String Quartet No. 1
London

Music in three movements by

Nicholas Alexander Norton

September 2009

Program Note

I wrote this piece at the end of my time in London. I like to think of it as a reflection of both my impression of the city and my experience of living there.

It is dedicated to the close friends I made and those back home who I missed.

Performance Notes

From the audience's left to right, players should be seated violin I, viola, cello, violin II. If this causes an awkward break in a program then don't worry about it.

A performance should last just about eleven minutes.

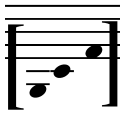
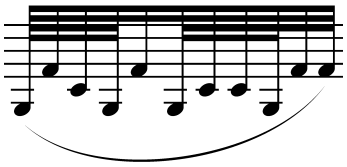
Headless stems are used to clarify glissando durations.

A circle above a notehead indicates a natural harmonic on the written pitch, and will be preceeded by a Roman numeral denoting the string.

Artificial harmonics are notated in the conventional fashion, with a regular notehead denoting where to stop the string, and a diamond shaped one above indicating which node to touch. The sounding pitch is indicated in parenthesis.

In the natural harmonic glissandos in the second movement, the clarity of sound of the erratic leaps between high, close together partials and more stable ones is more important than the actual notated pitches and rhythms.

Pitches in brackets in the third movement are to be played as fast as possible (unless marked with a rallentando), and in a random, constantly changing order. Though very fast, the durations given to each note should be slightly irregular. If only two notes are shown, their pattern should constantly change.

 for instance, denotes a pattern such as: 

Special symbols used, in order of appearance:

= Bartok/snap pizzicato

= Left hand pizzicato

= Col legno, on two strings behind the bridge

= Play a very high but indeterminate pitch

= Bow the tailpiece

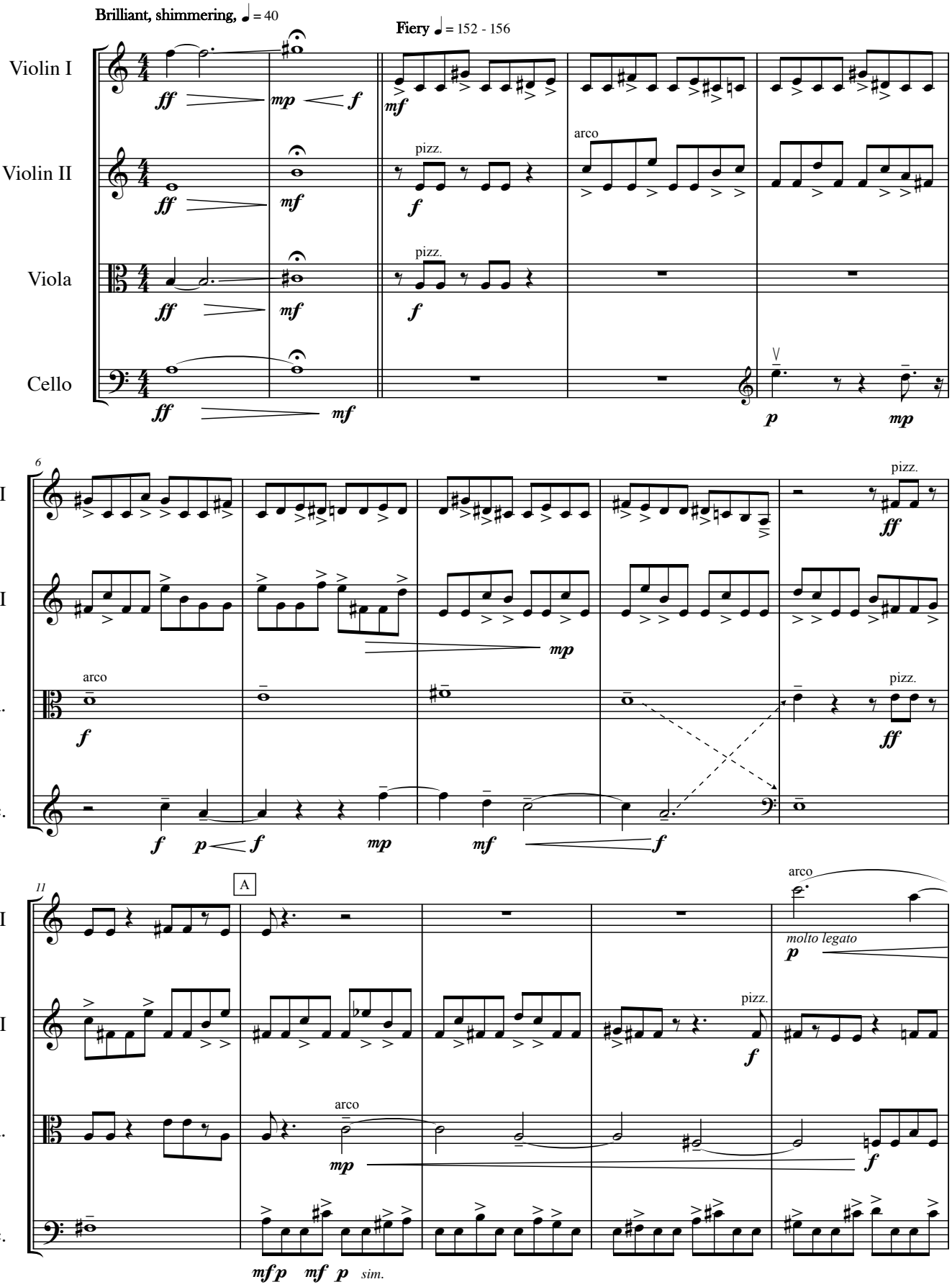
String Quartet No. 1

London

Score

I

Nick Norton



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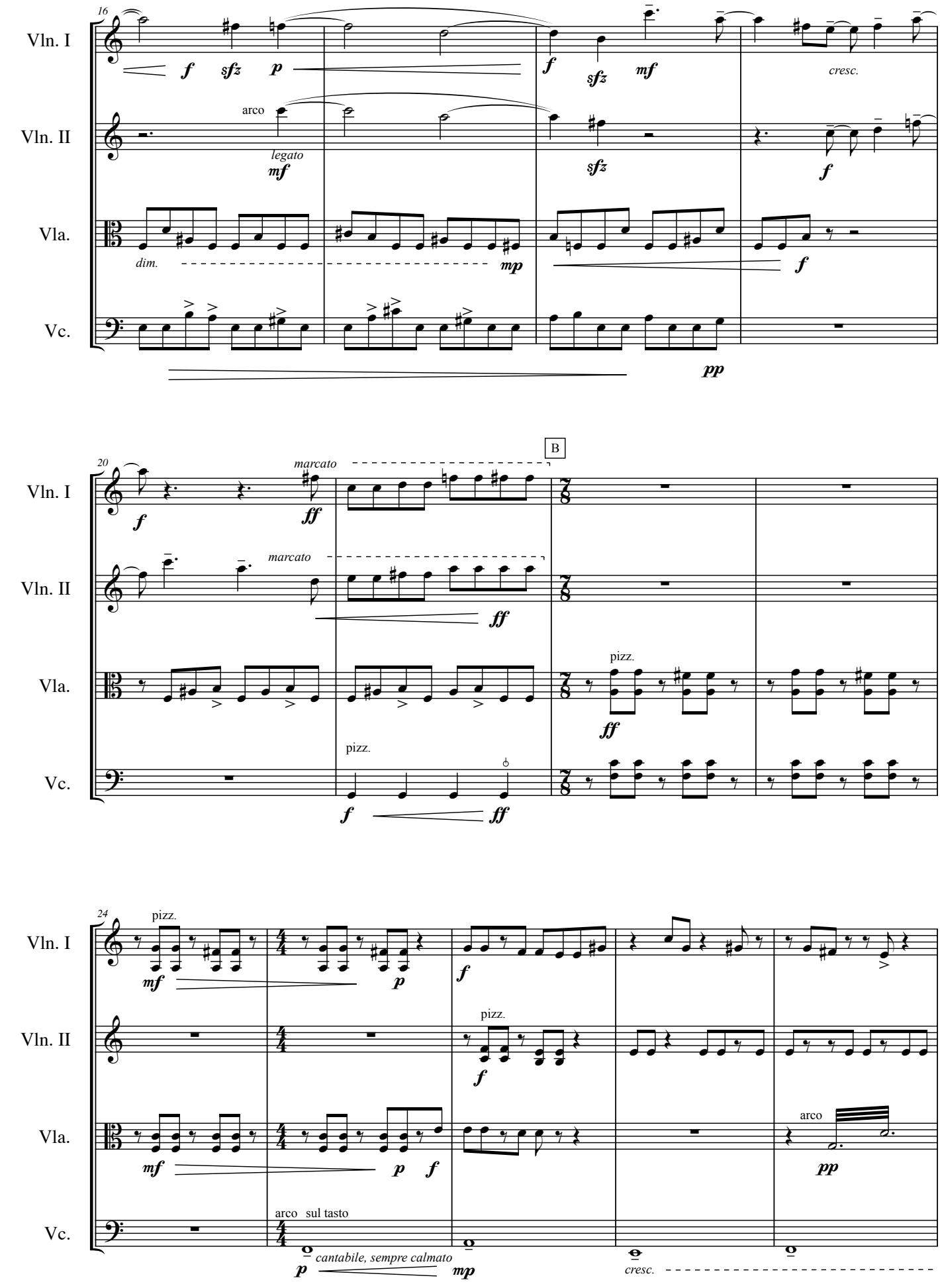
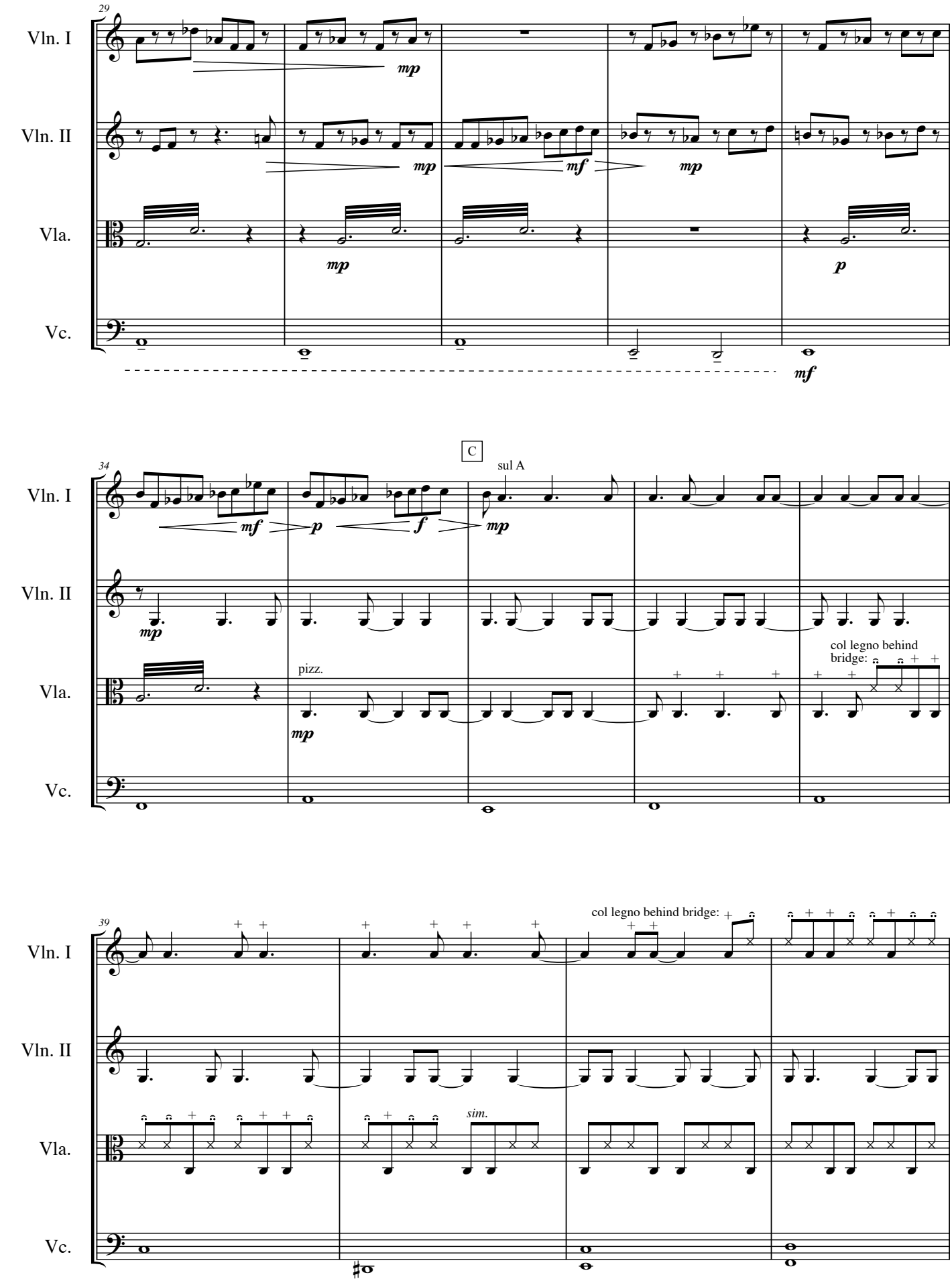
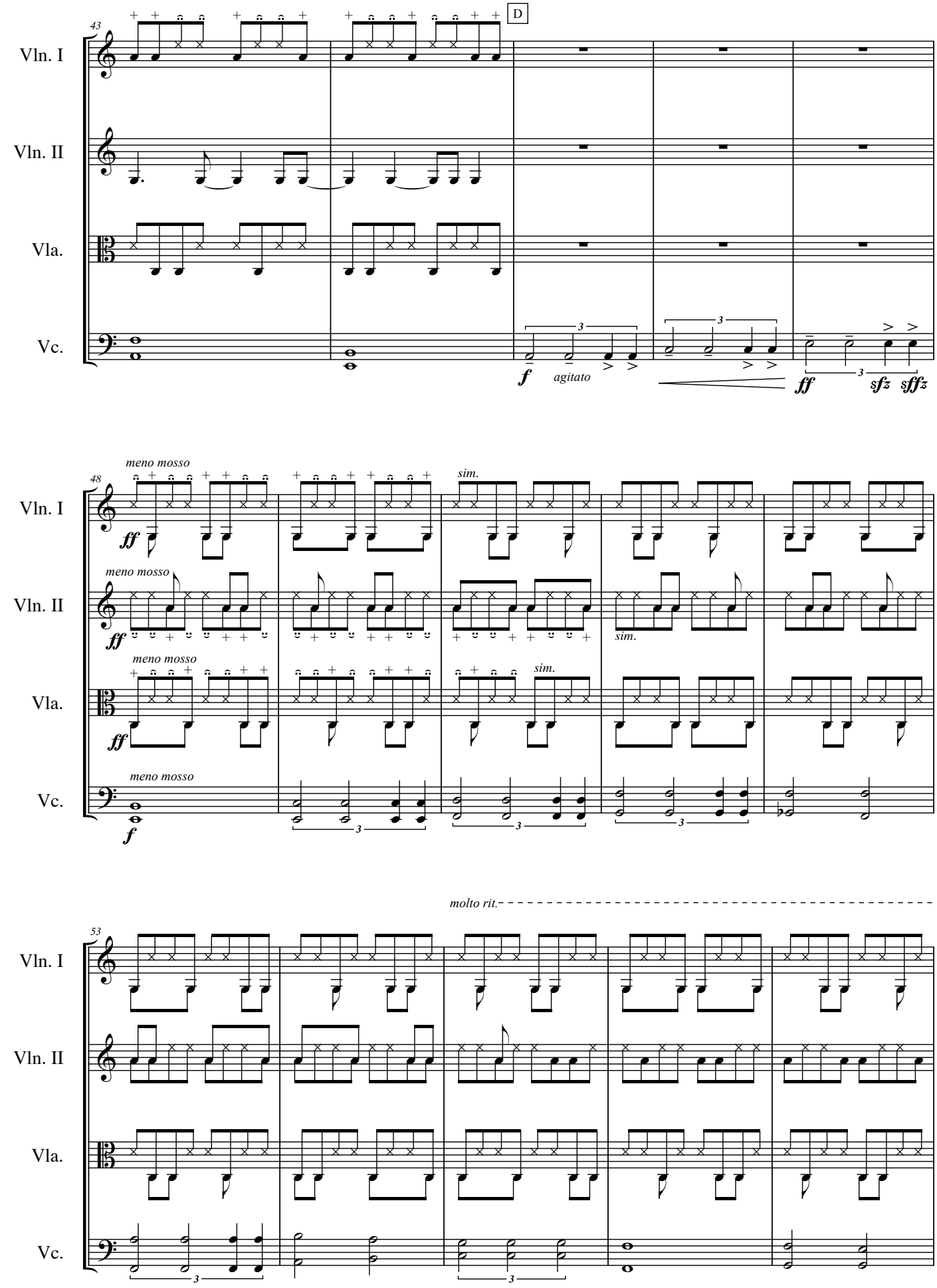
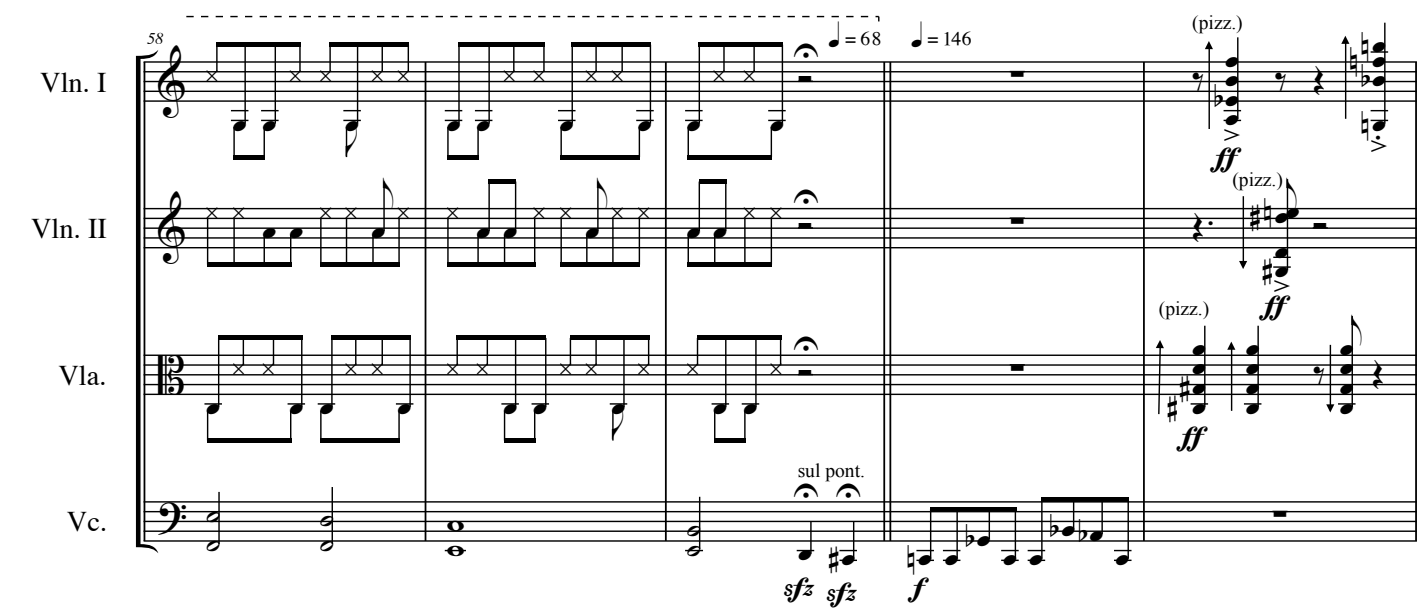
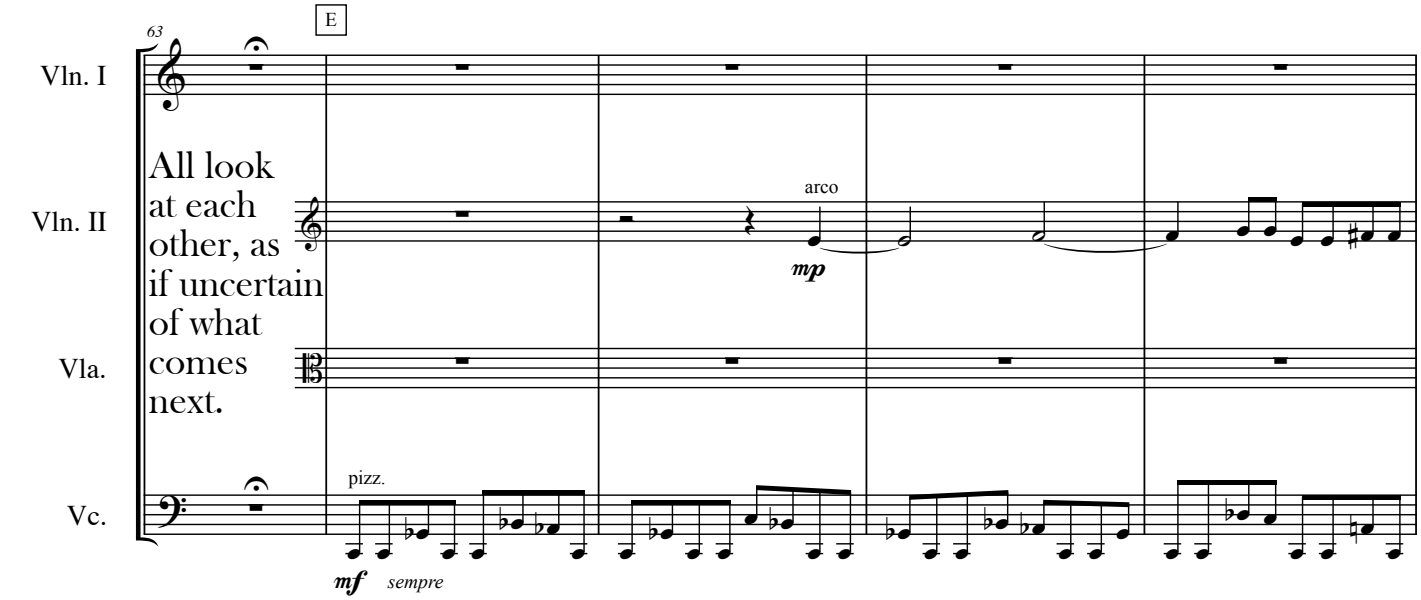
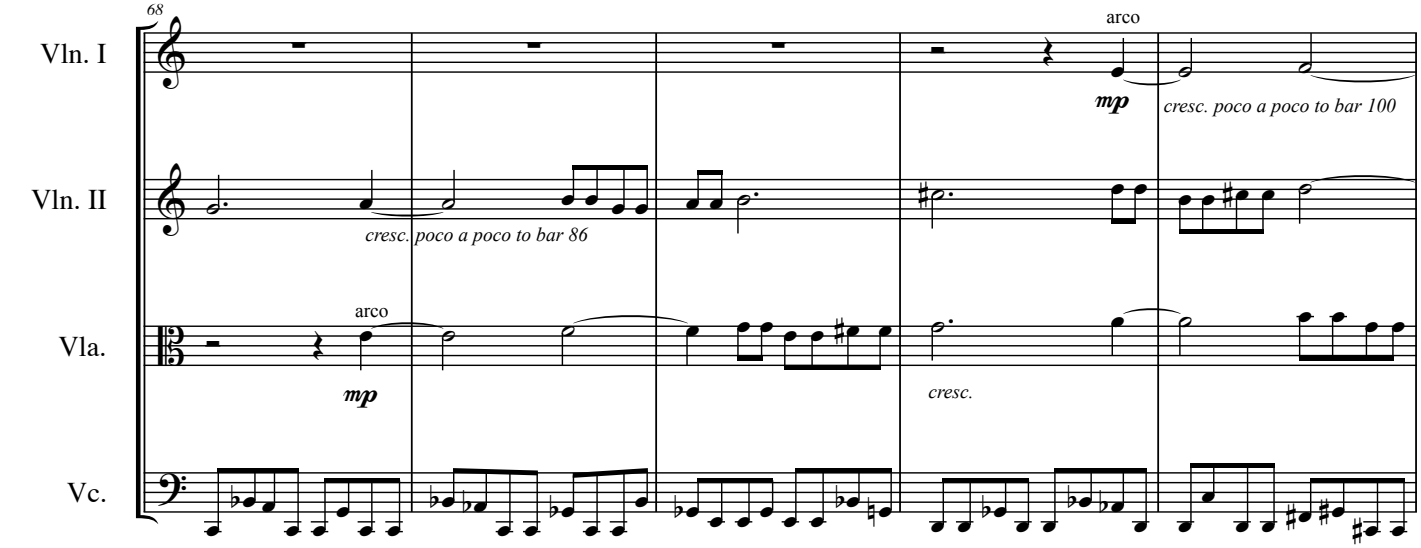

16
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
f sfz p
f sfz mf
cresc.
arco
legato
mf
sfz
f
dim.
mp
f
pp
20
B
marcato
ff
marcato
ff
pizz.
ff
pizz.
f ff
24
pizz.
mf p
f
pizz.
f
mf p f
arco
pp
arco sul tasto
p cantabile, sempre calmato
mp
cresc.

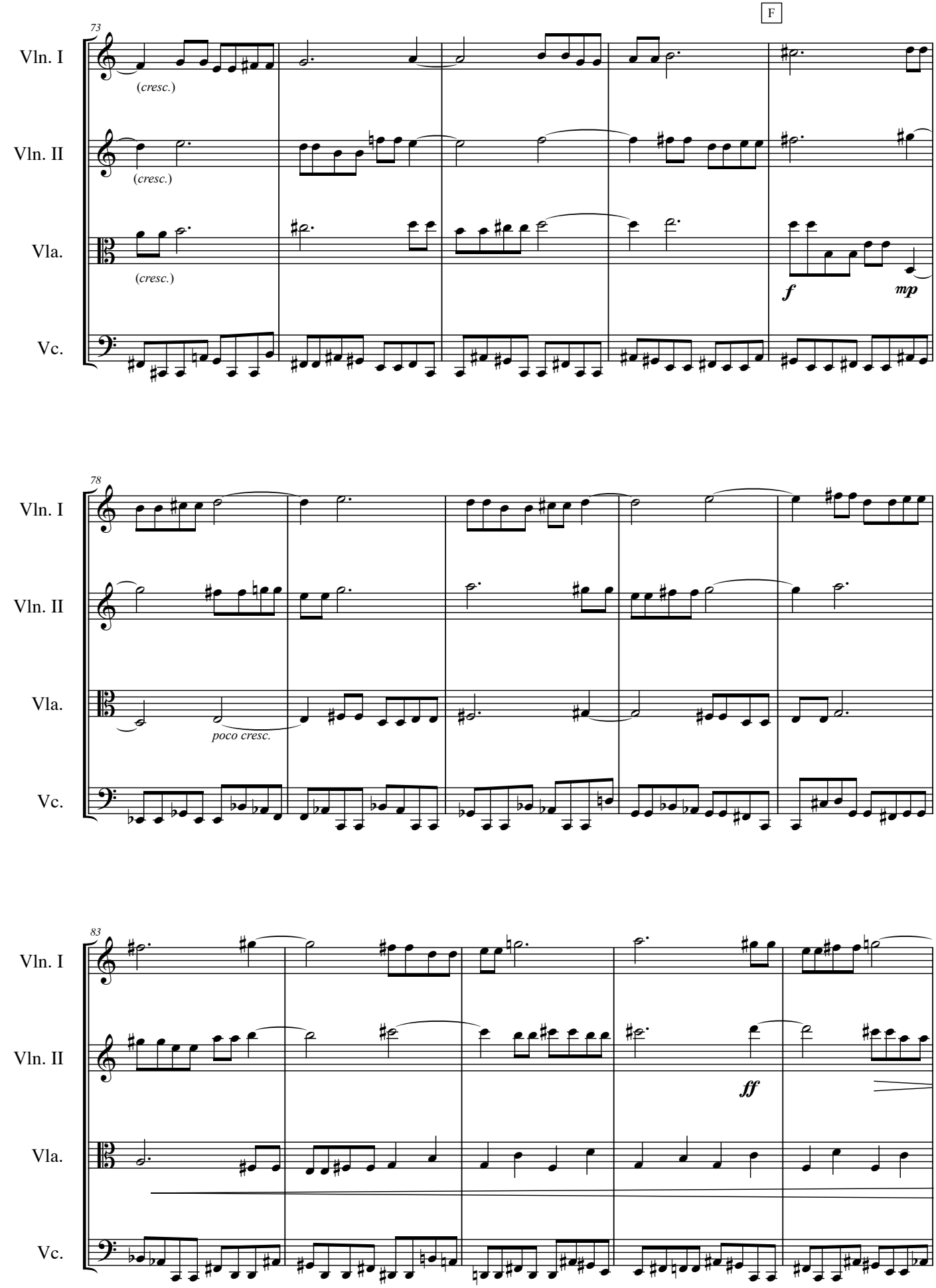

29
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
mf
p
34
C
sul A
pizz.
col legno behind bridge:
39
sim.

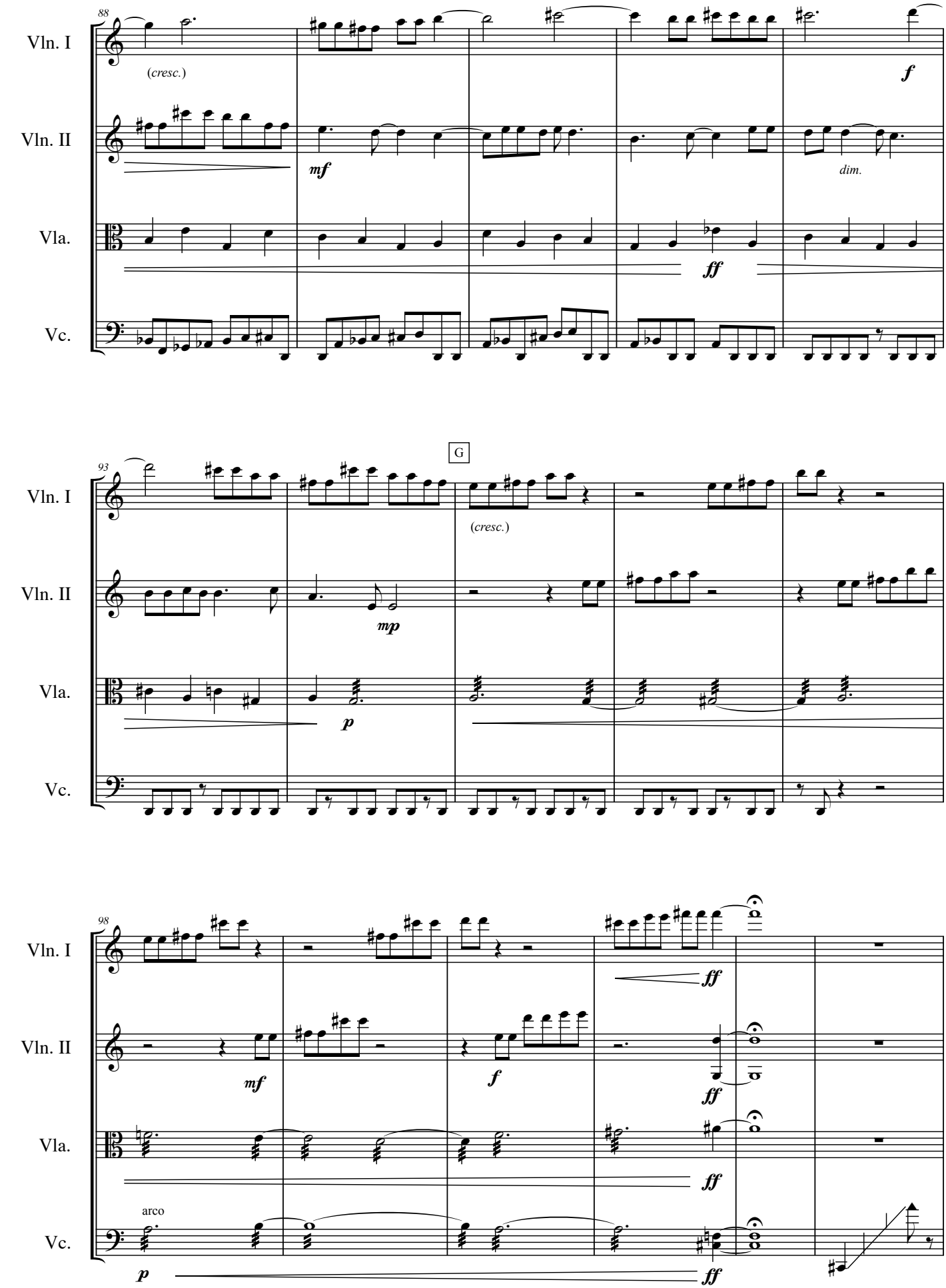

43
D
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
f
agitato
ff
sfz
sfffz
48
meno mosso
sim.
molto rit.
53

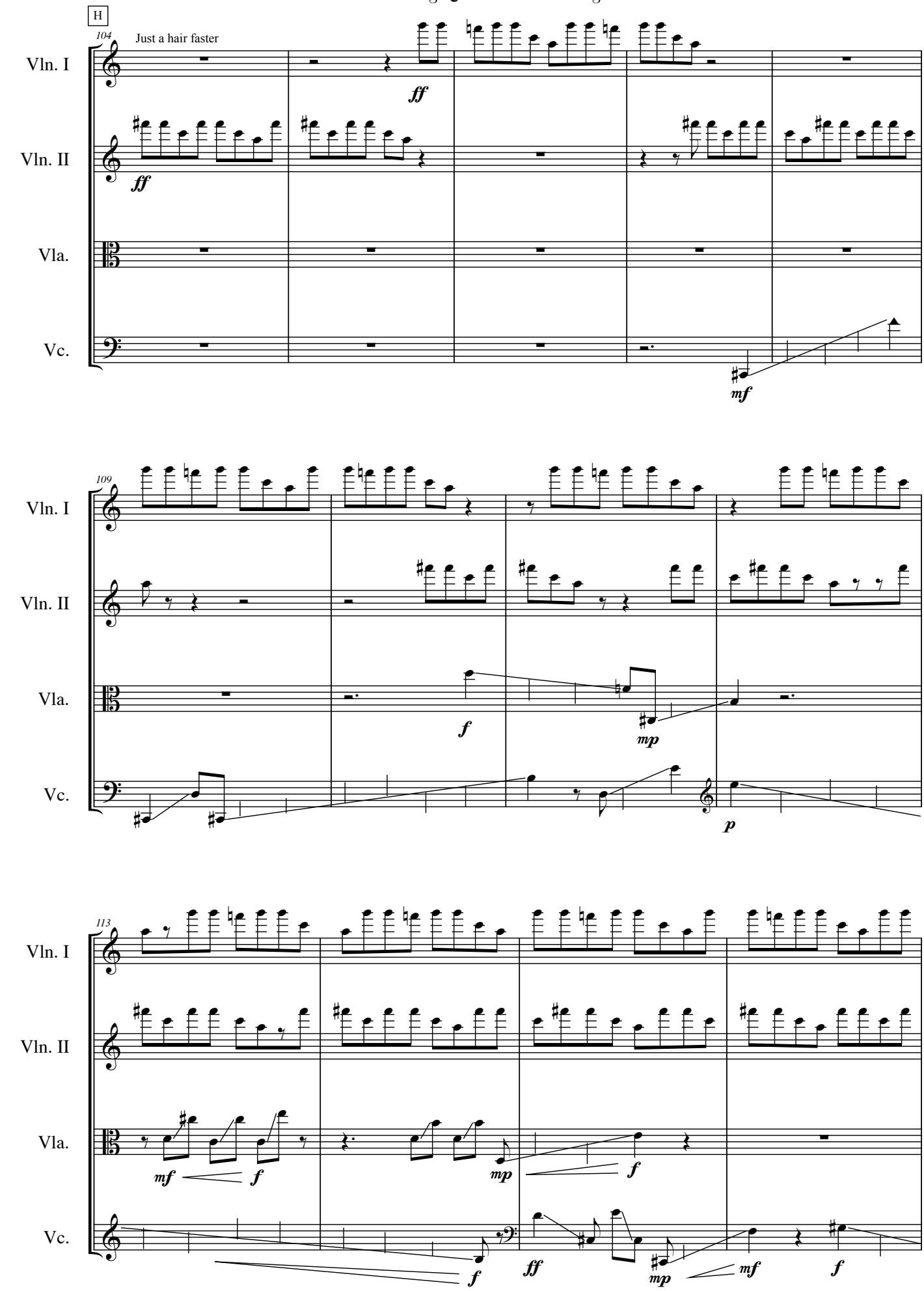

58
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
♩ = 68
♩ = 146
(pizz.)
ff
(pizz.)
ff
(pizz.)
ff
sul pont.
sfz
sfz
f

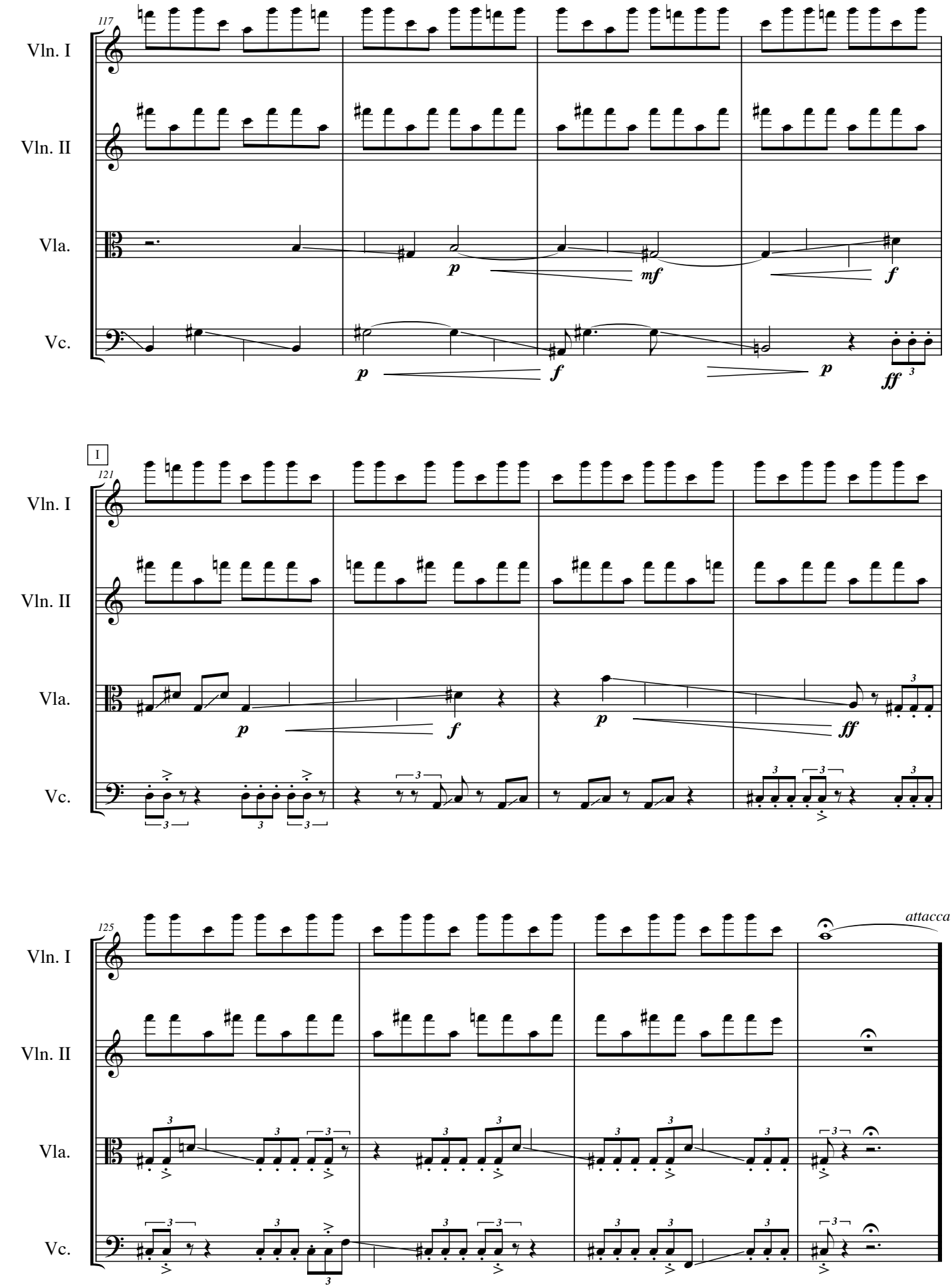

63
E
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
All look at each other, as if uncertain of what comes next.
arco
mp
pizz.
mf
sempre


68
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
mp
cresc. poco a poco to bar 100
cresc. poco a poco to bar 86
arco
mp
cresc.

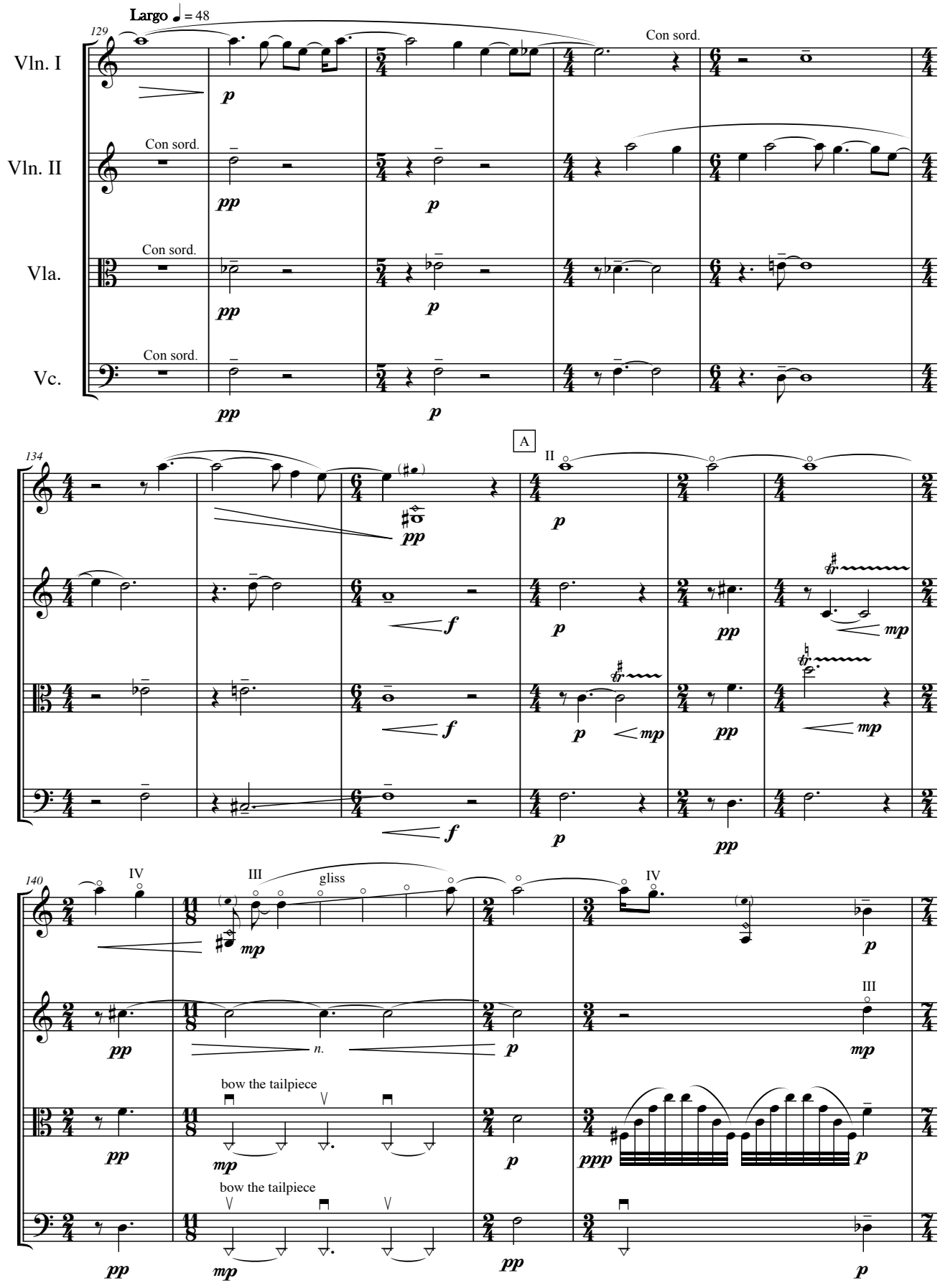

F
73
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
(cresc.)
(cresc.)
(cresc.)
f
mp
78
poco cresc.
83
ff

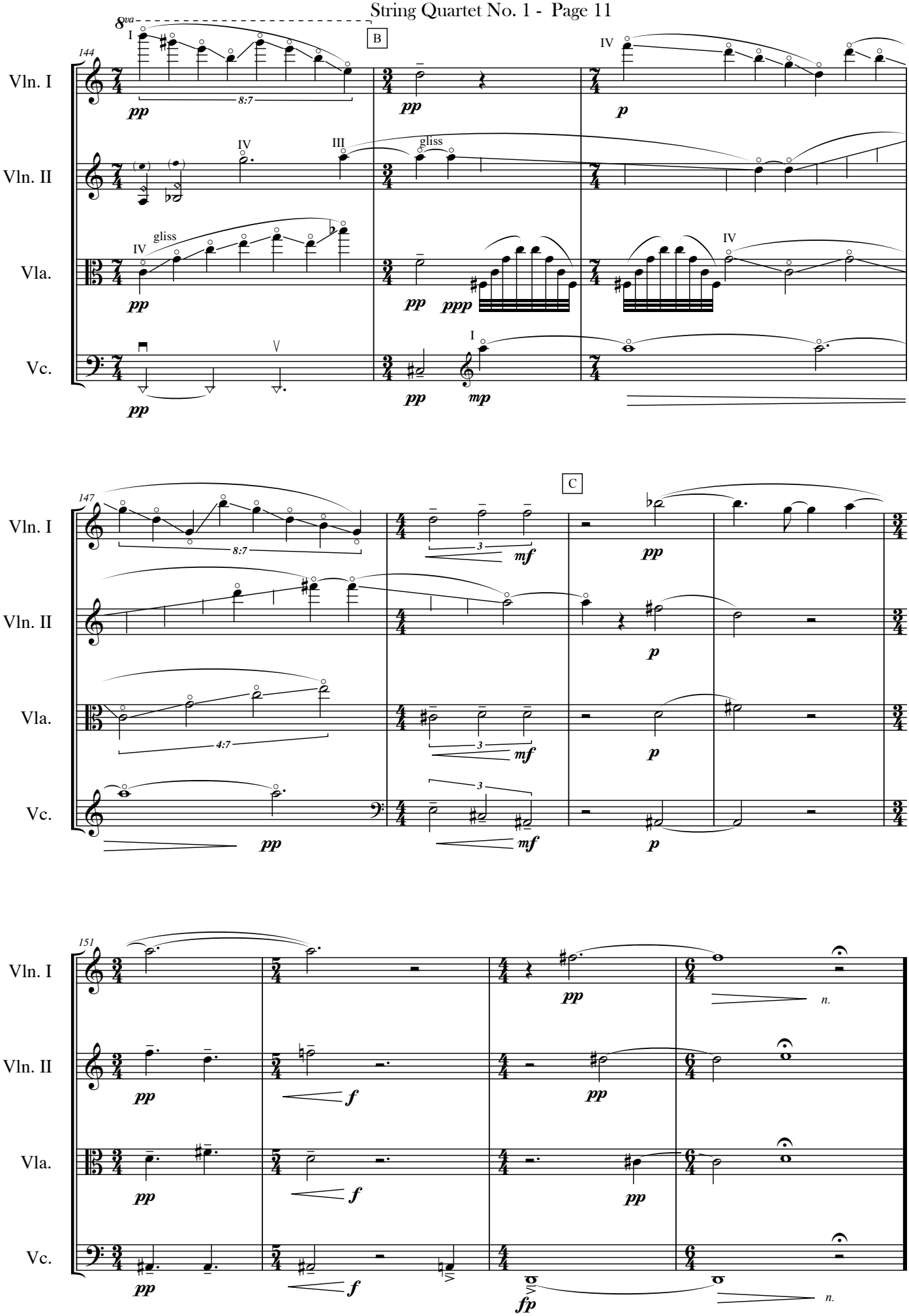

88
Vln. I
(cresc.)
f
Vln. II
mf
dim.
Vla.
ff
Vc.
93
G
Vln. I
(cresc.)
Vln. II
mp
Vla.
p
Vc.
98
Vln. I
ff
Vln. II
mf
f
ff
Vla.
ff
Vc.
arco
p
ff


H
104
Just a hair faster
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ff
ff
mf
109
f
mp
p
113
mf
f
mp
f
f
ff
mp
mf
f

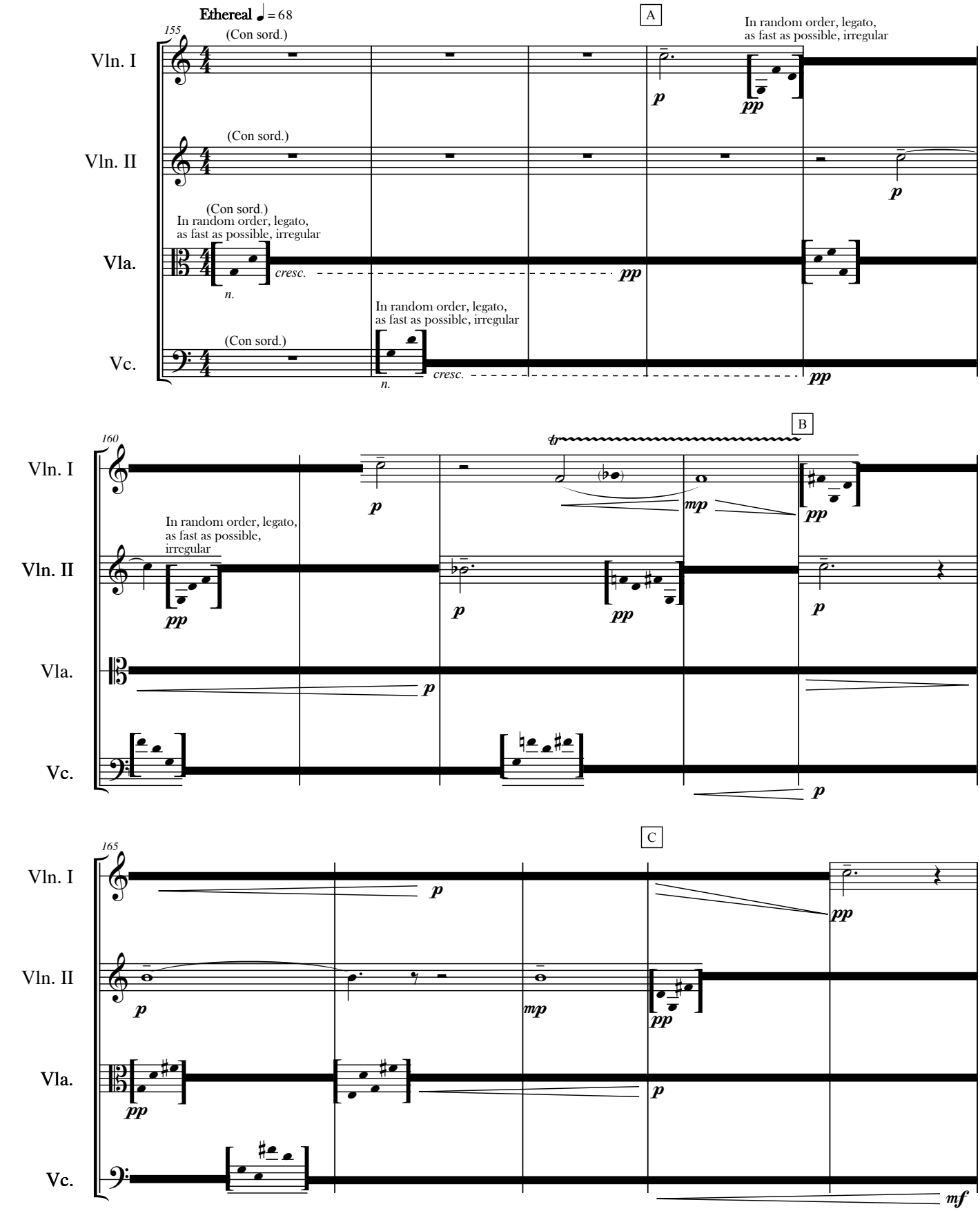

117
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
mf
f
p
f
p
ff
I
121
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
f
p
ff
125
attacca
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

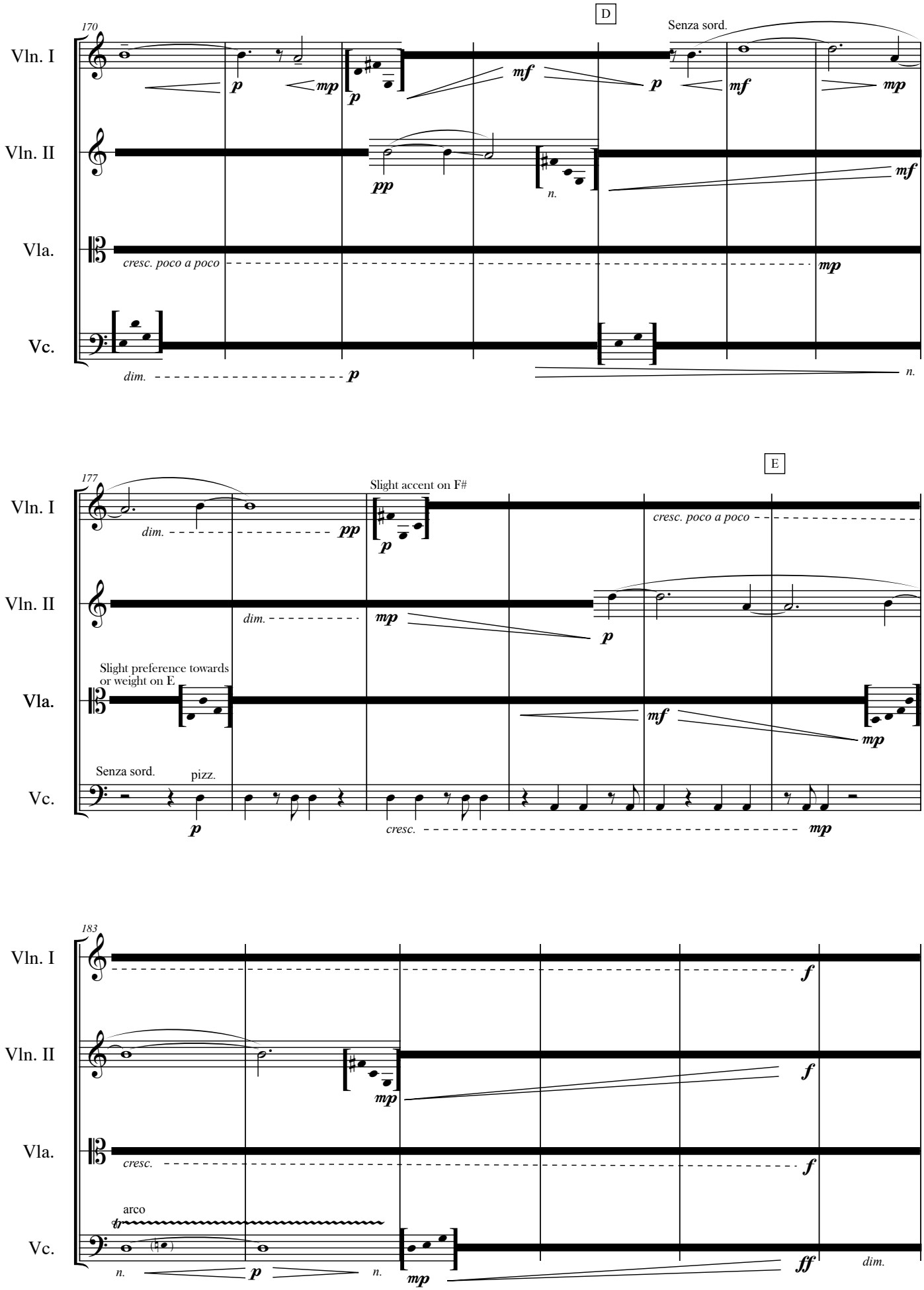
II

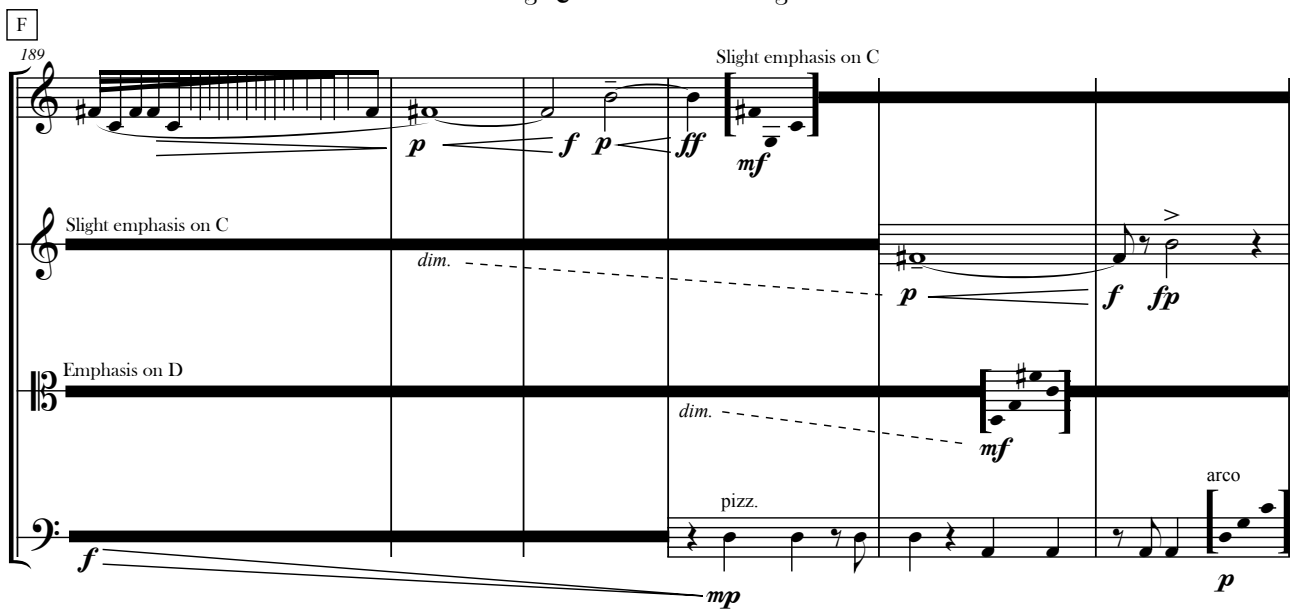

Largo ♩ = 48
129
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Con sord.
pp
p
134
A
II
f
mp
140
IV
III
gliss
bow the tailpiece
ppp
n.

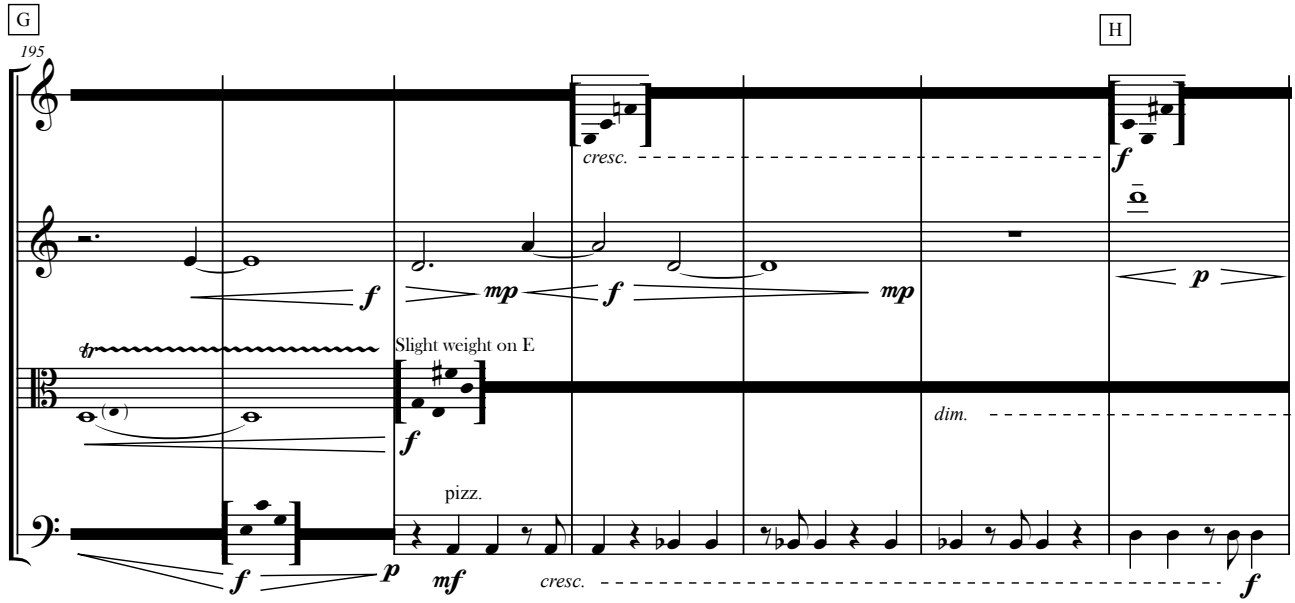

8va
B
144
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
I
IV
III
gliss
pp
p
ppp
mp
147
C
8:7
4:7
3
mf
151
f
fp
n.

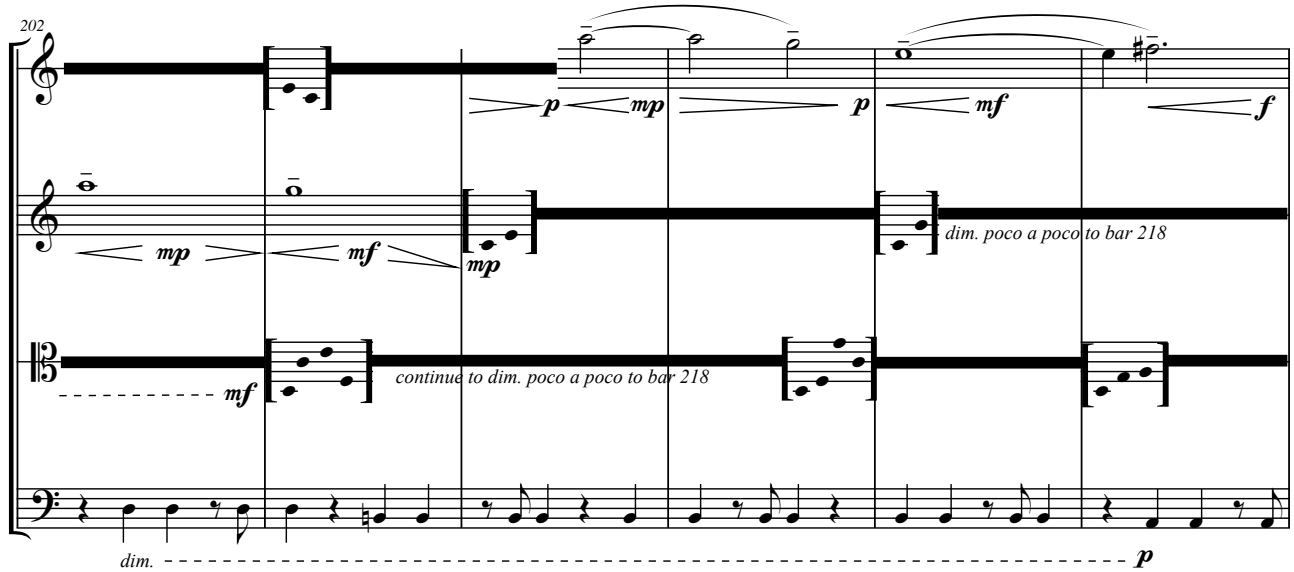
III

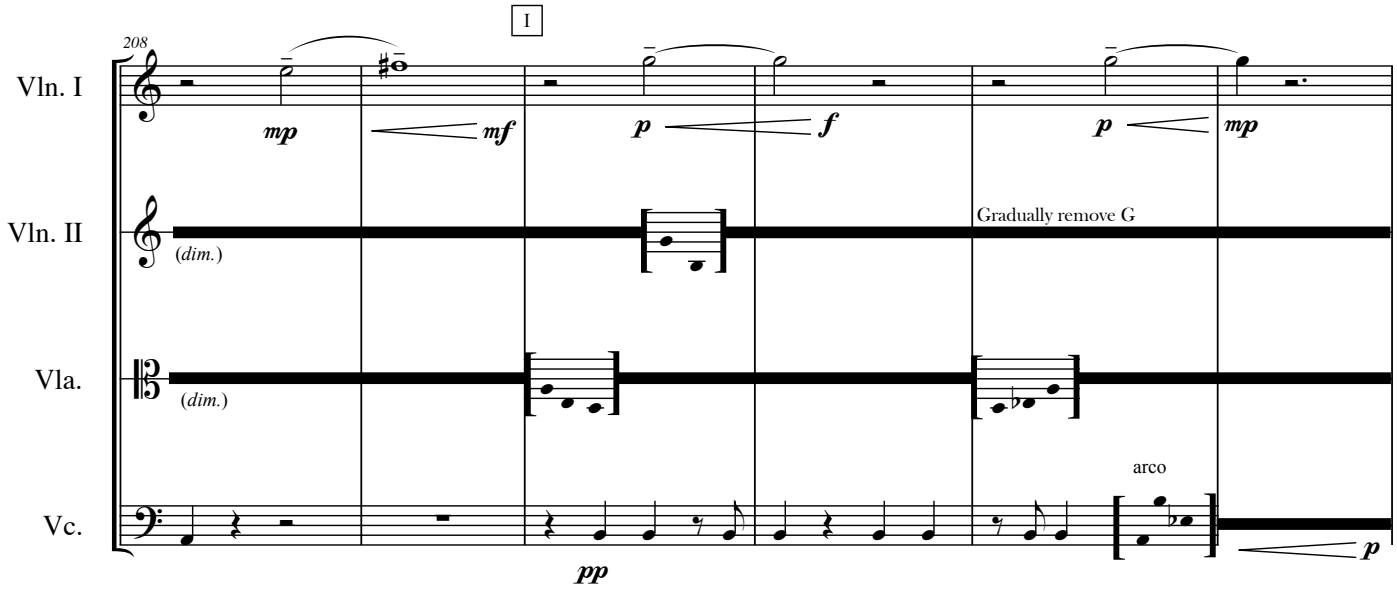

Ethereal ♩= 68
155
(Con sord.)
A
In random order, legato, as fast as possible, irregular
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
cresc.
n.
160
B
tr
In random order, legato, as fast as possible, irregular
165
C
mf

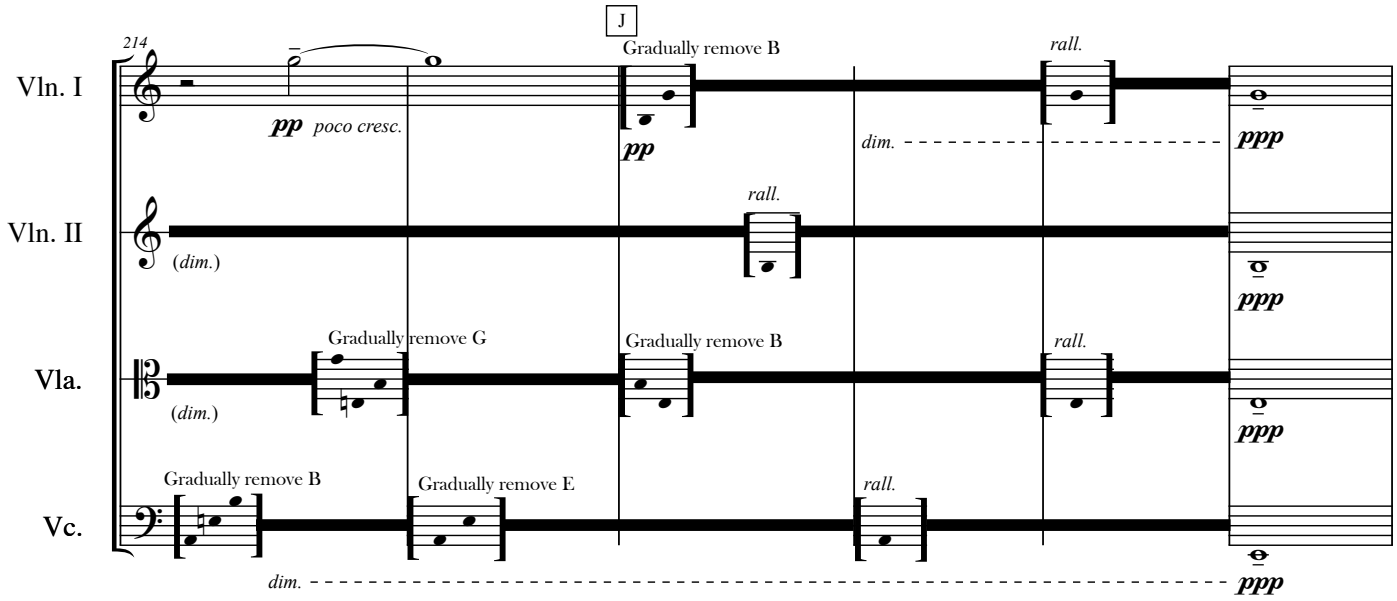

D
170
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Senza sord.
cresc. poco a poco
dim.
n.
E
177
Slight accent on F#
Slight preference towards or weight on E
Senza sord.
pizz.
cresc.
183
arco
tr

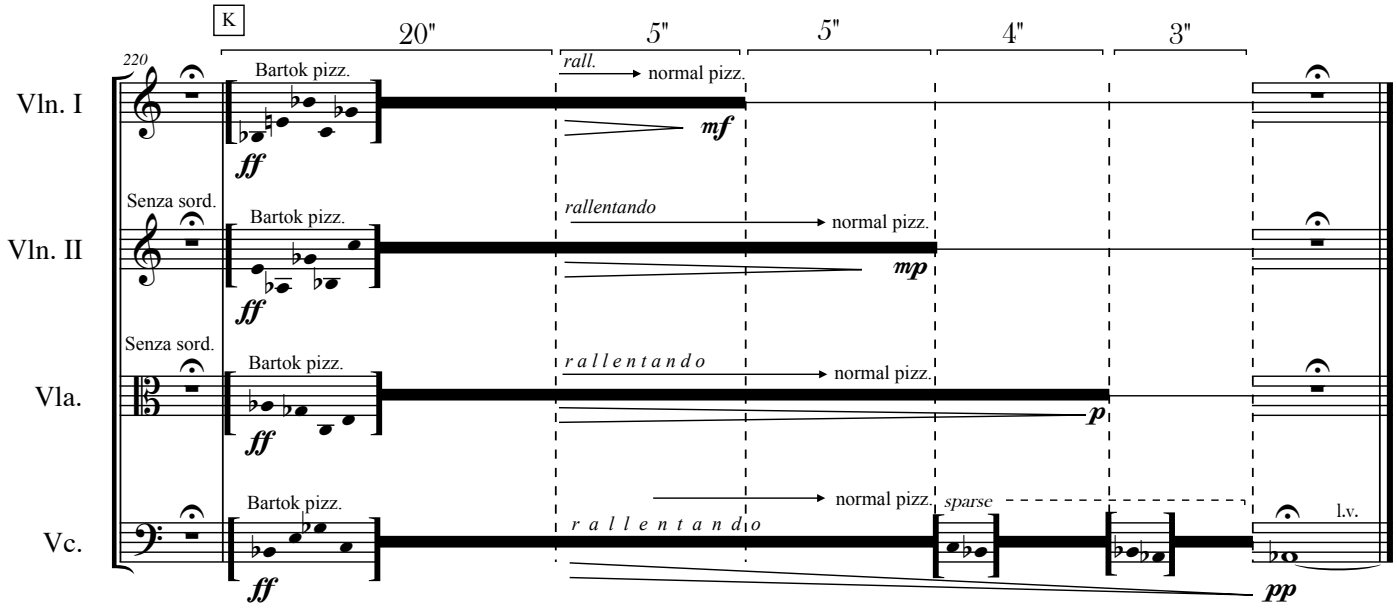

F
189
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Slight emphasis on C
Slight emphasis on C
dim.
Emphasis on D
dim.
pizz.
arco


G
H
195
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
cresc.
Slight weight on E
dim.
pizz.
cresc.


202
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
dim. poco a poco to bar 218
continue to dim. poco a poco to bar 218
dim.


I
208
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
mf
p
f
p
mp
(dim.)
Gradually remove G
(dim.)
arco
pp
p


J
214
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pp poco cresc.
Gradually remove B
pp
rall.
dim.
ppp
(dim.)
rall.
ppp
Gradually remove G
Gradually remove B
rall.
(dim.)
ppp
Gradually remove B
Gradually remove E
rall.
dim.
ppp


K
20"
5"
5"
4"
3"
220
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bartok pizz.
rall.
normal pizz.
ff
mf
Senza sord.
Bartok pizz.
rallentando
normal pizz.
ff
mp
Senza sord.
Bartok pizz.
rallentando
normal pizz.
ff
p
Bartok pizz.
normal pizz.
sparse
l.v.
rallentando
ff
pp