# Interlocking Melodies

## for string quartet

**Richard Whalley**

# Interlocking Melodies

## *for the Quatuor Danel*

**Programme Note**

I wanted to write a piece that pays tribute to the wonderful composer György Ligeti, who died in June last year. It is very dangerous for a composer like myself to get too close to the music of a great composer (think of all the 19th century composers who struggled with the shadow of Beethoven), so I chose a tangential course. When I think of Ligeti's music I think of infinite space; it seems utterly unlimited in scope, and often appears to have a remarkable property of transcending gravity. I was drawn to a late painting of the artist Willem de Kooning, *Untitled XIII*, that consists of a number of large curvy shapes in yellow, green red and white that serenely float in some kind of intriguing weightless balance. In music the whole-tone scale defies gravity, as all its intervals are equal, and all its pitches are of equal weight. Therefore it seemed natural to build the interlocking melodies in this piece out of interlocking whole-tone scales. Rather than being content with the traditional 12 semitones (which contain two complementary whole-tone scales), this piece uses four complementary whole-tone scales through judicious use of quarter-tones.

This relatively short, intense movement can be heard as a set of variations, in which interlocking melodies subjected to a number of transformations, resulting in a number of increasingly intricate textures. To complicate matters the "theme" consistently gets faster, yet the rate at which textures evolve does not, so the "theme" appears to accelerate ahead of the texture. It may help to think of the movement as a progression through a life-cycle, from naïvety through an accumulation of experience (which includes moments of crisis and of climax), culminating in serene acceptance.

**Duration: c. 7 mins**

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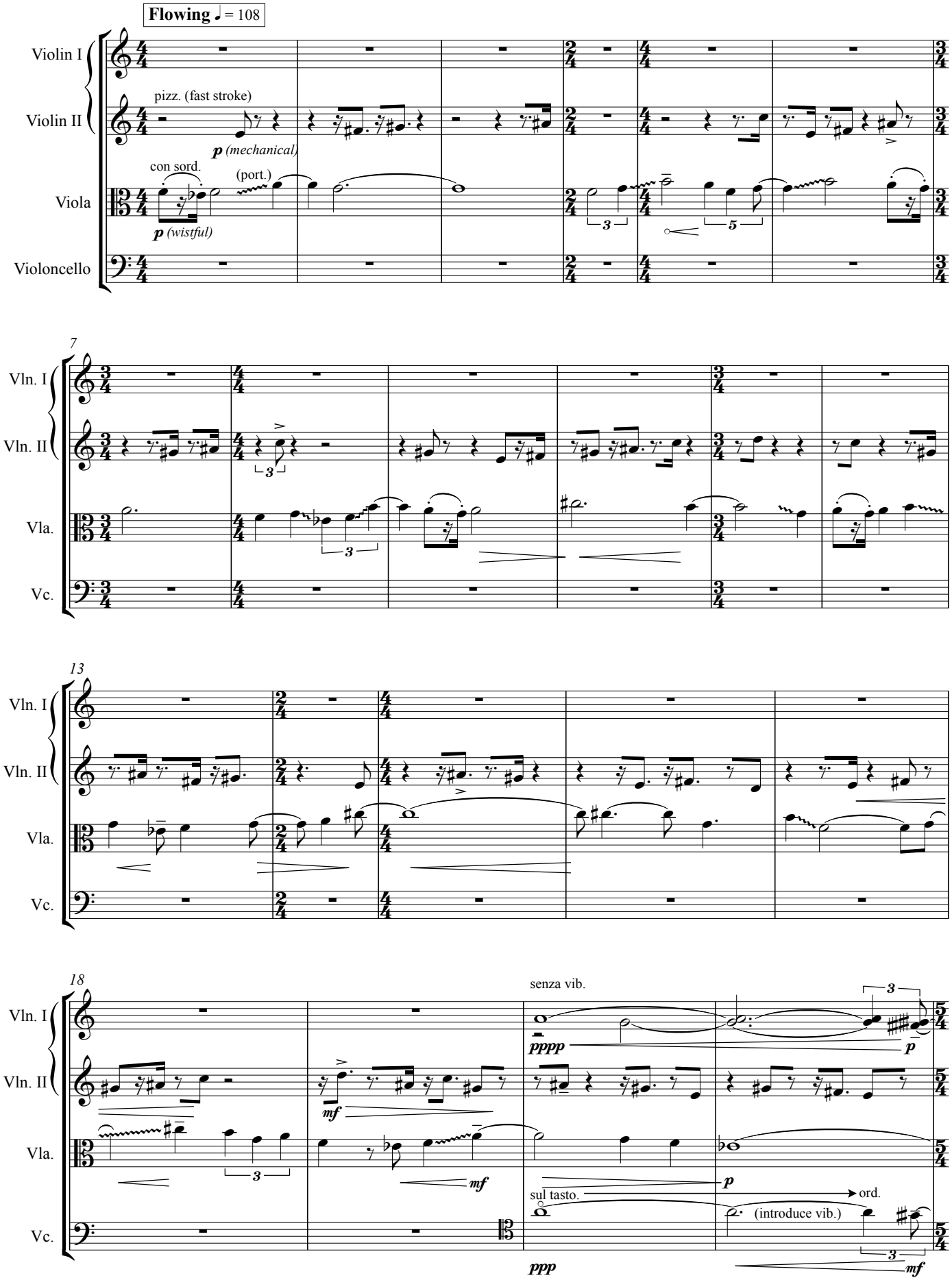


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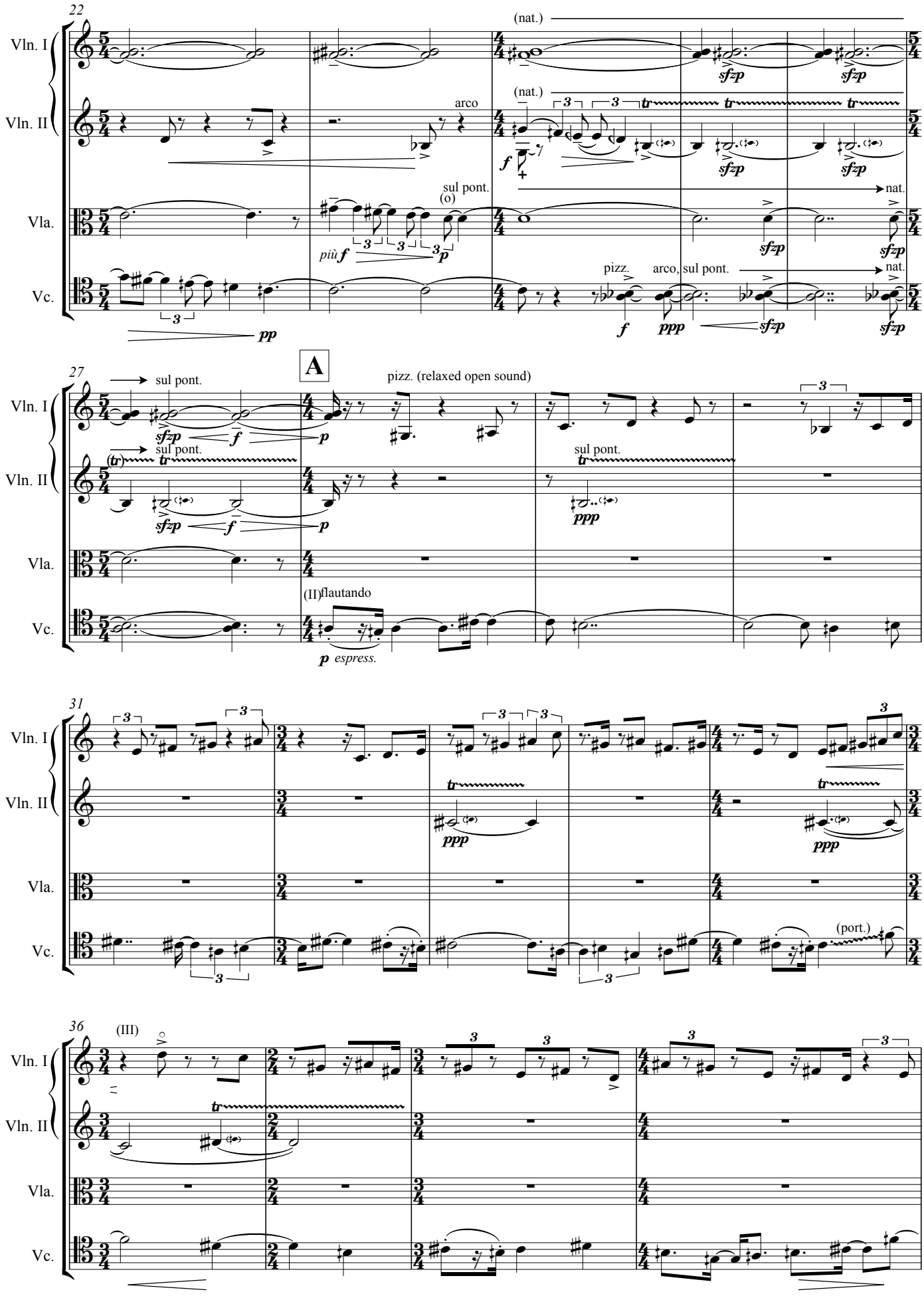
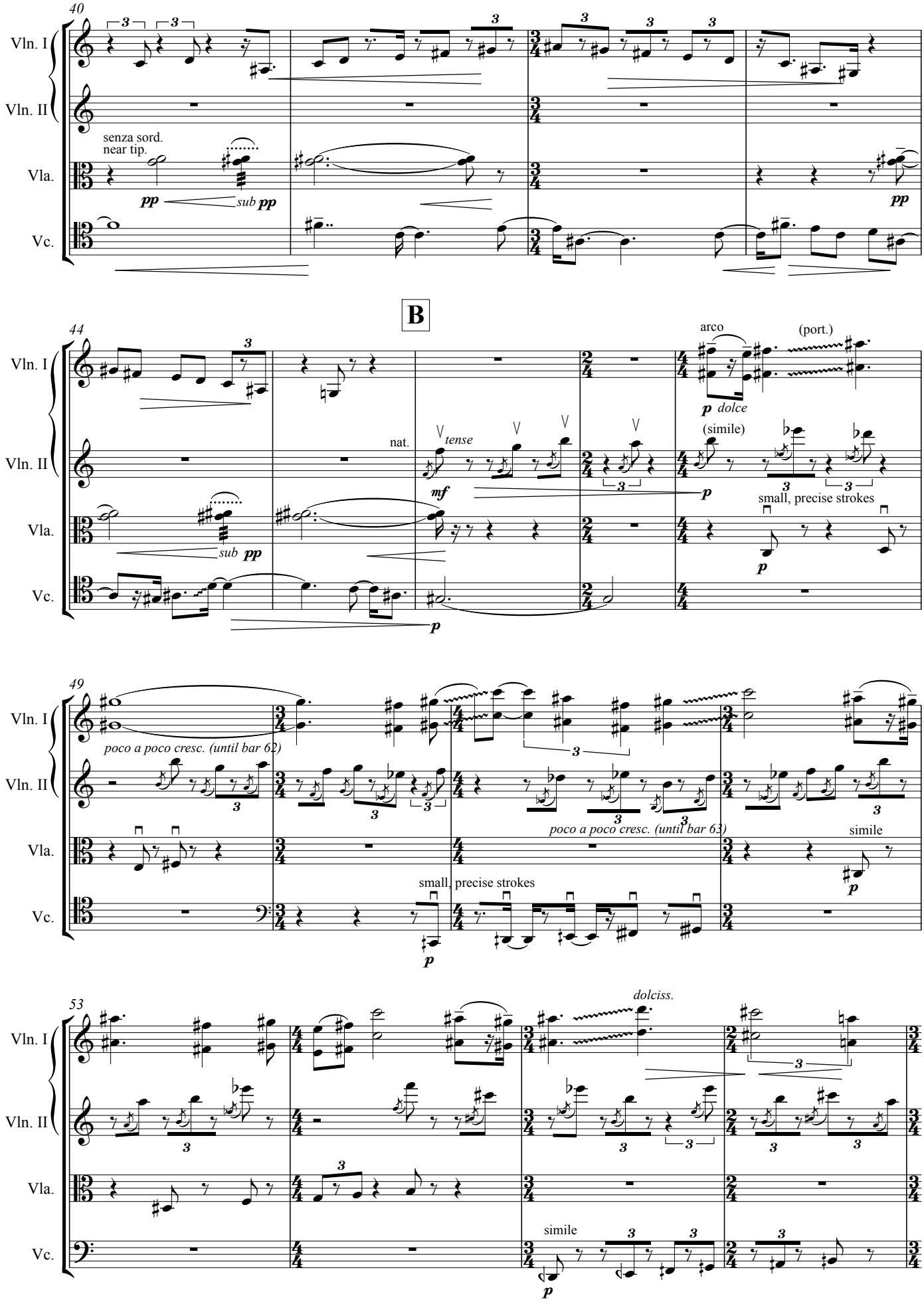
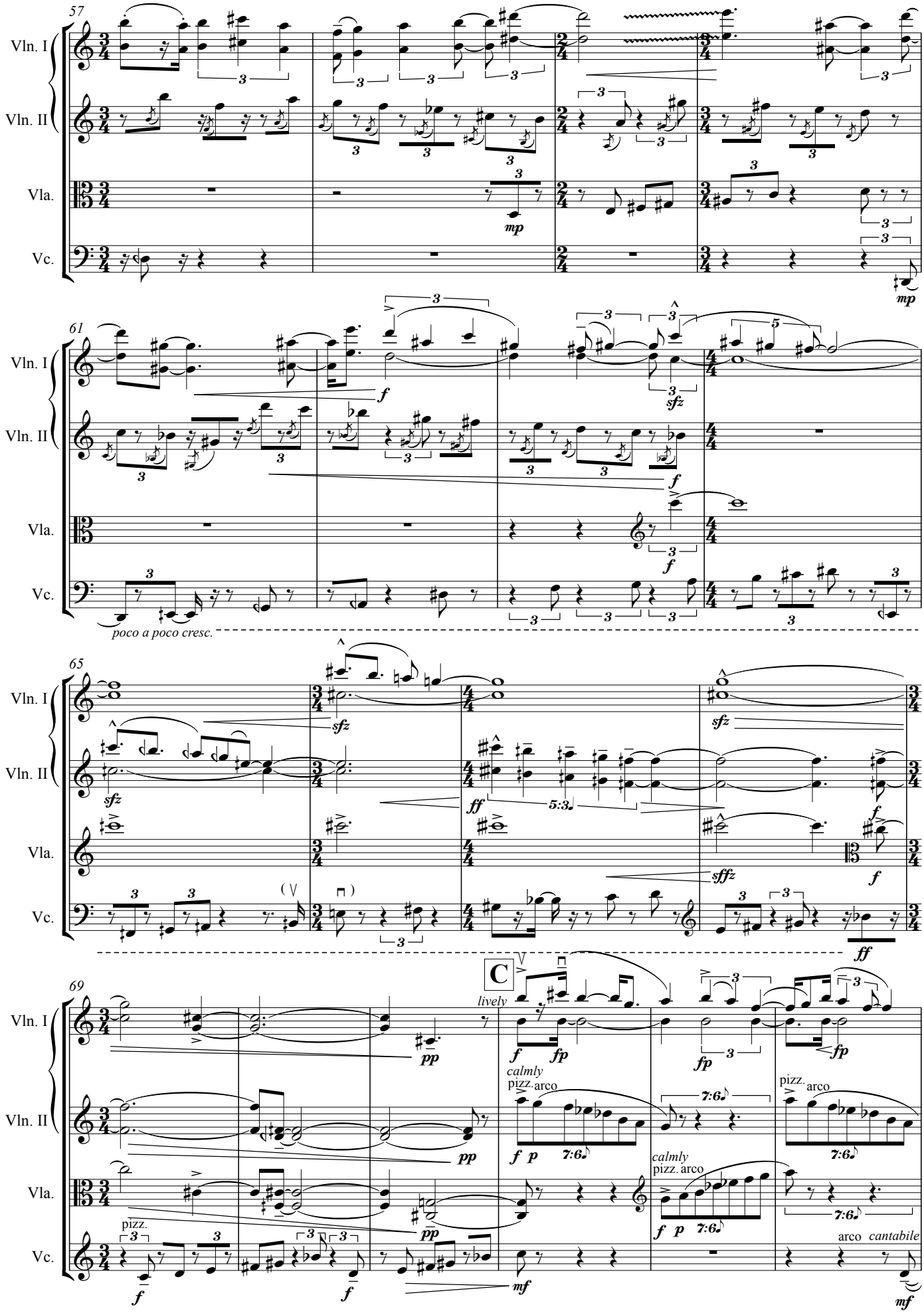
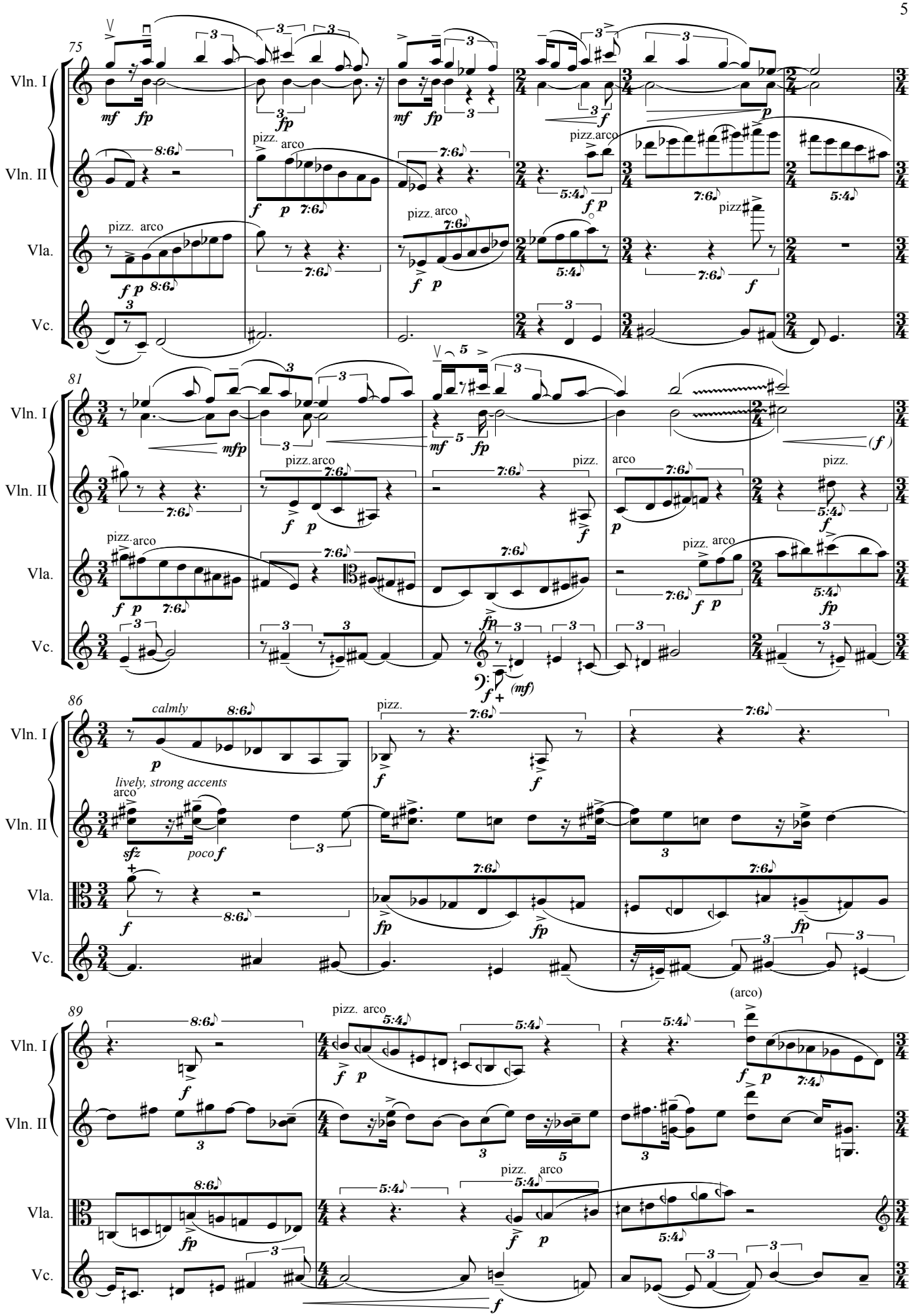
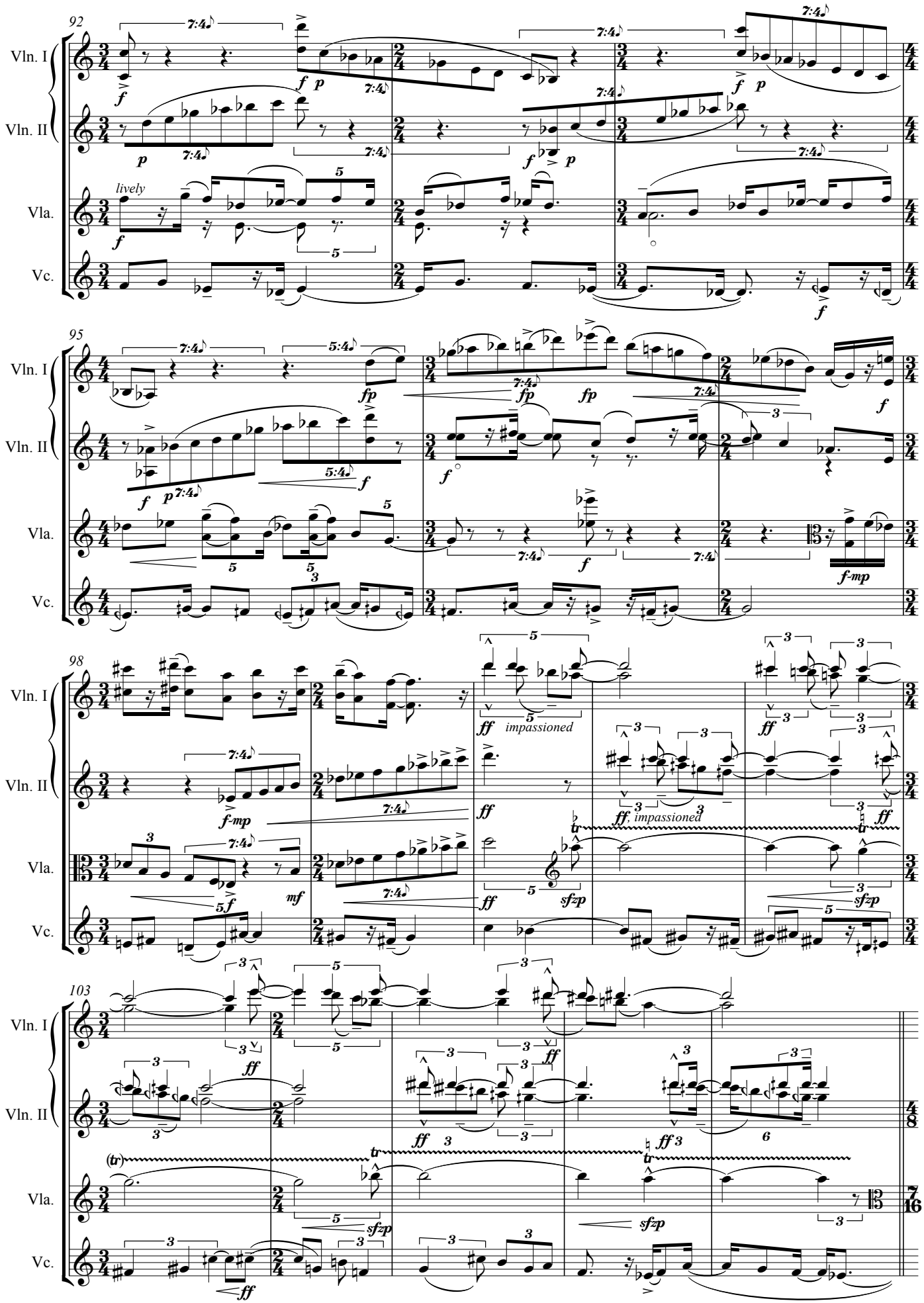
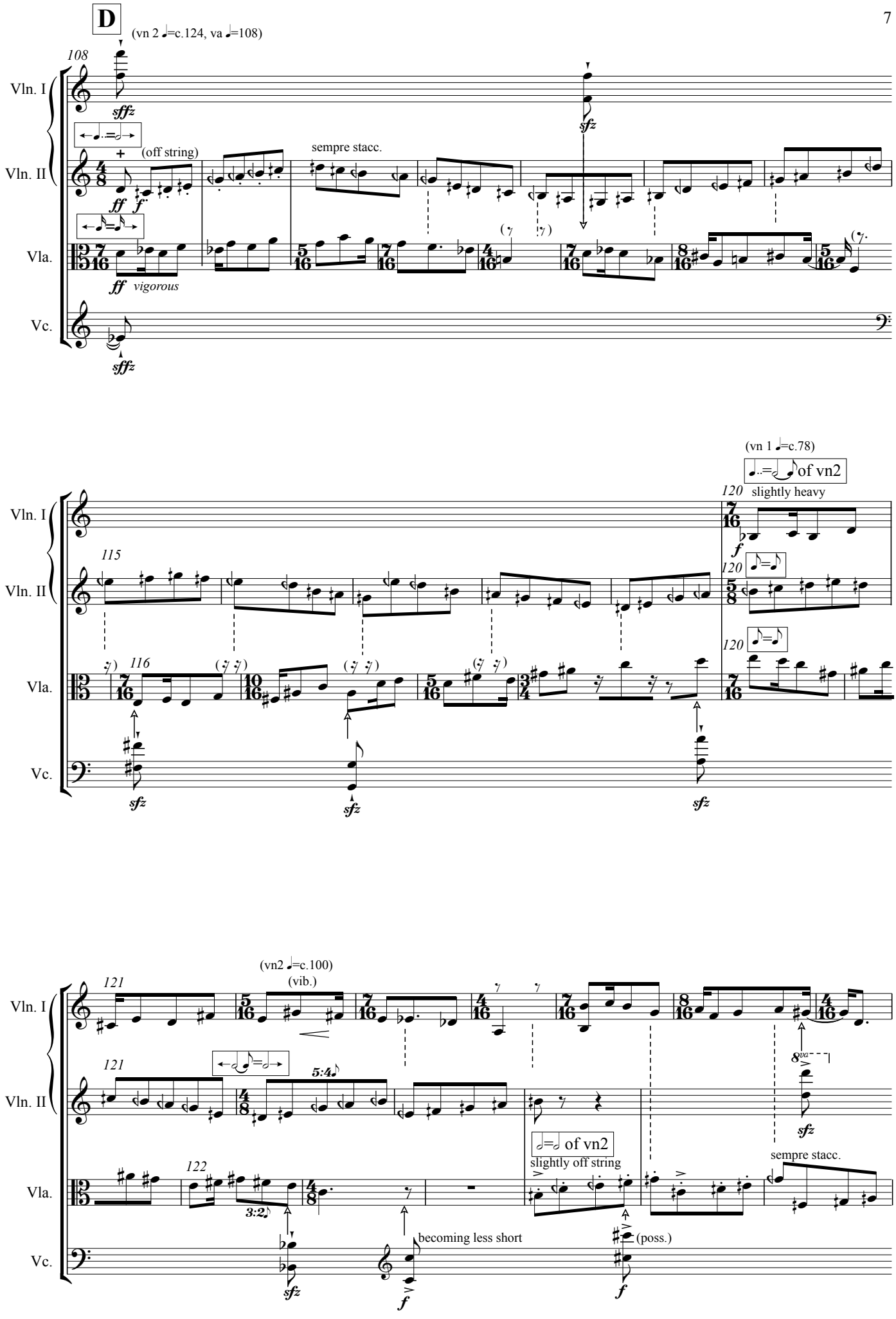

22
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
(nat.)
arco
sul pont.
(o)
nat.
pizz.
arco, sul pont.
27
A
sul pont.
pizz. (relaxed open sound)
(II)flautando
espress.
31
(port.)
36
(III)

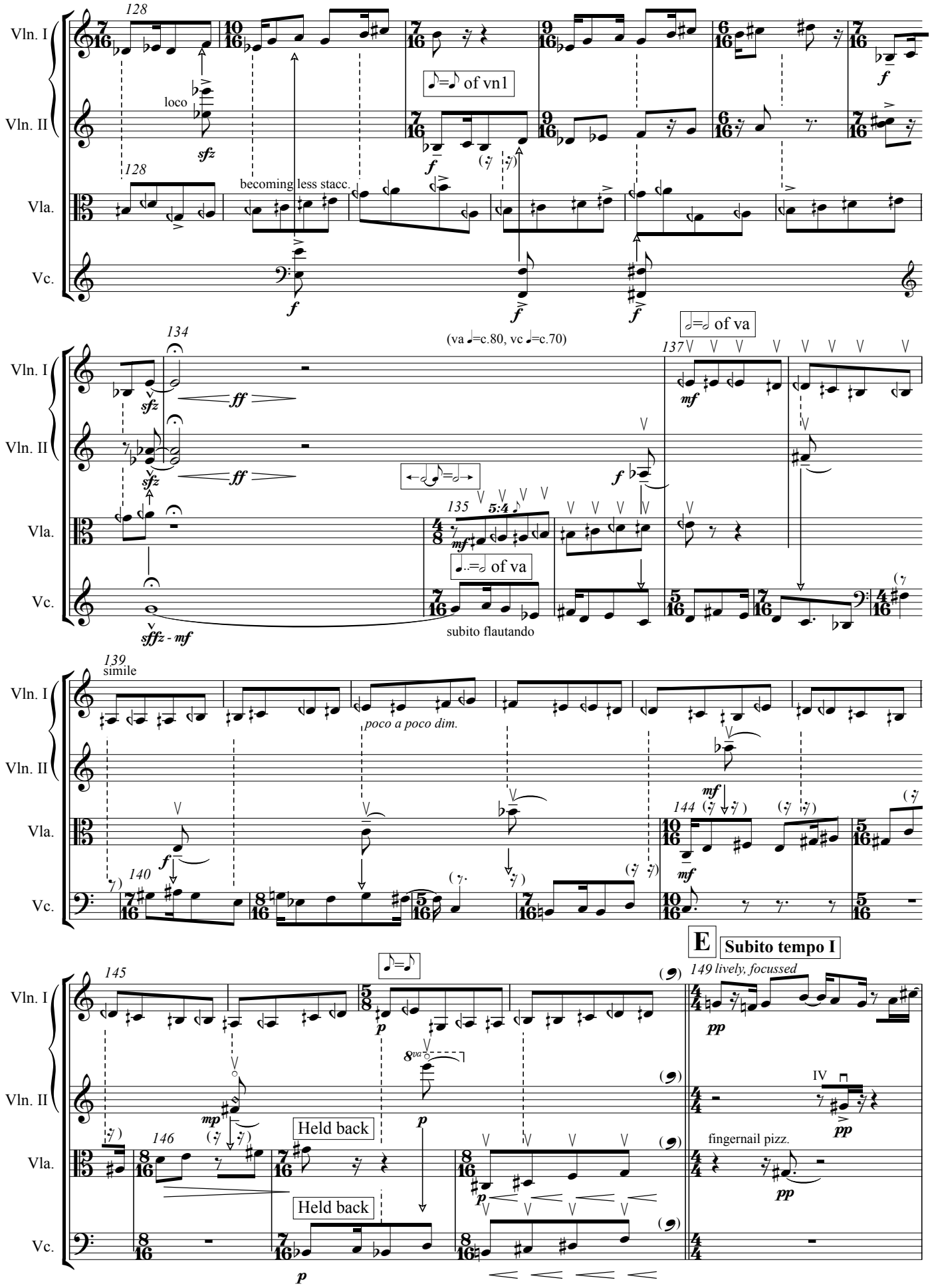

40
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
senza sord.
near tip.
pp
sub pp
pp
B
44
arco
(port.)
p dolce
(simile)
nat.
tense
mf
p
small, precise strokes
sub pp
p
49
poco a poco cresc. (until bar 62)
poco a poco cresc. (until bar 63)
simile
small, precise strokes
p
53
dolciss.
simile
p

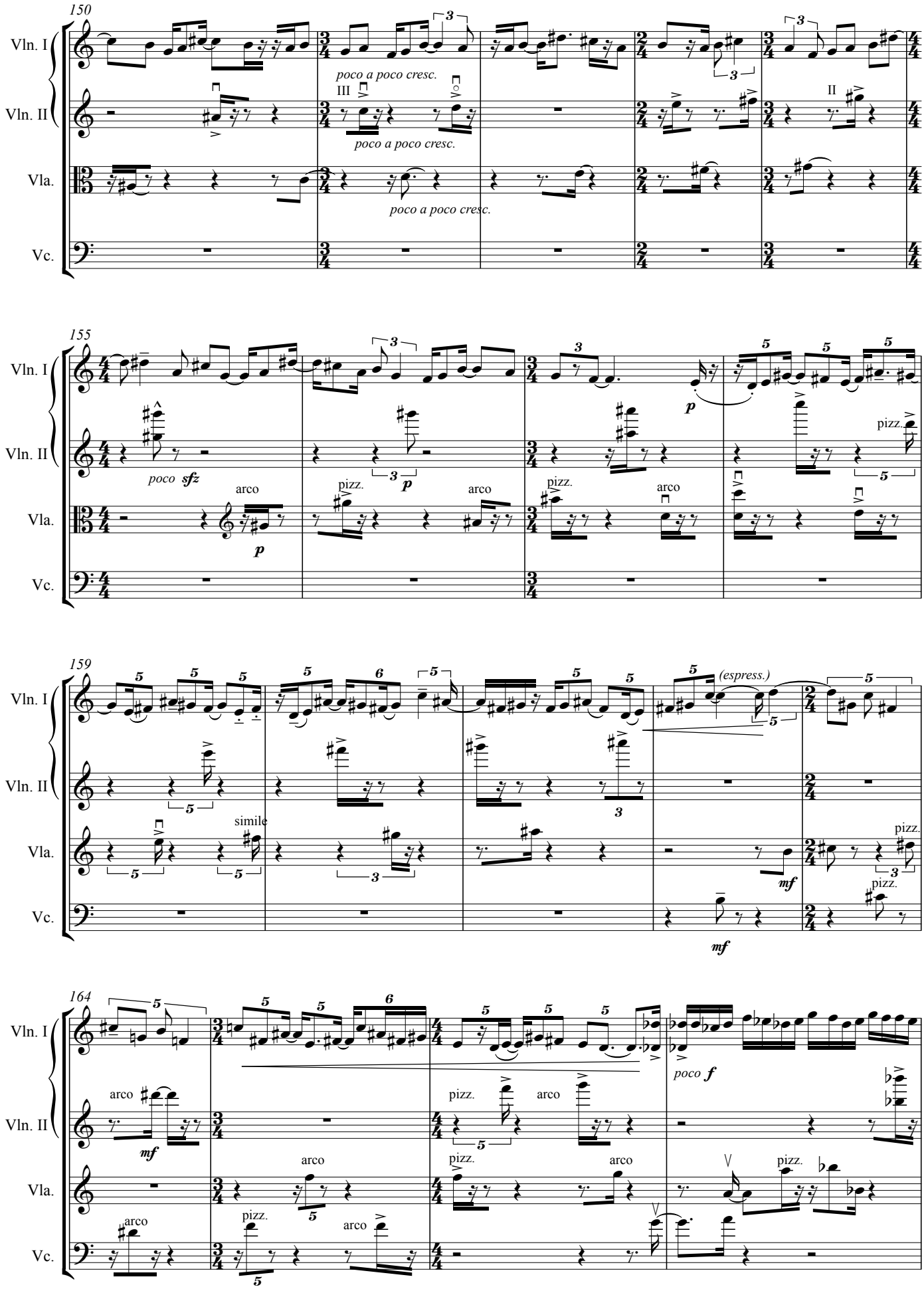

57
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
61
poco a poco cresc.
65
sfz
ff
sffz
69
C
lively
pp
calmly
pizz.
arco
pizz.
mf
arco
cantabile

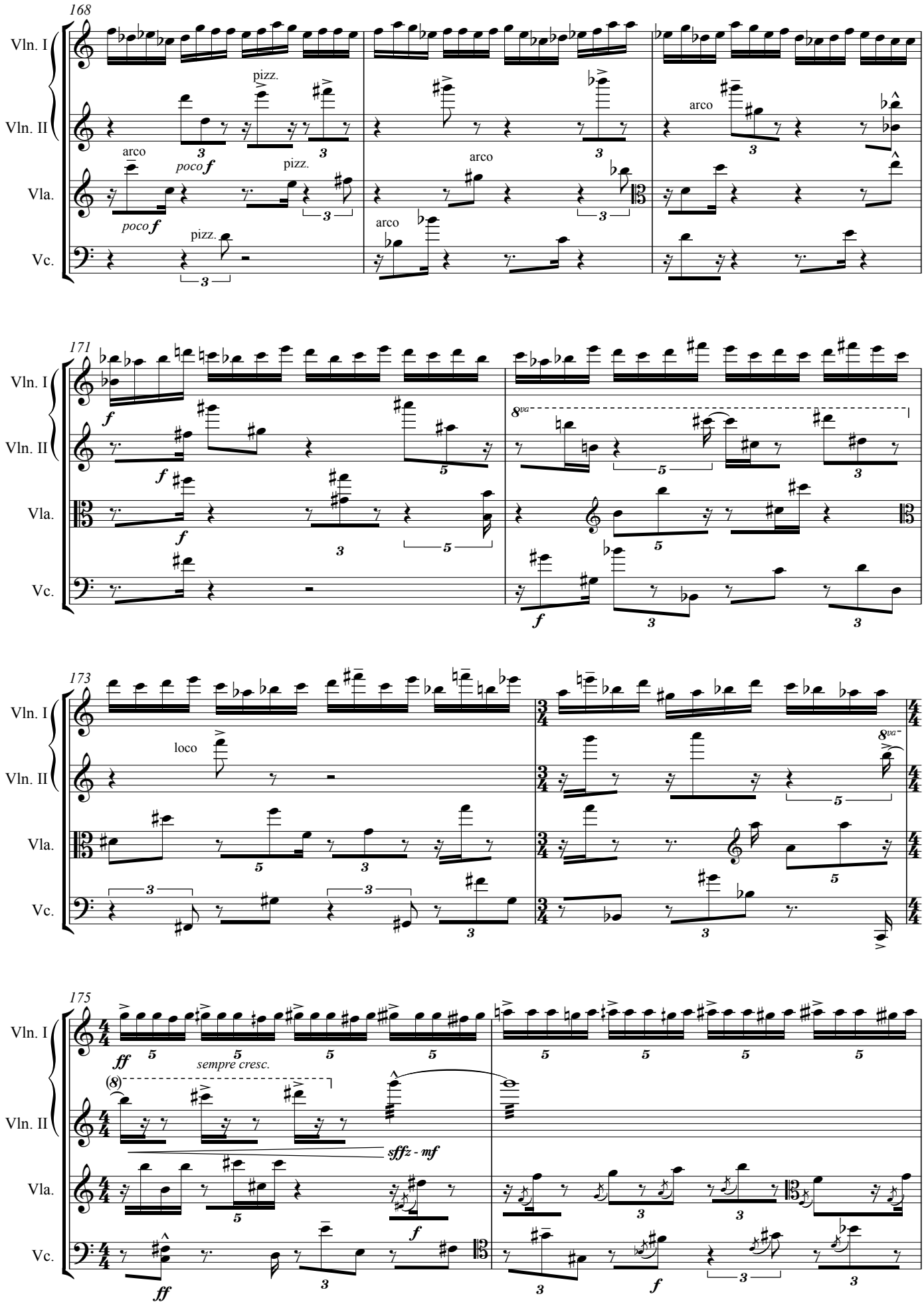

75
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
81
86
89
calmly
lively, strong accents
arco
pizz.
pizz. arco
(arco)

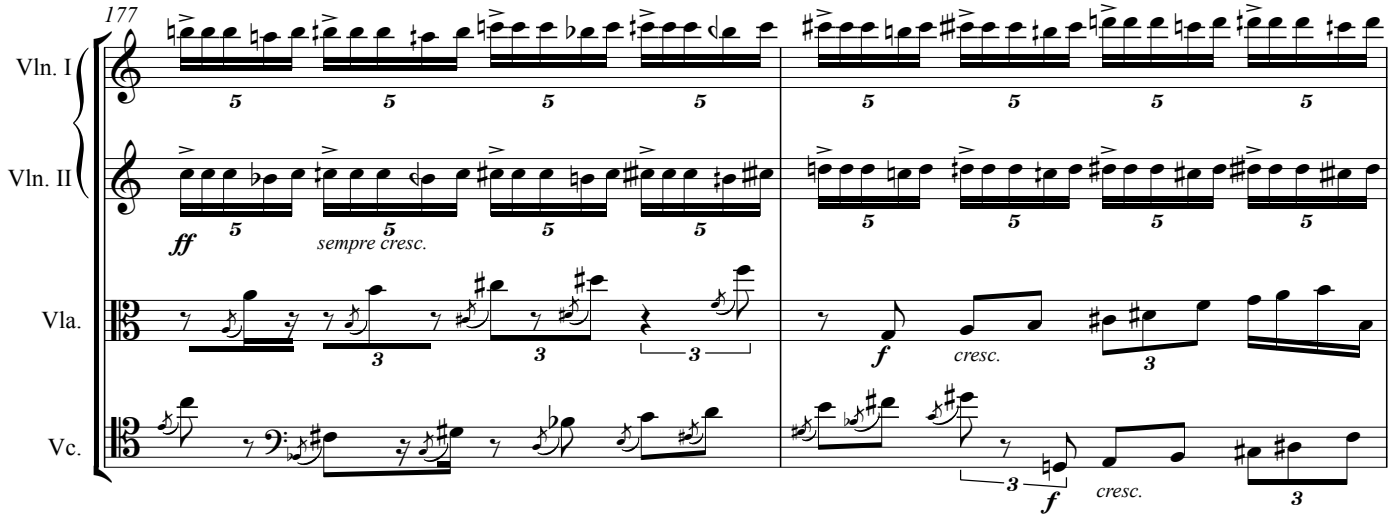

92
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
lively
95
98
impassioned
ff, impassioned
103
7/16

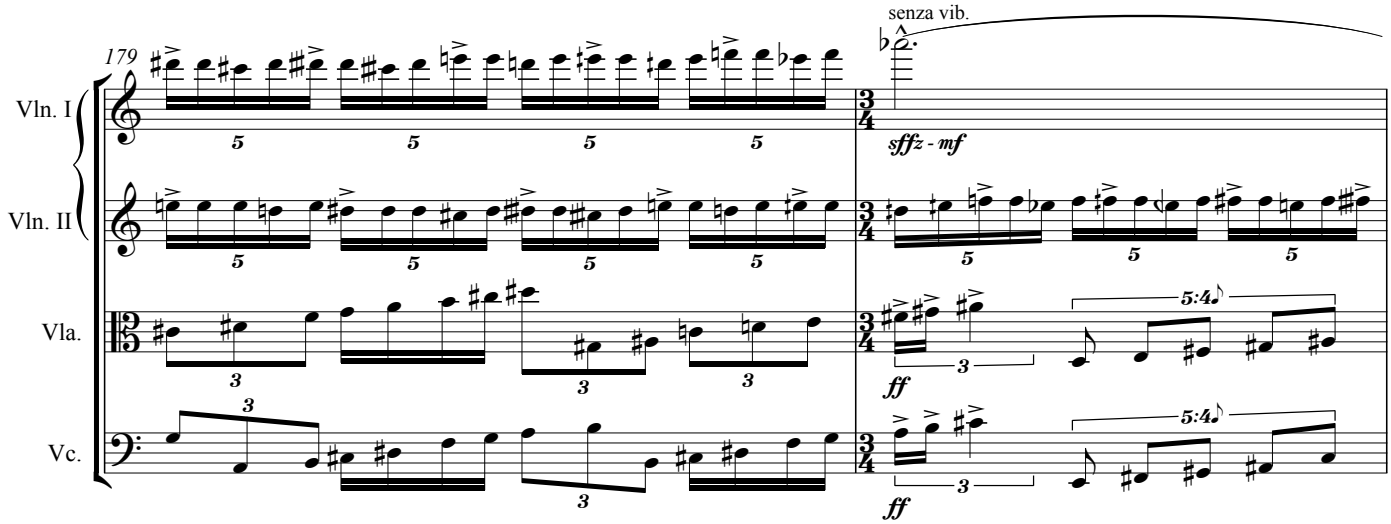

D
(vn 2 ♩=c.124, va ♩=108)
108
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
sffz
sfz
(off string)
sempre stacc.
ff
f
ff vigorous
(vn 1 ♩=c.78)
of vn2
120
slightly heavy
115
116
sfz
121
(vn2 ♩=c.100)
(vib.)
5:4
8va
of vn2
slightly off string
sempre stacc.
122
3:2
becoming less short
(poss.)

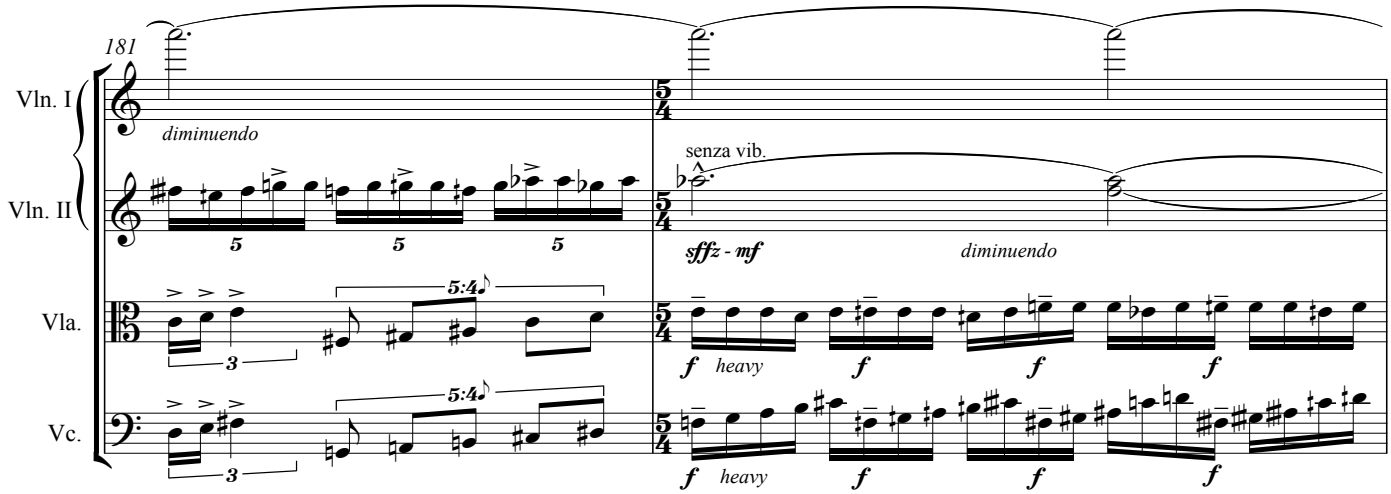

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
128
loco
sfz
becoming less stacc.
♪=♪ of vn1
f
134
(va ♩=c.80, vc ♩=c.70)
ff
sffz - mf
135
5:4
♩..=𝅗𝅥 of va
subito flautando
137
𝅗𝅥=𝅗𝅥 of va
mf
139
simile
poco a poco dim.
140
144
145
♪=♪
p
8va
mp
146
Held back
E
Subito tempo I
149 lively, focussed
pp
IV
fingernail pizz.


150
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
poco a poco cresc.
III
II
155
poco sfz
arco
pizz.
p
159
(espress.)
simile
mf
164
poco f


168
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz.
arco
poco f
171
f
8va
173
loco
175
ff
sempre cresc.
sffz - mf


177
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ff
sempre cresc.
f
cresc.
f
cresc.


179
senza vib.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
sffz - mf
ff
5:4
ff
5:4


181
diminuendo
senza vib.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
sffz - mf
diminuendo
5:4
5:4
f heavy
f heavy