From God's Back 40

for Clarinet, Viola, and Piano

June 22—October 7, 2017
Duration: 24-25 minutes

In June 2017, clarinetist Fred Jacobowitz and pianist Carl Banner, director of Washington Musica Viva, asked me to write a trio for clarinet, viola, and piano. I had just moved to the little town of Cleveland, North Carolina, in rural western Rowan County, nestled in the bucolic Piedmont about an hour drive from the nearest big cities. I had lived in Raleigh since 2001, and retired in May after seven years teaching physics at NCSU. Such is the result of budget cuts and declining health; at age 62, it was time to go.

So I settled in with an old friend who had some extra space in his home, where I had time to do what I like and take care of my health. With a cortisone shot in my shoulder, I started playing an electric 6 string violin. I couldn't compose during my final months in Raleigh, but the new environment proved fertile for creativity. (One must be attentive to the muses, and fighting urban traffic can drown them out.)

The first movement is based on various tetrachords, which is very common in my music—not from some theoretical plan, but just because that seems to be how things work out and sound right. I have written a piece before titled *Diatonic Phrygian Tetrachord*, which was more specific about that particular type. There is a somewhat baroque flavor to this section, as I came up with the basic ideas after listening to Bach violin concertos.

The second movement is Yet Another Waltz, as I have written altogether too many already. I wouldn't recommend trying to dance to this one.

The third movement has a touch of country roots music to it; I am trying my hand at old fiddle tunes, and it's well-suited to the rural surroundings.

The finale is a big fast ending, inspired by my inspiration of albuterol as an inhaled medication for COPD. One of the main problems of this disease (as well as my arthritis) is extreme fatigue; albuterol is a potent stimulant, as well as helping breathing. Only lasts three or four hours, but does the job.

Performance notes

My usual style of piano playing is heavy on the sostenuto pedal; the indicated pedal marks are really required, but please use freely. Notes that do not have dots are not short. In case of programming constraints, individual movements may be performed by themselves or in any combination. It would be unfortunate if the total length of this piece inhibited performance.

The viola is going to have a balance issue matched against potentially louder instruments. Skilled performers can compensate; also, it is fine with me if the viola is either amplified or electric, such as an electric 5 string violin.

Cover photo: "Country Boy" from Jim McGuire's studio, 1997, Charlotte NC.

Bill Robinson

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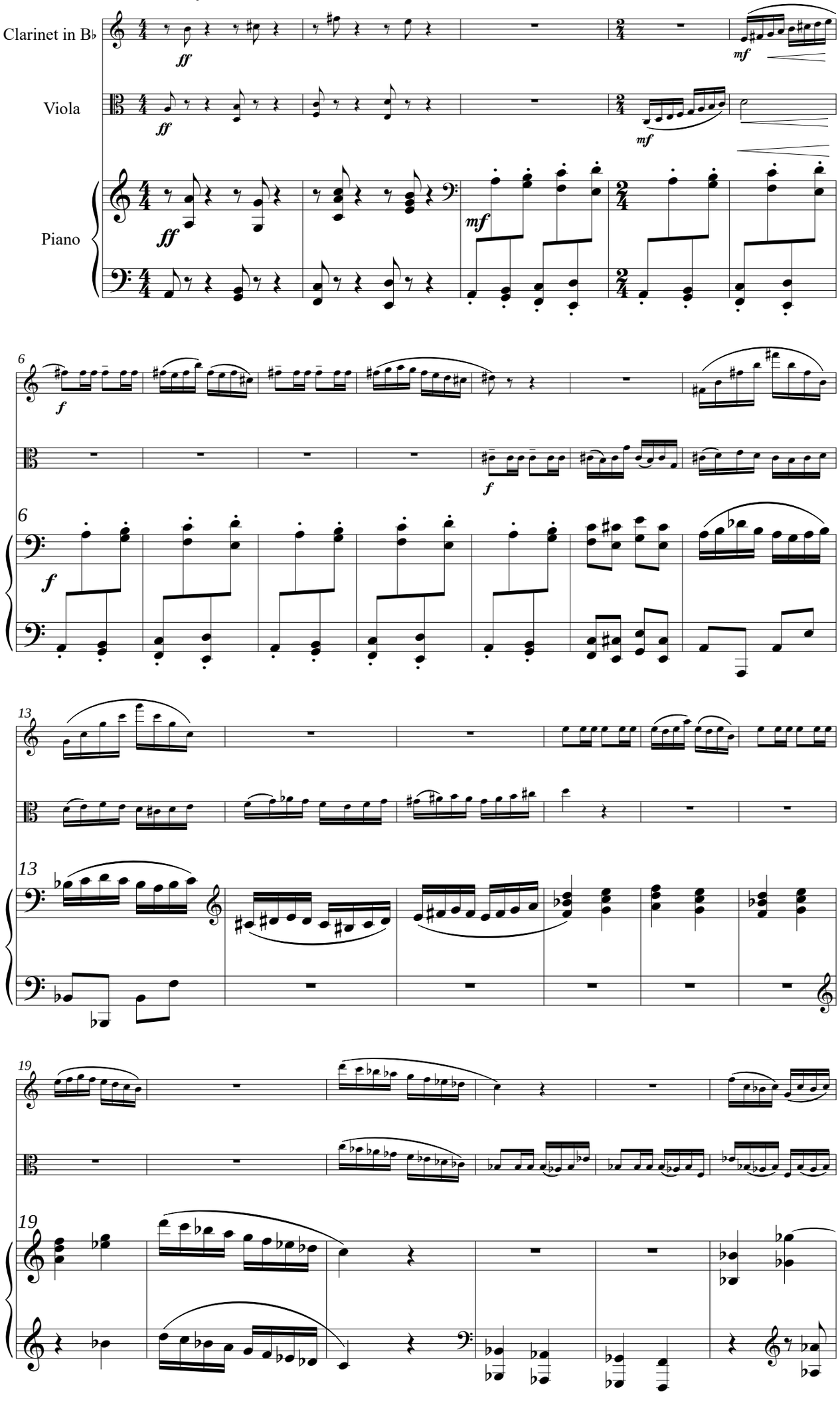
billrobinsonmusic.com

From God's Back 40

I. Gimme that Old-Time Tetrachord [7:40]

Bill Robinson

Don't Be Shy (♩ = 94)



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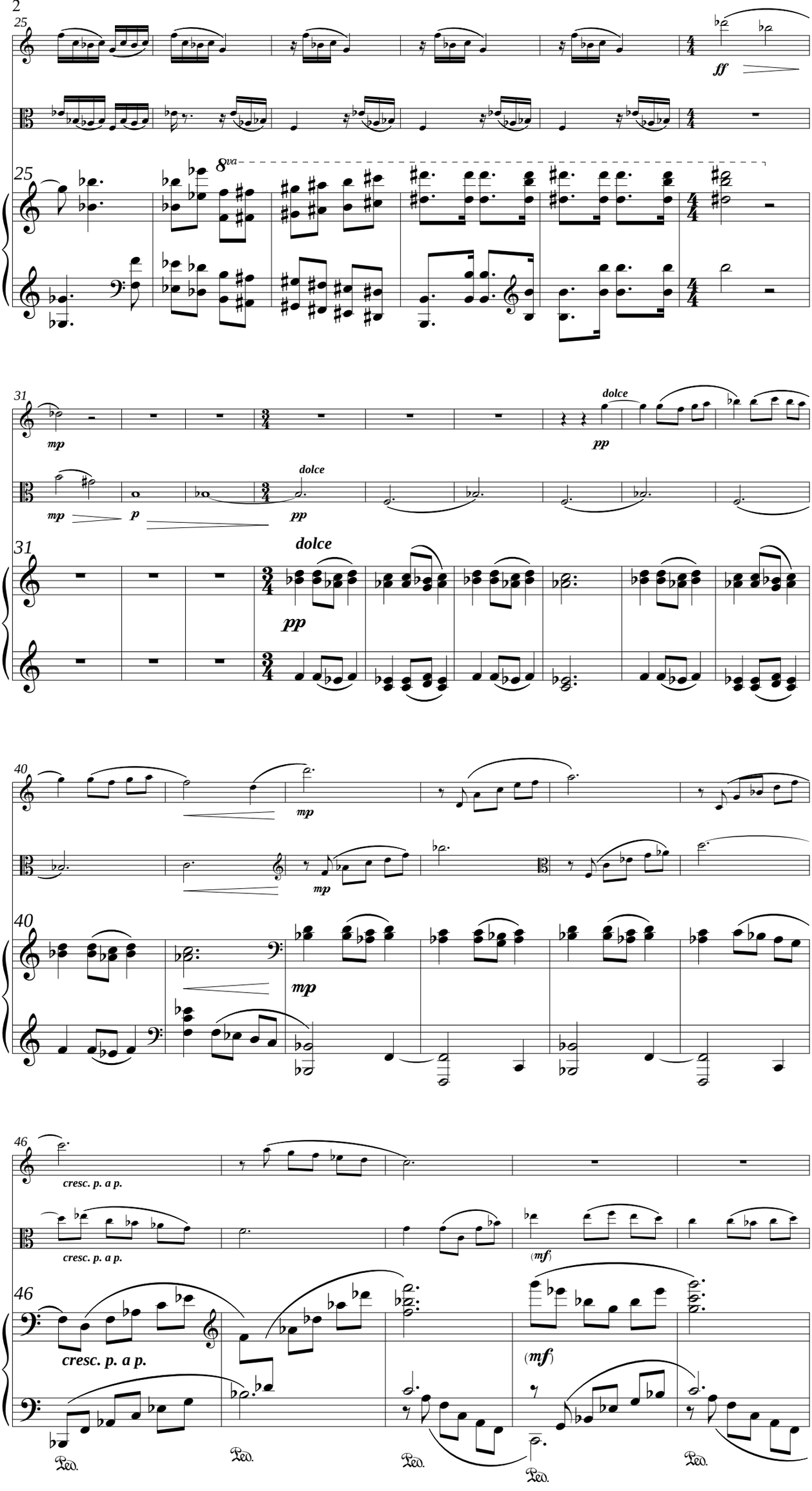
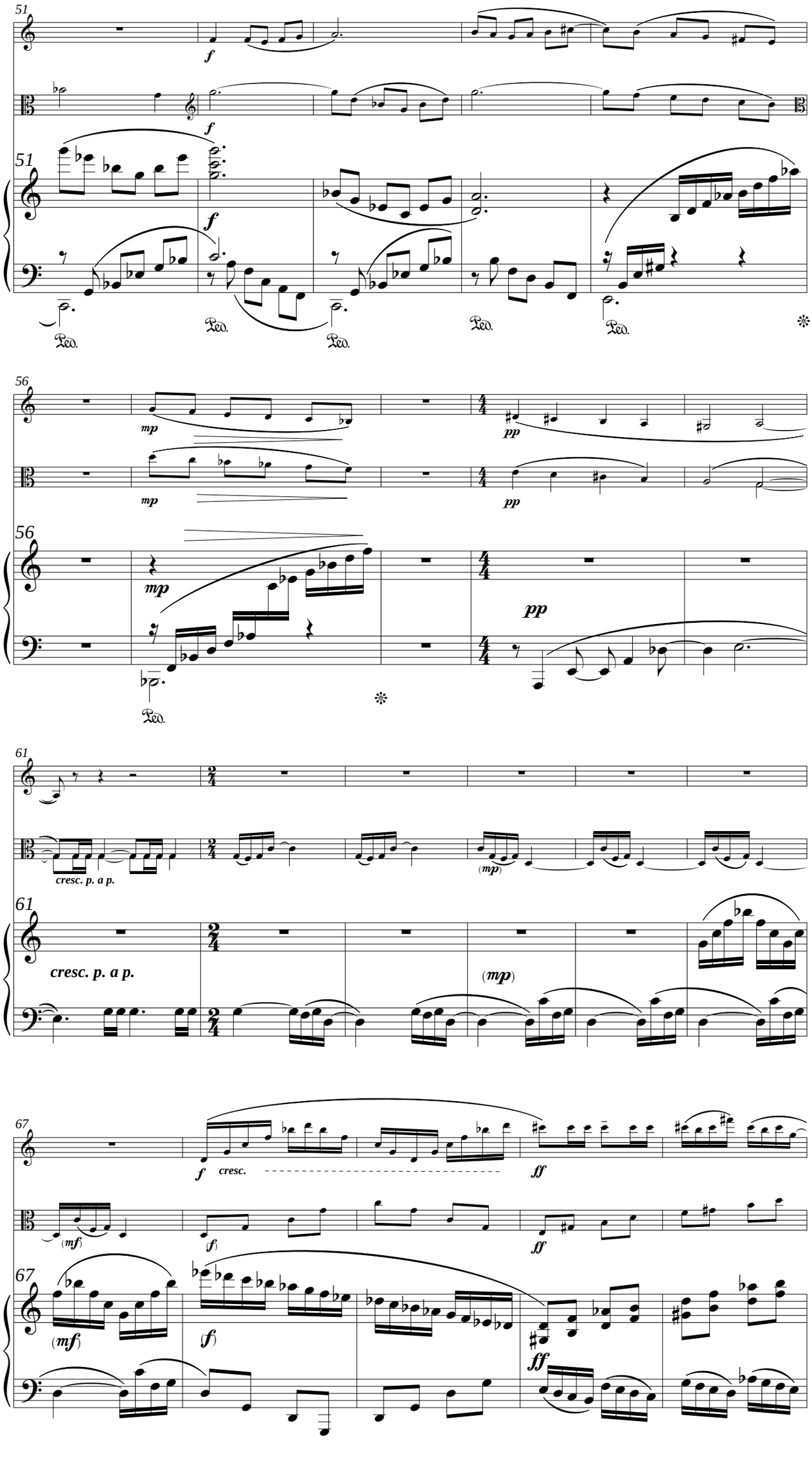
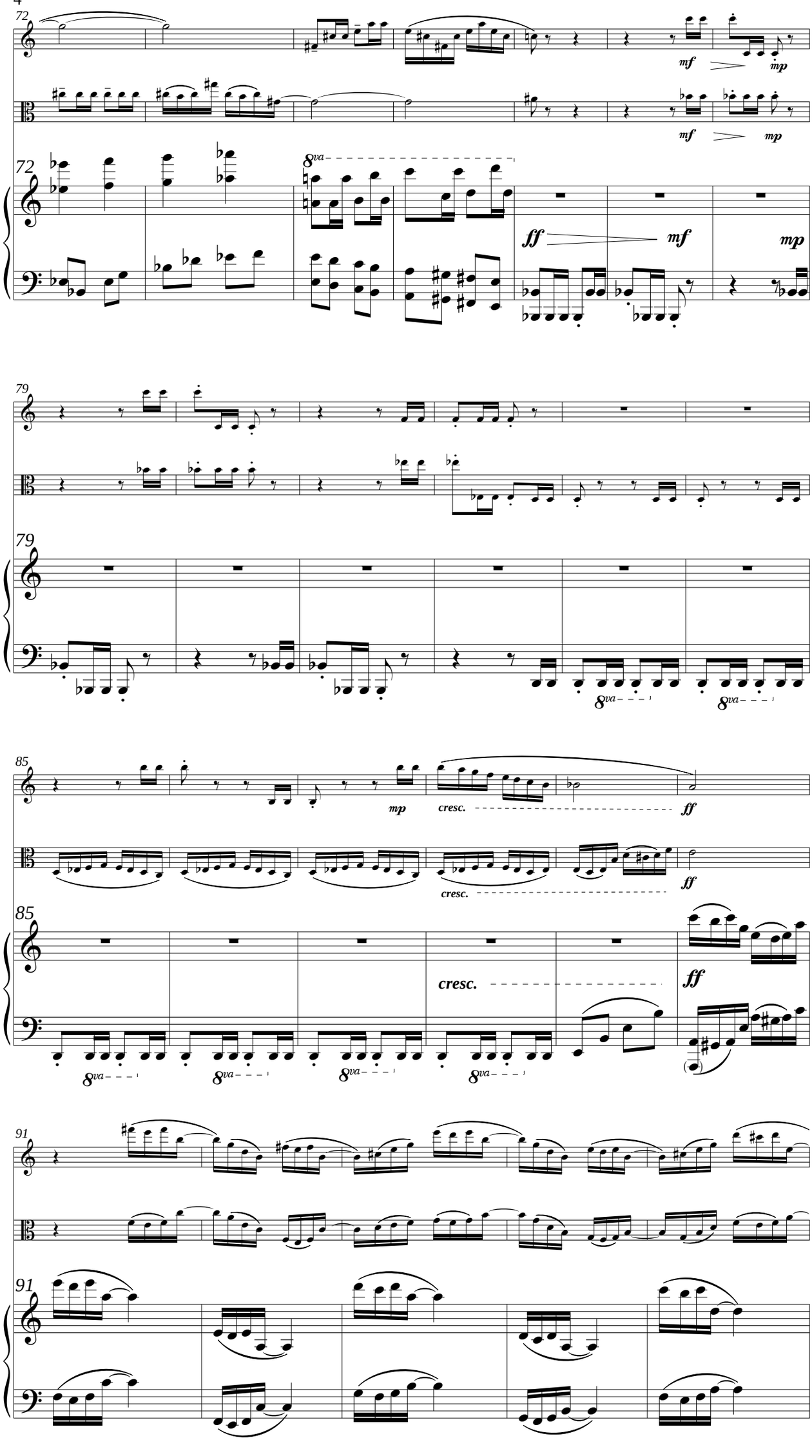
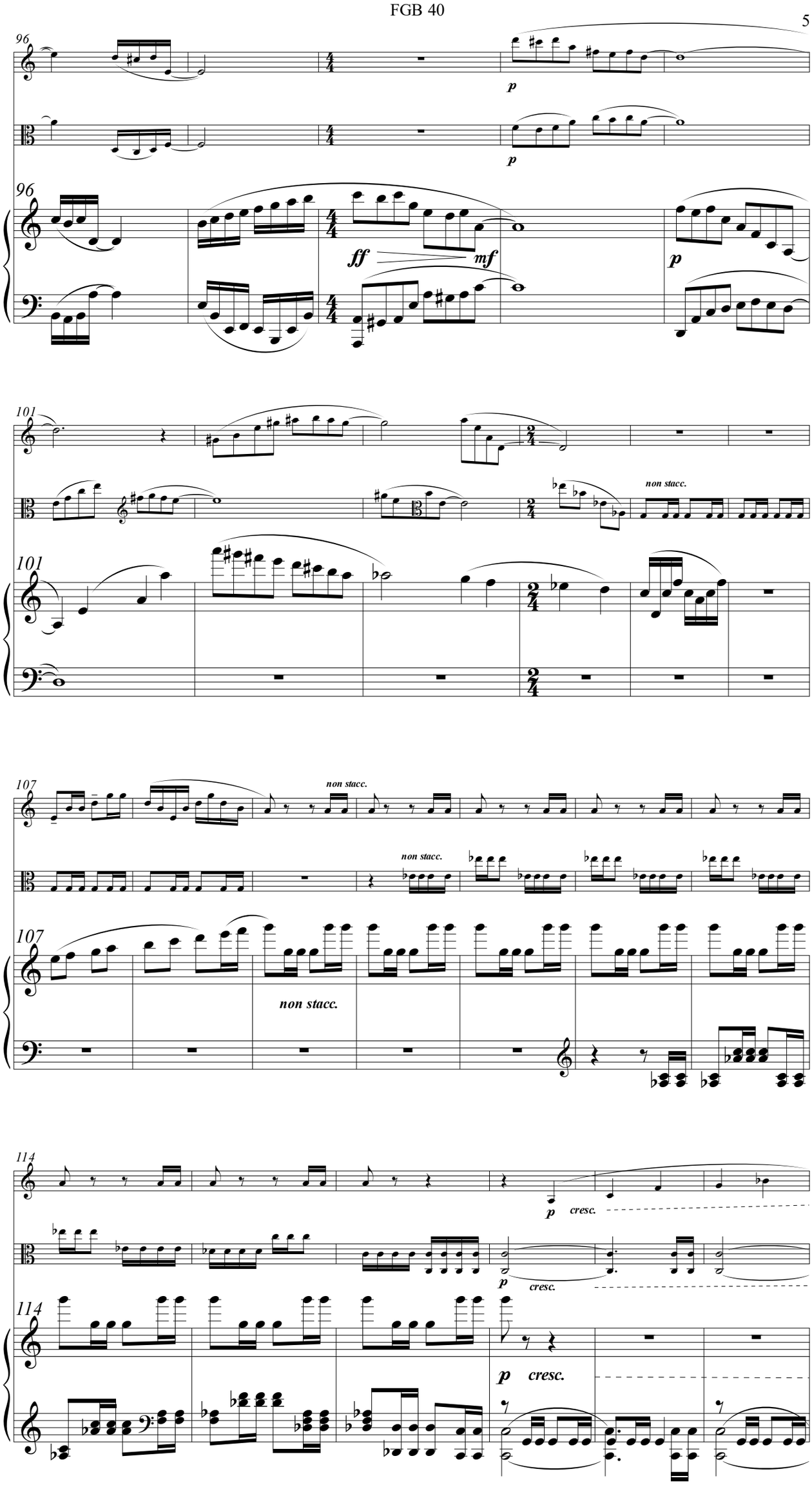
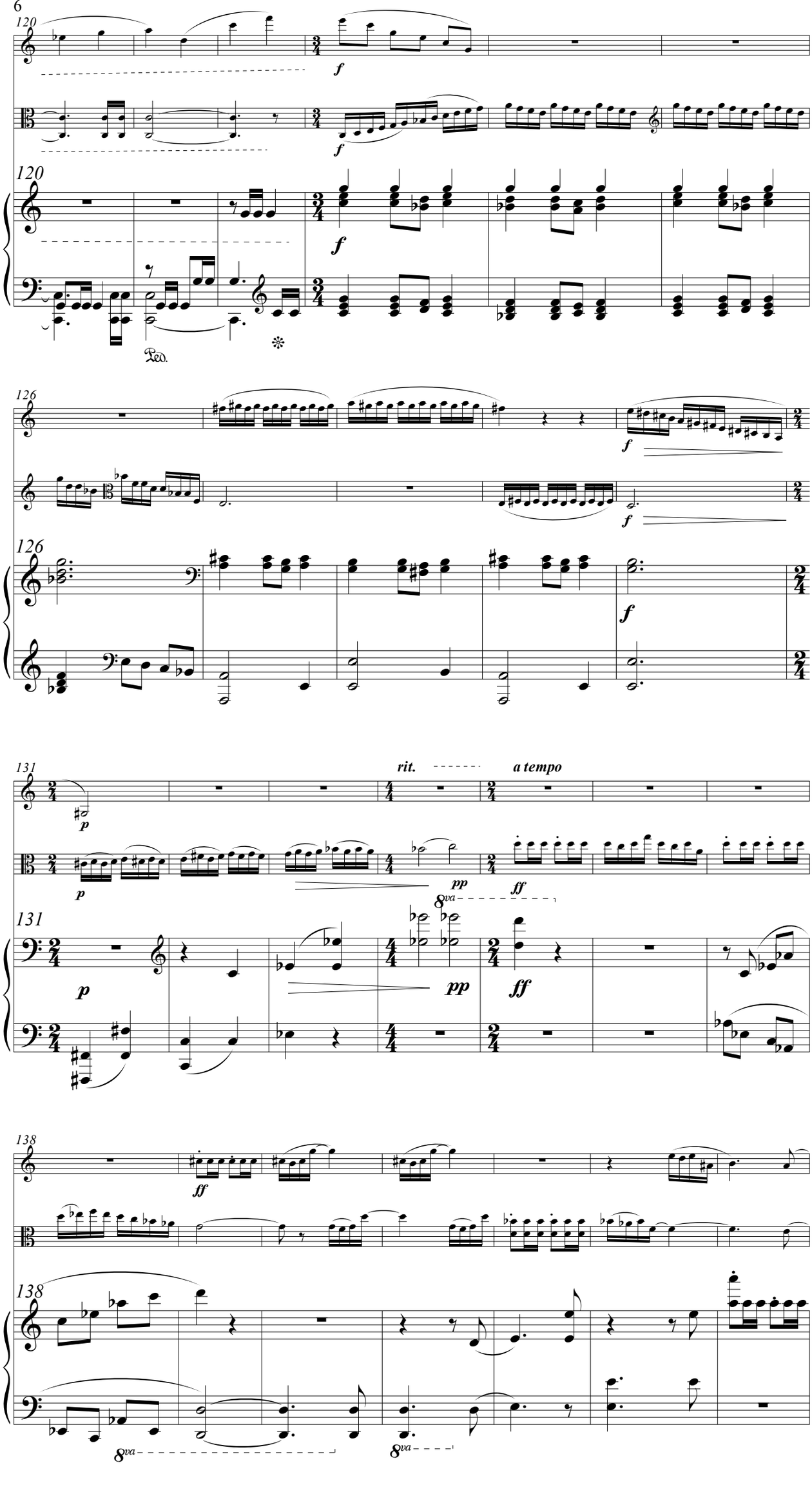
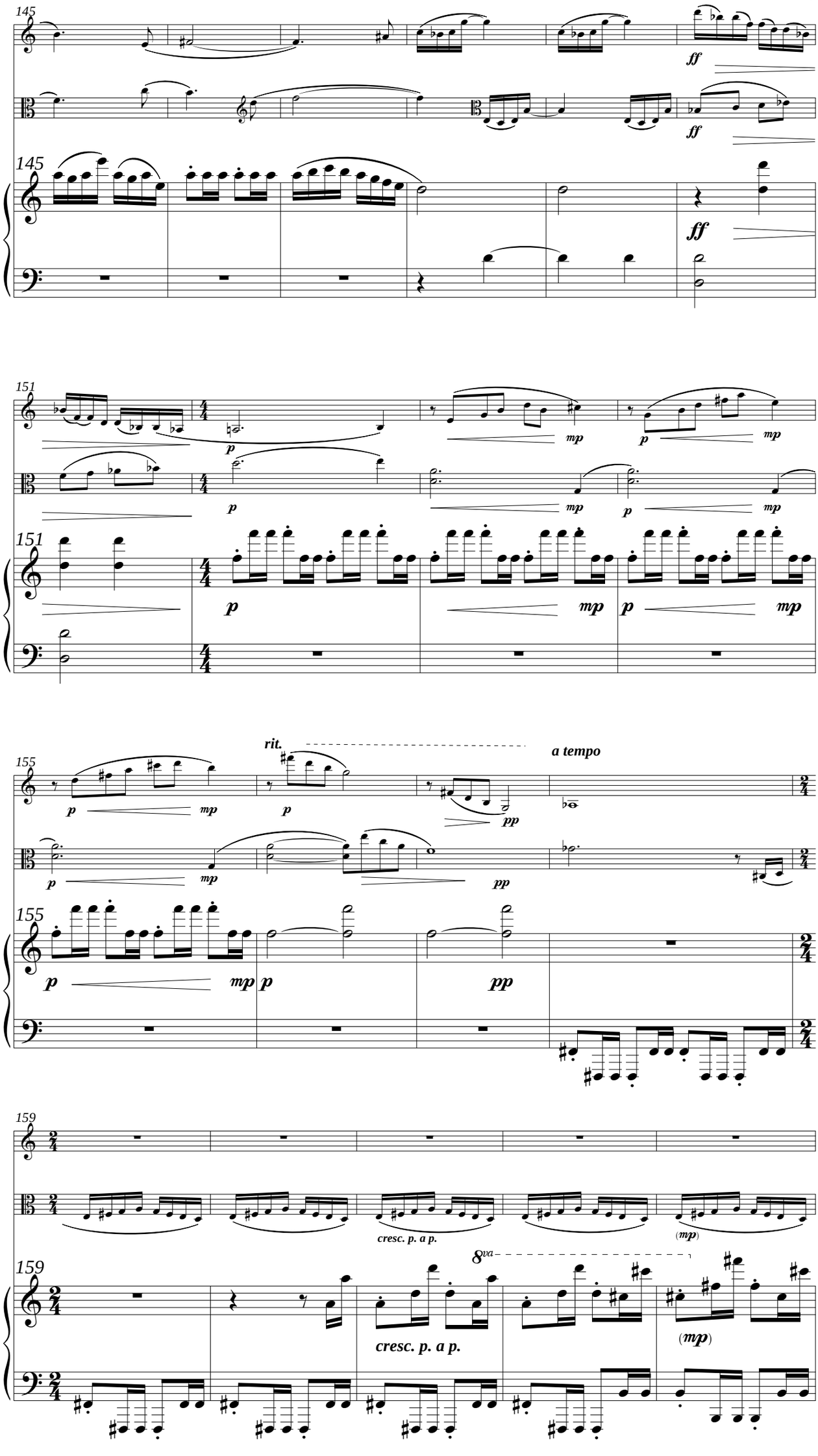

25
ff
8va
31
mp
p
pp
dolce
40
mp
46
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
Ped.

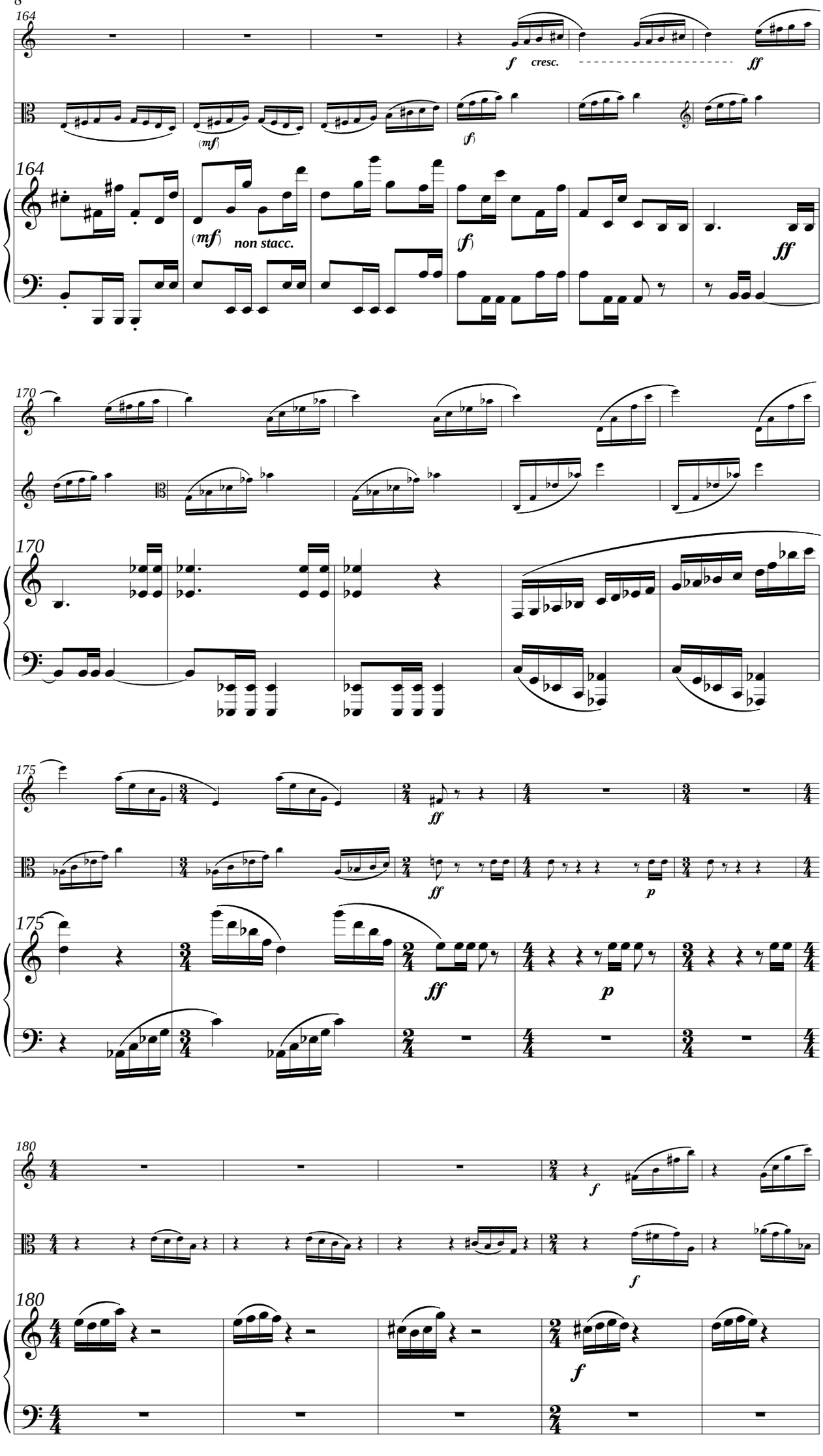

51
f
Ped.
56
mp
pp
61
cresc. p. a p.
(mp)
67
f
cresc.
ff
(mf)

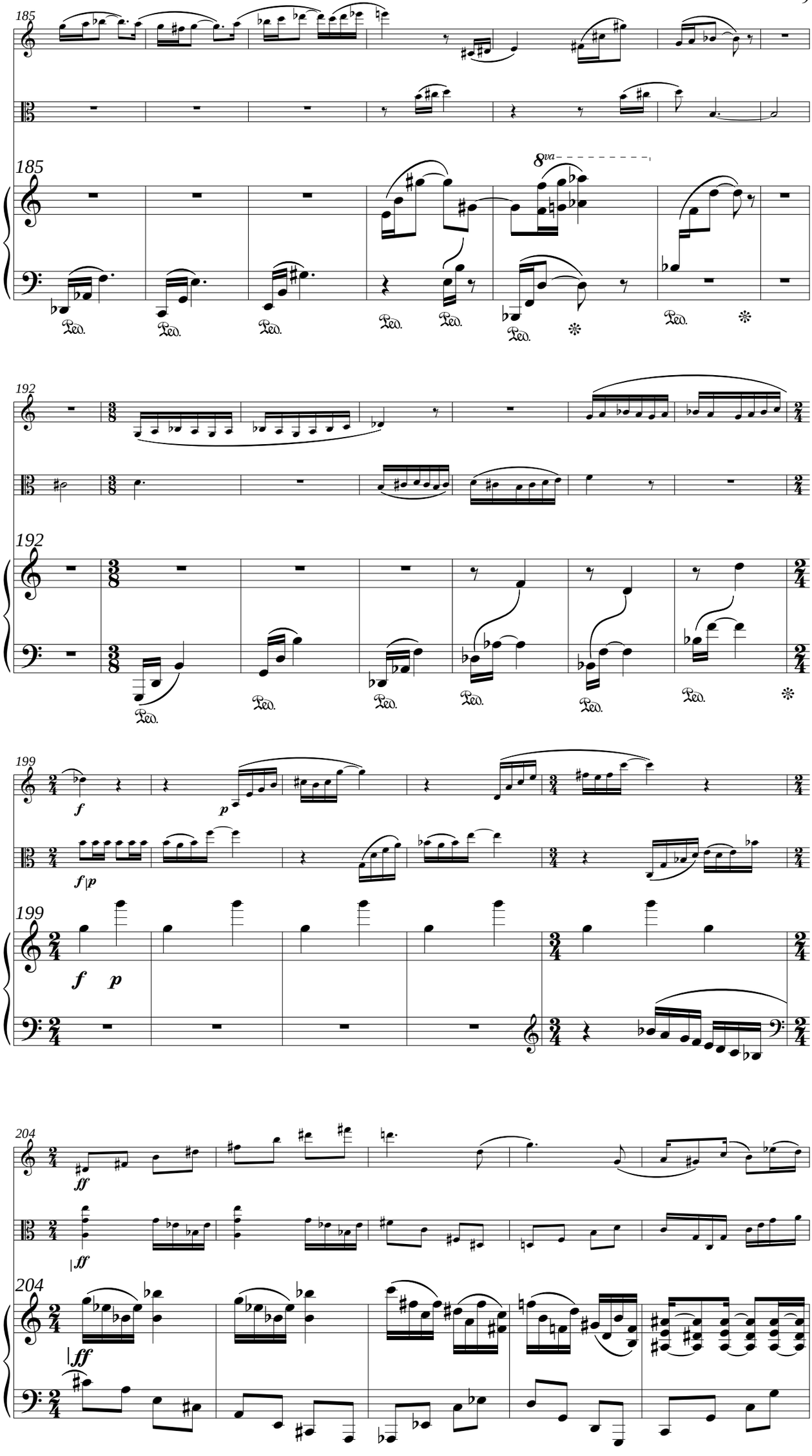

72
mf
mp
8va
ff
mf
mp
79
8va
85
mp
cresc.
ff
cresc.
ff
cresc.
ff
8va
91

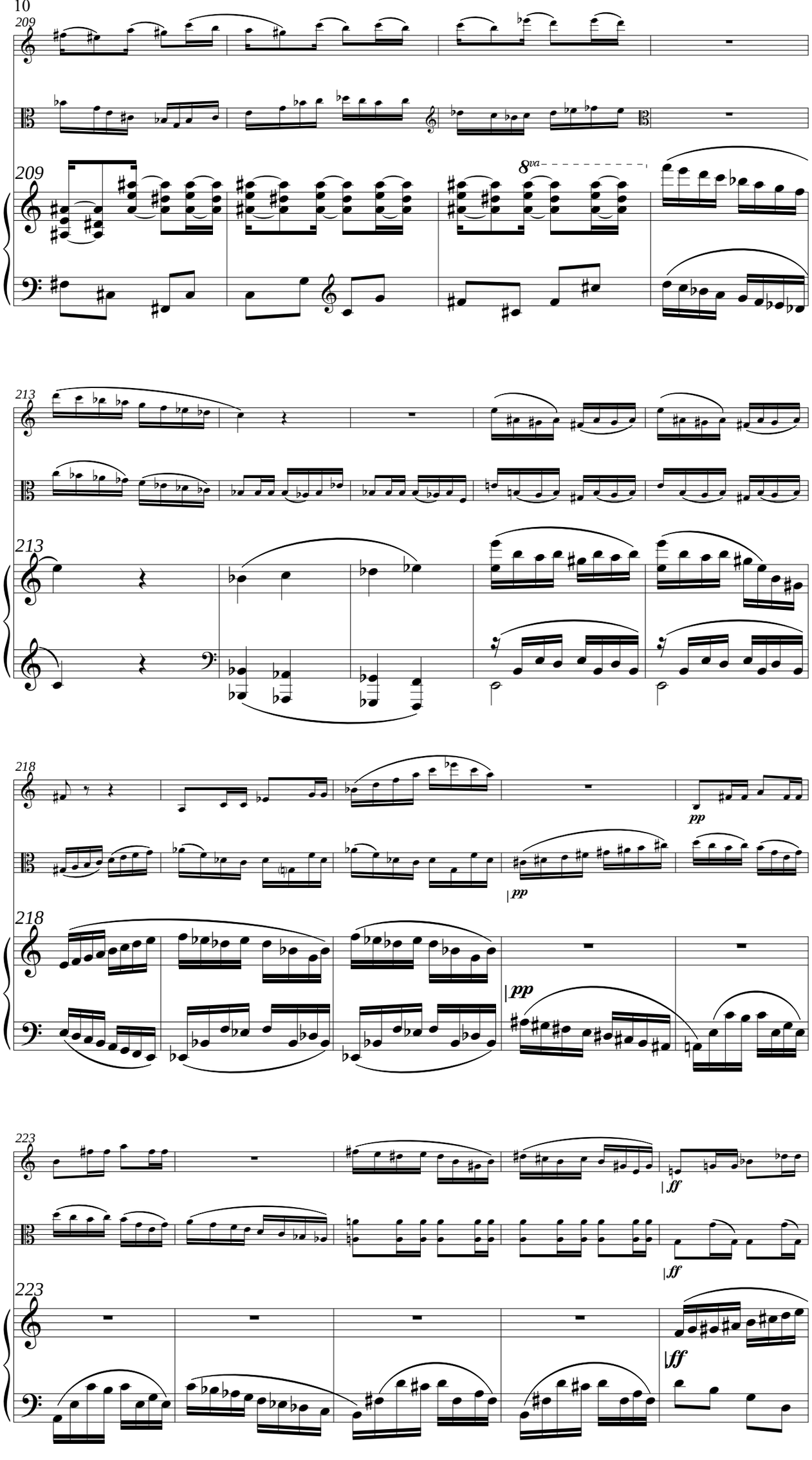

96
p
p
96
ff
mf
p
101
non stacc.
101
107
non stacc.
non stacc.
107
non stacc.
114
p
cresc.
p
cresc.
114
p
cresc.

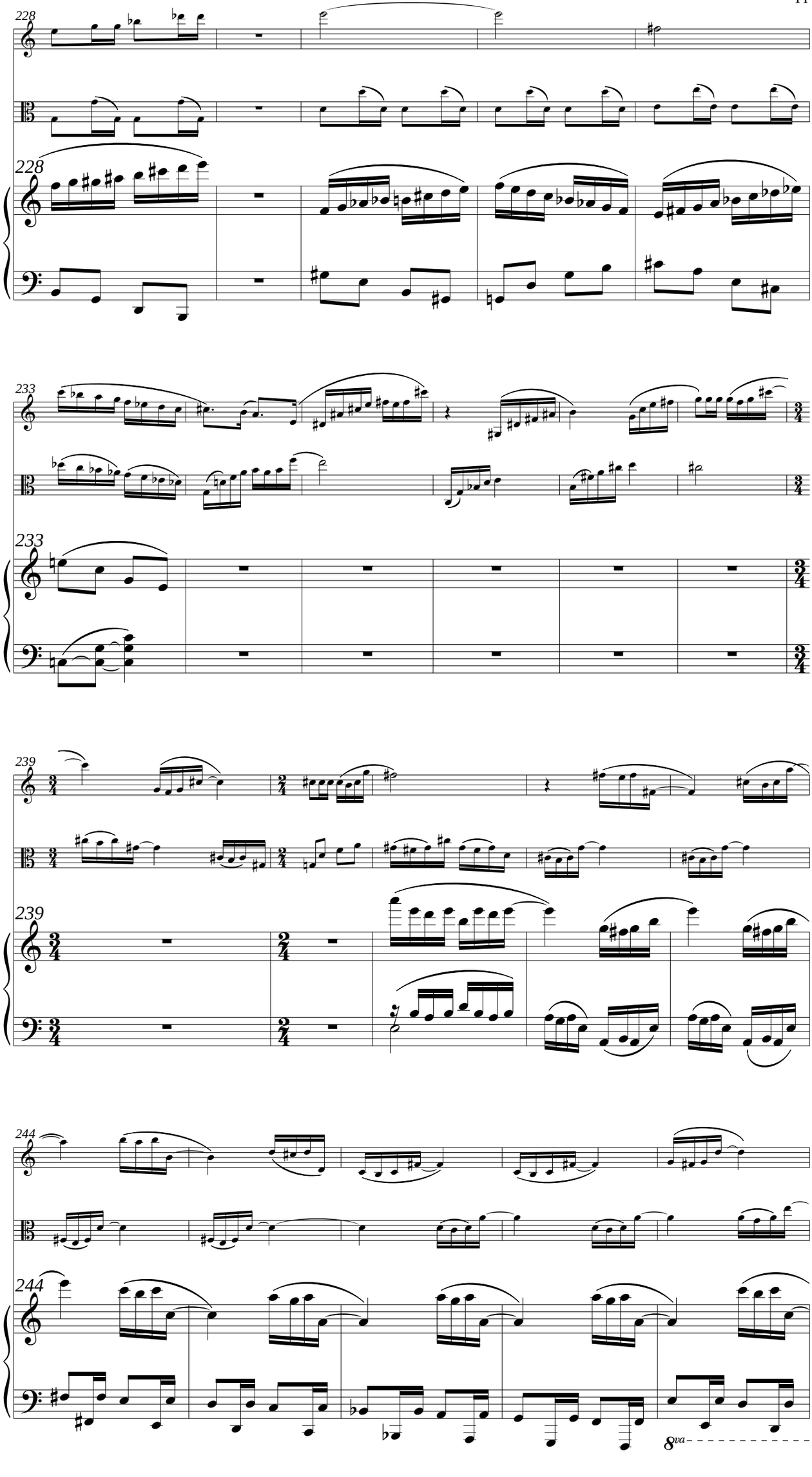

120
f
Ped.
126
131
rit.
a tempo
p
pp
ff
8va
138

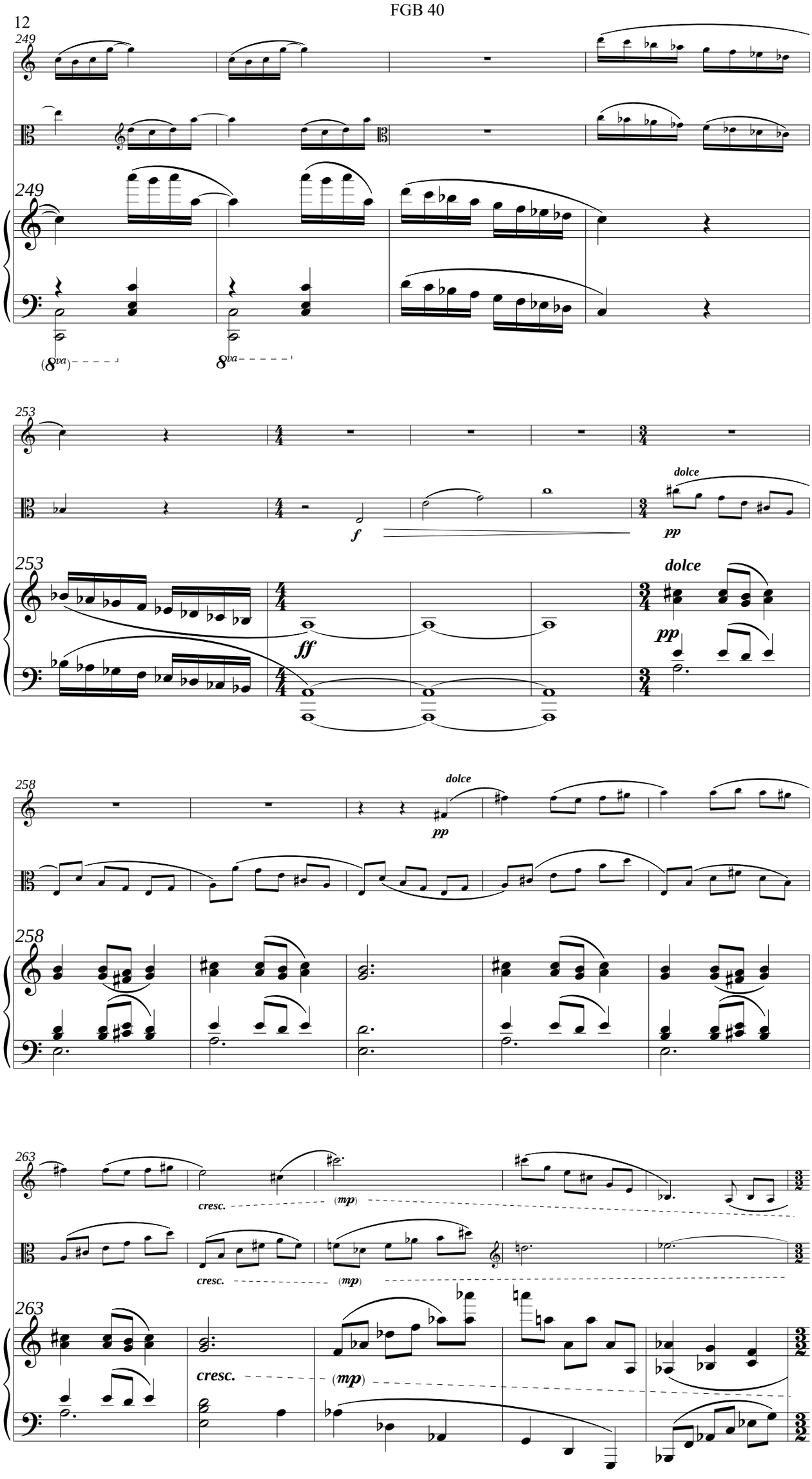

145
ff
ff
145
ff
151
p
mp
p
mp
151
p
mp
p
mp
155
rit.
a tempo
p
mp
p
pp
155
p
mp
p
pp
159
cresc. p. a p.
(mp)
8va
159
cresc. p. a p.
(mp)

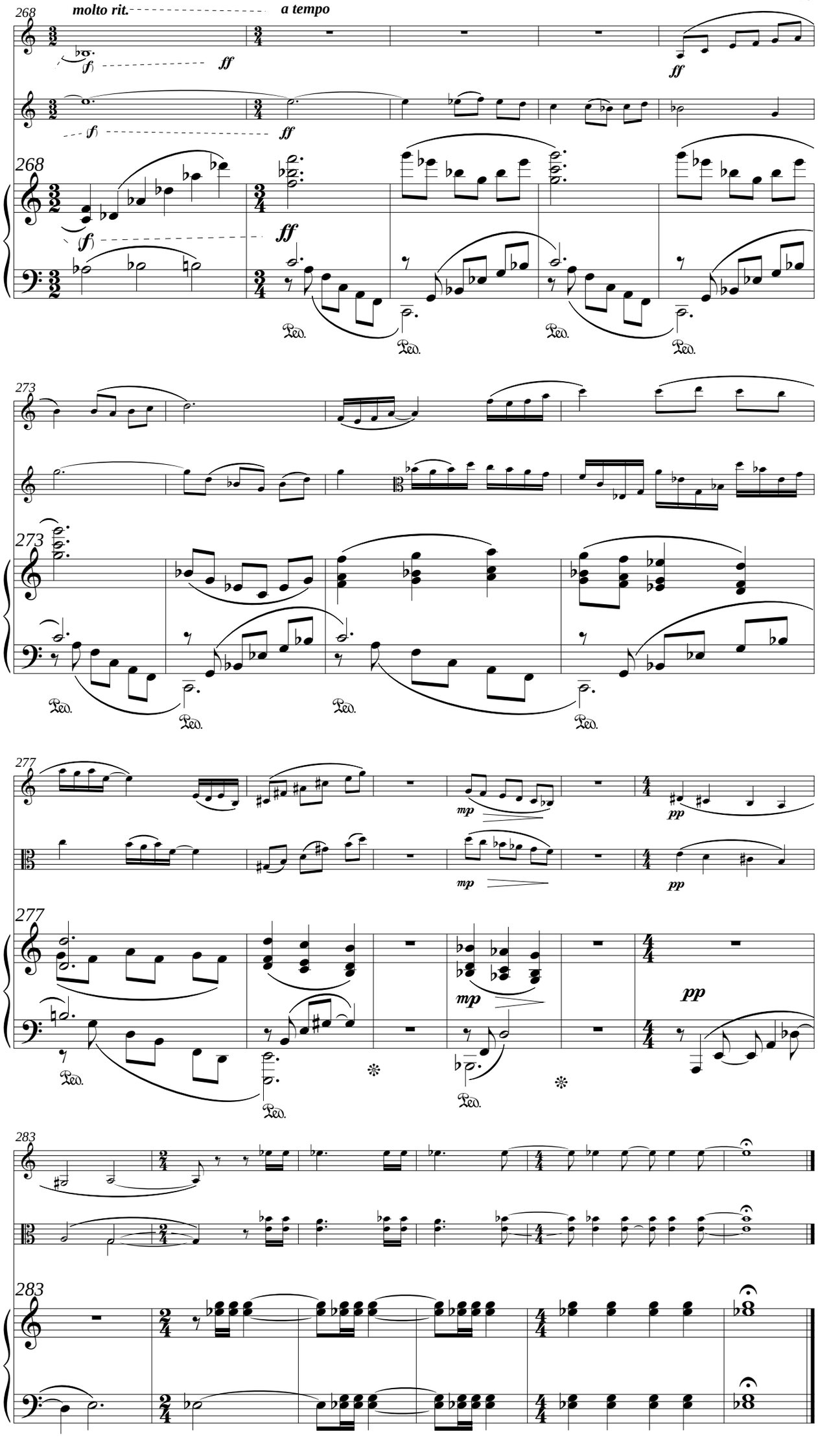

164
f
cresc.
ff
(mf)
(f)
164
(mf)
non stacc.
(f)
ff
170
170
175
ff
ff
p
175
ff
p
180
f
f
180
f


185
8va
Ped.
192
199
f
p
f p
204
ff


209
8va
213
218
pp
223
ff


228
228
233
233
239
239
244
244
8va


249
249
(8va)
8va
253
253
f
ff
dolce
pp
dolce
pp
258
258
dolce
pp
263
263
cresc.
(mp)
cresc.
(mp)
cresc.
(mp)


molto rit.
a tempo
268
273
277
283
ff
mp
pp

II. Yet Another Waltz

[6']

Anorexia composa (♩ = 180)

Clarinet in B♭

Viola

Piano

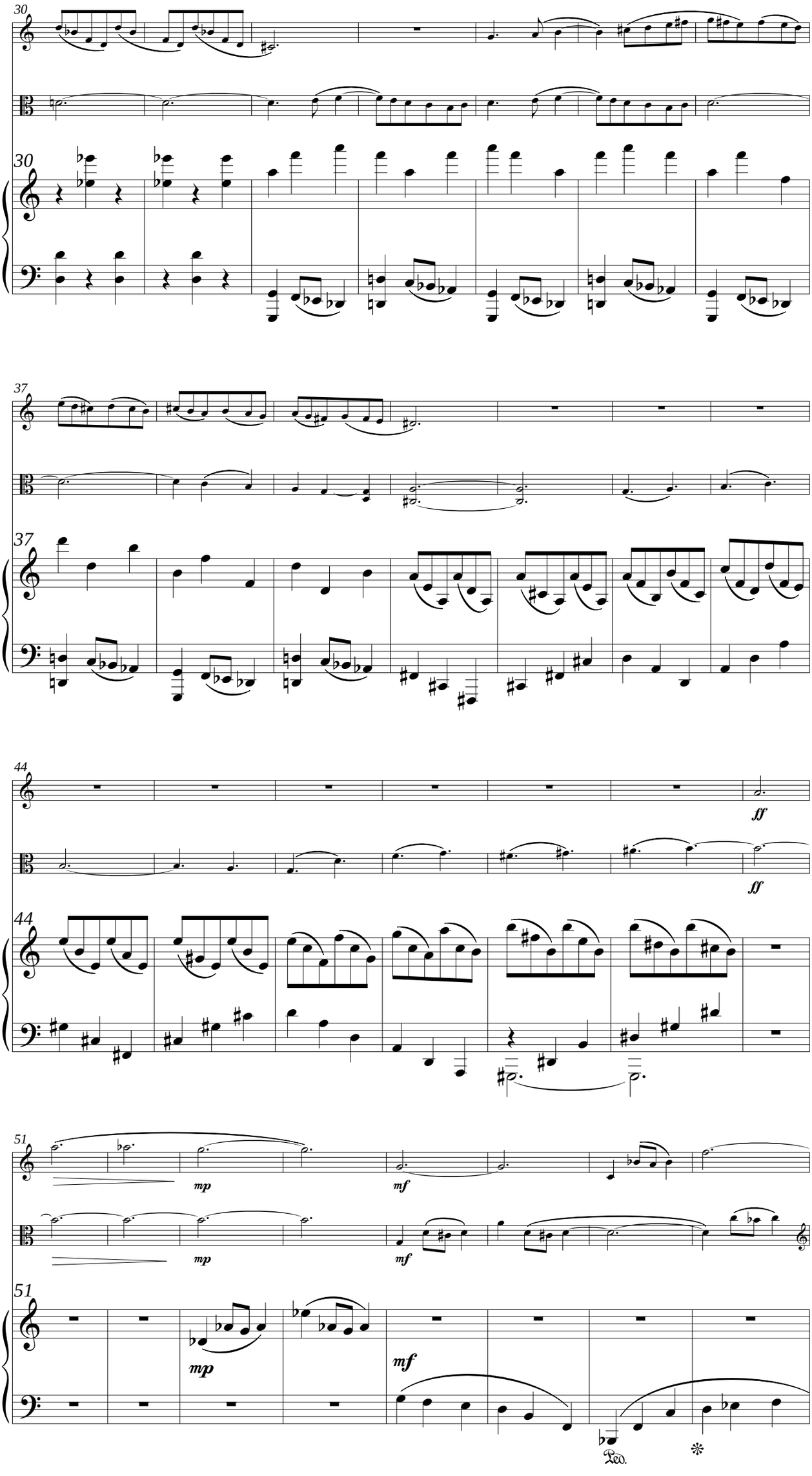
ff

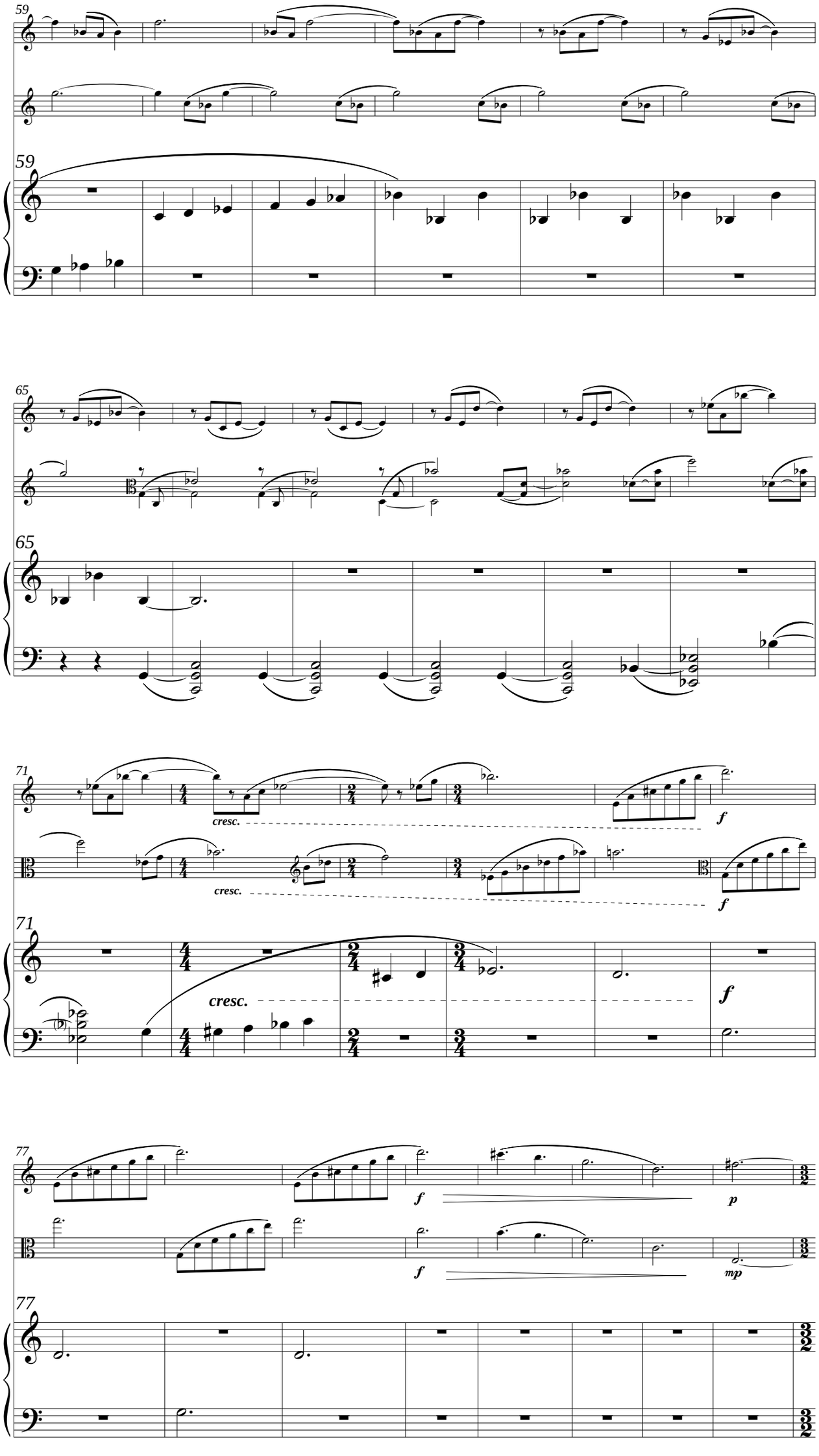
8

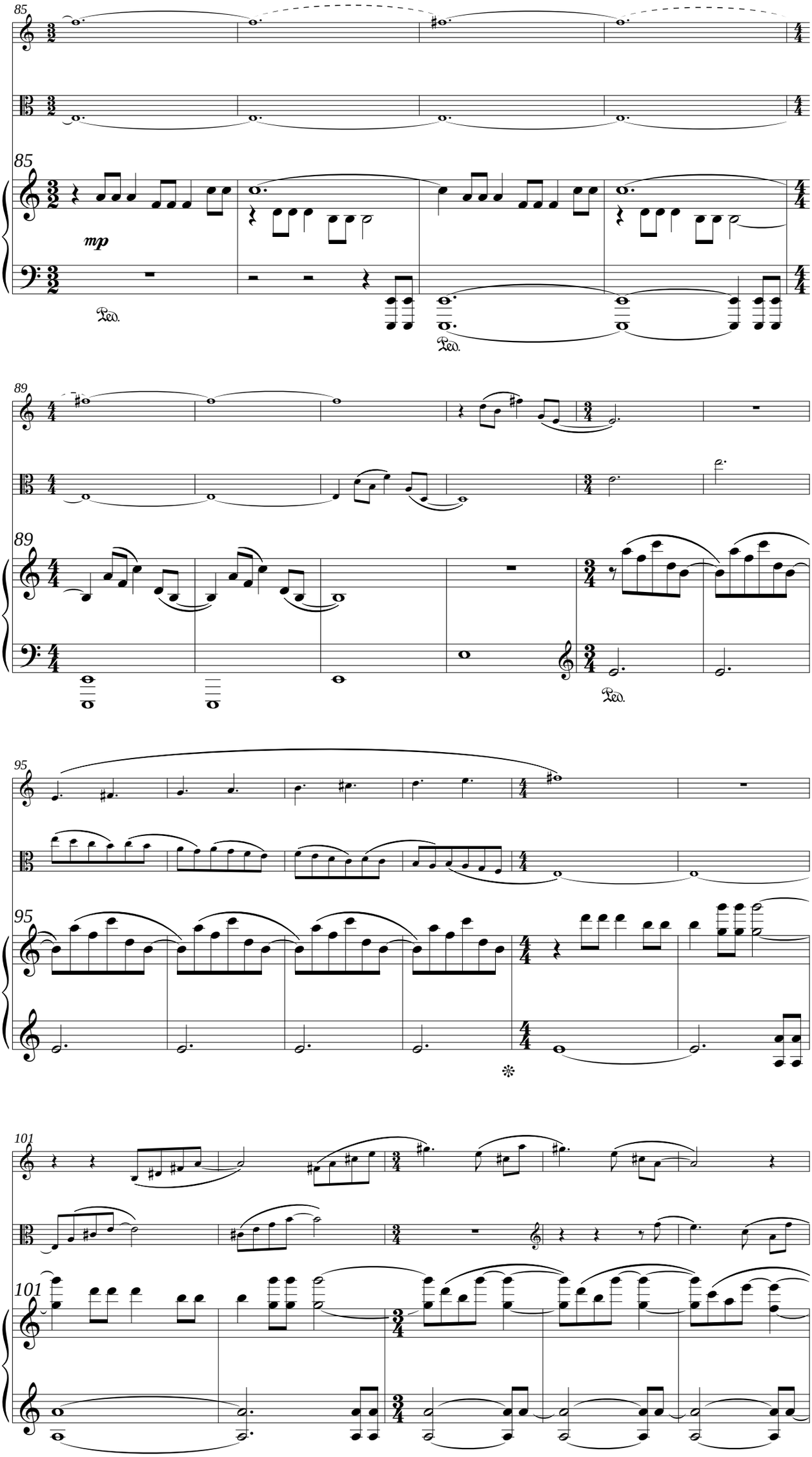
15

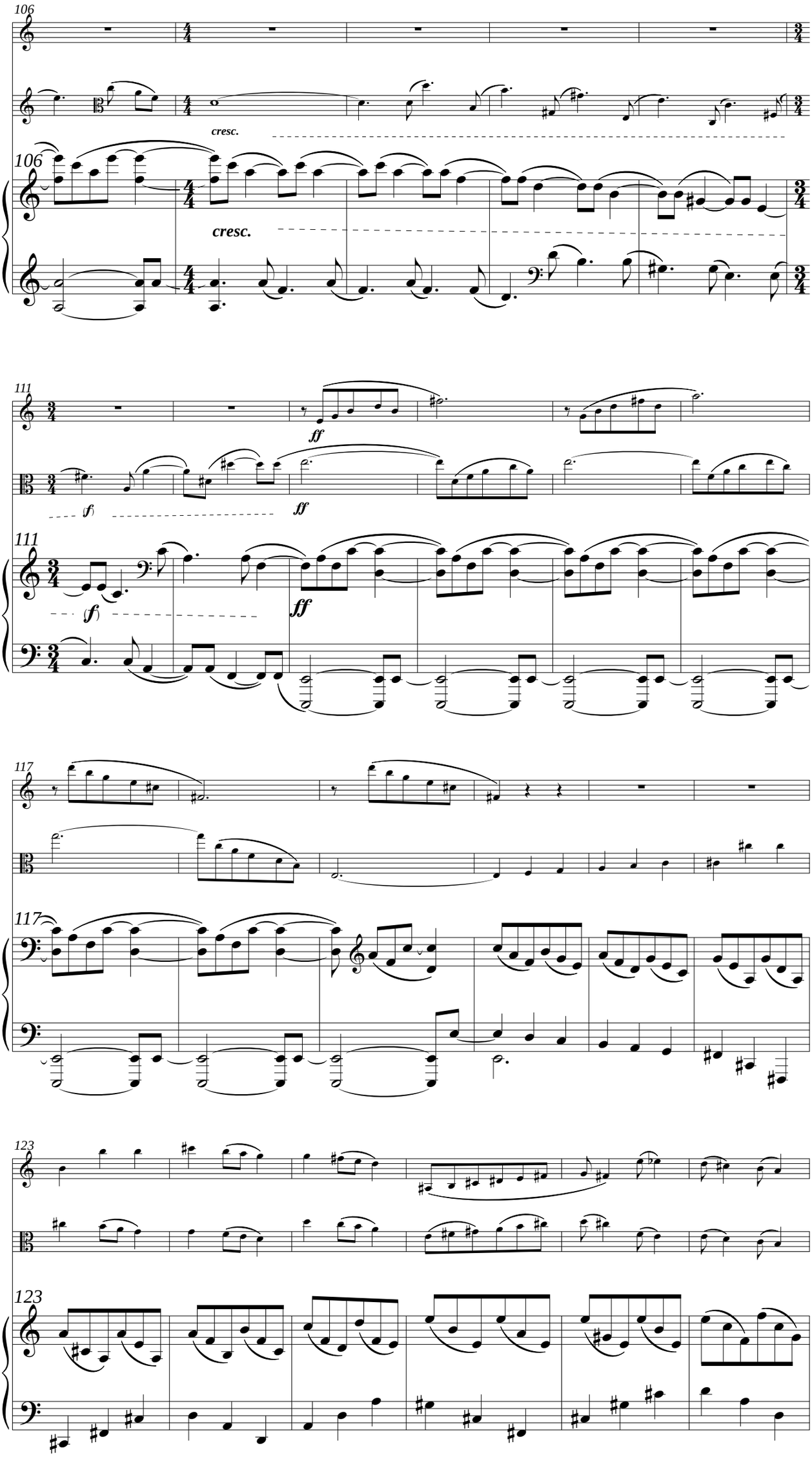
22

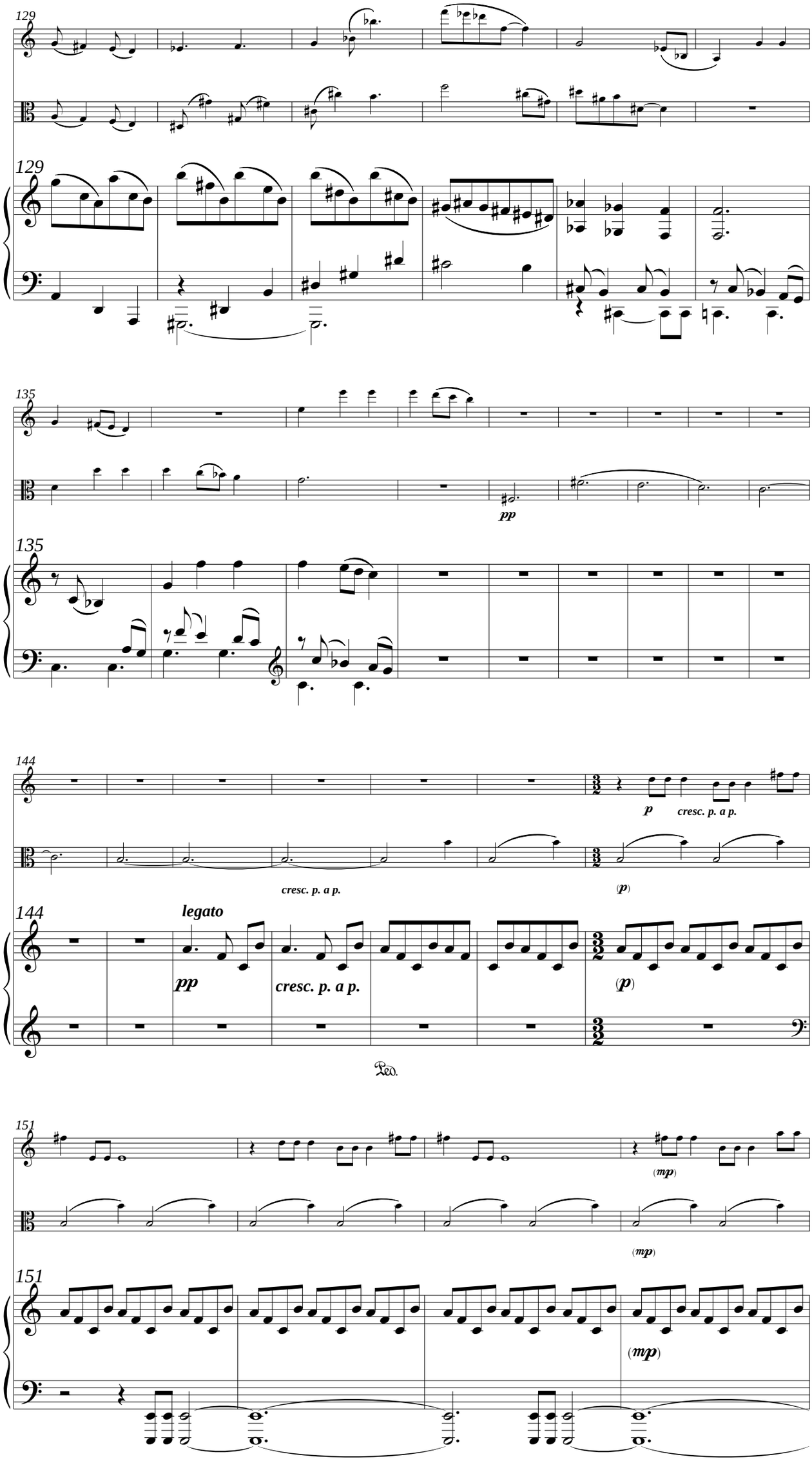
8va

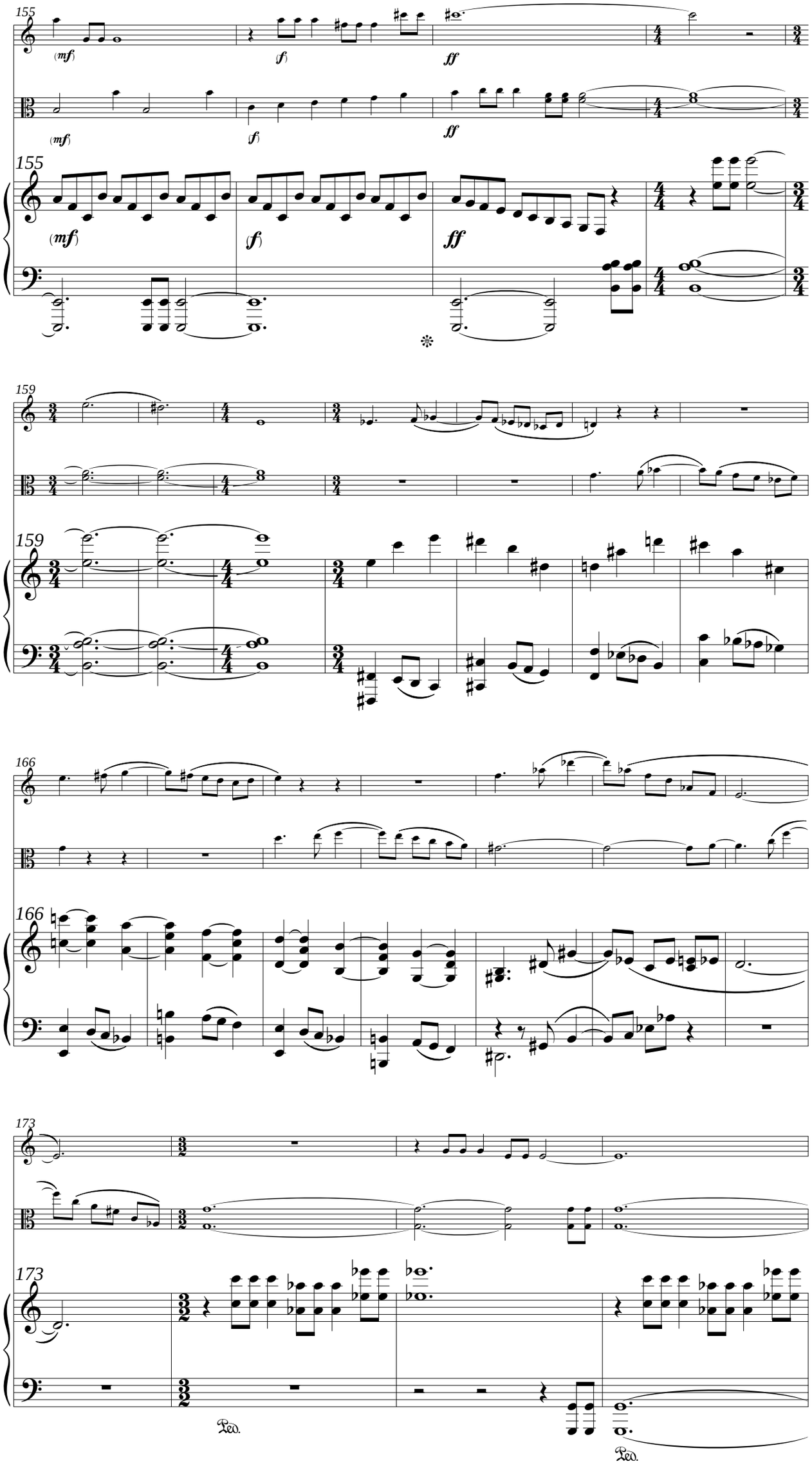

30
37
44
ff
ff
51
mp
mf
mp
mf
mp
mf
Ped.

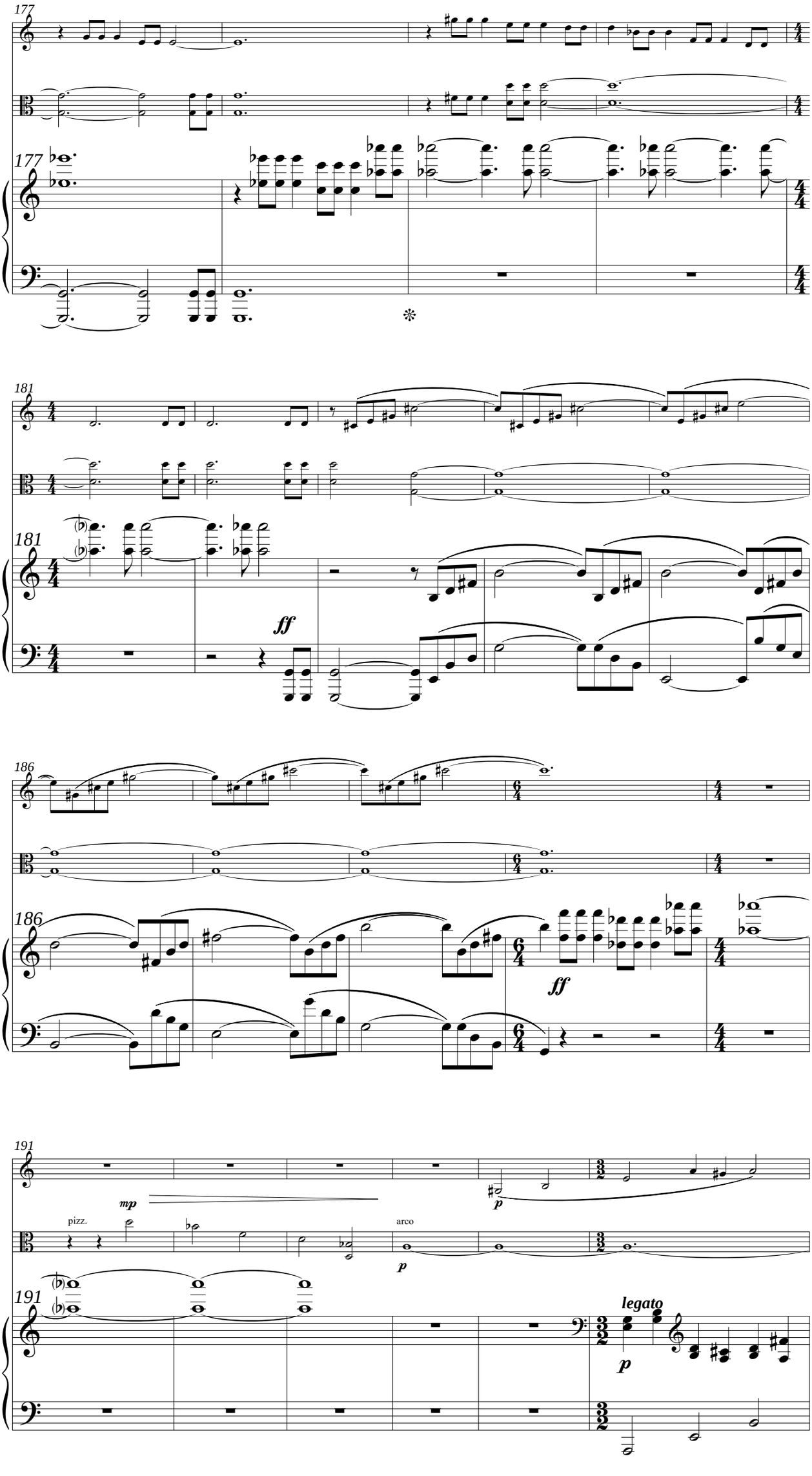

59
59
65
65
71
cresc.
cresc.
71
cresc.
f
f
f
77
f
f
p
mp
77

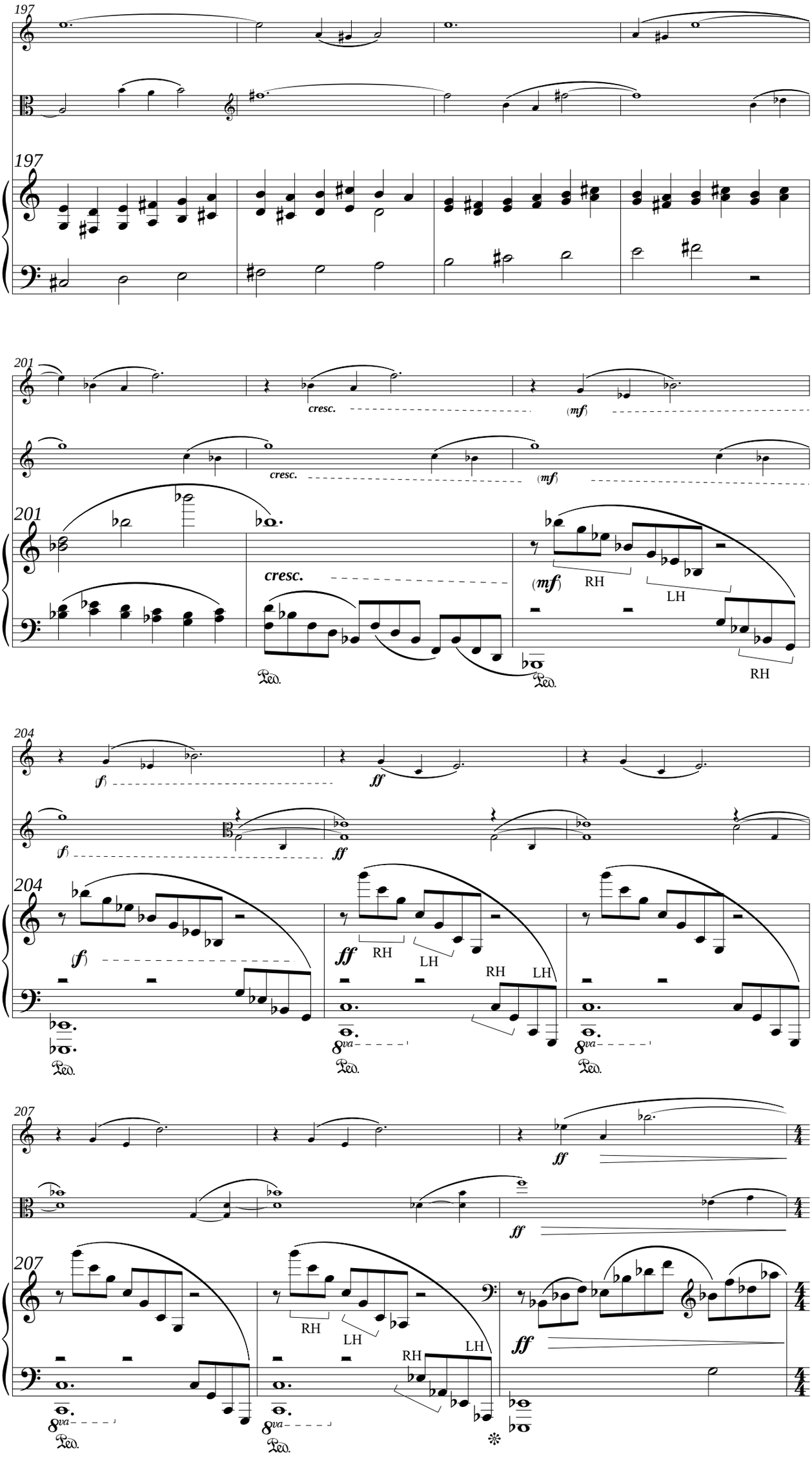

85
mp
Ped.
Ped.
89
Ped.
95
101

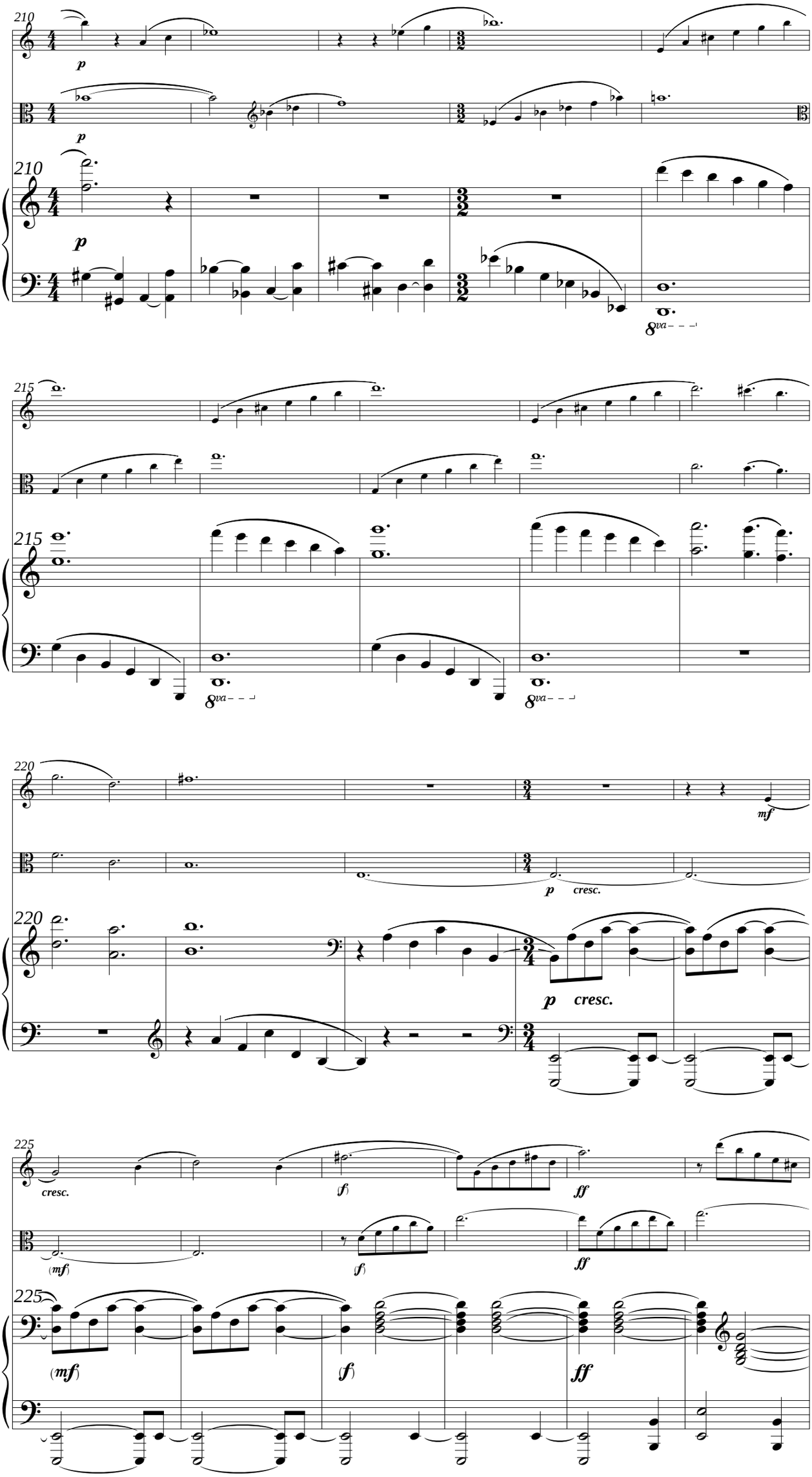

106
cresc.
106
cresc.
111
ff
f
ff
111
f
ff
117
117
123
123

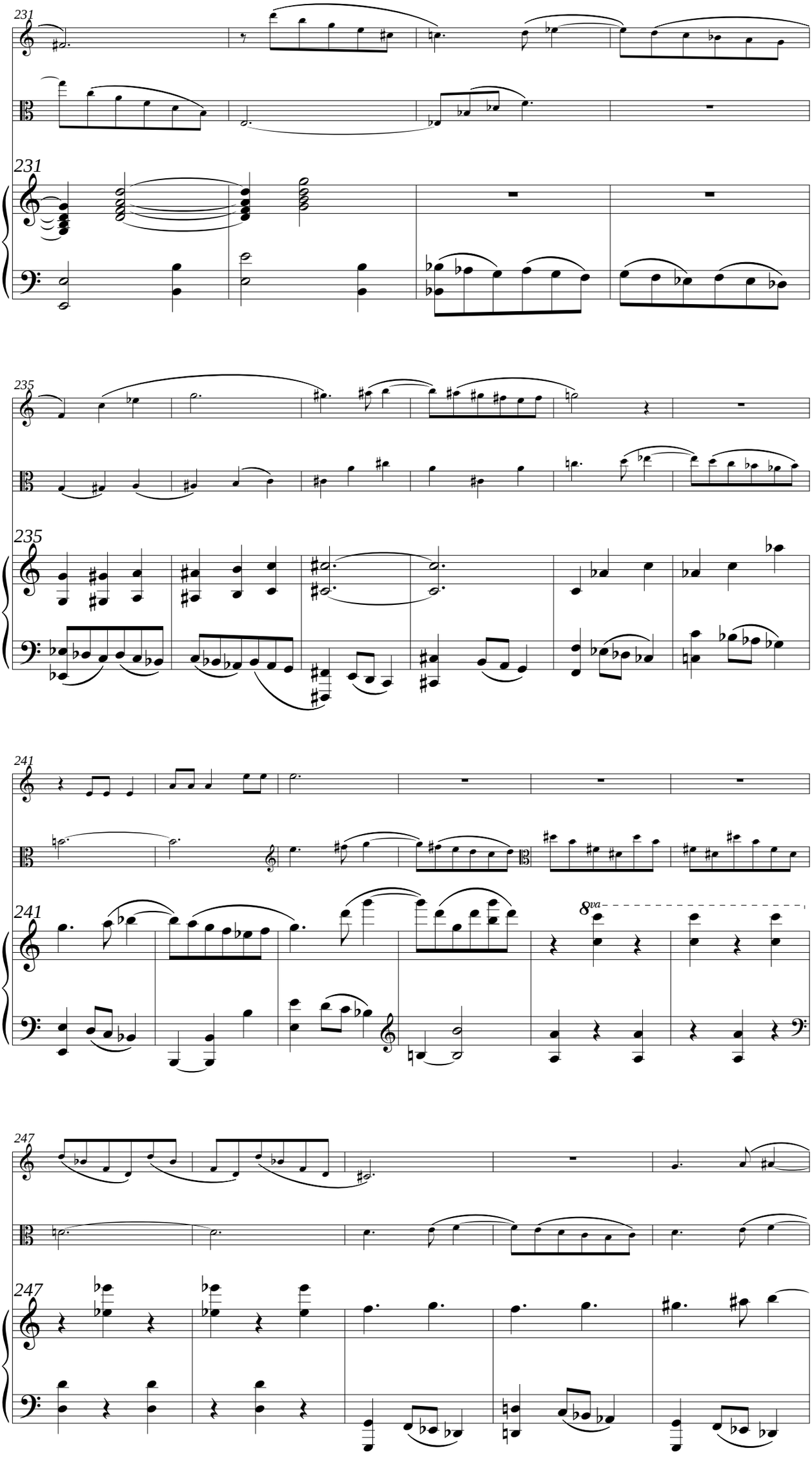

129
129
135
pp
135
144
p
cresc. p. a p.
cresc. p. a p.
(p)
144
legato
pp
cresc. p. a p.
(p)
Ped.
151
(mp)
(mp)
151
(mp)

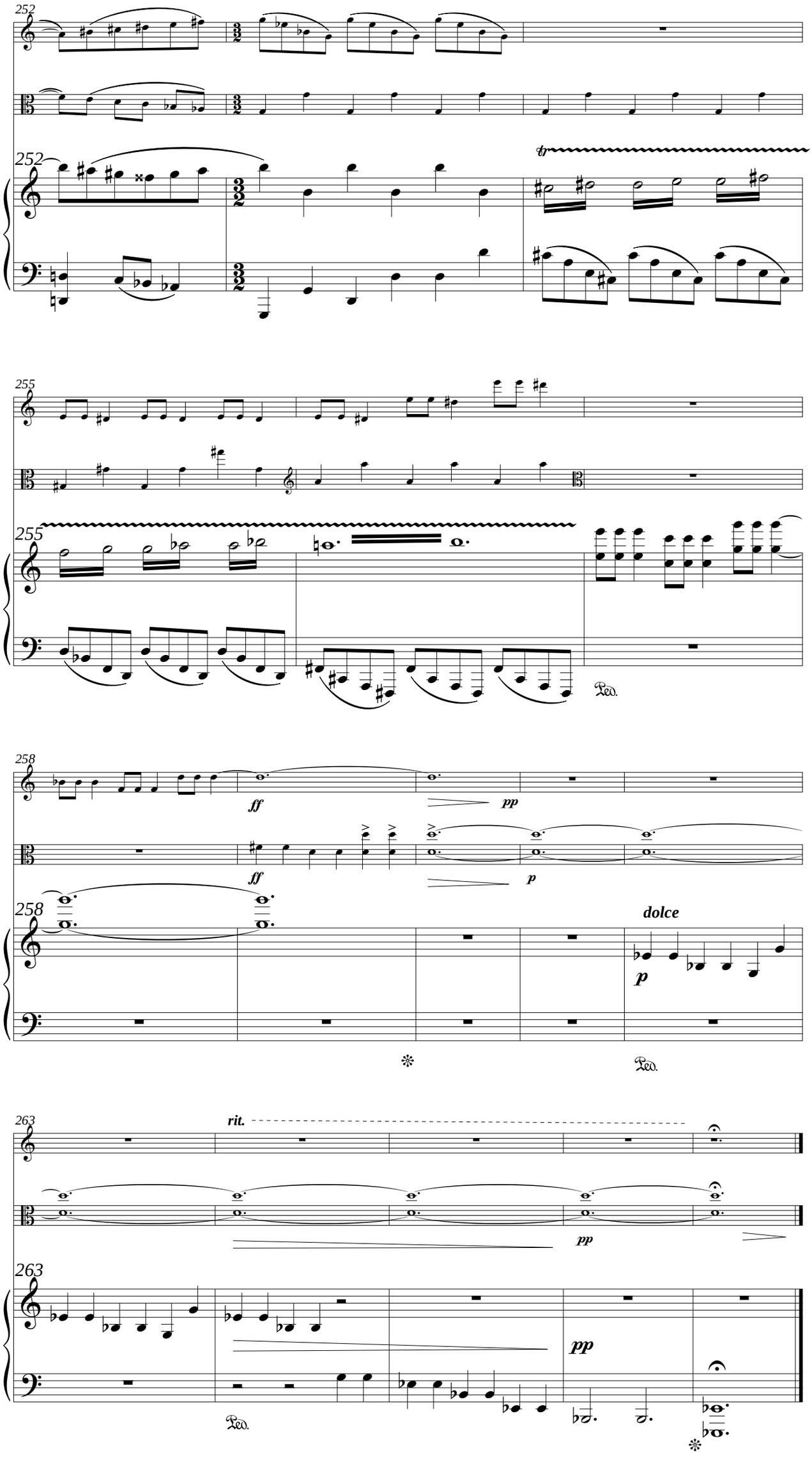

155
(mf)
(f)
ff
159
166
173
Ped.
Ped.


177
177
181
181
ff
186
186
ff
191
mp
pizz.
arco
p
191
legato
p


197
197
201
cresc.
(mf)
cresc.
(mf)
201
cresc.
(mf)
RH
LH
RH
Ped.
Ped.
204
(f)
ff
(f)
ff
204
(f)
ff
RH
LH
RH
LH
8va
8va
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
207
ff
ff
207
RH
LH
RH
LH
ff
8va
8va
Ped.
Ped.


210
p
8va
215
8va
8va
220
mf
p cresc.
p cresc.
225
cresc.
(mf)
(f)
ff
(mf)
(f)
ff

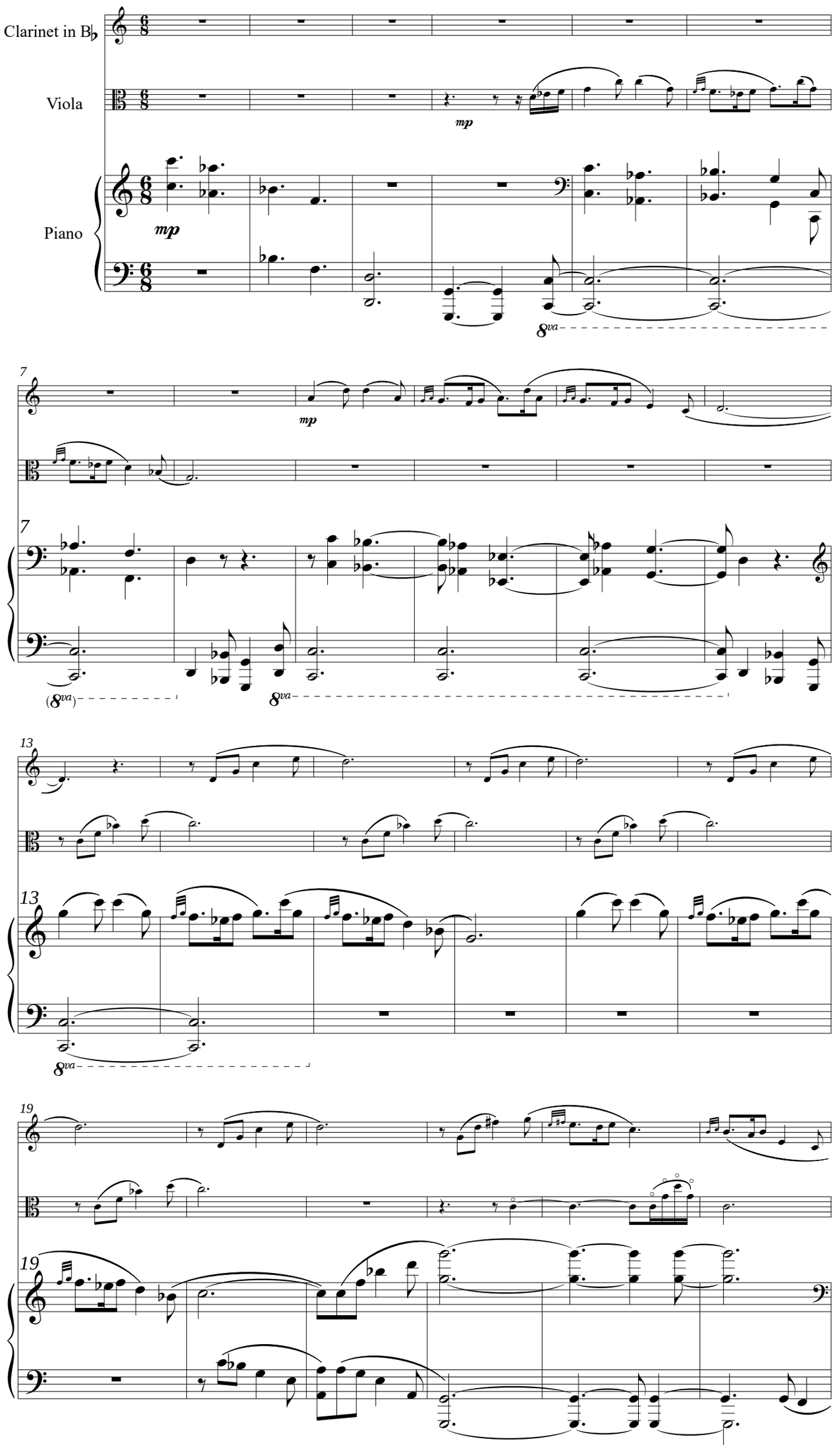

231
231
235
235
241
241
8va
247
247

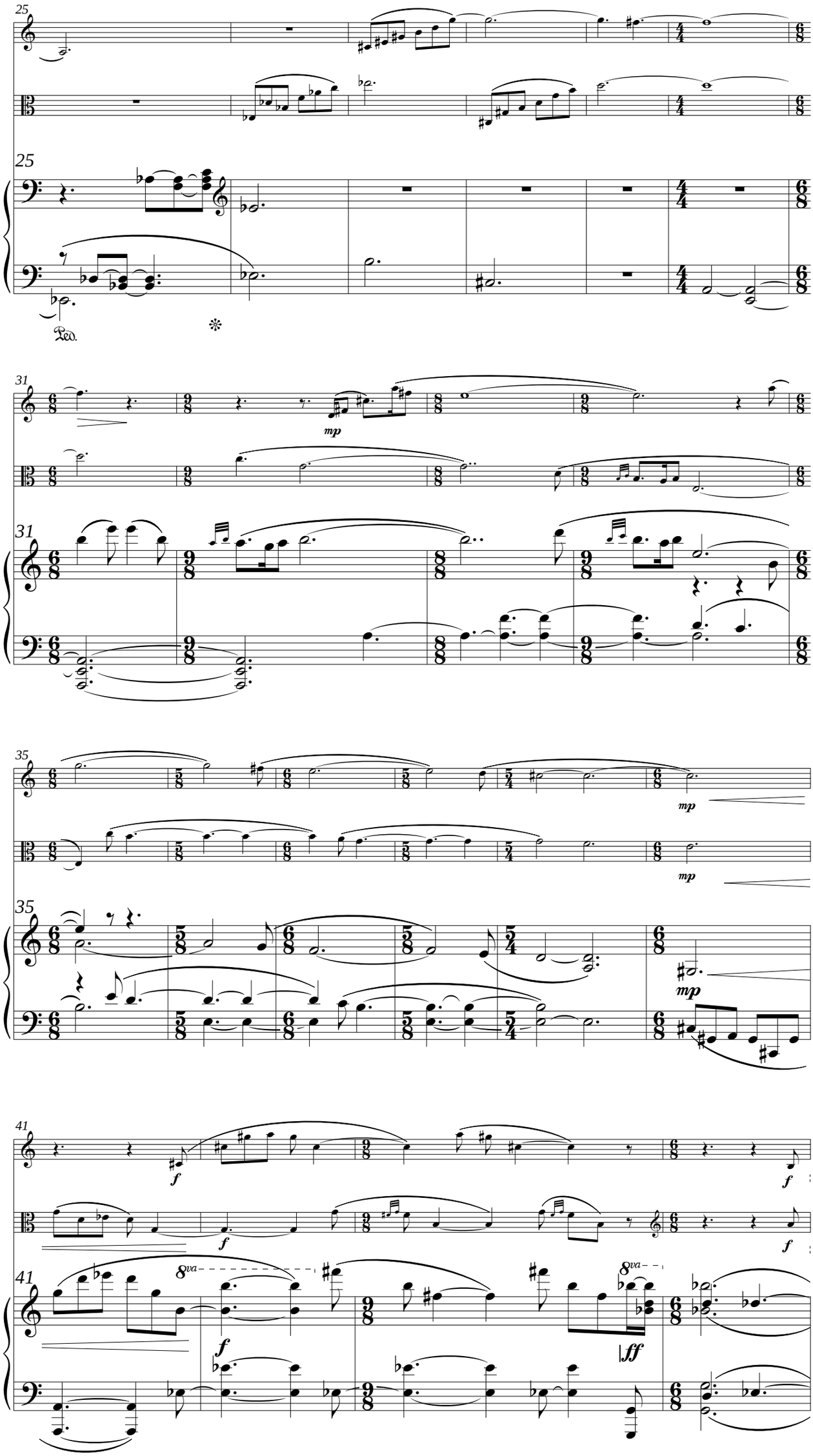

252
tr
255
Ped.
258
ff
pp
ff
p
dolce
p
Ped.
263
rit.
pp
263
pp
Ped.

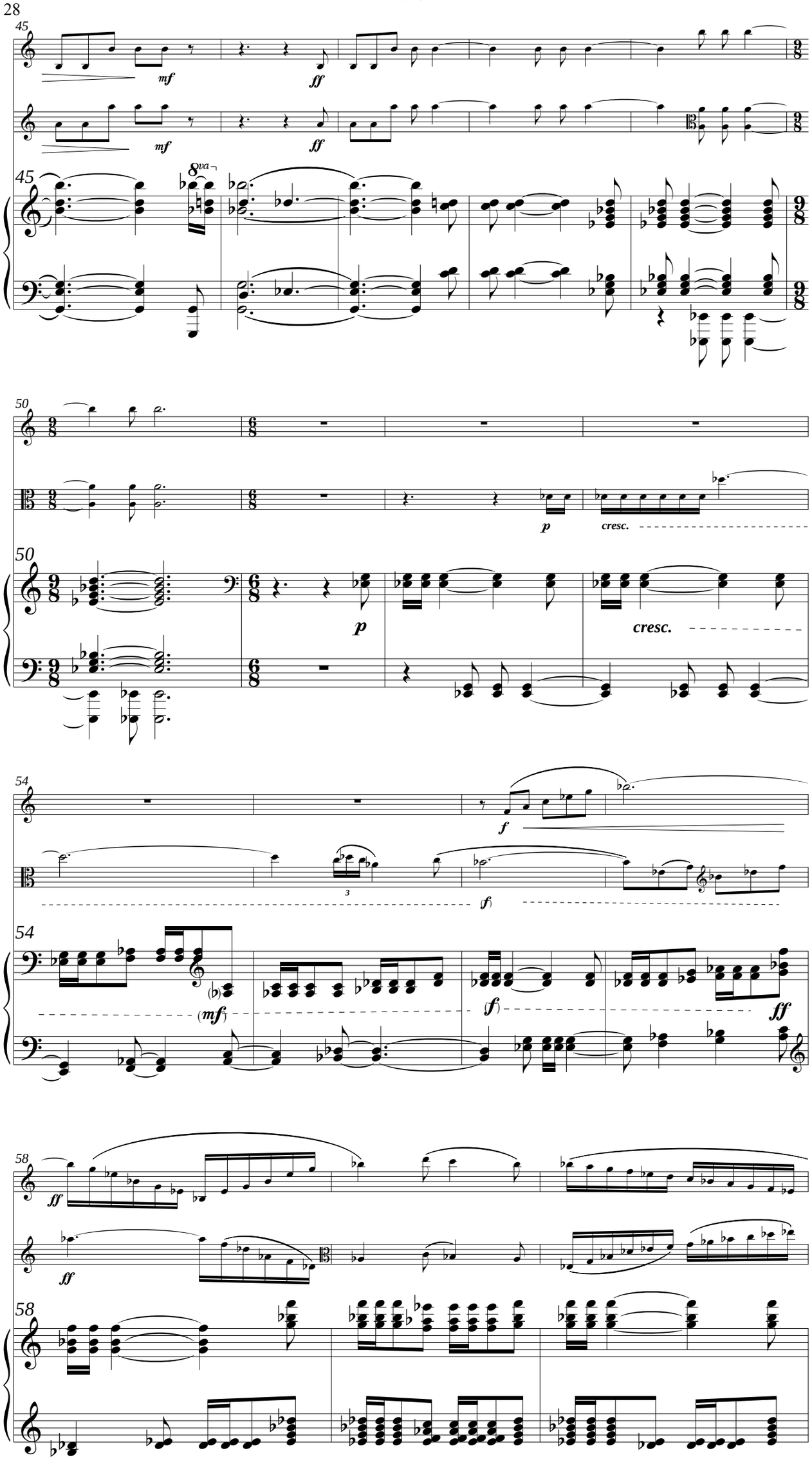
III. Sic Transit Gloria Mundi

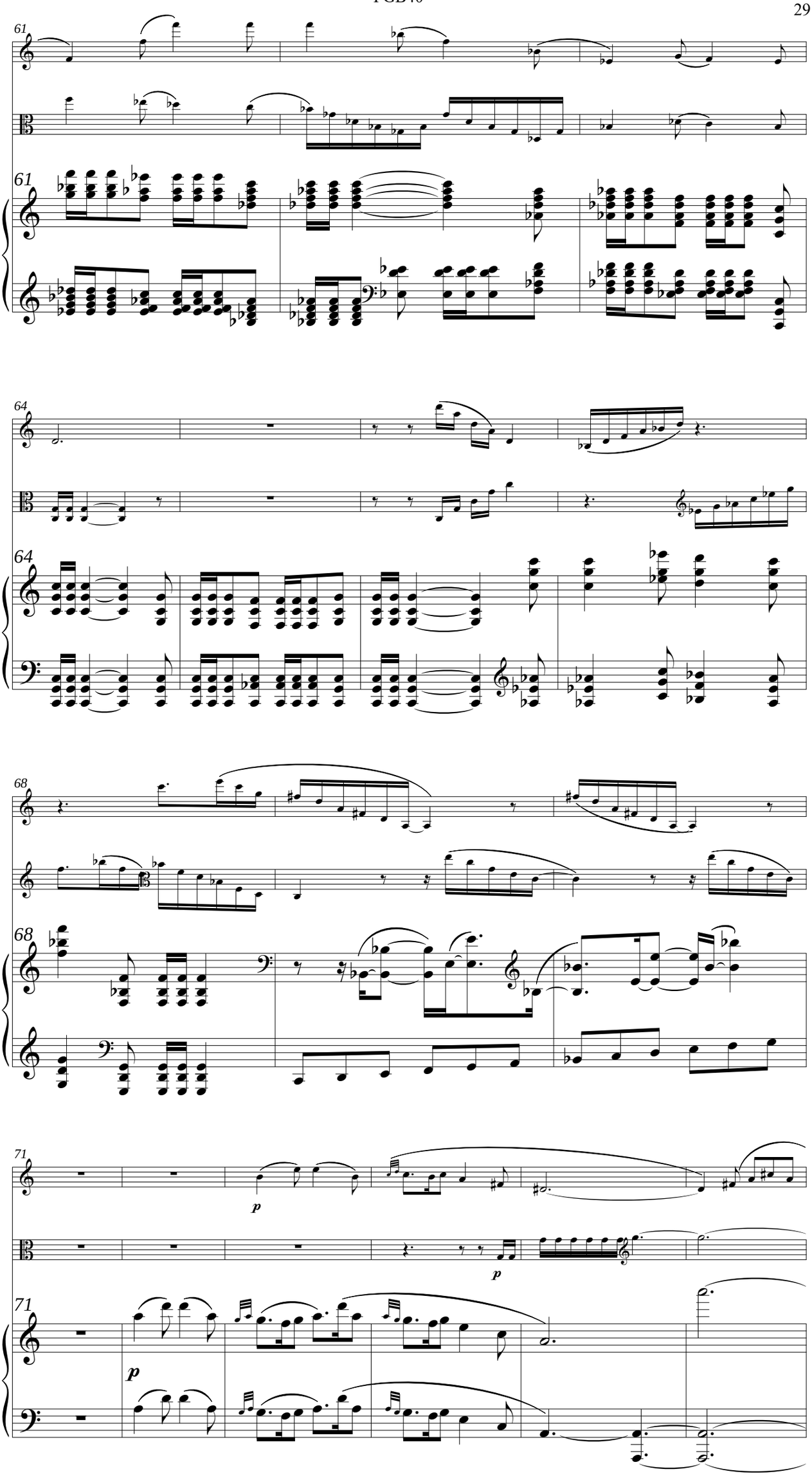
[5:30]

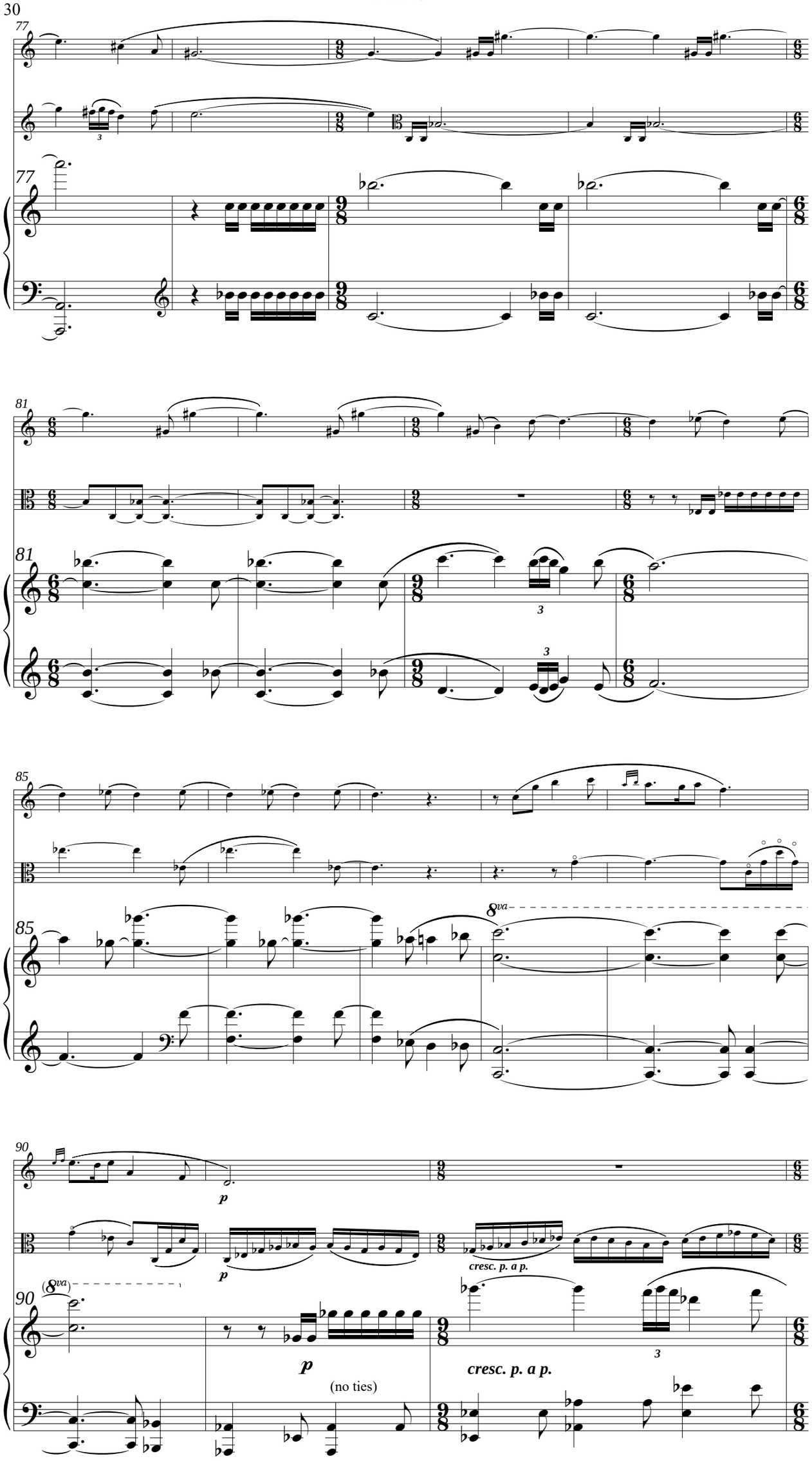
Lento (♩. = 56)

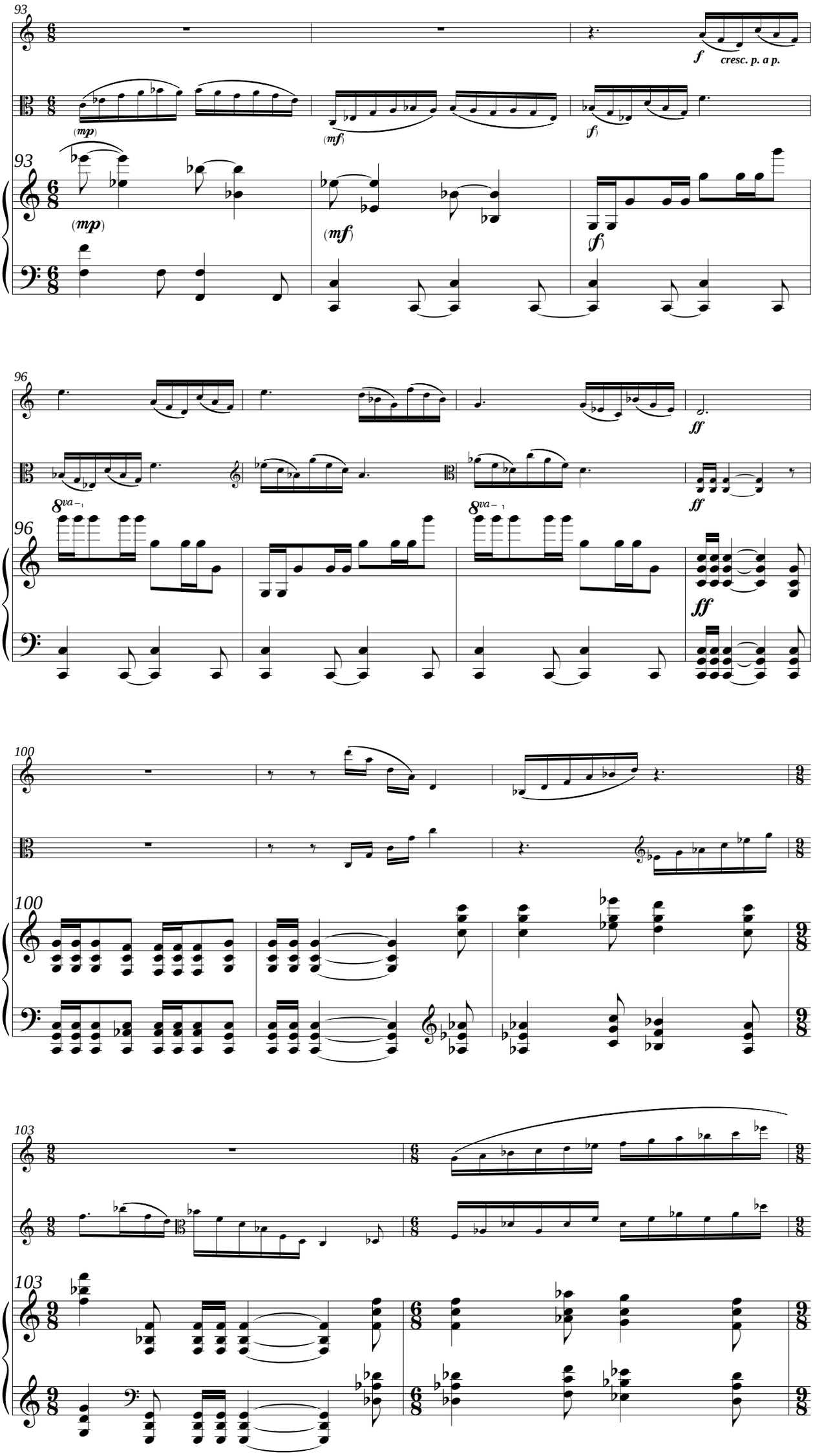


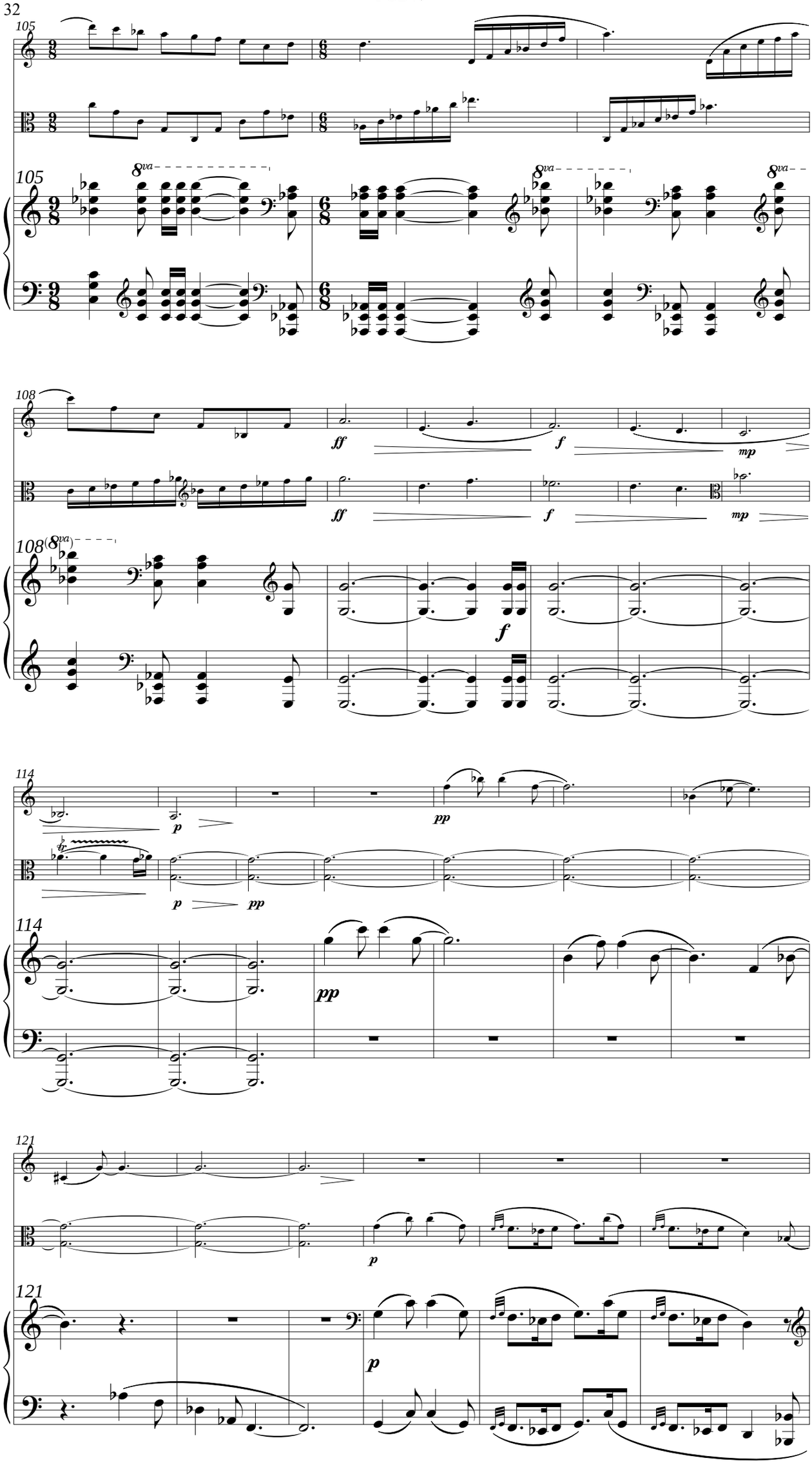

25
Ped.
31
mp
35
mp
mp
41
f
f
f
f
8va
f
8va
ff

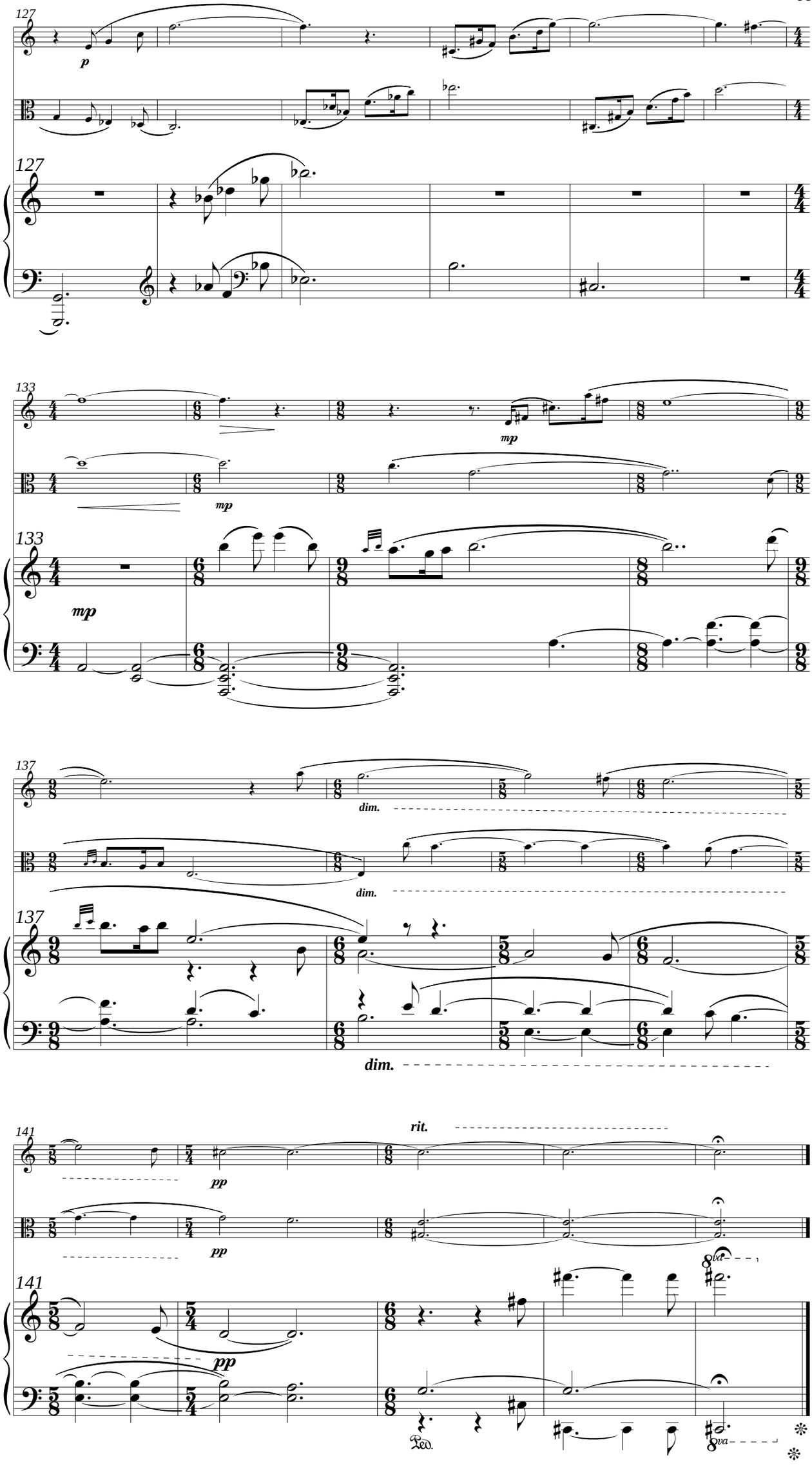

45
mf
ff
8va
50
p
cresc.
54
f
(f)
(mf)
ff
58


61
64
68
71
p
p
p

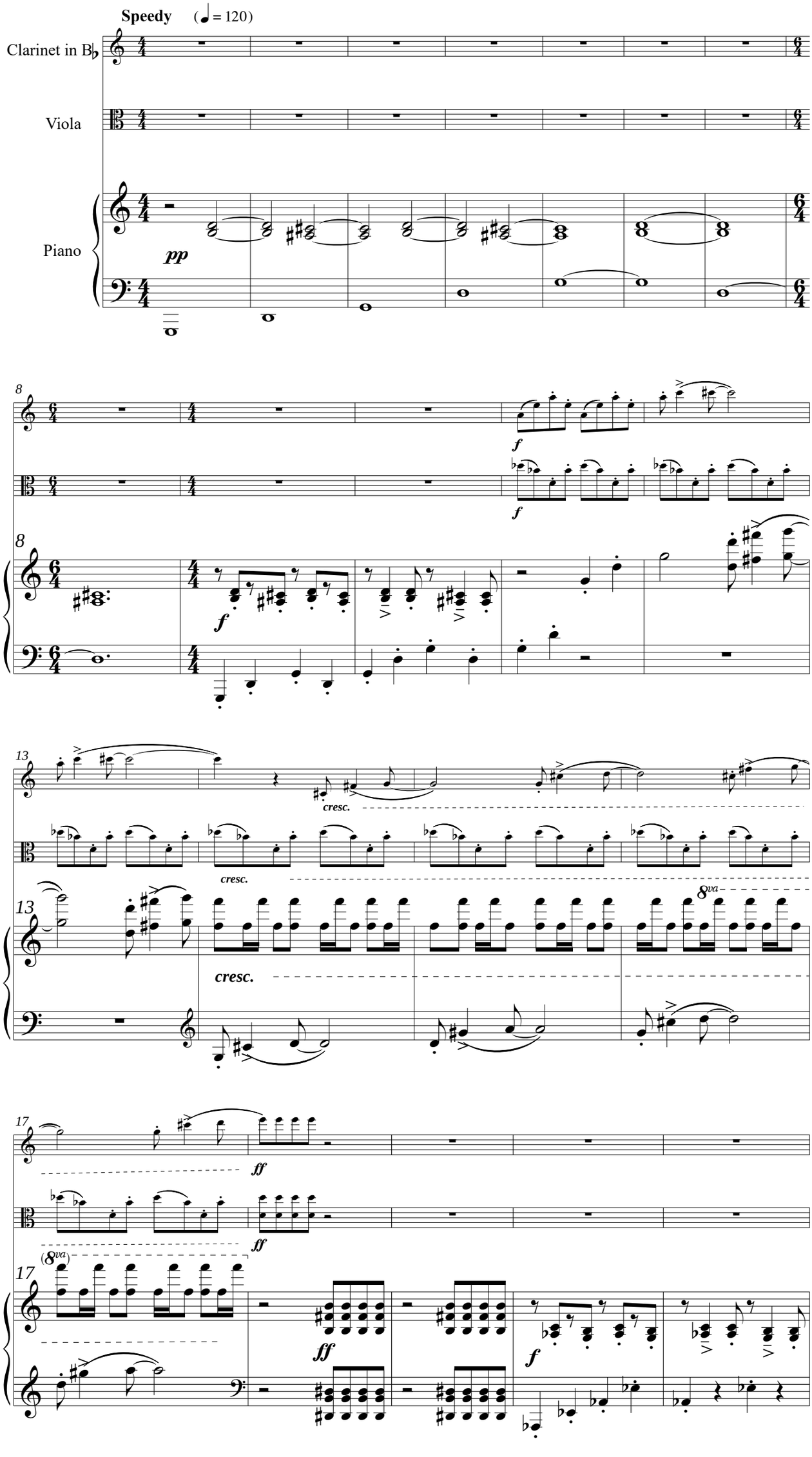

77
81
85
90
8va
p
cresc. p. a p.
(no ties)

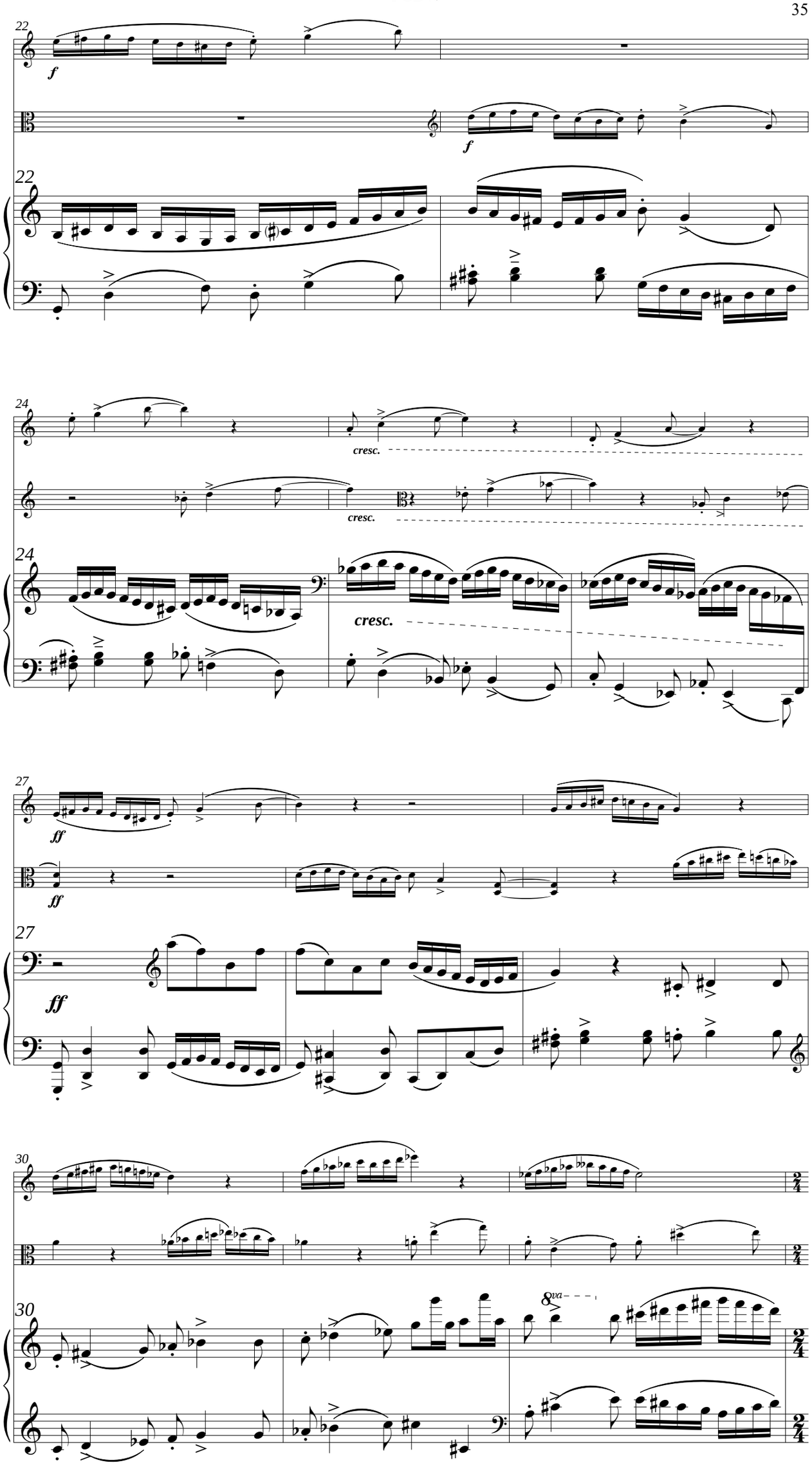

93
(mp)
(mf)
f
cresc. p. a p.
96
ff
8va
100
103

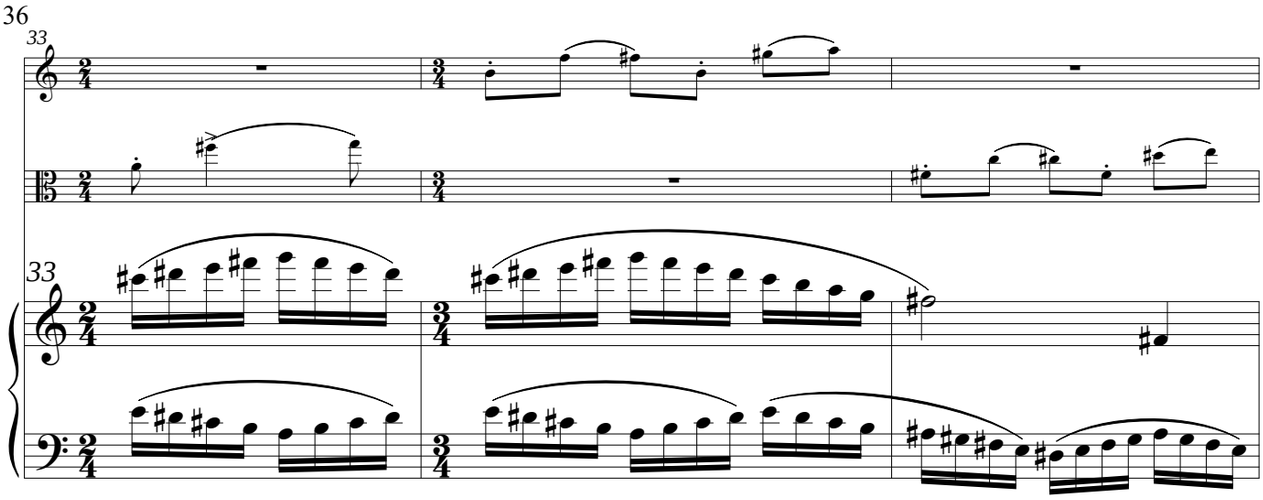

105
8va
108
ff
f
mp
(8va)
114
p
pp
121

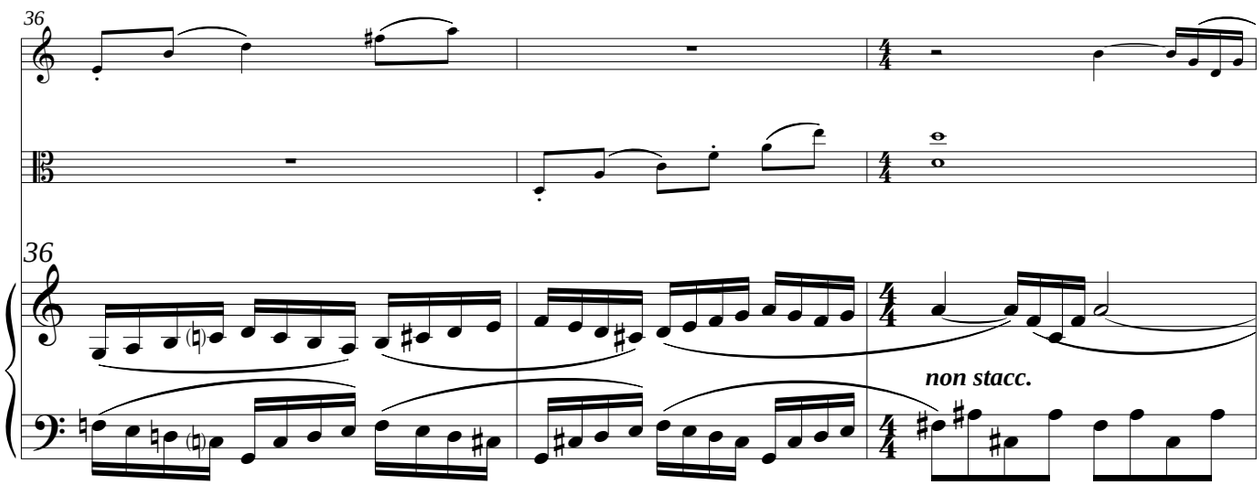

127
p
127
133
mp
mp
133
mp
137
dim.
dim.
137
dim.
141
rit.
pp
pp
141
pp
8va
8va
Ped.

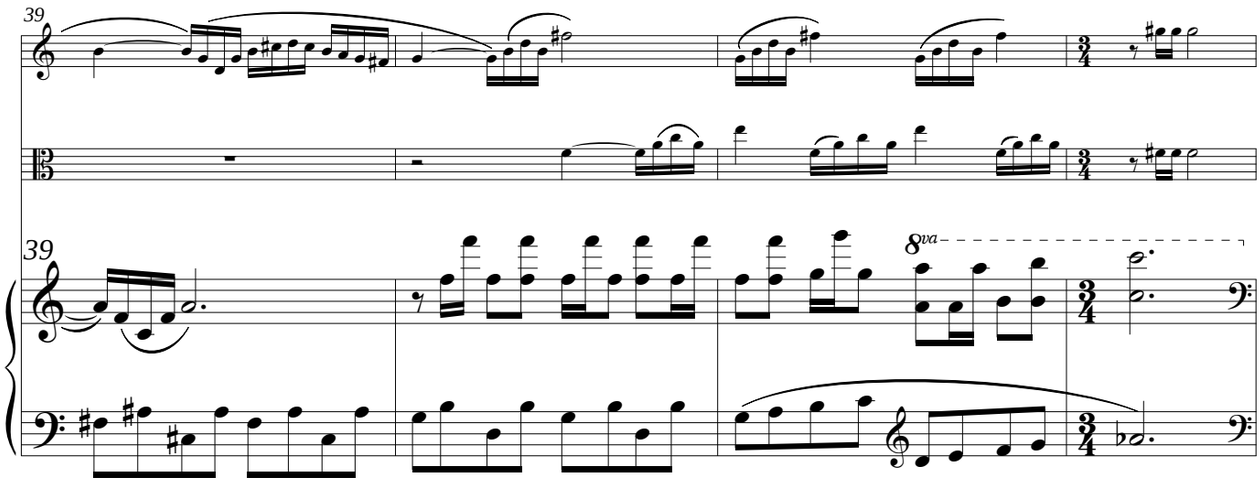
IV. The Albuterol Stomp [5:30]

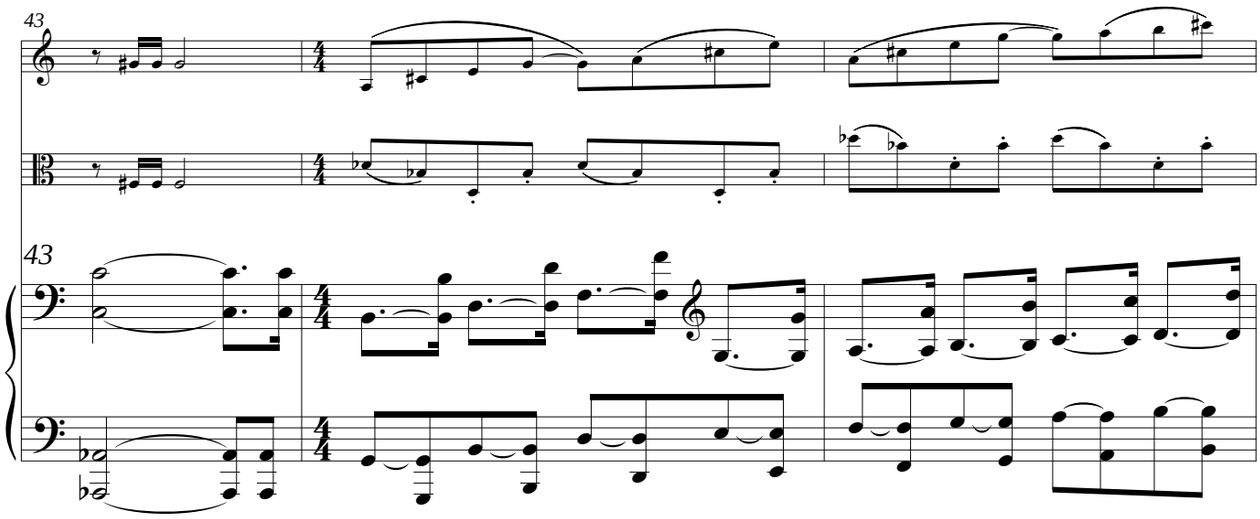


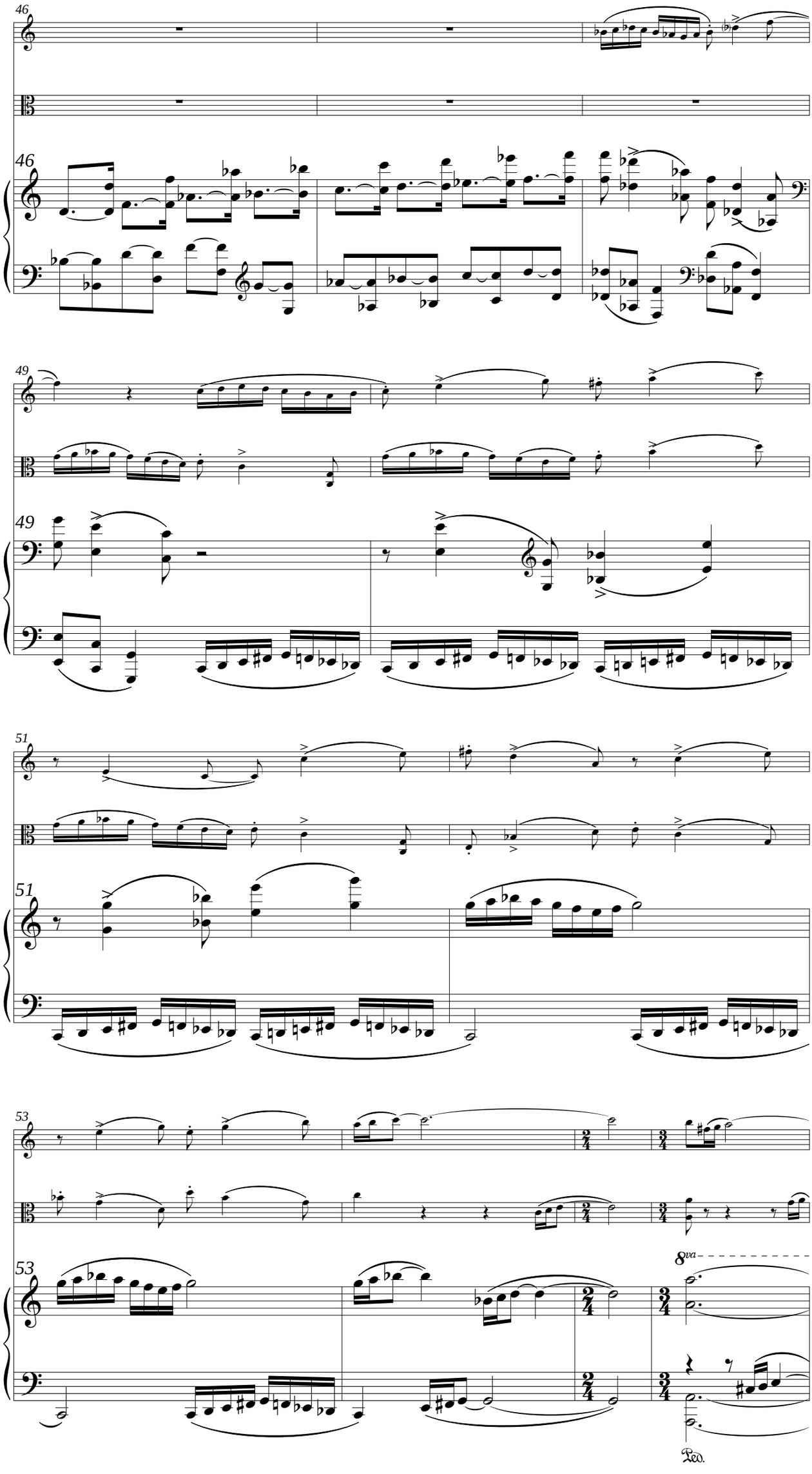

22
f
f
22
24
cresc.
cresc.
24
cresc.
27
ff
ff
27
ff
30
8va
30

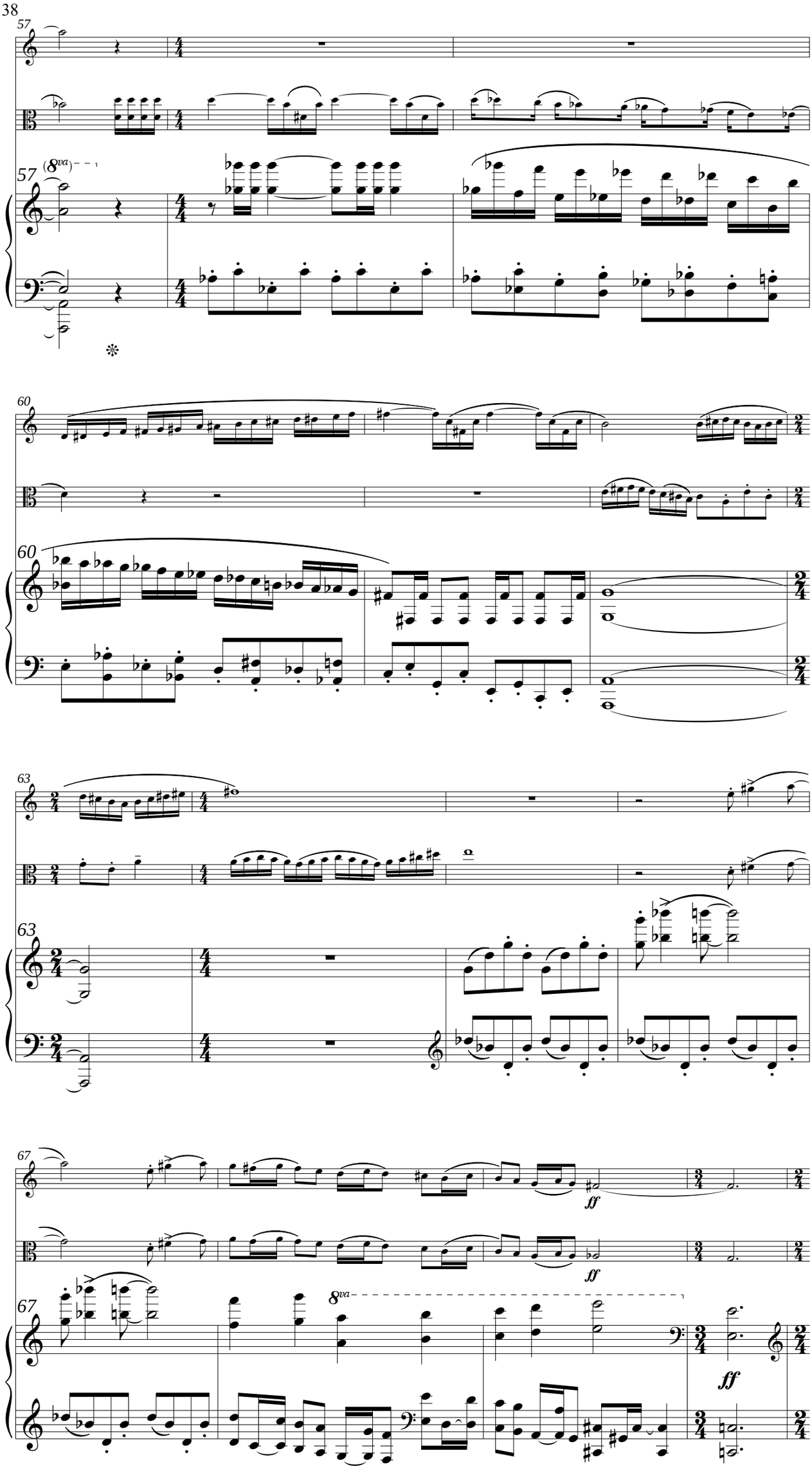

33
33

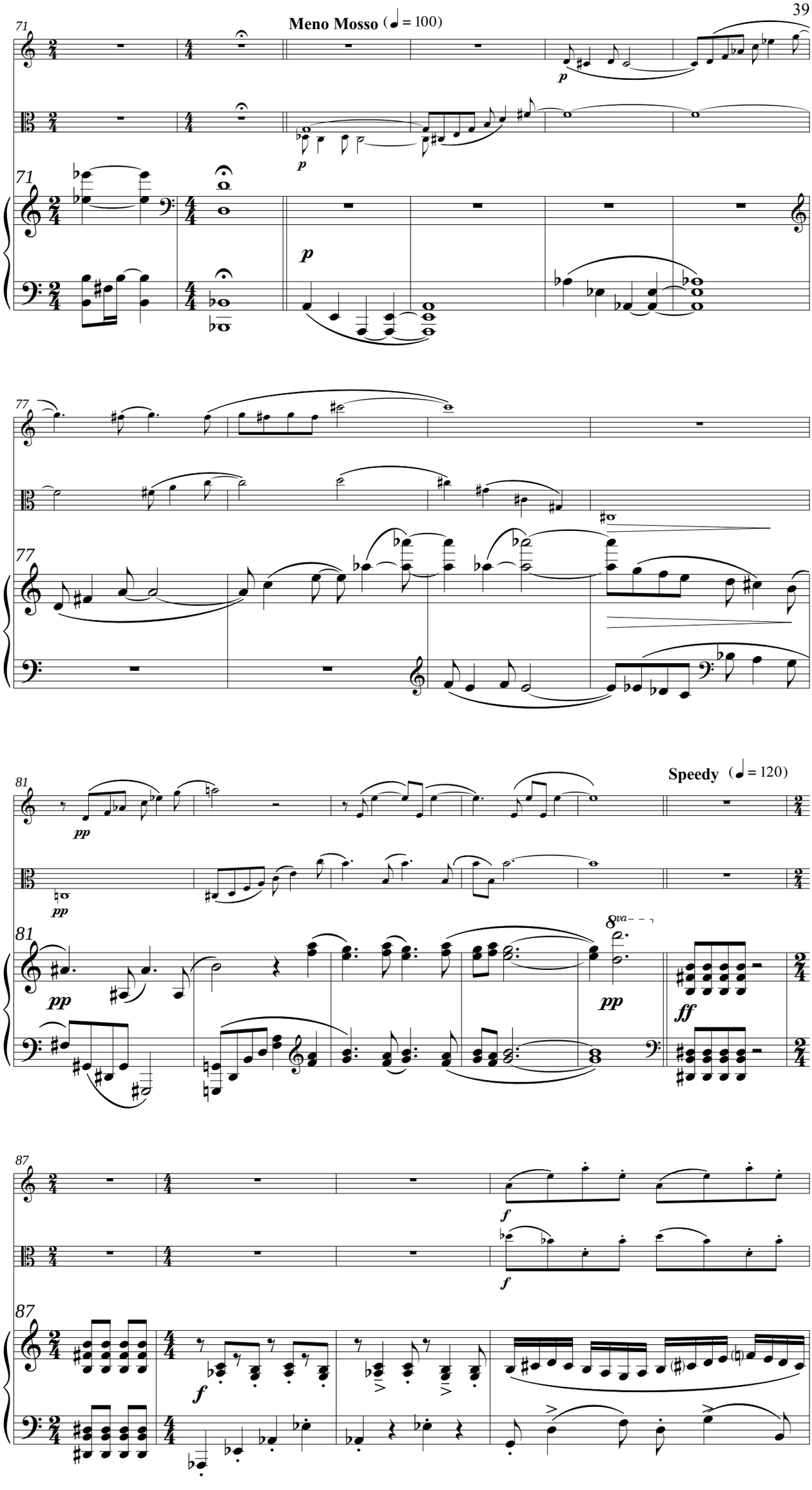

36
36
non stacc.

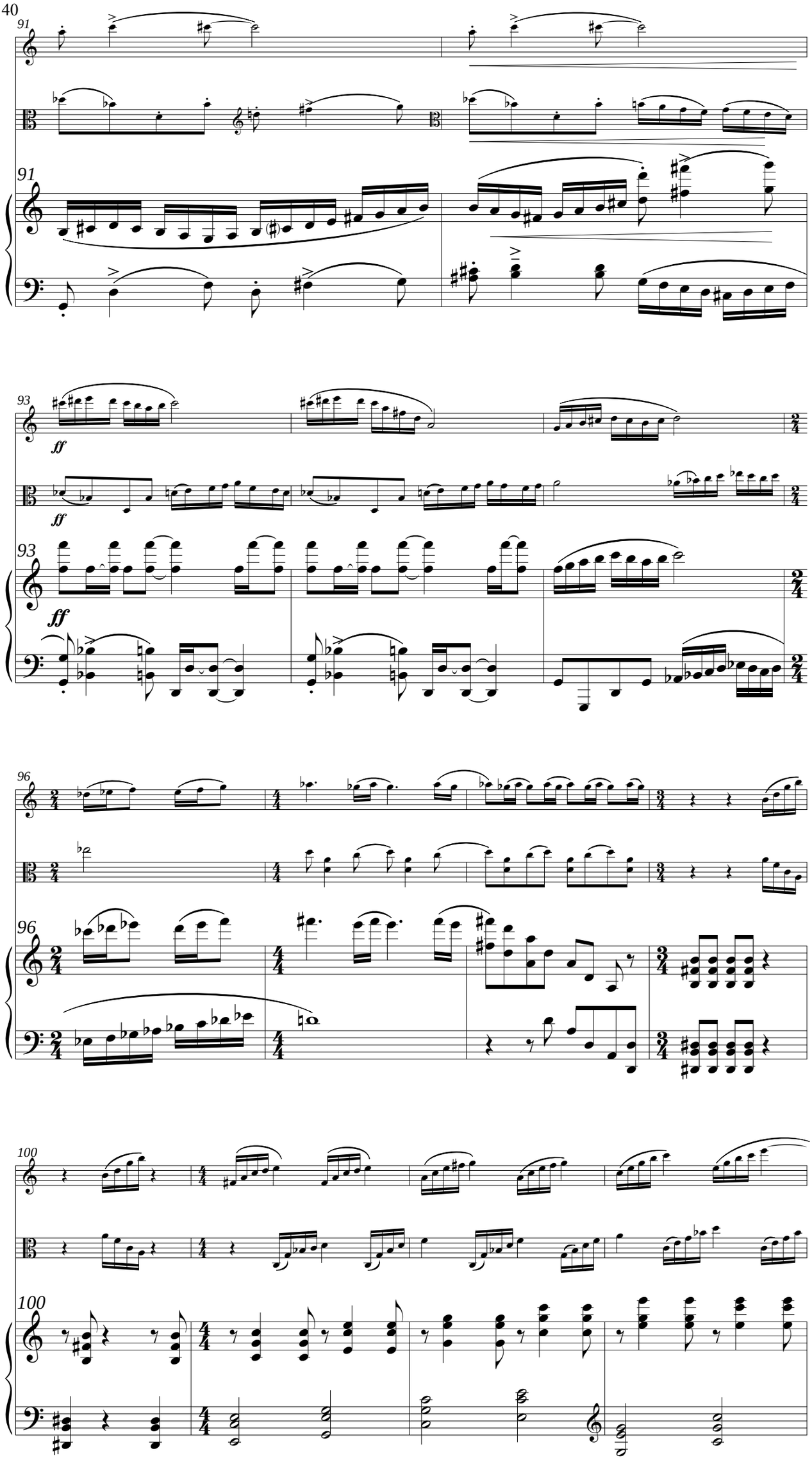

39
39
8va

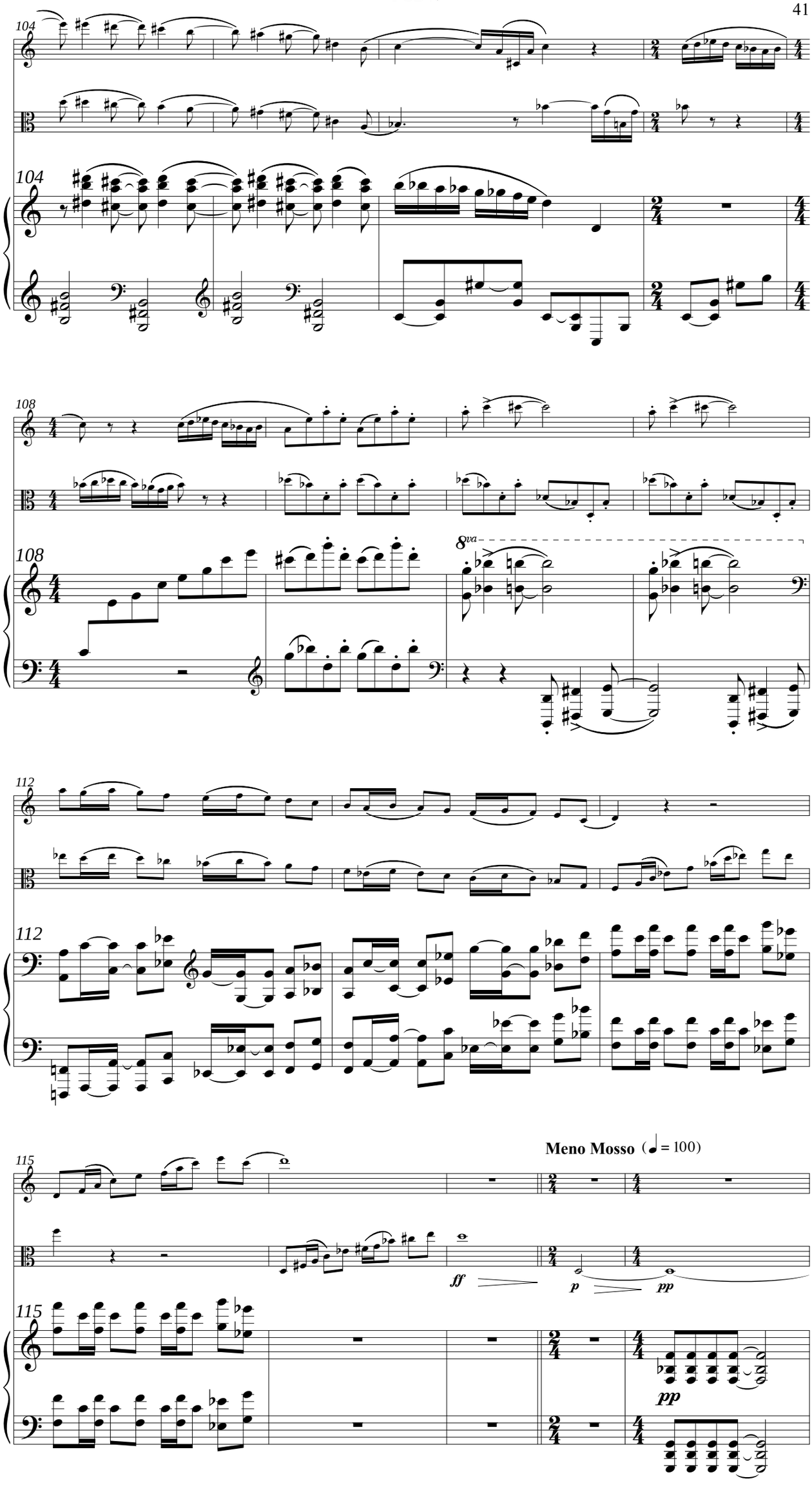

43
43

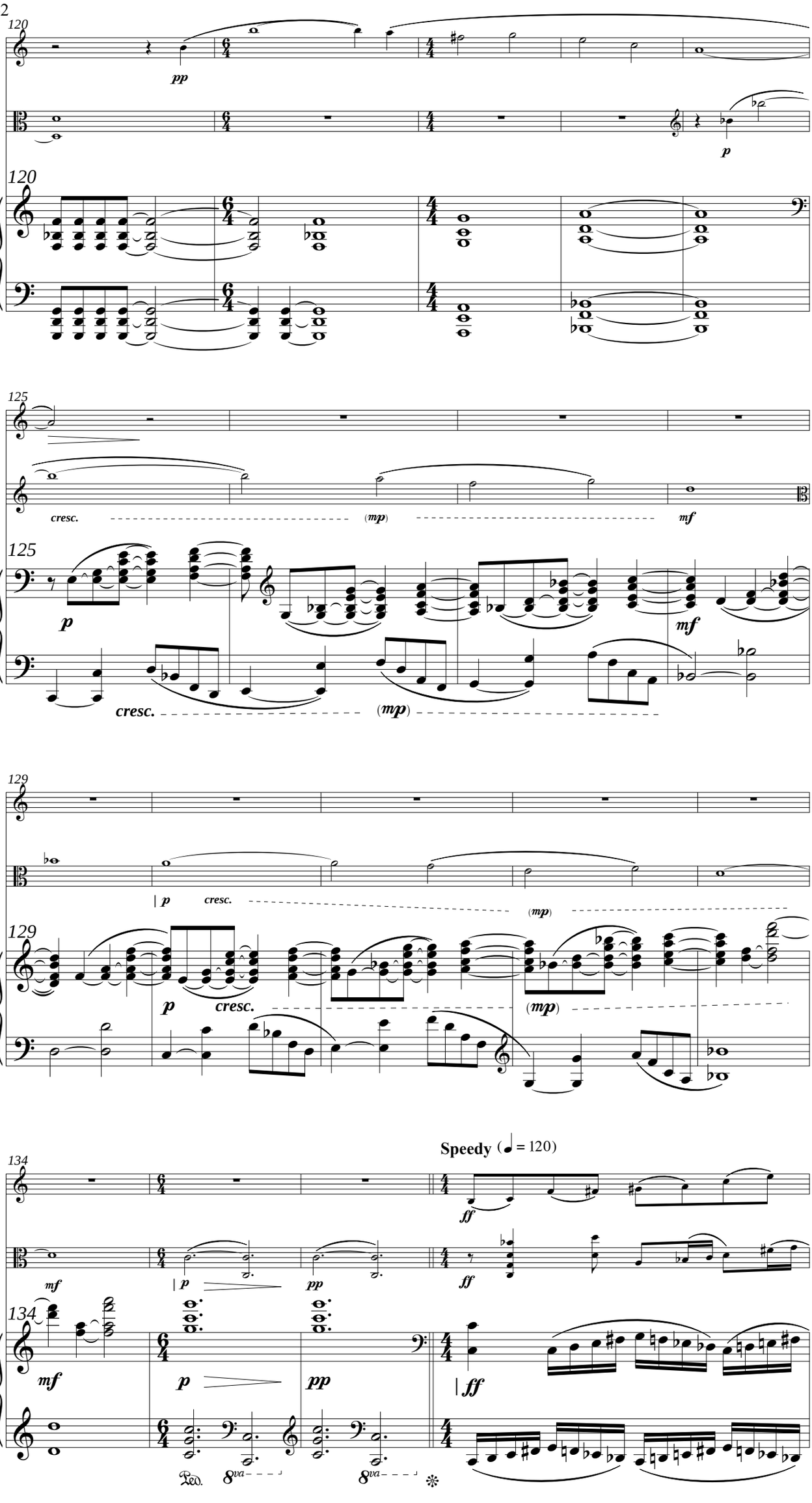

46
49
51
53
8va
Ped.

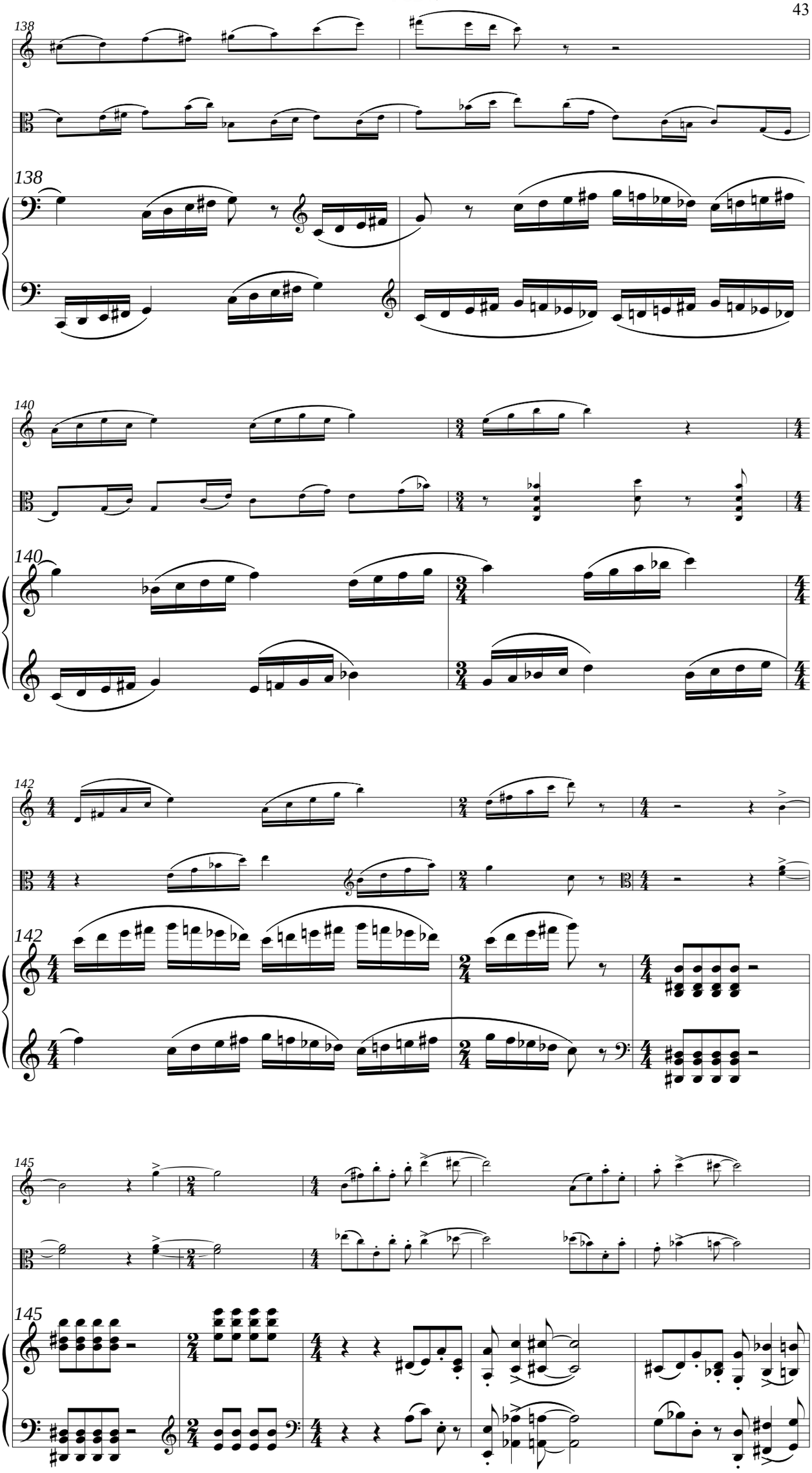

57
(8va)
57
60
60
63
63
67
67
8va
ff
ff
ff

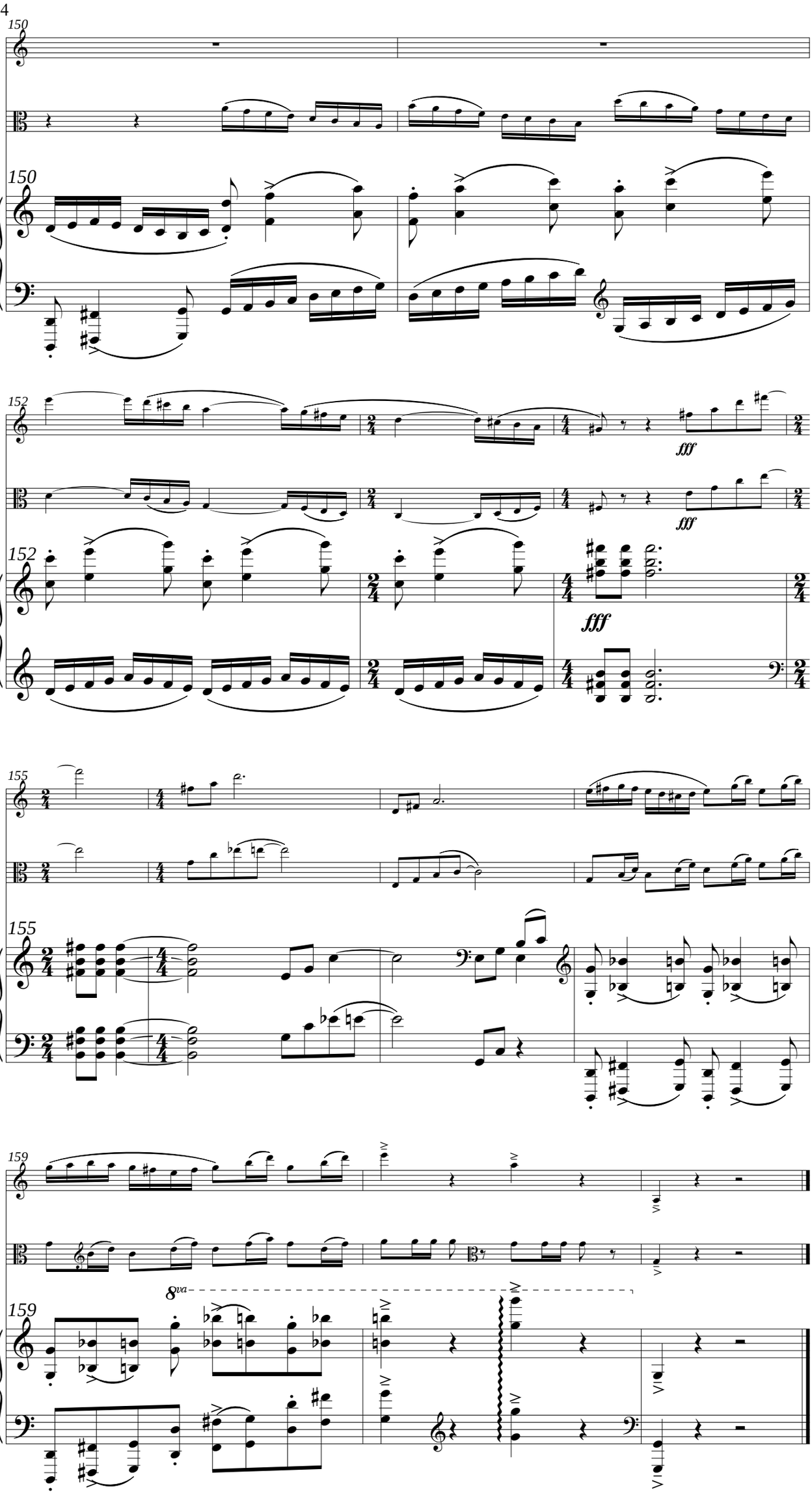

Meno Mosso (♩ = 100)
Speedy (♩ = 120)
71
77
81
87
p
pp
f
ff
8va


91
91
93
ff
ff
93
ff
96
96
100
100


104
104
108
108
8va
112
112
115
Meno Mosso (♩ = 100)
ff
p
pp
115
pp


120
pp
p
120
125
cresc.
(mp)
mf
125
p
mf
cresc.
(mp)
129
p
cresc.
(mp)
129
Speedy (♩ = 120)
134
mf
p
pp
ff
134
mf
p
pp
ff
Ped.
8va
8va


138
138
140
140
142
142
145
145


150
150
152
152
fff
fff
fff
155
155
159
159
8va