Portfolio of compositions and commentary

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PORTFOLIO OF COMPOSITIONS AND COMMENTARY

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Abstract

The five works of this portfolio are all part of a continuing personal dialogue with tonality. My aim has been to investigate various ways to approach tonality as a composer today and map out its role within the harmonic, timbral, dramatic and formal fabric of my music.

Detached from functional harmony of the past, tonality is viewed as one harmonic colour: a part of a more varied syntax that also includes modality and cluster harmony. The expressive and sonic qualities of tonality are used to manage dramatic depth and shape, leading to diverse musical forms. Several techniques to do with timbre and texture are used to maintain a contemporary approach to tonality, and to introduce a level of novelty and peculiarity to the familiar sonorities. In addition, connections between my harmonic and formal thinking, and my synaesthesia will be drawn.

In Piano Concerto, my aim was to design the work using gravitational harmonic centres, or 'tonics', and to manipulate the harmonic landscape with pitch centres, foreign pitches, and gestural elements. *Ripped Tapestry* sets the medieval melody of *l'Homme armé* into a new harmonic context. Tonality is used to support the melody, but is obscured using harmonic stasis, melodic colouring, and by varying textural and harmonic density. Responding to the minimalist photography of Bruce Percy*, Songs of Empty Landscapes* is a multi-movement work exploring the curves of tension and release that arise from combining noise, modal, cluster, and tonal elements. *Pilgrim* is a love letter to sound, and the expressive, sensuous qualities of tonality, with timbral and textural invention giving rise to the dramatic shape of the work. *Sunfall* aims to combine many of the above, to create a vivid orchestral tapestry diverse in colour, exuberant and dramatic in expression, while following an inner logic and exhibiting a high level of control over the harmony and form.

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Sunfall (2019-20) – for large orchestra

Submitted audio

Piano Concerto – *the sighing of the winds is softer than ever* . . . . . .12’26”

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Ripped Tapestry . . . . . .10’20”

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  at Barbican Hall, London (UK), 03.04.2022

1. Introduction

Upon hearing Richard Wagner's *Lohengrin*, Wassily Kandinsky wrote:

> I saw all my colors in my mind; they stood before my eyes. Wild, almost crazy lines were sketched in front of me.[1]

I recall a similar experience hearing Olivier Messiaen's *Turangalîla-Symphonie* for the first time in my early teens: splashes of blues, oranges, reds, greens, and yellows appeared in my mind. Jonathan W. Bernard ascribes Messiaen the ability to 'paint, as it were, in sound what is visible'.[2] Over the past years, I have begun my own search for a musical language that corresponds to the most colourful responses in my mind, by consciously embracing my synaesthesia. Through this I have gained a deeper understanding of how my synaesthesia works, and how it specifically manifests in colour-pitch and colour-harmony associations. This has resulted in a feeling of alignment between intuition and technique, and between what I wish to 'see' and what I wish to hear in a composition.

Tonal harmony, major and minor third intervals, individual triads, pitch centres and certain harmonic progressions induce some of the most consistent and clearest experiences of 'seeing' colour in my mind. The more complex a chord or harmony gets, the more faded the colour-associations become. For example, a dense cluster chord without a clear pitch centre or a grounding

[1] Wassily Kandinsky, 'Reminiscences', in *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art* ed. by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo, rev. edn (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994), p. 364.

[2] Jonathan W. Bernard, 'Messiaen's Synaesthesia: The Correspondence between Color and Sound Structure in His Music', *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 4 (1986), 41-68.

bass note results in very little, if any imagined colours. Thus, tonal harmony appeals to me, not purely due to its attractive sonic qualities, but it simply 'looks' better in my mind's eye.

It is difficult to interpret why this relationship between tonality and my synaesthesia exists. However, I am not alone: composer Michael Torke's synaesthesia responds only to major and minor triads, or a scale indicating a specific key signature.[3] This is reflected in the movement titles and keys (for example, 'Bright Blue Music' in D major) of his suite of orchestral works, *Color Music*.[4] It is also known that many others, such as Rimsky-Korsakov and Scriabin had strong associations between keys and colours.[5]

Due to my synaesthesia, I am often also inspired by extra-musical sources, especially photography and painting, like in *Songs of Empty Landscapes* and *Sunfall*, respectively. As will be shown, engaging with these external sources affect the structural and formal aspects of my music as well.

Yet, the most significant effect of synaesthesia on my music is that tonality has become a part of my musical syntax. However, my music is not tonal. Tonality is one part of my language, not *the* language. In the words of Hans Abrahamsen: 'It is like with painters - tonality is one colour'.[6]

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[3] Oliver Sacks, *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain, Revised & Expanded* (London: Picador, 2012), p. 182.

[4] Michael Torke, *Bright Blue Music for orchestra* (New York: Hendon Music Inc., a Boosey & Hawkes Company, 1996).

[5] Kenneth Peacock, 'Synesthetic Perception: Alexander Scriabin's Color Hearing', *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 2 (1986) 483-506.

[6] Bálint András Varga, *The Courage of Composers and the Tyranny of Taste: Reflections on New Music* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2017), p. 16.

1.1 'Atonal tonality'

The Oxford Companion to Music defines tonality as 'loyalty to a tonic, in other words to the key scheme of a composition'.[7] Atonality is defined as 'the absence of key'.[8] The above definition of tonality describes common practice period tonality, rule-based functional harmony, where each chord's function is dictated by the tonic and the key of a work. While fascinating, the history of tonality and atonality is outside the scope of this thesis, as are nuanced, detailed definitions. Furthermore, definitions remain debated. To give an interesting example, Noel Heath Taylor argues:

> if "atonality" is to mean a disrespect of denial of nature's tonal laws, then we are obliged to call all diatonic music "atonal", for not even its simplest chords possess the ratios of nature's vibrational scheme.[9]

However, tonality detached from the rules of functional harmony of the past, remains to many contemporary composers, including myself, a part of our music. Examples of works that deal with, and present tonality in their own way will be explored, providing context to my own approach.

A term I find useful when describing contemporary tonality, is 'atonal tonality', mentioned in passing by Rudolph Reti, in his book, *Tonality in Modern Music*.[10] It seems to imply the presence of tonal harmony in a work, in one form or another – be it a single major triad floating in space, a feeling of a tonic, a cadence, a passage of functional harmony, bitonality or polytonality,

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[7] Percy A. Scholes, ed. John Owen Ward, *The Oxford Companion to Music*, 10th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 1028.

[8] Ibid. p. 449.

[9] Noel Heath Taylor, 'The Schoenberg Concept', *Music & Letters*, 20 (1939), 183-188.

[10] Rudolph Reti, *Tonality in Modern Music* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 87.

or a melodic motif suggesting tonality – but free from any consistent system of rules. Michael D. Searby's notes on Ligeti's music echo this sentiment:

> triads are used as if they were a context-free atonal harmony, a sonority to be exploited in a new way without a sense of harmonic function or a sense of history.[11]

This also supports Abrahamsen's view that tonality can be one single colour. This way, when in conversation with other harmonic colours (such as cluster harmony), tonality can be used as a dramatic and harmonic tool as well (details below in *1.3 Five encounters: a dialogue with tonality*).

Exploring 'atonal tonality' begs the question: why not explore functional tonality, too? As seen in 'Lullaby', the fourth movement of *Songs of Empty Landscapes* (F# minor key) and *Pilgrim* (a minor harmonic centre and a reoccurring relative major chord), there are times when echoes of functional tonality are heard, sometimes louder than others. But even in these cases, tonality remains a colour, not the canvas. To achieve a soundworld and diverse formal designs that are rich and contrasting in terms of harmony, colour, and expression – and not dictated by chordal functions in relation to their tonic – I view tonality as something to have a dialogue with: a source of sonorities and colours, rather than as a system of writing music. Other concerns over functional tonality relate to questions of originality and an awareness of history and contemporary practice.

Nota bene: For clarity, when the term 'tonality' is used in this commentary, it should be understood as the multitude of approaches accommodated by the term 'atonal tonality' as described above, not functional tonality of the past.

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[11] Michael D. Searby, *Ligeti's Stylistic Crisis: Transformations in His Musical Style, 1974-1985* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2010), p. 24.

1.2 Five encounters: a dialogue with tonality

The five works of this portfolio are all, in one way or another, part of a continuing personal dialogue with tonality. My aim has been to investigate various ways to approach tonality as a composer today and map out its role within the harmonic timbral, dramatic and formal fabric of my music. This could also be formulated into the following question: 'In what specific ways can tonality be applied and engaged with, to create harmonic variety, colourful soundworlds, and dramatic and formal depth?'

a) Harmony

In the works of this portfolio, tonality is viewed as one harmonic colour, as part of a more varied syntax that also includes modality and cluster harmony. Modal harmony is especially useful in allowing 'melodic definition and harmonic direction without resorting to old-style tonality'.[12] Cluster harmony is used to increase tension and harmonic ambiguity.

The balance between different harmonic colours varies from seemingly equal (like modality and tonality in *Sunfall*) to one dominant colour (like tonality in *Pilgrim*). The frequency and perceptibility of tonal elements also change, within the works themselves and within the portfolio at large. Transitions from one harmonic colour to another vary from sudden (such as in *Songs of Empty Landscapes*) to smooth (such as in *Sunfall*). These are all variables I have tried to explore in my works and contribute to setting tonality in different musical contexts and landscapes. In addition, this ensures not only harmonic variety, but also diverse forms and livelier dramatic shapes.

[12] Paul Griffiths, *Modern Music and After,* 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2010), p. 371.

b) Colour

Several techniques to do with timbre and texture are used to maintain a contemporary approach to tonality. It is not my aim to disguise or re-invent tonality, but to introduce a level of novelty and peculiarity to the familiar sonorities. These techniques include microtonal colouring, extended instrumental sounds, manipulating harmonic rhythm, altering textural density, disruption, stasis, superimposition, and gestural attacks, in a manner evocative of expressionist painting.

c) Form and drama

Tonality plays a different formal and dramatic role in each work: in Piano Concerto, harmonic centres ('tonics') are used to design the structure while foreign pitches are mixed into harmonically stable contexts add drama; in *Ripped Tapestry* tonality is used to support a medieval melody, while being obscured by harmonic stasis, melodic colouring and increases and decreases in textural density; in *Songs of Empty Landscapes*, the tonal movements act as stark harmonic contrast to modal and noise-based movements, contributing to curves tension and release within the large-scale form; in *Pilgrim*, the sensuous and expressive qualities of tonality are explored, and coloured with timbral and textural invention, which in turn give rise to the dramatic shape of the work; *Sunfall* aims to combine some of the above elements, to create a rich and diverse large-scale work.

It's also worth noting that tonal elements carry with them a sound of familiarity, potentially resulting in more memorable and approachable passages which may aid some listeners in getting a grasp of the music. Listening experiences are highly subjective, so this remains speculative, yet it is something I consider when making formal and dramatic decisions. For example, the middle sections of both, *Songs of Empty landscape* ('Lullaby') and *Sunfall* (alto flute solo in b. 190-215), use tonality to signify the music reaching an important point within the narrative of the work.

Above all, my goal has been to create personal and exciting soundworlds, while remaining true to my synaesthesia, and more importantly, my musical intuition, both of which guide me towards a dialogue with tonality. This commentary aims to uncover and contextualise the techniques and tendencies that connect the five works.

2. A Note on Two Early Influences

Being Finnish, but having spent my childhood in Germany and Luxembourg, and years of study in the United-Kingdom, I have no immediate sense of national identity. In my experience as a composer, it has been liberating to feel less attached to any one culture or musical heritage. As will be evident in the commentary, my music is influenced by composers ranging from Bent Sørensen to Pascal Dusapin, and György Ligeti to Arvo Pärt.

Two early influences, however, point towards some belonging. James MacMillan, discovered while still in Luxembourg, sparked my interest in contemporary music and perhaps guided me towards the music scene of the United Kingdom. While Kaija Saariaho, discovered during the first year of my undergraduate studies in York, introduced me to the musical landscape of the country of my birth.

The influence of both composers has been fundamental in my development as a composer. Two works in specific must be mentioned, for they play a role in the musical contents of this portfolio, too: MacMillan's *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* and Saariaho's *Lichtbogen*.

Tonality, which in *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* is tied to MacMillan's use of religious chants (*Lux Aeterna*) and folksong influences (*The Cruel Mother)*, functions as part of a wider musical language that includes modality and thick cluster harmony.[1] MacMillan smoothly transitions from one to another, creating a fluctuating sonic tapestry of the various harmonic colours, and shows how tonality can be a memorable and highly expressive sonority (for example, towards the end in b. 345-374).[2]

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[1] Philip A. Cooke, *The Music of James MacMillan* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019), p. 49-54.

[2] James MacMillan, *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* (London: Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd., 1992), p. 88-94.

The music of Saariaho's *Lichtbogen* emerges from a single pitch F#, which remains a central pitch throughout the 20-minute work, either underpinning the harmony, or just as a drone as in the beginning. [3] Whether just a single pitch or a passage of denser texture and harmony, Saariaho conjures beautiful and iridescent timbres from the ensemble. Trills, string overpressure, glissandi, arpeggios, air sounds and ear-piercing melodies – and their electronic manipulation – result in thick textural and harmonic webs. The influence of Saariaho's work can be heard in my own explorations of timbre and texture as central elements of music, as well as the use of pitch centres in designing a work.

[3] Kaija Saariaho, *Lichtbogen for nine instruments and live electronics* (Helsinki: Edition Wilhelm Hansen, 1992).

3. Piano Concerto (2018)

The sighing of the winds is softer than ever is scored for solo piano and an ensemble of thirteen. The concerto borrows its title from the writings of the naturalist John Muir.[1] Although particularly relevant to the final movement, the evocative phrase also influenced other sections of the work, most notably the beginning of the concerto (b. 1-16) and the last section of the second movement (b. 97-143).

In this work my aim was to design the work using gravitational harmonic centres, or 'tonics', and to manipulate the harmonic landscape with pitch centres, foreign pitches, and gestural elements. In addition, the relationship between piano and ensemble changes in each movement. The first movement is primarily concerned with two types of material: the vertical, harmonic (and sustained) material embedded in the ensemble writing; and the linear, melodic material played by the piano. This reflects the traditional hierarchies of the concerto genre. It seemed only appropriate to respond to the historical weight of a concerto in this manner in the first movement. The second movement treats the piano and ensemble as one unified entity exploring common sonic ground, while the final movement sees the piano as the provider of harmony and melody, becoming a central timbre, as if performing solo.

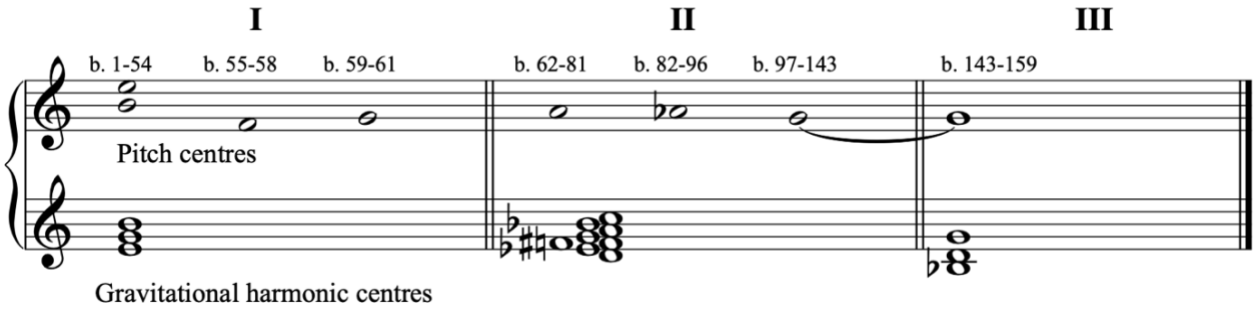
3.1 Harmonic and pitch centres

One of the legacies of functional harmony is the idea of a key and its tonic. A key and a tonic chord suggest a gravitational harmonic home, around which the work revolves. The idea of a central harmony is a useful tool in building and designing the harmonic and formal landscape of a work.

[1] John Muir, *Our National Parks* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1901), p. 413.

As illustrated in Ex. 1, in each of the three movements, a 'monoharmonic' approach dominates: the first movement is rooted in one triad, E minor; the second movement uses one mode throughout as the main harmonic colour; the third and final movement is loosely rooted in G minor. The final movement could also be considered 'monotimbral': one unchanging soundworld dominates.

Ex. 1 – Gravitational harmonic centres and pitch centres

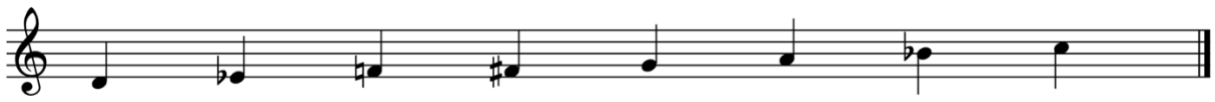


In addition to harmonic centres, the main pitch centres are also shown in Ex 1. In the first movement, the pitch centres F and G function as levers to move away from the gravitation pull of the E minor harmonic centre. They are used as 'dissonances' de-stabilising the harmonic landscape, bringing change to the music. The harmony in b. 1-54 of the first movement is rather static, but a clear dialogue between ensemble chorales and a toccata-like piano solo, as well as more gentle piano melodies, keep the music moving. These pitch centre shifts happen together with changes in texture and activity: upward woodwind scales and strummed *pizzicato* string chords mimicking the rhythmic vitality of the toccata-like figuration of the piano. The ensemble and piano have become texturally closer together for the first time in this movement.

The second movement is divided into three distinct sections (II^1 in b. 62-81, II^2 in b. 82-96, and II^3 in b. 97-143), held together using one mode, shown in Ex. 2. Using just one mode provides a framework within which to explore and generate material that seems connected at least on one level. This facilitates smooth transitions between sections and creates an overall harmonic

familiarity. This also provides an opportunity to further colour and distort the soundworld with foreign notes.

Ex. 2 – Mode used in the second movement



A useful technique in grounding the harmony in a non-tonal context, the pitch centres in the second movement act as structural scaffolding but also allow for different angles to approach the mode. The first section in b. 62-81 is based on a repeated, descending six-note scale derived from the main mode, with A as the centre, as confirmed by the piano's unison A^4 and A^6 in b. 62, b. 66, b. 70, b. 74 and b. 78. Before the scale is fully heard starting in b. 78, 'resolving' into a D in b. 80, it gets interrupted four times in each of the 3/4 bars that appear before. These interruptions are made more poignant and colourful by the introduction of the foreign notes E and B (for instance, the violins in b. 62-63), that do not belong to the main mode. (I consider the quartertones played by the flute, oboe, and clarinet more as colouring rather than alien pitches). The B^4 and E^5 also echo the piano solo in b. 17-30 in the first movement, in which the piano repeatedly hammers this interval of a fourth in the same register as it appears on the violins in b. 62-63.

Once the scale reaches the D^4 in b. 80, an expectation is created to return to the pitch class A, which has acted as the centre so far. However, the two-bar crescendo leading to the second section (b. 82) does not resolve back to an A but an A♭ bass played by the trombone, double bass, and piano, further disorientating the modal landscape with a foreign note. The pointillistic music of the first section is turned into a spectral outburst, with the piano hammering notes of the main mode (Ex. 3). In b. 88, we reach for the first time a section purely in the main mode. Again, as in

the first section, the ensemble is wrapping itself around the piano ostinato, searching for common ground.

The final section of the second movement (b. 97-143) centres around a G, reinforced by the constant tubular bell sonority, already subtly introduced in the background in b. 82. The shimmering, resonant piano and tubular bell duet is interrupted by low raspy and dry cluster chords in b. 115, b. 131 and b. 139. These short outbursts echo the climactic spectral outburst heard before. Tonality makes an appearance in the form of a G minor sonority in this section, which continues into the final movement.

As in the first movement, the shifts in pitch centres usher change in the music (be that harmonic, textural, temporal, or timbral), but rather than functioning as disruptors in a stable harmonic centre, they function more as structural elements, and gravitational points guiding exploration of the harmonic possibilities of the main mode.

The last movement sees the piano as the sole provider of harmony. The previous movements are organised in a manner where dialogue is created between contrasting sections. Each event has a consequence, which drives the music forward to the next section. The third movement has a form that is less concerned with a tension-and-release, or an event-and-consequence framework. The music just *is*.

Depicting 'the sighing of the winds', this movement employs wind-like sounds created by blowing through the trombone without a mouthpiece, flute whistle-tones and the use of an ocean drum. The repetition boxes in the upper strings result in an aleatoric texture, in this case imitating the sound of rain or clacking of beach pebbles. The music is rooted in an unchanging harmonic landscape reinforced by the low piano chords. These two chords, together with the very lowest notes A and B♭, outline a Gm-sus2 chord. The melody and harmony indicate a tonality of G minor.

However, the soundworld and tempo remain unchanged, contributing to a sense of stasis, a stark contrast to the previous movement. B. 152-153 sees a disturbance in the melodic line with the introduction of the foreign pitches B^4 and $C\#^5$. These two pitches signal the beginning of a slow disintegration of the musical landscape, ending in silence.

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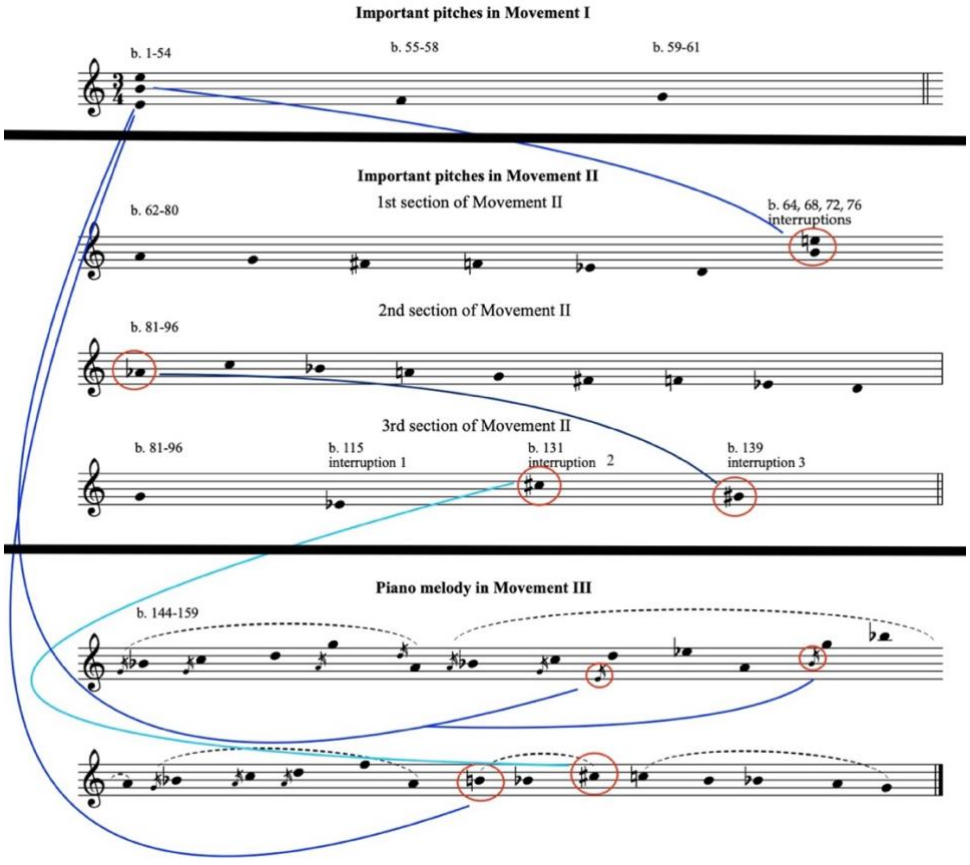
3.2 Pitch-content connections

Ex. 4 maps the pitch-content connections within the work with blue lines, to give an idea how foreign notes in each movement have been chosen. For example, E and B are the prominent pitch classes in the first movement. These can be heard again as foreign notes in the first section of the second movement and in the melody of the third movement. Likewise, the C# heard in b. 131 is the last foreign pitch class of the third movement.

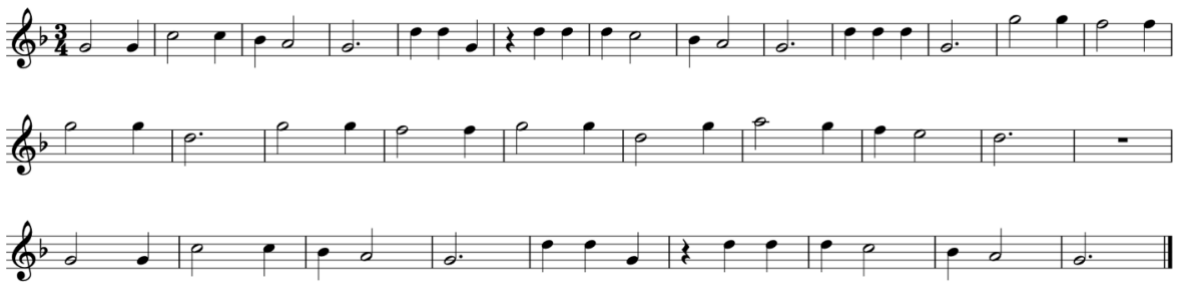
Ex. 3 – Pitch-content connections in Piano Concerto



4. *Ripped Tapestry* (2018-19)

Ripped Tapestry is a five-movement compositional reflection upon the well-known French medieval secular song *l'Homme armé* (Ex. 1).

Ex. 1 – *L'Homme armé* melody



The title refers to the concept behind my piece: an imaginary tapestry – depicting an armed man – ripped and destroyed, resulting in an abstracted version of the original. In my work the melody – the cantus firmus – proceeds from audible to nearly inaudible as if disintegrating, as it traverses through the movements of the work. Each movement lasts approximately two minutes with no pauses between the movements to maintain continuity and momentum. Considering the number of masses based on the theme of *l'Homme armé* (such as those by Josquin des Prez and Cristóbal de Morales) and that the Ordinary of the Catholic Mass contains five prayers (*Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus,* and *Agnus Dei*), the five-movement structure of my work seemed appropriate.[1]

4.1 Formal components and connections

Table 1 outlines the main formal elements including tempo, presence of the cantus firmus, overall dynamic levels, pitch centres and instrumentation of each movement. The table illustrates

[1] Percy A. Scholes, ed. John Owen Ward, *The Oxford Companion to Music*, 10th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 604.

similarities between the second and fourth movement (slow tempo, quiet dynamics, and lighter instrumentation), as well as similarities between the third and fifth movement (faster tempo and loud dynamics). The first and fifth movement create a dramatic arc as the only movements with the full orchestra playing.

Table 1 – Formal outline

Movements	**I** (b. 1-34)	**II** (b. 35-54)	**III** (b. 55-97)	**IV** (b. 98-127)	**V** (b. 128-175)
Tempi	♩ = 46	♩ = 46	III[1] - ♩ = 88 III[2] - ♩ = 88 III[3] - ♩ = 72	♩ = 46	♩ = 76 Coda ♩ = 60
Cantus firmus	Clearly stated by first violins	Abstracted, but audible in hocketing clarinet duet	Interspersed within the texture, partially present in timpani	Melodic contour: perfect fourth up, tone down	Traces in the top voice of first violins
Dynamic levels	***ppp - fff***	***ppp - ff***	***ff - fff***	***ppp - p***	***ff - fff***
Pitch centres	G	G	III[1] - B♭ III[2] - B♮ III[3] - C#	E	C
Instrumentation	Full orchestra	Solo violin, celli duo, clarinet duo, violas	III[1] - bassoon, oboes III[2] - woodwind, brass, basses III[3] - bassoons, brass, timpani, full strings	Woodwind, brass, celli quartet	Full orchestra

These connections serve to achieve coherence on a dramatic and formal level. The contrasting use of instrumental groups aims to achieve a sonic journey through the orchestra. The last movement features three elements which link back to the opening, completing the formal arc of the piece. First, it employs the full orchestra. Second, the natural horns that appeared in the first movement are brought back but unmuted, and with a harmonic function rather than a melodic one.

Third, the repeating low C in the double basses acts as a cadential nod to the pitch centre of G in the first movement.

4.2 Old melody, new harmony

Given that I had a set melody to work with, I consciously avoided treating the piece as a set of variations or arrangements. I also avoided the approach taken for example by Karl Jenkins in his work *The Armed Man*, in which the medieval tune is sung in its original form, accompanied by light orchestration.[2] This, to me, seemed an insufficient way to deal with the theme. My aim was to weave the cantus firmus into my own musical language and to find different ways to creatively engage with it, while maintaining a coherent musical narrative – the fading of the cantus firmus.

The challenge in using an old melody in a new harmonic setting was to write in a language that gives room for the melody to be heard and recognized, but unfamiliar enough to be heard as more than an orchestration. The way I approached this challenge was to use tonality, but obfuscate it with harmonic stasis, melodic colouring, and by varying textural and harmonic densities. Given that the minor third is a significant interval in all my works, I found the Dorian mode of *l'Homme armé* to suit my musical language well.

4.3 Influence of Ligeti's *Violin Concerto*

Though examples of works using *l'Homme armé* are numerous, the work that proved most influential during the writing of *Ripped Tapestry* was unrelated to the theme: György Ligeti's Violin Concerto. The sound of the just intonation of natural horns, juxtaposed against equal

[2] Karl Jenkins, *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace,* full orchestra version (London: Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd., 2003), p. 1-15.

temperament in b. 12-22 and b. 27-30 is inspired by Ligeti. The natural horn has already featured in my Piano Concerto (second movement in b. 82-87) but here the horns are used in a more melodic manner, like in the second and third movements of Ligeti's concerto.[3] The violin solo of the second movement of *Ripped Tapestry* imitates a concerto soloist's role, and is modelled on Ligeti's accentuated and jagged violin writing that is especially prominent in the last movement of his concerto.[4]

The final movement of *Ripped Tapestry*, though more explosive in character, shares similarities with the third movement ('Intermezzo') of Ligeti's concerto: the lengths of the movements are approximately the same; the cascading scales of the string section intensify; and the woodwind and brass join, building up to a loud ending.[5] In general, Ligeti's 'Intermezzo' represented the kind of short, self-contained movement I was especially keen to explore in my work.

4.4 Harmonic stasis

Harmonic stasis is mainly applied in movement I (b. 1-34) and movement IV (b. 98-127) of *Ripped Tapestry*. The cantus firmus is most audible in the first movement, played by the first violins, slowed down significantly. Providing another melodic layer on top of the violins, the just intonation of the muted horns adds colour to the harmony. The purpose of using the full *l'Homme armé* melody in this movement was to acquaint the listener with the lifeblood of the piece. The timpani echoes the rhythm of the first violins, but in rhythmic diminution, as if beating the wrong time, foreshadowing the disintegration of the cantus firmus that will continue throughout the work.

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[3] György Ligeti, *Konzert für Violine und Orchester* (Mainz: Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, 2002), p. 26-58.

[4] Ligeti, p. 71-95.

[5] Ibid. p. 38-58.

In the fourth movement, the woodwind and brass pair up (for instance, first clarinet with flute, second clarinet with second bassoon, and first bassoon with the horns) and move in a heterophonic manner. This creates an ambiguous instrumental colour, while the quiet celli quartet use *glissandi* in the background to create an unstable, stretched sounding soundworld. Though the cantus firmus is not audible in its entirety anymore, an ascending perfect fourth and a descending tone, the first two intervals of *l'Homme armé*, remain a part of the texture.

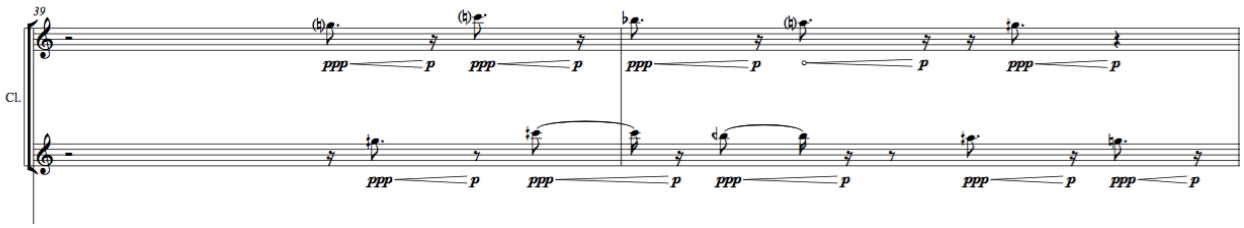
In the first movement, underneath the melody in the first violins, the timpani and double basses repeat the pitch class of G, creating an overall feeling of a G minor. The fourth movement is mostly rooted in the scale of A minor, apart from the E♭ appearing in b. 116 and the F# and B♭ thereafter. Both movements are rooted in one tonal harmonic centre. The tonal sound of these harmonies aligns with the melody, especially in the first movement, but the harmonic stasis and timbral variation places the melody into a different context. In terms of form, the stasis in these movements causes anticipation and contrast within the work at large, especially when the final, most dramatic movement is preceded by the slow fourth.

4.5 Melodic colouring

Melodic colouring occurs in the first movement to a degree (for example the *sul ponticello* second violin *glissandi* echoing the cantus firmus in b. 1-22) but is explored in a bolder manner in the second movement (b. 35-54).

The hocketing clarinet duo, entering in b. 39 (Ex. 2 below), state the original tune, abstracted using quartertones. The duo is reminiscent of the strange woodwind sounds created by the ocarinas and swanee whistles in Ligeti's second and fourth movements, but the idea owes more to Enno Poppe's orchestral work, *Keilschrift*.

Ex. 2 – Hocketing clarinet duo (b. 39-40)



In his work, Poppe continuously re-invents a short melodic fragment, based on a minor third. This interval gives the fragment a familiar, recognizable character (like that of *l'Homme armé*), yet the constant saturation of the music with microtones and orchestrational variety makes the work a highly engaging. Poppe masterfully passes the fragment around the orchestra in different combinations of timbres, intensities, and harmonies, presenting it under various lights.[6]

While I do not go to similar lengths as Poppe does in terms of re-inventing the same material, the clarinet duo in *Ripped Tapestry* is an exercise in similar melodic colouring. Due to its alien sonority, it became a memorable sonic motif in the second movement. Poppe's timbral exploration remains an influence on my later work *Pilgrim.*

In terms of harmony the second movement continues to be grounded in a G minor harmonic centre that was established in the first movement. The celli duo accompanies the violin solo with six pitches (G^3, A^3, $B♭^3$, C^4, D^4 and E^4, all part of the original Dorian mode of the tune) with emphasis on perfect fourths and fifths, which are characteristic of medieval organa.[7] Playing *sul*

[6] Enno Poppe, *Keilschrift für orchester* (Munich: G. Ricordi & Co., 2007).

[7] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Organum', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1998) – https://www.britannica.com/art/organum – accessed 01 December 2019.

tasto without vibrato, the celli imitate the sound of a hurdy-gurdy drone, also in reference to the medieval theme.[8]

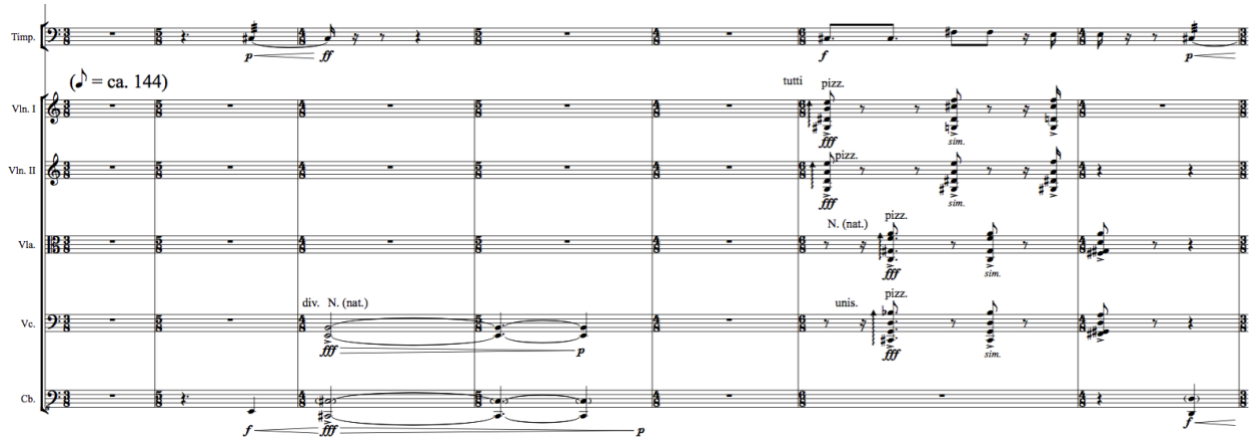
4.6 Textural and harmonic density

Textural density could loosely be defined as the overall number of instruments playing, the level of instrumental activity, harmonic or intervallic density, the number of melodic and gestural layers, and dynamic changes. Altering the density of a given passage is a tool for controlling the dramatic shape of a work. Table 1 above shows some of the textural, dynamic and orchestrational decisions that make up the dramatic shape of *Ripped Tapestry.* For example, the first and fifth movements are the only movements with the full orchestra playing, creating an arc, and signifying their importance as the beginning and ending.

In the first movement, textural density is increased to add momentum and sonic interest to the static harmonic landscape by the polyphonic woodwind gestures in b. 23-30. The beginning of the third movement (b. 55-97) echoes this thick woodwind texture. B. 81 in the third movement marks a significant moment in the work, as the trumpets enter unmuted and at ***ff*** for the first time, followed by the outburst of loud open horns in b. 84. The resulting texture is dense and dark, and the tessitura is low in comparison to that of the previous two movements. In b. 87, the texture is punctuated by strummed *pizzicato* chords and timpani beats further increasing the sonic activity. The timpani, shown in Ex. 3, attempts to state the tune of *l'Homme armé* but fails to complete it.

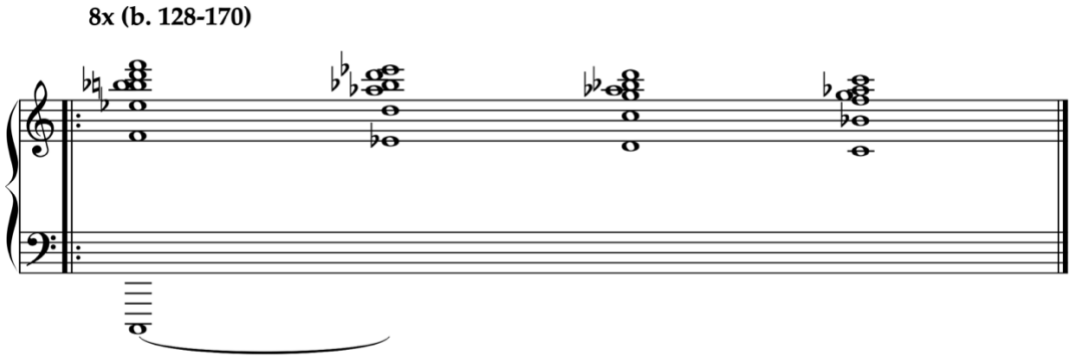
[8] Bozhidar Abrashev and Vladimir Gadjev, *The World Atlas of Musical Instruments* (Potsdam: H.F.Ullmann Publishing GmbH, 2000), p. 153.

Ex. 3 – Timpani as a melodic voice (b. 82-88)



The final movement (b. 128-175) is both, texturally and harmonically dense. Only a part of the melody of *l'Homme armé* is audible in the descending top voice of the first violins (F^6, $E♭^6$, D^6 and C^6) and the celli underneath. The reference is faded, as if the tapestry had been ripped, leaving barely any trace of what was depicted before. Simplified and illustrated in Ex. 4, this movement is built of a repeating harmonic progression, like a chaconne, over a grounding C bass.

Ex. 4 – Harmonic progression before Coda



These chords are almost purely based on C melodic minor (except for the B♮), though the voicing – the major and minor seventh intervals between the lower two voices, underpinning the cluster chords of the upper voices (as seen in Ex. 4) – produces a distinct harmonic colour that seems neither consonant nor dissonant. This is an example of applying tonal harmony (i.e., C minor

sonority), in a non-tonal context. The textural and harmonic density is compounded by the woodwind trills and brass chords, with the first horn playing in just intonation furthermore colouring the soundworld.

The music begins to gradually transform with each repetition of the chord progression: string entries become more staggered, and ornamentation is introduced; the woodwind trills become longer; and brass and woodwind begin to join in with the faster material of the strings. The texture is at its densest, as is the harmony, intensifying the final moments of the whole work. Led by the brass in b. 171, the coda brings the piece to an end.

5. *Songs of Empty Landscapes* (2020)

In *Songs of Empty Landscapes* my aim was to create multi-movement work exploring the curves of tension and release that arise from combining noise, modal, cluster, and tonal elements. I call these sonic and harmonic colours. Combining tonality with non-tonal harmony and noise results not only a diverse sonic journey, but also in interesting ways to control the dramatic shape of a work. In the case of *Songs of Empty Landscapes*, the two movements with most tonality (IV and VI) function as the antidotes to the anticipation, tension, and harmonic ambiguity present in the other movements. Writing about Claude Debussy, Arnold Whittall observes that a well-balanced relationship between 'chromaticism and diatonicism brings tension and dynamism' to his music.[1] It is this tension and dynamism I was searching for.

The piece is constructed of seven musical 'panels' in which drama emerges from sudden eruptions of colour, the introduction of foreign notes to harmonically stable contexts, the opposition of textural density and sparseness, as well as timbral invention. On a larger scale, the dramatic shape of the work is created through the juxtaposing of the distinct harmonic and sonic colours of each movement, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 – Dominant harmonic colours of each movement in *Songs of Empty Landscapes*

Movement	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Sonic/ Harmonic colour	Noise	Modal	Modal with noise elements	Functional tonality	Clusters, with noise elements	Tonal, not functional	Noise
Atmosphere	Anticipation	Brief release turning into anticipation	Anticipation and increasing tension	Release, calm	Disruption, tension, anticipation	Release	Anticipation

[1] Arnold Whittall, 'Tonality and the Whole-Tone Scale in the Music of Debussy', *The Music* Review, 36 (1975), 261-271.

Songs of Empty Landscapes was inspired by Scottish artist Bruce Percy's minimalist landscape photography.[2] The simplicity and immediacy of Percy's snowy landscapes also reminded me of Hans Abrahamsen's *Schnee*, which is divided into several short self-contained movements, and thus worked as a musical model for the 'panel' format I wanted to explore. Furthermore, *Schnee* combines noise (for instance, scratchy ***ff*** string harmonics in b. 19-30 of Canon 1a and the 'guiro' effect on the keyboard in the beginning of Canon 1b), modal and cluster (for example, Canons 3a and 4b), and tonal (for example, the alto flute D minor arpeggio beginning the Canon 2b, and the various major and minor piano sonorities in Canons 1a and 5a) elements in a beautiful way, resulting in a rich and expressive soundworld.[3]

Writing about Jean Sibelius' Sixth Symphony, Tim Howell identifies its economy of expression, 'which by being especially acute amounts to a sense of understatement'.[4] In my opinion, this also seems to be an apt description of Percy's art – and Abrahamsen's *Schnee* - and thus formed an aesthetic starting point for my work.

5.1 Noise (Movements I and VII)

The 'Prelude' and 'Postlude' are both the main noise element movements. Neither has clear harmony and the melodies feel absent of direction. The white noise, air sounds and pitchless *pizzicati* – in other words, noise elements – create anticipation and tension. The forms of these movements are akin to that of the last movement of the Piano Concerto (the music just *is*). With minimal vertical movement and no harmonic or melodic direction, the music seems still, framed in time, just as a photograph on a gallery wall.

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[2] Bruce Percy, *Bruce Percy: Colourchrome* – https://brucepercy.co.uk/ – accessed on 3 January 2023.

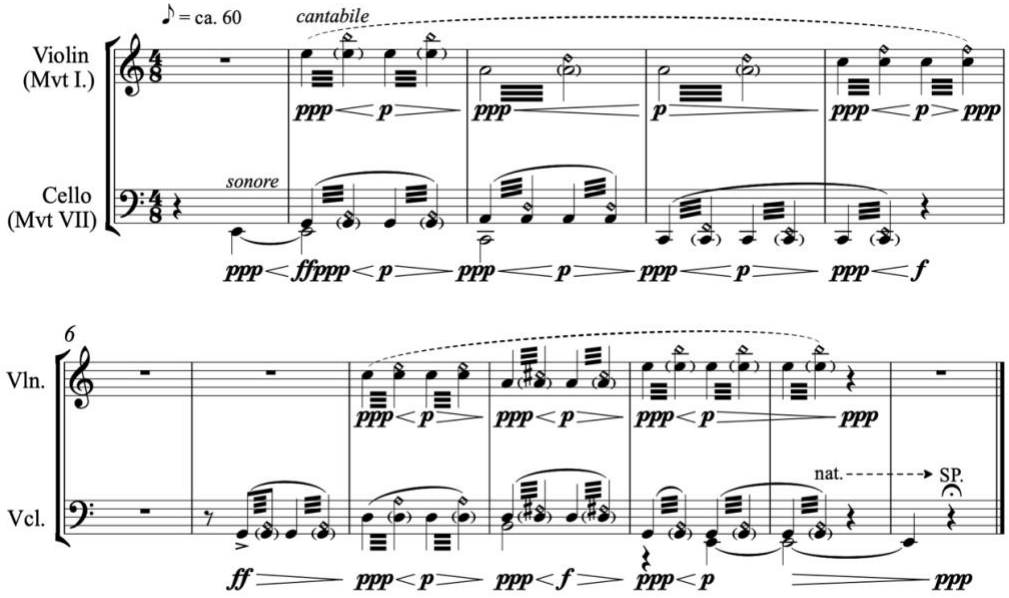
[3] Hans Abrahamsen, Schnee: Ten Canons for Nine Instruments (Copenhagen: Edition Wilhelm Hansen, 2008).

[4] Tim Howell, *After Sibelius: Studies in Finnish Music* (New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 11.

The lack of harmony and minimal material used, makes for an unusual beginning (at least when compared to my other works): there is no harmonic or motivic introduction, but instead it gives a clue of the aesthetic of the work. By introducing a minor third interval instantly after this movement in 'Haze', my aim was to create a moment of resolution, foreshadowing the larger scale curves of tension and release that arise from juxtaposing different harmonic and sonic colours of each movement.

The last movement ('Postlude') is a more dynamic version of the first movement. Ex. 1 shows the violin melody and cello melody superimposed, to illustrate their almost identical length and timbral quality. Five movements apart, these two melodies, and the noise-based soundworlds, draw an arc over the piece.

Ex. 1 – Violin melody (Mvt I) superimposed with cello melody (Mvt VII)

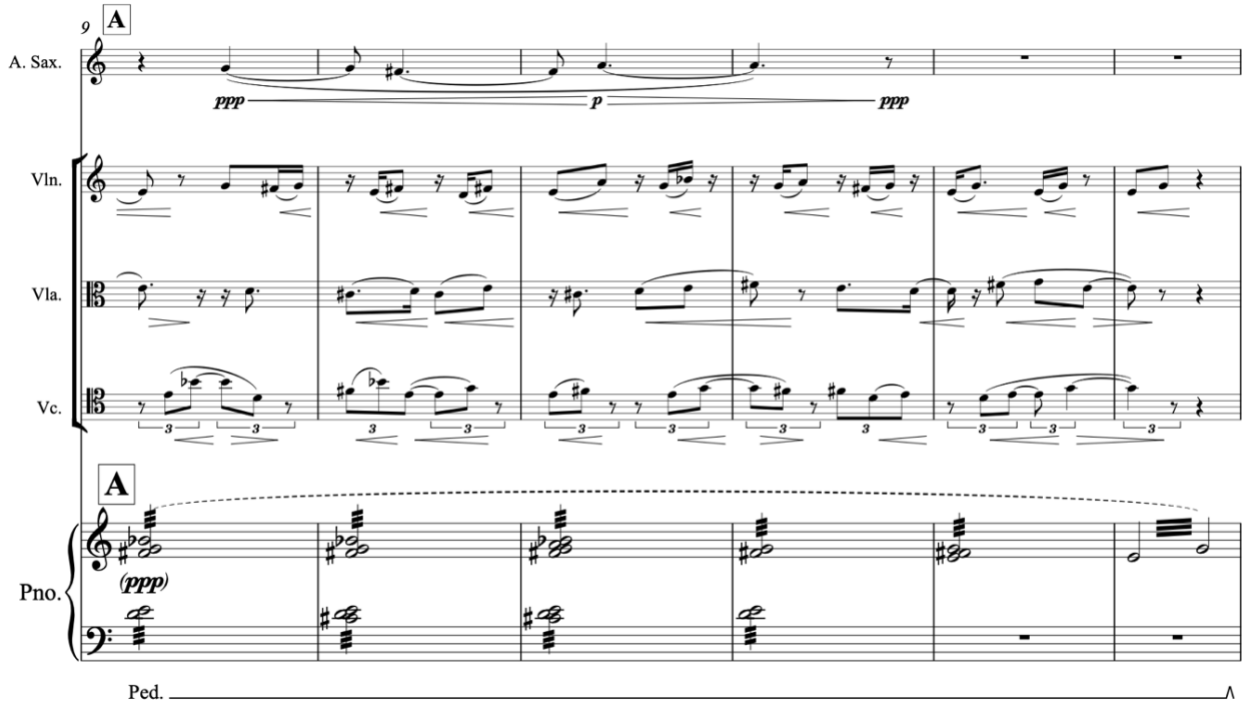


5.2 Modal/cluster harmony (Movements II, III and V)

As the title 'Haze' suggests, the second movement seeks to evoke a misty musical landscape, in which timbral distinctions are somewhat blurred. The moment of resolution mentioned above soon

turns into anticipation as the harmony becomes fixed in the same modal harmonic centre (unfolding in the piano *bisbigliando*). Ex. 2 shows how the saxophone and strings only play notes outlined by the *bisbigliando* chord (in the same tessitura) and the piano creates a continuous resonance to obscure timbral distinctions between the instruments.

Ex. 2 – Saxophone and strings play notes outlined by piano *bisbigliando* (b. 9-14 of 'Haze')



A C♮ appears for the first time in b. 15 on the saxophone and right hand of the piano, suggesting harmony built from a scale only one note off (D♮ instead of a D#) the octatonic scale in E. This scale, especially with the D♮, allows for a consonant harmonic world that is ambiguous enough to explore major and minor tenth sonorities from b. 15 onwards, without sounding tonal and possibly detracting from the impact of the tonality used in 'Lullaby'. The saxophone melody, also entering in b. 15, along with the piano dyads played ***ff*** create the drama in this movement. The other aspect of drama occurs in b. 27 (repeated in b. 30) when a foreign note – F^5 – disrupts the fixed harmony. This F is also the highest note of the movement.

These resonant dyads that disrupt and colour the otherwise uniform soundworld, are inspired by Jackson Pollock's 1952 work *Blue Poles*. In Pollock's painting, eight dark blue poles are set against a multicoloured background of splashes of oil, aluminium, and enamel paint on the canvas.[5] The poles provide depth and clarity, and the observer's attention is drawn to them, yet they are part of the overall texture. In 'Haze' I hoped for an equivalent effect.

While the third movement ('Snowriver') begins with a soundworld seemingly as still as the second movement, the structure and form are different. Table 2 illustrates the differences in formal design amongst the first three movements.

Table 2 – Formal designs of the first three movements

I. 'Prelude'	**A** (b. 1-12)			
II. 'Haze'	**A** (b. 1-14)	**B** (b. 15-41)	**A²** (b. 42-49)	
III. 'Snowriver'	**A** (b. 1-17)	**B** (b. 18-23)	**C** (b. 24-33)	**B²** (b. 34-39)

Section A of 'Snowriver' (b. 1-17) continues with the theme of timbral fusion explored in 'Haze', as well as some noise elements: the saxophone tongue slaps and the right hand of the piano mimicking the strings' *jeté* technique; and the left hand of the piano harmonising the heterophonic duet of the cello and saxophone. To escape this rigid soundworld, as if a river breaking free from ice, the strings aided by a faster tempo, surge forward with a contrasting material in b. 18 (section B). This change in texture and intensity foreshadows the change in the overall character of the work when 'Earth-Red' is reached, but more importantly it enables further new material to emerge: a solo saxophone melody (b. 24, section C). So far in the work, the saxophone has been bound melodically and timbrally to the other instruments but is finally emancipated, displaying

[5] Sarina Noordhuis-Fairfax, 'Blue Poles: How Pollock Created a Masterpiece', *National Gallery of Australia* – https://bluepoles.nga.gov.au/artwork/blue-poles/ – accessed on 15 March 2023.

characteristics of a concertante part with rhythmic independence and ornamentation. It seemed only natural to give this solo to the saxophone to address its stand-alone reedy timbre within the ensemble. In b. 27 the cello, and in b. 30 the viola enter with the first fragments of counterpoint in the piece. The instruments have become more independent, to contrast the unified soundworld of second movement.

The pitch class C# is present in the strings in each of the nine bars of section C, to foreshadow its importance in the next movement, 'Lullaby'. This C# is foreign to the octatonic scale outlined by the saxophone solo, adding a level of harmonic instability and maintaining the momentum brought by the previous section. An important formal aspect in this movement is the disappearance of the piano in b. 18. This is to ensure some textural breathing space within the movement, but also in the whole work, especially as 'Lullaby' involves piano as a constant.

Picking up from the last note (B^3) of 'Lullaby', explored below, the fifth movement ('Earth-Red') launches into cluster-chords played by the strings and saxophone mostly in rhythmic unison. Fastest movement in terms of tempo and harmonic rhythm, 'Earth-Red' marks a character change in the work.

As can be seen, movements II, III and V are all more complex in terms of material and harmonic activity, as well as density. Tension and ambiguity are increased by fluctuating from modal to cluster harmony and the addition of foreign-sounding pitches to harmonically stable passages. This generates a degree of contrast within the movements, but also within the larger scale form, when in dialogue with the tonal movements IV and VI.

It is worth noting that the function of the piano has also changed from a harmonic and melodic instrument to a more percussive voice in 'Earth-Red'. The piano is only playing a low C at four-bar intervals from b. 31 onwards, imitating a gong. In 'Grey-Blue', the piano occasionally

highlights the melodic lines of the other instruments, like crotales. In the last movement both extremities of the piano are used for the first time in the piece to mark its full transformation from a conventional provider of harmony to an abstract entity of percussive power.

5.3 Tonal harmony (Movements IV and VI)

The third movement of Bent Sørensen's piano trio *Phantasmagoria* was a significant influence on the soundworlds of 'Lullaby' and 'Grey-Blue'. In Sørensen's work, the piano provides harmony and a melody, that is then layered with melodic fragments and extended techniques such as extremely wide *vibrato* and *sul ponticello* by the violin and cello.[6] Sørensen's language sounds familiar, yet new. Jami Kianto, in his thesis about the use of tonality in Sørensen's music, coins an apt term for his technique: blurring tonality (*hämärrytetty tonaalisuus*).[7] Tonal sounding passages are coloured with timbral and textural invention. 'Rhythm, articulation and modern playing techniques' set tonal harmony into a new context, and 'familiar gestures are often hidden in layers of texture and harmony'.[8]

In 'Lullaby' and 'Grey-Blue' I set out to explore a language that is expressive and familiar, inspired by this technique. 'Lullaby' is the closest I have come to using functional tonality in the works of this portfolio. The tonic is F# minor, reinforced by the five other triads that appear: A major (relative major of F#m), Bm (chord IV), C#m (V), D (VI), and E (VII). A tonal framework evokes a sense of familiarity and immediacy, in keeping with the aesthetic of Percy's work, and

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[6] Bent Sørenesen, *Phantasmagoria: for Violin, Violoncello, and Piano* (Copenhagen: Edition Wilhelm Hansen, 2007), p. 19-24.

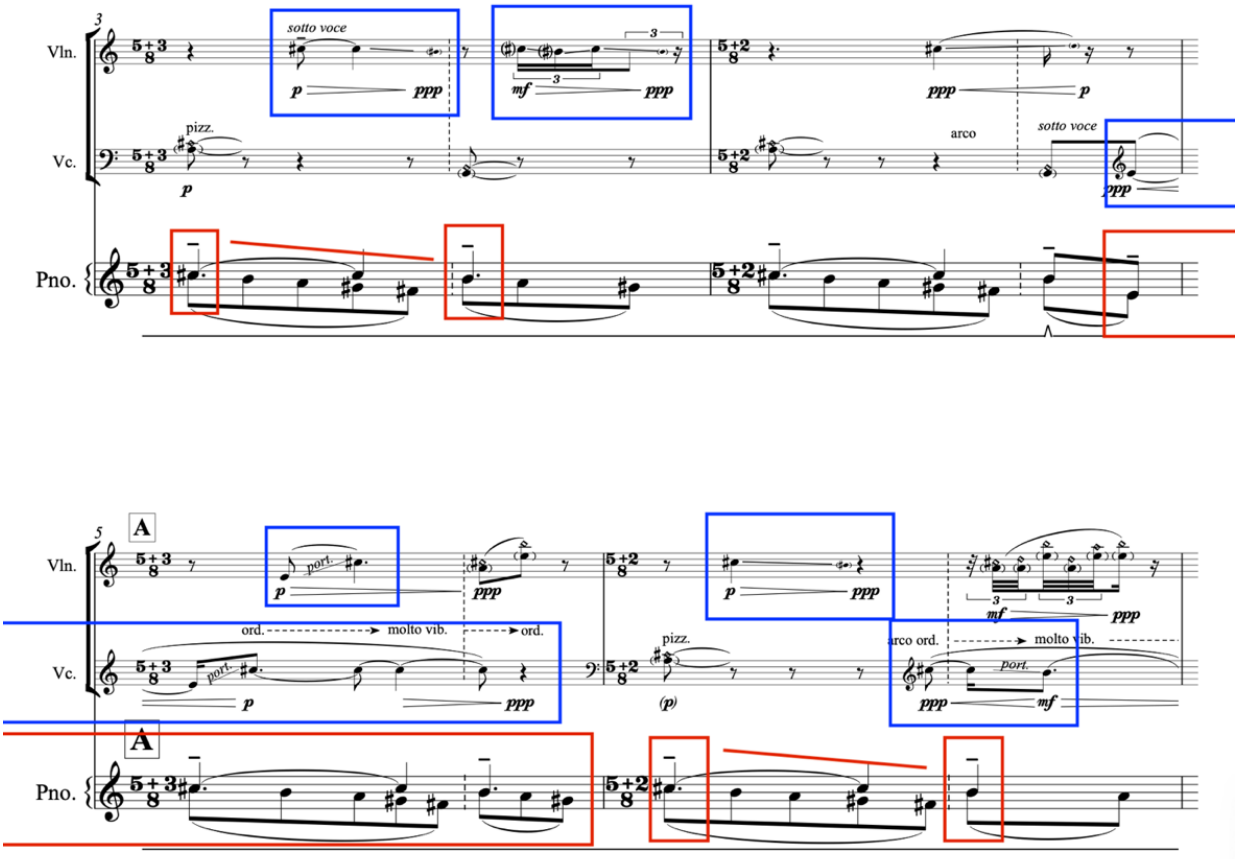
[7] Jami Kianto, trans. author, 'Blurred Tonality in Bent Sørensen's Music: A Study on the Boundaries between Tonality and Atonality' (unpublished bachelor's thesis, Tampere University of Applied Sciences, 2016), p. 3.

[8] Ibid. p. 40.

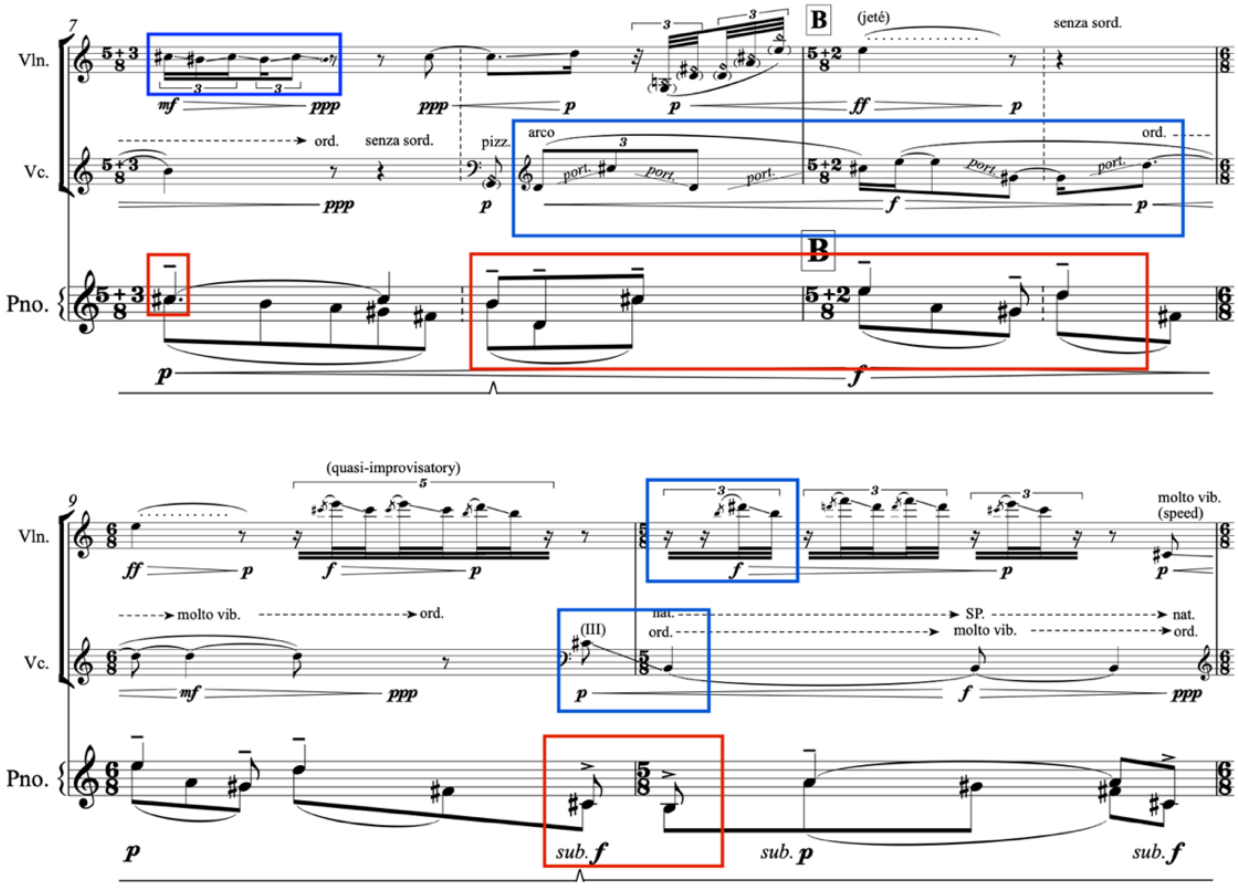
provides a simple canvas against which to paint and recycle melodic and abstract gestures, and fragmented material.

Ex. 3 below shows the relationship of the piano, violin, and cello in 'Lullaby', inspired by Sørensen's way of having the violin and cello echo, extend, and abstract the melodic material introduced by the piano.

Ex. 3 – Relationship of melodic material between the piano, violin and cello (b. 3-10 of 'Lullaby')



(Ex. 3 continued)



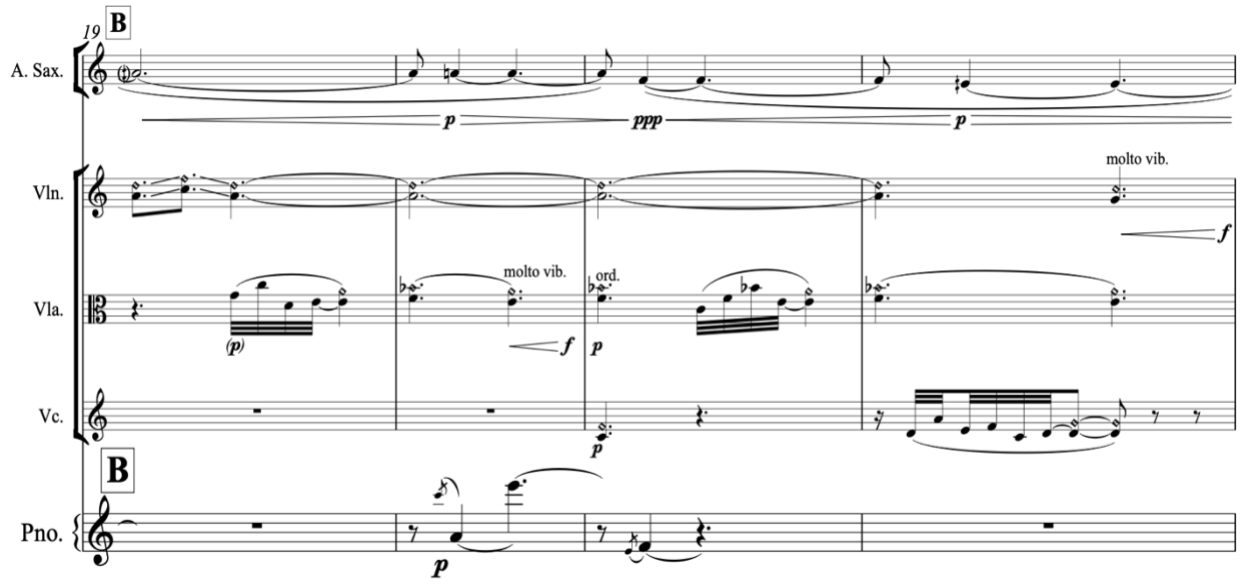
An additional layer emerges in b. 9-12: sounds of a seagull on the violin, an idea taken from a brief violin trio of bird-sounds from Maurice Ravel's 'Petit Poucet' from the *Mother Goose Suite* (b. 51-54).[9] At b. 12 of 'Lullaby', the violin joins the cello with seagull *glissandi*. Though abstract, these bird-like gestures remind us of the theme of natural landscapes, explored in Percy's work.

Though it was more Howell's remarks about Sibelius that inspired *Songs of Empty Landscapes*, a deliberate echo of the Sixth Symphony can be heard in the beginning ten bars of 'Grey-Blue' which uses the same notes of the D Dorian scale (first, second, third, fourth, fifth and

[9] Maurice Ravel, *Four Orchestral Works* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1989), p. 97.

seventh degrees) that appear in the four first bars of the Sibelius symphony.[10] 'Grey-blue' continues on the path set out in 'Lullaby'. For example, as shown in Ex. 4 below, there is a distinct D minor tonality in b. 19-20, changing to F major in b. 21, and back to D minor in b. 22. The harmony is simple, but coloured with quartertones in the alto saxophone, bell-like gestures on the piano, *molto vibrato* string harmonics, and fleeting melodic fragments. The players are also whistling, adding yet another layer, and thus introducing tonality in a new context.

Ex. 4 – Harmony and colouring in b. 19-22 of 'Grey-Blue'



5.4 Formal simplicity

For me, there are two ways in which the piece can be viewed to have an arch-like form. The first suggestion of such form is the approximate durations of the movements, seen in Table 3 (in minutes). Though subtle, this durational scheme contributes to symmetry and formal simplicity.

[10] Jean Sibelius, *Symphony No. 6, Op. 104,* rev. edn (Copenhagen: Edition Wilhelm Hansen, 1981) p. 3.

Table 3 – Arch-like durational scheme of *Songs of Empty Landscapes*

Movement	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Duration	1’	2’	3’	4’	3’	2’	1’

I also perceive a synaesthetic colour scheme that unfolds. As shown in Table 4, the more abstract and less harmonically grounded ‘Prelude’ and ‘Postlude’ do not spark colour association in my mind. However, ‘Haze’, for the prominence of the note E, evokes mostly yellow. ‘Snowriver’ is more complex and seems to result in white, grey, and blue. ‘Lullaby’, as the central and most tonal movement evokes several clearly felt colours. The next movement is dissonant and complex again, resulting in brown and concluding with red (‘Earth-Red’), brought on by the hammering low C. The music cools down back to ‘Grey-blue’ and turns colourless to finish.

Table 4 – Dominant colours of each movement in *Songs of Empty Landscapes*

Movement	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Colours	colourless	yellow	white, grey blue	black, blue yellow green purple	brown red	grey blue	colourless

The ‘panel’ format and the symmetries detailed above have proven a fruitful starting point to combining and juxtaposing the various harmonic and sonic colours within one work, while maintaining a formal simplicity. For contrast, in my one-movement orchestral work, *Sunfall*, I explore these harmonic and sonic colours in a larger-scale context and within a more fluid, complex form.

6. *Pilgrim* (2020)

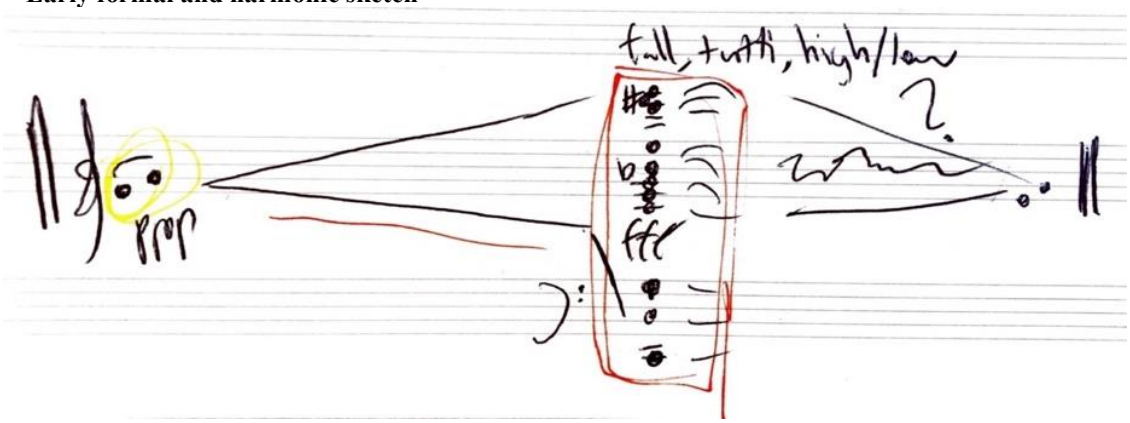
So far, tonality has been explored as part of a more varied harmonic palette. In *Pilgrim* I wanted tonality to be the main harmonic colour. The work is a love letter to sound and the expressive, sensuous qualities of tonality. The spectral echoes in the work, and the preoccupation with timbre and texture, are an homage to the music *Pilgrim* was inspired by, but also another approach to the challenge of using tonality in a new and engaging way. The harmonic series also holds within it a major chord sonority, which makes it very compatible with the tonal harmony I am using in *Pilgrim*.

Gérard Grisey writes in his article 'Did You Say Spectral?', about having a 'more "ecological" approach to timbres, noises and intervals', 'breaking out from the tempered system', and 'establishing new scales and melodic re-invention'.[1] While the influence of these ideas is also traceable in some of my other works (for example the use of noise, microtonality, and a focus on timbre in *Songs of Empty Landscapes* and *Ripped Tapestry*), the soundworld of *Pilgrim* aligns most with Grisey's spectral ideas. It must be noted however, that in this work the spectral undertones are more the result of my listening and a general curiosity towards colourful timbres, rather than actively engaging with the technical and methodical ideas of the spectral school.

The work is based on E minor as the gravitational centre (enforced by the presence of E and G in nearly every single bar) and a reoccurring harmonic motif, a move from E to C major. The origin of this harmonic motif lies in an early sketch of the piece. Ex. 1 below shows a rough harmonic and formal plan of the music. This early sketch provided the beginning material (E^4 and G^4) and the climax to aim towards.

[1] Gérard Grisey, trans. Joshua Fineberg, 'Did you say spectral?', *Contemporary Music Review,*19 (2000), 1-3.

Ex. 1 – Early formal and harmonic sketch



My aim was to remain loyal to this tonal sonority, while maintaining harmonic, dramatic, timbral and textural interest by organically transforming the musical landscape on each of these levels, thus creating a rich and dynamic soundworld. Specific timbres are employed to provoke and colour the surface of the music and to ensure an ever-changing context within which the harmonic and melodic ideas occur.

Examples of such timbral provocation include: the metallic sound of the violin's open E string played with a practice mute (b. 11, b. 15); the harp harmonics (b. 2, 4 etc.) and the harp's $B\flat^4$ tuned a quartertone lower; bowing the vibraphone and swiping the tubular bells; and the rapid vibrato on the clarinet and strings. In the second section, the viola gestures (in b. 64, b. 67, b. 70-71, and b. 74-75) emerging from the tubular bell *glissandi* and harp chords disrupt the accordion melody. The viola plays *tutta la forza* double stops in its lower register, providing stark rhythmic and textural contrast.

The title of the work comes from the following passage in Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*:

> It was a lone tree burning on the desert. A heraldic tree that the passing storm had left afire. The solitary pilgrim drawn up before it had travelled far to be here and he knelt in the hot sand and held his numbed hands out while all about in that circle

> attended companies of lesser auxiliaries routed forth into the inordinate day, small owls that crouched silently and stood from foot to foot and tarantulas and solpugas and vinegarroons and the vicious mygale spiders and beaded lizards with mouths black as a chowdog's, deadly to man, and the little desert basilisks that jet blood from their eyes and the small sandvipers like seemly gods, silent and the same, in Jeda, in Babylon. A constellation of ignited eyes that edged the ring of light all bound in a precarious truce before this torch whose brightness had set back the stars in their sockets.[2]

Within McCarthy's ultra-violent Western novel of near constant meaningless murder, this passage offers the reader a moment of respite. It was this introspective, ritualistic atmosphere depicted in *Blood Meridian* that I wished to convey in *Pilgrim*.

6.1 Musical influences

The first 56 bars of Giacinto Scelsi's double orchestra and organ work *Hymnos* was an initial harmonic and timbral inspiration for *Pilgrim*. *Hymnos* begins with a D pedal, with the flute and organ bringing in the minor third/tenth interval with an F, in b. 9. The celli enter with an A and a B♭ in b. 10, 16 and 23 creating a B♭maj7.[3] The move from Dm to B♭, is not only a beautiful and memorable sound, but creates a lightness and a cadence-like resolution. This is particularly effective following the lengthy, sustained minor chord.

This same two-chord progression is used as the harmonic motif in my work (Em to C). There is feeling of an uneasy ritual in *Hymnos*, in my opinion. To achieve a resonant and ritualistic soundworld in *Pilgrim*, I used metallic percussion, imitation (and echoing), and drones sustained

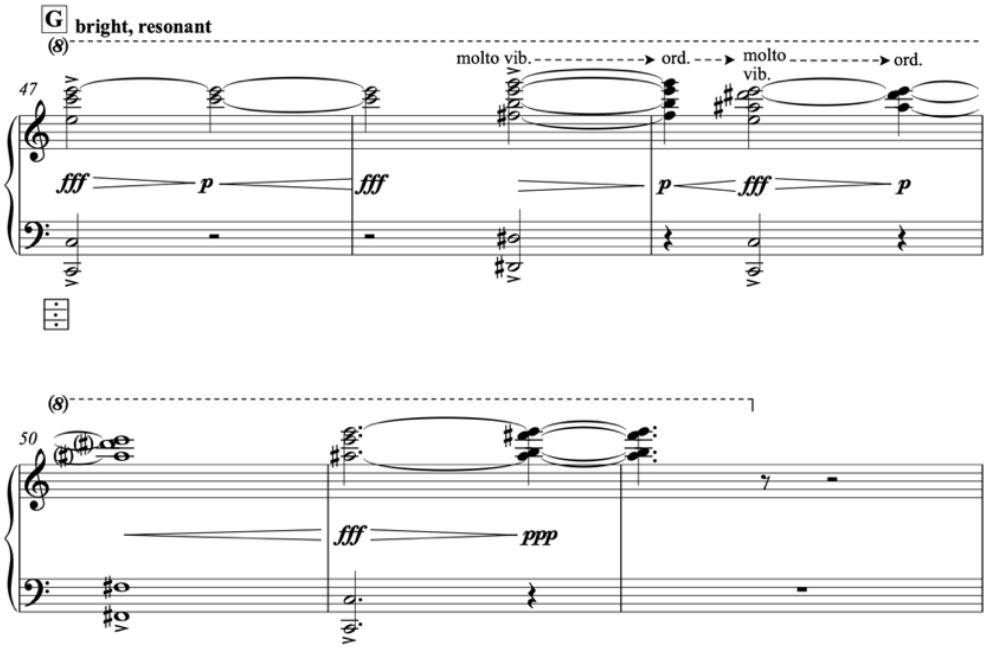
[2] Cormac McCarthy, *Blood Meridian* (London: Picador, 2015), p. 226-227.

[3] Giacinto Scelsi, *Hymnos*: *pour orgue & 2 orchestres* (Paris: Éditions Salabert, 1983), p. 1-19.

through several bars, framed in a slow tempo (♩ = 36). The slow tempo allows time and space for each musical object to emerge and dissipate. Scelsi believed that 'increasingly concentrated sounds' and 'their resonant properties could provide a pathway to spiritual achievement'.[4] Though a highly subjective issue, Scelsi's words do highlight the allure of a slow and resonant soundworld.

My work was also inspired by Pauline Oliveros', Stuart Dempster's, and Panaiotis' *Ione*, which is an improvisation in an extremely reverberant location.[5] *Ione*'s influence can also be heard in the way the accordion's role evolves during my work: in *Ione*, the accordion and trombone transition from sustaining pedals to melodic dialogue. Ex. 2 **(**climax, b. 47-52) and Ex. 3 (b. 61-73) highlight the change in the accordion material in *Pilgrim*. As the only non-traditional orchestral instrument in the ensemble, I wanted to exploit the accordion's unique position.

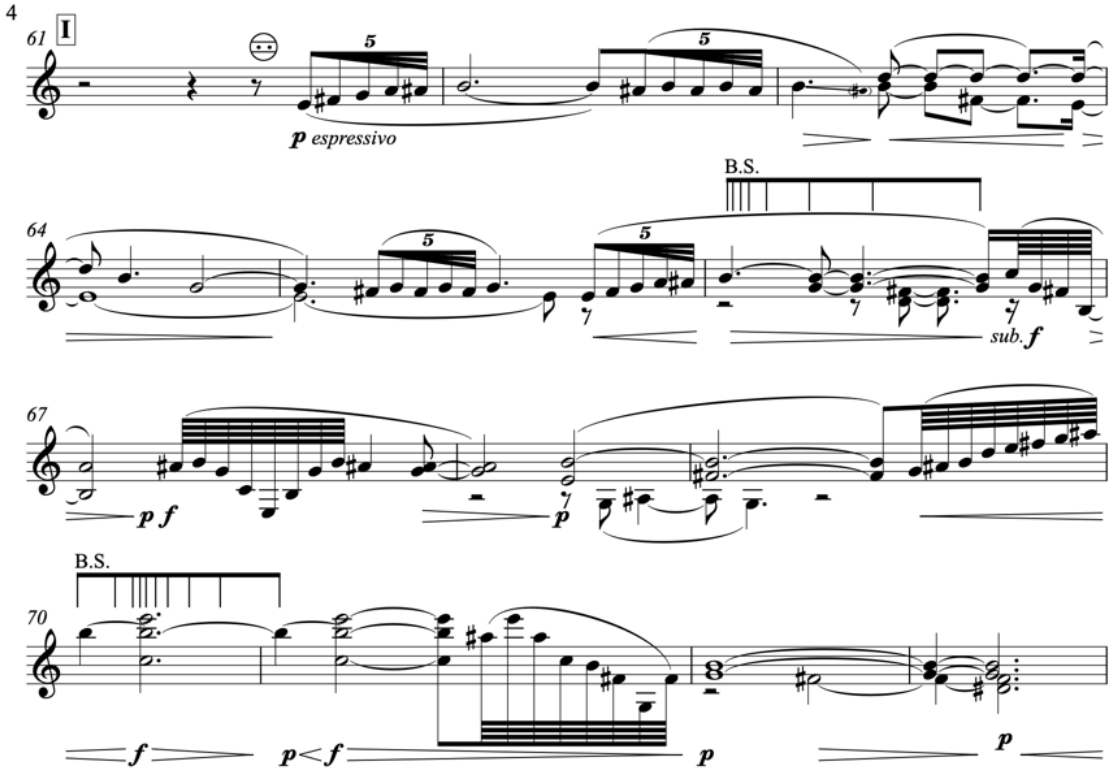
Ex. 2 – Accordion as harmonic support (b. 47-52)



[4] Gregory N. Reish, 'Una Nota Sola: Giacinto Scelsi and the Genesis of Music on a Single Note', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 2 (2006), 149-189.

[5] Oliveros, Dempster and Panaiotis, 'Ione', *Deep Listening,* Pauline Oliveros, Stuart Dempster (New Albion, NA 022, 1989).

Ex. 3 – Accordion as melodic voice (b. 61-73)



James Tenney's *Saxony* can also be viewed as an influence. The way Tenney transforms the music from one fundamental note into a polyphonic tapestry of melodic fragments based upon the harmonic series of this fundamental and back to the same one single note, is echoed in the shape of *Pilgrim*, as can be seen in the formal sketch in Ex. 1.[6]

What all these works have in common with my work is the preoccupation with timbral invention and an organic 'grow-climax-fade' form with dramatic effects created through gestures, transformation, and increases and decreases in textural density. They all also maintain a harmonic simplicity and a level of stillness, at least in terms of harmonic rhythm. The spectral influence of these works is also evident in the harmony of *Pilgrim*: the climactic chord in b. 47 is derived from

[6] James Tenney, 'Saxony', *John Melby/James Tenney*, David Mott (Composers Recordings Inc., NWCRL528, 1984).

the harmonic series of a low C fundamental: a C in the bass, E^4, $F\#^4$, G^4 in the mid-range and notably the quarter-flat $B\flat^4$, achieved by detuning the harp, alluding to the slightly flattened seventh degree of the C harmonic series.

For guidance on a more technical approach to generating and reusing material, I investigated the second movement of Arvo Pärt's *Tabula Rasa*. This movement, 'Silentium', is meticulously constructed using simple parameters: regularly extending the duration between reoccurring prepared piano arpeggio gestures and systematically adding extra notes to elongate the violin melodies, while the accompanying strings play in proportional canons.[7] Pärt has set these parameters to generate enough music for the whole movement from the material of the first few bars. This results in a satisfyingly coherent form, which is something I aimed for in *Pilgrim*, too, though setting such parameters results in a rather rigid framework, so I opted for a freer and more intuitive approach. Nevertheless, the influence of 'Silentium's' lucid form remains, as does Pärt's contemplative, tonal harmonic language.

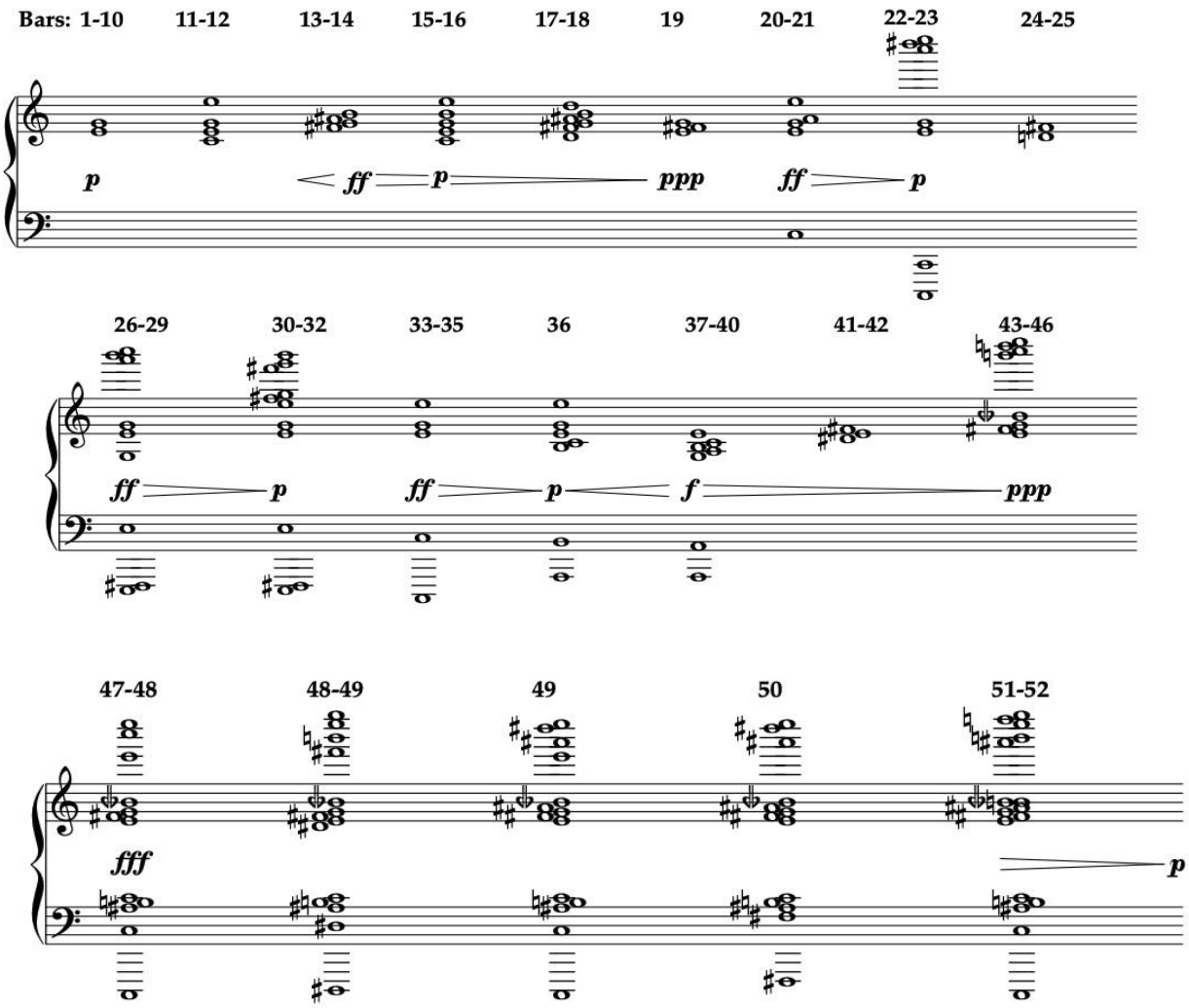
6.2 Harmonic details

The work unfolds in three sections: introduction and evolution of the material (b. 1-60); new, transformed material (b. 61-78); and coda (b. 79-87). The Em/C harmonic motif is heard three times in the first section in b. 10-11, b. 19-20, and b. 32-33, foreshadowing the climax and establishing a quasi-cyclical harmonic progression. It also appears in the second section, played by the accordion in b. 54-55, b. 69-70, and b. 76, and thus becoming a significant feature in the formal design of the work, as well as a part of the identity of the music. Ex. 4 illustrates the

[7] Arvo Pärt, 'Silentium', *Tabula Rasa: Doppelkonzert für Violine, Viola, Streichorchester und präpariertes Klavier* (Wien: Universal Edition A.G., 2001), p. 29-42.

harmonic scheme of the first section, till the end of the climax. The influence of gradual expansion of harmony in Tenney's *Saxony*, is also clearly seen in the growth of the harmony from two notes into a more complex harmonic tapestry in *Pilrgim*.

Ex. 4 – Harmonic scheme (b.1-52)



The third section (coda, b. 79-87), sees the accordion settling into a chorale with the bass drum and double bass accompanying at regular intervals, twelve times. The twelve times is in reference to the twelve tubular bells *glissandi* heard throughout the climax and the second section. It should be noted that the tubular bells *glissandi* starting in b. 47 were inspired by the prepared piano in 'Silentium' from Pärt's *Tabula Rasa*: the same technique of extending the duration

between these gestures is used, first $4^{1}/_{4}$ crotchet beats rest, then $5^{1}/_{4}$ crotchet beats rest, then $6^{1}/_{4}$ and so on.

The coda has also been alluded to three times before in b. 22-23, b. 29-30, and b. 34-35, in the gentle beating of the bass drum and double bass. In. the coda, the mid-range that has been present throughout the piece has disappeared, leaving a textural void, and marking the end of the piece.

While the first section contains melodic material, such as the viola in b. 15-17, clarinet in b. 30-34, the string trio in b. 37-41, and the accordion in b. 44-46, the music is more concerned with harmony and timbre. The lack of clear melodic focus throughout the first section places more weight on the accordion melody – echoed by the clarinet – that is revealed in the second section (b. 61-78). This melody signifies a transformation from short melodic fragments and an emphasis on the harmonic aspect, to a new musical space with a focus on the linear aspect.

The melody is built of two types of material: ornaments and sustained lines. Ornamentation adds further rhythmic definition and dynamism to the music, immediately marking the arrival to a new type of music. Yet, the melody is still harmonically related to the first section (as seen in its Em centricity and use of the harmonic motif discussed previously) to stress its organic emergence from the material heard before.

7. *Sunfall* (2019-20)

In a well-known conversation between Jean Sibelius and Gustav Mahler "Sibelius presented his latest ideas about 'severity of form,' about the 'profound logic' that should connect symphonic themes", to which Mahler responded that a symphony must resemble the world.[1] Though not a symphony, *Sunfall* draws from both approaches: my aim was to create a vivid orchestral tapestry, diverse in colour, exuberant and dramatic in expression, while following an inner logic and exhibiting a high level of control over harmony and form.

To achieve this in *Sunfall* - a large-scale, one movement work - I tried to engage with many of the elements explored in the previous works of this portfolio. As in Piano Concerto, sections of *Sunfall* are designed using harmonic centres. Harmonic stasis and varying textural and harmonic density are also used throughout, like in *Ripped Tapestry*. A dialogue between modal, cluster and tonal elements is prevalent – as it is in *Songs of Empty Landscapes* – with tonal sections relieving tension and anticipation created in more harmonically complex and fluctuating sections. Tonality is also used in slow sections, for its sonorous and sensuous, expressive qualities like in *Pilgrim*, while harmonic motifs, timbral and textural invention shape the drama of the *Sunfall*.

A major inspiration behind *Sunfall* was the painting, *Fiercely the red sun descending/Burned his way along the heavens*, by 19th century American artist Thomas Moran. This painting became an important part of the process of writing the work, as I attempted to further expand on the relationship between my composition and the extra-musical sources I engage with.[2]

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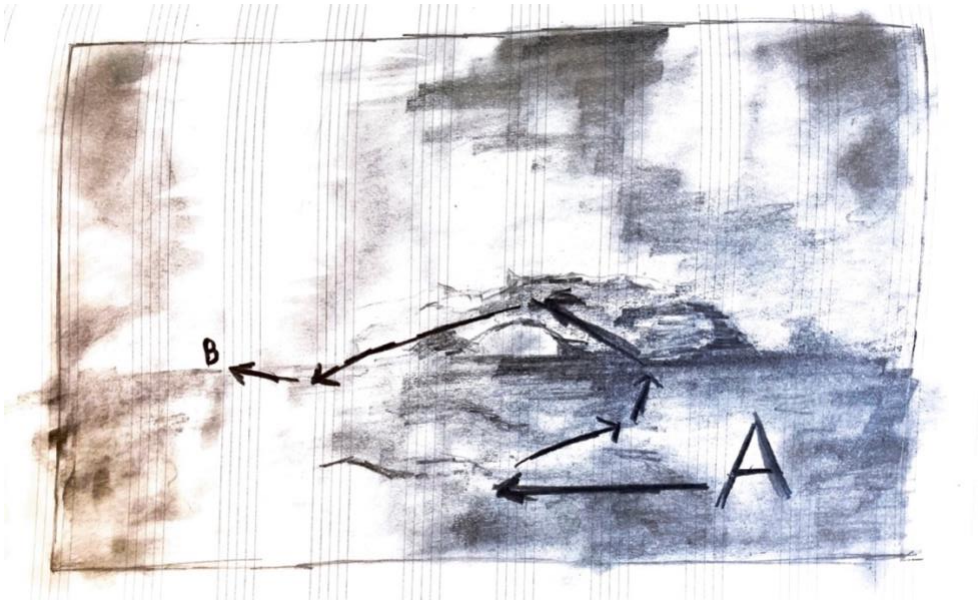
[1] Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise*: *Listening to the Twentieth Century* (London: Fourth Estate, 2012), p. 178.

[2] North Carolina Museum of Art, 'Fiercely the red sun descending/Burned his way along the heavens', *North Carolina Museum of Art*, https://ncartmuseum.org/object/fiercely-the-red-sun-descending-burned-his-way-along-the-heavens/ – accessed on 28 December 2022.

Picture 1 below shows my sketched reproduction of the painting with arrows indicating a pathway from point A to B. To me, it seems as though the right half of the painting (A), the darker, hazier half, evokes a storm. Whereas the left half (B), with the brightly coloured sun setting in the horizon, evokes a much calmer atmosphere. I aimed to structure my work by assigning areas of the painting to reflect upon in the sections of my composition. Though only an early sketch, *Sunfall* does loosely adhere to this journey from a darker, stormier music to something brighter and more serene.

Picture 1 – a sketched reproduction of Moran's *Fiercely the red sun descending/Burned his way along the heavens*



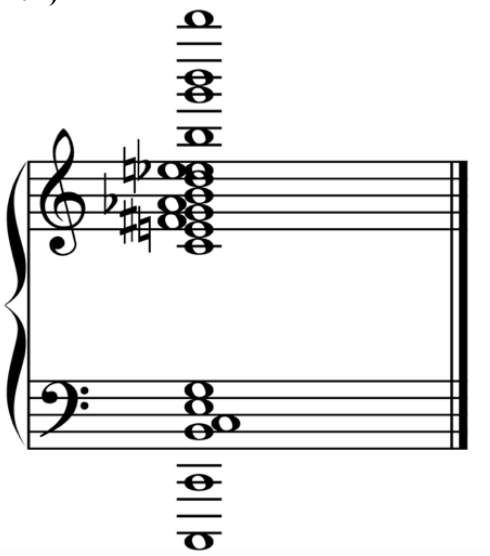
As seen in Table 1 below, *Sunfall* is divided into two halves (b. 1-189 and b. 190-349). Though not entirely dichotomous, these two halves (I and II) are in general defined by their unique harmonic properties: the first half is more dissonant (representing right half of the painting – A) and the second half more consonant (representing the left half of the painting – B). It should also be noted that the first half begins and ends with the full orchestra playing loudly, while the second half begins and ends with only a fraction of the orchestra, playing quietly. This, again, reflects the journey from A to B seen in Picture 1.

Table 1 – Structural and formal outline

Macro-structure (bar numbers)	**I** 1-189				**II** 190-349				
Micro-structure (bar numbers)	**I^1** 1	**I^2** 42	**I^3** 77	**I^4** 102	**II^1** 190	**II^2** 216	**II^3** 263	**II^4** 293	**II^5** 330
Tempo (connections)	♩ = 72 ♩ = 66	♩ = 52	♩ = 60	♩ = 90	♩ = 46	♪ = 120	♪ = 90	♩ = 46	(♩ = 46)
Form	Opening	Melodic Dialogue	Transition	1st Build -up	Alto Flute Solo	2nd Build-up & 1st Climax (b. 263-271)	3rd Build-up & 2nd Climax (b. 289-292)	Violin Solo, Harp solo	Coda
Main features	Explosive opening; heavy use of brass and percussion; introduction of harmonic material that is prevalent in the piece; large orchestral gestures	Calmer, slower music; lighter orchestration; bassoon and cor anglaise melodies and duet	Ascending string scales; brief violin solo; orchestral bursts	Rhythmic, percussive; fast material; mostly full orchestra playing	Extensive alto flute melody; introduction of ornament motif; muted string chords	References to the opening, harmony; multiple layers of material colliding; climax	Full orchestral hits; horns driving music forward; climax	Light orchestration; violin solo; harp solo to transition to coda	Repeating chord progression; resonant percussion; aleatoric material; whispering; arrival to new sound world
Harmonic rhythm (connections)	Moderate	Slow	Very slow	Fast	Slow	Moderate/Fast	Very fast	Slow	Very slow

Another direct influence of Moran's painting on this work were the colours emanating from the sunset. To me, the hues of red, yellow, orange, and white evoke the pitch classes of C, E, G and B respectively. This forms a Cmaj7 chord on which the second climax (b. 289-292) is anchored, as can be seen in Ex. 1. This chord is an expansion of the climactic chord of *Pilgrim*.

Ex. 1 – Final climax chord (b. 289-292)



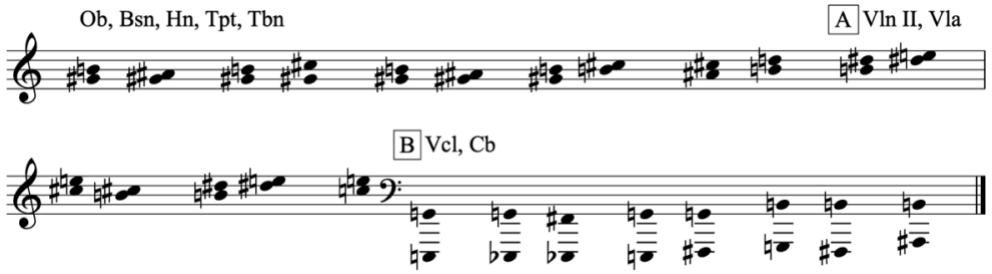
In b. 263, a B♭ major on the trombones with a high A on the first violins and piccolo also prefigures this quasi-Cmaj7 climactic chord. The colours of Moran's work also dictated the pure triads of Em (yellow), D (blue), G (orange) and Bm (white) that appear repeatedly in the coda in b. 330-349, as the music has reached point B of Picture 1.

7.1 Harmonic foundation

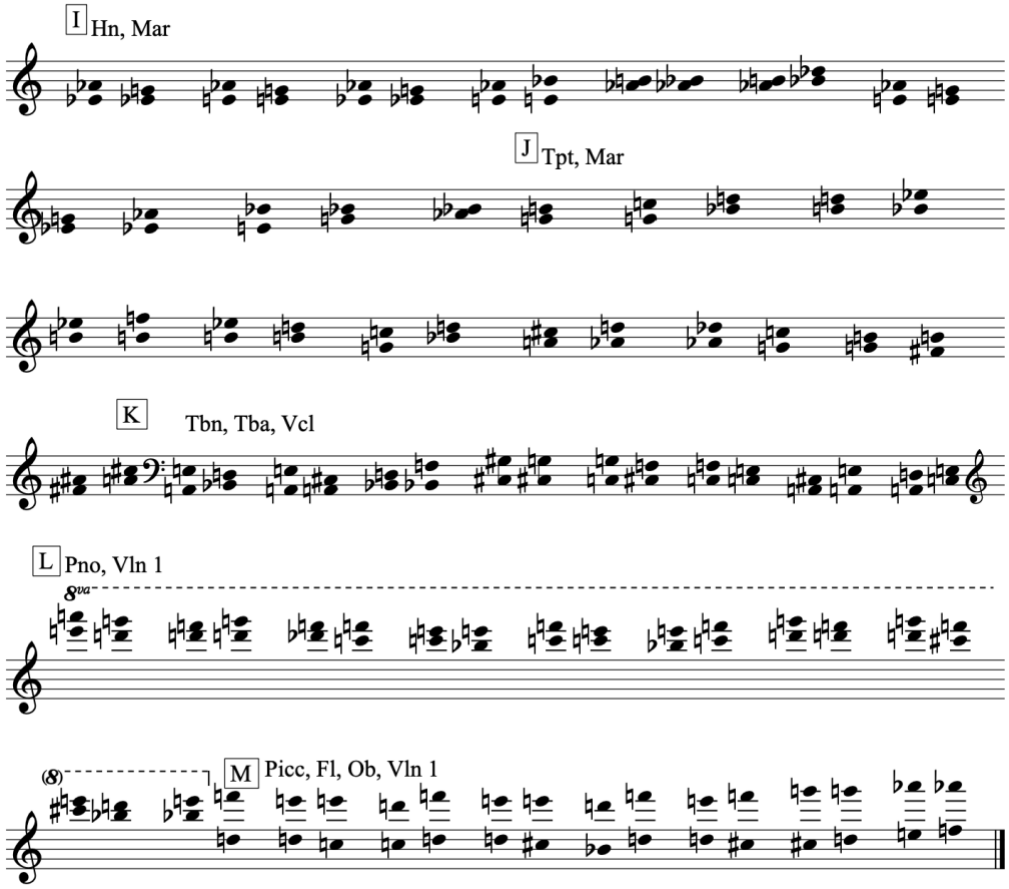
Much of the harmony in the work is built of progressions of dyads as highlighted in the examples below (with rehearsal marks and main instruments indicated for reference). These dyads are often built of minor and major thirds, echoing tonality. A semitone or a tone step upwards or downwards in one of the two notes of a dyad offers the possibility of smoothly modulating from one chord to another. So far, in my works, tonality is often associated with slower sections, as is the case also

in *Sunfall.* However, this technique has been a way to apply tonal sonority into faster music, and in way that refuses to fully anchor onto a harmonic centre, which has proven especially useful in building momentum and driving the forward towards the climactic section in b. 272-289 (Ex. 4).

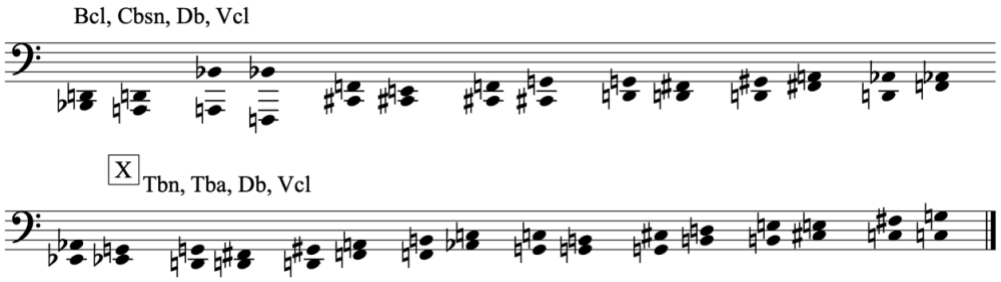
Ex. 2 – Dyads in b. 1-41



Ex. 3 – Dyads in b. 102-175



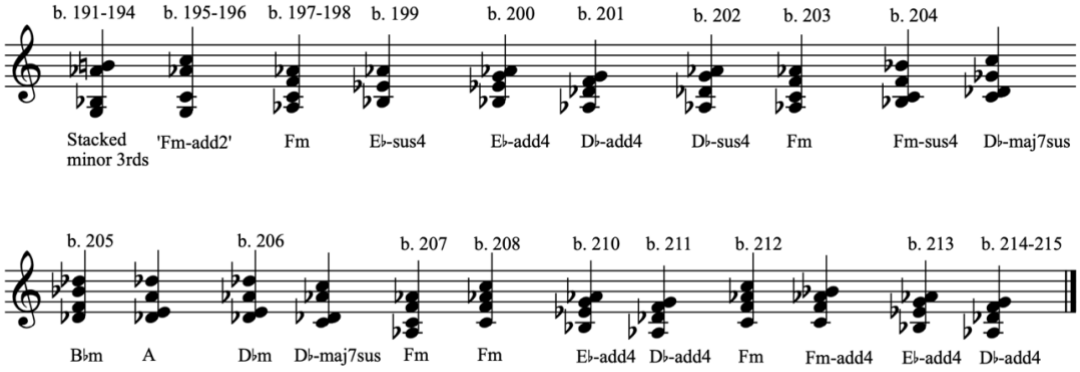
Ex. 4 – Dyads in b. 272-289



Though the harmony is often more complex and layered than just these pure dyads, they create a foundation that holds the work together. Furthermore, their distinct sound adds to the identity of the piece and their reoccurrence builds a sense of familiarity in the musical language.

In contrast to the continuously fluctuating harmonic soundworld that results from these dyads, are periods of harmonic stasis. These are passages, as in my previous works, where the use of triadic harmony again becomes most apparent. An example of this stasis is b. 67-76, in which the music dwells in one harmonic field, an F#maj7 sonority played by stopped horns. Another example is the beginning of the second half of the work which sees an extended alto flute solo (b.190-215). Here the chords revolve in a quasi-cyclical fashion around an Fm harmonic centre as seen in Ex. 5, providing a moment of harmonic stability and a memorable setting for the longest solo of the work. In a similar manner to 'Lullaby' in *Songs of Empty Landscapes*, the music arrives to tonality signifying an important moment within the work.

Ex. 5 – Chord progression accompanying alto flute solo in b. 191-215



This section is inspired by two tonal passages from other contemporary works. The first example is b. 158-218 in the second movement of Pascal Dusapin's concerto for violin and orchestra, *Aufgang*.[3] The second, b. 500-509 in Dieter Ammann's piano concerto, *Gran Toccata.*[4] I wanted to echo a similar expressive effect that is achieved in both works: a feeling of resolution brought on by the arrival of a slow, simple tonal passage after complex harmonic colours and orchestral movement.

In both works, like in *Sunfall*, there is a dialogue between movement (embodied by more complex harmony and faster harmonic rhythm) and stillness (embodied by simpler tonal harmony and slower harmonic rhythm). Varying these harmonic features results in dramatic depth and contributes to an elasticity within the form.

7.2 Superimposition

Superimposition of multiple harmonies and melodies, existing in parallel to each other can be 'extraordinary' but also 'musically and structurally sterile', as George Benjamin observes.[5] In b. 235-262 of *Sunfall* I wanted to attempt superimposition, but in a manner that would instead result in dynamism and direction, leading up to the 1st climax of the work.

Triadic harmony, ranging from various inversions of major, minor, and suspended chords, is present first in the double bass in b. 235-245, and then in the first violins from b. 246 to the climax at b. 263. Underneath the violin, from b. 246 the violas and celli play a fast-moving dyadic harmonic progression (also sounding as a melody) suggesting a different kind of tonality. The high

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[3] Pascal Dusapin, *Aufgang: concerto pour violin & orchestra (*Paris: Éditions Salabert, 2013), p. 45-50.

[4] Dieter Ammann, *The Piano Concerto: Gran Toccata* (Basel: Bärenreiter Kassel, 2019), p. 81-83.

[5] Risto Nieminen and Renaud Machart, trans. Julian Anderson and Michael Durnin, 'Interview with George Benjamin', in *George Benjamin in association with IRCAM* (London: Faber & Faber, 1997), p. 16.

woodwind adds a top melody, and some flutters, while the low woodwind continues with chromatic scale shudders which began at b. 242.

Tonal harmony is present but in constant flux and obfuscated by the number of other layers that seemingly function in their own tempi and harmonic fields. This adds tension and ambiguity (which is resolved by the B♭ major trombone triad in the 1st climax in b. 263). Yet, the music is not sterile due to the first violin triads and viola/celli dyads gradually moving up in tessitura and the general dynamics increasing. In constructing this passage, I found that superimposing tonality with modality and chromaticism successfully avoids musical or structural dead-ends, when these layers are kept in motion. Furthermore, triads (in the first violins) in such a context can offer a clear detail for the ear to follow.

7.3 Melody and gesture

Sunfall can be subdivided and loosely categorized into sections of largely melodic and/or gestural music. 'Gestural' is used here as an umbrella term, describing music that lacks clear melodic definition and is more concerned with texture and colour.

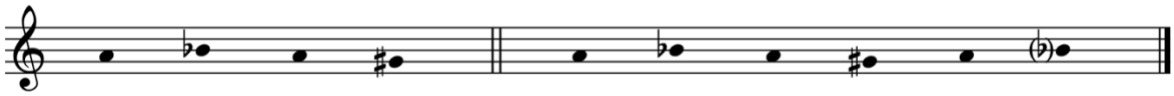
Table 2 divides the sections (and some sub-sections) into gestural (ge) and melodic (me). Where there is overlap, or no clear distinction on whether the focus of the music is melodic or gestural, I have marked 'me/ge'. While this may not be audible in a work of this length, Table 2 reveals a symmetry between these two types of material, which further reinforces an inner logic that lies within the work.

Table 2 – Sections divided into melodic and gestural music

I						II						
I^1	I^2	I^3		I^4		II^1	II^2		II^3		II^4	II^5
b. 1	42	77	87	102	126	190	216	235	263	272	293	330-349
me/ge	me	ge	me/ge	me/ge	ge	me	ge	me/ge	me/ge	ge	me	me/ge

The most significant melody in the work is the alto flute solo in b. 196-215. The alto flute has not been heard up to this point and, together with a quiet tam-tam hit (also not heard before), it marks the beginning of the second half. In b. 197 the alto flute introduces an ornamental figure, seen in Ex. 6. In the section starting from b. 216 the first violins develop this ornament figure into a six-note motif.

Ex. 6 – Ornamental figure – Ornament motif



This motif reappears disguised in the string texture in b. 235-245. It is then heard four times between b. 246-257 played by the piccolo, first flute and first oboe, prefiguring the motif's final appearance during the first climax on the first trumpet doubled by the first clarinet (b. 263 and b. 269). Beyond adding energy and vitality to the melodic lines, this ornament motif provides clarity and continuity to the music, especially during the most complex moment of the work in b. 246-263 where it is heard soaring above the layers of other material, played by the piccolo, first flute, and first oboe.

Another feature of the alto flute melody is the descending semitone *glissando* (for instance, in b. 197-200 and b. 211). This semitone fall is heard in several solo melodies throughout the work, forming part of the melodic identity of *Sunfall*. It can be found in the top voice of the harp chords in b. 48 and b. 50, the solo violin in b. 50-53, and the trio in b. 56-61, shown in Ex. 7. It is also heard in the first trumpet and first clarinet melodies, together with the ornament motif in b. 263-

271. Furthermore, we hear it in multiple violin soli in b. 88-91, b. 235-238, b. 306-309, and b. 323-324. It is heard for the last time in the sparsest texture of the work: the harp solo starting in b. 326.

Ex. 7 – Descending semitone in the cor anglaise, first bassoon and violin solo (b. 56-61)

The alto flute plays this falling semitone from A♭ to G (which relates to the tonal chord progression in Ex. 5) several times during its solo. We can hear these exact pitch classes on the first violins in b. 205-210, first trumpet and first clarinet in b. 263-271 twice, first trombone in b. 270-271 and once again in the trumpets in b. 279-281, almost becoming a motif of its own.

7.4 Orchestration and form

The brass play an important role in articulating the form and dramatic shape of the piece. Because of the force of unmuted fortissimo brass which begins the piece – and the brass' potentially overwhelming presence within the work – they remain mostly muted (with exceptions especially towards the end of the first build-up in b. 165-189) until the first and second climaxes in b. 263-292.

From b. 190 to b. 263 there is no brass at all. These bars account for approximately a quarter of the work's full duration. This substantial period allows the ears of listeners to adjust to a soundworld with no brass timbre, making their entry in b. 263 (first climax) a significant dramatic moment in the work. The entry is made even more poignant due to the Brahmsian use of a trombone chorale built of triads, and the metric modulation made audible by the timpani beat changing to the rhythm of the double bass *pizzicati* heard moments before. From b. 293 onwards, the brass are muted again.

Another formal feature in this work is the use of gestural attacks often emphasised by percussion and brass. There are three types of gestures: flurries, stabs, and gusts. Flurries and stabs tend to be loud, providing momentum and energy to the music. Gusts are quiet and function more as an extra-colour. Table 3 details the types and occurrence of these gestures.

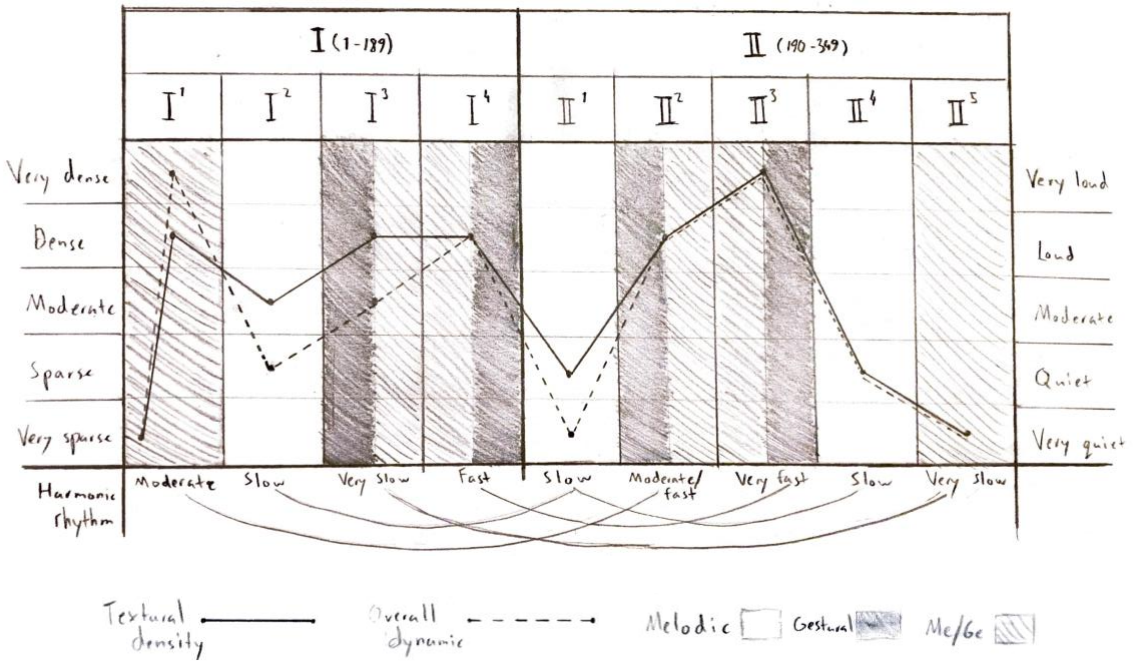
Table 3 – Gestural material in *Sunfall*

Sections	Type	Bars	Details
I[1]	Flurries	b. 6-22	Woodwind arpeggios, trumpet fluttertonguing, percussion attacks, snap *pizzicati*
I[2]	Gusts	b. 53-77	Violin duet harmonics, trumpet, and trombone 'wah-wah' effects
I[3]	Flurries	b. 87-101	Trumpet repeated notes, trombone and tuba bass, percussion and harp gestures, double bass col legno
I[4]	Stabs	b. 102-140 b. 141-161 b. 165-189	Brass, percussion, harp, and piano stabs Flute repeated notes, harp bisbigliando Woodwind, brass, percussion, harp and piano stabs, string chords
II[1]	Gusts	b. 196-211	Harp low range slap, tam-tam, flute harmonics, double bass
II[2]	Flurries	b. 242-261	Bass clarinet, bassoons, contrabassoon, and cello chromatic flurries, interjected by woodwind arpeggios, harp and piano gestures and second violins harmonics
II[3]	Stabs	b. 264-270 b. 272-292	Woodwind outbursts and descending scales Almost full orchestra stabs
II[4]	Gusts	b. 302-323	First flute, harp, and second violins trills
II[5]	Flurries/ stabs/ gusts	b. 330-338	Percussion, piano and harp glissandi, brass and string chords, bass clarinet, contrabassoon, and double bass murmurs

These gestures form a dialogue across the sections, adding another dimension to the work and articulating the shape of the work.

In terms of form, the work exhibits symmetry on four levels: textural density; overall dynamics; harmonic rhythm (also seen in Table 1); and the balance between melodic and gestural music (also seen in Table 2). Graph 1 visualises the shape of *Sunfall* using these four parameters and sheds light on the symmetrical elements within the work.

Graph 1 – Symmetrical elements within *Sunfall*



Though only an approximation, Graph 1 shows the near-symmetrical shape found in the overall dynamic fluctuations and textural density changes. The distance between the two points within I^1 in the graph, emphasises the extreme change in dynamic and textural density after the first three bars of the work. The arch-like connections in harmonic rhythm are drawn at the bottom and the balance of melodic and gestural music in each section is illustrated with colouring.

These symmetries are rather concealed; however, they point to the influence of Sibelius' idea of an inner logic and the importance of formal coherence within a piece of music. The rigorous formal and harmonic thinking allowed me to maintain control and freely choose various sonic

landscapes to explore within the work, while not getting lost in the countless possibilities an orchestra offers.

In homage to Mahler's more intuitive approach, the coda of *Sunfall* includes a completely new sound in the work: unsynchronised whispering (starting in b. 338) of the title of Moran's painting, symbolising the arrival to an unknown landscape, beyond the horizon, beyond the sunfall.

8. Conclusion

Though diverse in instrumentation and length, the five works of this portfolio are connected by a common aesthetic outlook and similar technical approaches. This commentary shows a consistency in harmonic thinking, between melodic and gestural material, and a search for controlled and coherent forms built of stasis and development.

My engagement with extra-musical sources and my synaesthetic experiences play an important role in the conception of my compositions, influencing: the soundworld of the Piano Concerto; the narrative ideas of *Ripped Tapestry*; the formal and aesthetic ideas in *Songs of Empty Landscapes*; the concept and timbre of *Pilgrim*; and the structural and harmonic aspects of *Sunfall*.

Most importantly, an unfolding dialogue with tonality is apparent across the five works. Though this dialogue begins with viewing tonality as 'one colour' (in the words Abrahamsen), a harmonic colour, and a part of a varied musical syntax, the consequences of applying tonality into different musical contexts extend beyond simply creating harmonic variety within a work. Tonality becomes an actor within the dramatic journey and the expressive landscape of a work, and thus an integral part its formal design. A familiar sonority searching for a new home, tonality is also a prompt for timbral and textural invention.

It has been my aim to seek ways to approach tonality as a composer today and investigate its role within the harmonic, timbral, dramatic and formal landscapes of my music. Summarising the developments in my approach, traceable across the chronologically arranged portfolio, is key to revealing my findings.

a) Harmonic variety

In the first three works of the portfolio, harmonic shifts are stark due to clear juxtaposition and separation of different harmonic colours. In the first two works, tonality is presented in stasis. In Piano Concerto, the tonal 'monoharmonic' centres of the first and final movements are juxtaposed with the modal middle movement. Pitch centres, foreign pitches, and gestures are used to effect harmonic tensions and surface colour. In *Ripped Tapestry* melodic colouring, microtonality, as well as varying textural and harmonic density are used in addition to stasis. Tonality is associated with harmonic stillness. While harmonic shifts are still stark in *Songs of Empty Landscapes*, tonality is presented in motion, echoing functional harmonic progressions.

In the final two works, the harmonic language is more unified as different harmonic colours become integrated. In *Pilgrim*, tonality is the dominant colour and is fused with harmony derived from the harmonic series (spectral harmony), whereas in *Sunfall* shifts in harmonic colours are smoother, tonality is often in motion (little stasis, more progressions, and the use of ever-changing, fast moving major and minor dyads) and superimposition is explored. Moving on from juxtaposition, stasis, and a 'panel' format, I have come to view harmony more linearly in *Pilgrim* and *Sunfall*, with the interaction of harmonic colours becoming more agile and interconnected.

d) Colourful soundworlds

Engaging with tonal harmony today raises concerns over how to make it your own. This necessitates continuous creative effort to introduce and maintain a level of novelty and freshness to the familiar sonority. Composer Kyle Gann tackles this concern by, in his own words, 'reinventing tonality' by 'augmenting' conventional tonality with 'higher-overtone relationships'

in his large-scale microtonal electronic three-piano work, *Hyperchromatica*.[1,2] Bearing similarities with the quarter-tone piano preludes of Ivan Wyschnegradsky, the resulting soundworlds are appealing and expressive.[3] While Gann's approach is about re-inventing tonality by way of expanding the number of notes in an octave, my own is more about colouring tonal harmony with timbral and textural invention. Both approaches represent different answers to the same questions over the contemporary use of tonality.

My own exploration begins with gesture-based elements, such as microtonal melodic colouring, or surface level interruptions. As the portfolio progresses, I expand my approach to using various musical elements – such as melodic fragments, gestures, instrumental sounds, and motifs – not just as isolated colours, but as interconnected elements within the formal and dramatic fabrics of my works. Thanks to this concern over colouring tonality and presenting it in new contexts, I have developed a deeper understanding of the dramatic and formal consequences of timbral and textural invention in my music.

c) Formal and dramatic depth

My approach to form has perhaps developed the most across the portfolio. This is evident in the multi-movement, block-like approach to structuring my music in Piano Concerto, *Ripped Tapestry* and *Songs of Empty Landscapes*, contrasted by the more agile forms of single-movement works *Pilgrim* and *Sunfall*, in which soundworlds transform over time, harmonic colours are not

[1] Kyle Gann, 'Hyperchromatica (2012;2015-17;2020-21) for three retuned, computer-driven pianos, *Kyle Gan* – https://www.kylegann.com/Hyperchromatica.html – accessed on 18 March 2023.

[2] Kyle Gann, 'Hyperchromatica (2015-2017) for three retuned, computer-driven pianos' (Other Minds Records, 2018).

[3] Ivan Wyschnegradsky, 'Preludes in Quarter-Tone System', *Charles Ives, Ivan Wyschnegradsky: Quarter-tone Pieces*, Josef Christof, Schleiermacher, (Hat Hut Records Ltd., NATNOWART143, 2006).

juxtaposed in the same manner as previously, and relationships between musical elements are created over longer structures.

In both formal approaches, tonality is a central element in prompting timbral and textural colouring, in providing moments of resolution and stillness, and applying familiar sonorities with great expressive potential within various contexts. Tonality can thus be used as a tool to control the shape of the form and induce shifts in the mood and atmosphere of a work.

Equipped with a more concrete grasp on how my largely intuitive processes unfold, I hope to continue further expanding on the ideas presented in this commentary and begin analytically exploring elements that have had a less prominent role so far, such as chaos, dissonance, and rhythm – and tonality's relationship with them.

A possible path to investigate chaos and complexity could be increasing the role of cluster harmony, superimposition of multiple harmonic colours and further expanding the use of microtones, and using tonality in motion. This would result in more dissonance, providing further opportunities to investigate its expressive effects and role on the form. As my approach to rhythm has been primarily intuitive, I am keen to investigate how specific rhythmic schemes, and rhythmic invention in general, can generate captivating soundscapes and contribute to formal coherence in larger-scale works.

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines 'dynamic' as an energetic 'force or factor that controls or influences a process of growth, change, interaction, or activity'.[4] Considering the role of tonality

[4] The Editors of Merriam-Webster, 'Dictionary: Dynamic, adjective', *Merriam-Webster* – https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dynamic – accessed on 23 February 2023.

in so many aspects of my works, I have come to understand it as more than a colour: it is, to me, a dynamic force inducing change in my creative thinking, and thus, my music. It is a point of departure, and a point of reference, in my composition process.

Therefore, I am confident there is more to uncover in my dialogue with tonality, much of which I hope to discover in the future in chamber, and especially orchestral music, but also in solo works, vocal works, and opera. But for now, in the words of composer Jukka Tiensuu, it is time to

> let the music speak for itself – which it does only better when the creator gets out of the way.[5]

[5] Jukka Tiensuu, 'Program notes?', *Jukka Tiensuu* – https://tiensuu.fi/program_note.php – accessed on 17 March 2023.

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Joel Järventausta

Piano Concerto

the sighing of the winds is softer than ever

for 14 players

(2018)

Piano Concerto was written for Laura Farré Rozada and the New Perspectives Ensemble (Royal College of Music)

The premiere was given by Laura Farré Rozada and the New Perspectives Ensemble, conducted by Timothy Lines at the Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall, Royal College of Music, London (UK), on 4 December 2018

Duration = ca. 13 minutes

Instrumentation

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in Bb (= Bass Clarinet in Bb)

Bassoon

Horn in F

Trumpet in Bb

Trombone

Percussion (1 player)

Piano

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

PERCUSSION

Vibraphone, tubular bells, ocean drum

Score in C

Composer's notes

The first movement of this three movement concerto for piano and chamber ensemble begins with a slow melancholic chorale. The piano answers the calling of the ensemble and sets out to establish its individual voice. Throughout this movement the piano is a leading voice with the ensemble accompanying its movements.

The first half of the second movement treats the piano as part of the overall texture, however a juxtaposition is created through the microtonal inflections of the ensemble clashing with the equally tempered piano. A climactic surge of colour sets in motion an obsessive, repeating piano figuration resolving in a fragile and bare ending.

The third movement sees bell-like chords and gestures accompanying a lonely cantabile melody played by the piano. Scarcely orchestrated, the ensemble provides a soundscape of alien echoes.

The subtitle of the piece - 'the sighing of the winds is softer than ever' - is taken from John Muir's writings on nature (1838-1914). This piece is dedicated to my friend and collaborator Laura Farré Rozada.

J.Järventausta

Contents

written for Laura Farré Rozada

Piano Concerto

the sighing of the winds is softer than ever

I

Joel Järventausta
2018

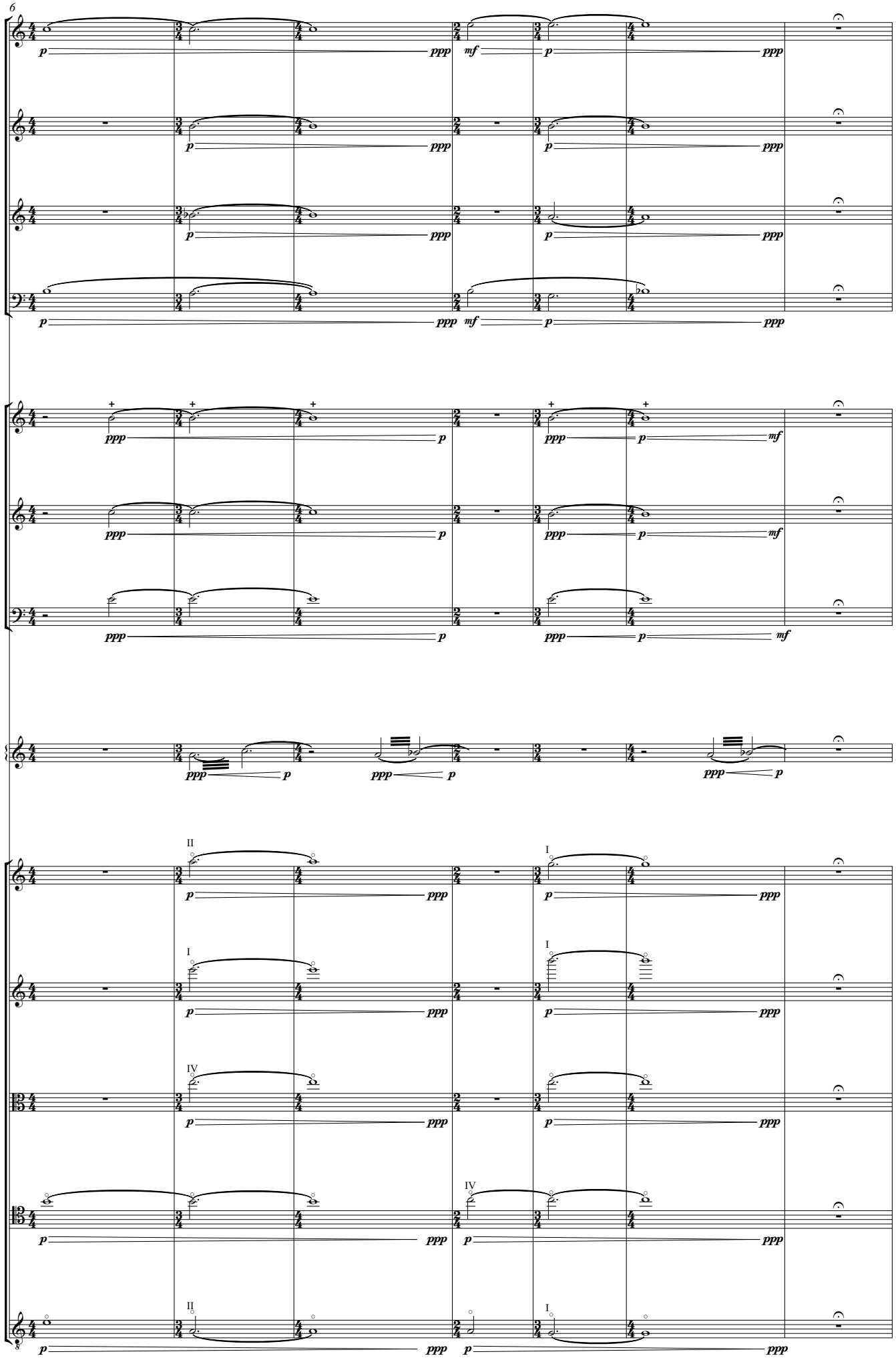
♩ = ca. 46 **remote chorale, melancholic**

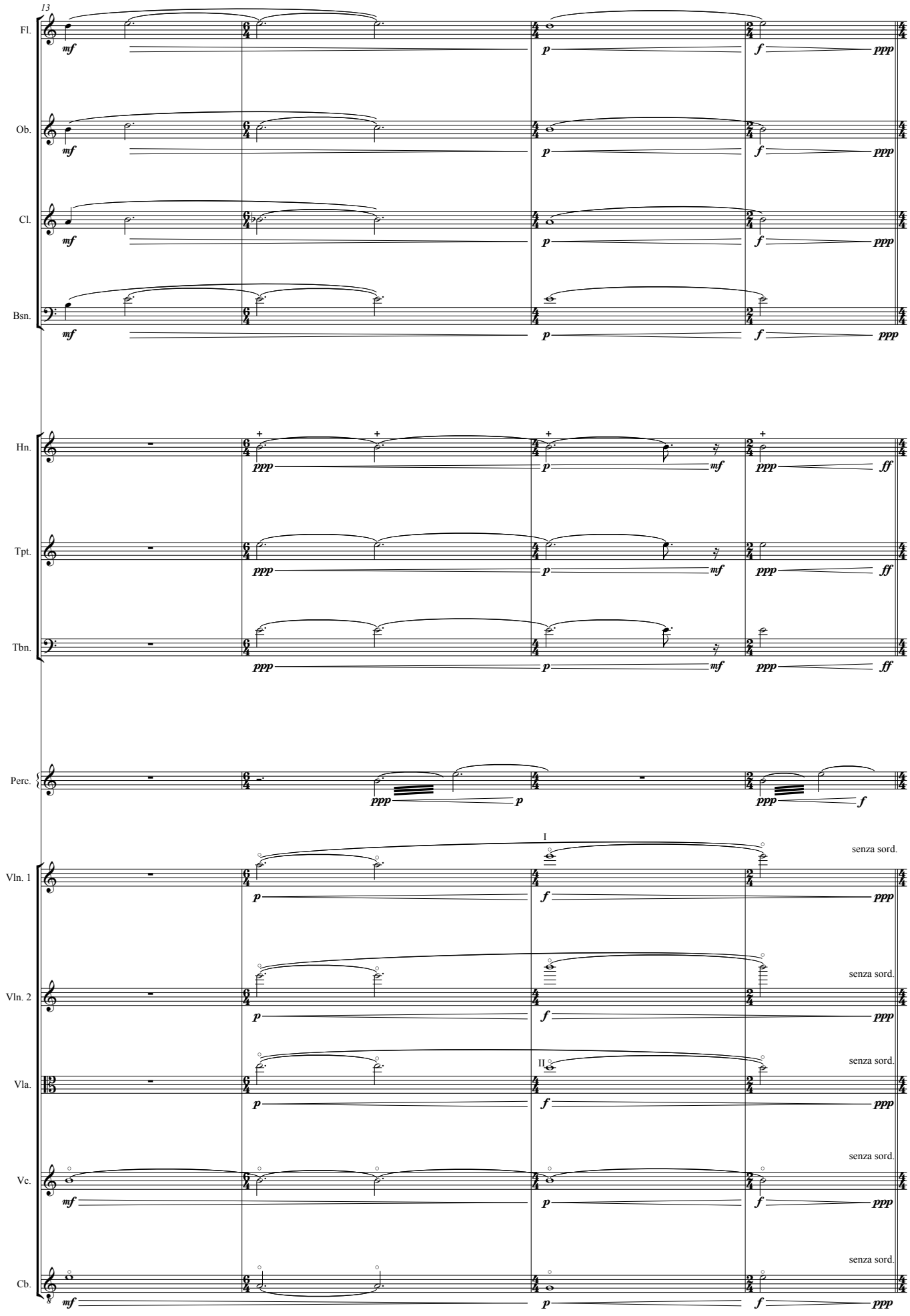
Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in B♭
Bassoon
Horn in F
straight mute
Trumpet in B♭
straight mute
Trombone
Vibraphone
soft mallets
l.v.
Percussion
Piano

♩ = ca. 46 **remote chorale, melancholic**

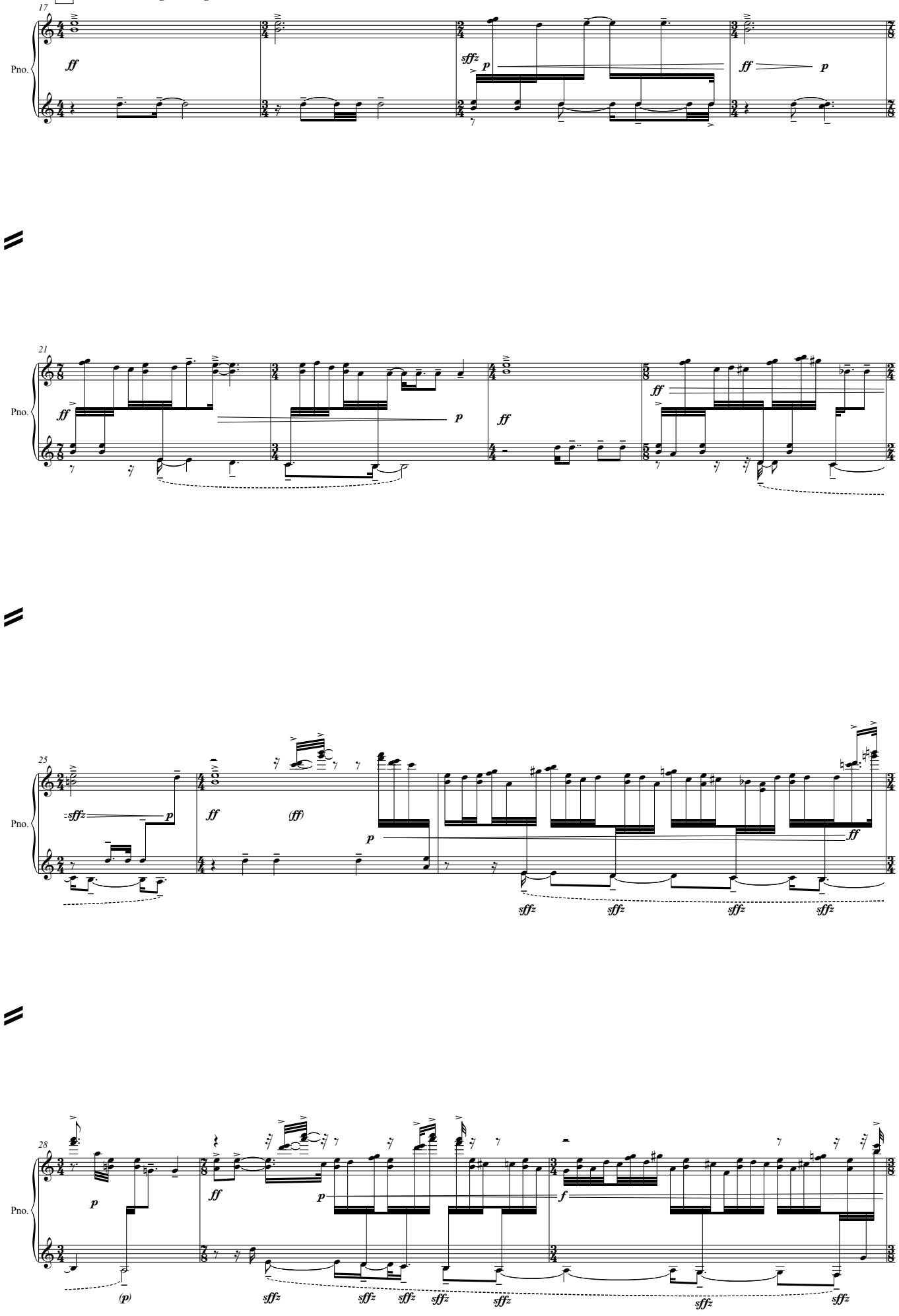
con sord.
III (do not tune harmonics)
Violin 1
con sord.
III (do not tune harmonics)
Violin 2
IV (do not tune harmonics)
con sord.
Viola
con sord.
III
(do not tune harmonics)
Violoncello
con sord.
III (do not tune harmonics)
Contrabass

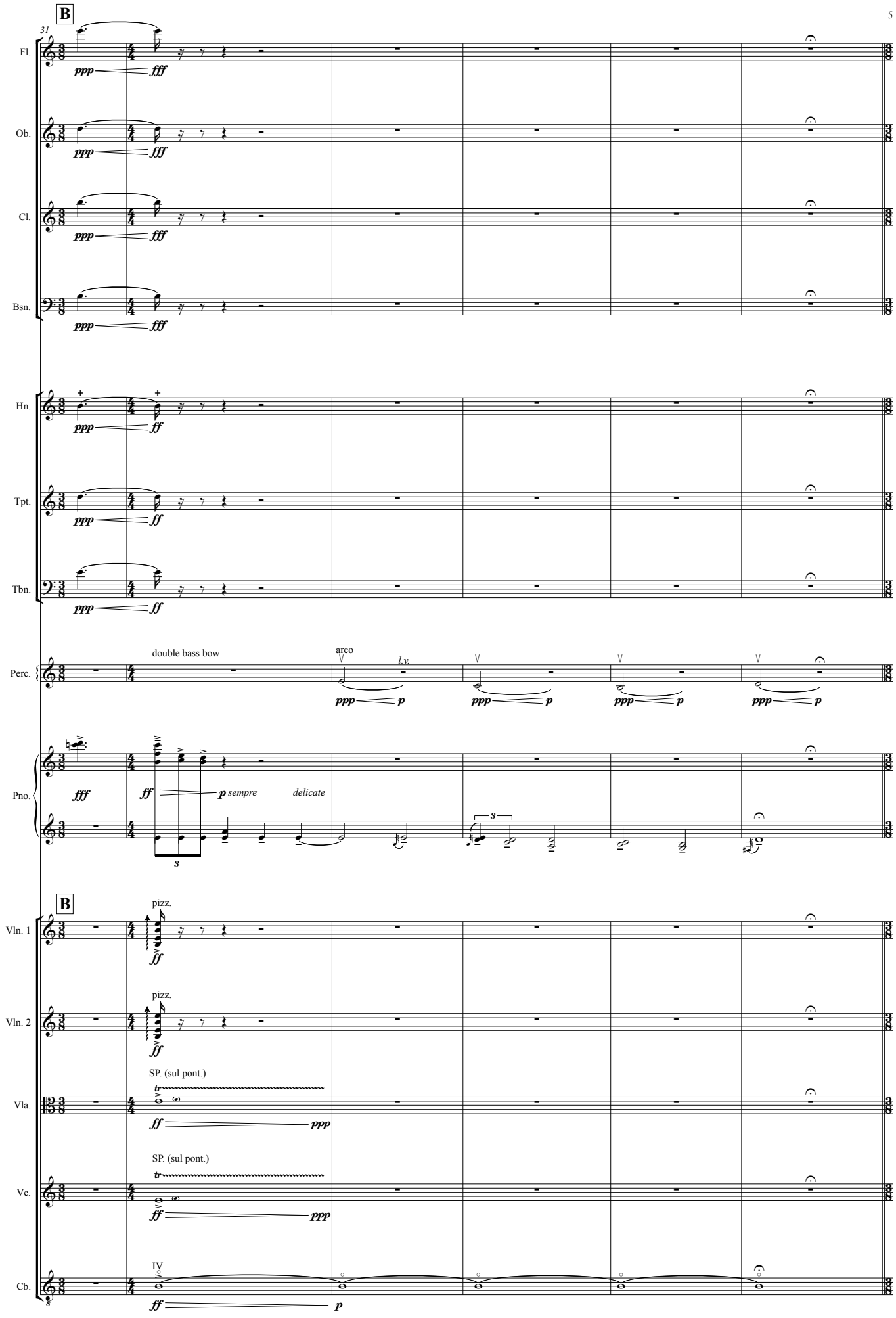
p *ppp*

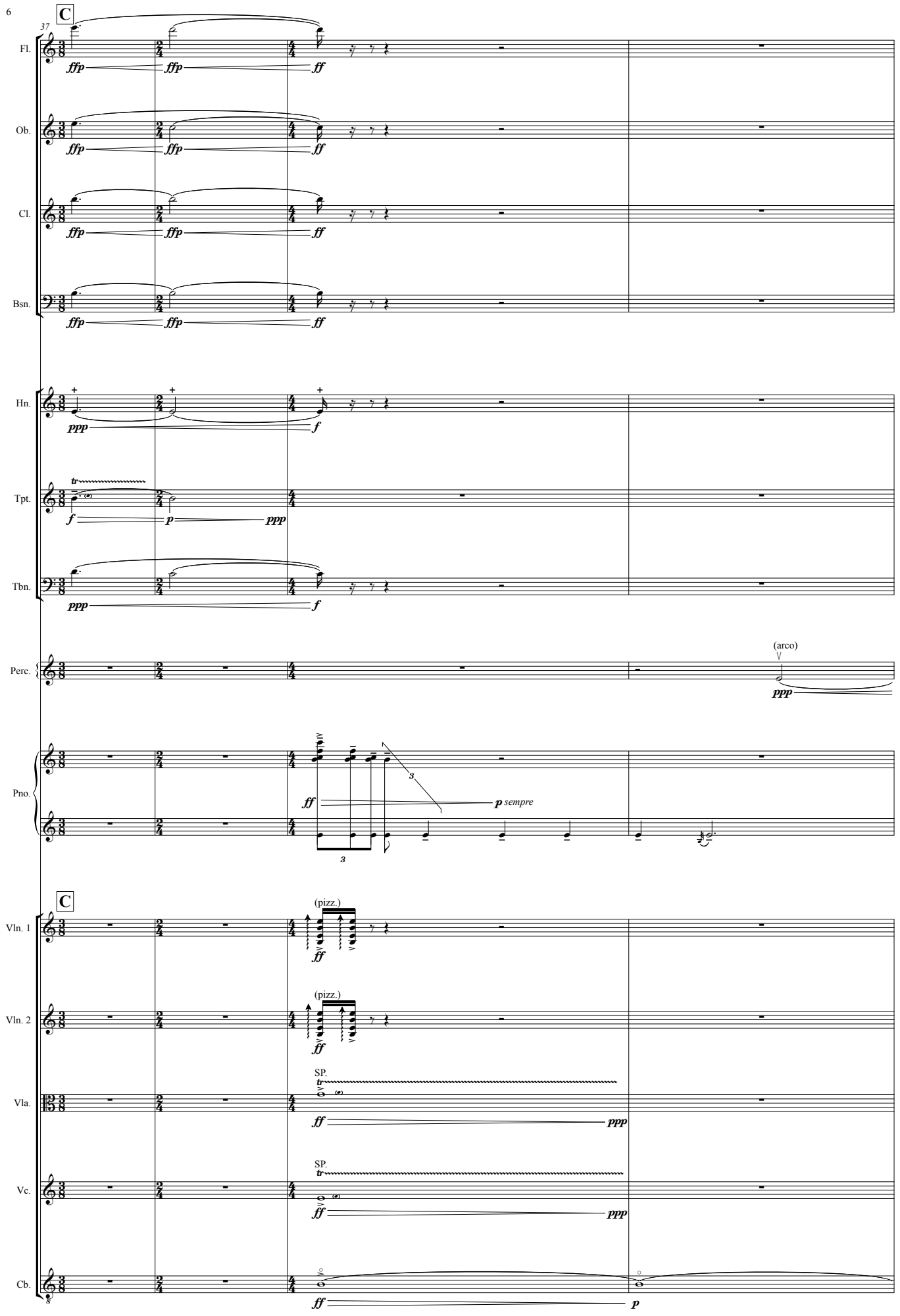

6
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
p
ppp
mf
II
I
IV

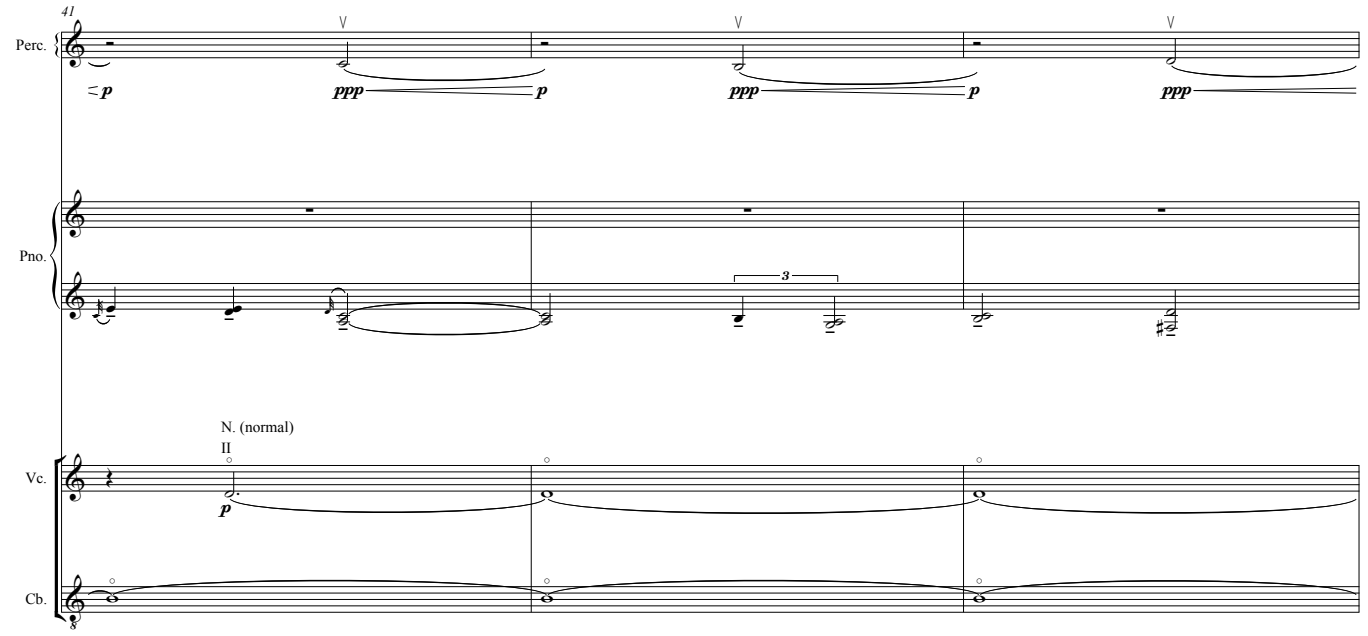

13
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
I
II
senza sord.
mf
p
f
ppp
ff

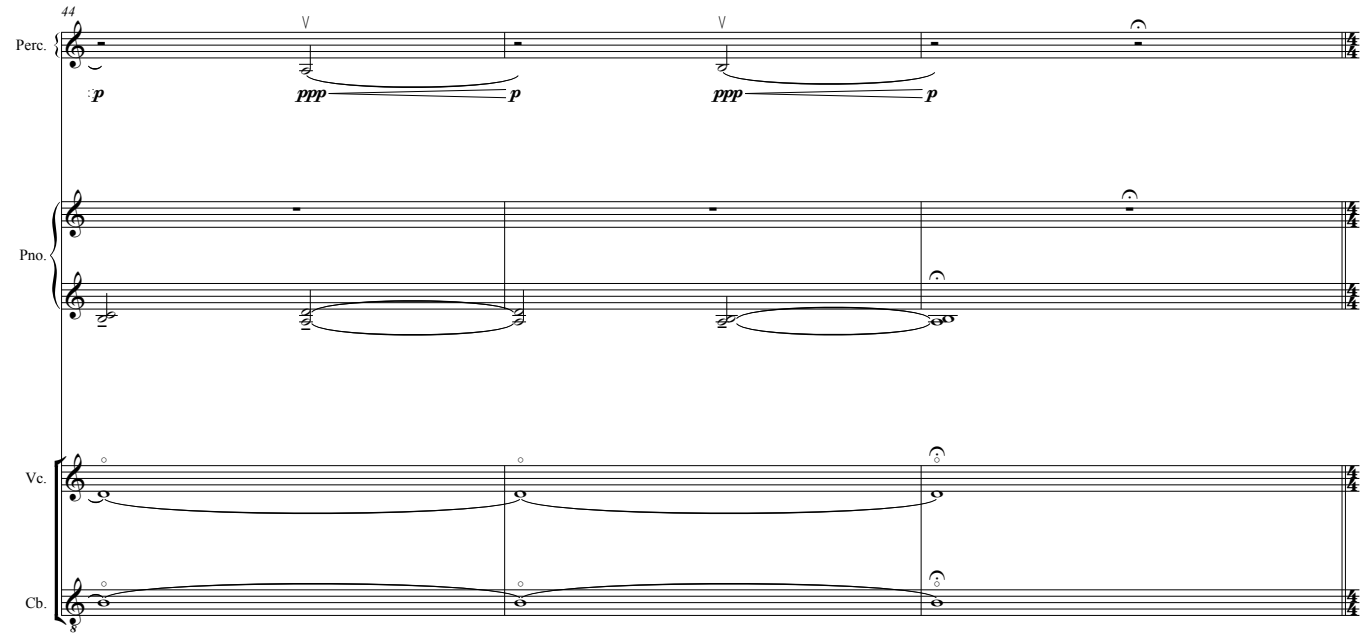
A ♩ = ca. 60 **energetic, bright**

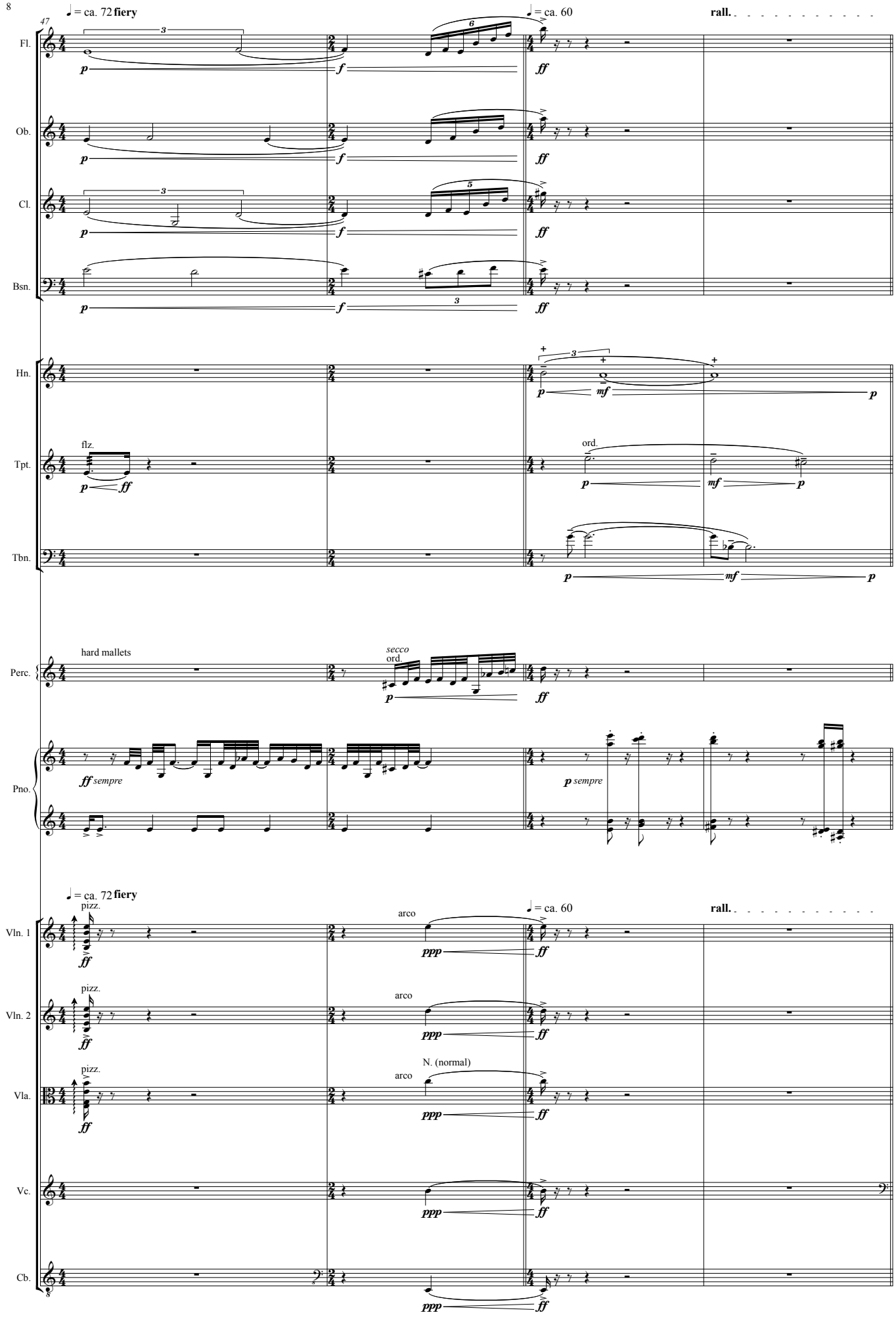


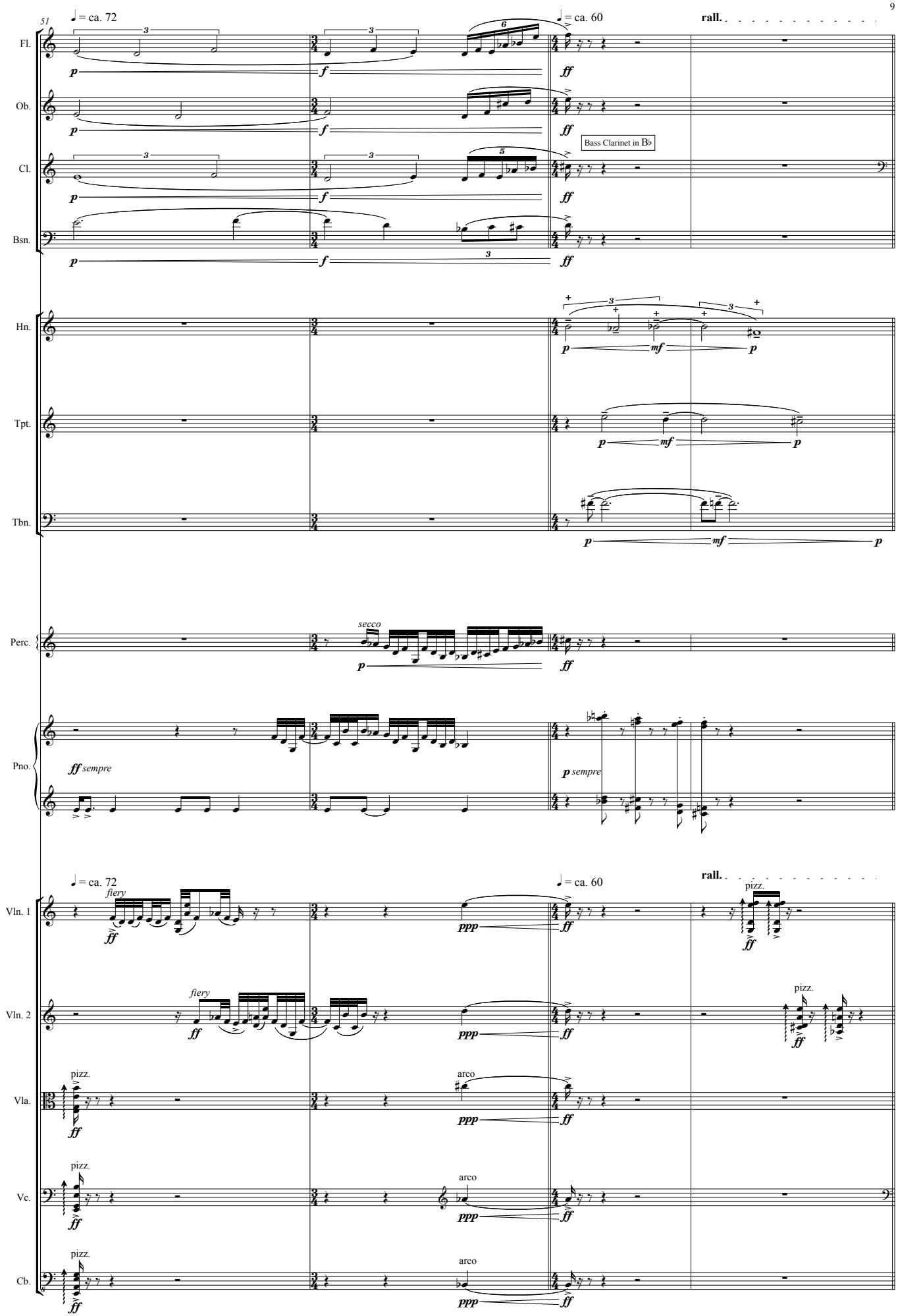

B
31
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Pno.
B
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
ppp
fff
ff
p
double bass bow
arco
l.v.
sempre
delicate
pizz.
SP. (sul pont.)
IV

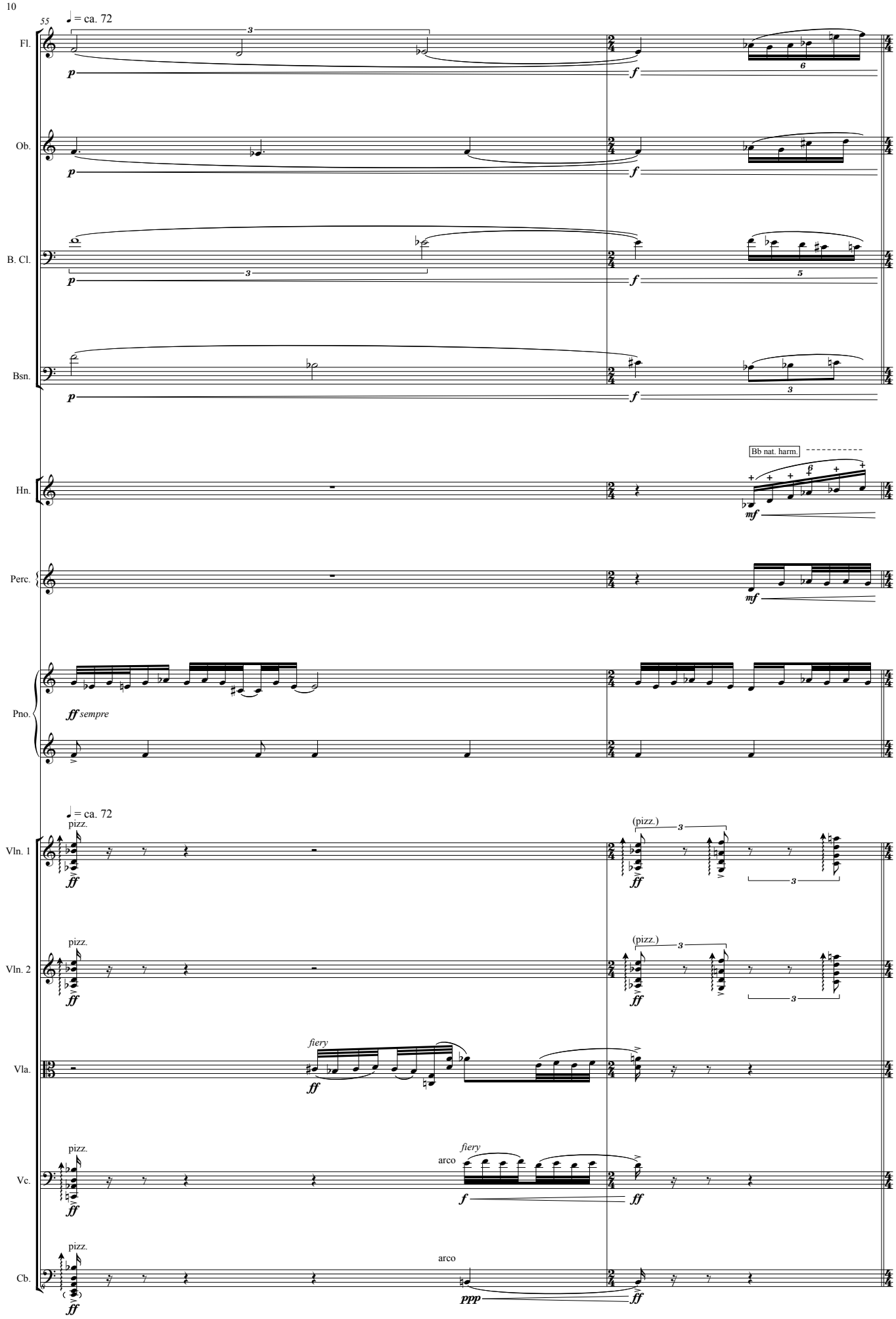

C
37
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Pno.
C
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
ffp
ff
ppp
f
p
tr
(arco)
(pizz.)
SP.
sempre
3
8

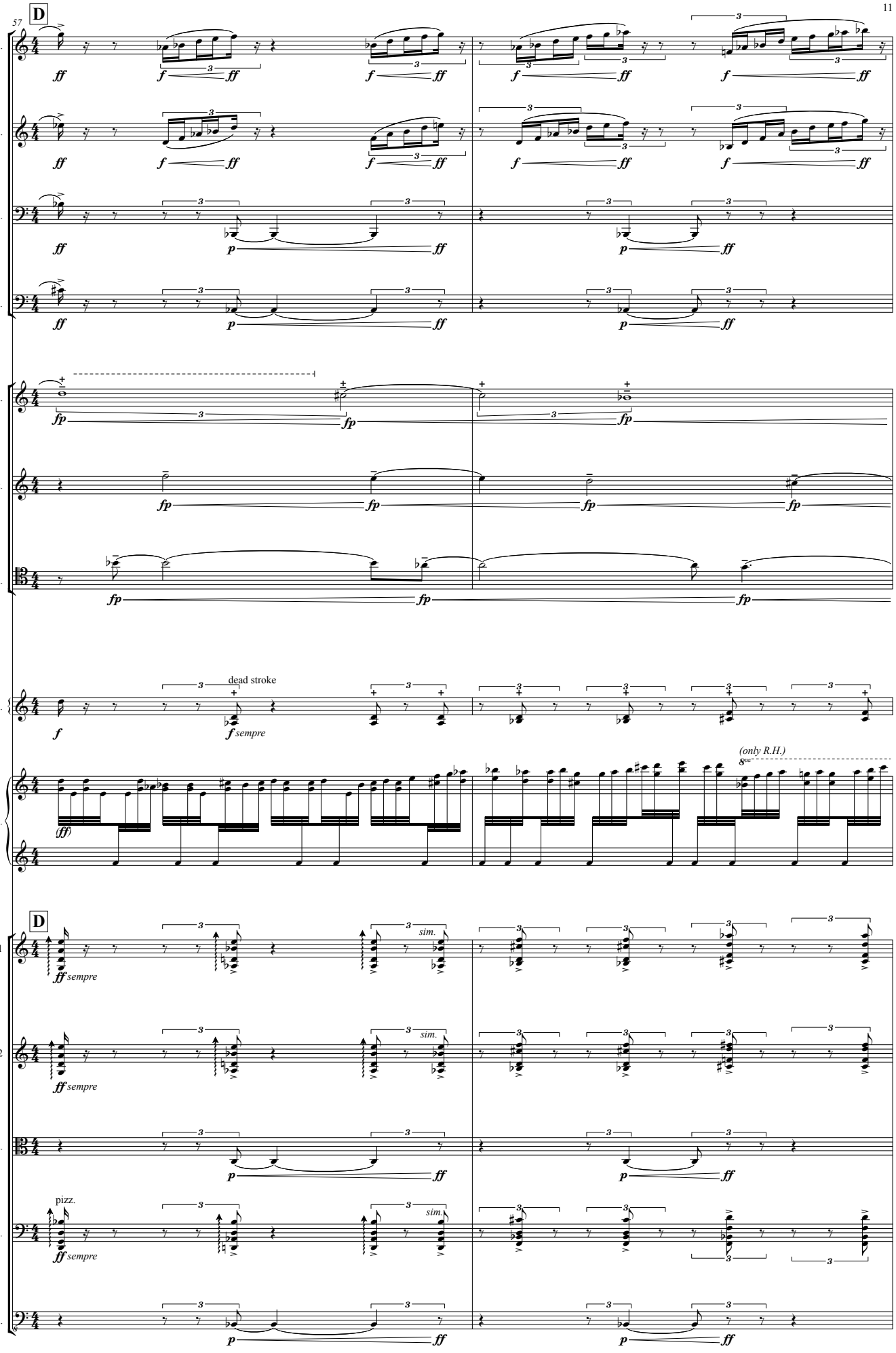

41
Perc.
p
ppp
p
ppp
p
ppp
Pno.
3
N. (normal)
II
Vc.
p
Cb.

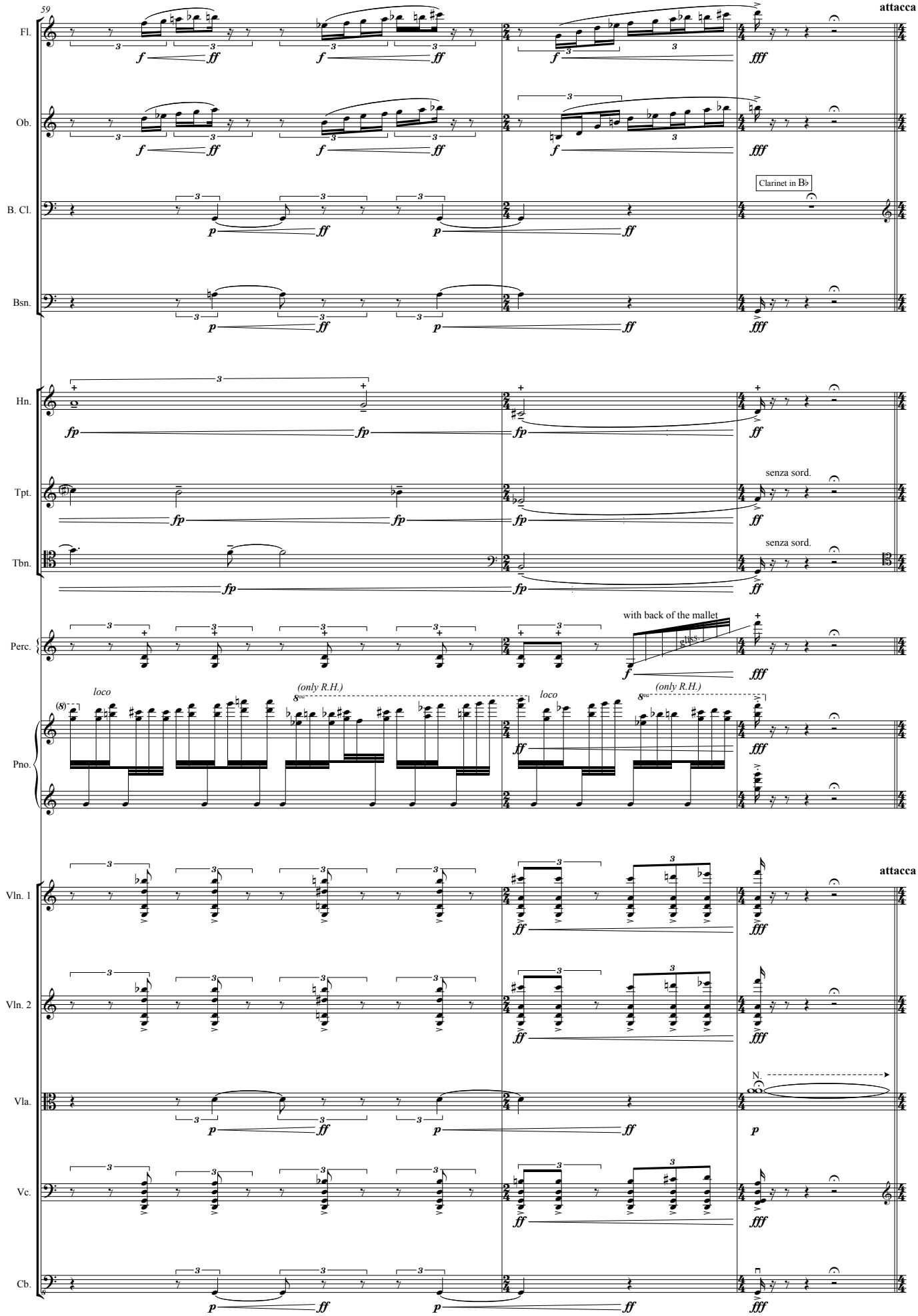

44
Perc.
p
ppp
p
ppp
p
Pno.
Vc.
Cb.

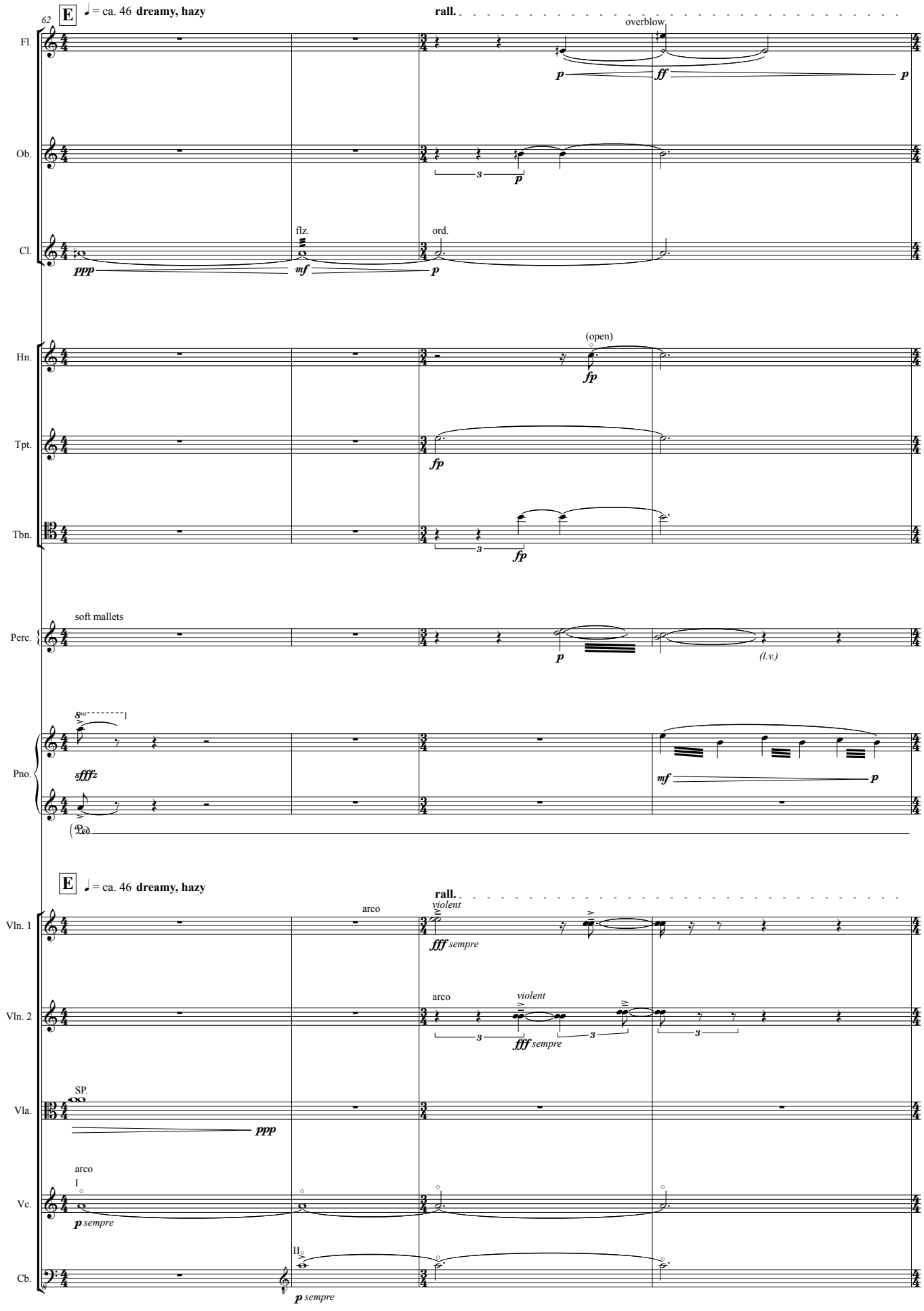

47
♩ = ca. 72 fiery
♩ = ca. 60
rall.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
flz.
ord.
Tbn.
hard mallets
secco
ord.
Perc.
ff sempre
p sempre
Pno.
♩ = ca. 72 fiery
pizz.
arco
♩ = ca. 60
rall.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
N. (normal)
Vc.
Cb.

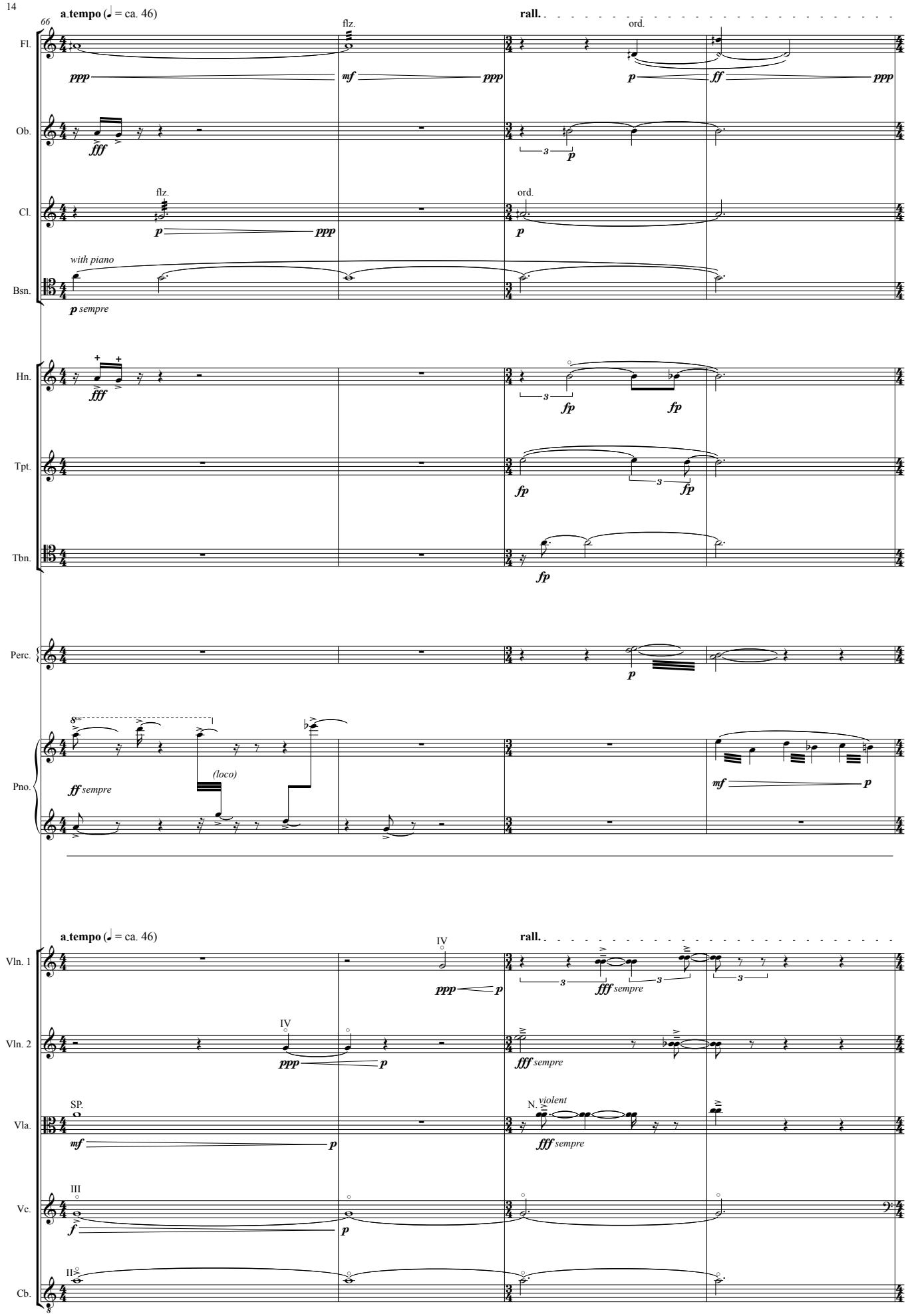

51
♩ = ca. 72
♩ = ca. 60
rall.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Bass Clarinet in B♭
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
secco
Pno.
ff sempre
p sempre
♩ = ca. 72
♩ = ca. 60
rall.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
fiery
pizz.
arco


55
♩ = ca. 72
Fl.
Ob.
B. Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Bb nat. harm.
Perc.
Pno.
ff sempre
♩ = ca. 72
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
pizz.
(pizz.)
fiery
arco


57
D
Fl.
Ob.
B. Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
dead stroke
Pno.
(only R.H.)
D
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
pizz.
sim.
sempre


59
attacca
Fl.
Ob.
B. Cl.
Clarinet in B♭
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
senza sord.
Tbn.
senza sord.
Perc.
with back of the mallet
gliss.
Pno.
loco
(only R.H.)
loco
(only R.H.)
attacca
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
N.
Vc.
Cb.


62
E
= ca. 46 dreamy, hazy
rall.
overblow
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
flz.
ord.
Hn.
(open)
Tpt.
Tbn.
soft mallets
Perc.
(l.v.)
Pno.
E
= ca. 46 dreamy, hazy
rall.
Vln. 1
arco
violent
sempre
Vln. 2
arco
violent
sempre
Vla.
SP.
Vc.
arco
I
sempre
II
Cb.
sempre


66
a.tempo (♩ = ca. 46)
rall.
Fl.
flz.
ord.
ppp
mf
ppp
p
ff
ppp
Ob.
fff
3
p
Cl.
flz.
ord.
p
ppp
p
with piano
Bsn.
p sempre
Hn.
fff
3
fp
fp
Tpt.
fp
3
fp
Tbn.
fp
Perc.
p
Pno.
8va
(loco)
ff sempre
mf
p
a.tempo (♩ = ca. 46)
rall.
Vln. 1
IV
ppp
p
3
fff sempre
3
3
Vln. 2
IV
ppp
p
fff sempre
Vla.
SP.
mf
p
N. violent
fff sempre
Vc.
III
f
p
Cb.
II
8

70

a tempo (♩ = ca. 46)

rall.

Fl.
flz.
ord.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
(dead stroke)
Perc.
Pno.
ff sempre

a tempo (♩ = ca. 46)

rall.

Vln. 1
N.
SP.
Vln. 2
IV
pizz.
arco
Vla.
III
SP.
Vc.
p sempre
II
Cb.

74

a.tempo (♩ = ca. 46)

rall.

Fl.
flz.
ord.
Ob.
Cl.
flz.
ord.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Pno.
ff sempre
mf

a.tempo (♩ = ca. 46)

rall.

Vln. 1
SP.
N.
fff sempre
Vln. 2
N.
SP.
Vla.
pizz.
arco
SP.
Vc.
III
Cb.
II

78 **a.tempo** (♩ = ca. 46)

F ♩ = ca. 60 **ritualistic, obsessive**

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Perc.

Tubular Bell (G4)
plastic hammer

Pno.

a.tempo (♩ = ca. 46)

F ♩ = ca. 60 **ritualistic, obsessive**

Vln. 1

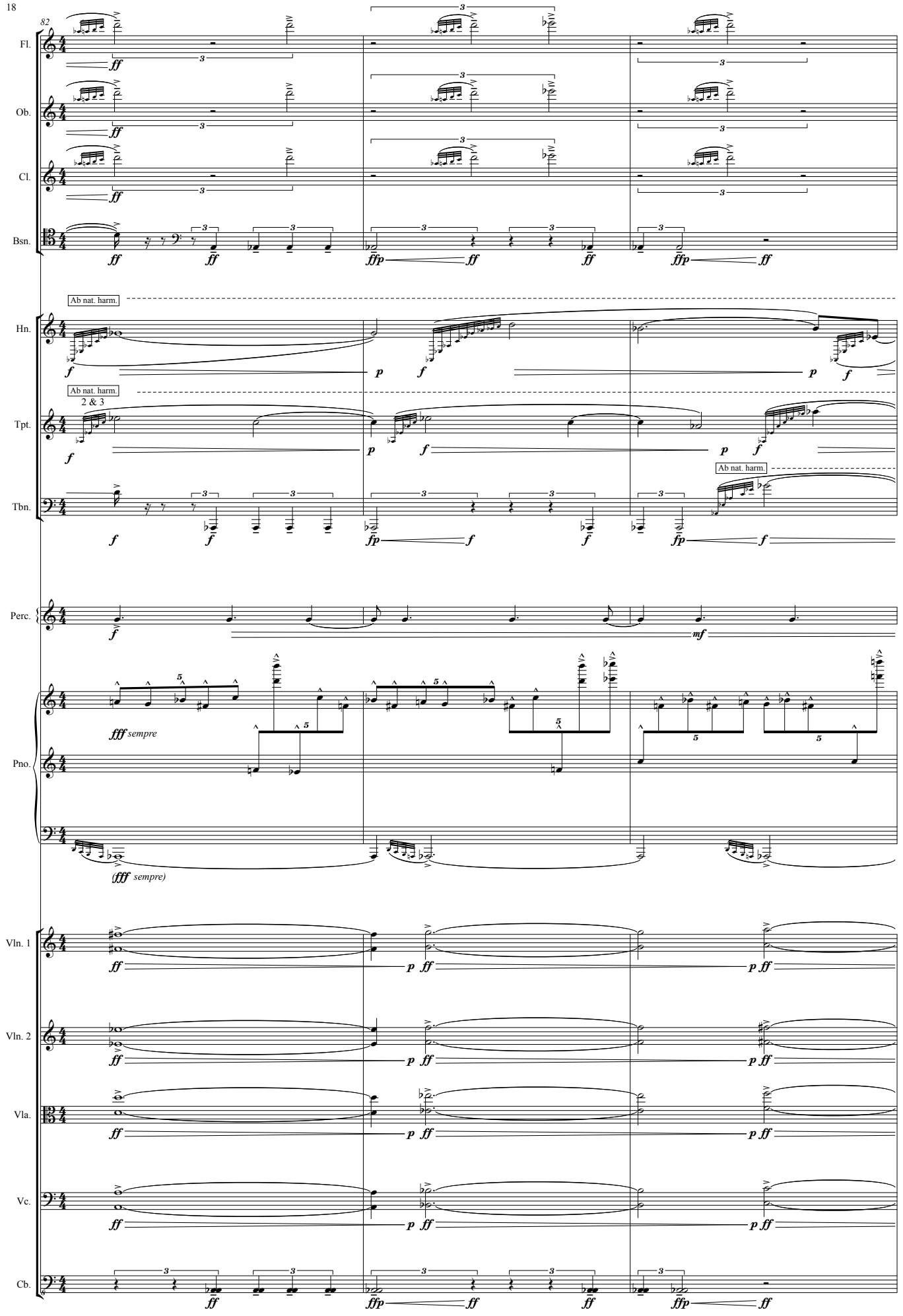
Vln. 2

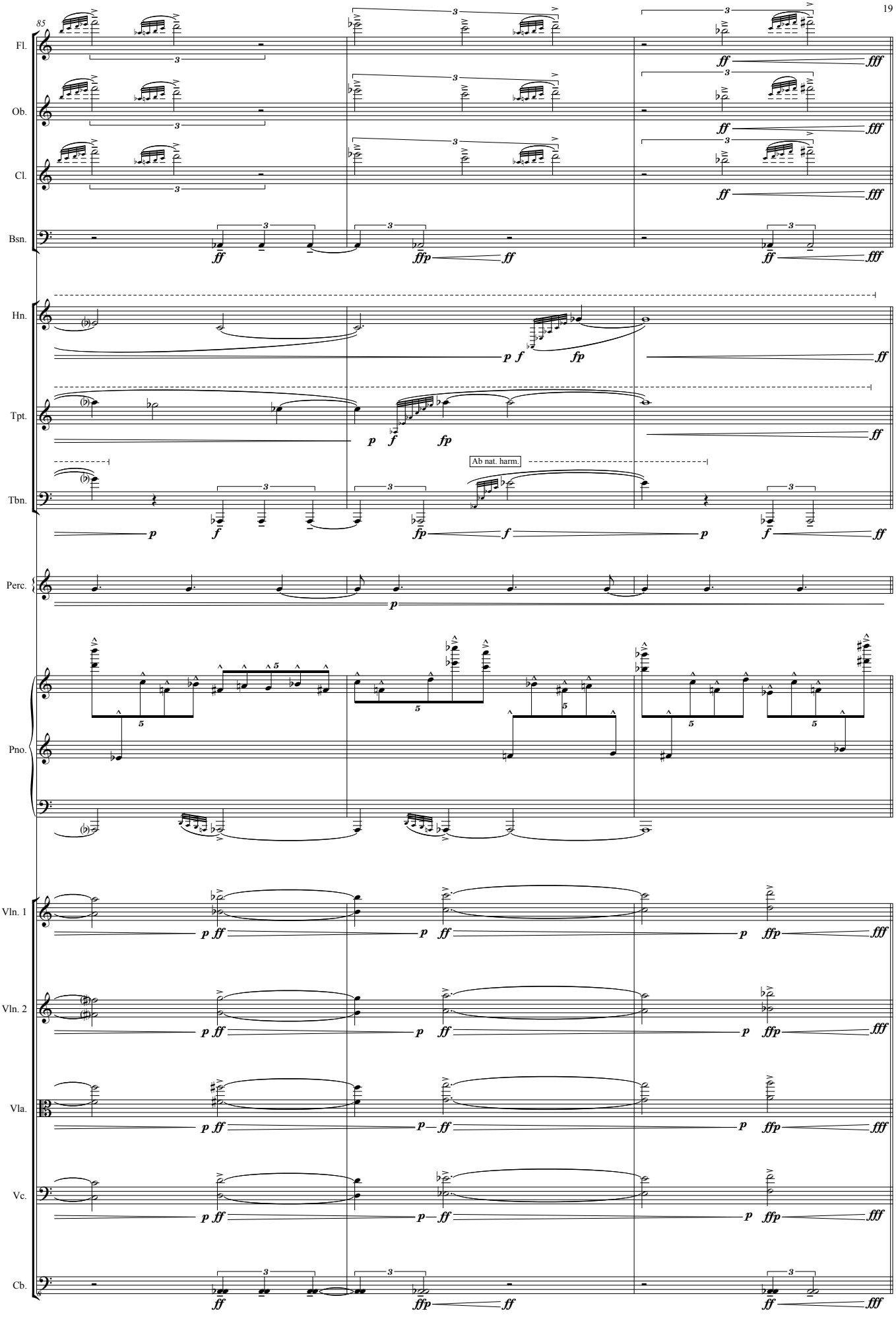
Vla.

Vc.

arco

Cb.


82
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Ab nat. harm.
Hn.
Ab nat. harm.
2 & 3
Tpt.
Ab nat. harm.
Tbn.
Perc.
fff sempre
Pno.
(fff sempre)
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.


85
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Ab nat. harm.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

G **hypnotic**

88

Fl.

mf sempre

Cl.

mf sempre

Tbn.

p

Perc.

p sempre

fff sempre

mf

Pno.

p sempre

8vb

G **hypnotic**

piercing

arco

Vln. 1

fff sempre

piercing

arco

Vln. 2

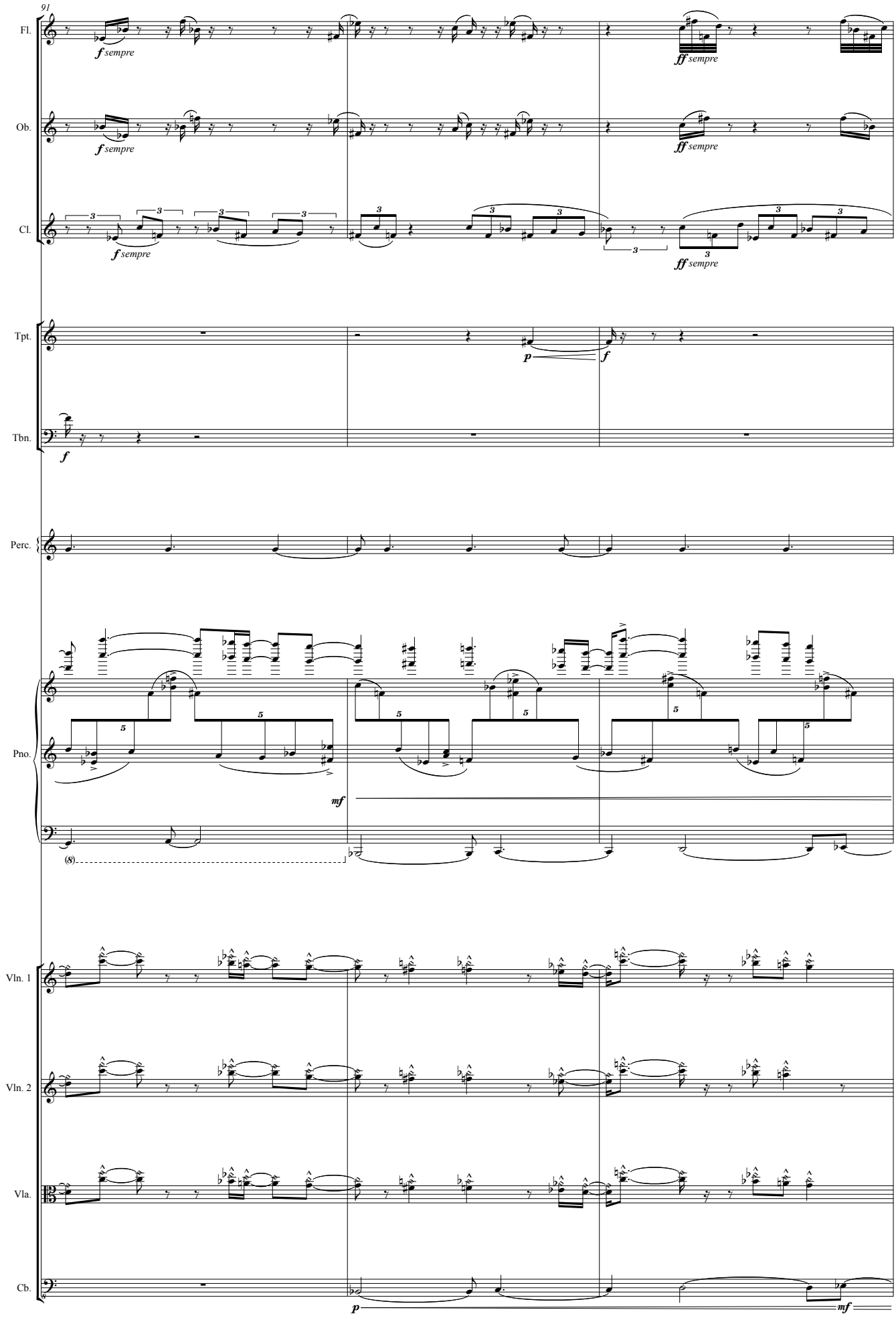
fff sempre

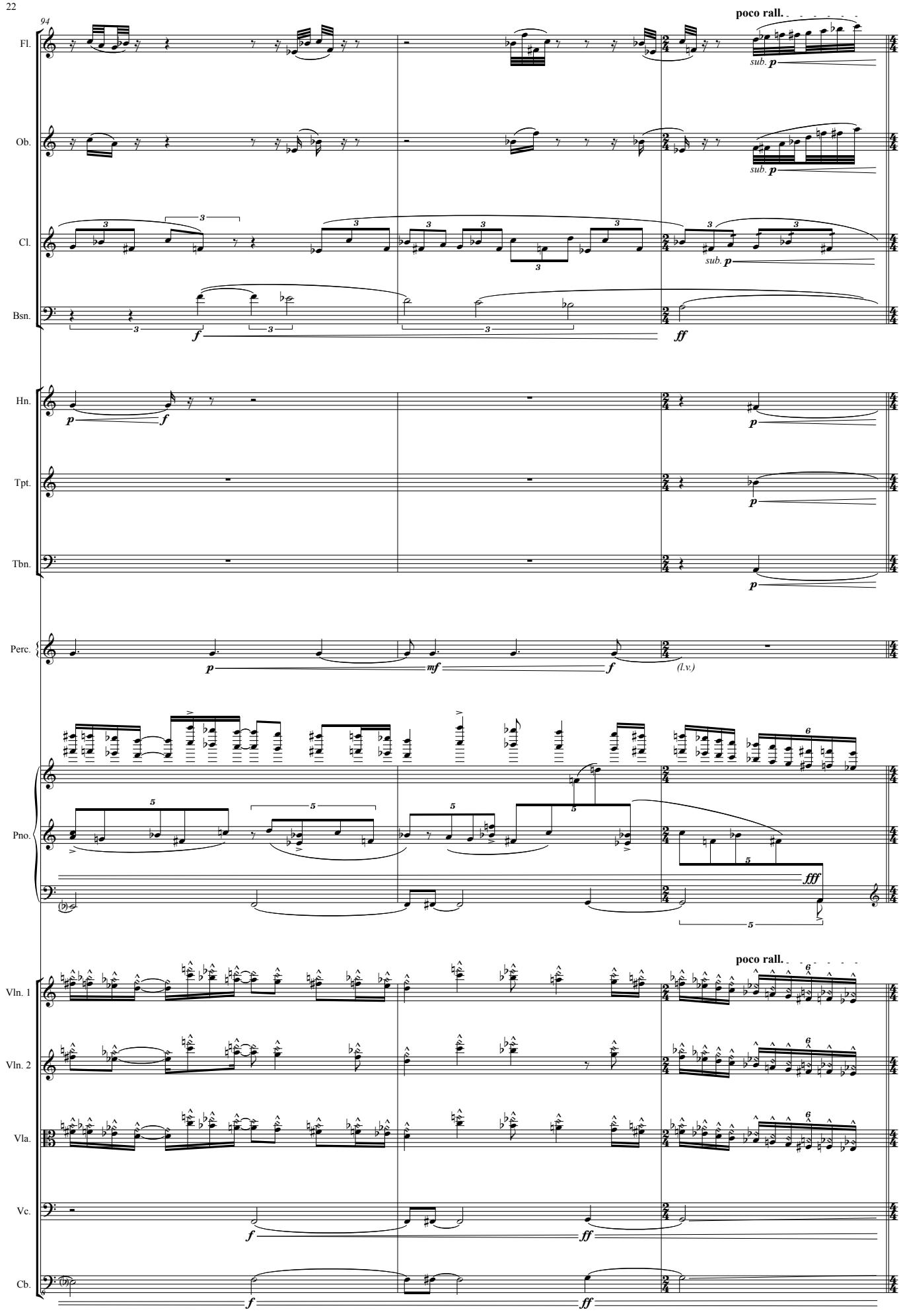
piercing

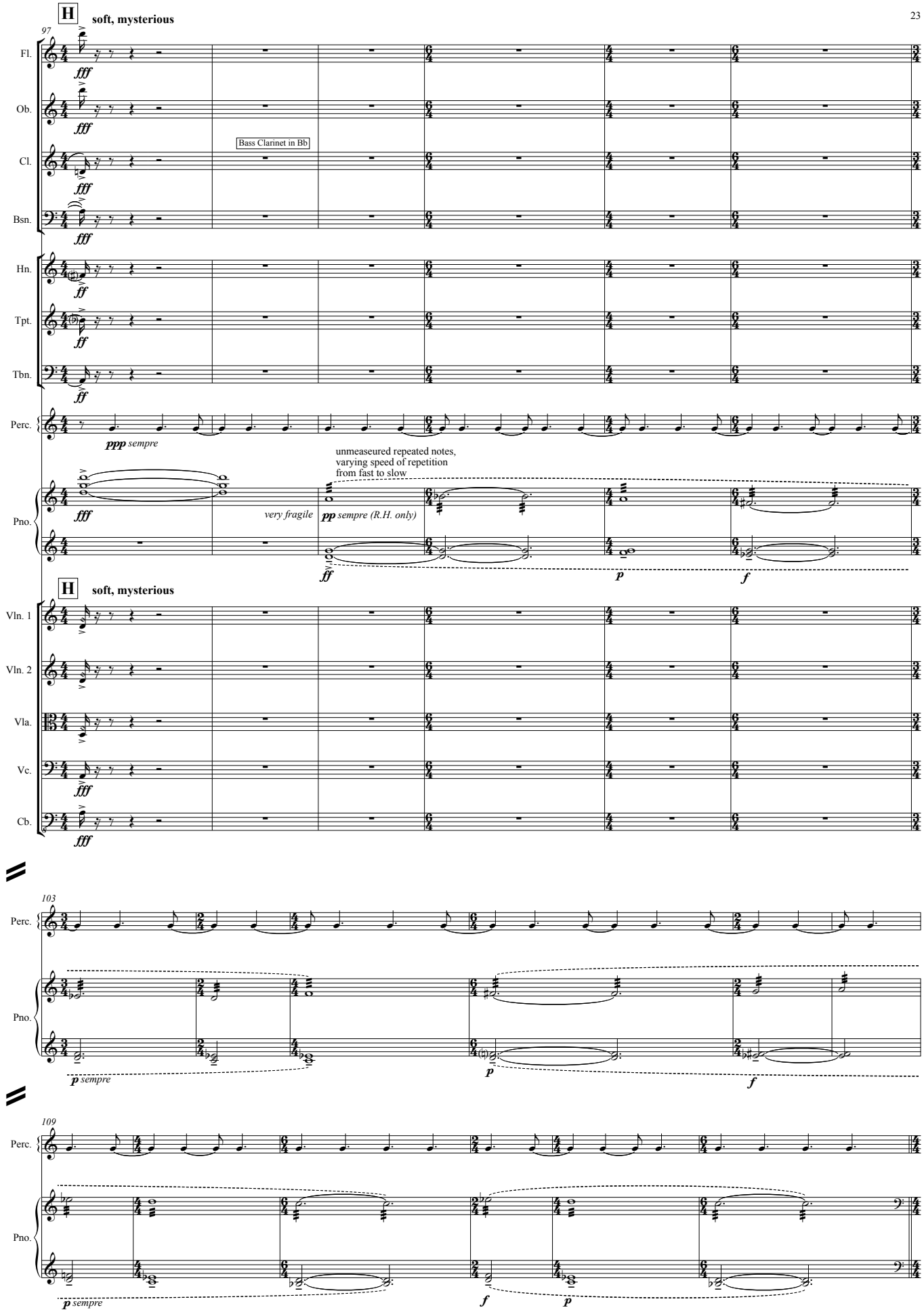
arco

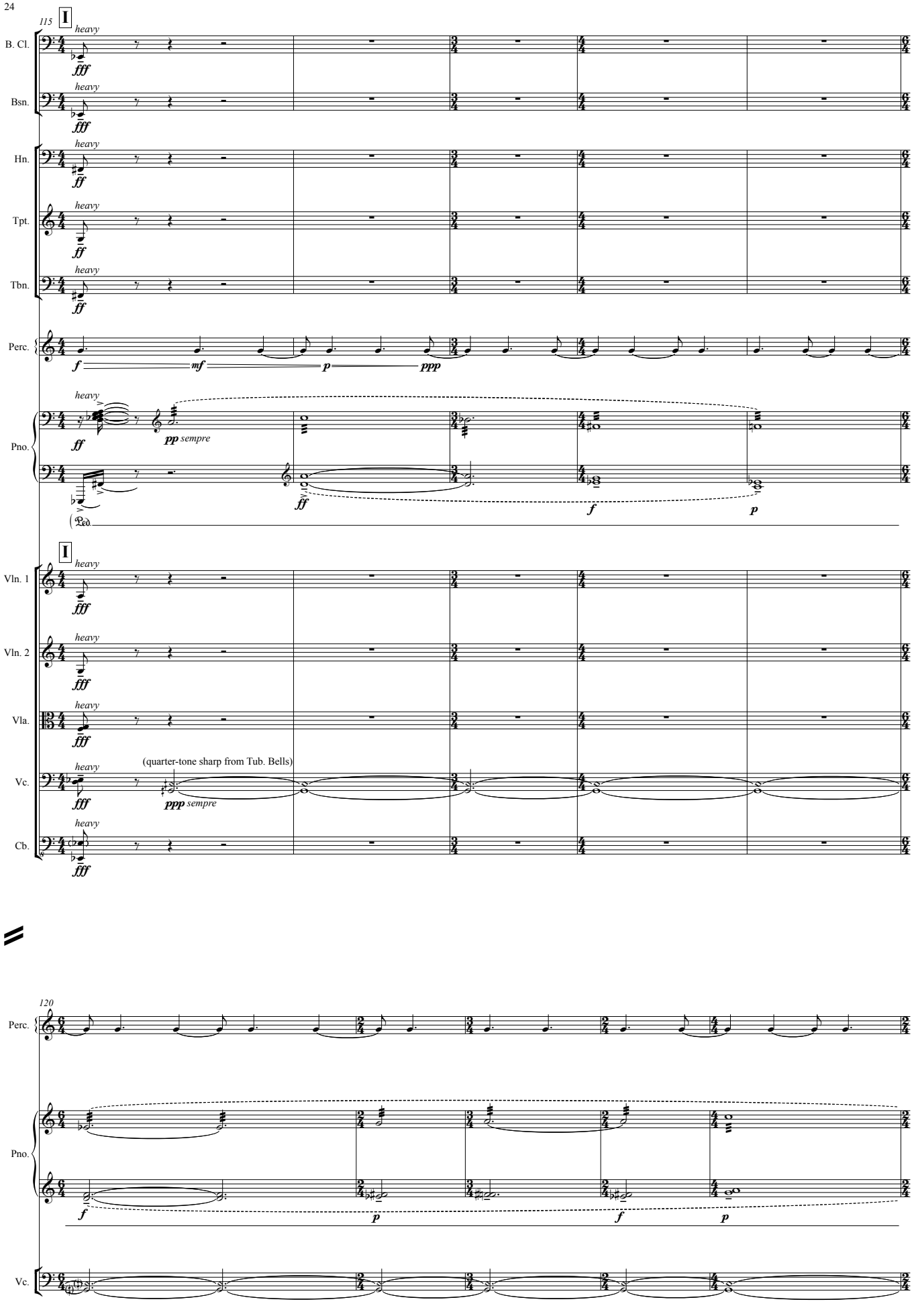
Vla.

fff sempre

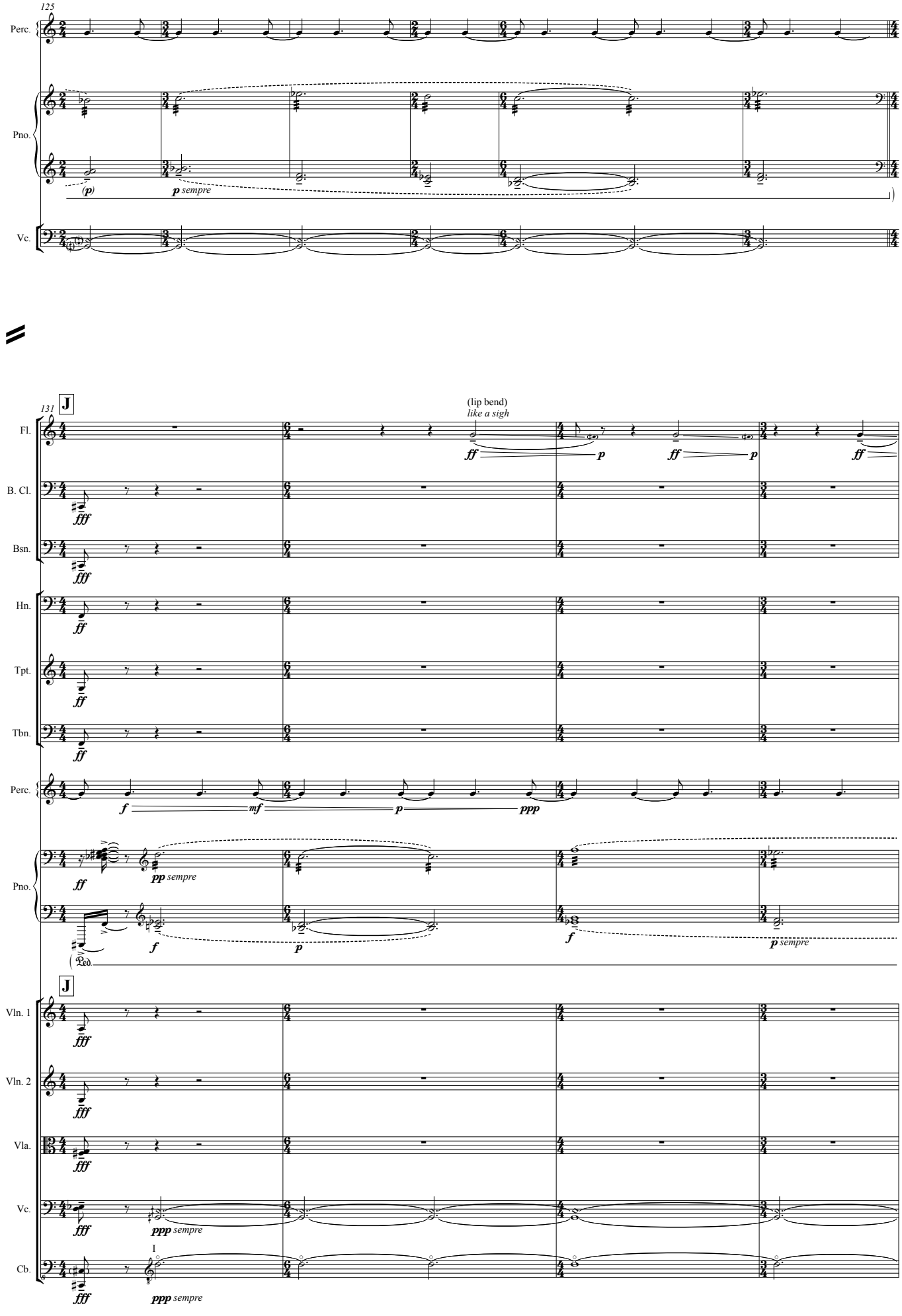

91
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Cb.
f sempre
ff sempre
p
f
mf
(8)

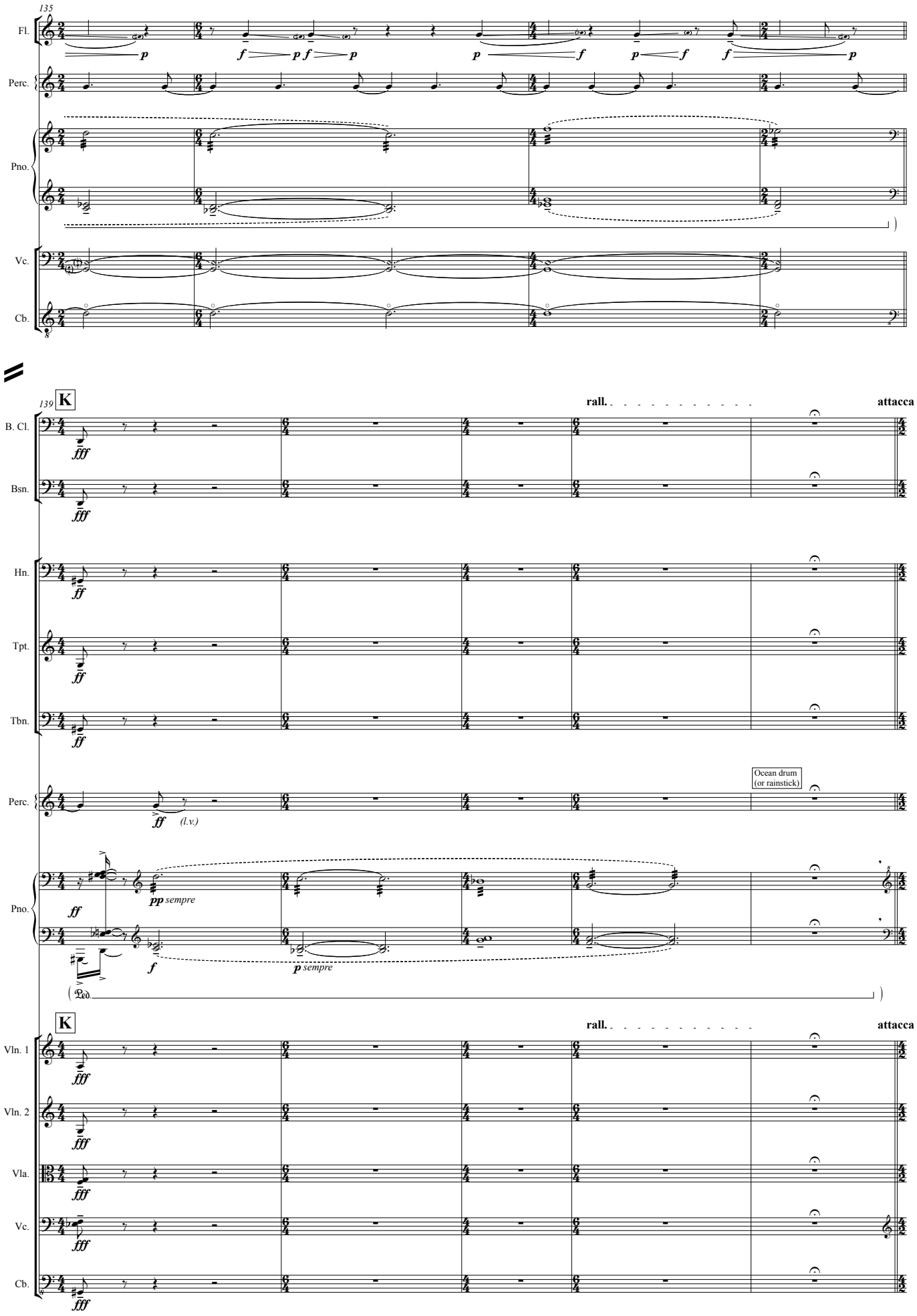

94
poco rall.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
sub. p
f
ff
mf
fff
(l.v.)


H
soft, mysterious
97
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
Bass Clarinet in Bb
ppp sempre
unmeasured repeated notes,
varying speed of repetition
from fast to slow
very fragile
pp sempre (R.H. only)
103
109
p sempre
f
p


115
I
B. Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
heavy
fff
ff
f
mf
p
ppp
pp sempre
sempre
(quarter-tone sharp from Tub. Bells)
Ped.

120
Perc.
Pno.
Vc.
f
p


125
Perc.
Pno.
(p)
p sempre
Vc.
131
J
(lip bend)
like a sigh
Fl.
B. Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
pp sempre
ppp sempre
I


135
Fl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vc.
Cb.
139
K
rall.
attacca
B. Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Ocean drum
(or rainstick)
Pno.
pp sempre
p sempre
K
rall.
attacca
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

III

L ♩ = ca. 40 (𝅗𝅥 = ca. 20)

lamenting, peaceful

WT. (whistle tones)

144

Fl.

p sempre

sim.

Tbn.

**

p

rotate drum very slowly

Perc.

p

p

fff

fff

sim.

(N.B. 8va)

mf

mf

sim.

Pno.

soft, cantabile

p sempre

low bells

Una corda, throughout

ppp sempre

L ♩ = ca. 40 (𝅗𝅥 = ca. 20)

lamenting, peaceful

Vln. 1

pizz.

ff sempre
like raindrops

Vln. 2

pizz.

ff sempre
like raindrops

Vc.

softly echoing the piano

IV (IV) (IV) II IV (IV) (IV)

ppp sempre

Cb.

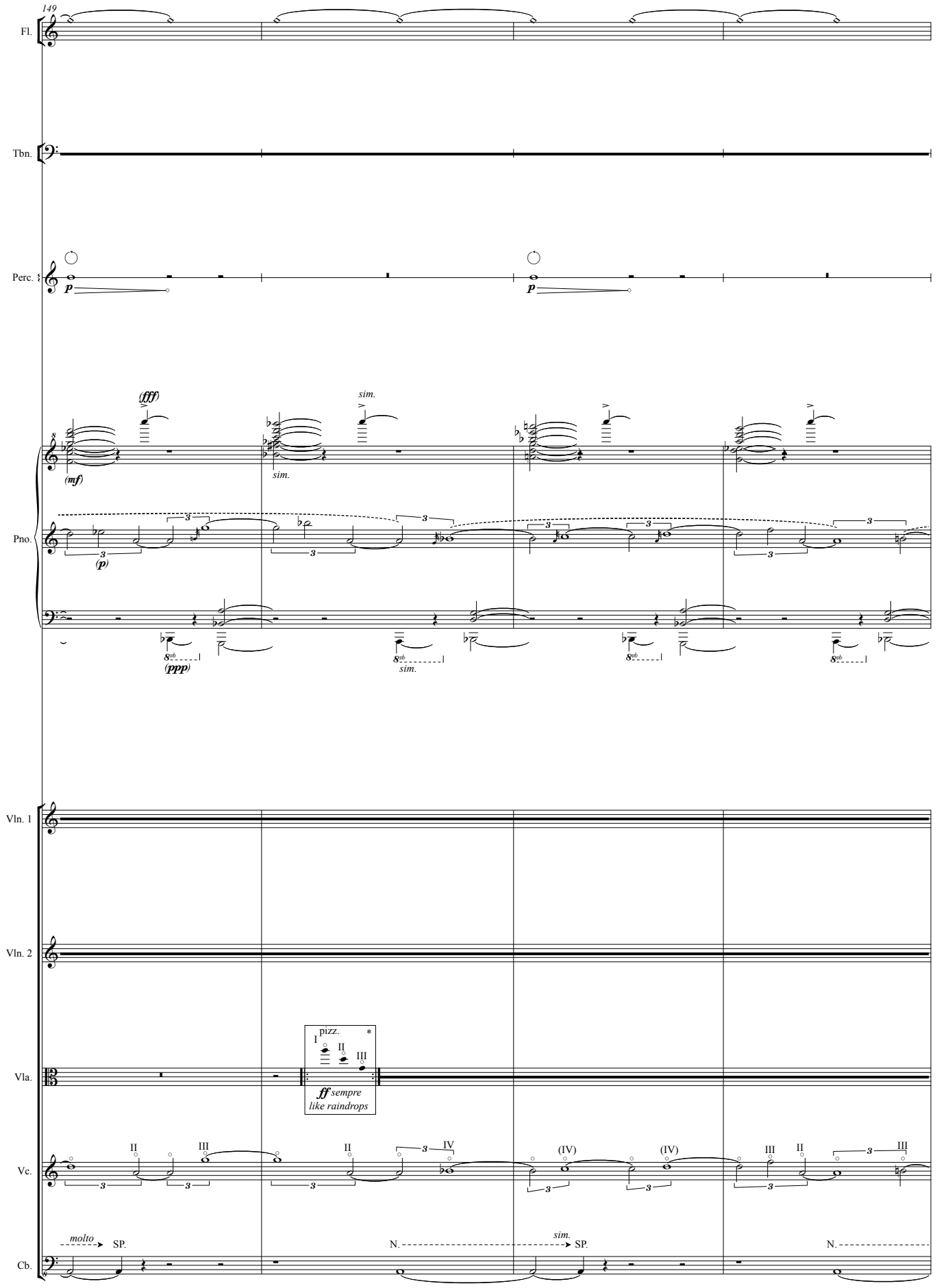
N. (normal) *molto* SP. (sul pont) N.

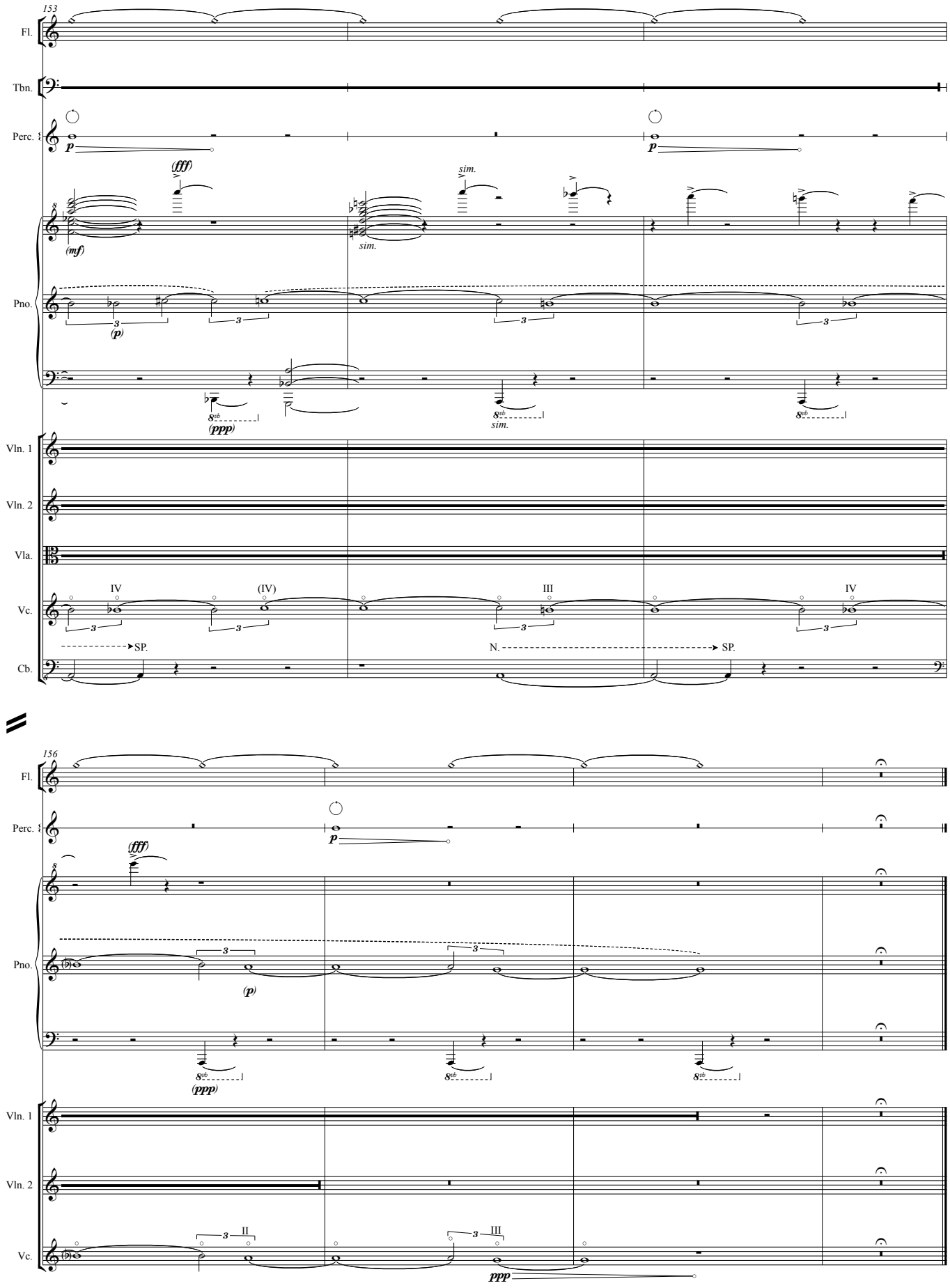
ppp sempre

(ppp)

* play any given pitch every 2" - 4"
do not synchronize with other performers

** blow through instrument for 3" every 3" -5"


149
Fl.
Tbn.
Perc.
p
p
(fff)
sim.
(mf)
sim.
Pno.
3
(p)
(ppp)
sim.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
pizz.
I
II
III
ff sempre
like raindrops
Vc.
II
III
II
IV
(IV)
(IV)
III
II
III
molto
SP.
N.
sim.
SP.
N.
Cb.


153
Fl.
Tbn.
Perc.
p
p
(fff)
sim.
(mf)
sim.
Pno.
3
(p)
3
3
3
8vb
(ppp)
8vb
sim.
8vb
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
IV
(IV)
III
IV
3
3
3
3
SP.
N.
SP.
Cb.
156
Fl.
Perc.
p
(fff)
Pno.
3
(p)
3
8vb
(ppp)
8vb
8vb
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vc.
3
II
3
III
ppp

Joel Järventausta

Ripped Tapestry

for orchestra

(2018-19)

The premiere was given by l'Orchestre national d'Île de France, conducted by Jean Deroyer at Centre des boards des Marne, le Perreux-sur-Marne (France), on 21 February 2019

1st Prize winner of the 7th Edition of Île de Creations Composition Competition with l'Orchestre national d'Île de France, supported by Radio France

Duration = ca. 10 minutes

Instrumentation

Flute

2 Oboes

2 Clarinets in Bb

2 Bassoons

2 Horns in F

2 Trumpets in Bb

Timpani

Violin 1 (4 desks)

Violin 2 (4 desks)

Viola (3 desks)

Cello (2 desks)

Double Bass (2 desks)

Score in C

Composer's notes

Ripped Tapestry is built of five short movements, all responding to the famous anonymous medieval secular song *l'homme armé.* The title refers to the idea of an imaginary tapestry - depicting the armed man - destroyed, ripped apart resulting in an abstracted version of the original. The music follows in this vein.

Ripped Tapestry is a sister piece to *Stonewalls* (2017) which is a response to a medieval plainchant from Finland.

J.Järventausta

Contents

Ripped Tapestry

for orchestra

I

Joel Järventausta
2018-19

♩ = ca. 46 **fragile and cold**

Flute

2 Oboes

2 Clarinets in B♭

2 Bassoons

2 Horns in F

2 Trumpets in B♭

Timpani

p sempre

♩ = ca. 46 **fragile and cold**

distant, like an echo

Violin I

ppp sempre

Violin II

SP. (sul pont.)

p sempre

(SP.)

Contrabass

pizz.

I I II II III IV V *

ppp *ff*

* play the given pitches/gestures every 2-3 seconds
in any order individually & unsynchronized.
Follow dynamic marking.
If 5th string is not availble, do not play C

5 **A**

Timp.

A

Vln. I

(SP.)

Vln. II

Cb.

ppp

12 **B** G nat. harm.

mute

pp sempre

Hn.

mute

G nat. harm.

pp sempre

(7th harmonic)

(7th harmonic)

Timp.

B

Vln. I

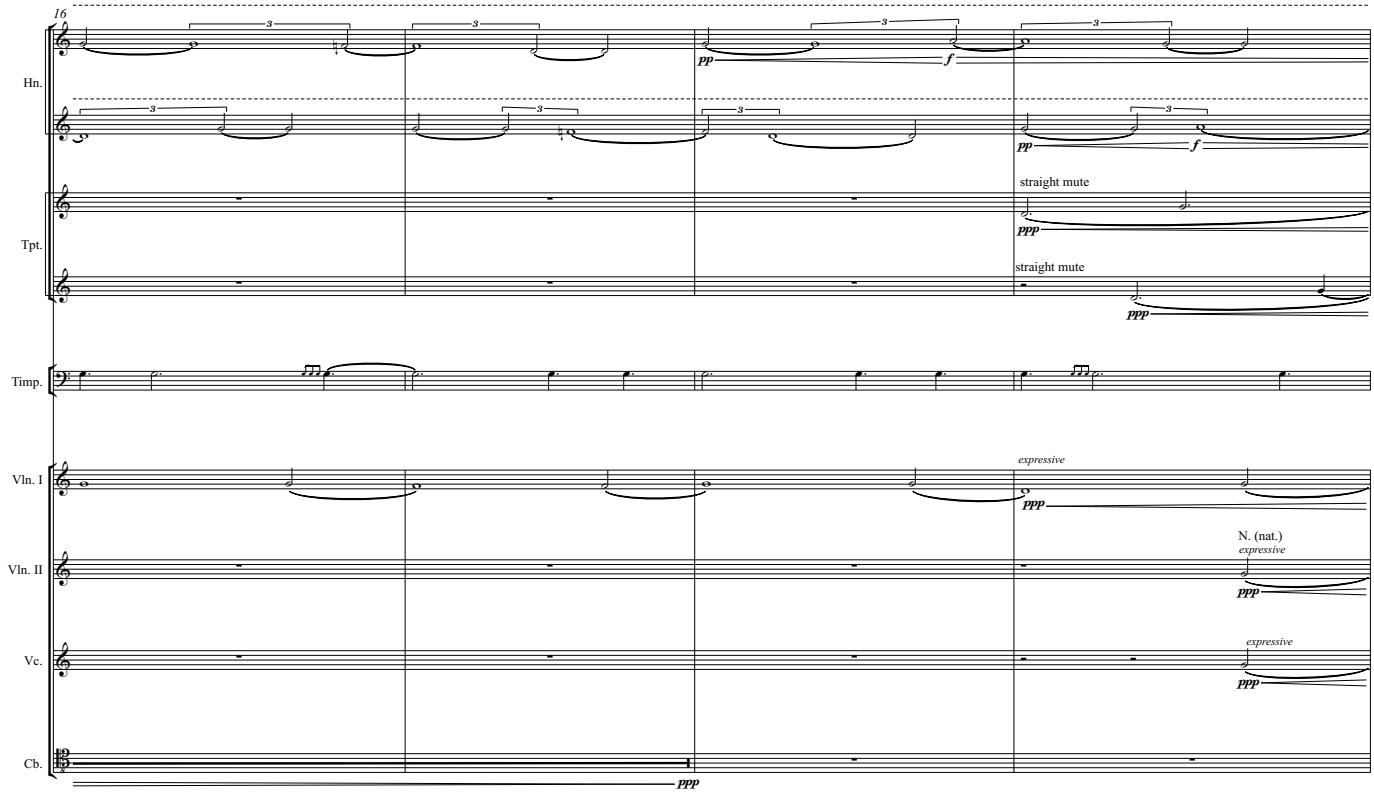
Vln. II

pizz.

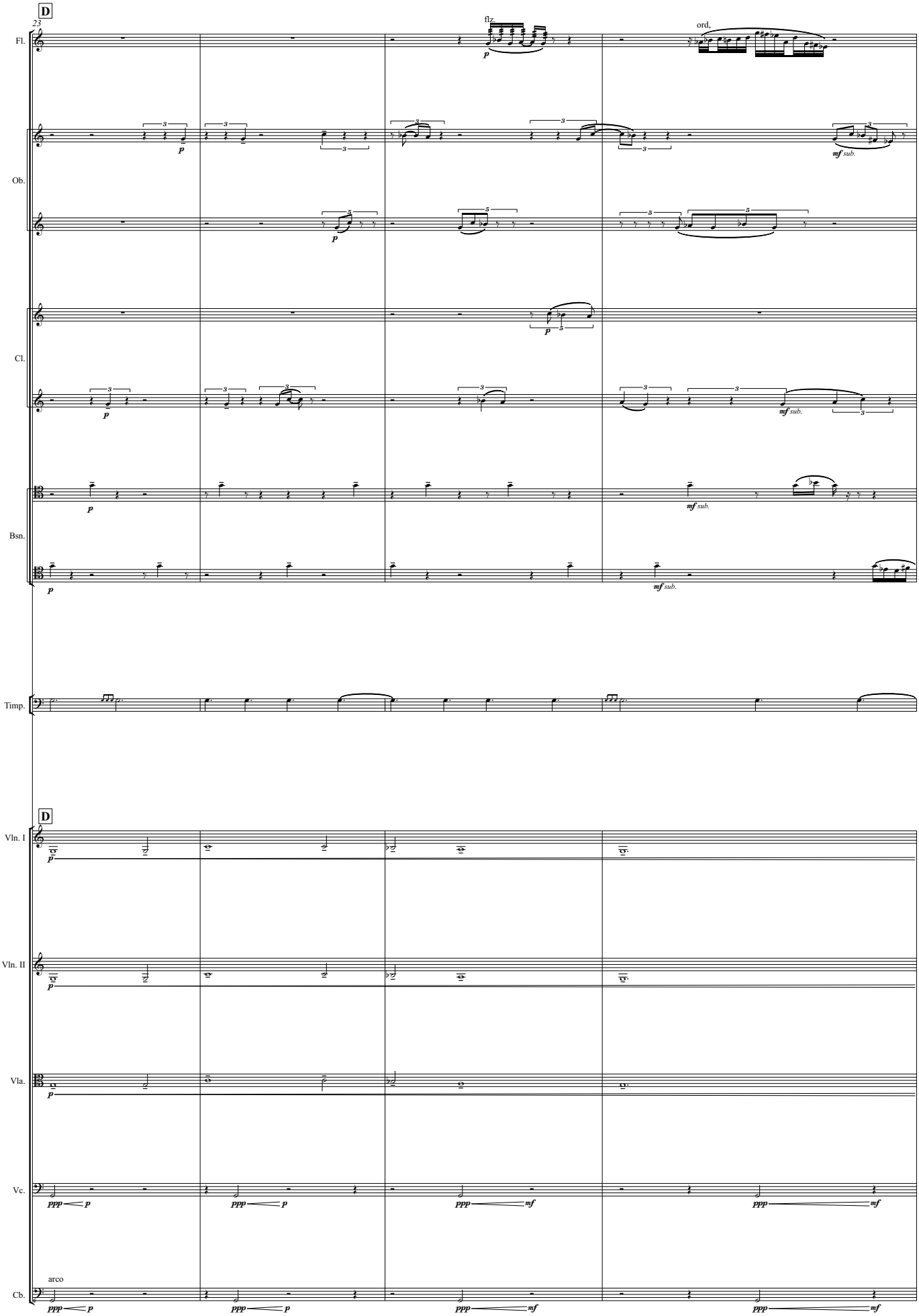
I I II II III IV V

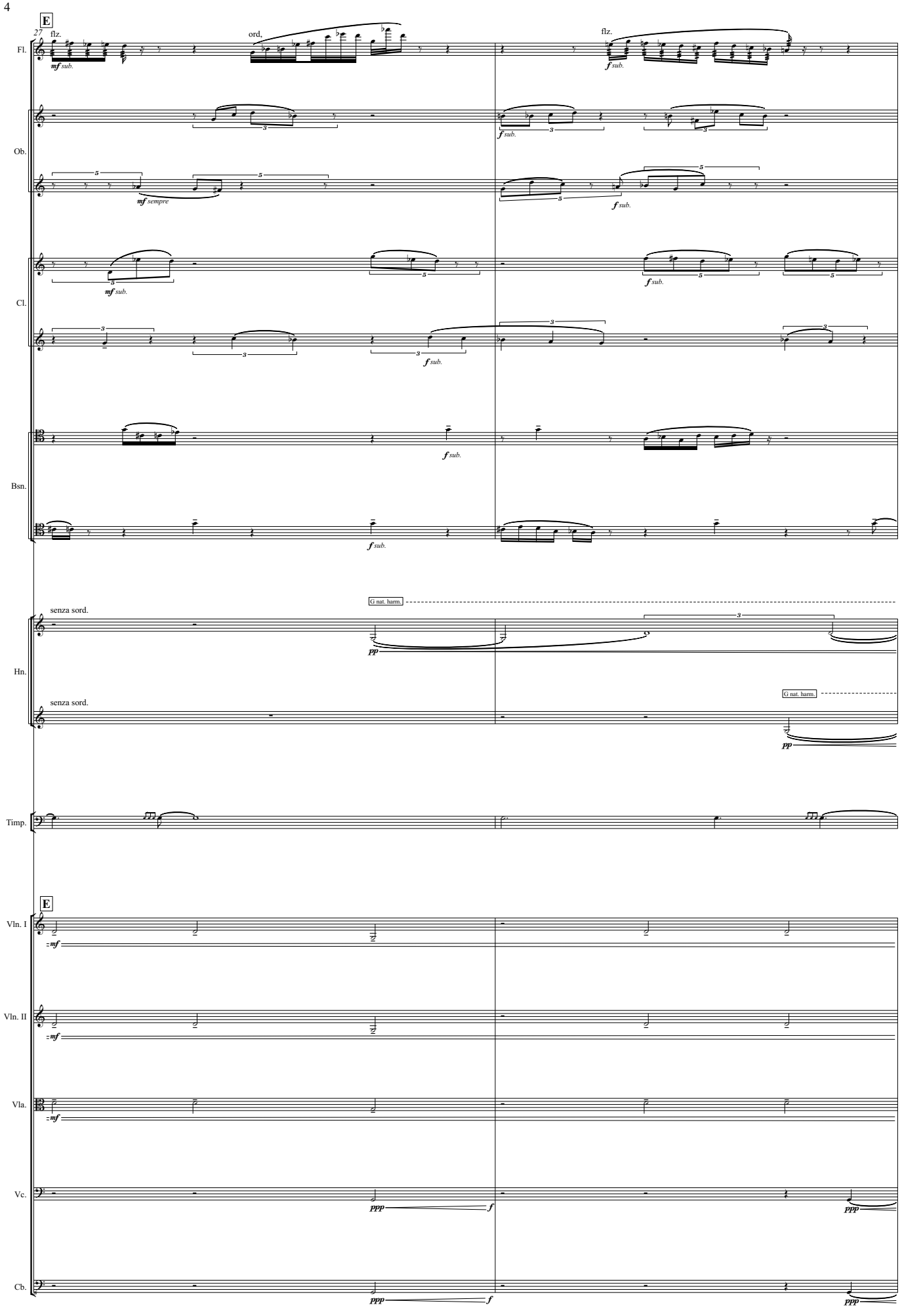
Cb.

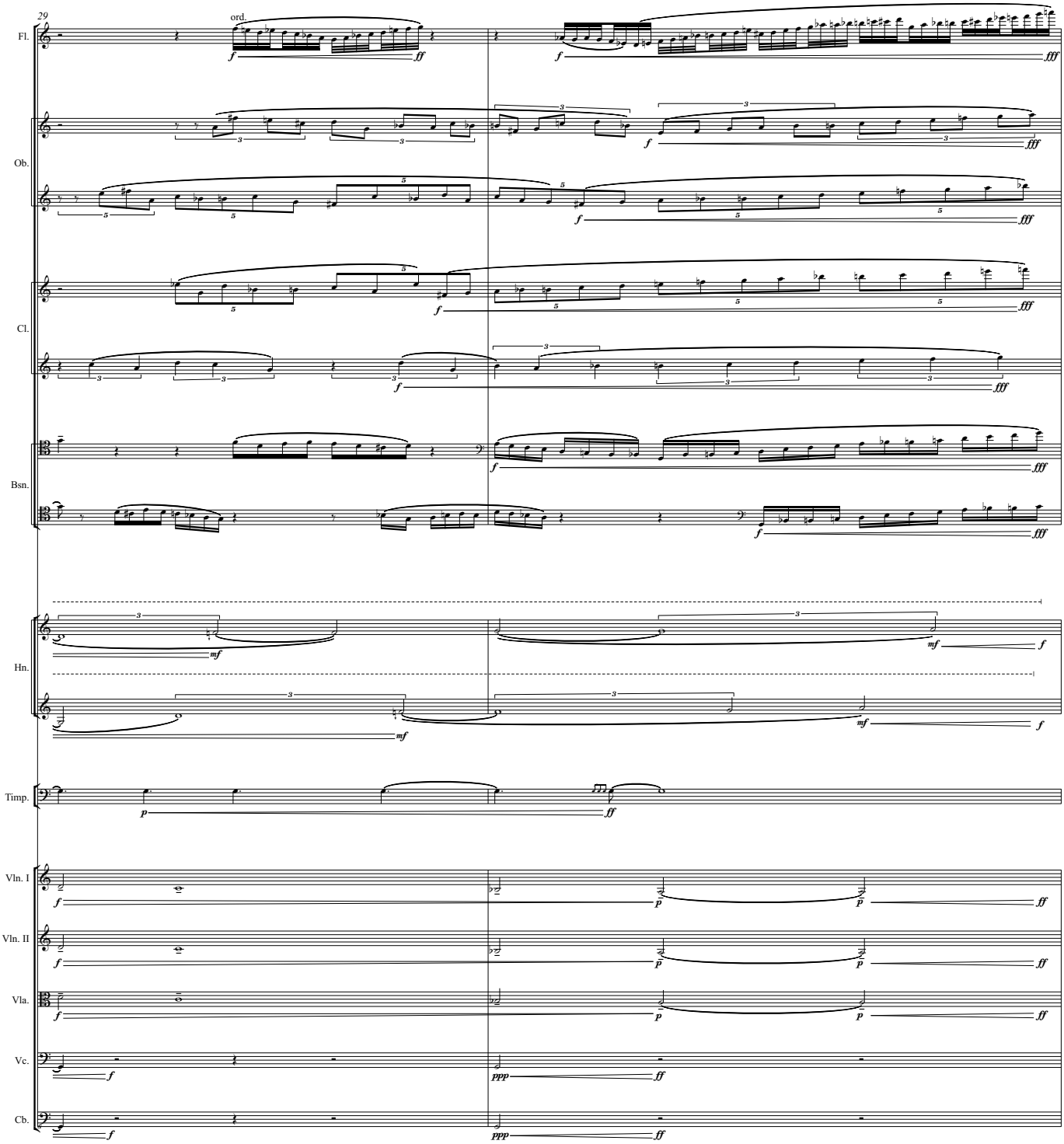
ppp *ff*


16
Hn.
Tpt.
straight mute
straight mute
Timp.
Vln. I
expressive
Vln. II
N. (nat.)
expressive
Vc.
expressive
Cb.


C
20
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
C
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vc.
pizz.
Cb.


D
23
Fl.
flz.
ord.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Timp.
D
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
arco

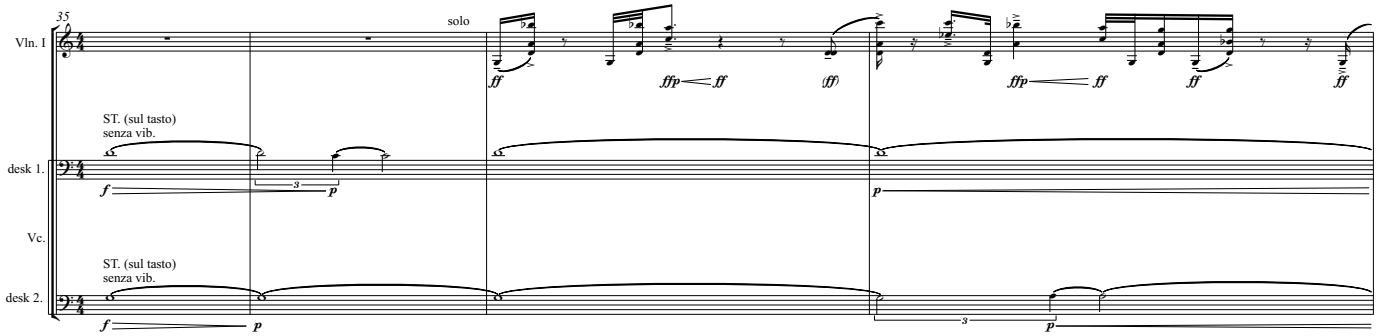

E
27
Fl.
flz.
mf sub.
ord.
flz.
f sub.
Ob.
mf sempre
f sub.
Cl.
mf sub.
f sub.
f sub.
Bsn.
f sub.
f sub.
G nat. harm.
senza sord.
Hn.
pp
G nat. harm.
senza sord.
pp
Timp.
E
Vln. I
mf
Vln. II
mf
Vla.
mf
Vc.
ppp
f
ppp
Cb.
ppp
f
ppp

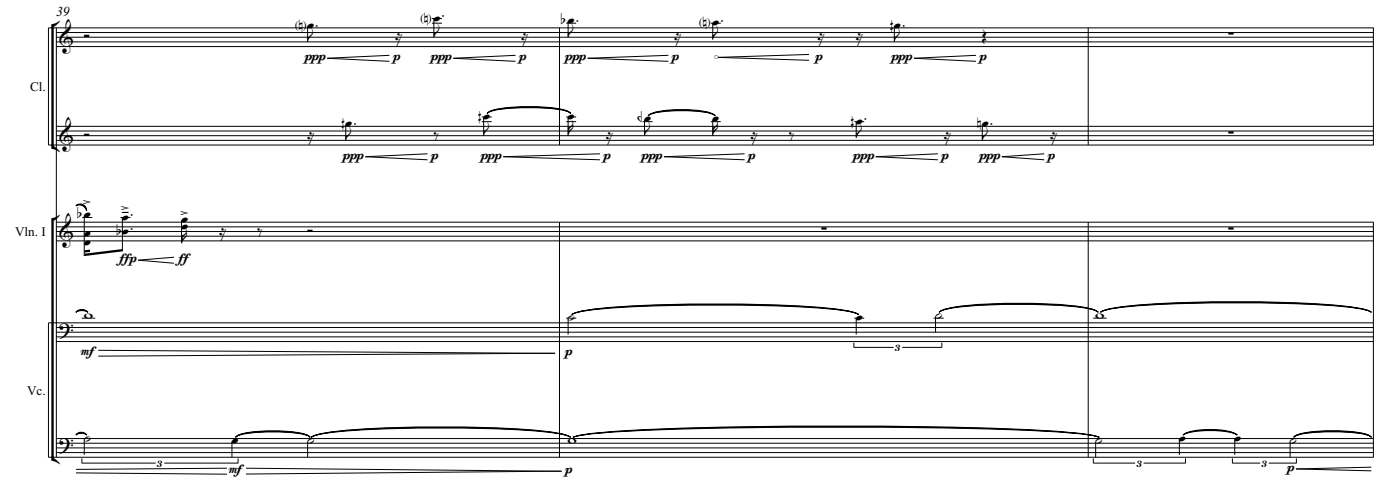

29
Fl.
ord.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

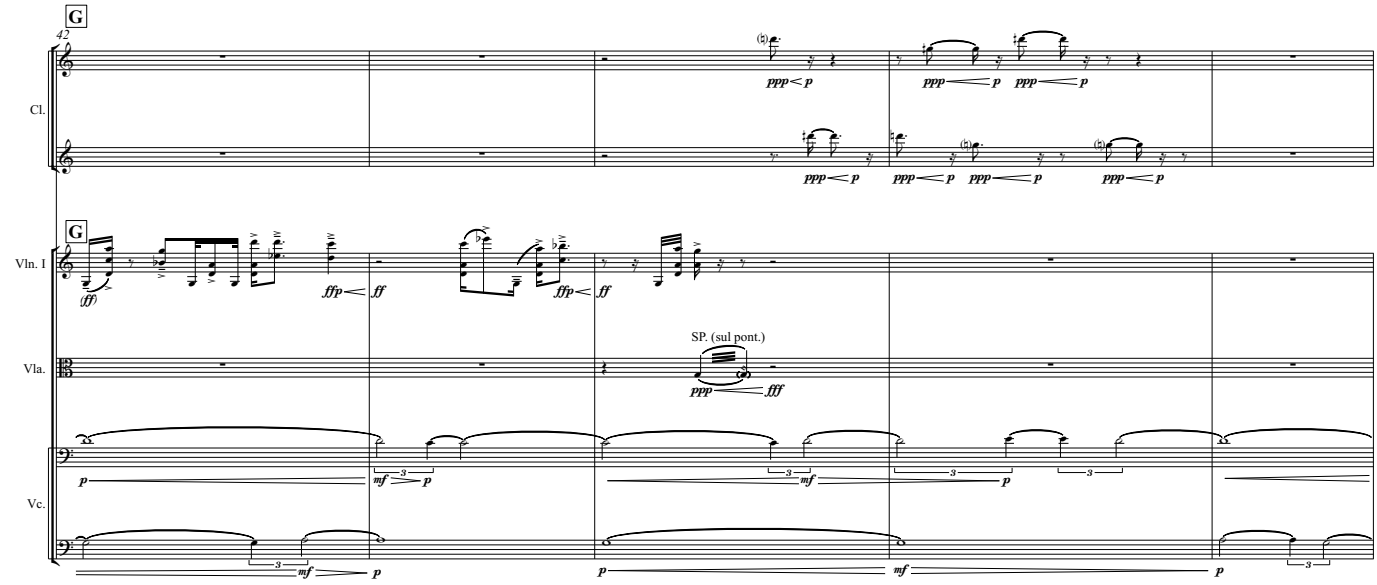

31
Timp.
ppp sempre
III
Vc.
ppp

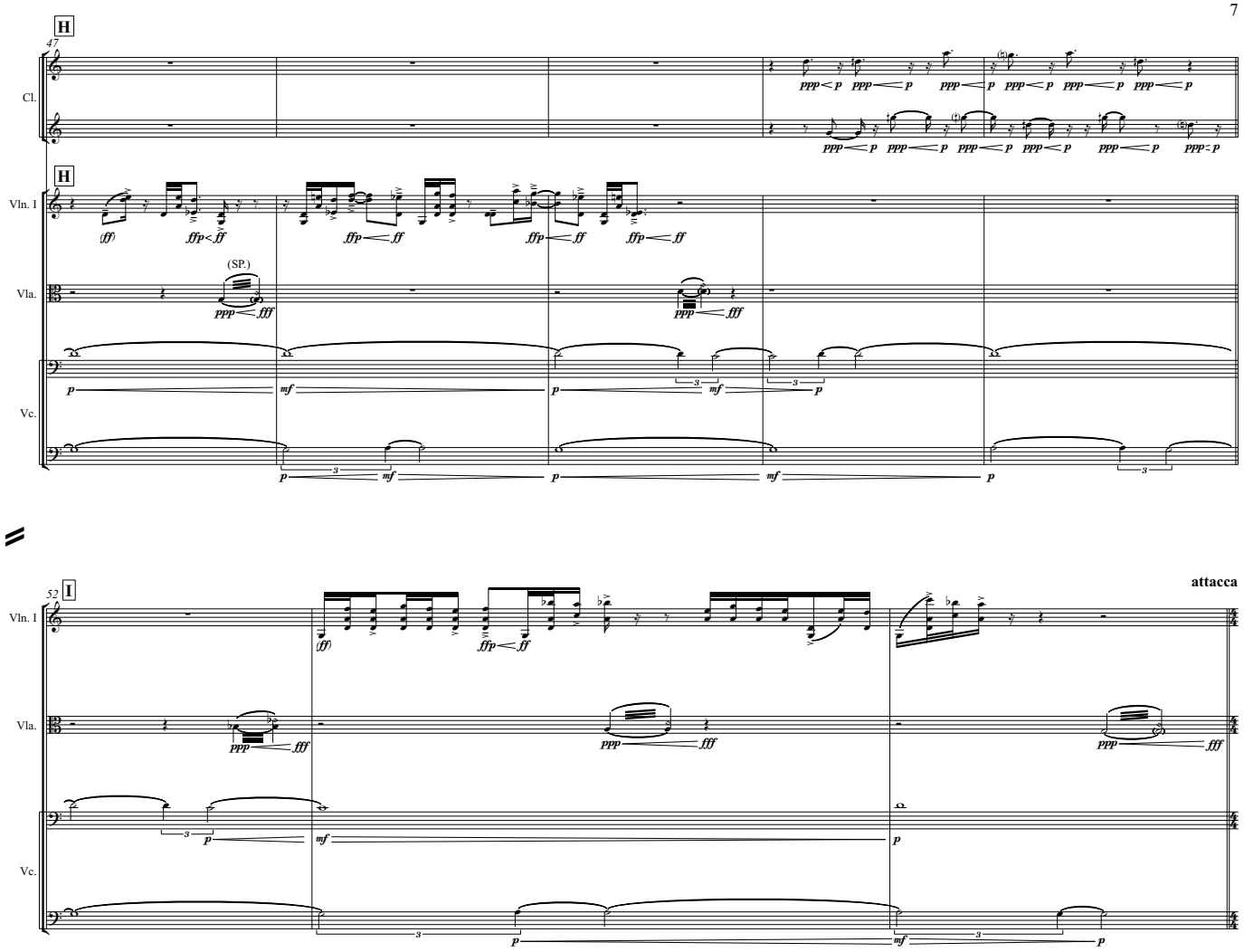
II

F ♩ = ca. 46 **tense**



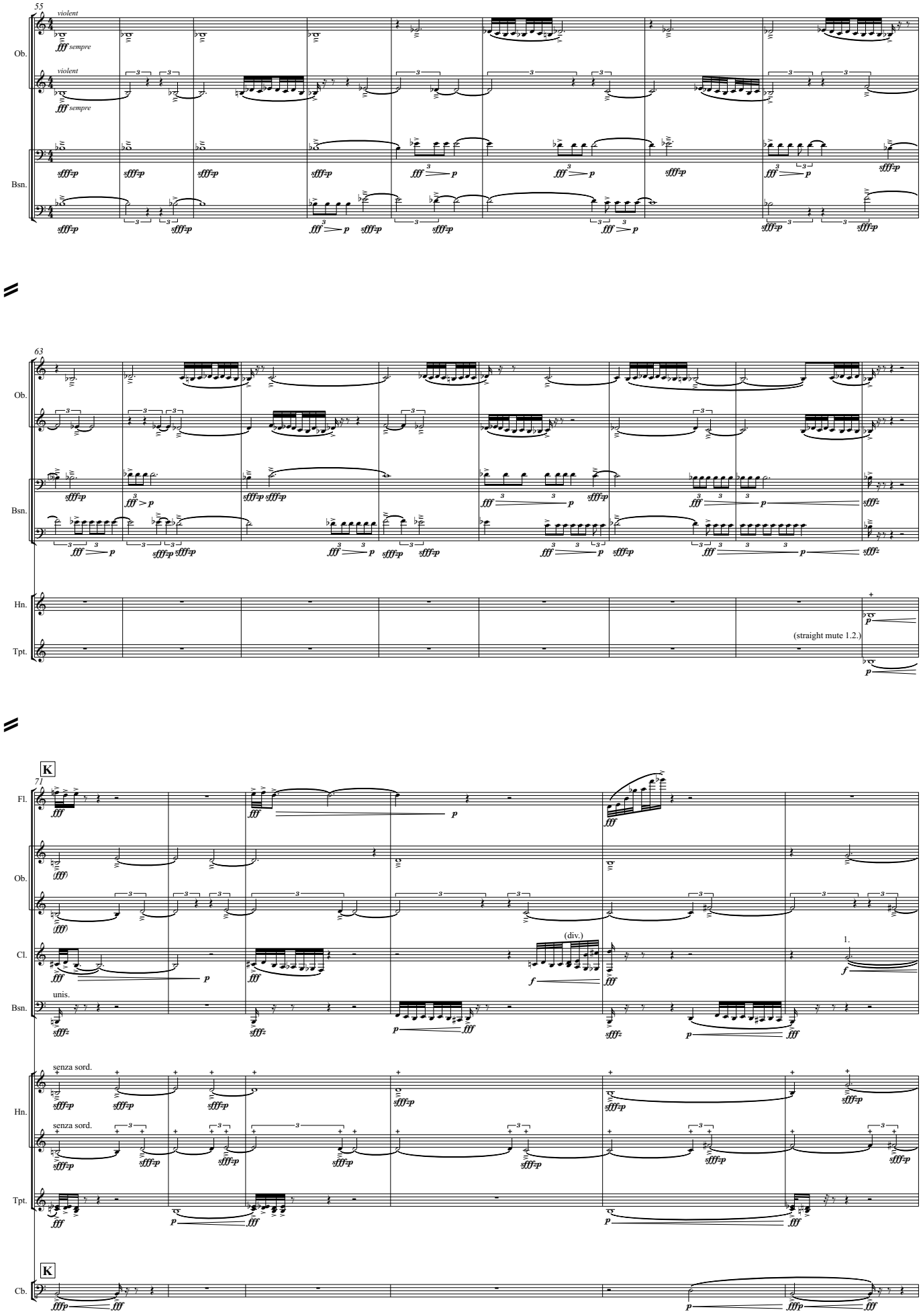


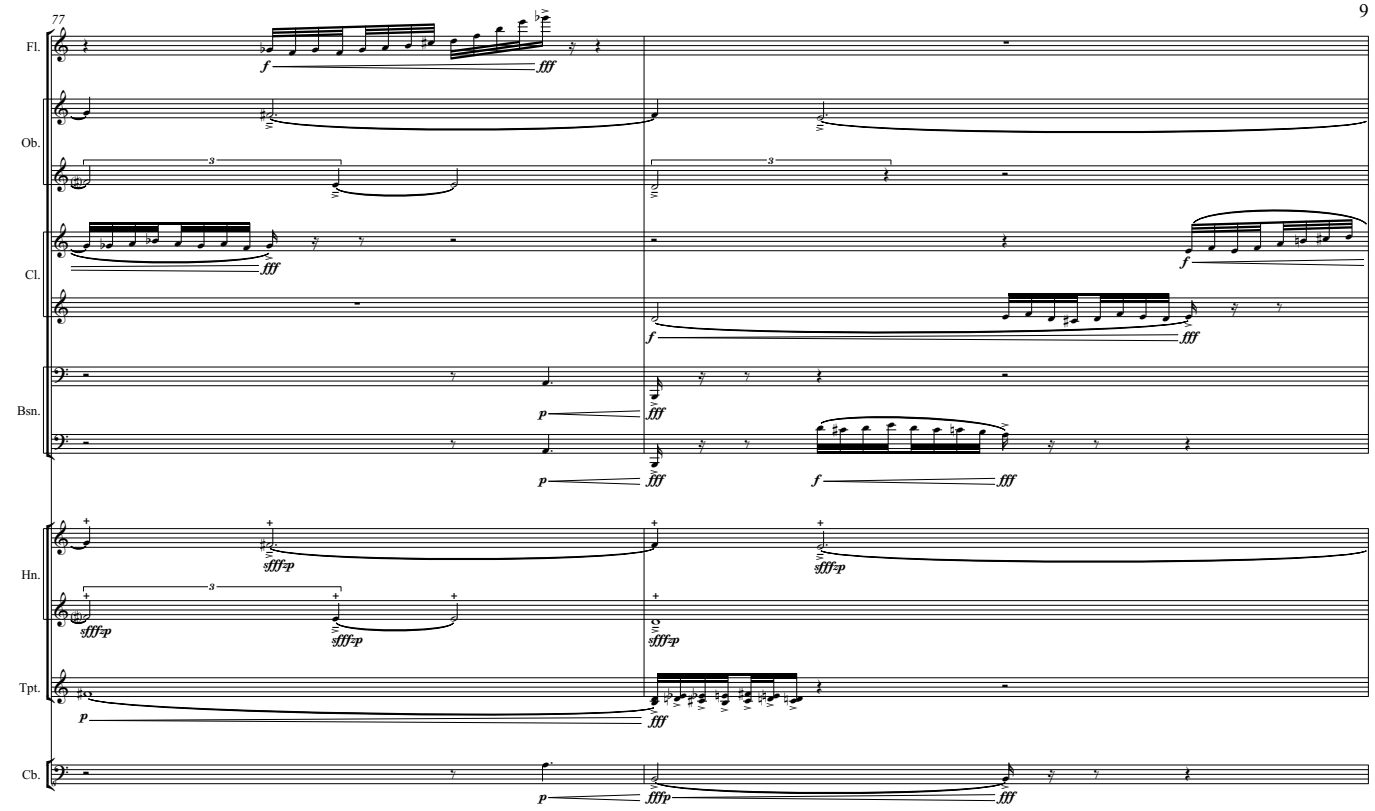


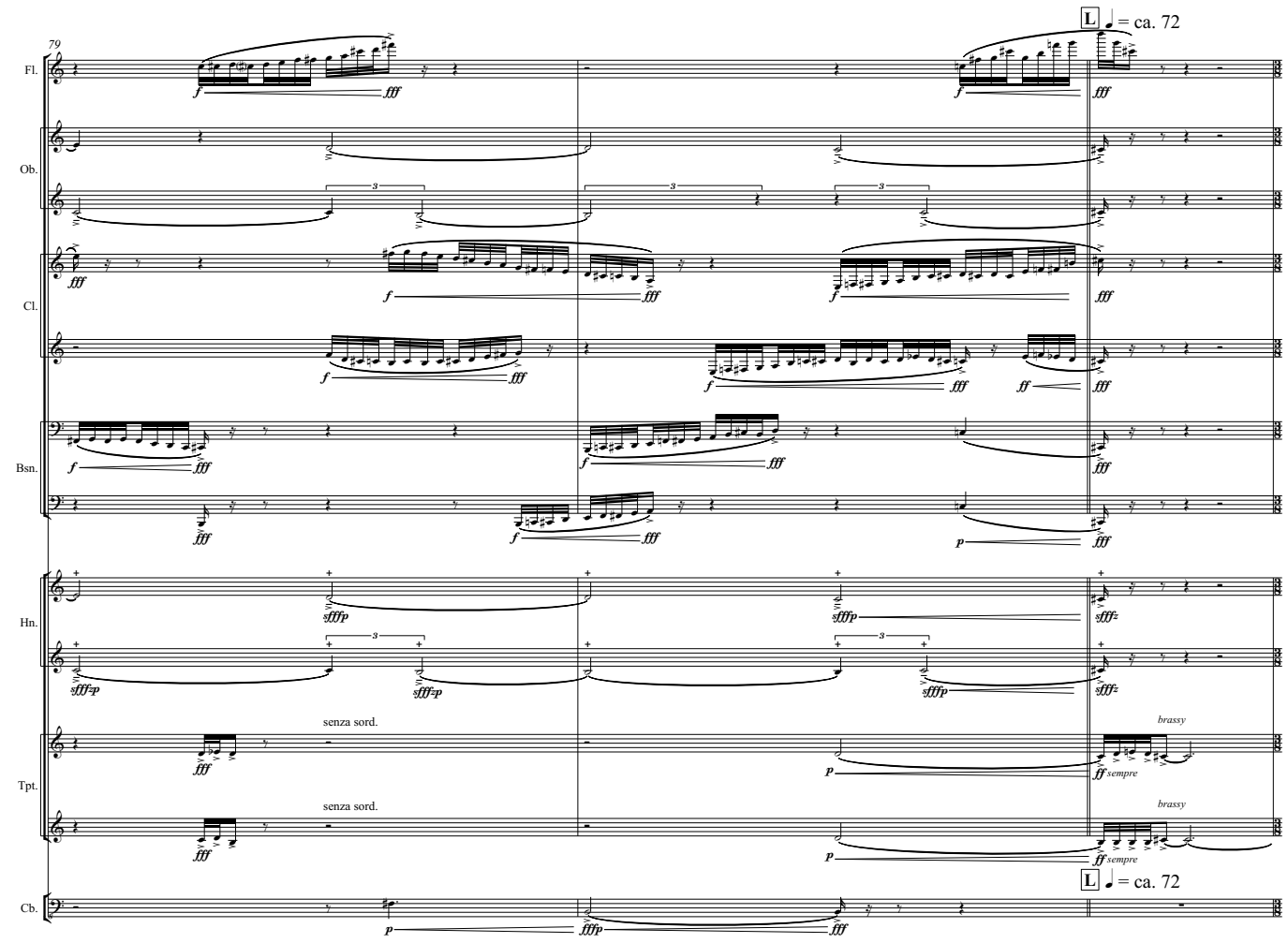

H
47
Cl.
H
Vln. I
Vla.
(SP.)
Vc.
I
52
attacca

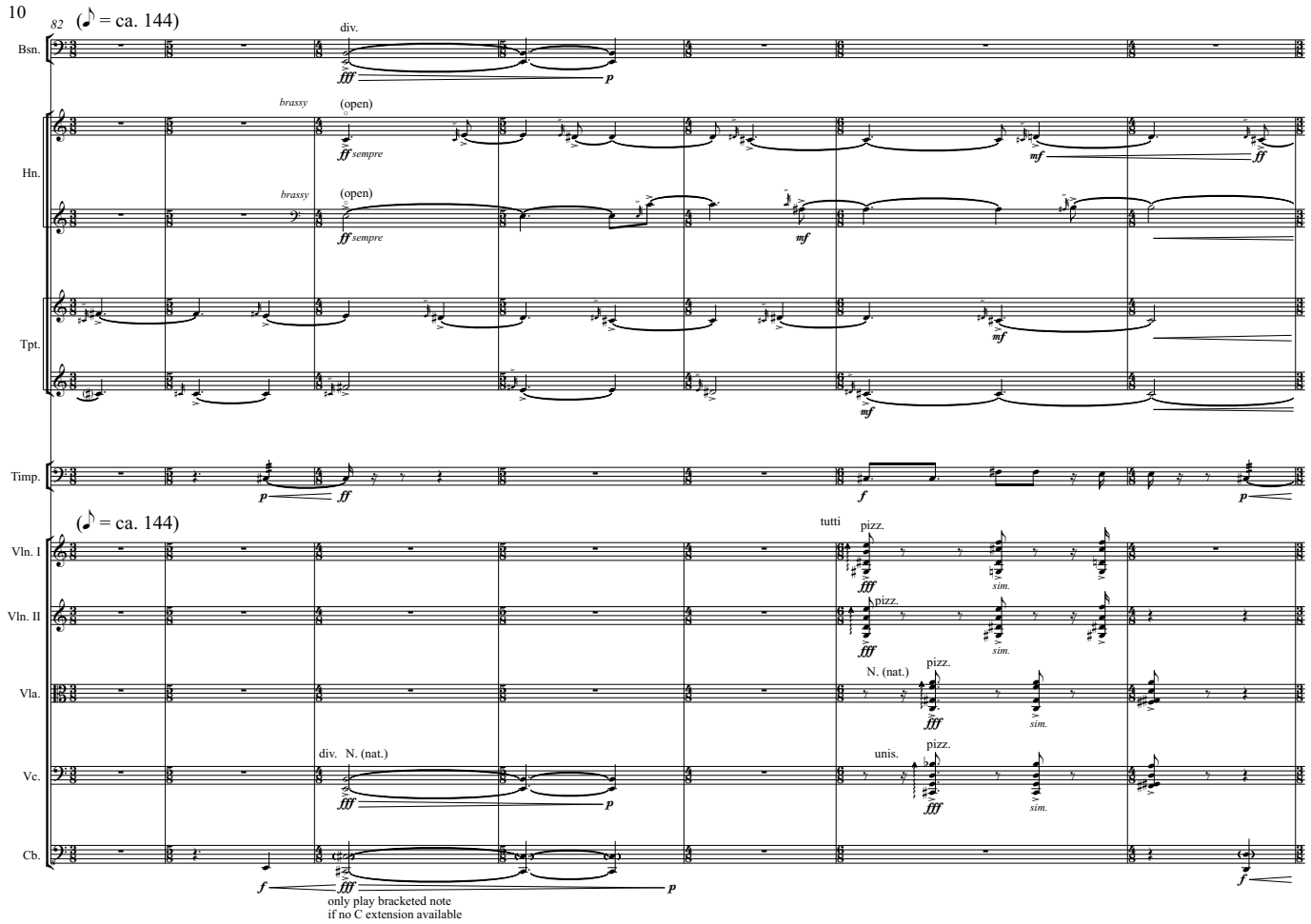
III

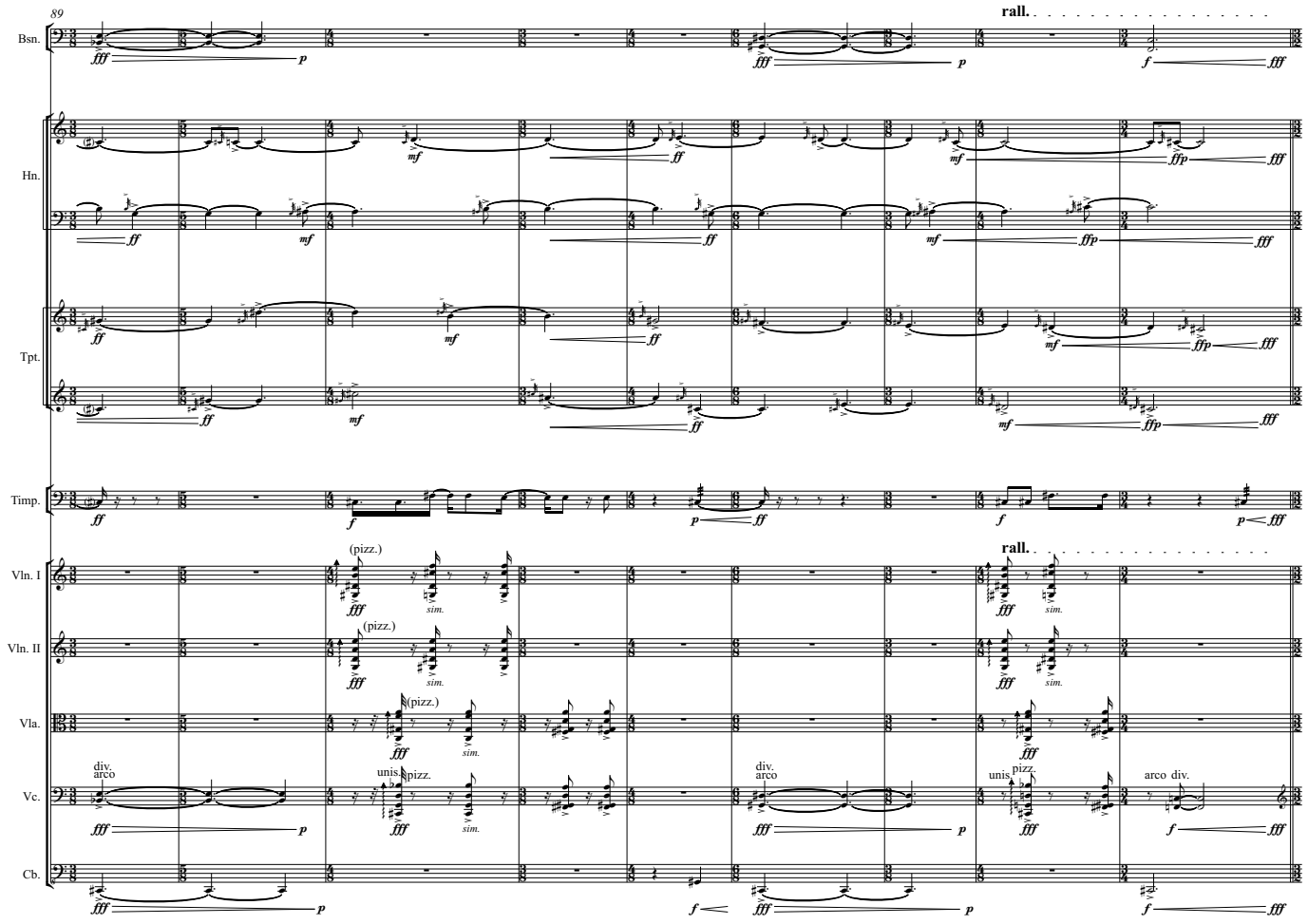
J ♩ = ca. 76 **ritualistic**

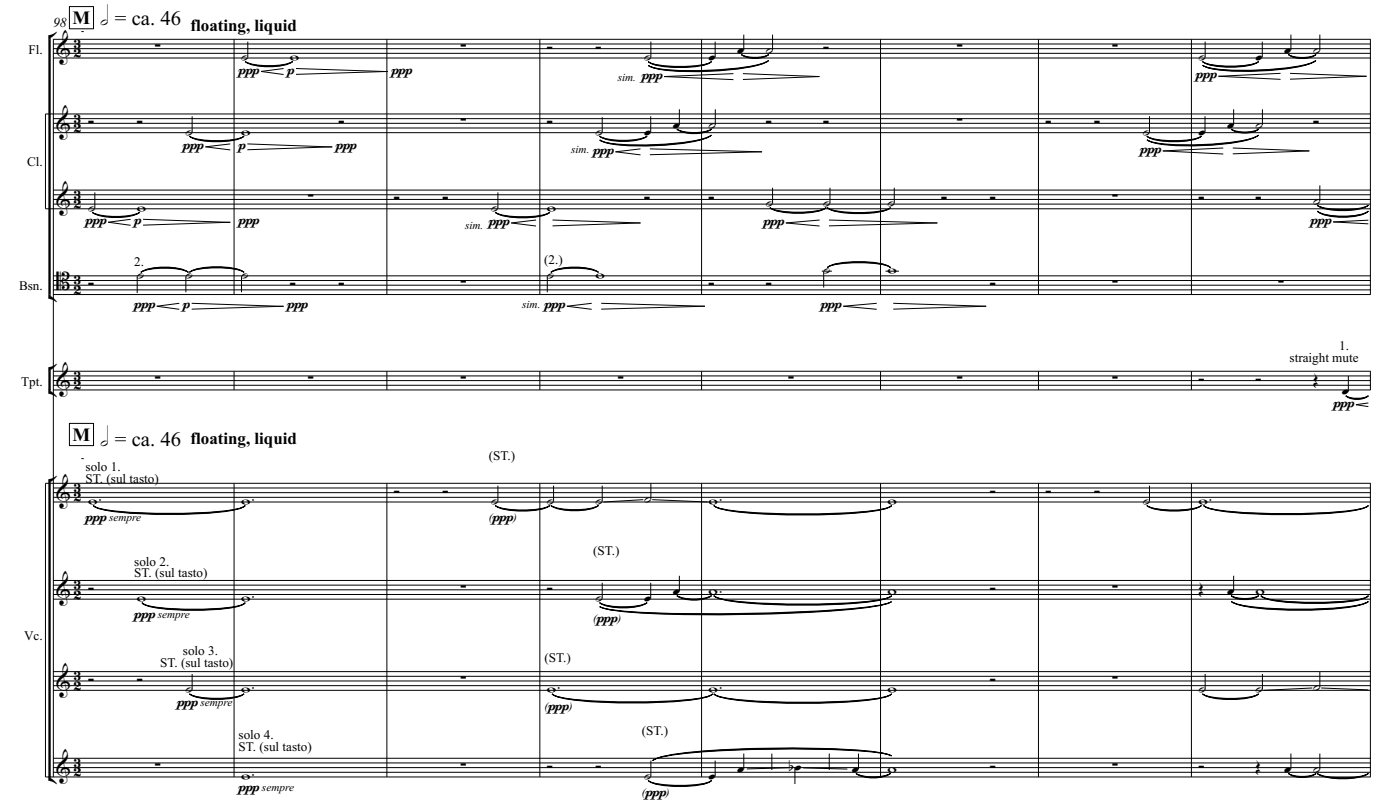


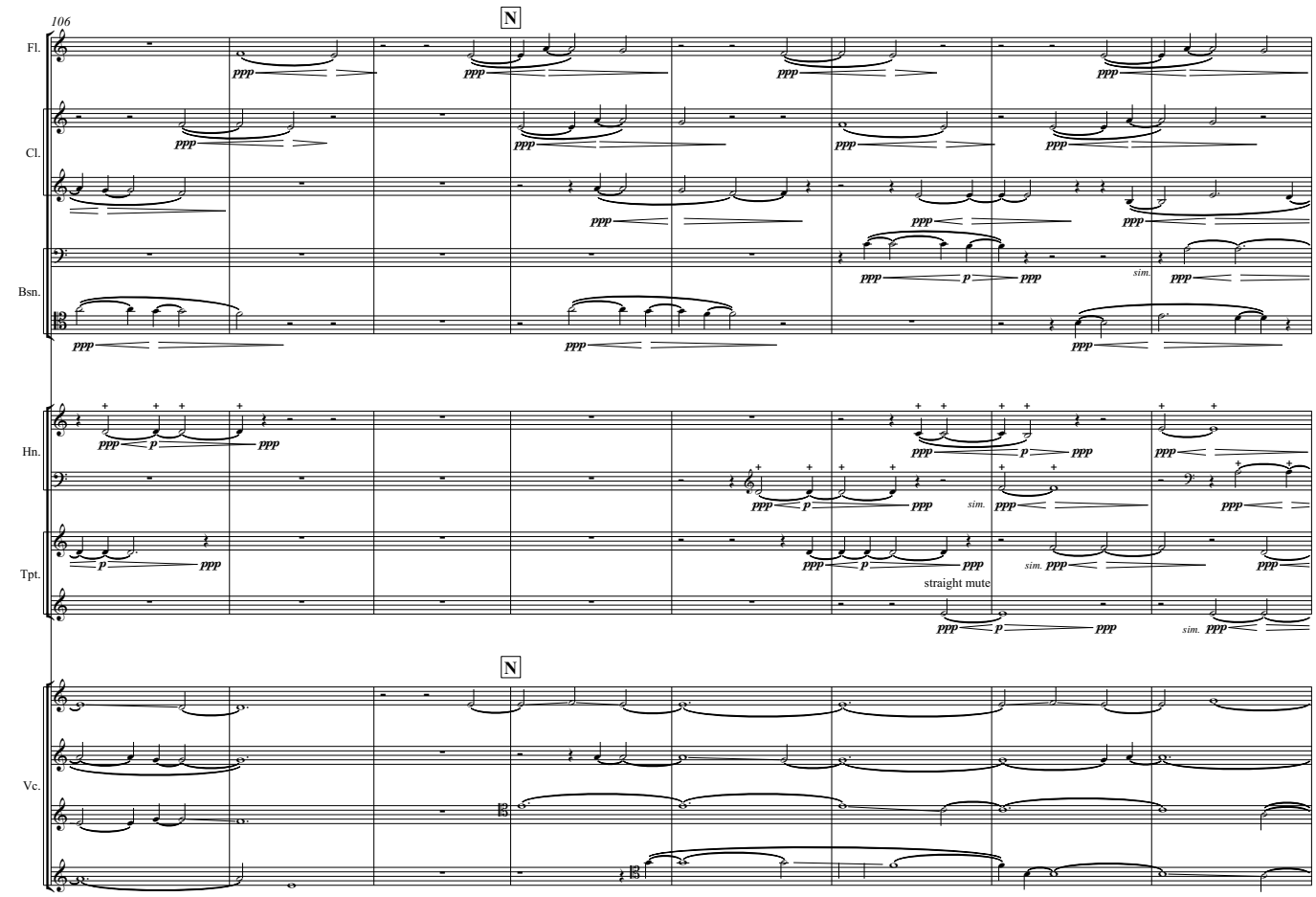

77
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Cb.

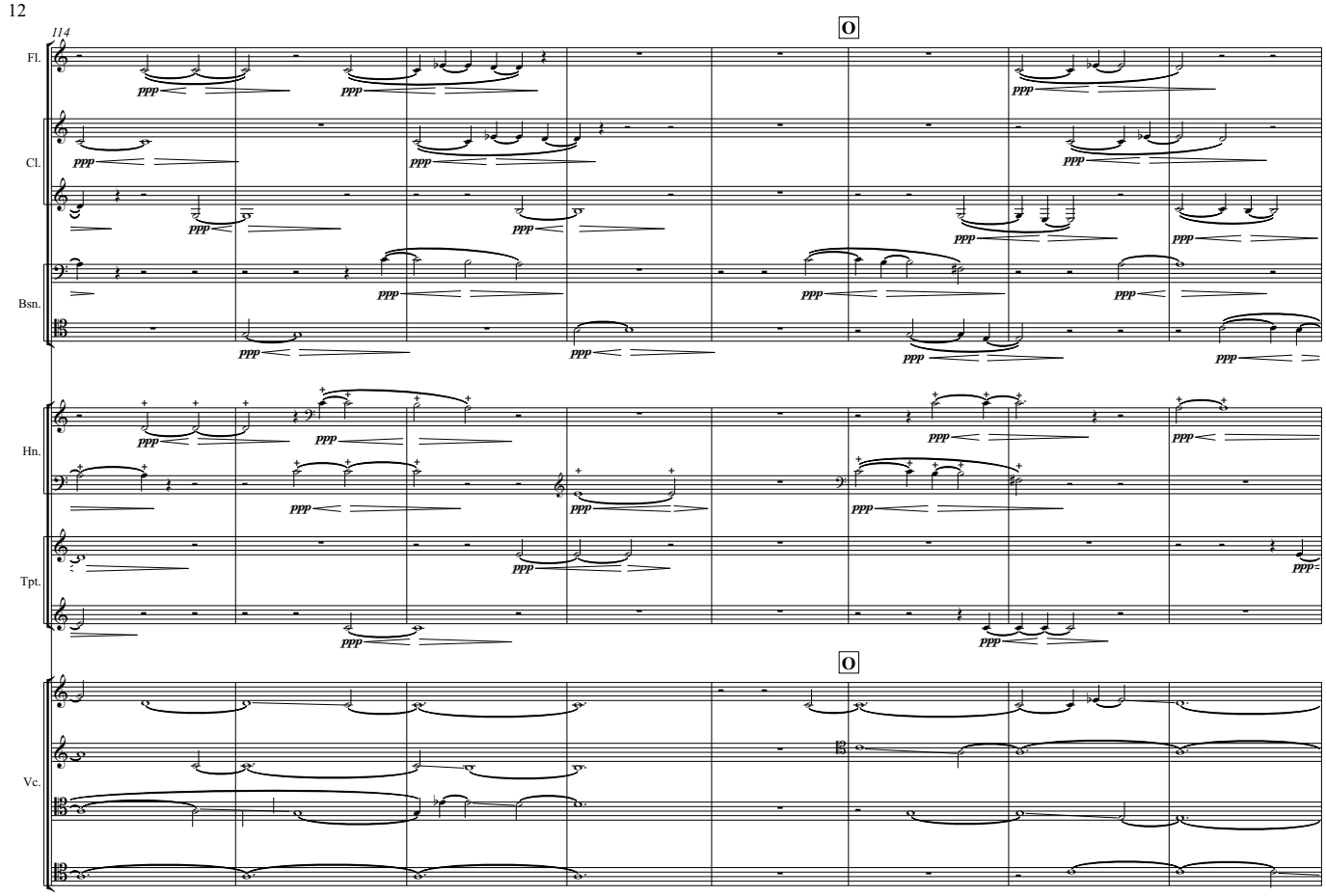

79
L = ca. 72
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
senza sord.
senza sord.
brassy
brassy
Tpt.
Cb.
L = ca. 72

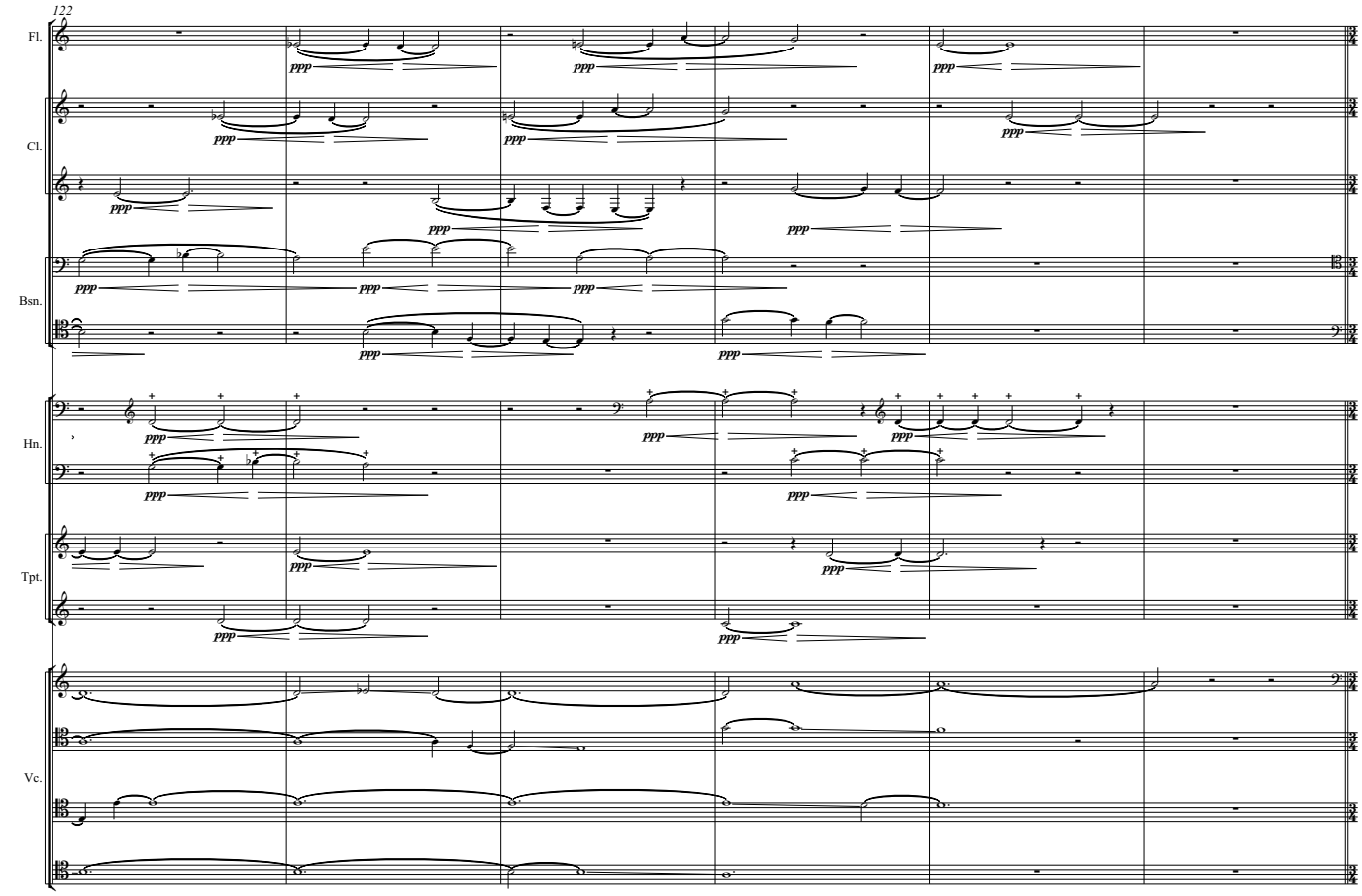

82
(♪ = ca. 144)
Bsn.
div.
brassy
(open)
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
(♪ = ca. 144)
tutti
pizz.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
N. (nat.)
Vc.
div. N. (nat.)
unis.
Cb.
only play bracketed note
if no C extension available

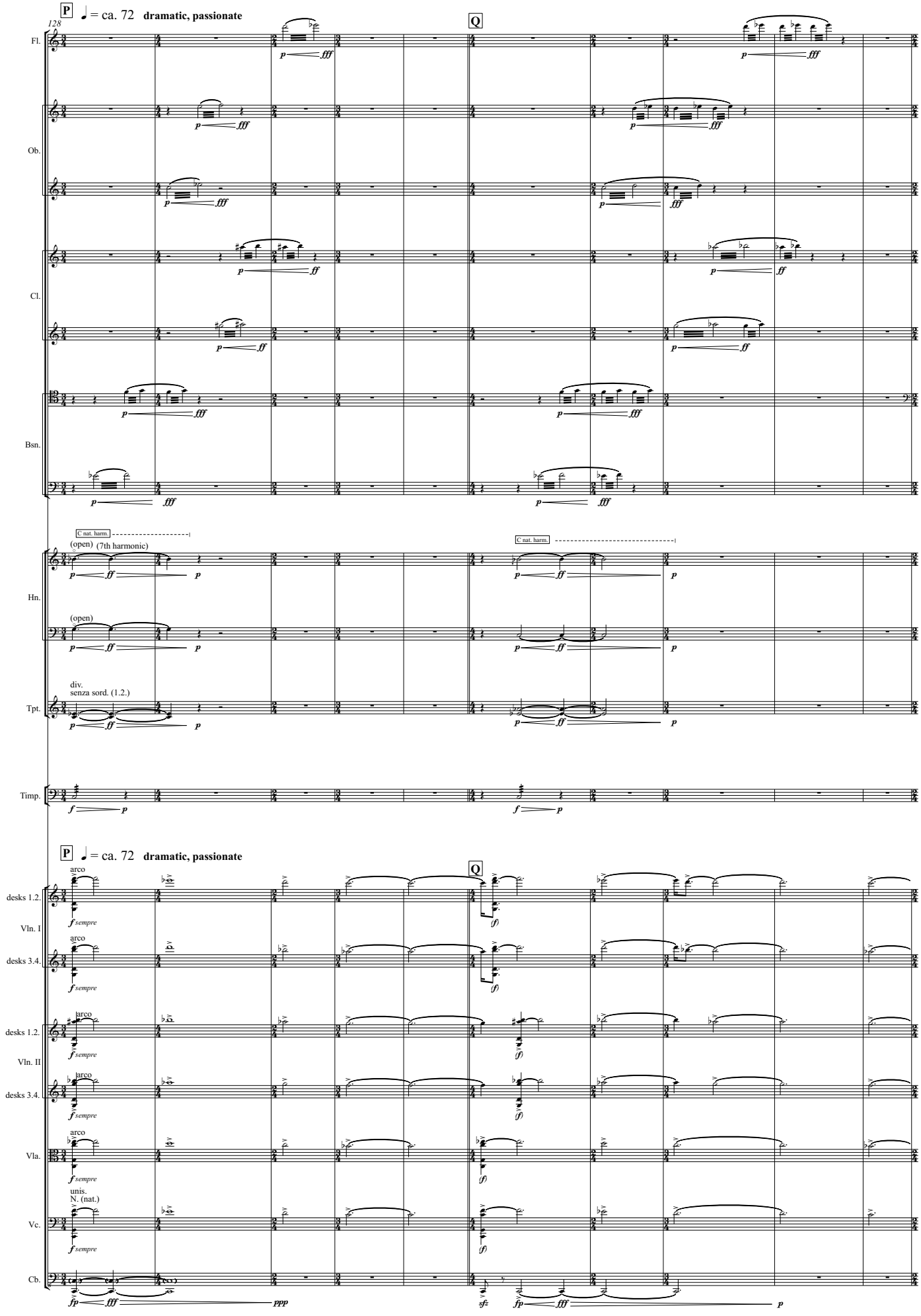

89
rall.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
(pizz.)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
div.
arco
unis.
pizz.
Vc.
arco div.
Cb.

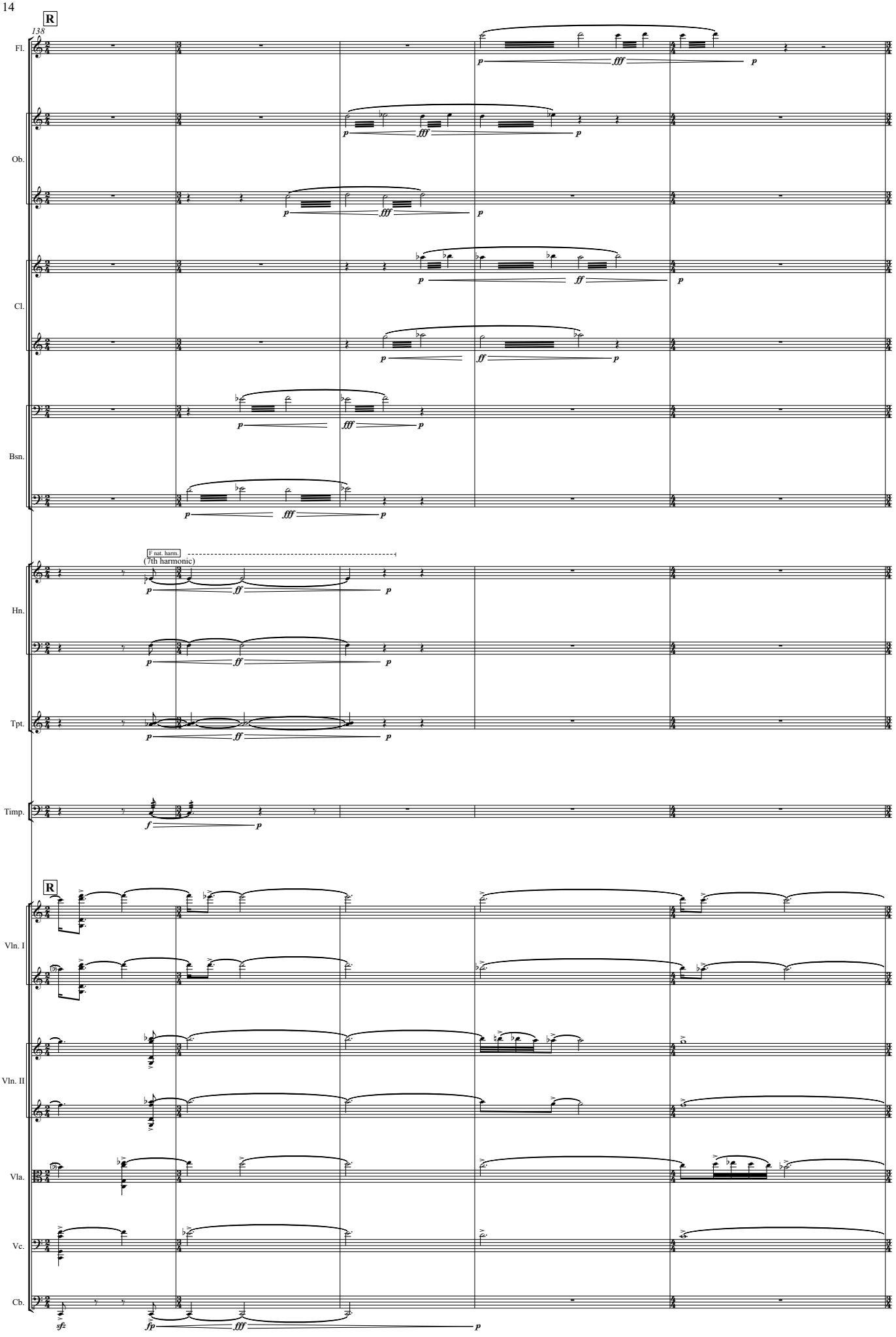

98
M
♩ = ca. 46
floating, liquid
Fl.
Cl.
Bsn.
Tpt.
straight mute
M
♩ = ca. 46
floating, liquid
Vc.
solo 1.
ST. (sul tasto)
solo 2.
ST. (sul tasto)
solo 3.
ST. (sul tasto)
solo 4.
ST. (sul tasto)
sempre
(ST.)

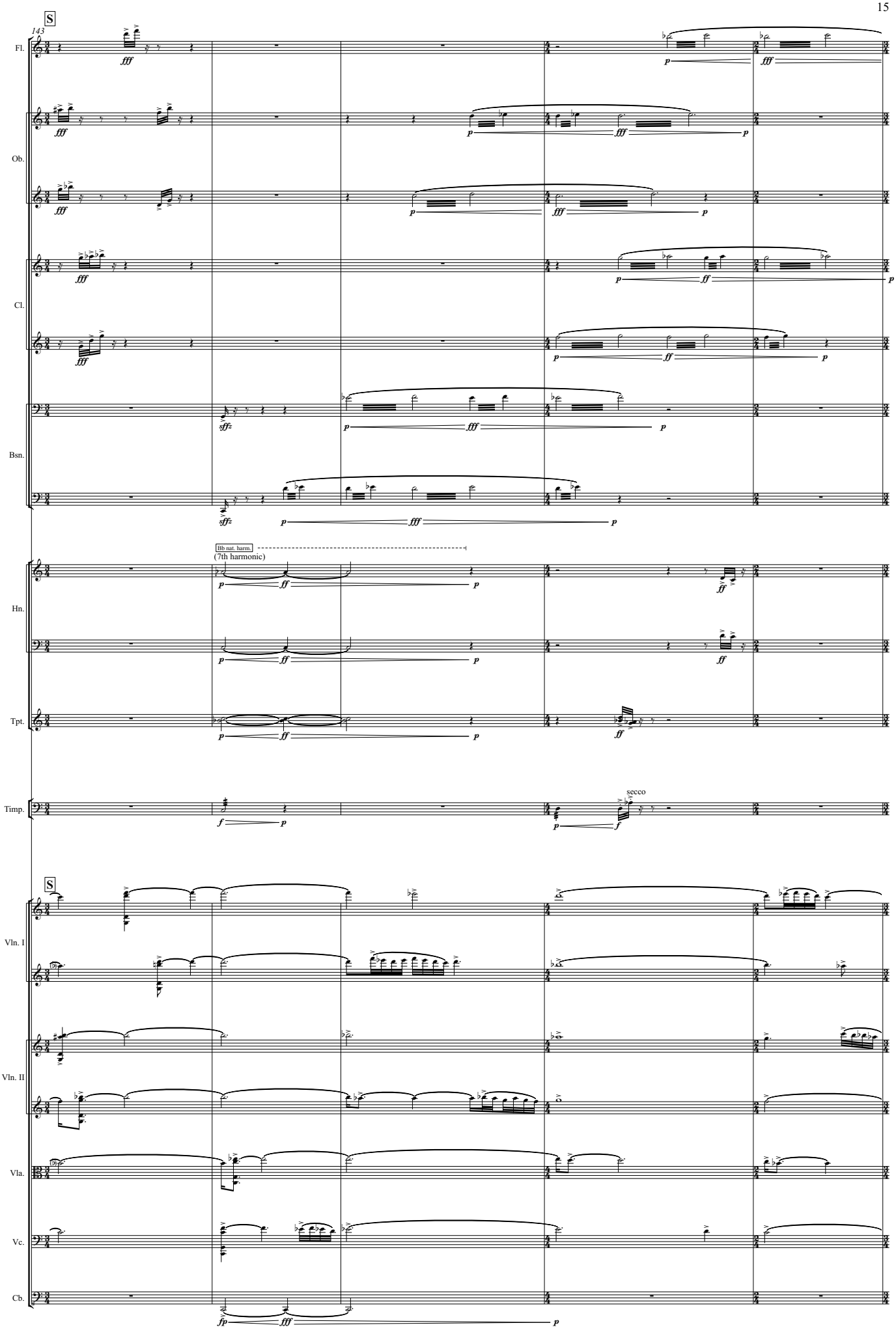

106
N
Fl.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
straight mute
N
Vc.

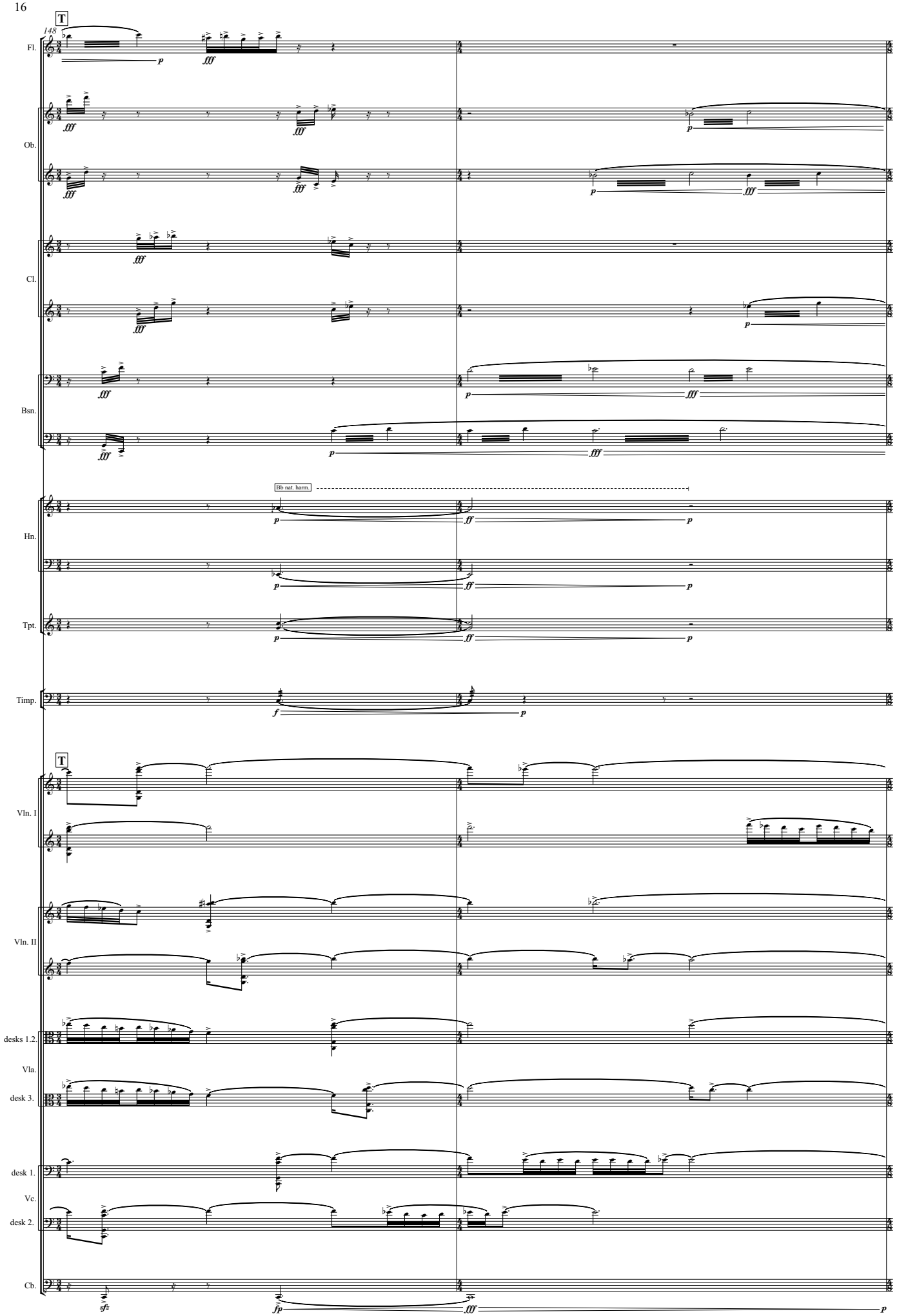

114
O
Fl.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
O
Vc.
ppp

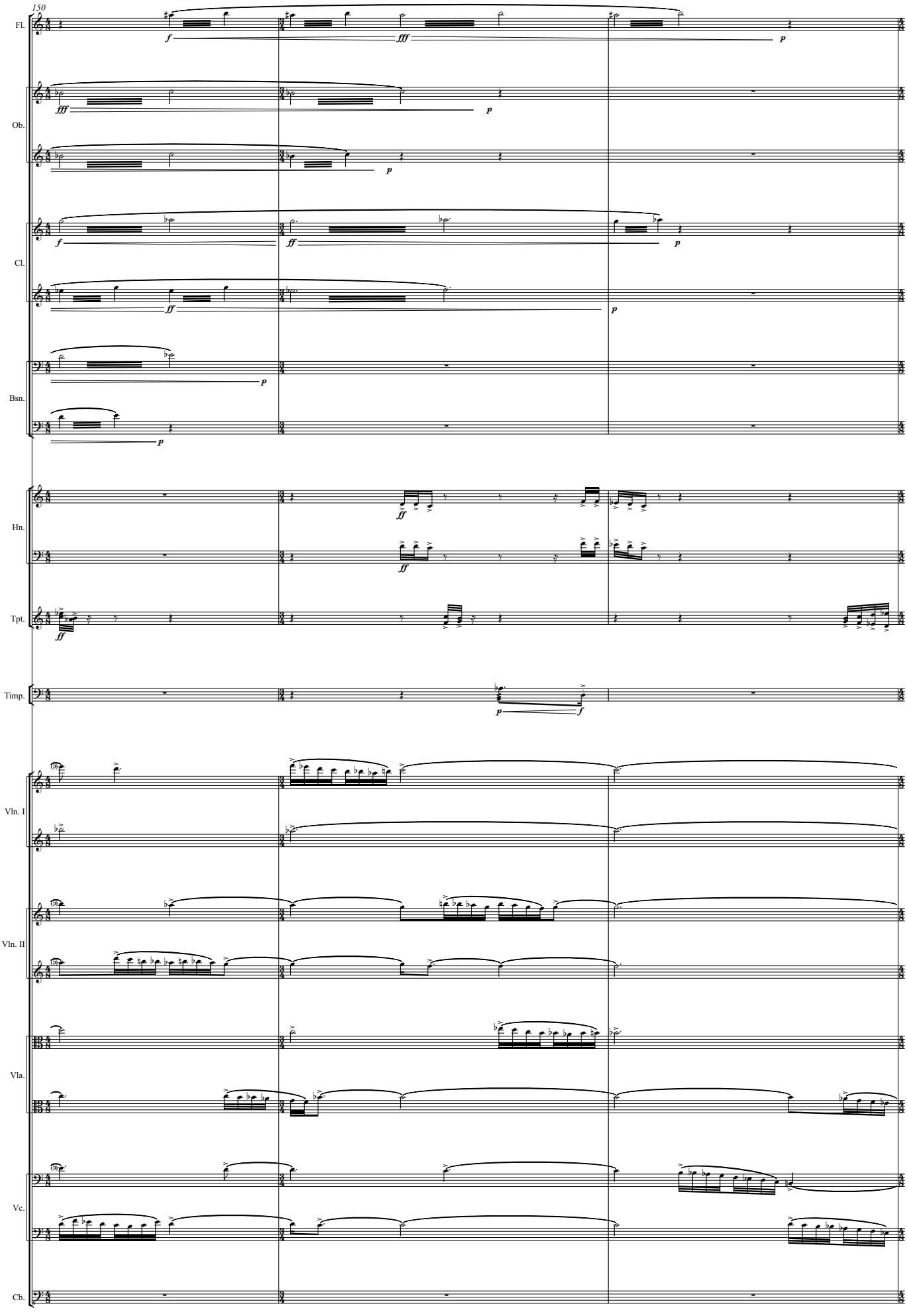

122
Fl.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Vc.
ppp

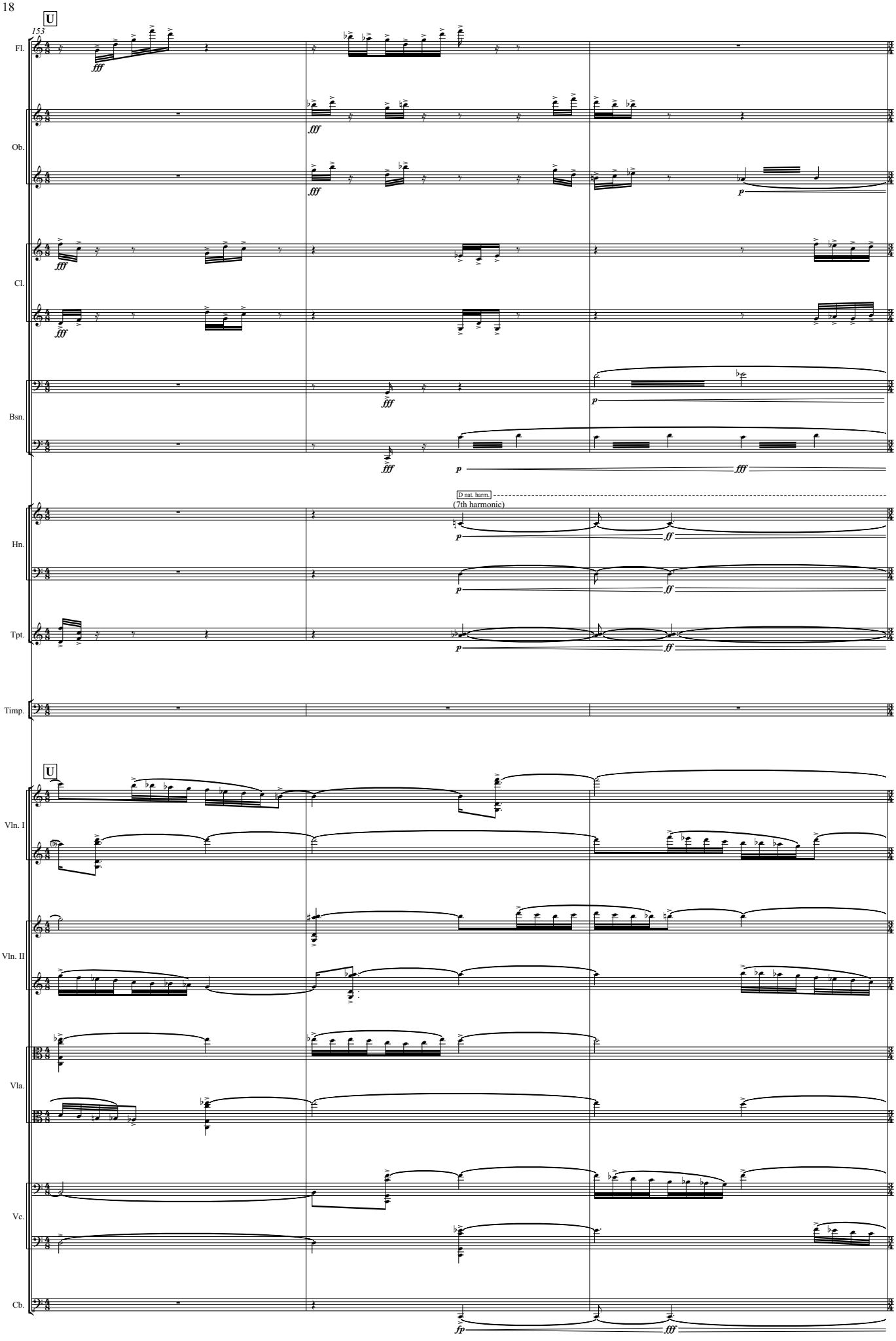

P
= ca. 72 dramatic, passionate
128
Q
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
C nat. harm.
(open) (7th harmonic)
Hn.
(open)
div.
senza sord. (1.2.)
Tpt.
Timp.
P
= ca. 72 dramatic, passionate
Q
arco
desks 1.2.
Vln. I
desks 3.4.
Vln. II
Vla.
unis.
N. (nat.)
Vc.
Cb.

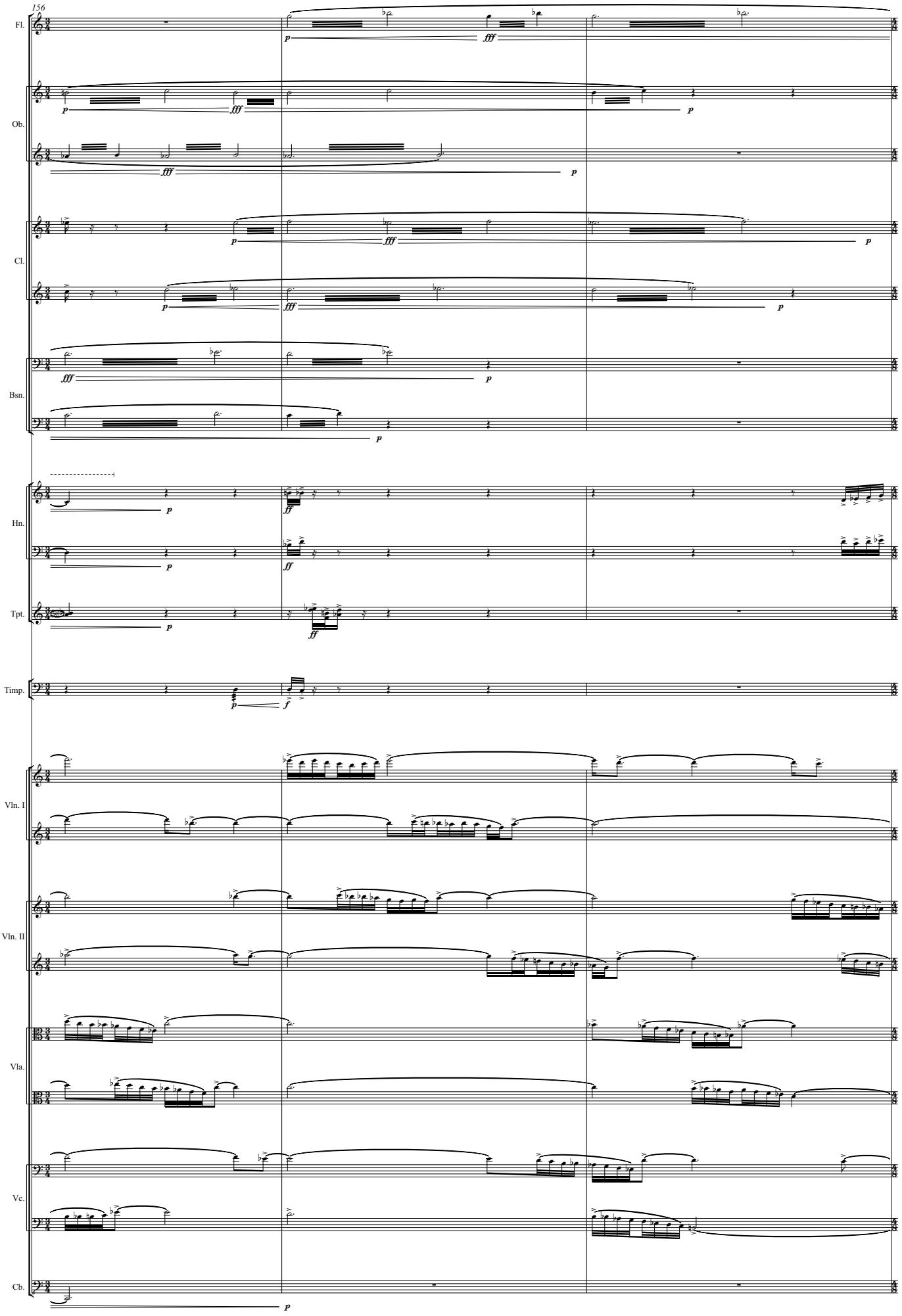

R
138
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
F nat. harm.
(7th harmonic)
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
R
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

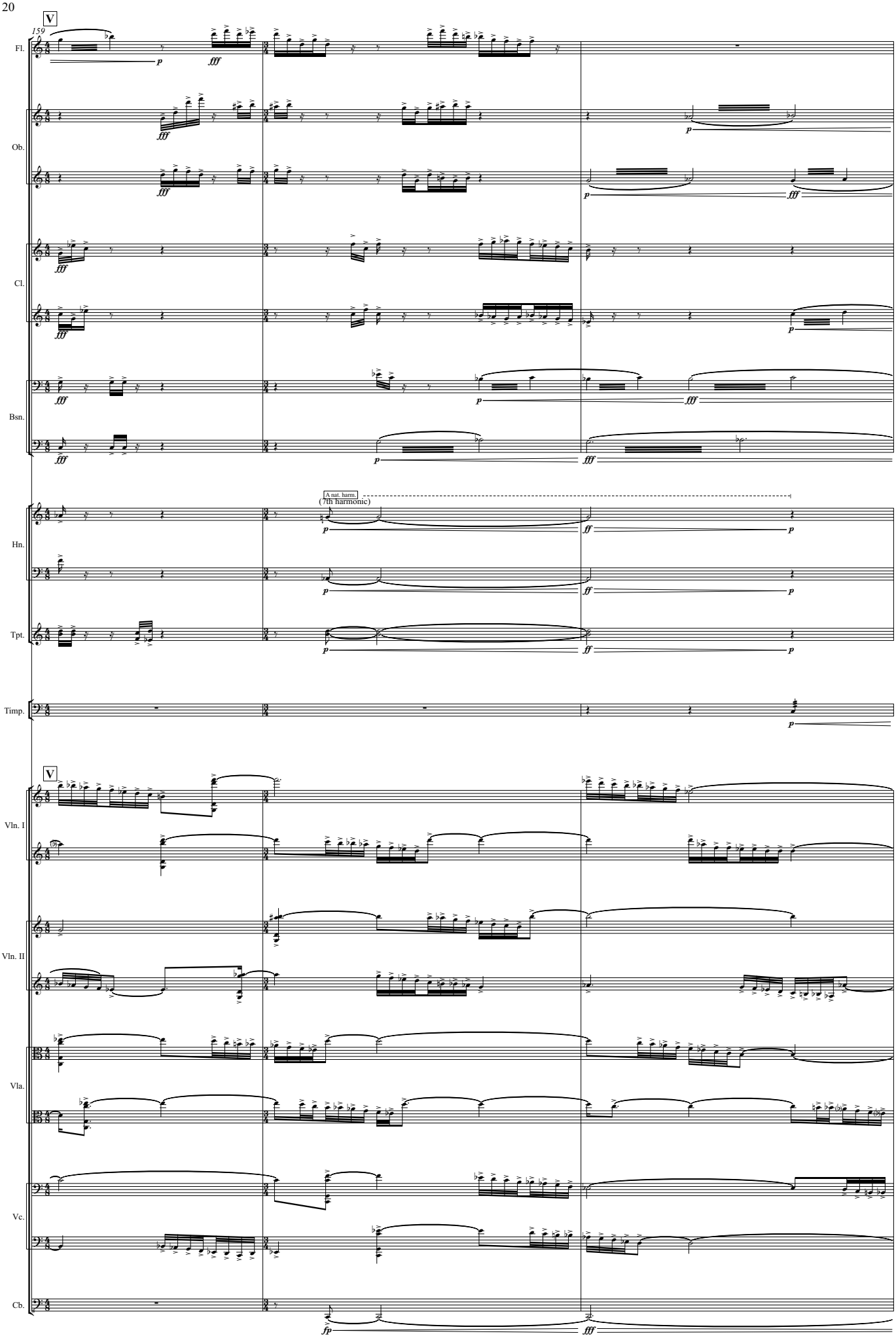

S
143
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Bb nat. harm.
(7th harmonic)
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
secco
S
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

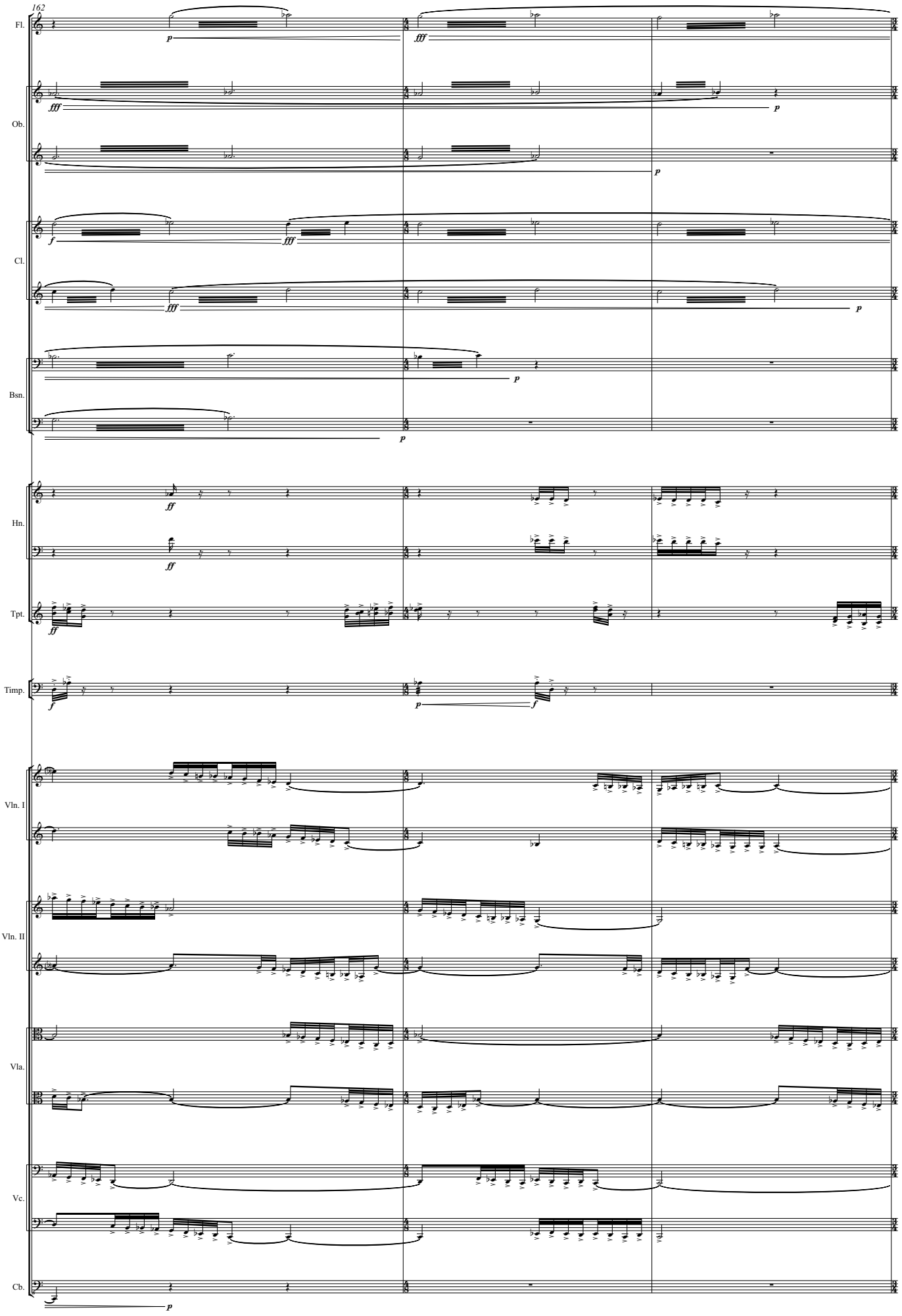

148
T
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Bb nat. harm.
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
T
Vln. I
Vln. II
desks 1.2.
Vla.
desk 3.
desk 1.
Vc.
desk 2.
Cb.

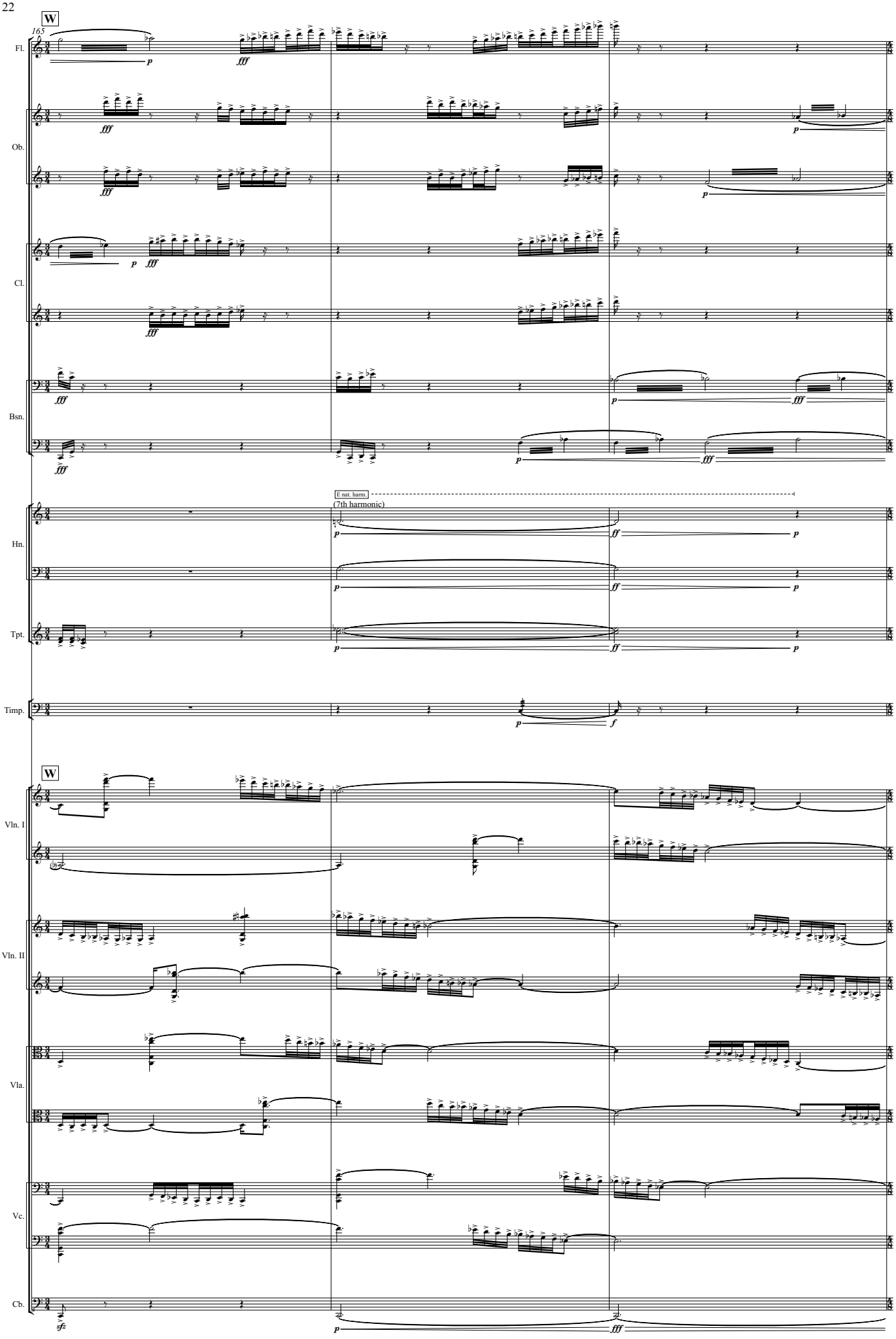

150
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

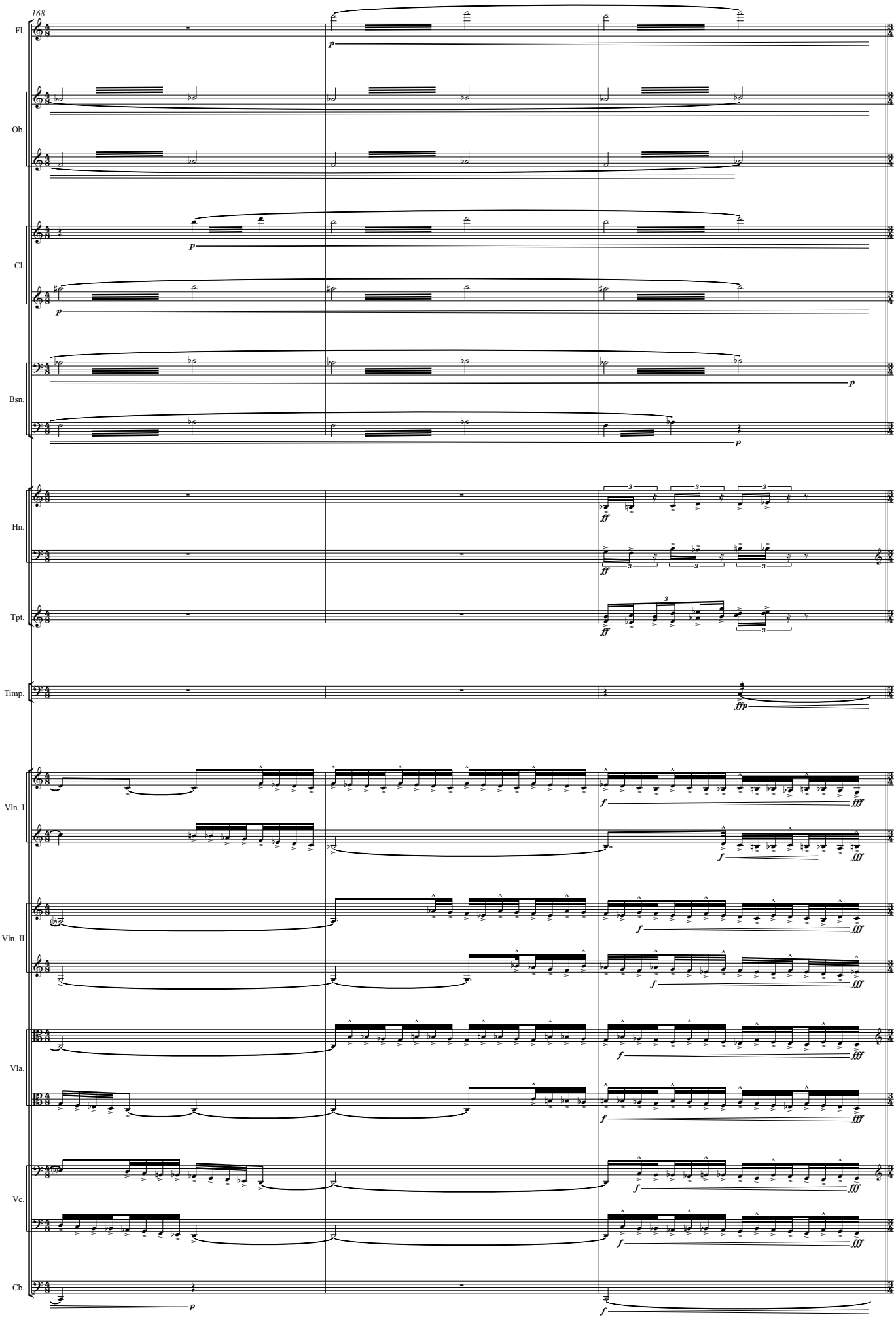

U
153
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
fff
p
ff
fp
D nat. harm.
(7th harmonic)

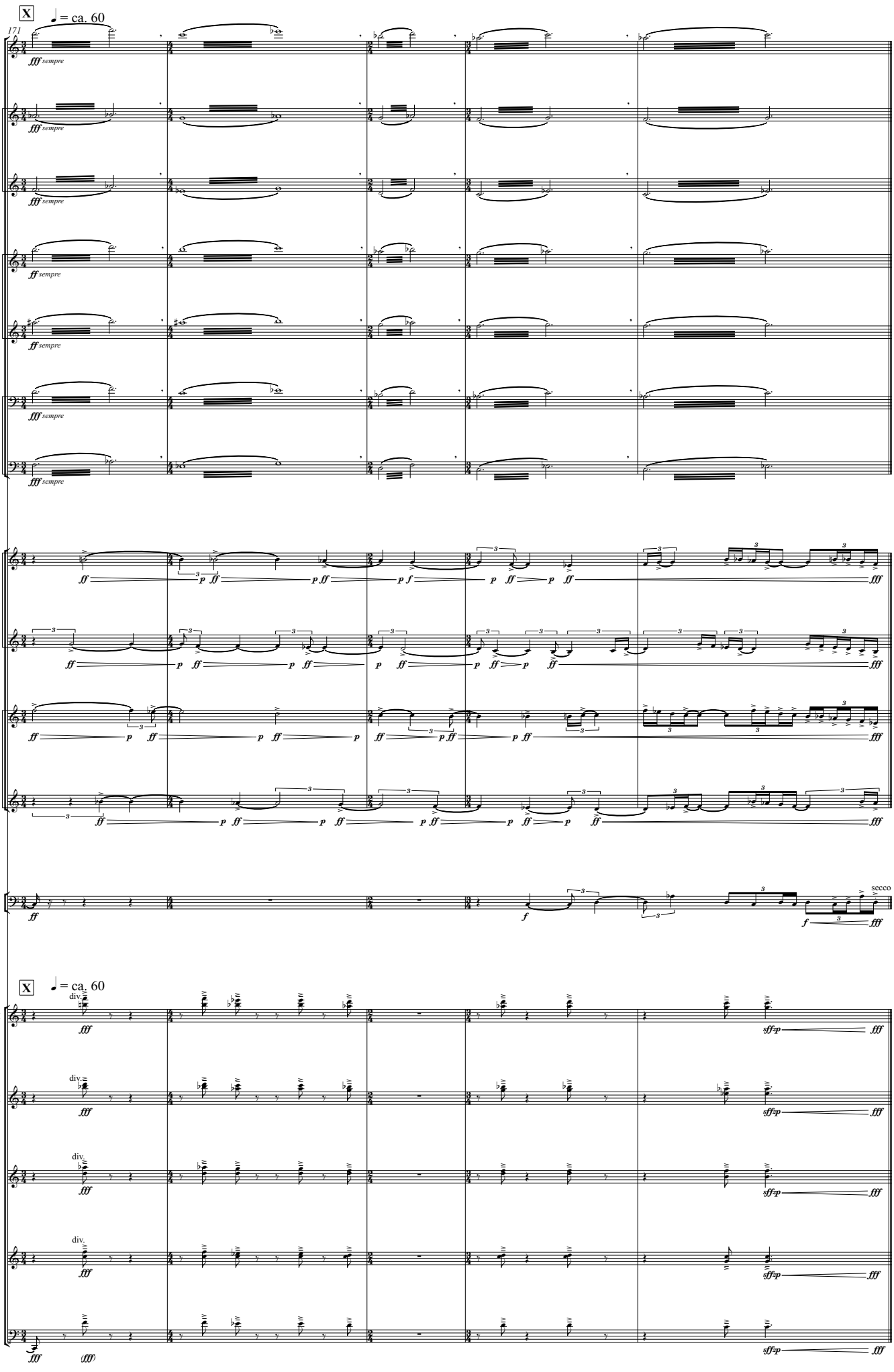

156
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.


V
159
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
A nat. harm.
(7th harmonic)
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
V
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.


162
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.


W
165
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
E nat. harm.
(7th harmonic)


168
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.


X
♩ = ca. 60
171
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Timp.
secco
X
♩ = ca. 60
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
div.

Joel Järventausta

Songs of Empty Landscapes

for alto saxophone, violin, viola, cello & piano

(2020)

Songs of Empty Landscapes was commissioned by
Uusinta Ensemble, with the generous support of Teosto

UUSINTA
ENSEMBLE

TEOSTO

The premiere was given by Uusinta Ensemble at Juhlasali Konsu, Tampere Biennale Festival, Tampere (Finland), on 28 August 2020

Duration = ca. 17 minutes

Instrumentation

Alto saxophone*

Violin

Viola

Cello

Piano

* May be replaced with a clarinet in Bb

Score in C

Composer's notes

This work was inspired by Bruce Percy's minimalist nature photography. These photographs depict a variety of 'empty' landscapes from white snowy plains to vast deserted lands.

In the music, I attempted to capture some of the vagueness, emptiness and apparent simplicity that these photographs, or indeed, empty landscapes evoke. Each movement is a piece of its own providing a window into one landscape, yet musical material is shared throughout the whole work.

I *Prelude* opens the piece with the lonesome singing of the violin.

II A thick texture dominates *Haze.* This is punctured by ringing chords, like church bells sounding in the mist.

III *Snowriver* is an abstract depiction of a cold running river in deep winter.

IV *Lullaby* is a slow, wistful piano trio.

V *Earth Red* is inspired by barren, scorched desert landscapes.

VI In *Grey-Blue* the fragile, melancholic soundworld, reflects upon undulating hills of snow-covered lands.

VII *Postlude* concludes the work, with the low humming of the cello.

J.Järventausta

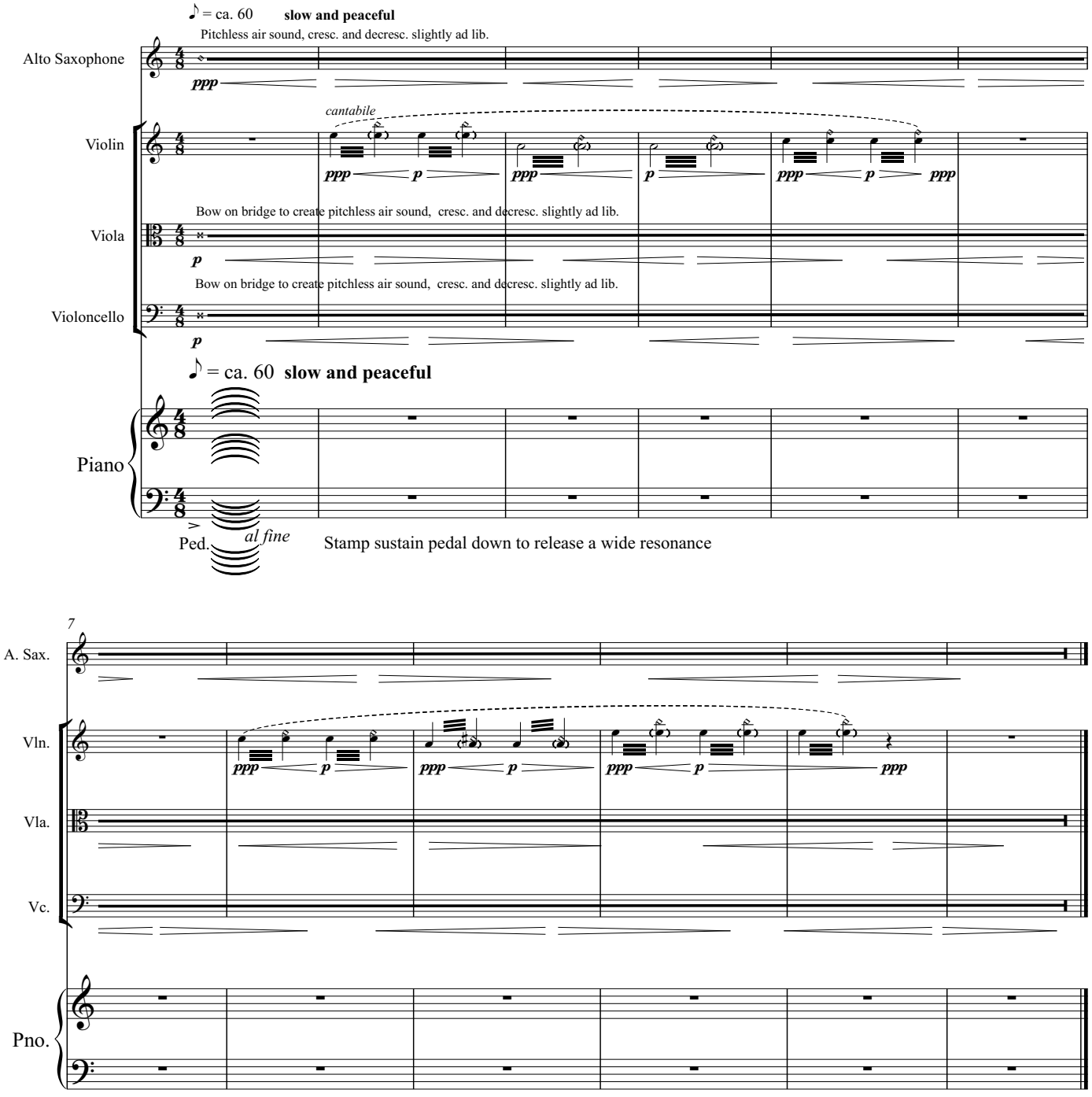
Contents

Songs of Empty Landscapes

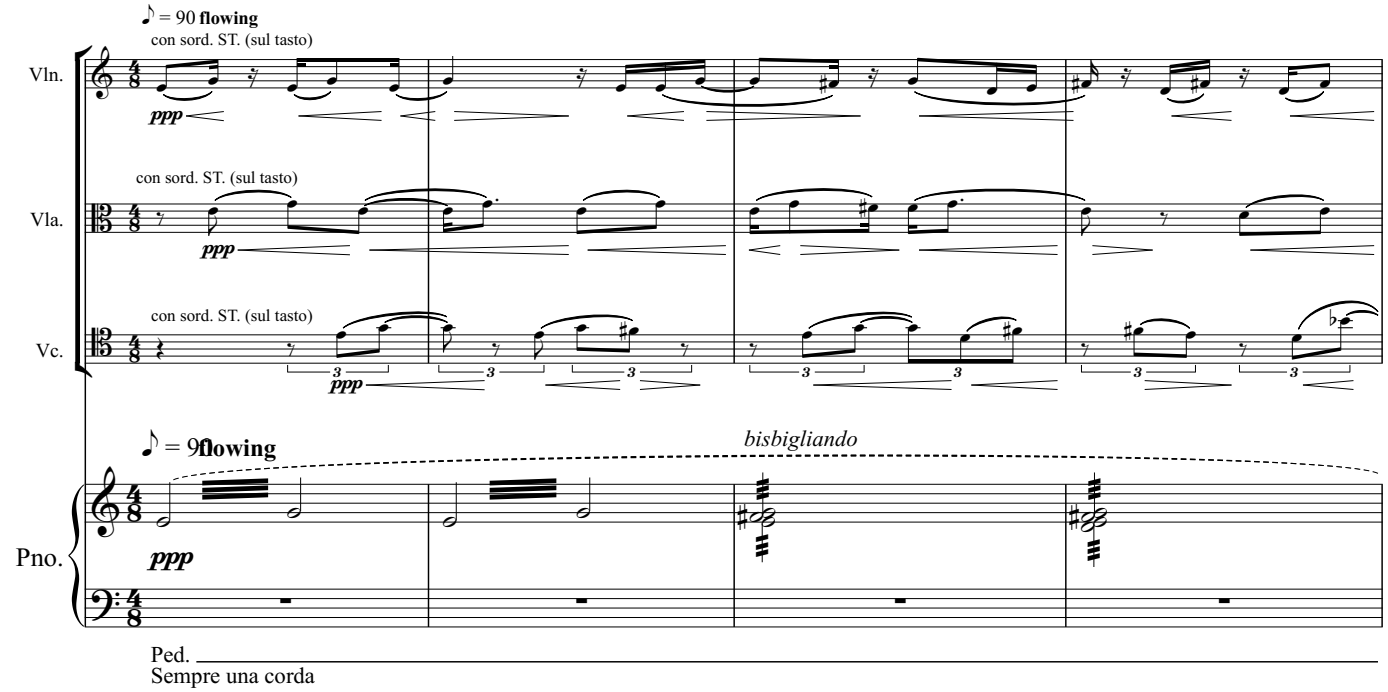
for alto saxophone, violin, viola, cello & piano

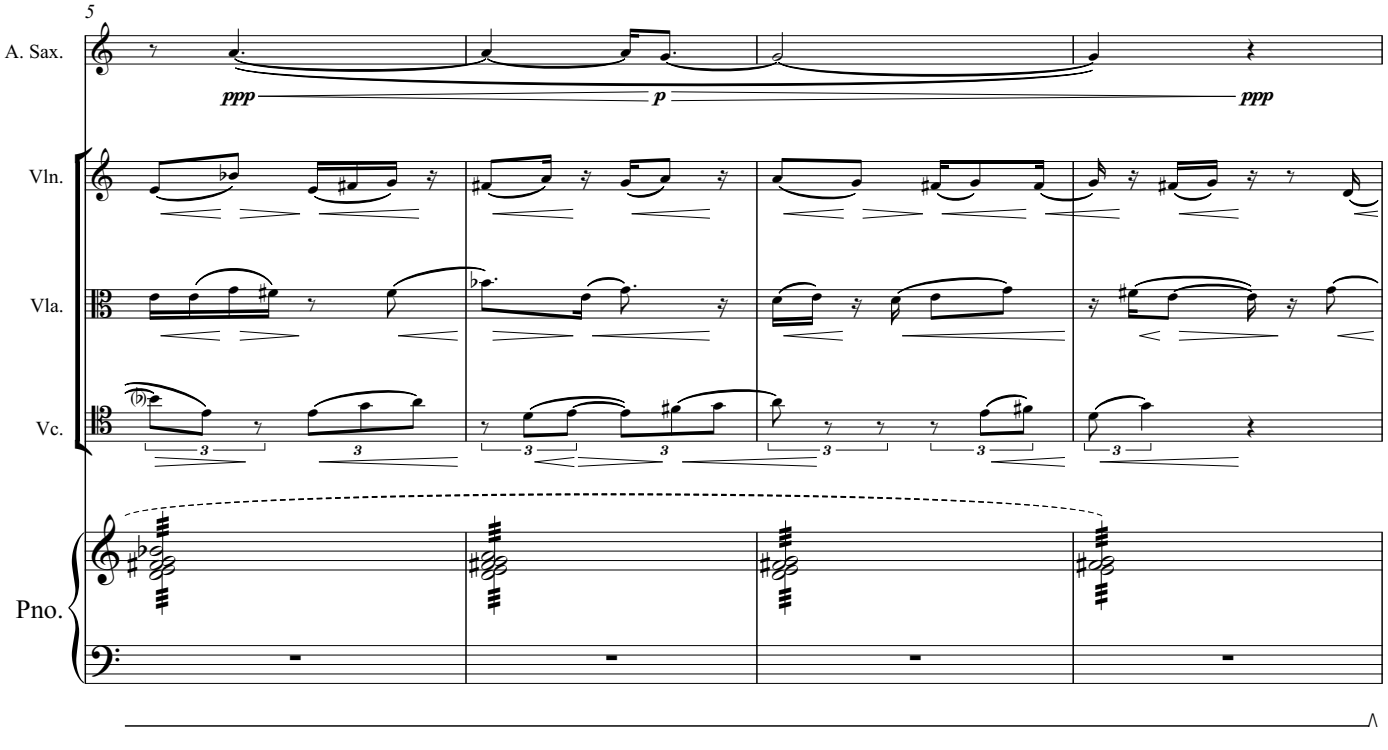
I
Prelude

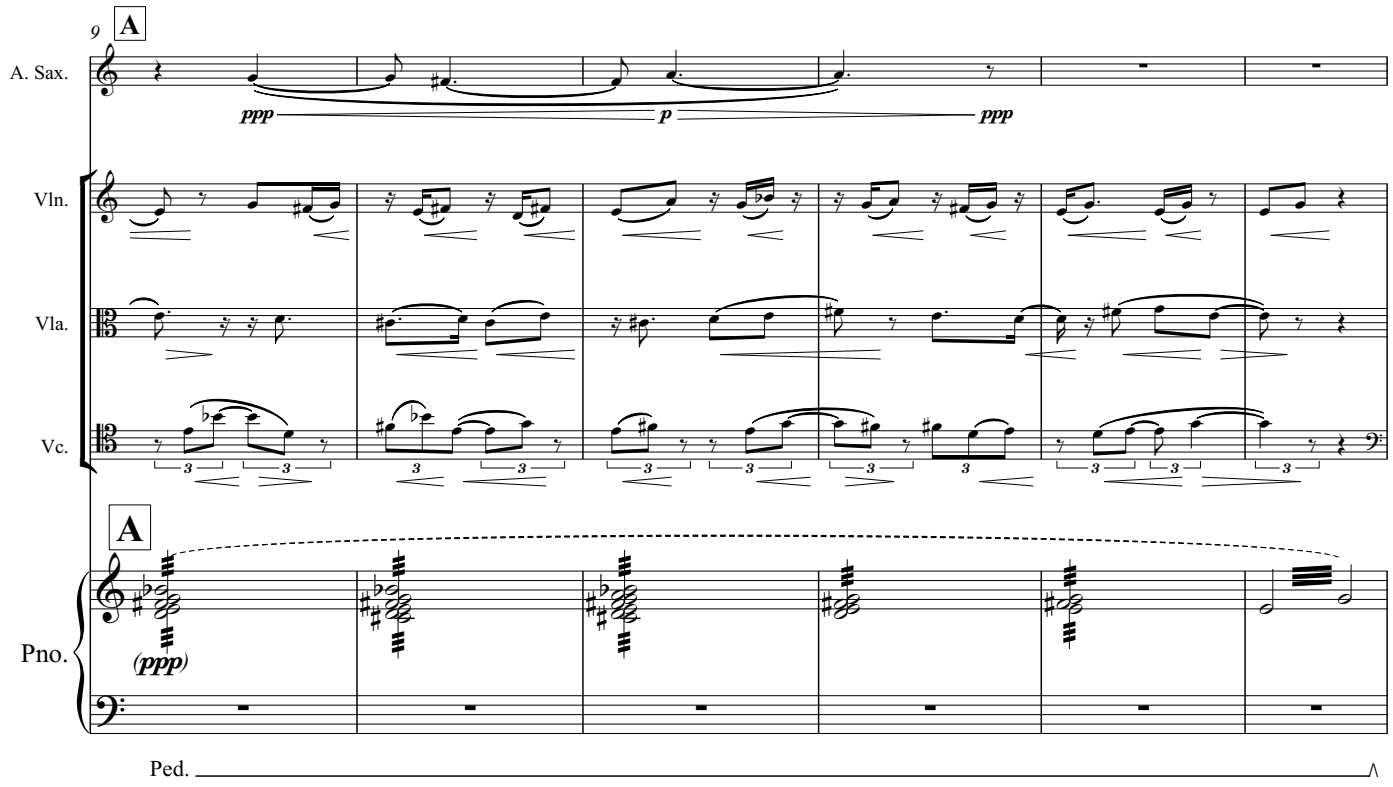
Joel Järventausta
2020

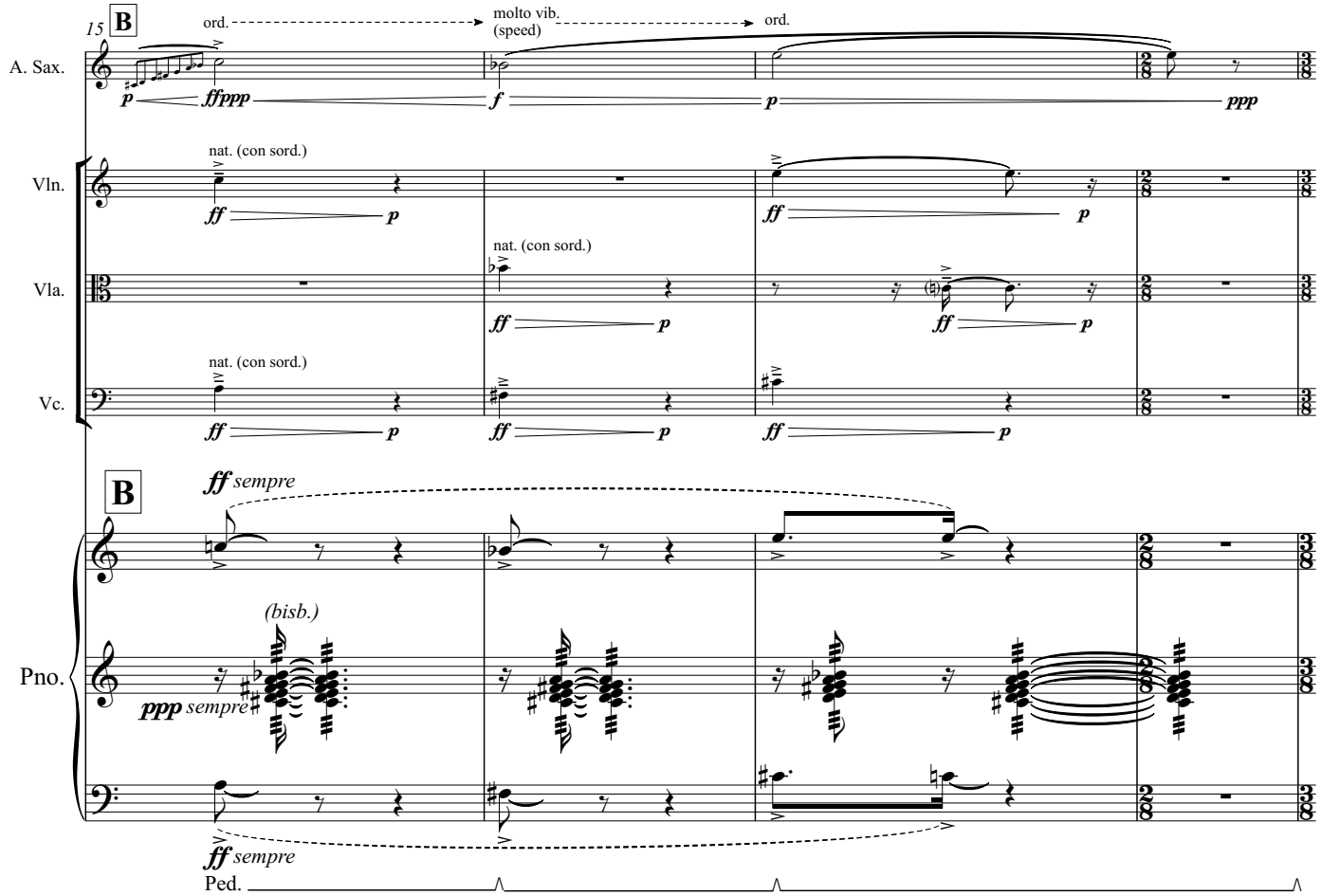


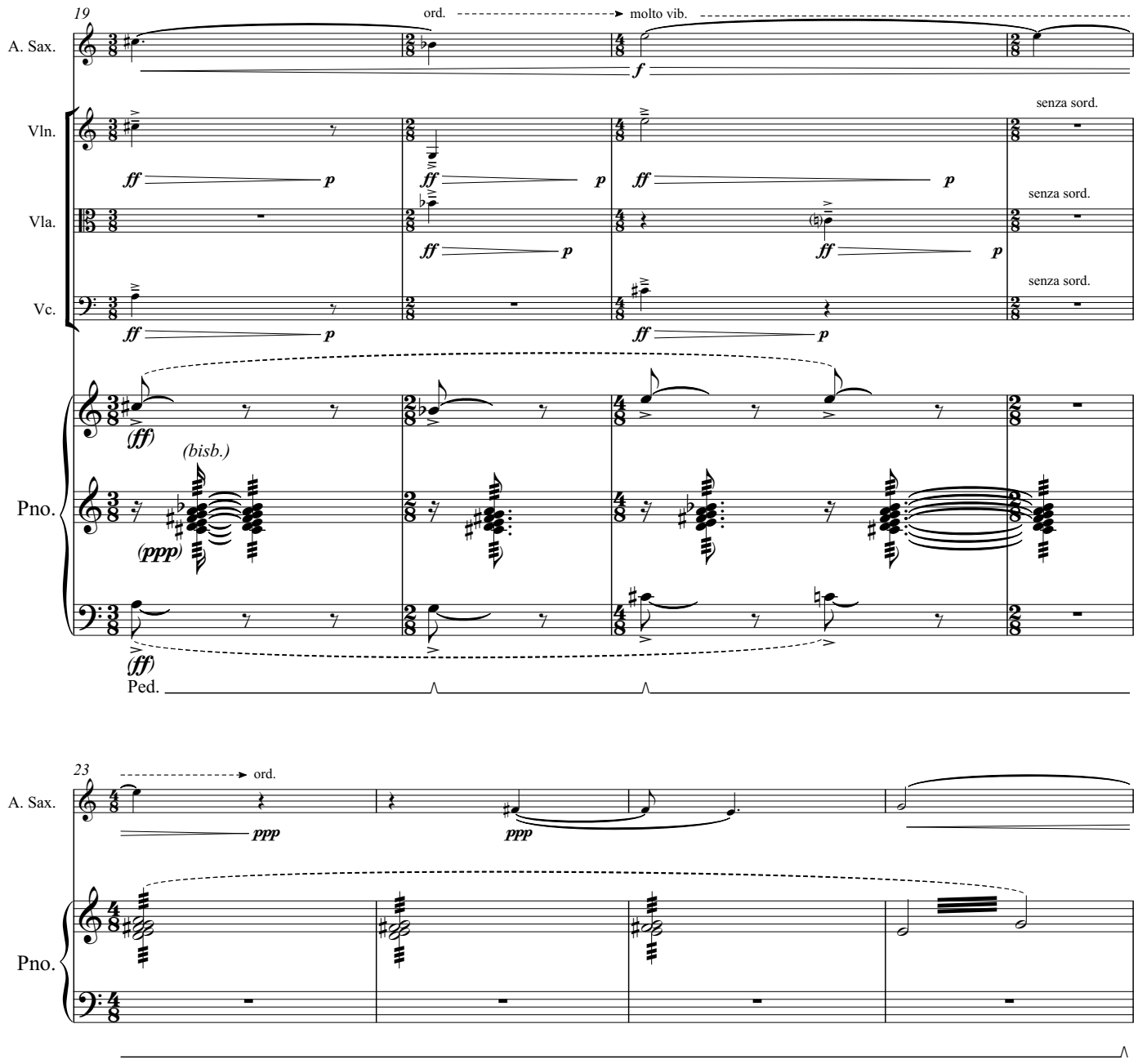
II
Haze

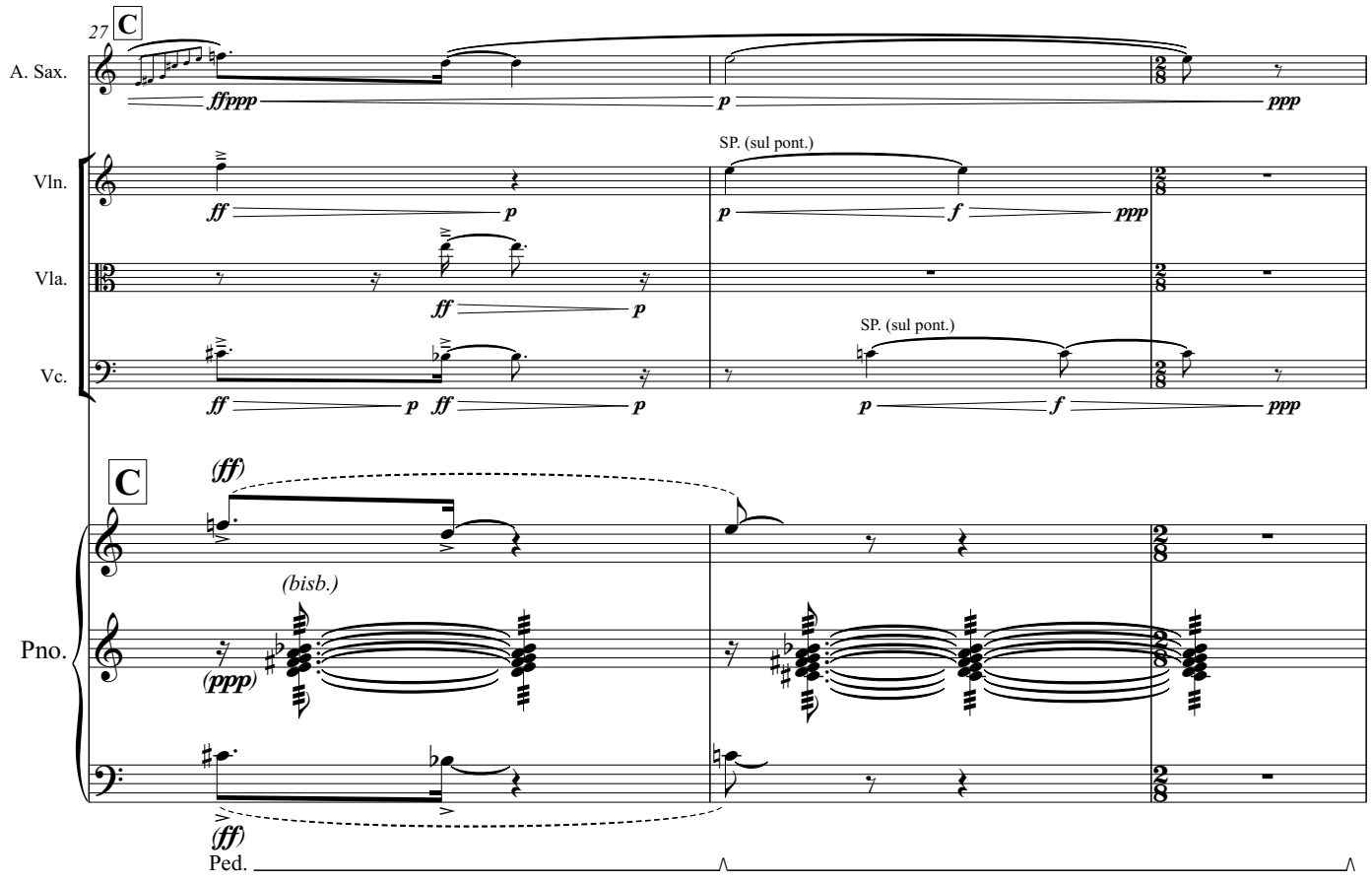

♪ = 90 flowing
con sord. ST. (sul tasto)
Vln.
ppp
con sord. ST. (sul tasto)
Vla.
ppp
con sord. ST. (sul tasto)
Vc.
ppp
♪ = 90 flowing
bisbigliando
Pno.
ppp
Ped.
Sempre una corda

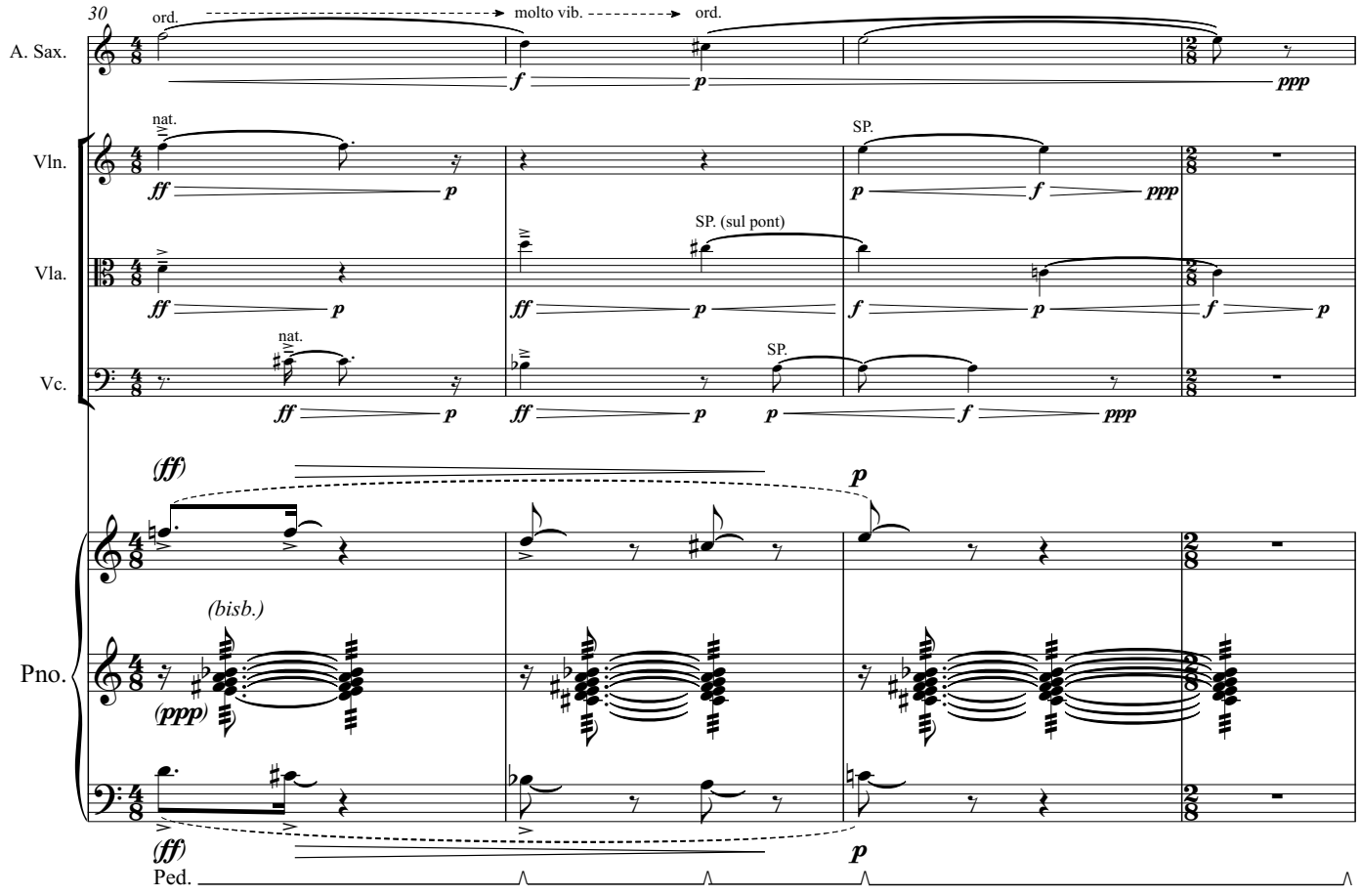

5
A. Sax.
ppp
p
ppp
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.

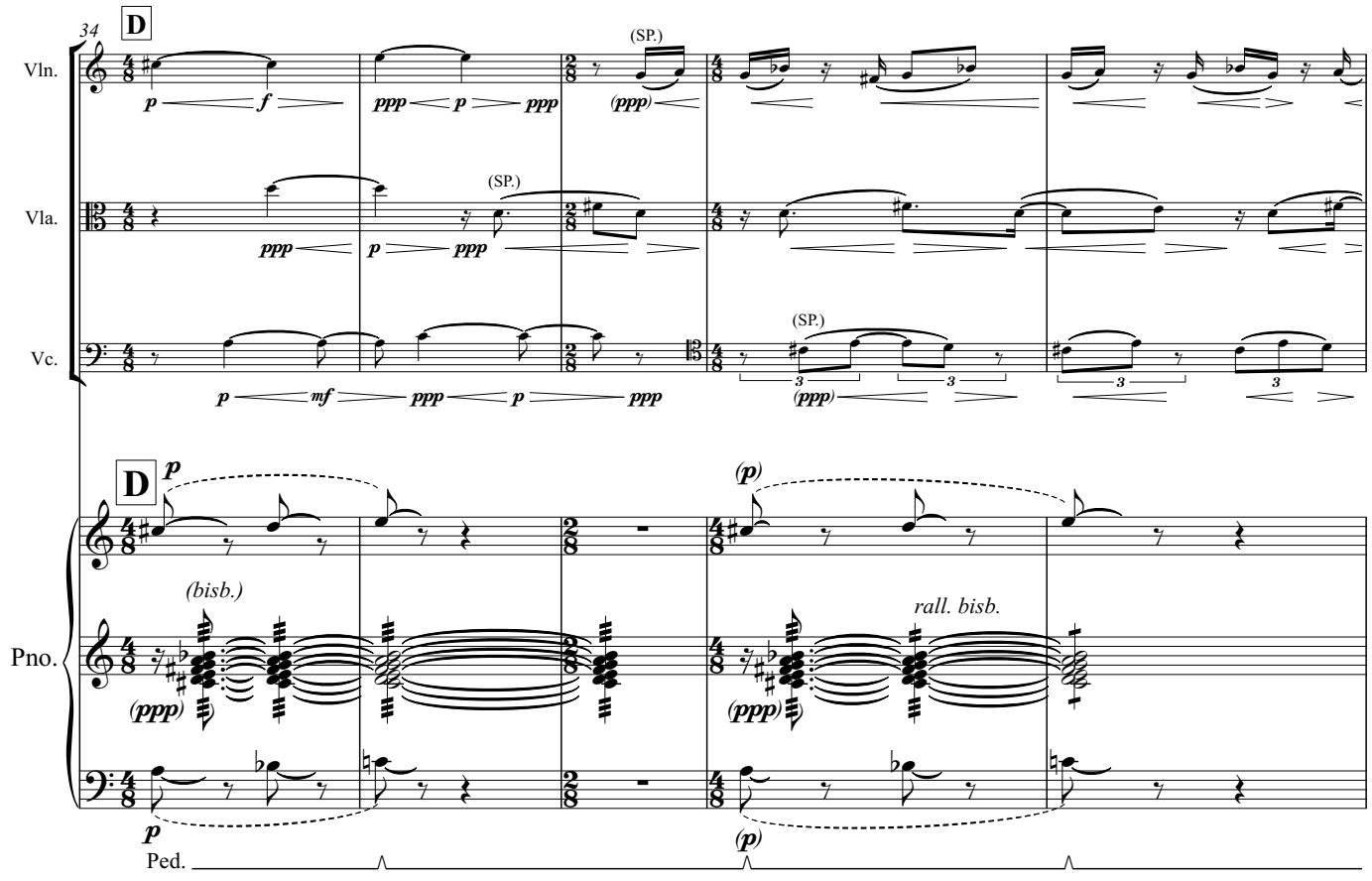

9
A
A. Sax.
ppp
p
ppp
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
3
A
Pno.
(ppp)
Ped.

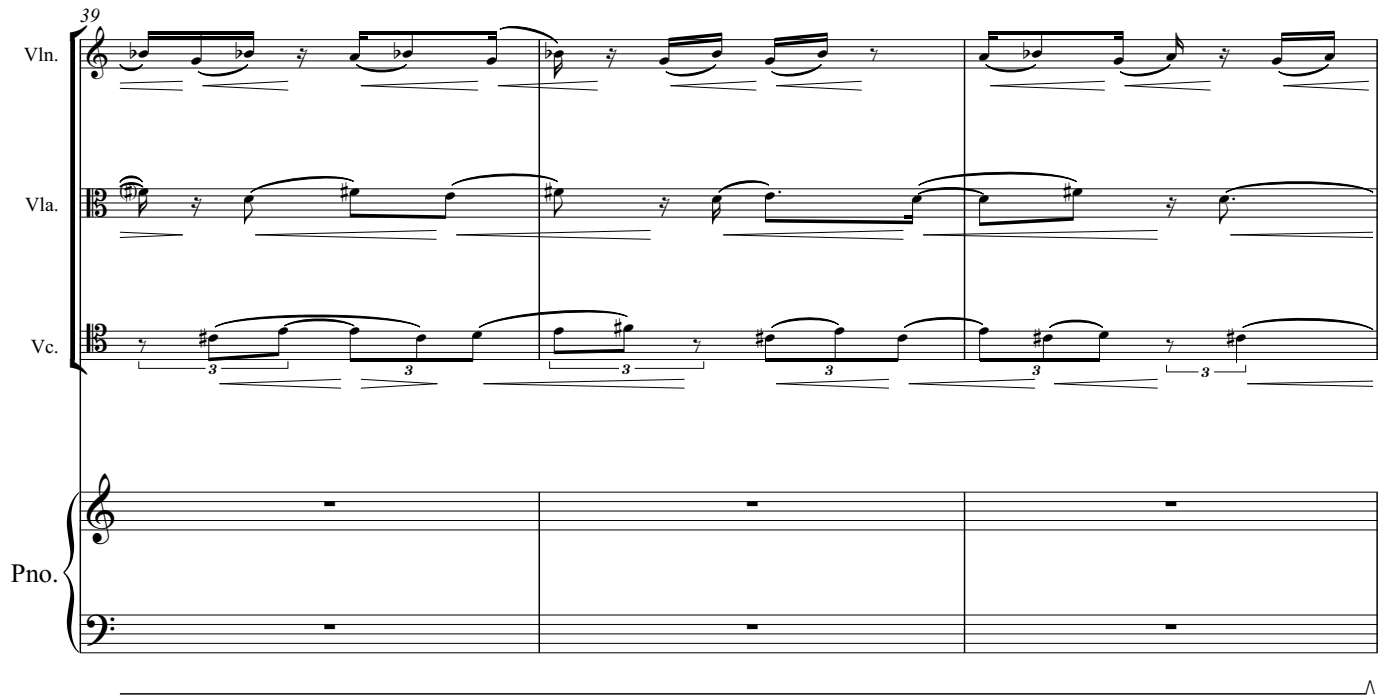

15
B
ord.
molto vib.
(speed)
ord.
A. Sax.
p
ffppp
f
p
ppp
nat. (con sord.)
Vln.
ff
p
nat. (con sord.)
Vla.
ff
p
nat. (con sord.)
Vc.
ff
p
B
ff sempre
(bisb.)
Pno.
ppp sempre
ff sempre
Ped.

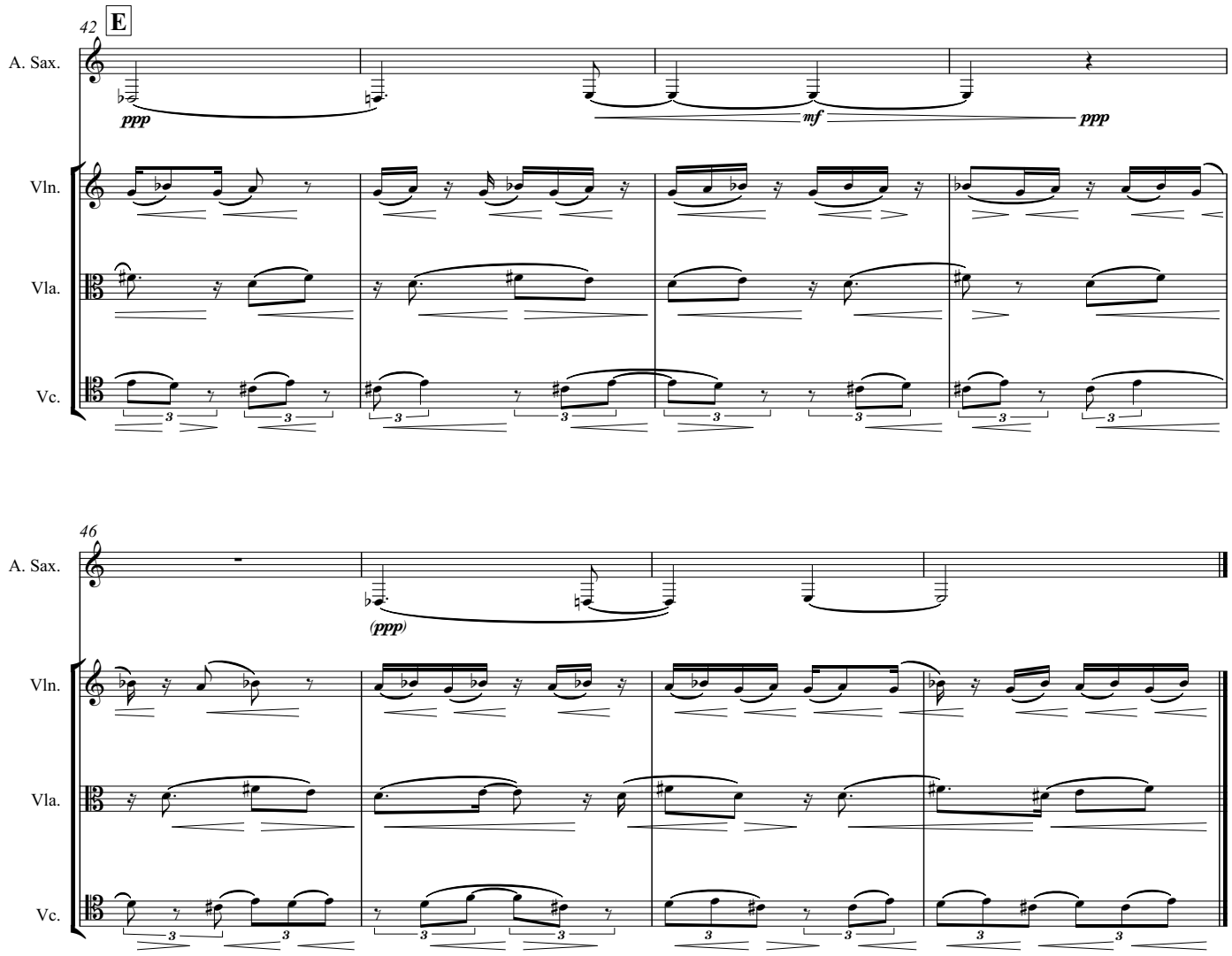

19
ord.
molto vib.
A. Sax.
f
senza sord.
Vln.
ff
p
senza sord.
Vla.
senza sord.
Vc.
(ff)
(bisb.)
Pno.
(ppp)
Ped.
23
ord.
A. Sax.
ppp
Pno.


27
C
A. Sax.
ffppp
p
ppp
Vln.
ff
p
SP. (sul pont.)
p
f
ppp
Vla.
ff
p
Vc.
ff
p
ff
p
SP. (sul pont.)
p
f
ppp
C
(ff)
(bisb.)
Pno.
(ppp)
(ff)
Ped.

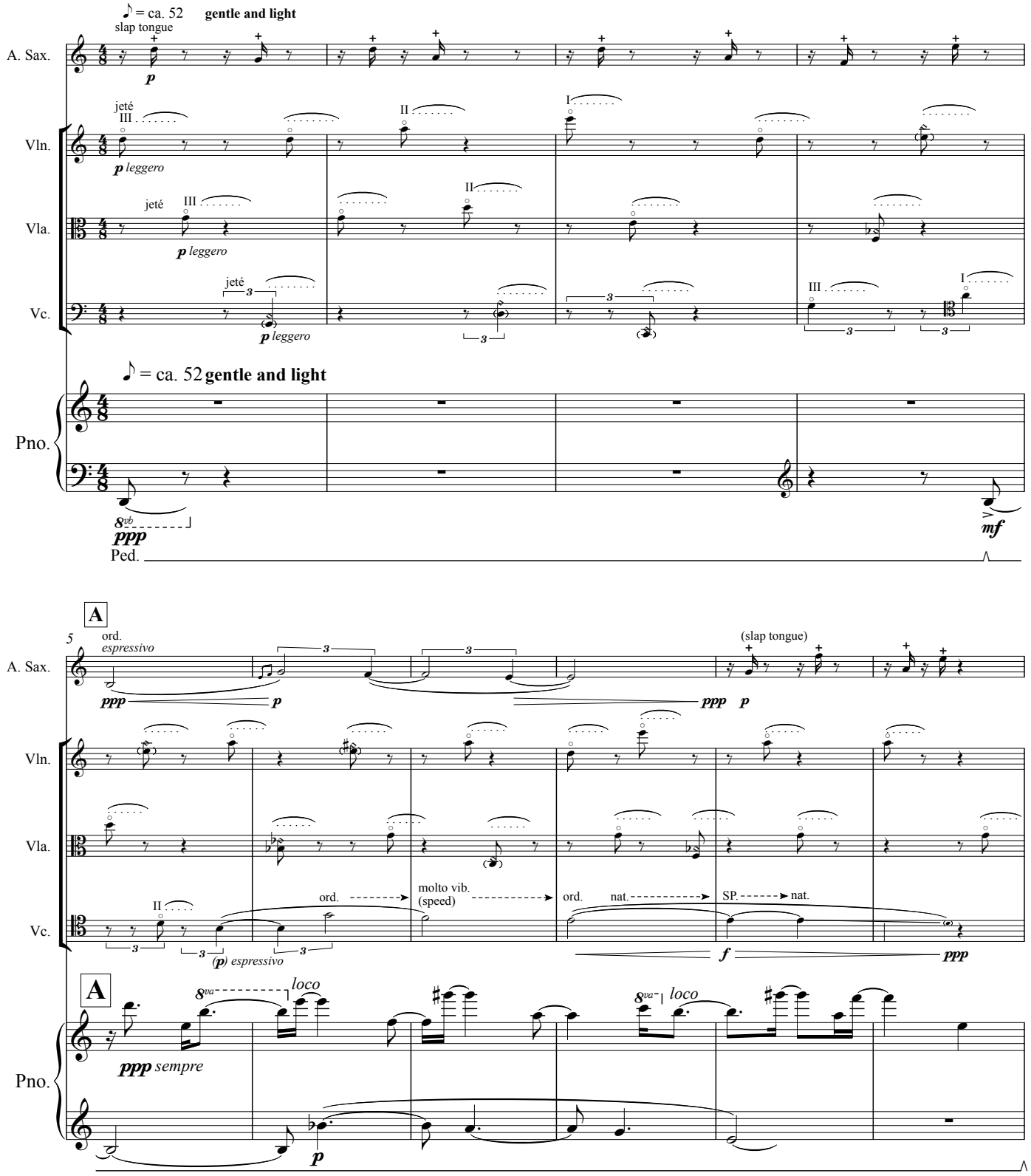

30
ord.
molto vib.
ord.
A. Sax.
f
p
ppp
nat.
Vln.
ff
p
SP.
p
f
ppp
SP. (sul pont)
Vla.
ff
p
f
p
f
p
nat.
Vc.
SP.
ff
p
ff
p
p
f
ppp
(ff)
p
(bisb.)
Pno.
(ppp)
(ff)
p
Ped.

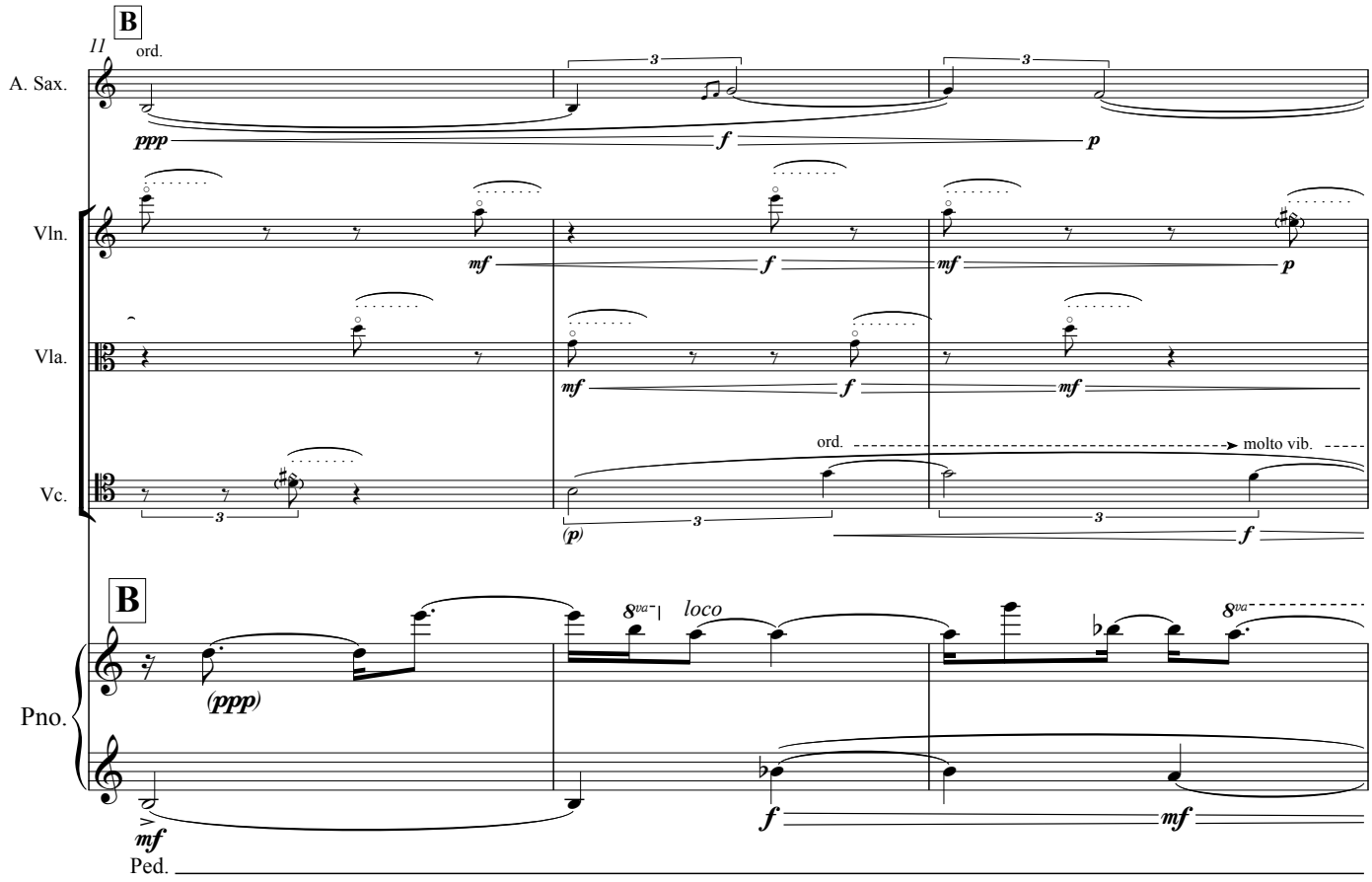

34
D
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
(SP.)
p
f
ppp
(ppp)
mf
3
D
Pno.
(bisb.)
rall. bisb.
(p)
Ped.

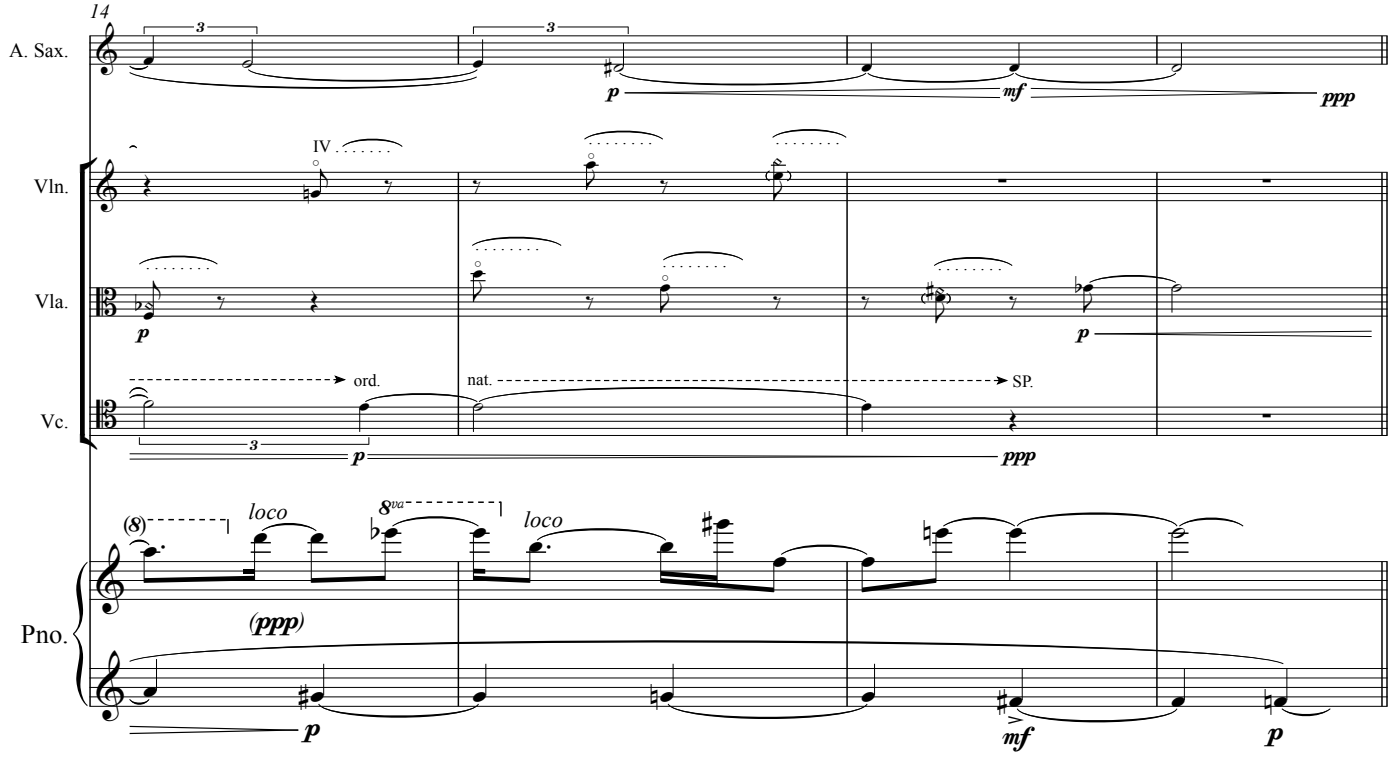

39
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
3

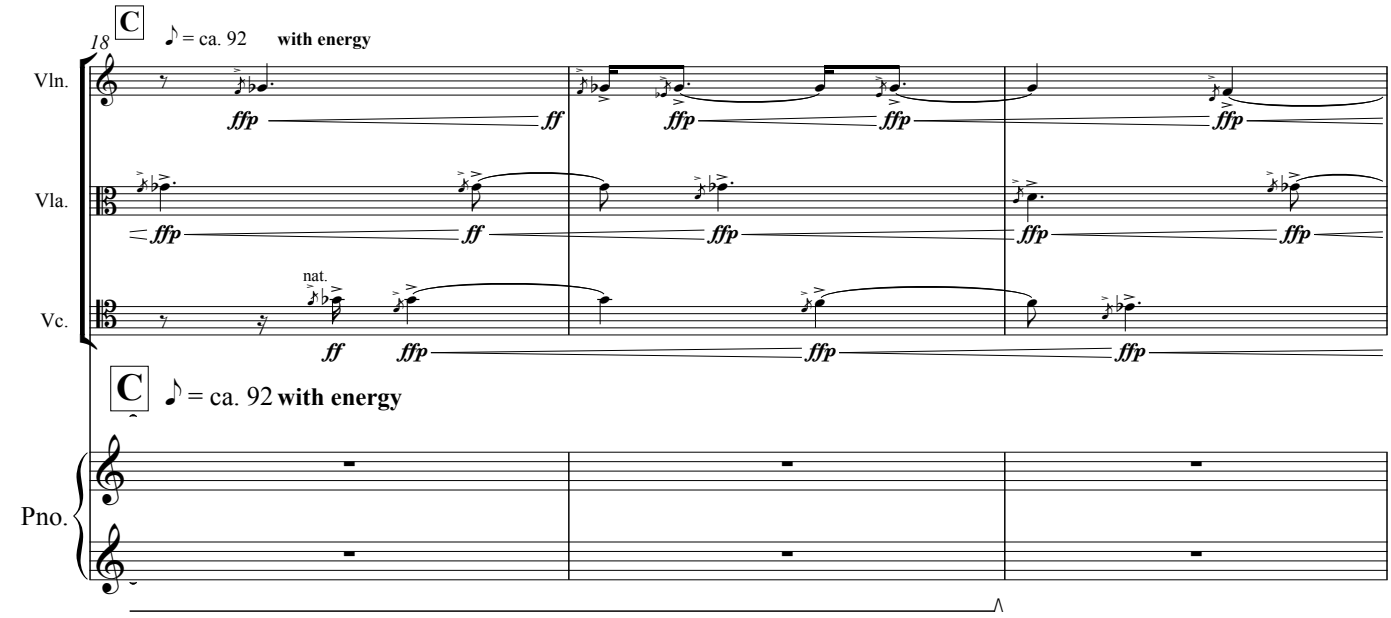

42
E
A. Sax.
ppp
mf
ppp
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
46
A. Sax.
(ppp)
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.

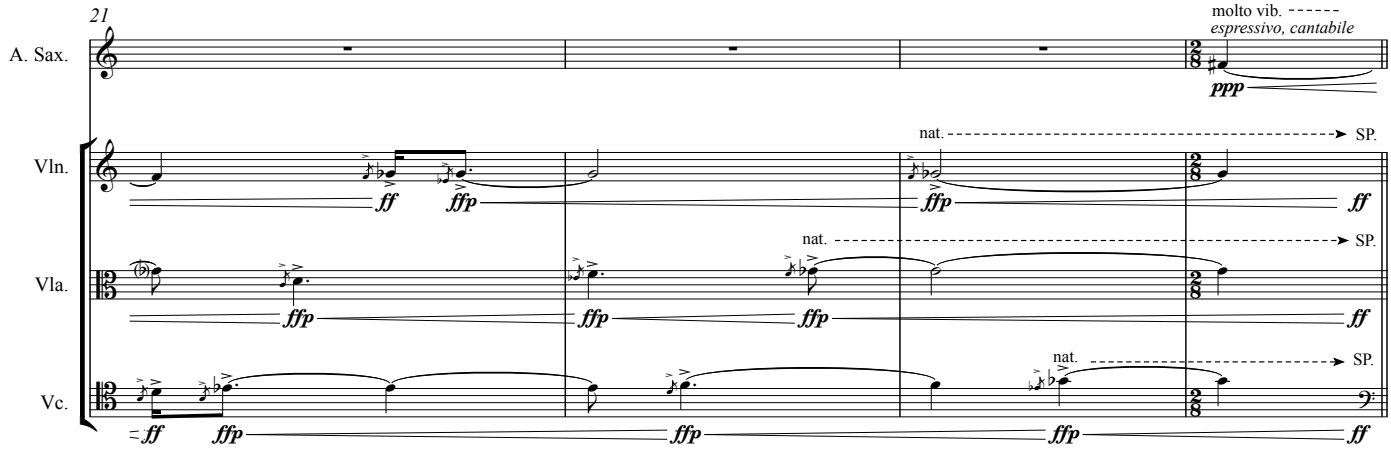
III
Snowriver

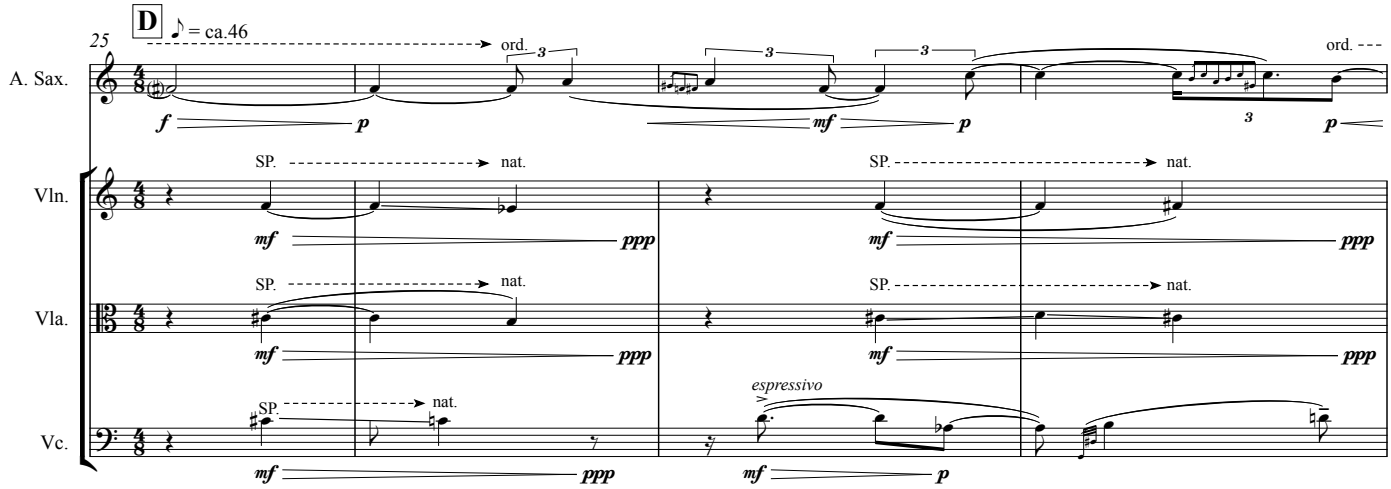


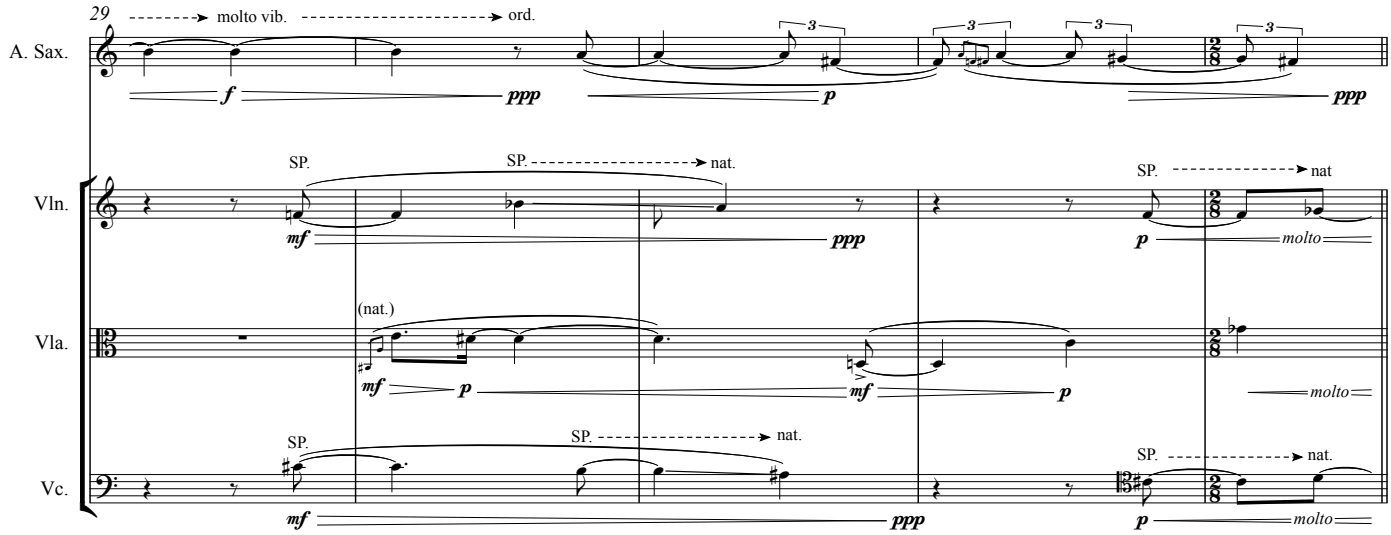

11
B
ord.
A. Sax.
ppp
f
p
Vln.
mf
f
mf
p
Vla.
mf
f
mf
Vc.
ord.
molto vib.
(p)
f
B
(ppp)
8va
loco
8va
Pno.
mf
f
mf
Ped.

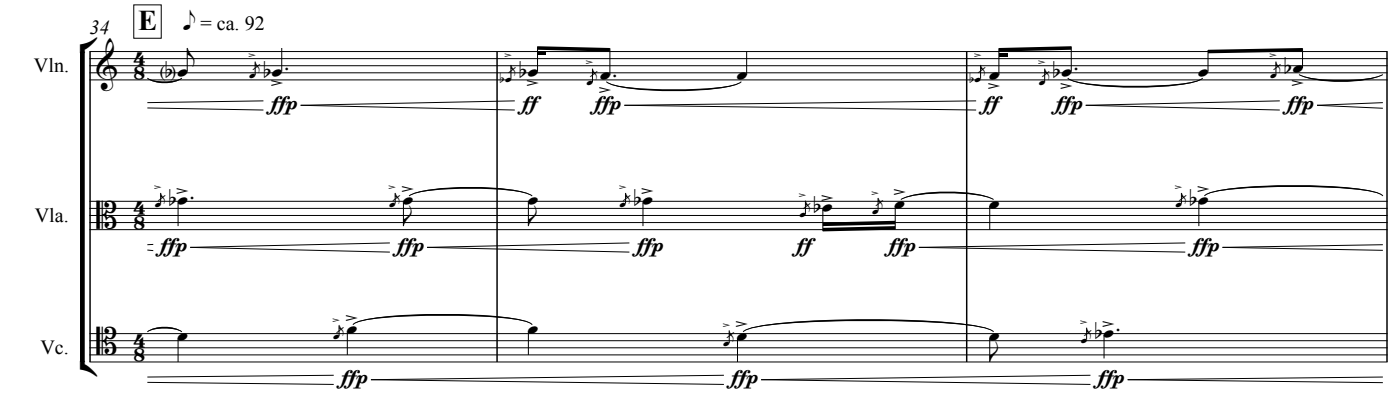

14
A. Sax.
p
mf
ppp
IV
Vln.
Vla.
p
p
ord.
nat.
SP.
Vc.
p
ppp
(8)
loco
8va
loco
(ppp)
Pno.
p
mf
p

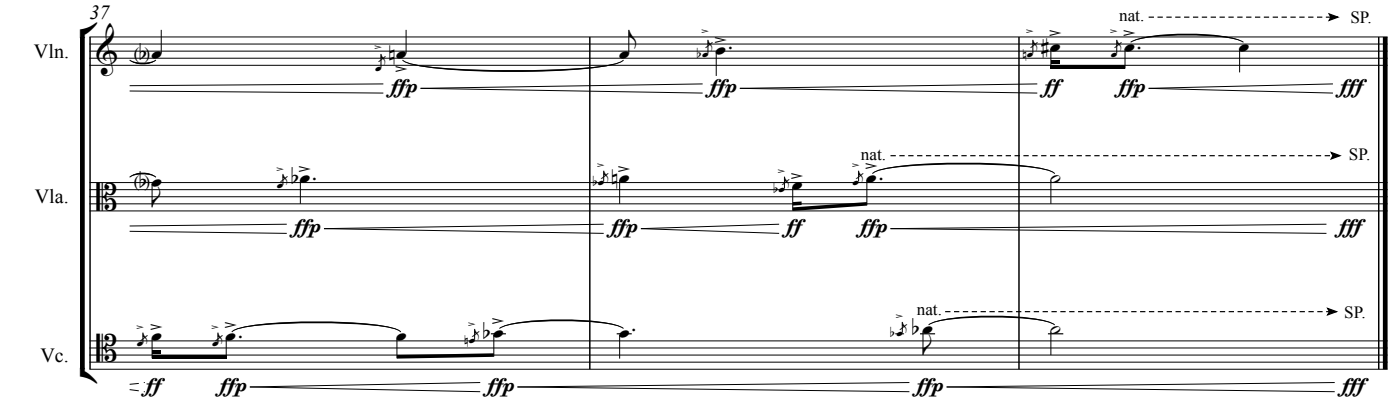

18
C
♪ = ca. 92
with energy
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
nat.
C
♪ = ca. 92 with energy
Pno.


21
A. Sax.
molto vib.
espressivo, cantabile
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
nat.
SP.

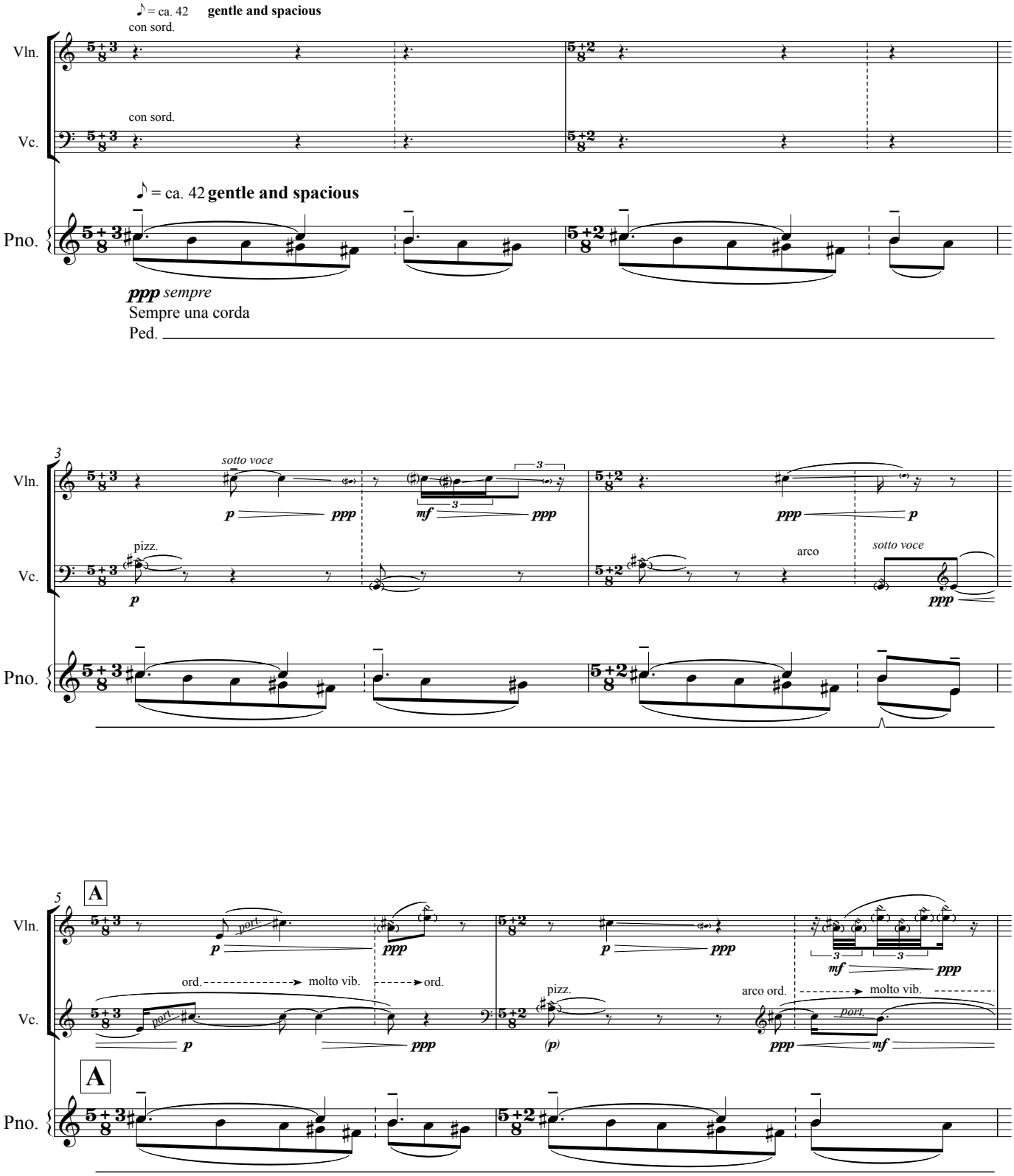

25
D
♪ = ca.46
A. Sax.
ord.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
SP.
nat.
espressivo

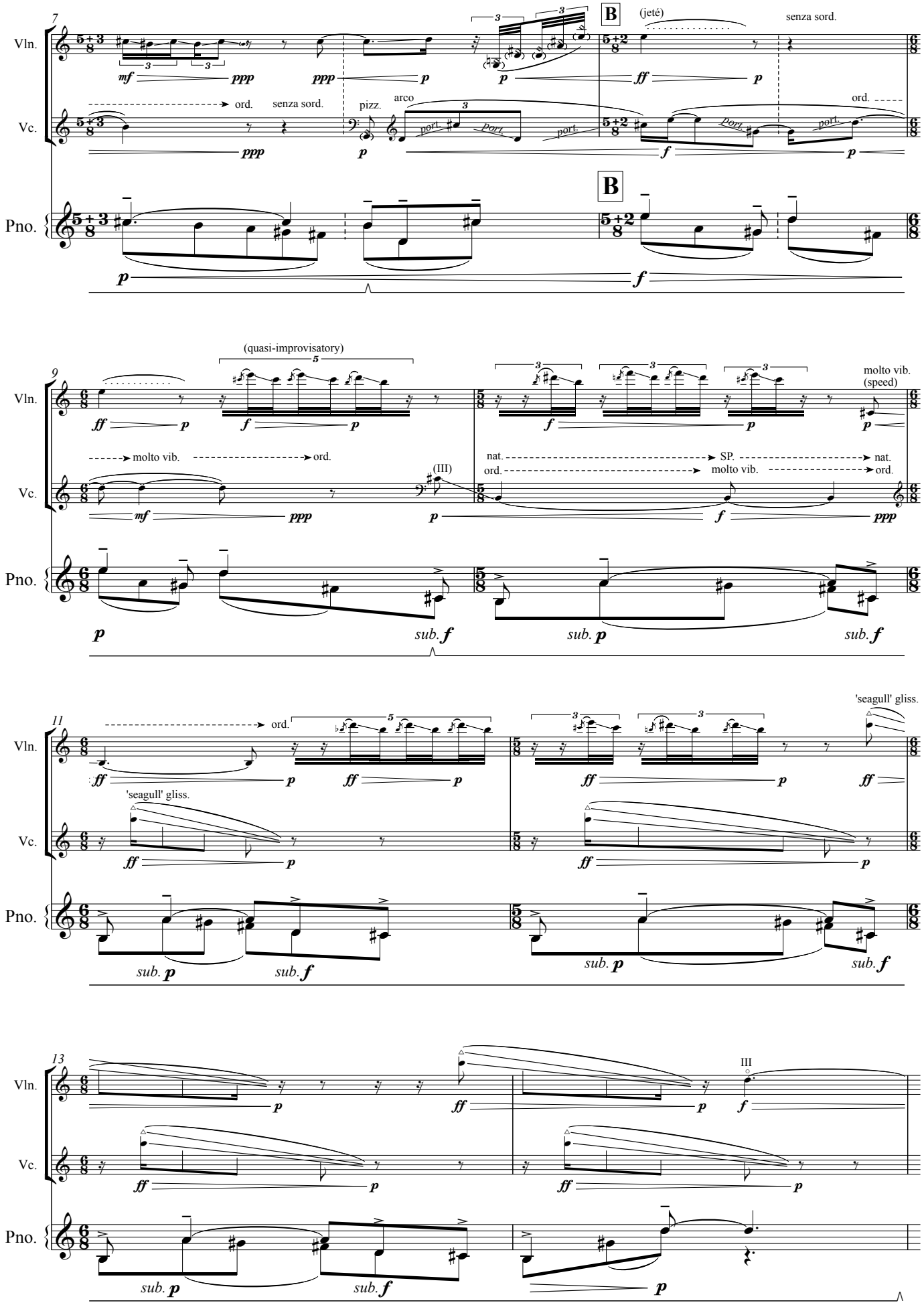

29
molto vib.
ord.
A. Sax.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
SP.
nat.
(nat.)
molto

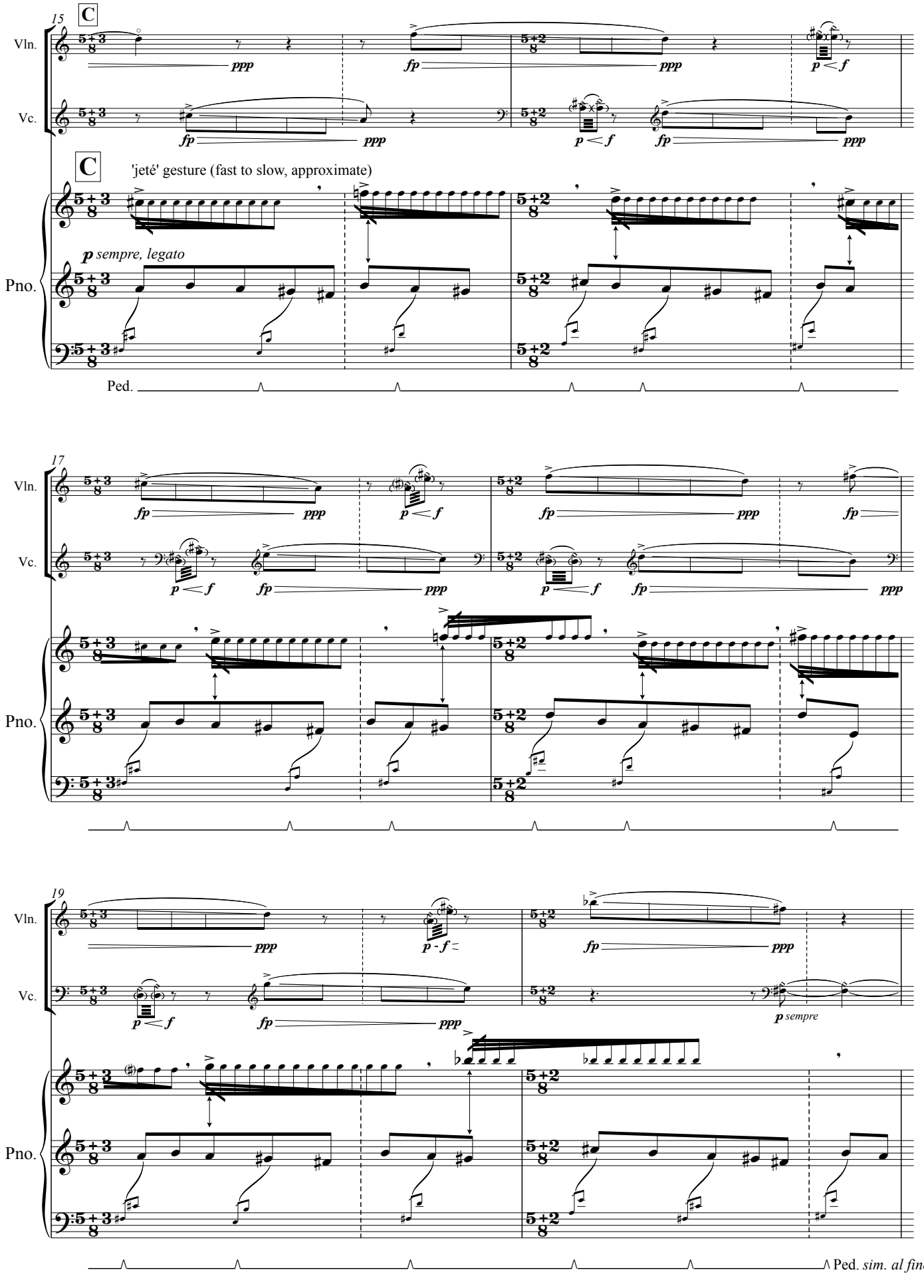

34
E
♪ = ca. 92
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.

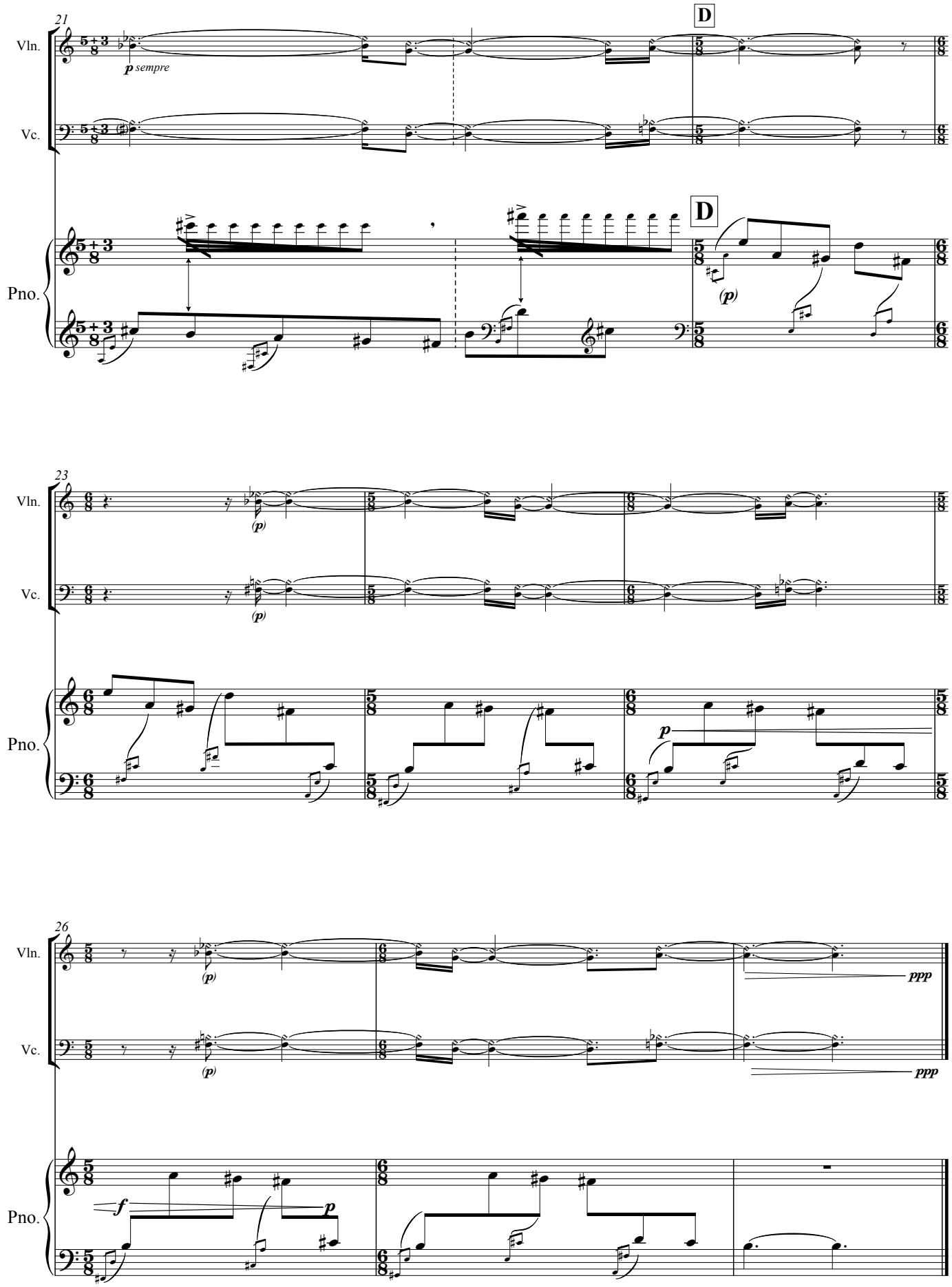

37
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
nat.
SP.

IV
Lullaby


♪ = ca. 42 gentle and spacious
con sord.
Vln.
con sord.
Vc.
♪ = ca. 42 gentle and spacious
Pno.
ppp sempre
Sempre una corda
Ped.
sotto voce
pizz.
arco
sotto voce
A
ord.
molto vib.
ord.
pizz.
arco ord.
molto vib.
port.

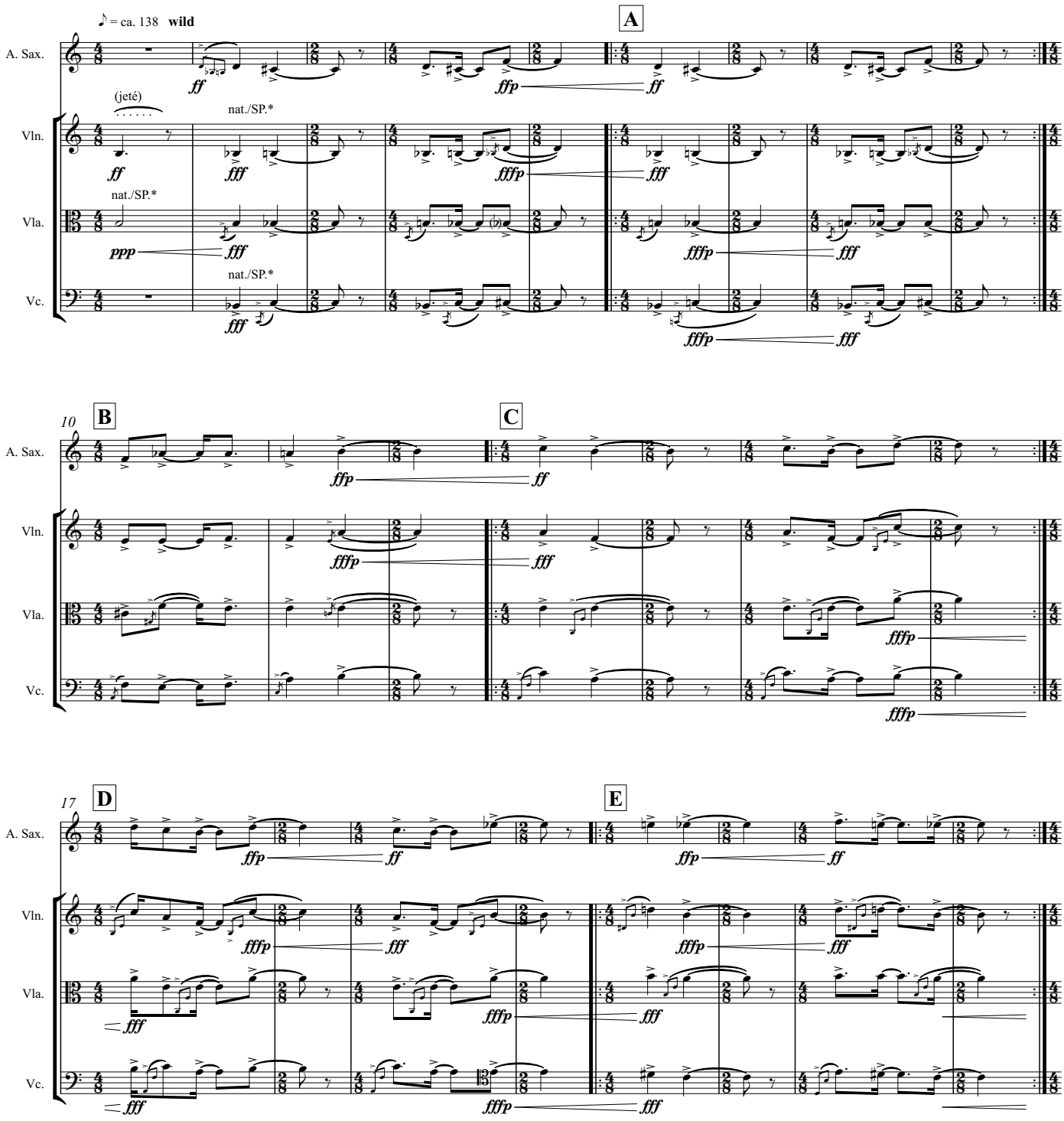

7
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
B
(jeté)
senza sord.
ord.
senza sord.
pizz.
arco
port.
ord.
B
9
(quasi-improvisatory)
molto vib.
(speed)
molto vib.
ord.
(III)
nat.
SP.
nat.
ord.
molto vib.
ord.
sub.
11
ord.
'seagull' gliss.
'seagull' gliss.
sub.
13
III
sub.

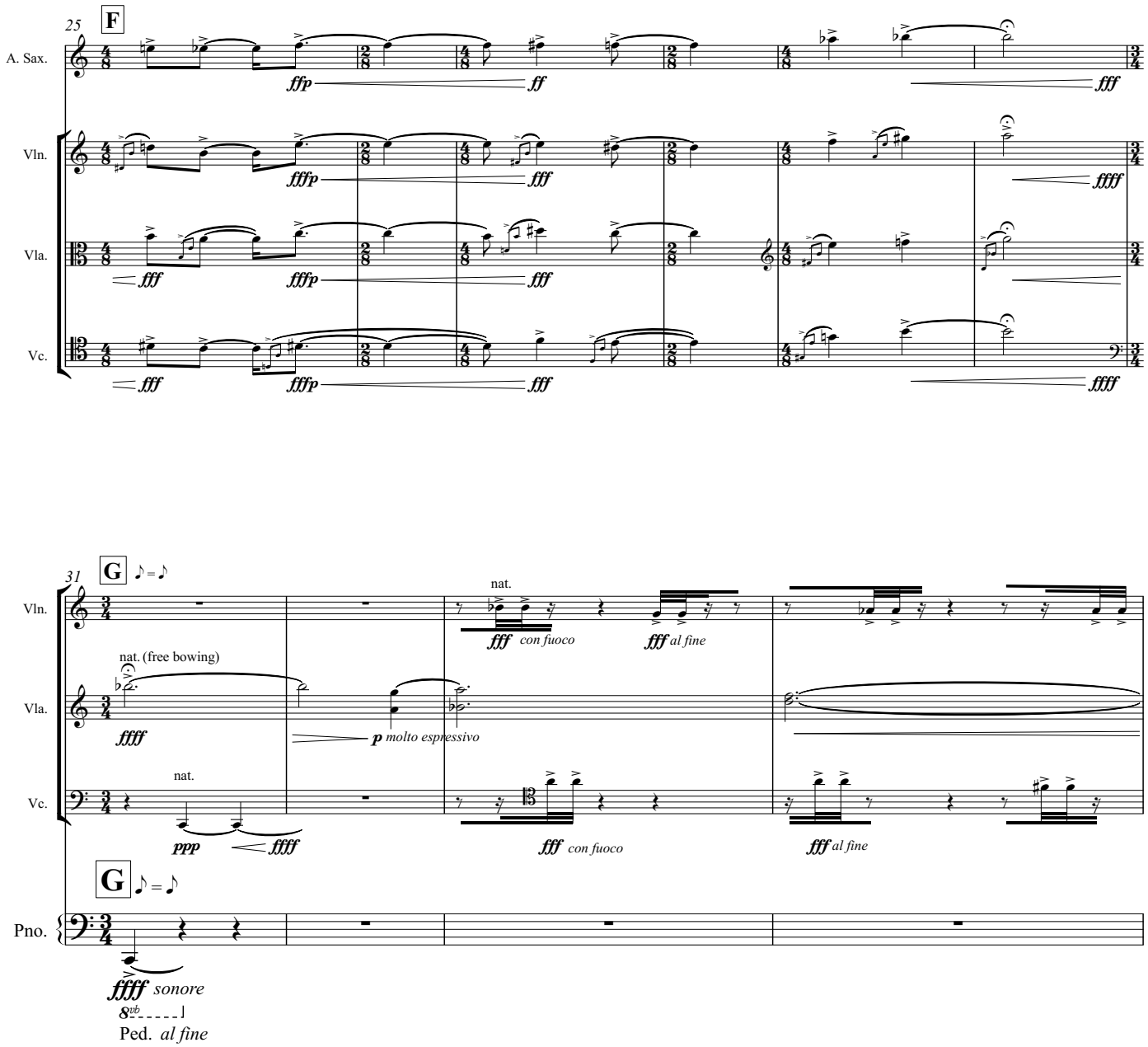

15
C
Vln.
Vc.
ppp
fp
p < f
C
'jeté' gesture (fast to slow, approximate)
Pno.
p sempre, legato
Ped.
17
19
p - f
sempre
Ped. sim. al fine

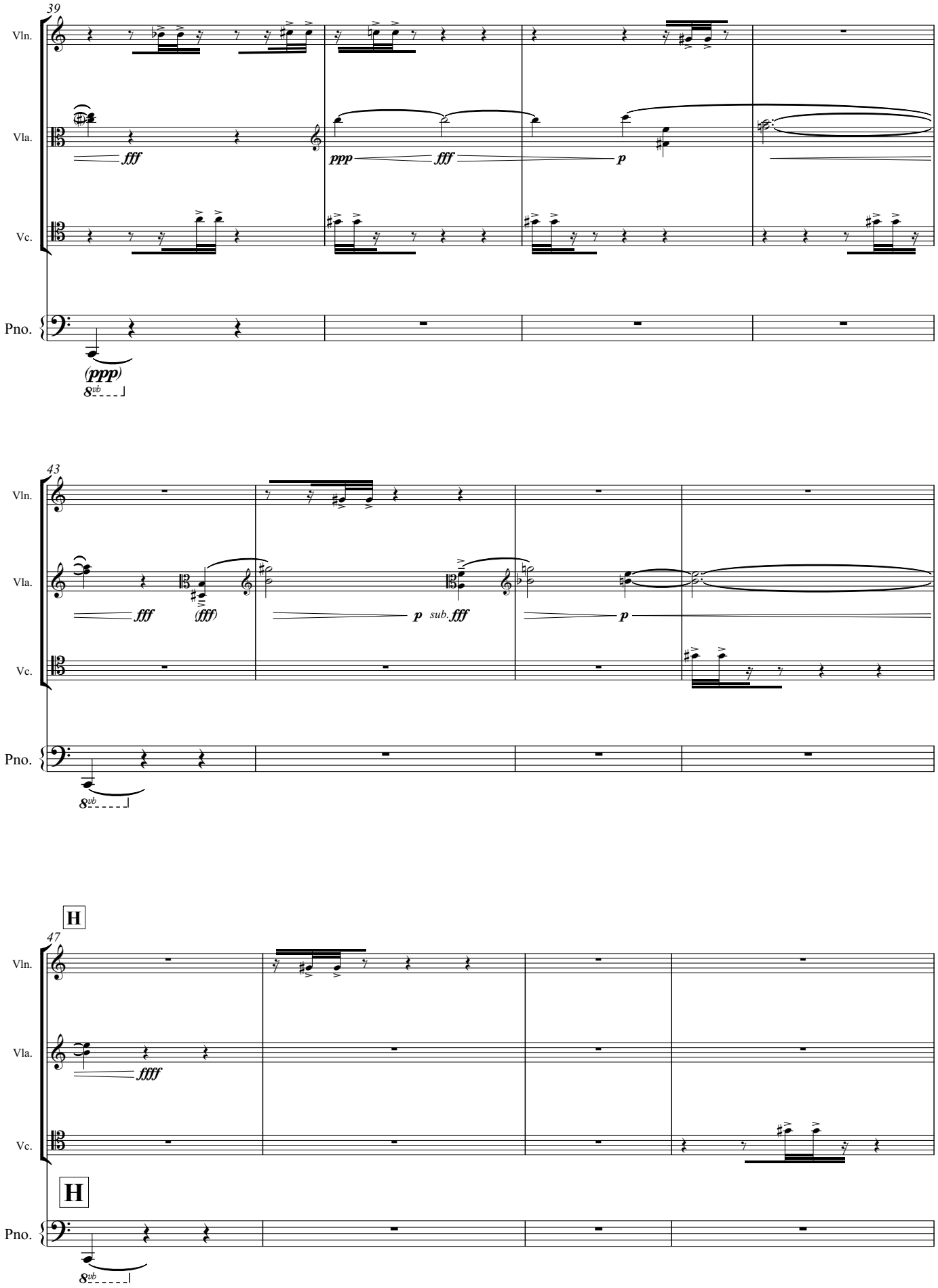

21
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
p sempre
D
D
(p)
23
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
(p)
(p)
p
26
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
(p)
(p)
ppp
ppp
f
p

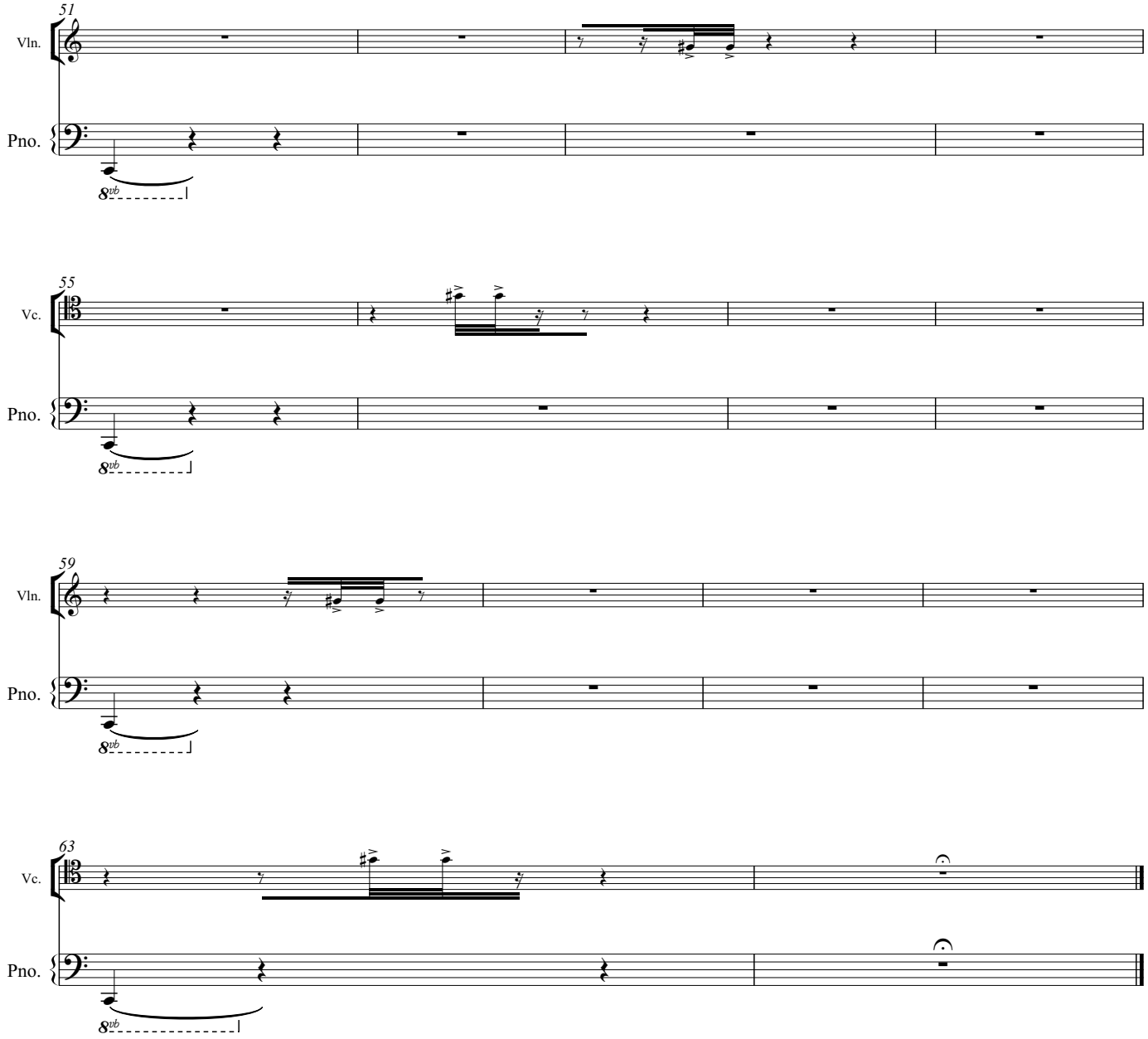
V
Earth Red

*Alternate freely between nat. and sul pont. till bar 31 (rehearsal mark G). Do not synchronize with others.

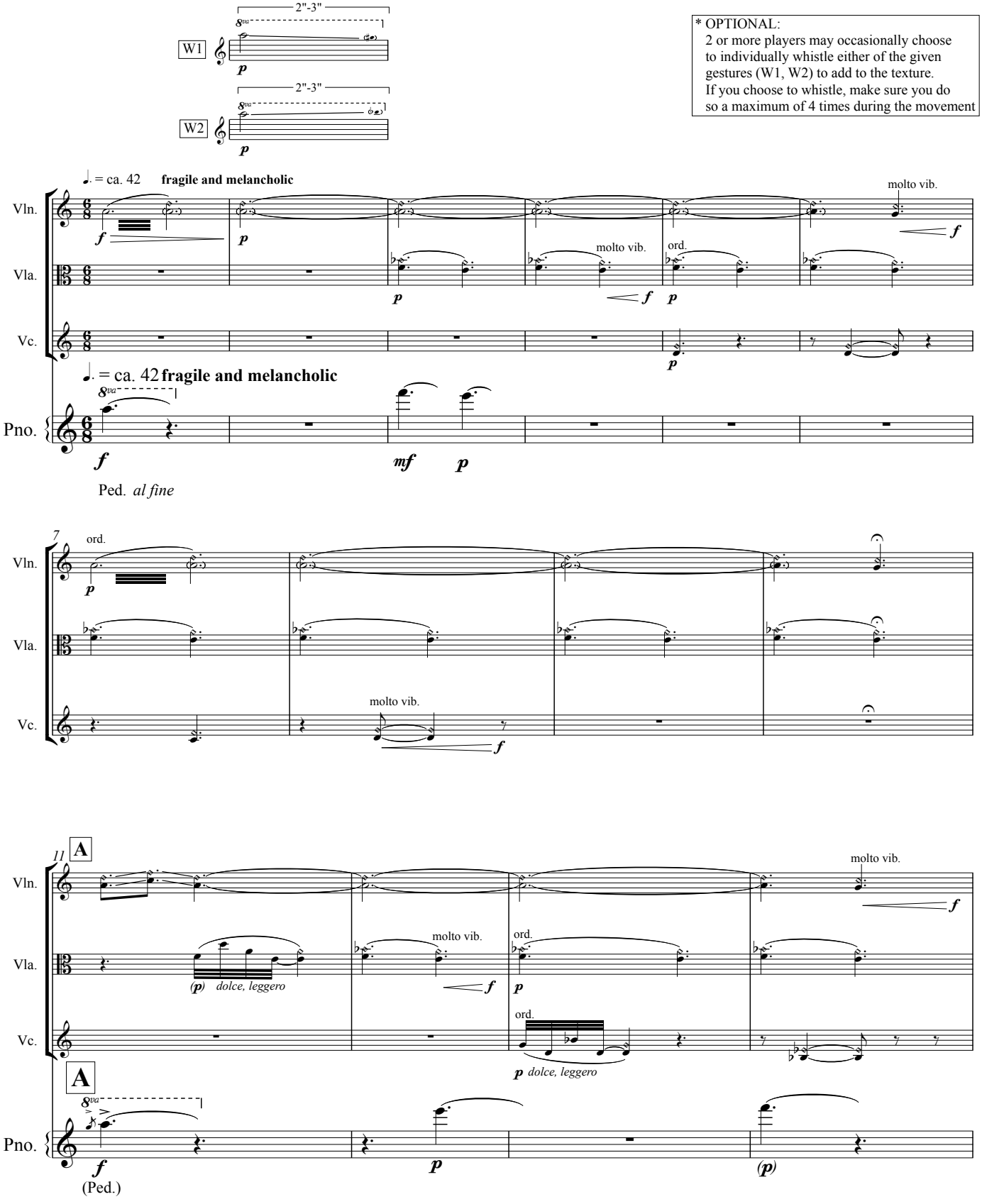


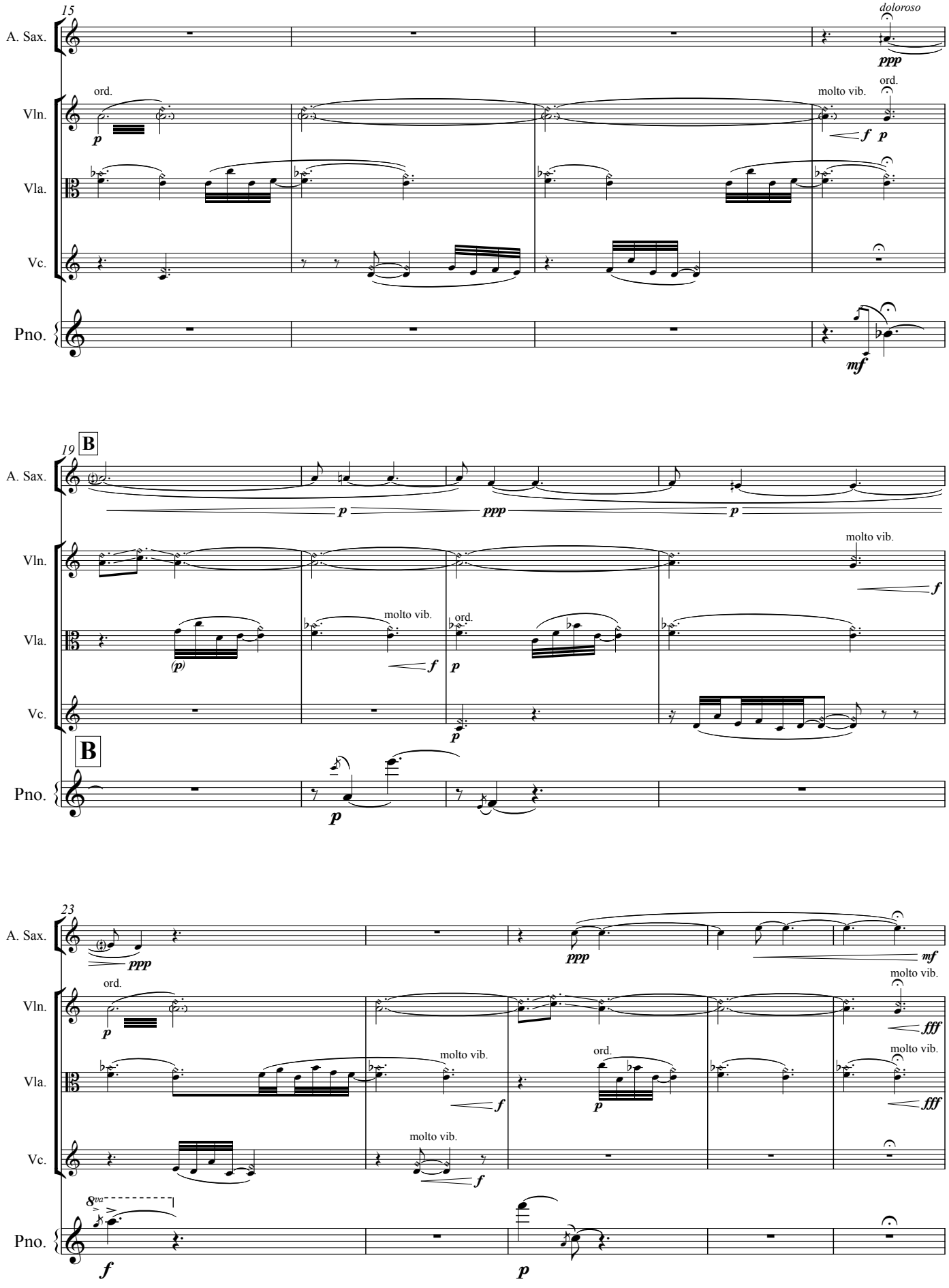

25
F
A. Sax.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
fffp
ff
fff
ffff
31
G
♪ = ♪
nat.
fff con fuoco
fff al fine
nat. (free bowing)
ffff
p molto espressivo
ppp
Pno.
fffff sonore
8vb
Ped. al fine
35
(fff)
ppp al fine

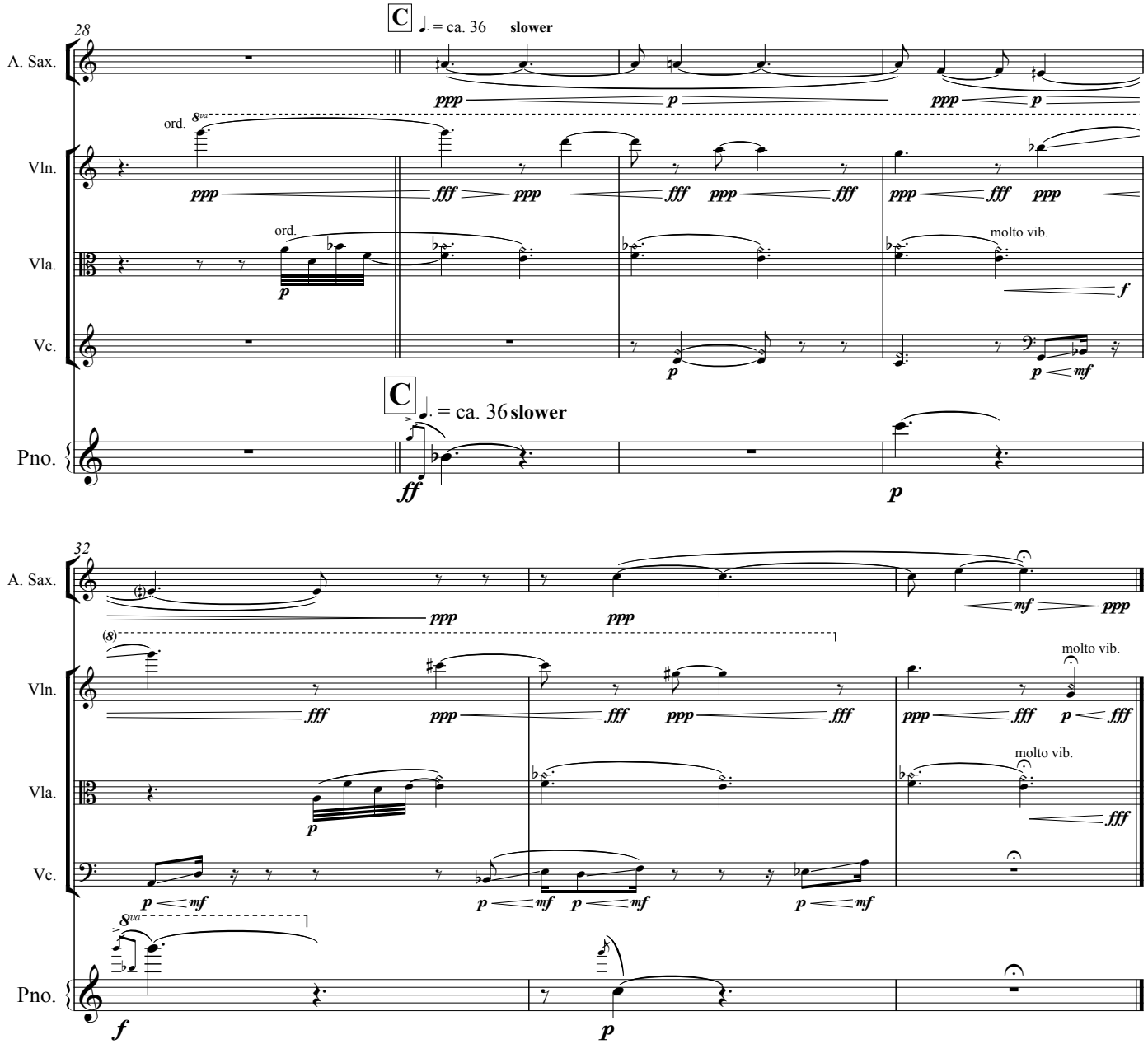

39
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
fff
ppp
fff
p
(ppp)
8vb
43
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
fff
(fff)
p
sub.fff
p
8vb
H
47
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
ffff
H
8vb


51
Vln.
Pno.
8vb
55
Vc.
Pno.
8vb
59
Vln.
Pno.
8vb
63
Vc.
Pno.
8vb

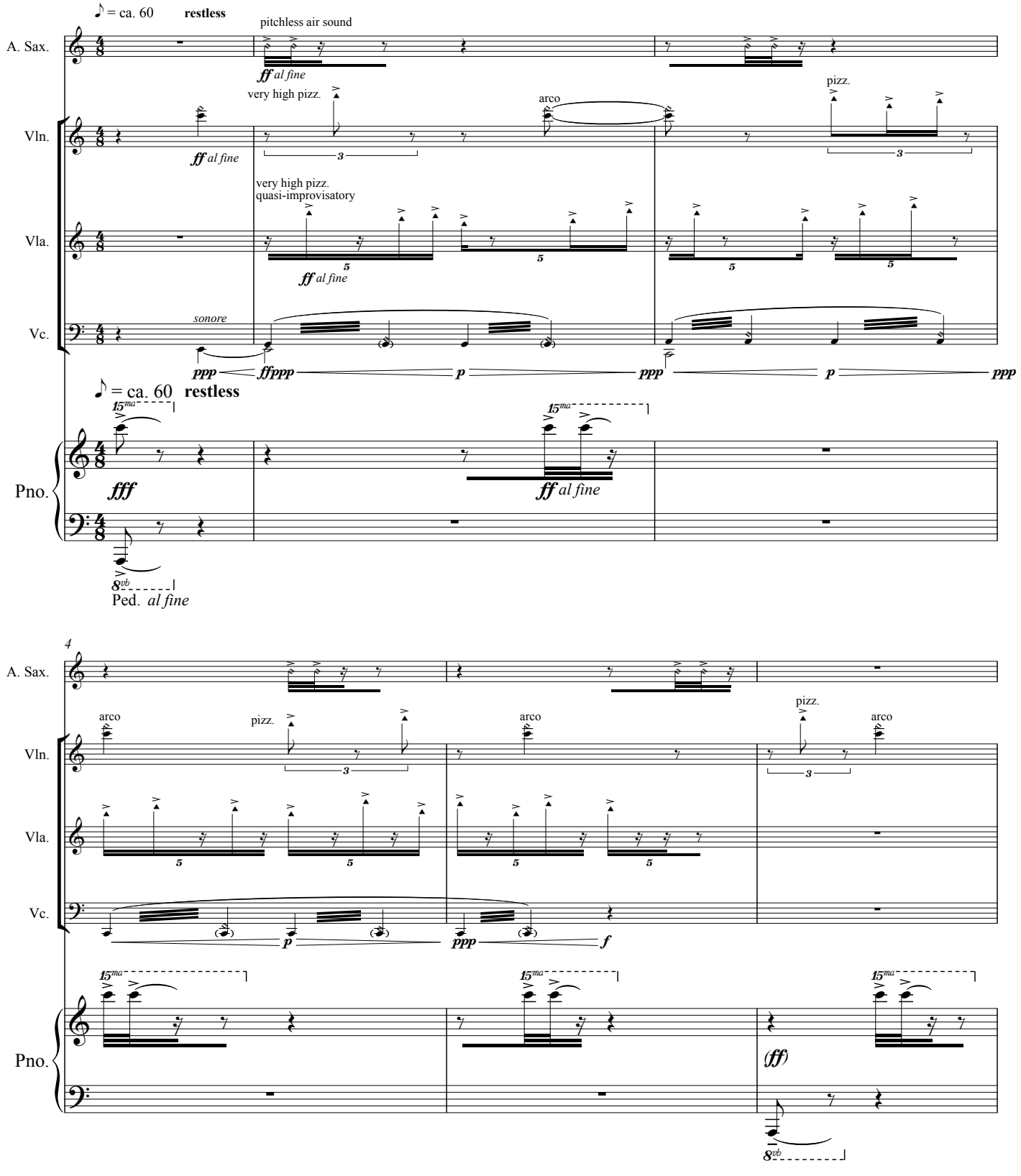
VI
Grey-Blue

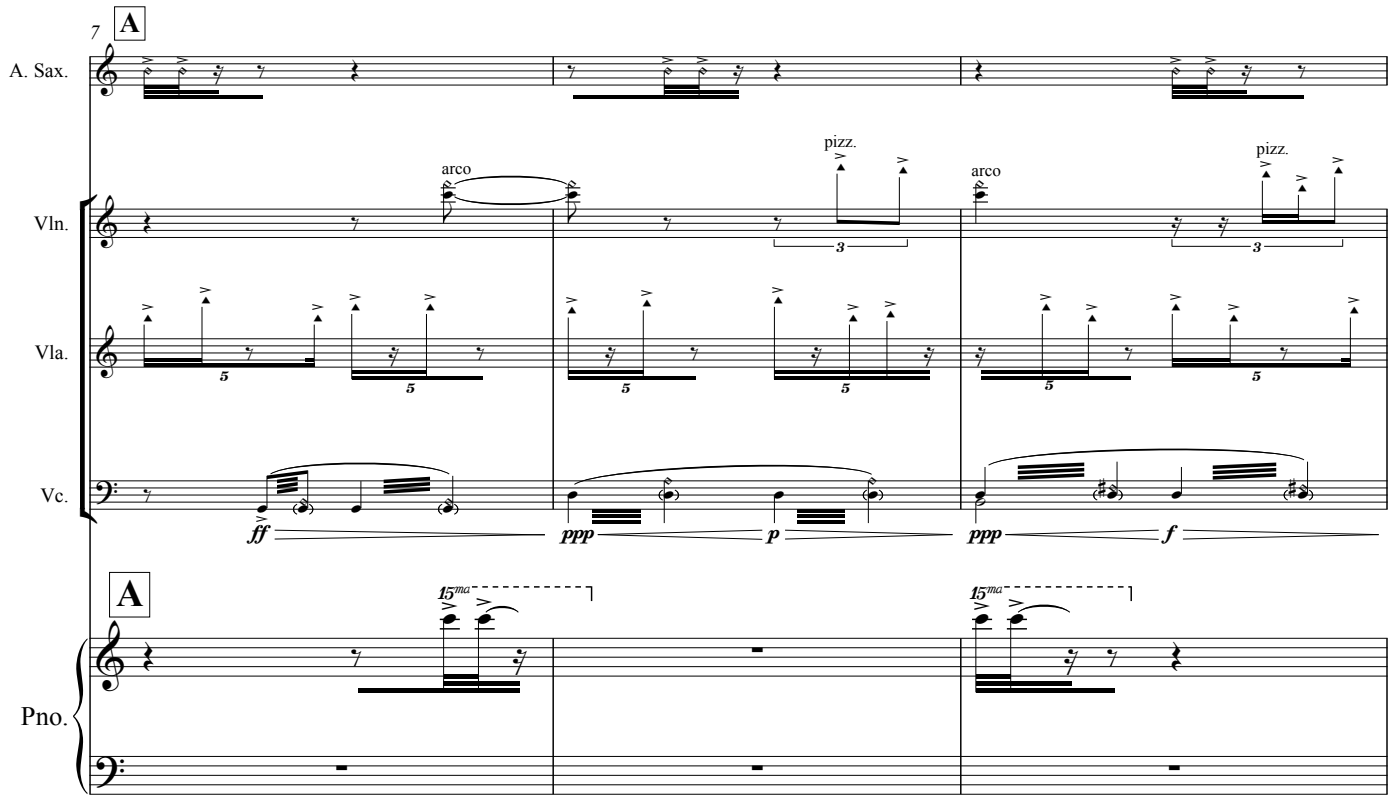

2"-3"
W1
2"-3"
W2
* OPTIONAL:
2 or more players may occasionally choose to individually whistle either of the given gestures (W1, W2) to add to the texture.
If you choose to whistle, make sure you do so a maximum of 4 times during the movement
♩. = ca. 42 fragile and melancholic
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
molto vib.
ord.
Ped. al fine
7
11
A
(p) dolce, leggero
(Ped.)

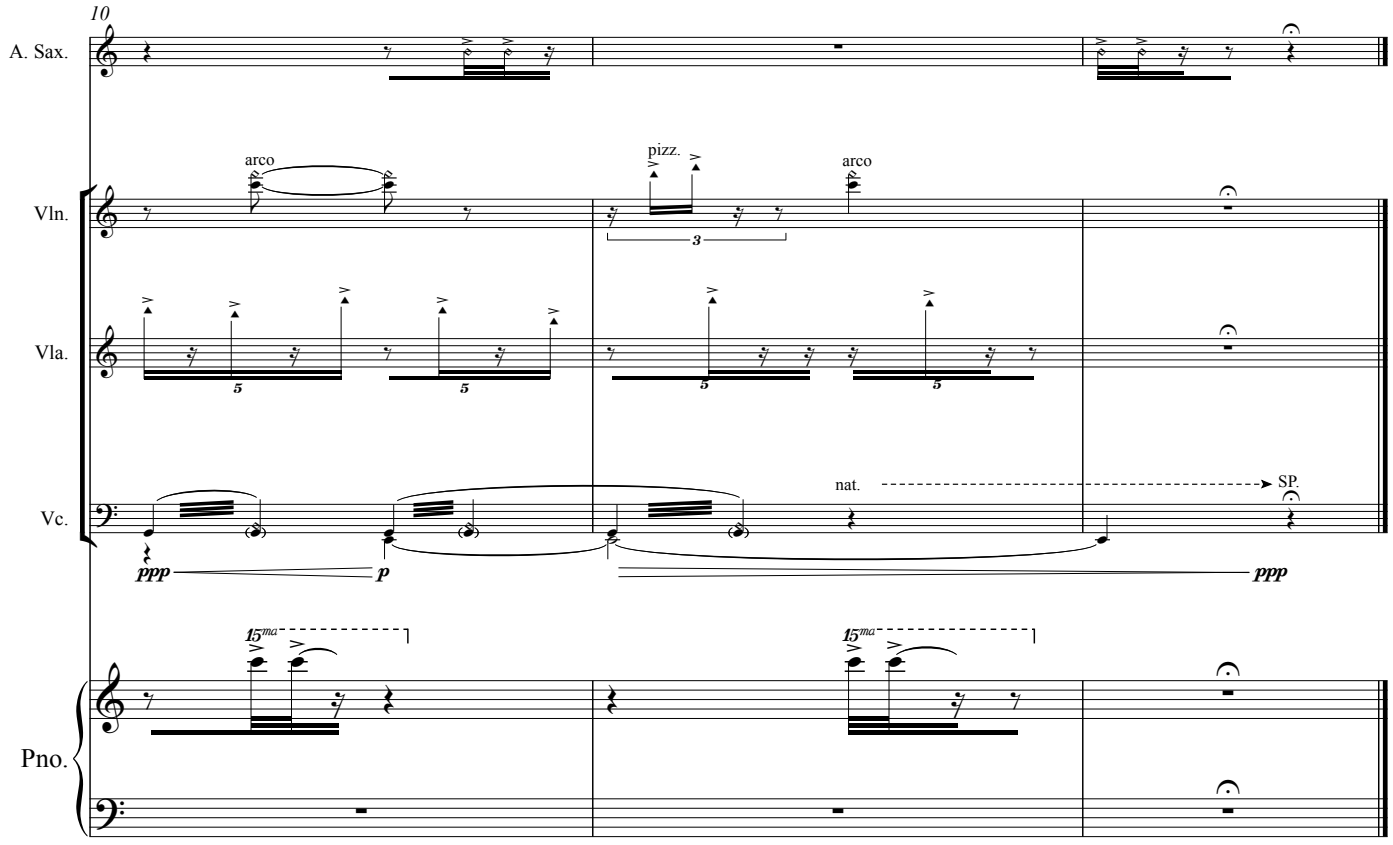

15
A. Sax.
doloroso
ppp
Vln.
ord.
p
molto vib.
f
p
ord.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
mf
19
B
A. Sax.
p
ppp
p
Vln.
molto vib.
f
Vla.
molto vib.
f
ord.
p
(p)
Vc.
p
B
Pno.
p
23
A. Sax.
ppp
ppp
mf
Vln.
ord.
p
molto vib.
fff
Vla.
molto vib.
f
ord.
p
molto vib.
fff
Vc.
molto vib.
f
8va
Pno.
f
p


28
C
♩. = ca. 36 slower
A. Sax.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
ord.
8va
molto vib.
C
♩. = ca. 36 slower
32
(8)
8va

VII
Postlude




7
A
A. Sax.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
ff
ppp
p
ppp
f
15ma
15ma


10
A. Sax.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
arco
pizz.
arco
nat.
SP.
ppp
p
ppp
15ma
15ma

Joel Järventausta

Pilgrim

for eight players

(2020)

Pilgrim was commissioned by the
Royal Philharmonic Society for Philharmonia Orchestra

philharmonia orchestra

Pilgrim is recorded by Philharmonia Orchestra and will be commercially released by NMC Recordings in 2022

Duration = ca. 13 minutes

Instrumentation

Clarinet in Bb

Percussion (1 player)

Harp*

Accordion

Violin

Viola

Cello

Double Bass**

* Harp: Bb^4 tuned approx. 1/4-tone flat

** C extension required

PERCUSSION

Vibraphone (bow required), 2 bell plates (C^3, E^3), bass drum, tubular bells

Score in C

Composer's notes

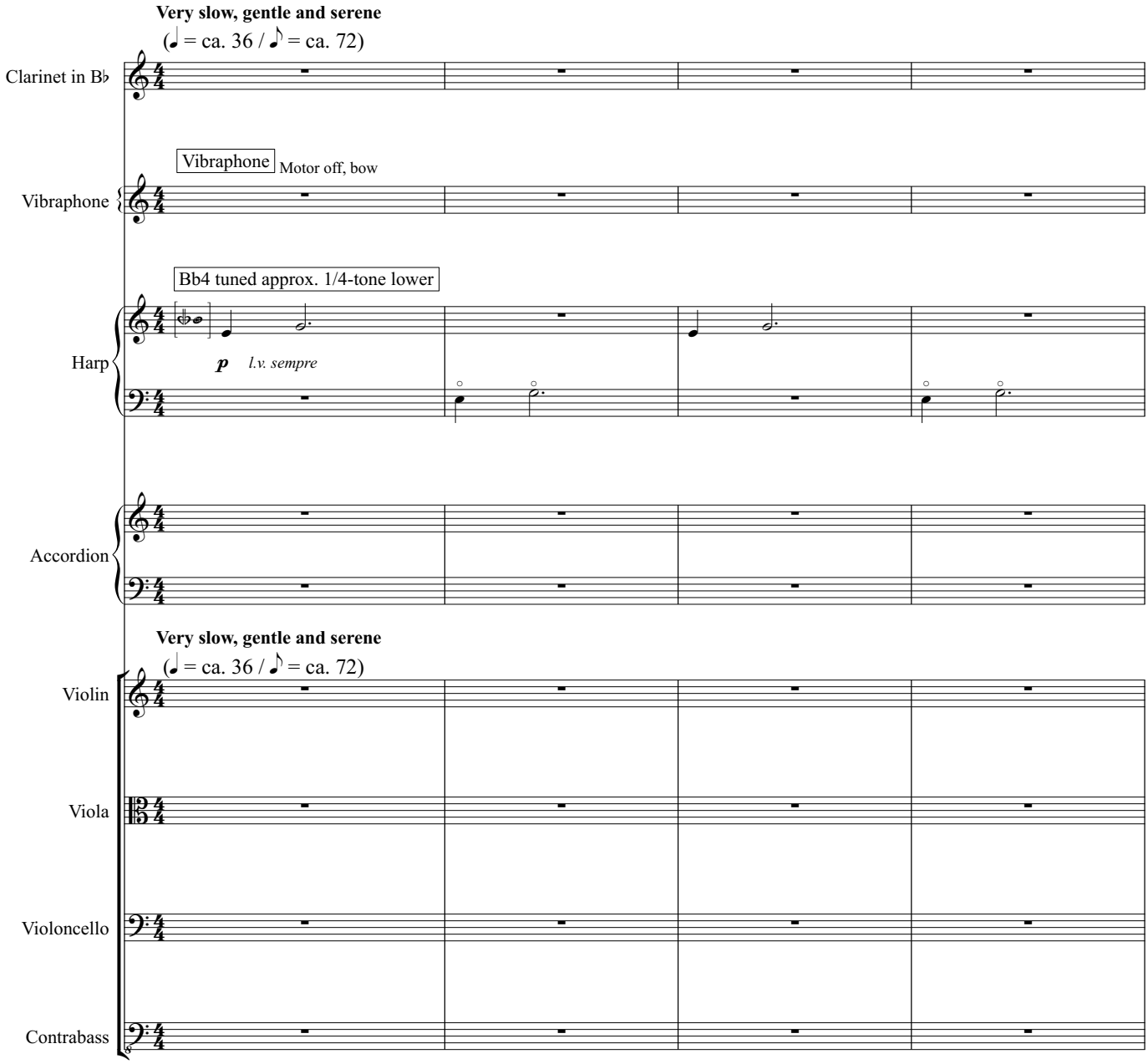
The slow, contemplative - even ritualistic - nature of the music, seemed to me much like that of a solitary pilgrimage.

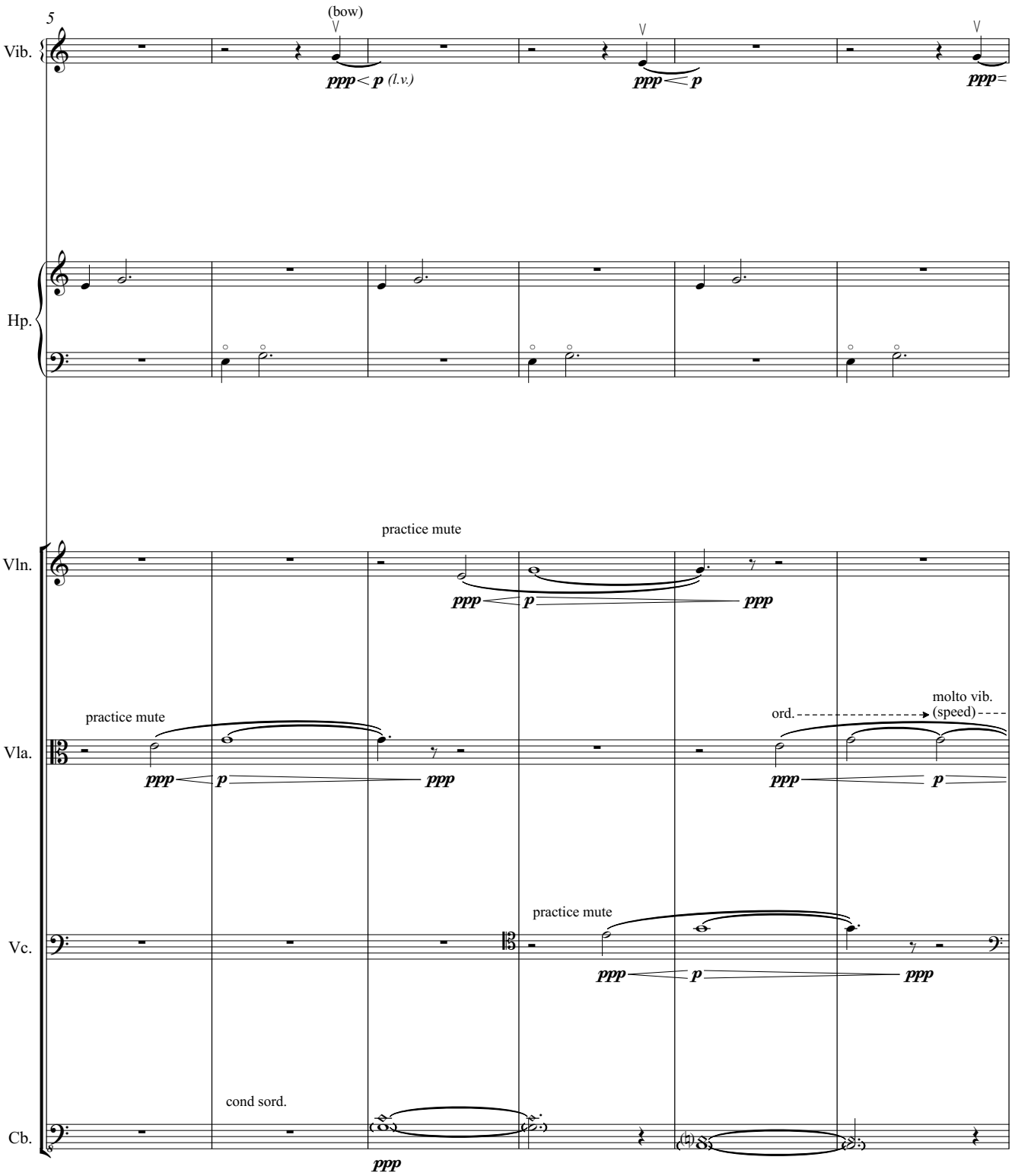
J.Järventausta

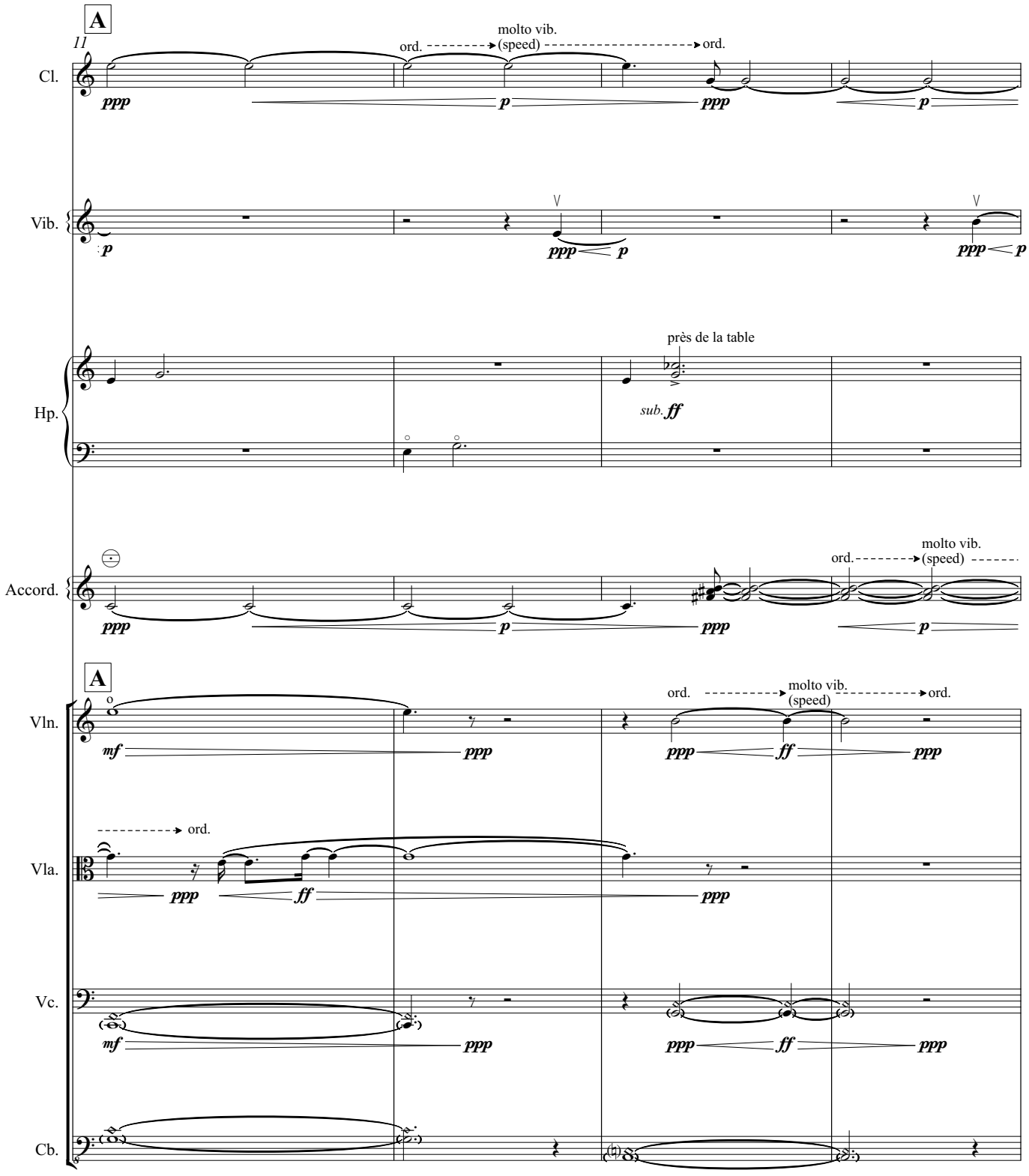
Pilgrim

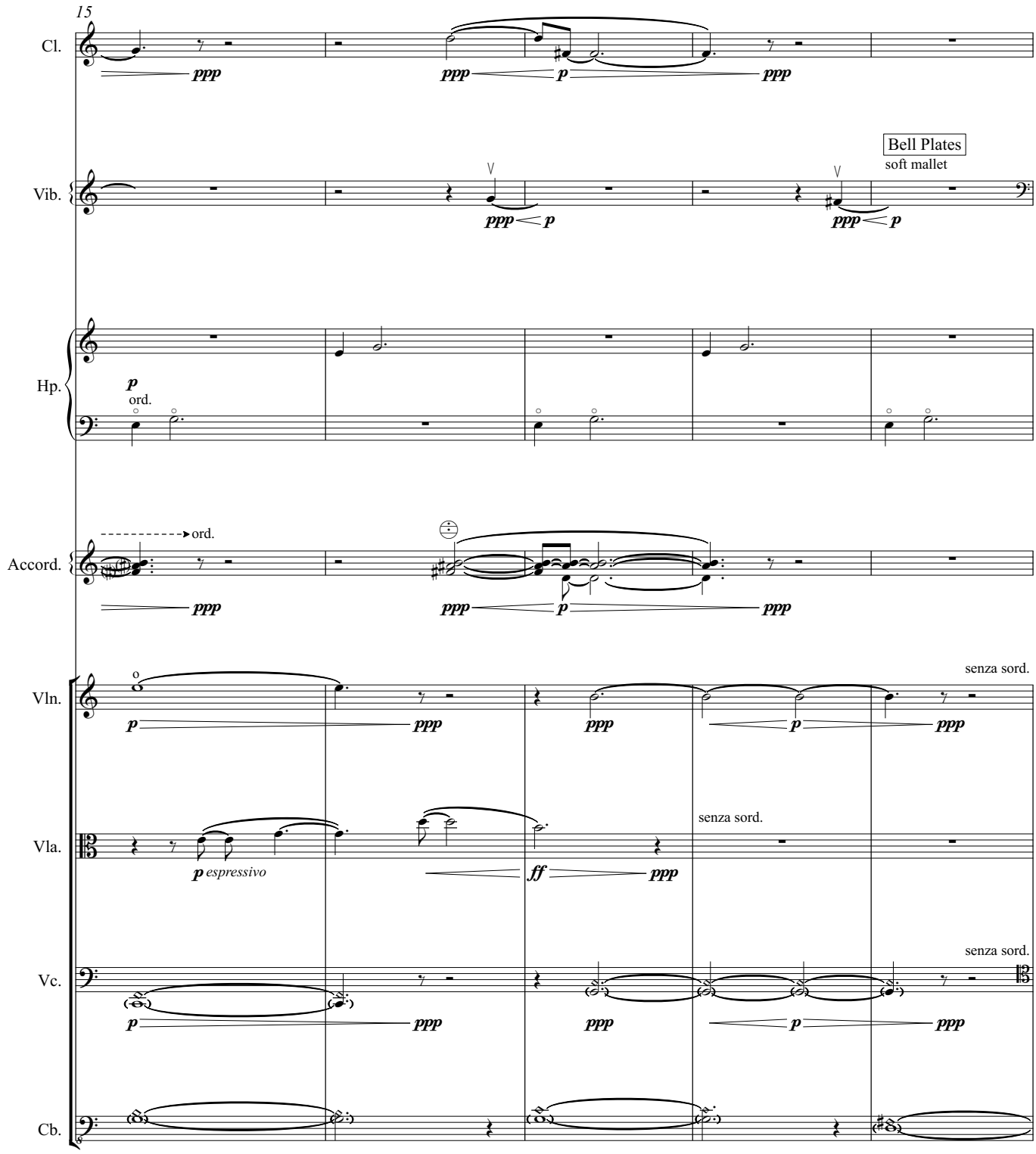
for 8 players

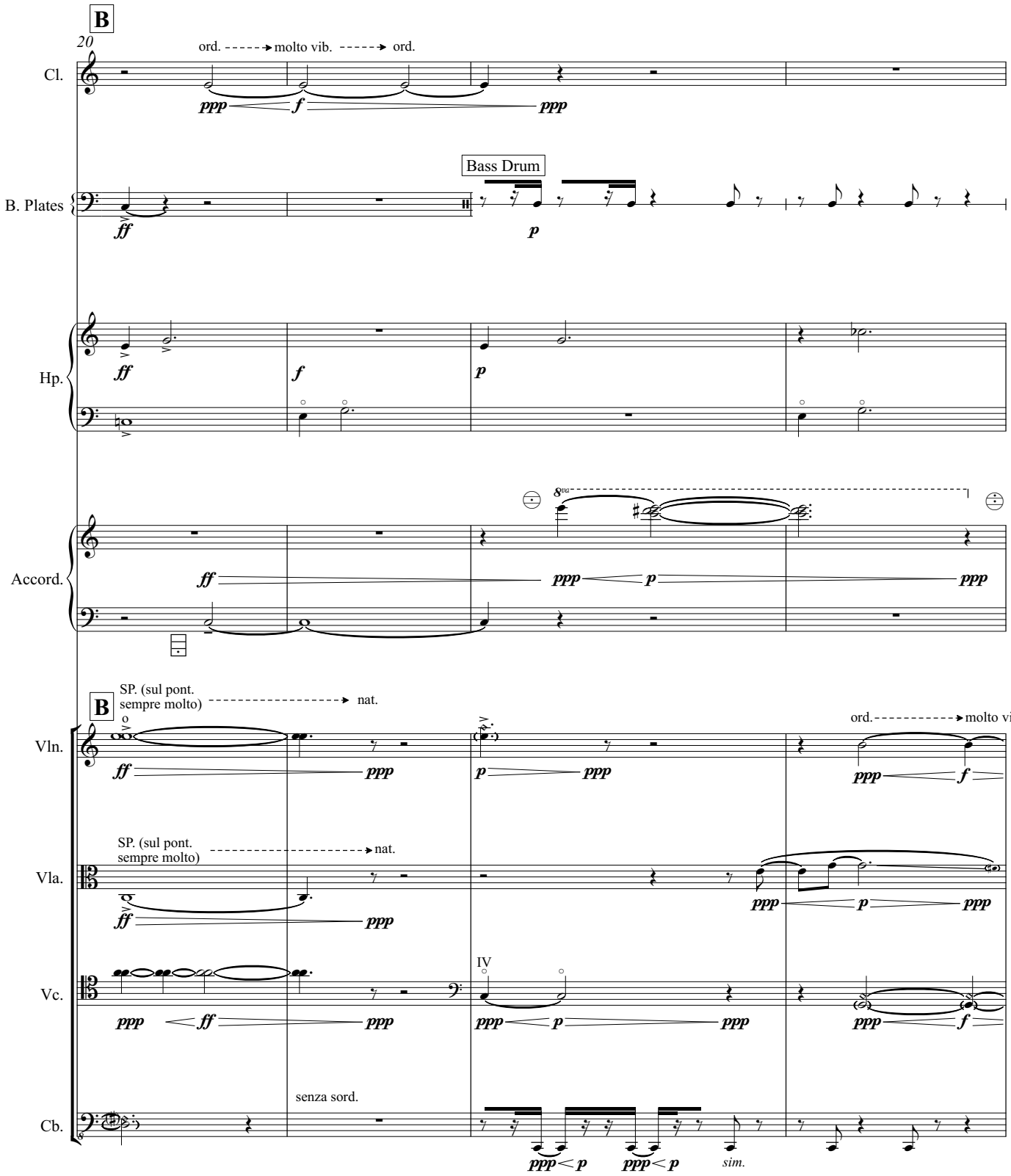
Joel Järventausta
2020

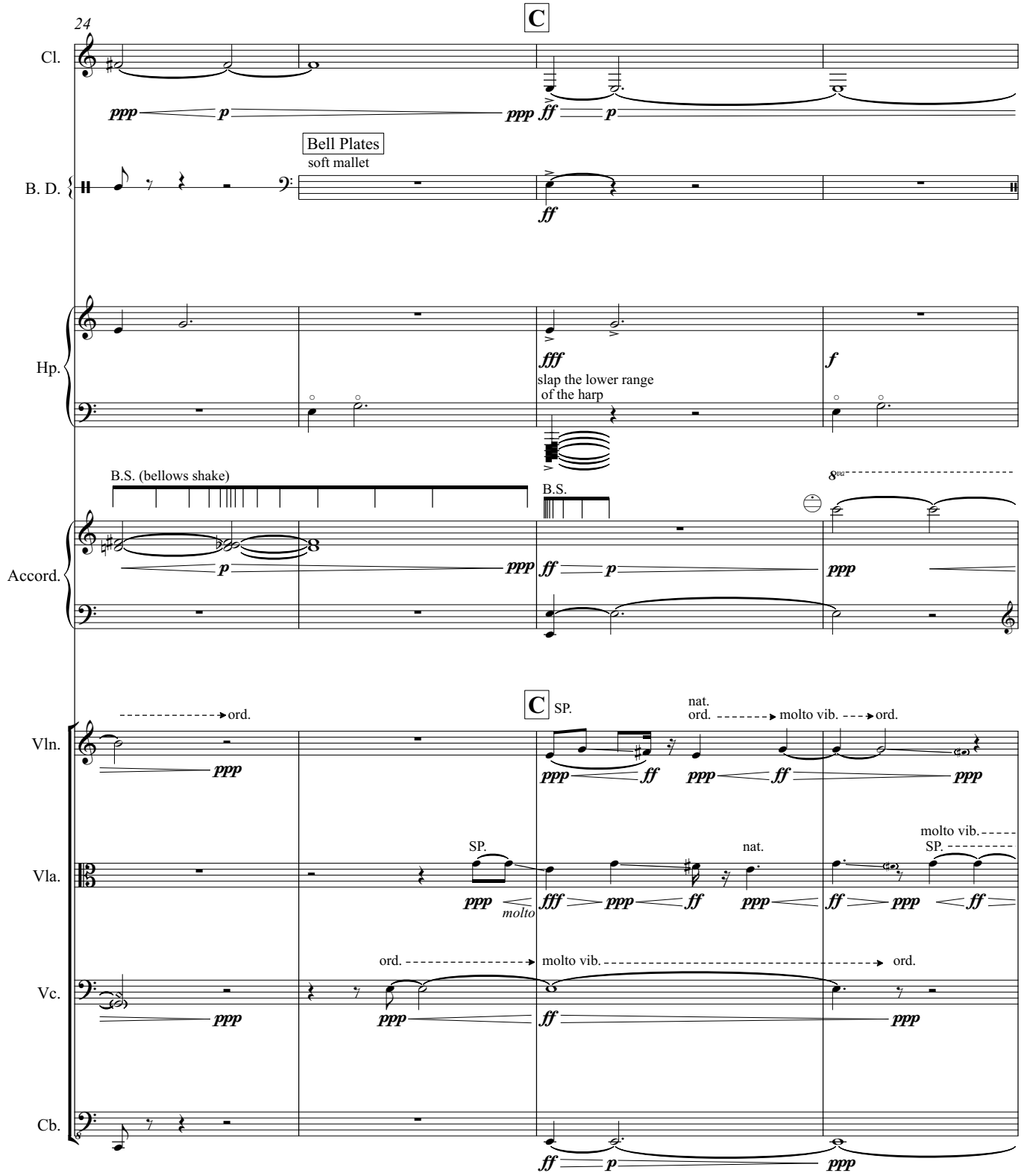


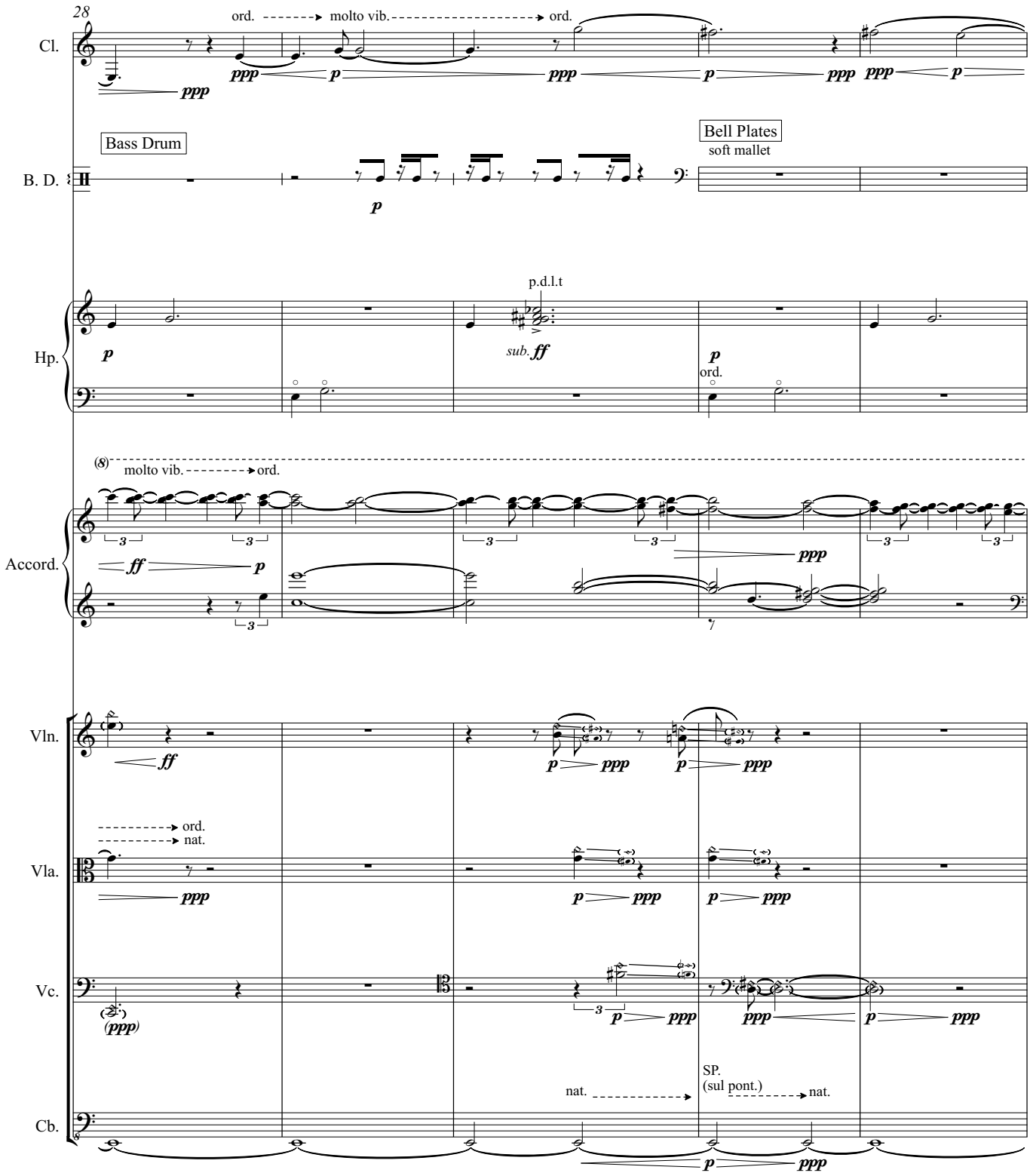

5
Vib.
(bow)
ppp < p (l.v.)
ppp < p
ppp=
Hp.
Vln.
practice mute
ppp
p
ppp
Vla.
practice mute
ppp
p
ppp
ord.
molto vib.
(speed)
ppp
p
Vc.
practice mute
ppp
p
ppp
Cb.
cond sord.
ppp

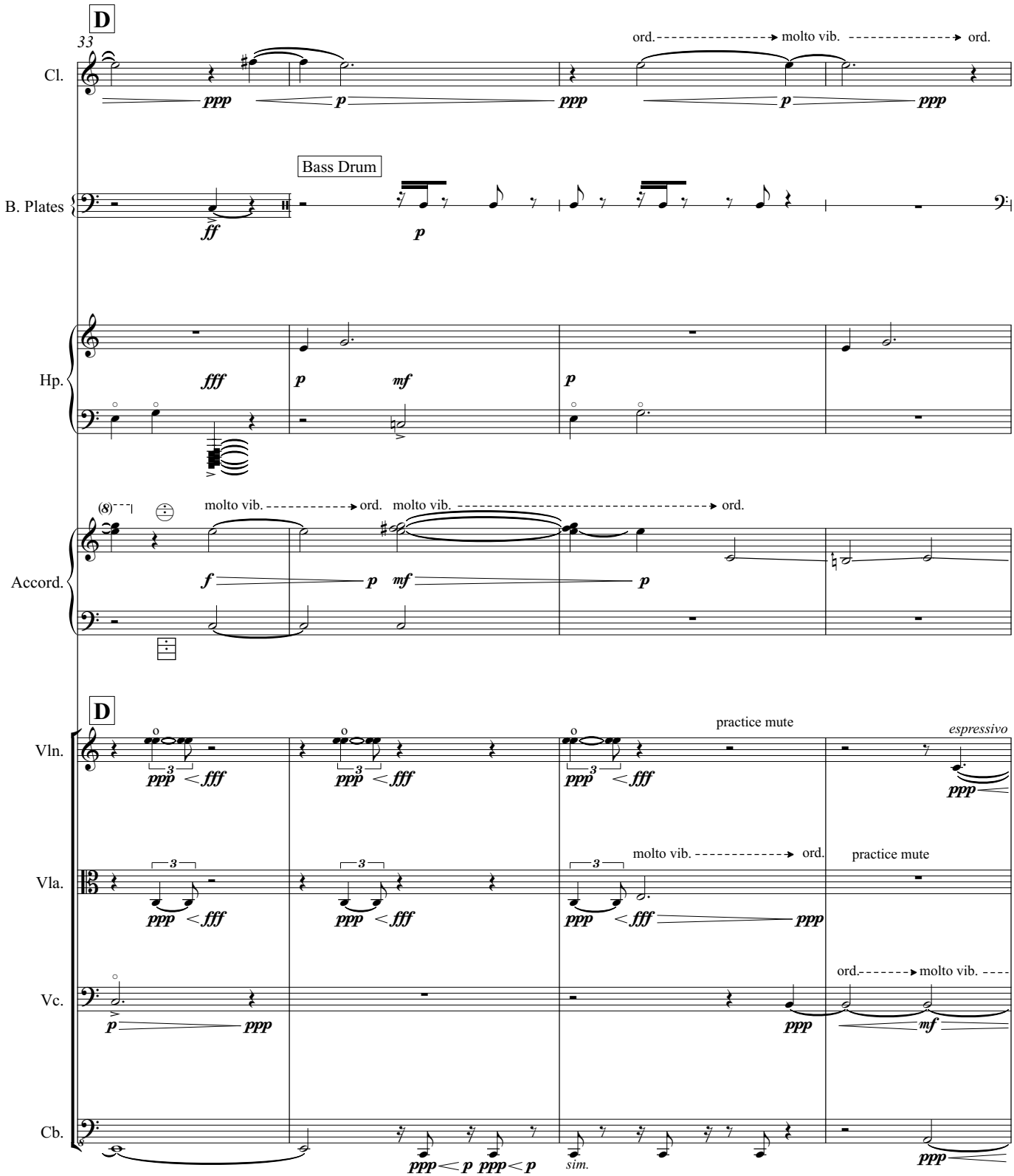

A
11
Cl.
ord.
molto vib.
(speed)
ord.
ppp
p
ppp
p
Vib.
p
ppp
p
ppp
p
Hp.
près de la table
sub. ff
Accord.
ord.
molto vib.
(speed)
ppp
p
ppp
p
A
Vln.
mf
ppp
ord.
molto vib.
(speed)
ord.
ppp
ff
ppp
Vla.
ord.
ppp
ff
ppp
Vc.
mf
ppp
ppp
ff
ppp
Cb.

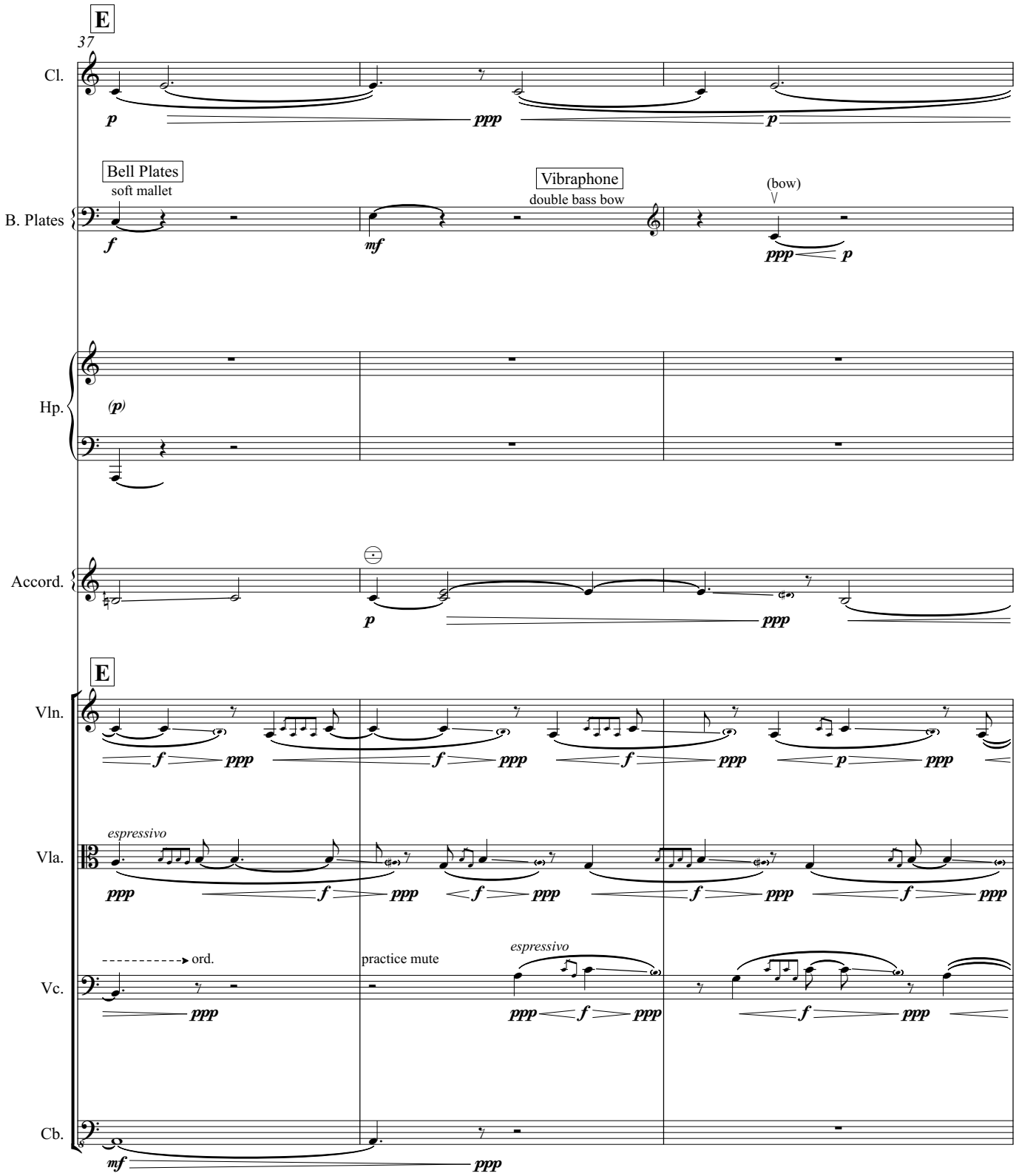

15
Cl.
ppp
ppp
p
ppp
Vib.
Bell Plates
soft mallet
ppp
p
ppp
p
Hp.
p
ord.
Accord.
ord.
ppp
ppp
p
ppp
Vln.
senza sord.
p
ppp
ppp
p
ppp
Vla.
senza sord.
p espressivo
ff
ppp
Vc.
senza sord.
p
ppp
ppp
p
ppp
Cb.

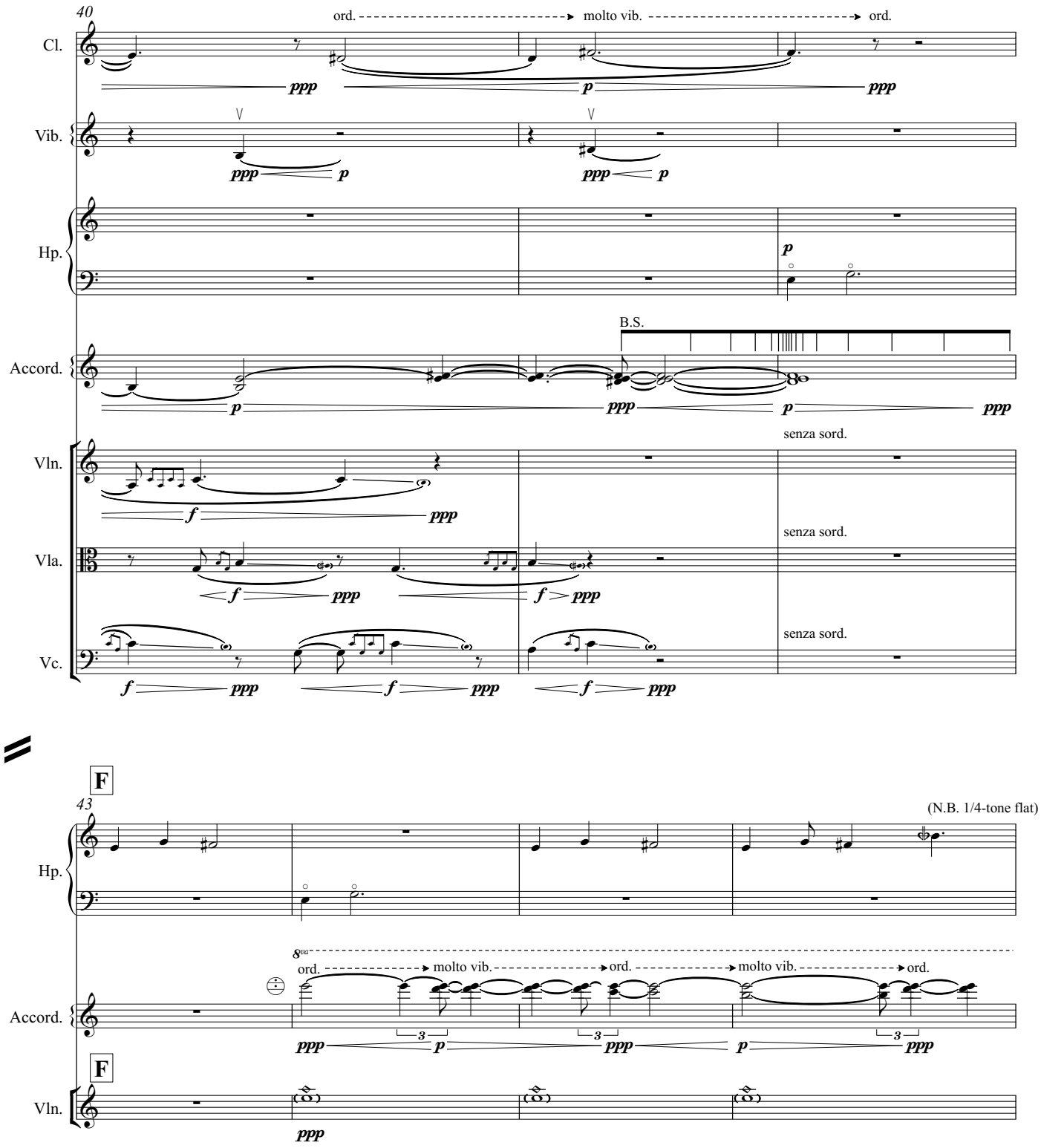

B
20
Cl.
ord.
molto vib.
ord.
ppp
f
ppp
Bass Drum
B. Plates
ff
p
Hp.
ff
f
p
Accord.
8va
ff
ppp
p
ppp
B
SP. (sul pont. sempre molto)
nat.
Vln.
ff
ppp
p
ppp
ord.
molto vib.
ppp
f
SP. (sul pont. sempre molto)
nat.
Vla.
ff
ppp
ppp
p
ppp
IV
Vc.
ppp
ff
ppp
ppp
p
ppp
ppp
f
senza sord.
Cb.
ppp
p
ppp
p
sim.

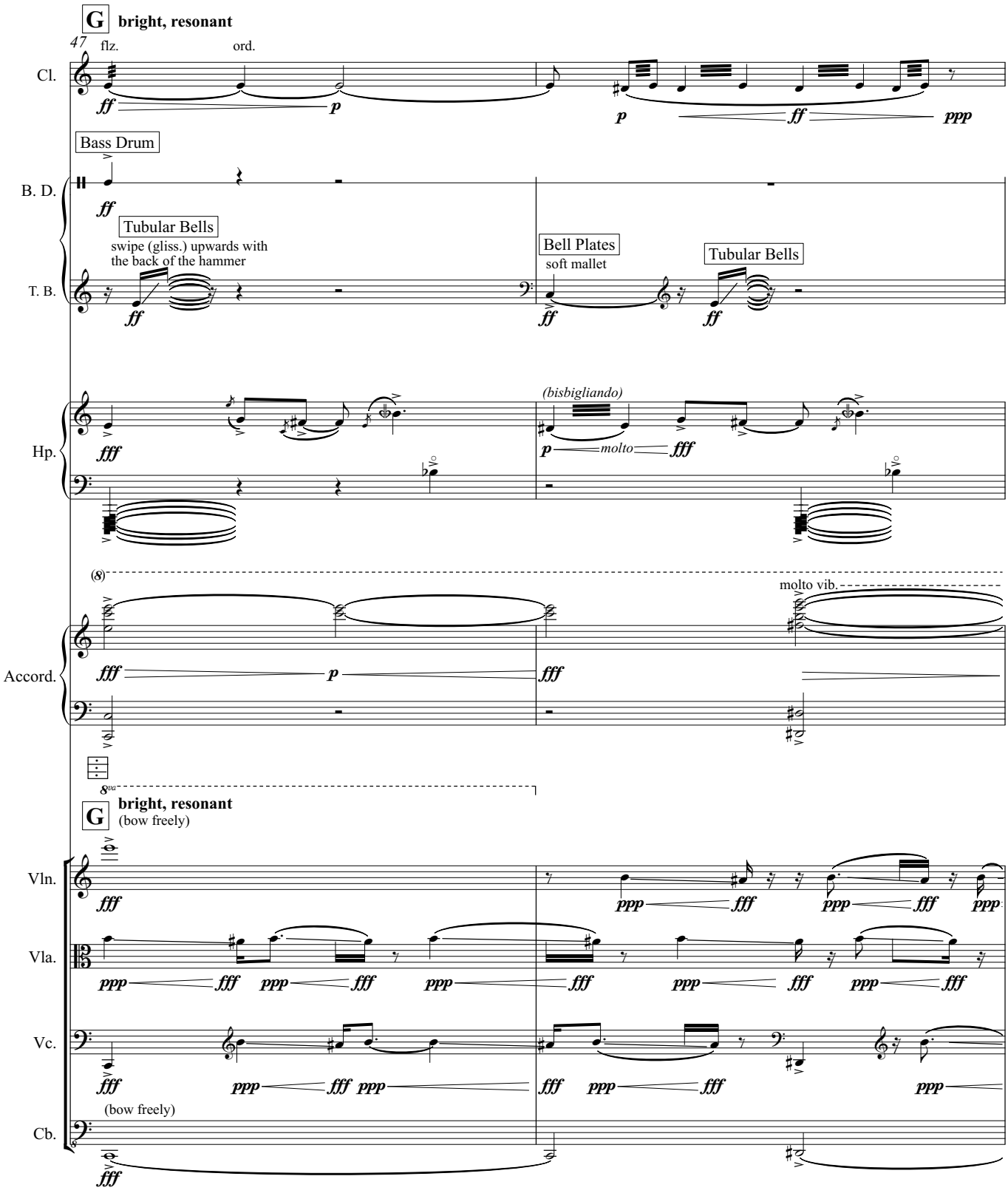

24
C
Cl.
ppp p ppp ff p
Bell Plates
soft mallet
B. D.
ff
Hp.
fff
slap the lower range
of the harp
f
B.S. (bellows shake)
B.S.
8va
Accord.
p ppp ff p ppp
C SP.
ord.
nat.
ord. molto vib. ord.
Vln.
ppp ff ppp ff ppp
SP.
nat.
molto vib.
SP.
Vla.
ppp molto fff ppp ff ppp ff ppp ff
ord.
molto vib.
ord.
Vc.
ppp ppp ff ppp
Cb.
ff p ppp

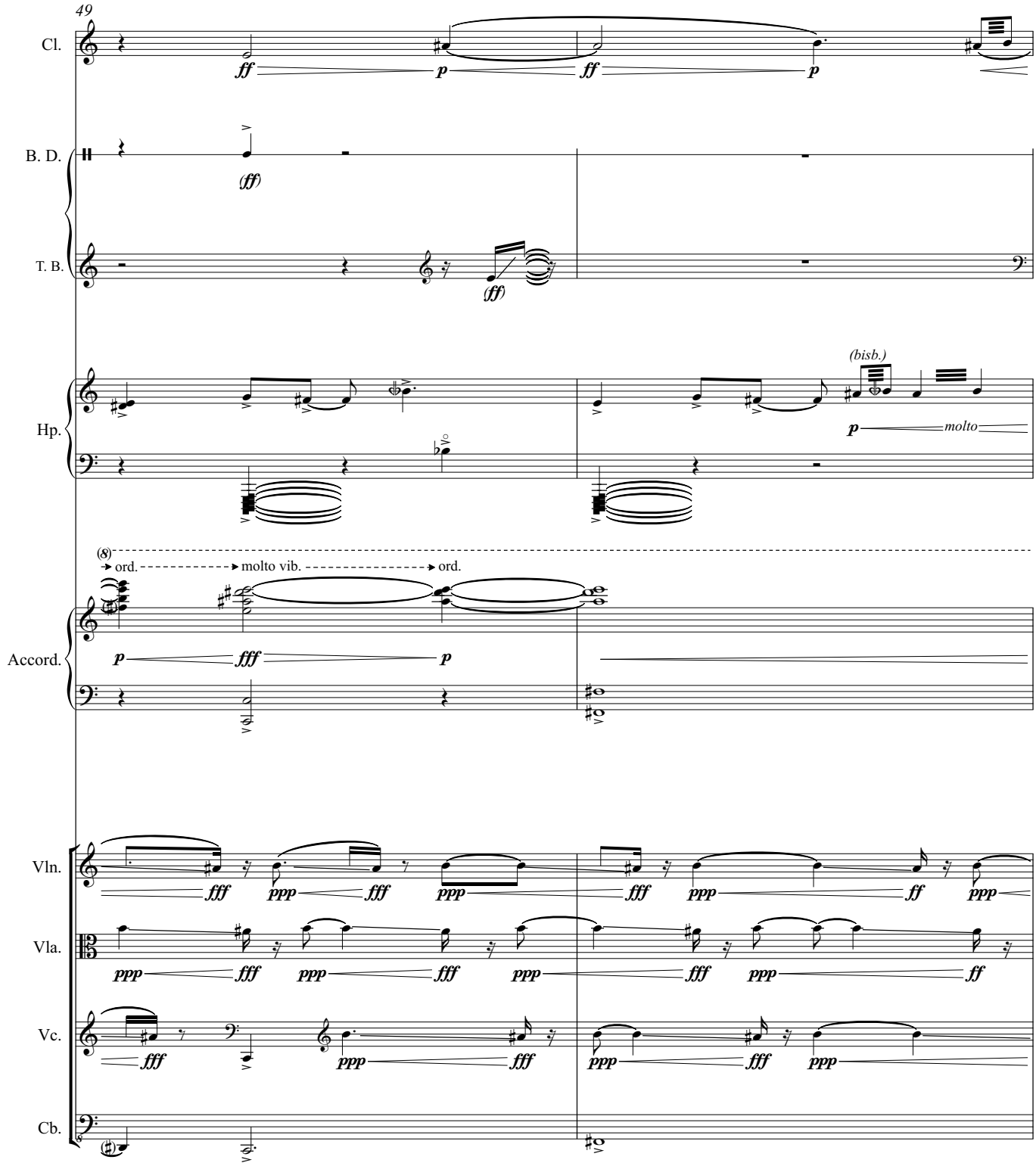

28
Cl.
ord.
molto vib.
ord.
ppp
p
ppp
p
ppp
ppp
p
B. D.
Bass Drum
Bell Plates
soft mallet
p
Hp.
p.d.l.t
sub. ff
p
ord.
(8)
molto vib.
ord.
Accord.
ff
p
ppp
Vln.
ff
p
ppp
p
ppp
ord.
nat.
Vla.
ppp
p
ppp
p
ppp
Vc.
(ppp)
p
ppp
ppp
p
ppp
nat.
SP.
(sul pont.)
nat.
Cb.
p
ppp

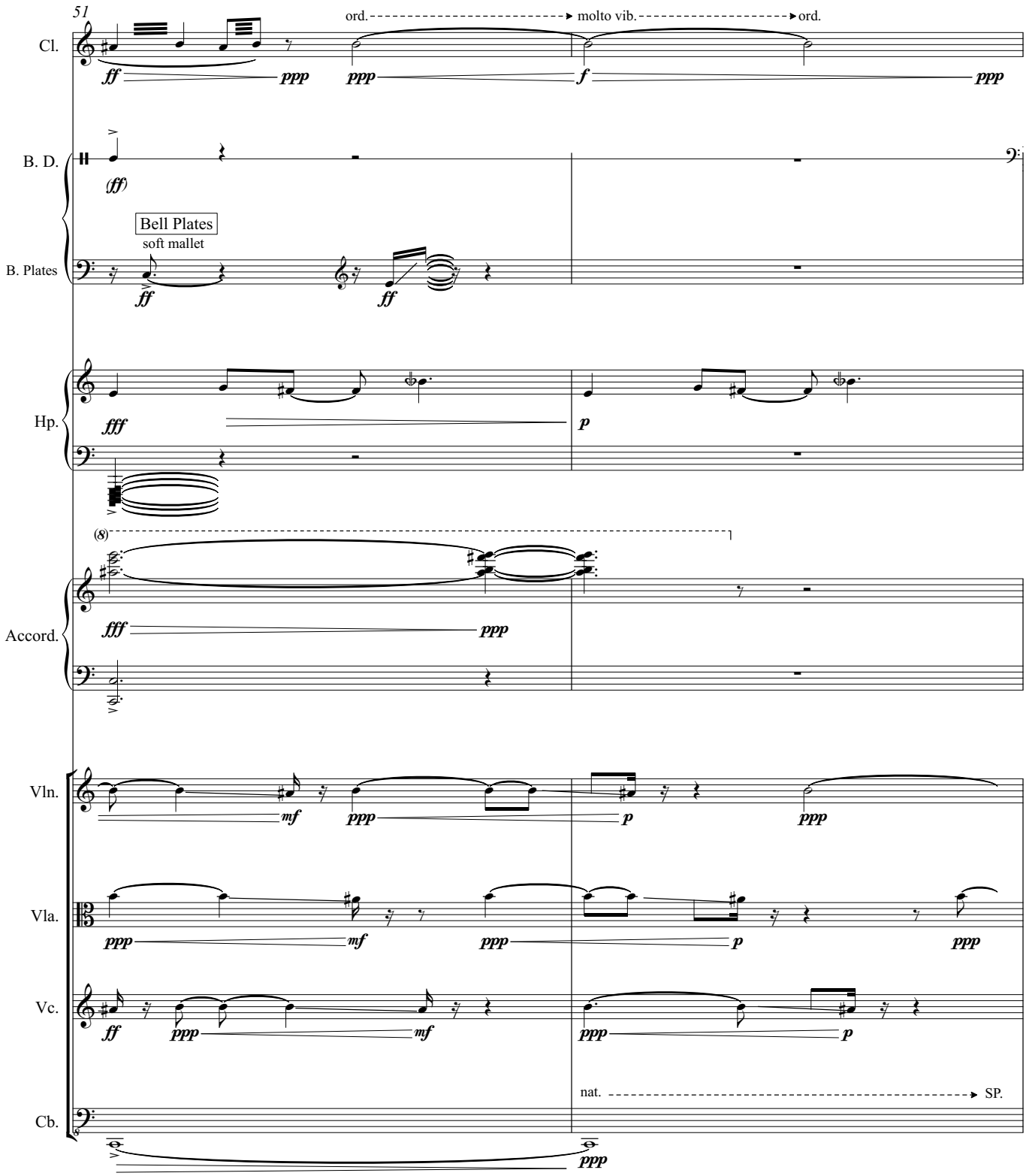

D
33
Cl.
ord.
molto vib.
ord.
ppp
p
ppp
p
ppp
Bass Drum
B. Plates
ff
p
Hp.
fff
p
mf
p
Accord.
(8)
molto vib.
ord.
molto vib.
ord.
f
p
mf
p
D
Vln.
practice mute
espressivo
ppp
fff
ppp
fff
ppp
fff
ppp
Vla.
molto vib.
ord.
practice mute
ppp
fff
ppp
fff
ppp
fff
ppp
Vc.
ord.
molto vib.
p
ppp
ppp
mf
Cb.
ppp
p
ppp
p
sim.
ppp

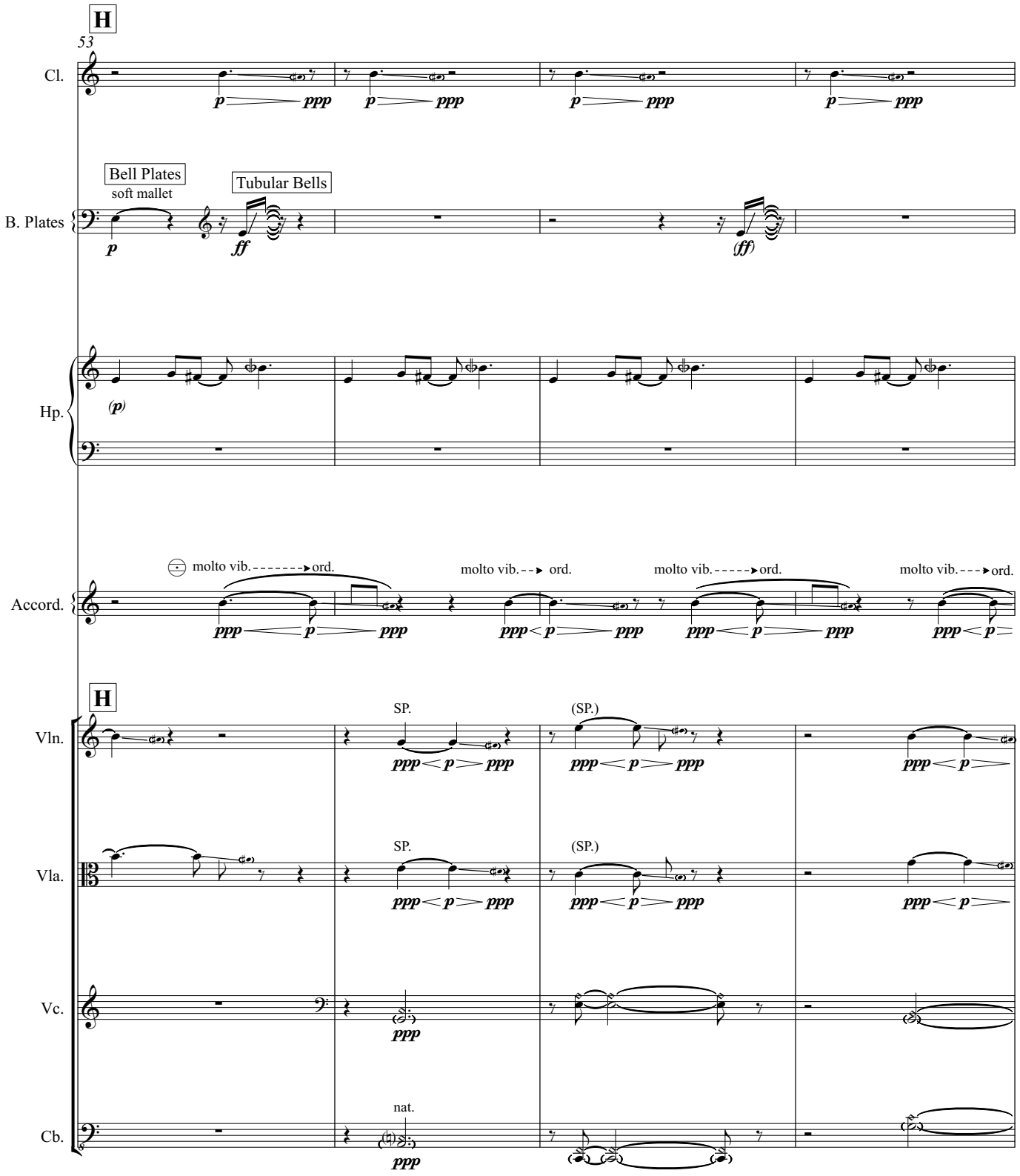

E
37
Cl.
p
ppp
p
Bell Plates
soft mallet
Vibraphone
double bass bow
(bow)
B. Plates
f
mf
ppp
p
Hp.
(p)
Accord.
p
ppp
E
Vln.
f
ppp
f
ppp
f
ppp
p
ppp
espressivo
Vla.
ppp
f
ppp
f
ppp
f
ppp
f
ppp
f
ppp
ord.
practice mute
espressivo
Vc.
ppp
ppp
f
ppp
f
ppp
Cb.
mf
ppp

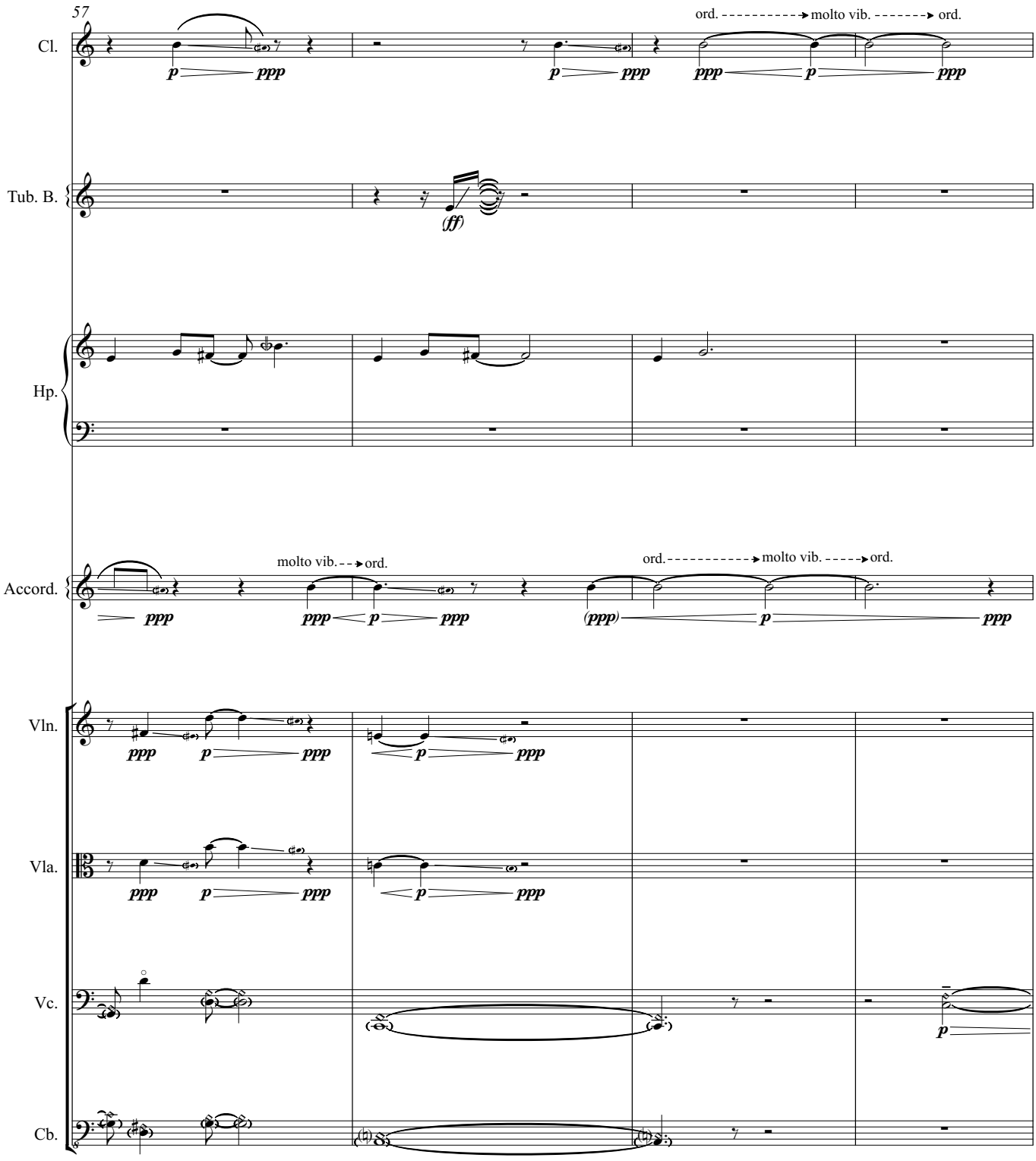

40
Cl.
ord.
molto vib.
ord.
ppp
p
ppp
Vib.
ppp
p
ppp
p
Hp.
p
Accord.
B.S.
p
ppp
p
ppp
Vln.
senza sord.
f
ppp
Vla.
senza sord.
f
ppp
f
ppp
Vc.
senza sord.
f
ppp
f
ppp
f
ppp
F
43
(N.B. 1/4-tone flat)
Hp.
8va
ord.
molto vib.
ord.
molto vib.
ord.
Accord.
3
3
3
ppp
p
ppp
p
ppp
F
Vln.
ppp

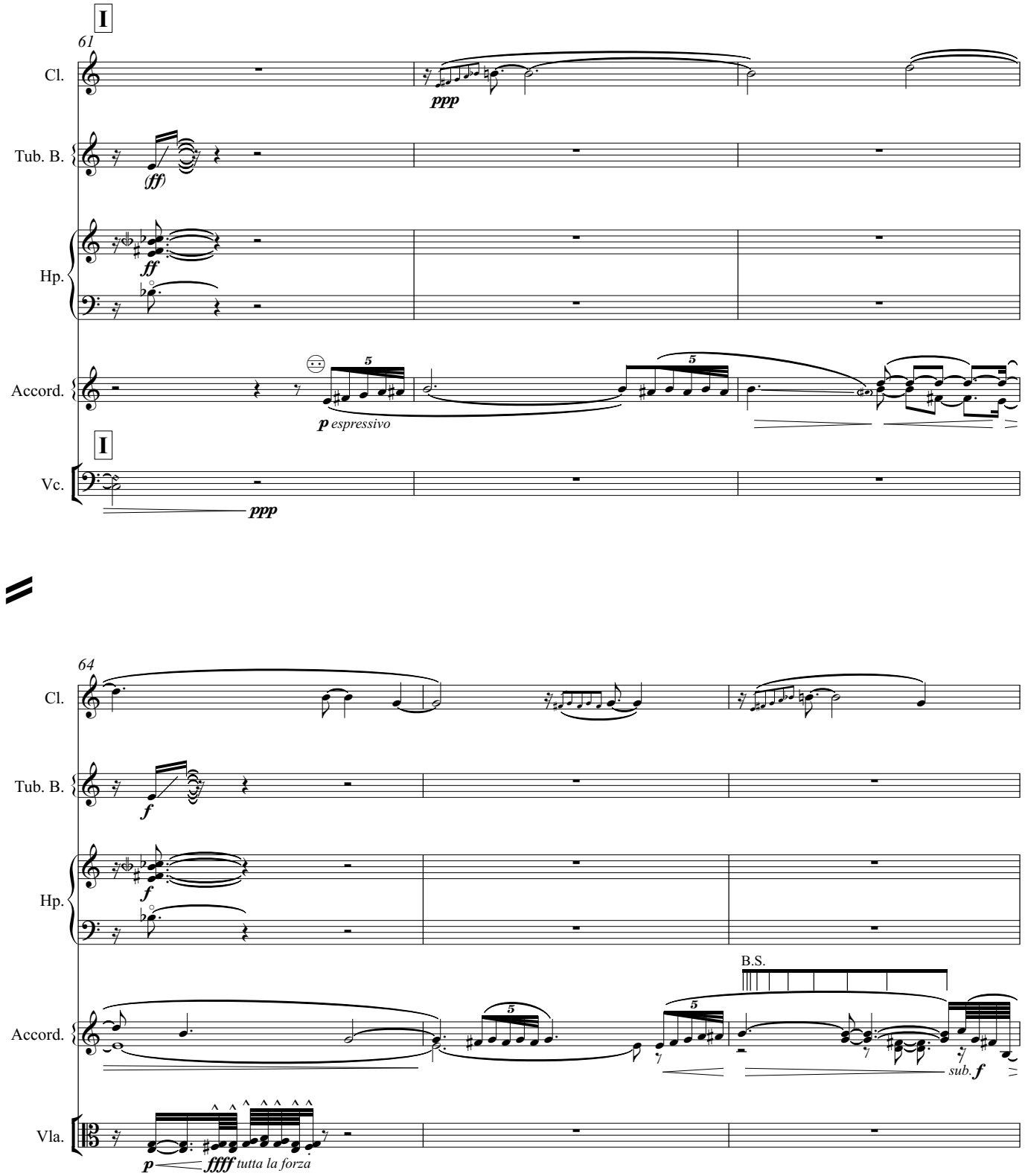

G
bright, resonant
47
flz.
ord.
Cl.
Bass Drum
B. D.
Tubular Bells
swipe (gliss.) upwards with the back of the hammer
T. B.
Bell Plates
soft mallet
Tubular Bells
Hp.
(bisbigliando)
molto
molto vib.
Accord.
8va
G
bright, resonant
(bow freely)
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
(bow freely)
Cb.

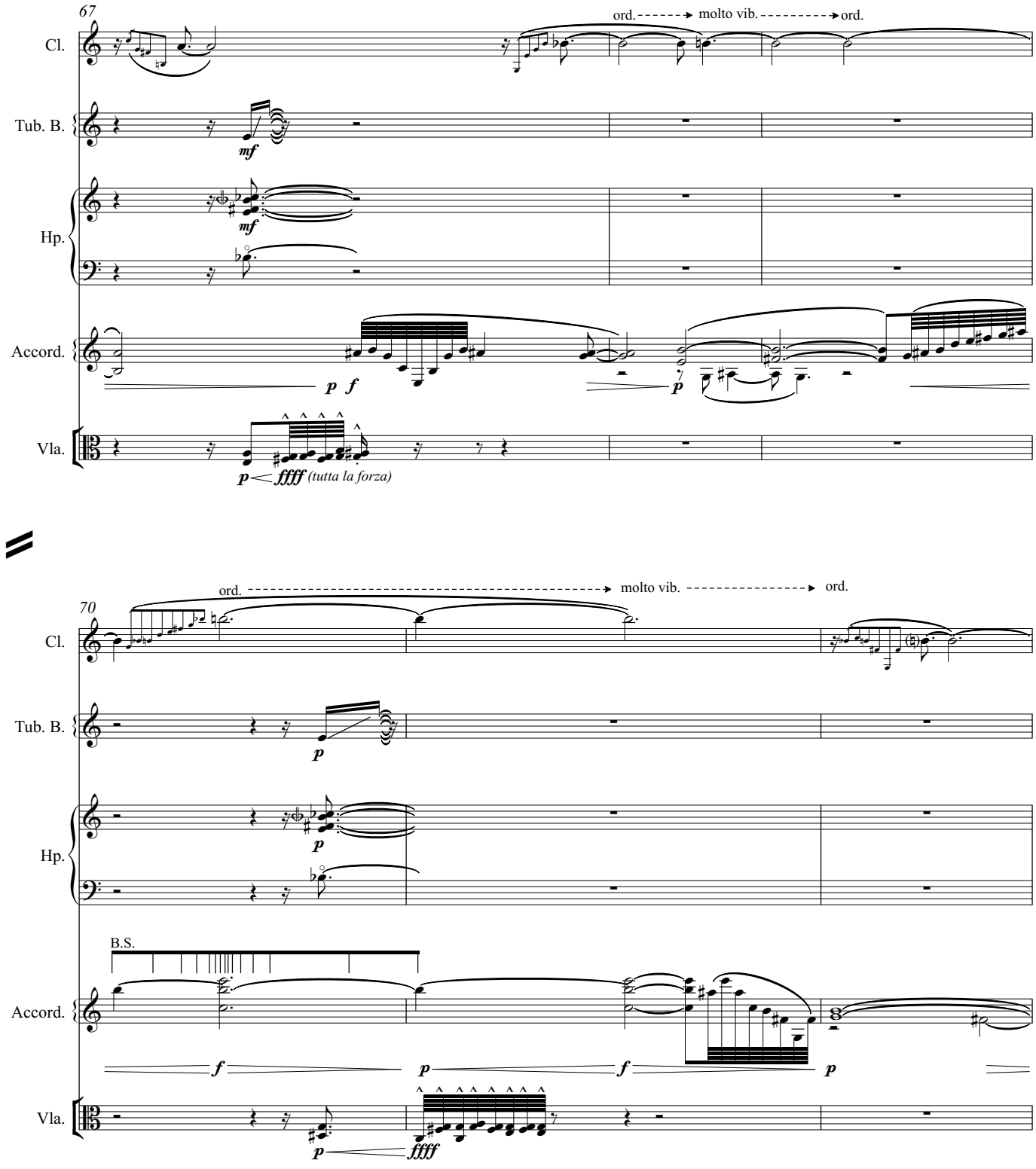

49
Cl.
ff
p
ff
p
B. D.
(ff)
T. B.
(ff)
Hp.
(bisb.)
p
molto
(8)
ord.
molto vib.
ord.
Accord.
p
fff
p
Vln.
fff
ppp
fff
ppp
fff
ppp
ff
ppp
Vla.
ppp
fff
ppp
fff
ppp
fff
ppp
ff
Vc.
fff
ppp
fff
ppp
fff
ppp
Cb.

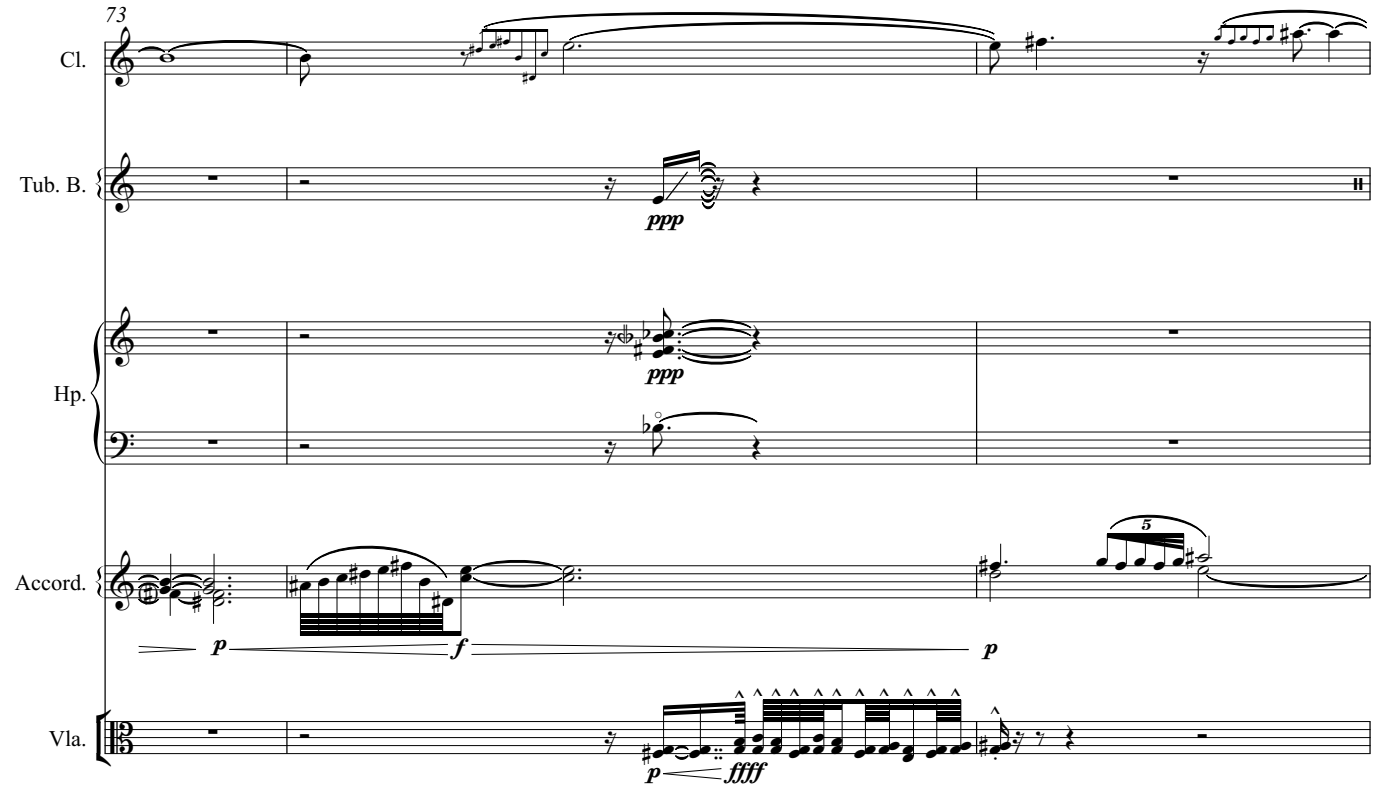

51
Cl.
ord.
molto vib.
ord.
ff
ppp
ppp
f
ppp
B. D.
(ff)
Bell Plates
soft mallet
B. Plates
ff
ff
Hp.
fff
p
(8)
Accord.
fff
ppp
Vln.
mf
ppp
p
ppp
Vla.
ppp
mf
ppp
p
ppp
Vc.
ff
ppp
mf
ppp
p
nat.
SP.
Cb.
ppp

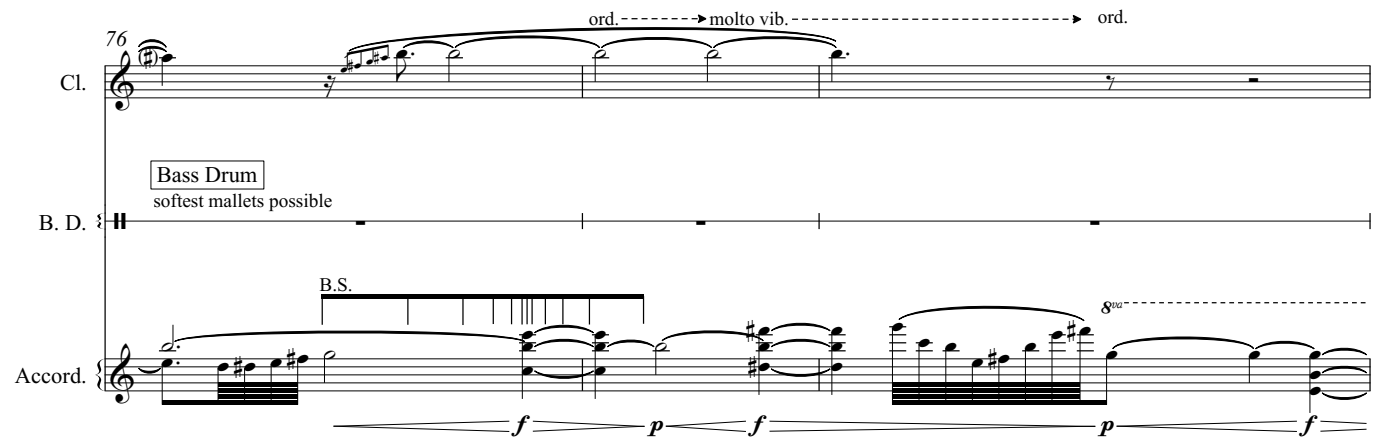

H
53
Cl.
p ppp
B. Plates
Bell Plates
soft mallet
Tubular Bells
p
ff
(ff)
Hp.
(p)
Accord.
molto vib. ord.
ppp p ppp
H
Vln.
SP.
(SP.)
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
nat.

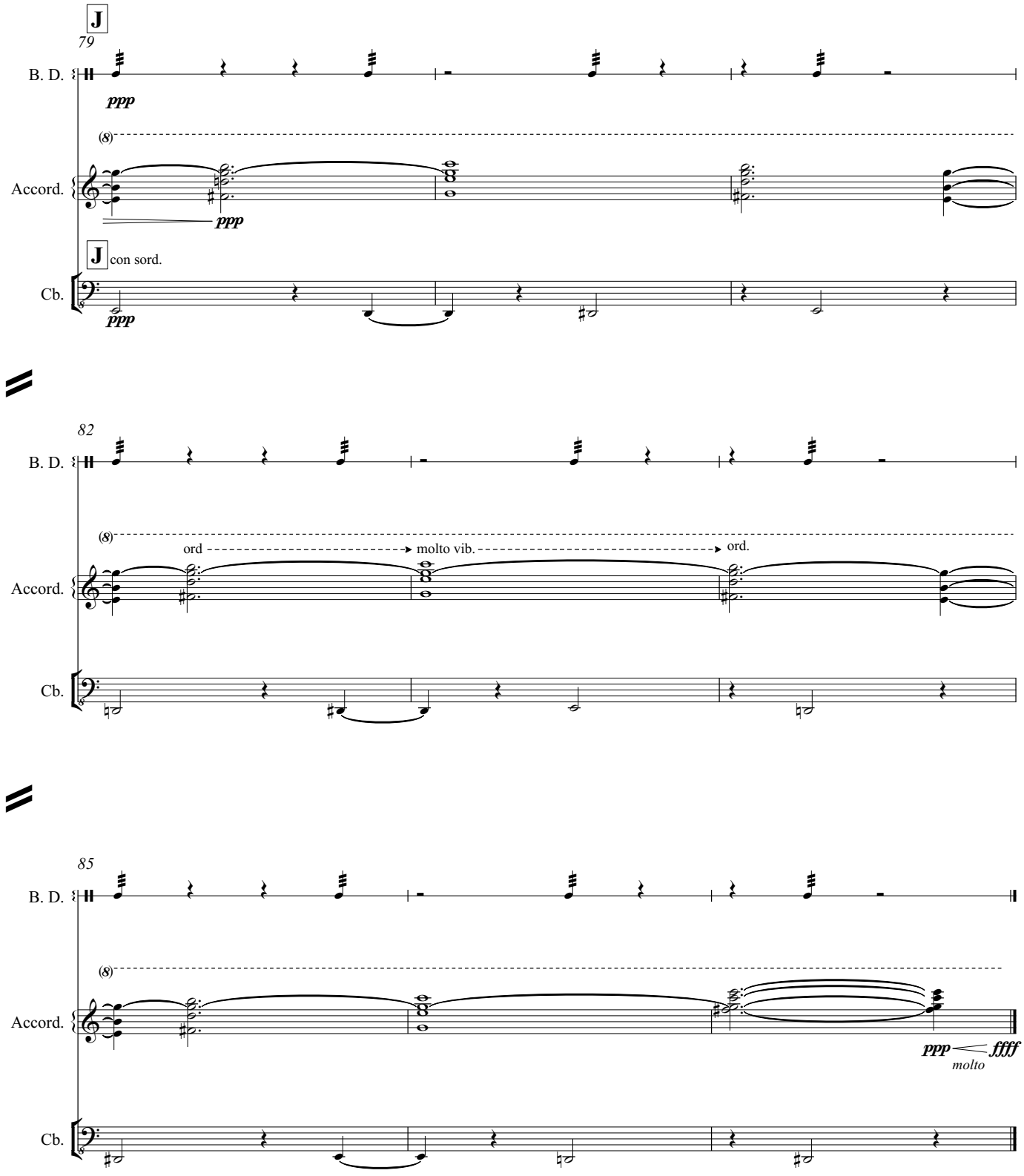

57
Cl.
ord. molto vib. ord.
Tub. B.
Hp.
Accord.
molto vib. ord.
ord. molto vib. ord.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.


I
61
Cl.
ppp
Tub. B.
(ff)
Hp.
ff
Accord.
p espressivo
I
Vc.
ppp
64
Cl.
Tub. B.
f
Hp.
f
B.S.
Accord.
sub. f
Vla.
p
ffff tutta la forza


67
ord.
molto vib.
ord.
Cl.
Tub. B.
mf
Hp.
mf
Accord.
p f
p
Vla.
p
ffff (tutta la forza)
70
ord.
molto vib.
ord.
Cl.
Tub. B.
p
Hp.
p
B.S.
Accord.
f
p
f
p
Vla.
p
ffff


73
Cl.
Tub. B.
Hp.
Accord.
Vla.
ppp
ppp
5
p
f
p
p
ffff


76
ord.
molto vib.
ord.
Cl.
Bass Drum
softest mallets possible
B. D.
B.S.
8va
Accord.
f
p
f
p
f


J
79
B. D.
ppp
(8)
Accord.
ppp
J con sord.
Cb.
ppp
82
B. D.
(8)
ord
molto vib.
ord.
Accord.
Cb.
85
B. D.
(8)
Accord.
ppp
ffff
molto
Cb.