Ellen Ruth Harrison

INVISIBLE TOPOGRAPHY

Invisible Topography

Narrow Road, Deep Chasm
An Ancient Radiance
Igneous Folds

for violin, viola, cello, and double bass

Ellen Ruth Harrison

2010

Invisible Topography explores the various textures, moods, and colors that strings can produce, from dark and lustrous to pale, hollow and eerie, to bright, bold, and jubilant.

The first movement leads the listener down a narrow road that opens suddenly to deep chasms only to veer away from the edge and return to the narrow, albeit twisting, road. It's a high-energy jaunt, almost relentless in its forward motion, with but one lengthy foray into more mellow territory. Yet even here, as the road widens and the pace slows, the cello breaks the tranquility, leaping out of the texture several times in a rather dramatic fashion. The movement ends with a tour de force pizzicato passage for double bass, inspired by Matt Zory's incredible performance at a Cincinnati Pops concert that I attended several years ago.

The second movement serves as a tranquil oasis between the -- for lack of a better word -- slightly zany first and third movements. In a mysterious, otherworldly landscape, wisps of melody drift in and out of focus among the different voices, at times forming clear counterpoint, at times remaining fragmentary. They lead to a mournful melody played by the violin, accompanied by shimmering harmonics that surround it with an ancient radiance. Then the mood turns more intense as the other voices imitate and vary the violin's rising line. It comes to a close as the double bass whispers a fragment of this melody one last time, by now an ancient memory.

The third movement is a crazy dance, chock full of irregular meters and phrase lengths. The double bass has a mind of its own, and often comes in right before or after the other instruments. In fact, in the middle section, the bass imitates the violin's melody several octaves below, but with an eighth-note delay. The techniques I used in this movement are similar to the natural phenomena that create folds in rock formations. These occur as a result of a shortening of existing layers, displacement, or compaction due to the intrusion of other substances.

I tend to think of my music either visually or dramatically, often imagining specific passages as landscapes of sound or as the personification of a certain character such as a mountebank or diva. Afte Matt Zory told me that, for him, music is a journey, I wanted to offer him one, in this case I guess a rather wild ride. *Invisible Topography* is dedicated to Matt, with great appreciation.

Duration: circa 13 minutes

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Invisible Topography

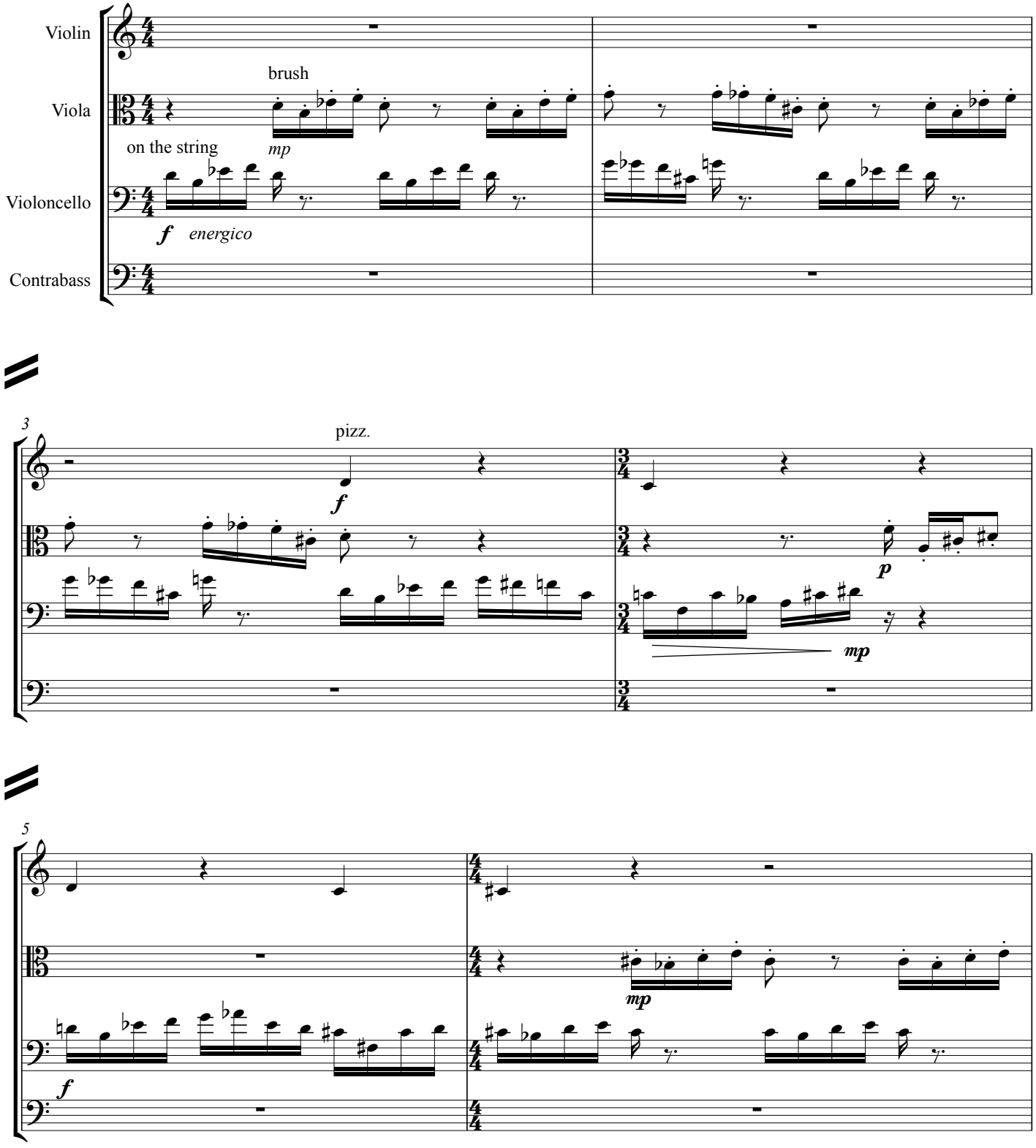
Narrow Road, Deep Chasm

for Matt Zory

Ellen Ruth Harrison (2010)

Tempo I, Animato

♩ = 126



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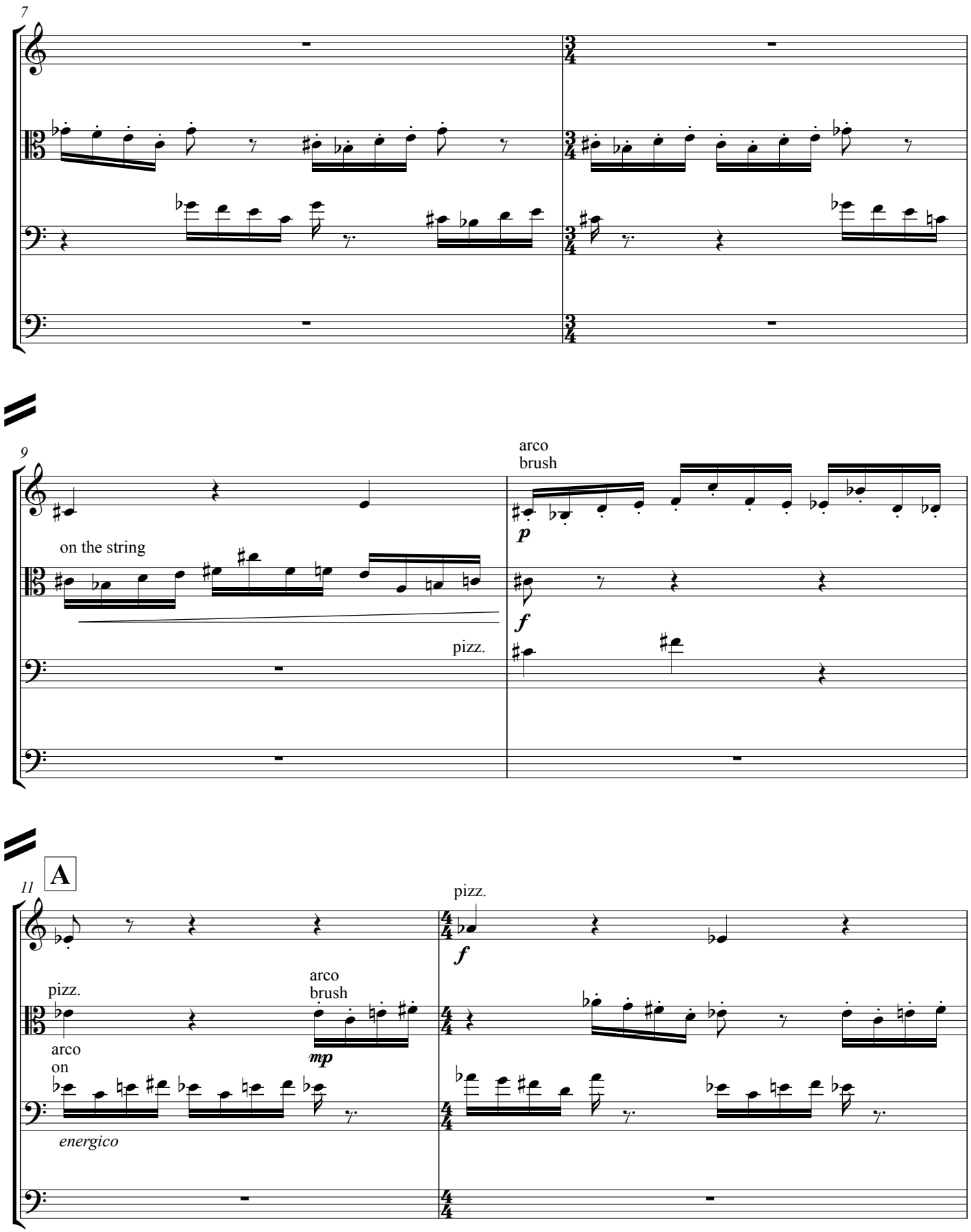
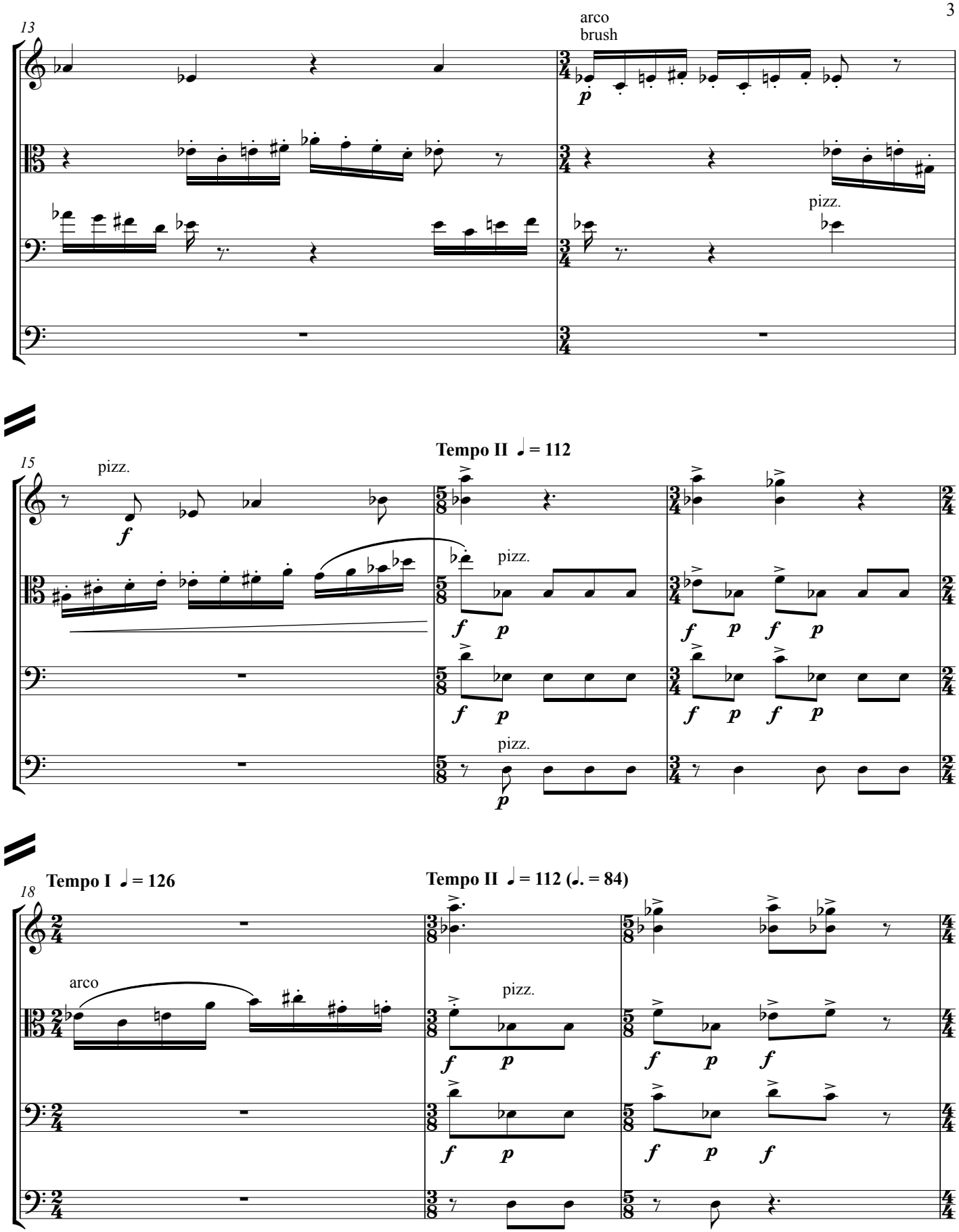

7
9
arco
brush
p
on the string
f
pizz.
11
A
pizz.
f
pizz.
arco
brush
mp
arco
on
energico


13
arco
brush
pizz.
15
pizz.
Tempo II ♩ = 112
pizz.
pizz.
18
Tempo I ♩ = 126
Tempo II ♩ = 112 (♩. = 84)
arco
pizz.

B **Tempo III** ♩ = 120

21

arco

mp *legato cantabile*

arco
brush

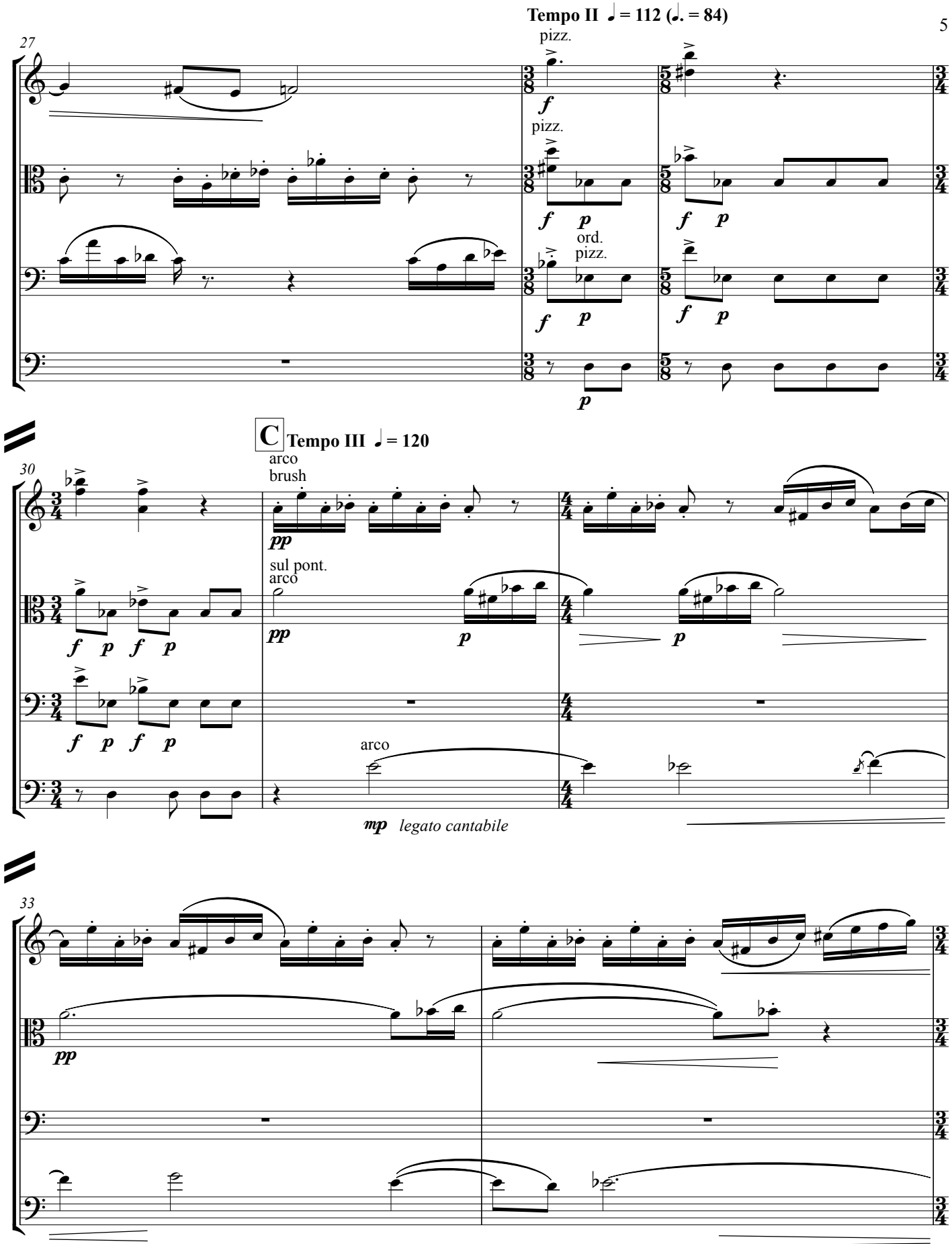
pp

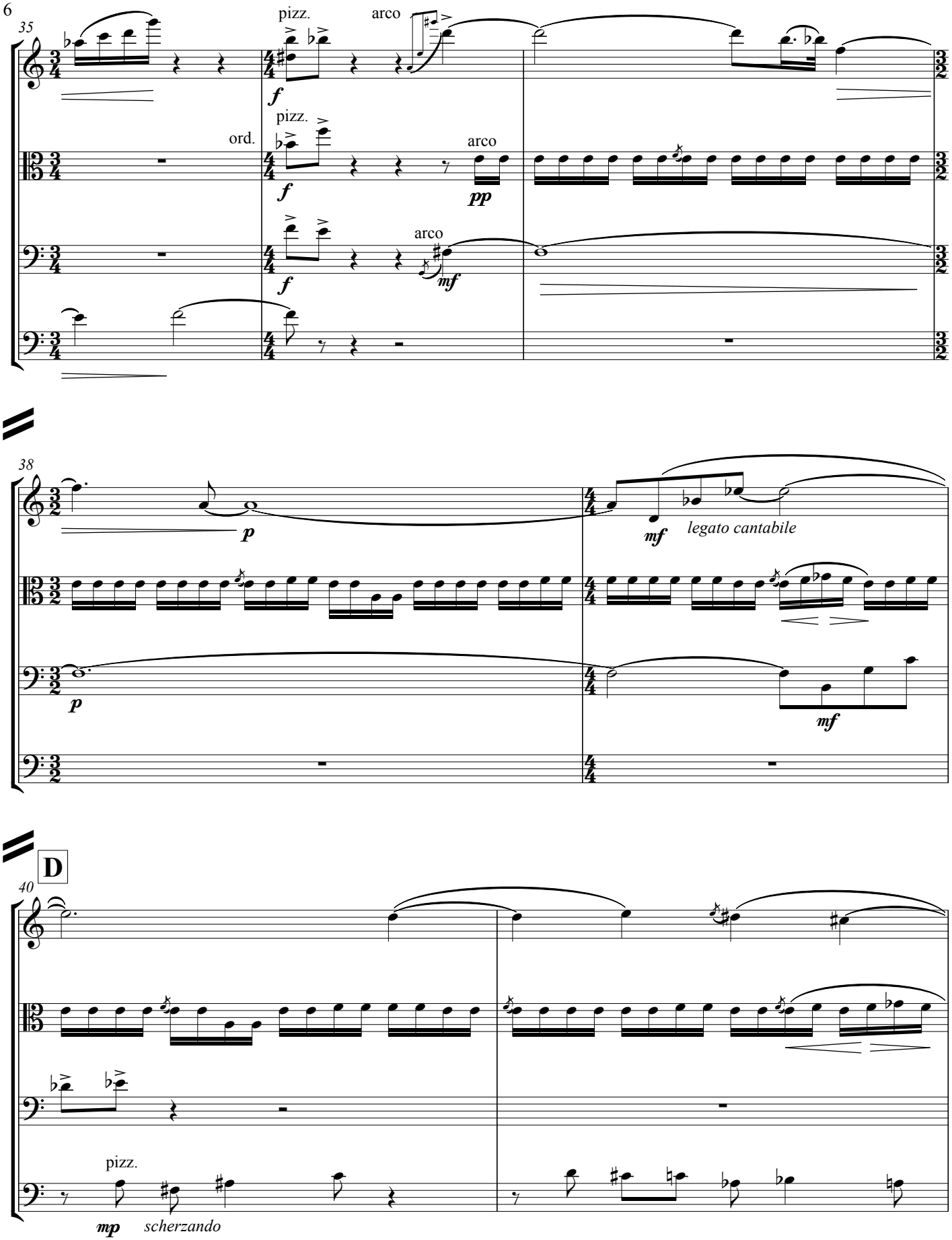
sul pont.
arco

pp

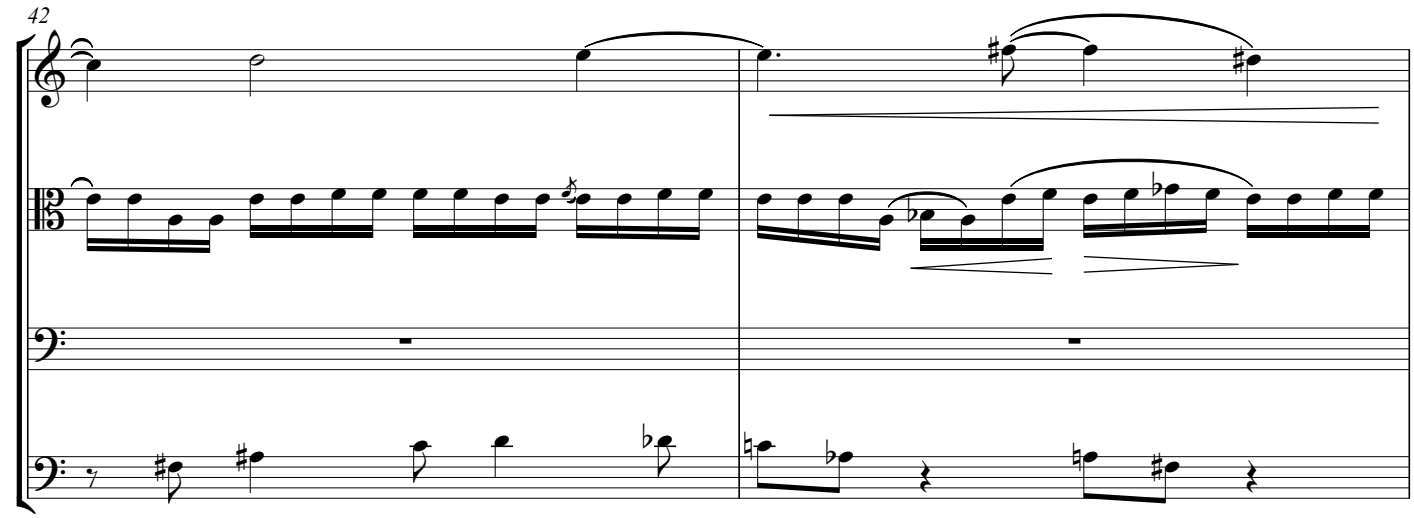
23

25

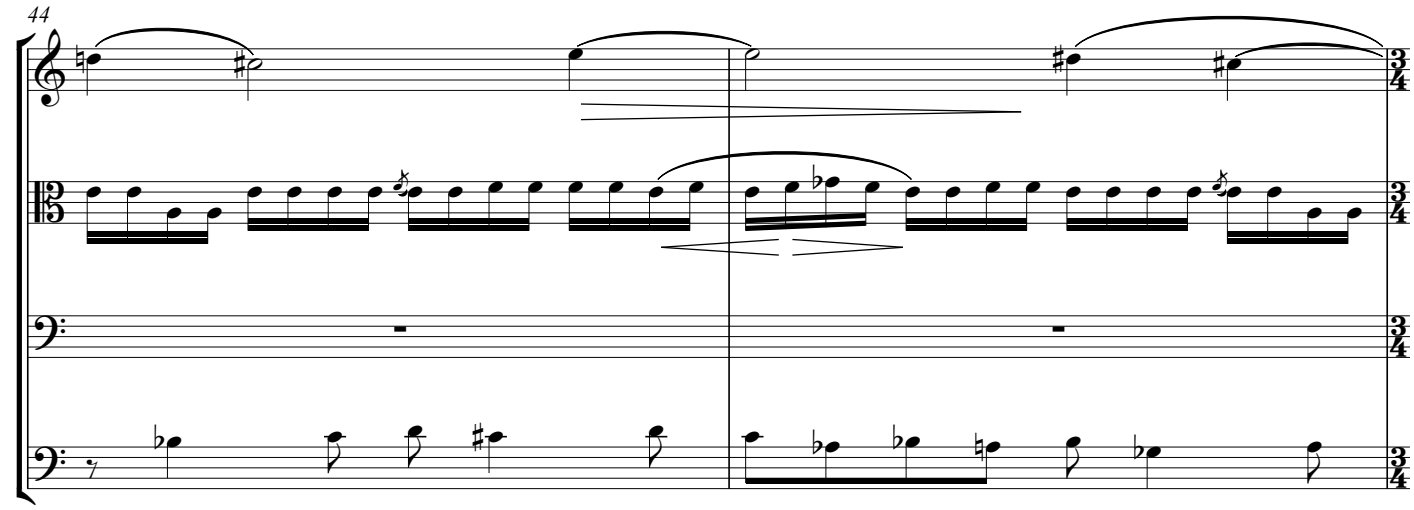

Tempo II ♩ = 112 (♩. = 84)
27
pizz.
pizz.
ord.
pizz.
C
Tempo III ♩ = 120
30
arco
brush
sul pont.
arco
arco
mp legato cantabile
33


35
pizz.
arco
ord.
pizz.
arco
arco
38
legato cantabile
D
40
pizz.
scherzando

42



44



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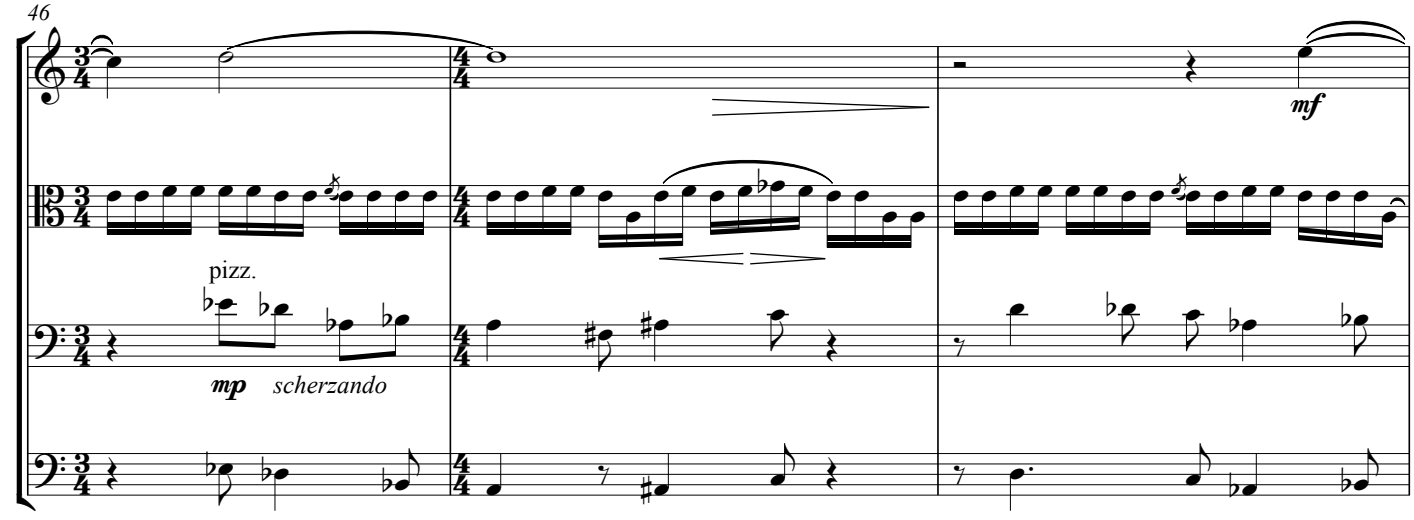
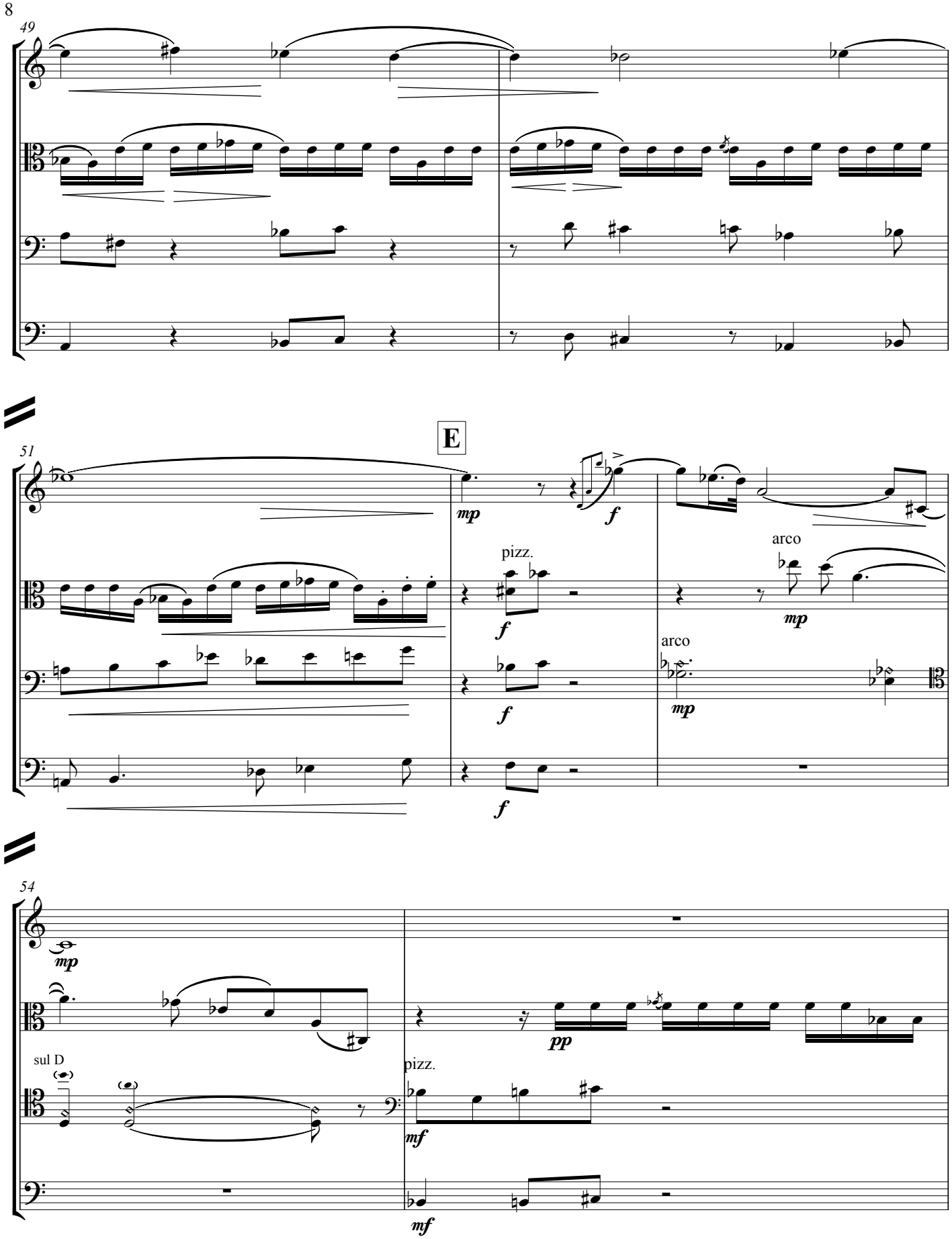
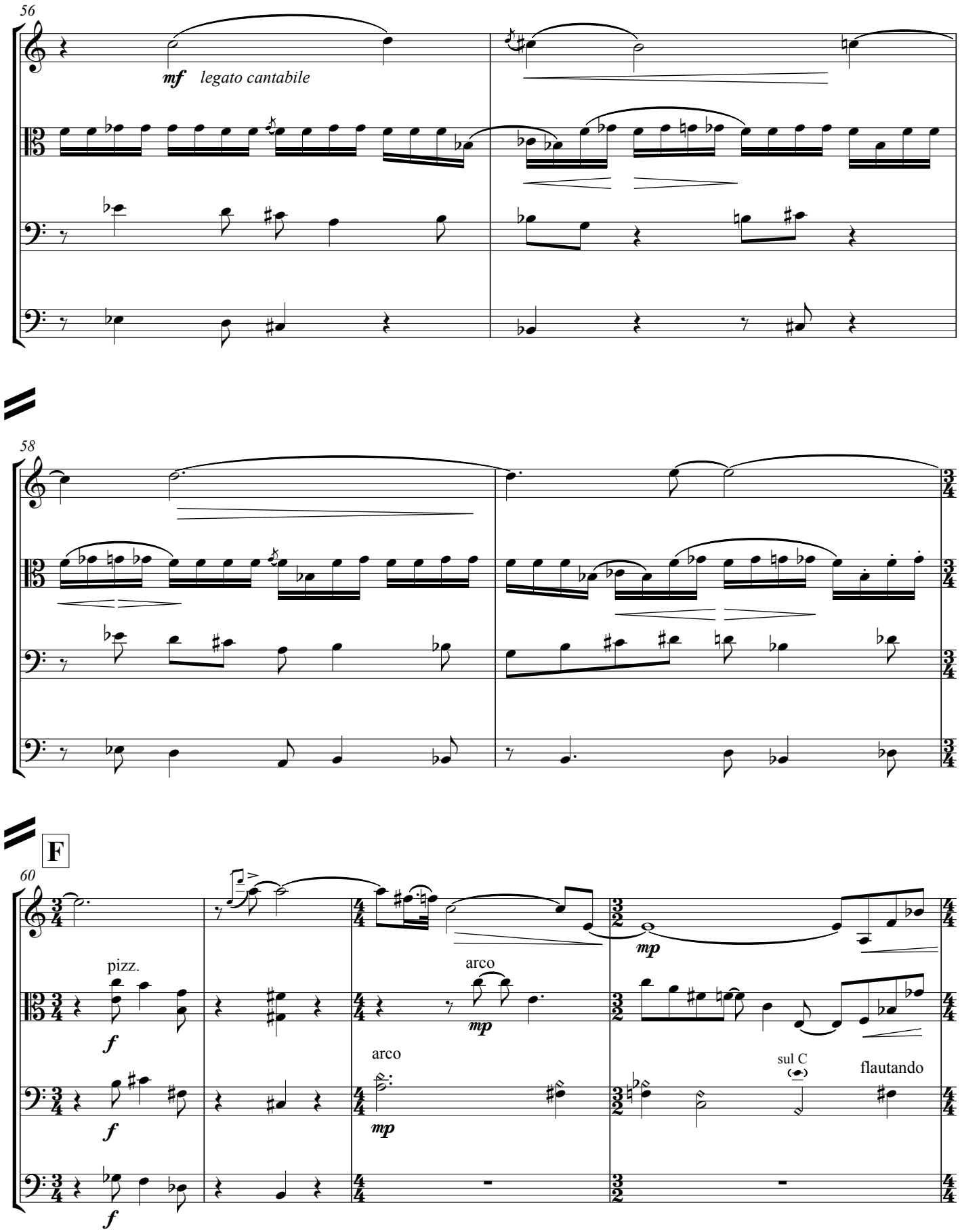
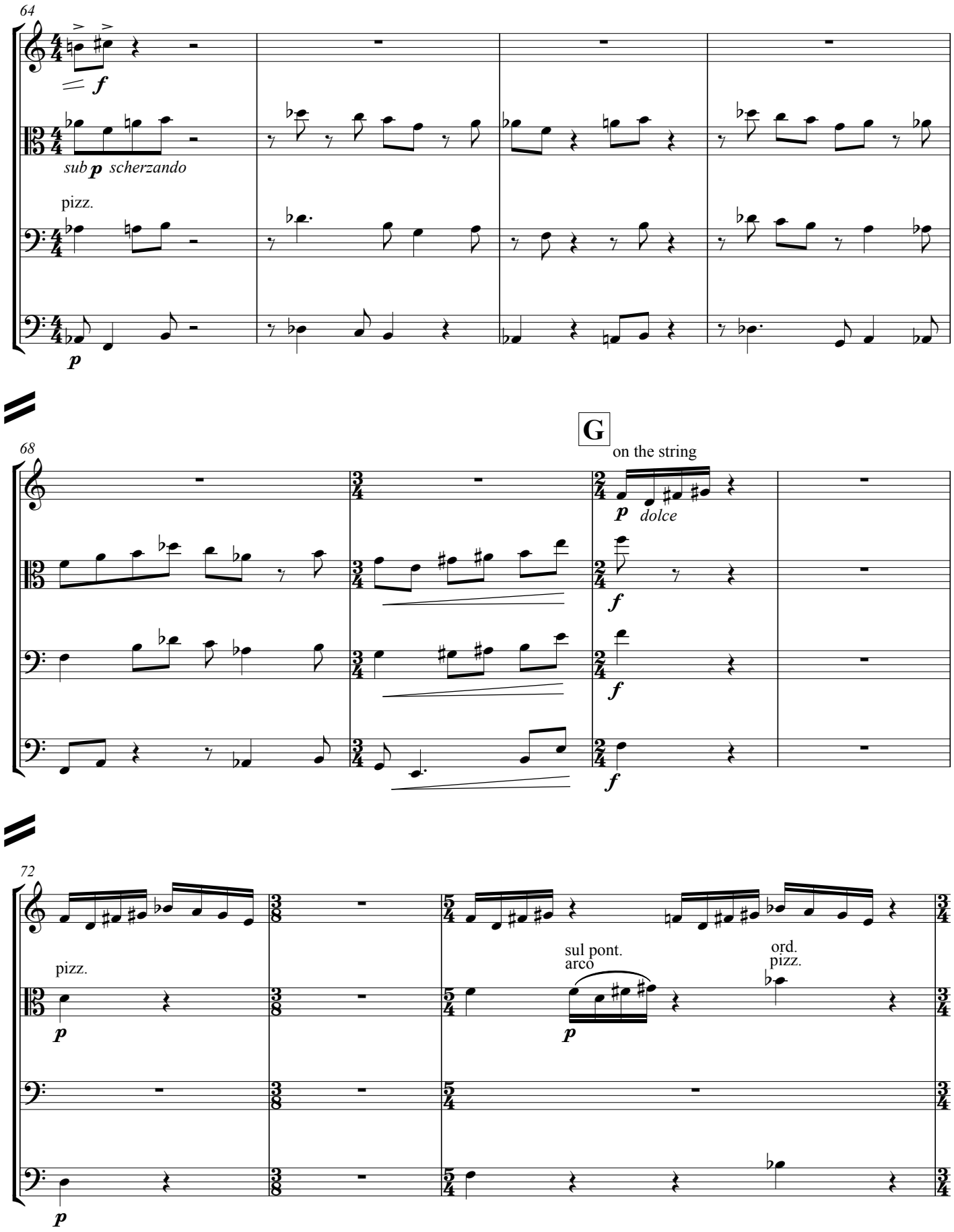
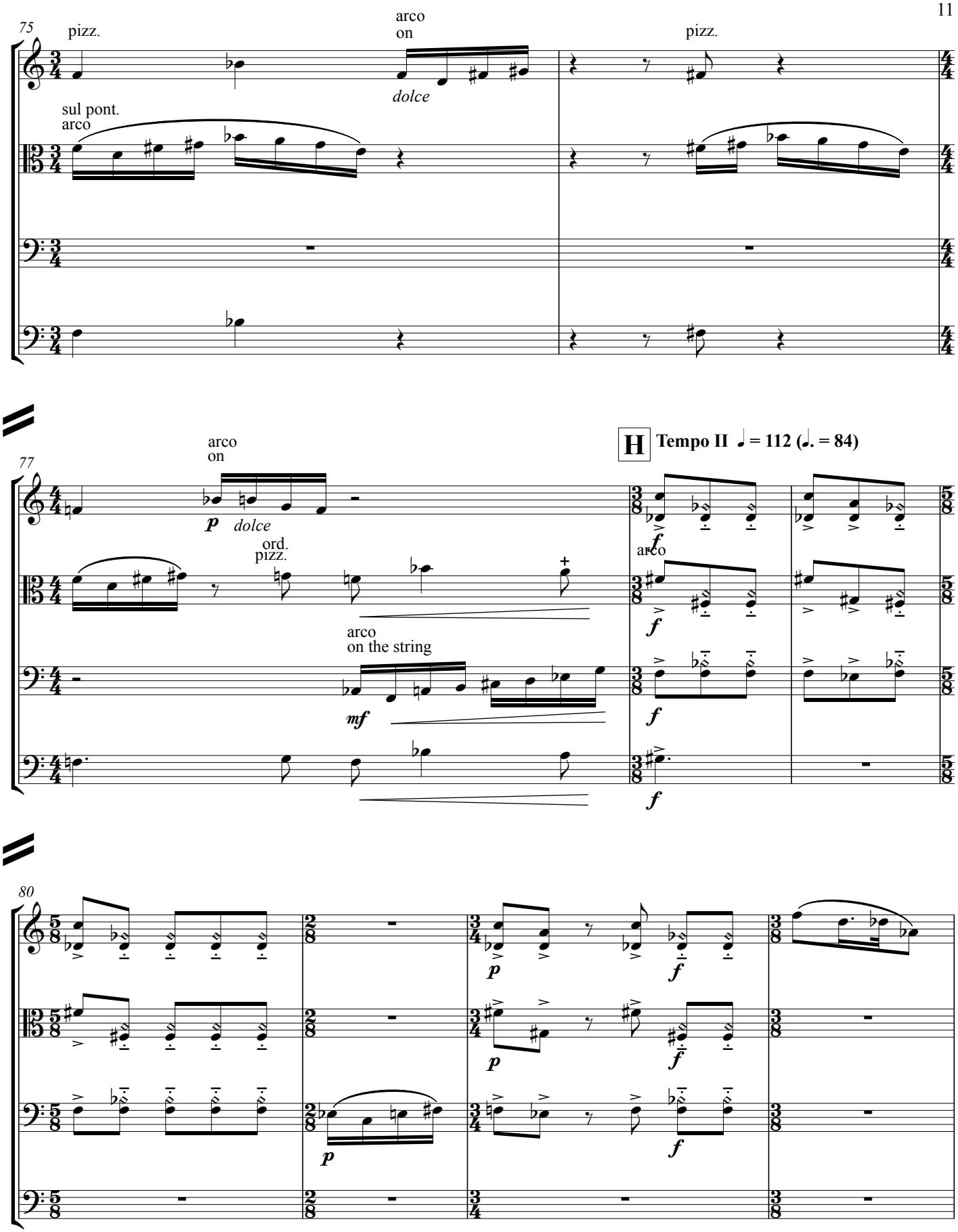
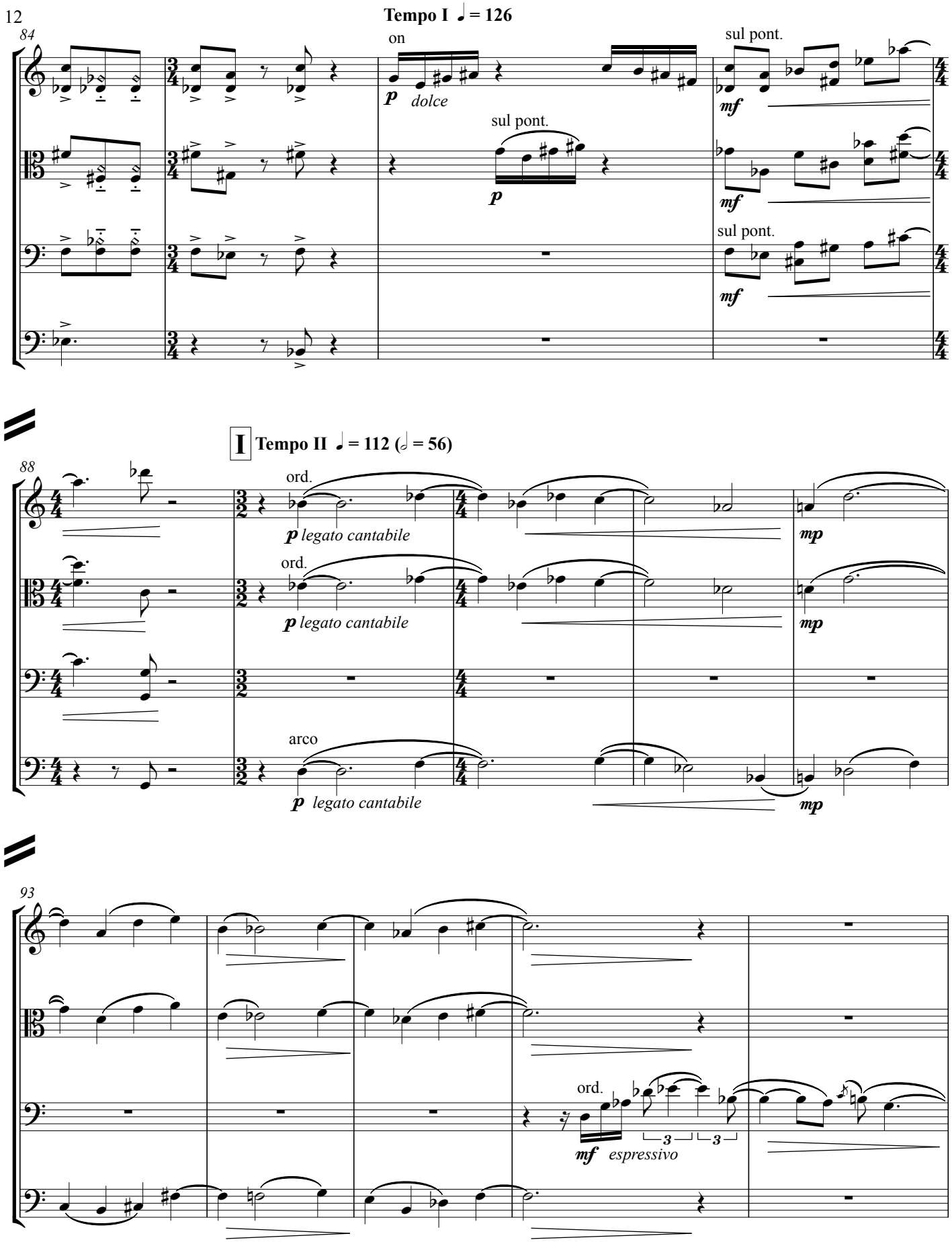


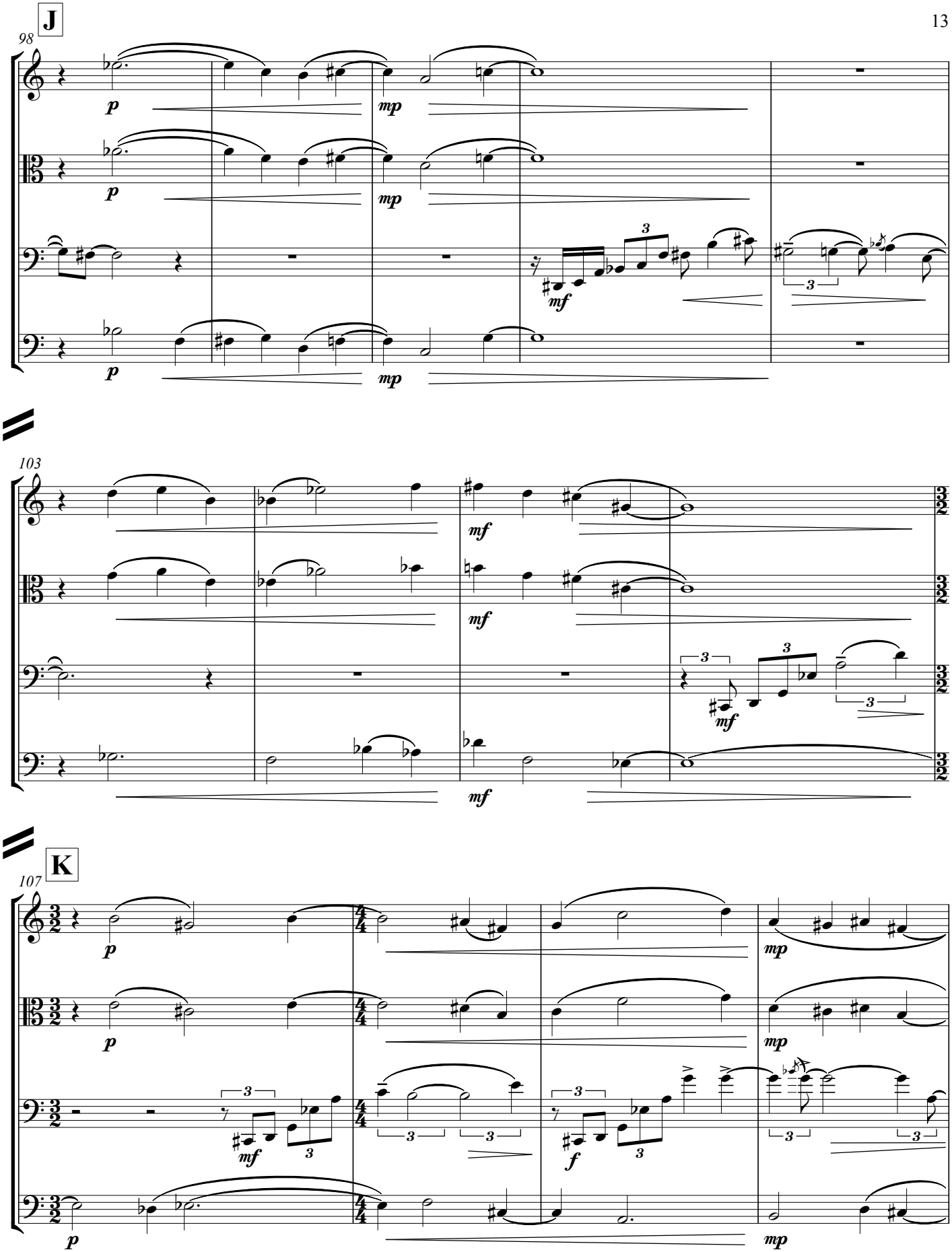

49
51
E
mp
f
pizz.
arco
54
sul D
pp
mf

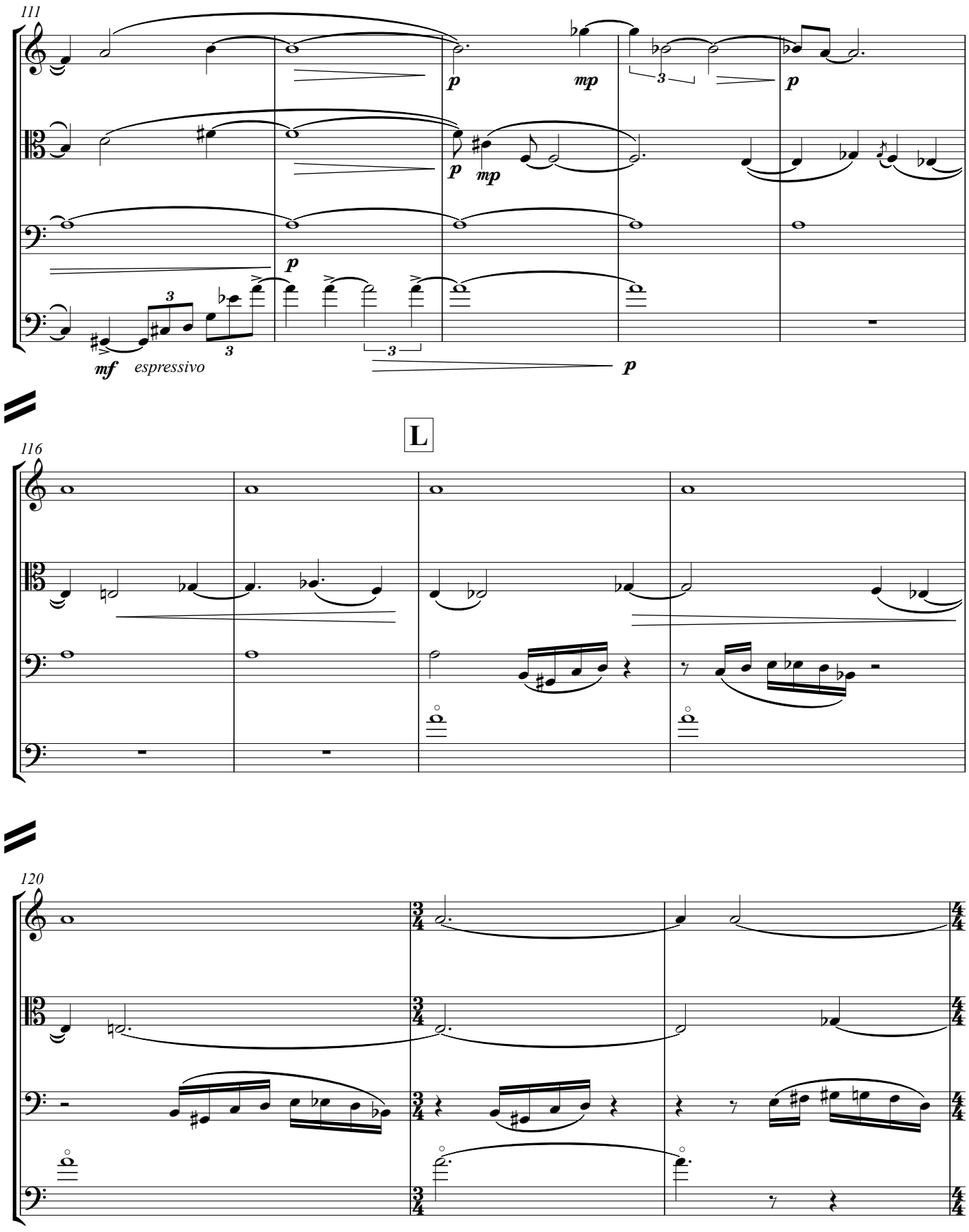

56
mf legato cantabile
58
F
60
pizz.
f
arco
mp
arco
mp
mp
sul C
flautando
f
f


64
f
sub p scherzando
pizz.
p
68
G
on the string
p dolce
f
f
f
72
pizz.
p
sul pont.
arco
p
ord.
pizz.
p


75
pizz.
arco
on
dolce
pizz.
sul pont.
arco
77
arco
on
p
dolce
ord.
pizz.
arco
on the string
mf
H
Tempo II ♩ = 112 (♩. = 84)
f
arco
80
p
f


Tempo I ♩ = 126
84
on
p dolce
sul pont.
p
sul pont.
mf
sul pont.
mf
mf
I Tempo II ♩ = 112 (𝅗𝅥 = 56)
88
ord.
p legato cantabile
mp
ord.
p legato cantabile
mp
arco
p legato cantabile
mp
93
ord.
mf espressivo
3
3


J
98
p
mp
mf
103
K
107
f


111
p
mp
3
p
p
mp
p
3
3
3
mf
espressivo
p
L
116
120

123

125

poco a poco sul pont.

mf

mf

poco a poco sul pont. molto pont.

127

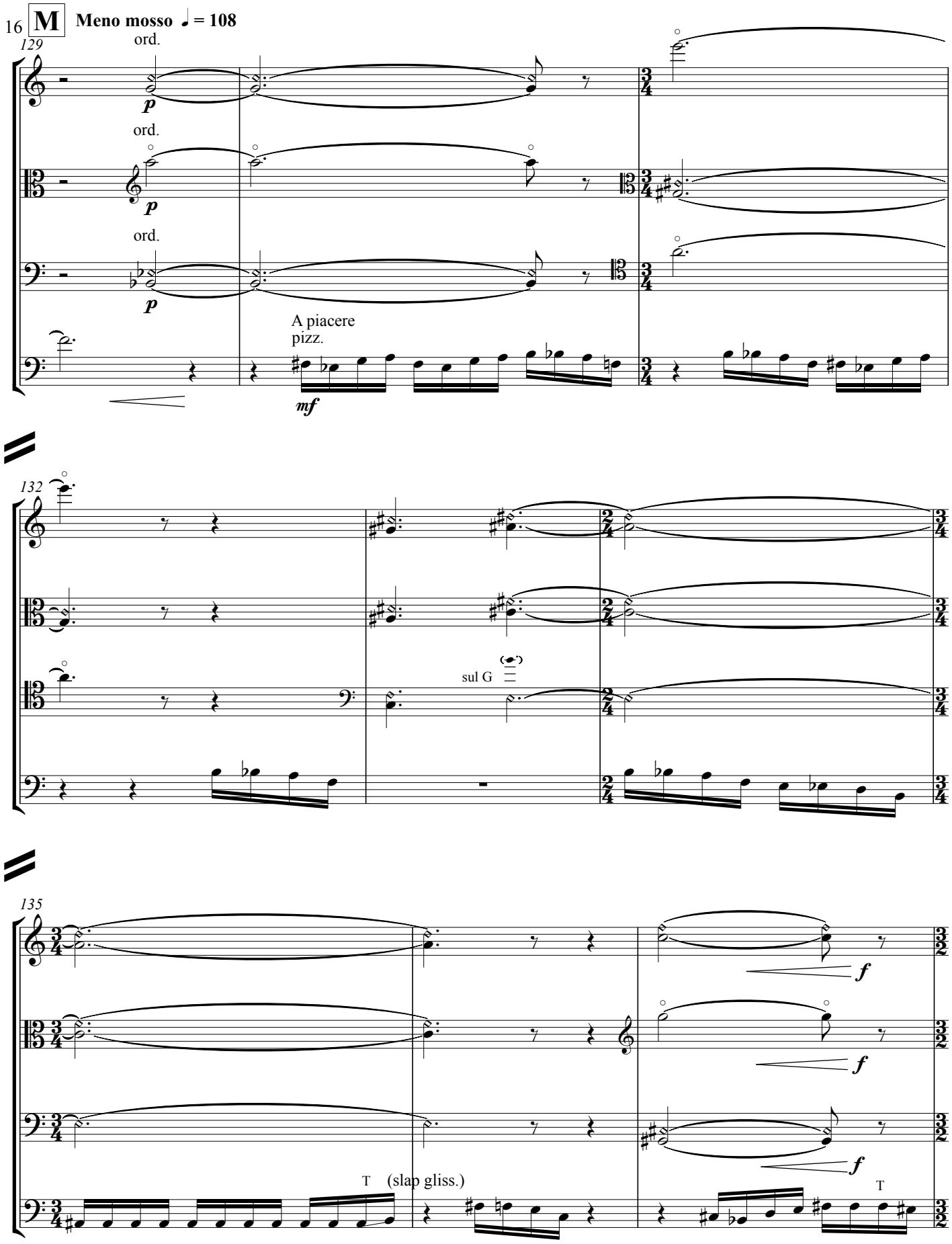
molto pont.

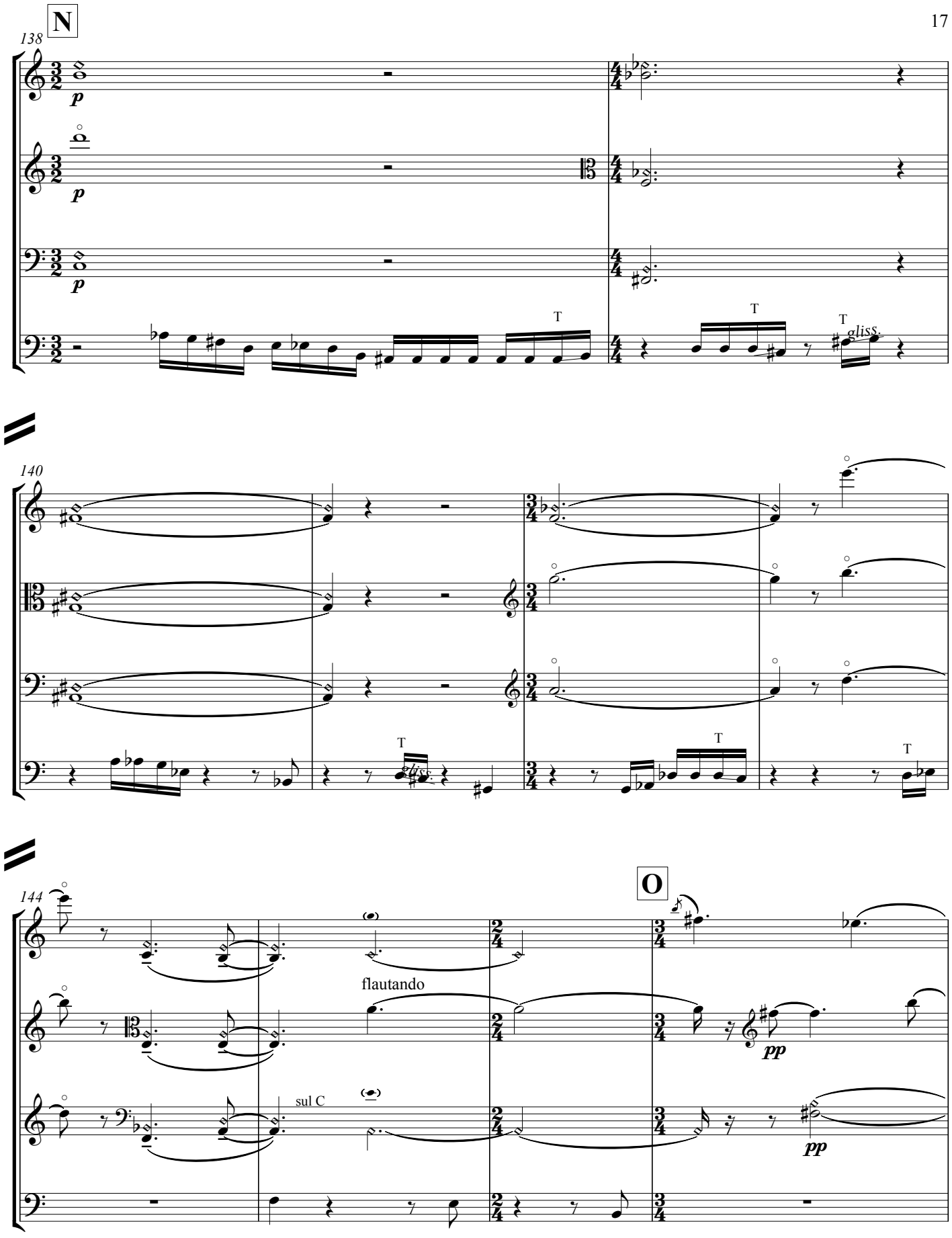
f

poco a poco sul pont. molto pont.

mf

ff


16
M
Meno mosso ♩ = 108
129
ord.
p
ord.
p
ord.
p
A piacere
pizz.
mf
132
sul G
135
f
f
f
T
(slap gliss.)
T


N
138
p
p
p
T
T
T
gliss.
140
T
T
T
144
O
flautando
sul C
pp
pp

148

mp

153

rit.

♩ = 84

♩ = 100

pizz.

p

pizz.

p

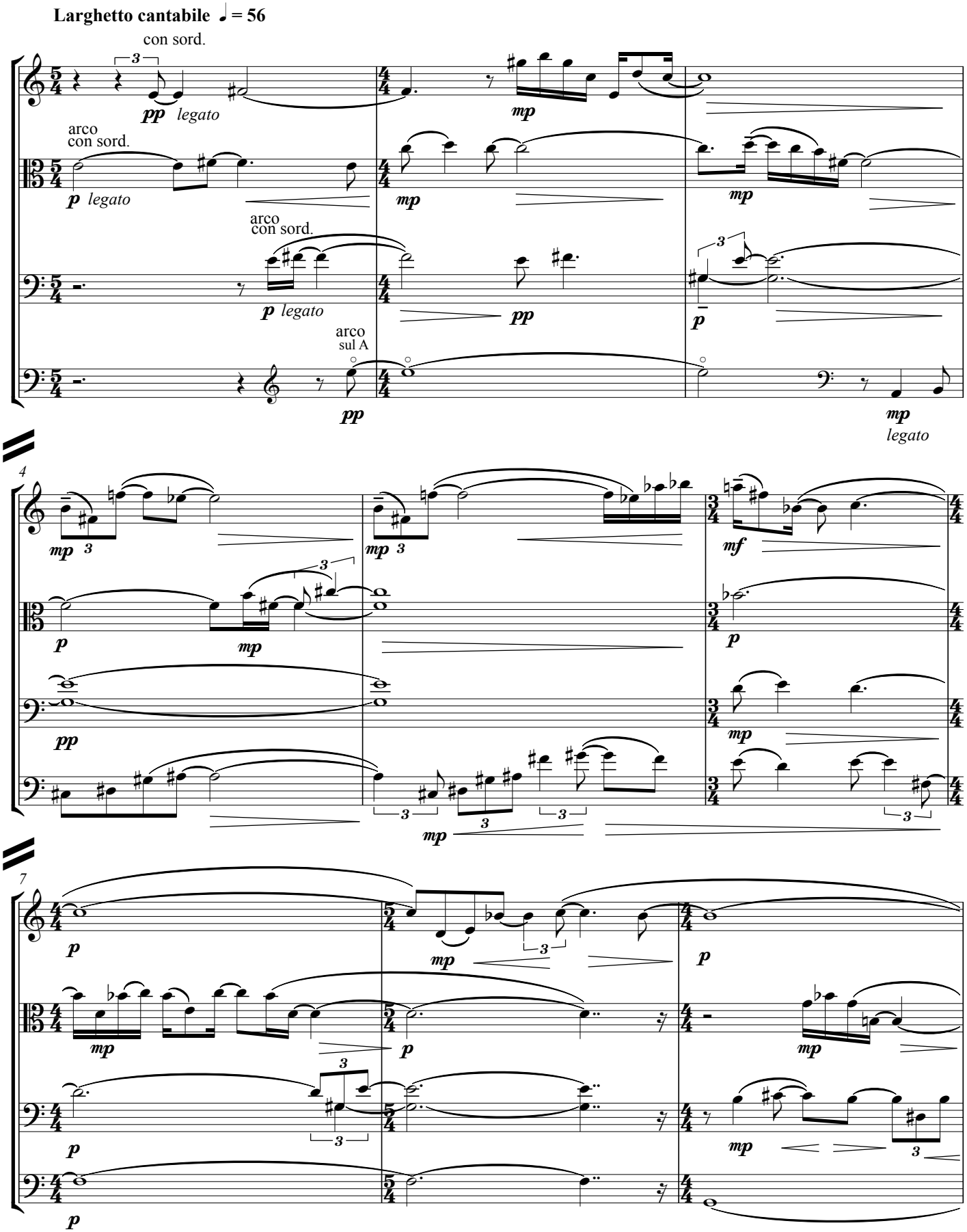
ord. pizz.

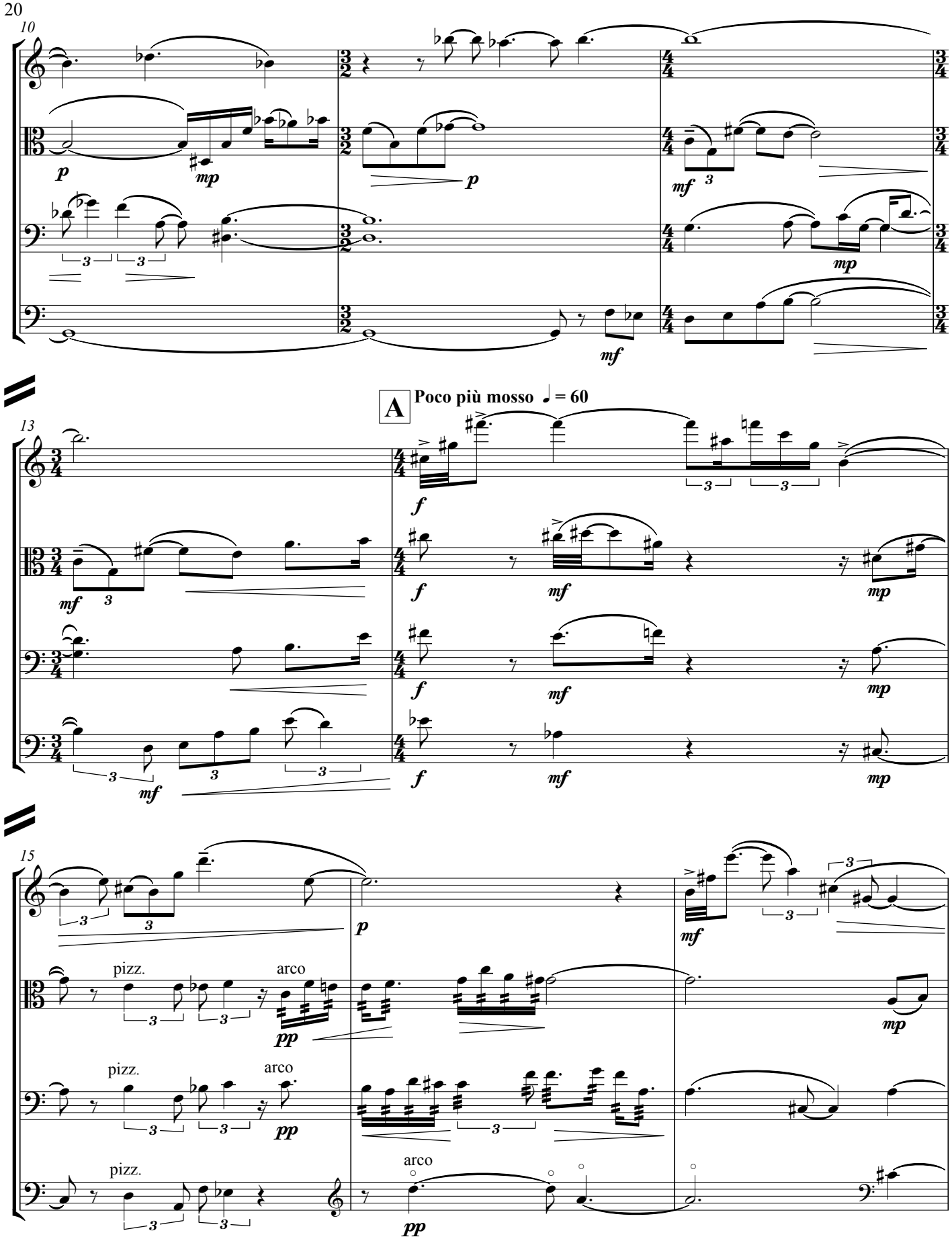
p

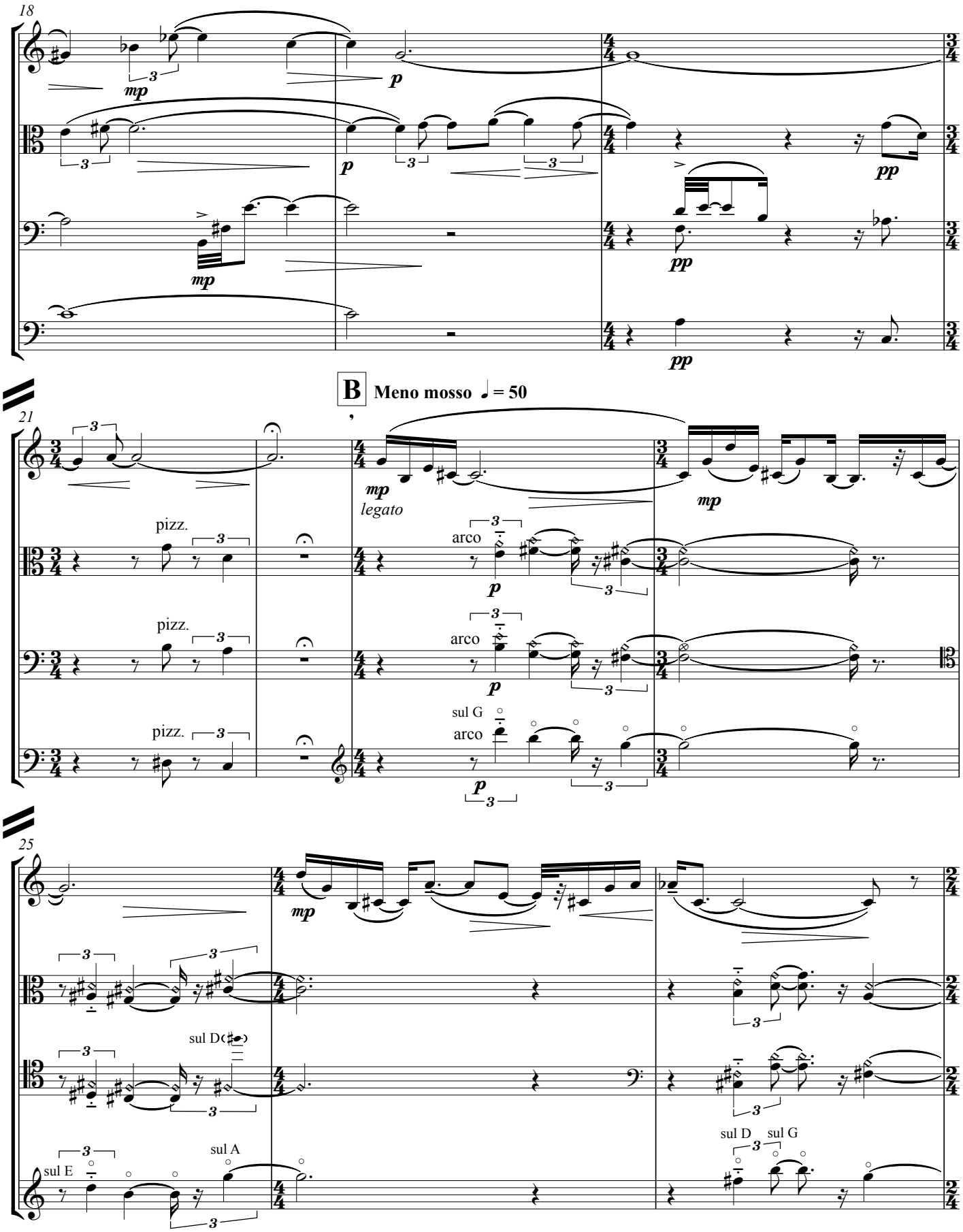
pp

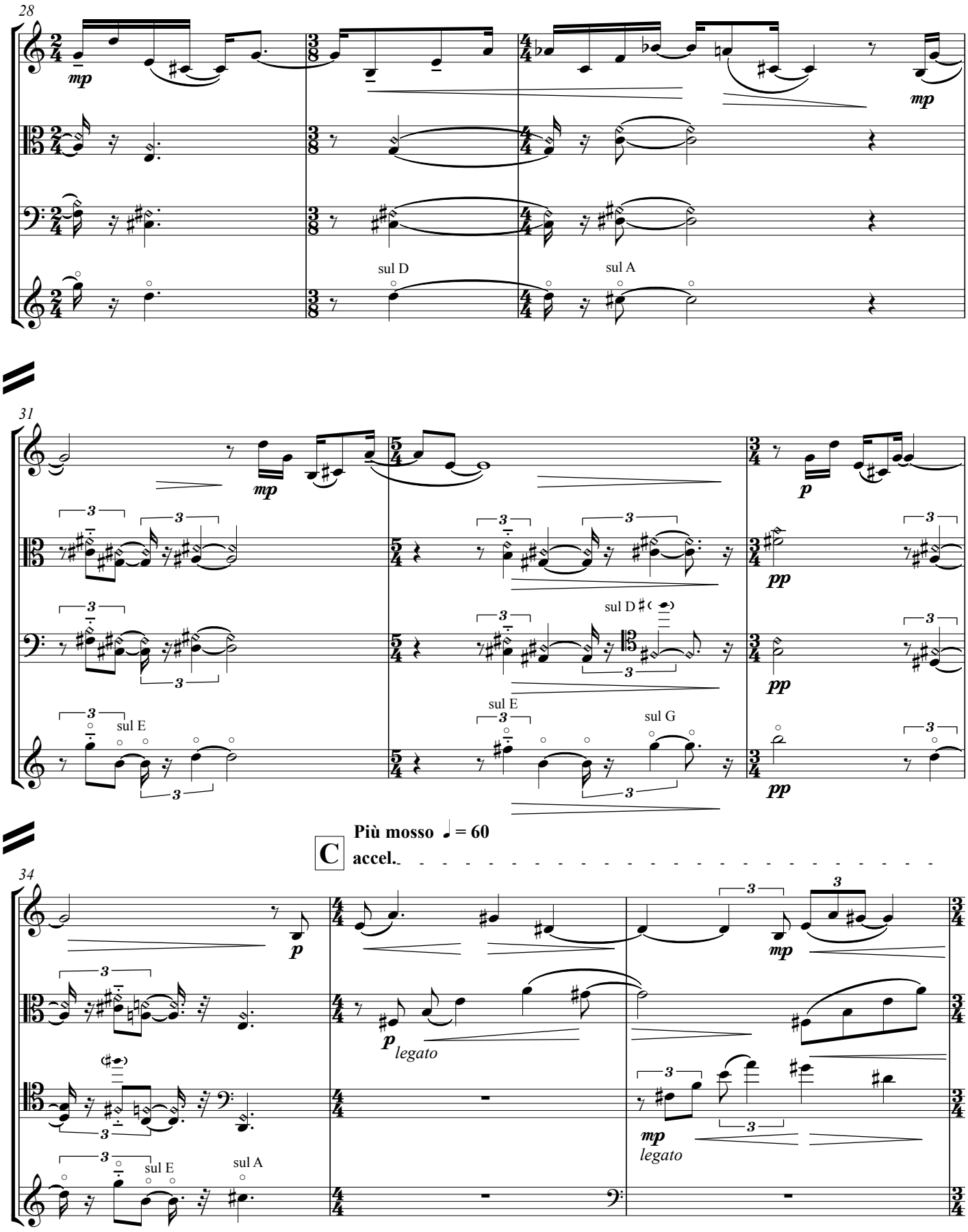
pp

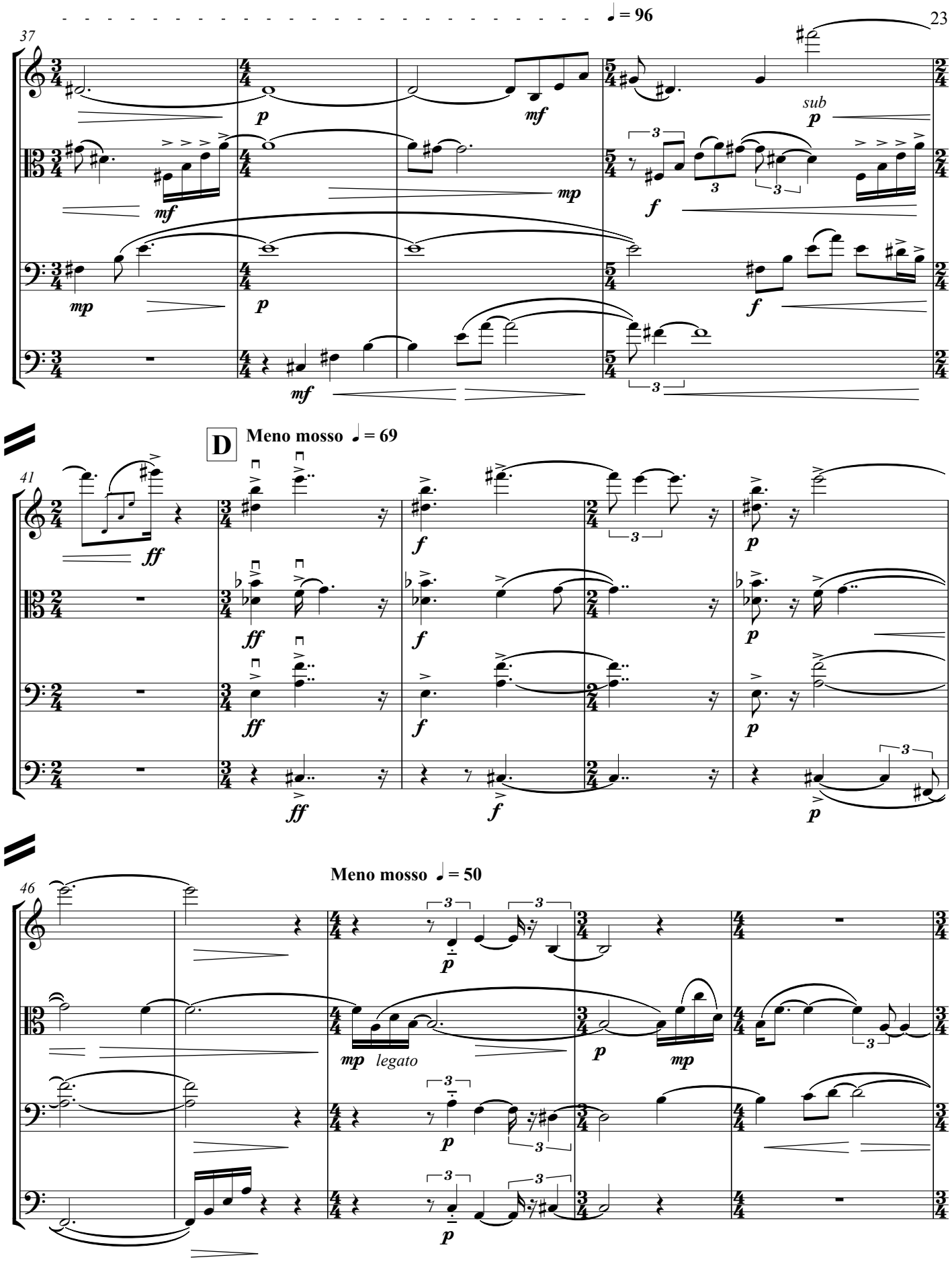
pp


Larghetto cantabile ♩ = 56
con sord.
pp legato
arco
con sord.
p legato
mp
mp
arco
con sord.
p legato
pp
p
arco
sul A
pp
mp
legato
4
mp
mp
mf
p
mp
p
pp
mp
mp
7
p
mp
p
p
mp
p
mp
p
p


10
13
A
Poco più mosso ♩ = 60
15
pizz.
arco


18
mp
p
pp
B
Meno mosso ♩ = 50
21
mp
legato
pizz.
arco
sul G
25
sul D
sul A
sul E
sul D
sul G


28
mp
sul D
sul A
mp
31
mp
p
pp
sul D
sul E
sul G
pp
pp
C
Più mosso ♩ = 60
accel.
34
p
p
legato
mp
mp
legato
sul E
sul A


♩ = 96
37
sub
D
Meno mosso ♩ = 69
41
Meno mosso ♩ = 50
46
legato

E

51

mp

p

p

55

poco rit.

pizz.

pp

pizz.

pp

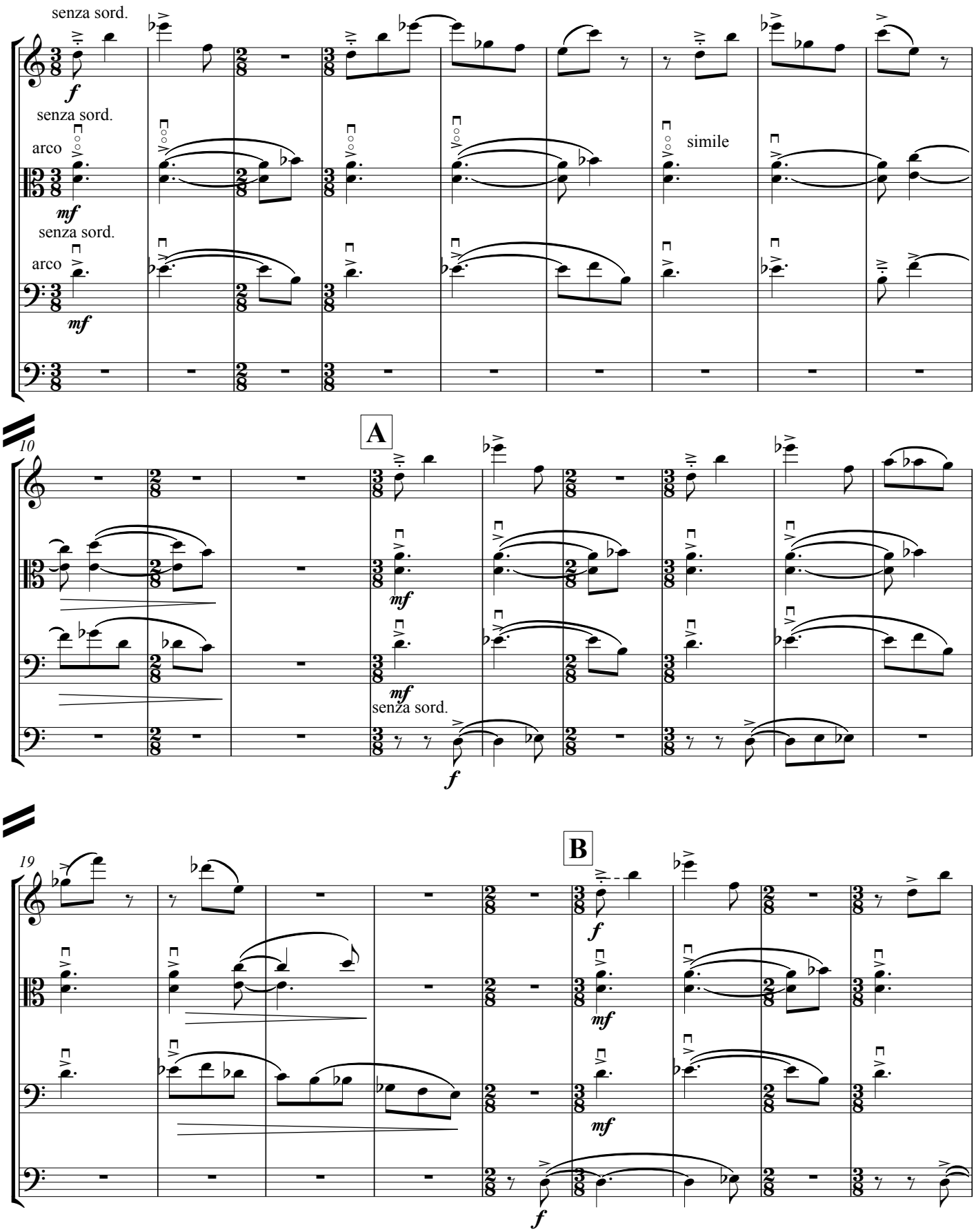
pizz.

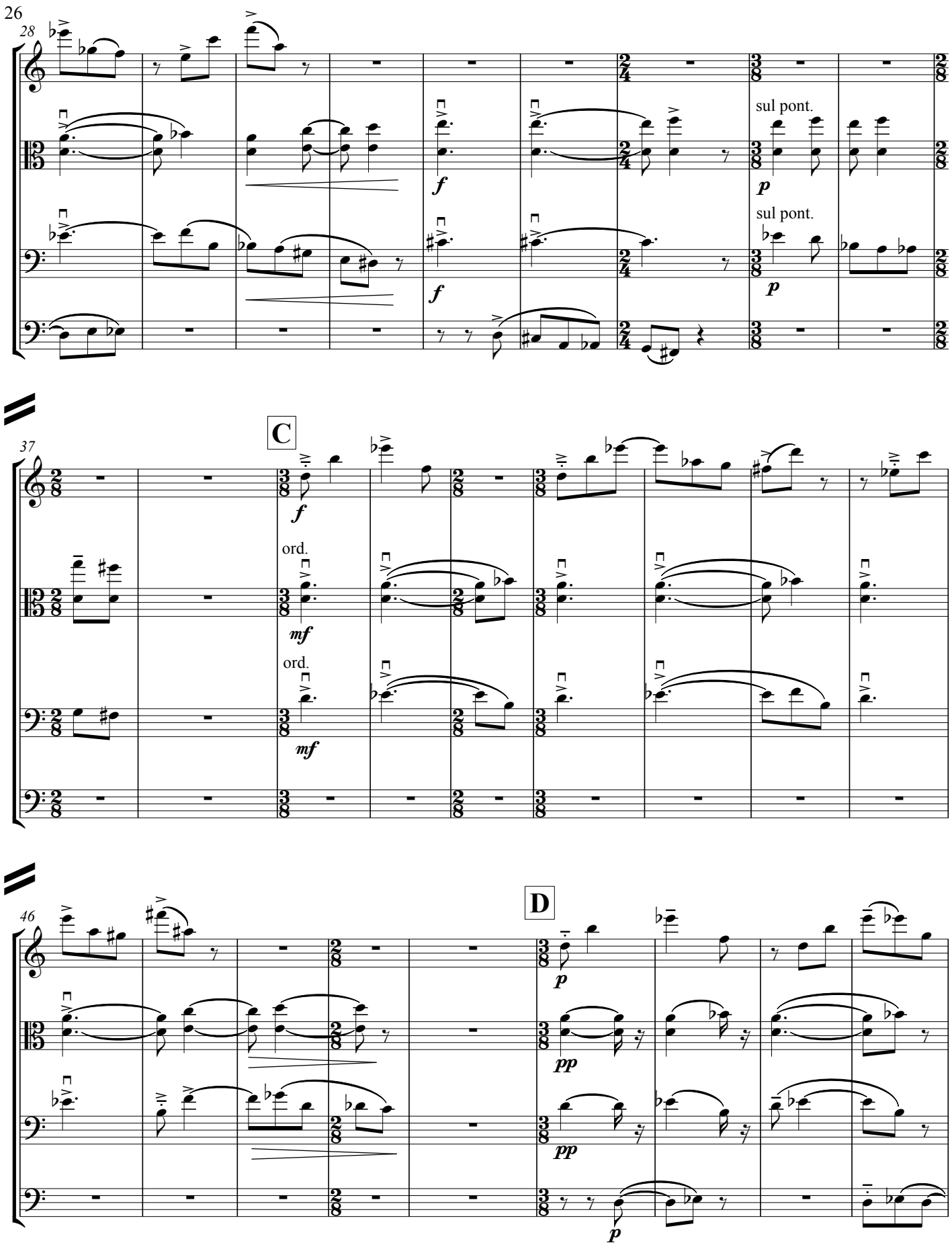
pp

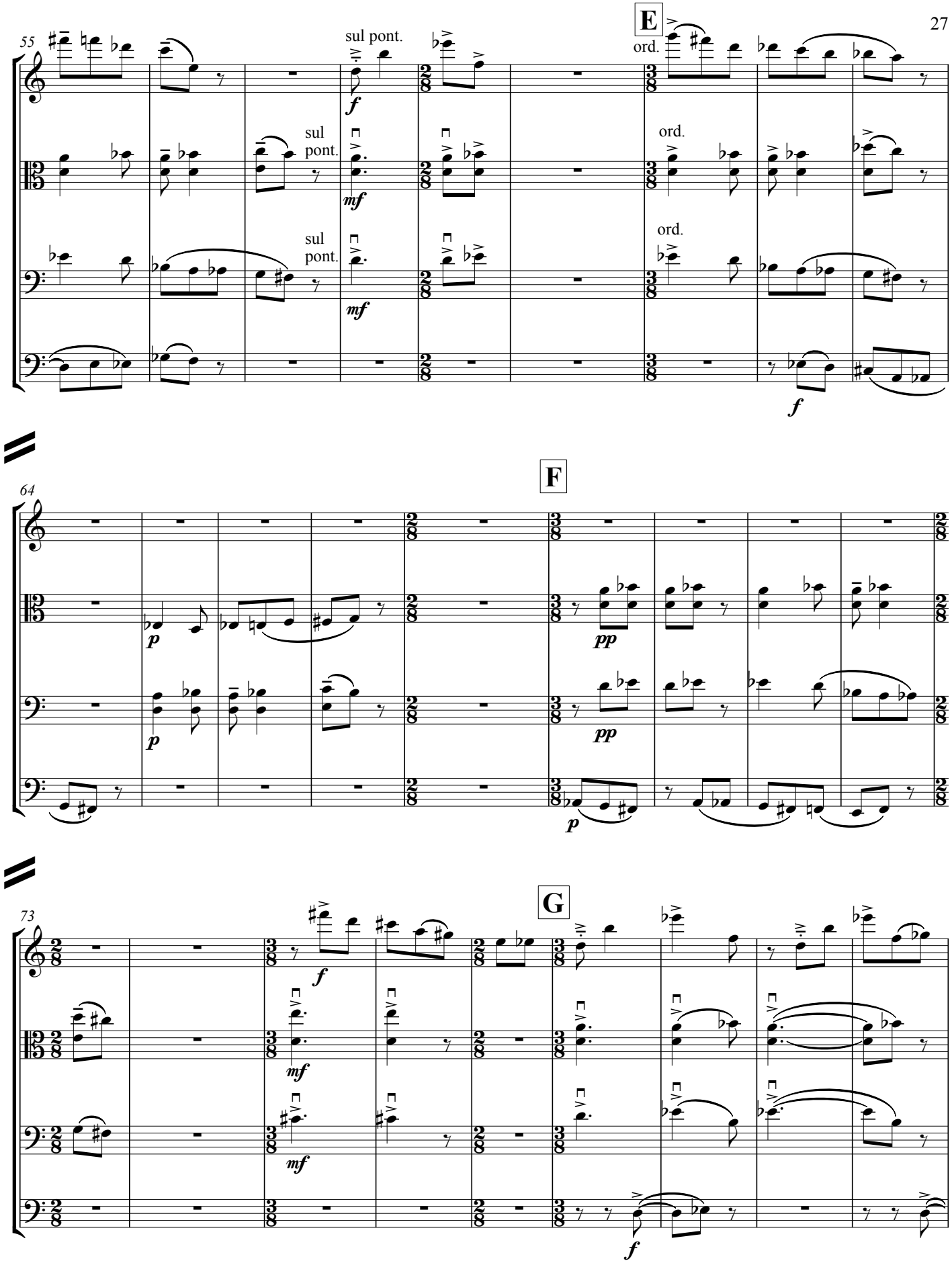
arco

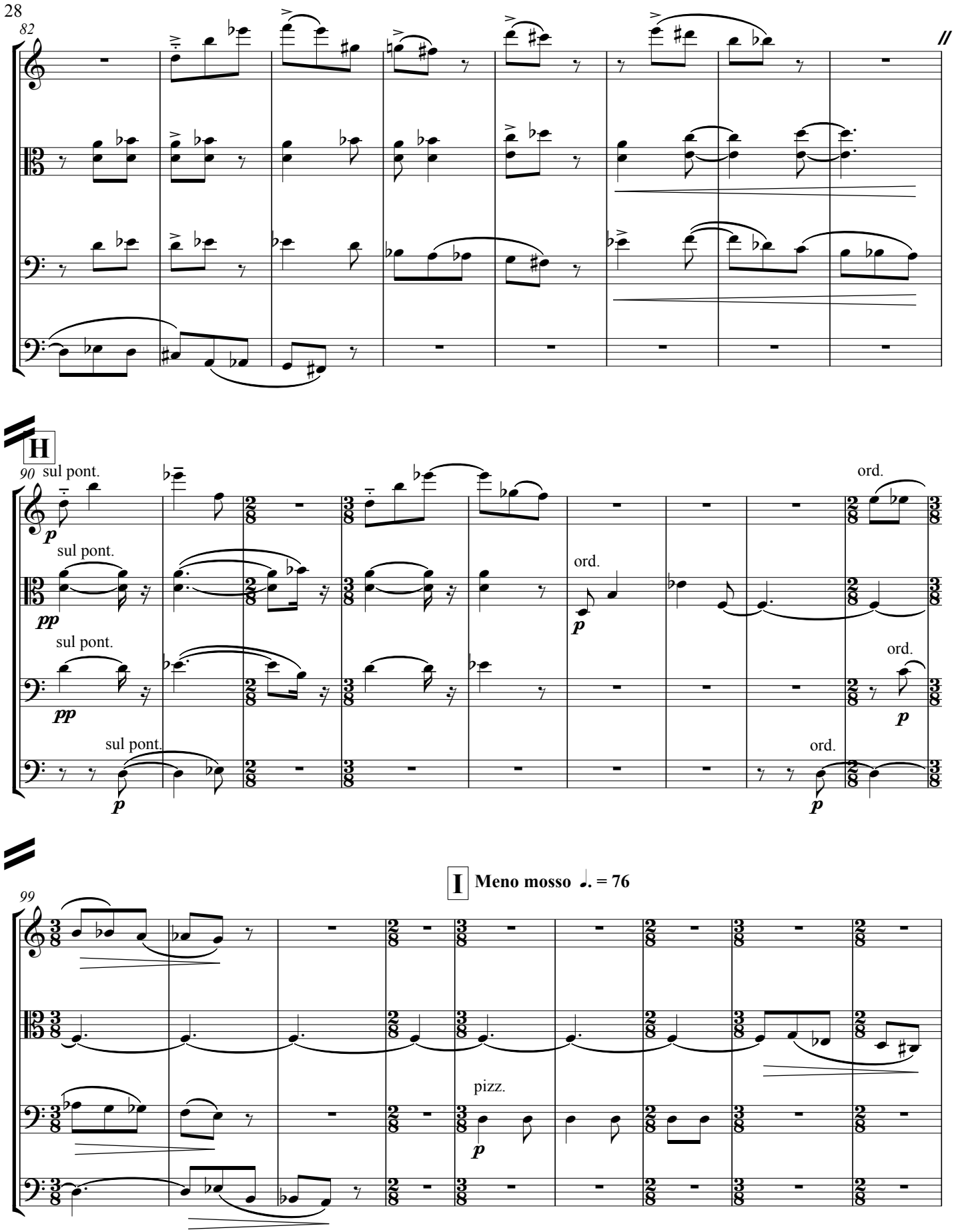
p *legato*

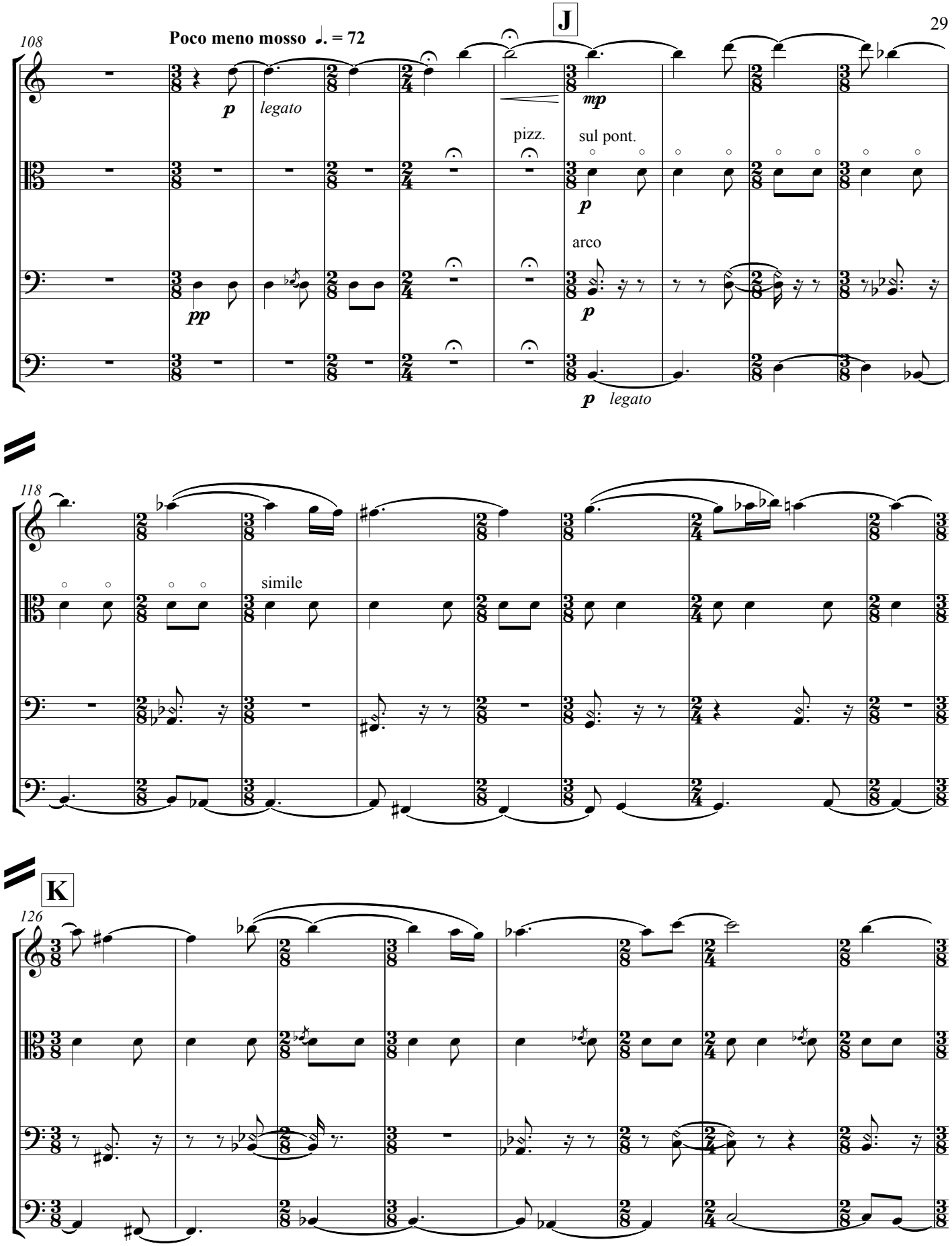
Allegro capriccioso ♩. = 84

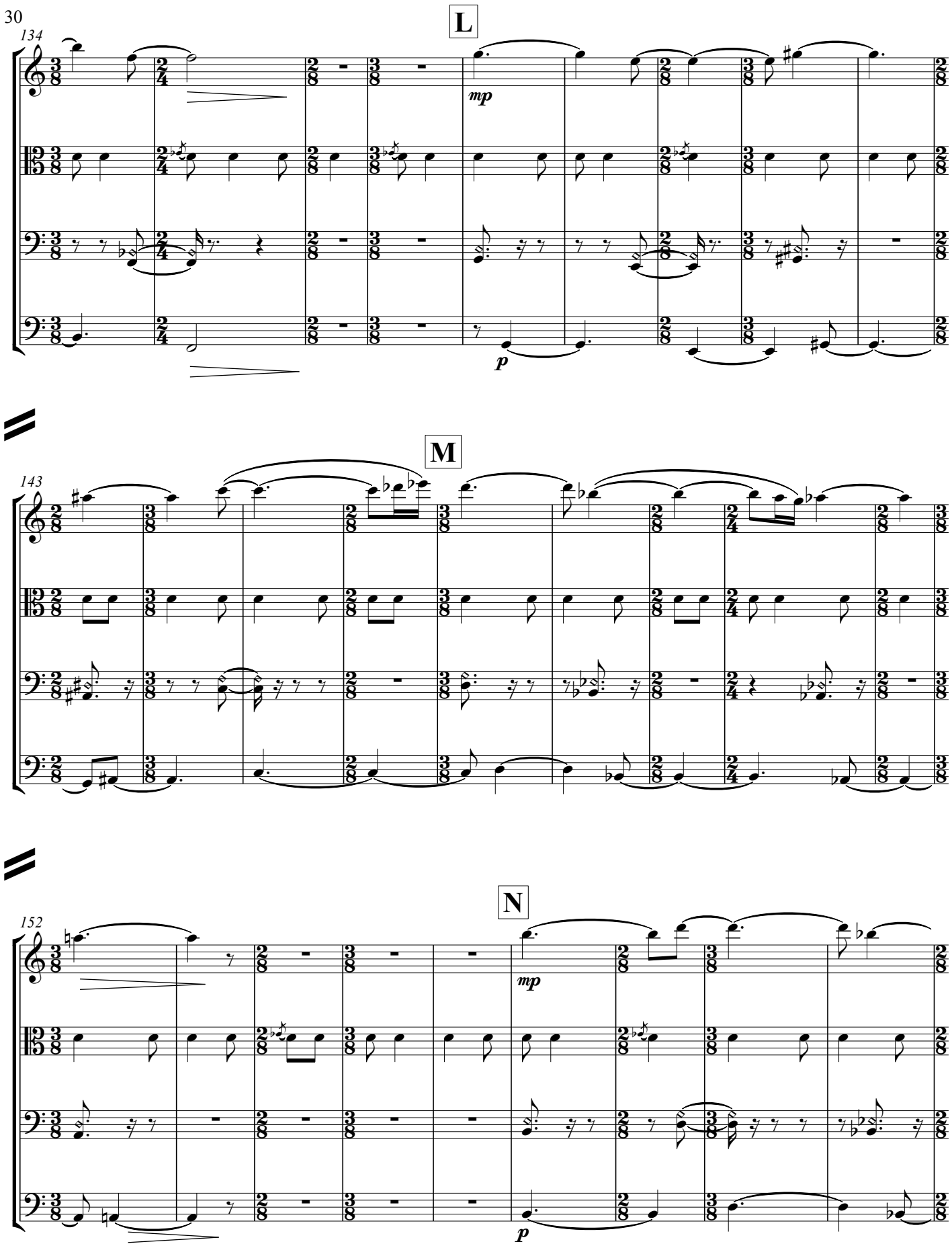


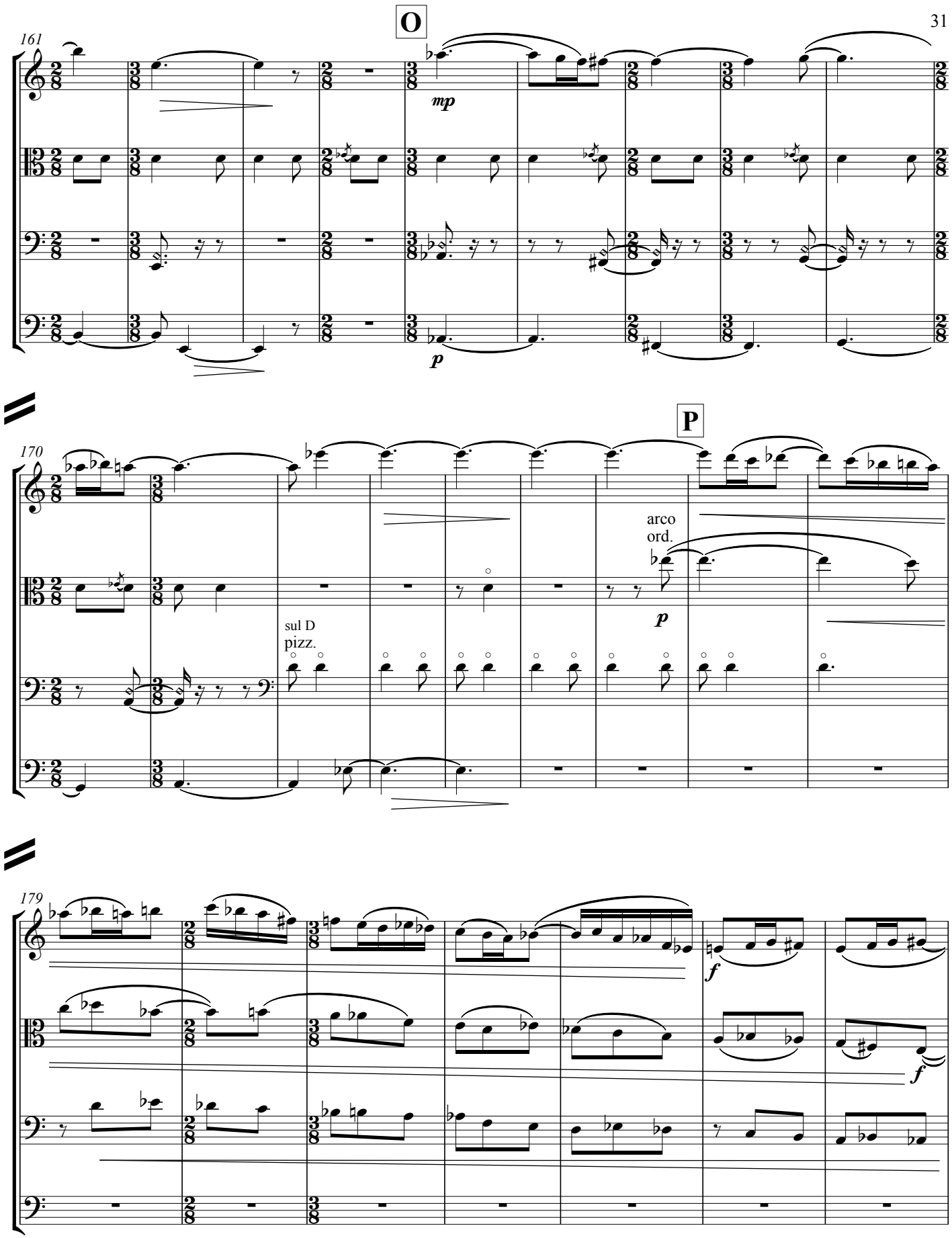

28
sul pont.
sul pont.
C
37
ord.
ord.
D
46


55
E
sul pont.
ord.
f
sul pont.
mf
ord.
sul pont.
mf
ord.
f
64
F
p
p
pp
pp
p
73
G
f
mf
mf
f


82
H
90
sul pont.
ord.
pp
p
99
I
Meno mosso ♩. = 76
pizz.


108
Poco meno mosso ♩. = 72
J
p
legato
pizz.
sul pont.
mp
p
arco
pp
p
p
legato
118
simile
K
126


L
134
mp
p
M
143
N
152
mp
p


O
161
mp
p
P
170
arco
ord.
p
sul D
pizz.
179
f
f

186

Q

p *mf* *mp* *f* *p*

193

R **Poco più mosso** ♩. = 76

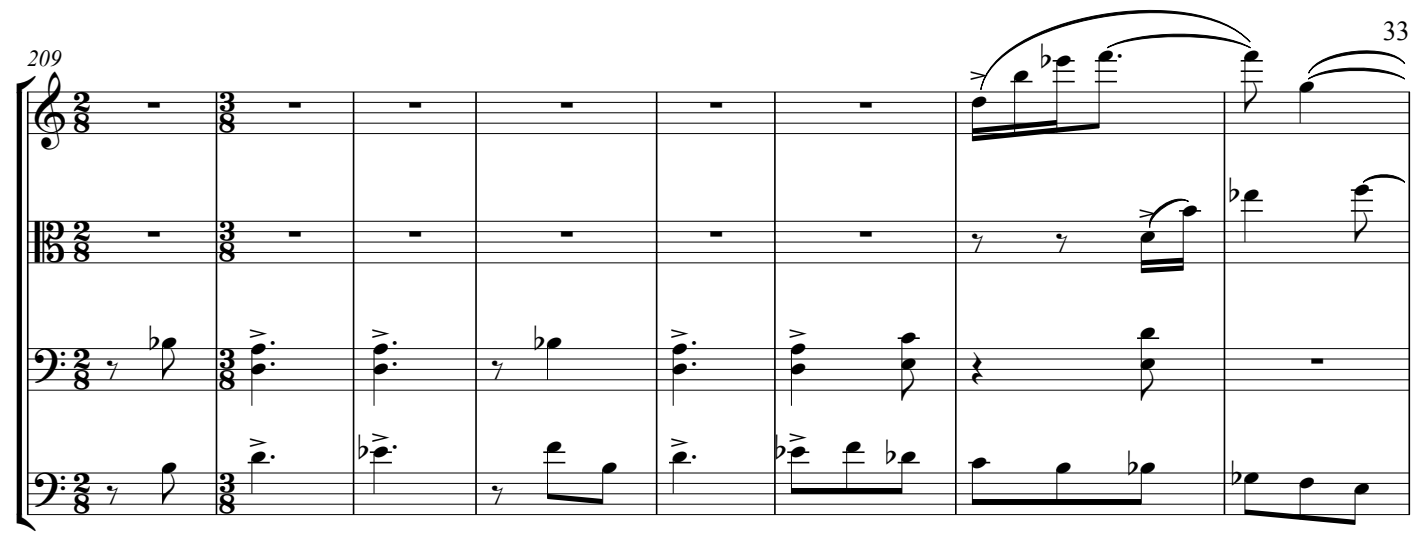
f *f* arco 3 *f* pizz. *f* pizz. *f* *f*

201

S

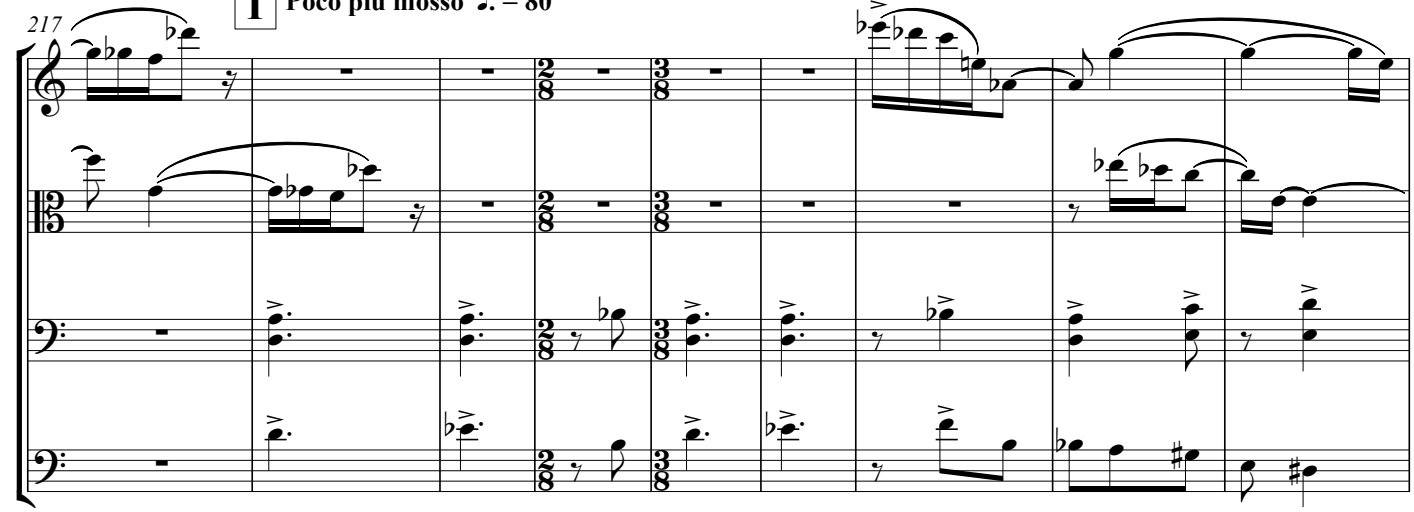
f *f*

209



217

T **Poco più mosso** ♩. = 80



226

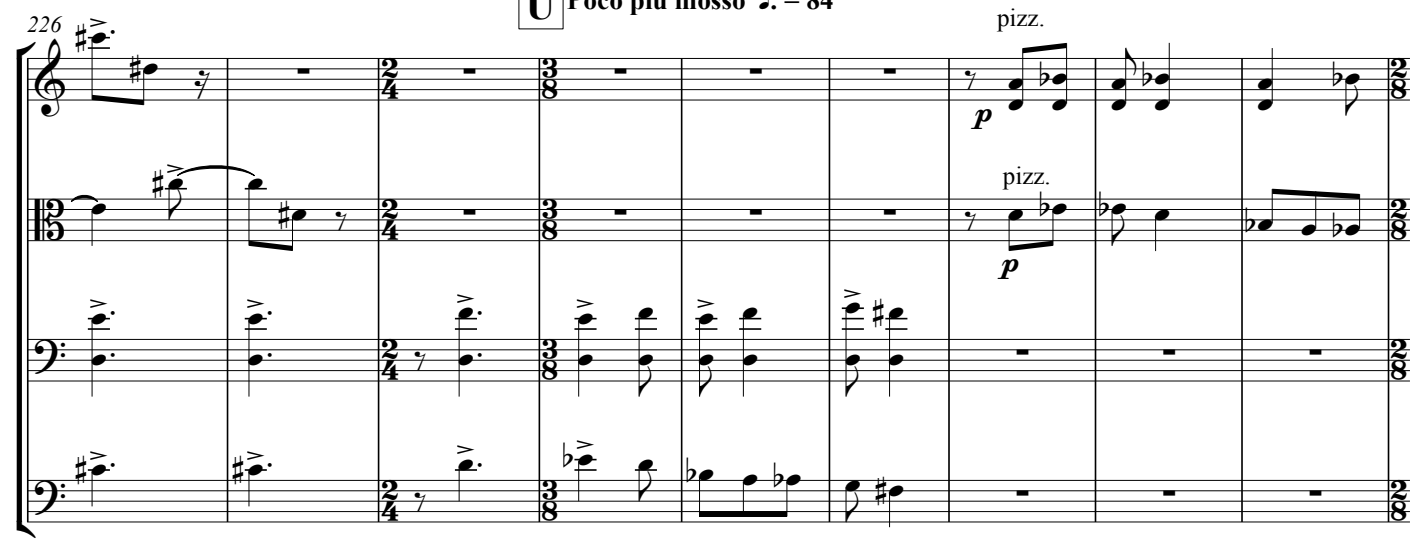
U **Poco più mosso** ♩. = 84

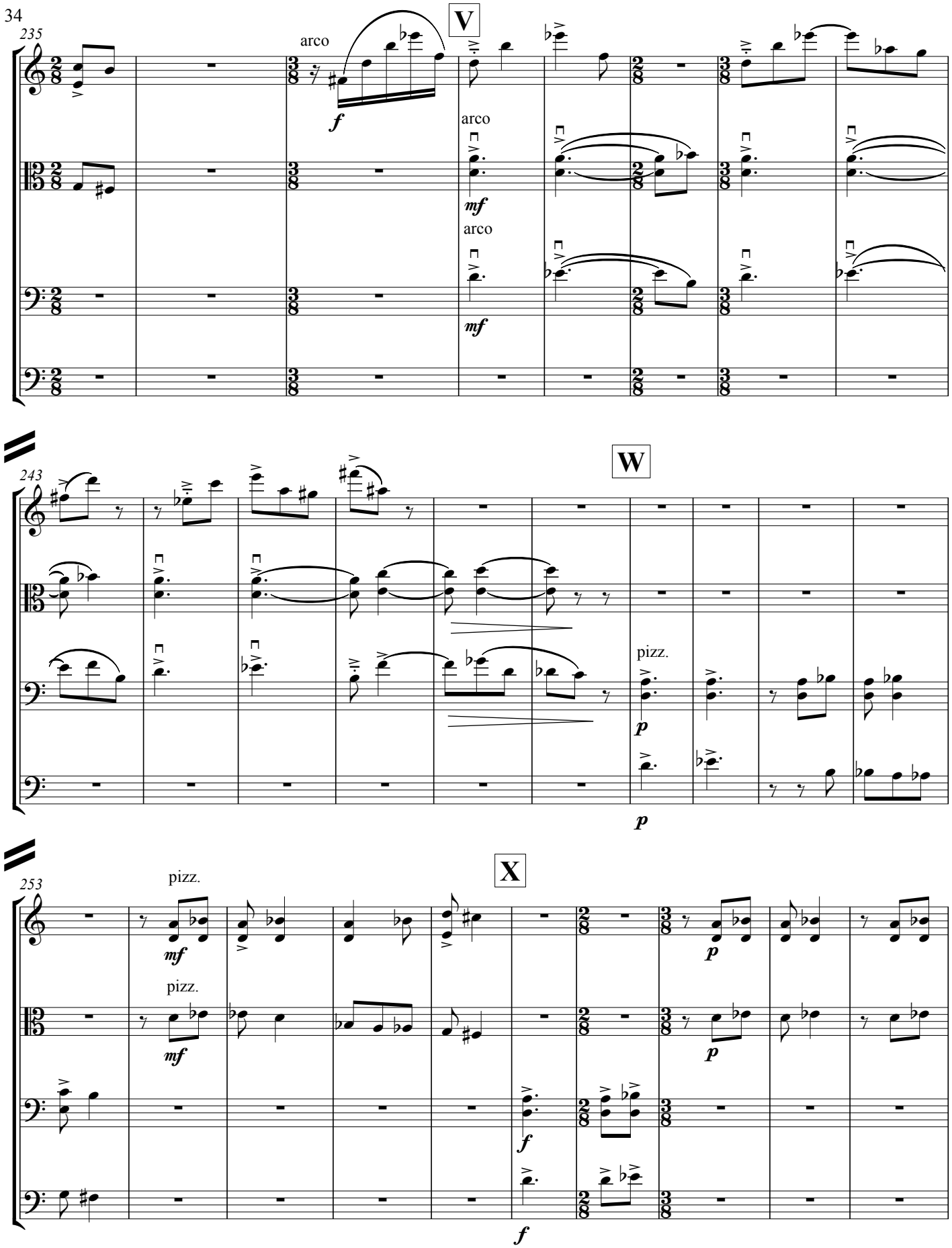
pizz.

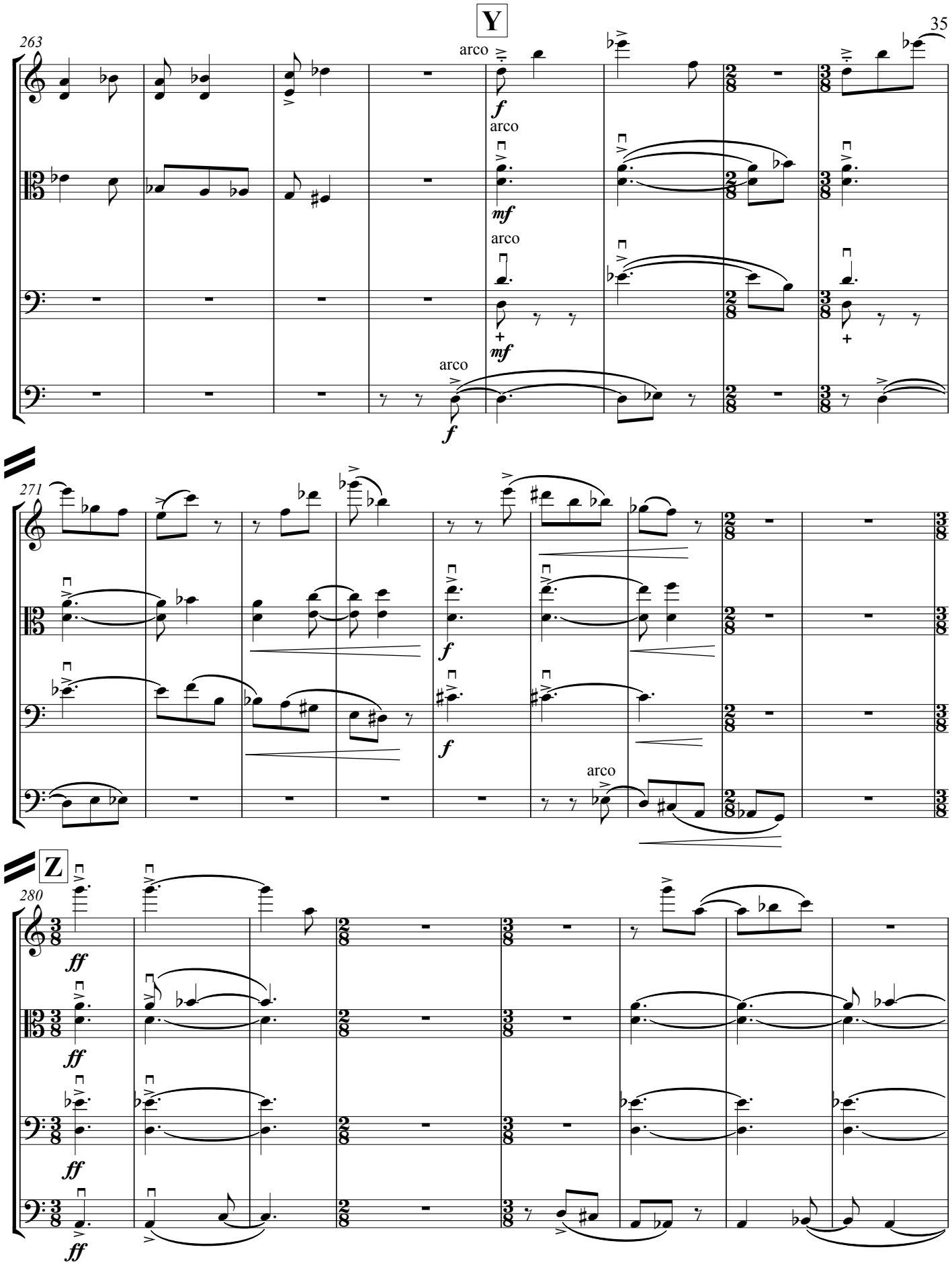
p

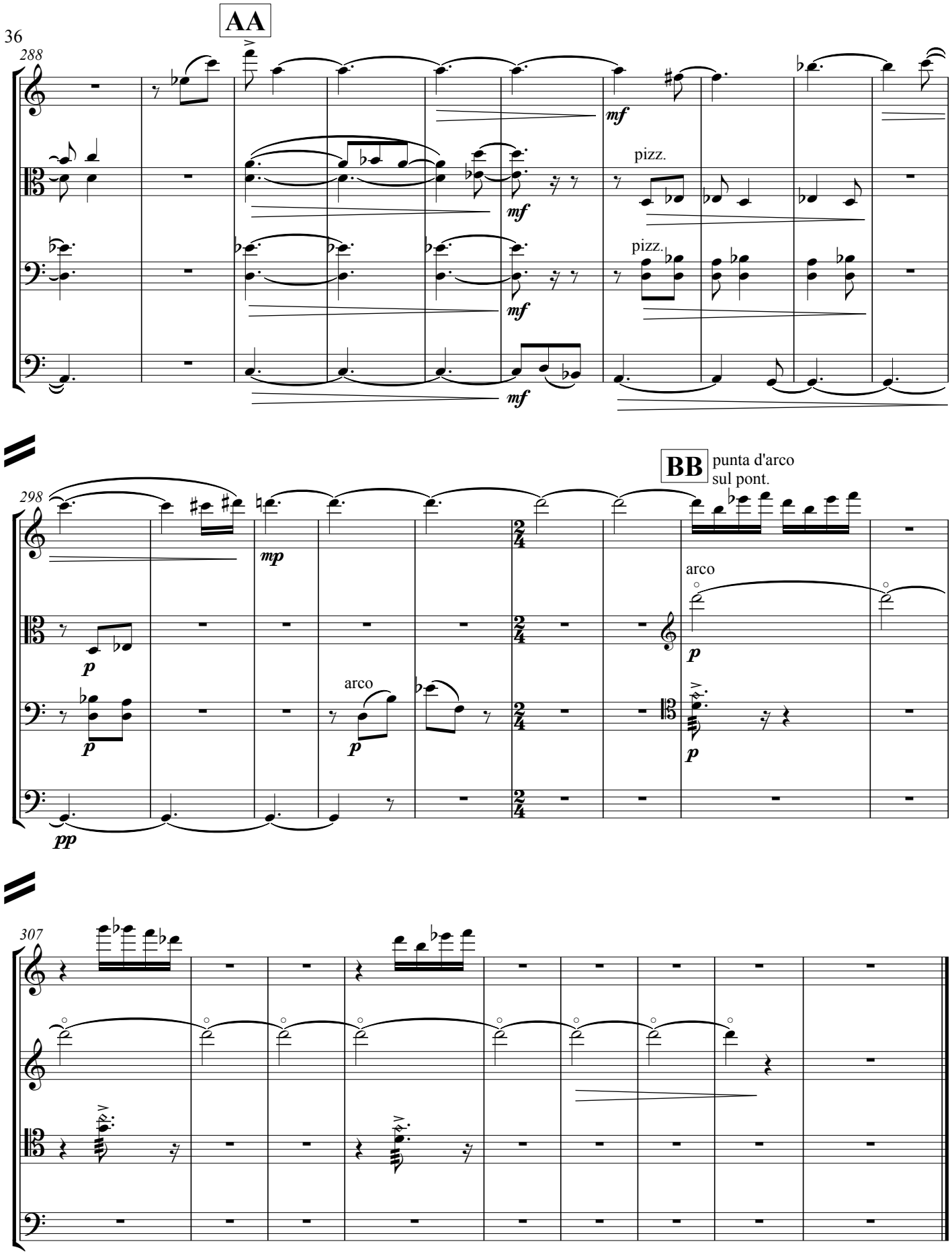
pizz.

p




235
V
arco
f
arco
mf
arco
mf
243
W
pizz.
p
p
253
X
pizz.
mf
pizz.
mf
p
f
f


Y
263
arco
f
arco
mf
arco
mf
arco
f
271
f
f
arco
Z
280
ff
ff
ff
ff


AA
288
mf
pizz.
mf
pizz.
mf
mf
BB
punta d'arco
sul pont.
298
mp
arco
p
p
arco
p
p
p
pp
307