Six Downie Nocturnes

In memory of Martin Downie

For viola and piano

David Lancaster

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Six Downie Nocturnes (2013)

For viola and piano

Duration: 13 minutes

This music comprises three pairs of highly contrasted miniatures; each movement is separated from its 'companion' in order to explore possible relationships between the different pairs (in spite of the stark contrasts between them) and to fracture the natural continuity of the music.

The outer pieces are a sustained chorale, plaintive and largely undecorated.

The second and fourth Nocturnes are a small tribute to Elliott Carter who died while I was at work on this commission. Whilst some elements of the pieces remain constant (the quick notes in the viola part, for example) others effect a gradual rallentando through a series of metric modulations. In the second Nocturne the viola outlasts the piano and her music flowers into melody whereas in the fourth the final outcomes are reversed.

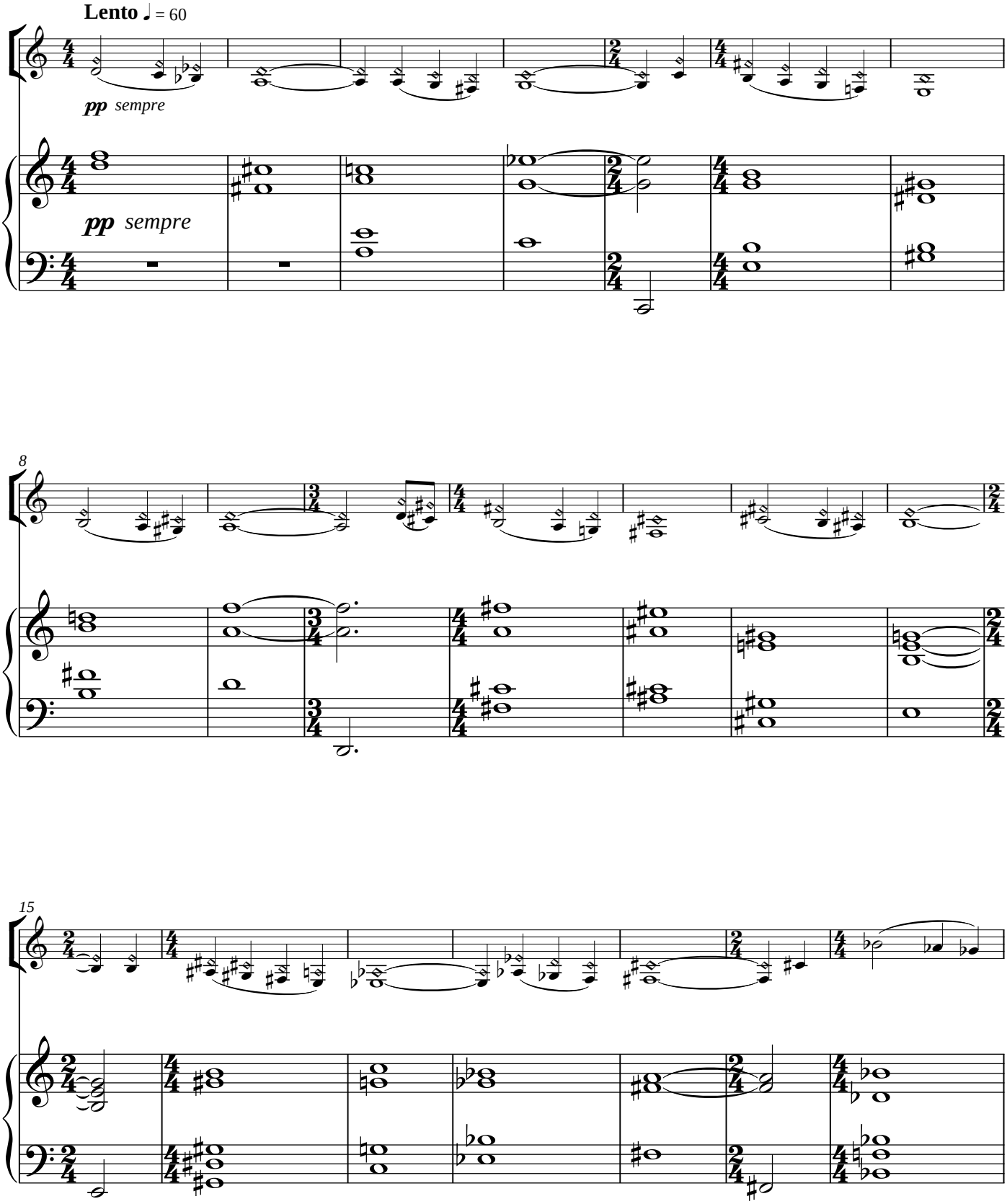
The third and fifth Nocturnes are based on a song which I composed in 2010 to words by Daniela Nunnari: *The day the clocks went back, the autumn sky bled grey…* The third Nocturne is virtually a transcription of that song whilst number five subjects the melody of the song to a process of fragmentation, redistributing its phrases over soft, bell-like sounds in the piano.

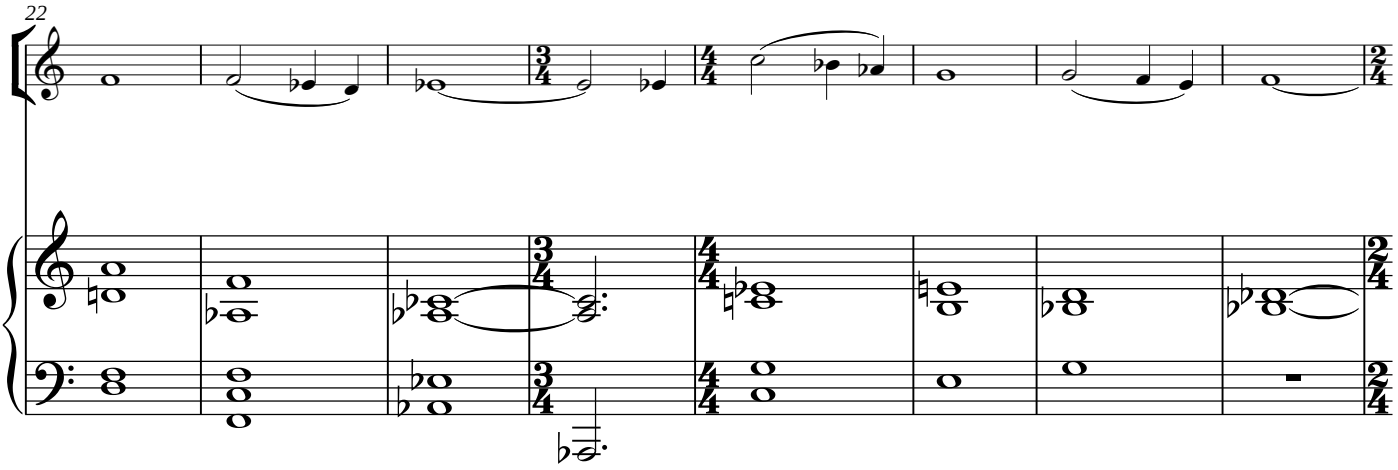
The Six Downie Nocturnes are dedicated to the memory of Martin Downie, ceramic artist and Dean of the Faculty of Arts at York St John University, who died in November 2012.

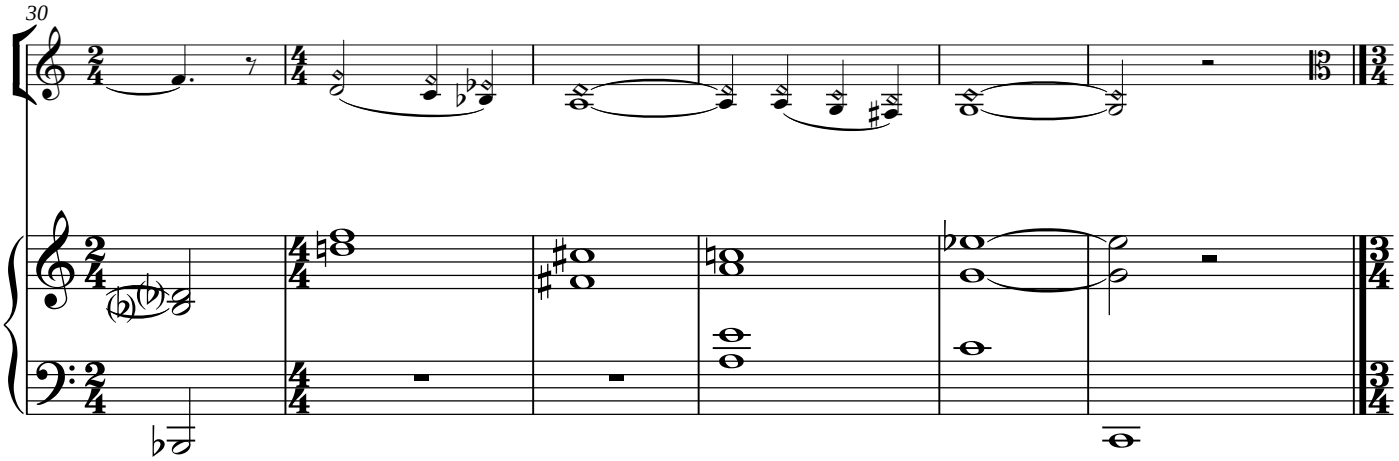
Six Downie Nocturnes were first performed by Rosalind Ventris and Lara Dodds-Eden in May 2013 in the Unitarian Chapel, York.

Nocturne 1

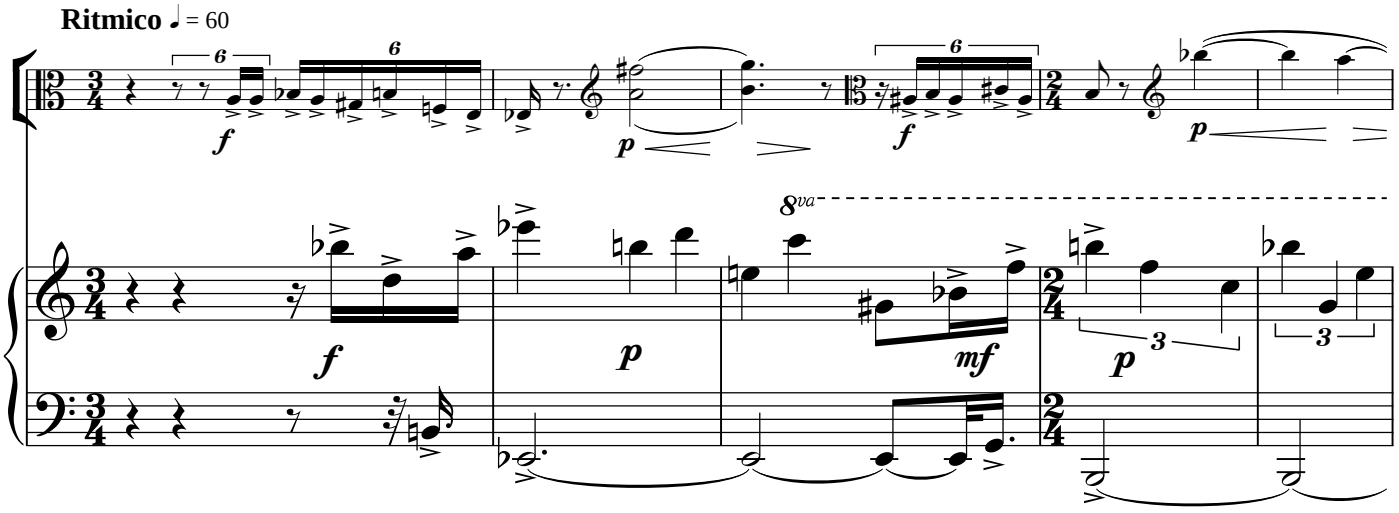
David Lancaster

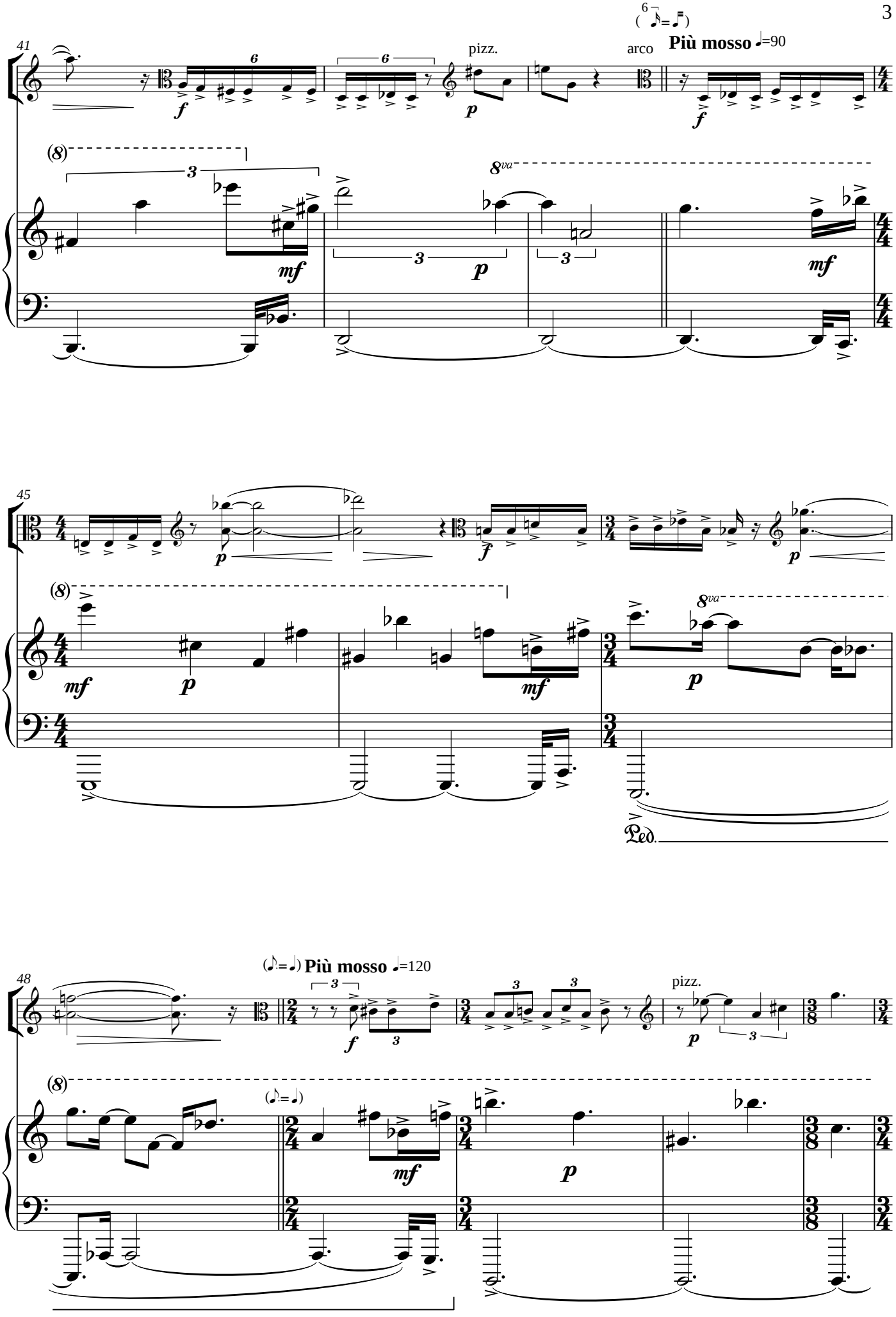


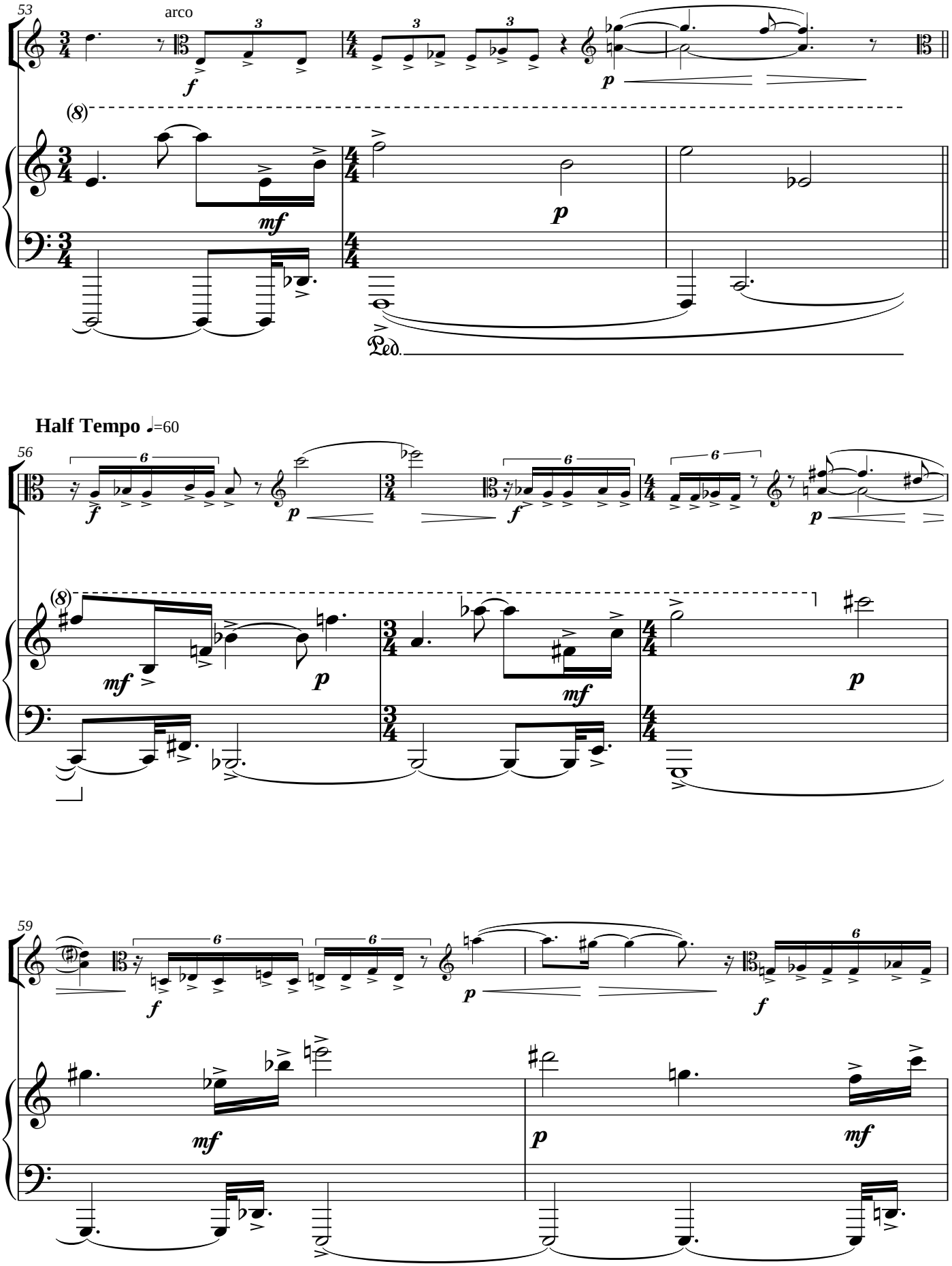


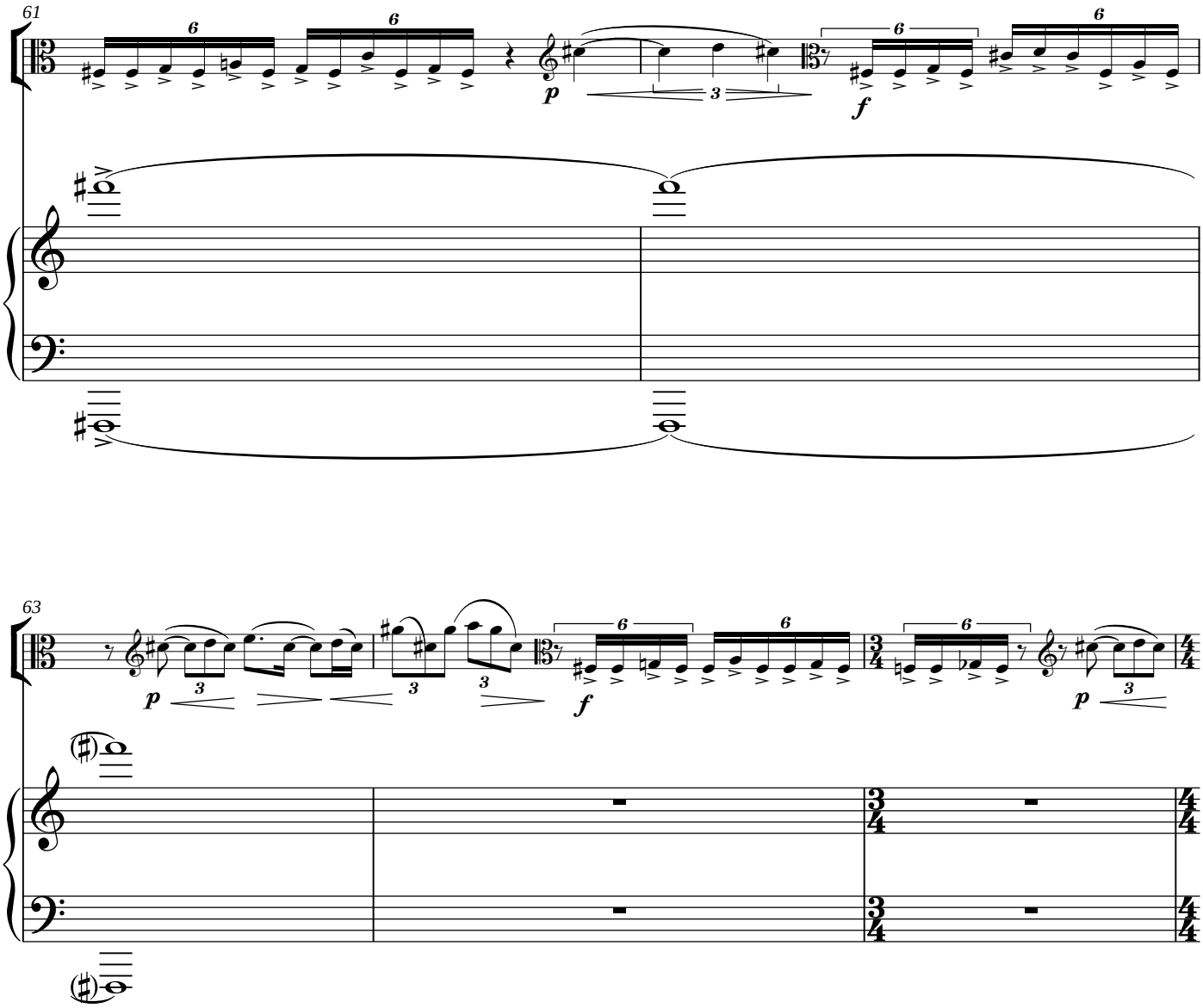


Nocturne 2

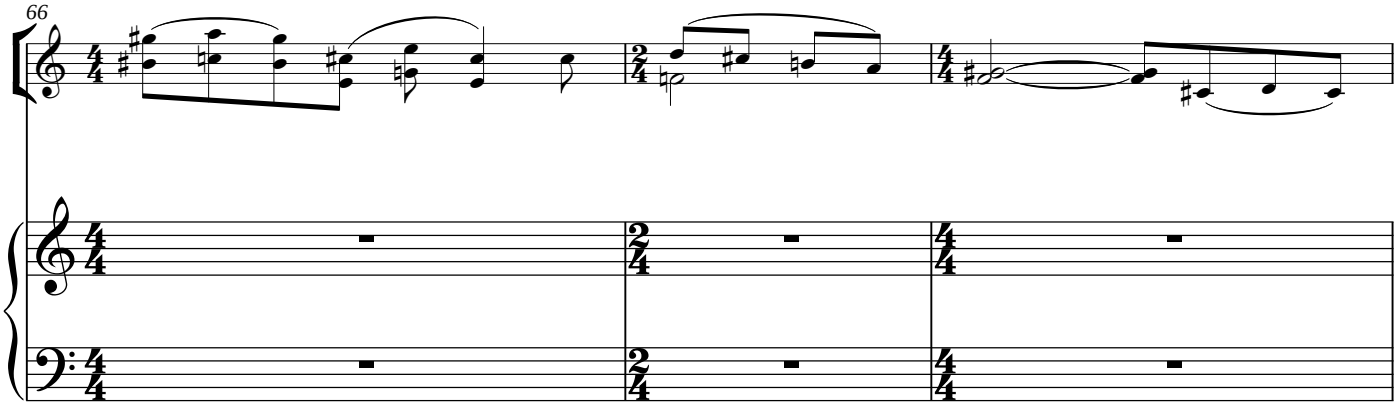


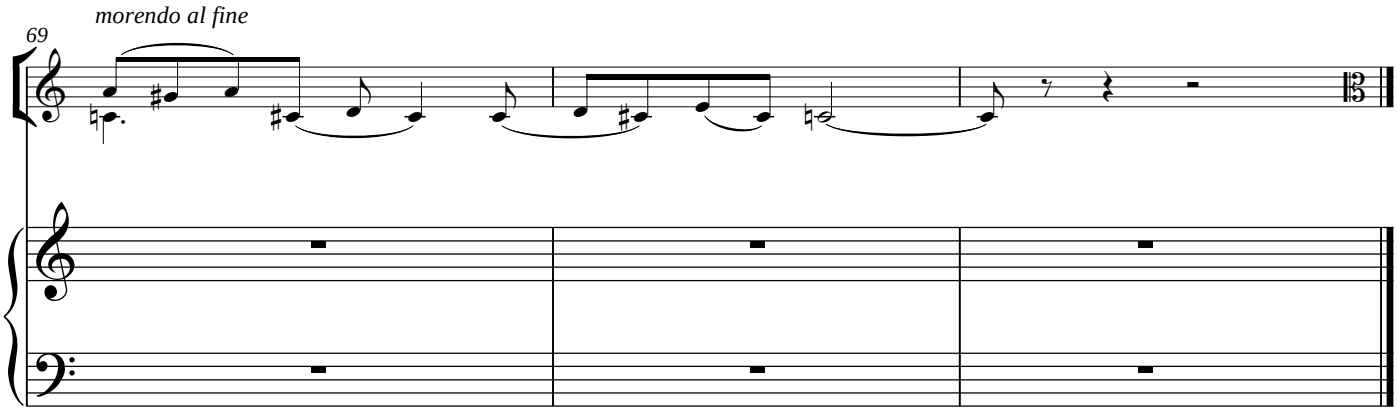

41
pizz.
arco
Più mosso ♩=90
45
48
Più mosso ♩=120
pizz.


53
arco
f
mf
p
Ped.
Half Tempo ♩=60
56
59

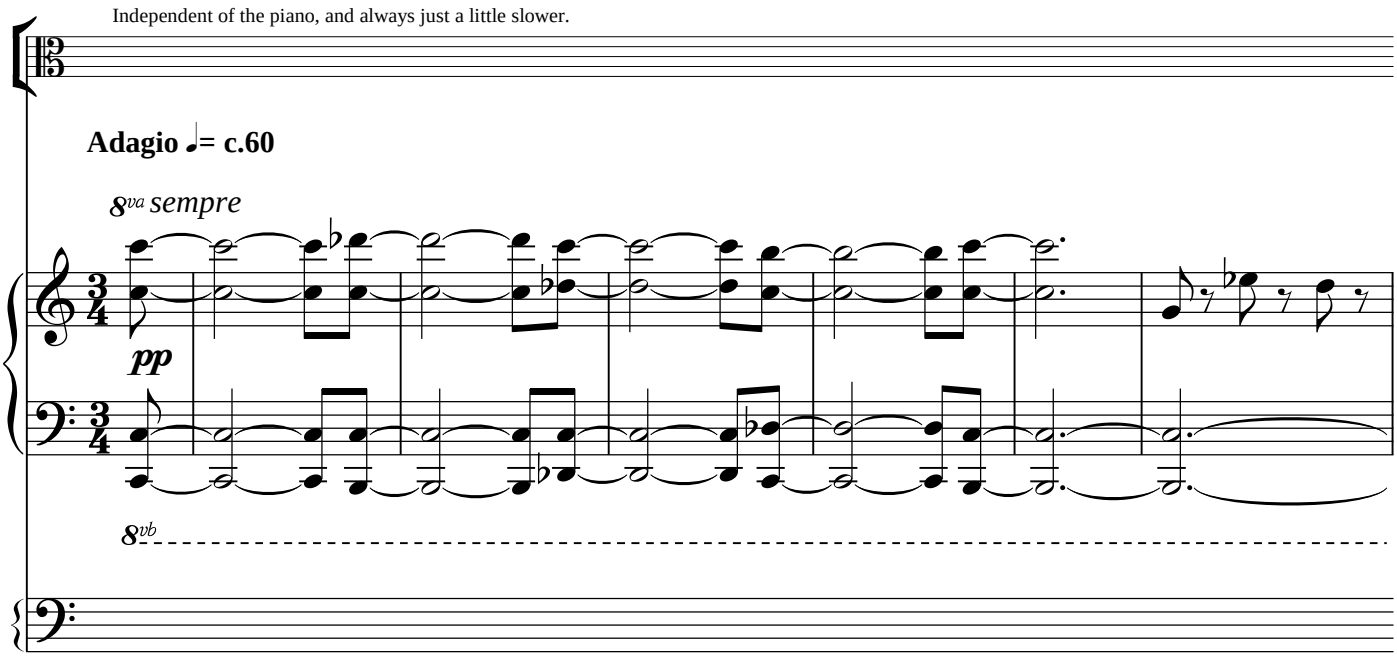

61
p
f

63
p
f
p

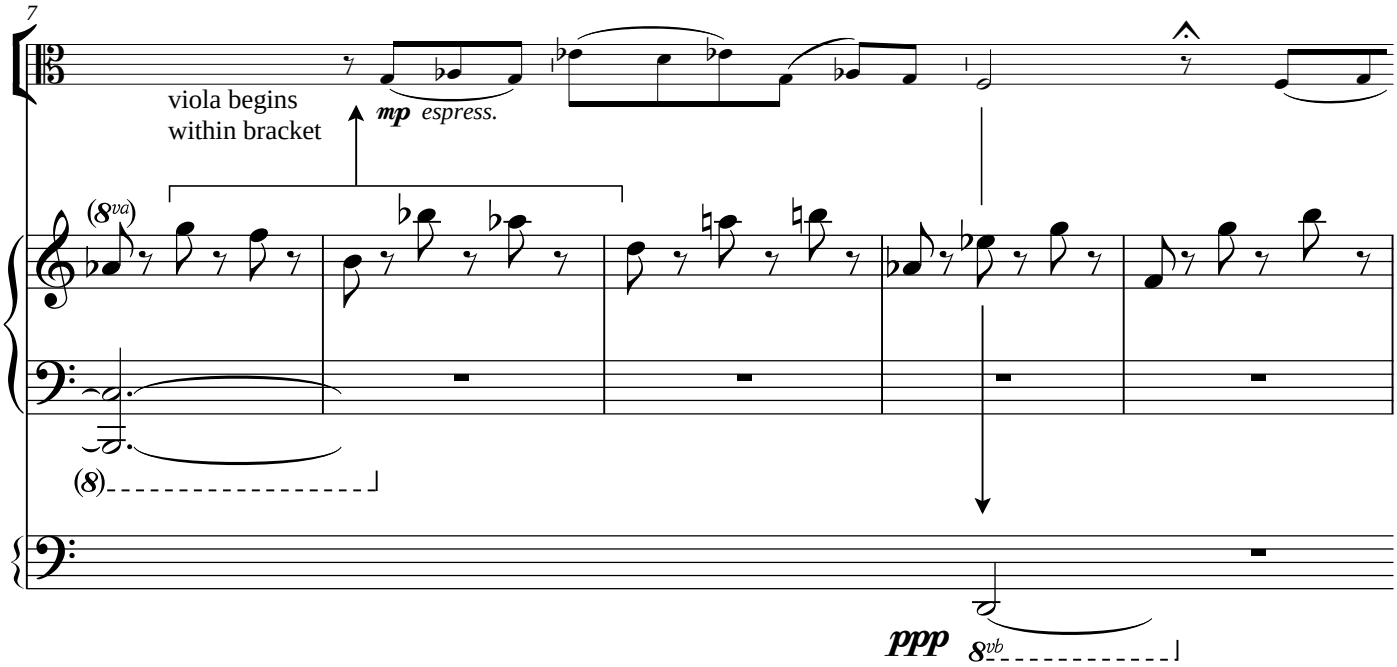

66

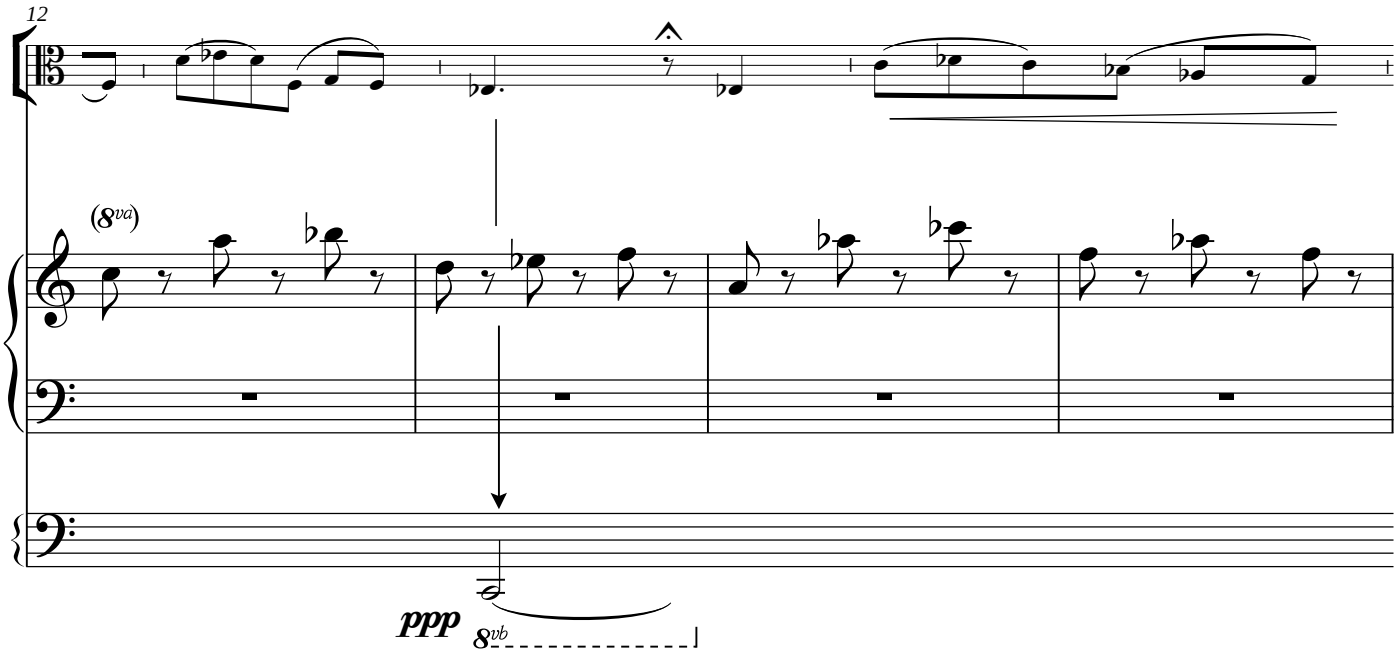


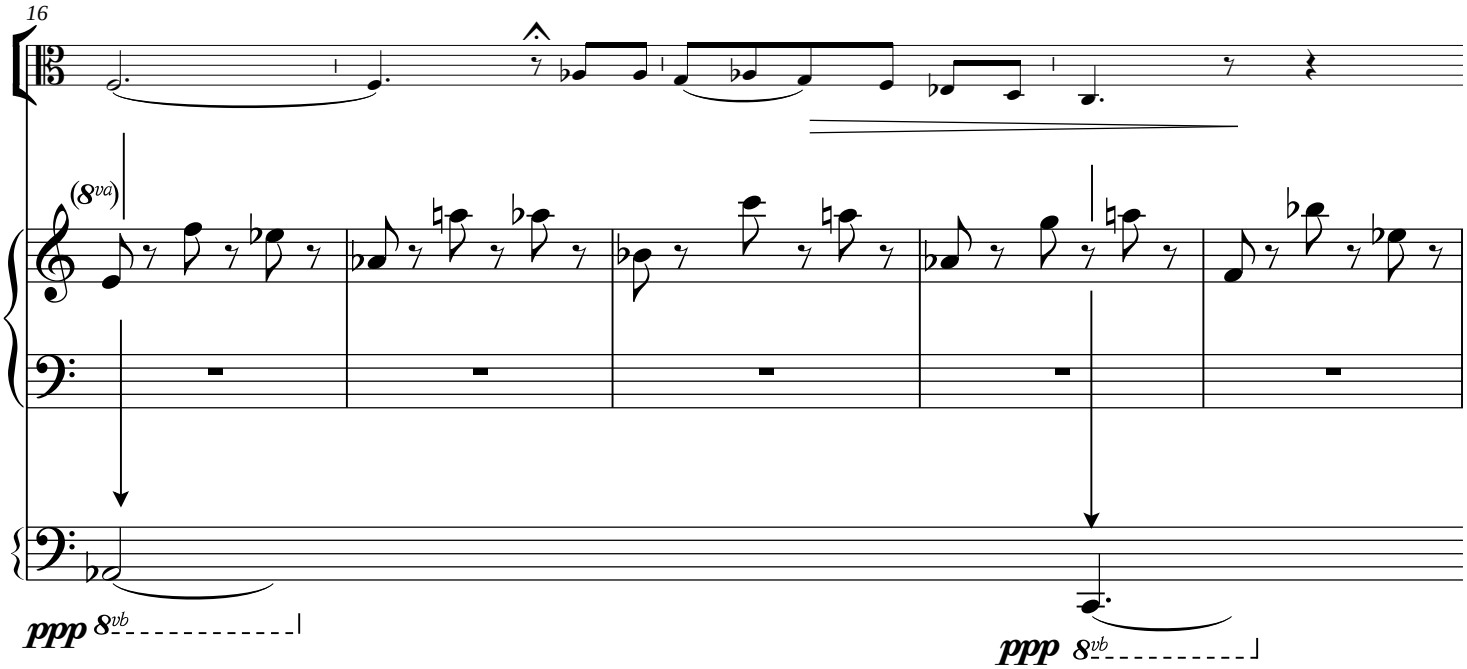
Nocturne 3

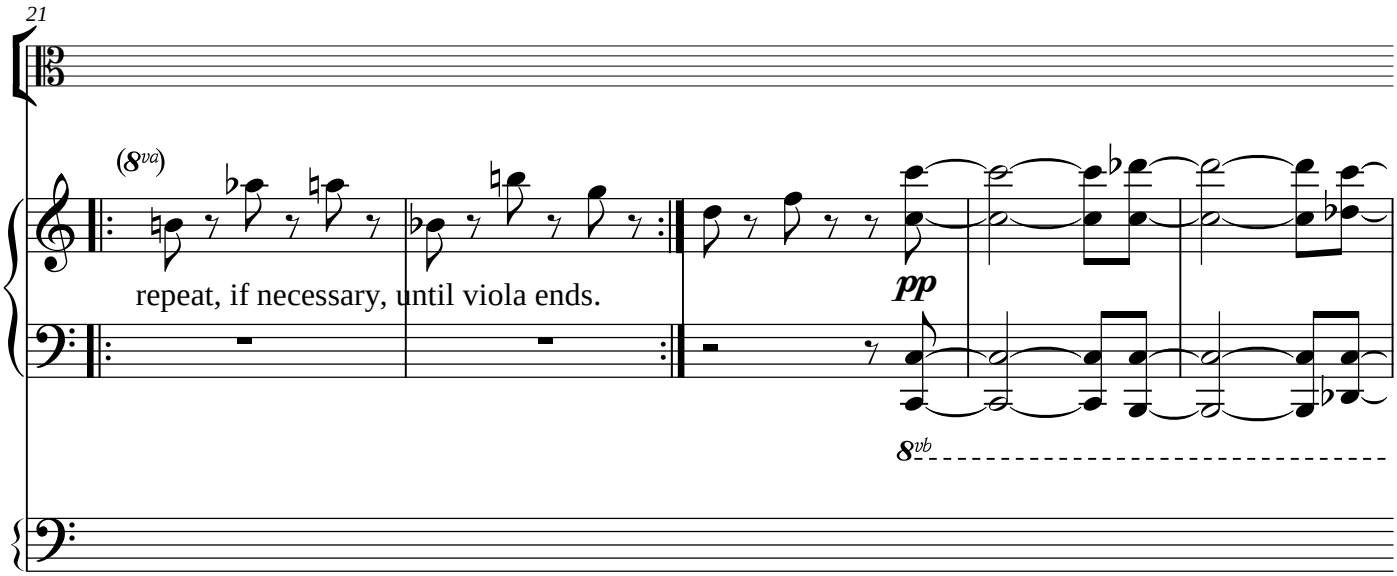


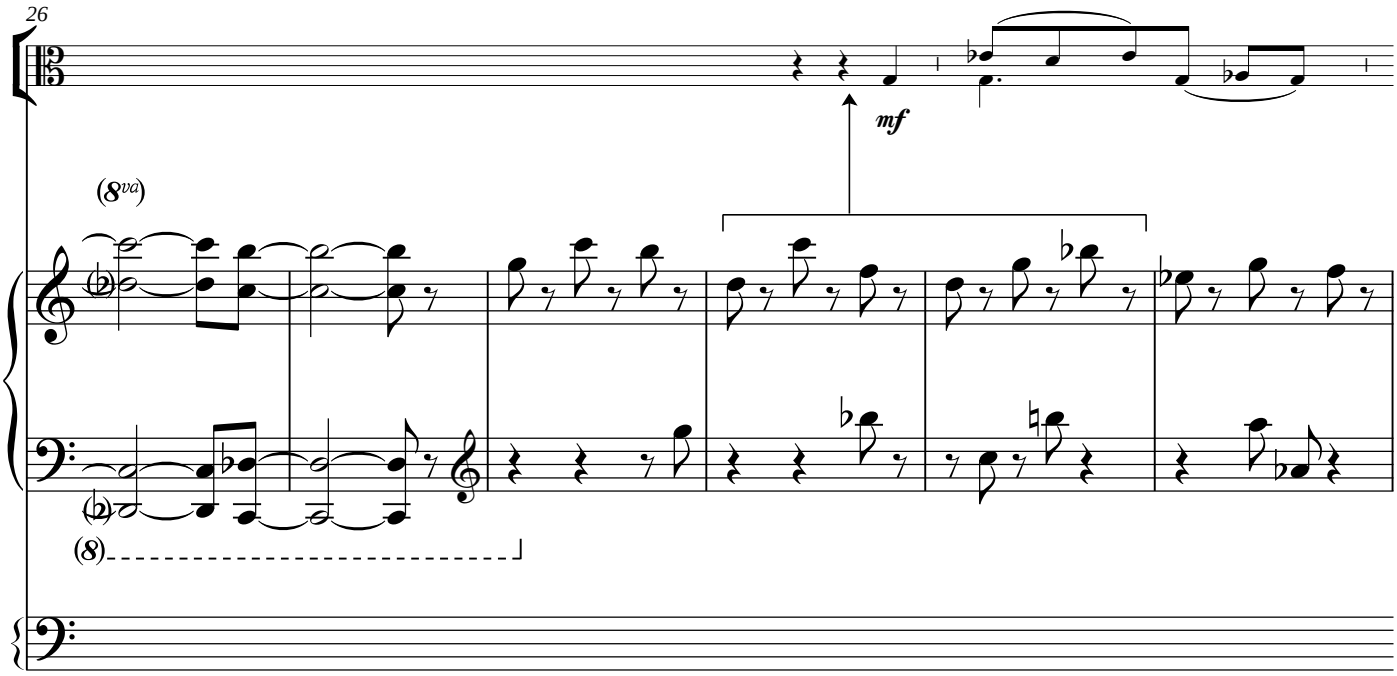
This stave 'cued' by the viola; play with the viola or as soon as possible afterwards.

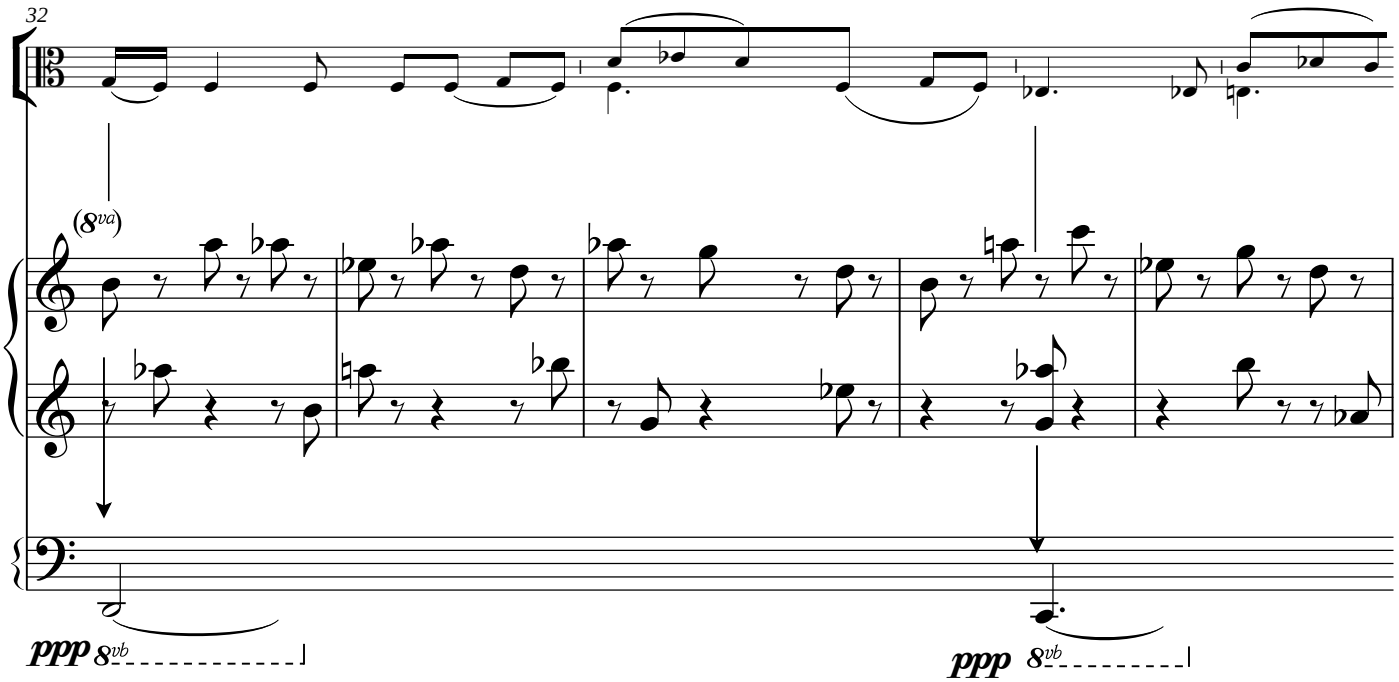


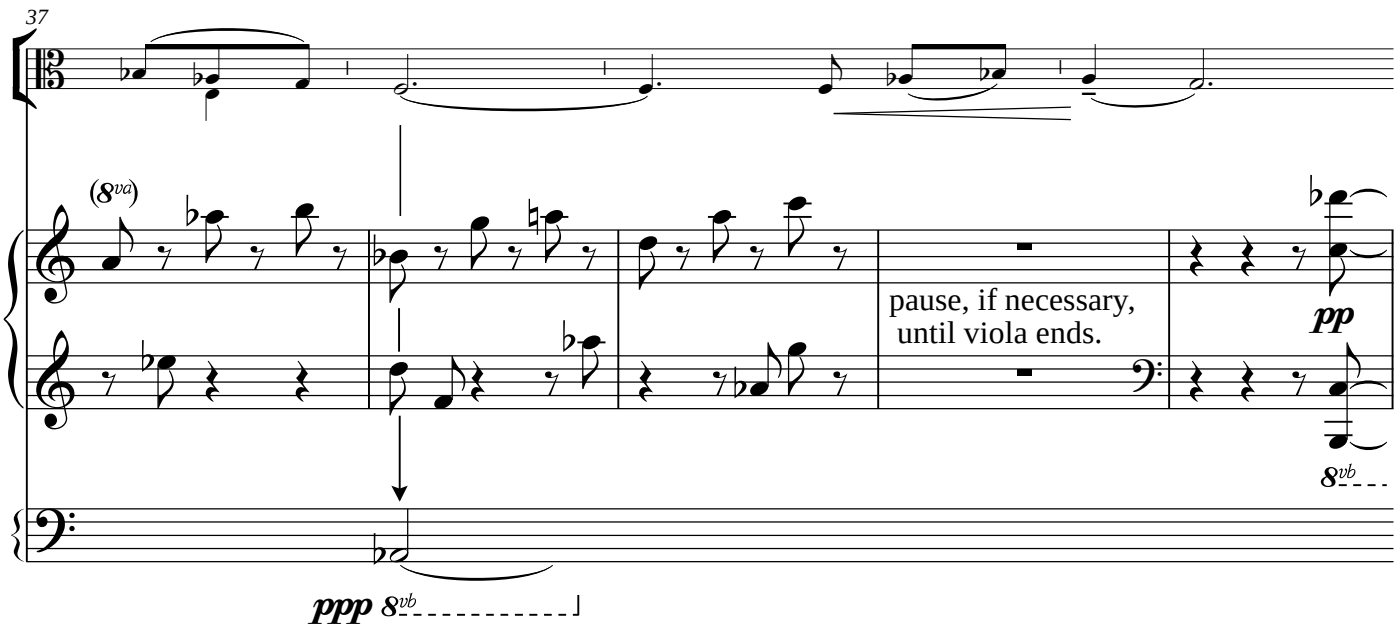

12
(8va)
ppp
8vb

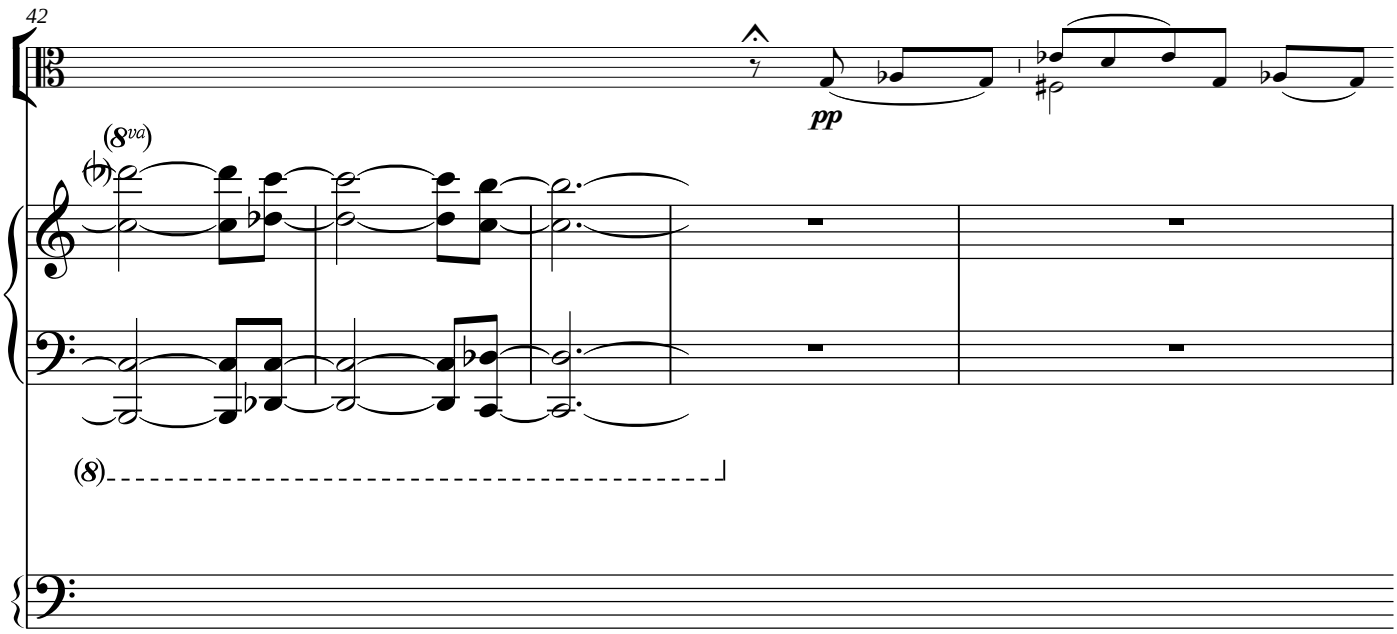

16
(8va)
ppp
8vb
ppp
8vb

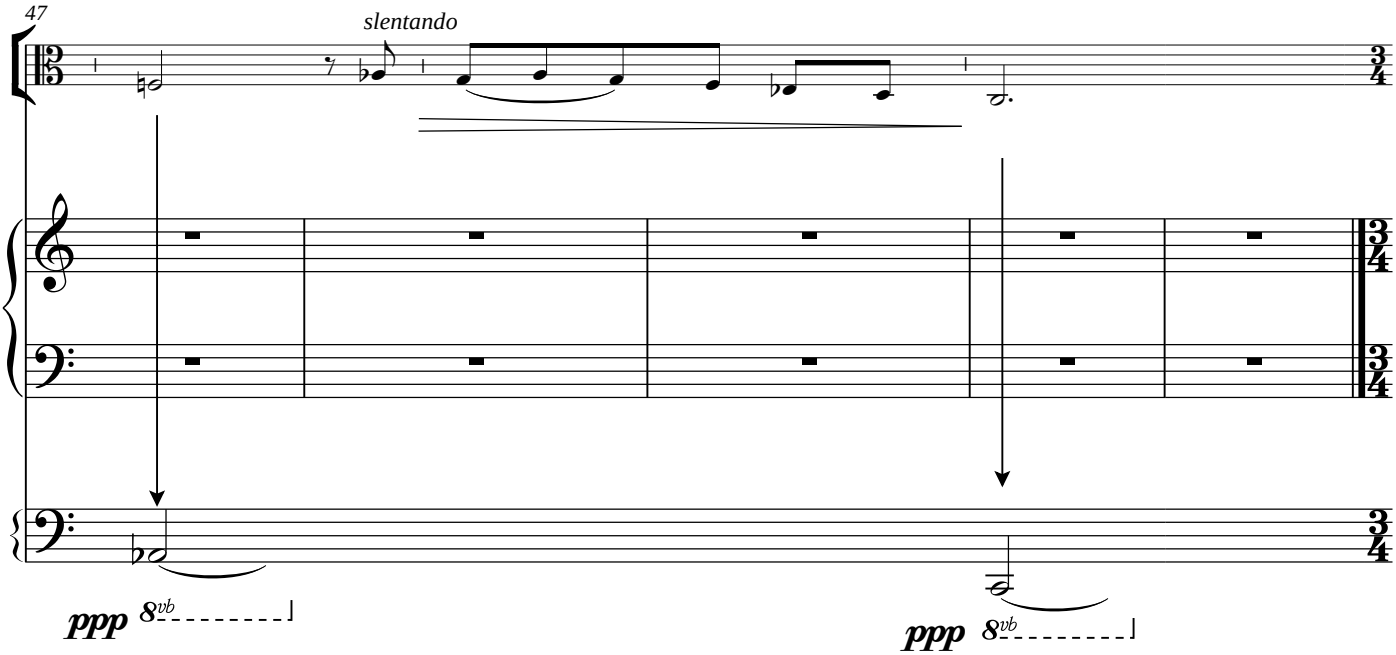

21
(8va)
repeat, if necessary, until viola ends.
pp
8vb


26
mf
(8va)
(8)

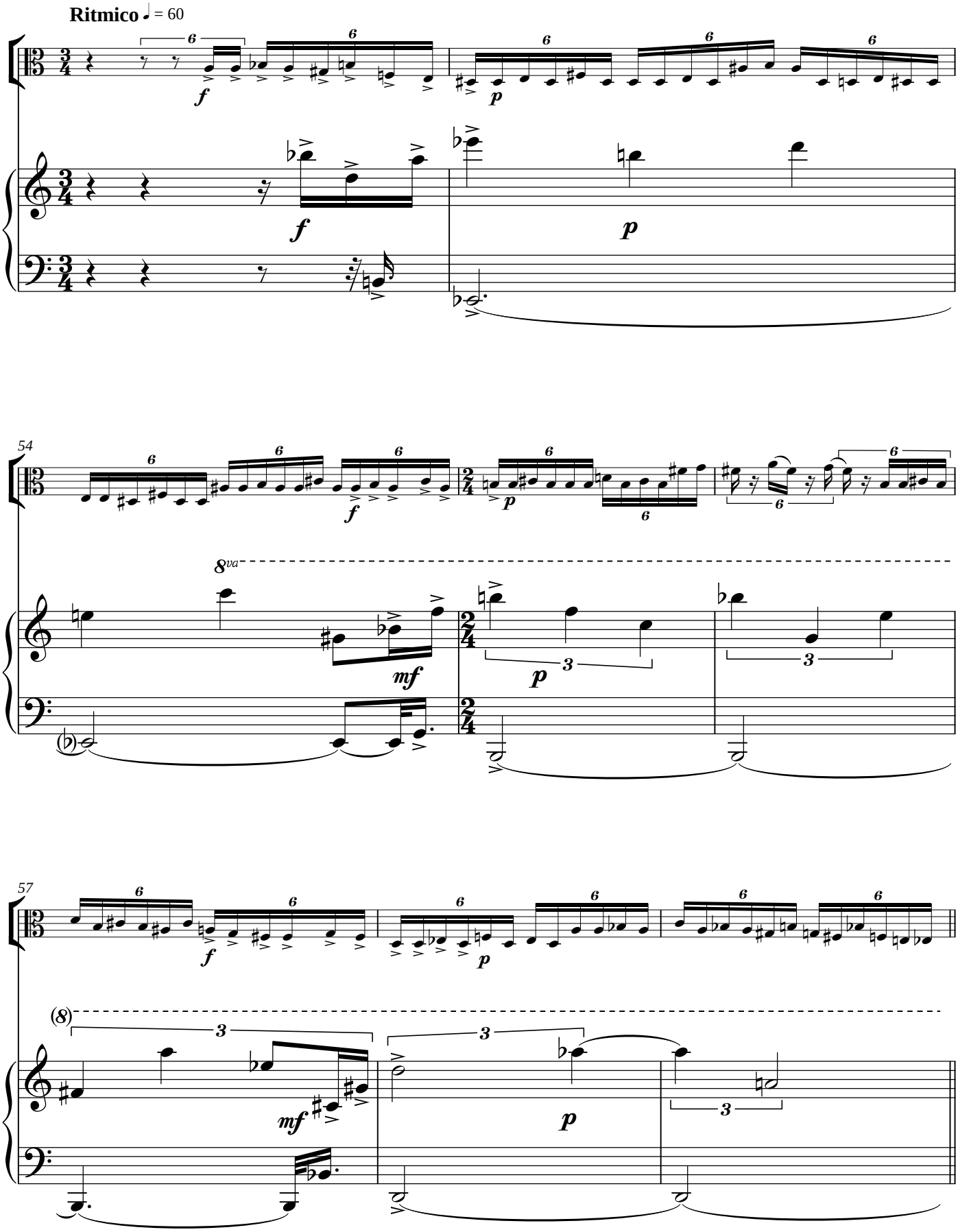

32
(8va)
ppp 8vb
ppp 8vb

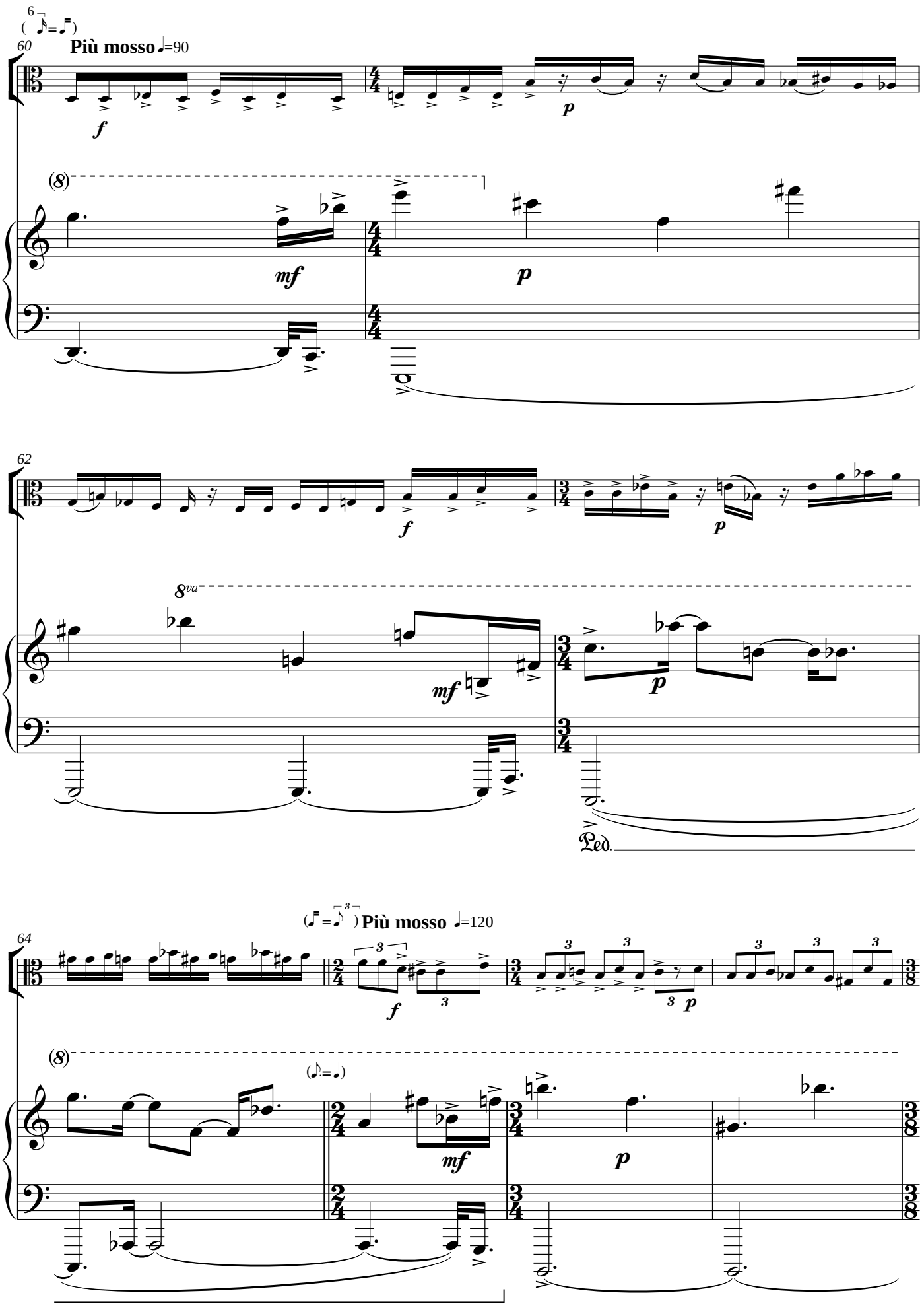

37
(8va)
pause, if necessary,
until viola ends.
pp
8vb
ppp 8vb

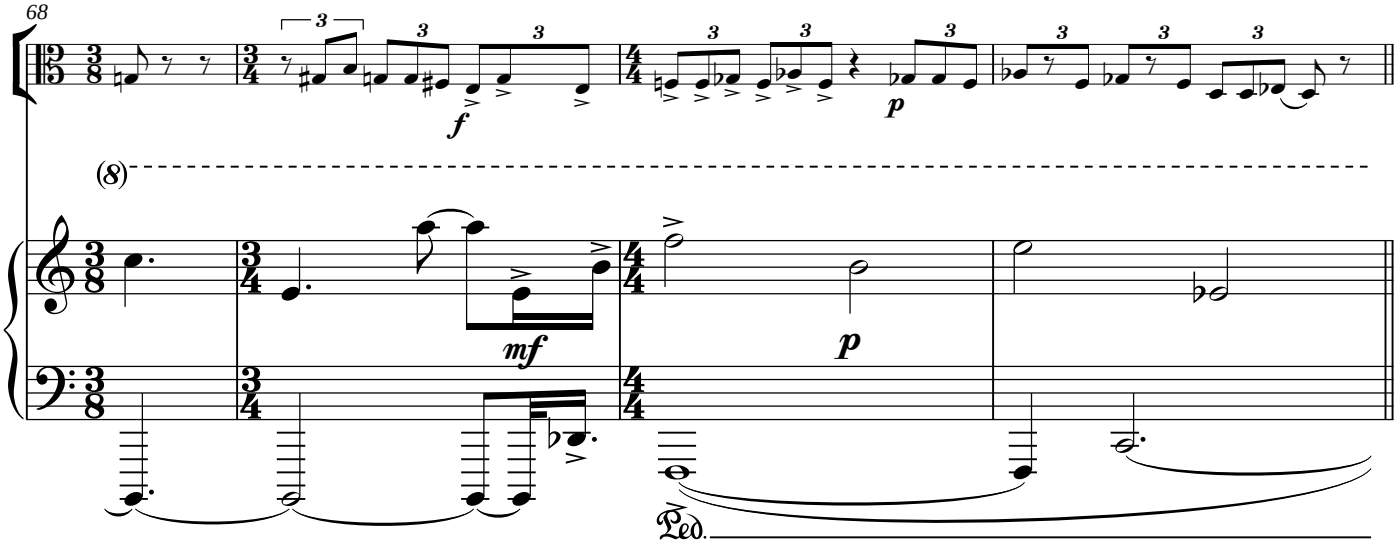

42
(8va)
pp
(8)

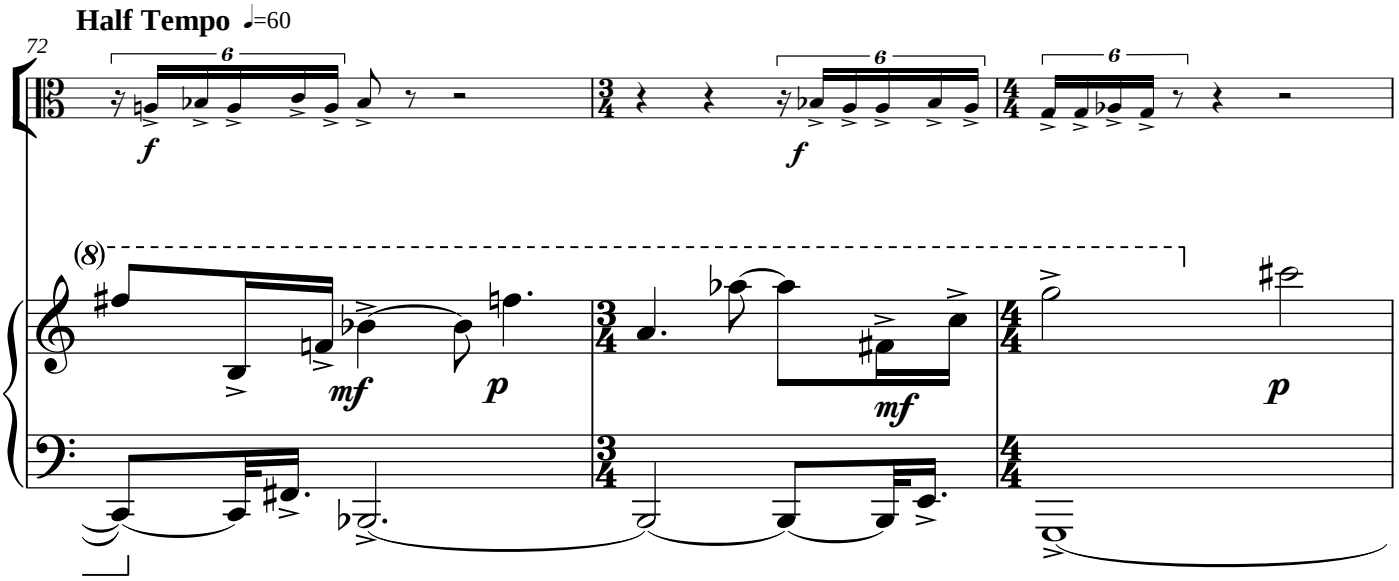

47
slentando
3/4
ppp 8vb
ppp 8vb

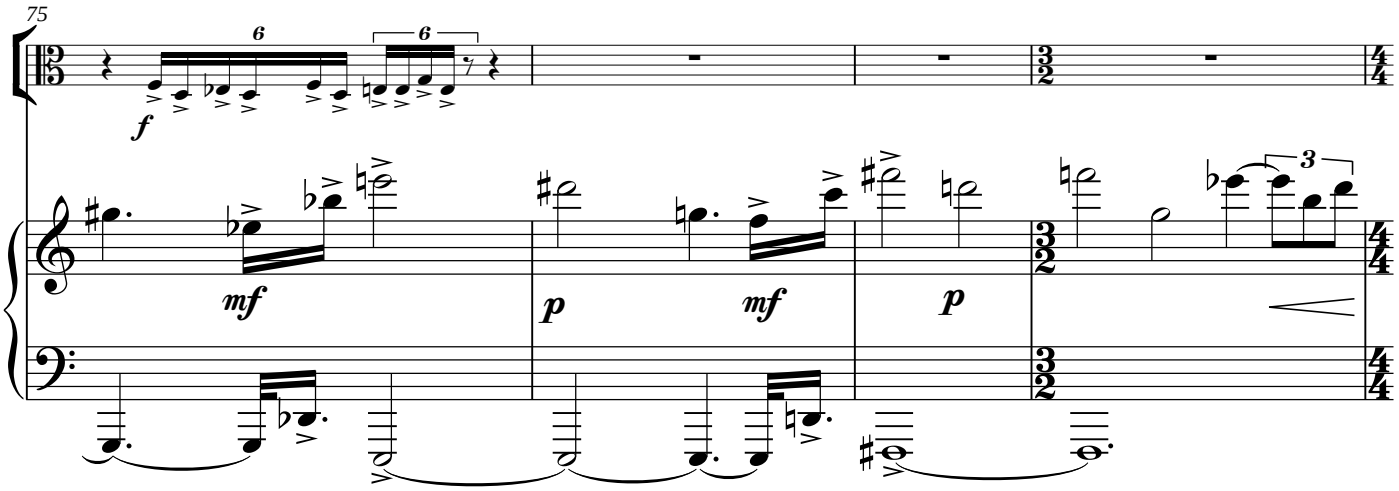
Nocture 4




60
Più mosso ♩=90
62
64
Più mosso ♩=120
Ped.


68
(8)
Ped.


Half Tempo ♩=60
72
(8)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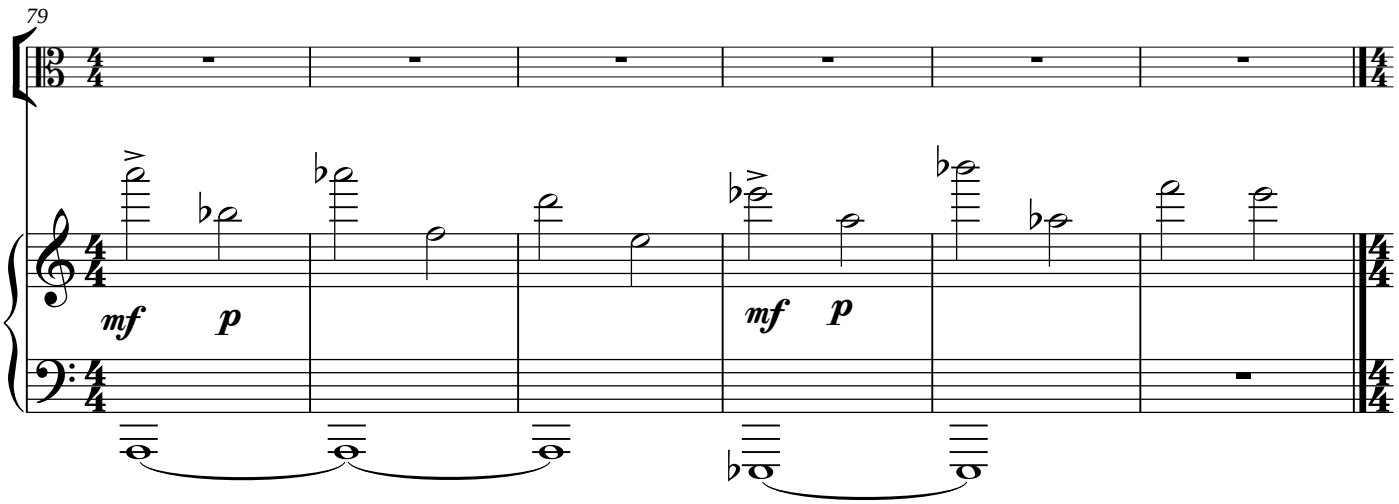
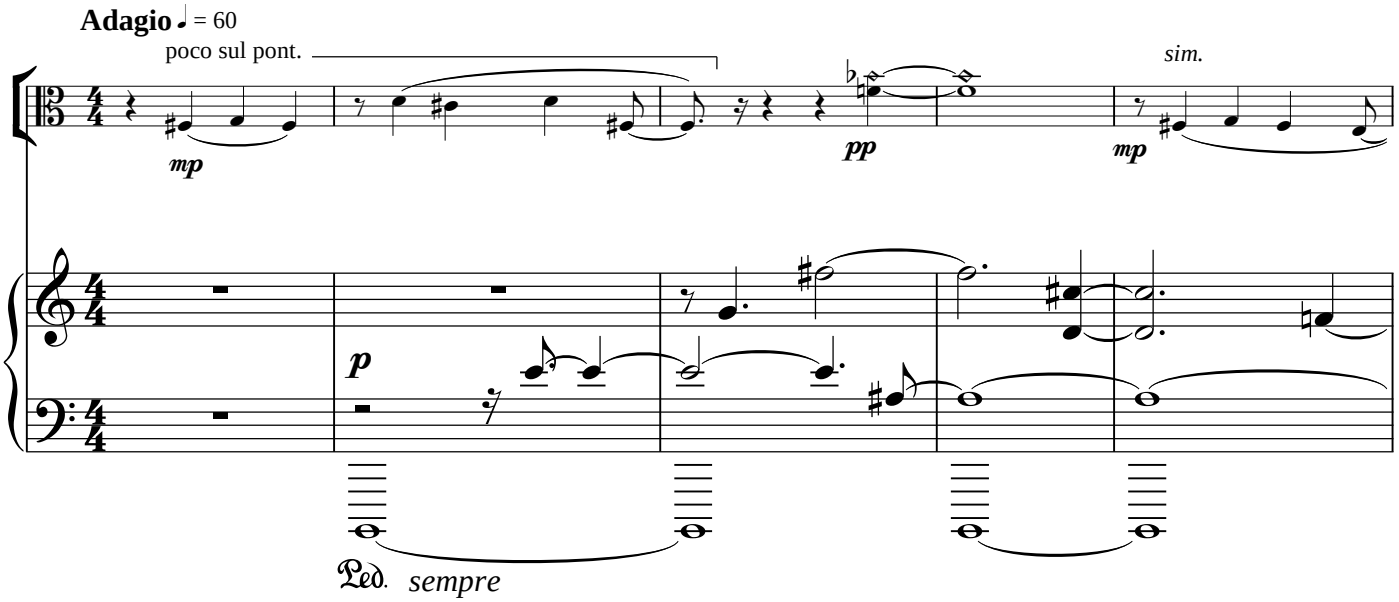
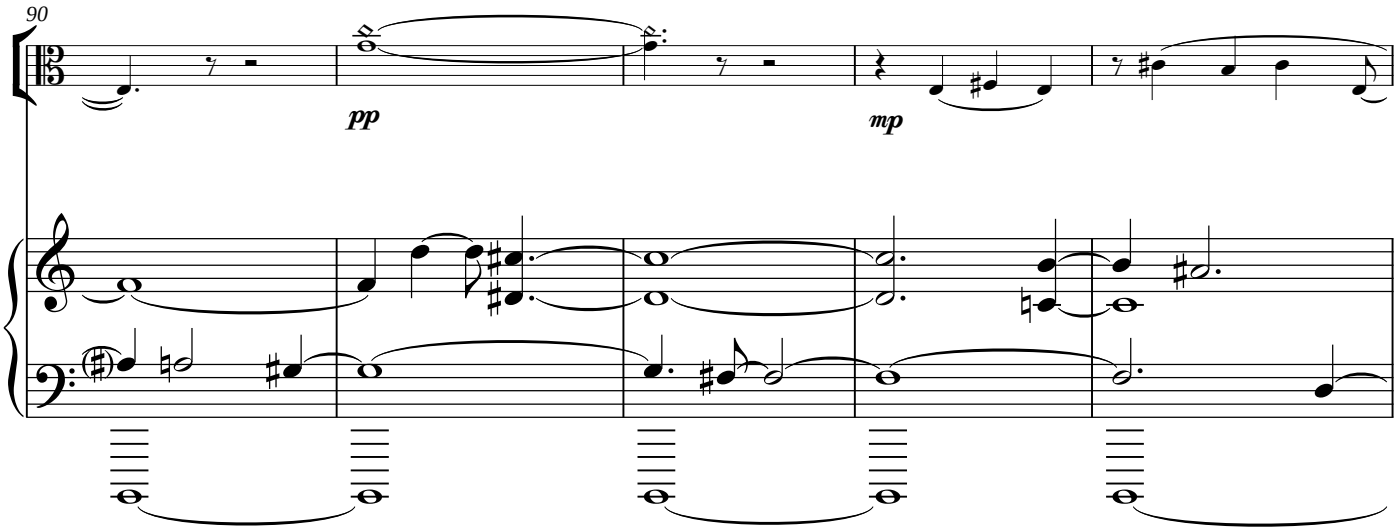
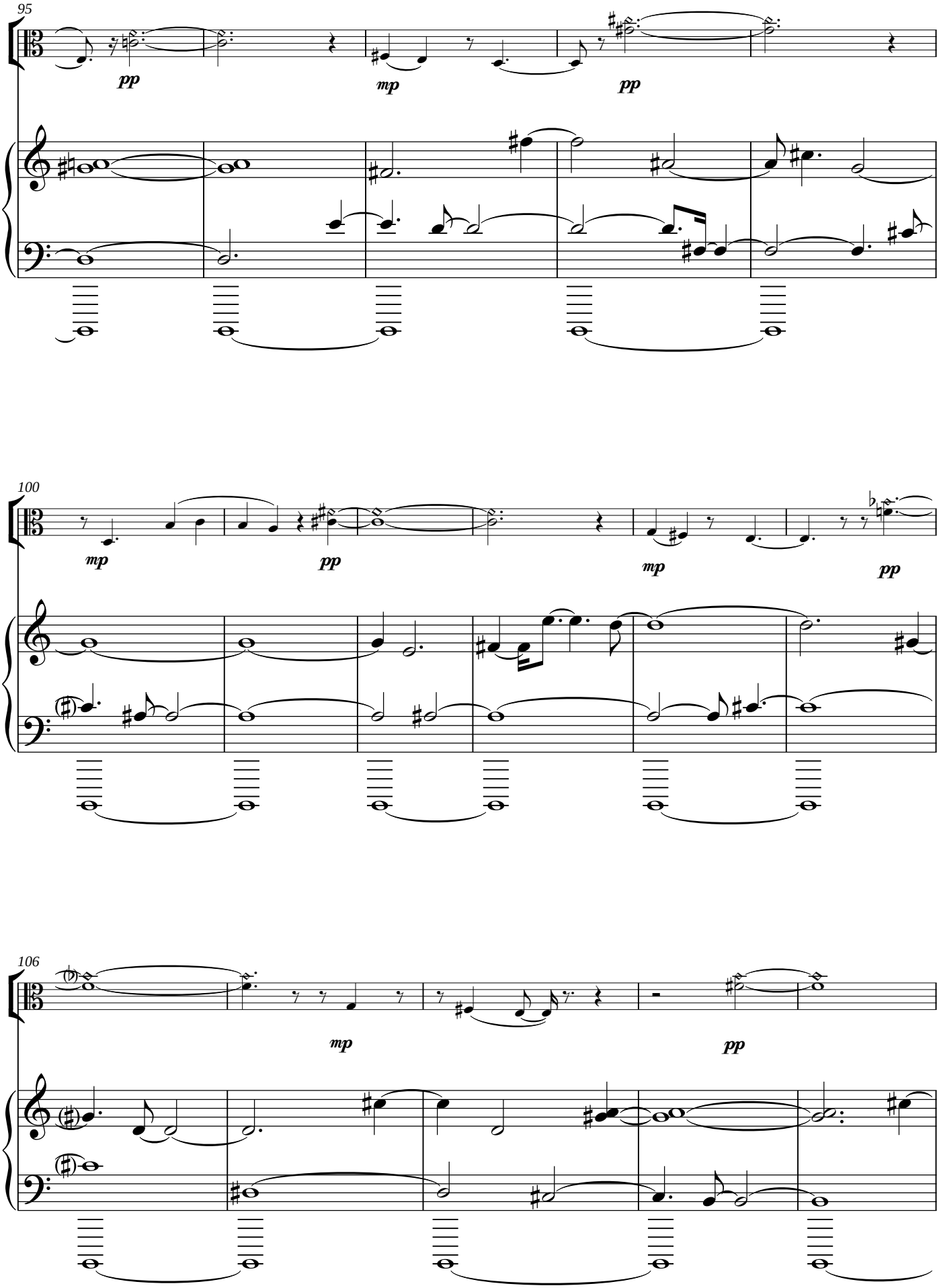
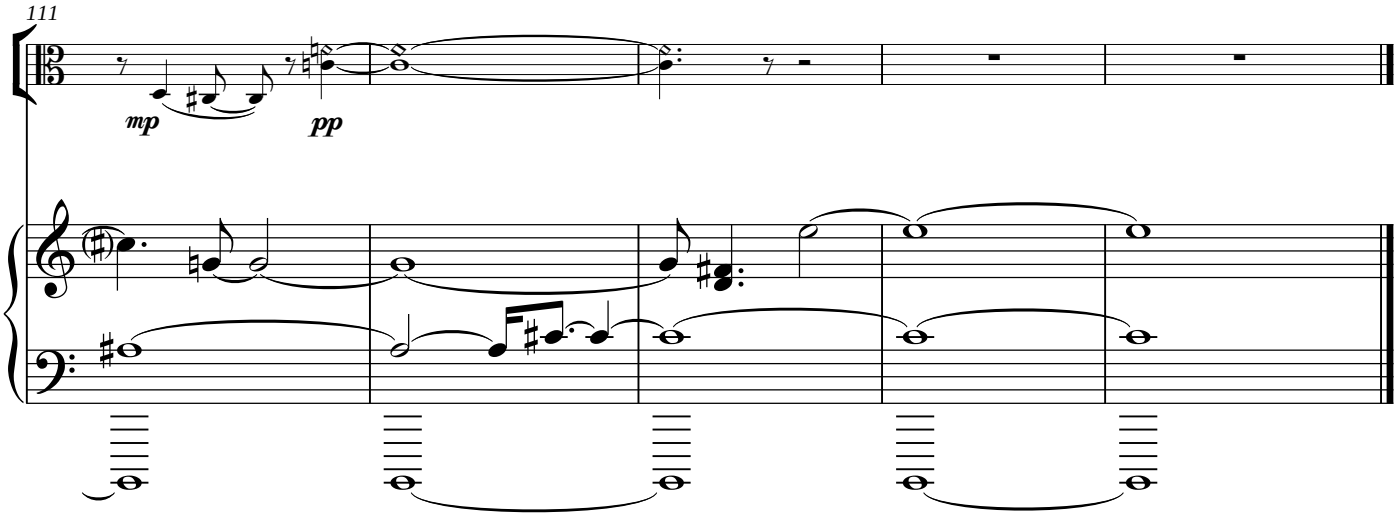

79
mf
p
mf
p

Nocturne 5

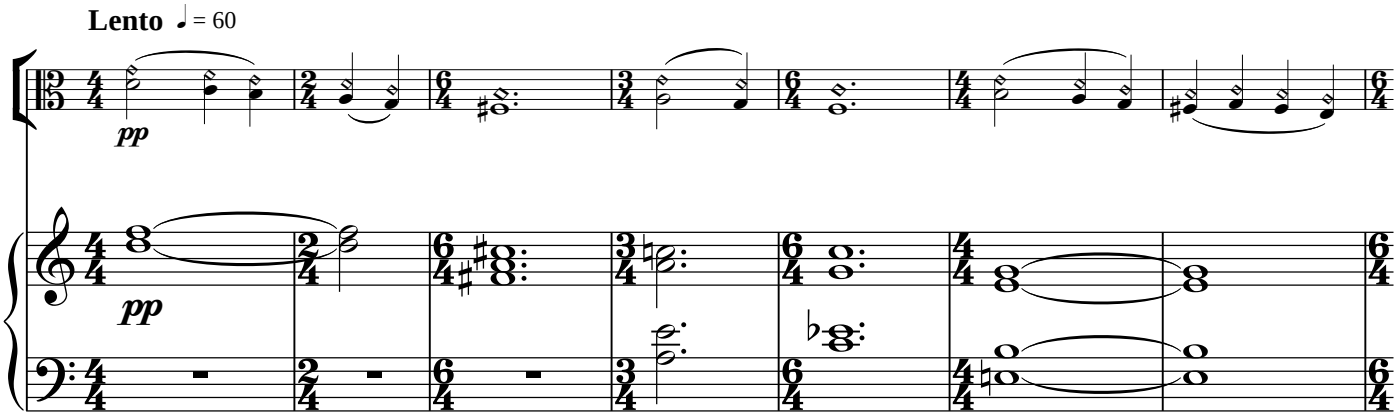

Adagio ♩ = 60
poco sul pont.
mp
pp
mp
sim.
p
Ped.
sempre

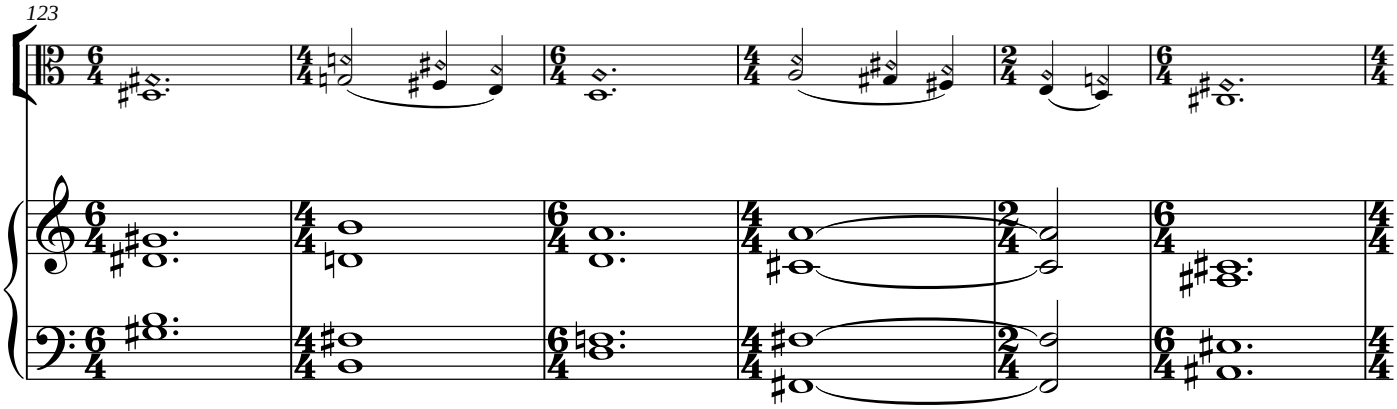

90
pp
mp

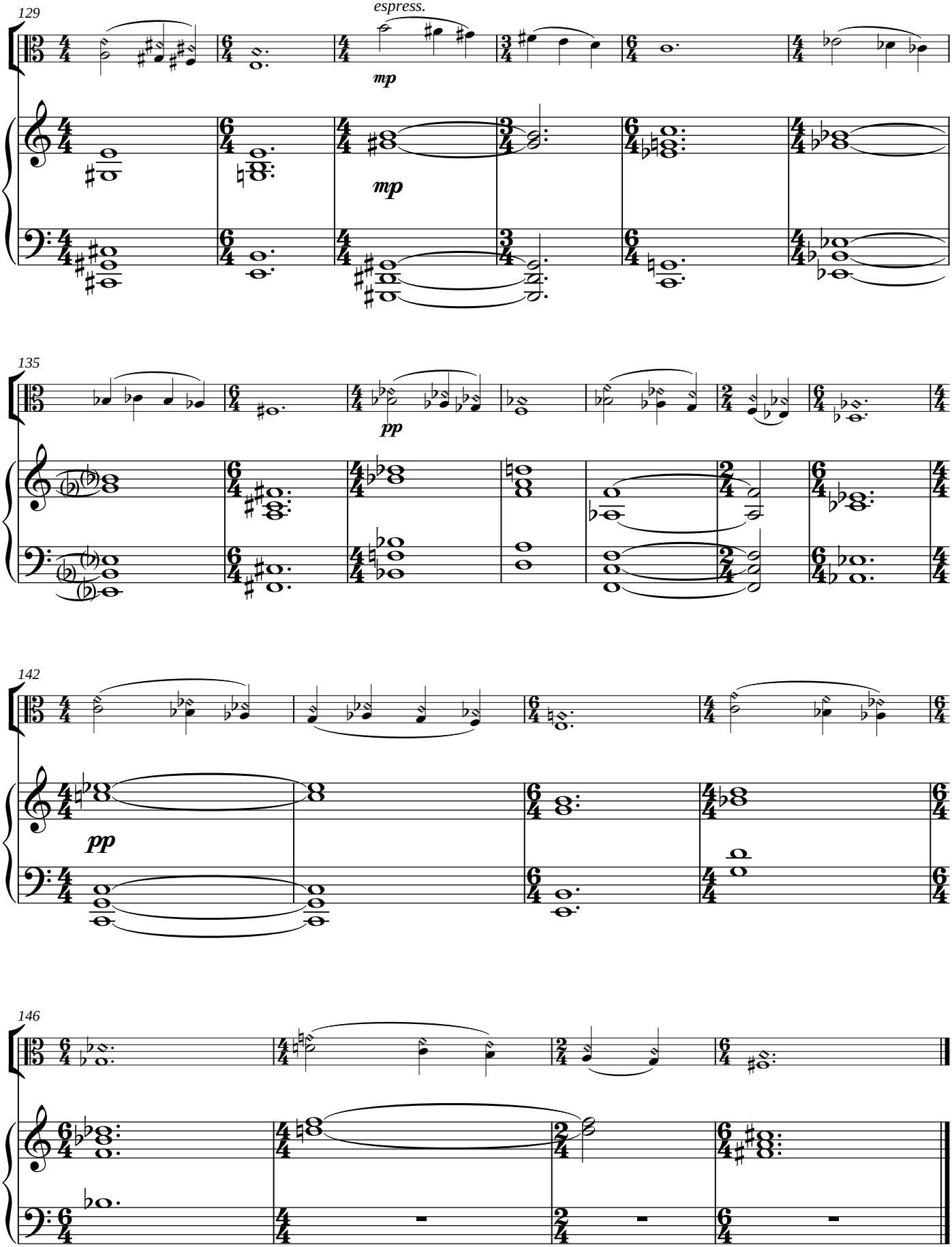

95
pp
mp
pp
100
mp
pp
mp
pp
106
mp
pp



Nocturne 6






129
espress.
mp
mp
135
pp
142
pp
146