Cubic Deviations

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

For Piano Quintet

Viola

for Electronic Music Readers

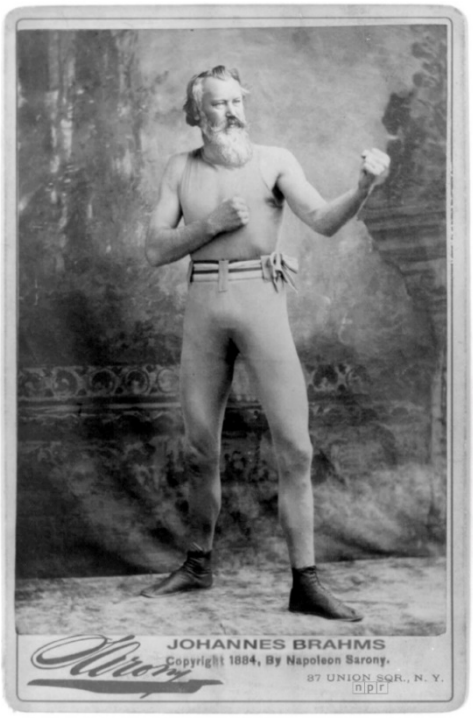
Bill Robinson

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

Publisher Parrish Press Garner, NC 1st Edition (corrected to 8/9/23) April 2023

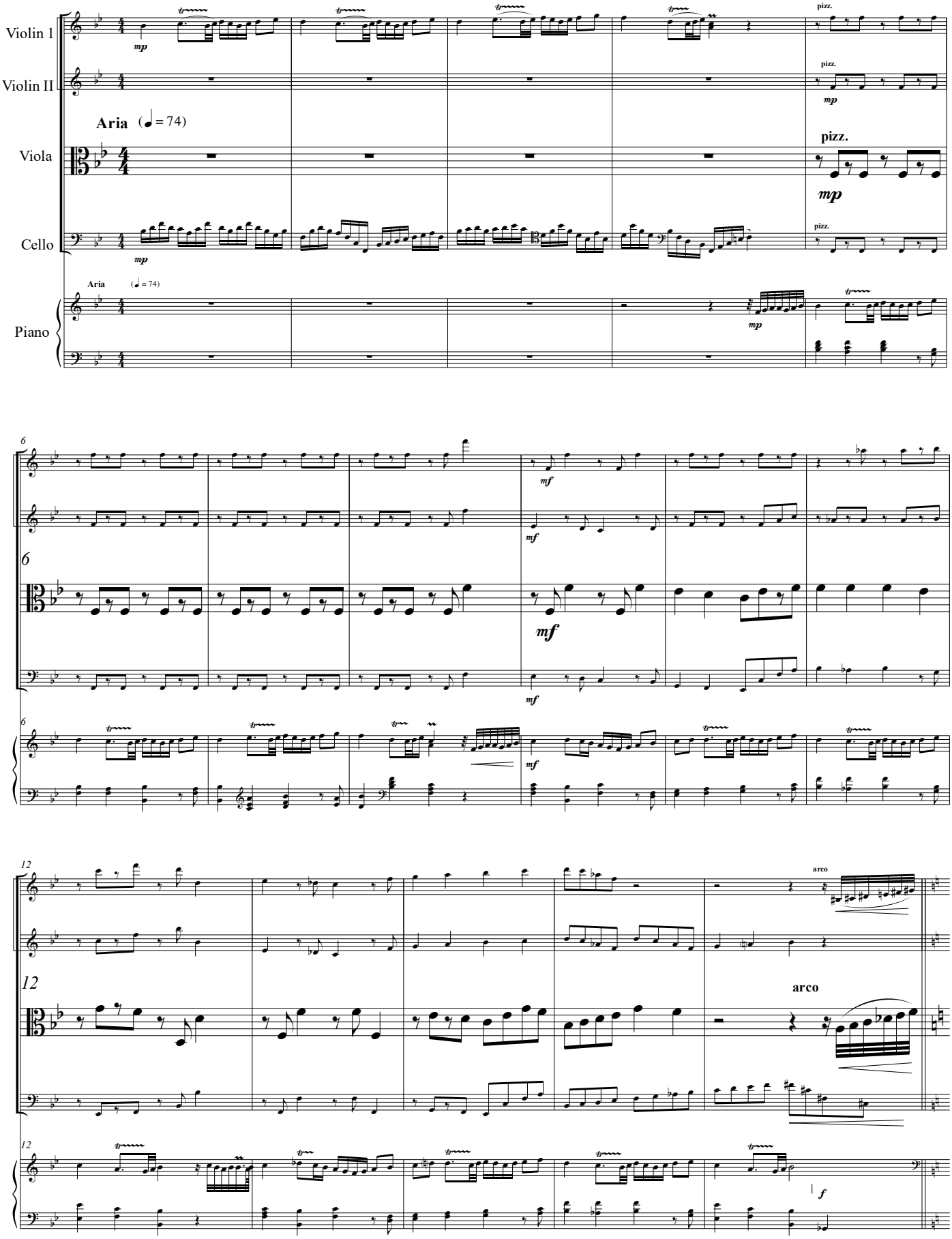
Cover art by Joseph Groupy, 1743 *Pugilist Brahms by NPR* billrobinsonmusic.com

Viola Part for Electronic Music Readers

Cubic Deviations

[corrected to 7/21/23]

Bill Robinson



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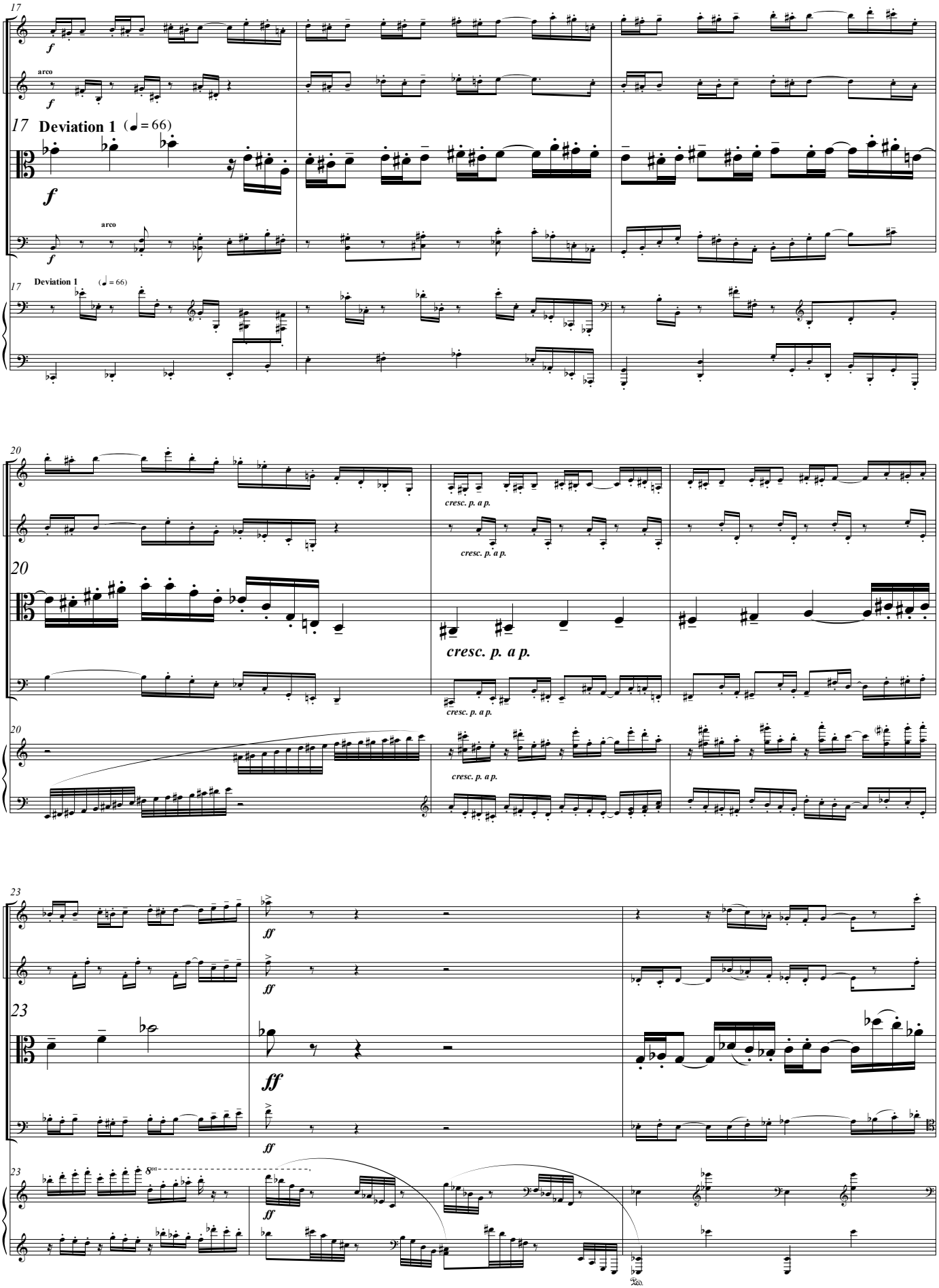
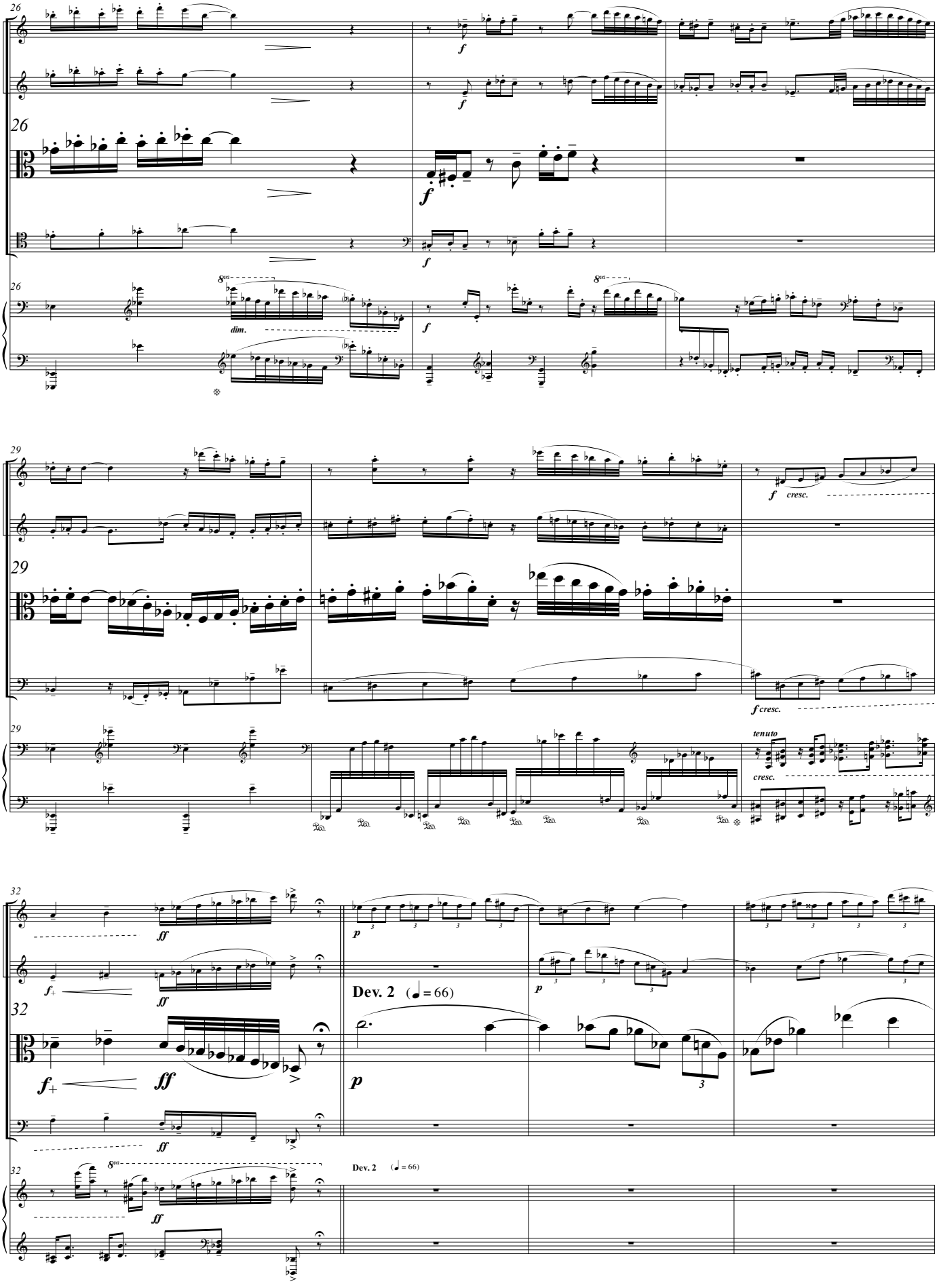
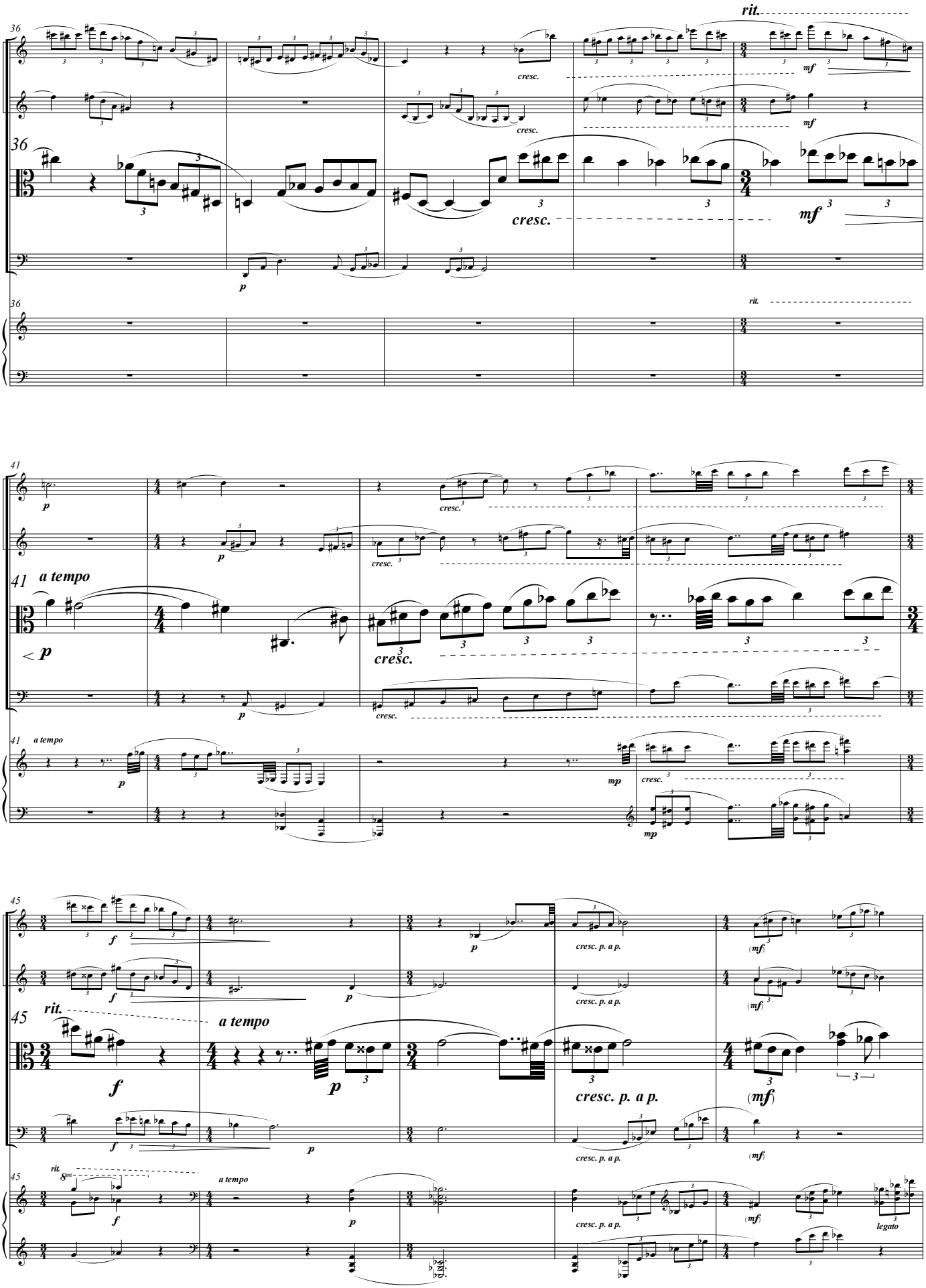
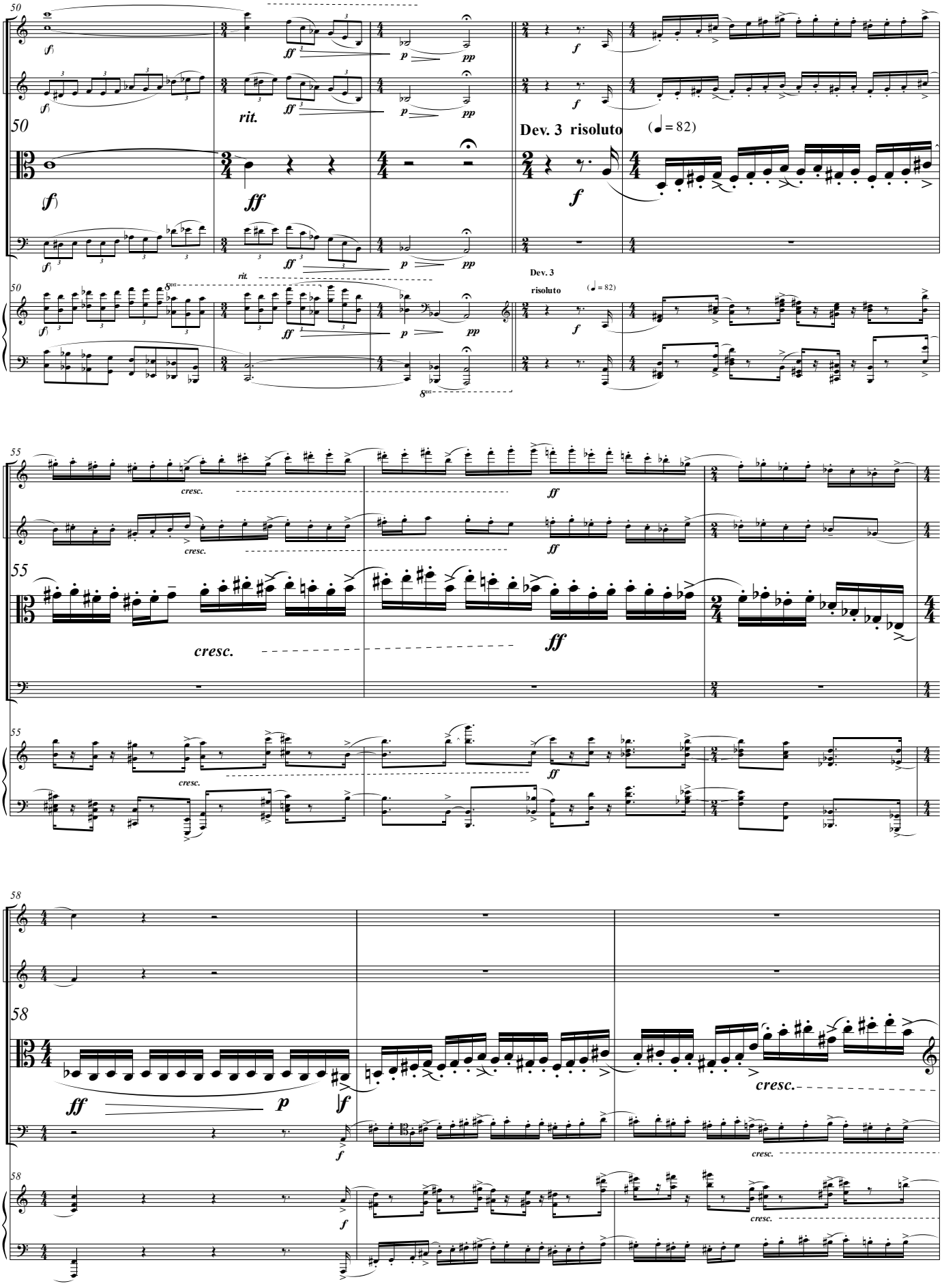
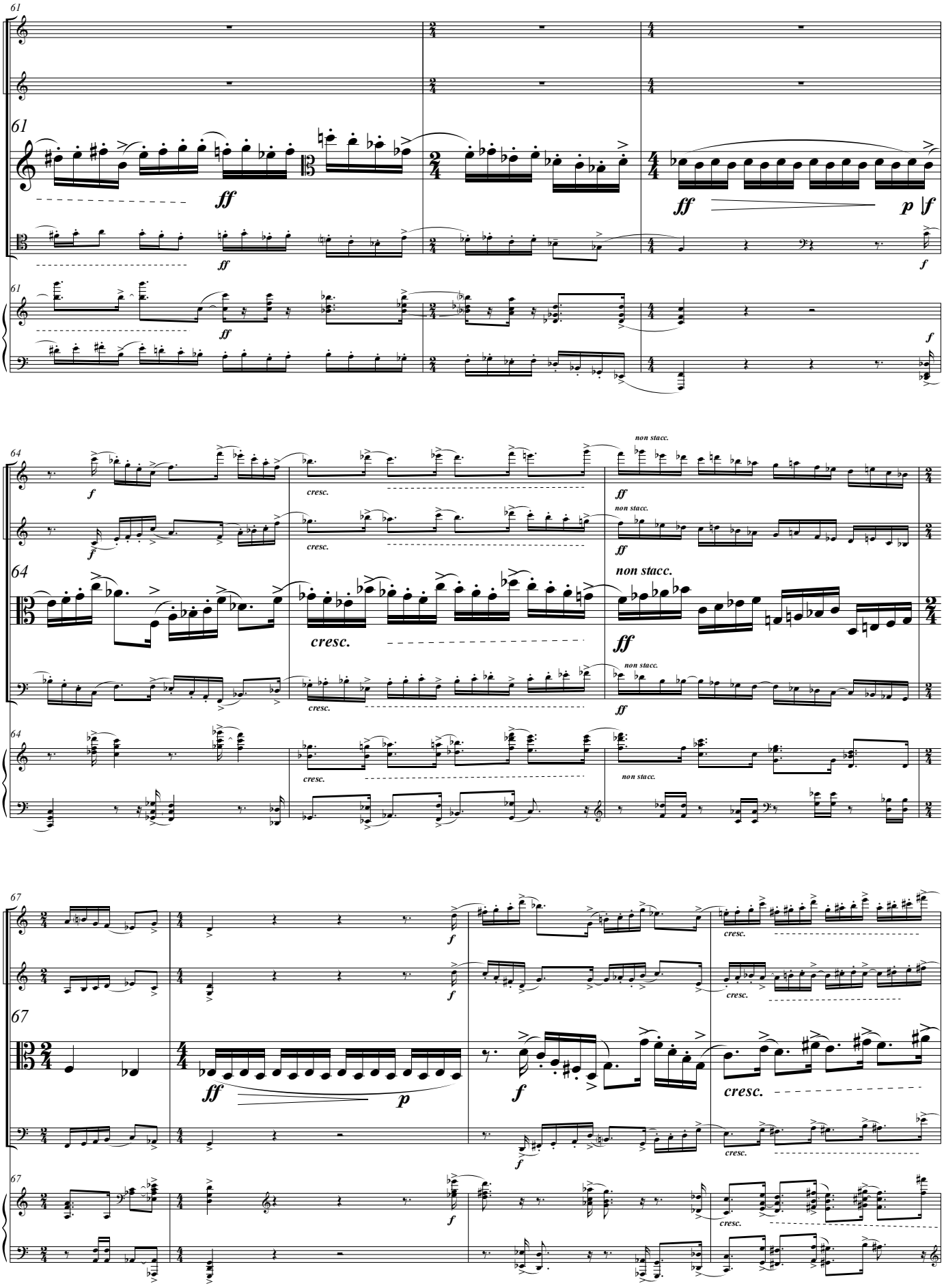
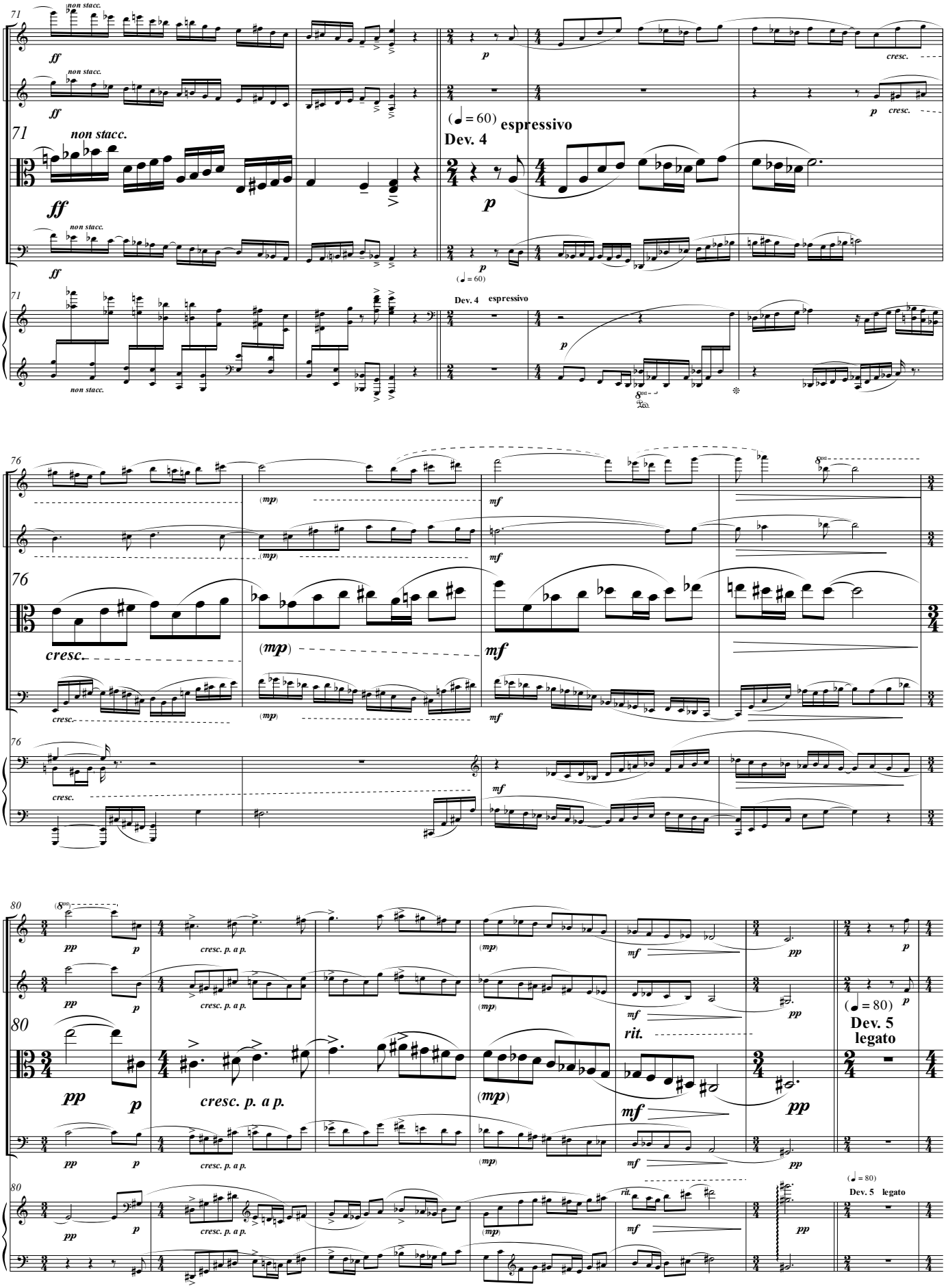

17
f
arco
f
17 Deviation 1 (♩= 66)
f
arco
f
17 Deviation 1 (♩= 66)
20
cresc. p. a p.
cresc. p. a p.
20
cresc. p. a p.
cresc. p. a p.
cresc. p. a p.
20
23
ff
ff
23
ff
ff
23
8va
ff

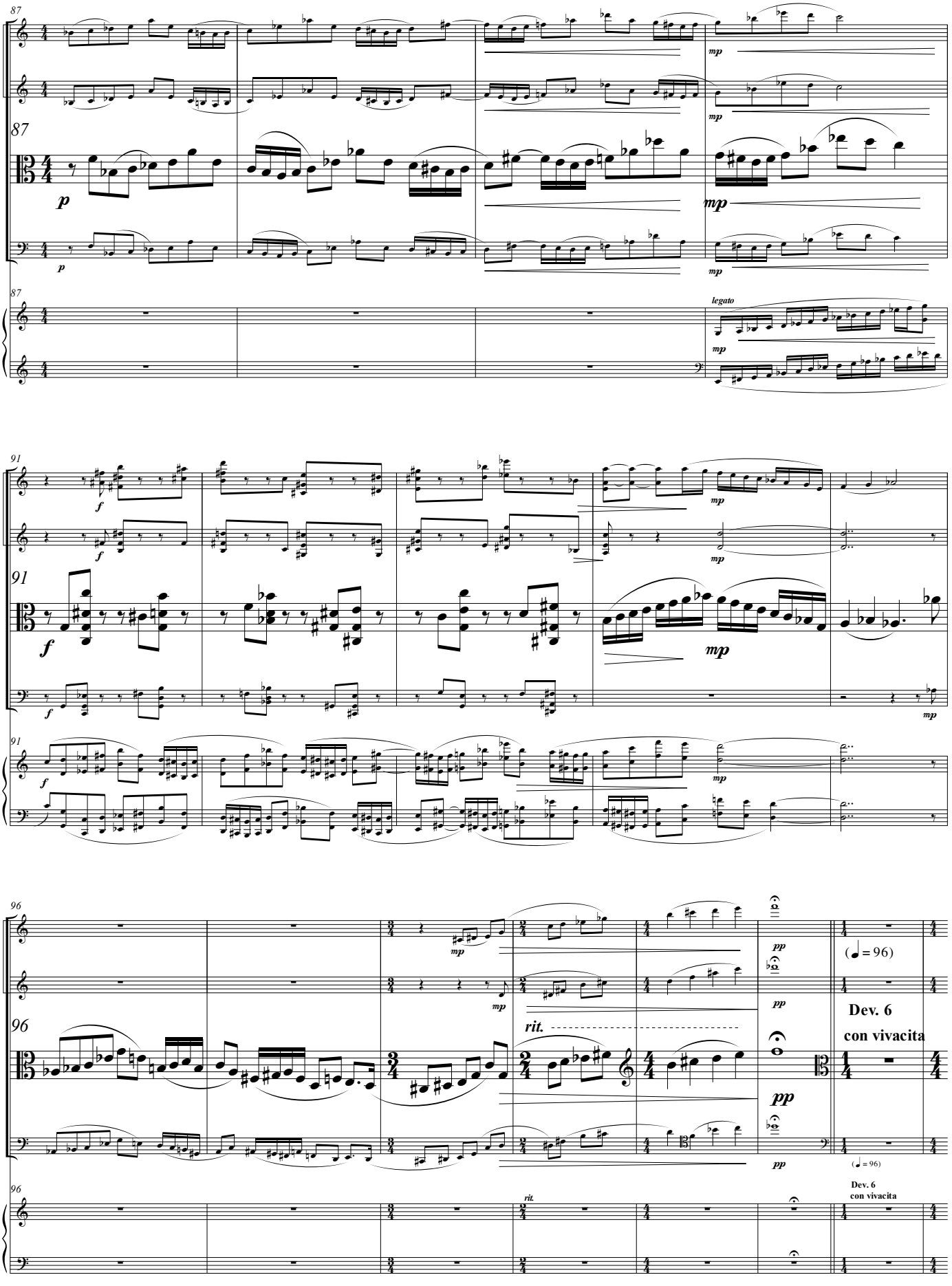

26
f
dim.
29
f cresc.
f cresc.
tenuto
cresc.
32
ff
f+
Dev. 2 (♩ = 66)
p

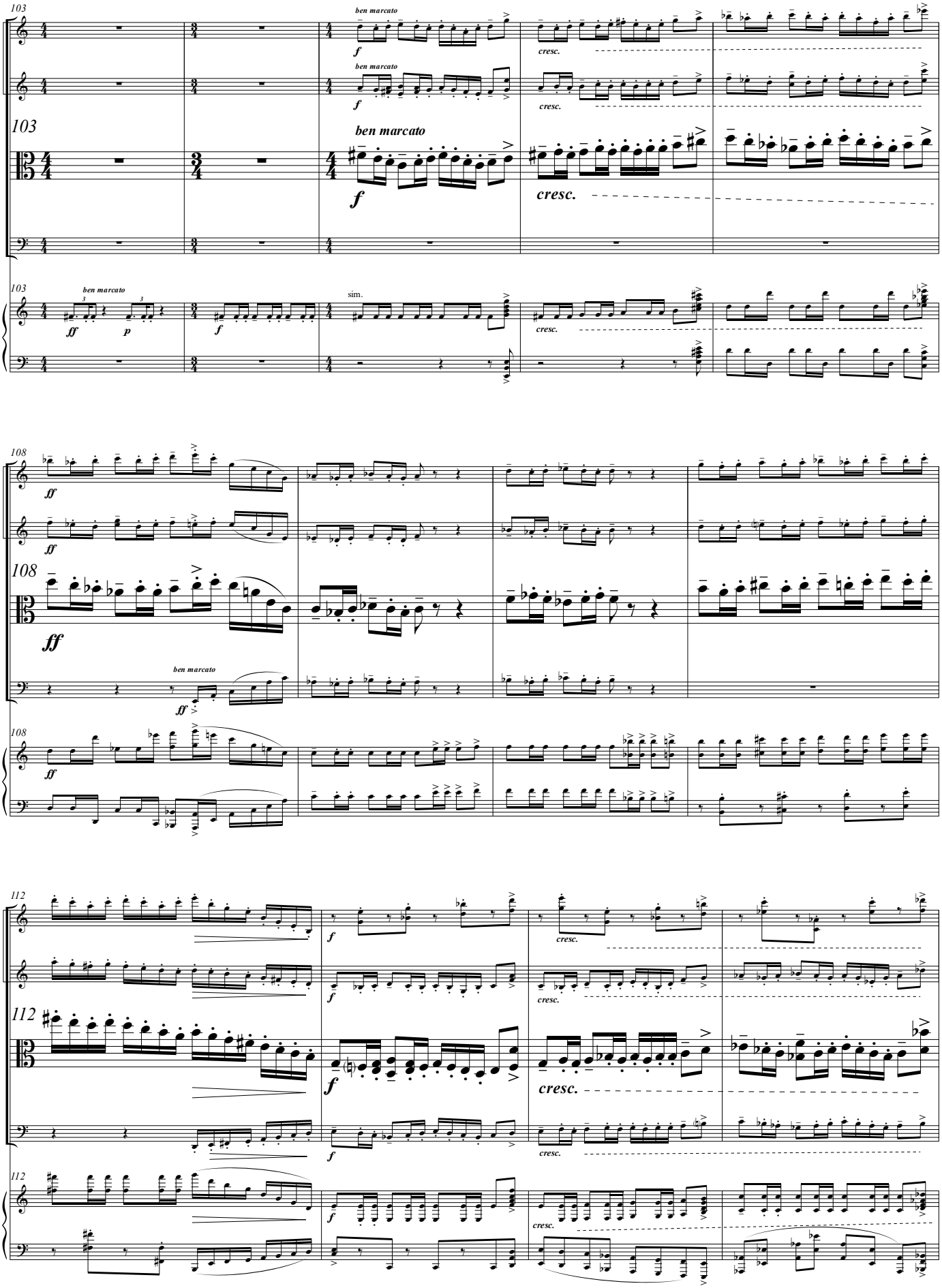

36
rit.
cresc.
mf
p
41
a tempo
cresc.
mp
45
rit.
a tempo
f
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
8va
legato

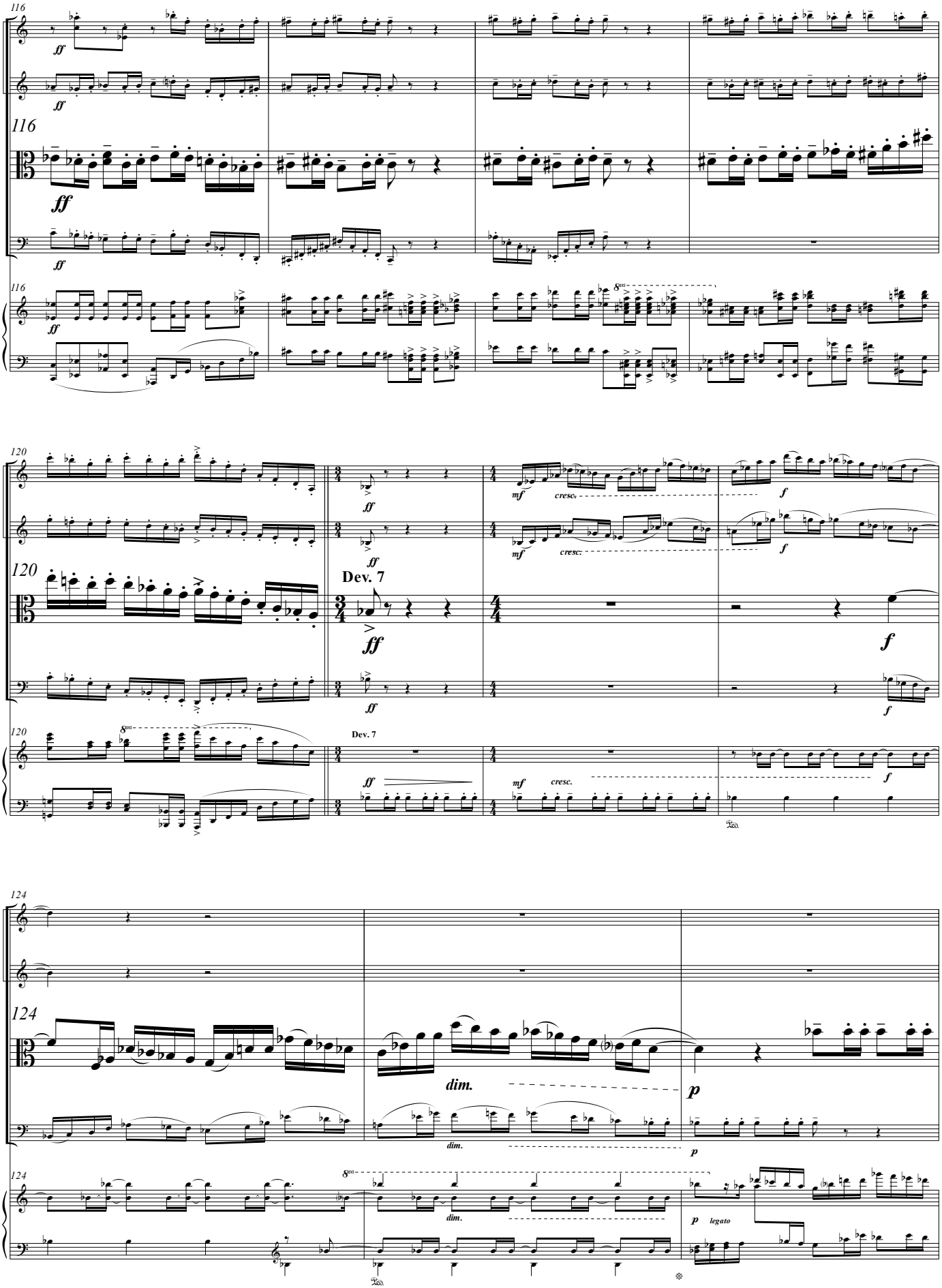

50
rit.
Dev. 3 risoluto
(♩= 82)
55
cresc.
ff
58
p
cresc.

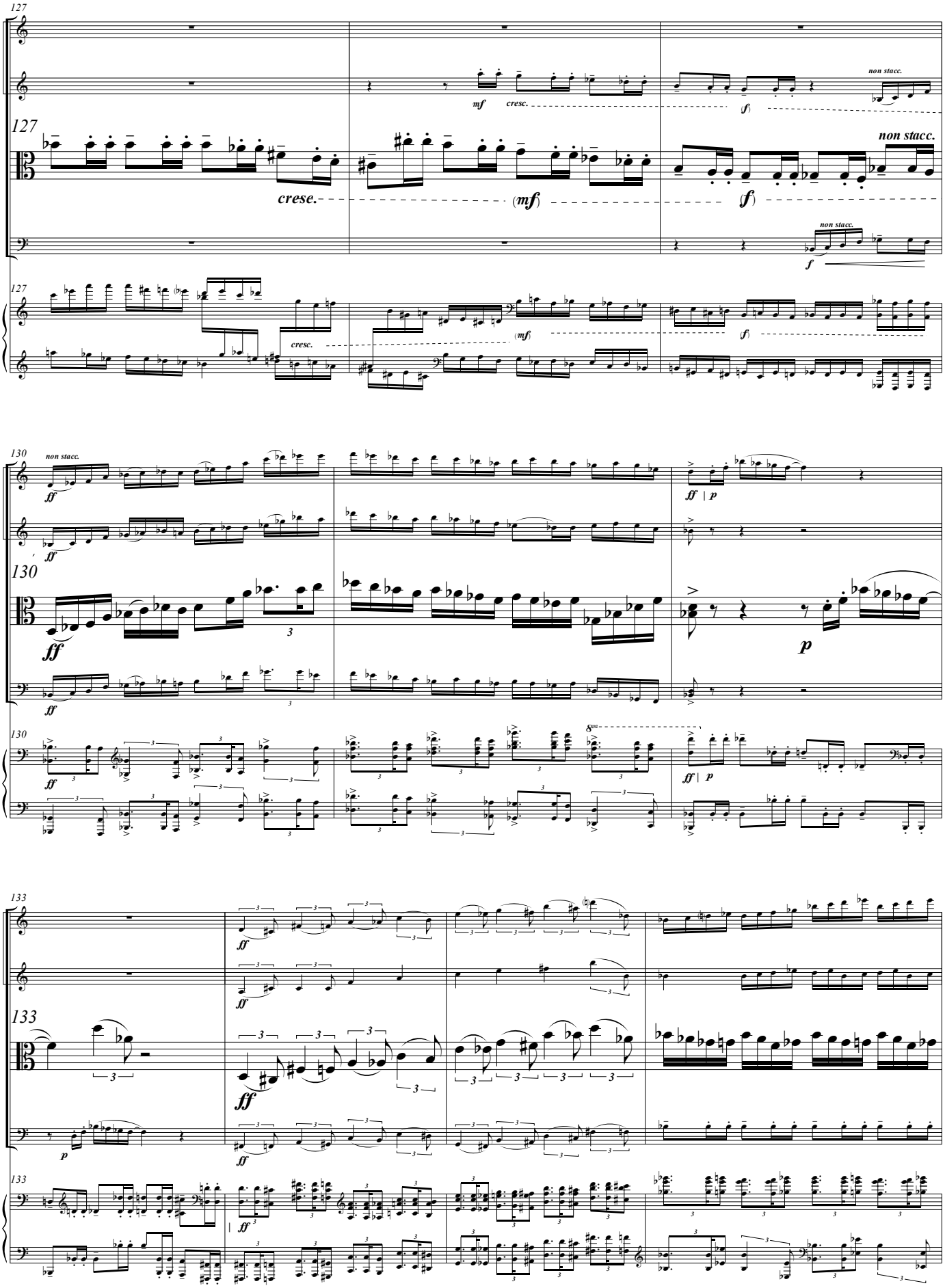

61
ff
p
f
64
cresc.
non stacc.
ff
67
ff
p
f
cresc.

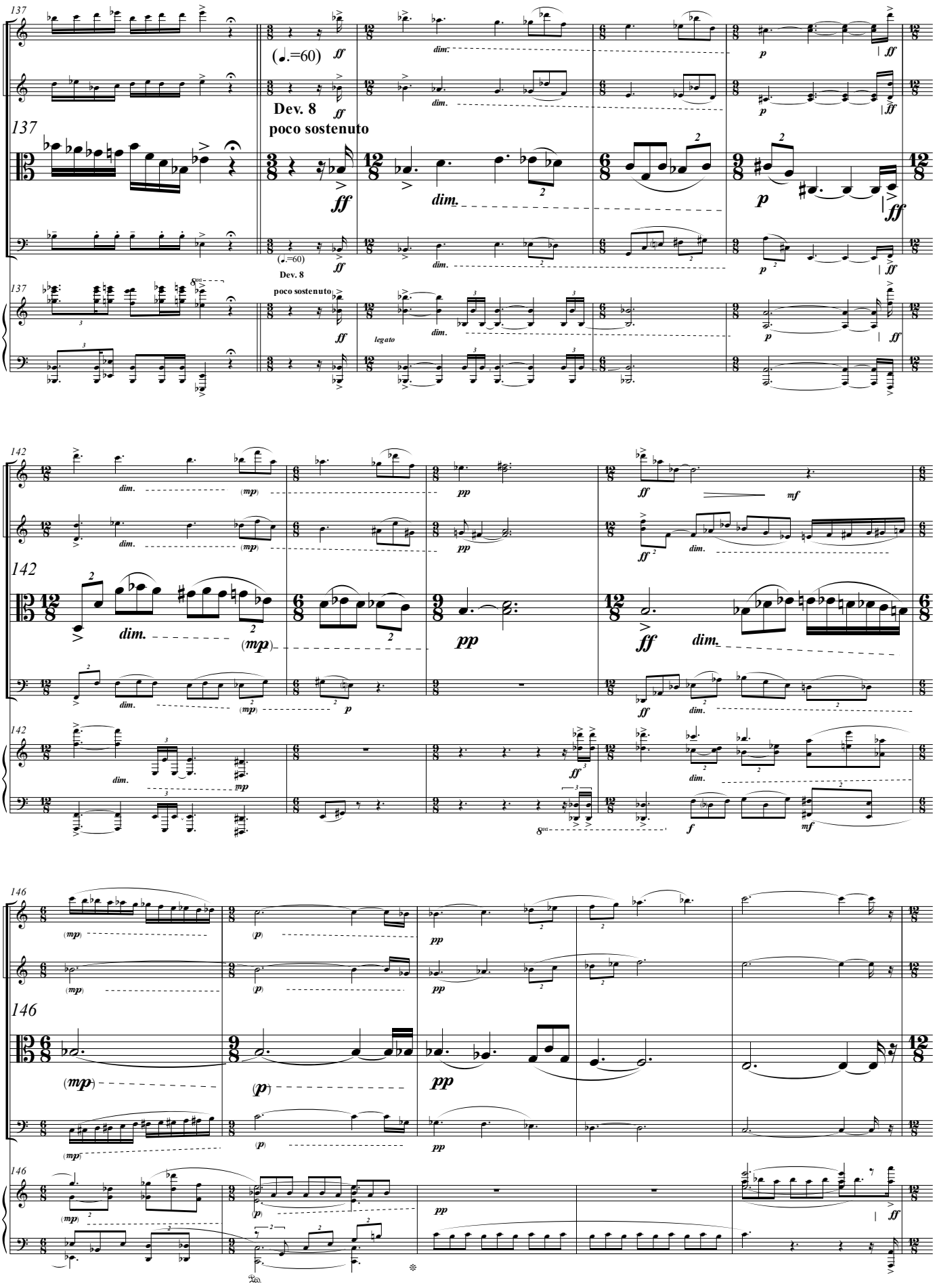

71
non stacc.
ff
p
cresc.
(♩ = 60)
espressive
Dev. 4
76
(mp)
mf
cresc.
80
pp
cresc. p. a p.
rit.
(♩ = 80)
Dev. 5
legato

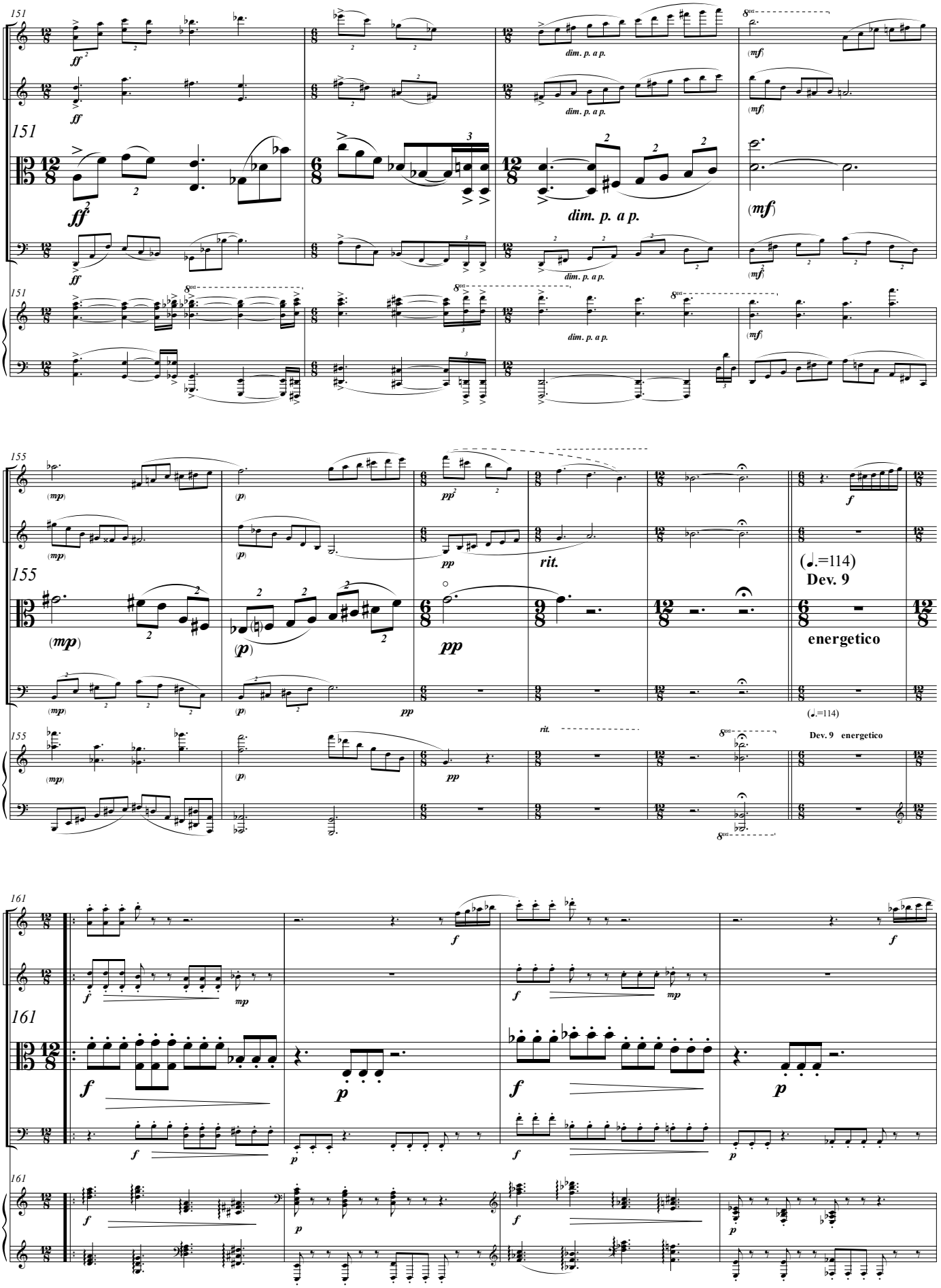

87
p
mp
legato
91
f
96
rit.
pp
(♩ = 96)
Dev. 6
con vivacita

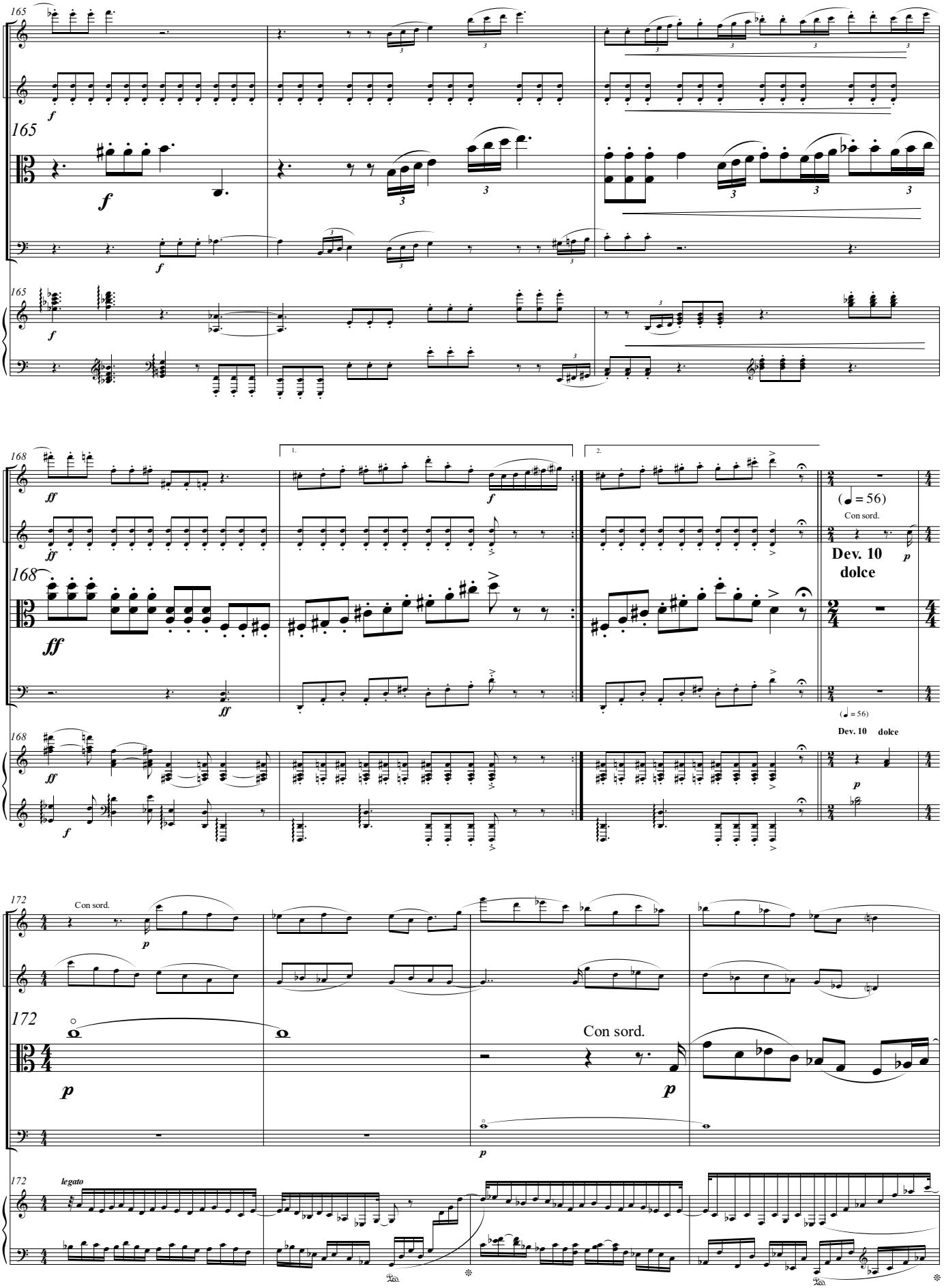

103
ben marcato
f
cresc.
ben marcato
f
cresc.
103
ben marcato
f
cresc.
103
ben marcato
ff
p
f
sim.
cresc.
108
ff
ff
108
ff
ben marcato
ff
108
ff
112
f
cresc.
f
cresc.
112
f
cresc.
f
cresc.
112
f
cresc.

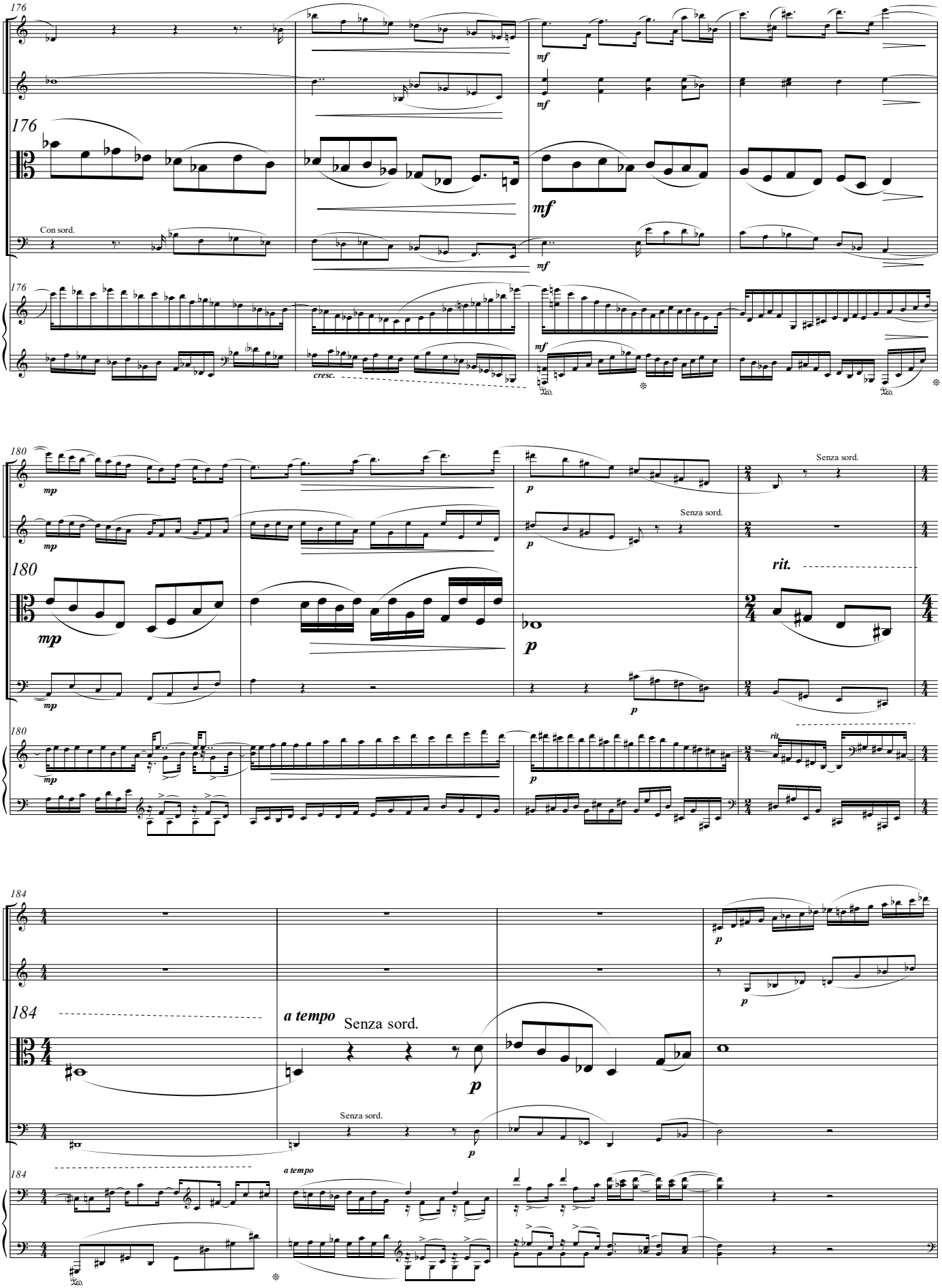

116
ff
120
Dev. 7
mf
cresc.
f
124
dim.
p
legato

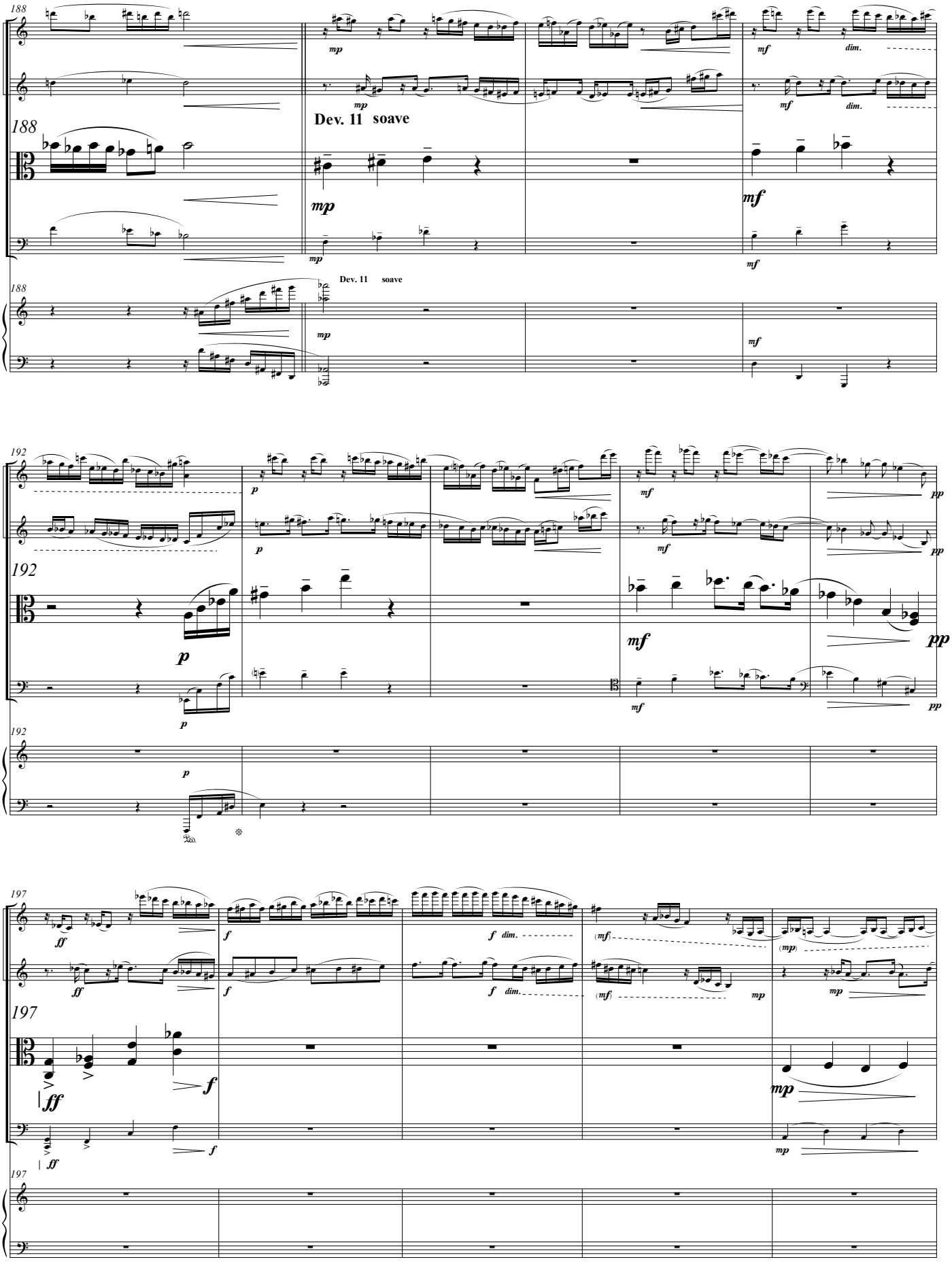

127
non stacc.
mf
cresc.
(f)
crese.
(mf)
(f)
f
130
ff
p
133
ff
p

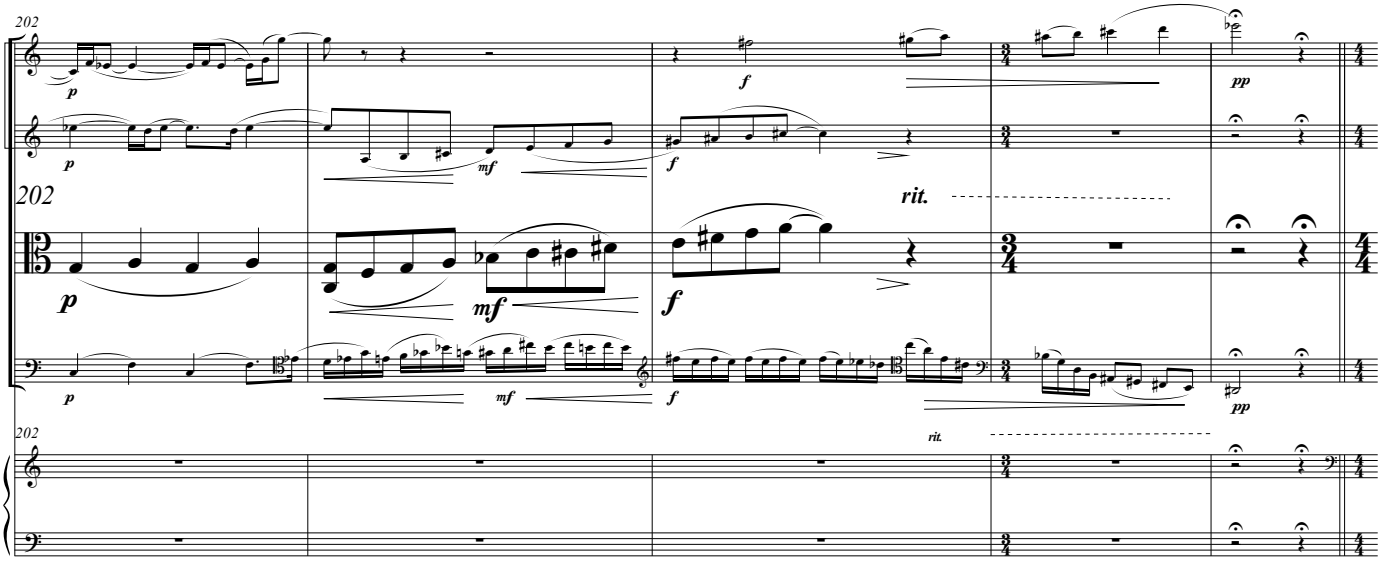

137
(♩.=60)
ff
Dev. 8
poco sostenuto
dim.
p
legato
142
(mp)
pp
mf
dim.
146
(mp)
(p)
pp
ff

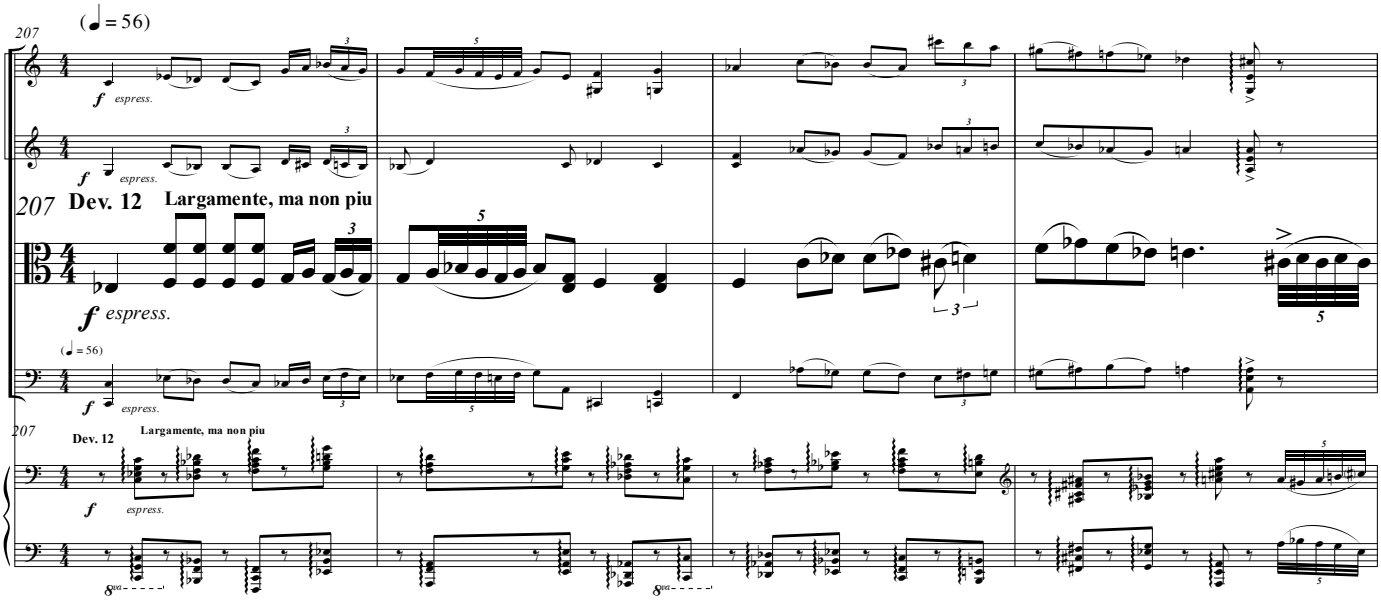

151
ff
dim. p. a p.
(mf)
155
(mp)
(p)
pp
rit.
(♩.=114)
Dev. 9
energetico
161
f
mp
p

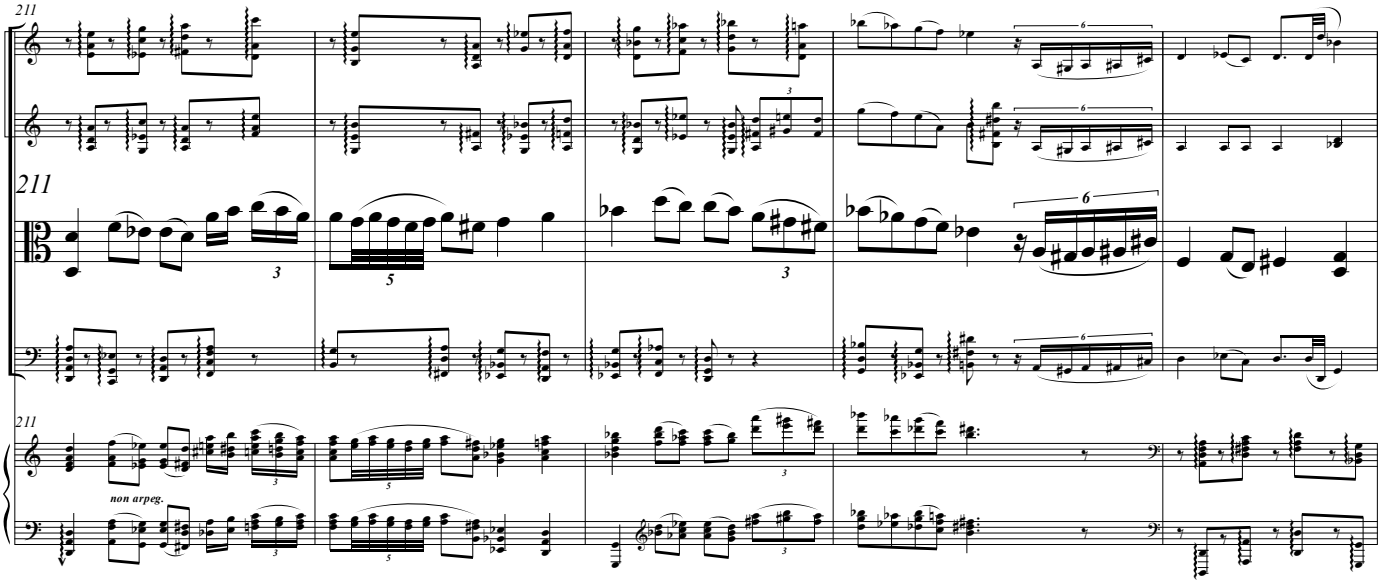

165
f
165
f
165
f
168
ff
1.
2.
f
(♩ = 56)
Con sord.
Dev. 10
dolce
p
168
ff
ff
168
ff
f
(♩ = 56)
Dev. 10 dolce
p
172
Con sord.
p
172
p
Con sord.
p
p
172
legato

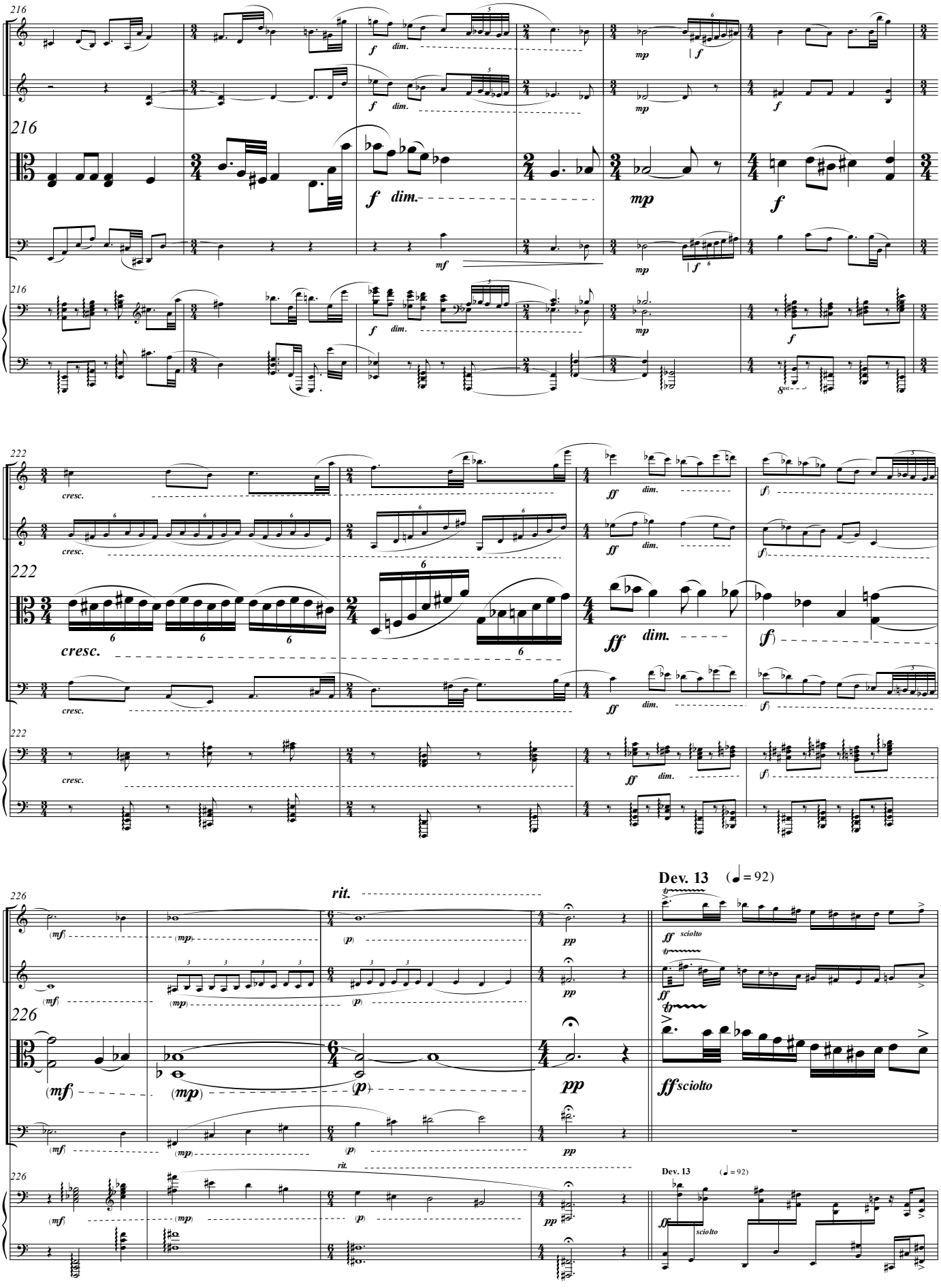

176
mf
Con sord.
cresc.
180
mp
p
Senza sord.
rit.
184
a tempo
Senza sord.

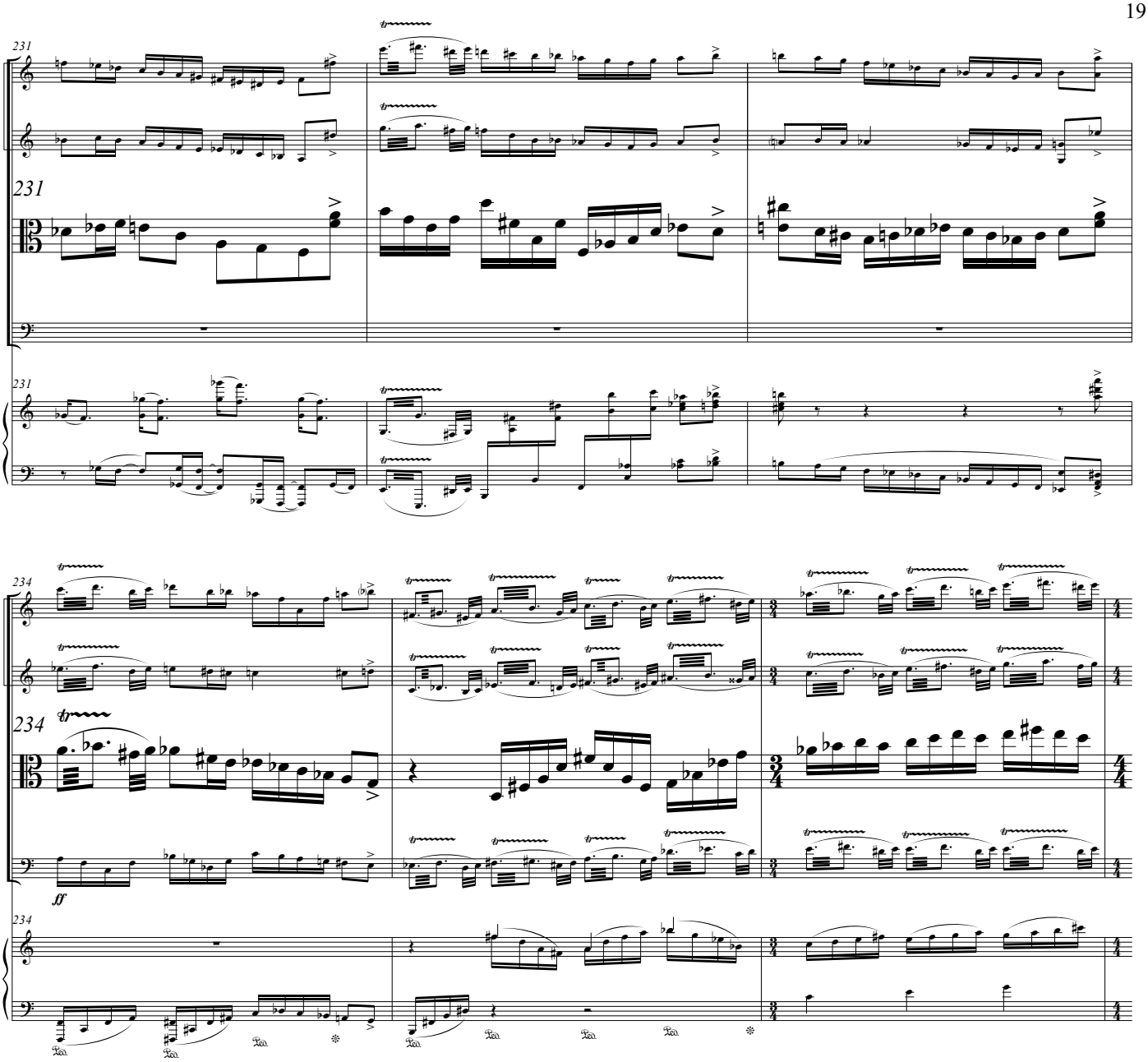

188
mp
mf
dim.
Dev. 11 soave
192
p
pp
197
ff
f
dim.
(mf)
(mp)

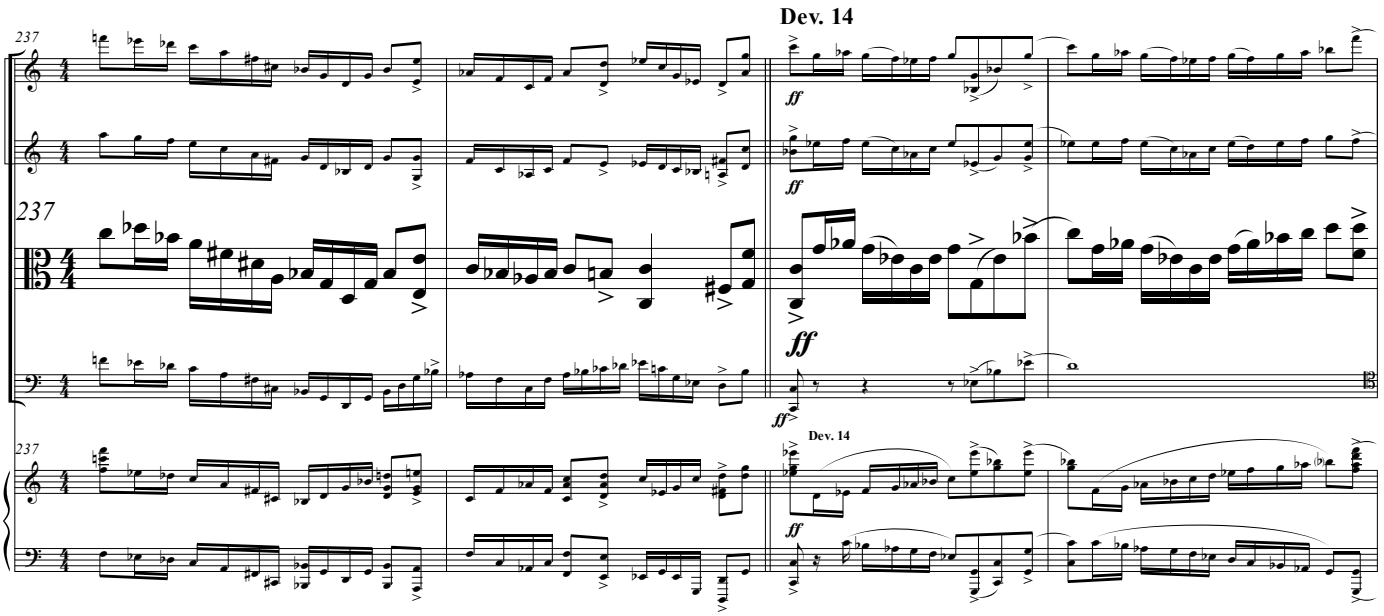

202
rit.

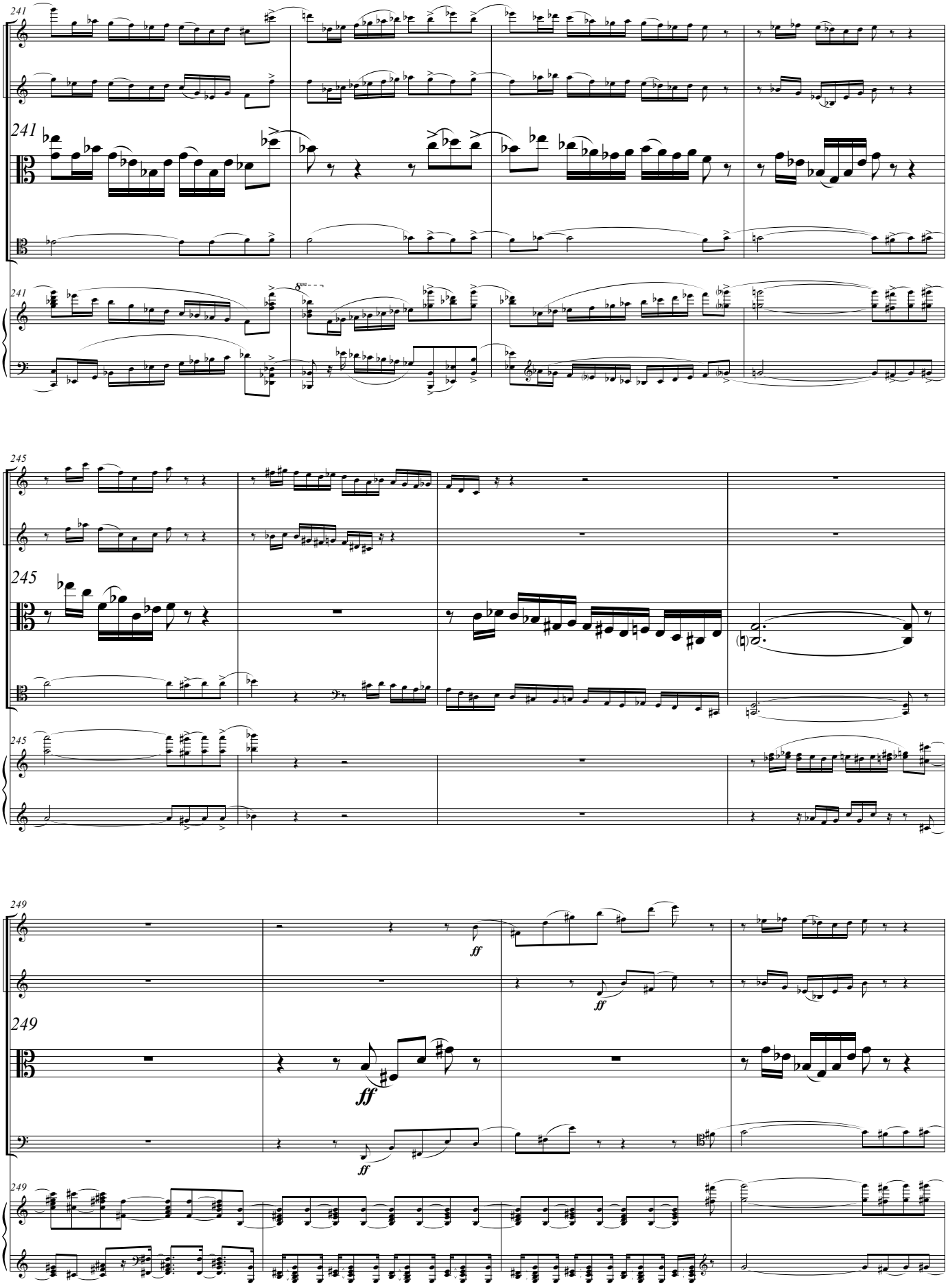

207
(♩ = 56)
Dev. 12
Largamente, ma non piu
espress.

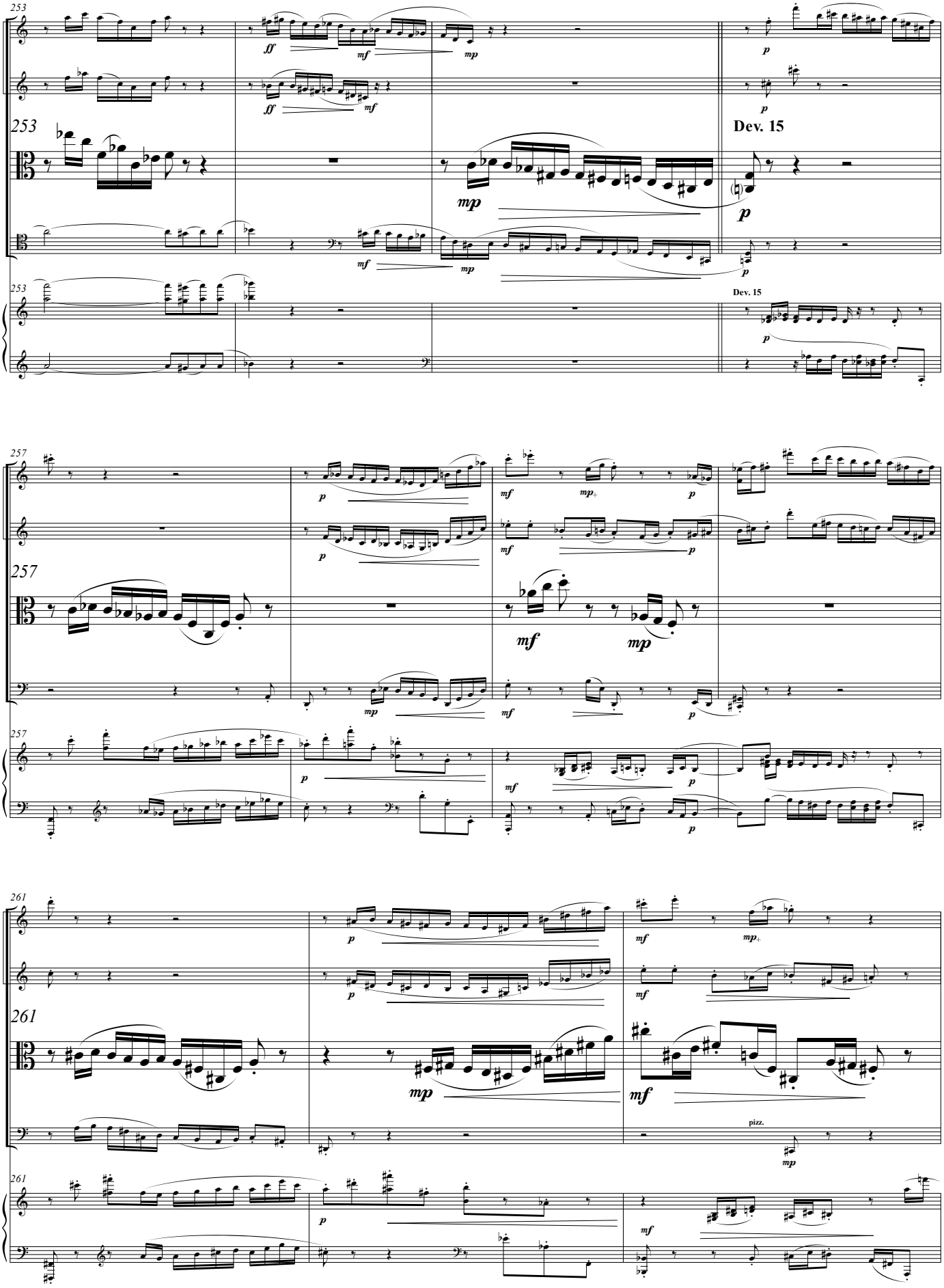

211
non arpeg.

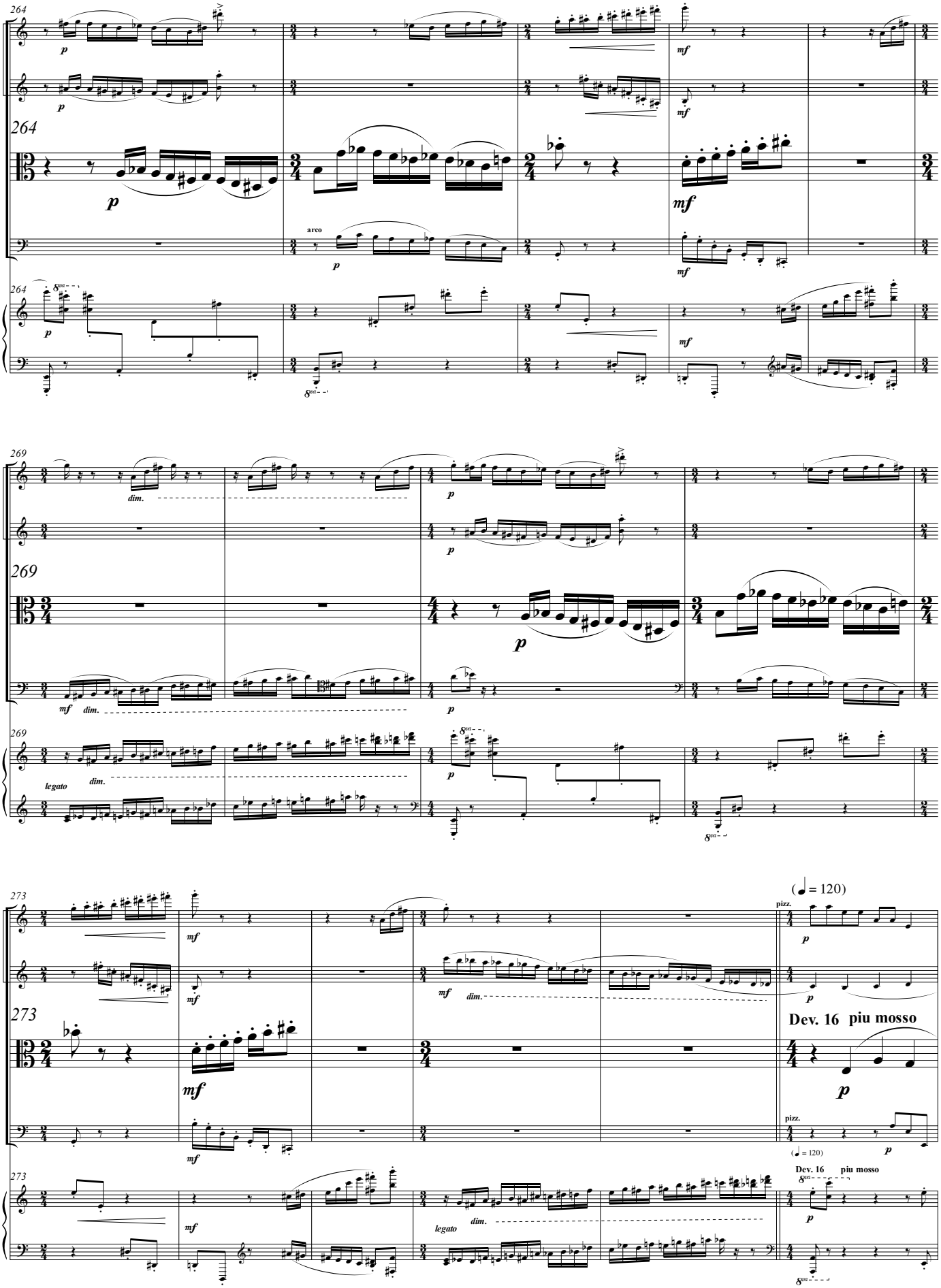

216
f dim.
mp
f
mf
222
cresc.
ff dim.
(f)
226
rit.
(mf)
(mp)
(p)
pp
Dev. 13 (♩ = 92)
ff sciolto

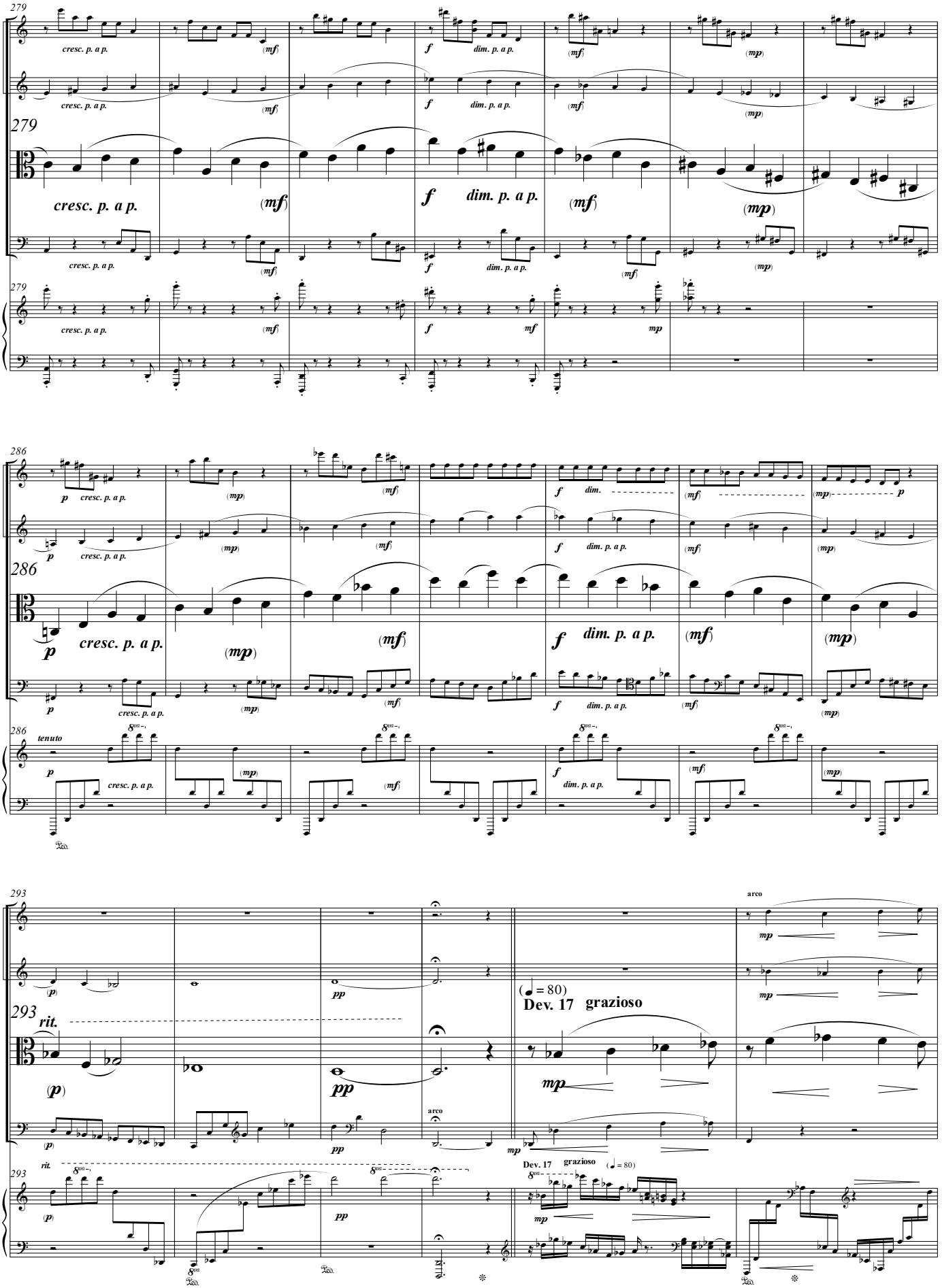

231
231
231
234
234
234
ff

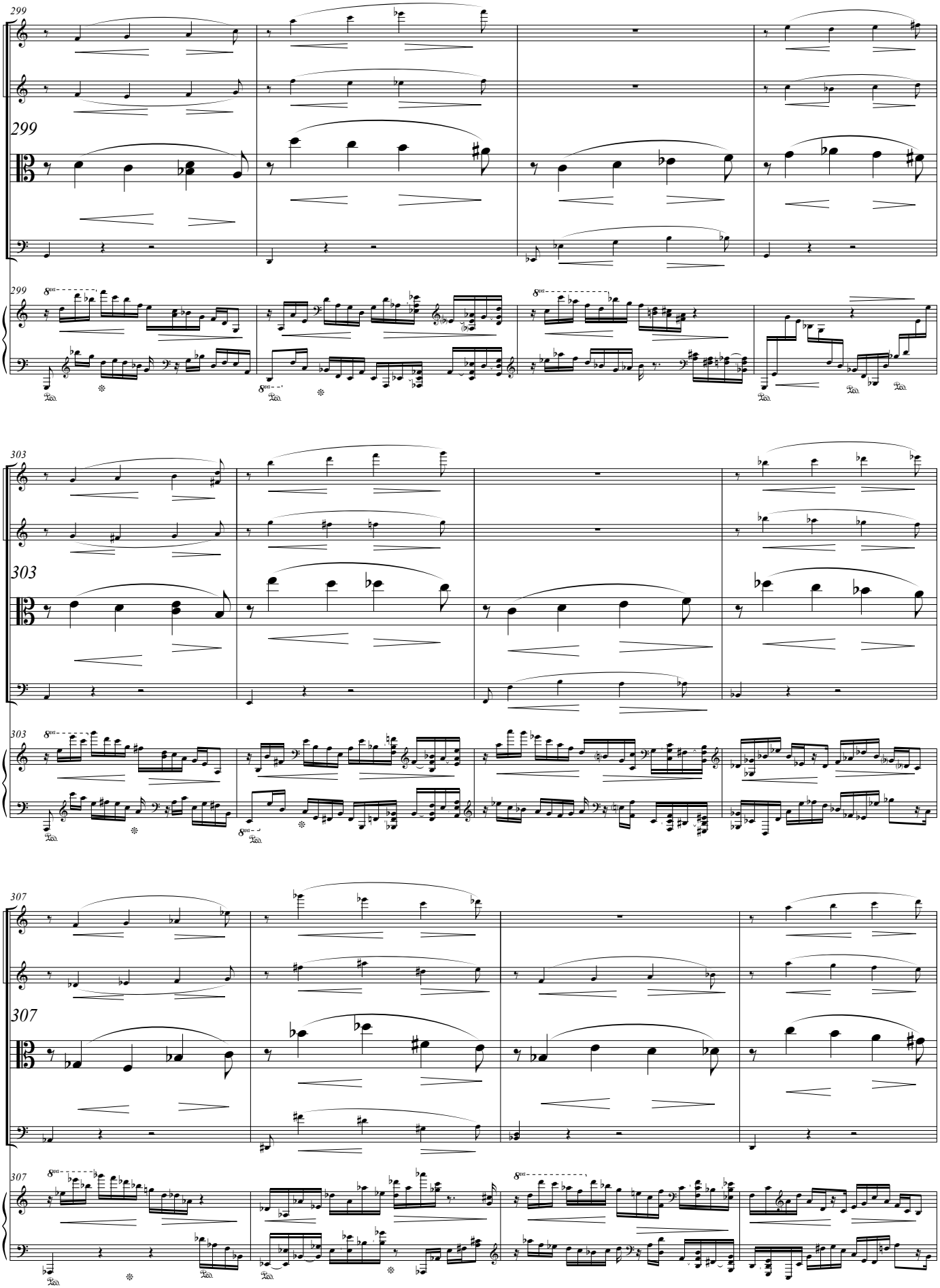

Dev. 14
237
237
237
ff
ff
ff
ff
Dev. 14

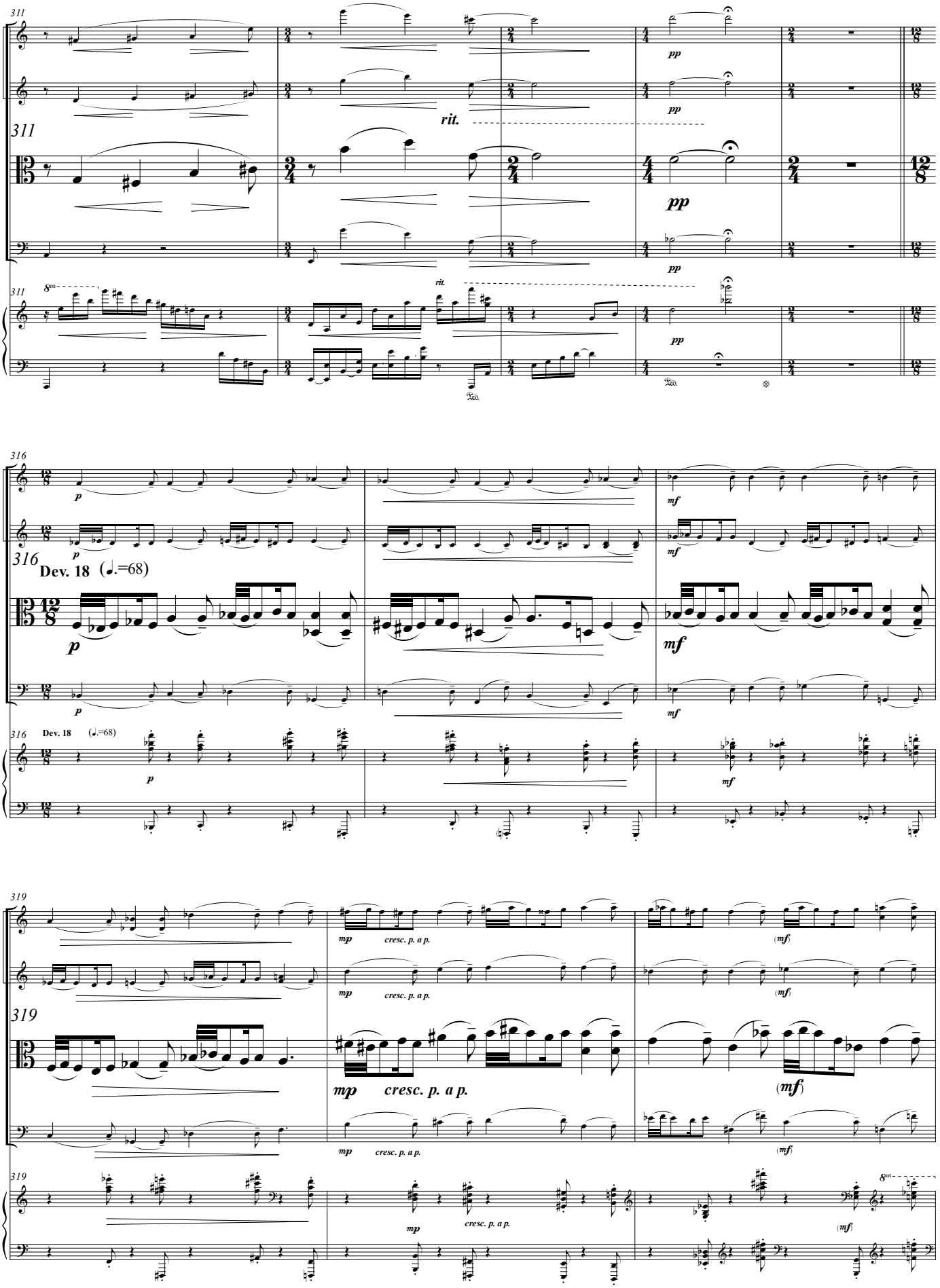

241
241
241
245
245
245
249
249
249
ff
ff
ff

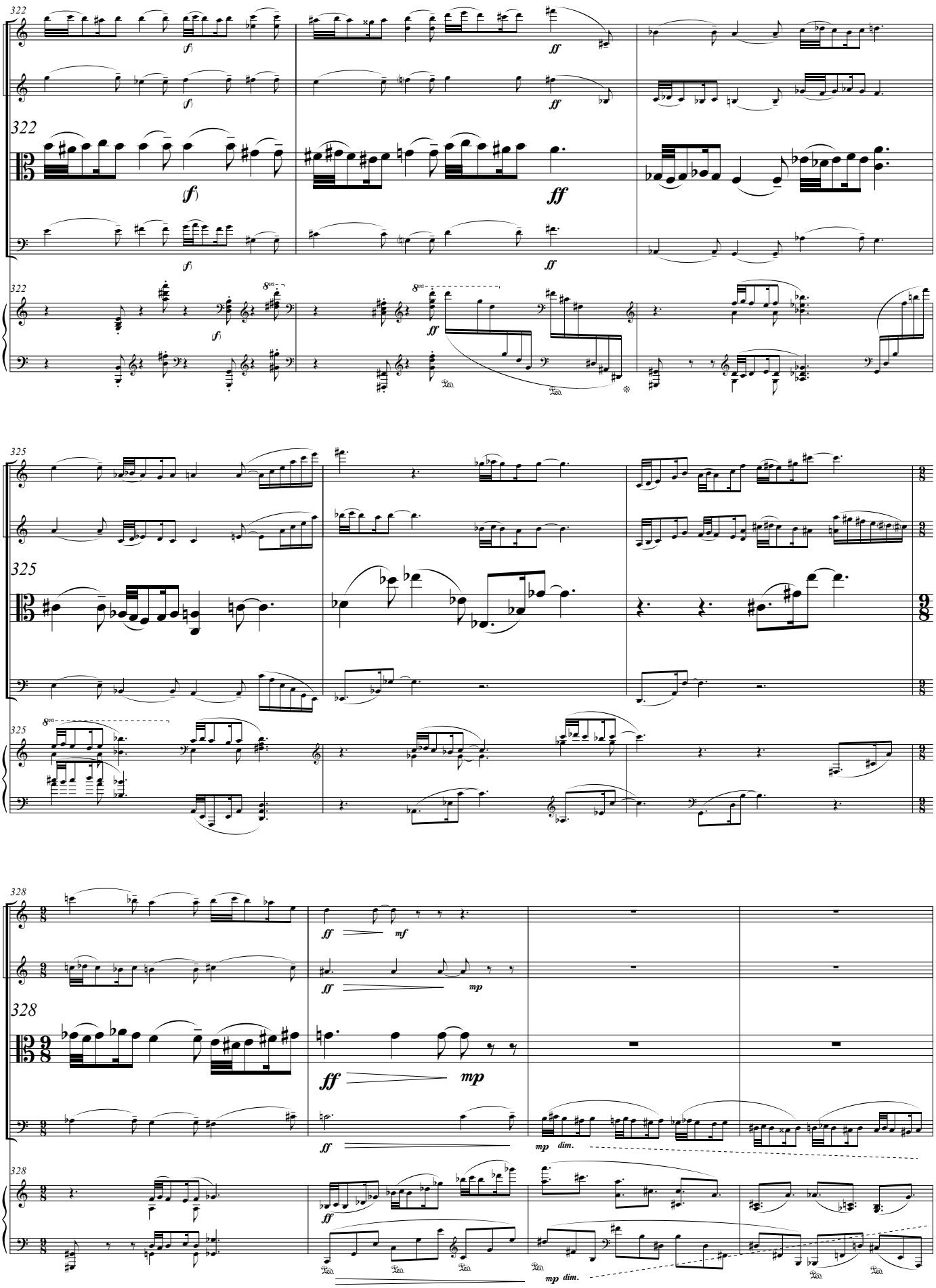

253
Dev. 15
257
261
pizz.

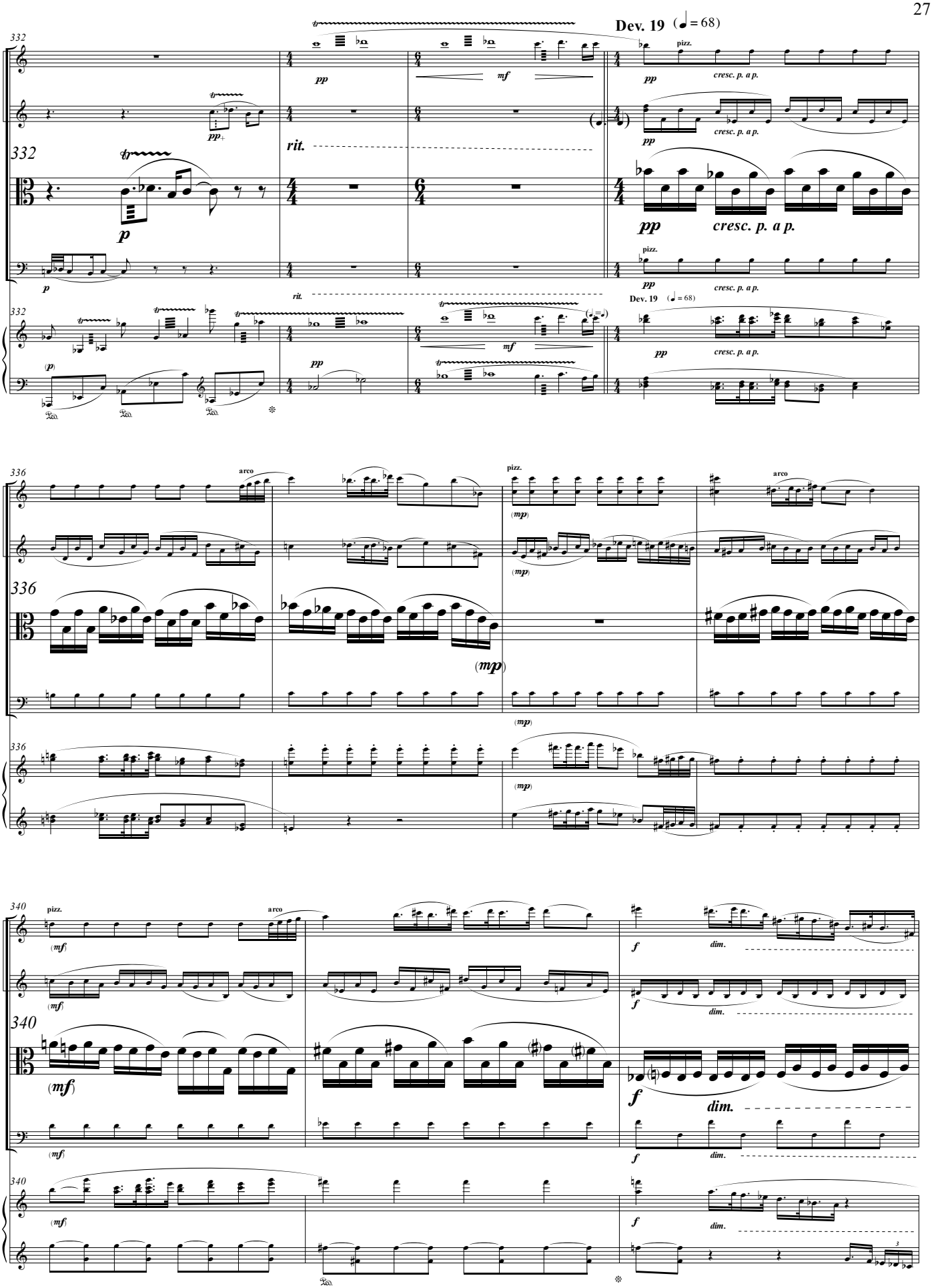

264
p
mf
arco
269
dim.
mf
legato
273
(♩ = 120)
pizz.
Dev. 16 piu mosso

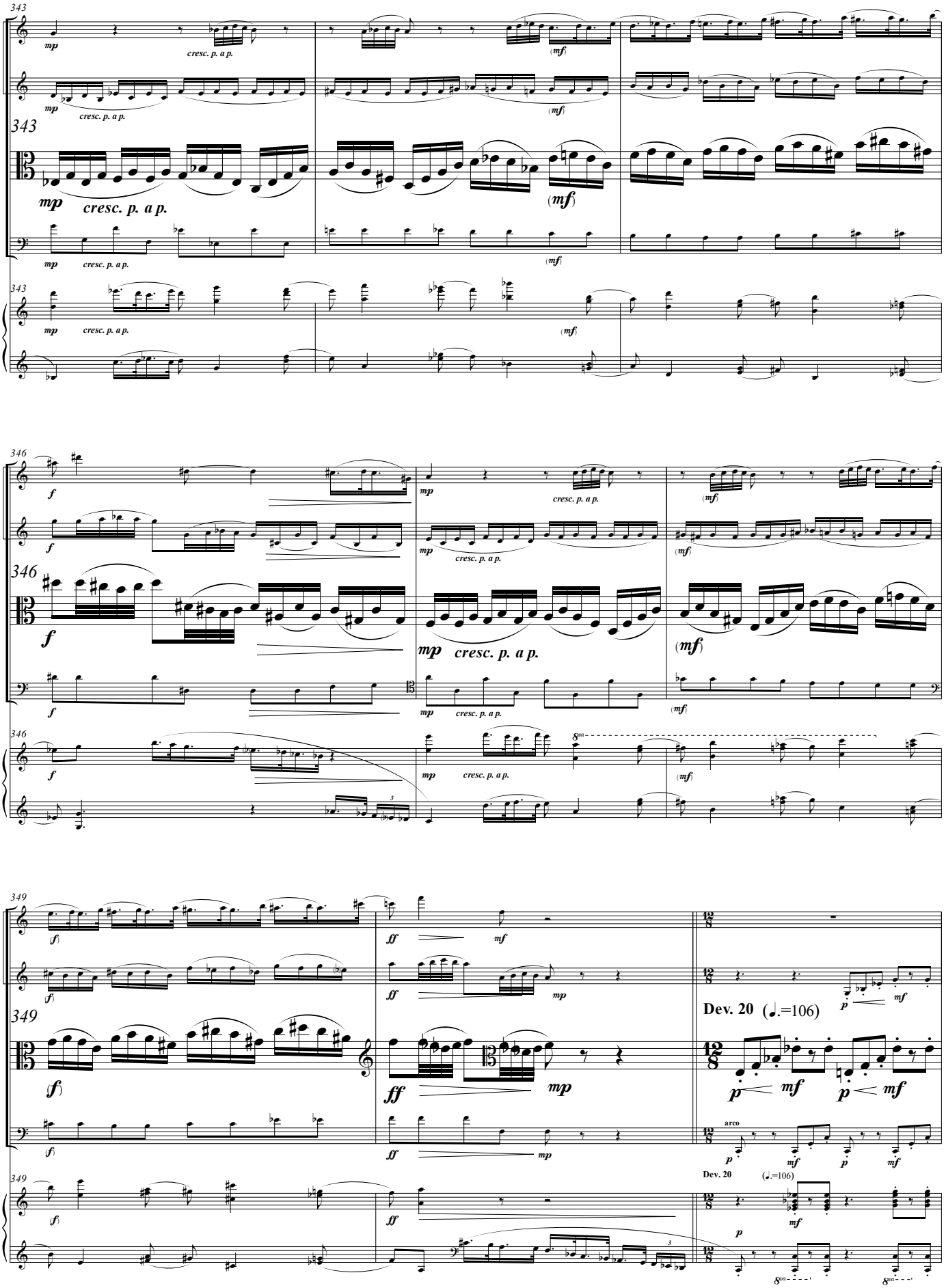

279
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
f
dim. p. a p.
(mp)
286
p
tenuto
293
rit.
pp
arco
(♩ = 80)
Dev. 17 grazioso

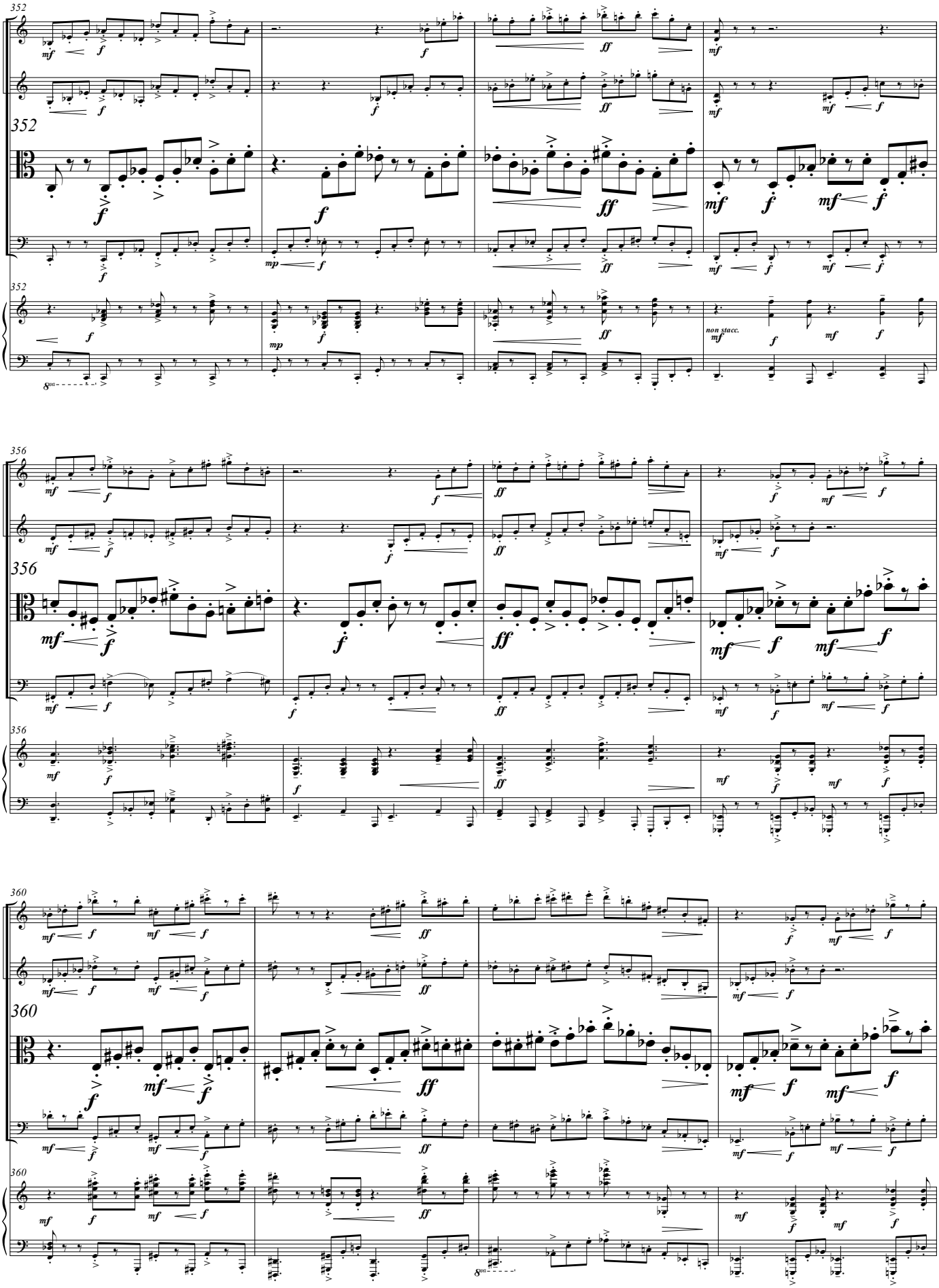

299
303
307

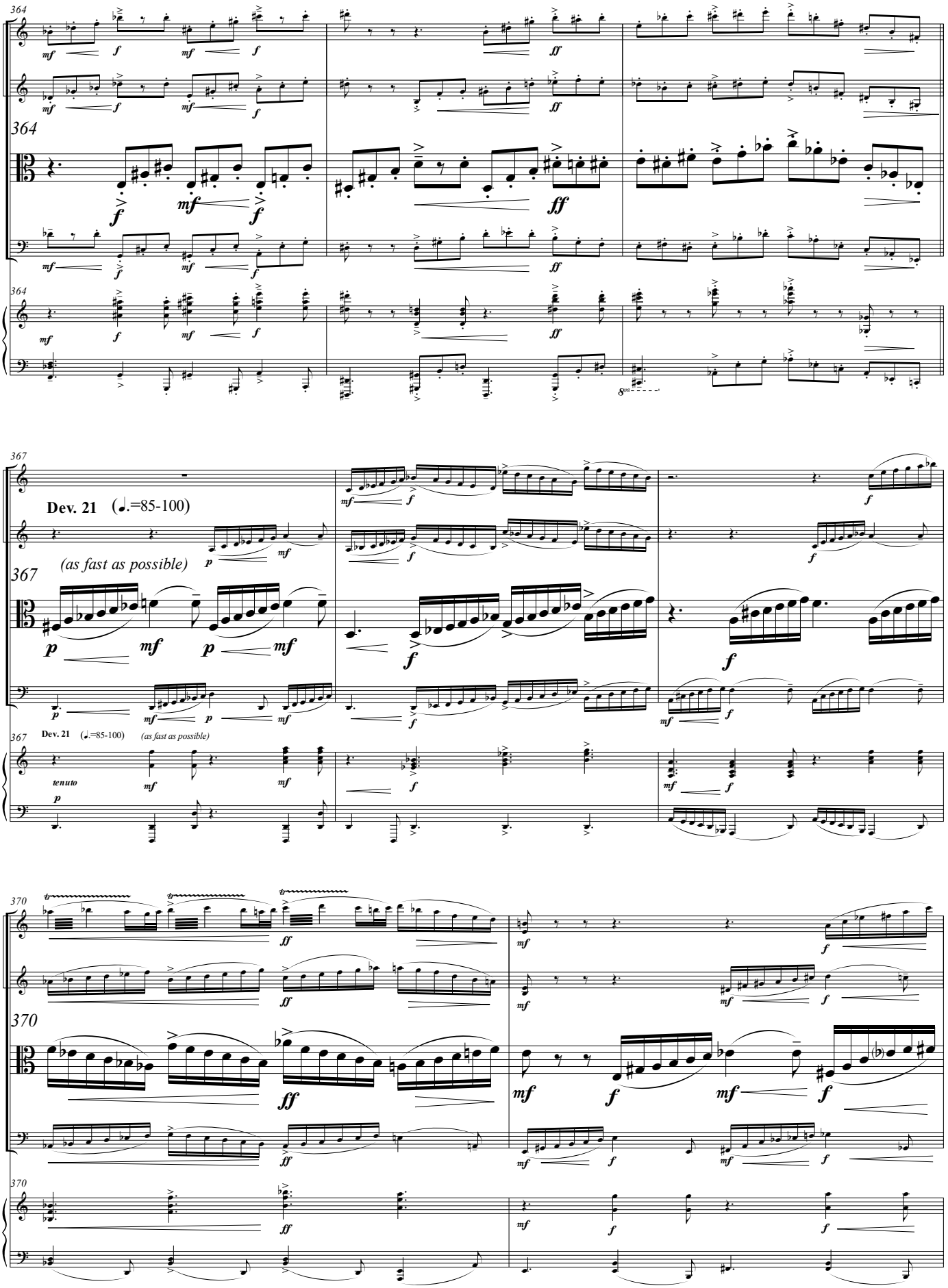

311
rit.
pp
316
Dev. 18 (♩.=68)
p
mf
319
mp cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
8va

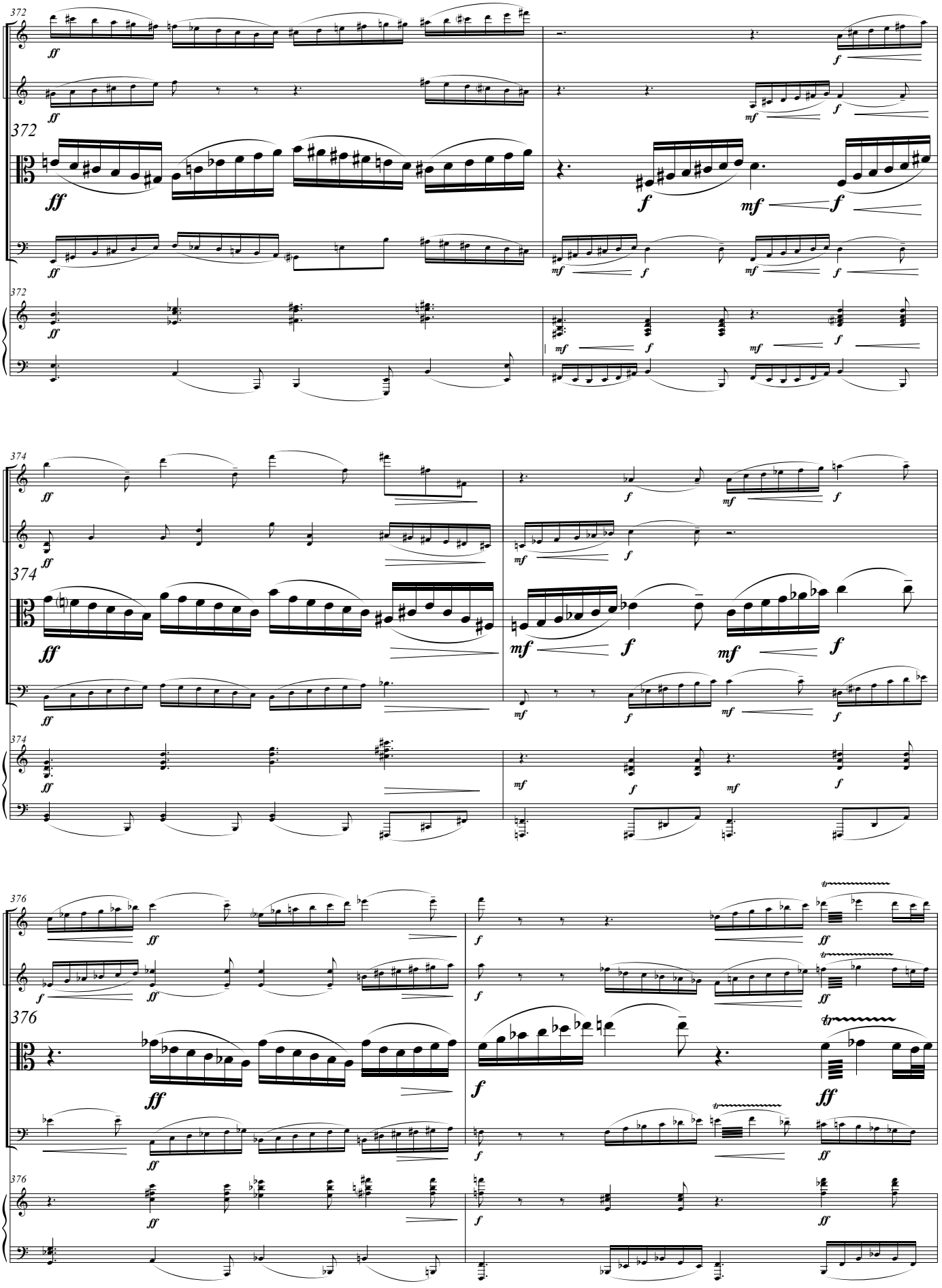

322
325
328
dim.

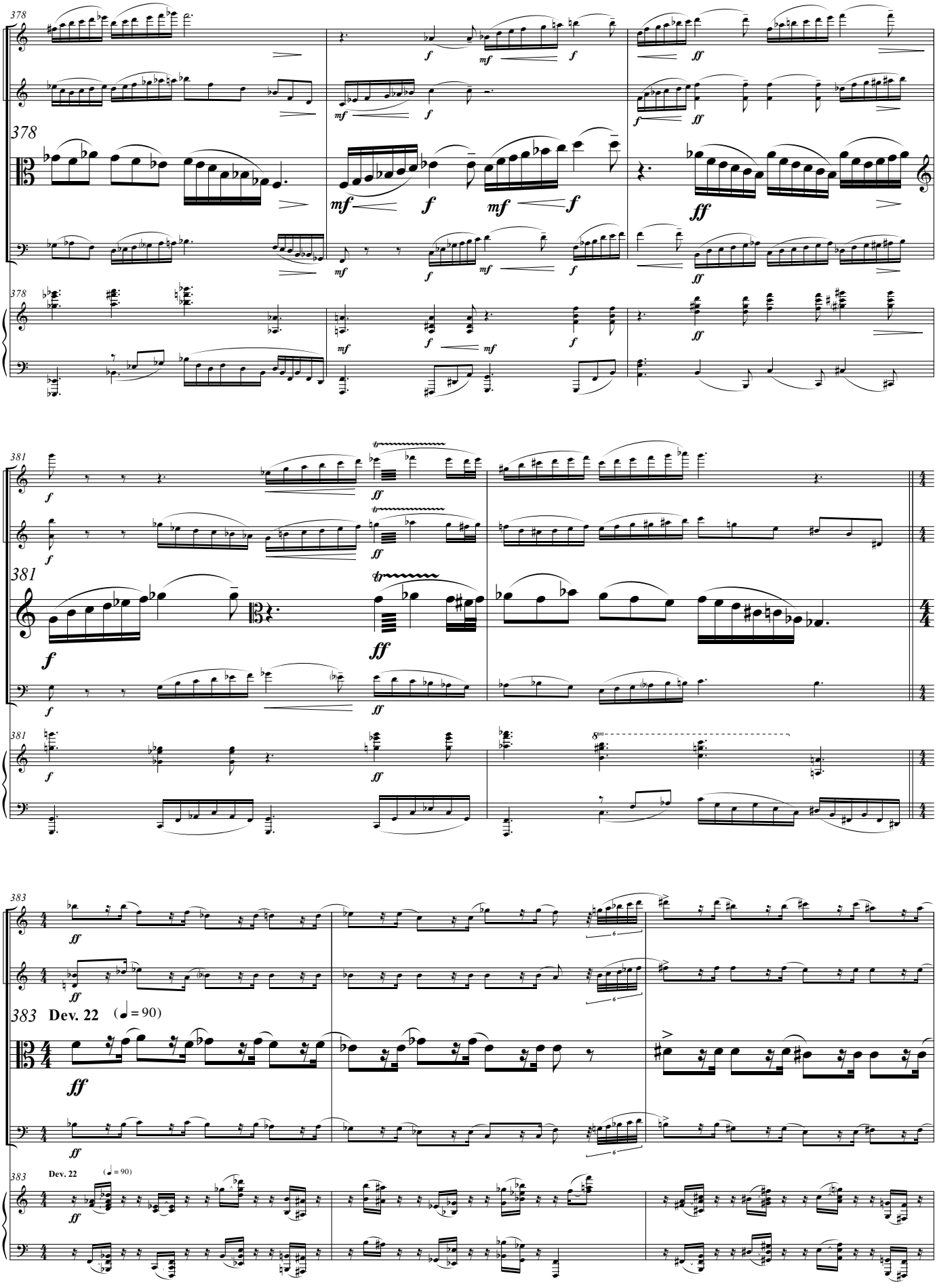

Dev. 19 (♩ = 68)
pizz.
cresc. p. a p.
rit.
arco
dim.

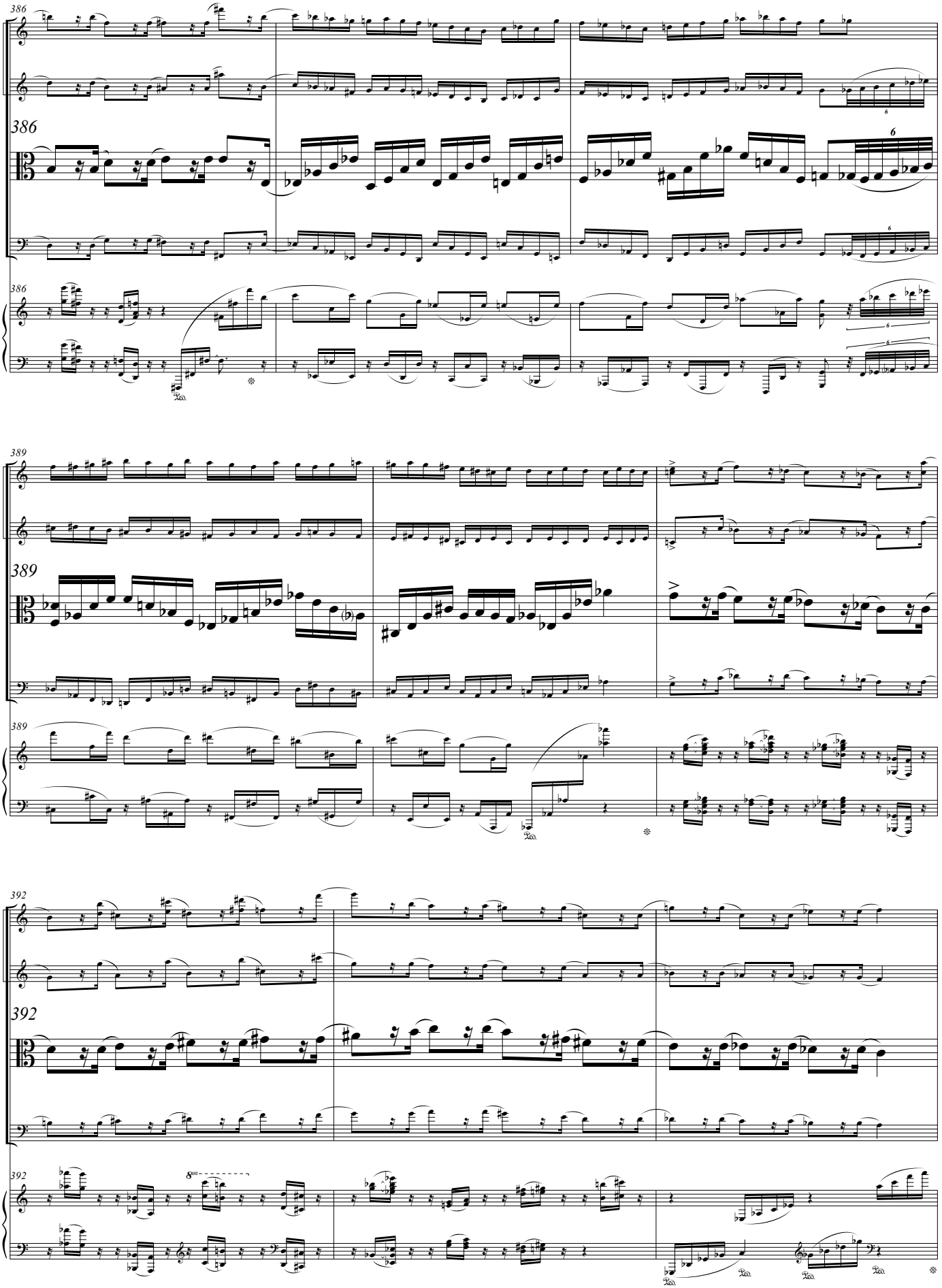

343
mp
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
346
f
mp
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
349
(f)
ff
mf
mp
Dev. 20 (♩.=106)
p
arco

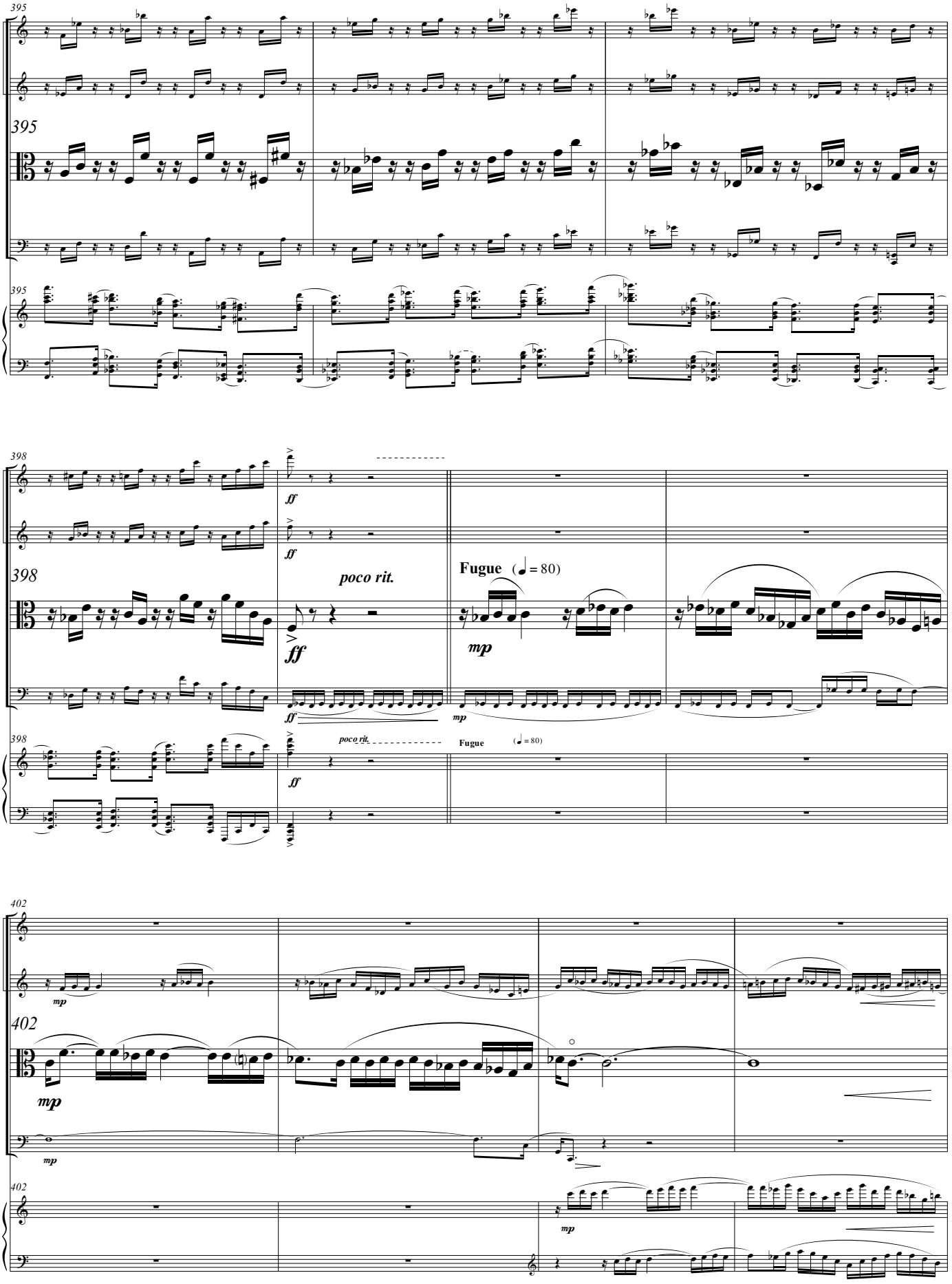

352
356
360
non stacc.
8va

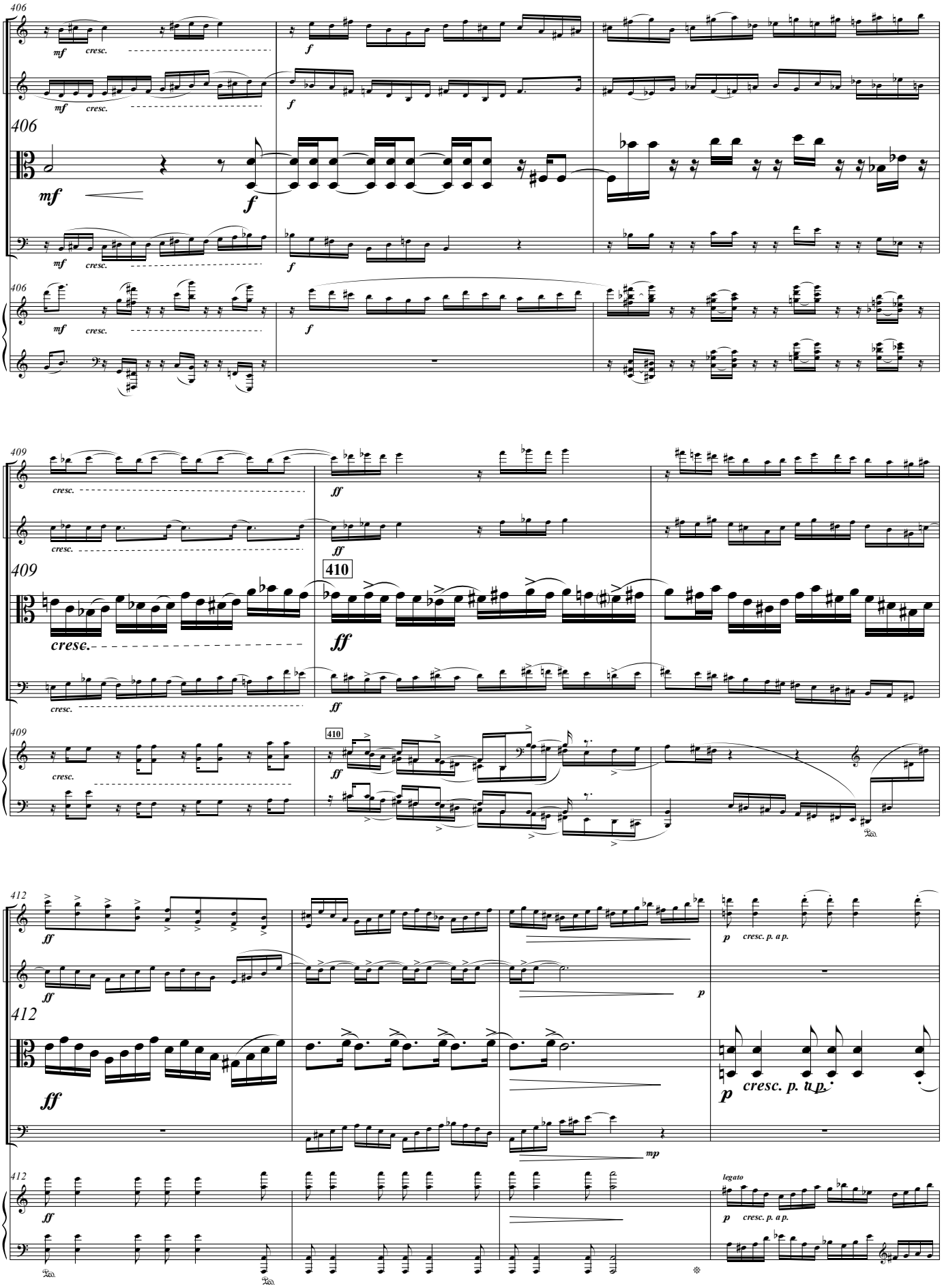

364
364
364
367
Dev. 21 (♩.=85-100)
(as fast as possible)
367
Dev. 21 (♩.=85-100) (as fast as possible)
370
370
370

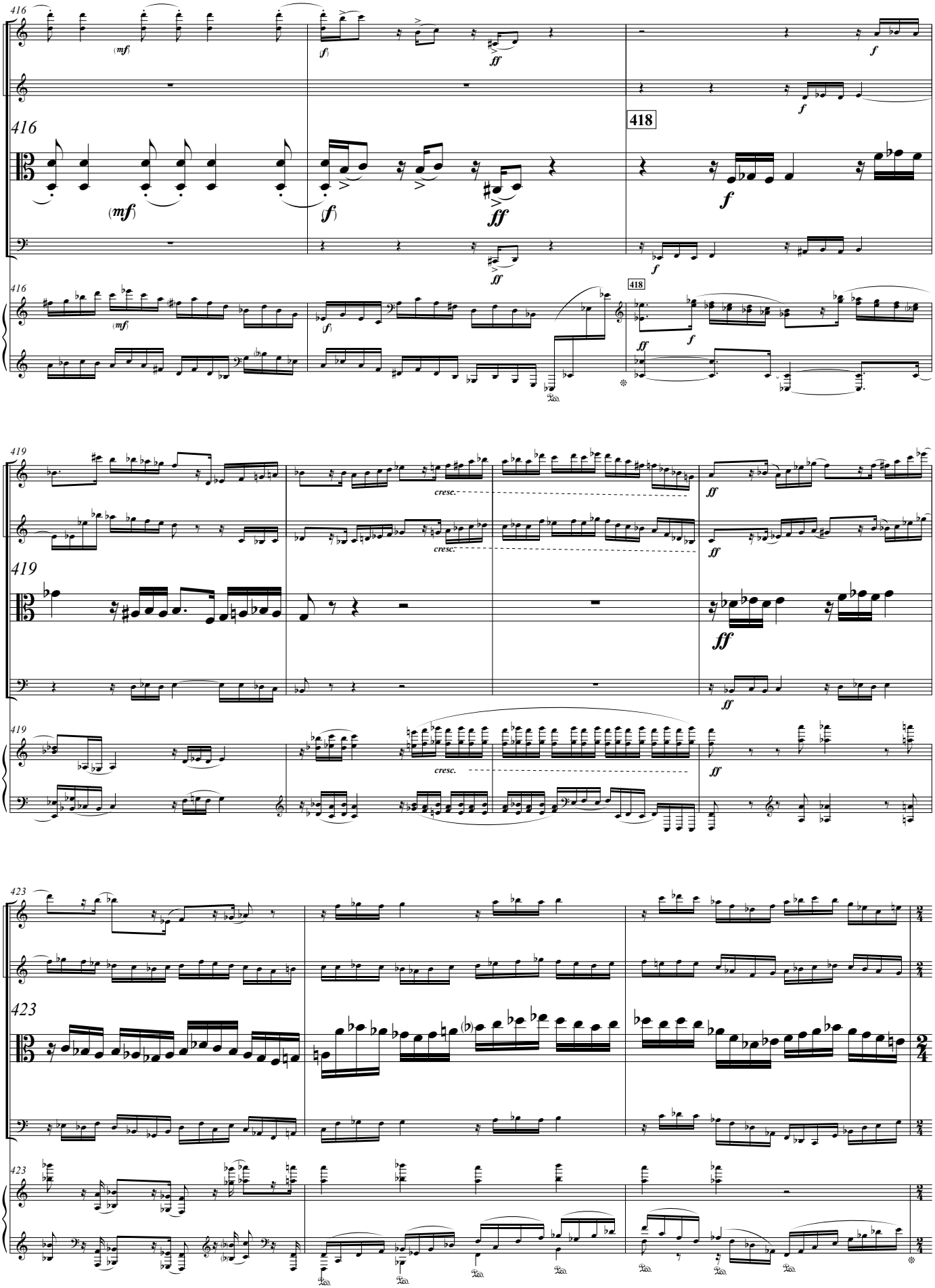



Dev. 22
(♩ = 90)


386
386
386
389
389
389
392
392
392


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


406
mf
cresc.
f
409
410
ff
412
p
cresc. p. a p.
mp
legato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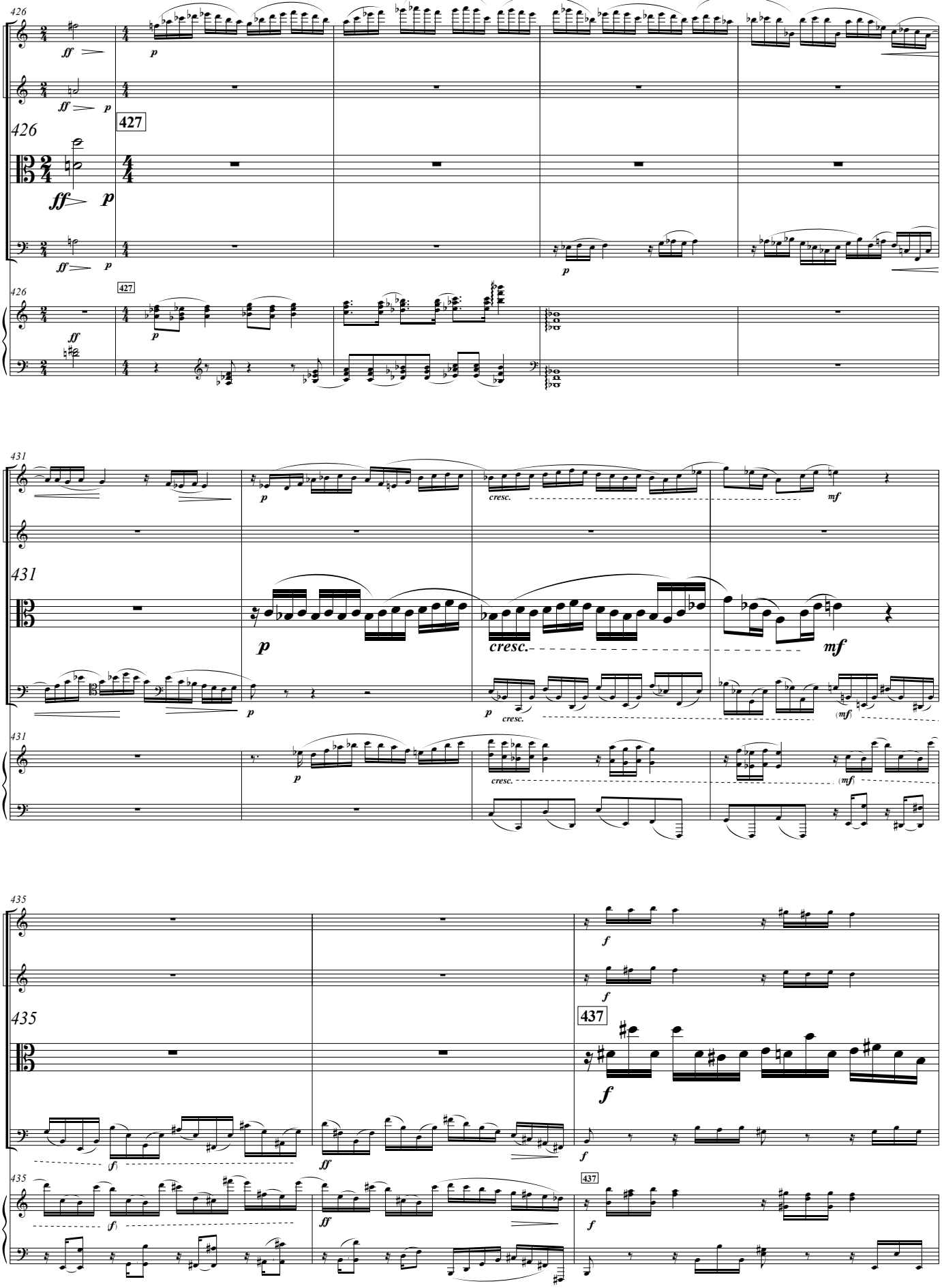
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435
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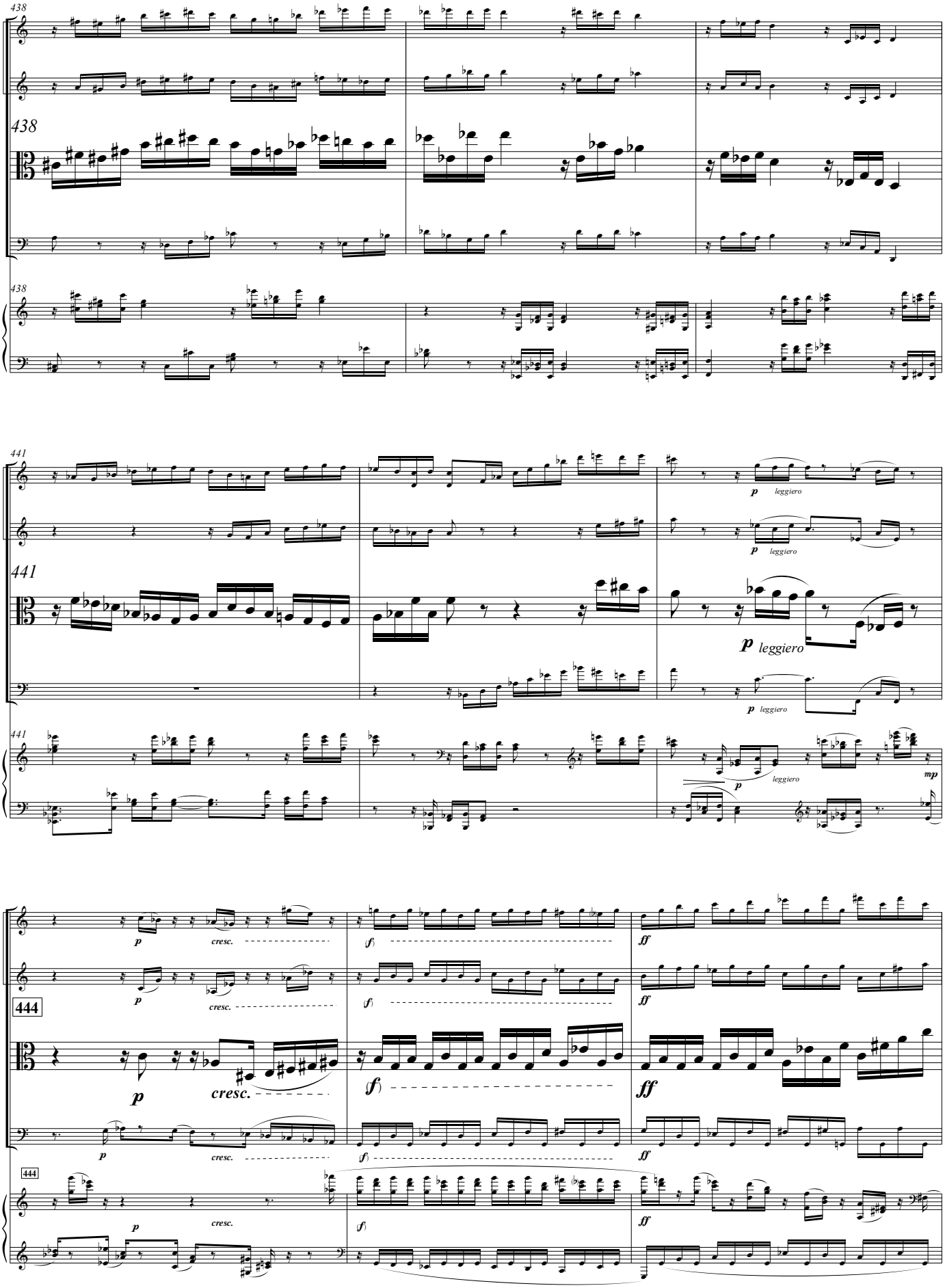
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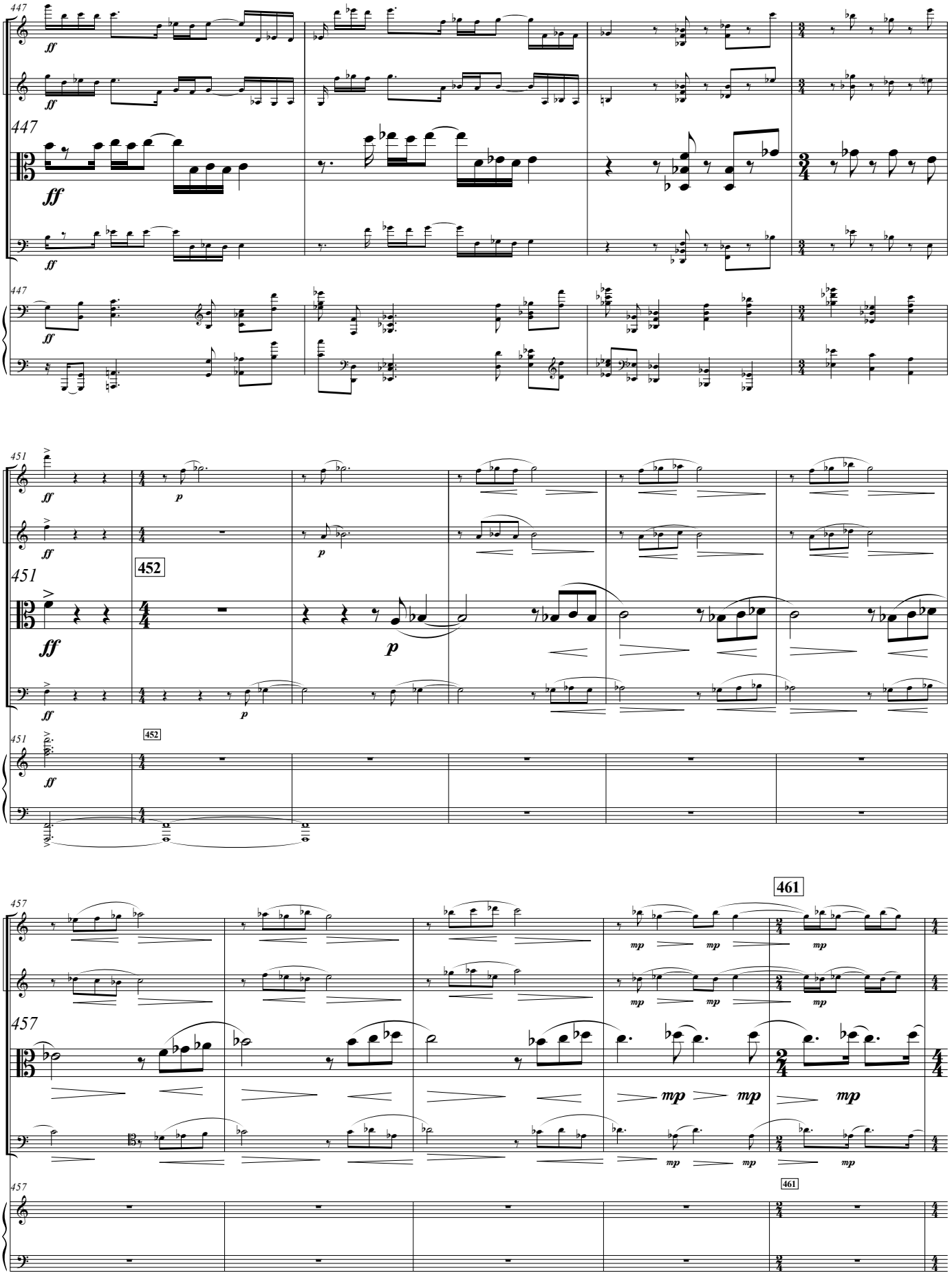
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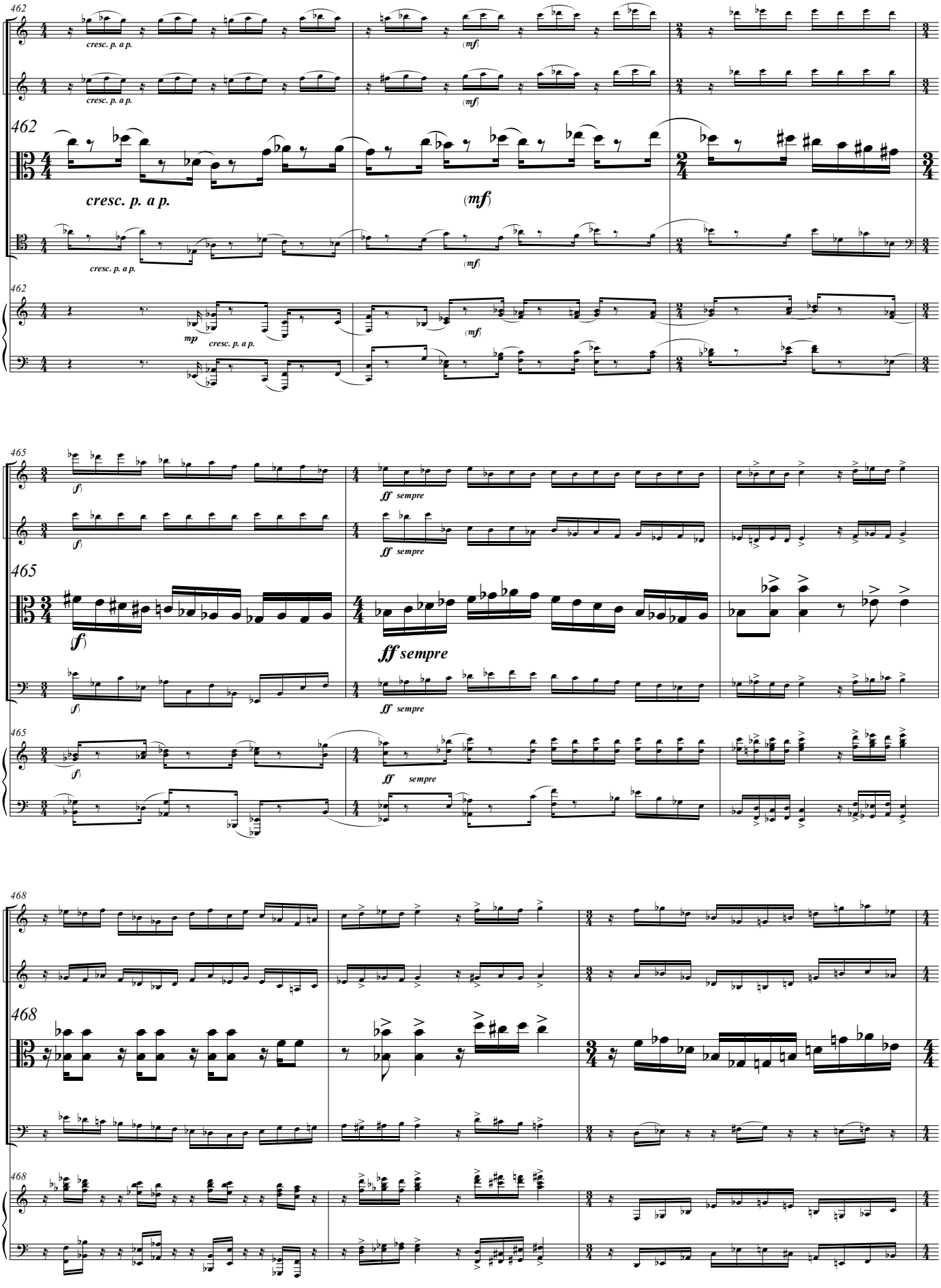
462
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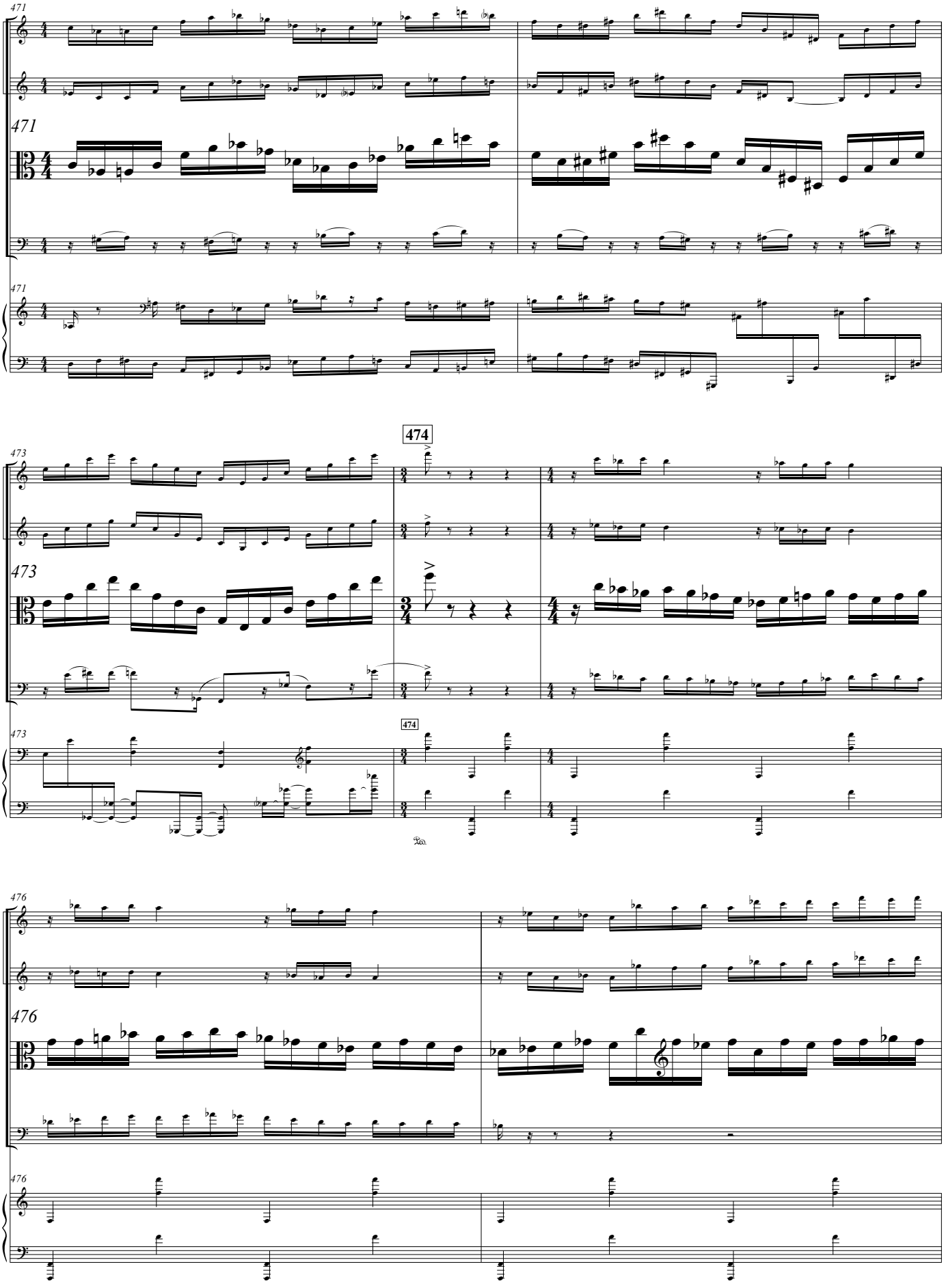
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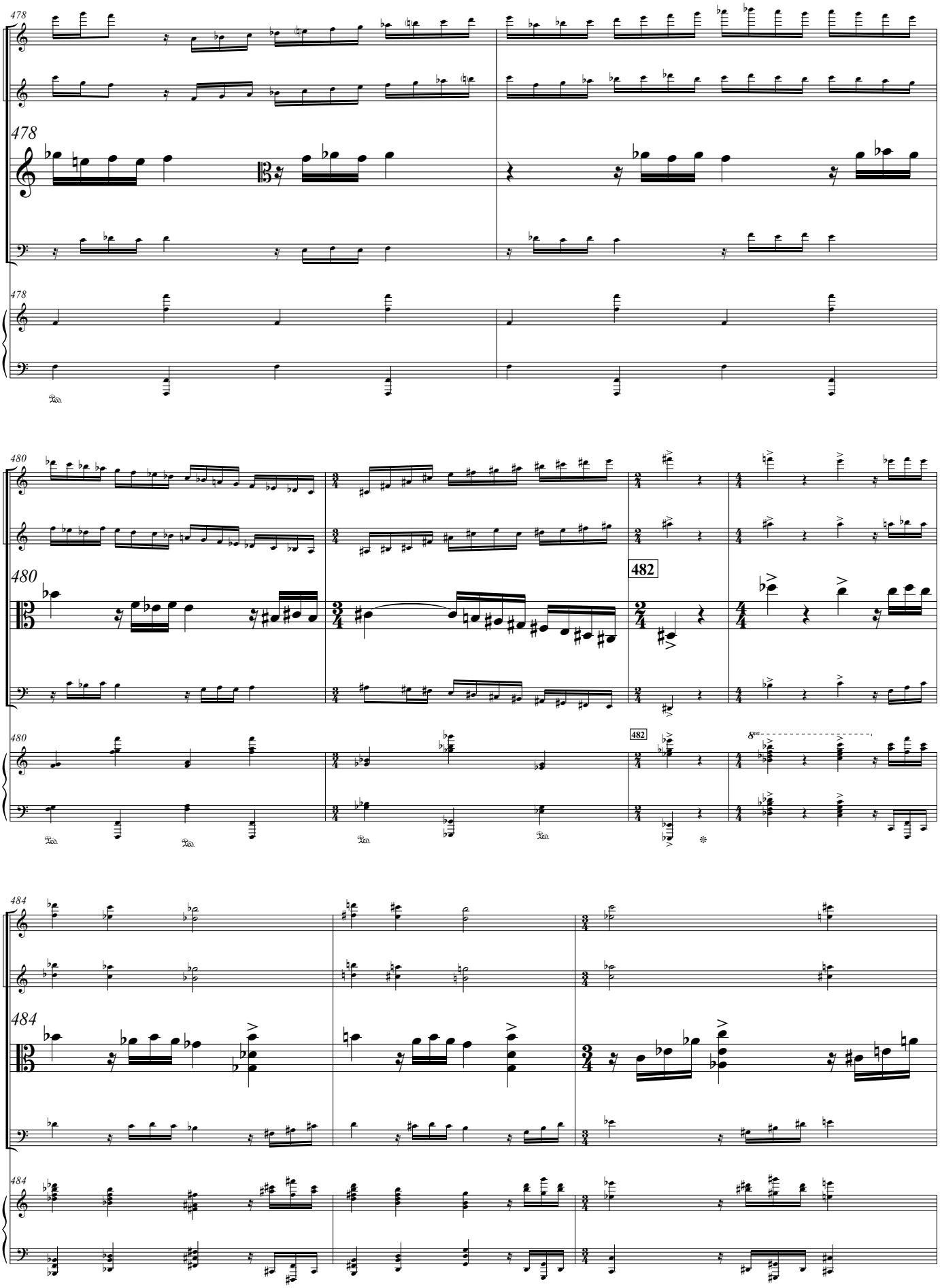
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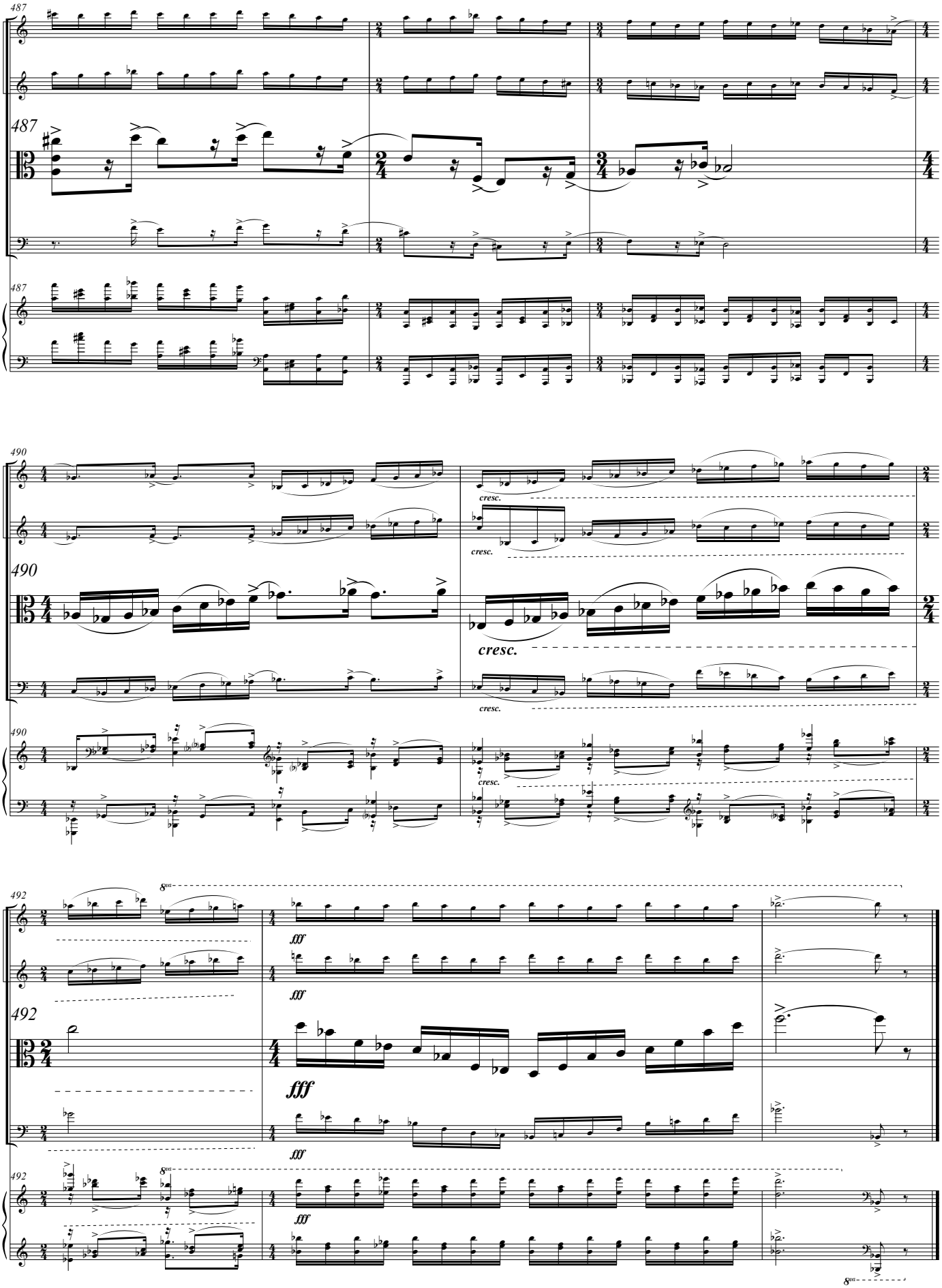
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