Cubic Deviations

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

For Piano Quintet

Violin 1

for Electronic Music Readers

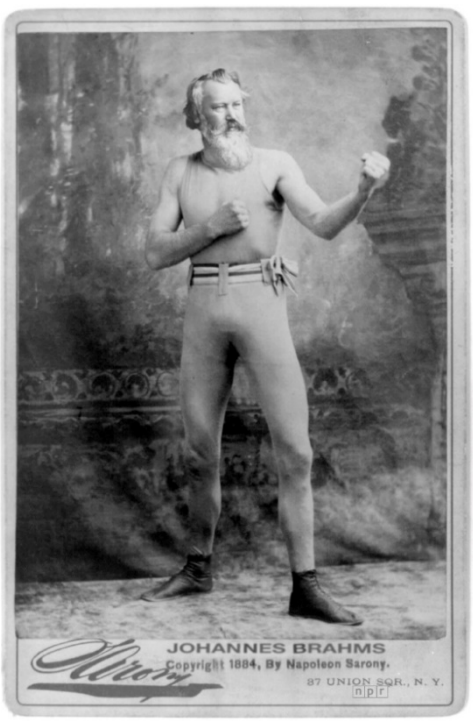
Bill Robinson

Cubic Deviations

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

Duration: about 27 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*. The piano quintet is the basis of a version for full orchestra.

The original Brahms work is extremely virtuosic. I have toned down the piano technique considerably by adding the quartet. 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?

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.

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.

Bill Robinson

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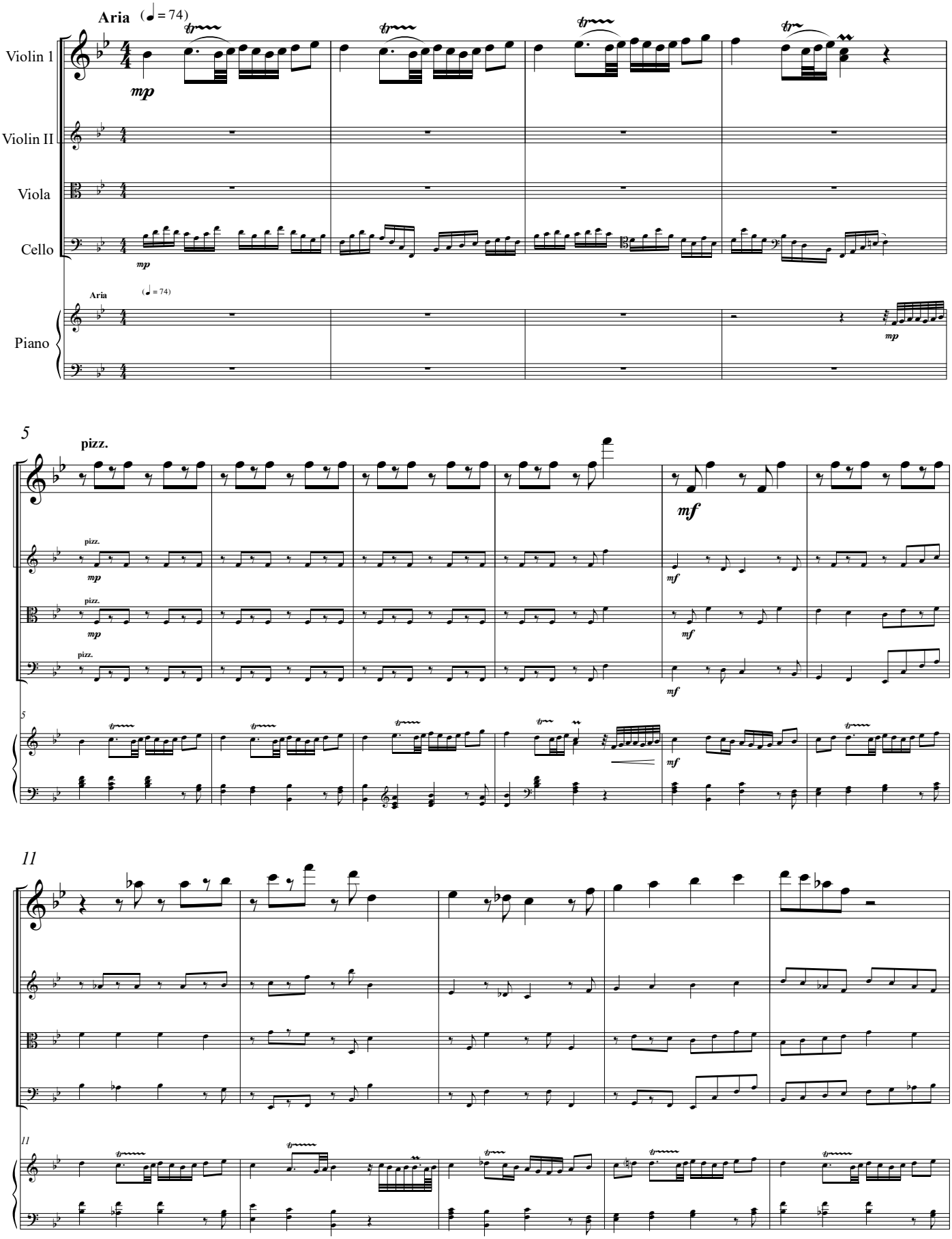
Cover art by Joseph Groupy, 1743 *Pugilist Brahms by NPR* billrobinsonmusic.com

Violin I Part for Electronic Music Readers

Cubic Deviations

[corrected to 5/25/23]

Bill Robinson



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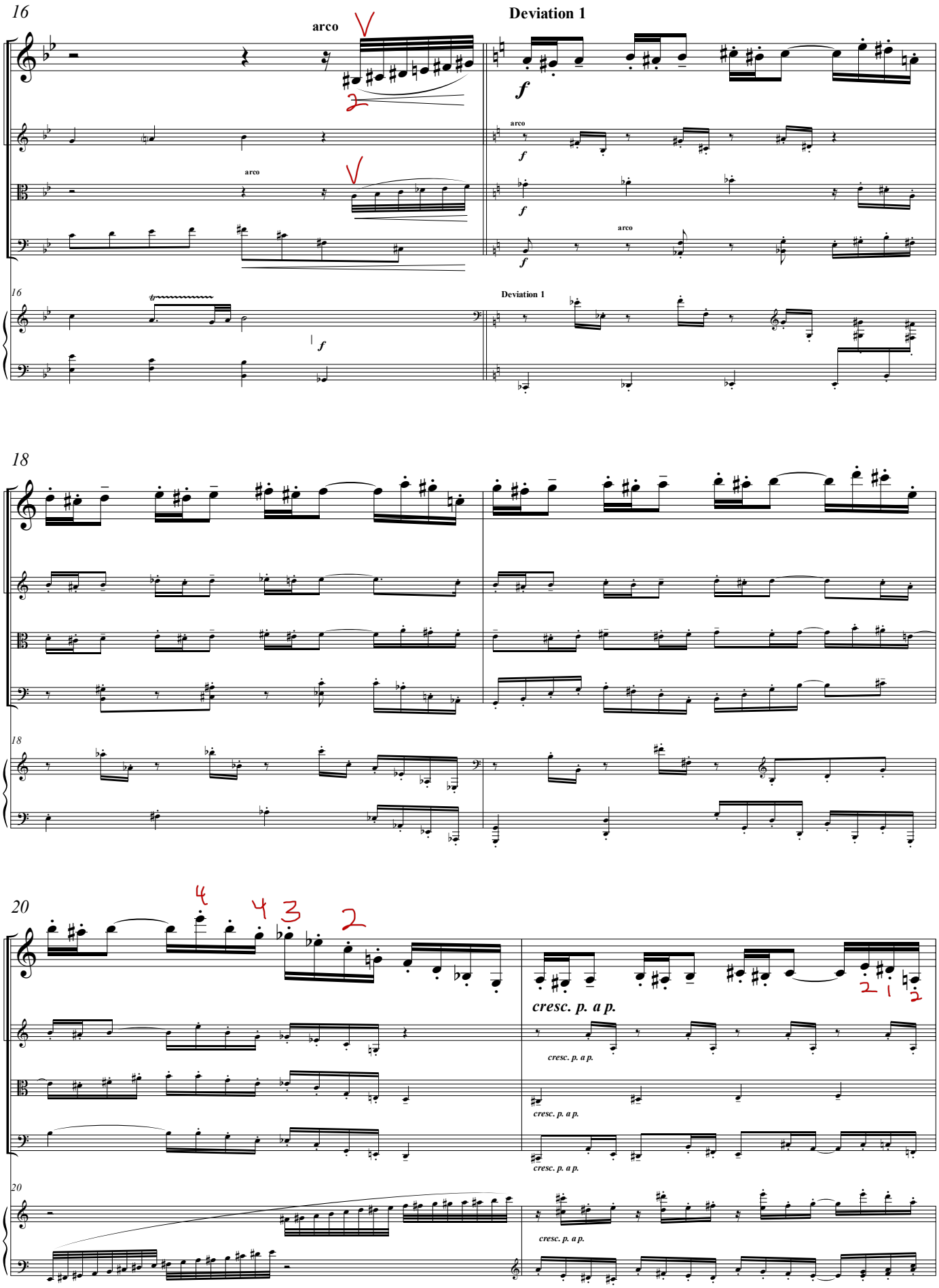
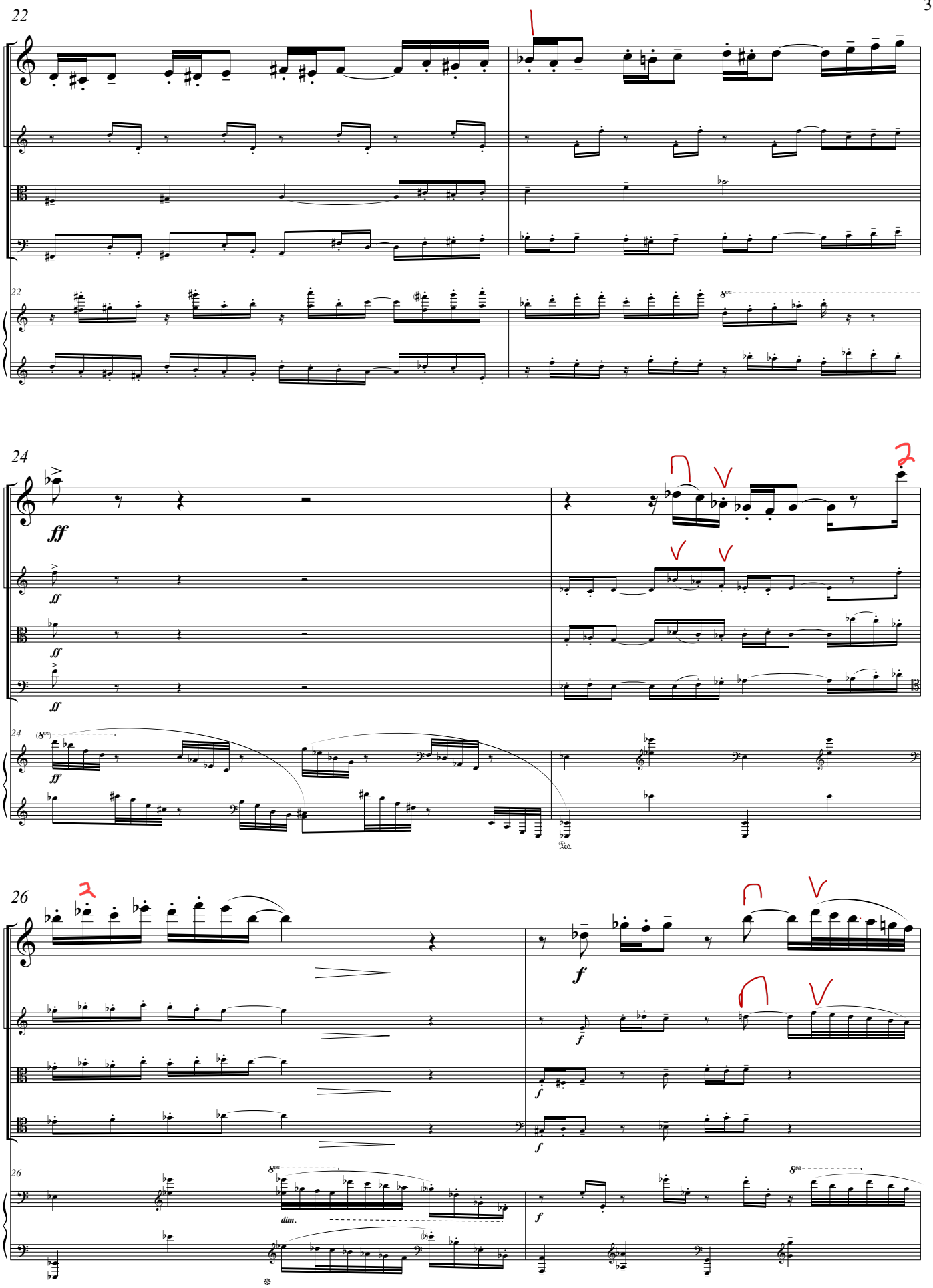
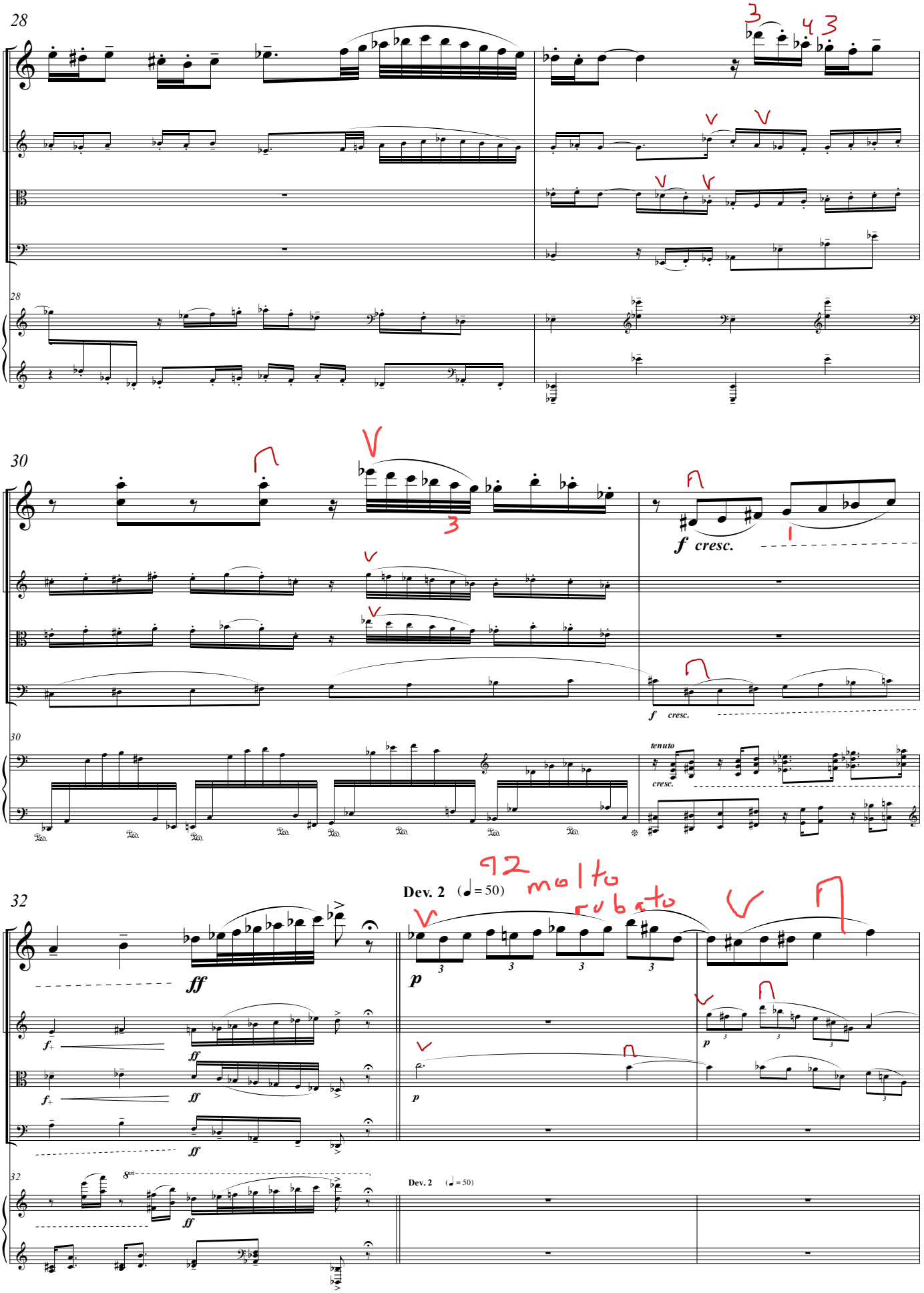
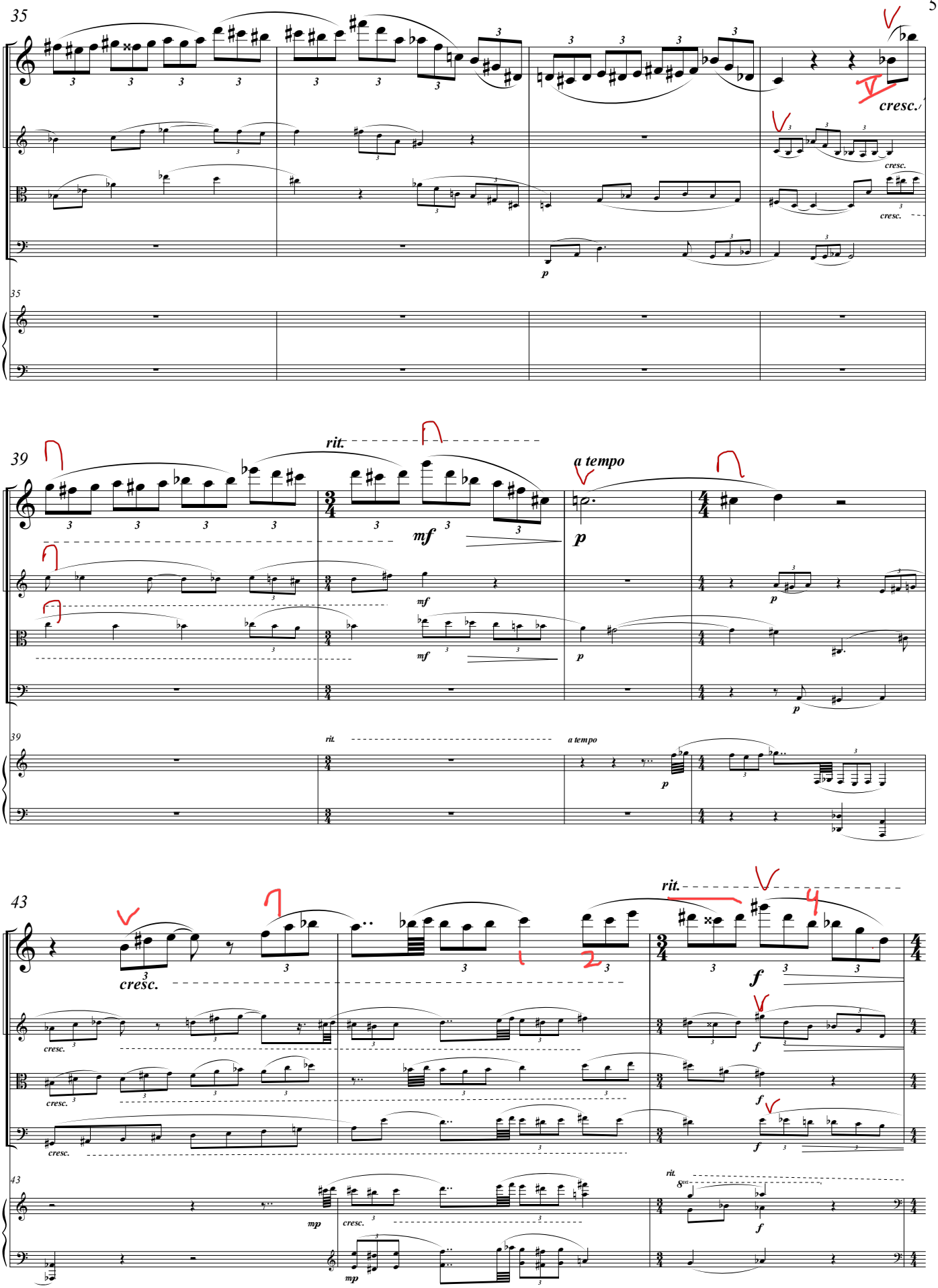
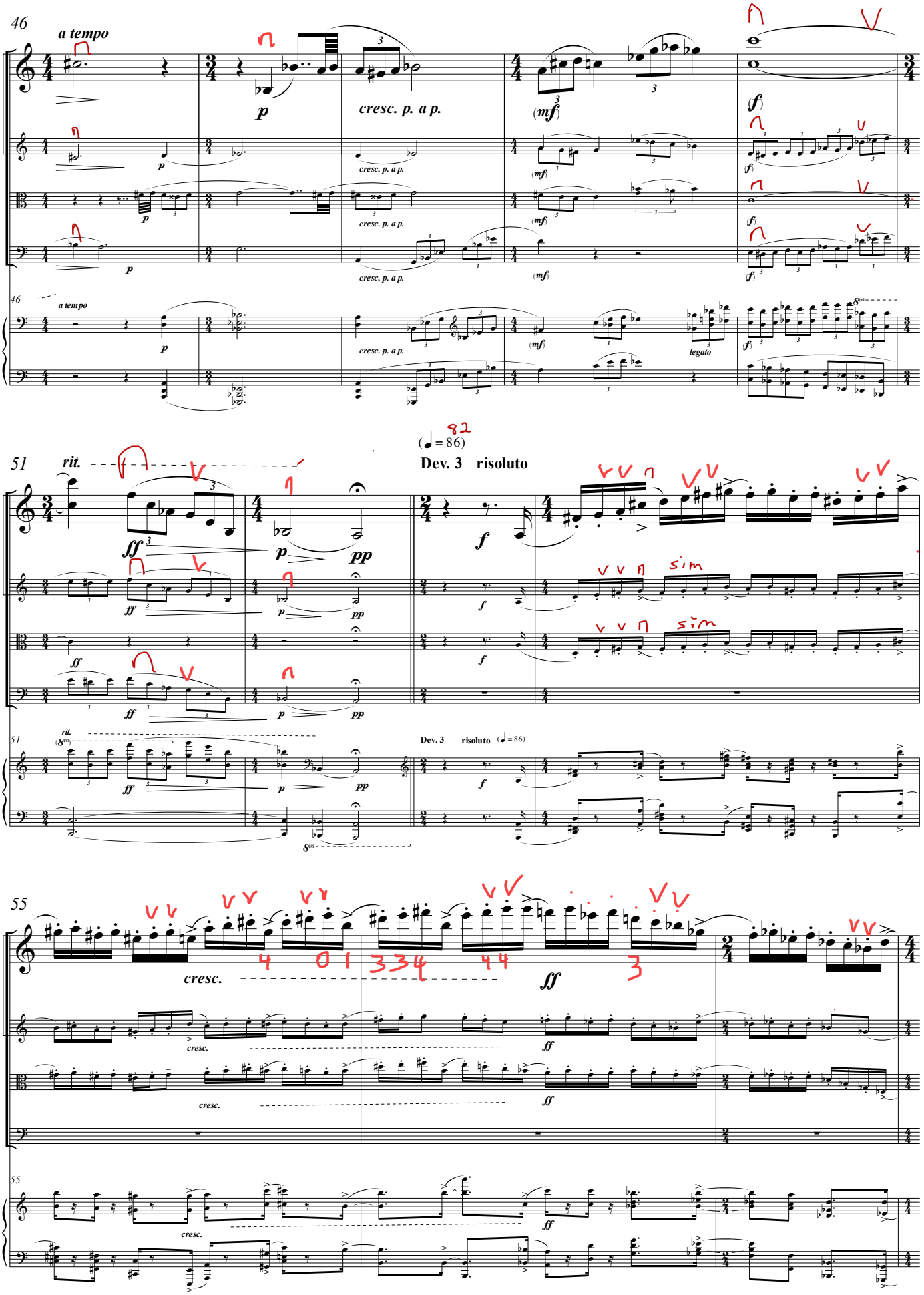

16
arco
Deviation 1
f
arco
f
arco
f
arco
f
16
Deviation 1
f
18
18
20
4
4 3
2
cresc. p. a p.
2 1 2
cresc. p. a p.
cresc. p. a p.
cresc. p. a p.
20
cresc. p. a p.

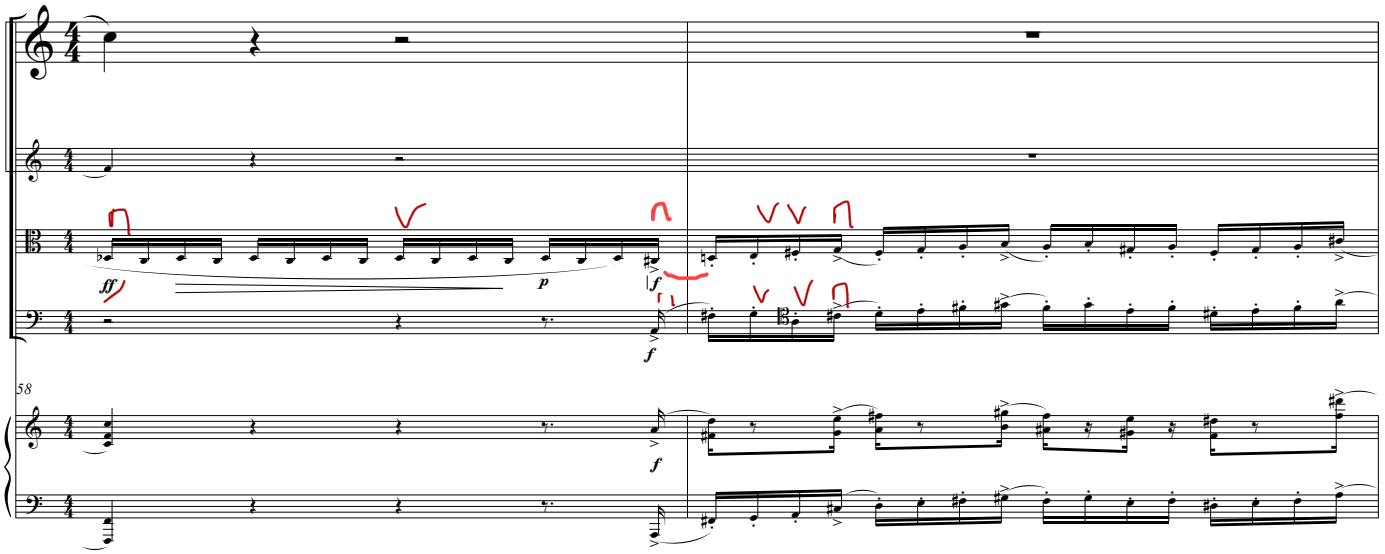

22
24
ff
26
f
dim.


28
30
f cresc.
tenuto
32
Dev. 2 (♩ = 50)
ff
p
92 molto rubato


35
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
p
39
rit.
a tempo
mf
mf
mf
p
p
p
p
43
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
f
f
f
f
mp
mp
cresc.
rit.
f


46
a tempo
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
(f)
legato
(♩ = 86)
Dev. 3 risoluto
51
rit.
ff
pp
f
sim
55
cresc.
ff

58



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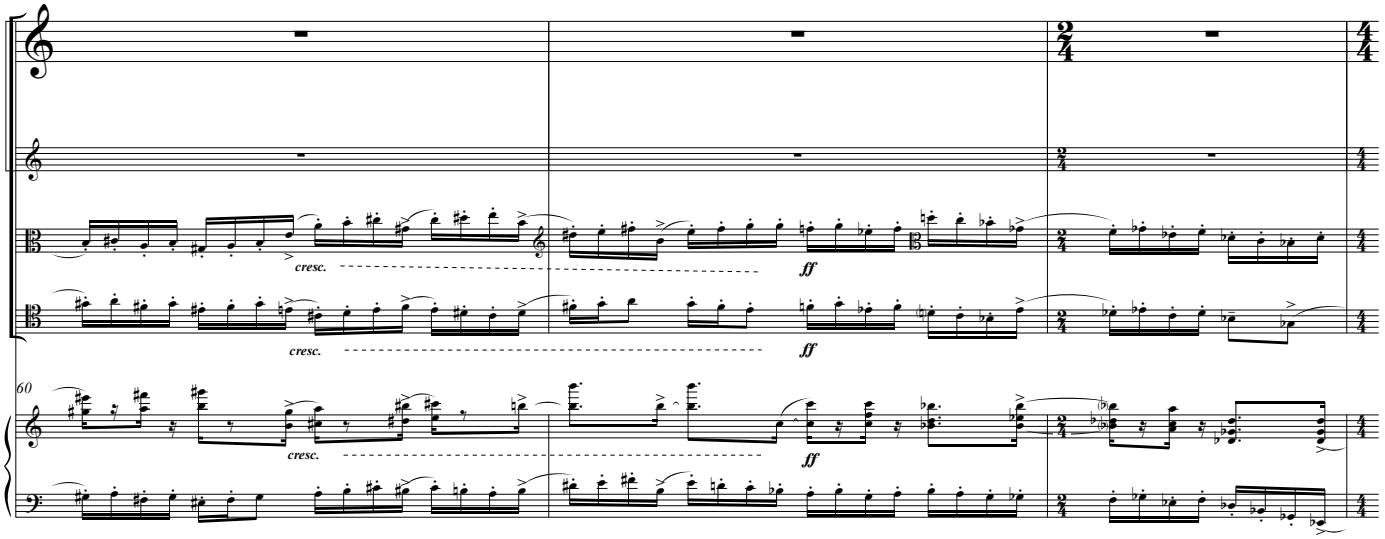
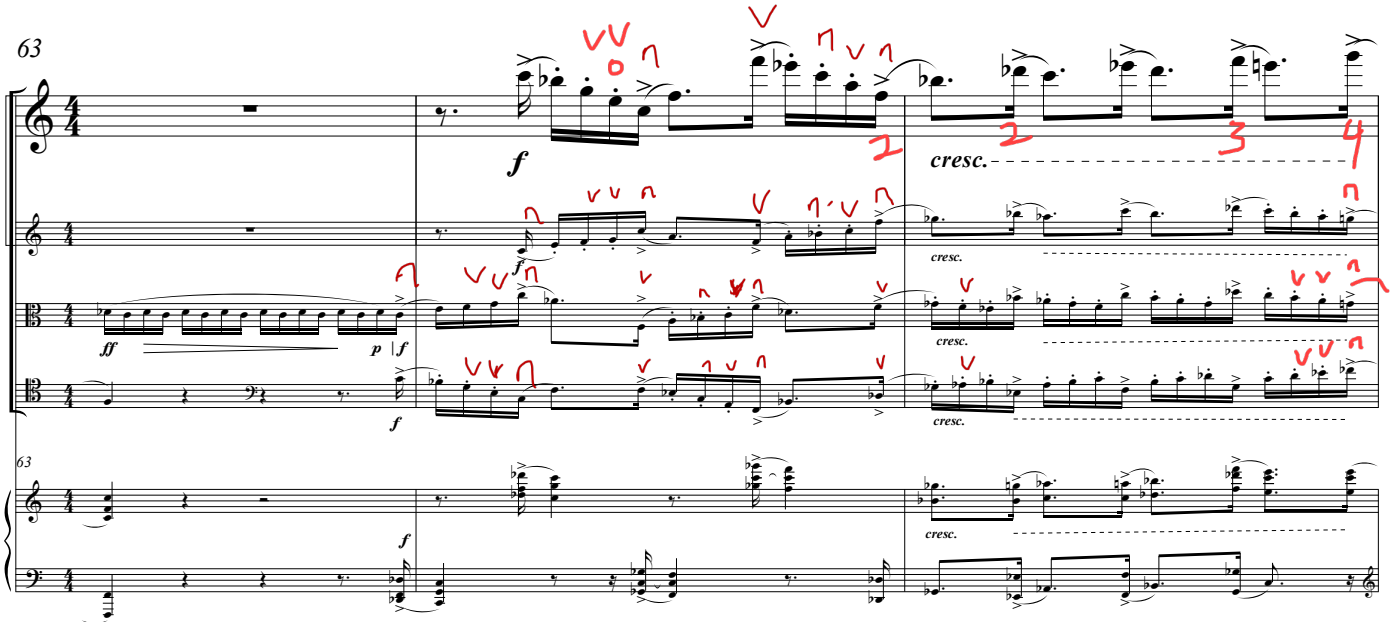
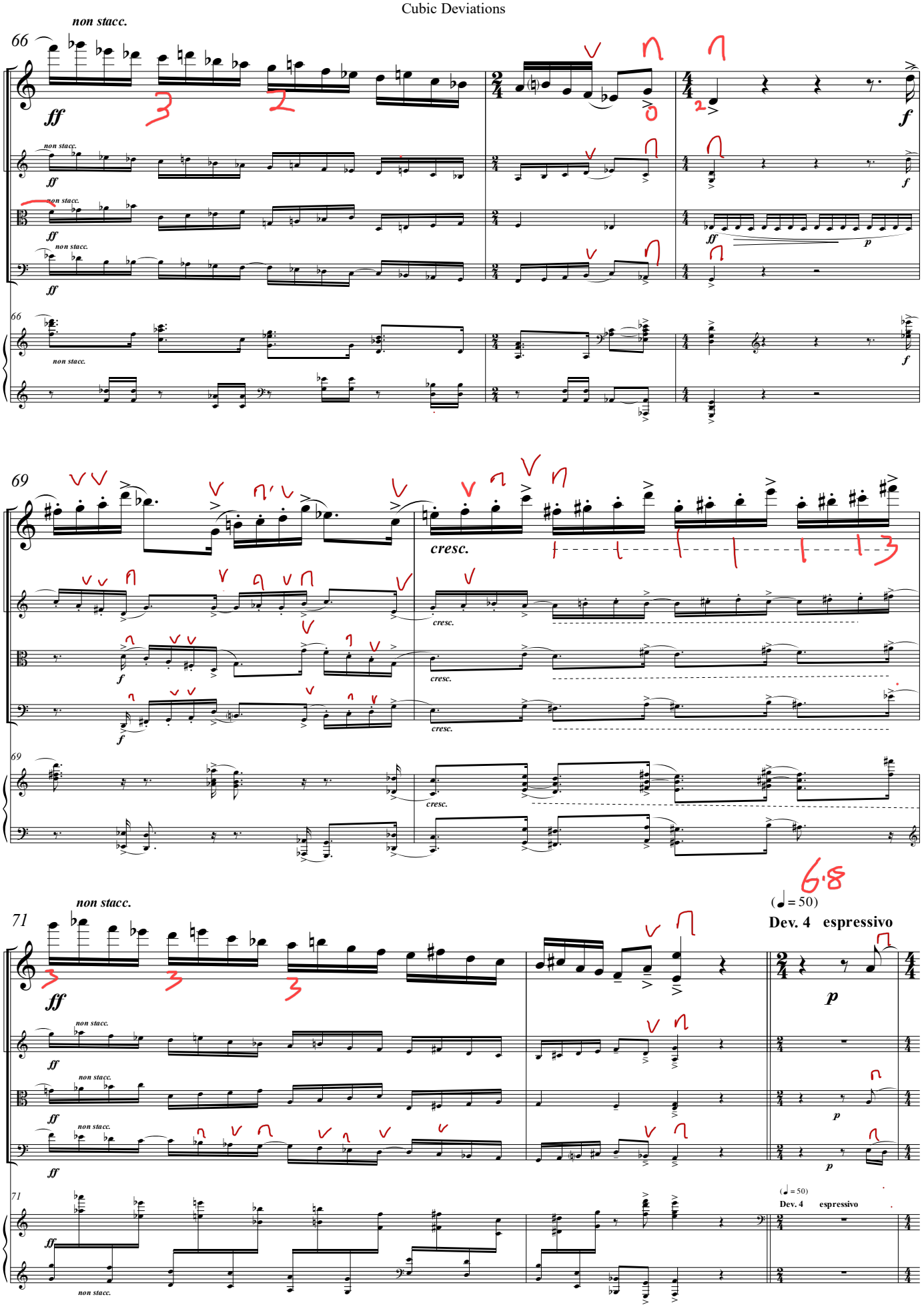
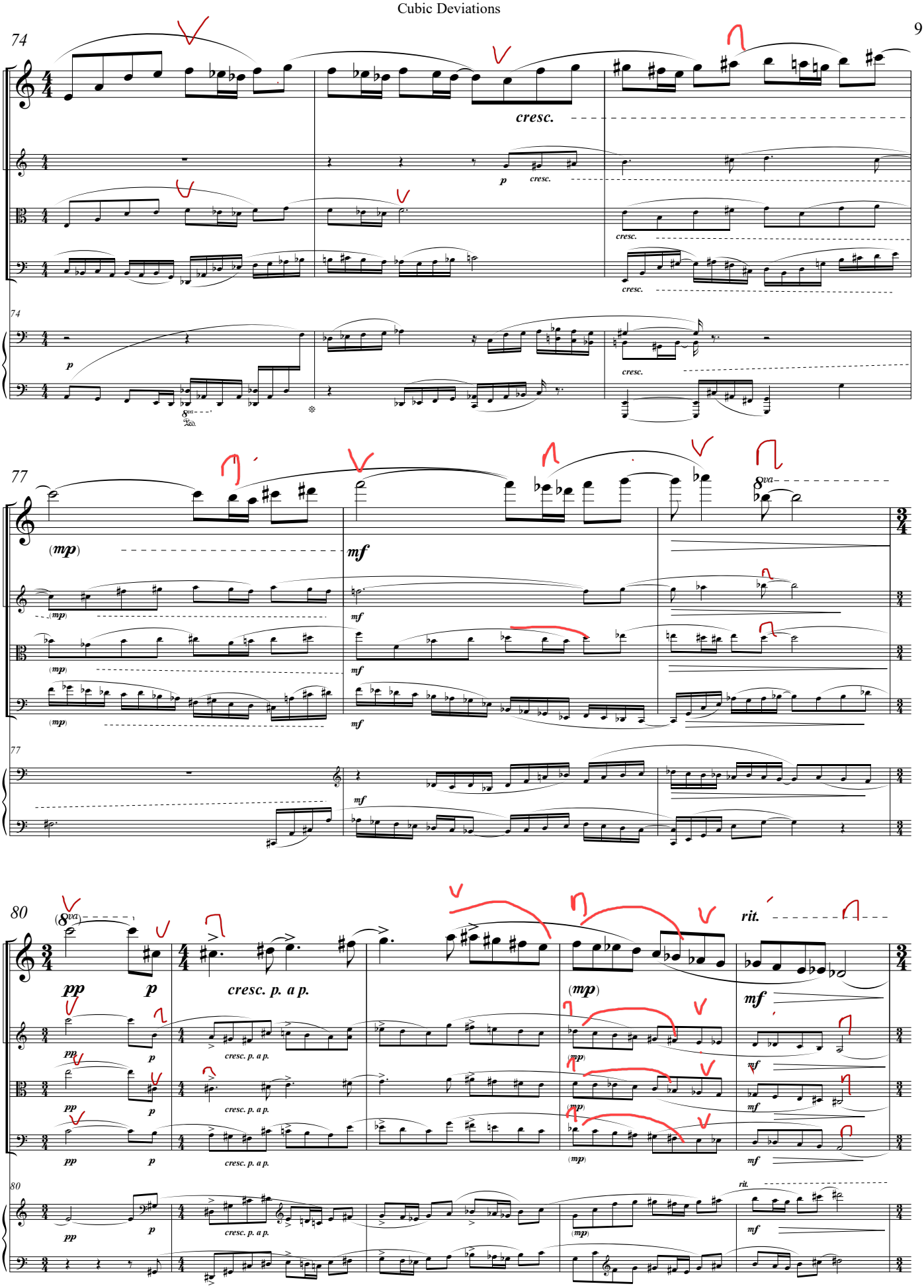
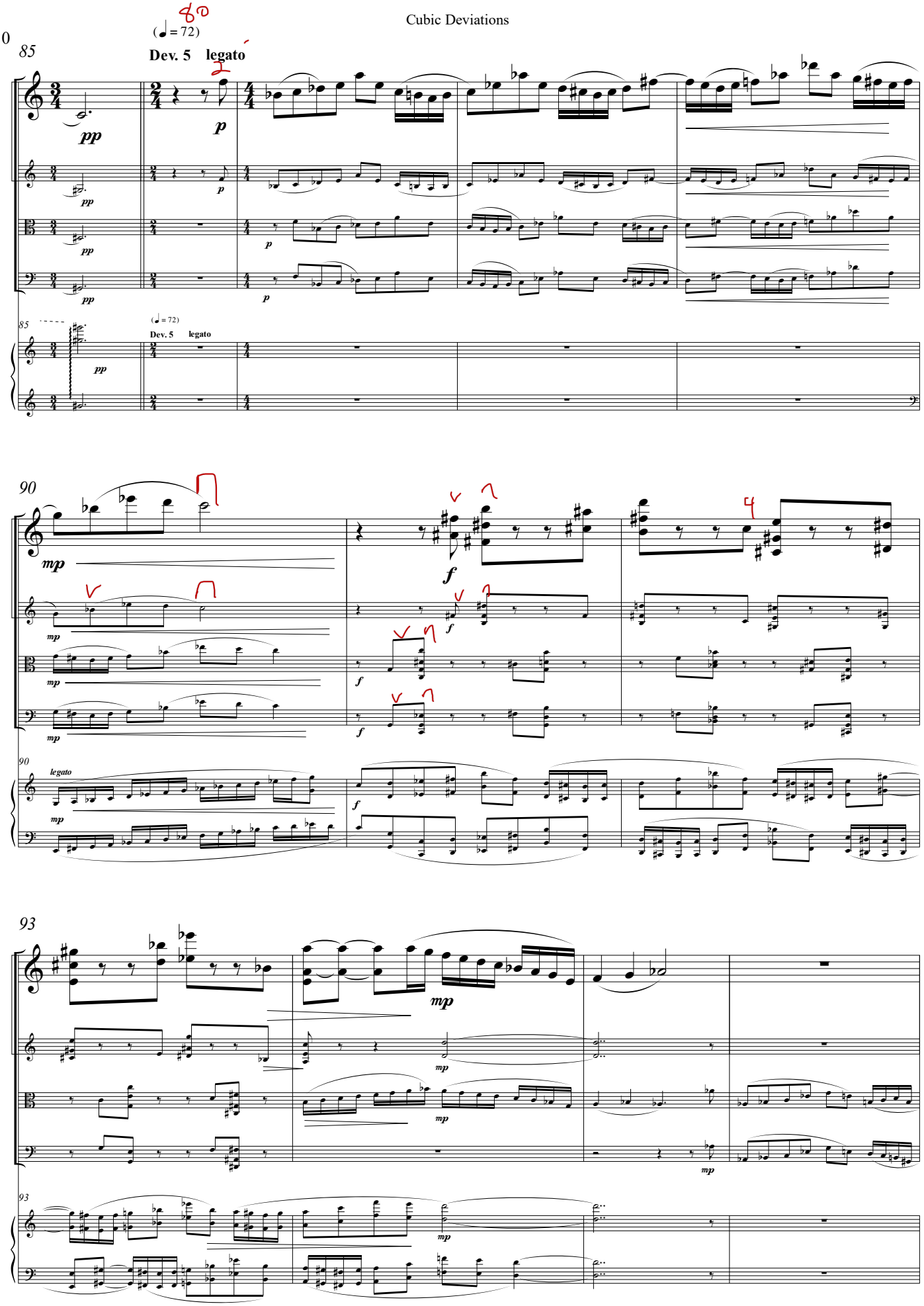


63




non stacc.
66
ff
f
p
69
cresc.
71
(♩ = 50)
Dev. 4 espressivo


74
cresc.
p
cresc.
77
(mp)
mf
8va
80
(8va)
pp
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mp)
rit.
mf


(♩ = 72)
Dev. 5 legato
85
pp
p
90
mp
f
legato
93
mp

97

rit.

(♩ = 92)

Dev. 6 con vivacita

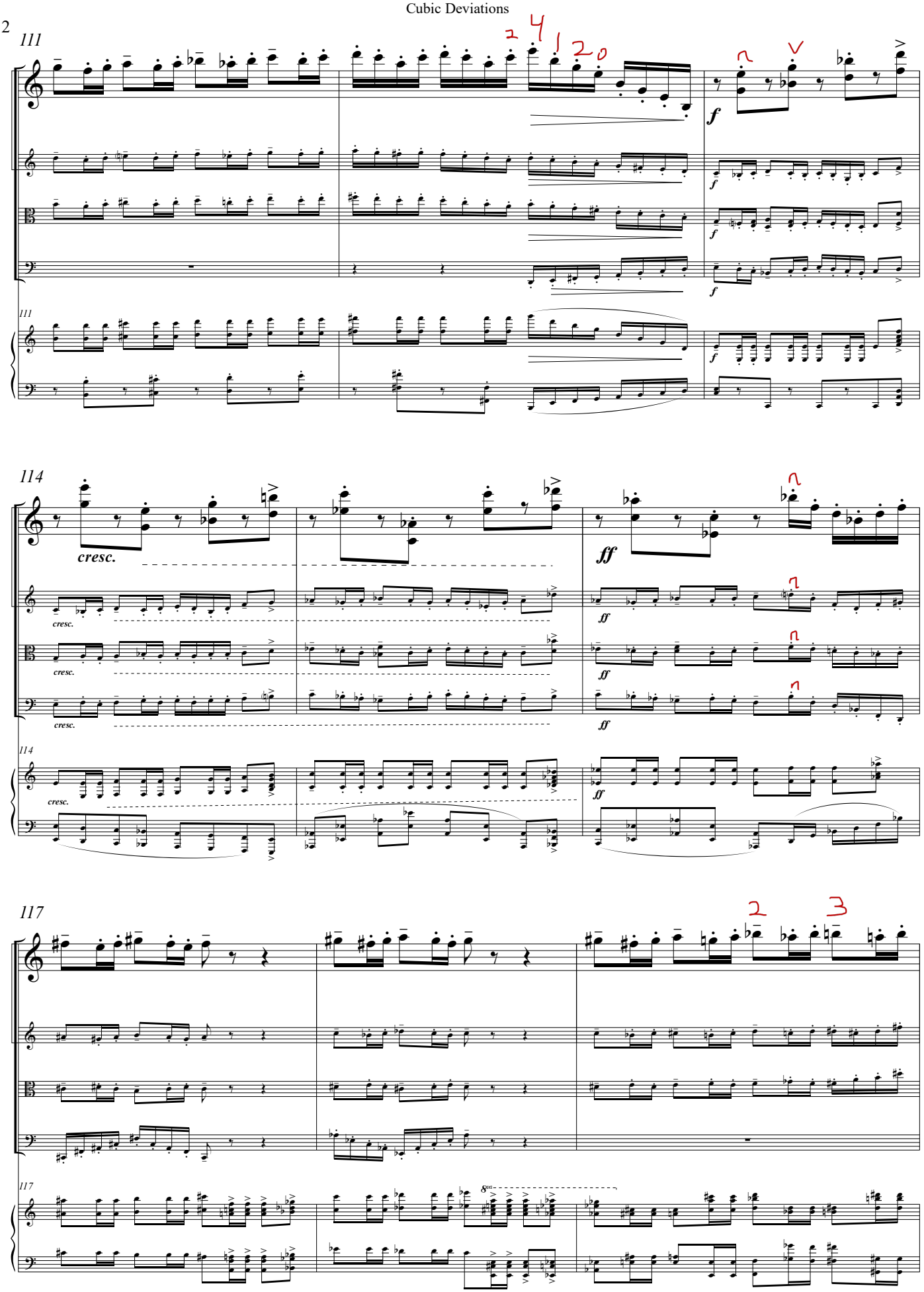
103

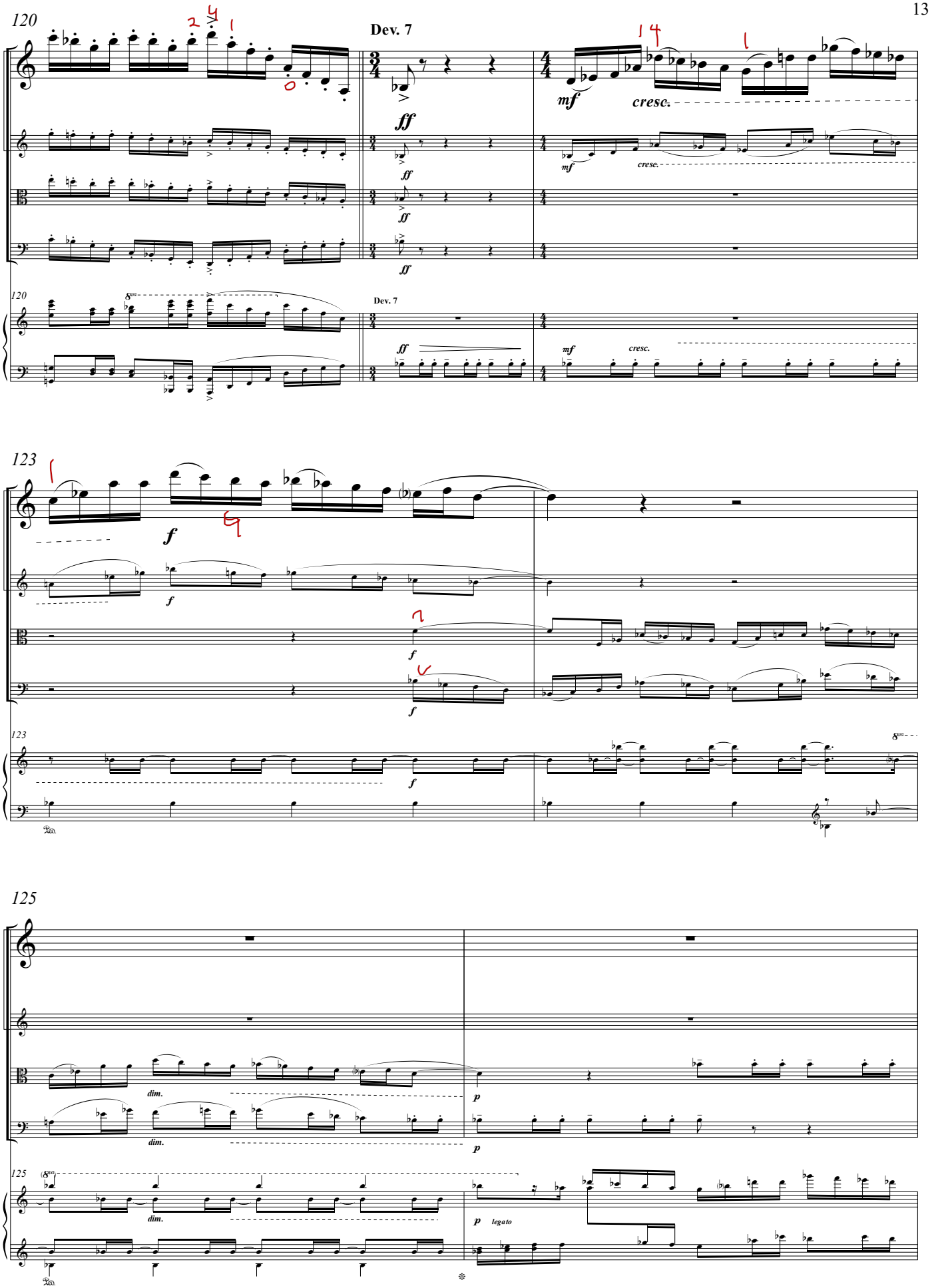
ben marcato

cresc.

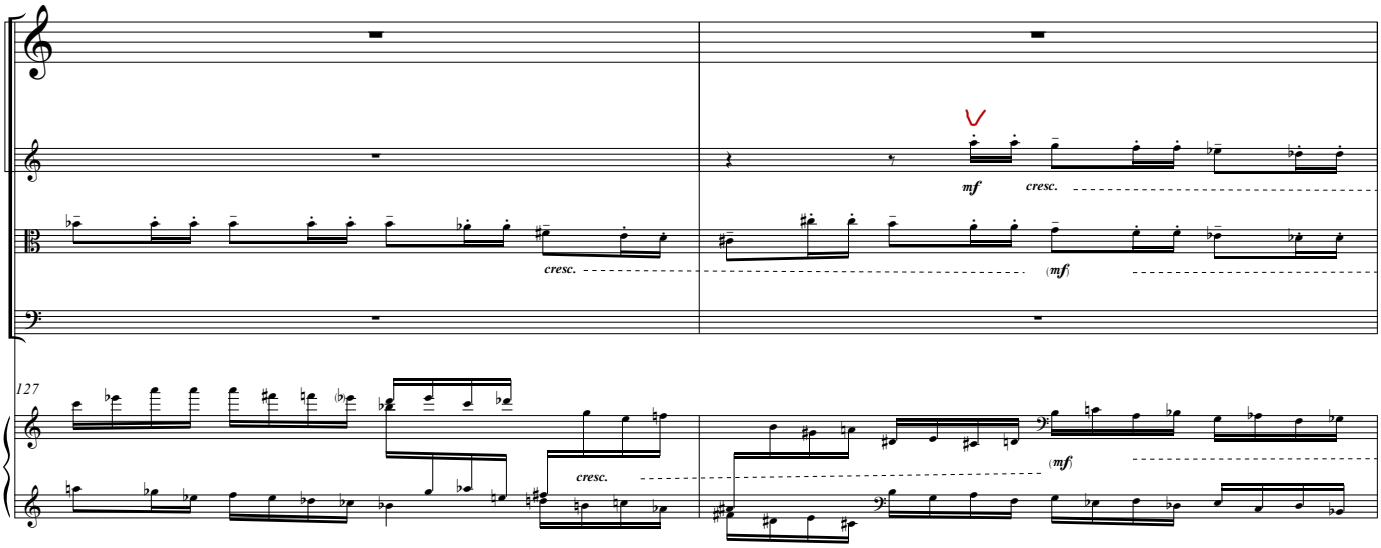
107

ff

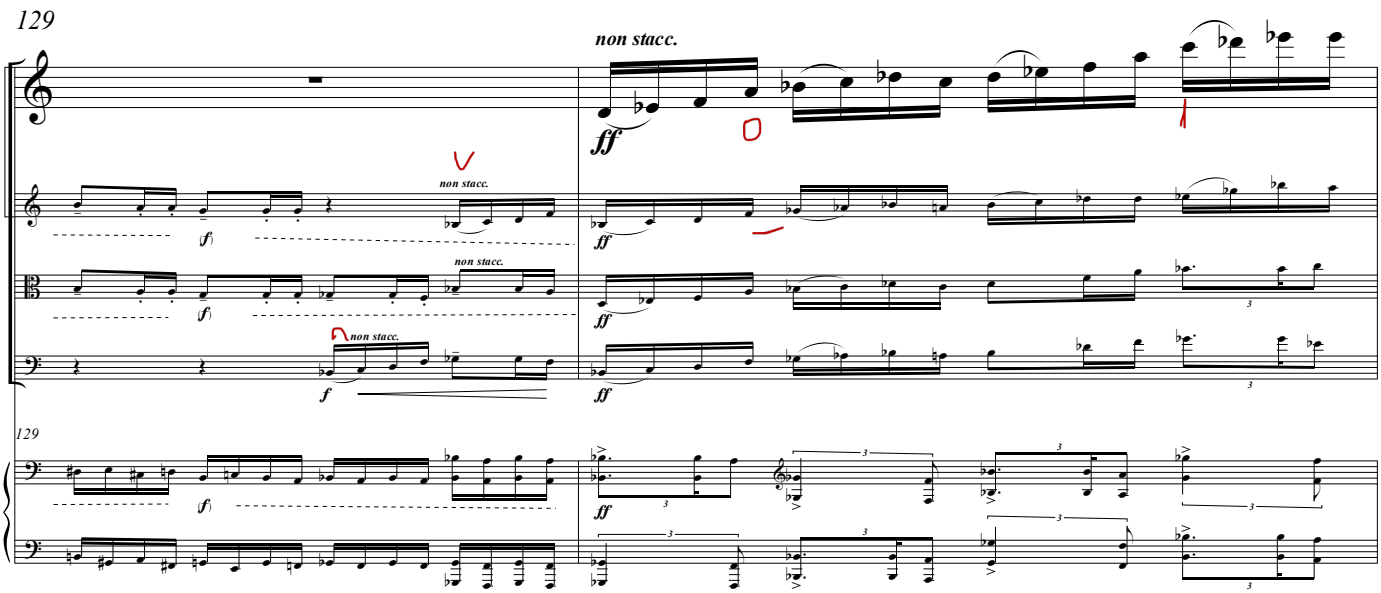

111
114
117
cresc.
ff
8va


120
Dev. 7
ff
mf
cresc.
123
f
125
dim.
p
legato

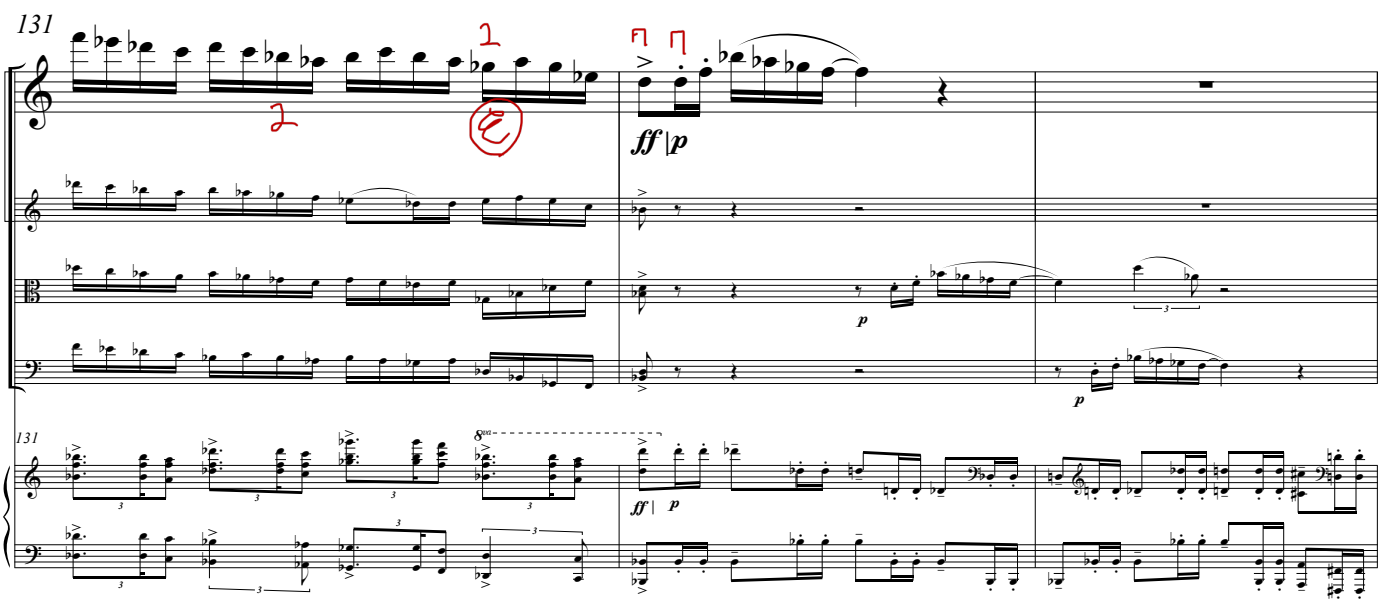
127

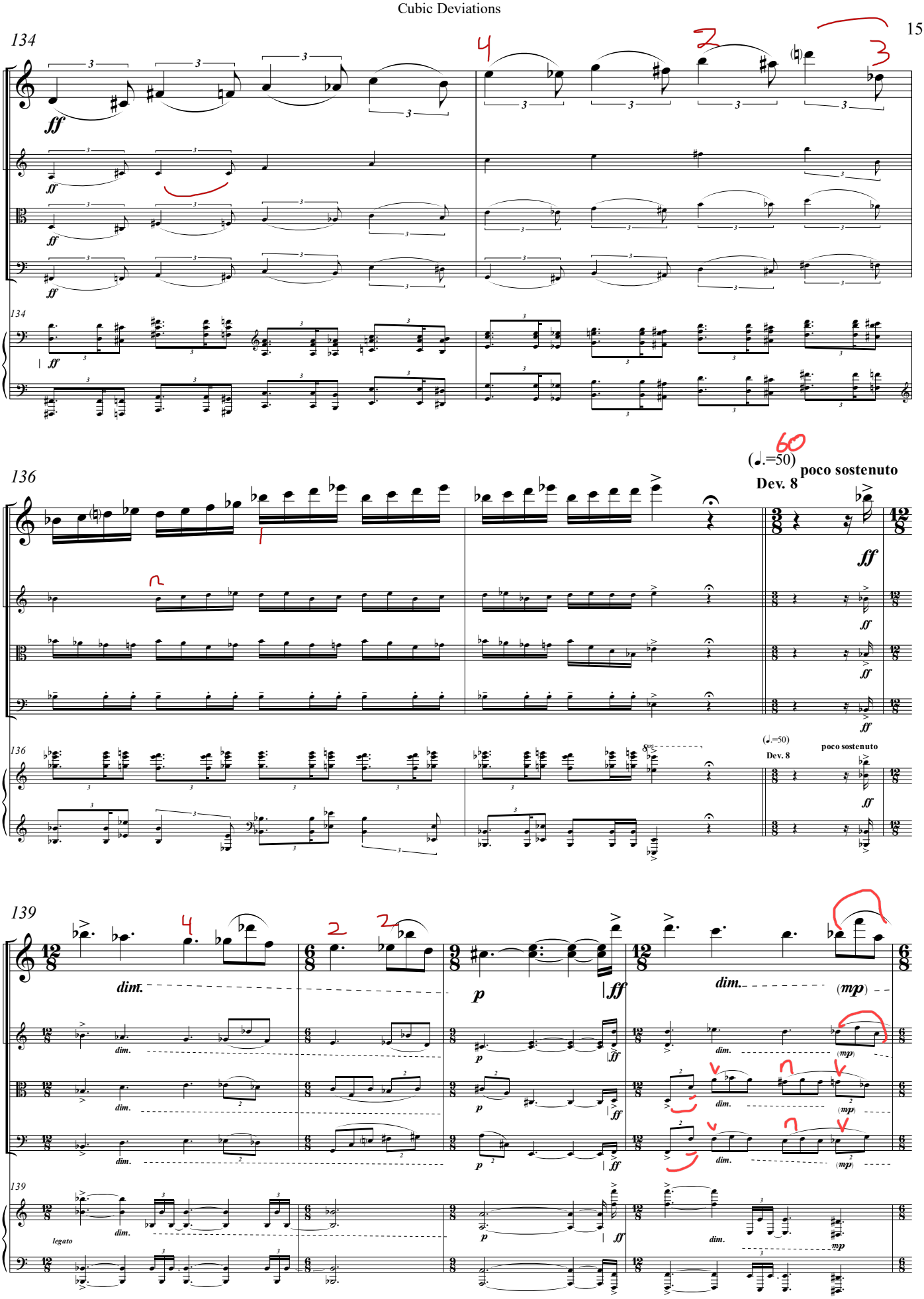

mf
cresc.
cresc.
(mf)
127
cresc.
(mf)

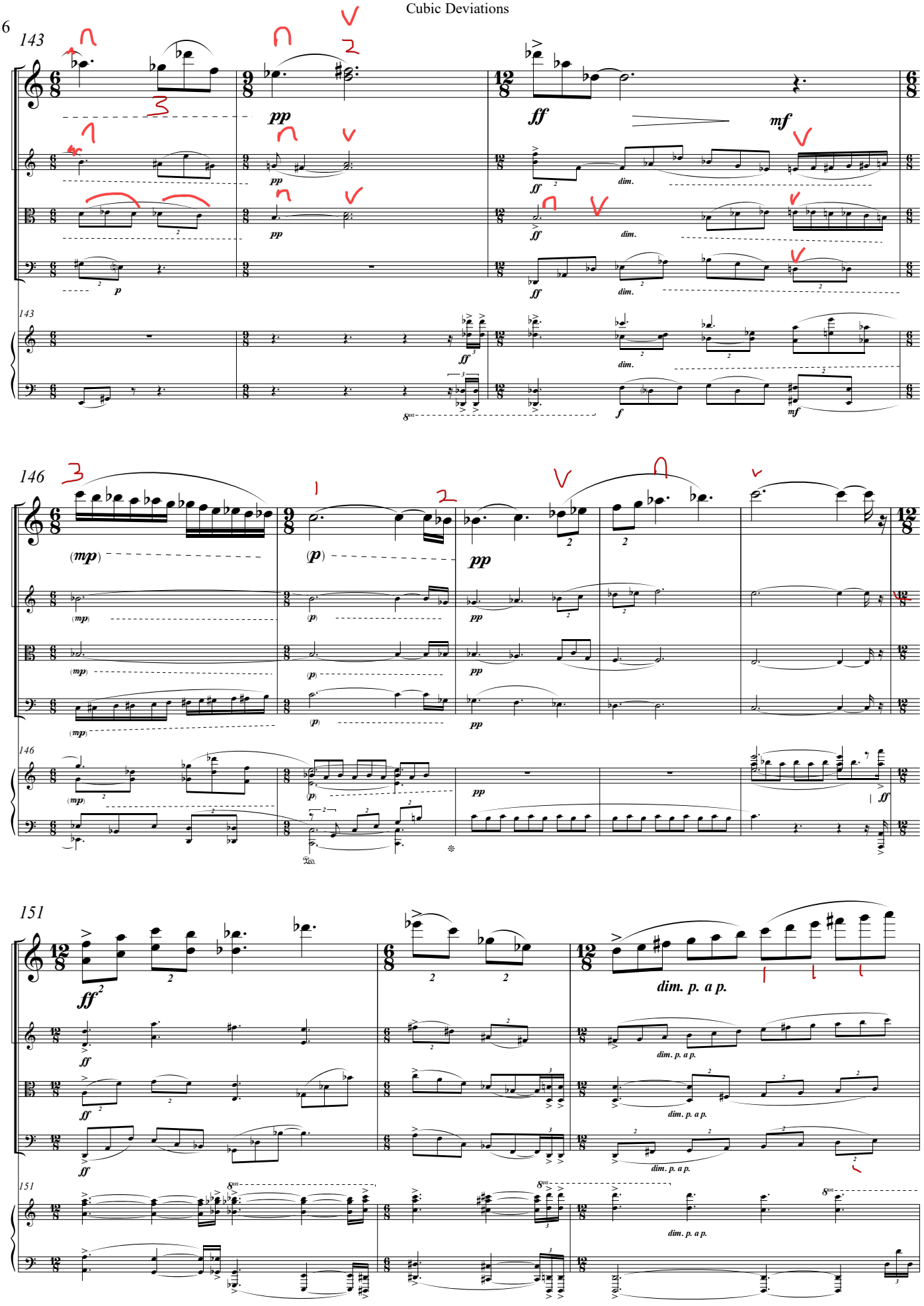
129

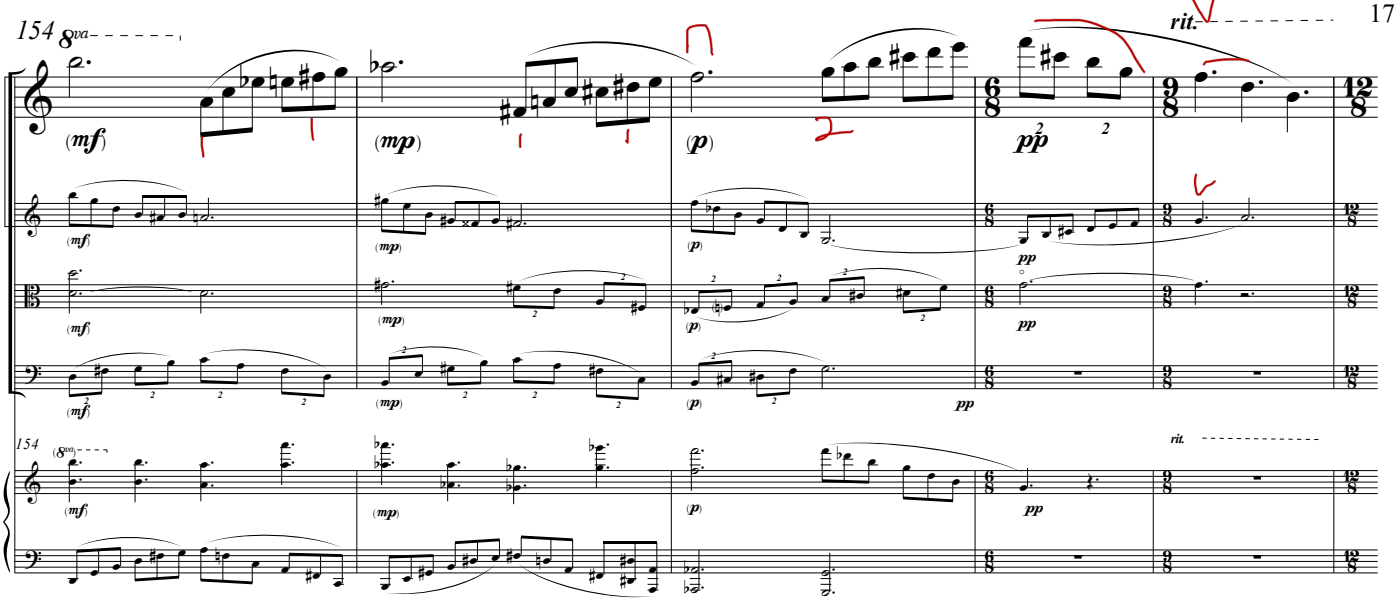

non stacc.
ff
non stacc.
(f)
non stacc.
(f)
non stacc.
f
ff
ff
ff
129
(f)
ff
ff
ff

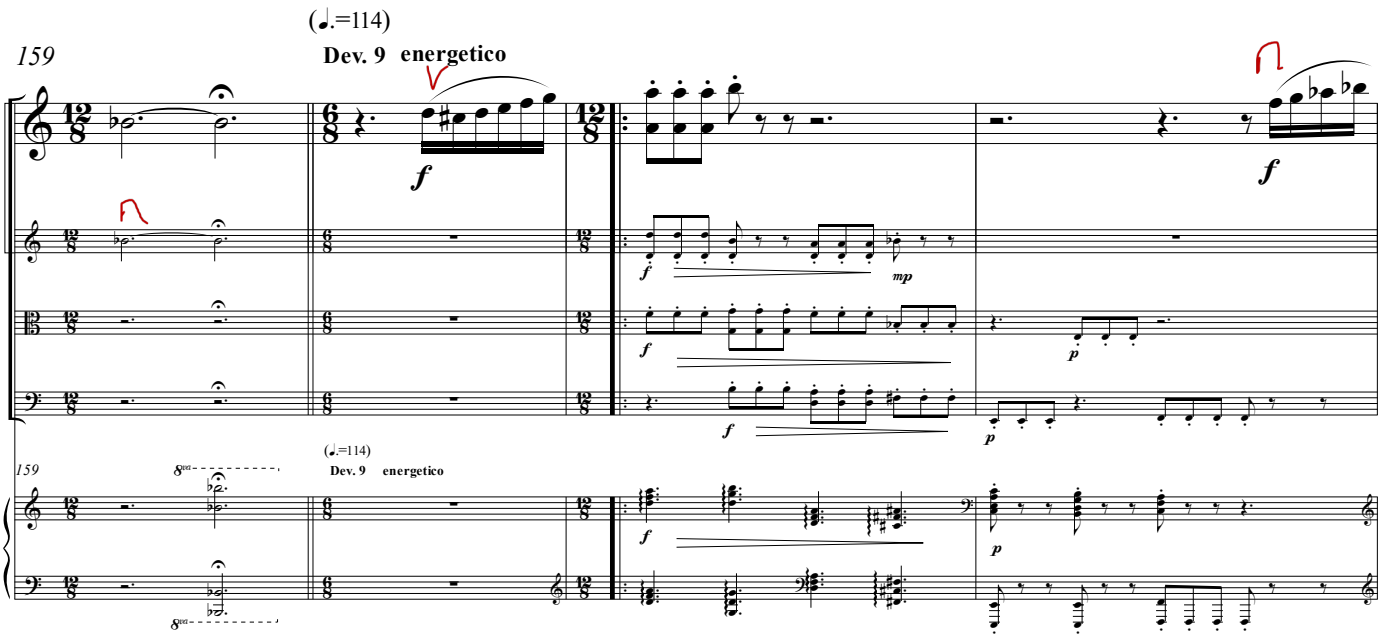
131

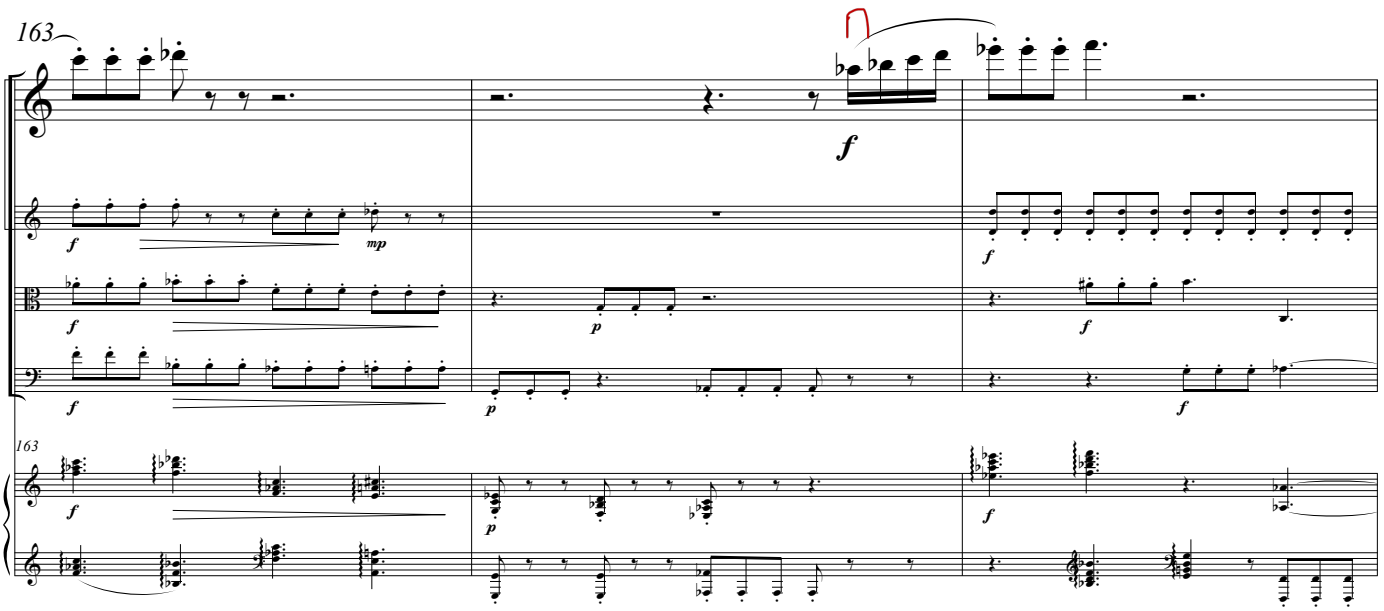

ff |p
p
p
131
ff | p

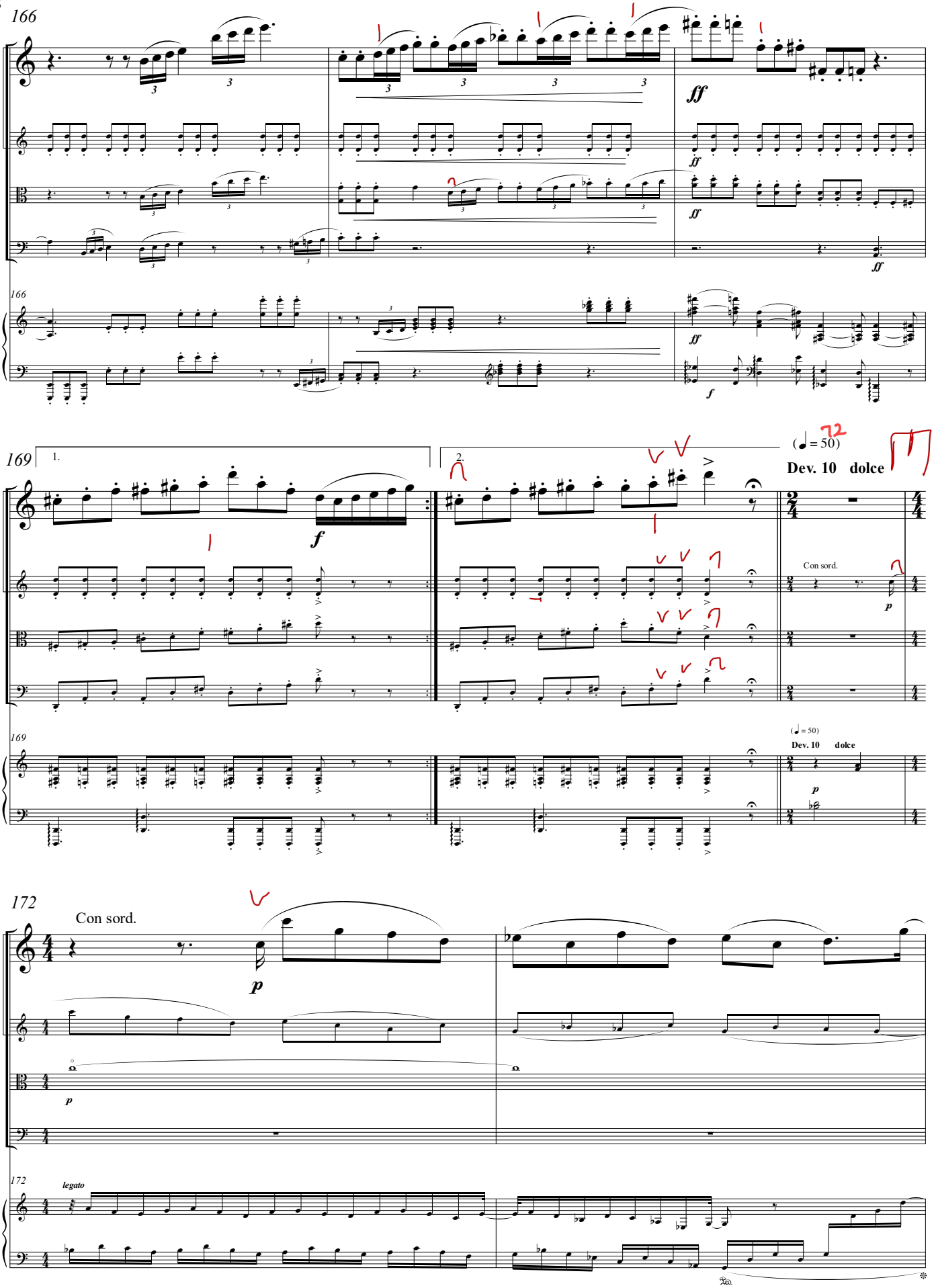

134
ff
136
(♩.=50)
poco sostenuto
Dev. 8
139
dim.
p
ff
(mp)
legato
mp

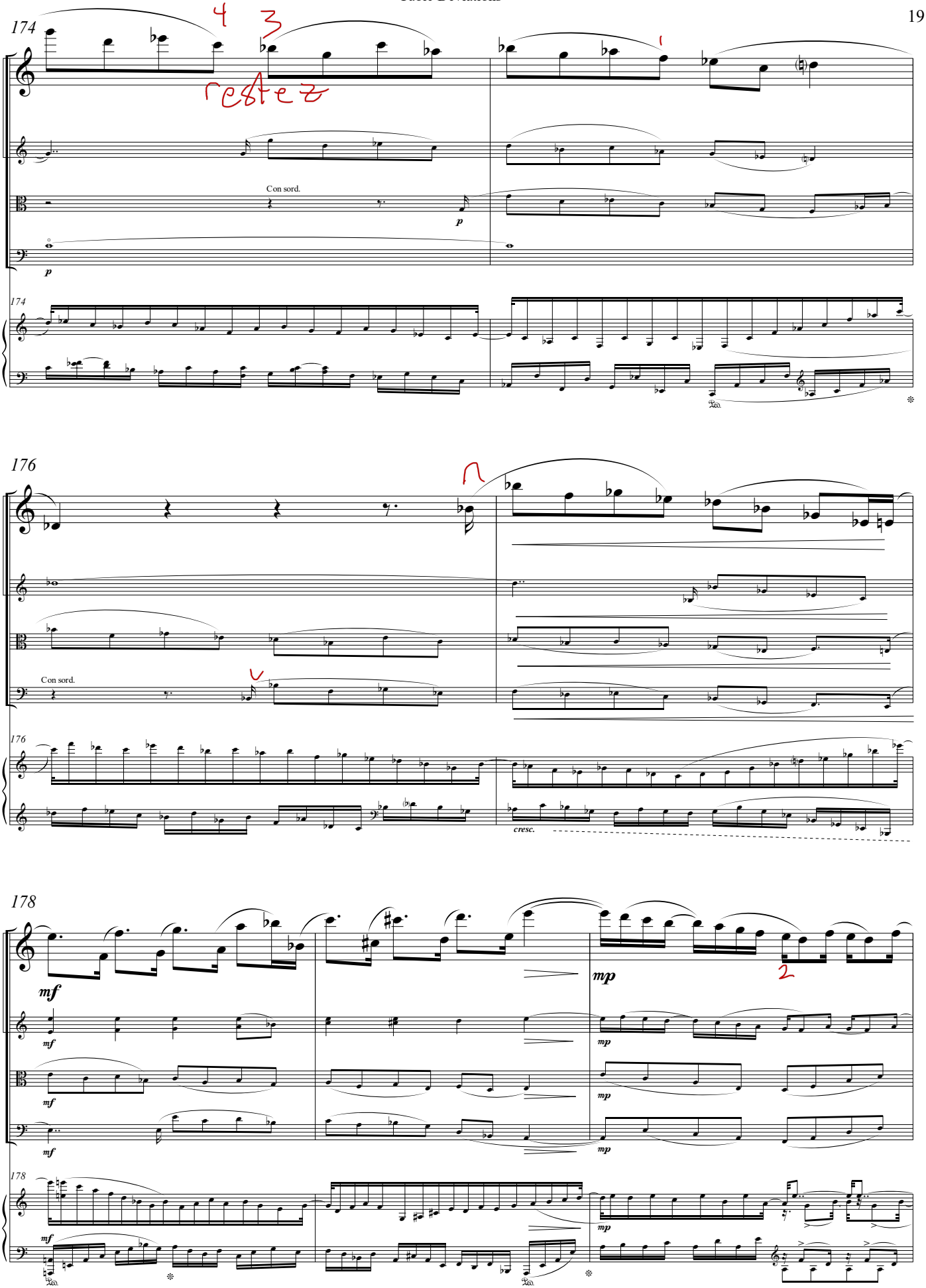

143
pp
ff
mf
dim.
p
f
146
(mp)
(p)
pp
151
ff
dim. p. a p.

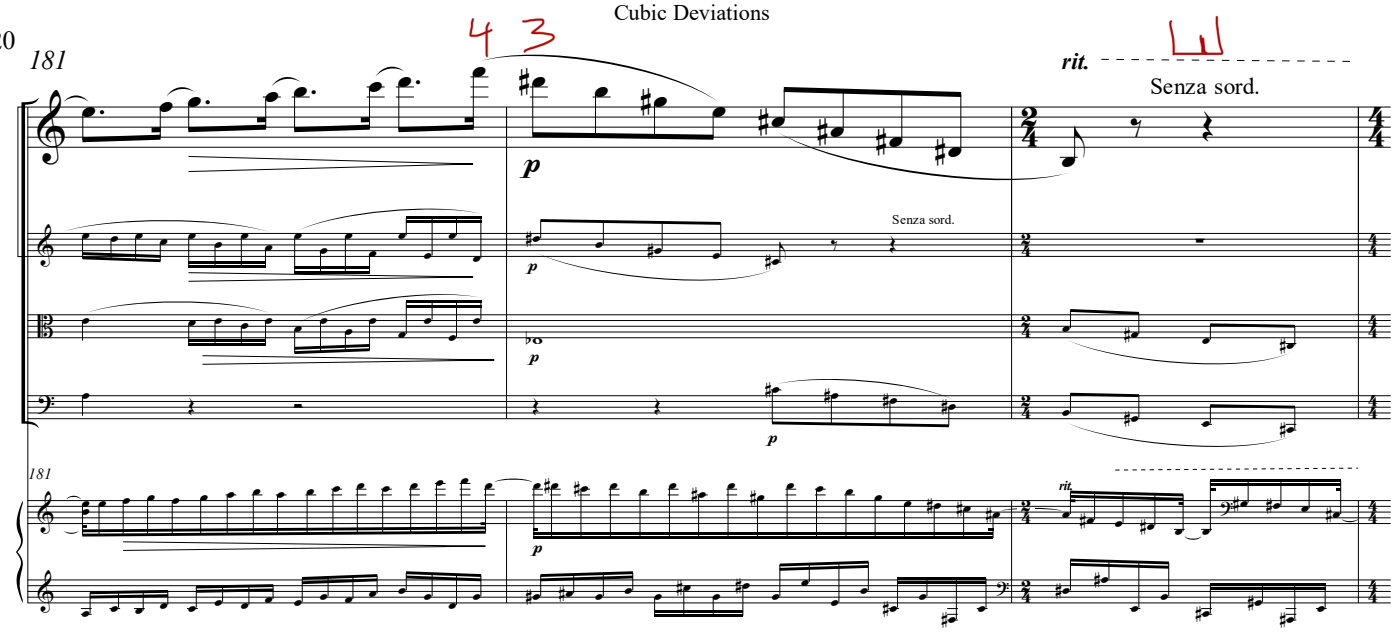

154
8va
(mf)
(mp)
(p)
pp
rit.

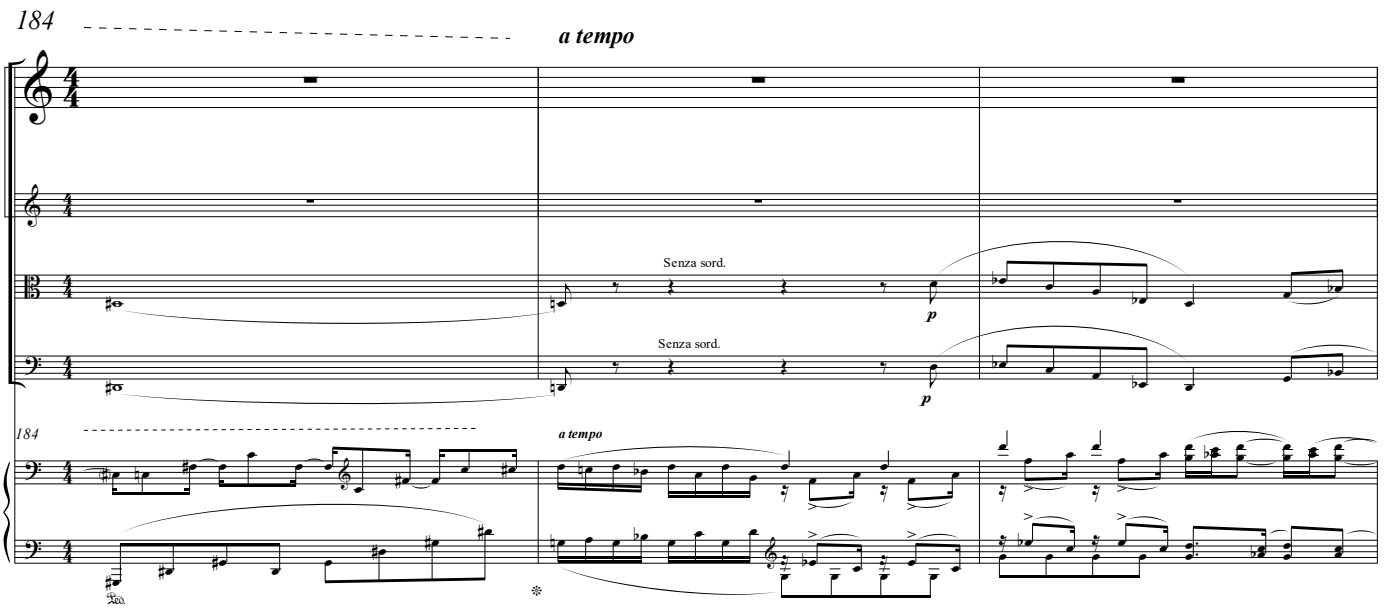

(♩.=114)
159
Dev. 9 energetico
f
mp
p

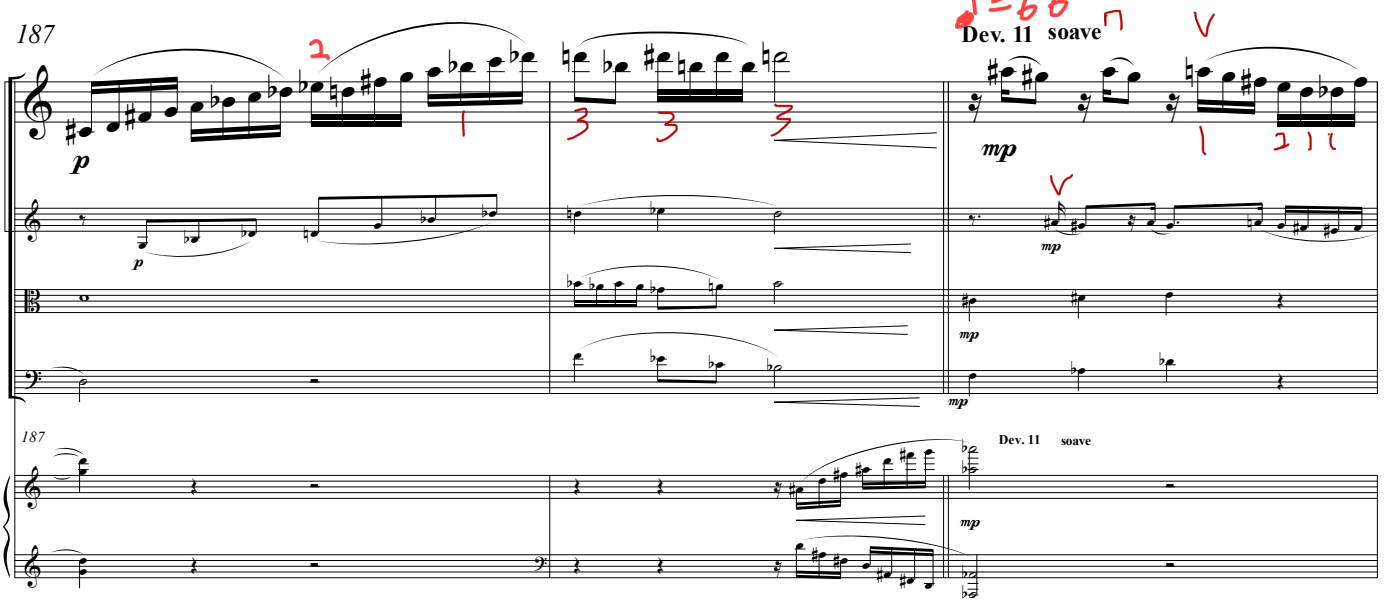

163
f
mp
p

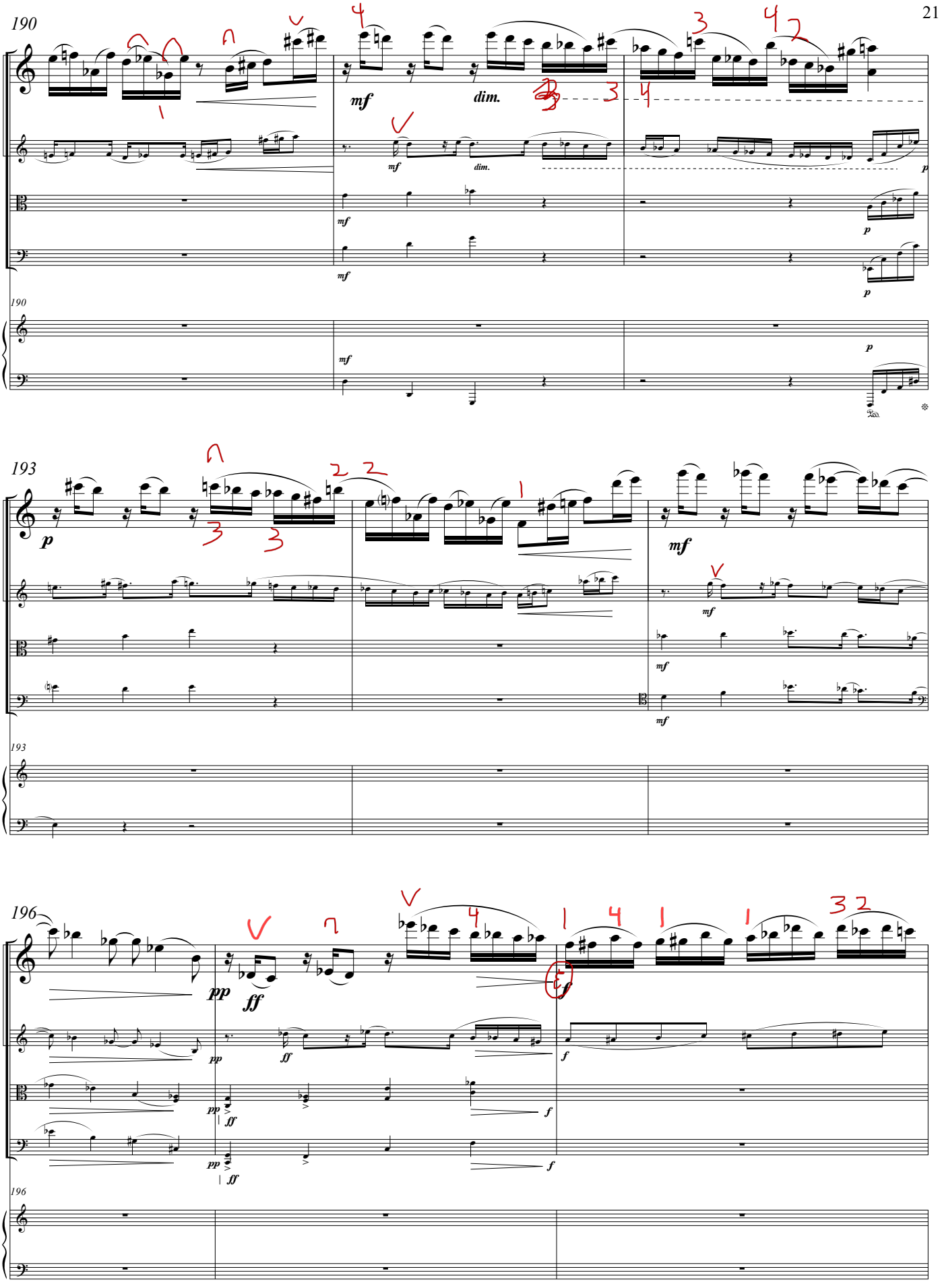

166
ff
f
169
1.
2.
(♩ = 50)
Dev. 10 dolce
Con sord.
p
172
Con sord.
legato

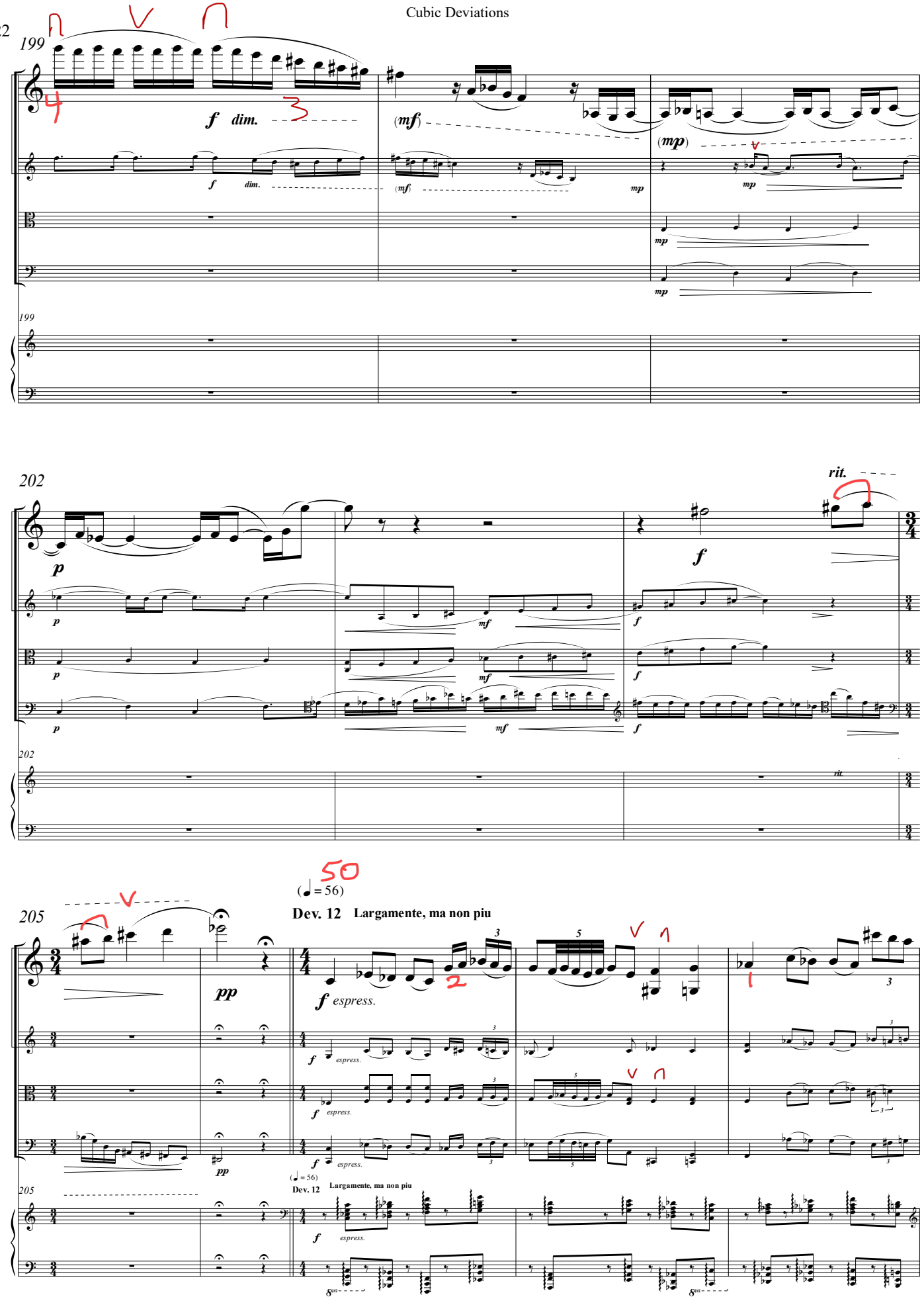

174
Con sord.
p
176
Con sord.
cresc.
178
mf
mp

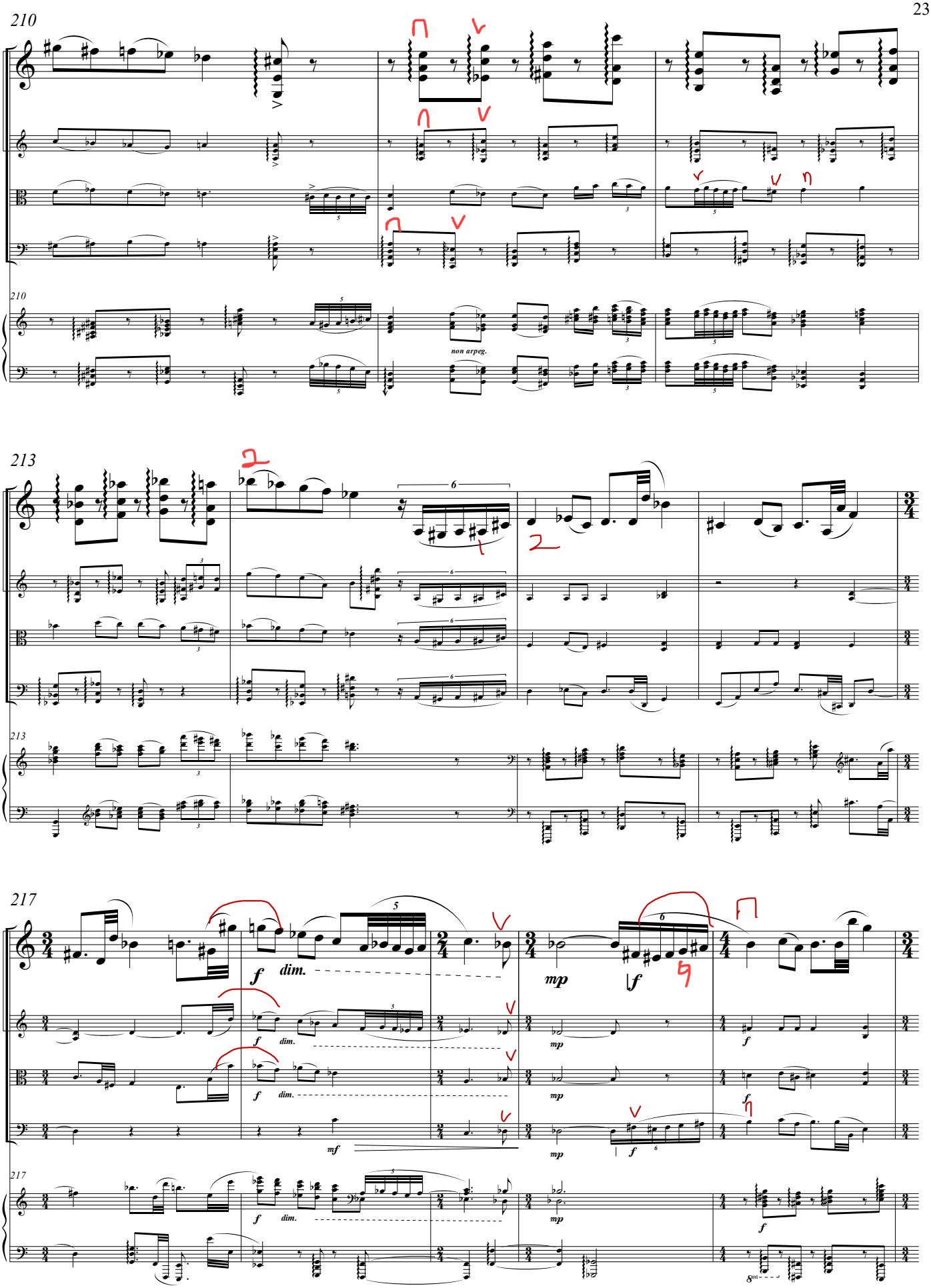

181
rit.
Senza sord.
p
Senza sord.
p
p
181
rit.
p

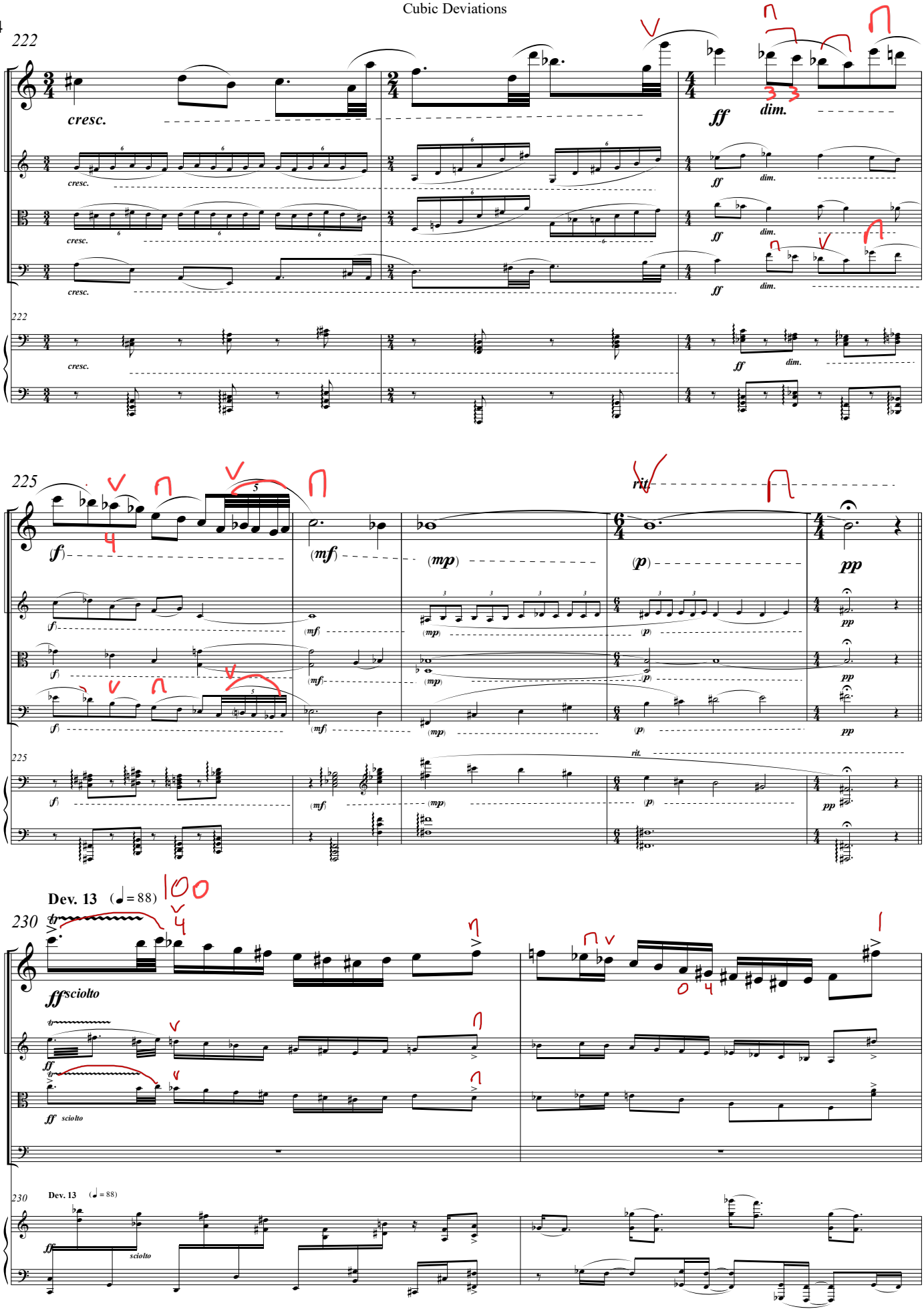

184
a tempo
Senza sord.
p
Senza sord.
p
184
a tempo


187
Dev. 11 soave
p
p
mp
mp
mp
mp
187
Dev. 11 soave
mp


190
mf
dim.
p
193
p
mf
196
pp
ff
f


199
f dim.
(mf)
(mp)
202
rit.
205
pp
(♩ = 56)
Dev. 12 Largamente, ma non piu
espress.


210
non arpeg.
213
217
f
dim.
mp
mf

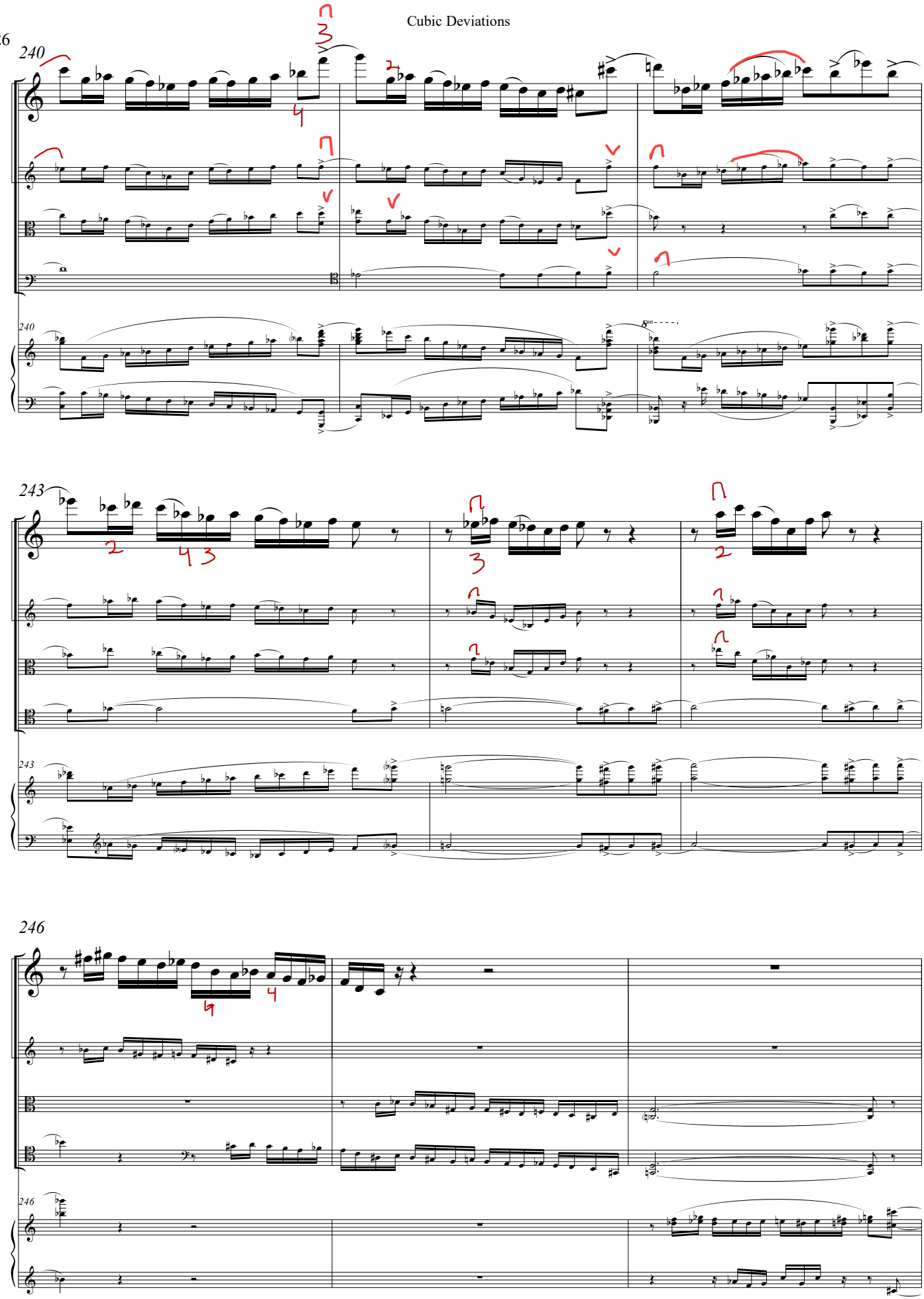

222
cresc.
ff
dim.
225
(f)
(mf)
(mp)
(p)
pp
rit.
Dev. 13 (♩ = 88)
230
ffsciolto
sciolto

232

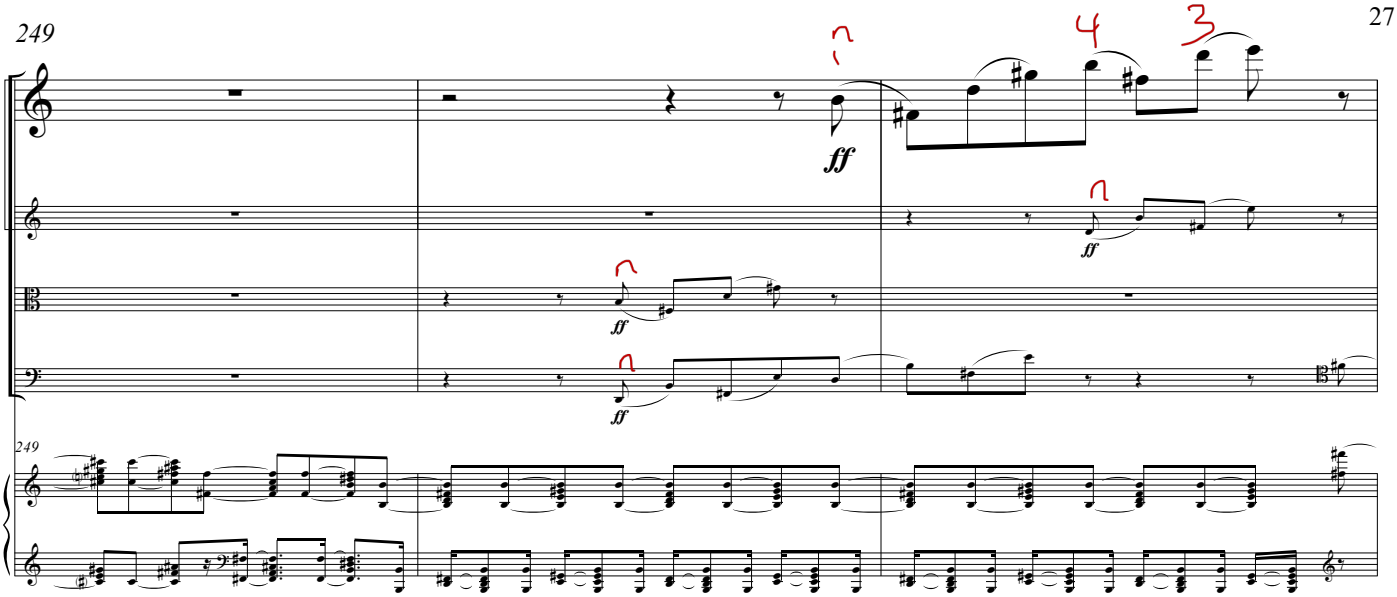
235

237

Dev. 14


240
240
243
243
246
246

249



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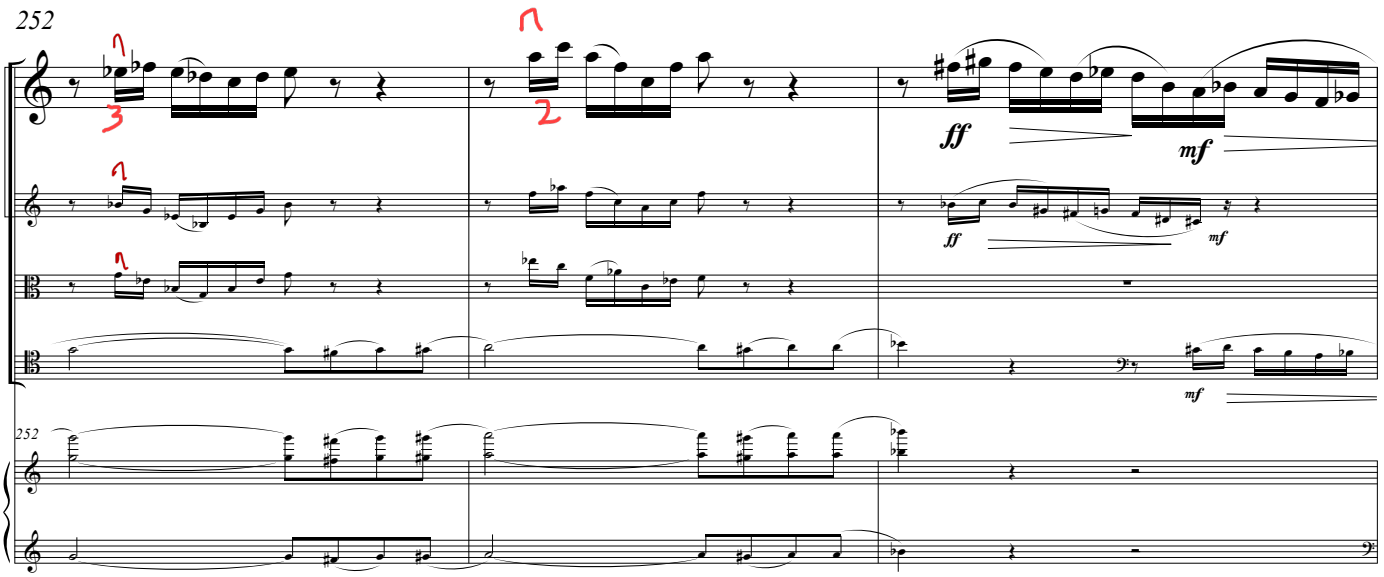
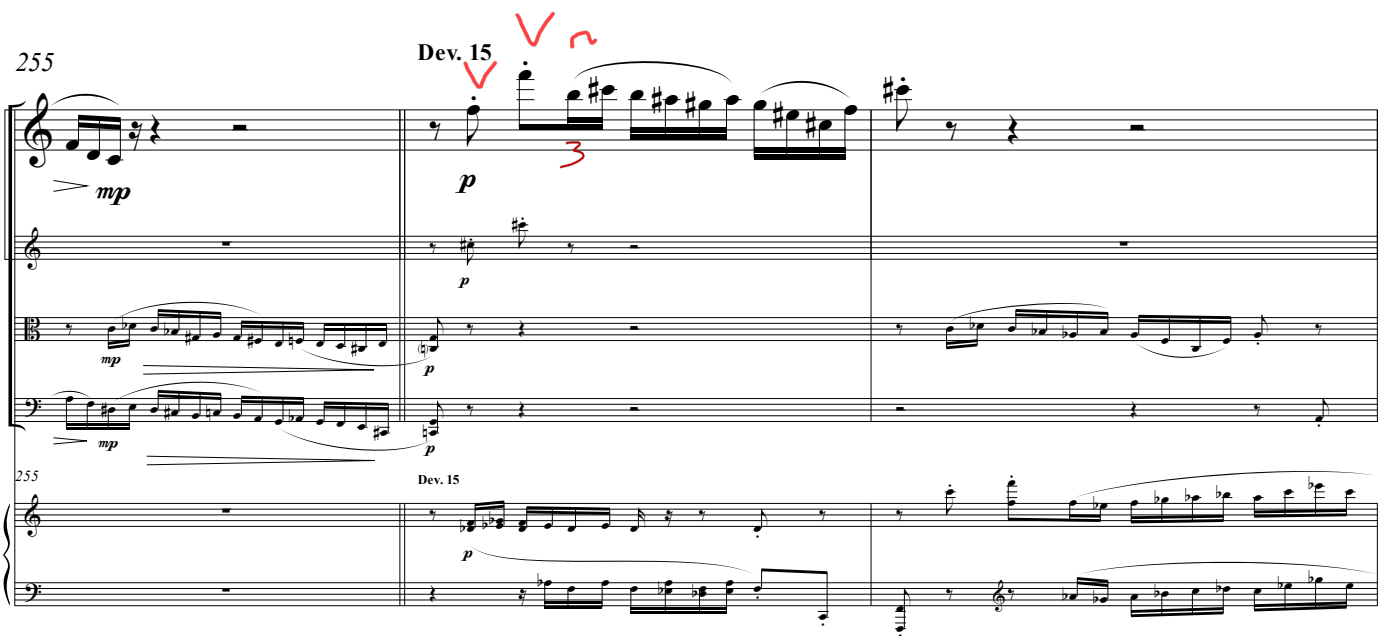
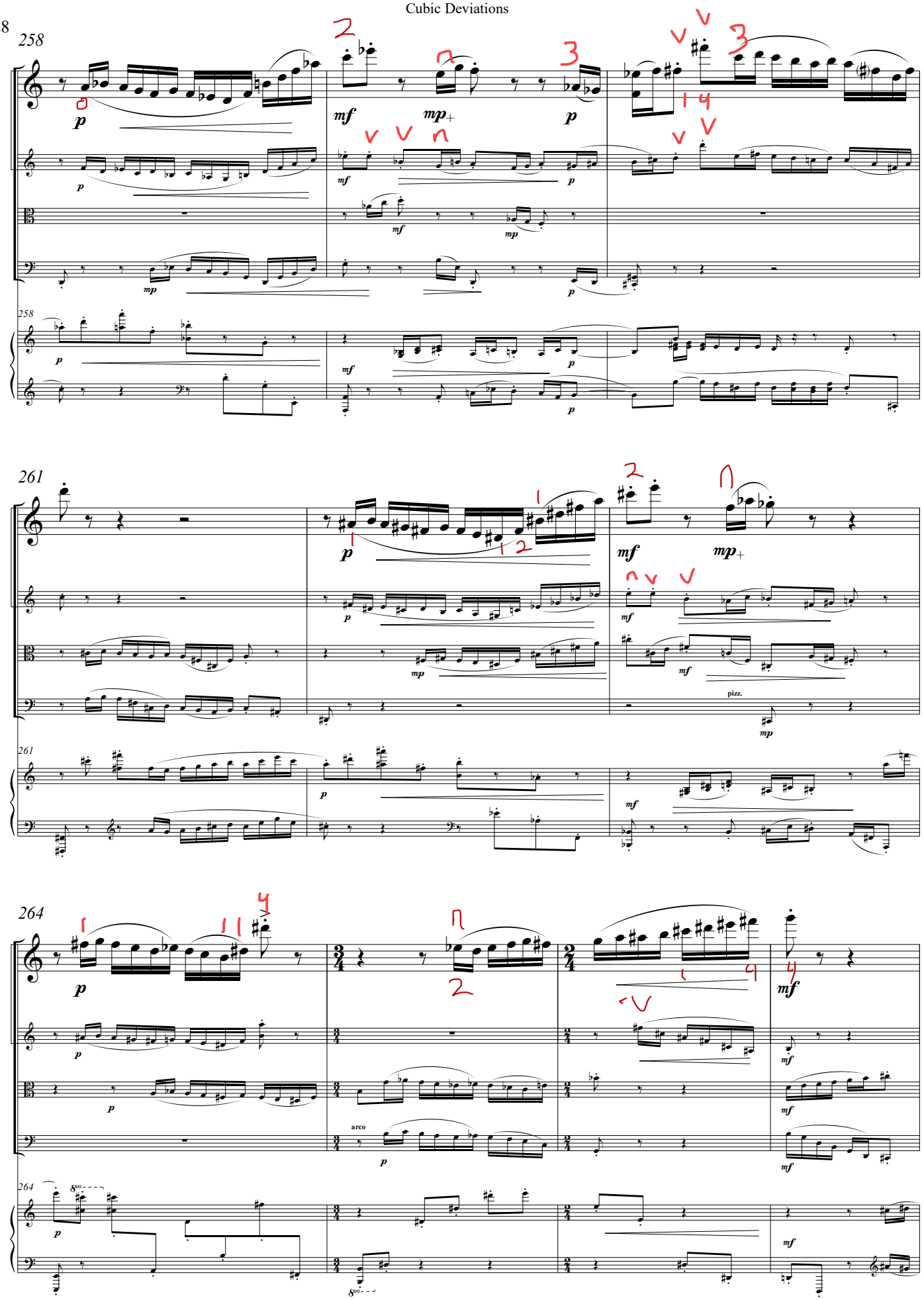
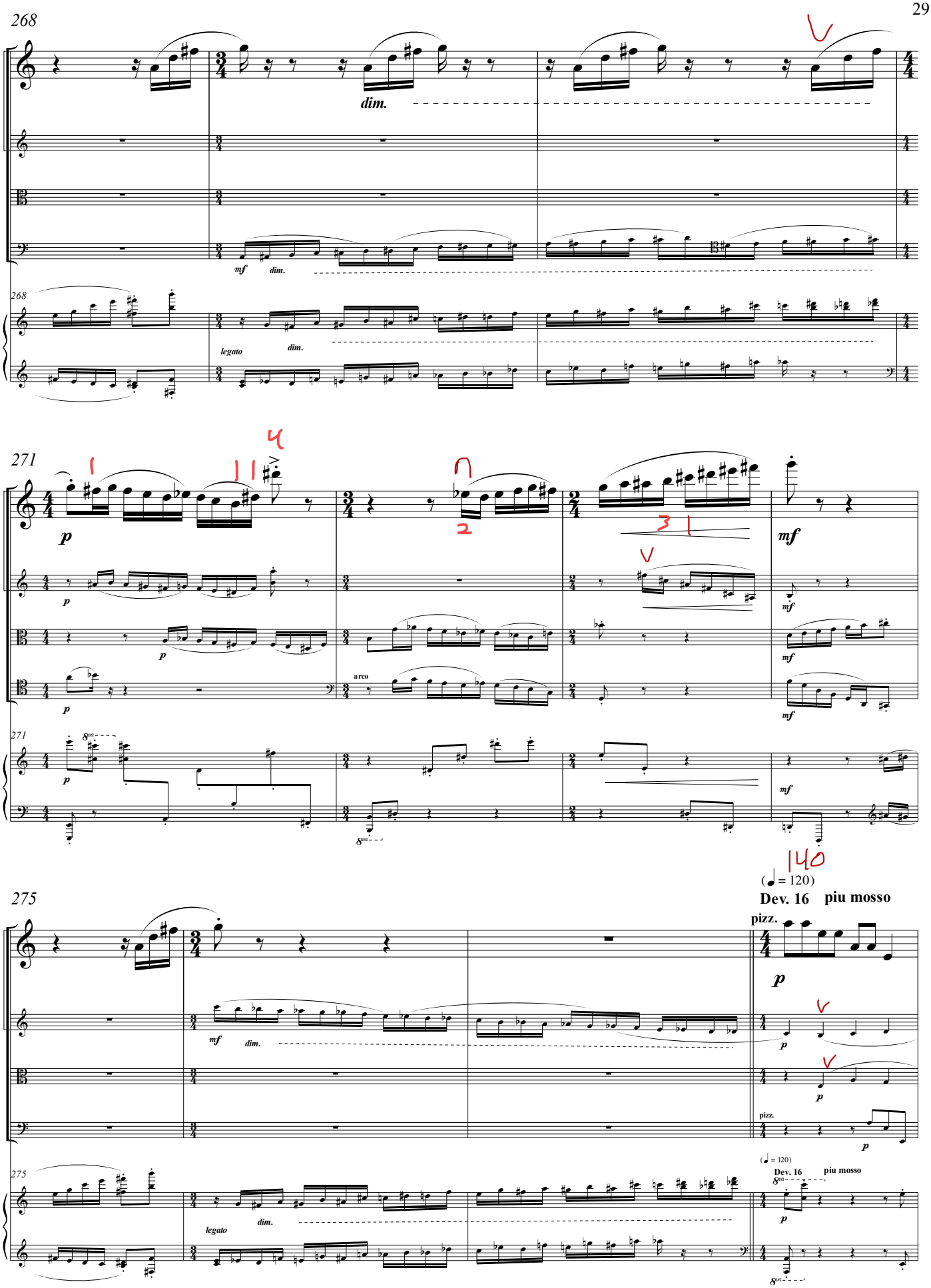


255

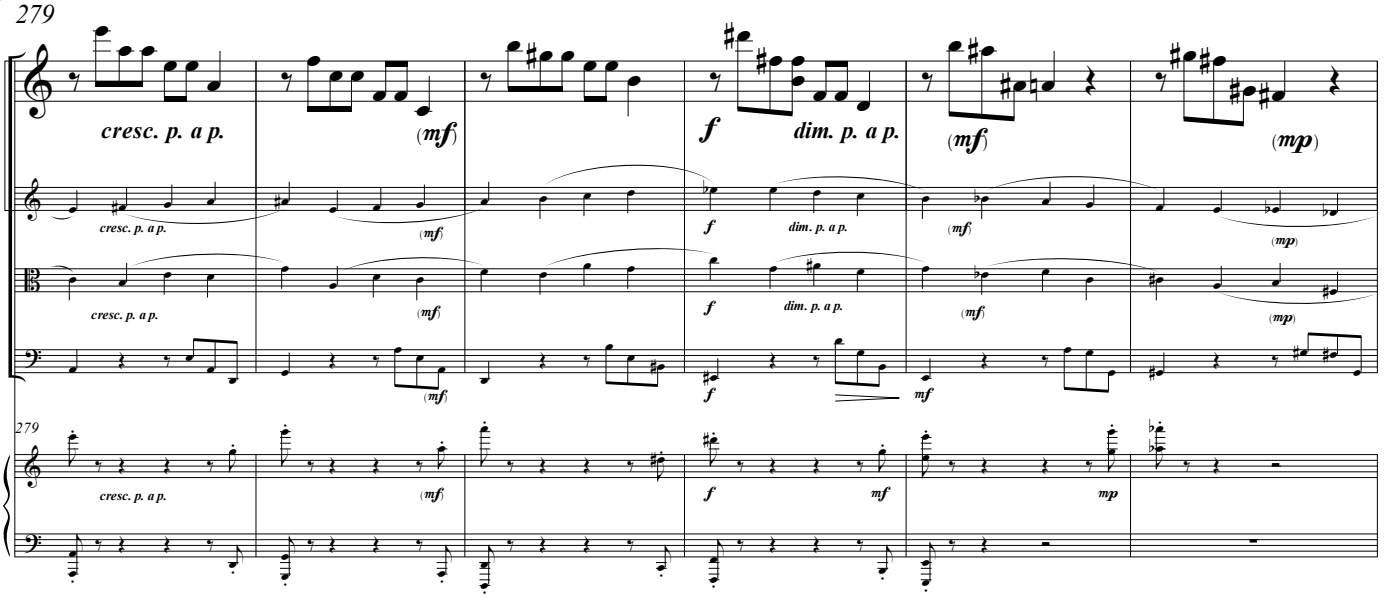
Dev. 15



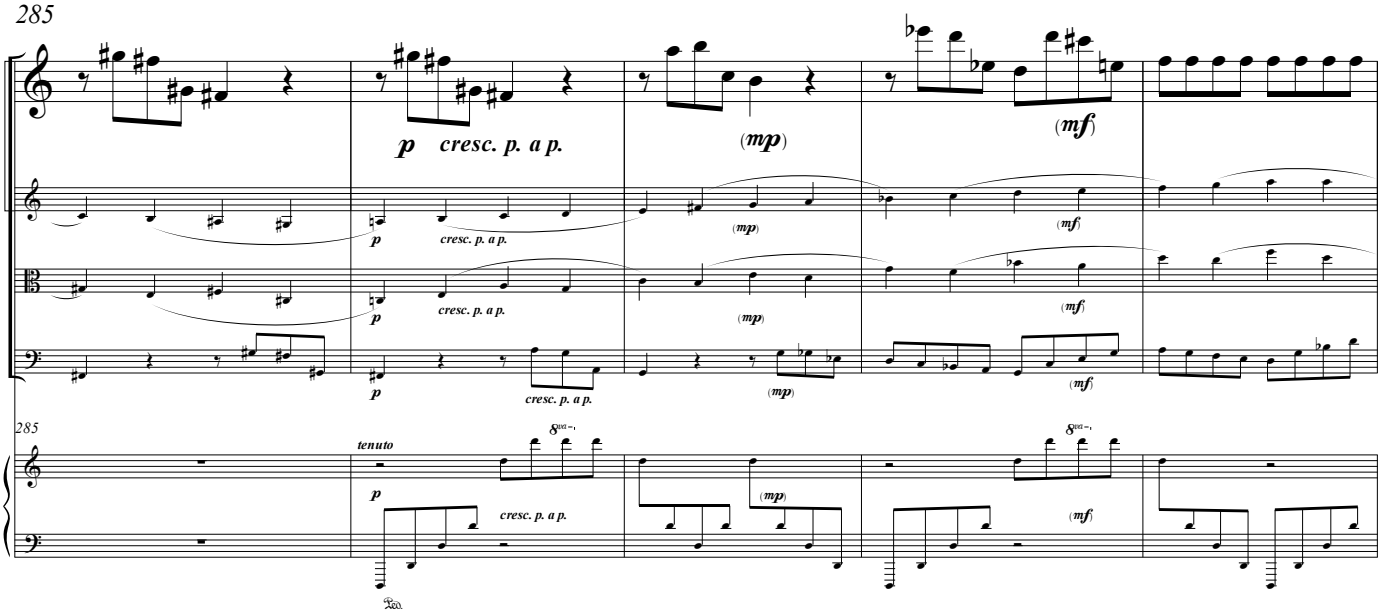

258
261
264
arco
pizz.


268
dim.
mf
dim.
legato
dim.
271
p
mf
arco
140
(♩ = 120)
Dev. 16
piu mosso
275
pizz.
mf
dim.
legato

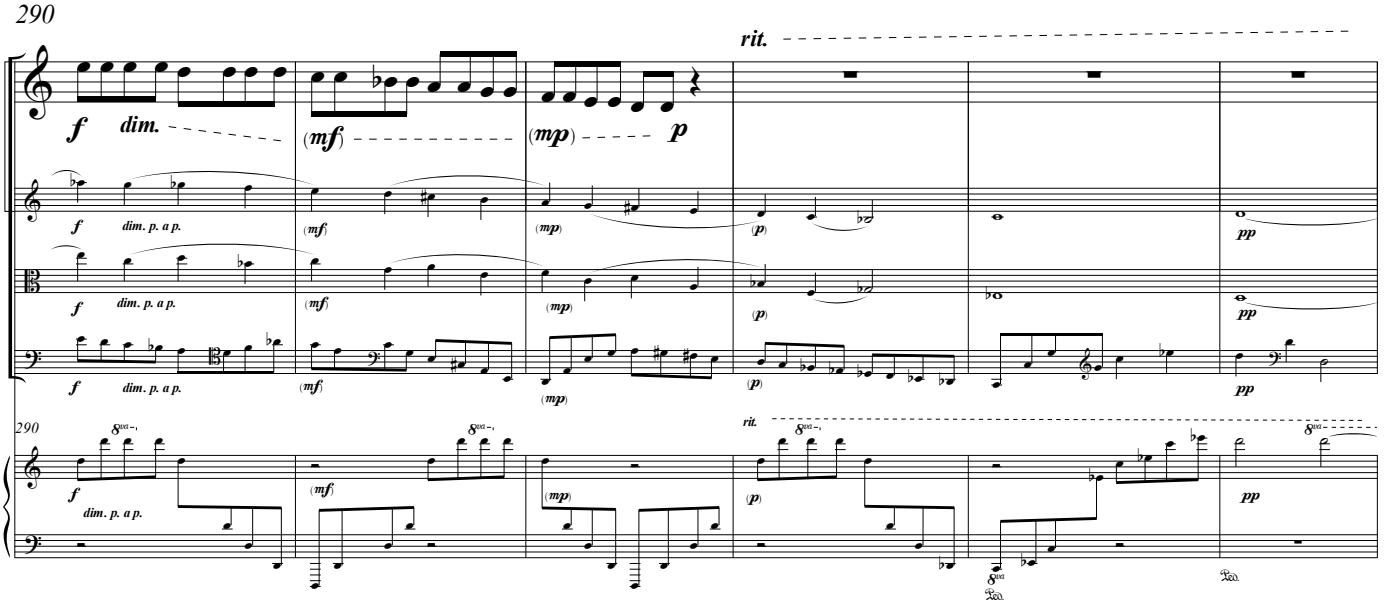
279

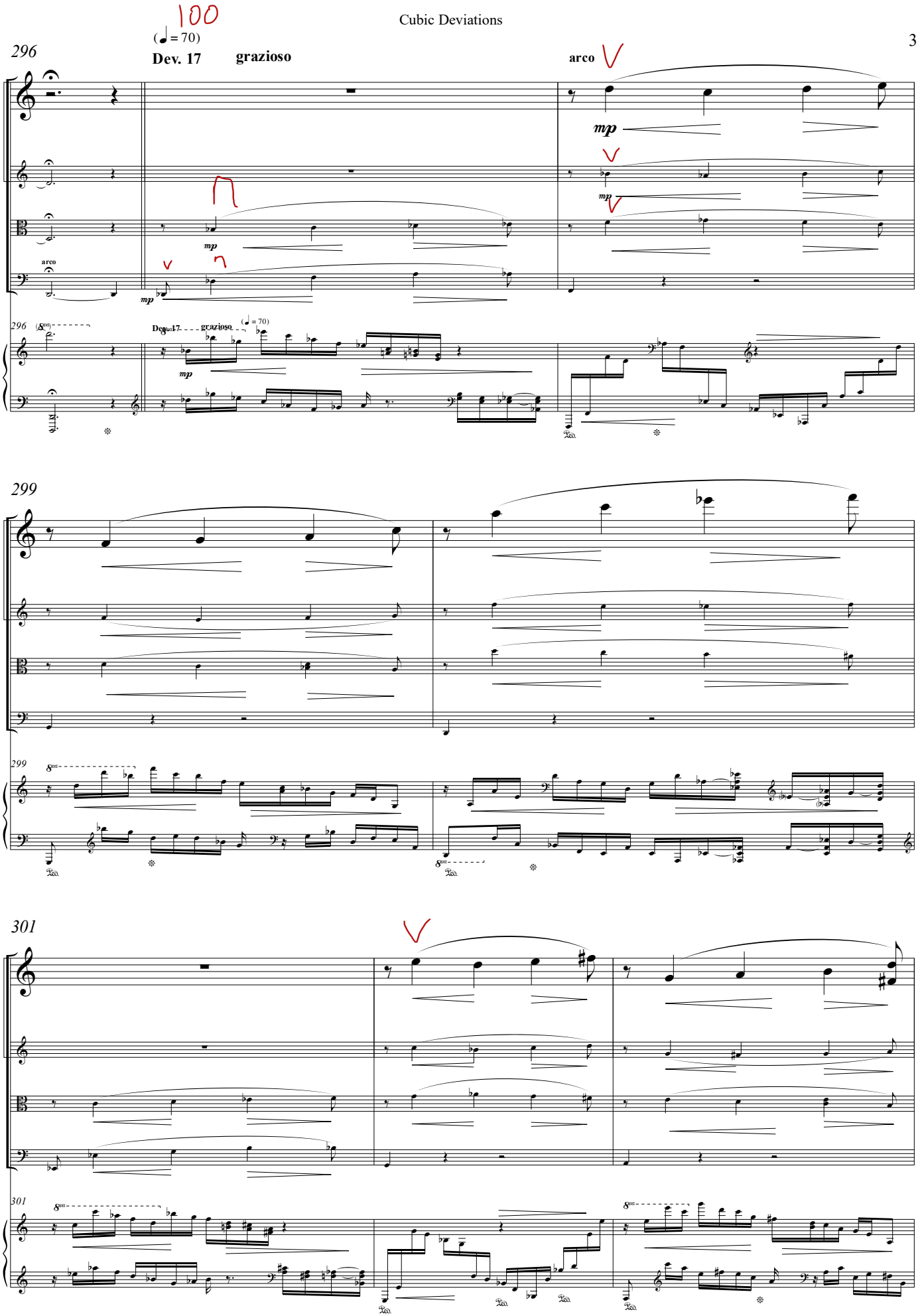

cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
f
dim. p. a p.
(mf)
(mp)
279

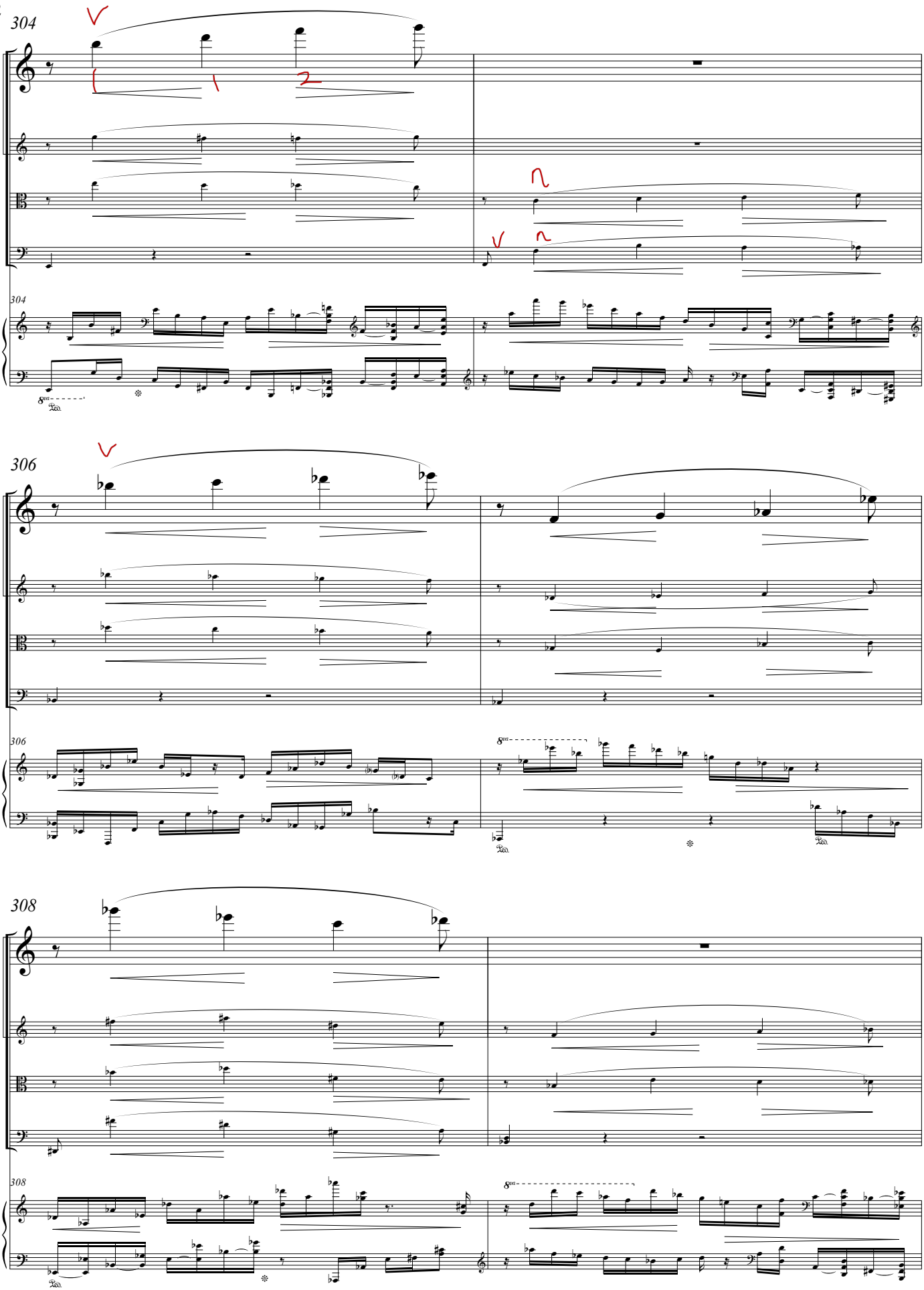
285


p
cresc. p. a p.
(mp)
(mf)
285
tenuto

290


f
dim.
(mf)
(mp)
p
rit.
dim. p. a p.
pp
290


100
(♩ = 70)
Dev. 17
grazioso
arco
mp
296
299
301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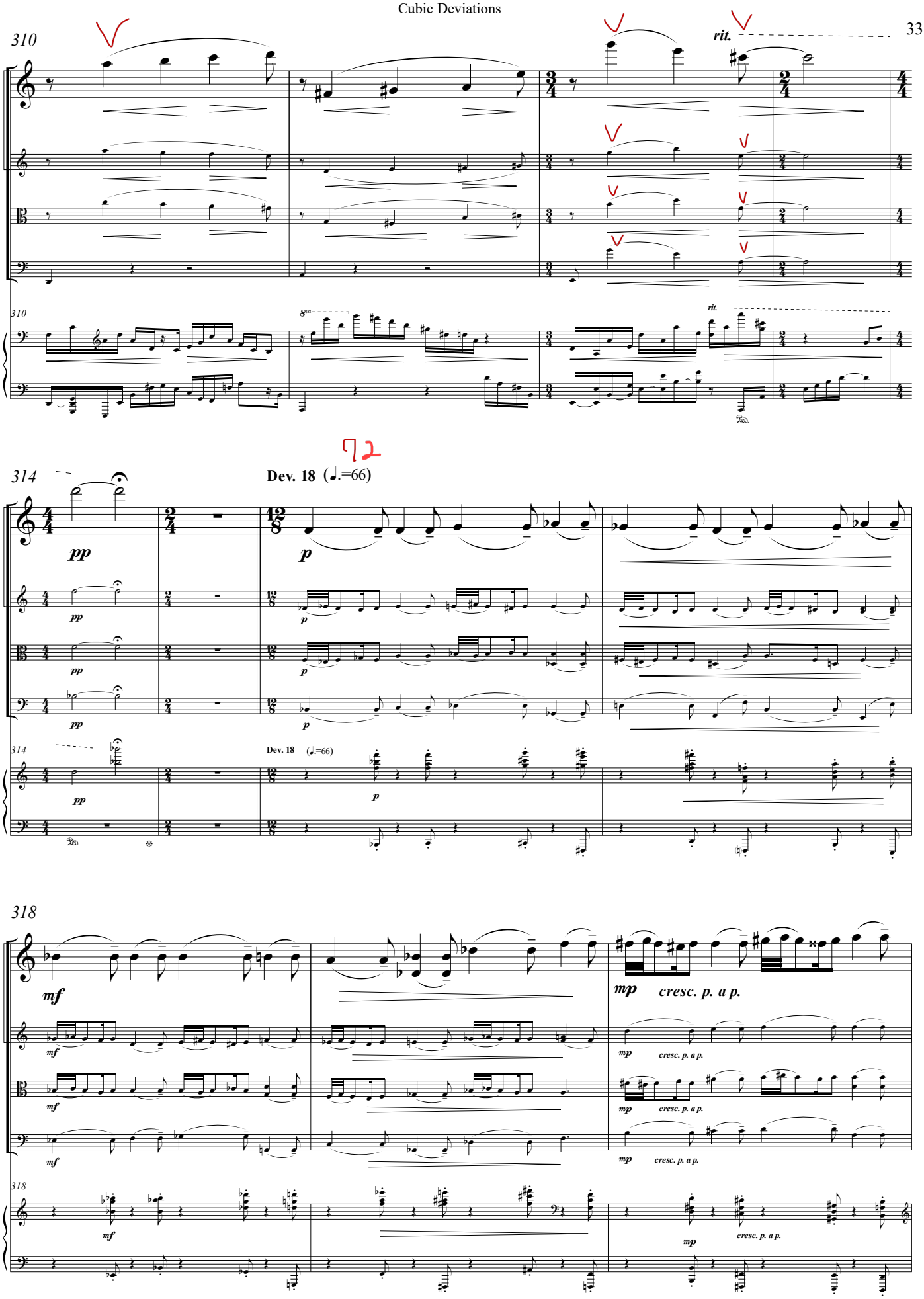
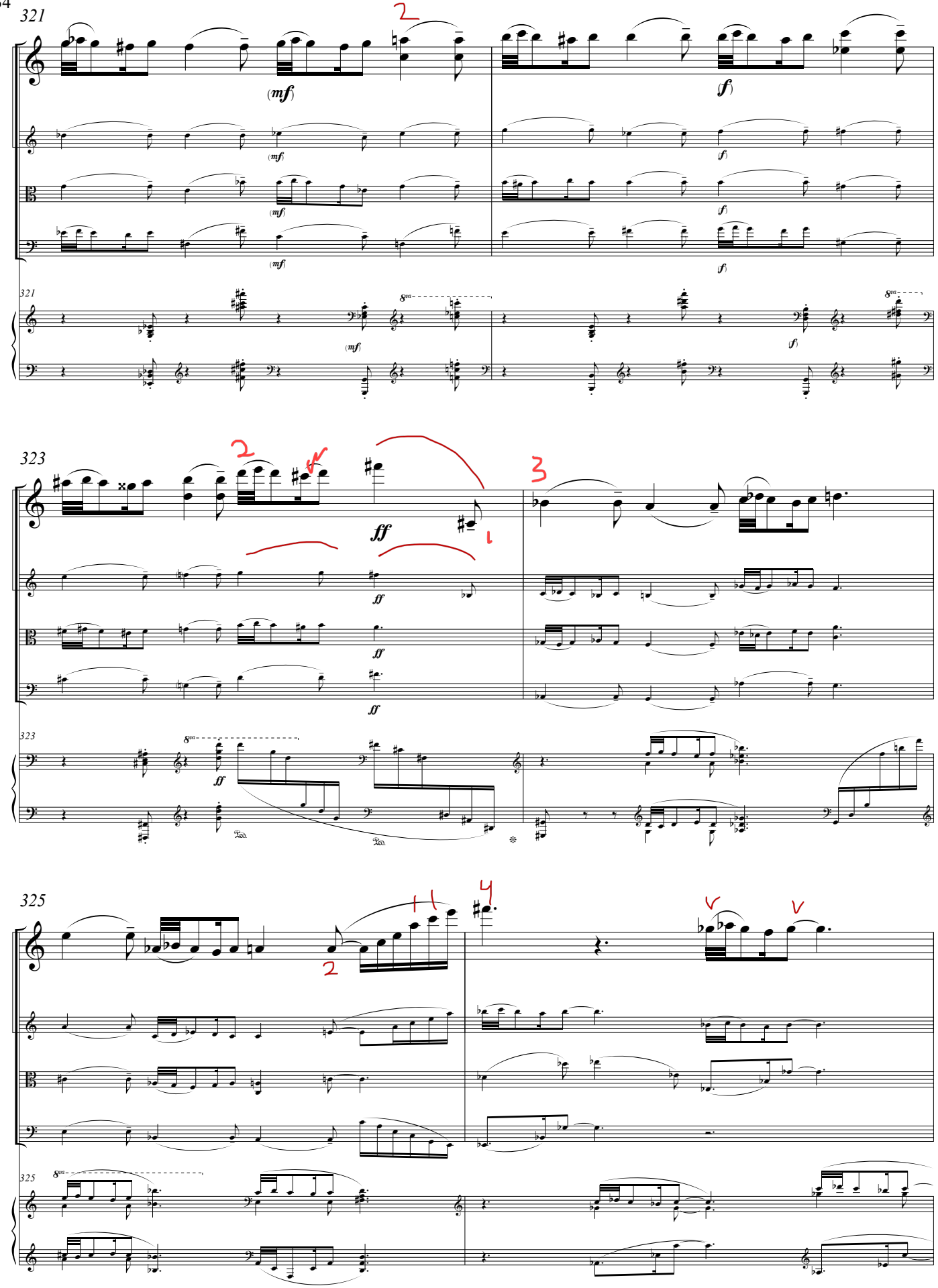
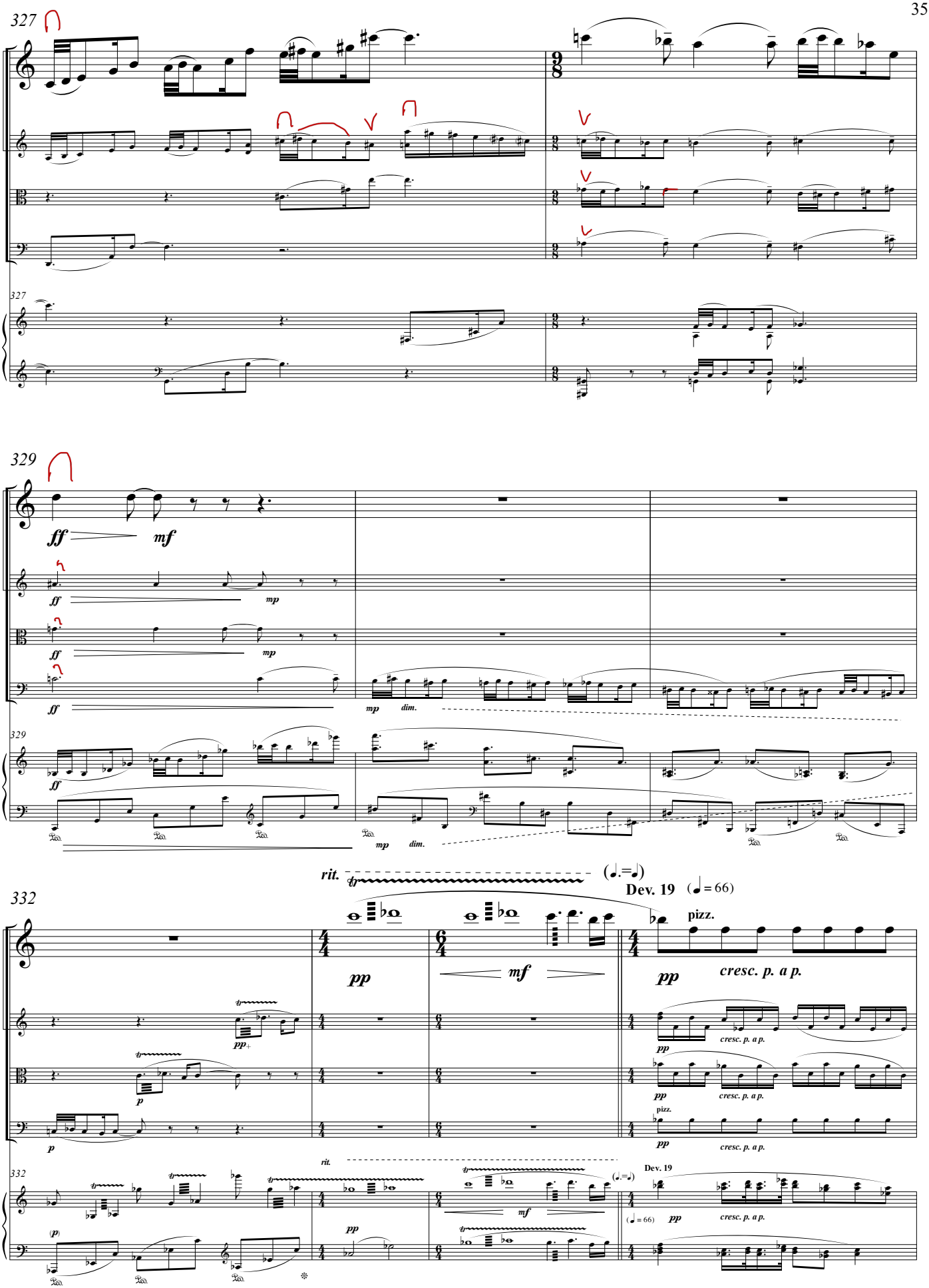
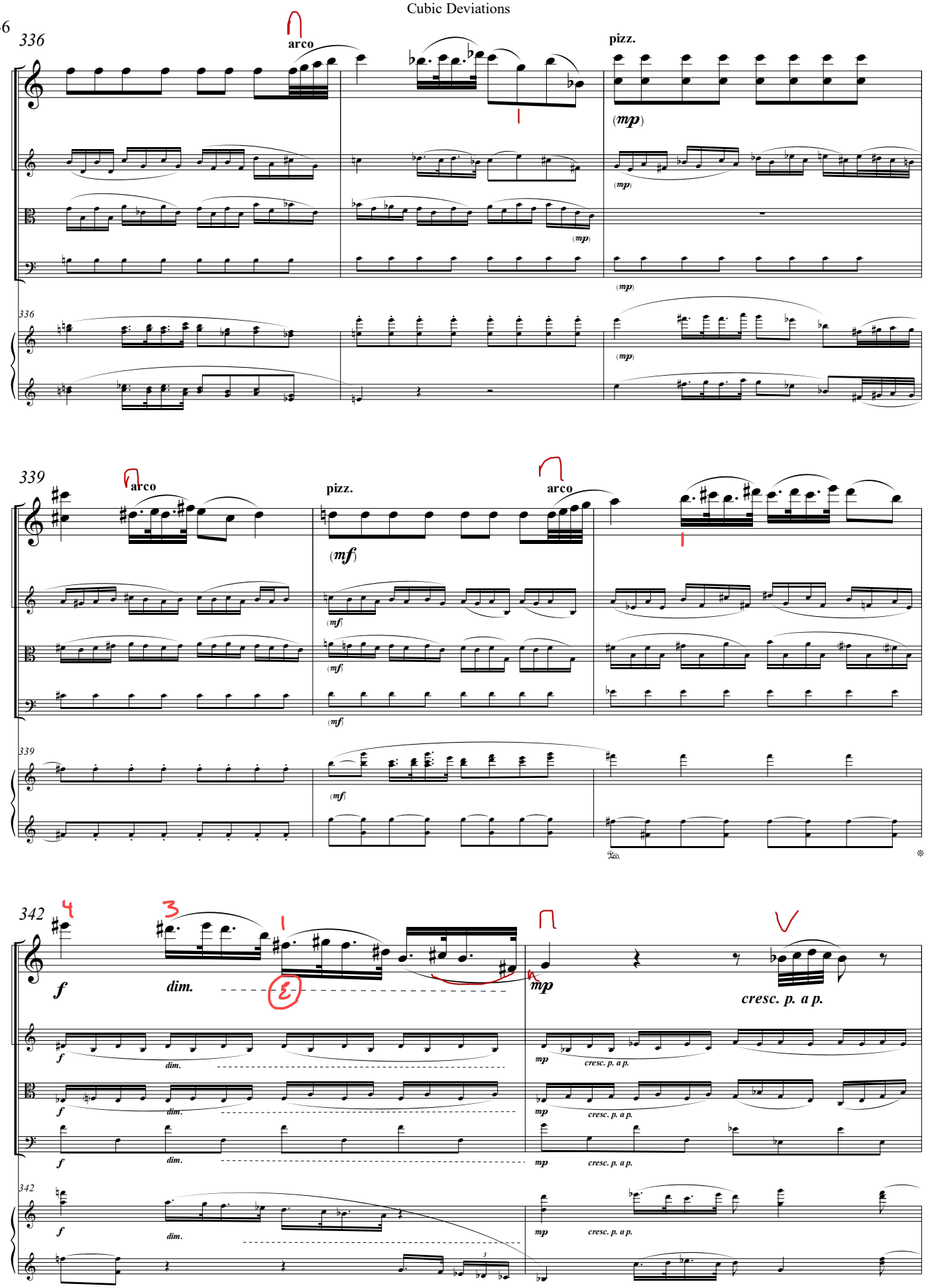
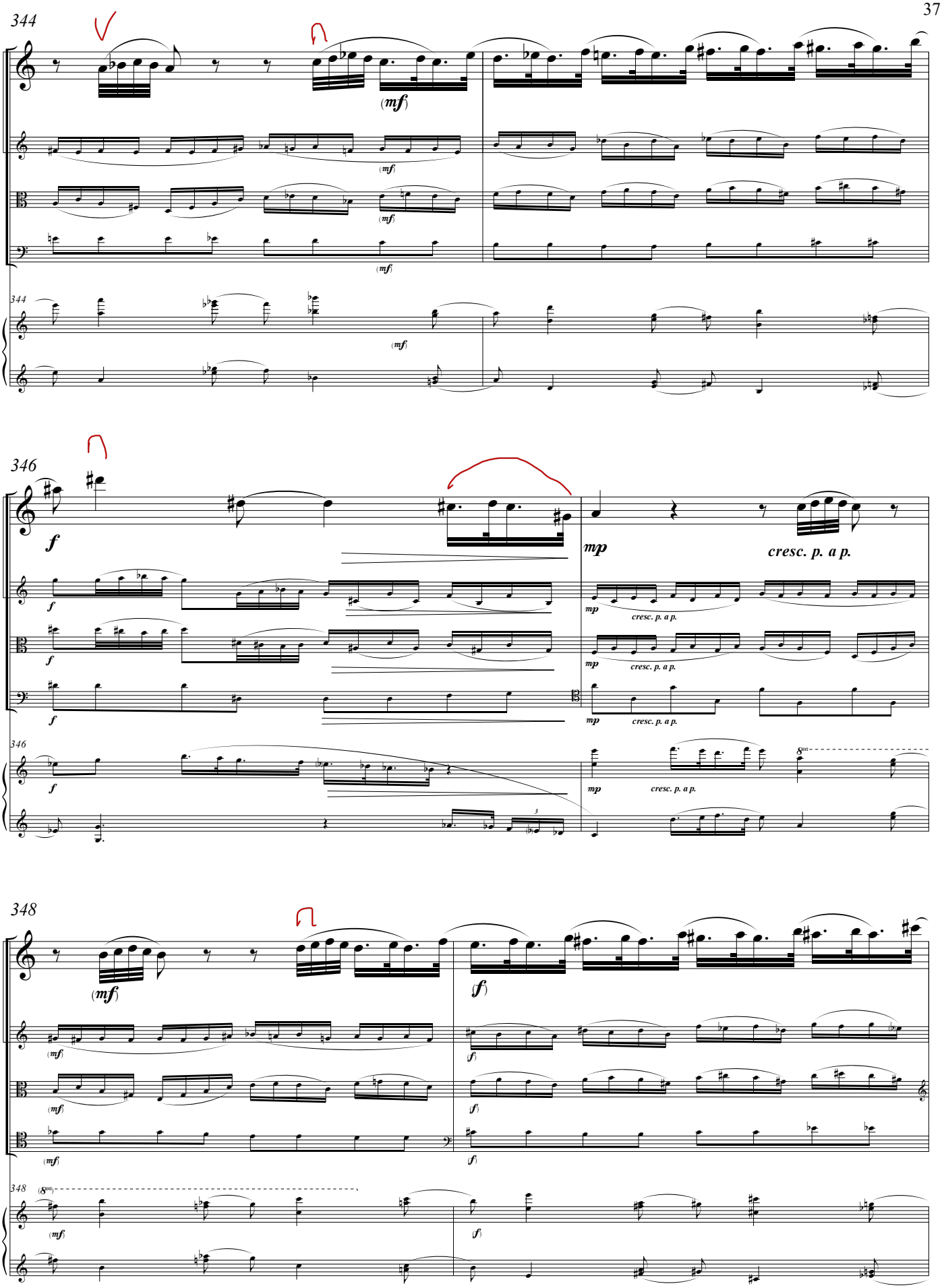
306
308


310
rit.
314
Dev. 18 (♩.=66)
318
mf
mp
cresc. p. a p.


321
(mf)
(f)
323
ff
325


327
329
ff
mf
mp
dim.
rit.
(𝅗𝅥.=𝅗𝅥)
Dev. 19
(𝅗𝅥 = 66)
332
pp
mf
pizz.
cresc. p. a p.


336
arco
pizz.
(mp)
339
arco
pizz.
arco
(mf)
342
f
dim.
mp
cresc. p. a p.


344
(mf)
346
f
mp
cresc. p. a p.
348
(mf)
(f)

350

Dev. 20 (♩.=100)

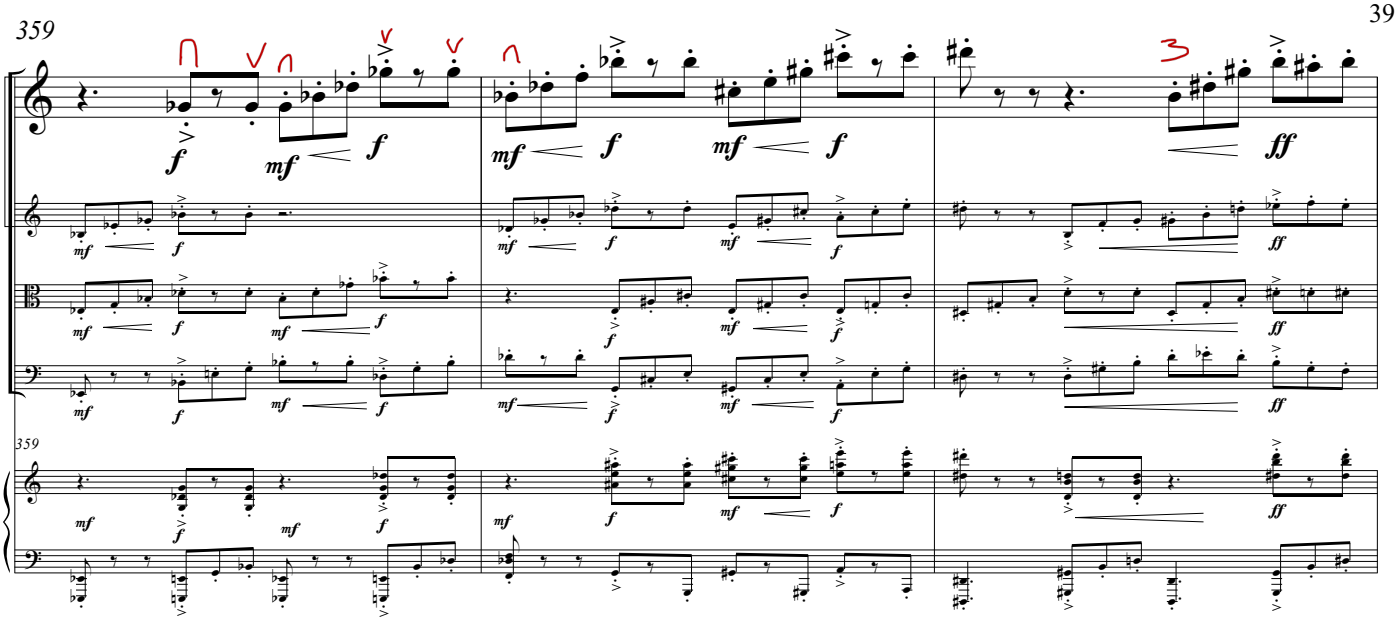
arco

353

non stacc.

356

359



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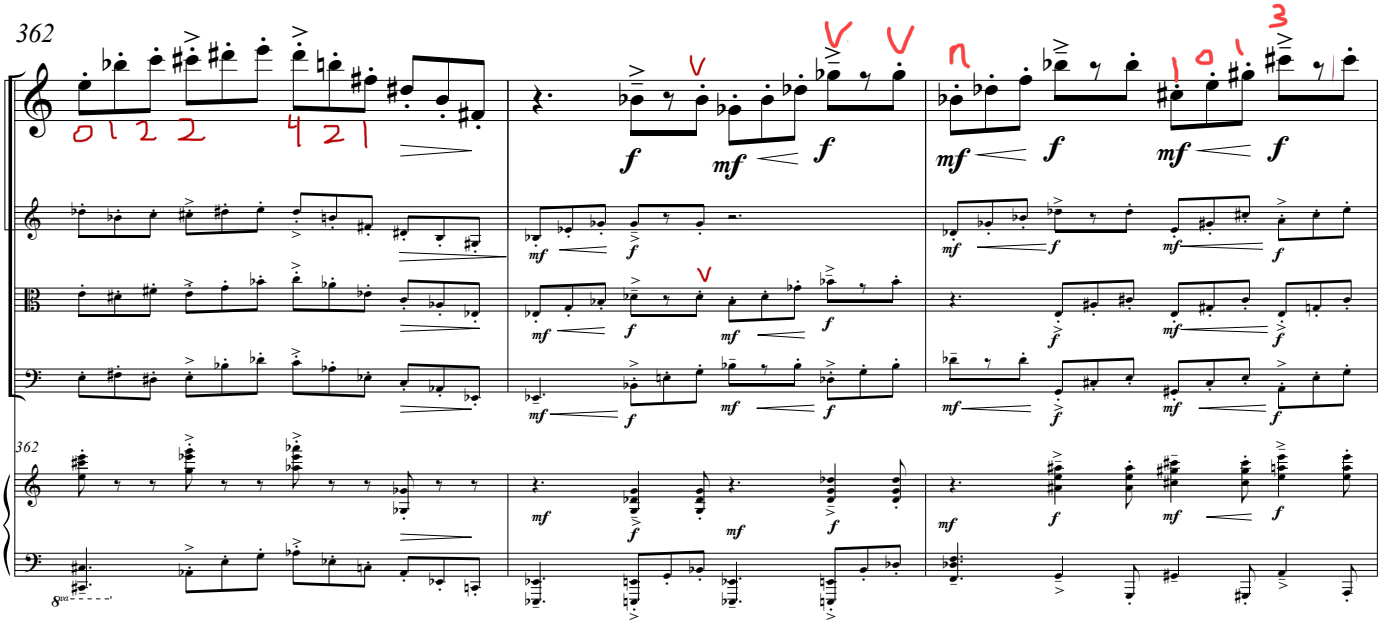

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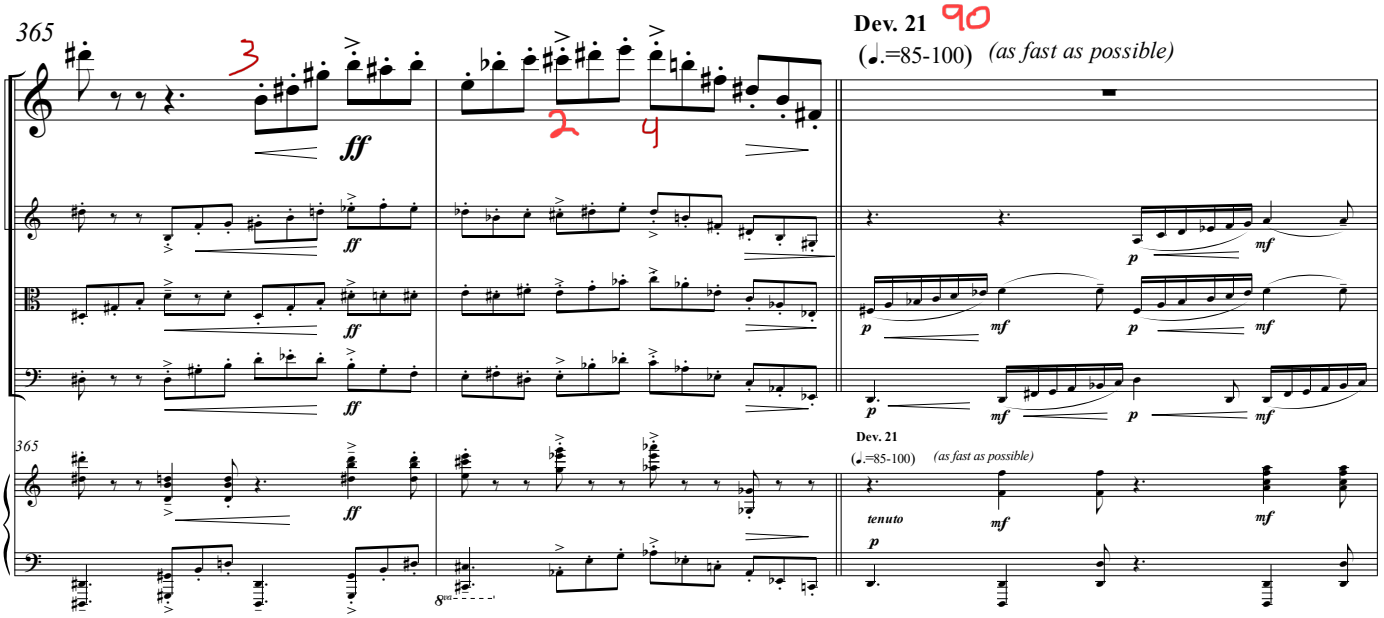
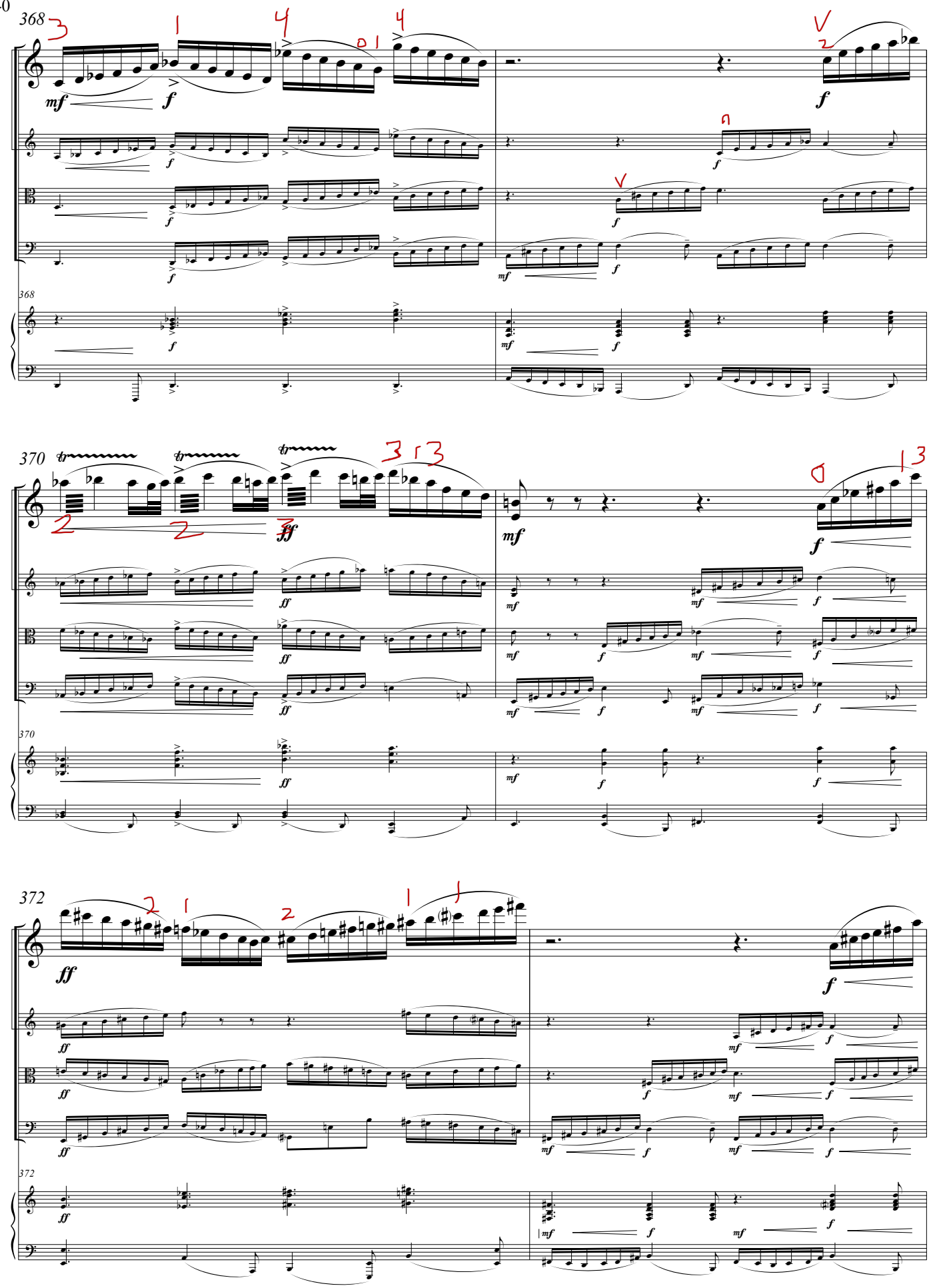
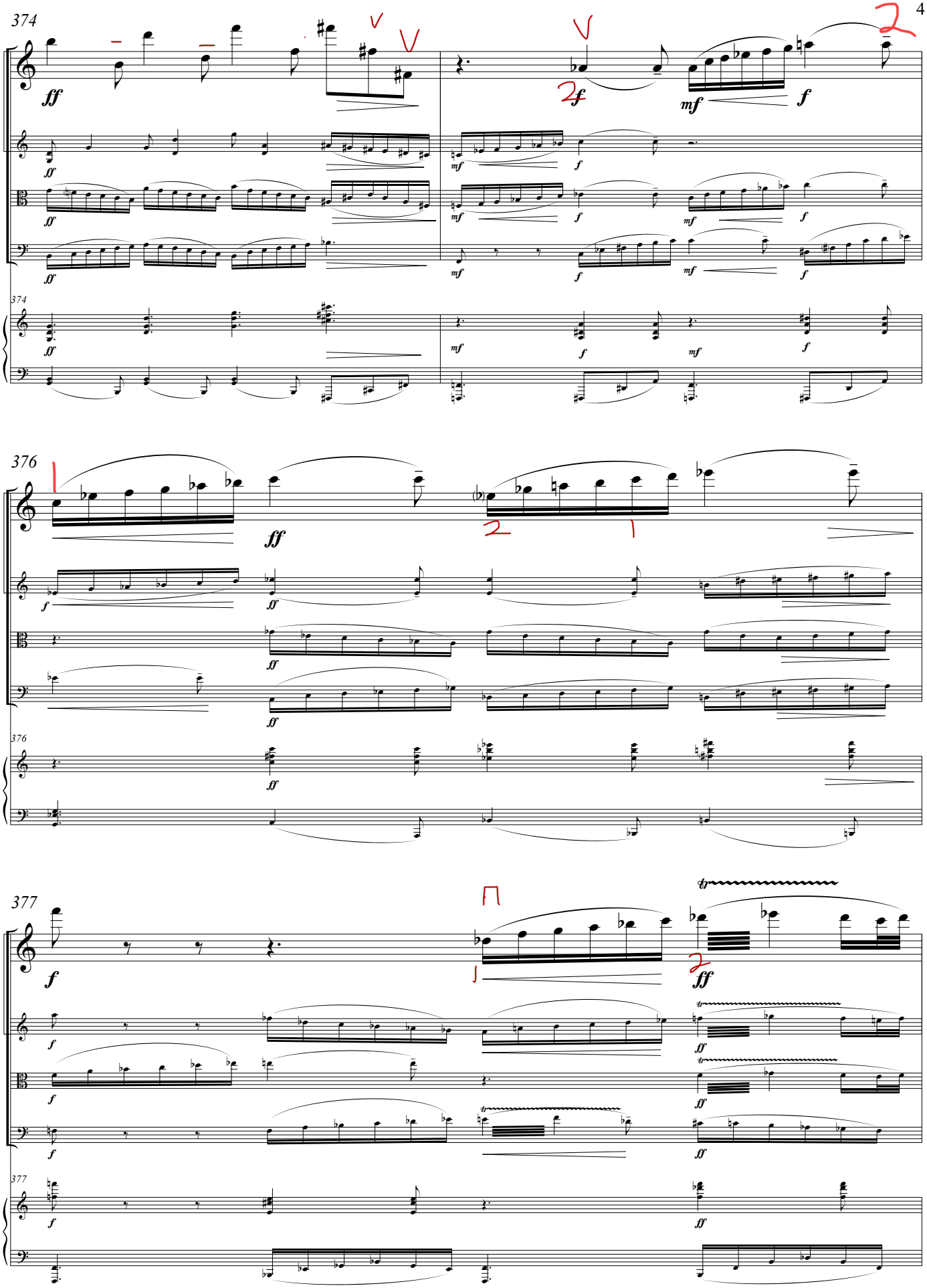
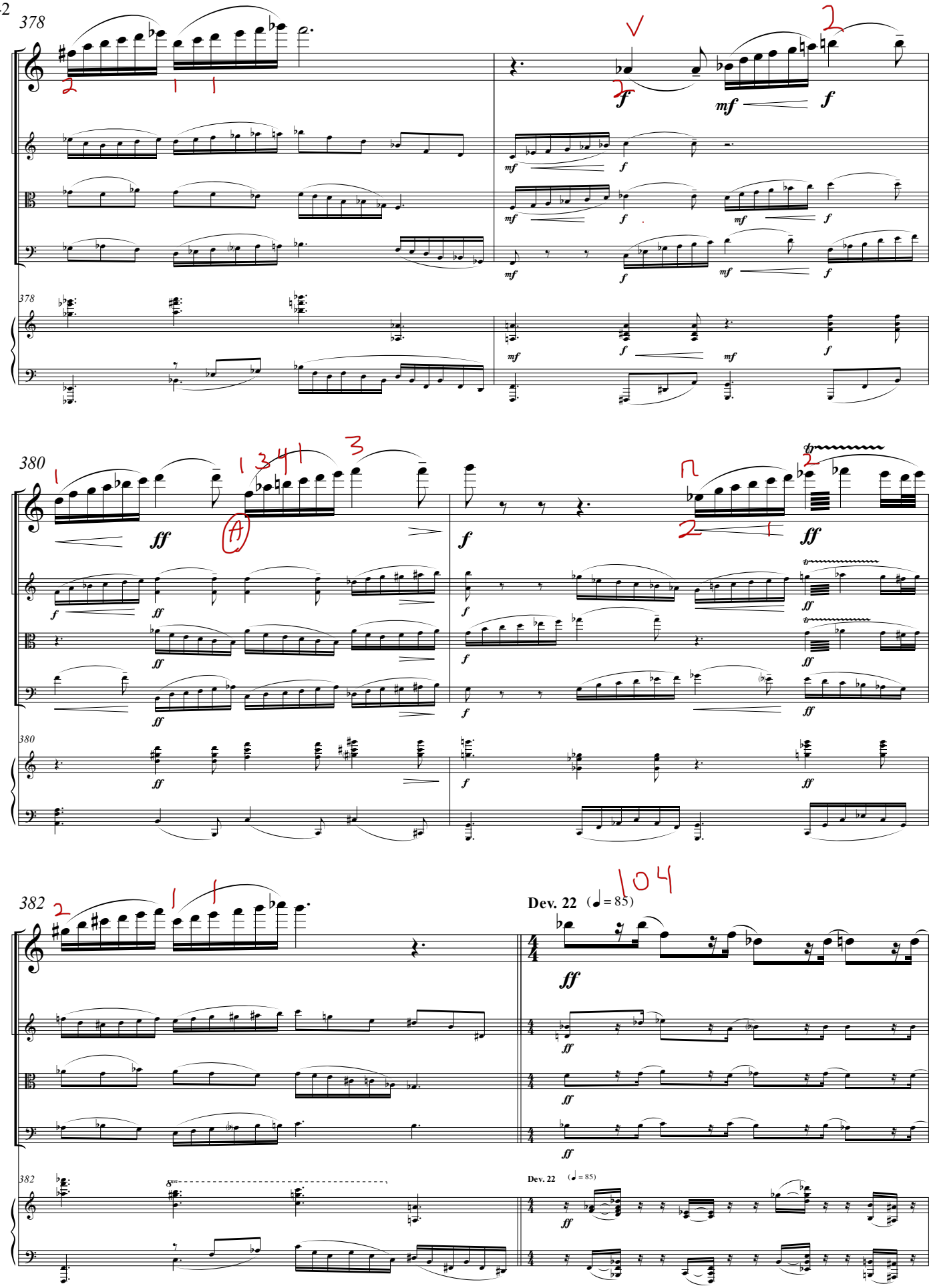
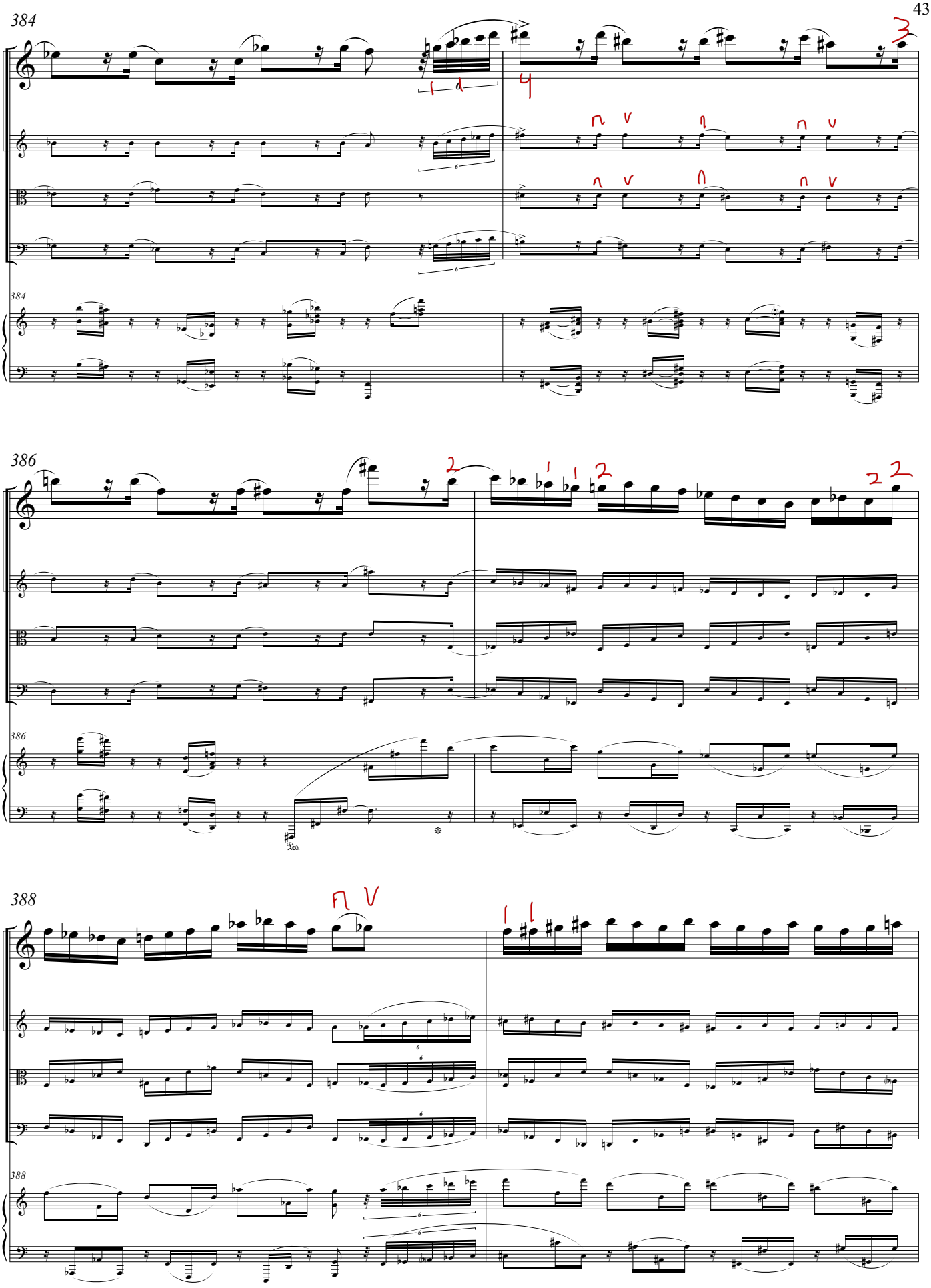



368
370
372


374
376
377


378
380
382
Dev. 22 (♩ = 85)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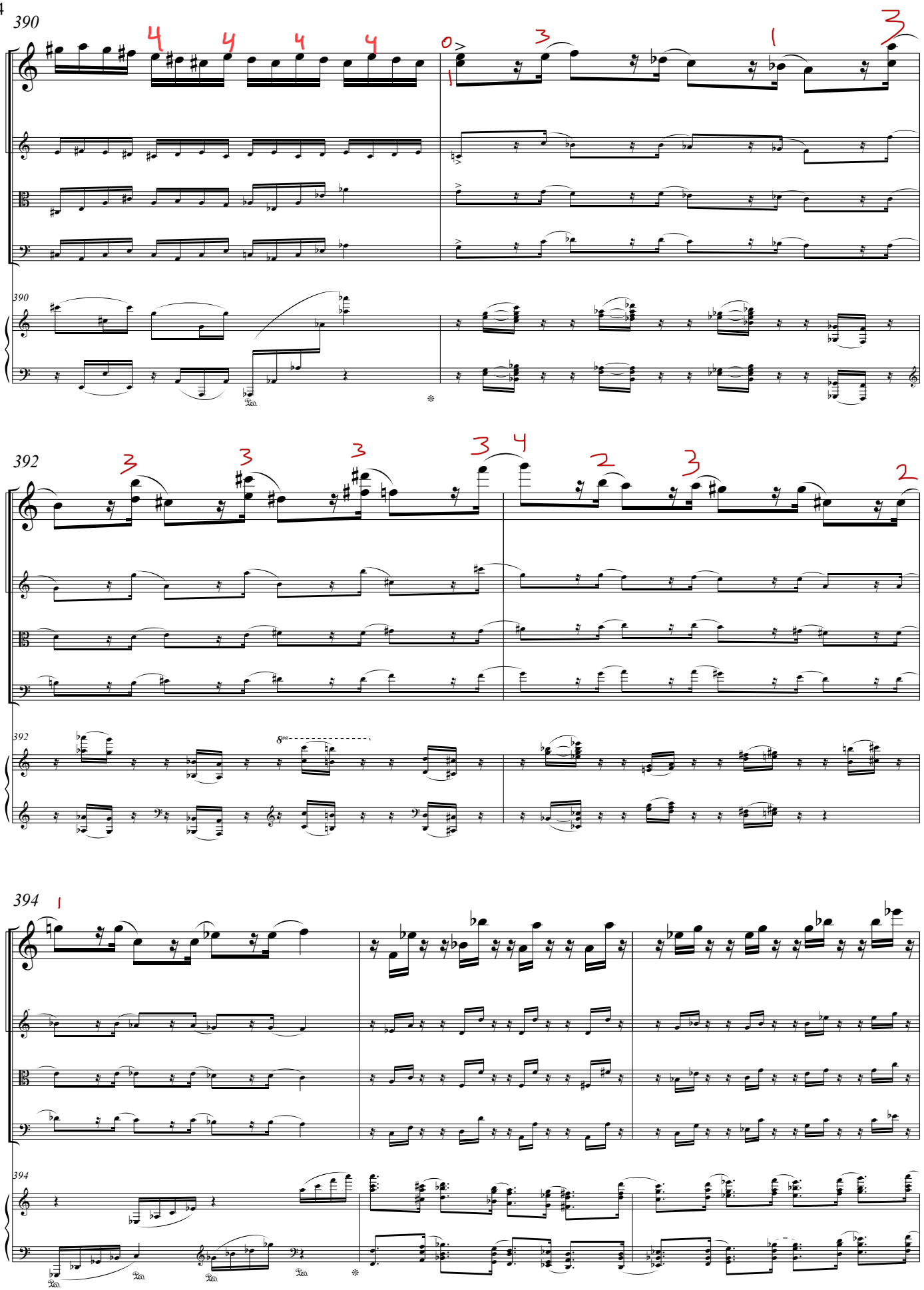
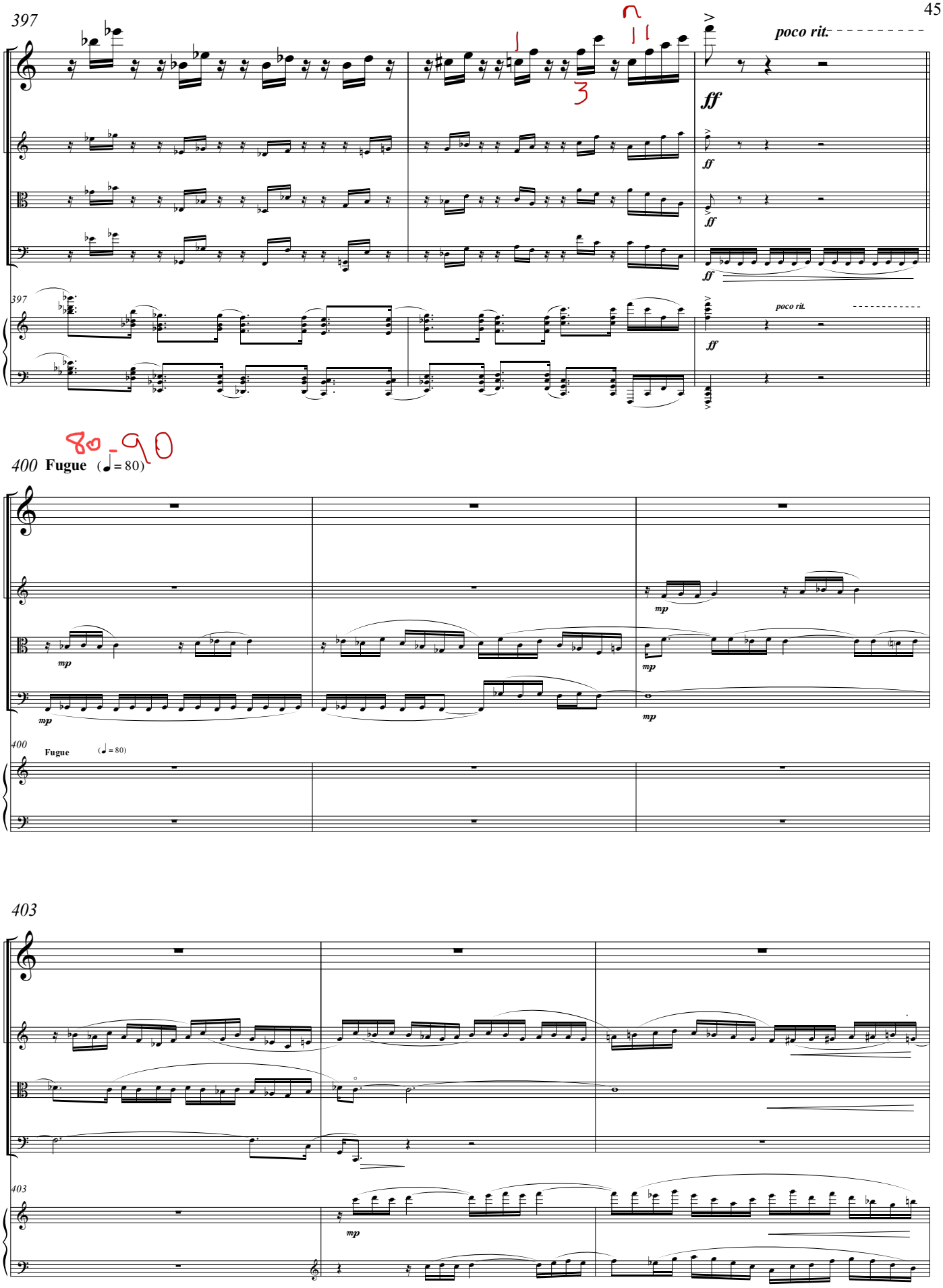
386
388


390
392
394


397
poco rit.
ff
397
poco rit.
ff
80-90
400 Fugue (♩= 80)
mp
400
Fugue (♩= 80)
403
403
mp

406

mf cresc.

f

408

cresc.

410

ff

412

ff

p

mp

415

p *cresc. p. a p.*

(*mf*)

legato

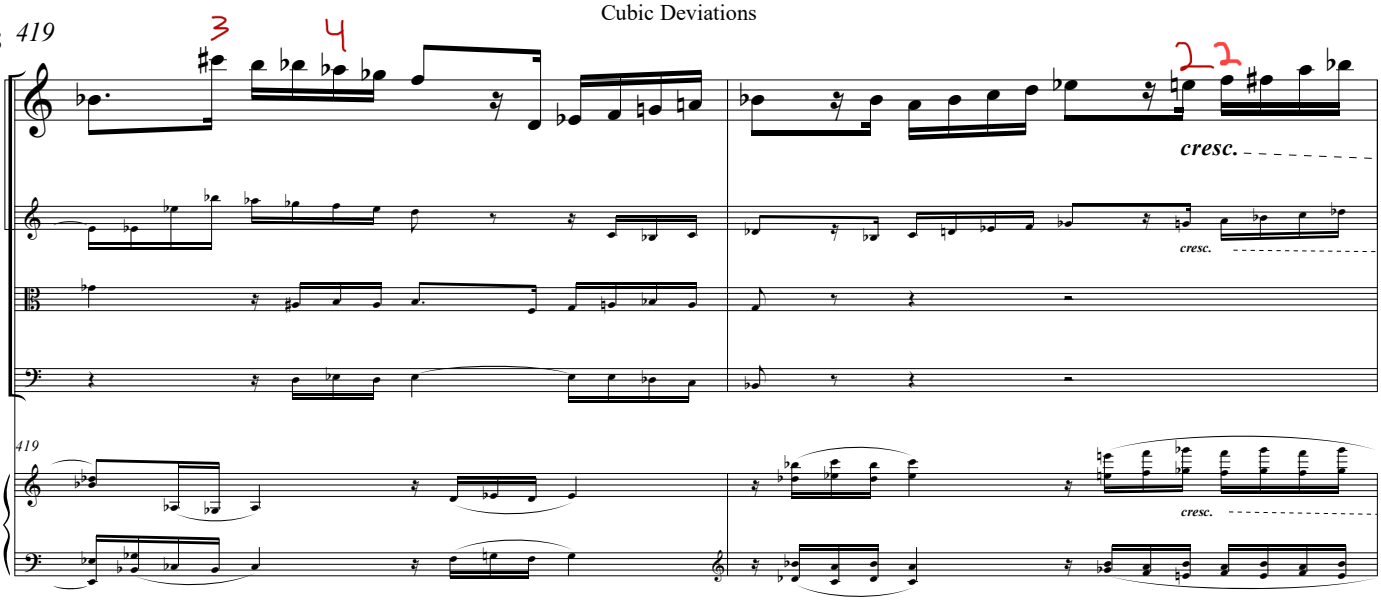
417

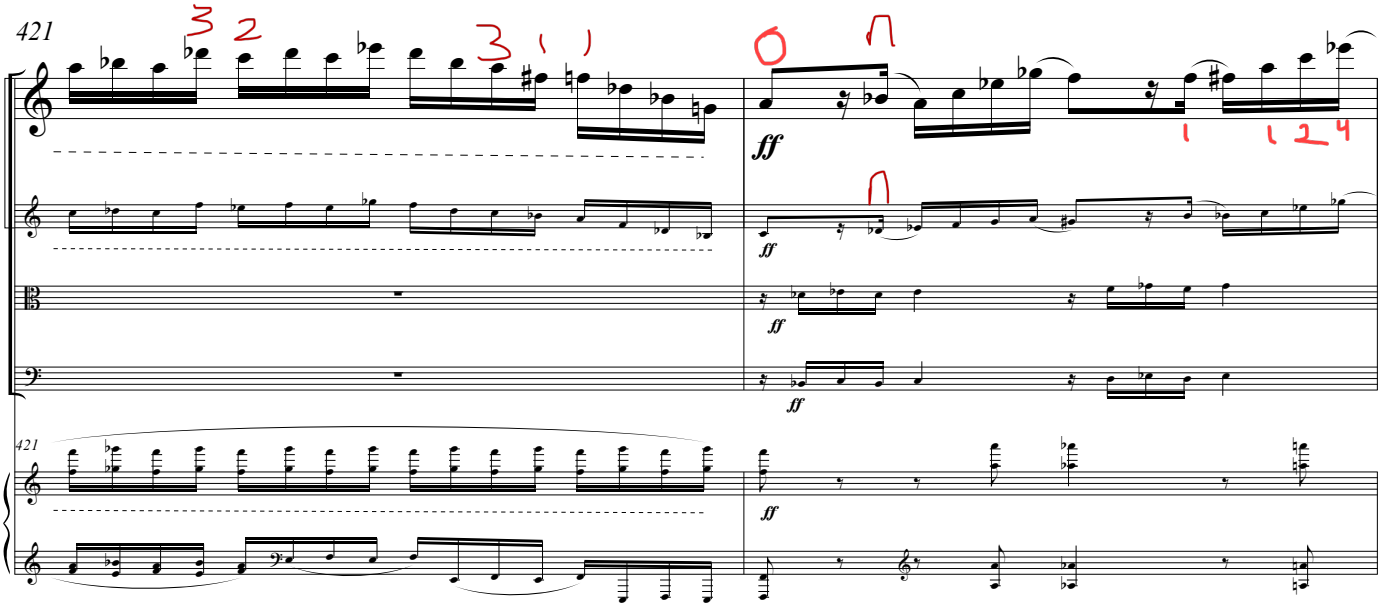
(*f*)

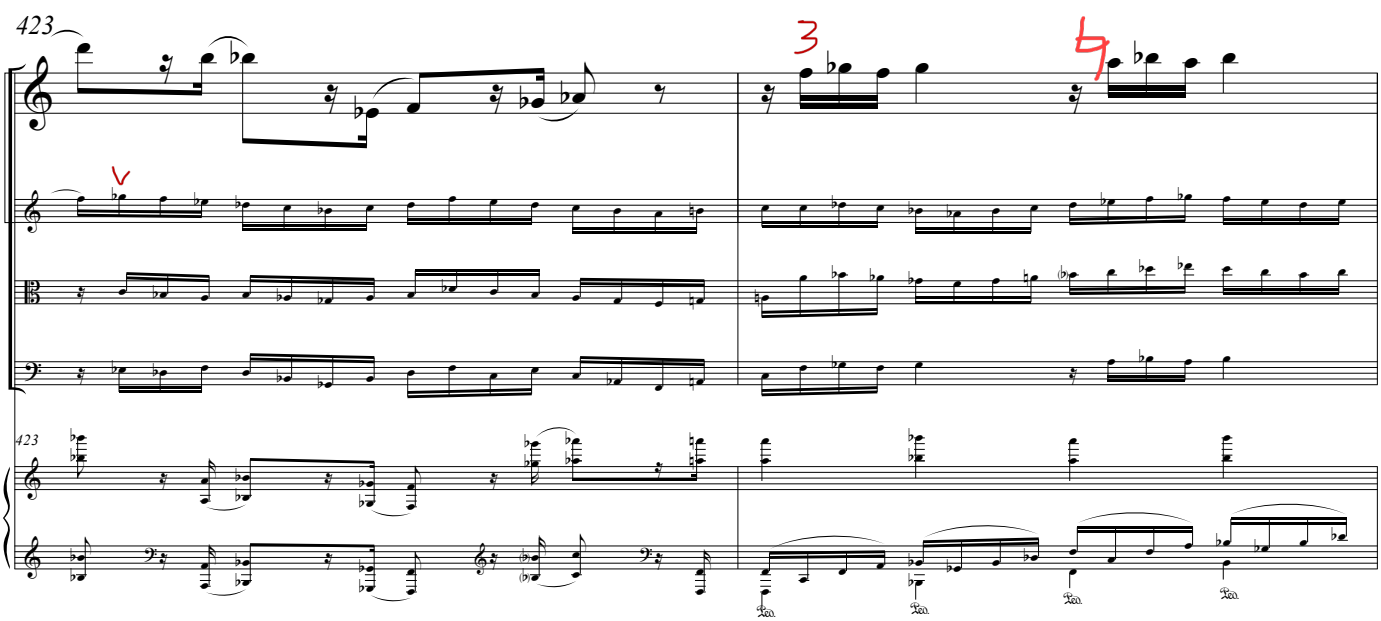
ff

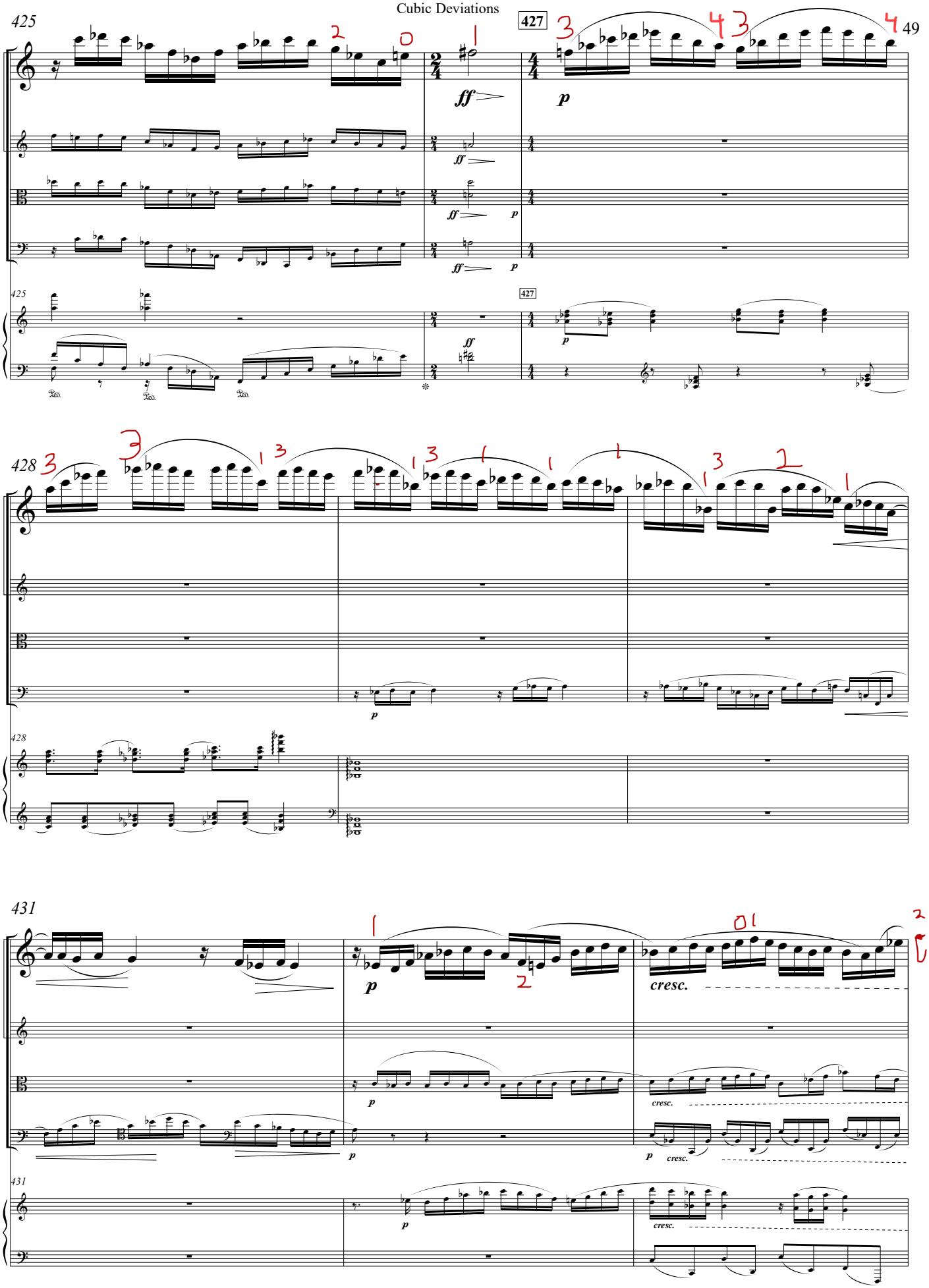
418

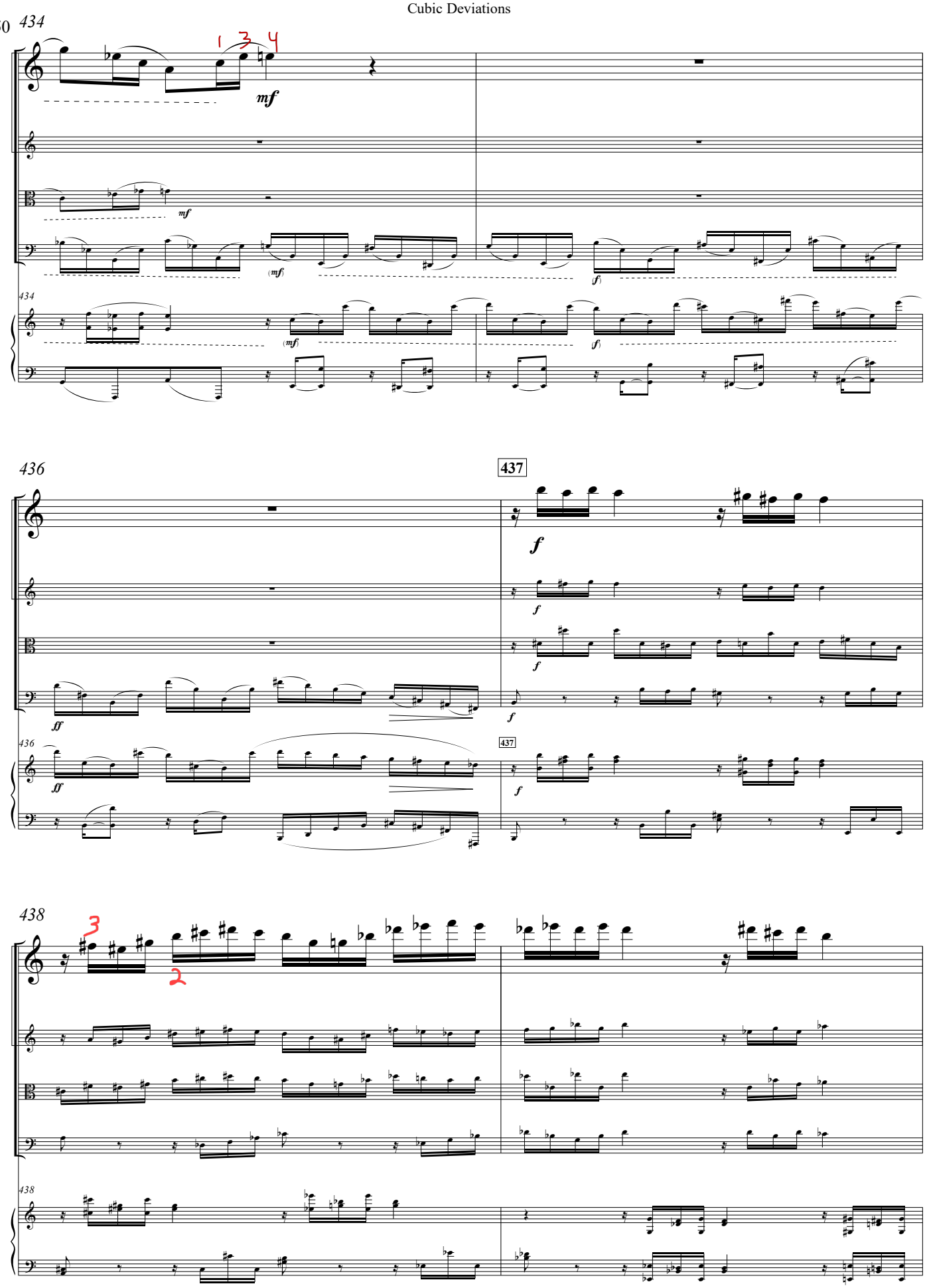
f


419
cresc.
cresc.
419
cresc.


421
ff
ff
ff
ff
421
ff


423
423


425
427
ff
p
428
431
cresc.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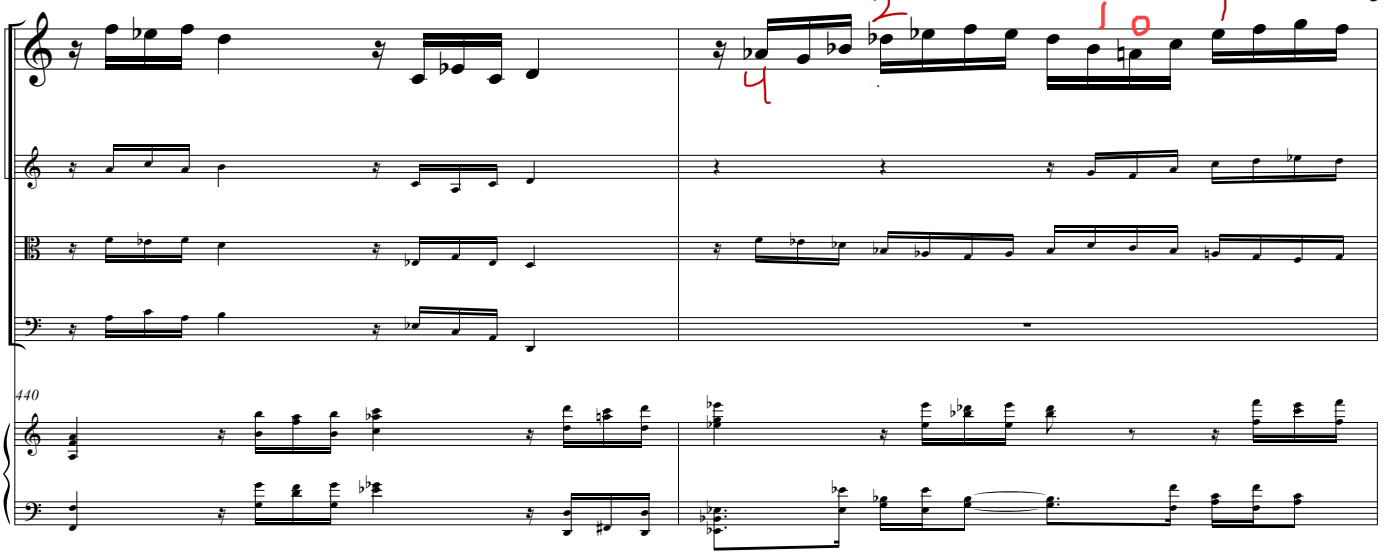
438

440



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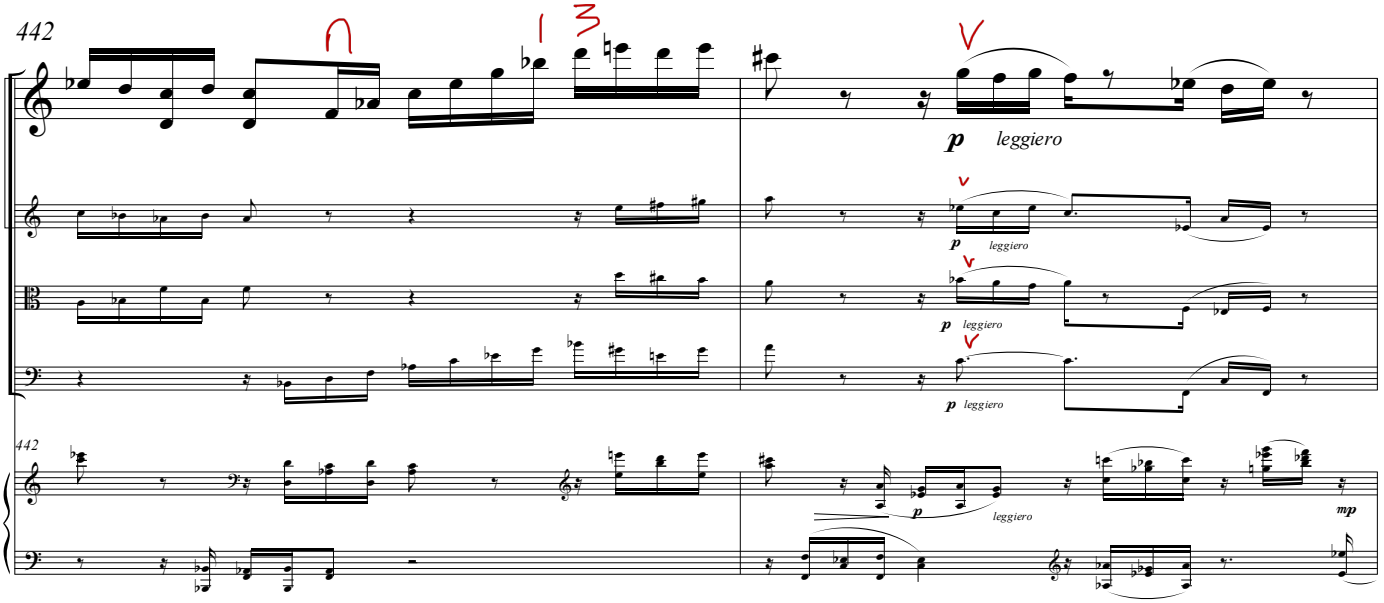

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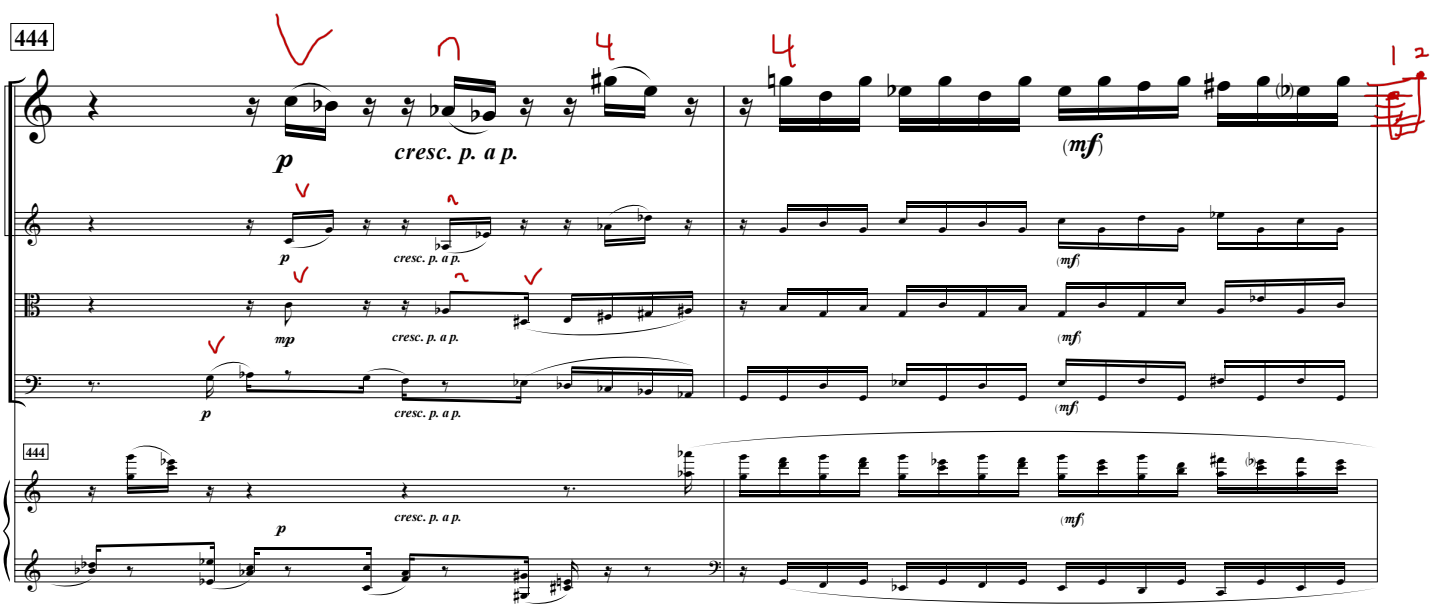

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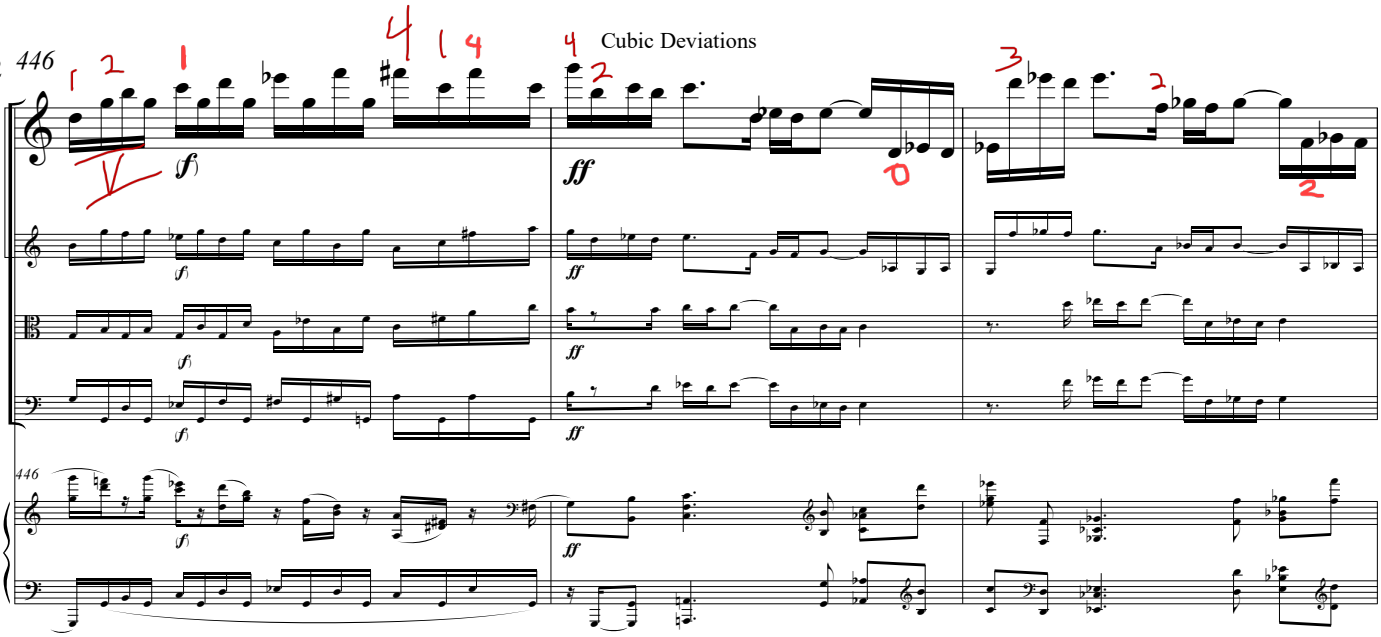

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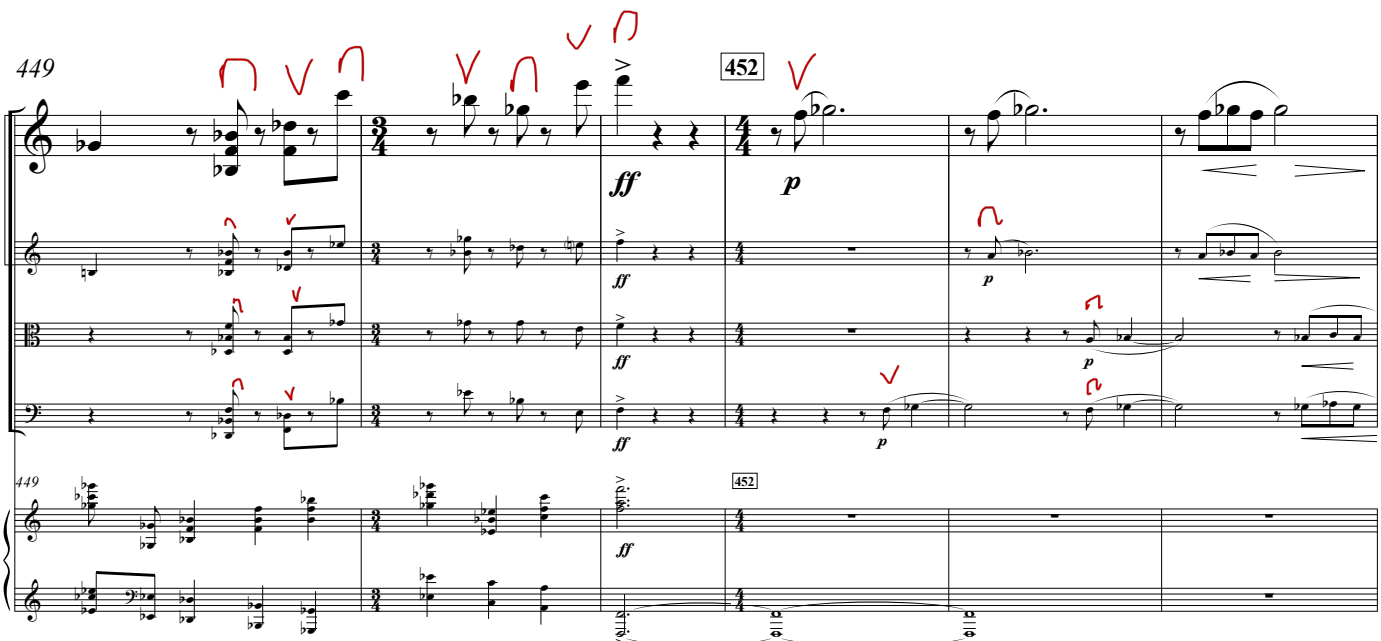
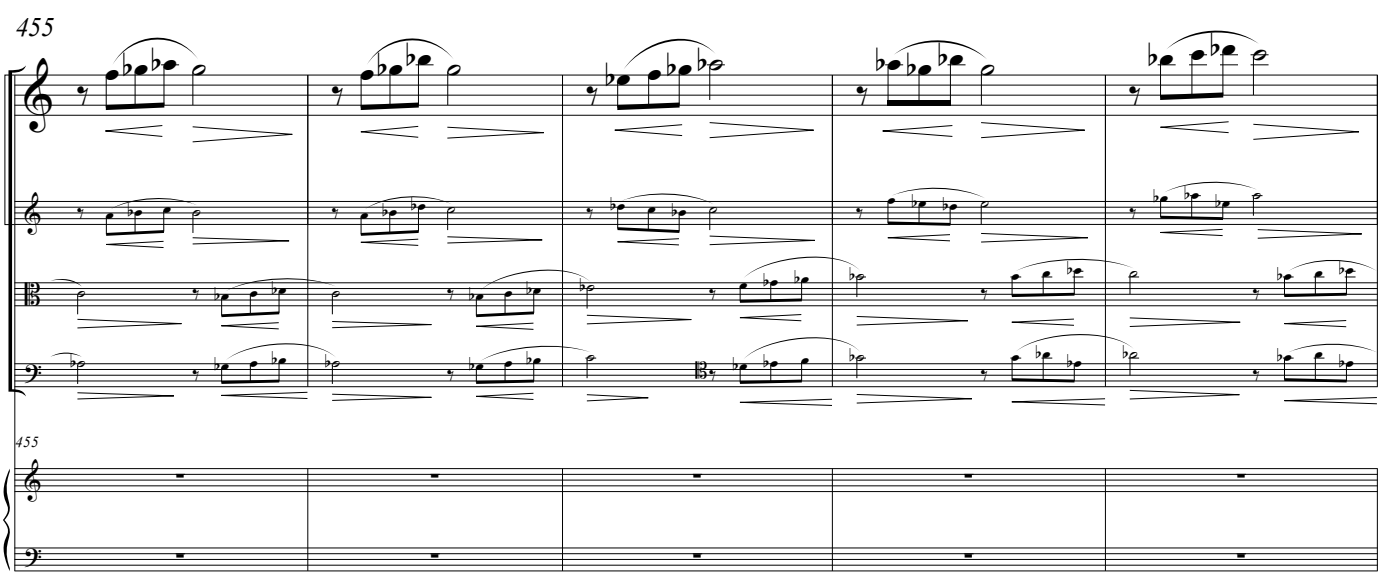
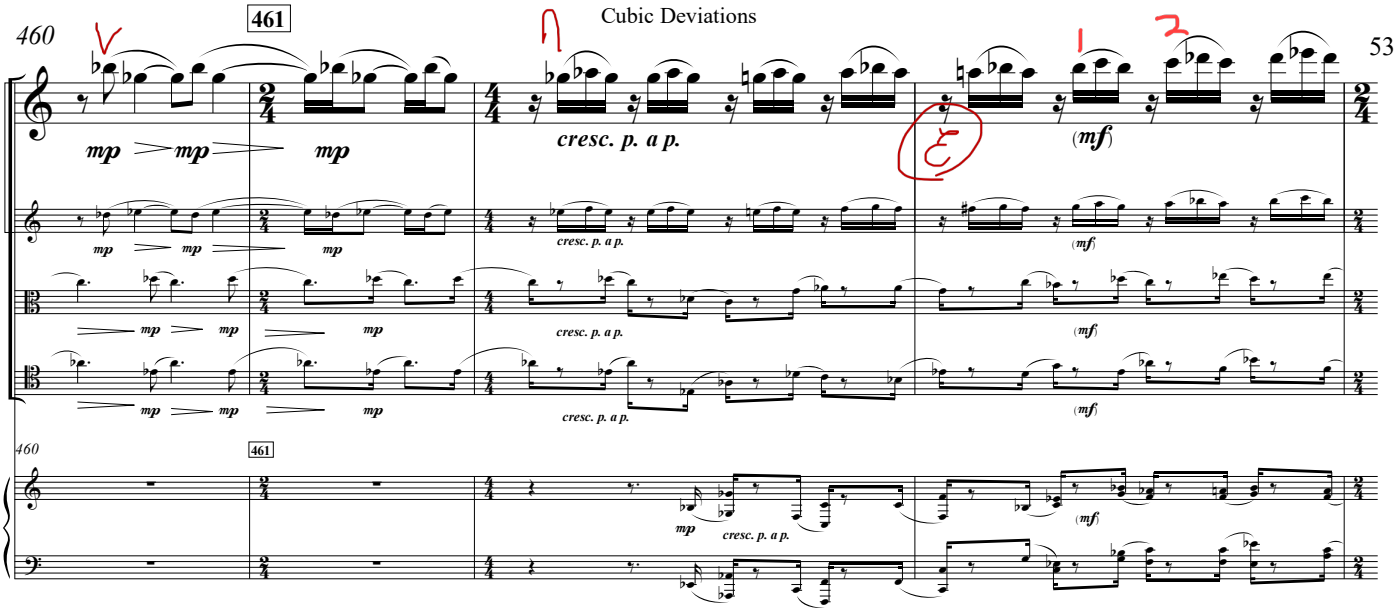
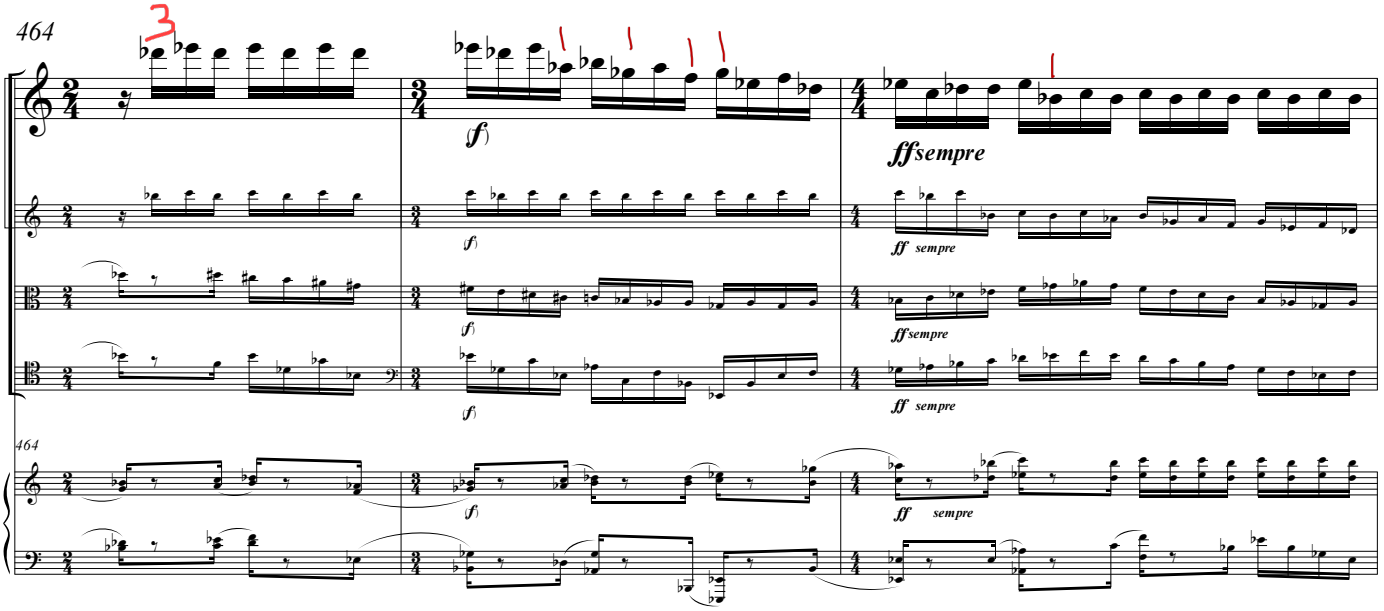


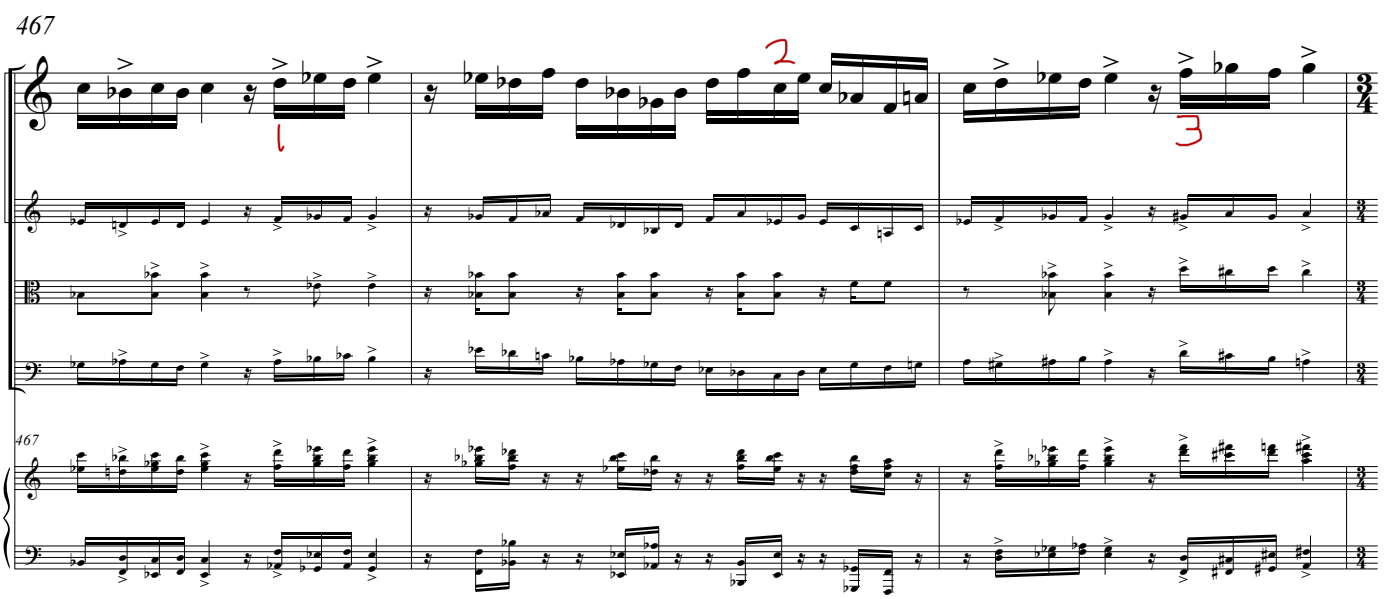
452

455




460
461
mp
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)


464
(f)
ff sempre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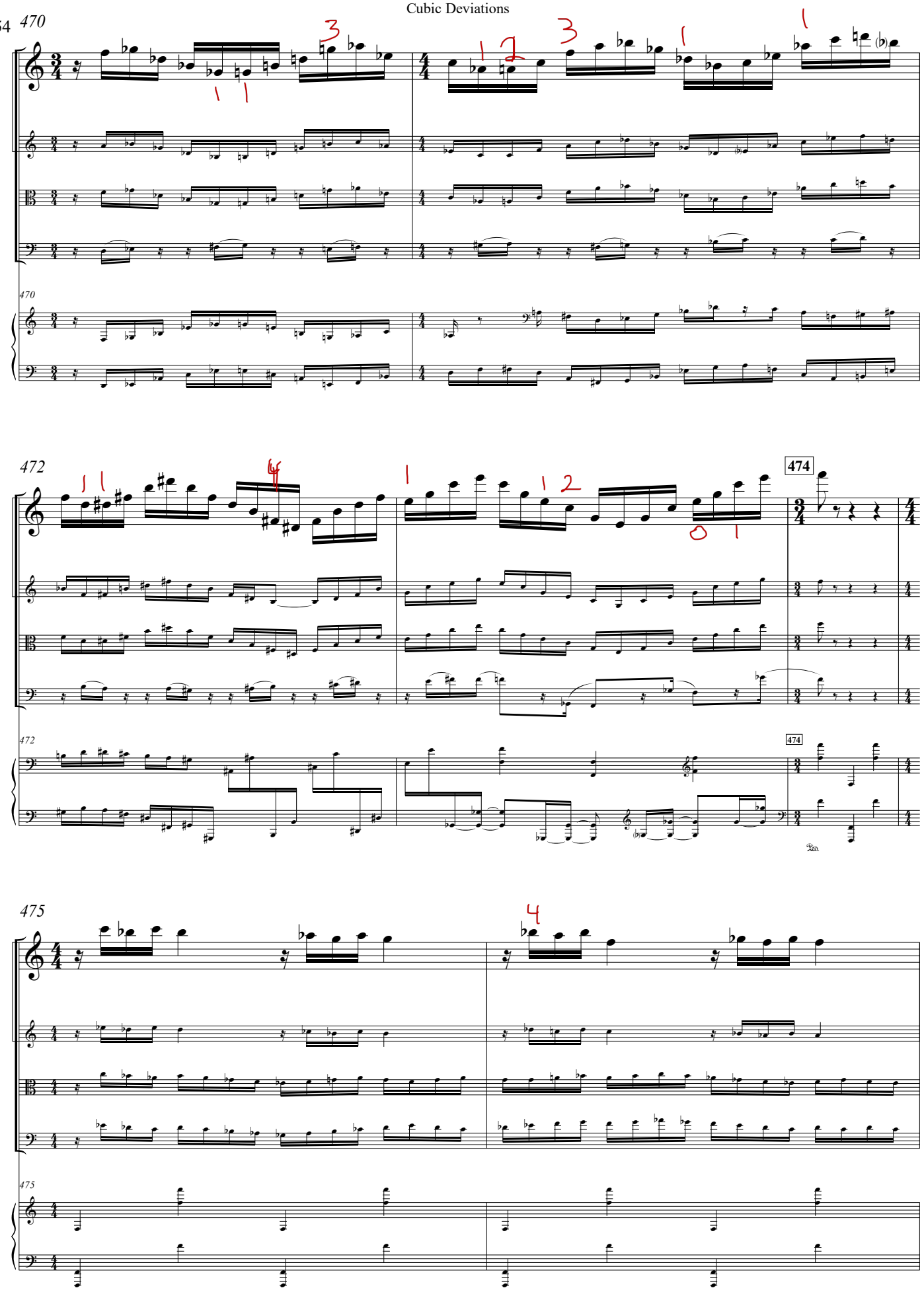
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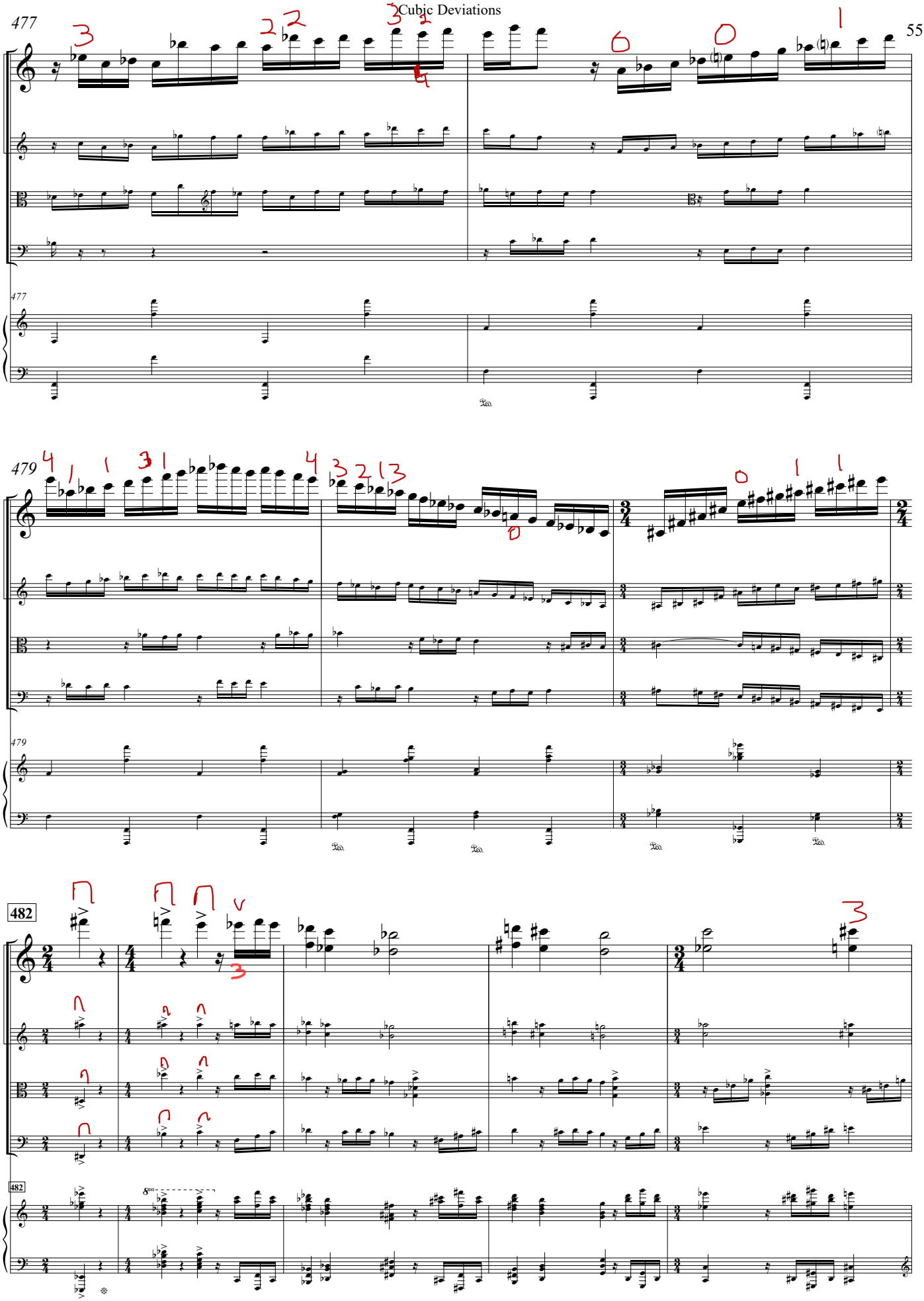
472
474
475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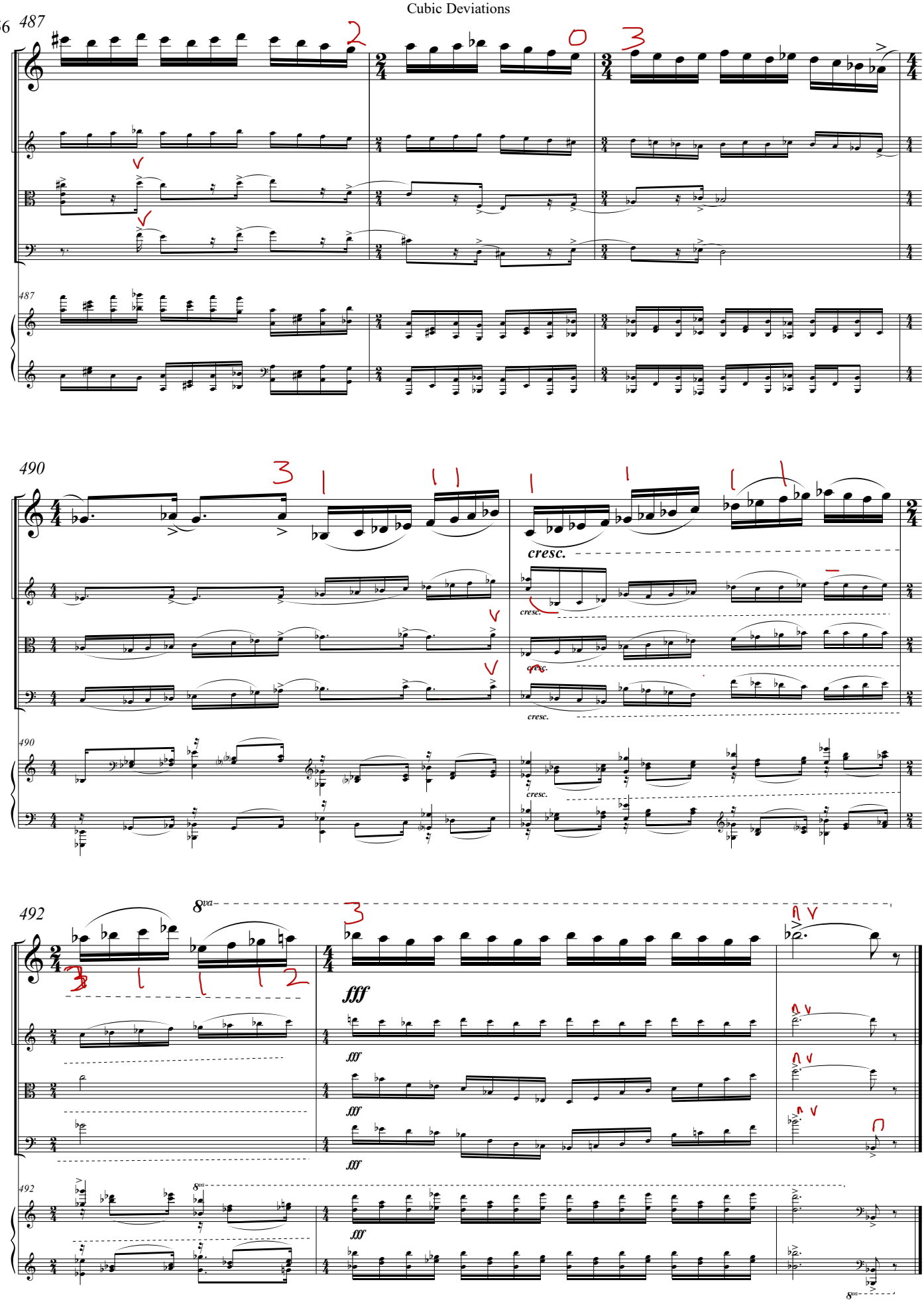
479
482


487
490
492
cresc.
fff
8va