Cubic Deviations

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

For Piano Quintet

Violin II

for Electronic Music Readers

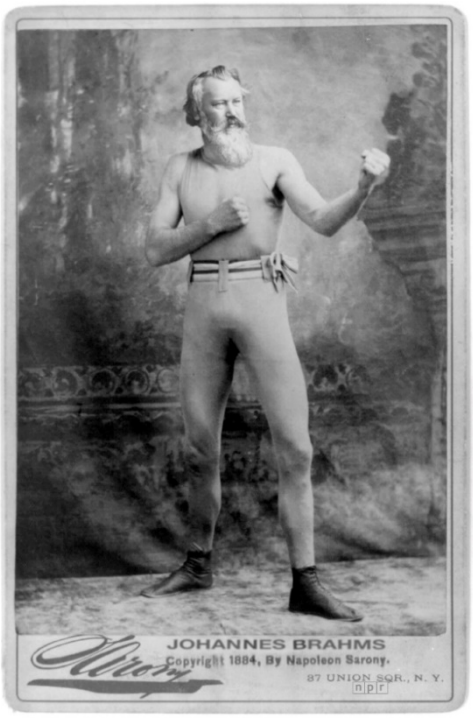
Bill Robinson

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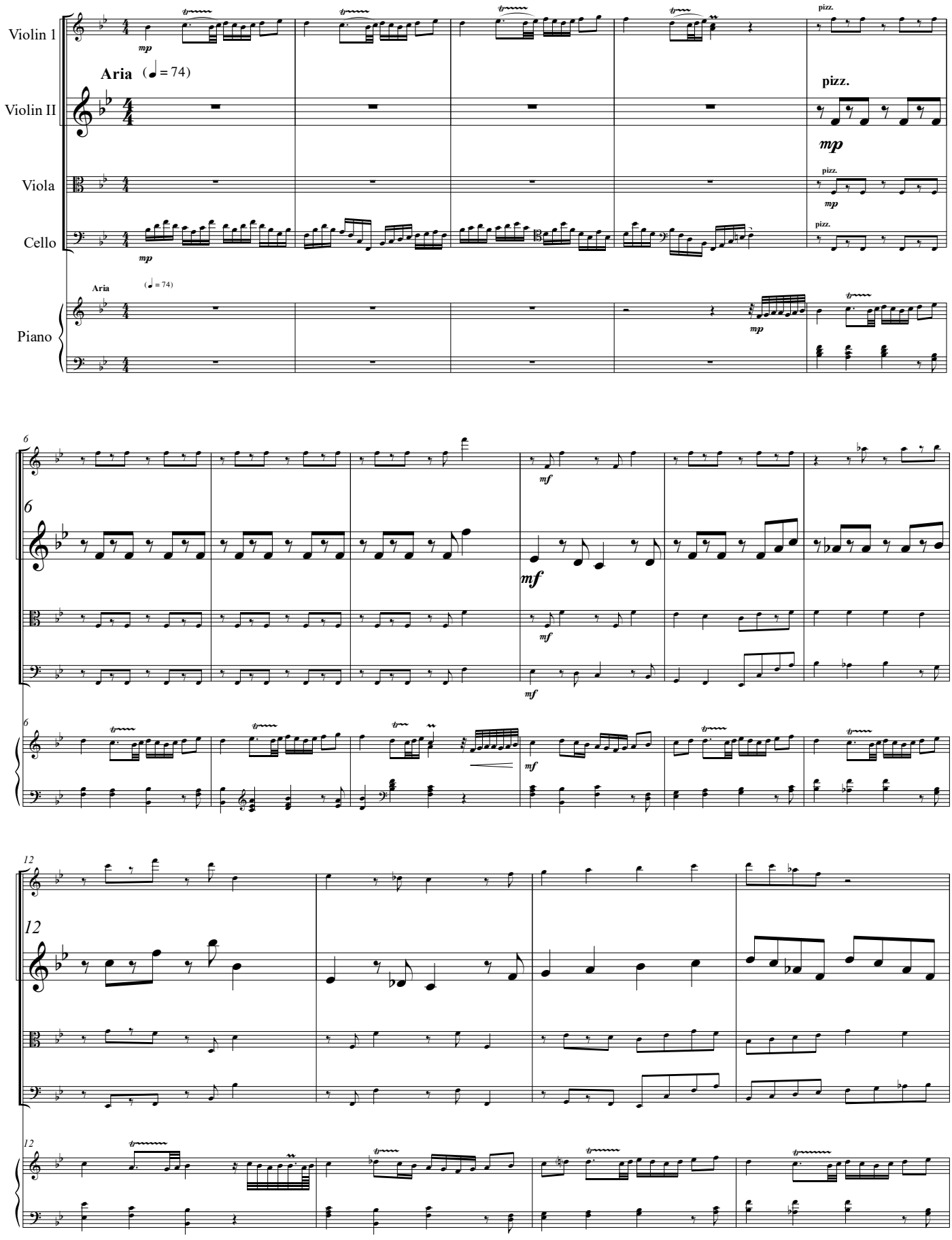
Cover art by Joseph Groupy, 1743 *Pugilist Brahms by NPR* billrobinsonmusic.com

Violin II Part for Electronic Music Readers

Cubic Deviations

[corrected to 7/21/23]

Bill Robinson



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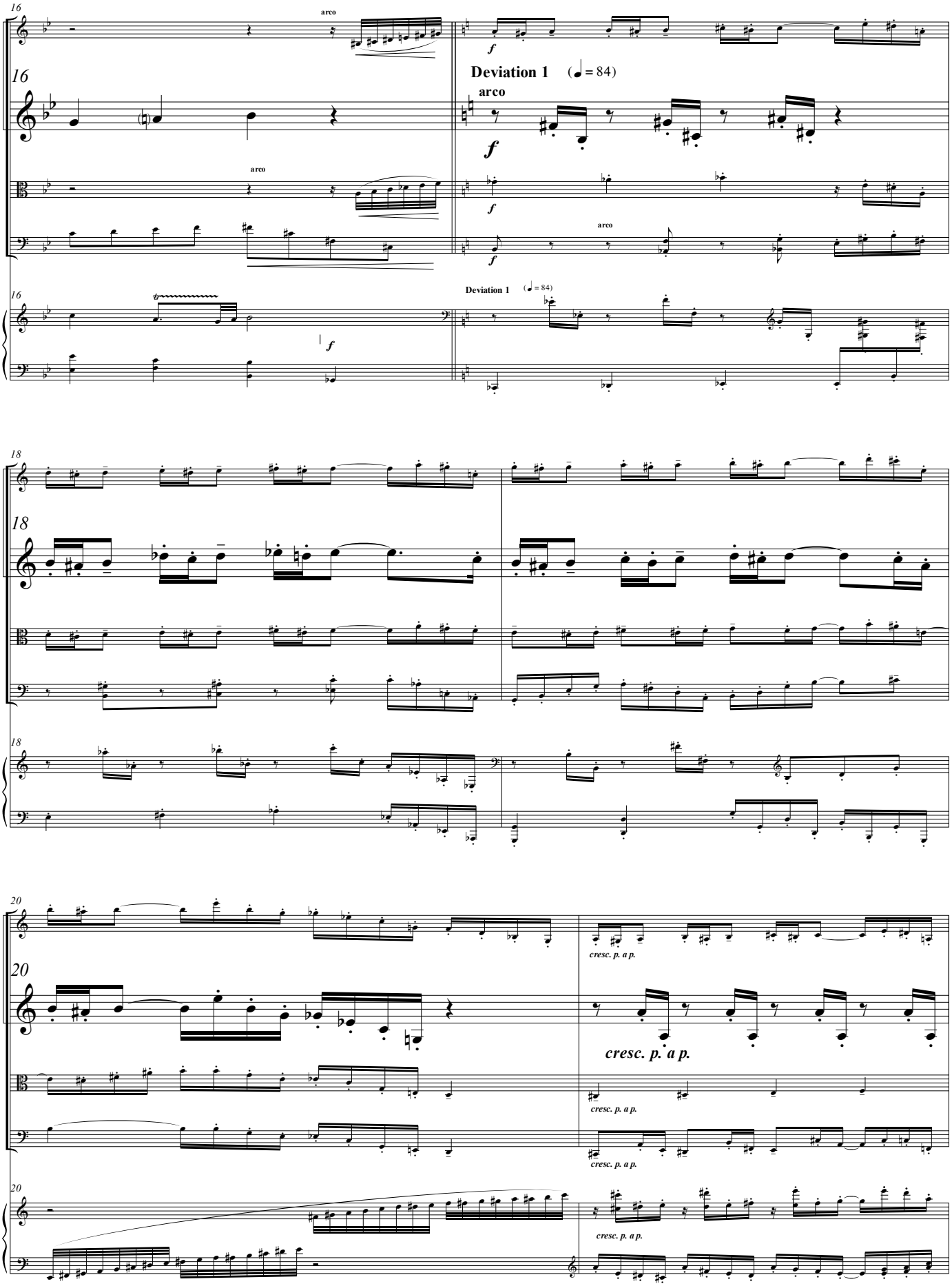
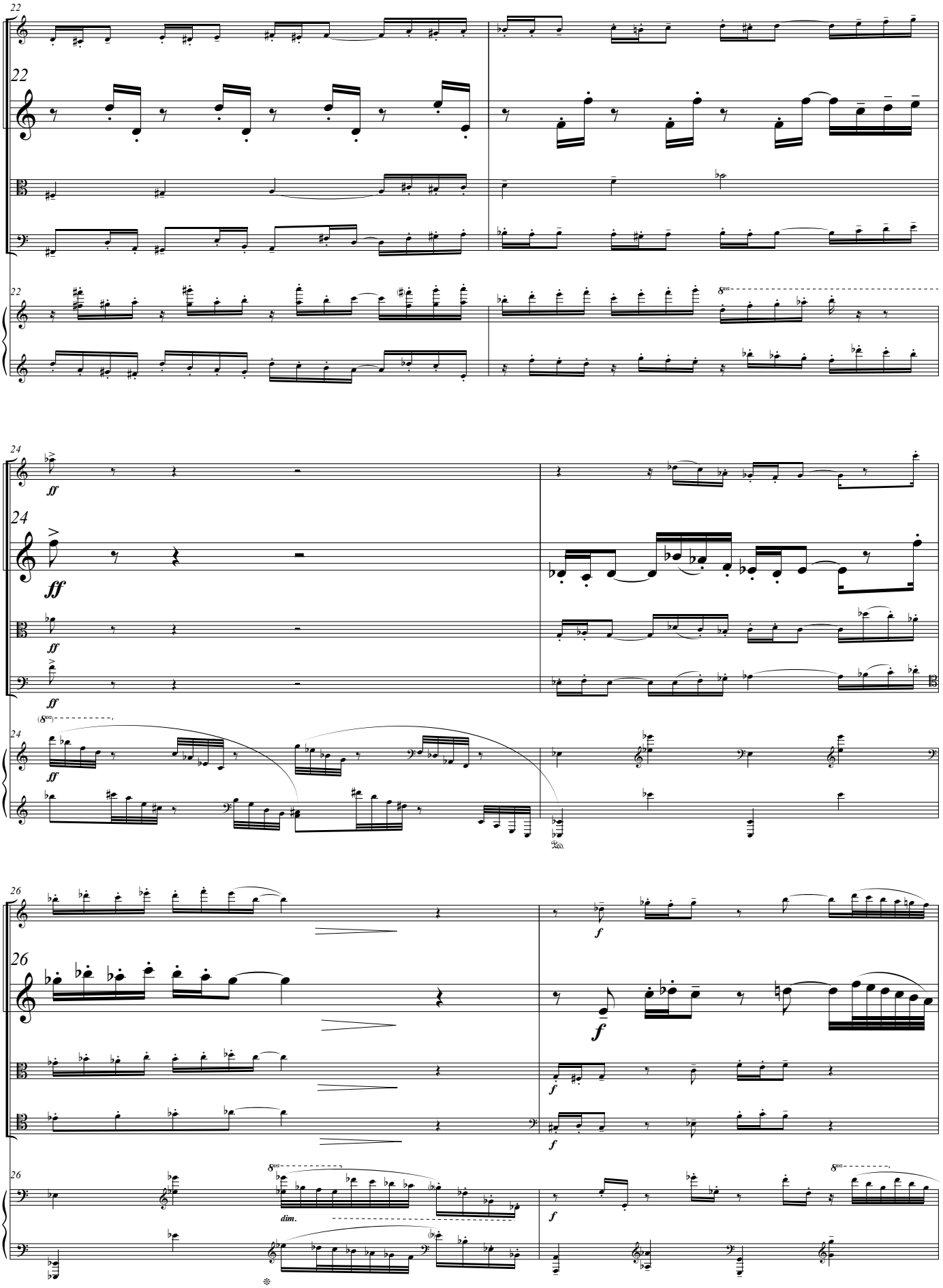
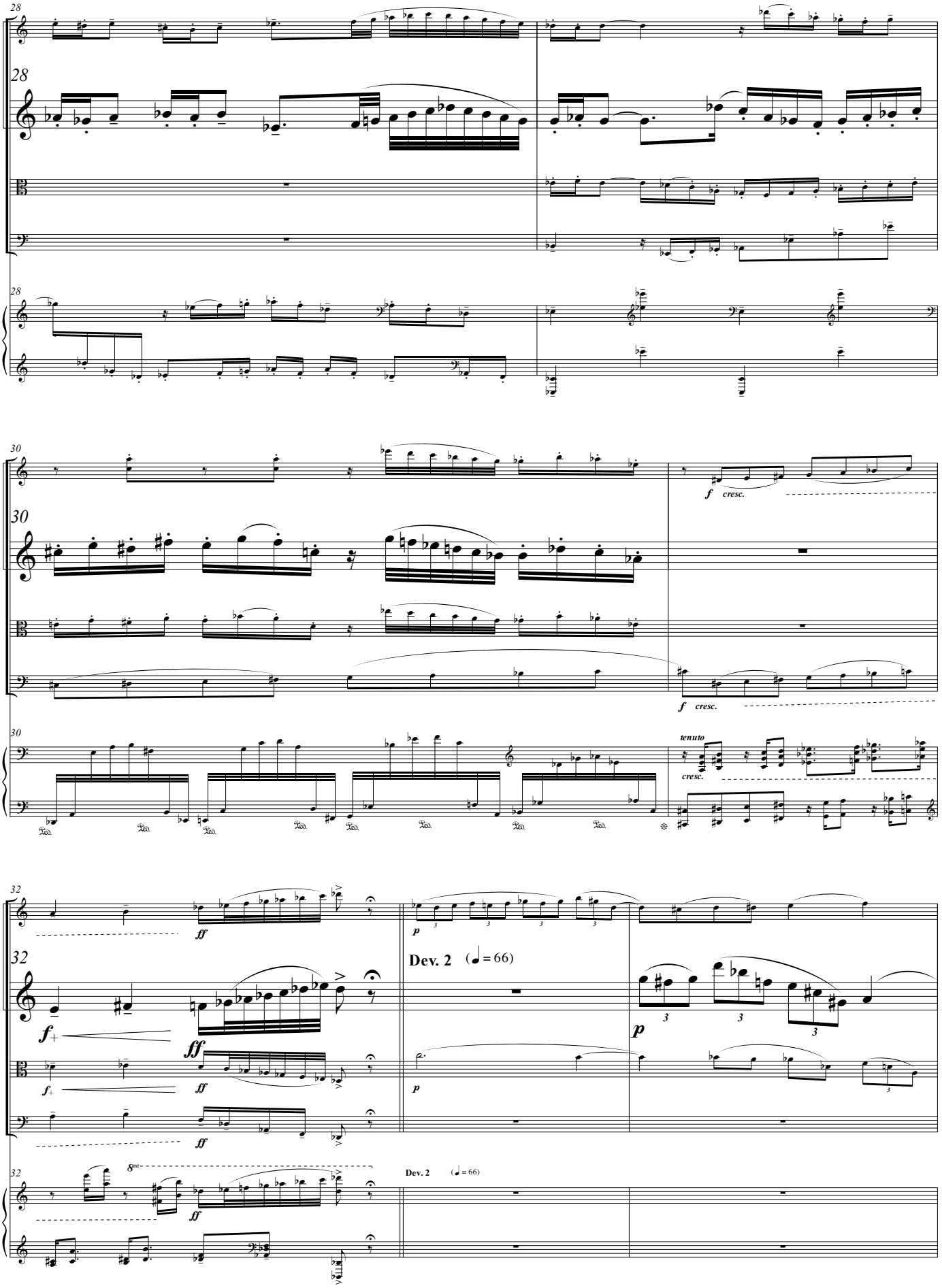
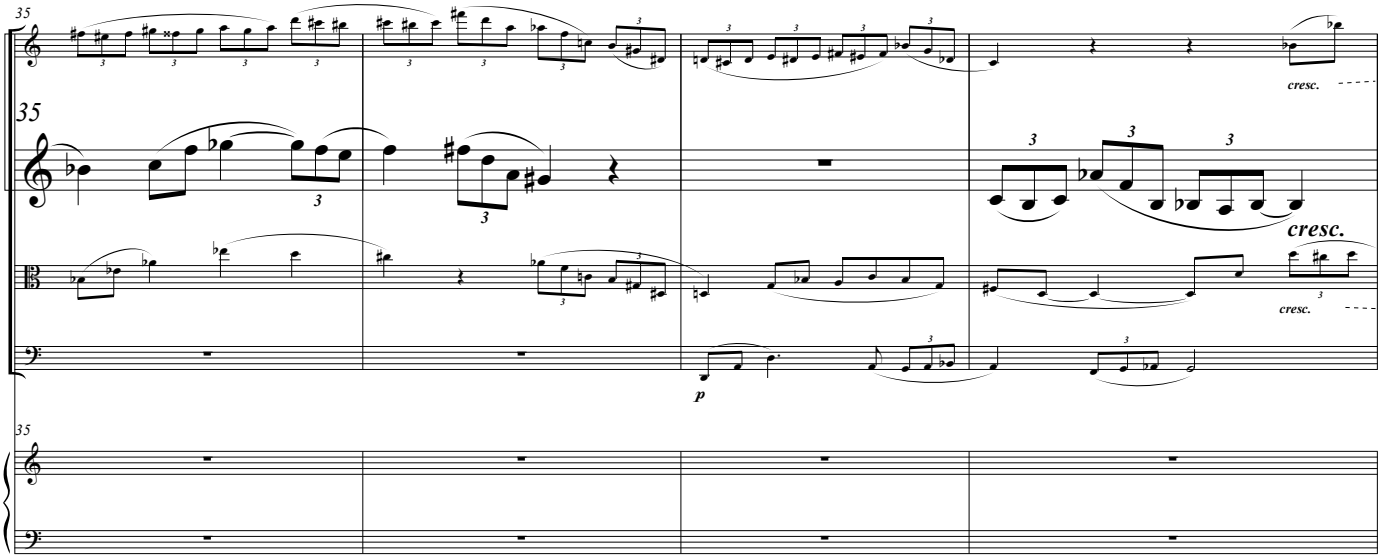
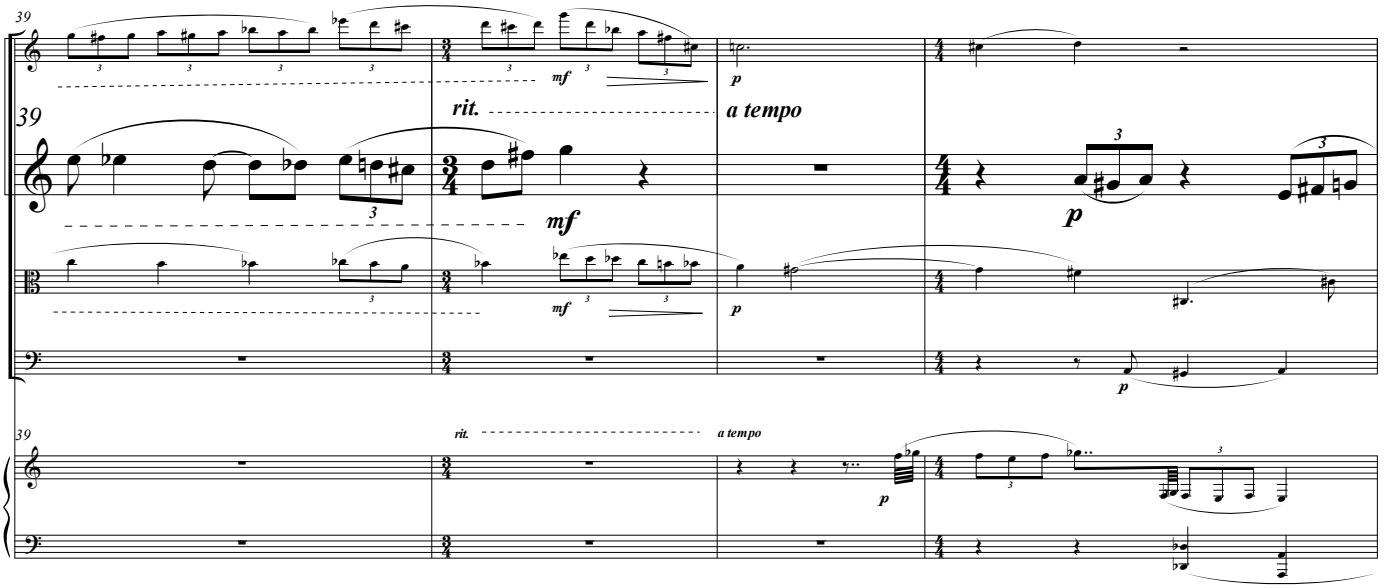
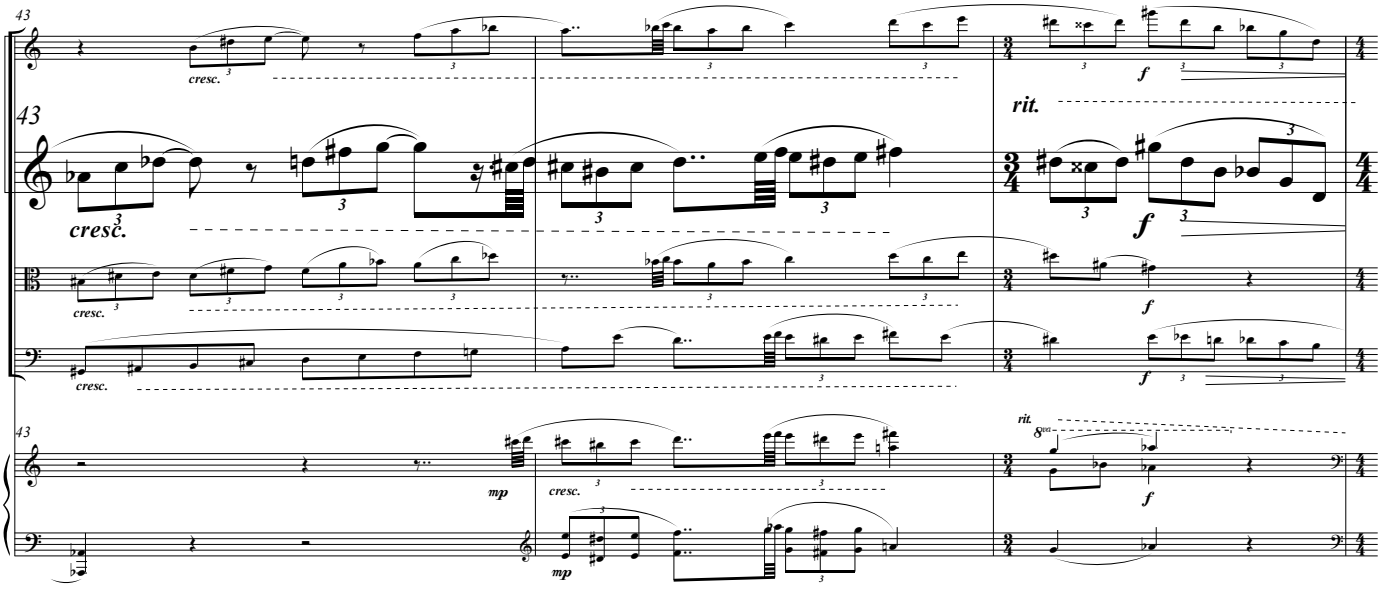

16
arco
Deviation 1 (♩= 84)
arco
18
20
cresc. p. a p.

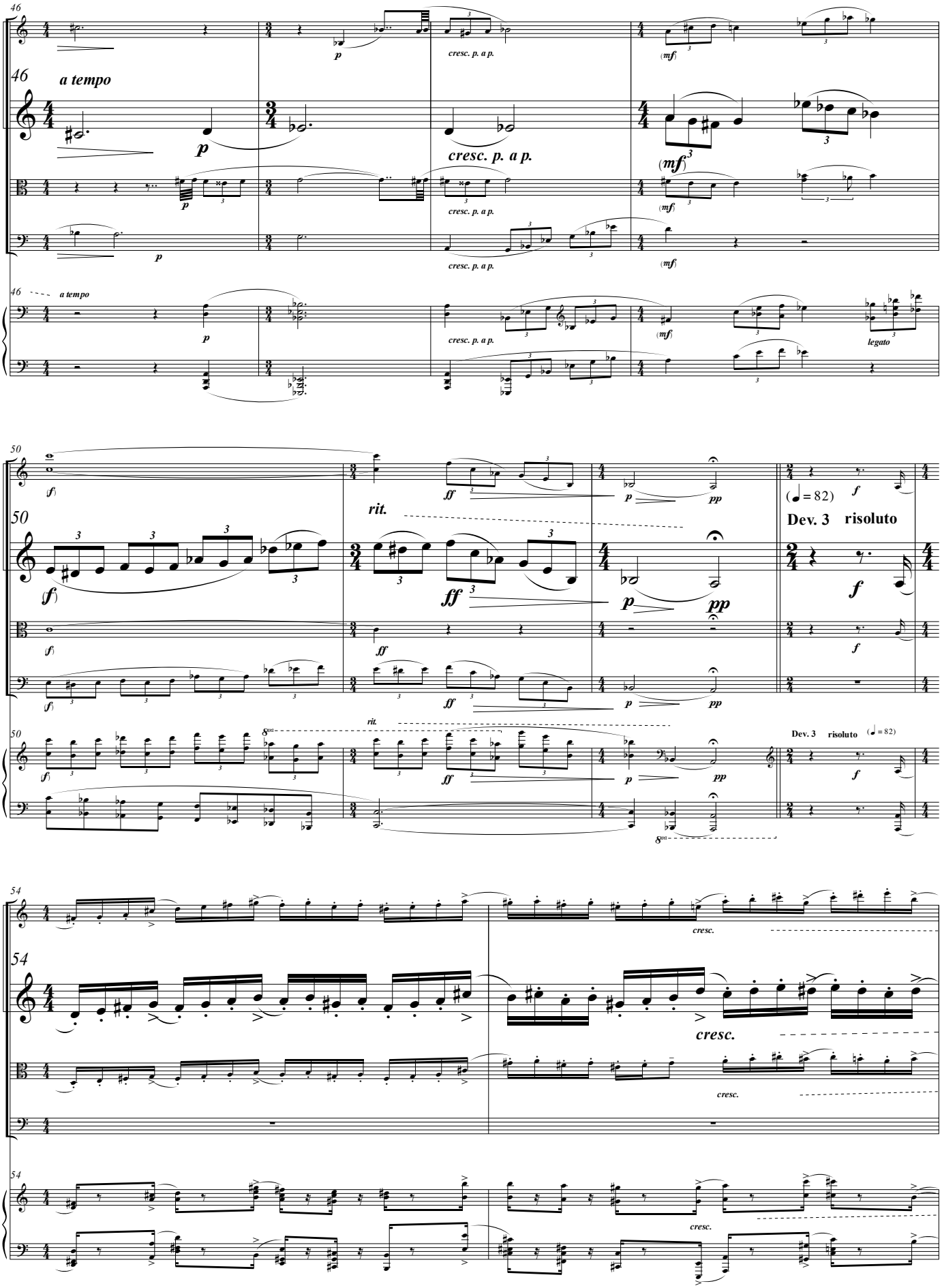

22
24
ff
26
f
dim.

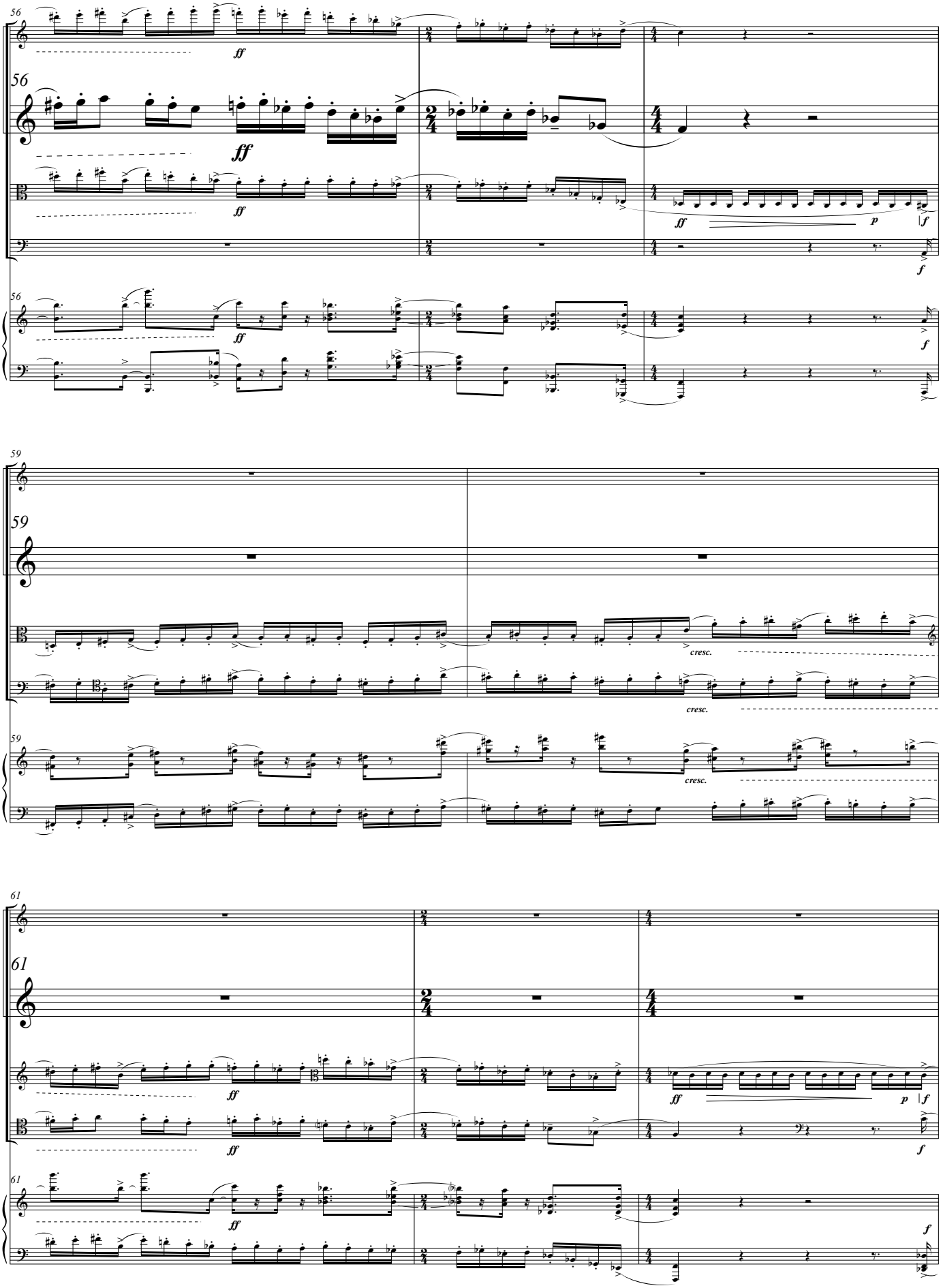

28
30
f cresc.
tenuto
32
ff
Dev. 2 (♩ = 66)
p
8va

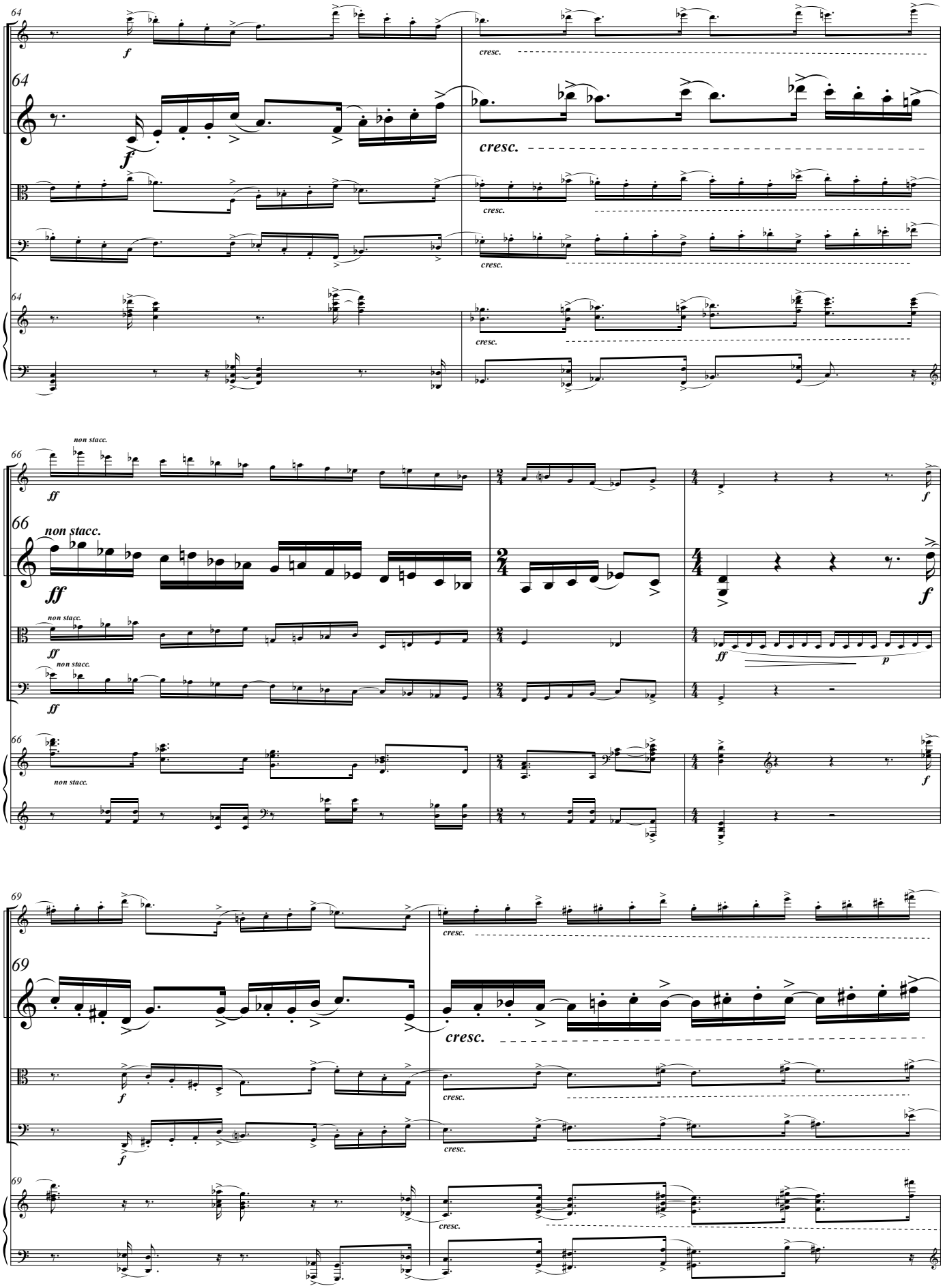

35
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
p

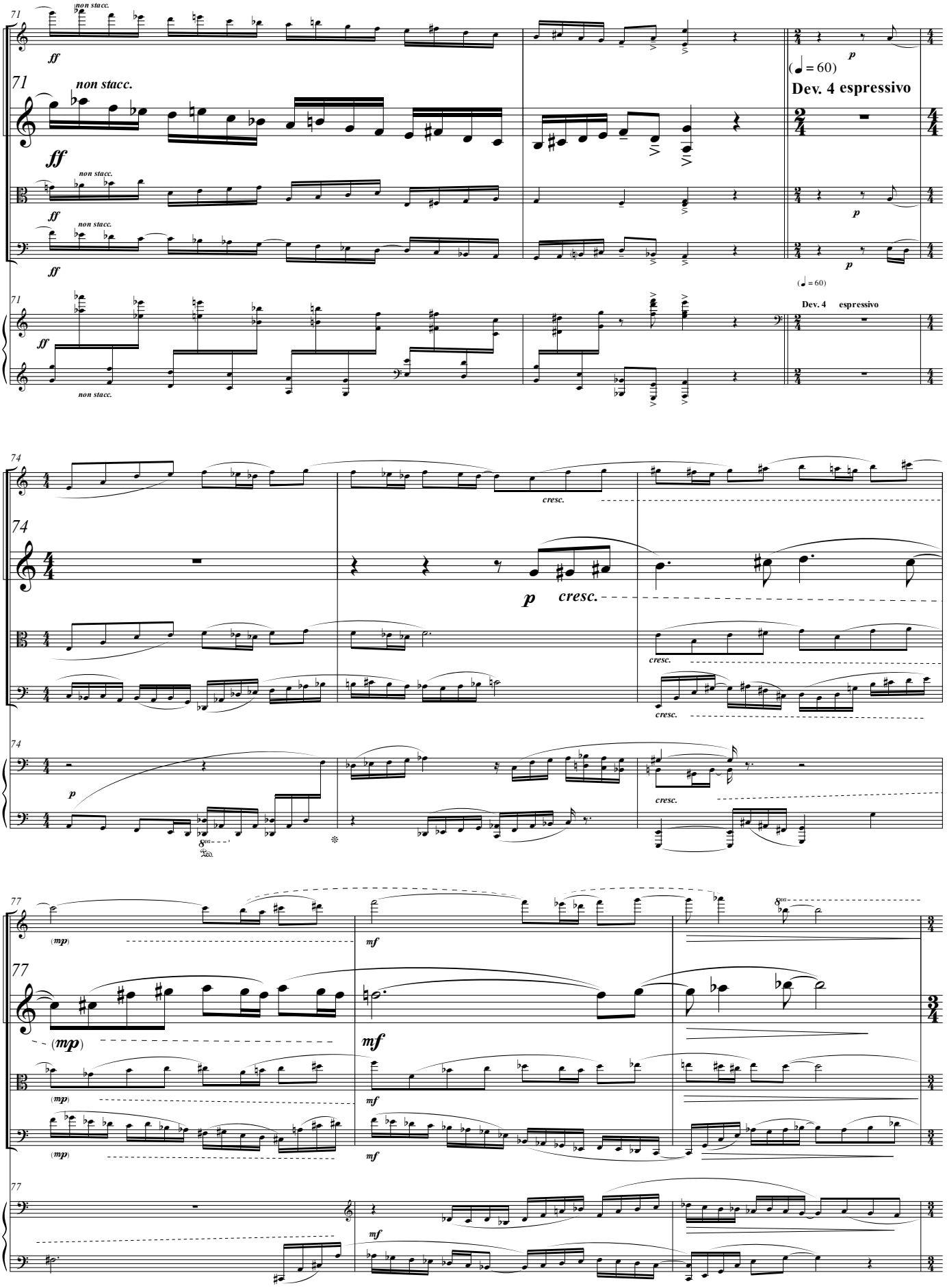

39
mf
rit.
a tempo
p
mf
p

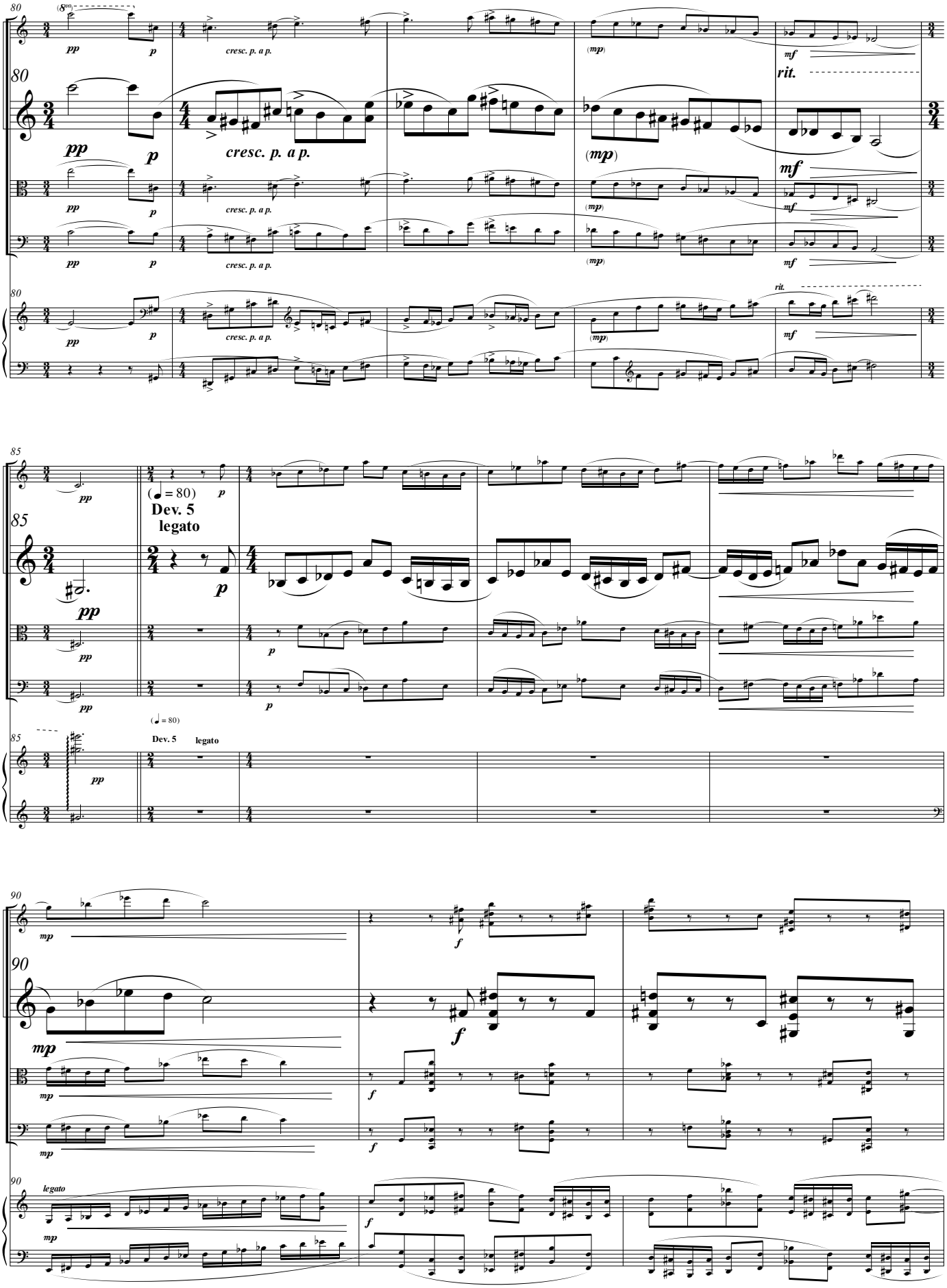

43
cresc.
cresc.
rit.
f
mp
cresc.
rit.
f

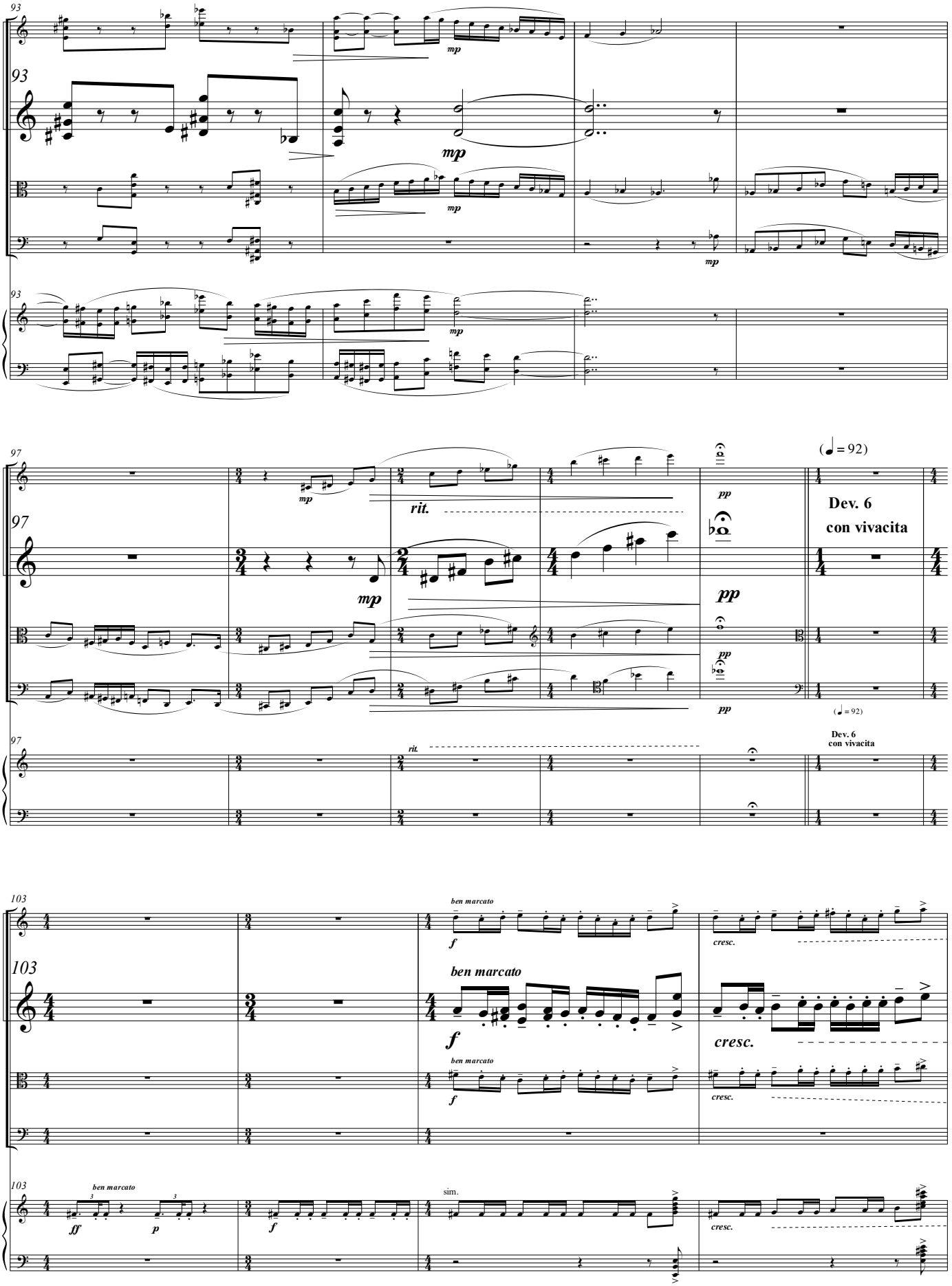

46
a tempo
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
legato
50
(f)
ff
rit.
pp
(♩ = 82)
Dev. 3 risoluto
54
cresc.

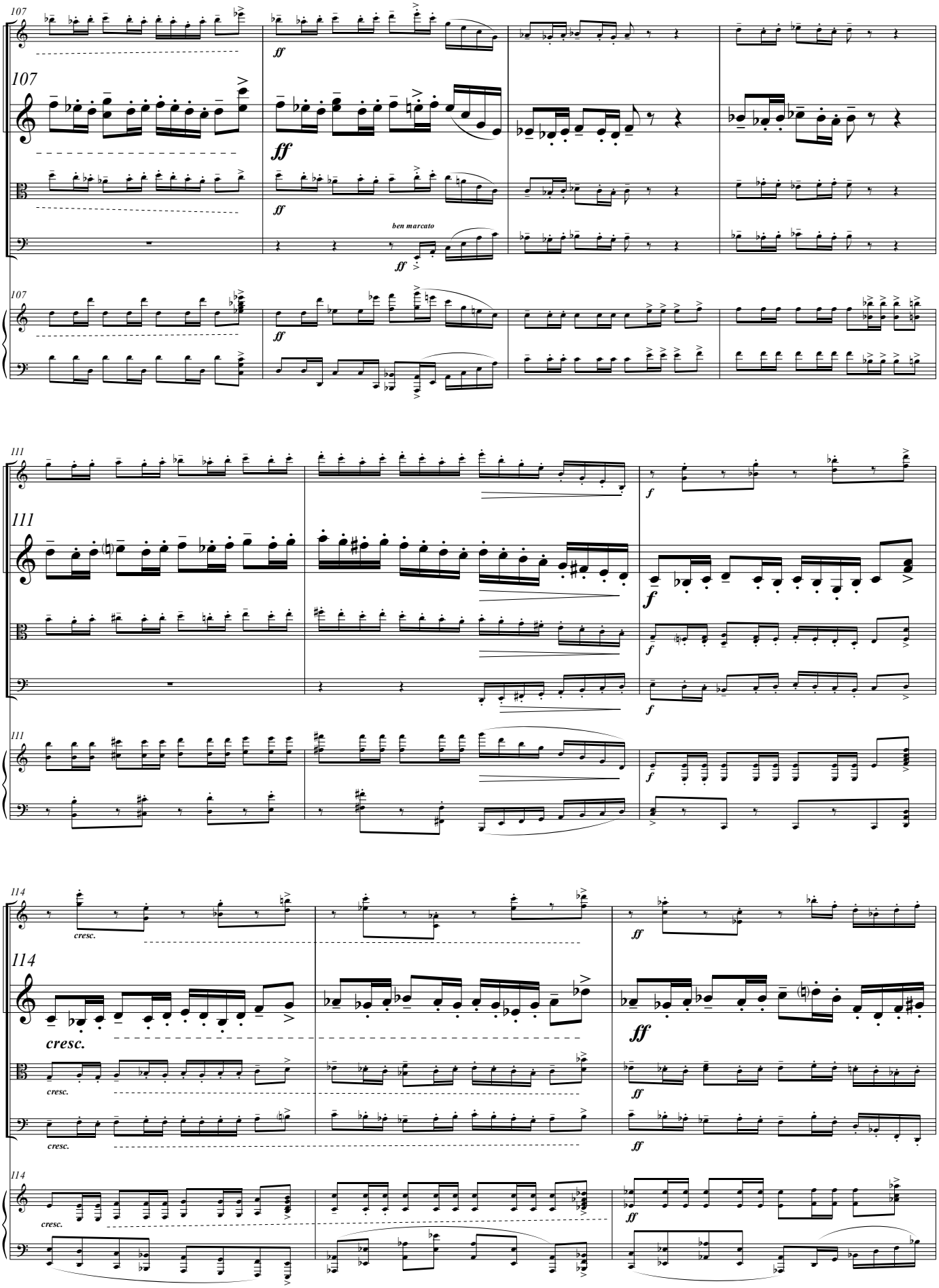

56
ff
p
f
59
cresc.
61

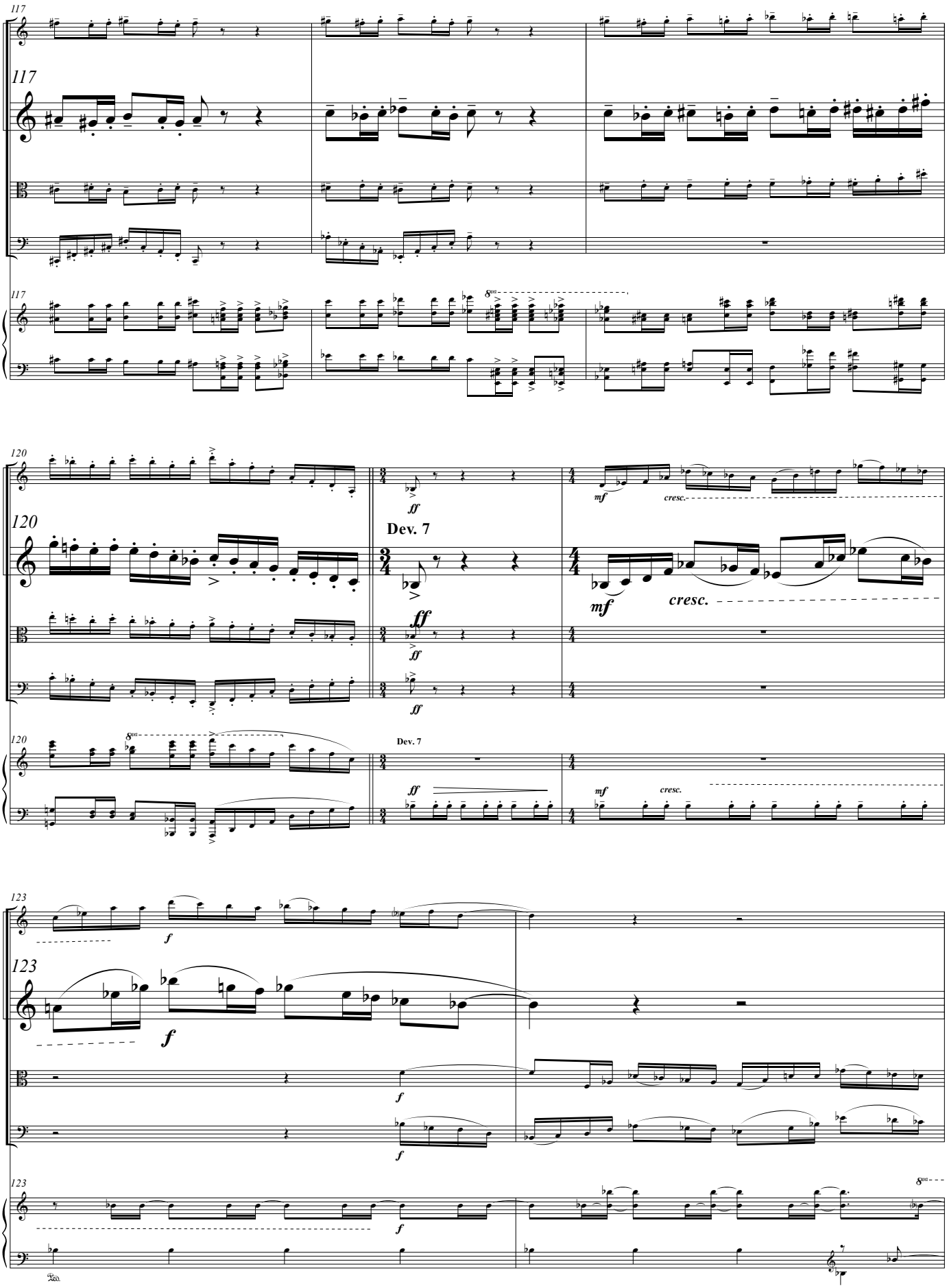

64
f
cresc.
64
f
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
64
cresc.
66
non stacc.
ff
f
66
non stacc.
ff
f
non stacc.
ff
p
non stacc.
ff
66
non stacc.
f
69
cresc.
69
f
cresc.
cresc.
69
cresc.

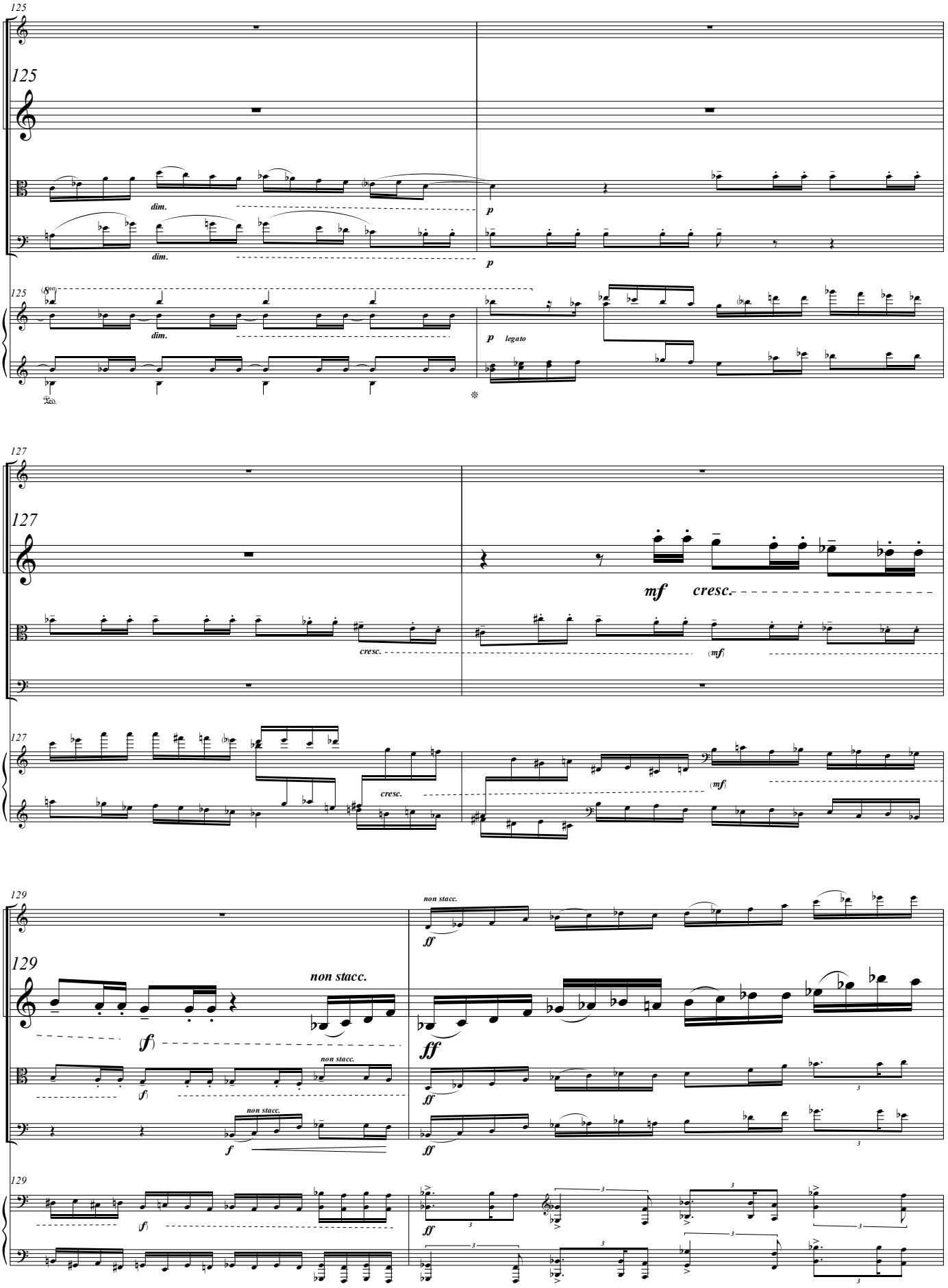

71
non stacc.
ff
(♩ = 60)
Dev. 4 espressivo
p
74
cresc.
p
77
(mp)
mf

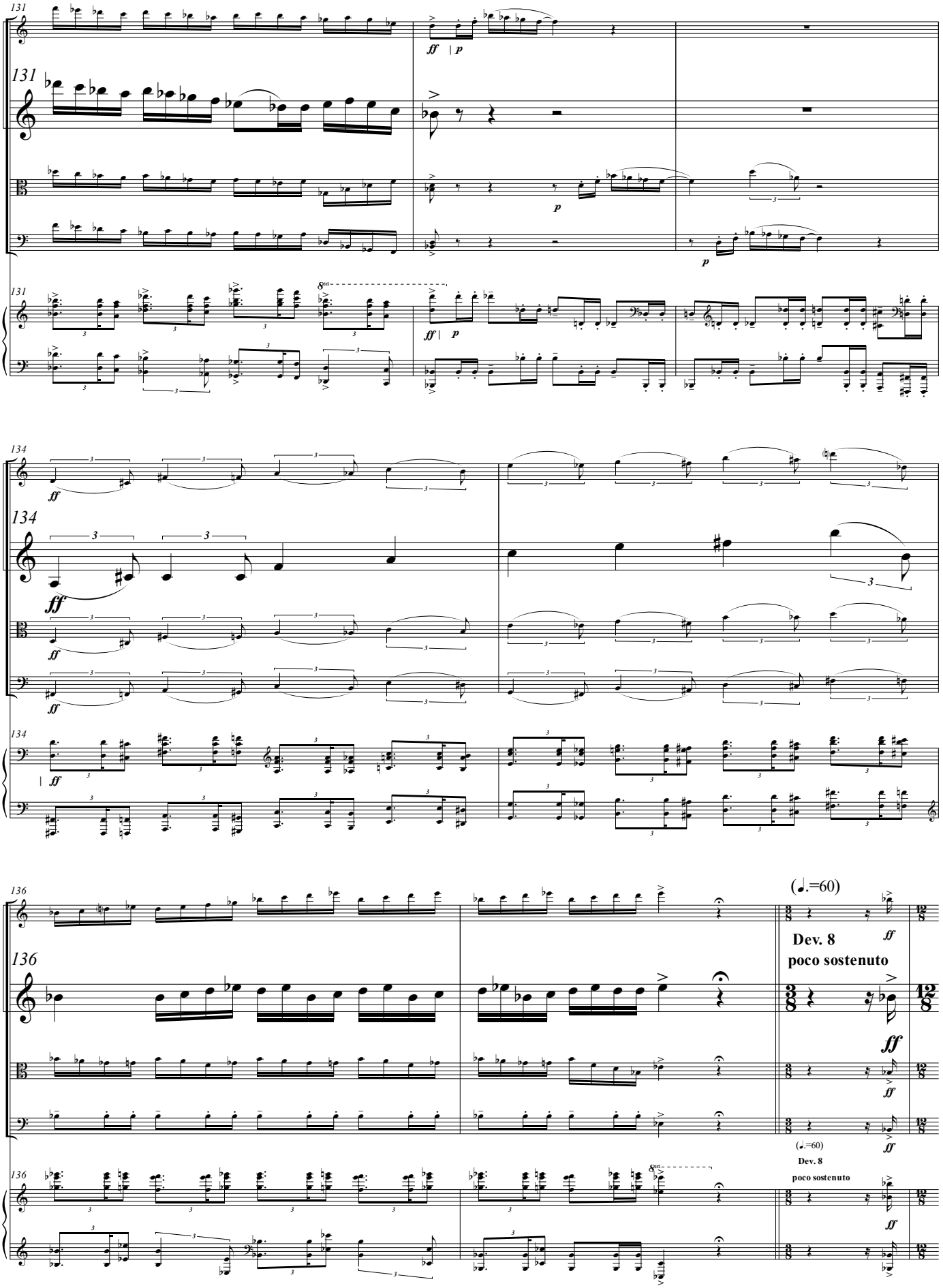

80
(8va)
pp
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mp)
mf
rit.
85
(♩ = 80)
Dev. 5
legato
90
mp
f
legato

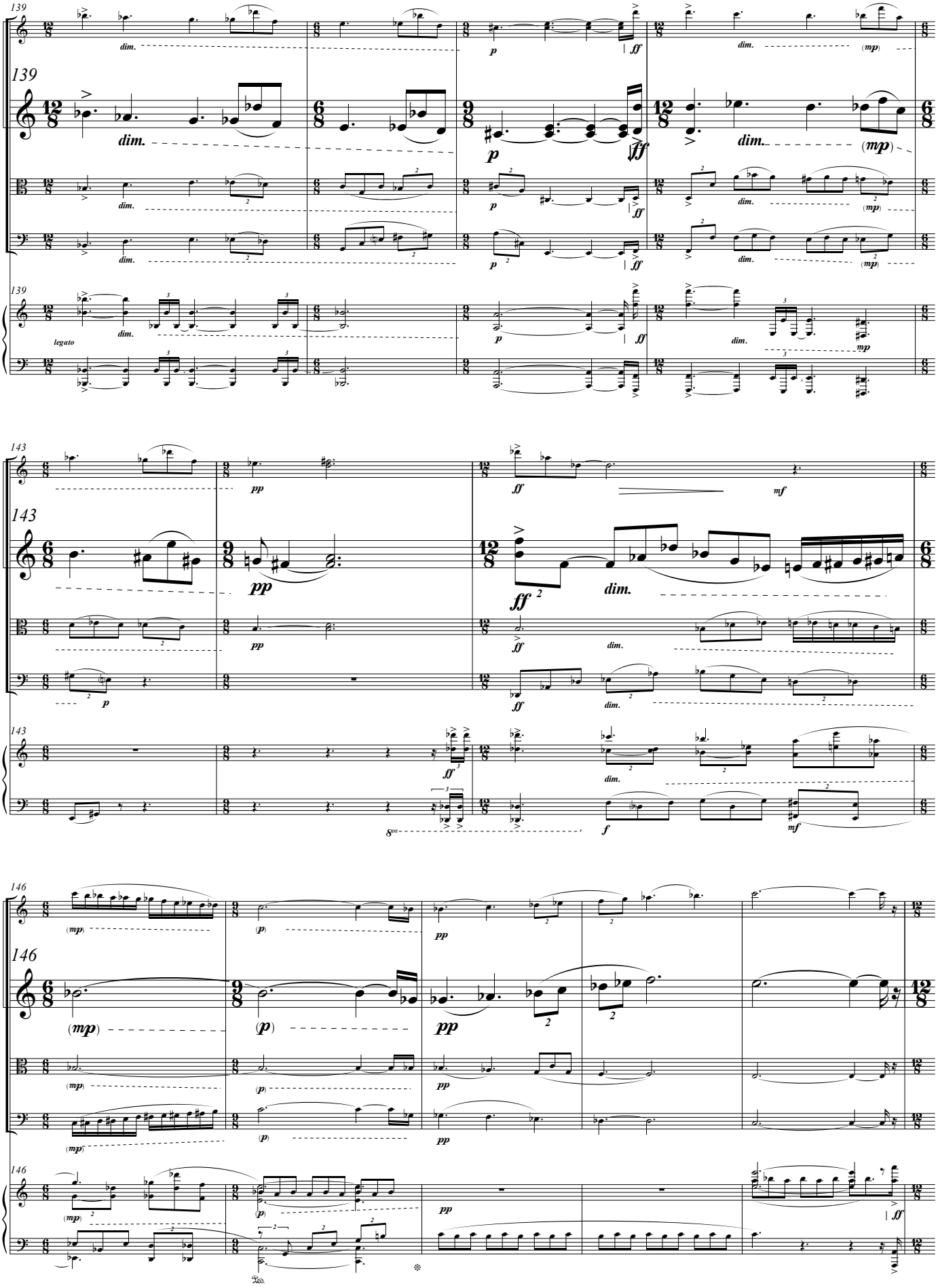

93
mp
97
rit.
pp
(♩ = 92)
Dev. 6
con vivacita
103
ben marcato
f
cresc.
ff
p
sim.

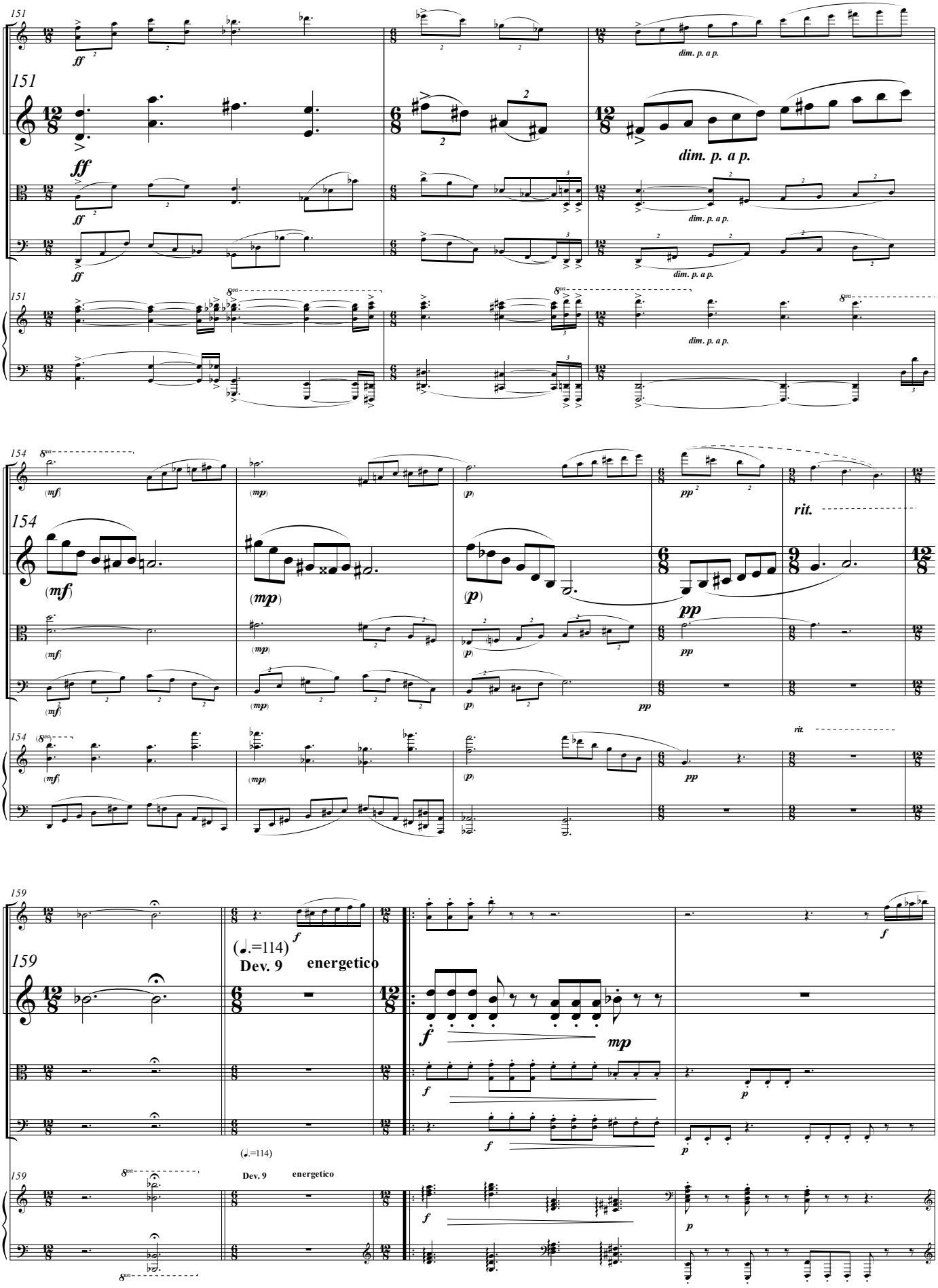

107
ff
ben marcato
111
f
114
cresc.
ff

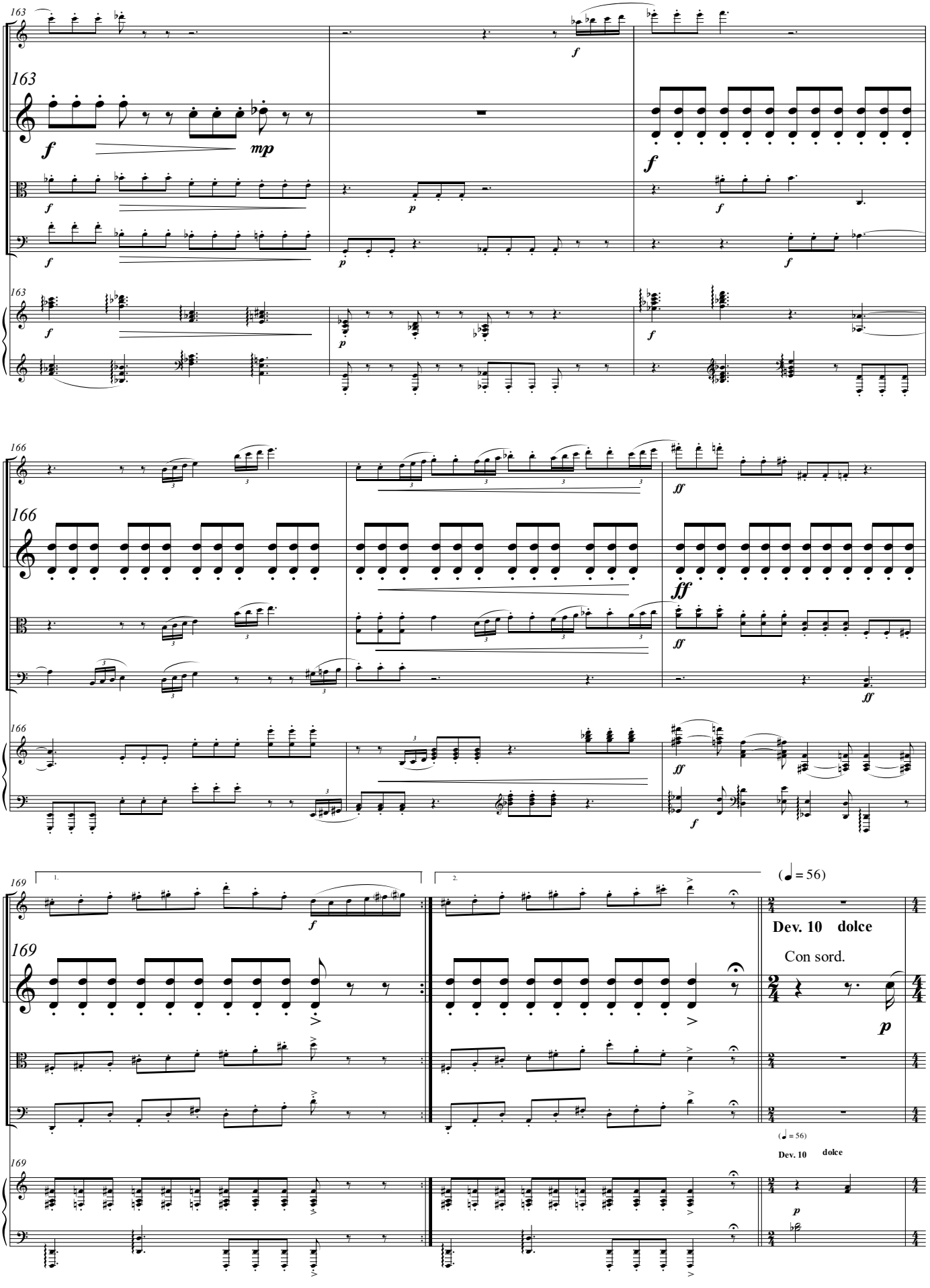

117
120
Dev. 7
ff
mf
cresc.
123
f

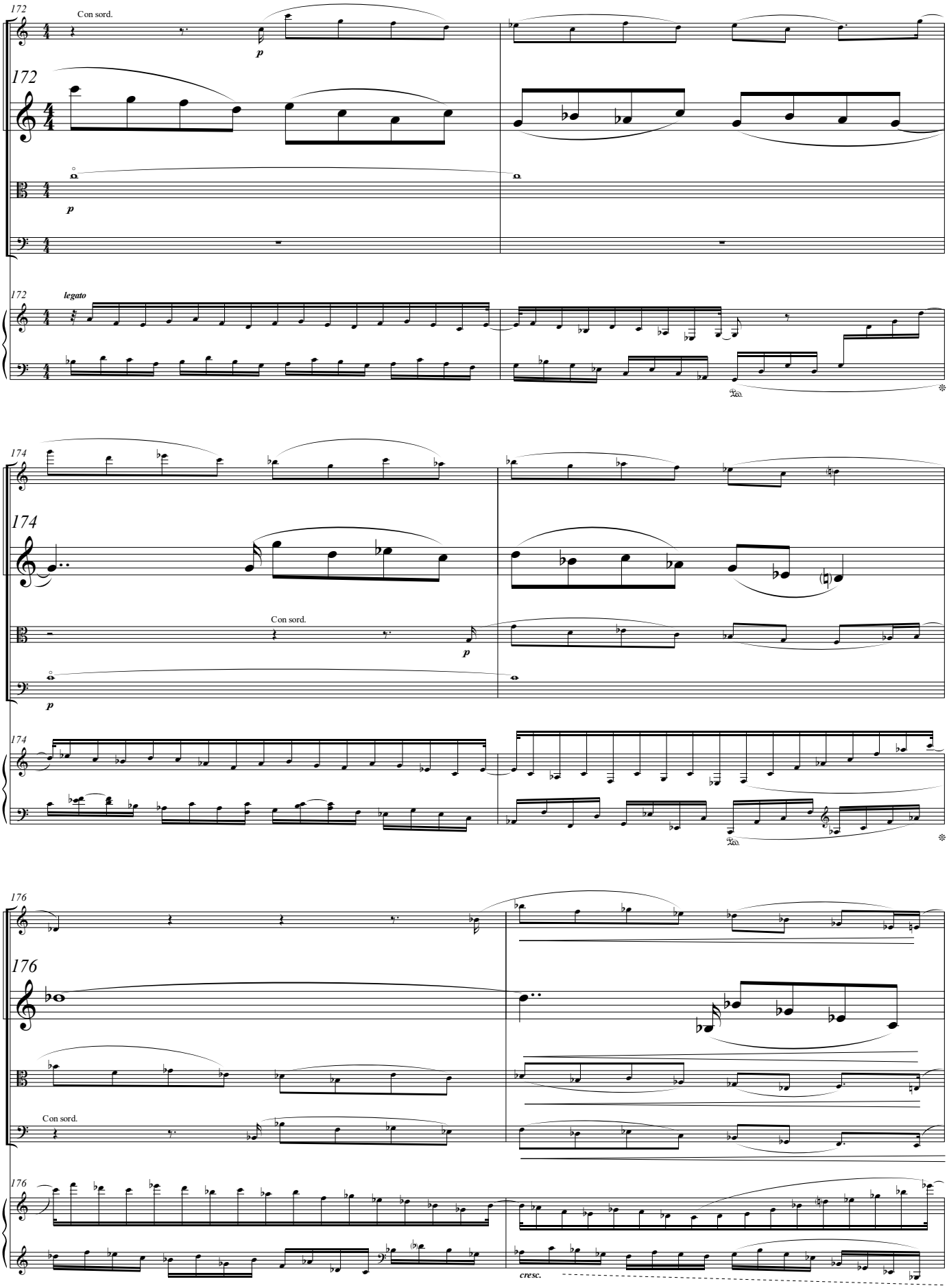

125
dim.
dim.
p
p
dim.
p legato
127
cresc.
cresc.
mf
cresc.
(mf)
(mf)
129
non stacc.
(f)
non stacc.
f
non stacc.
ff
ff
ff
(f)
ff

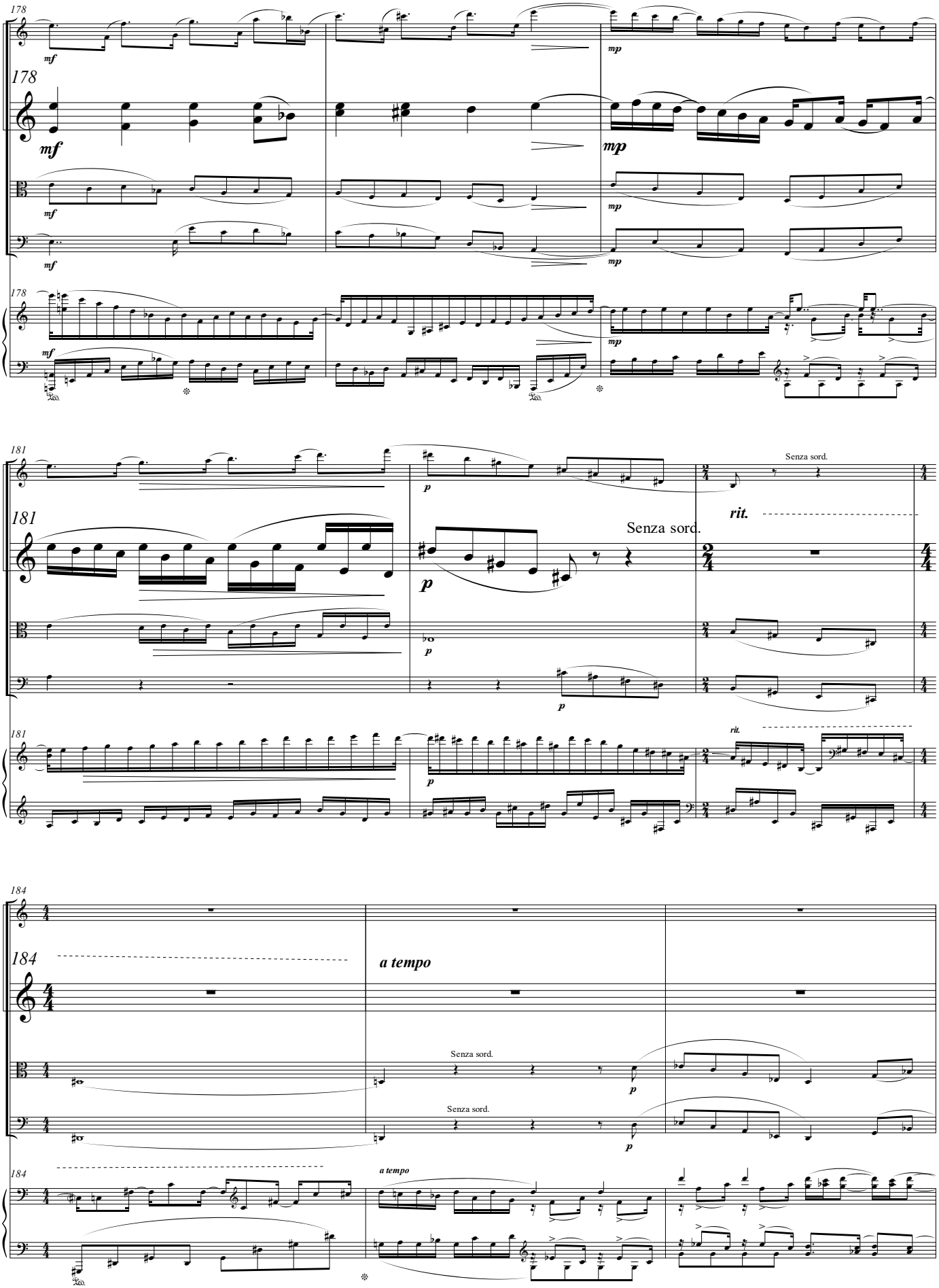

131
ff
p
134
ff
136
(♩.=60)
Dev. 8
poco sostenuto

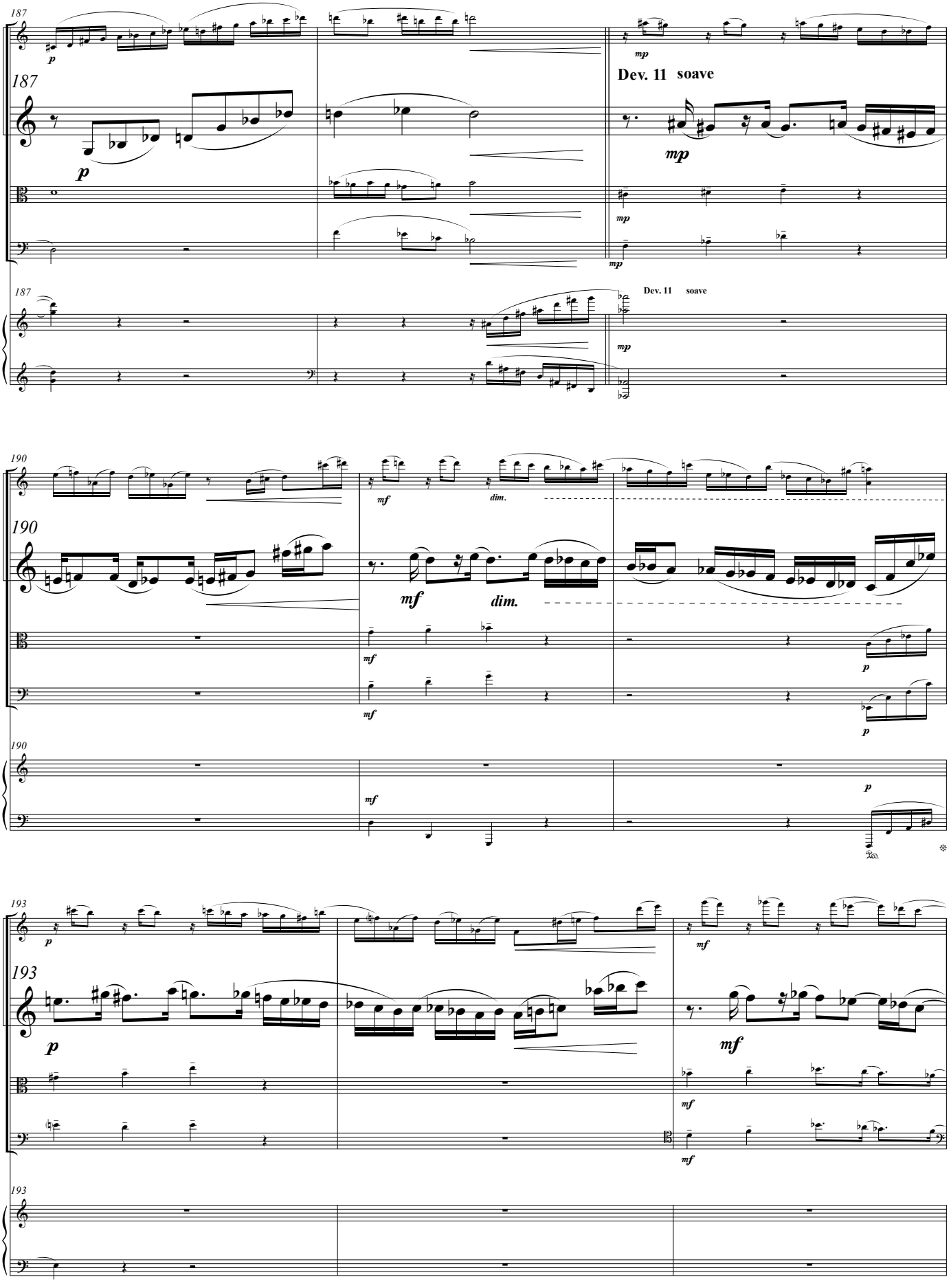

139
dim.
p
ff
(mp)
legato
mp
143
pp
mf
146
(mp)
(p)
8va

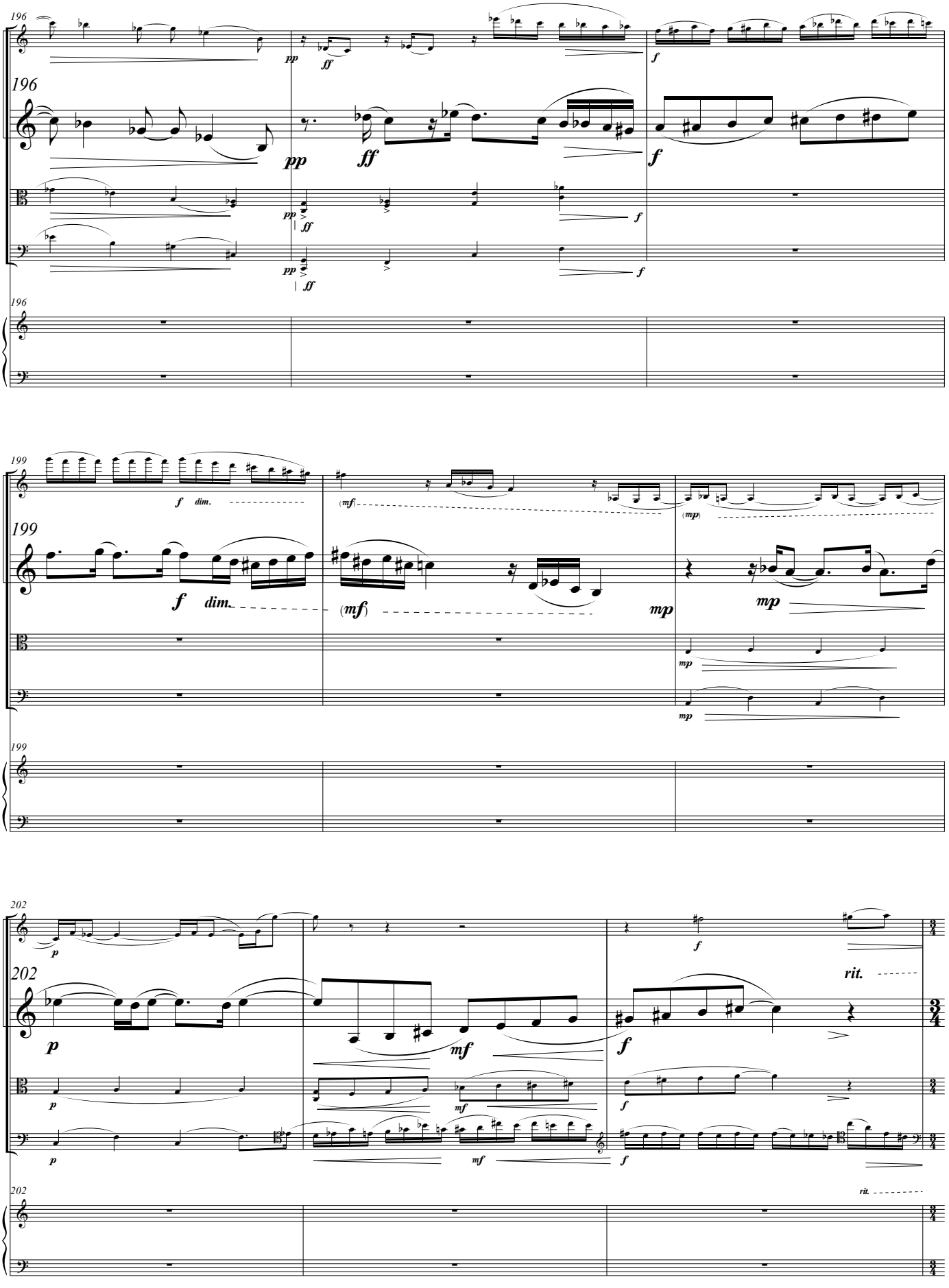

151
ff
dim. p. a p.
154
(mf)
(mp)
(p)
pp
rit.
159
(♩.=114)
Dev. 9
energetico
f
mp
8va


163
f
mp
p
166
ff
169
1.
2.
(♩ = 56)
Dev. 10 dolce
Con sord.
p


172
Con sord.
p
172
p
172
legato
174
174
Con sord.
p
p
174
176
176
Con sord.
176
cresc.


178
mf
mp
181
p
Senza sord.
rit.
184
a tempo
Senza sord.


187
p
mp
Dev. 11 soave
190
mf
dim.
p
193
p
mf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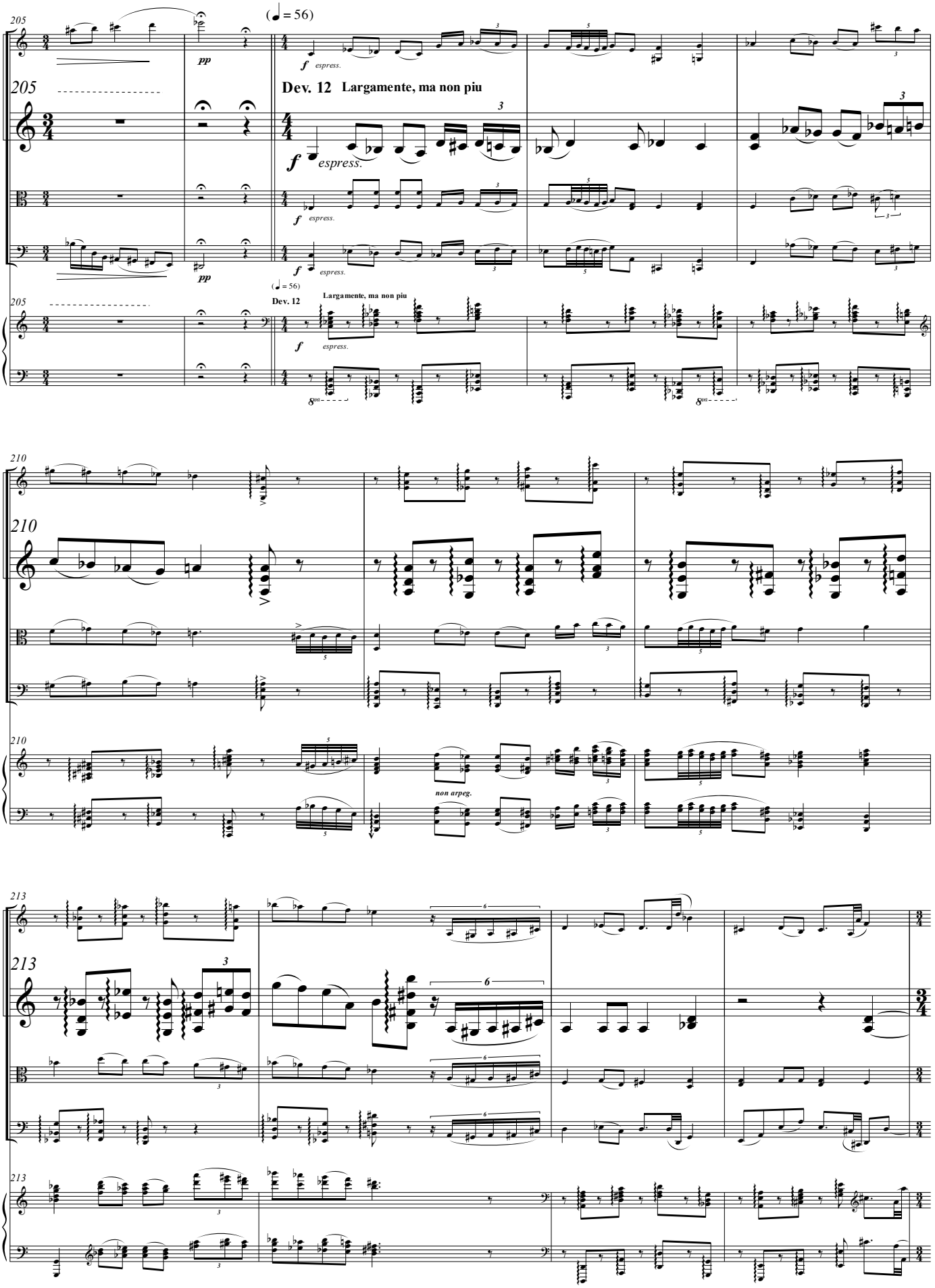
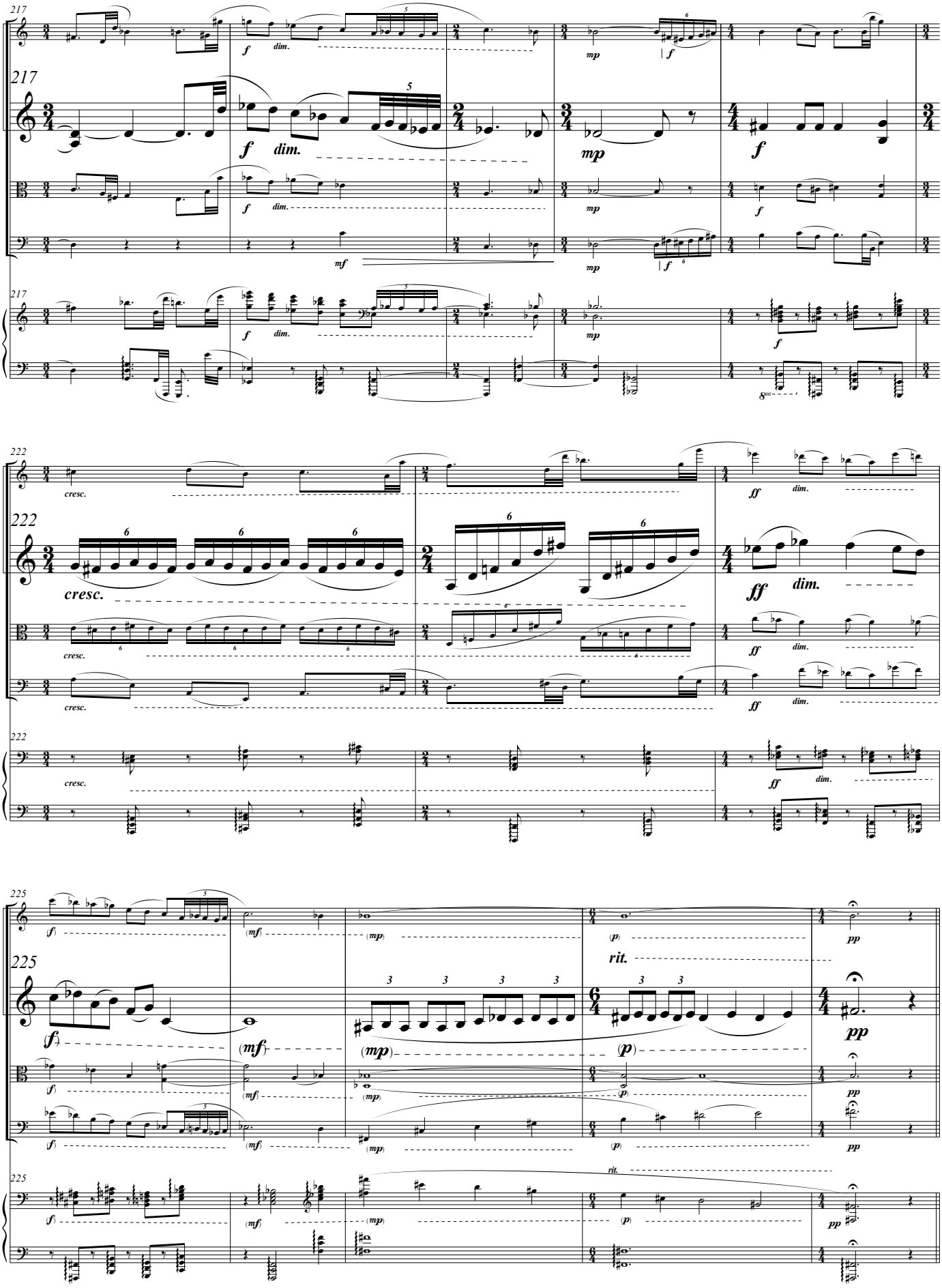
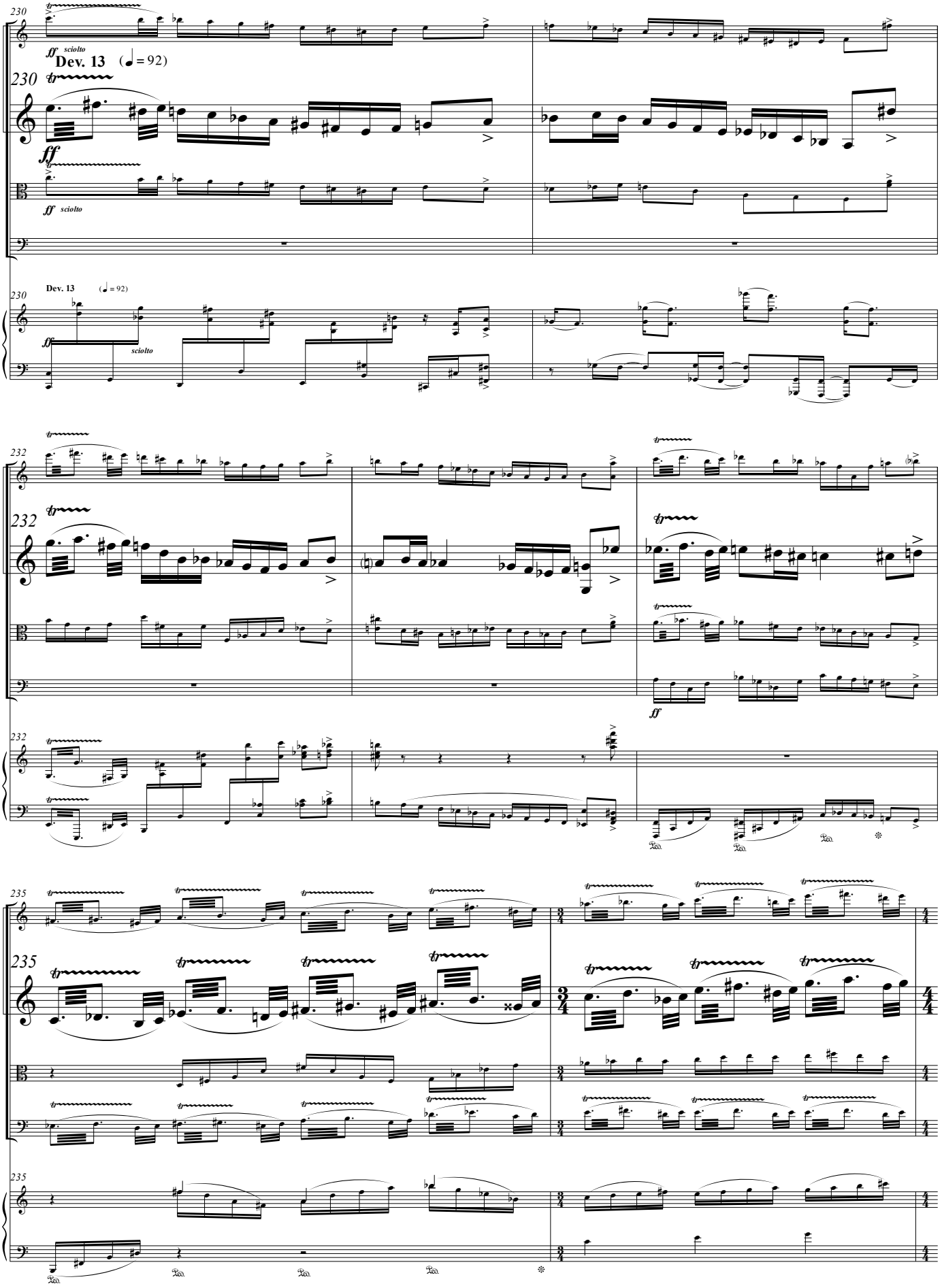
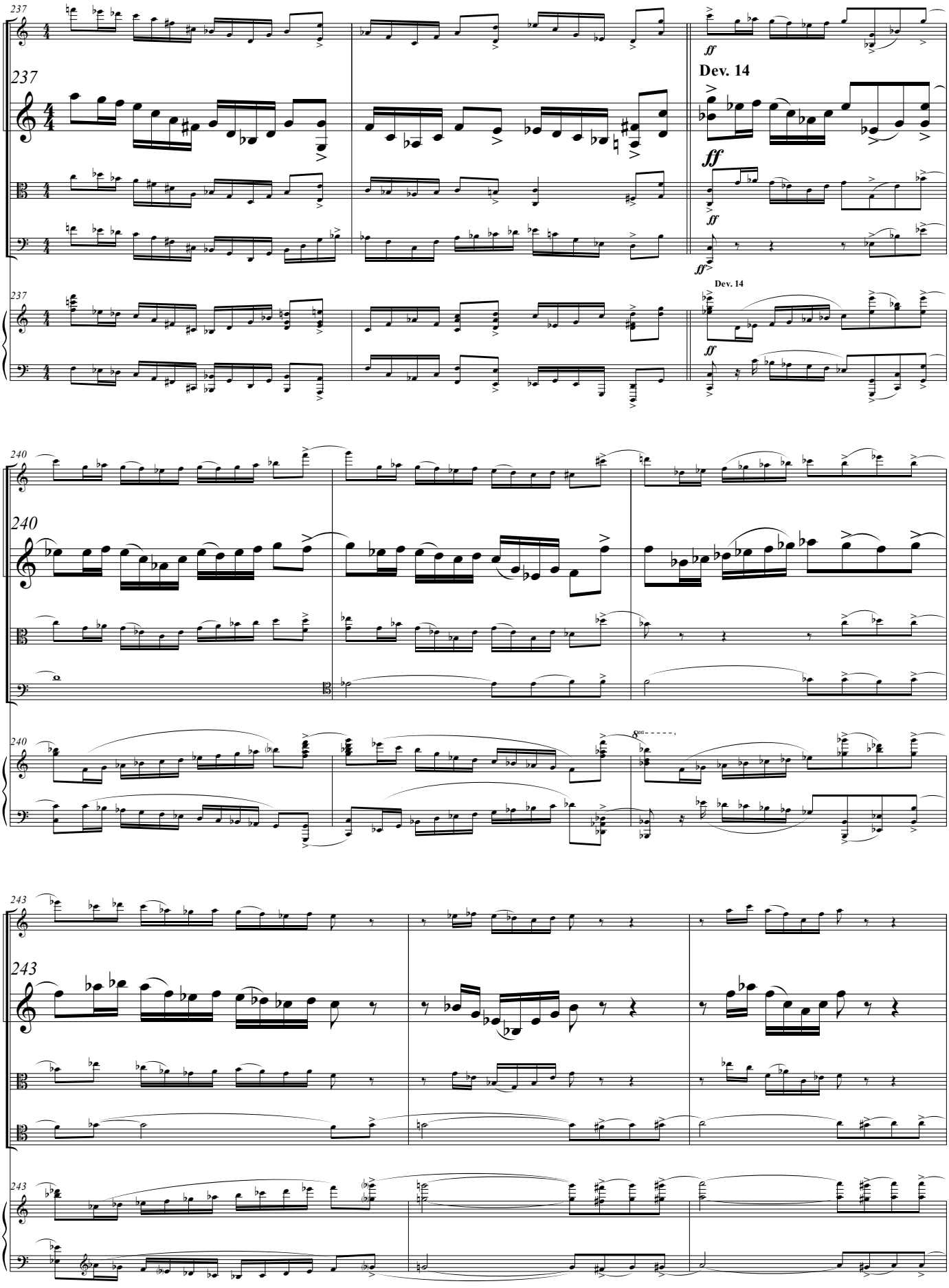
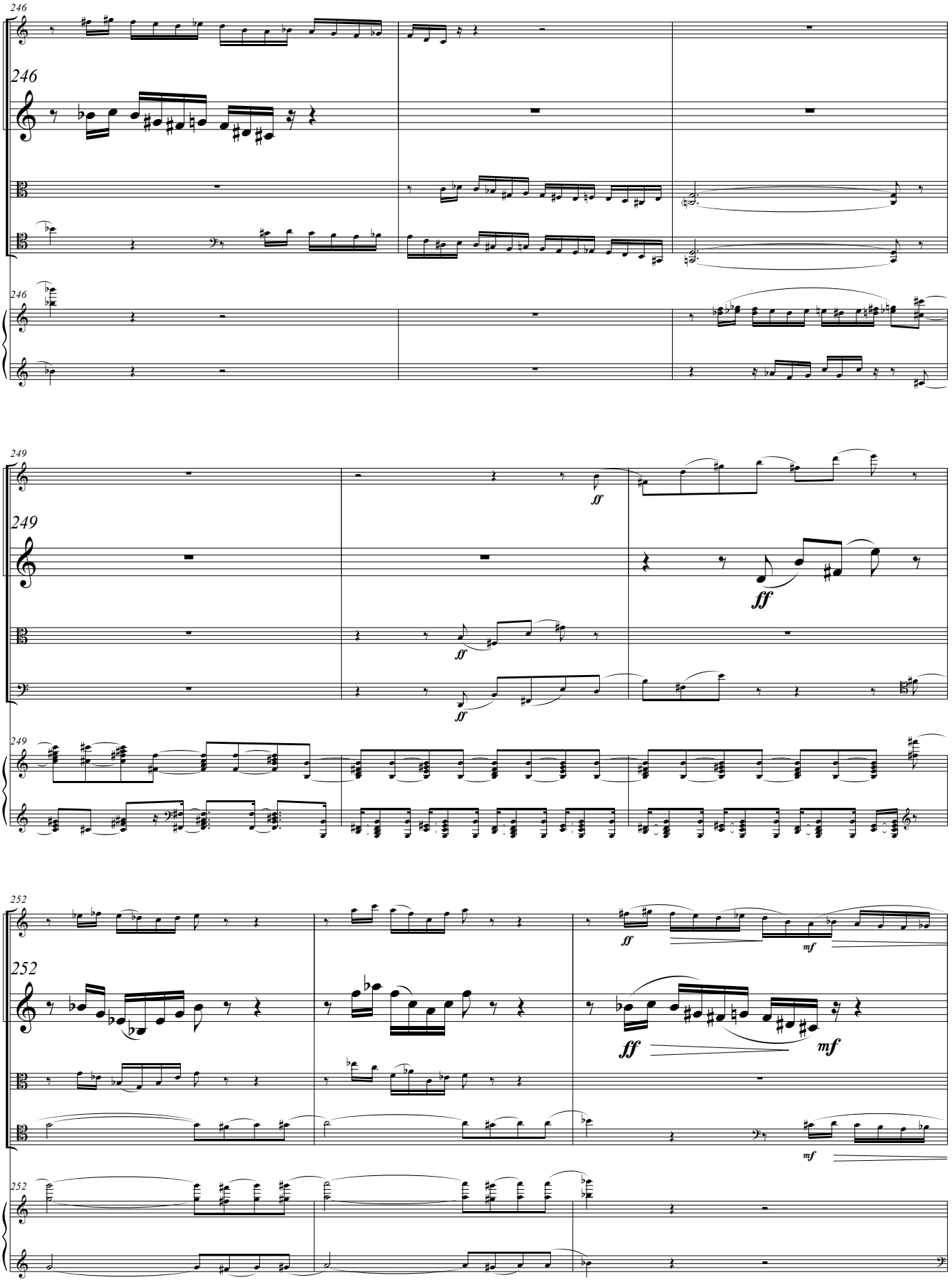
pp
ff
f
199
f dim.
(mf)
(mp)
mp
202
p
mf
f
rit.

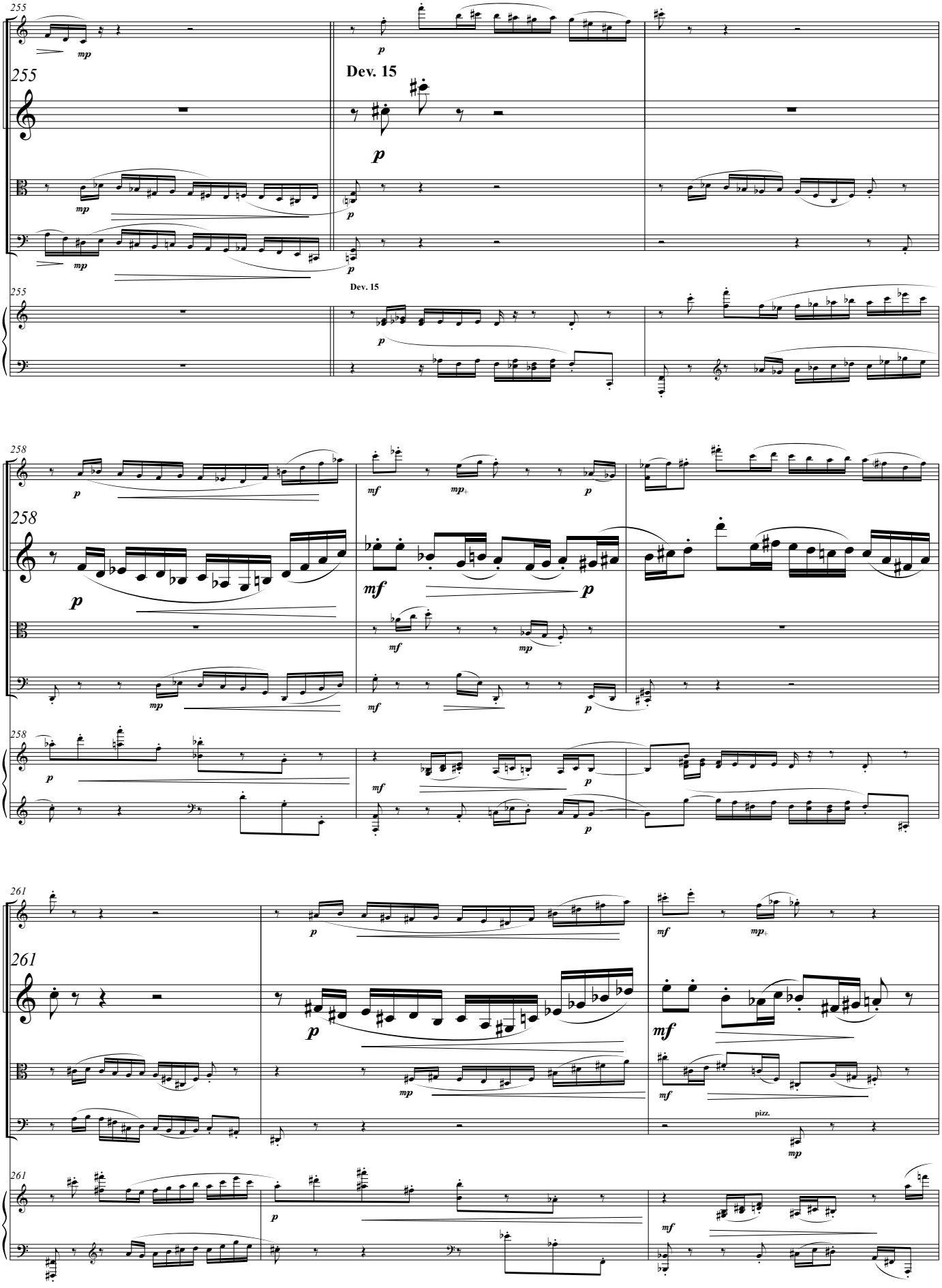

205
(♩ = 56)
pp
f espress.
Dev. 12 Largamente, ma non piu
210
non arpeg.
213

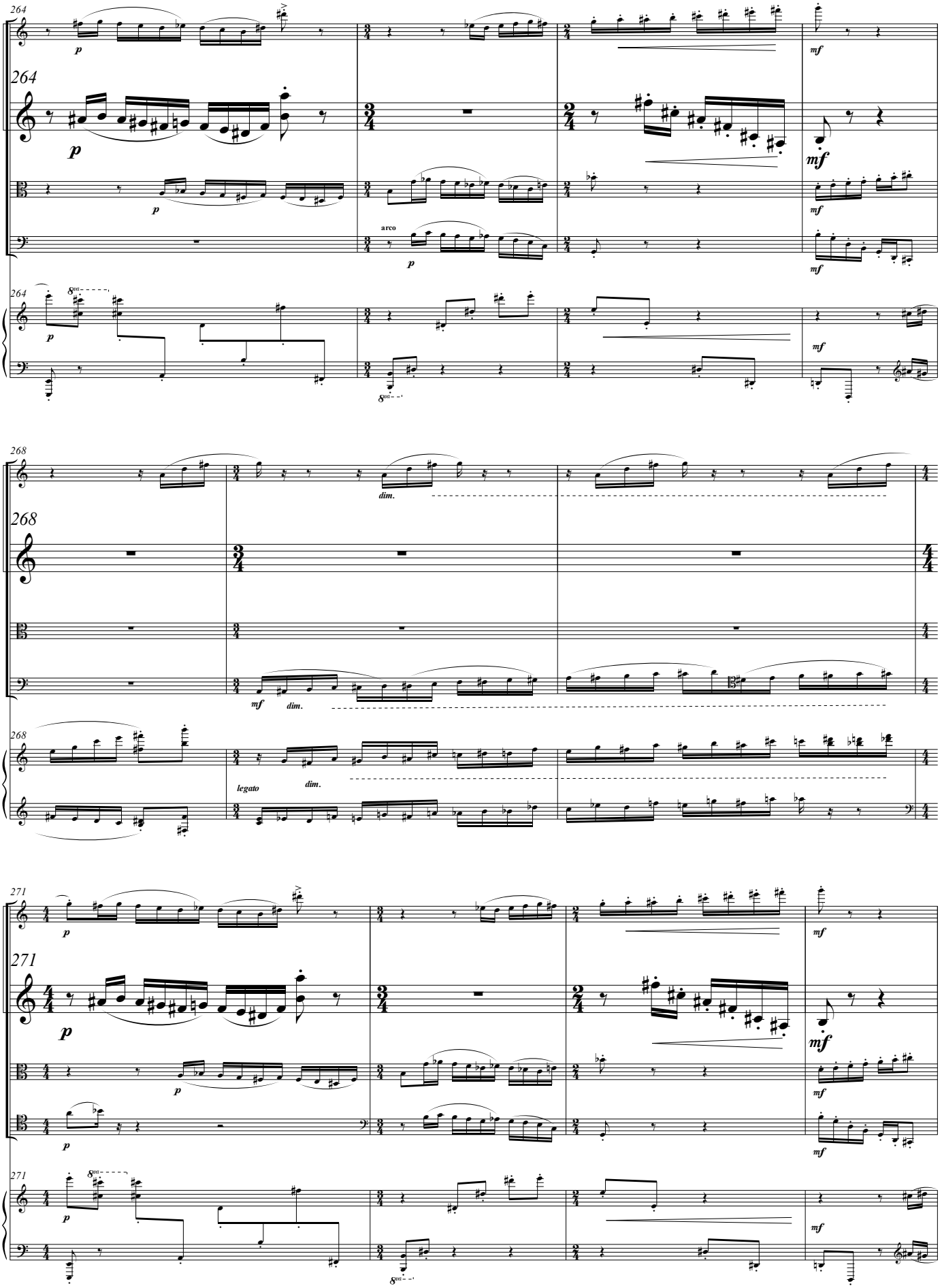

217
f
dim.
mp
f
mf
222
cresc.
ff
dim.
225
(f)
(mf)
(mp)
(p)
rit.
pp

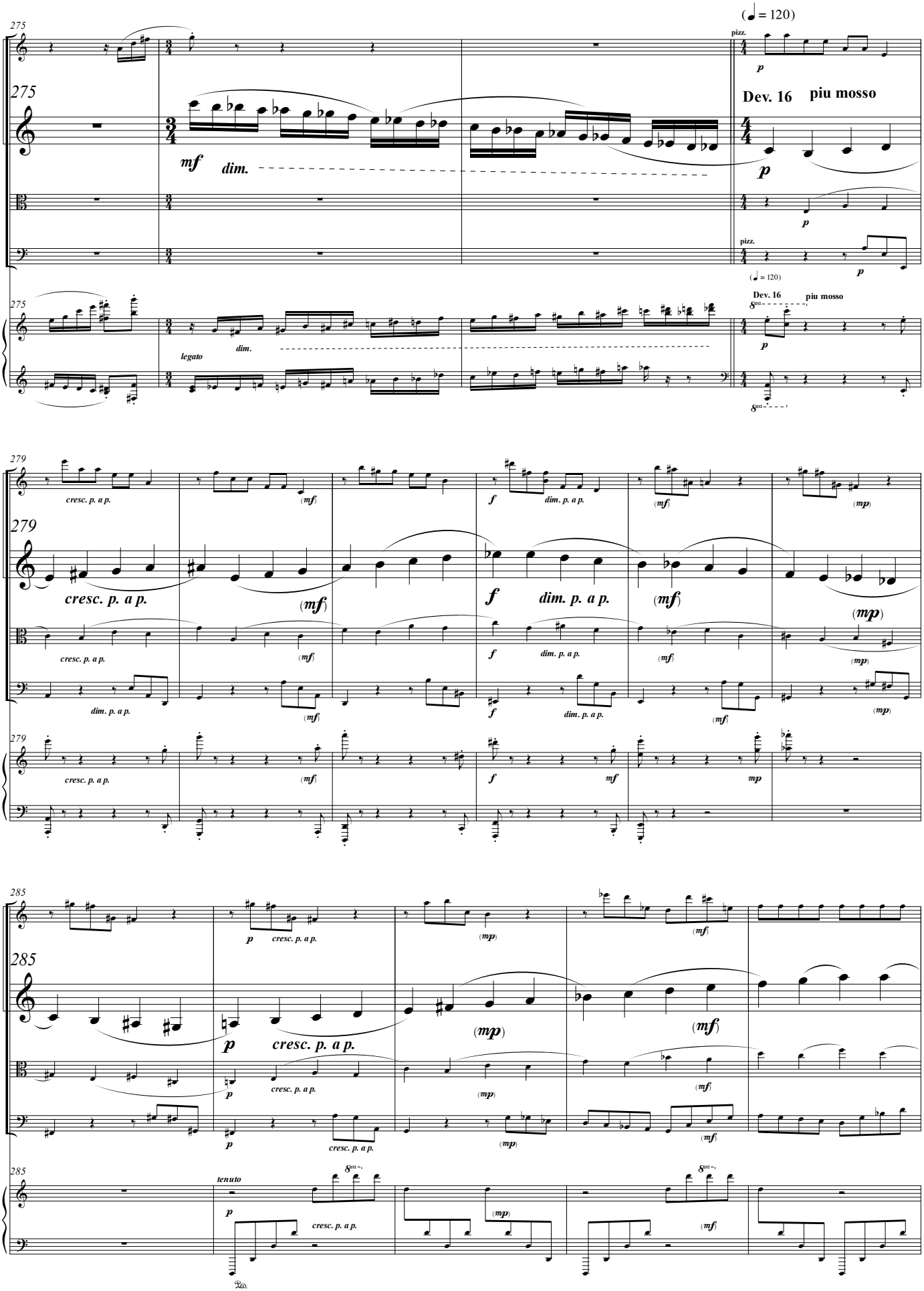

230
ff sciolto
Dev. 13 (♩ = 92)
230
ff
ff sciolto
Dev. 13 (♩ = 92)
230
ff
sciolto
232
232
ff
232
235
235
235

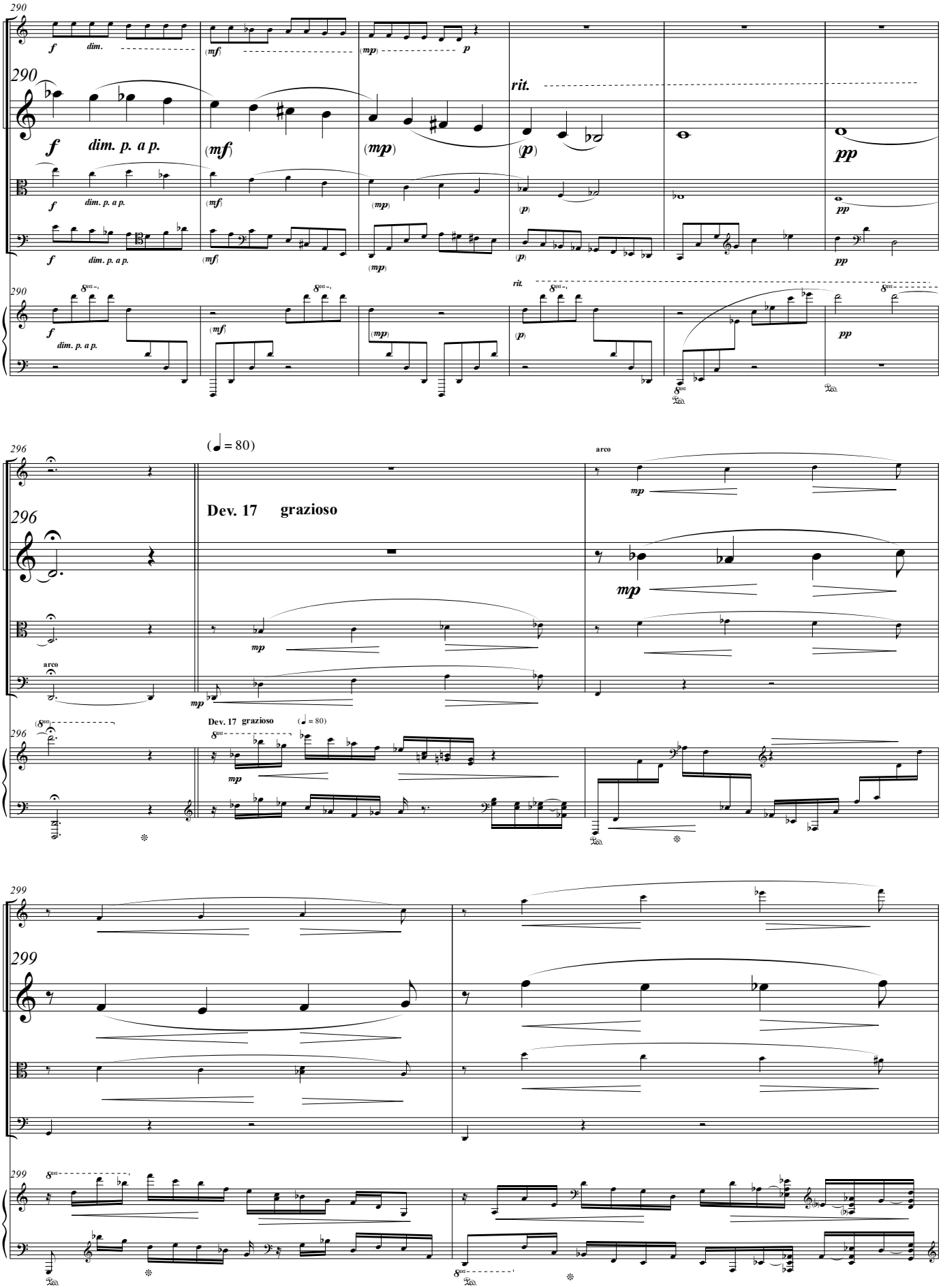

237
237
ff
Dev. 14
ff
ff
237
Dev. 14
ff
240
240
240
243
243
243

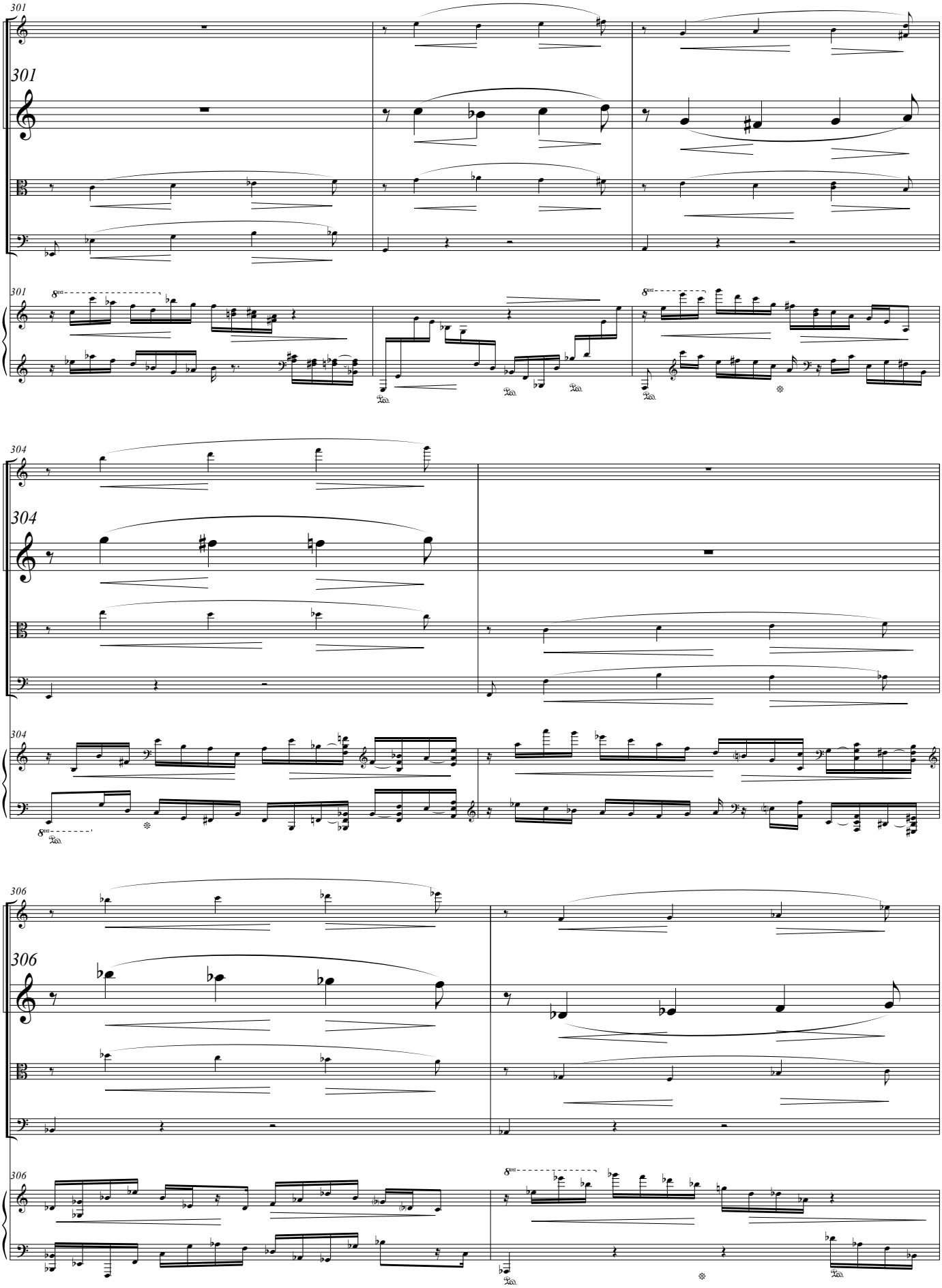

246
246
246
249
249
ff
ff
ff
ff
249
252
252
ff
mf
ff
mf
mf
252

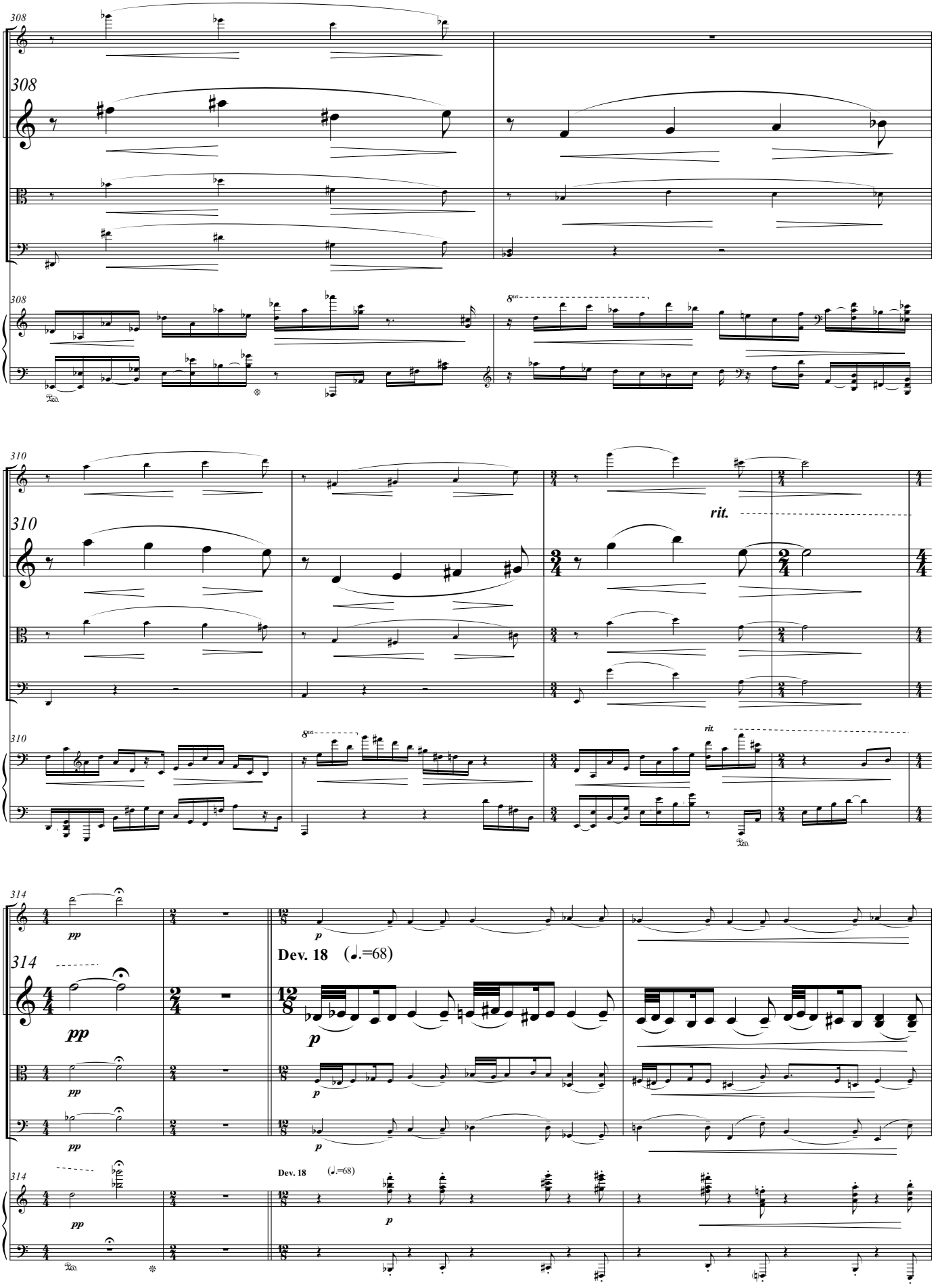

255
Dev. 15
258
261
pizz.

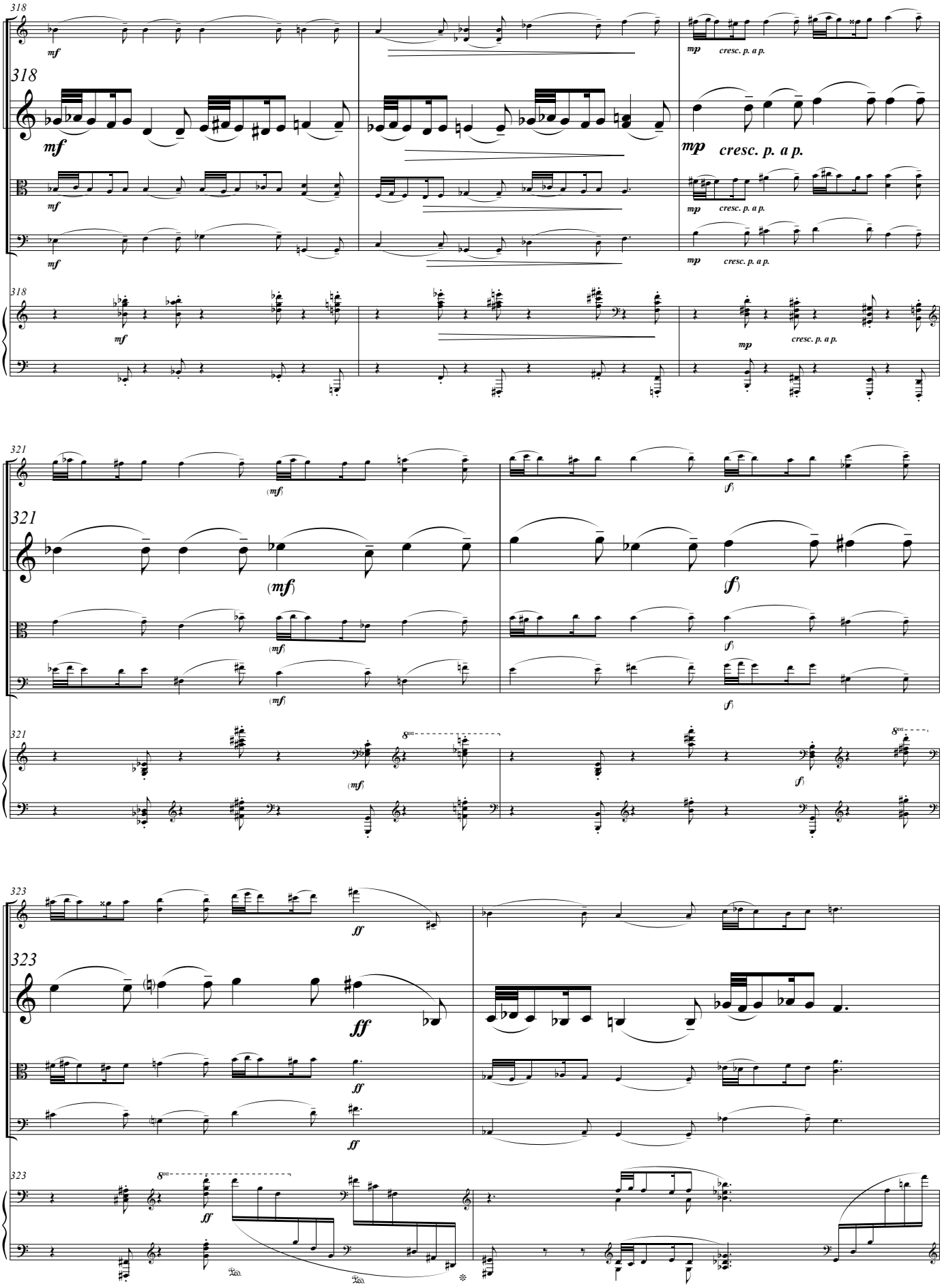

264
p
mf
arco
8va
268
dim.
mf
legato
271

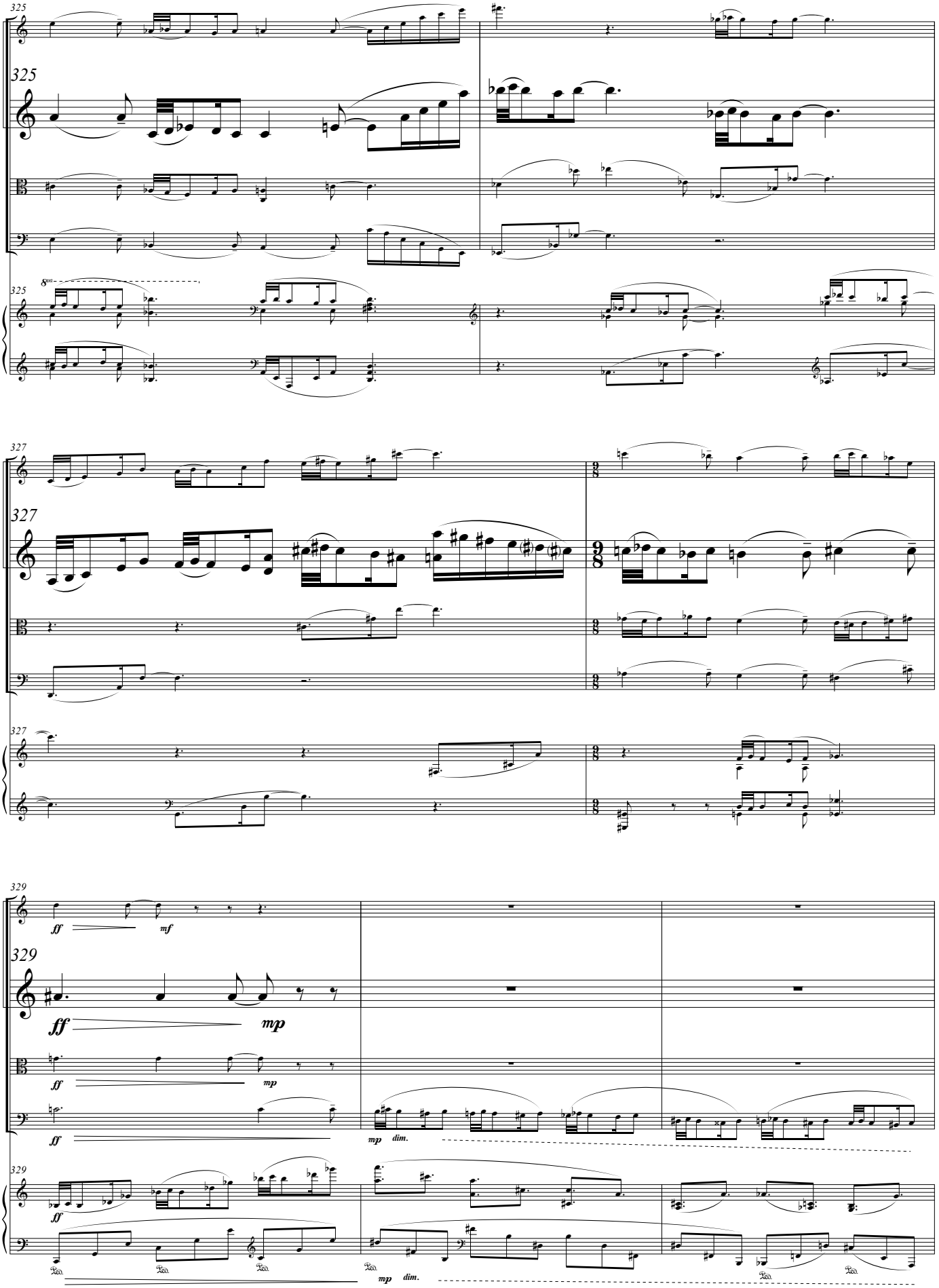

275
(♩ = 120)
pizz.
p
Dev. 16
piu mosso
mf
dim.
legato
279
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
f
dim. p. a p.
(mp)
285
tenuto
Ped.

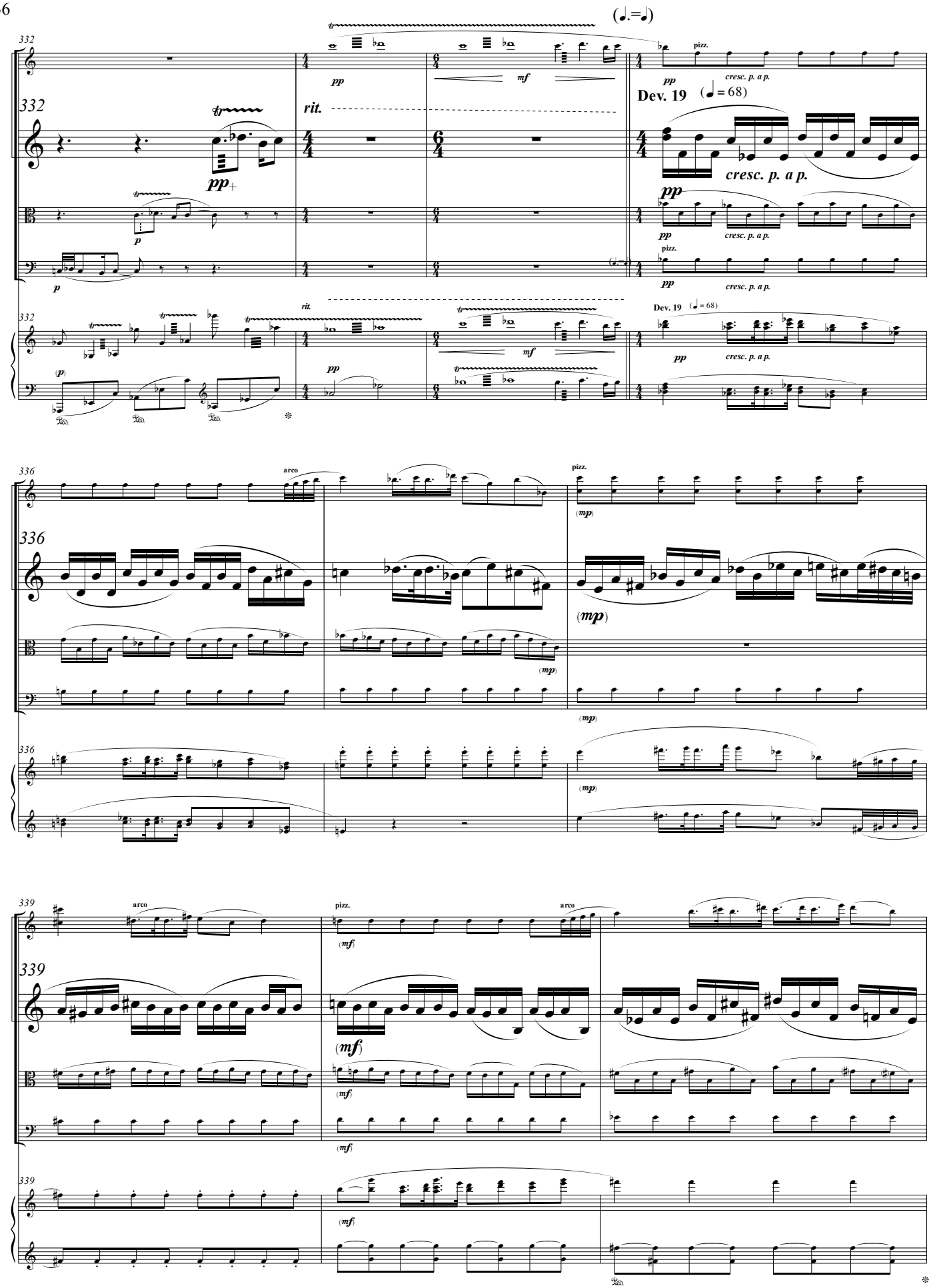

290
f
dim.
(mf)
(mp)
p
rit.
dim. p. a p.
pp
296
(♩ = 80)
arco
mp
Dev. 17 grazioso
299

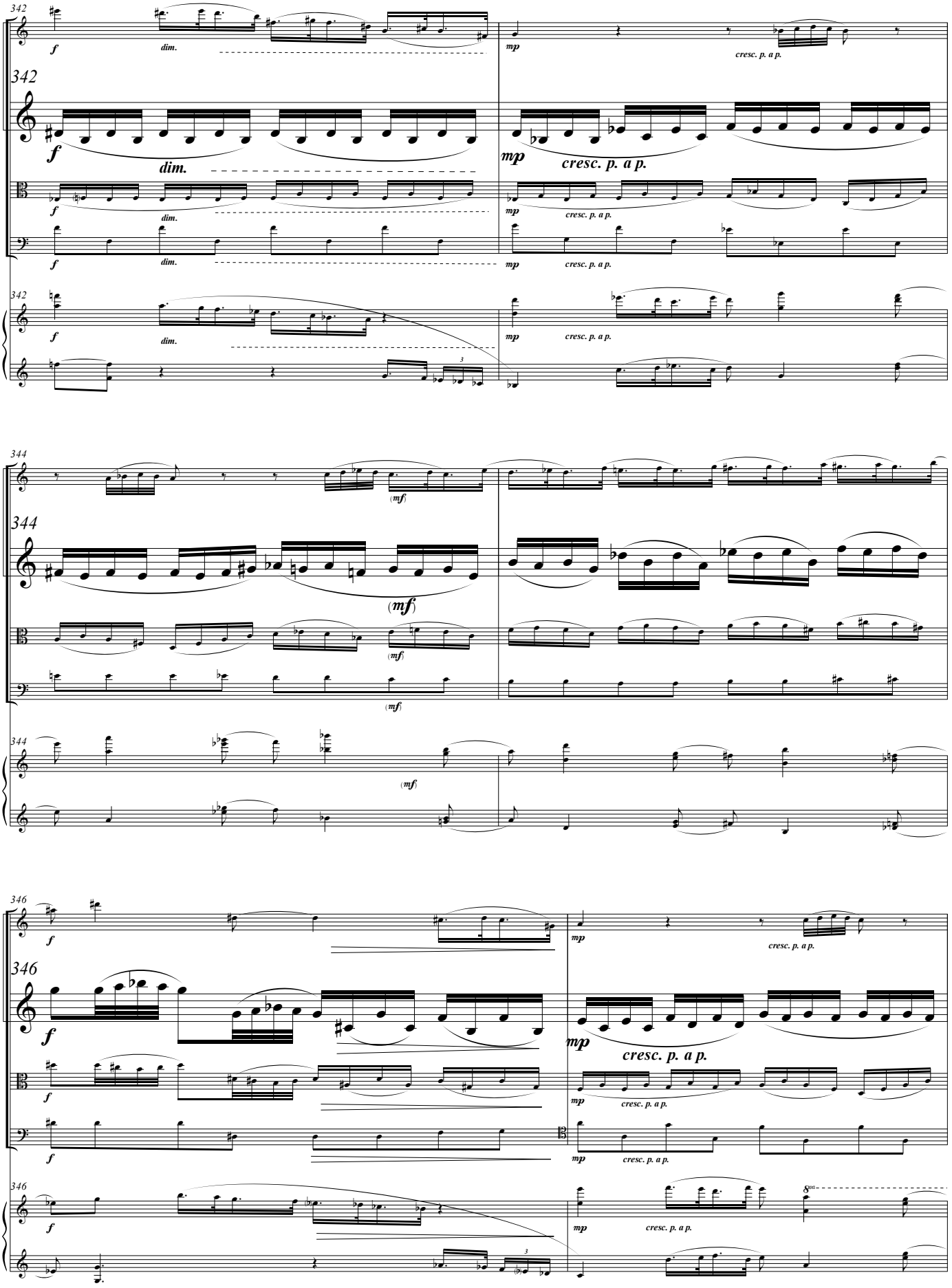

301
304
306

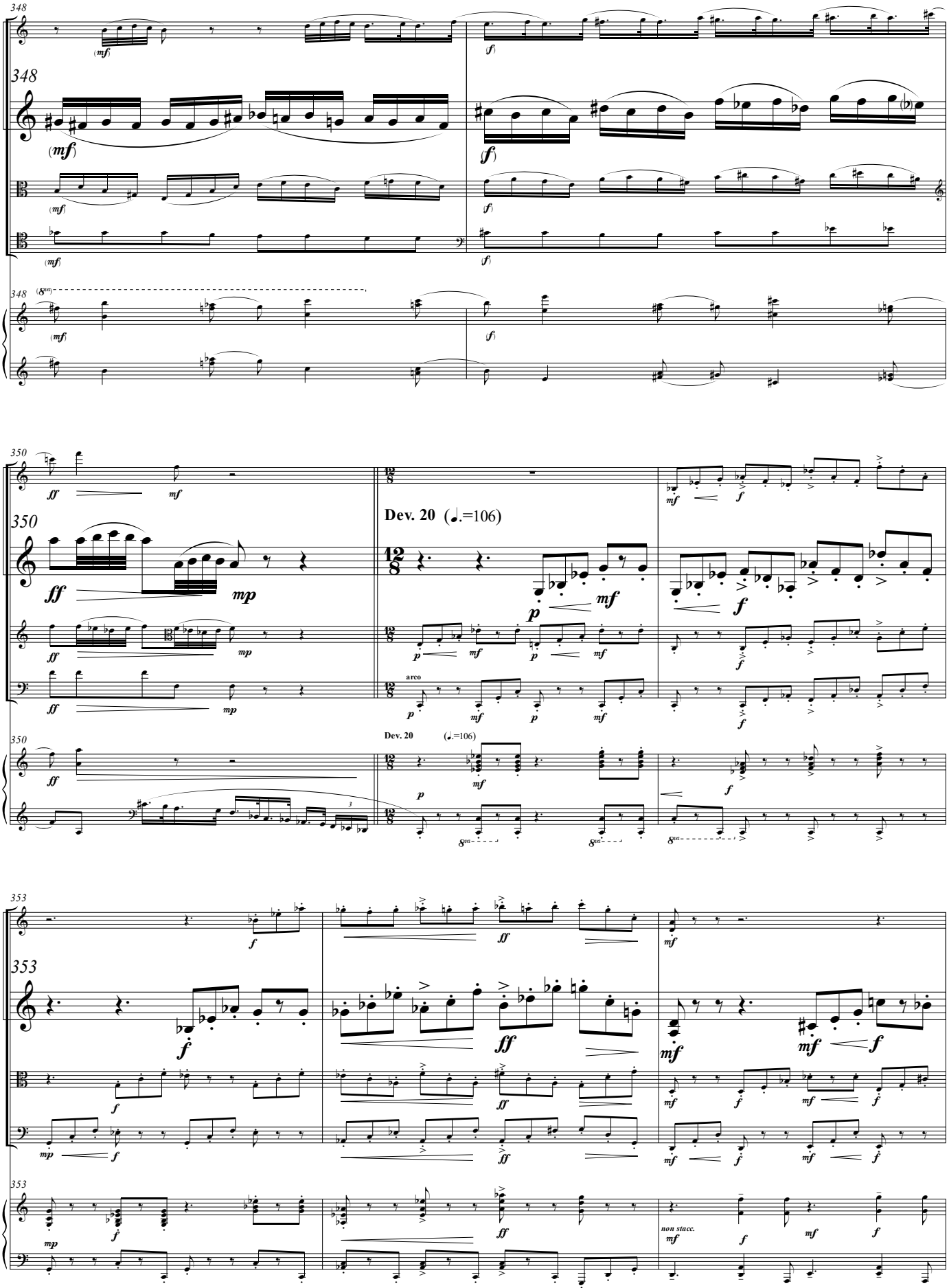

308
310
rit.
314
pp
p
Dev. 18 (♩.=68)

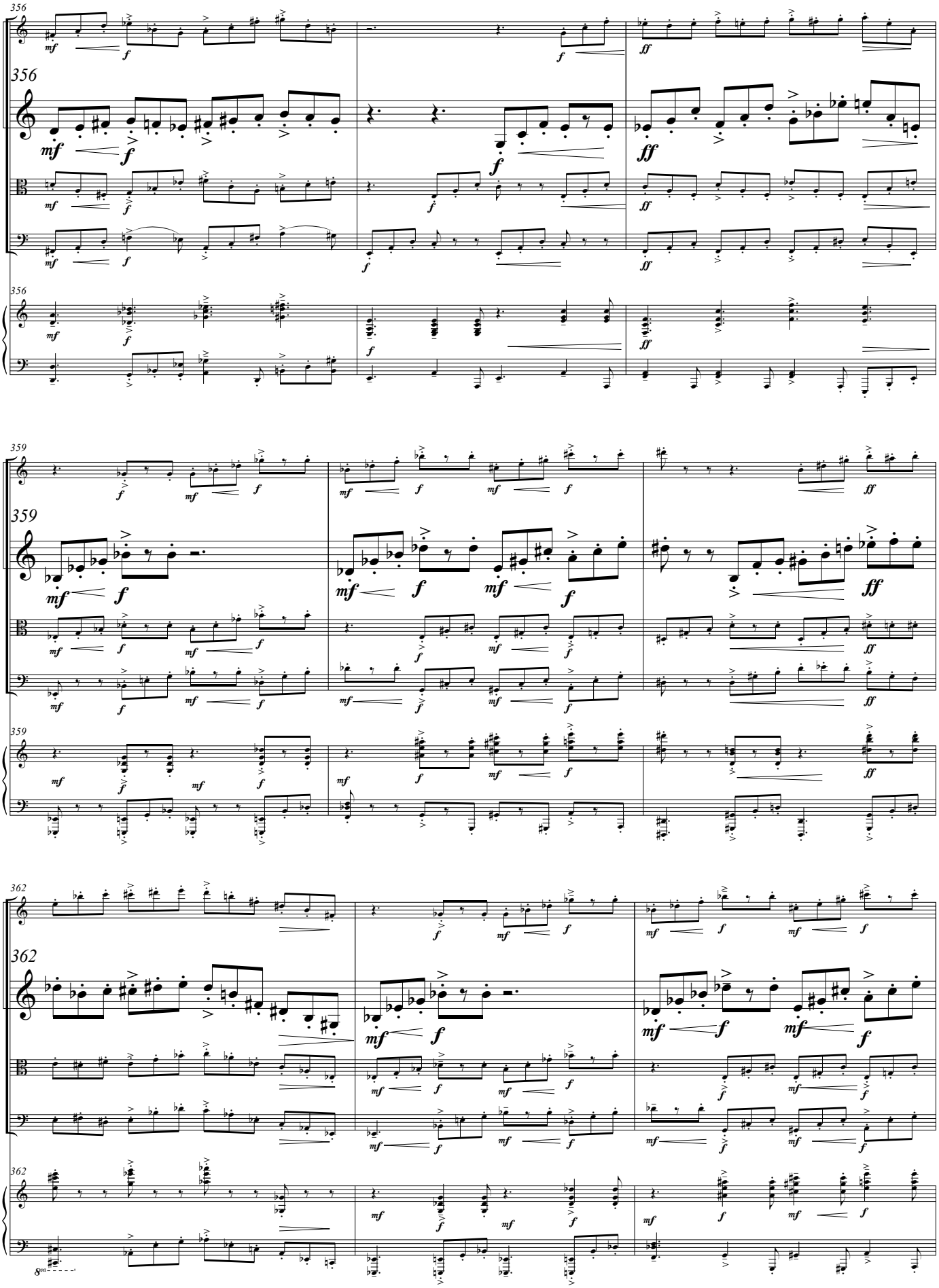

318
mf
mp
cresc. p. a p.
321
(mf)
(f)
323
ff
8va

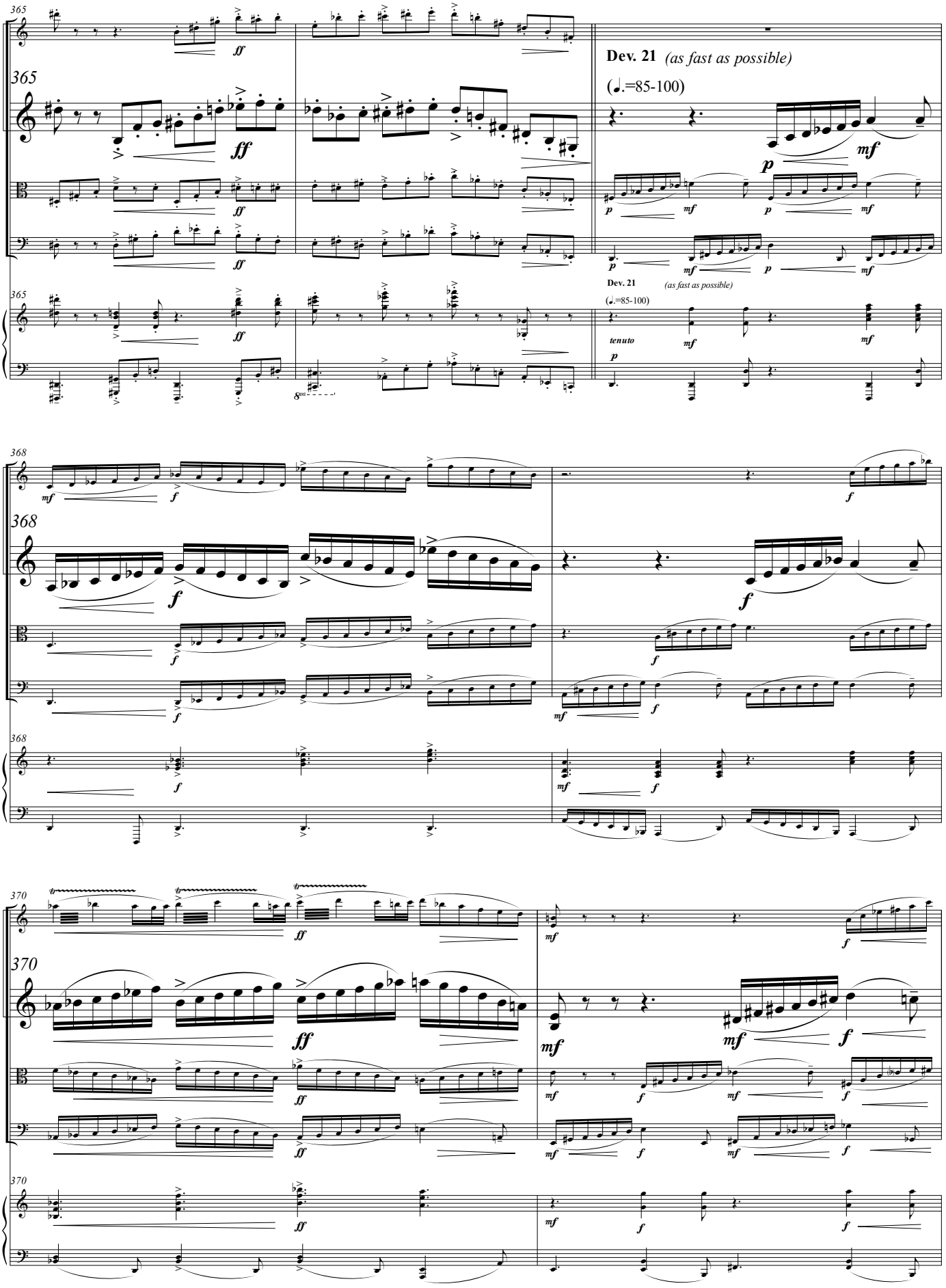

325
325
8va
325
327
327
327
329
ff
mf
329
ff
mp
ff
mp
mp
dim.
329
ff
mp
dim.

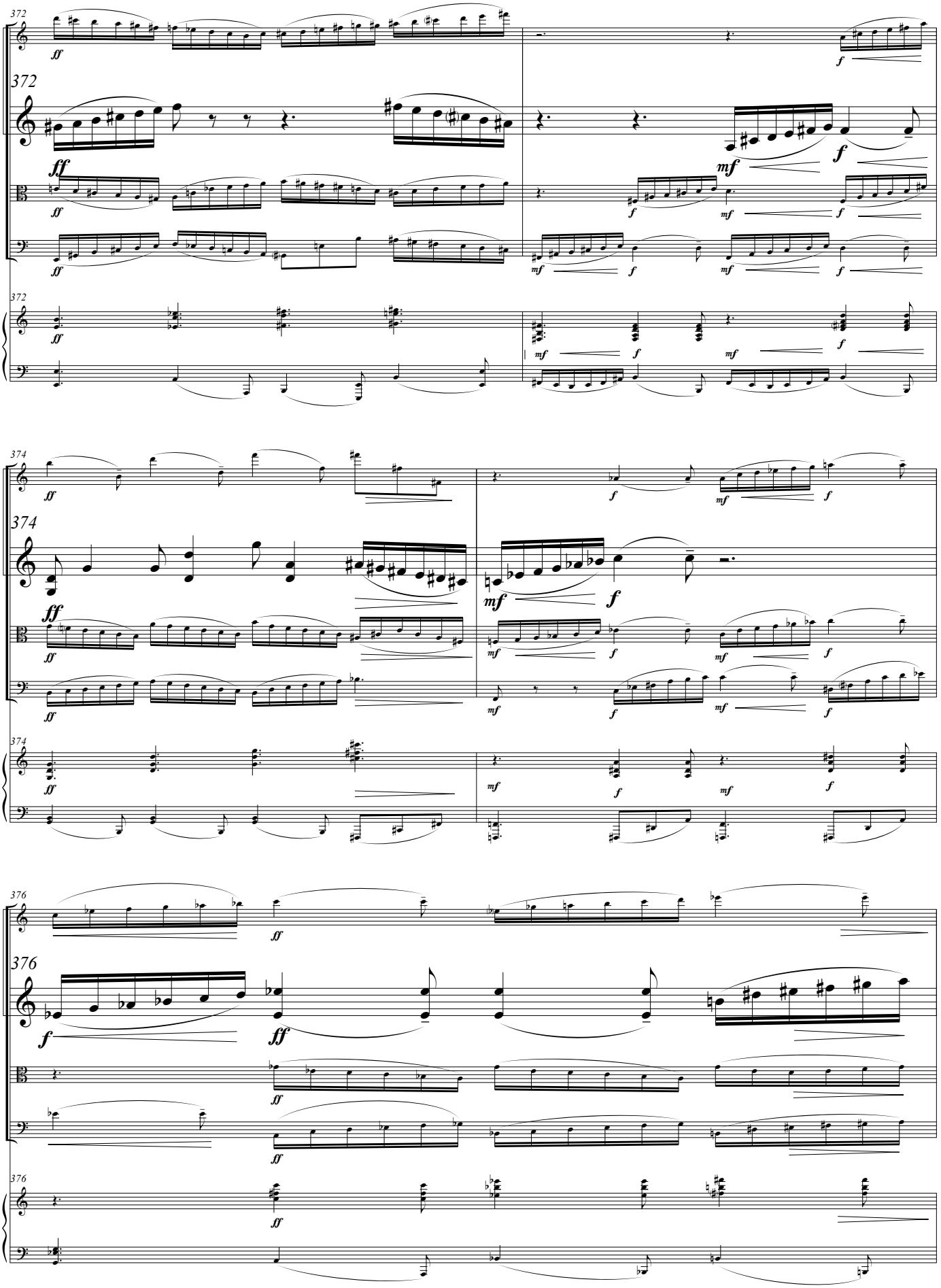

(♩.=♩)
332
rit.
pp
mf
pizz.
cresc. p. a p.
Dev. 19 (♩ = 68)
336
arco
(mp)
339
(mf)

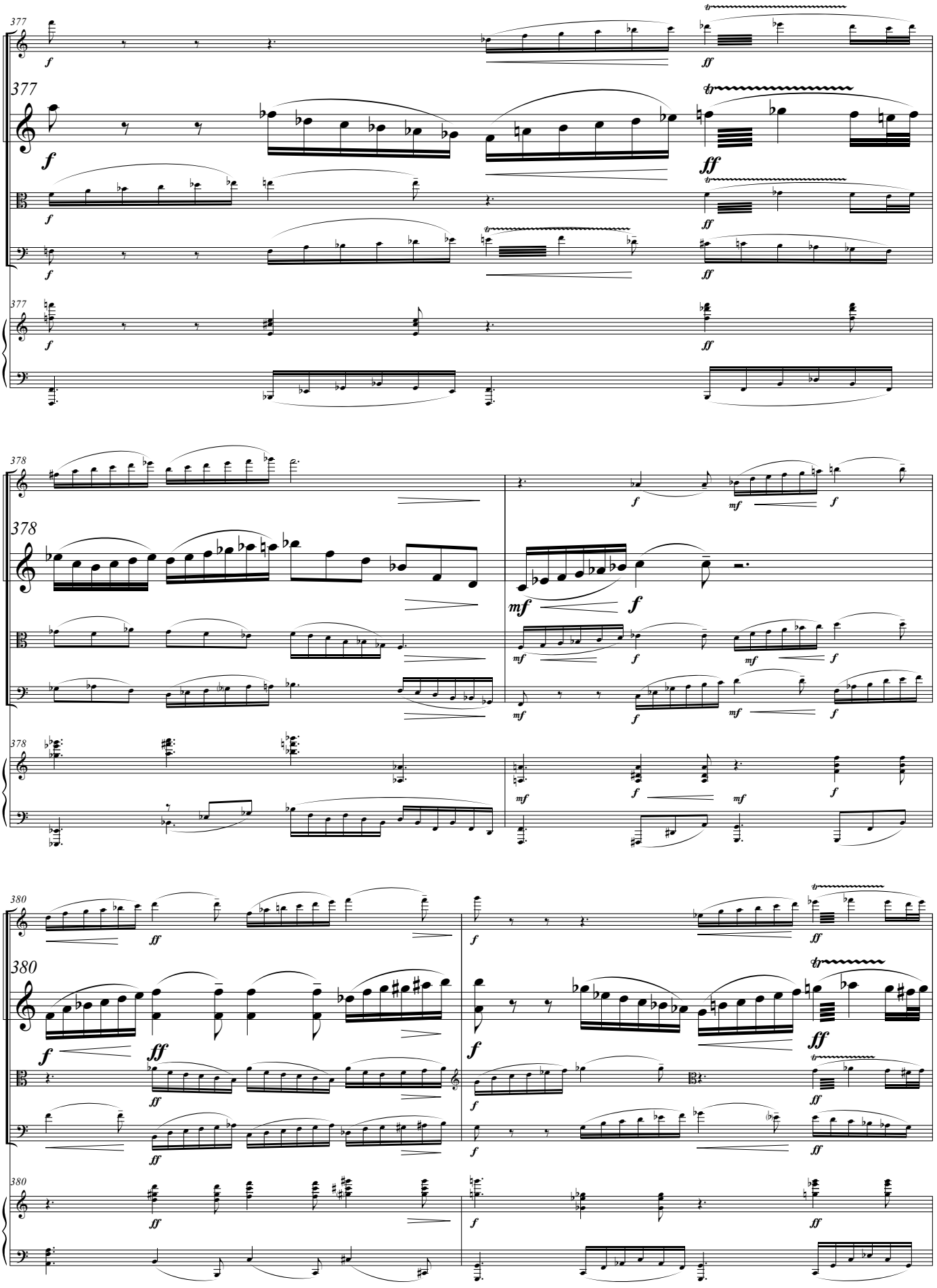

342
f
dim.
mp
cresc. p. a p.
344
(mf)
346
8va

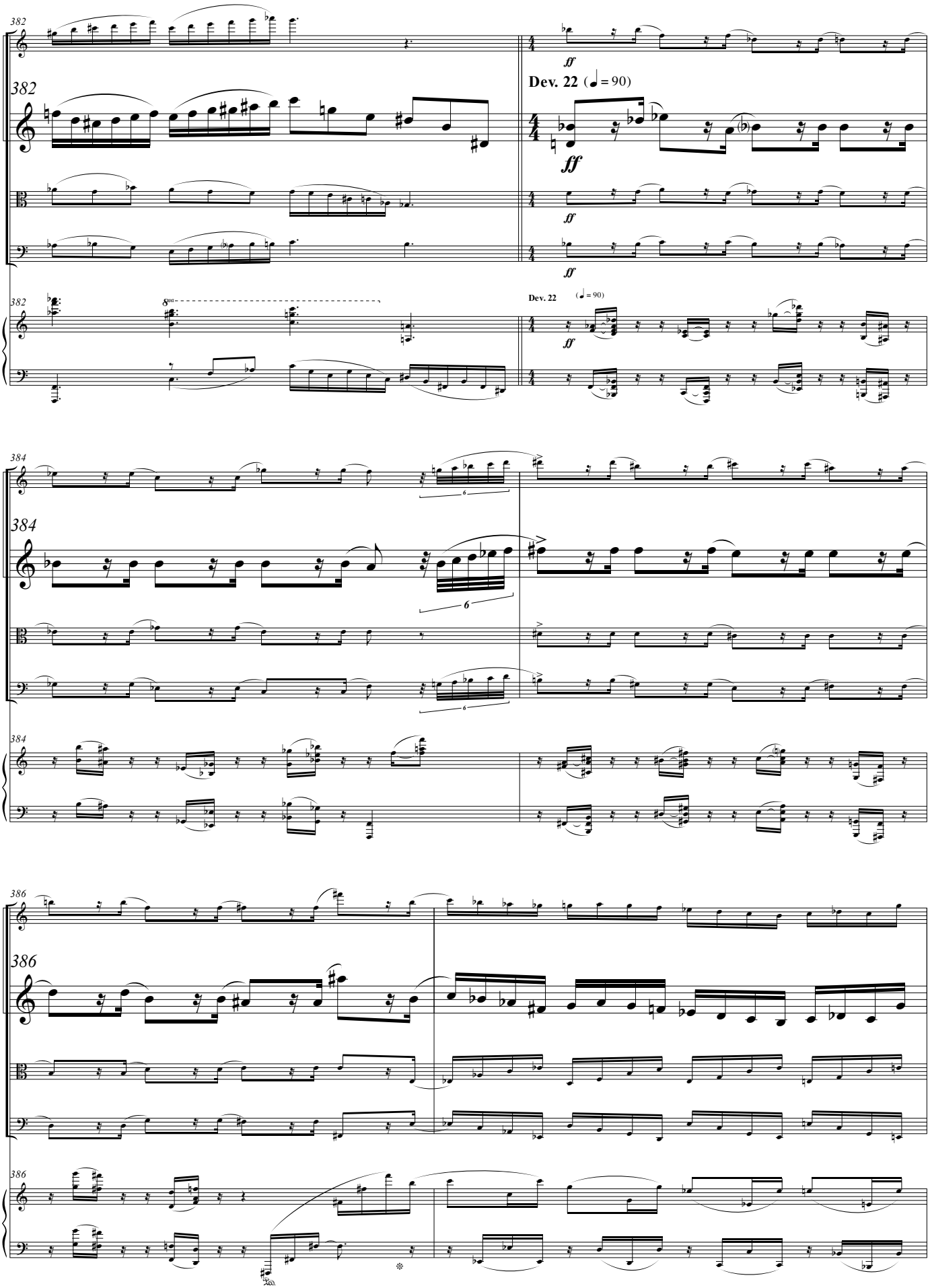

348
(mf)
(f)
(8va)
350
ff
mf
mp
Dev. 20 (♩.=106)
p
arco
353
non stacc.

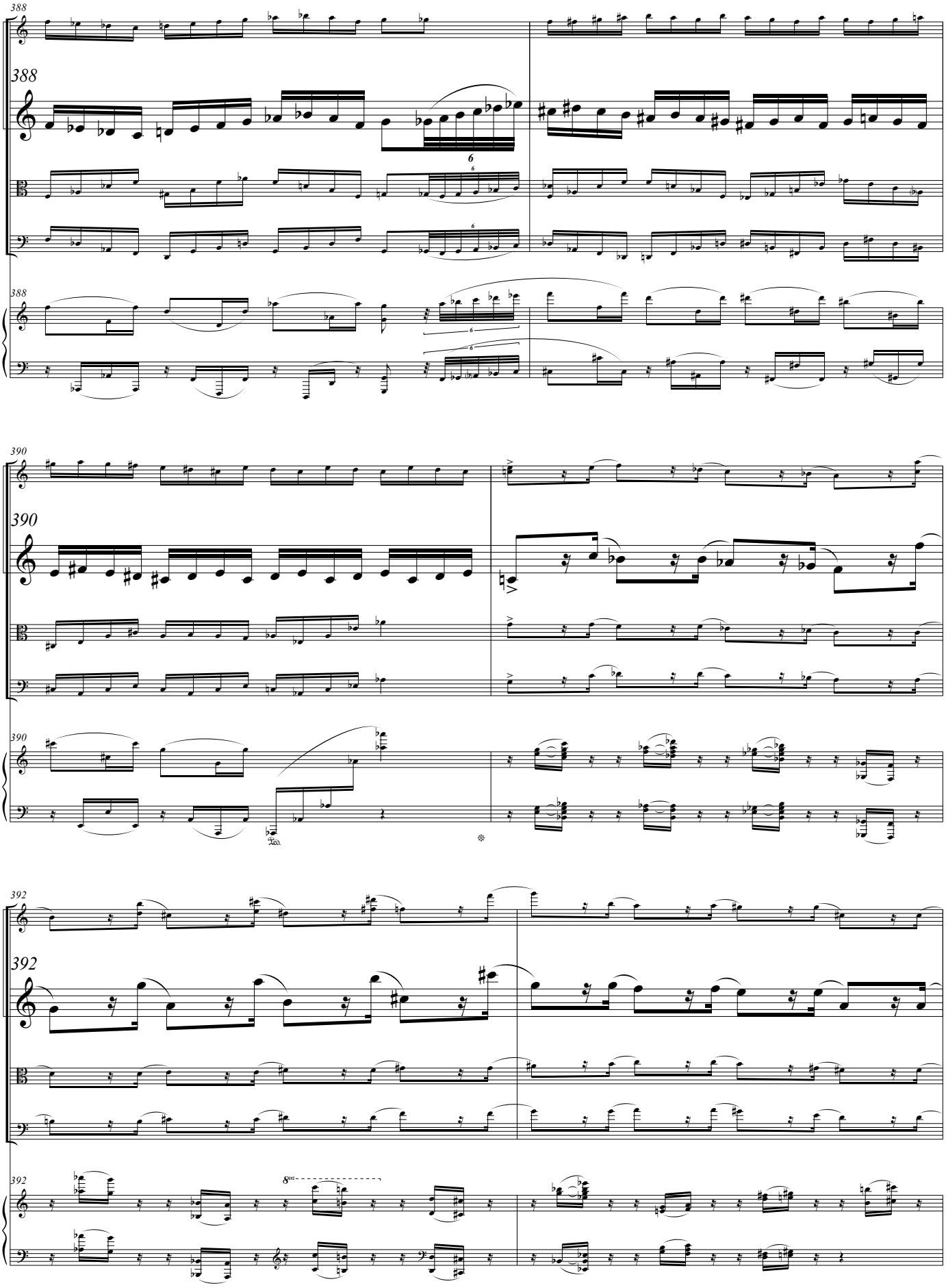

356
359
362

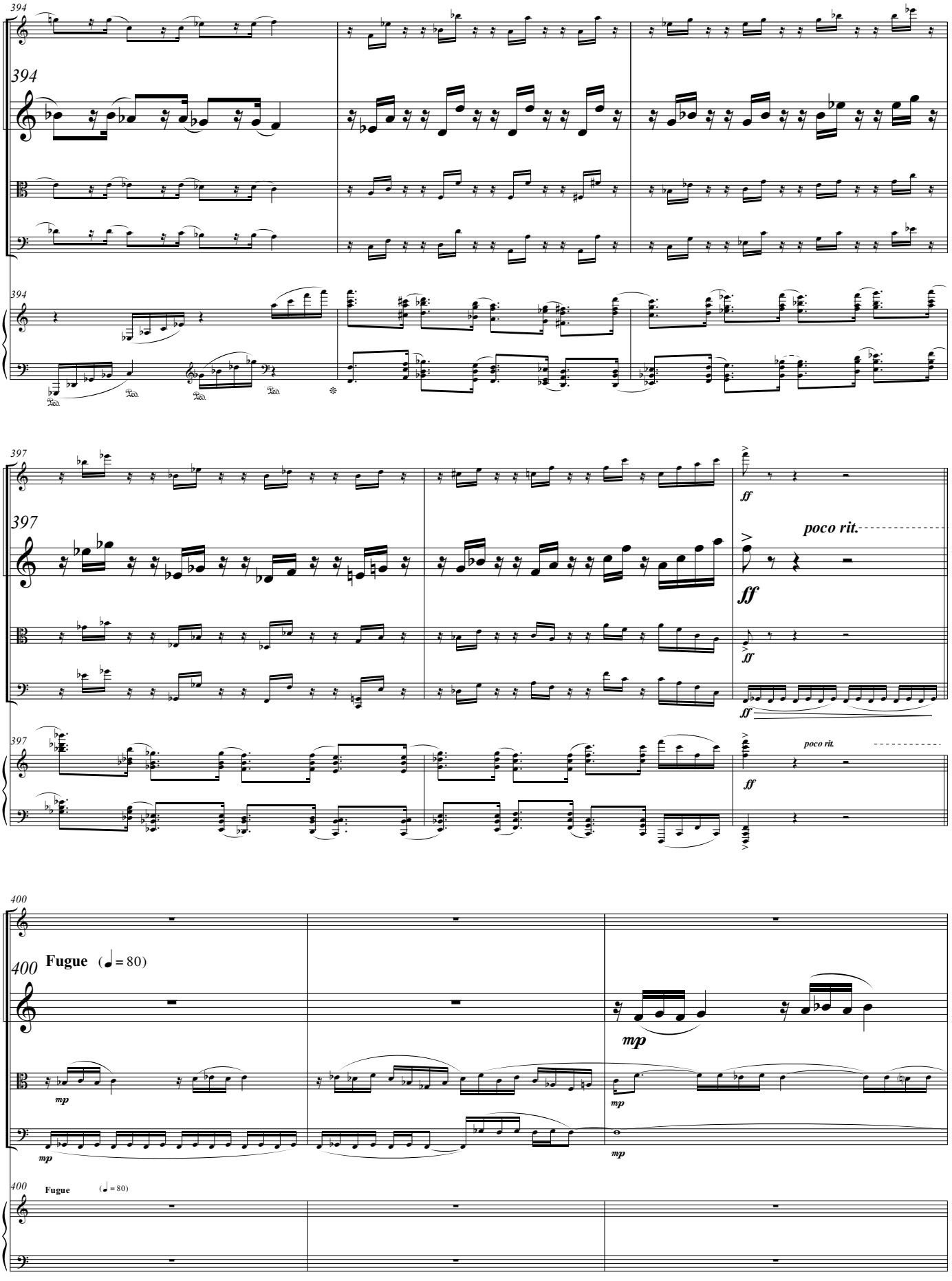

365
Dev. 21 (as fast as possible)
(♩.=85-100)
tenuto
368
370

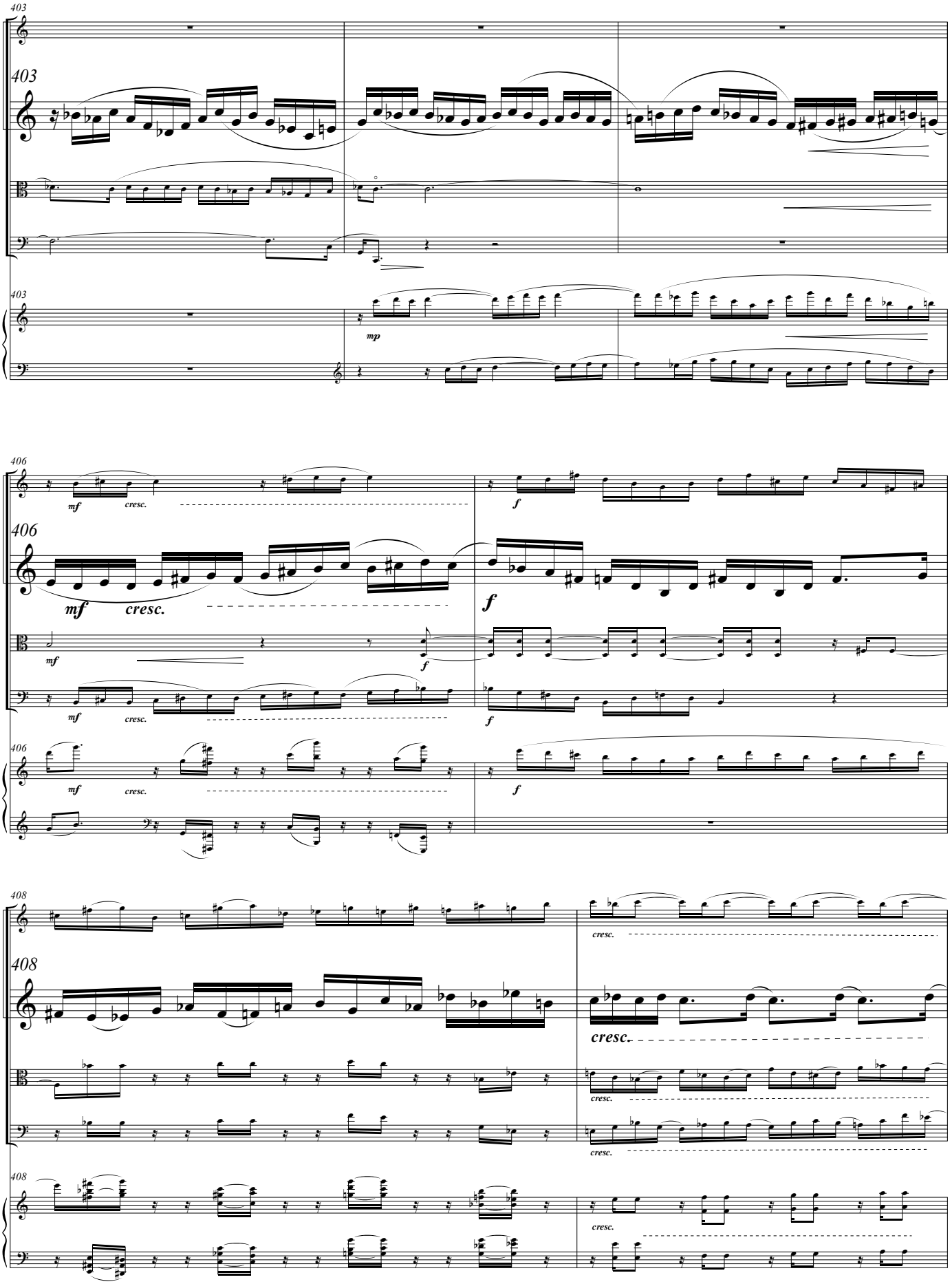


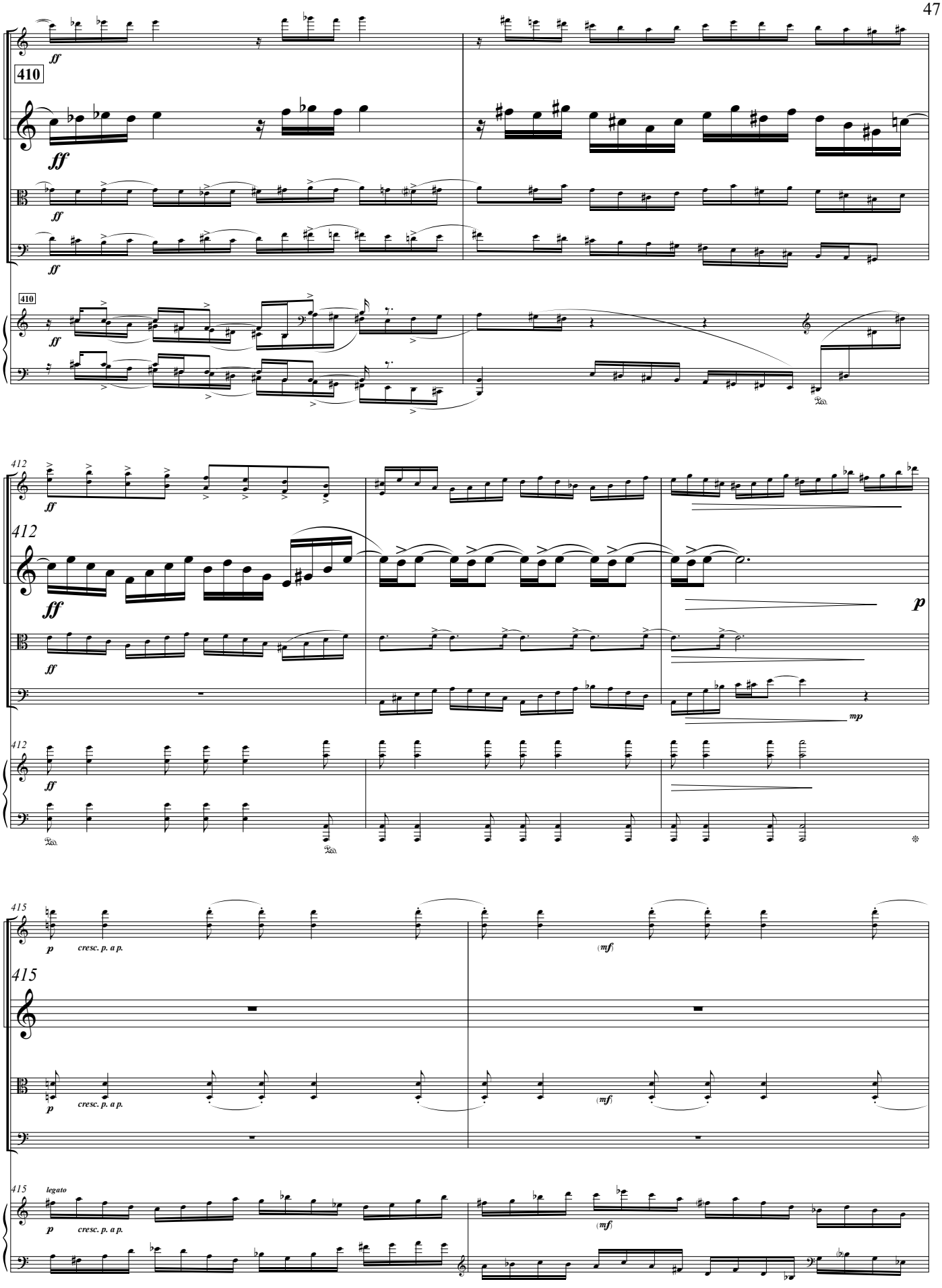

377
f
ff
tr
378
mf
380

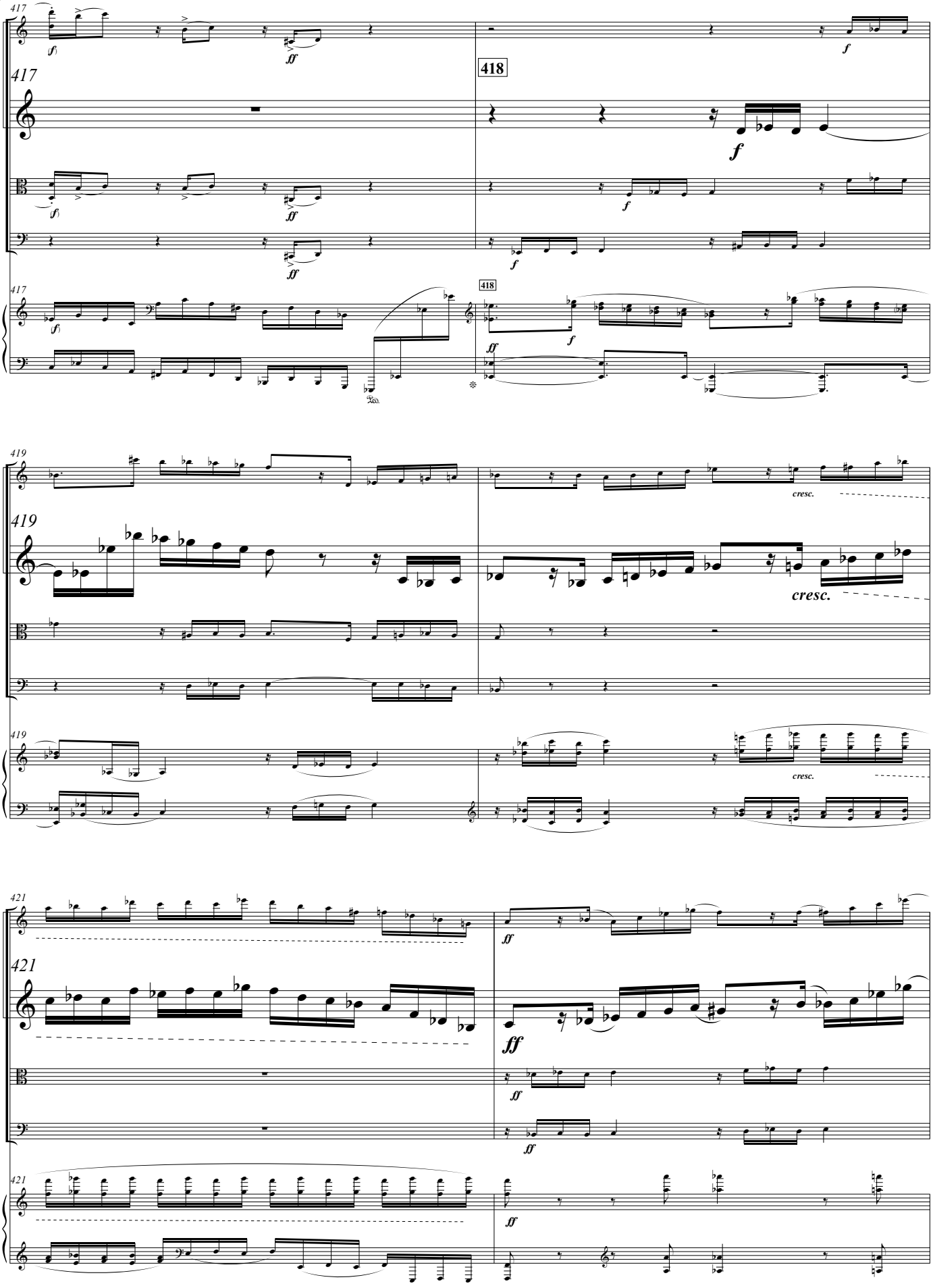

382
382
ff
Dev. 22 (♩ = 90)
ff
ff
ff
382
8va
Dev. 22
(♩ = 90)
ff
384
384
6
6
384
386
386
386

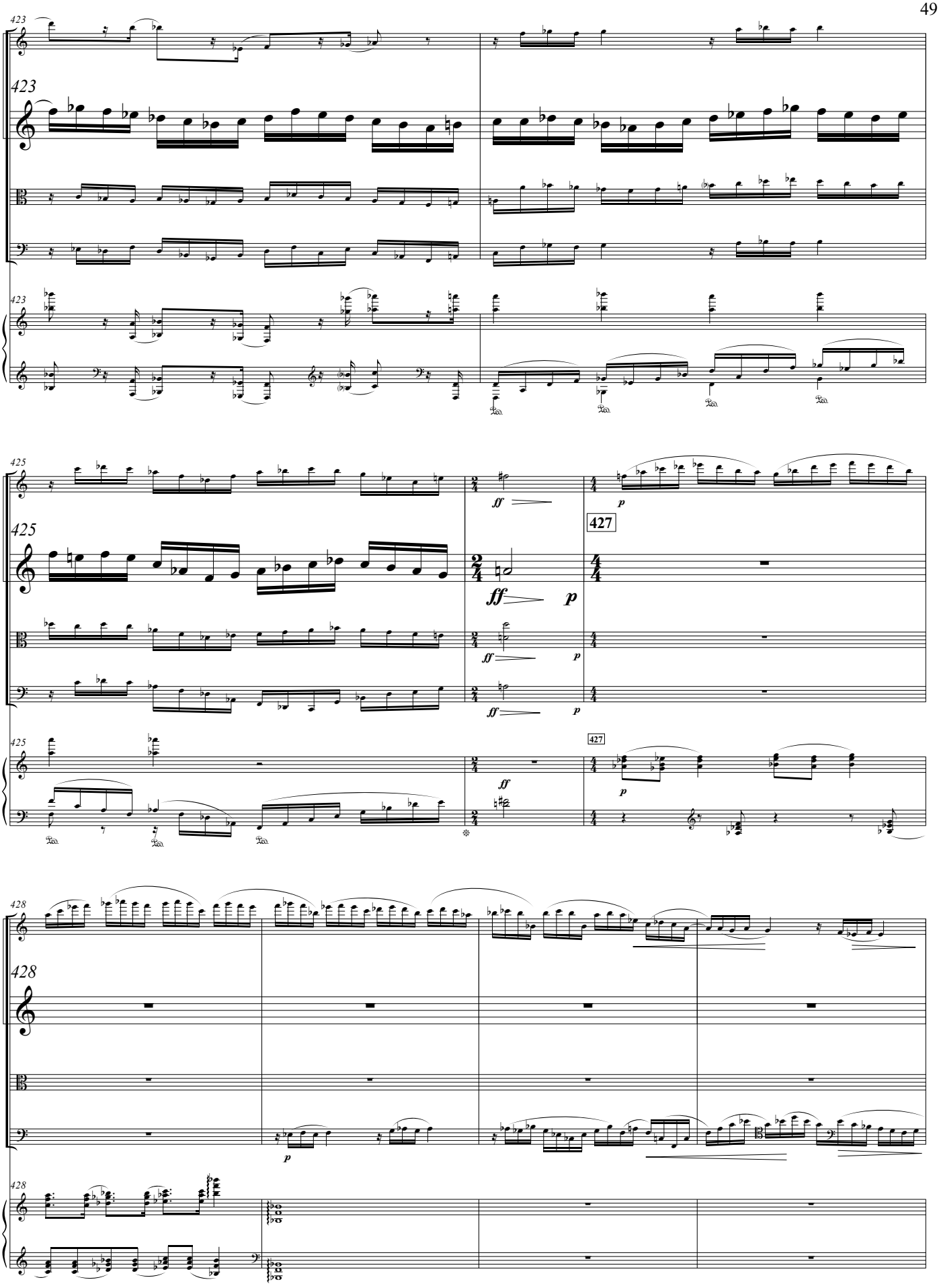

388
388
6
388
390
390
390
392
392
392
8va

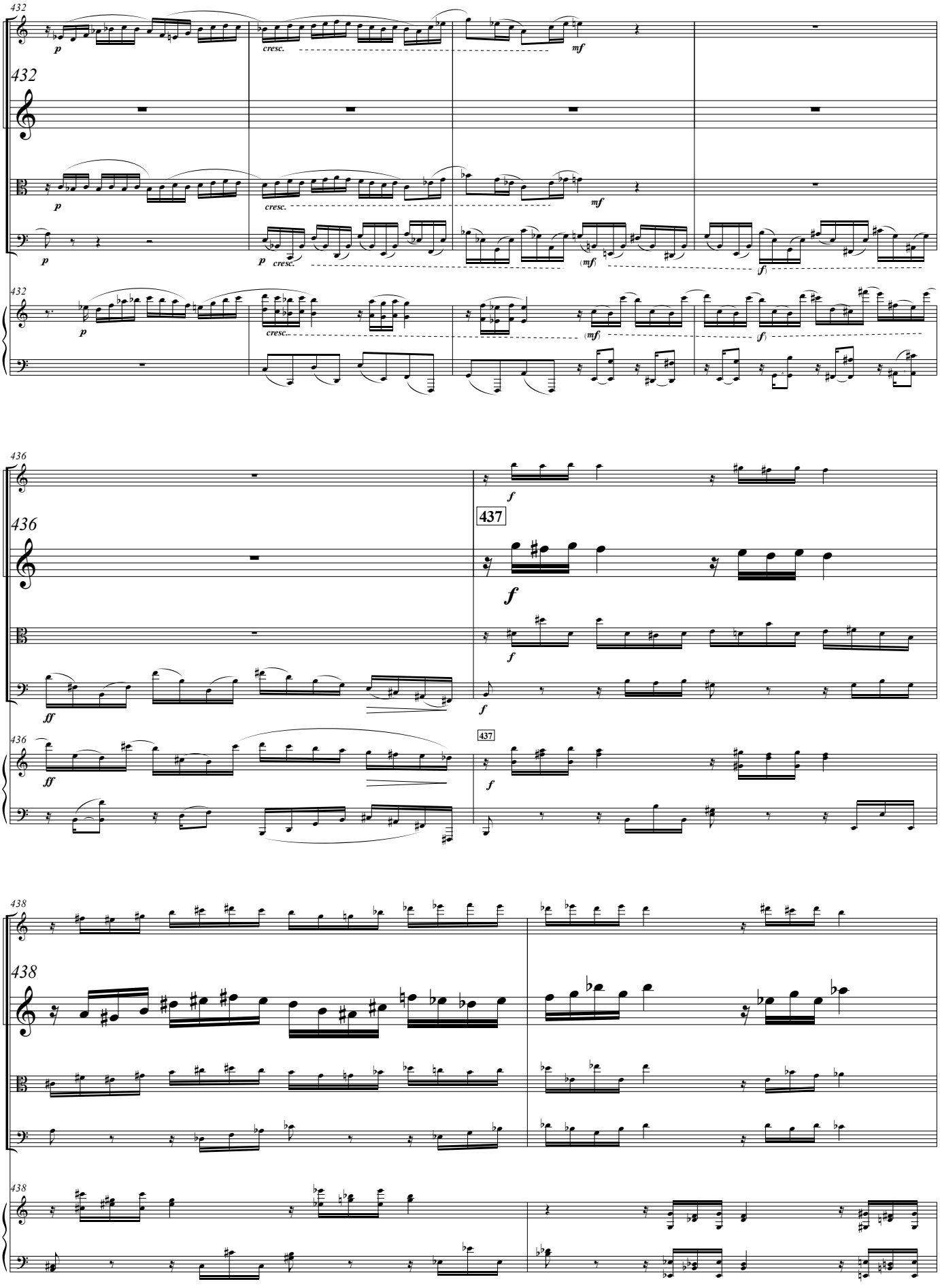

394
394
394
397
397
397
ff
poco rit.
ff
ff
ff
poco rit.
400
400
Fugue (♩ = 80)
mp
mp
mp
mp
400
Fugue (♩ = 80)

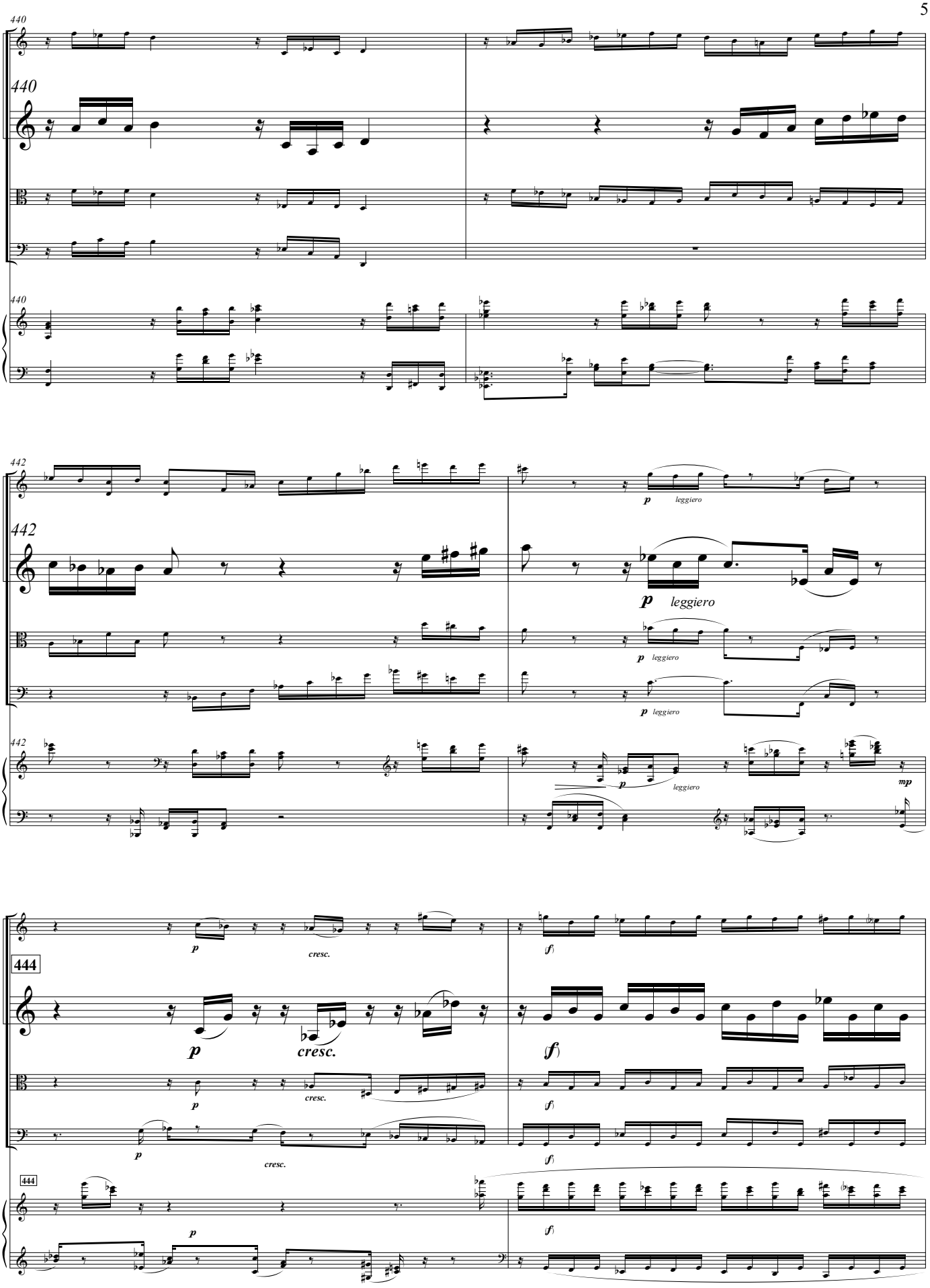

403
mp
406
mf
cresc.
f
408
cresc.

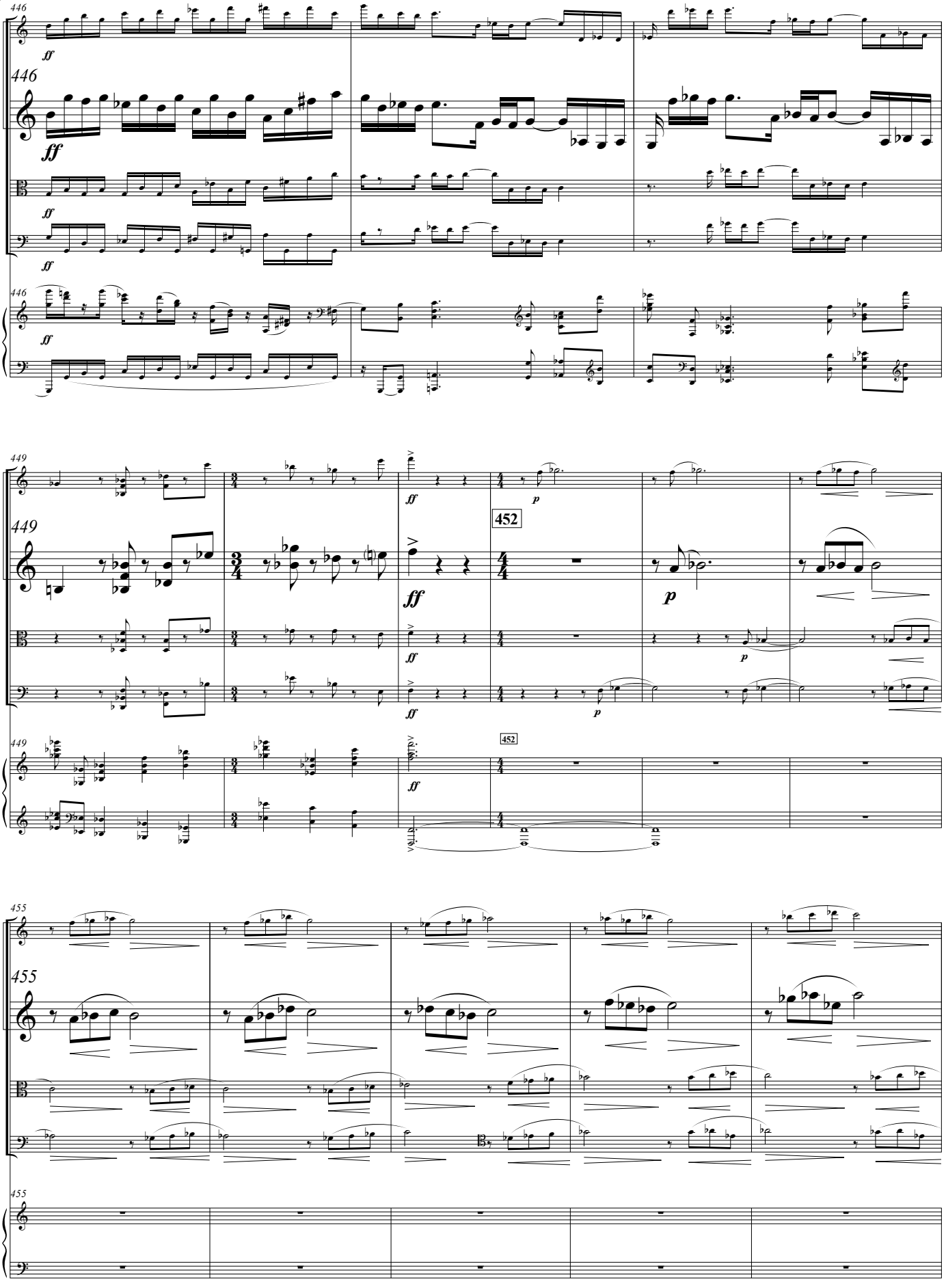

410
ff
410
412
ff
p
mp
415
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
legato

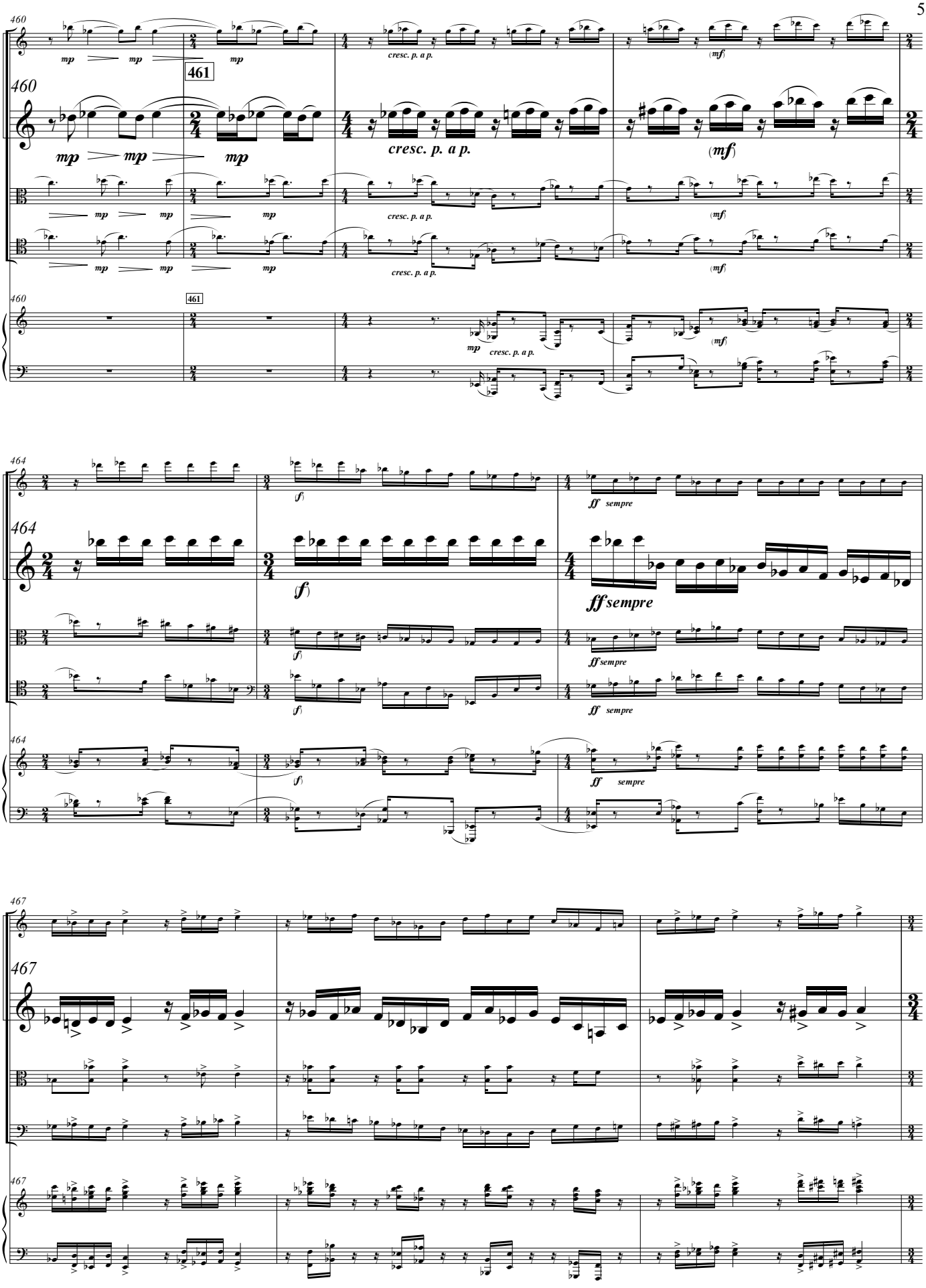

417
418
419
421
cresc.
ff
f

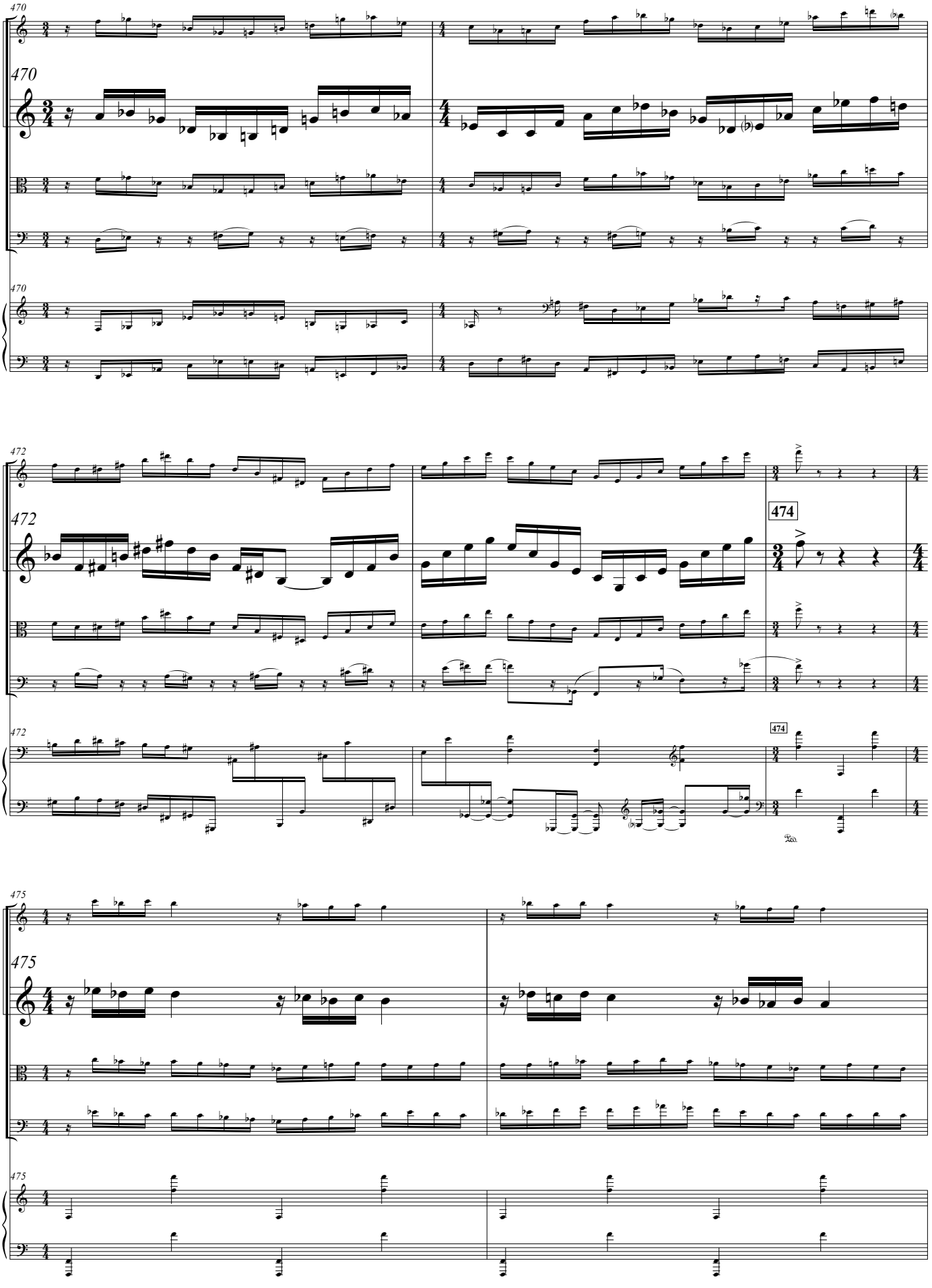

423
425
427
428
ff
p


432
p
cresc.
mf
(mf)
f
436
ff
437
438


440
442
444
p
leggiero
cresc.
(f)
mp


446
ff
449
452
p
455


460
461
mp
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
464
(f)
ff sempre
467


470
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472
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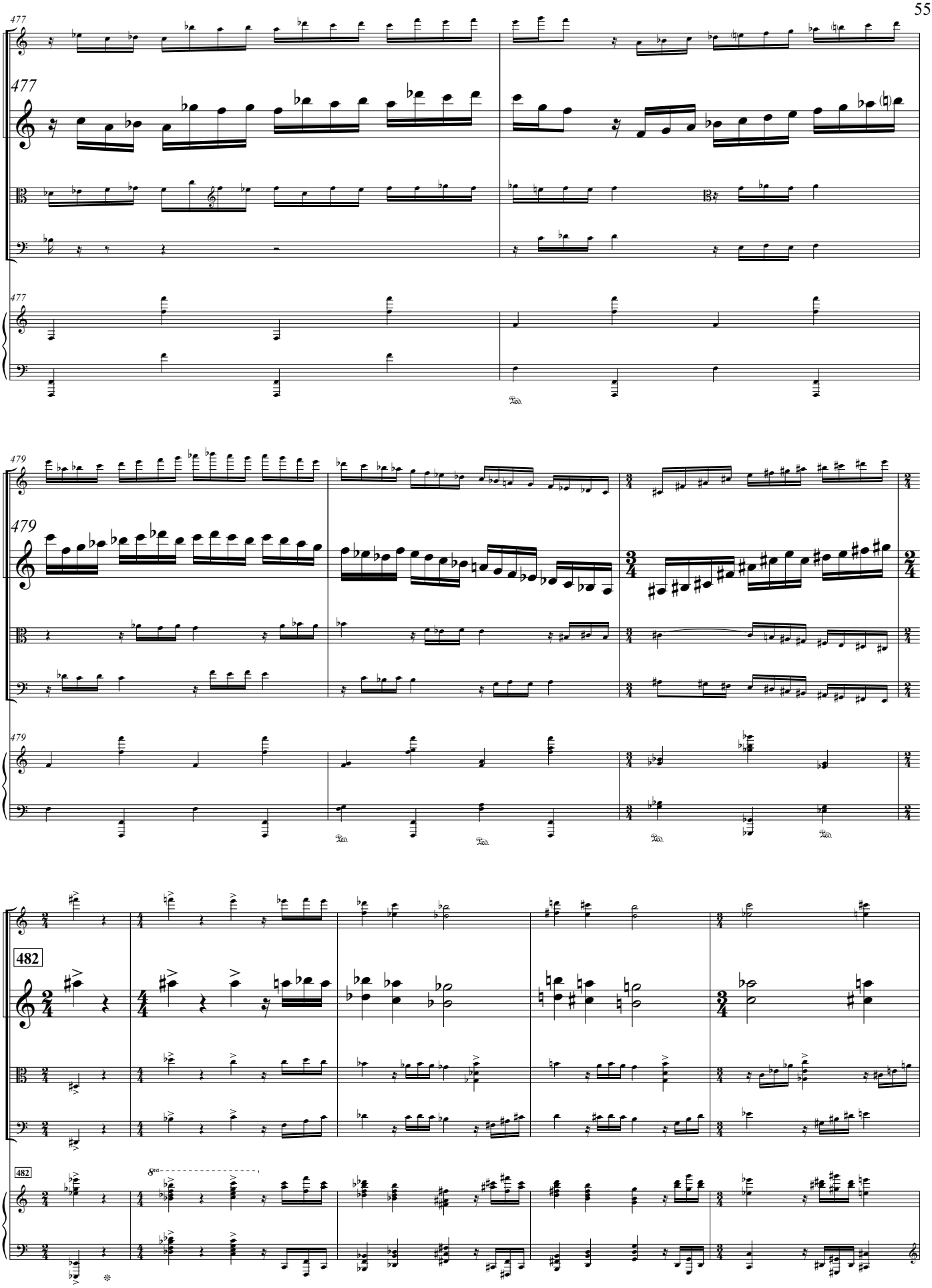
475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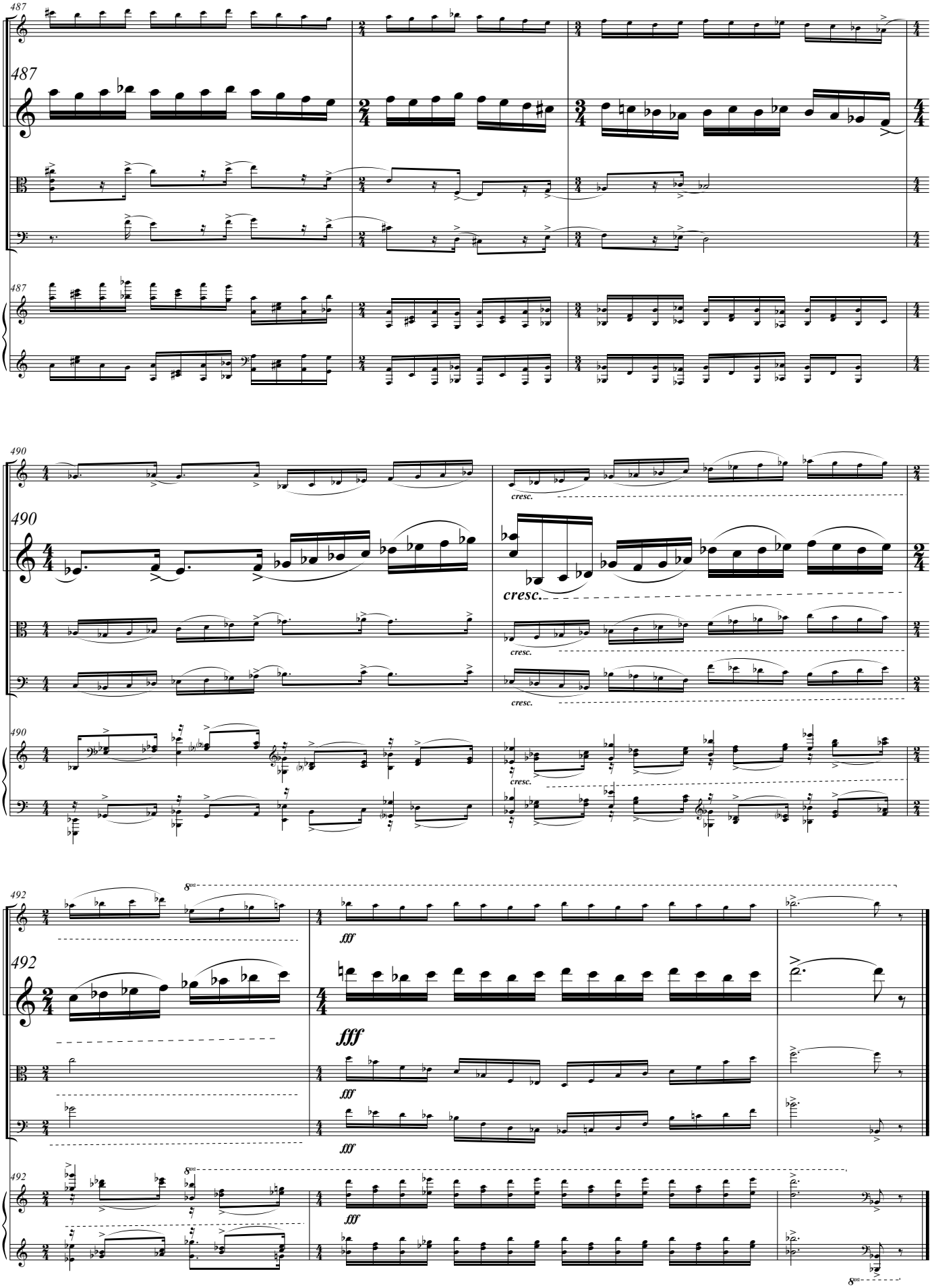
487
490
cresc.
492
fff
8va