Cubic Deviations

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

For Piano Quintet

Viola

for Electronic Music Readers

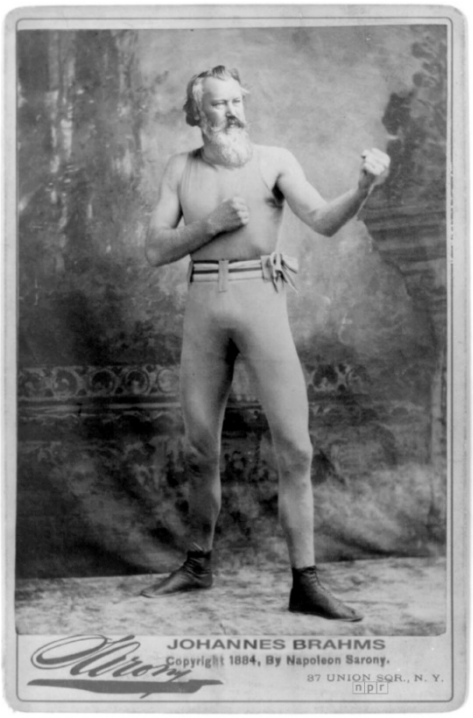
Bill Robinson

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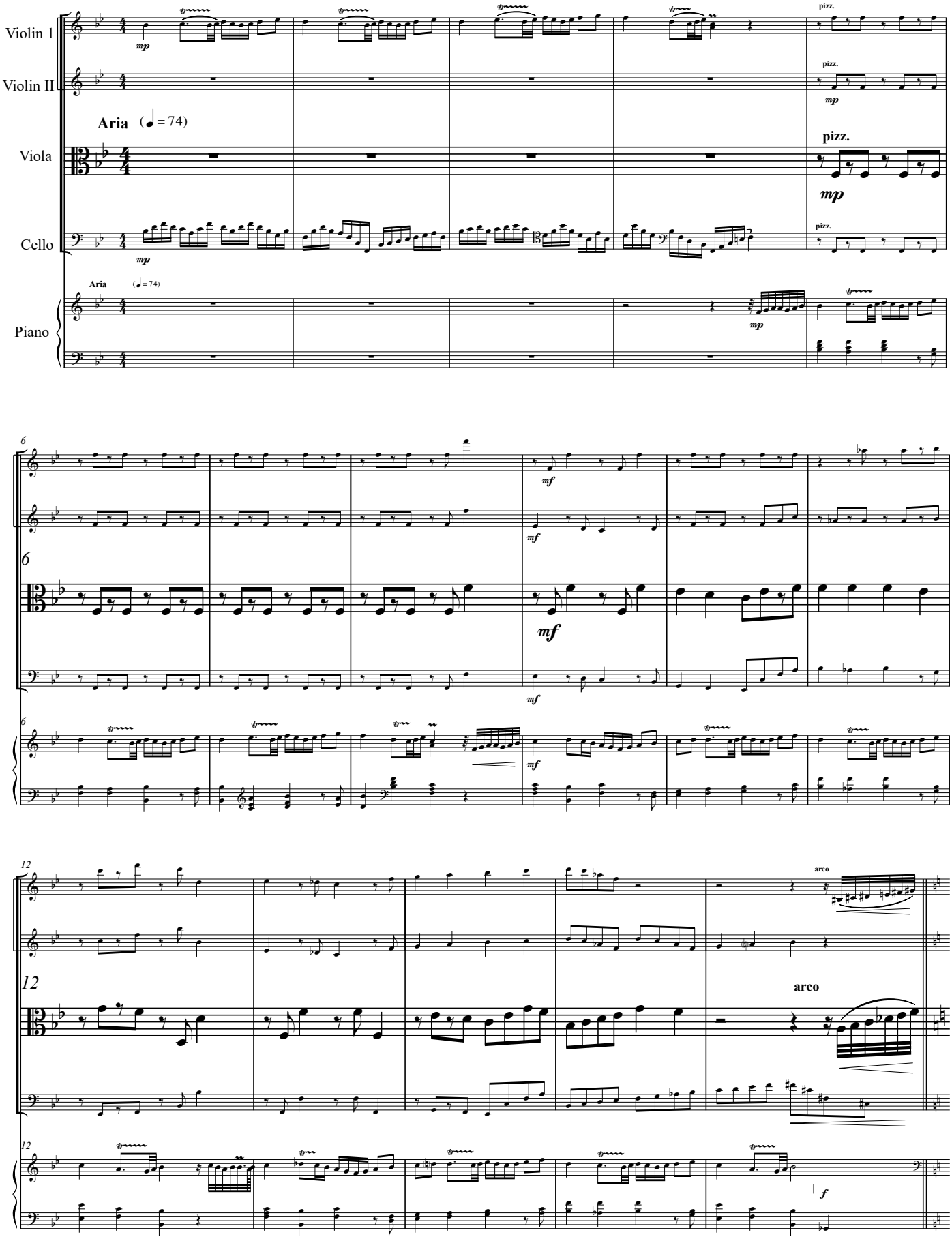
Cover art by Joseph Groupy, 1743 *Pugilist Brahms by NPR* billrobinsonmusic.com

Viola Part for Electronic Music Readers

Cubic Deviations

[corrected to 7/21/23]

Bill Robinson



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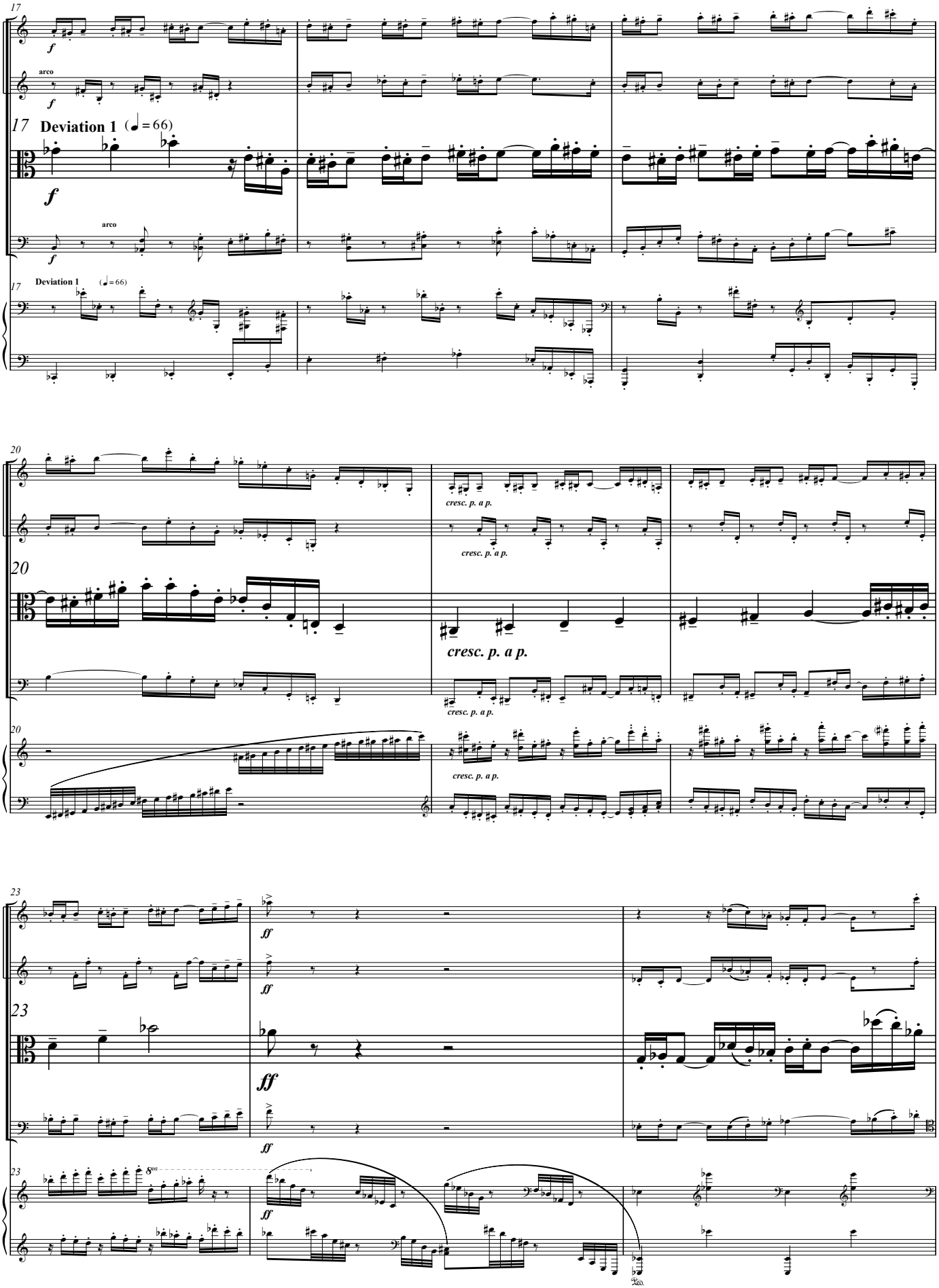
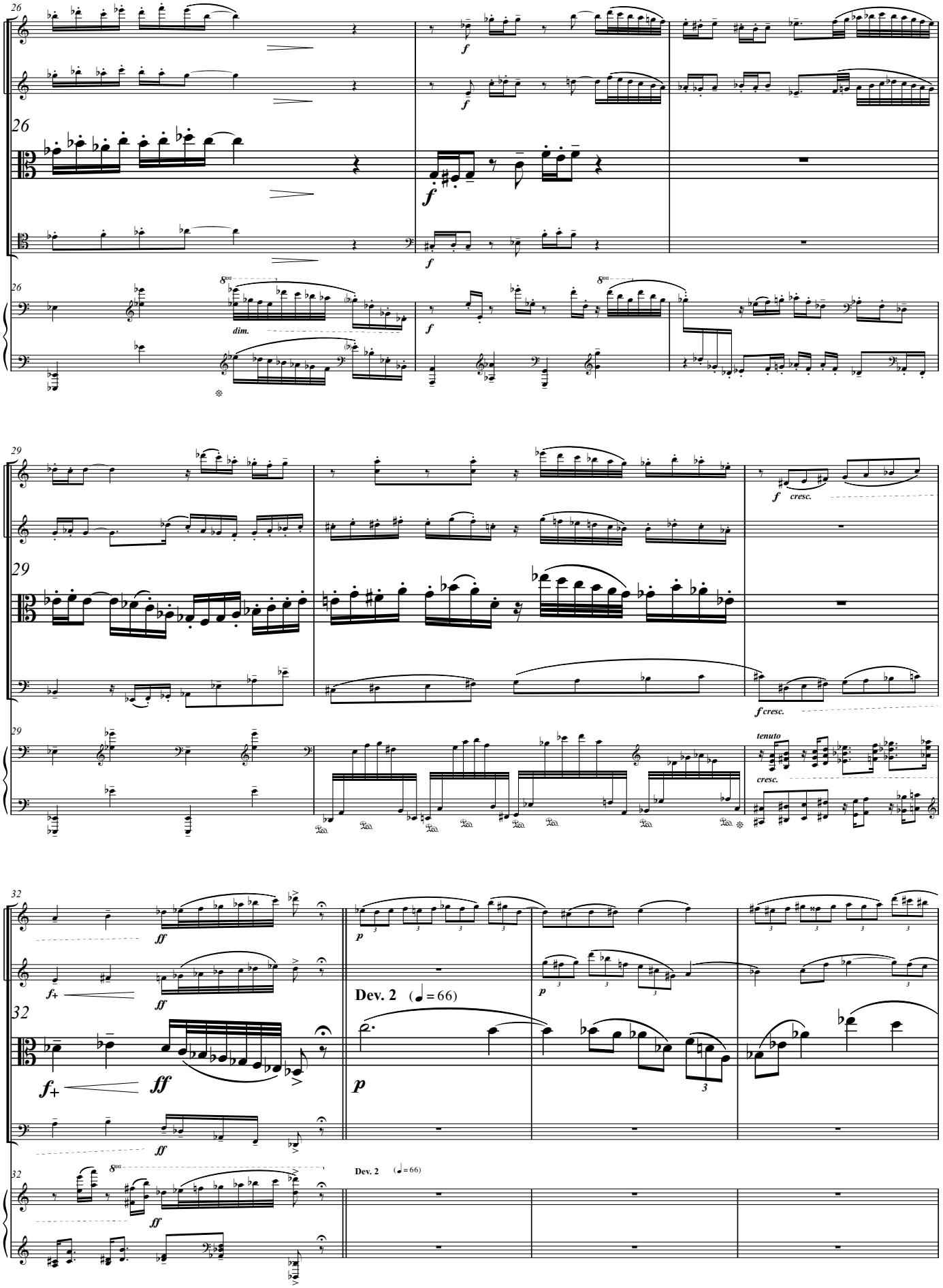
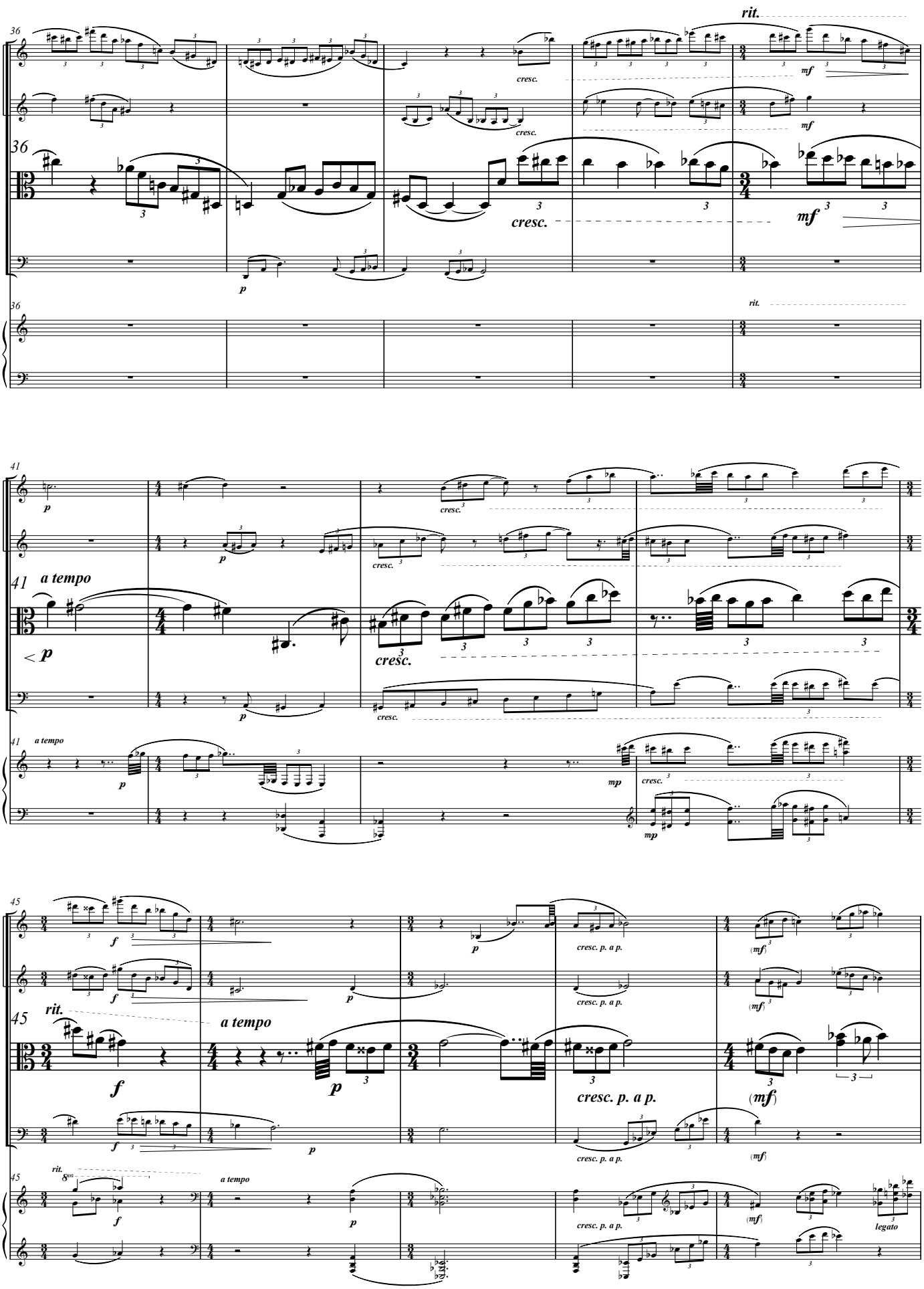
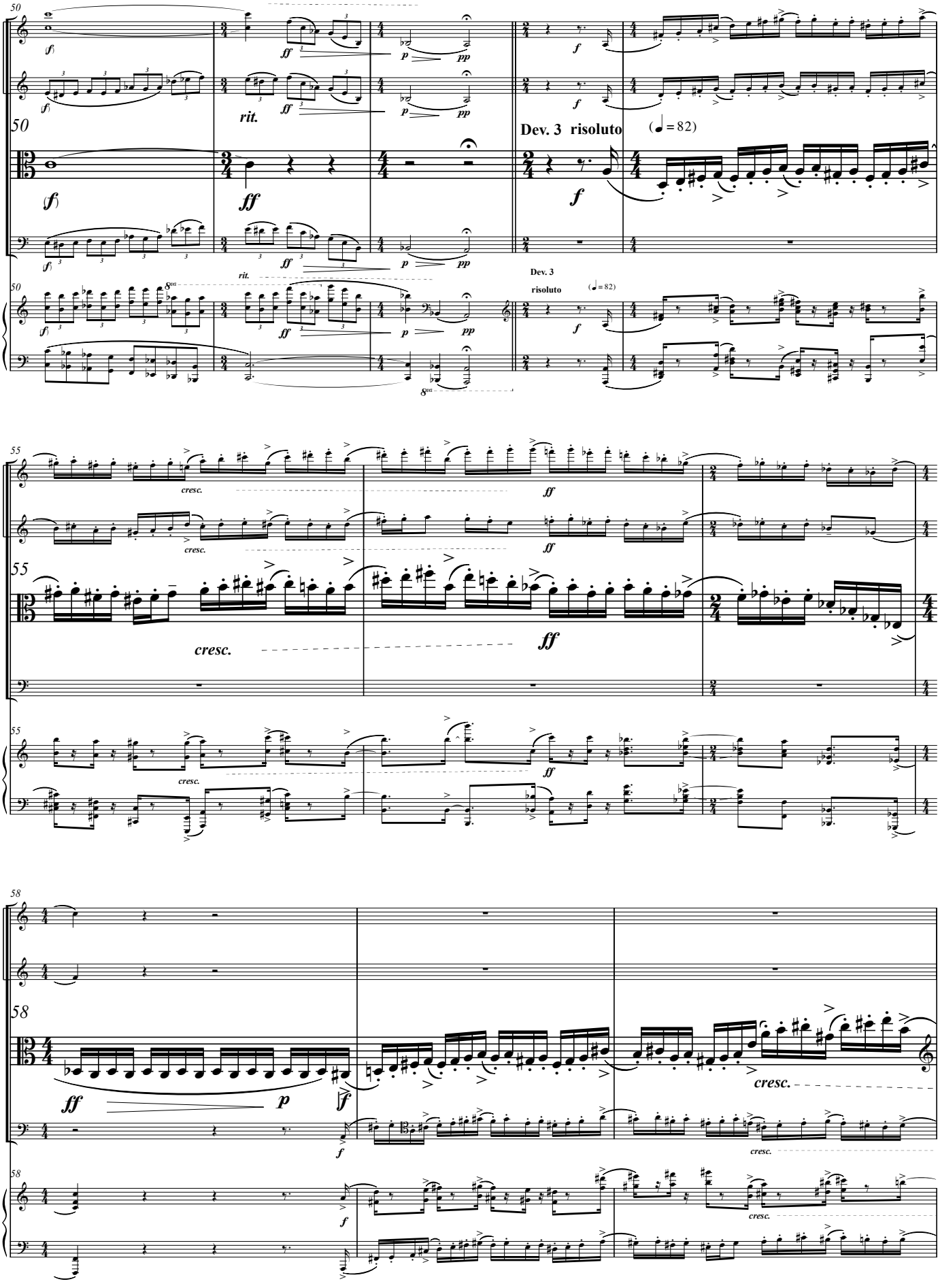
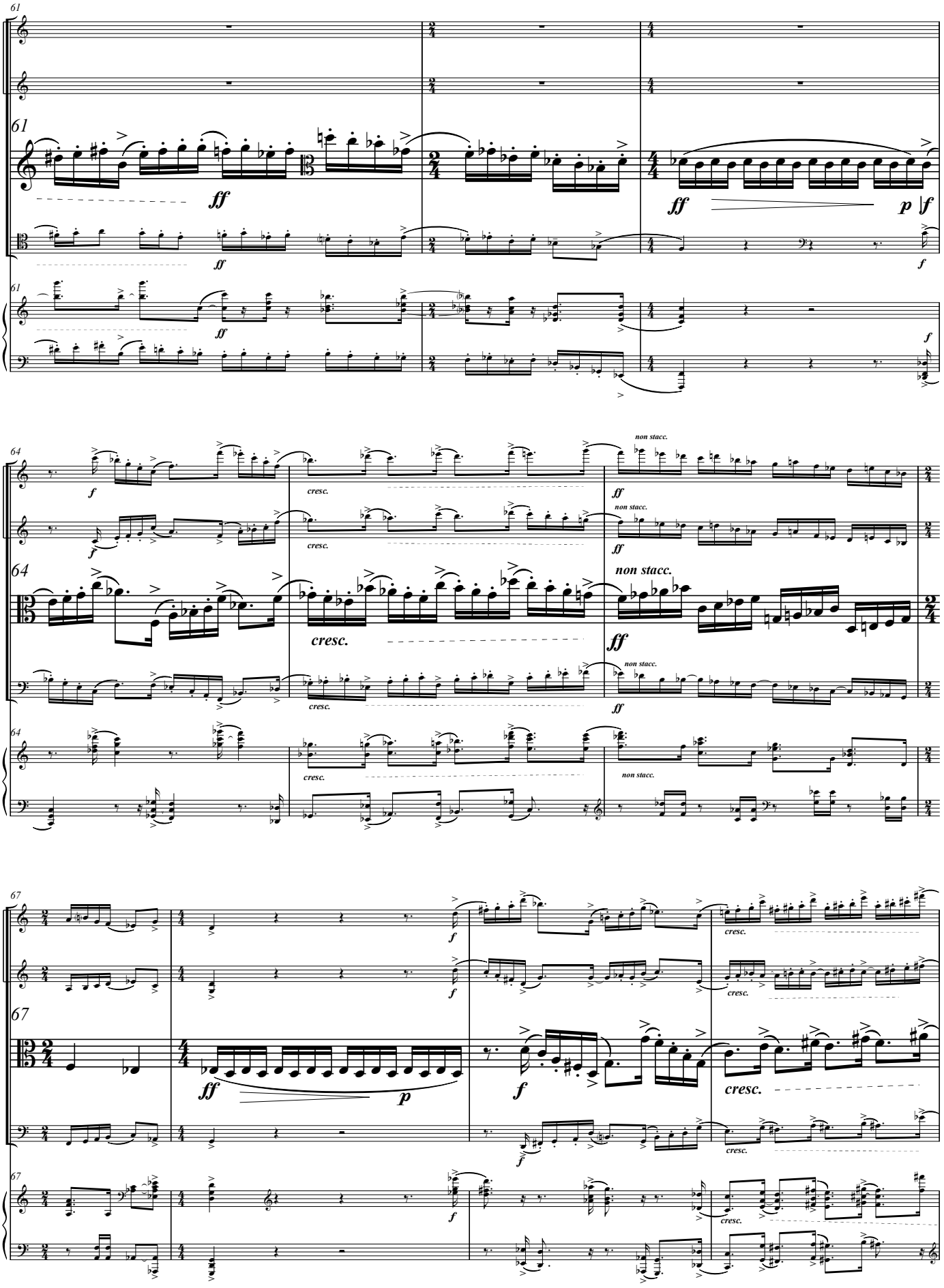
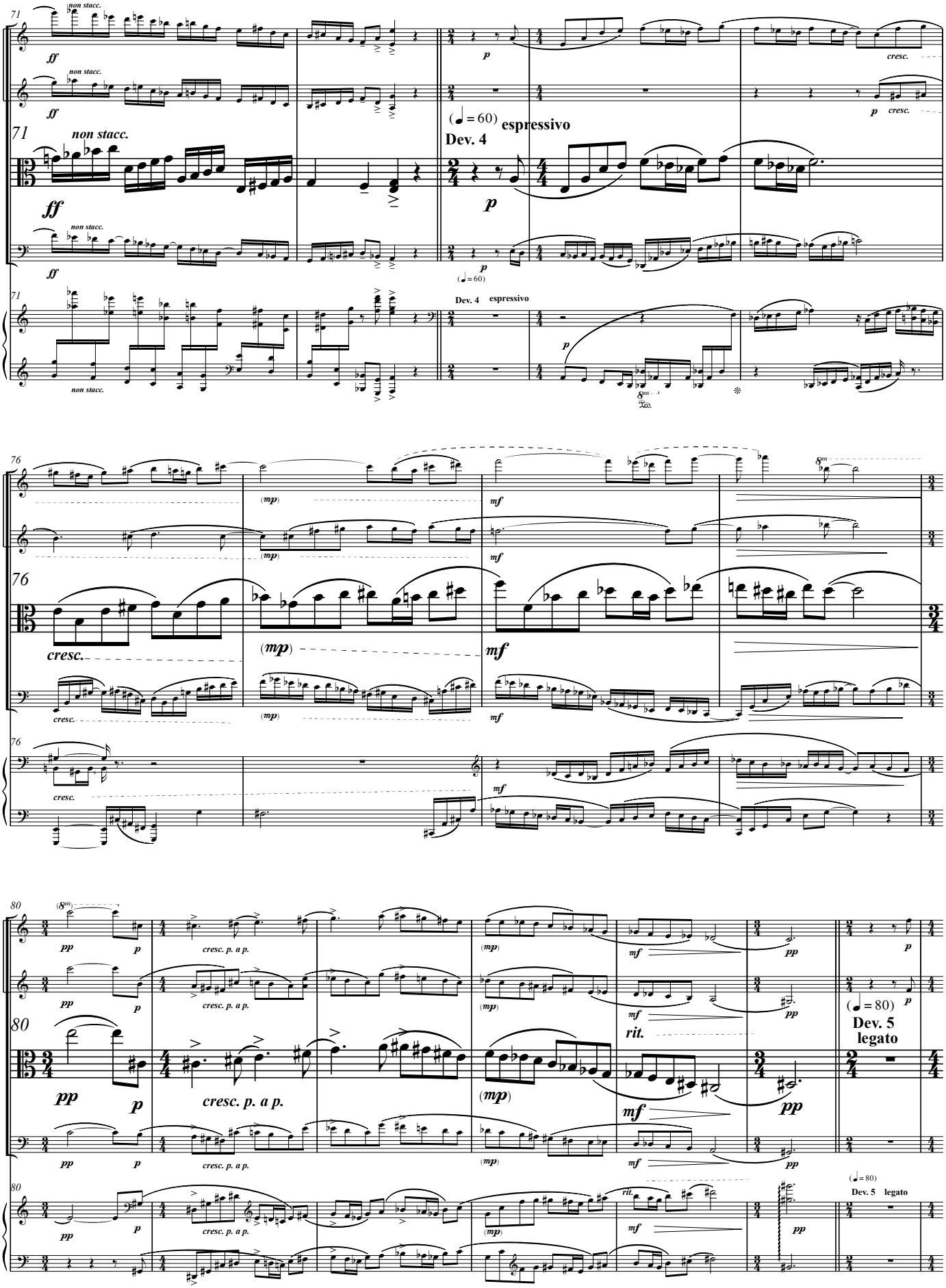

17
f
arco
f
17 Deviation 1 (♩= 66)
f
arco
f
17 Deviation 1 (♩= 66)
20
cresc. p. a p.
cresc. p. a p.
20
cresc. p. a p.
cresc. p. a p.
cresc. p. a p.
23
ff
ff
23
ff
ff
23
8va
ff

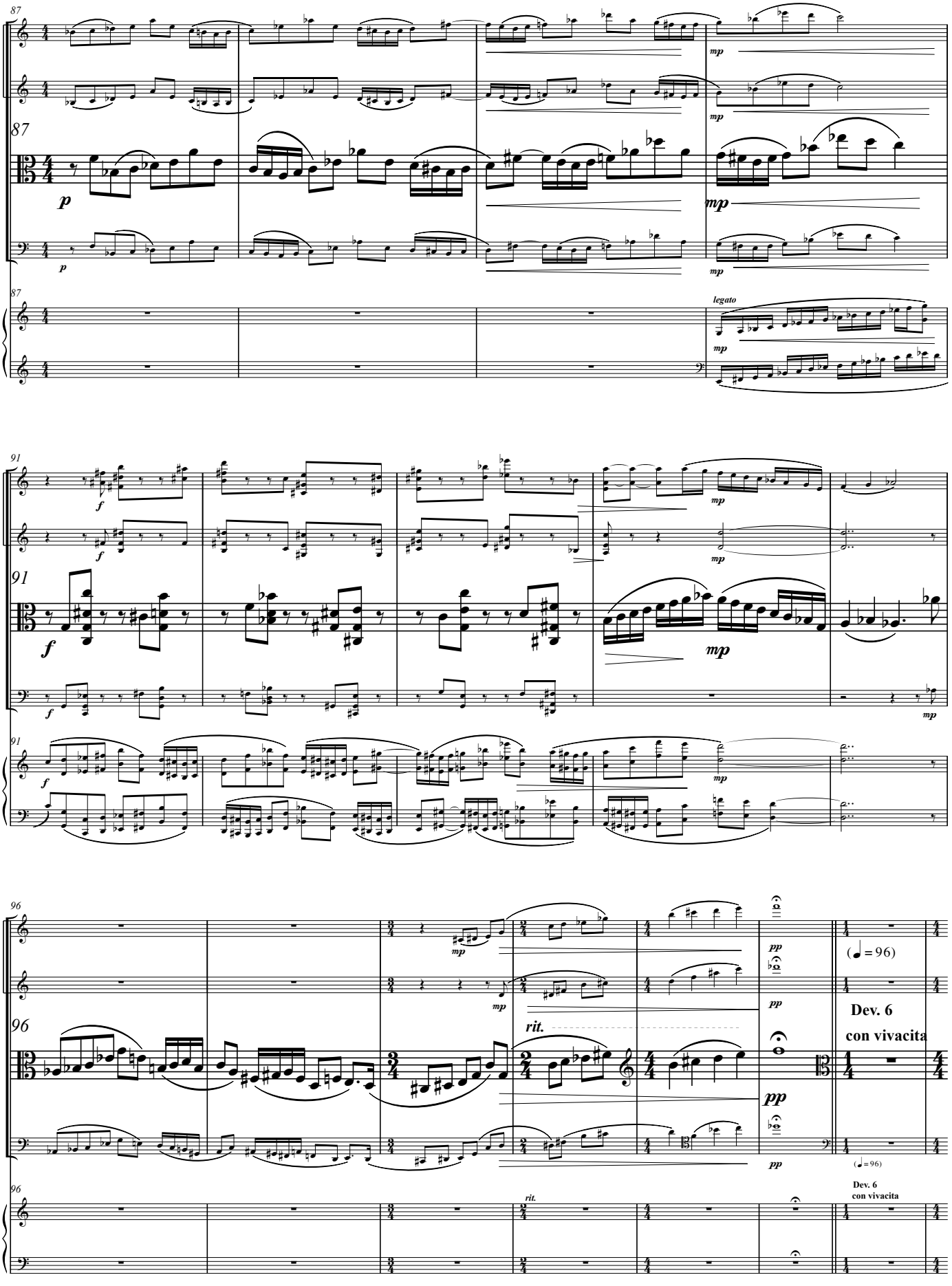

26
f
dim.
29
f cresc.
f cresc.
tenuto
cresc.
32
ff
f+
Dev. 2 (♩ = 66)
p

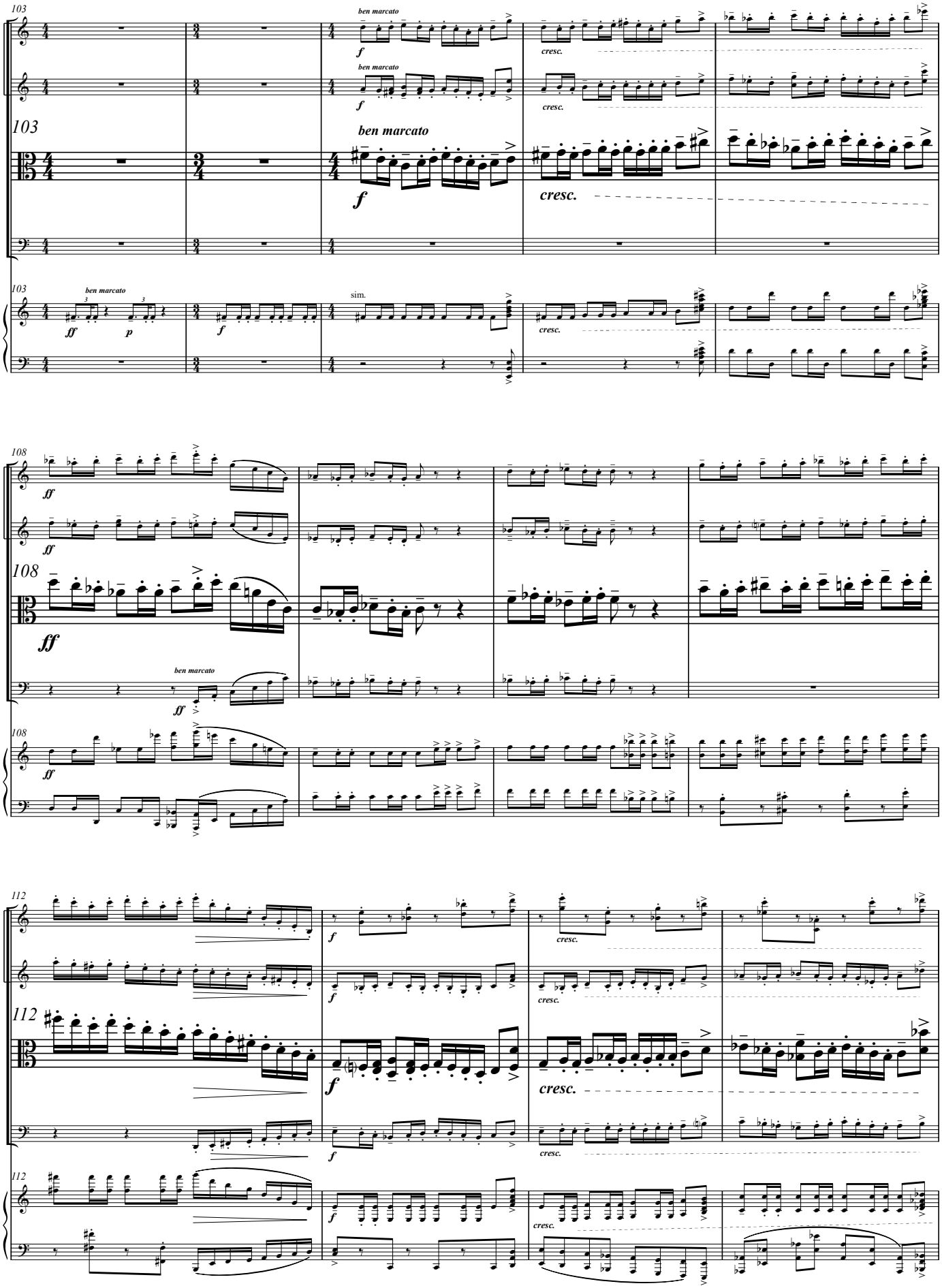

36
rit.
cresc.
mf
p
41
a tempo
< p
cresc.
mp
45
rit.
a tempo
f
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
8va
legato

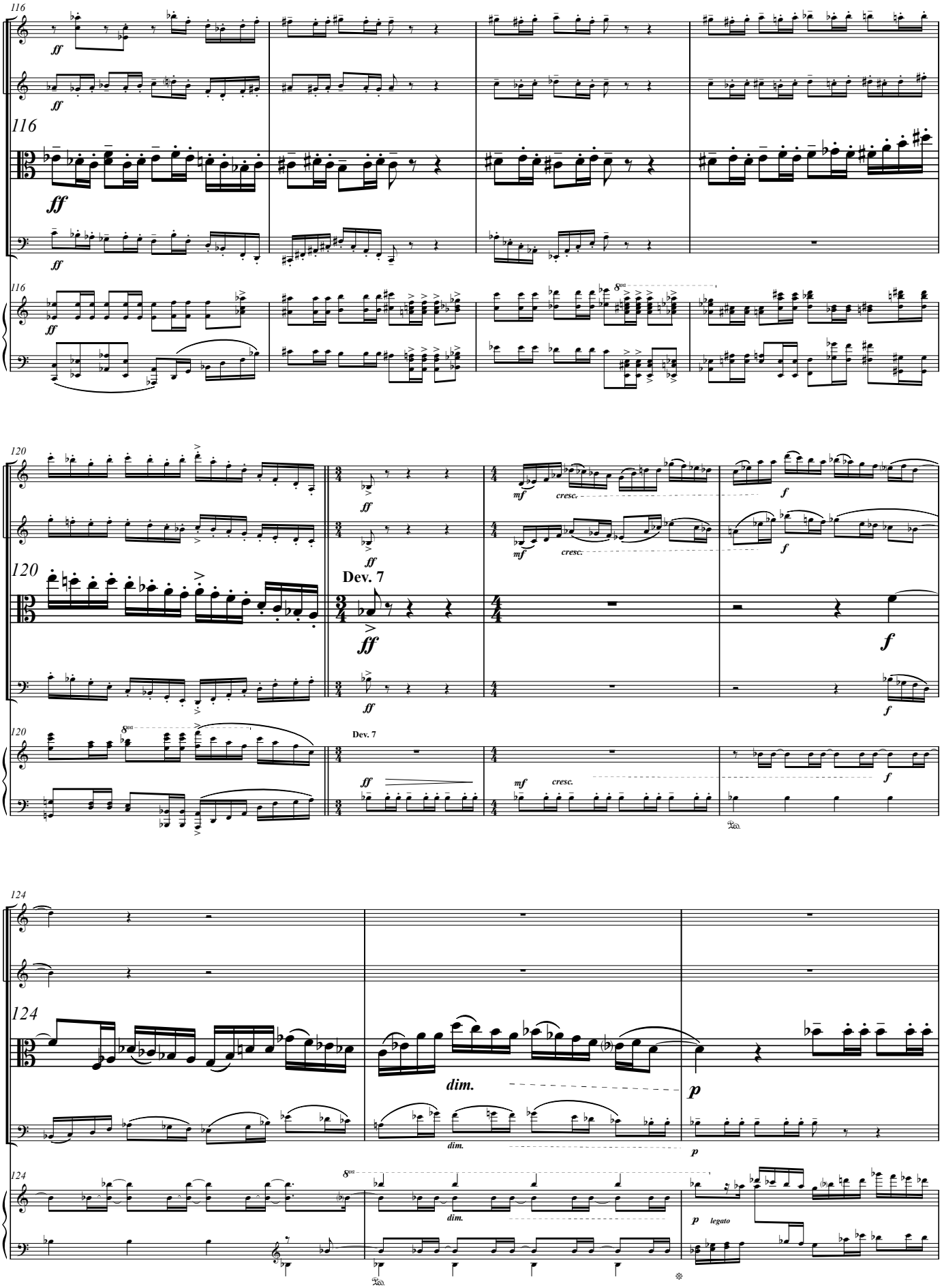

50
rit.
Dev. 3 risoluto
(♩= 82)
Dev. 3
risoluto
(♩= 82)
55
cresc.
58
cresc.

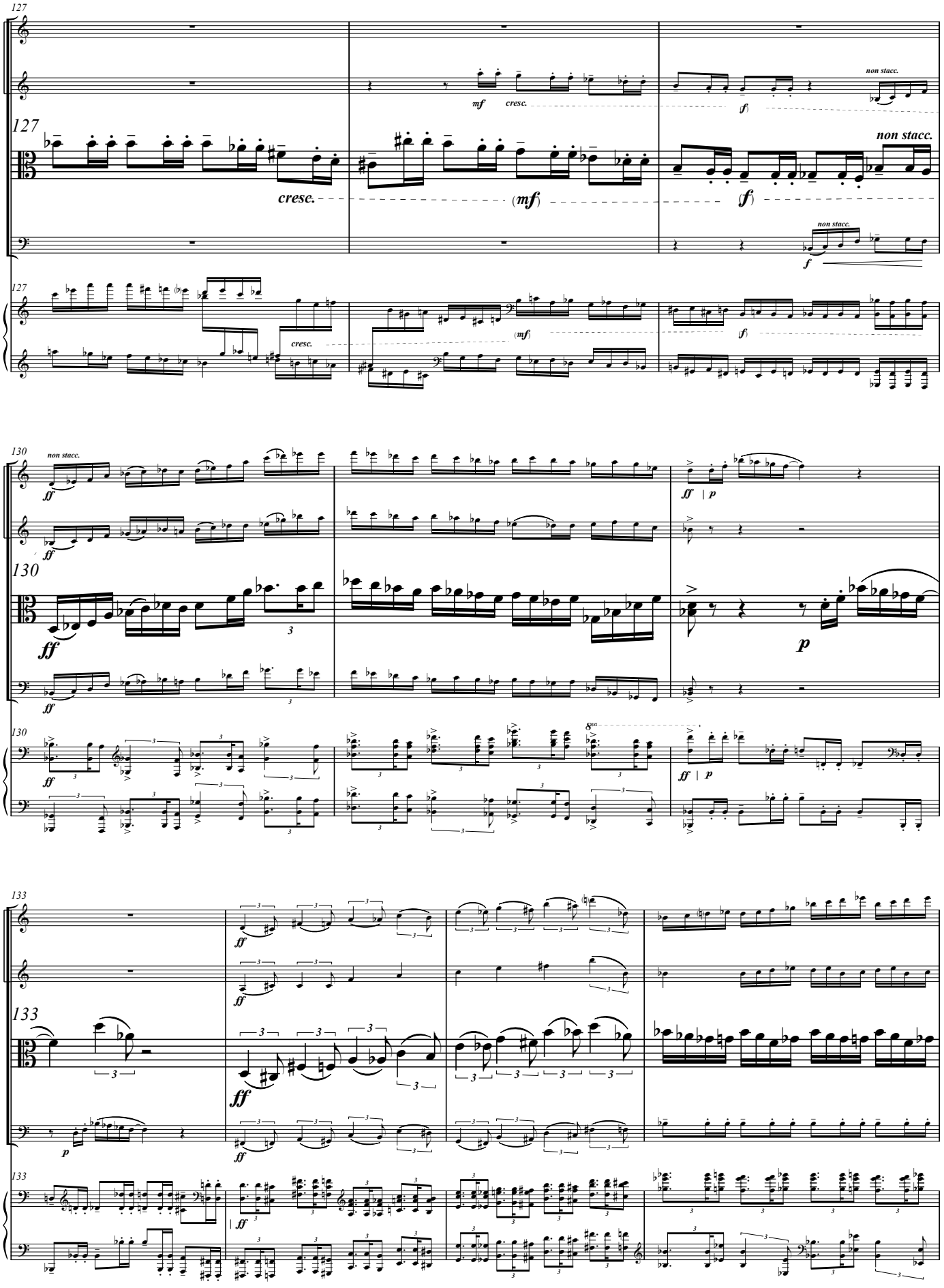

61
ff
p
f
64
cresc.
non stacc.
67

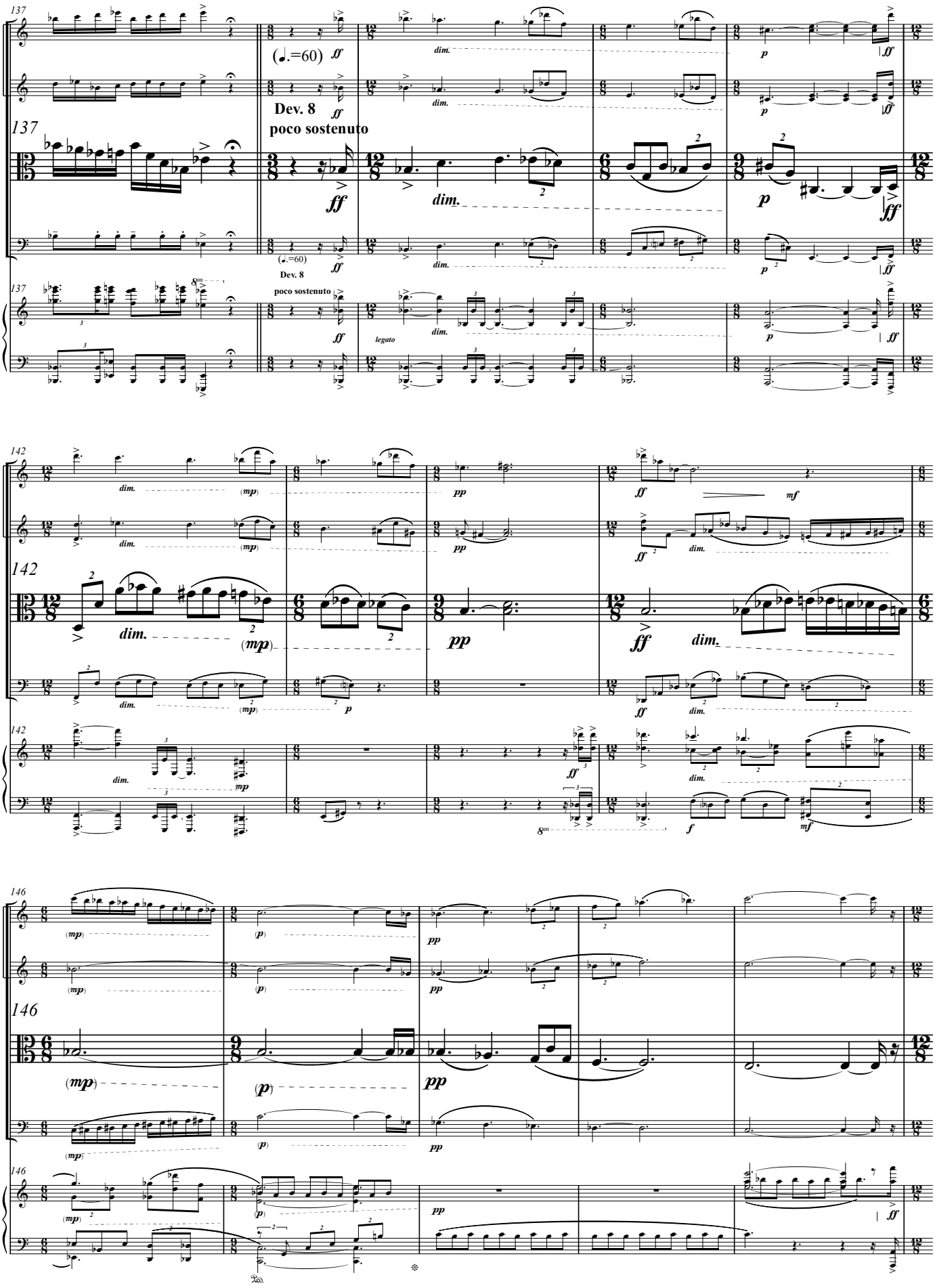

71
non stacc.
ff
p
cresc.
(♩ = 60)
espressivo
Dev. 4
76
(mp)
mf
cresc.
80
pp
cresc. p. a p.
rit.
Dev. 5
legato

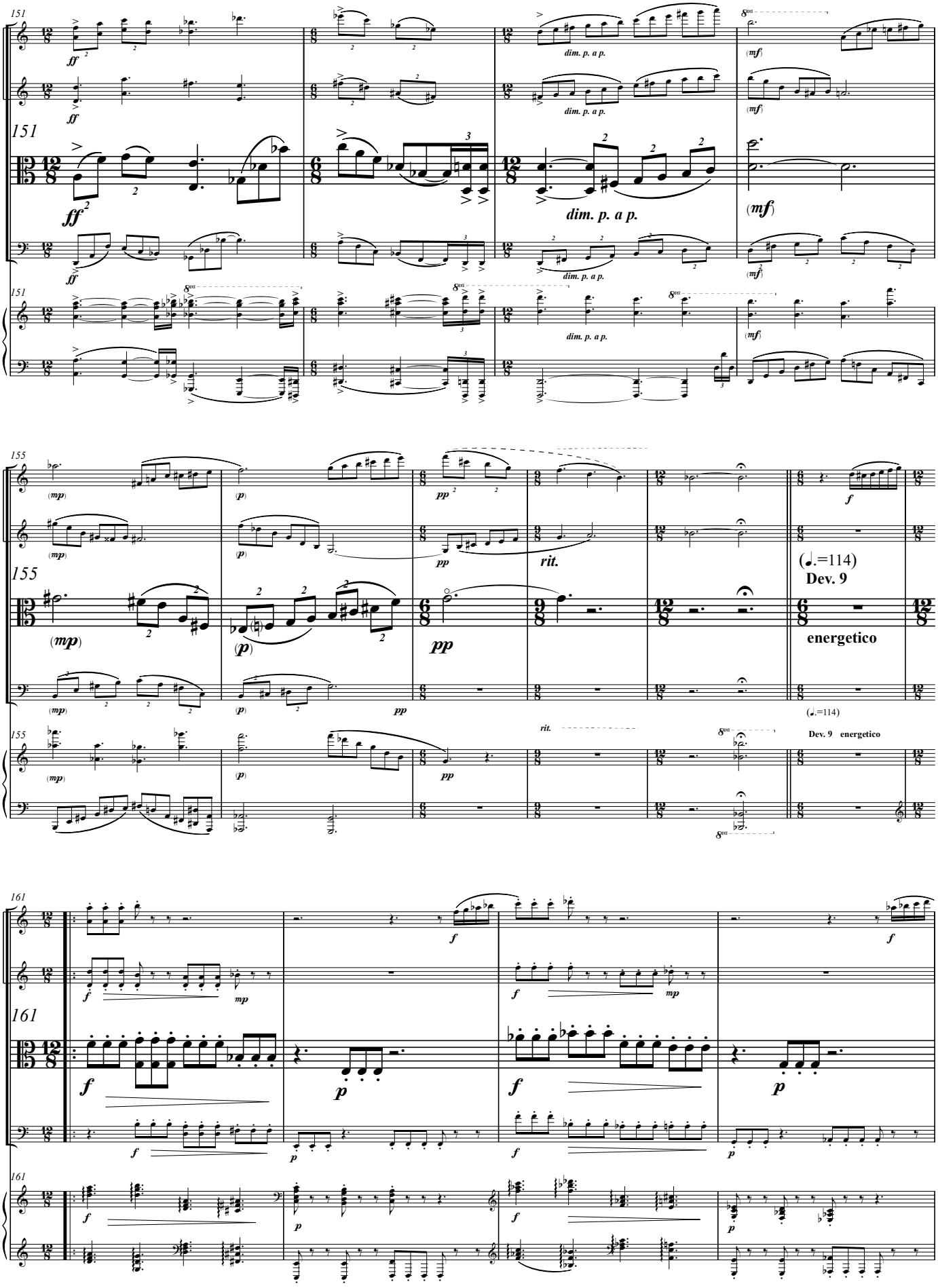

87
p
mp
legato
91
f
mp
96
rit.
pp
(♩ = 96)
Dev. 6
con vivacita

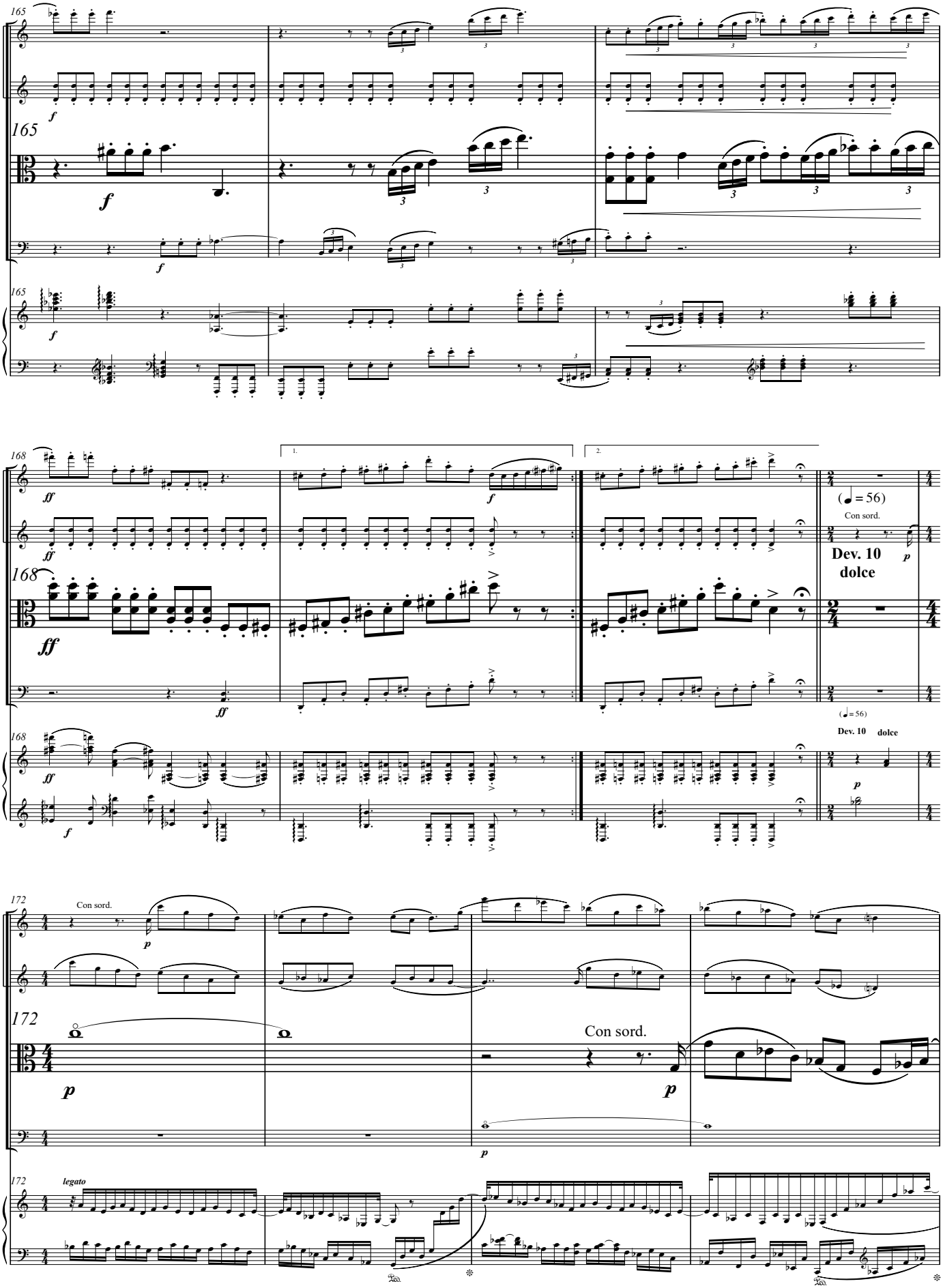

103
ben marcato
f
cresc.
ben marcato
f
cresc.
103
ben marcato
f
cresc.
103
ben marcato
ff
p
f
sim.
cresc.
108
ff
ff
108
ff
ben marcato
ff
108
ff
112
f
cresc.
f
cresc.
112
f
cresc.
f
cresc.
112
f
cresc.

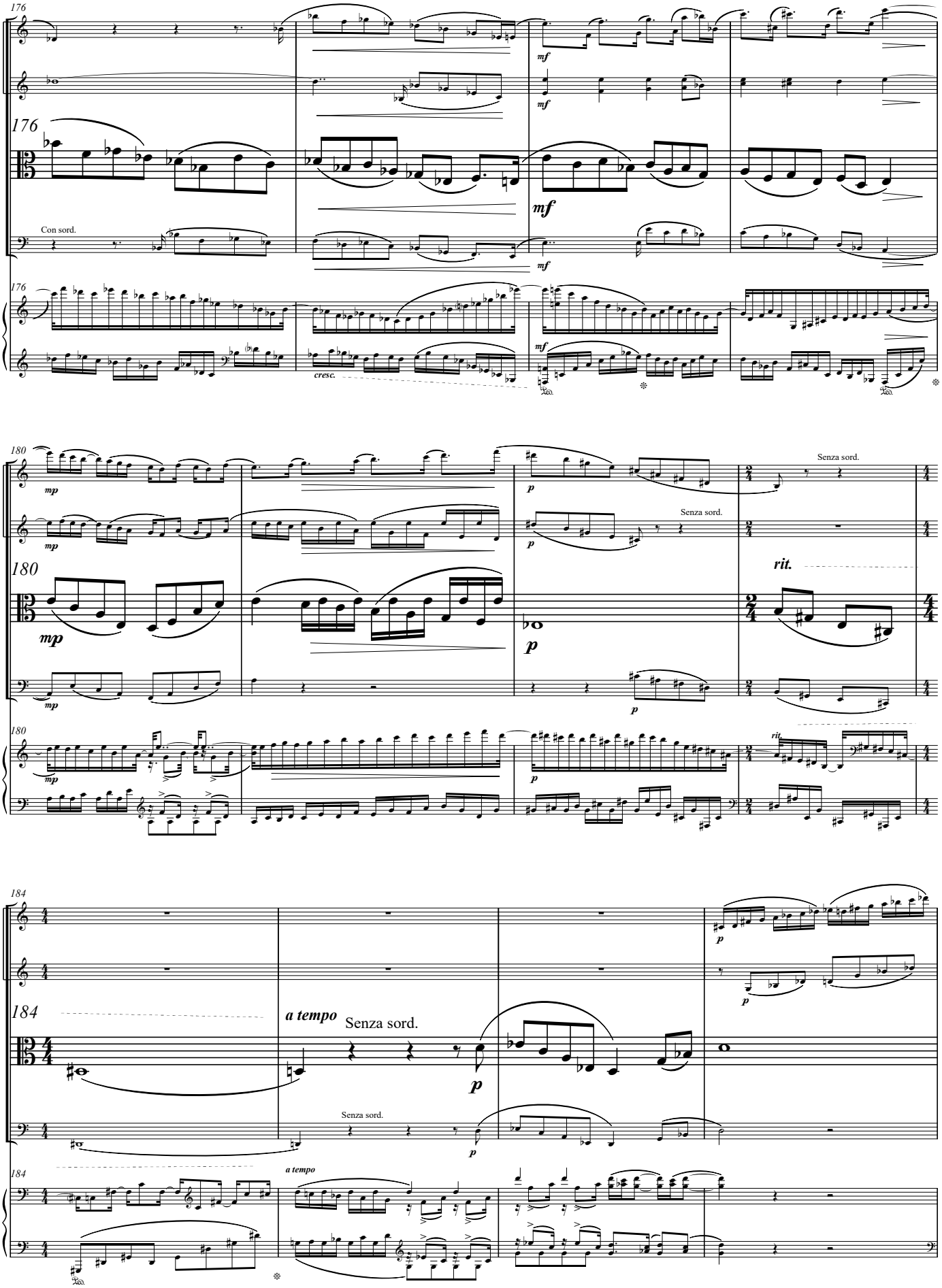

116
ff
120
Dev. 7
mf
cresc.
f
124
dim.
p
legato

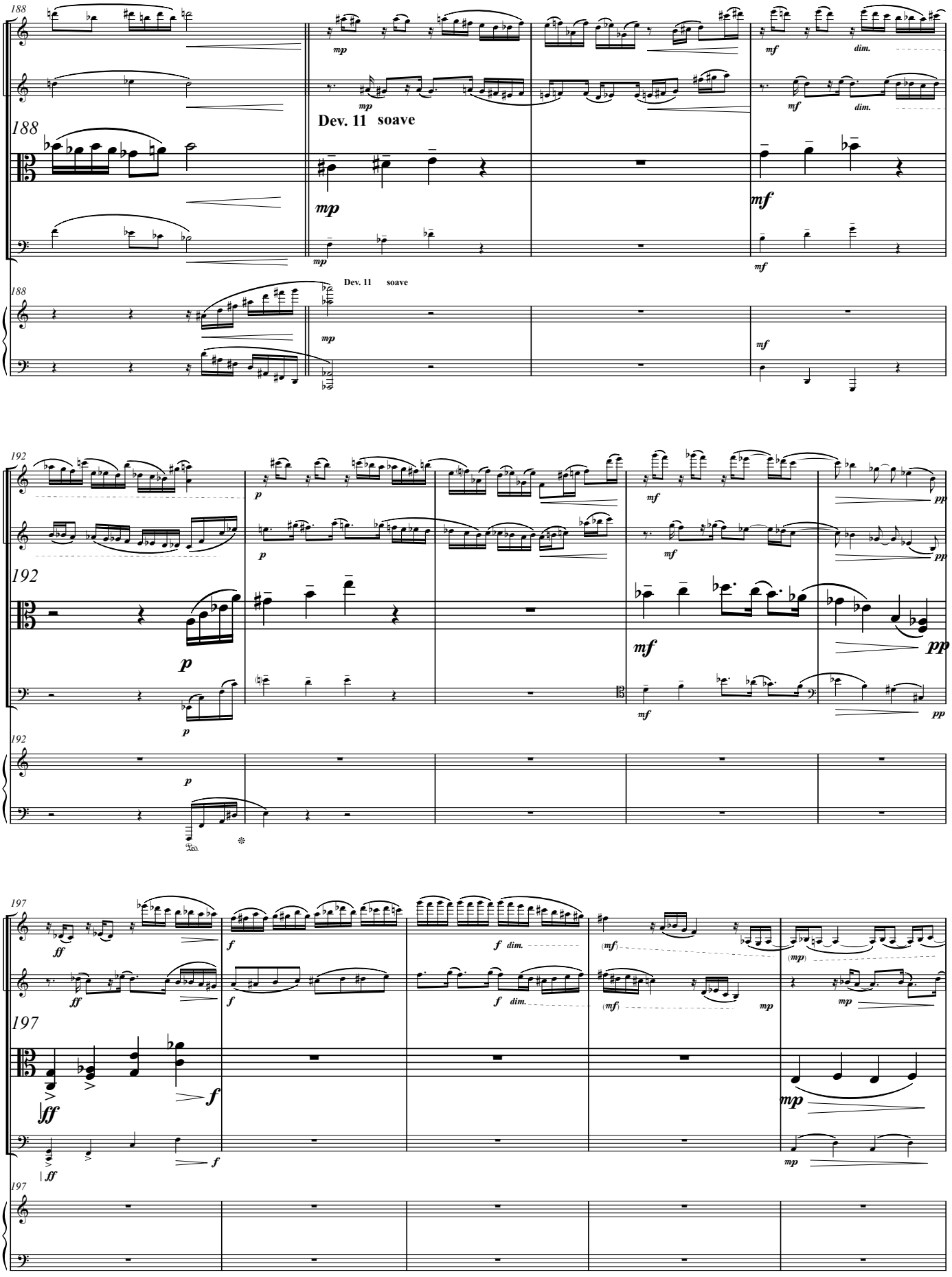

127
non stacc.
mf
cresc.
(f)
non stacc.
127
cresc.
(mf)
(f)
non stacc.
f
127
cresc.
(mf)
(f)
130
non stacc.
ff
ff | p
130
ff
p
130
ff
ff | p
133
ff
133
ff
p
ff
133
| ff

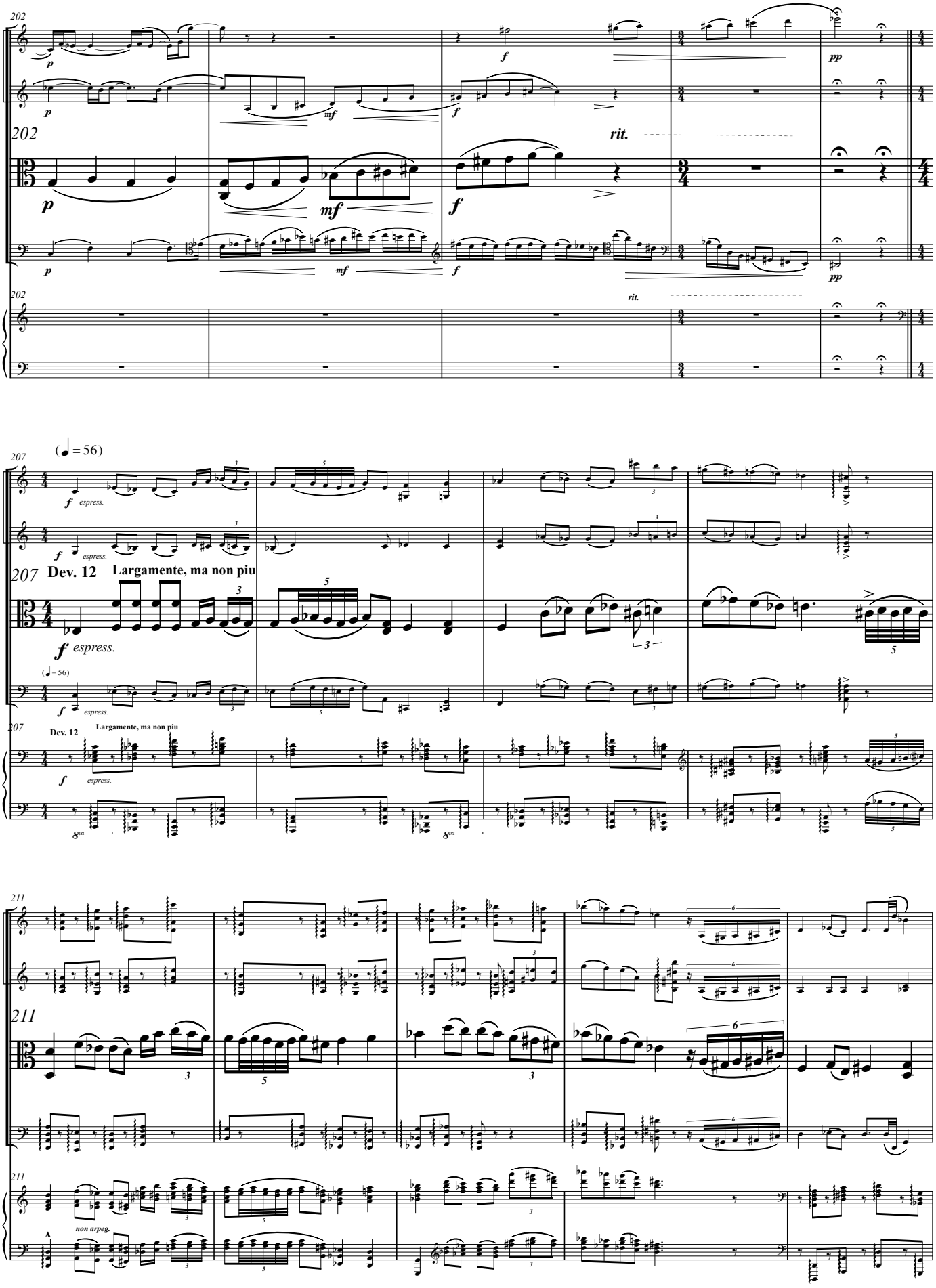

137
(♩.=60) ff
Dev. 8
poco sostenuto
dim.
p
ff
legato
142
(mp)
pp
mf
146
(mp)
(p)

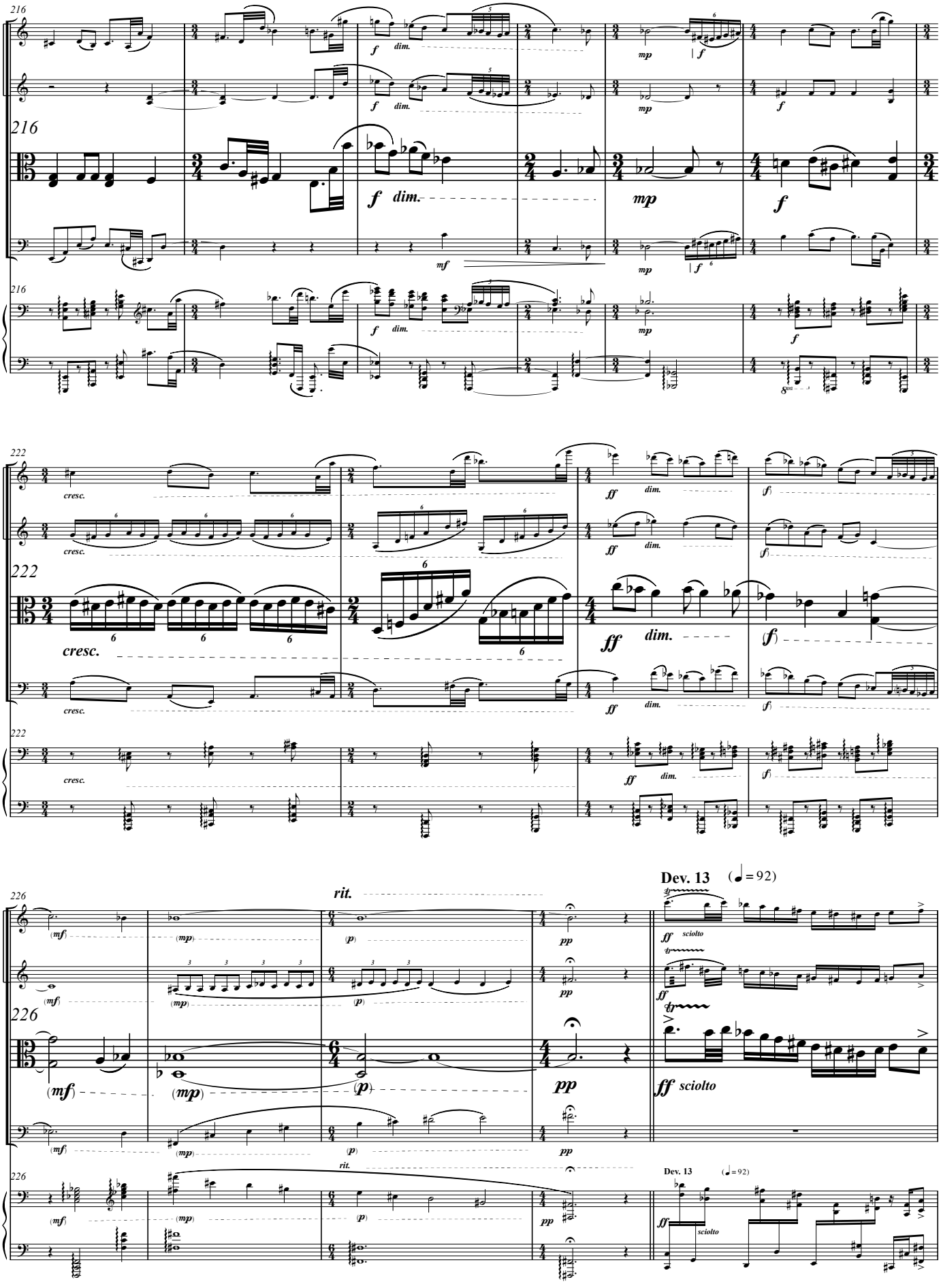

151
dim. p. a p.
(mf)
155
(mp)
(p)
pp
rit.
(♩.=114)
Dev. 9
energetico
161
f
mp
p

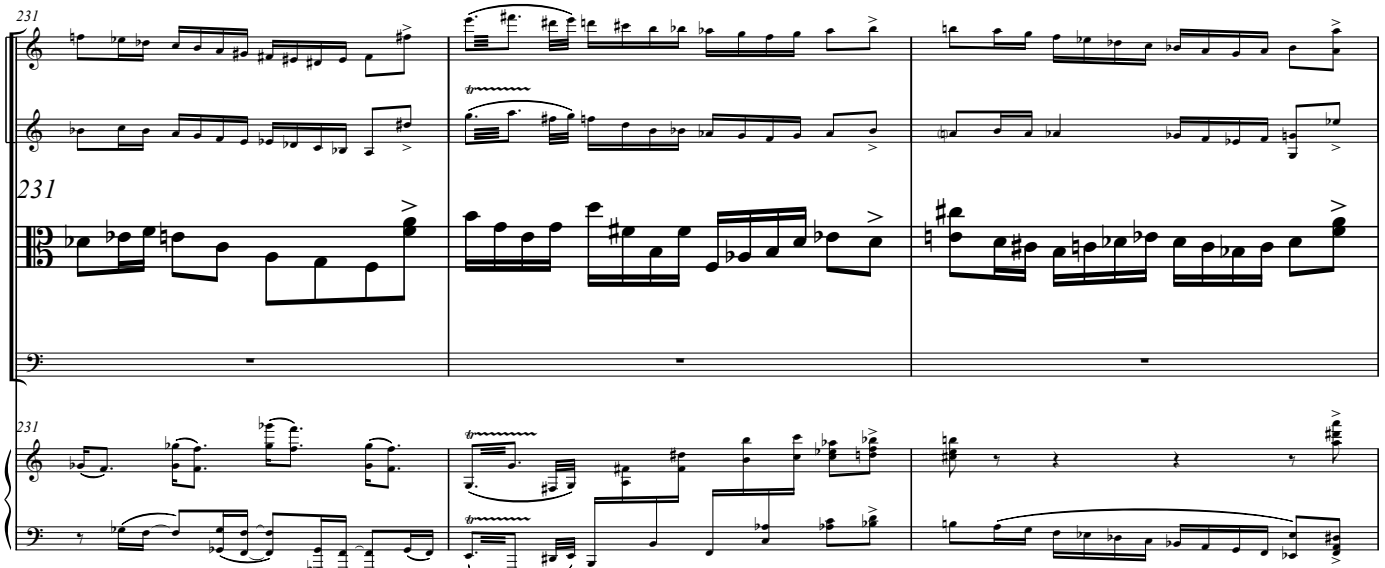

165
168
172
1.
2.
(♩= 56)
Con sord.
Dev. 10
dolce
Con sord.
Con sord.
legato

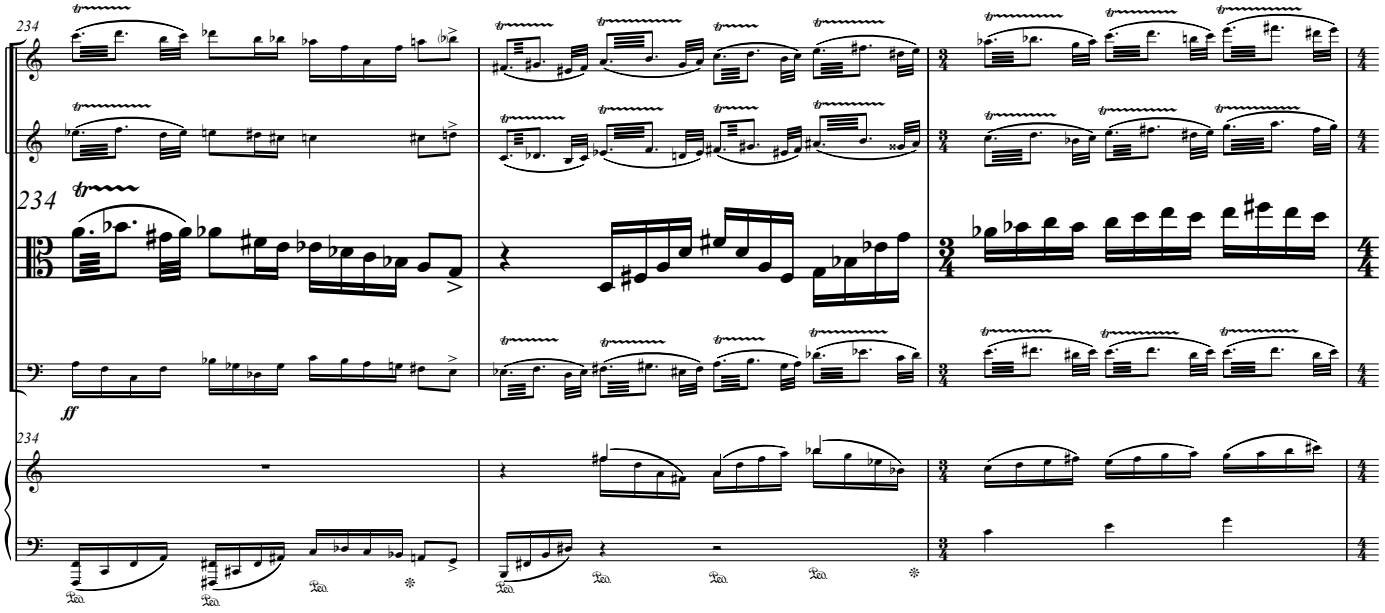

176
mf
Con sord.
cresc.
180
mp
p
Senza sord.
rit.
184
a tempo
Senza sord.


188
mp
mf
dim.
Dev. 11 soave
192
p
pp
197
ff
f
dim.
(mf)
(mp)

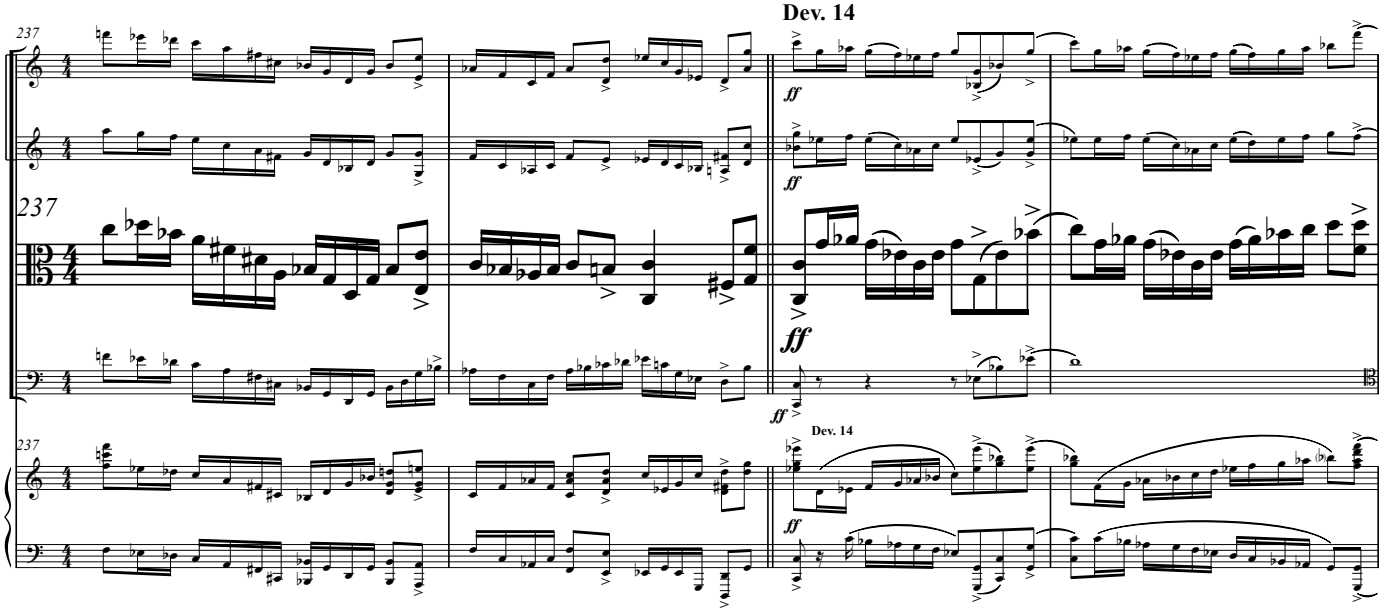

202
rit.
(♩ = 56)
207
Dev. 12
Largamente, ma non piu
espress.
211
non arpeg.

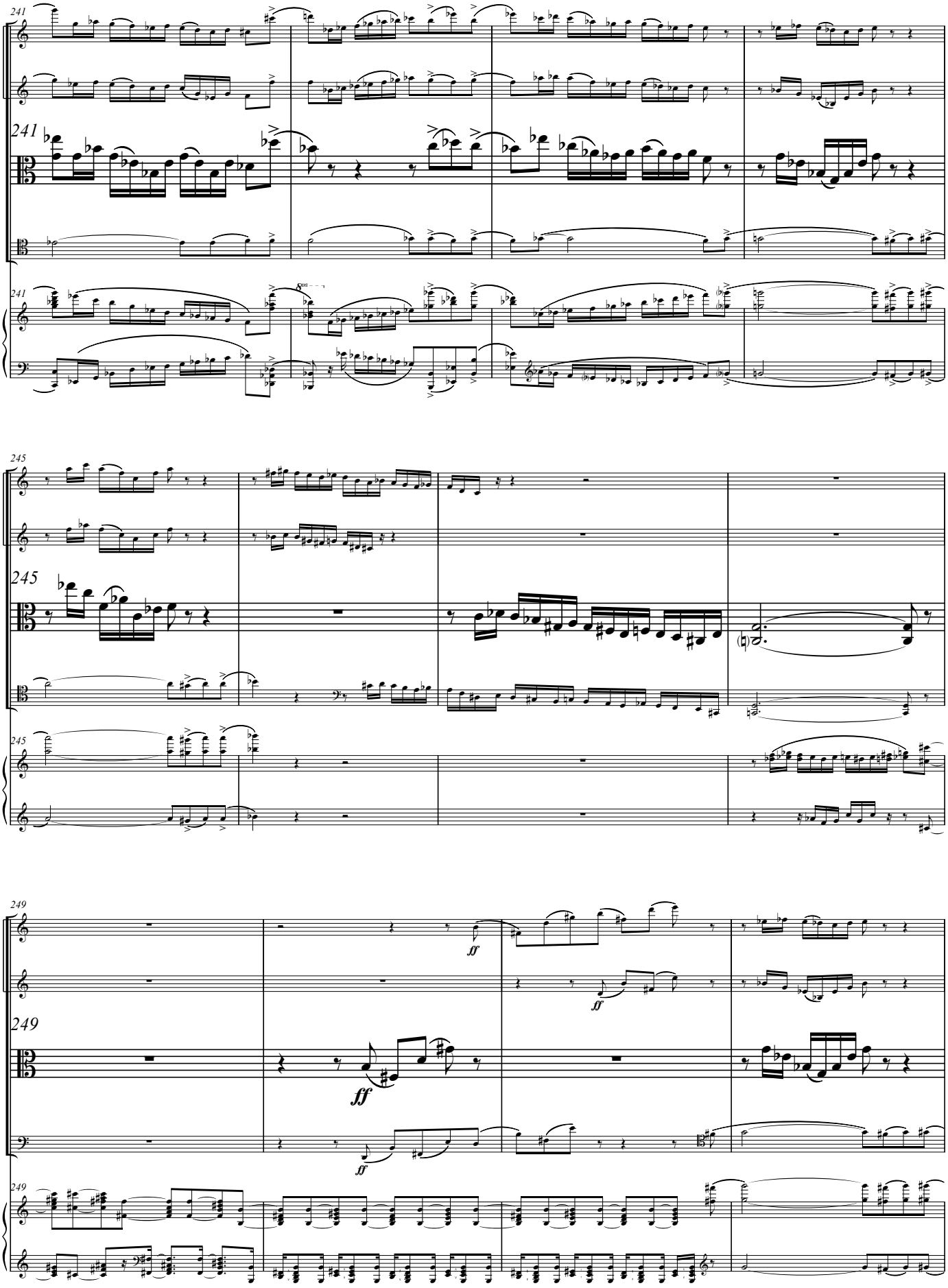

216
f dim.
mp
f
mf
222
cresc.
ff dim.
226
rit.
pp
Dev. 13
(♩= 92)
ff sciolto

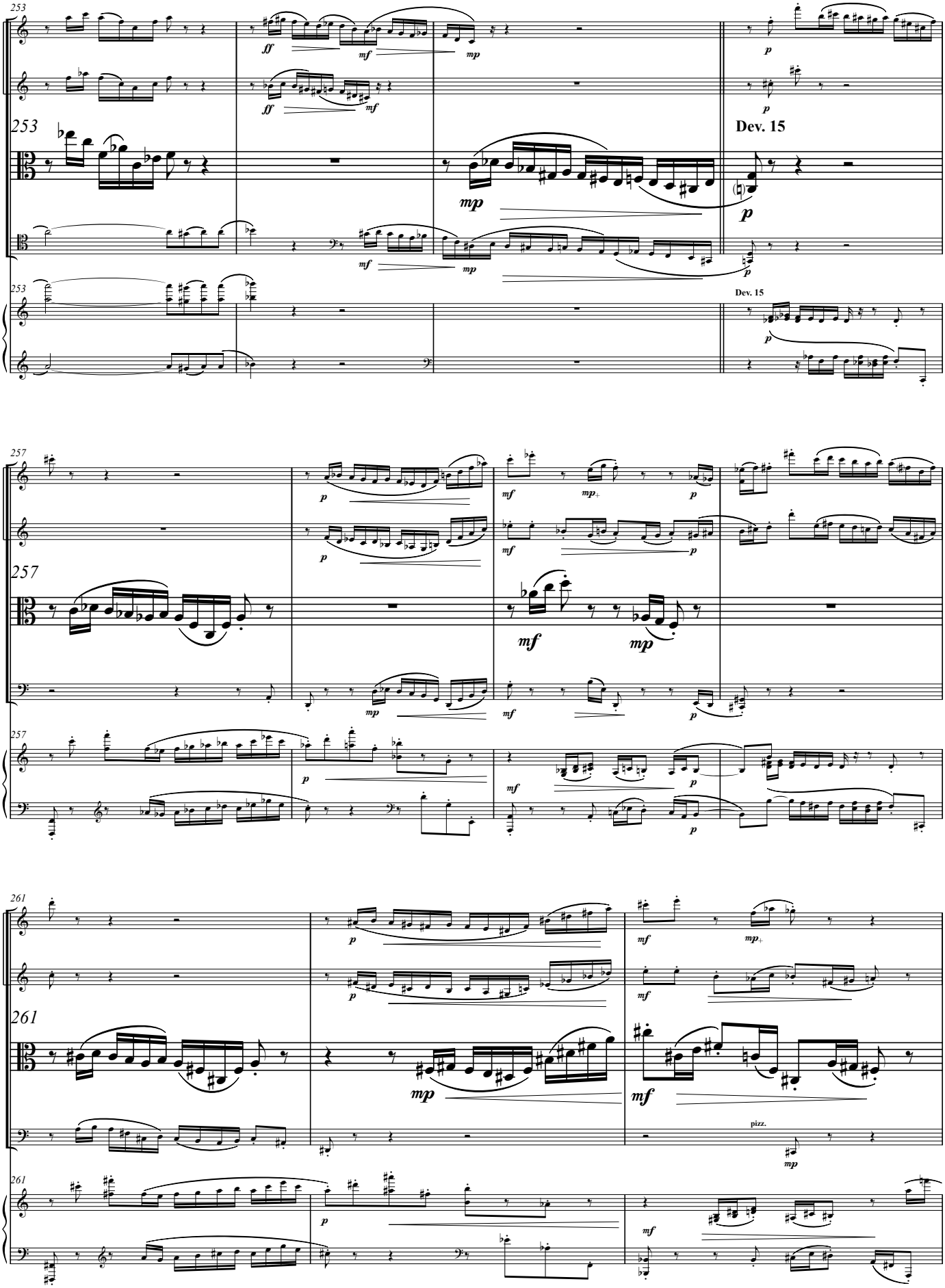


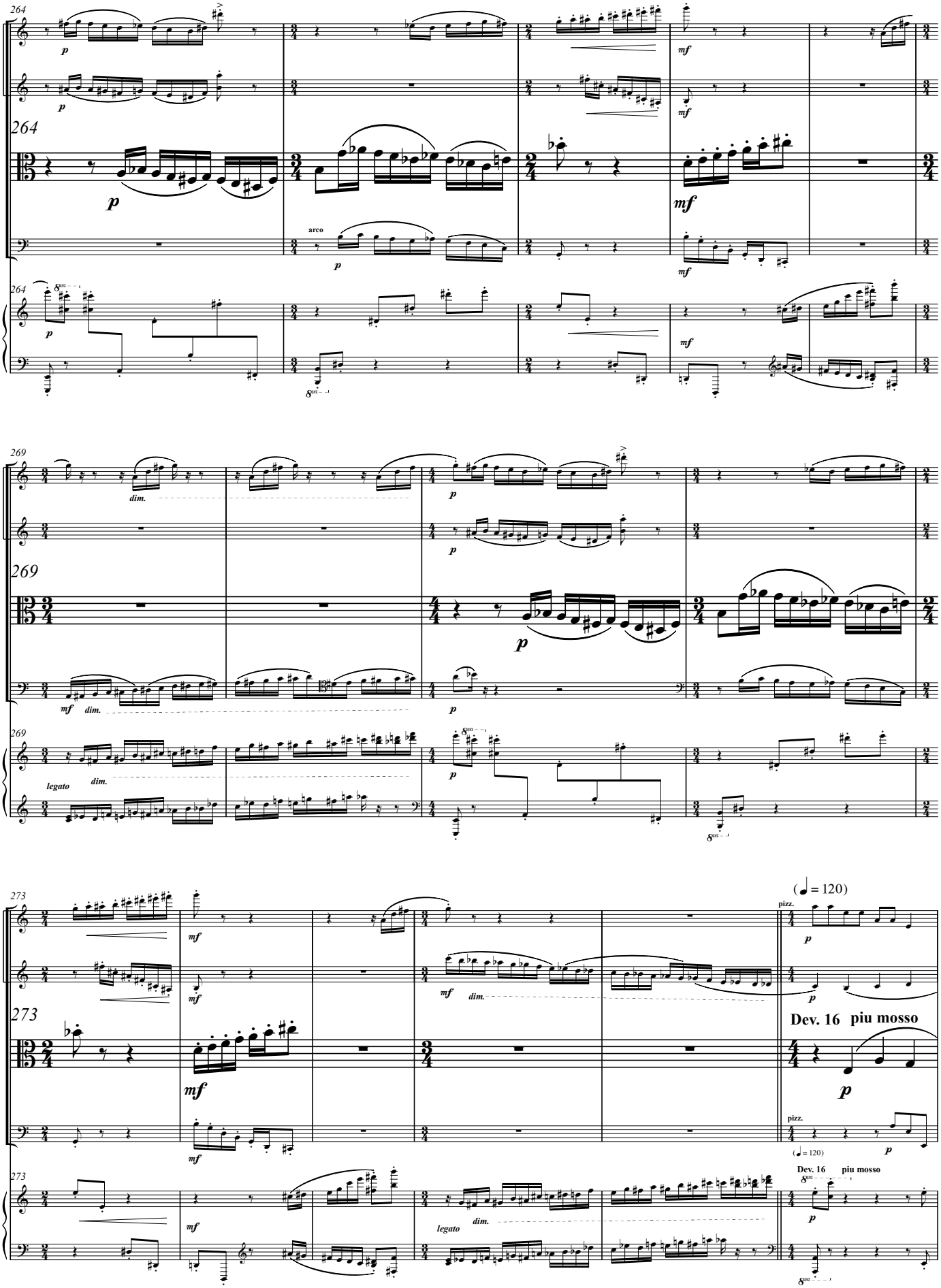


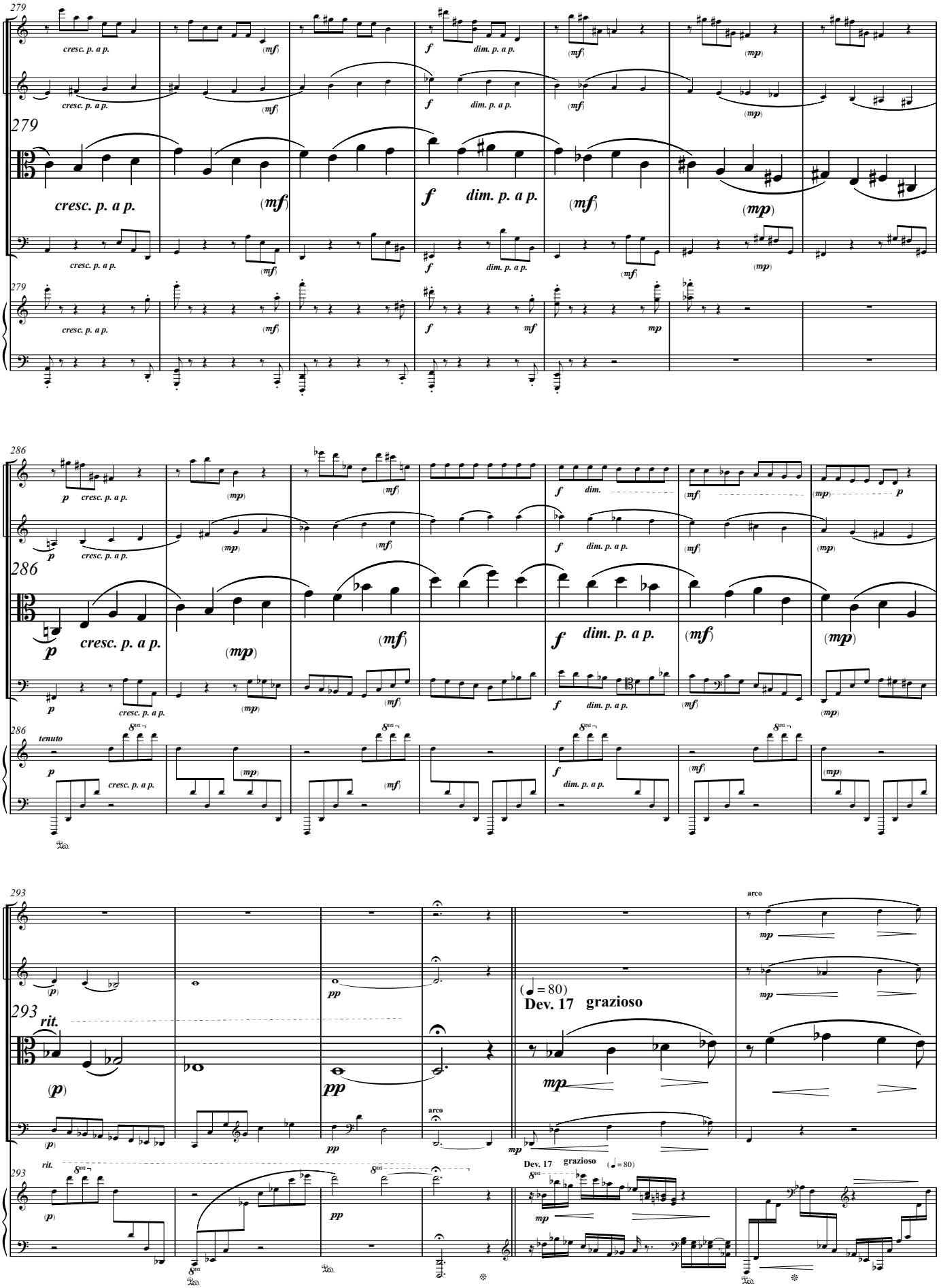
Dev. 14

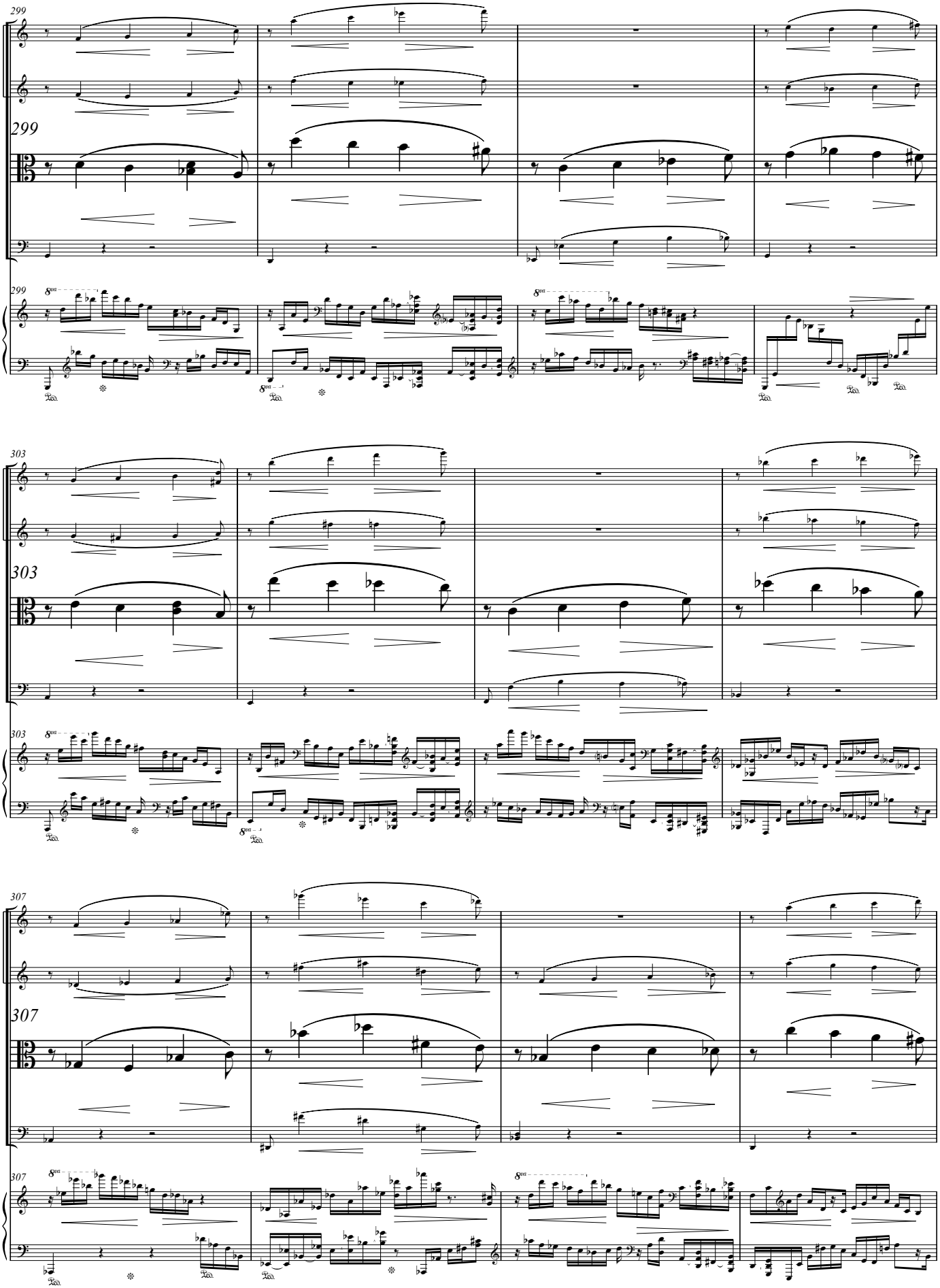


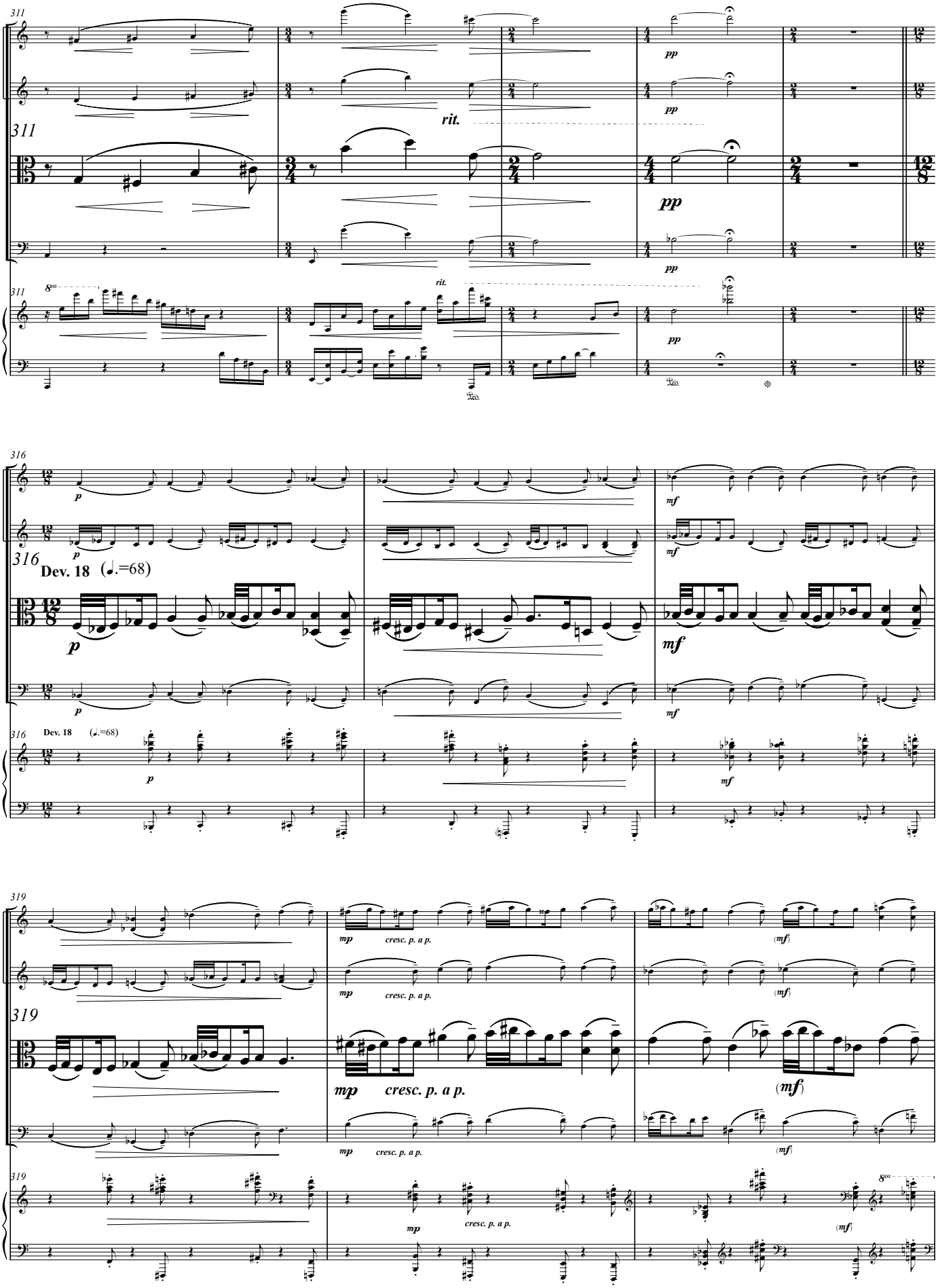

241
241
241
245
245
245
249
249
249
ff
ff
ff

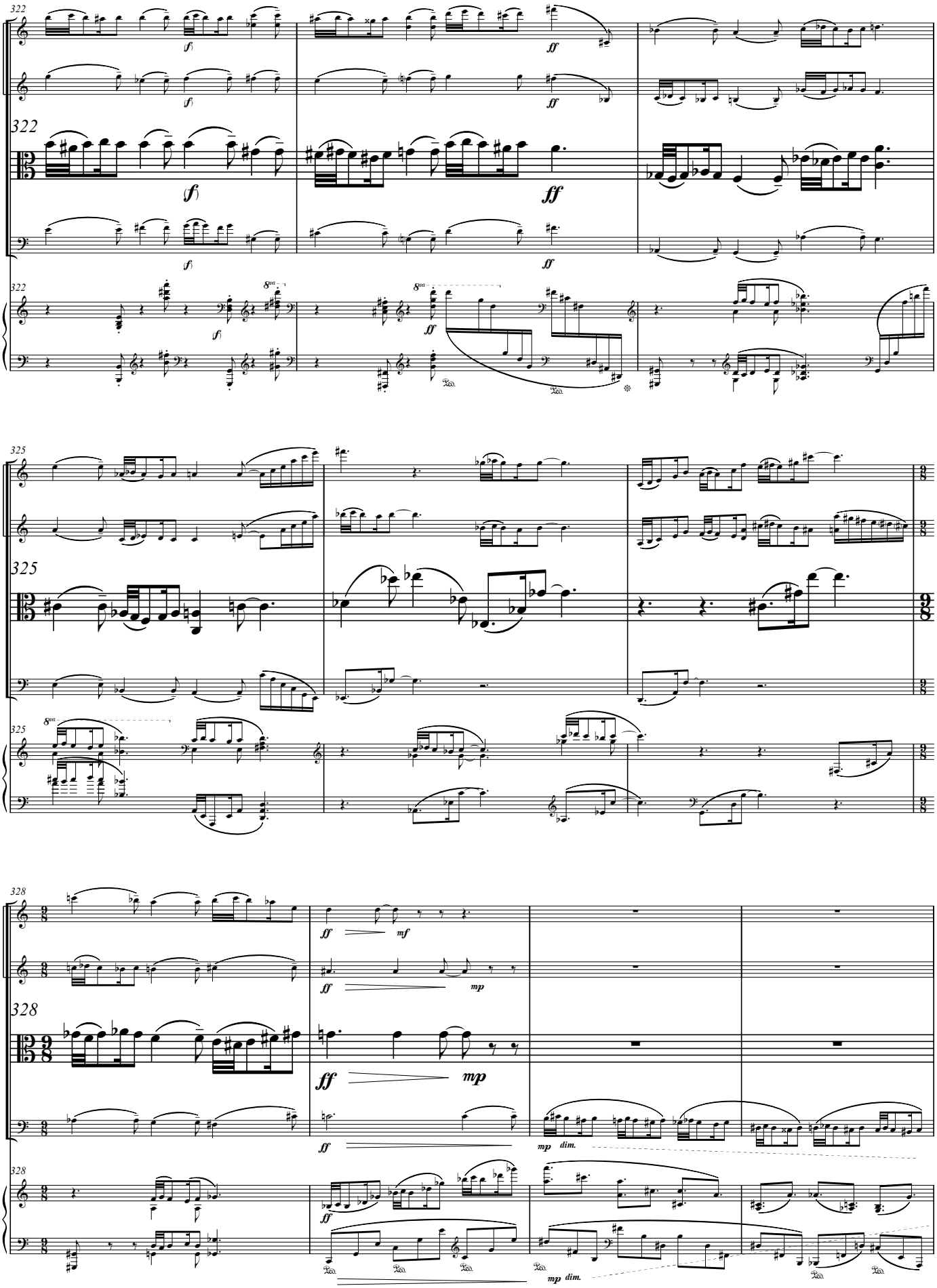

253
Dev. 15
257
261
pizz.

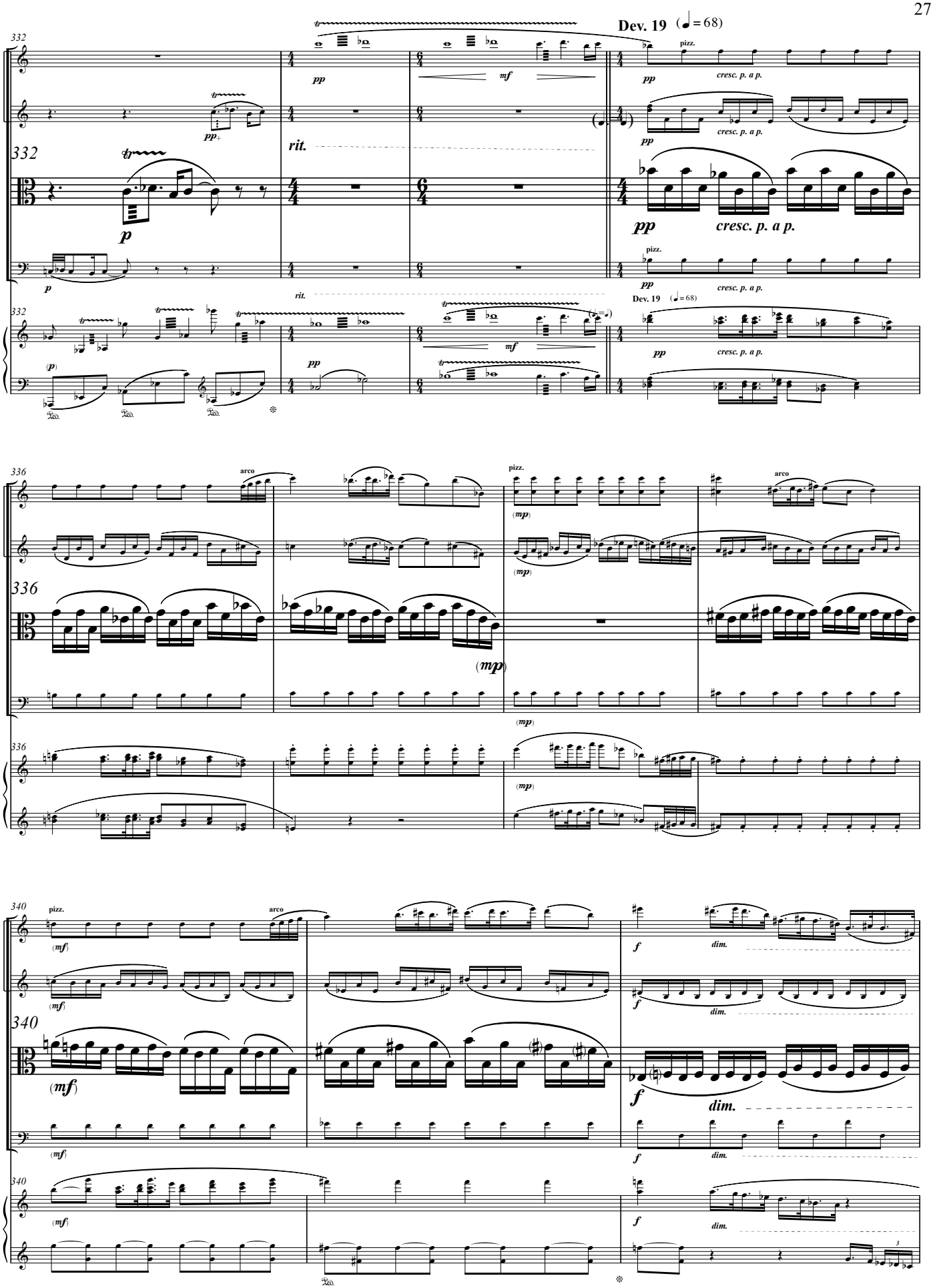

264
p
mf
arco
269
dim.
mf
legato
273
(♩ = 120)
pizz.
Dev. 16 piu mosso

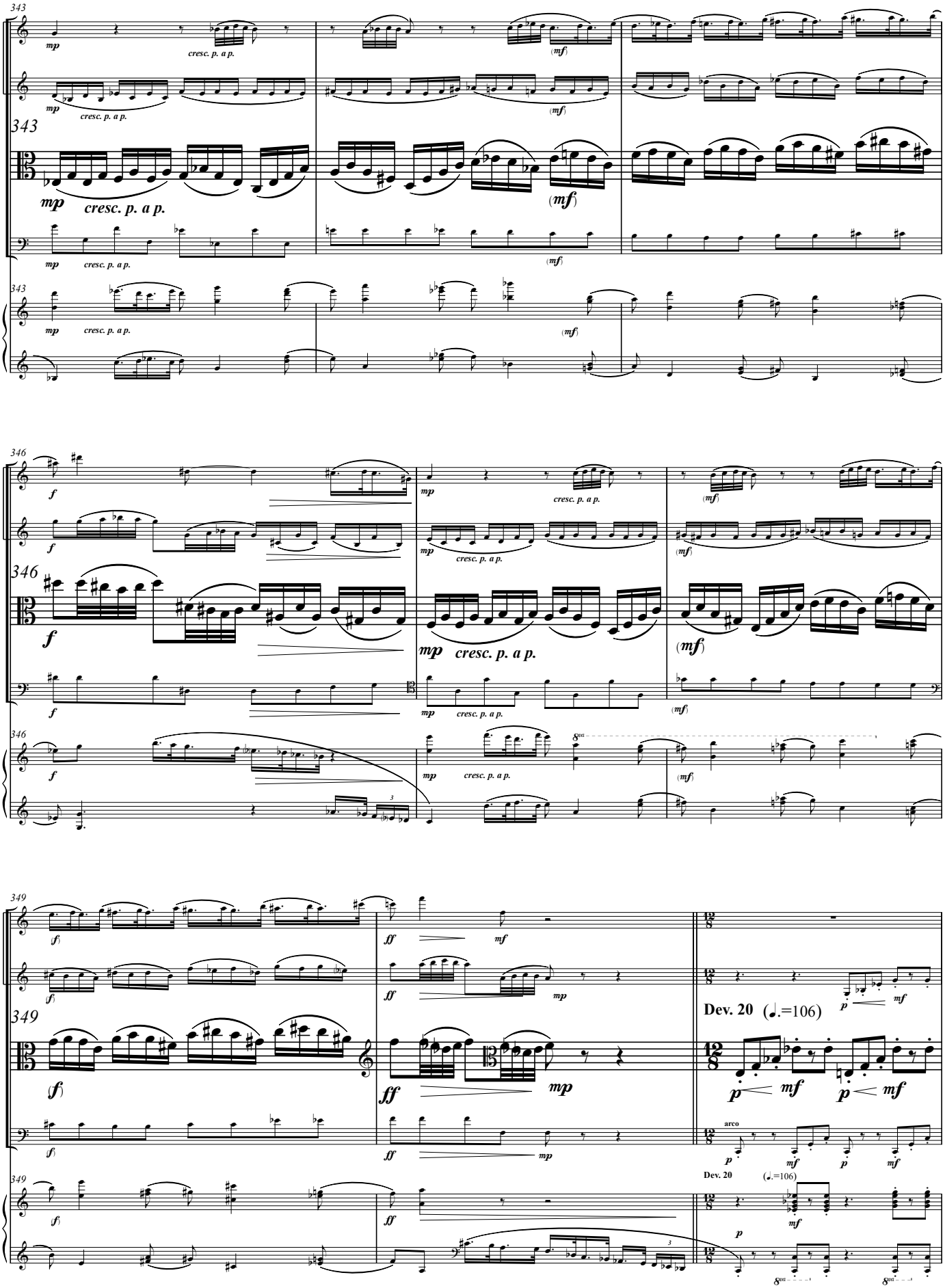

279
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
f
dim. p. a p.
(mf)
(mp)
286
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mp)
(mf)
f
dim. p. a p.
(mf)
(mp)
tenuto
293
rit.
(p)
pp
arco
mp
(♩ = 80)
Dev. 17 grazioso

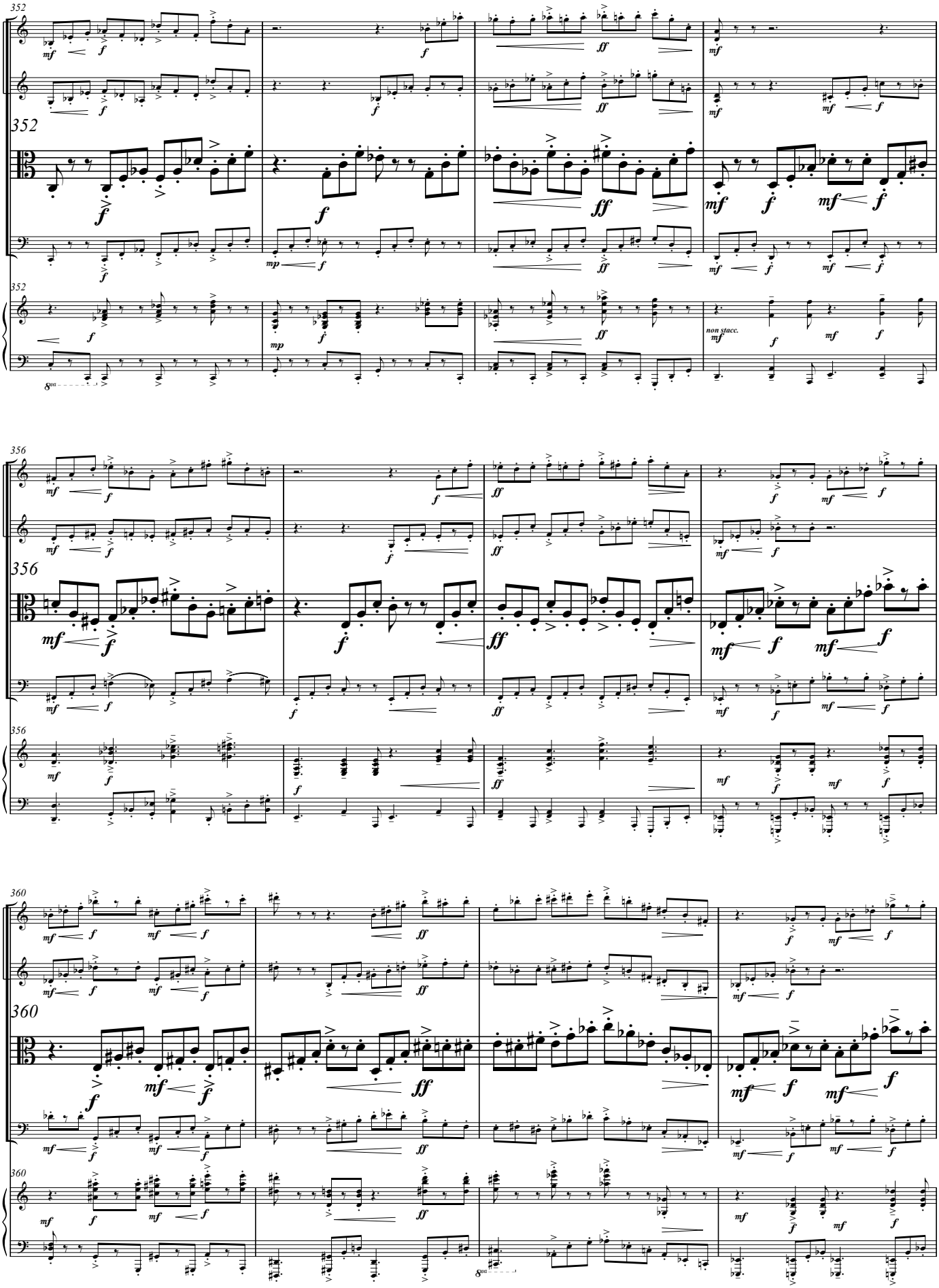

299
303
307

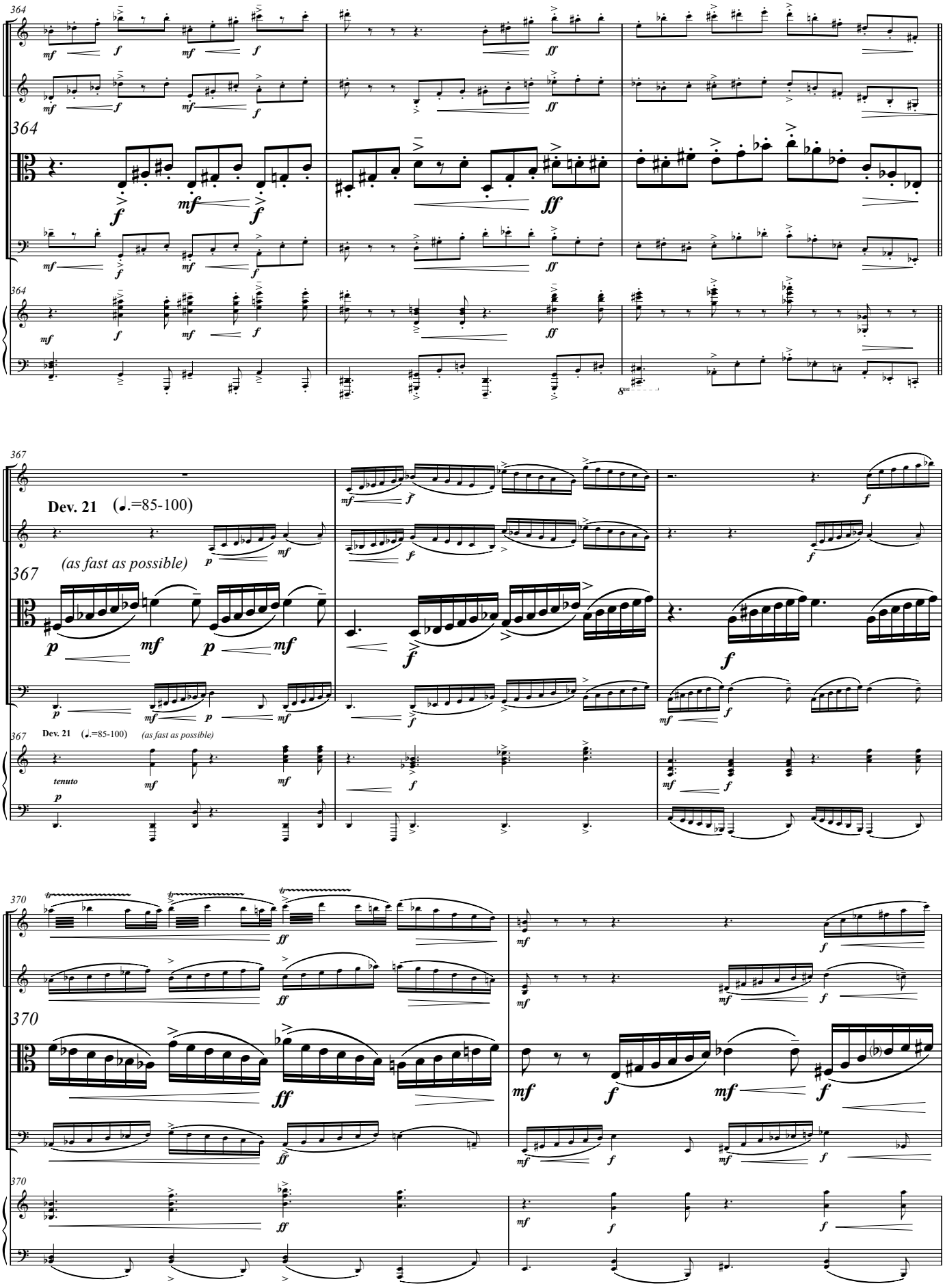

311
rit.
pp
316
Dev. 18 (♩.=68)
p
mf
319
mp cresc. p. a p.
(mf)

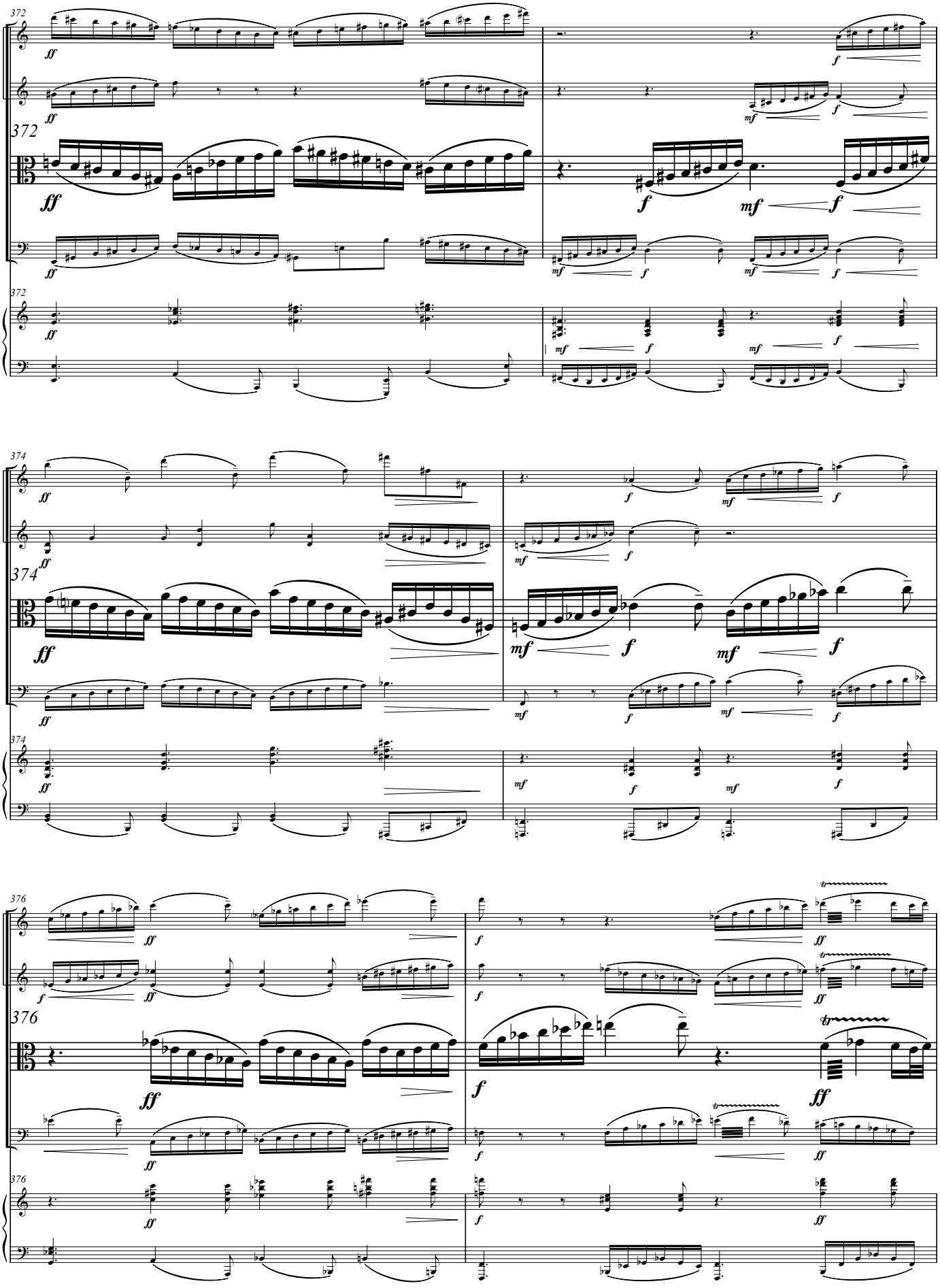

322
325
328
ff
mf
mp
dim.

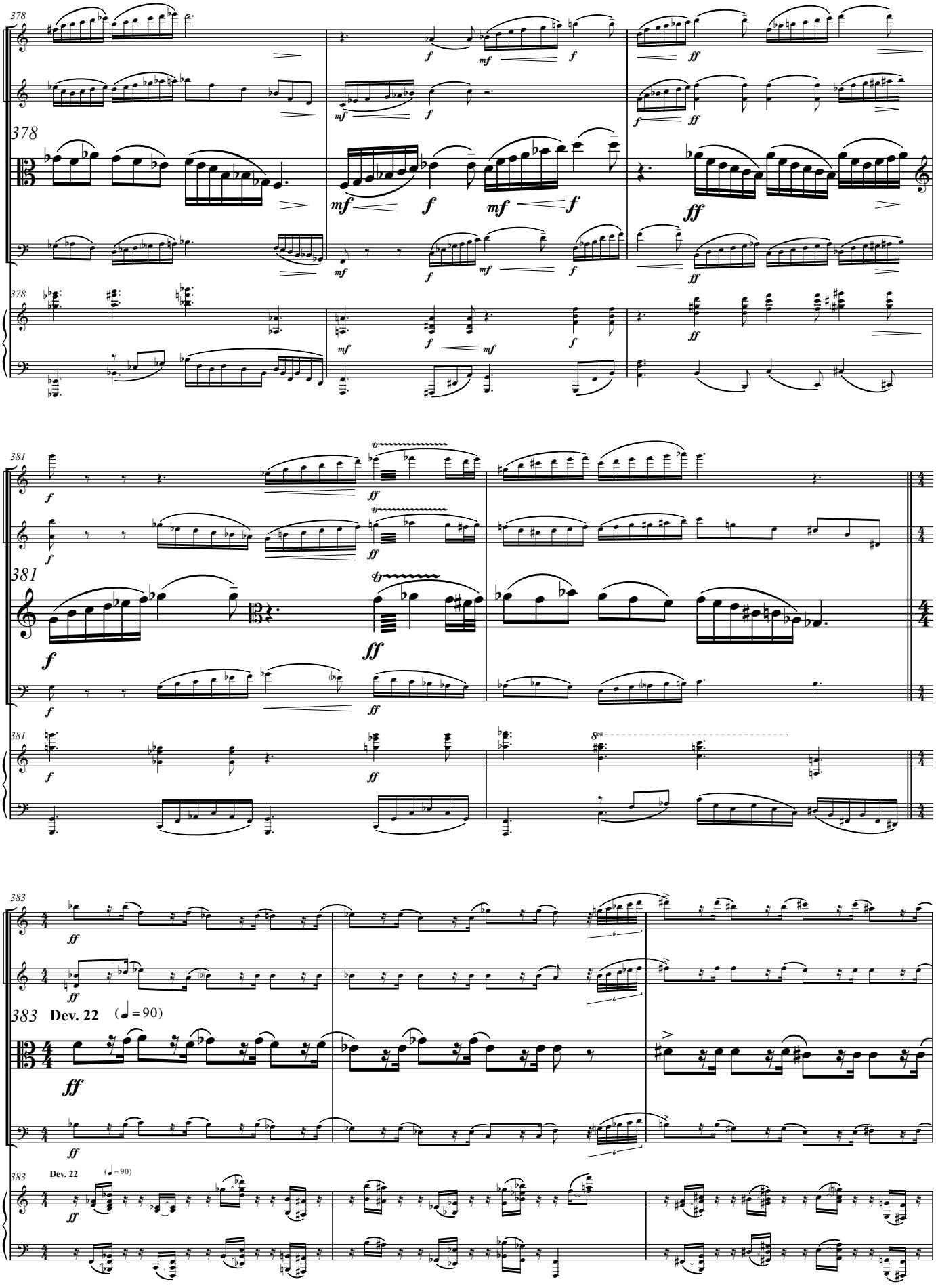

Dev. 19 (♩= 68)
pizz.
cresc. p. a p.
rit.
arco
dim.

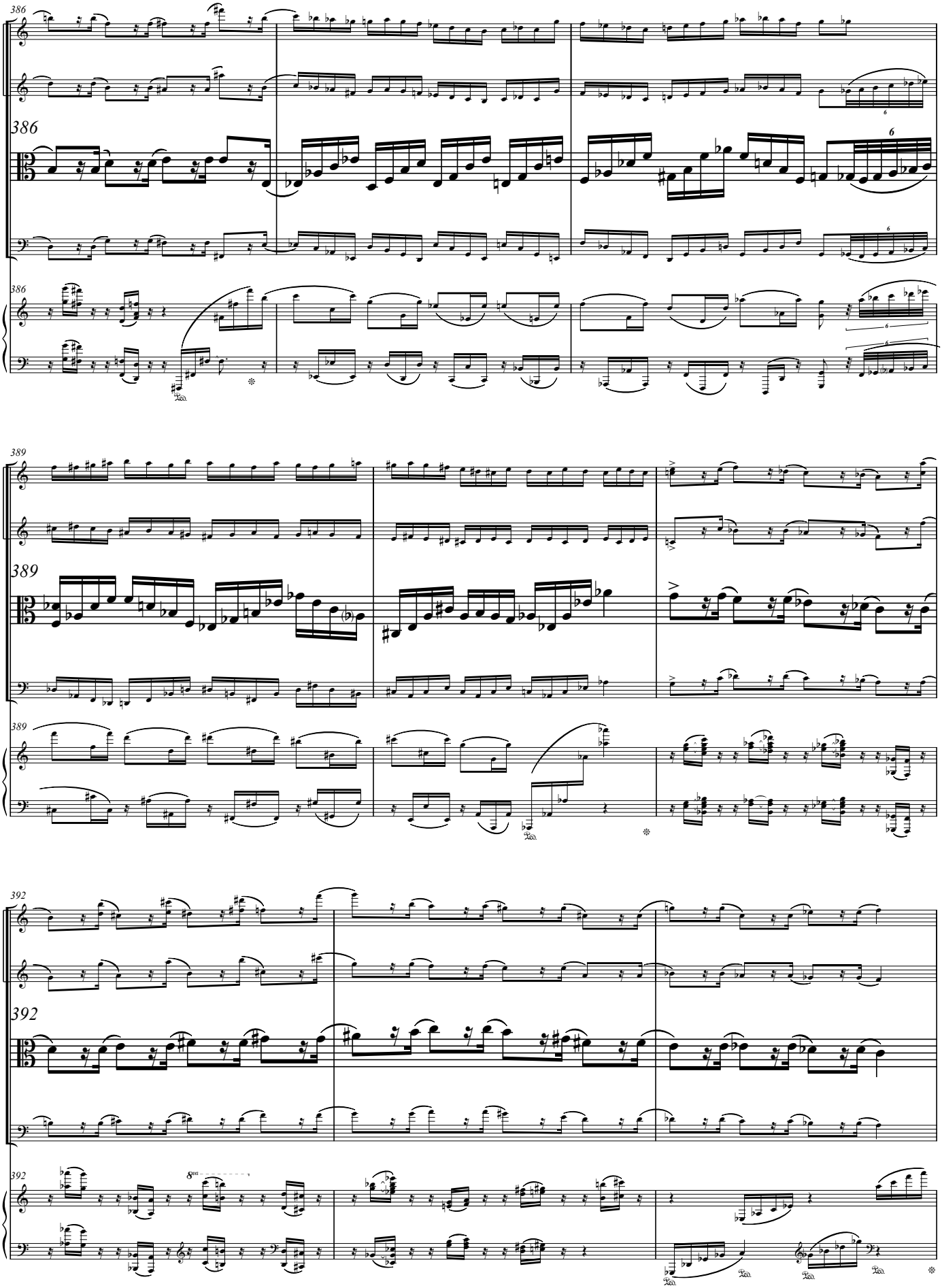

343
mp
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
346
f
349
(f)
ff
mf
mp
Dev. 20 (♩.=106)
arco
p

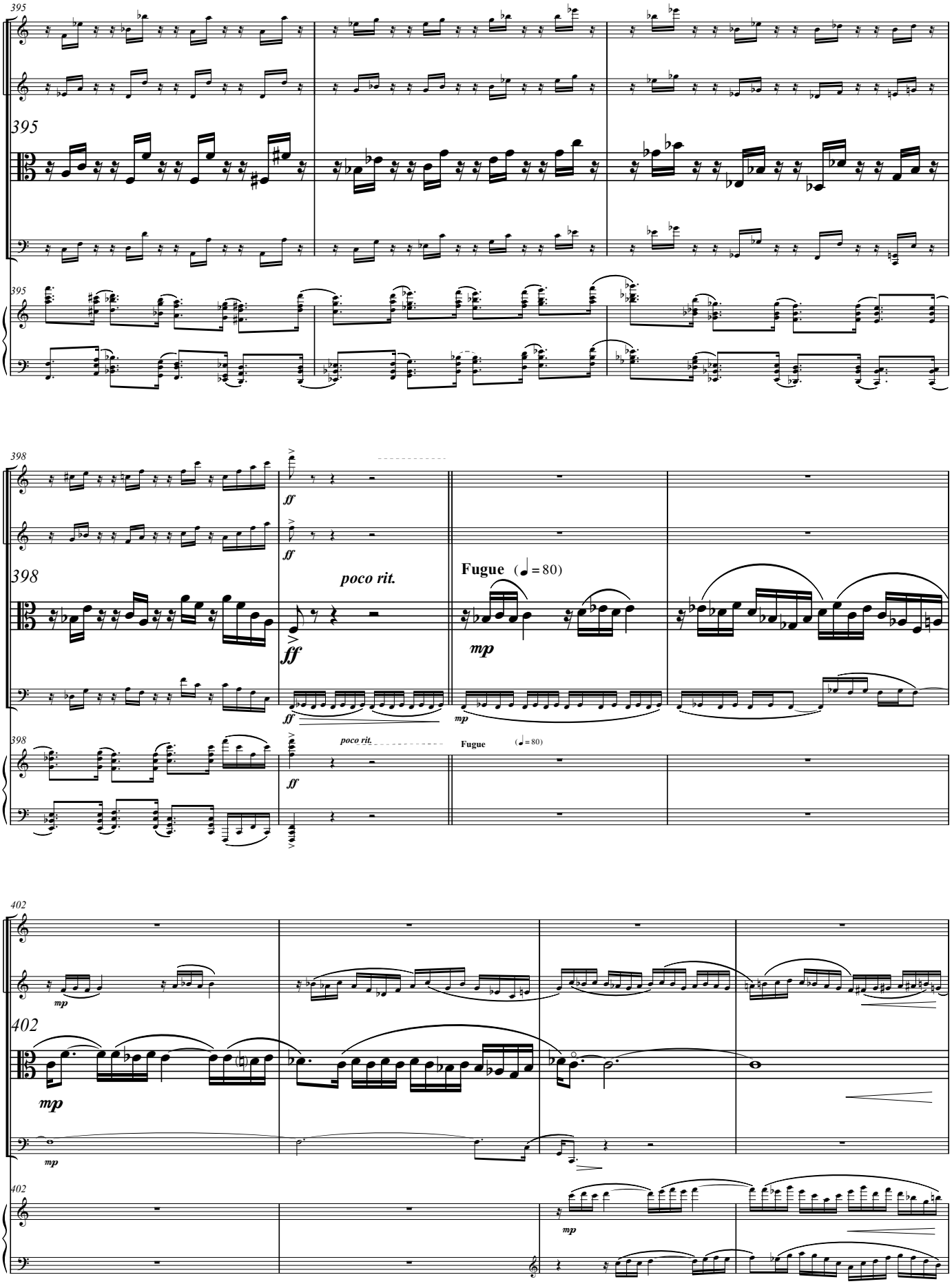

352
352
352
non stacc.
356
356
356
360
360
360

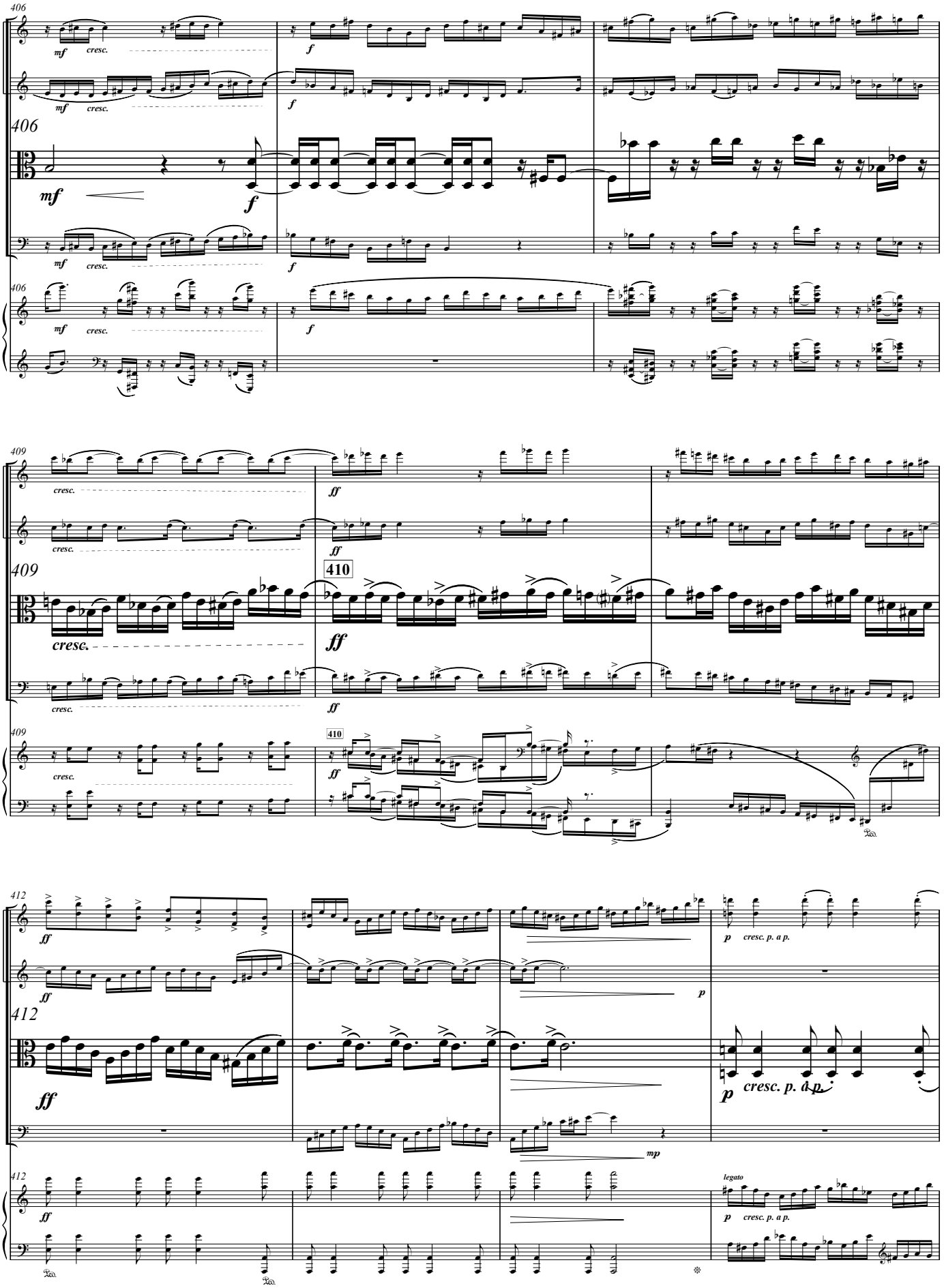

364
364
364
367
Dev. 21 (♩.=85-100)
(as fast as possible)
367
367
Dev. 21 (♩.=85-100) (as fast as possible)
370
370
370

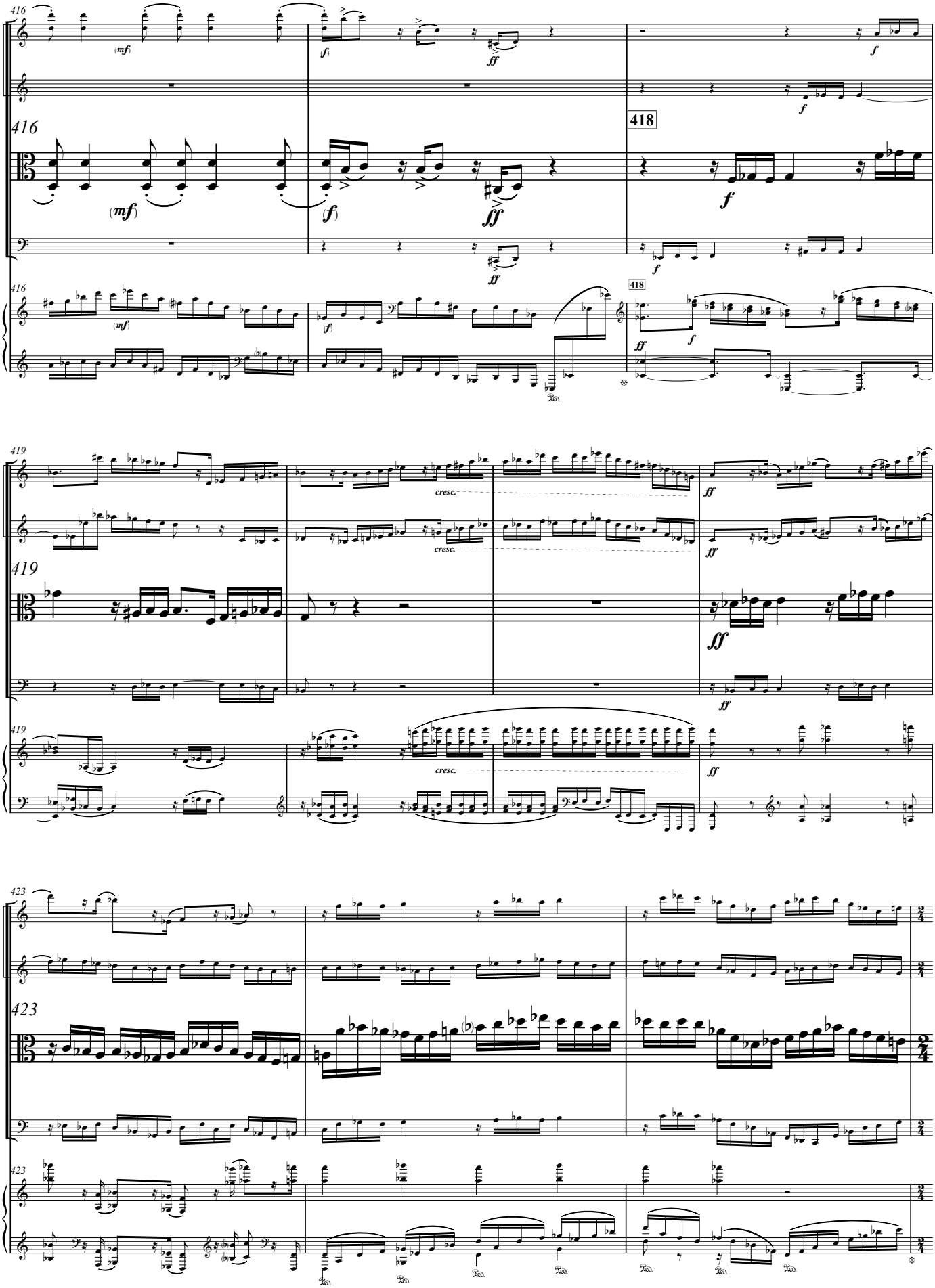


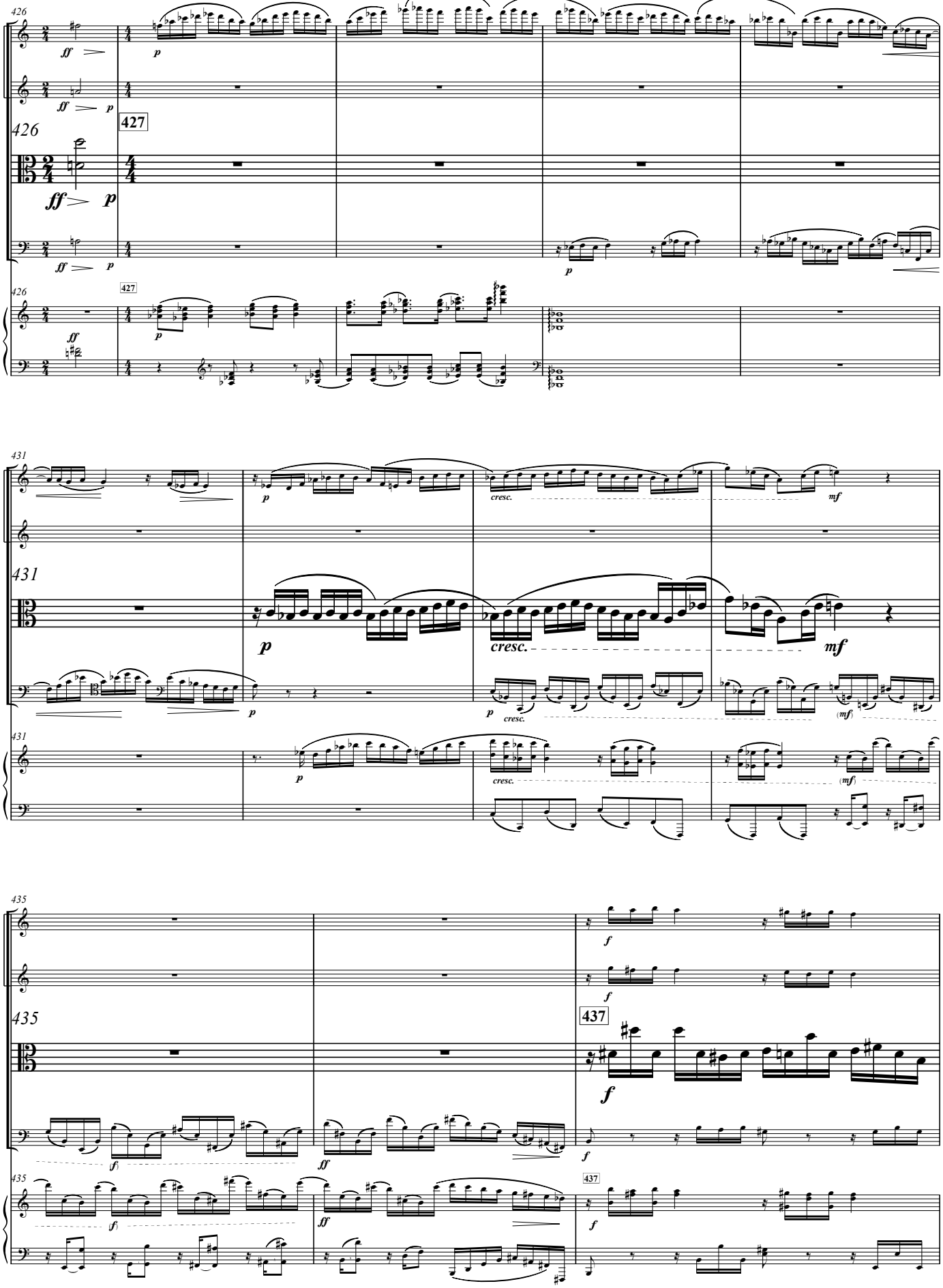

378
381
383
Dev. 22
(♩= 90)


386
386
386
389
389
389
392
392
392
8va


395
398
ff
poco rit.
Fugue (♩= 80)
mp
402


406
mf
cresc.
f
409
ff
410
412
p
cresc. p. a p.
mp
legato


416
418
419
423
cresc.


426
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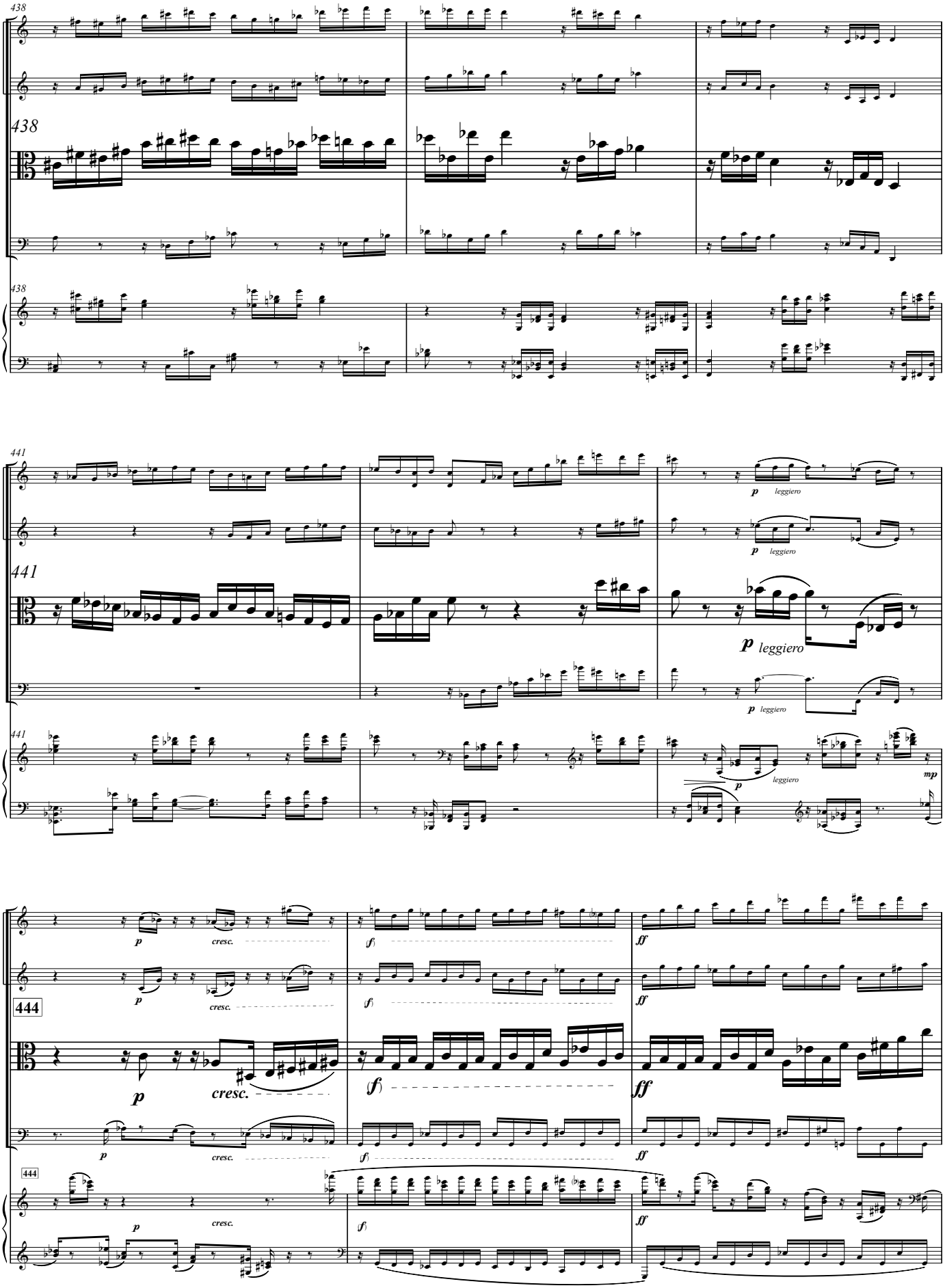
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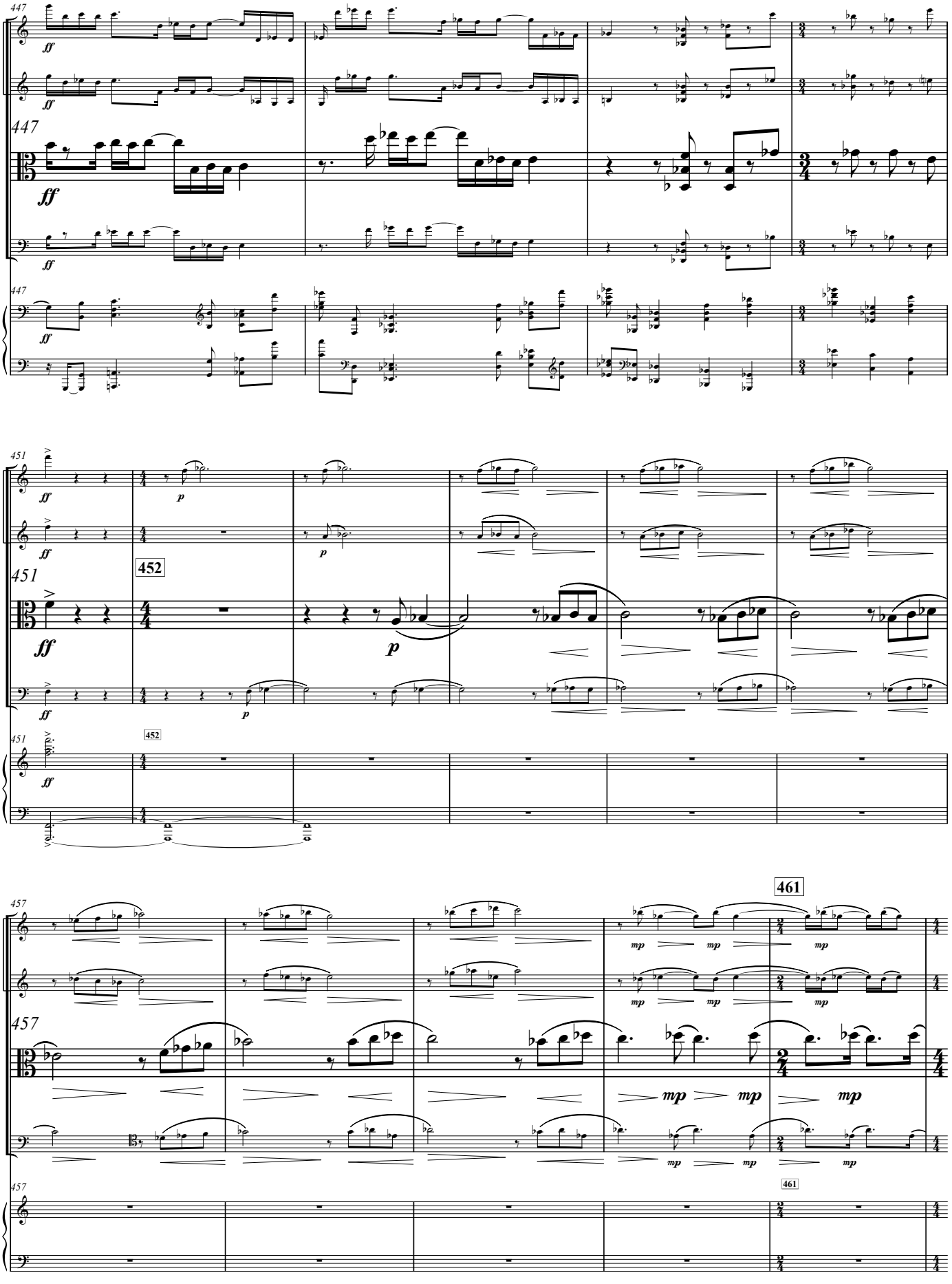
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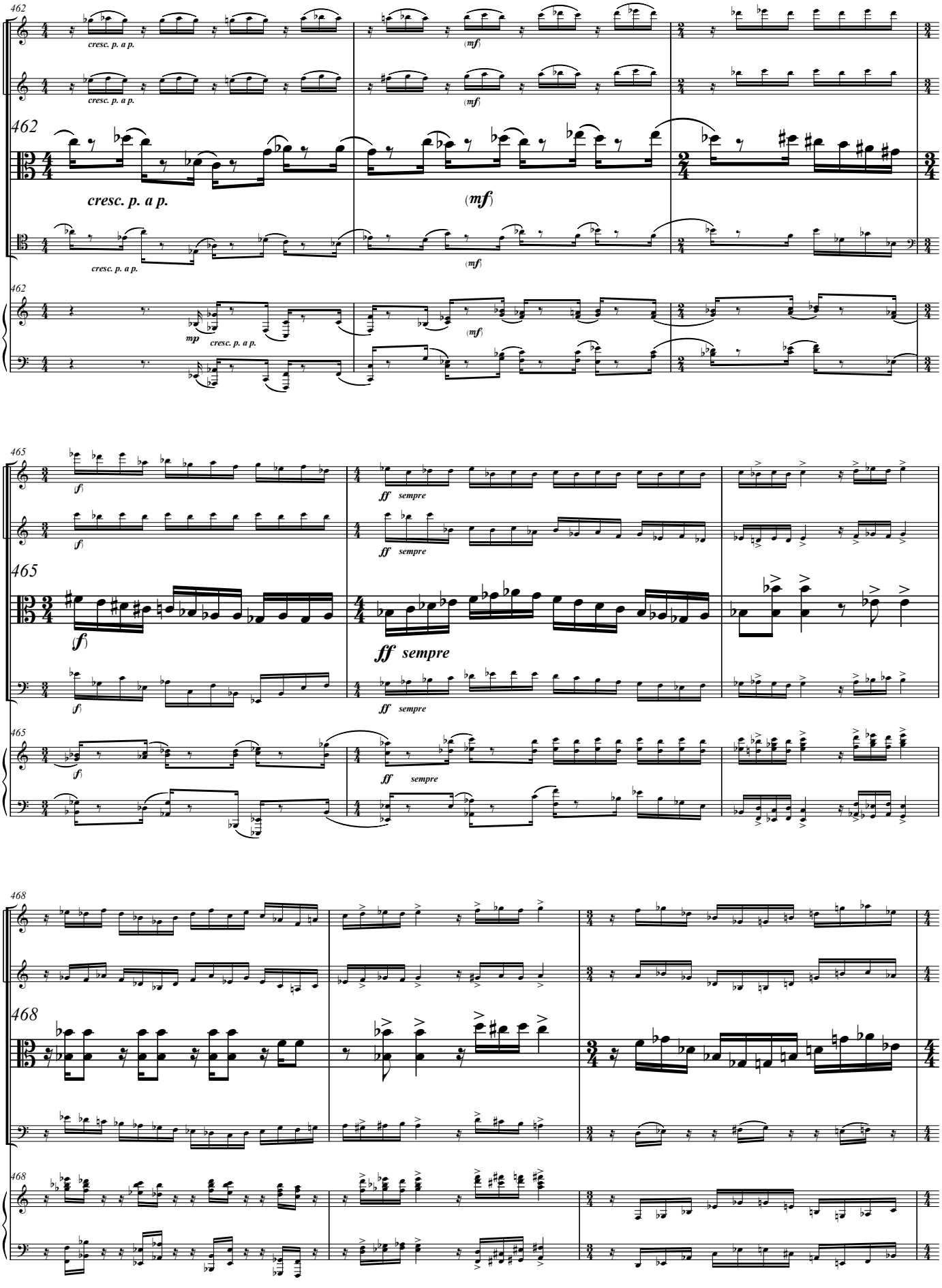
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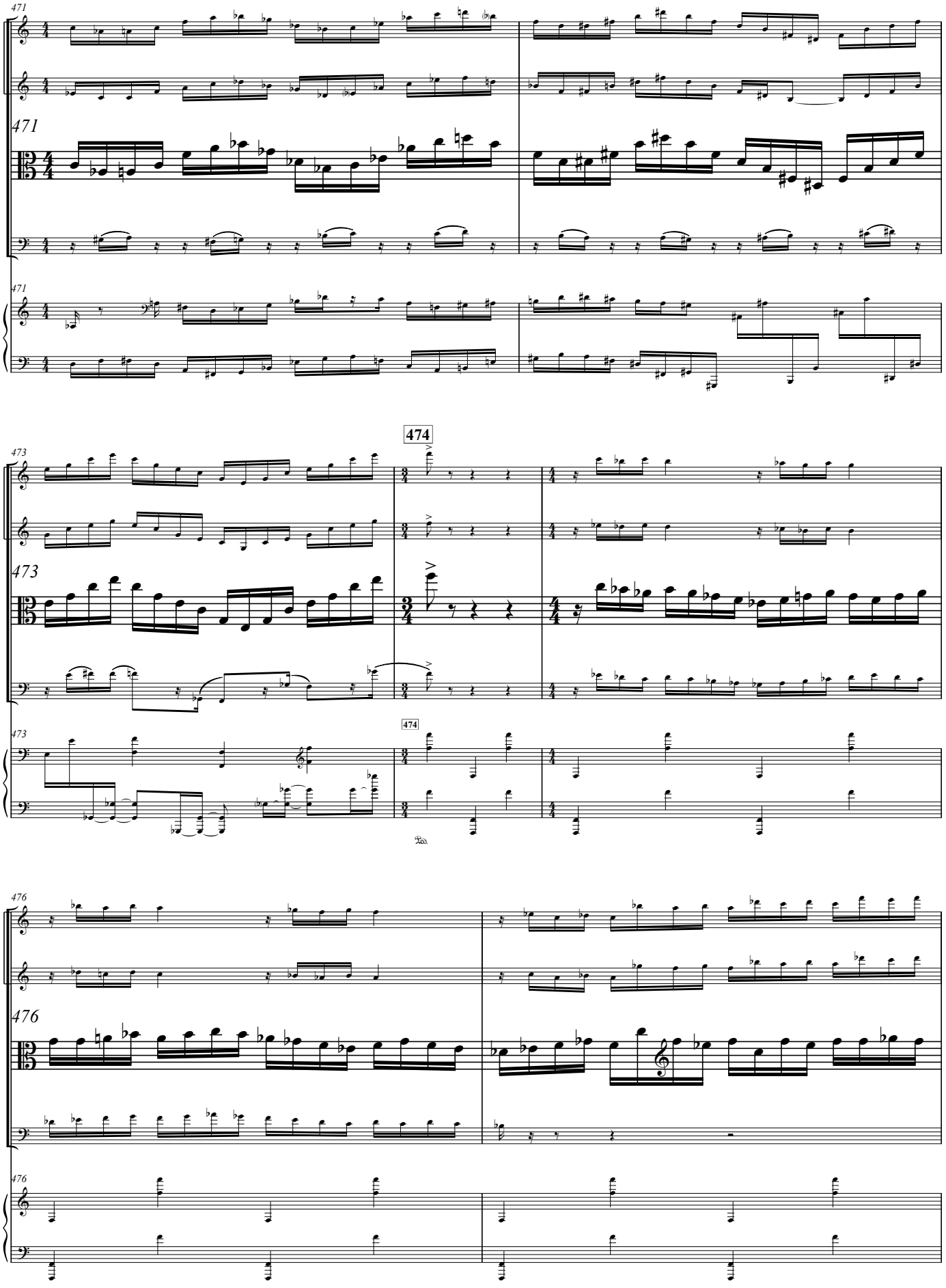
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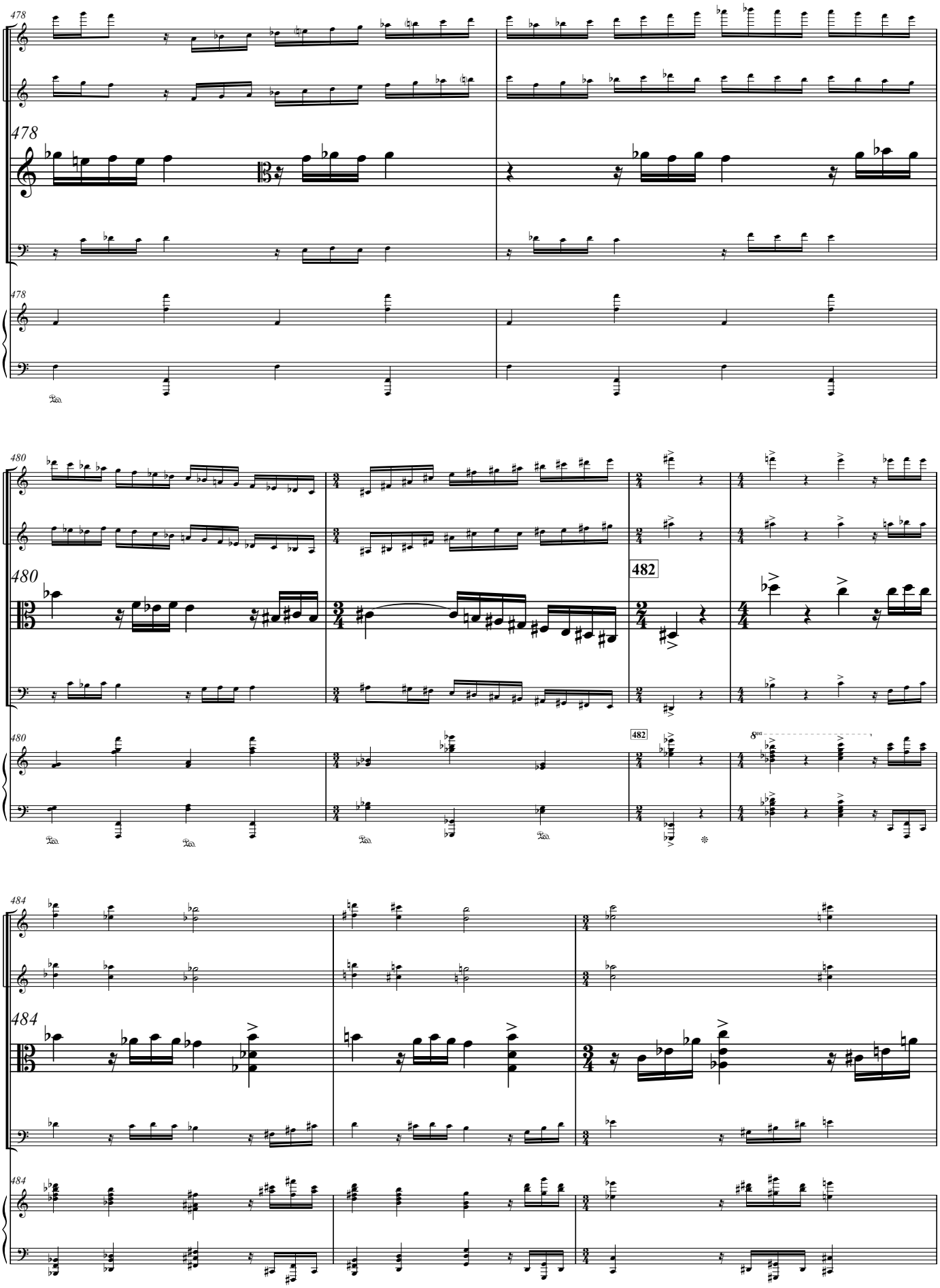
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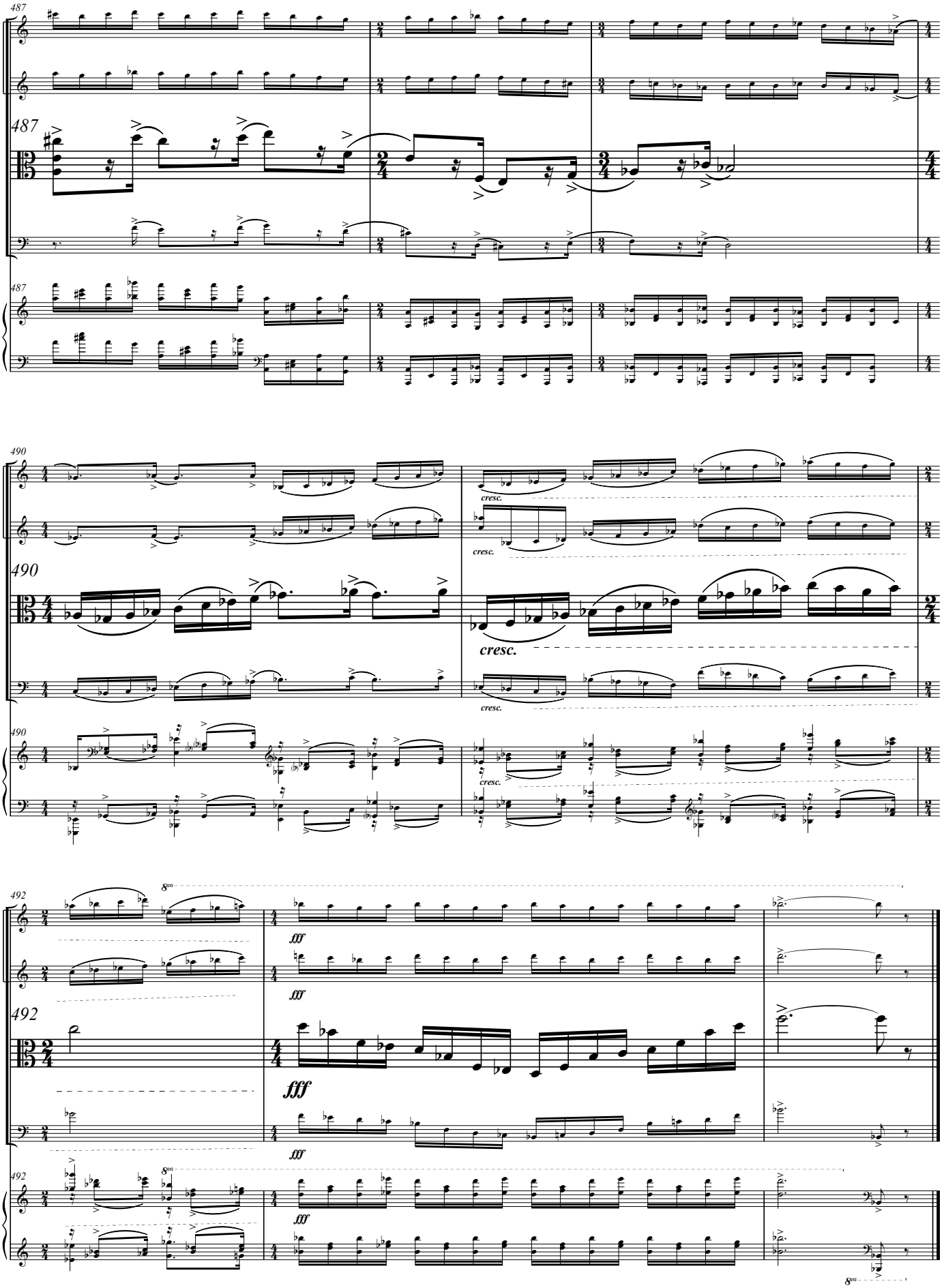
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