Time Crystal Flying Machine!

Alexander Howard

Program Notes:

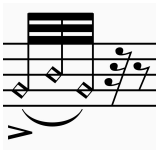
A *Time Crystal* is a theoretical state of matter characterized as crystals which fractures Time-Translation Symetry (continuous and predictable atomic motion in time). Proposed by Nobel lauriate, Frank Wilczek in 2016, this theory has been the subject of immense fascination and scrutiny from the scientific community; yet from the actualization of multiple experiments there has been evidence to show this as an actual phenomenon, although only conceivable within laboratorial conditions.

In taking this concept, I was immediately confronted with many questions based upon what the so-called "fracturing" would constitute and of how evident it would present itself within the music. In the end, I decided that the "fracturing" presented would constitute multiple things at once, whether it be emotional, rhythmical, or textural, etc. -- which then blurs the line between fracturing and musical continuity.

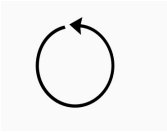
Alongside this, I had been itching for a long time to express another love of of mine: the enigmatic silent-movies of George Melies, dubbed the father of special effects. He was most known for utilizing cuts and expansive sets to properly create the magical worlds otherwise only conceivable within novels. Specifically, the inspiration behind this piece was his 1912 masterpiece, *The Conquest Of The Pole*. Following the lives of many groups of scientists, they attempt to journey to the North Pole and, with each increasing attempt, their vehicles become increasingly more absurd and whimsical.

The conjunct of these two ideas is that the eccentric flying machines (from *The Conquest Of The Pole*), now has time-traveling abilites, transporting the listeners (or the occupants of the machine) to every place, except the North Pole. As such, this follows a hypothetical voyage -- much as a film soundtrack accompanies a film -- of a chaotic and ill-fated journey as the machine hopelessly spirals through different dimensions and landscapes.

Performance instructions:

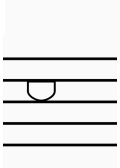


= Lightly finger the note, while rapidly glissing between the notes. The result should sound like a rip.



= Circular bowing (sul pont to sul tasto).

= Grind the bow into the string.



= Play with light bow pressure.

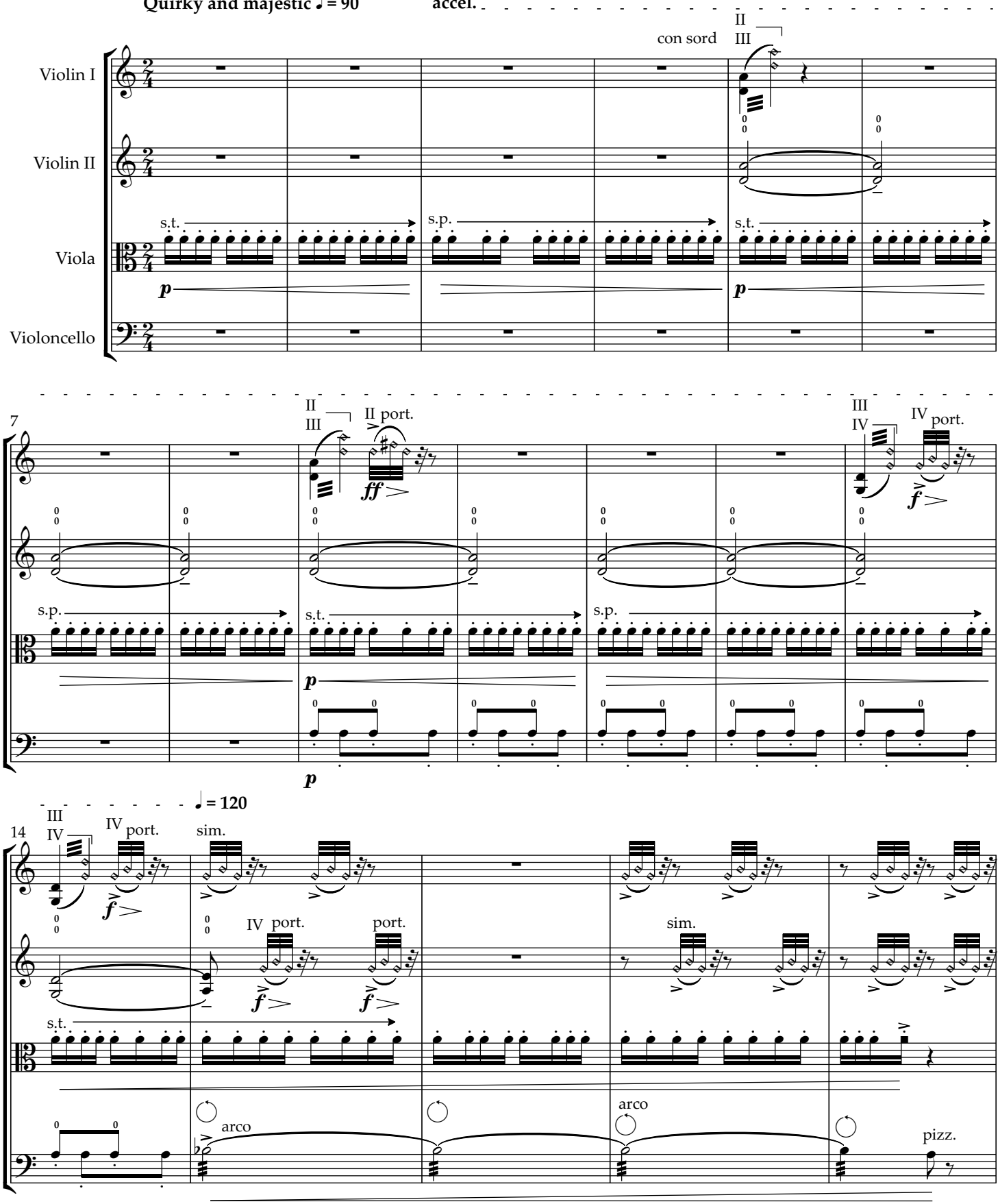
Duration: ca. 7' (with pauses)

Dedicated to the Rhythm Method String Quartet, who premierered this piece at the Lake George Composers' Institute in Lake George, New York

Time Crystal Flying Machine!

for String Quartet

Alexander Howard



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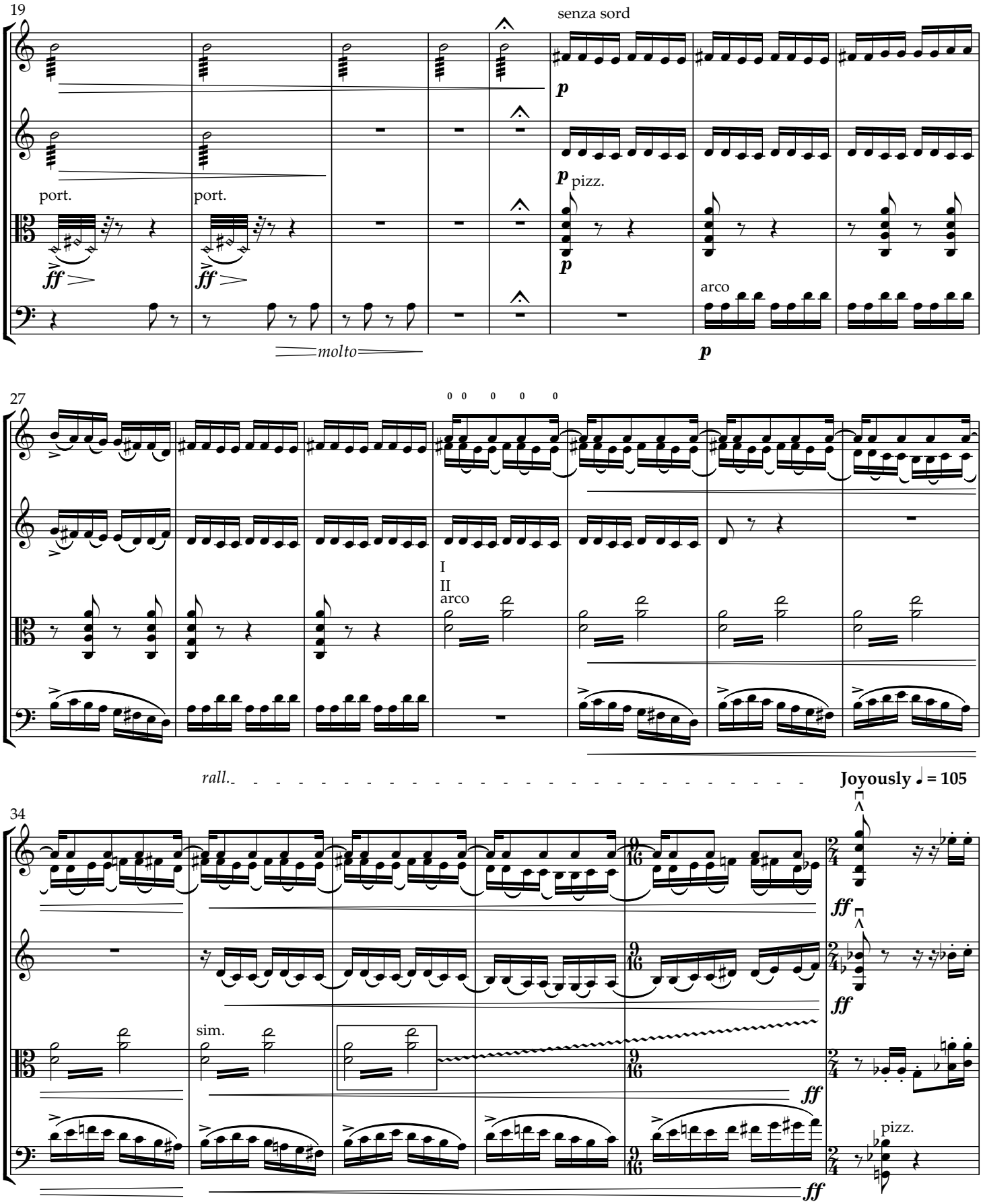
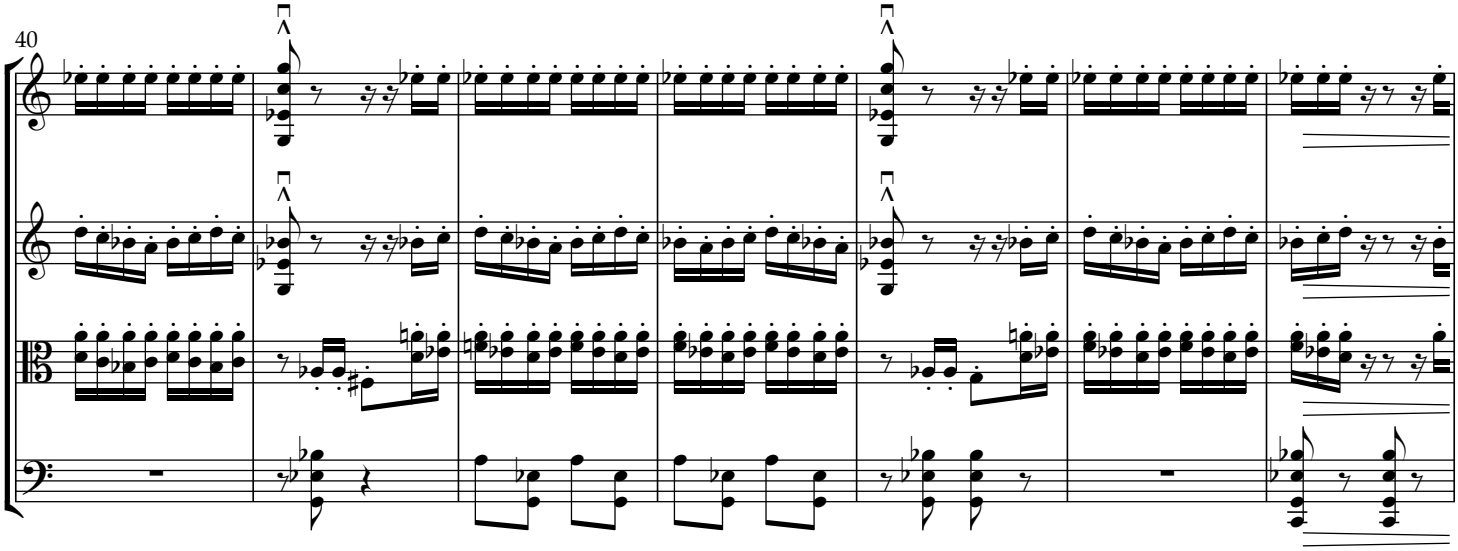
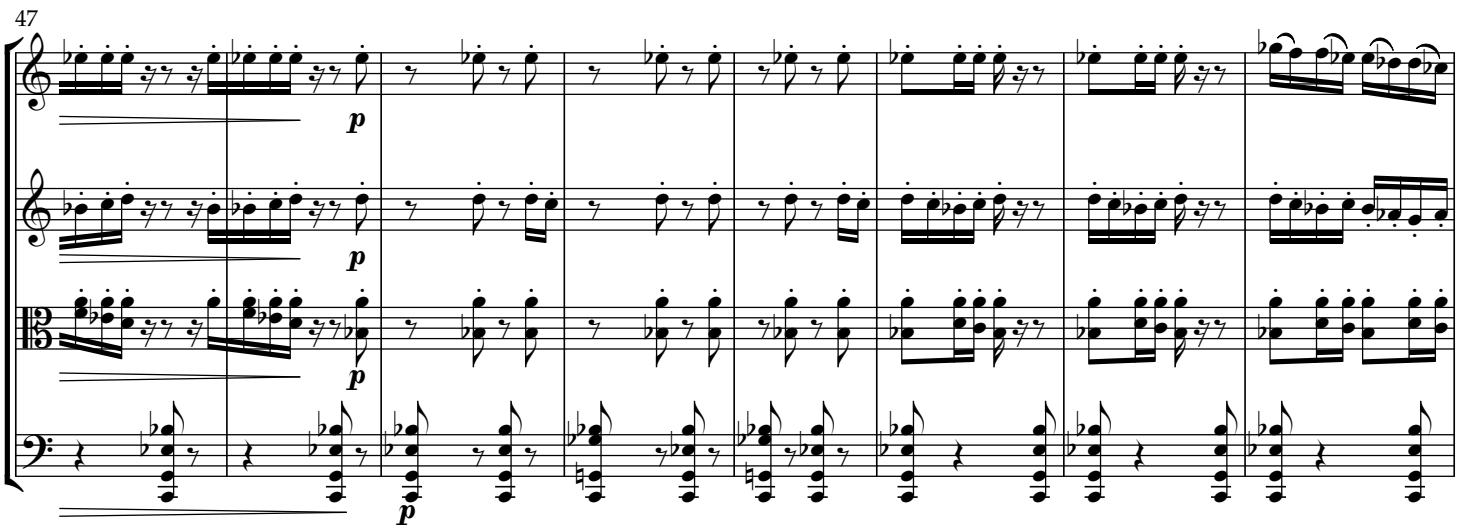

19
senza sord
p
p pizz.
port.
port.
ff
ff
p
arco
molto
p
27
I
II
arco
rall.
Joyously ♩ = 105
34
ff
ff
sim.
ff
pizz.
ff

40



47



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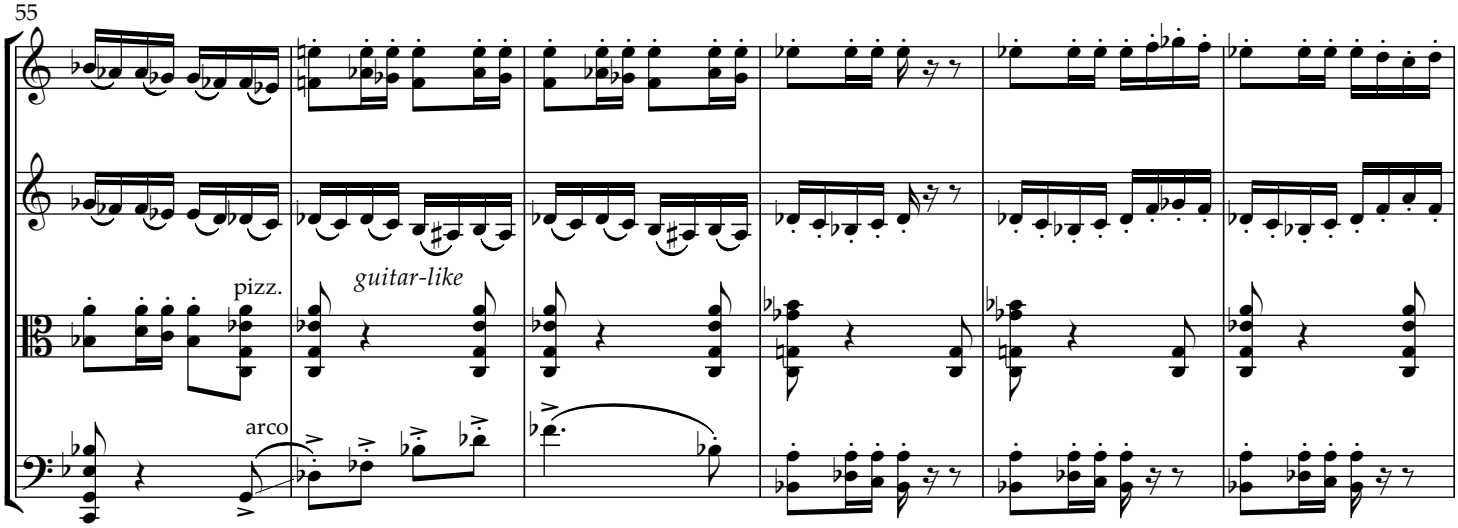
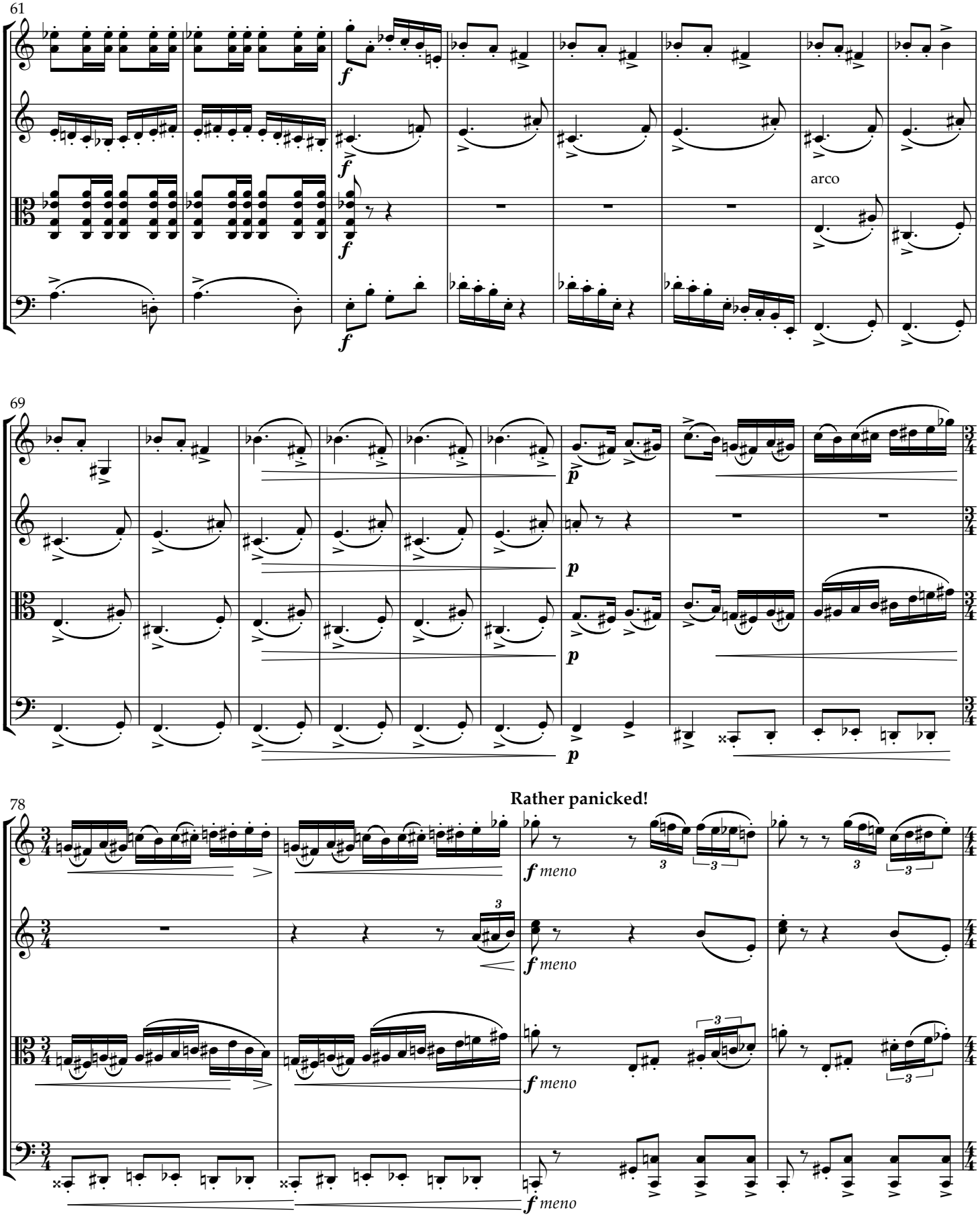



61
arco
69
78
Rather panicked!

Calmly, dance-like, slightly slower
un poco rubato with the dynamics

82

p

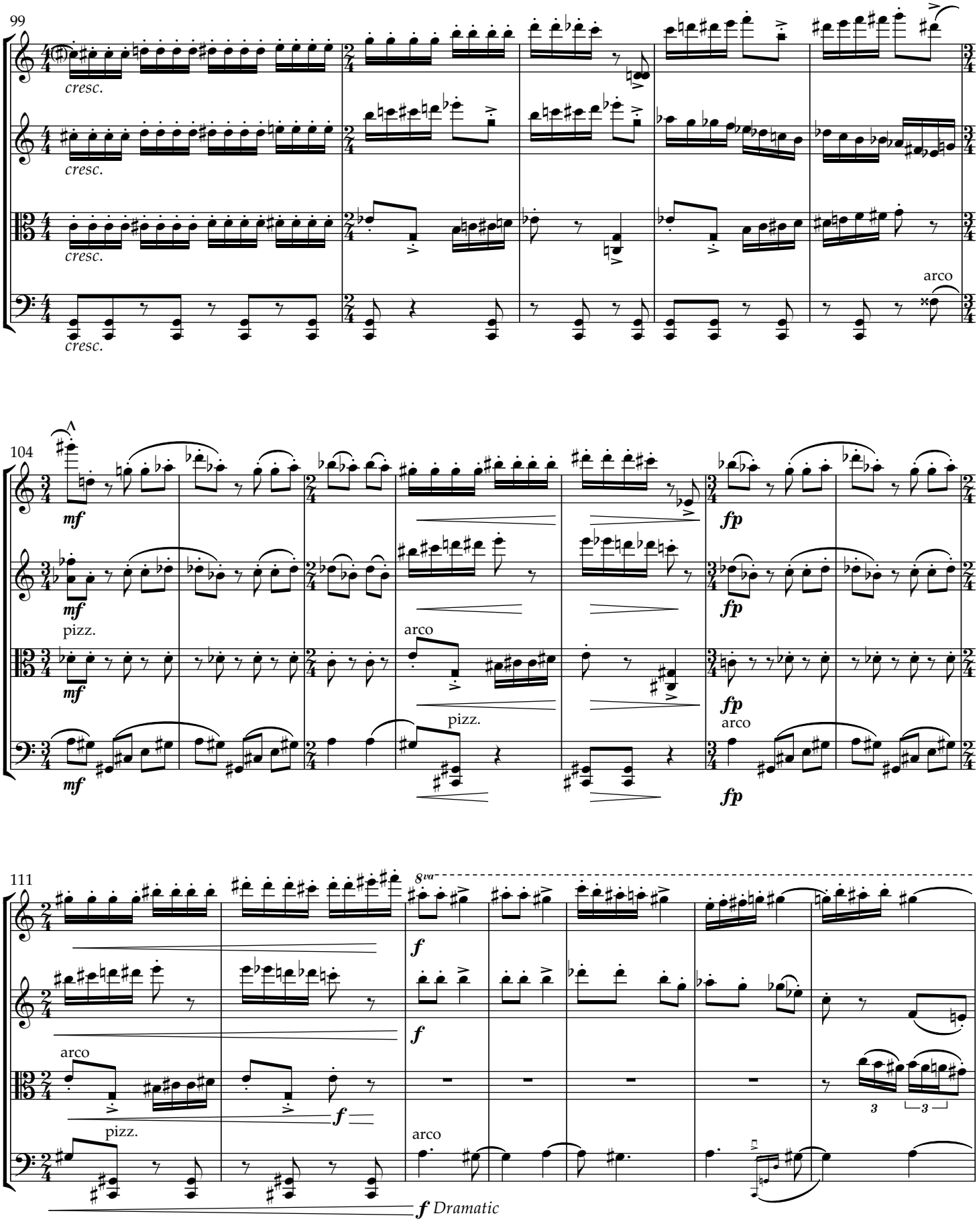
cresc.

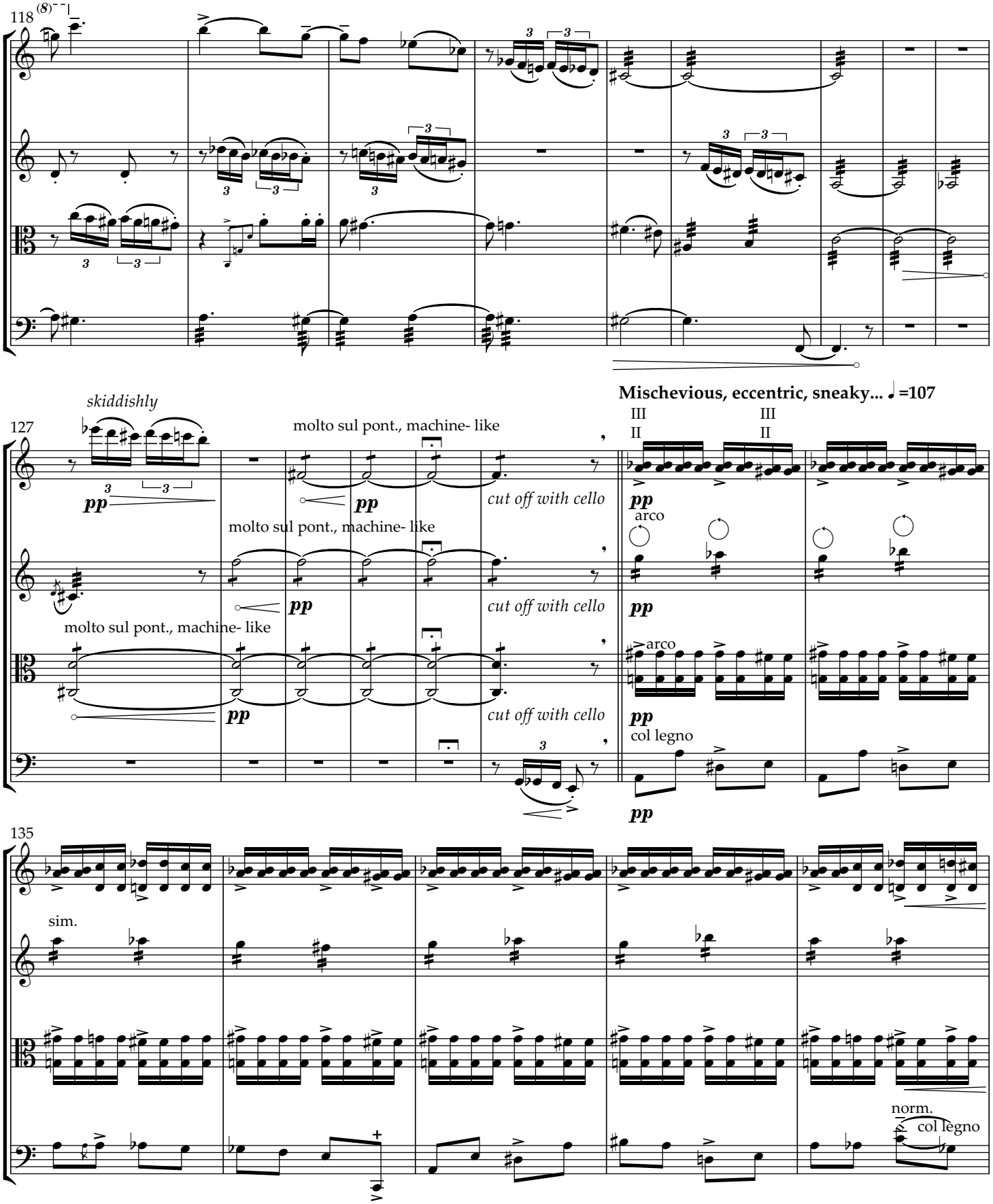
pizz.

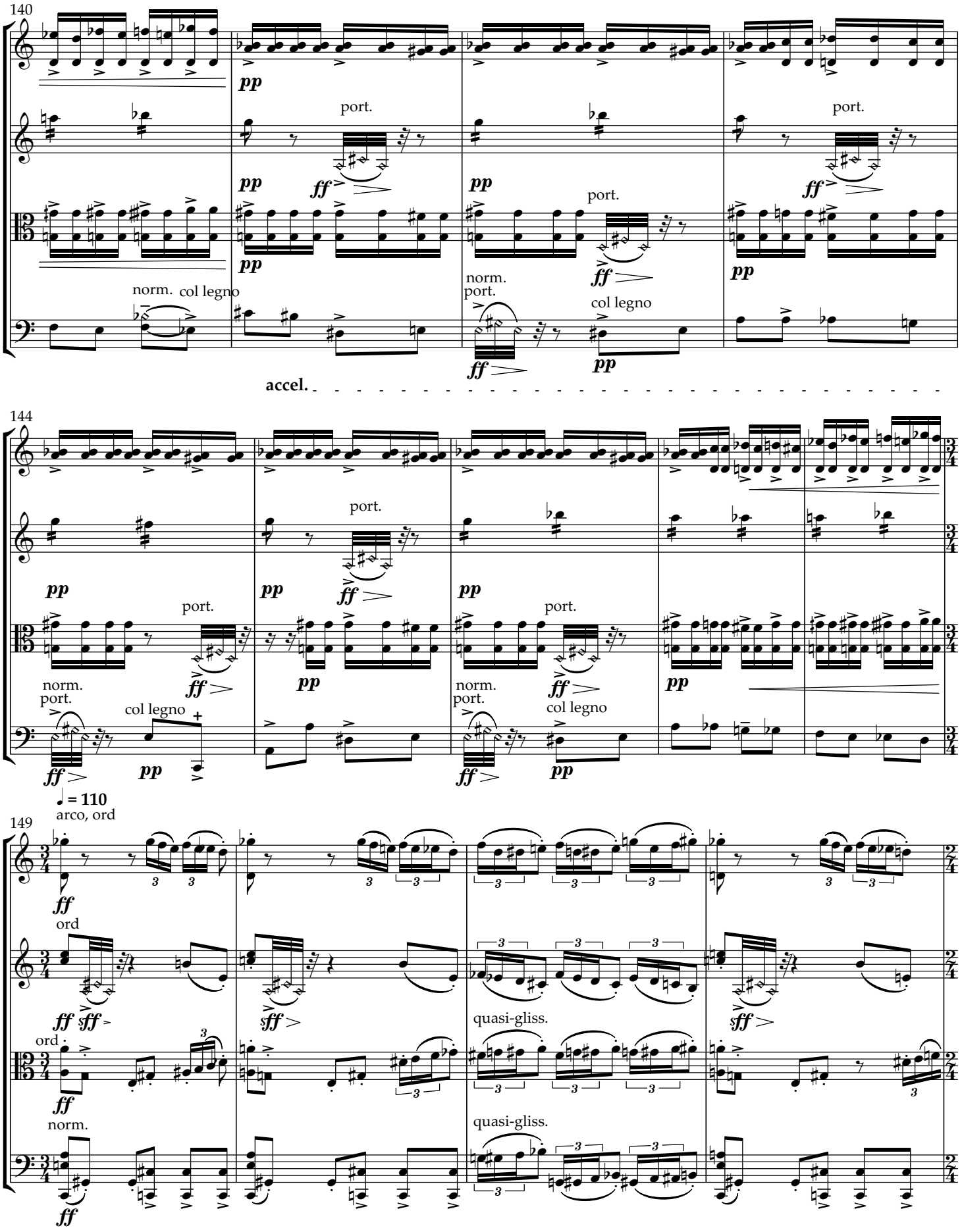
88

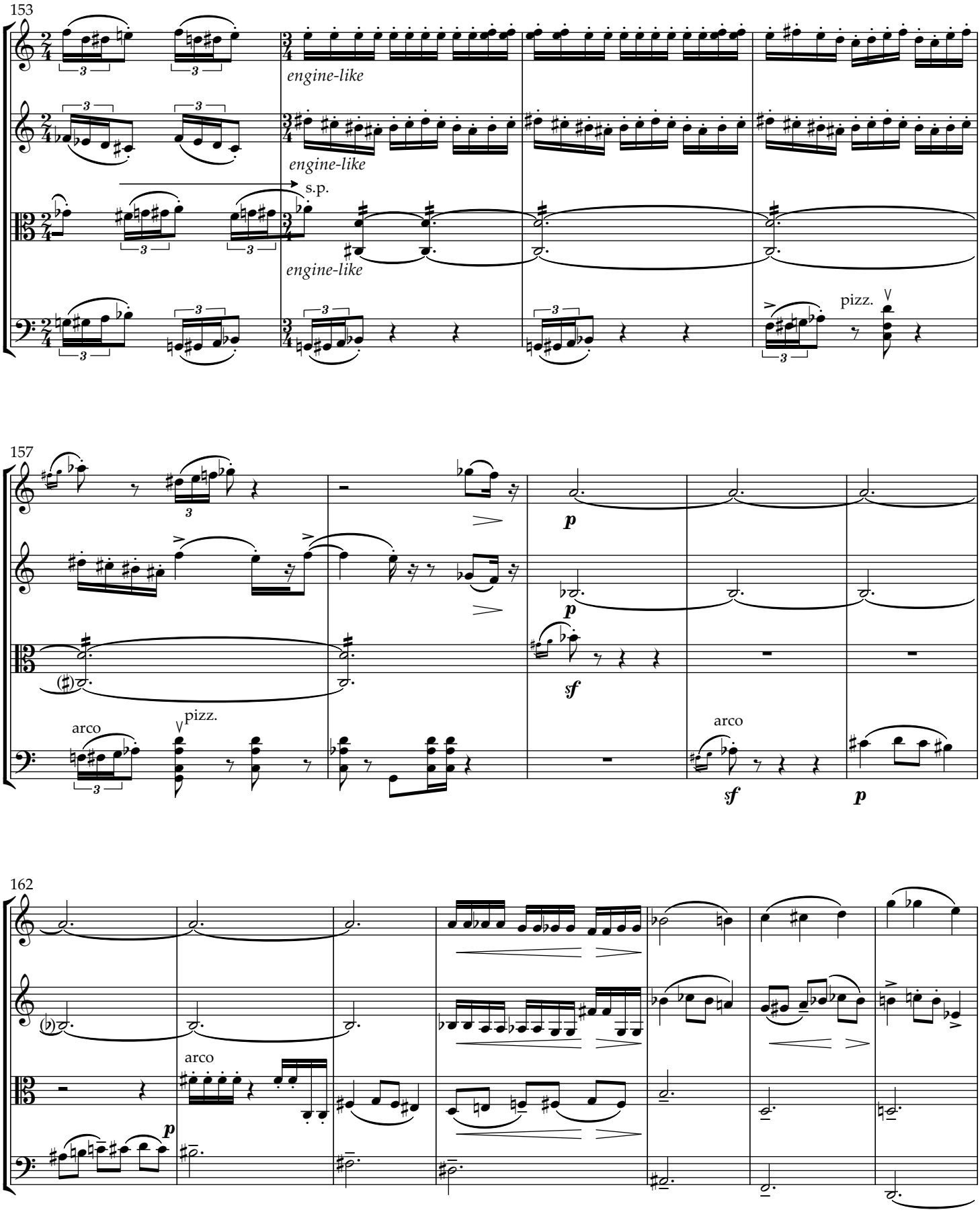
94

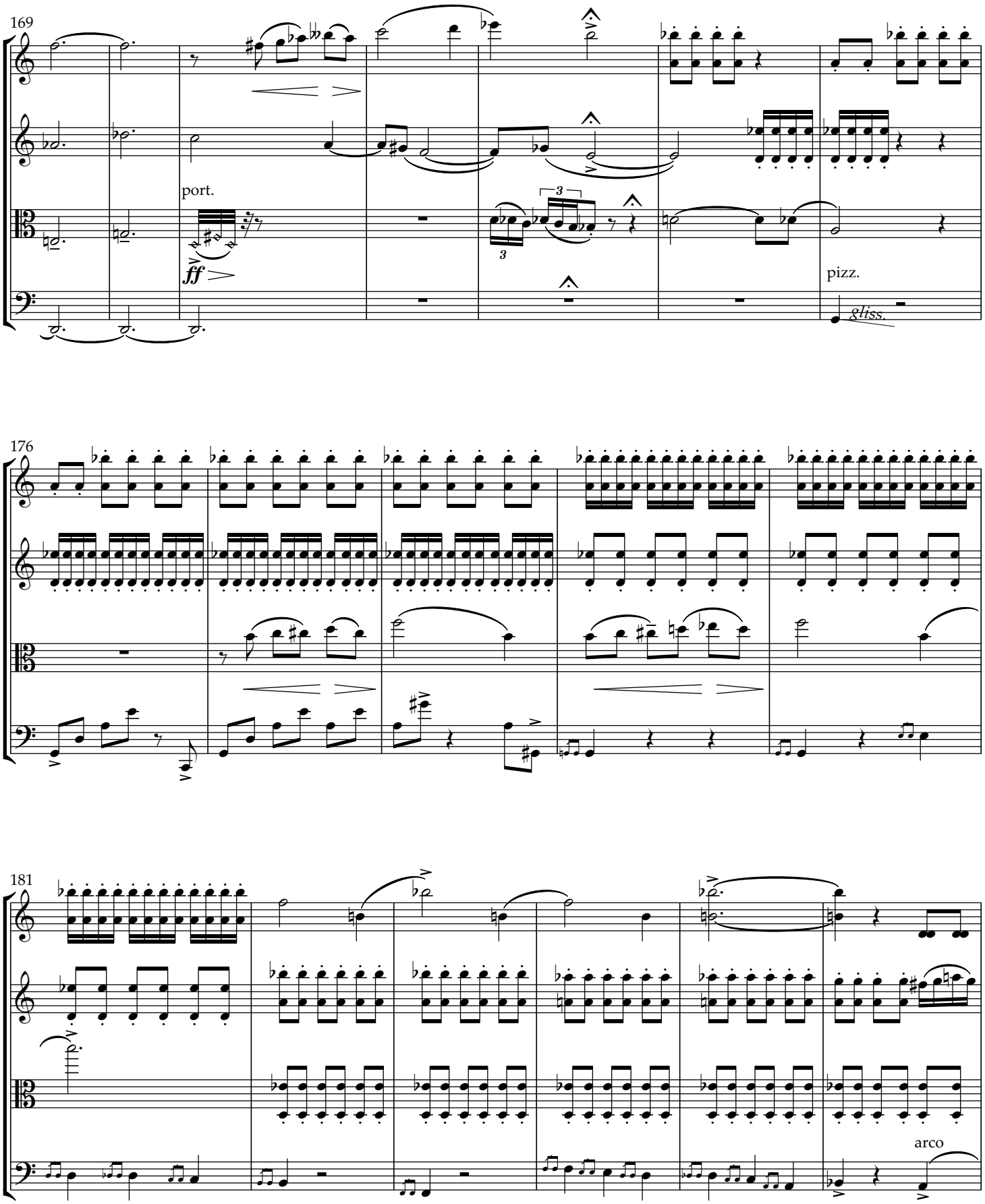
mf


99
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
arco
104
mf
mf
pizz.
mf
mf
arco
pizz.
fp
fp
fp
arco
fp
111
8va
f
f
arco
pizz.
f
arco
f Dramatic

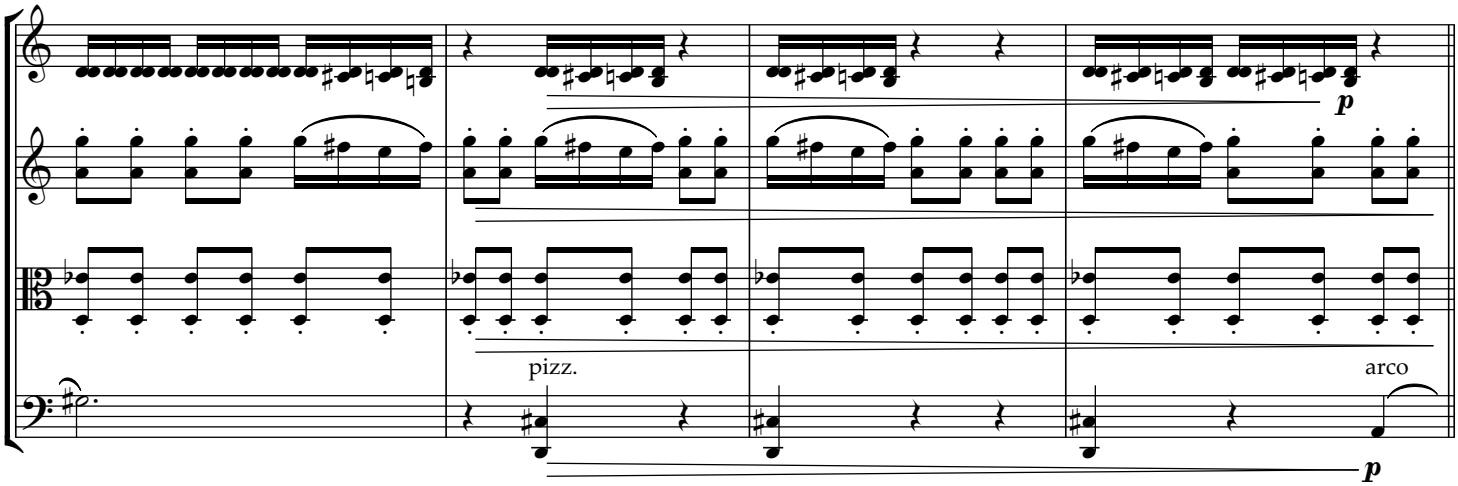

118
(8)
skiddishly
127
molto sul pont., machine- like
cut off with cello
Mischevious, eccentric, sneaky... ♩=107
III
II
arco
col legno
135
sim.
norm.
col legno


140
pp
port.
ff
norm.
col legno
accel.
144
= 110
arco, ord
ord
quasi-gliss.
norm.


153
engine-like
engine-like
s.p.
engine-like
pizz.
157
arco
pizz.
arco
162
arco


169
port.
ff
pizz.
gliss.
176
181
arco

187



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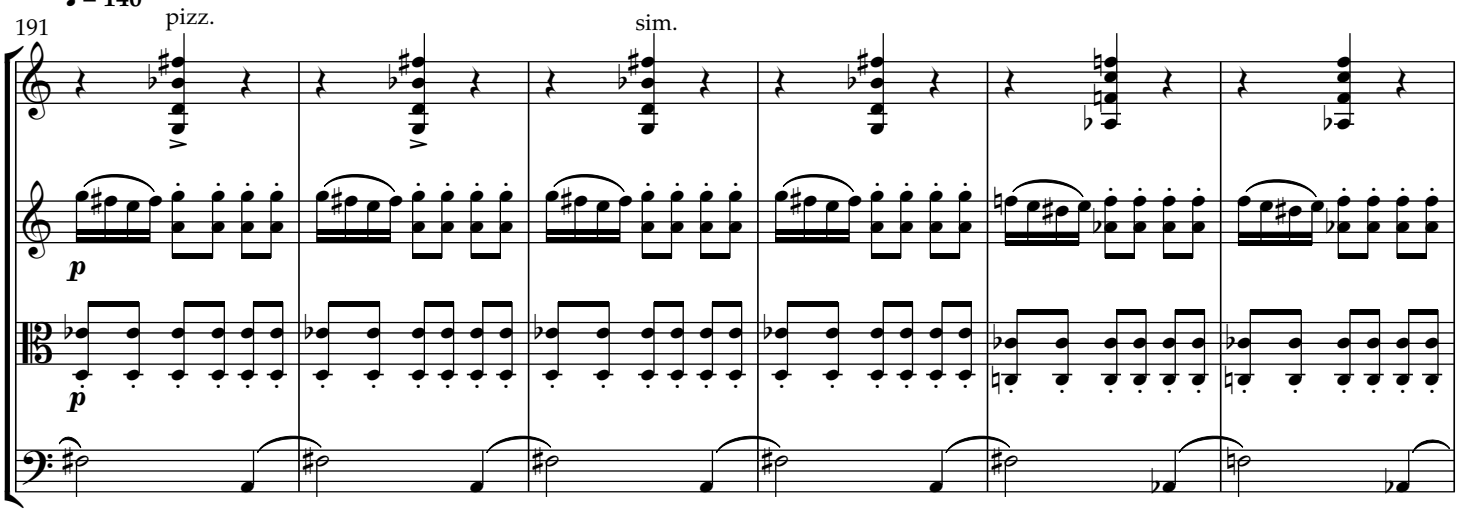

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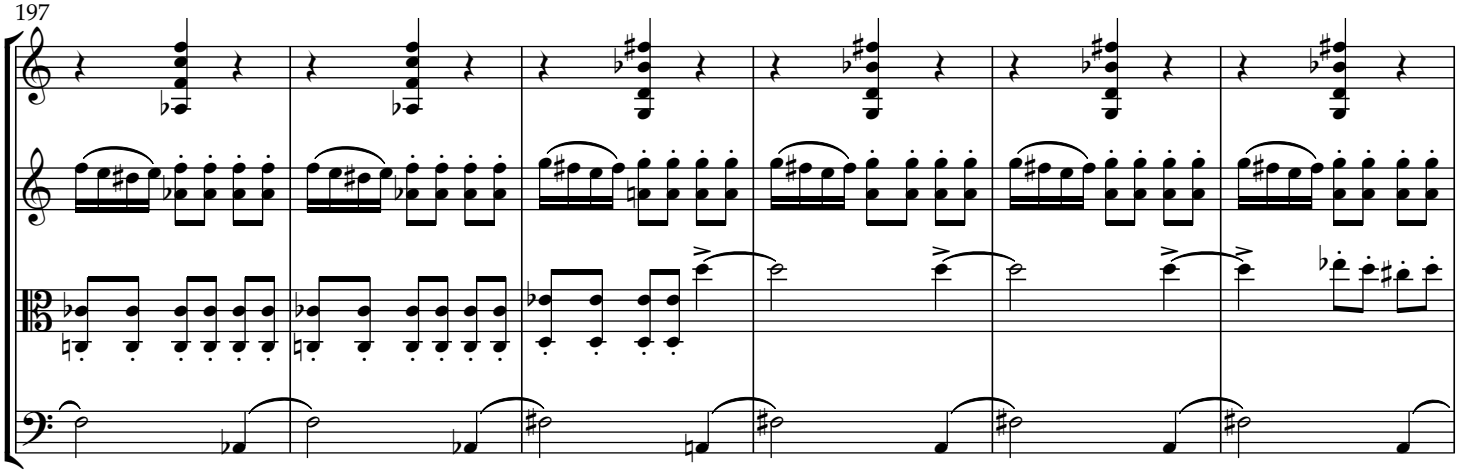
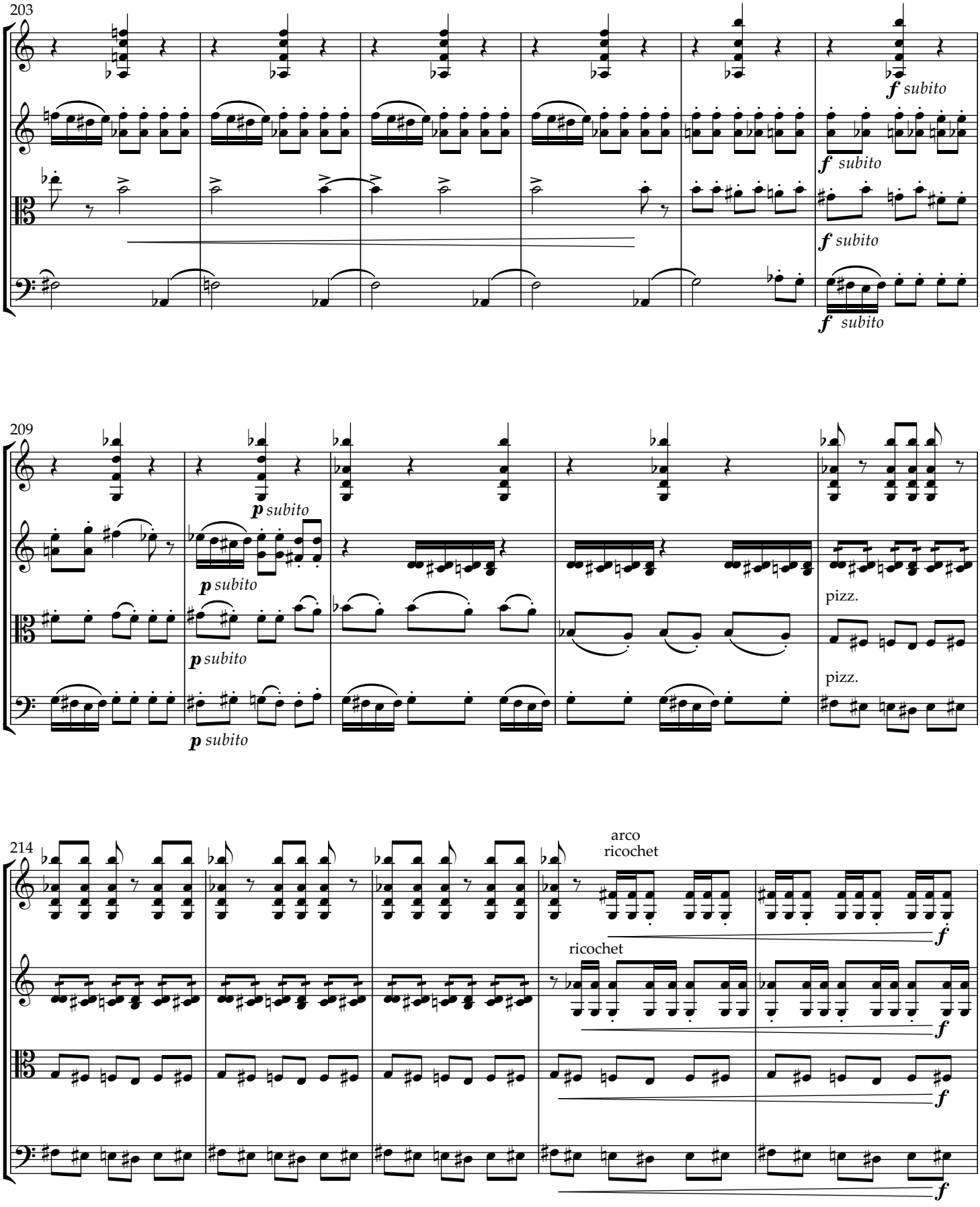
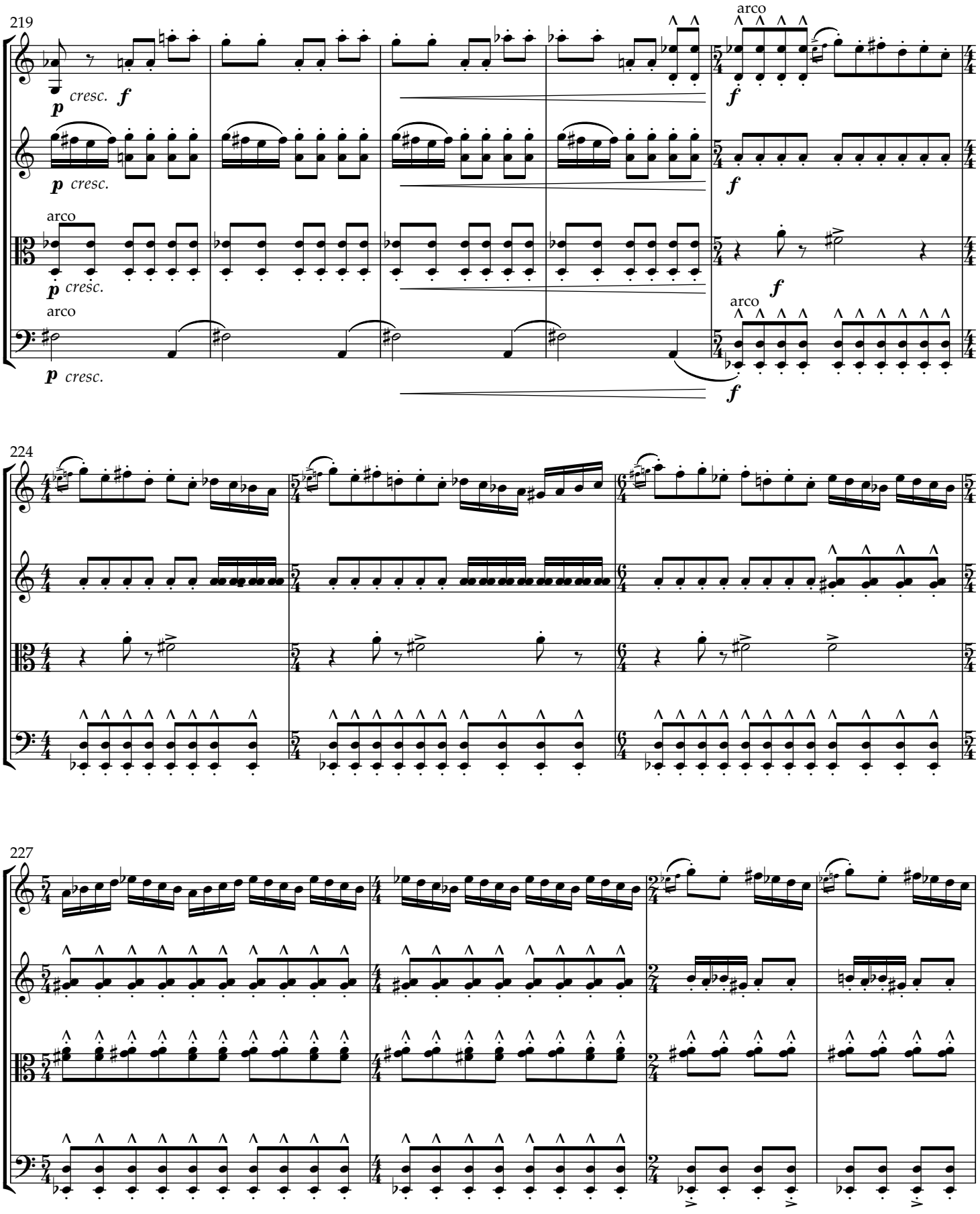
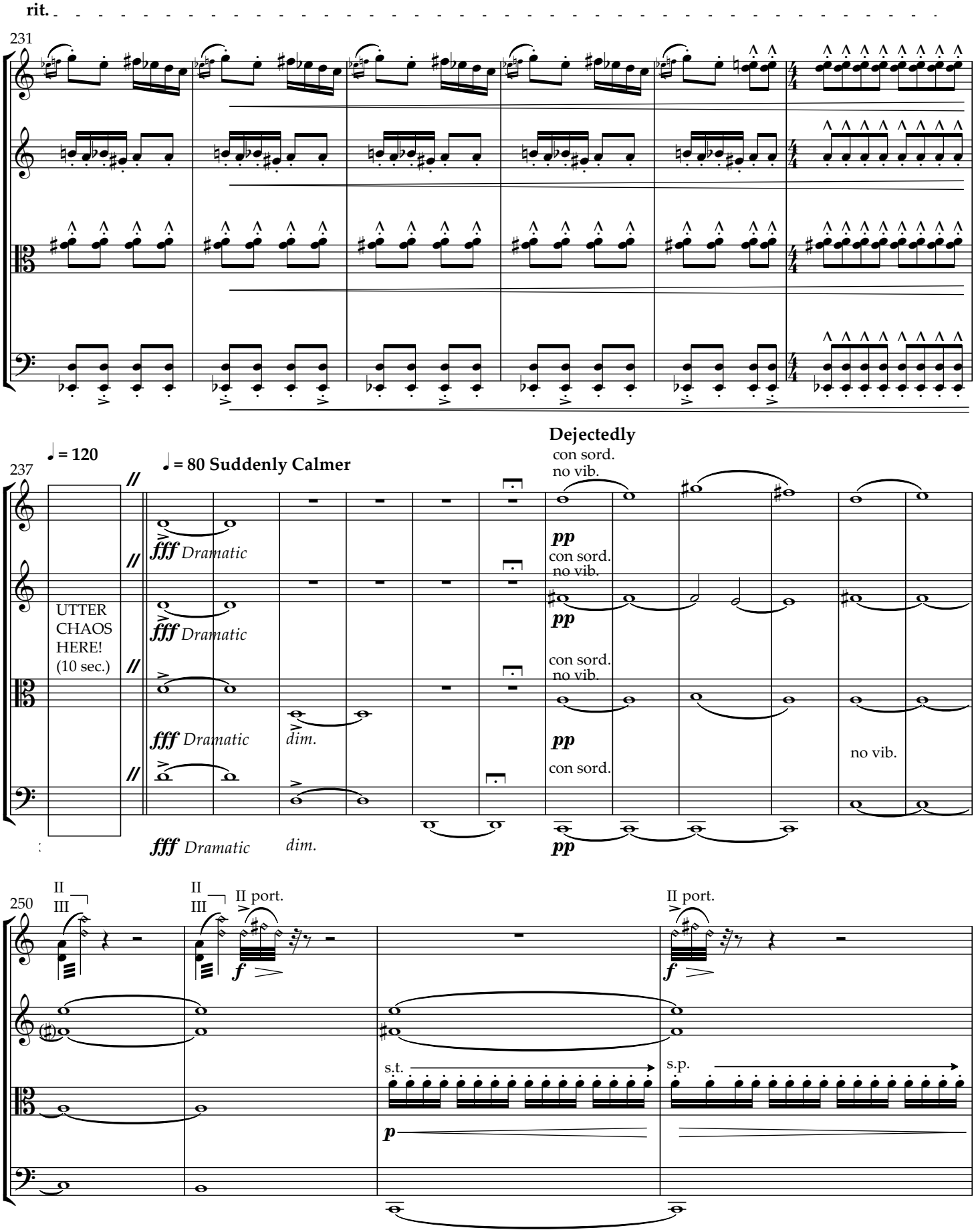
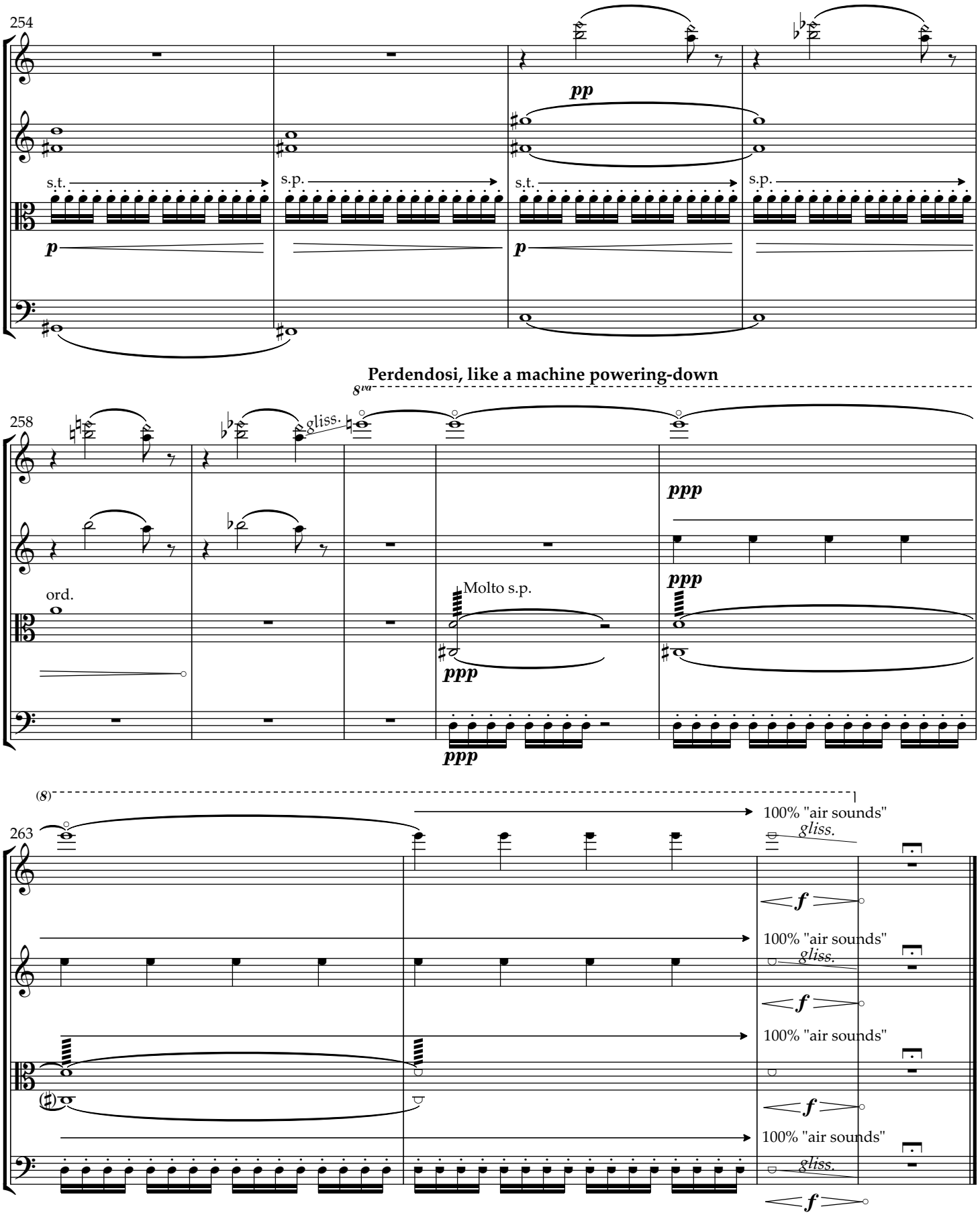



203
f subito
f subito
f subito
f subito
209
p subito
p subito
p subito
p subito
pizz.
pizz.
214
arco
ricochet
ricochet
f
f
f
f
f


219
arco
cresc.
arco
arco
224
227


rit.
231
237
♩ = 120
♩ = 80 Suddenly Calmer
Dejectedly
con sord.
no vib.
fff Dramatic
pp
UTTER
CHAOS
HERE!
(10 sec.)
dim.
no vib.
250
II
III
II port.
f
s.t.
s.p.
p


254
pp
s.t.
s.p.
s.t.
s.p.
p
p
Perdendosi, like a machine powering-down
8va
258
gliss.
ppp
ppp
ord.
Molto s.p.
ppp
ppp
(8)
263
100% "air sounds"
gliss.
f
100% "air sounds"
gliss.
f
100% "air sounds"
f
100% "air sounds"
gliss.
f