Florida State University Libraries

Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations | The Graduate School

Quiet Sounds

Matthew Harrison Briggs

Follow this and additional works at the DigiNole: FSU's Digital Repository. For more information, please contact lib-ir@fsu.edu

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF MUSIC

QUIET SOUNDS

By

MATTHEW BRIGGS

A Dissertation submitted to the
College of Music
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Music

2020

© 2020 Matthew Briggs

Matthew Briggs defended this dissertation on April 3, 2020.
The members of the supervisory committee were:

Clifton Callender
Professor Directing Dissertation

Benjamin Sung
University Representative

Mark Wingate
Committee Member

Liliya Ugay
Committee Member

Daniel Smith
Committee Member

The Graduate School has verified and approved the above-named committee members, and certifies that the dissertation has been approved in accordance with university requirements.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Instrumentation iv

Performance Notes v

Abstract xi

1. QUIET SOUNDS 1

Biographical Sketch 54

INSTRUMENTATION

Solo Violin 1
Solo Violin 2
Solo Viola
Solo Cello
Solo Double Bass

Directional or clip-on microphones are needed for the instruments that do need impede their playing capabilities, especially on the bridge and behind the bridge.

This piece is written to be performed with dance. Use boundary mics on the stage to pick up the sounds of the dancers. These are only used in the last third of the piece. They must be routed to the same mixing board as the instrument microphones. A mixing board with reverb is needed for the last third of the piece. However, routing all microphones to a DAW in a computer will work to add the reverb and/or control the levels of the microphones. If a computer and DAW is used, a fairly large (8-channel) audio interface would be needed, unless routing of instrument mics is combined. The boundary microphones should always be stereo to show spatial movement.

This piece is choreographed by Rachel Hunter. It can be performed without dance, but discretion must be made as to the length of the tacets. The first one can be taken away completely, but the second should be treated as a long fermata, not a movement break.

Duration: ca. 27’

PERFORMANCE NOTES

Clefs:

Standard clefs

Noise clef (accompanied with single line staff – all strings are constantly dampened with left hand)

String clef (each space represents a string – all strings are constantly dampened with left hand)

Abbreviations:

n (normale)

– *arco* used after coming from pizz.

sp (sul ponticello)

st (sul tasto)

clt (col legno tratto)

cltf (col legno tratto flautando – lay the bow on its side to play with the both the wood and the hair)

clb (col legno battuto)

clb random (play clb with random points of the bow for each note, from high to low, so that the resulting pitch *from the bow* changes for each note – is utilized at different points in the piece with both muted strings (left hand) and fingered pitches)

mst (molto sul tasto, beyond normal sul tasto, higher on the fingerboard)

Quiet Sounds:

Square notehead (rubbing with finger(s) in a slow, circular or up-and-down pattern)

- Square notehead (rubbing on body)

- sp (rubbing on bridge)

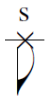
- s (rubbing on strings)

- Durations of an 8th note or shorter should be only rubbed once in one direction
- Durations of a quarter note or longer should be rubbed continuously in a circle or back-and-forth motion without being rhythmically/metrically precise

X notehead (tapping)

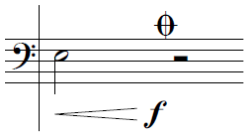
- X notehead (tapping on body)

- s (tapping on strings)



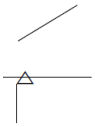
Mute symbol (mute/dampen all strings with left hand by the nut)

- Used at end of a crescendo to immediately stop (or “choke”) all sound



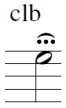
- This same muting method is always used in conjunction with the noise and string clef, although this symbol is not used

Vertical drag (triangle notehead)

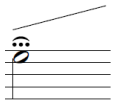


- Hold the bow with the fist and, without moving the bow horizontally, vertically drag the bow up or down the string
- To produce a clear pitched line, especially with a louder dynamic, it might help to slightly move the bow horizontally while dragging up or down
- Should always be performed with left hand muting the strings
- Line above the staff indicates the direction of pitch – moving the bow towards the bridge will create a rising line, and moving away from the bridge will create a descending line

Col legno battuto ricochet



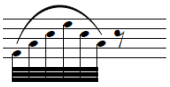
- Pay careful attention to pitch that is created from the wood hitting the string
- If there is no line associated with the symbol, be careful to keep the bow in the same position so that there is no change in pitch coming from the bow
- If there is a line, move the bow closer to or further away from the bridge during the ricochet to create an ascending or descending line of pitch



Normal:

Behind bridge (applies to one gesture at a time)

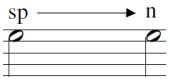
Figures with small noteheads to be played as quickly as possible (as grace notes starting on the beat)



Ricochet

- All ricochets should be relatively uncontrolled (i.e. more or less falling on the string)
- Those of a shorter duration should happen quicker, and those of a longer duration should be more uncontrolled so that the bows bounces for the full duration given
- This also applies to col legno battuto ricochet

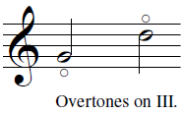
Arrow – indicates a gradual change from one technique/sound to another (i.e. n →sp → n)



Circle bowing (move the bow in a circle motion around the strings at a moderate speed (use discretion for speed); this will create a pulsating sound using the combination of horizontal and vertical bow motion inherent in the circle).

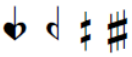
In general, imperceptibly change bow as needed for long durations.

Partials indicated by "Overtones on [string number]" in conjunction with a dot over the notehead. The microtonal accidentals indicate the approximate tuning nauturally occurring from the partials.

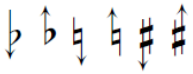


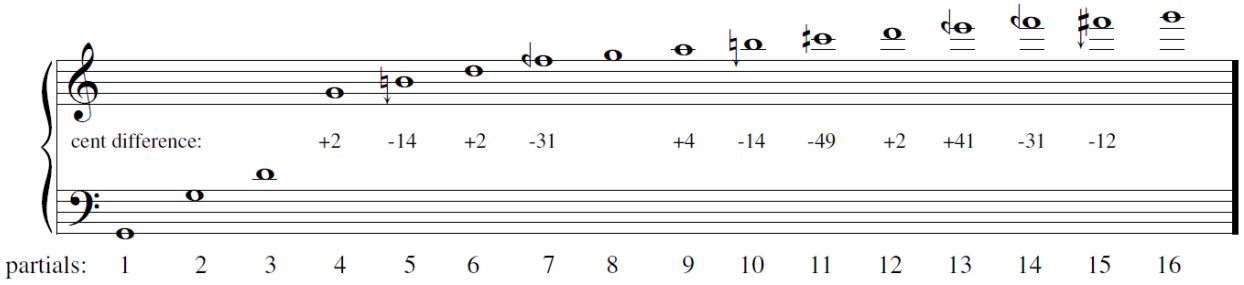
Microtones (only used in coda)

- Quarter tones (¾ flat, ¼ flat, ¼ sharp, ¾ sharp)



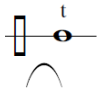
- Slightly lower, slightly higher





For double bass only:

"t", noise clef and behind-the-bridge symbol, normal notehead (arco on tailpiece, change bow when necessary)



Microphone setup:

Each instrument should be mic'd individually, ideally very closely. A directional or clip-on mic would be preferred, as long as the mic does not interfere with playability of the instrument, especially on or behind the bridge.

Boundary mics should be placed at the front or around the dance stage to pick up the sound of the dancers.

All microphones should be routed to a mixing board that has reverb or to an audio interface and computer. Any computer program with controllable reverb can be used; Ableton Live is recommended. A controllerist will be needed to control both the reverb and the microphone levels, at either the mixing board or DAW on the computer.

Microphone and reverb levels are indicated in the score, above the system in boxes. The main levels being used are: high, medium, and low. The levels correspond with the opposite dynamic level of techniques being played by the strings (i.e. low dynamic levels in strings = high mic levels). Discretion should be used to determine exactly what levels those are, as it will be different for every hall/microphone type/microphone placement.

A medium-sized reverb should be used when indicated in the score. Use discretion. Should be significant, enough to create a "dream" effect, but not so strong that it sounds like delay.

Link to dance:

Both tacets will be filled with dance. Follow notes from choreographer to know exactly how long each tacet should be.

ABSTRACT

Quiet Sounds originally drew its inspiration from what the title suggests, the quiet sounds of these five string instruments. These sounds take on a different character as they are amplified to "normal" volume, providing an exciting palate of new sounds. However, the entire piece is not derived from the quiet sounds, but the last two-thirds explore what was hidden in them, the music behind these ideas. The second section of the piece contrasts greatly with the first. From the cacophonous world of rubbing, scratches, and scrapings, a magnificent wall of harmony emerges. This section is ruled by a pulsating engine and develops rhythmic motives that were present in the first.

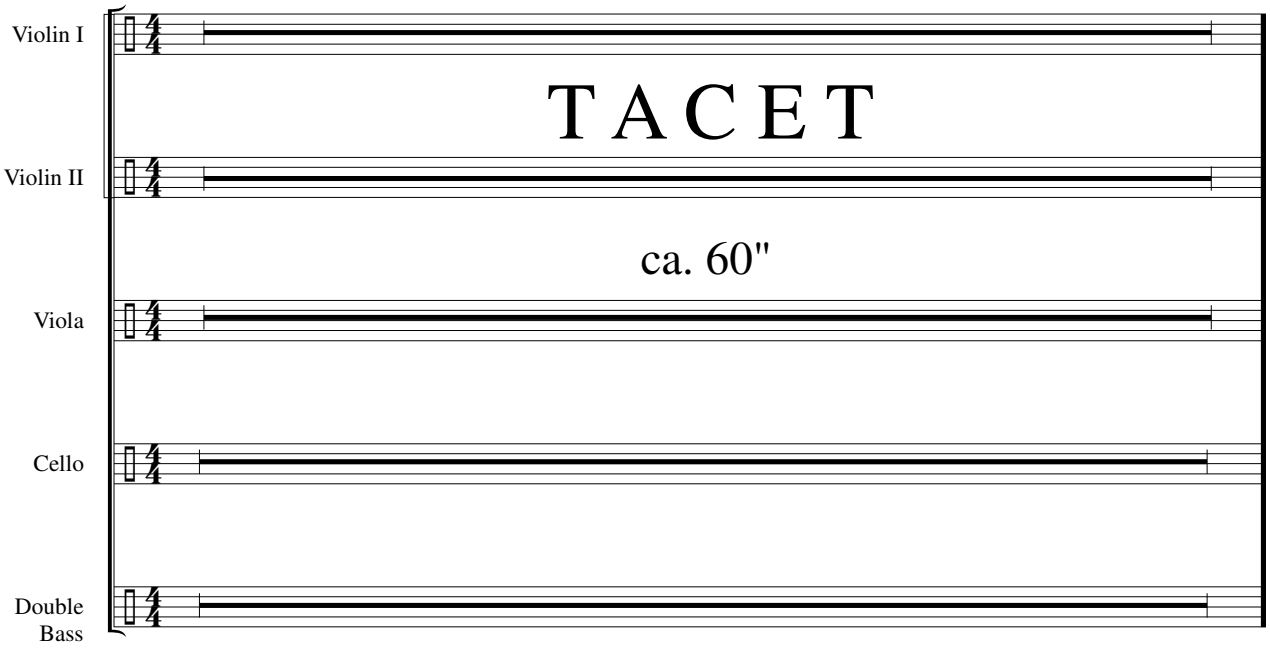
This first section could be thought of as a dream, a dream that is ended by the ensuing reality of pitch and harmony. However, the opposite might be interpreted as well – this I want to leave open for the audience. As the section continues, the largest climax of the piece ends the second section on one very long, high intensity chord. It is at this climax where we see a return of silence from the instruments. The very first minute of the work is completely silent, the only noises coming from the dancers. This concept returns here, although now reverb is applied to stage sounds as if to imply that the dancers' movements are larger than reality. When the strings come back in, they have also been influenced by this new mood, with reverb on all of their sounds as well.

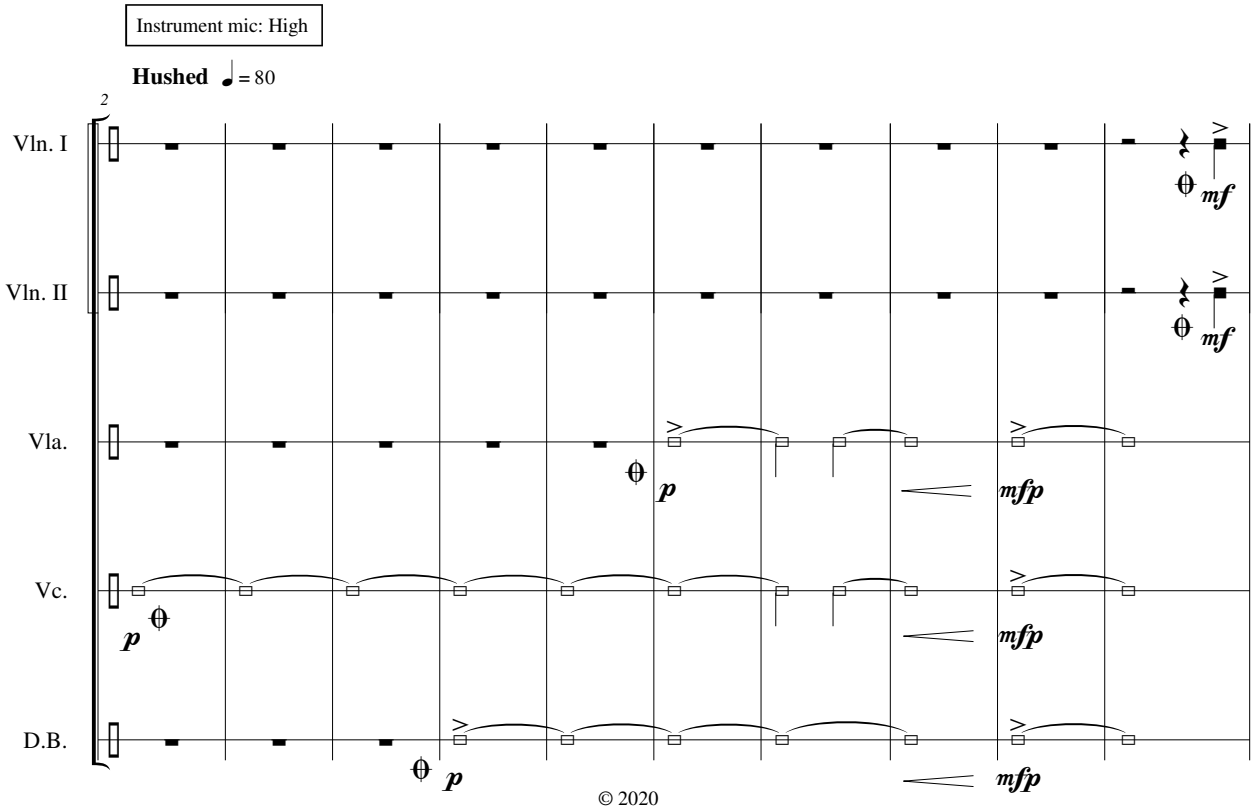
Now, the audience might perhaps revisit their interpretation of the first section. Was that reality, and this the dream? After all, this last section derives its material and structure from that material explored with the "quiet sounds," although now with pitch. On the surface this third section might be closely related to the second section, but at its core is only a variation of the first. But as in a dream, things are not remembered so precisely but are expanded upon in strange ways. Finally, the piece ends with a very long coda, in hopes that the audience will find rest in a contemplative state of rest and satisfied intrigue.

Score

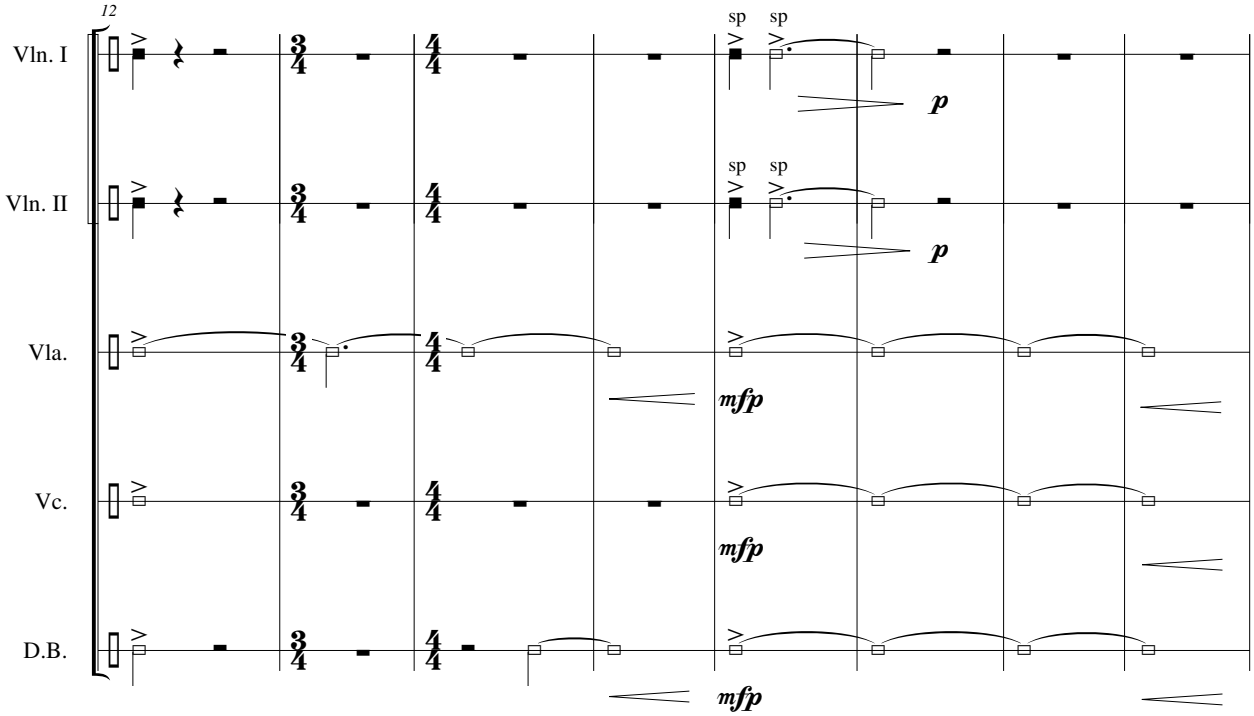
QUIET SOUNDS

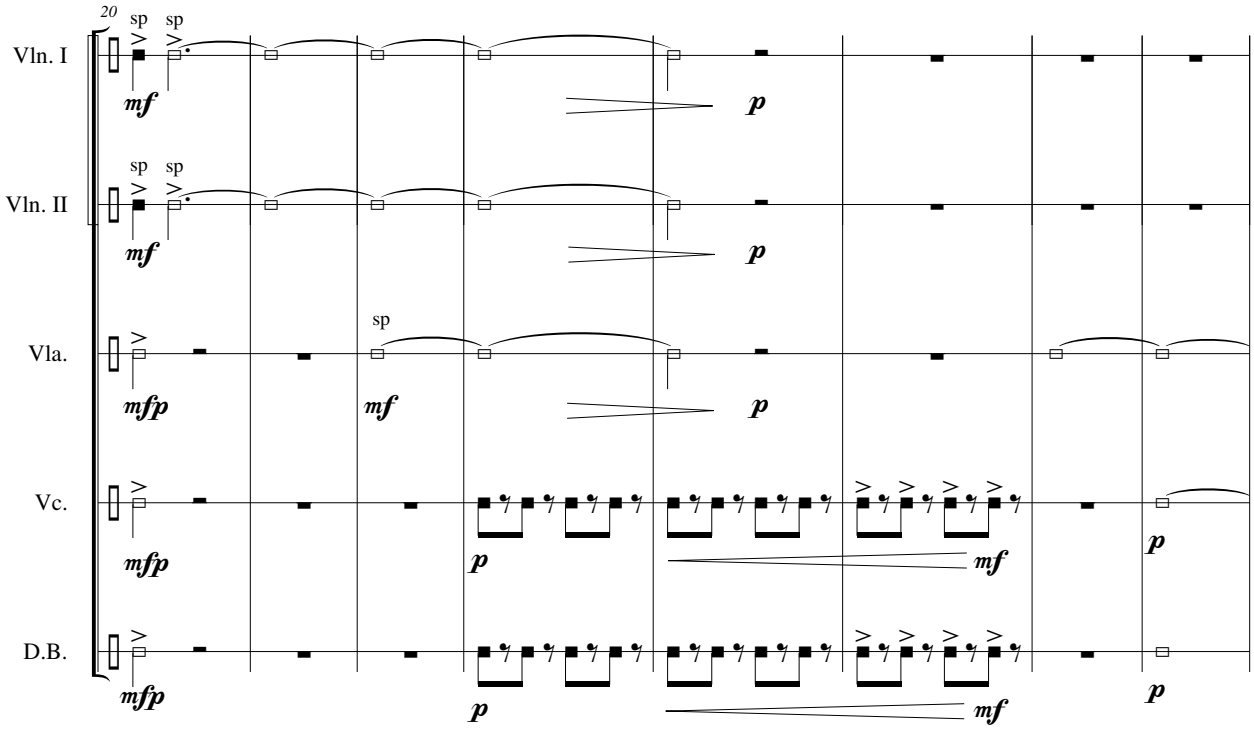
Matthew Briggs

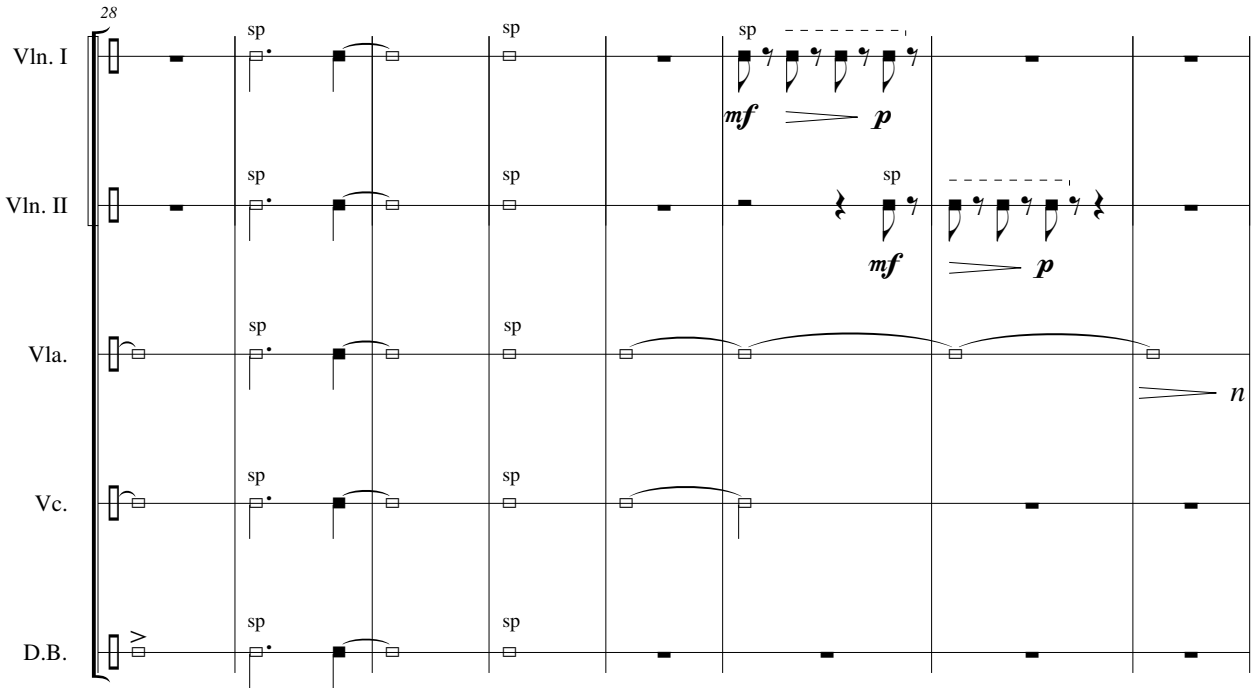


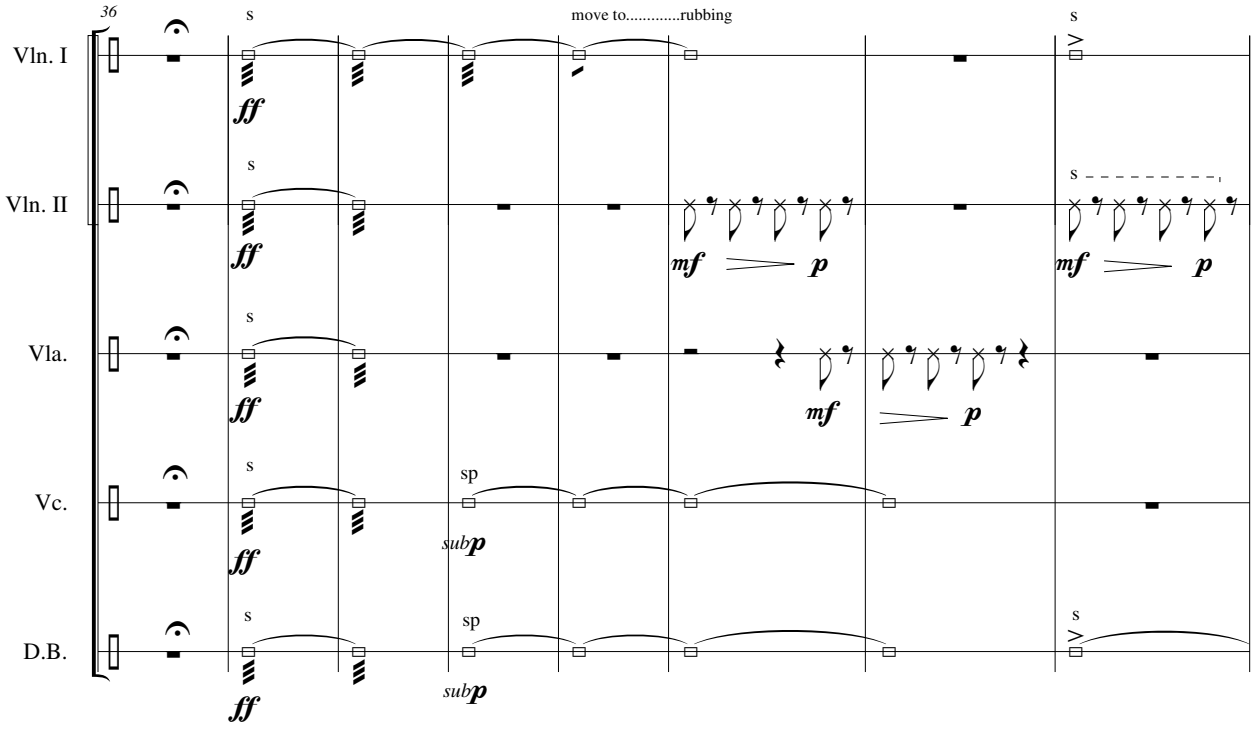


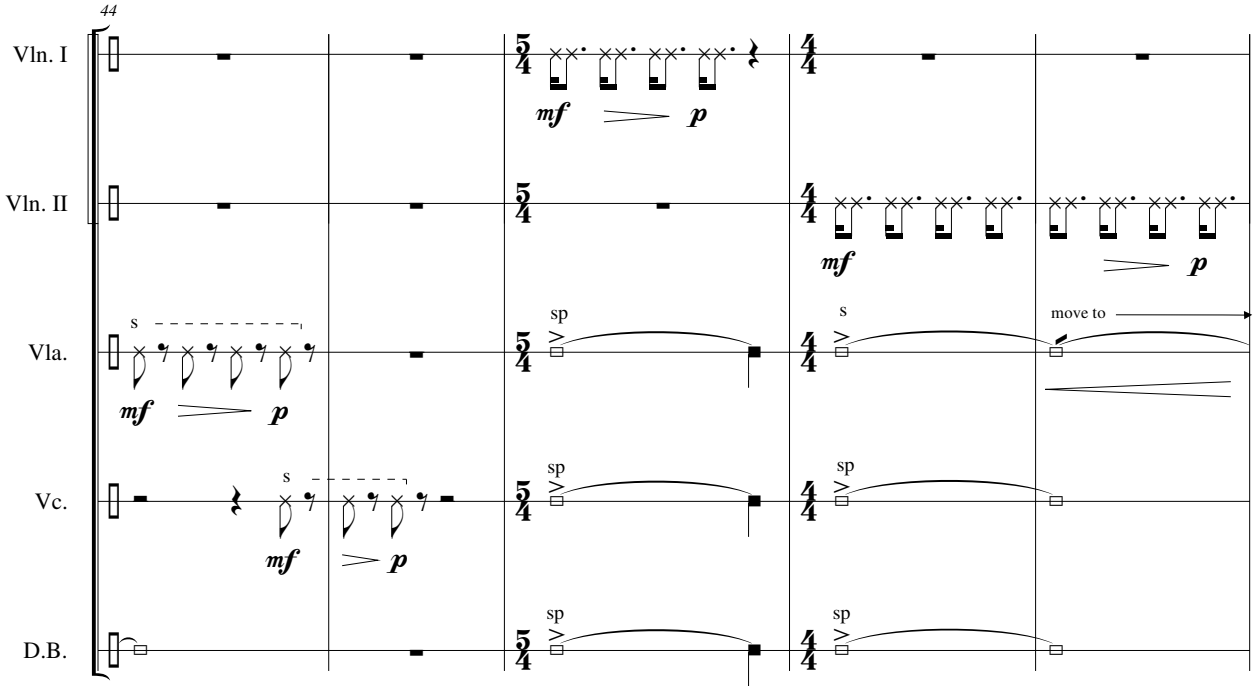
© 2020

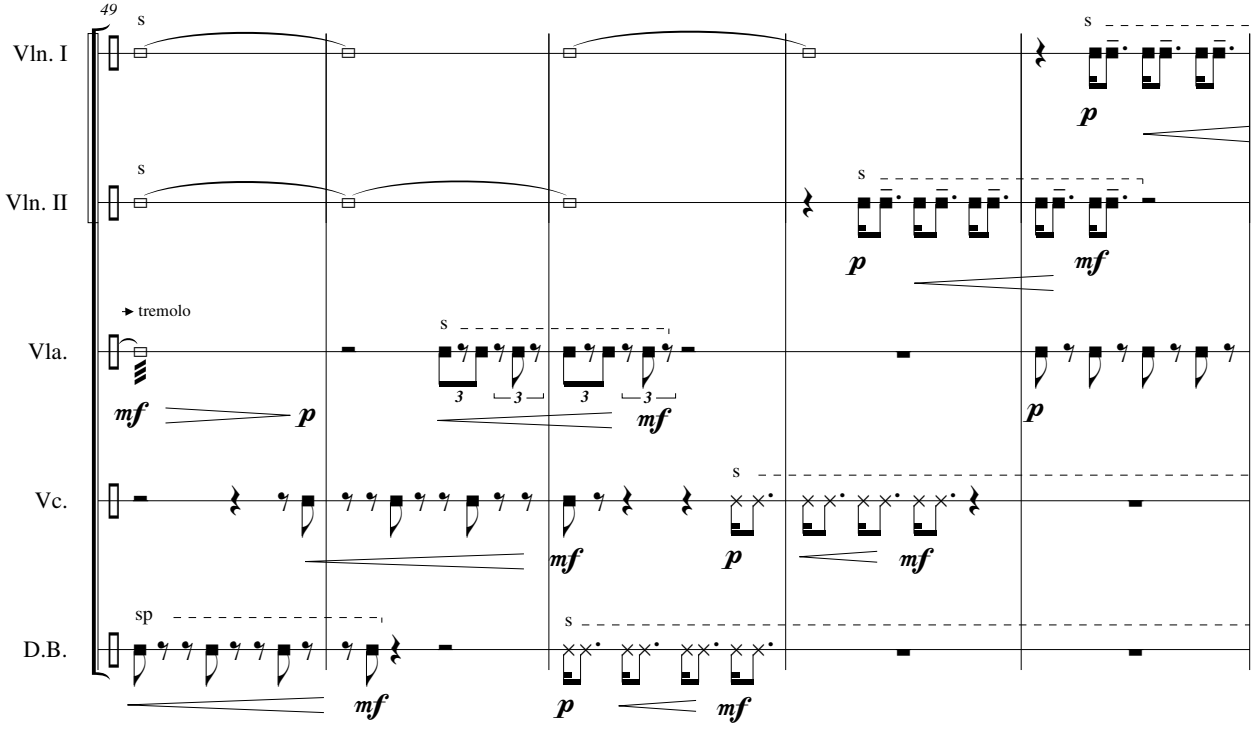

12
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
sp
sp
p
mfp

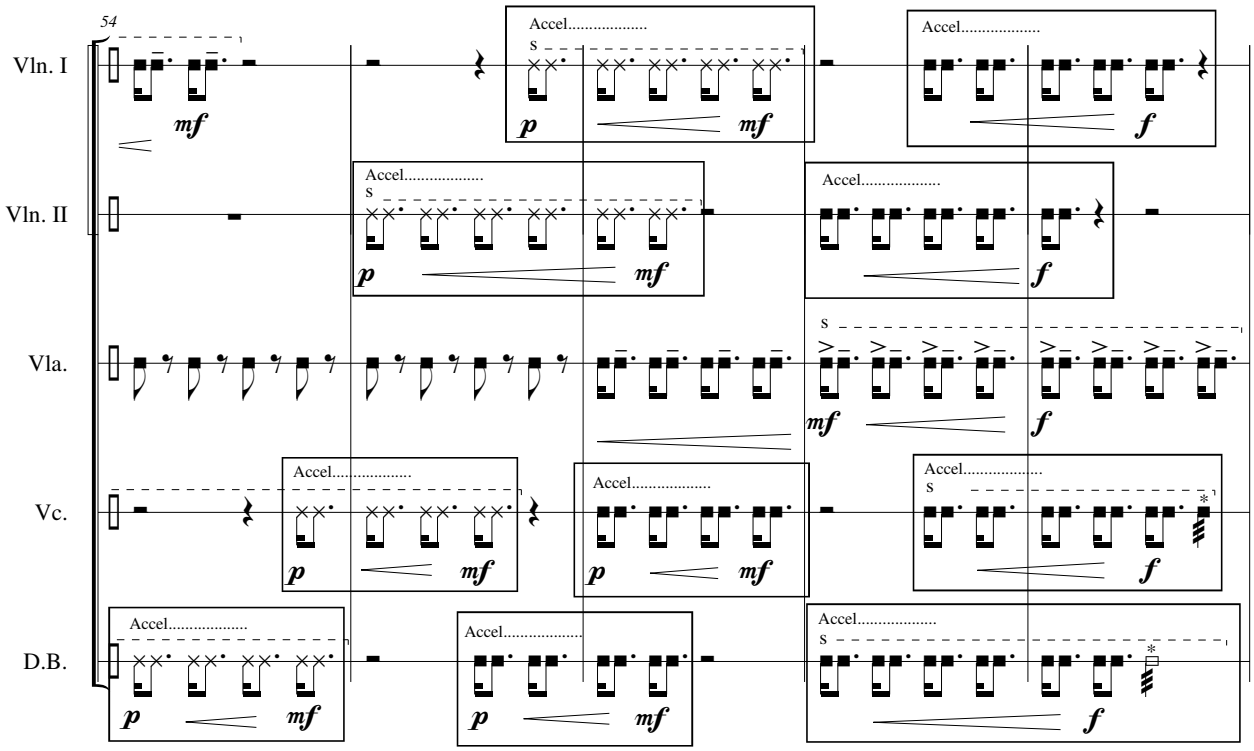

20
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
sp
mf
p
mfp

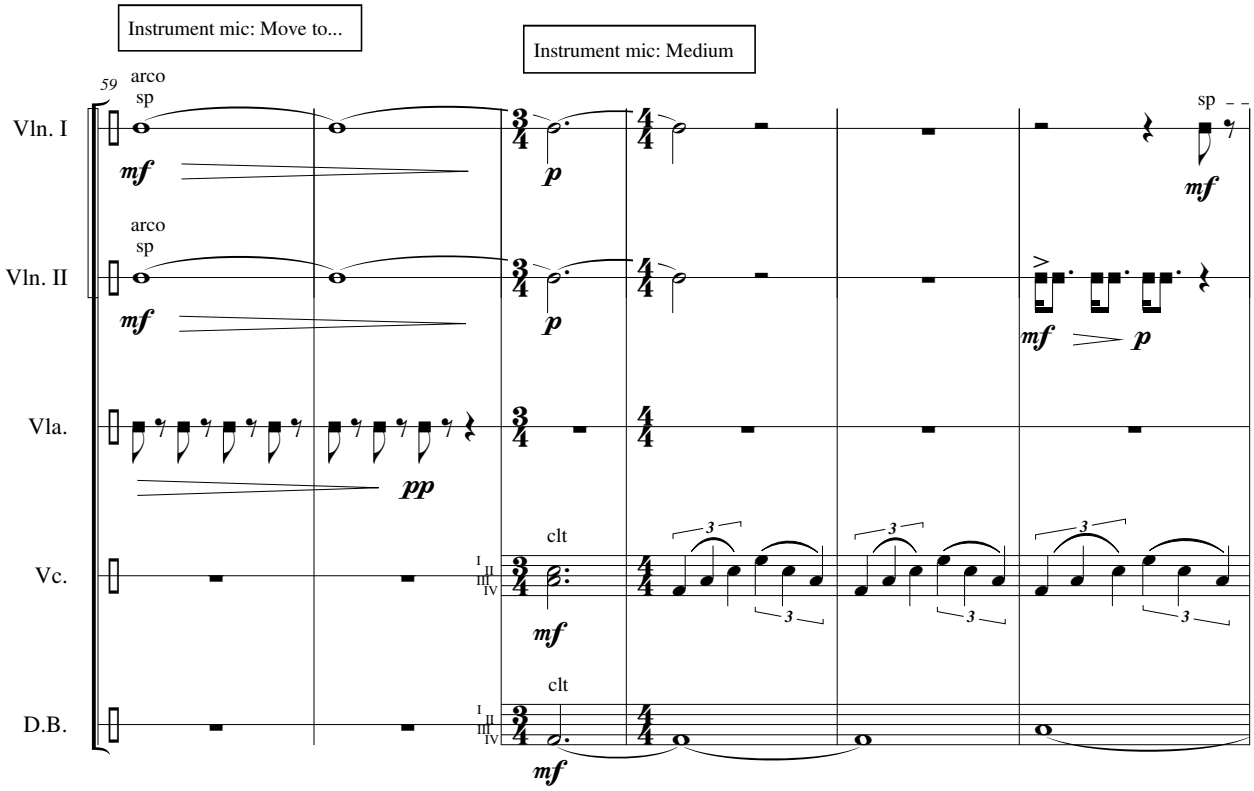

28
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
sp
mf
p
n

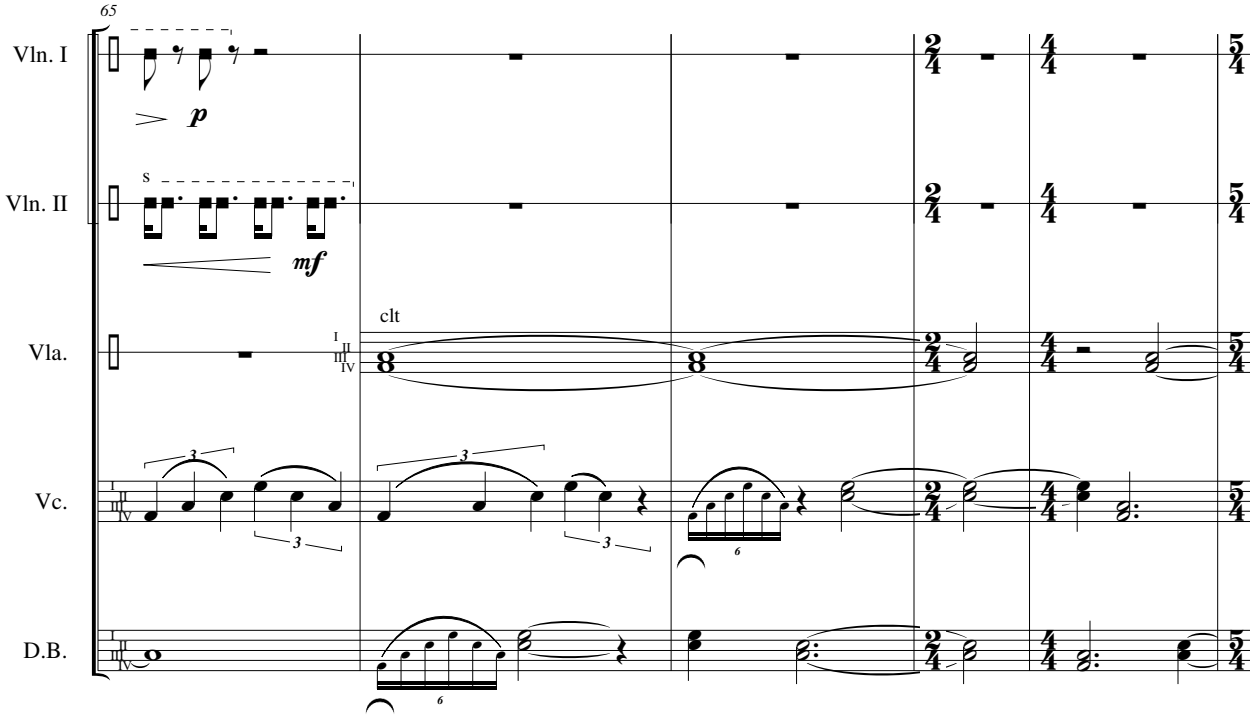

36
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
s
ff
move to.....rubbing
mf
p
sp
subp

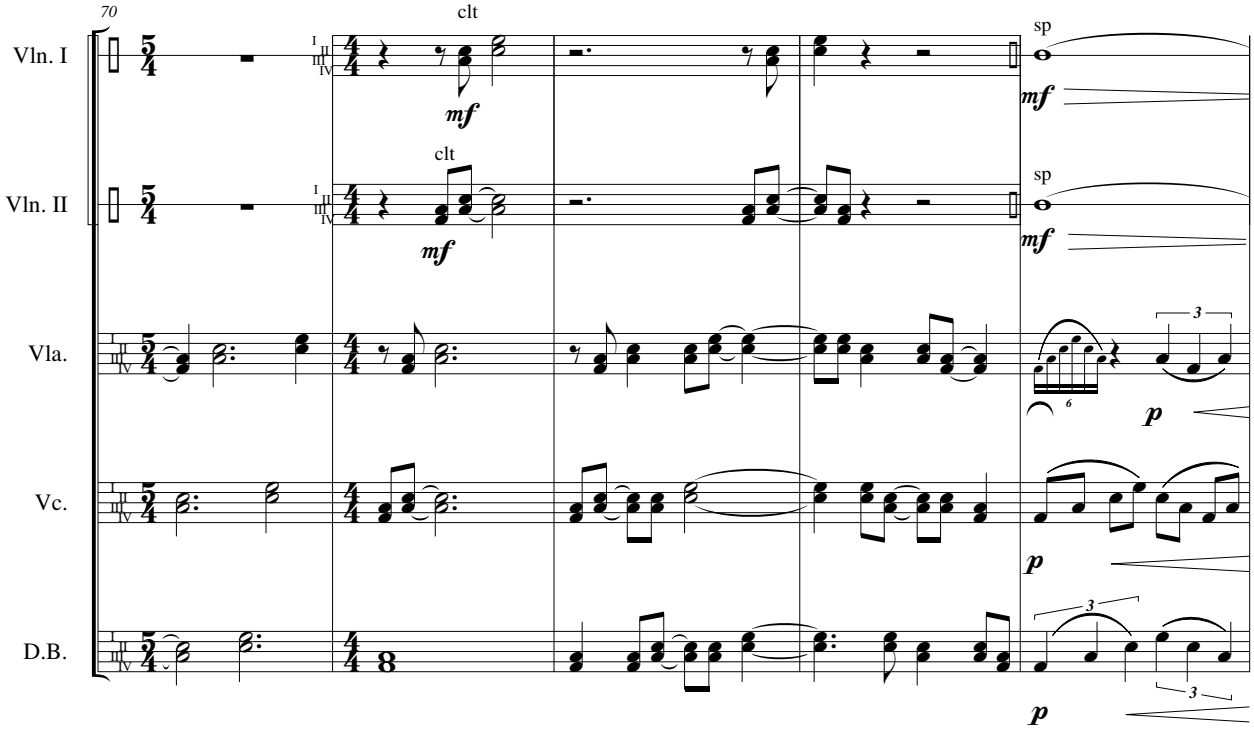

44
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
p
s
sp
move to

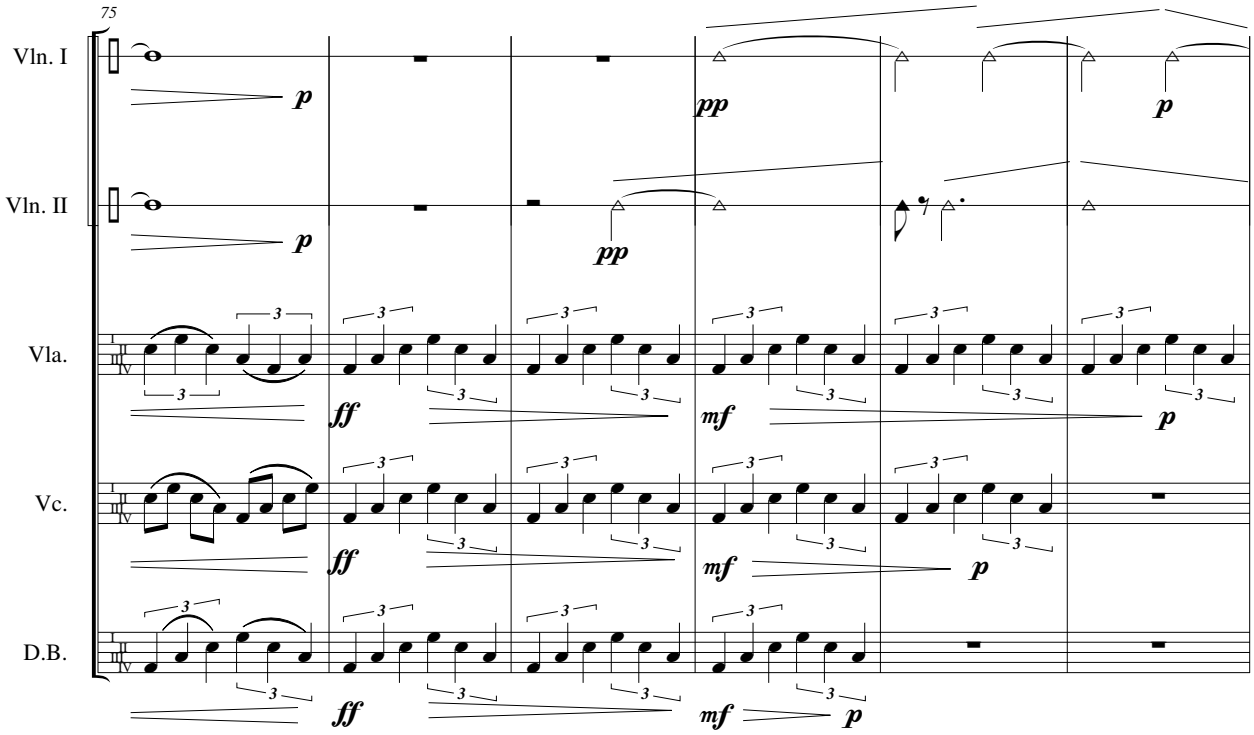

49
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
s
tremolo
sp
mf
p
3

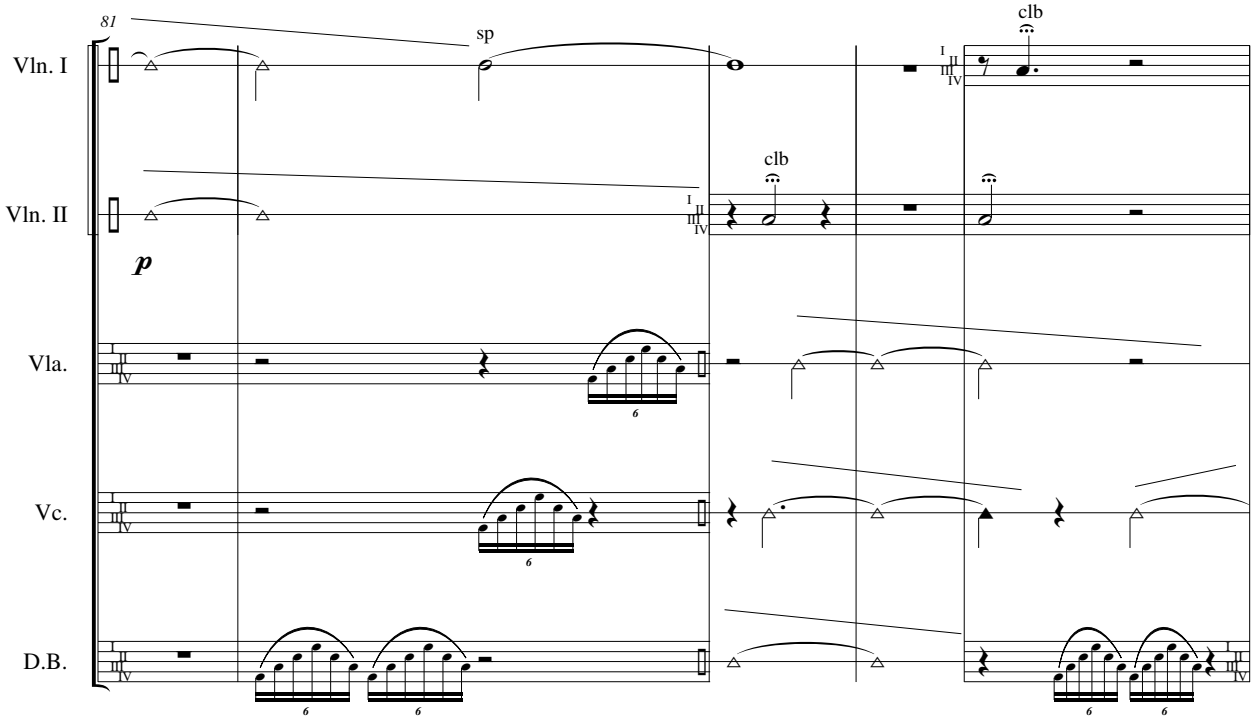

54
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
Accel.....
s
p
mf
f
*Hold tremolo for full duration of m. 58.

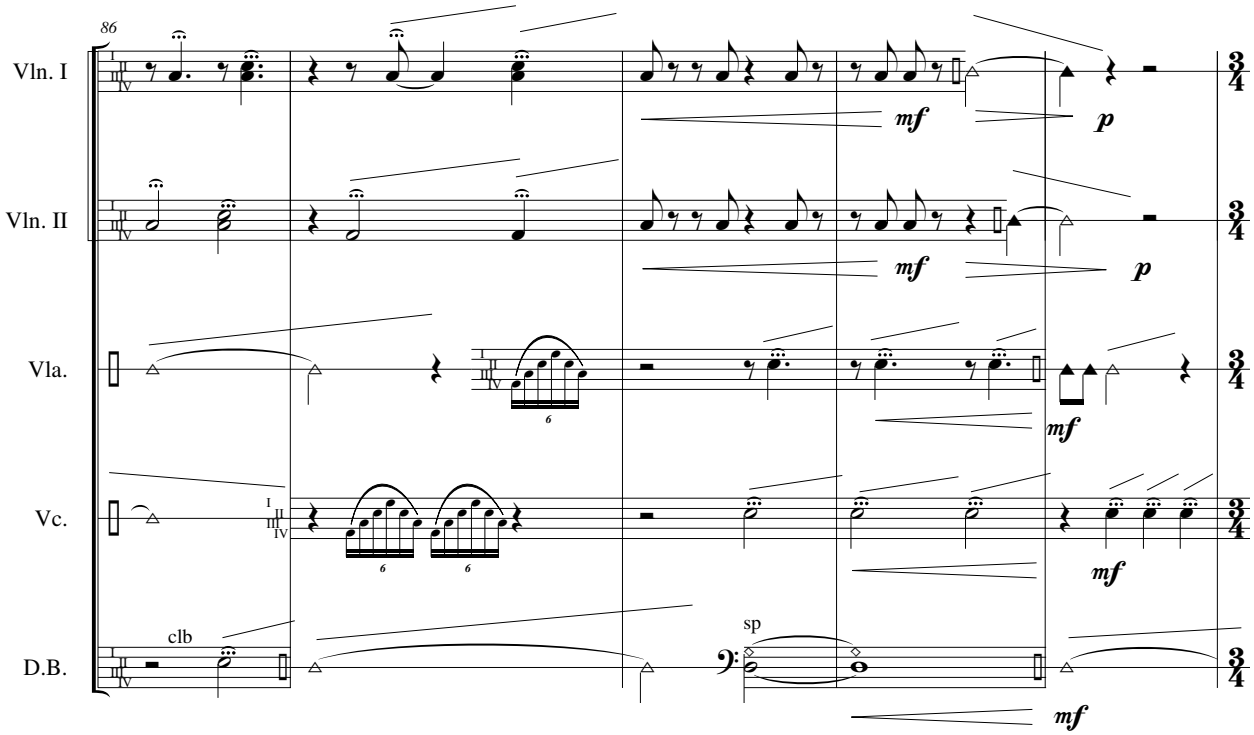

Instrument mic: Move to...
Instrument mic: Medium
59
arco
sp
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
clt
pp
mf
p

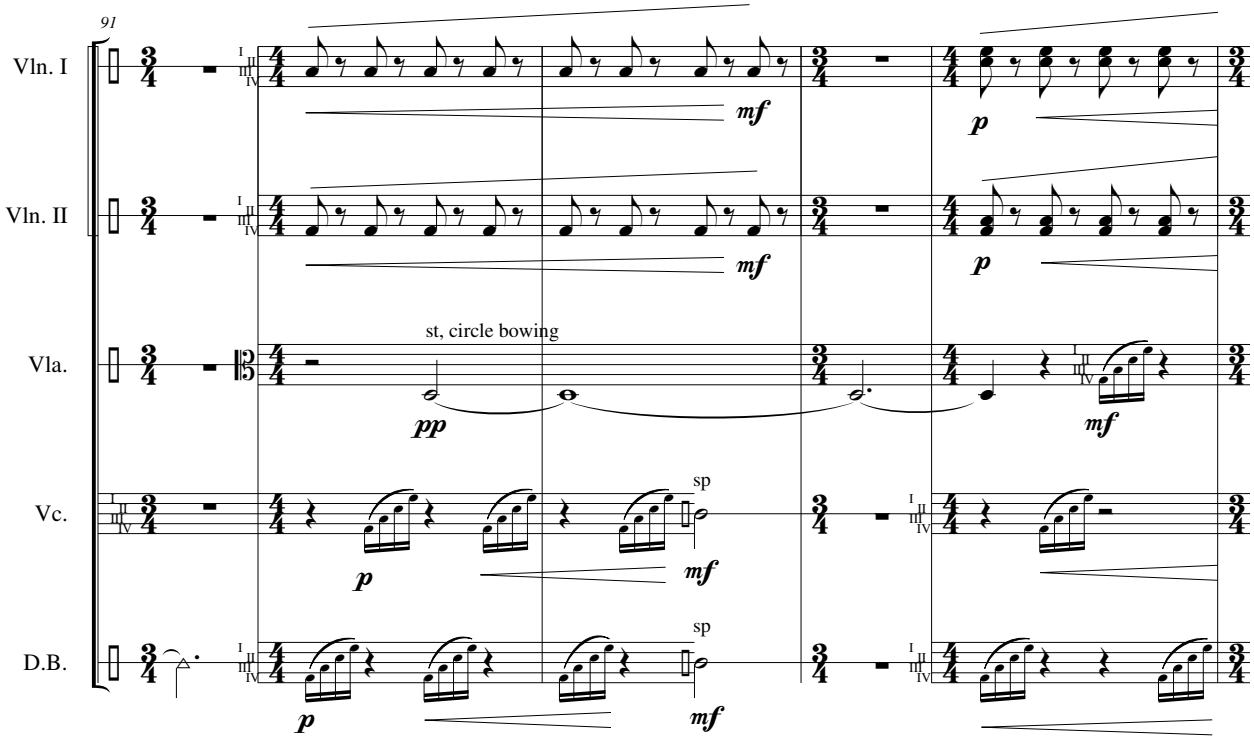

65
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
clt
p
mf

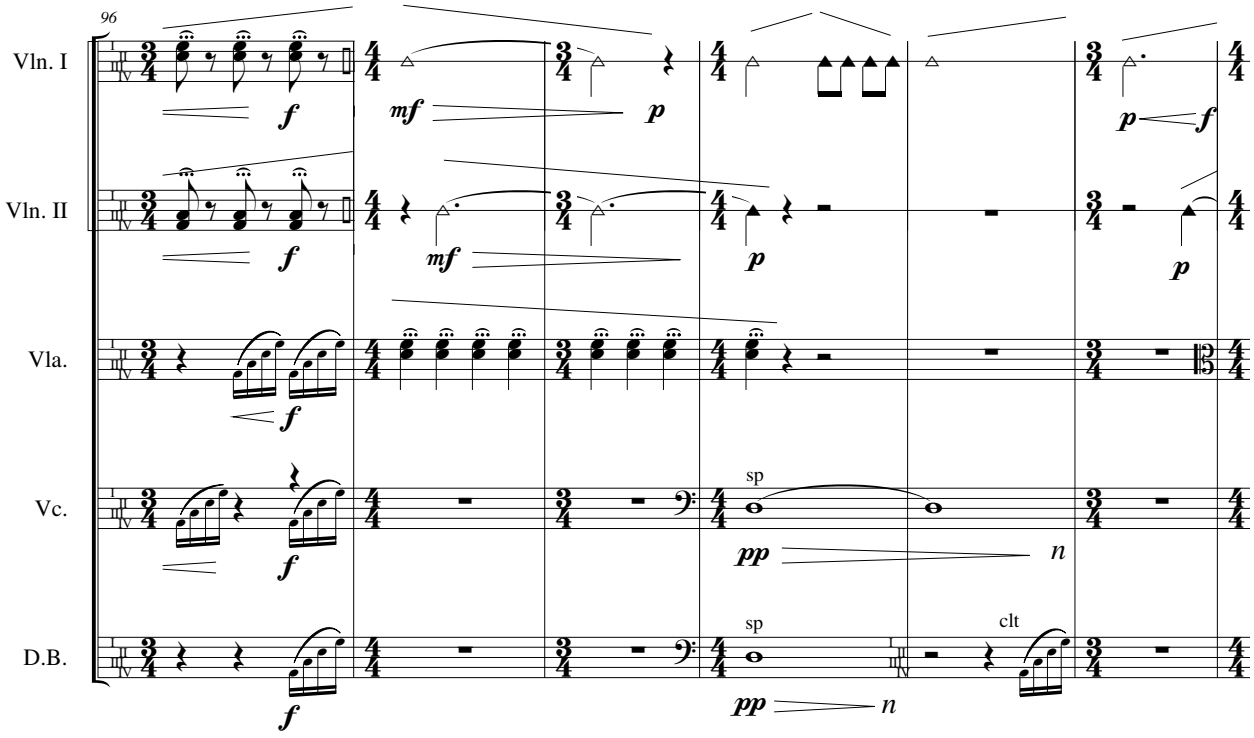

70
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
clt
sp
mf
p

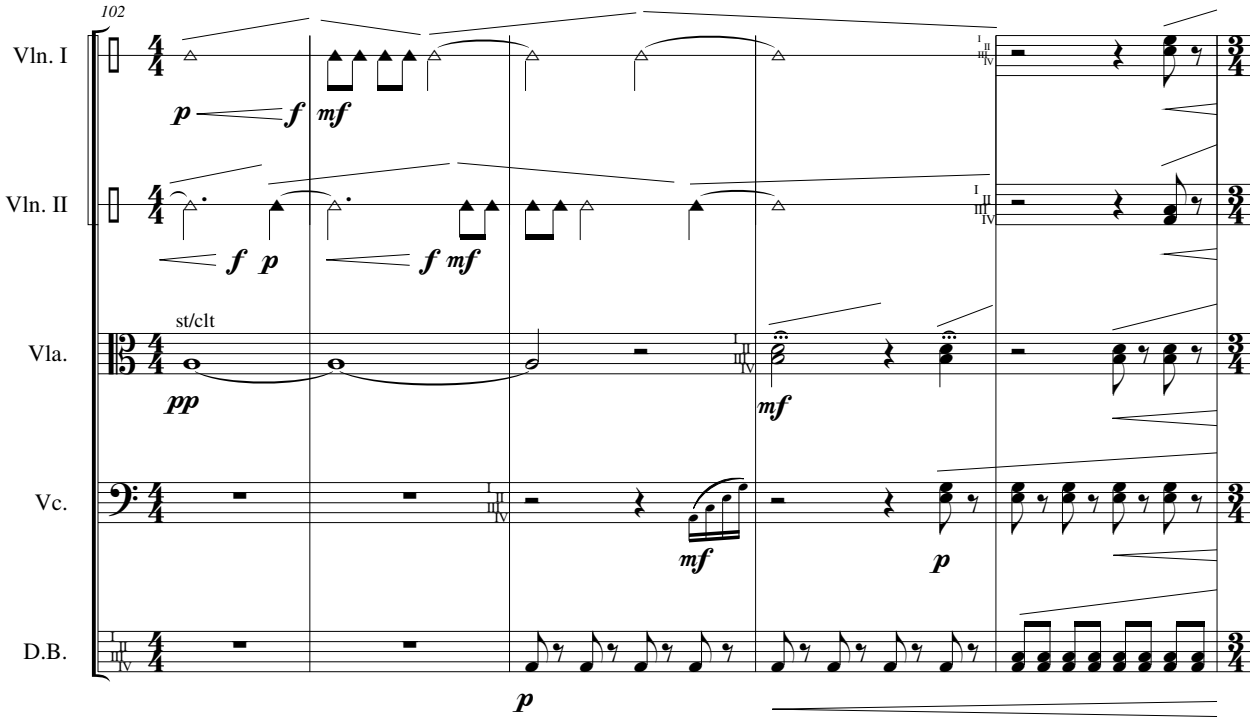

75
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
pp
ff
mf

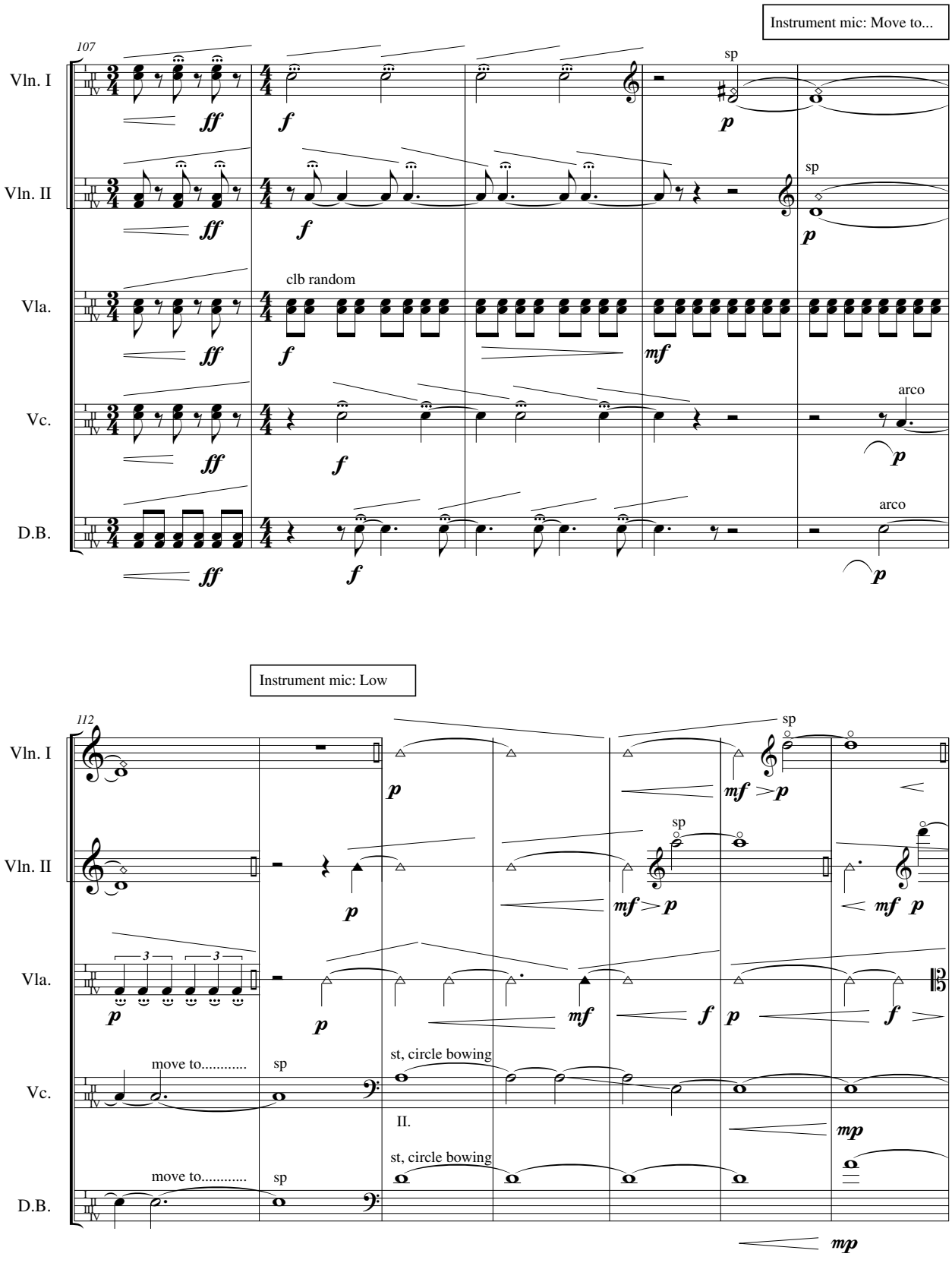

81
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
sp
clb
p

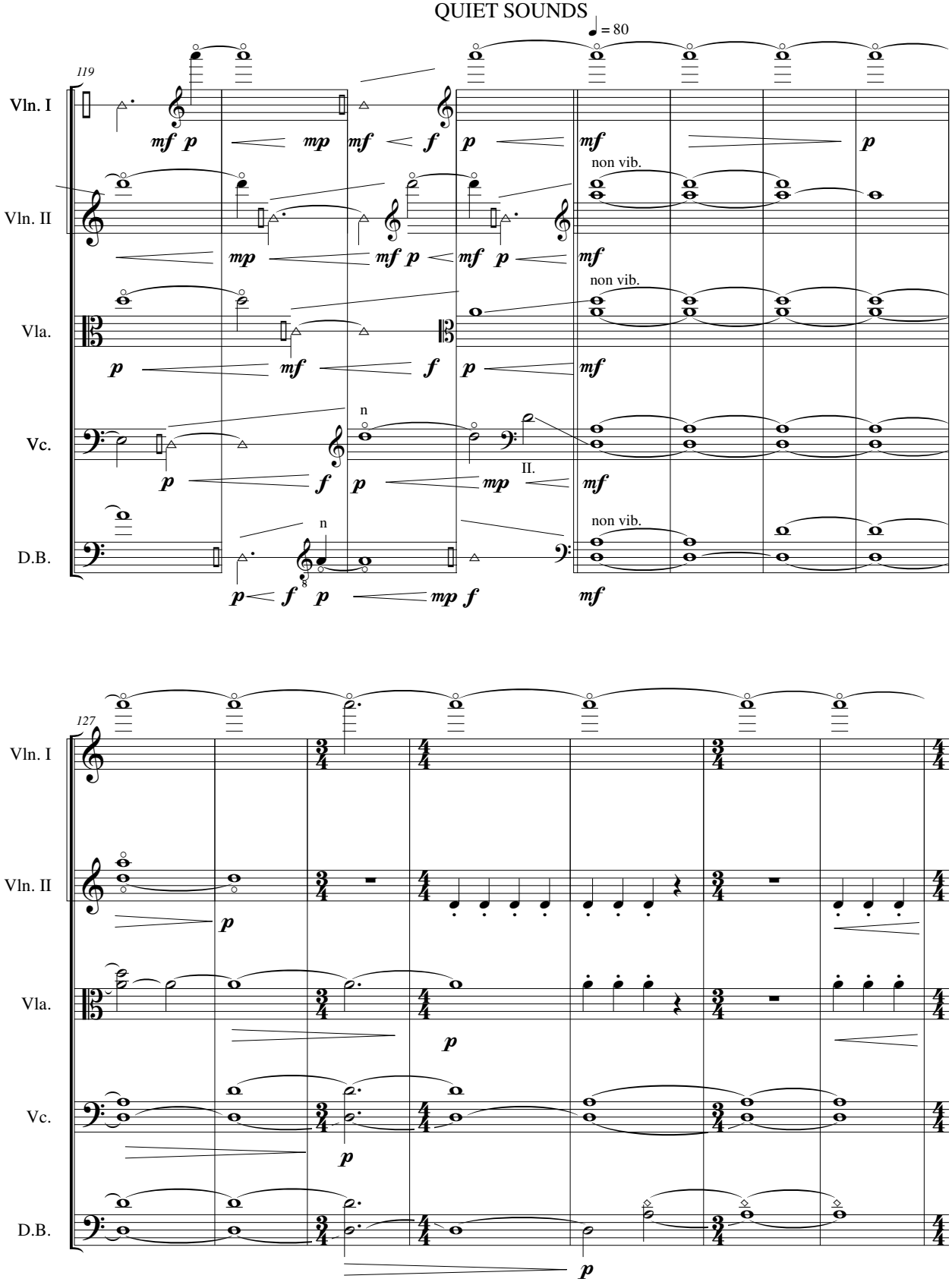

86
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
clb
sp
mf
p

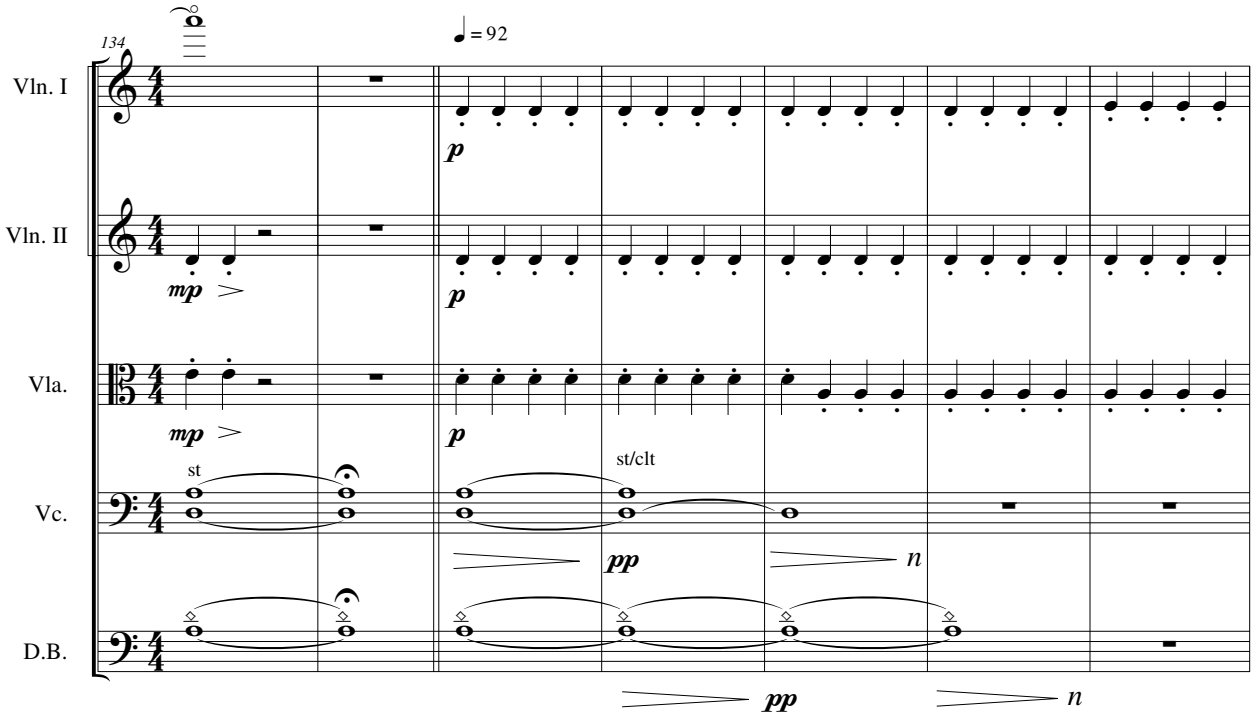

91
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
st, circle bowing
sp
pp
p
mf

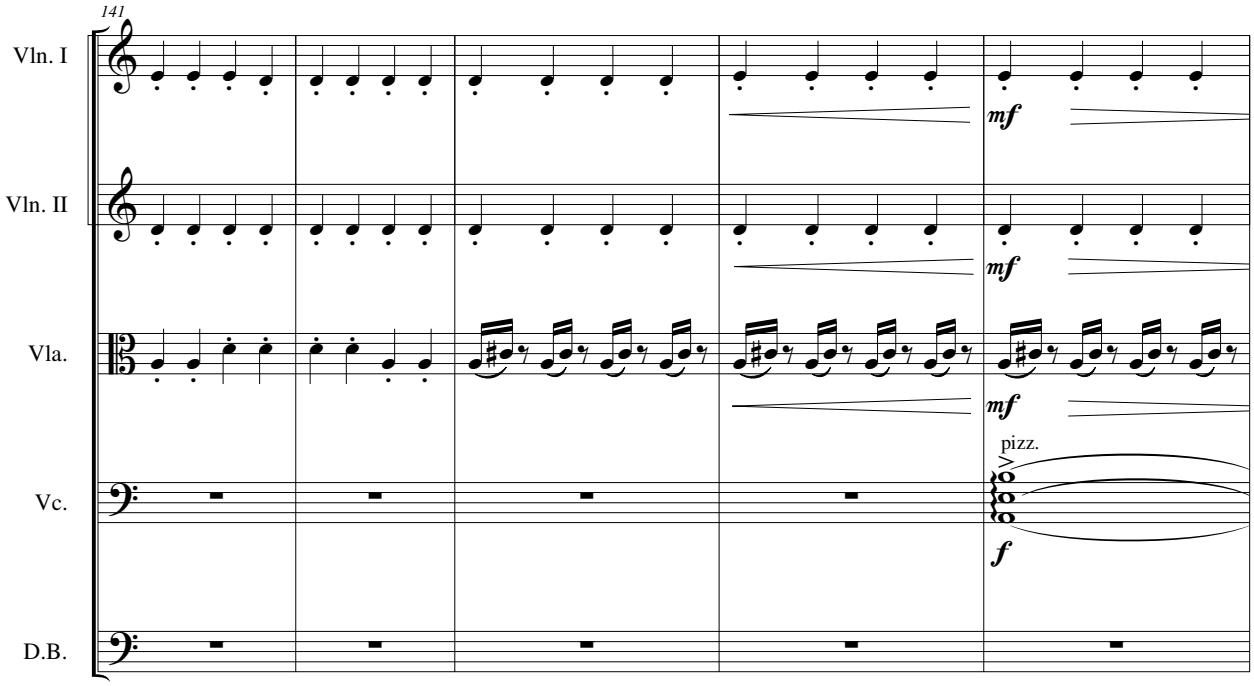

96
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
sp
clt
f
mf
p
pp
n

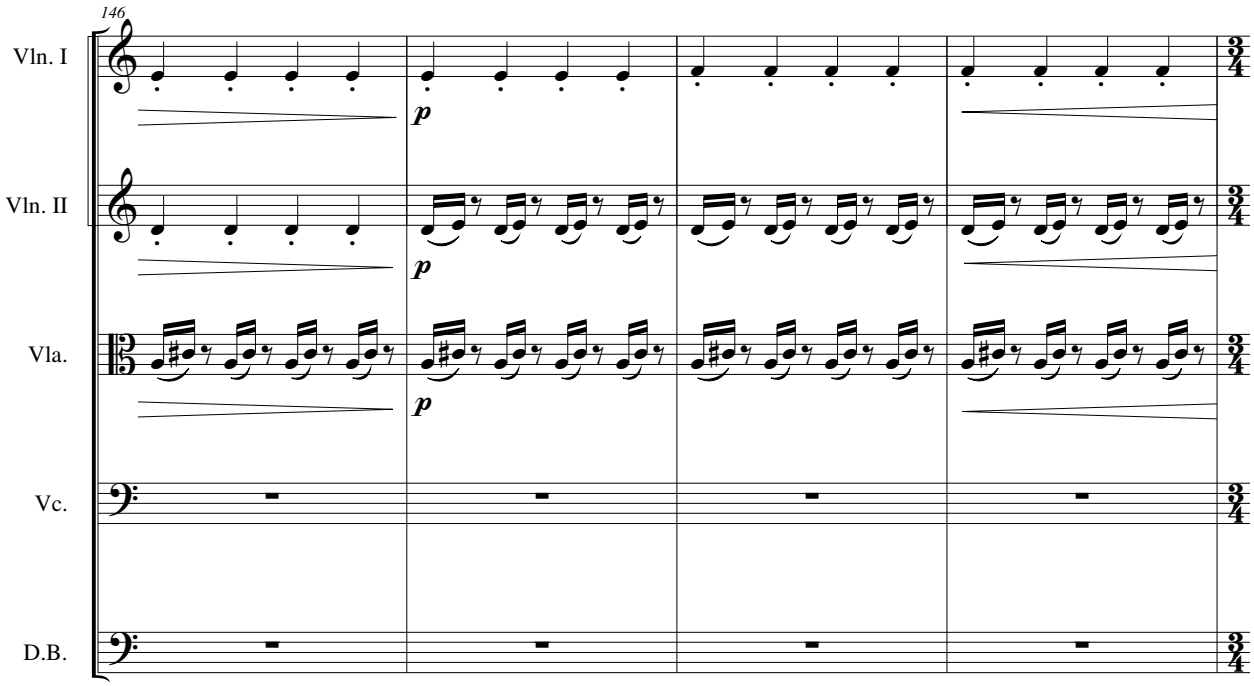

102
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
st/clt
p
f
mf
pp

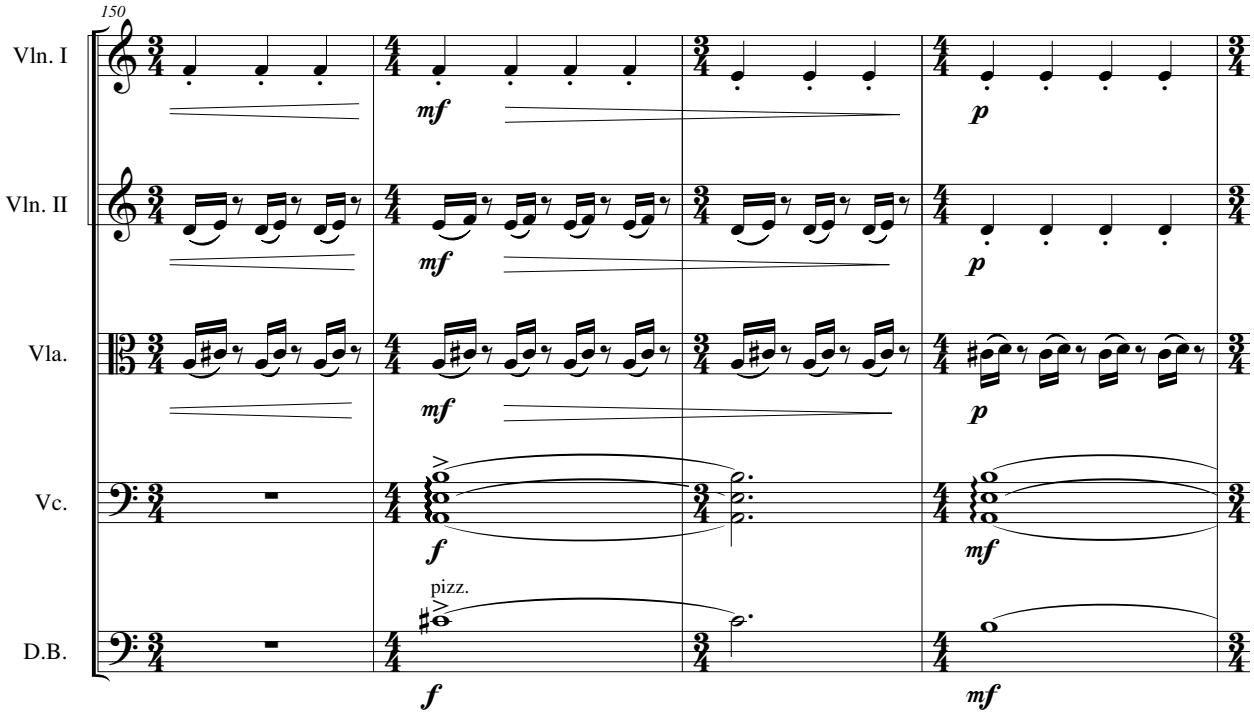

Instrument mic: Move to...
107
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
sp
clb random
arco
Instrument mic: Low
112
move to.....
st, circle bowing
II.

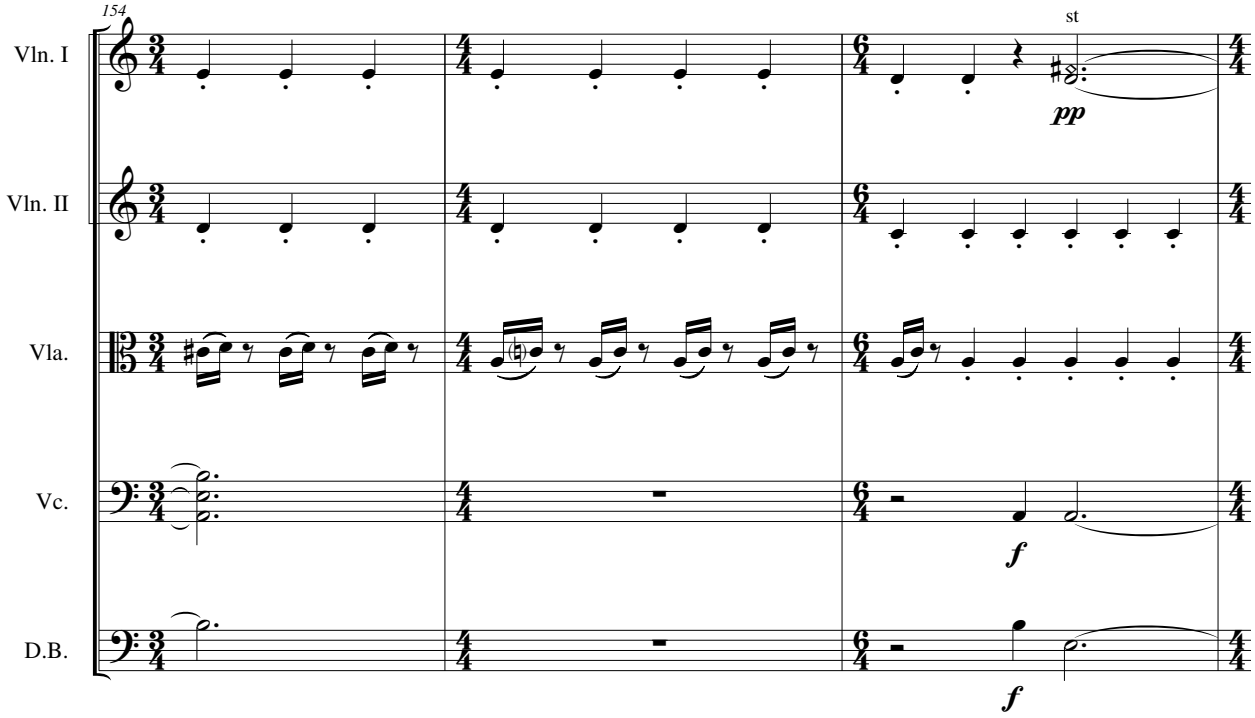

♩ = 80
119
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
non vib.
II.
127

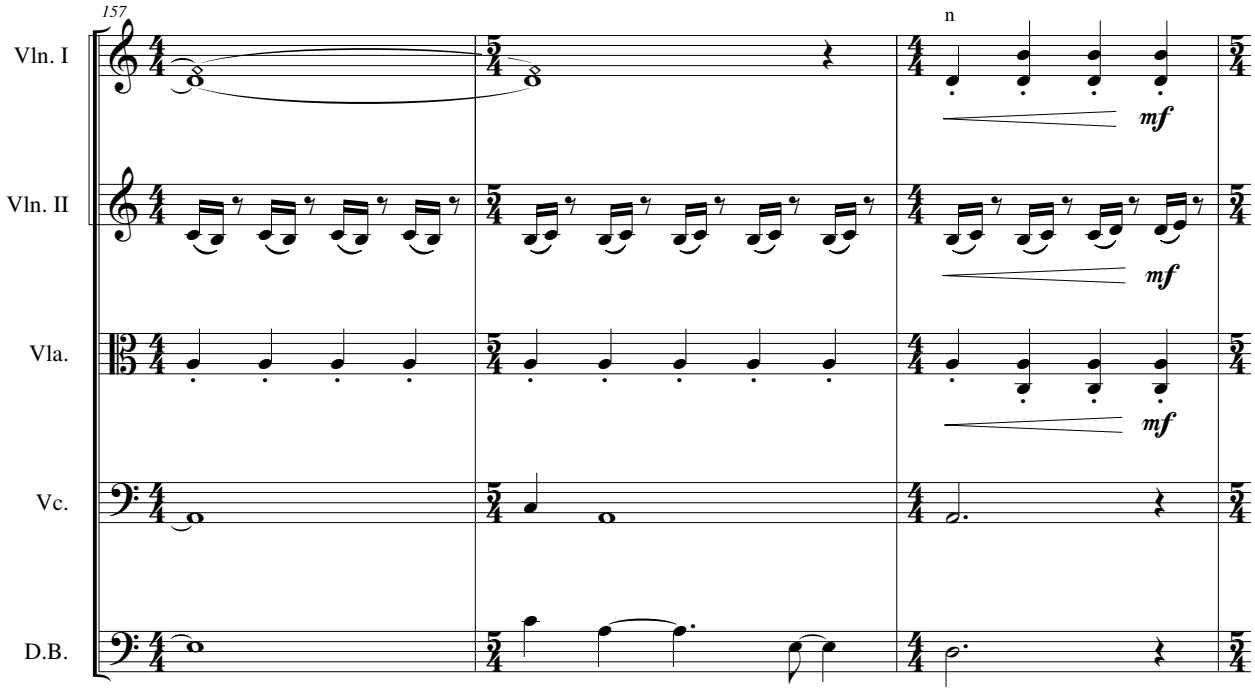

134
♩ = 92
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mp
p
st
st/clt
pp
n

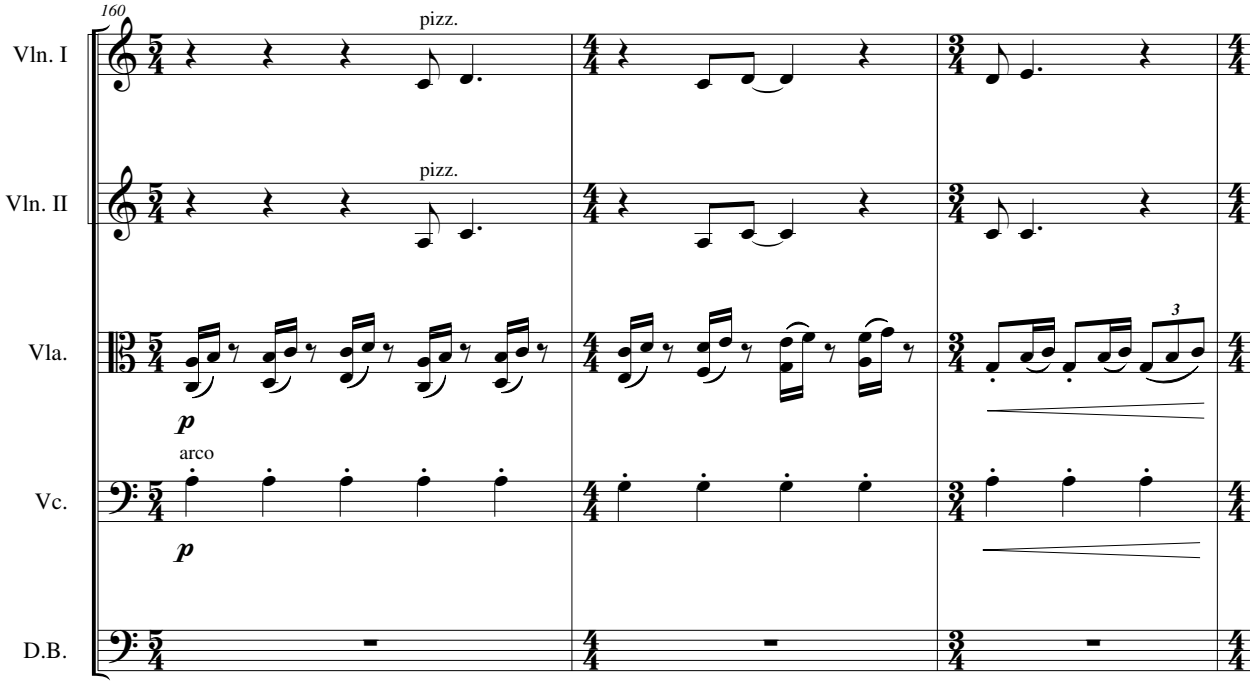

141
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
pizz.
f

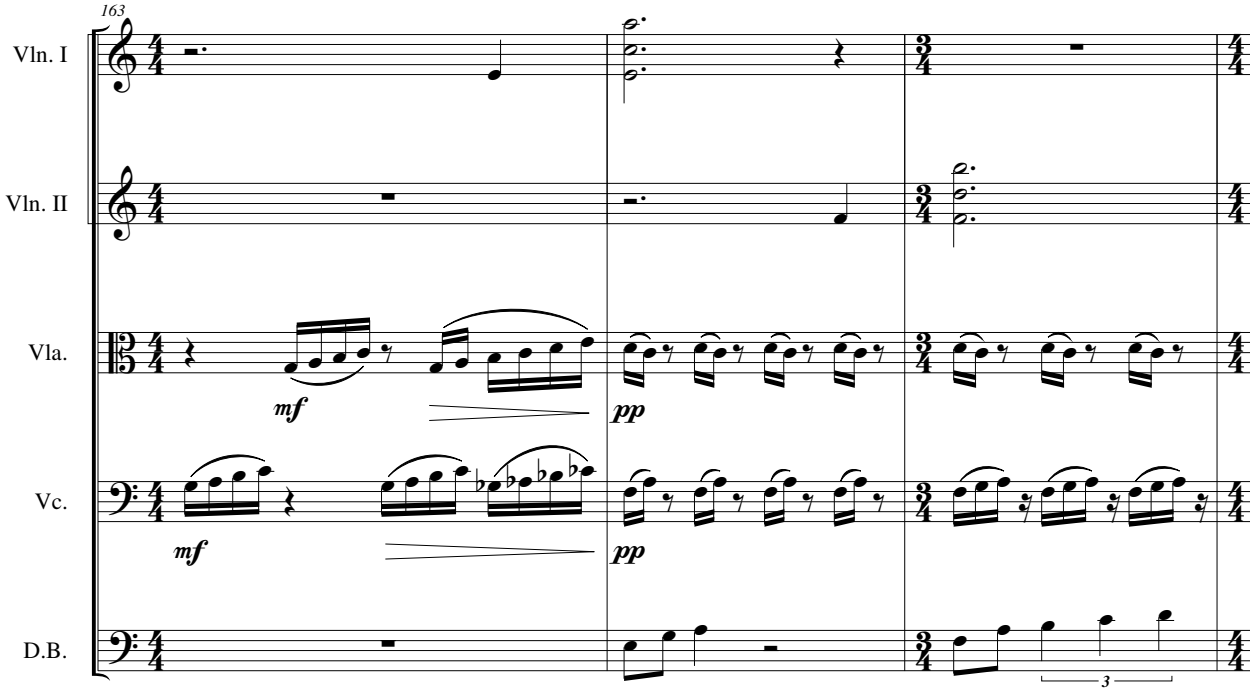

146
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p

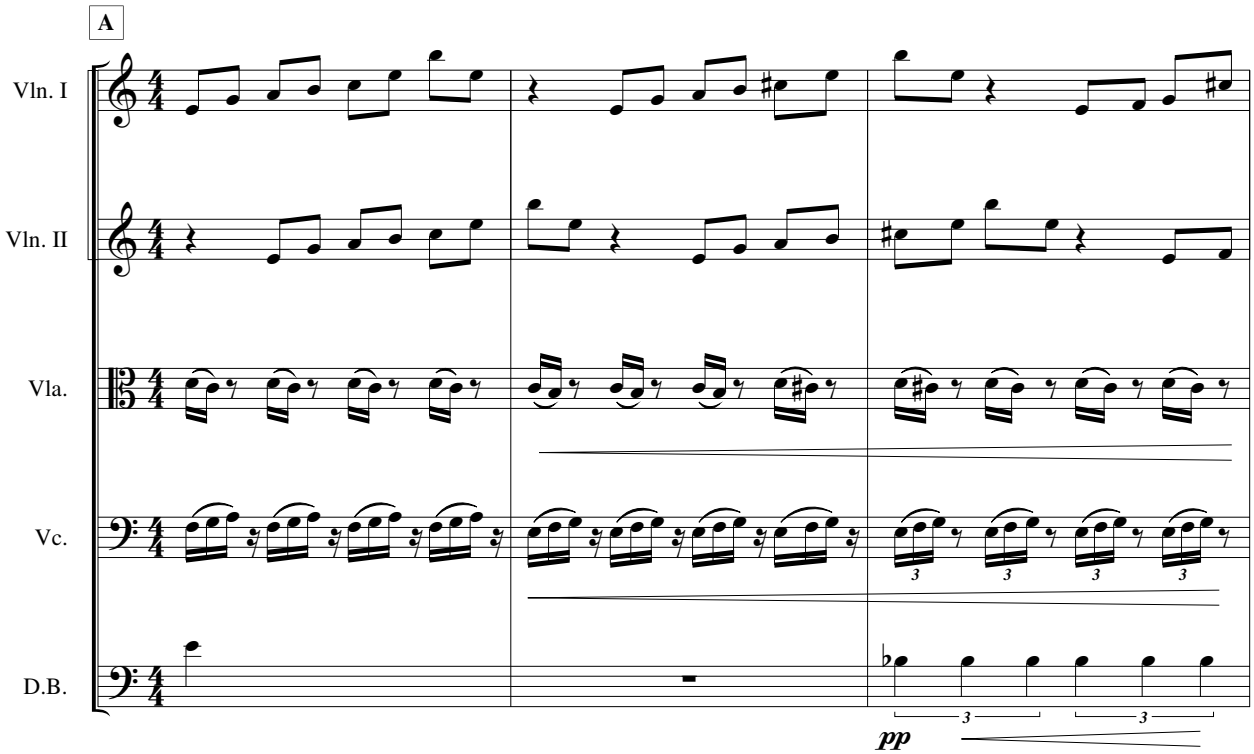

150
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
p
f
pizz.

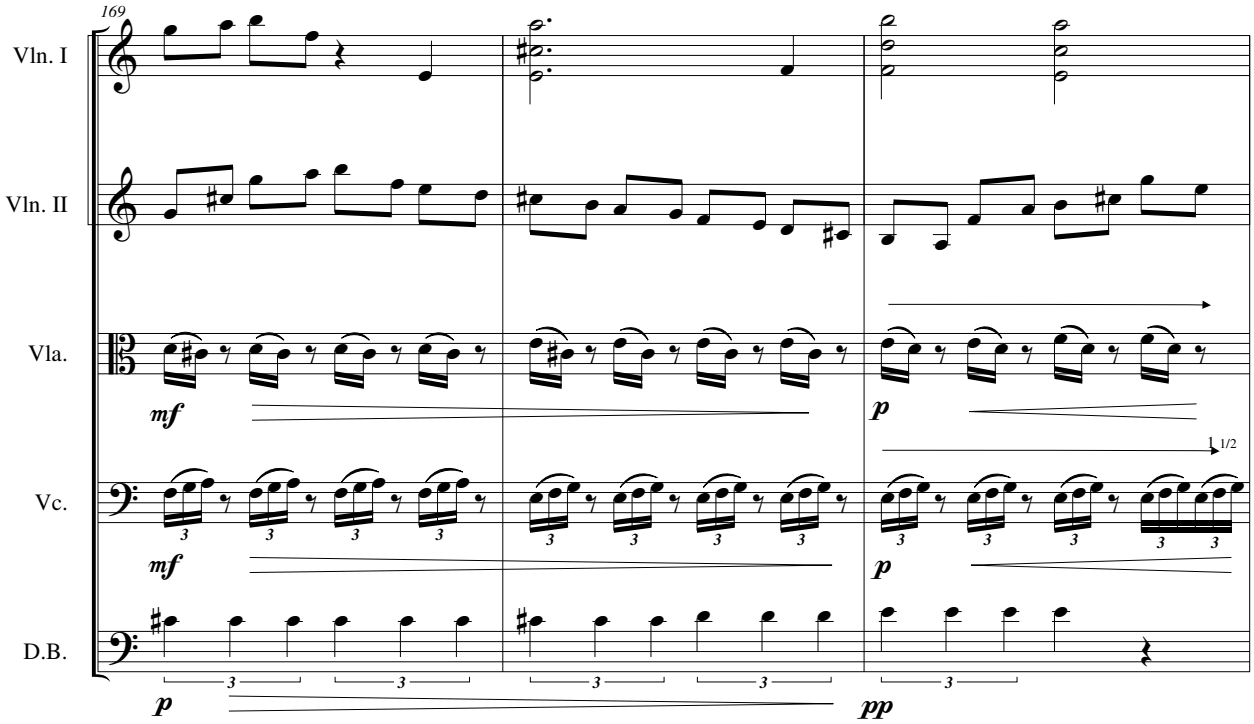

154
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
st
pp
f
f

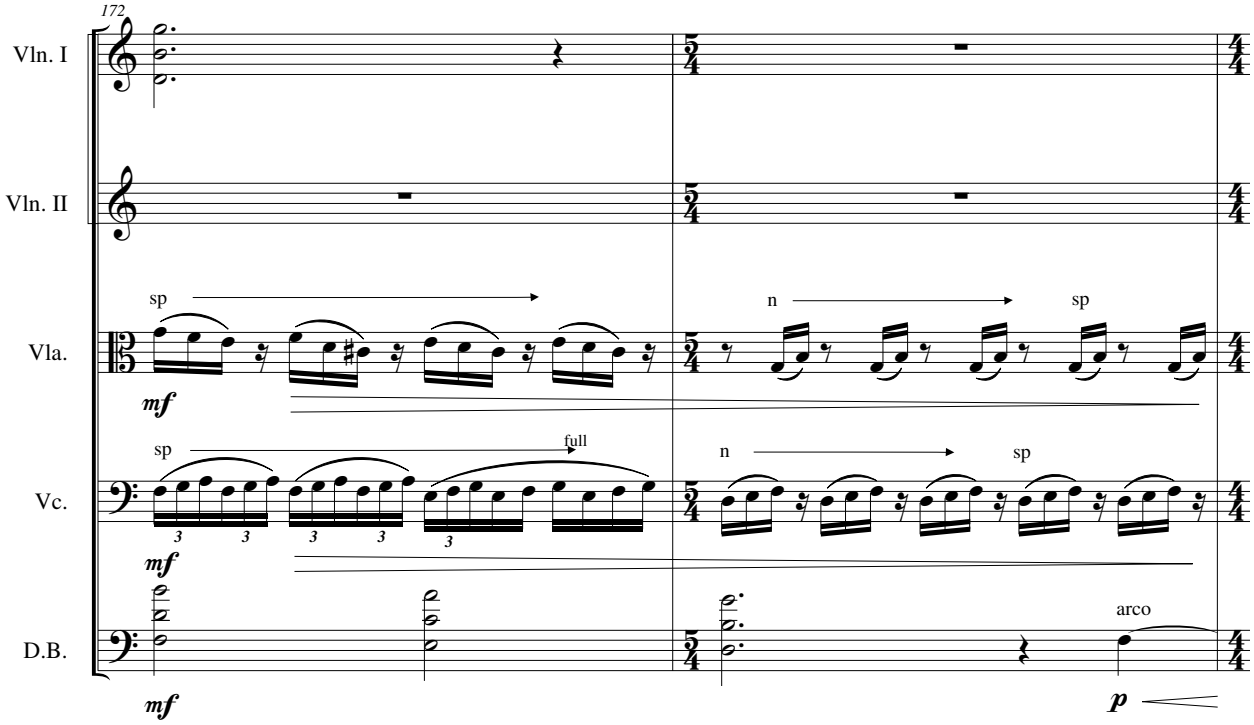

157
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
n
mf
mf
mf

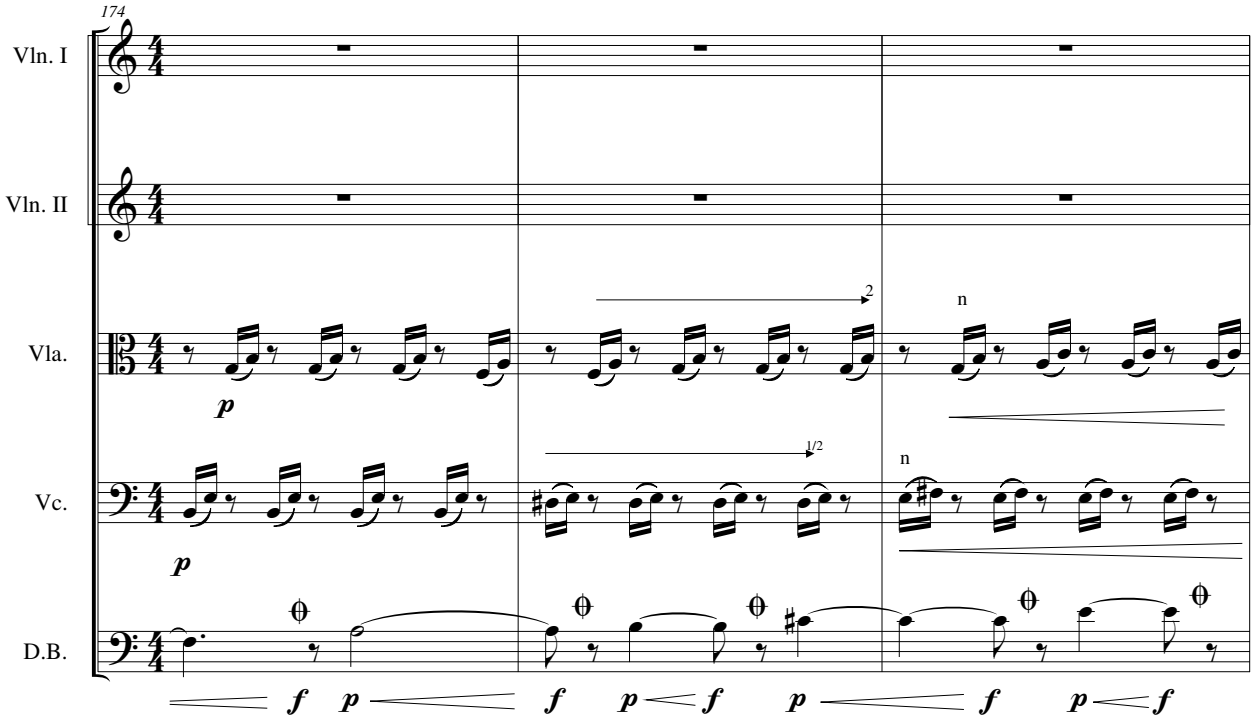

160
Vln. I
pizz.
Vln. II
pizz.
Vla.
p
arco
Vc.
p
D.B.

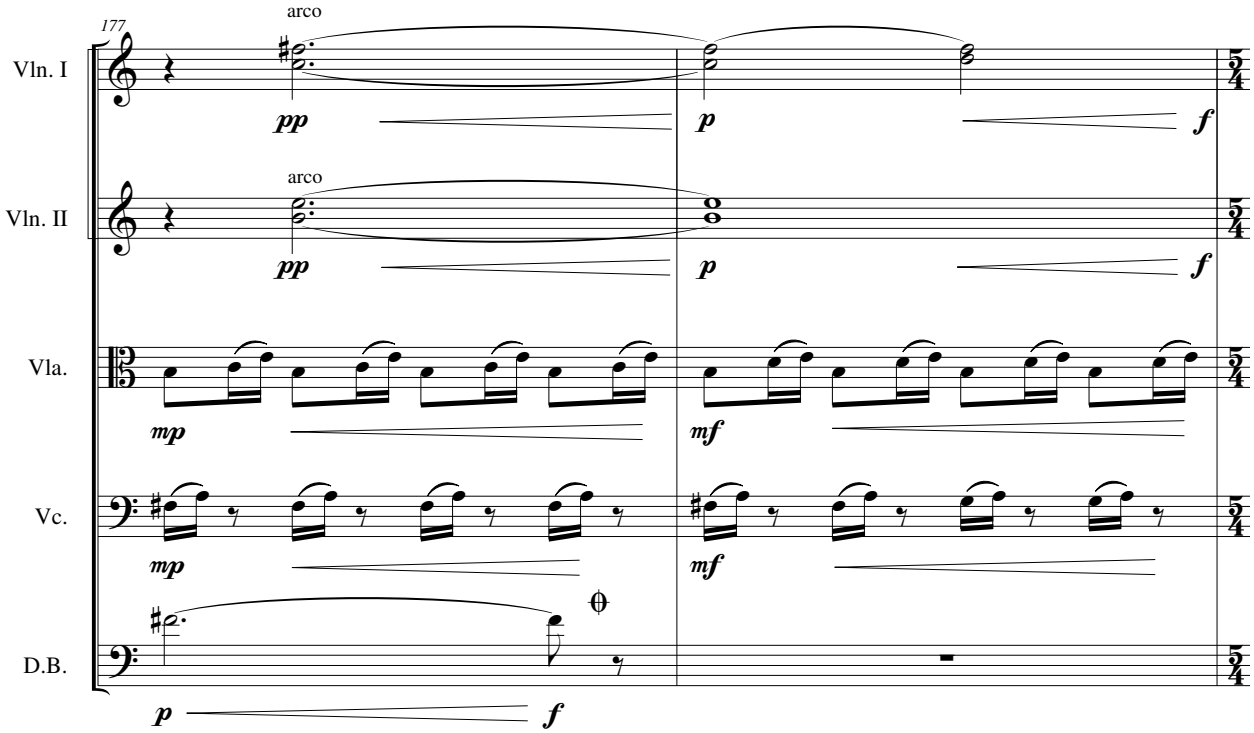

163
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
mf
pp
Vc.
mf
pp
D.B.

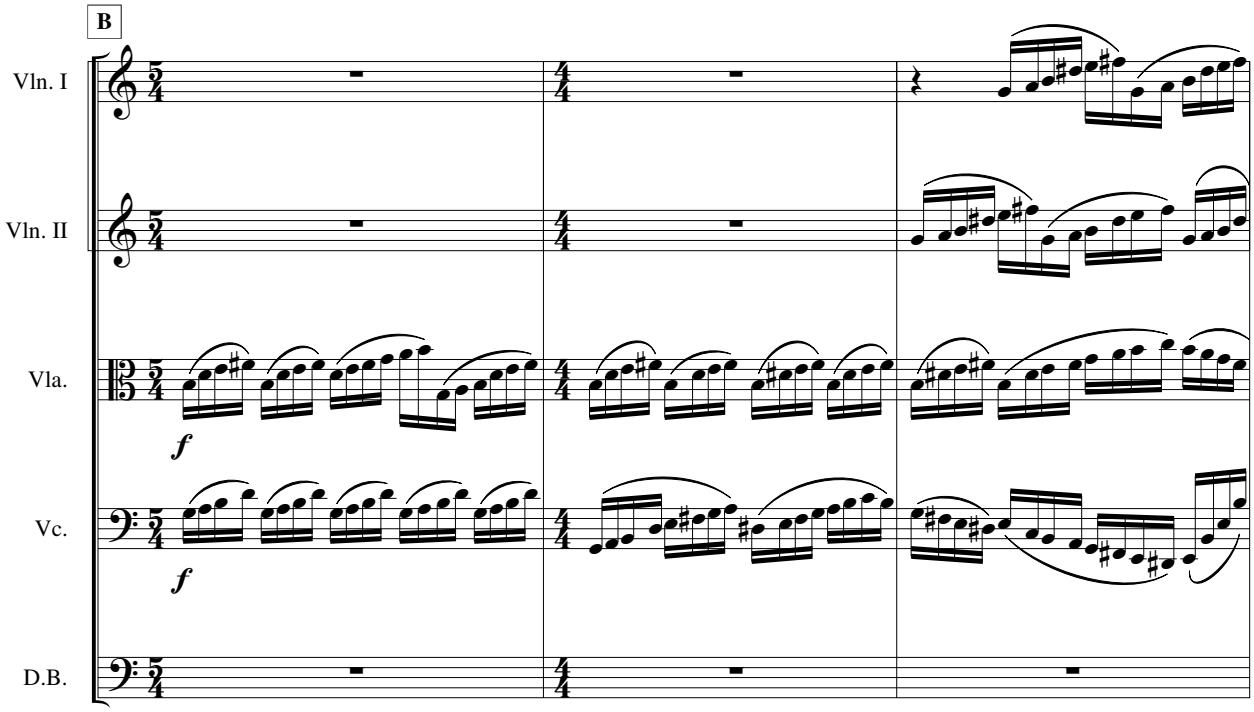

A
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
pp

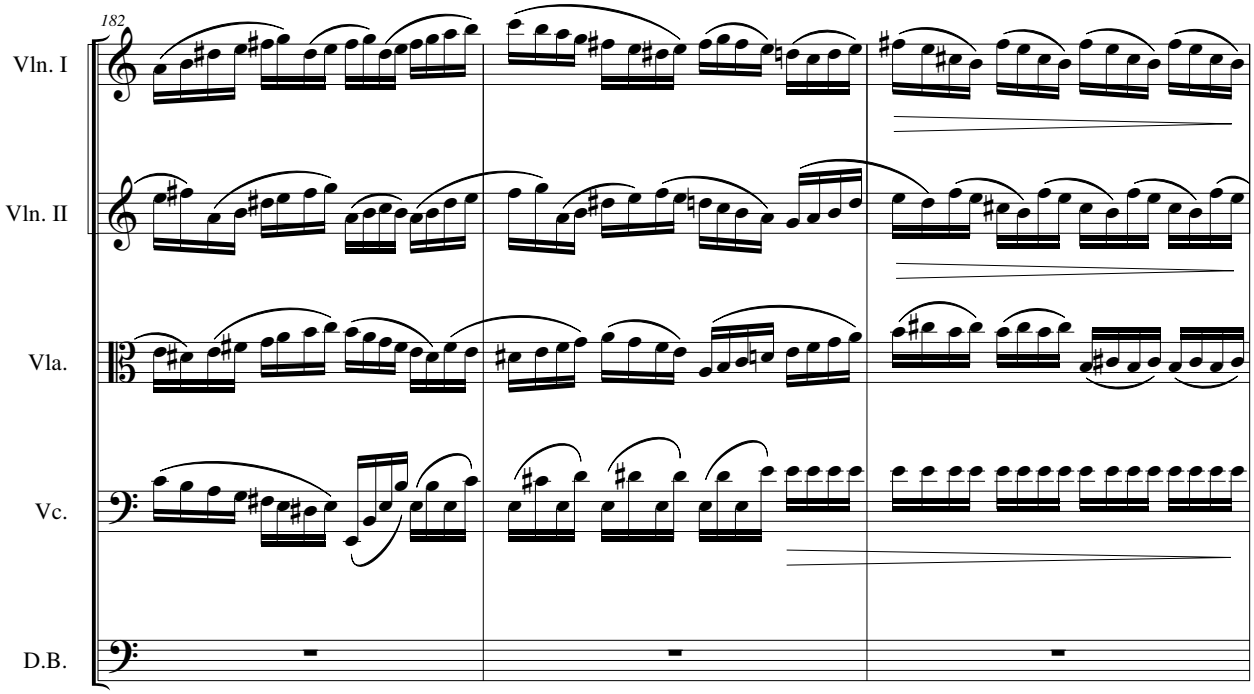

169
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
p
mf
p
p
pp
1/2

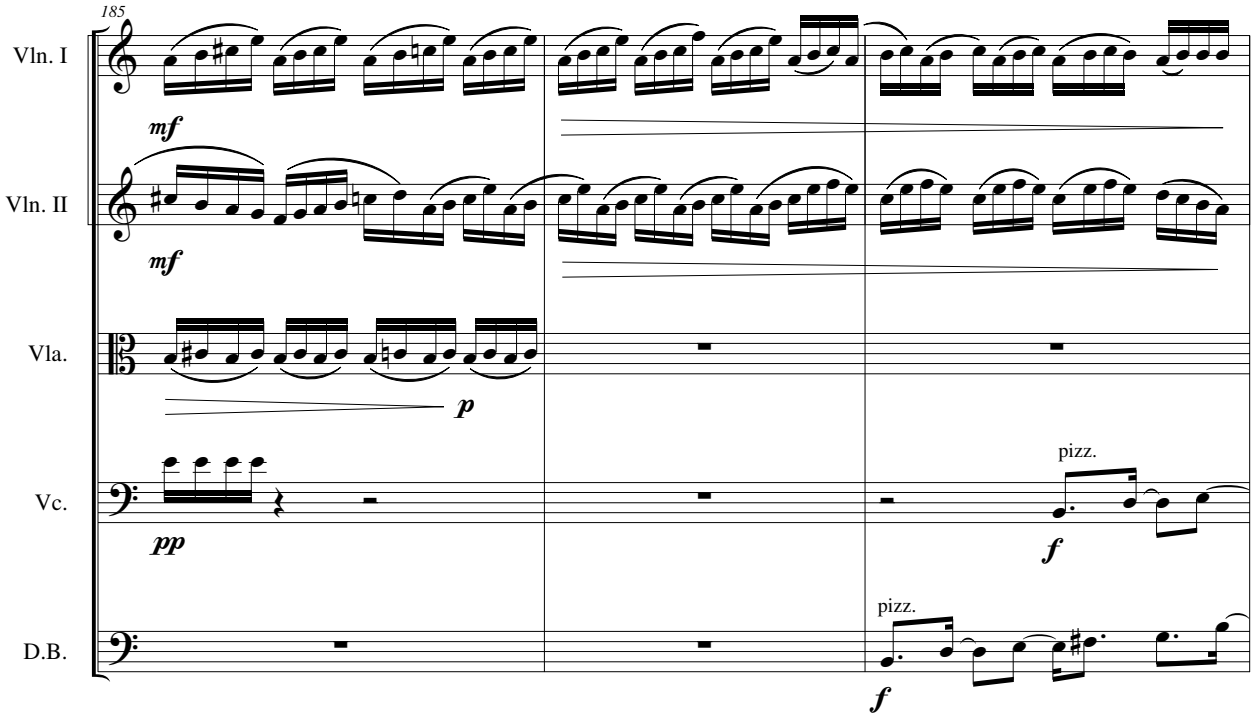

172
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
sp
n
sp
mf
sp
full
n
sp
mf
arco
mf
p

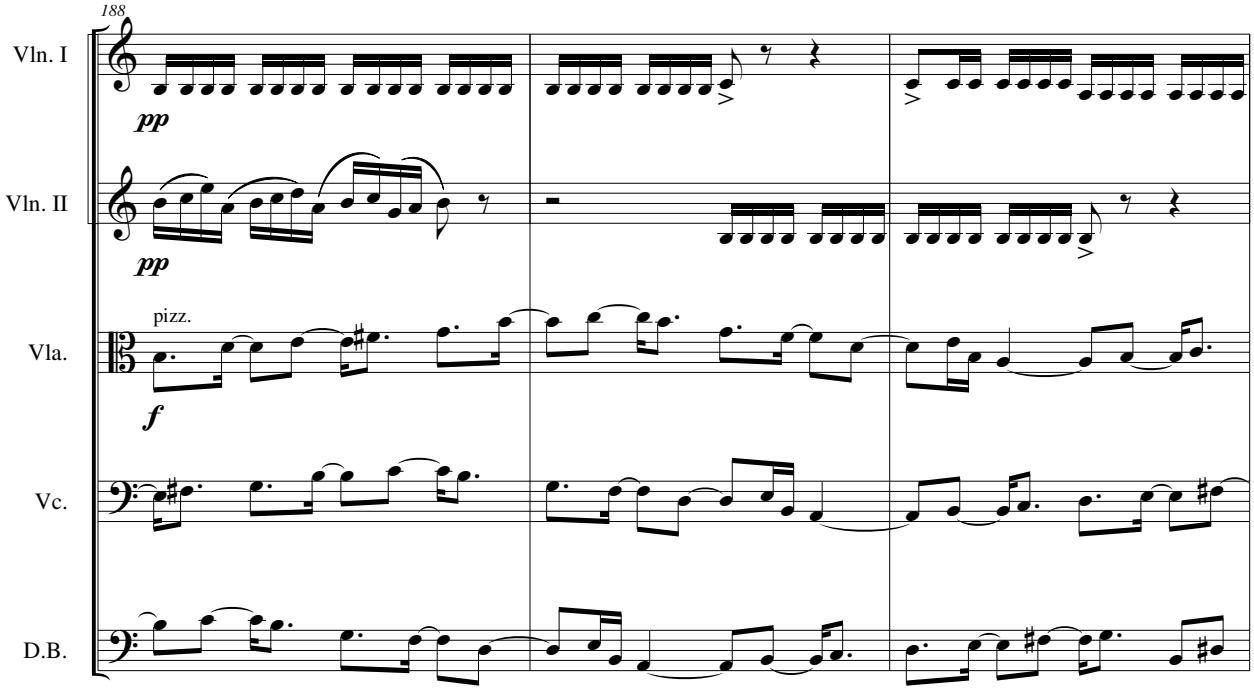

174
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
2
n
1/2
n
p
p
f
p
f
p
f
p
f
p
f

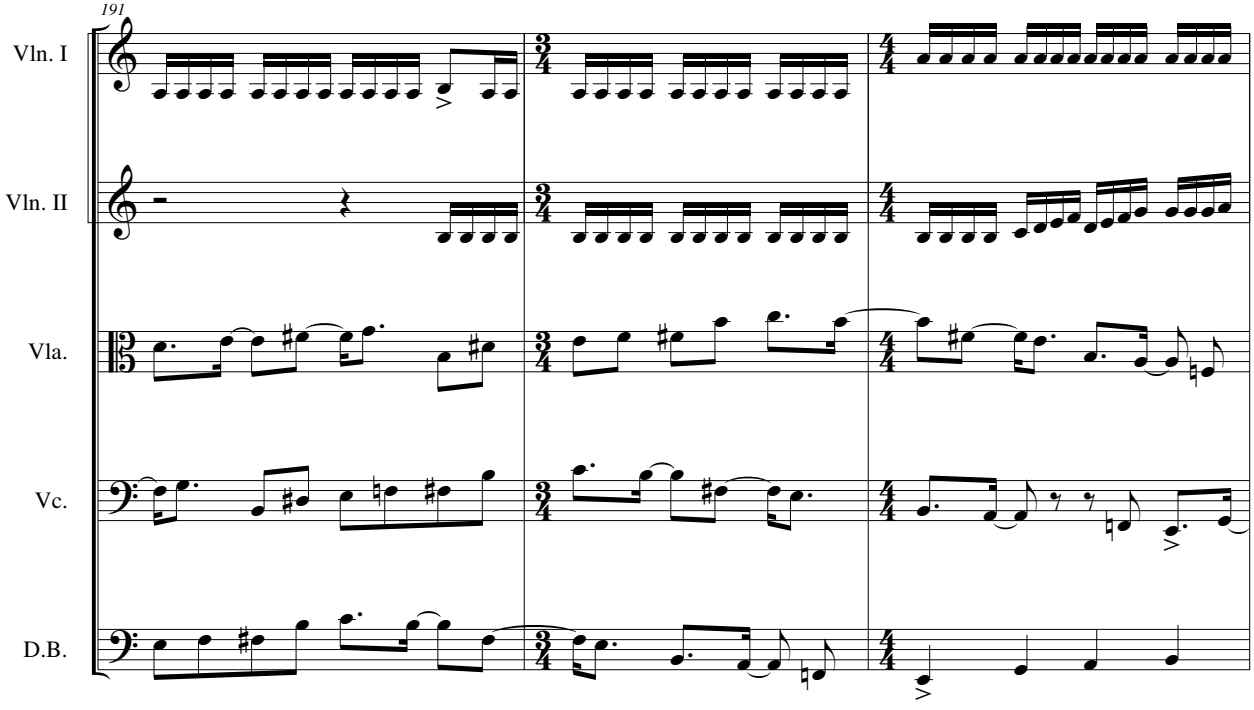

177
arco
Vln. I
pp
p
f
arco
Vln. II
pp
p
f
Vla.
mp
mf
Vc.
mp
mf
D.B.
p
f

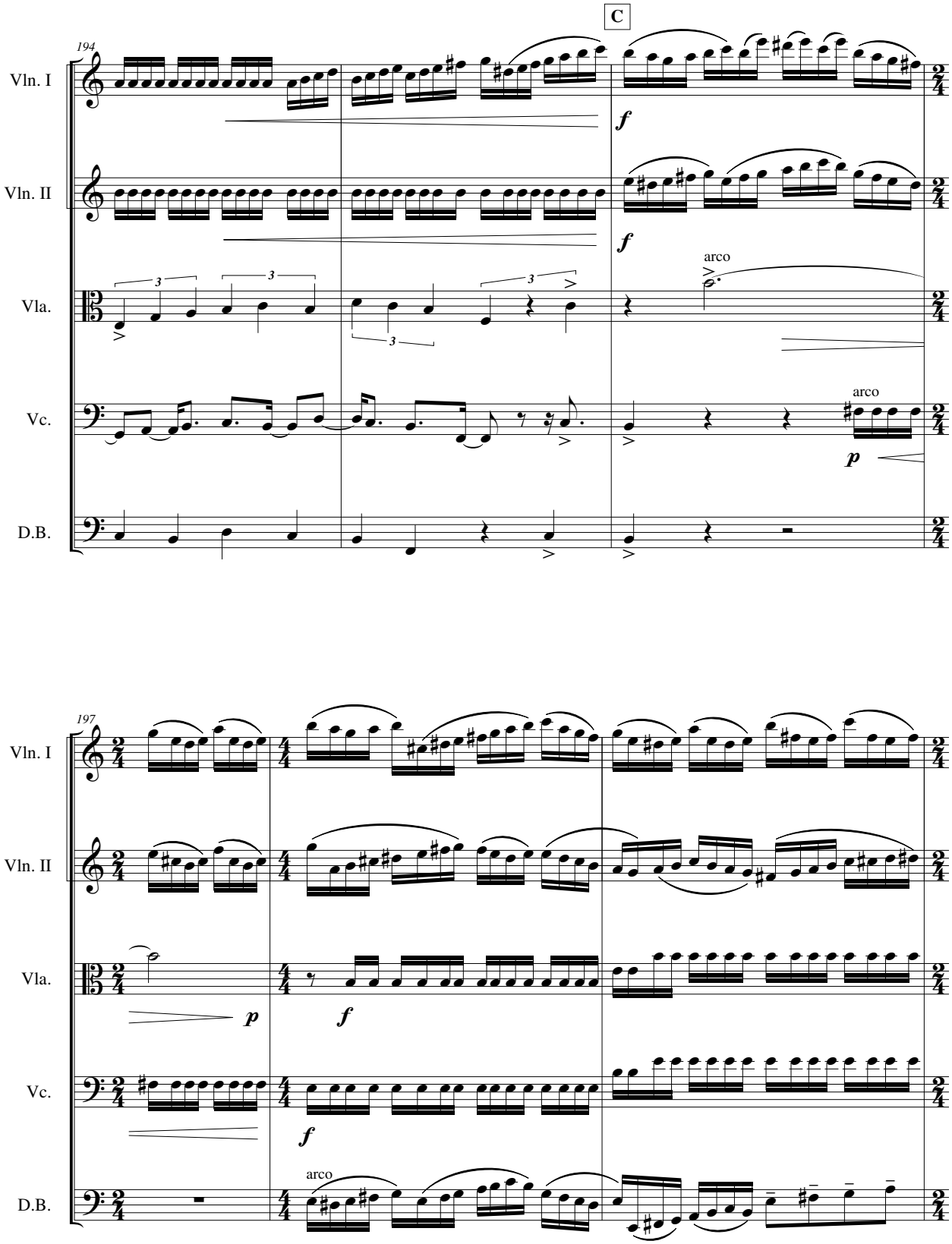

B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
f
Vc.
f
D.B.

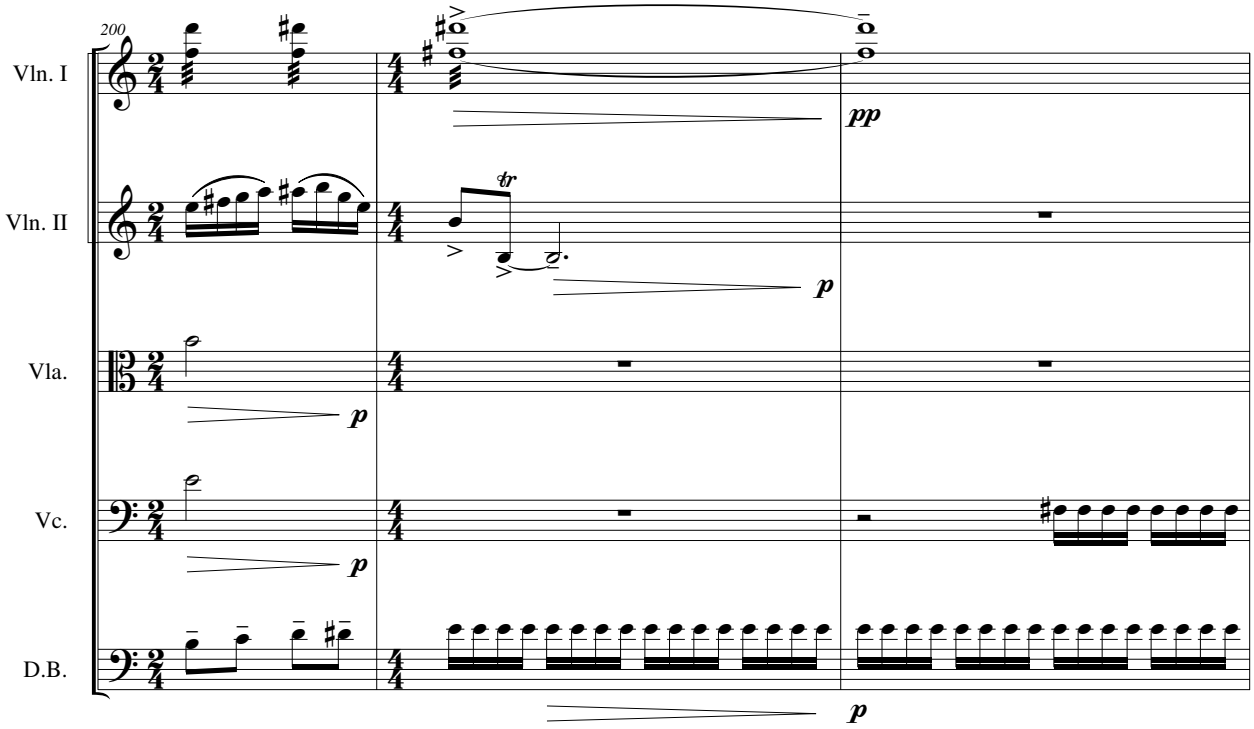

182
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.

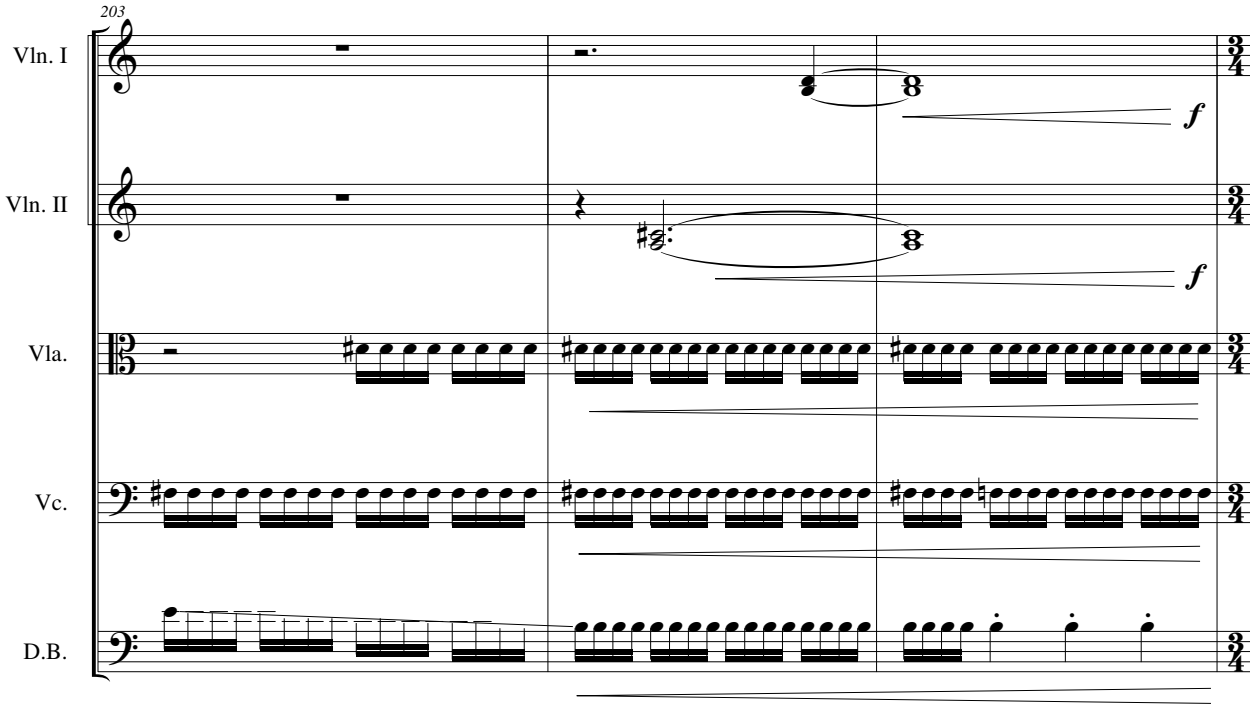

185
Vln. I
mf
Vln. II
mf
Vla.
p
Vc.
pp
pizz.
f
D.B.
pizz.
f

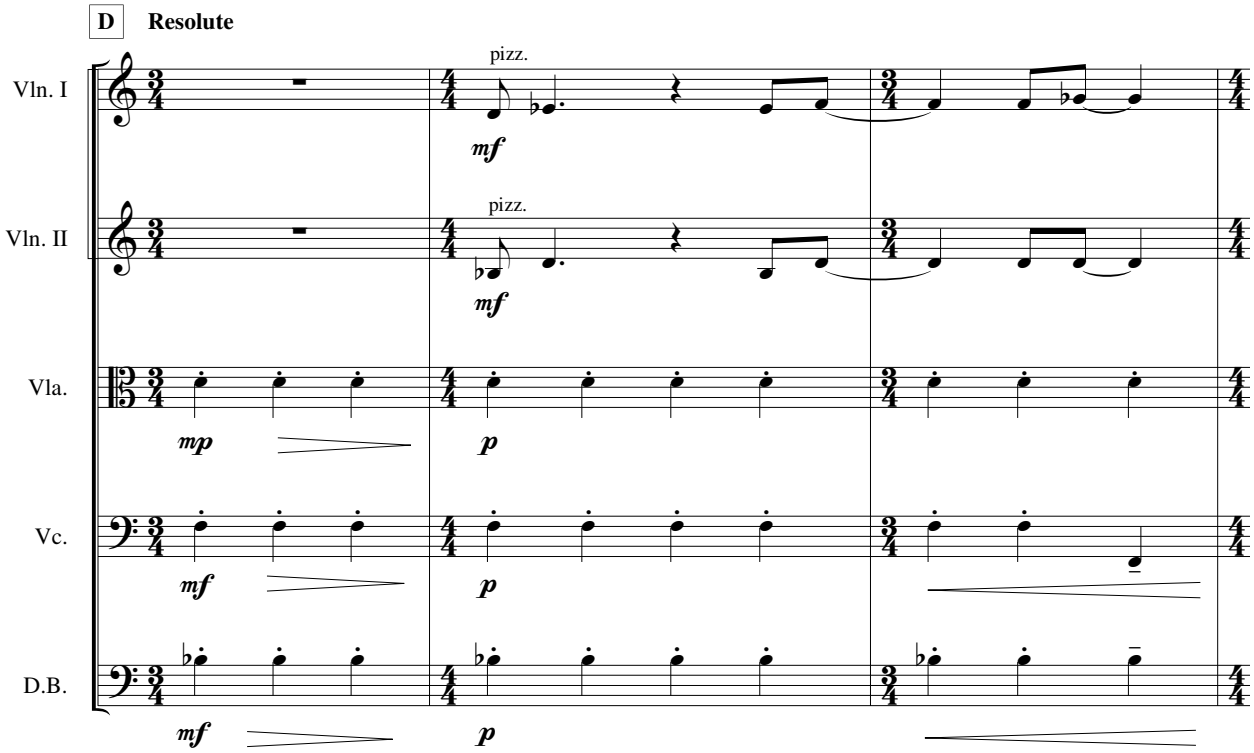

188
Vln. I
pp
Vln. II
pp
pizz.
Vla.
f
Vc.
D.B.

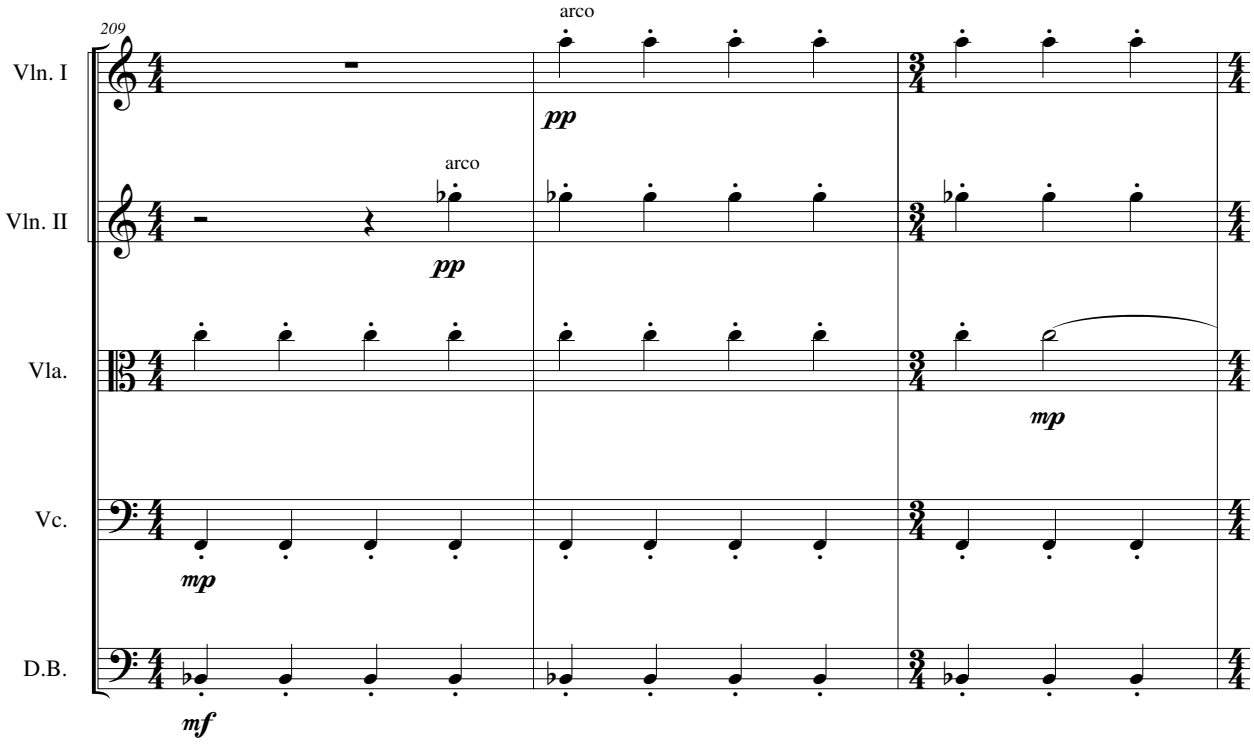

191
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.

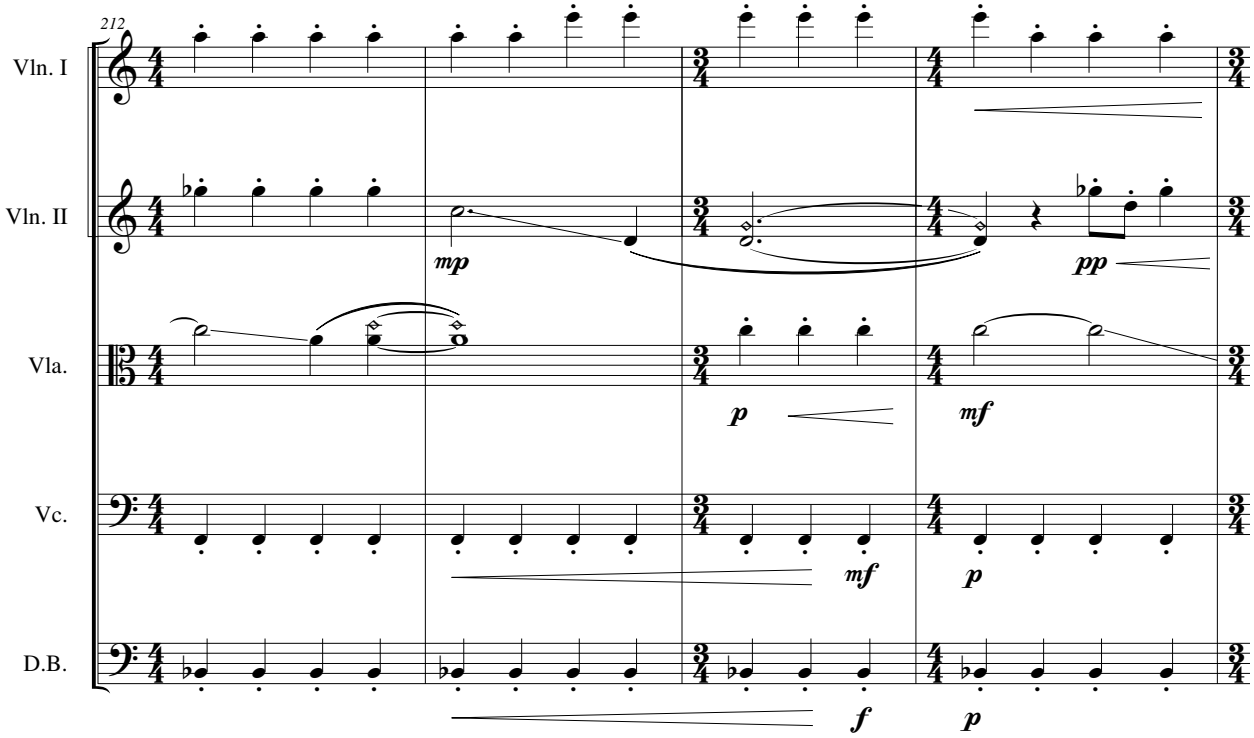

C
194
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
arco
arco
197
arco

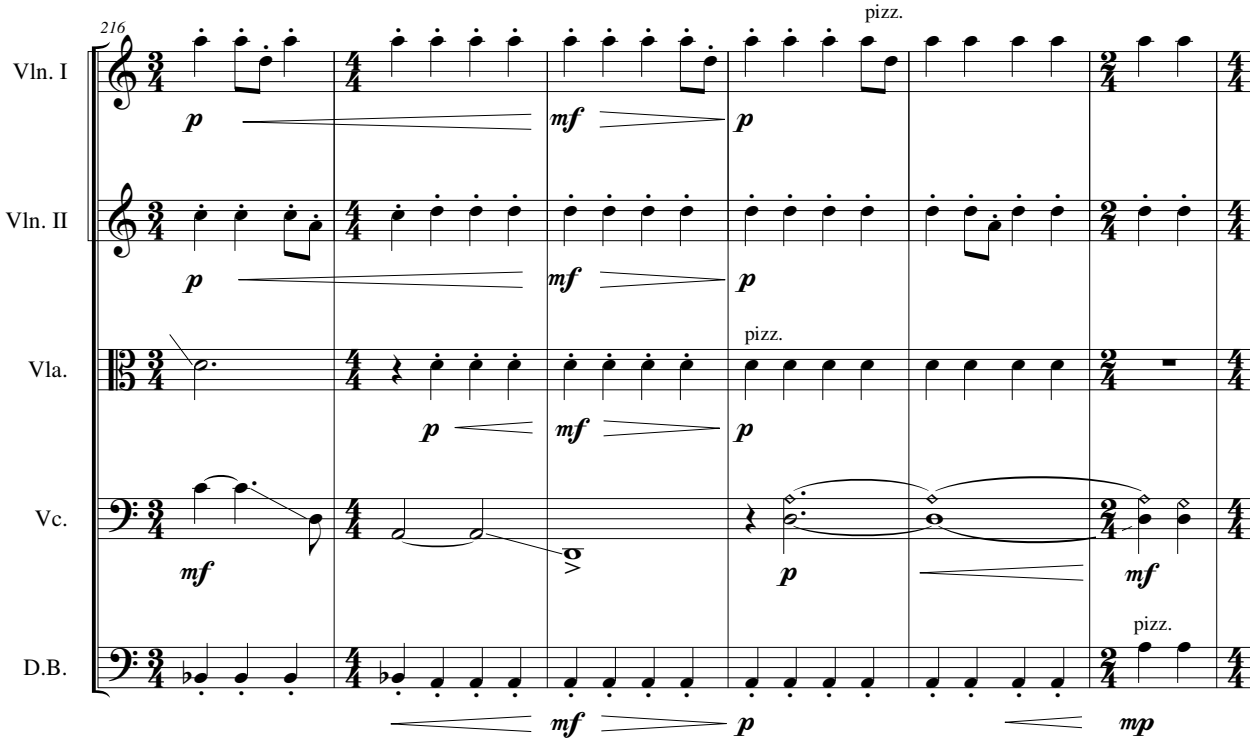

200
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
pp
p
tr

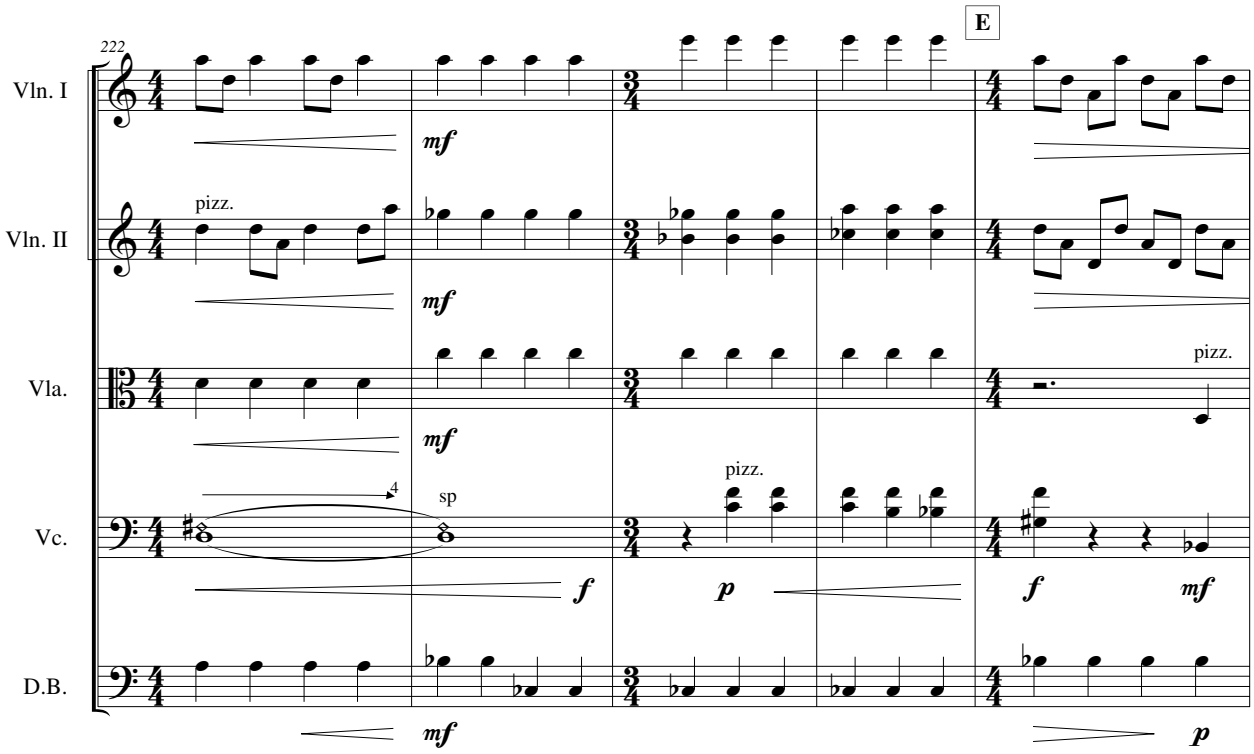

203
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
f

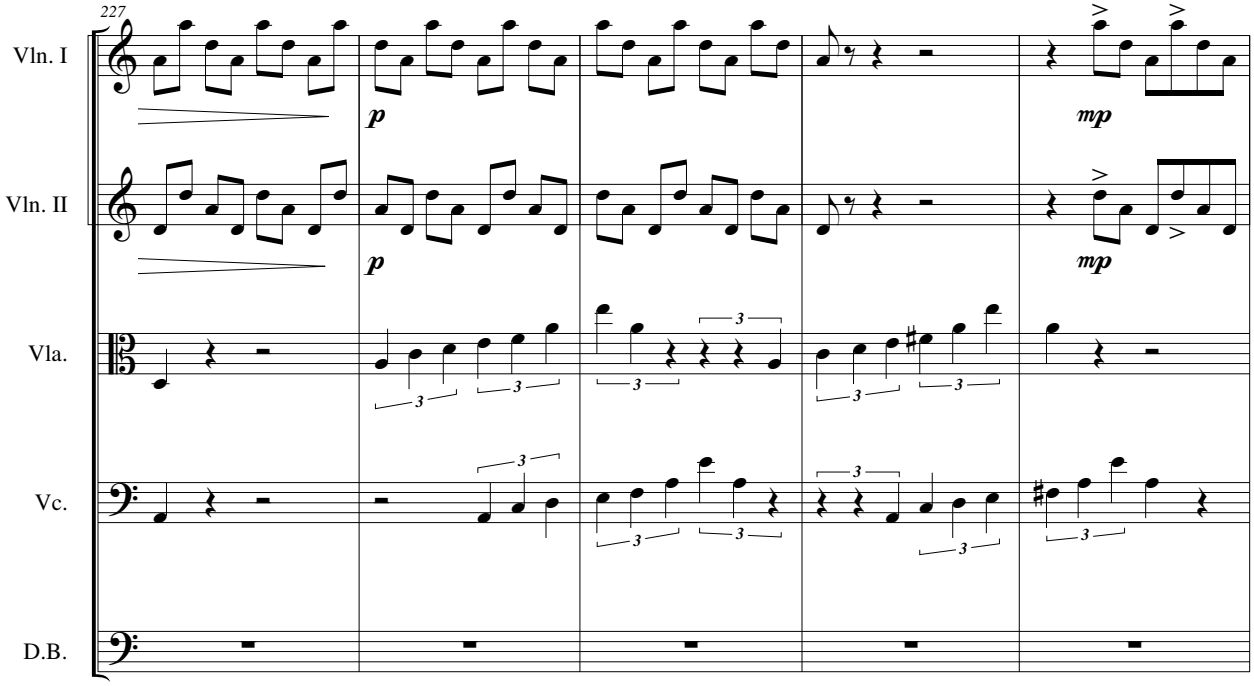

D
Resolute
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
pizz.
pizz.
mf
mf
mp
p
mf
p
mf
p

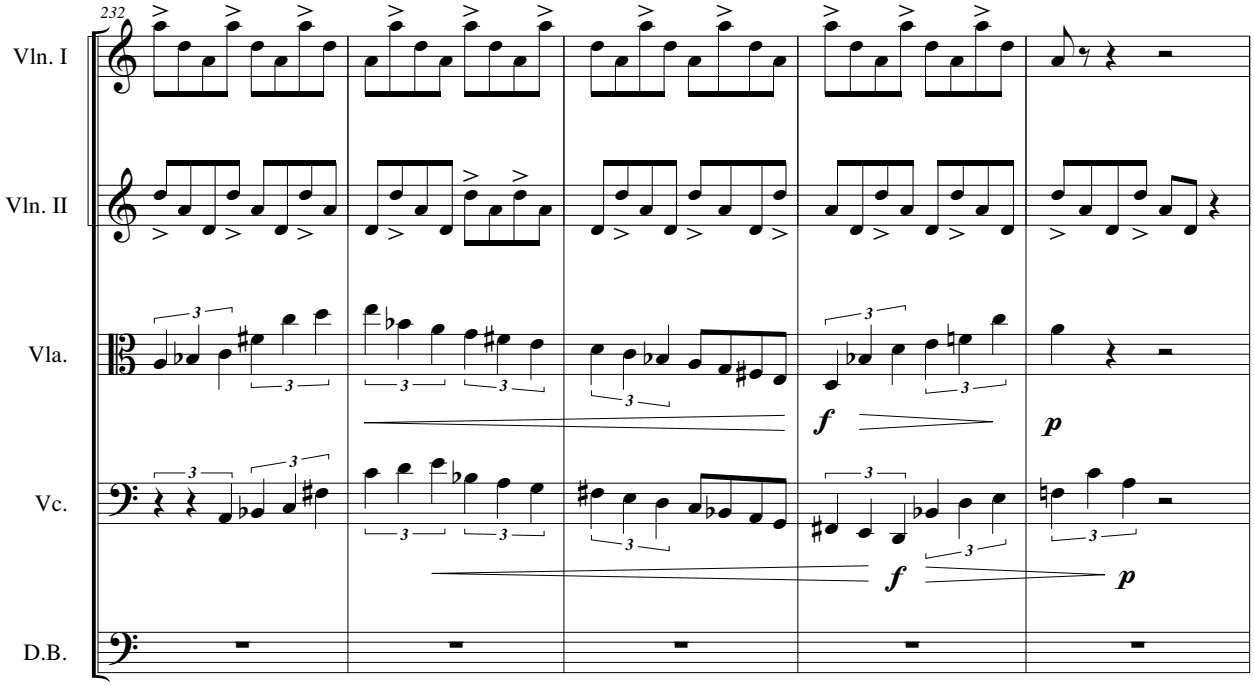

209
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
arco
arco
pp
pp
mp
mp
mf

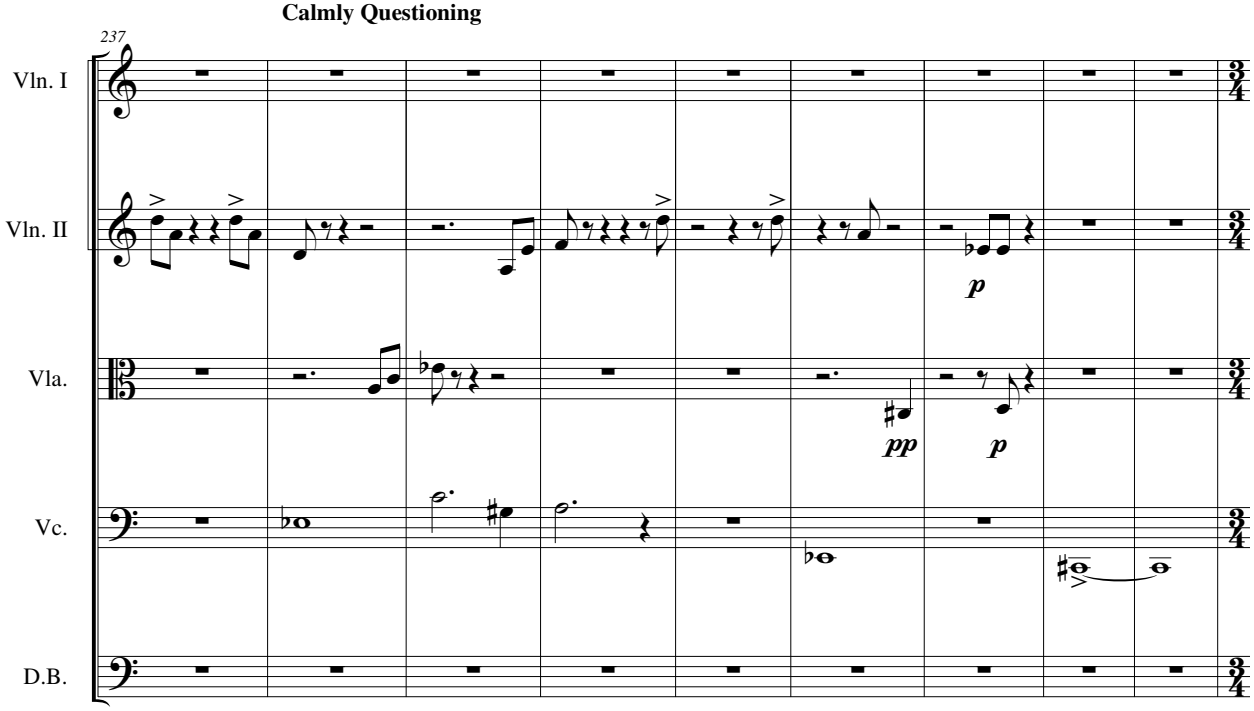

212
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mp
pp
p
mf
mf
p
f
p

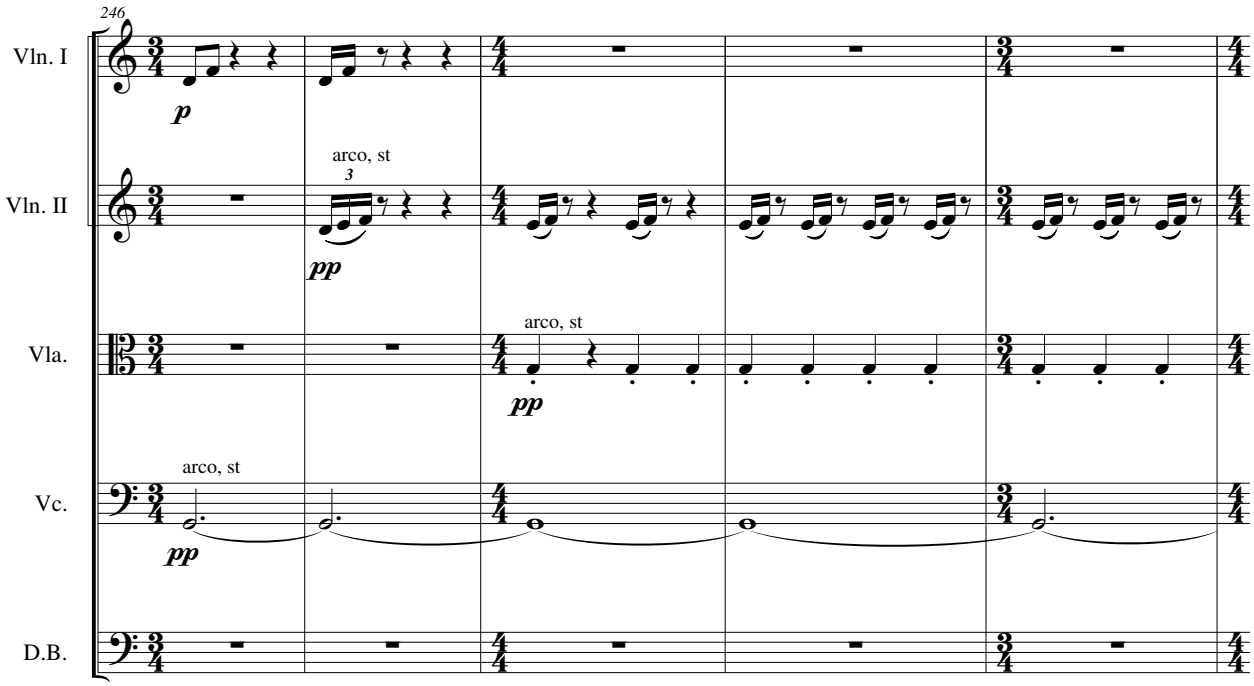

216
pizz.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
mf
p
p
mf
p
pizz.
p
mf
p
mf
p
mf
pizz.
mf
p
mp

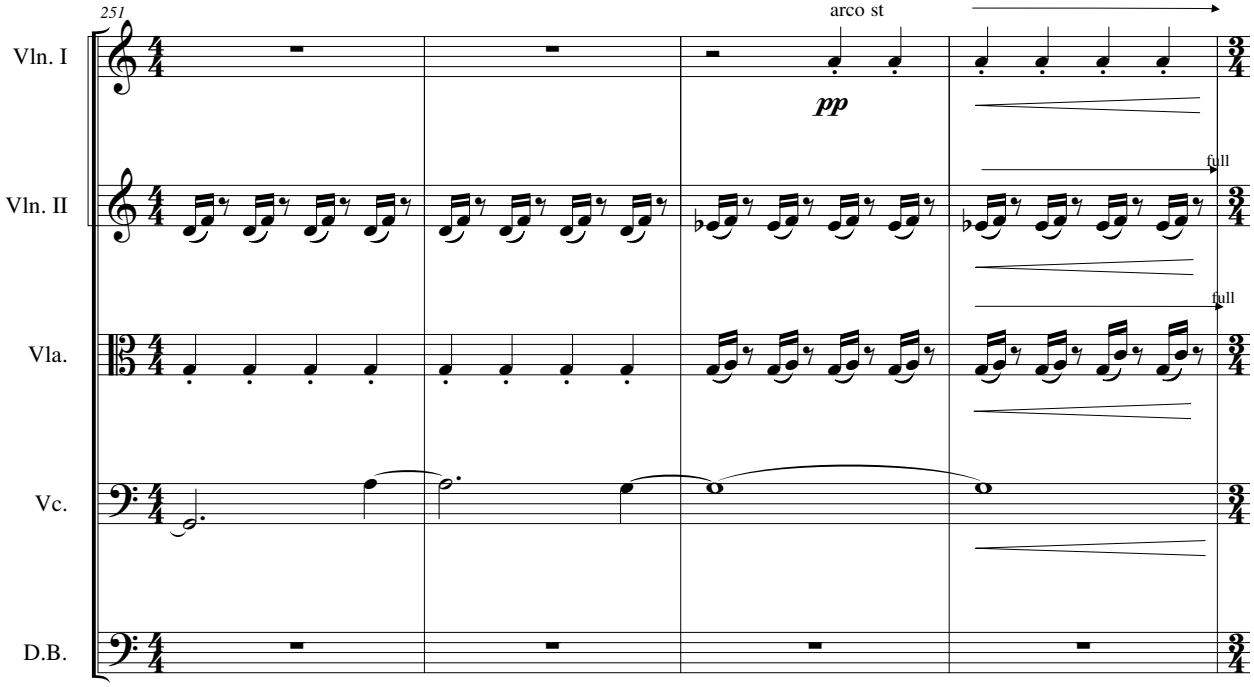

222
E
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
pizz.
sp
mf
f
p
mf

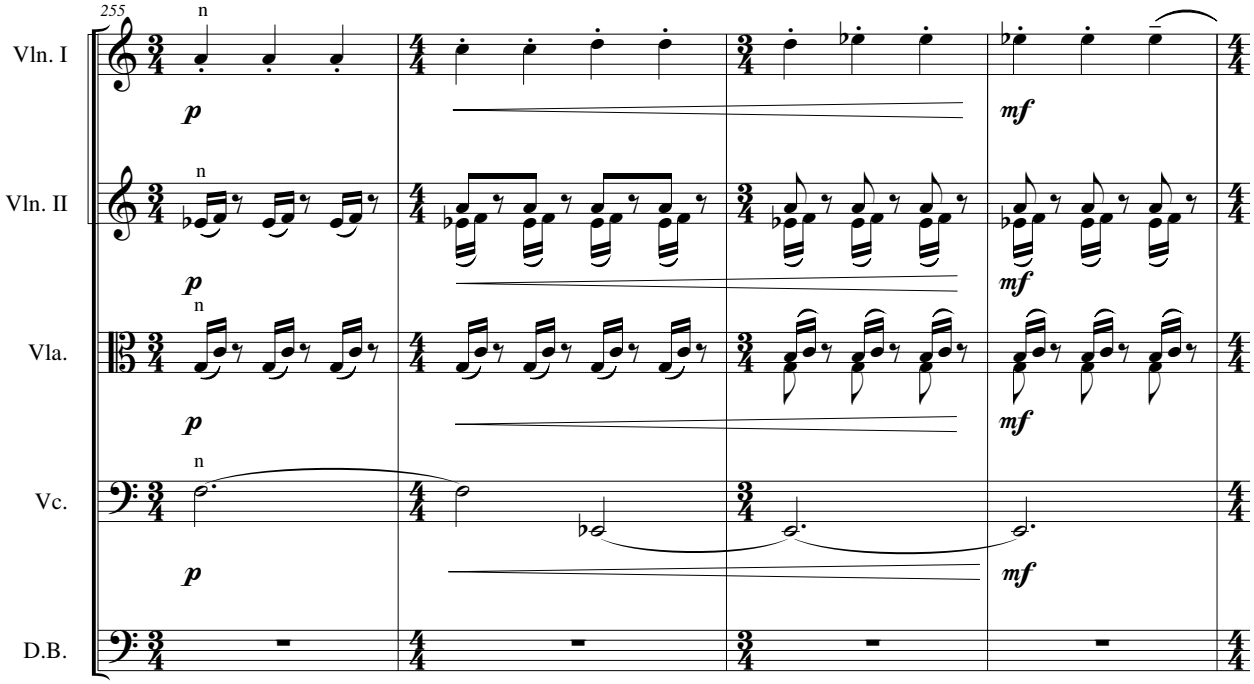

227
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
mp
3

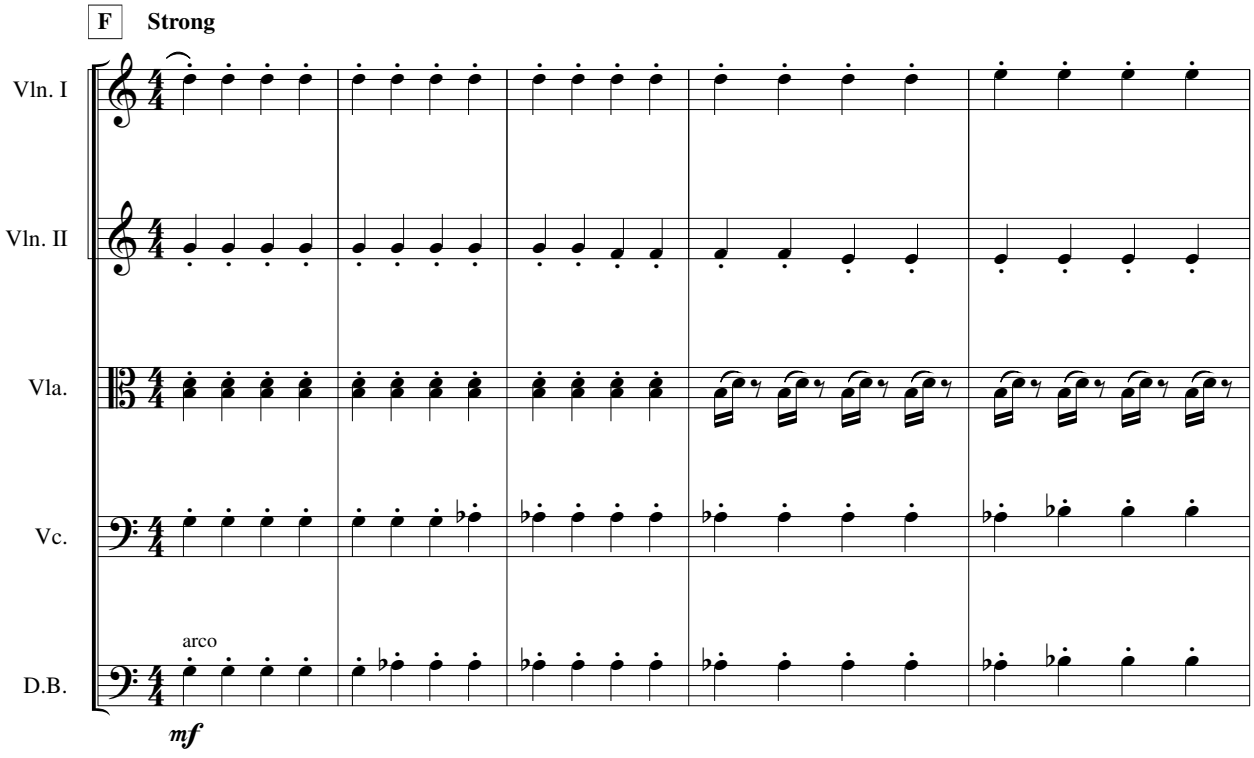

232
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
f
p
f
p

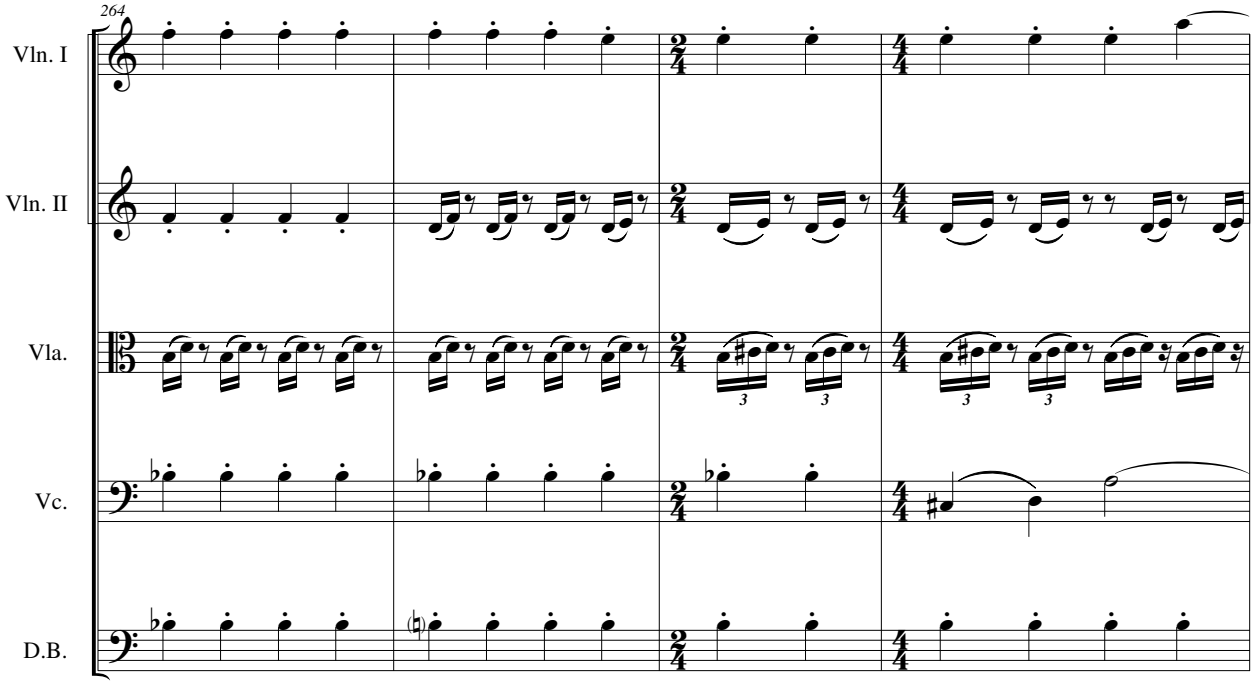

Calmly Questioning
237
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
pp
p

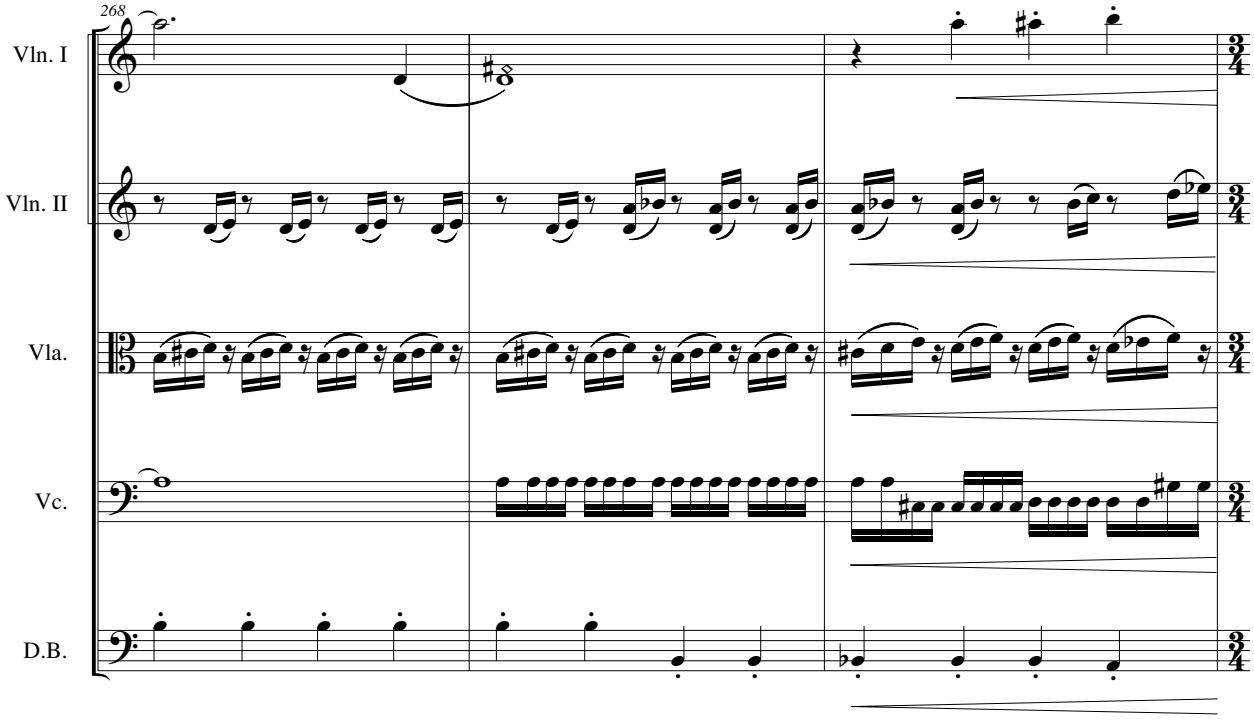

246
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
arco, st
3
pp
arco, st
pp
arco, st
pp

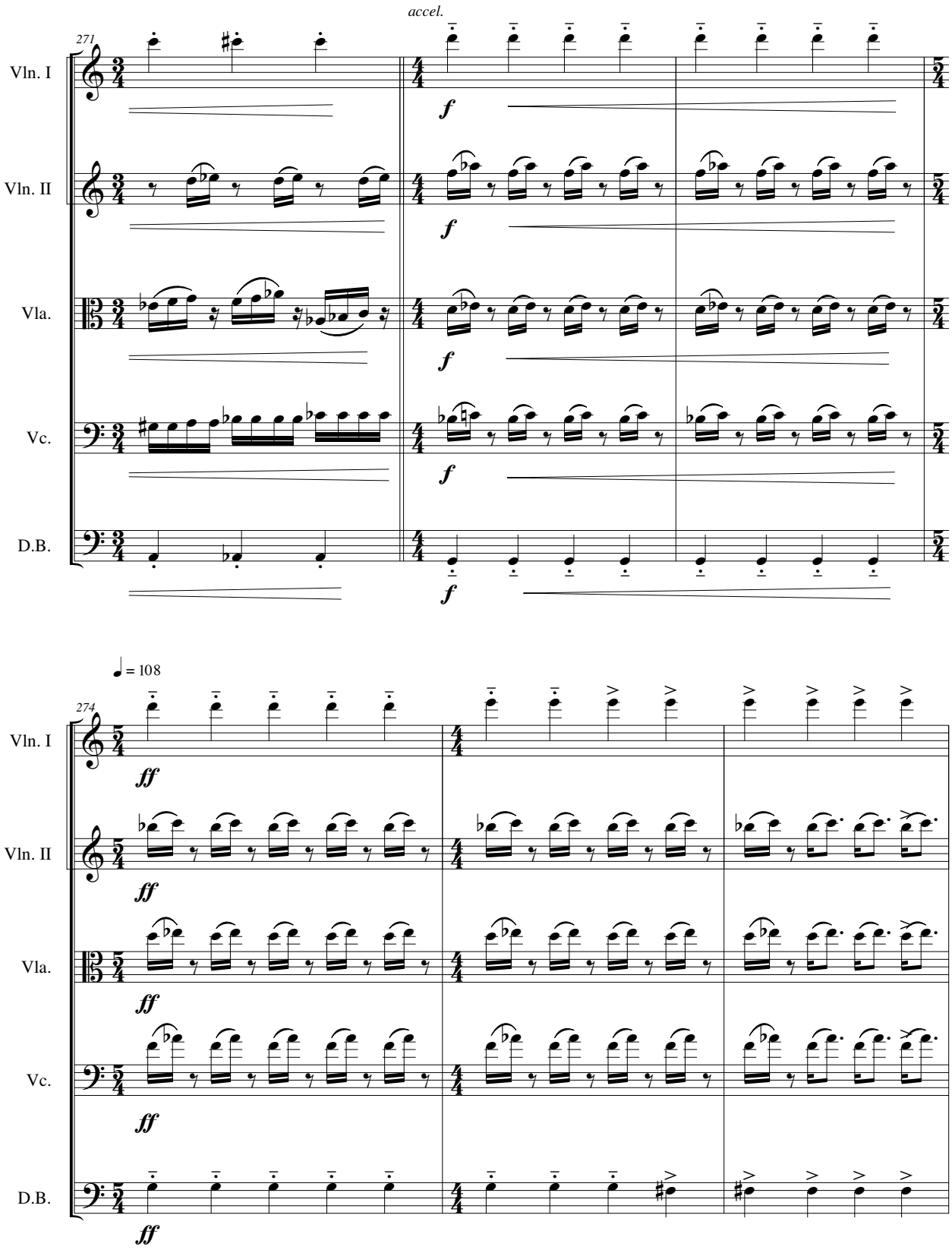

251
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
arco st
pp
full
full


255
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
n
p
mf

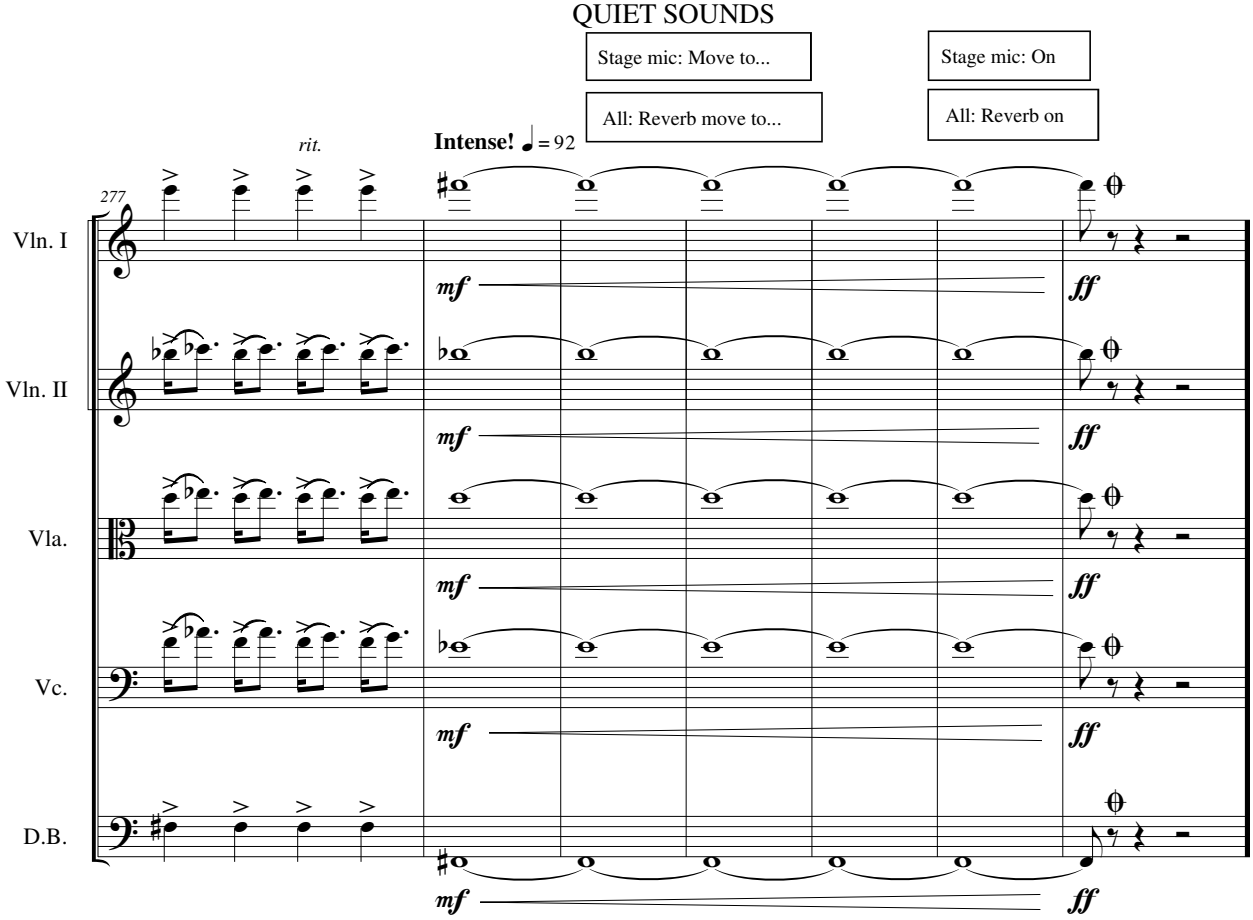

F
Strong
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
arco
mf

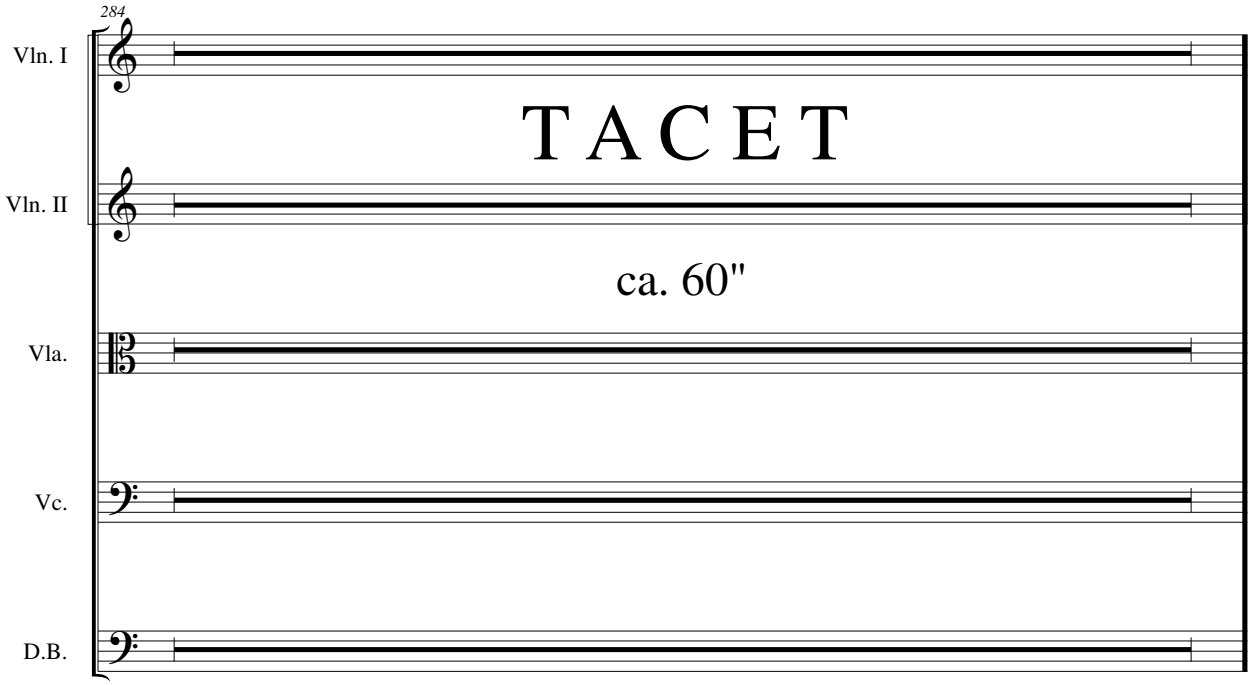

264
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.

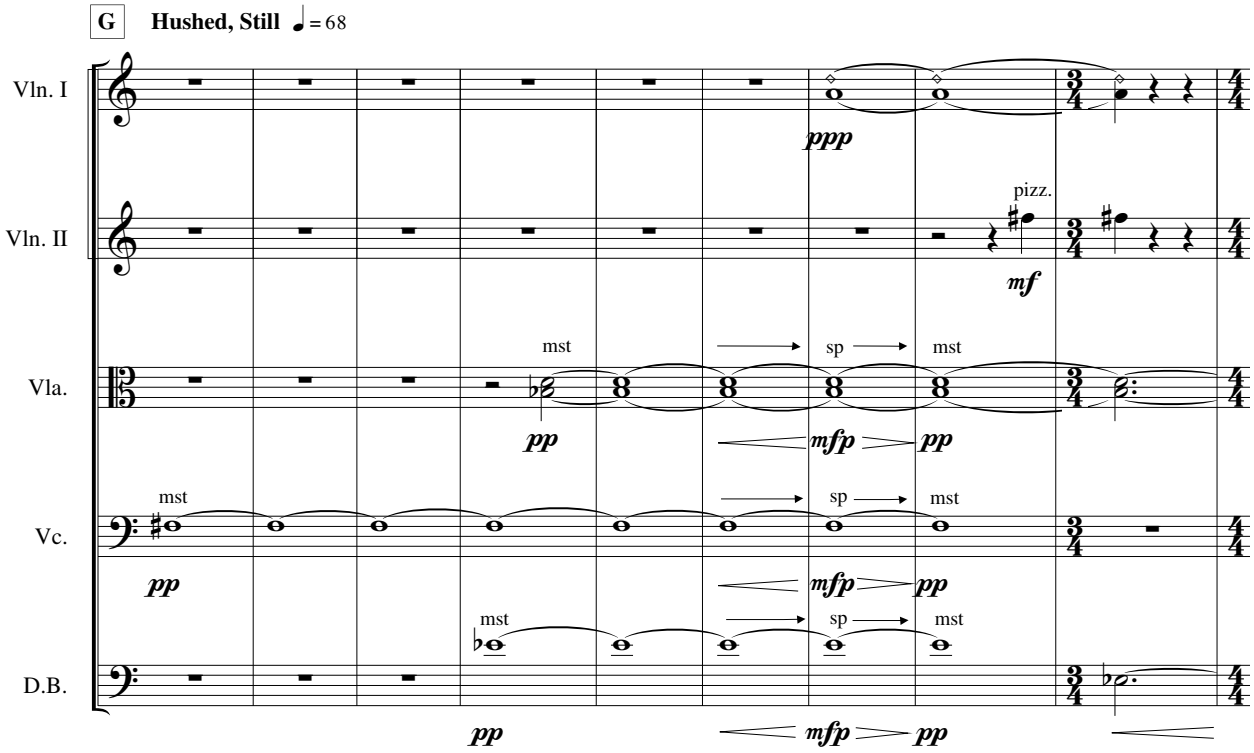

268
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.

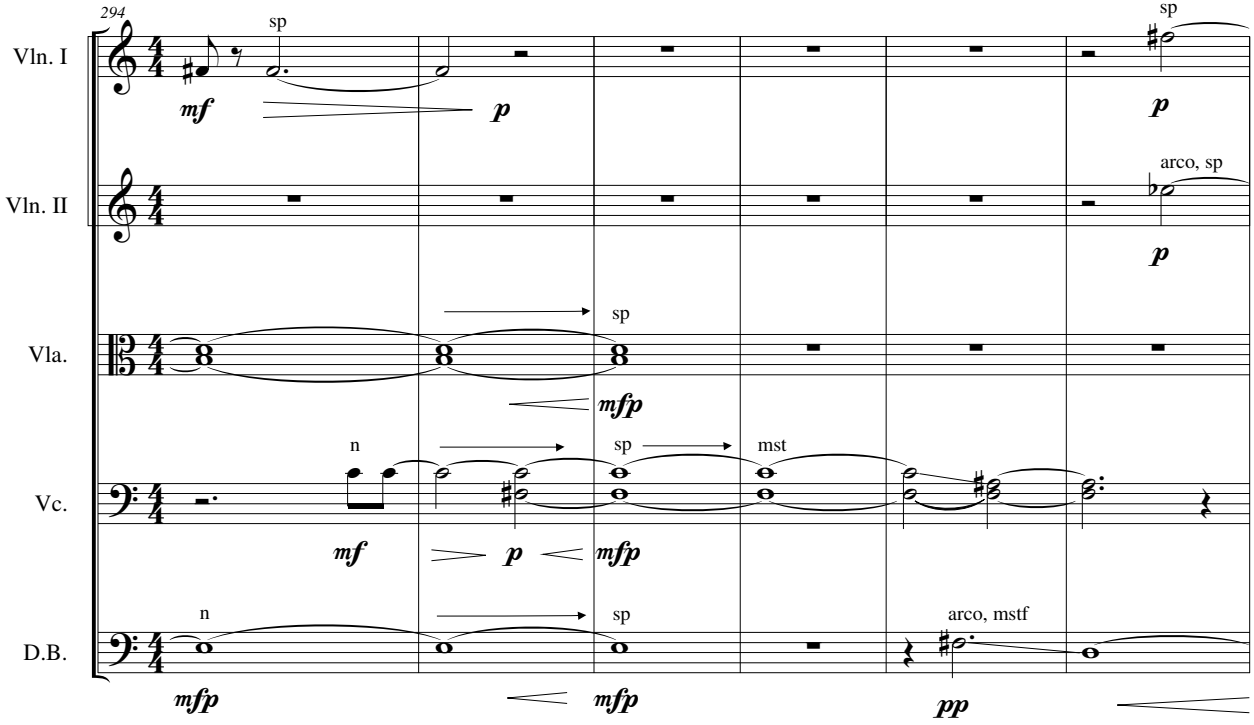

accel.
271
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
f
♩ = 108
274
ff

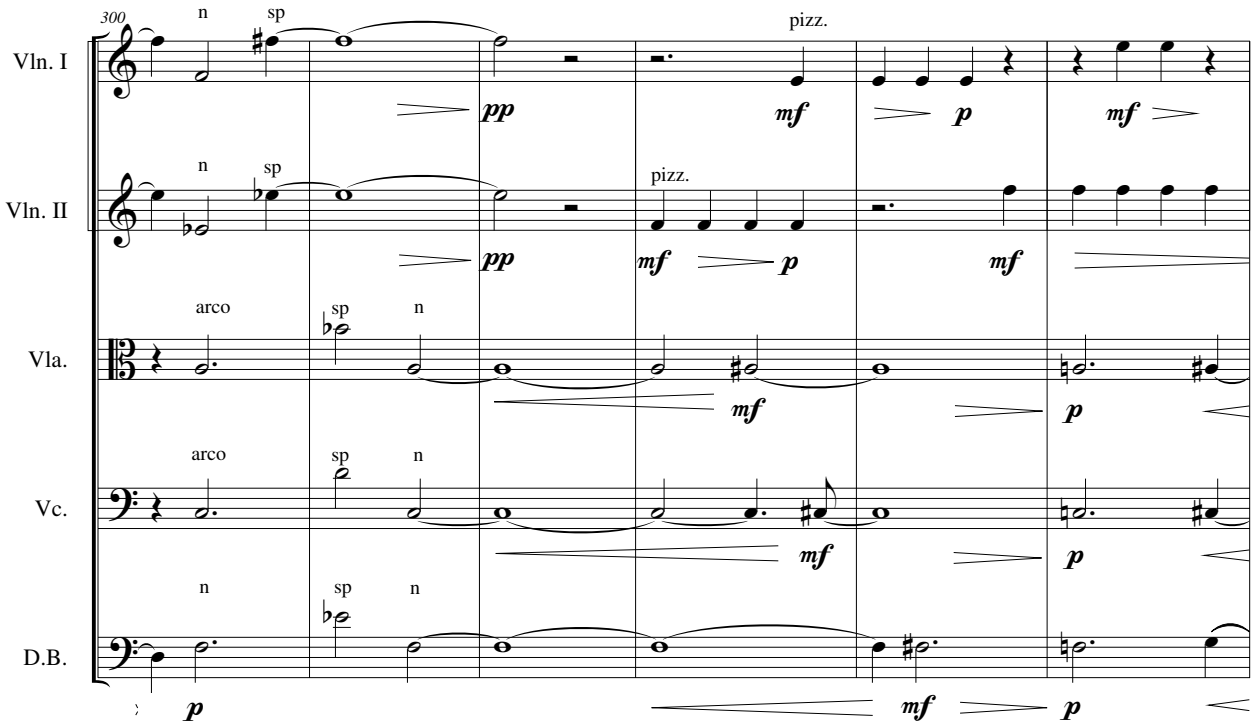
QUIET SOUNDS

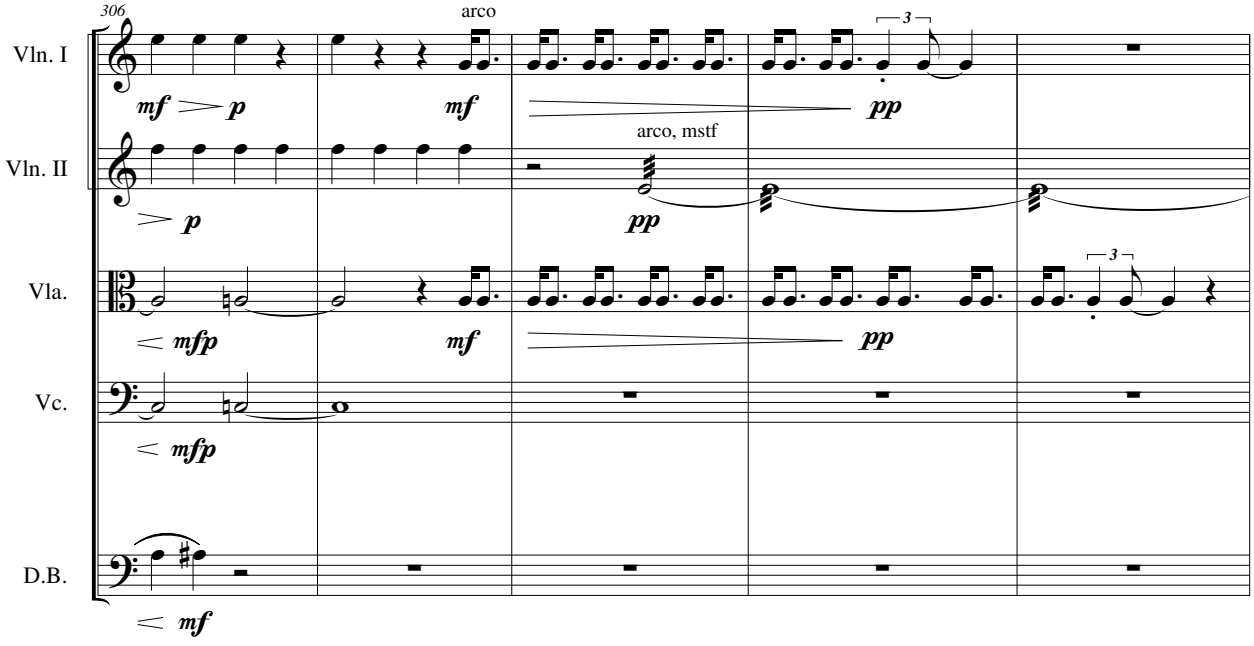


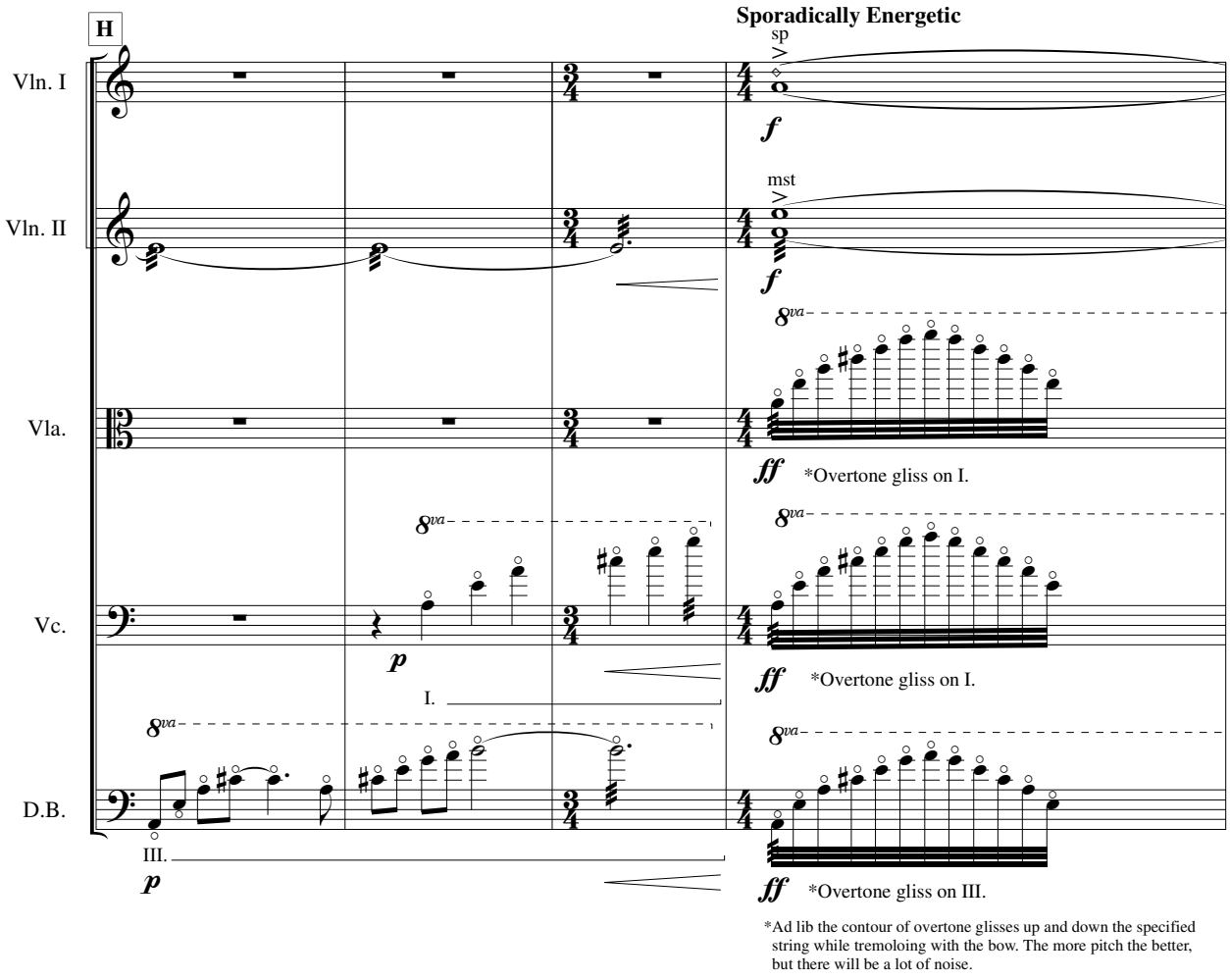


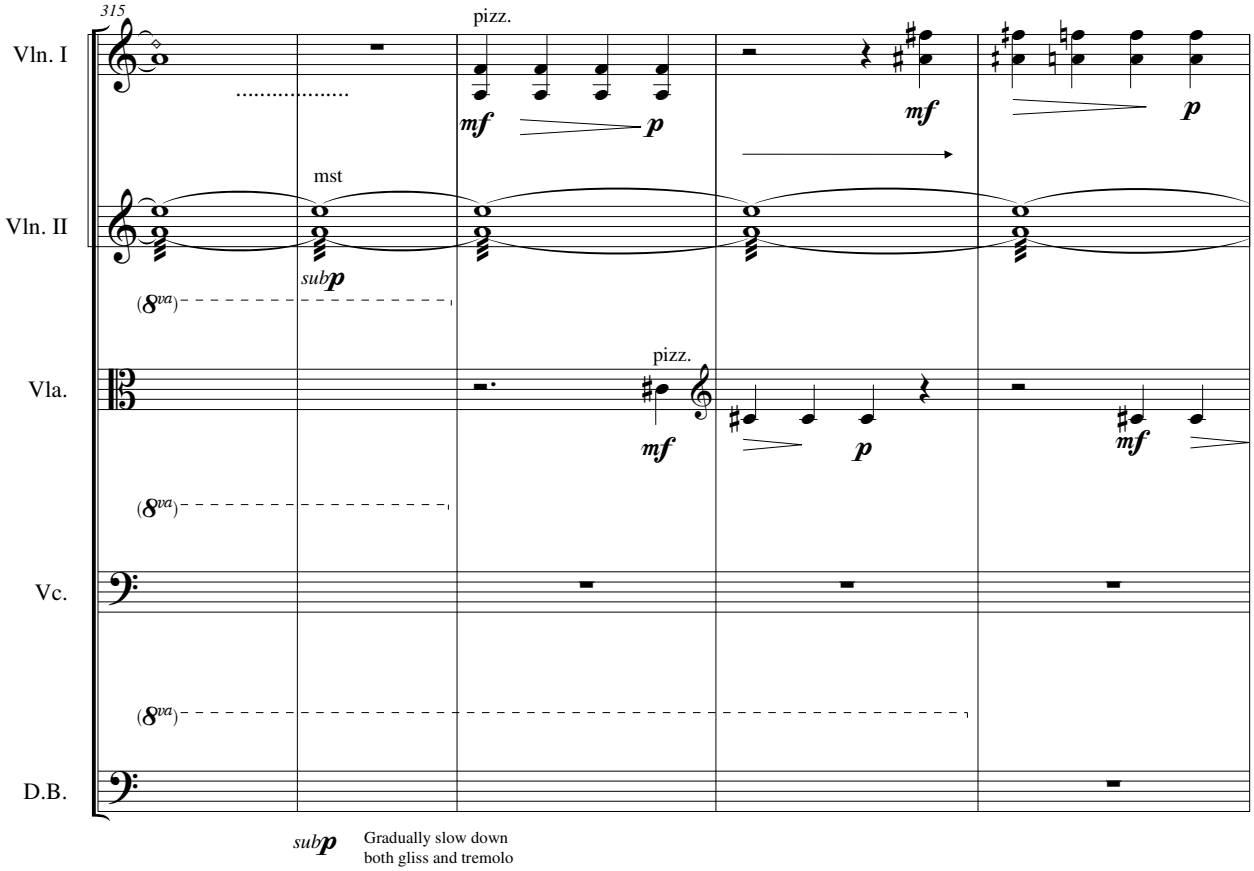

G
Hushed, Still ♩= 68
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
ppp
pizz.
mf
mst
sp
pp
mfp

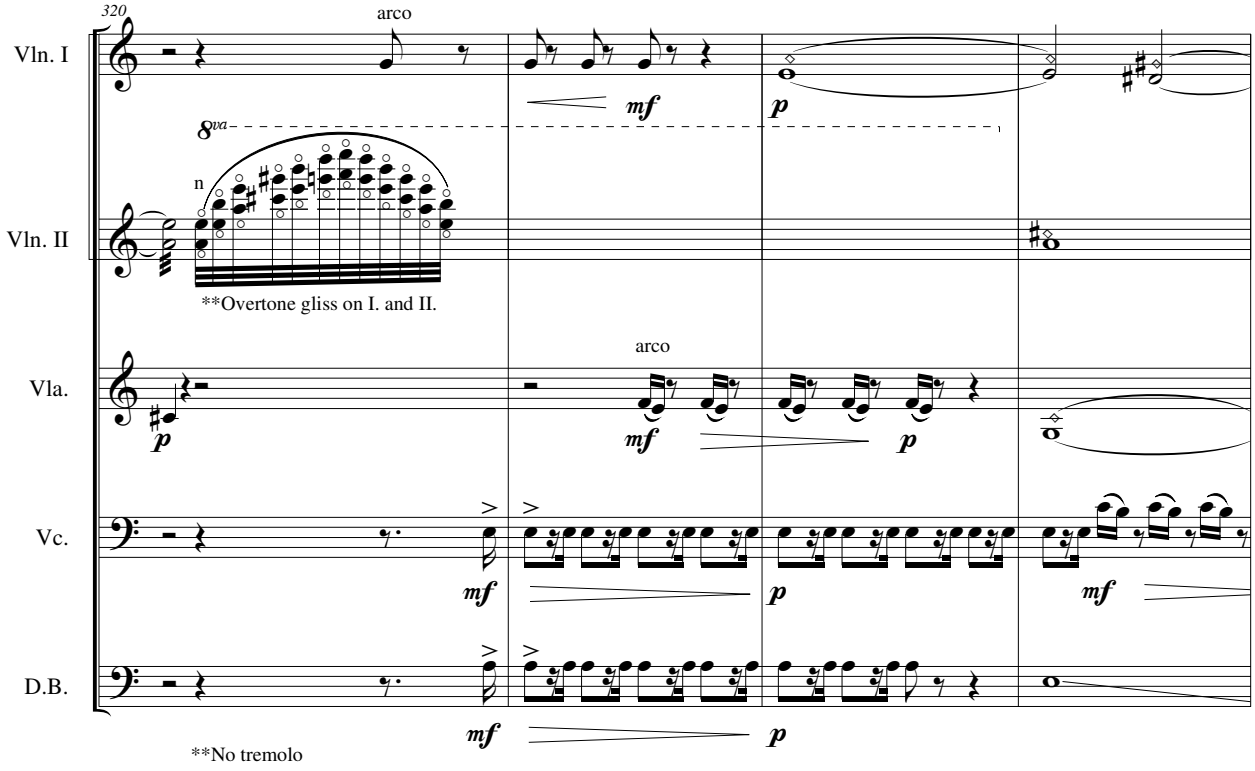

294
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
sp
mf
p
arco, sp
mfp
n
mst
arco, mstf
pp

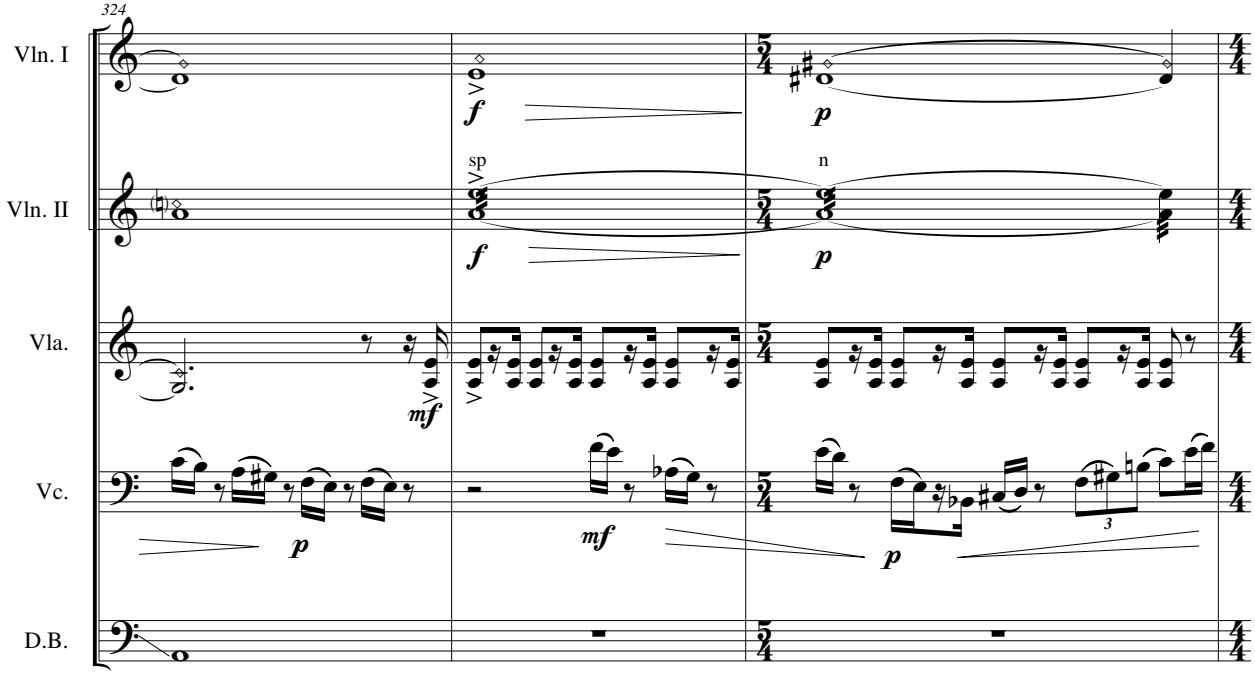

300
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
n
sp
pizz.
arco
pp
mf
p

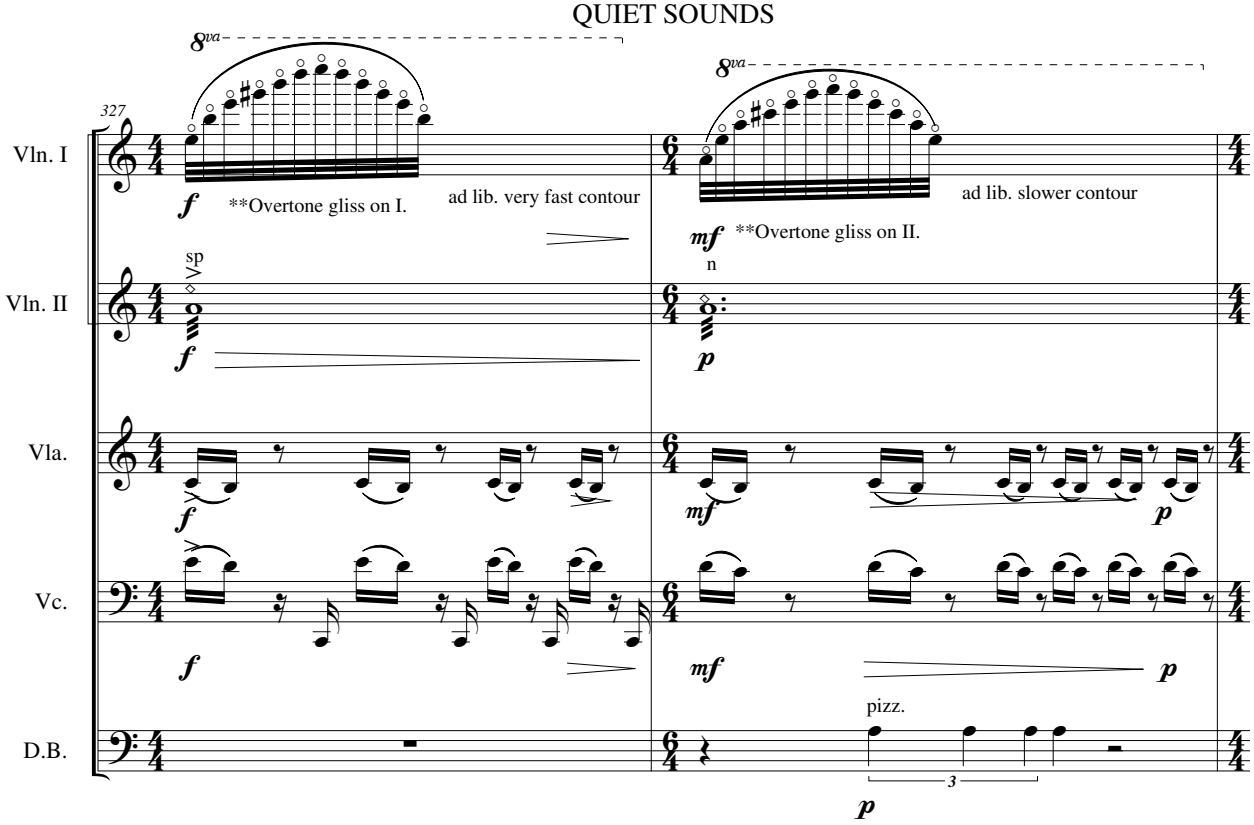

306
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
arco
arco, mstf
3
mf
p
pp
mfp

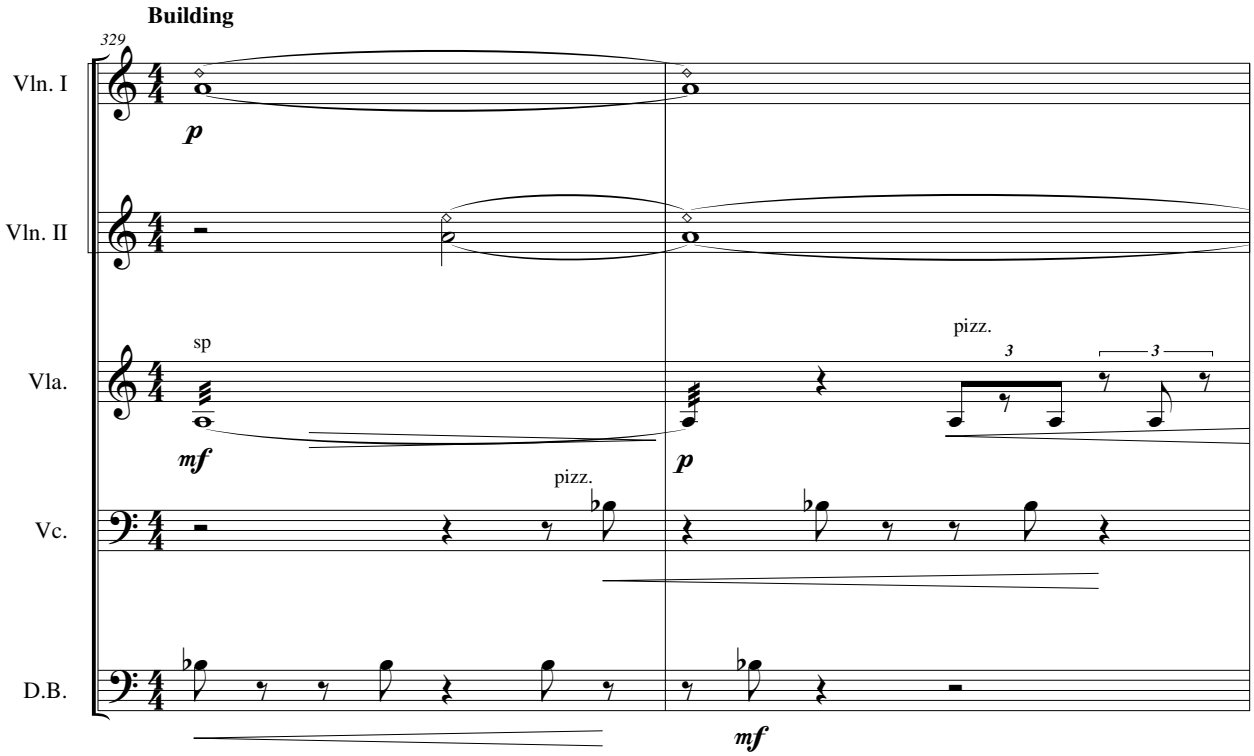

H
Sporadically Energetic
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
sp
mst
f
ff
p
8va
I.
III.
*Overtone gliss on I.
*Overtone gliss on I.
*Overtone gliss on III.
*Ad lib the contour of overtone glisses up and down the specified string while tremoloing with the bow. The more pitch the better, but there will be a lot of noise.

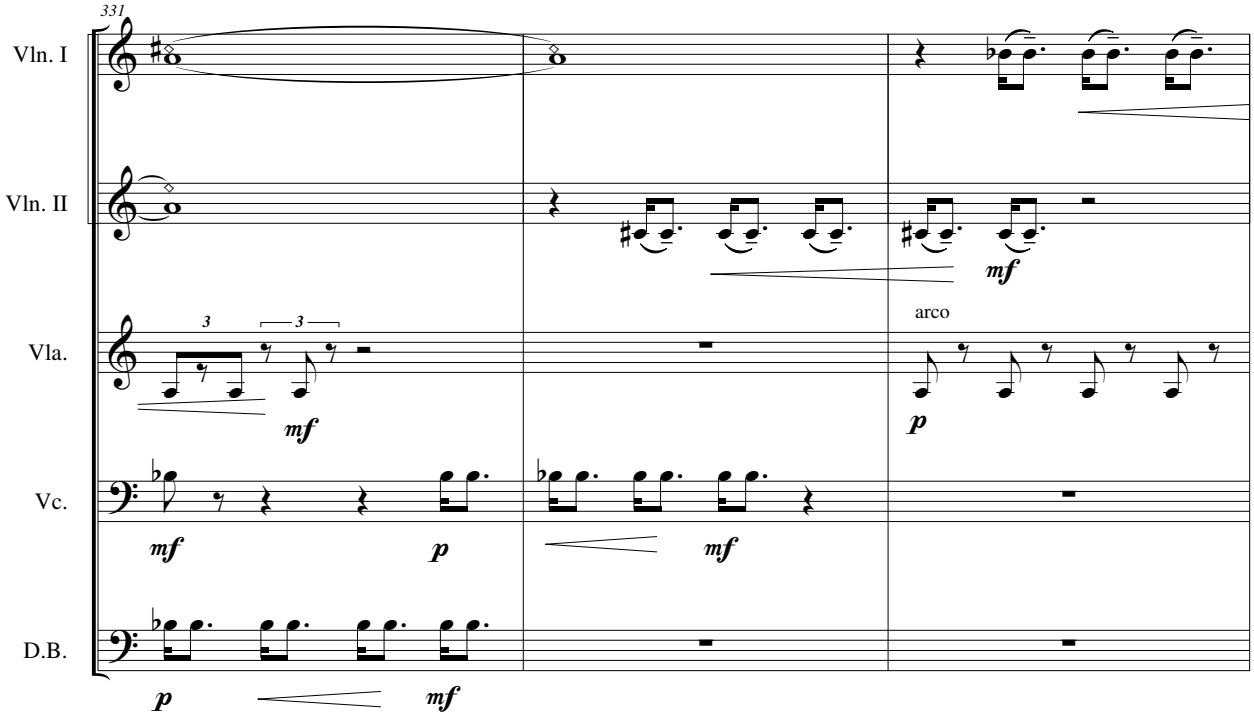

315
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
pizz.
mf
p
mst
subp
(8va)
pizz.
mf
p
mf
subp
Gradually slow down
both gliss and tremolo

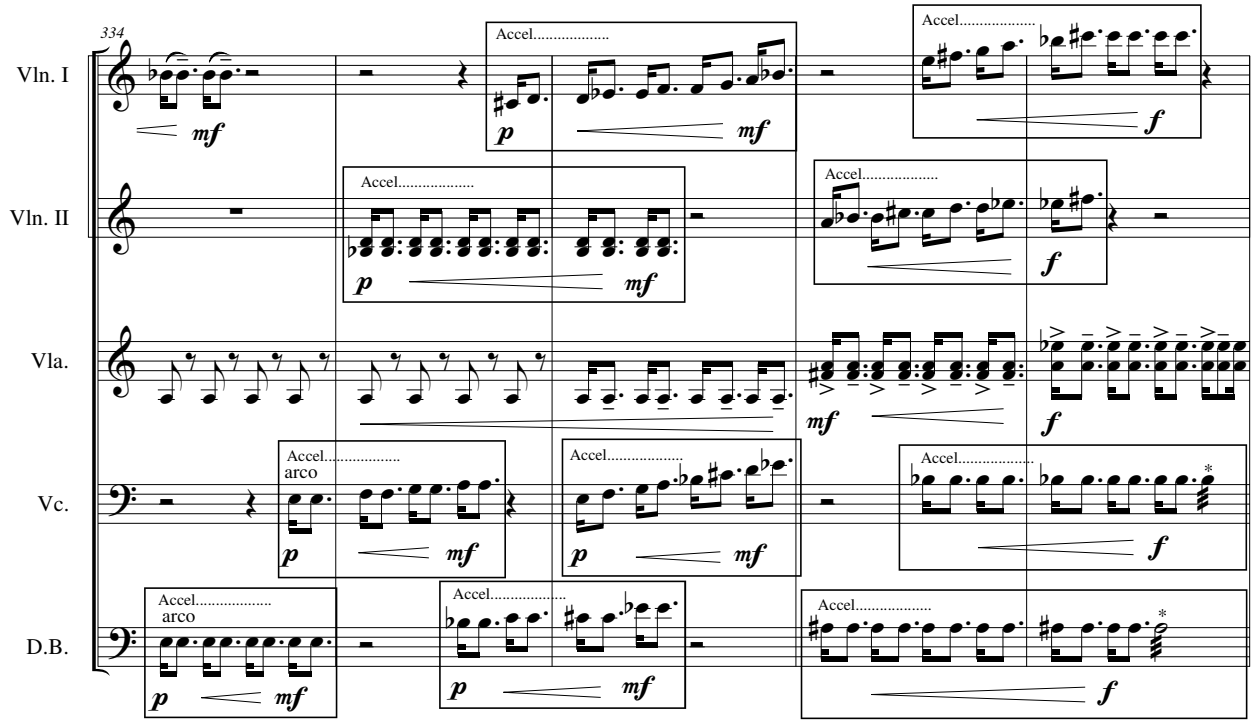

320
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
arco
8va
n
**Overtone gliss on I. and II.
arco
**No tremolo


324
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
sp
n
3


327
8va
8va
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
f
**Overtone gliss on I.
ad lib. very fast contour
mf
**Overtone gliss on II.
ad lib. slower contour
sp
n
p
pizz.
3

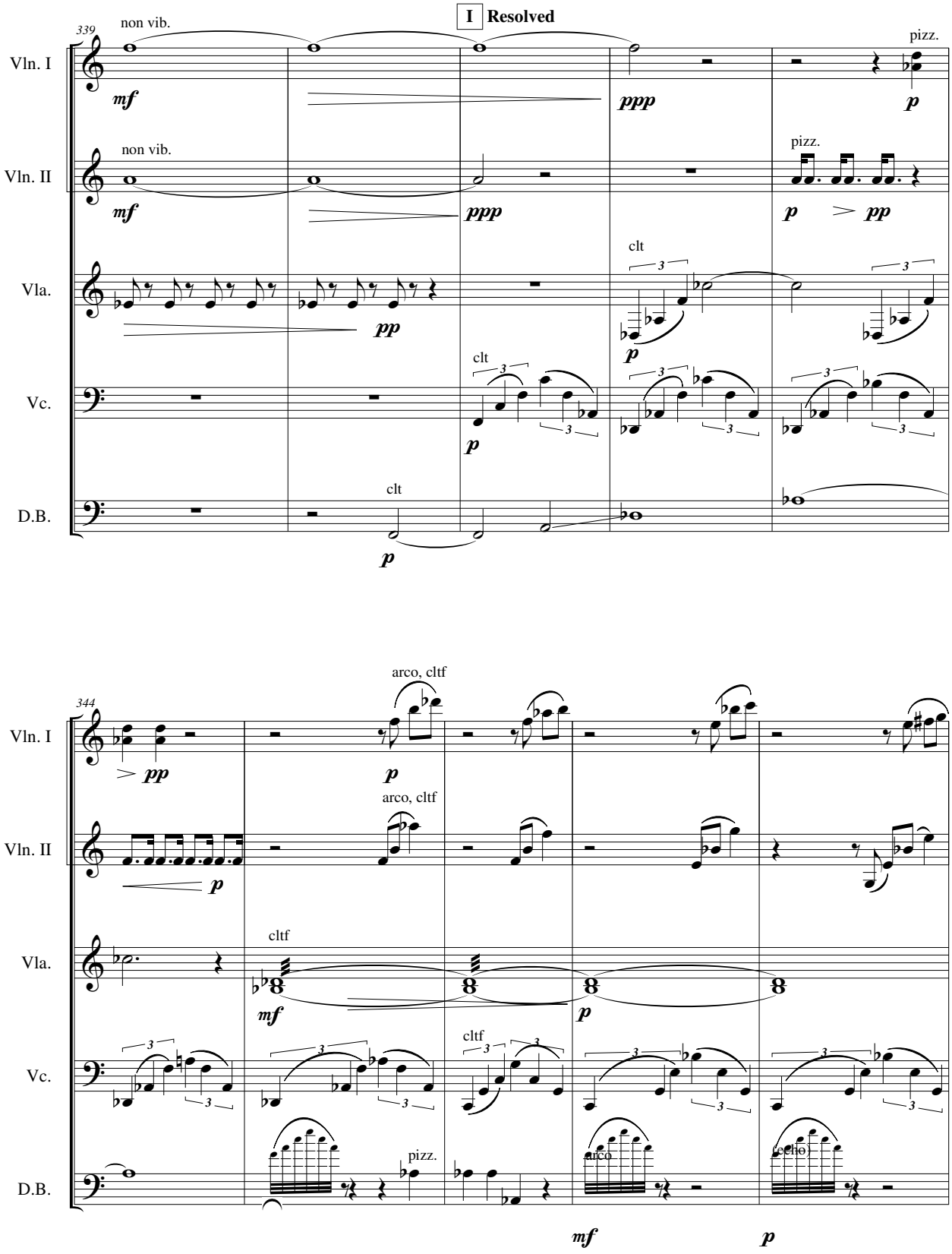

Building
329
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
sp
mf
pizz.
3



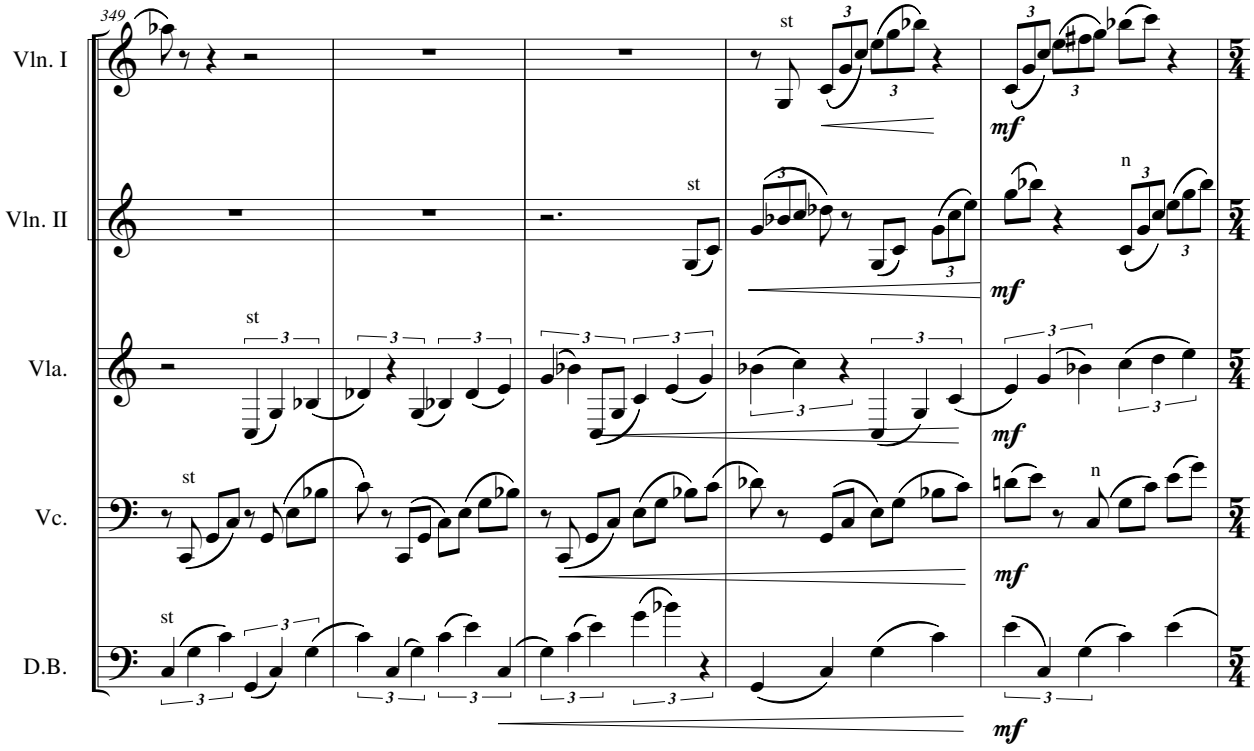


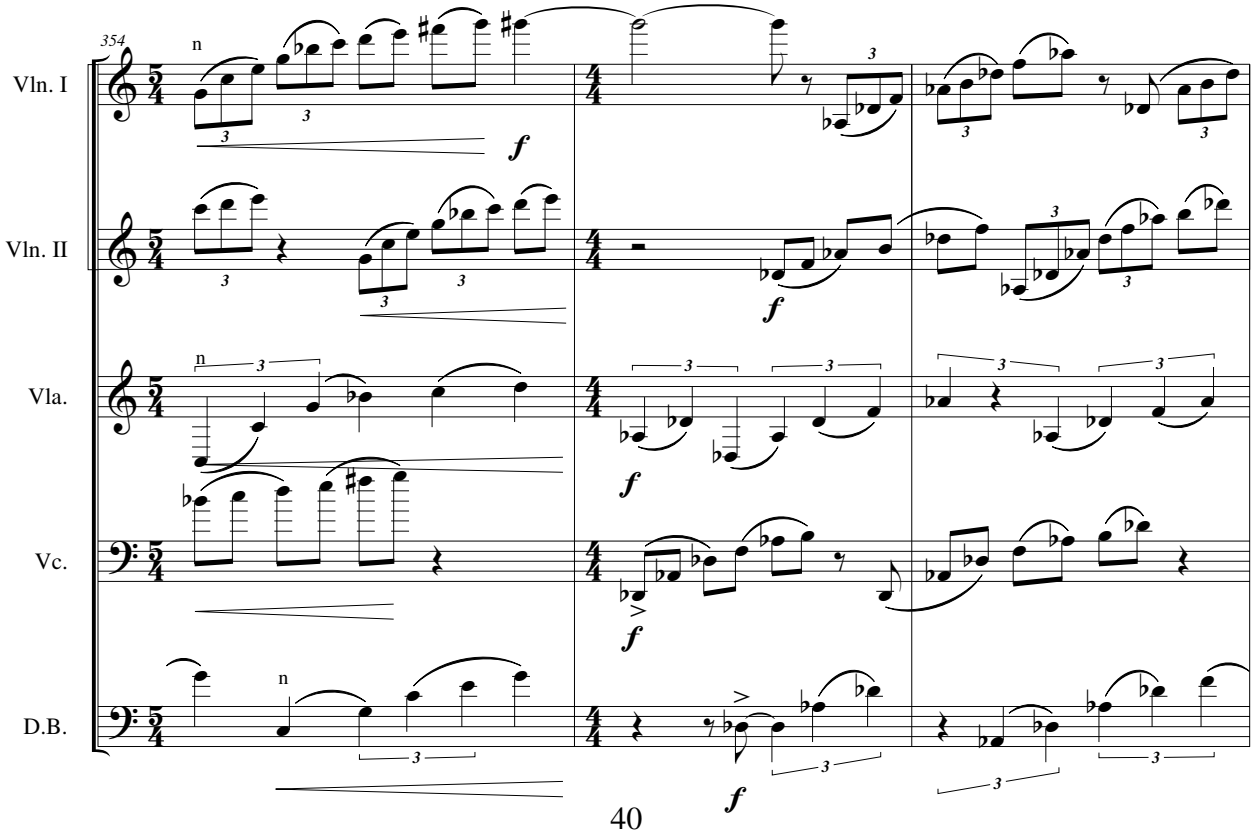
Accelerate independently, starting on the beat and resting after your figure is over.

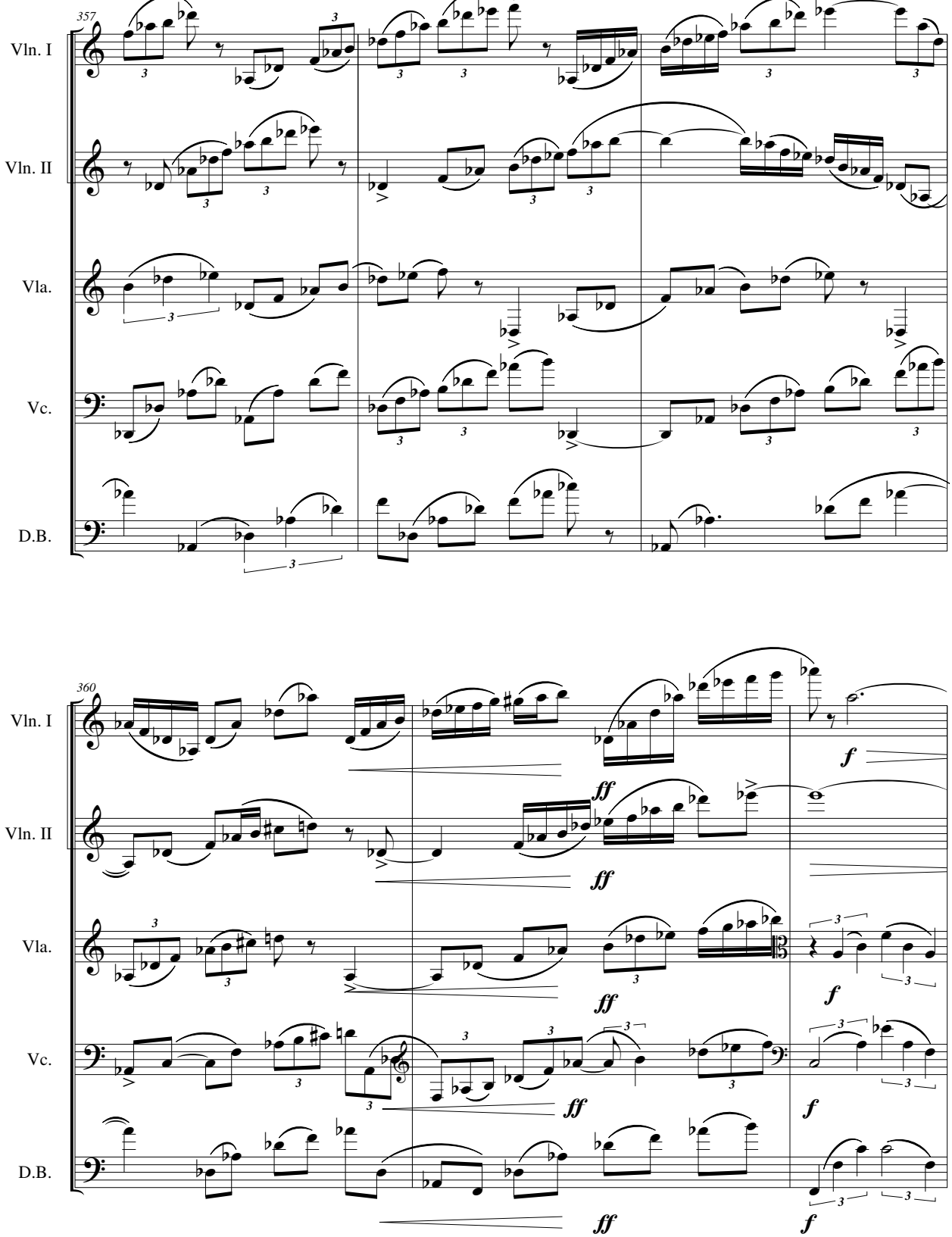
*Hold tremolo for full duration of m. 341.

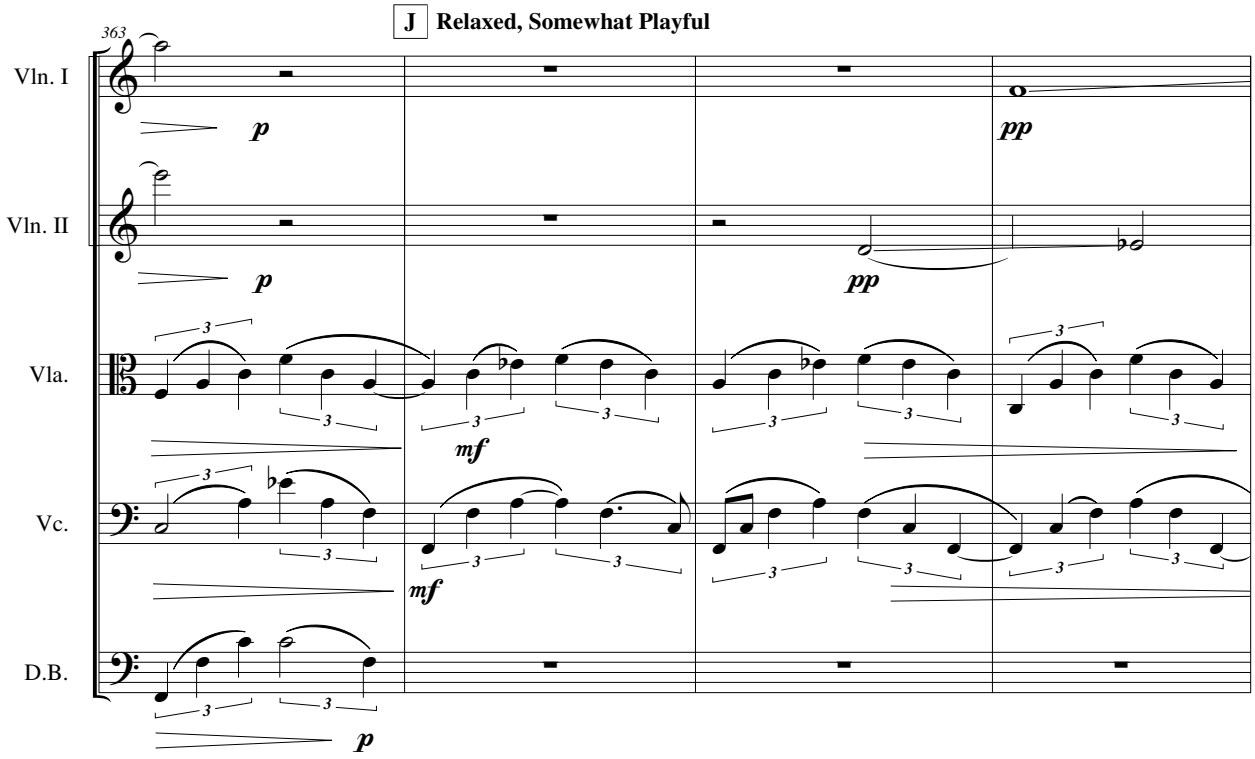

I Resolved
339
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
non vib.
pizz.
clt
arco, cltf
cltf
arco
echo
344

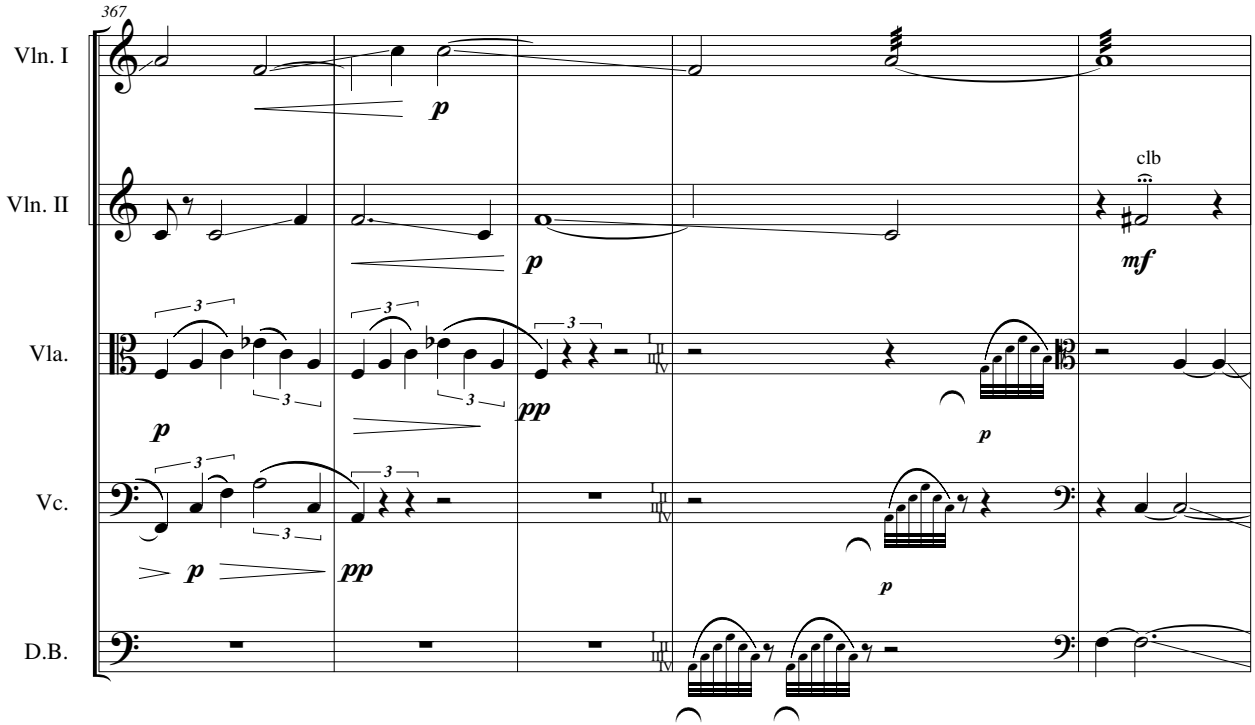
Growing Strength

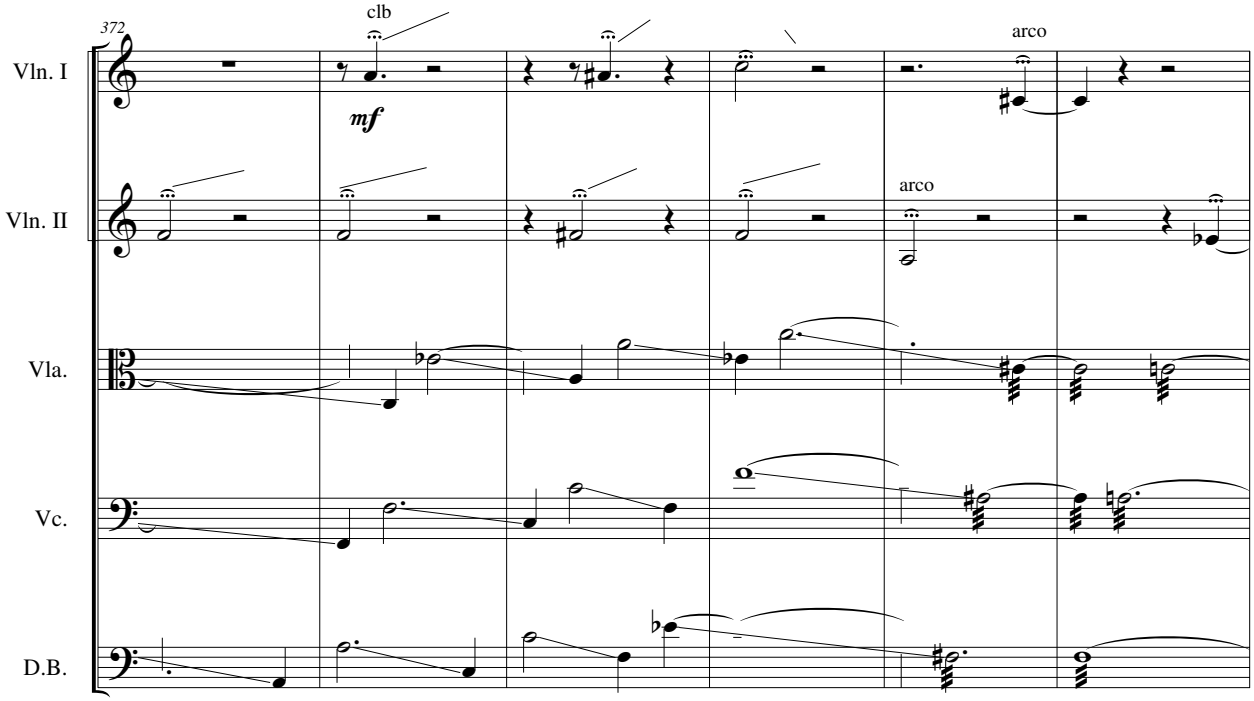


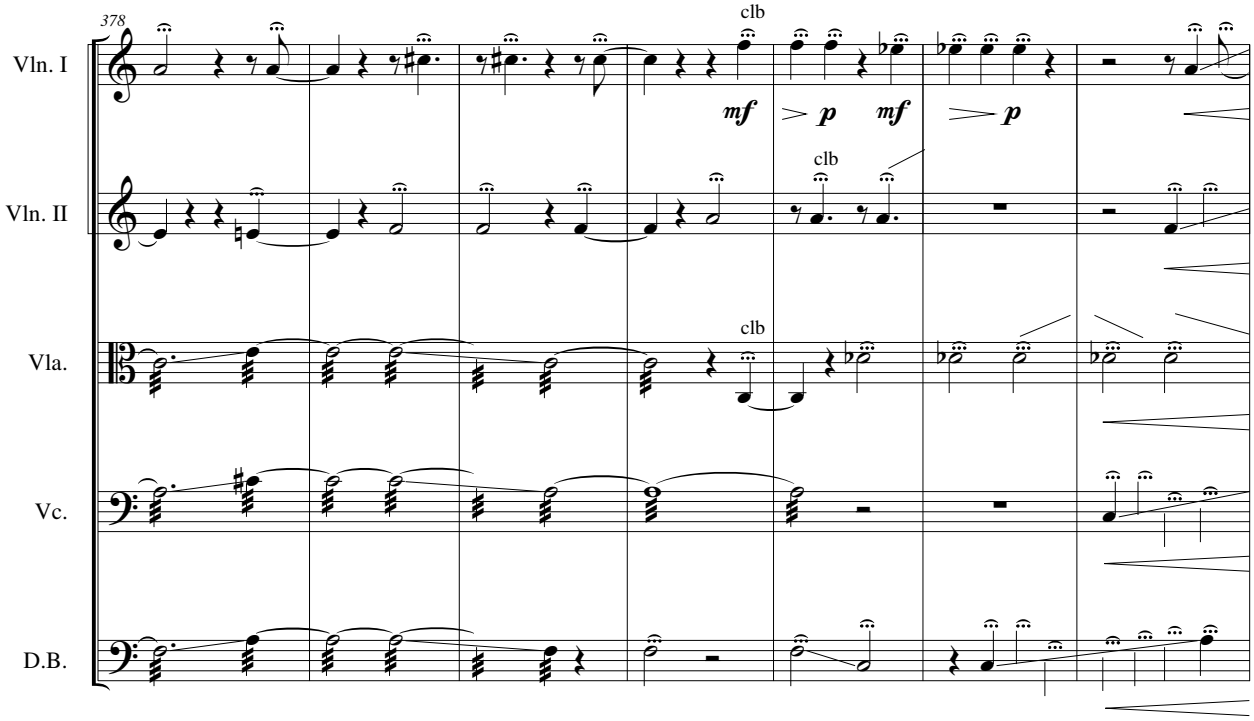


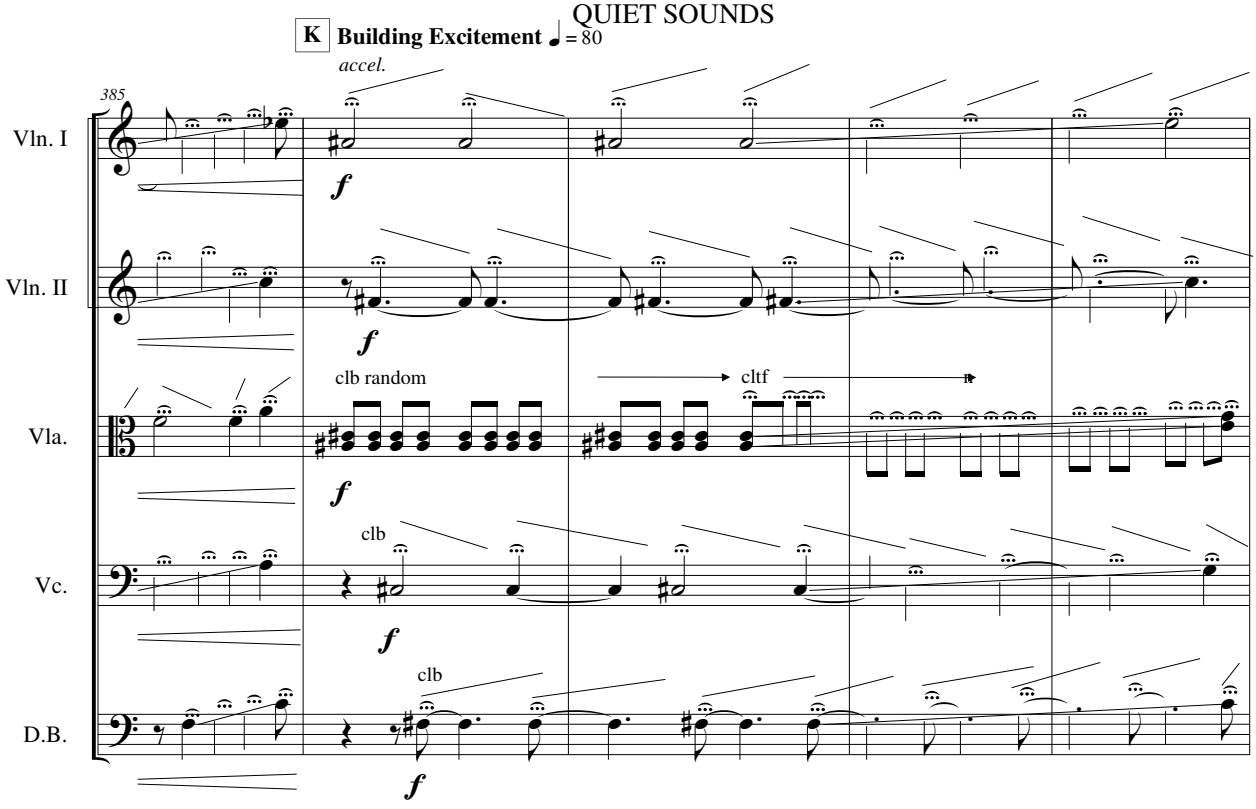

357
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
360
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
ff
f

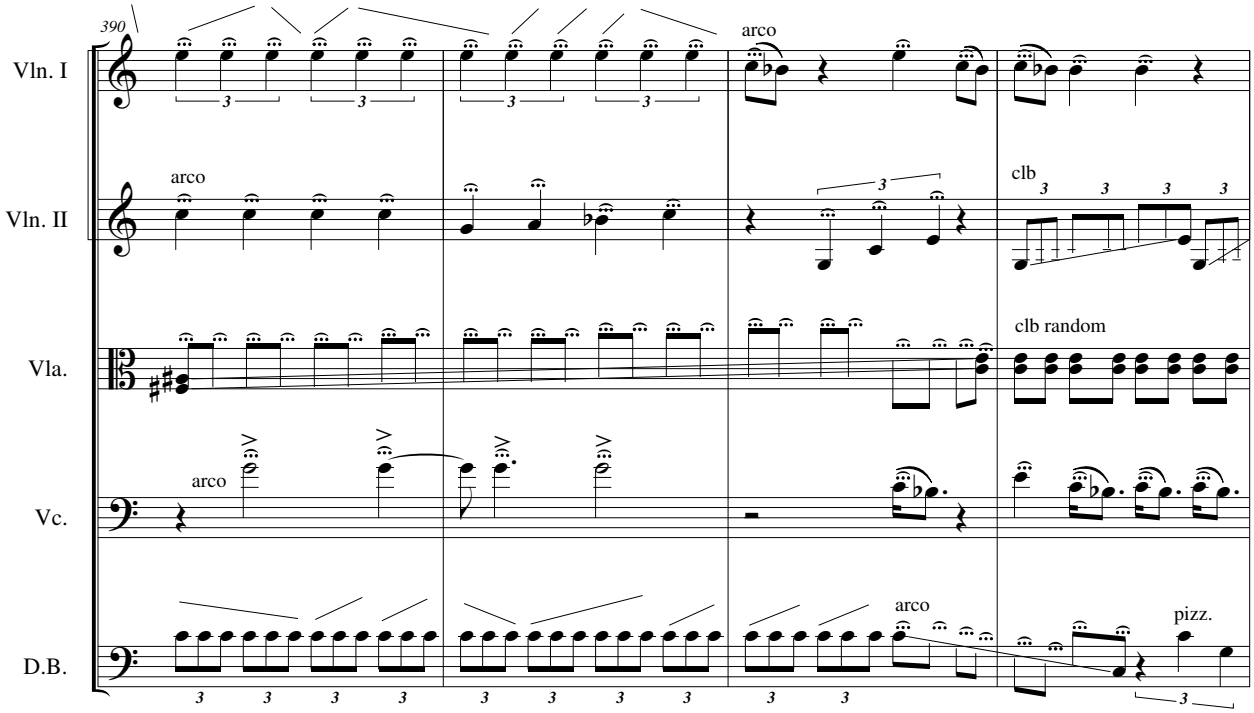

J Relaxed, Somewhat Playful
363
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
pp
mf

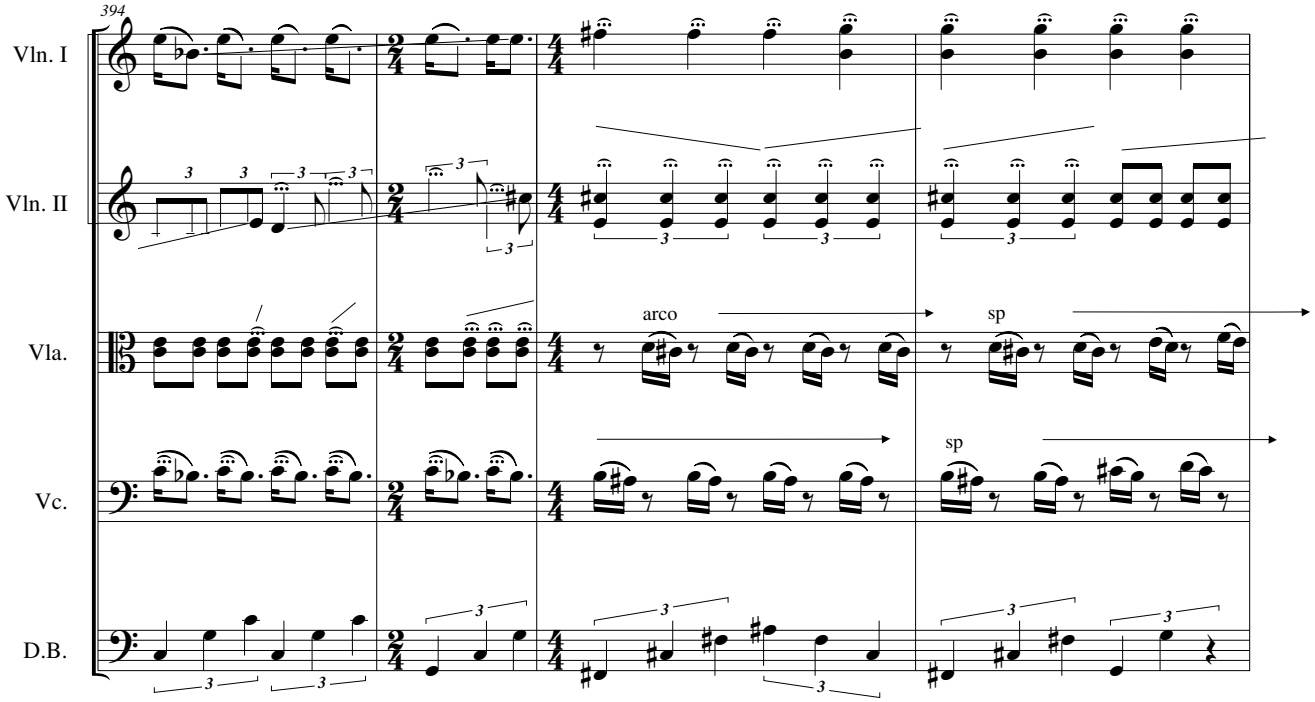

367
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
clb
p
pp
mf

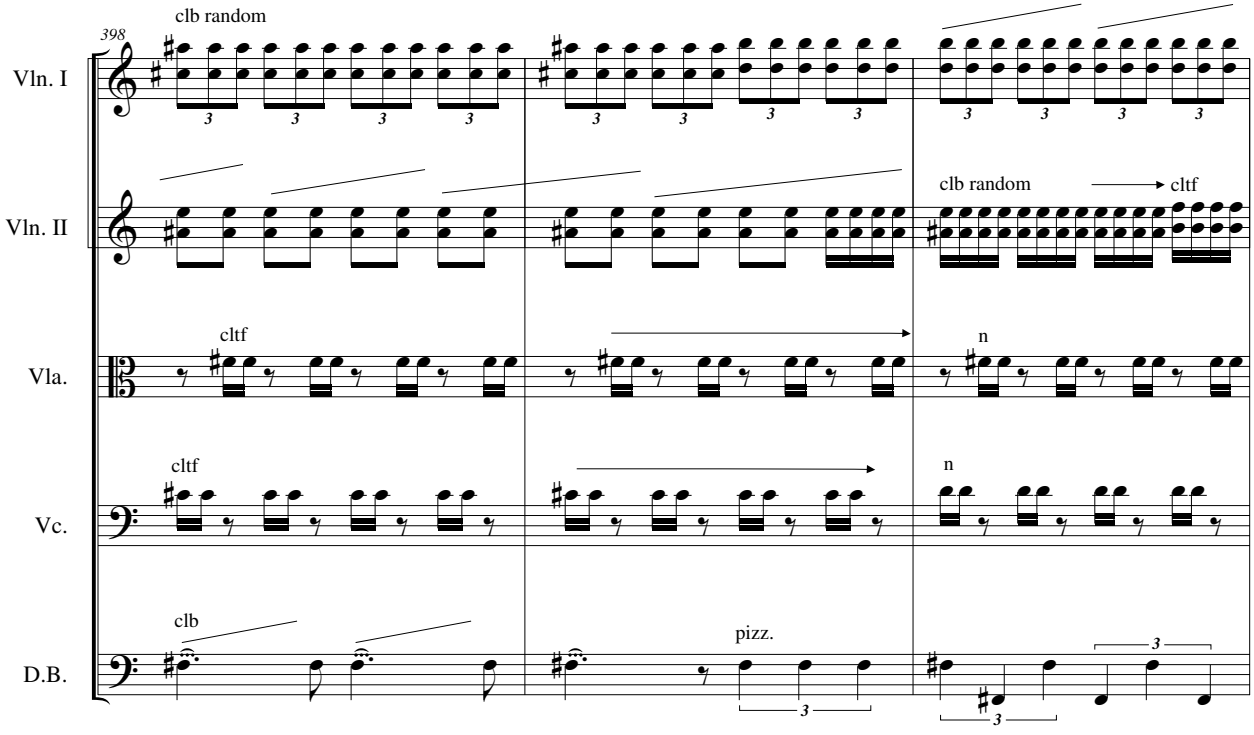

372
clb
arco
Vln. I
mf
Vln. II
arco
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.

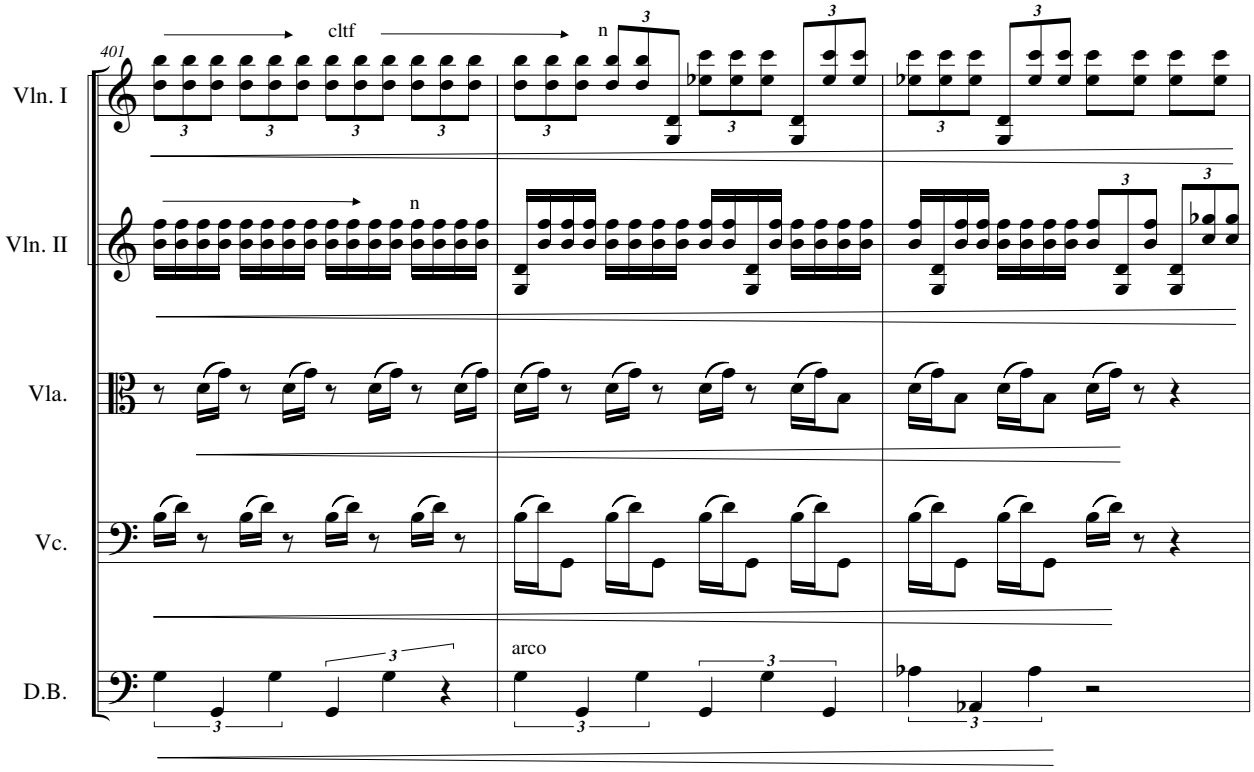

378
clb
Vln. I
mf
p
mf
p
clb
Vln. II
clb
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.

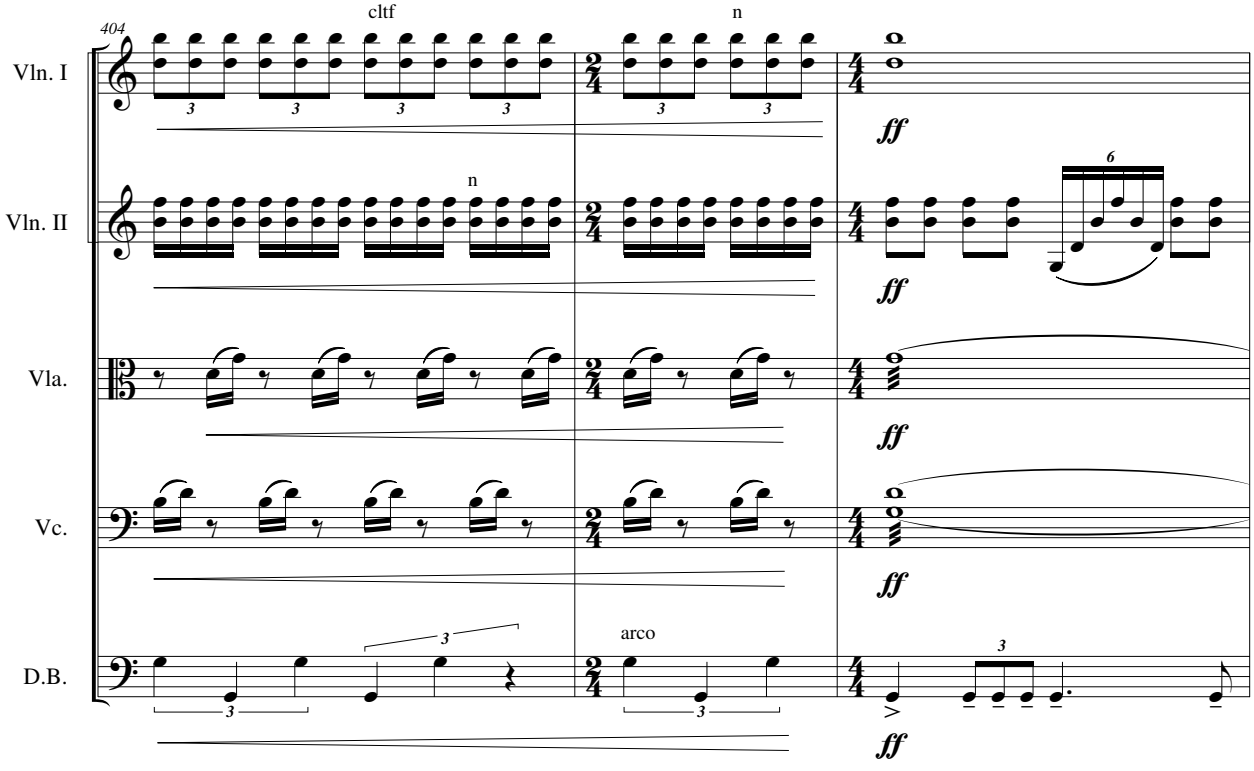

K
Building Excitement
= 80
accel.
385
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
clb random
cltf
clb
clb
f

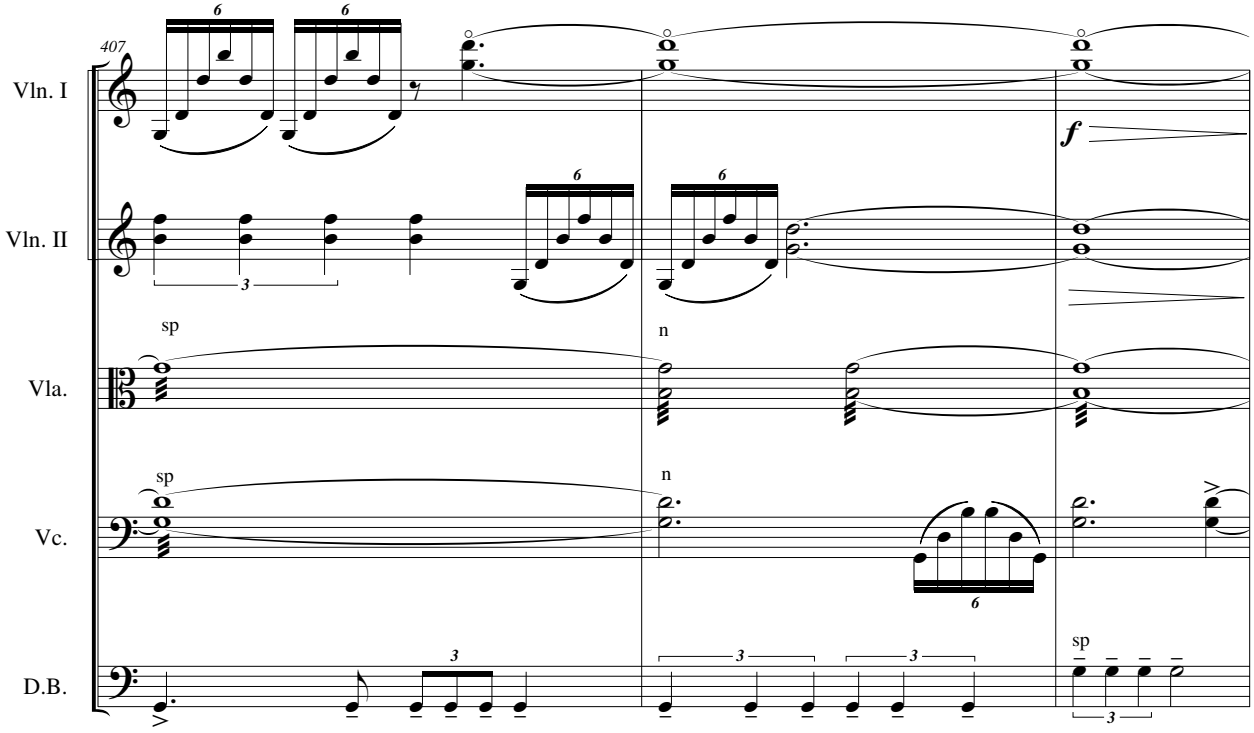

390
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
arco
arco
clb
clb random
arco
arco
pizz.

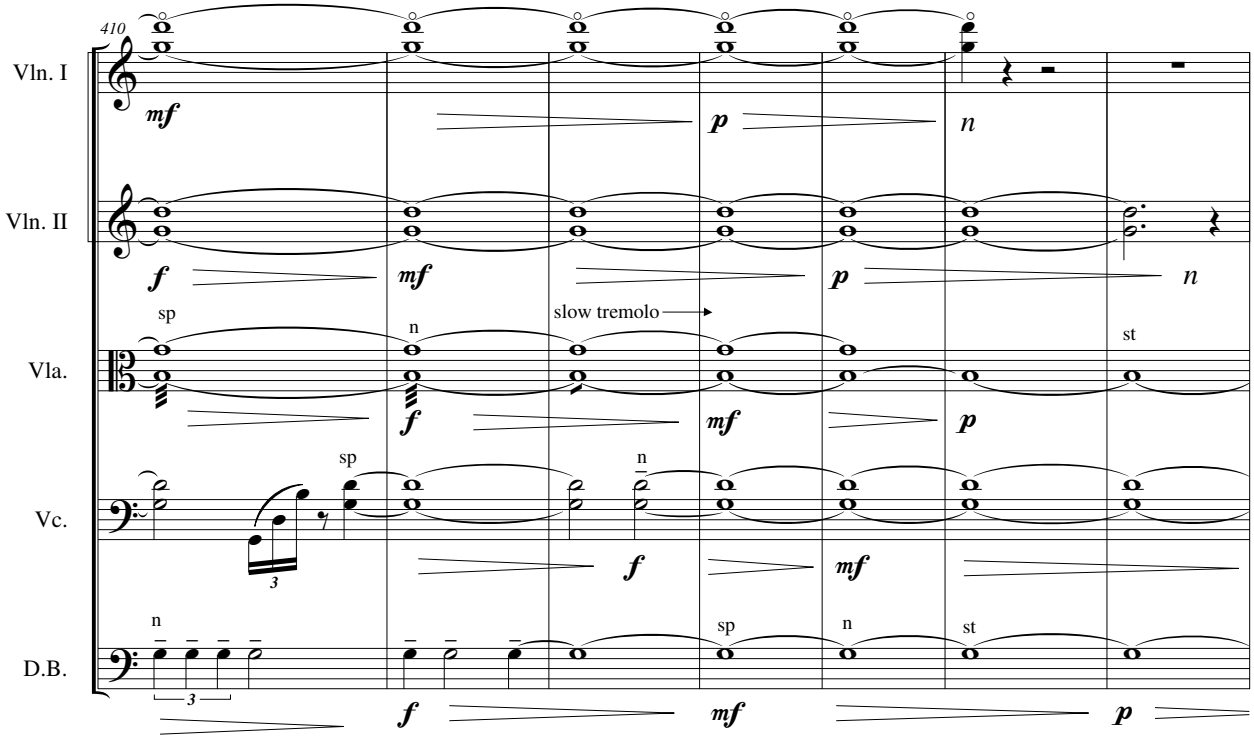

394
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
arco
sp
sp

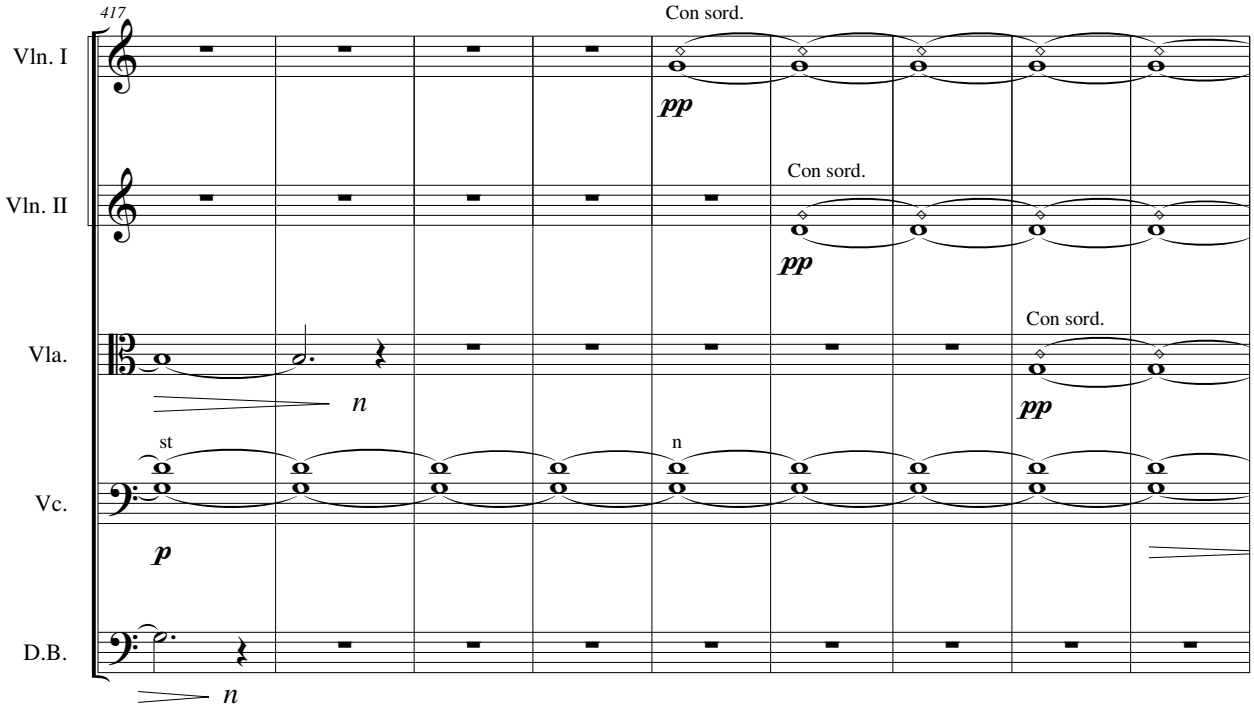

398
clb random
Vln. I
Vln. II
clb random
cltf
Vla.
cltf
n
Vc.
cltf
n
D.B.
clb
pizz.

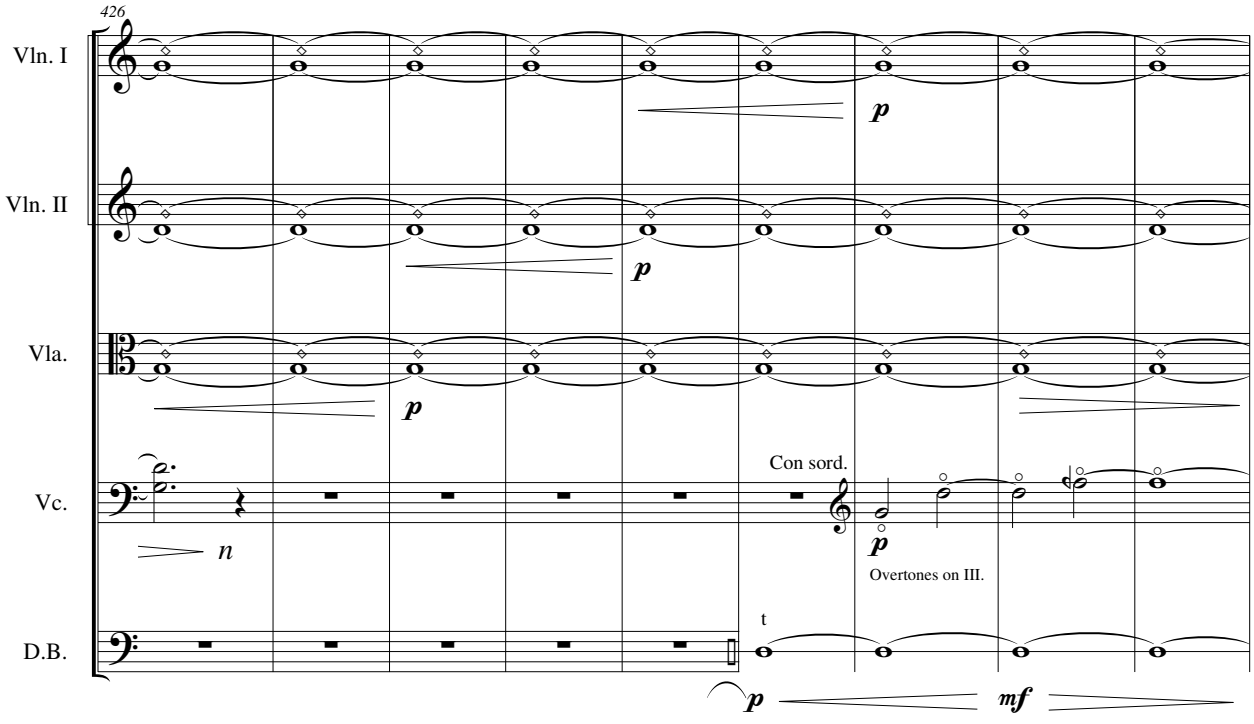

401
cltf
n
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
arco

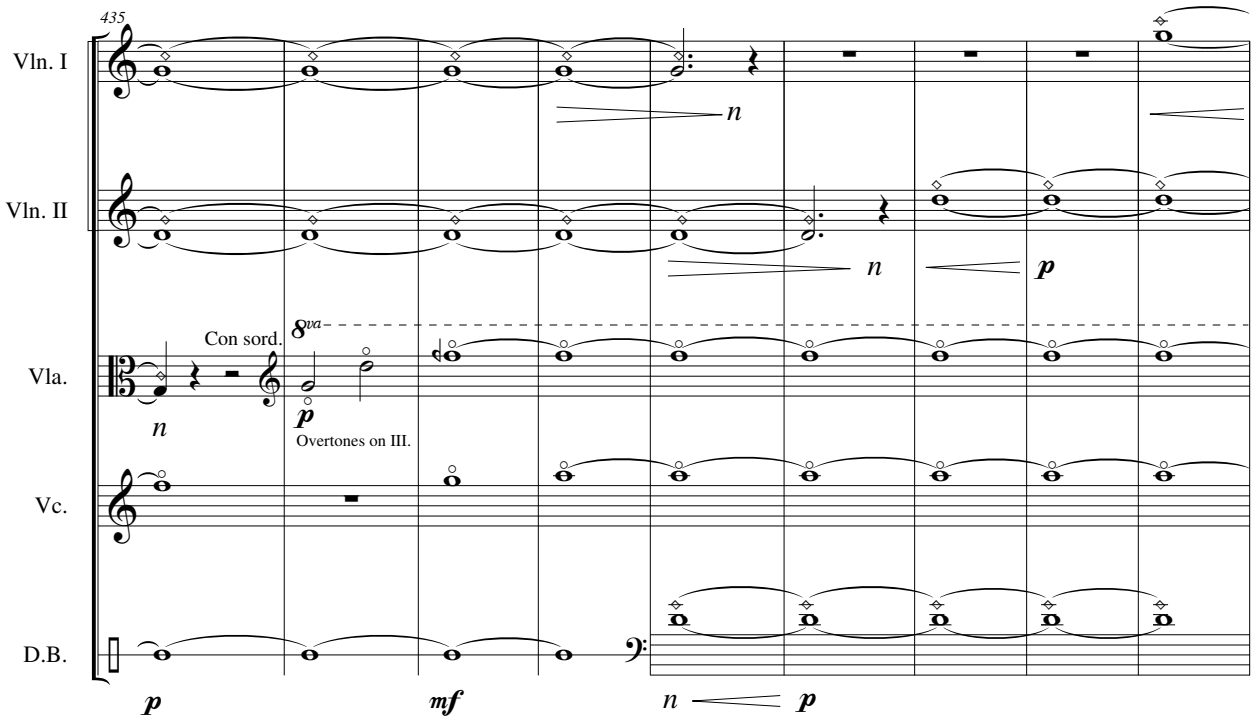

404
cltf
n
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
arco
ff

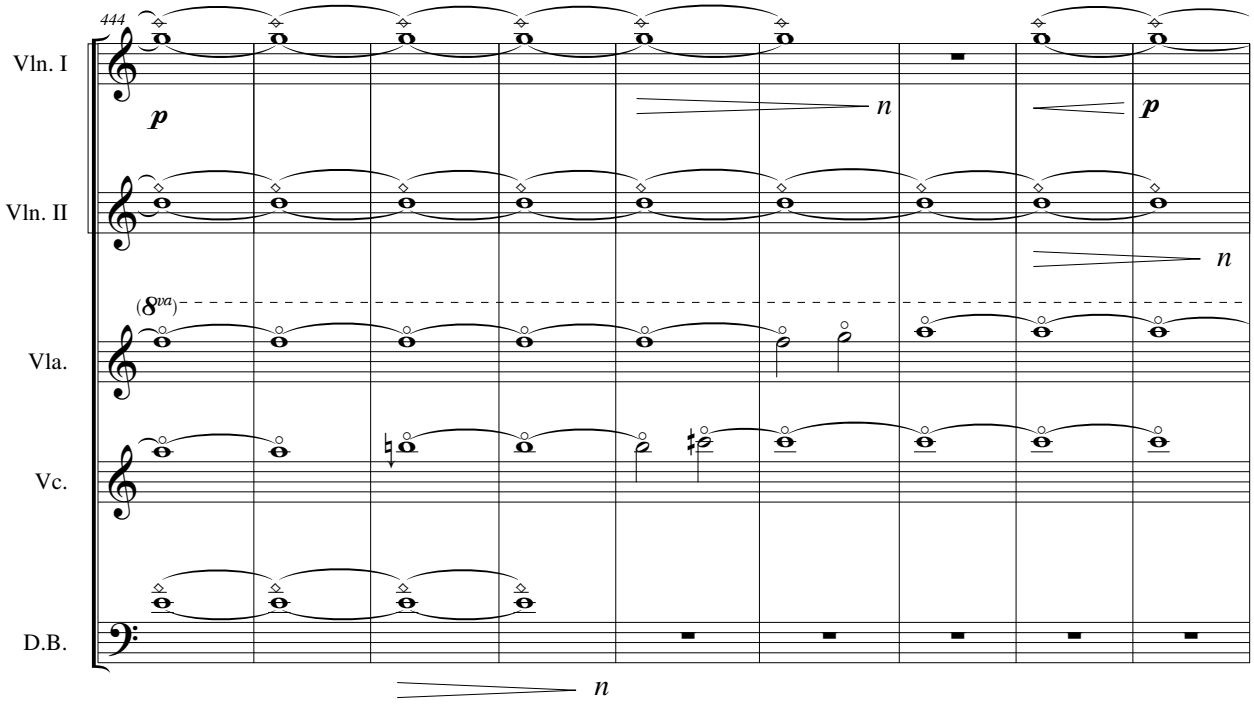

407
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
sp
n
f

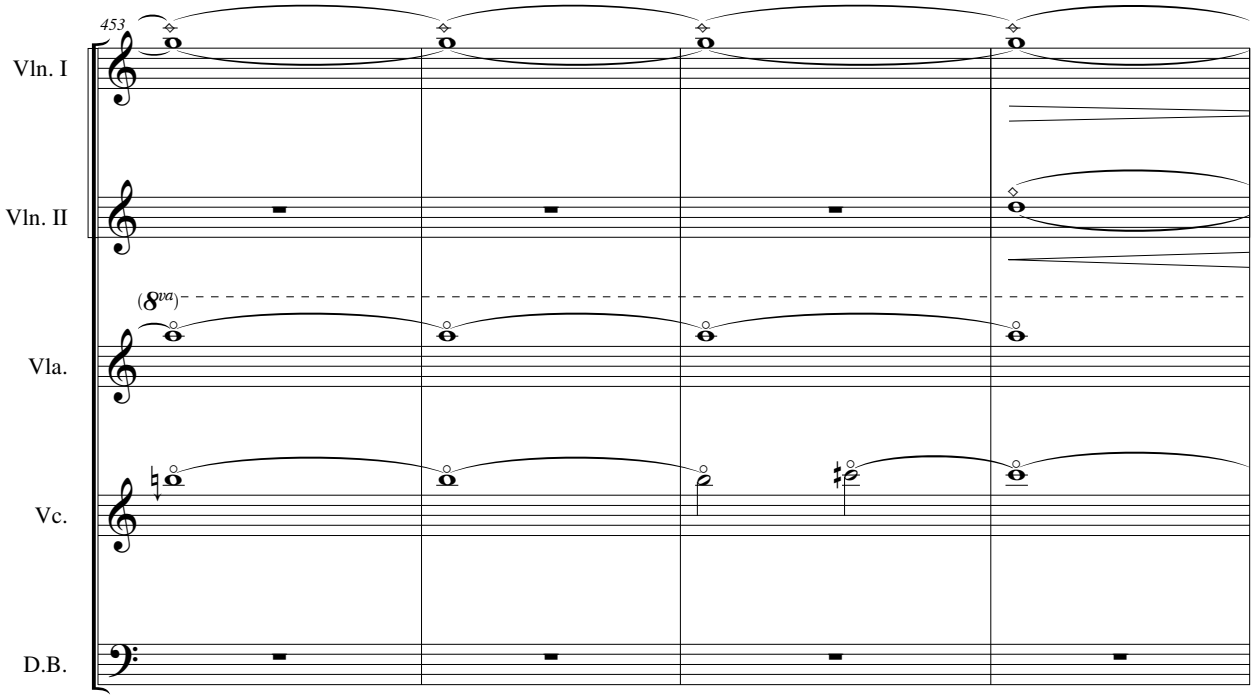

410
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
p
n
f
sp
slow tremolo
st

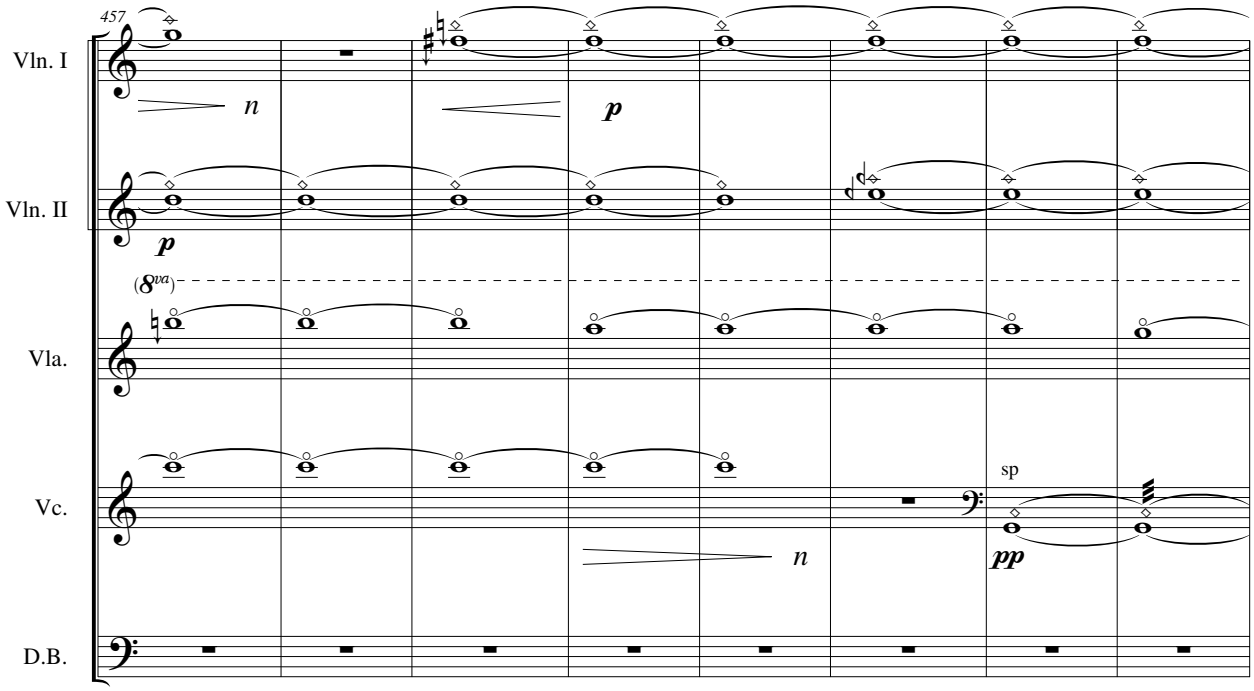

417
Con sord.
Vln. I
pp
Con sord.
Vln. II
pp
Con sord.
Vla.
n
pp
st
n
Vc.
p
D.B.
n

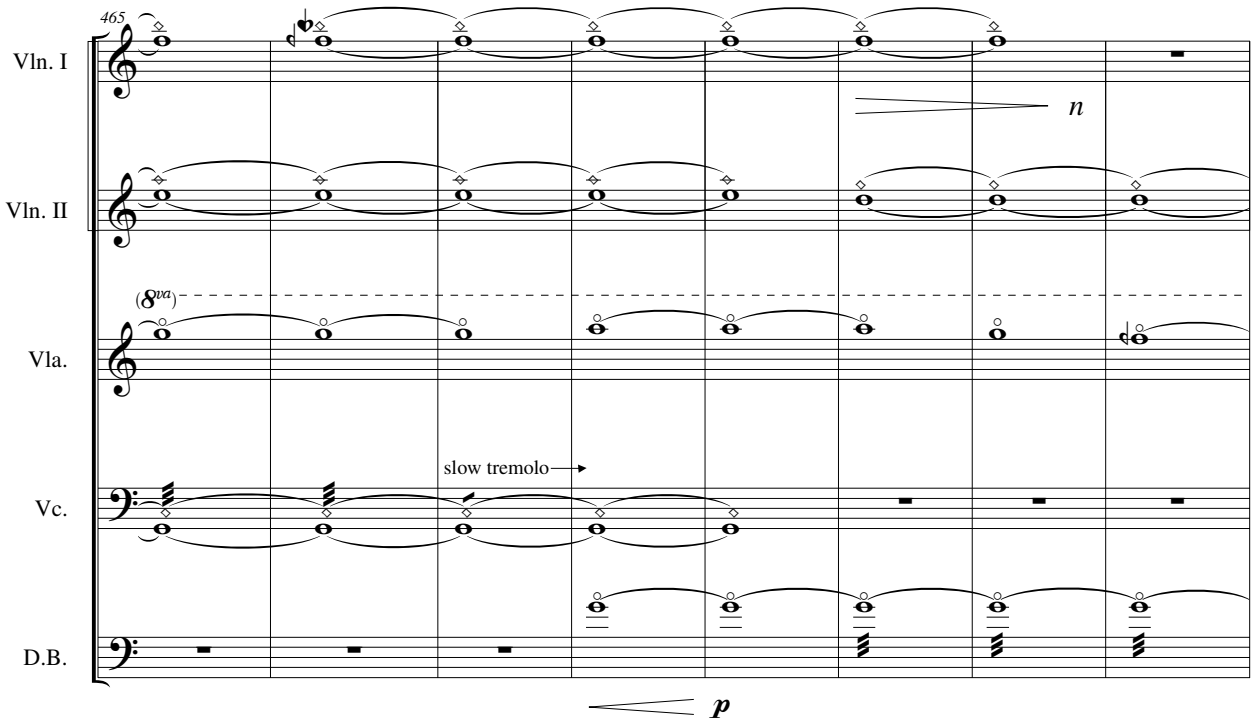

426
Vln. I
p
Vln. II
p
Vla.
p
Con sord.
Vc.
n
p
Overtones on III.
t
D.B.
p
mf

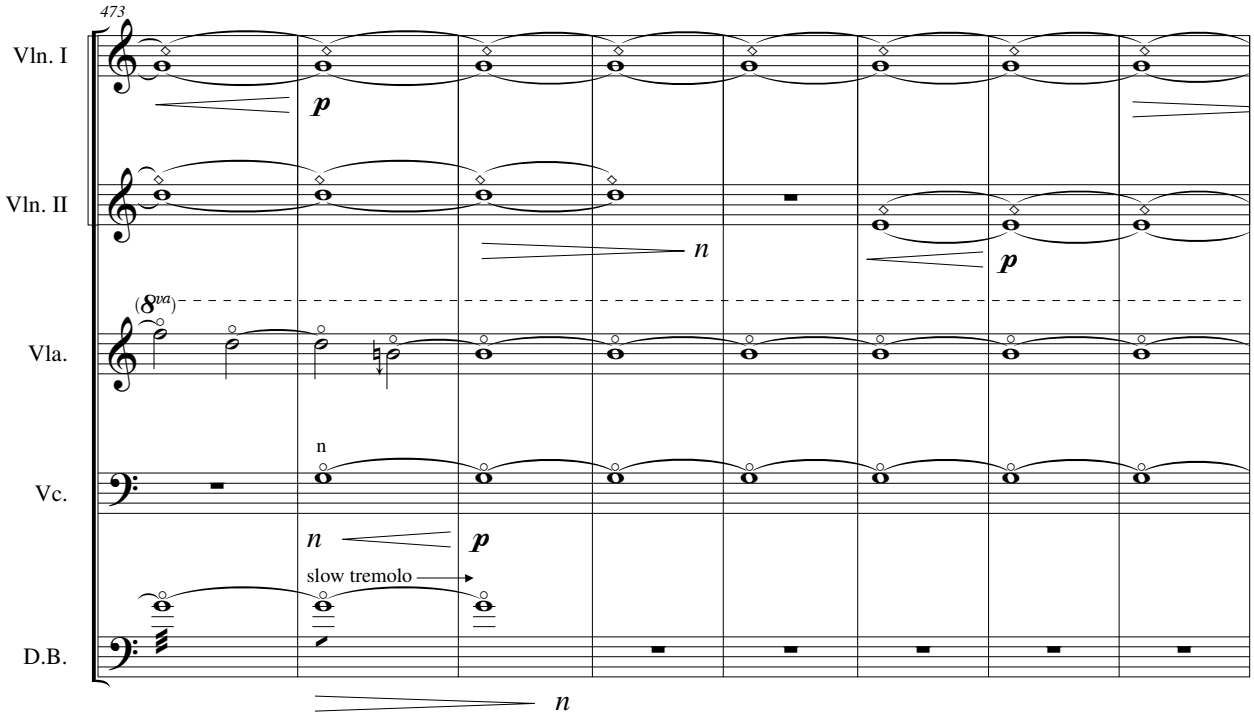

435
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
Con sord.
8va
Overtones on III.
n
p
mf

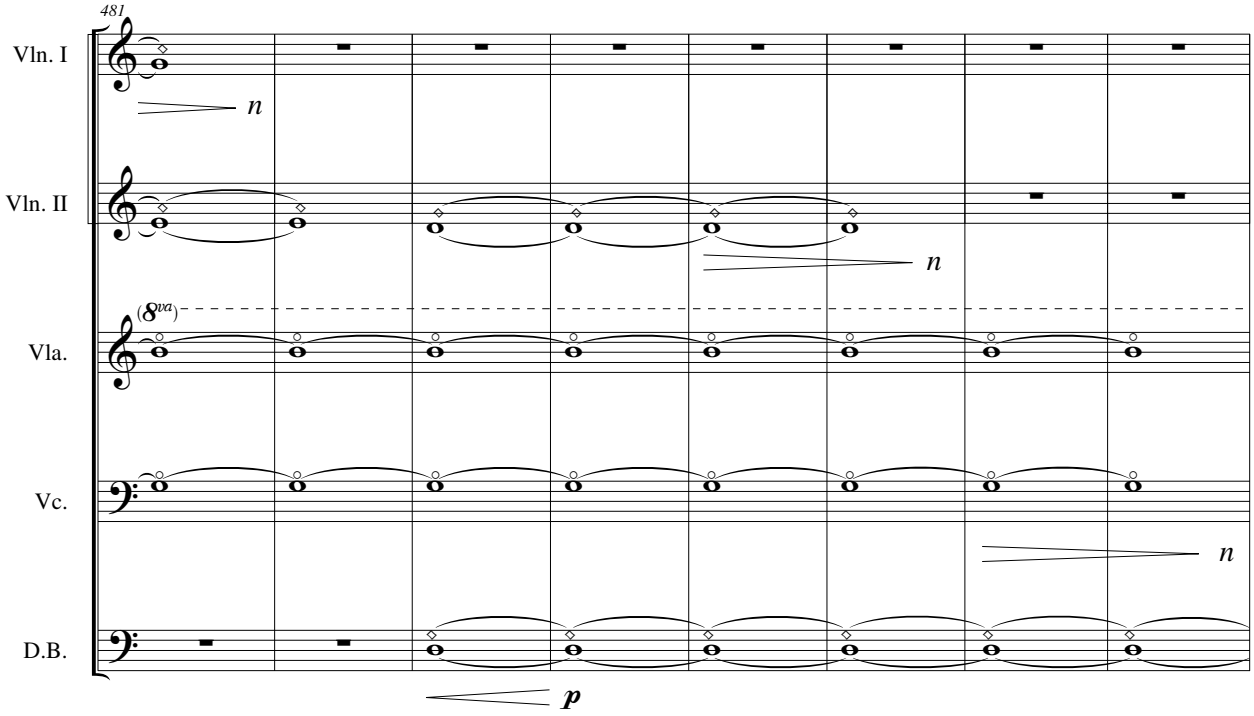

444
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
(8va)
p
n

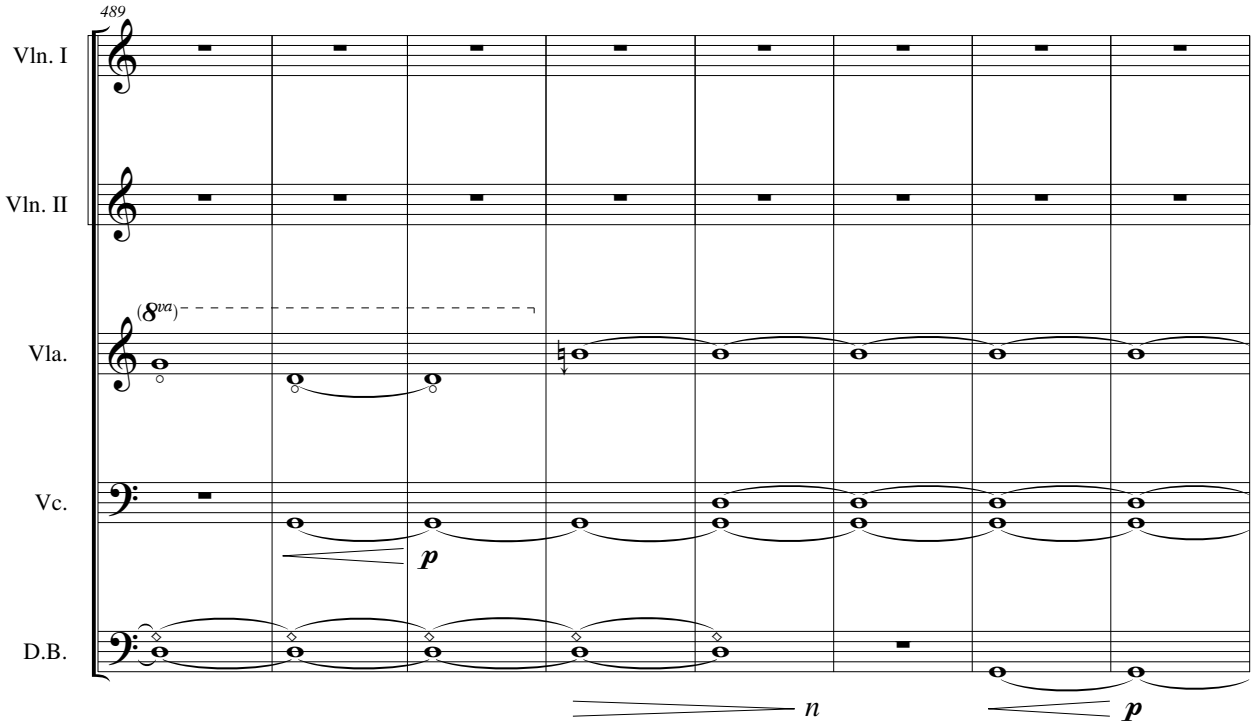

453
Vln. I
Vln. II
(8va)
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.

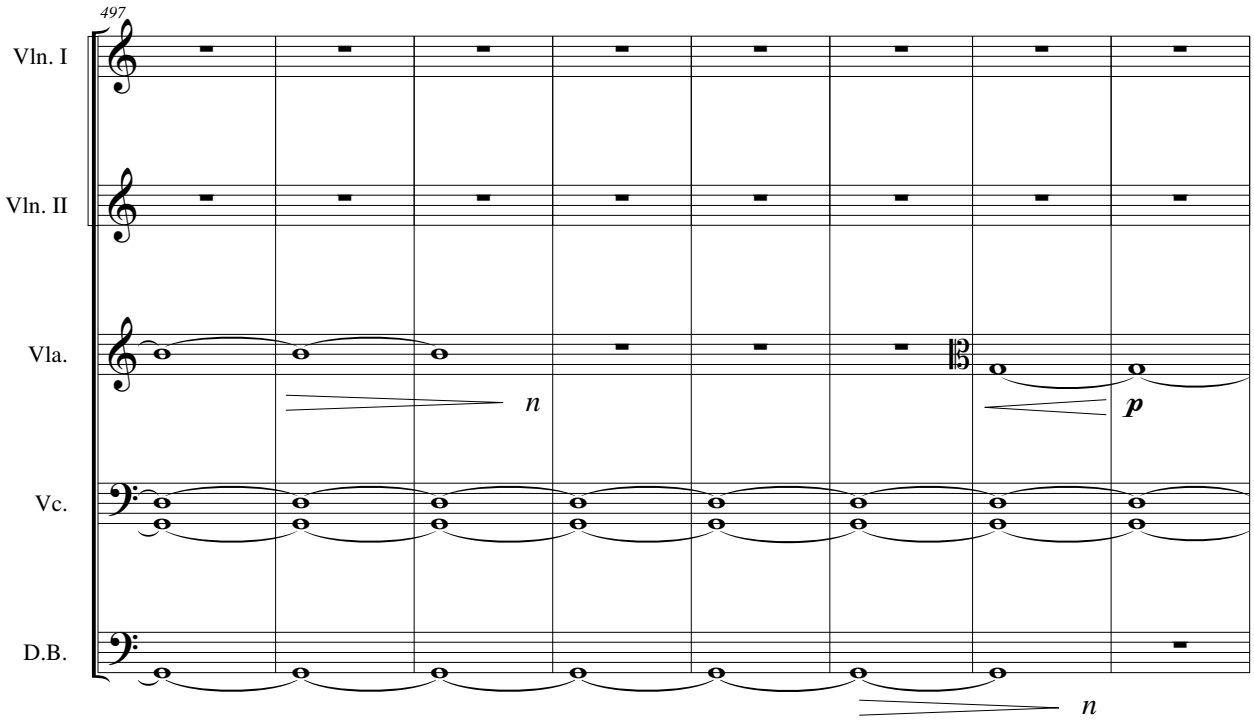

457
Vln. I
n
p
Vln. II
p
(8va)
Vla.
Vc.
sp
n
pp
D.B.

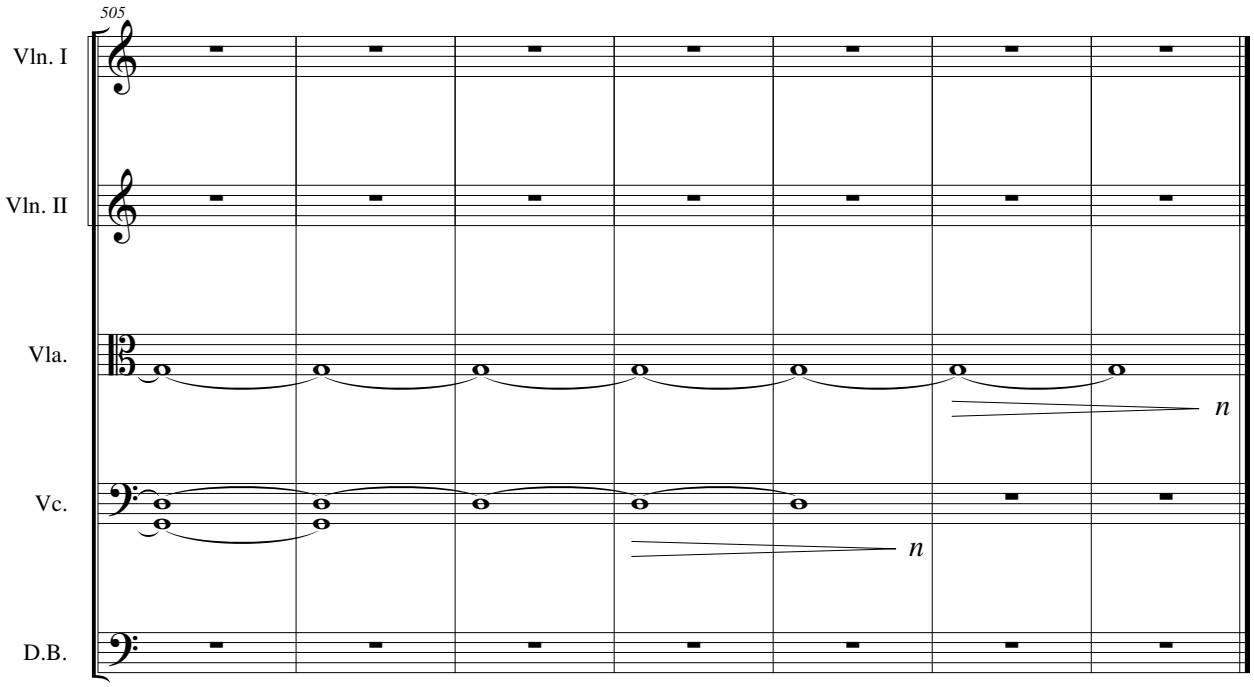

465
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
n
(8va)
slow tremolo
p


473
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
n
(8va)
n
p
n
p
slow tremolo
n


481
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
n
n
n
(8va)
p


489
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
(8va)
p
n
p


497
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
n
p
n


505
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
n
n

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Matthew Briggs is a doctoral candidate and teaching assistant at Florida State University in Music Composition. Also an avid educator, he was previously an Adjunct Instructor of Music at Texas Christian University (TCU) and Music Theory Instructor at Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU) and will continue to teach theory and composition at the collegiate level. Equally at home in acoustic and electronic mediums, his compositional style is diverse, ranging from modal, semi-minimalist work to the avant-garde. He particularly enjoys exploring the world of microtonality, with much inspiration coming from the overtone series. His music has currently been gaining recognition on the national stage, as my work was recently accepted to the ACCelerate Creativity and Innovation Festival at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, the International Computer Music Conference and New York Electroacoustic Festival, the National Student Electronic Music Event (NSEME), the 2020 SCI National Conference, and the 2020 Cortona Sessions in Italy.

Matthew began playing piano at the age of six, and it still remains a large part of his life; since then he has also picked up guitar, bass, trumpet, and other instruments with varying degrees of proficiency. He is a member of Society of Composers, Inc. (SCI), ASCAP, Pi Kappa Lambda (Music Honor Society), and Delta Phi Alpha (German Honor Society). Some other interests include fishing, collecting old books, and language study.