Microludes for *'The Black Path'*

for string quartet

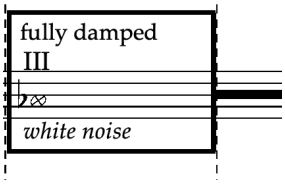
Cameron McArthur

January 2024

Microludes for *'The Black Path'*

Performance Notes/Notation

Boxed notation - repeat contents of box for duration of black line. Make decisions about rests, phrasing, and rhythmic cells where appropriate.



Triangle notehead - 'as high as possible' - precise pitch is unimportant; play as high as physically possible.

Square notehead - approximate pitch/unspecified pitch.

s.t. – sul tasto – bow closer to fingerboard.

s.p. – sul ponticello – bow closer to bridge.

m.s.p. – molto sul ponticello – bow very close to the bridge.

x.s.p. – estremamente sul pont – bow on the bridge (little to no pitch).

Overpressure – the thicker the black mark, the heavier the bow pressure.

Circular bowing – move the bow in a circle shape. The speed of the movement is at the performer's discretion, unless otherwise indicated. In general, a steady, consistent motion is preferred.

Notes on the Music

This set of microludes is built from the remnants of an earlier string quartet of mine, *The Black Path*. That piece is inspired by an arresting, desolate, semi-wild track that is carved out amongst the heavy industry on the river Tees. The piece itself is crammed full of unexplored ideas - throughout the music, there are shapes and figures that are never fully revealed, musical expectations that remain unfulfilled, and a sense of energy that can change in a heartbeat. These microludes explore those left-behind gestures, shapes, and figures, creating a new work from the material that was originally cast away.

Composer Biography

Cameron McArthur (b. 1997) is a composer and multi-instrumentalist from the North-East of England.

His work focuses upon the experience of momentum in music, as well as ideas around perception, implication, and expectation. He is a currently exploring these topics as part of a PhD at the University of York, under the tutelage of Thomas Simaku and Martin Suckling.

Recent performances of his music have taken place at Convergence @ DMU, Twisted Spruce Foundation, Sound Thought Festival, and The Arc Project. Current and past collaborators include Psappha, Ensemble Intercontemporain, Diotima Quartet, Ligeti Quartet, Terra Invisus, and more.

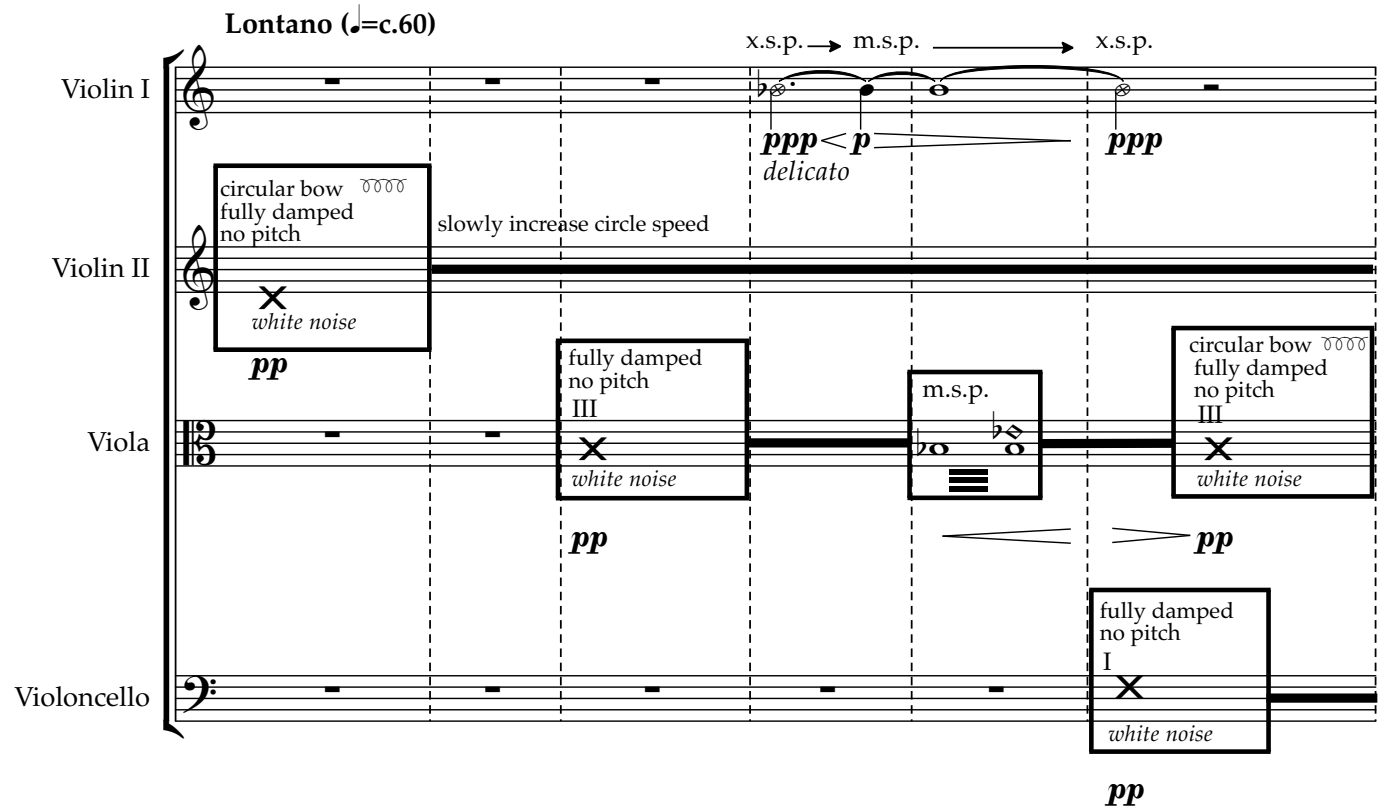
This page is left blank to facilitate page turns.

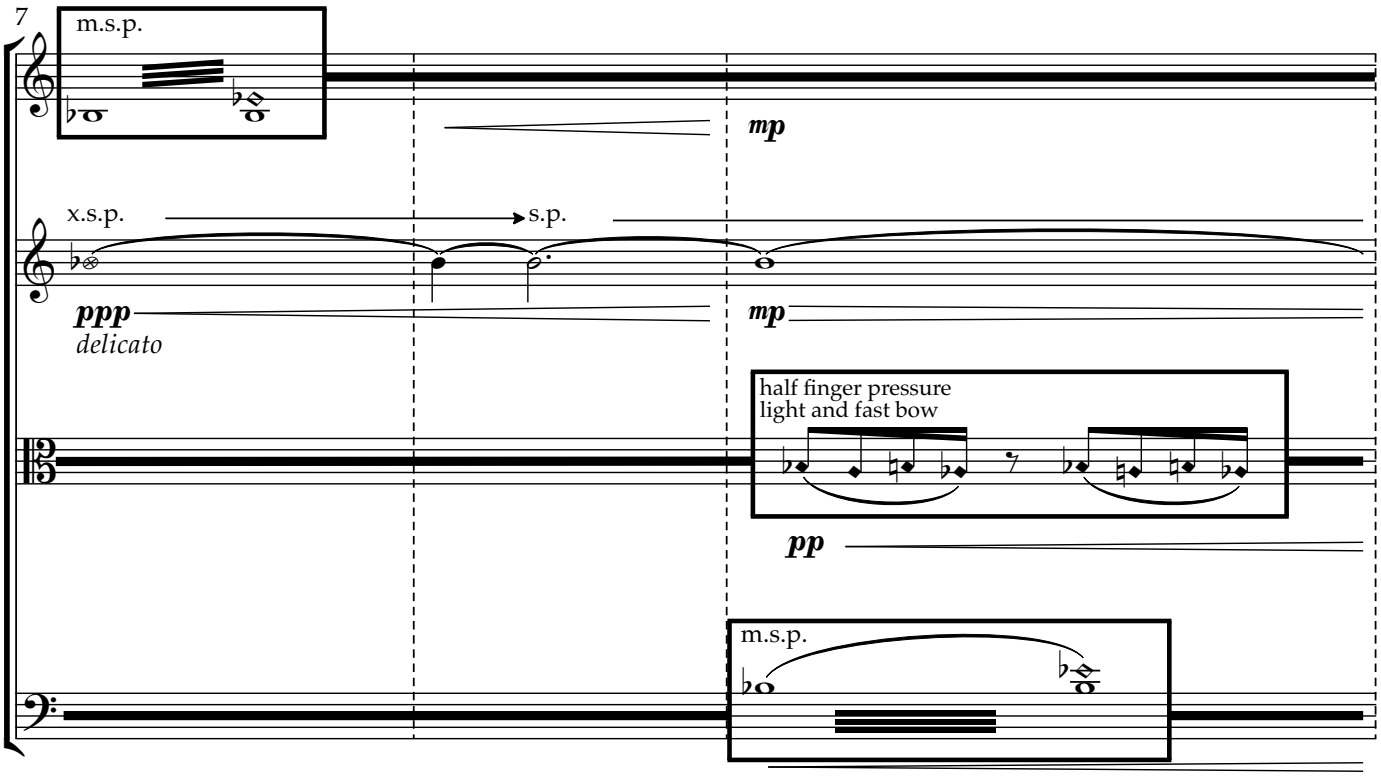
Microludes for *'The Black Path'*

for String Quartet

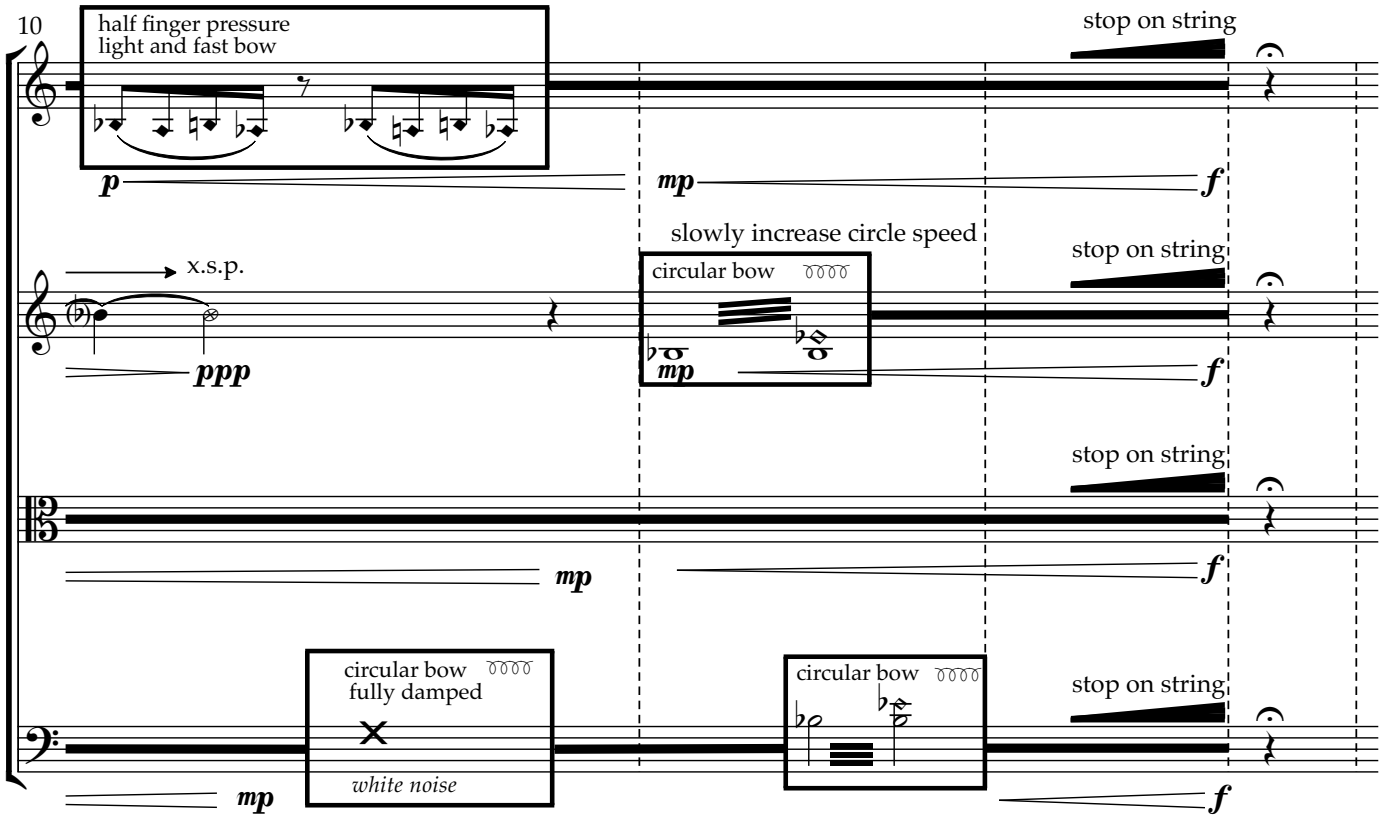
Cameron McArthur

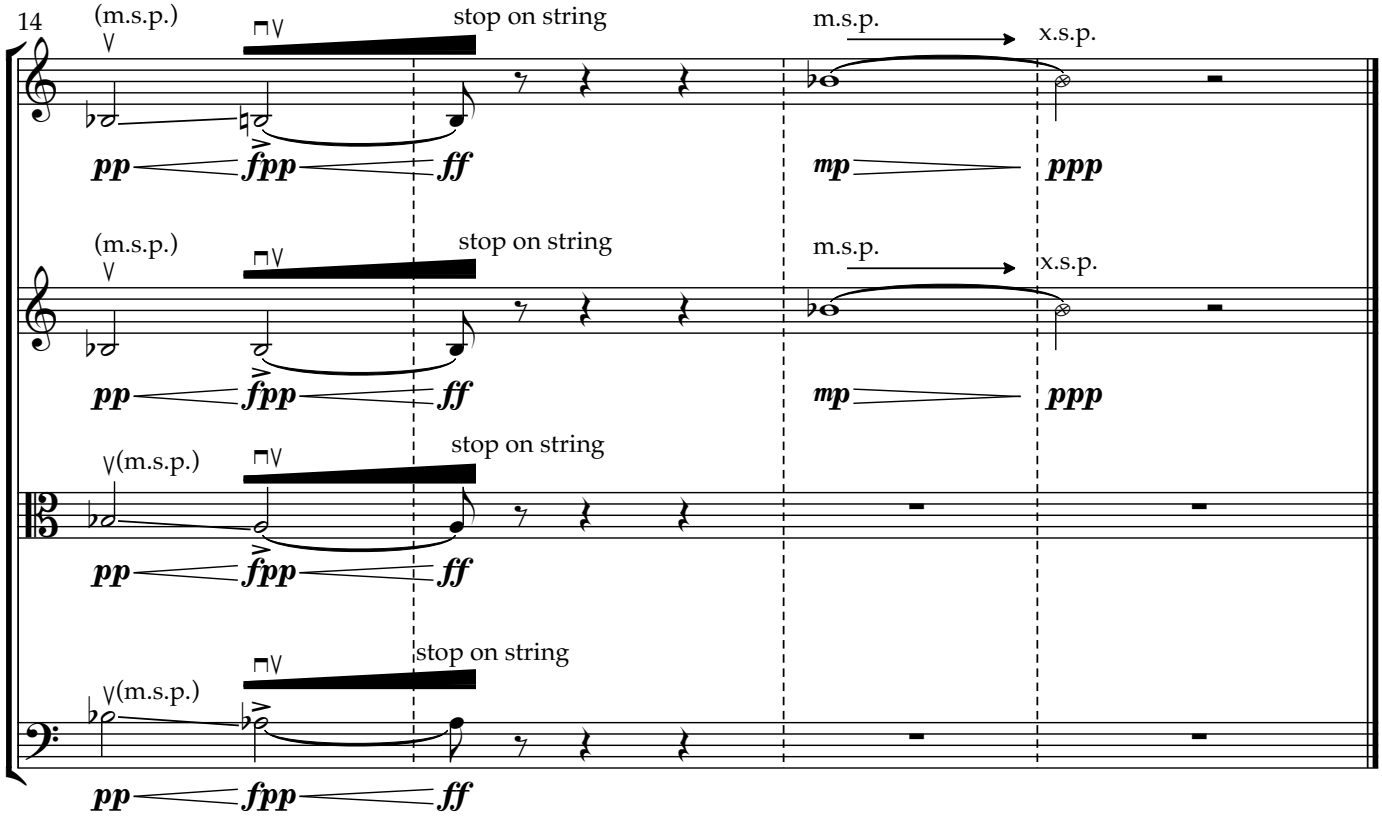
1. Prelude



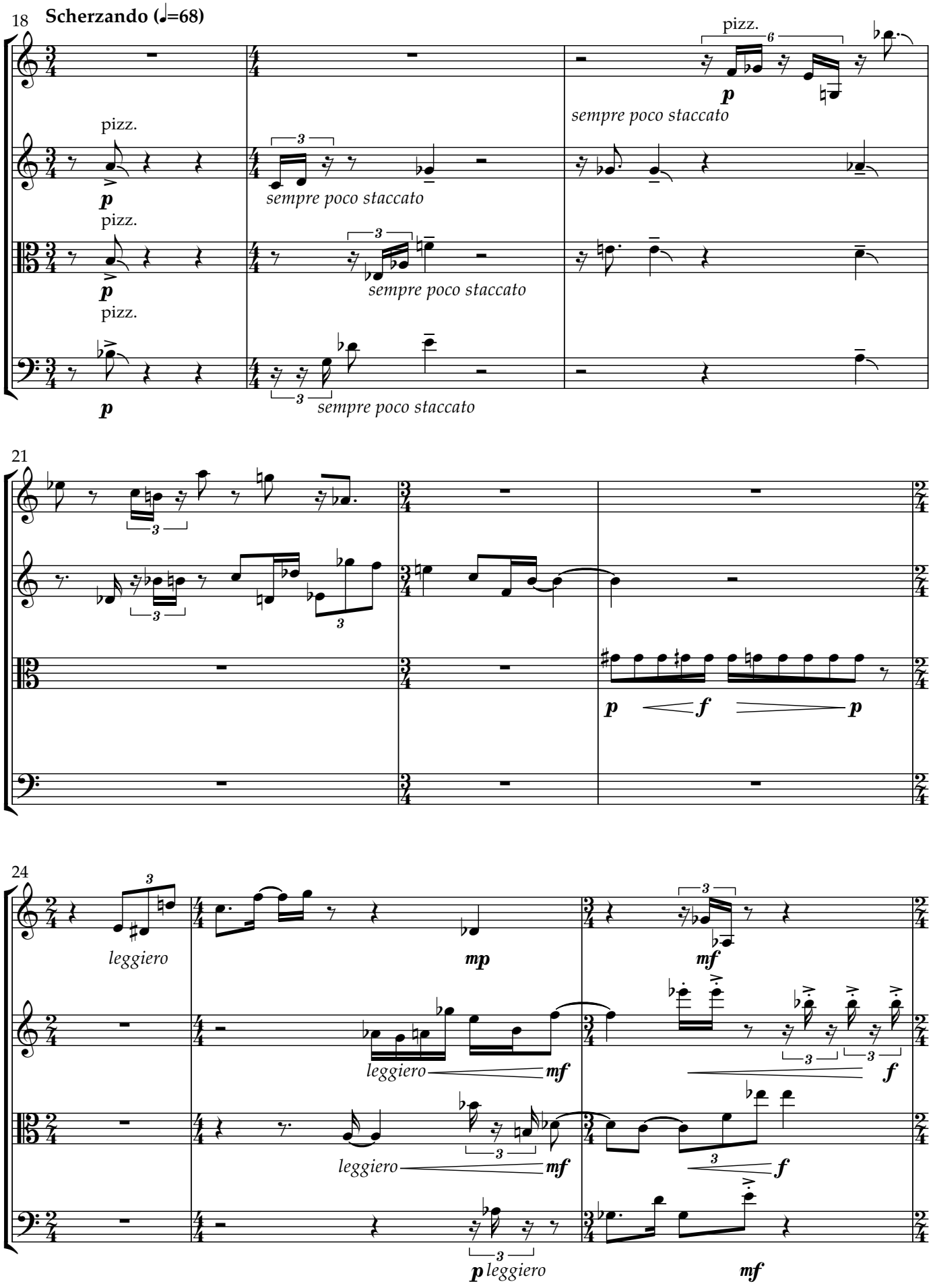


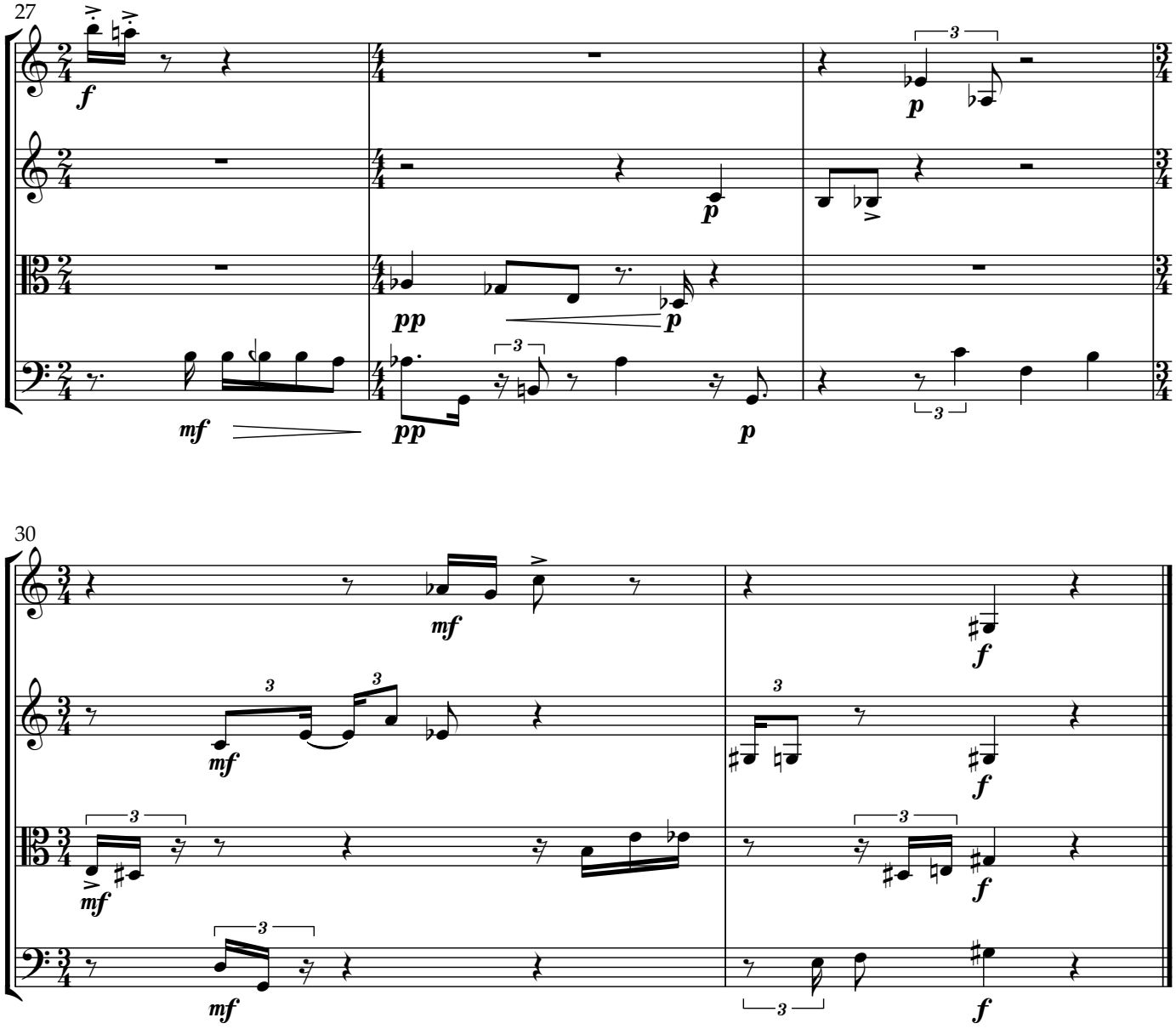
Copyright © 2024 by C McArthur


10
half finger pressure
light and fast bow
stop on string
p
mp
f
slowly increase circle speed
x.s.p.
circular bow
stop on string
ppp
mp
f
stop on string
mp
f
circular bow
fully damped
white noise
circular bow
stop on string
mp
f


14
(m.s.p.)
stop on string
m.s.p.
x.s.p.
pp
fpp
ff
mp
ppp
(m.s.p.)
stop on string
m.s.p.
x.s.p.
pp
fpp
ff
mp
ppp
(m.s.p.)
stop on string
pp
fpp
ff
stop on string
(m.s.p.)
pp
fpp
ff

2. Unfollowed Path #1




27
30

3. Interlude

Glistening ♩=96

32

norm.
arco

pp

norm.
arco

pp

norm.
arco

I

pp

arco

norm.

p

espress.

36

f

p

ff

p

pp

f

p

ff

p

pp

f

p

ff

p

pp

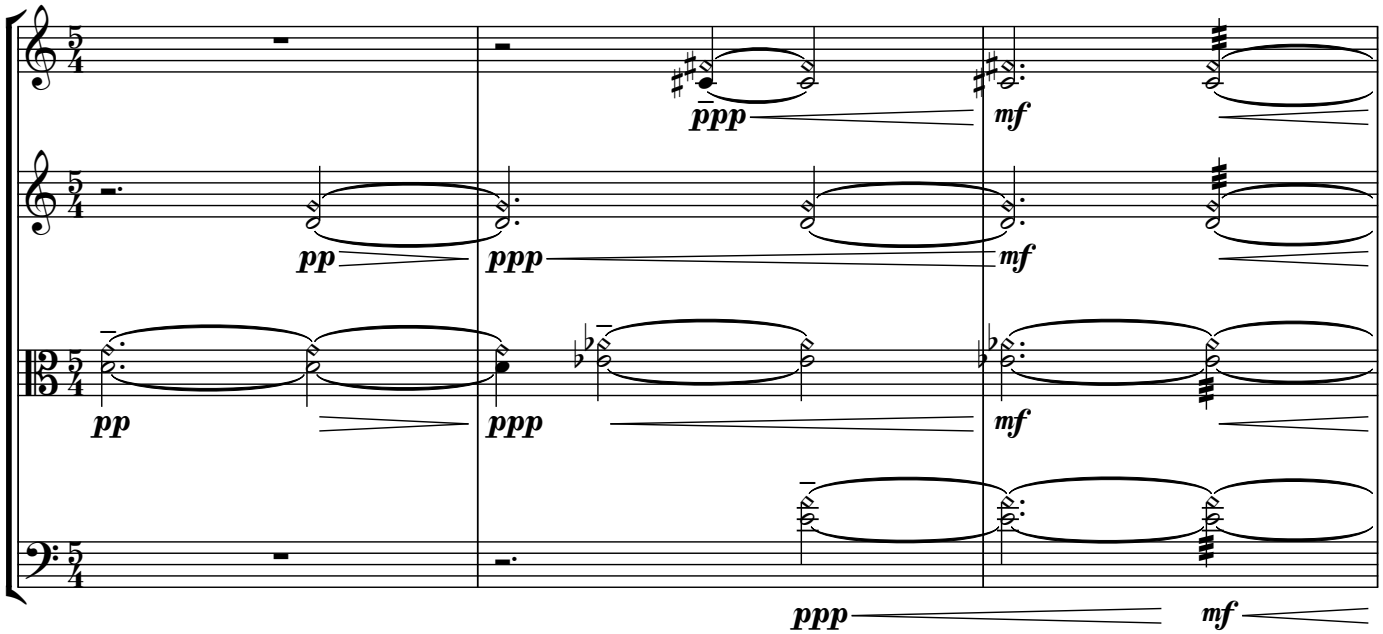
f

p

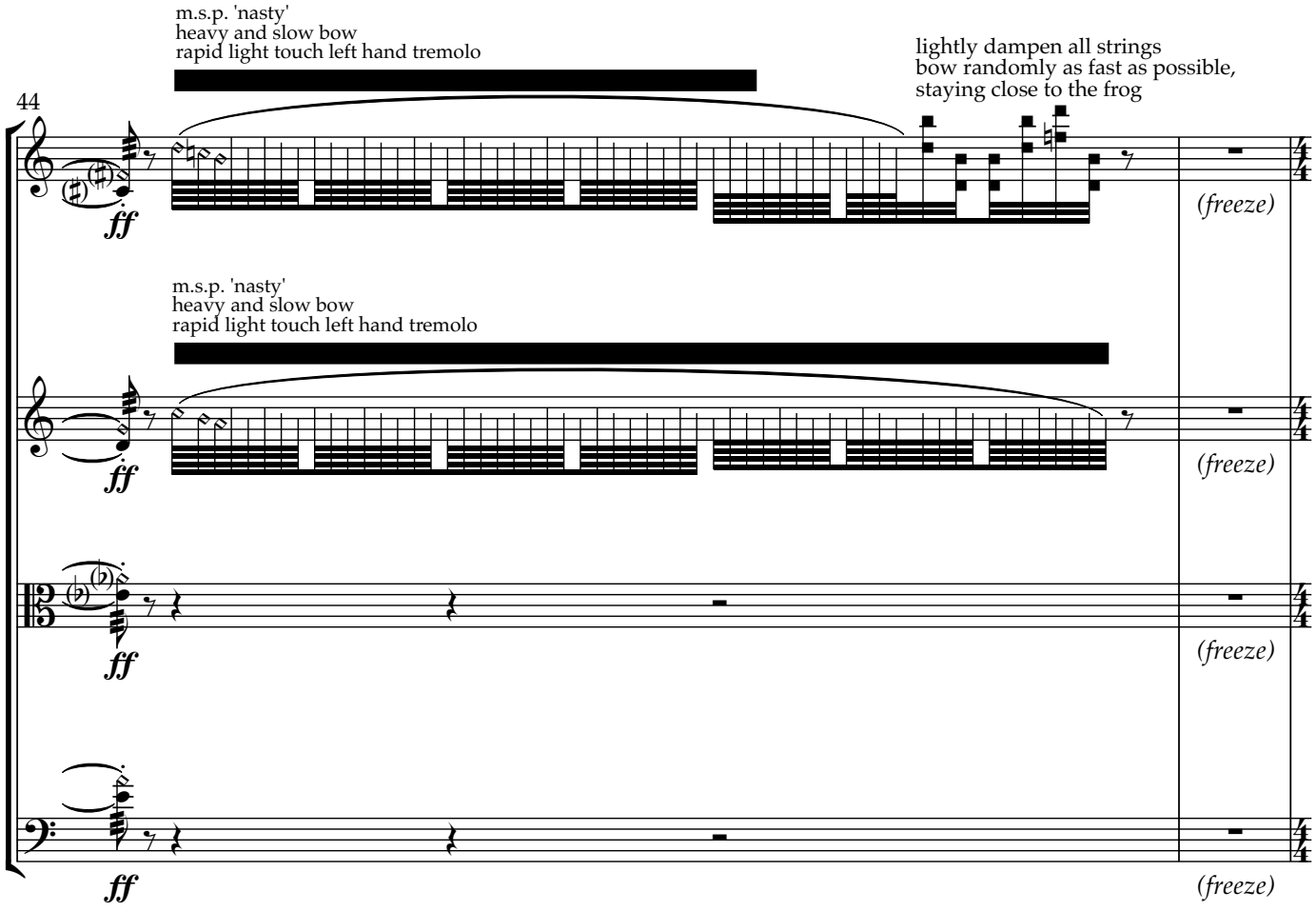
ff

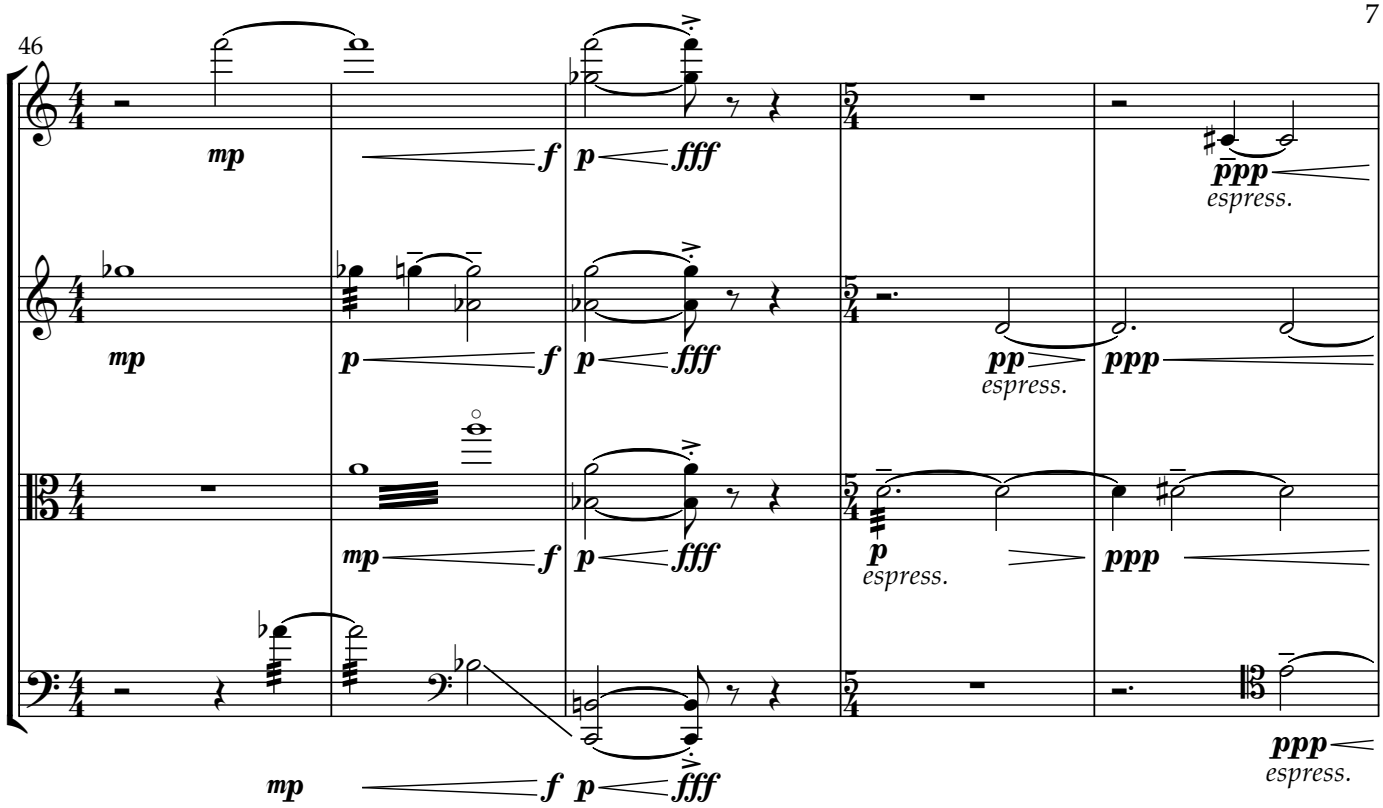
p

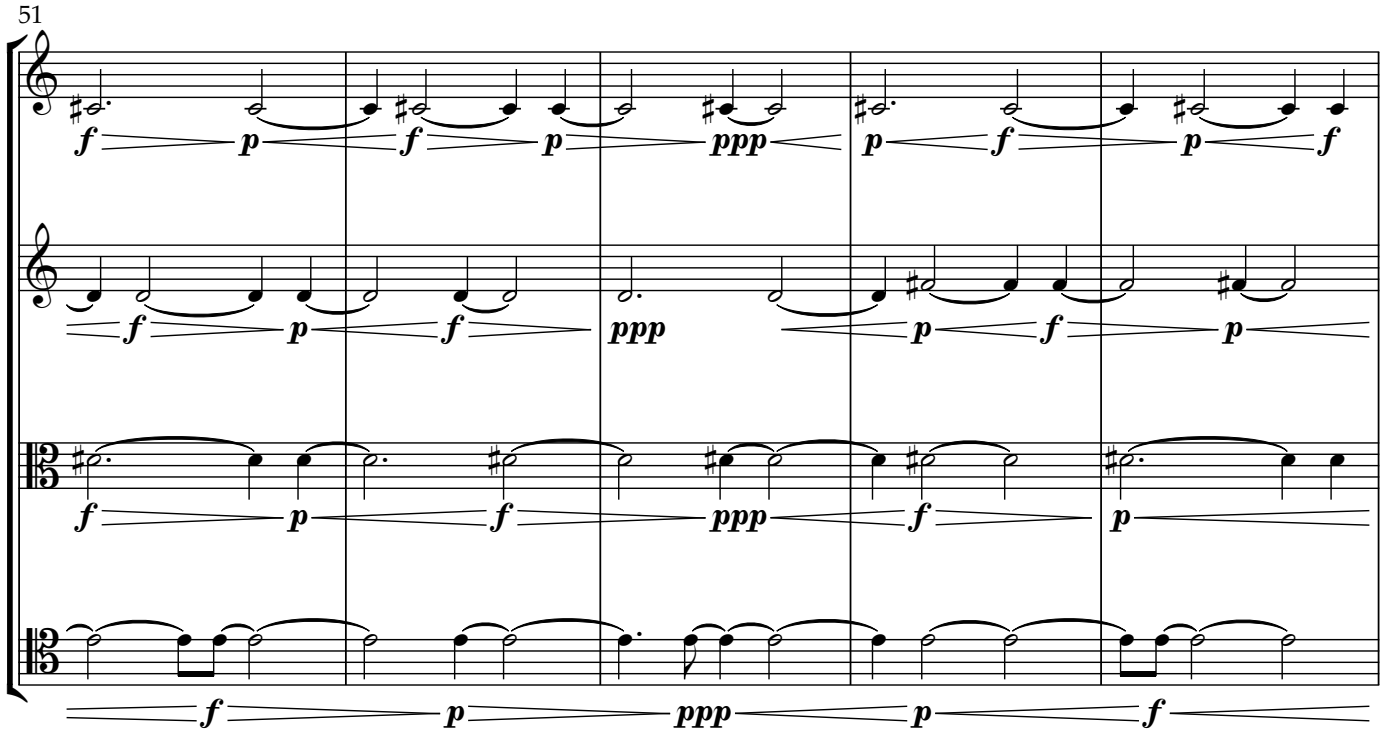
41

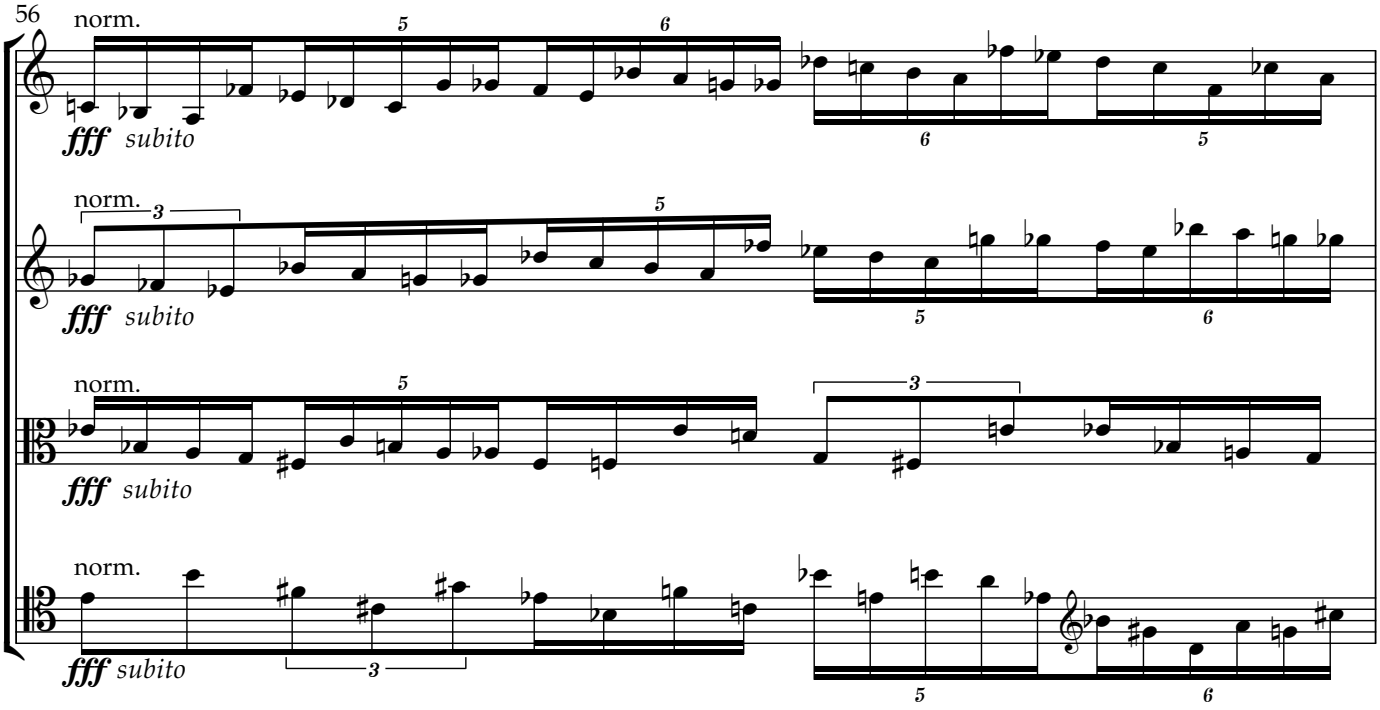

ppp
mf
pp
ppp
mf
pp
ppp
mf
ppp
mf

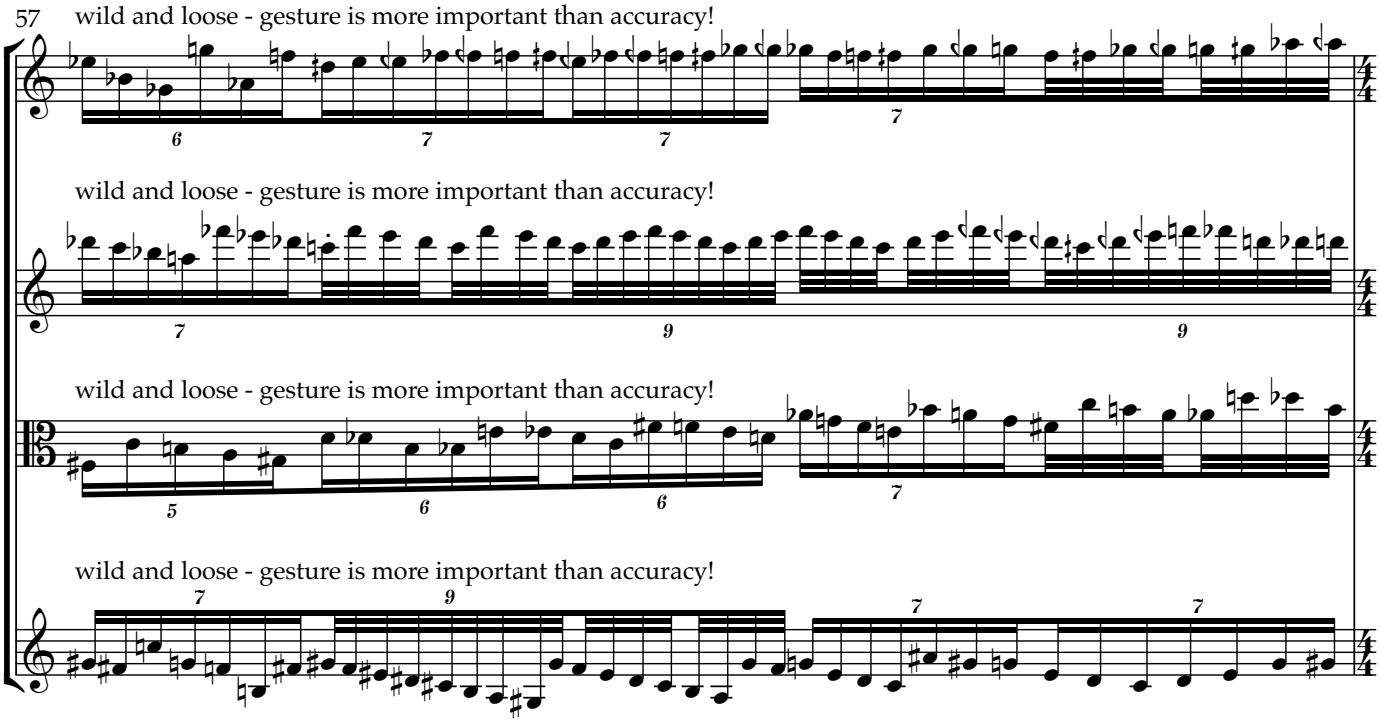
44

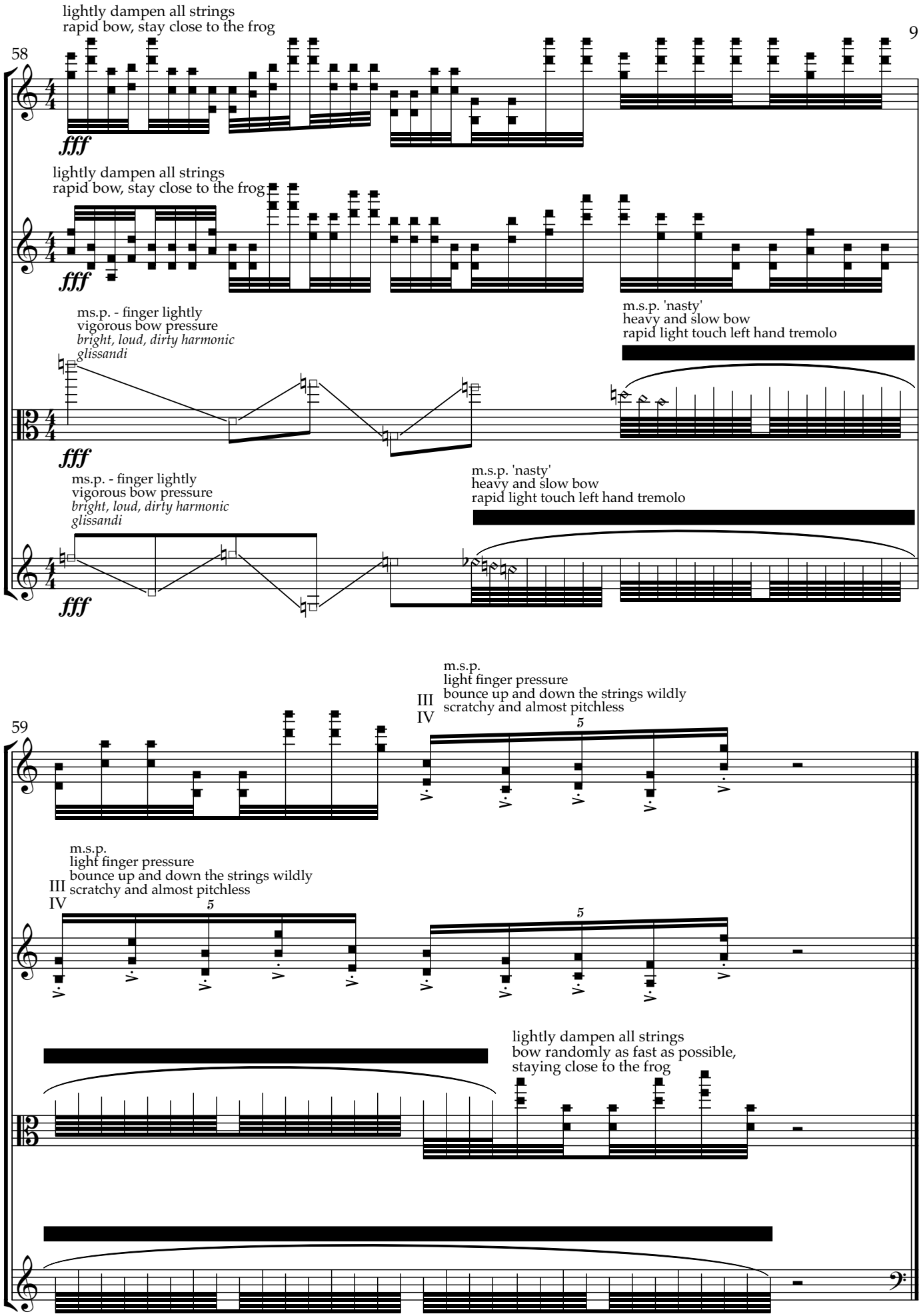

m.s.p. 'nasty'
heavy and slow bow
rapid light touch left hand tremolo
lightly dampen all strings
bow randomly as fast as possible,
staying close to the frog
ff
(freeze)
m.s.p. 'nasty'
heavy and slow bow
rapid light touch left hand tremolo
ff
(freeze)
ff
(freeze)
ff
(freeze)


46
mp
f
p
fff
ppp
espress.
mp
p
f
p
fff
pp
espress.
ppp
mp
f
p
fff
p
espress.
ppp
mp
f
p
fff
ppp
espress.


51
f
p
f
p
ppp
p
f
p
f
f
p
f
ppp
p
f
p
f
p
f
ppp
f
p
f
p
ppp
p
f

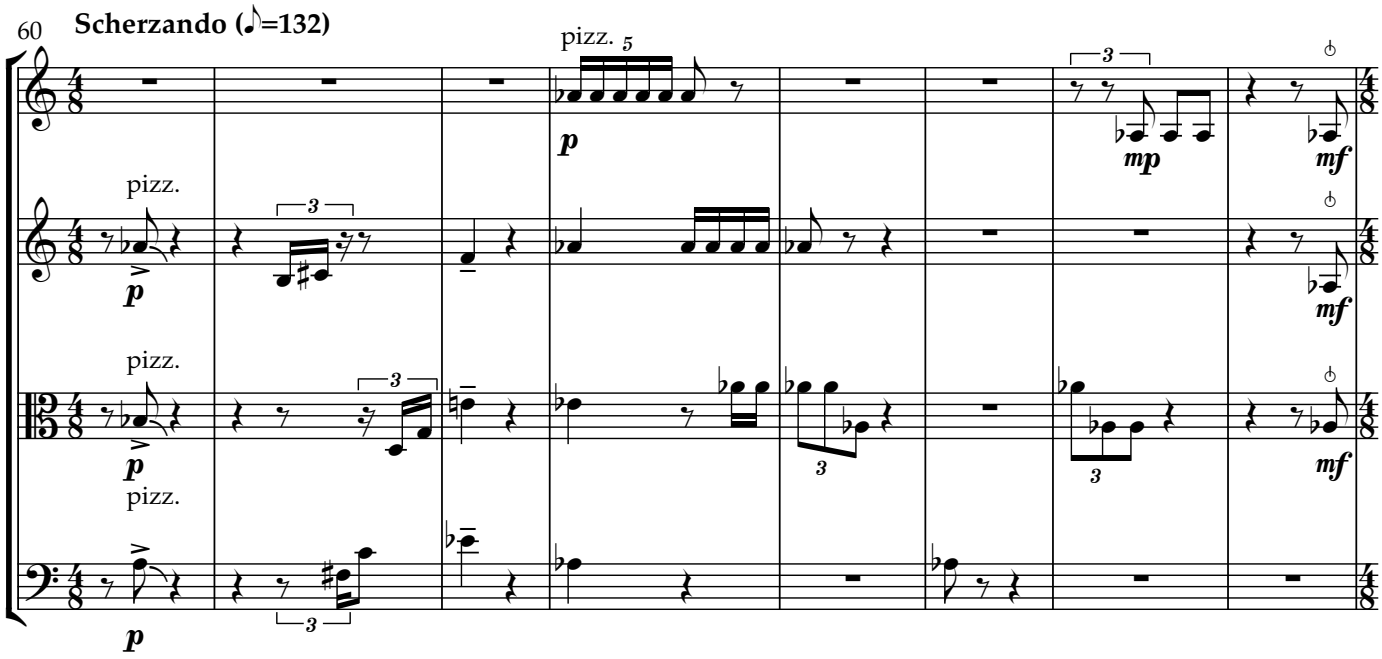

56
norm.
fff subito
norm.
fff subito
norm.
fff subito
norm.
fff subito


57
wild and loose - gesture is more important than accuracy!
wild and loose - gesture is more important than accuracy!
wild and loose - gesture is more important than accuracy!
wild and loose - gesture is more important than accuracy!

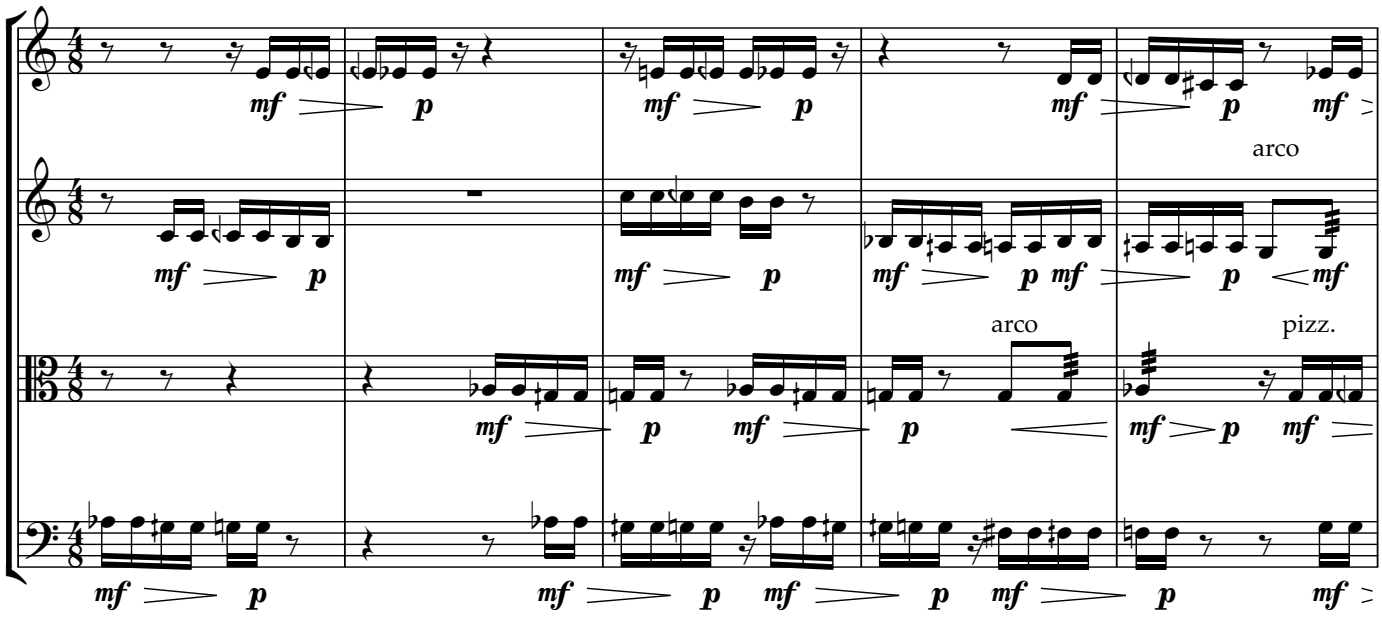

58
lightly dampen all strings
rapid bow, stay close to the frog
fff
lightly dampen all strings
rapid bow, stay close to the frog
fff
ms.p. - finger lightly
vigorous bow pressure
bright, loud, dirty harmonic
glissandi
fff
m.s.p. 'nasty'
heavy and slow bow
rapid light touch left hand tremolo
ms.p. - finger lightly
vigorous bow pressure
bright, loud, dirty harmonic
glissandi
fff
m.s.p. 'nasty'
heavy and slow bow
rapid light touch left hand tremolo
59
III
IV
m.s.p.
light finger pressure
bounce up and down the strings wildly
scratchy and almost pitchless
5
III
IV
m.s.p.
light finger pressure
bounce up and down the strings wildly
scratchy and almost pitchless
5
5
lightly dampen all strings
bow randomly as fast as possible,
staying close to the frog

4. Unfollowed Path # 2

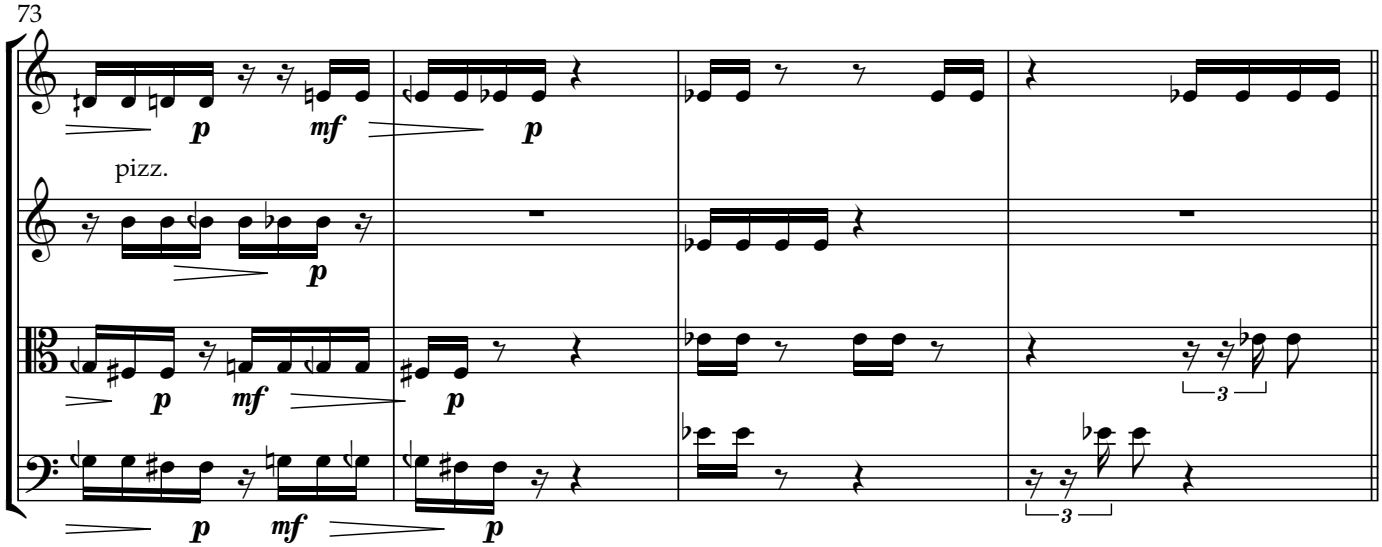
60 **Scherzando (♪=132)**

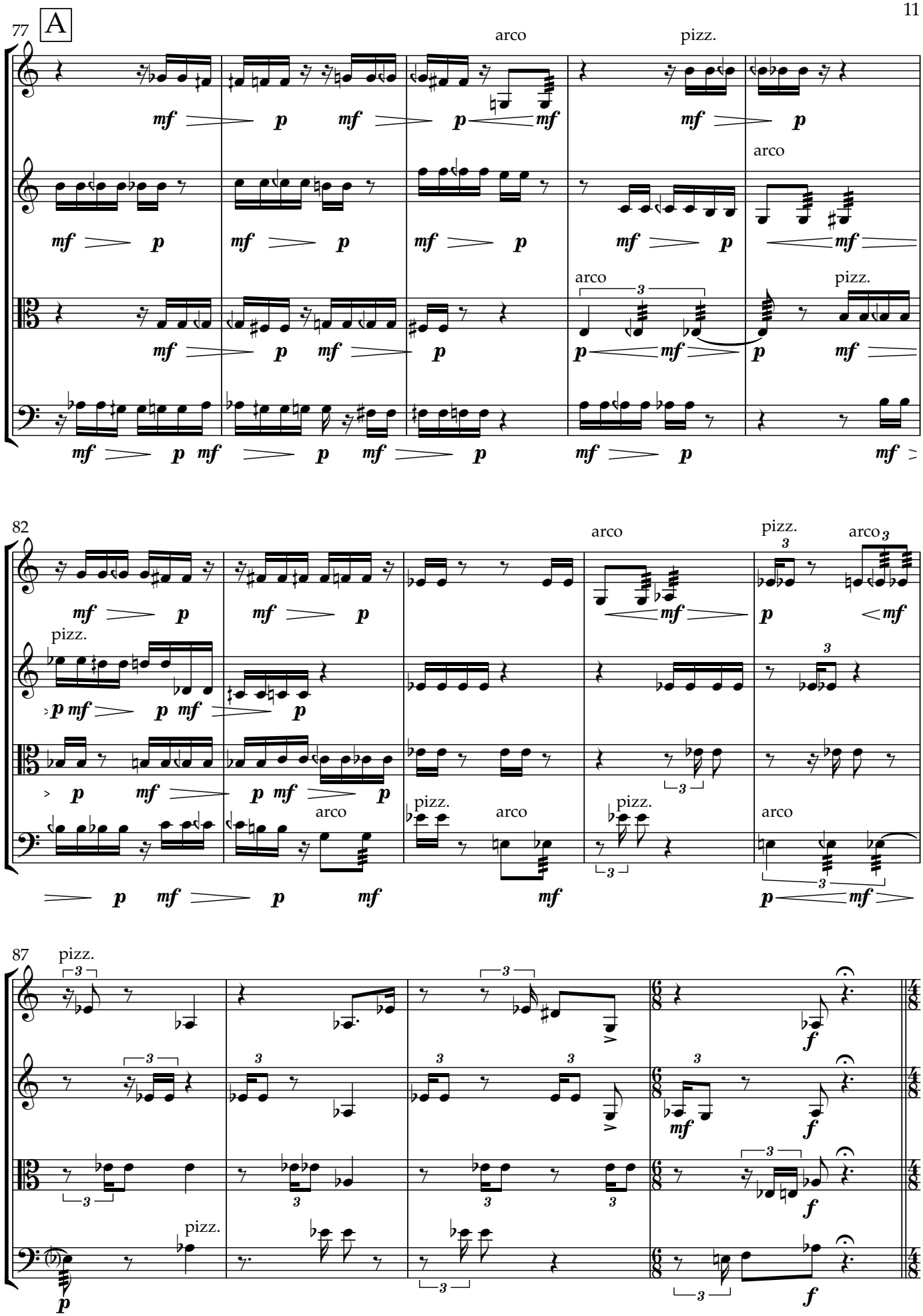


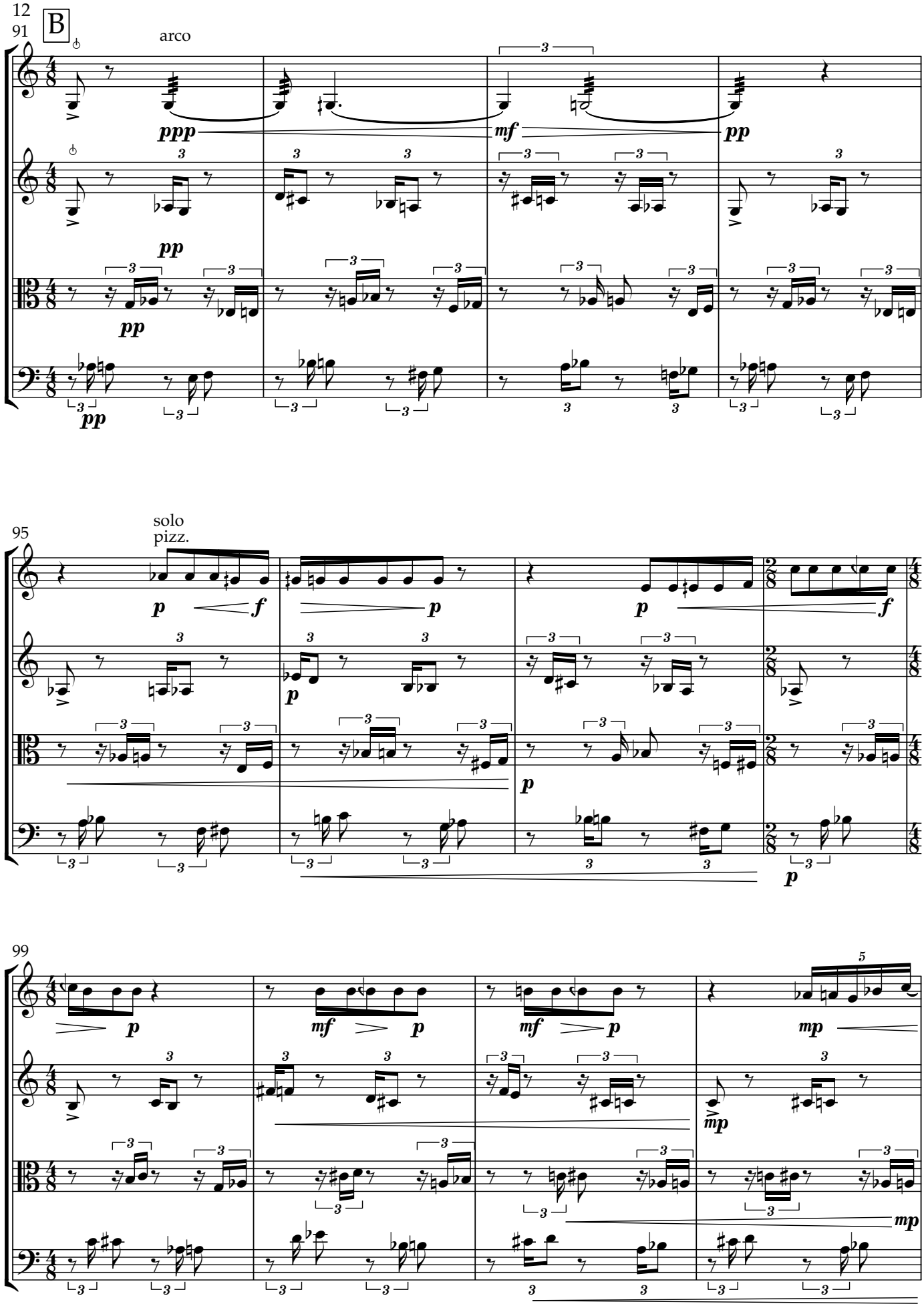
68

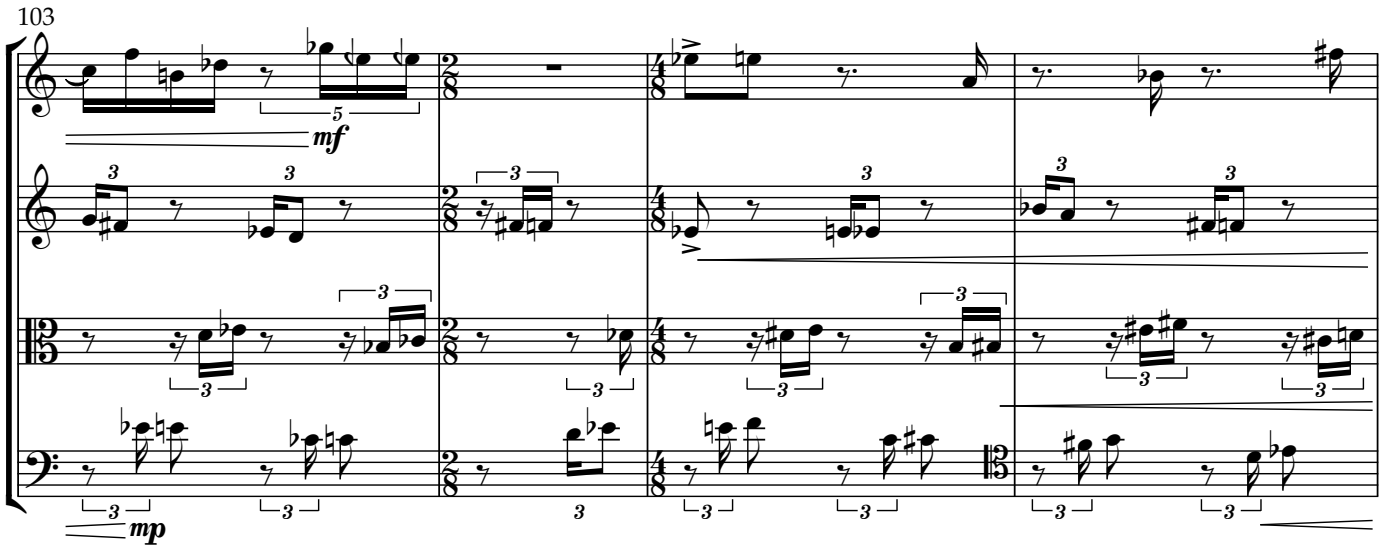


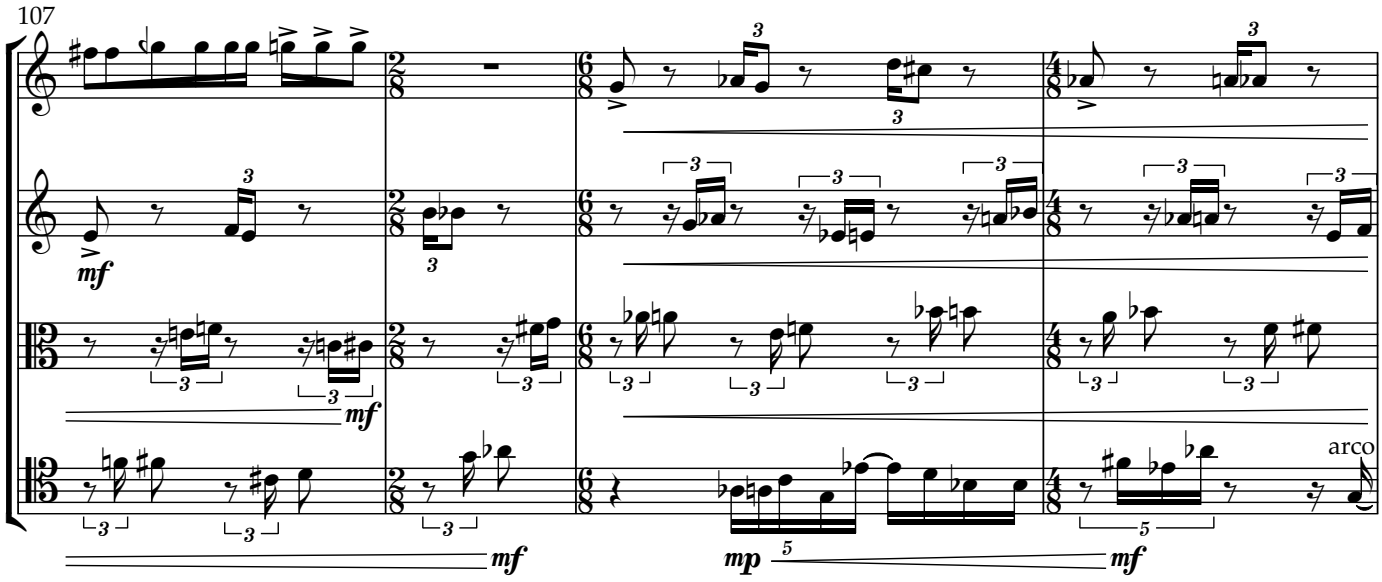
73

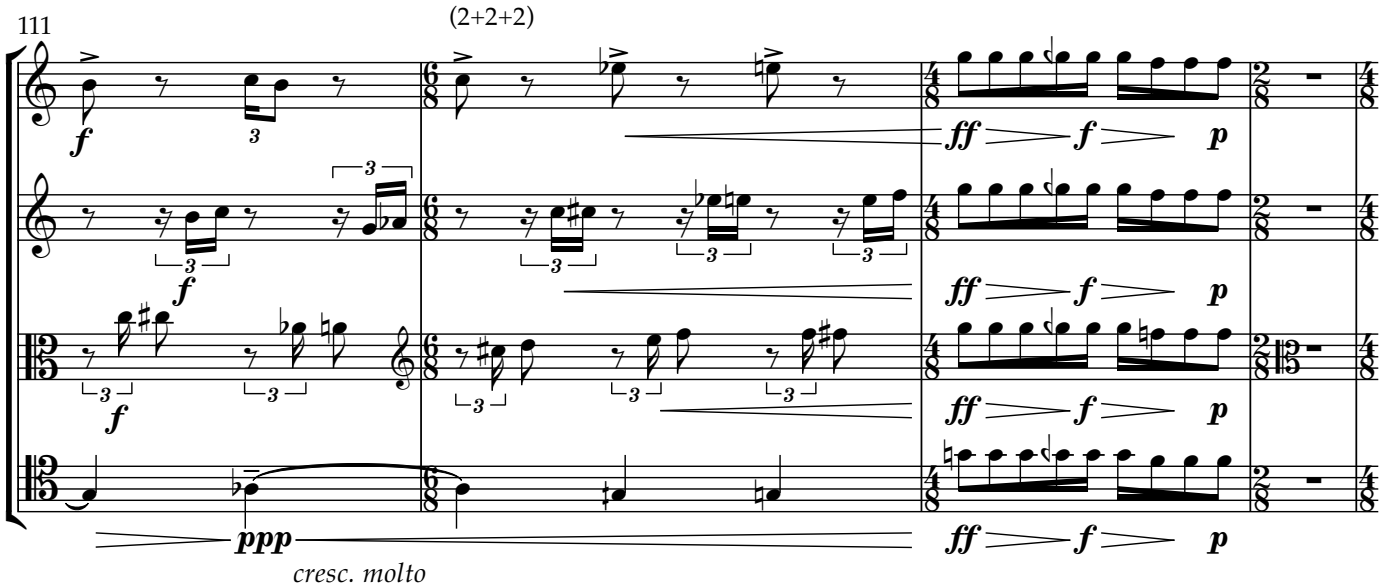


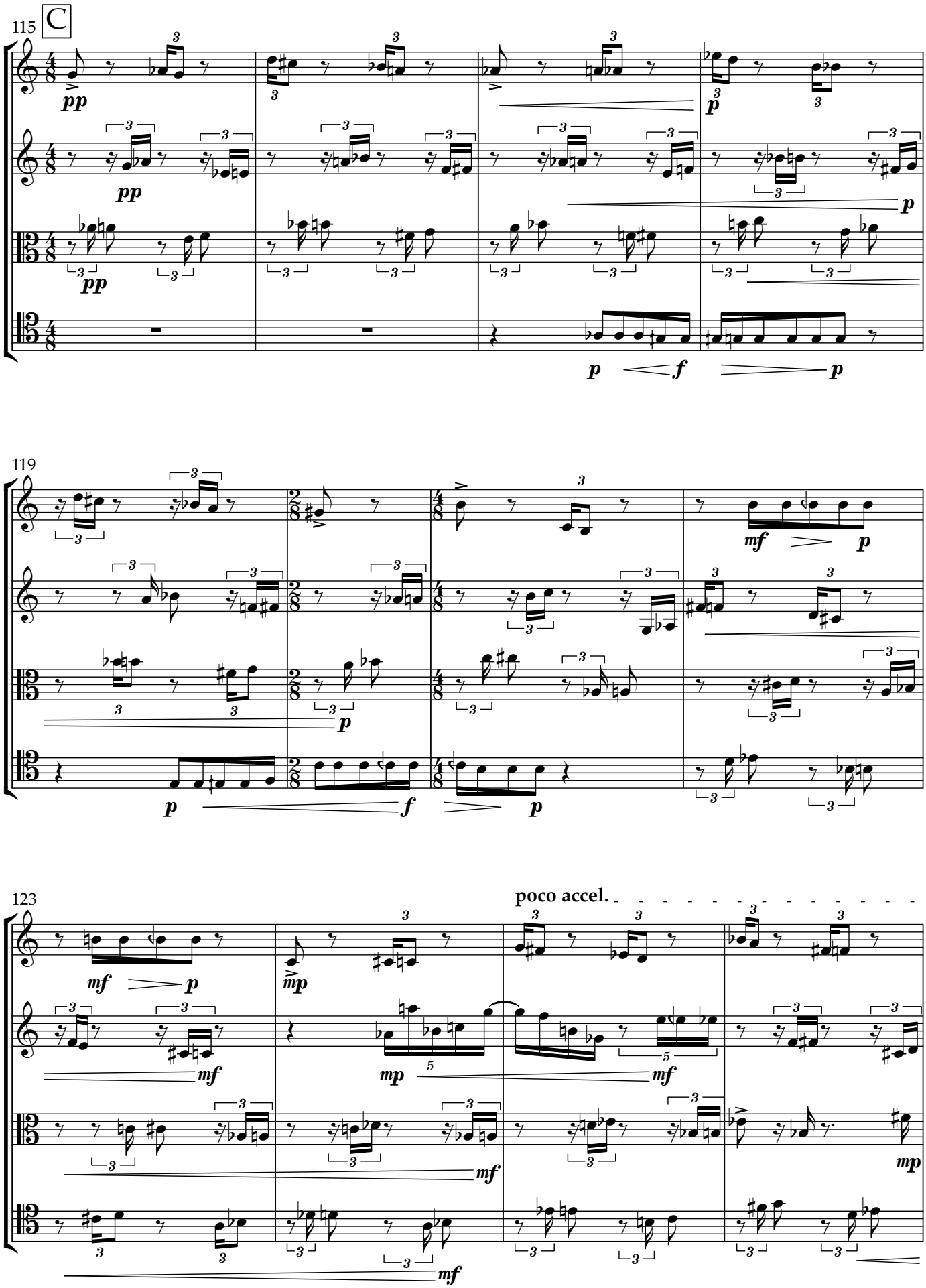

77
A
arco
pizz.
arco
arco
pizz.
82
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
87
pizz.
pizz.

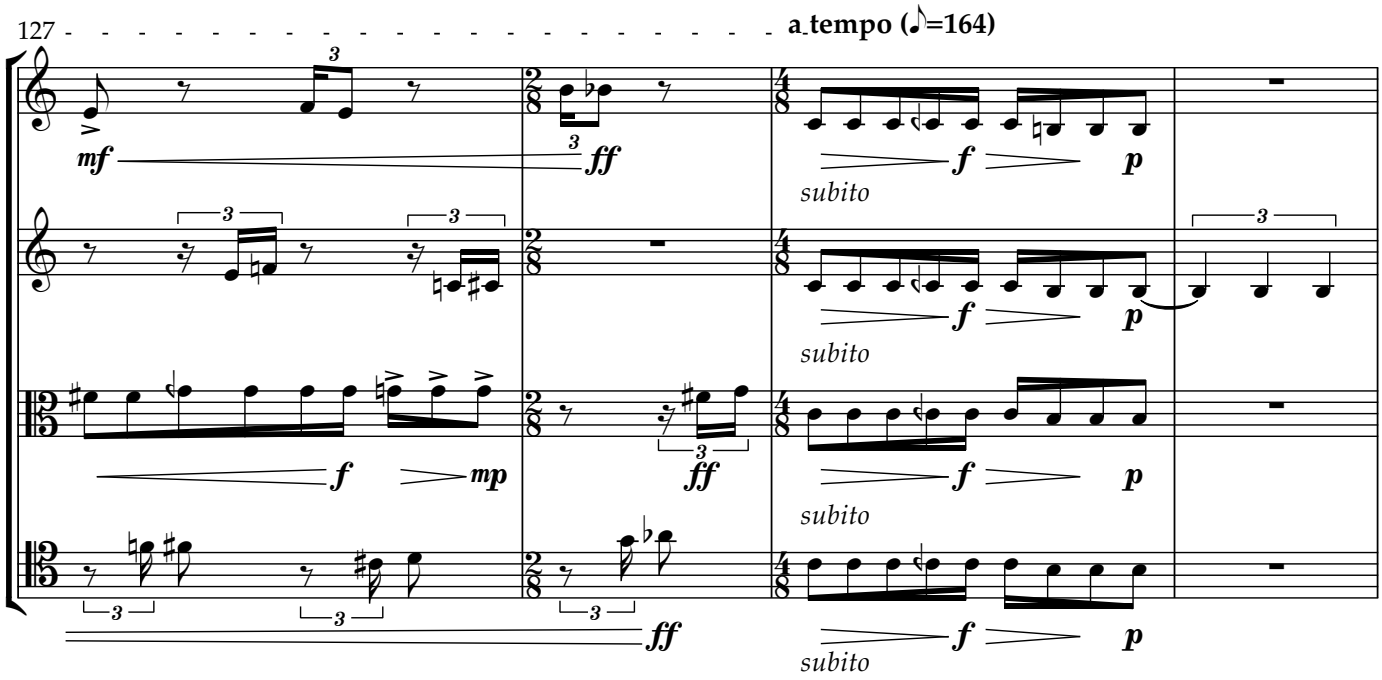

12
91
B
arco
ppp
mf
pp
pp
pp
pp
95
solo
pizz.
p
f
p
p
p
p
f
p
99
p
mf
p
mf
p
mp
mp
mp

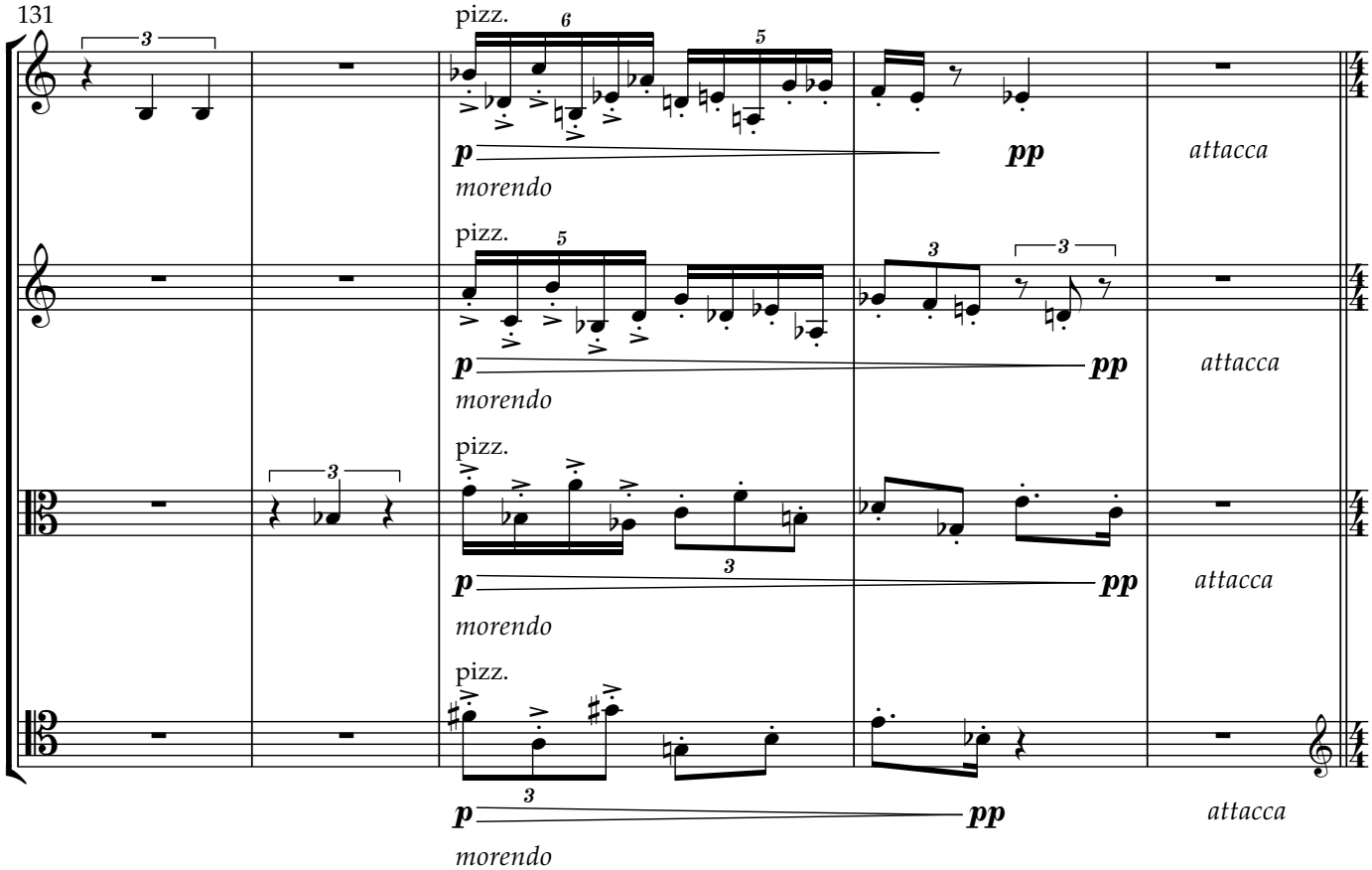

103
mf
mp


107
mf
mf
mp
mf
arco

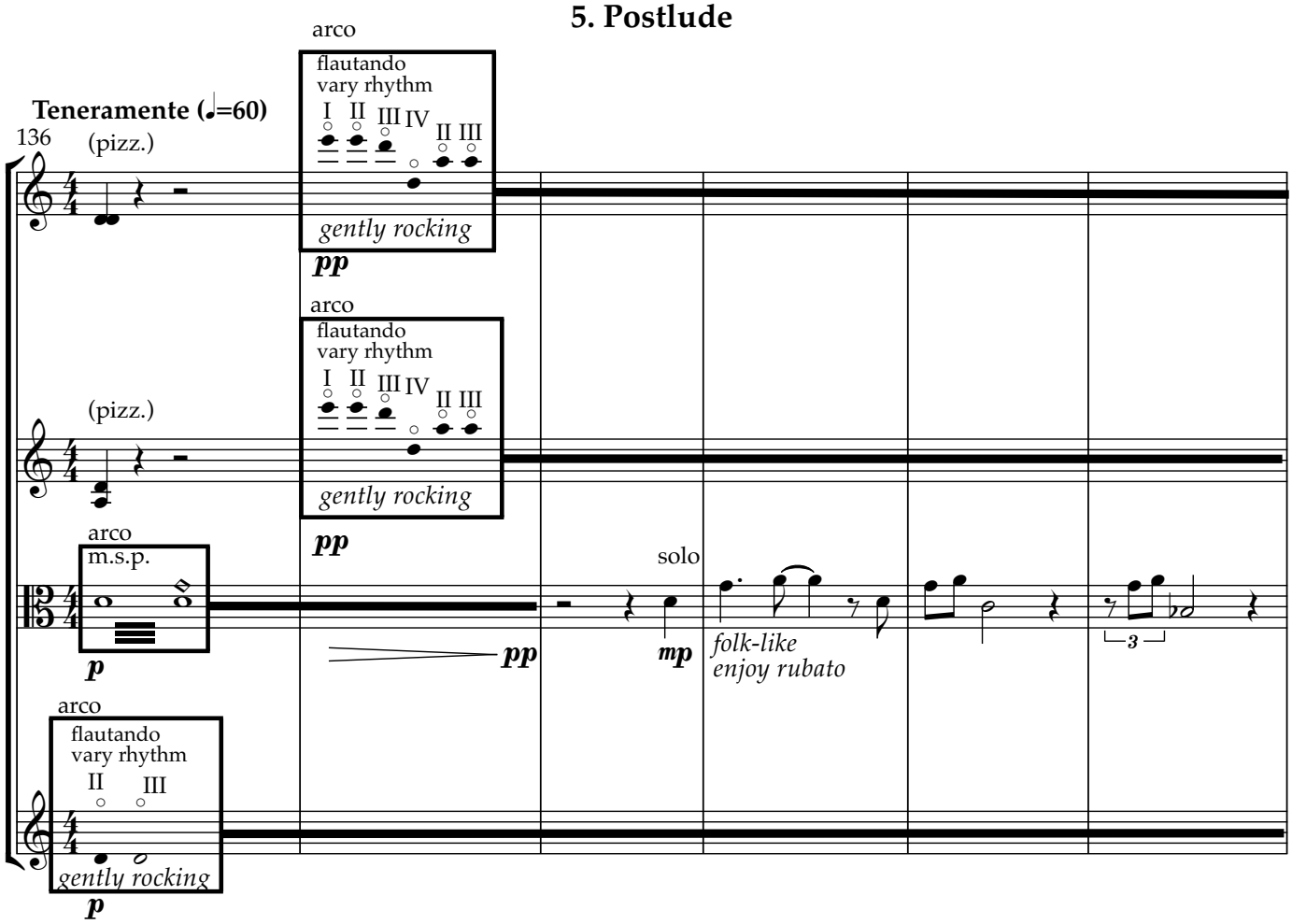

111
(2+2+2)
f
f
f
ff
f
p
ff
f
p
ff
f
p
ff
f
p
ppp
cresc. molto

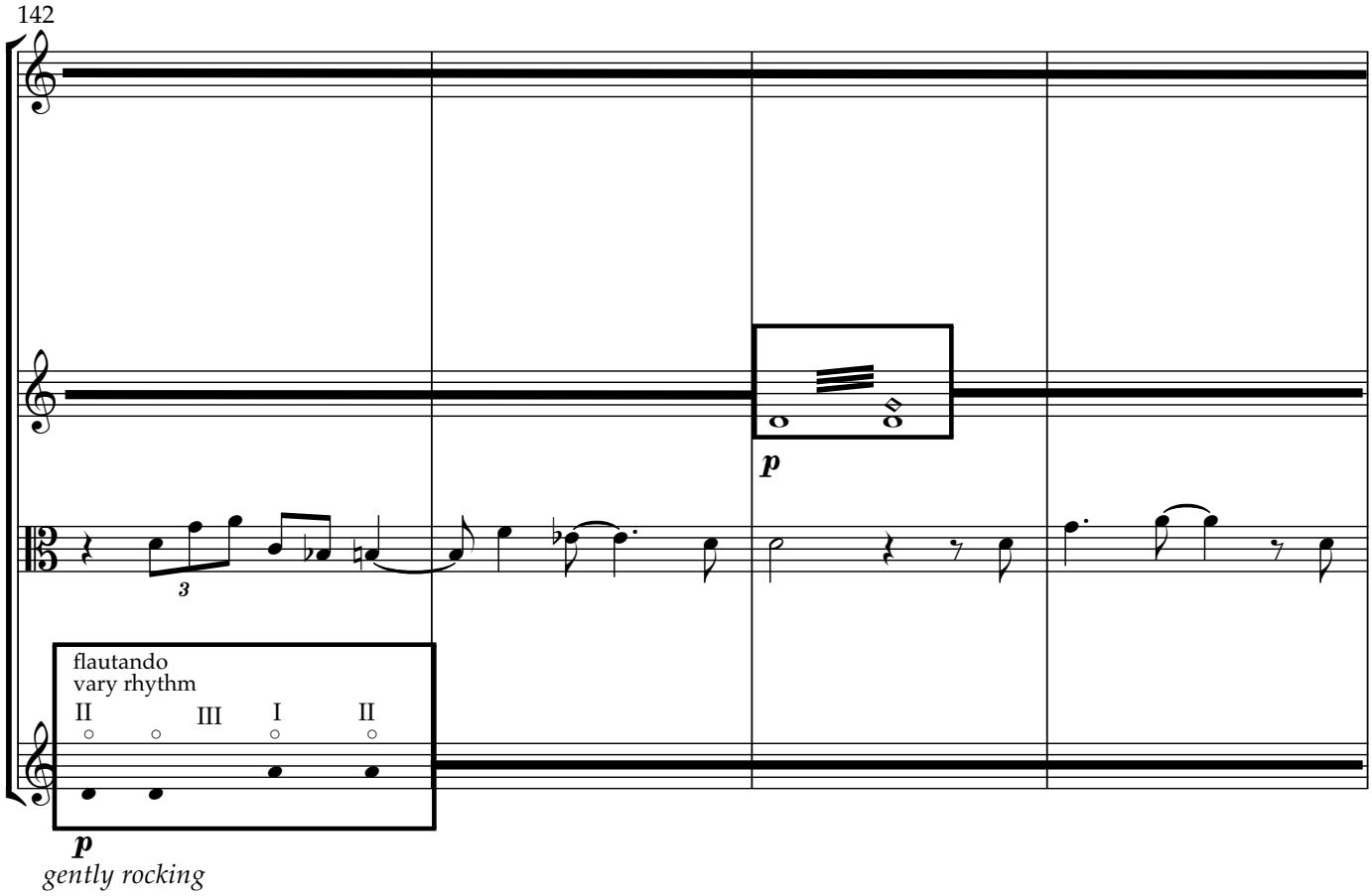

115
C
pp
pp
pp
p
p
f
p
119
mf
p
p
f
p
123
poco accel.
mf
p
mp
mf
mp
mf
mf
mp
mf

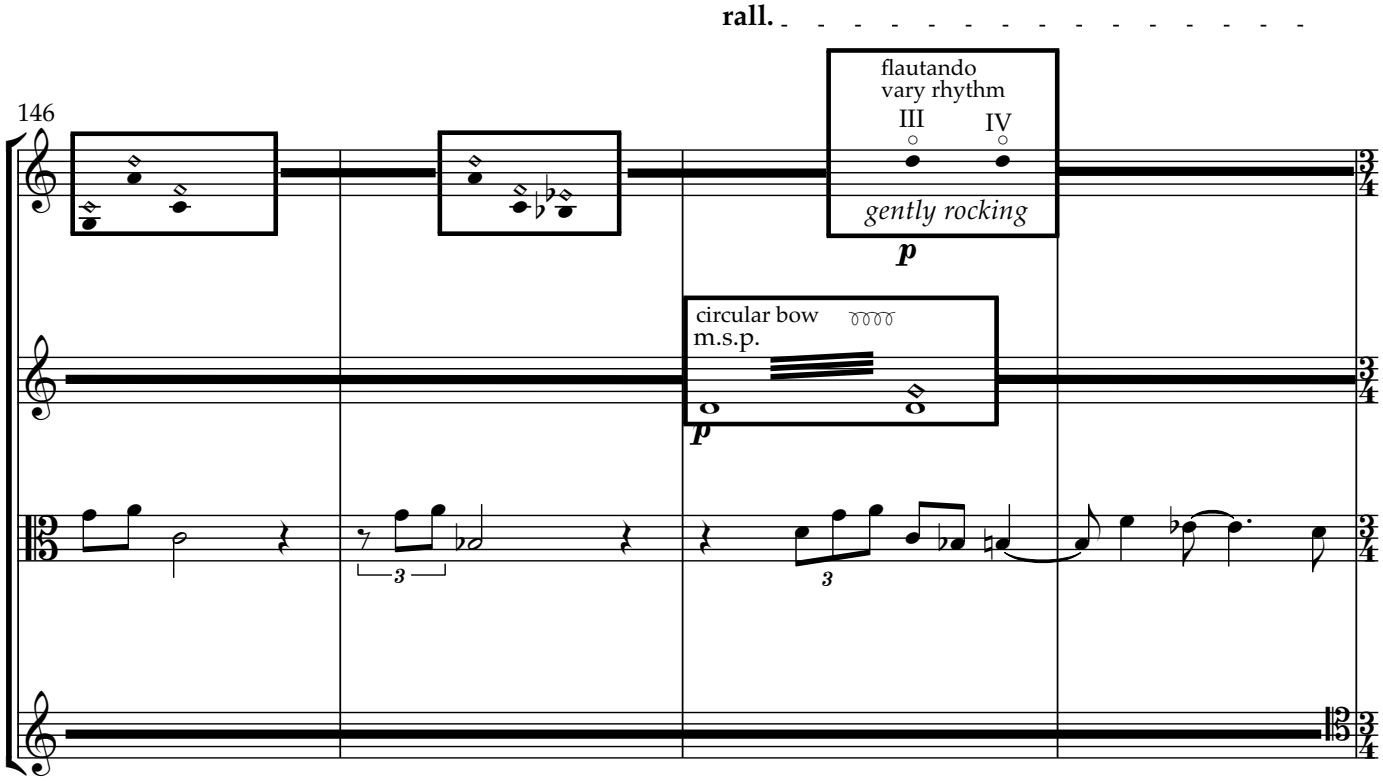

127
a tempo (♪=164)
mf
ff
f
p
subito
mp
attacca

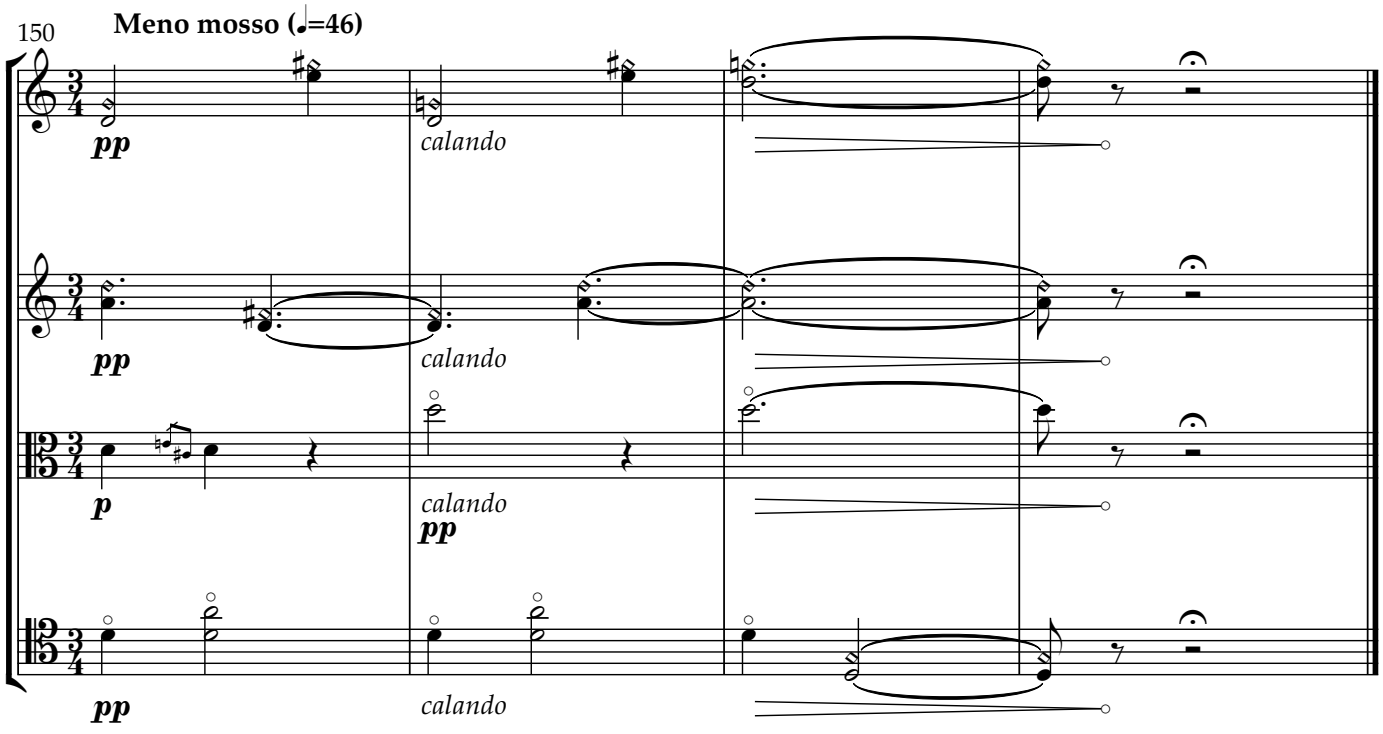

131
pizz.
p
pp
morendo
attacca

5. Postlude


Teneramente (♩=60)
136
(pizz.)
arco
flautando
vary rhythm
I II III IV II III
gently rocking
pp
arco
flautando
vary rhythm
I II III IV II III
gently rocking
pp
(pizz.)
arco
m.s.p.
p
pp
solo
mp
folk-like
enjoy rubato
3
arco
flautando
vary rhythm
II III
gently rocking
p


142
p
3
flautando
vary rhythm
II III I II
p
gently rocking


rall.
146
flautando
vary rhythm
III
IV
gently rocking
p
circular bow
m.s.p.
p
3
3


150
Meno mosso (♩=46)
pp
calando
pp
calando
p
calando
pp
pp
calando