Cubic Deviations

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

For Piano Quintet

Violoncello

for Electronic Music Readers

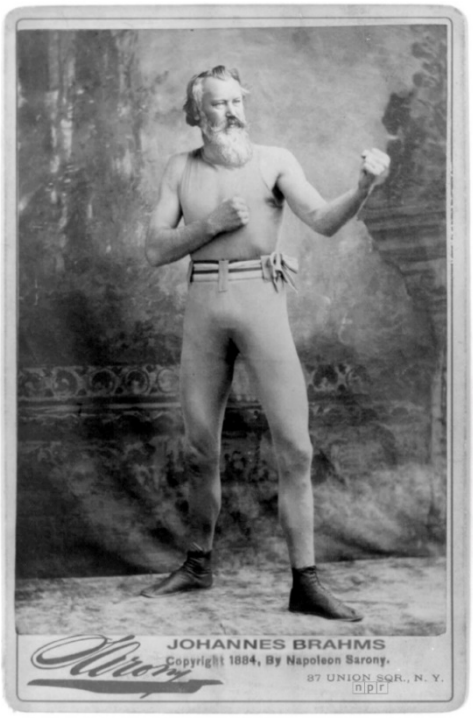
Bill Robinson

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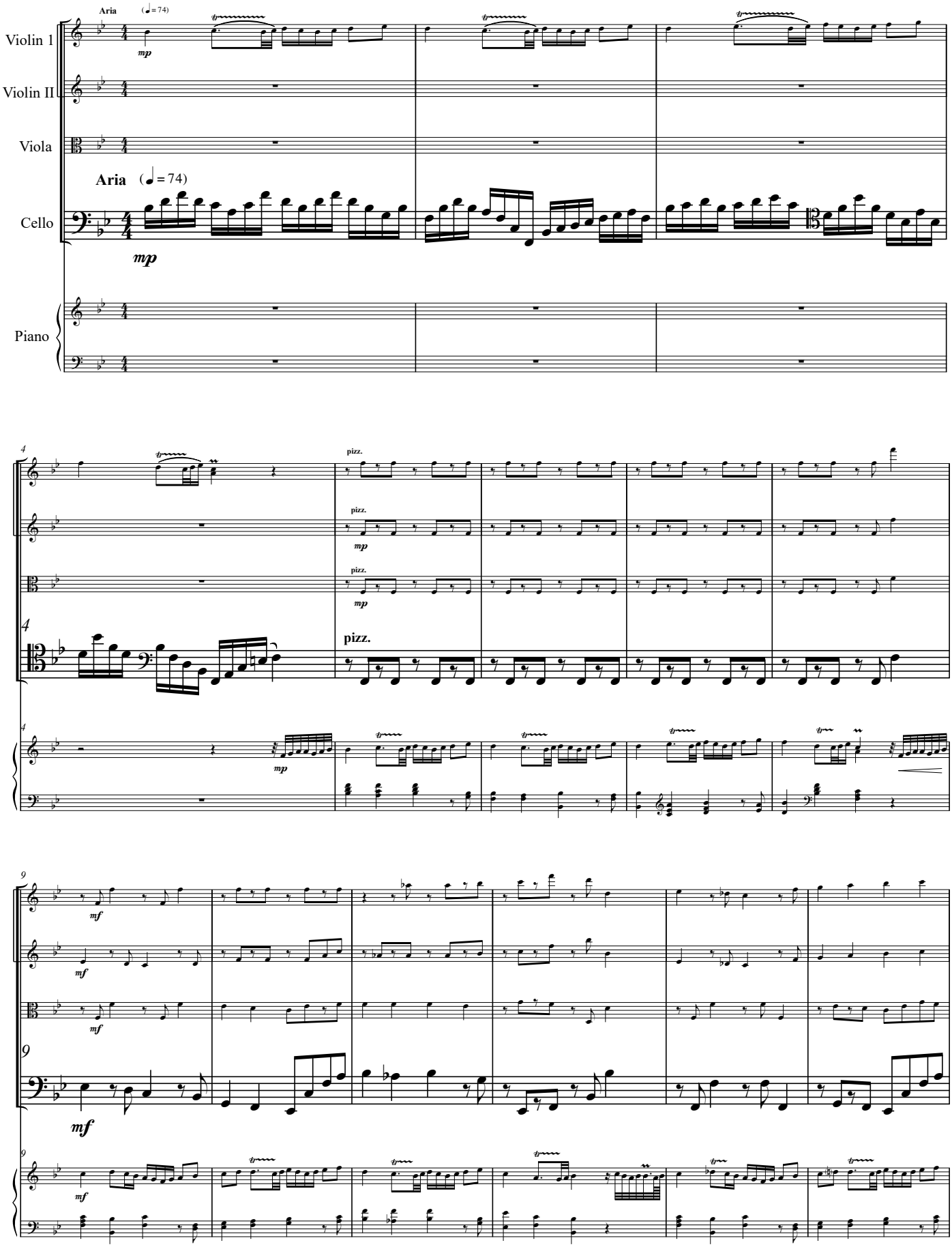
Cover art by Joseph Groupy, 1743 *Pugilist Brahms by NPR* billrobinsonmusic.com

Cello Part for Electronic Music Readers

Cubic Deviations

[corrected to 7/21/23]

Bill Robinson



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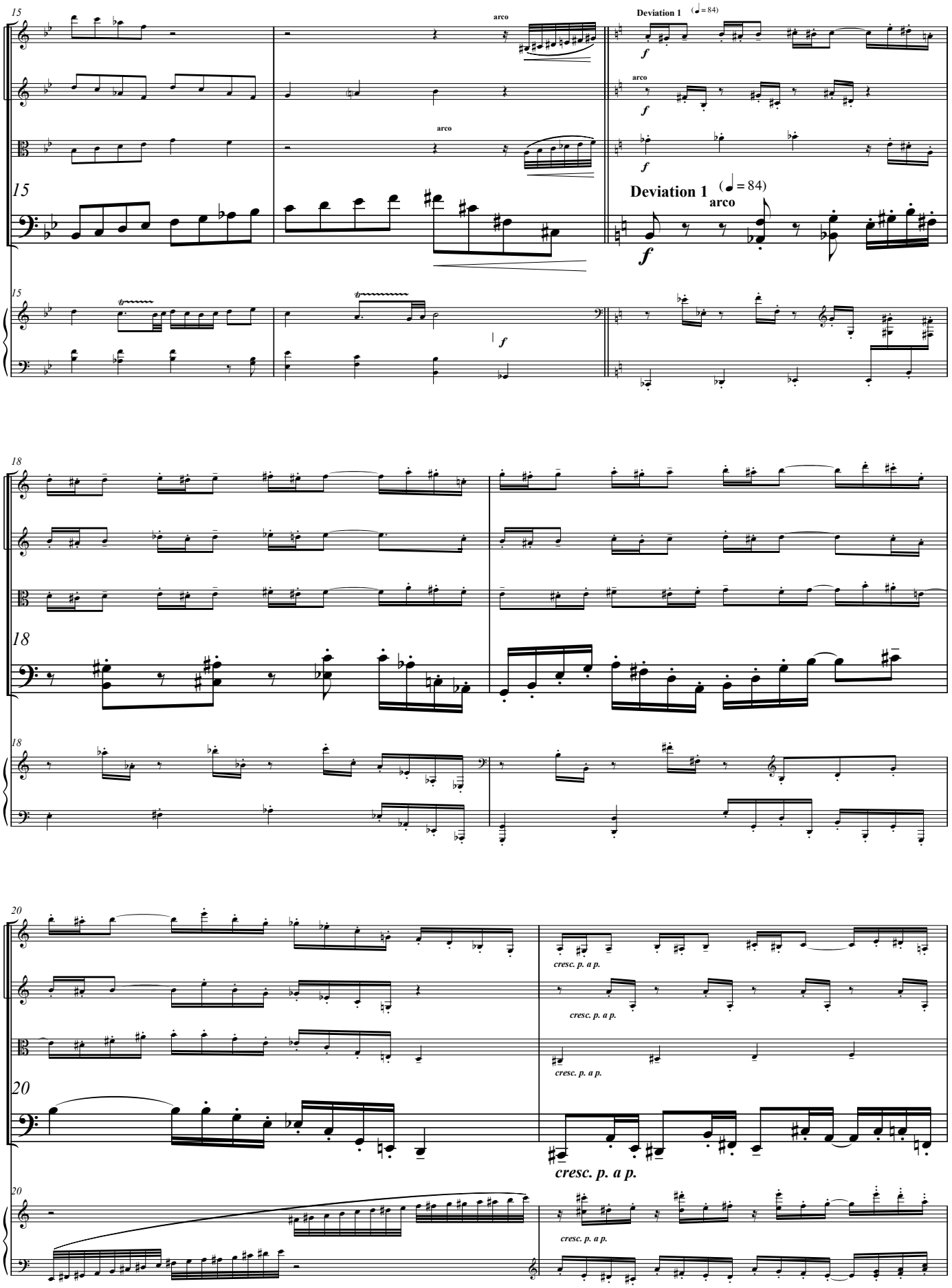
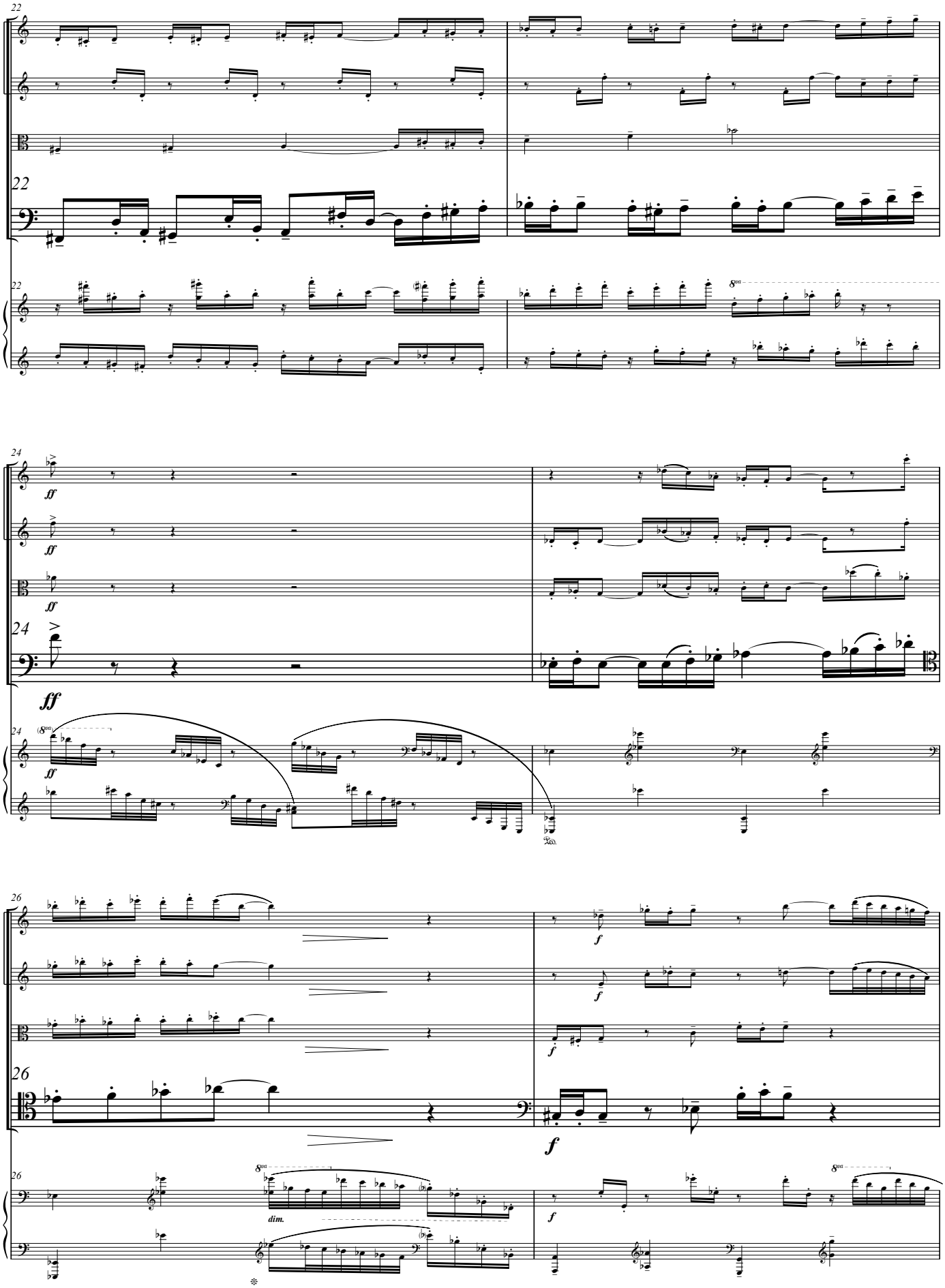
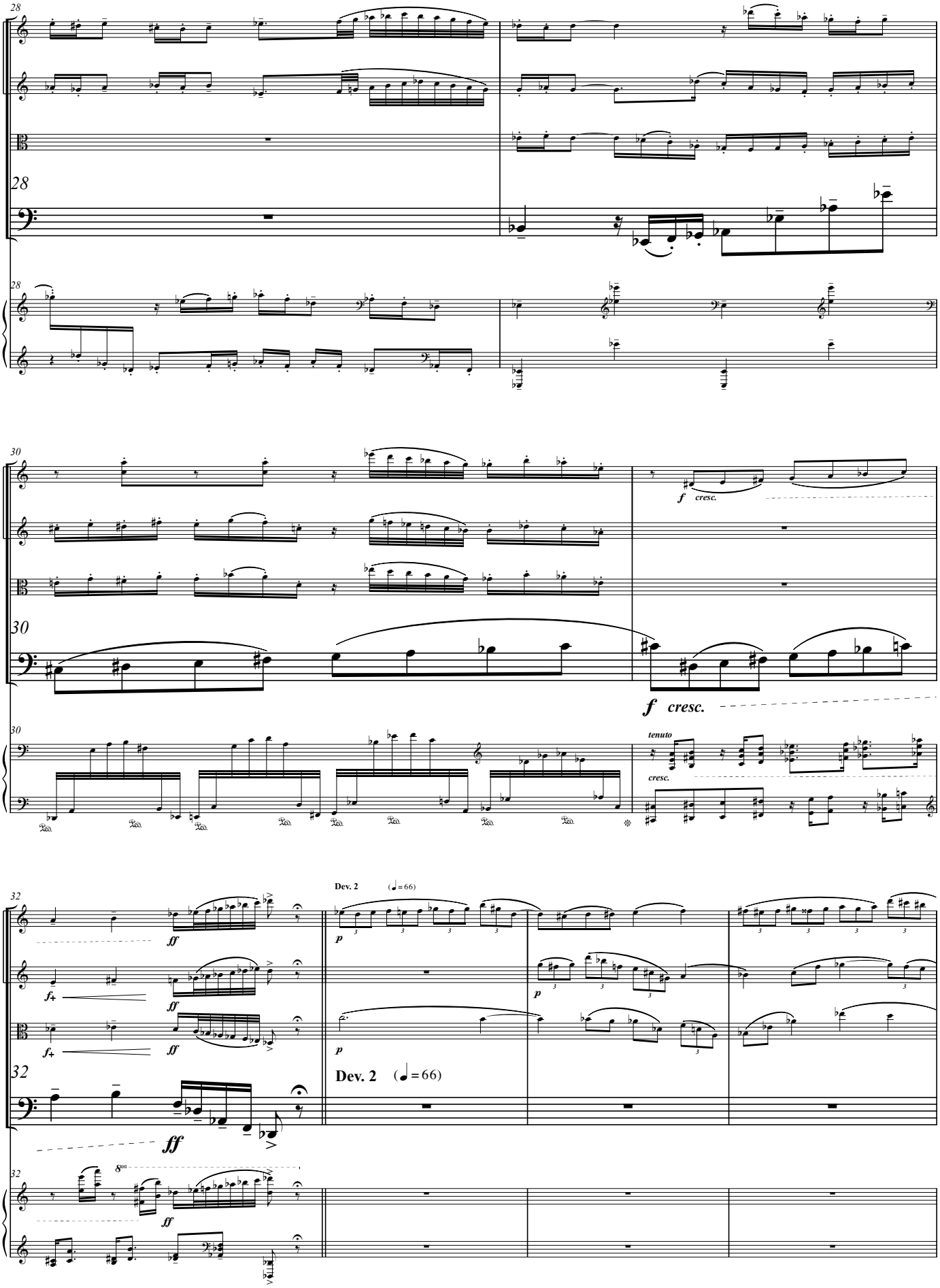
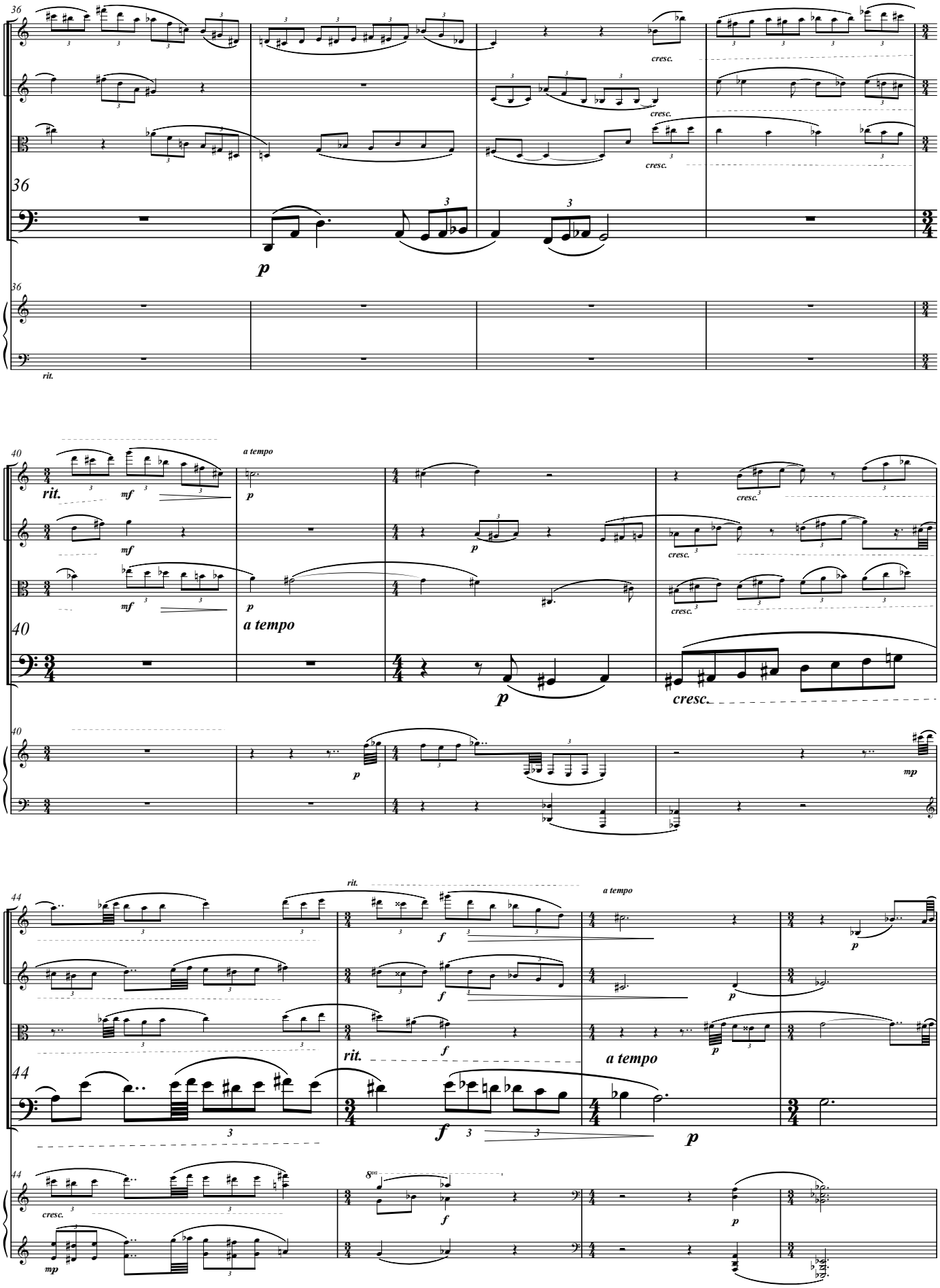
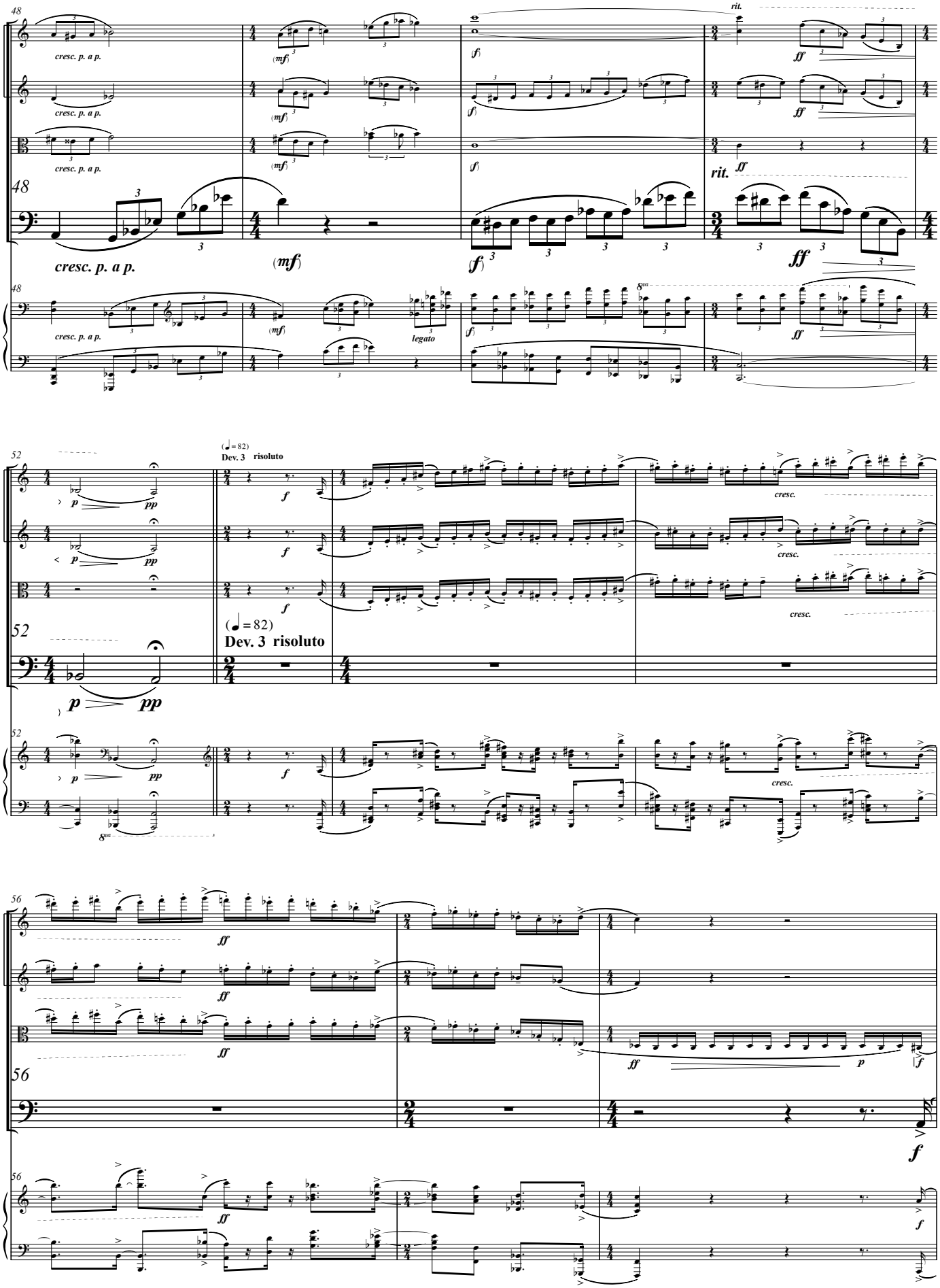
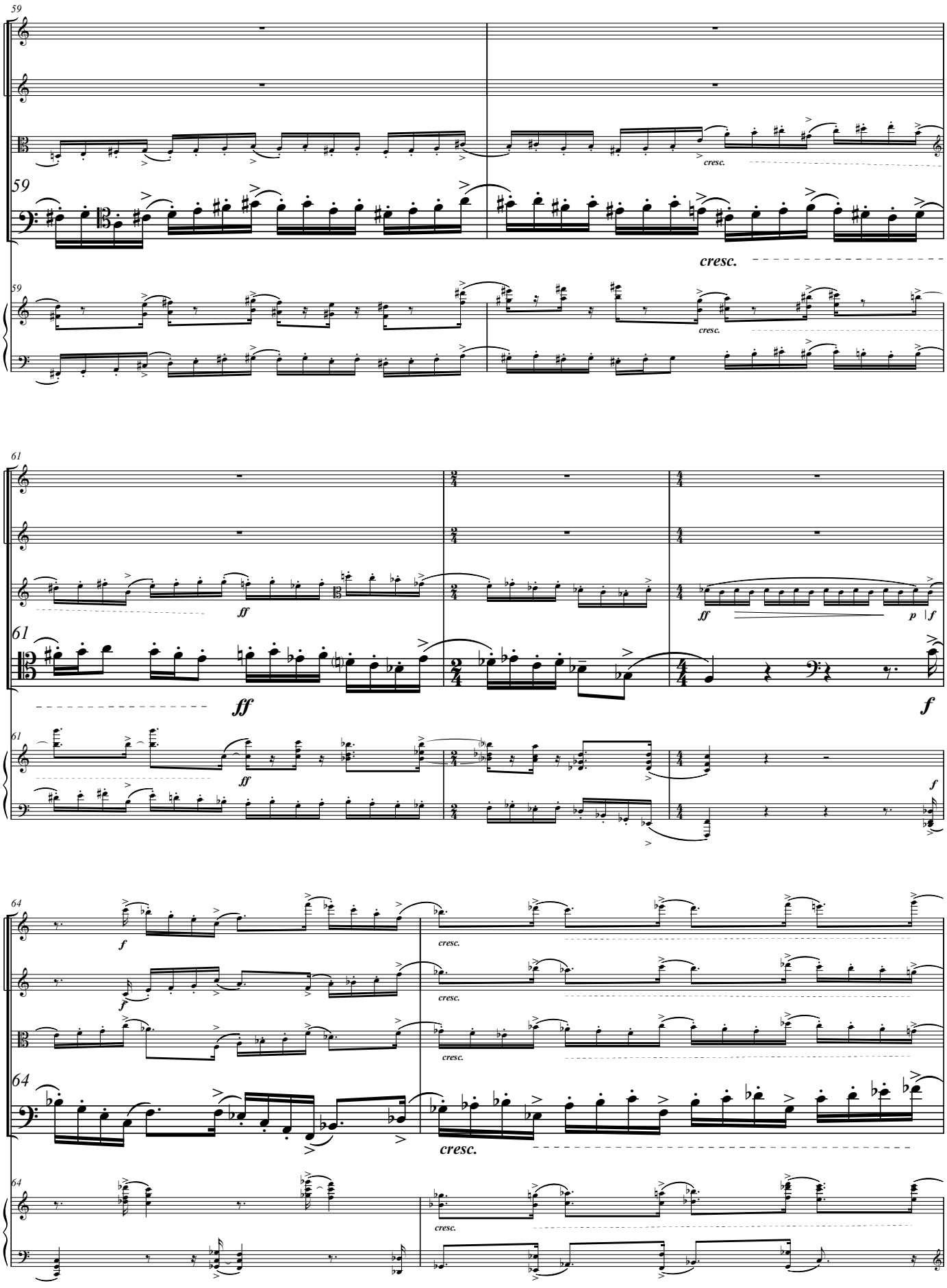

15
arco
Deviation 1 (♩= 84)
f
arco
f
arco
f
15
Deviation 1 (♩= 84)
arco
f
15
f
18
18
18
20
cresc. p. a p.
cresc. p. a p.
cresc. p. a p.
20
cresc. p. a p.
20
cresc. p. a p.

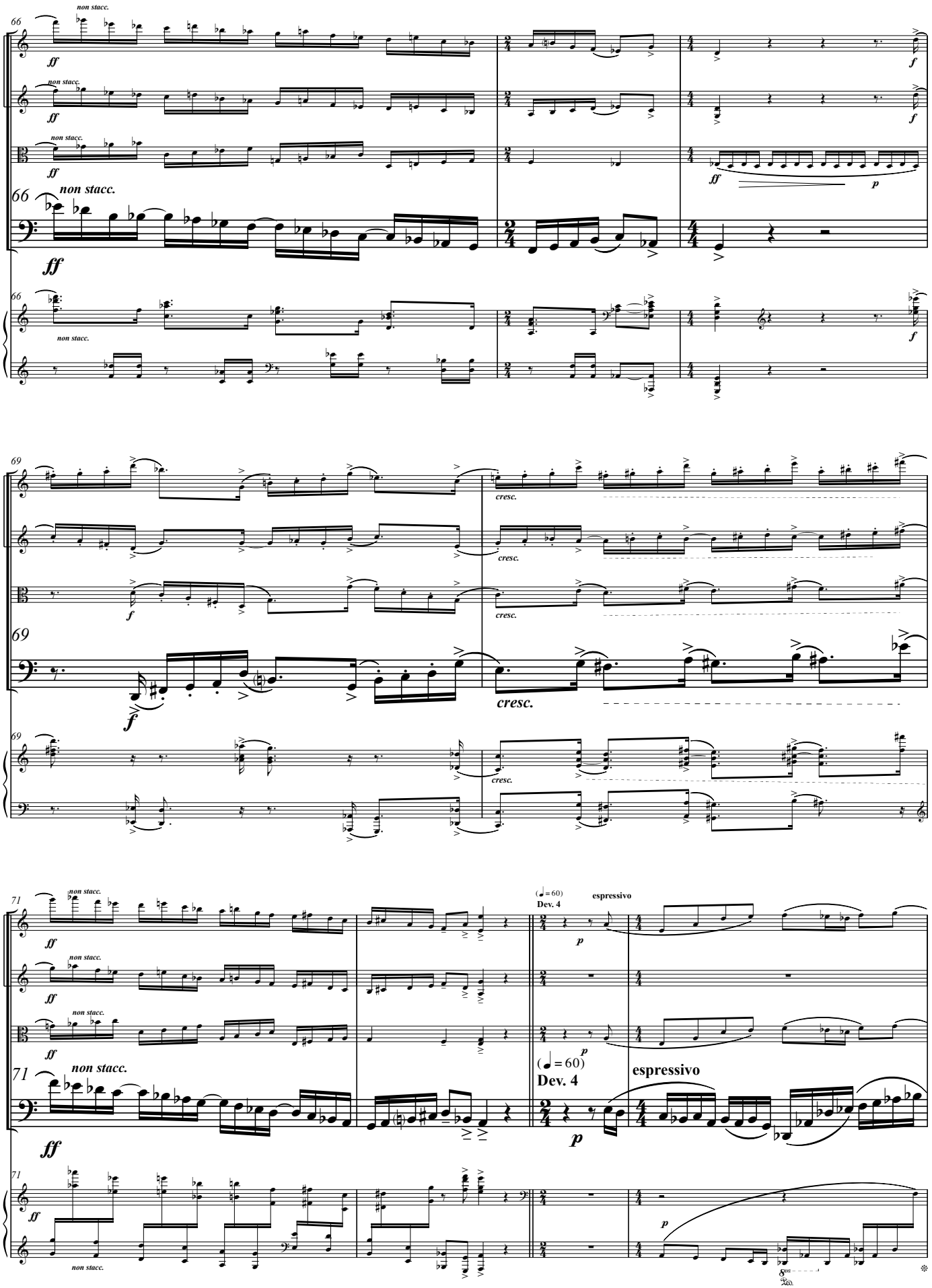

22
24
ff
26
f
dim.

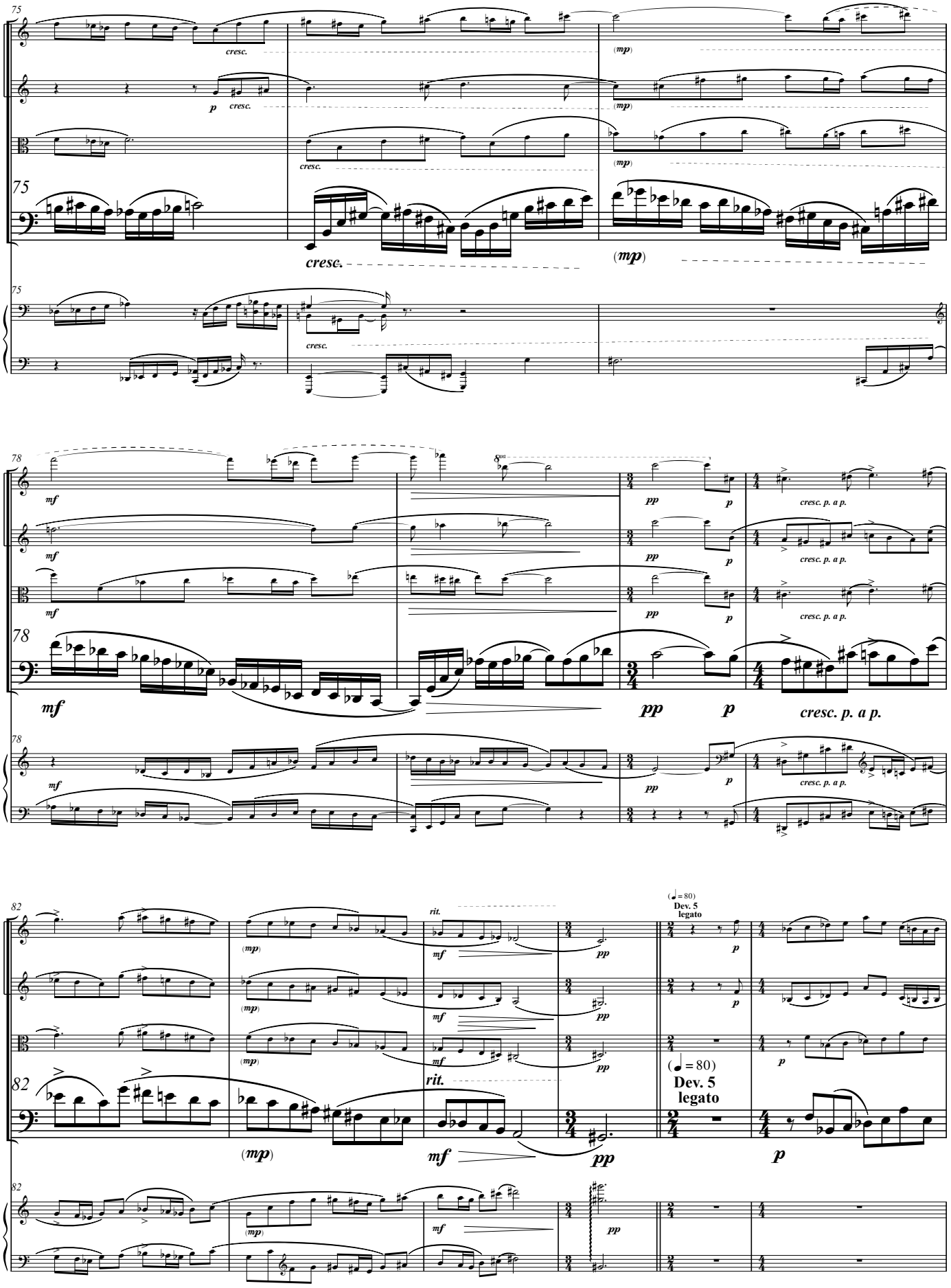

28
30
f cresc.
tenuto
32
ff
Dev. 2 (♩= 66)
p
8va

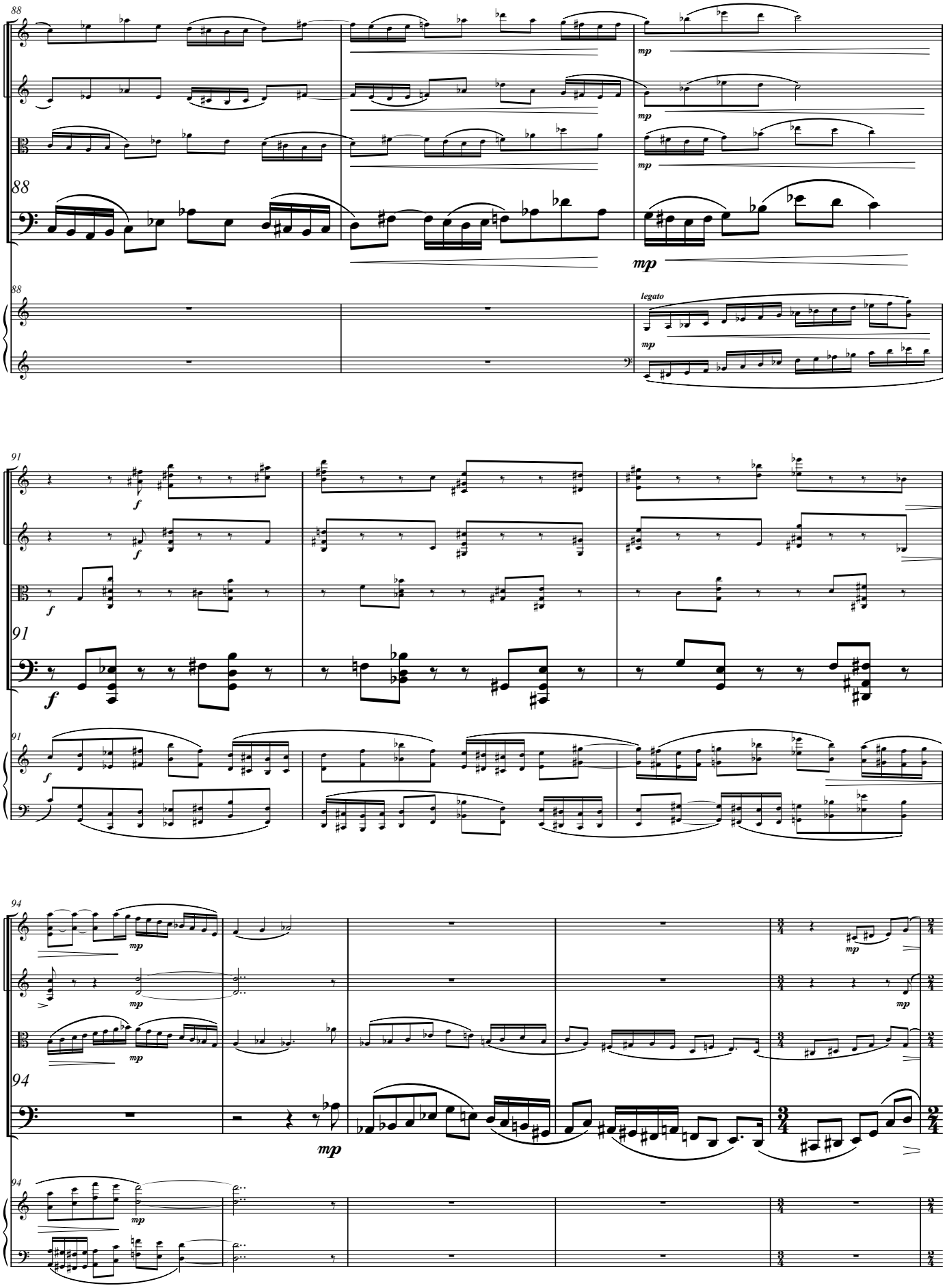

36
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
36
p
36
rit.
40
rit.
mf
a tempo
p
mf
p
cresc.
mf
p
cresc.
40
a tempo
p
cresc.
40
p
mp
44
rit.
a tempo
f
p
f
p
rit.
f
p
a tempo
44
f
p
44
cresc.
8va
f
p
mp

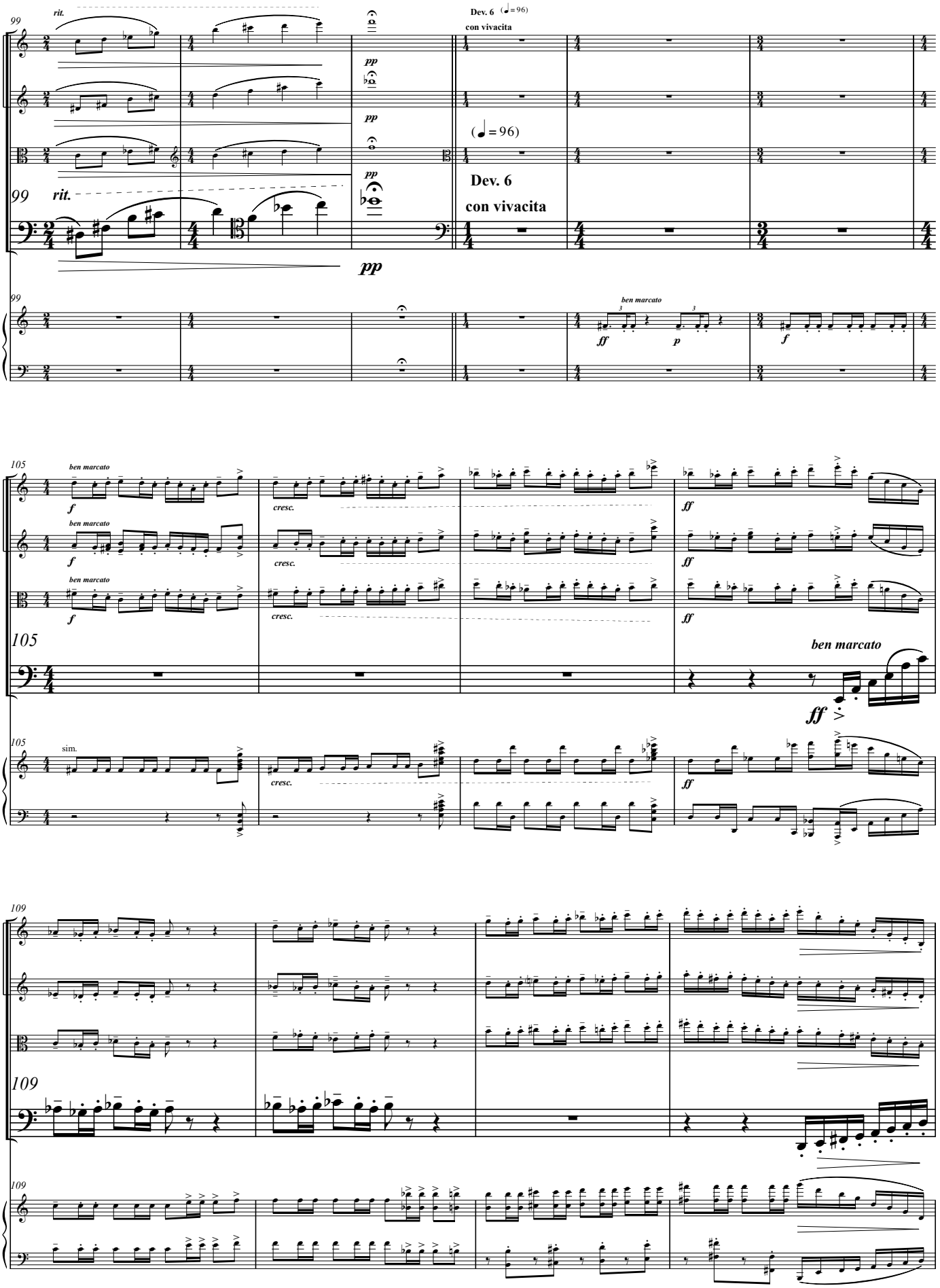

48
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
(f)
rit.
ff
legato
52
(♩ = 82)
Dev. 3 risoluto
p
pp
cresc.
56

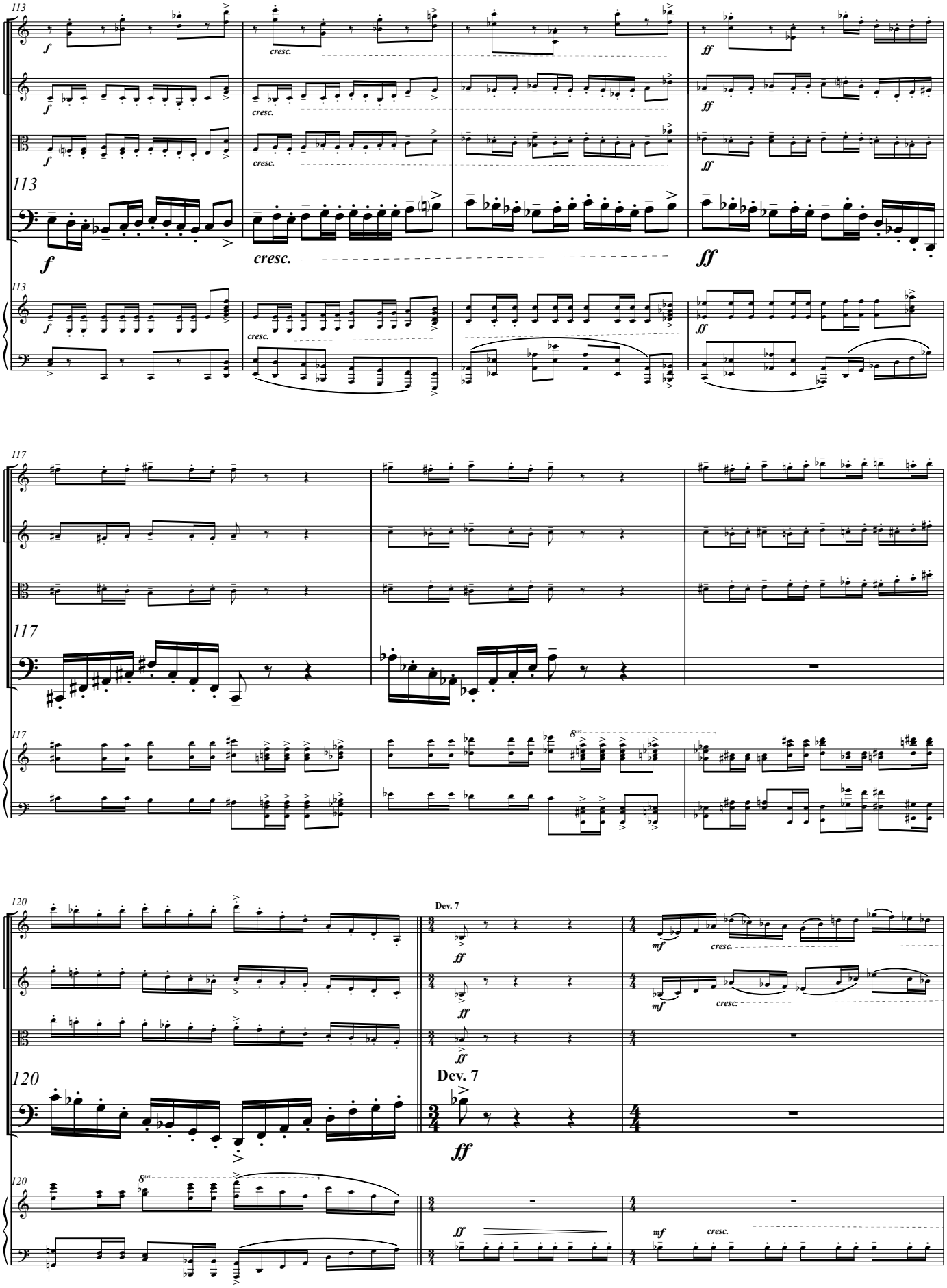

59
cresc.
61
ff
f
64
cresc.

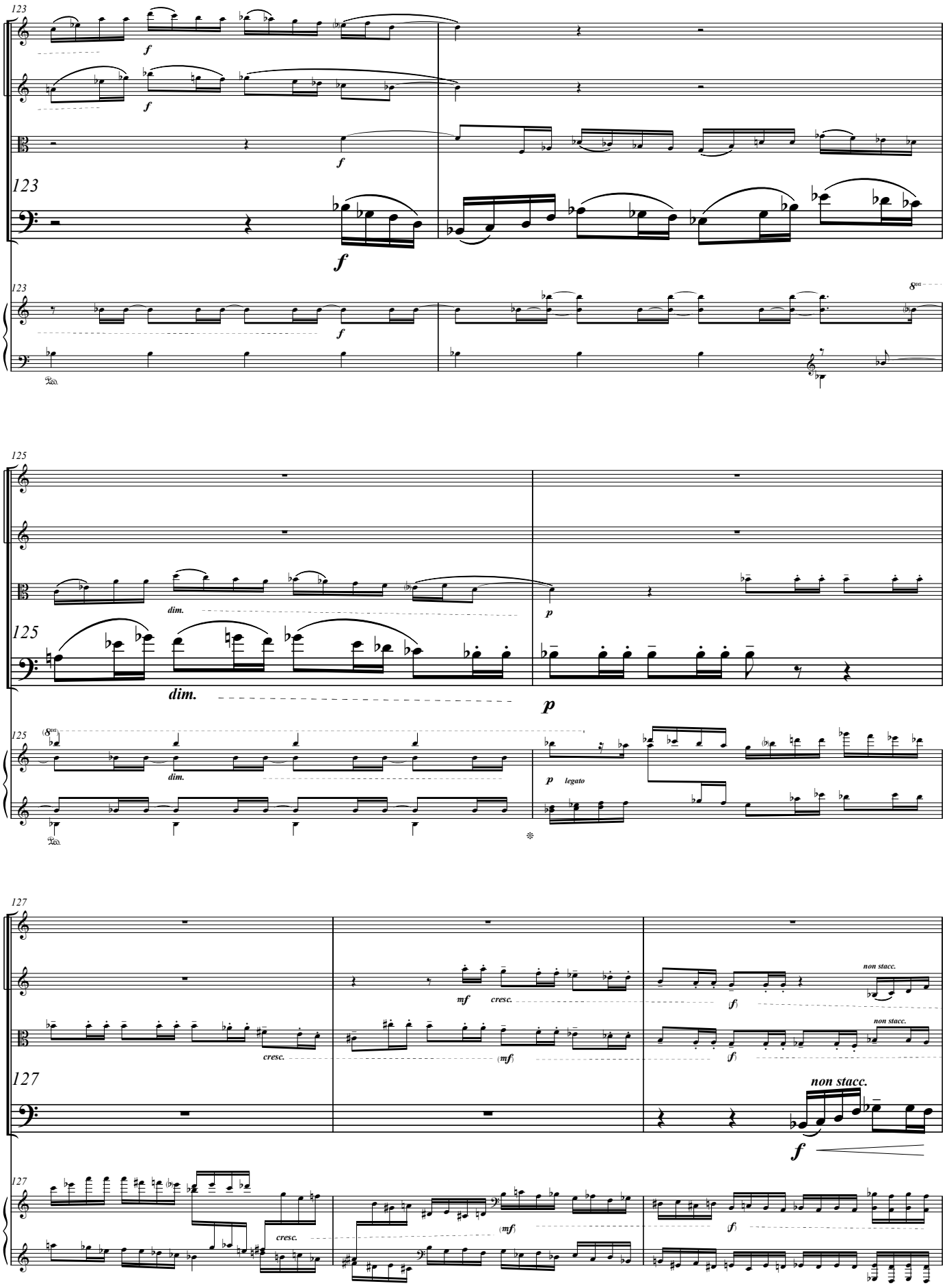

66
non stacc.
ff
f
p
69
cresc.
71
(♩ = 60)
Dev. 4
espressivo

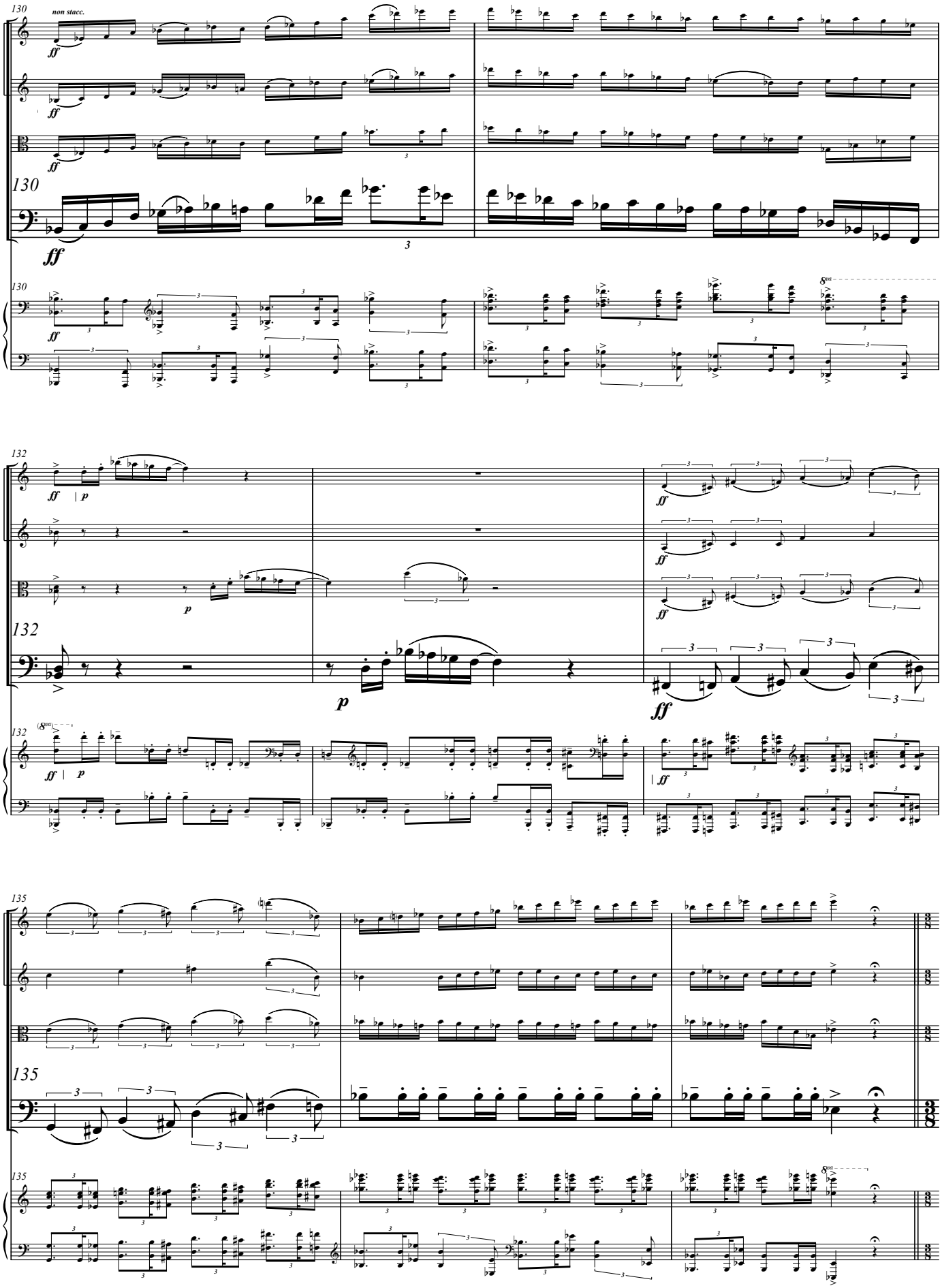

75
cresc.
p
cresc.
(mp)
(mp)
(mp)
75
cresc.
(mp)
75
cresc.
78
mf
mf
mf
mf
8va
pp
p
cresc. p. a p.
pp
p
cresc. p. a p.
pp
p
cresc. p. a p.
78
mf
pp
p
cresc. p. a p.
78
mf
pp
p
cresc. p. a p.
82
(mp)
(mp)
(mp)
rit.
mf
mf
mf
pp
pp
pp
(♩ = 80)
Dev. 5
legato
p
p
82
(mp)
rit.
mf
pp
(♩ = 80)
Dev. 5
legato
p
82
(mp)
mf
pp
pp

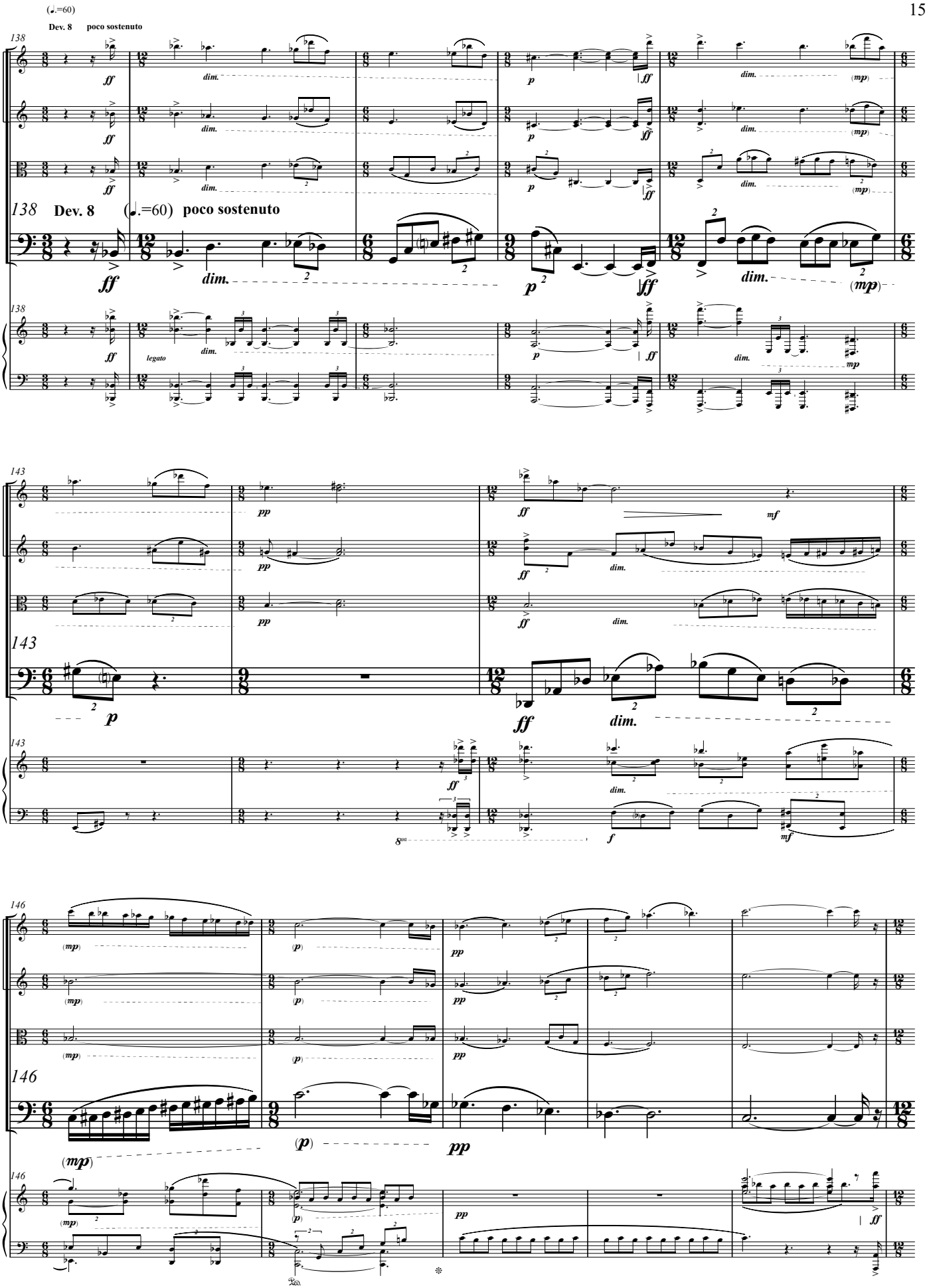

88
mp
legato
91
f
94
mp

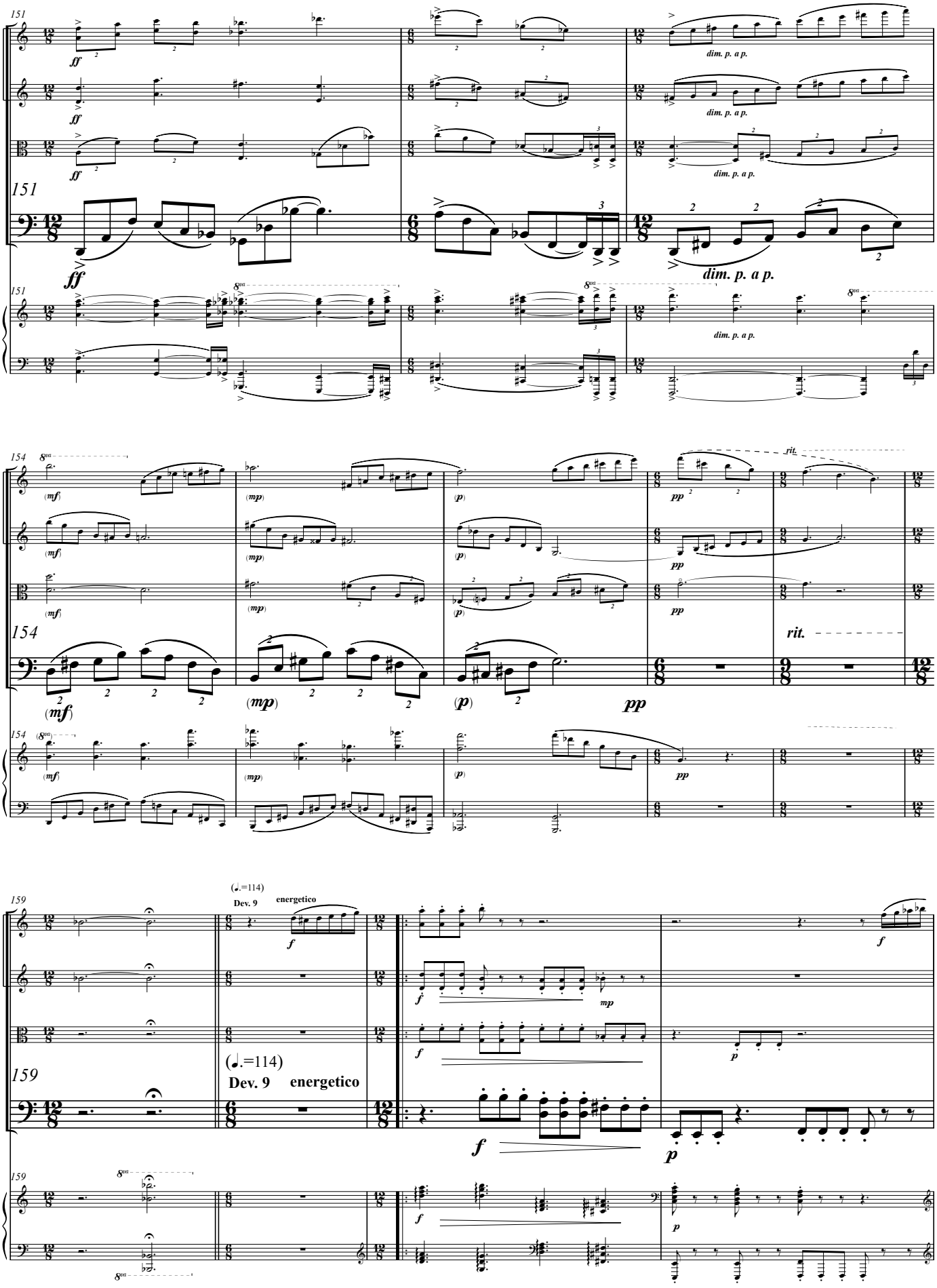

99
rit.
Dev. 6
con vivacita
(♩= 96)
pp
ben marcato
ff
p
f
105
cresc.
ff
sim.
109

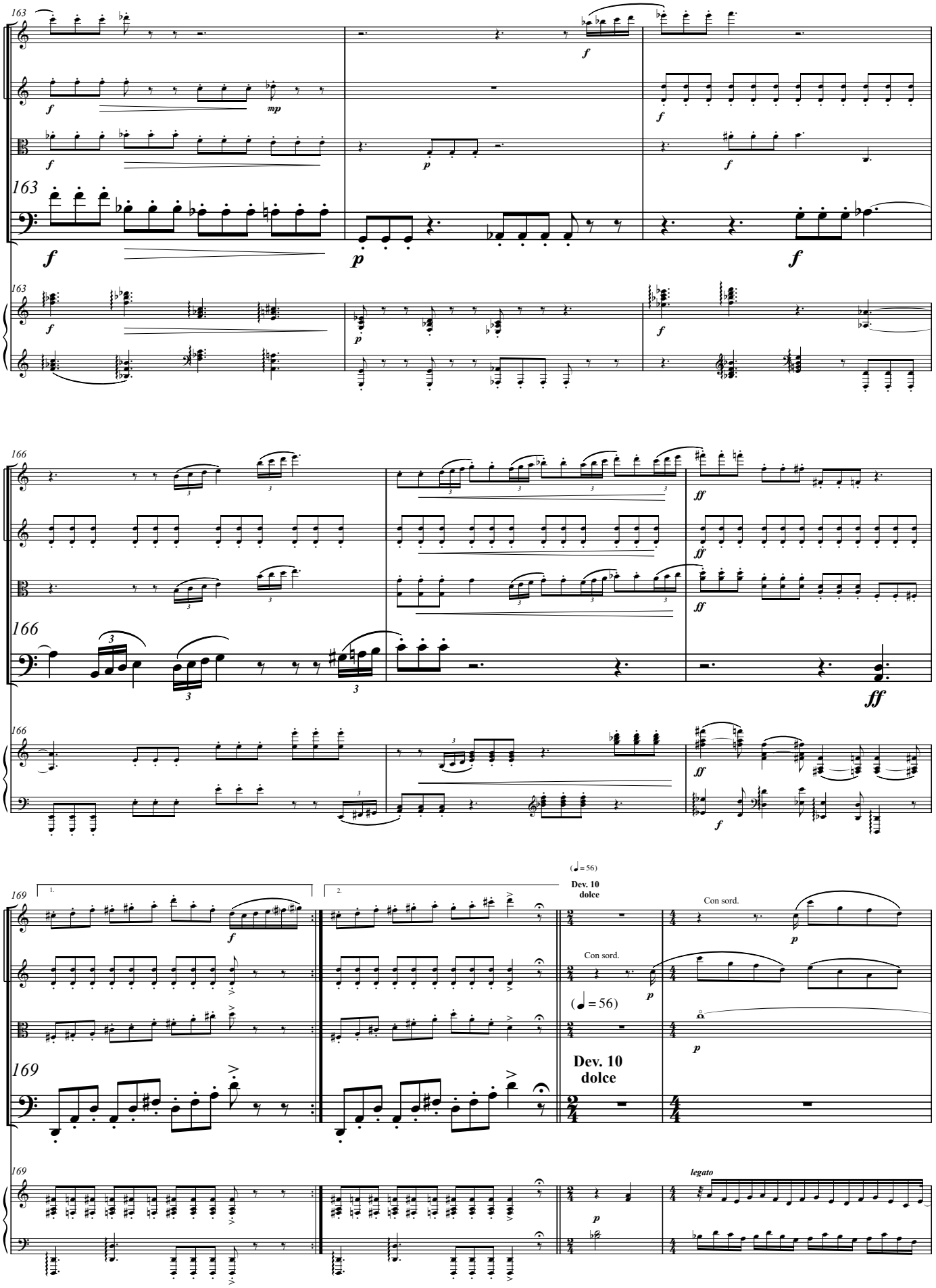

113
f
cresc.
ff
117
120
Dev. 7
mf
8va

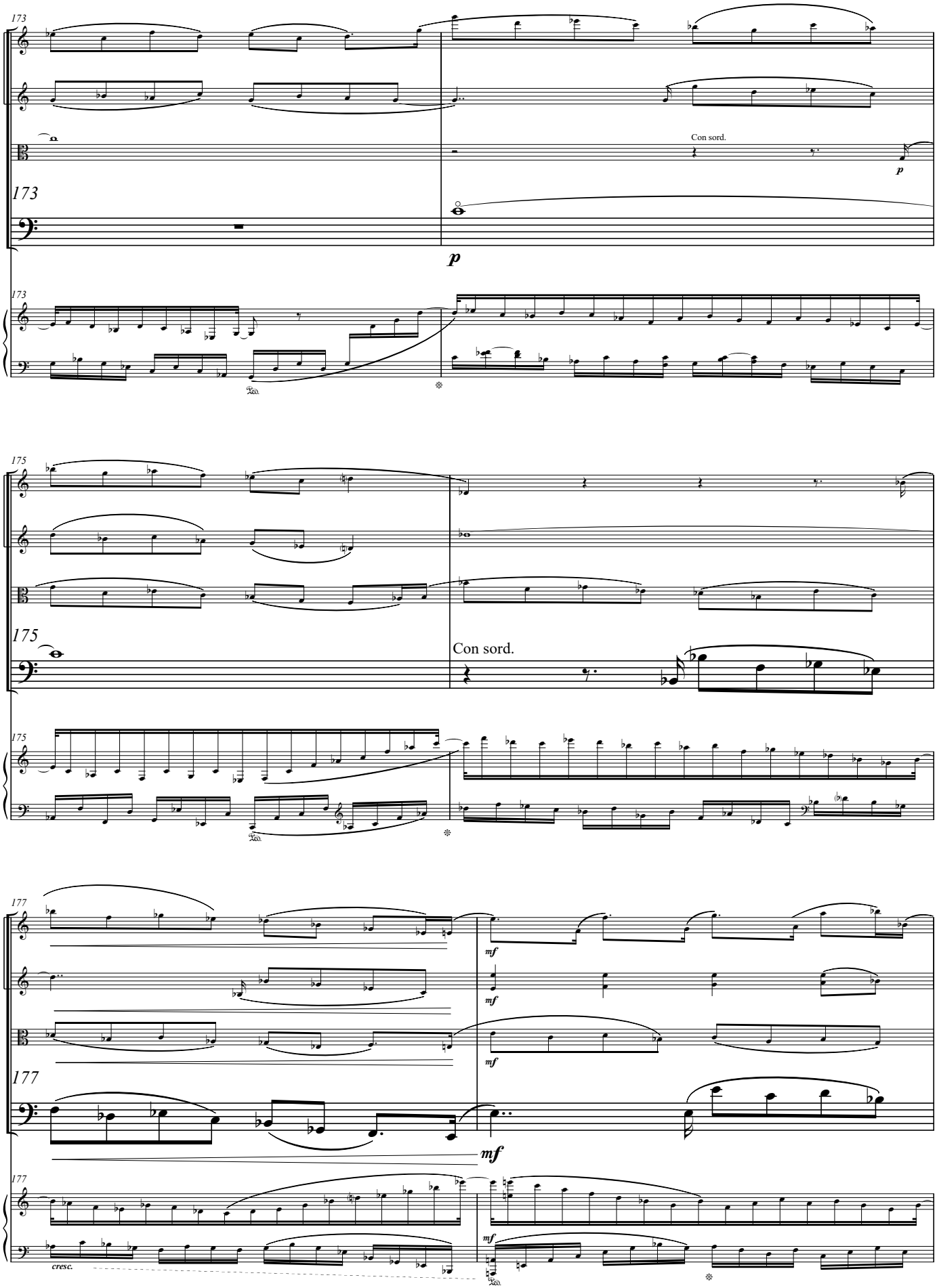

123
f
f
f
123
f
123
f
8va
125
dim.
p
125
dim.
p
125
(8va)
dim.
p legato
127
mf
cresc.
(f)
non stacc.
cresc.
(mf)
(f)
non stacc.
127
non stacc.
f
127
cresc.
(mf)
(f)

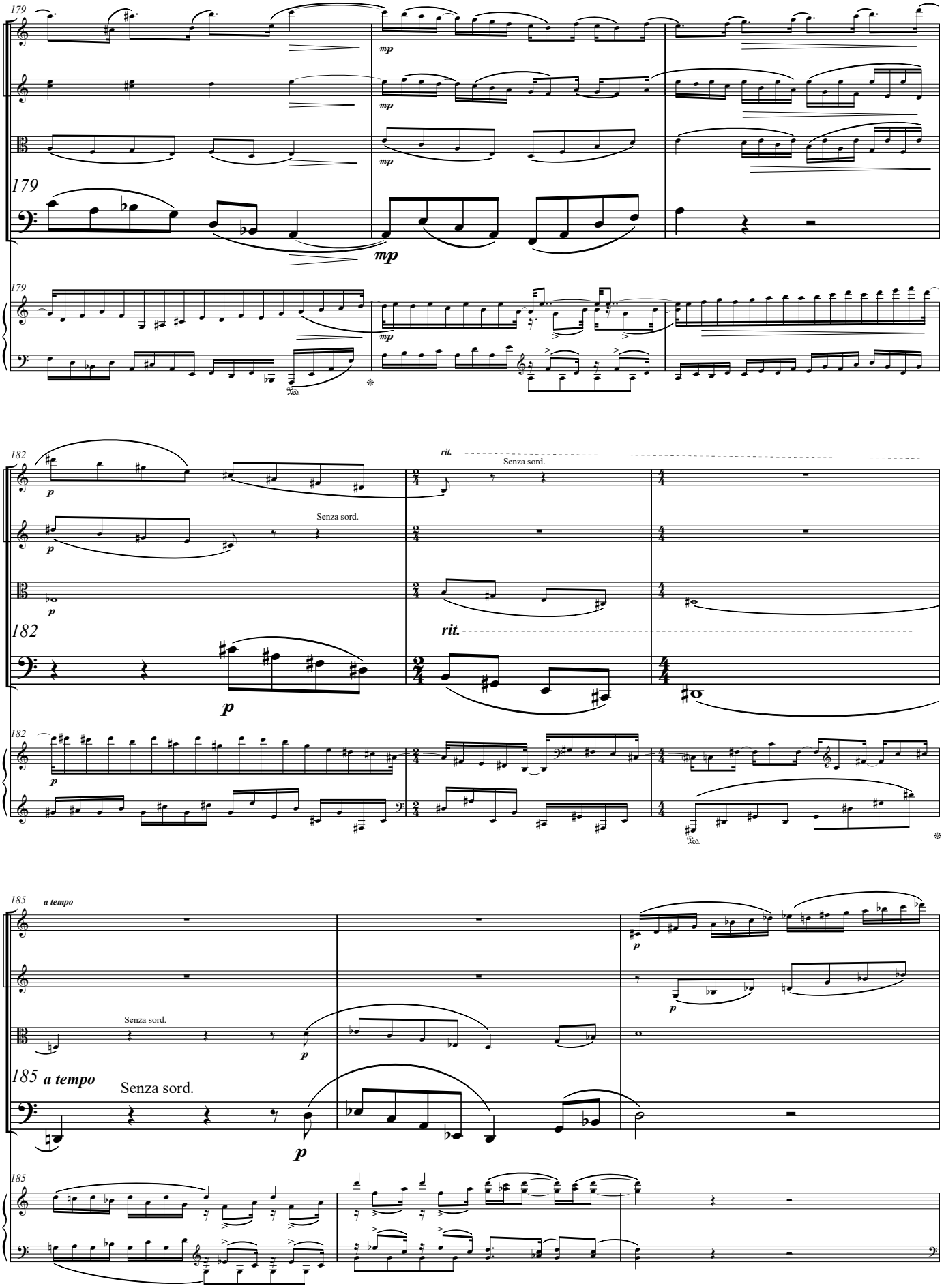

130
non stacc.
ff
130
ff
132
ff
p
132
p
ff
135
135

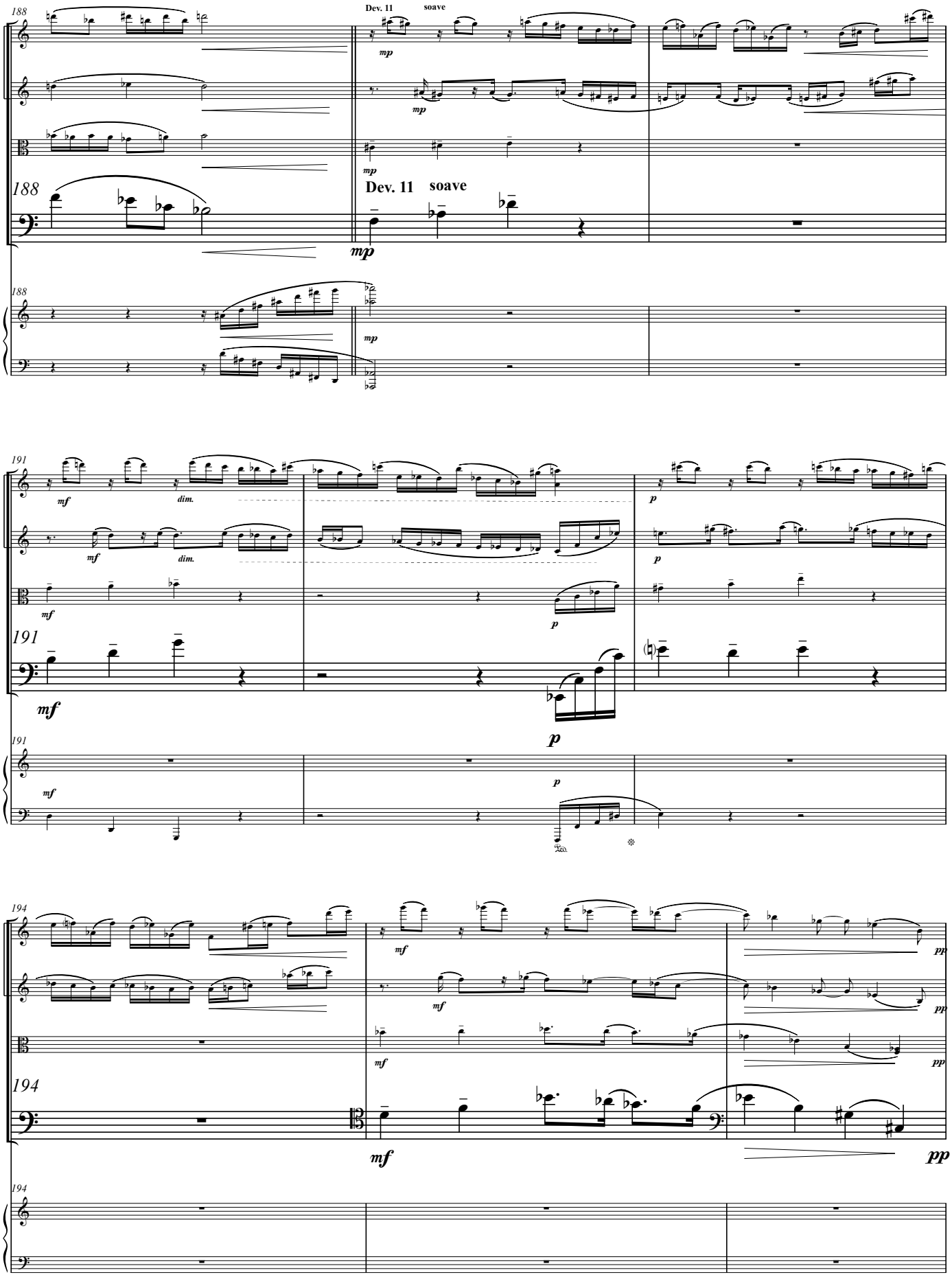

(♩.=60)
Dev. 8
poco sostenuto
138
ff
dim.
p
(mp)
legato
mp
143
pp
mf
f
8va
146
(p)
Ped.

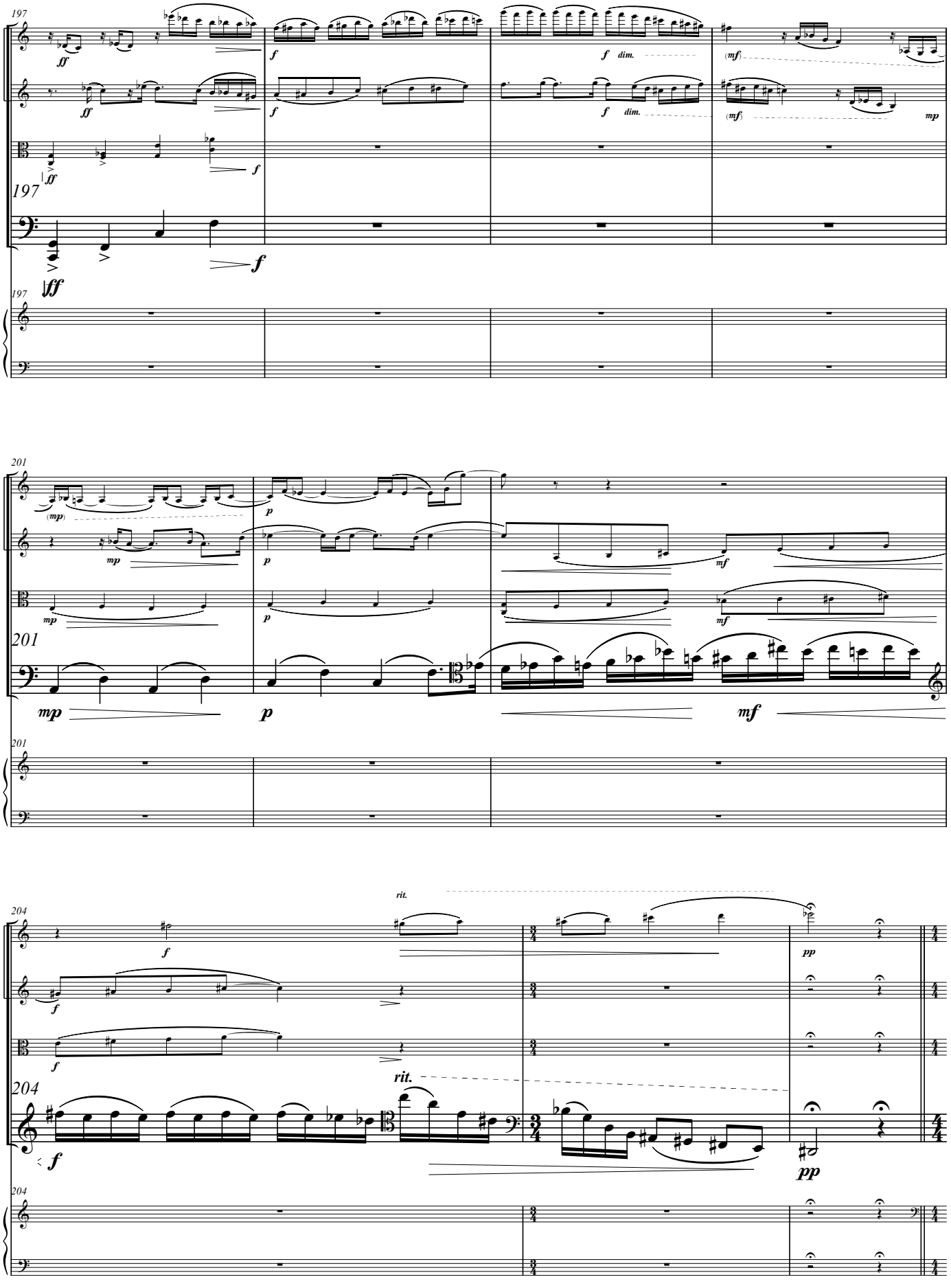

151
ff
dim. p. a p.
154
(mf)
(mp)
(p)
pp
rit.
159
(♩.=114)
Dev. 9
energetico
f
mp
p

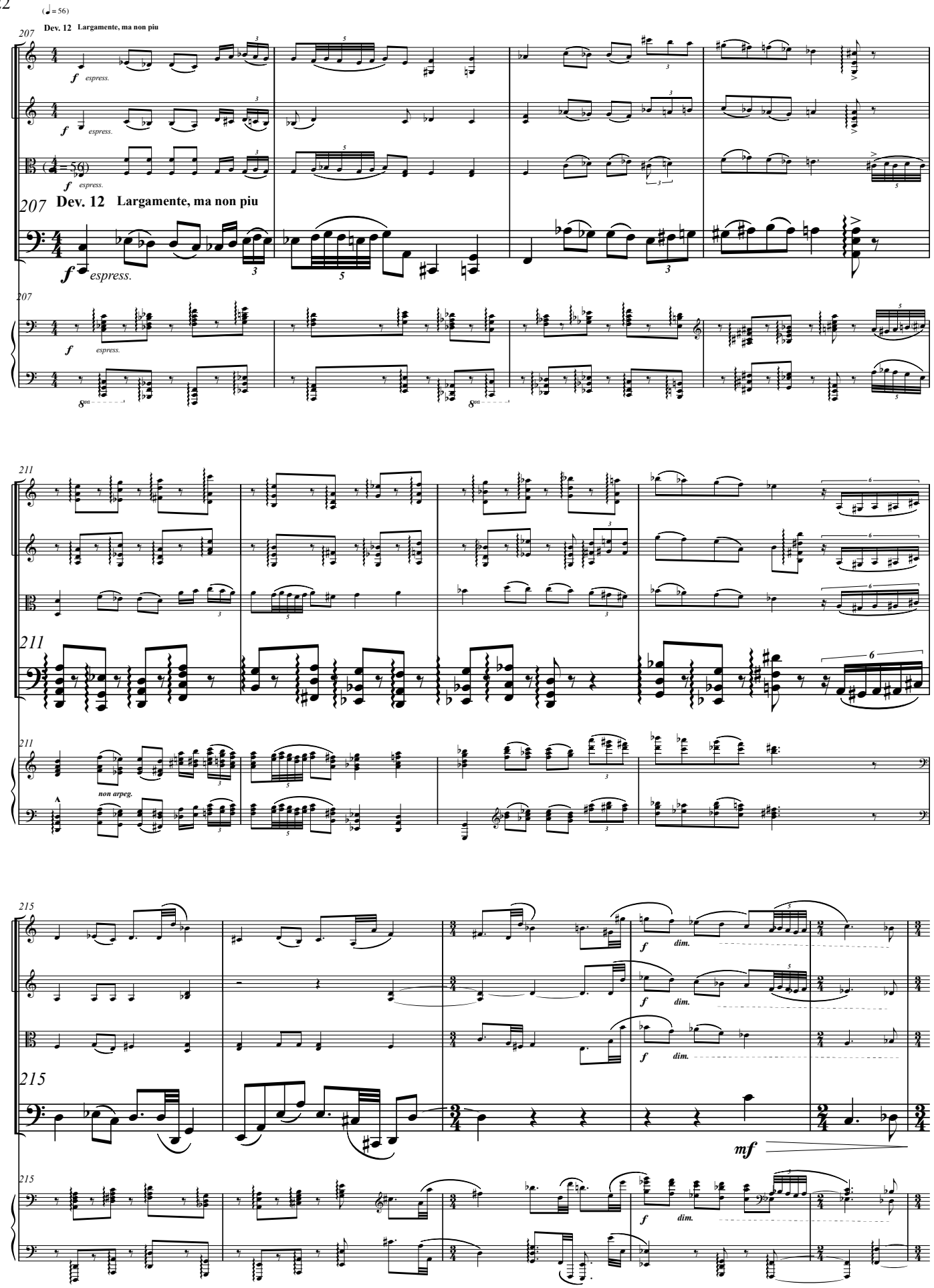

163
166
169
1.
2.
(♩= 56)
Dev. 10
dolce
Con sord.
legato

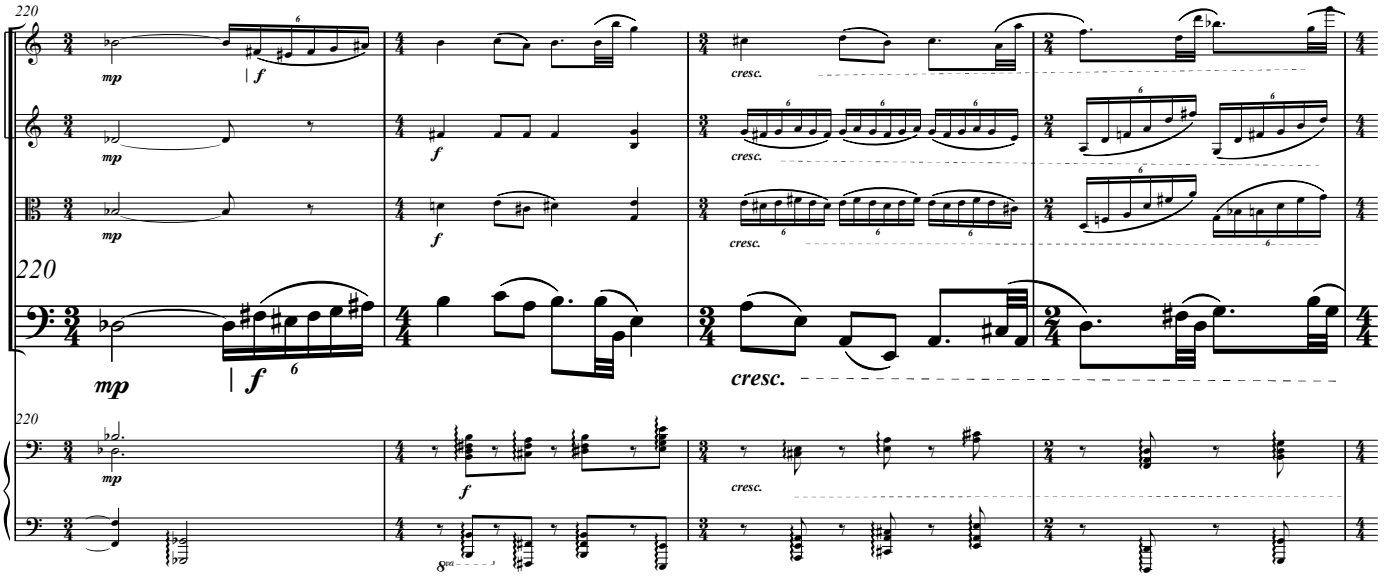

173
Con sord.
p
173
p
173
175
175
Con sord.
175
177
mf
mf
mf
177
mf
177
cresc.
mf

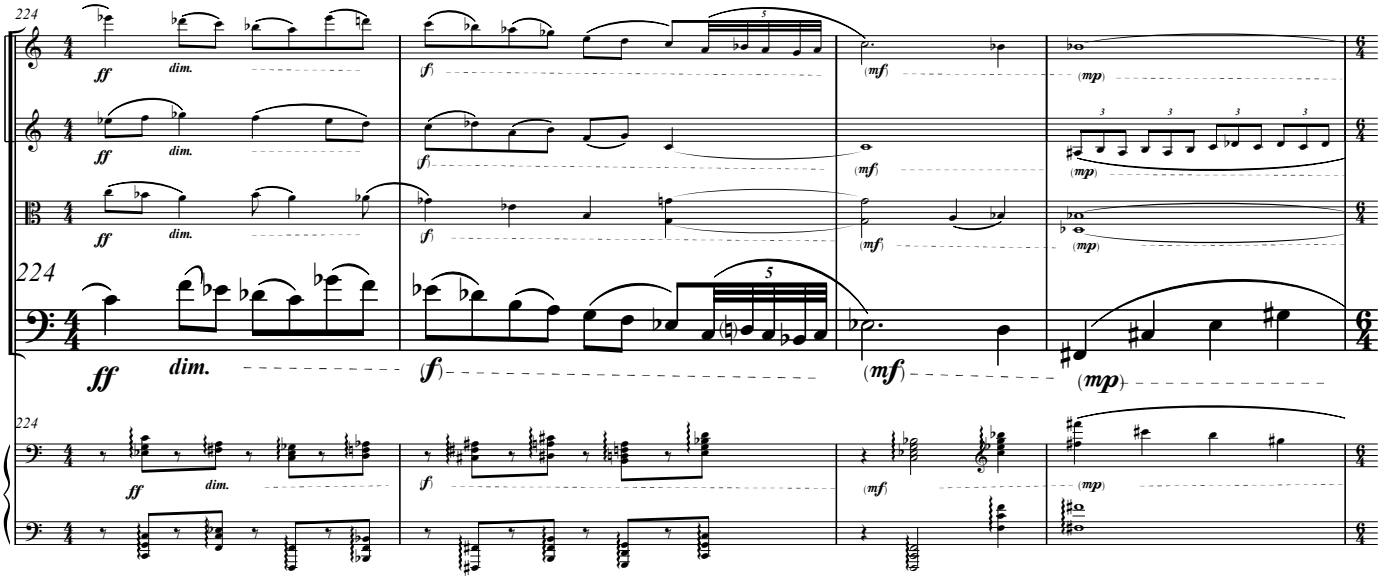

179
mp
182
rit.
Senza sord.
p
185
a tempo
Senza sord.

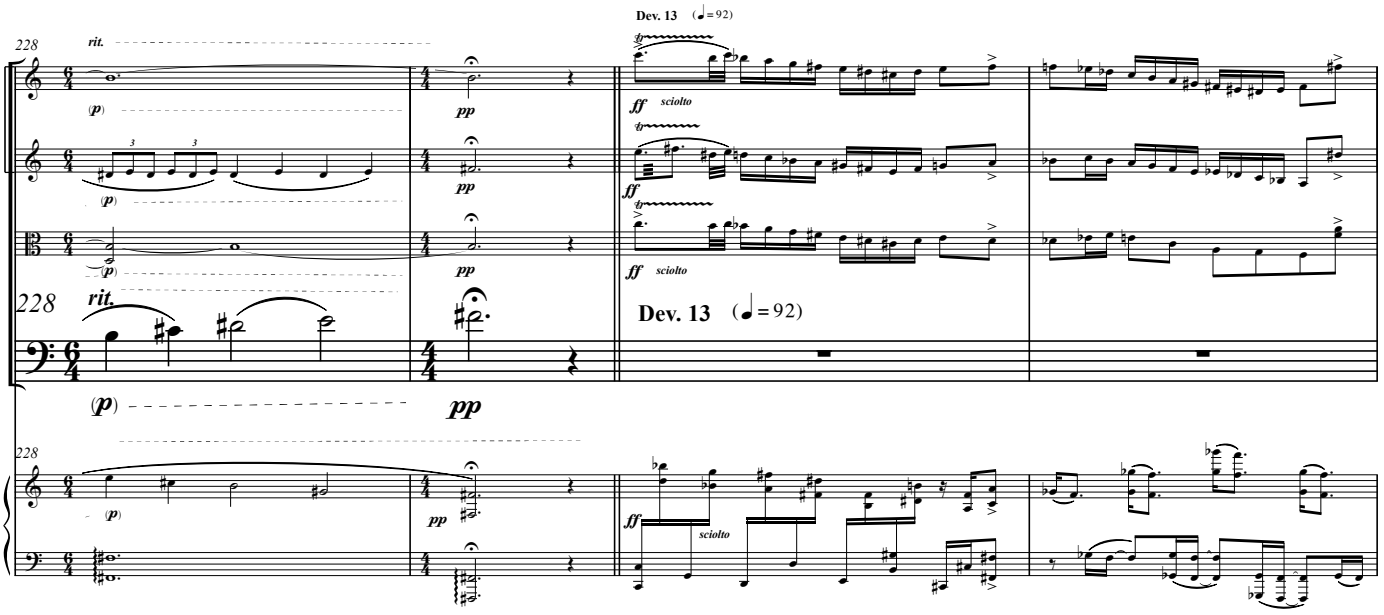

188
Dev. 11 soave
mp
188
Dev. 11 soave
mp
188
mp
191
mf
dim.
mf
dim.
mf
191
mf
p
p
191
mf
p
194
mf
mf
mf
pp
pp
pp
194
194

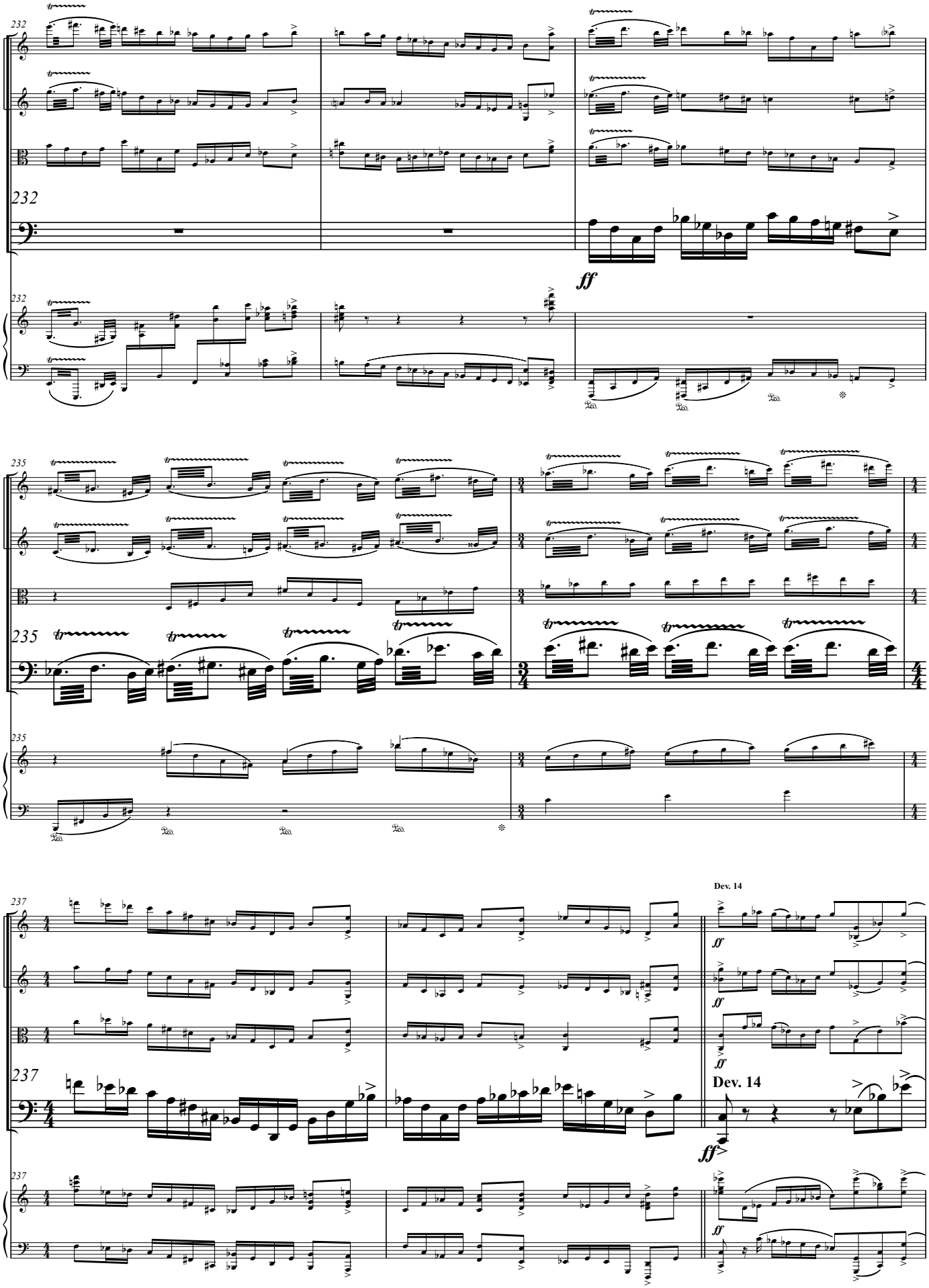

197
ff
f
f dim.
(mf)
mp
197
ff
f
197
ff
201
(mp)
mp
p
mf
201
mp
p
mf
201
rit.
204
f
pp
204
f
rit.
pp
204

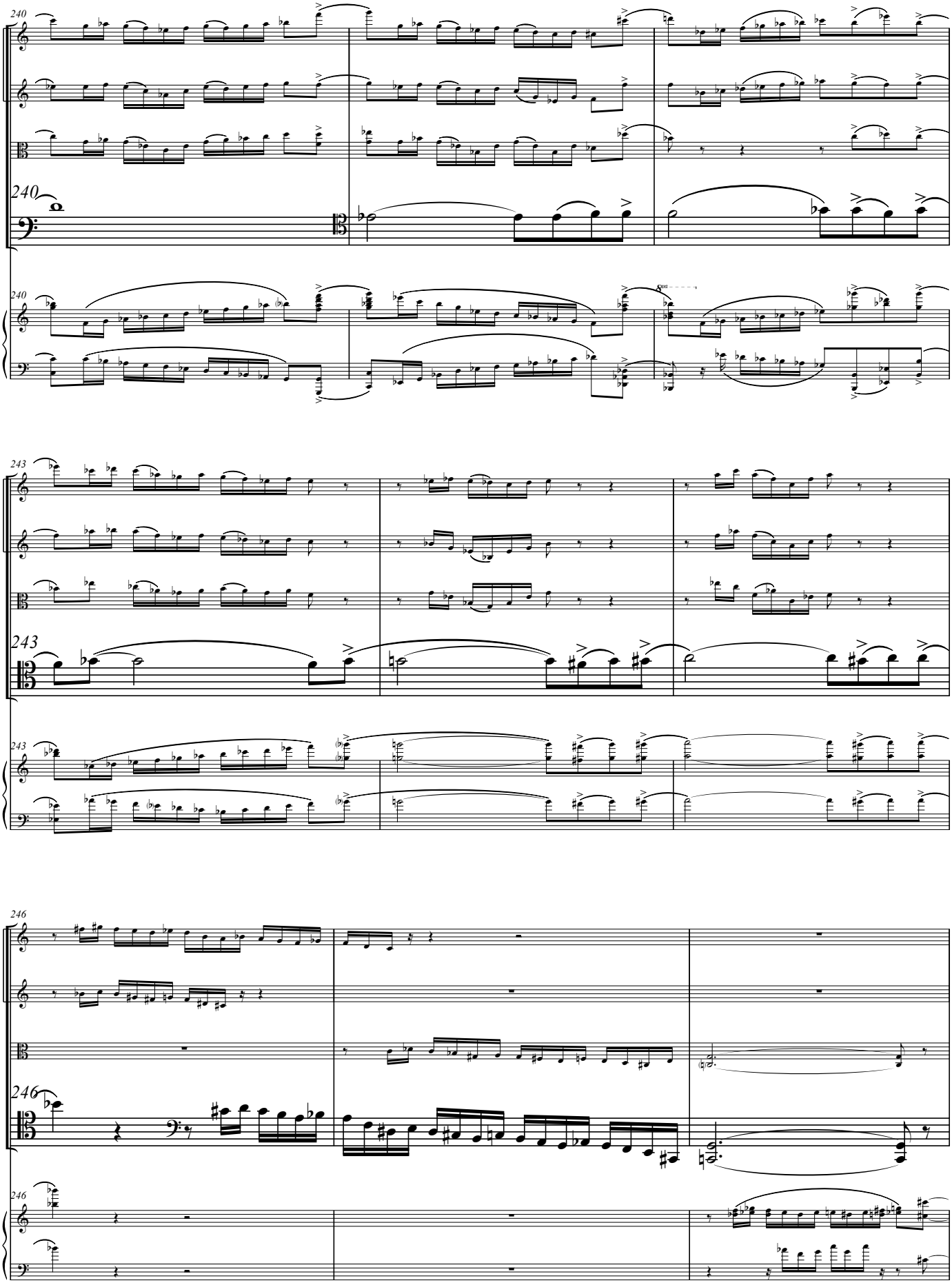

(♩= 56)
Dev. 12 Largamente, ma non piu
207
f espress.
211
non arpeg.
215
dim.
mf


220
mp
f
cresc.


224
ff
dim.
(f)
(mf)
(mp)


228
rit.
(p)
pp
Dev. 13 (♩= 92)
ff
sciolto


232
ff
235
237
Dev. 14


240
240
240
243
243
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246
246
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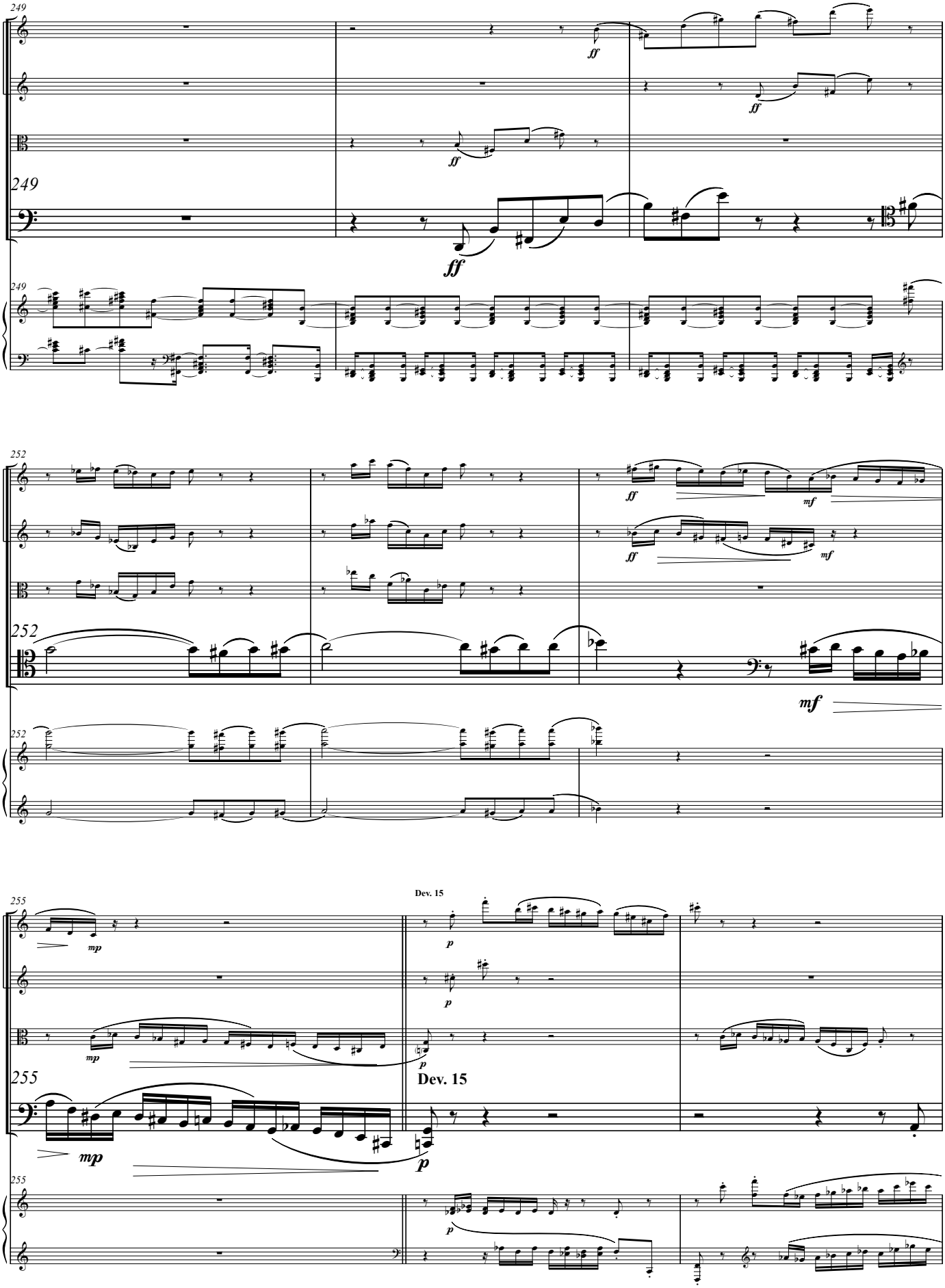
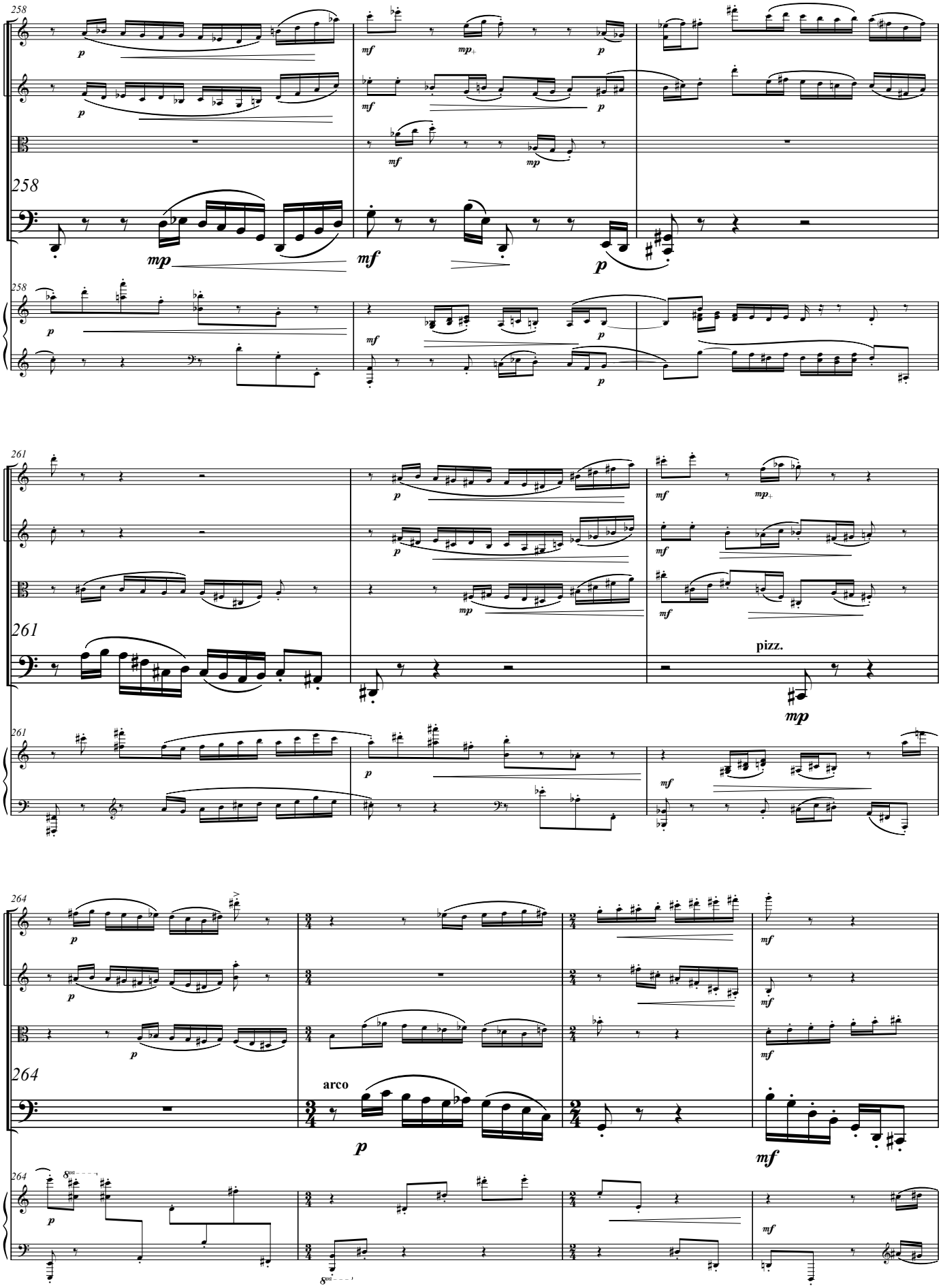
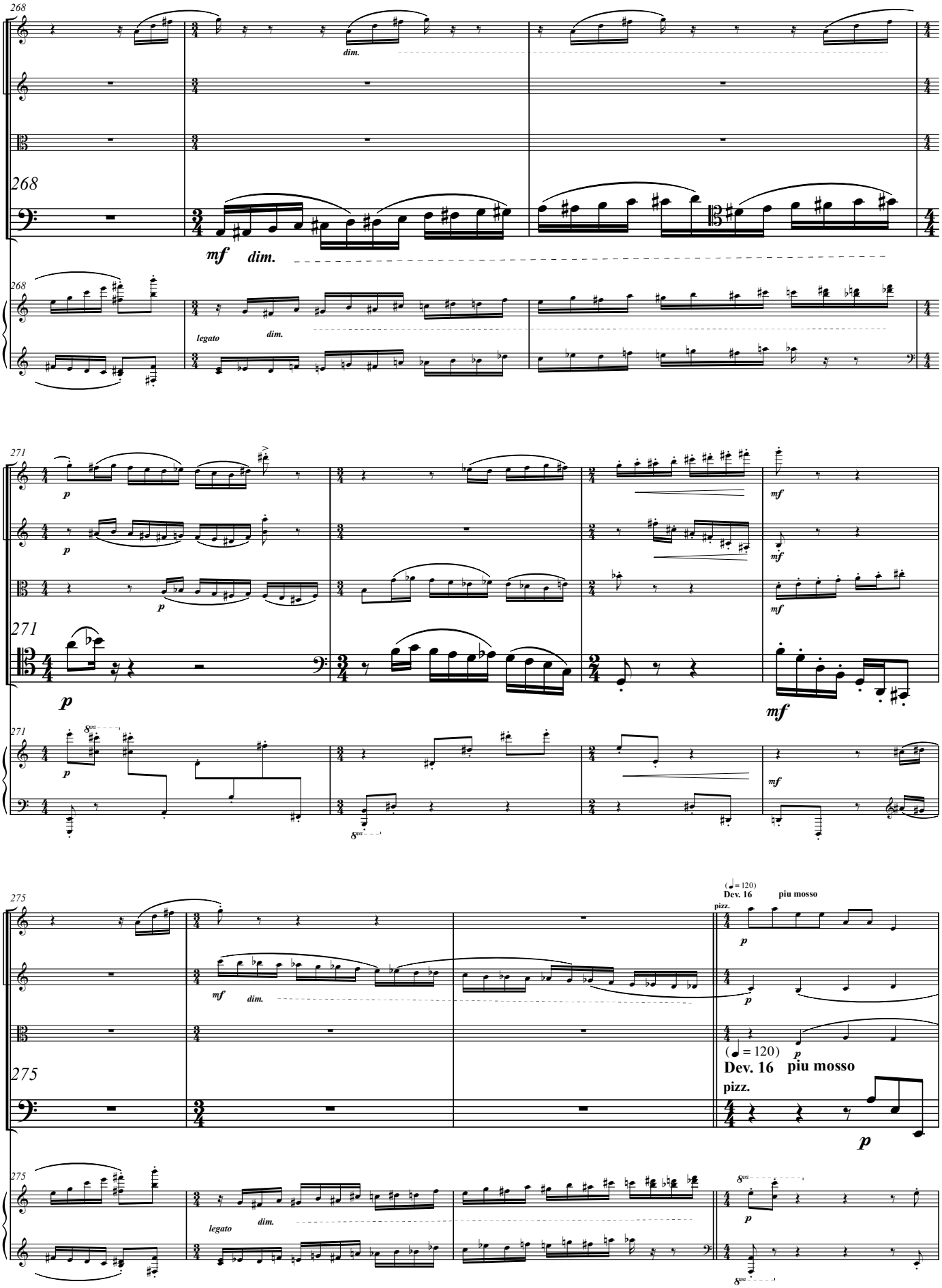
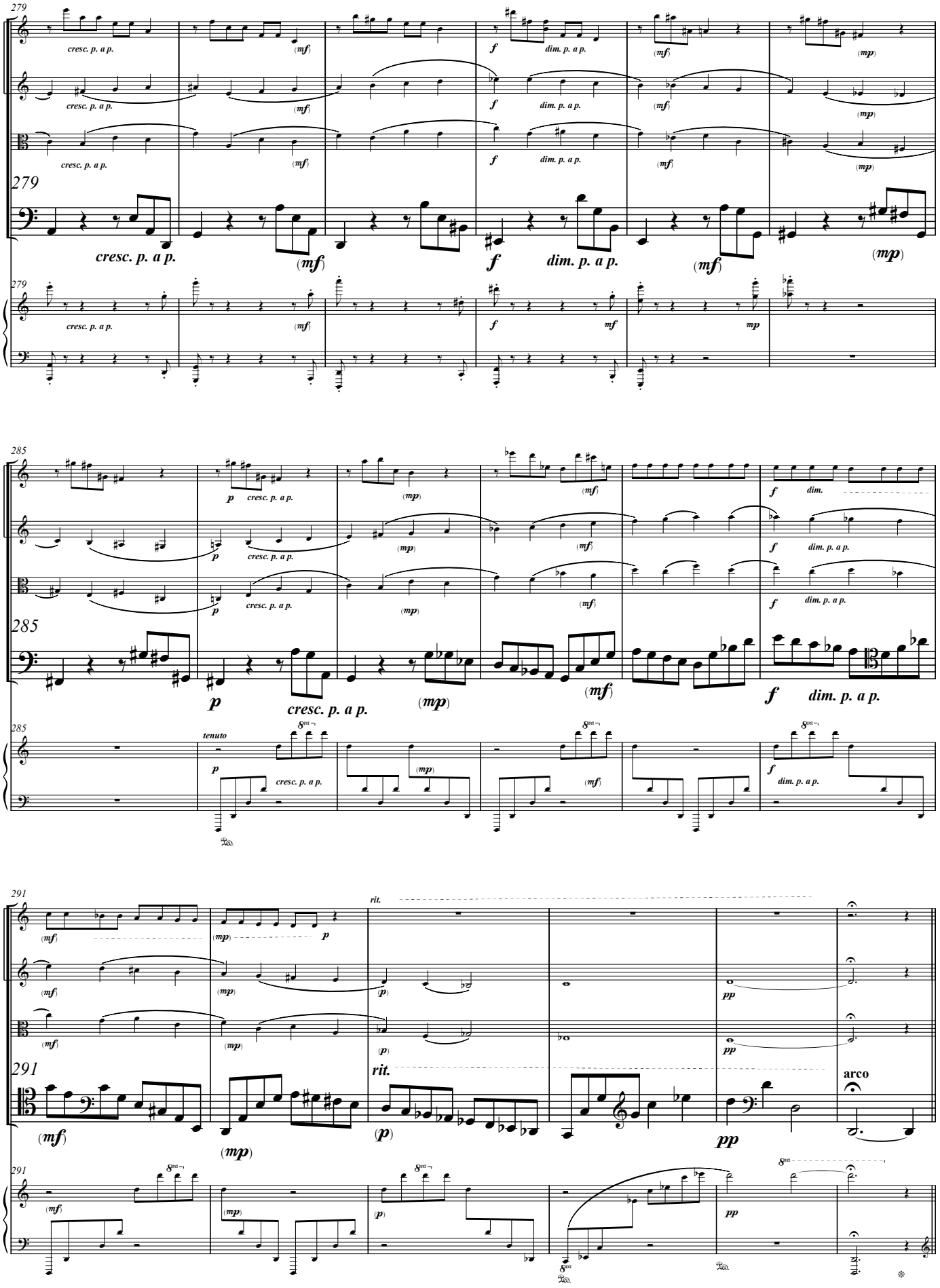
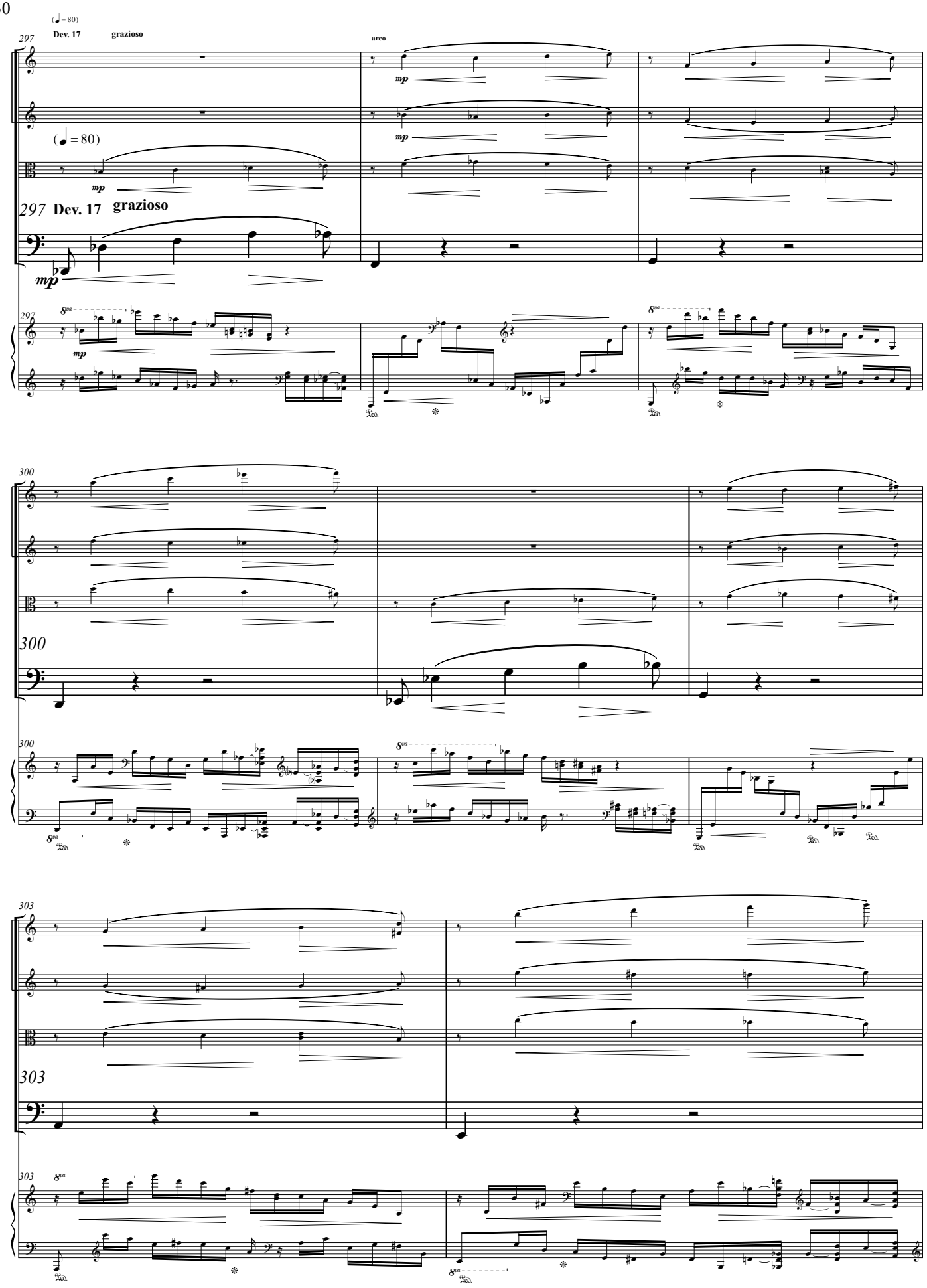
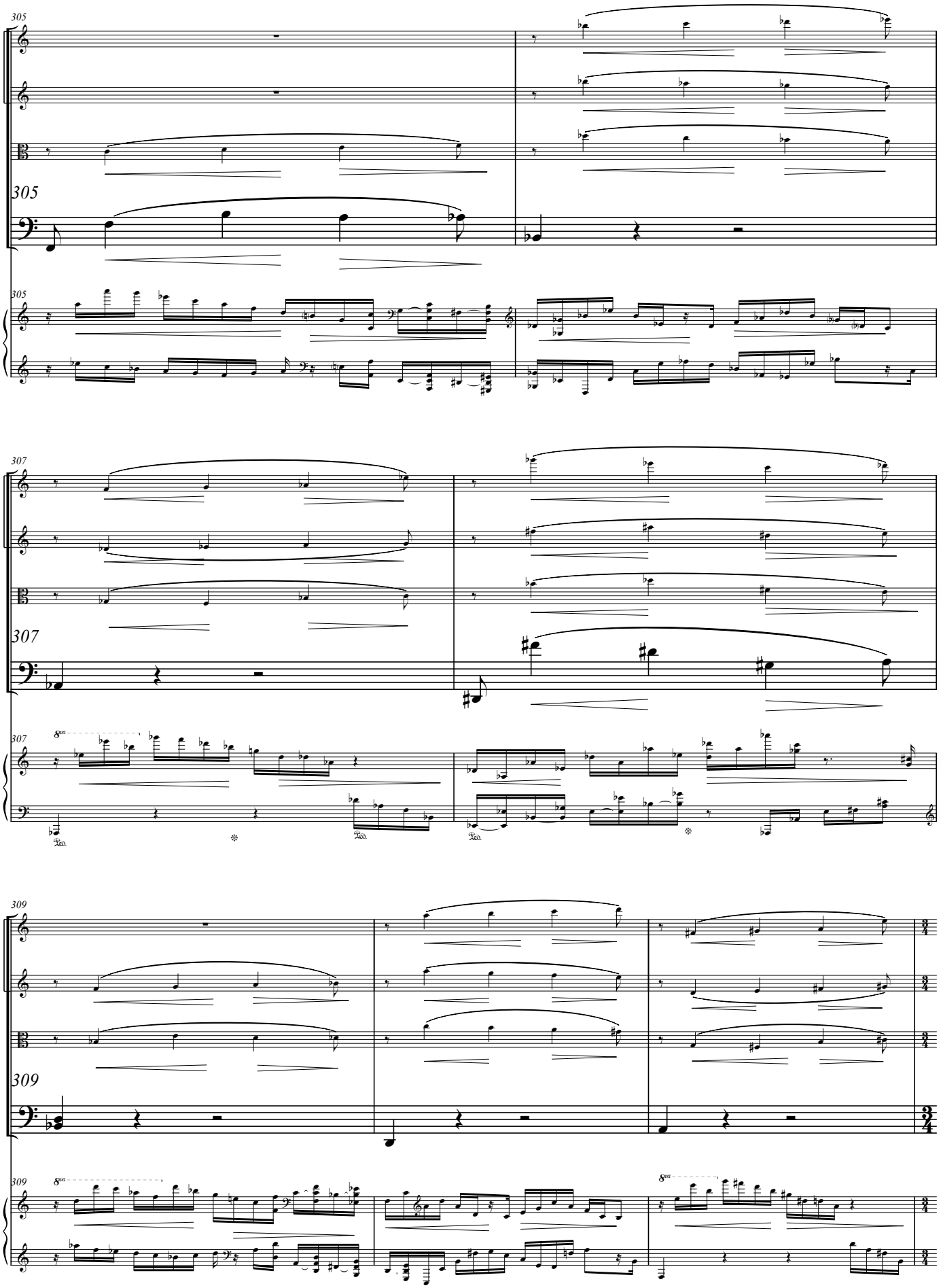

249
ff
249
252
mf
252
255
mp
Dev. 15
255

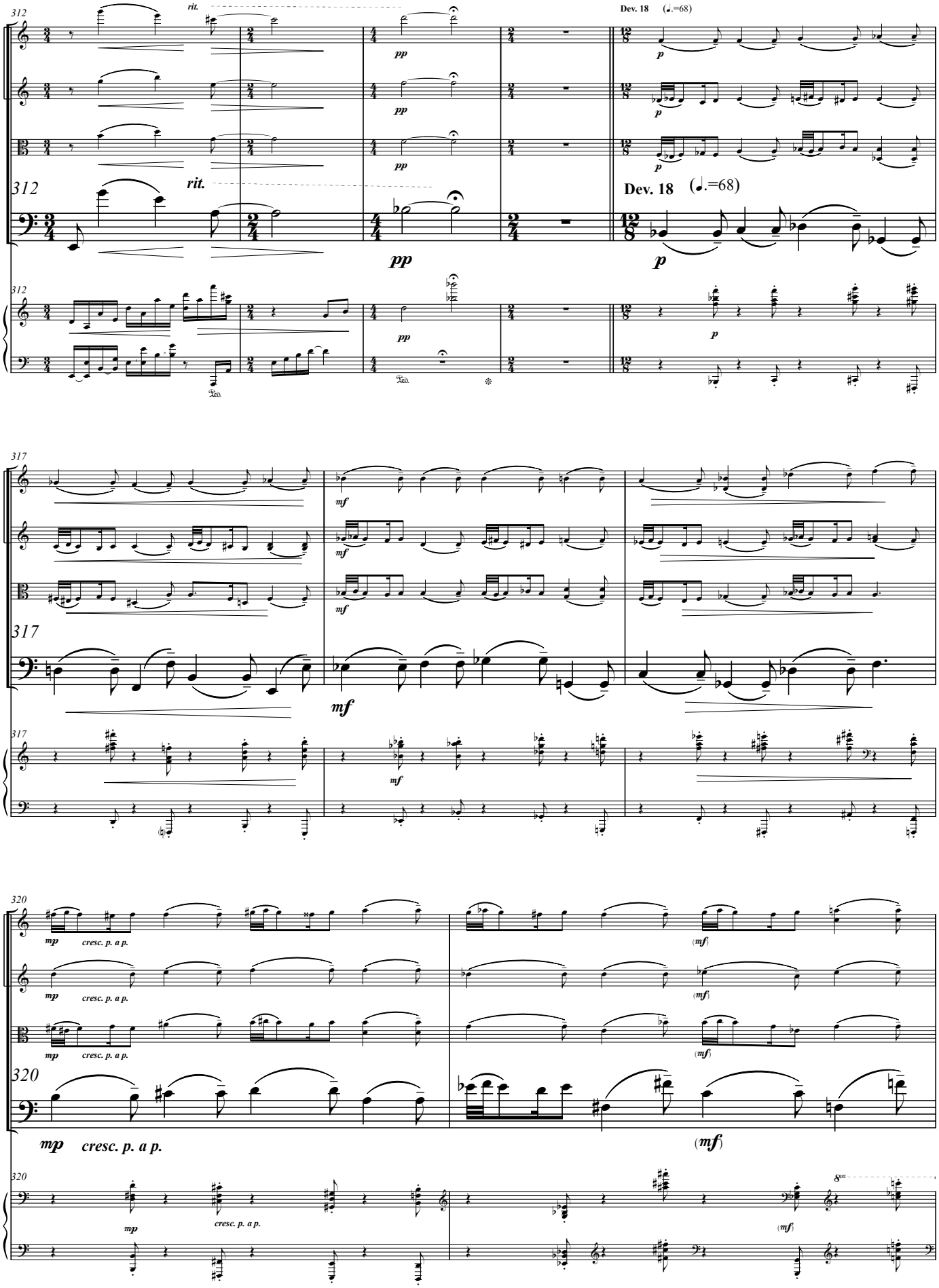

258
261
264
pizz.
arco

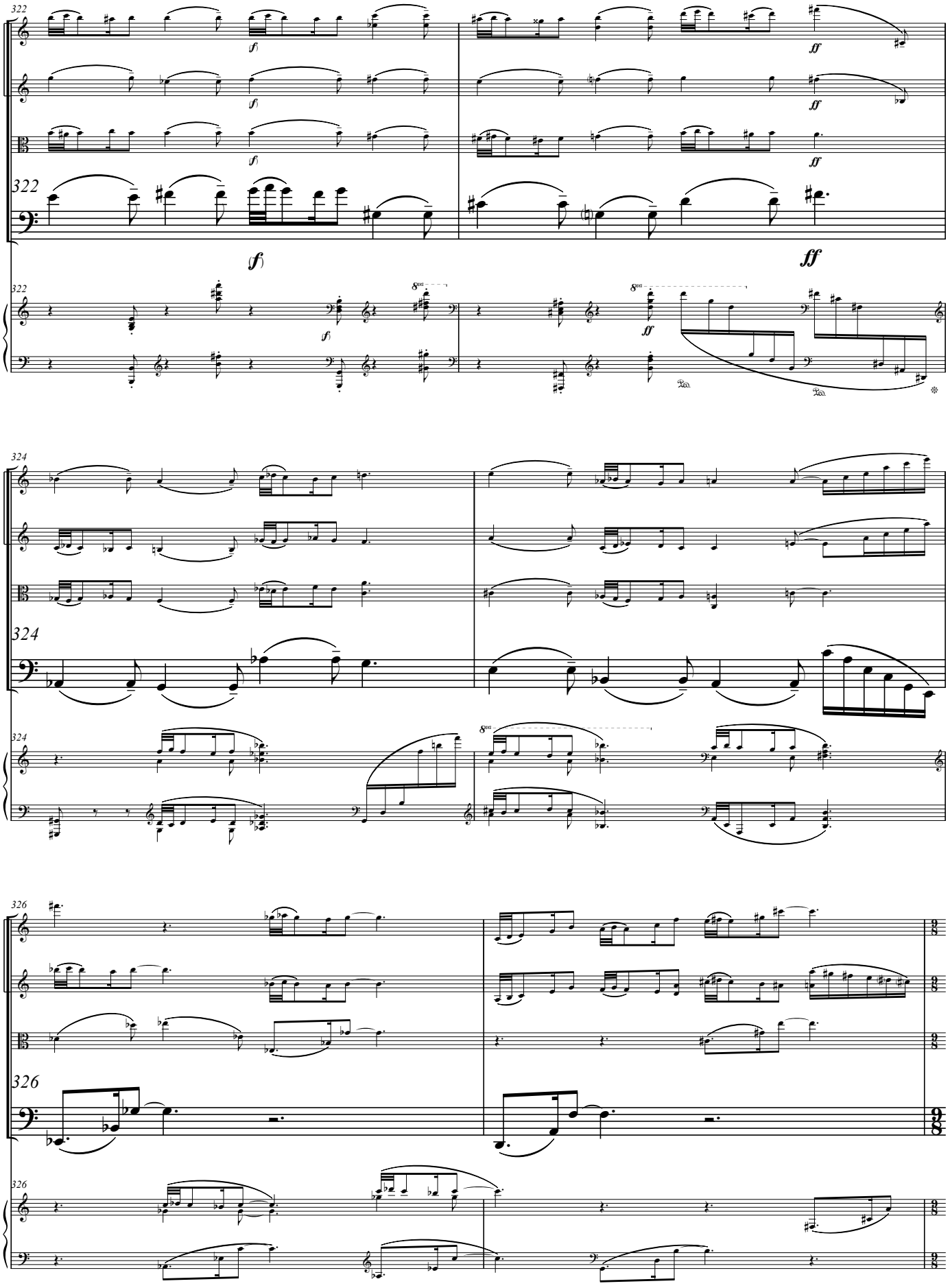

268
dim.
mf
dim.
legato
271
p
mf
275
(♩ = 120)
Dev. 16
piu mosso
pizz.


279
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
f
dim. p. a p.
(mp)
mf
mp
285
p
tenuto
(mf)
dim.
291
rit.
pp
arco


(♩ = 80)
Dev. 17
grazioso
arco
297
mp
300
303


305
305
305
307
307
307
8va
309
309
309
8va
8va


312
rit.
Dev. 18 (♩.=68)
pp
p
317
mf
320
mp cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
8va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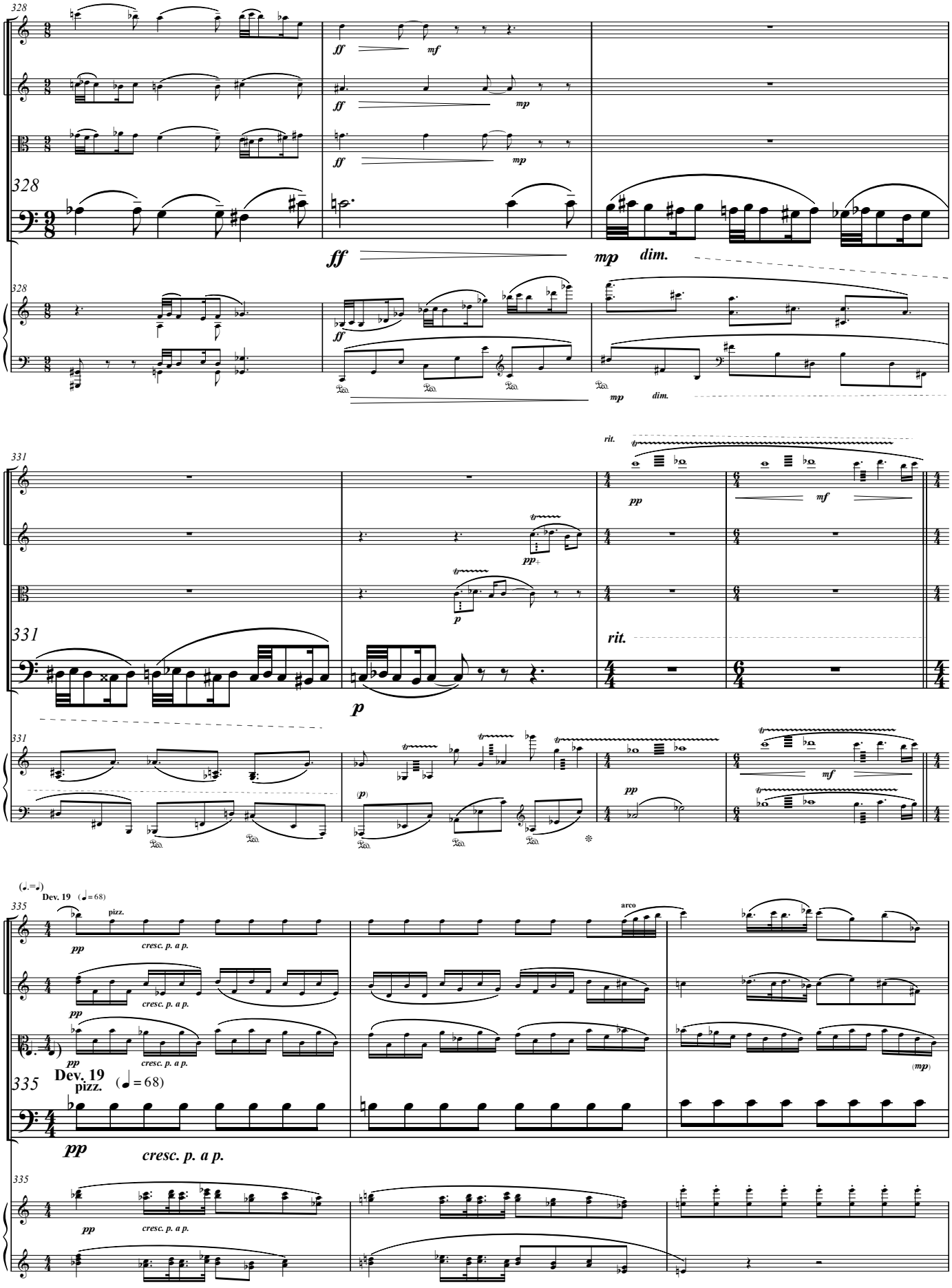
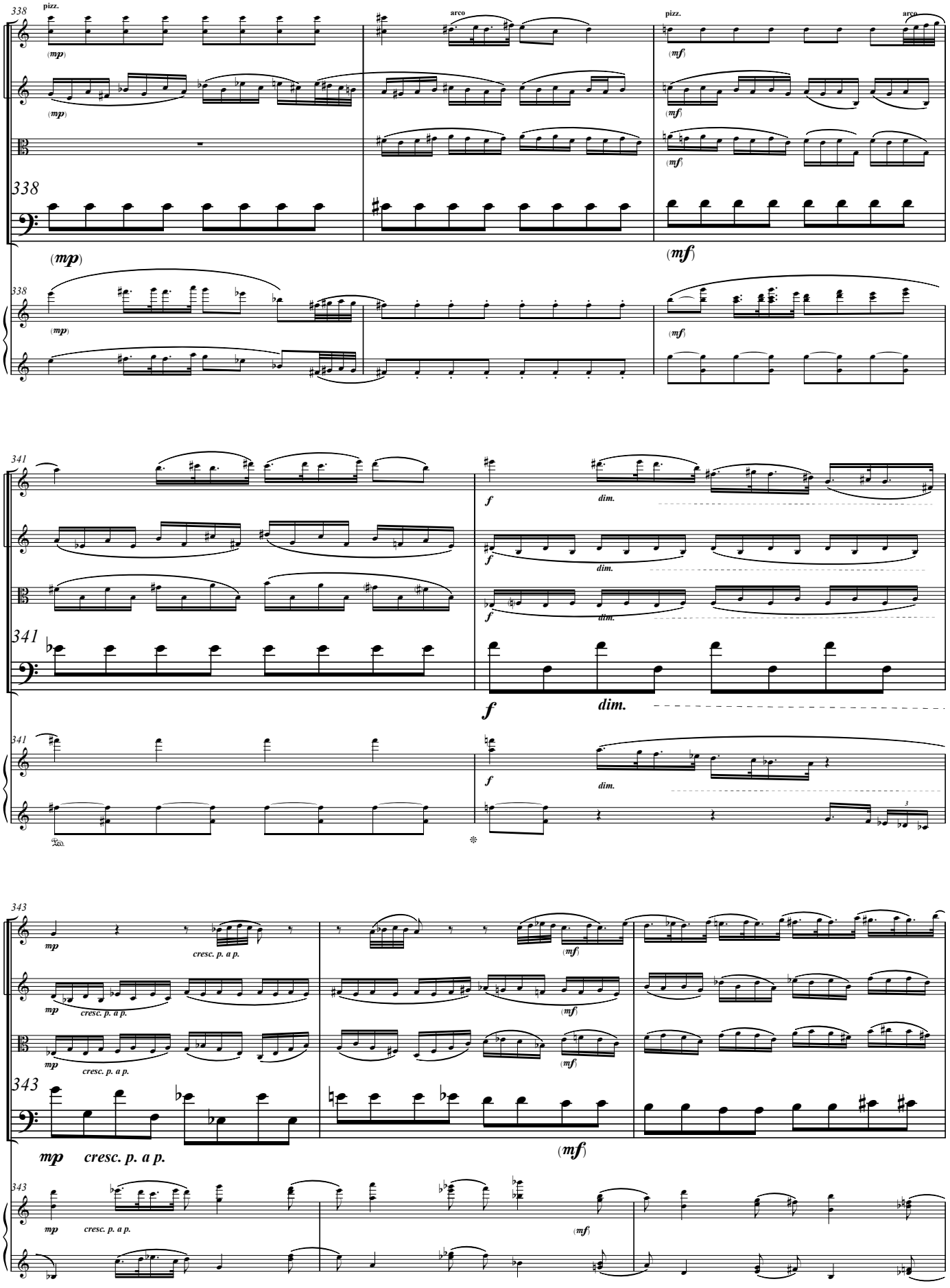
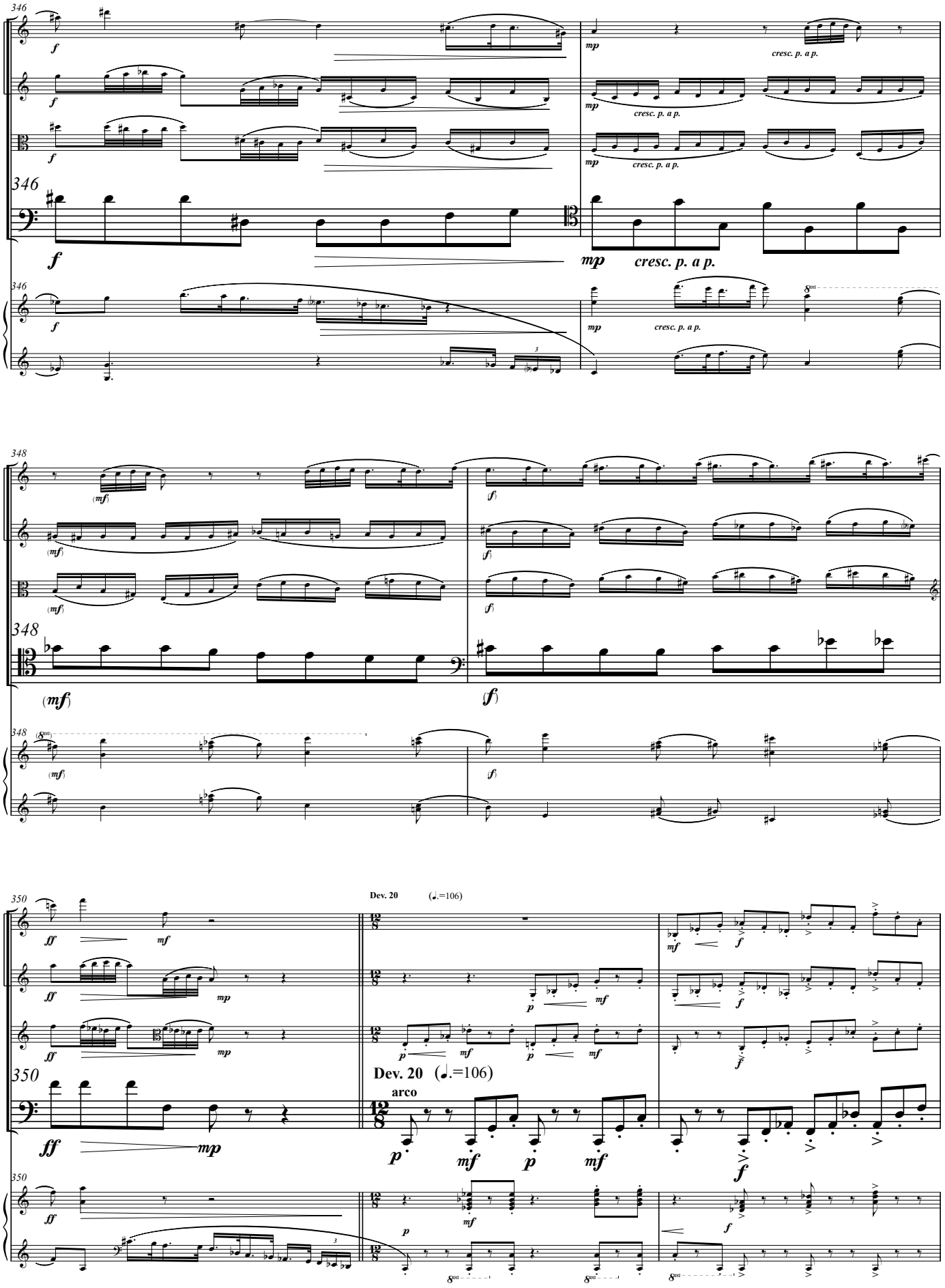
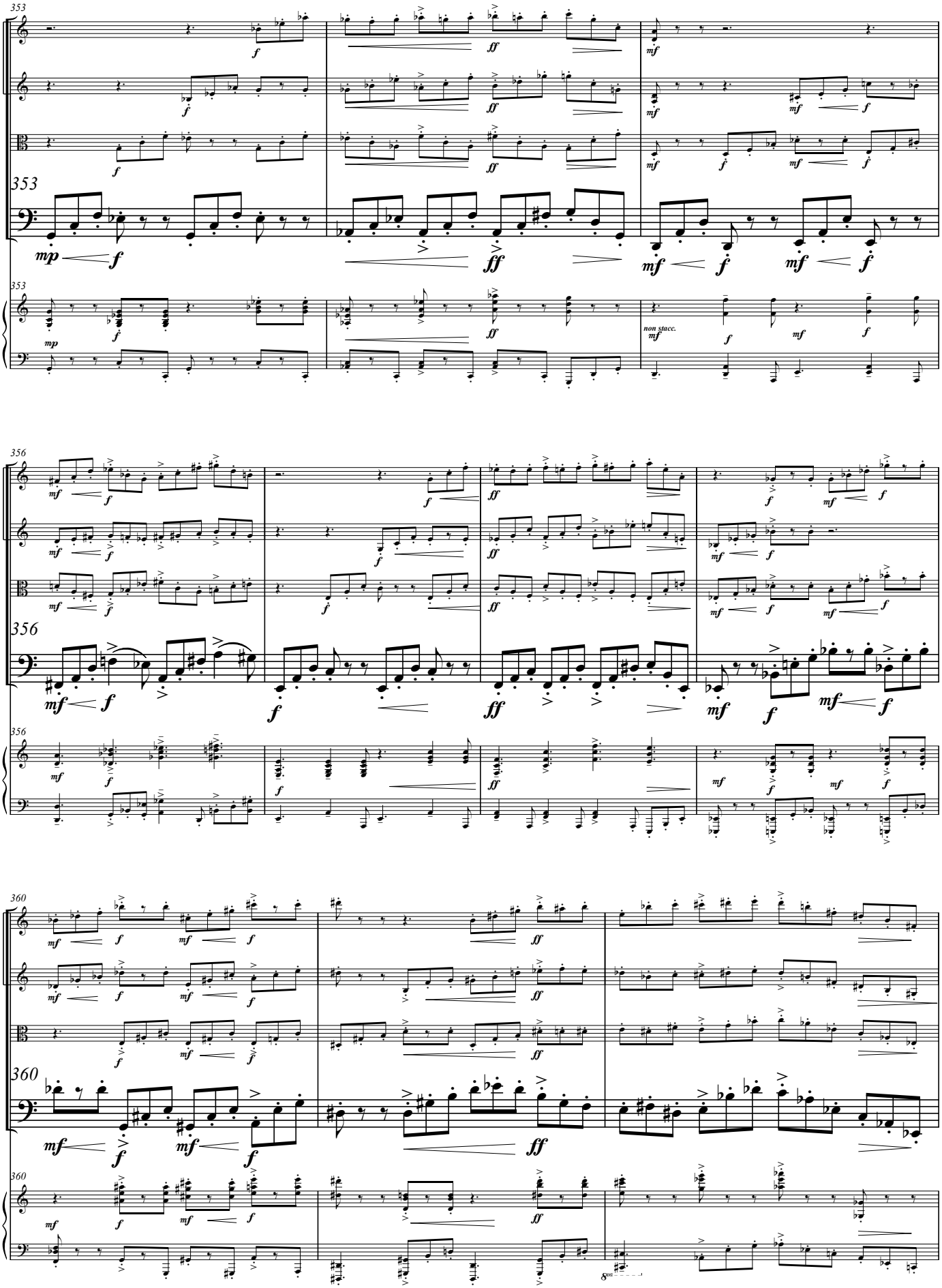
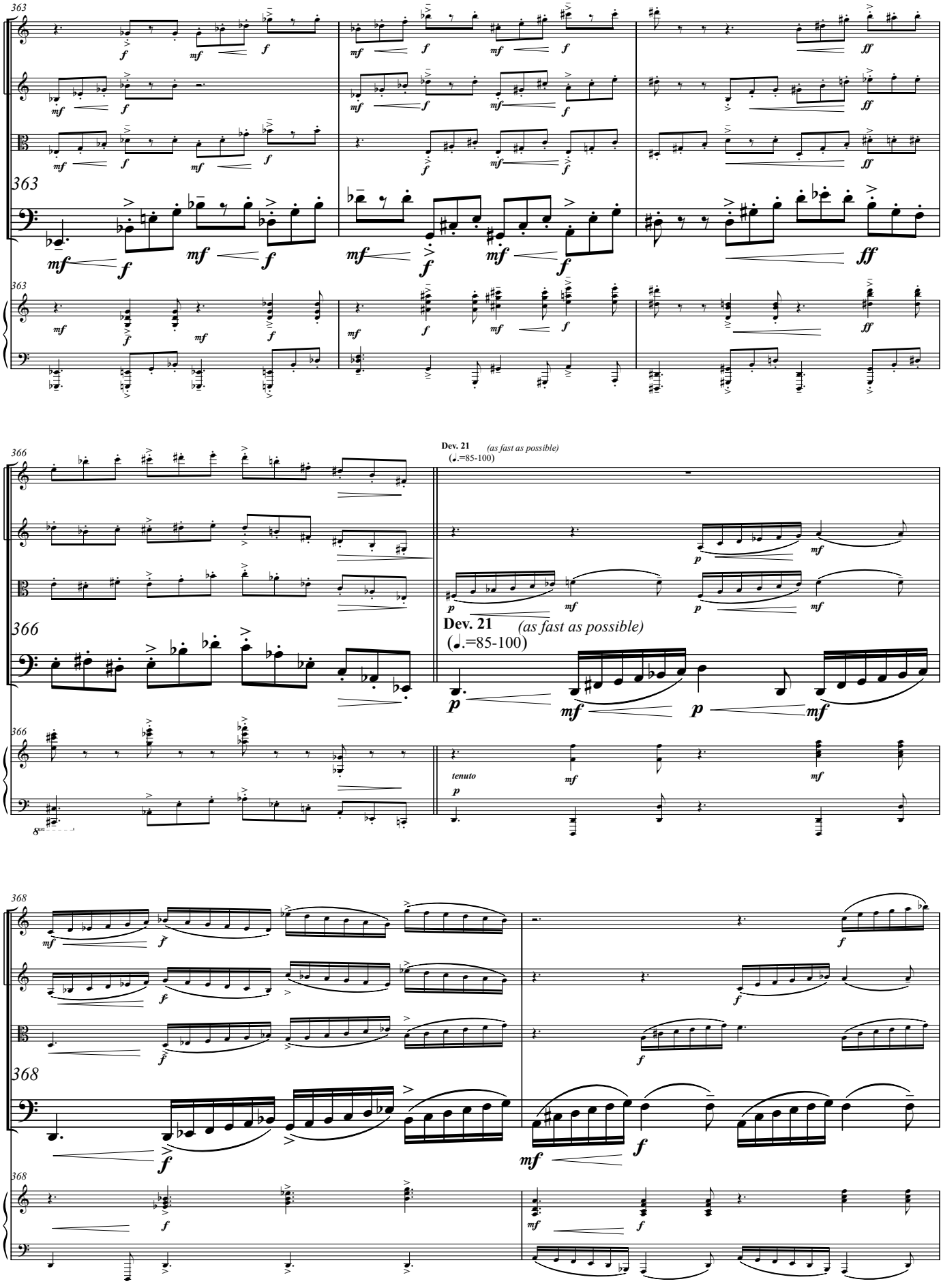
326
326

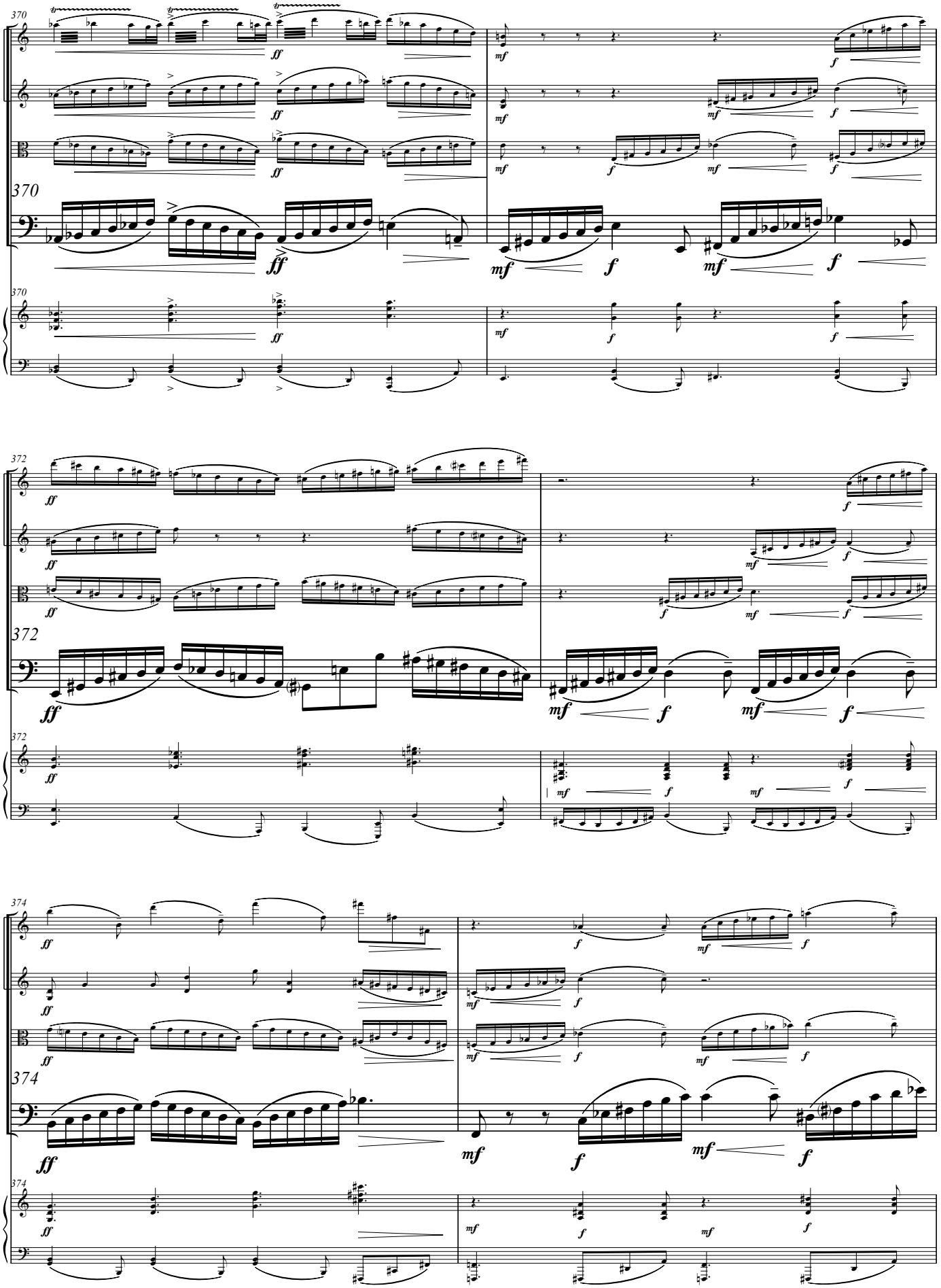

328
ff
mf
mp
dim.
331
rit.
pp
p
335
Dev. 19
(♩ = 68)
pizz.
arco
cresc. p. a p.
(mp)

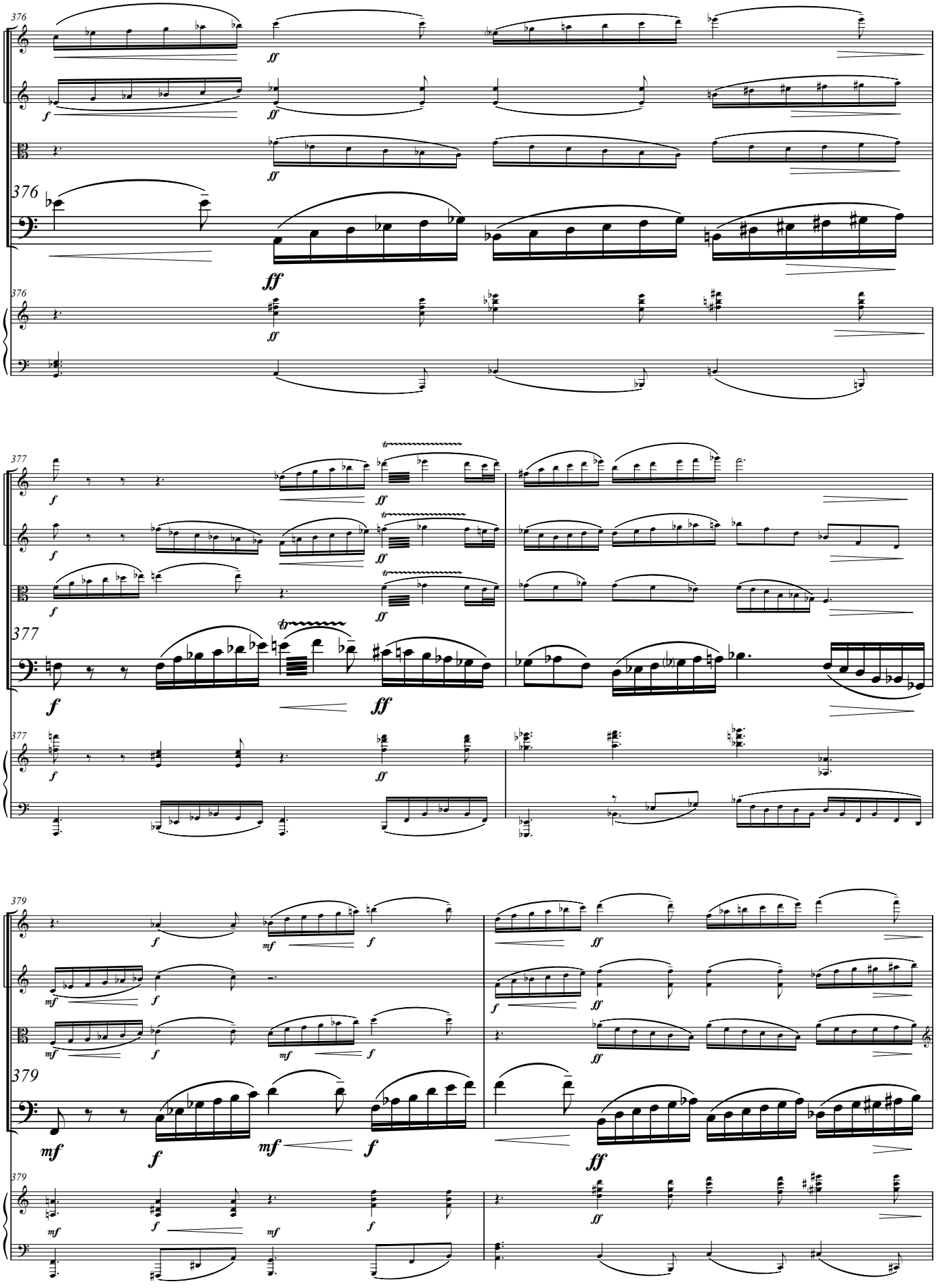

338
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
(mp)
(mf)
341
f
dim.
343
mp
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)

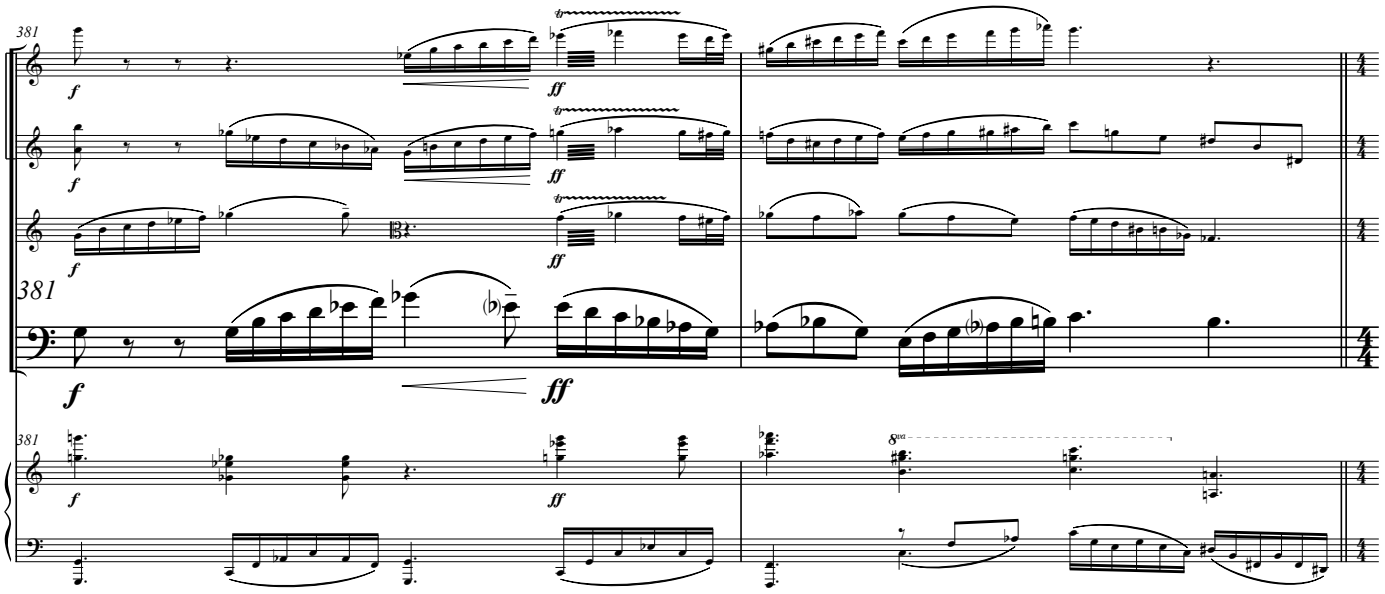

346
f
mp
cresc. p. a p.
348
(mf)
(f)
350
ff
mf
mp
Dev. 20 (𝅗𝅥.=106)
arco
p
mf
f

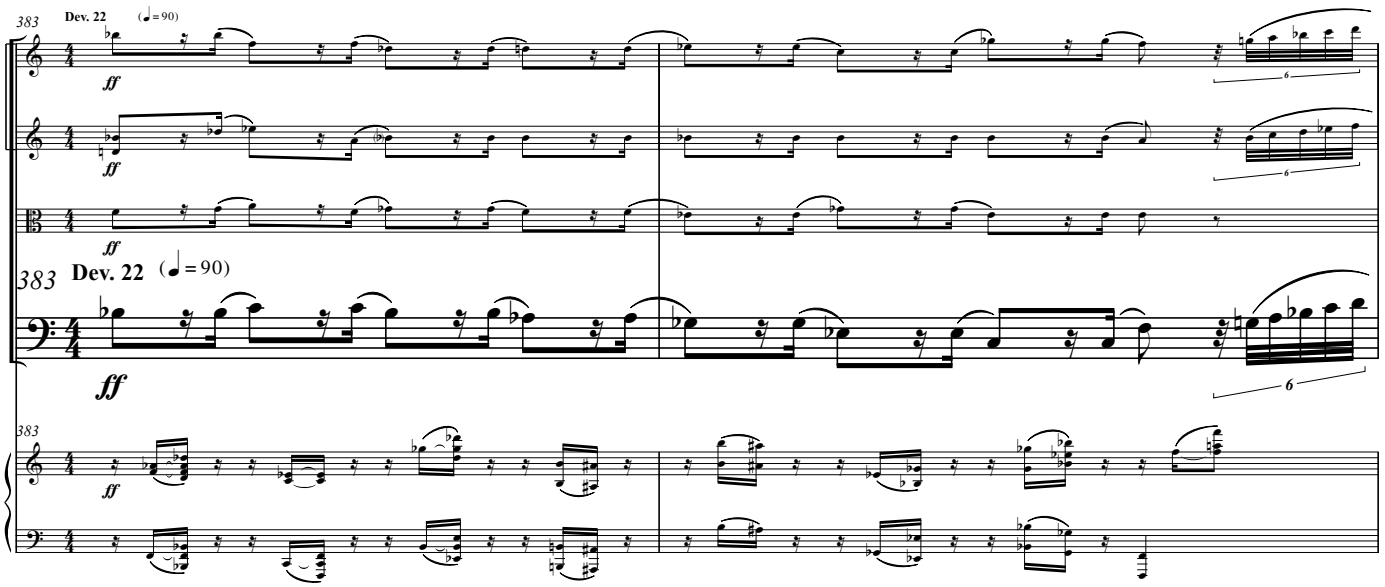

353
356
360
non stacc.
8va

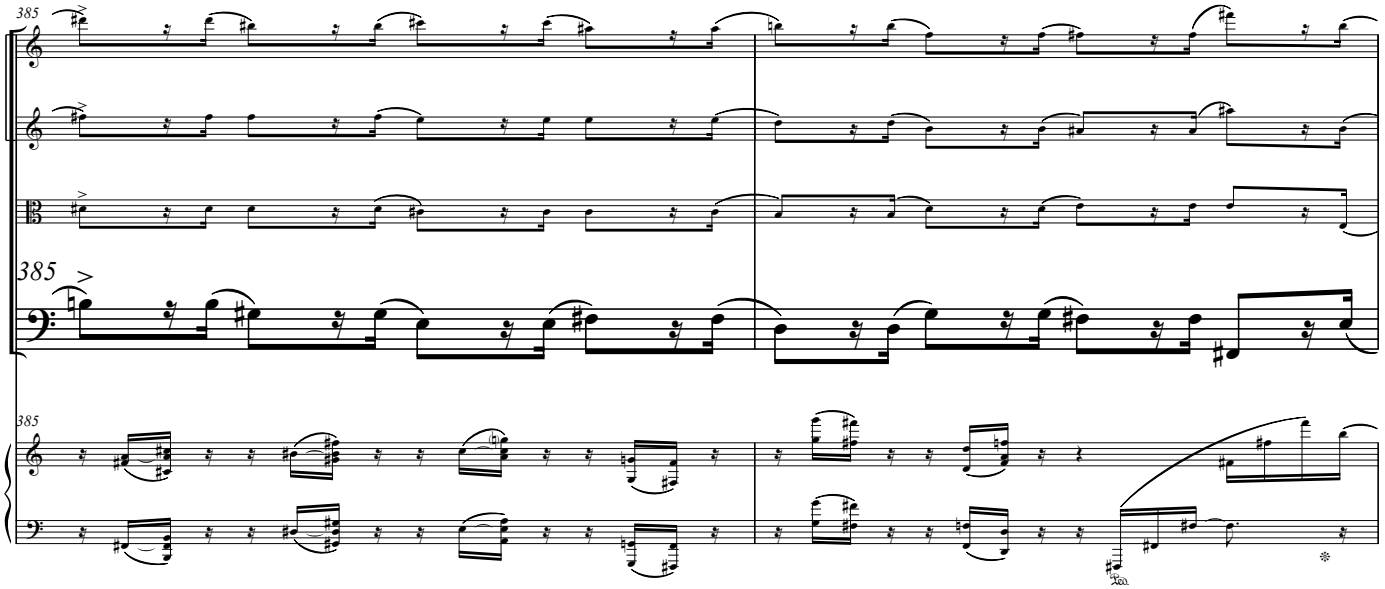

363
366
Dev. 21 (as fast as possible)
(♩.=85-100)
368
tenuto

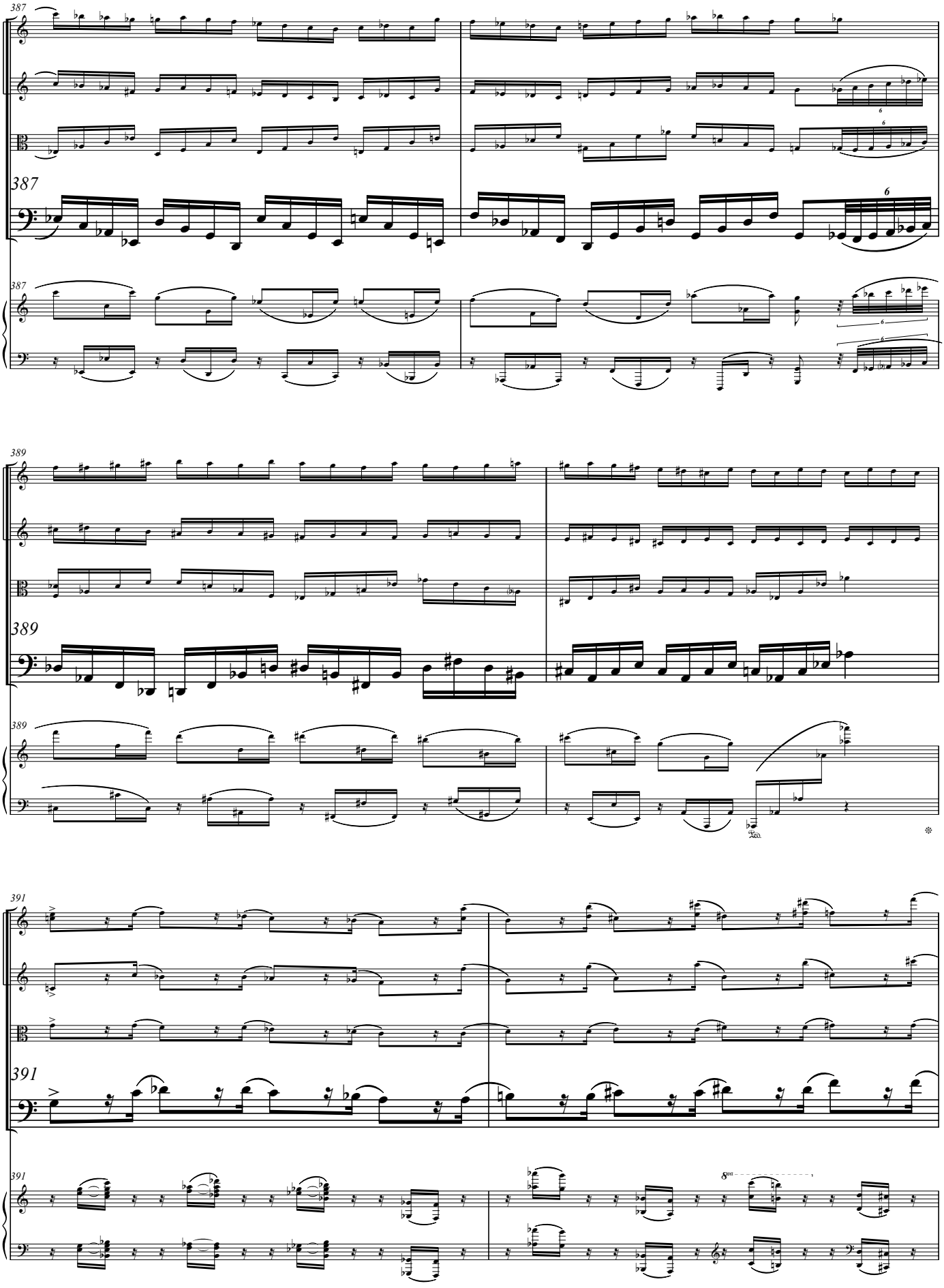


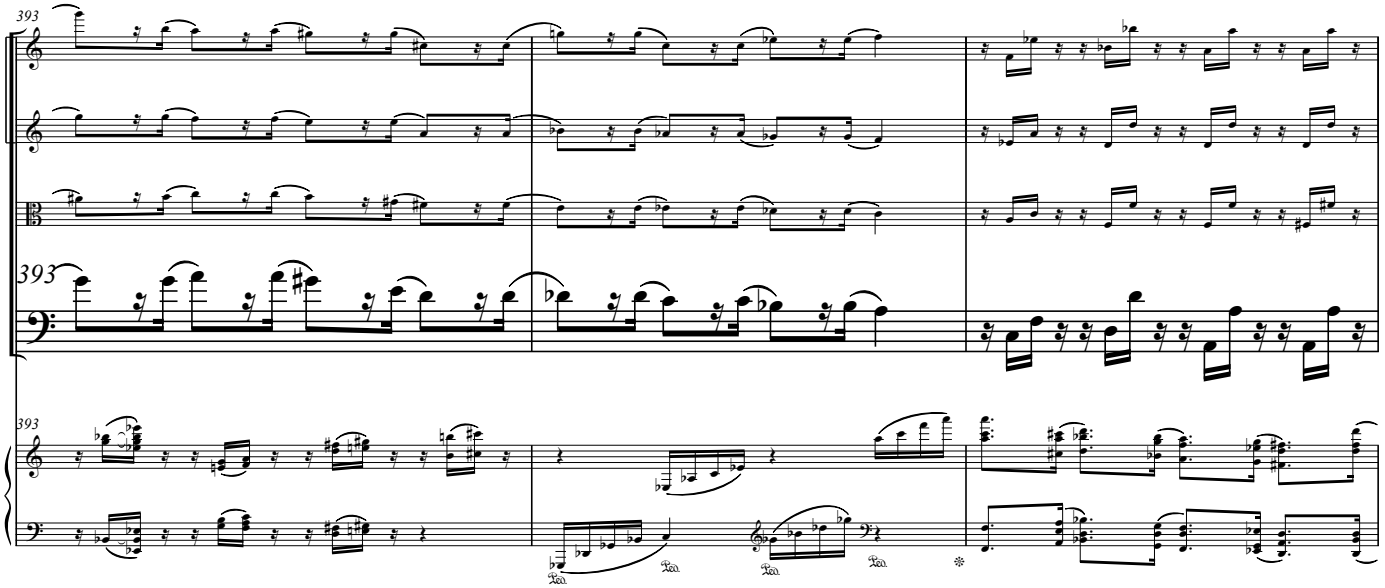

376
377
379


381
f
ff
8va


383
Dev. 22
(♩= 90)
ff
6


385
>
Xeo.


387
387
387
389
389
389
391
391
391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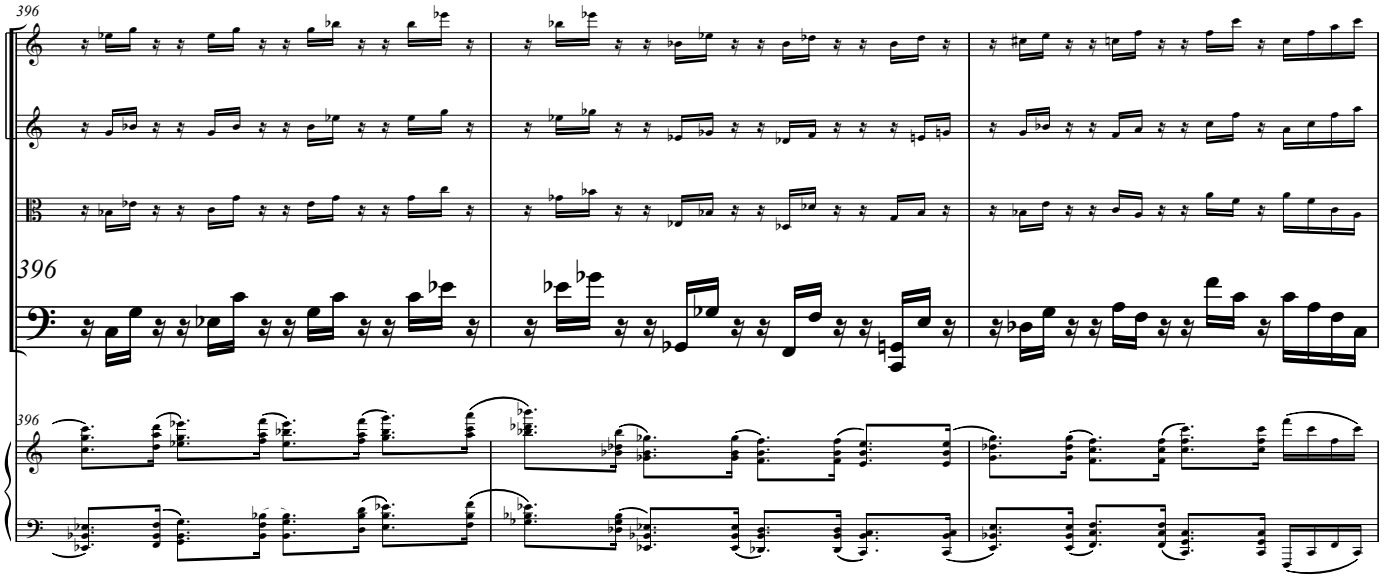
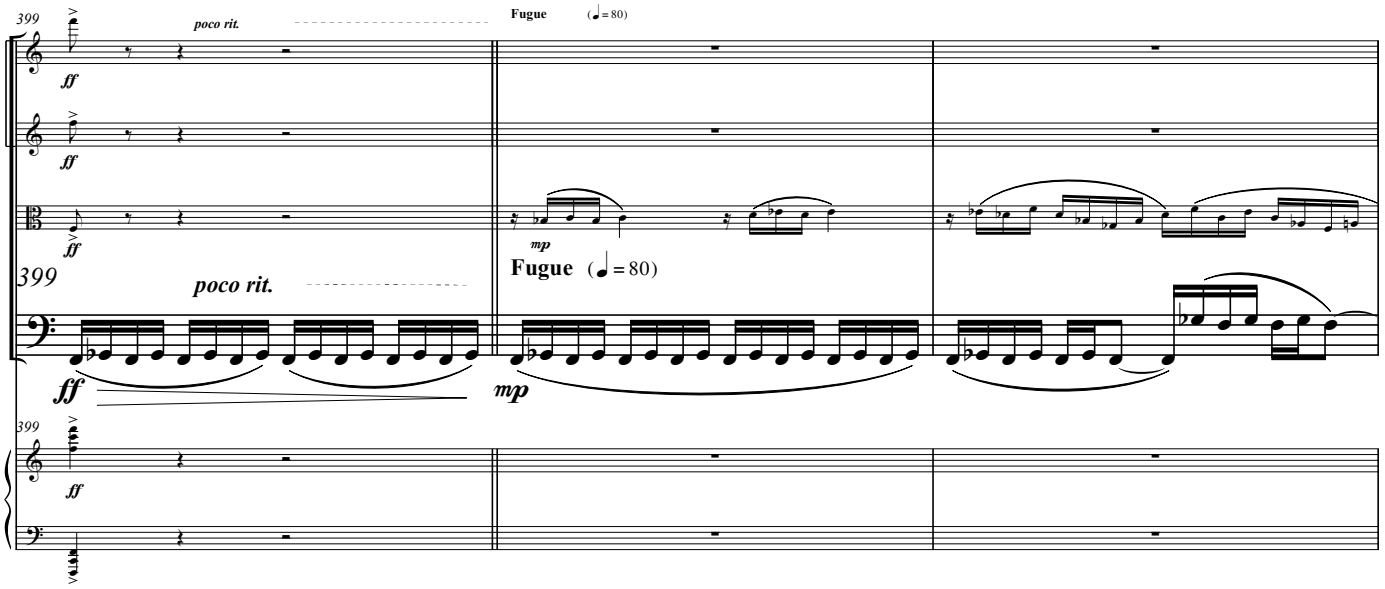
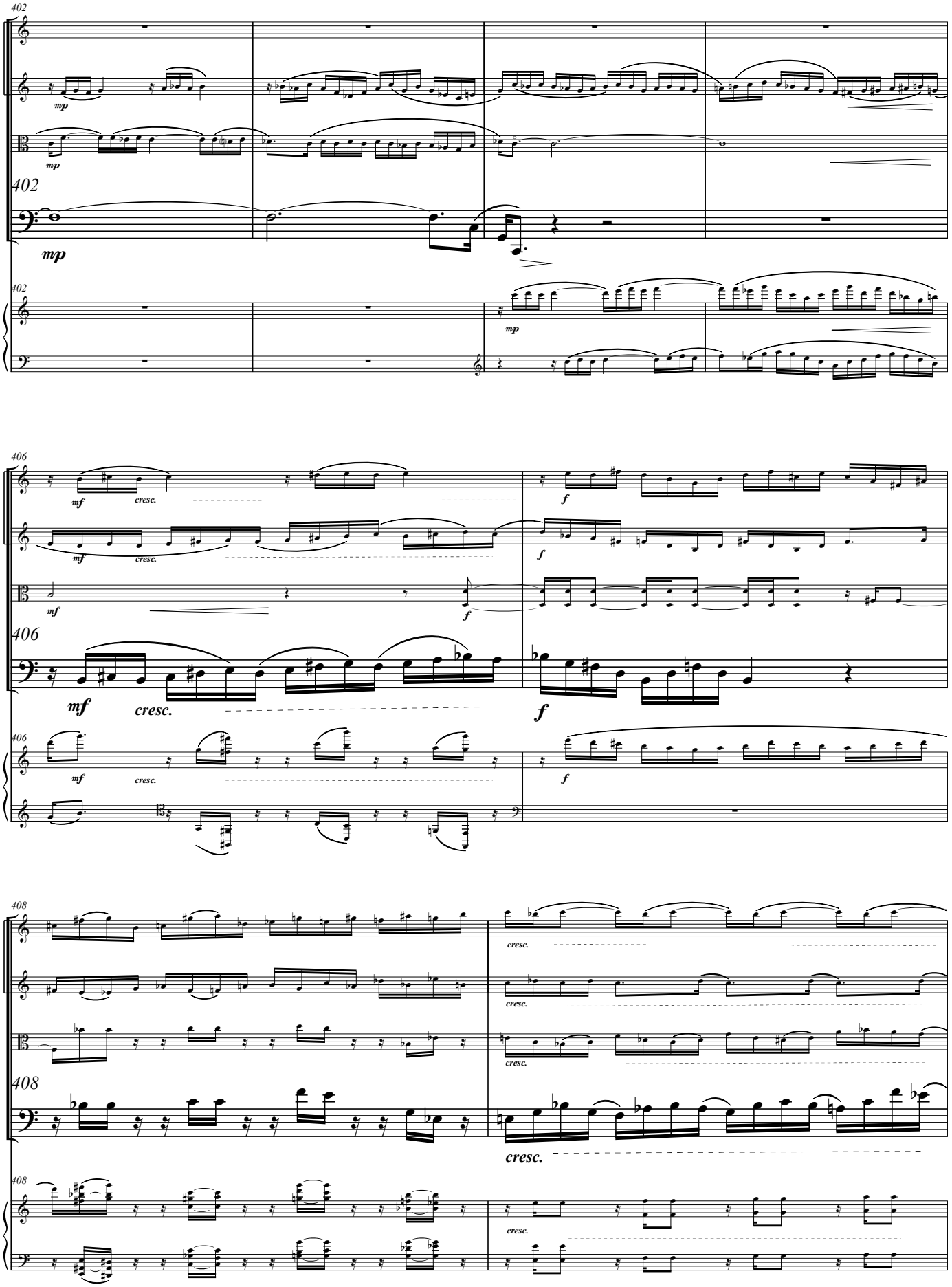
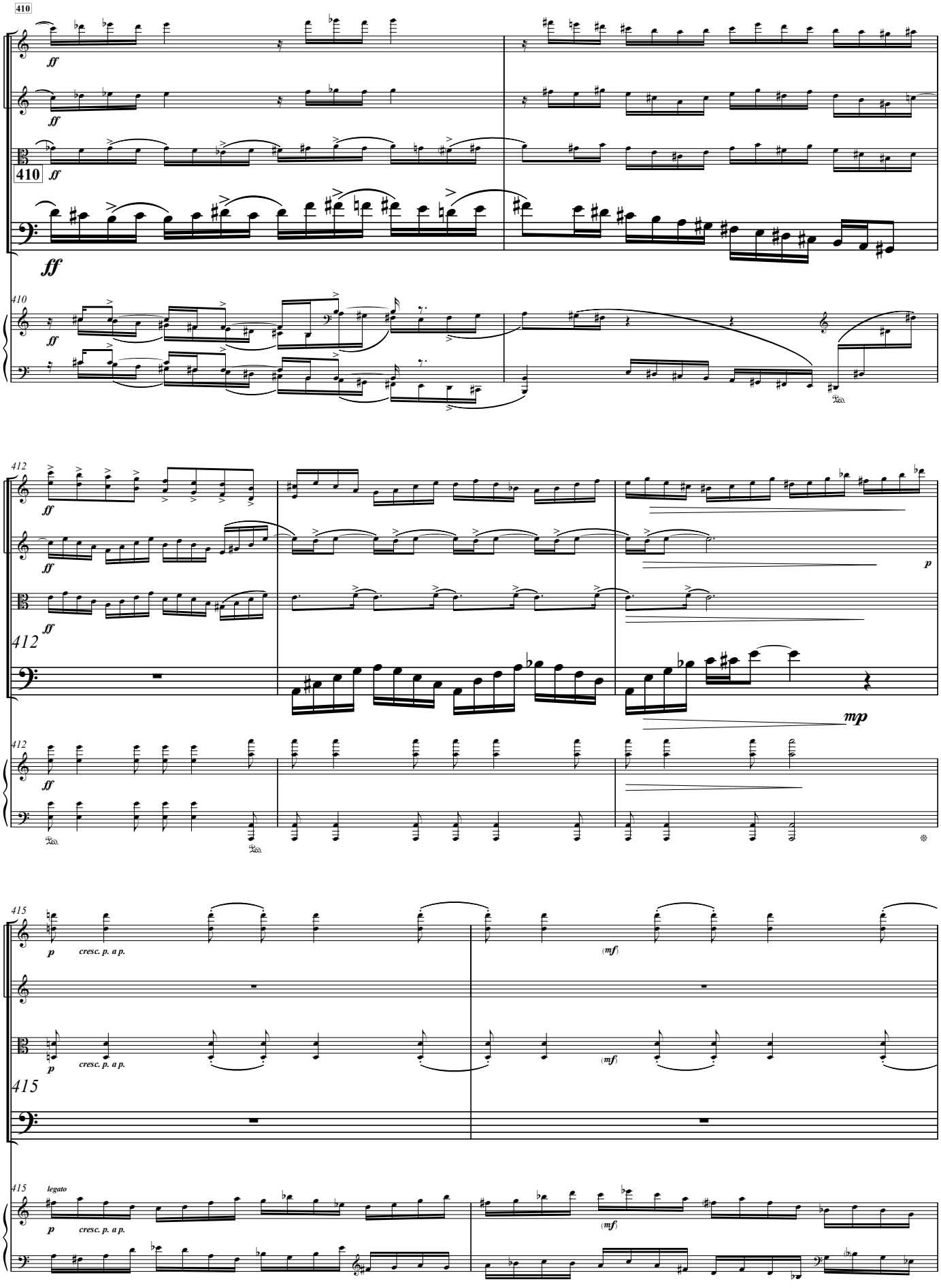
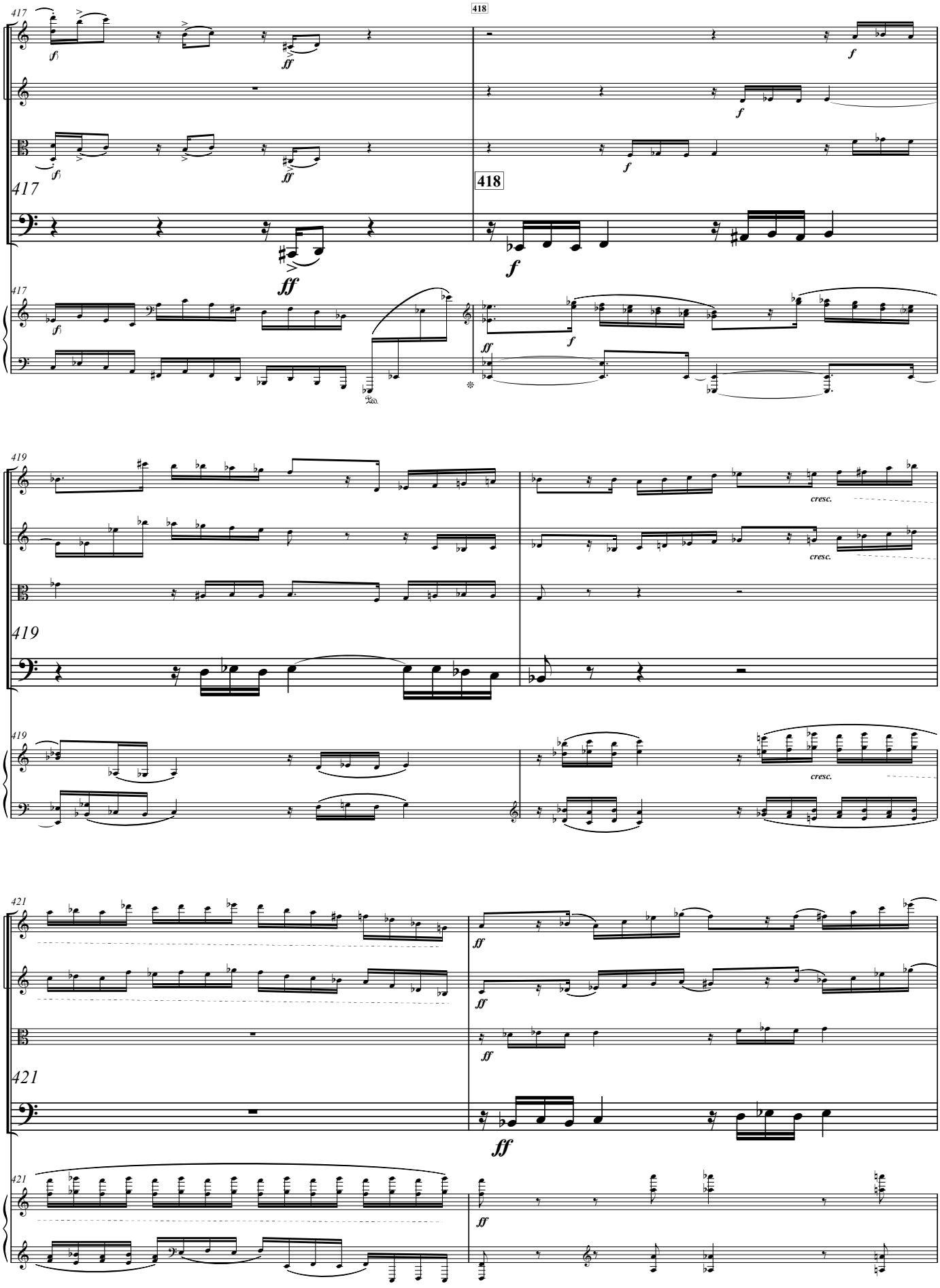
393

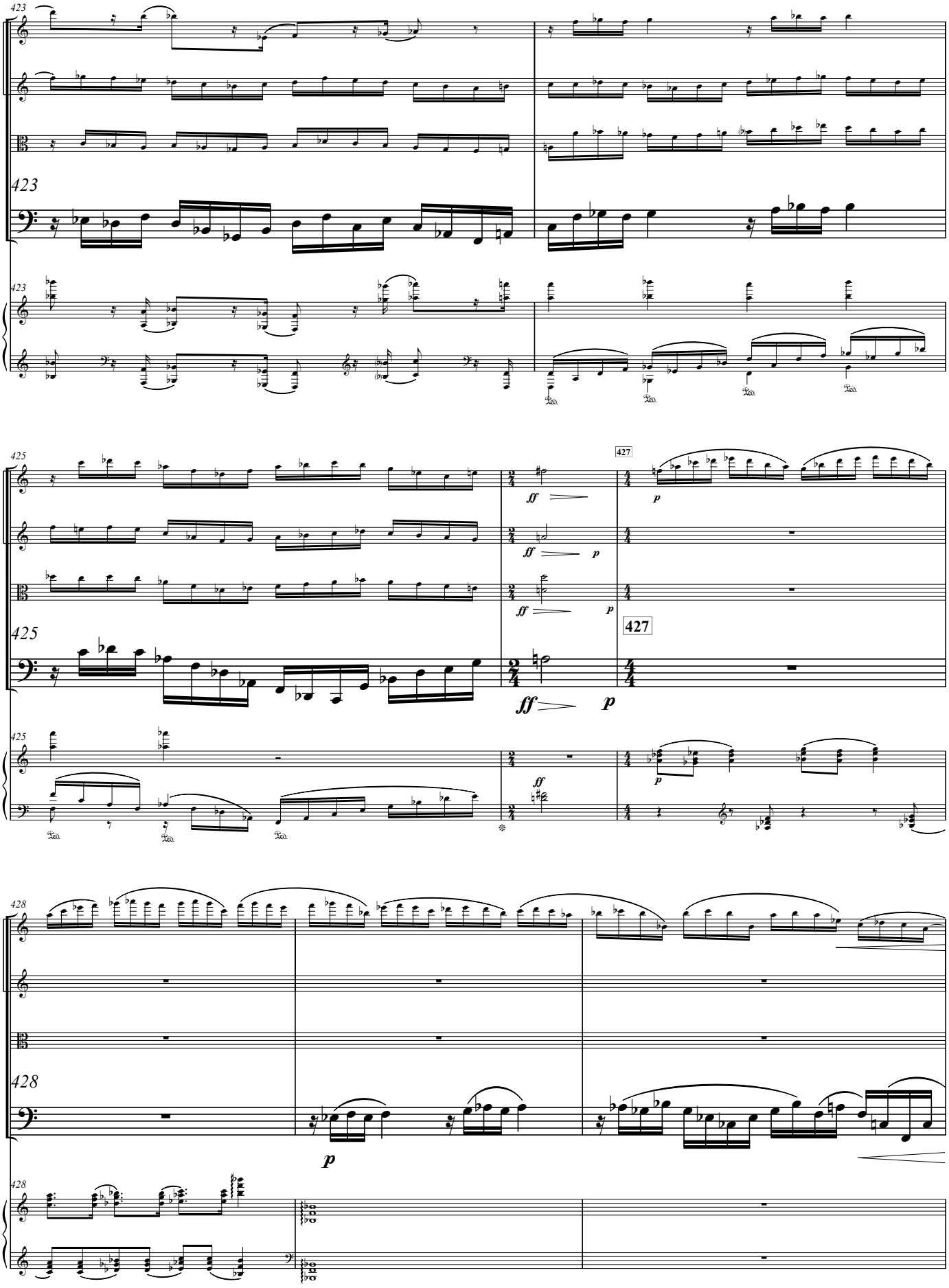

396
396
396

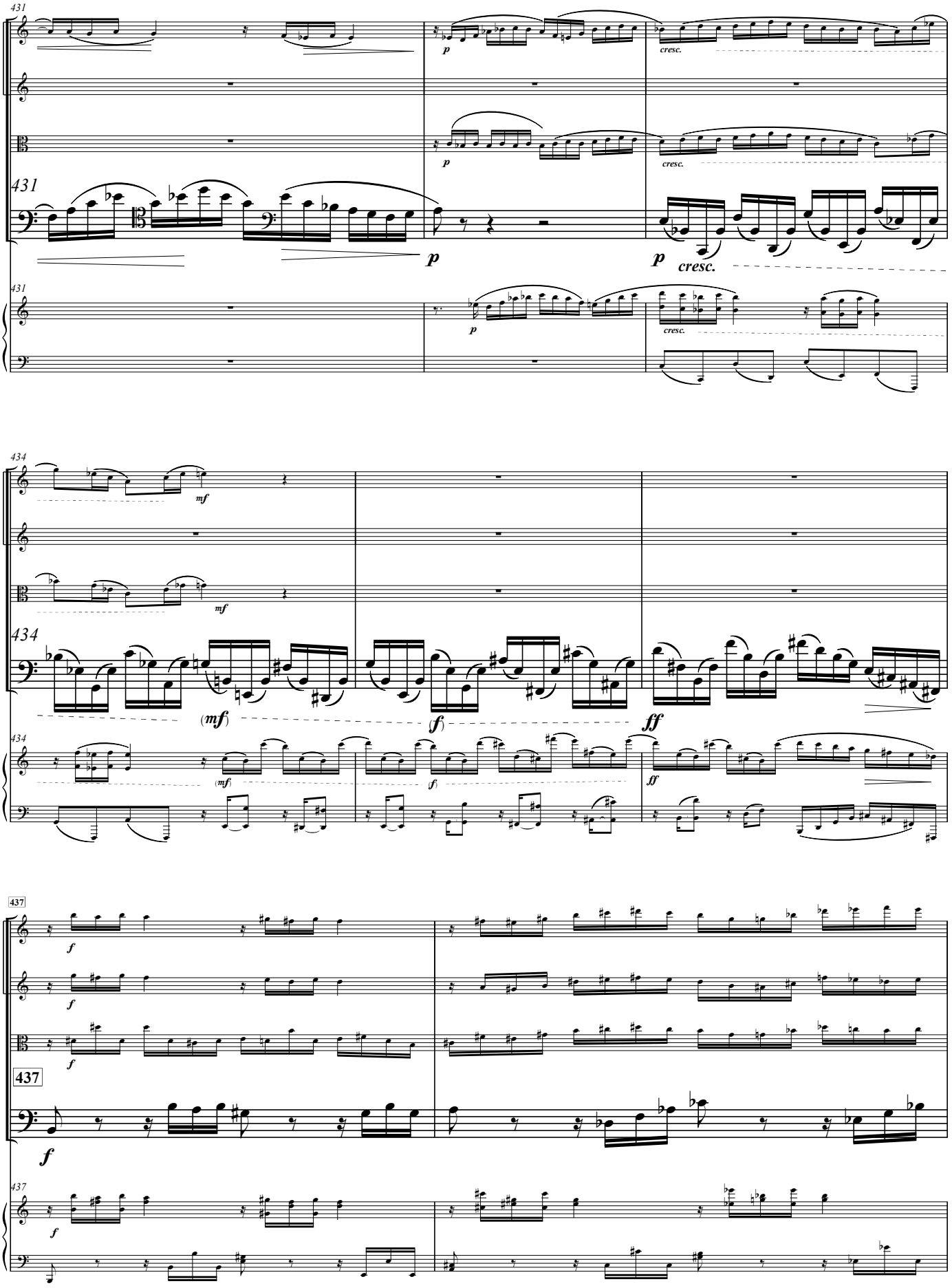

399
poco rit.
Fugue (♩= 80)
ff
ff
ff
399
poco rit.
mp
Fugue (♩= 80)
ff
mp
399
ff

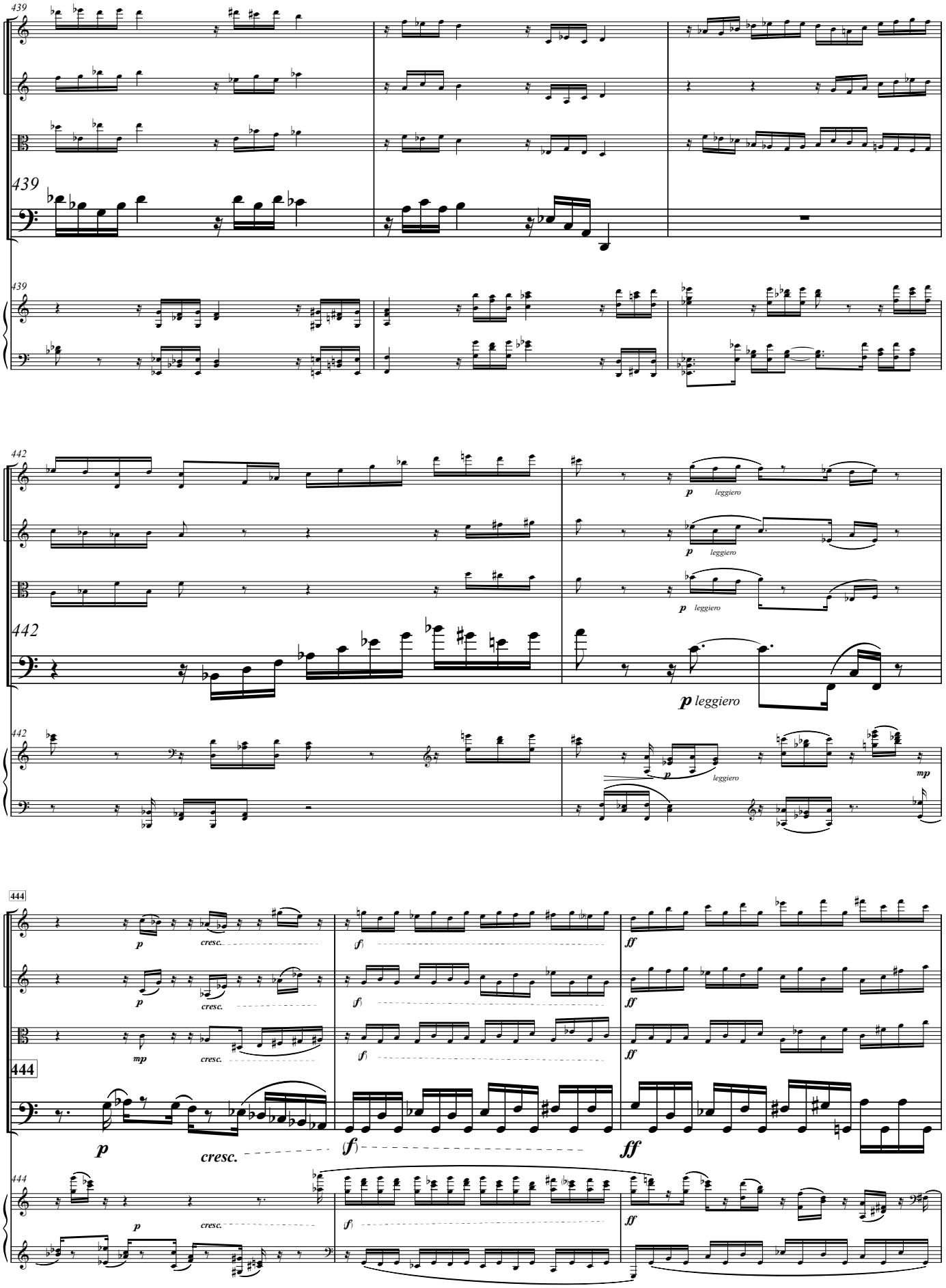

402
mp
402
mp
402
mp
406
mf
cresc.
f
406
mf
cresc.
f
406
mf
cresc.
f
408
cresc.
408
cresc.
408
cresc.

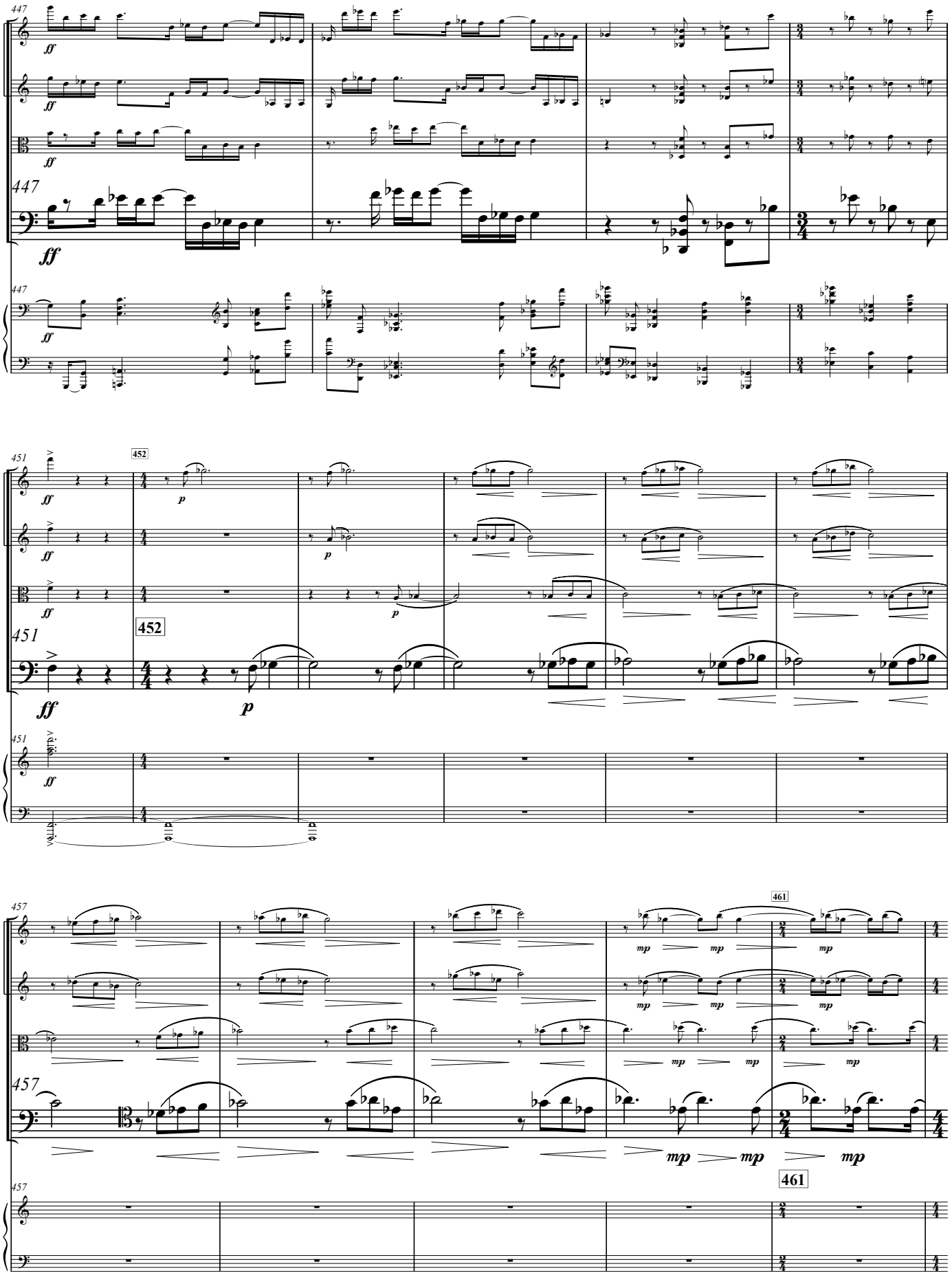

410
ff
410
ff
ff
410
ff
412
ff
ff
ff
412
mp
412
ff
p
415
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
415
415
legato
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)

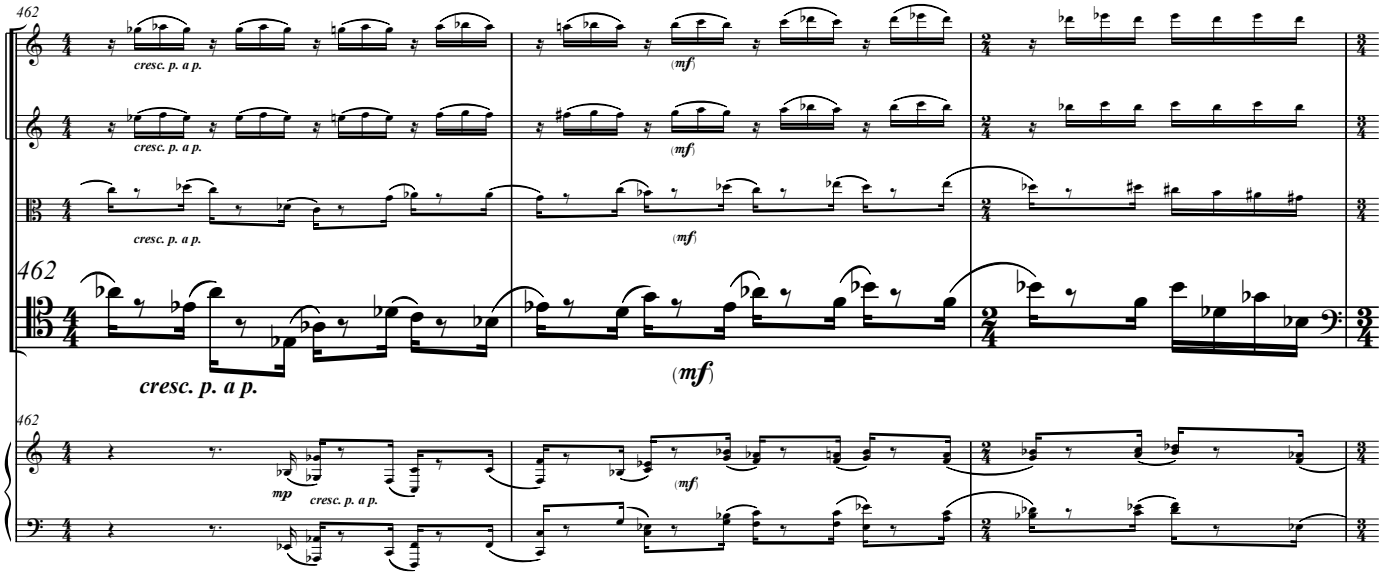

417
418
419
421
cresc.
ff
f

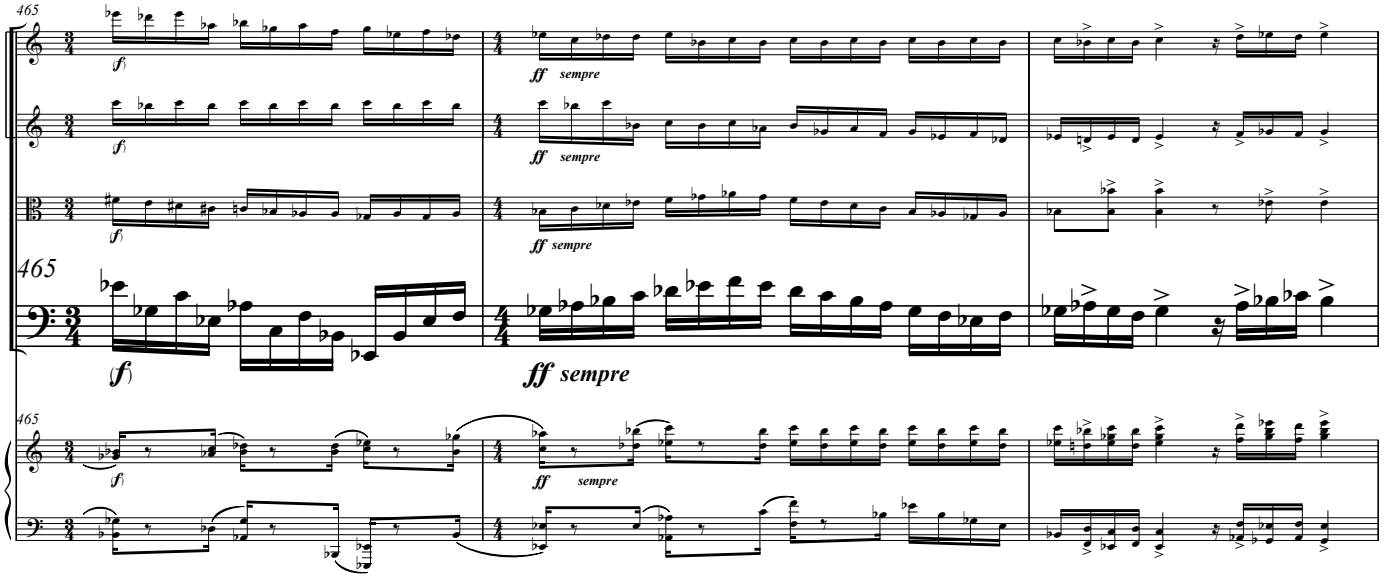

423
425
427
428
ff
p

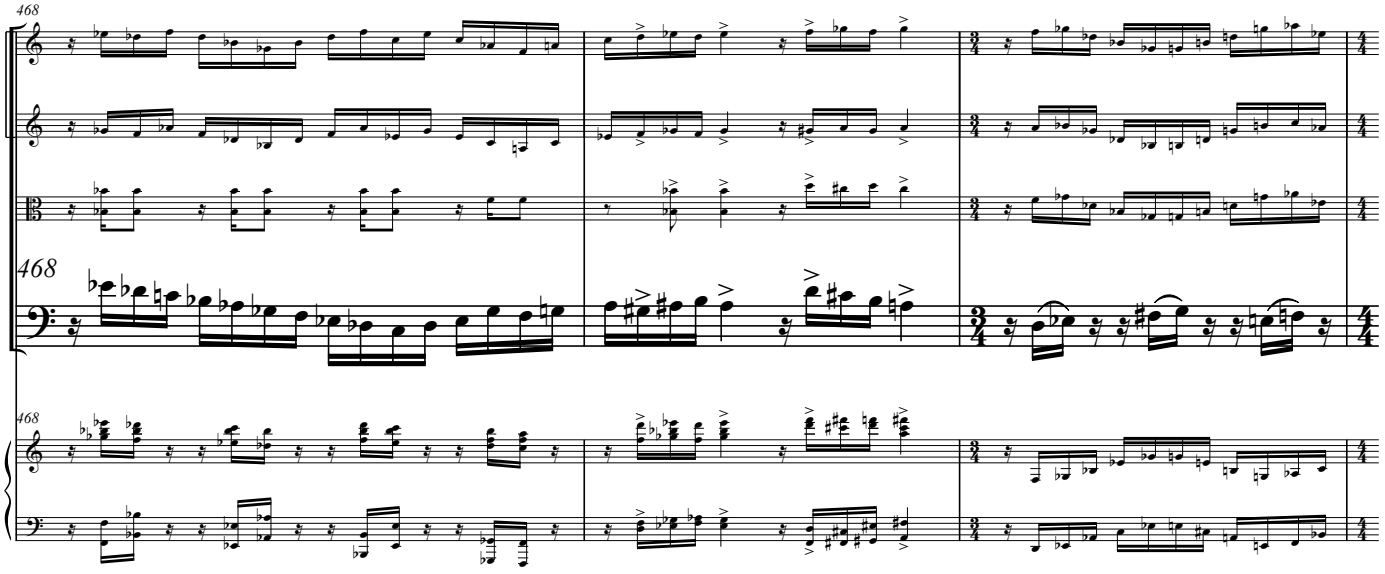

431
p
cresc.
434
mf
(mf)
(f)
ff
437
f


439
442
leggiero
444
cresc.
(f)
ff
mp


447
ff
451
452
p
457
461
mp


462
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
462
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
462
mp
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)


465
(f)
ff sempre
(f)
ff sempre
(f)
ff sempre
465
(f)
ff sempre
465
(f)
ff sempre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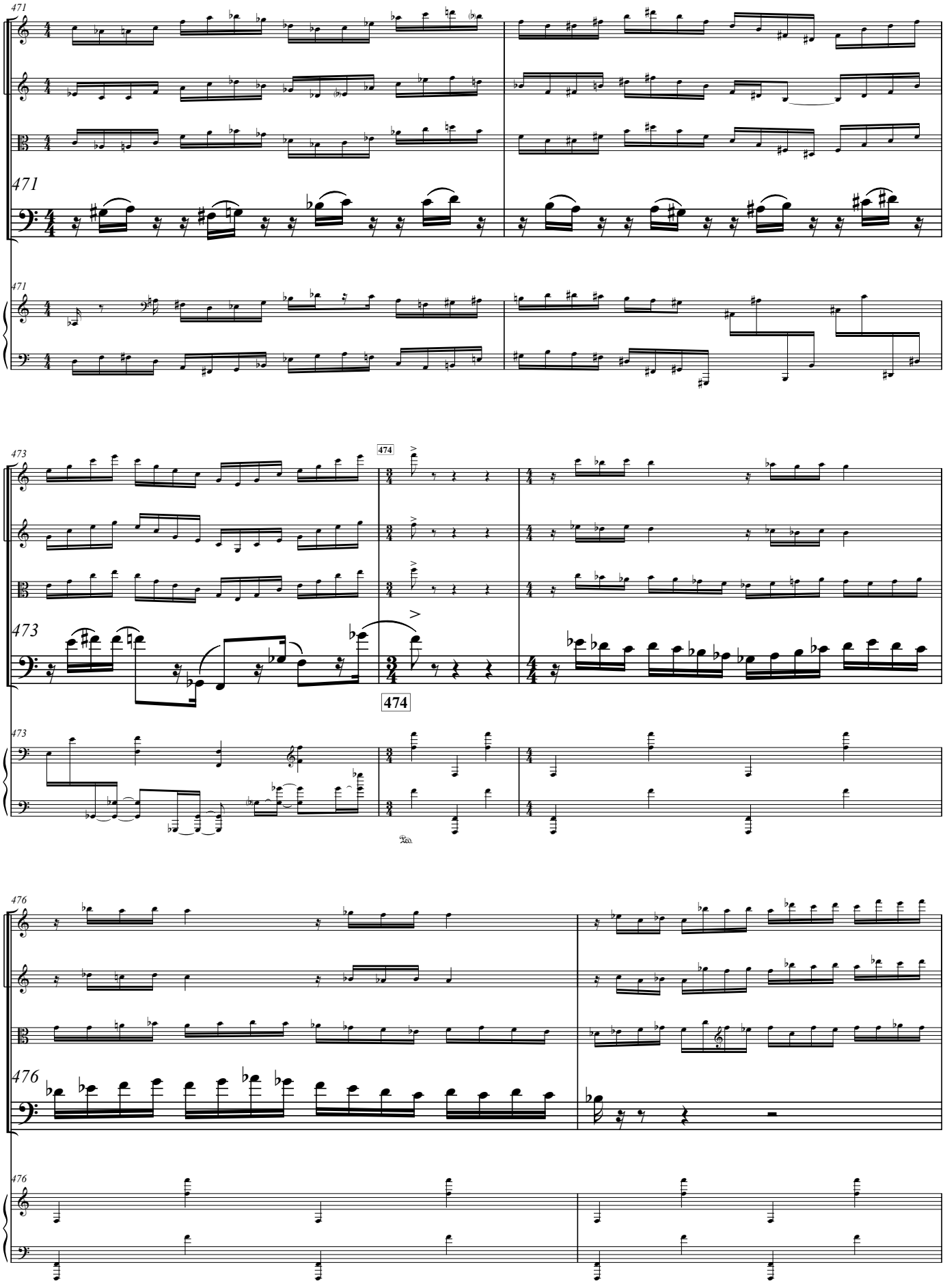
468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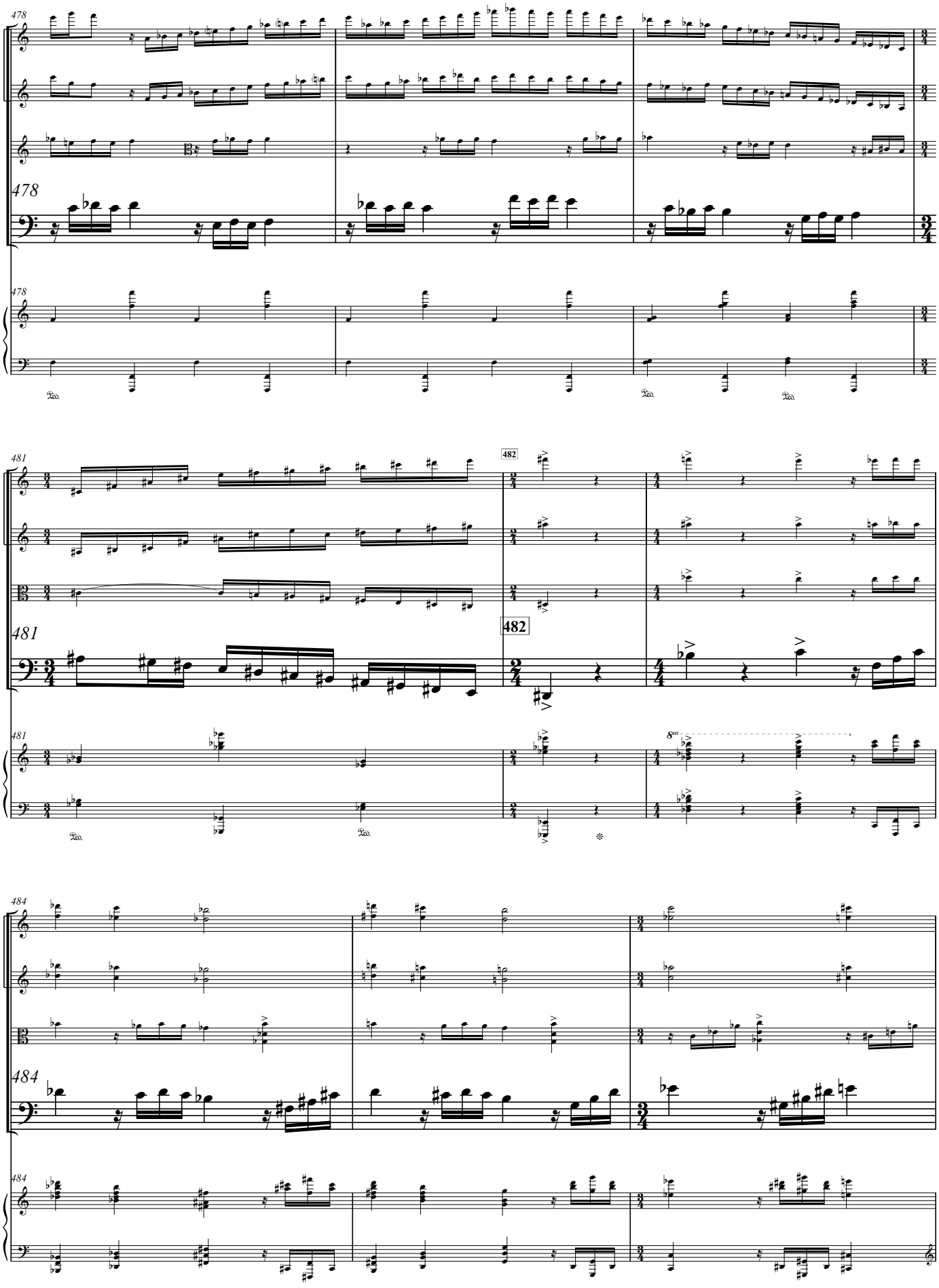
476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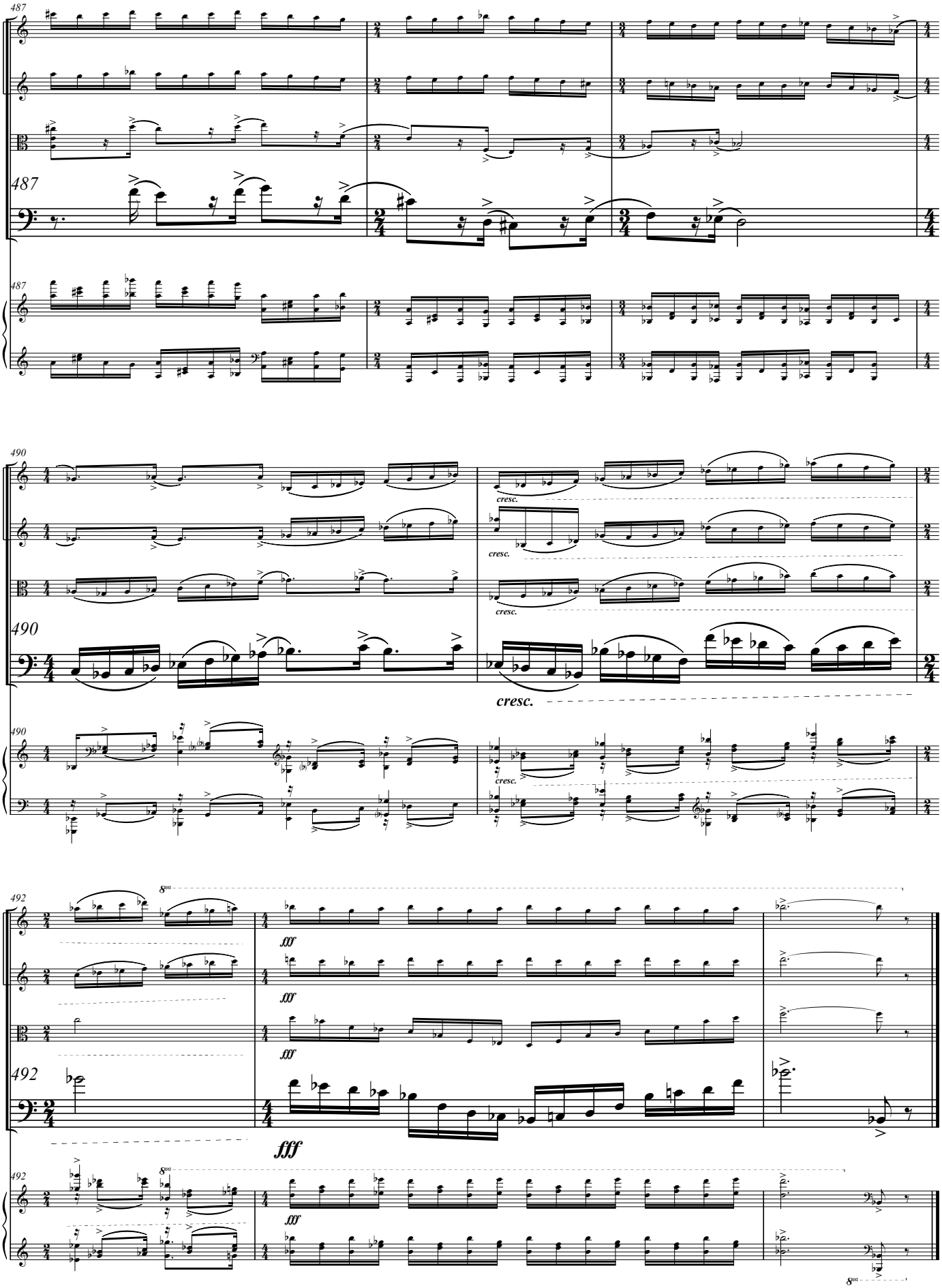
487
490
cresc.
492
8va
fff