John M. Tarrh

Clarinet Quintet

Full Score

Meriam Hill Music
www.tarrh.com
(ASCAP)

Instrumentation

Clarinet in B♭, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello

Performance Notes

Performance time: approximately 13 minutes

Score is in C. All instruments sound as written.

Program Listing

Clarinet Quintet (2008) John M. Tarrh (b. 1947)

I. Caprice
II. Adagietto
III. Finale

Program Notes

This work is comprised of three movements, each quite different in character and in their approach to tonality.

My goal for the first movement was to use an atonal approach but create music that does not sound atonal. I used a 12-tone compositional approach, first adopted by Arnold Schoenberg in the 1920s. In this approach, no pitch is repeated until the remaining 11 have been used. One important issue relates to the choice of the specific 12-tone row (sequence of pitches) and how it is used among multiple instruments. My choice for the row is stated in the opening phrase of the clarinet. This choice provides some inherently tonal aspects, as the row opens with a minor triad for its first three pitches.

The form of the first movement is a set of variations on the opening material. The first variation is a duet between the two violins, followed by a duet between the clarinet and viola. The central variation is a *pizzicato* version, which is followed by two more duets (first between clarinet and cello, then between the two violins). The final variation is a recapitulation of the opening, using different forms of the row.

The second movement is an arrangement of the second movement of my *Symphony No. 1*. In the symphony, the *Adagietto* movement is an orchestral arrangement of one of my songs for tenor and piano: *With rue my heart is laden*, setting a poem by A. E. Housman. Like the first song of Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*, this poem juxtaposes great sorrow and joy. Three variations of the song are given. The first is most like the original setting with its emphasis on the poet's sorrow at the loss of many golden friends to death. A brief chorale setting effectively provides a catharsis, leading to the final version that is wistful but nevertheless more focused on the joy of having had these friends in the first place. While there are a number of key changes, this movement uses traditional tonal methods.

In the finale, the strings are used as a percussive accompaniment to highlight the clarinet. The upper strings play harmonies that conflict with the lower strings while they all play the same syncopated rhythmic pattern. Over the course of the work, the conflicting harmonies gradually come together and resolution is achieved. While not using traditional tonal methods, this movement's tonality lies somewhere in between that of the first two movements.

In the opening, the strings seem to have difficulty playing cooperatively. The clarinet enters and the strings begin playing together in rhythmic unison, with only the occasional string solo to help clarify (or to deliberately confuse) the beat. After the initial third of the movement, the first violin attempts to join the clarinet by repeating the clarinet's opening statement in a broader rhythm. The clarinet objects, but ultimately acquiesces and the two engage in a duet. At this point, the conflicting harmonies have come together and brief duets follow in the lower and then the upper strings, punctuated by the clarinet. The dissonant rhythmic pattern returns for the final third, with the clarinet repeating its opening statement. An abbreviated recapitulation follows, as the clashing harmonies evolve more quickly. The harmonies come together and a climax occurs where resolution is nearly complete. A brief coda ensues, where the entire pattern of conflicting harmonies is restated in just a few measures. With a final flourish from the clarinet, the harmonies coalesce and resolve.

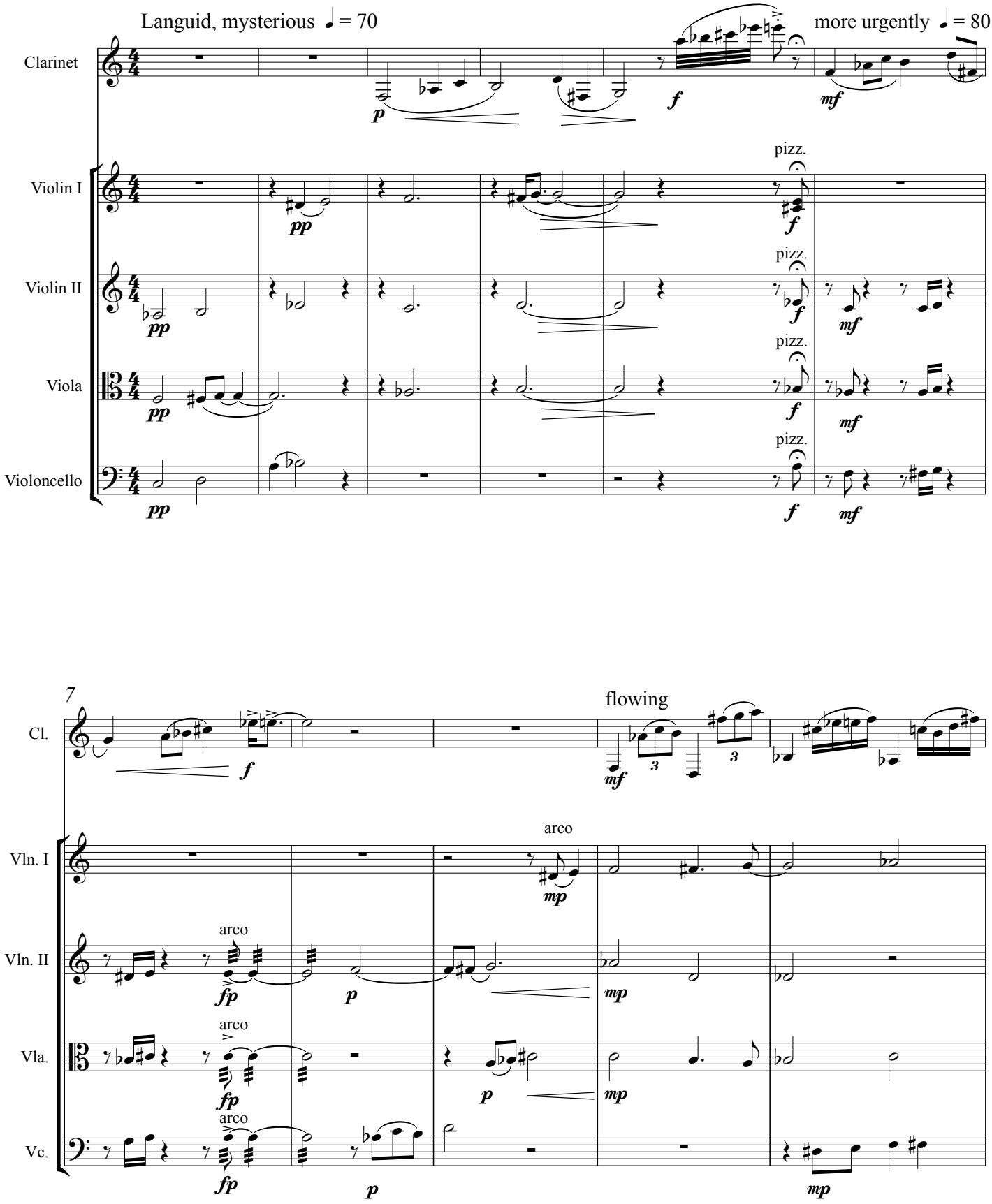
John M. Tarrh

Score in C
Rev. 8/11/08

Clarinet Quintet

I. Caprice

John M. Tarrh



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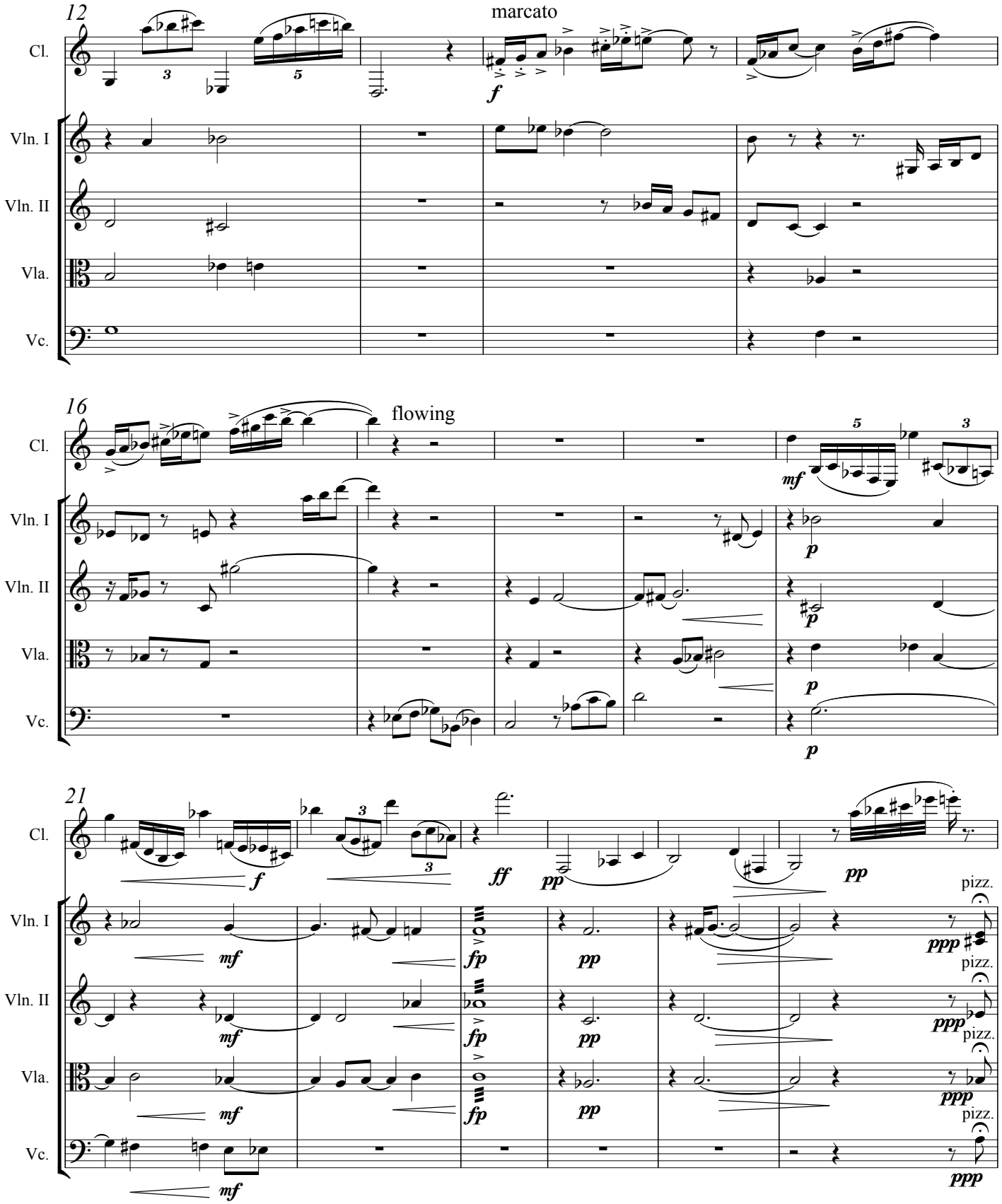
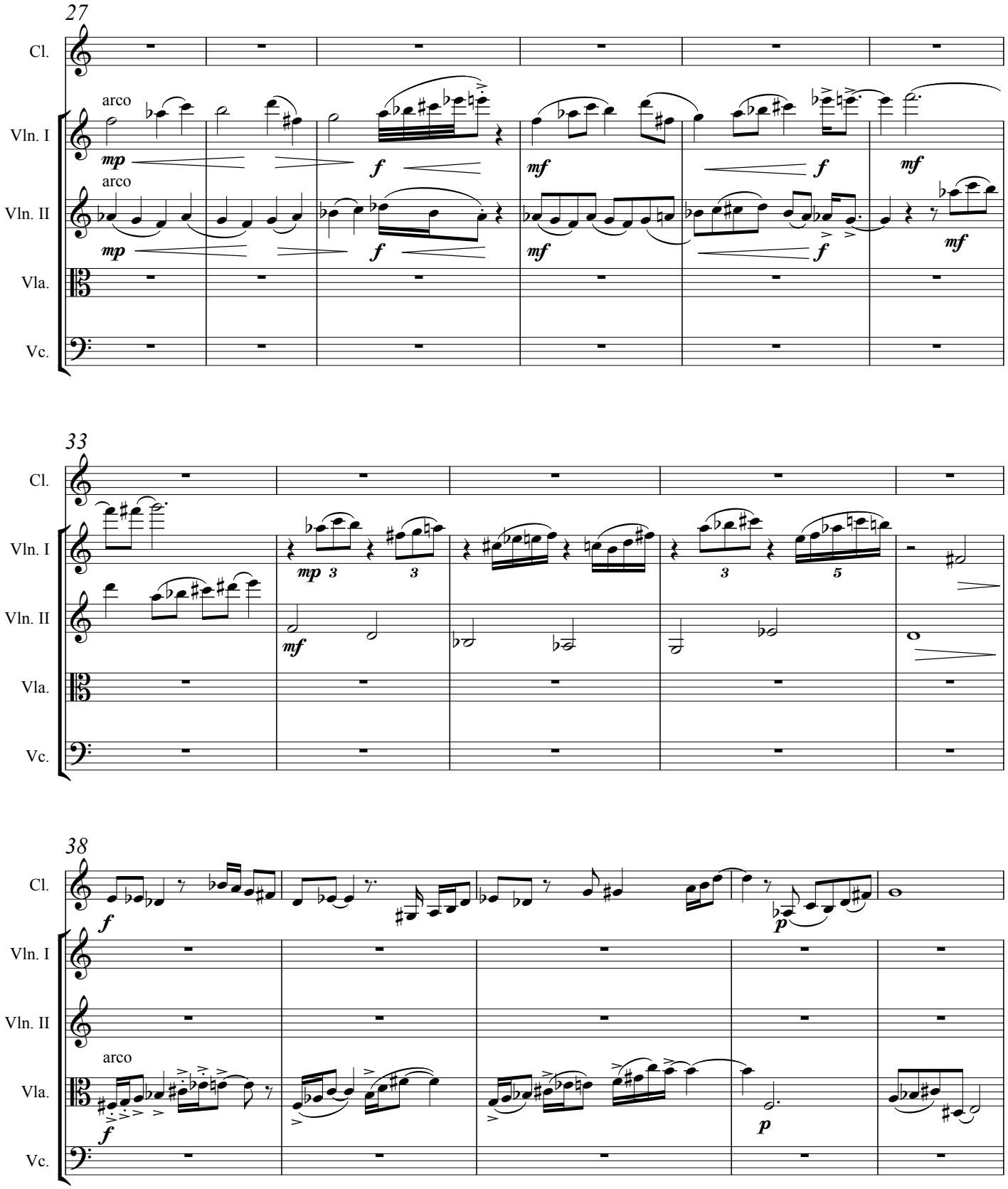
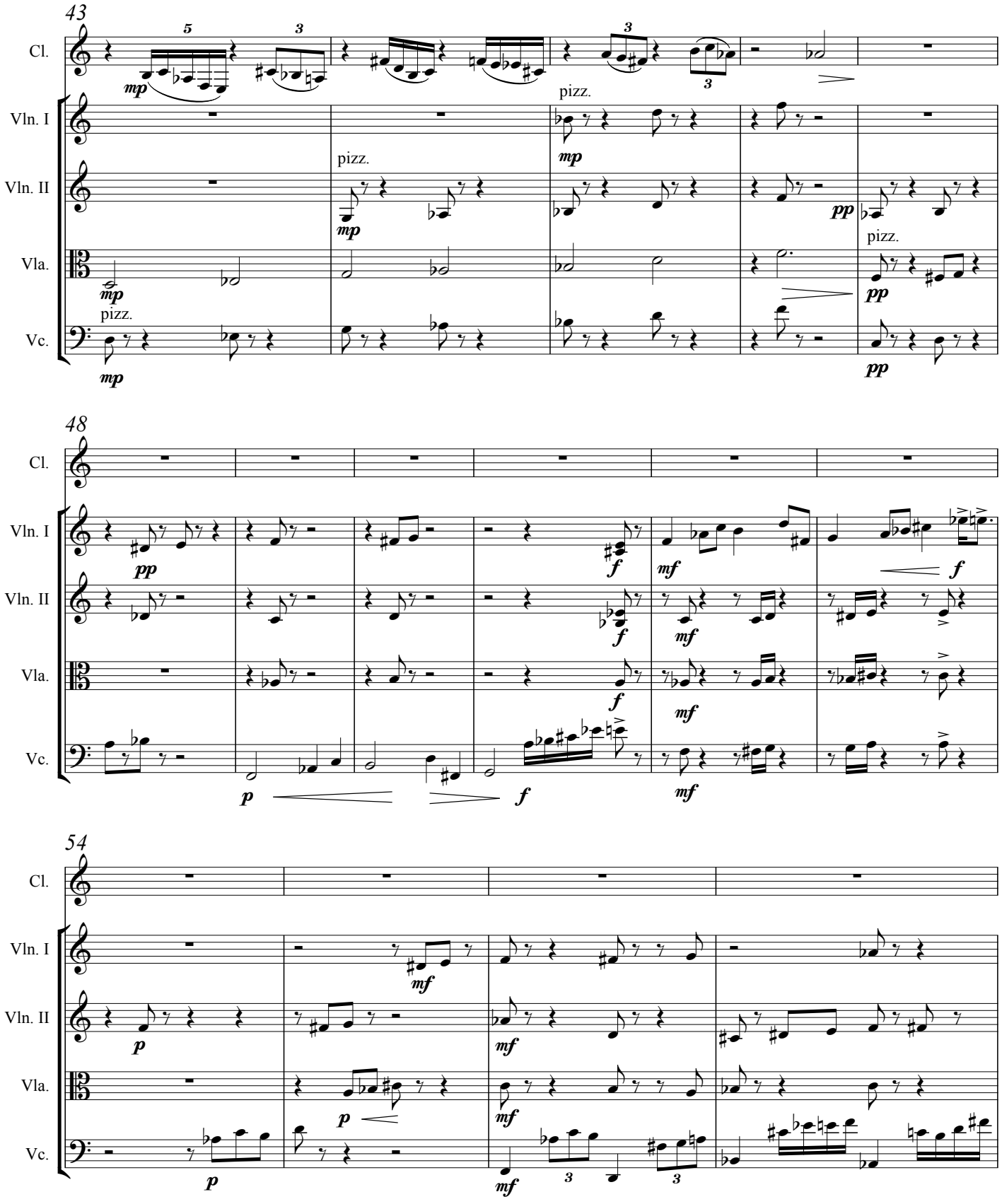
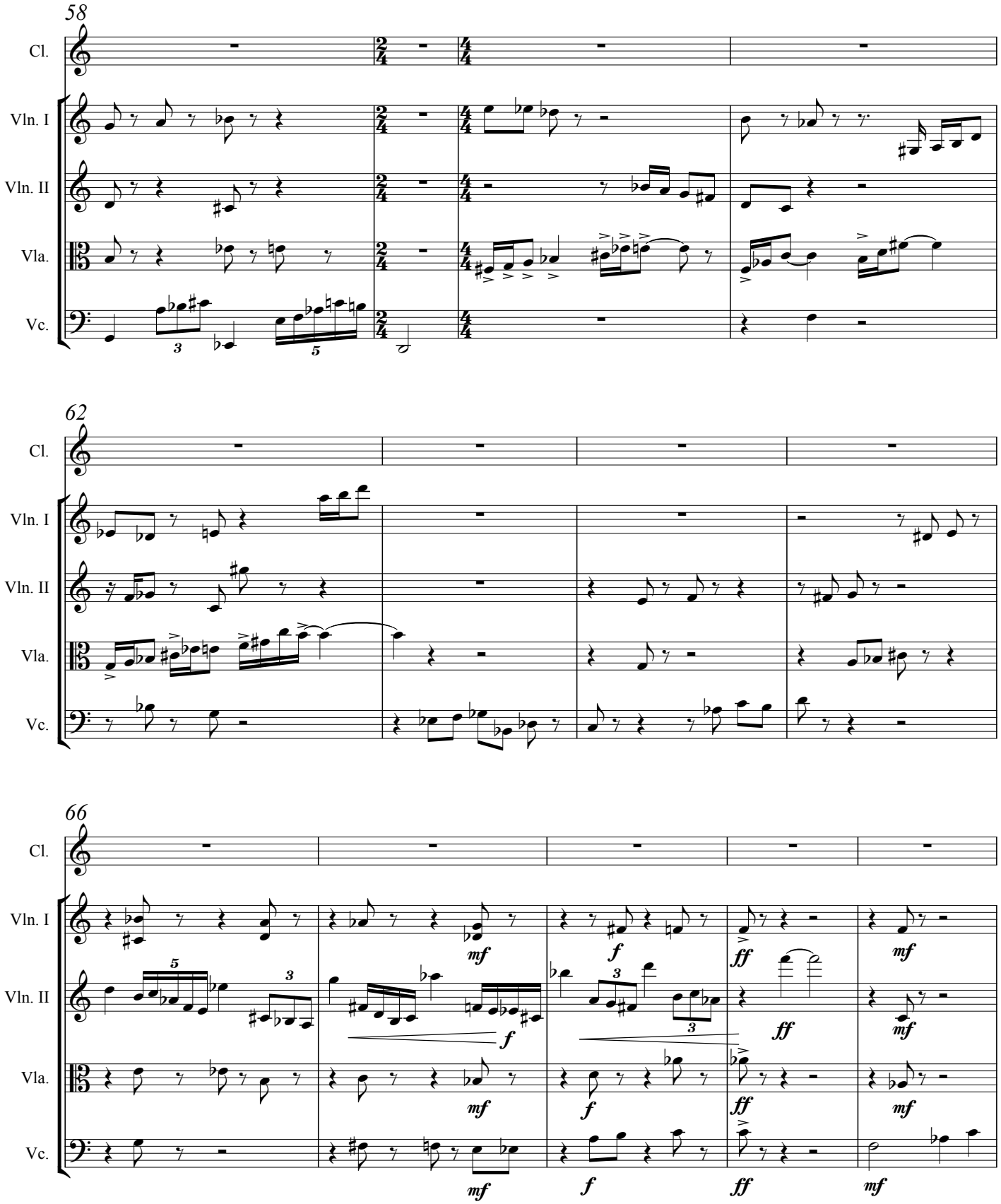
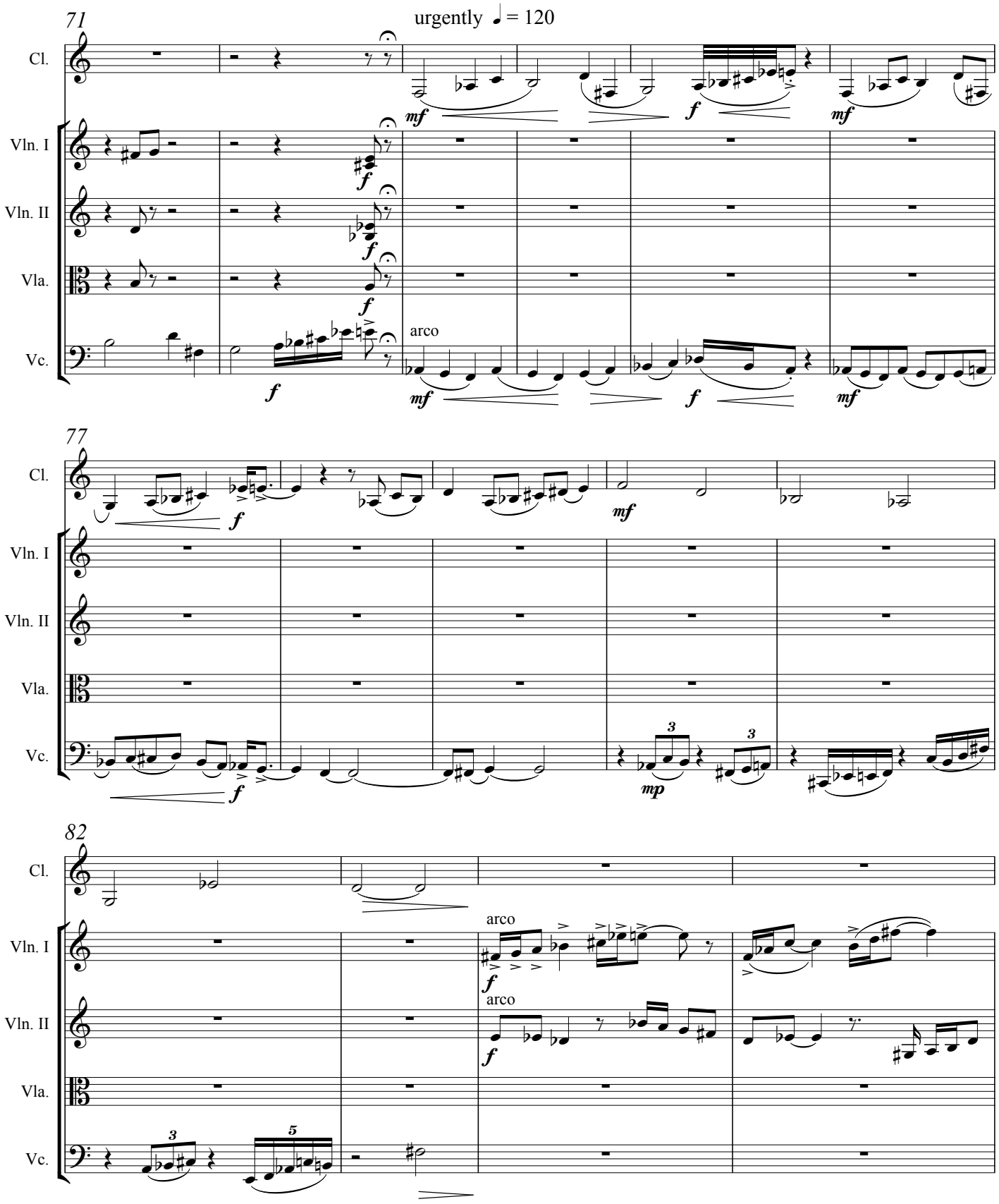
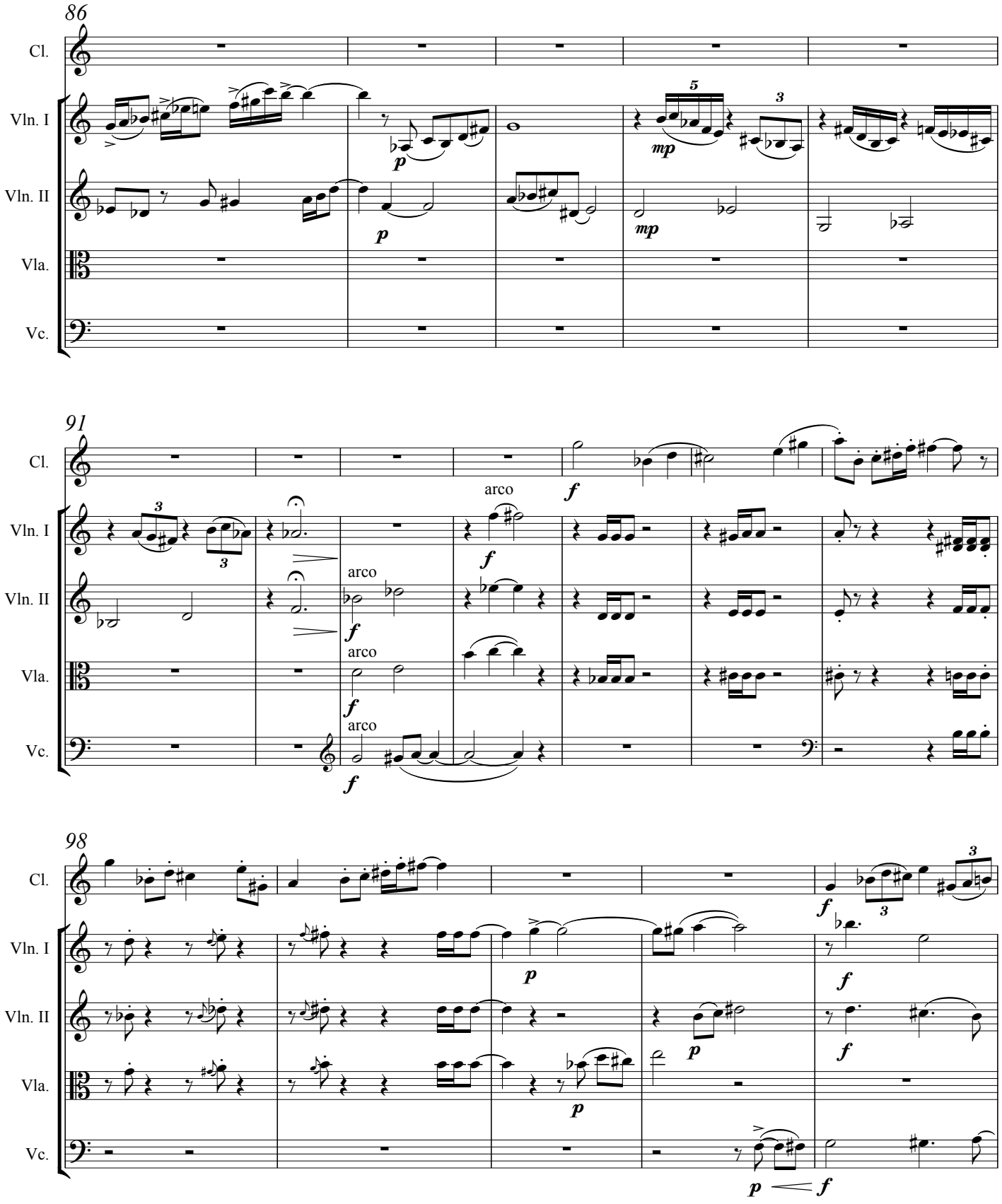

12
marcato
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
16
flowing
21
pizz.

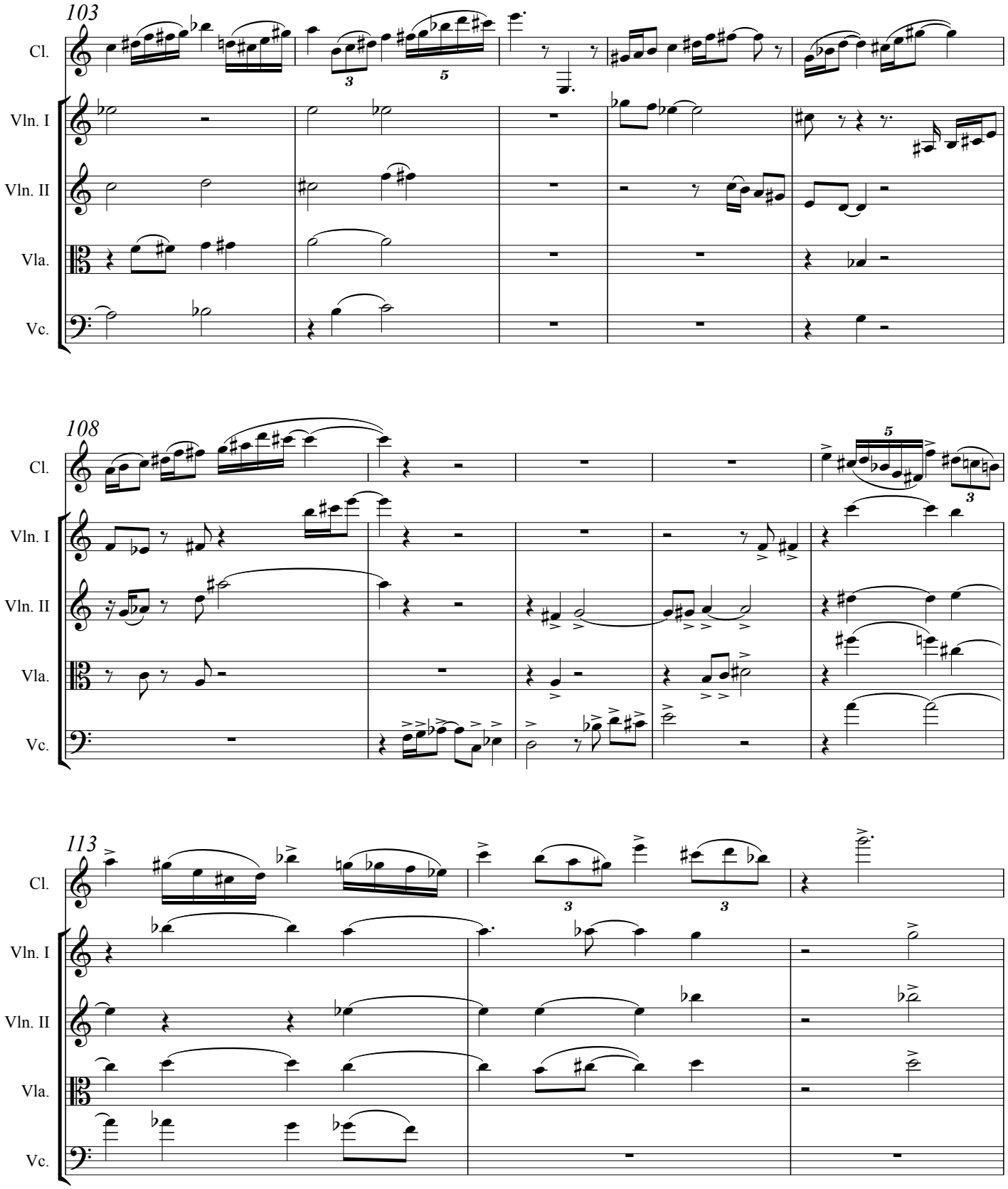

27
Cl.
Vln. I
arco
mp
f
mf
f
mf
Vln. II
arco
mp
f
mf
f
mf
Vla.
Vc.
33
Cl.
Vln. I
mp
3
3
3
5
Vln. II
mf
Vla.
Vc.
38
Cl.
f
p
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
arco
f
p
Vc.

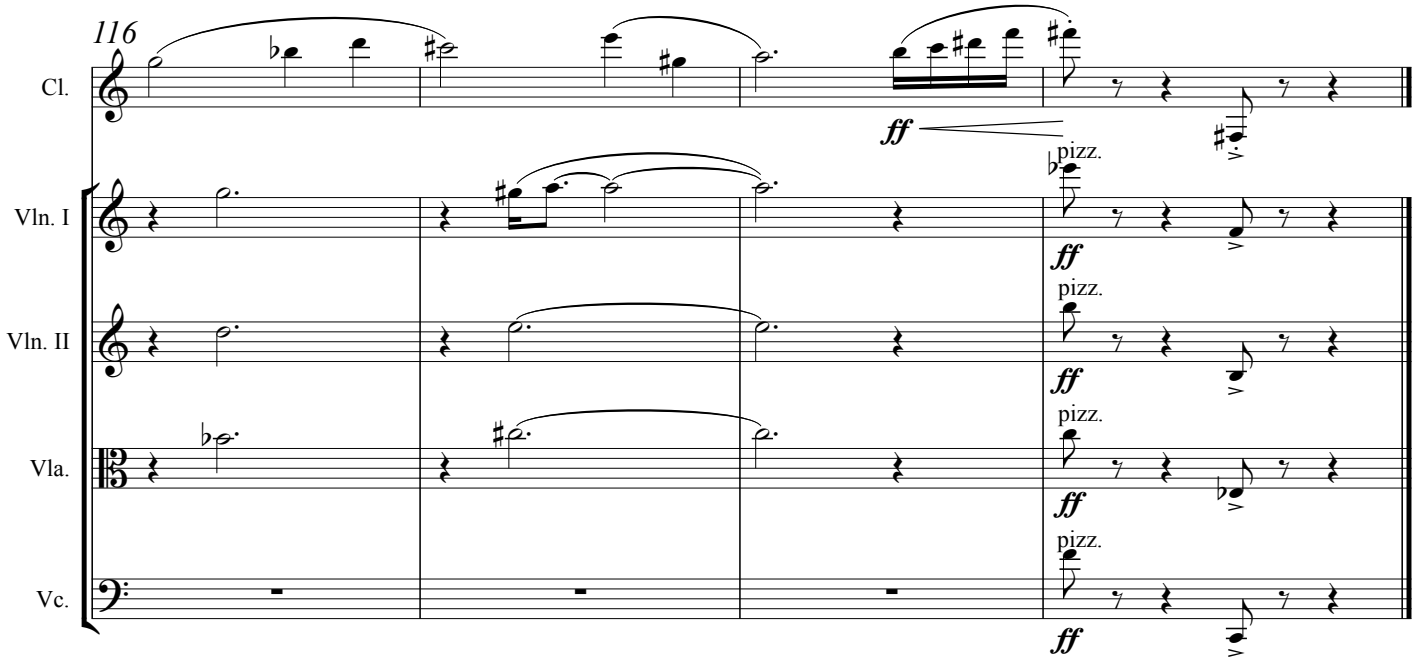

43
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
pizz.
pp
48
pp
f
mf
p
54
mf
p


58
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
62
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
66
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
f
ff

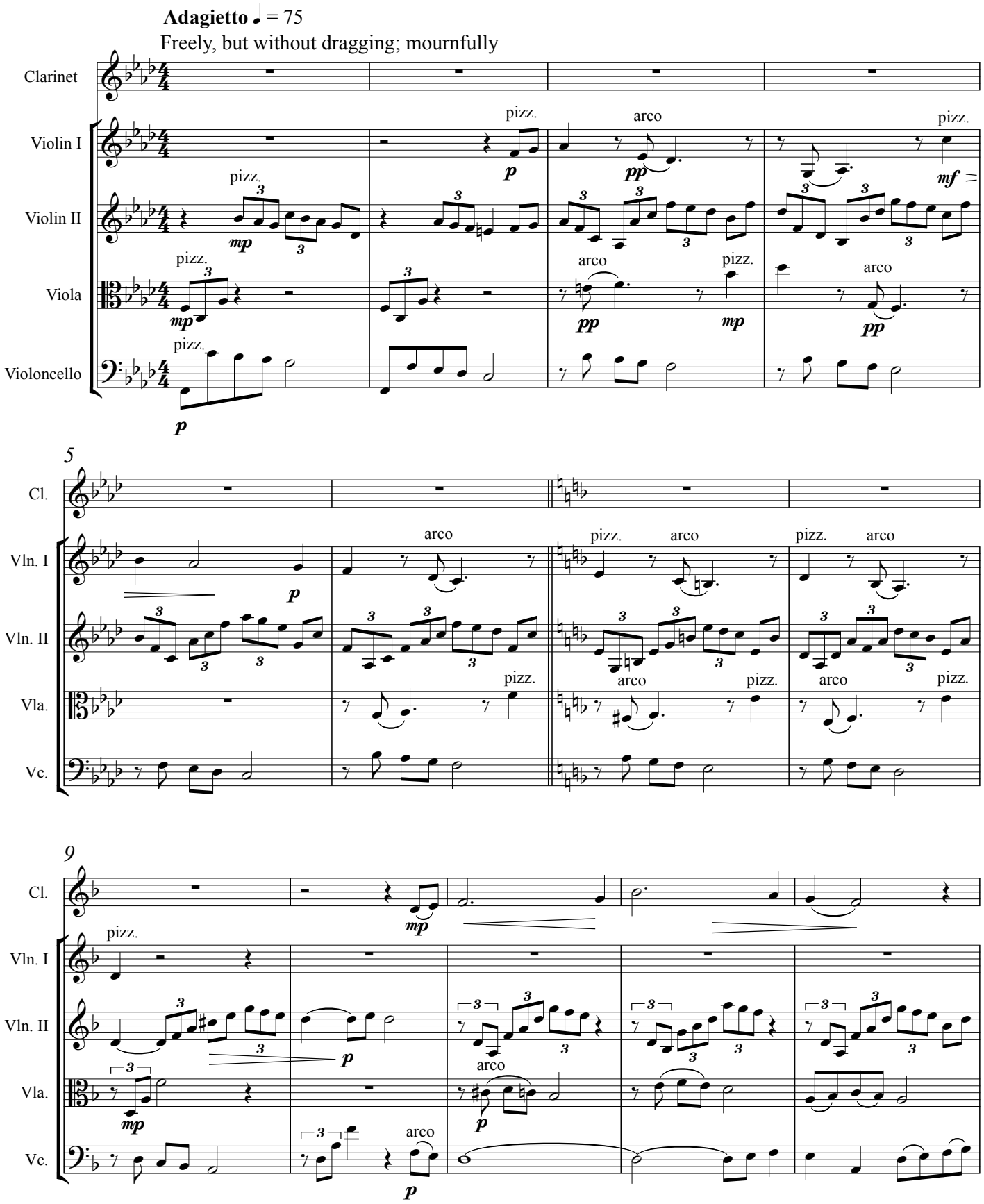

71
urgently ♩ = 120
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
77
82

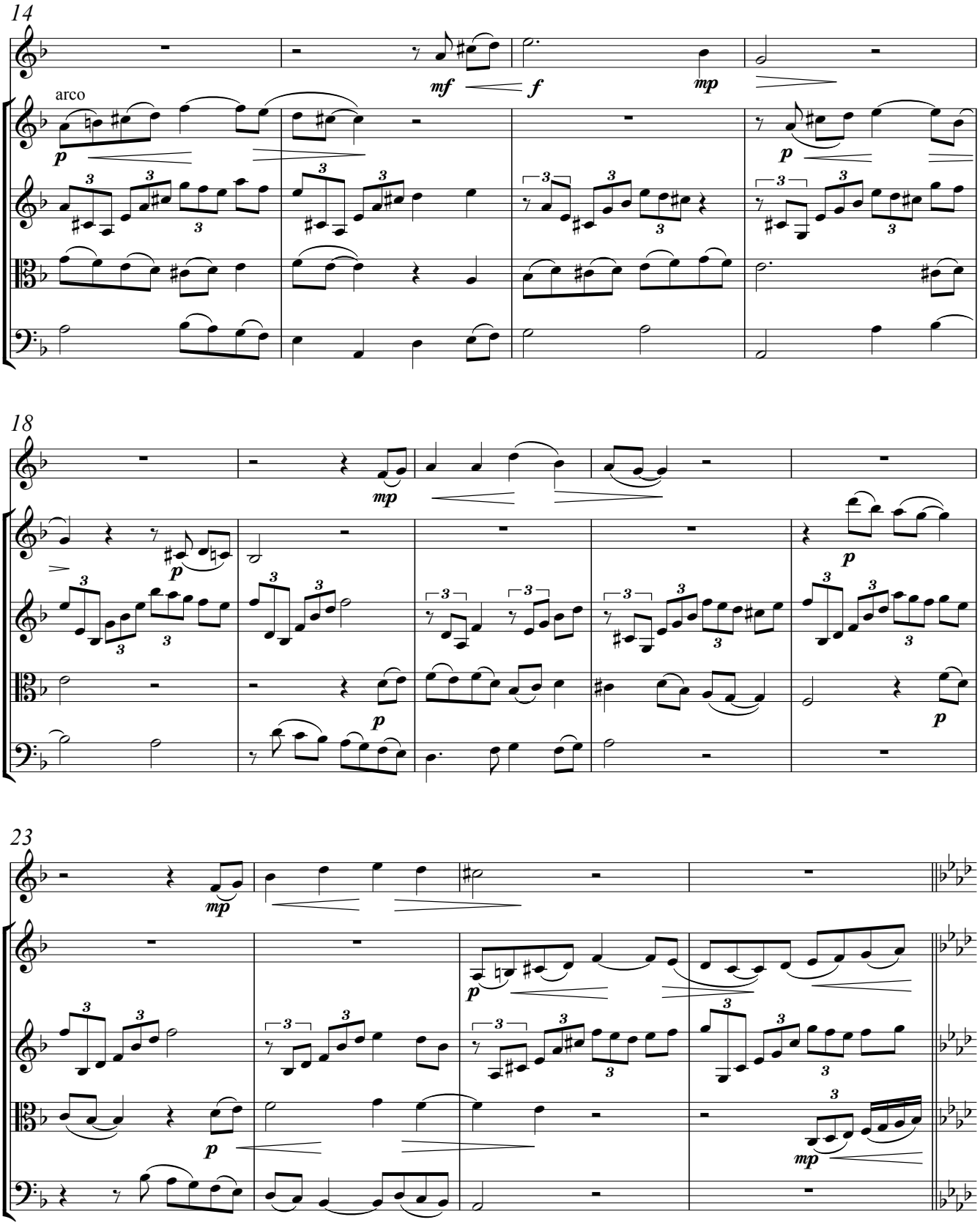

86
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
91
arco
98

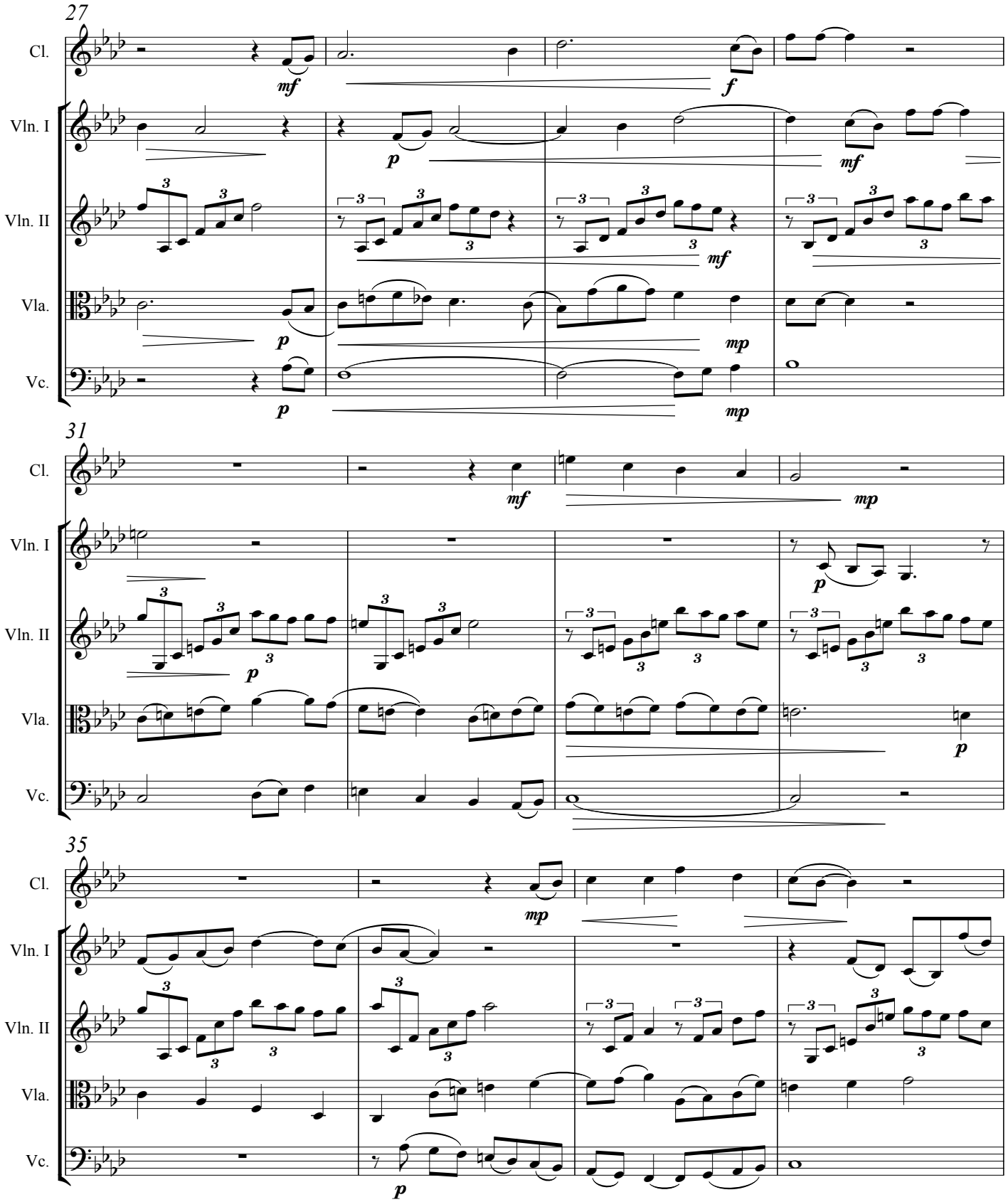

103
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
108
113

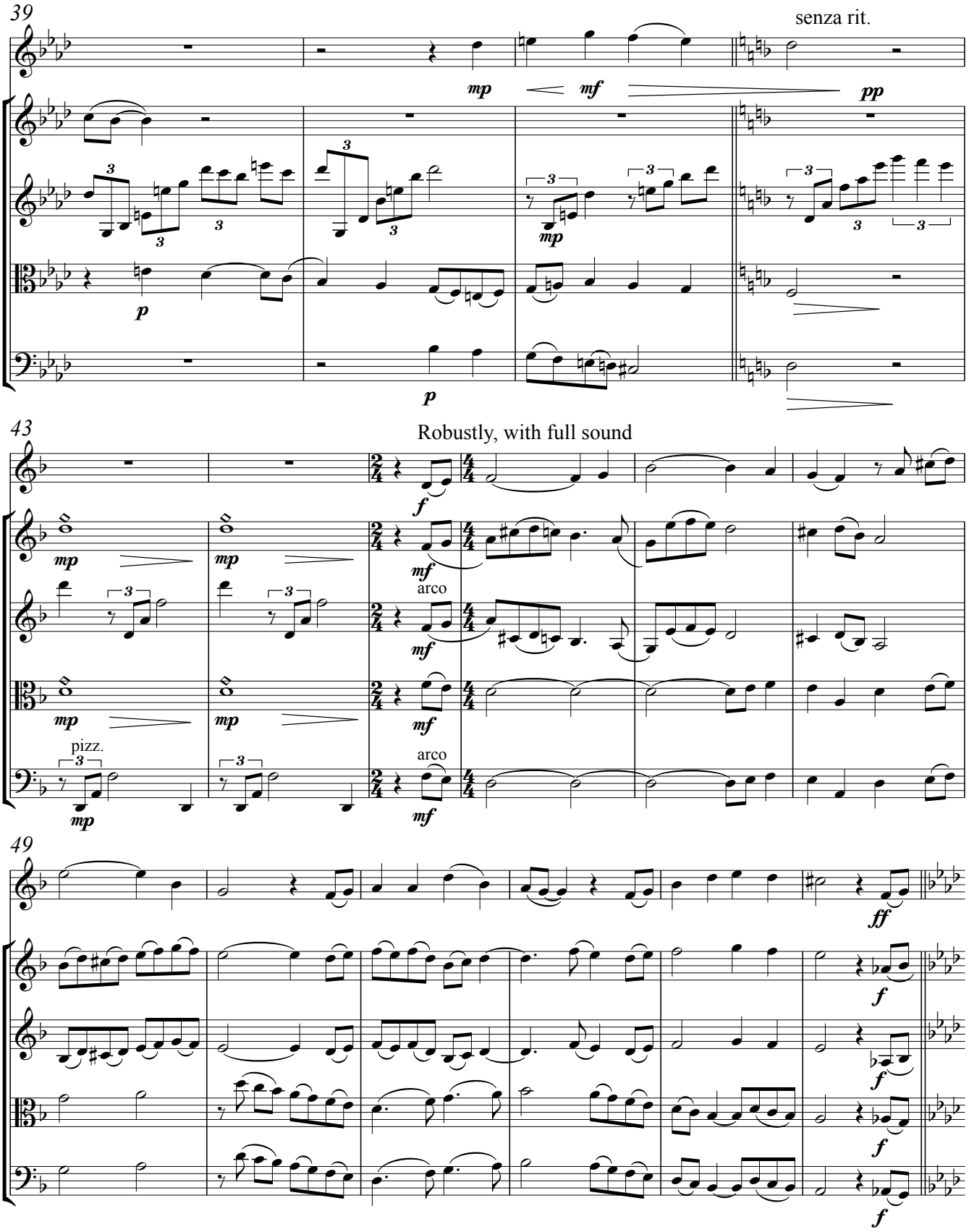

116
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ff
pizz.

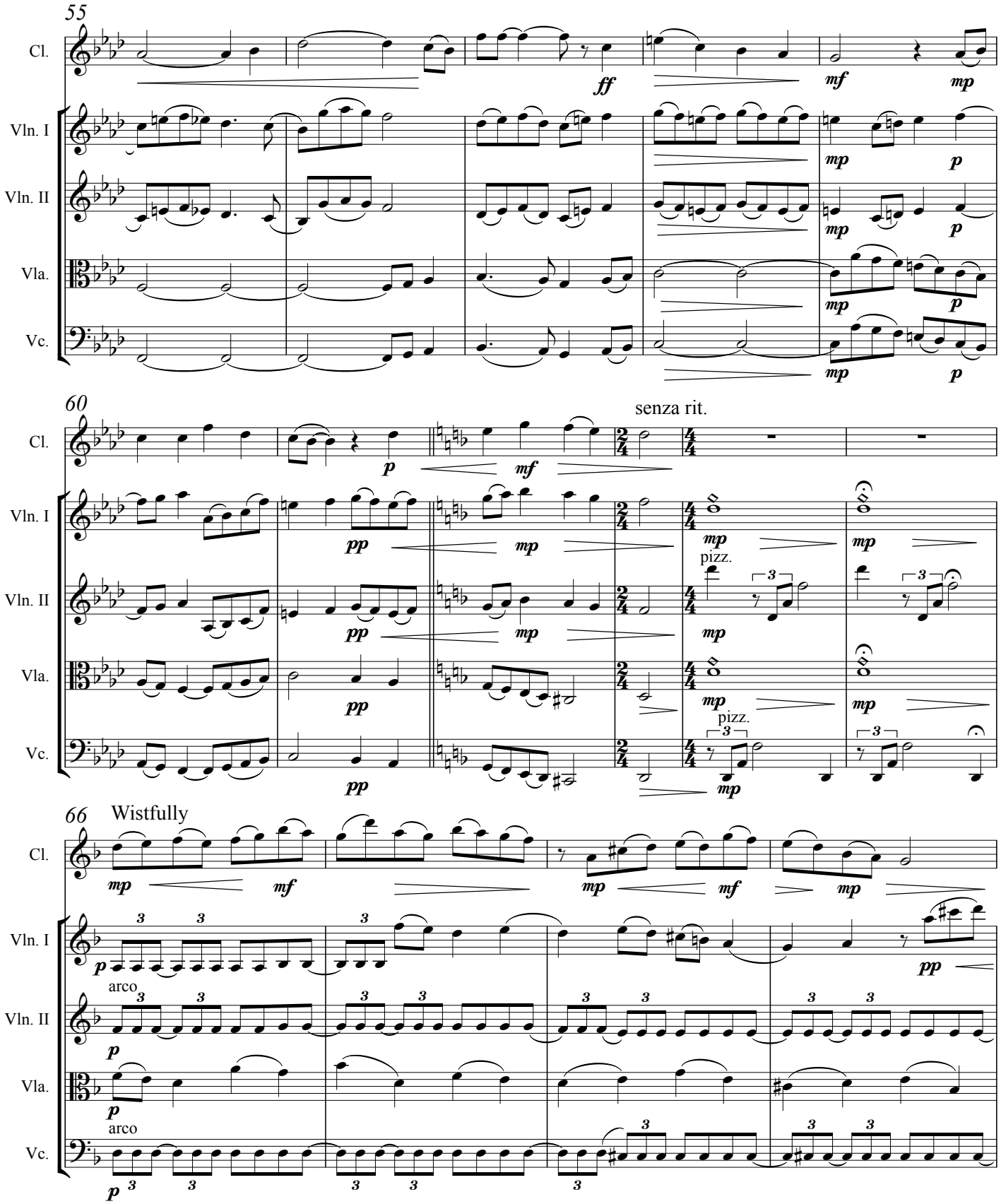
II. Adagietto

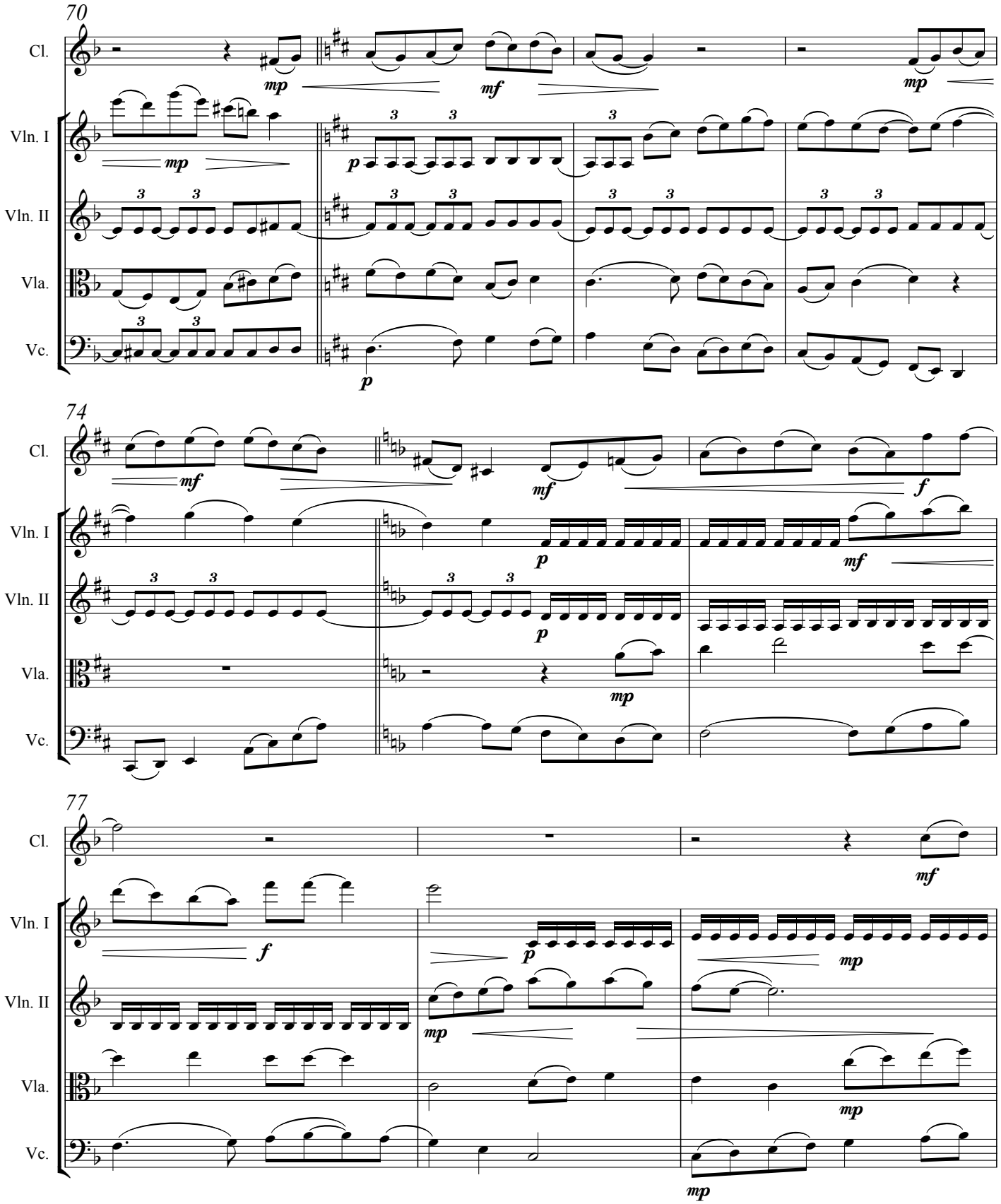


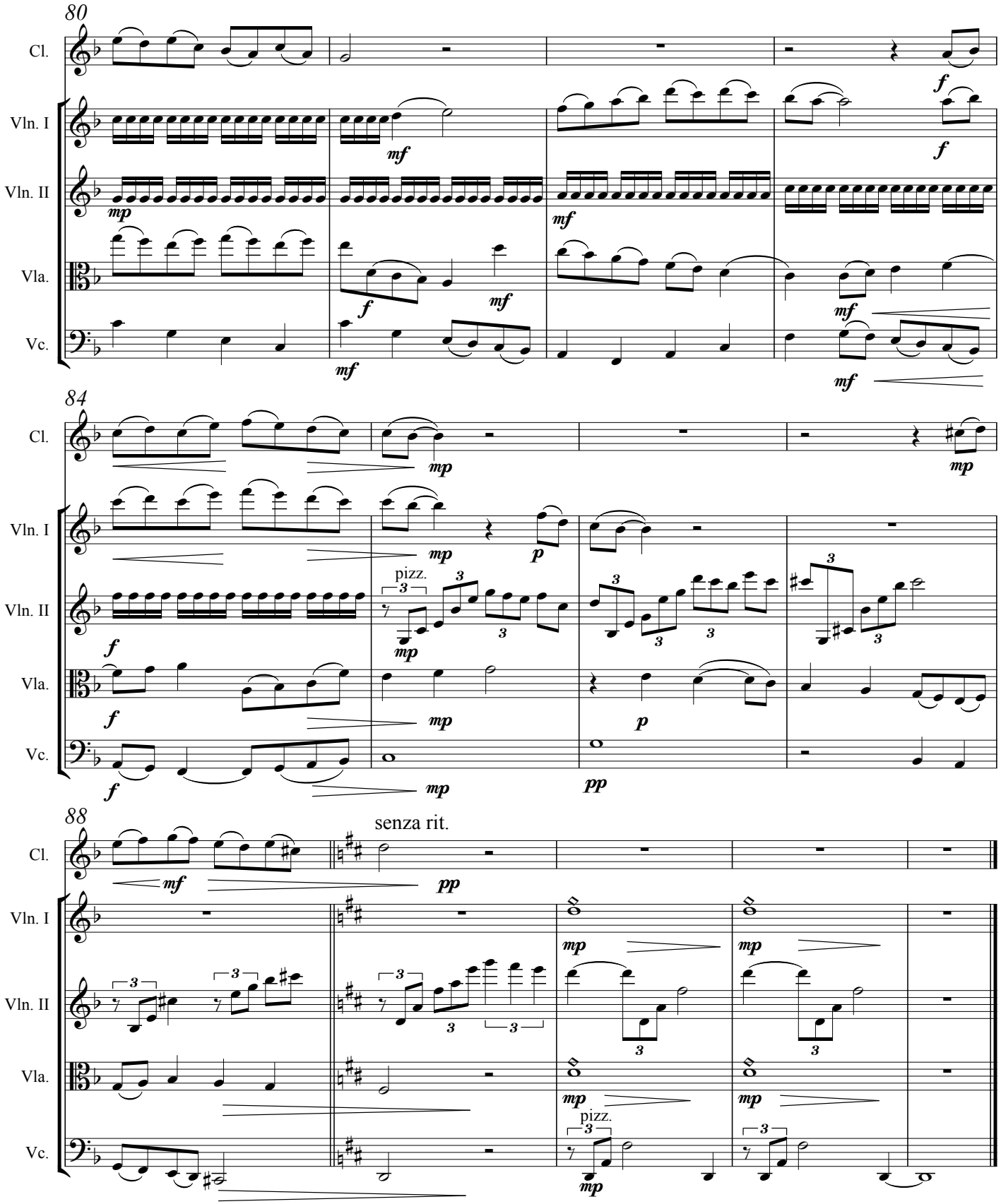

14
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
mf
f
mp
p
18
23


27
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
f
p
mf
mf
p
mp
p
mp
31
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
mp
p
p
p
35
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
p

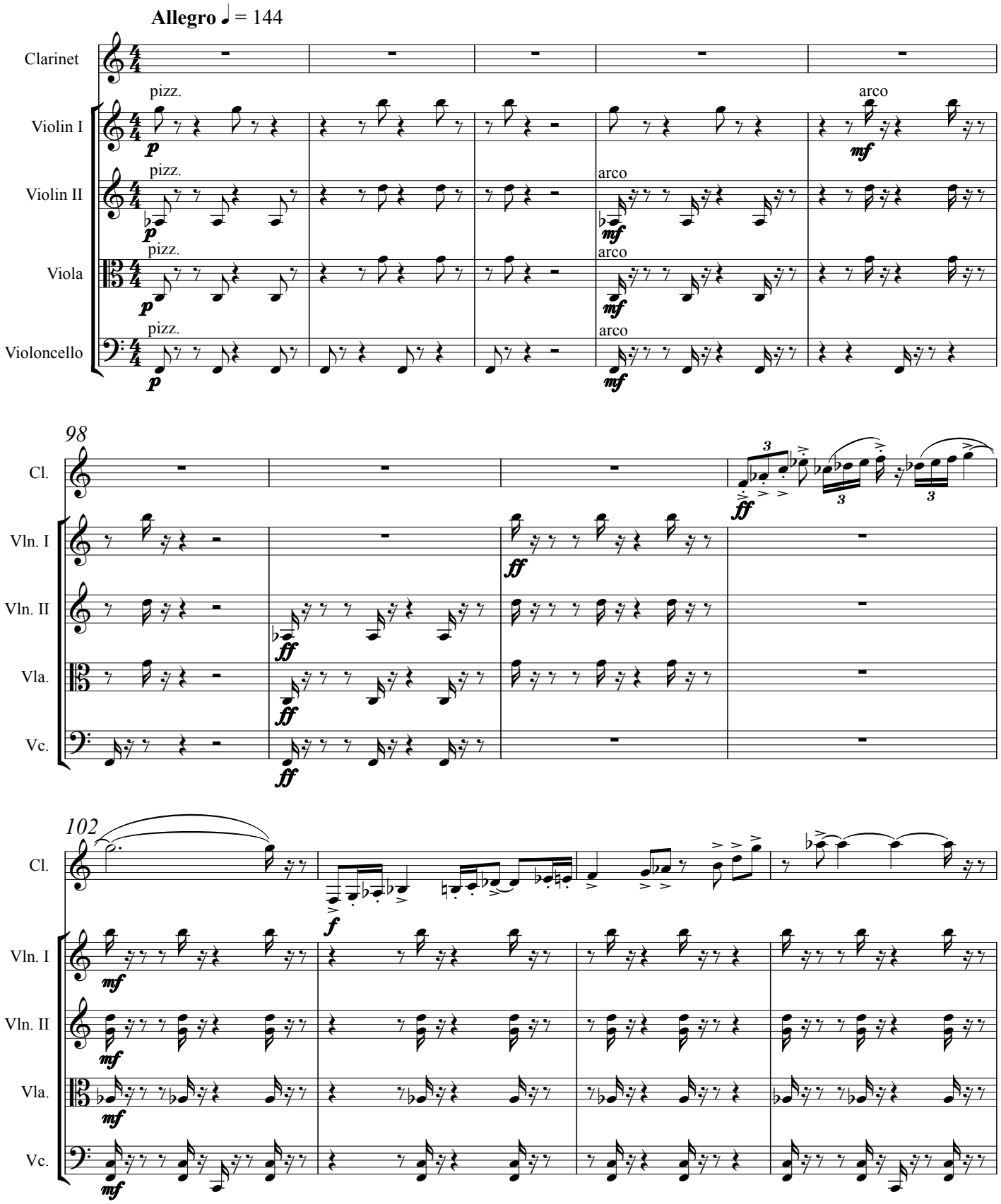

39
senza rit.
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
43
Robustly, with full sound
arco
pizz.
49

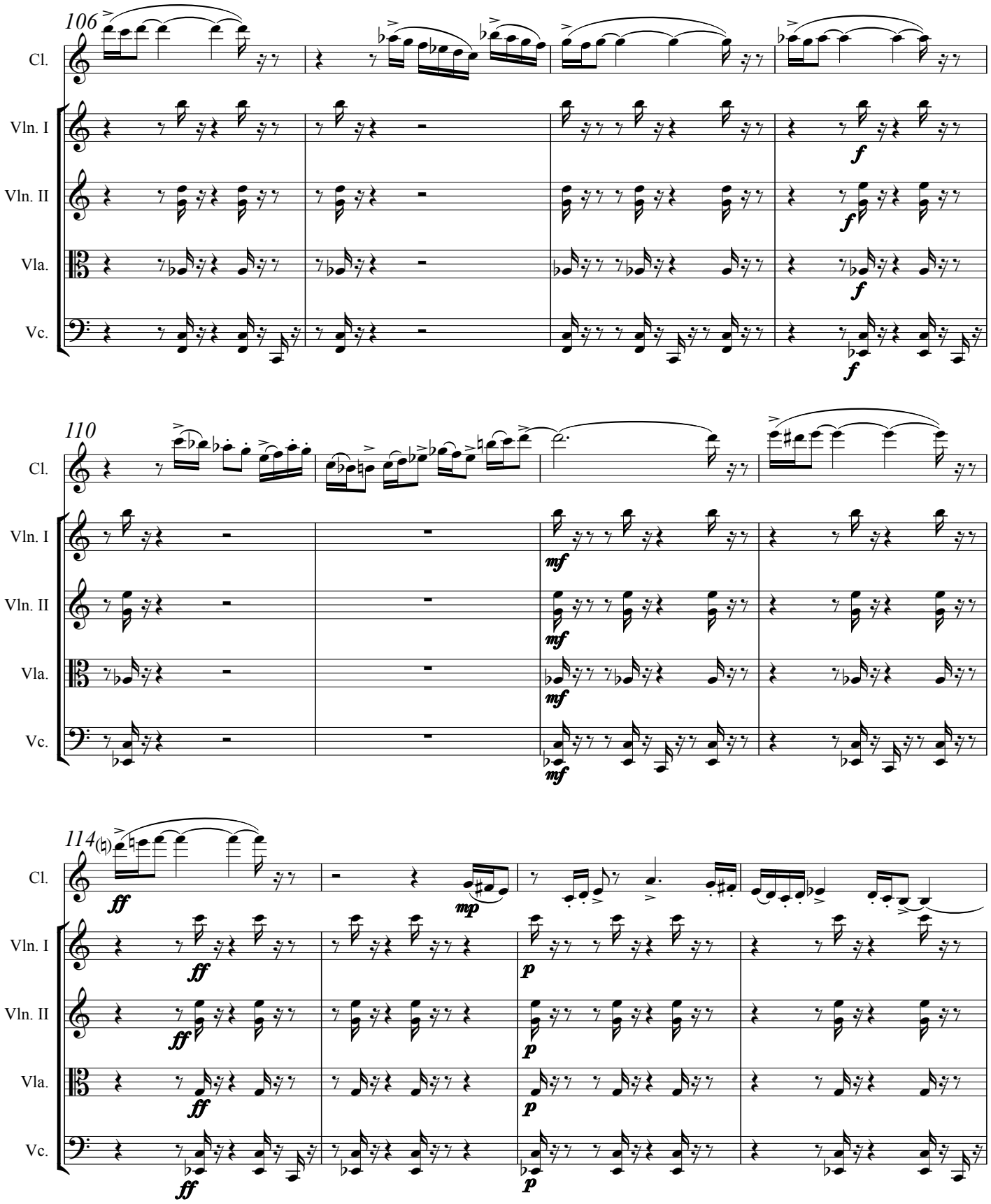

55
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ff
mf
mp
p
60
senza rit.
pp
pizz.
66
Wistfully
arco

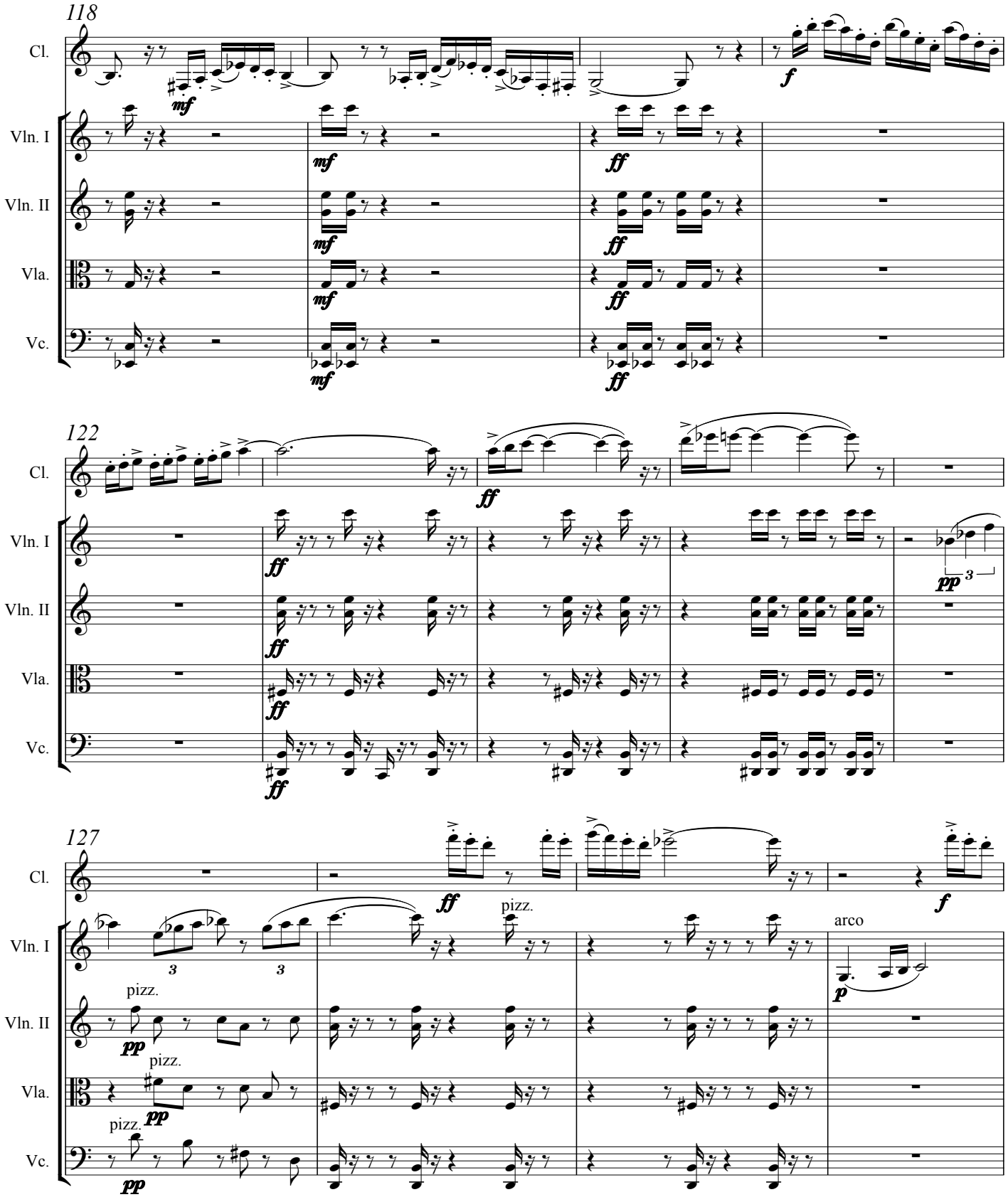

70
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
74
77

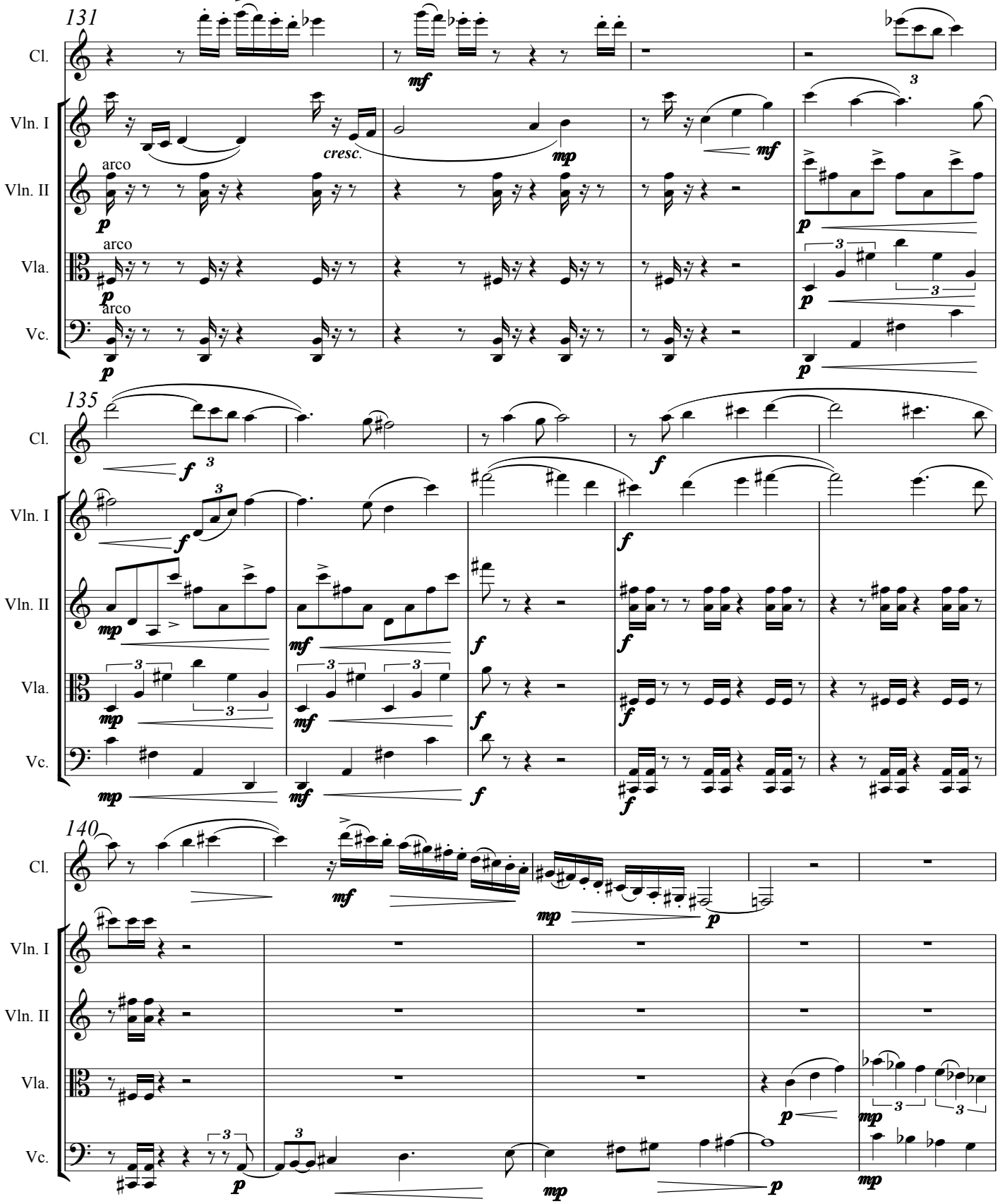

80
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
84
pizz.
88
senza rit.

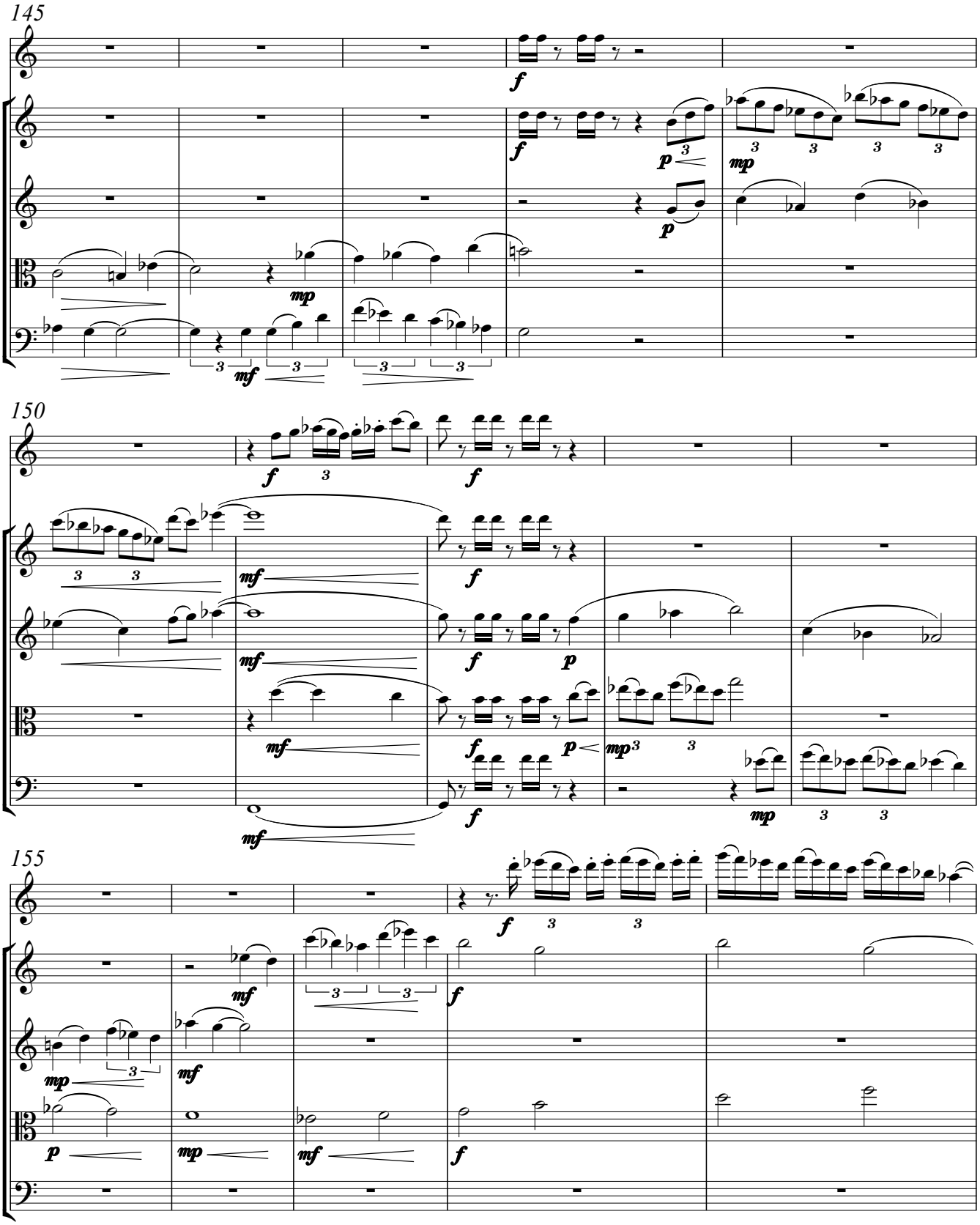
III. Finale

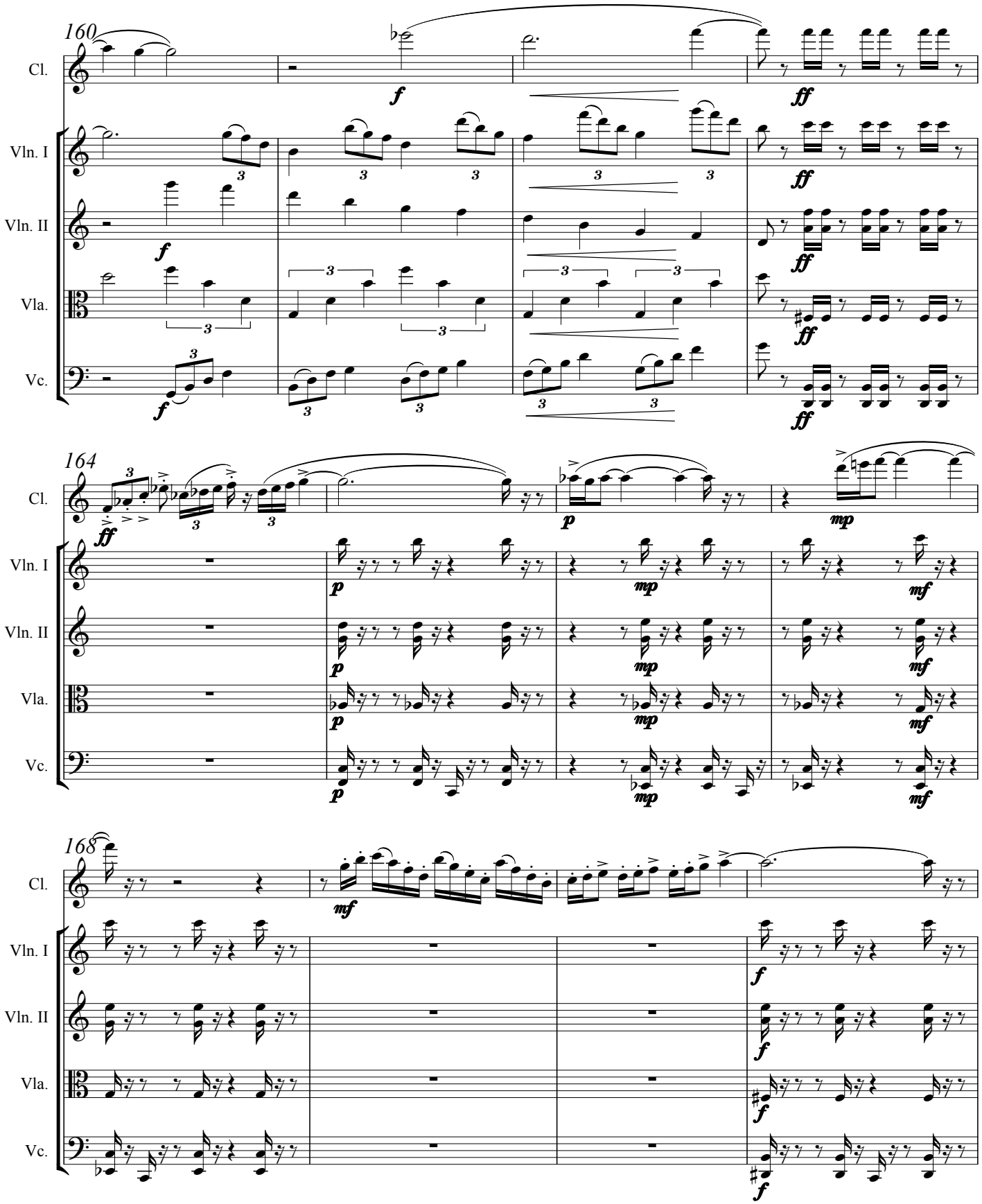

Allegro ♩ = 144
Clarinet
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
pizz.
arco
98
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
102

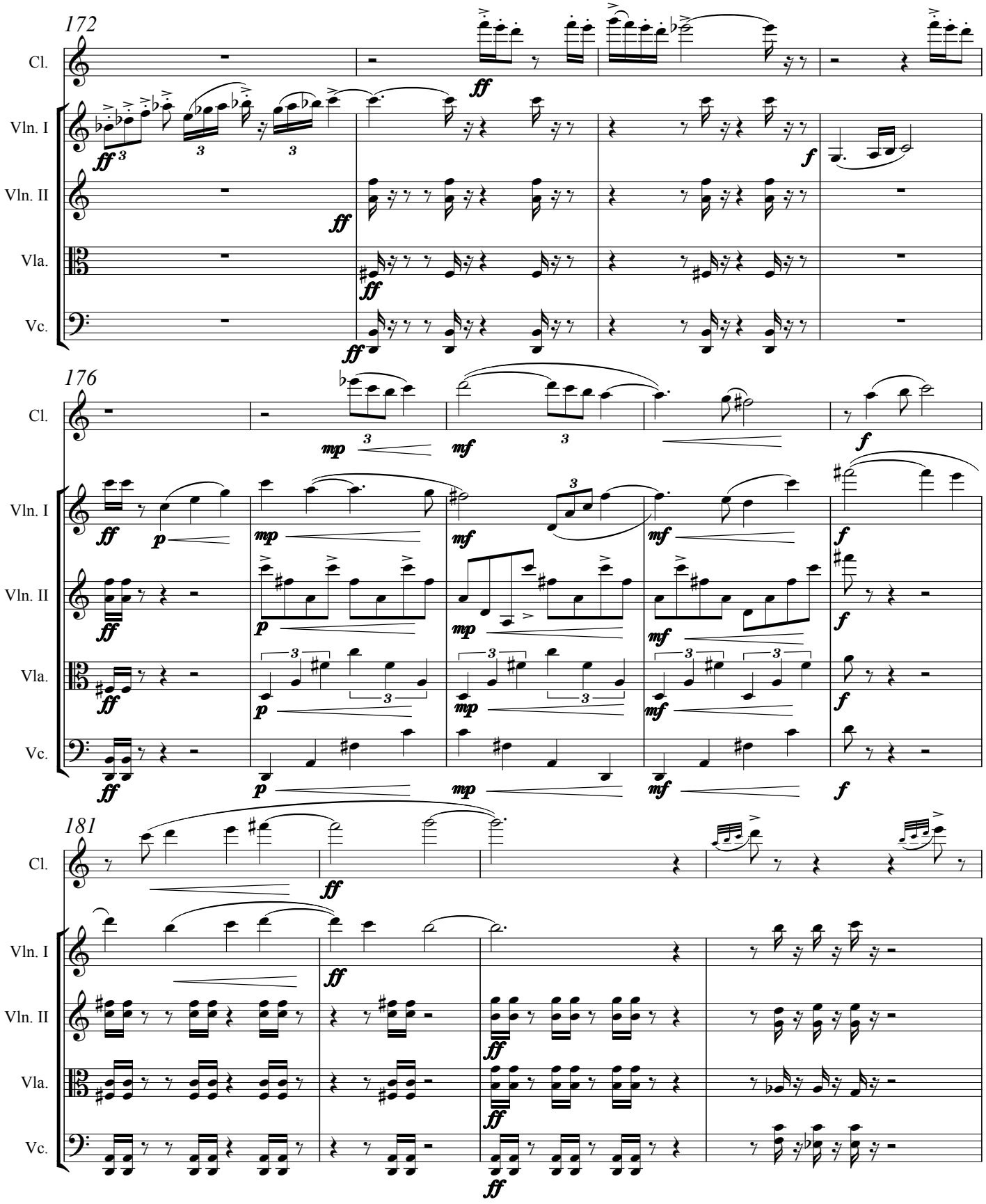

106
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
f
110
mf
114
ff
mp
p

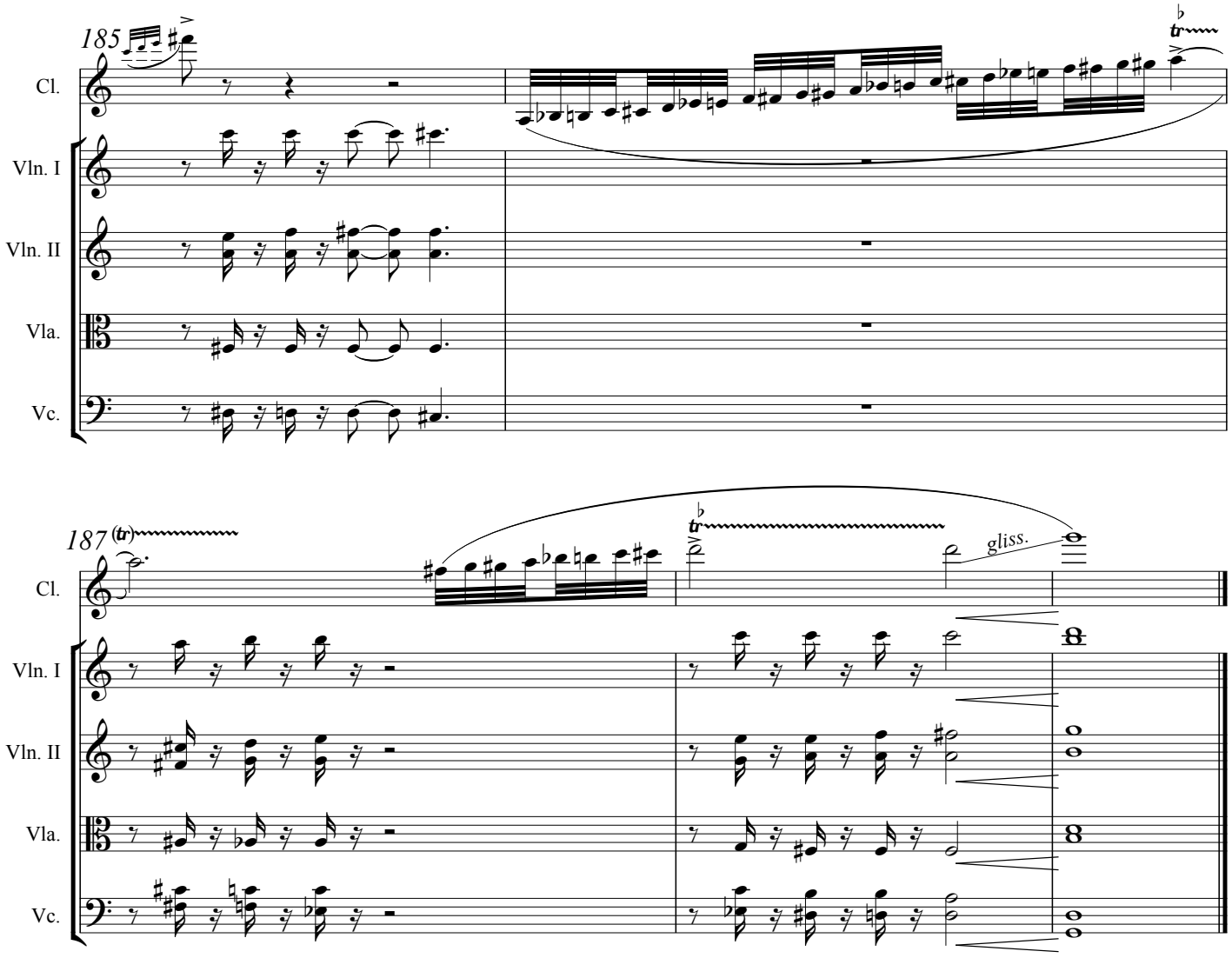

118
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
f
ff
122
pp
3
127
pizz.
arco
p


131
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
cresc.
135
140


145
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
150
155


160
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
f
ff
164
p
mp
mf
168


172
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
176
181


185
Cl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
187
(tr)
tr
gliss.