W. Jay Sydeman

Clarinet Quintet No. 1
"Farallon Quintet"

for Clarinet and String Quartet
(2012)

Arts Aeturnum Productions

Premiere performance:
May 24, 2014, Farallon Quintet
Trinity Chamber Concerts, Berkeley, CA

I composed this work because I was unable to locate another piece of the same ilk which Eric Van Dyke, a clarinetist here, was interested in. After two hours of fruitless searching through my computer and music stacks, I gave up and wrote this instead. It is a 'musicianly' work, quite classic in its construction – that is, with recognizable themes and recognizable development of those recognizable themes.

Movement 1 begins with a pleasant (can you believe it?) tune in the clarinet, followed by a dancy counterpart. Pleasant returns and is developed, accompanied by a somewhat odd ostinato in the strings. Then comes a variation on pleasant, slower and somewhat melancholic, the second part of which darkens considerably – and then yet another variation, even dancier – then a repeat lest you forget what you heard. The first seven notes provide most of the material for the whole movement, albeit developed in a variety of ways and moods. The playing style is decidedly classical.

The second movement is whimsical, moving from pesante-like material to the dance, again based on the first few notes. It initially brings to mind corpulent Germans in lederhosen. This idea (perhaps not politically correct) is superseded by some odd trills in the strings. The trills become background for a somewhat ditzy tune in the clarinet. Lederhosen tune reappears as a long somber melody in the viola, treated fugue-like of all things, with the clarinet having the last word as it moves from quasi-cadenza to fragmented repeats of LH while the strings rush about seemingly somewhat aimlessly. Fortunately they all end together.

Movement 3 is a rush of good fun, mainly in 6/8, rondo-like in the great tradition – quite brilliant as you might expect with a bravo-yelling pop-up-from-your-seats type ending.

– W. Jay Sydeman, April & August 2012

W. Jay Sydeman's life mirrors the breadth and variety of his music. Born in New York in 1928 and educated at Manhattan's Mannes School of Music, he quickly became one of the most sought-after and honored composers of his generation, receiving commissions from such prestigious groups as the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Tanglewood Music Center, and the Boston Symphony, which premiered his orchestral work in memory of John F. Kennedy in 1966. "Sydeman uses a whole battery of far out techniques," wrote the New York Times, "but he has an uncanny ability to throw in the whole avant-garde machinery as if it were the simplest, most normal way of making music in the world ... More than many of his colleagues, he seems to know what will sound well, and he works for some remarkably attractive, pure textures. His sounds seem to grow from a physical sense of exactly what material is right."

In 1970, after a heady period that included awards from the National institute of Arts and Letters, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Library of Congress, Sydeman left New York – and composition – to begin a journey of personal and artistic exploration.

"Around 1980," he has written, "I returned to composition – at first a large number of choral works which reconnected me to the source of all music – the human voice. Out of this new lyric impulse have evolved all of my works since that time – more romantic, more accessible. I create music for the musician."

– Howard Hersh,
Artistic Director of "Music Now"

Sydeman is part of a composers' group in Nevada City annually producing the "Wet Ink Festival of New Music." He now lives in Mendocino and hosts a bi-weekly program on KZYX, "The Mind of a Composer", 10 am to noon on Mondays, introducing and commenting on contemporary music.

Duration: I. Poco allegro – circa 5:00
II. Poco pesante – circa 5:30
III. Grazioso – circa 2:15

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Edited and engraved by Rick Shinozaki (Albany, CA) in consultation & collaboration with the composer.

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for Clarinet and String Quartet

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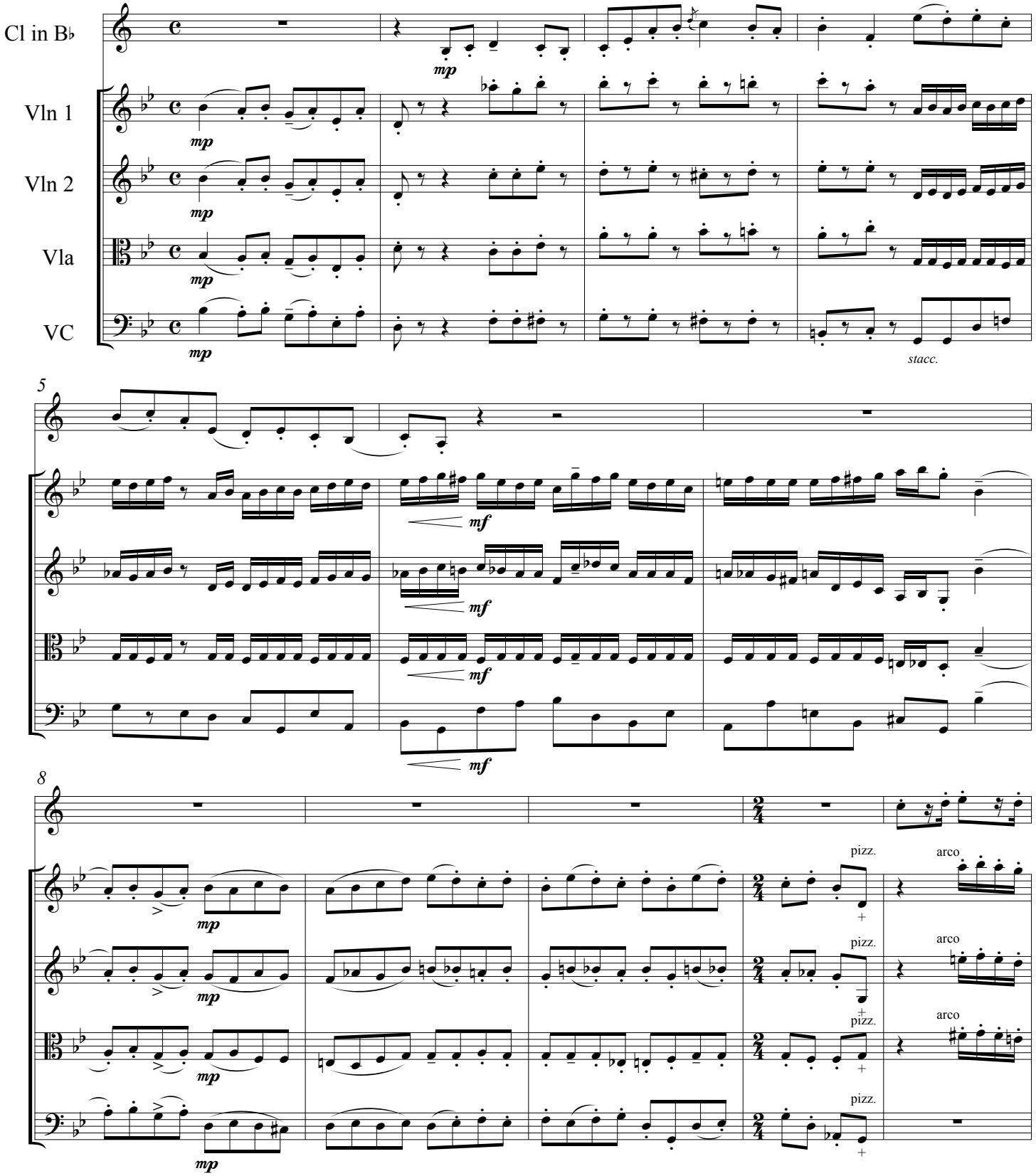
I.

Poco allegro ♩ = c. 115



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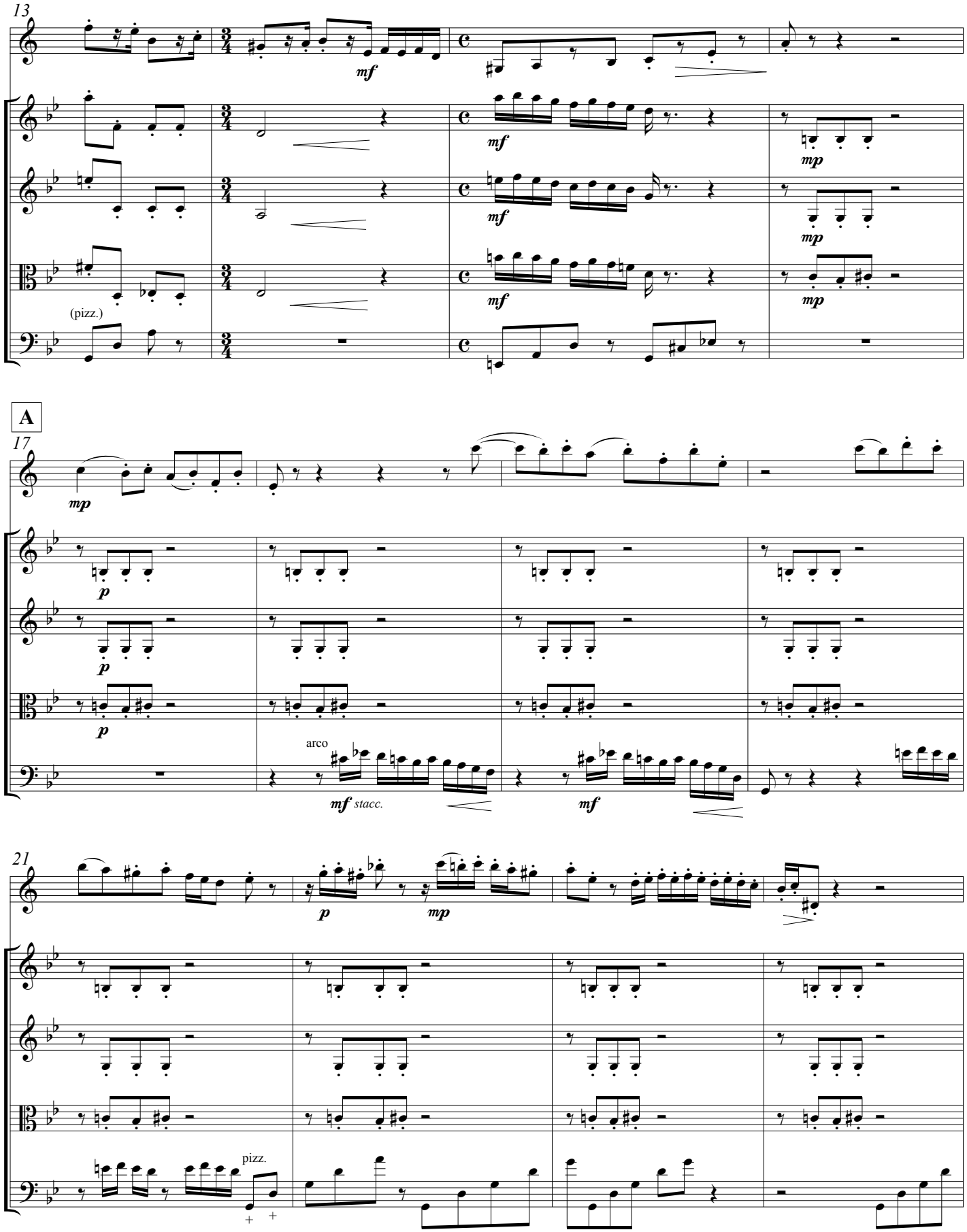
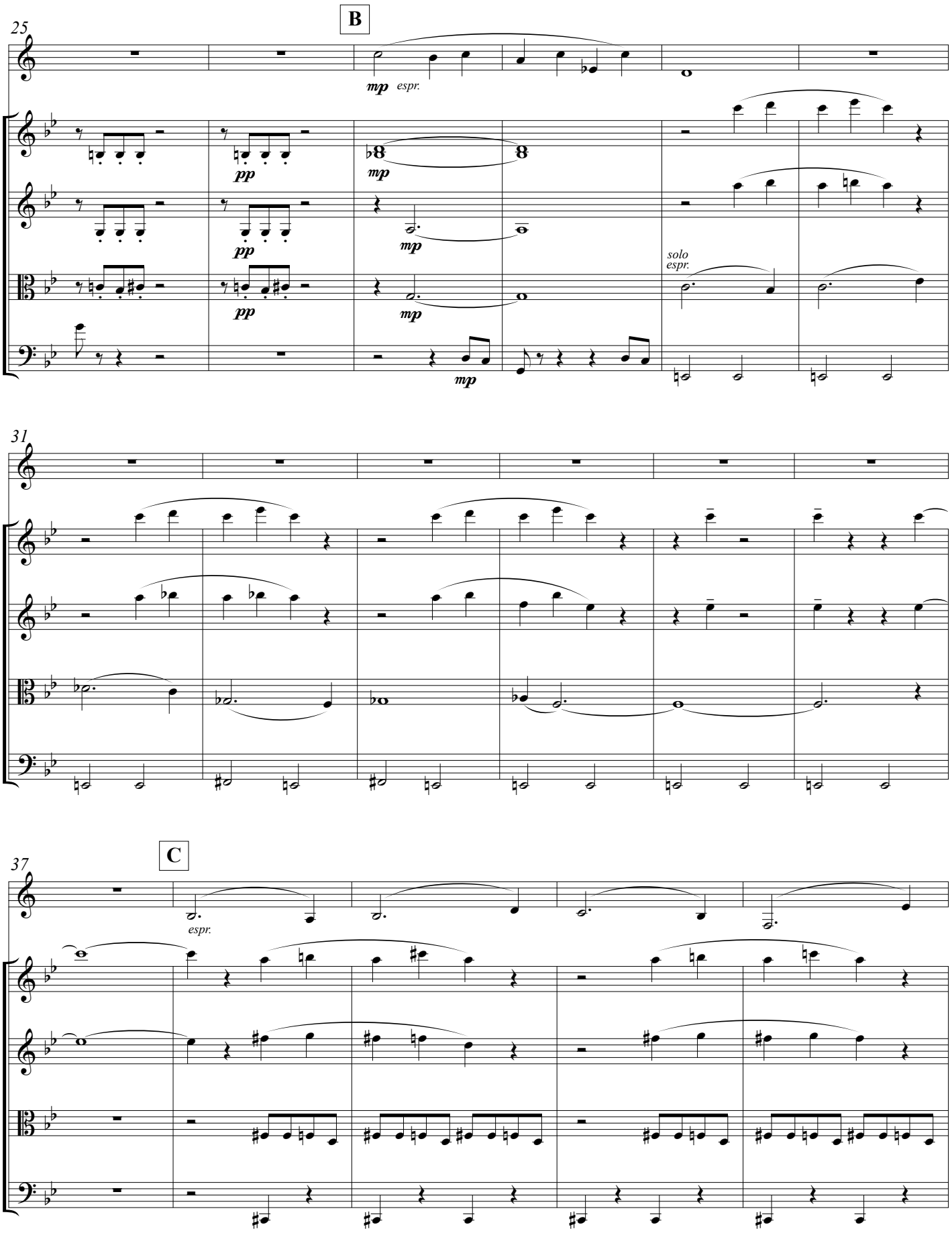
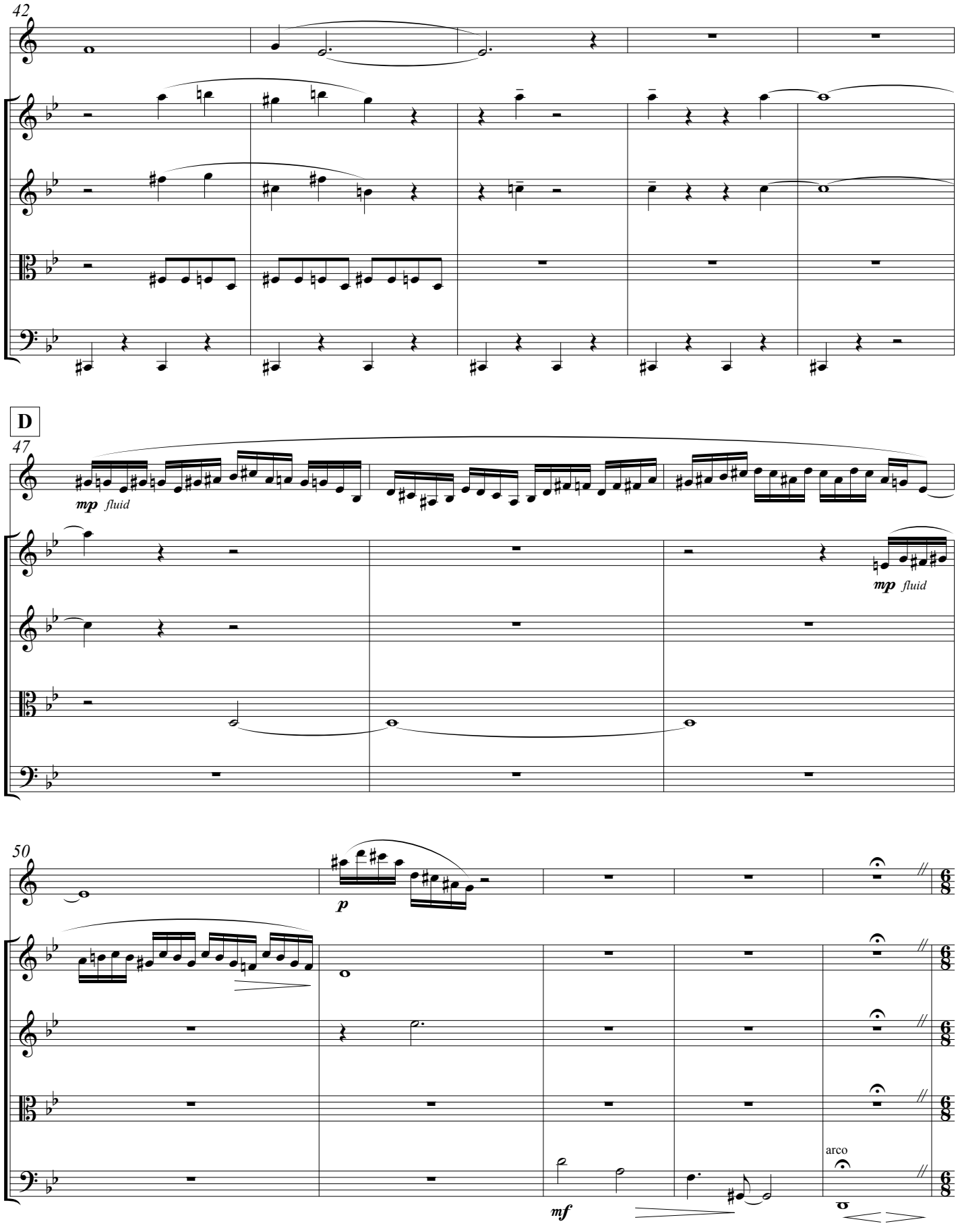
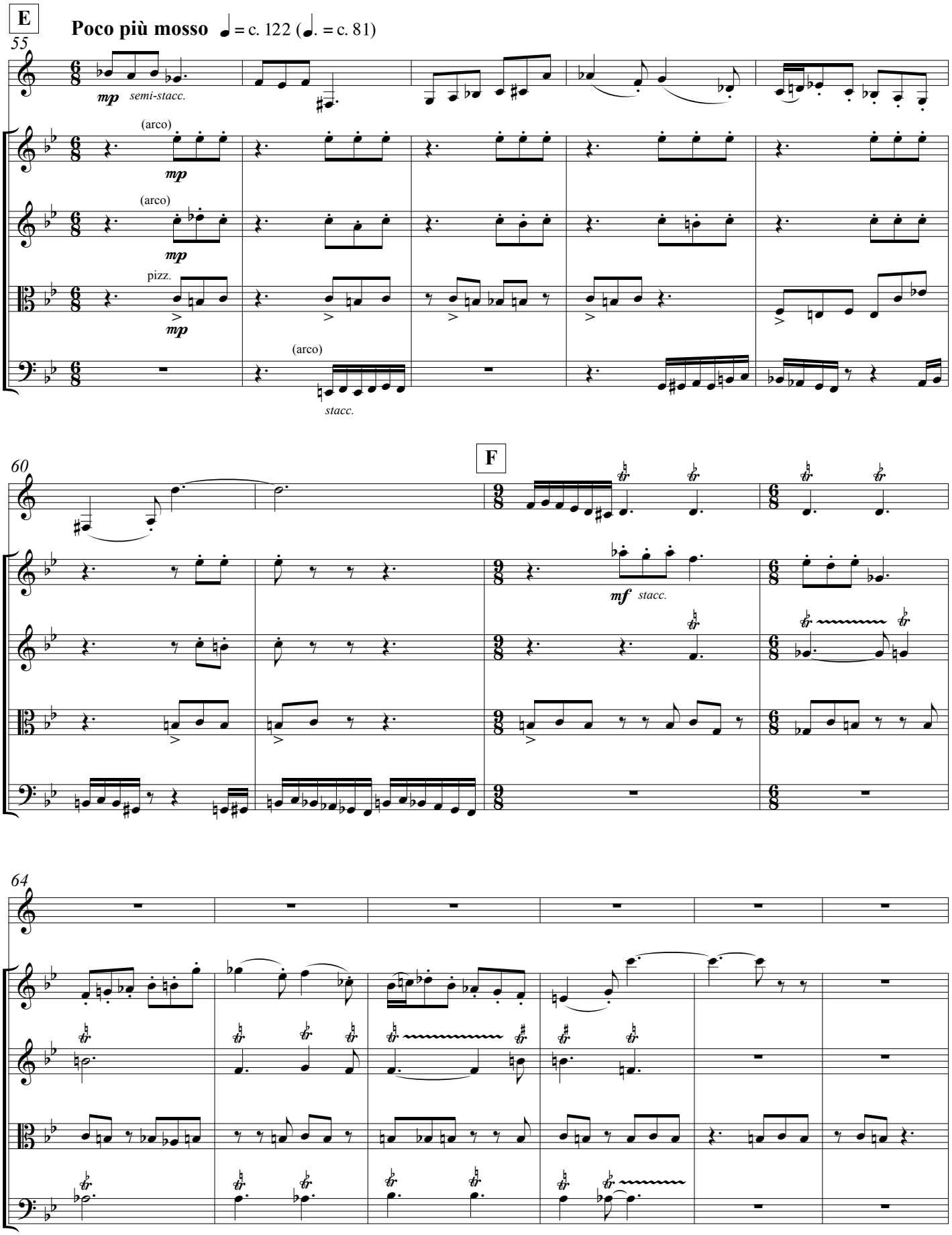
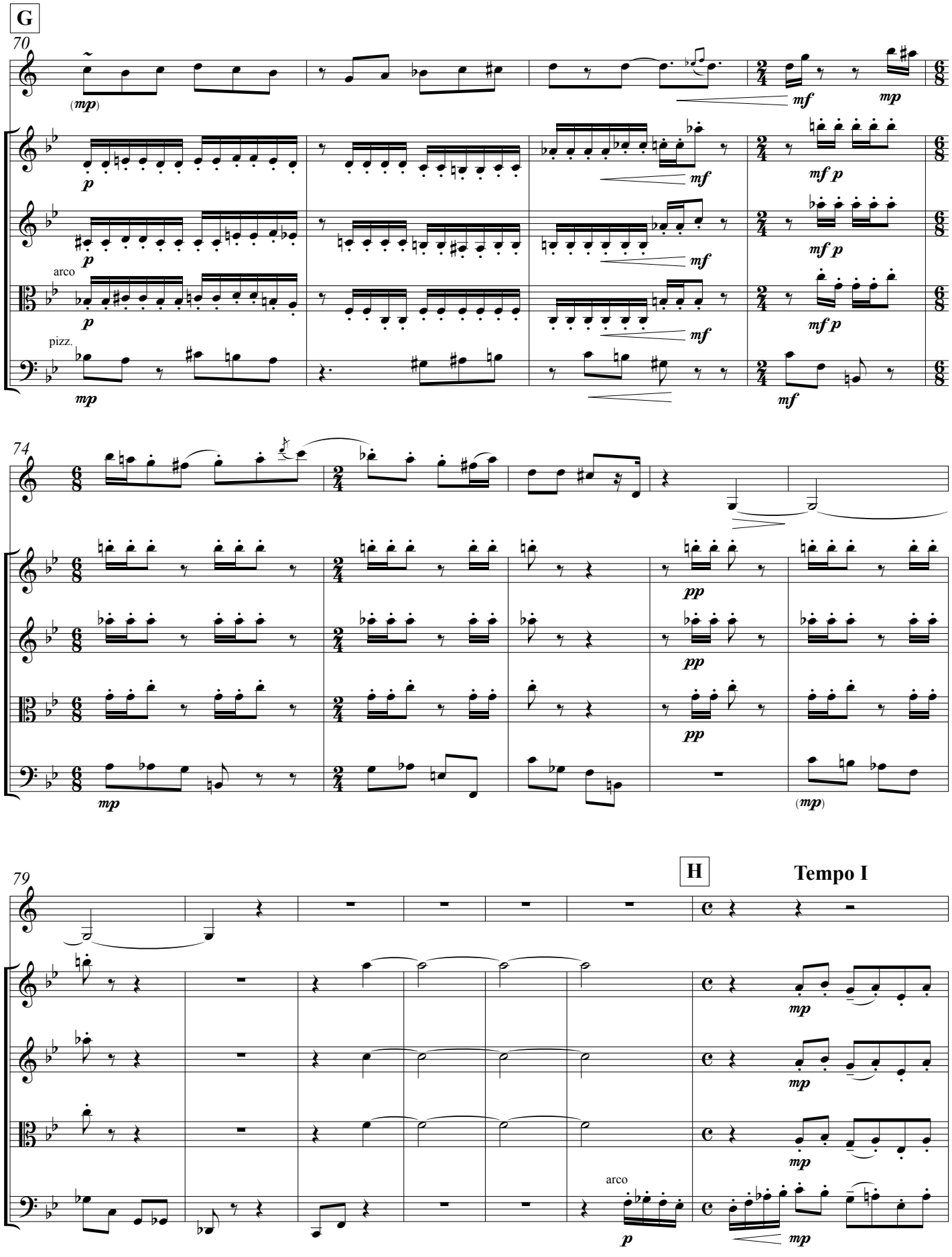
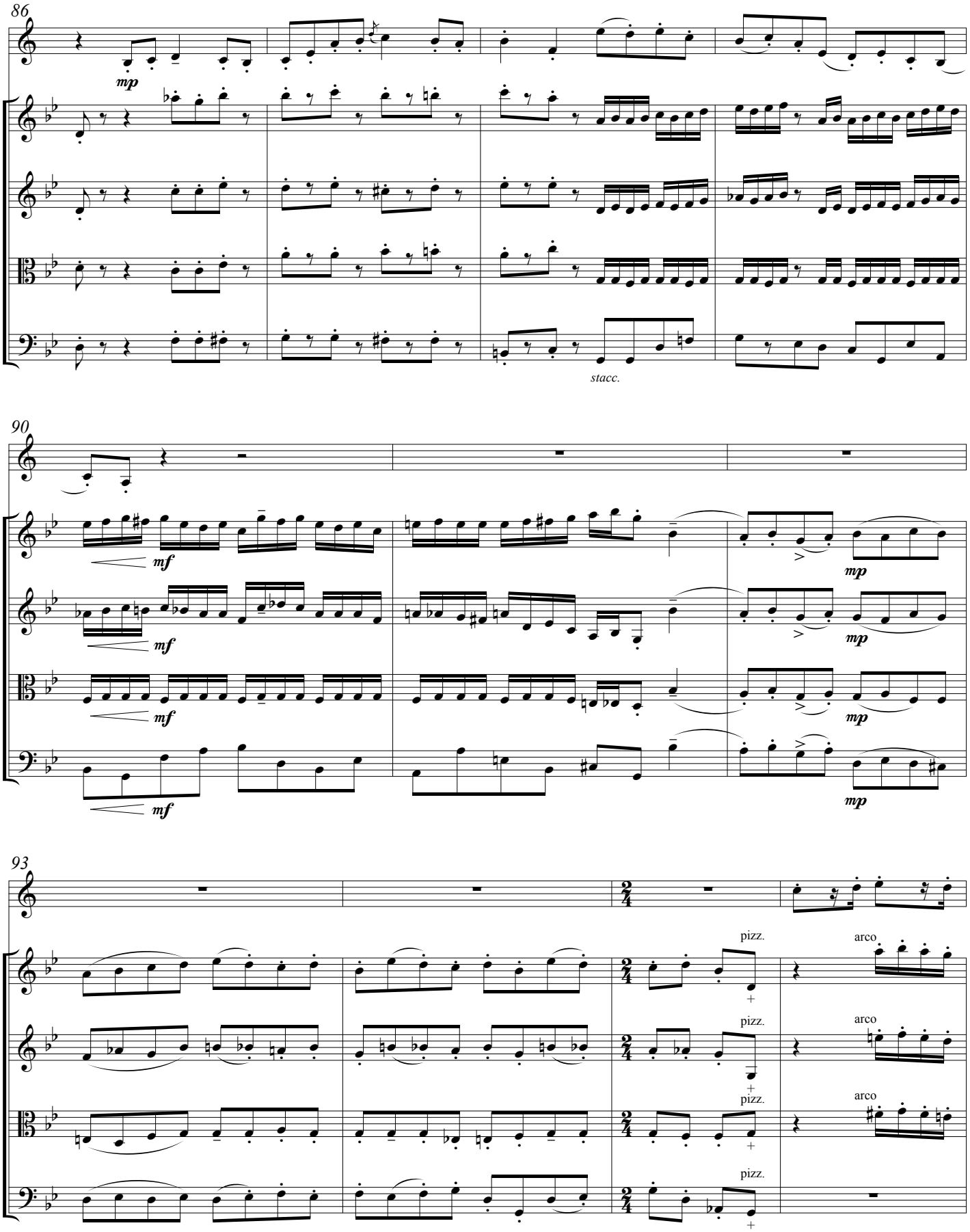

13
mf
mf
mf
mf
mp
mp
mp
(pizz.)
A
17
mp
p
p
p
arco
mf stacc.
mf
21
p
mp
pizz.

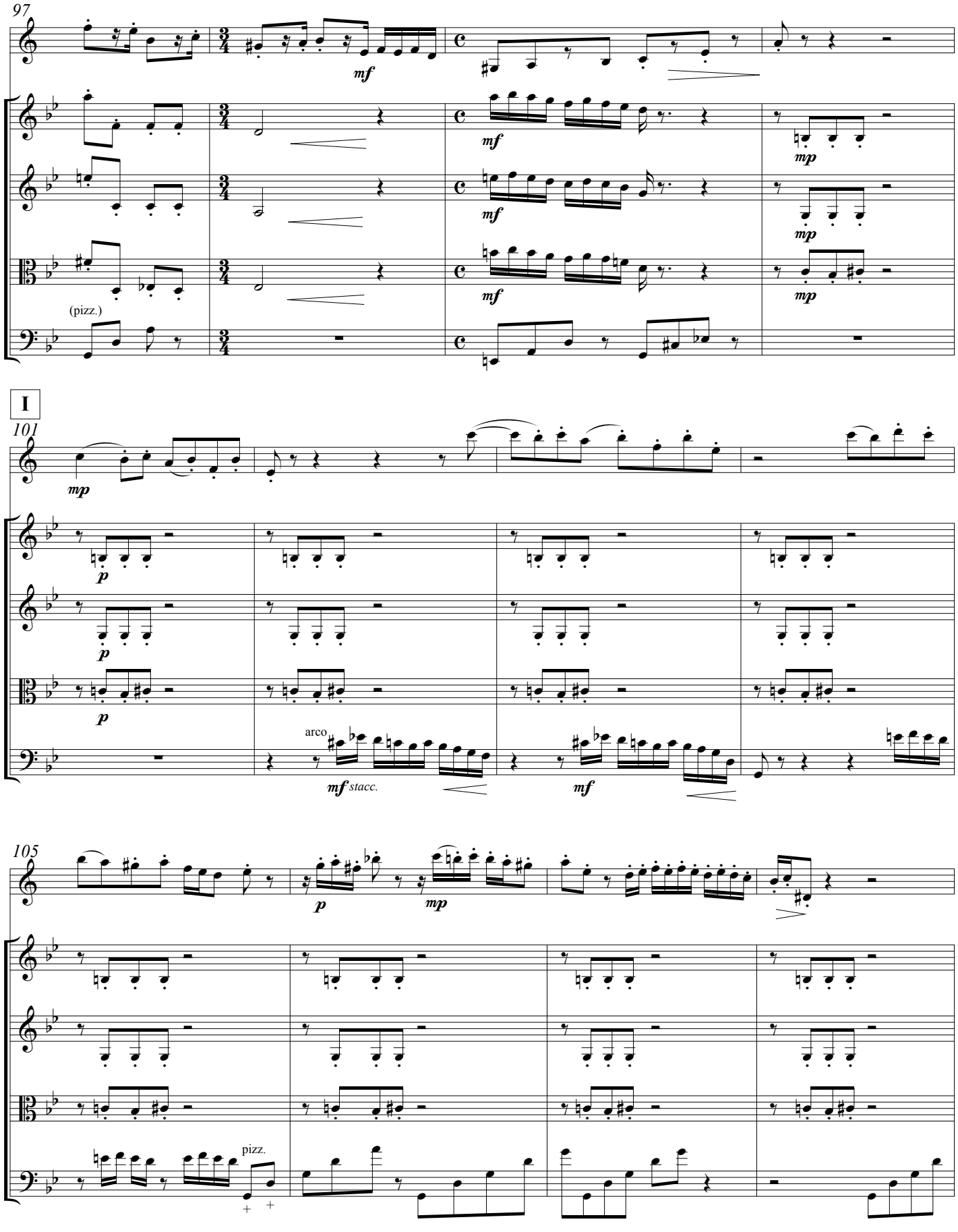

25
B
mp espr.
pp
mp
solo
espr.
31
37
C
espr.

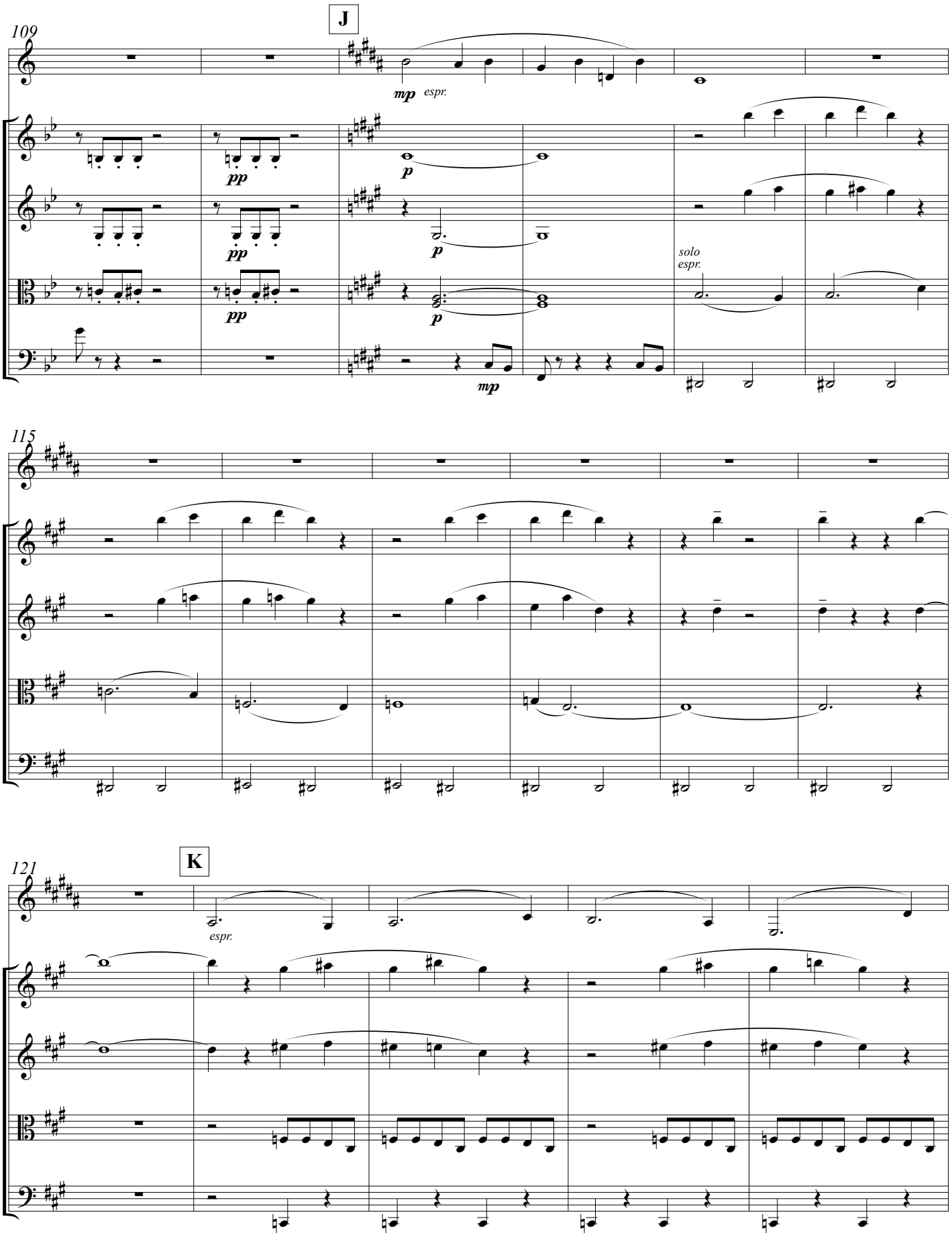

42
D
47
mp fluid
mp fluid
50
p
mf
arco

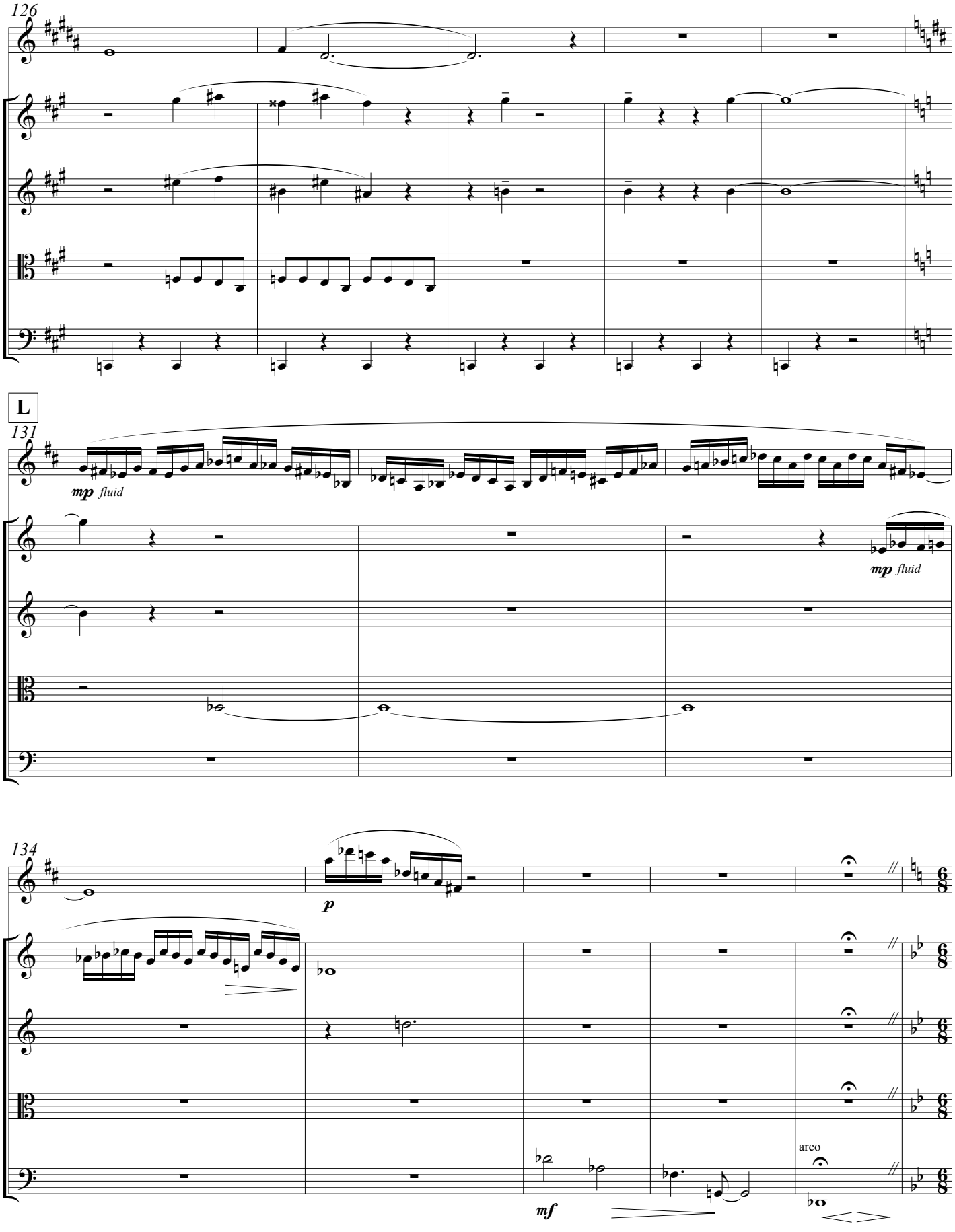

E
Poco più mosso ♩ = c. 122 (♩. = c. 81)
55
mp semi-stacc.
(arco)
mp
(arco)
mp
pizz.
mp
(arco)
stacc.
60
F
mf stacc.
64


G
70
(mp)
mf
mp
p
mf p
arco
pizz.
74
pp
(mp)
79
H
Tempo I
arco


86
mp
stacc.
90
mf
mf
mf
mf
mp
mp
mp
mp
93
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.


97
mf
mf
mp
mf
mp
mf
mp
(pizz.)
I
101
mp
p
p
p
arco
mf stacc.
mf
105
p
mp
pizz.


J
109
mp
espr.
pp
p
solo
espr.
115
K
121
espr.


126
L
131
mp fluid
mp fluid
134
p
mf
arco

M

Tempo II

139

mp *semi-stacc.*

(arco)

mp

(arco)

mp

pizz.

mp

(arco)

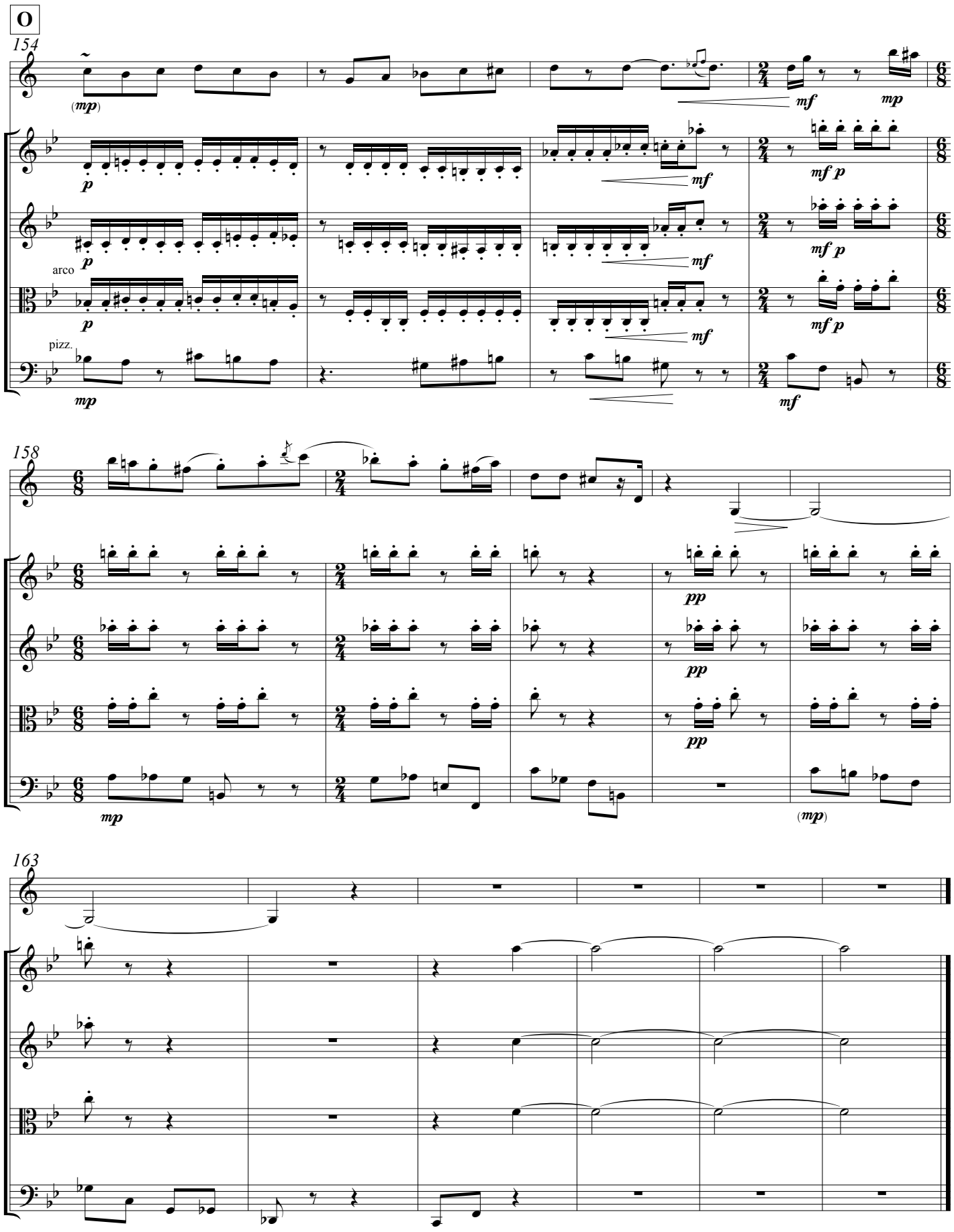
stacc.

144

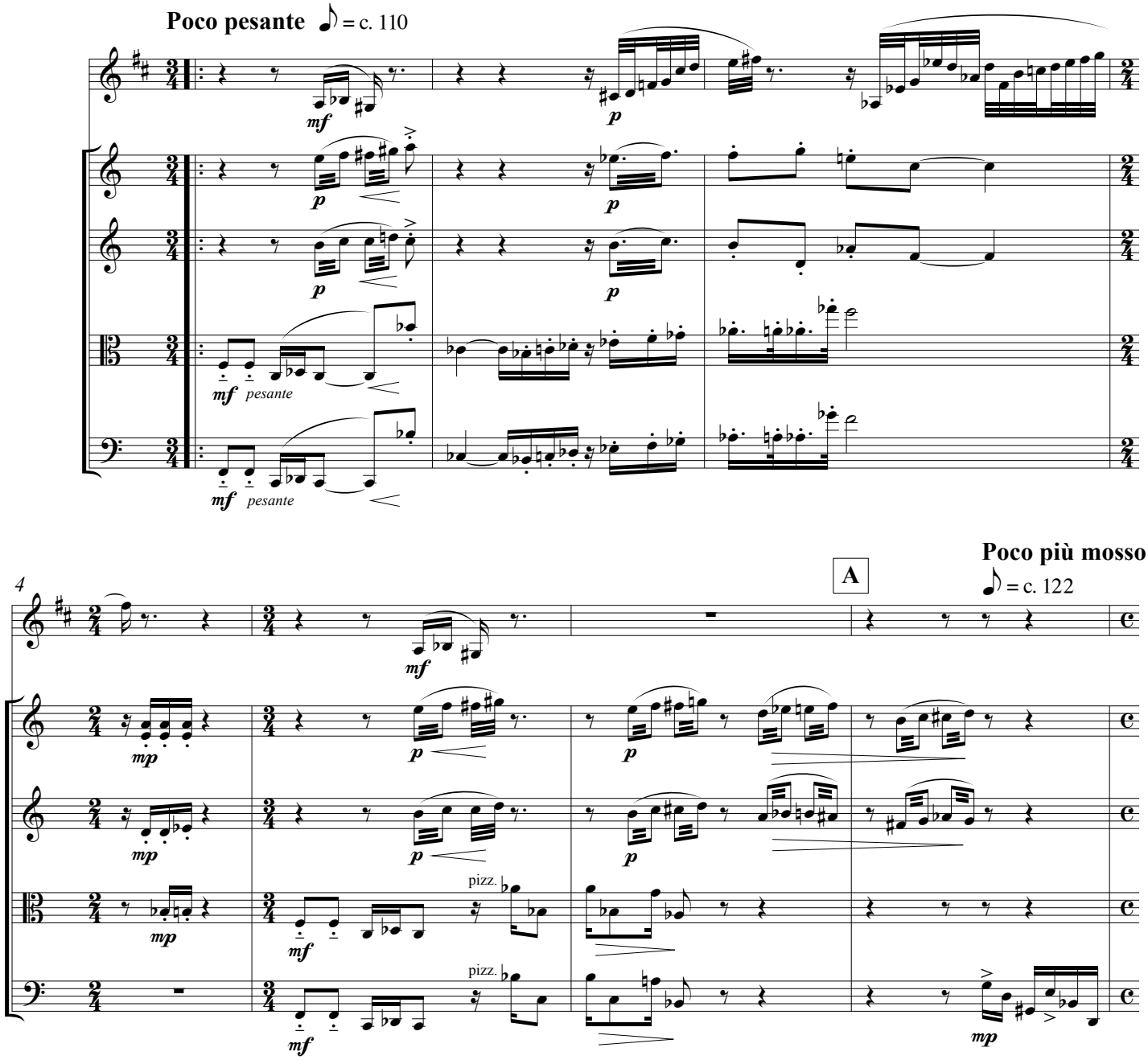
N

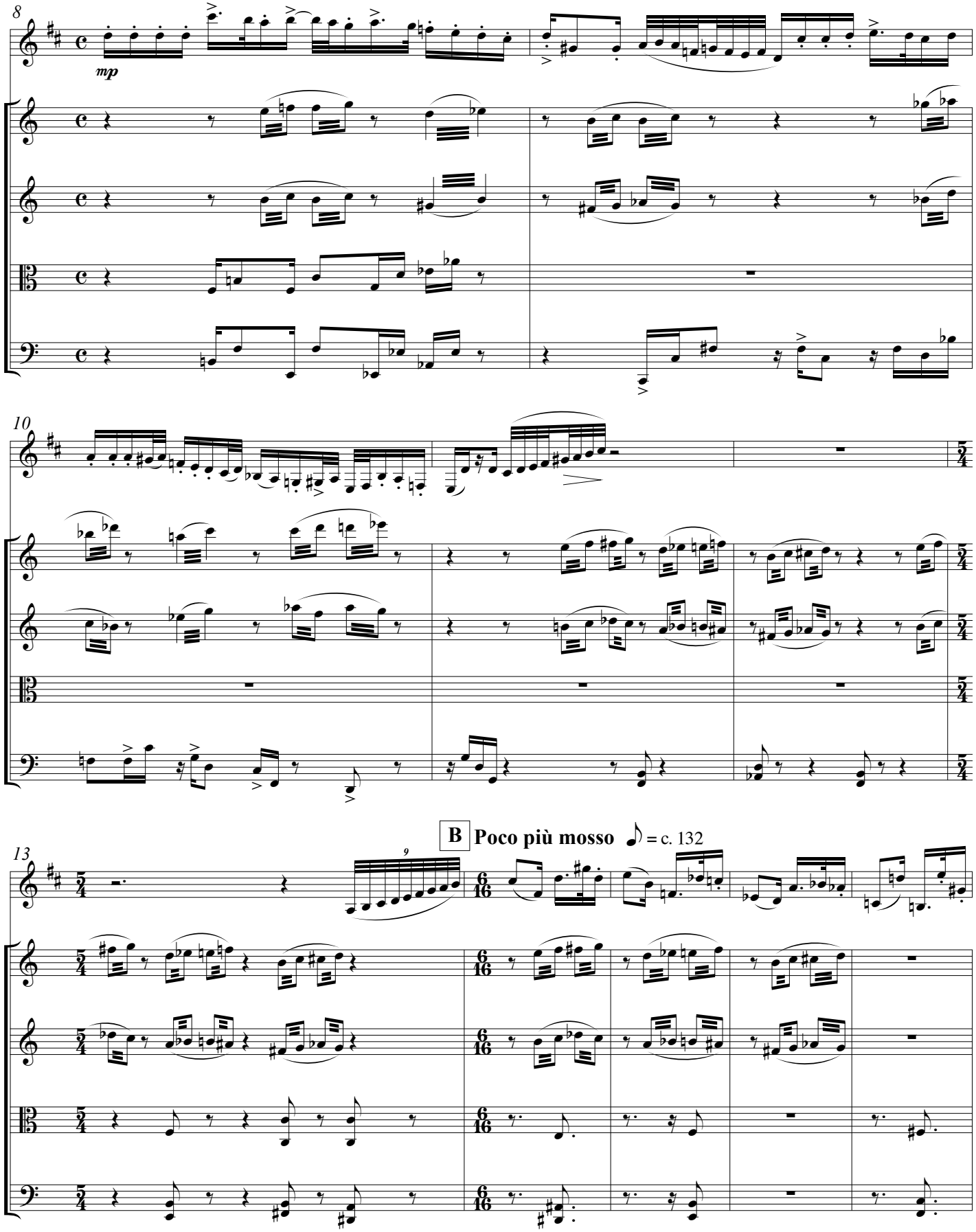
mf *stacc.*

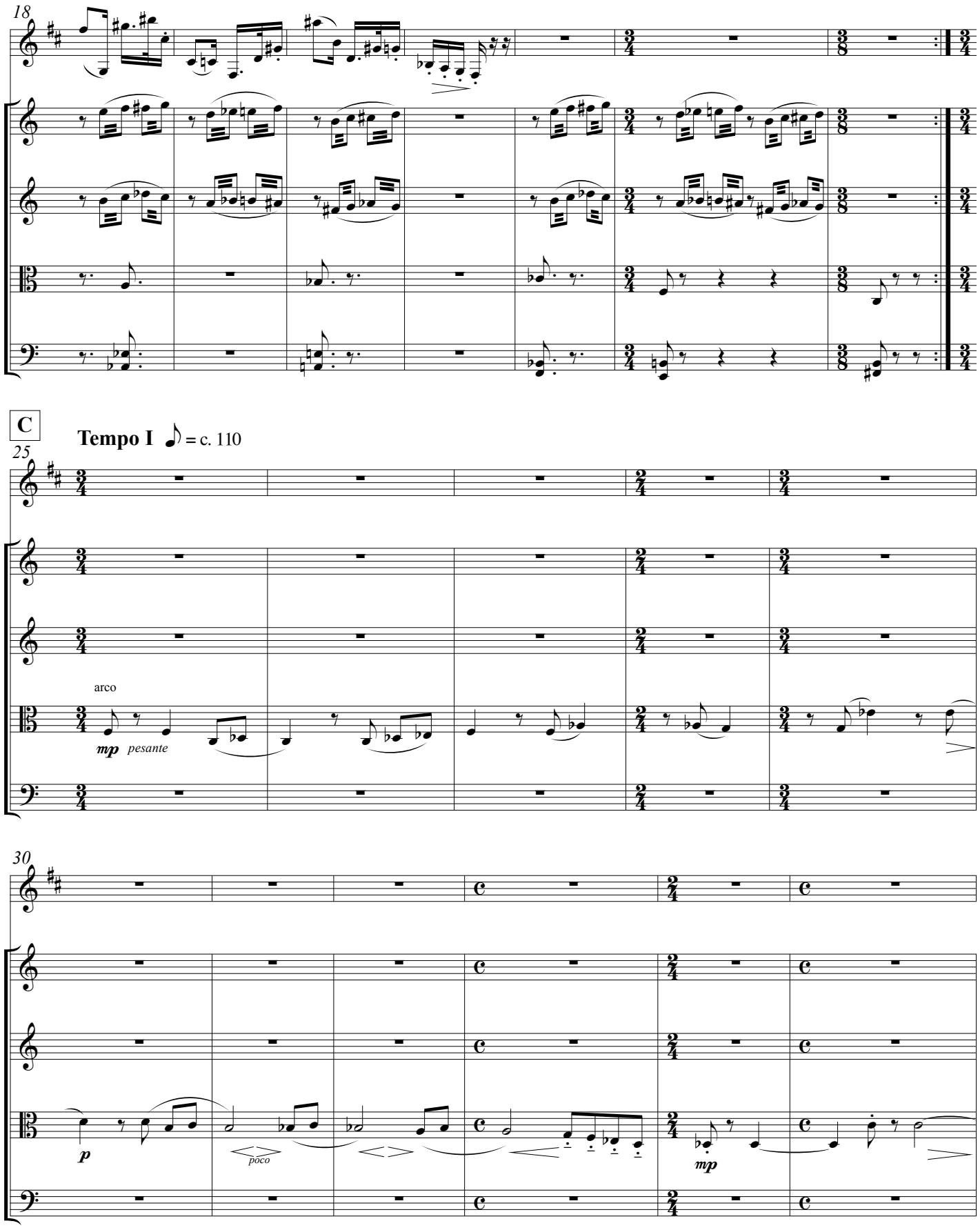
148

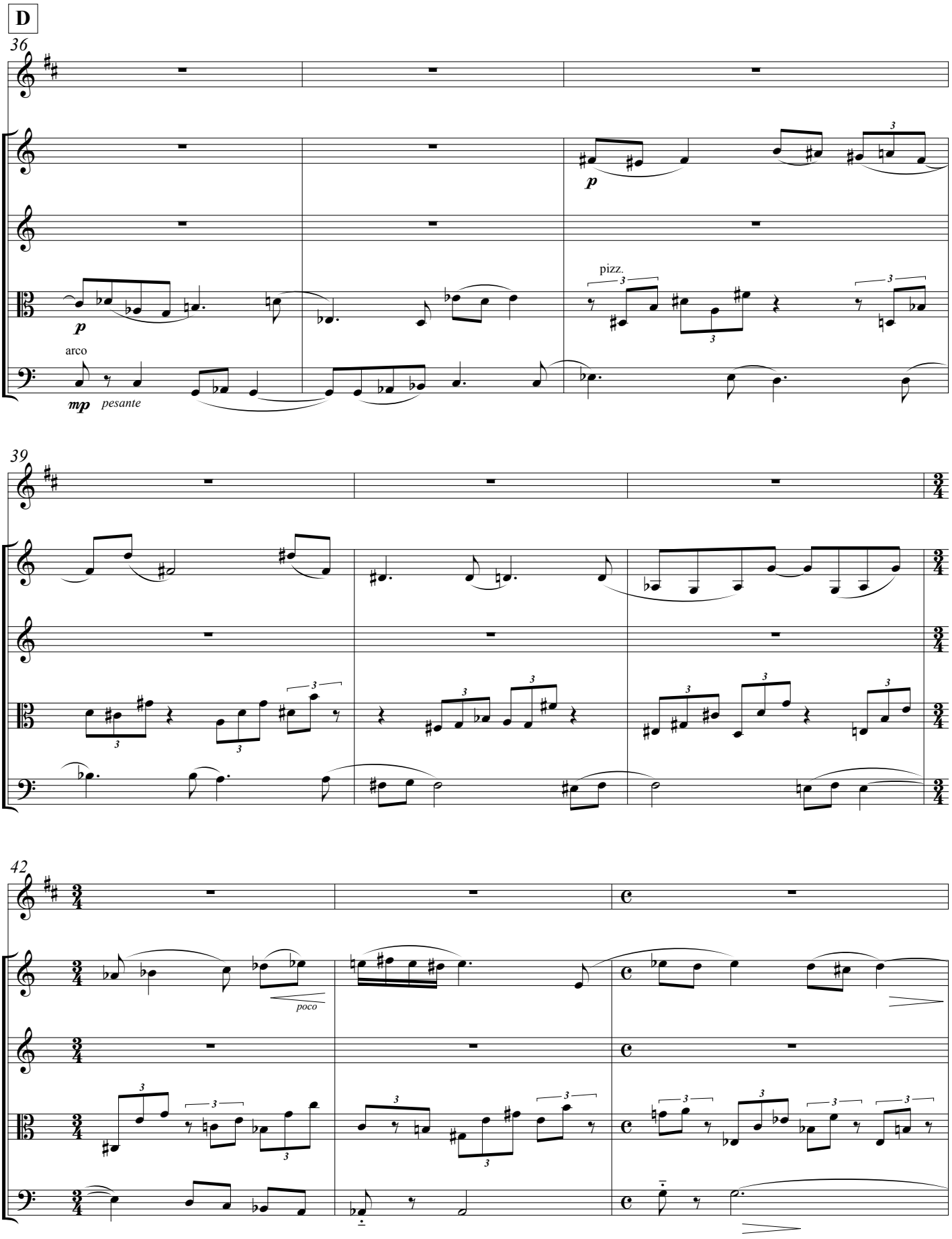

O
154
(mp)
mf
mp
p
mf
mf p
arco
pizz.
158
pp
(mp)
163

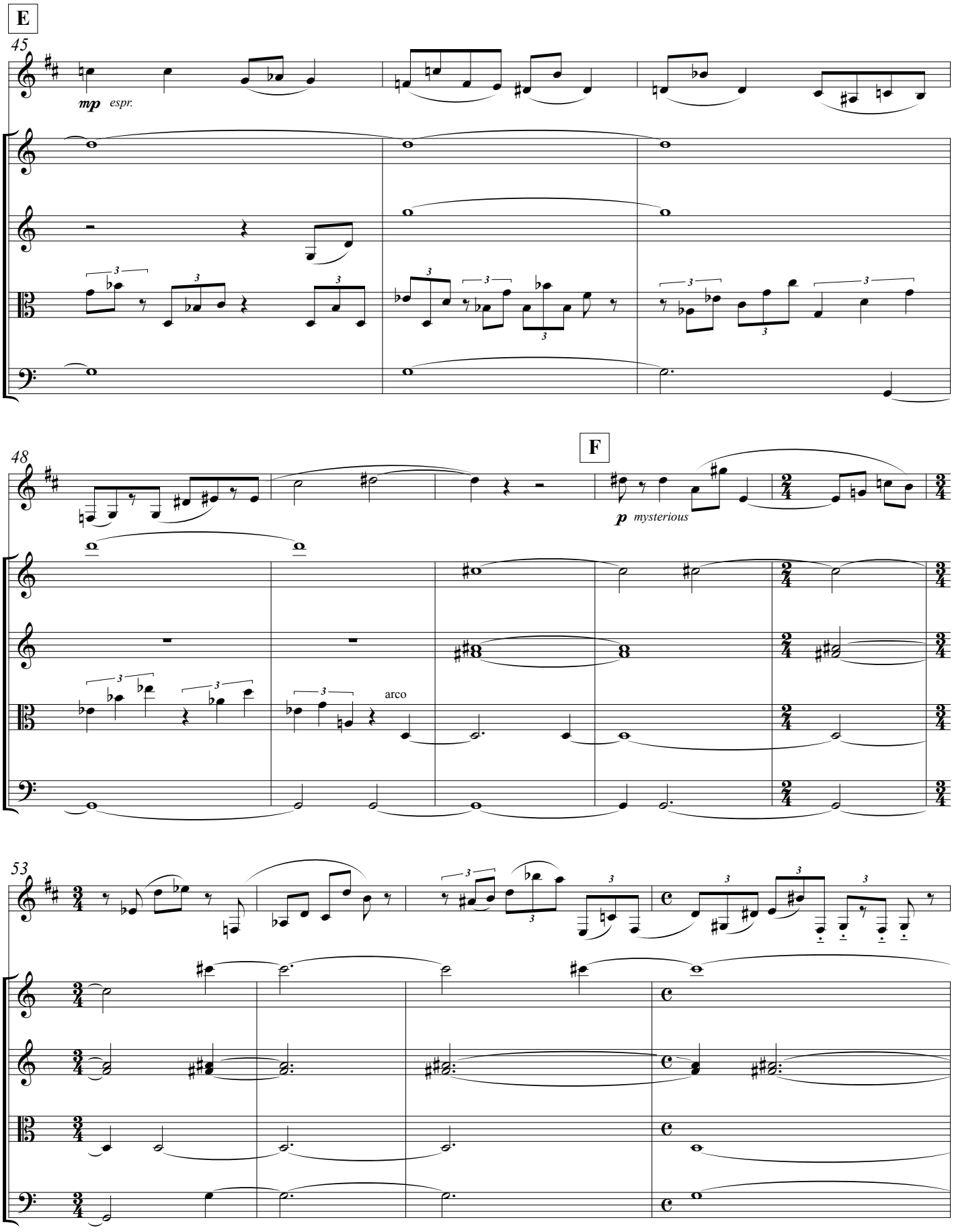
II.

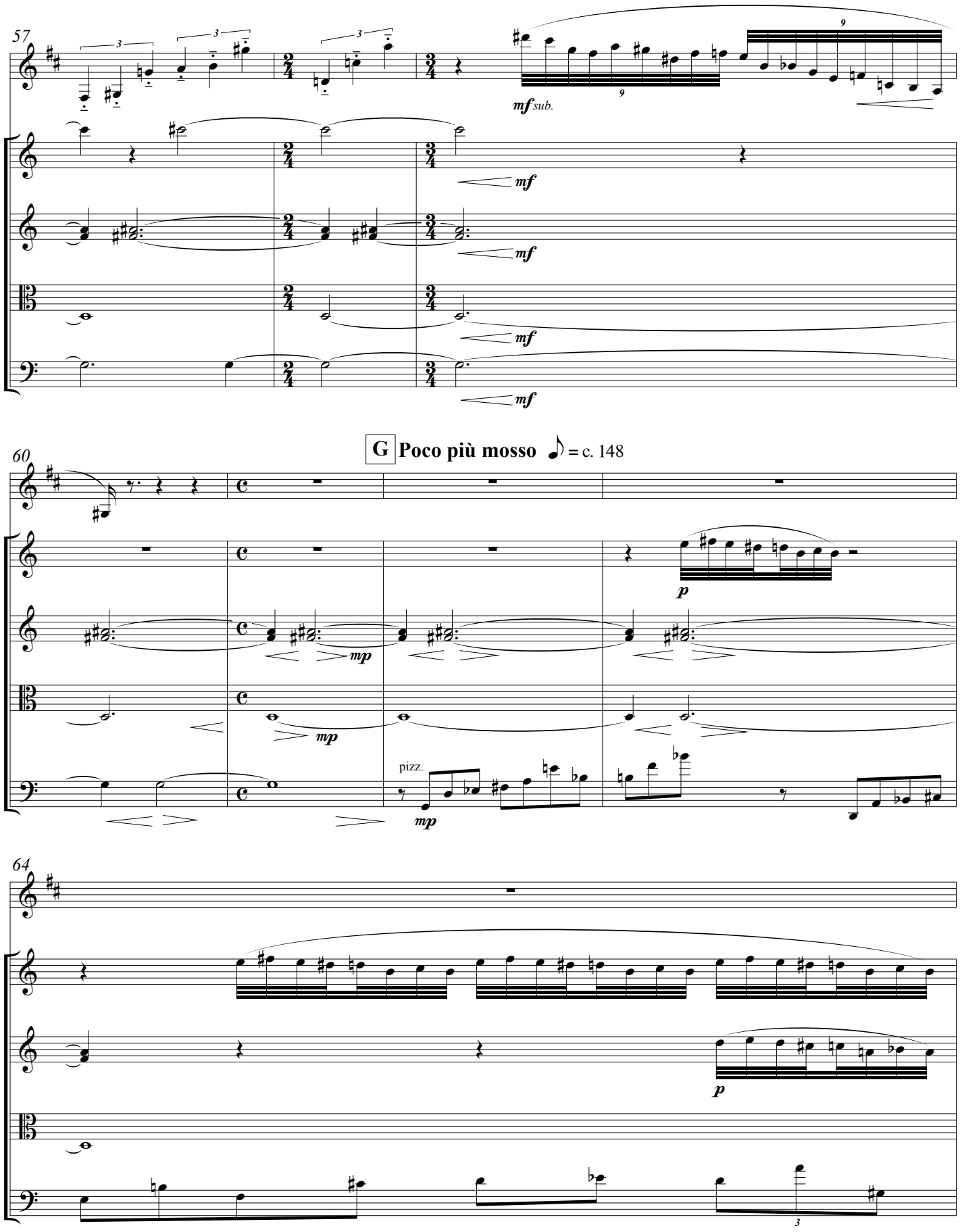

Poco pesante ♪ = c. 110
mf
p
mf pesante
mf pesante
4
A
Poco più mosso
♪ = c. 122
mp
p
mf
pizz.
pizz.
mp

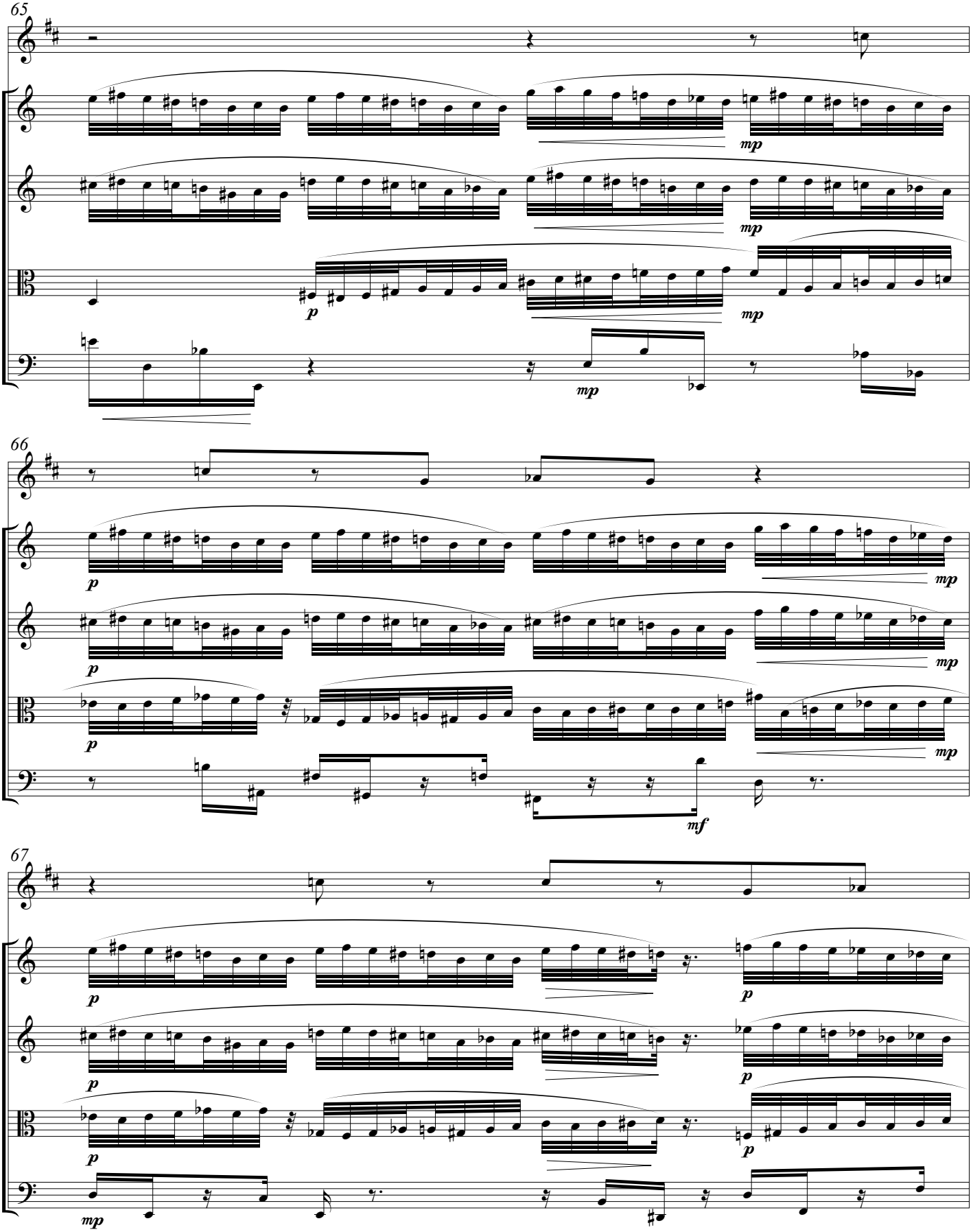

8
mp
10
13
9
B
Poco più mosso
= c. 132

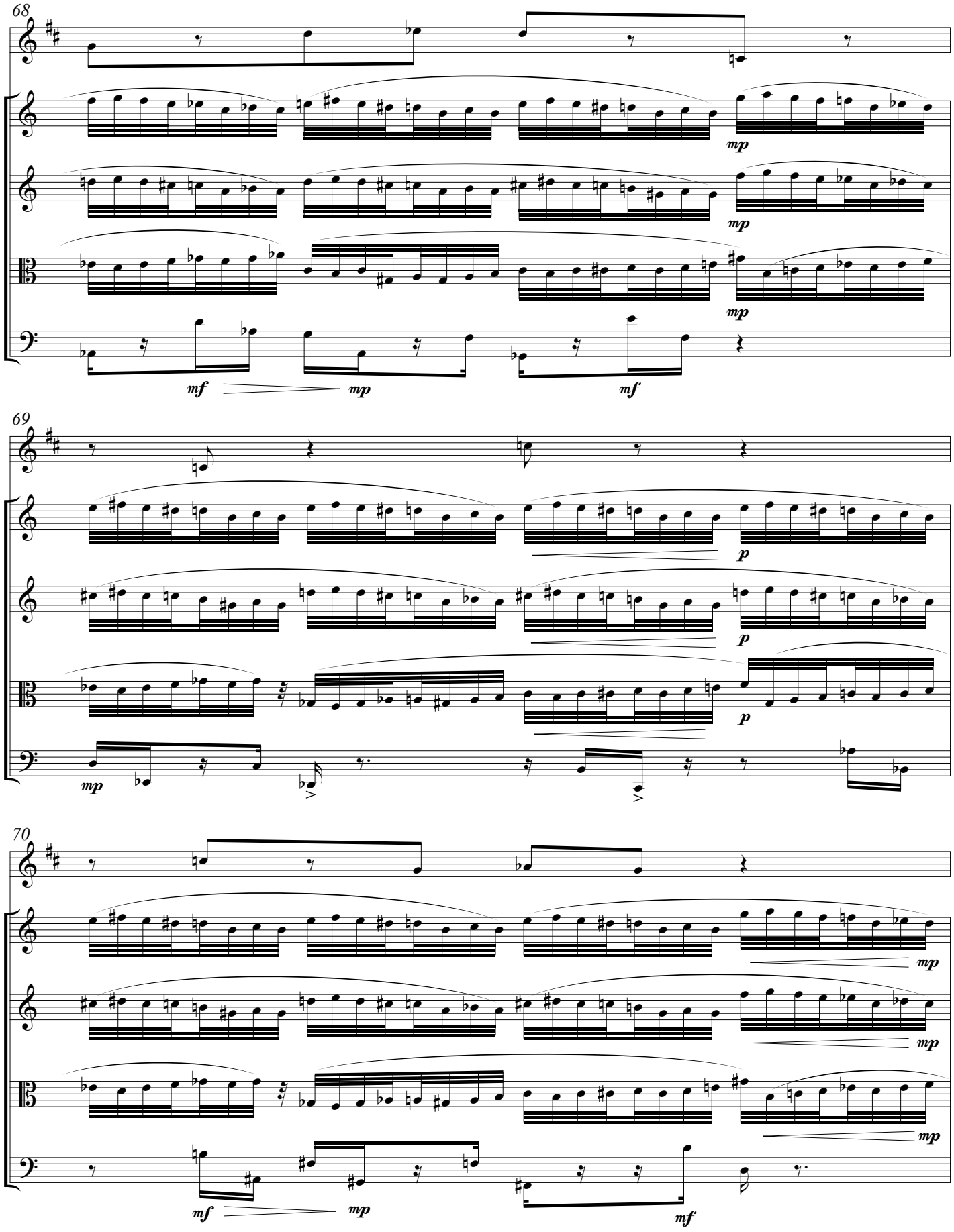

18
C
Tempo I
= c. 110
25
arco
mp
pesante
30
p
poco
mp

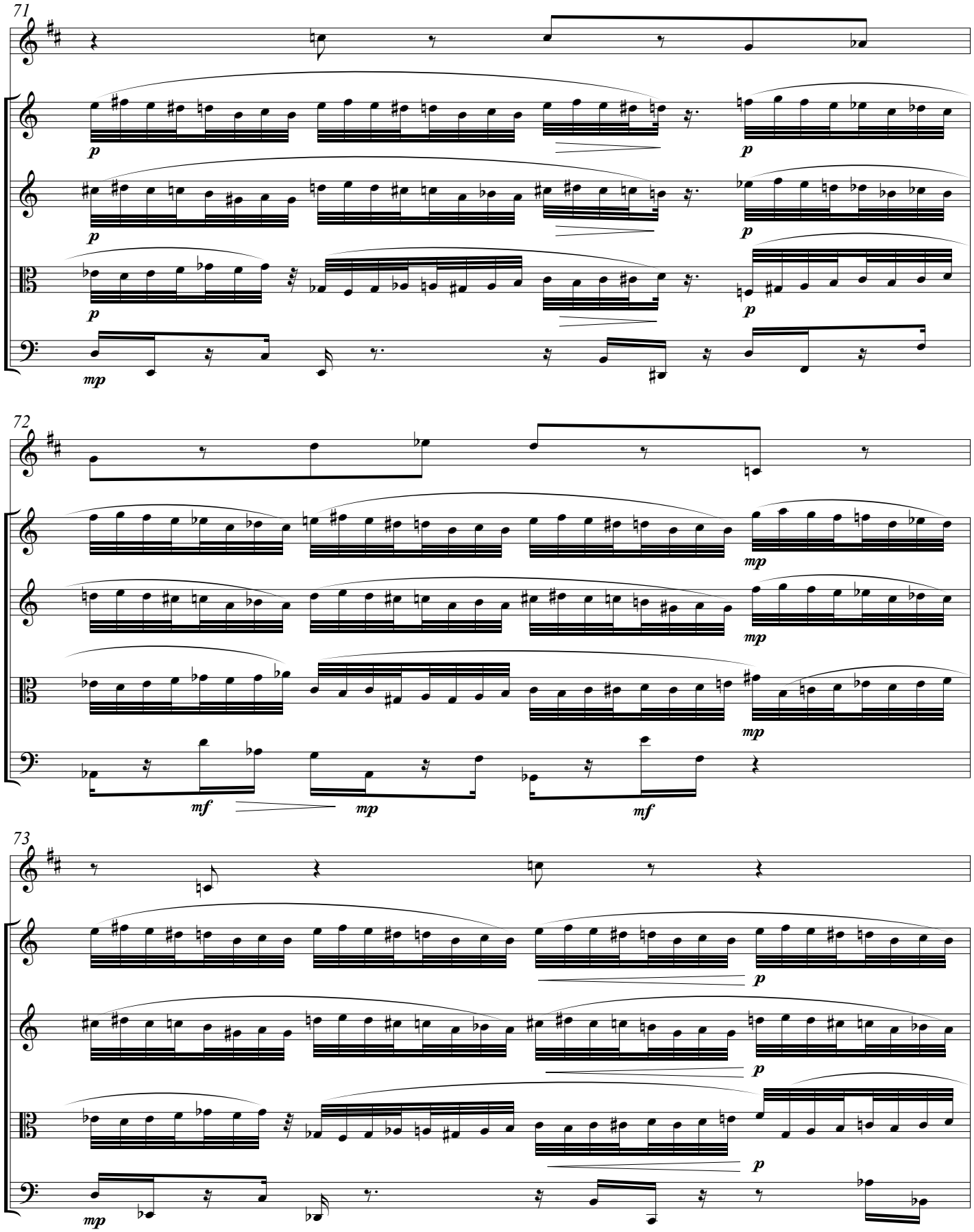

D
36
p
pizz.
arco
mp pesante
39
42
poco

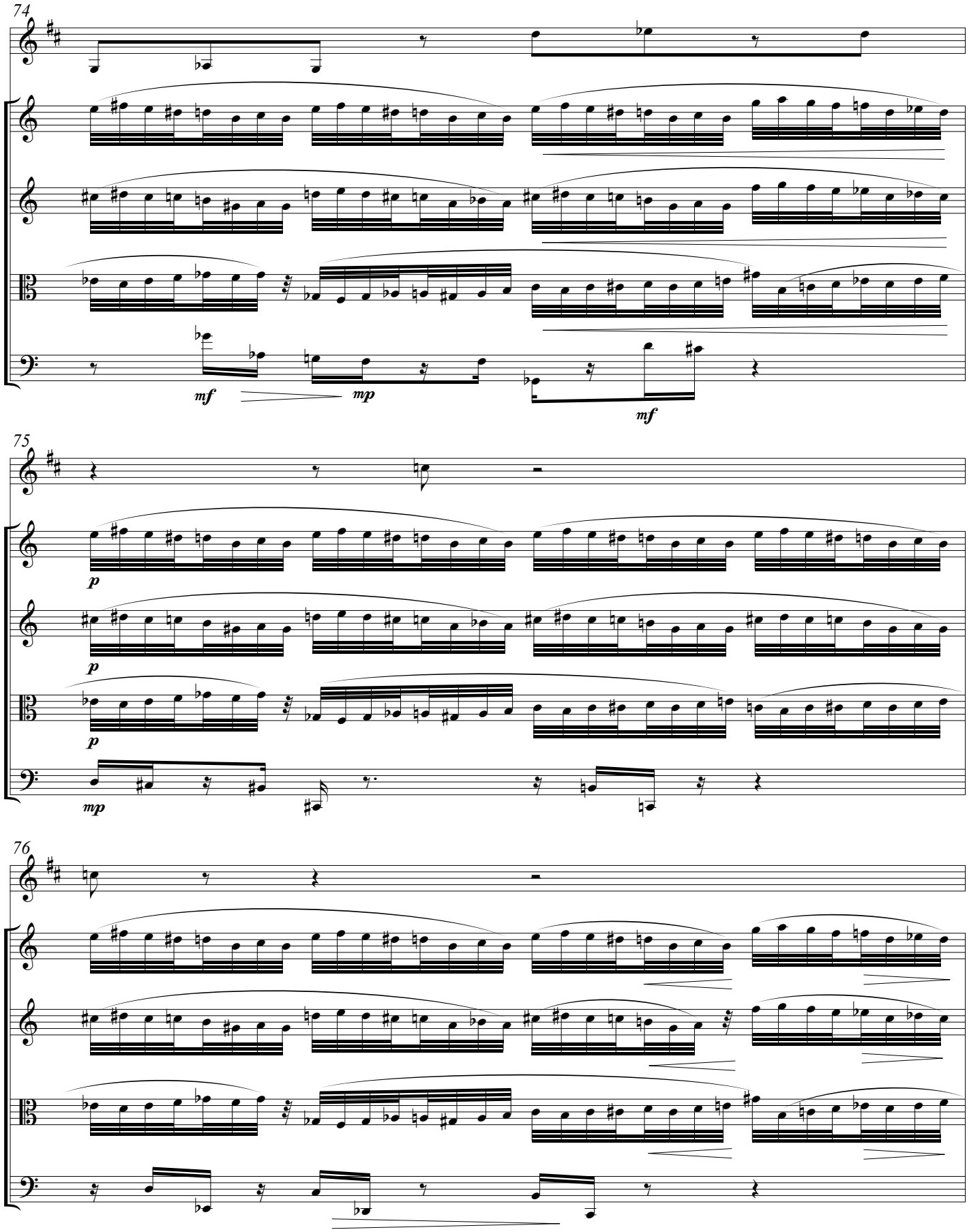

E
45
mp espr.
F
48
p mysterious
arco
53

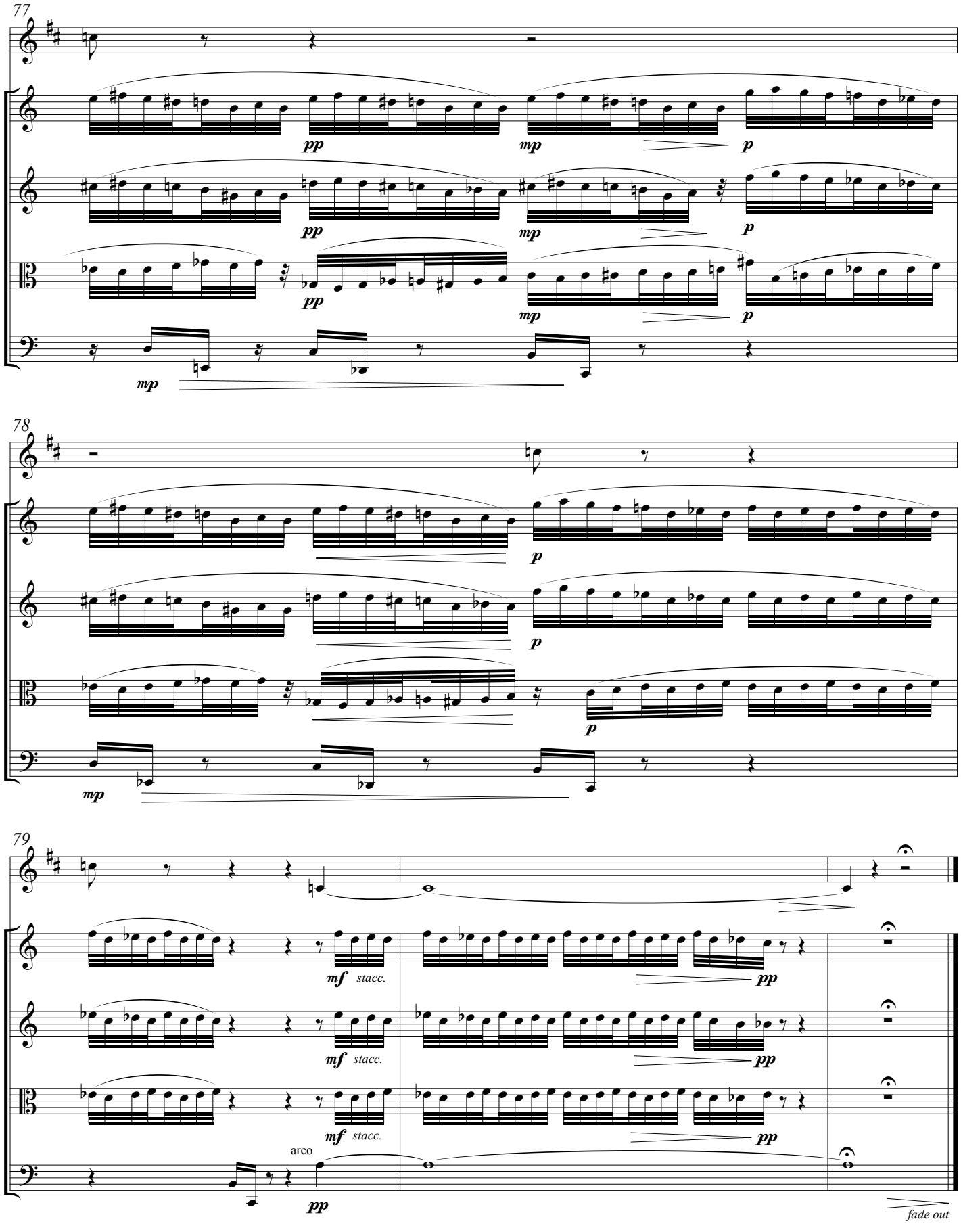

57
mf sub.
mf
mf
mf
mf
G Poco più mosso ♪ = c. 148
60
p
mp
mp
pizz.
mp
64
p


65
66
67
p
mp
mf

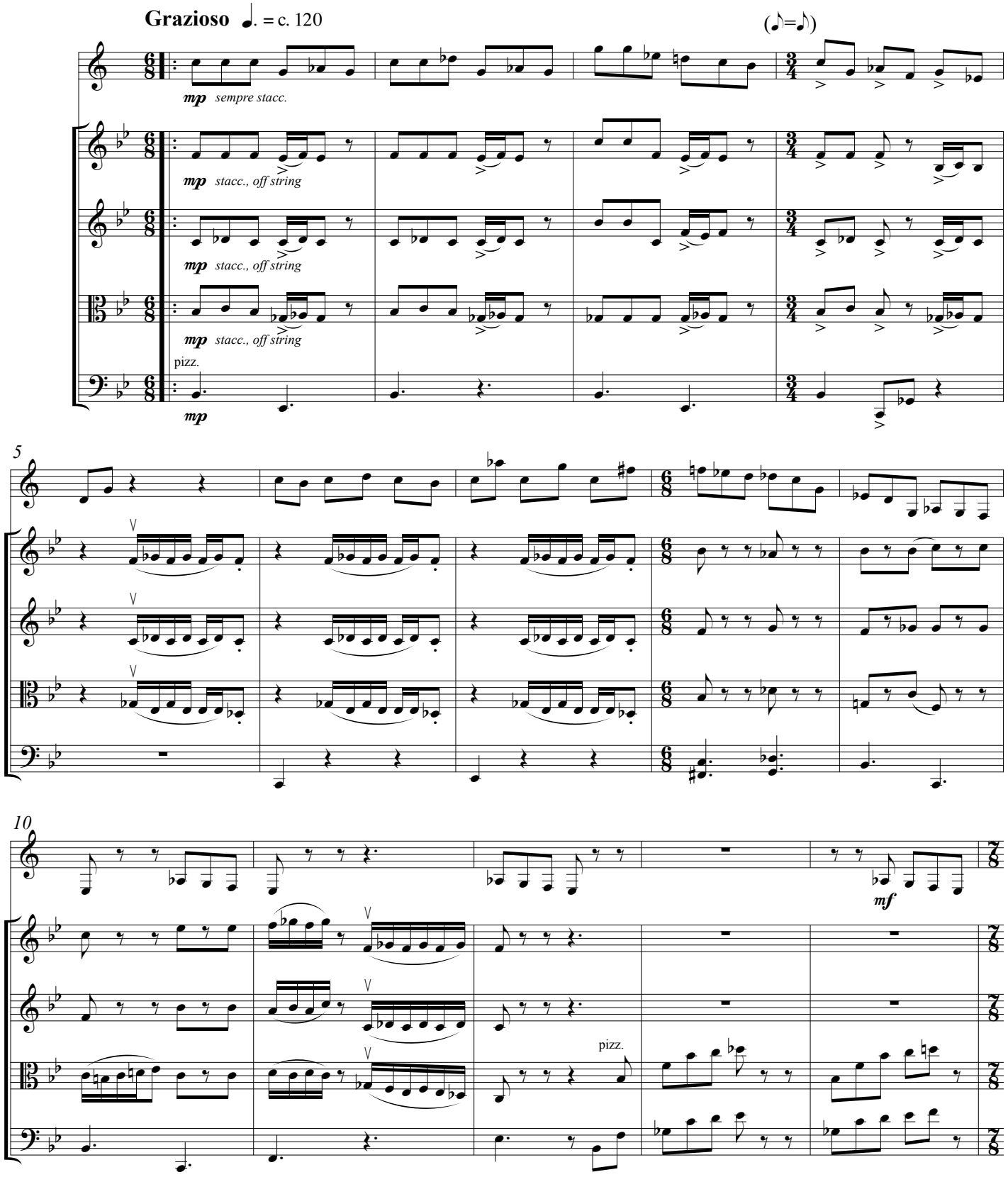

68
mp
mp
mp
mf
mp
mf
69
p
p
p
mp
70
mp
mp
mp
mf
mp
mf

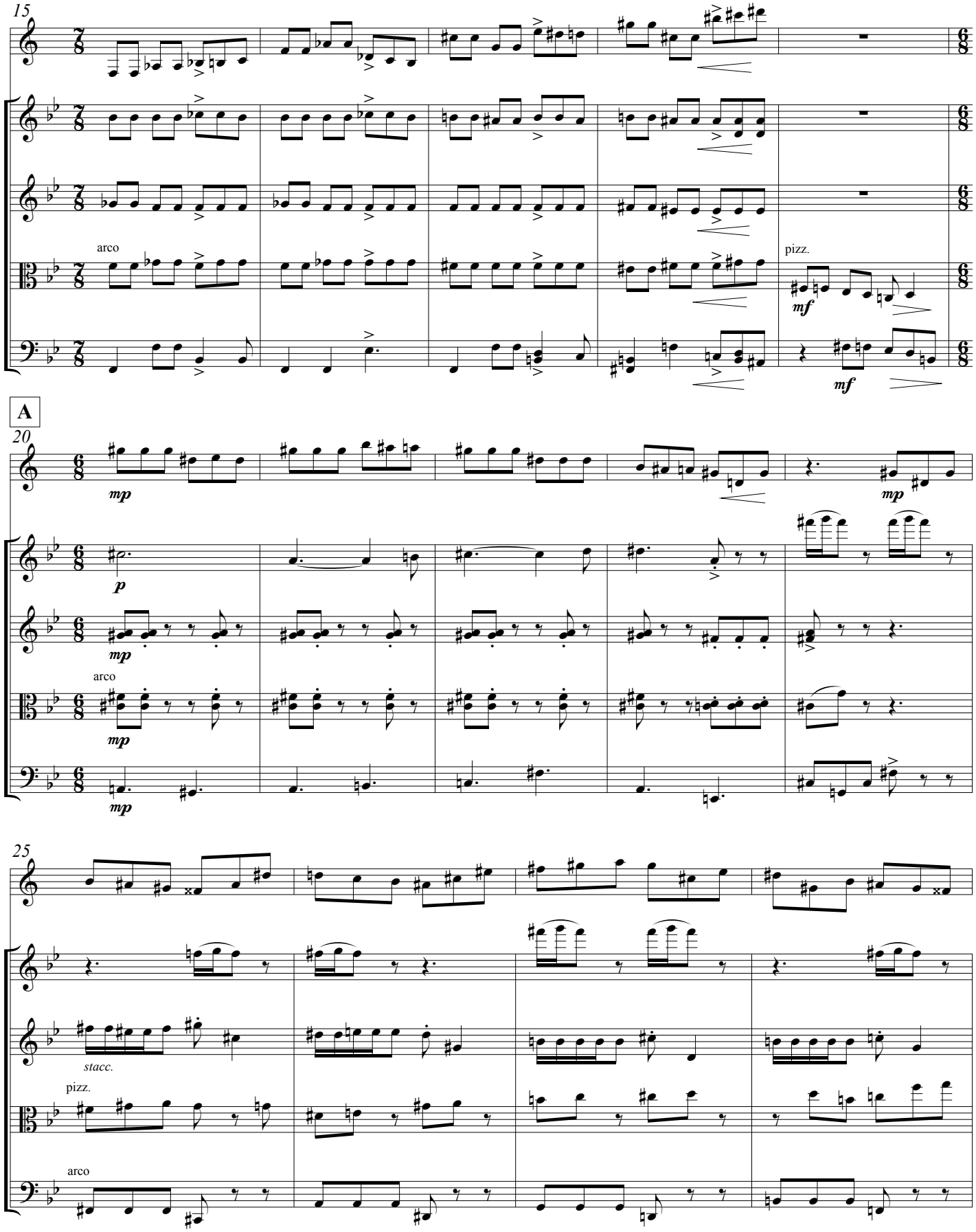

71
72
73
p
mp
mf

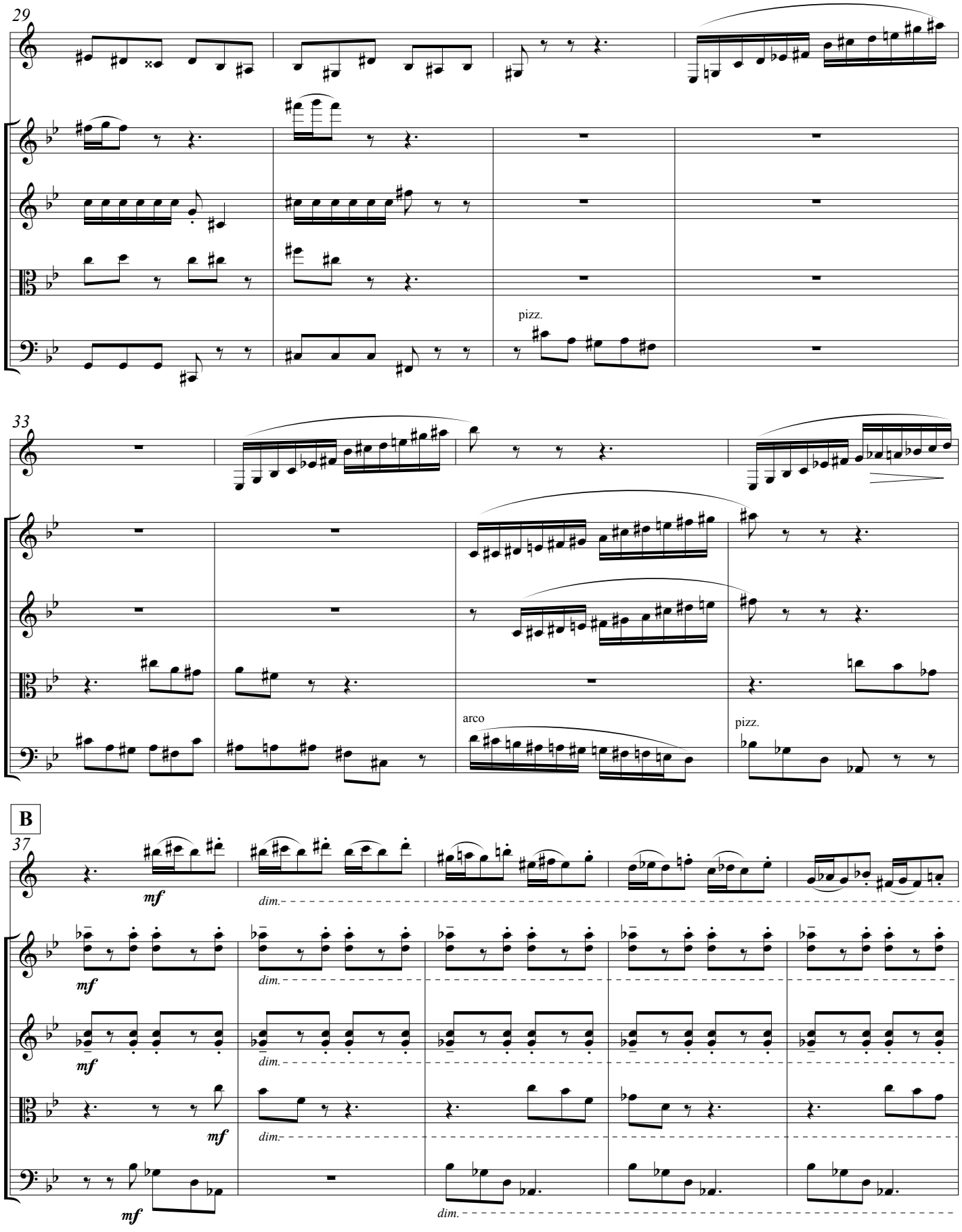

74
mf
mp
mf
75
p
p
p
mp
76

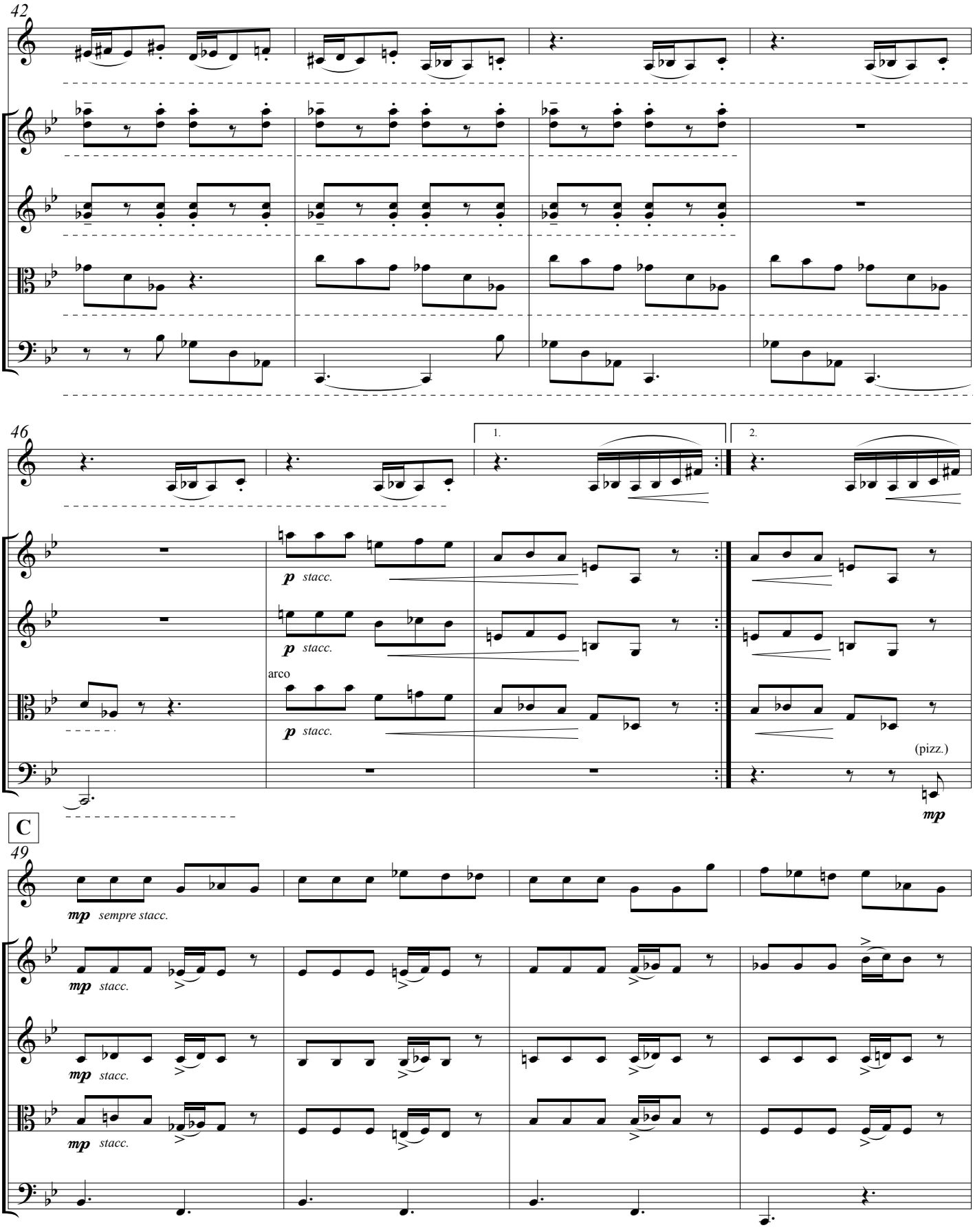

77
pp
mp
p
78
79
mf stacc.
arco
fade out

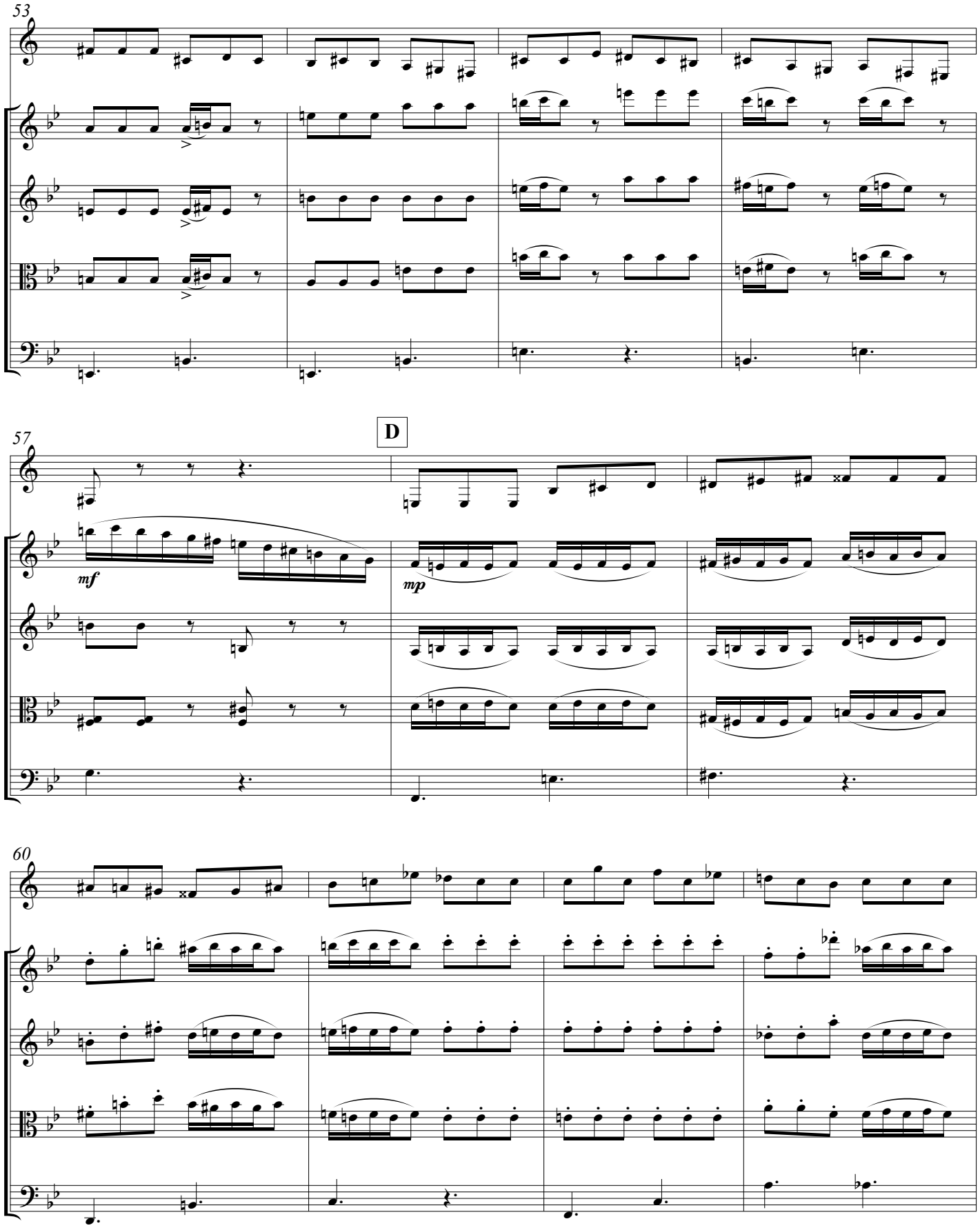
III.

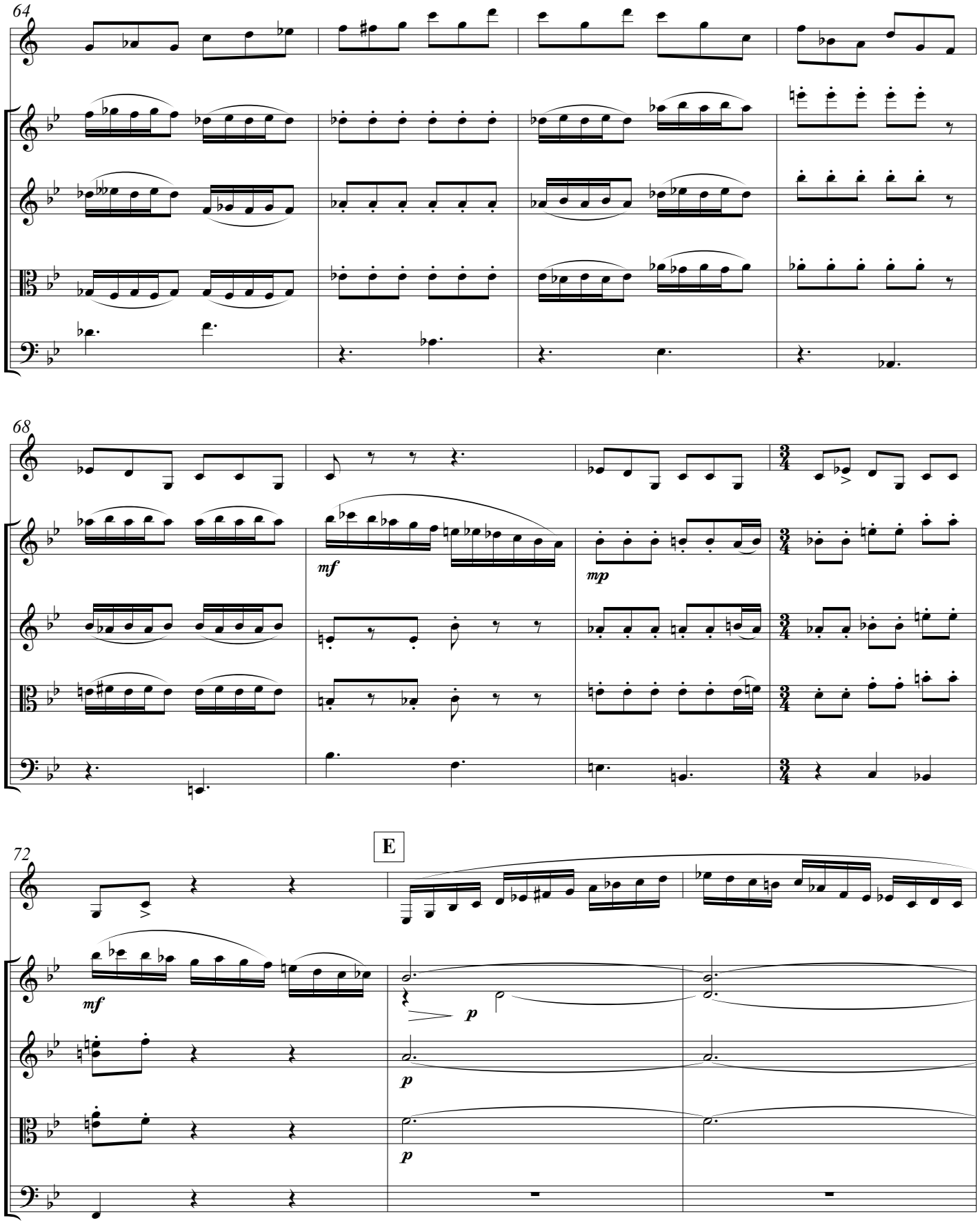

Grazioso ♩. = c. 120
(♪=♪)
mp sempre stacc.
mp stacc., off string
mp stacc., off string
mp stacc., off string
pizz.
mp
5
10
mf
pizz.

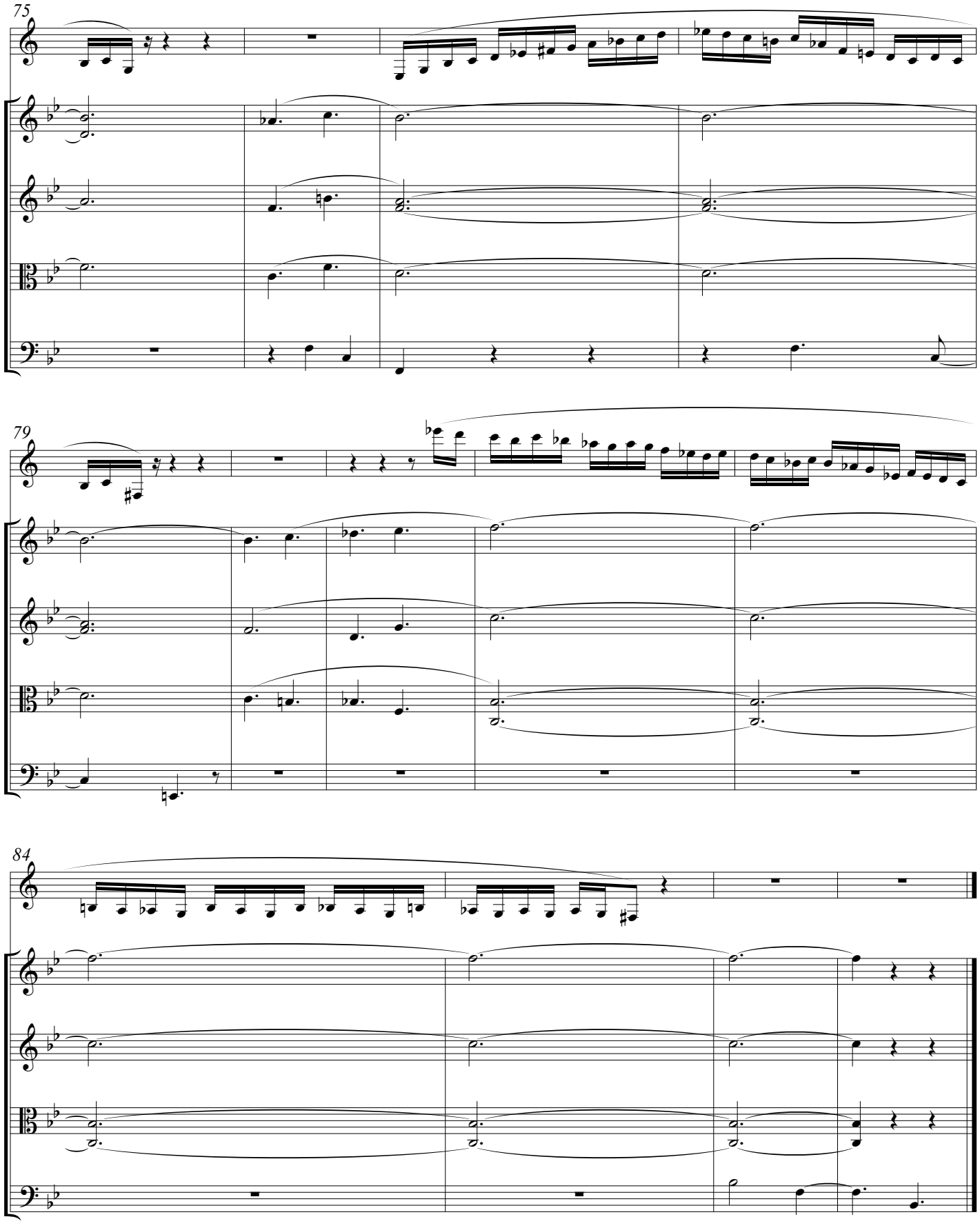

15
arco
pizz.
mf
mf
A
20
mp
p
mp
mp
mp
25
stacc.
pizz.
arco


29
pizz.
33
arco
pizz.
B
37
mf
dim.


42
46
1.
2.
p stacc.
p stacc.
arco
p stacc.
(pizz.)
mp
C
49
mp sempre stacc.
mp stacc.
mp stacc.
mp stacc.


53
57
D
mf
mp
60


64
68
mf
mp
72
E
mf
p
p
p


75
79
84