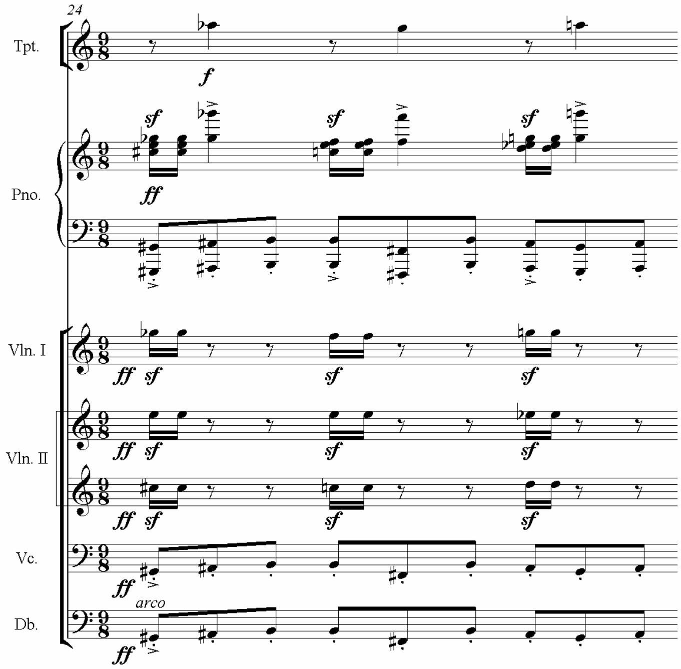

Pno.
mp
f
Pno.
mf
mf
mp
poco a poco cresc
f
Vc.
mf
c r e s c . . . .
f

V – Repentance under the Banner of the Cross b193 – 198

Articulation

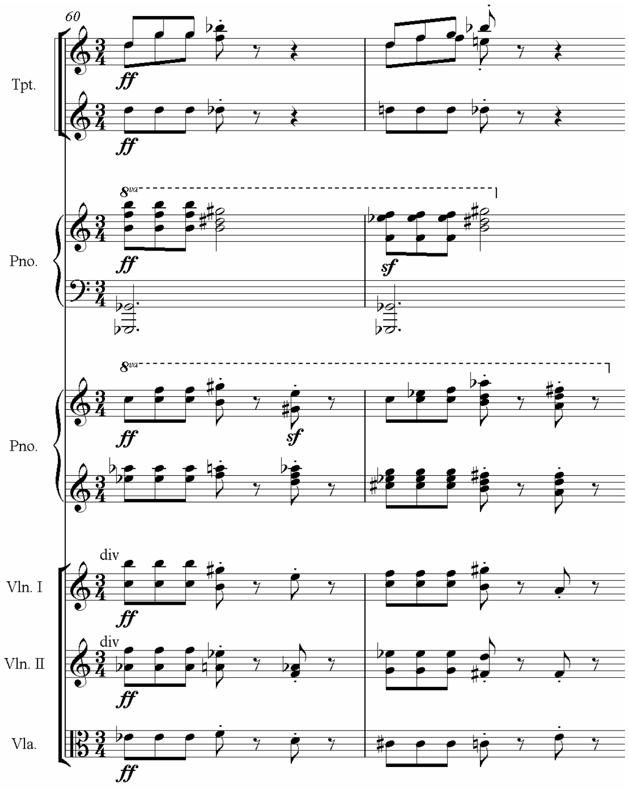
It is obvious that the diversity in colouration, and the clear difference in the abilities of each orchestral instrument, could become problematic when doing a transcription of this type. For example, legato string writing is difficult to reproduce on the piano. The instruments' ability to create a smooth attack and to sustain a note with a crescendo is one of the shortcomings of the piano. Another aspect is how different instruments' sounds change when playing softly or loudly. For example, the trumpet is able to sound beautiful and melodic but also has the ability to pierce through any texture if playing an accent or even a muted accent. These changes in timbre need to be considered and sometimes adjusted to keep the effect as close to the original as possible.

One of the few examples where articulation is changed occurs in bar 24, in the first movement. String semiquavers and trumpet stabs are included in the right hand of the 2nd Piano. To help distinguish between these parts, an octave is added, as well as an accent. As noted before, the timbre of the instrument at this volume is to be noted. In this way, the sharp attacked note is imitated in a convenient and effective way.



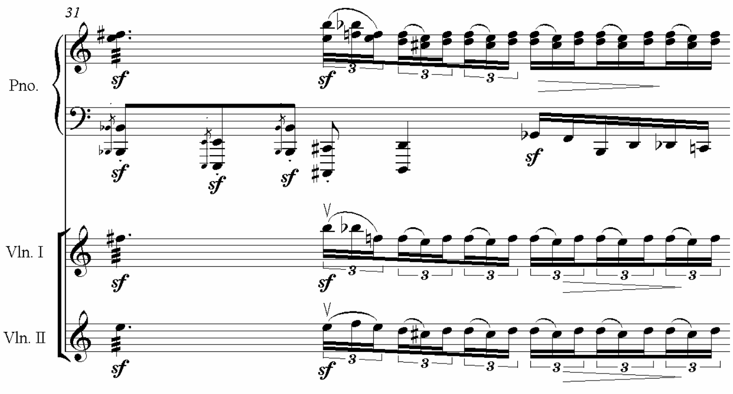
I – Reminiscences in the Festive Hall of the Knights b24

A similar instance occurs in bar 162, in the fourth movement. Although the strings are playing at a fairly high and clearly audible range, the trumpet triplet figure is still more melodic and therefore needs to be clearly indicated as being more thematic than the string figure. Again, an octave is added.



IV – The Charge of Polotsk and Murder of Ragvald b162 - 163

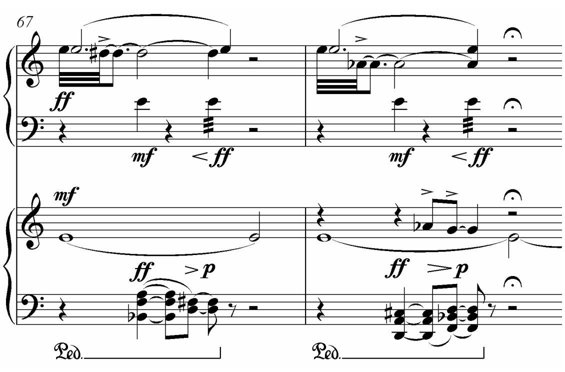
Another simple characteristic of the string section is its effective movement of a figure when playing a two-note slur followed by a third single-bowed note. Just because of the speed at which this needs to happen in the following example, it creates a well-known but still interesting quality that could possibly be missed when being performed on the piano. In the following example, where the violins play such a figure, it's almost guaranteed that this effective sound will be produced for the simple fact that the third note of the three-note figure has to be repeated - as the first note of the next. Violin technique, in such an instance, dictates a down-bow for the slur, and a fast and short up-bow for the third note. Hence, the effect is produced. For the piano parts, instead of having both pianos playing one line of this string figure each, for the sake of the effect they are inserted into one hand. The technique needed to play these figures requires the pianist to exaggerate the slur as well as the implied staccato so that they have enough time to replace the D and F for the beginning of the next figure. At this speed this technique needs to be even more refined, hereby effectively copying the slurred and staccato sound the strings produce.



I – Reminiscences in the Festive Hall of the Knights b31

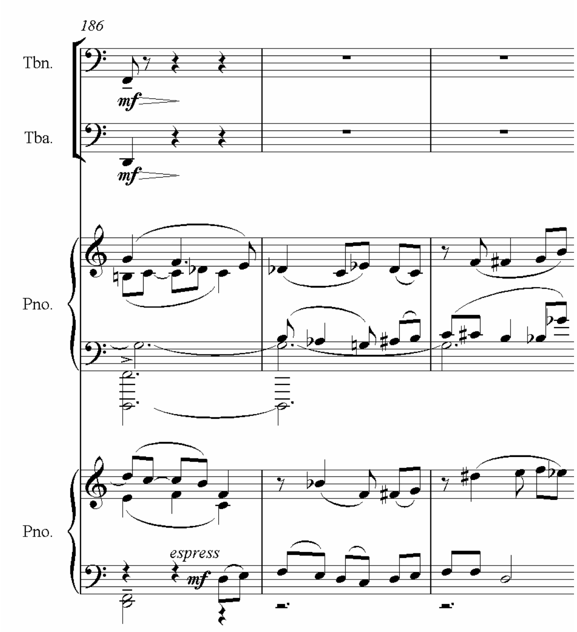
The most basic principle that needs to be enforced in this transcription is the use of the sustain pedals. A natural inclination of any pianist is free use of the pedal and this use needs to be reserved for special sections only. The pedal markings inserted into this piano score are very rare; however, this is not to say that pedal is taboo everywhere else. Again, for clarity, the performers need to be reserved in their decisions as to where to add a touch of pedal. Generally, it is important to preserve the movement of each individual line, especially in the second and final movements: The sheer density of the harmonic and melodic elements could easily cloud any suggestion of thematic movement.

In bar 67 and 68, the second movement, the distinction between a resonant piano and an effective piano is made. Both pianos have melodic or thematic material but the 1st Piano is required to keep its pedal clear for two short note entries, particularly the crotchet tremolo – imitating the flutter-tongue effect of the trumpet. Meanwhile, in the 2nd Piano, the intention is for the 1st Piano's entry to resonate within the 2nd Piano's lower octave note as well as any other possible sympathetically vibrating notes. Here, a pedal marking is used to suggest this. The resolving chord in the left hand of the 2nd Piano is meant to be played at such a dynamic as to not interfere with the previous chord – rather, add to it.



II – The Cunning Slaying of Yaropolk b67 – 68

Finally, an example of the most liberal use of articulation markings occurs in the last movement. To achieve a rich yet accented low, bell-like, bass note on the piano is a simple and effective technique to supply an unobtrusive and supportive foundation. The double-bass, gong, trombone and tuba play a low percussive sound. To try and capture a sound of 'mist' is not too difficult. It does, however, require a few changes. The double bass, trombone and tuba notes are kept in the piano parts but are changed to suit the needs of the piano sound. An accent is placed on the 1st Piano note, while a tenuto marking is added on the 2nd Piano. This tenuto marking ensures that the performer will carefully place the two notes so as not to be obtrusive, but supportive of the bell-like octave in the 1st Piano. In addition, as in the above example, sympathetic resonance will occur in the 1st Piano part.

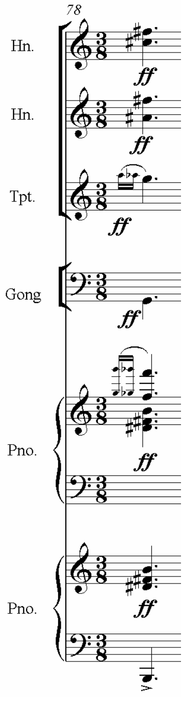


V – Repentance under the Banner of the Cross b186 – 188

Percussive Features

Percussive elements prevail in this entire work. Unfortunately, as effective as some of the percussion writing is, it can't all be included in a piano transcription. To a certain extent one could argue that perhaps a timpani cue could be added in a few places but generally it is preferred that the melodic features are used as far as possible to accommodate and imitate these percussive elements within the notated framework. It is important to mention that Stefans Grové often writes percussively in the orchestral parts anyway. Violin triplet figures, stopped horn notes and the like all contribute to the overall picture of sharp entries and, in some places, percussive melodies.

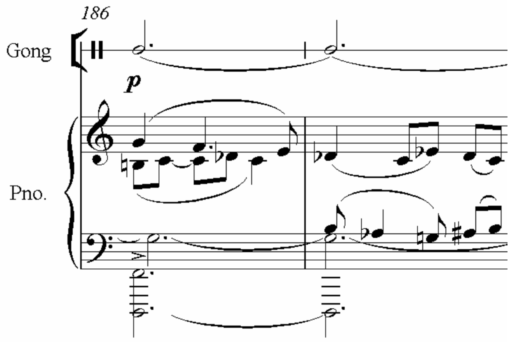
There are a few instances where, for example, the timpani are doubled by double bass, 'cello, tuba or trombone anyway so this would fall under the percussive use of the melodic material. However, for an instrument like the gong, some sections could benefit greatly from this consideration. In the second movement, bar 78, a full, strong chord is sounded in the higher-range instruments with no other melodic accompaniment – except a brooding gong note which is added to the 2nd Piano part. The note, however, could be debated: The chord is clearly that of B major with a diminished fifth above. Automatically, the addition of a low B is considered. But the gong isn't exactly a melodic instrument so the consideration of another note like, for example, a D-flat or F-natural is not unreasonable. In the end, however, the decision was made to not blur the effectiveness of the higher range chord too much.



II – The Cunning Slaying of Yaropolk b78

An unfortunate exclusion of the timpani part appears (or, rather, doesn't) in the introduction to the fourth movement. The timpani glissando to the Allegro Pesante is an extremely effective precursor to the brash and pulsating piano and trombone melody. This, however, is just not possible to copy without breaking the distinction between the alto flute and *cor anglais* lines before they get interrupted by a new sound. Thoughts of an individual bass upbeat seem feeble in context. In the end, maybe one should leave ones preference for tuned drums behind – this one time.

Even though this chapter consists of very few examples of percussive elements, it is necessary to include it in a critical commentary such as this. As mentioned previously, tremolos are used in places where it is necessary to hear 'waving' dynamics and this is the most effective way of achieving this from the piano - a percussive instrument incapable of creating a crescendo on a single sustained note. This aspect is a characteristic of dynamics and that of percussive elements. So as not to repeat previous examples and arguments, these will not be discussed here. Another example of preferential treatment with regards to the gong is in the closing movement, bar 186. Although the double-bass note is an F, to include the bell-like tolling sound of the gong would be adding to the thick and misty sound which can be produced on the piano at a low dynamic. Not to detract from what will be discussed later, here is an example of percussion inclusion:



V – Repentance under the Banner of the Cross b186 - 187

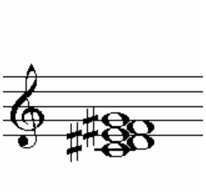
Arrangement Decisions

As mentioned before, the overriding factor in this transcription, over-riding those of ‘pianistic ability’ and dynamic considerations is the factor of clarity. In this sense decisions are made according to this but this is not to say that the elements of effects and harmony are sacrificed, rather altered to serve the purpose of clarity. It is so easy for the ensemble of two pianos to become a pedalled mass of swirls and clusters. For this to be avoided it is necessary to make these small ‘sacrificial alterations’.

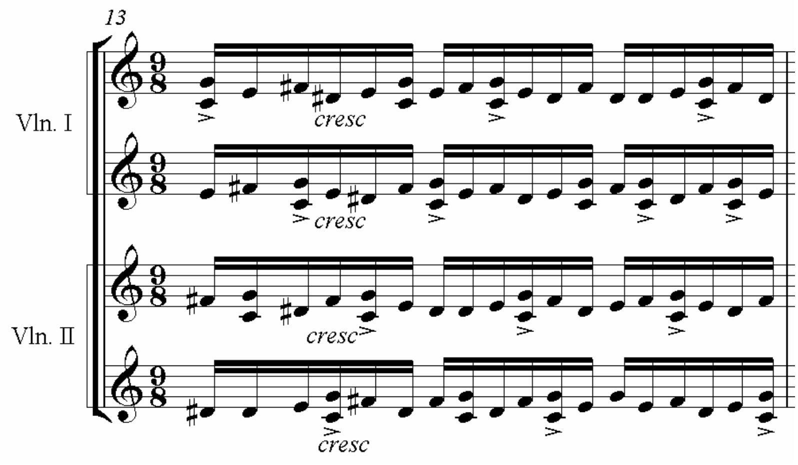
The enduring ideal is to bear in mind that one is not trying to recreate the full orchestral score on two pianos but rather the various intricate effects of what the orchestra is capable of. These can, at best, be mimicked – not copied. It is unfortunate that the first movement appears, at first glance, to be 43 bars of mostly tremolos. As mentioned previously, the specific orchestration by Grové provides a wonderful mass of sound. Similarly, Richard Strauss’ *Eine Alpensinfonie* begins with, literally, a mountain of sound as the whole orchestra plays notes of the B melodic minor scale in ***pp***. The brilliant orchestration makes this work one of the most representative and effective epic tone-poems of any natural aspect of the world. With *Vladimir’s Round Table*, Grové creates and holds a remarkable tension as the represented ‘merry-making’ of the knights in a celebration hall seems to warn of an impending darkness. To keep with this representation it is necessary to carry the impression of this busy scene.

In this movement one of the most significant alterations to the original score appears. The use of the clarinet semi-quaver ‘whirling’ figures, a series of ascending and descending scales, to help with the bed of sound is somewhat overshadowed by the rest of the thick orchestration - in the one existing recording of this work these parts are almost completely inaudible. Besides this, it would prove to be almost impossible, to work these fast and severely chromatic semi-quaver figures into the already thick piano reduction. For these reasons some of these parts are almost completely ignored. However, these ‘whirling’ figures are often doubled by ‘cello lines so a few of the more important ones are included in the transcription when they are featured in another instrument. The other melodic features would suffer as these parts would simply cloud any existing clarity of the melodic and percussive features. Later, when the woodwinds have static quaver entries, these are taken into account and included.

The strings are not excluded in the semiquaver commotions: in bar 13 of the first movement the violins play, in *divisi*, a repeated cluster of sorts which is arranged in a way that each part plays an individual line which eventually evolves into tremolos. To make sense of this it is necessary to consider its purpose: it's an effect. Also, this is simply a carefully structured tremolo as every semiquaver beat contains exactly the same notes:

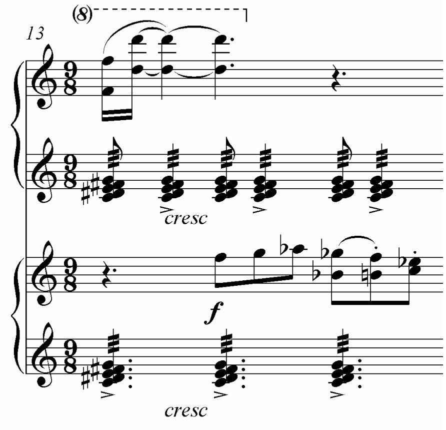


However, when studying the violin parts, it is clear the reason for this decision:



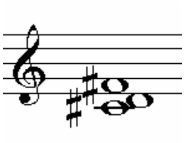
I – Reminiscences in the Festive Hall of the Knights b13

The accents provide a driving force in the crescendo. So, to reproduce this on the pianos with only four hands, these essential and effective figures are reduced to tremolos.

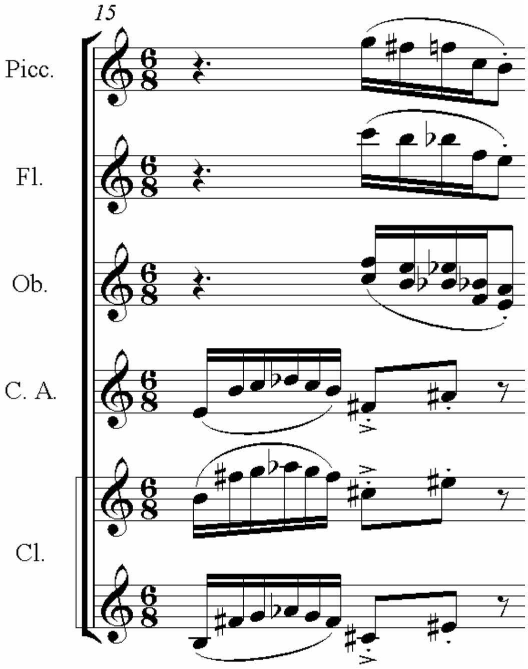


I – Reminiscences in the Festive Hall of the Knights b13

Similarly, the clarinet parts play alternate chromatic notes that are in the same range, but that aren't being played by the violins:



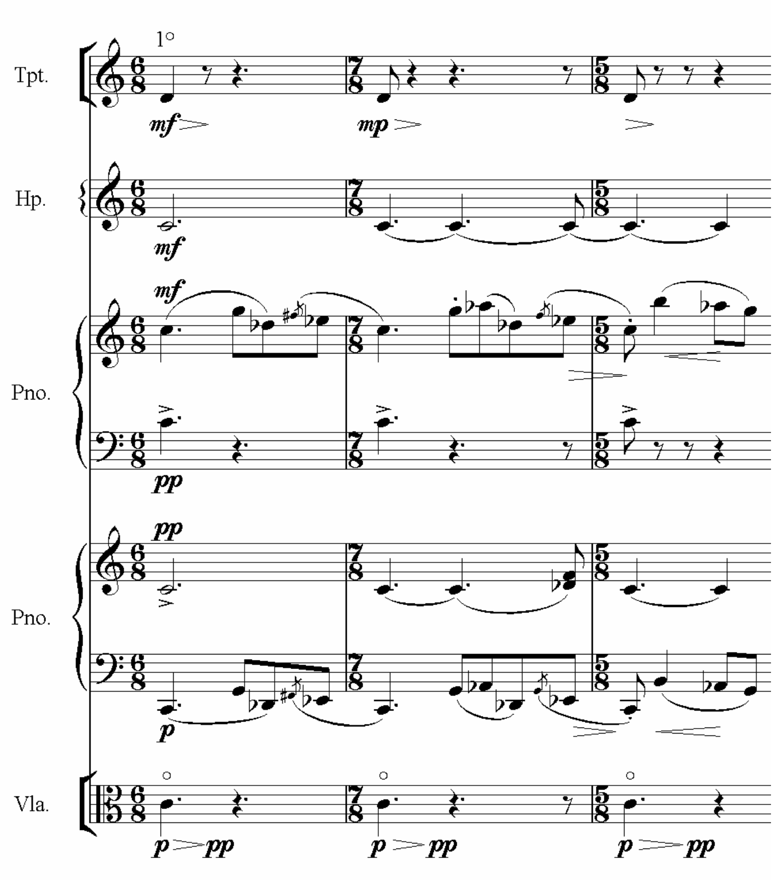
An example of selective clarinet writing occurs in bar 15, where it is necessary to include these figures as they form part of what seems to be a call and response mechanism. Here, clarinets and cor anglais introduce a line which is immediately answered by piccolo, flute and oboe.



I – Reminiscences in the Festive Hall of the Knights b15

In quieter areas where the sound is sustained by long notes in the strings it is necessary to find a method of creating that same illusion on the piano. Unfortunately, the problem presented is also that the 'cellos are playing harmonics. This sound is impossible to match on the piano but the best possible solution is to double the resulting note, in this case a B-flat just below middle-C, an octave lower. The sustaining ability of the piano at this range is much more effective in producing this necessary soft support.

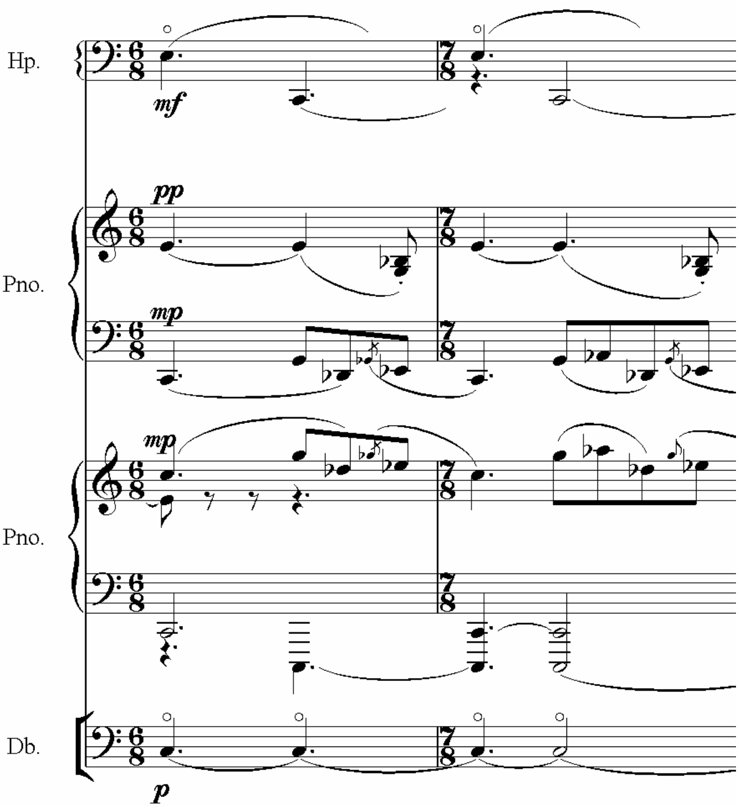
In the second movement, bar 51, the trumpet and viola share an entry with the harp. This is an obvious secondary voice but the interesting point is the sustenance that the harp provides. In the piano part this is done similarly, where one piano provides the accented note while the other 'catches' the resonance in a way.



II – The Cunning Slaying of Yaropolk b67 – 69

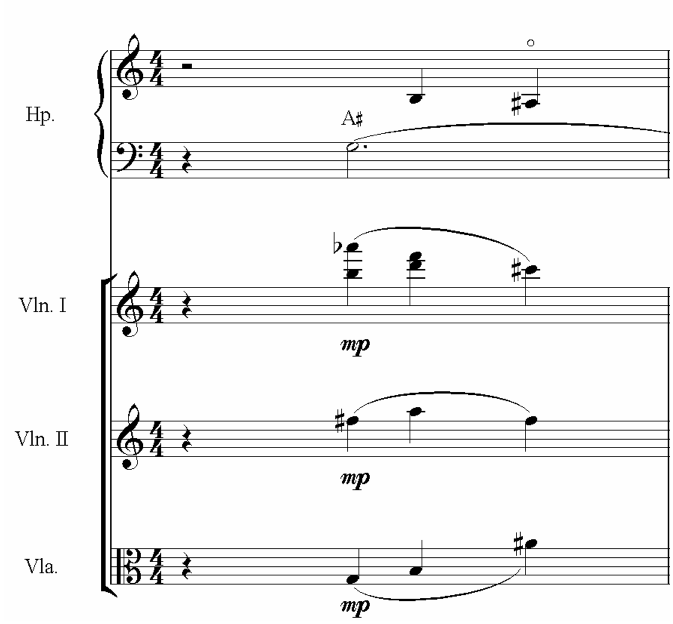
Later, in bar 67, the horn entry is played in a higher octave. If the entry was kept in the same octave, the clarity of the entry, when played with the other voices would be muffled and the effectiveness would be lost. Similarly, the distance enlarges the contrast hereby reinforcing the entry.

In bar 69 sustaining harp figure keeps the harmony clear with an added double bass. Here, the double bass harmony structure is used with the harps moving figure. This ‘rocking sustenance’ keeps the harmony stable and while being played ***mf***, its use in this manner is somewhat effective.



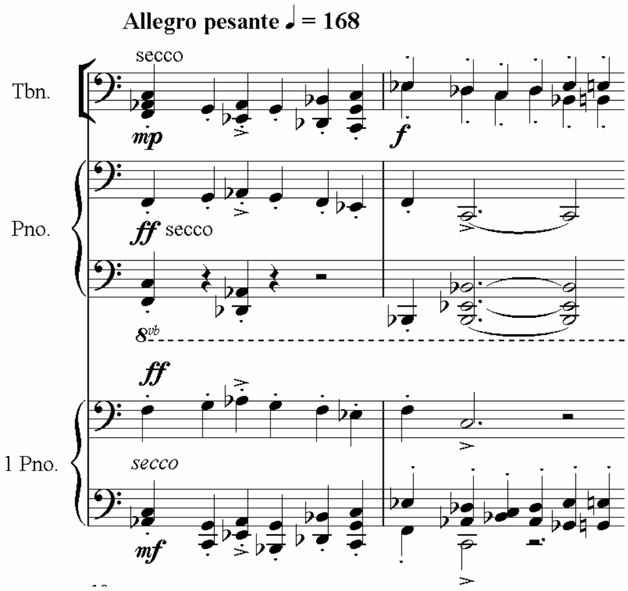
II – The Cunning Slaying of Yaropolk b69

In bar 94, the third movement, an interesting bit of writing can be seen. The three note phrased melody is similar in appearance in the respective instruments: violins, harp, and celesta. Why did Grové place the final note of the same three note phrase an octave higher? Is this an example of Grové’s timbre modulation technique? Could it be to assist with a thinning of the texture and at the same time, the dynamics? Considering the geography of the section, (where the cor anglais solo has just ended) this is plausible as the small but effective piccolo entry answers at ***pp*** two bars later. In the piano part, however, the harp part’s structure is used as playing the lower octave note assists in keeping the dynamic level down.


Hp.
A♯
Vln. I
mp
Vln. II
mp
Vla.
mp

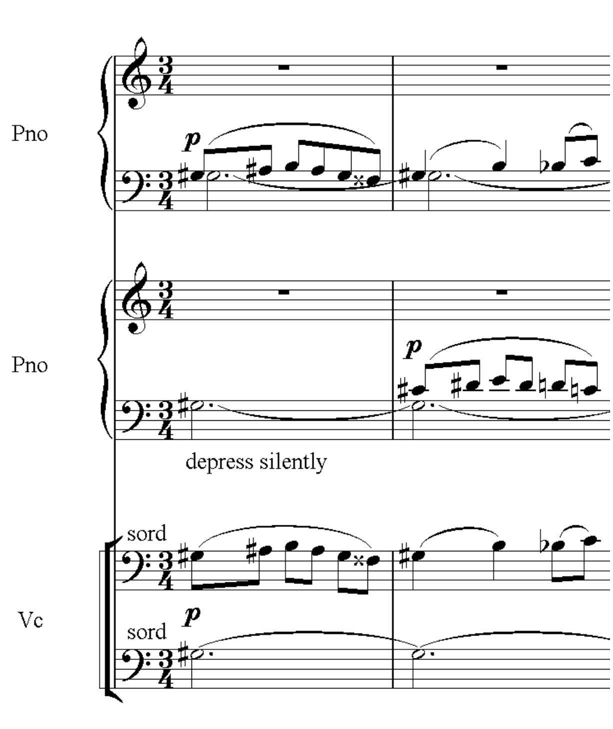
III – The Wooing of Ragmilde b94

Piano use in orchestral music is not anything new, but when it is used, depending on the composer and the work, it could be immensely effective. Well known examples of this are Saint-Saëns' Third Symphony and Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony. Here, in bar 110 of the fourth movement, the introduction of a fuller piano line is effective in providing a heavy, percussively driven theme. The closely written chords in the trombones (and copied in the horns) are effective in assisting this piano line and are included in a lower dynamic, providing support without overriding the thematic material.


Allegro pesante ♩ = 168
secco
Tbn.
mp
f
Pno.
ff secco
8vb
ff
1 Pno.
secco
mf

IV – The Charge of Polotsk and Murder of Ragvald b110

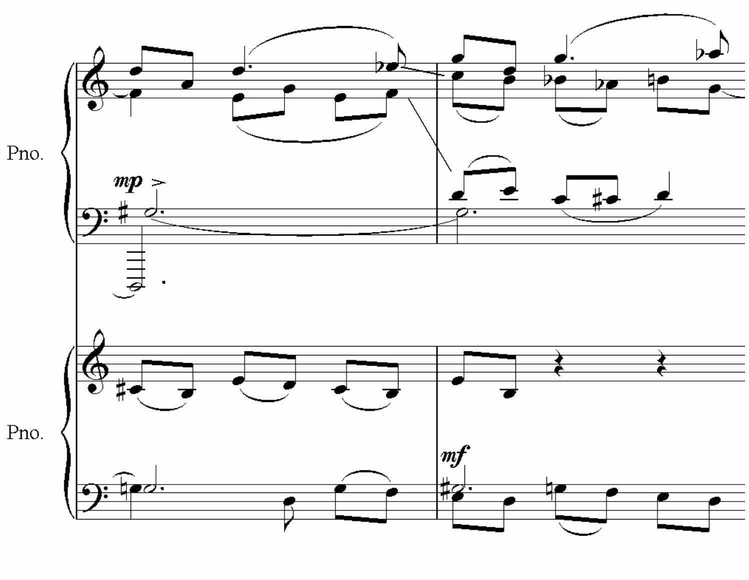
An interesting effect used in the closing movement has to do with simple scientific harmonic resonance. As two piano works are performed with the pianos facing each other to absorb and maximise each other's resonance, this simple yet effective technique supplies an interesting alternative to a simple ***pp*** placing of a note. Here, the sympathetic resonances of higher notes ring within the held G-sharp in the 1st Piano as well as the silently depressed G-sharp in the 2nd Piano. Unfortunately this is not necessarily a simple task. The pianists need to exercise supreme legato playing with hardly any pedalling to achieve and sustain the sound whereby interweaving entries can be heard and followed. This is a modern fugue of sorts – with 6 voices.



V – Repentance under the Banner of the Cross b180 – 181

At times where the string parts overlap it is necessary to rearrange the parts for clarity. For practical reasons as well as line hierarchy these voices are rearranged to suit the particular situation of any particular bar. In general, as mentioned before, the 'true-to-the-score' attitude is adopted as much as possible. In this movement, however, the individual instrument timbres are lost within the piano part and are therefore far more difficult to follow especially as the parts all occupy a similar range.

To assist with this, for the pianists' sake, indicative lines are added to ensure these lines are followed as phrasing.



V – Repentance under the Banner of the Cross b196 – 197

Overall, the decisions made with regards to Arrangement Decisions and its translation into a Piano Duo version, serve two main purposes: Clarity, and pianistic possibility. It is clear that this vastly orchestrated work, and its transcription, provide challenges of many kinds to the pianists. Hopefully these decisions are helpful and insightful, without detracting from a richly orchestrated work such as this.

Conclusion

"*Vladimir's Round Table* is a fascinating and vividly descriptive work in which timbre and tension are skilfully manipulated" and "the total effect transports the listener into an unusual and memorable story-world" (Larkin, 1993). Grové's experienced orchestration technique compliments his focus on "the importance of literature and works of prose … and in this composition there is an intimate connection between the narrative and the music" (*ibid*).

This transcription attempts to attain an equal balance between a certain 'faithfulness' to the score, while trying to keep a level of spontaneity in its performance. Performance is, after all, what an audience ultimately remembers. The process of transcription was one which posed many interesting challenges, each of which required their own individual solutions. The immensity of Grové's score was constantly a reminder of what the final product should be: a work which conveys an array of moods, leaves an impression, and, finally, creates interest. Secondary to this, it was necessary to be as academically accurate as possible while still working under the guise of a 'free transcription'. During the study of this work many discoveries were made with regards to the possibilities which piano writing creates. It is the writer's impression that pianists seem to be so fixed on the standard repertoire of western classical music that, after having observed the possibilities in this study, almost limit the technical freedom pianists and composers can afford to utilise. Performance today is focused on new ways to interpret and present a work, as demonstrated by the high level of technical prowess of some of the famous pianists on the international music scene today. This supports the fact that audiences want to be amazed as well as enamoured by music, or even by a performer. So, considering this, the music has not changed – only the way it is performed. Transcriptions by Vladimir Horowitz, Leopold Godowsky, and Arcadi Volodos introduced in a new level of pianistic technical facility, but also a new level of interpretation.

Individual performance and interpretation style keeps people craving a variety of performers playing the same piece over and over again. Mahler said that "the best part of music is not found in the notes". Therefore, "to make the piece of music come alive, the guidelines of the score – and even of historically appropriate performance practice – are only a beginning point, not an end" (Benson 2003). So as a work, a musical score is essentially a dull noun – a dead piece of paper. Bruce Ellis Benson says that music comes alive when we, as performers, perform the work with the same sense of responsibility mentioned above so as to continually re-create a 'living' entity. Therefore, for the work to come alive, translation has to take place – that is, the journey the work takes in an individual's mind, from the notes on the page to the ears of the listeners – and these varying depths of translation between individuals is what keeps music alive. Essentially, music is a constant, and to keep it “a living entity … its life must be characterised by an ongoing maturation process” (*ibid*).

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C.

VLADIMIR’S ROUND TABLE

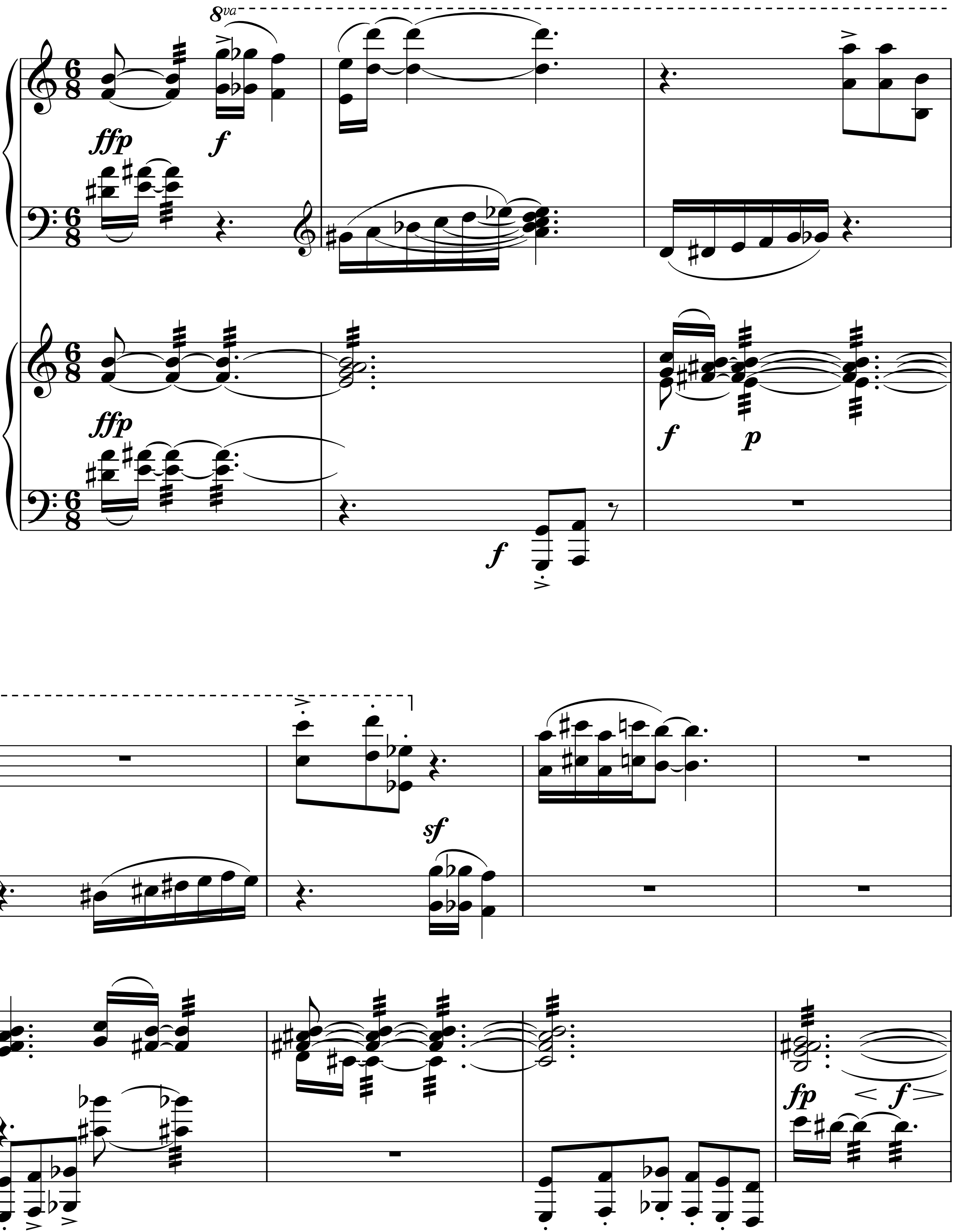
STEFANS GROVÉ

TRANSCRIPTION FOR TWO PIANOS

Vladimirs Round Table

Stefans Grové
(Transcribed for Two Pianos by
Brendan Hollins)

Larghetto misterioso ♩. = 84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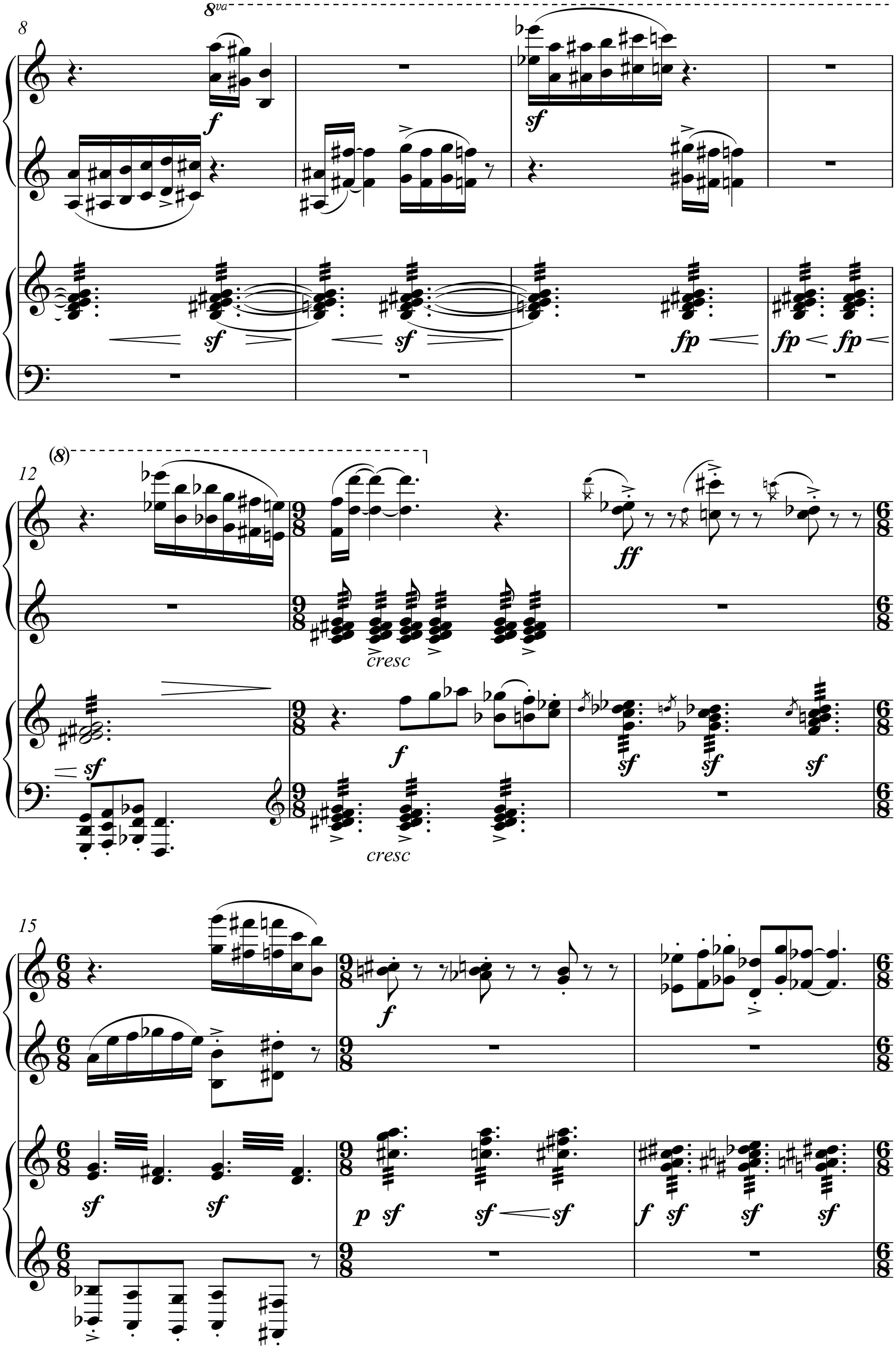
ffp
f
ffp
f
f
p
4
(8)
sf
f
fp
f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8va
f
sf
sf
sf
sf
fp
fp
fp
12
(8)
sf
cresc
f
ff
sf
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sf
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p
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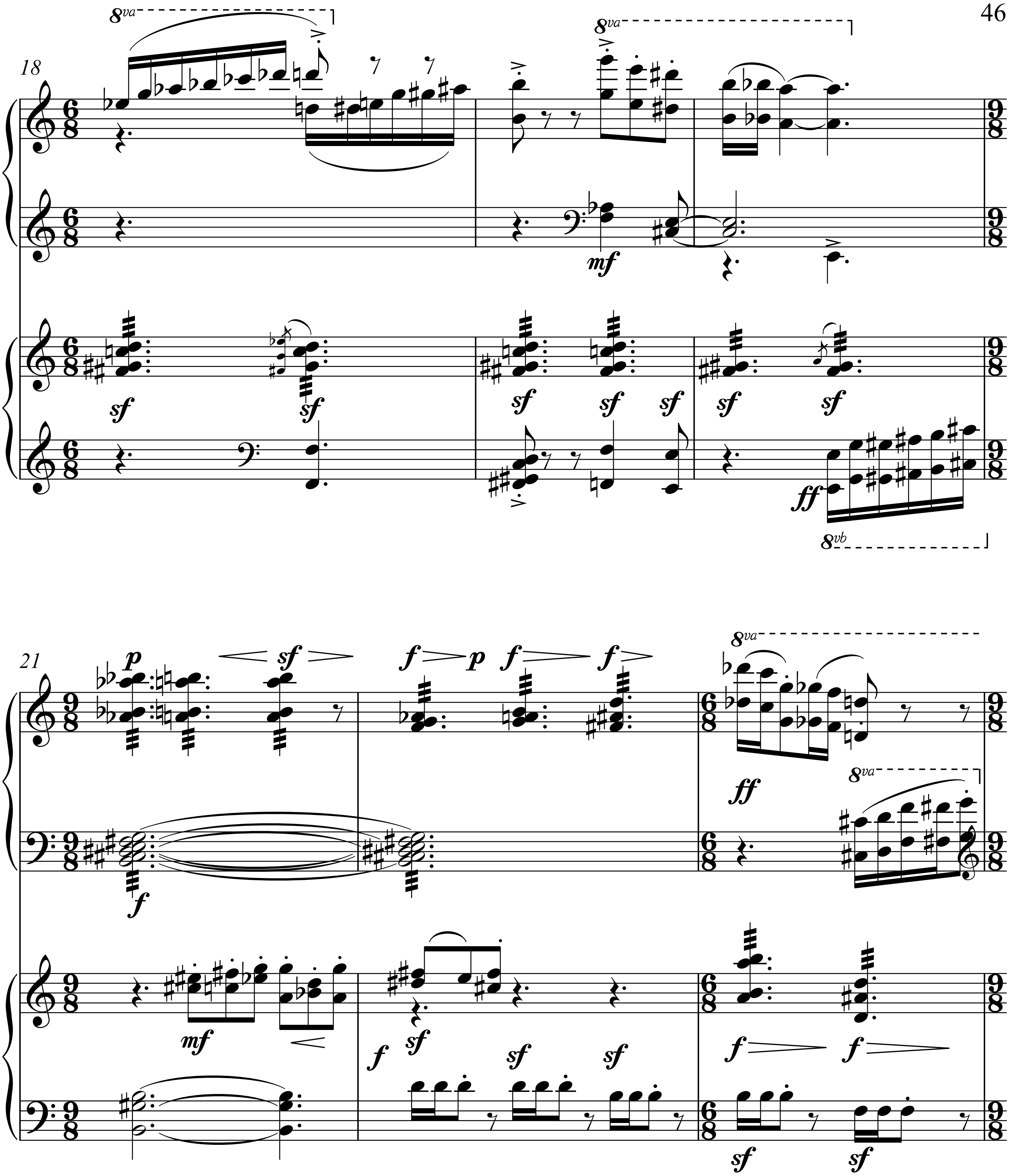
sf
sf
f
sf
sf
sf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6/8
sf
sf
mf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
ff
8vb
9/8
21
p
sf
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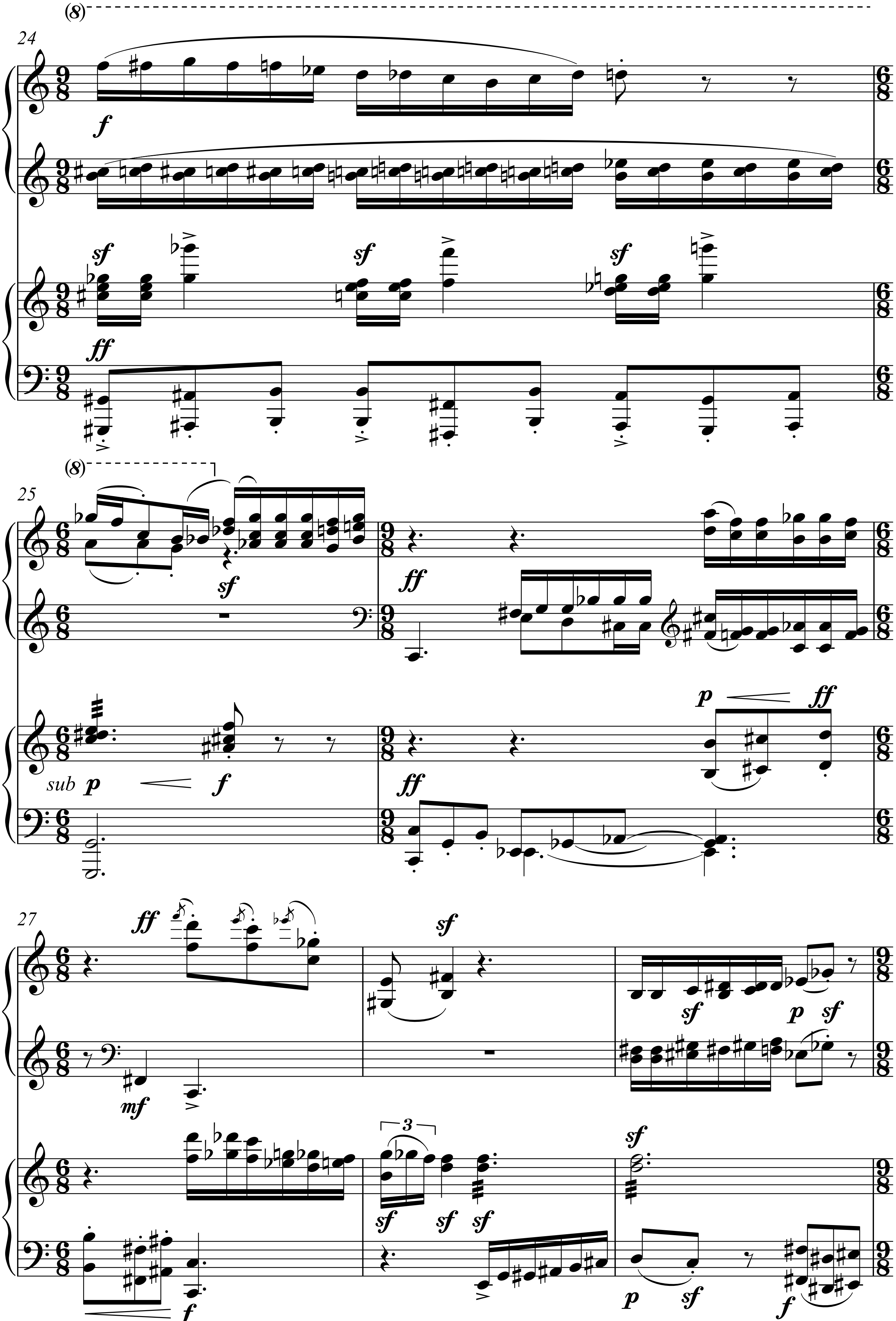
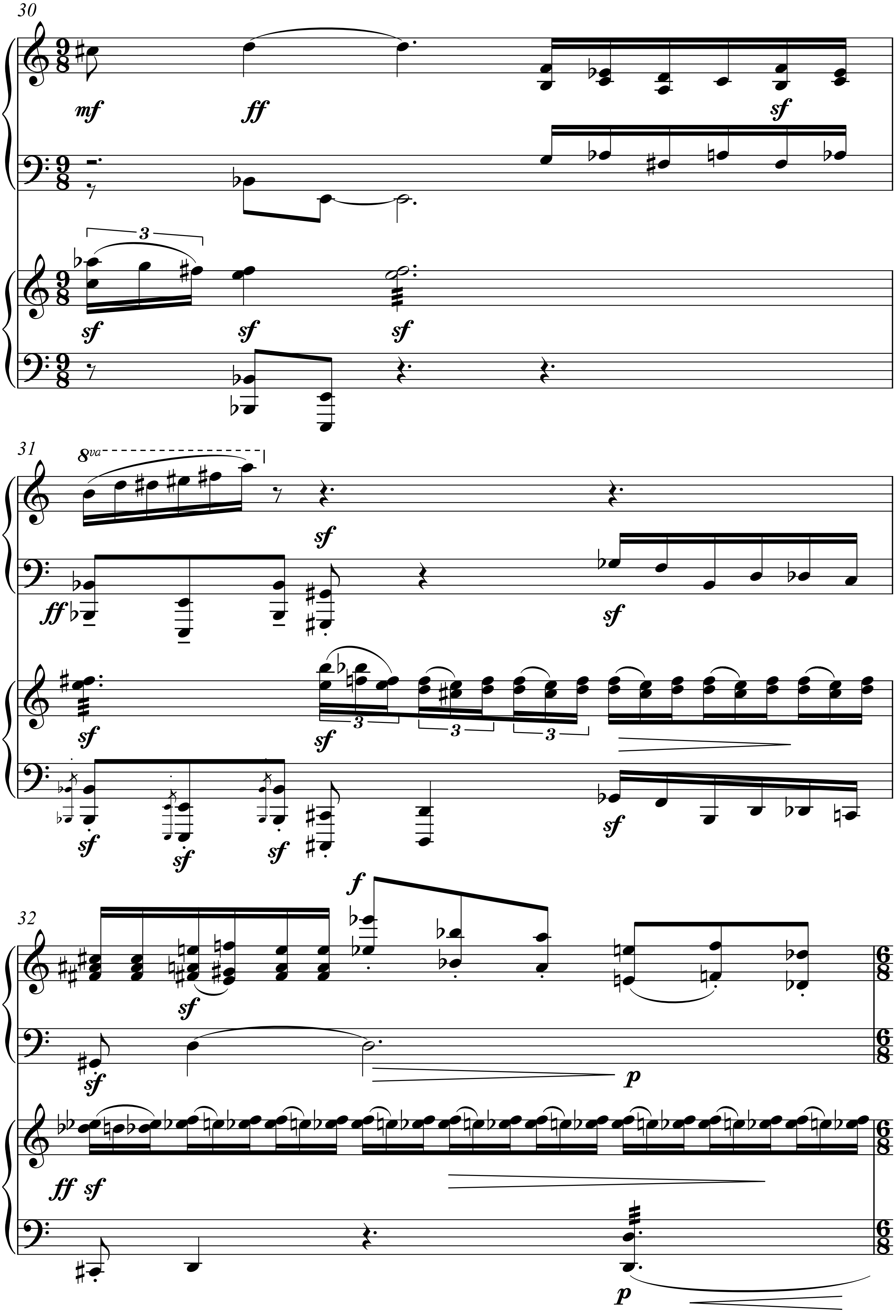
6/8
8va
ff
f
f
sf
sf


(8)
24
f
sf
ff
(8)
25
sf
ff
p
ff
sub p
f
ff
27
ff
mf
sf
sf
p
sf
3
sf
sf
sf
sf
p
sf
f
8vb
f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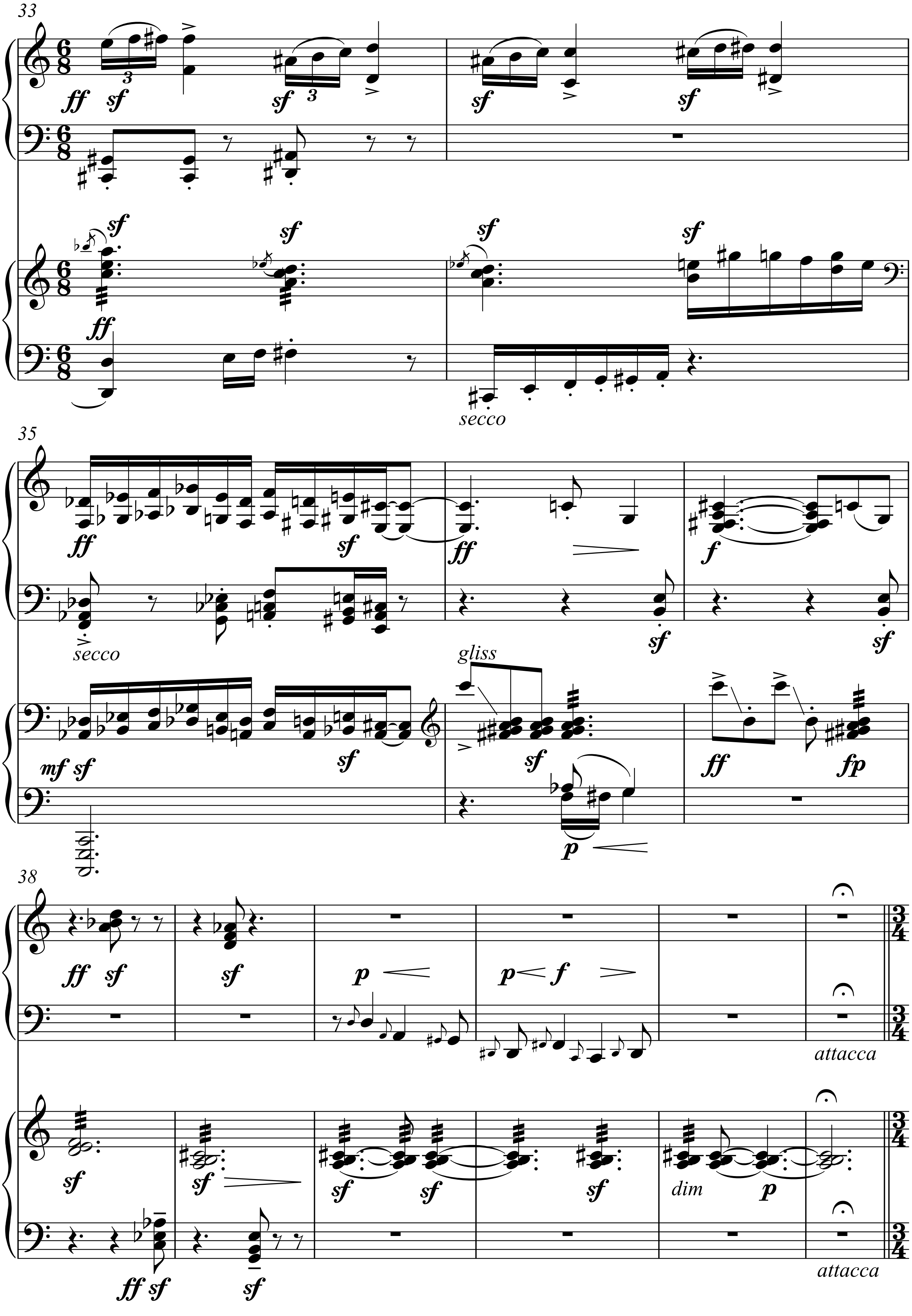
mf
ff
sf
3
sf
sf
sf
31
8va
sf
ff
sf
sf
sf
3
3
3
sf
sf
sf
32
f
sf
sf
p
ff sf
p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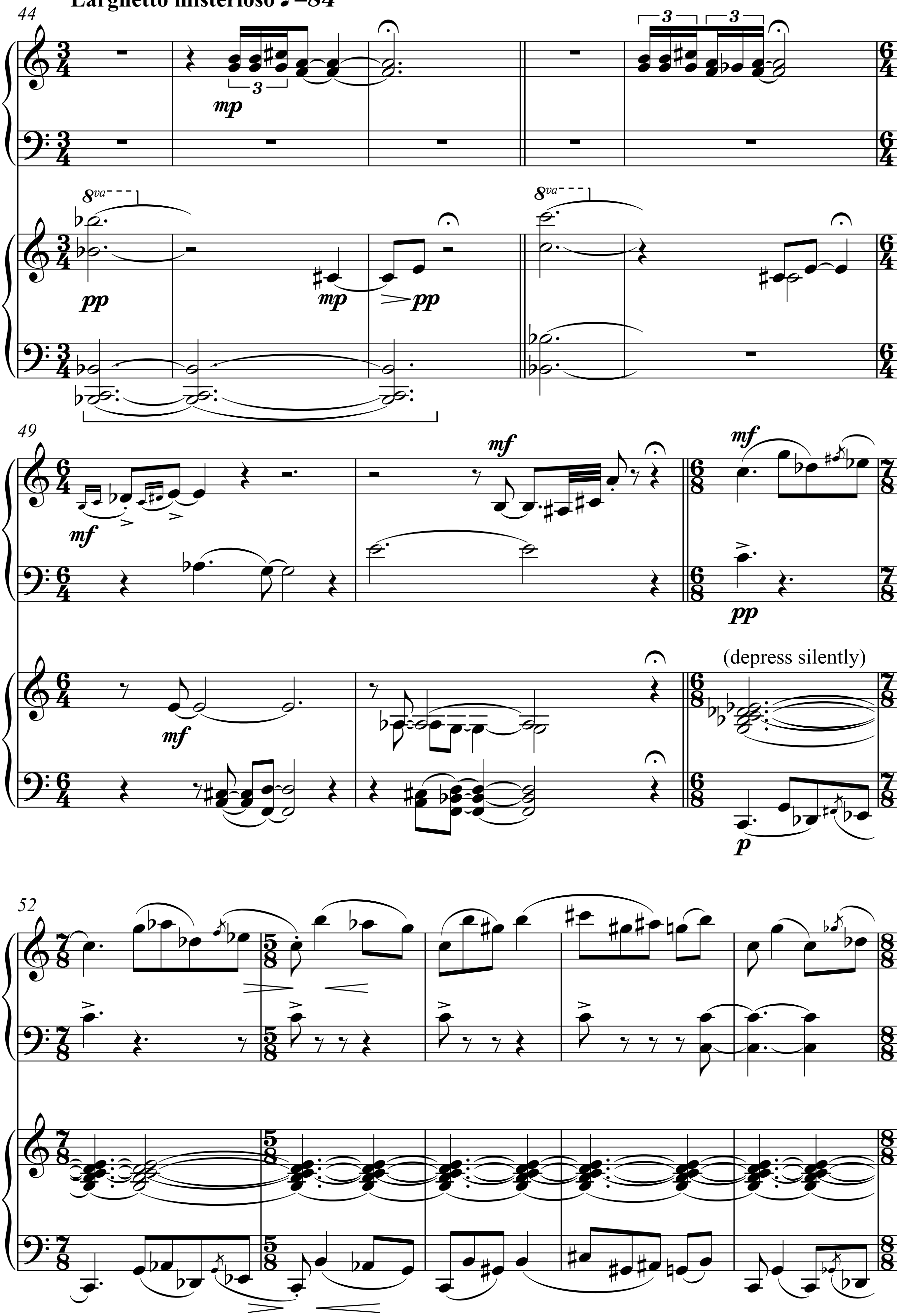
ff
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
ff
secco
35
ff
sf
ff
f
secco
sf
sf
mf sf
sf
gliss
sf
ff
fp
p
38
ff sf
sf
p
p f
attacca
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
dim
p
ff sf
sf
attacca

II

Larghetto misterioso ♪=84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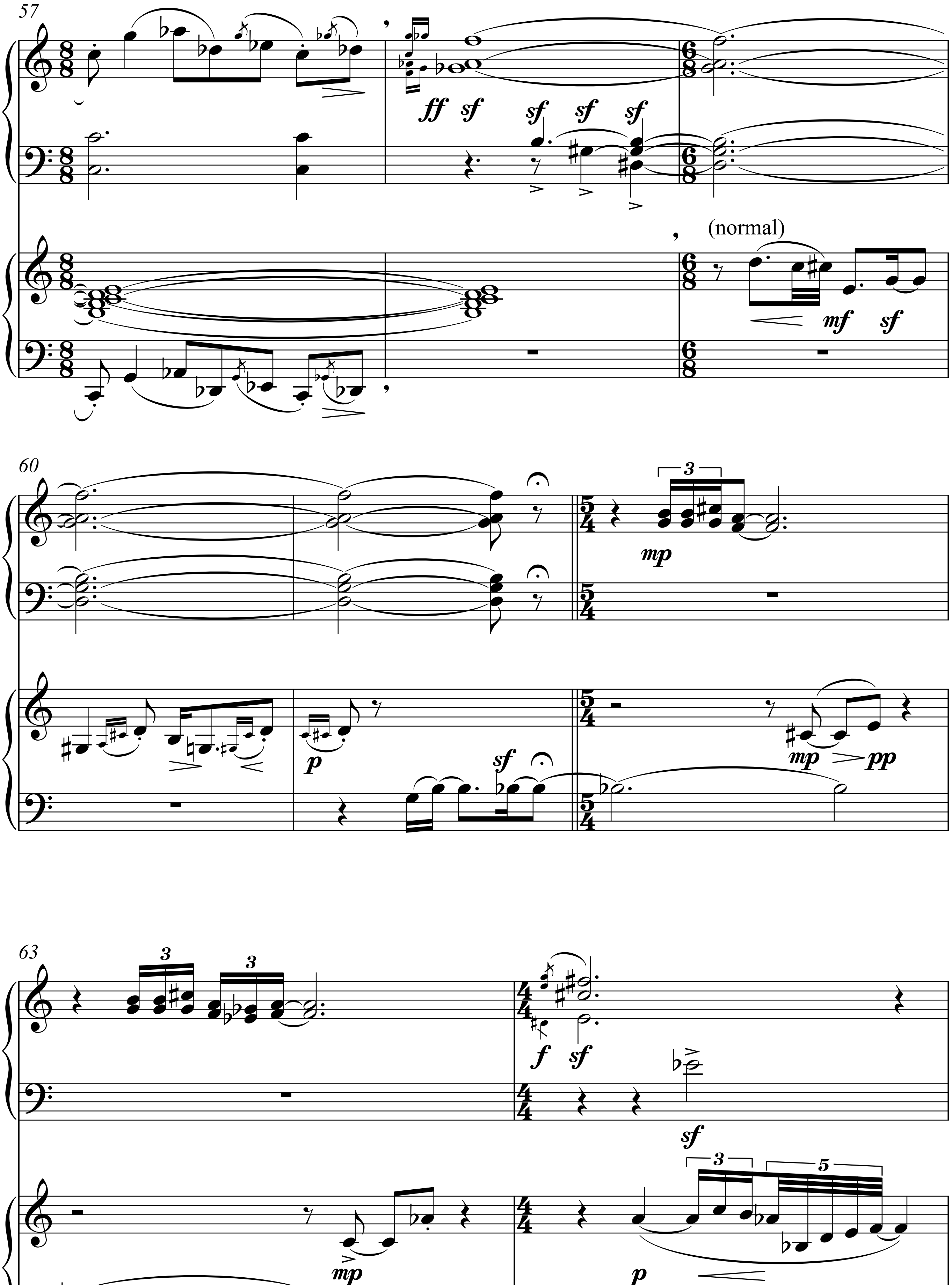
3
mp
8va
pp
mp
pp
49
mf
mf
mf
pp
(depress silently)
p
52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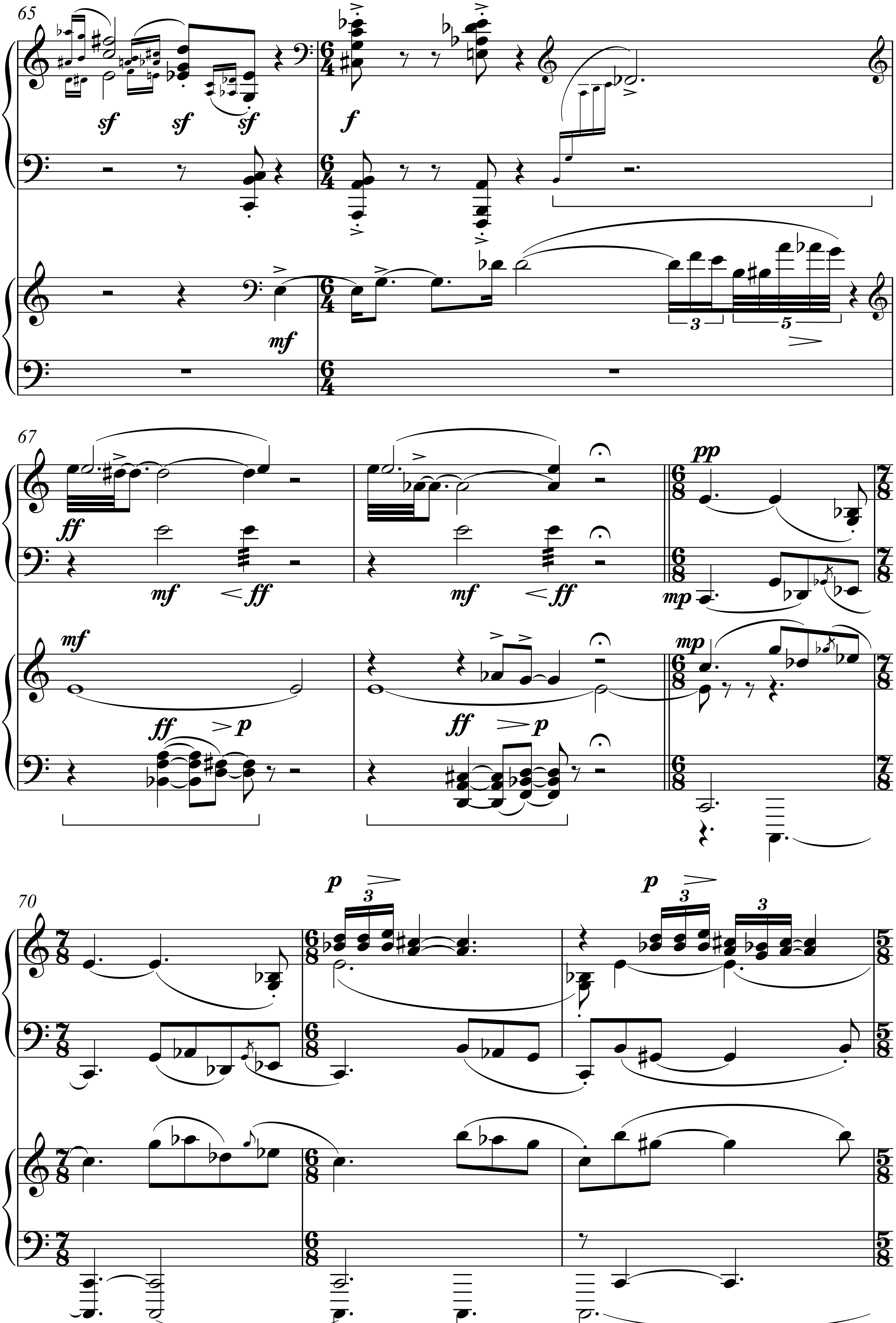
ff
sf
sf
sf
sf
(normal)
mf
sf
60
p
sf
mp
mp
pp
63
f
sf
sf
mp
p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sf
sf
f
3
5
mf
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ff
mf
ff
mf
ff
p
ff
p
pp
mp
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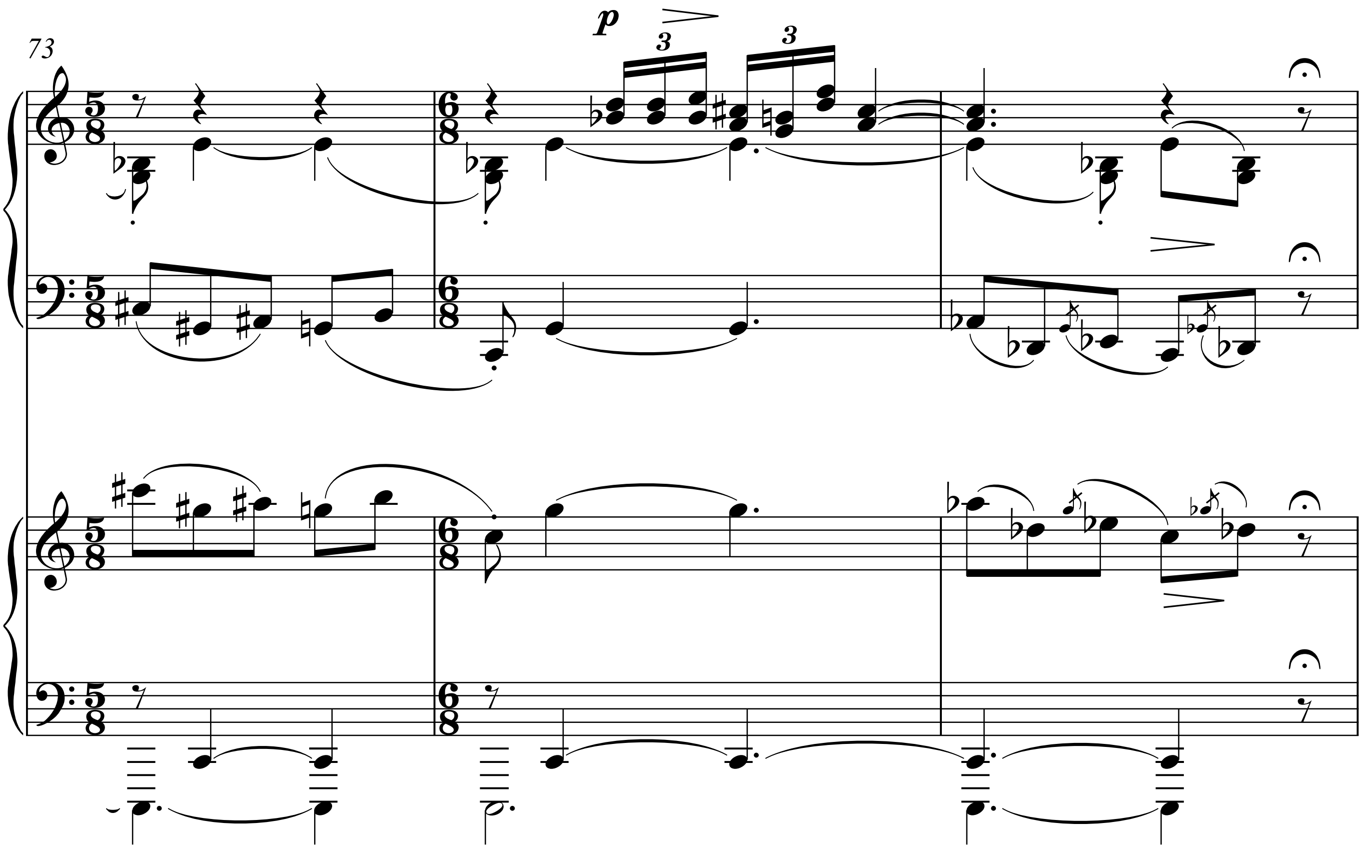
70
p
3
p
3
3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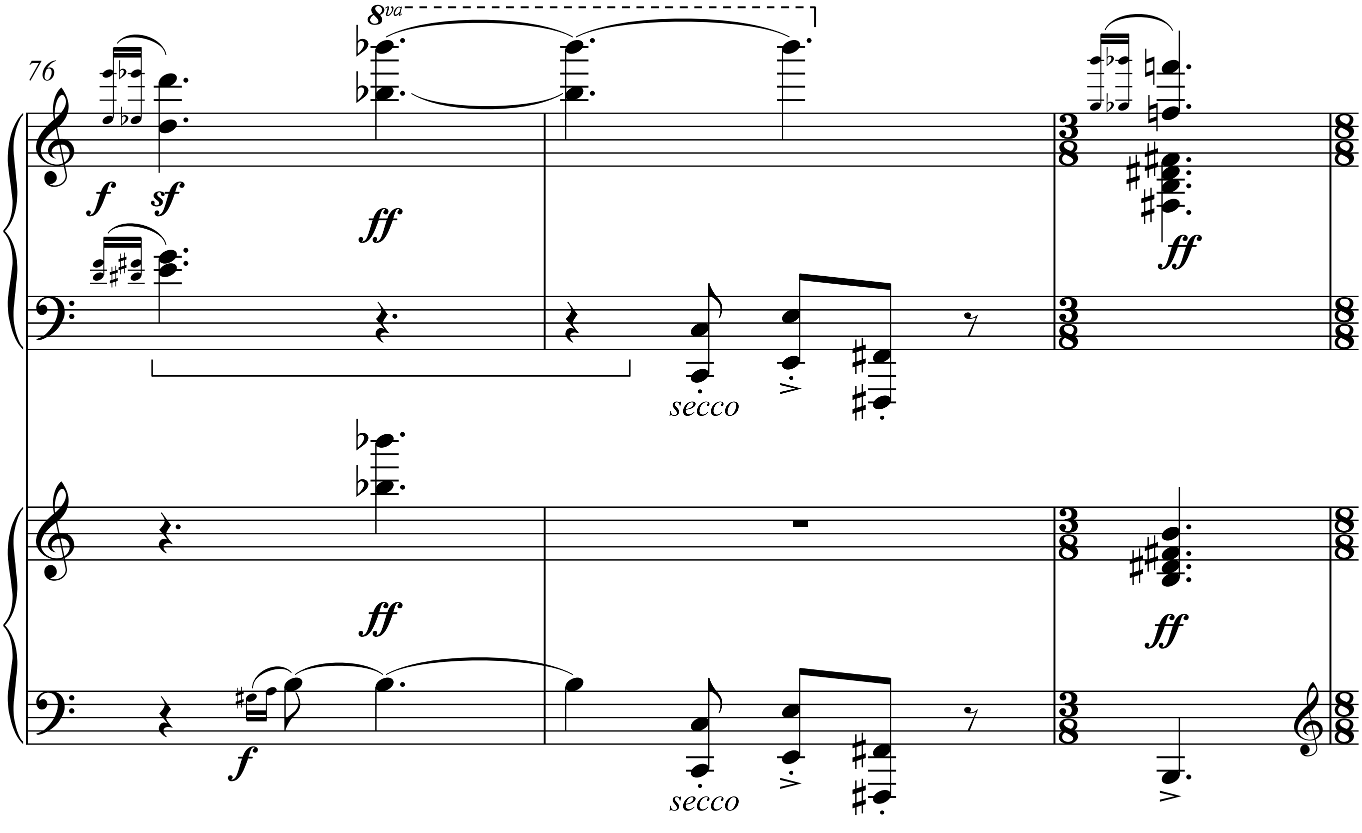
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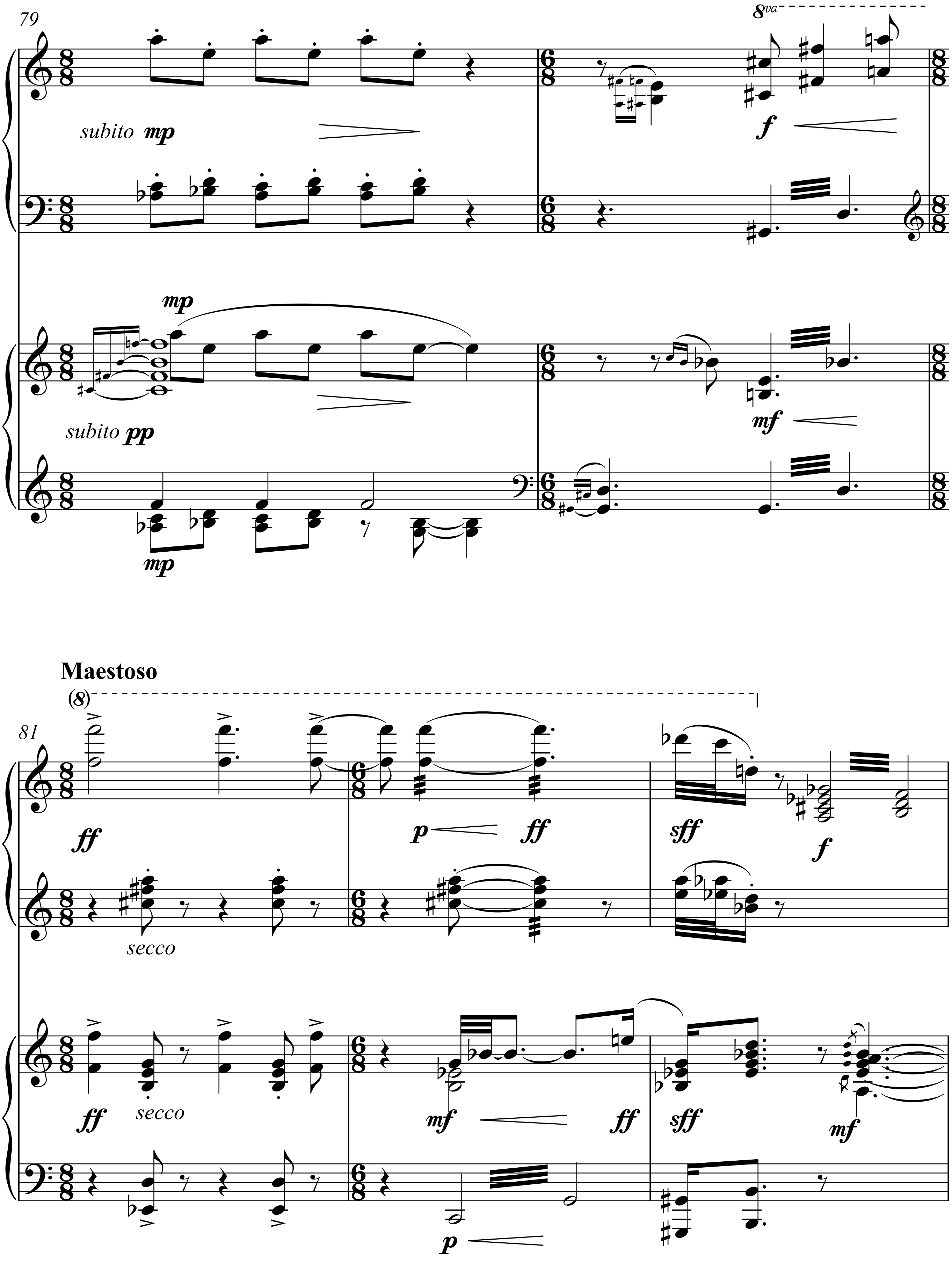
8va
f
sf
ff
secco
ff
ff
f
secco
ff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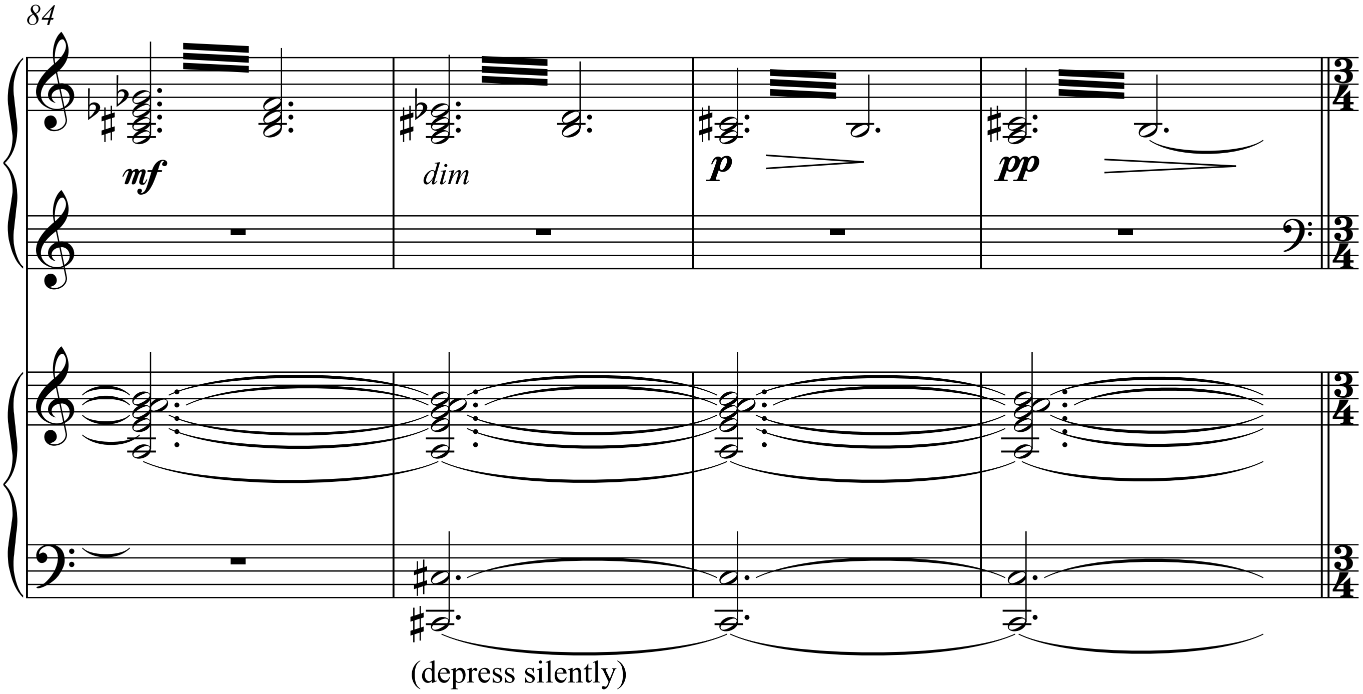
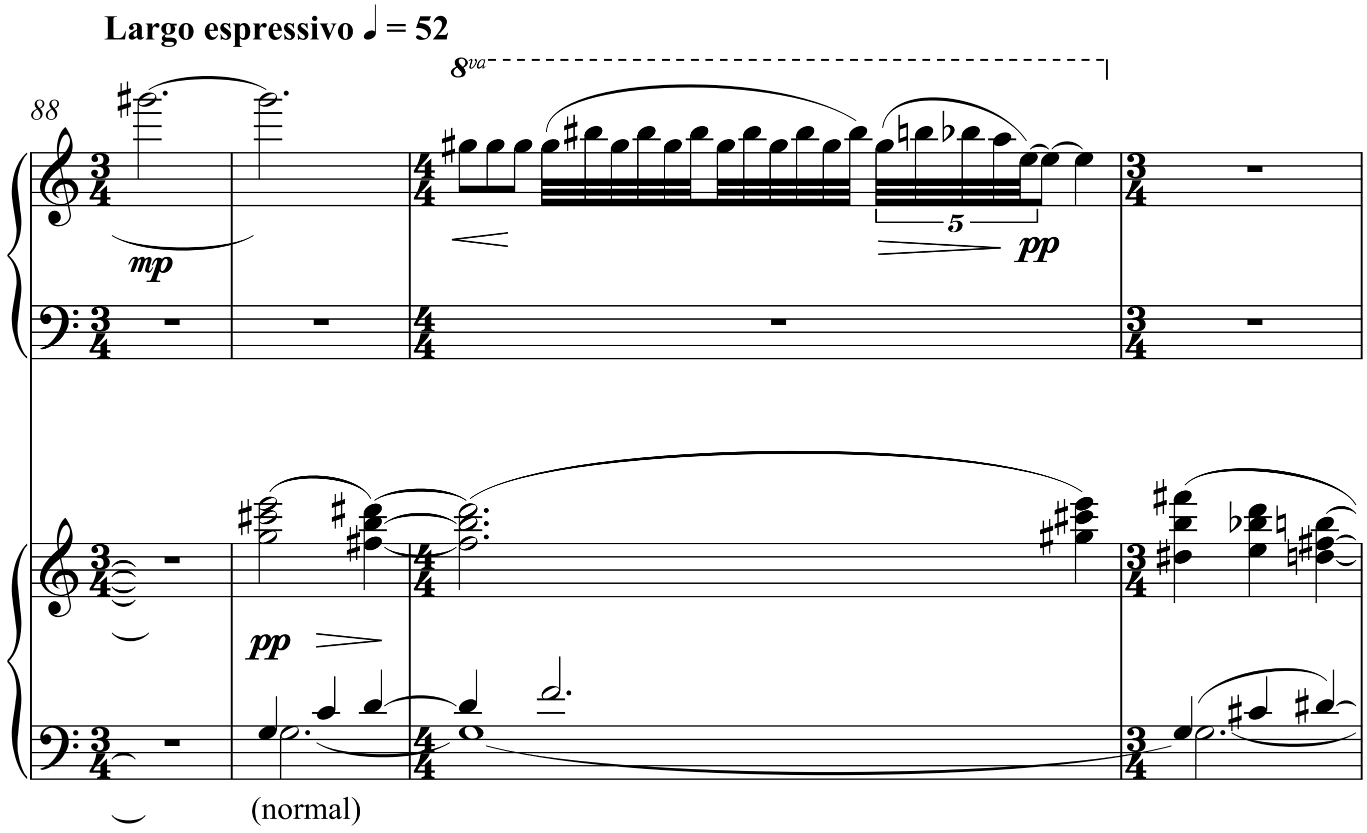
8va
subito mp
f
mp
subito pp
mf
mp
Maestoso
(8)
81
ff
p
ff
sff
f
secco
ff
secco
mf
ff
sff
mf
p


84
mf
dim
p
pp
(depress silently)

III


Largo espressivo ♩ = 52
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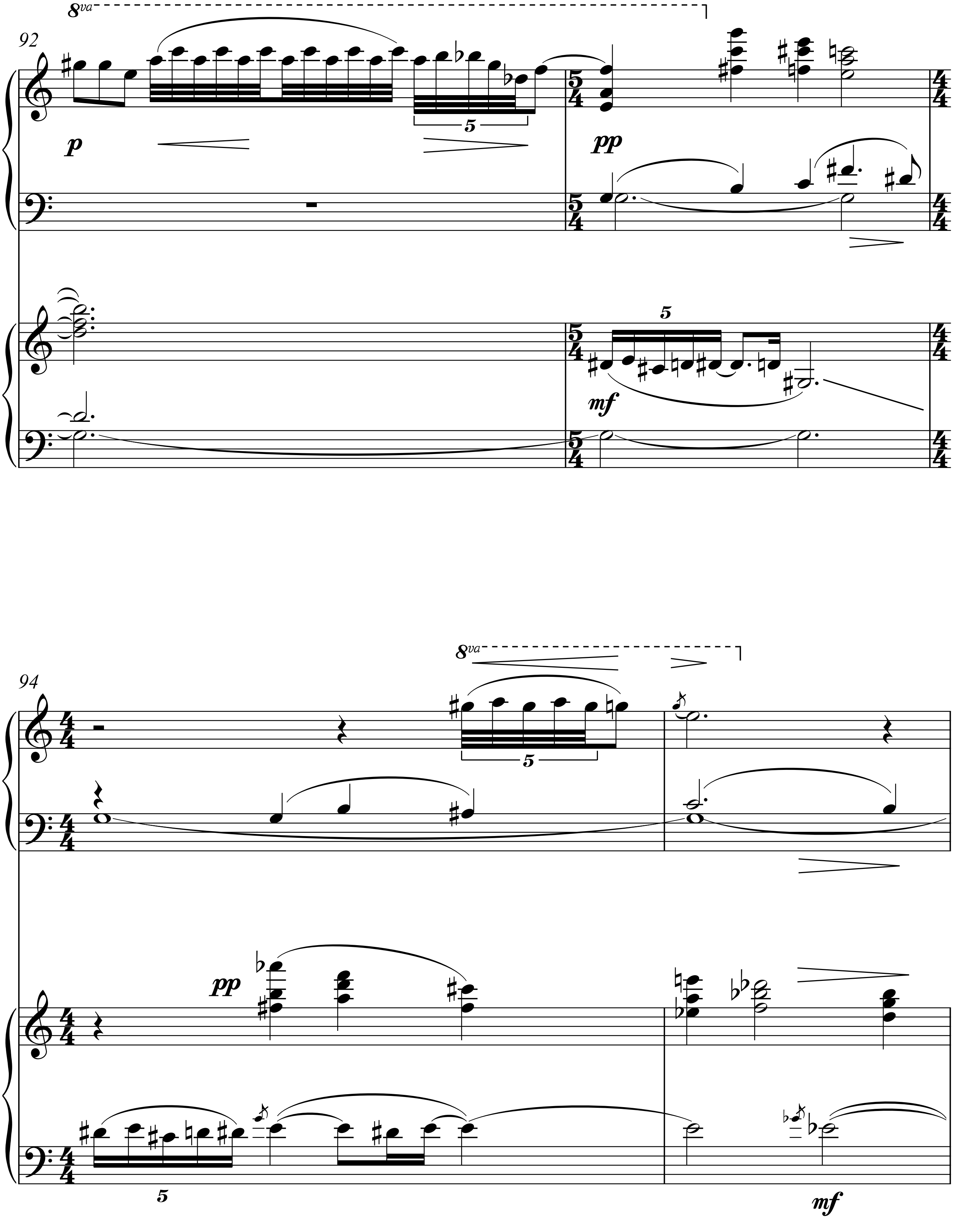
8va
mp
5
pp
pp
(normal)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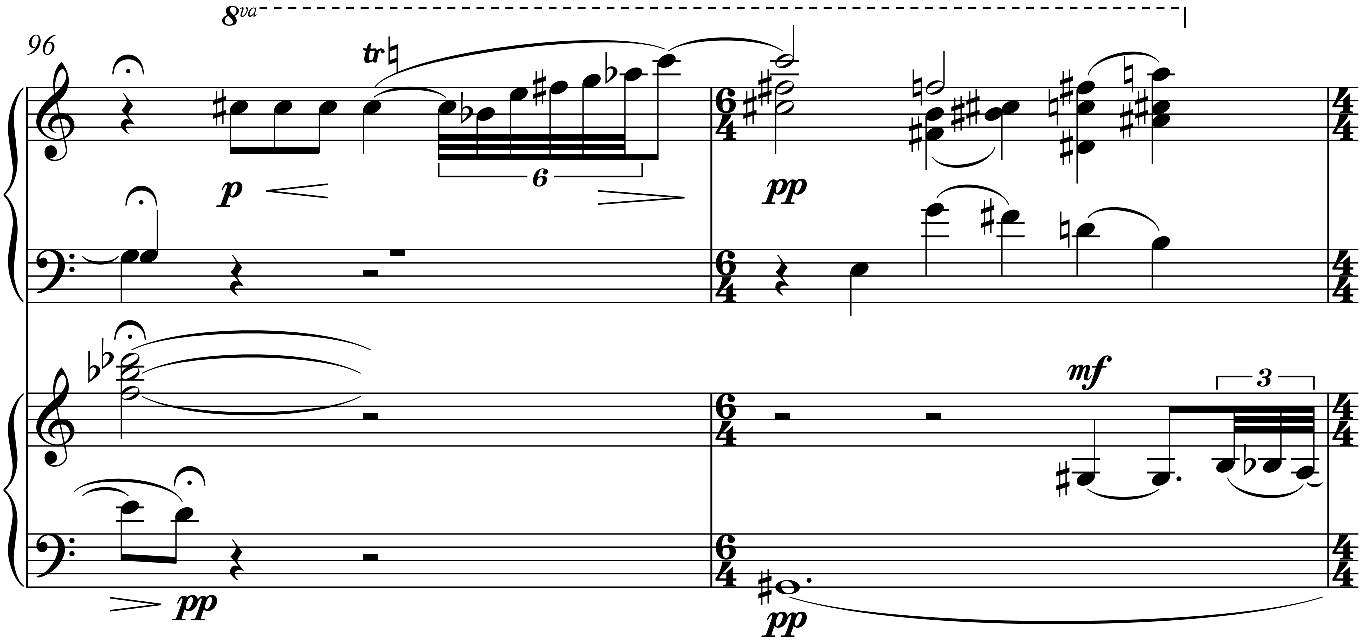
p
5
pp
5
mf
8va
94
5
pp
5
mf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tr♮
p
6
pp
mf
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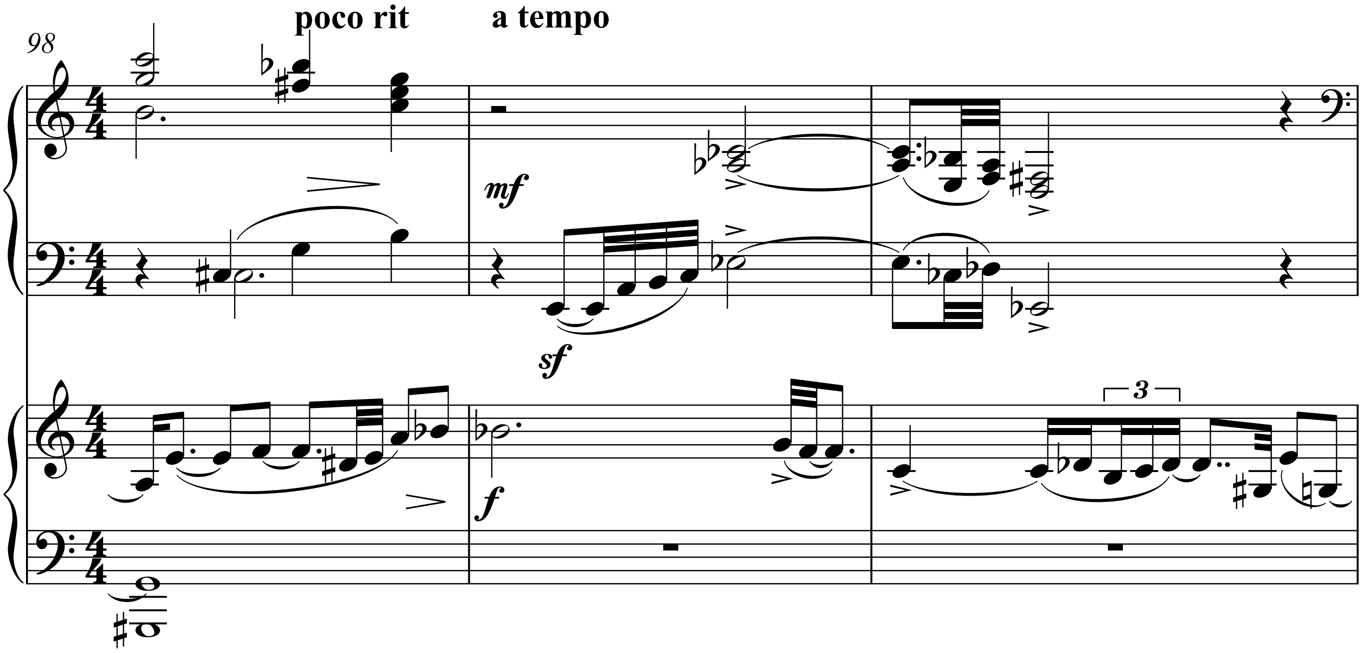
pp
pp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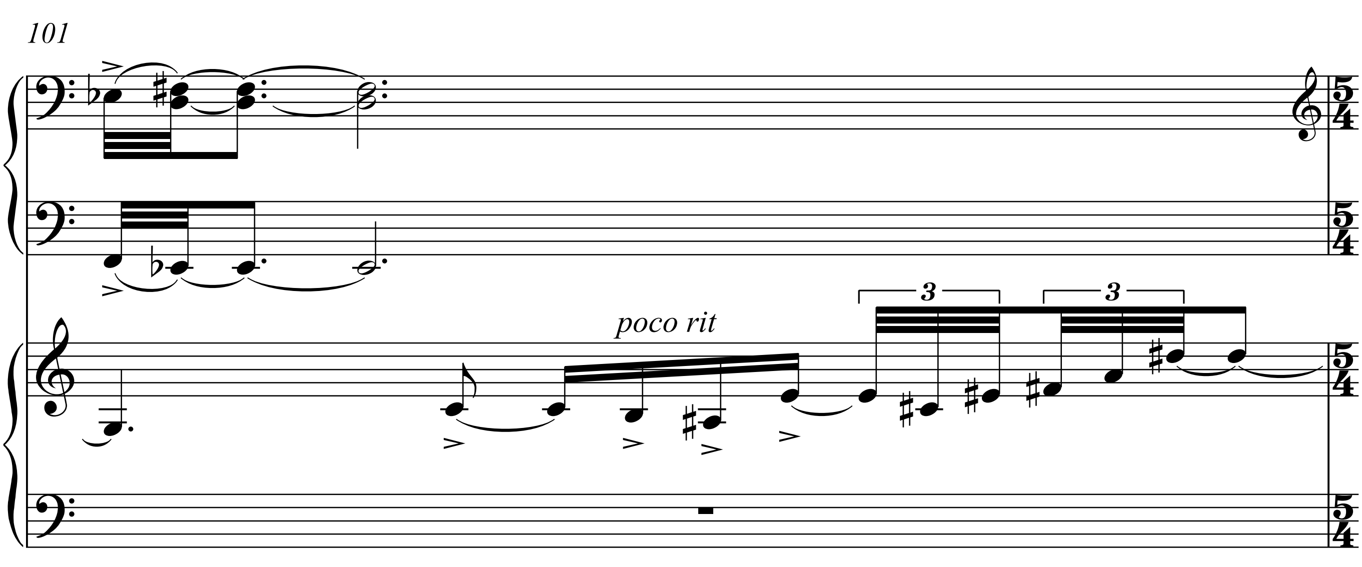
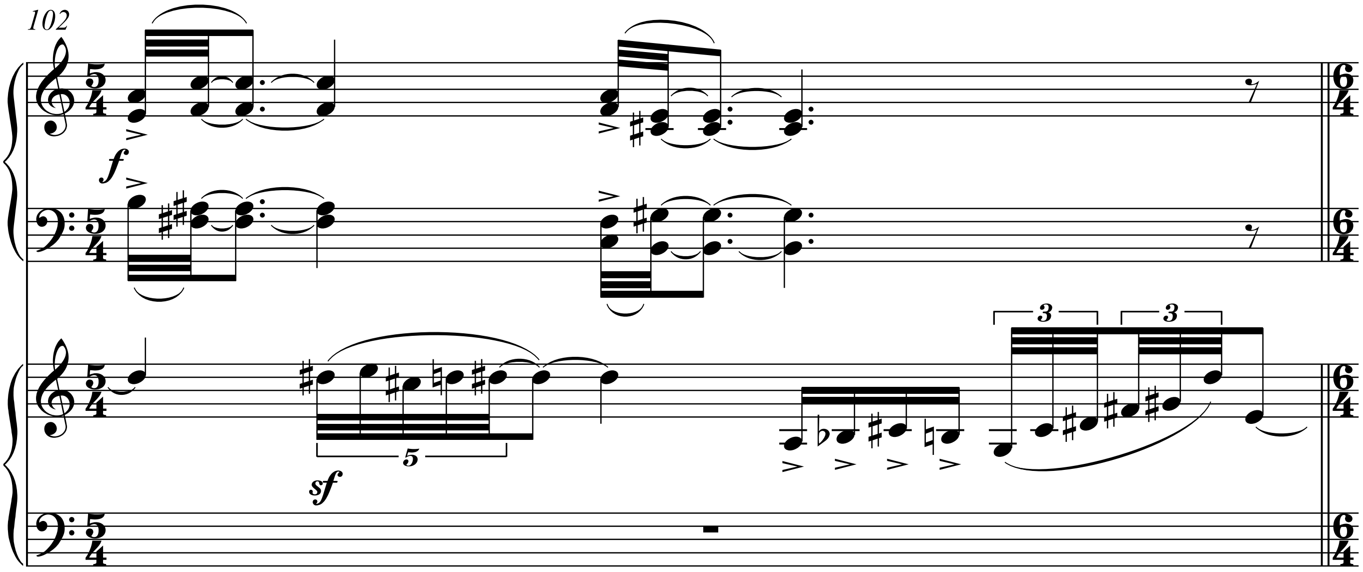
a tempo
mf
sf
f
3


poco rit



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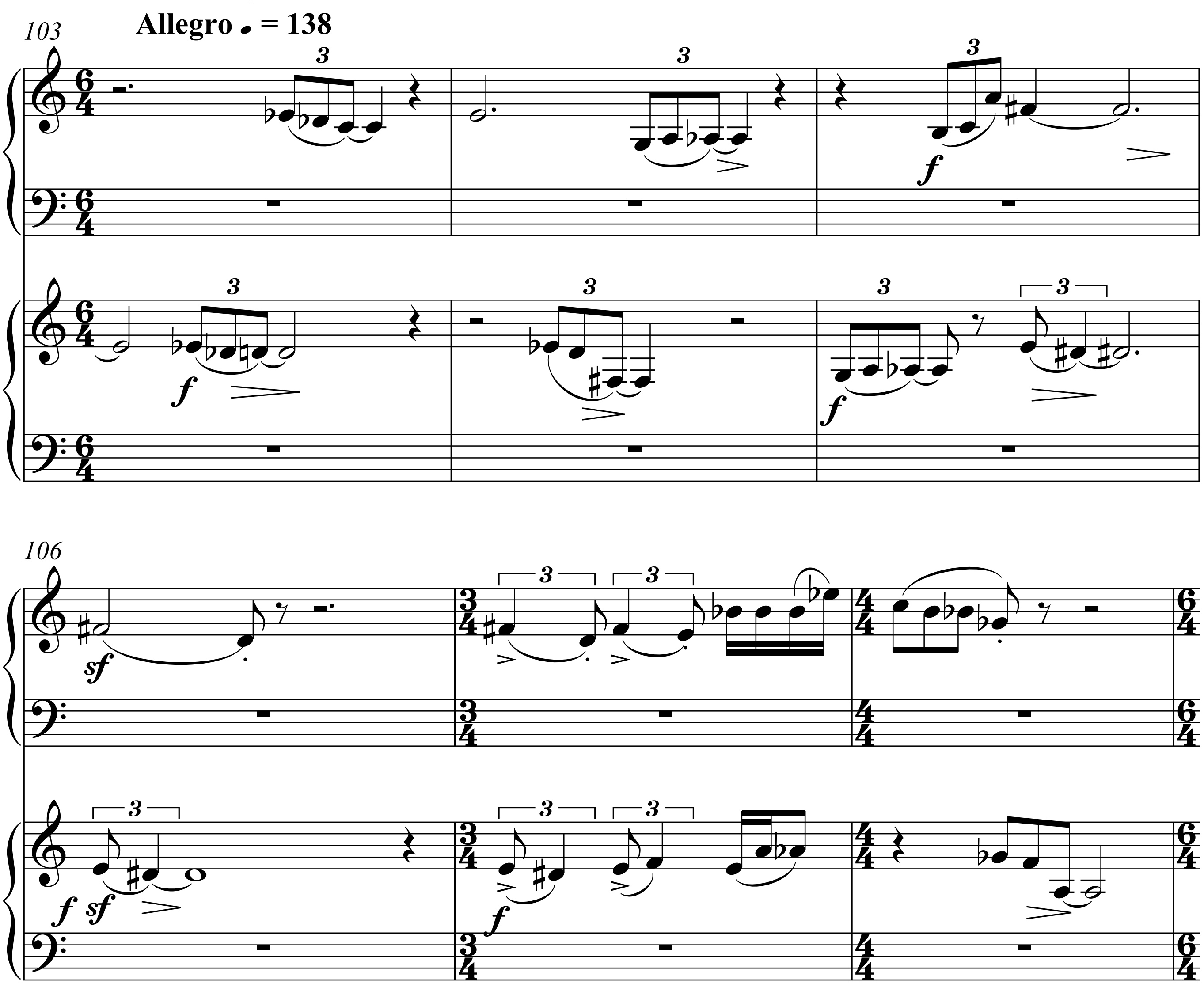
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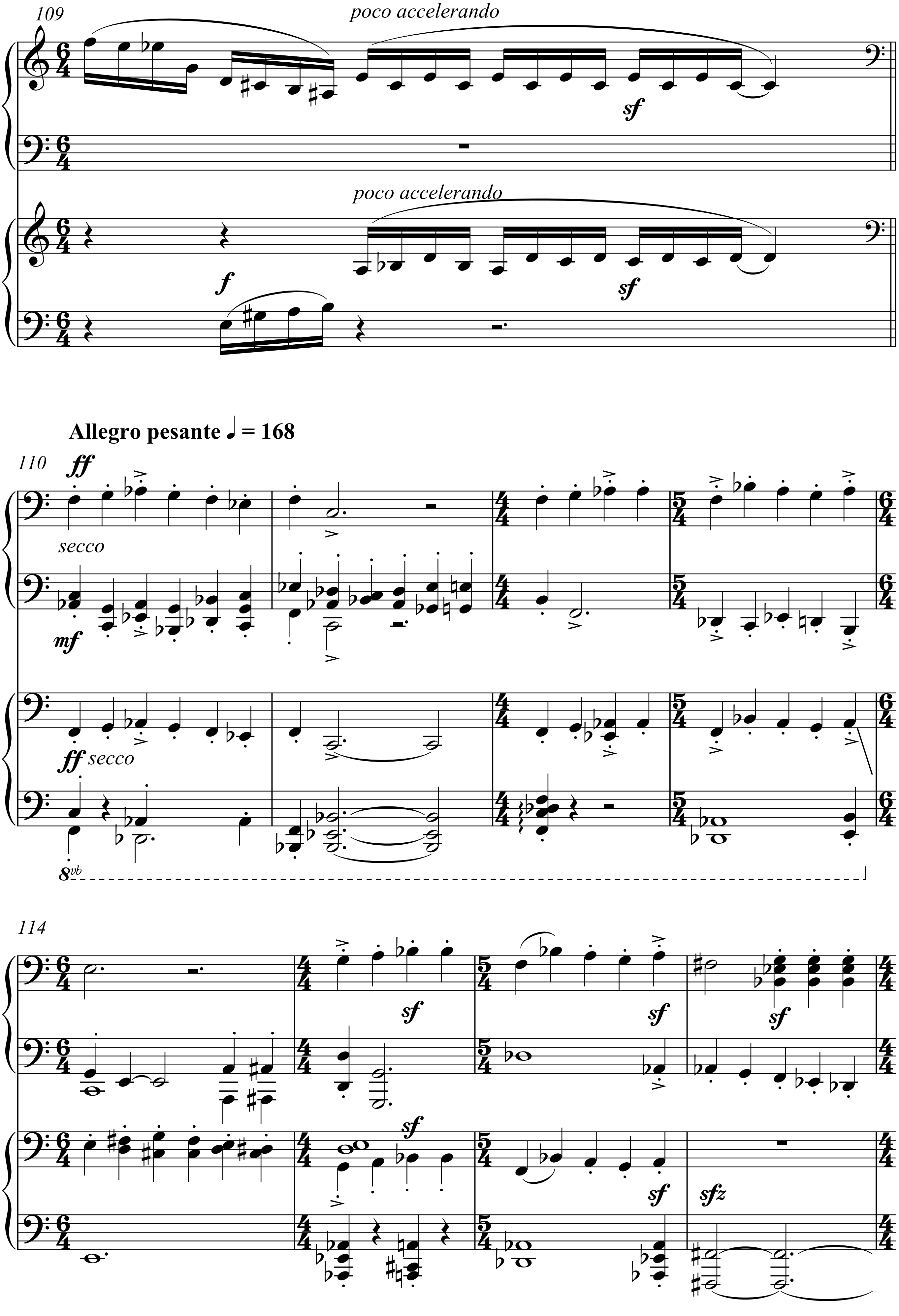
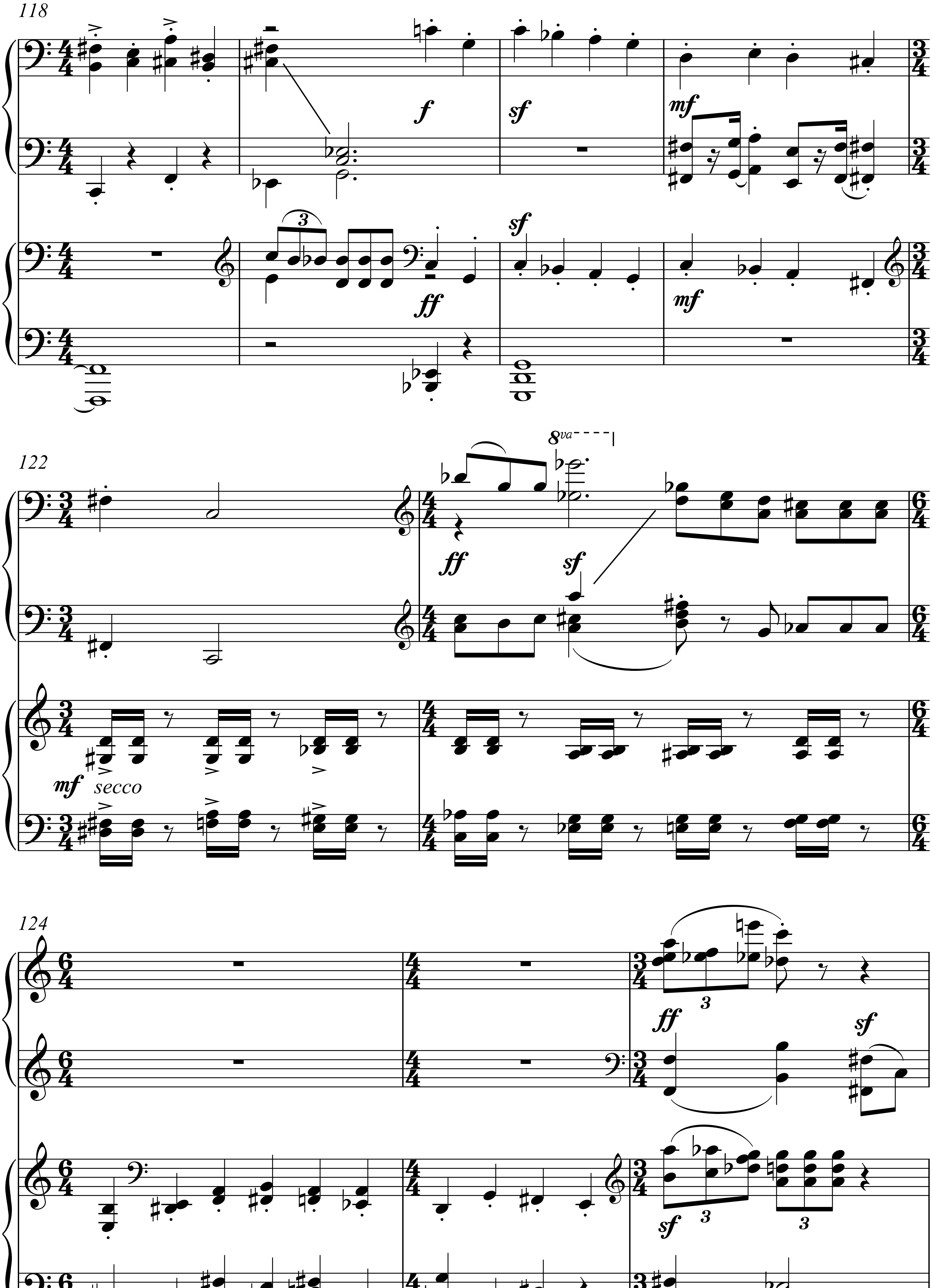
Allegro ♩ = 138
3
f
106
sf
f


109
poco accelerando
sf
poco accelerando
f
sf
Allegro pesante ♩ = 168
110
ff
secco
mf
ff secco
8vb
114
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sfz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sf
mf
sf
ff
mf
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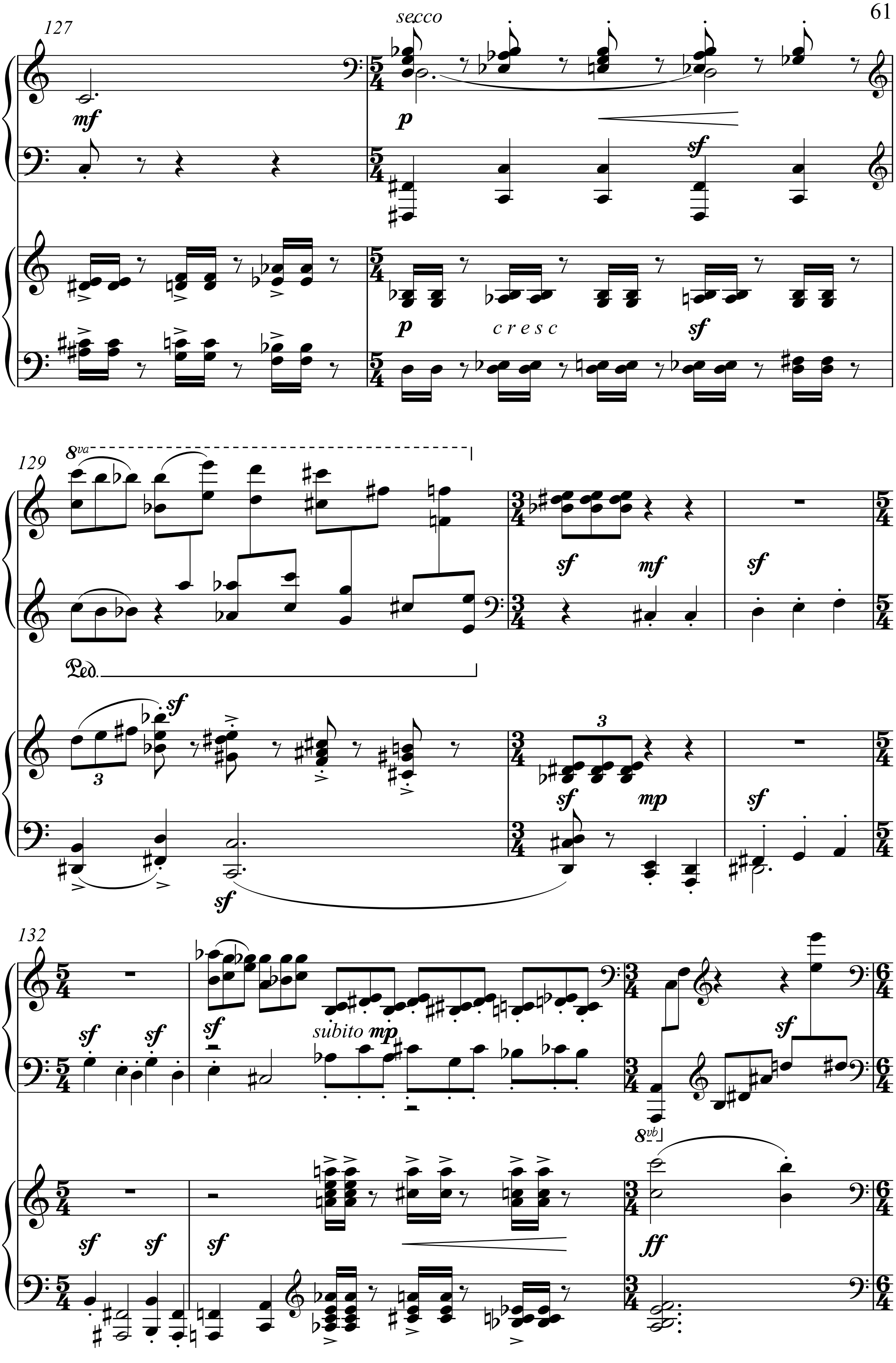
8va
ff
sf
mf
secco
124
ff
sf
sf
8vb


127
secco
mf
p
sf
p
c r e s c
sf
129
8va
Ped.
sf
mf
sf
3
sf
mp
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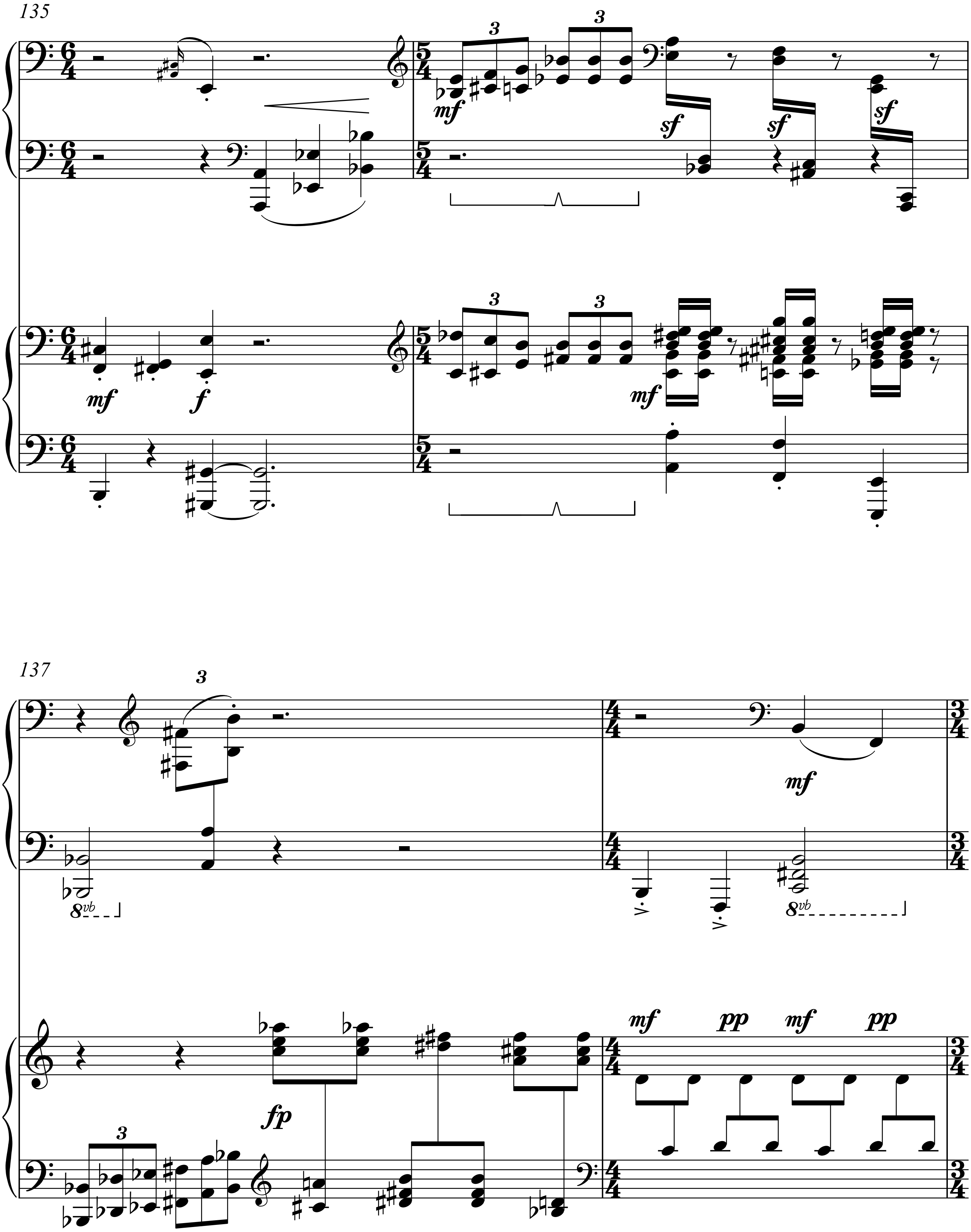
subito mp
sf
8vb
sf
sf
sf
ff


135
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mf
137
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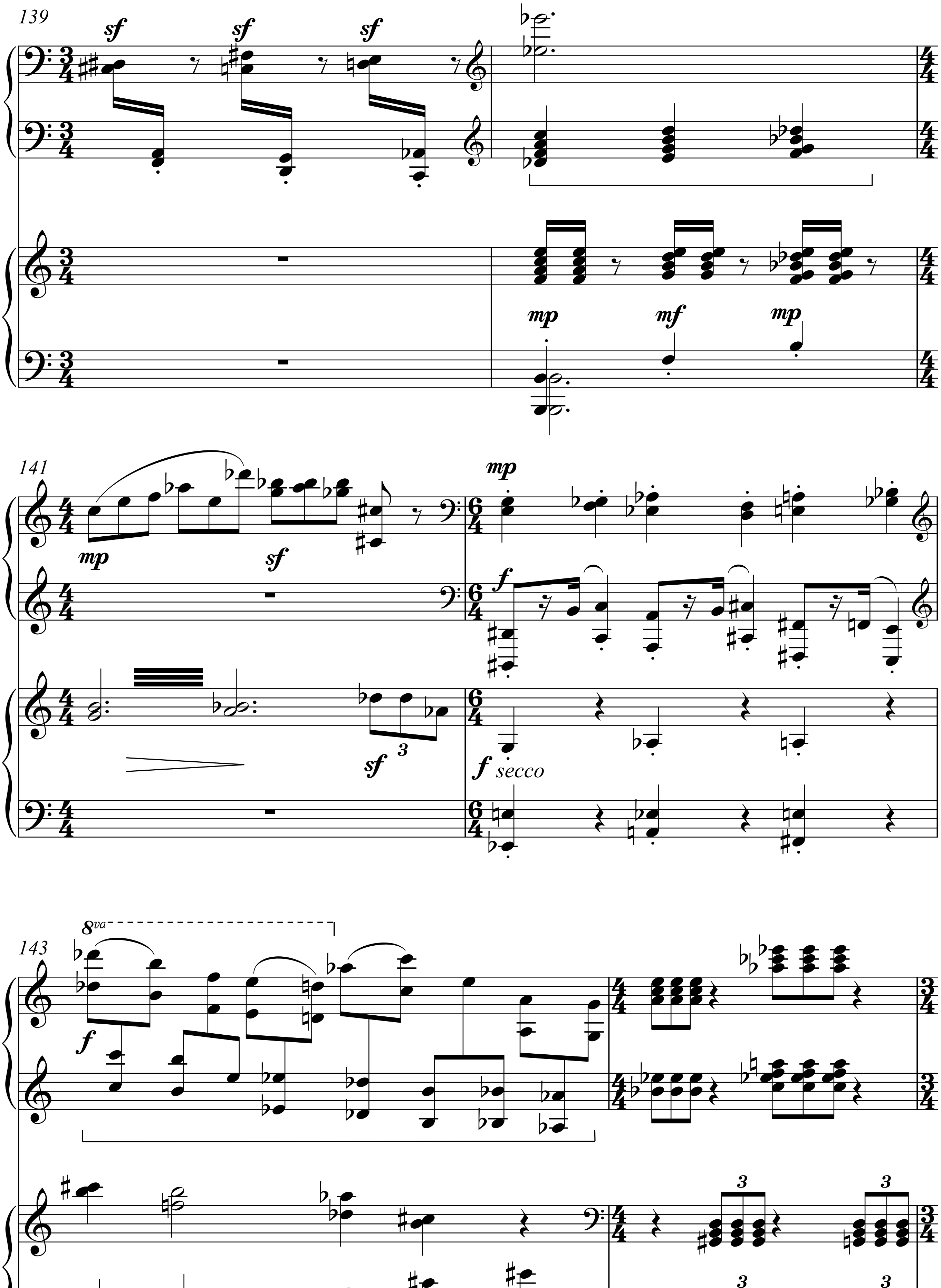
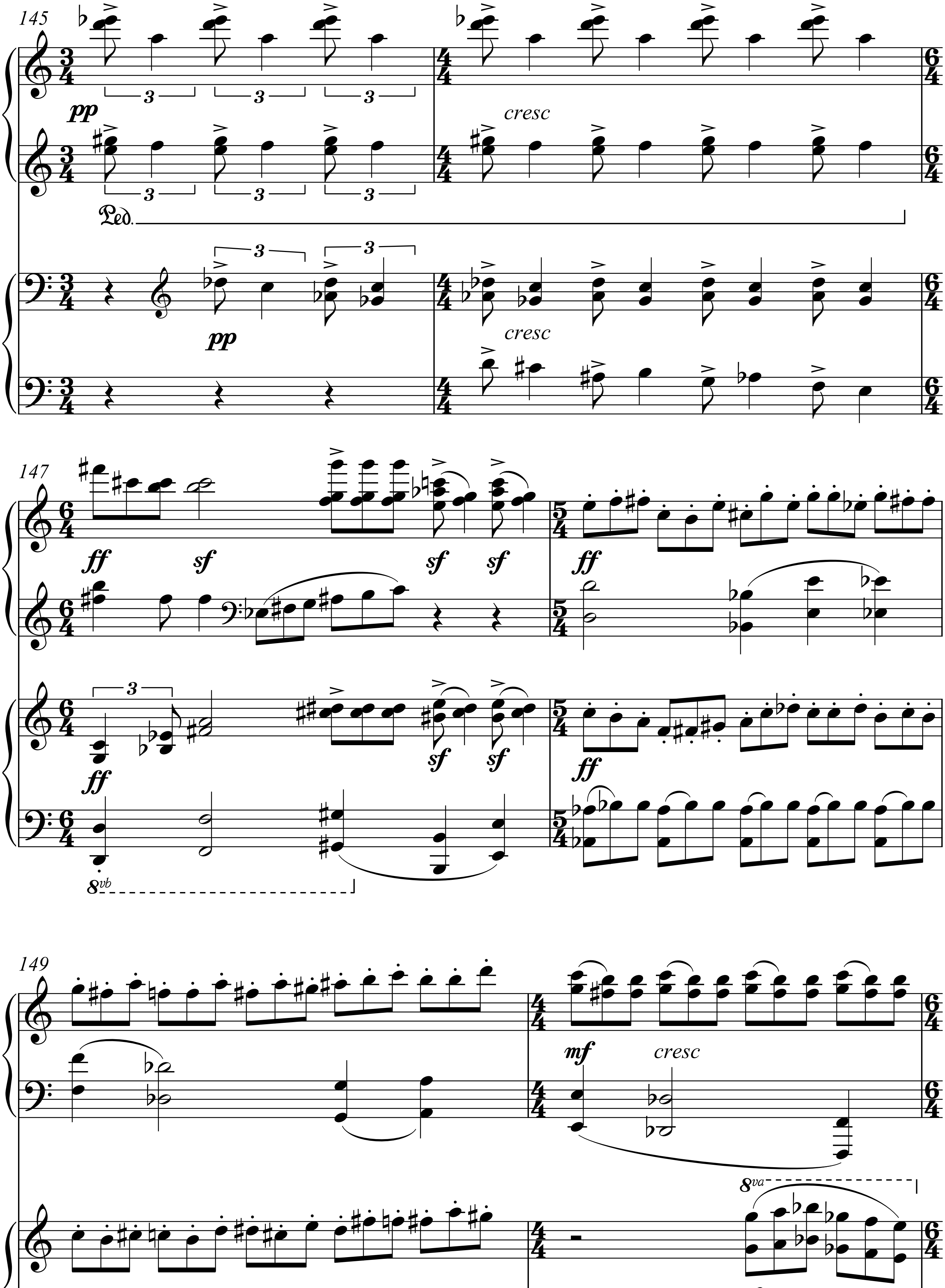
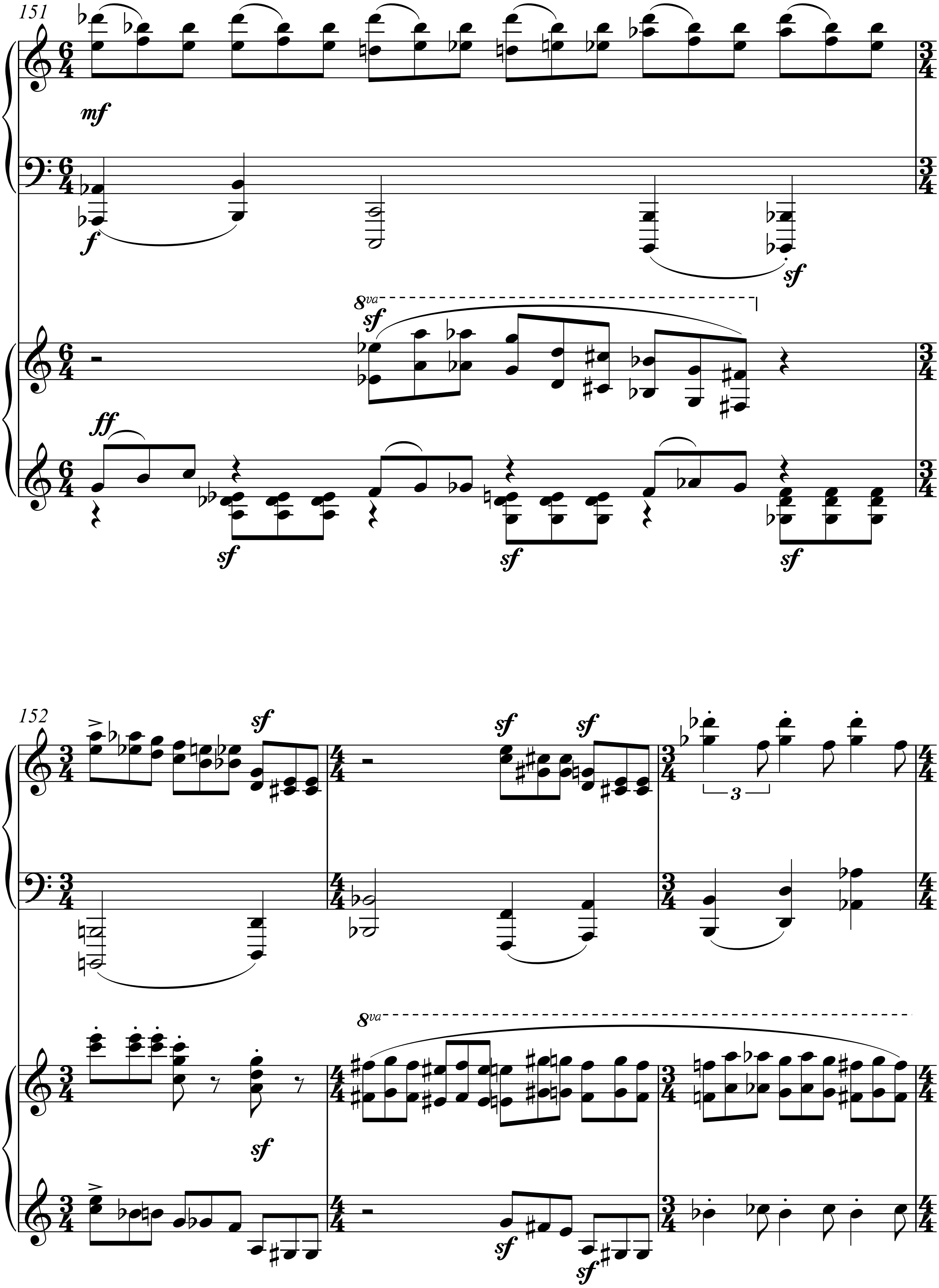
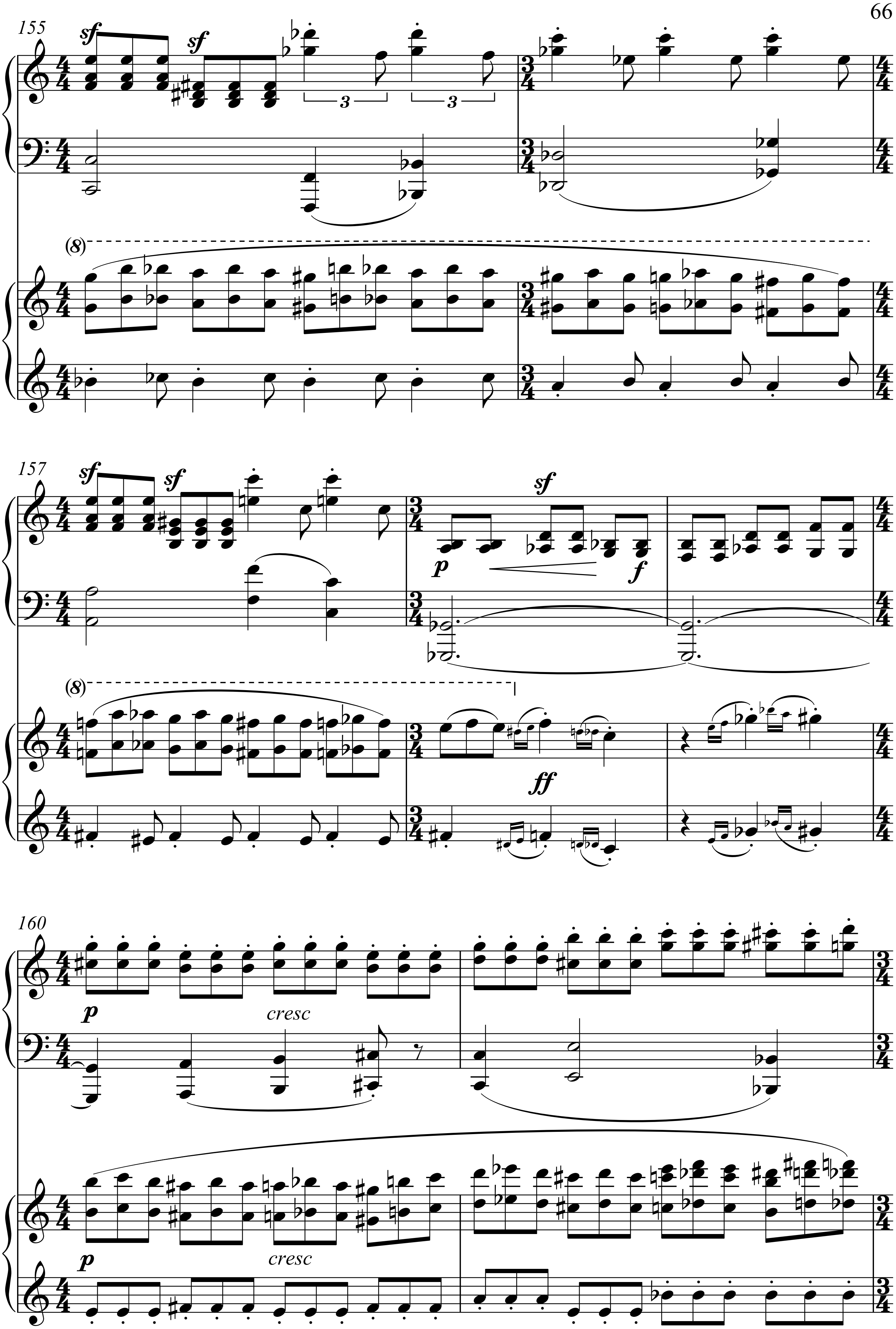
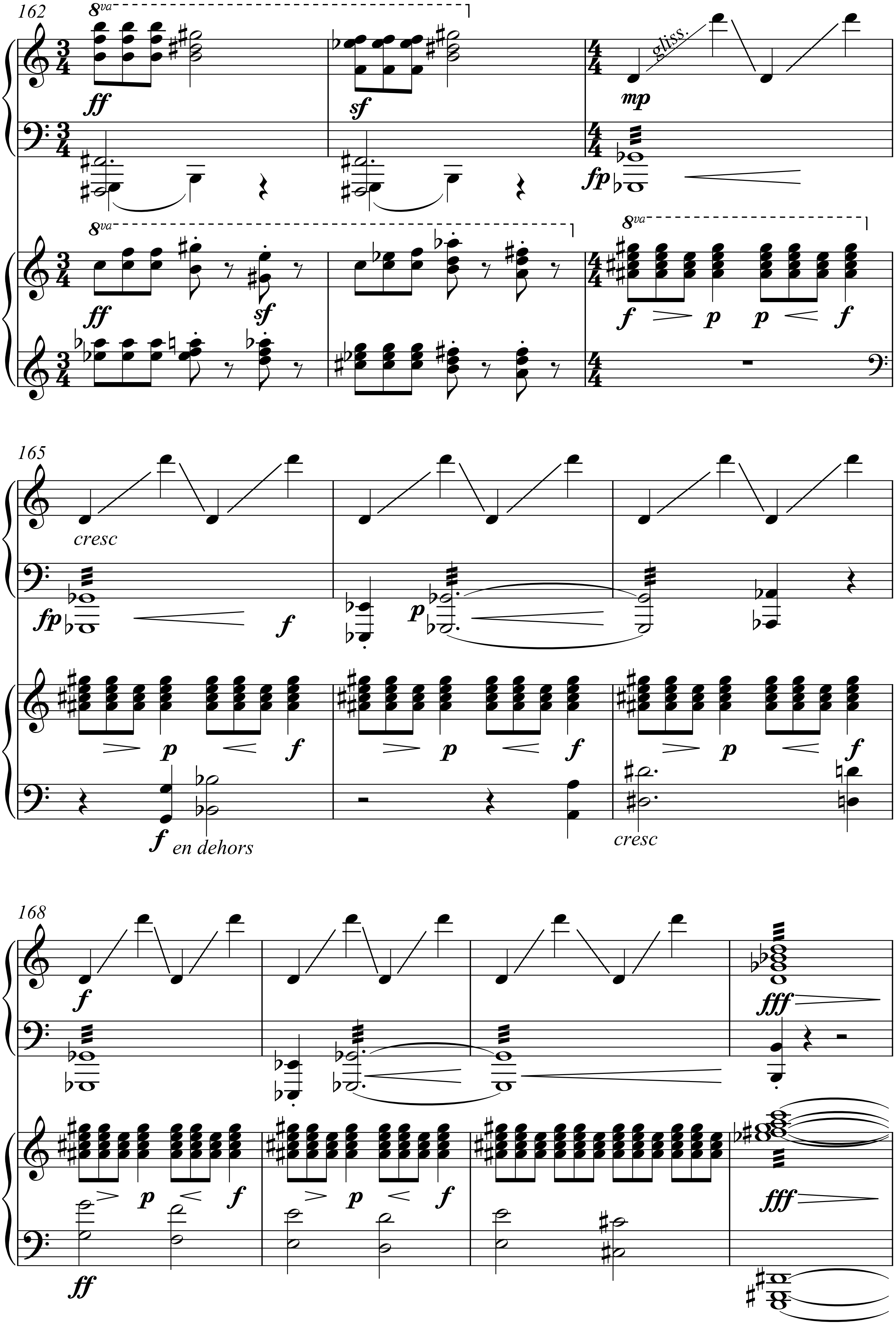
mf
8vb
8vb
mf
pp
mf
pp
fp
3

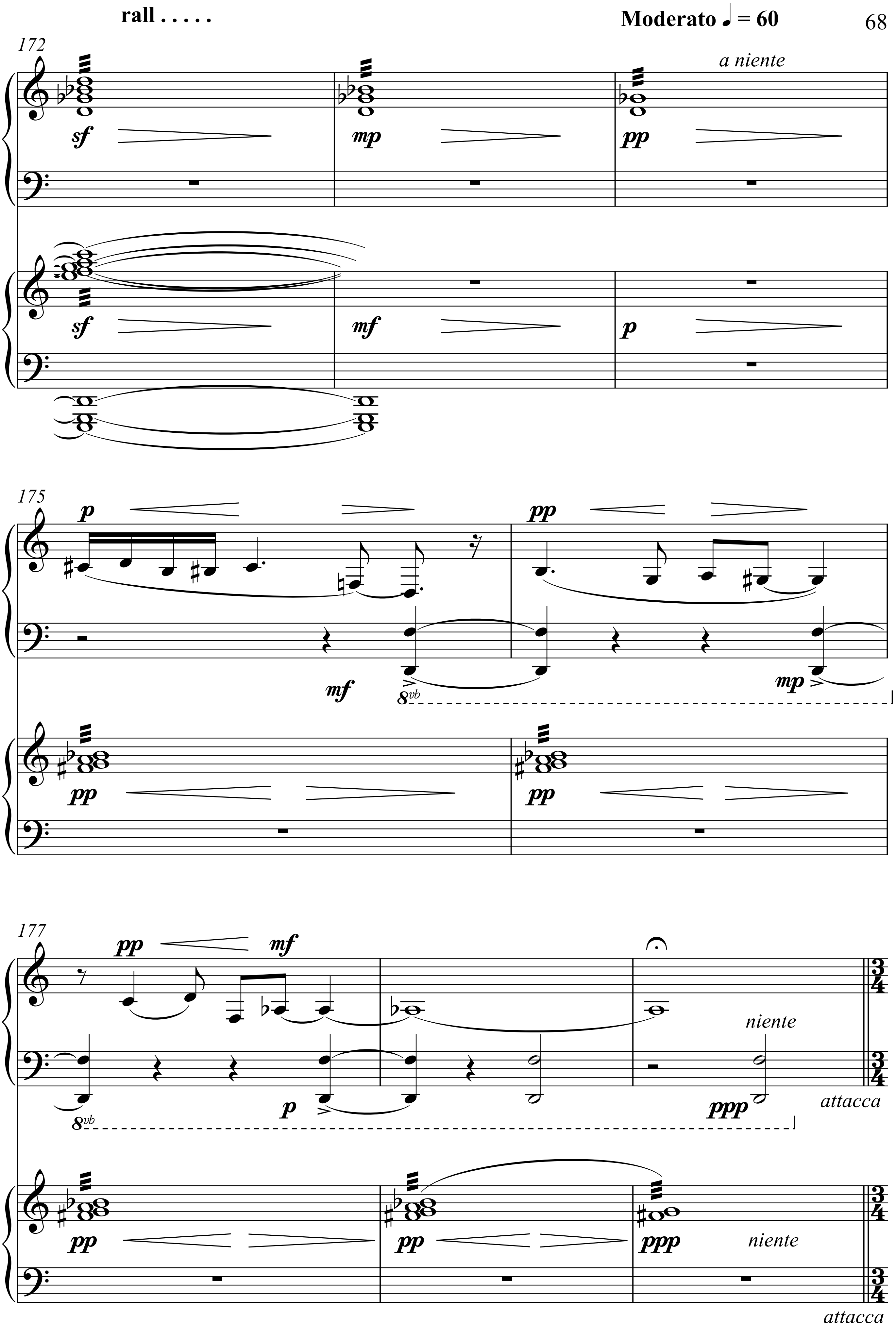

139
sf
sf
sf
mp
mf
mp
141
mp
sf
mp
sf
3
f
f secco
143
8va
f
3
3
3
3
8vb
f


145
pp
cresc
Ped.
3
pp
cresc
147
ff
sf
sf
sf
ff
ff
sf
sf
ff
8vb
149
mf
cresc
8va
sf
cresc

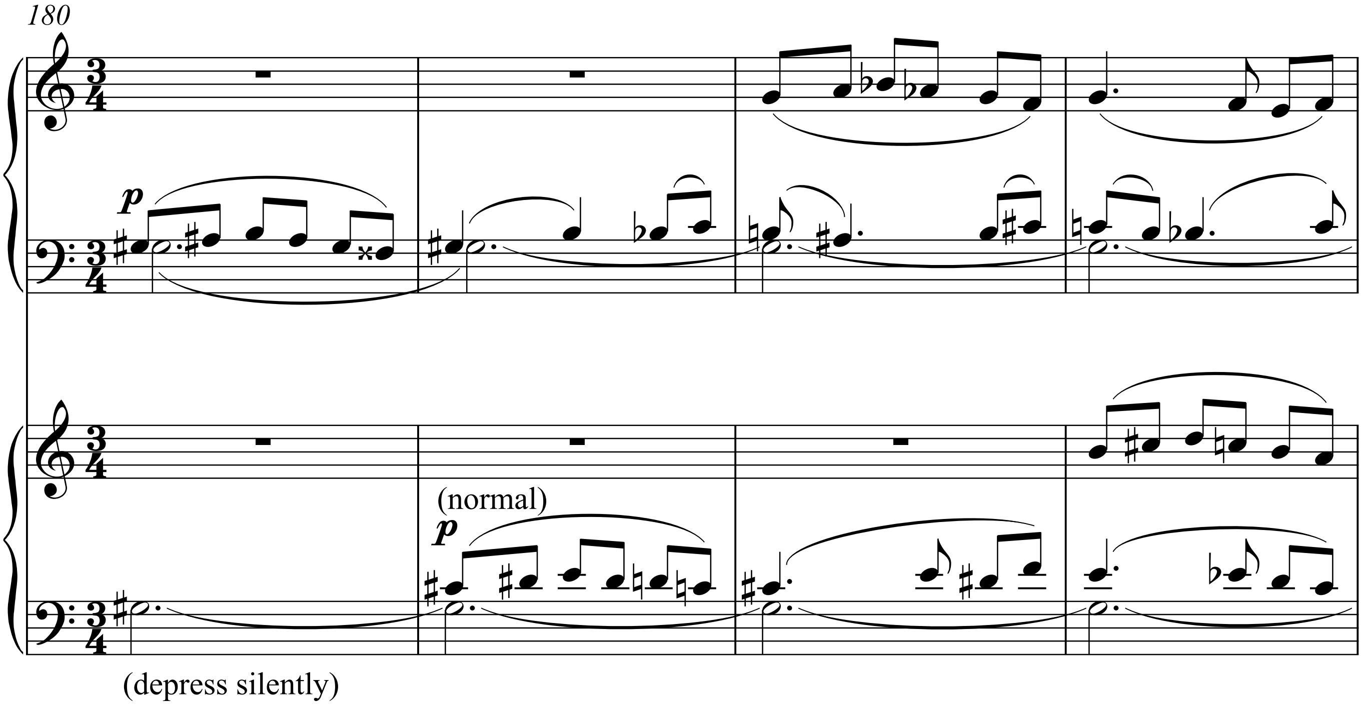

151
mf
f
sf
8va
sf
ff
sf
sf
sf
152
sf
sf
sf
3
8va
sf
sf
sf

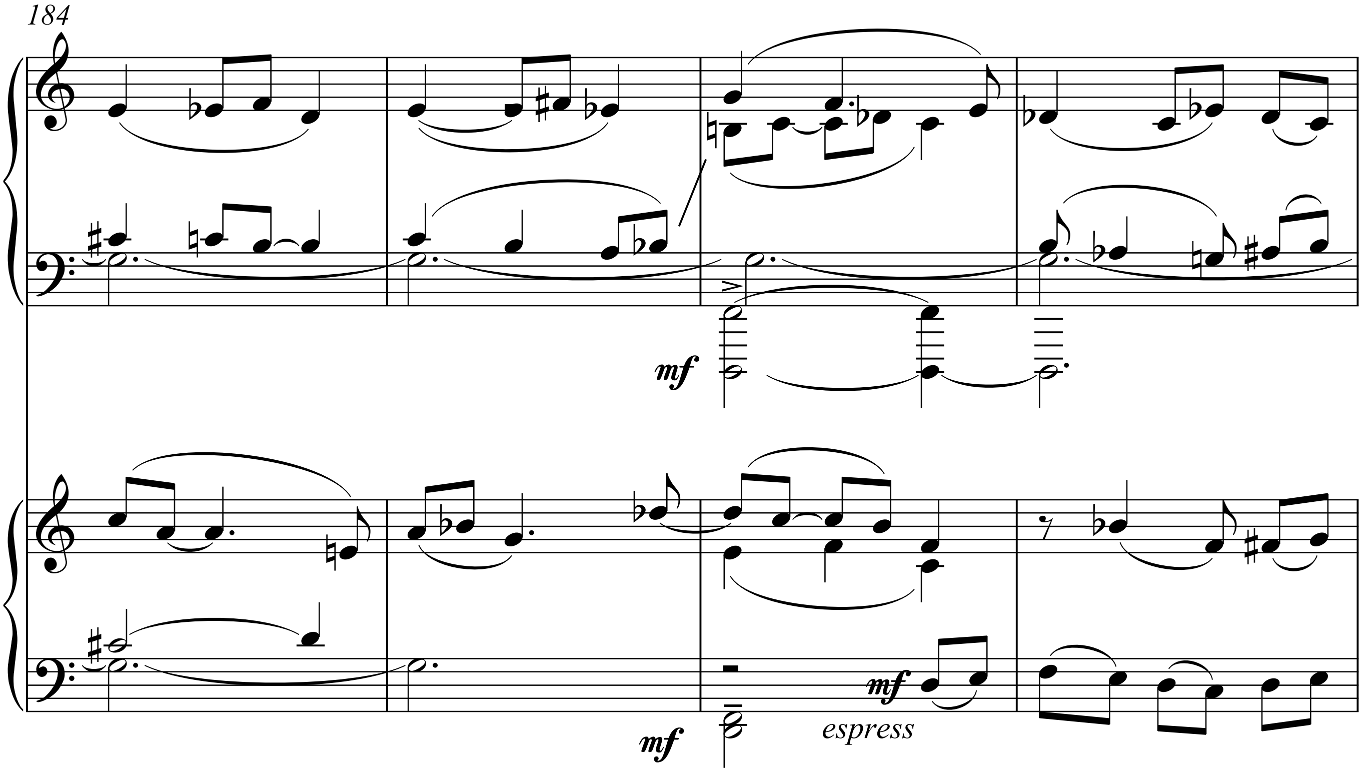

155
sf
sf
3
3
(8)
157
sf
sf
sf
p
f
(8)
ff
160
p
cresc
p
cresc

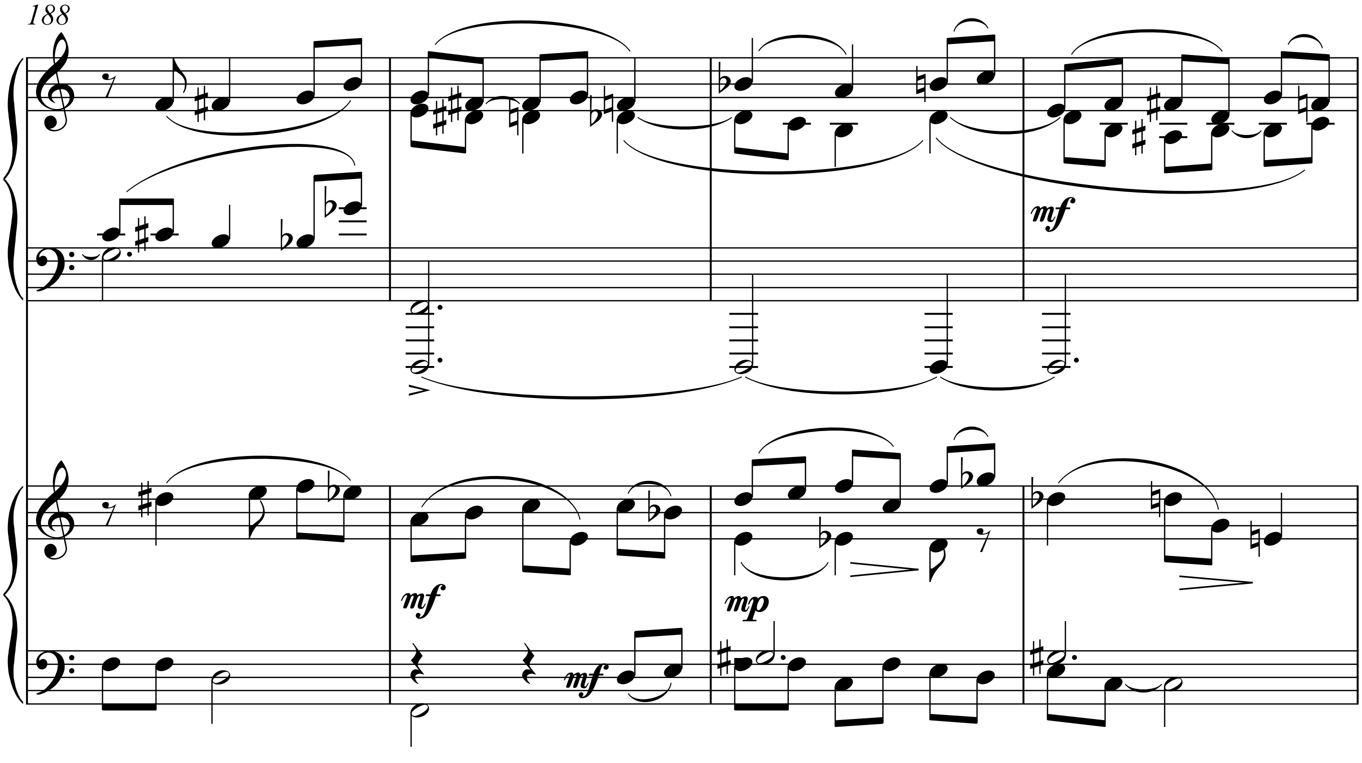

162
8va
ff
sf
gliss.
mp
fp
8va
ff
sf
8va
f
p
p
f
165
cresc
fp
f
p
p
f
f
en dehors
cresc
168
f
fff
p
f
ff
fff

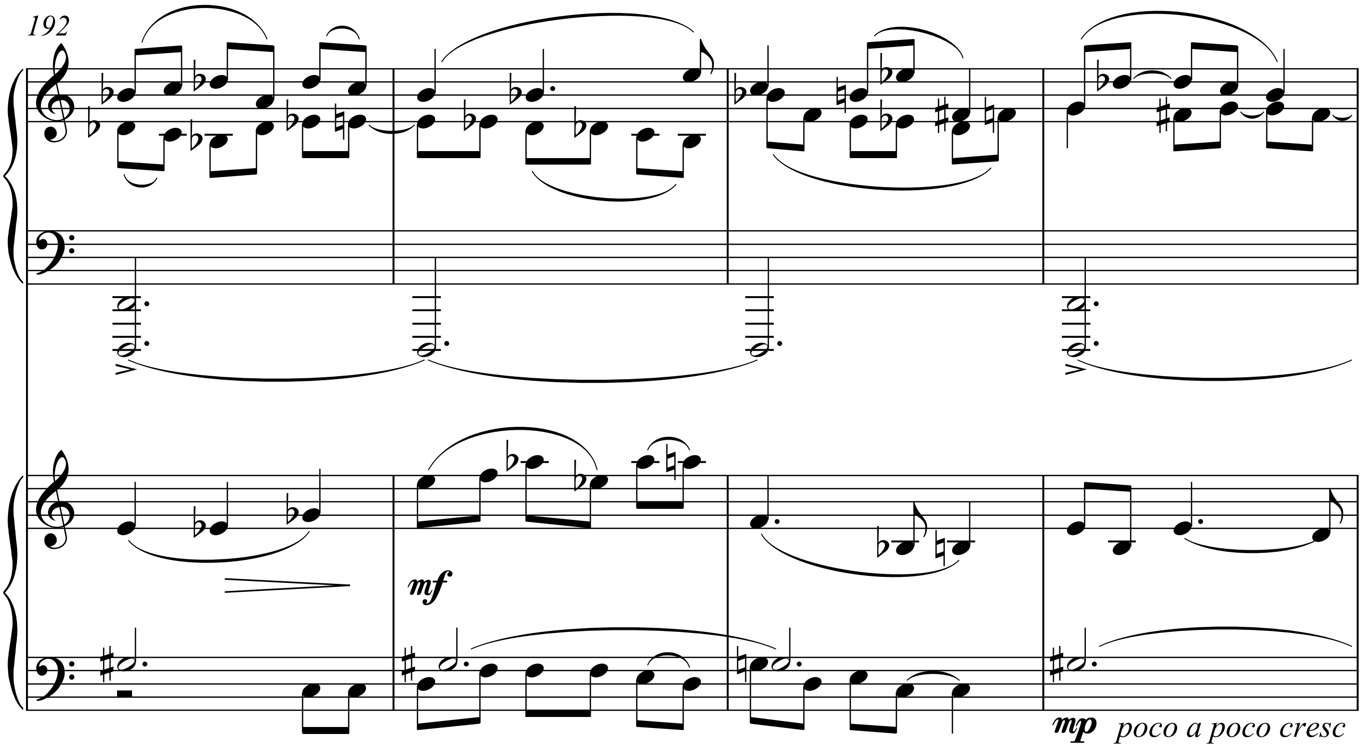

rall . . . . .
Moderato ♩ = 60
172
a niente
sf
mp
pp
sf
mf
p
175
p
pp
mf
8vb
mp
pp
pp
177
pp
mf
p
8vb
ppp
niente
attacca
pp
pp
ppp
niente
attacca

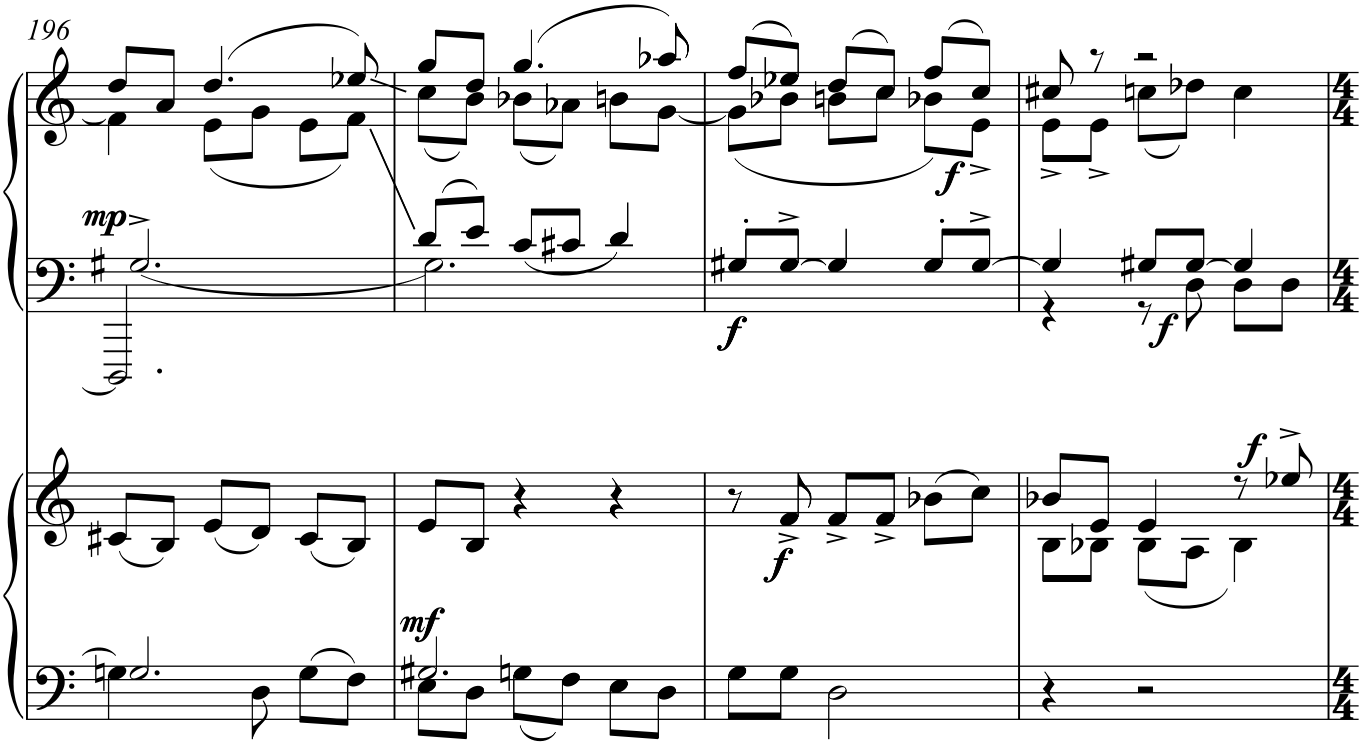
V

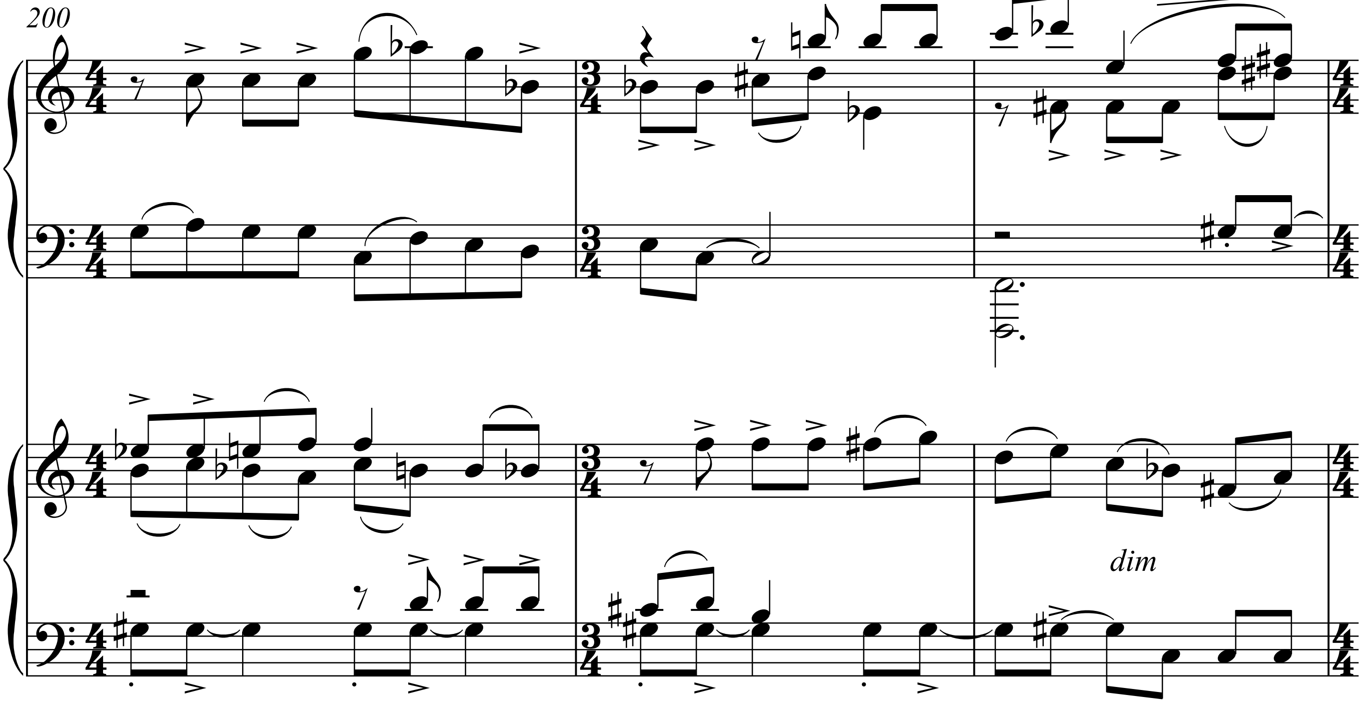

180
p
(normal)
p
(depress silently)

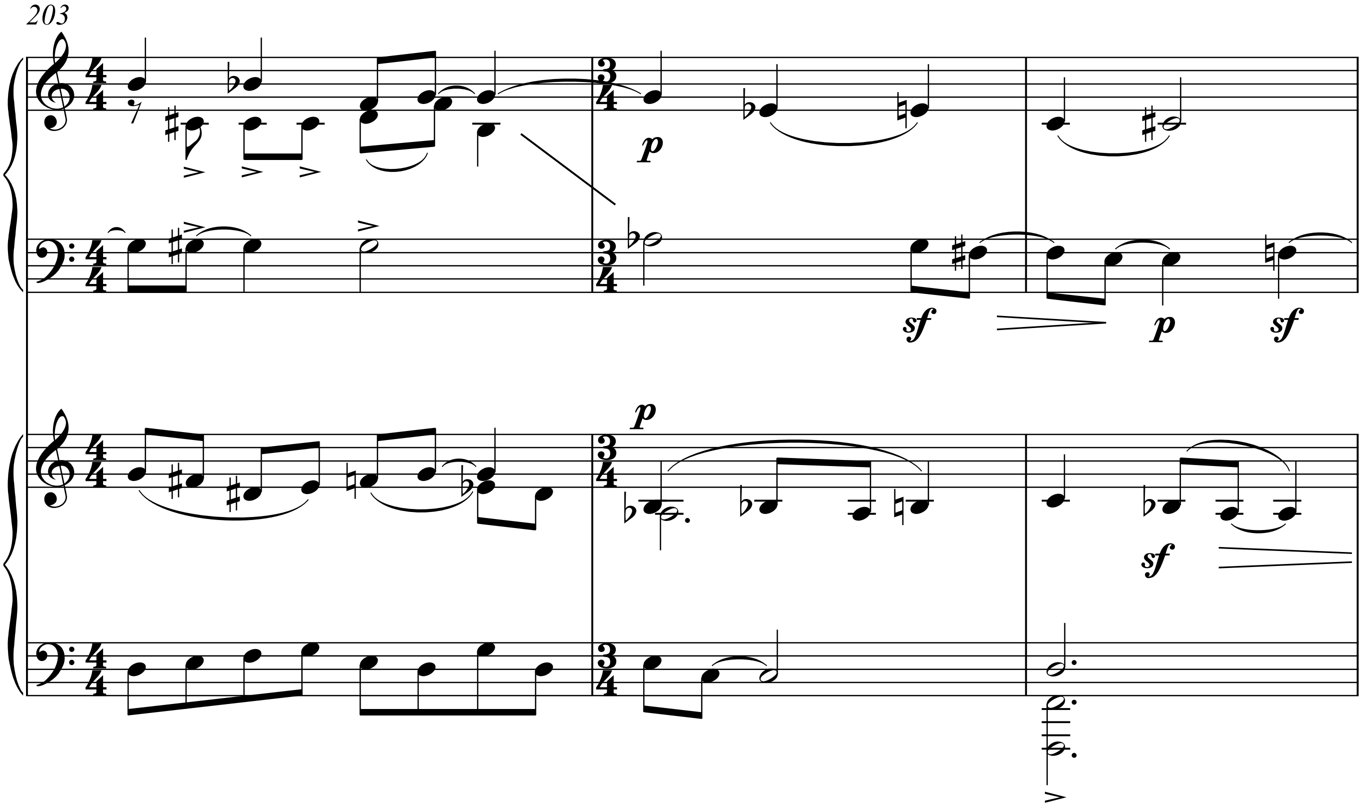

184
mf
mf
mf
espress

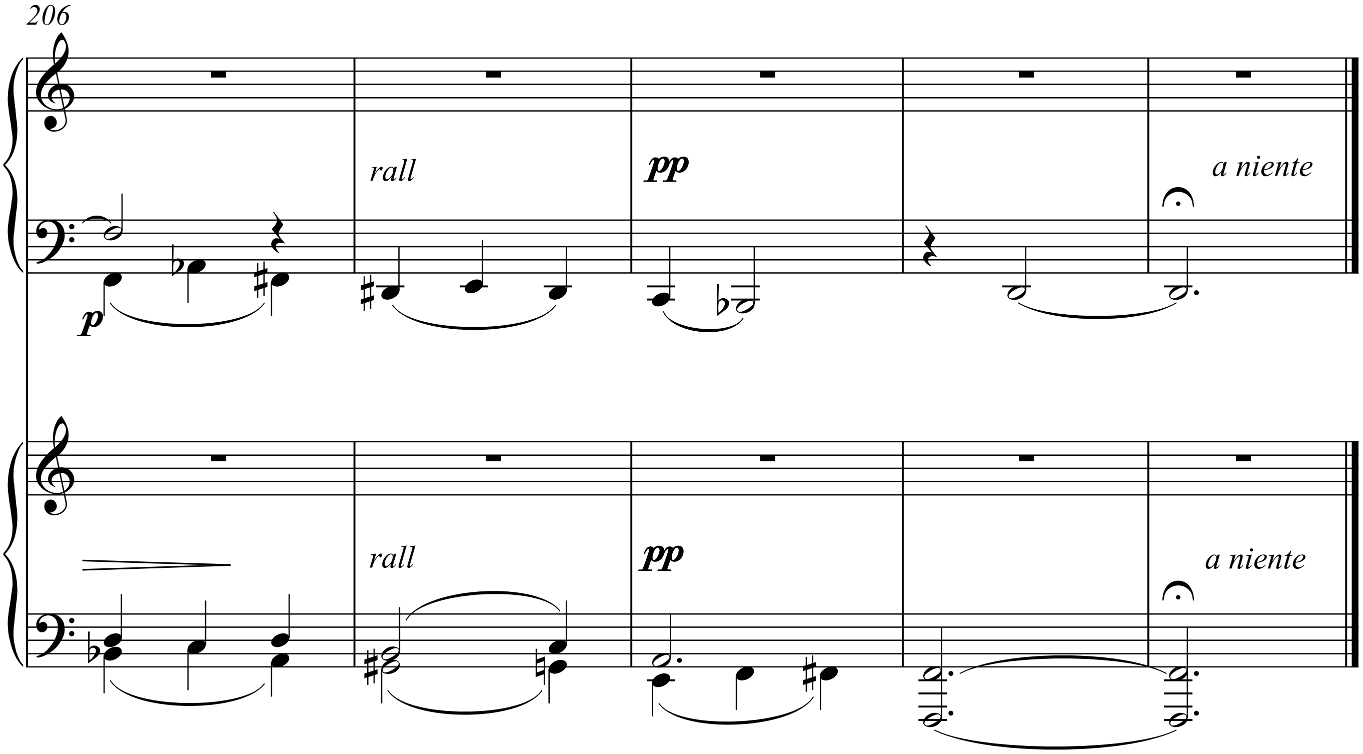

188
mf
mf
mf
mp


192
mf
mp poco a poco cresc


196
mp
f
f
f
f
mf


200
dim


203
p
sf
p
sf
p
sf


206
p
rall
pp
a niente
rall
pp
a niente

D.

VLADIMIR'S ROUND TABLE

STEFANS GROVÉ

FULL ORCHESTRAL SCORE

I Reminiscences in the Festive Hall of the Knights

II The Cunning Slaying of Yaropolk

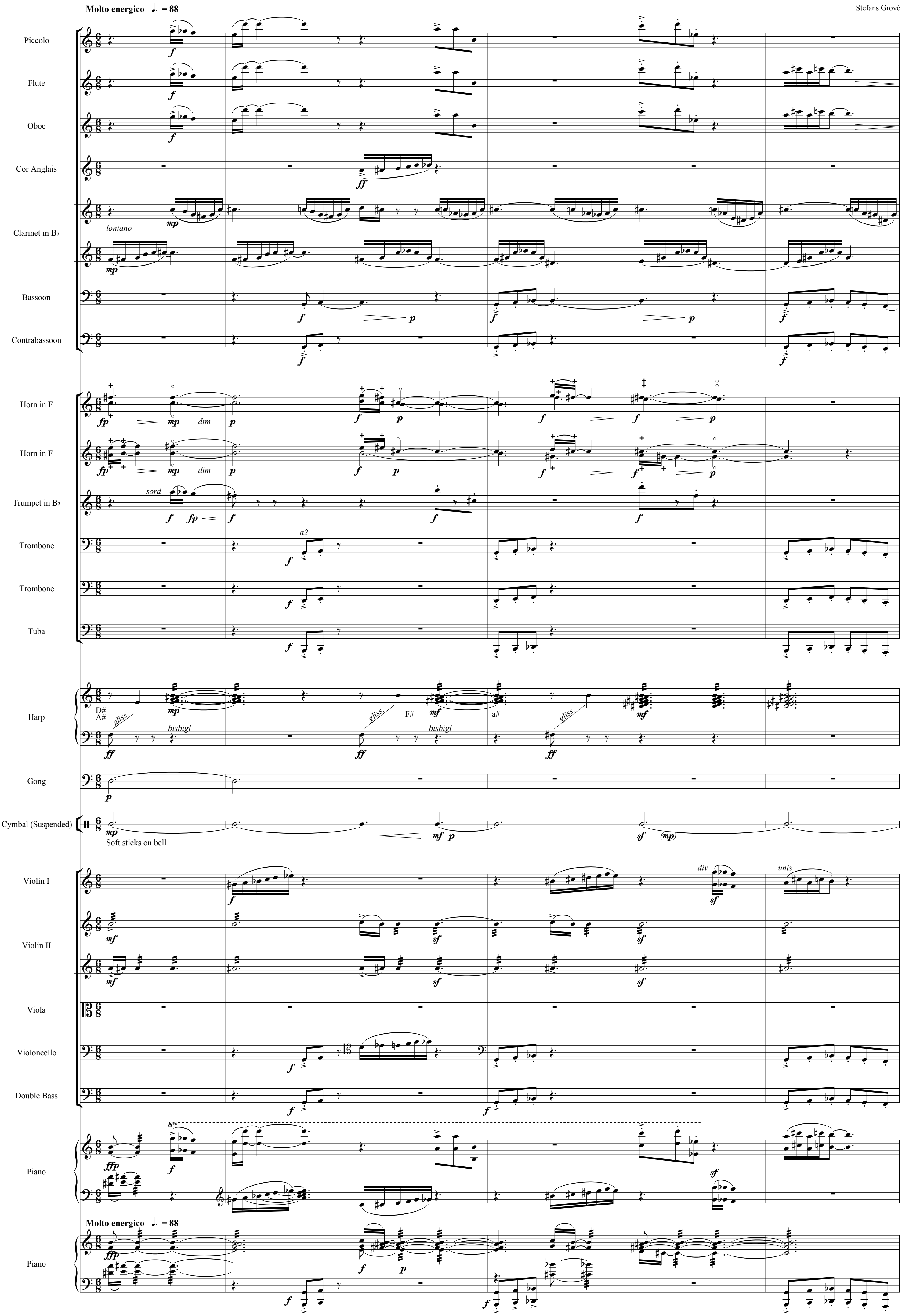
III The Wooing of Ragmilde

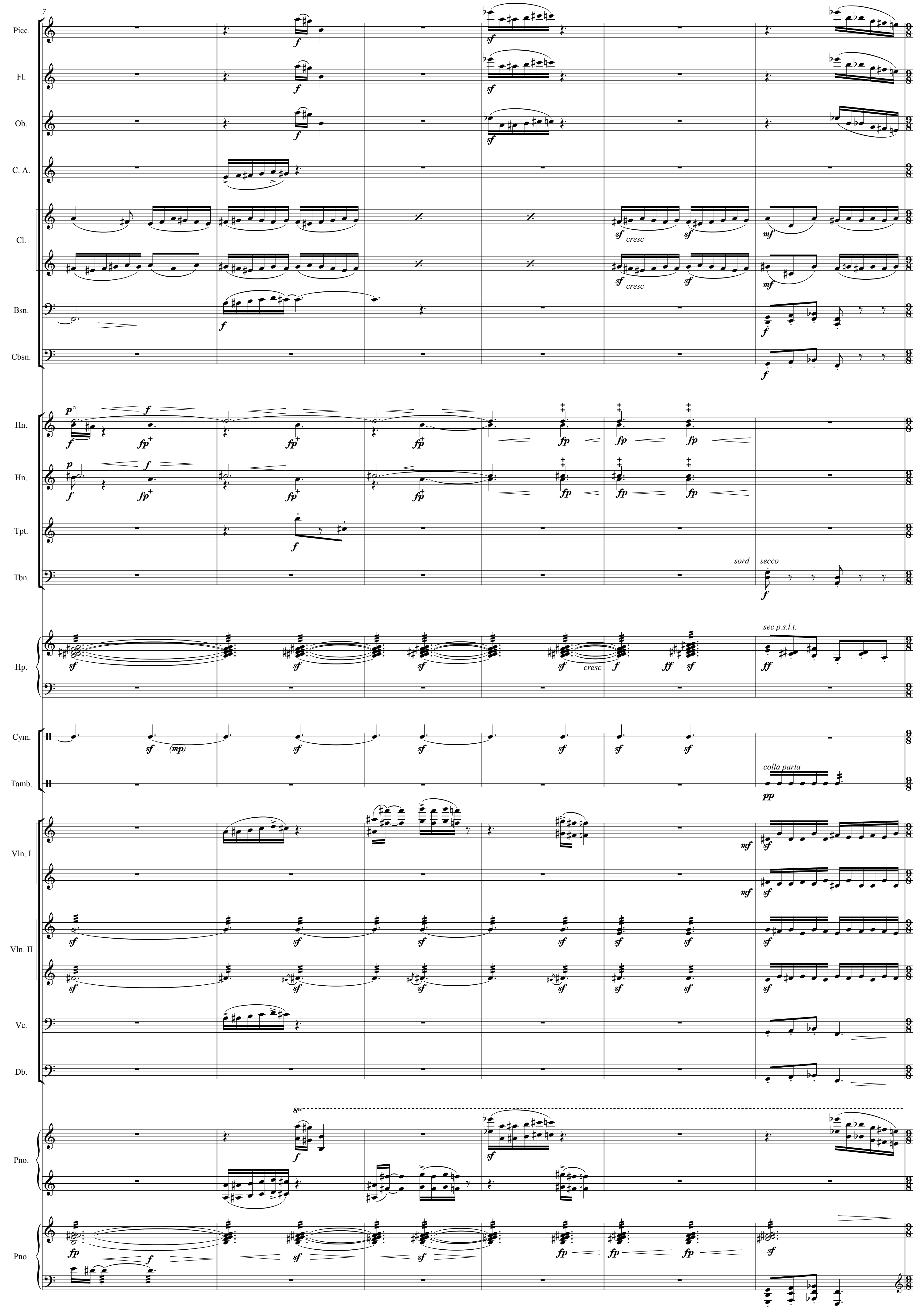
IV The Charge of Polotsk and Murder of Ragvald

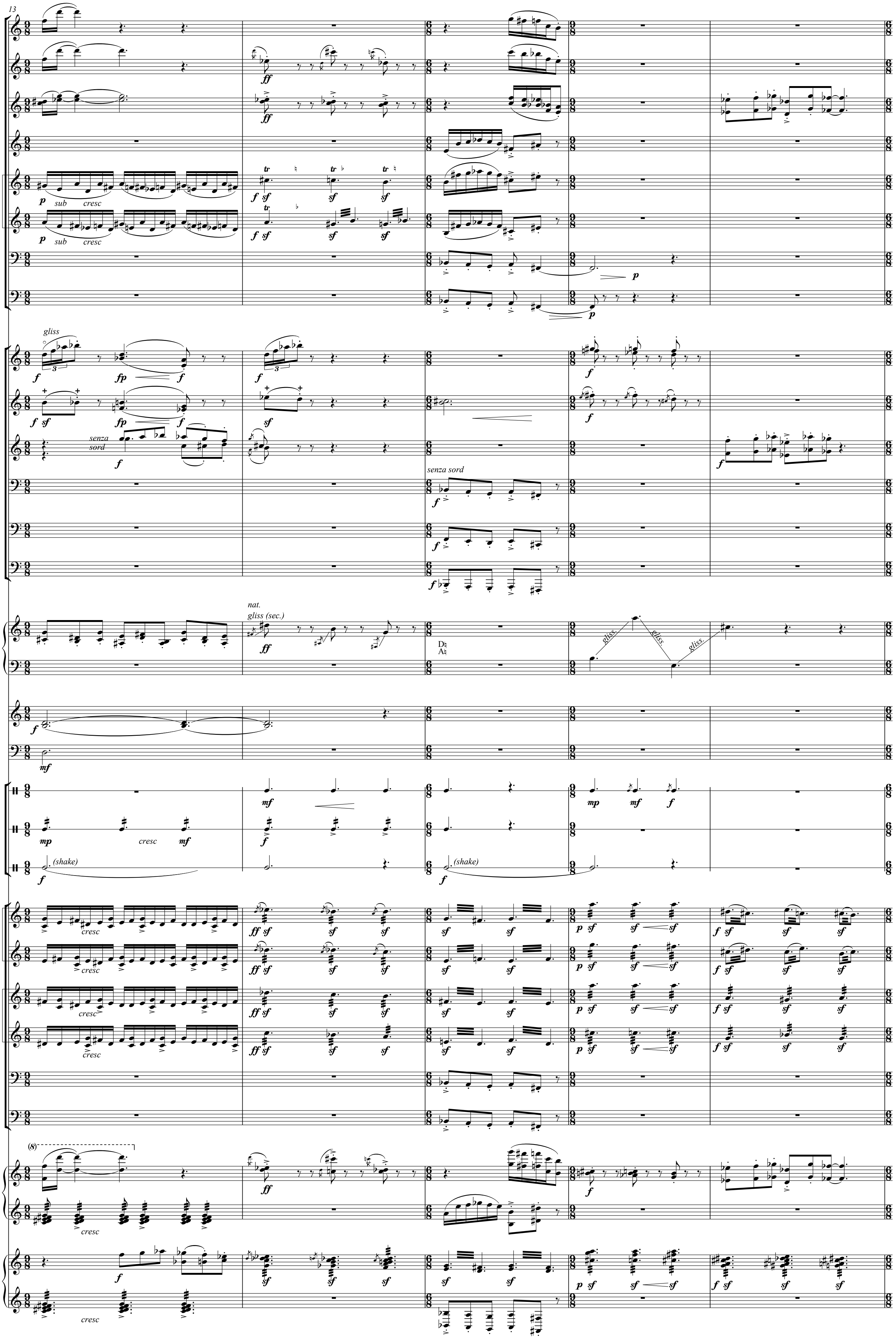
V Repentance under the Banner of the Cross

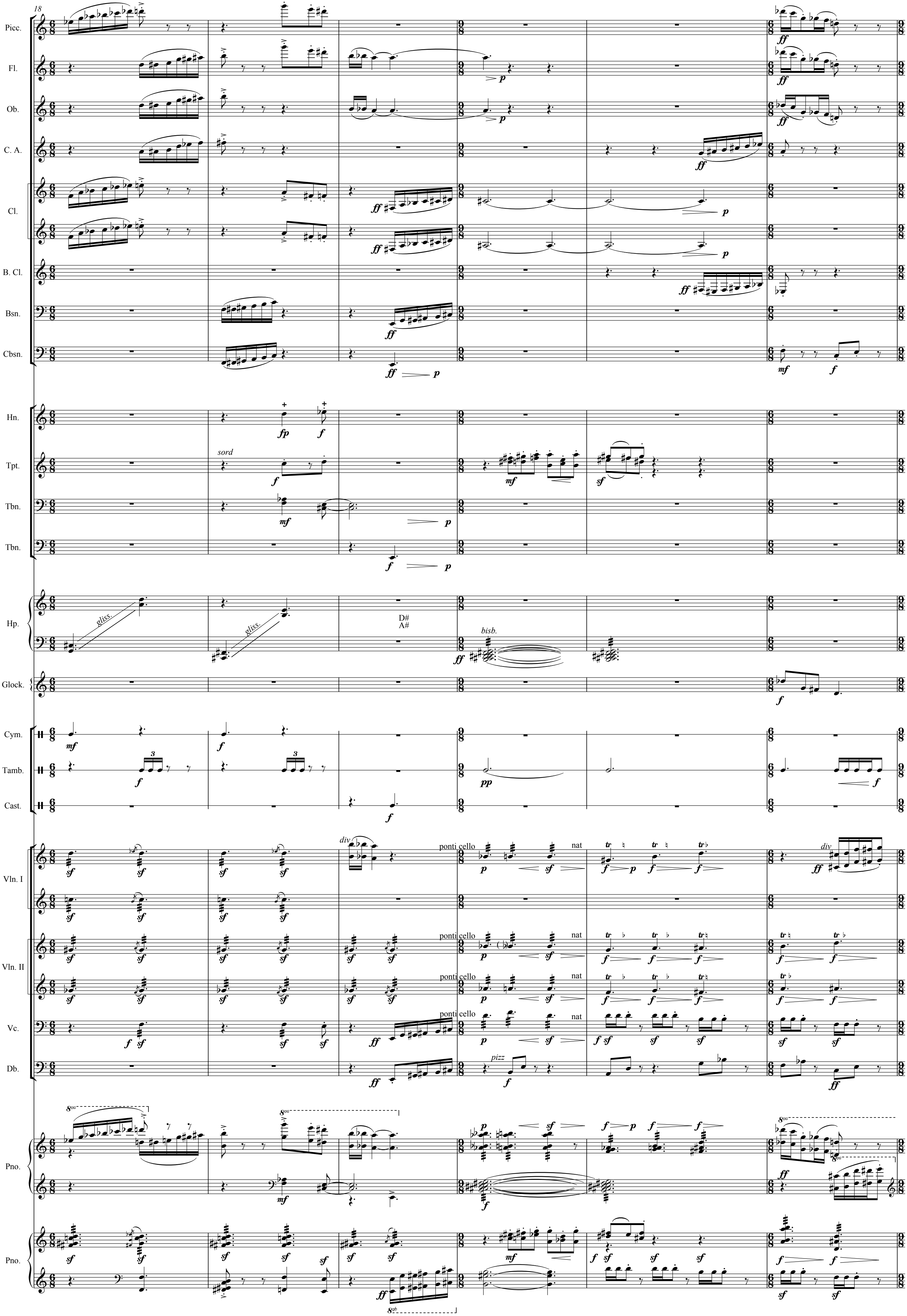
I

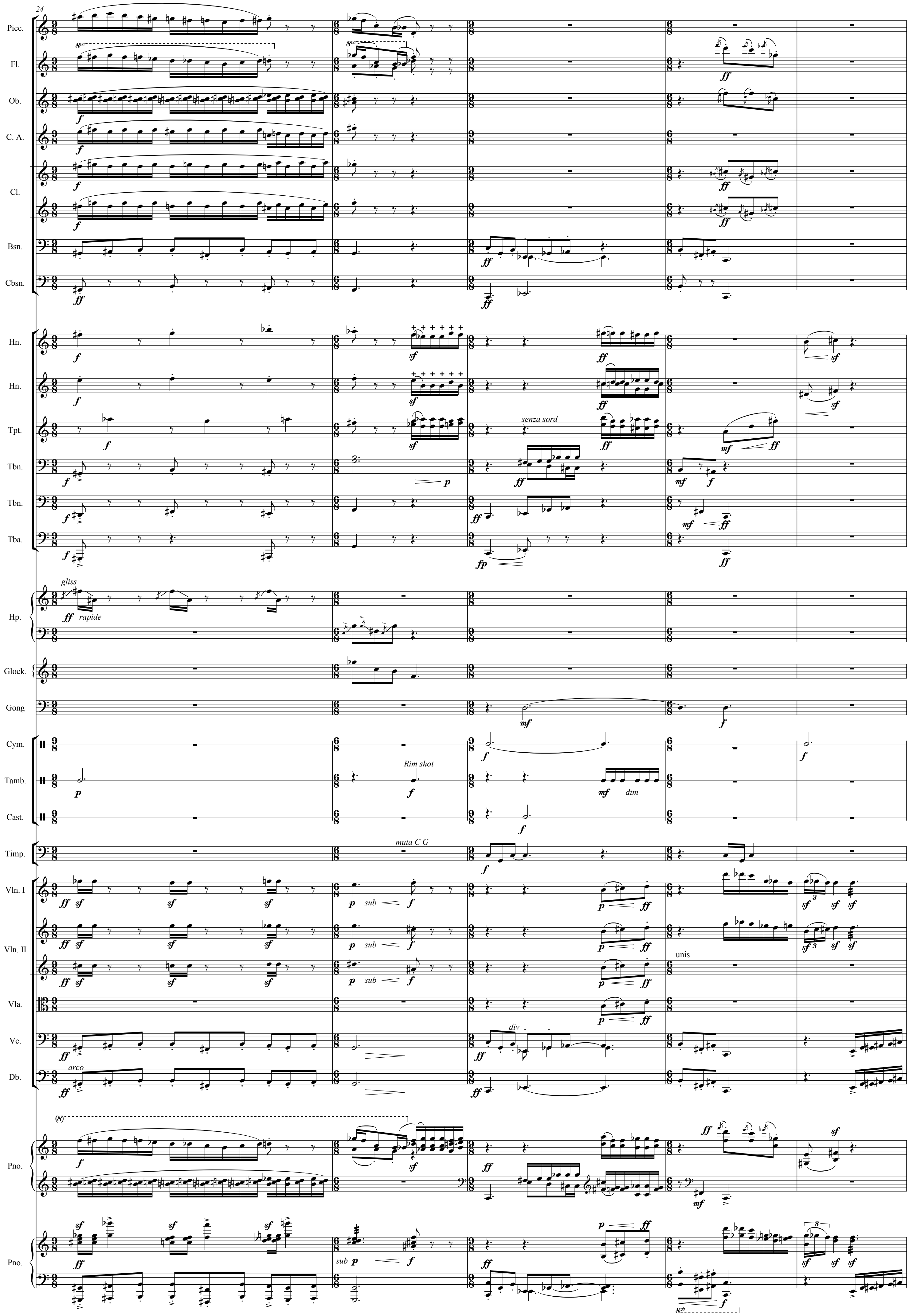
Stefans Grové

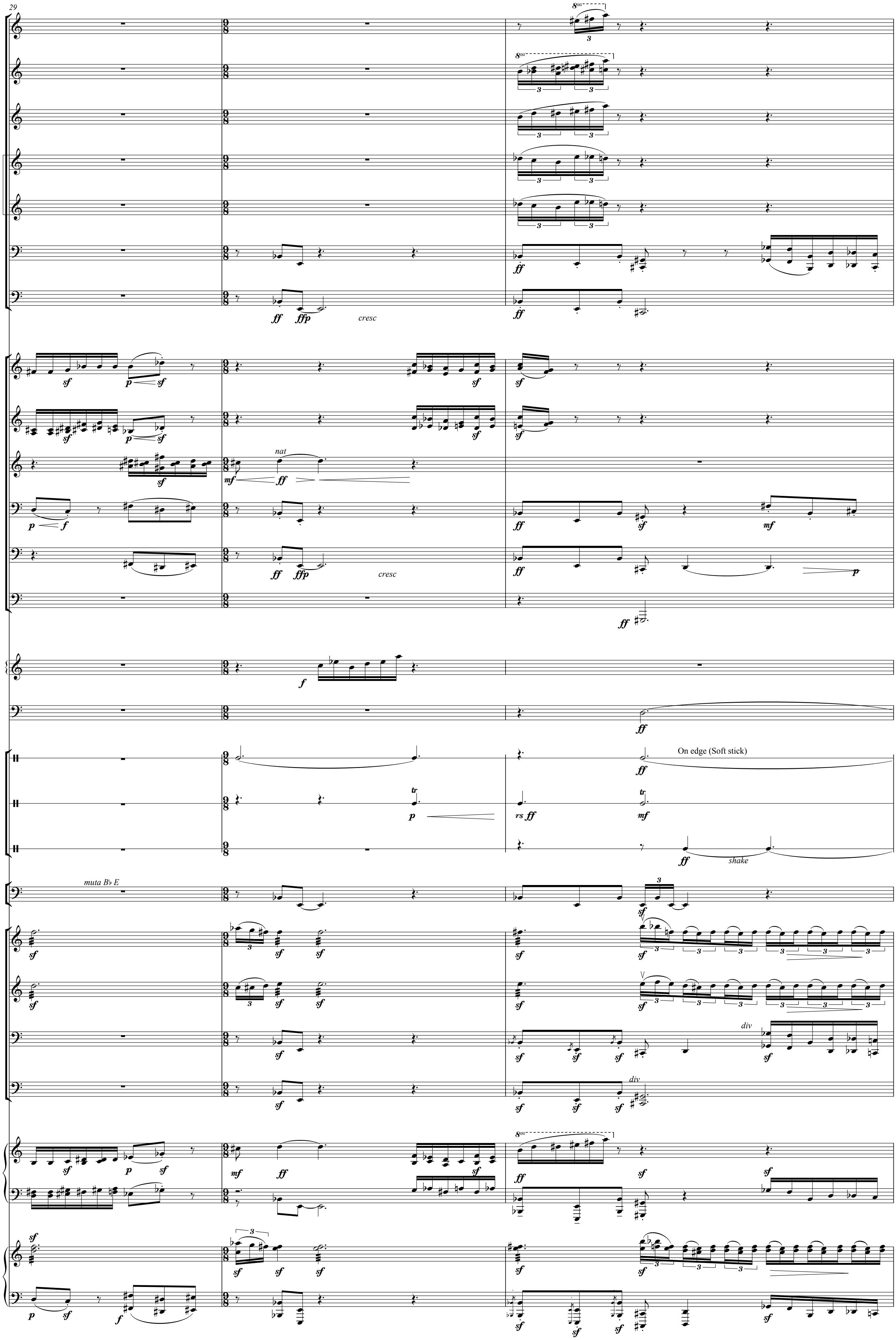

Molto energico ♩. = 88
Piccolo
Flute
Oboe
Cor Anglais
Clarinet in B♭
Bassoon
Contrabassoon
Horn in F
Horn in F
Trumpet in B♭
Trombone
Trombone
Tuba
Harp
Gong
Cymbal (Suspended)
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass
Piano
Piano
lontano
sord
a2
gliss.
bisbigl
D#
A#
F#
a#
Soft sticks on bell
div
unis
dim
8va
Molto energico ♩. = 88

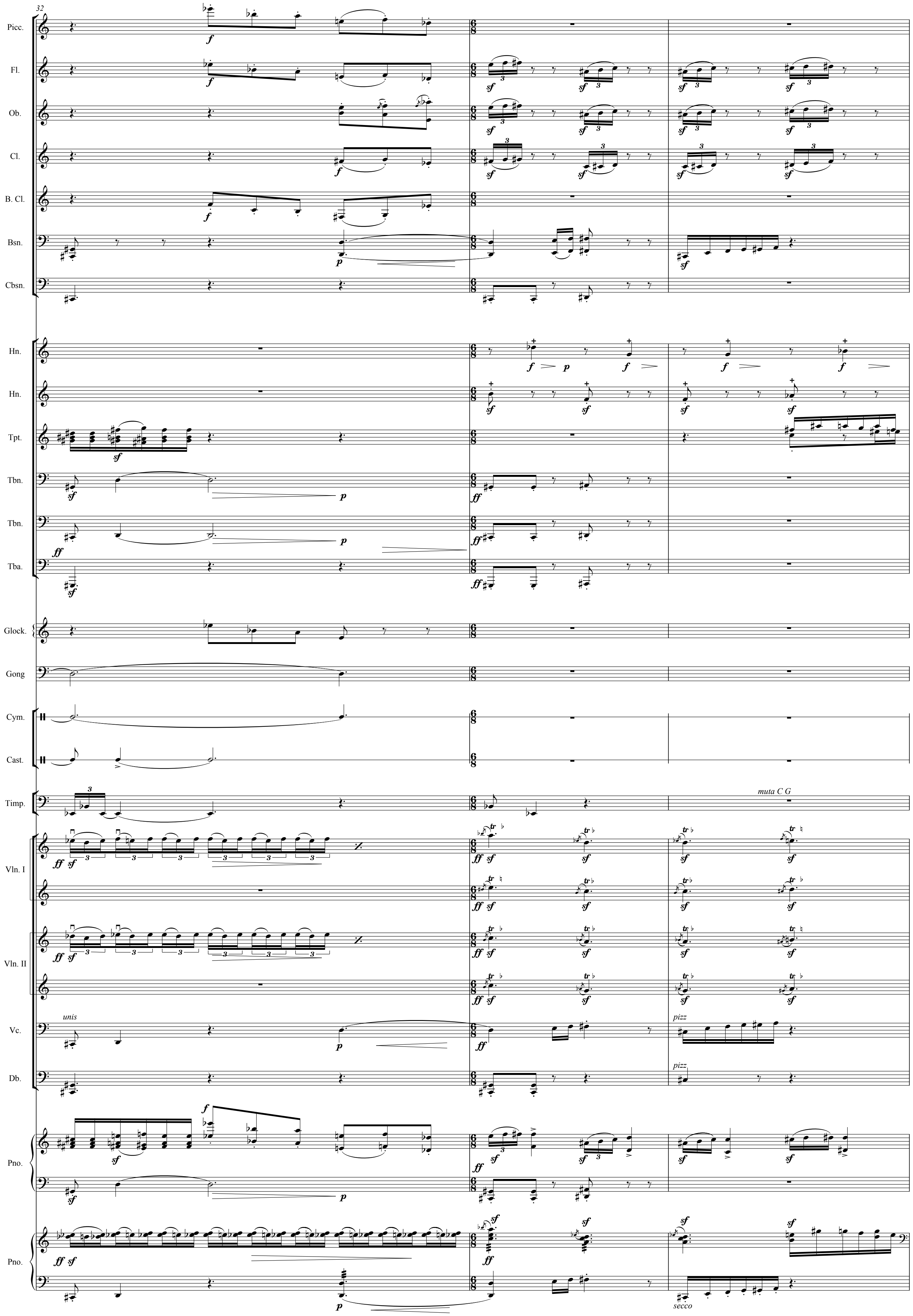

7
Picc.
Fl.
Ob.
C. A.
Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Hp.
Cym.
Tamb.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
Pno.
cresc
sord
secco
sec p.s.l.t.
(mp)
colla parta
8va
9/8

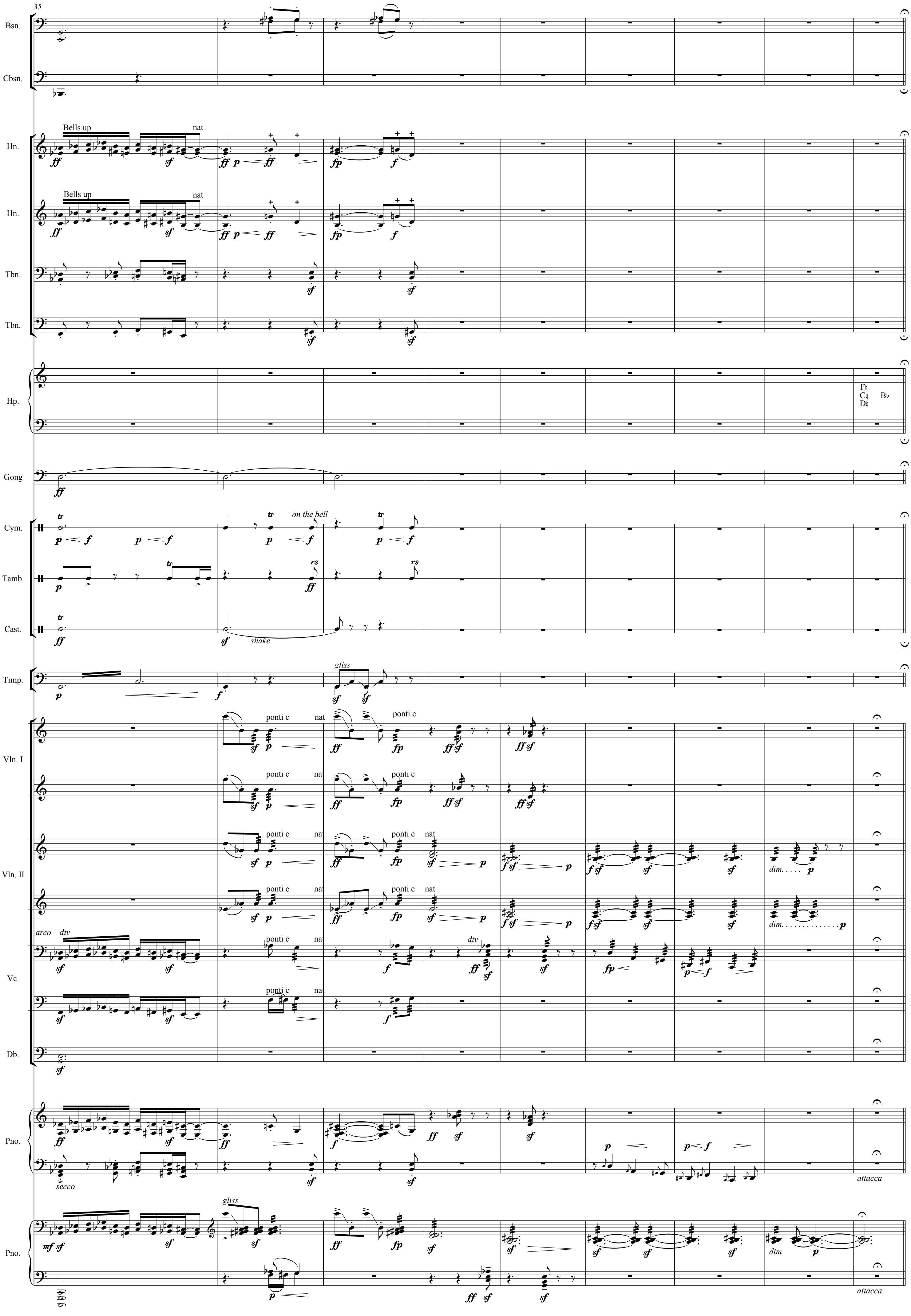

13
Picc.
Fl.
Ob.
C. A.
Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Tbn.
Tba.
Hp.
Tub. B.
Gong
Cym.
Tamb.
Cast.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
Pno.
p sub cresc
ff
f sf
gliss
fp
senza sord
nat.
gliss (sec.)
D♮
A♮
gliss.
(shake)
mp
mf
cresc
(8)

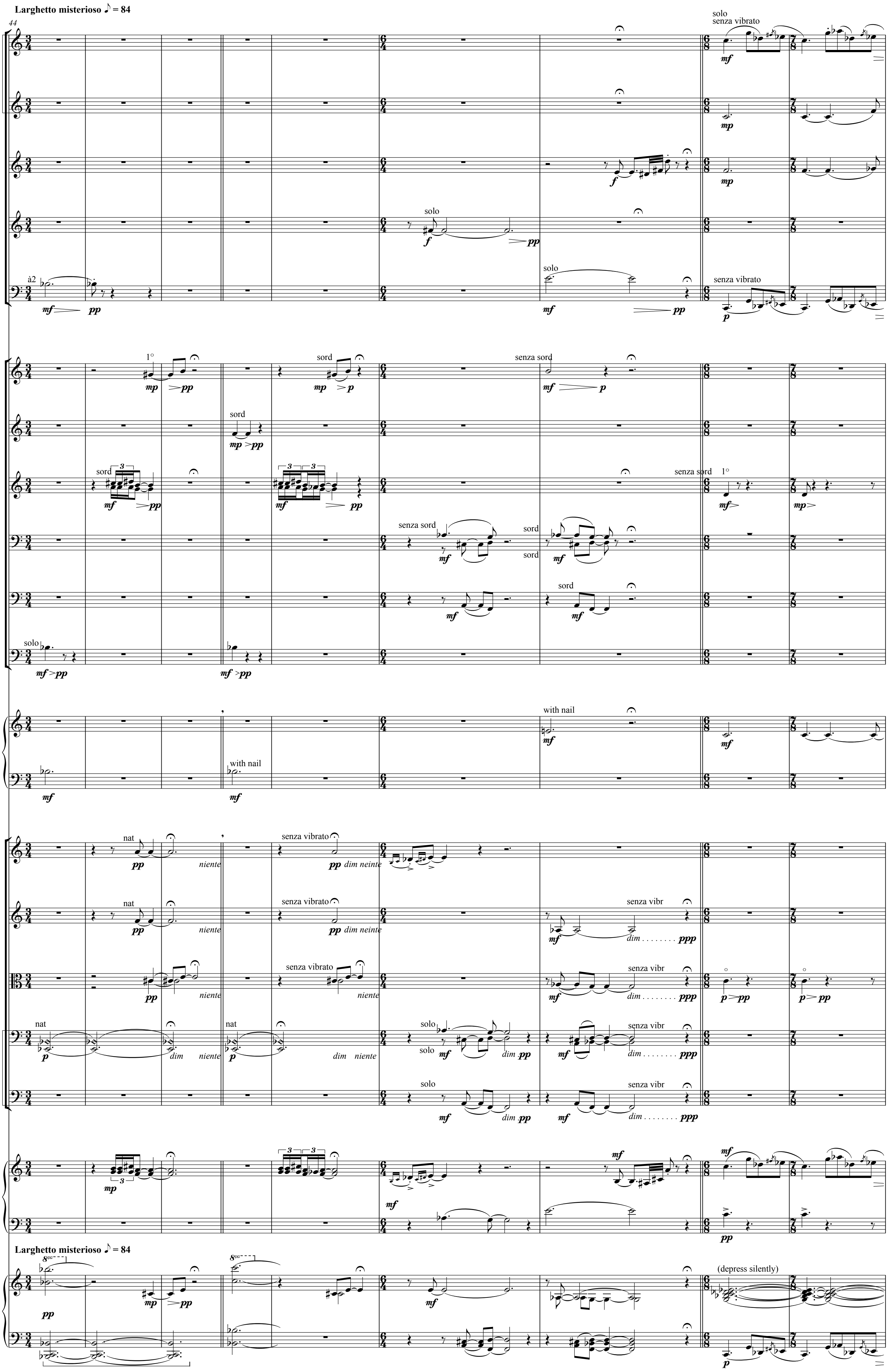

18
Picc.
Fl.
Ob.
C. A.
Cl.
B. Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Tbn.
Hp.
Glock.
Cym.
Tamb.
Cast.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
Pno.
gliss.
D#
A#
bisb.
sord
div
ponti cello
nat
pizz
8va
8vb
ff
fp
mf
sf
pp
p
f

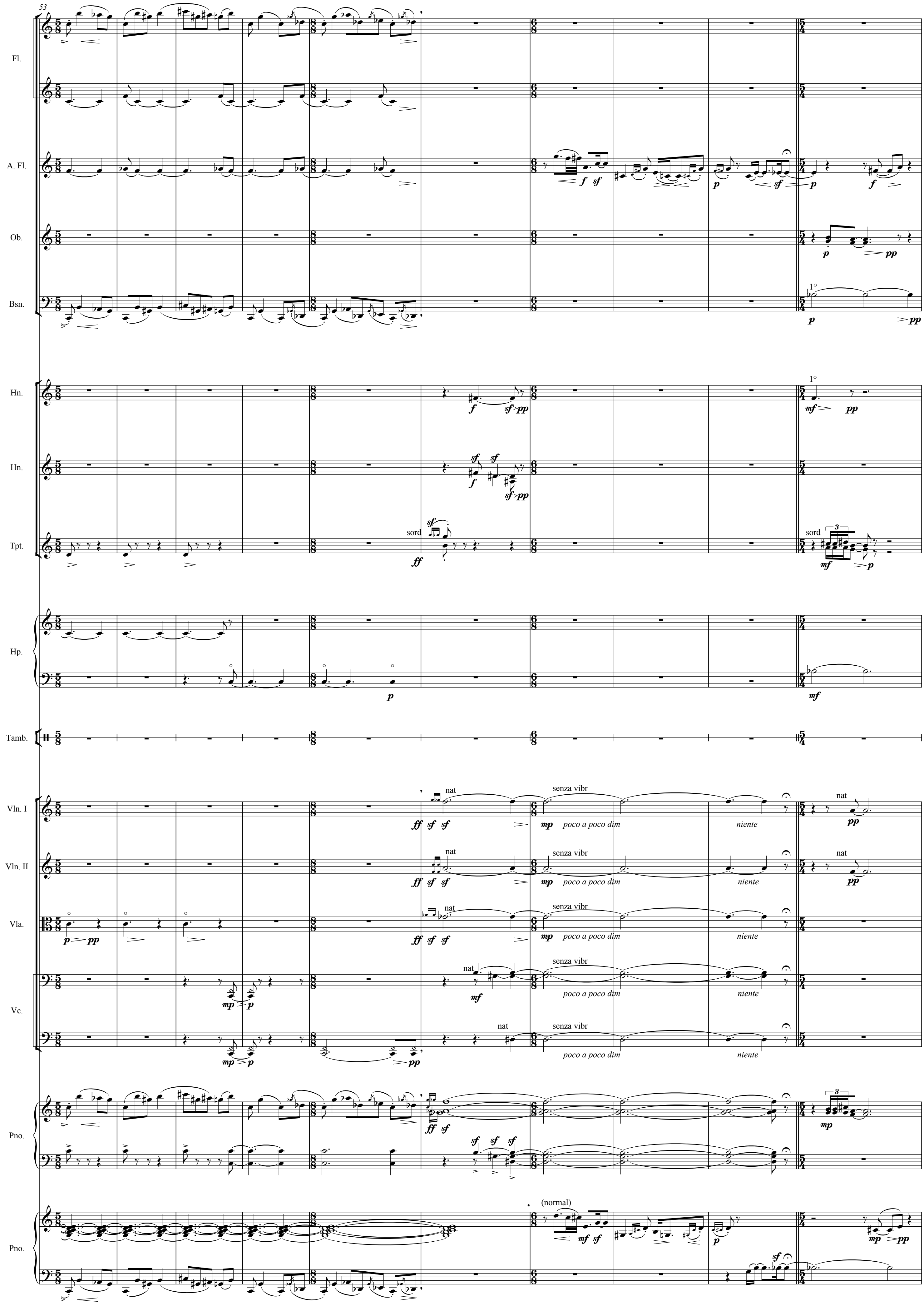

24
Picc.
Fl.
Ob.
C. A.
Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Tbn.
Tba.
Hp.
Glock.
Gong
Cym.
Tamb.
Cast.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
Pno.
gliss
rapide
senza sord
Rim shot
muta C G
div
arco
unis
sub
dim

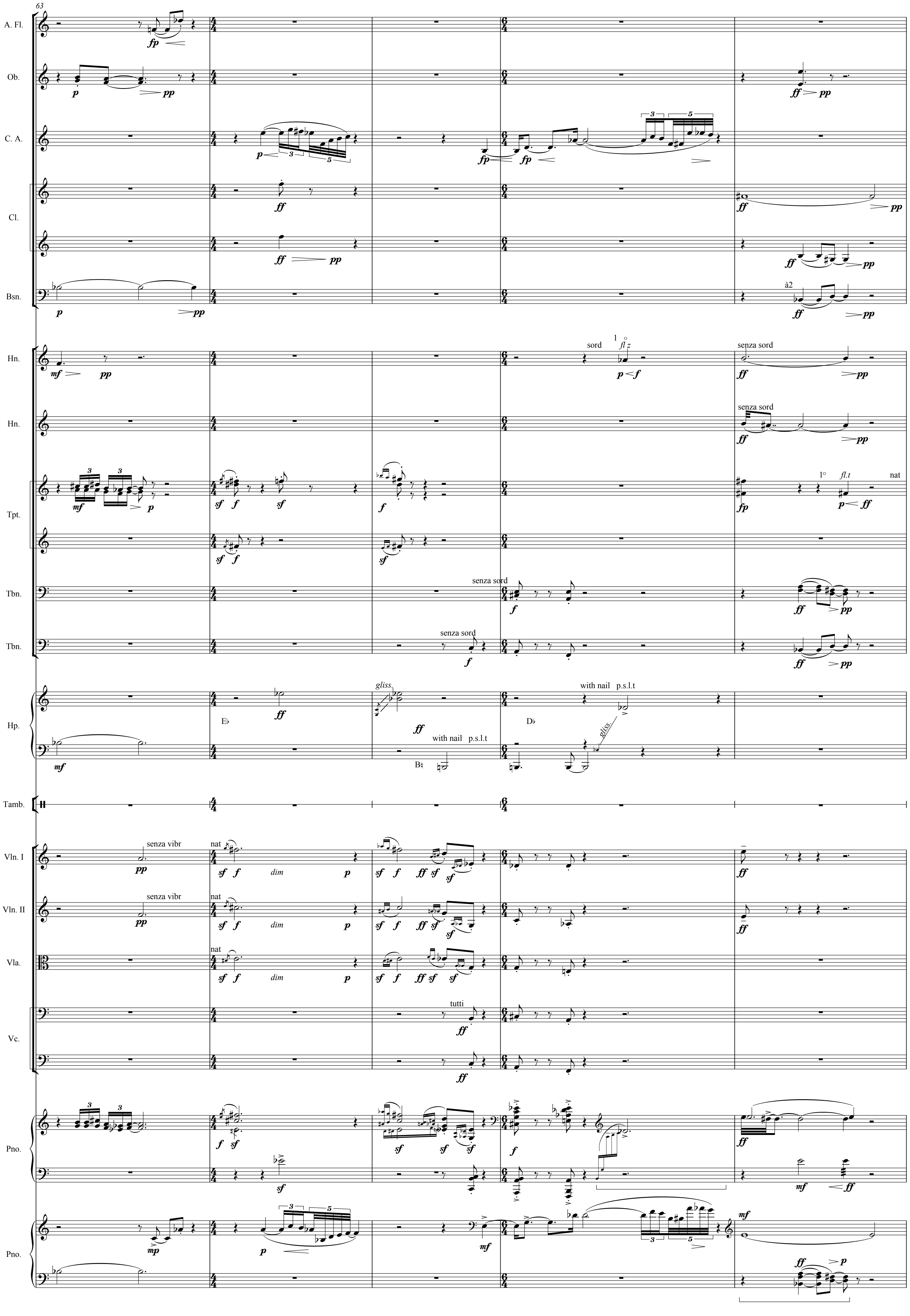

29
Picc.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Tbn.
Tba.
Glock.
Gong
Cym.
Tamb.
Cast.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
Pno.
8va
ff
ffp
cresc
sf
p
mf
nat
f
On edge (Soft stick)
rs ff
shake
muta B♭ E
div
tr

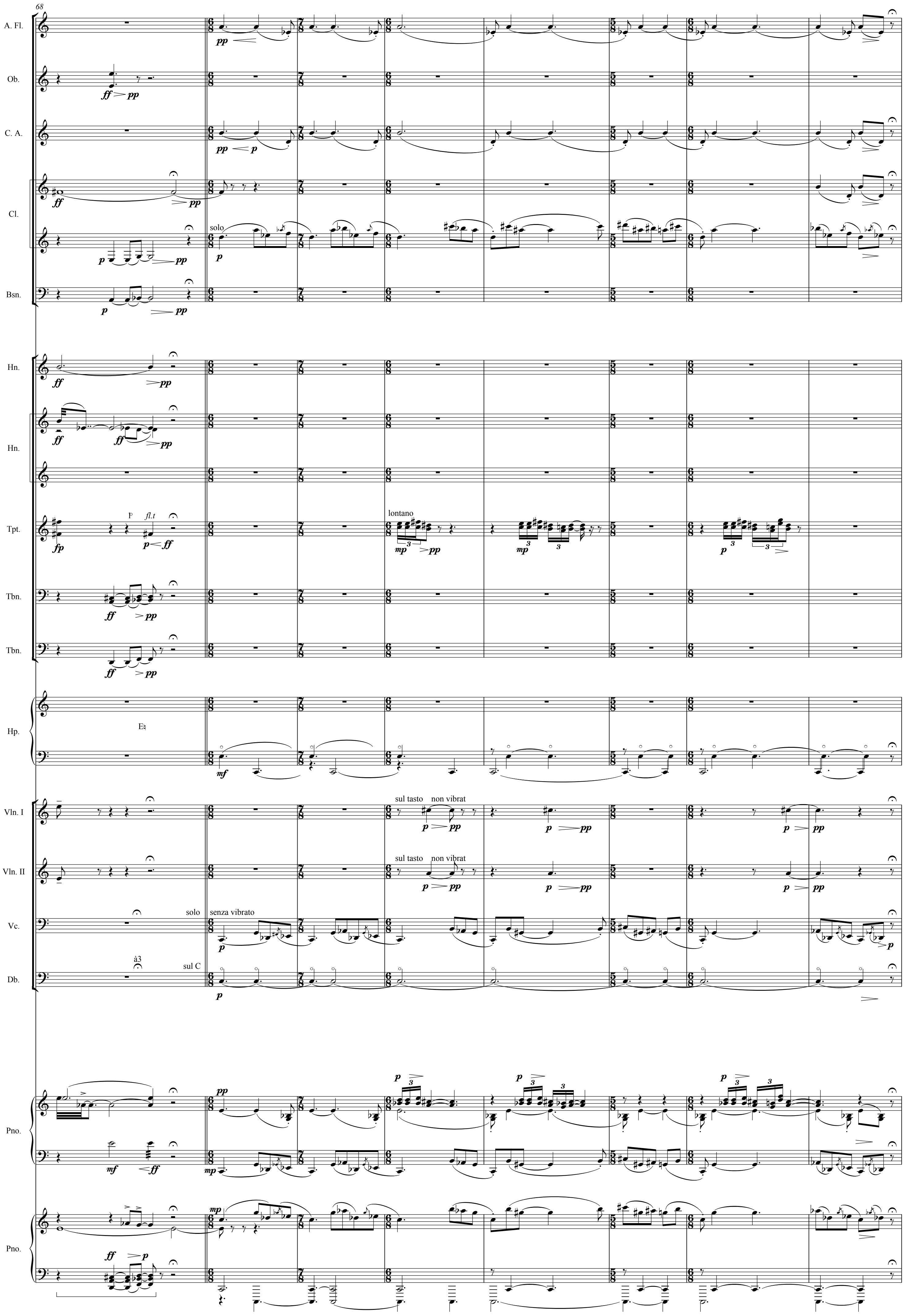

32
Picc.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
B. Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Tbn.
Tba.
Glock.
Gong
Cym.
Cast.
Timp.
muta C G
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vc.
unis
pizz
Db.
pizz
Pno.
Pno.
secco

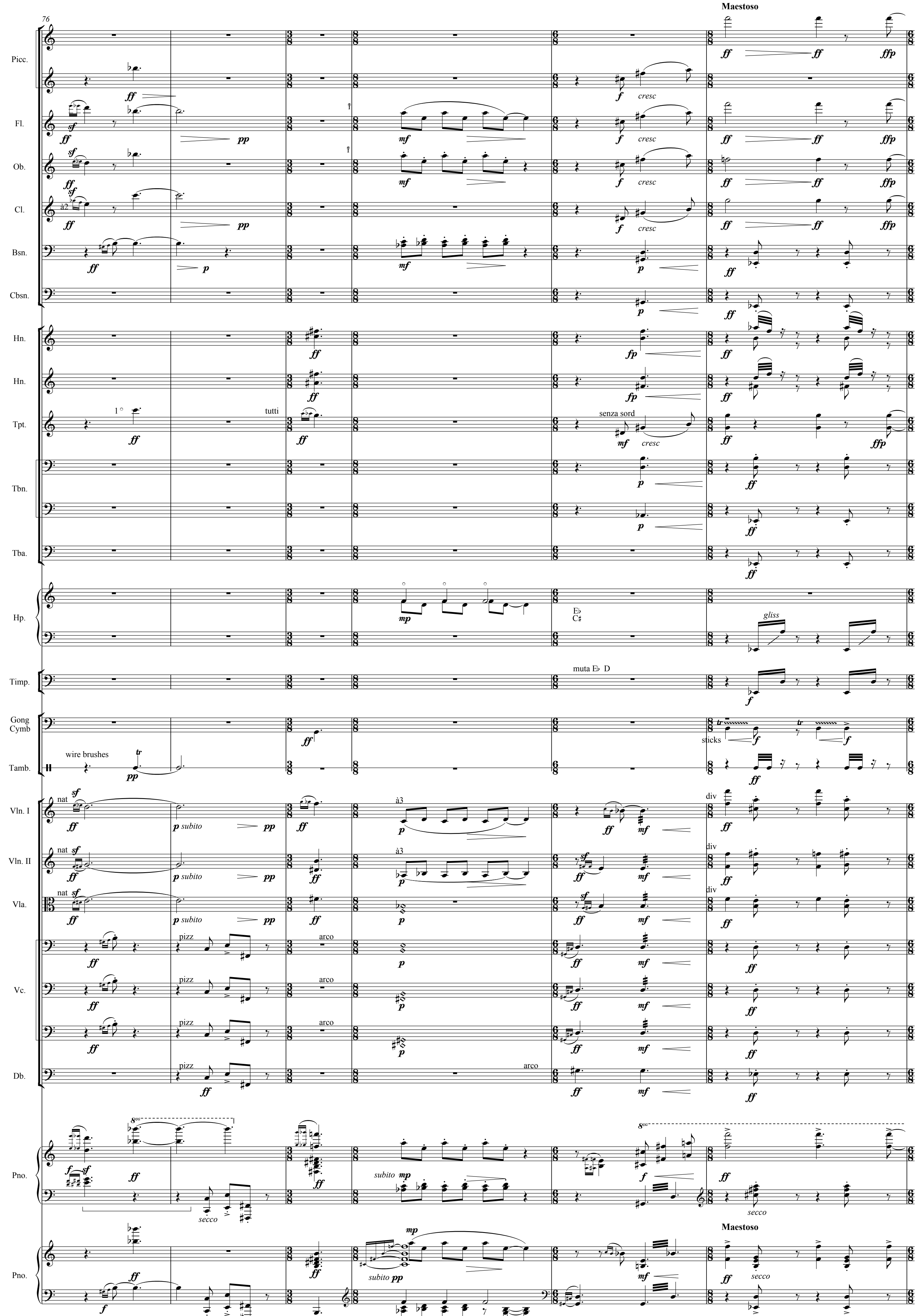

35
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Bells up
nat
Hn.
Bells up
nat
Tbn.
Tbn.
Hp.
F♮
C♮
D♮
B♭
Gong
Cym.
on the bell
Tamb.
rs
rs
Cast.
shake
Timp.
gliss
Vln. I
ponti c
nat
ponti c
Vln. II
ponti c
nat
ponti c
nat
dim.
arco
div
Vc.
ponti c
nat
div
Db.
Pno.
secco
attacca
Pno.
gliss
dim
attacca

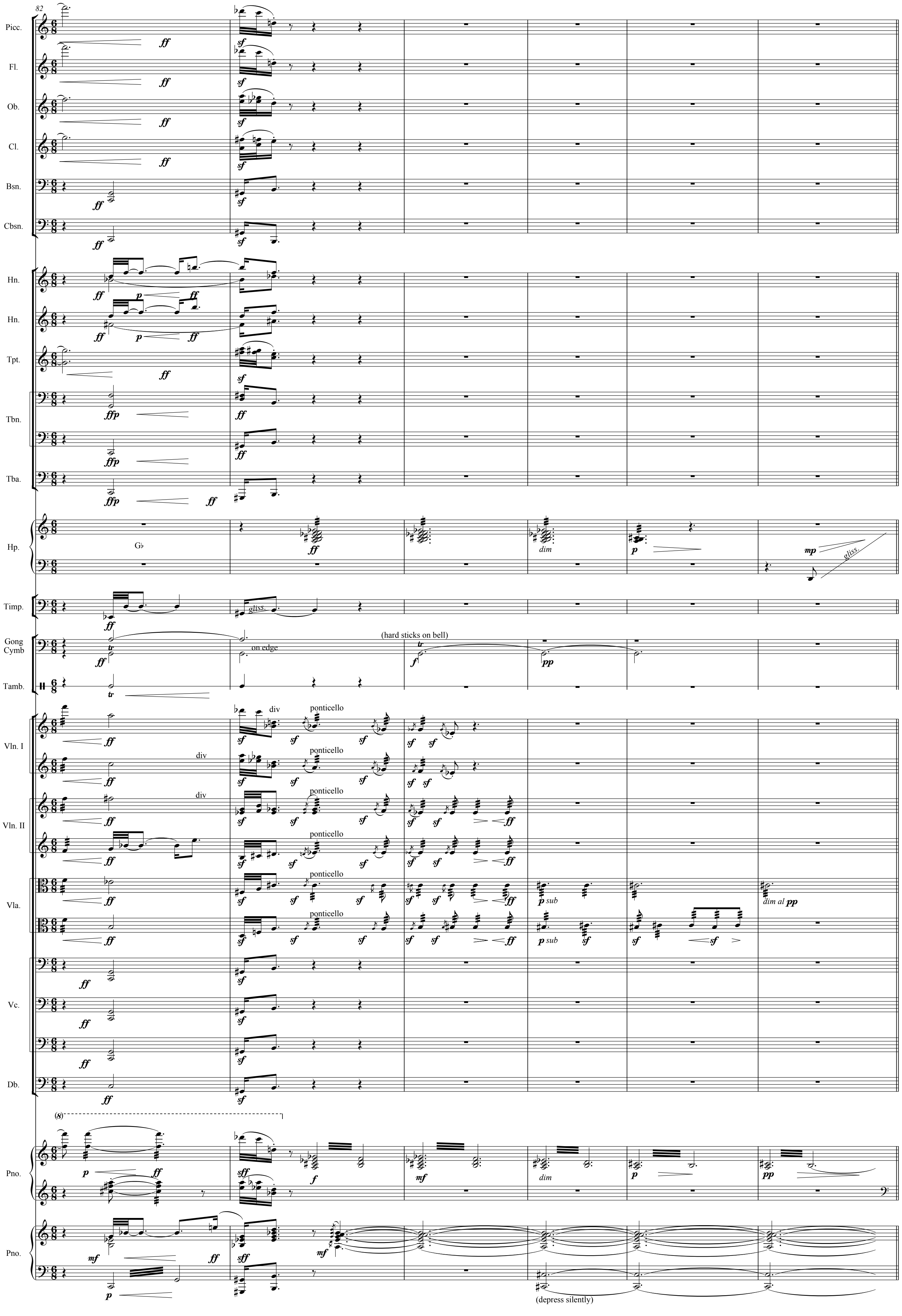

Larghetto misterioso ♪ = 84
44
Flute
Alto Flute
Clarinet in B♭
Bassoon
Horn in F
Horn in F
Trumpet in B♭
Trombone
Trombone
Tuba
Harp
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Piano
Piano
solo
senza vibrato
à2
1°
sord
senza sord
with nail
nat
senza vibr
dim niente
dim neinte
(depress silently)
Larghetto misterioso ♪ = 84
8va


53
Fl.
A. Fl.
Ob.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Hp.
Tamb.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Pno.
1°
1°
sord
sord
nat
senza vibr
poco a poco dim
niente
(normal)
f sf
p sf p
f
p pp
mf pp
f sf pp
ff
mf p
mf
ff sf sf
mp
pp
p pp
mp p
mp pp
mf sf
mp

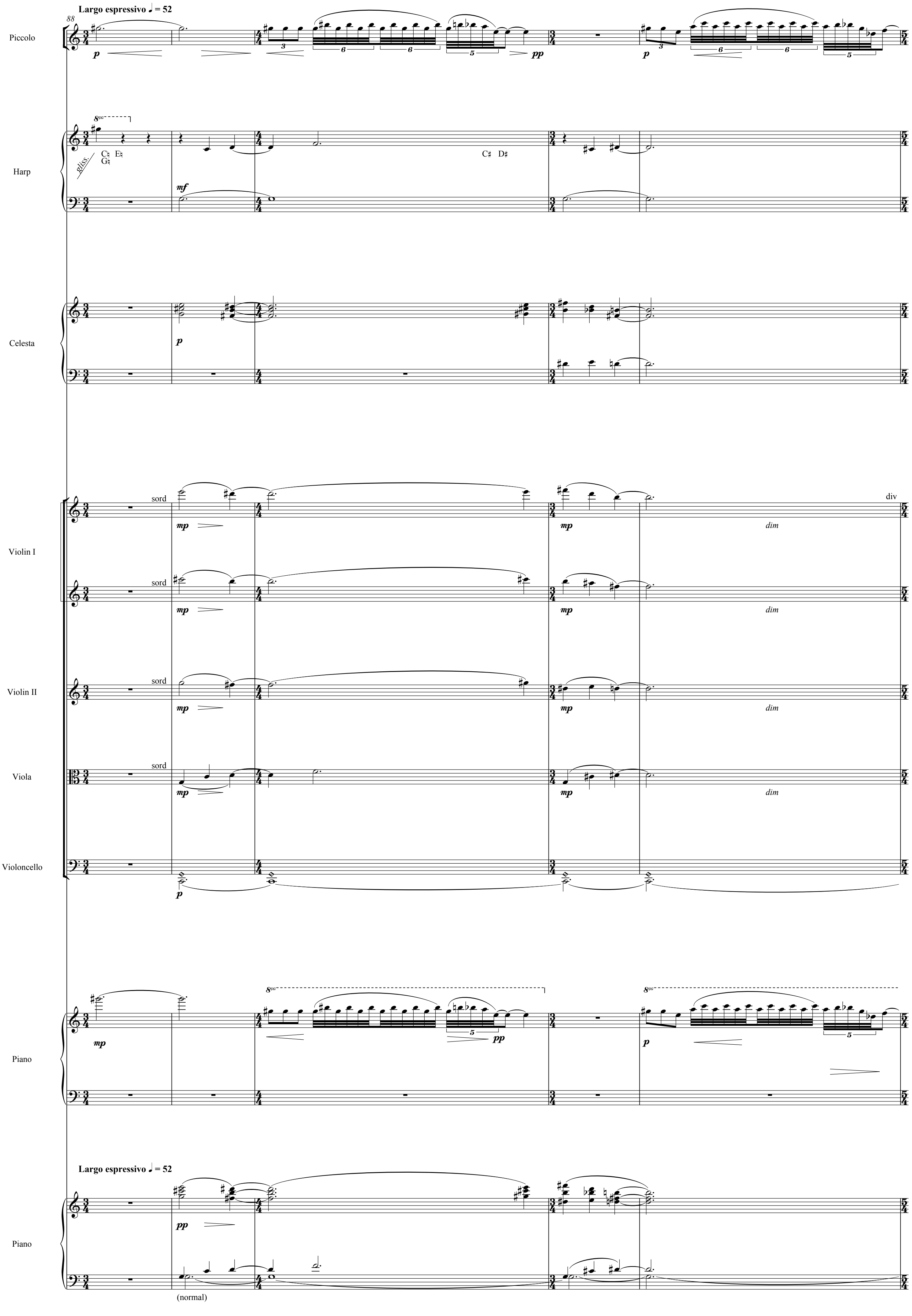

63
A. Fl.
Ob.
C. A.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Tbn.
Hp.
Tamb.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Pno.
fp
p
pp
ff
mf
sf
f
à2
sord
1
fl z
senza sord
1°
fl.t
nat
fp
p
gliss.
with nail p.s.l.t
E♭
D♭
B♮
gliss
senza vibr
nat
dim
tutti
mp

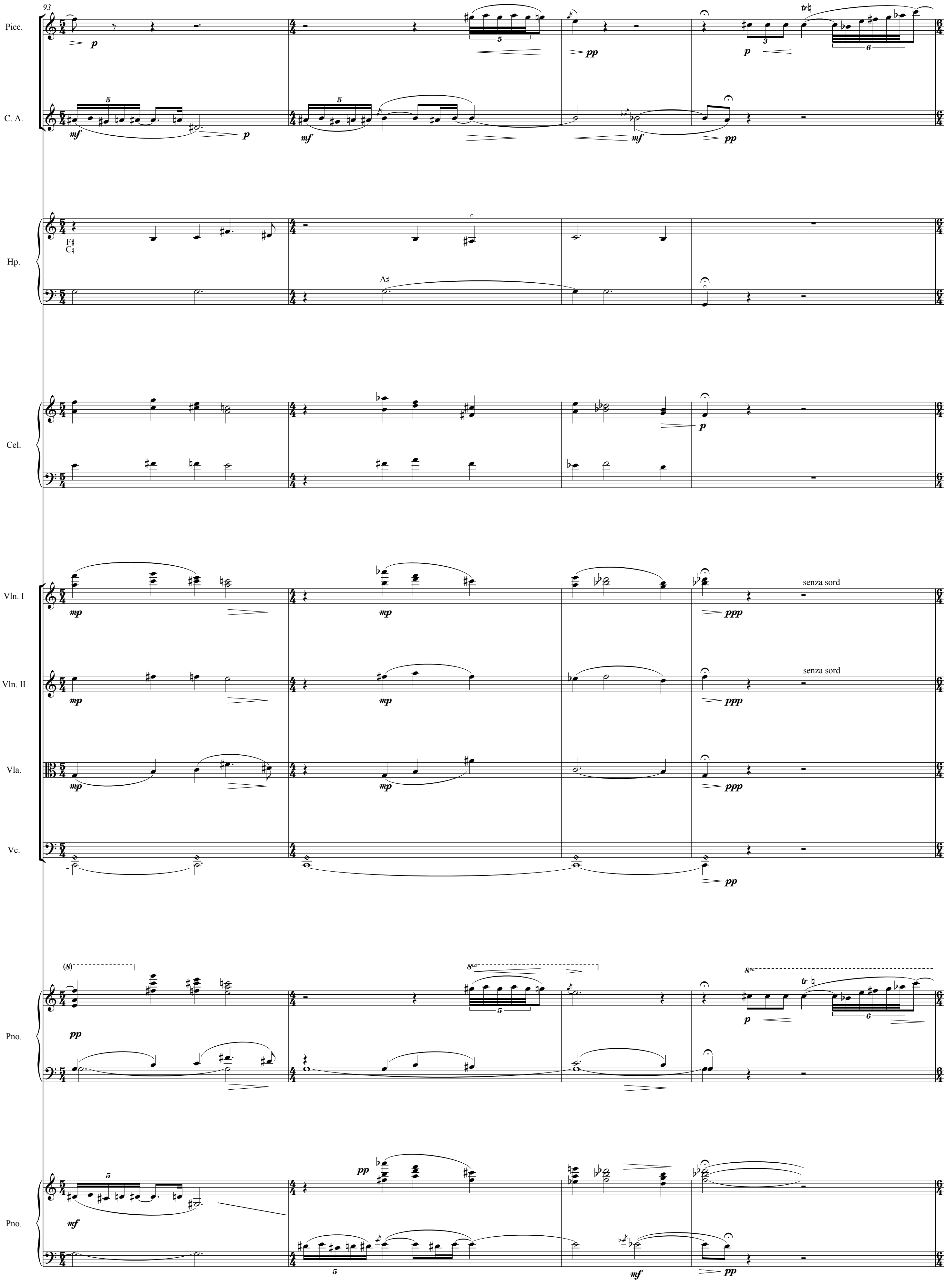

68
A. Fl.
Ob.
C. A.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Tbn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
Pno.
solo
P
fl.t
lontano
E♮
sul tasto
non vibrat
solo
senza vibrato
à3
sul C
pp
ff
p
mf
mp
fp

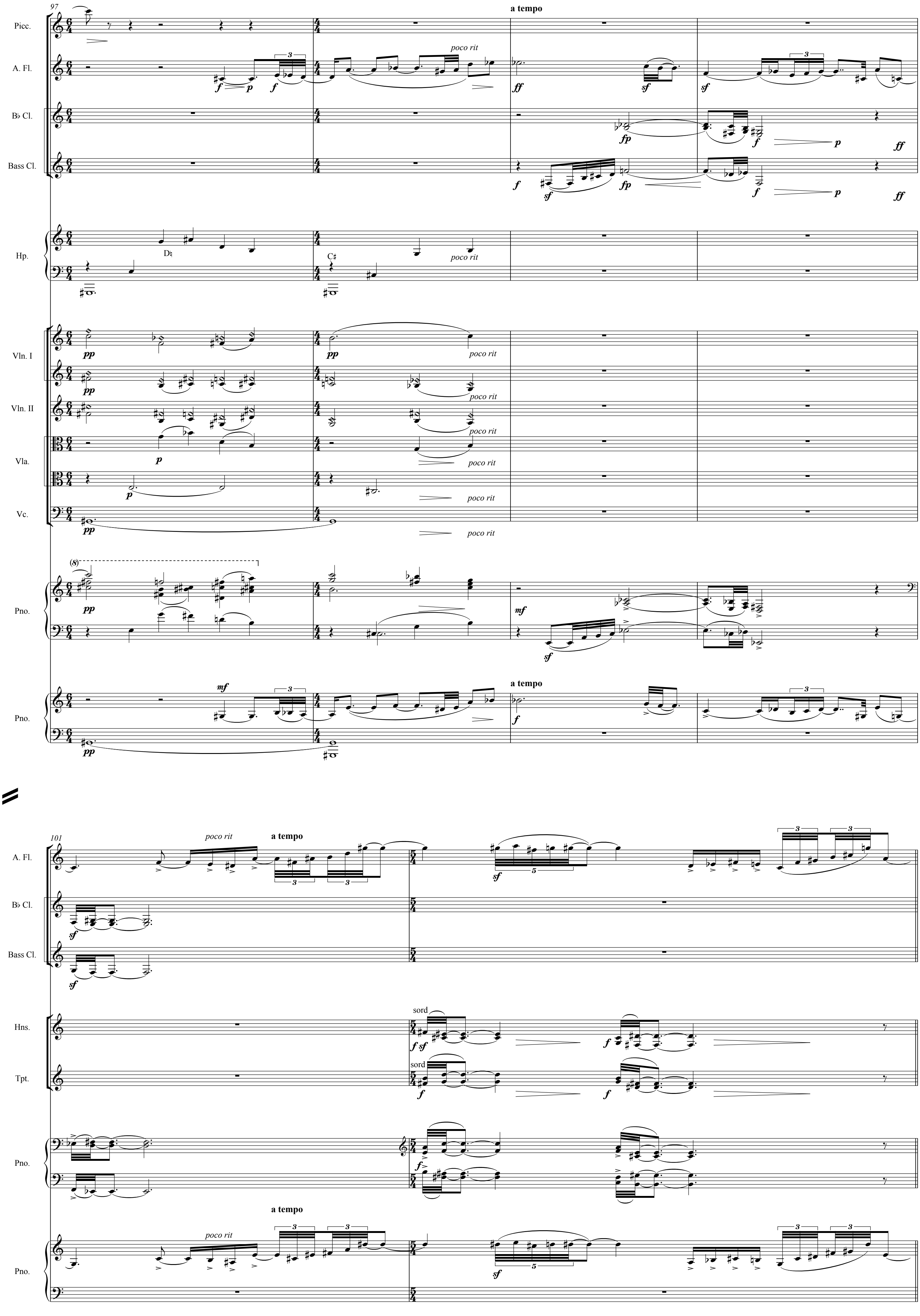

Maestoso
76
Picc.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Tba.
Hp.
Timp.
Gong
Cymb
Tamb.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
Pno.
à2
1°
tutti
senza sord
cresc
gliss
muta E♭ D
E♭
C♯
wire brushes
sticks
nat
div
à3
p subito
pizz
arco
secco
subito mp
subito pp
ff
pp
mf
ffp
fp
sf


82
Picc.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Tba.
Hp.
G♭
gliss.
Timp.
gliss.
Gong
Cymb
on edge
(hard sticks on bell)
Tamb.
Vln. I
div
ponticello
Vln. II
div
ponticello
Vla.
ponticello
p sub
dim al pp
Vc.
Db.
(8)
Pno.
Pno.
dim
(depress silently)
ff
ffp
sf
ff
mf
mp
p
pp

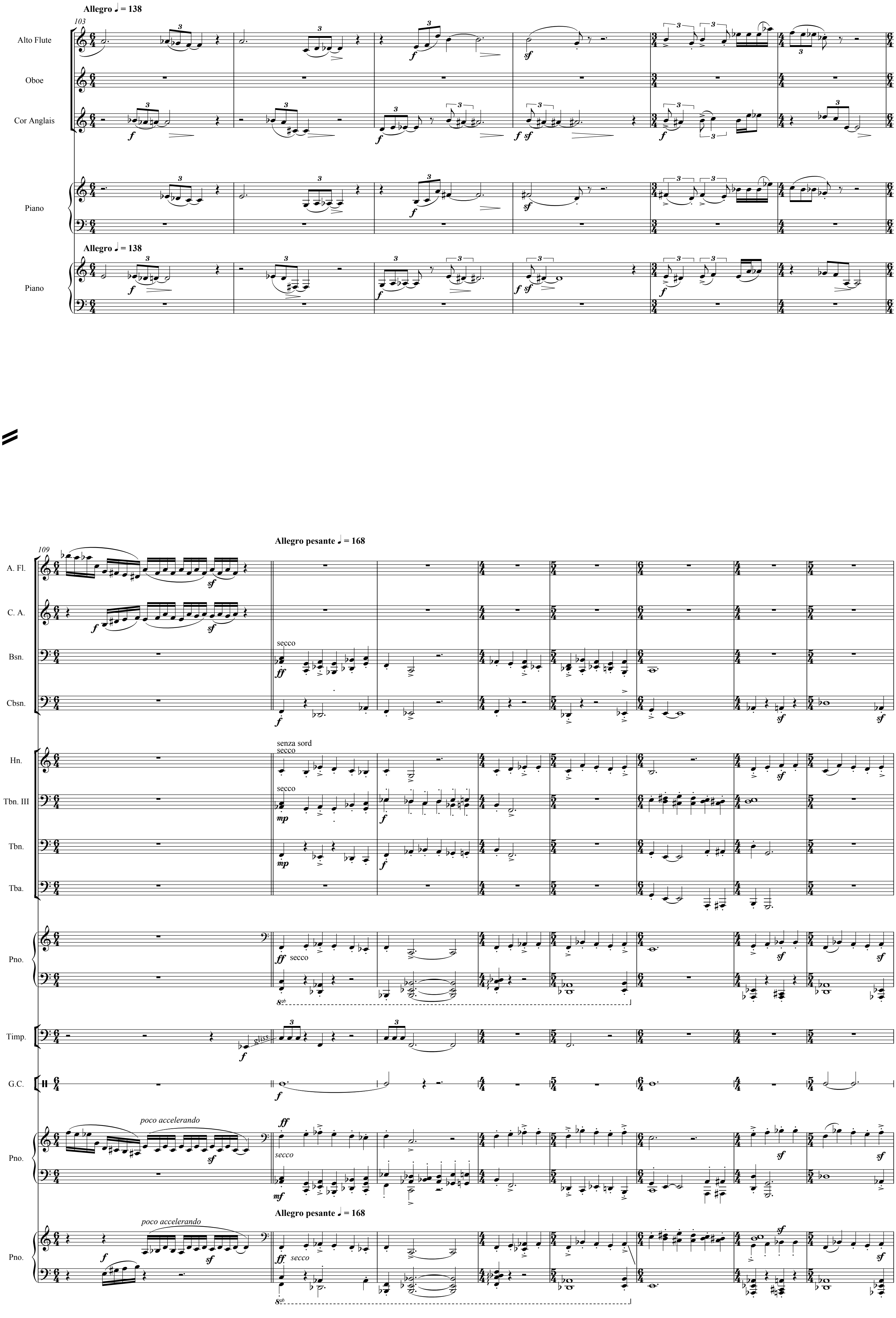
III

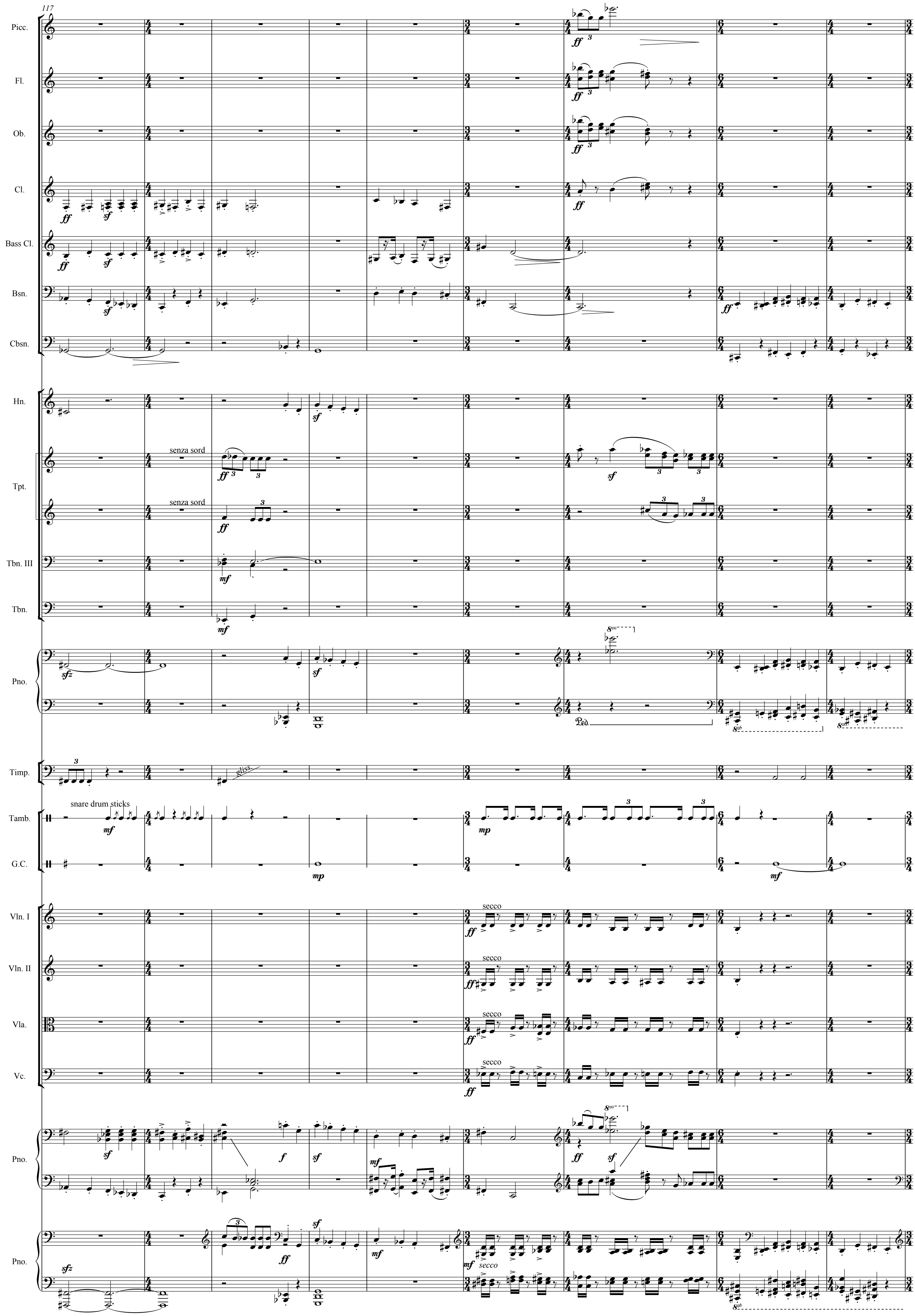

Largo espressivo ♩ = 52
88
Piccolo
Harp
Celesta
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Piano
Piano
gliss.
C♮ E♮
G♮
C♯ D♯
8va
sord
div
dim
mp
mf
p
pp
(normal)

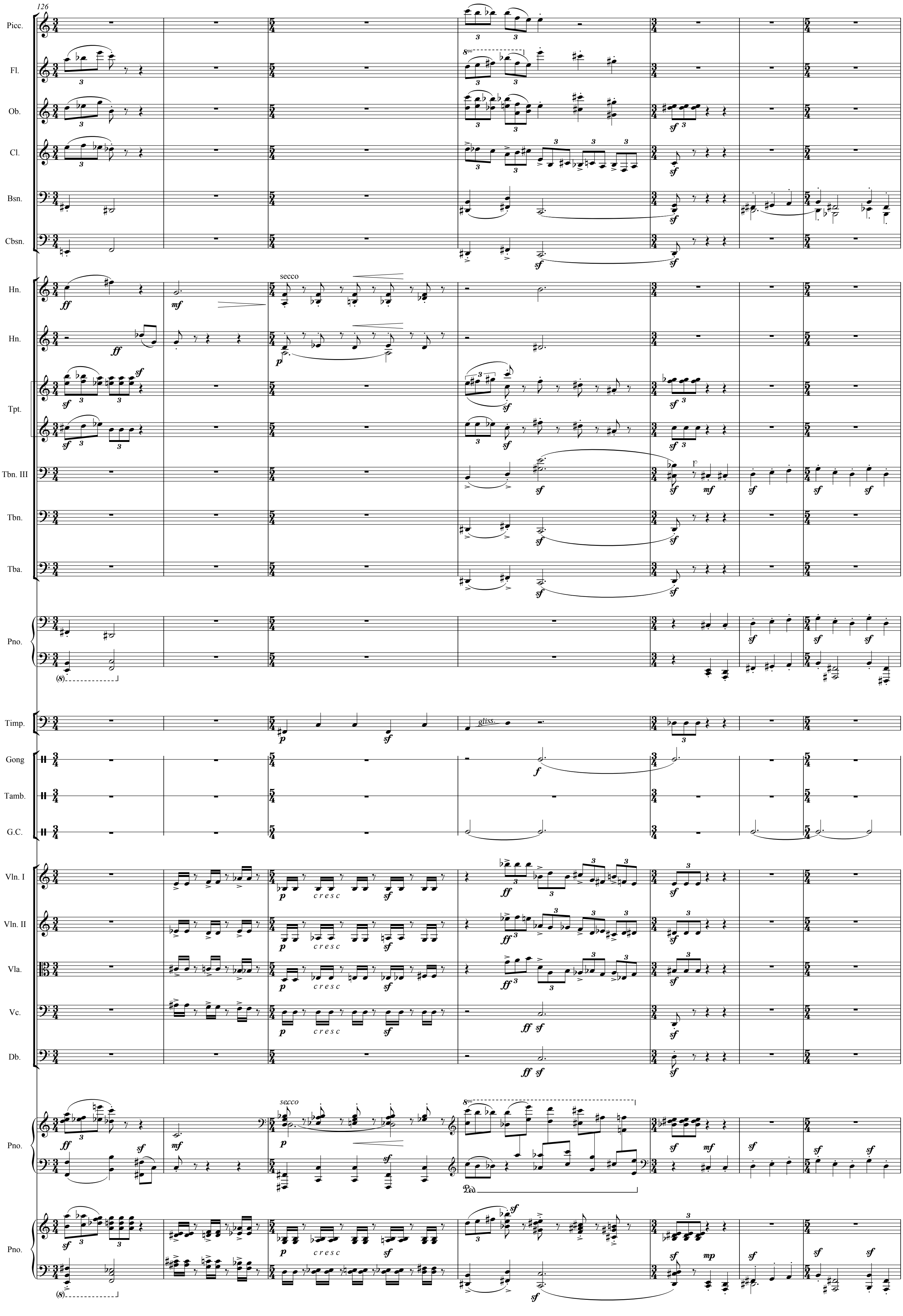

93
Picc.
C. A.
Hp.
Cel.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Pno.
F♯
C♮
A♯
senza sord
senza sord
tr
(8)
8va
8va
p
mf
p
pp
p
mf
mf
pp
p
mp
mp
ppp
mp
mp
ppp
mp
mp
ppp
pp
pp
p
pp
mf
mf
pp
5
5
3
6
5
6
5
5

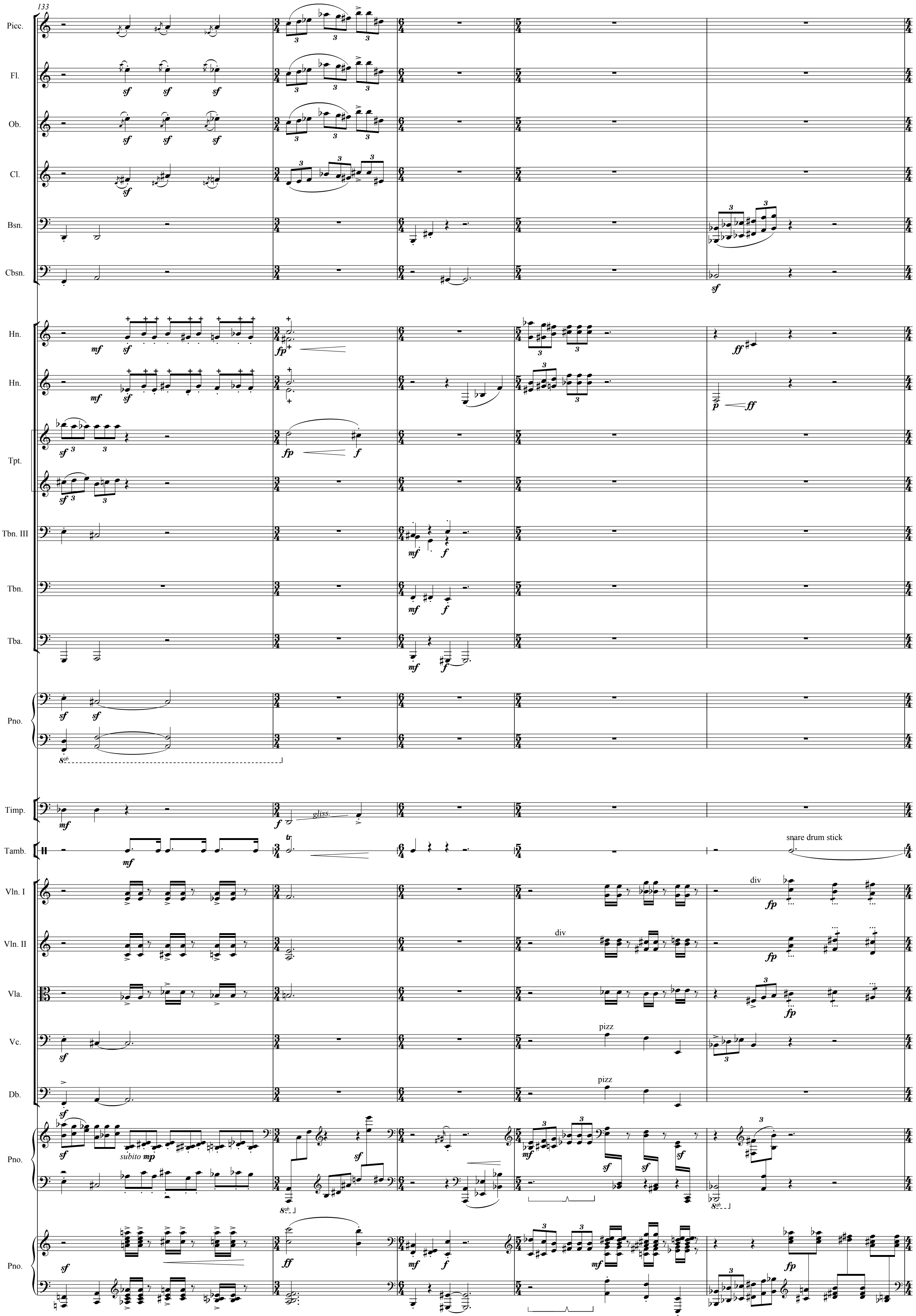

97
Picc.
A. Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bass Cl.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Pno.
a tempo
poco rit
D♮
C♯
(8)
pp
p
f
mf
ff
sf
fp
a tempo
101
A. Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bass Cl.
Hns.
Tpt.
Pno.
Pno.
poco rit
a tempo
sord
sord
f
sf
3
5

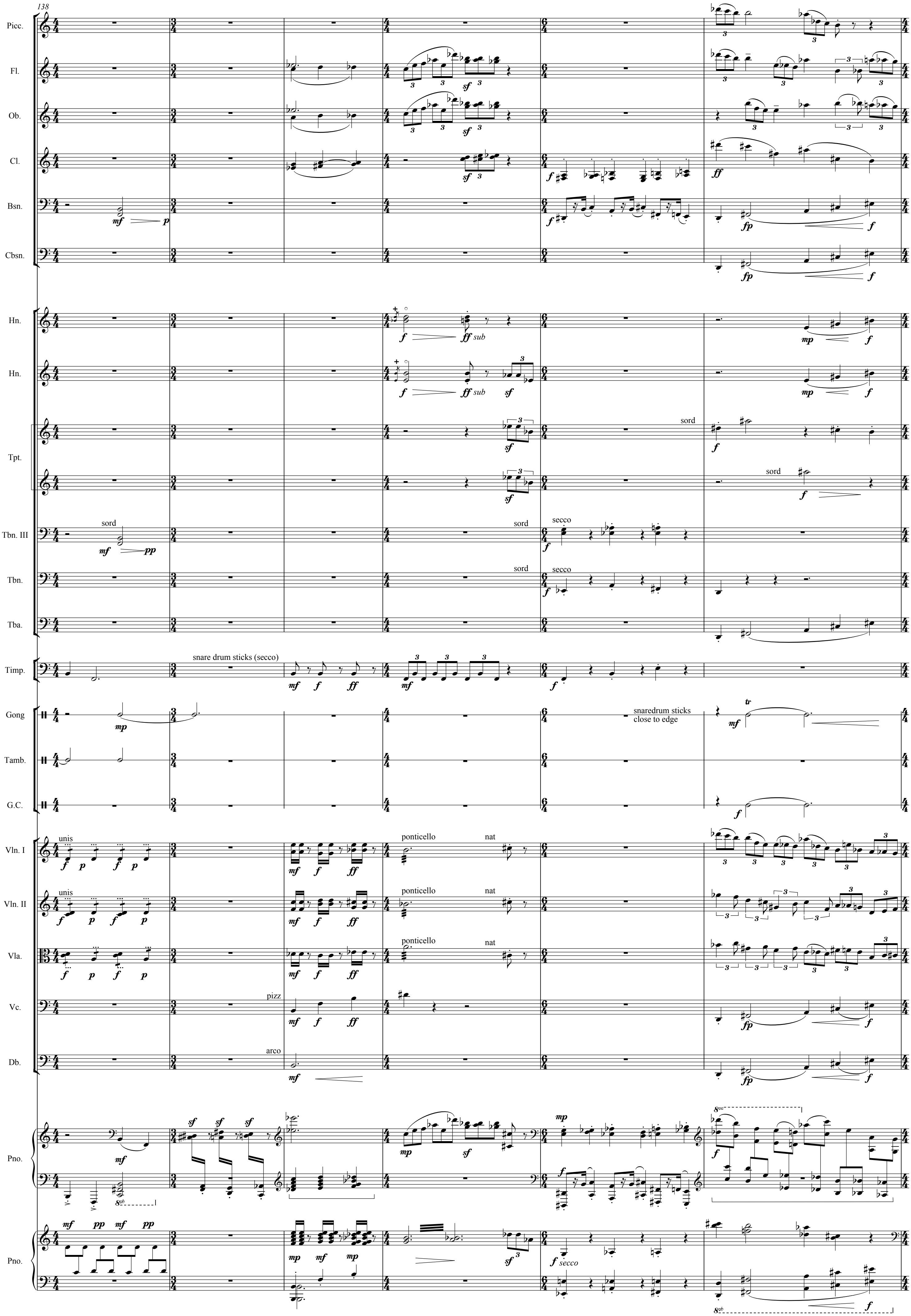
IV

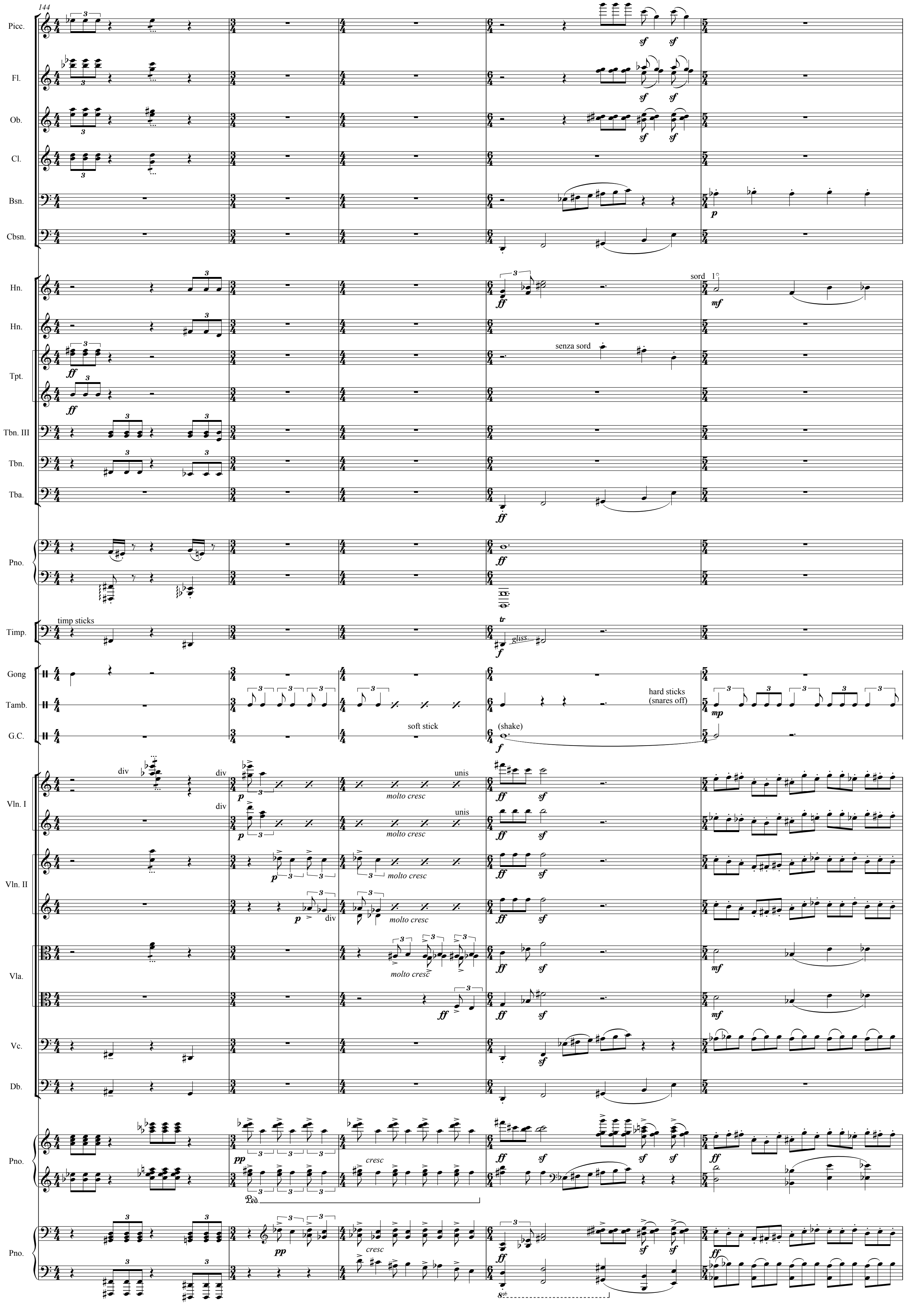

Allegro ♩ = 138
103
Alto Flute
Oboe
Cor Anglais
Piano
Allegro ♩ = 138
Piano
109
A. Fl.
C. A.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Tbn. III
Tbn.
Tba.
Pno.
Timp.
G.C.
Pno.
Pno.
Allegro pesante ♩ = 168
secco
senza sord
gliss.
poco accelerando
Allegro pesante ♩ = 168
8vb

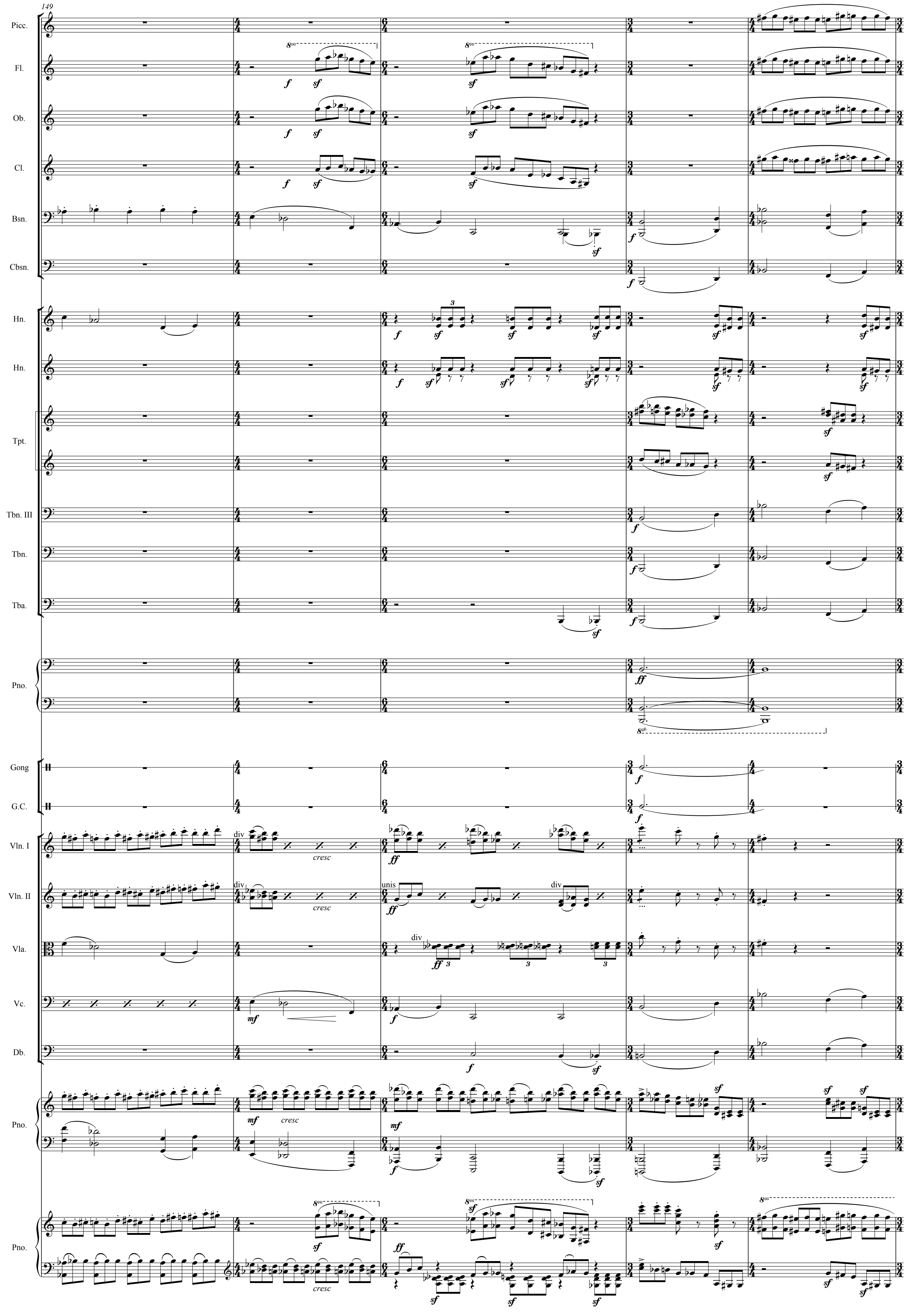

117
Picc.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bass Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
senza sord
senza sord
Tbn. III
Tbn.
Pno.
8va
Ped.
8vb
Timp.
gliss.
Tamb.
snare drum sticks
G.C.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
secco
Pno.
Pno.
secco

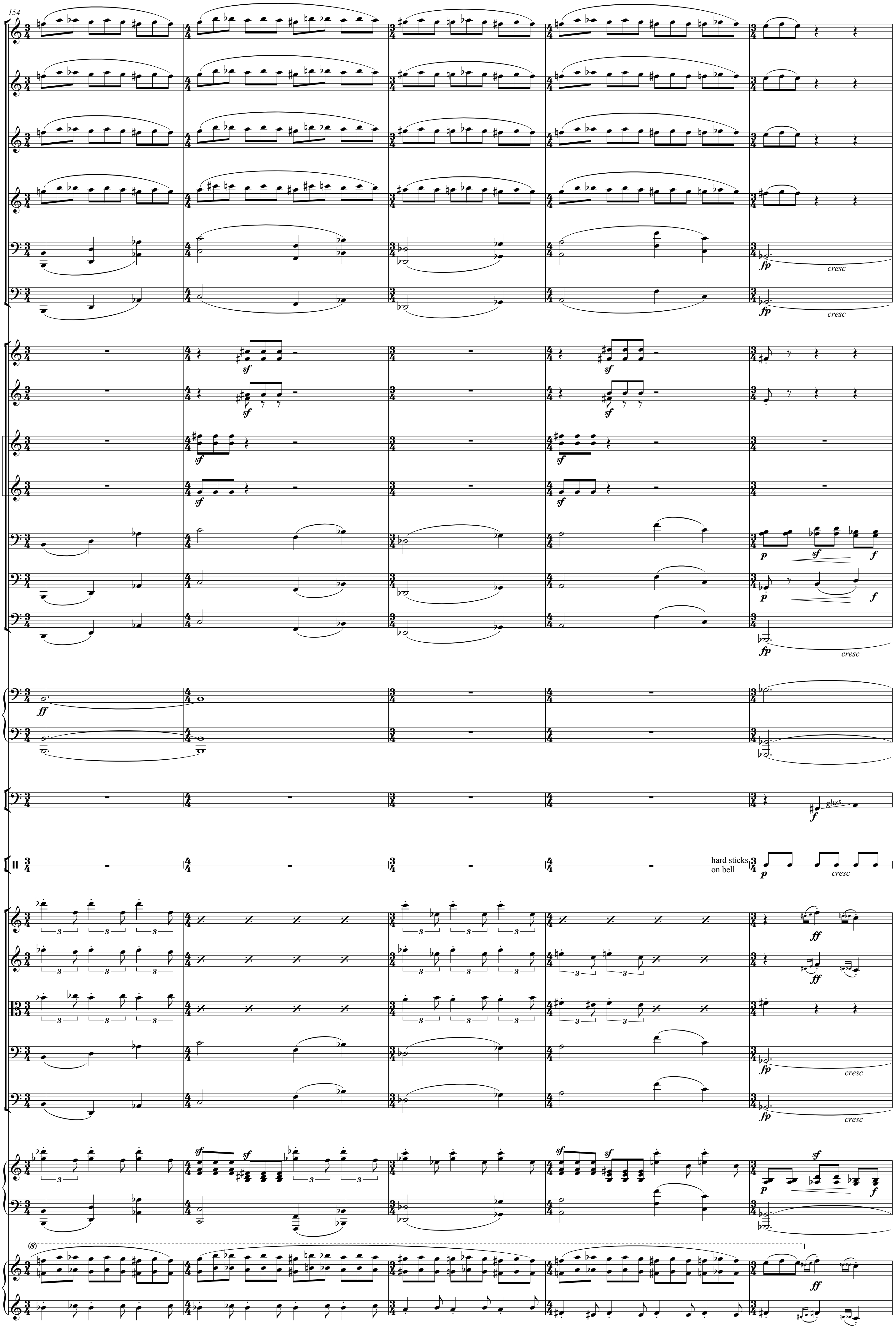

126
Picc.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn. III
Tbn.
Tba.
Pno.
Timp.
Gong
Tamb.
G.C.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
Pno.
secco
8va
gliss.
cresc
ff
mf
p
sf
f
mp
ff sf
(8)
Ped.

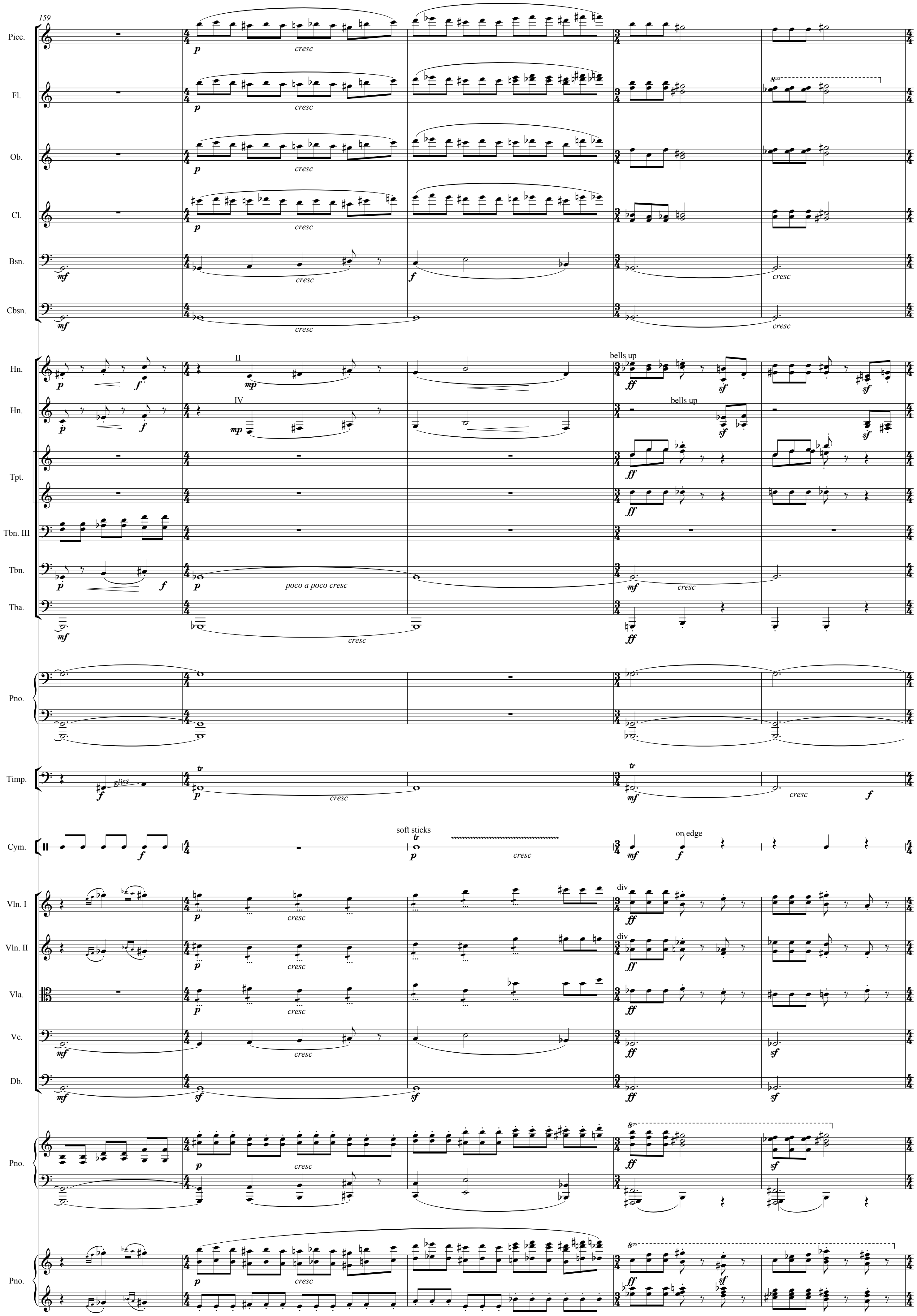

133
Picc.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn. III
Tbn.
Tba.
Pno.
Timp.
Tamb.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
Pno.
sf
mf
fp
f
ff
p
gliss.
snare drum stick
div
pizz
subito mp
8vb

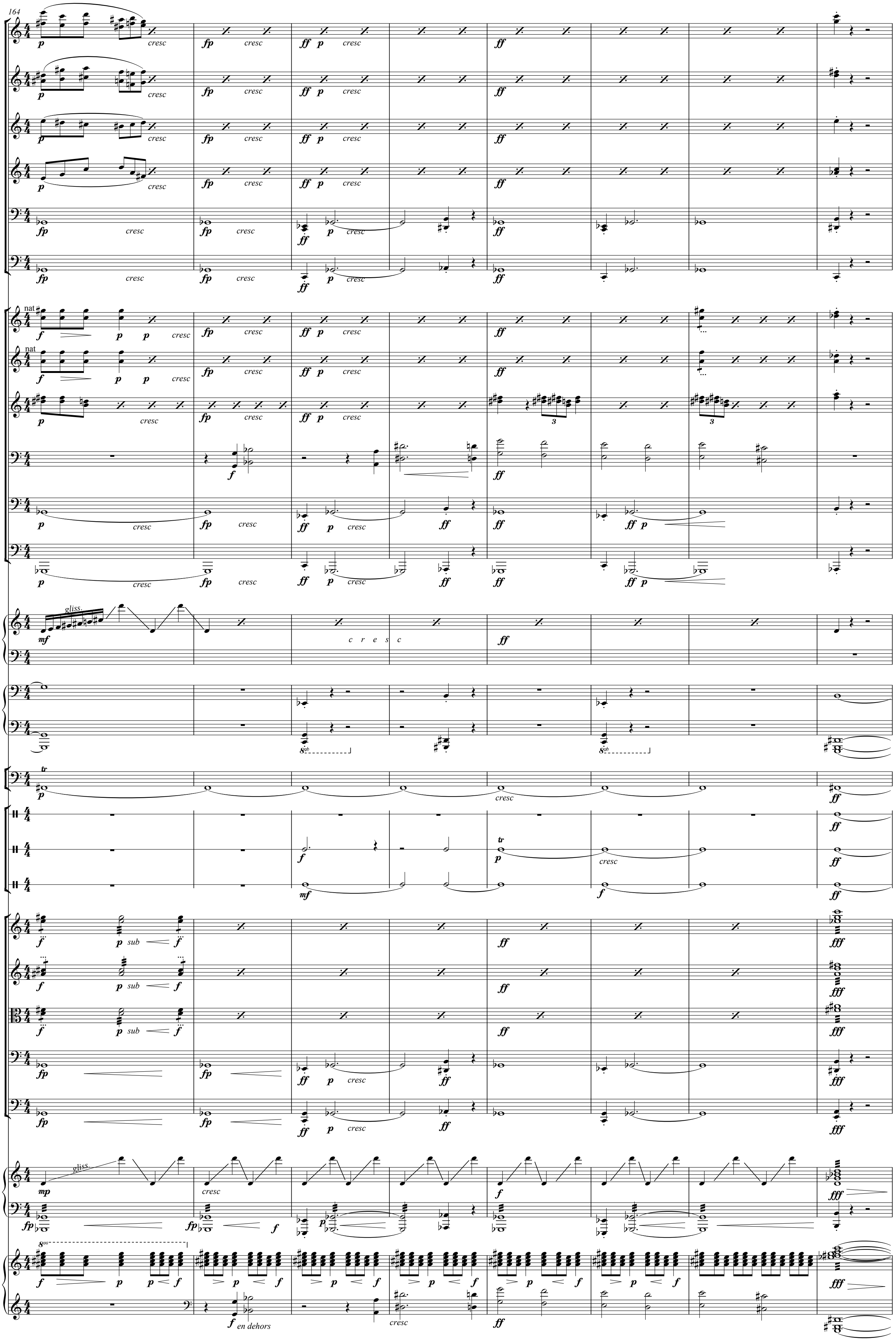

138
Picc.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn. III
Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
Gong
Tamb.
G.C.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
Pno.
sord
sord
secco
sord
secco
sord
sord
snare drum sticks (secco)
snaredrum sticks close to edge
tr
unis
unis
ponticello
nat
ponticello
nat
ponticello
nat
pizz
arco
ff sub
ff sub
f secco
8va
8vb

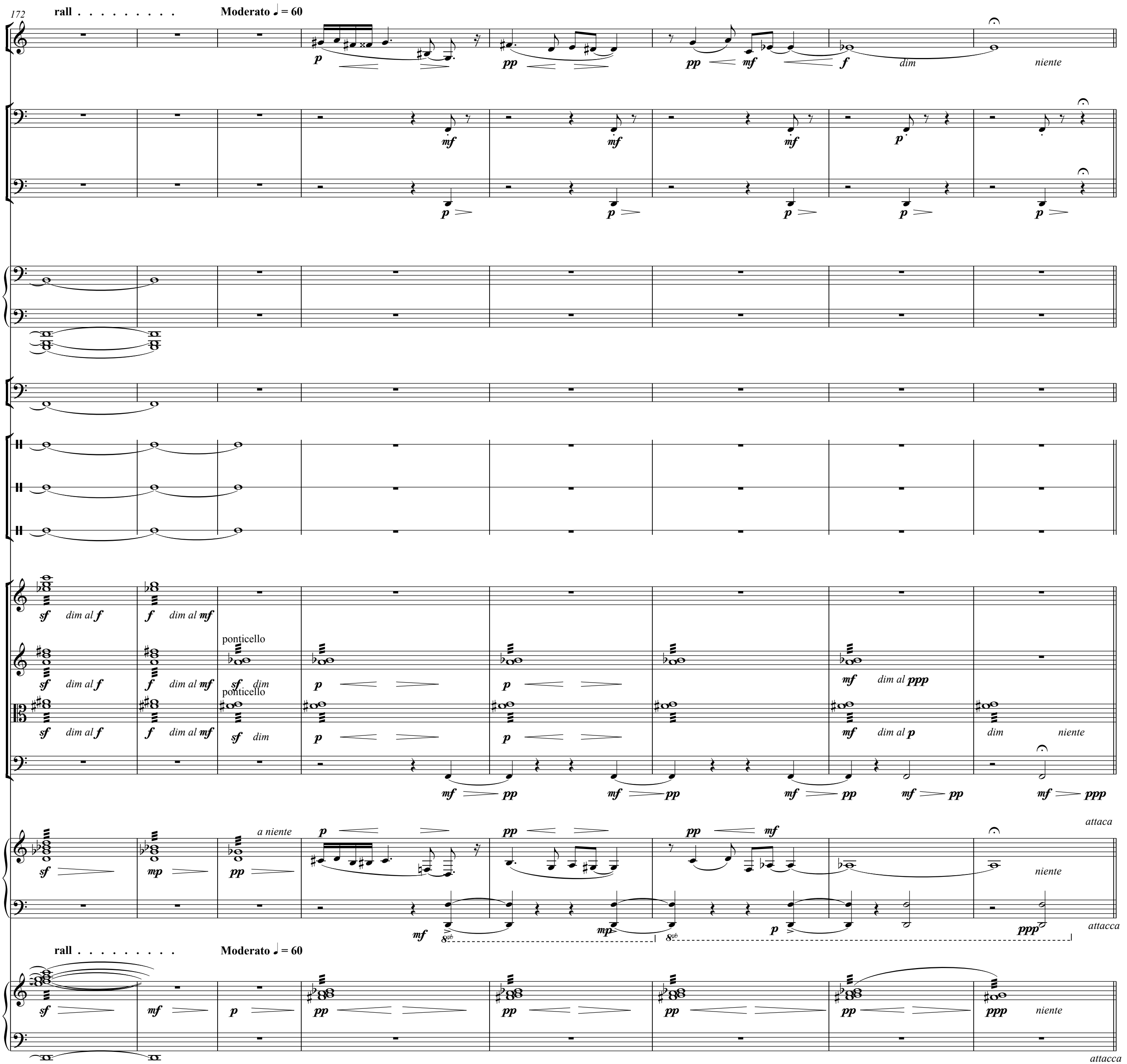

144
Picc.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn. III
Tbn.
Tba.
Pno.
Timp.
Gong
Tamb.
G.C.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
Pno.
sf
ff
p
mf
mp
f
pp
sord 1°
senza sord
timp sticks
gliss
soft stick
hard sticks
(snares off)
(shake)
div
unis
molto cresc
cresc
Ped.
8vb

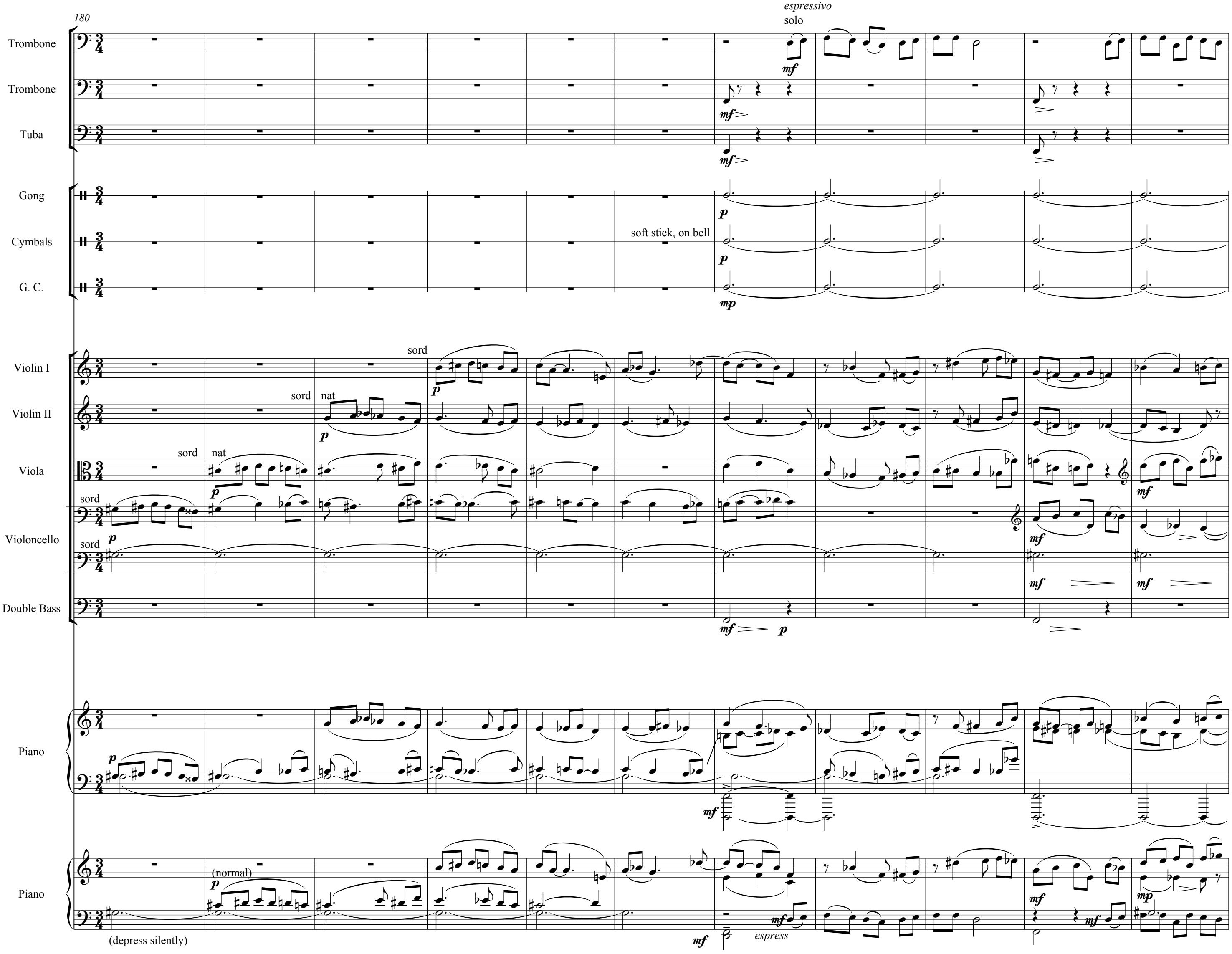

149
Picc.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn. III
Tbn.
Tba.
Pno.
Gong
G.C.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
Pno.
8va
f
sf
ff
mf
div
unis
cresc
8vb

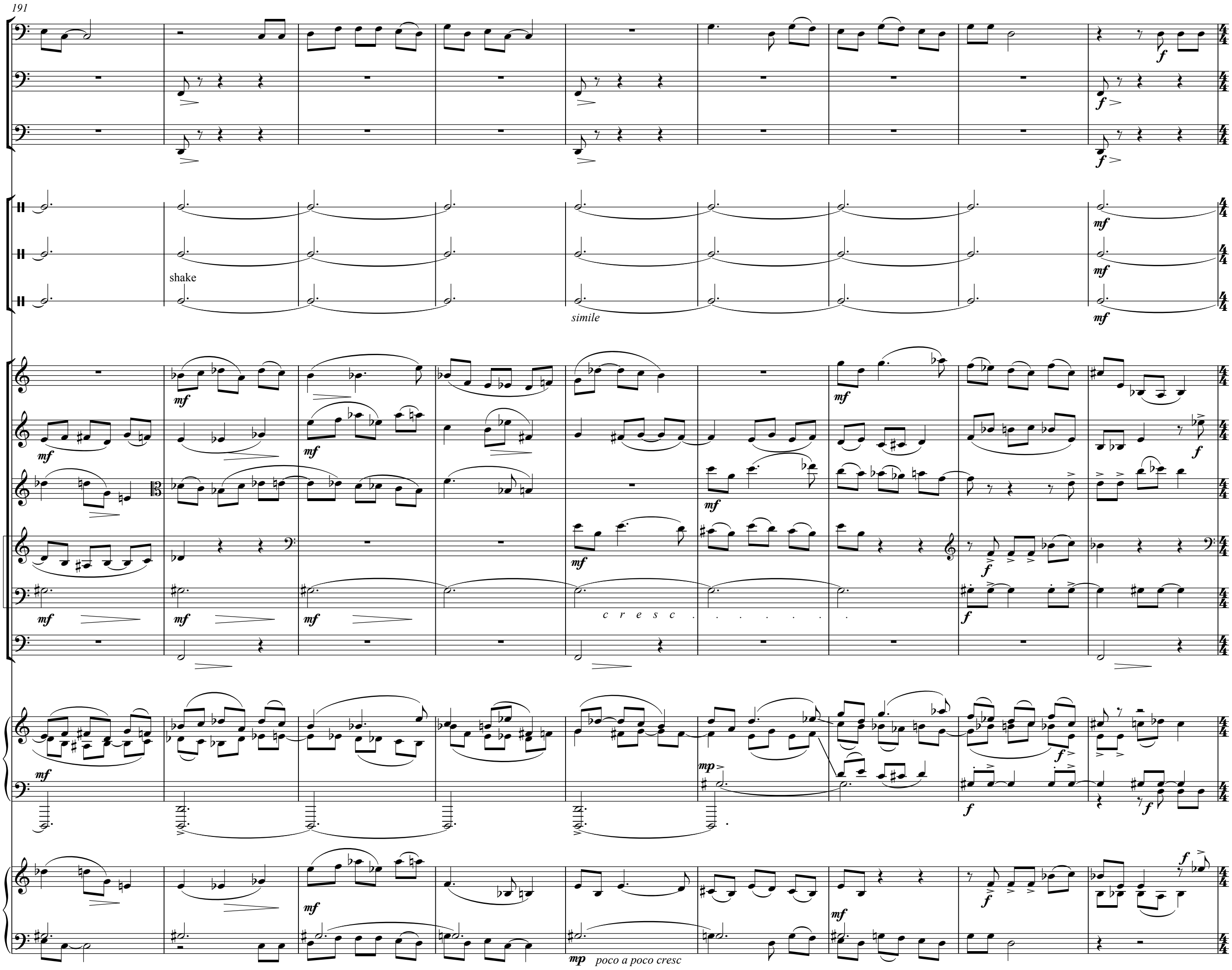

154
Picc.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn. III
Tbn.
Tba.
Pno.
Timp.
Cym.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
Pno.
fp
cresc
sf
p
f
ff
gliss.
hard sticks on bell
(8)

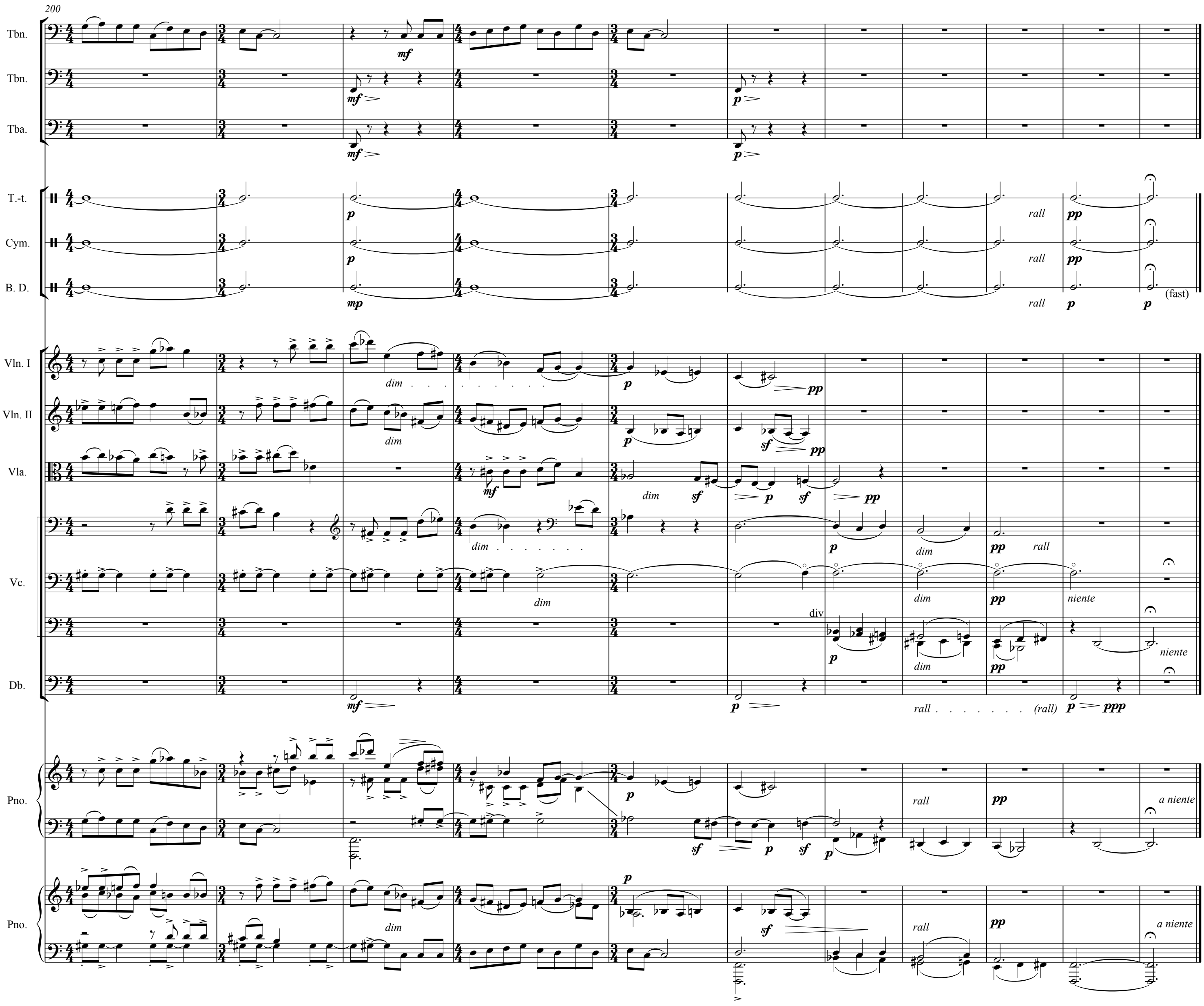

159
Picc.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn. III
Tbn.
Tba.
Pno.
Timp.
Cym.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
Pno.
cresc
poco a poco cresc
II
IV
bells up
bells up
gliss.
soft sticks
on edge
div
div
8va
tr


164
Fl.
Ob.
C. A.
Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn. III
Tbn.
Tba.
Hp.
Pno.
Timp.
Gong
Cym.
G.C.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
Pno.
nat
gliss.
p sub
cresc
c r e s c
en dehors
p
mp
mf
f
fp
ff
fff
tr
8vb
8va
3


172
rall . . . .
Moderato ♩ = 60
C. A.
Tbn. III
Tba.
Pno.
Timp.
Gong
Cym.
G.C.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Db.
Pno.
Pno.
dim
niente
dim al f
dim al mf
ponticello
ponticello
dim
dim al ppp
dim al p
a niente
attaca
attacca
8vb
rall . . . .
Moderato ♩ = 60
niente
attacca


180
Trombone
Trombone
Tuba
Gong
Cymbals
G. C.
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass
Piano
Piano
espressivo
solo
soft stick, on bell
sord
nat
(normal)
(depress silently)
espress
p
mf
mp


191
Tbn.
Tbn.
Tba.
T.-t.
Cym.
B. D.
shake
simile
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
cresc. . . . .
Db.
Pno.
Pno.
poco a poco cresc
mf
mp
f


200
Tbn.
mf
Tbn.
mf
p
Tba.
mf
p
T.-t.
p
rall
pp
Cym.
p
rall
pp
B. D.
mp
rall
p
p
(fast)
Vln. I
dim . . . .
p
pp
Vln. II
dim
p
sf
pp
Vla.
mf
dim
sf
p
sf
pp
Vc.
dim . . . .
p
dim
pp
rall
dim
dim
pp
niente
div
p
dim
pp
niente
Db.
mf
p
rall . . . . (rall)
p
ppp
Pno.
p
sf
p
sf
p
rall
pp
a niente
Pno.
dim
p
sf
rall
pp
a niente