Cubic Deviations

from Brahms' ***Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel***

For Piano Quintet

Violin 1

for Electronic Music Readers

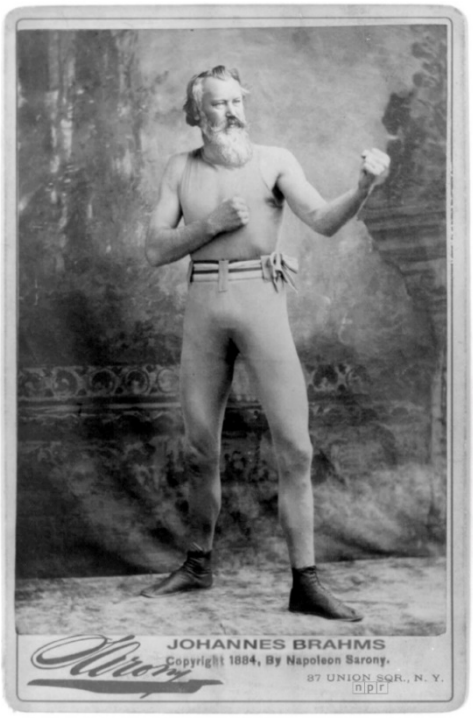
Bill Robinson

Cubic Deviations

from Brahms' *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel*
for Piano Quintet

Duration: about 25 minutes October 24, 2022—April 1, 2023

for Eric Pritchard and the Ciompi Quartet



I finished *Violin Concerto No. 2* for Eric Pritchard in 2018, and then a little cello quartet. After that, I found myself mysteriously unable to compose anything for four years. My muse up and left me, and I assumed that I had retired for good. In spring 2022, I started several months of revising old scores, and had three performances of older chamber music. This got me back in the groove, and in October 2022 I started up again, choosing the ensemble that is easiest for me to write for, piano quintet, and the easiest format, a variation on an existing piece. I've done such a variation twice before, for Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge* and for Vivaldi/Bach *Concerto for Four Violins/Harpsichords* (first movement only). This time I picked Brahms' *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel* for piano. That means that this work is *variations on variations on variations*, hence the title *Cubic Deviations*. This piano quintet is the basis of a version for full orchestra.

Handel was in his twenties when he wrote his original theme for harpsichord, and Brahms was 28. I am 68, and find it handy to borrow the youthful energy in my dotage.

There is a delicate balance in a process like this, where the composition can't be too close to the original, because then it's just a transcription and arrangement, but can't be too far away, because then what's the point? This piece follows the format of the Brahms original, although I have skipped three of the 25 variations. The initial statement of the theme is very close to Handel's original, with a few curve balls, and may deceive the audience into thinking this is a retrograde exercise in nostalgia. The first deviation should dispel that notion. This is a work of the 21st Century, written in my own style.

String parts are available in two versions; for printing on paper, or use with electronic music readers. Accidentals hold through the measure and not beyond, and do not apply to other octaves.

Bill Robinson

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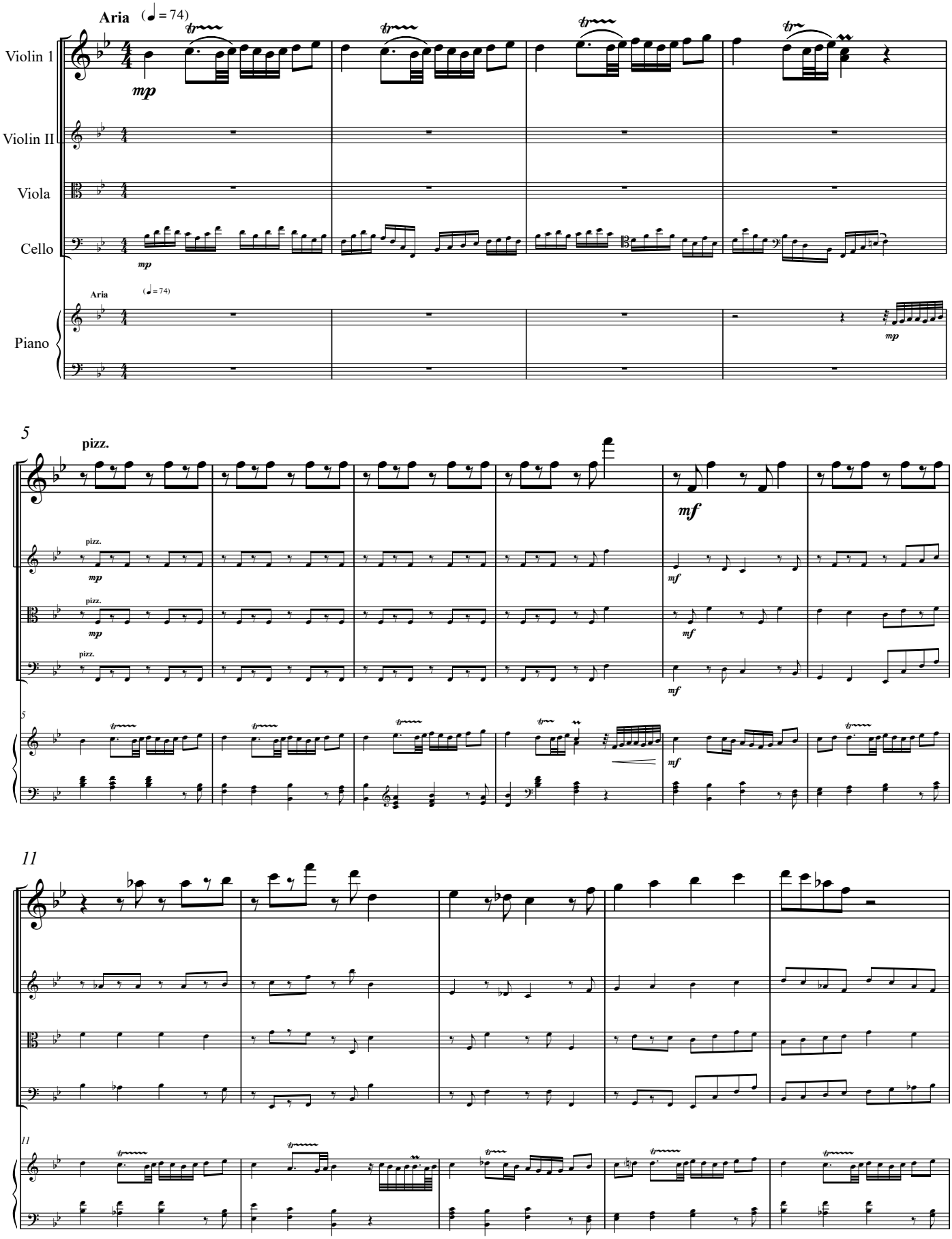
Cover art by Joseph Groupy, 1743 *Pugilist Brahms by NPR* billrobinsonmusic.com

Violin I Part for Electronic Music Readers

Cubic Deviations

[corrected to 7/21/23]

Bill Robinson



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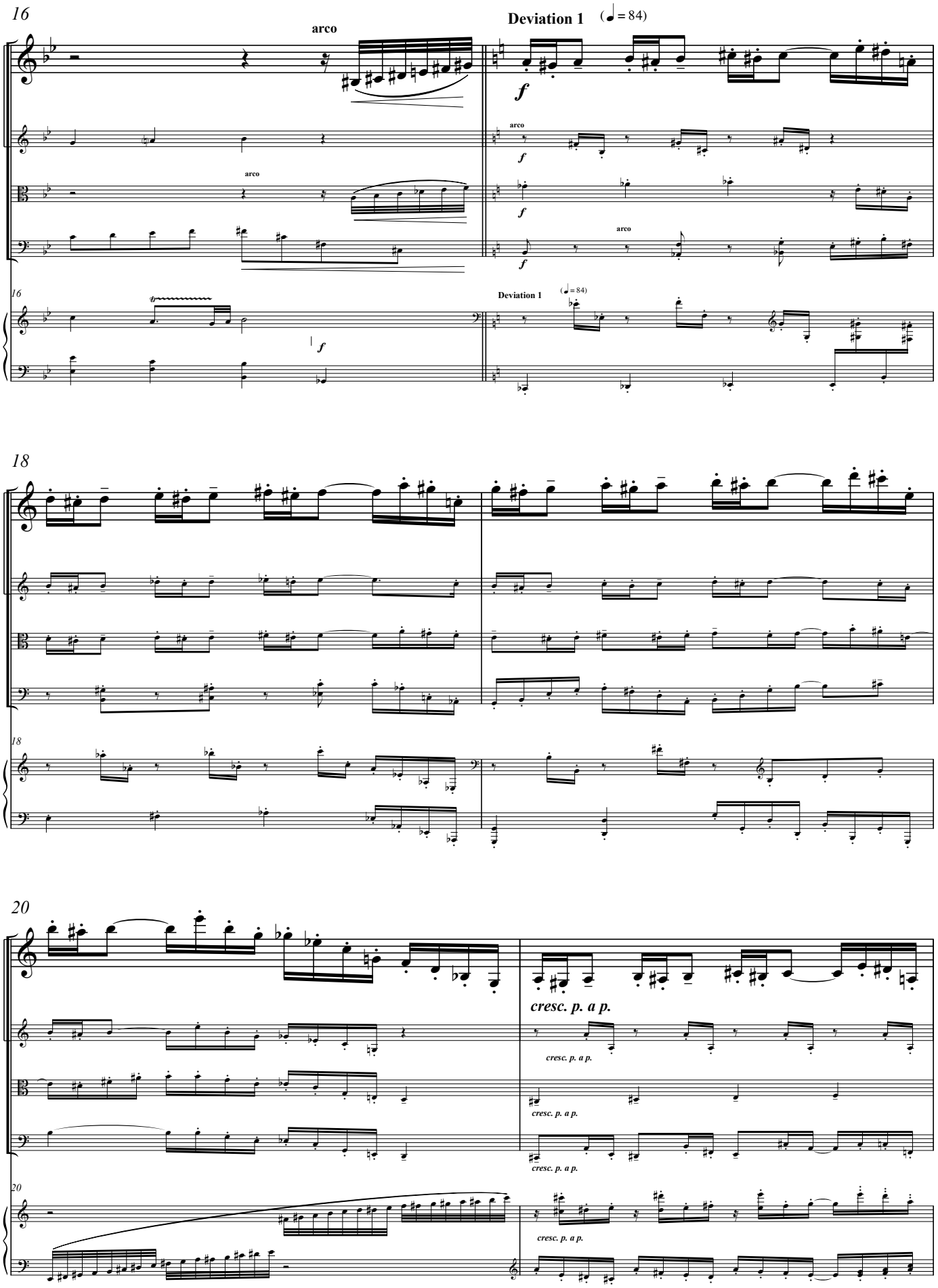
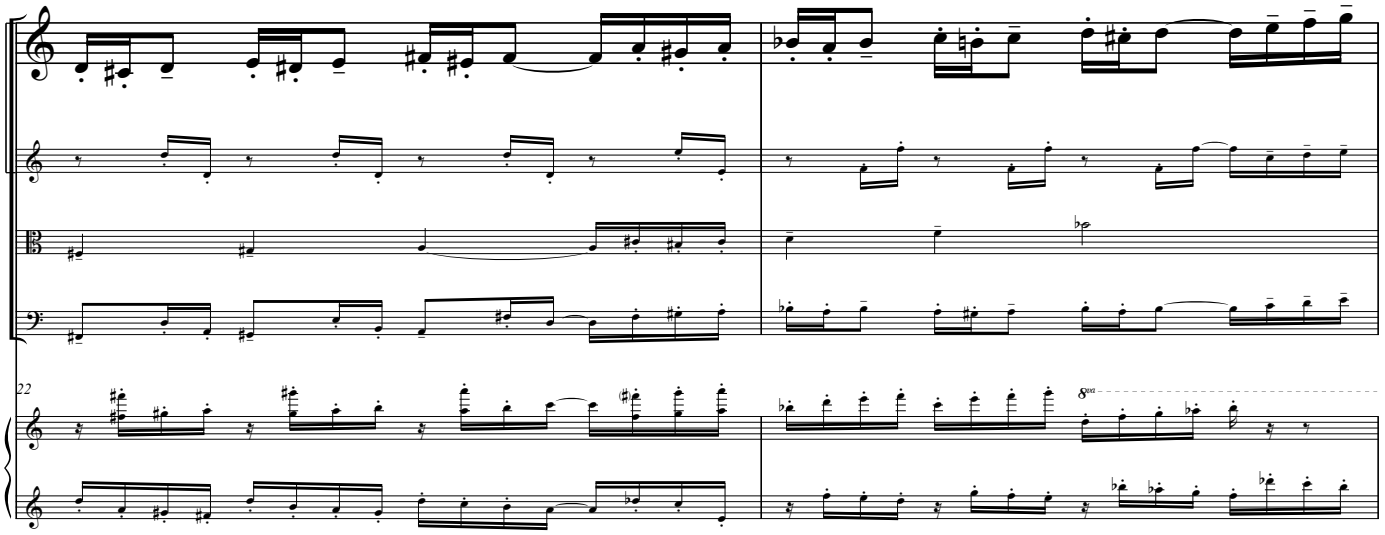

16
arco
Deviation 1
(♩= 84)
f
arco
arco
16
Deviation 1
(♩= 84)
f
18
18
20
cresc. p. a p.
cresc. p. a p.
cresc. p. a p.
cresc. p. a p.
20
cresc. p. a p.

22



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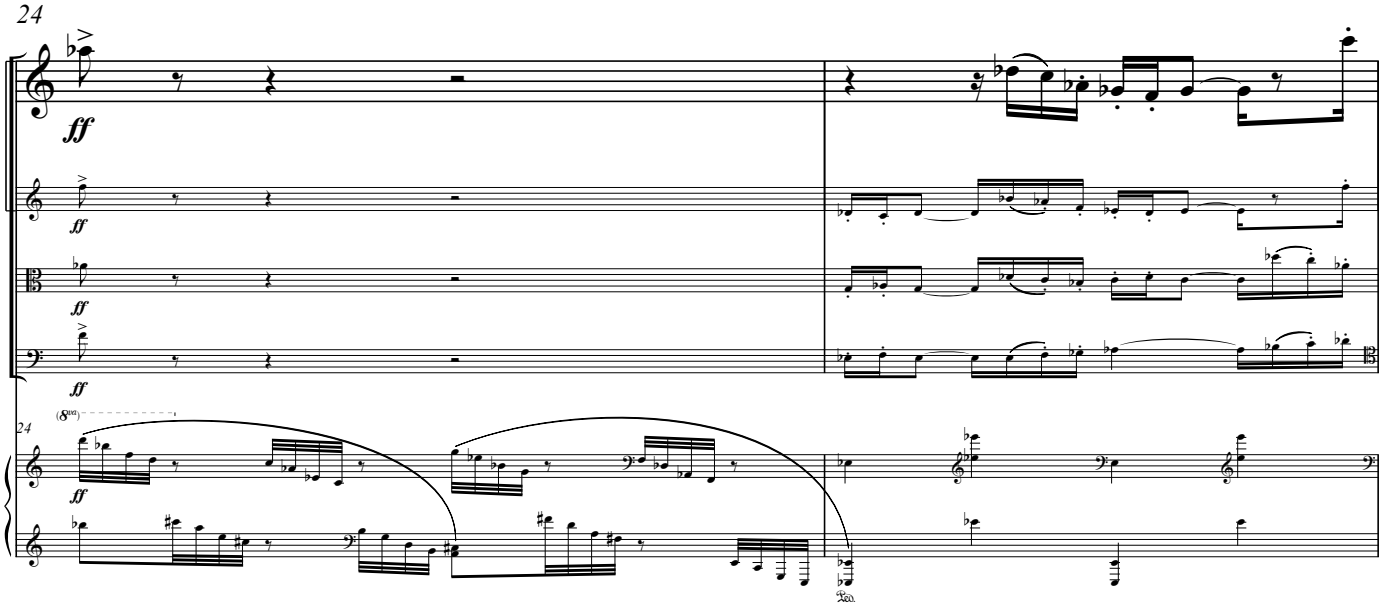

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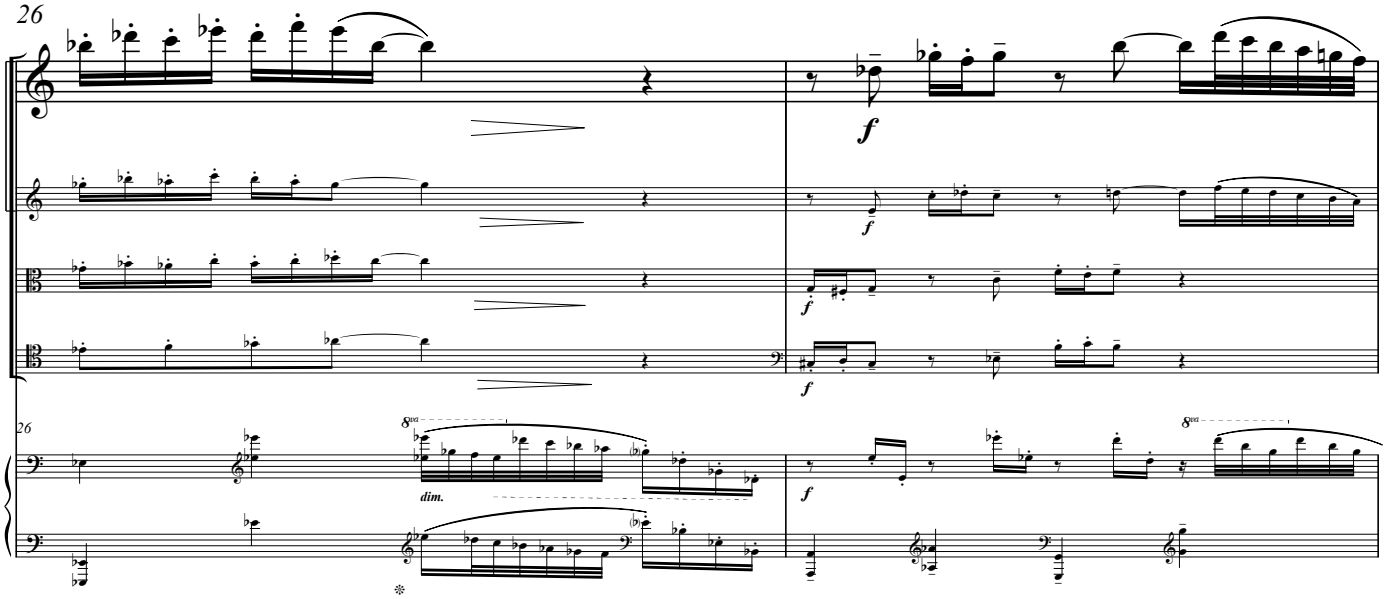
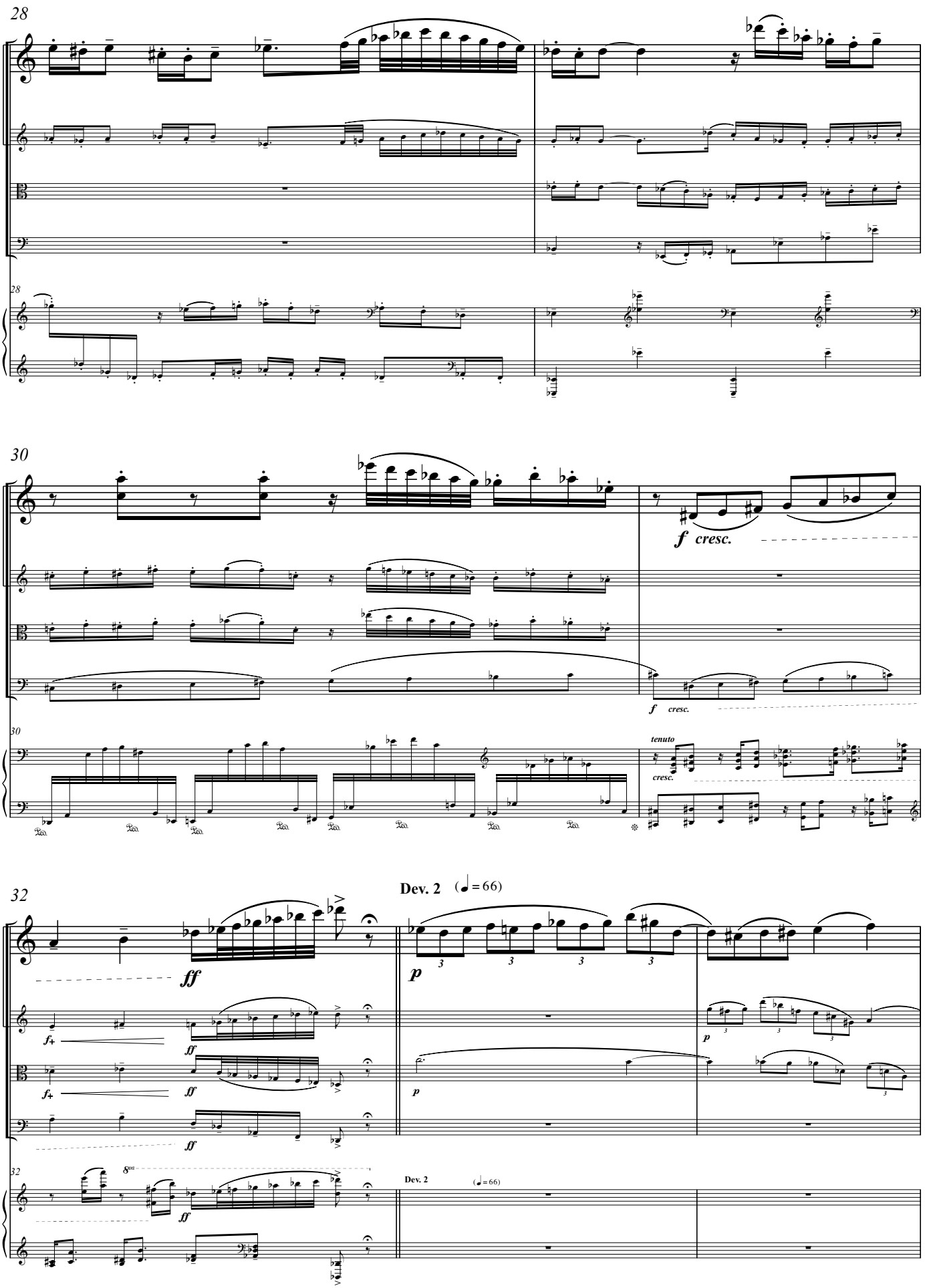
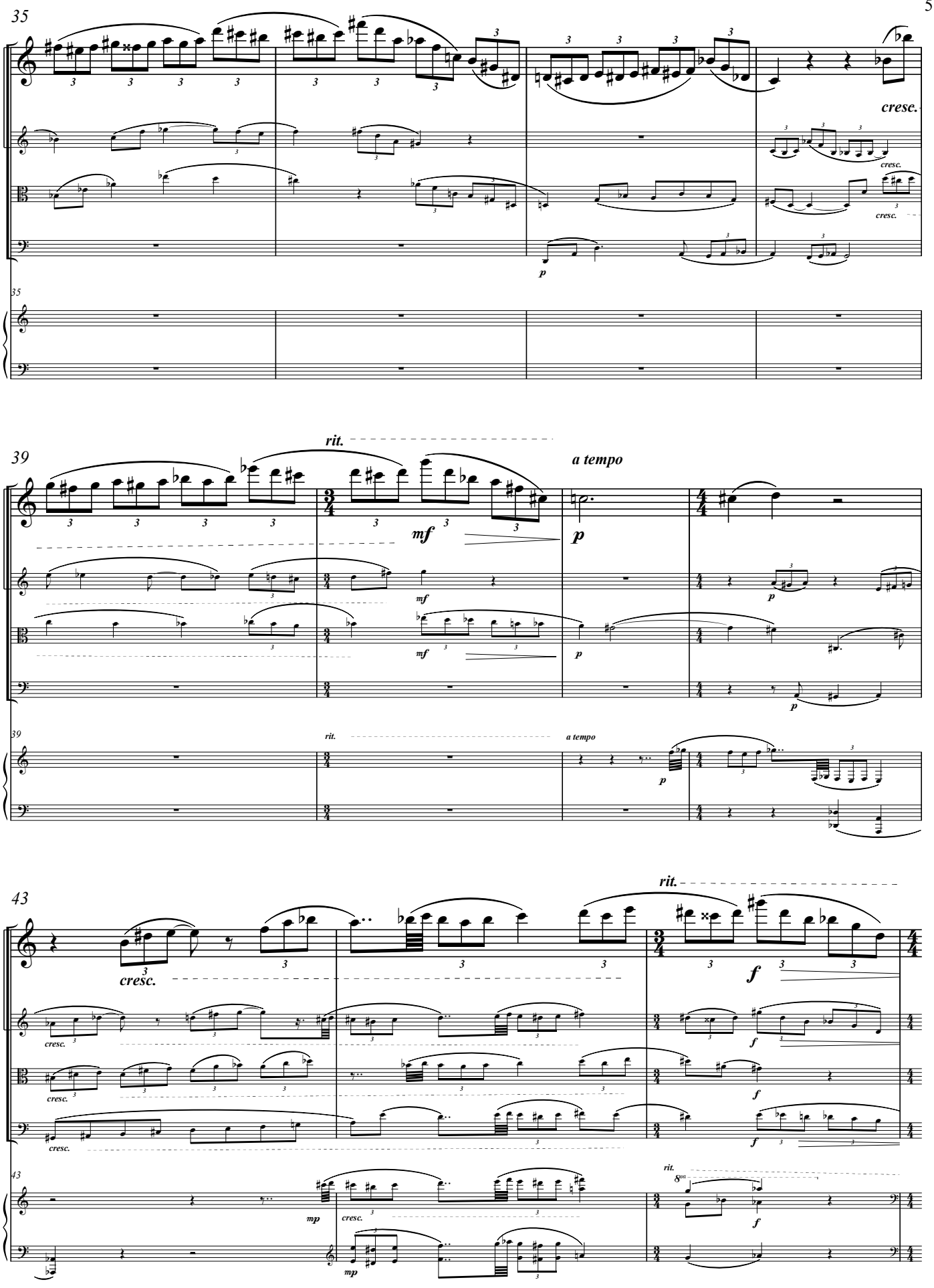
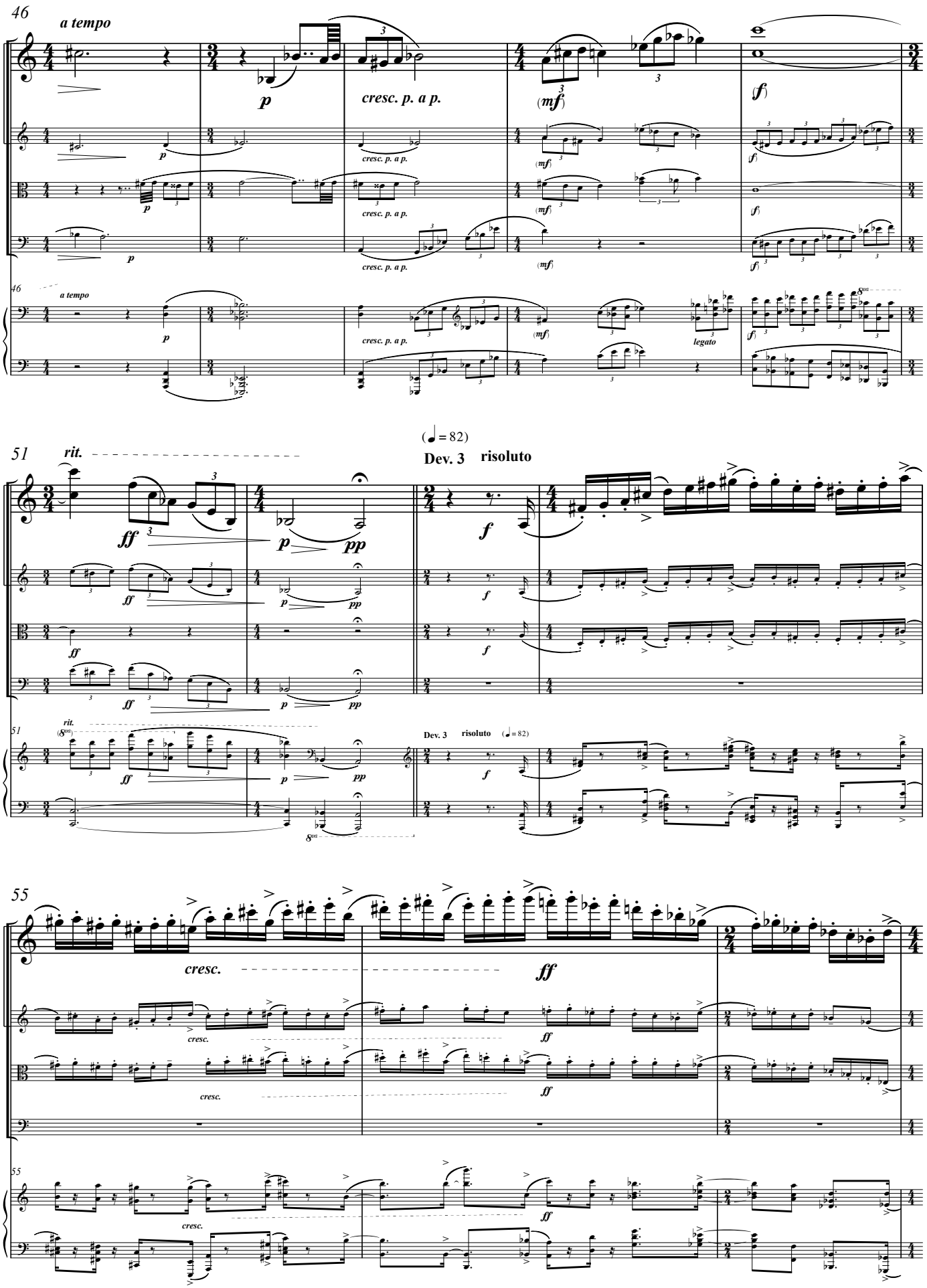
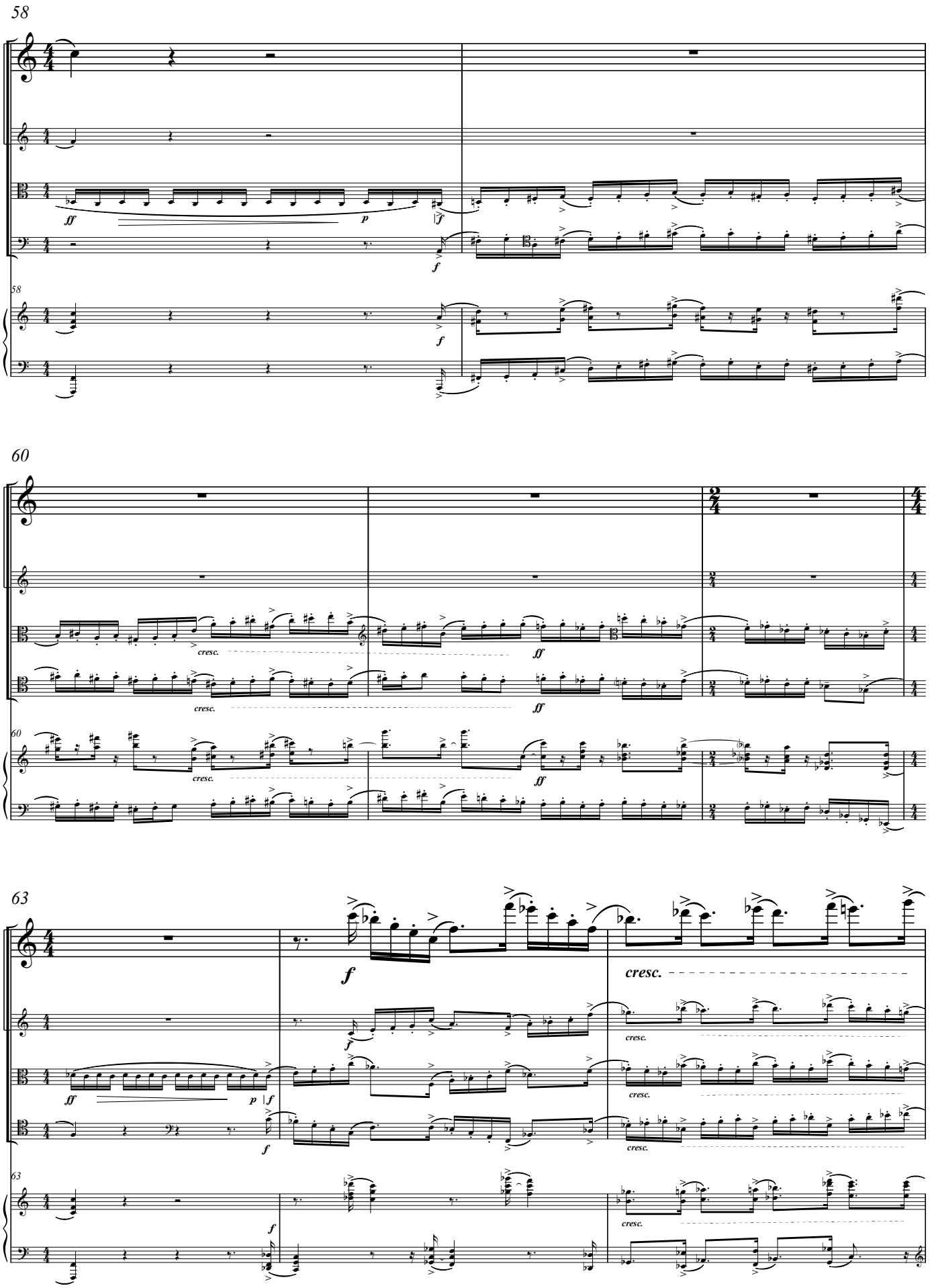
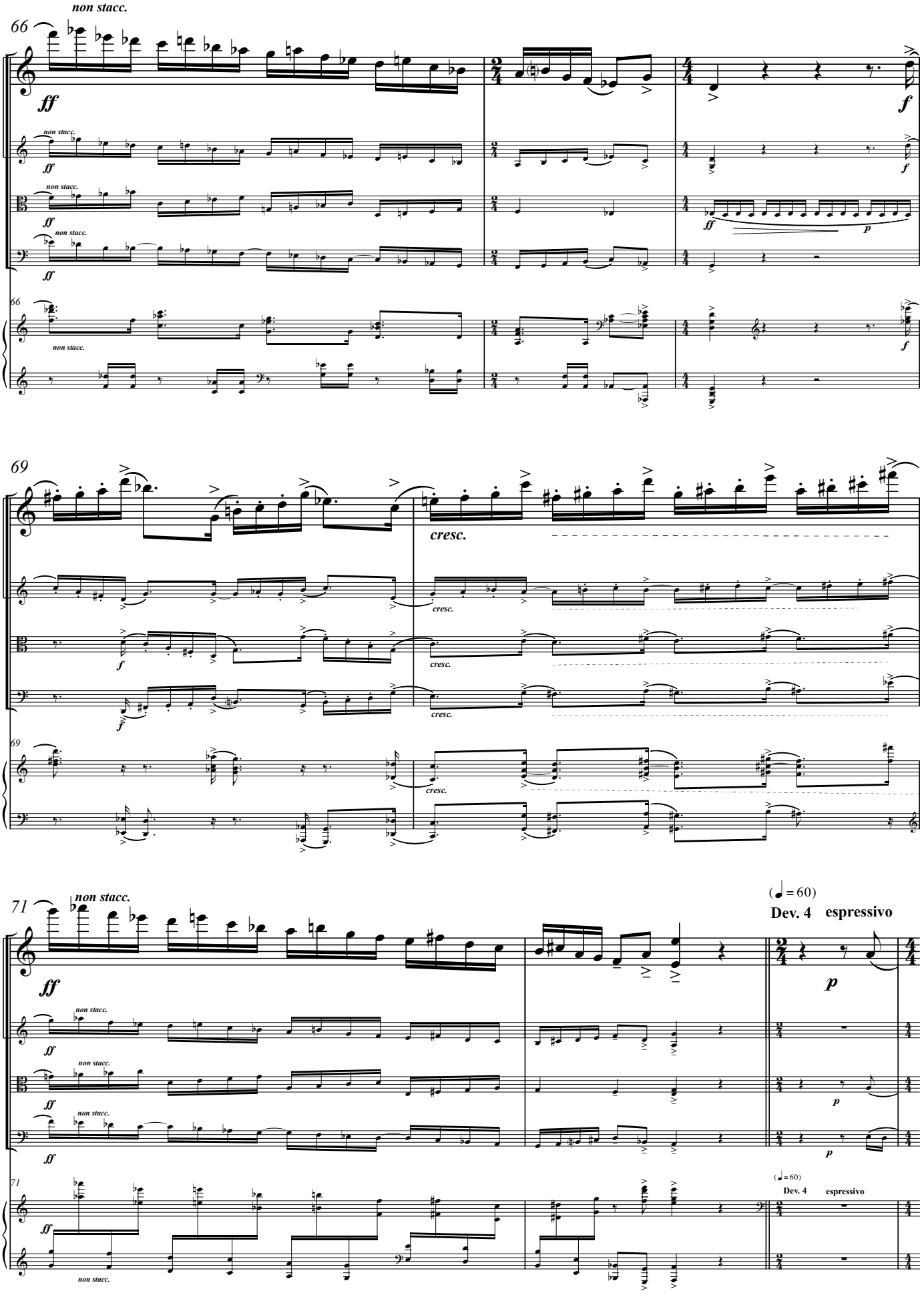


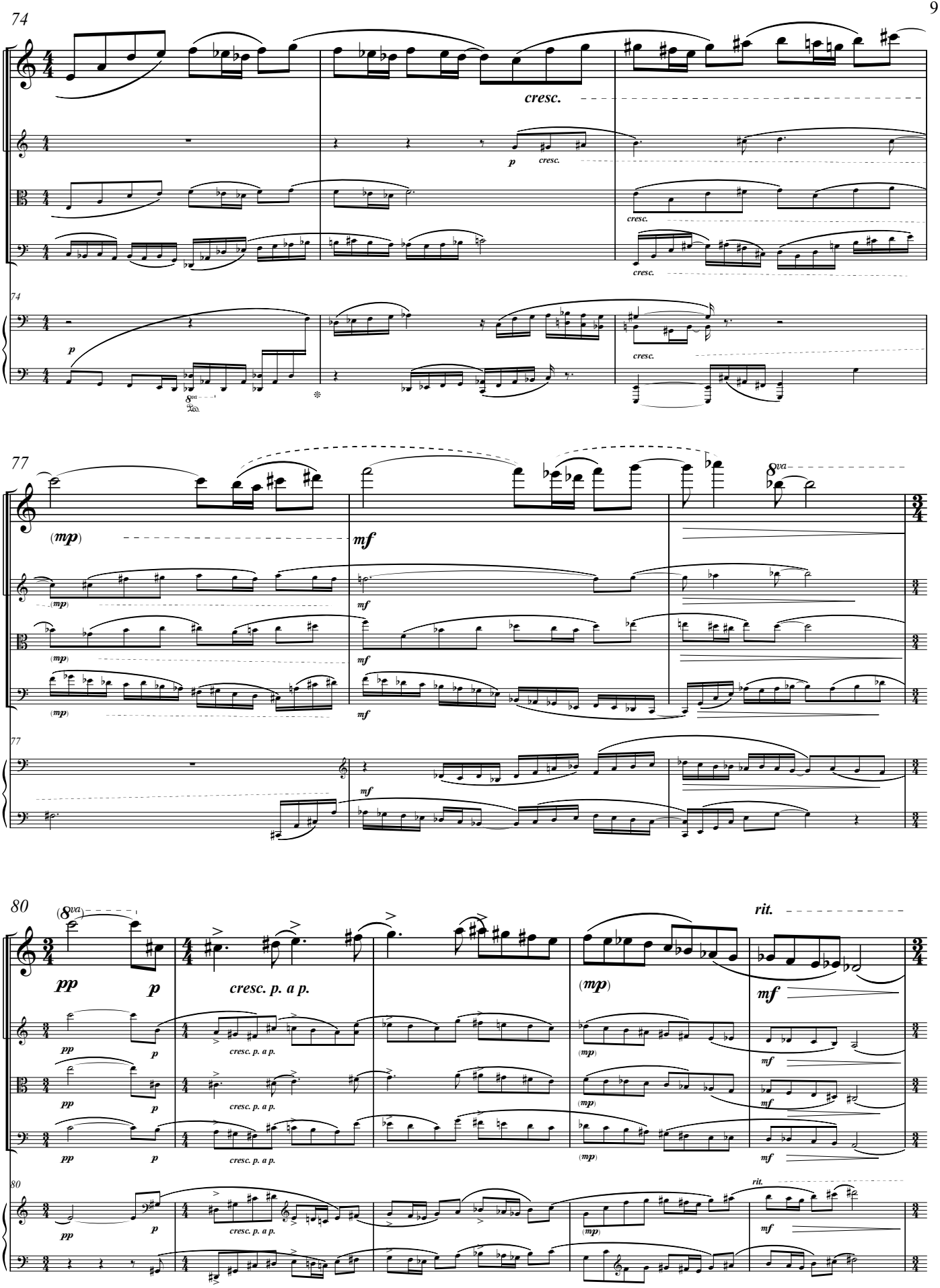

28
30
f cresc.
tenuto
32
ff
p
Dev. 2 (♩ = 66)

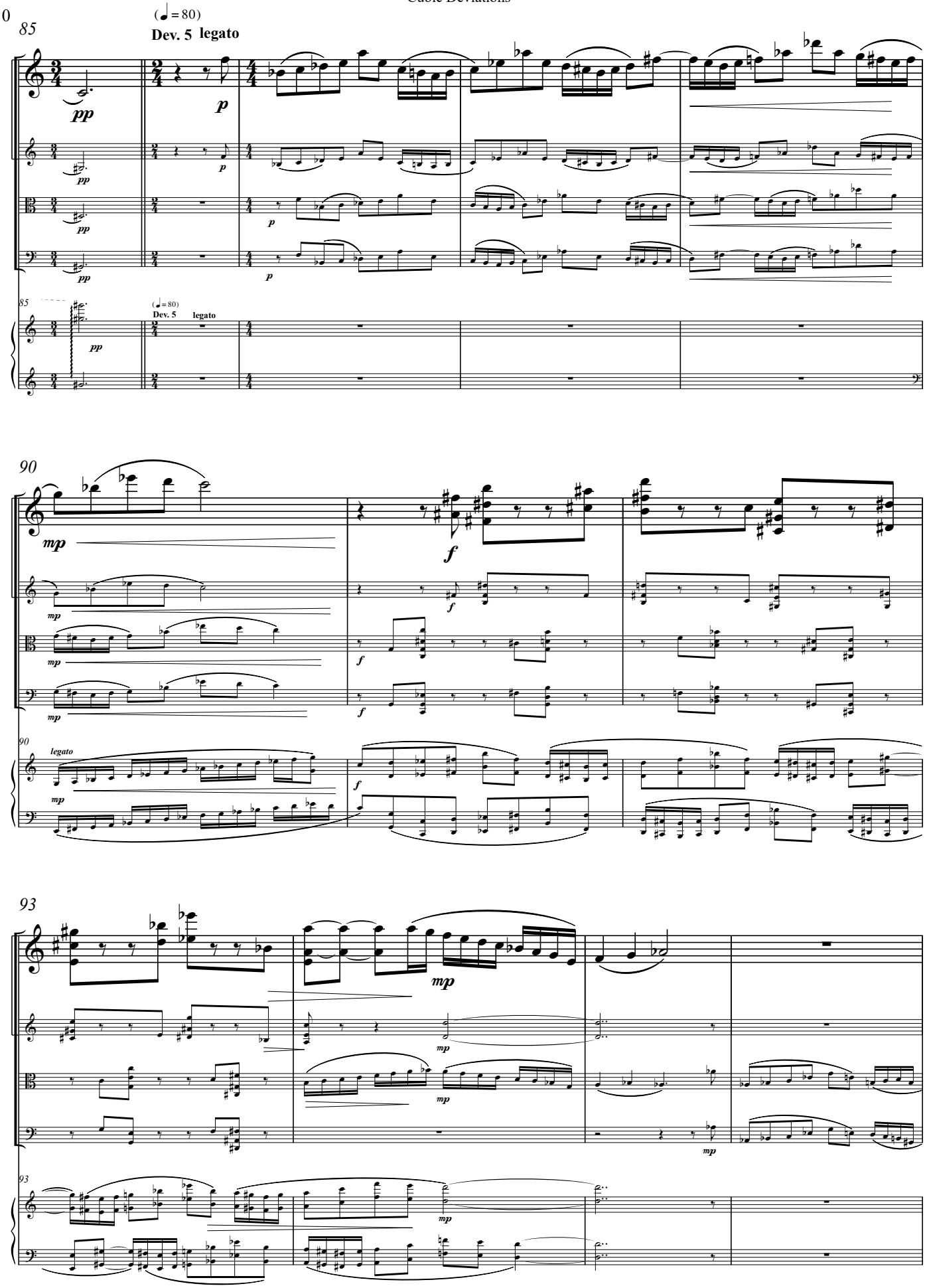

35
crese.
cresc.
cresc.
p
35
39
rit.
a tempo
mf
p
mf
mf
p
p
p
39
rit.
a tempo
p
43
rit.
cresc.
f
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
f
f
f
43
rit.
8va
mp
cresc.
f
mp


46
a tempo
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
(f)
legato
8va
(♩ = 82)
51
rit.
ff
pp
Dev. 3
risoluto
f
55
cresc.
ff


58
60
63
cresc.
ff
f
p


66
non stacc.
ff
f
p
69
cresc.
71
non stacc.
(♩= 60)
Dev. 4
espressivo


74
cresc.
p
cresc.
77
(mp)
mf
8va
80
(8va)
pp
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mp)
mf
rit.


85
(♩= 80)
Dev. 5 legato
pp
p
90
mp
f
legato
93
mp

97

rit.

(♩ = 96)

Dev. 6

mp

pp

con vivacita

103

ben marcato

f

cresc.

ff

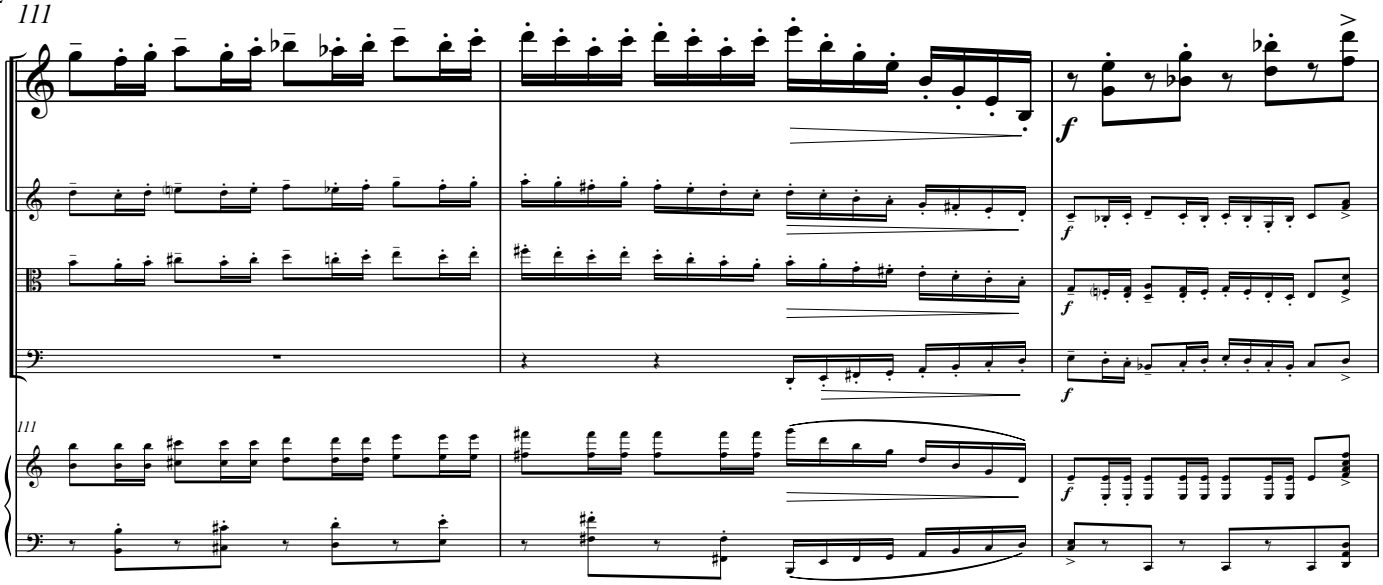
p

sim.

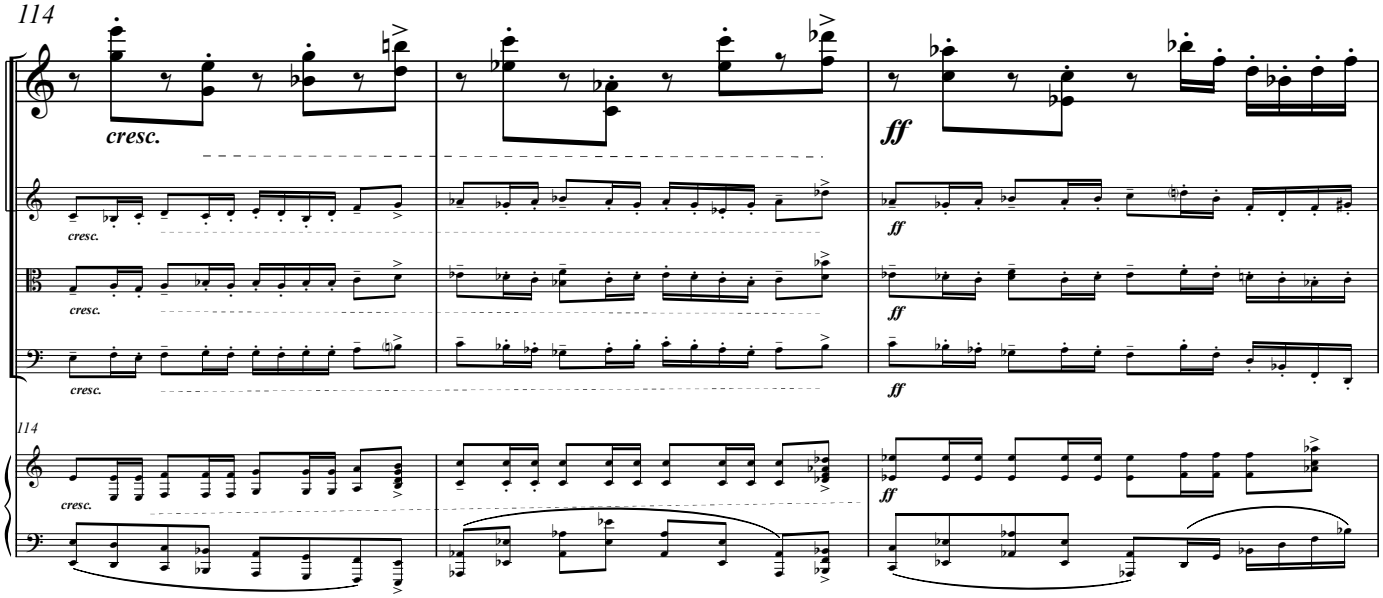
107

ff

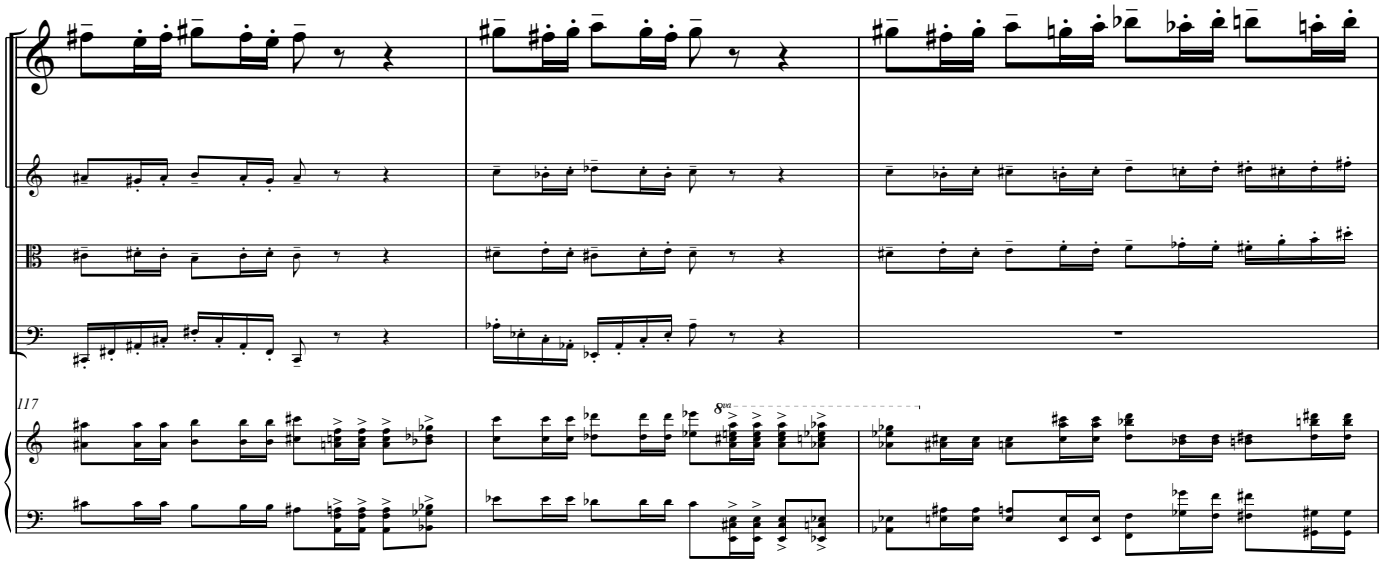
111


f
f
f
f
f
111

114


cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
ff
ff
ff
ff
114

117


8va
117

120

Dev. 7

ff

mf

cresc.

123

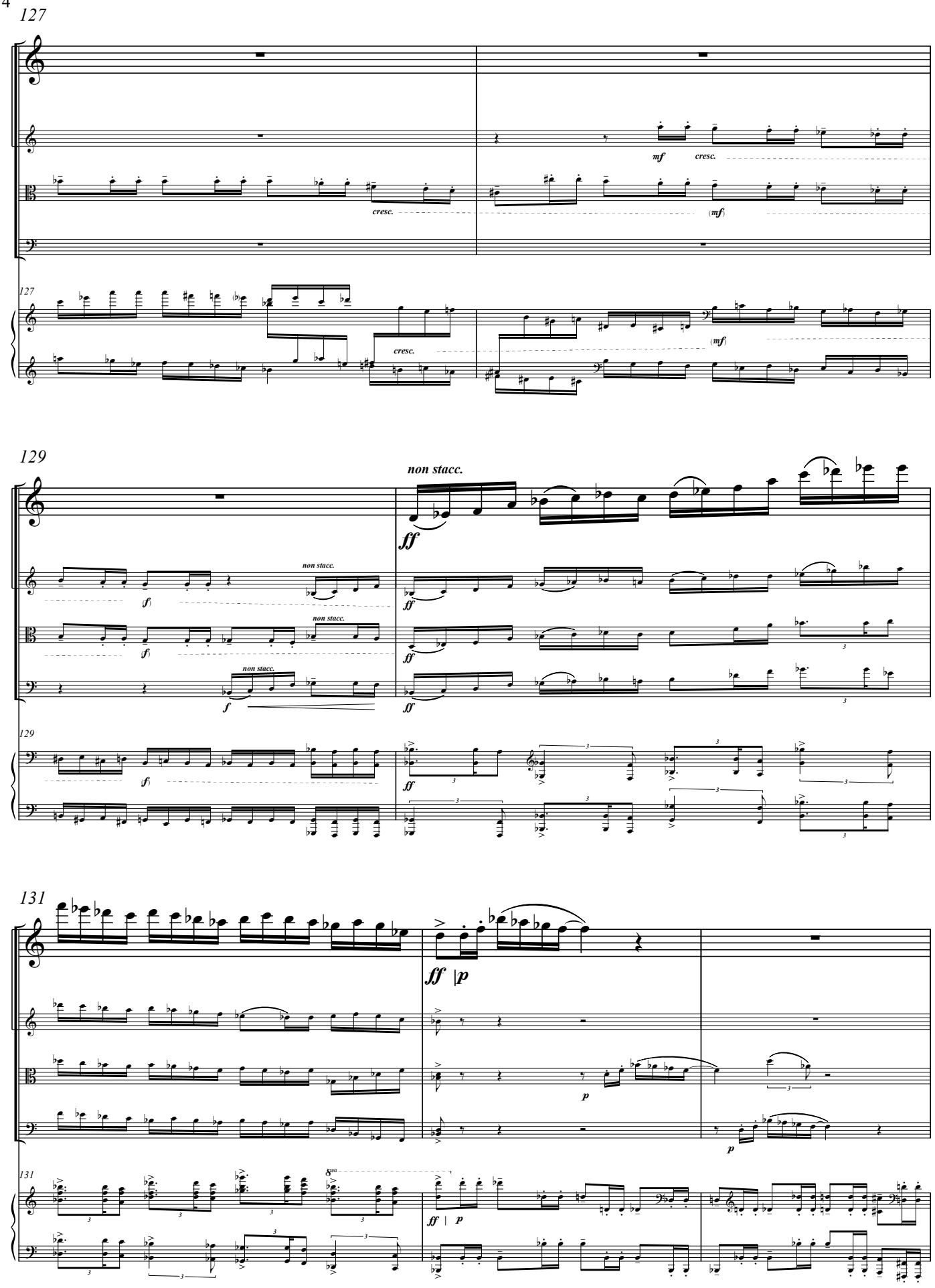
f

125

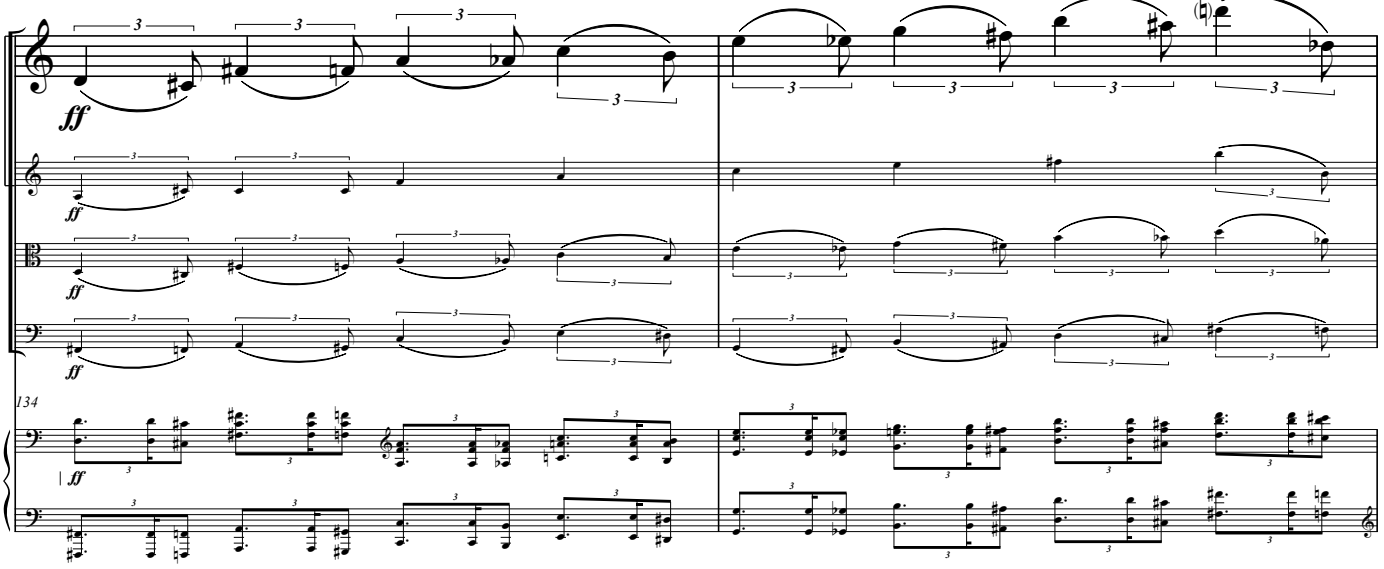
dim.

p

legato

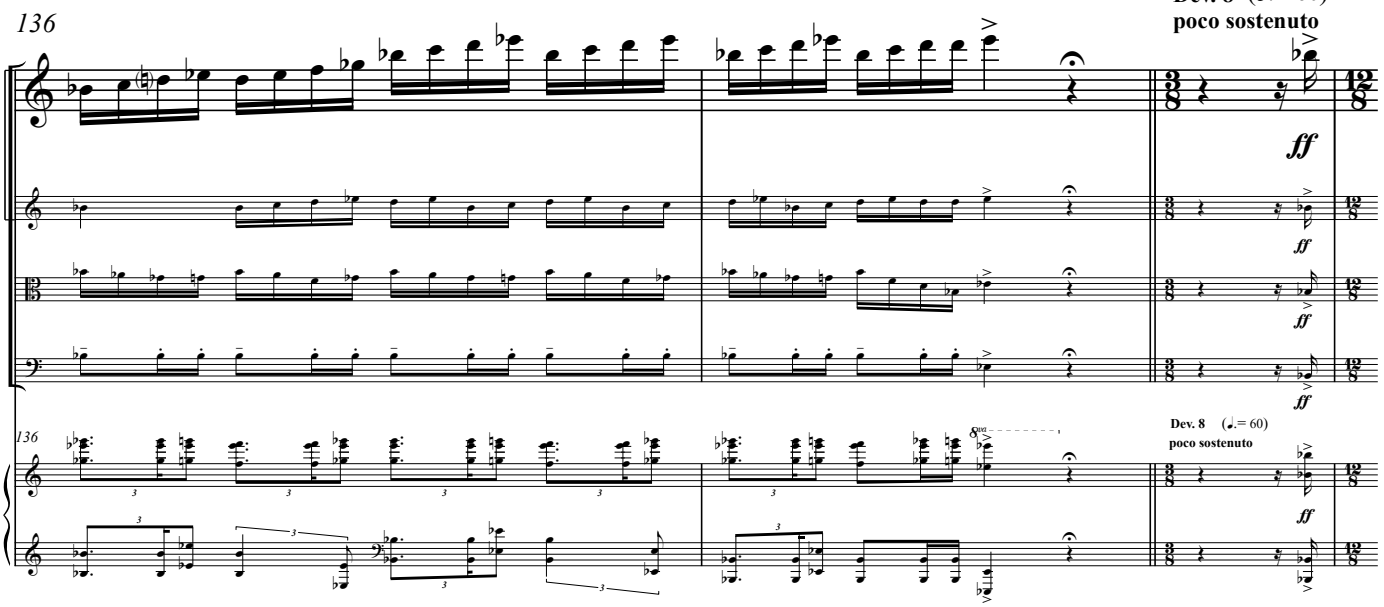

127
mf
cresc.
cresc.
(mf)
(mf)
127
cresc.
129
non stacc.
ff
non stacc.
fi
non stacc.
fi
non stacc.
f
ff
ff
ff
ff
129
fi
ff
131
ff |p
p
p
131
ff | p

134



136

Dev. 8 (♩.= 60)
poco sostenuto



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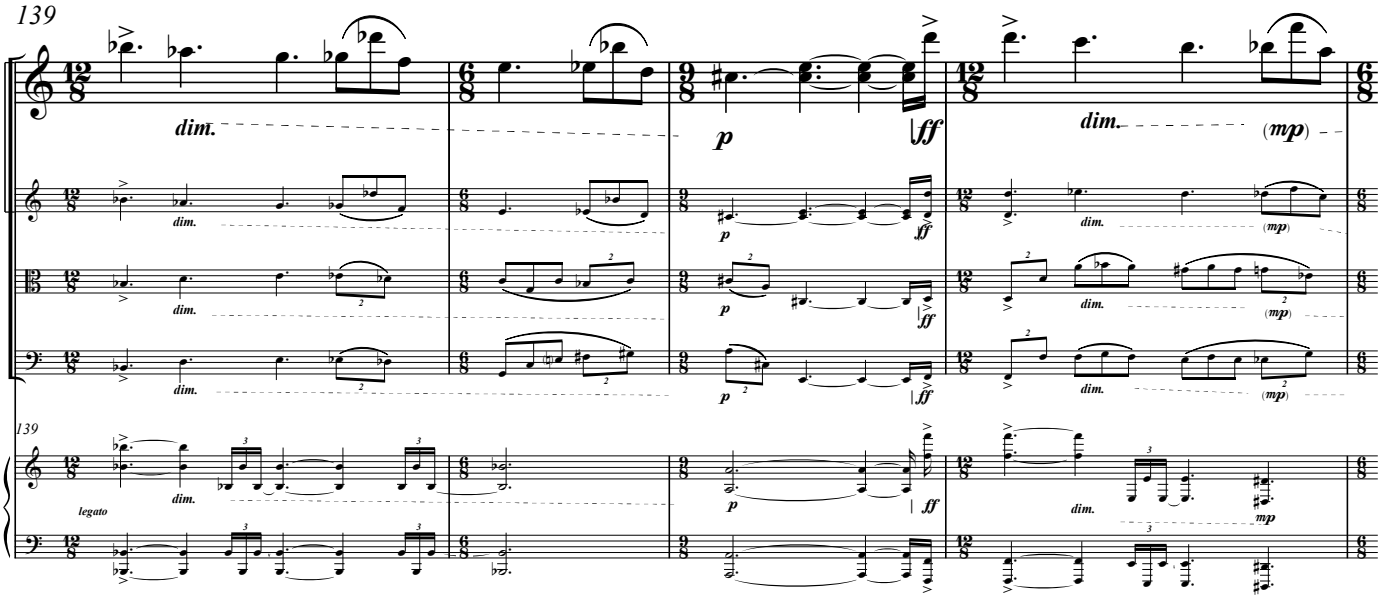
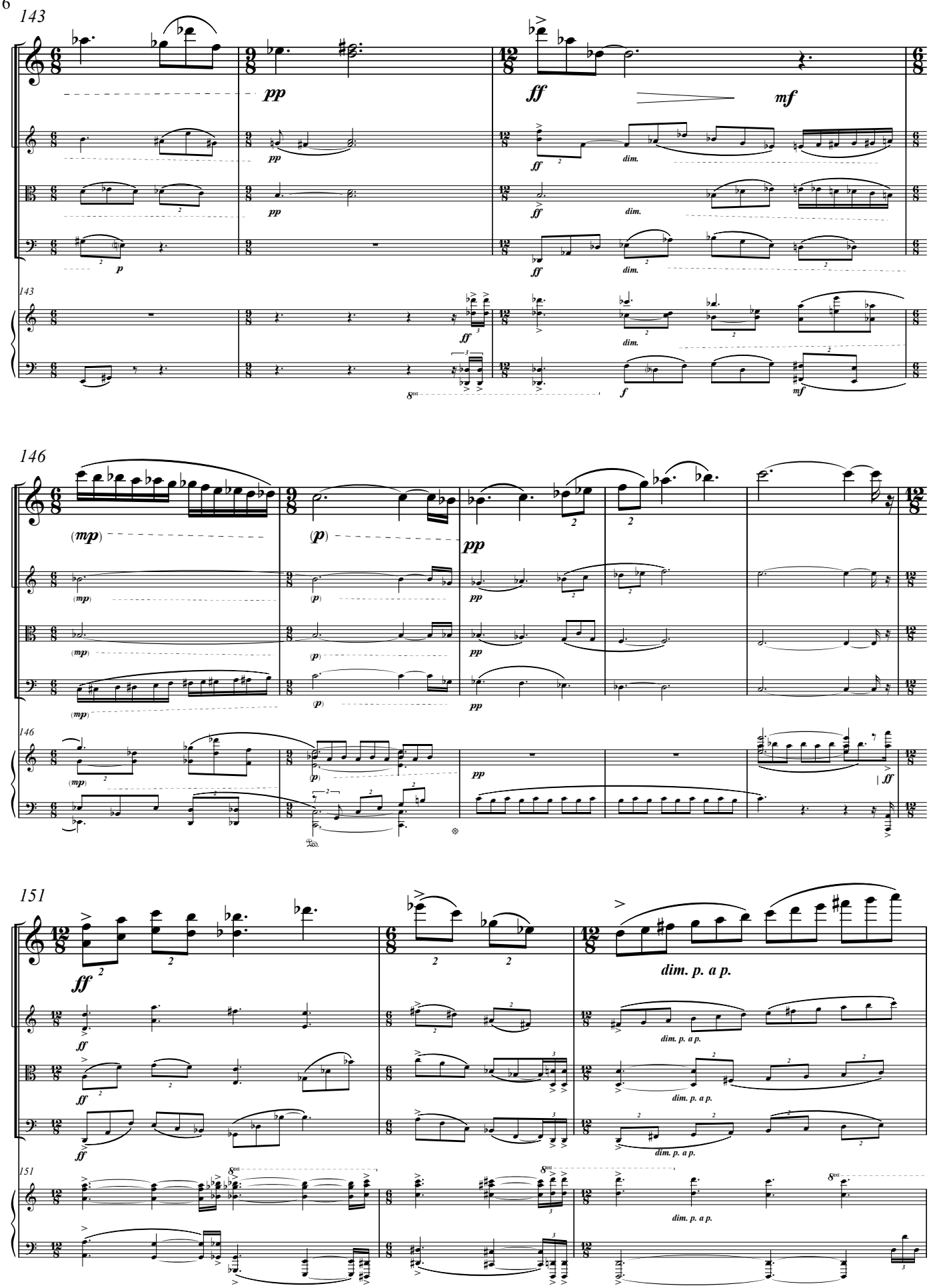
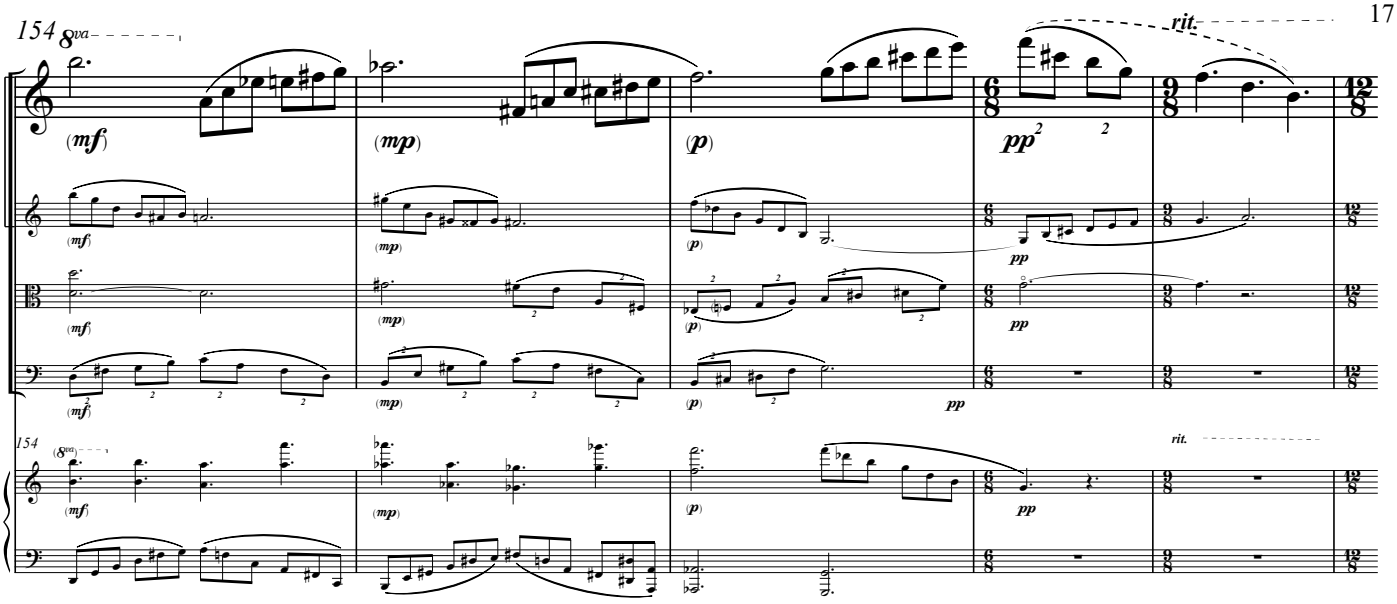
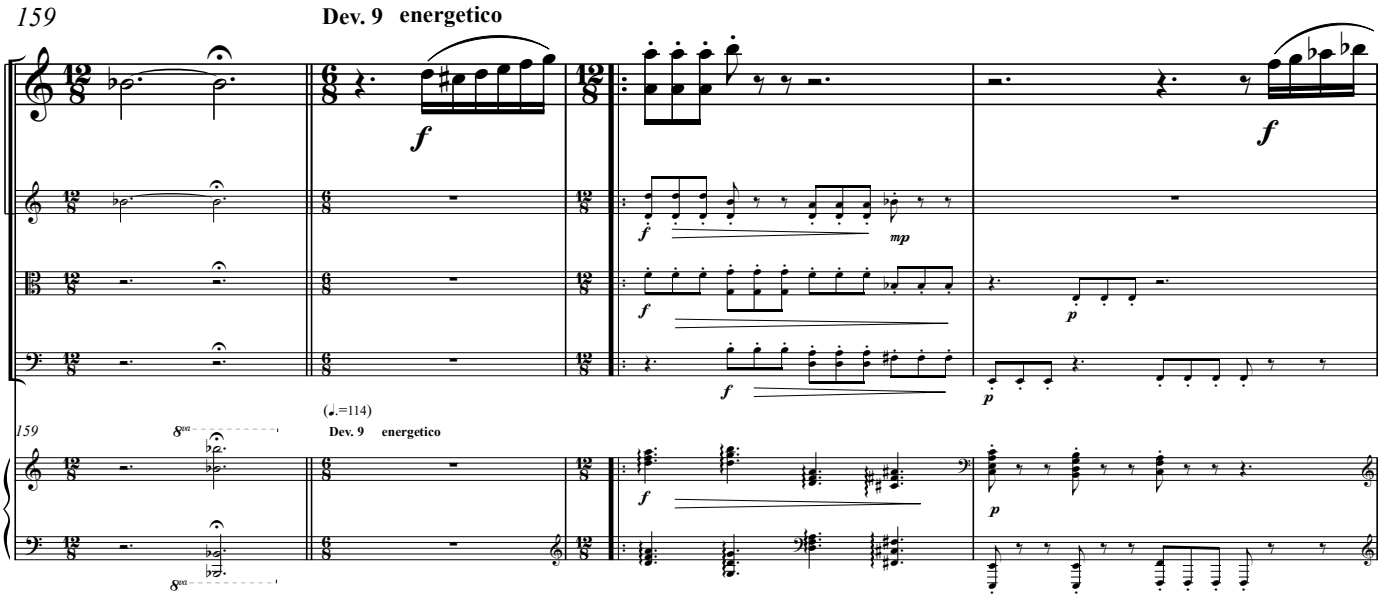
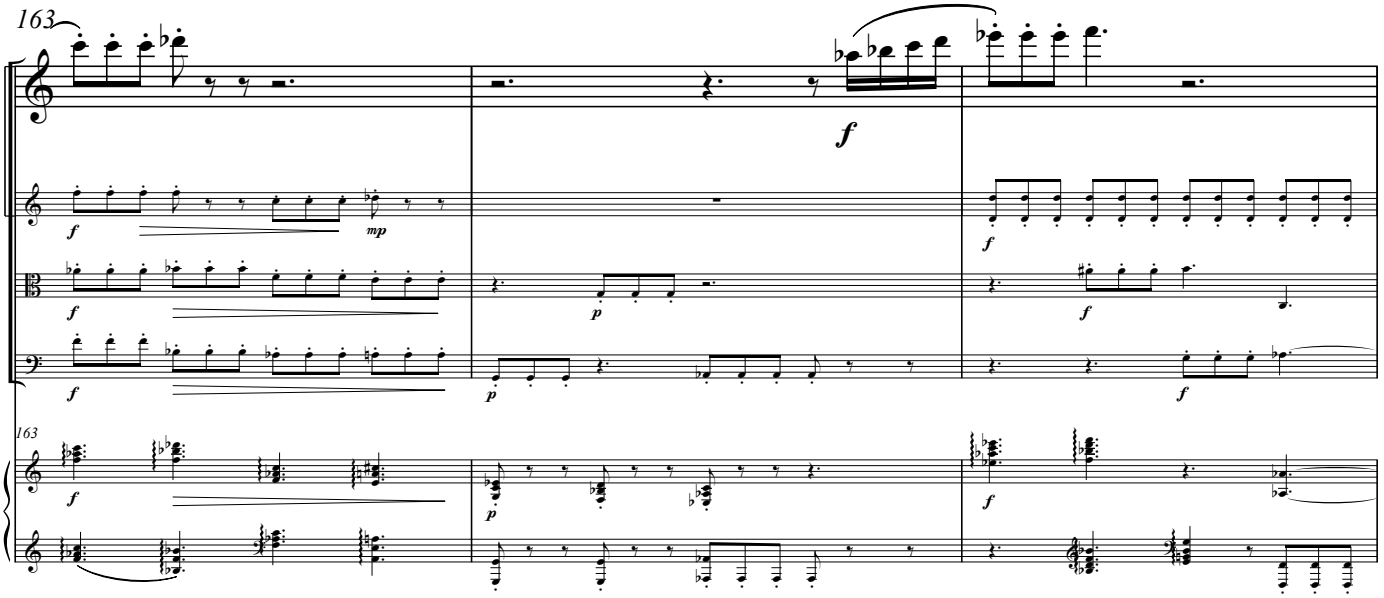


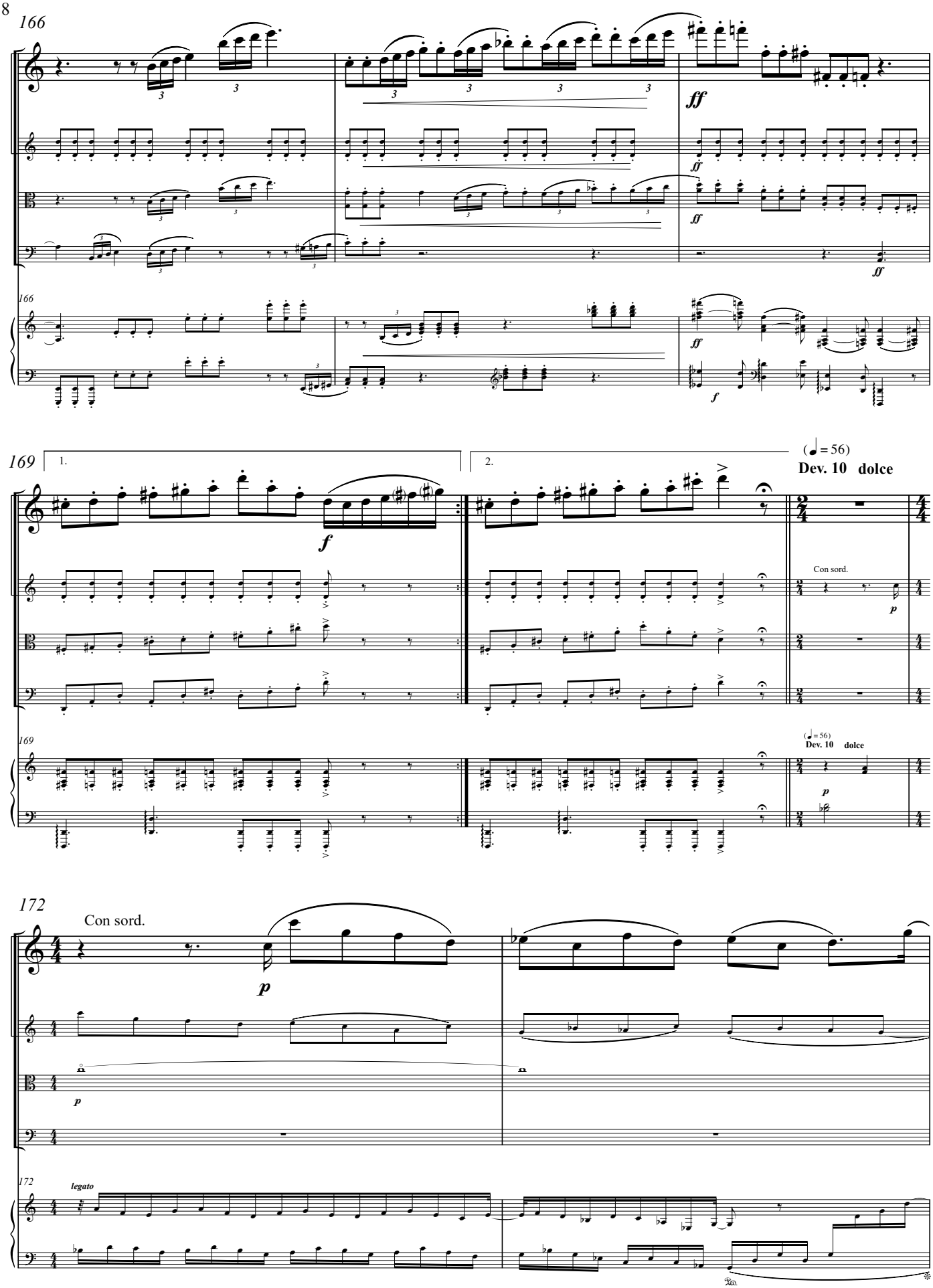

143
pp
ff
mf
dim.
p
f
146
(mp)
(p)
pp
151
ff
dim. p. a p.

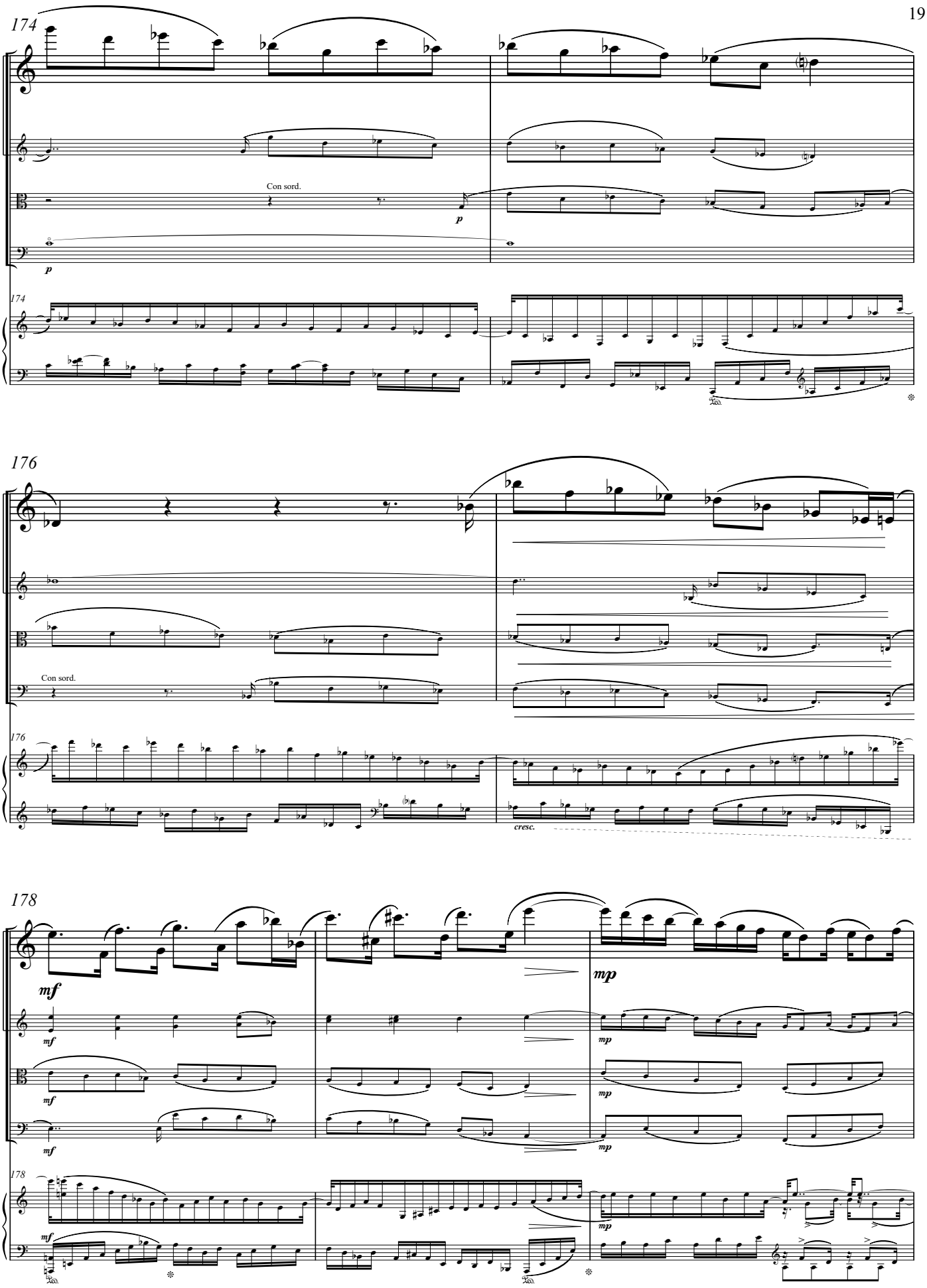


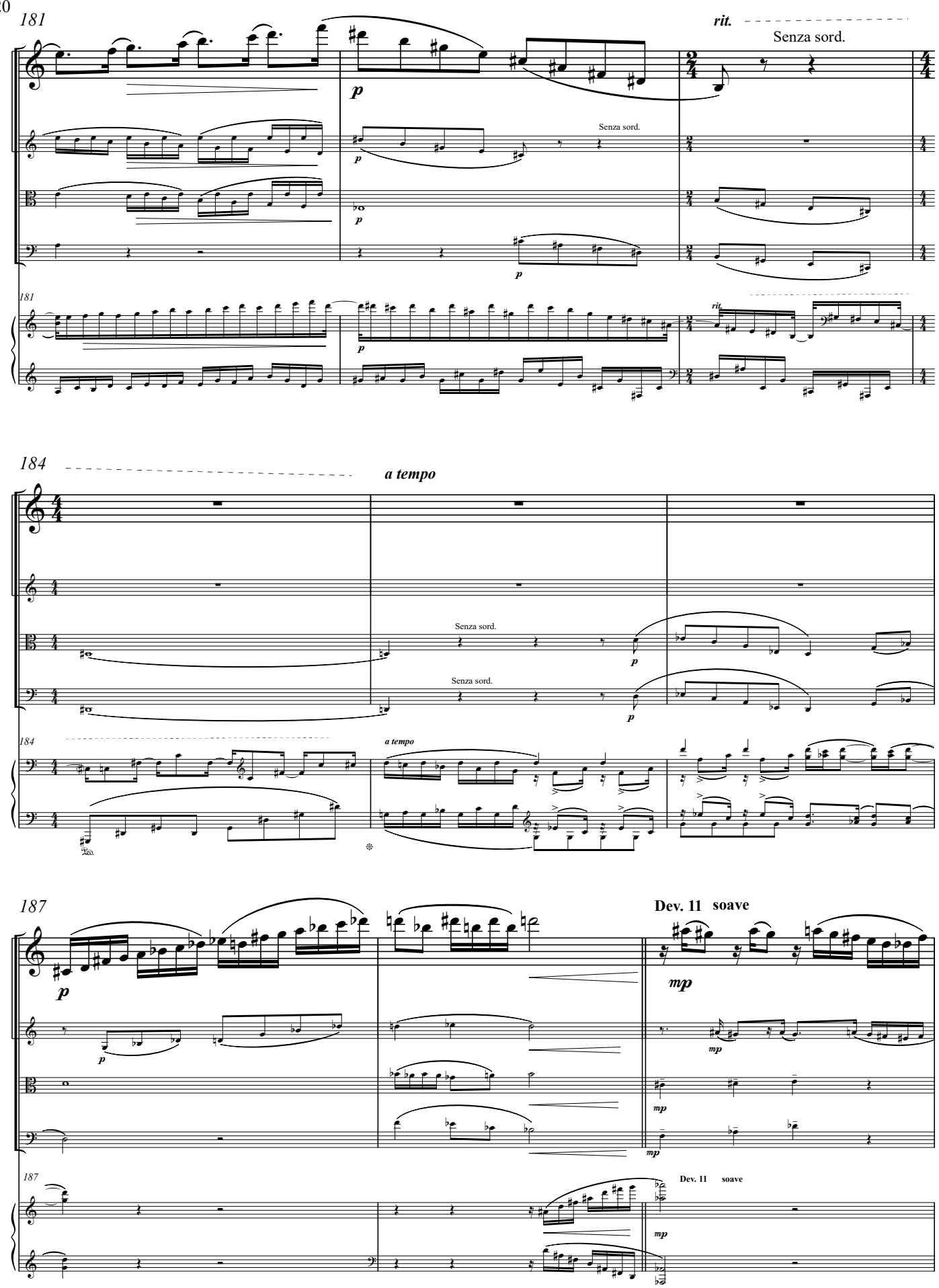
(♩.=114)

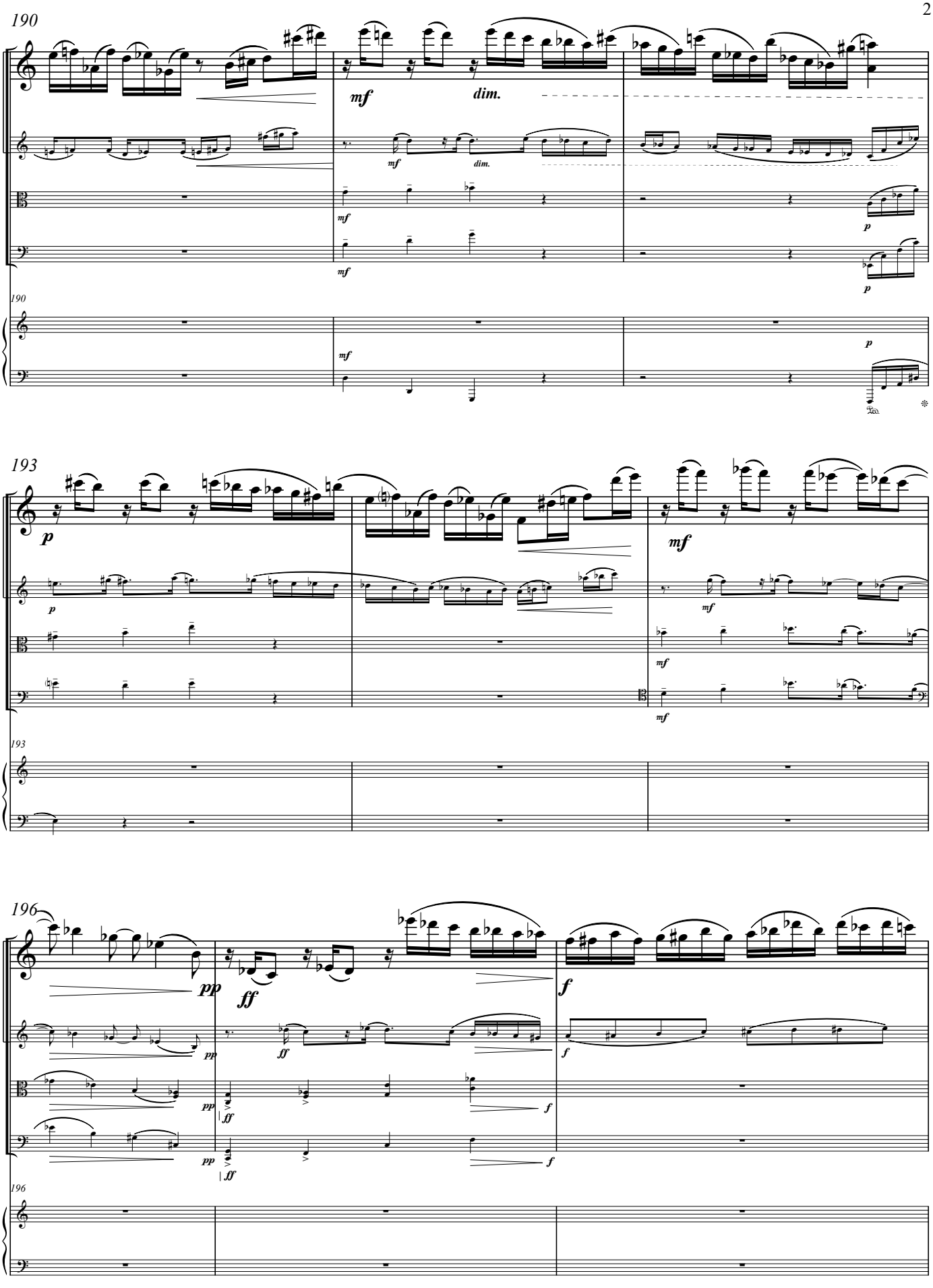


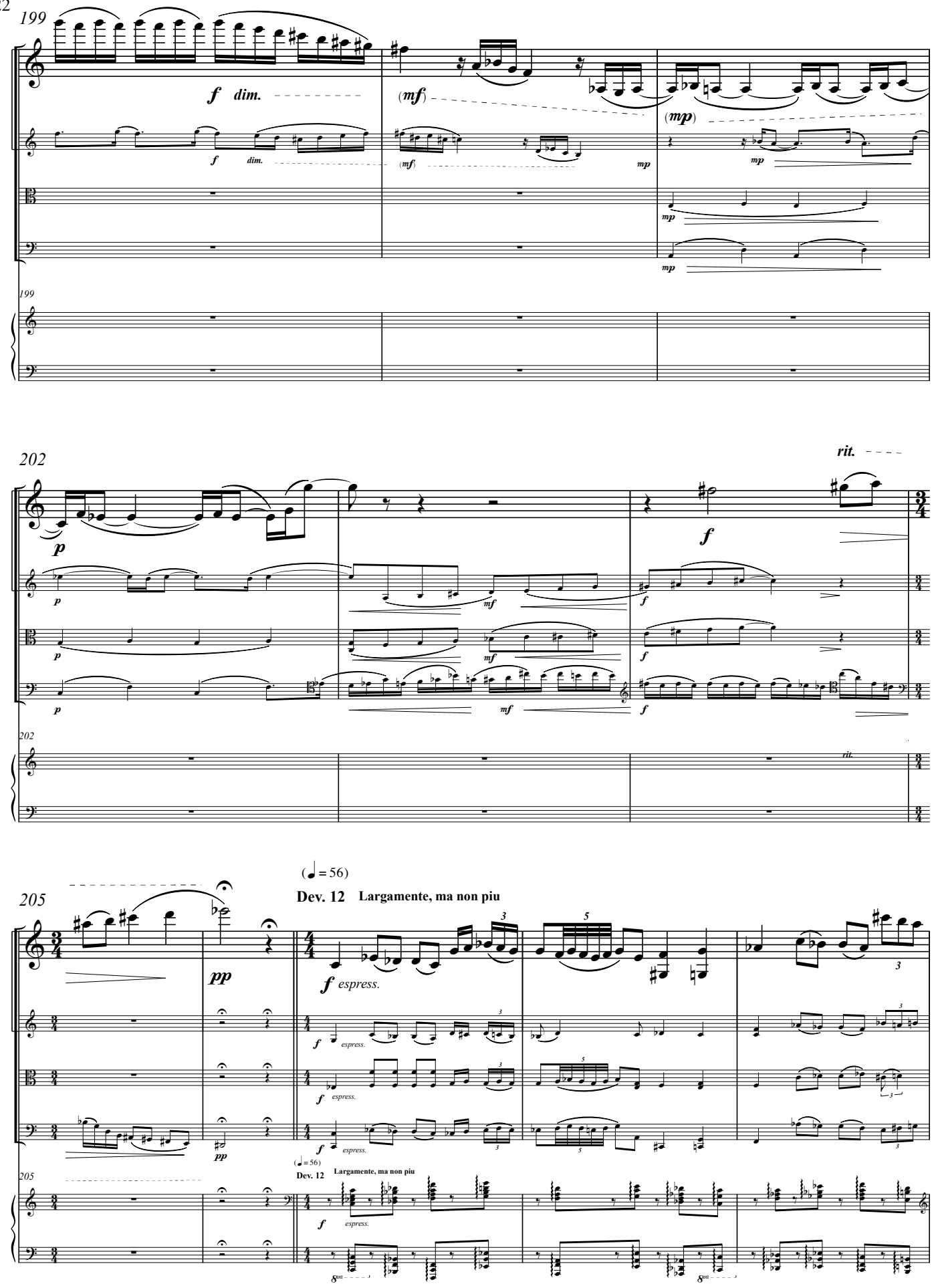


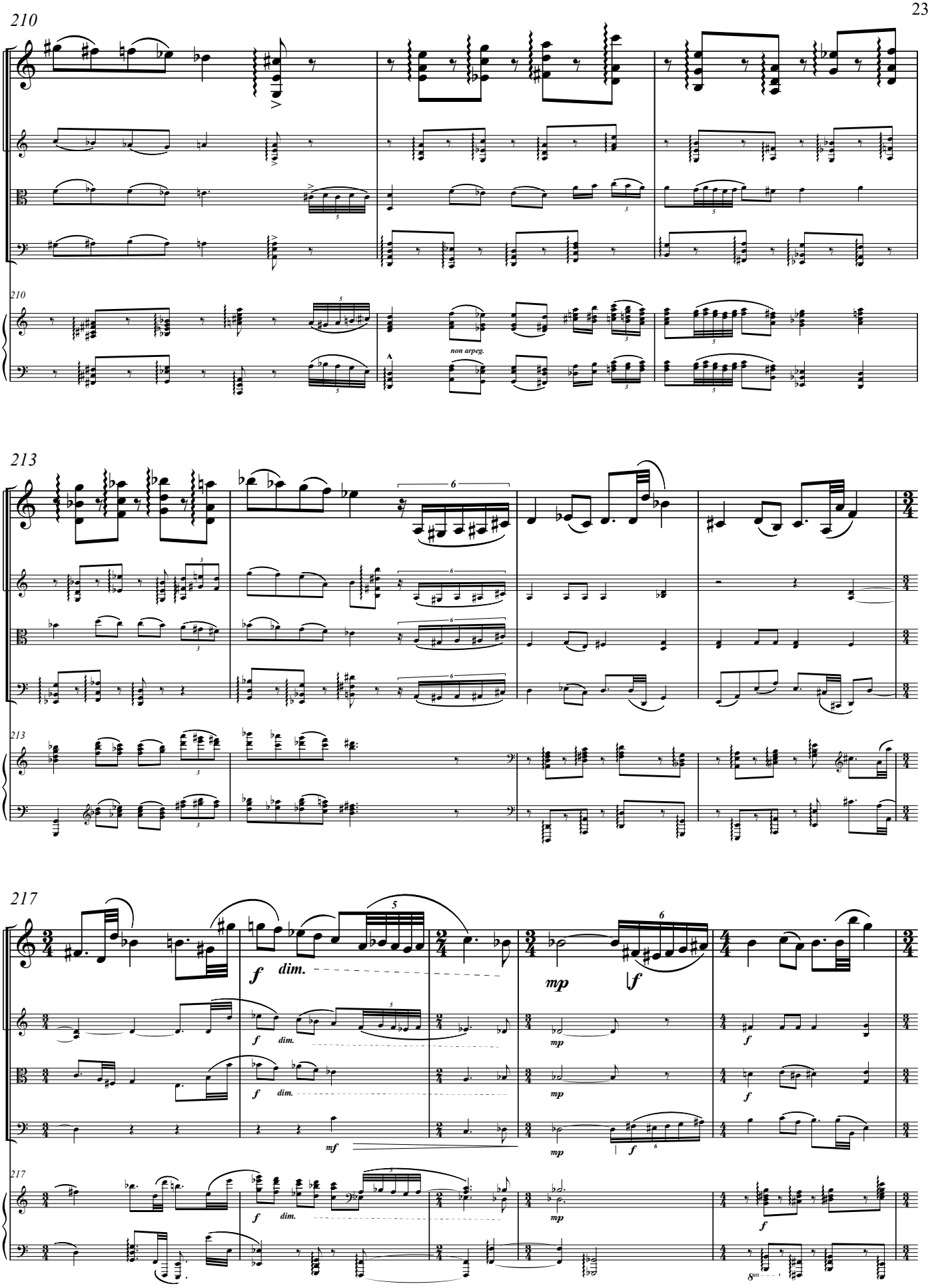

166
ff
f
169
1.
2.
(♩= 56)
Dev. 10 dolce
Con sord.
p
172
Con sord.
legato


174
Con sord.
p
p
174
176
Con sord.
176
cresc.
178
mf
mf
mf
mf
mf
mf
mp
mp
mp
mp
178
mf
mp

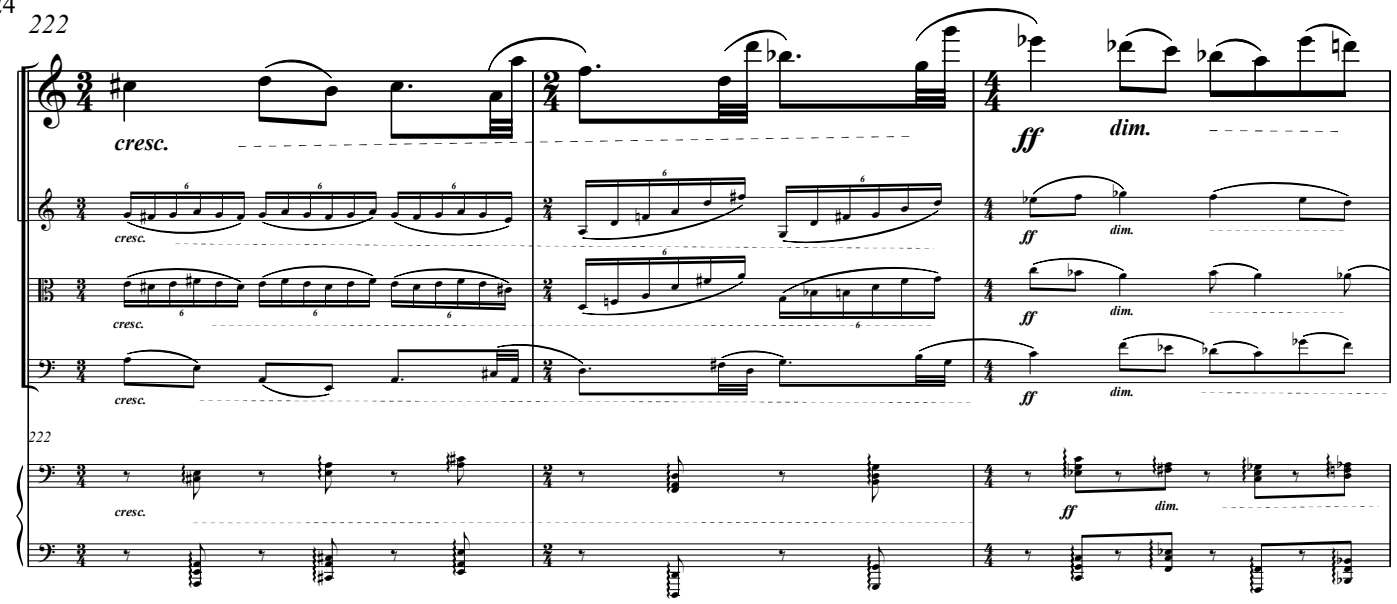

181
rit.
Senza sord.
p
Senza sord.
p
p
181
rit
p
184
a tempo
Senza sord.
p
Senza sord.
p
184
a tempo
187
Dev. 11 soave
p
mp
p
mp
mp
mp
187
Dev. 11 soave
mp


190
mf
dim.
p
193
p
mf
196
pp
ff
f


199
f dim.
(mf)
(mp)
202
rit.
205
(♩ = 56)
Dev. 12 Largamente, ma non piu
pp
f espress.


210
non arpeg.
213
217
f
dim.
mp
mf

222



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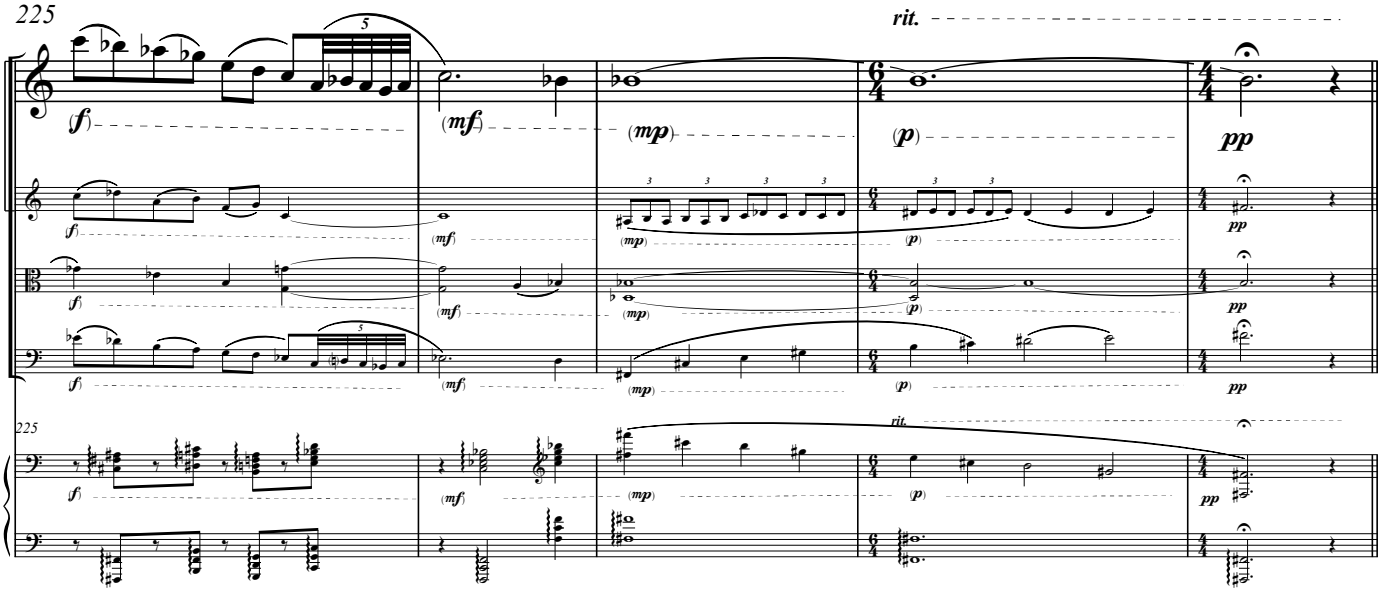
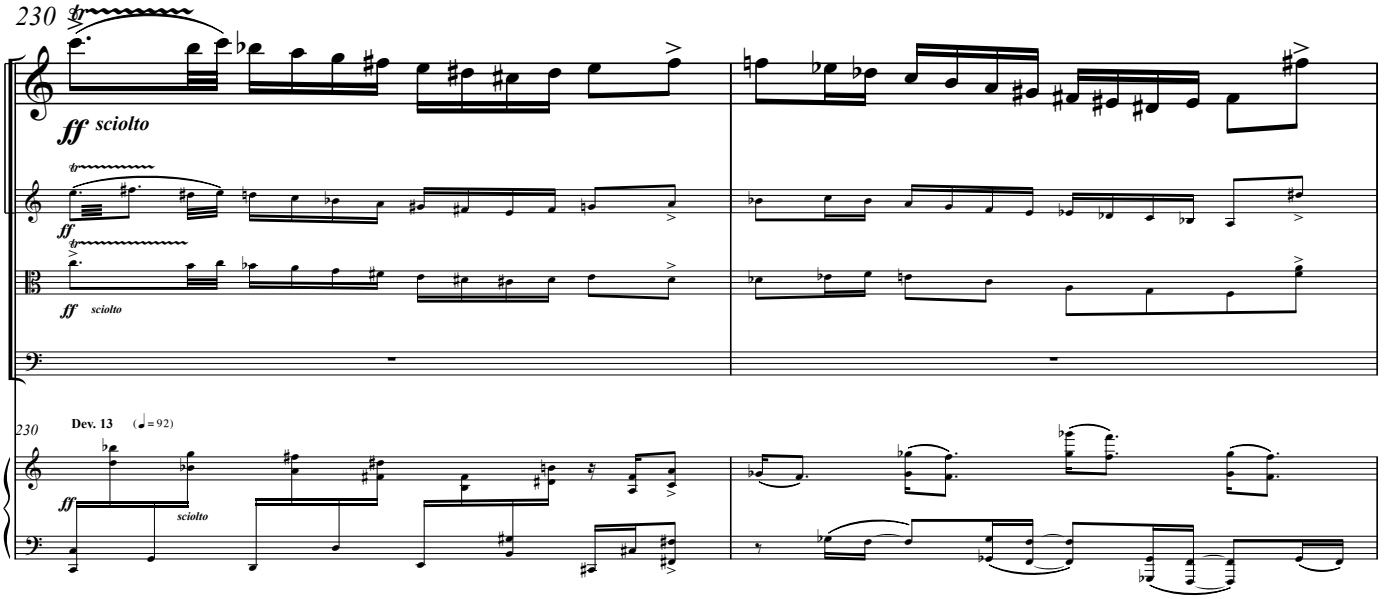
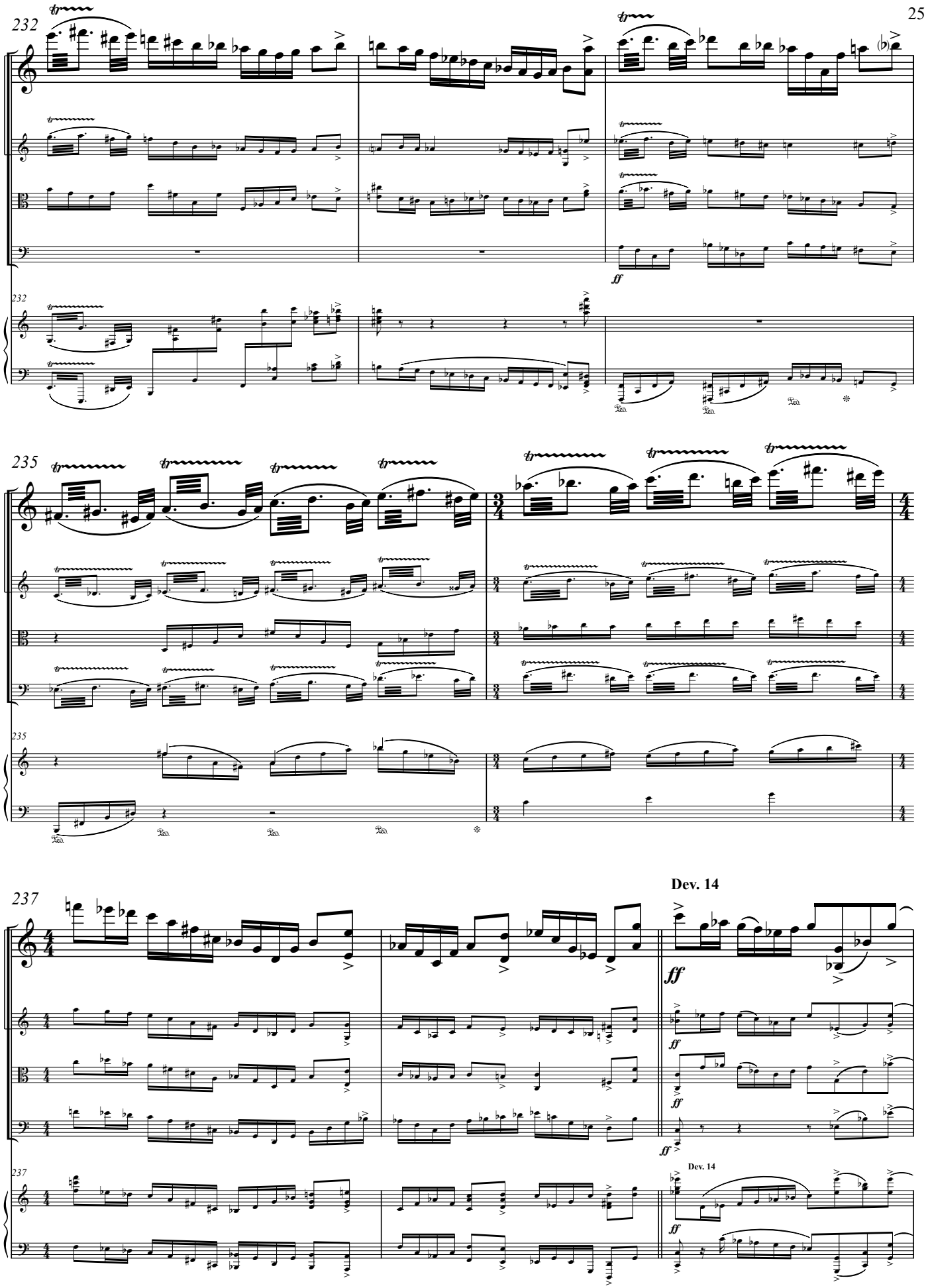


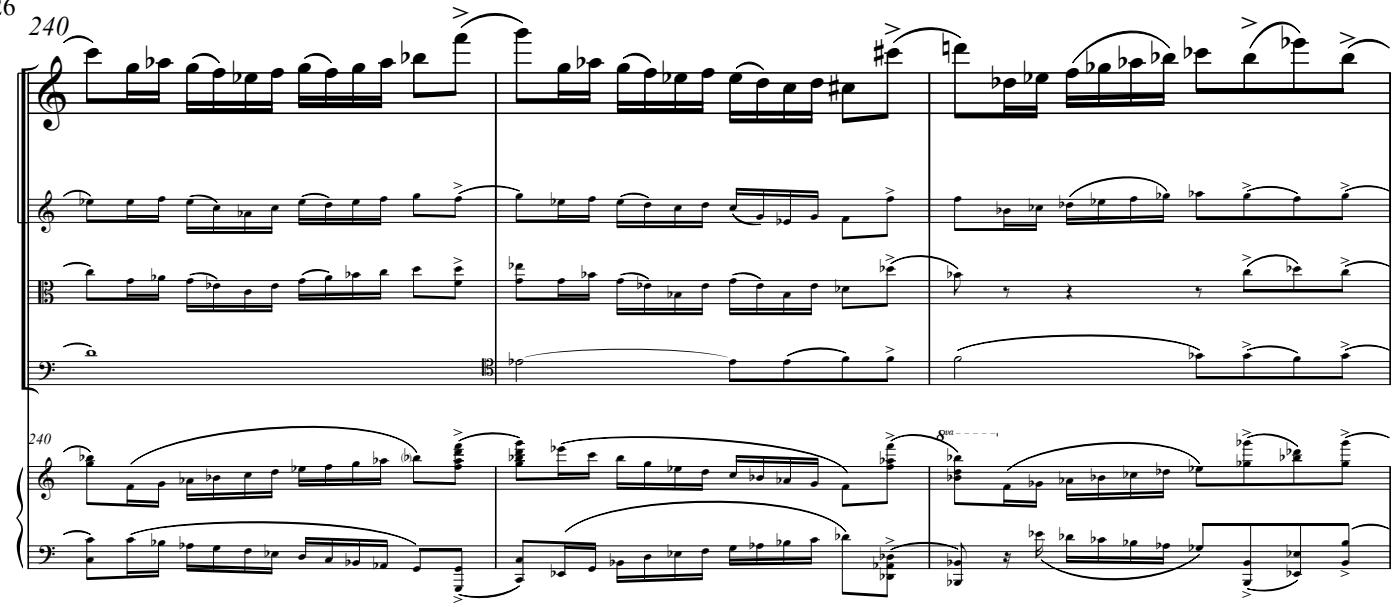
Dev. 13 (♩ = 92)

230




232
ff
235
237
Dev. 14
Dev. 14

240



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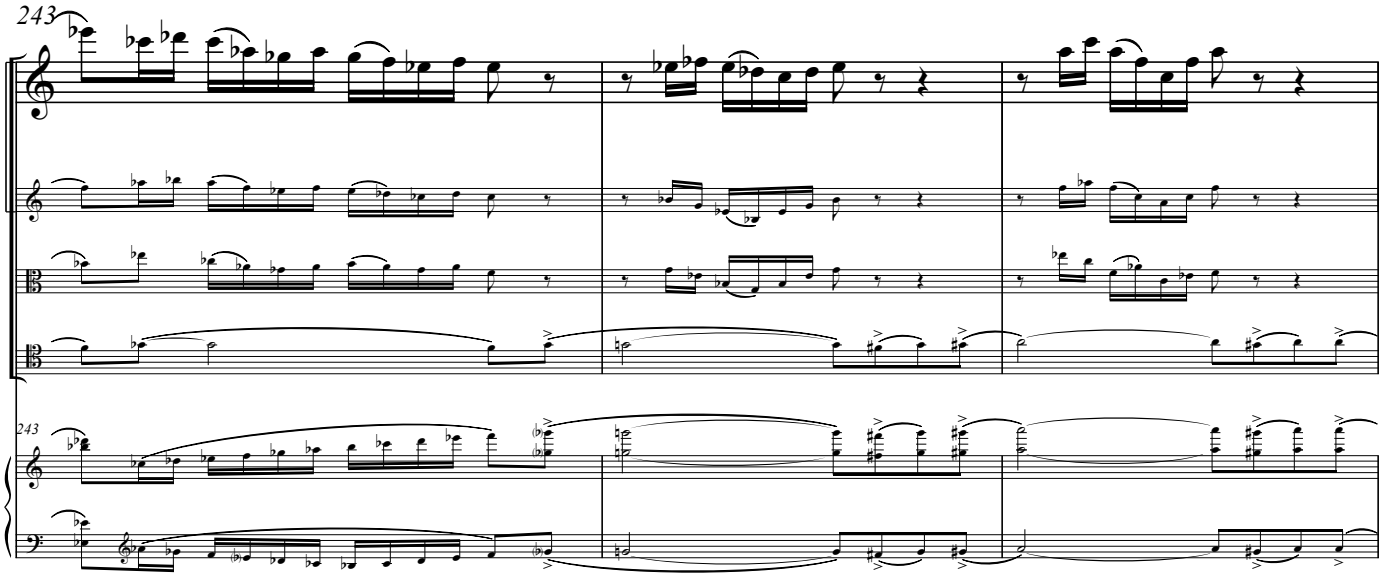

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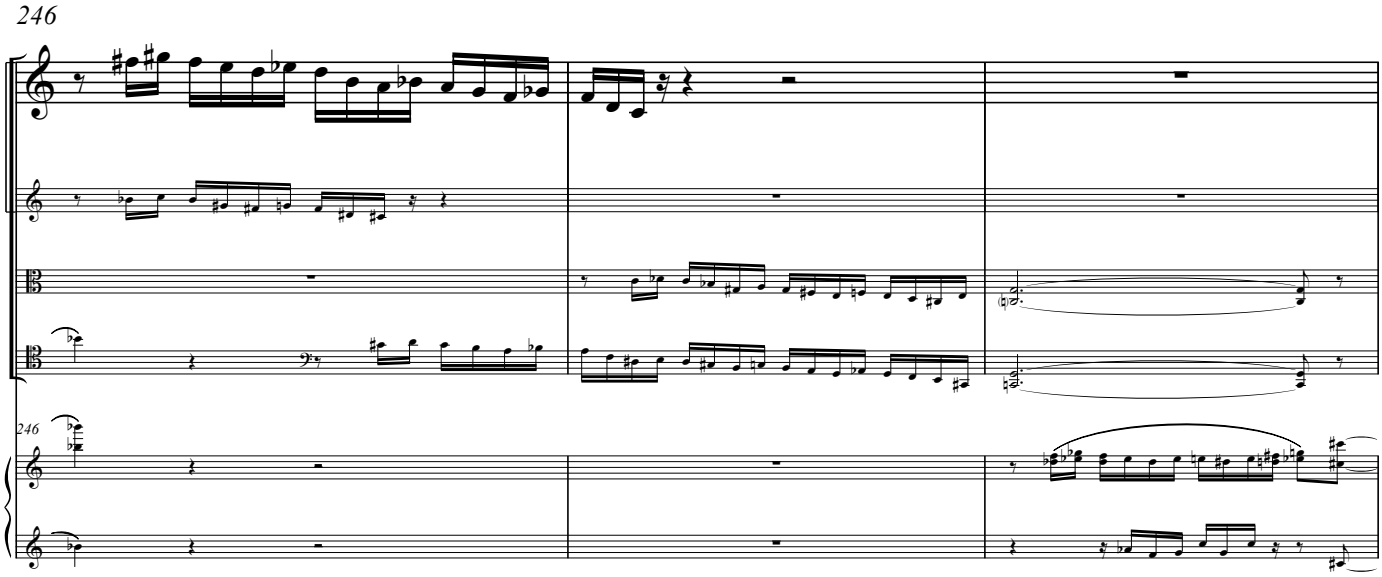

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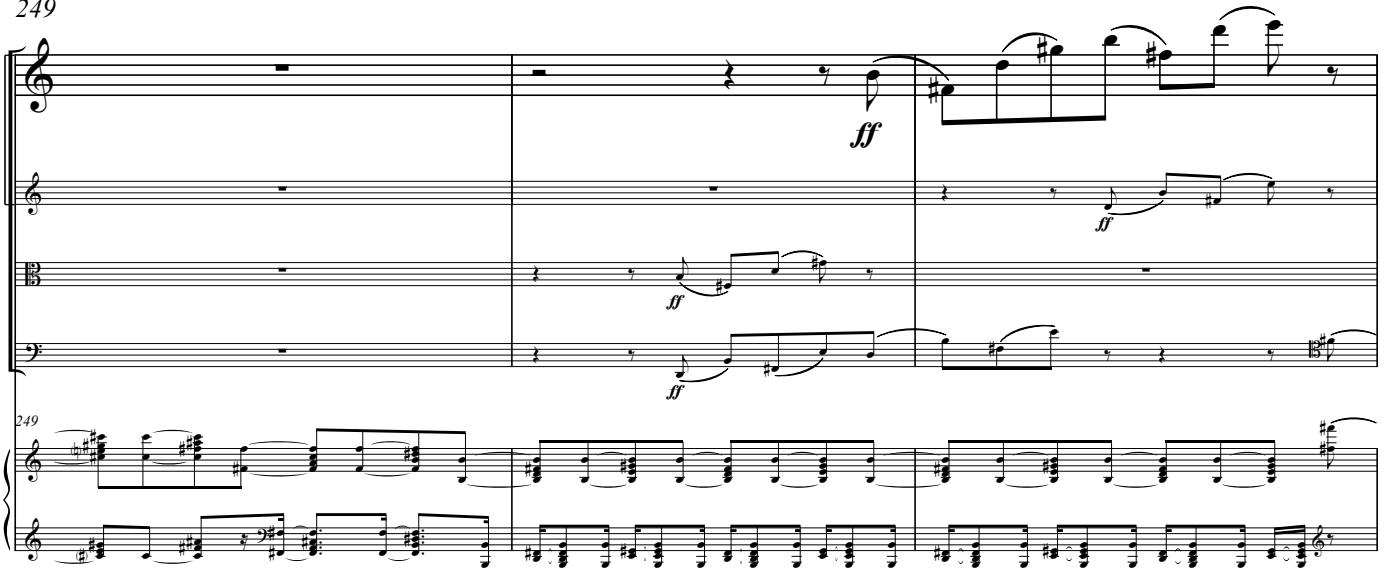

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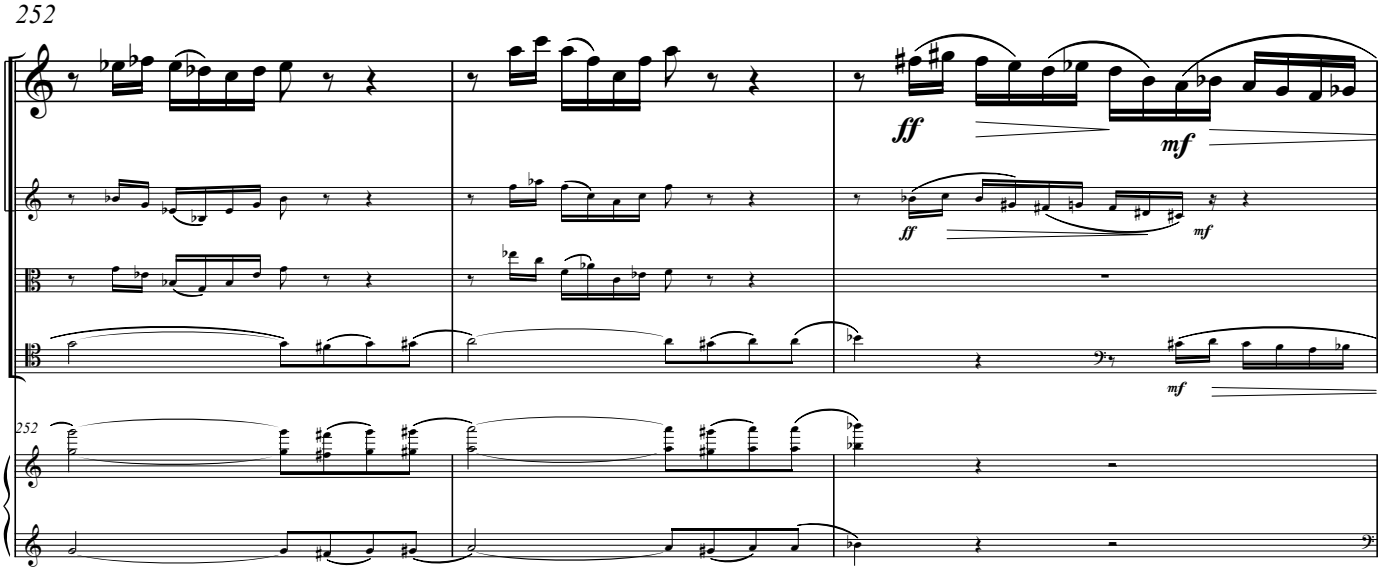
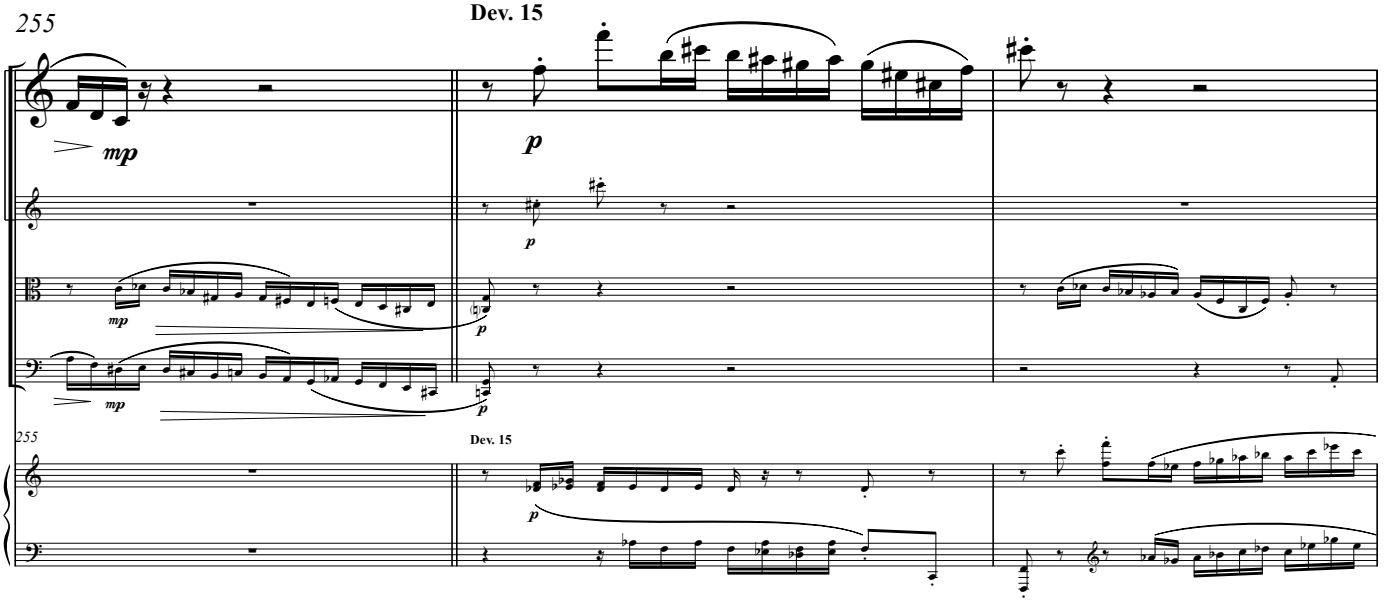
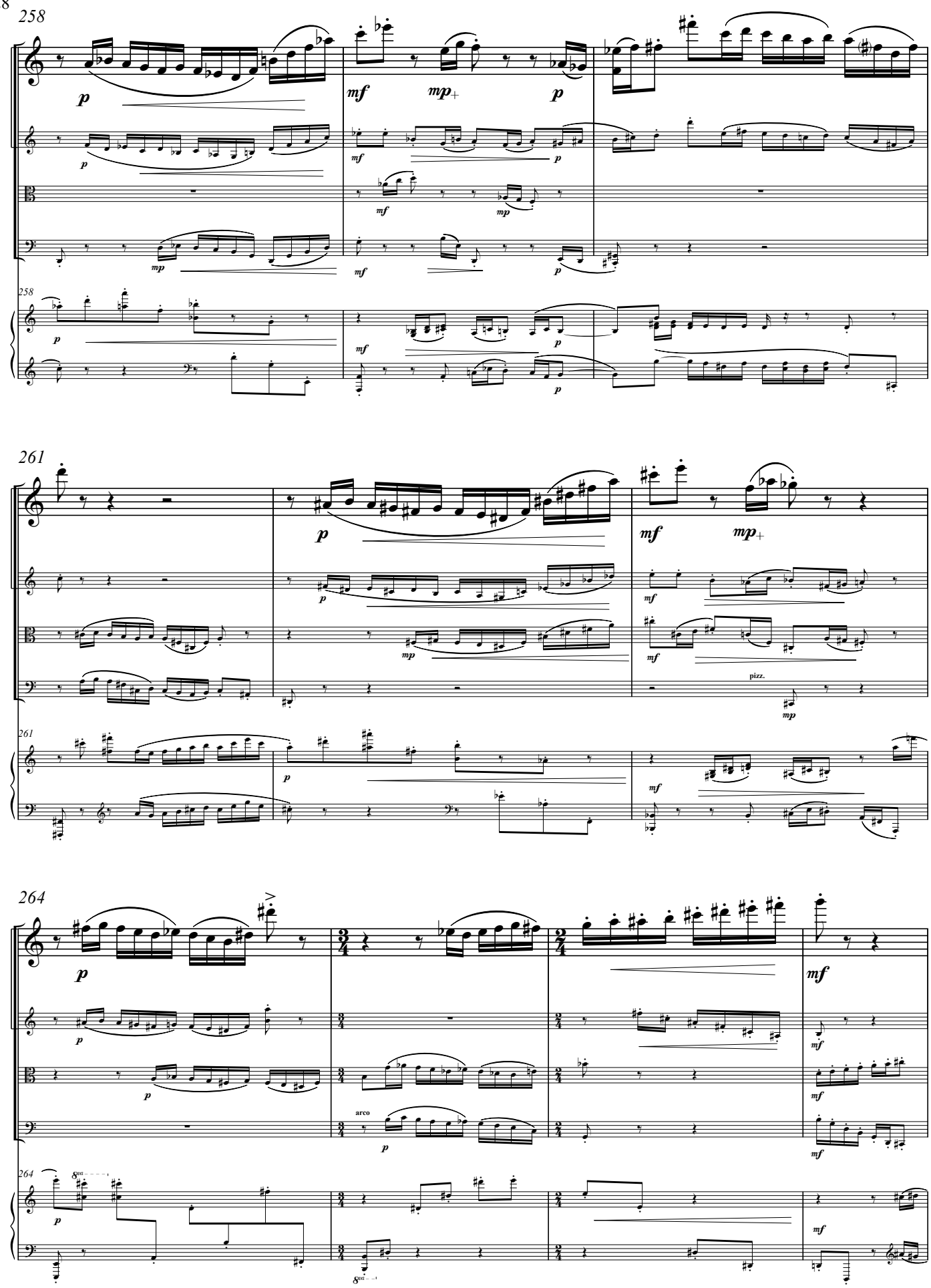
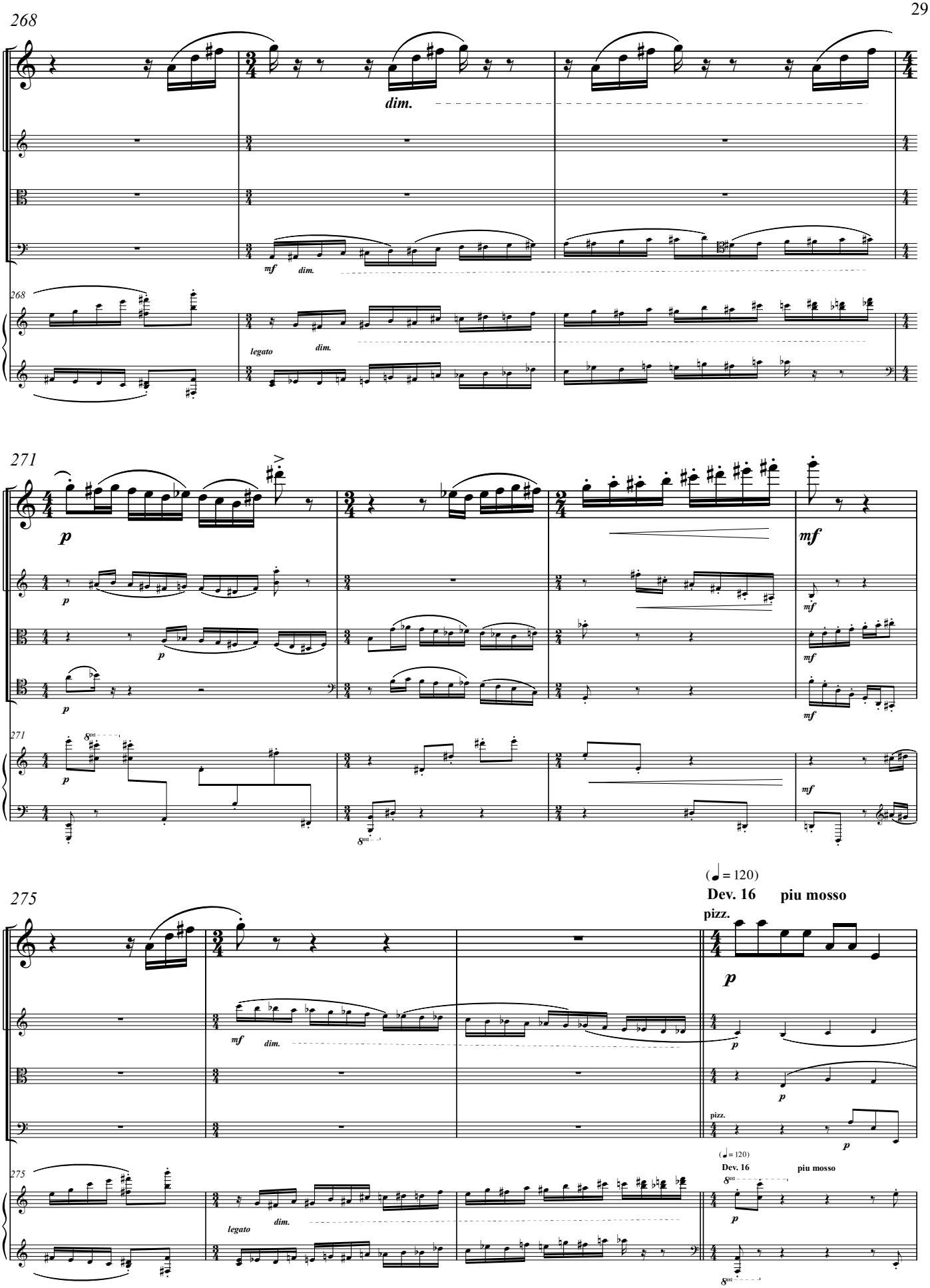


255

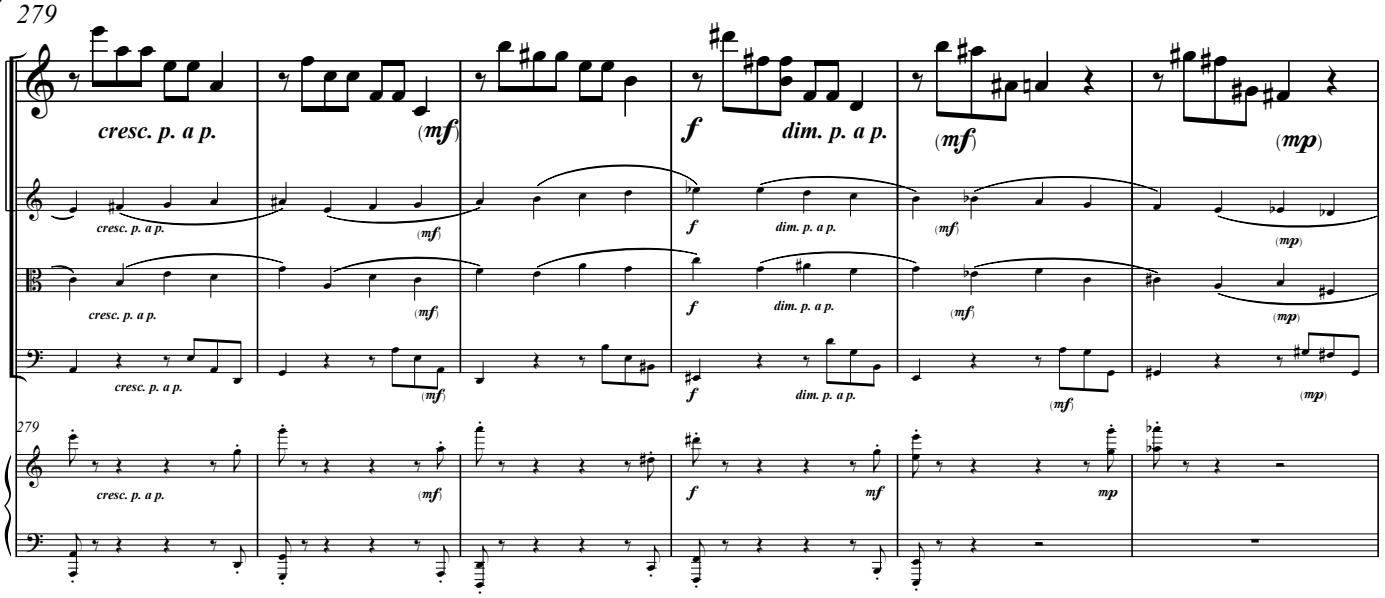
Dev. 15



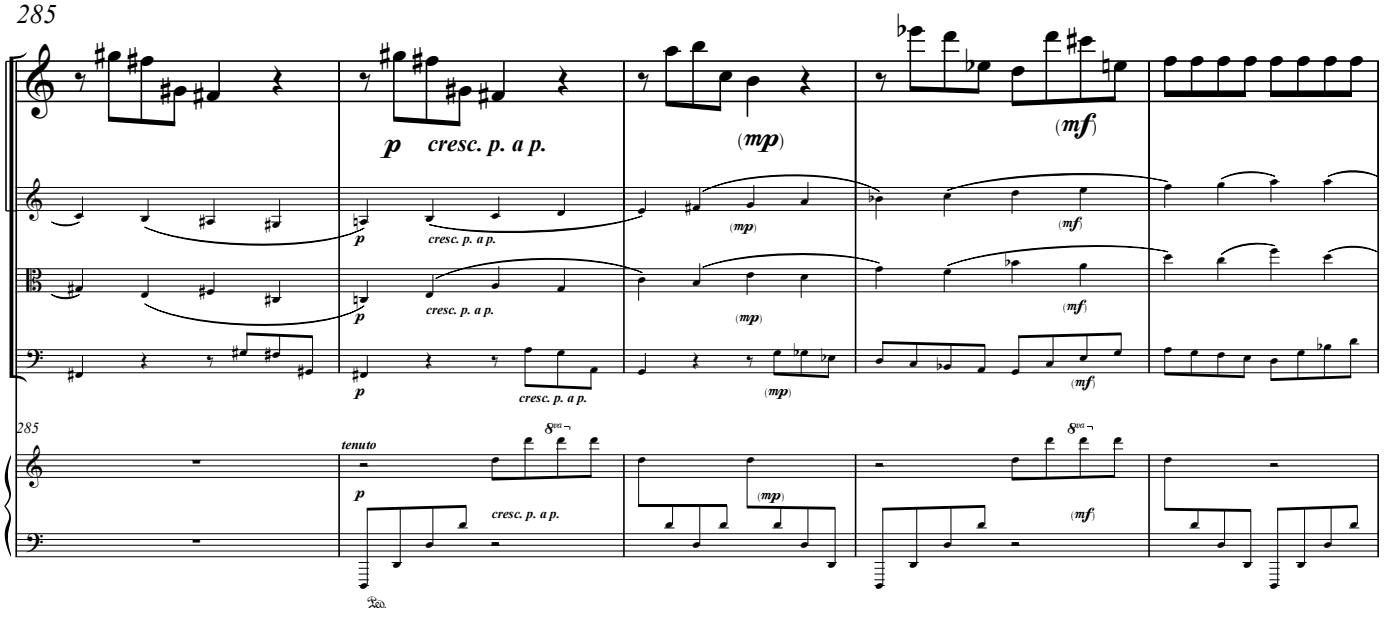

258
261
264
pizz.
arco


268
dim.
mf
dim.
legato
dim.
271
p
mf
8va
275
(♩= 120)
Dev. 16
piu mosso
pizz.
p
mf
dim.
legato
dim.
pizz.
(♩= 120)
Dev. 16
piu mosso
8va

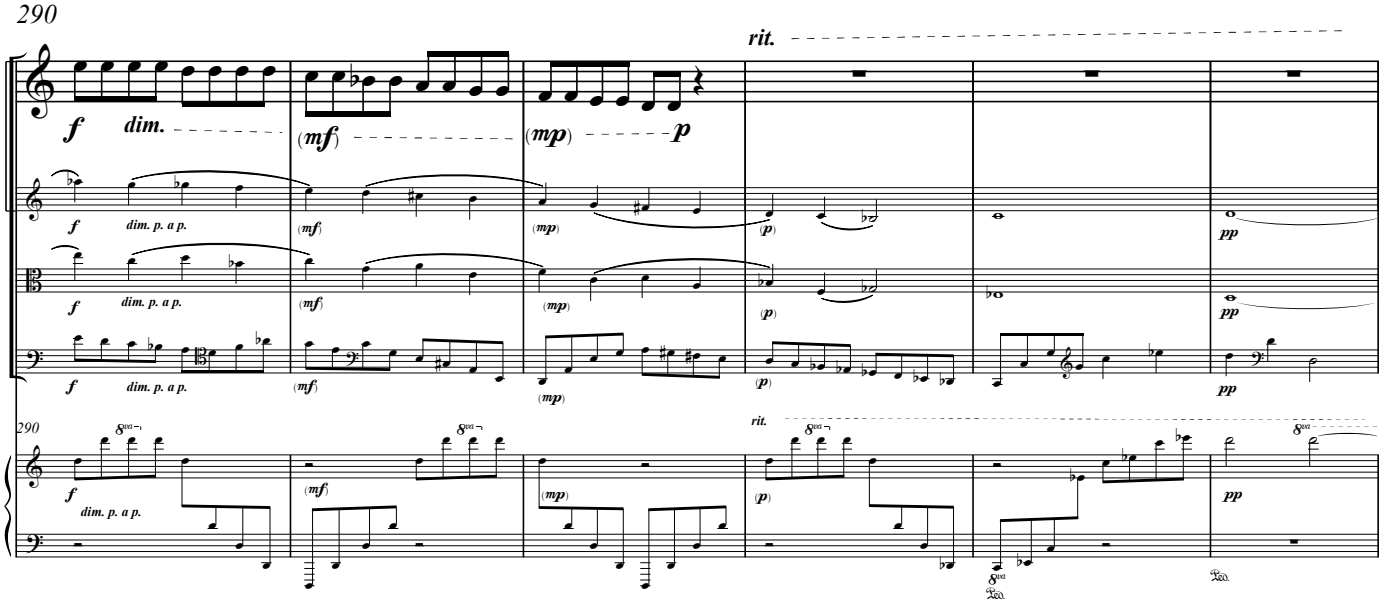
279

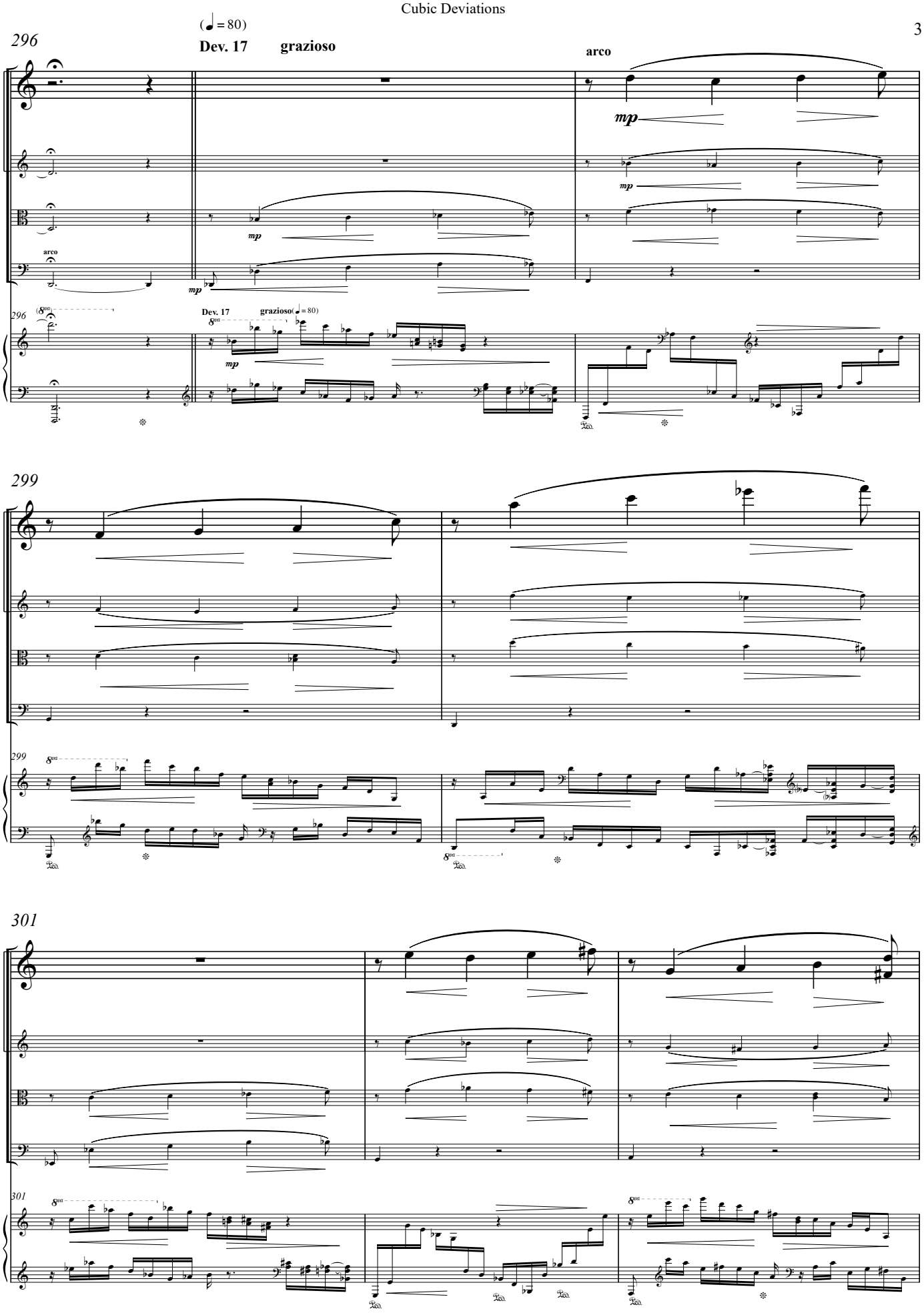

cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
f
dim. p. a p.
(mf)
(mp)
mf
mp

285

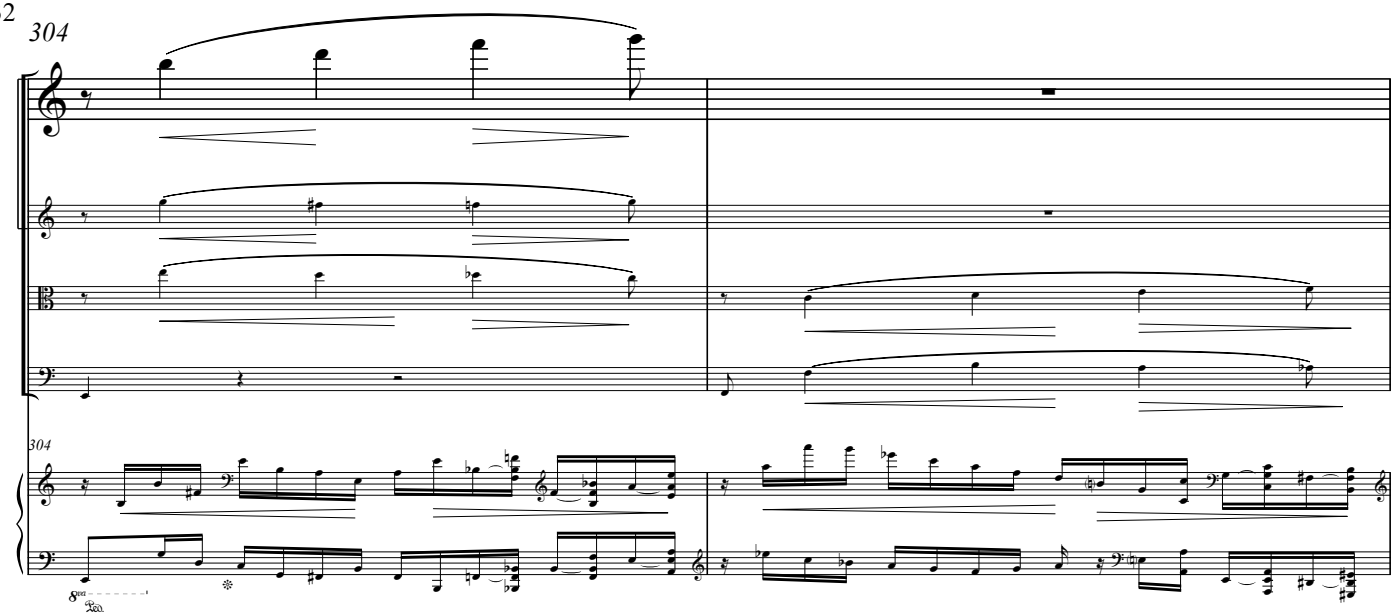

p
cresc. p. a p.
(mp)
(mf)
tenuto
8va

290

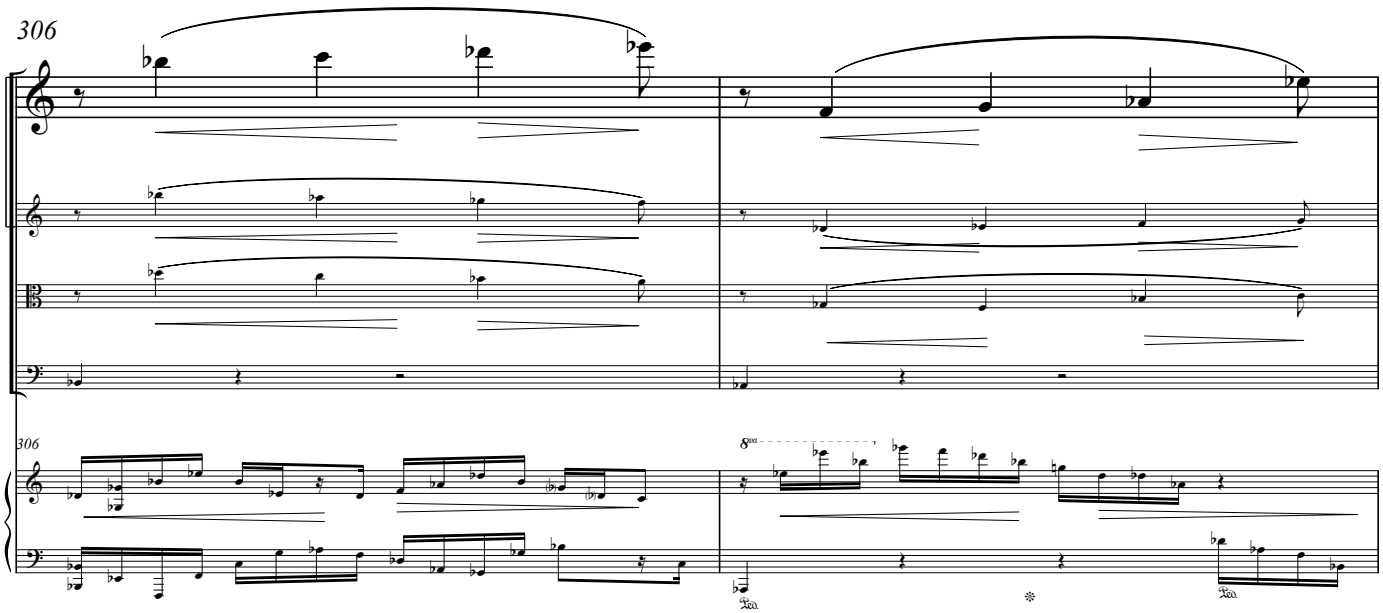

f
dim.
dim. p. a p.
(mf)
(mp)
p
(p)
rit.
pp
8va


296
(♩ = 80)
Dev. 17
grazioso
arco
mp
299
301

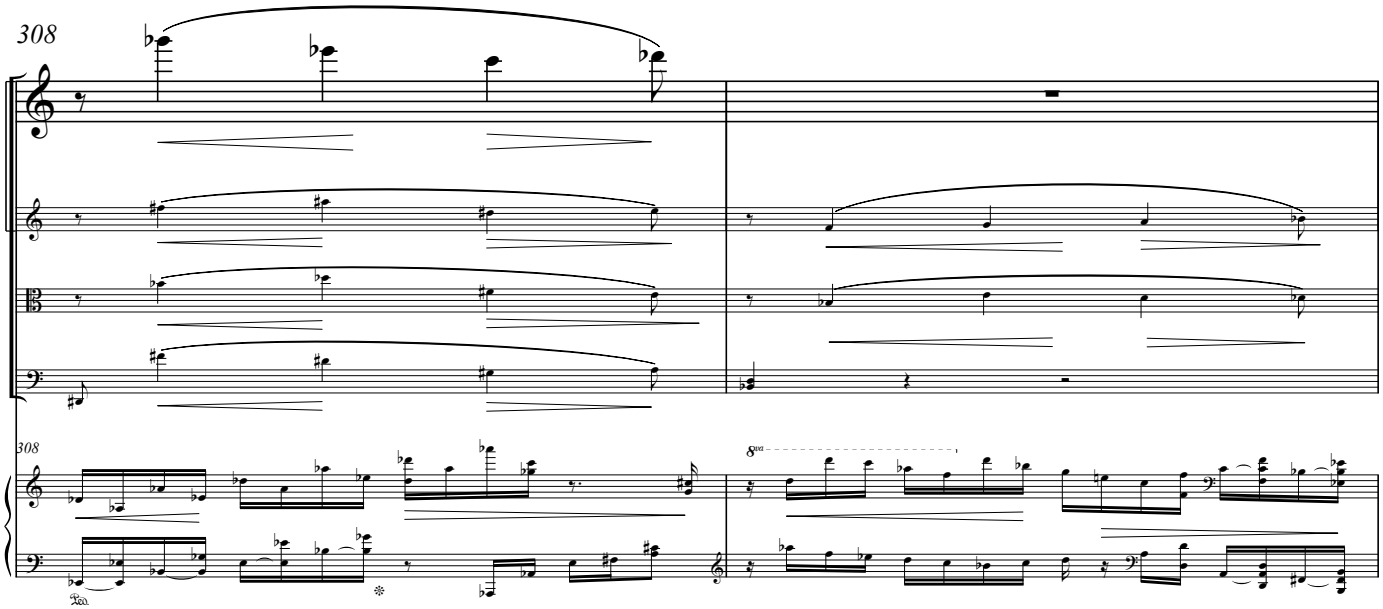
304

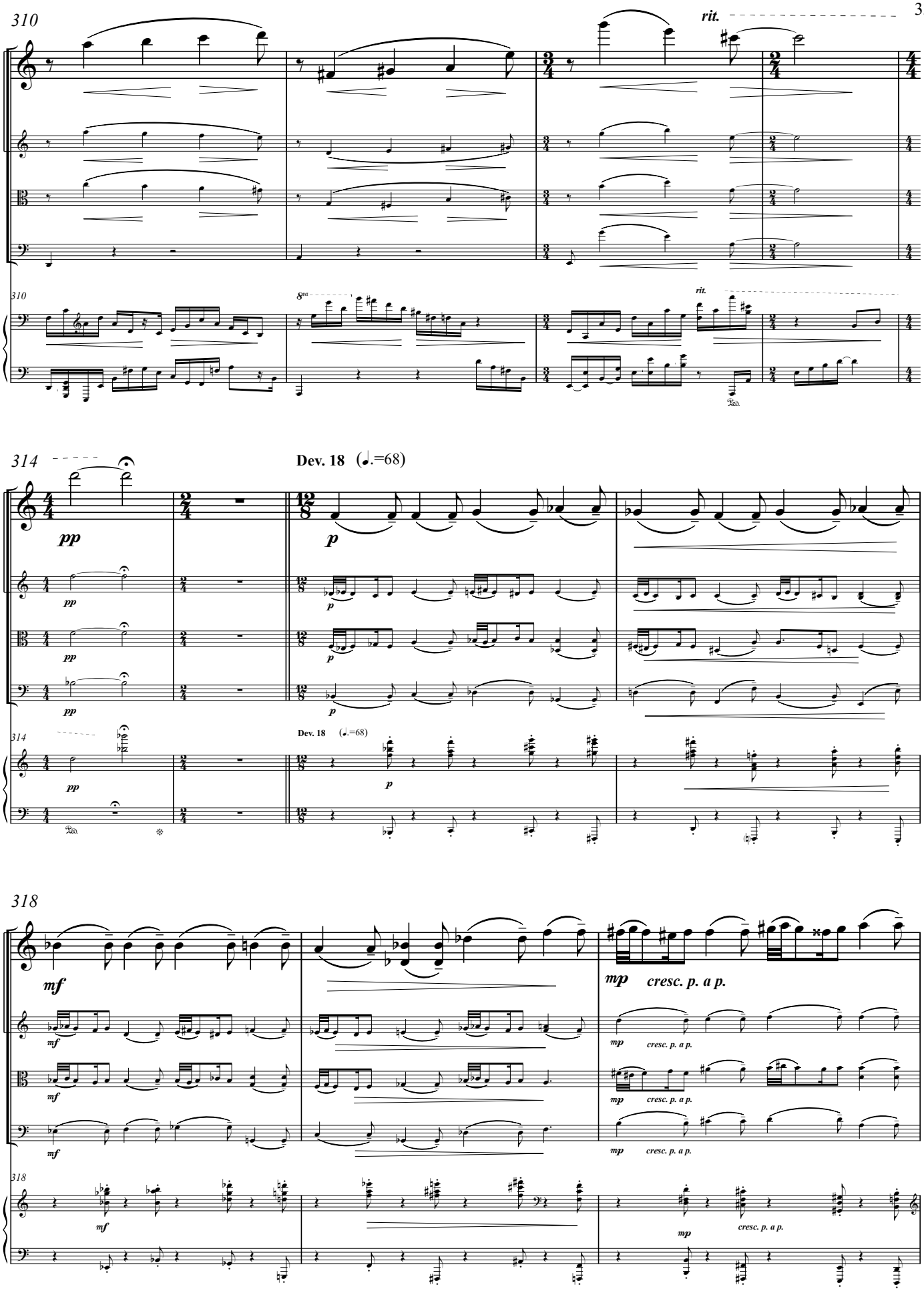


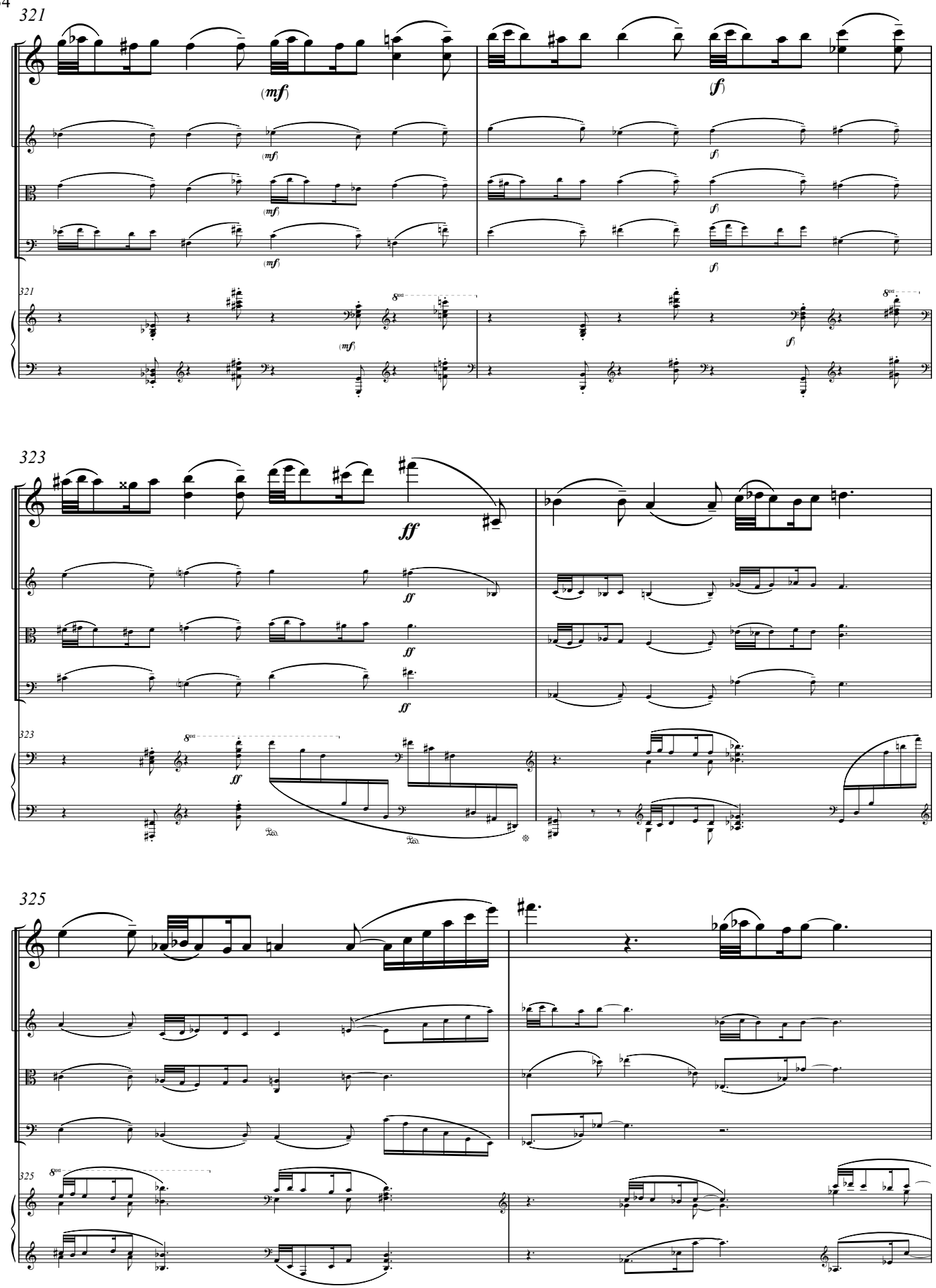
306

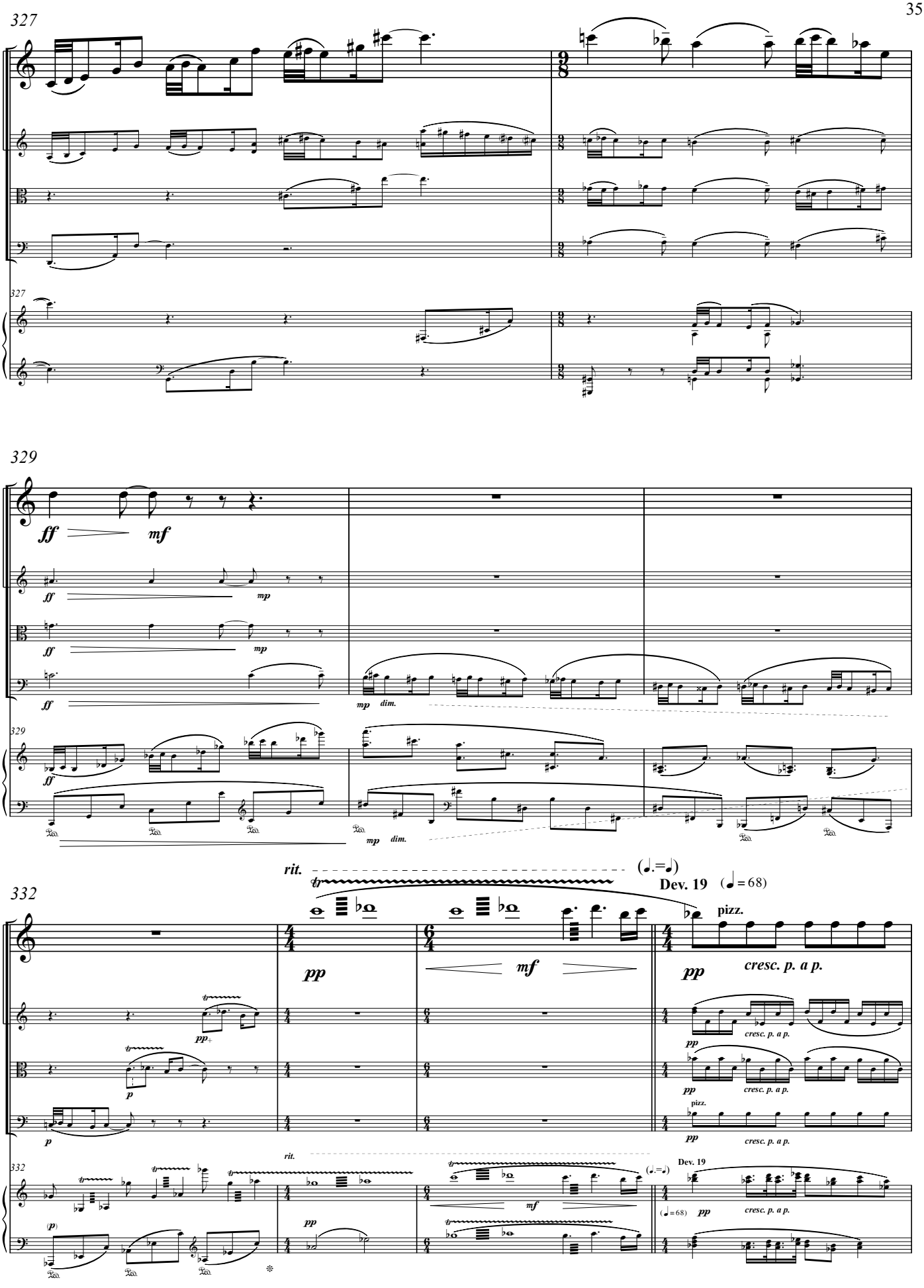


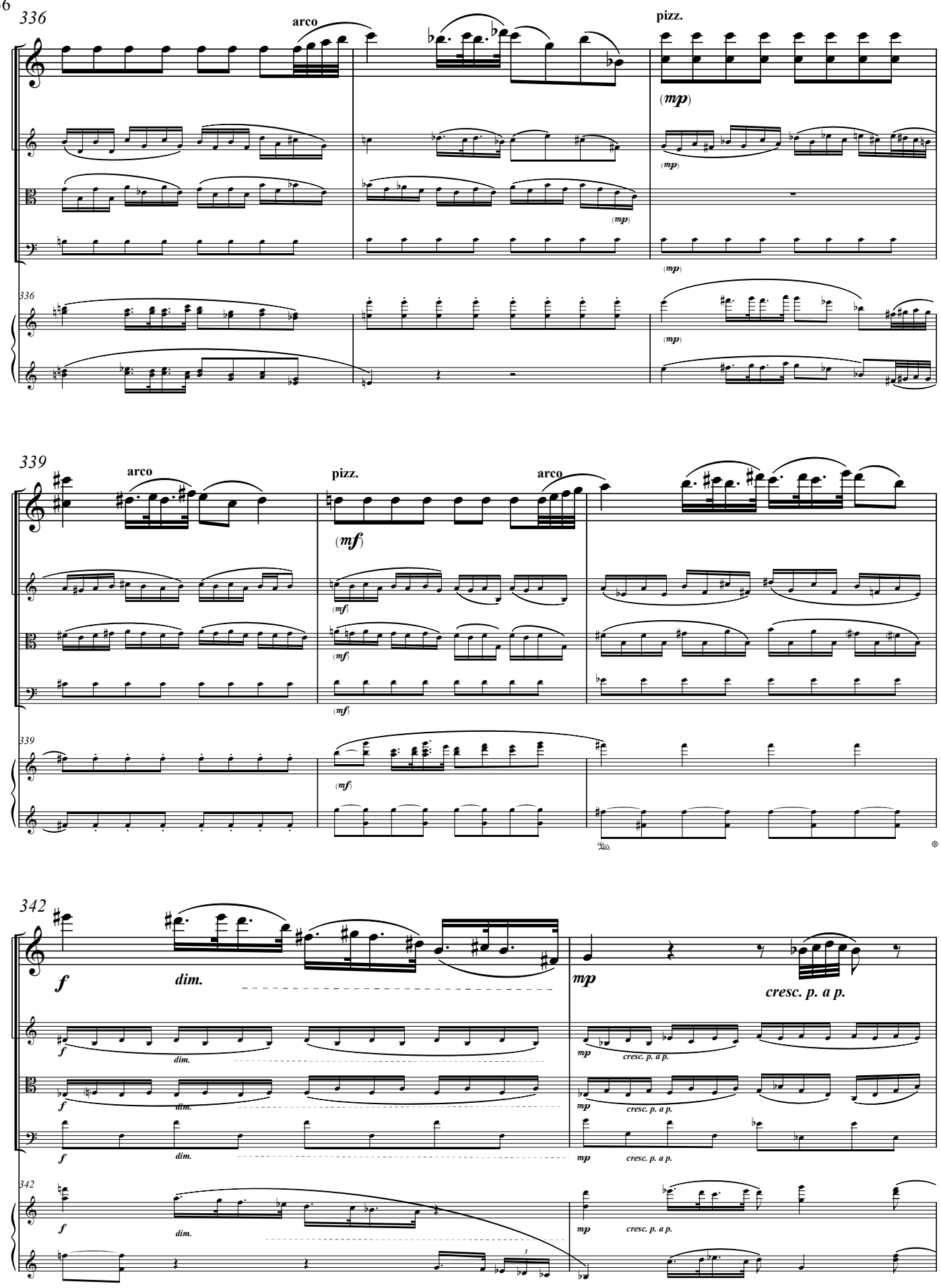
308

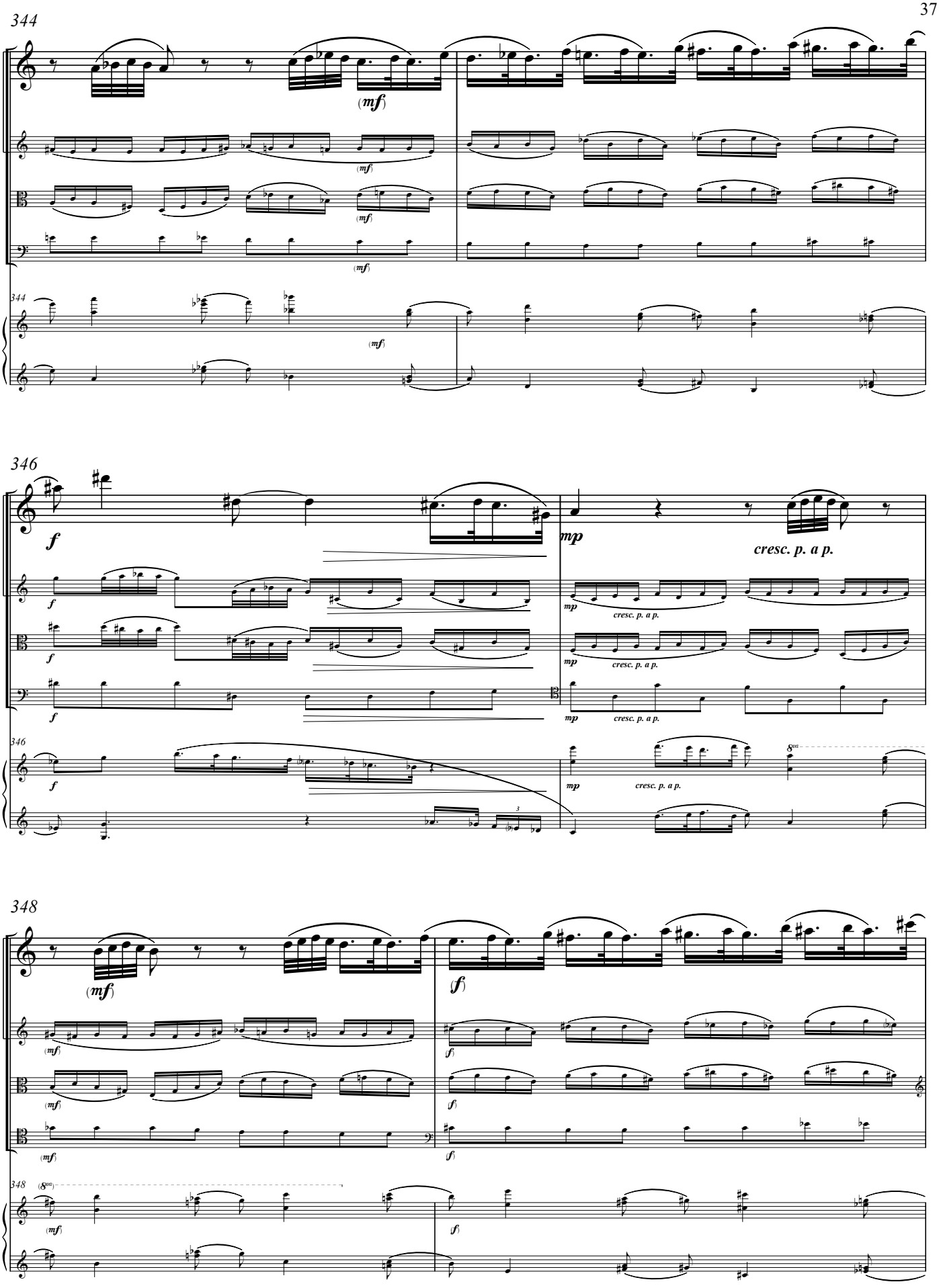


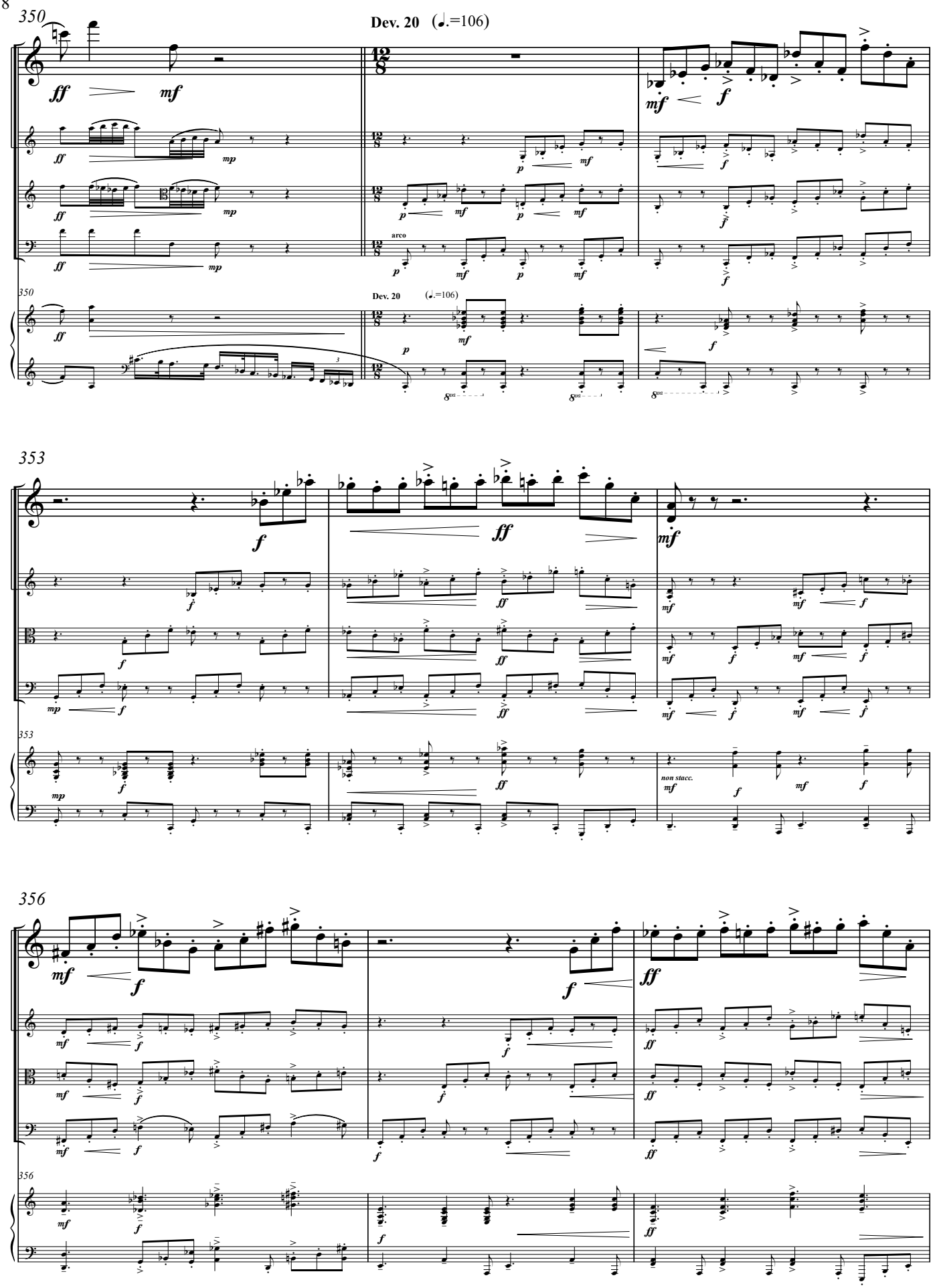

310
rit.
8va
rit.
314
Dev. 18 (♩.=68)
pp
p
Dev. 18 (♩.=68)
318
mf
mp
cresc. p. a p.


321
(mf)
(f)
323
ff
325

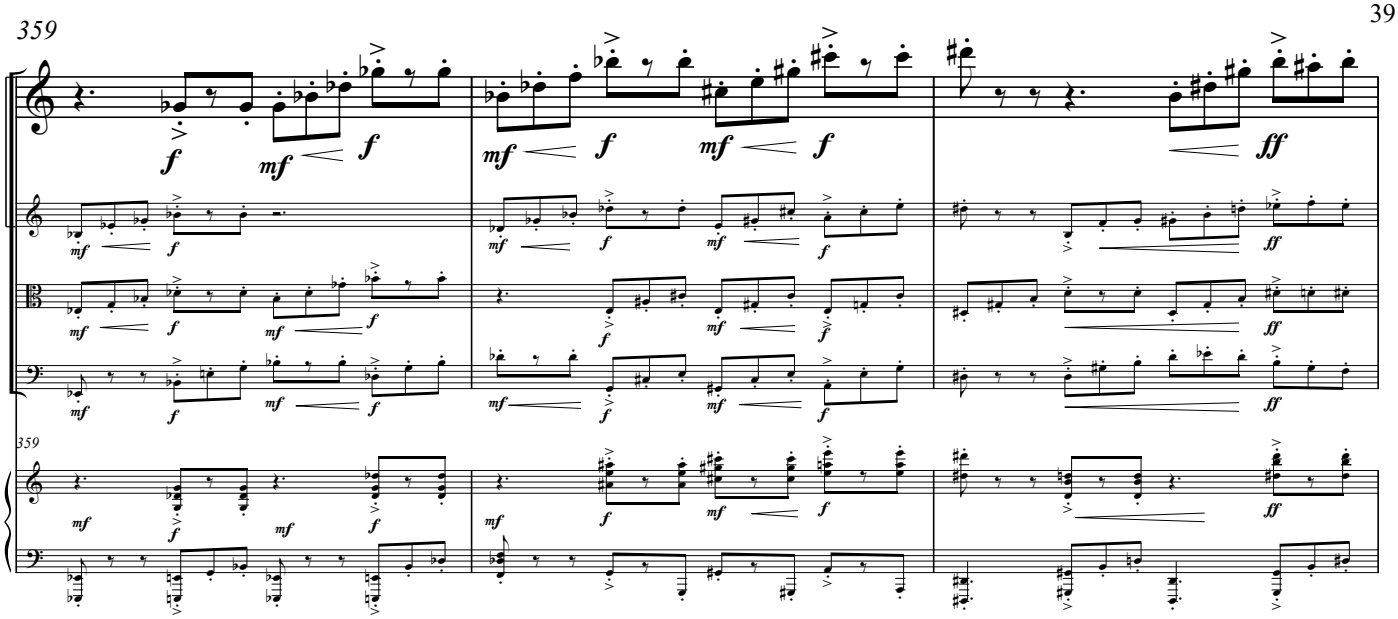

327
329
ff
mf
mp
dim.
rit.
Dev. 19
pizz.
pp
cresc. p. a p.
332


336
arco
pizz.
(mp)
339
arco
pizz.
arco
(mf)
342
f
dim.
mp
cresc. p. a p.

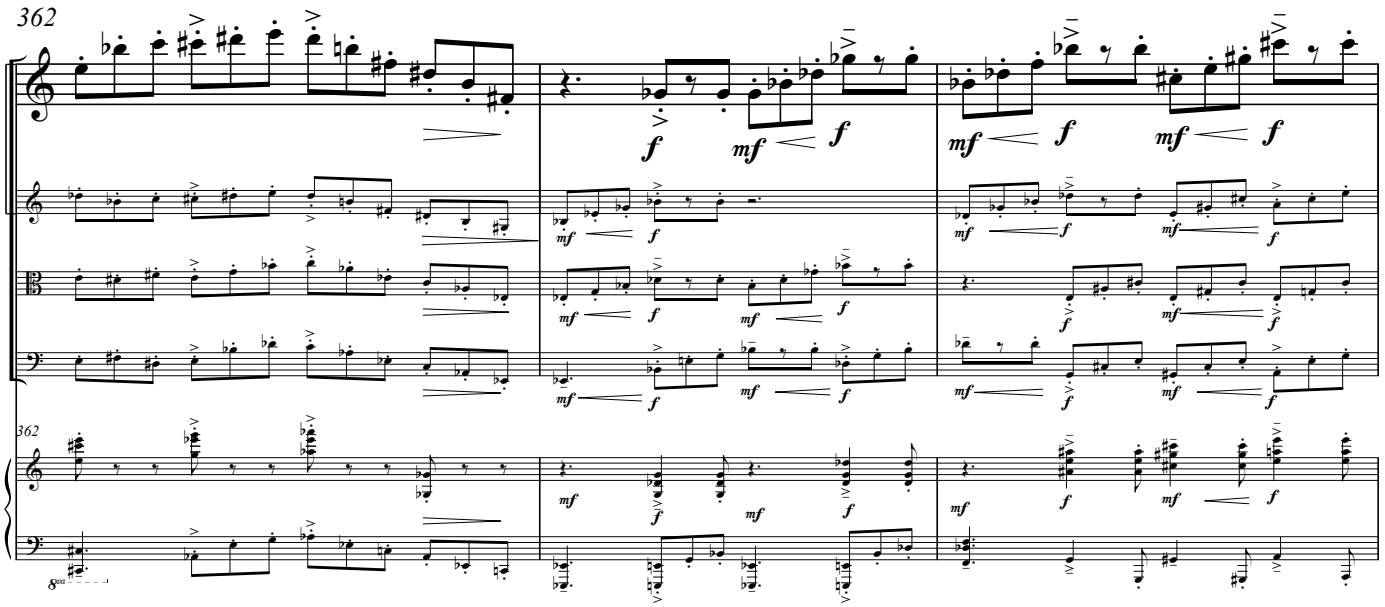

344
(mf)
346
f
mp
cresc. p. a p.
348
(mf)
(f)


350
Dev. 20 (♩.=106)
arco
353
non stacc.
356

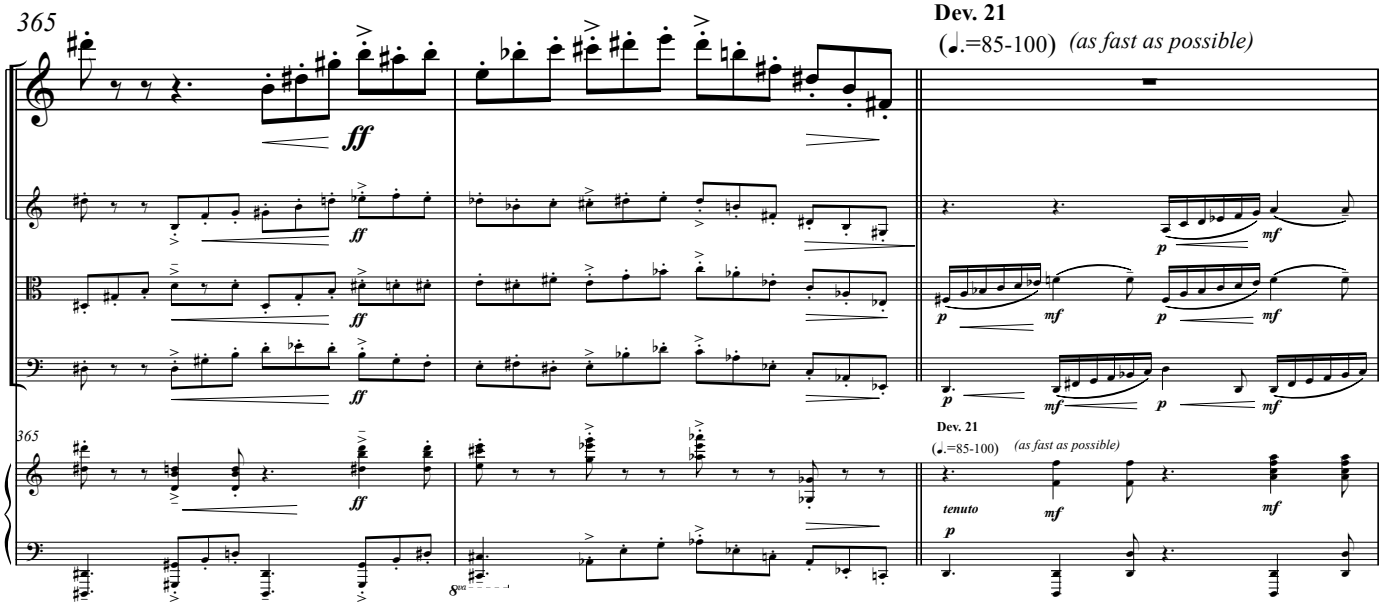
359

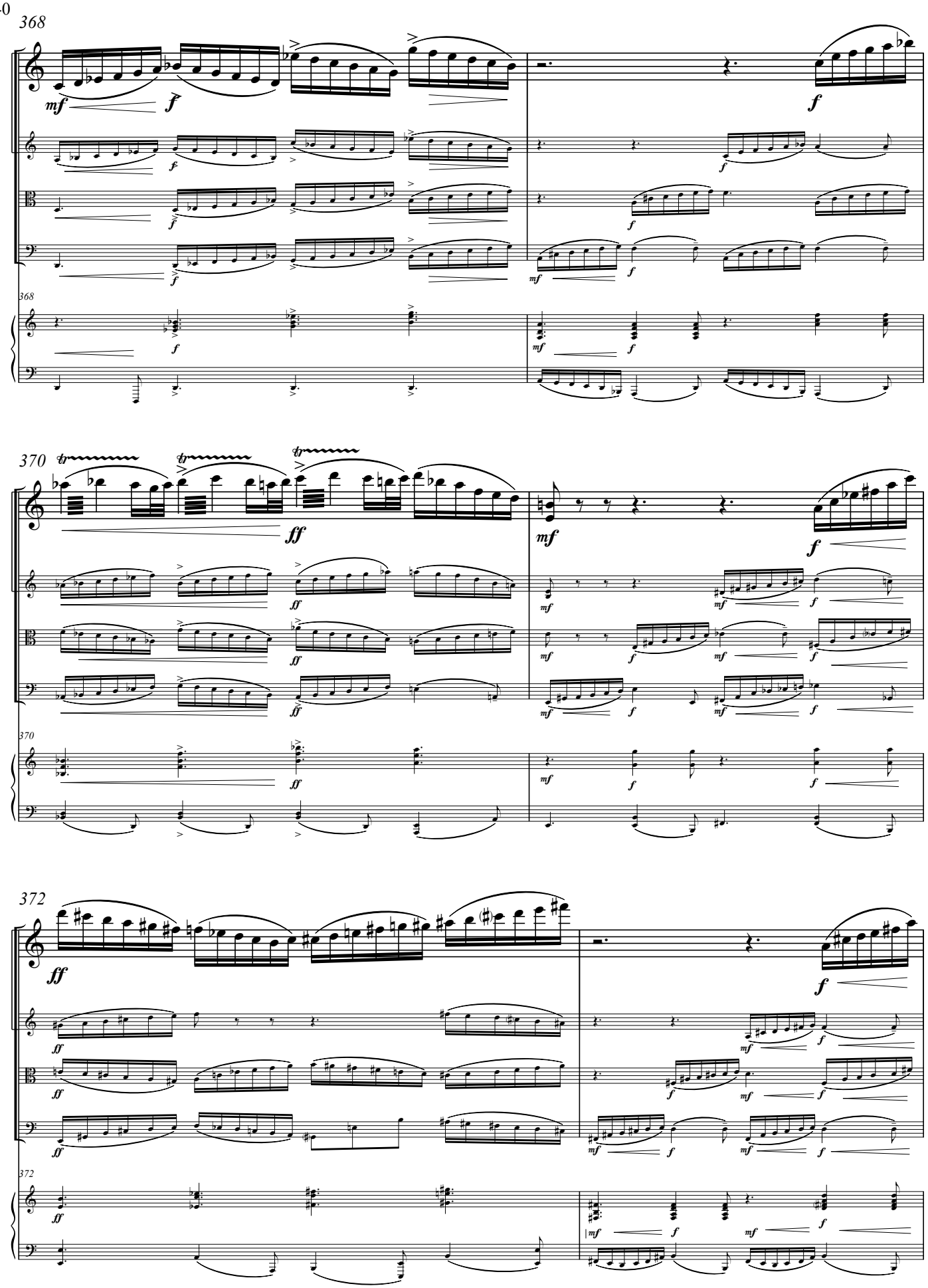


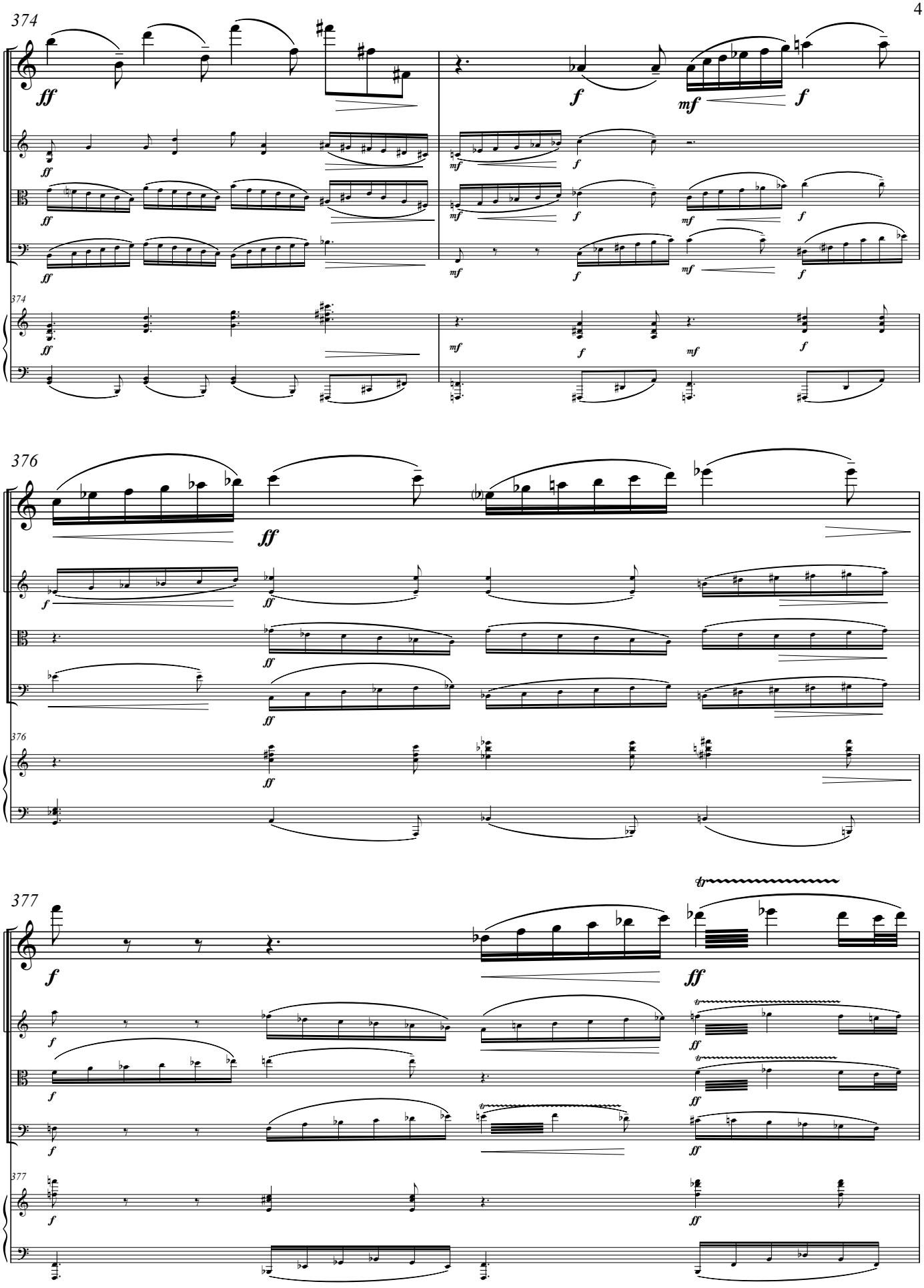
362

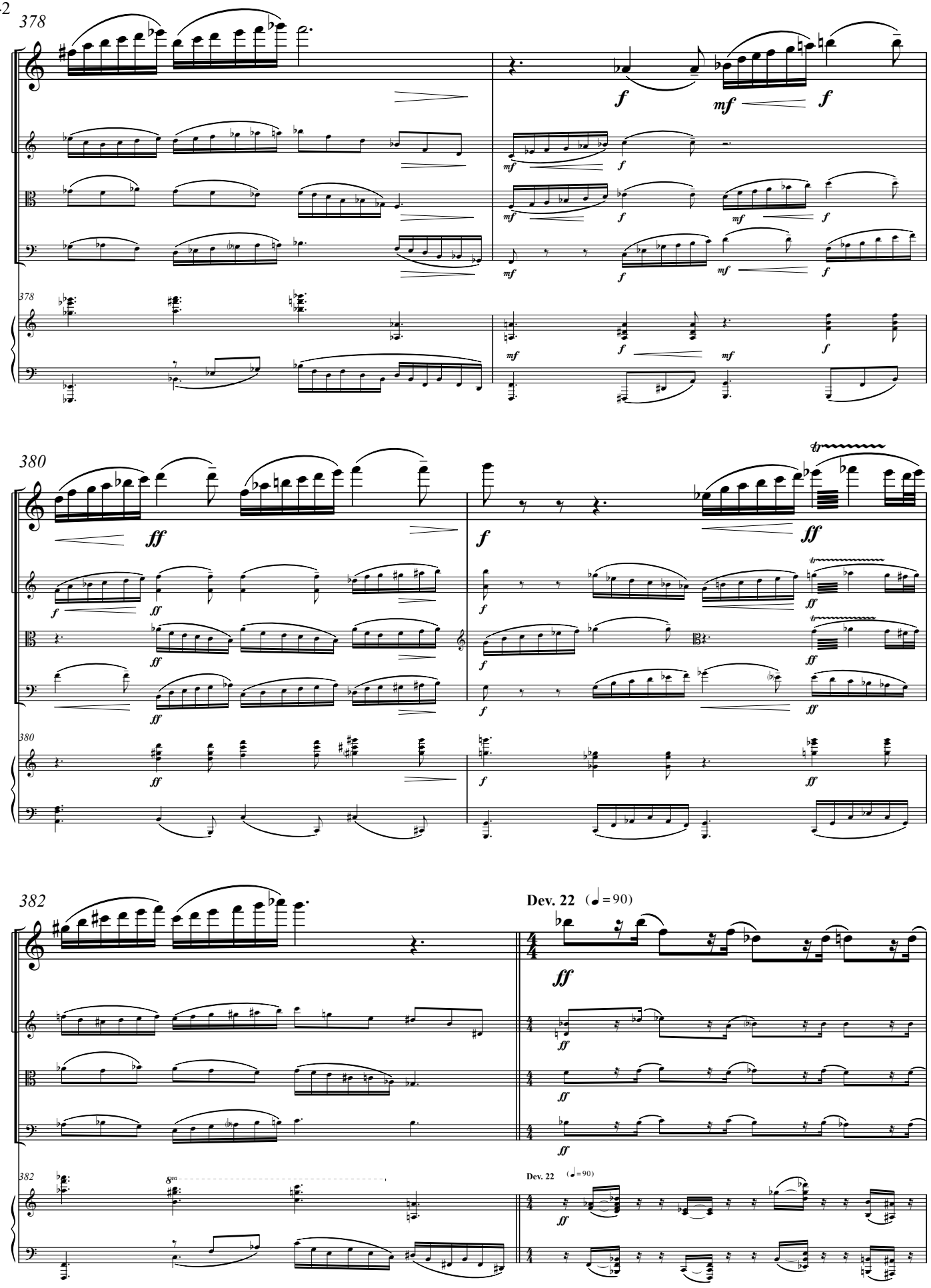


365

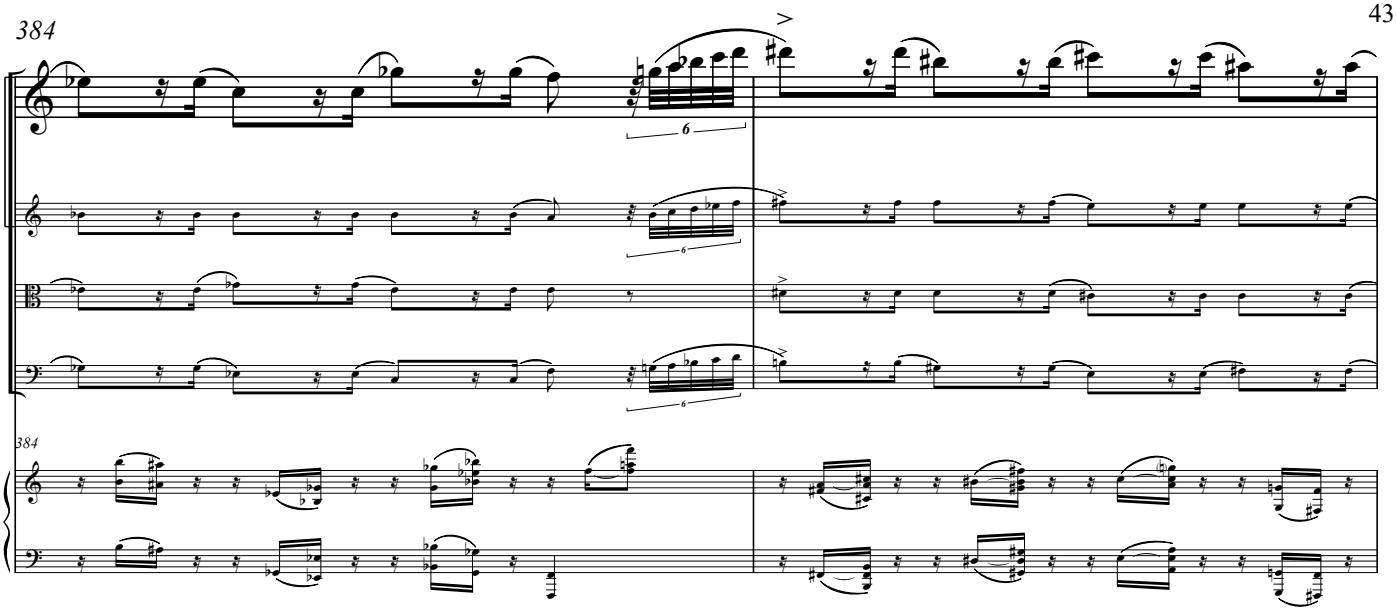



368
370
372

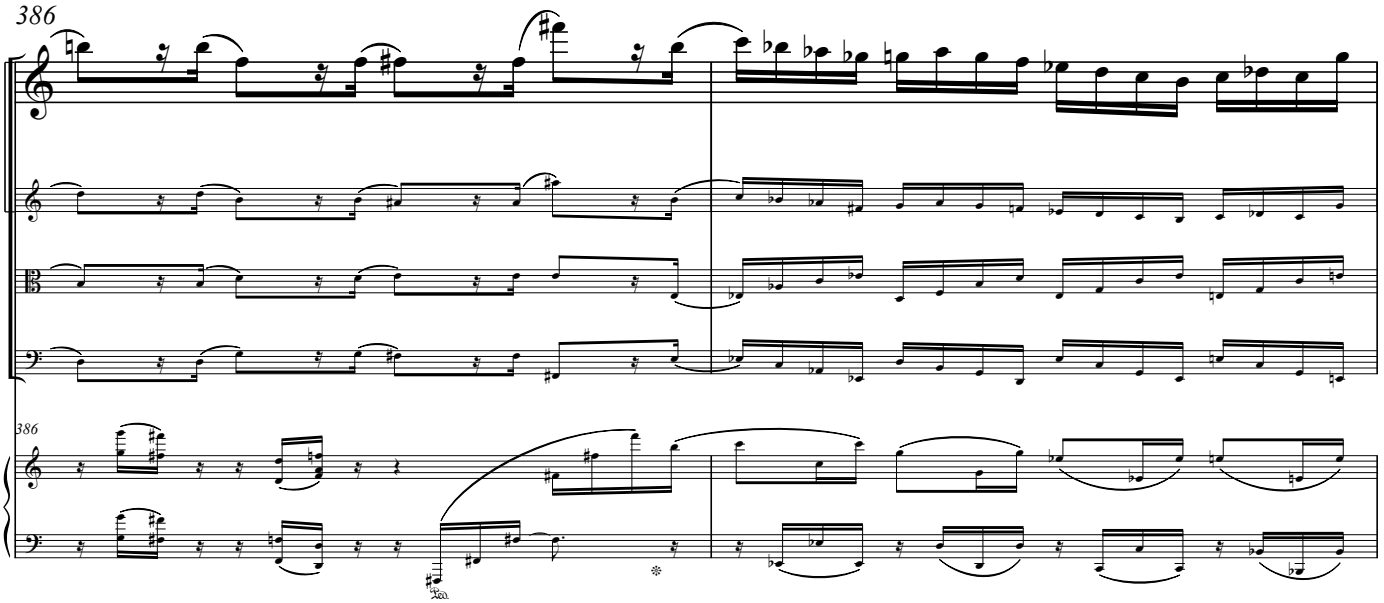

374
376
377


378
380
382
Dev. 22 (♩ = 90)

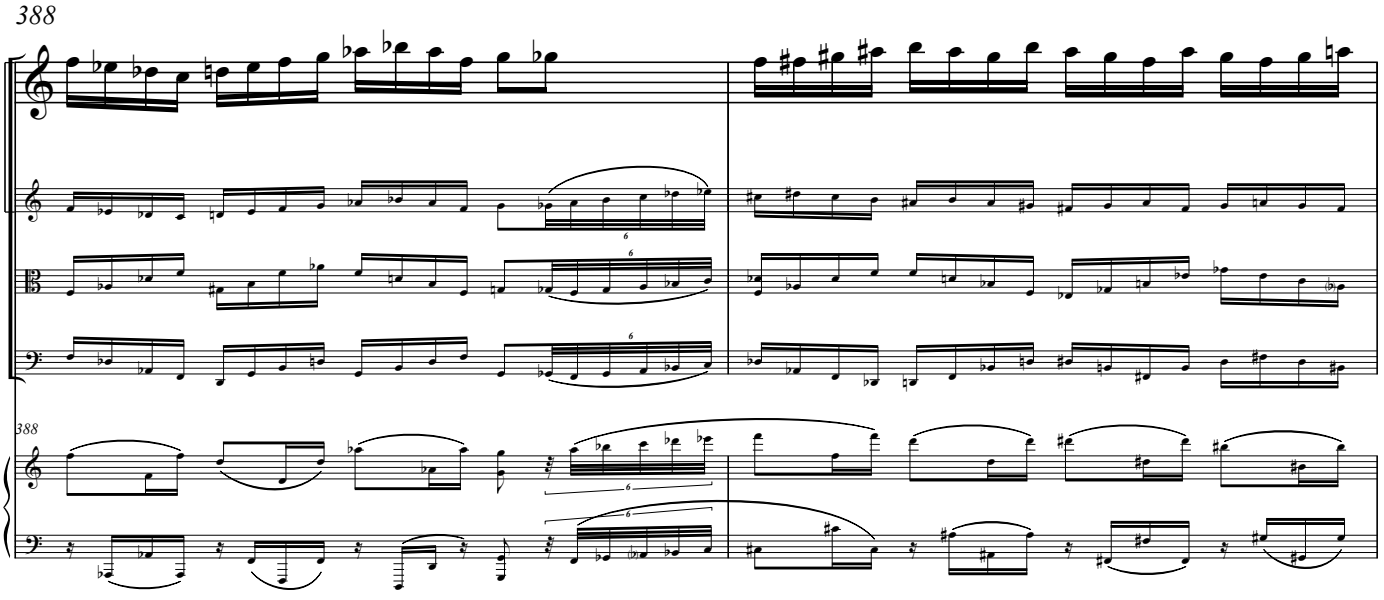
384



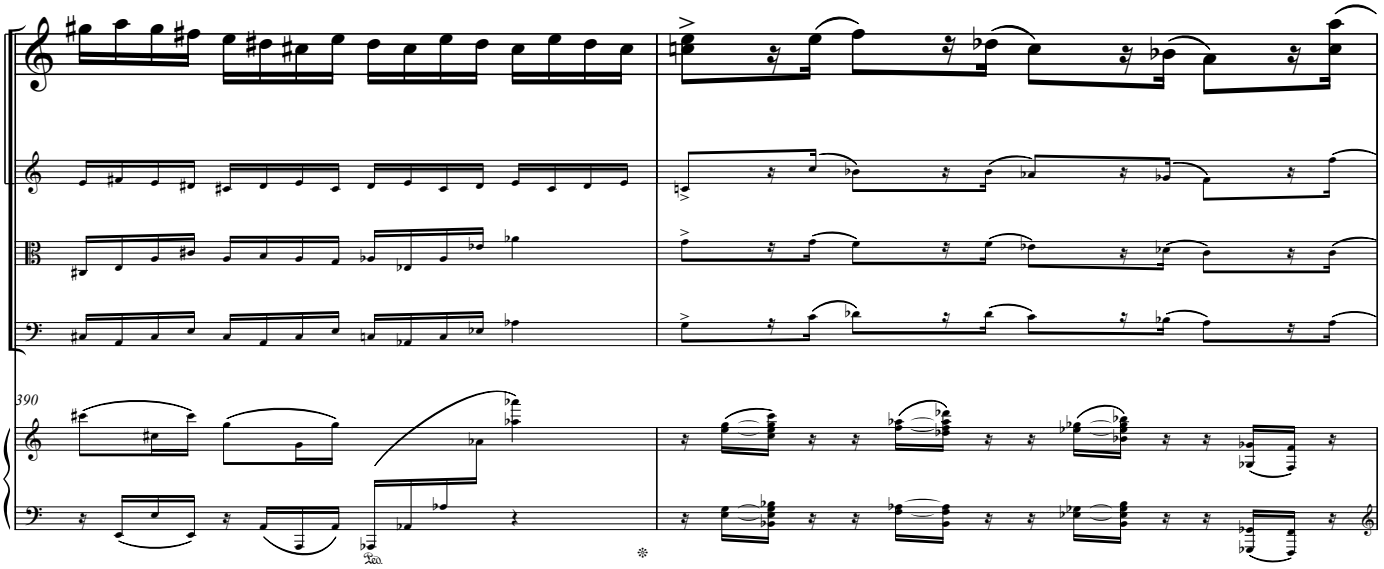
386



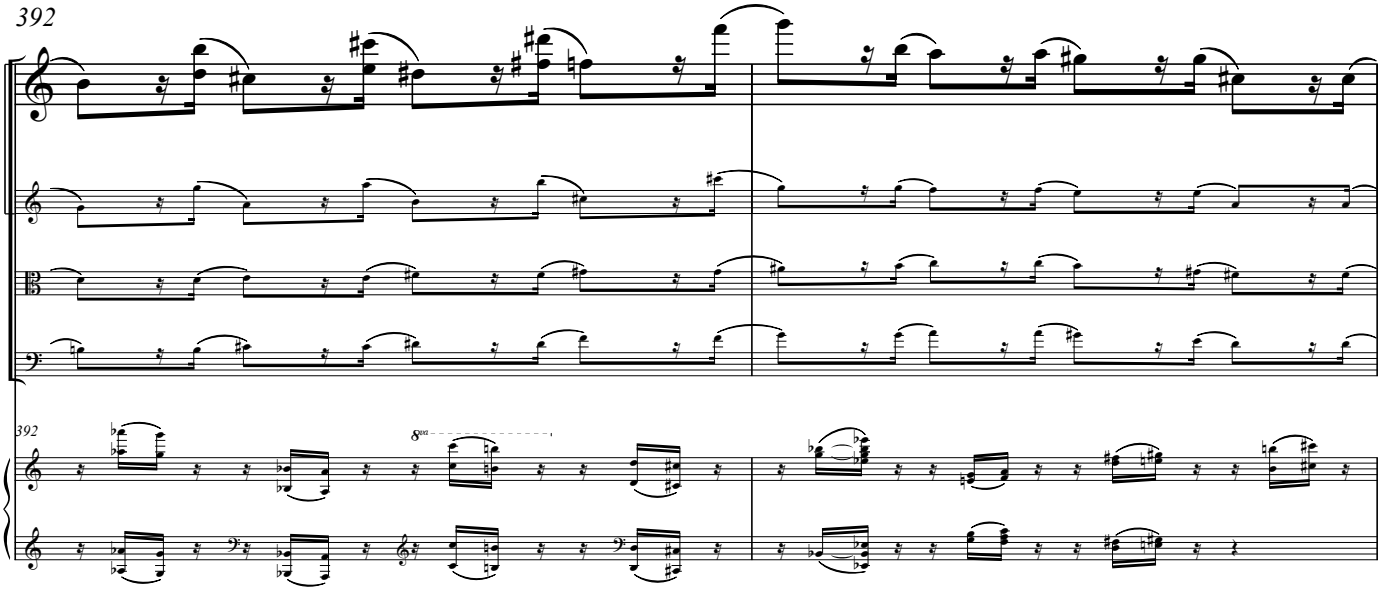
388



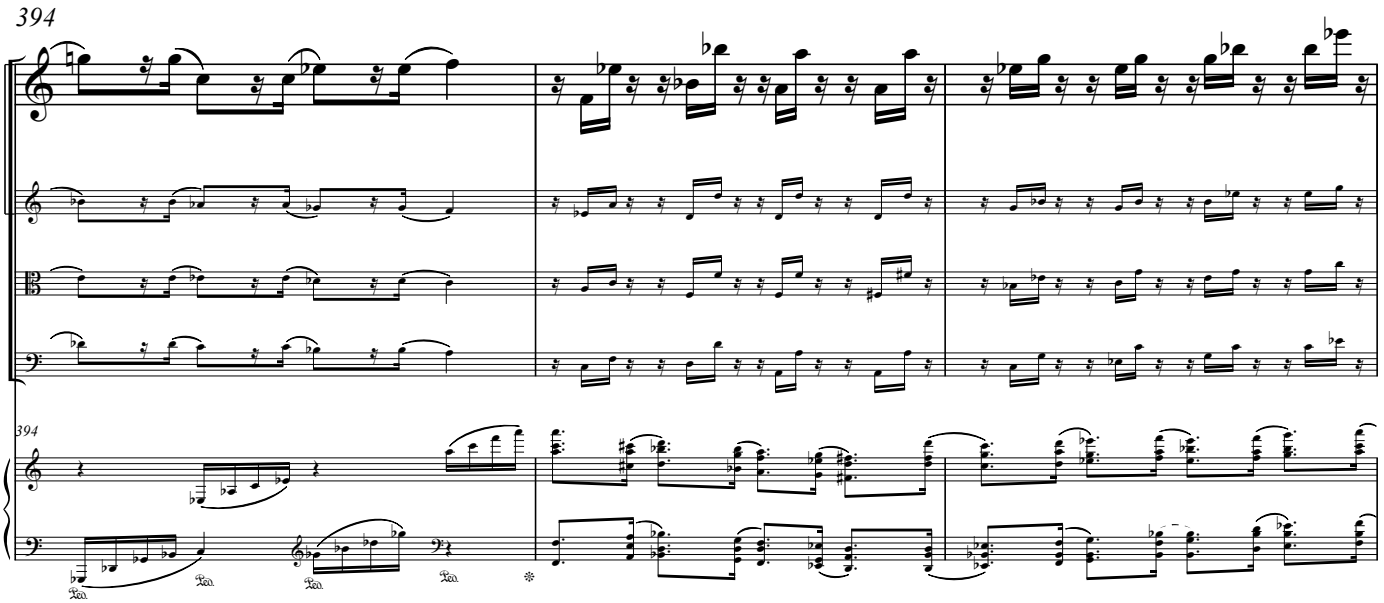
390



392



394



397

poco rit.

ff

400 **Fugue** (♩ = 80)

mp

403

406

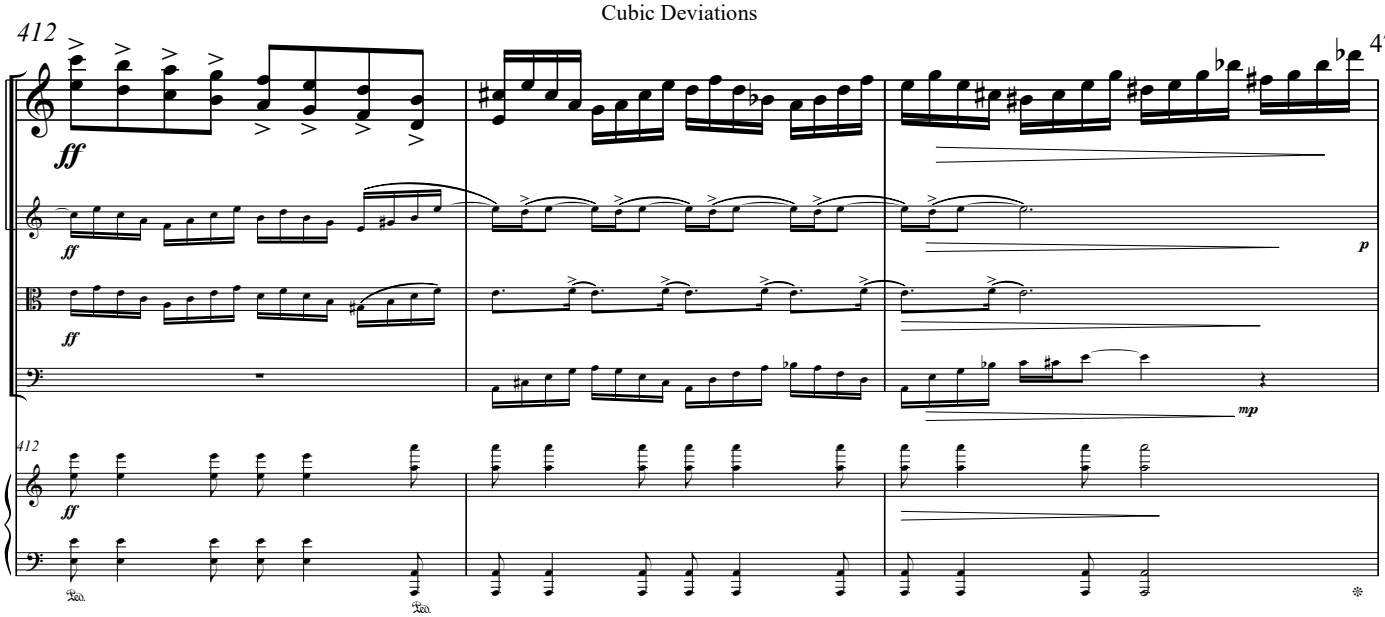
mf cresc. f

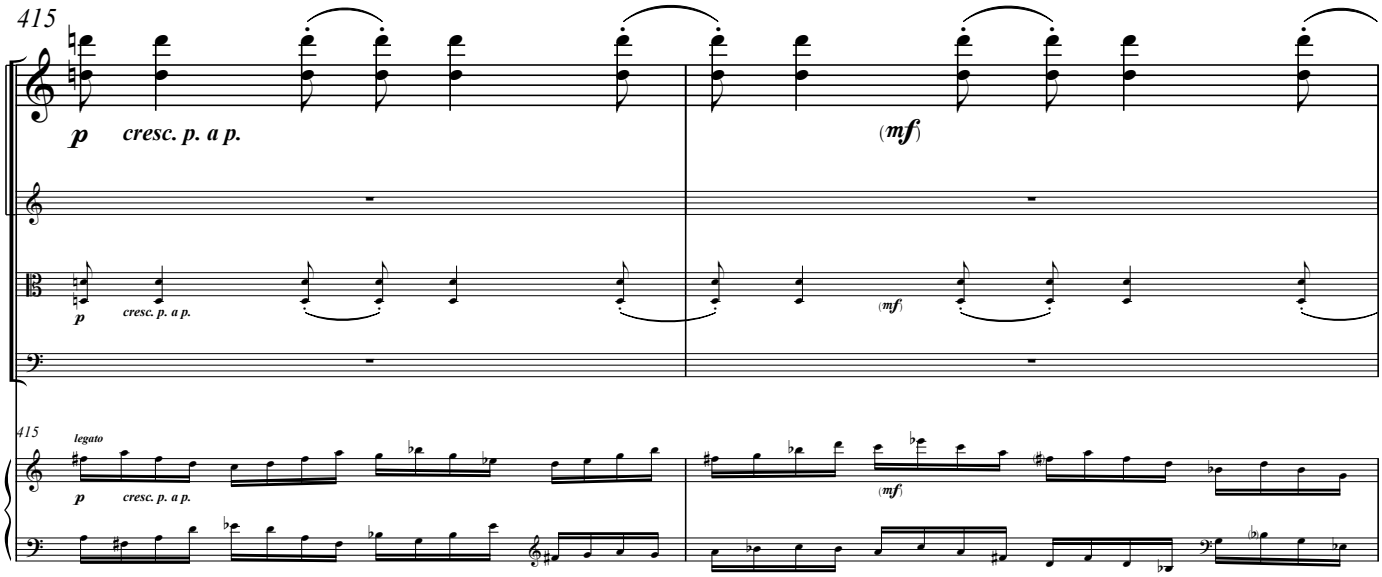
408

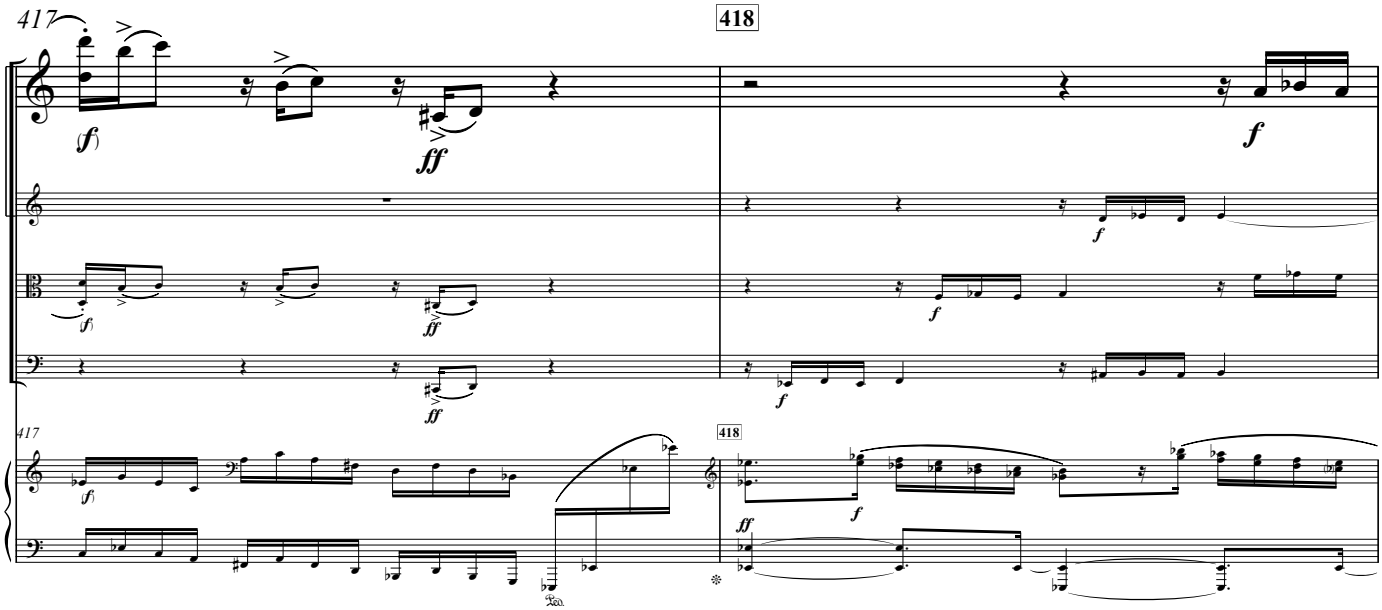
cresc.

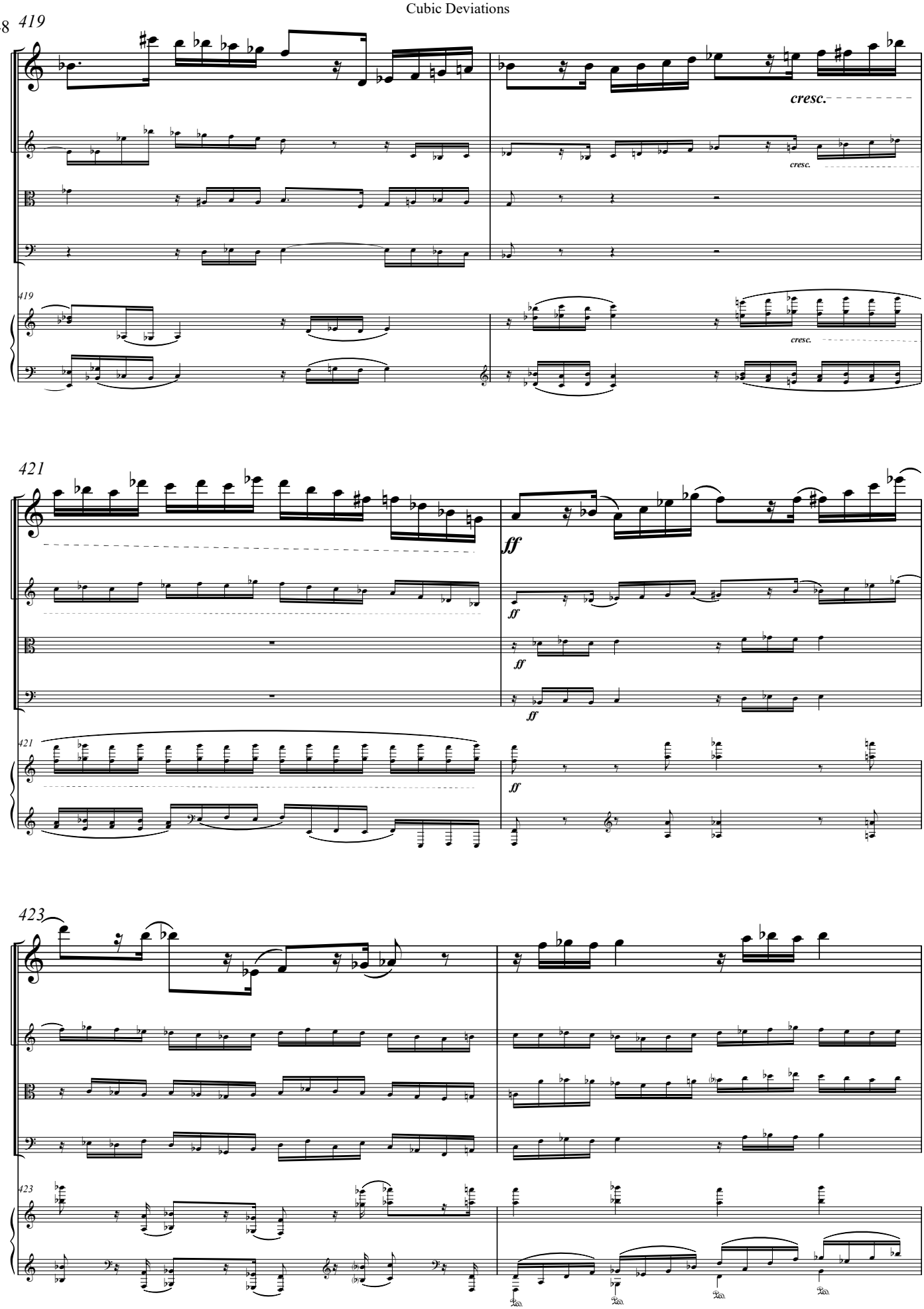
410

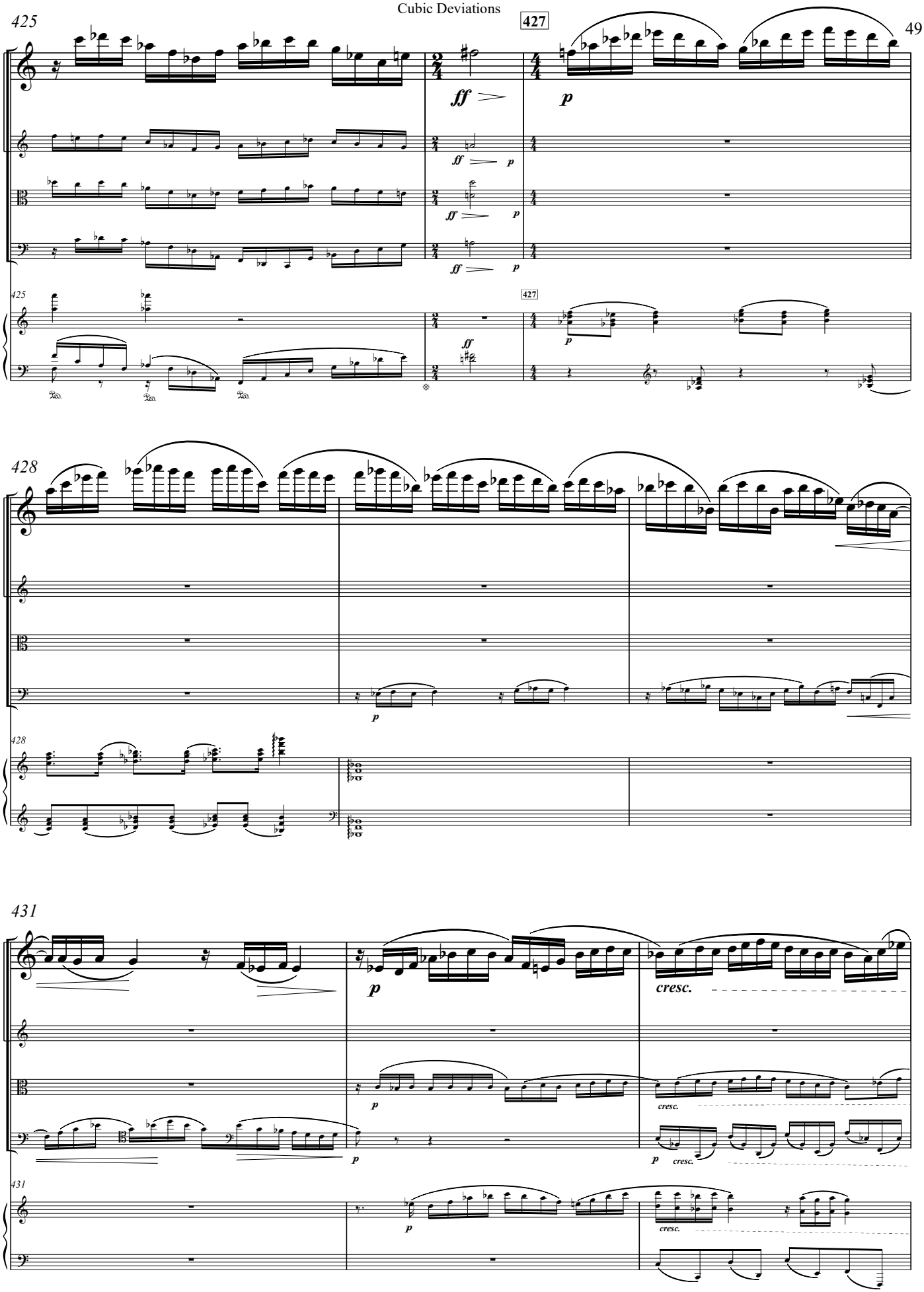
ff

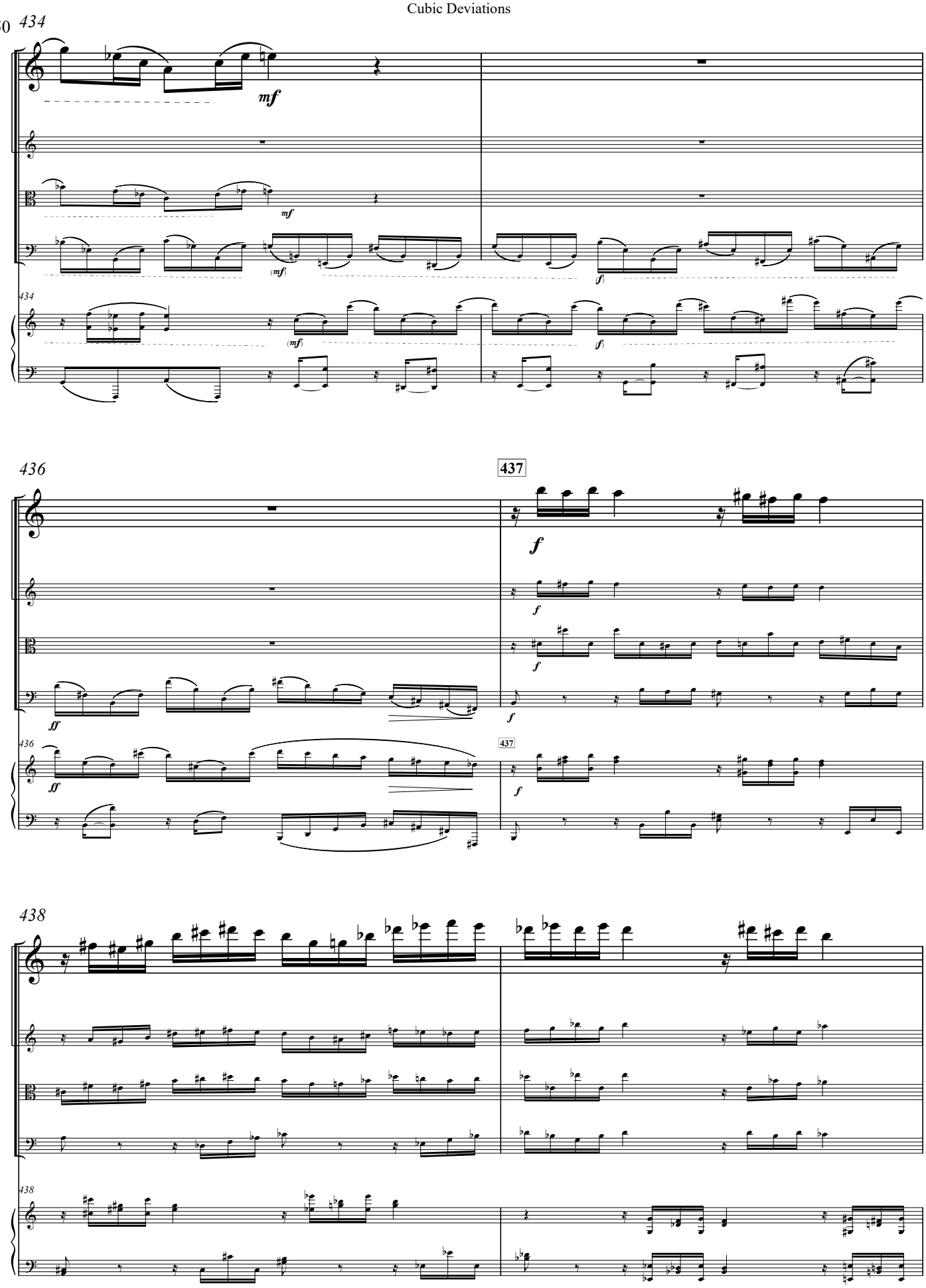

412
ff
p
mp


415
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
legato

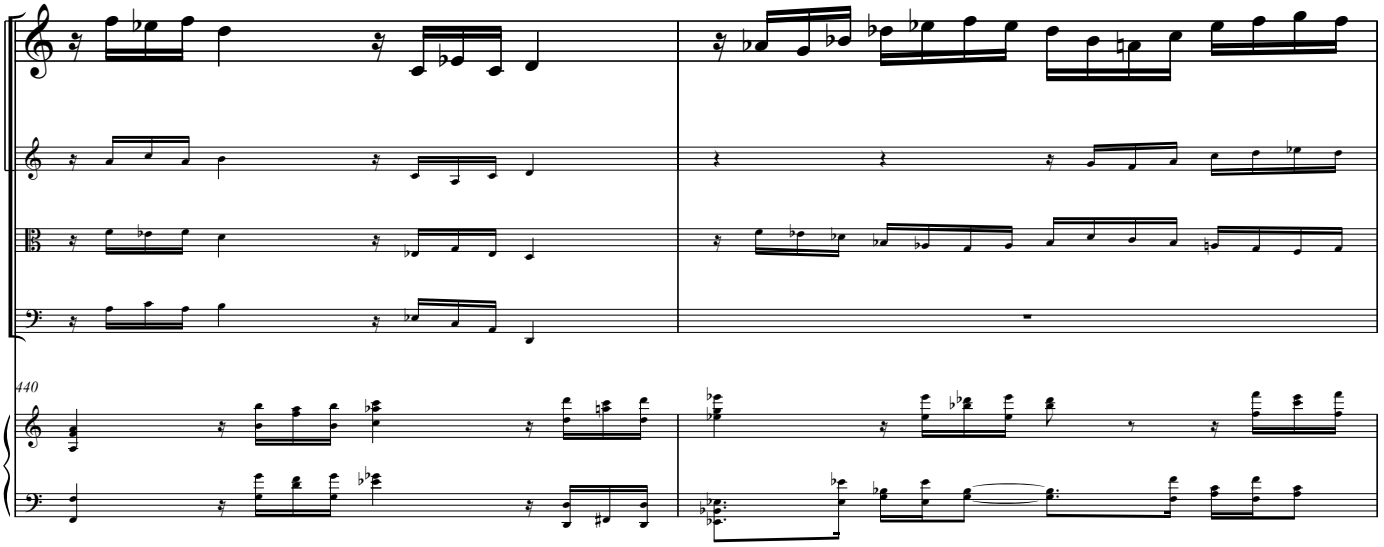

417
418
(f)
ff
f


419
cresc.
cresc.
419
cresc.
421
ff
ff
ff
ff
421
ff
423
423

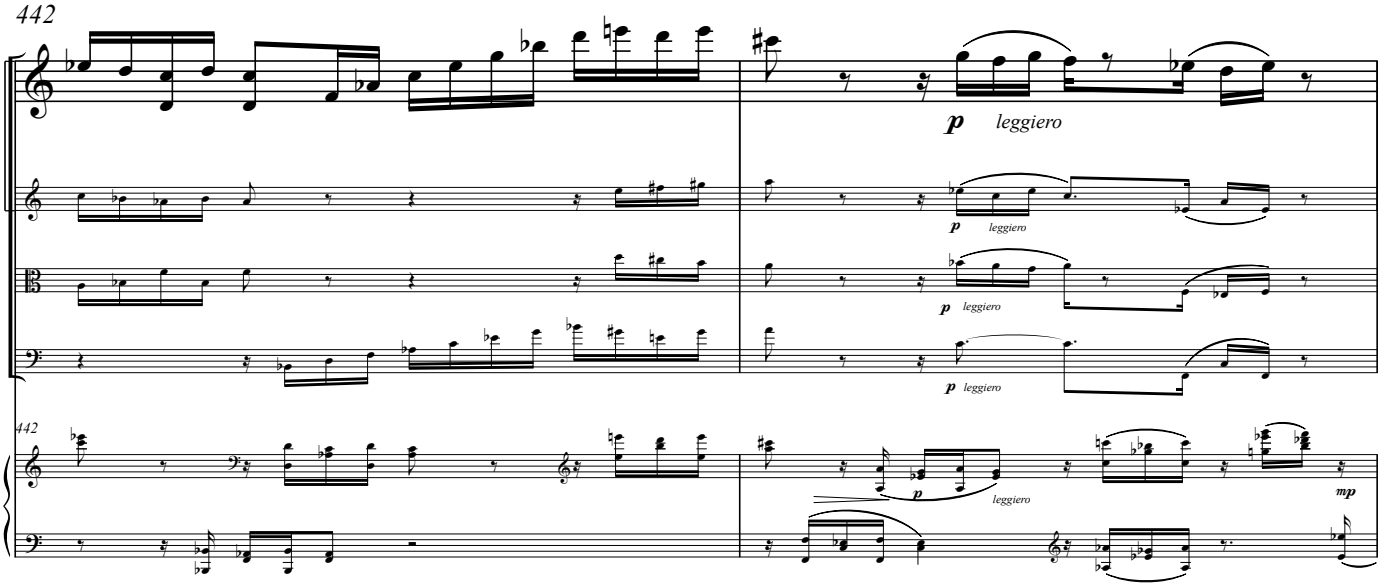

425
427
ff
p
428
431
cresc.


434
mf
mf
(mf)
f
434
(mf)
f
436
437
f
f
f
ff
f
436
ff
437
f
438
438

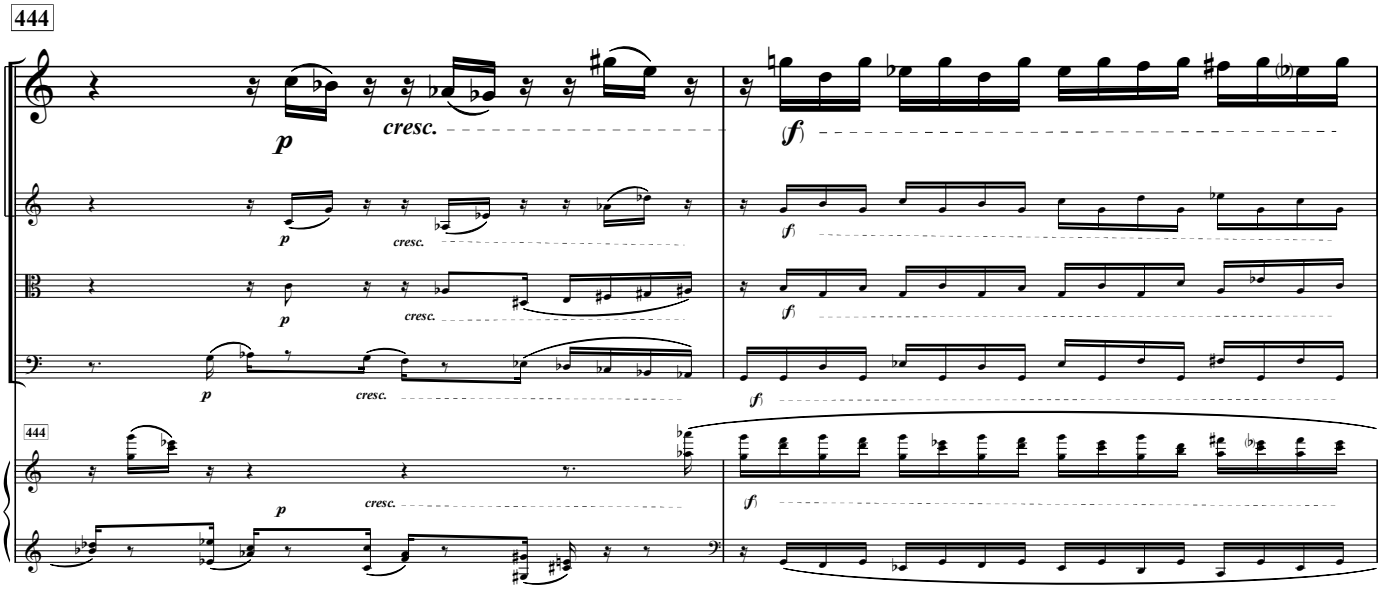
440

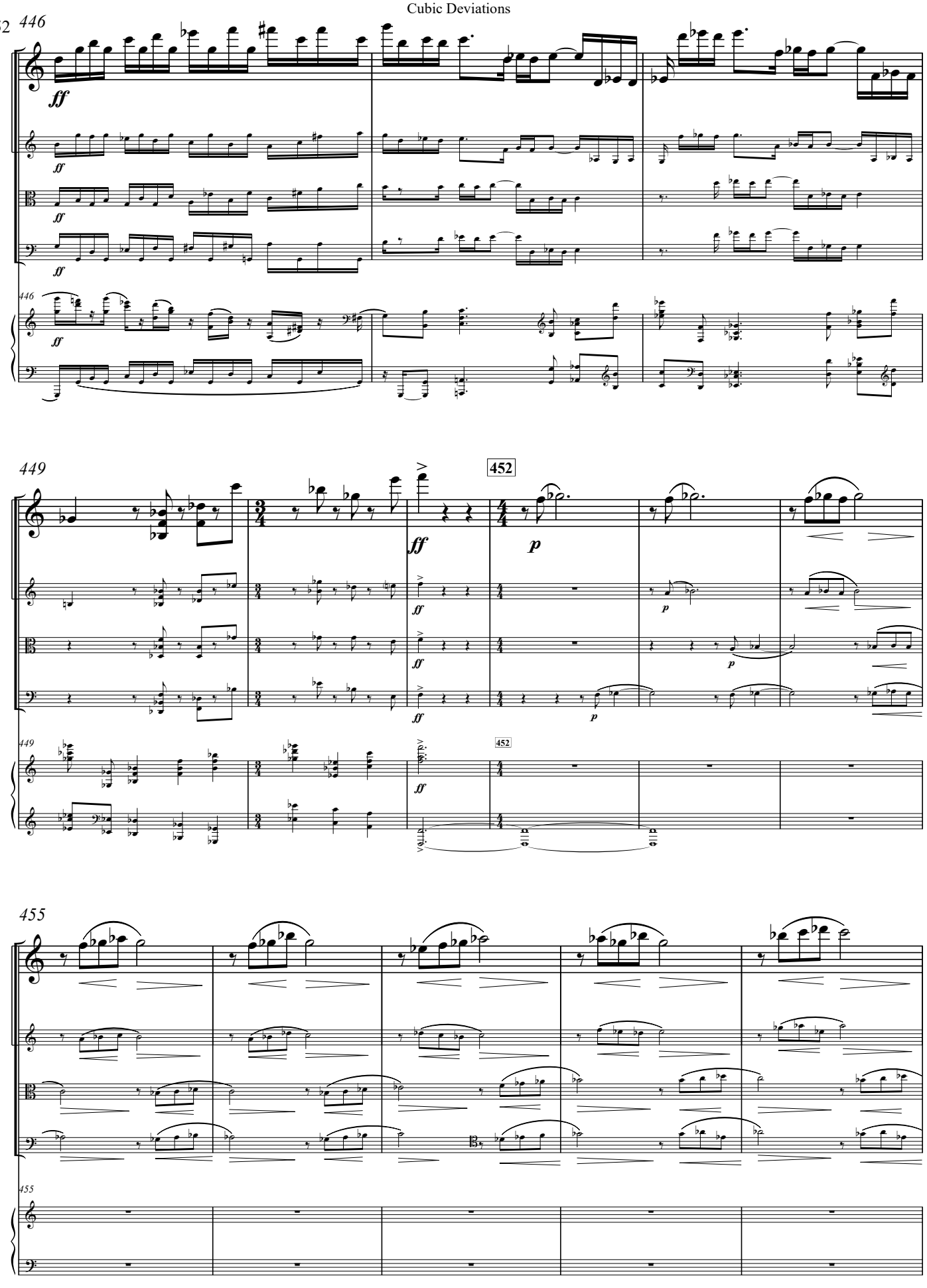


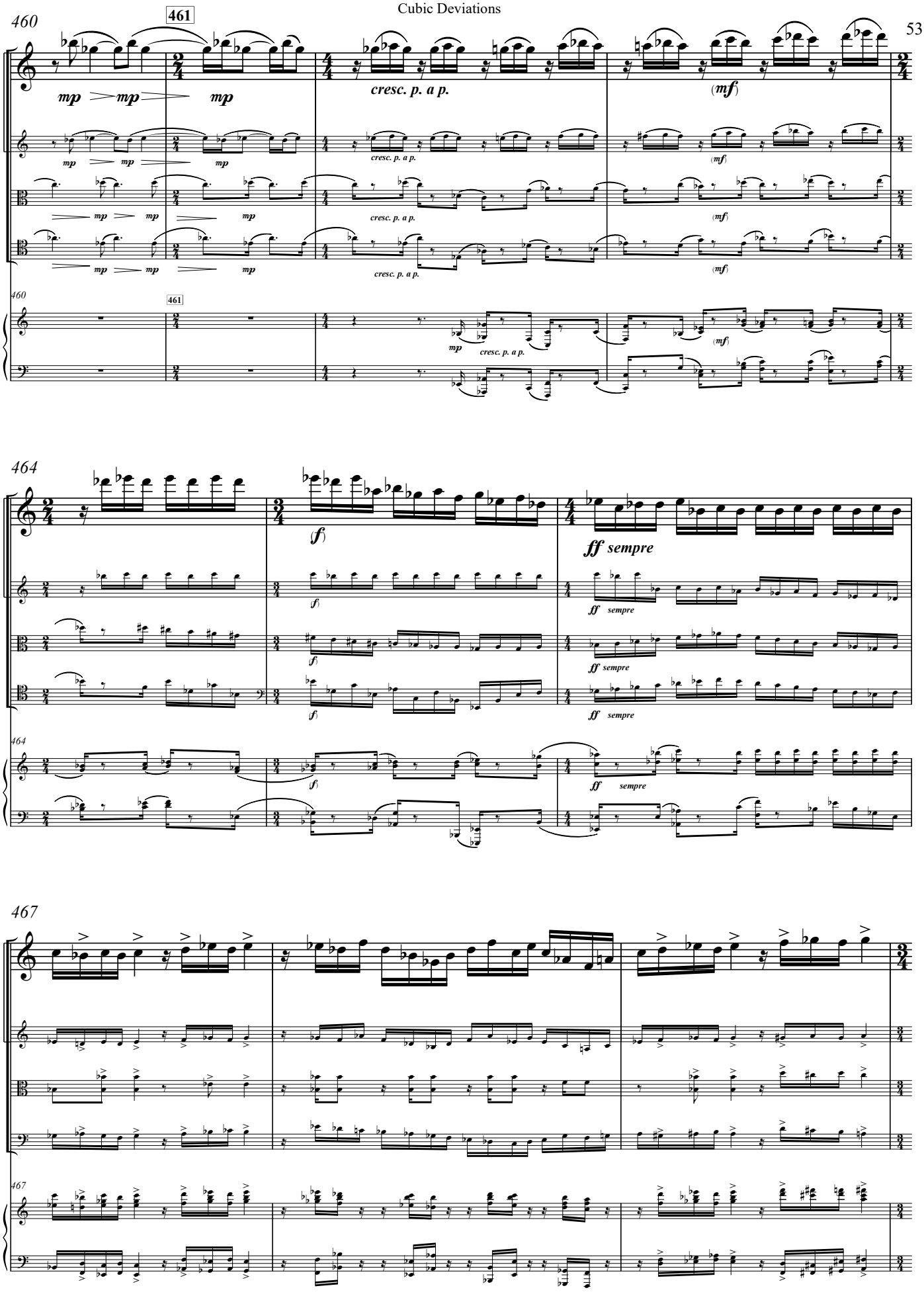
442

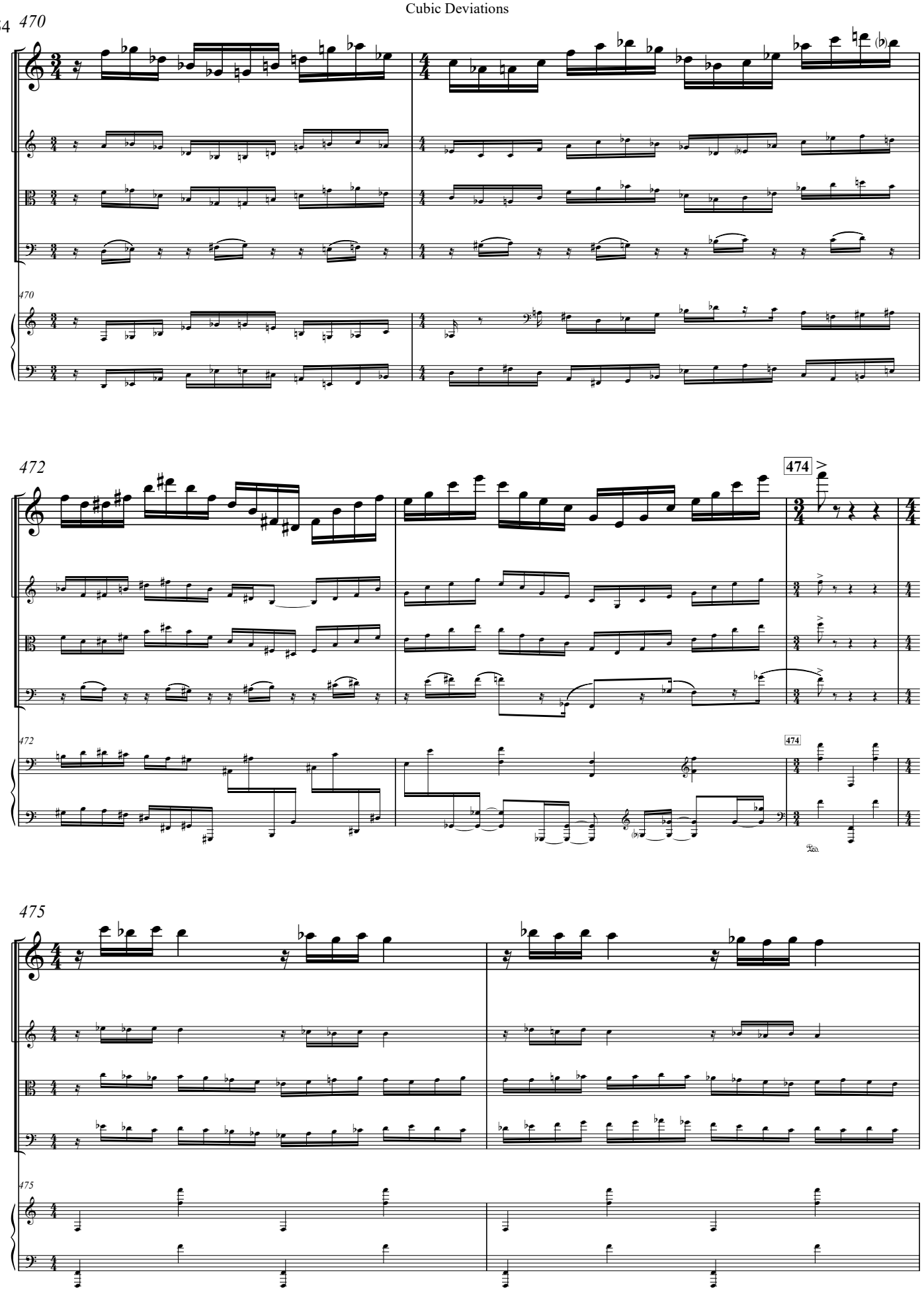

p leggiero
p leggiero
p leggiero
p leggiero
p leggiero
mp

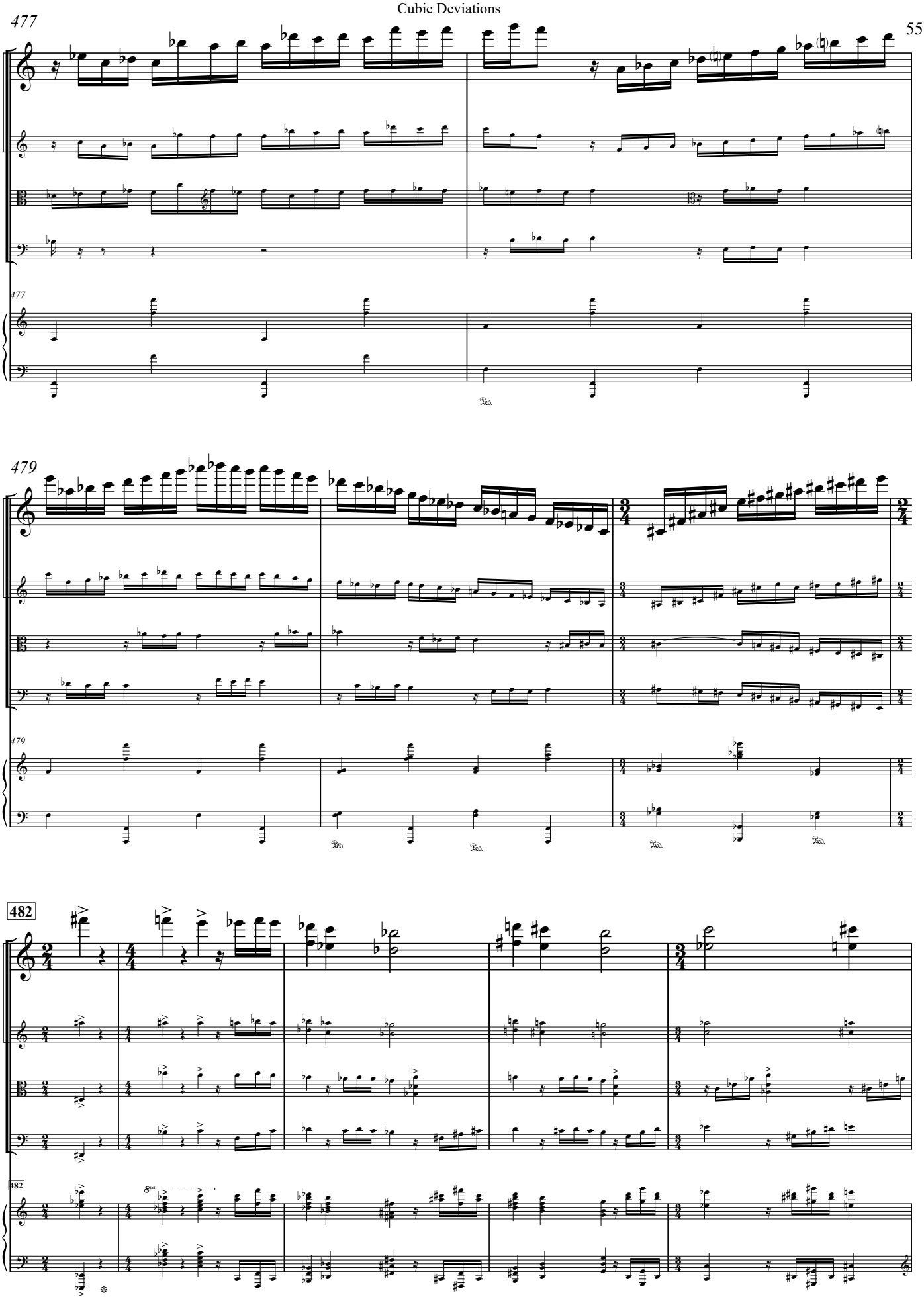
444

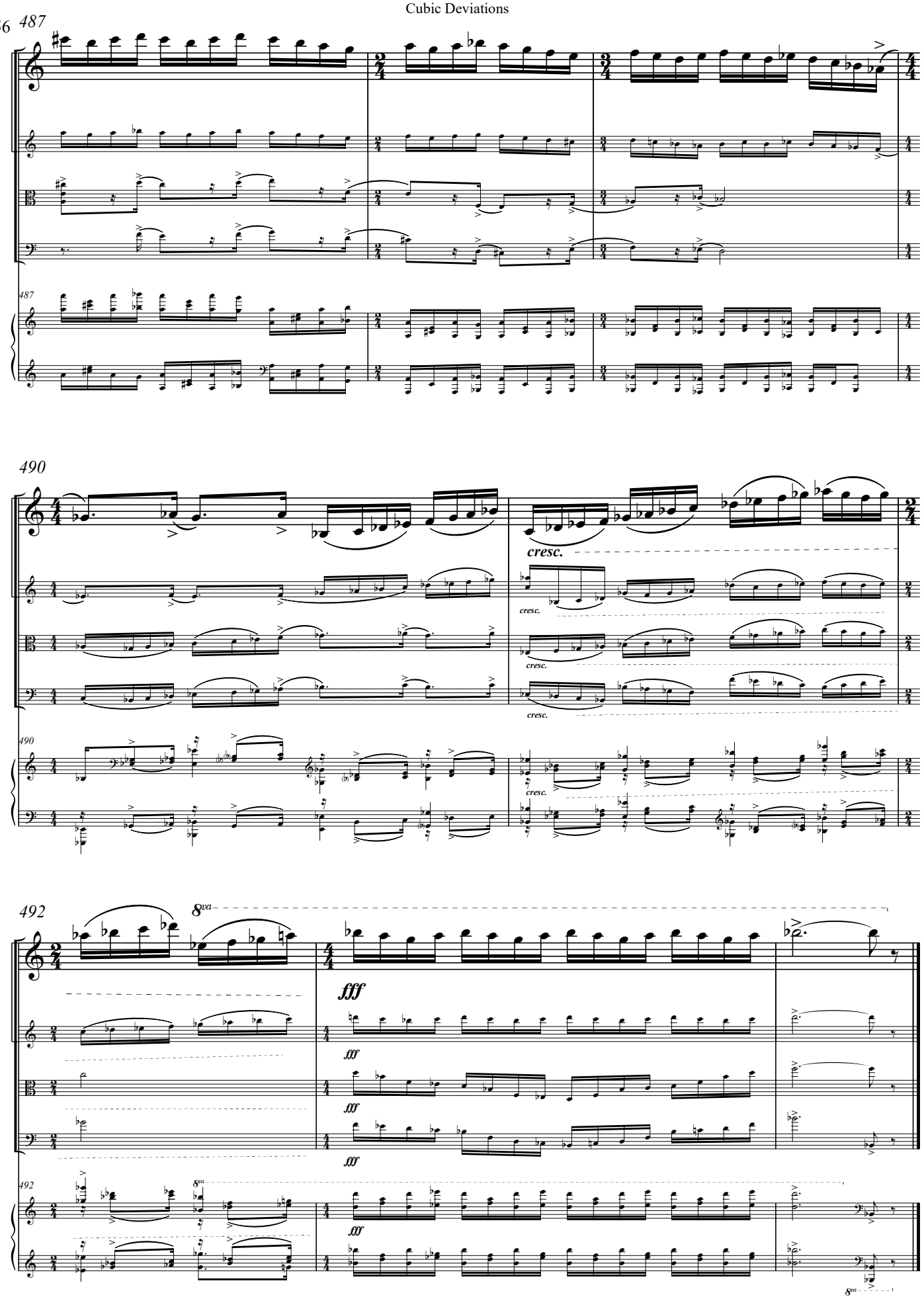

p
cresc.
(f)
p
cresc.
(f)
p
cresc.
(f)
p
cresc.
(f)


446
ff
449
452
p
455


460
461
mp
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
464
(f)
ff sempre
467


470
472
474
475


477
479
482


487
490
cresc.
492
8va
fff