W. Jay Sydeman

Trio

for Viola, Cello and Piano

(c. 1985)

Arts Aeternum

I had a somewhat brief flirtation with the viola in the ’80s, to the extent that I attended and performed in chamber music workshops. It seemed to me there was (sadly) a somewhat limited repertoire for viola, cello and piano, and as there were some colleagues of that description, I wrote this work.

The first movement is quite pretty (I believe that is the right word, believe it or not), and the second quite gracious (ditto). Apparently these qualities lie latent in my personality and it only took a viola to nudge them forth. Musicians sharing these personality quirks might enjoy performing this piece, or might not... or something.

As for details – the viola and cello play independent counterpoints in the first movement while surrounded by arpeggiated figures in the piano, all in the context of a somewhat (pretty) sad expression. The second movement is an (almost) dance in a 20th century courtly manner (if that is imaginable). There is some strenuous playing in all parts. All of that being said, the language as well as technical demands of the piece reflect the fact that it was written for amateurs. so are tonal and not overly demanding. Perhaps the second “dancy” movement is a bit quirky. but who says that amateurs can't have their quirks – particularly as the word “amateur” actually means “lover of”.

– W. Jay Sydeman, July 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. Allegro espressivo – circa 4:45
II. Grazioso – circa 3:00

To contact the composer:
Jeanne Duncan, Sydeman Archive Publications
707-962-0394
www.williamjaysydeman.com

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

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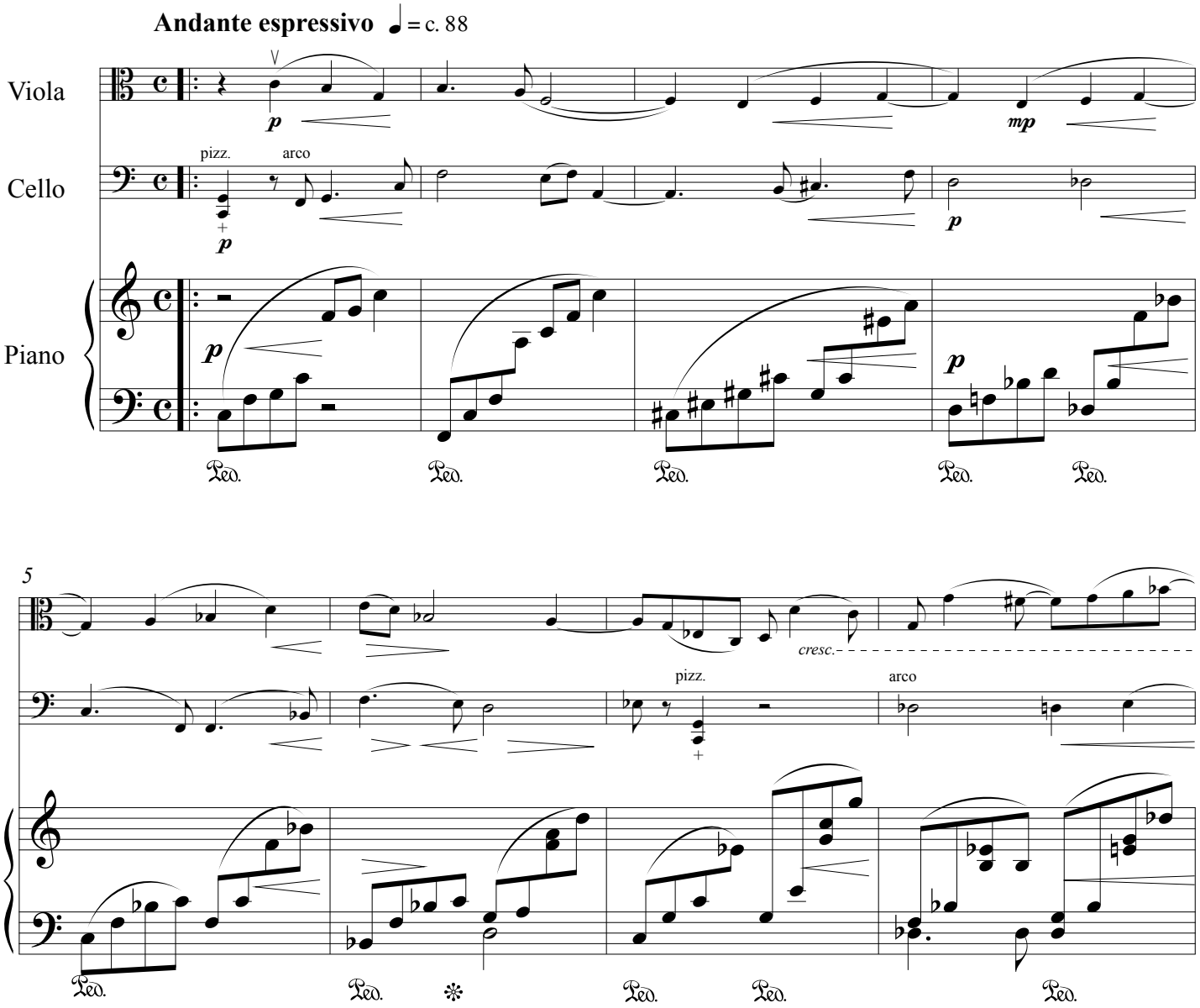
I.



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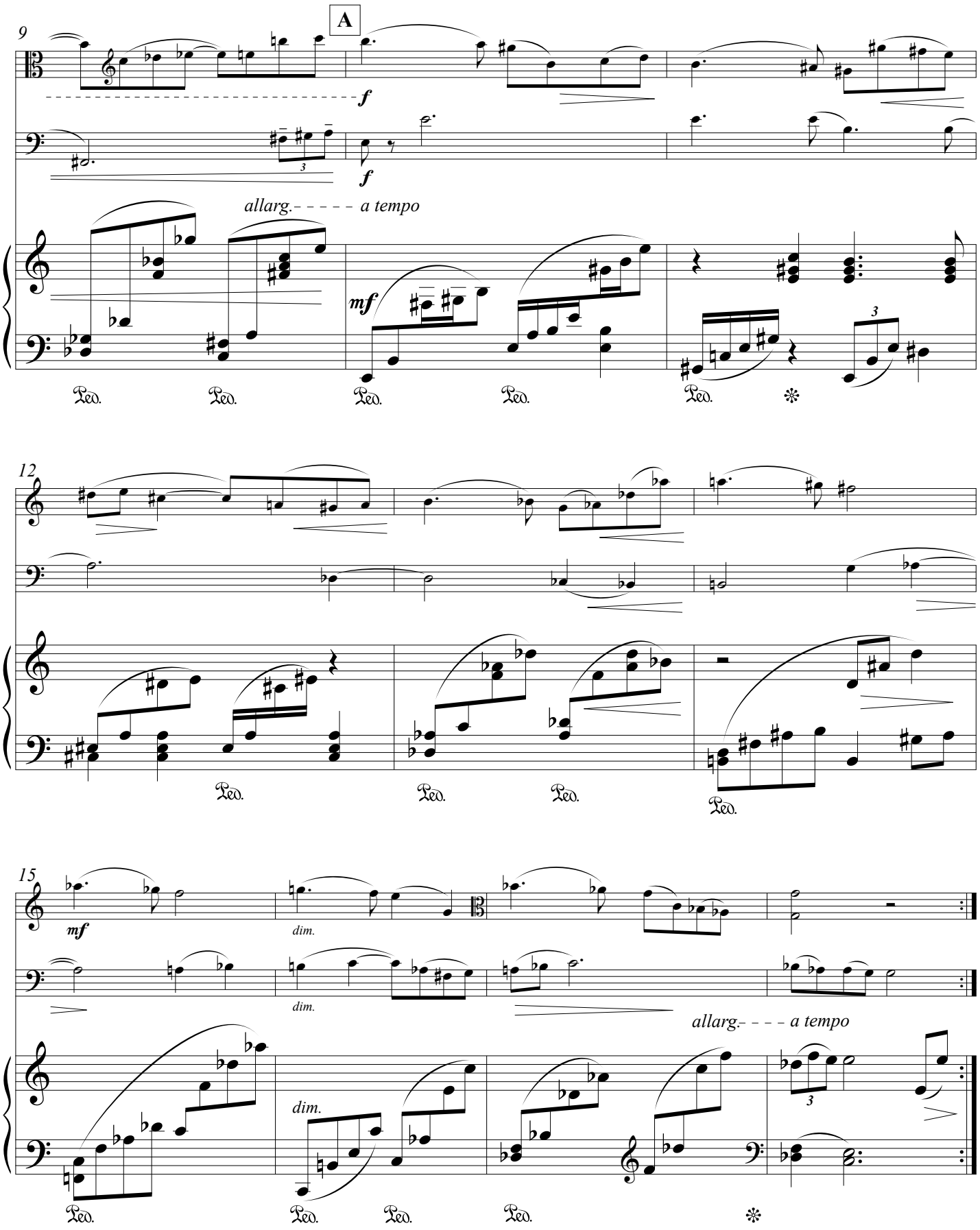
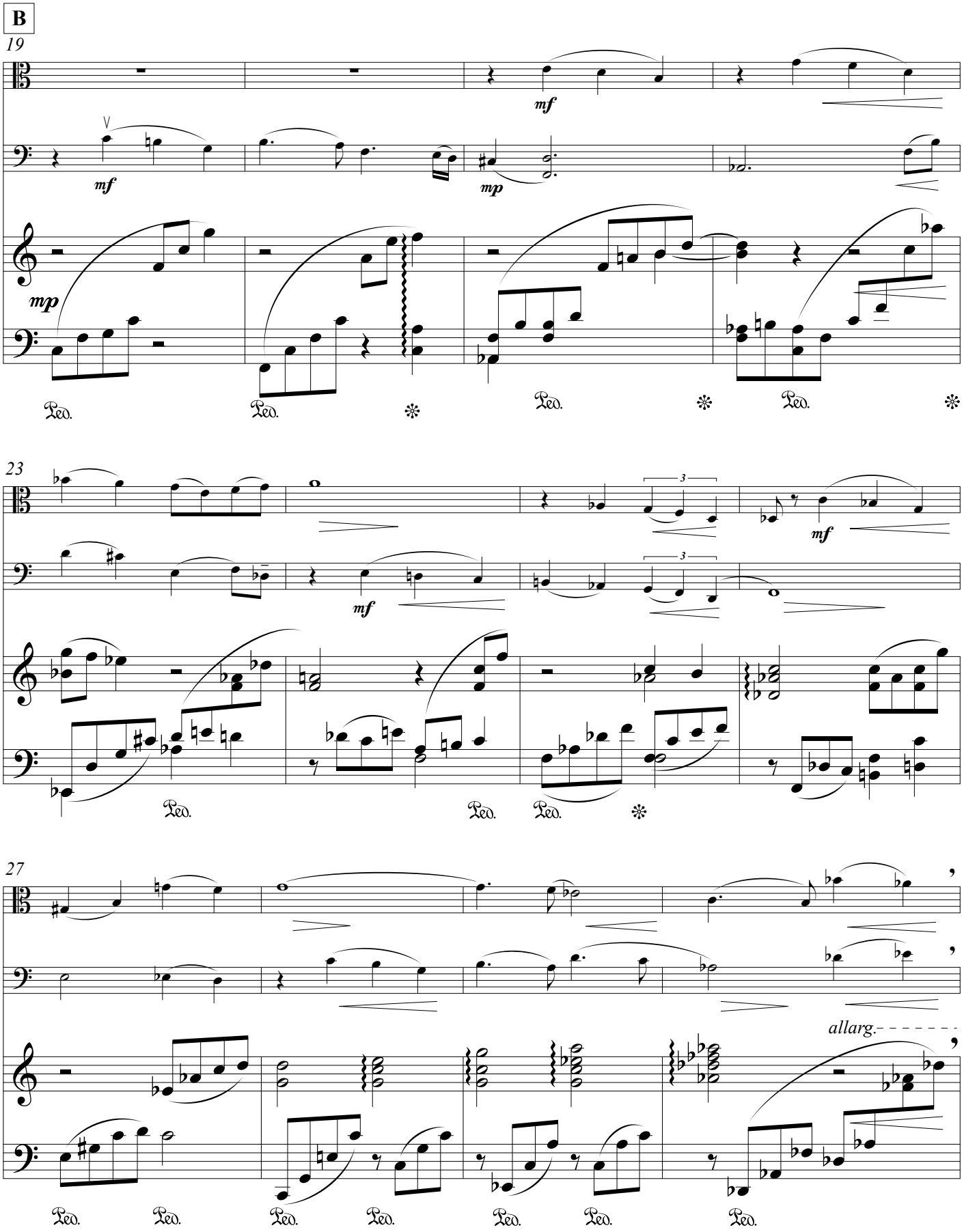
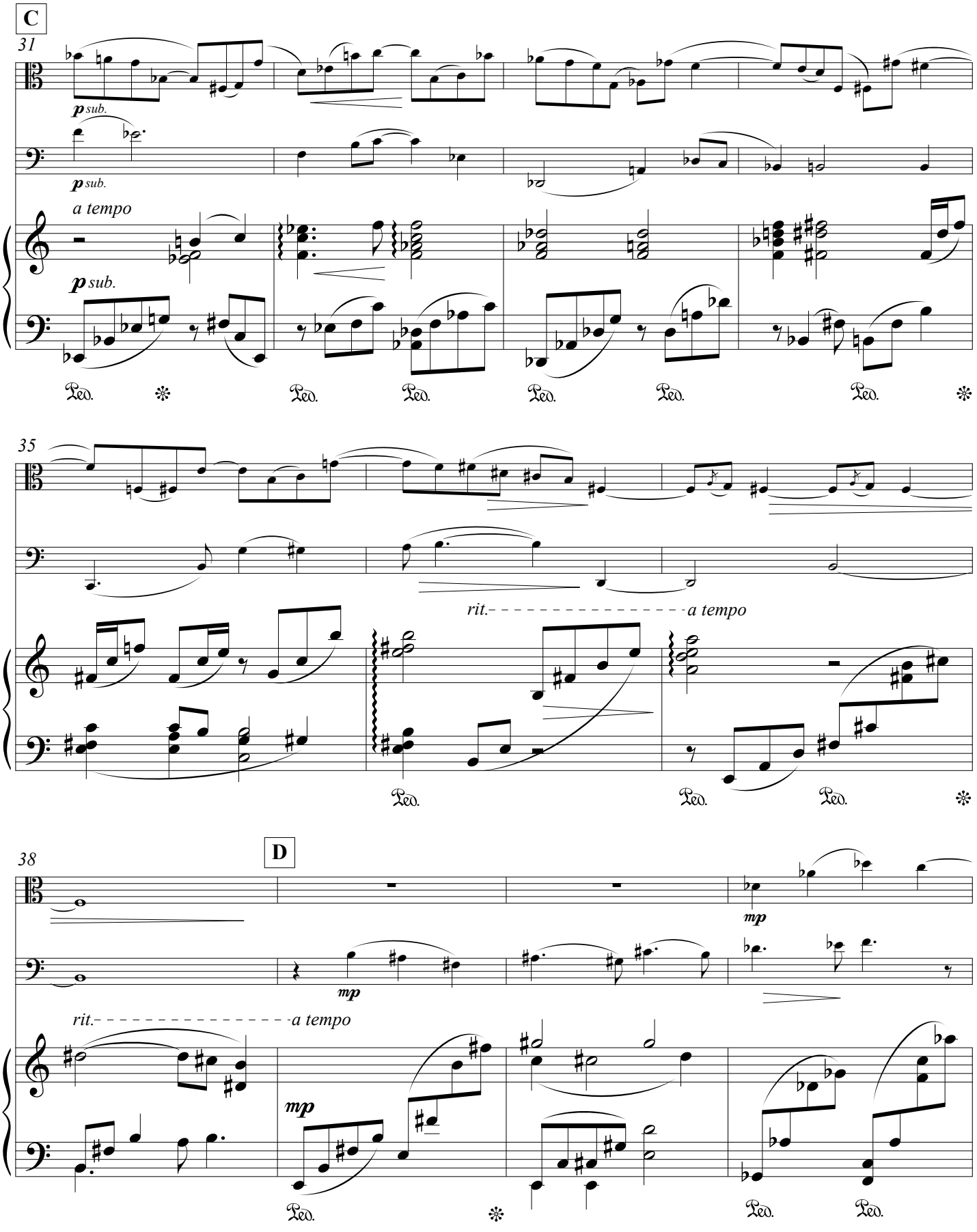
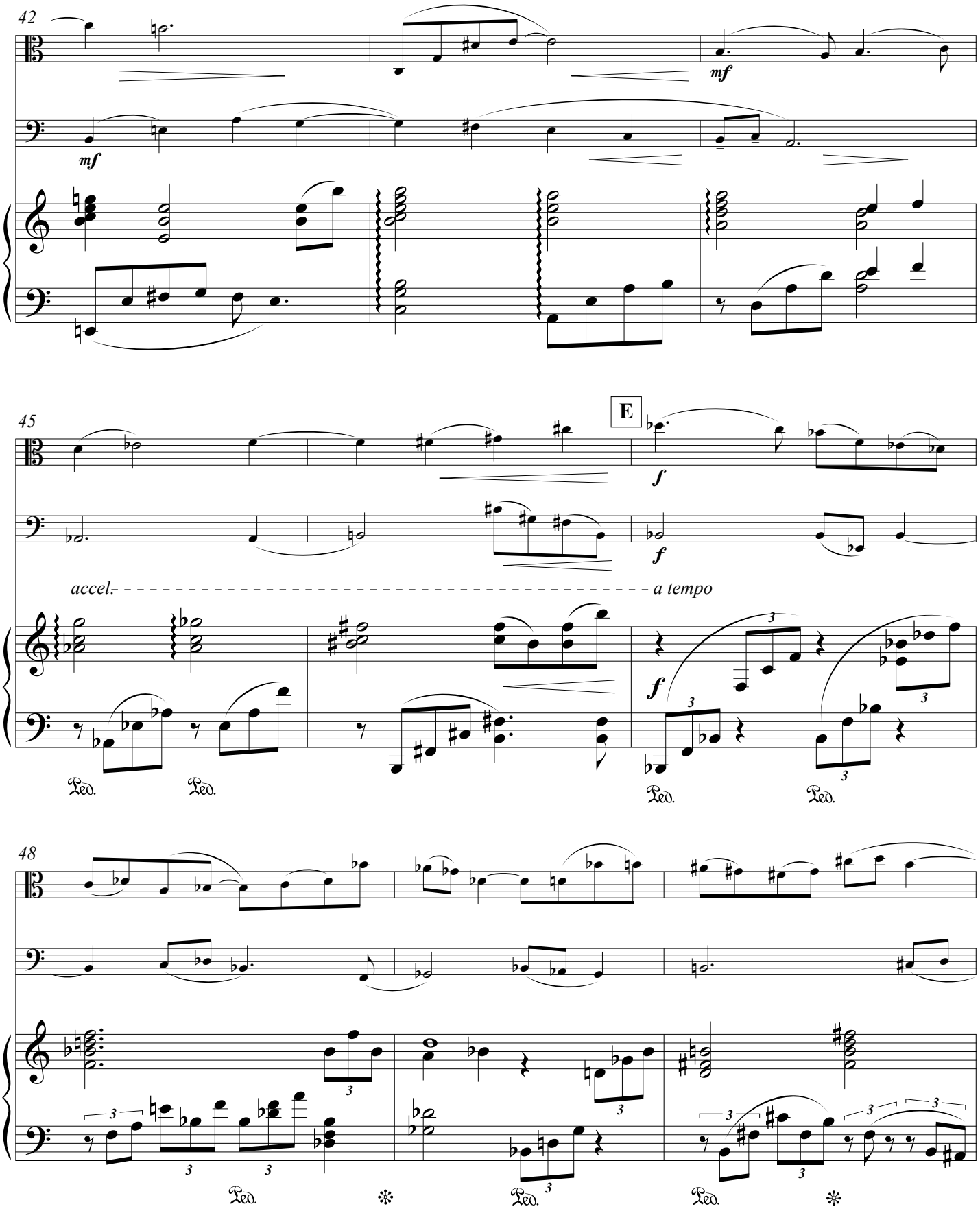
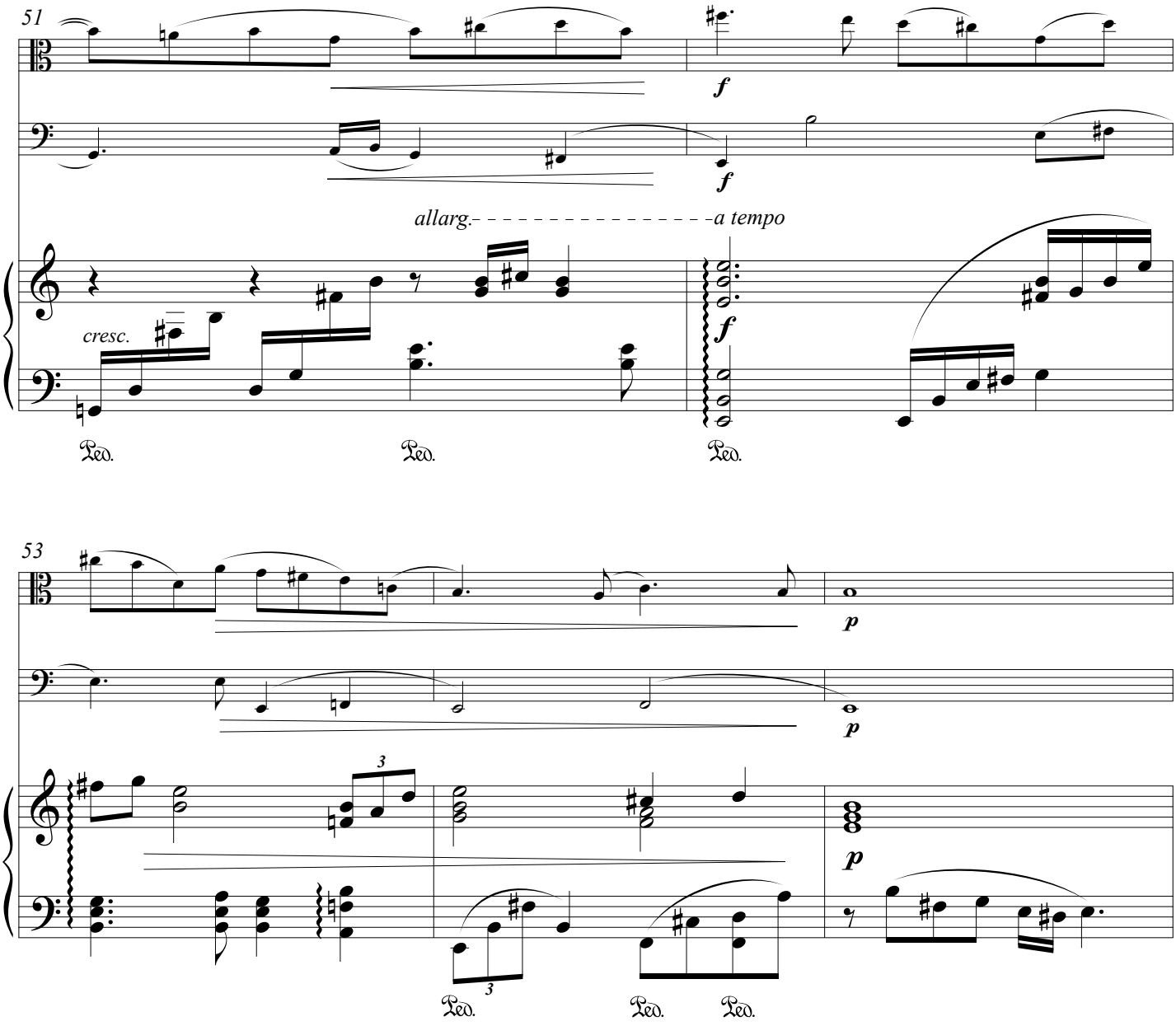
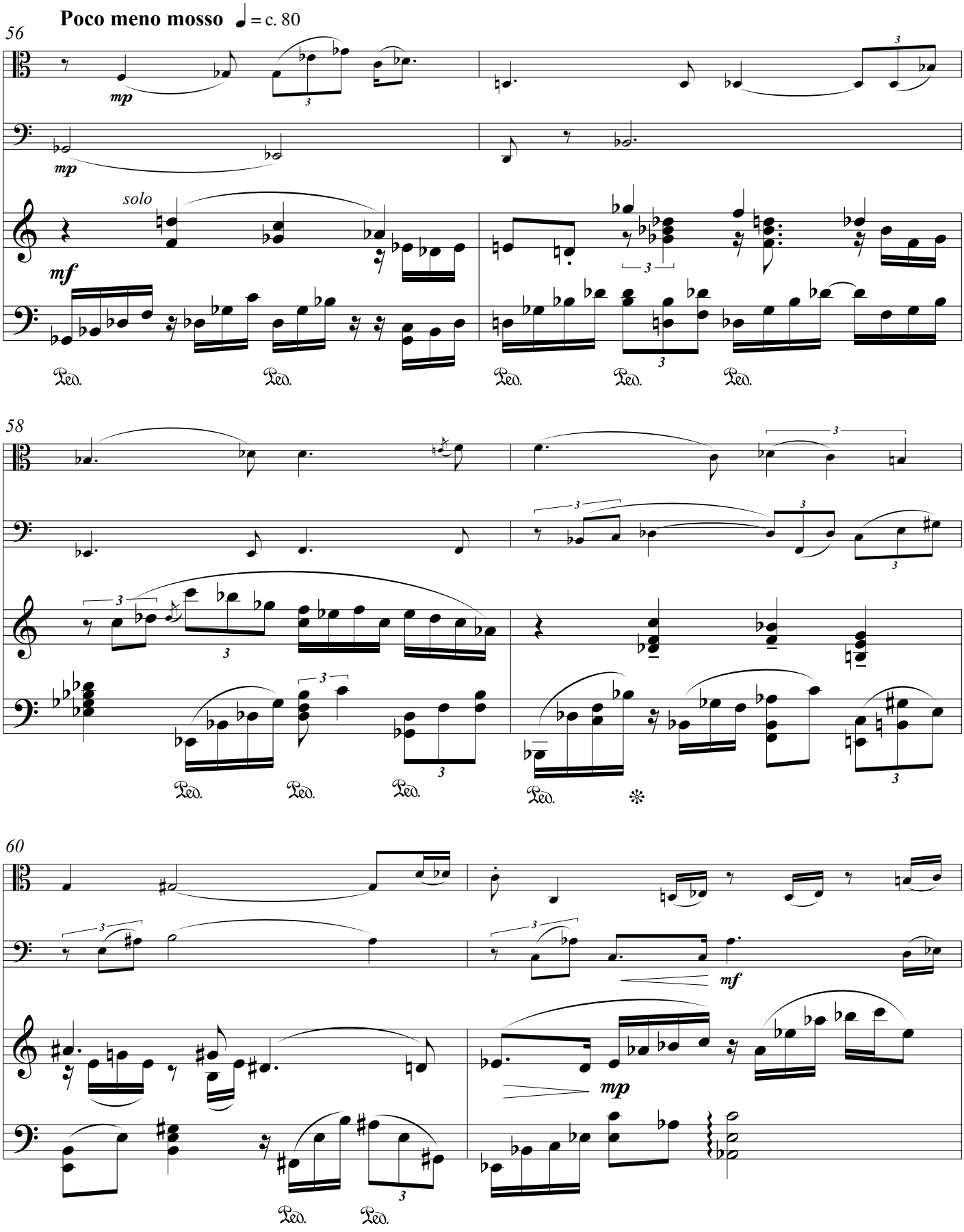

9
A
f
f
allarg. a tempo
mf
Ped.
12
Ped.
15
mf
dim.
dim.
allarg. a tempo
dim.
Ped.


B
19
mf
mp
Ped.
23
3
mf
Ped.
27
allarg.
Ped.


C
31
p sub.
p sub.
a tempo
p sub.
Ped.
35
rit.
a tempo
Ped.
38
D
mp
mp
rit.
a tempo
mp
Ped.


42
mf
mf
45
E
f
f
accel.
a tempo
f
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
48
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.


51
f
f
allarg.- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -a tempo
cresc.
f
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
53
p
p
3
p
3
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.


Poco meno mosso ♩ = c. 80
56
mp
mp
solo
mf
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
58
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
60
mf
mp
Ped.
Ped.

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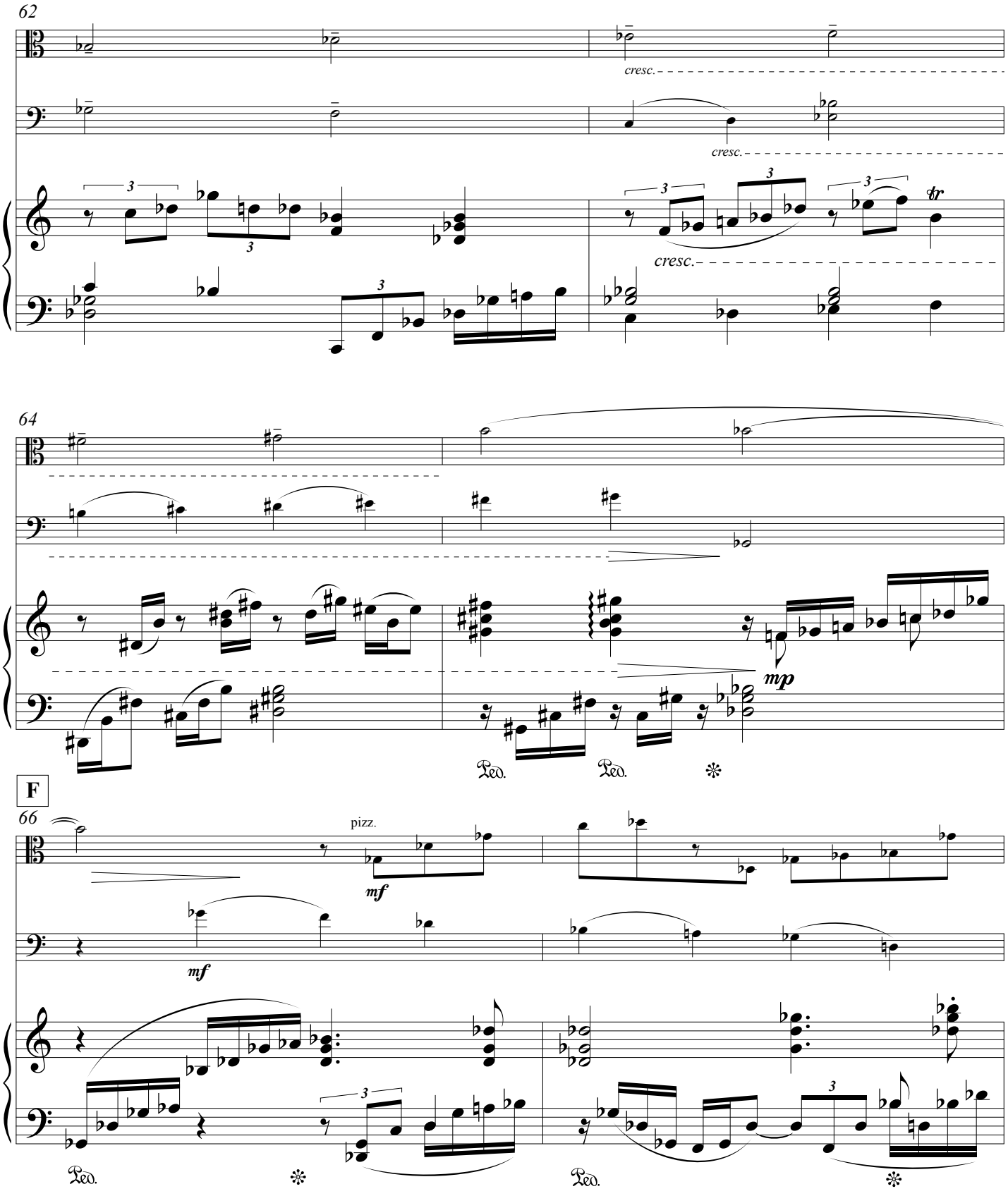
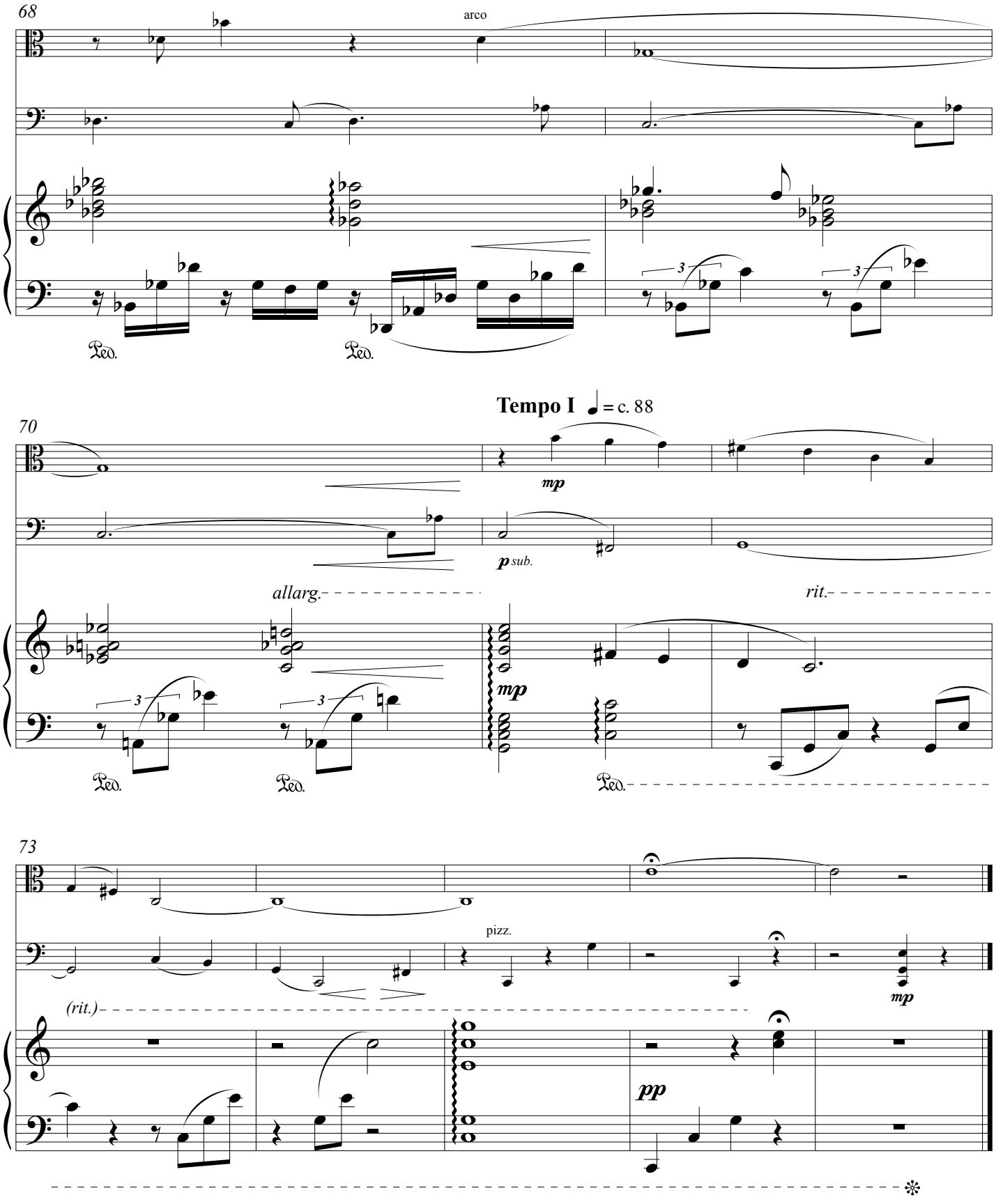
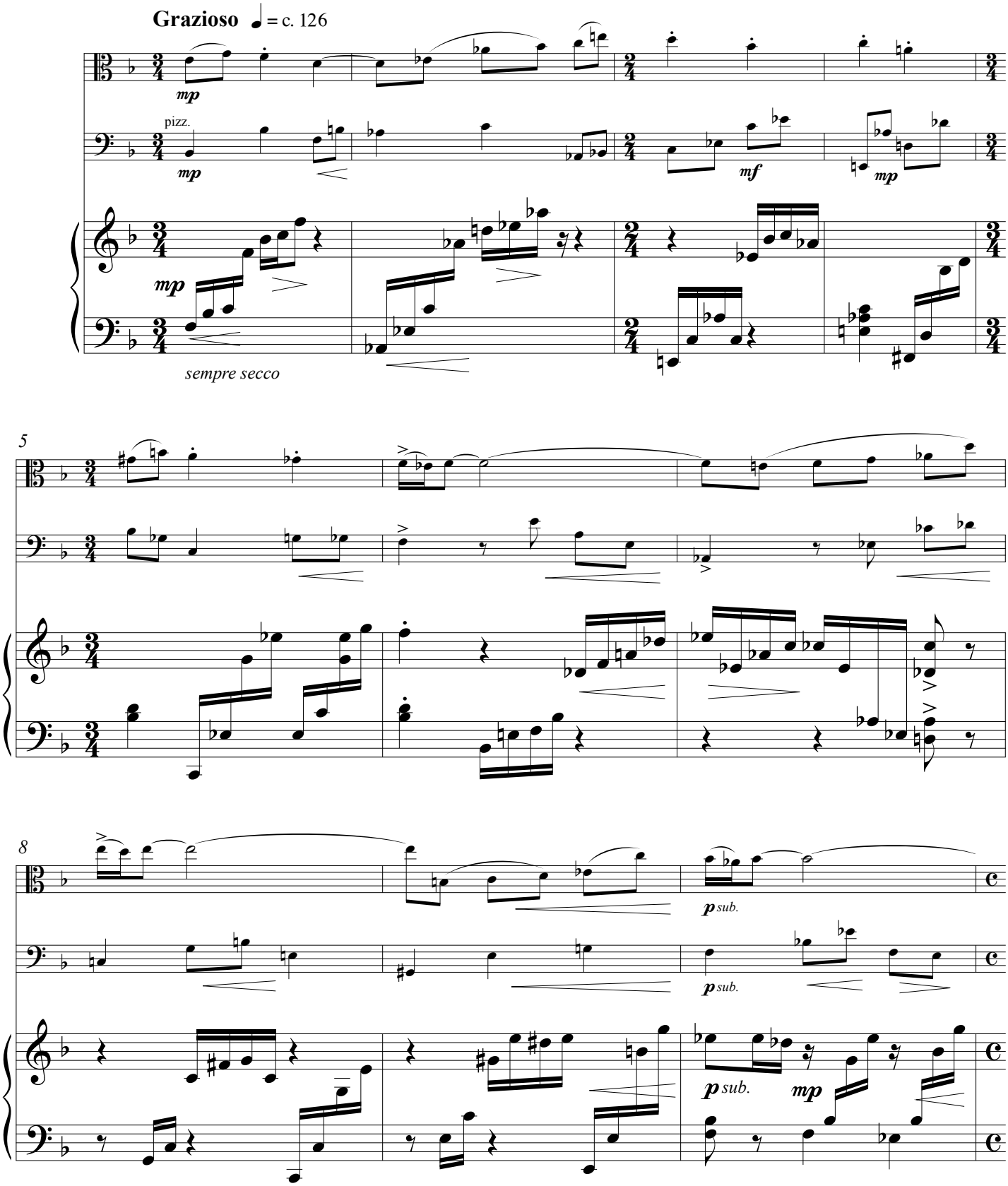
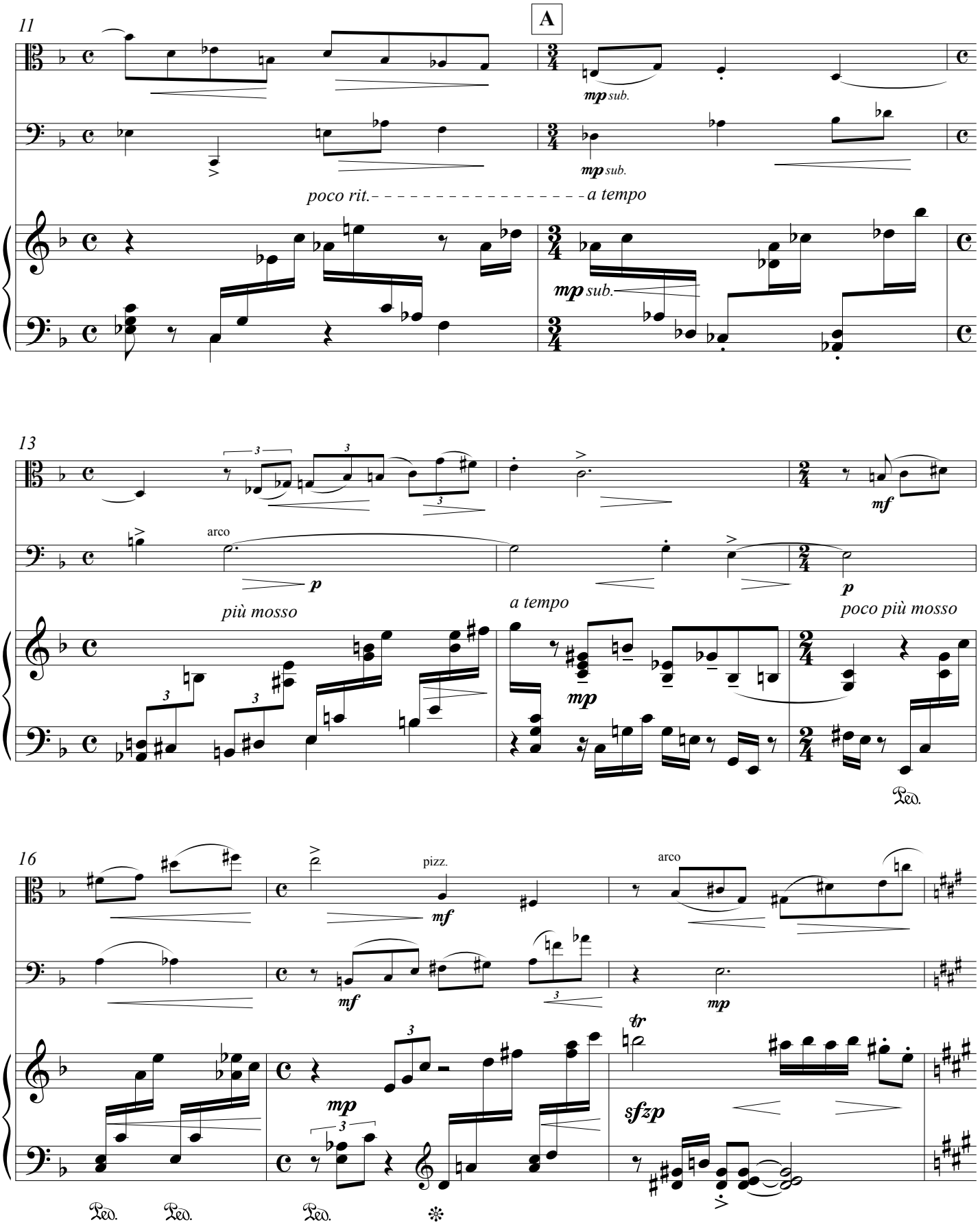
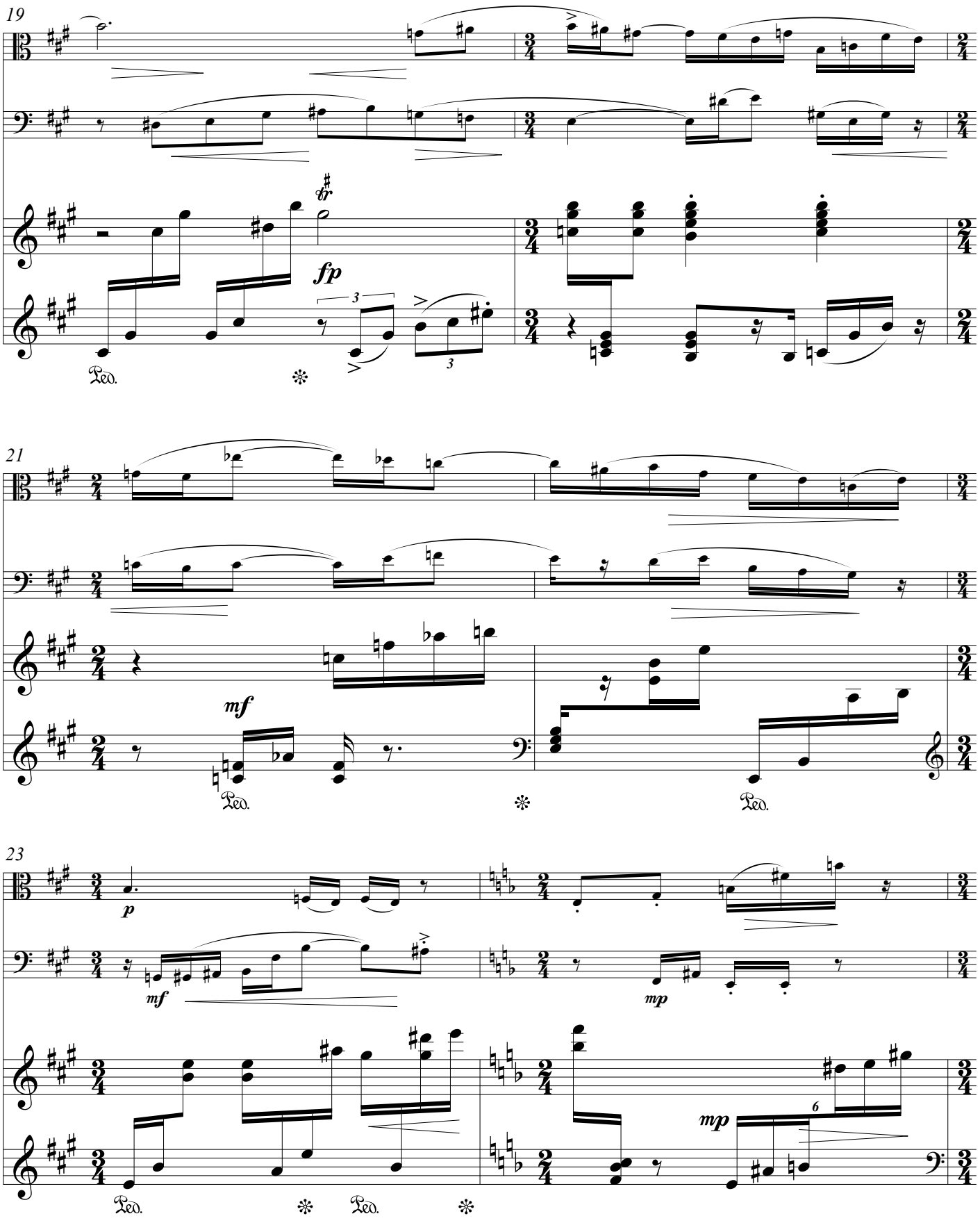

62
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
tr
64
mp
Ped.
Ped.
F
66
pizz.
mf
mf
Ped.
Ped.

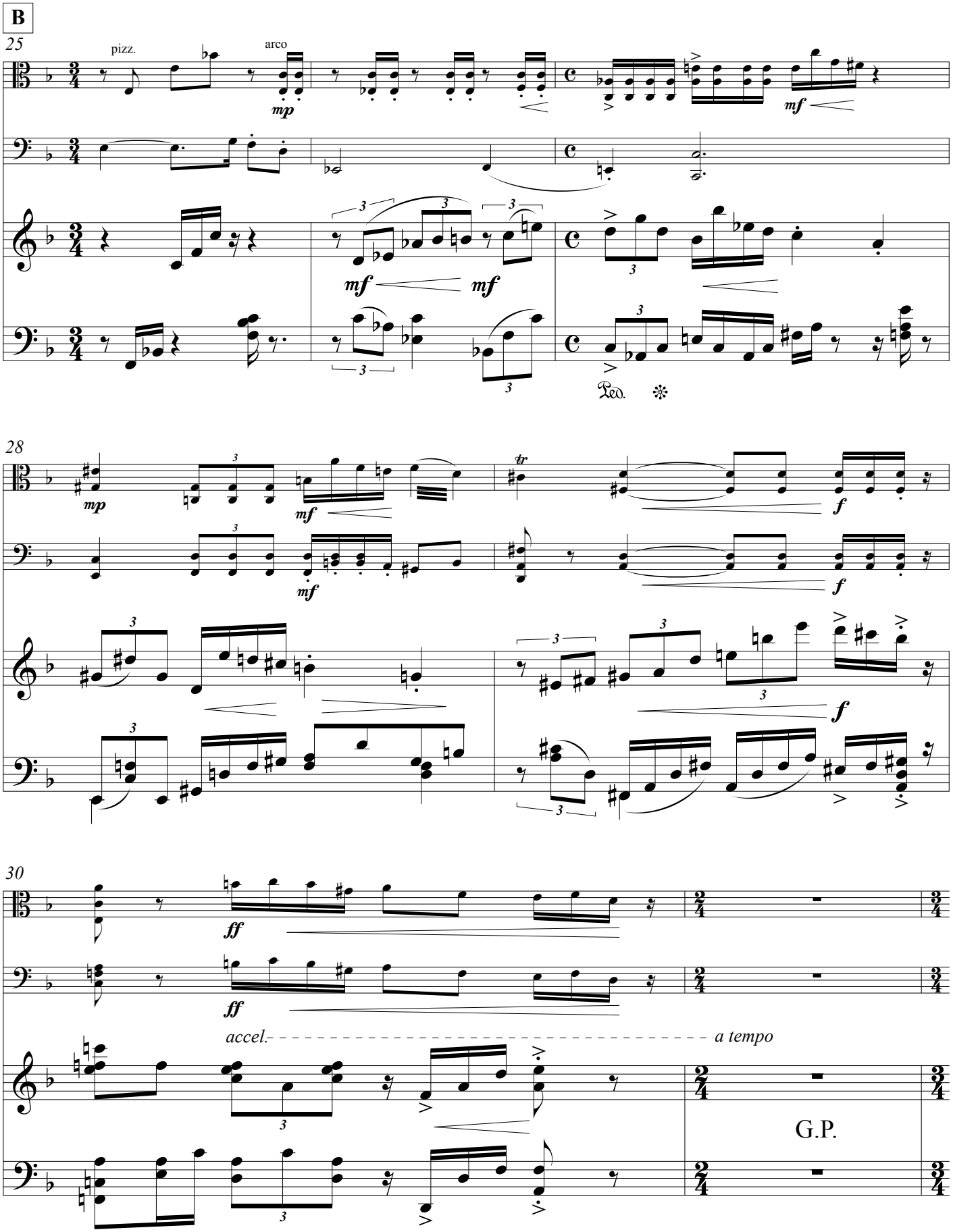

68
arco
Ped.
Ped.
Tempo I ♩ = c. 88
70
mp
p sub.
allarg.
rit.
mp
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
73
pizz.
(rit.)
mp
pp

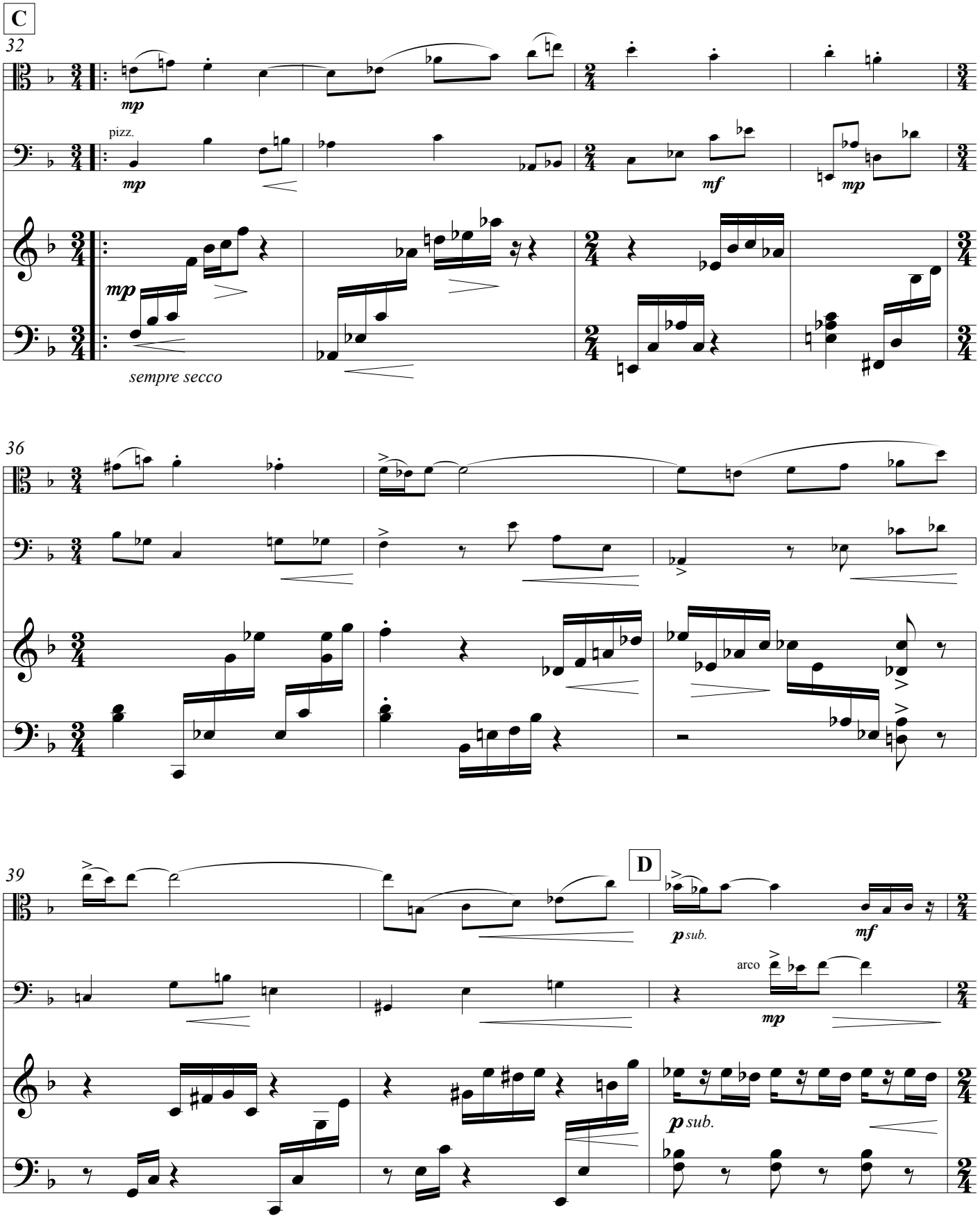
II.

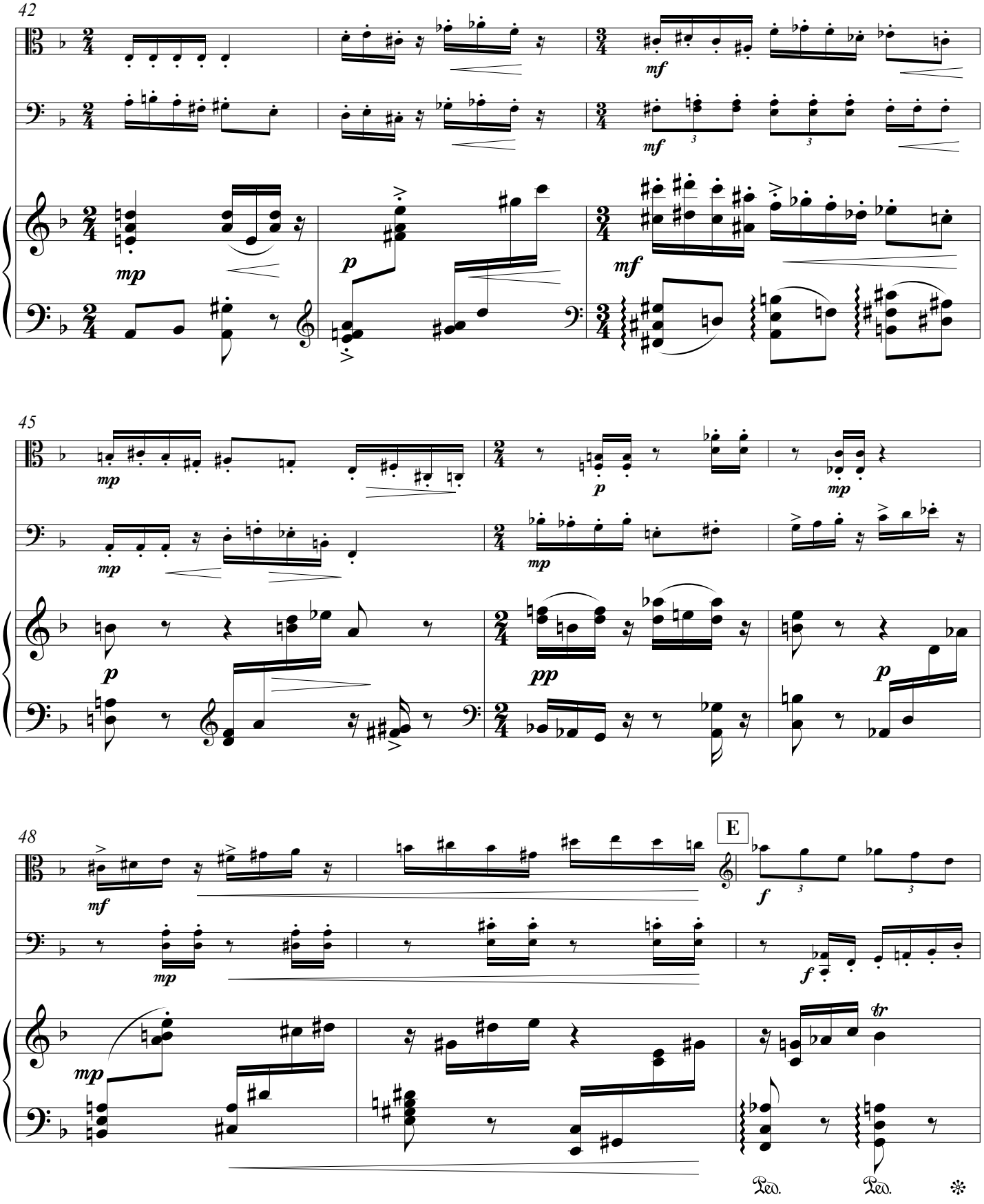

Grazioso ♩ = c. 126
mp
pizz.
mp
mf
mp
mp
sempre secco
5
8
p sub.
p sub.
p sub.
mp

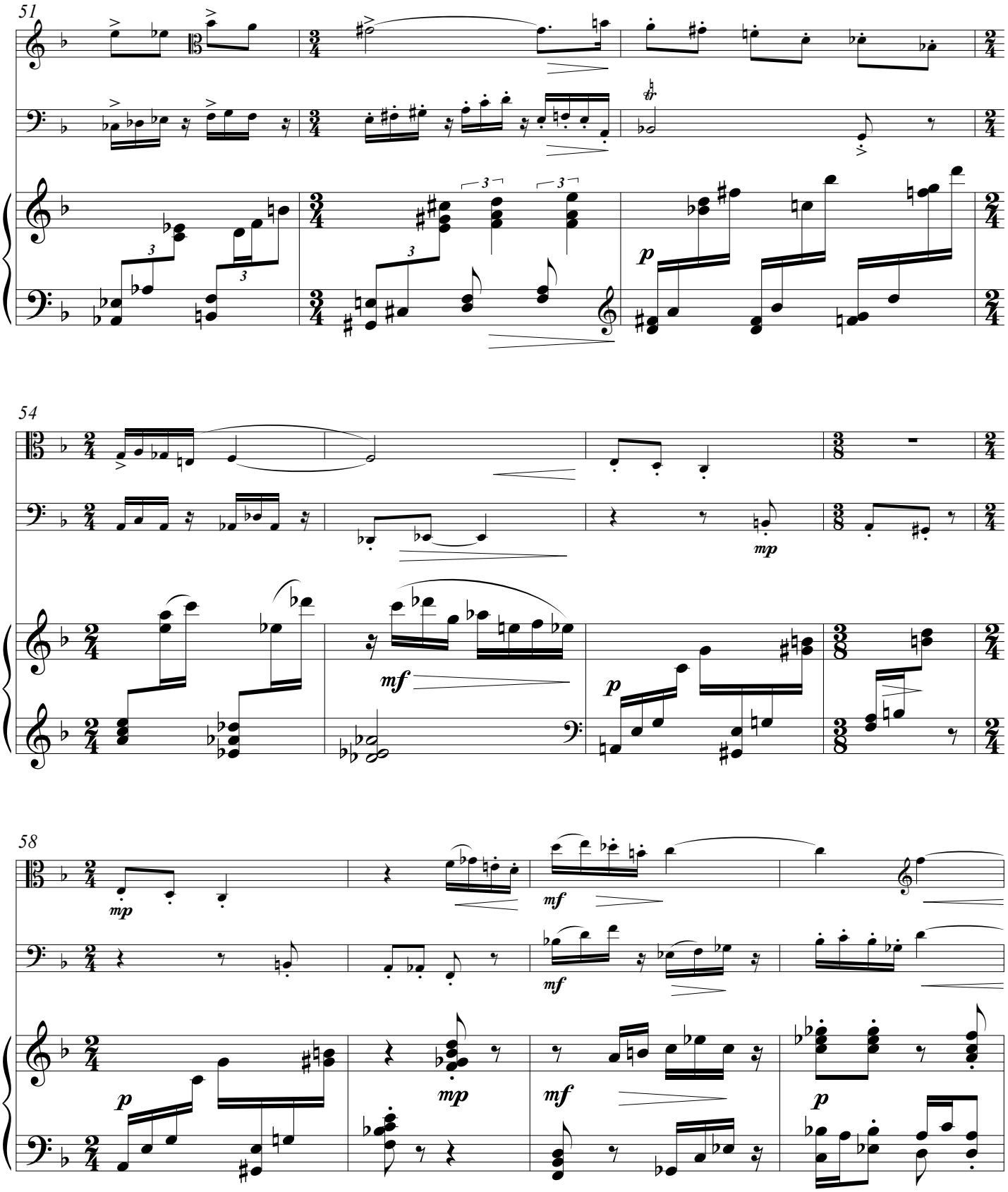

11
A
mp sub.
mp sub.
poco rit.
a tempo
mp sub.
13
arco
p
p
più mosso
a tempo
poco più mosso
mf
mp
Ped.
16
pizz.
mf
arco
mf
mp
tr
mp
sfzp
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

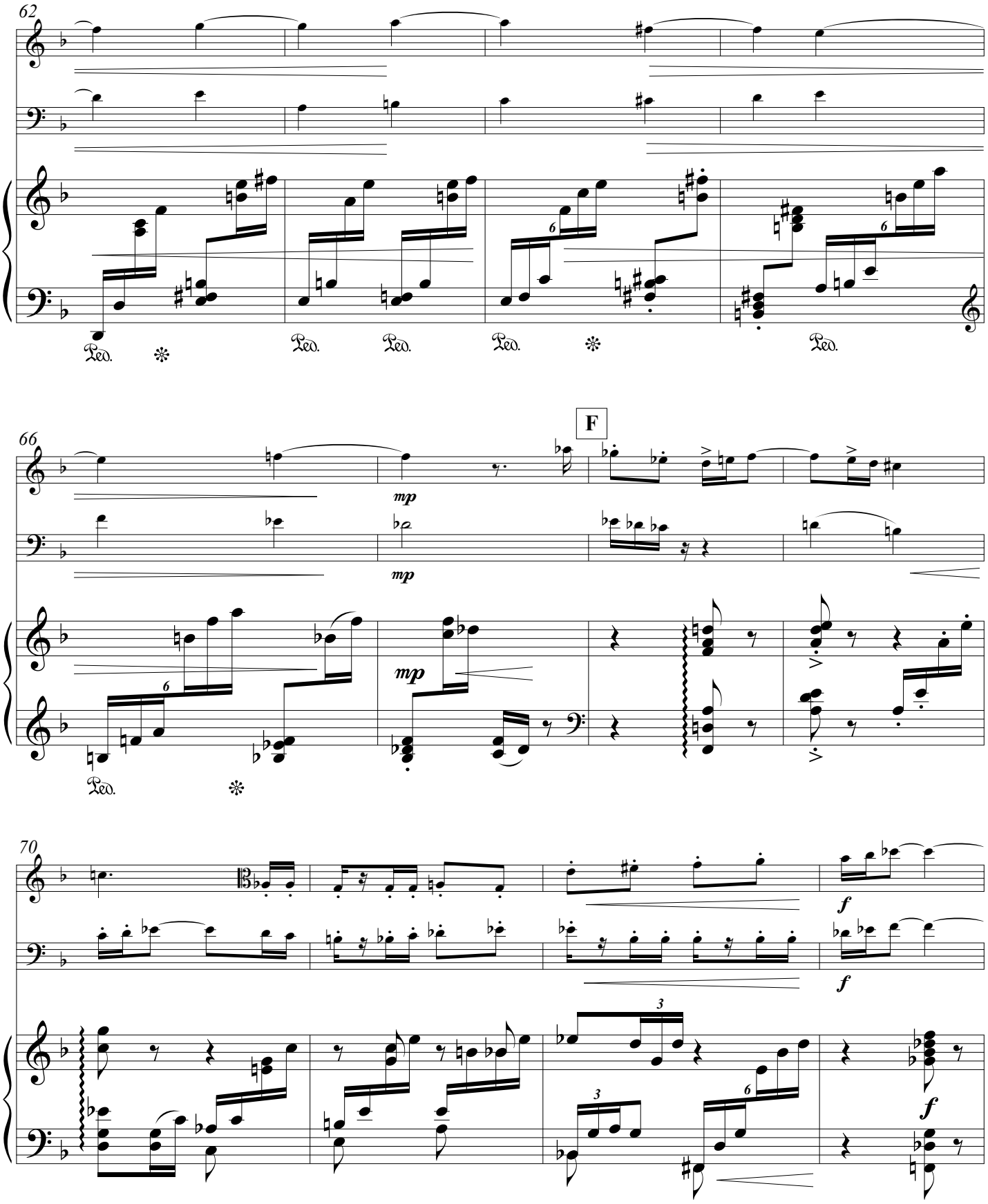

19
tr
fp
Ped.
21
mf
Ped.
Ped.
23
p
mf
mp
mp
Ped.
Ped.

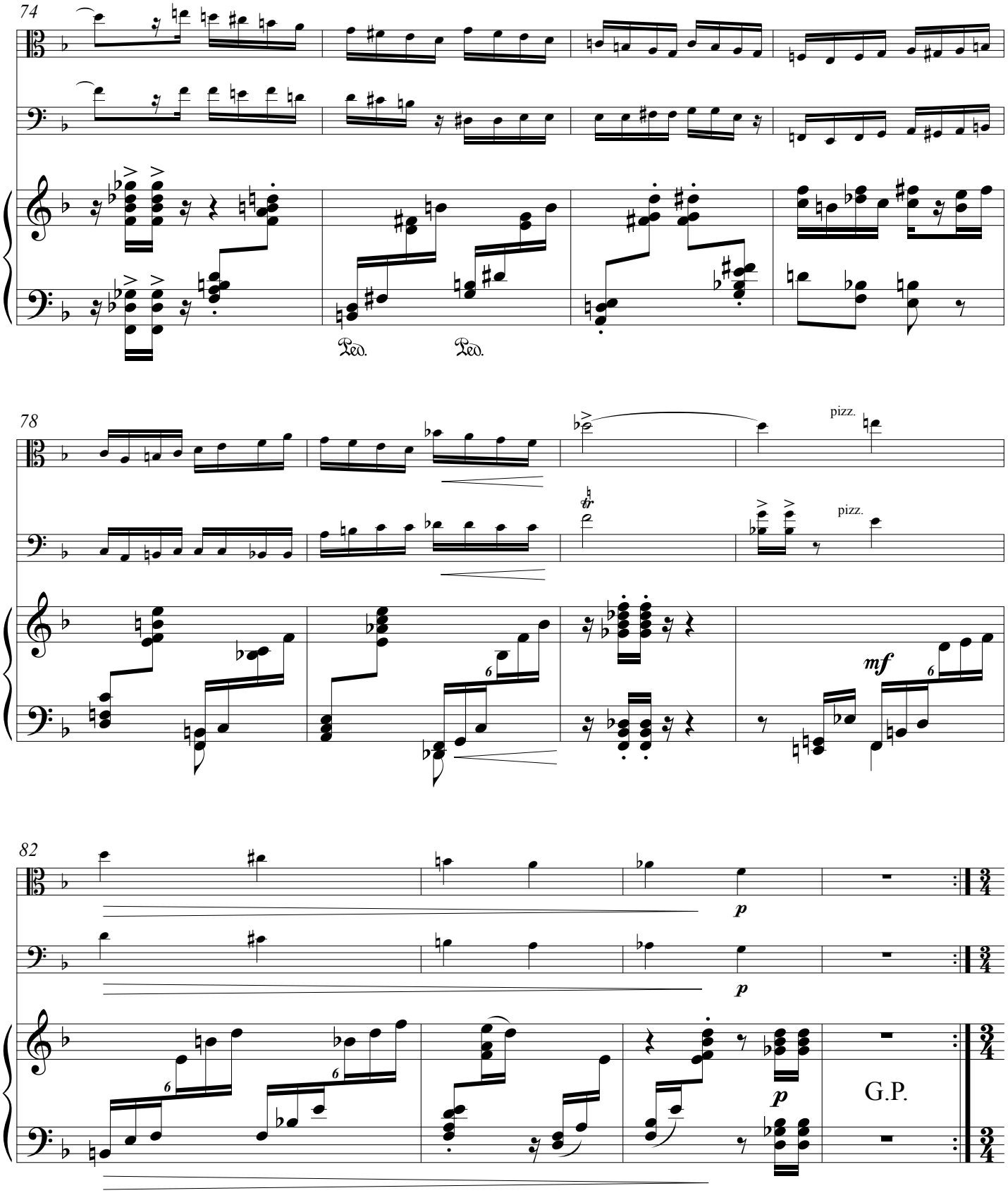

B
25
pizz.
arco
mp
mf
mf
mf
Ped.
28
mp
mf
mf
tr
f
f
f
30
ff
ff
accel.
a tempo
G.P.

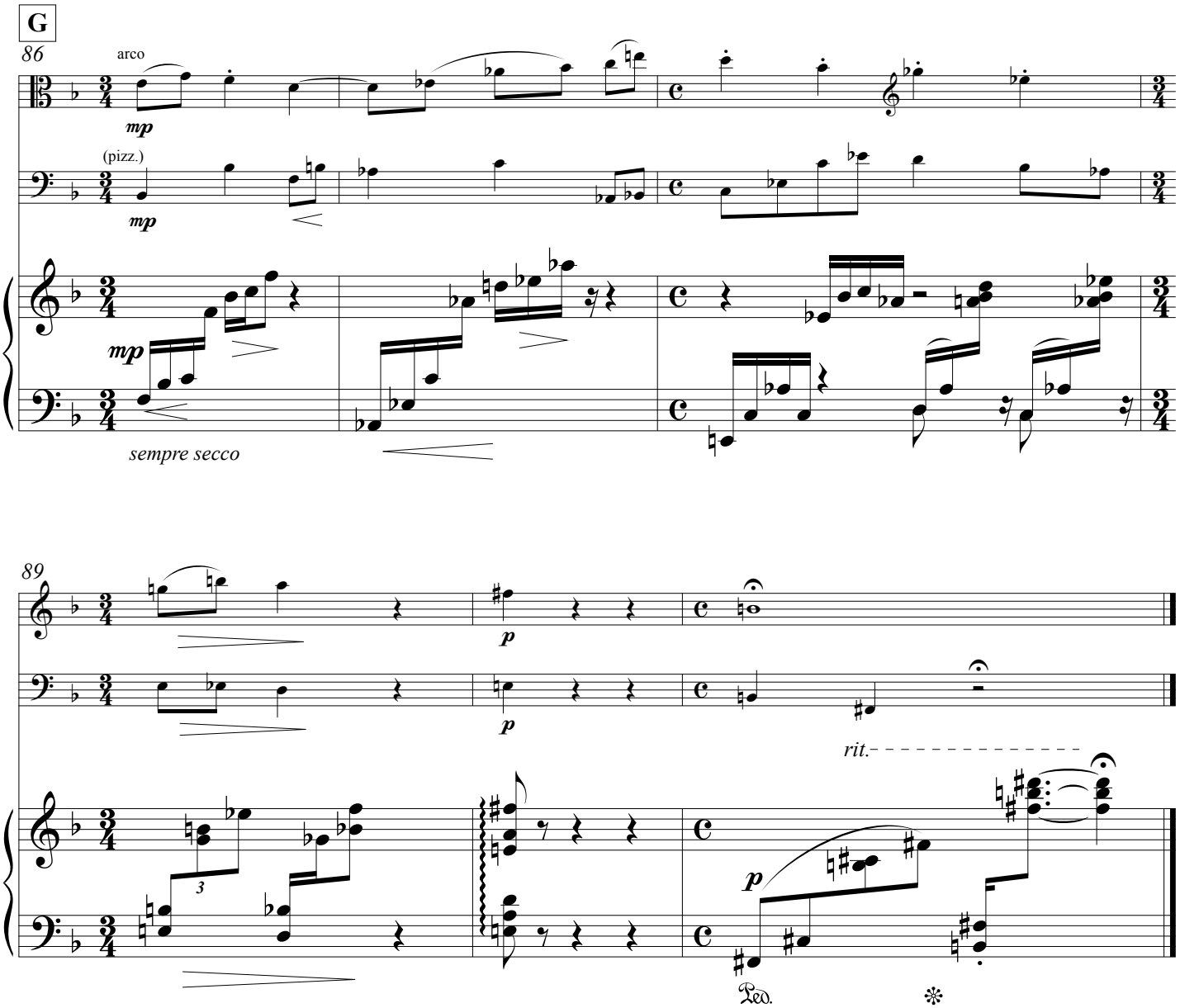

C
32
mp
pizz.
mp
mf
mp
mp
sempre secco
36
39
D
p sub.
mf
arco
mp
p sub.


42
mp
p
mf
45
mp
pp
48
E
f
tr
Ped.
Ped.


51
54
58
p
mp
mf


62
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
66
F
mp
mp
mp
Ped.
70
f
f
f


74
Ped.
Ped.
78
pizz.
pizz.
mf
82
p
p
p
G.P.


G
86
arco
mp
(pizz.)
mp
mp
sempre secco

89
p
p
rit.
3
p
Ped.