# String Quartet

2003 – 2006

Philip Venables

# String Quartet

**Philip Venables**

(2003 – 2006)

The first movement (2003) of this String Quartet was first performed by the Artea Quartet (Thomas Gould, Rhys Watkins, Benjamin Roskams, Ashok Klouda) at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester on 10th January 2004, as part of the International String Quartet Festival, *QuartetFest* 2004. It was given its London Premiere in the Duke's Hall, Royal Academy of Music, on April 23rd 2004 as part of the *Omaggio* Festival celebrating the life and music of Luciano Berio.

The complete quartet (2006) was given its world premiere by The Duke Quartet at The Wigmore Hall, Wigmore Street, London, on 5th December 2006, and performed again in the following days at The Queen's Hall, Edinburgh and The Gate, Cardiff.

The first movement of this quartet can be performed on its own, but the other movements should only be played as part of the complete quartet.

The first movement (2003) is dedicated to Rizwan Ifrahim.

# String Quartet

**Philip Venables**

December 2003 (1st Movement)
January 2006 (2nd & 3rd Movements)

**I** – *Wildly, folk-like* (c. 8'30")
**II** – *Steady, relaxed* (c. 4'15")
**III** – *Fast, nervous* (c. 2'20")

Duration: c. 15'00"

## Listener's note

This piece, my first String Quartet, divulges all of its music within the striking, folkish viola solo at the very beginning. All three movements begin with the same gesture, and each has similar elements of violence and lyricism, but the first movement is far more organic and freely flowing than the later movements. The music moves through several different harmonic and rhythmic zones, always carried by a continuation of the passionate opening viola melody. A faster, more violent central section, characterised by stabbing chords and aggressive rising figures, breaks down to a broad and pained melody, blurred between the upper strings. Finally, a more reflective and sinuous coda returns the viola melody back to its home.

In contrast, the nature of both the second and third movements is far more mechanical and single-minded than the first. The second movement is almost hypnotic in its repetitive use of a rising scale. As the scale is passed around and varied, elements of the first movement are brought to bear: long, winding melodies high up in the cello and an intense violin solo towards the end. The third movement is a relentless but brief *moto perpetuo*, drawing out motivic elements from the first movement and transforming them into mechanical patterns. The violence, stabbing chords and the rapid unison *crescendi* make up the fabric of this concluding movement, and over the top of the constant buzzing energy, the upper strings re-frame melodies from the first movement in a new context, returning the music to the unison A-flat that started the work.

PV

## Performance Notes

= crescendo from nothing

= diminuendo to nothing

**+** = Left hand pizzicato

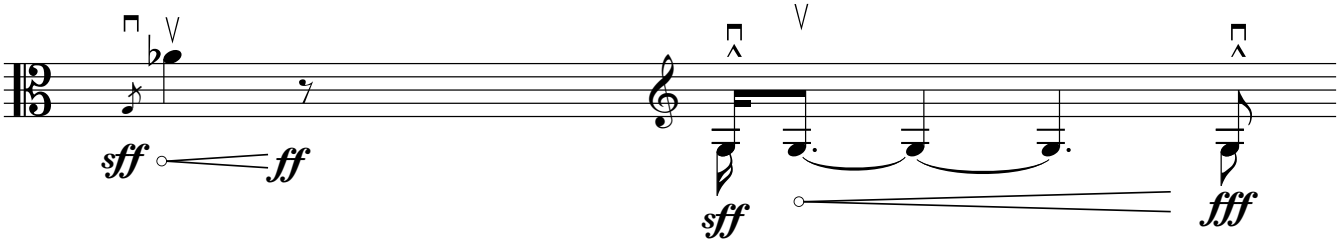
*gliss.* = a measured slide: slide continuously and gradually from the start note to the end note for the duration indicated, with no breaks of bow or string changes

*port.* = a quick slide: slide at the end of the note as a quick transition to the new note rather like an audible shift in hand position. If notated at the end of a note which is followed by a rest, 'fall off' the end of the note to the pitch specified by a small note)

Use vibrato as normal unless otherwise indicated. Use it particularly to emphasise crescendi and diminuendi

Grace notes come BEFORE the beat in the 1st Movement and ON the beat in the 2nd & 3rd movements

*Viola, bar 1 (opening solo)* *Violin I, bar 38*




Here are two examples of a figuration which occurs often in the piece. It should be played by a ***full*** down-bow as fast and as loud as possible (almost throwing the bow down with a total release of pressure), followed by a ***full*** up-bow starting from nothing with a rapid crescendo towards the lower-half of the bow (like a sudden surge of sound)

The viola player should be seated in the "first" position, to help projection and emphasise the soloistic nature of the viola in this piece. In other words, like this:

Vn I Vn II

Viola Vc

Accidentals apply to the whole bar, except in the first bar of the 1st Movement (free time, viola solo) , where they apply to the note only.

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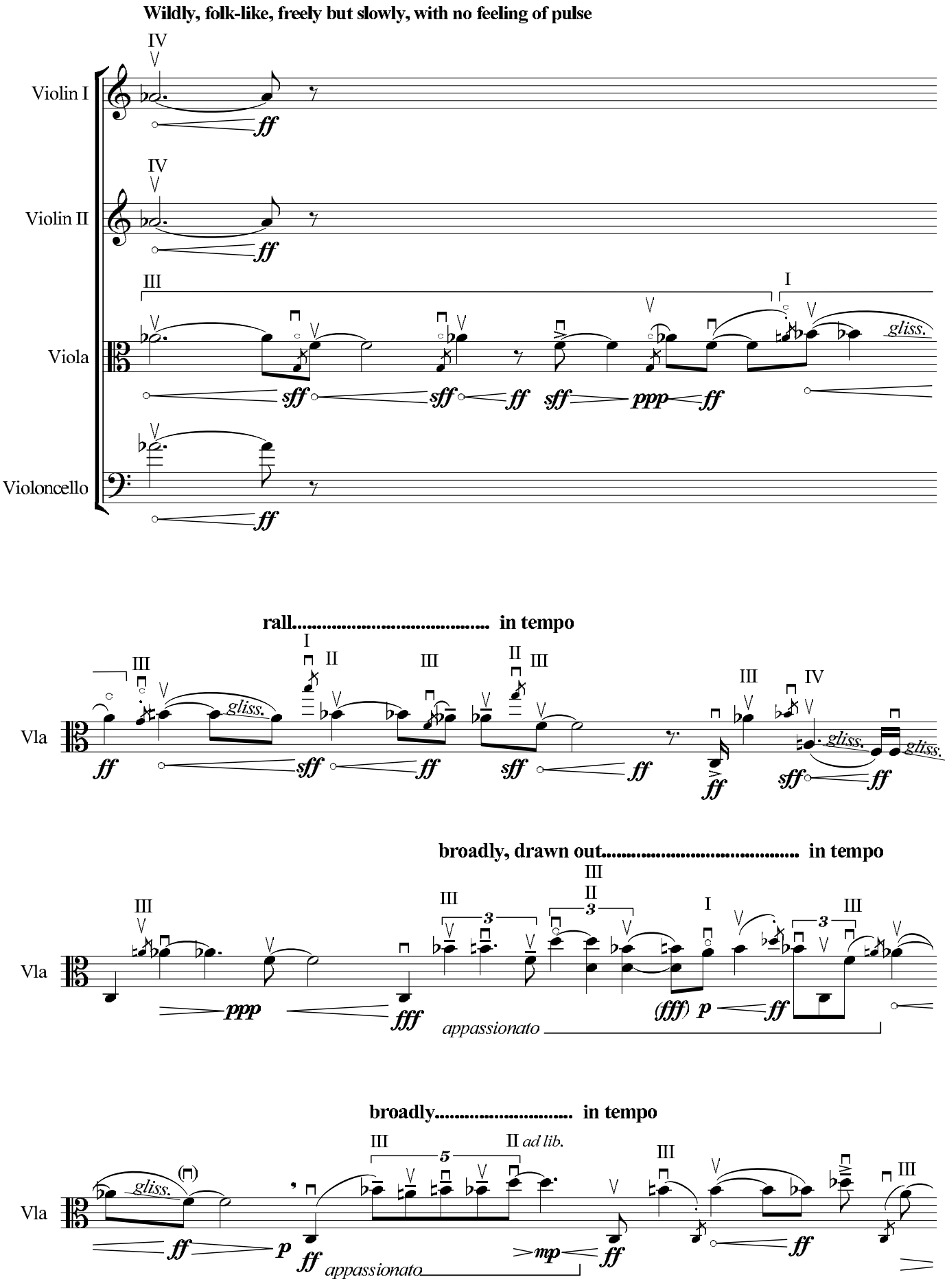
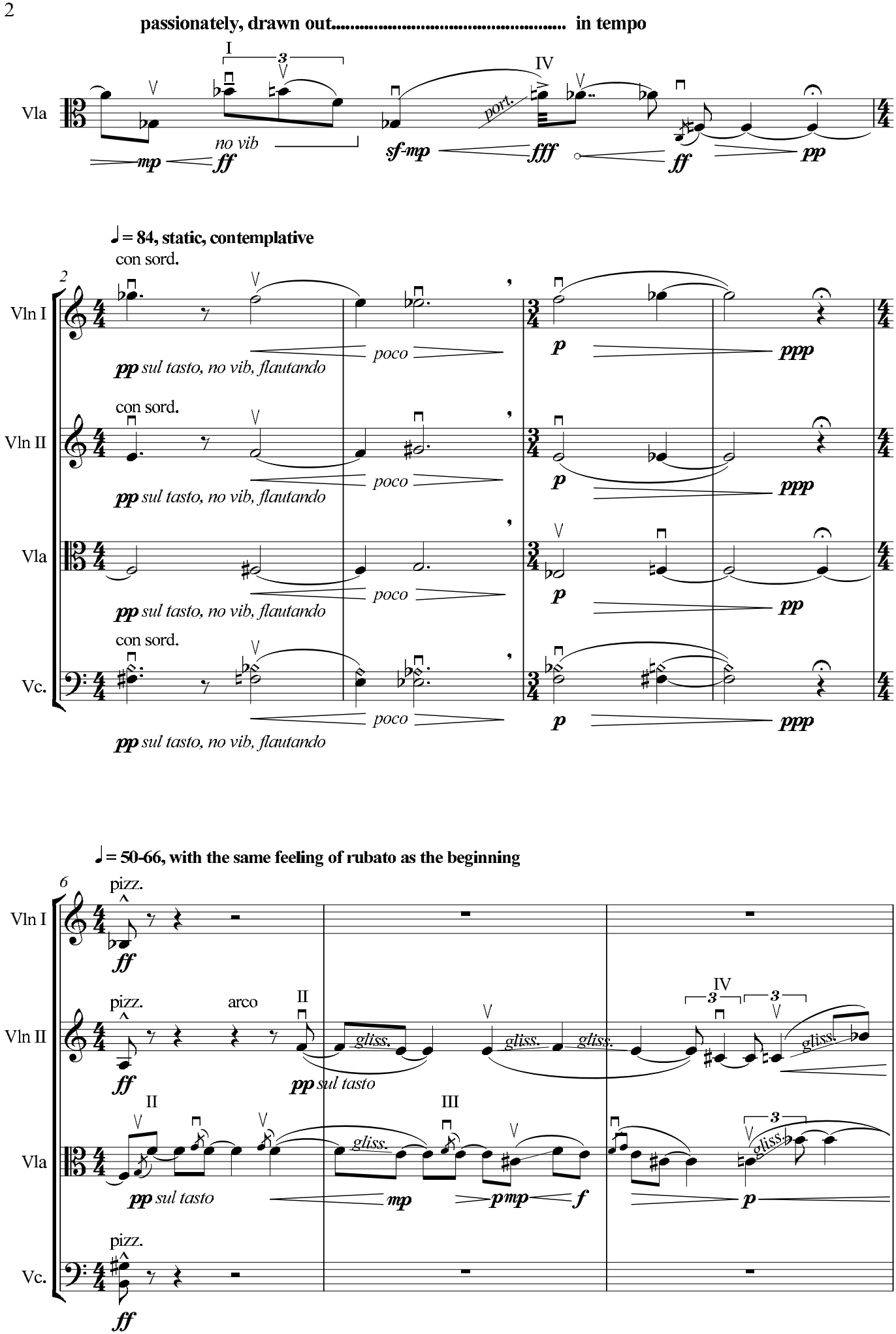
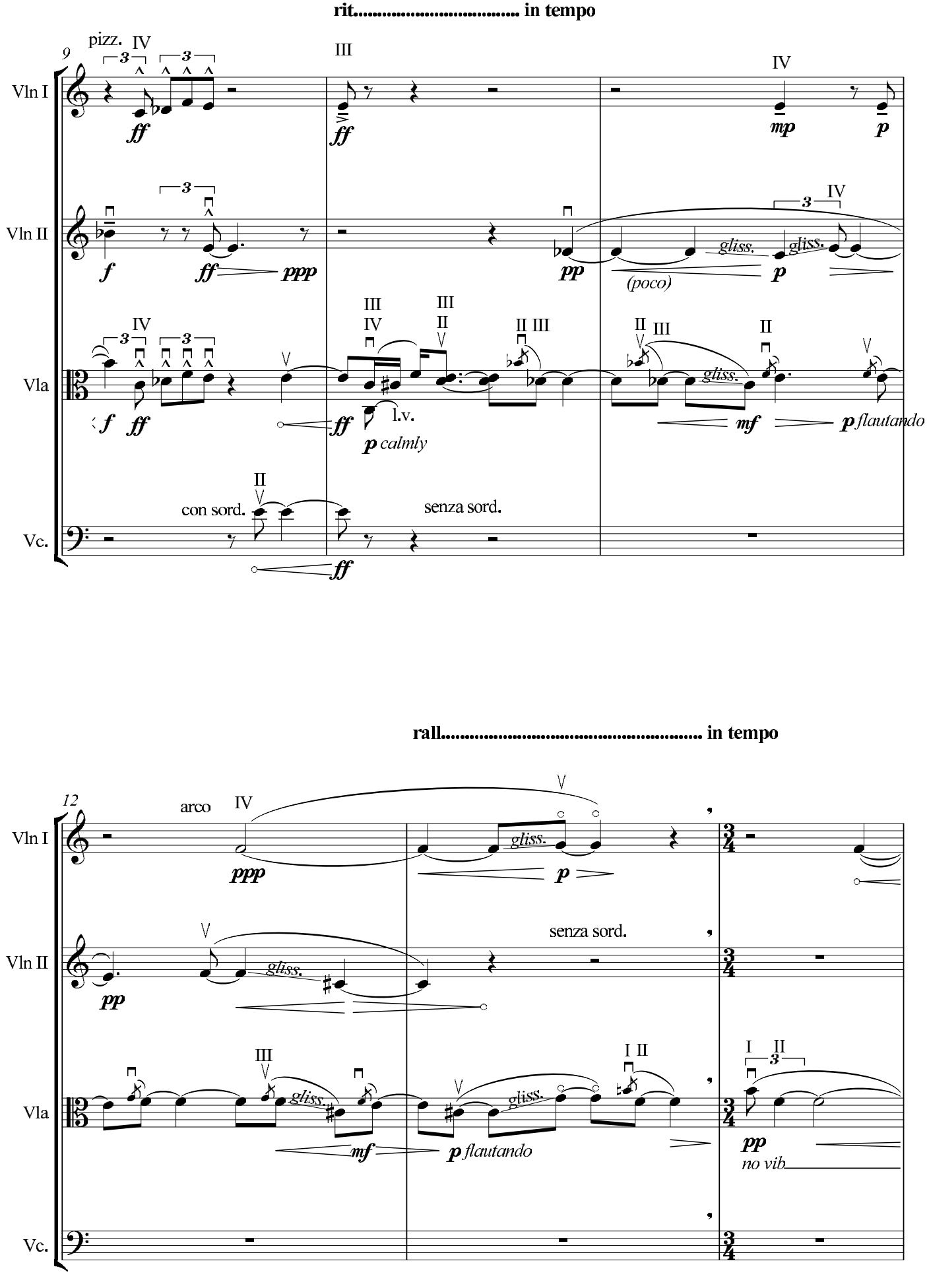
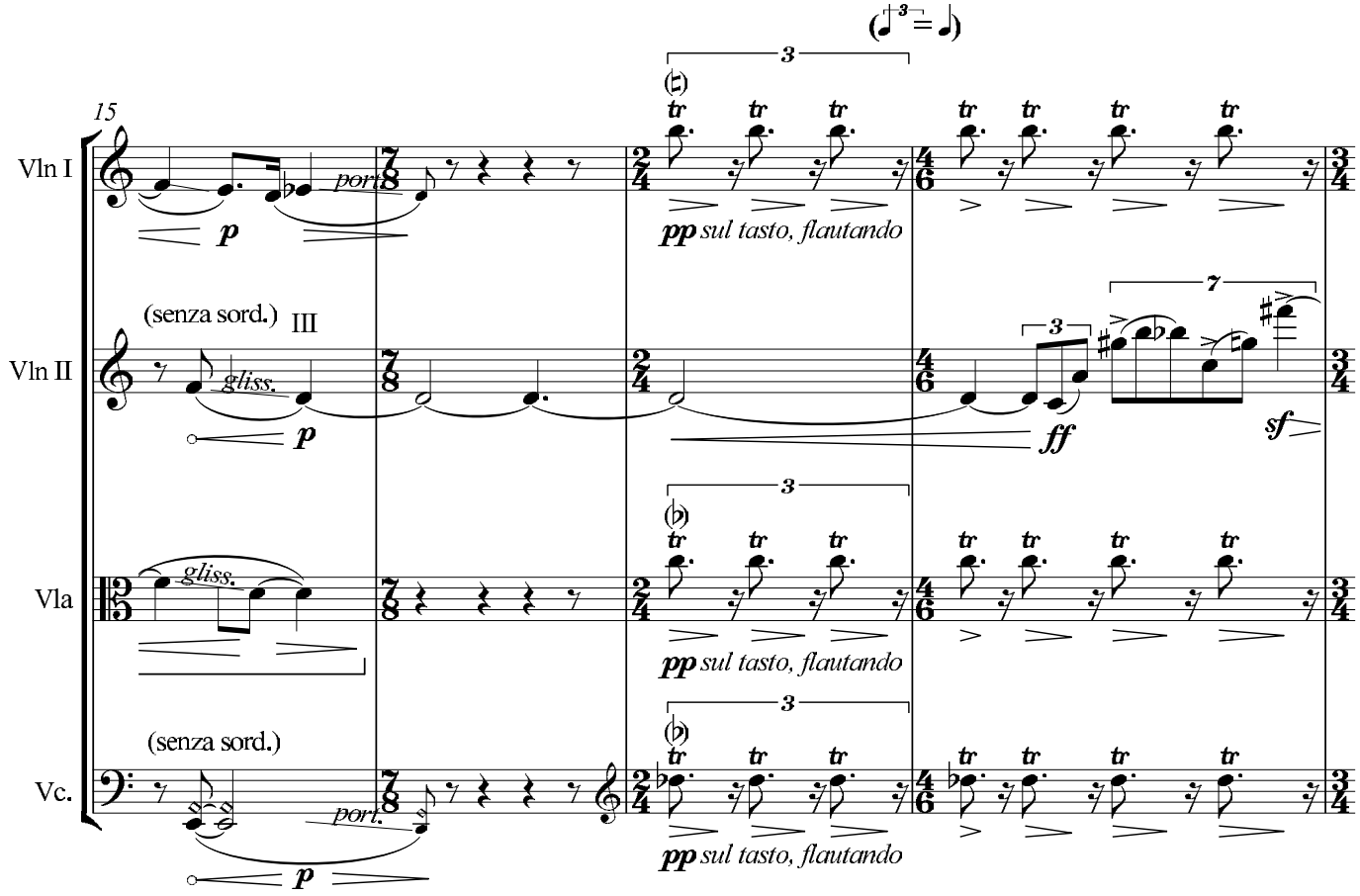
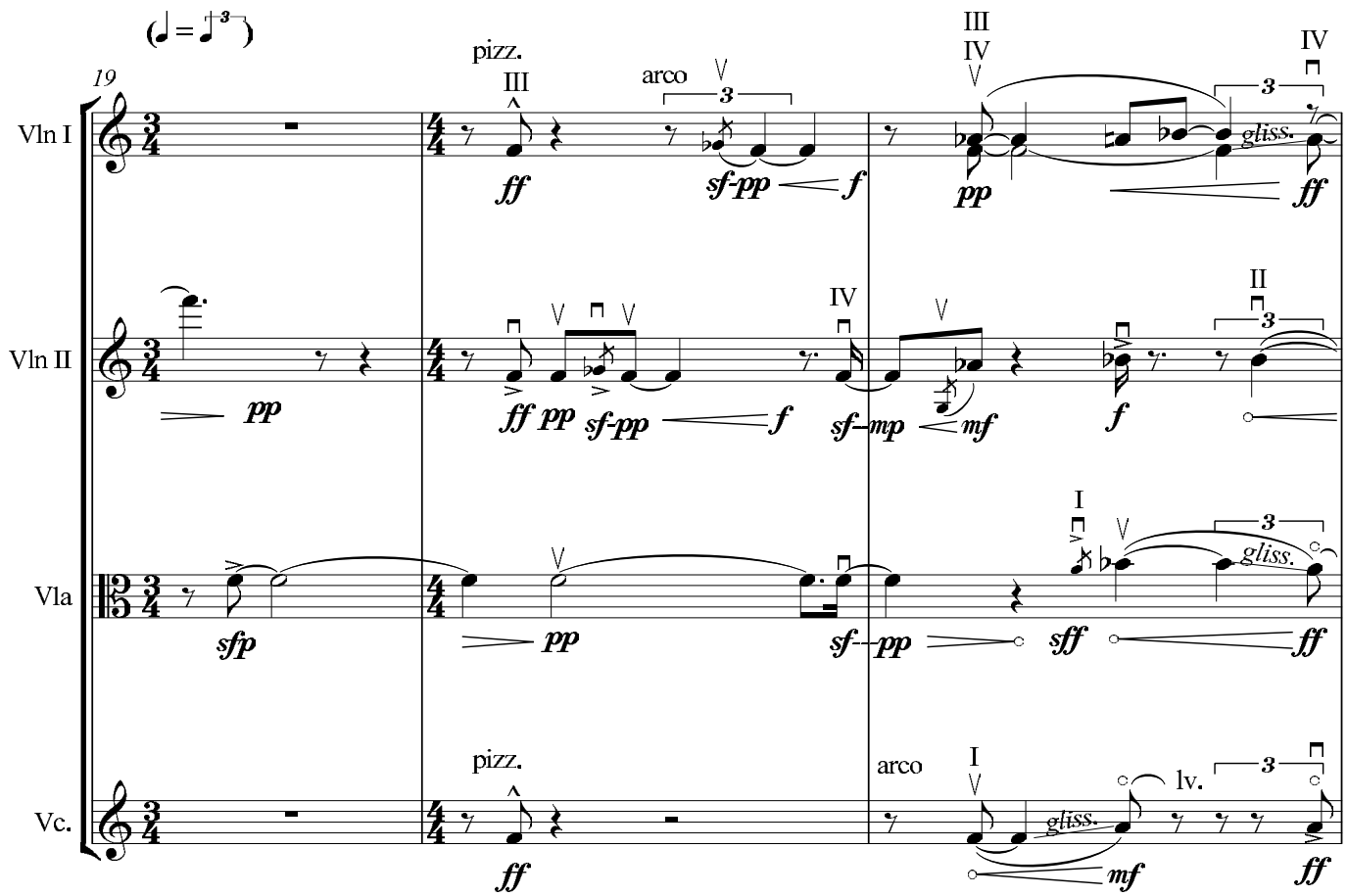
# I

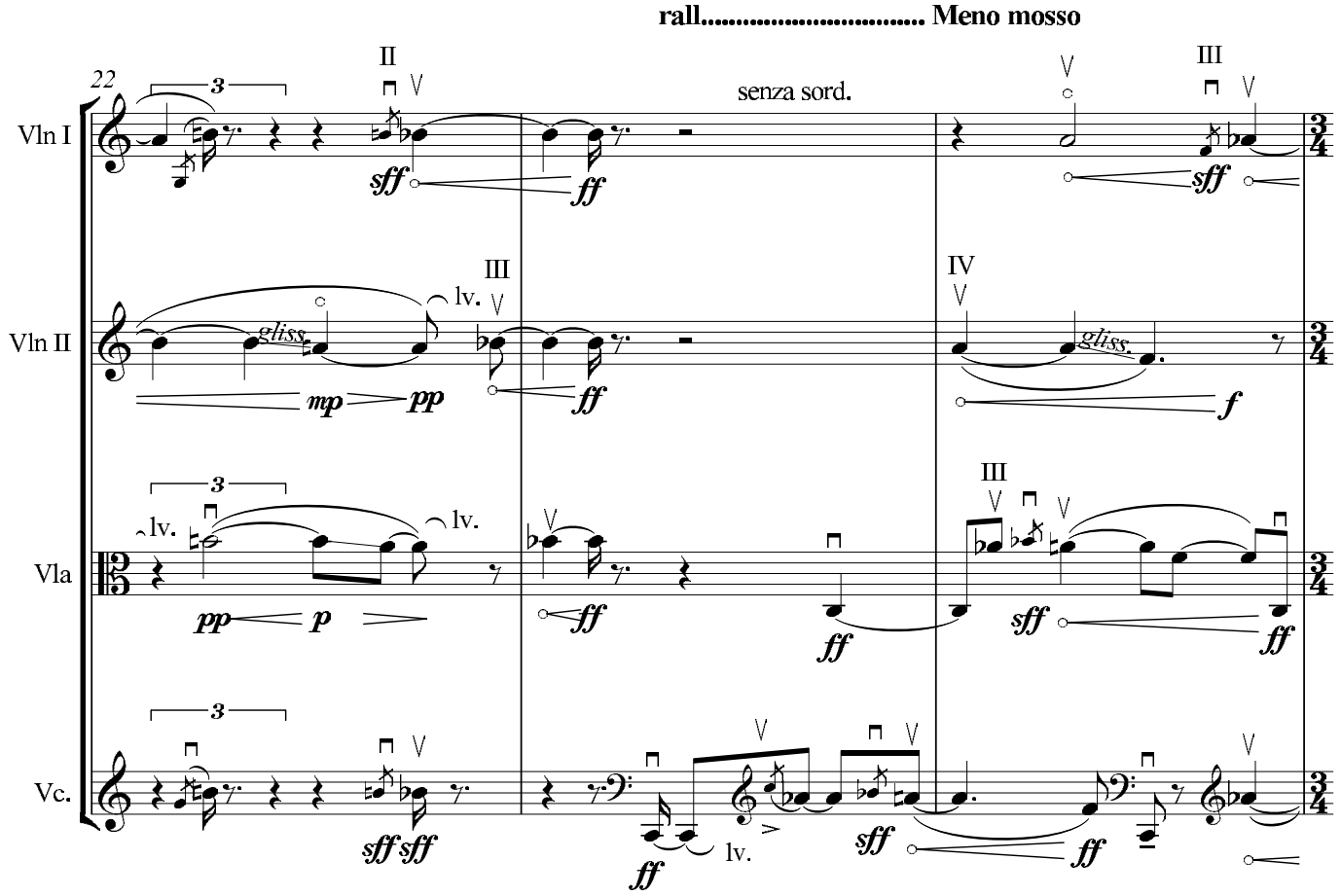

Wildly, folk-like, freely but slowly, with no feeling of pulse
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
gliss.
rall..... in tempo
Vla
broadly, drawn out..... in tempo
appassionato
broadly..... in tempo
ad lib.
appassionato

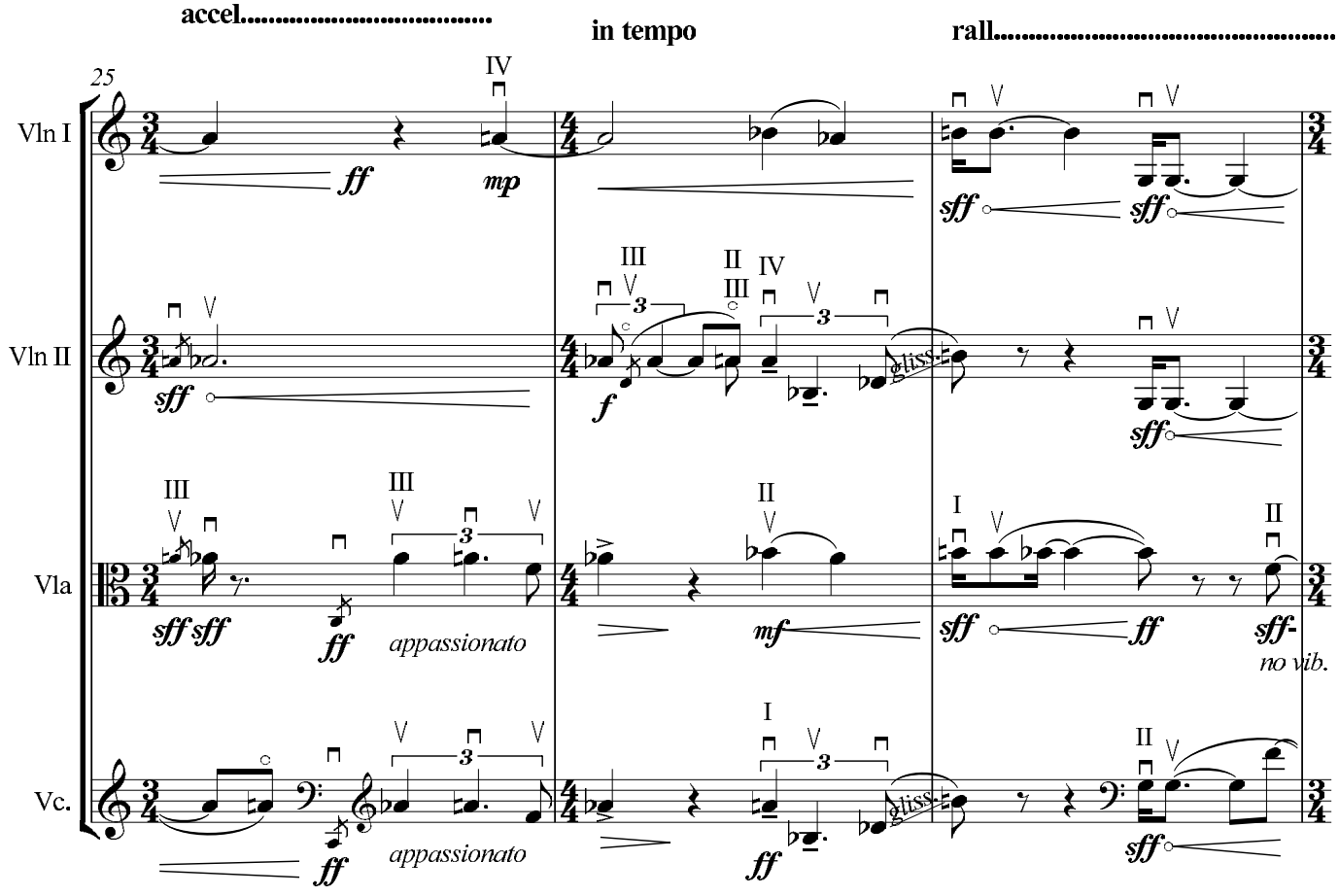

passionately, drawn out..... in tempo
Vla
I
IV
3
no vib
port.
mp
ff
sf-mp
fff
ff
pp
♩= 84, static, contemplative
con sord.
2
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
pp sul tasto, no vib, flautando
poco
p
ppp
pp
♩= 50-66, with the same feeling of rubato as the beginning
6
pizz.
arco
II
III
IV
gliss.
pp sul tasto
mp
pmp
f

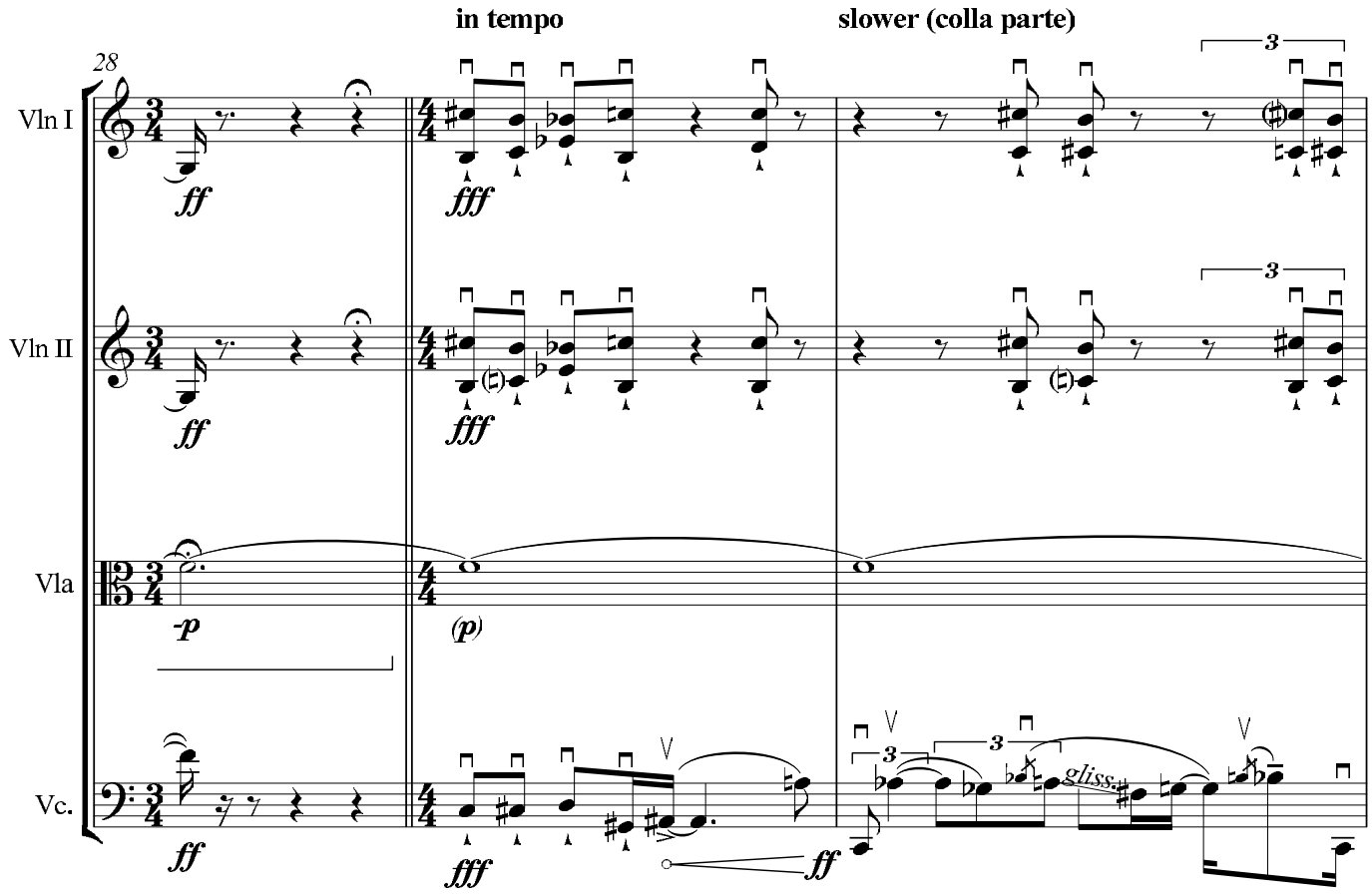

rit..... in tempo
9
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
pizz.
arco
con sord.
senza sord.
(poco)
gliss.
l.v.
p calmly
p flautando
no vib
rall..... in tempo
12

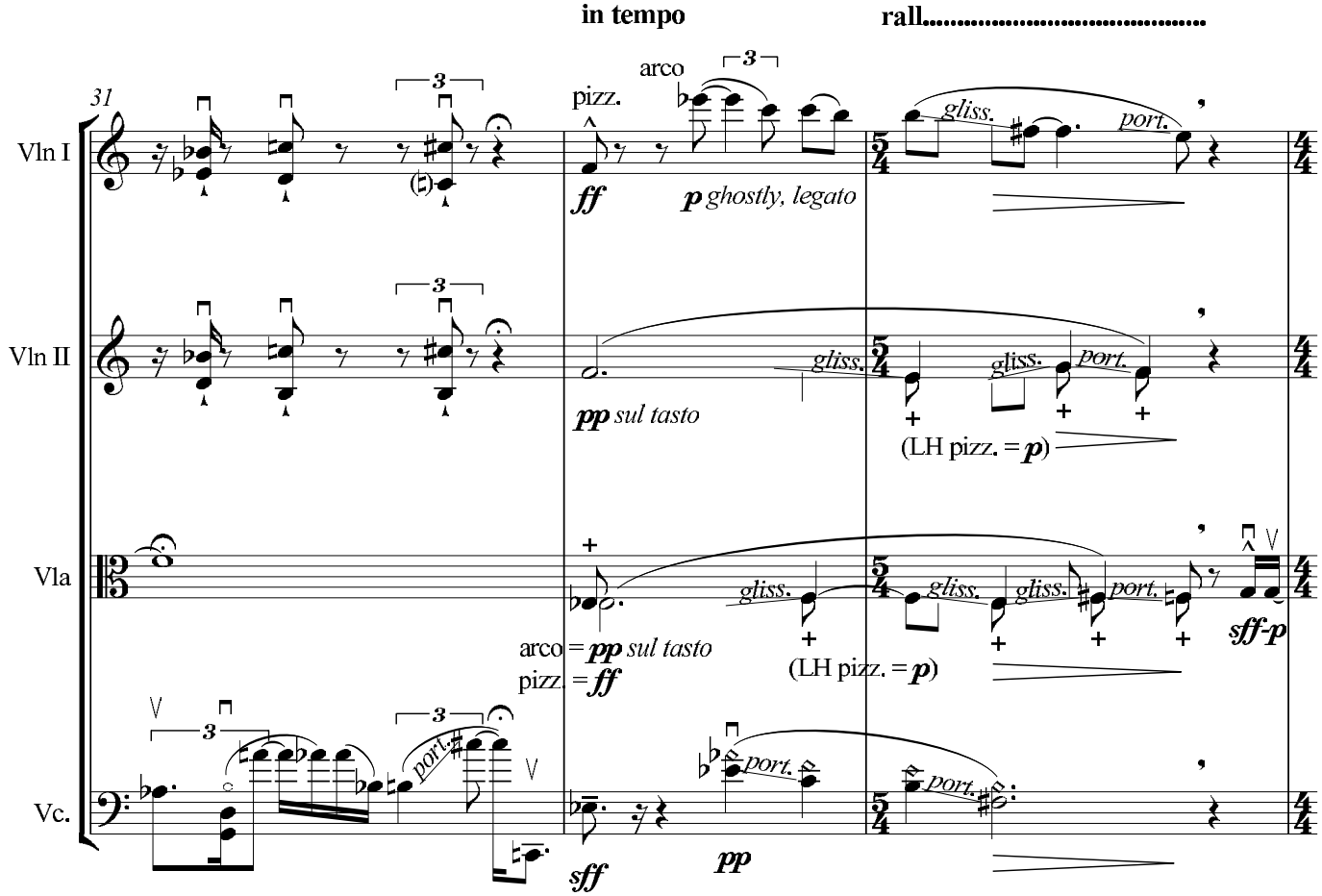

(♩ 3 = ♩)
15
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
(senza sord.)
III
port.
gliss.
p
pp sul tasto, flautando
ff
sf
(senza sord.)

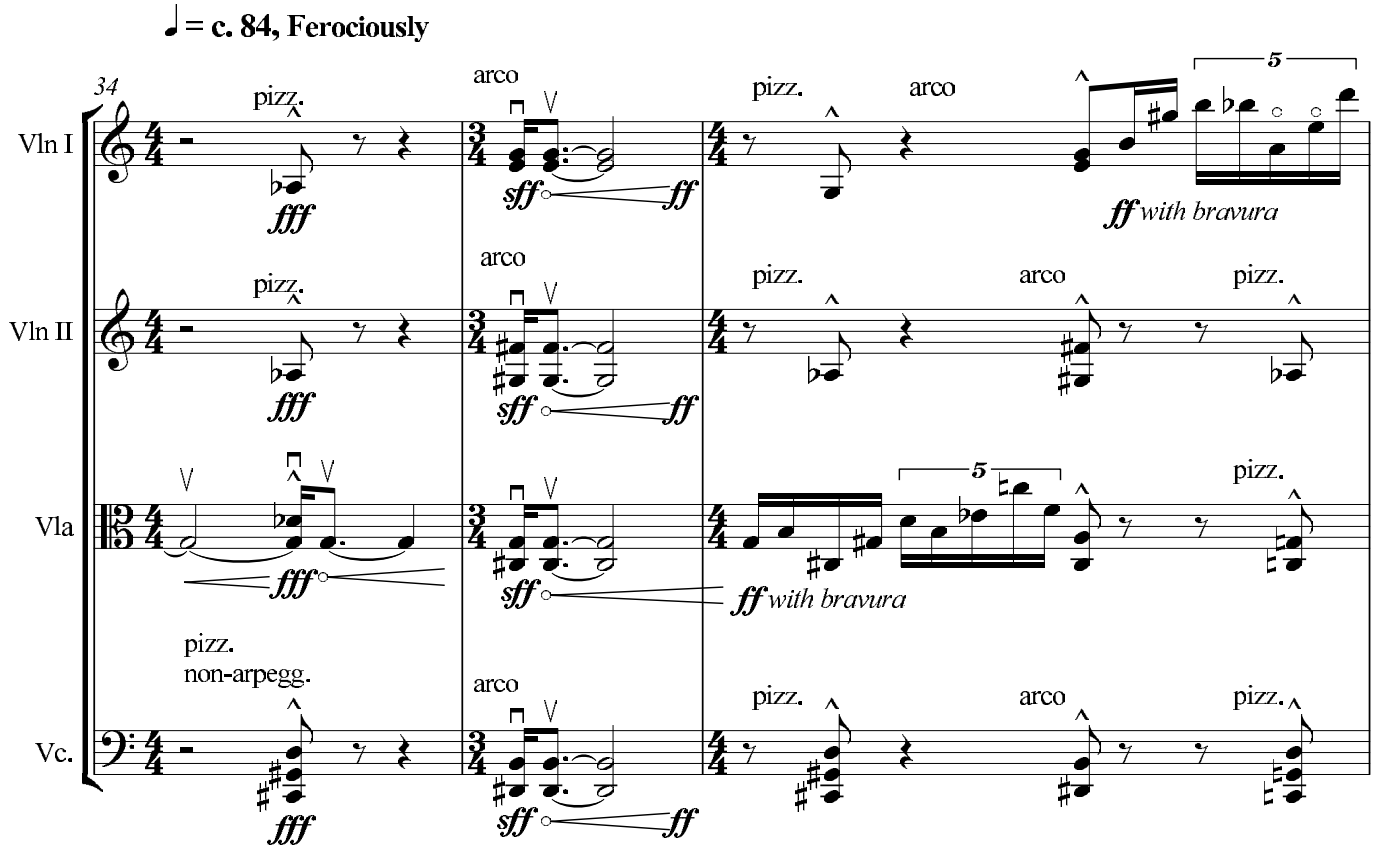

rit..... in tempo
(♩ = ♩ 3)
19
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
pizz.
arco
III
IV
II
I
lv.
gliss.
pp
ff
sf-pp
f
sf-mp
mf
sfp
sff

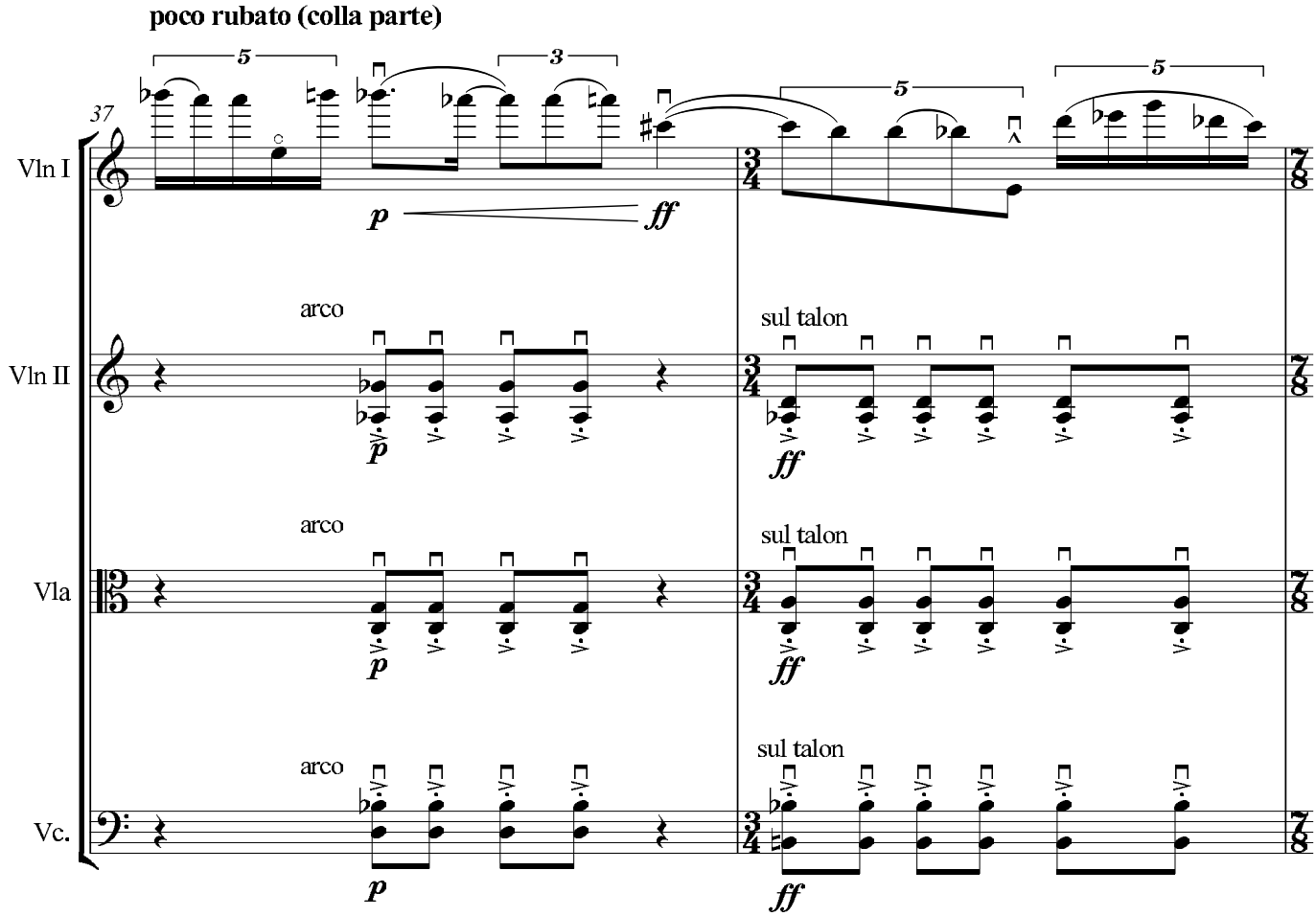

rall..... Meno mosso
22
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
senza sord.
gliss.
lv.
sff
ff
mp
pp
f
p

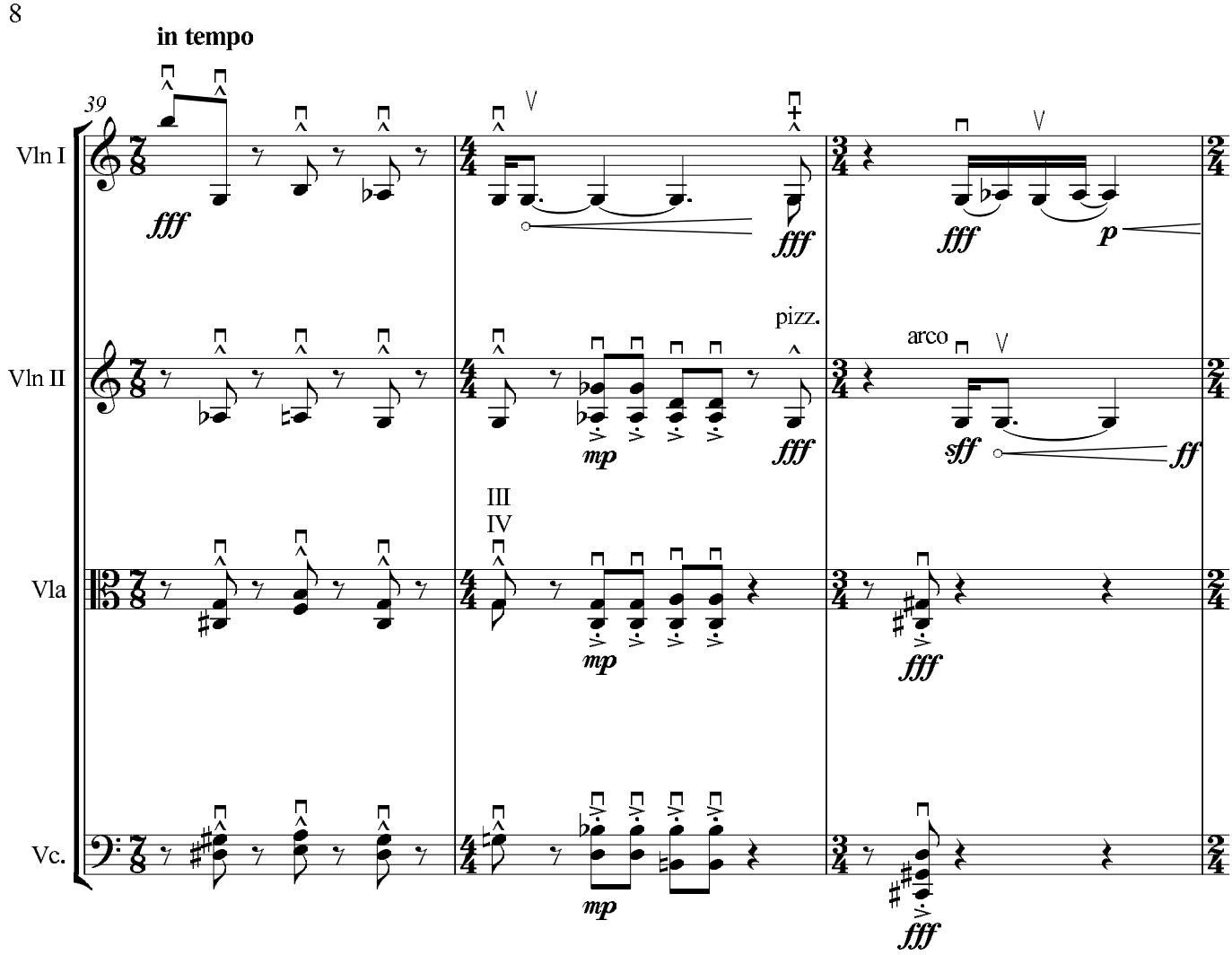

accel.....
in tempo
rall.....
25
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
appassionato
gliss.
no vib.
sff
ff
mp
mf
f

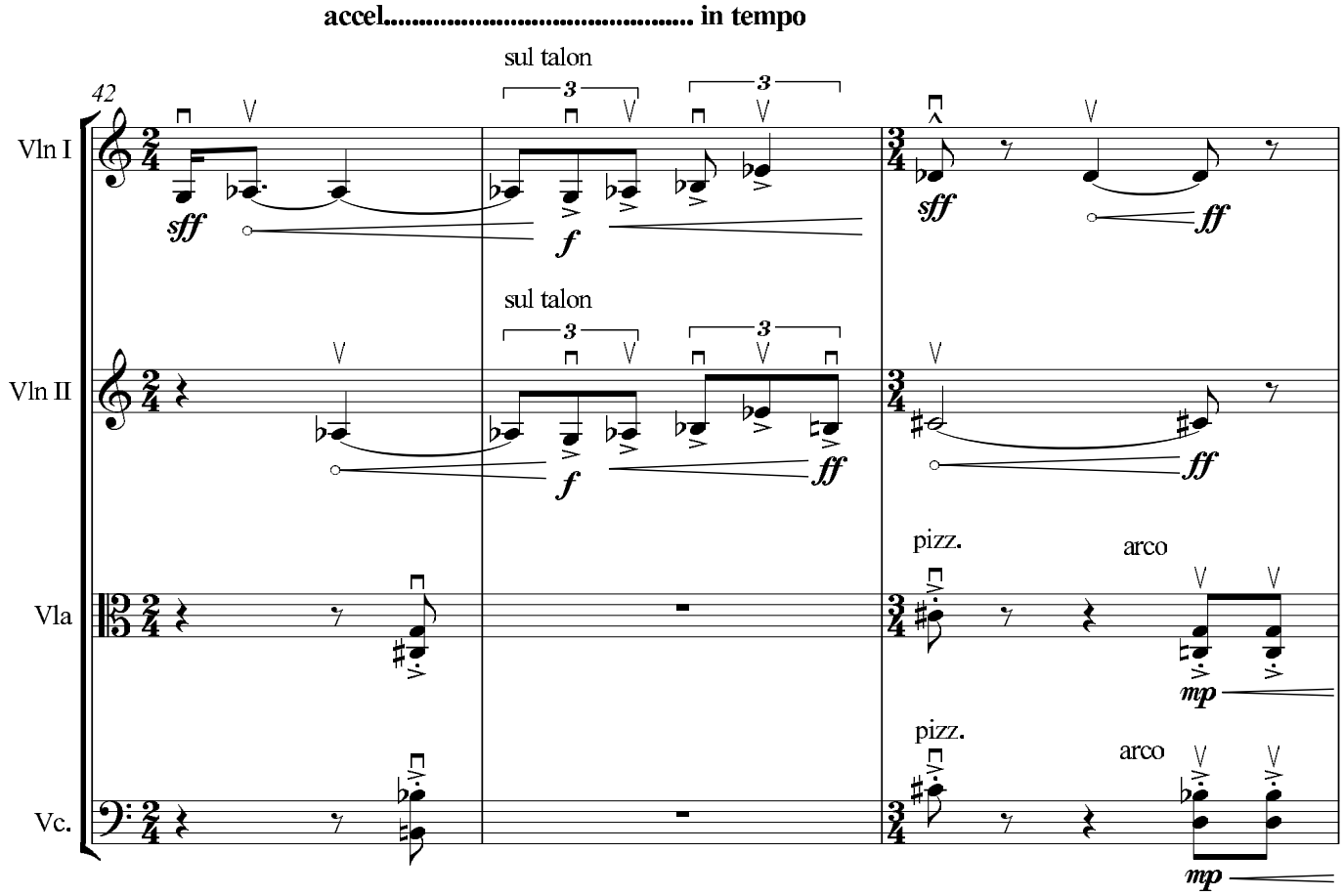

in tempo
slower (colla parte)
28
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
ff
fff
-p
(p)
gliss.

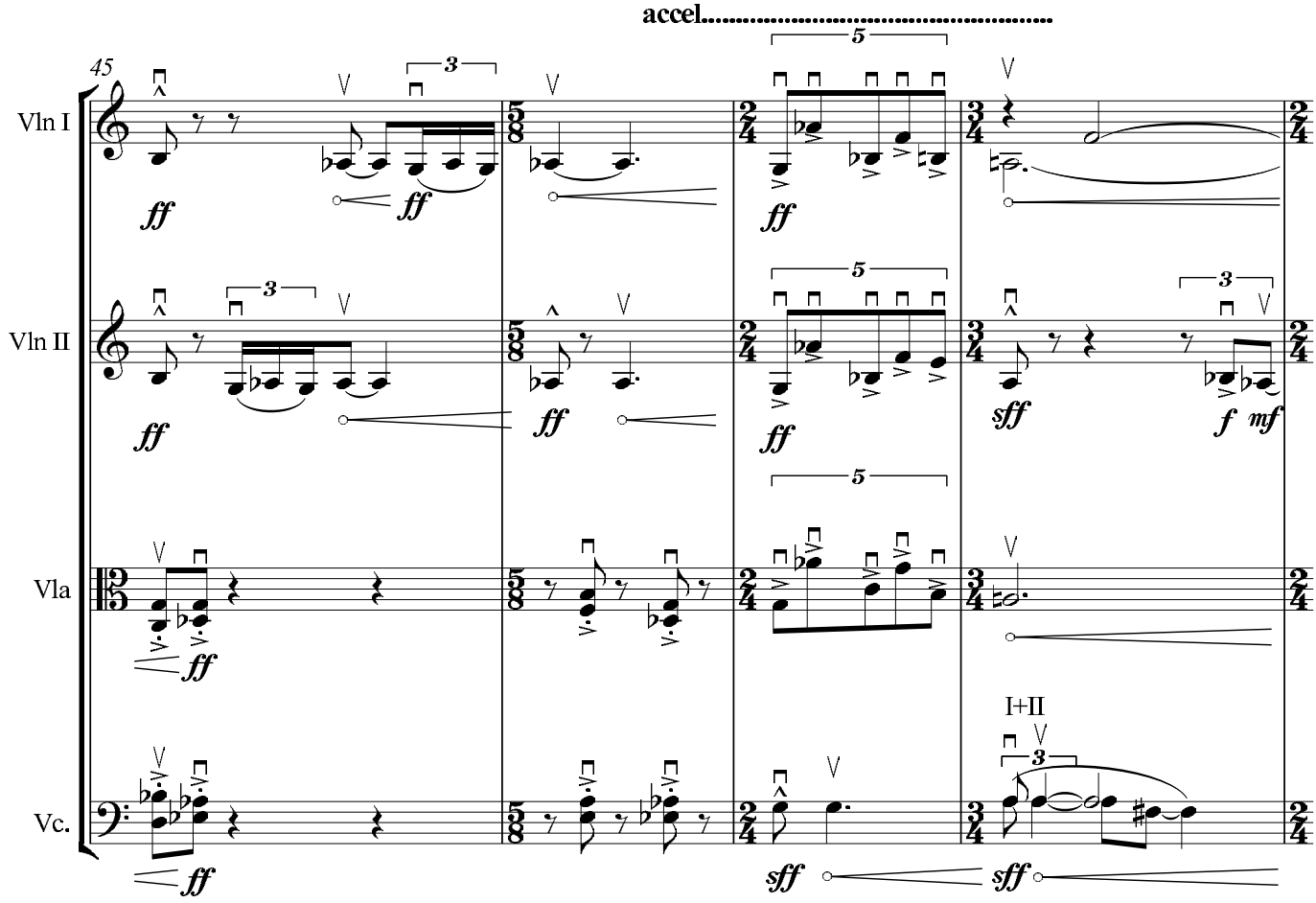

in tempo
rall.....
31
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
pizz.
arco
ff
p ghostly, legato
pp sul tasto
(LH pizz. = p)
arco = pp sul tasto
pizz. = ff
sff-p
sff
pp
gliss.
port.

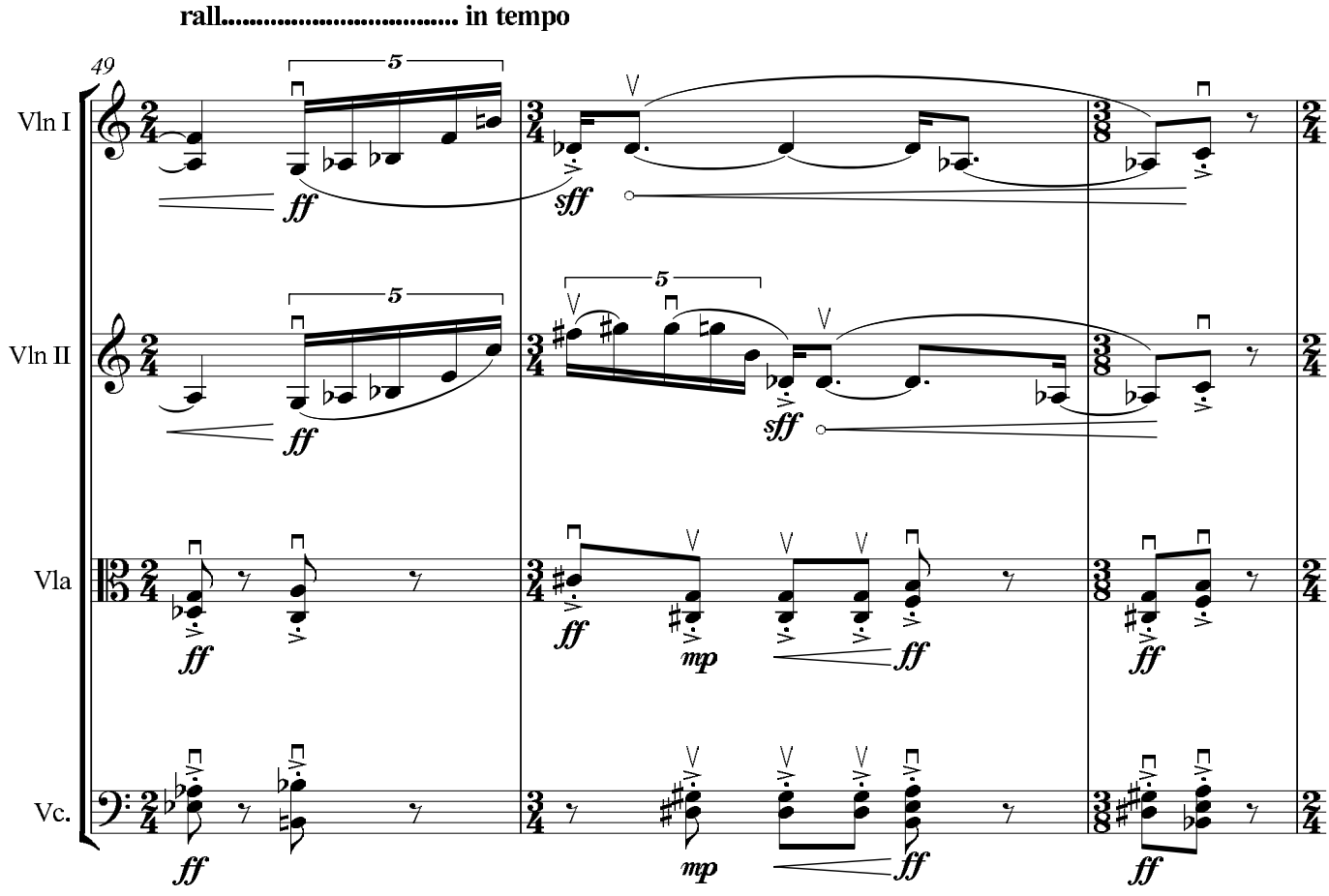

♩ = c. 84, Ferociously
34
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
pizz.
arco
fff
sff
ff
ff with bravura
pizz.
non-arpegg.
5

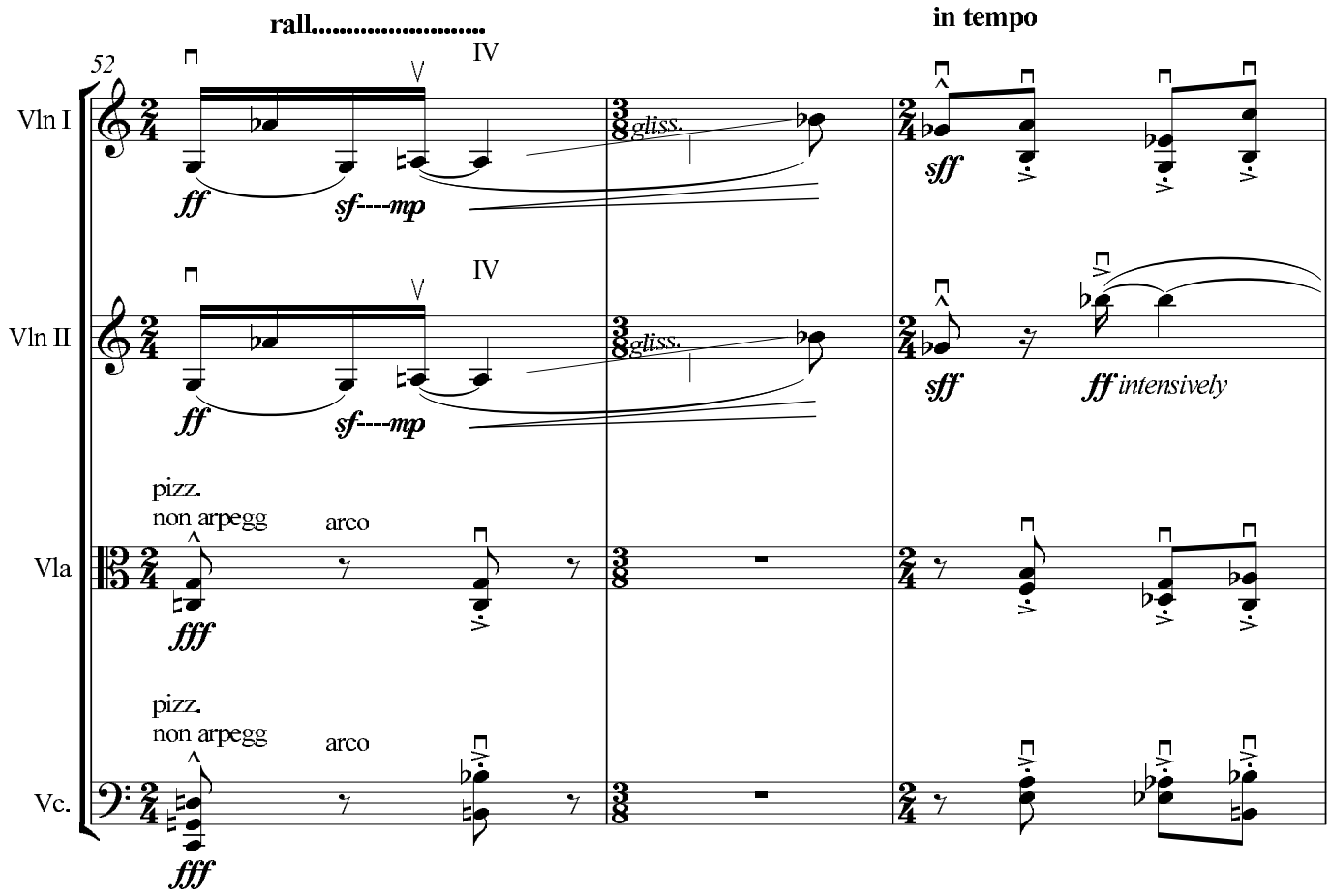

poco rubato (colla parte)
37
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
5
3
p
ff
arco
sul talon

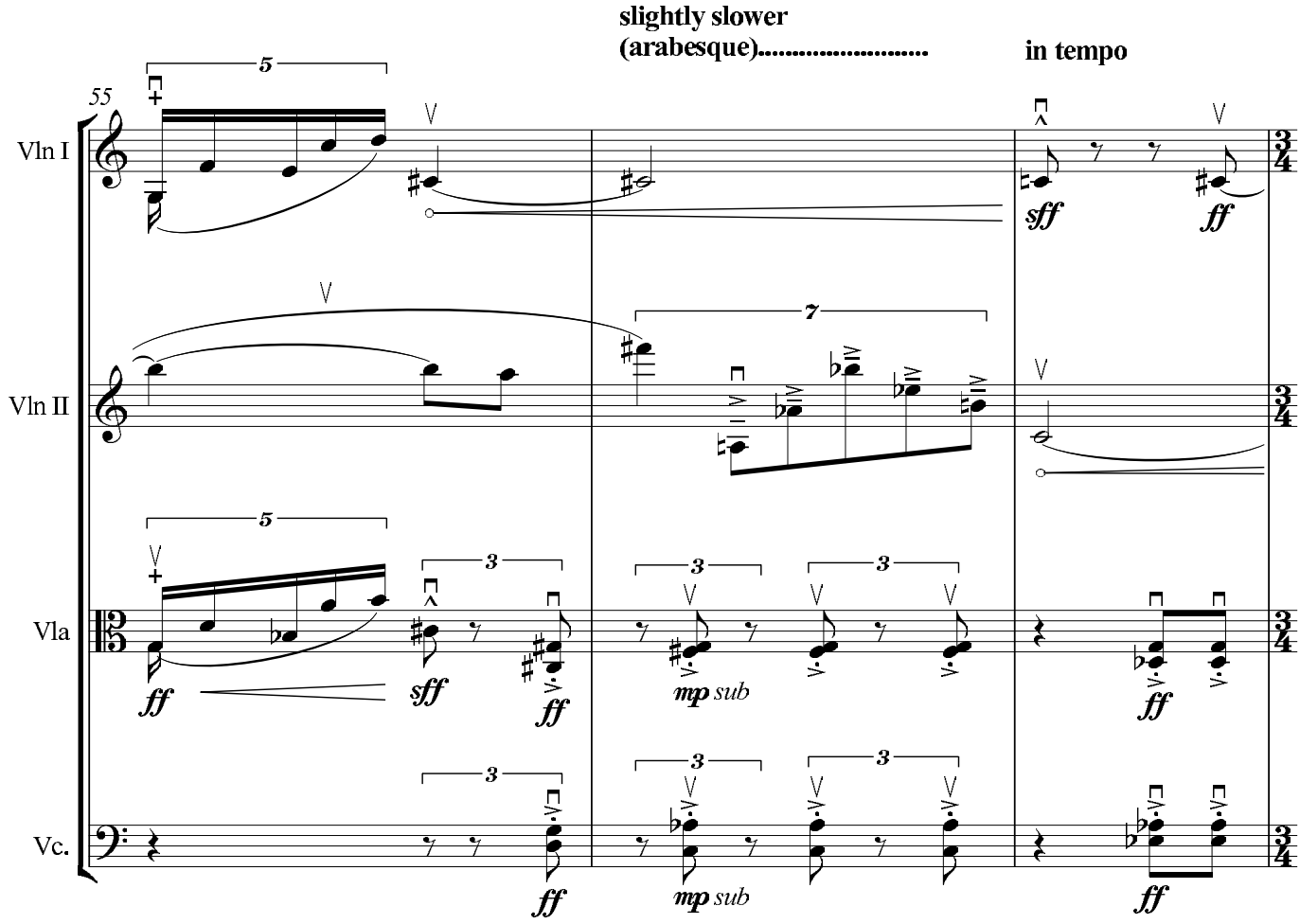

in tempo
39
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
fff
pizz.
arco
mp
sff
ff
p
III
IV

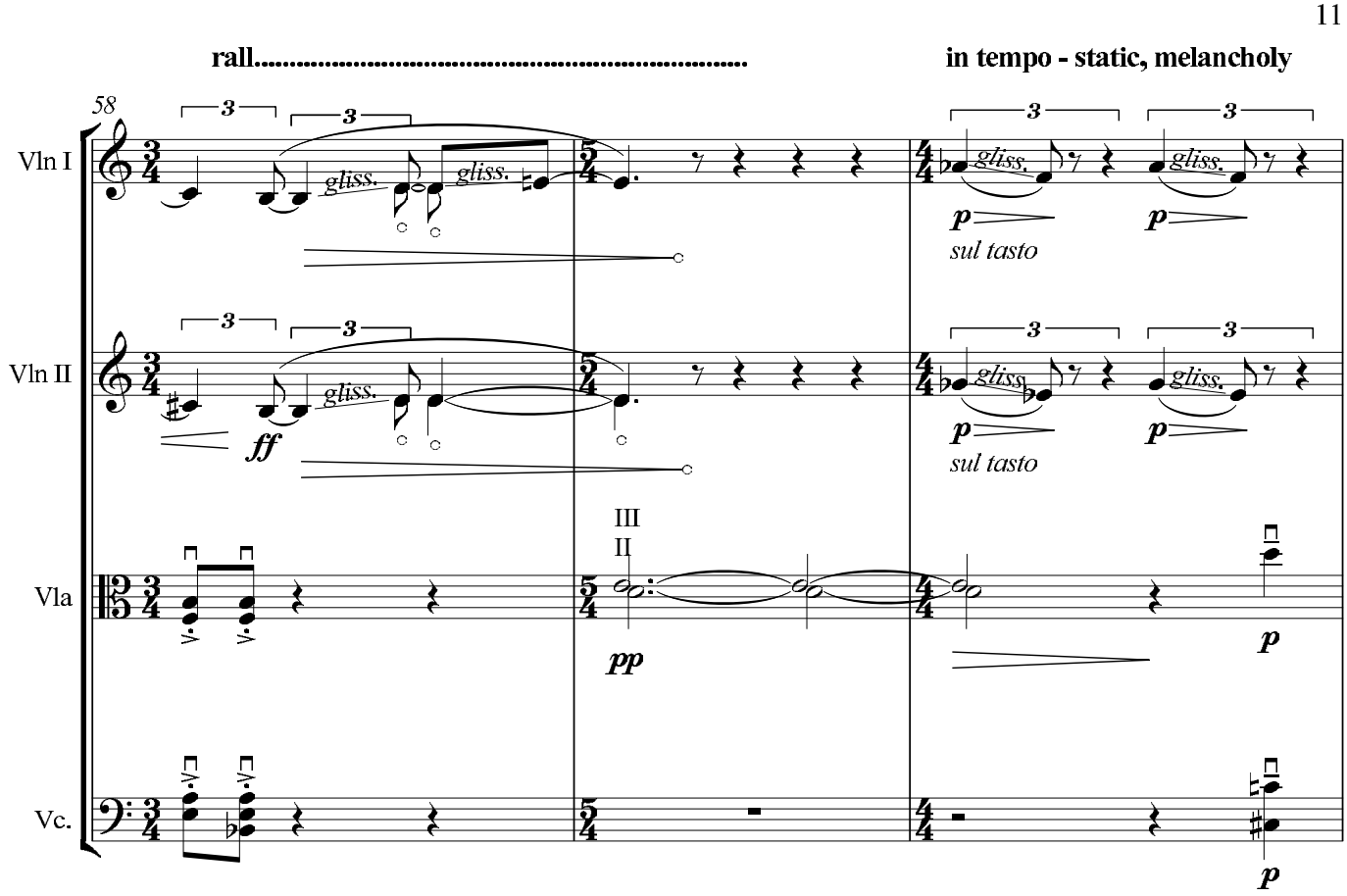

accel..... in tempo
42
sul talon
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
sff
f
ff
pizz.
arco
mp

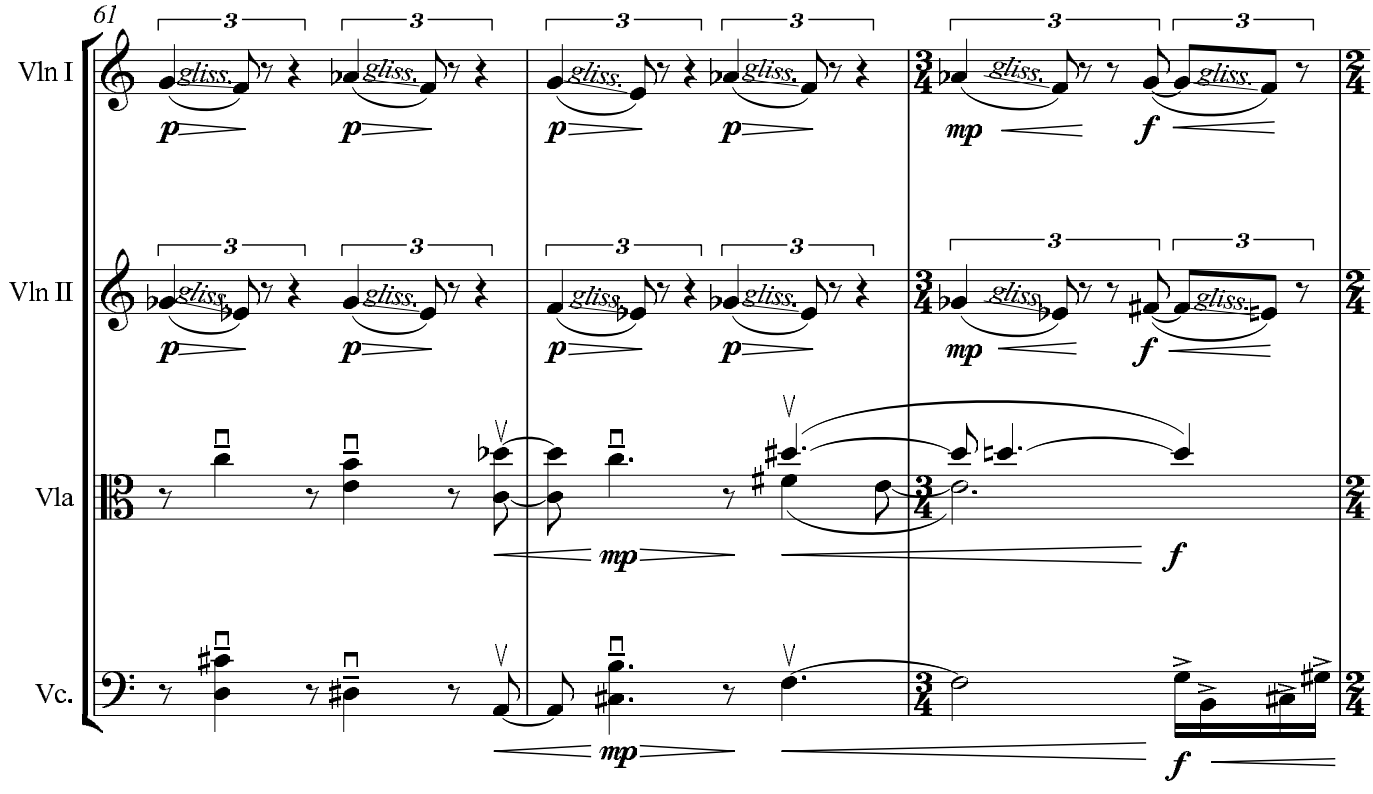

accel.....
45
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
I+II

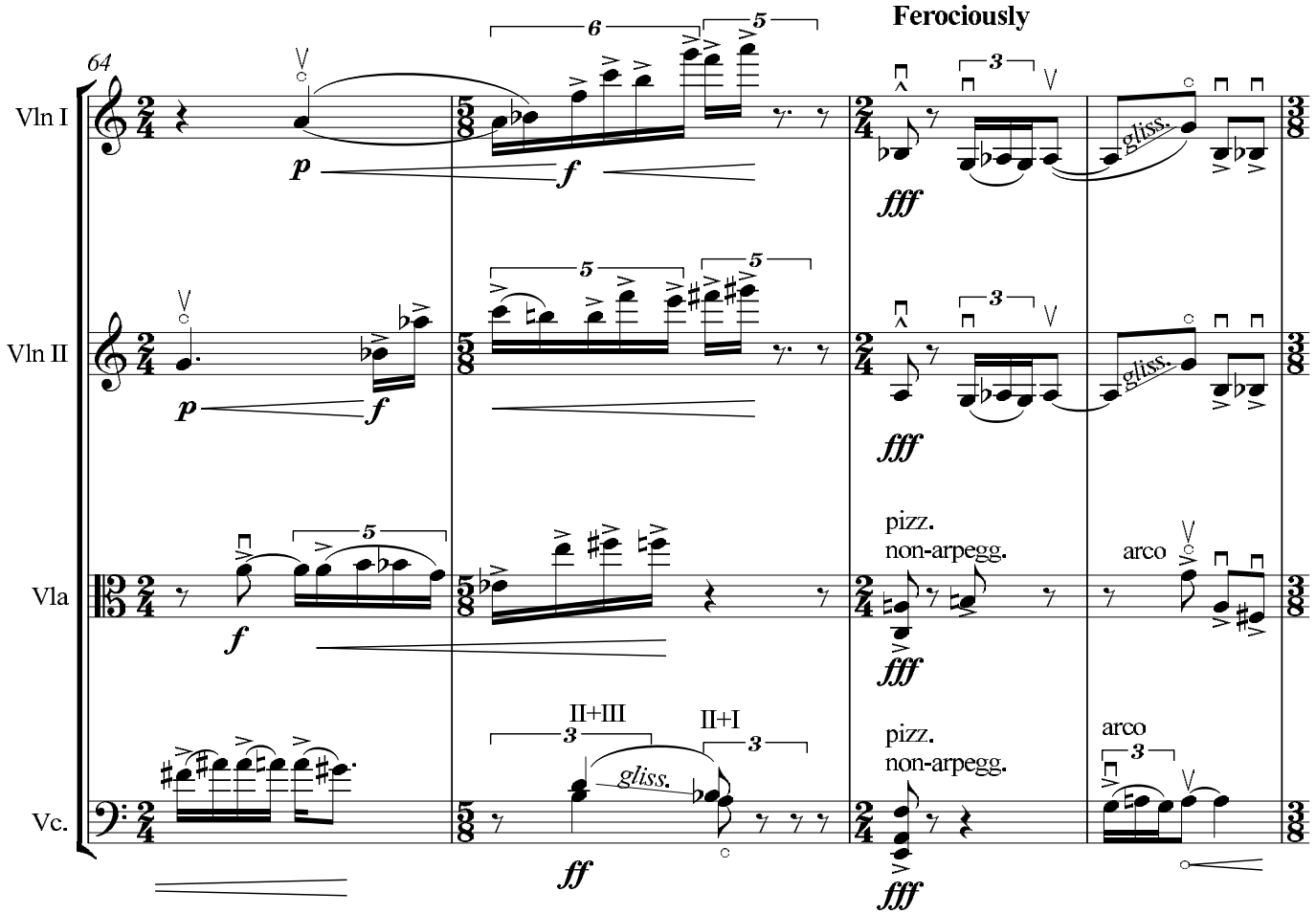

rall..... in tempo
49
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.

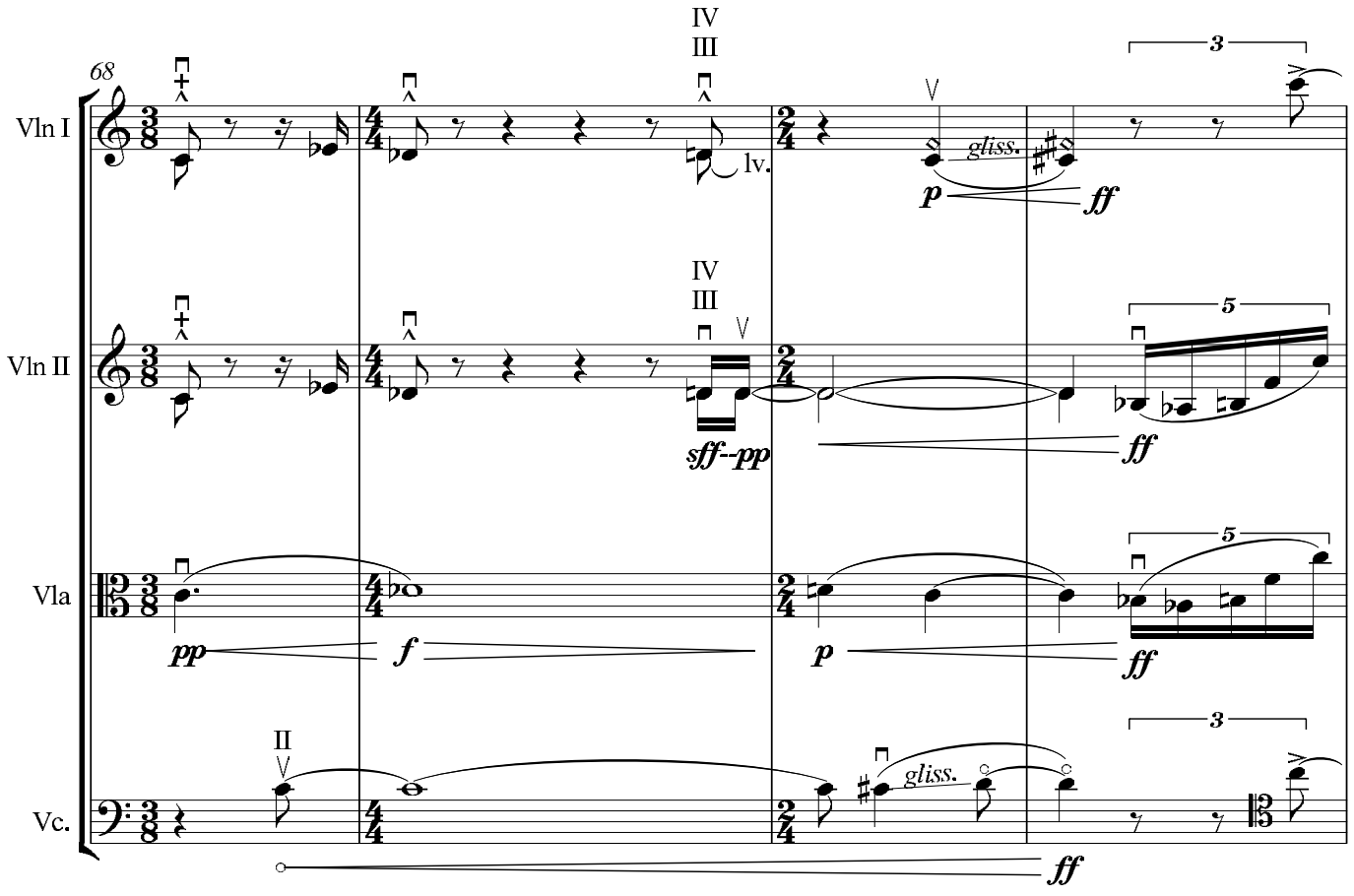

rall.....
in tempo
52
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
IV
ff
sf----mp
gliss.
sff
ff intensively
pizz.
non arpegg
arco
fff

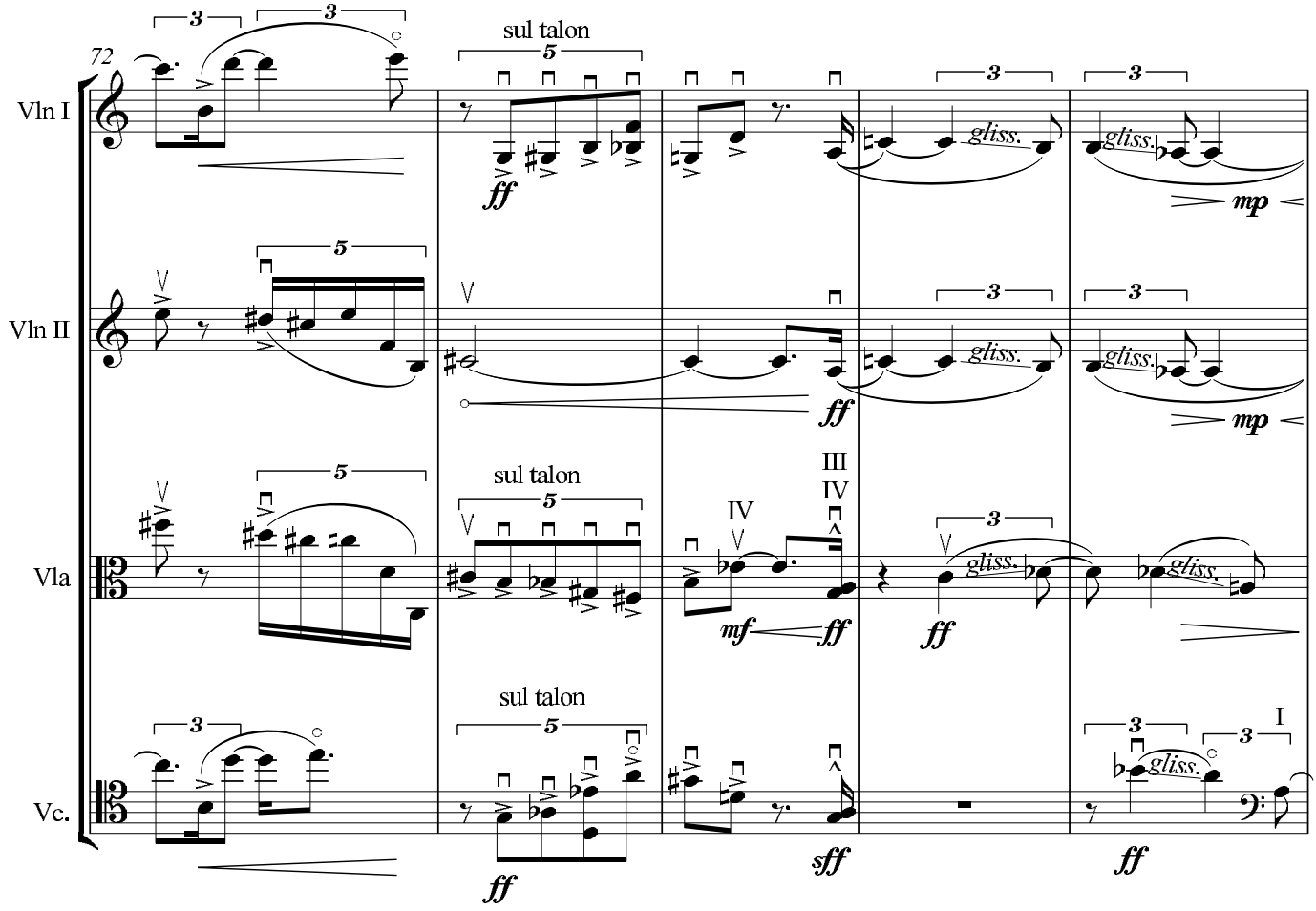

slightly slower
(arabesque).....
in tempo
55
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
5
7
3
ff
sff
mp sub

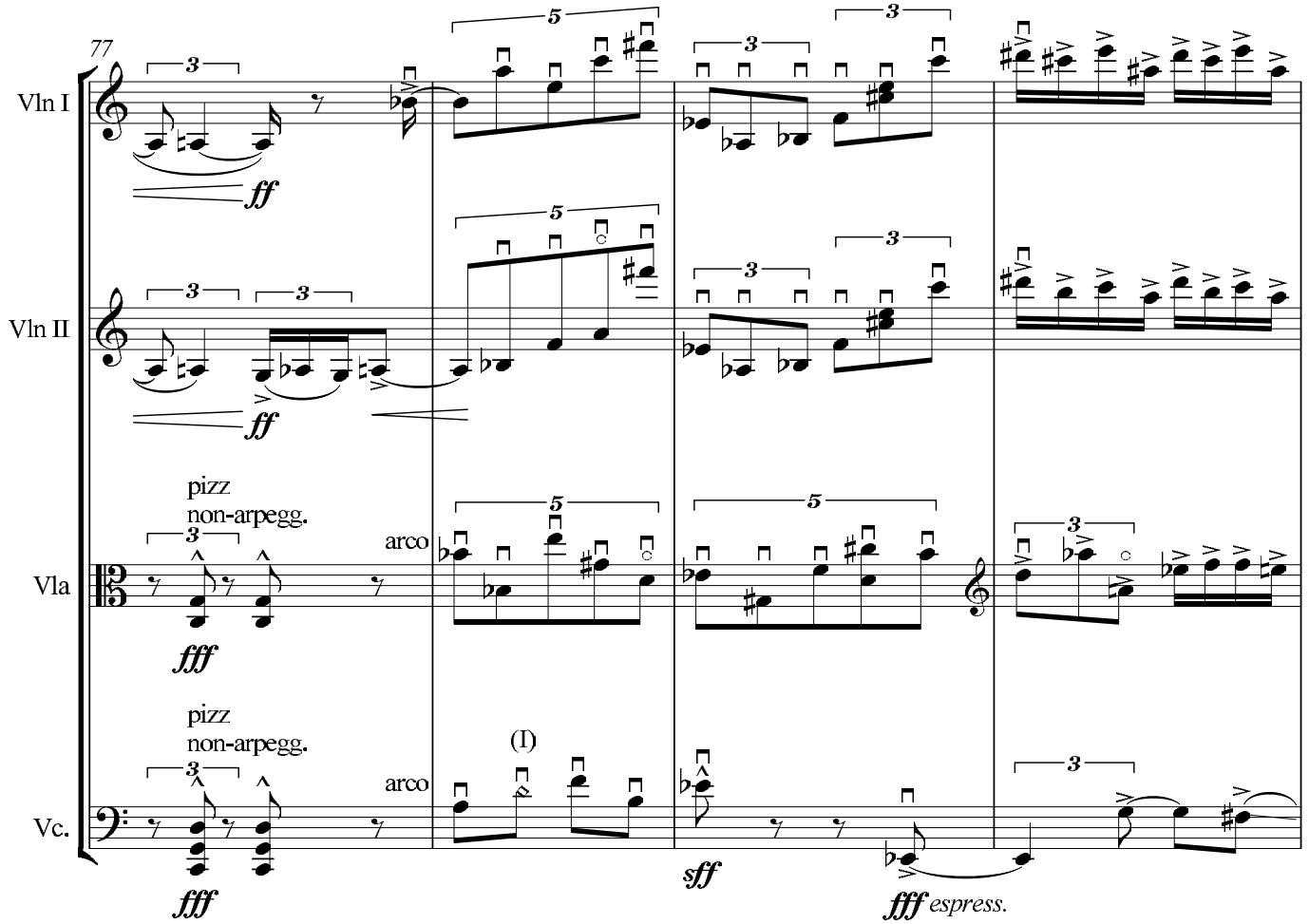

rall.....
in tempo - static, melancholy
58
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
gliss.
sul tasto
III
II
ff
pp
p

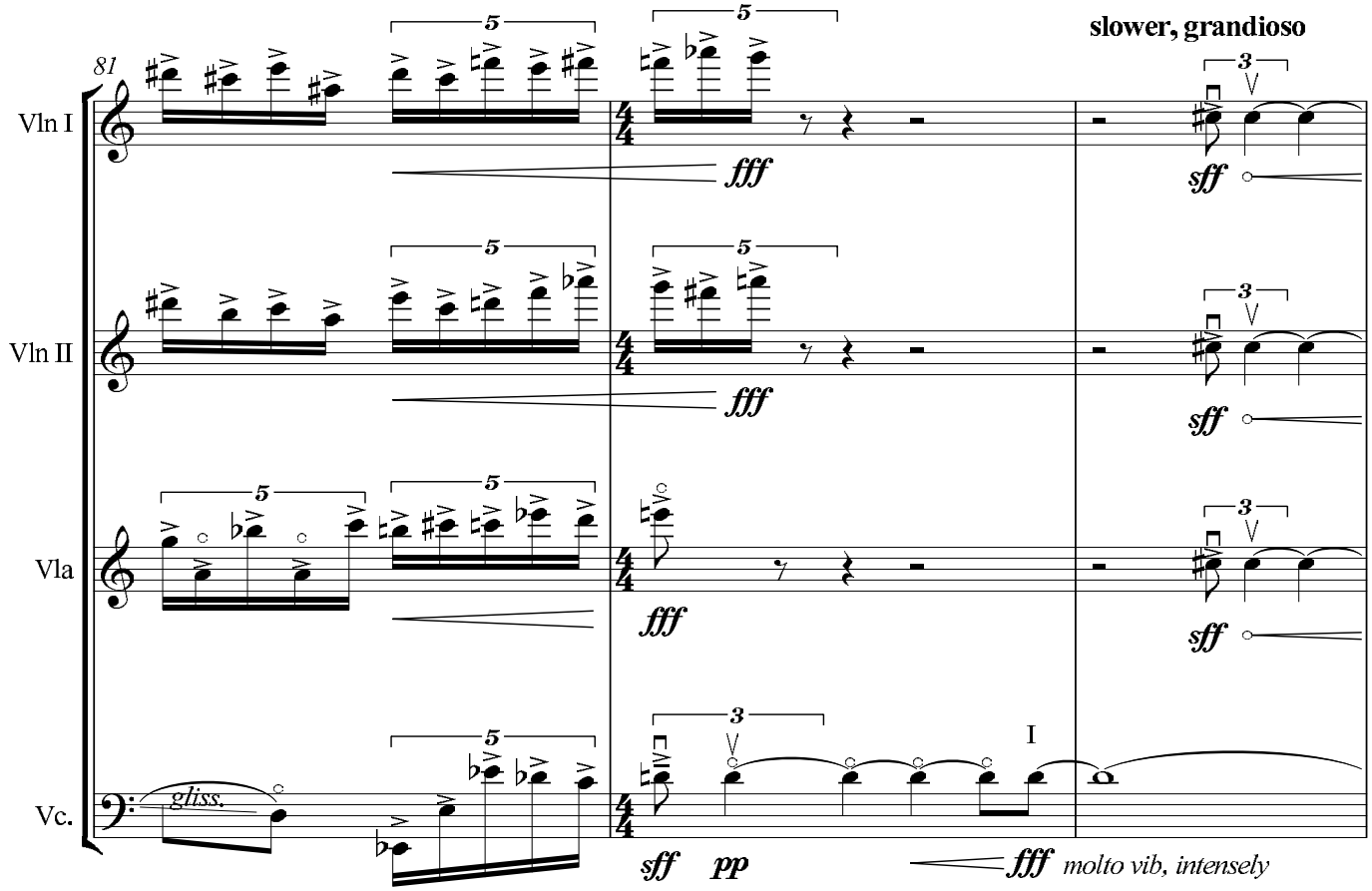

61
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
gliss.
mp
f

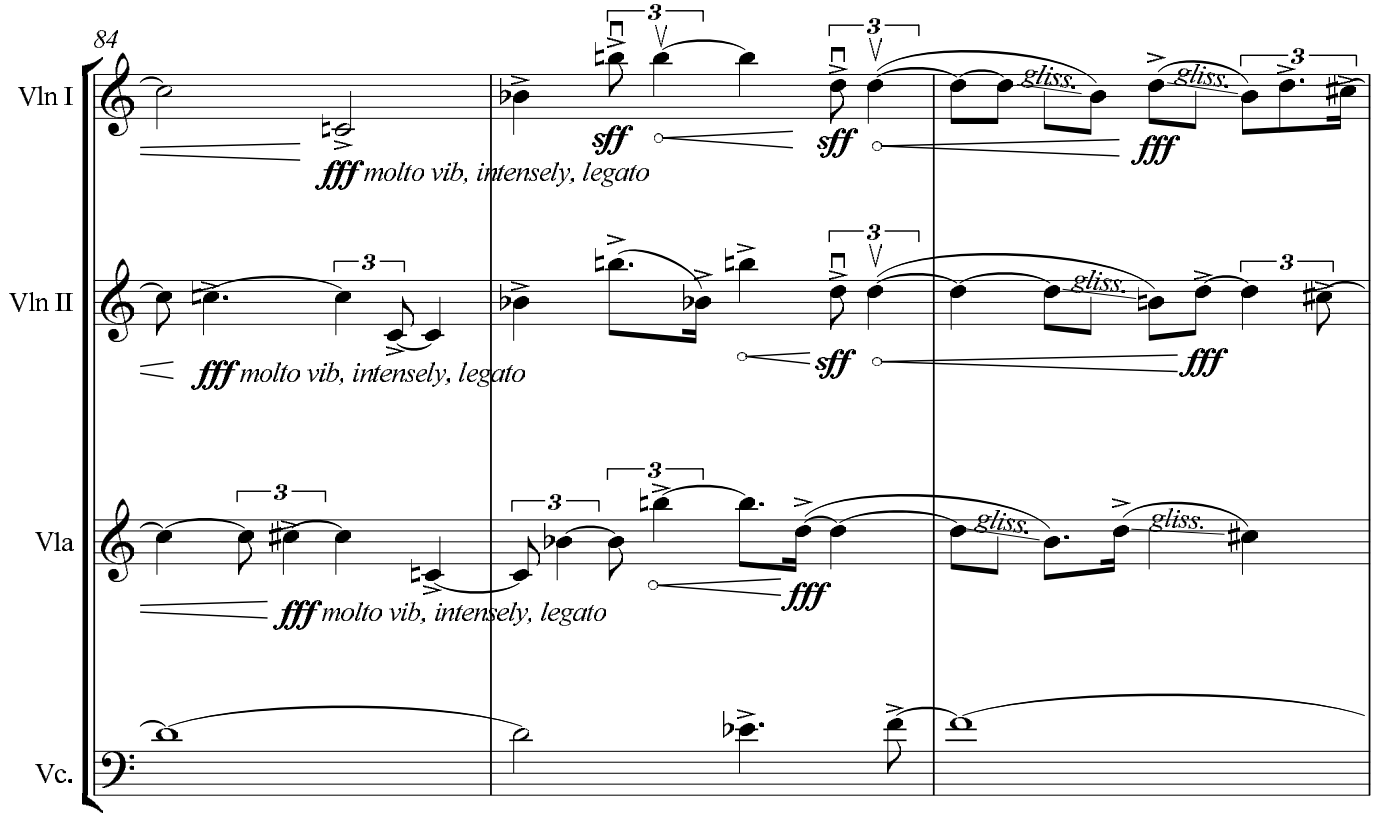

64
Ferociously
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
pizz.
non-arpegg.
arco
II+III
II+I
gliss.

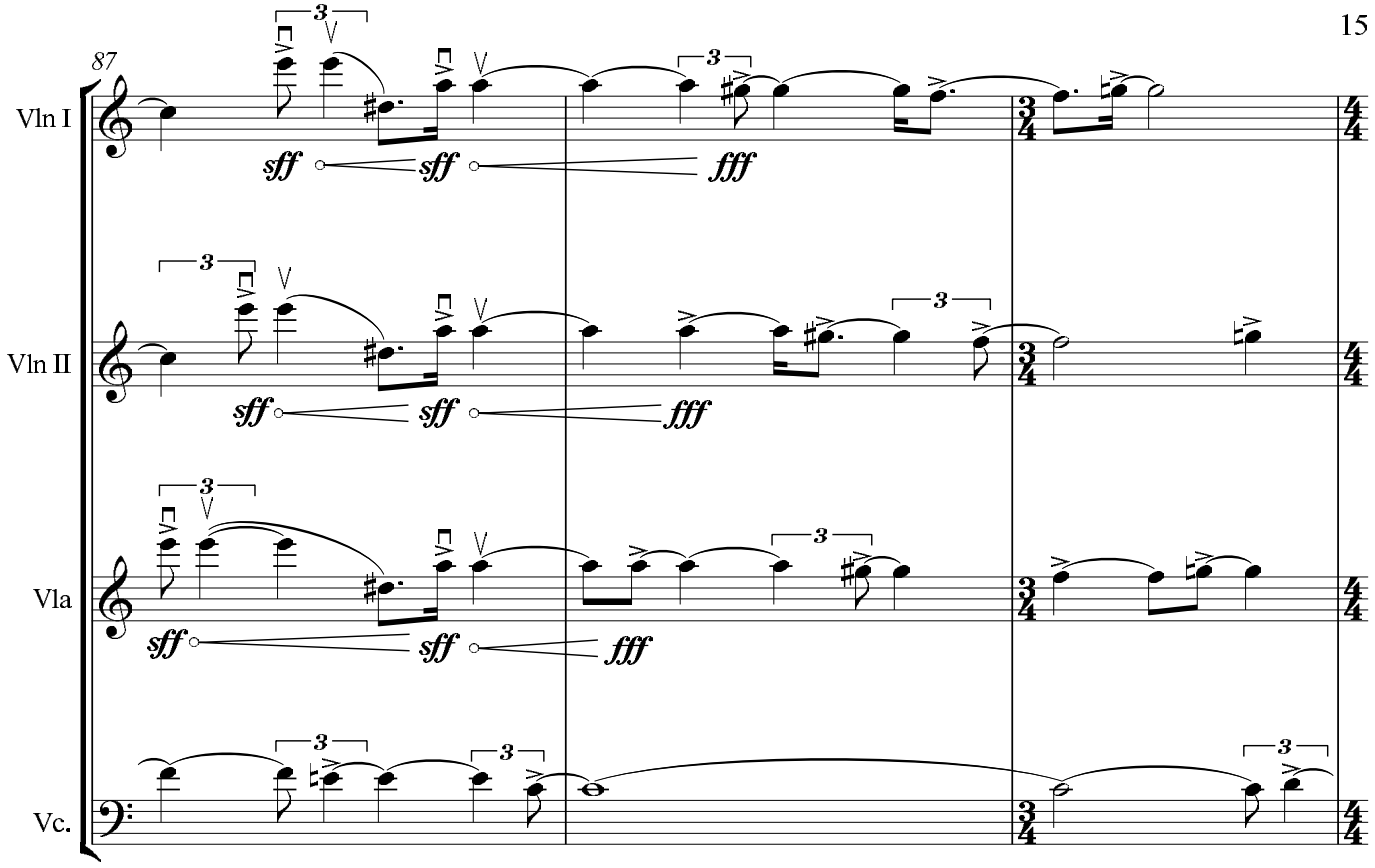

68
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
IV
III
lv.
sff--pp
II
gliss.

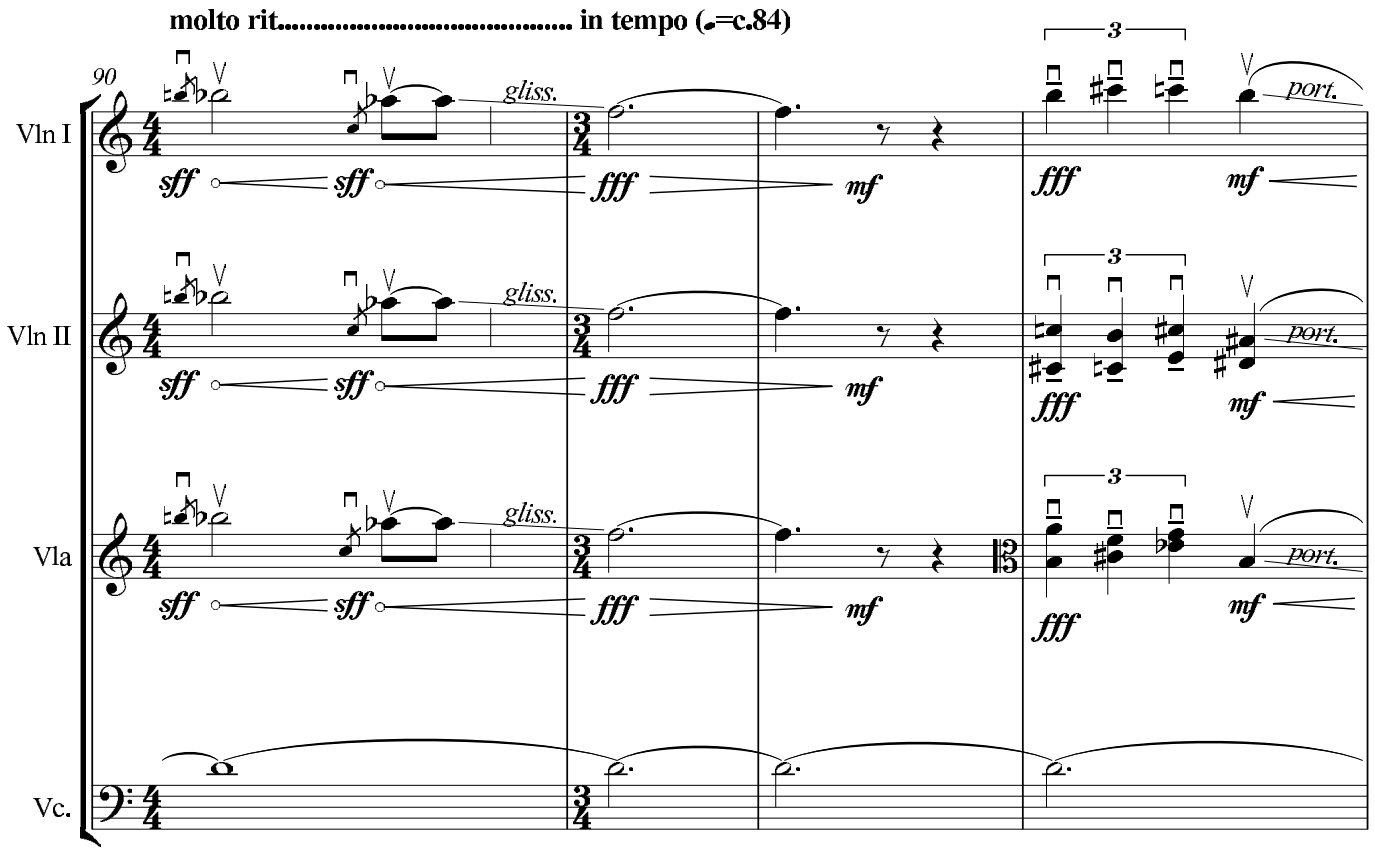

72
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
sul talon
ff
mp
gliss.
III
IV
mf
sff
I
lv.

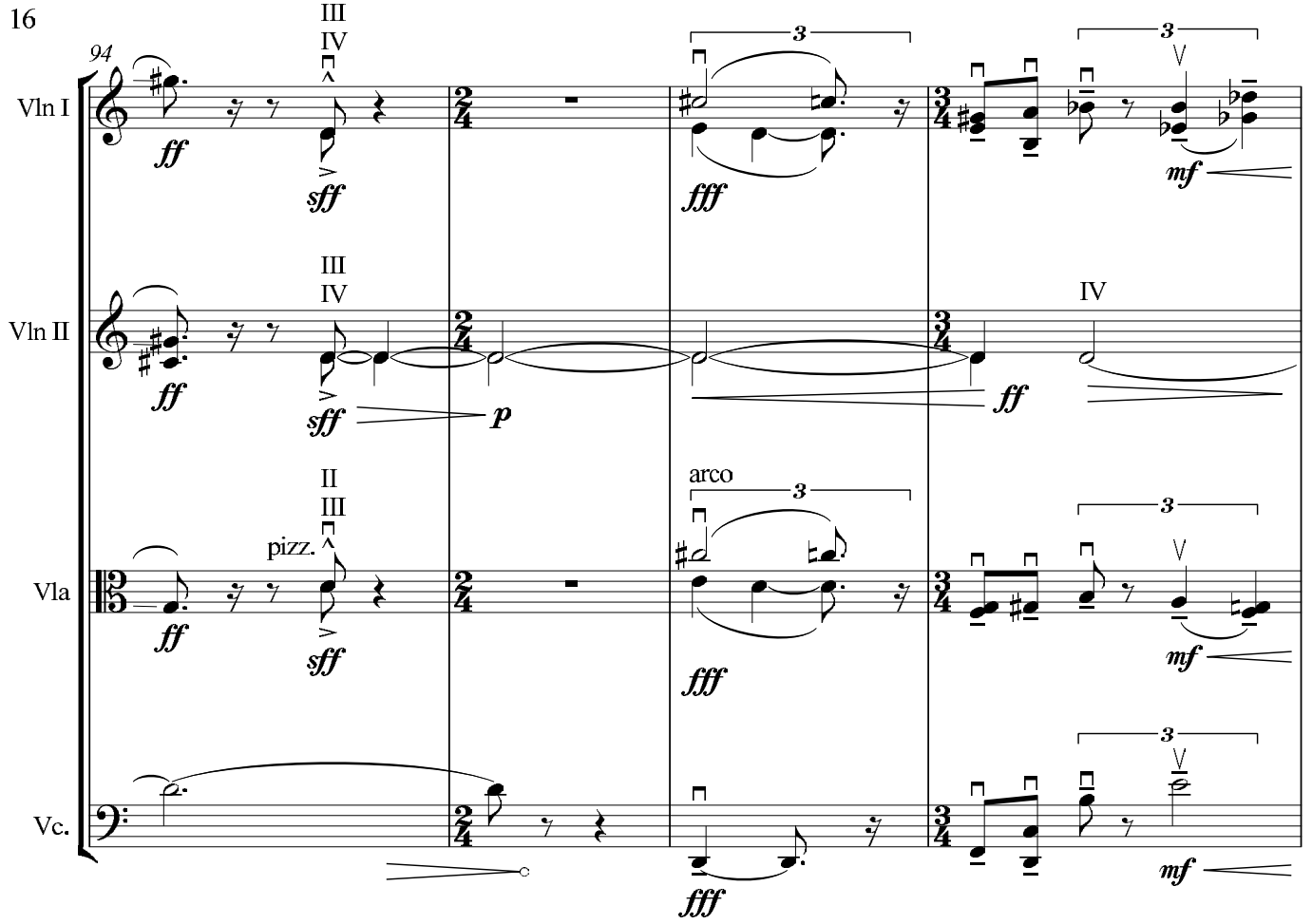

77
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
ff
pizz
non-arpegg.
arco
(I)
fff
sff
espress.

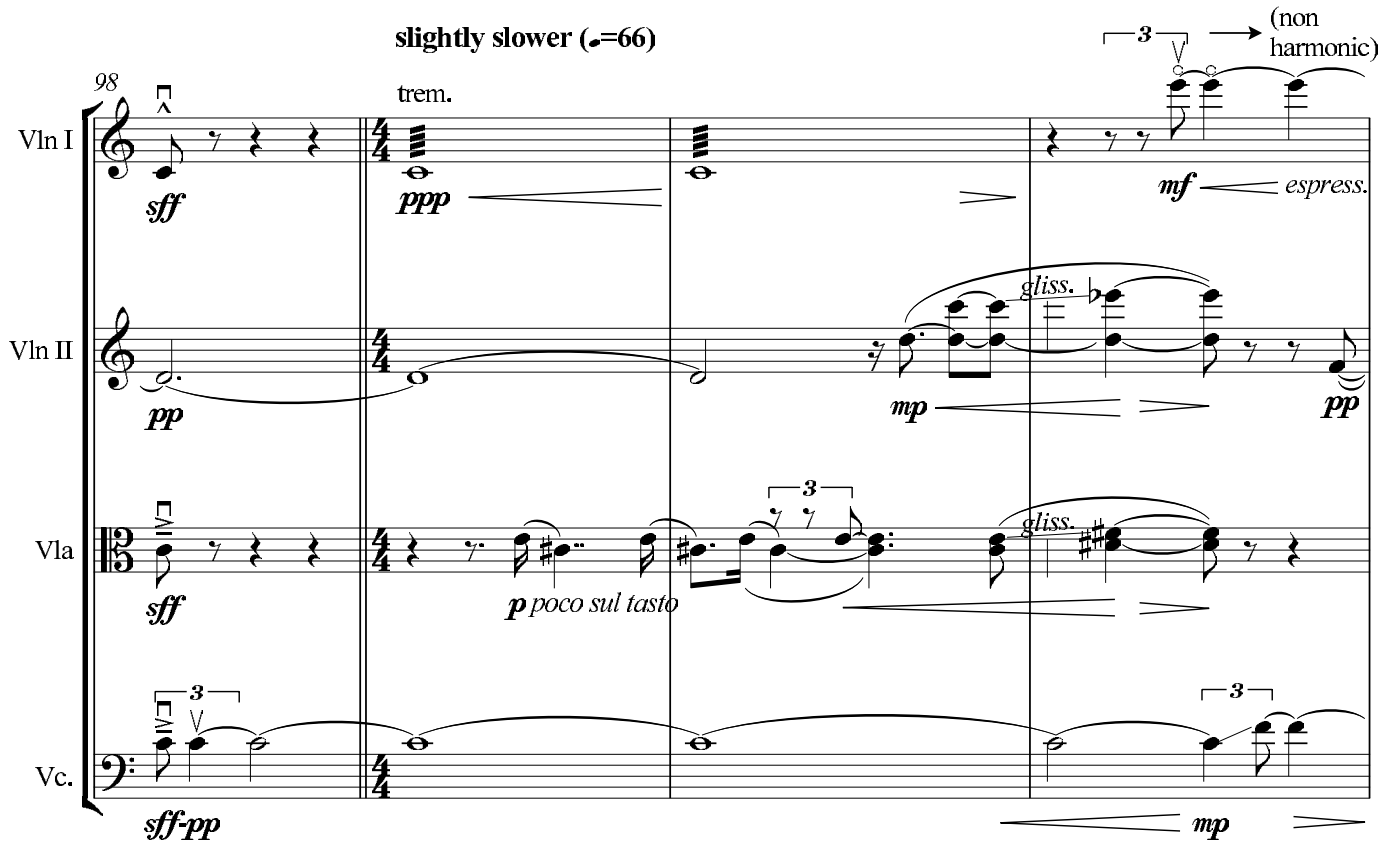

81
slower, grandioso
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
fff
sff
pp
gliss.
I
molto vib, intensely

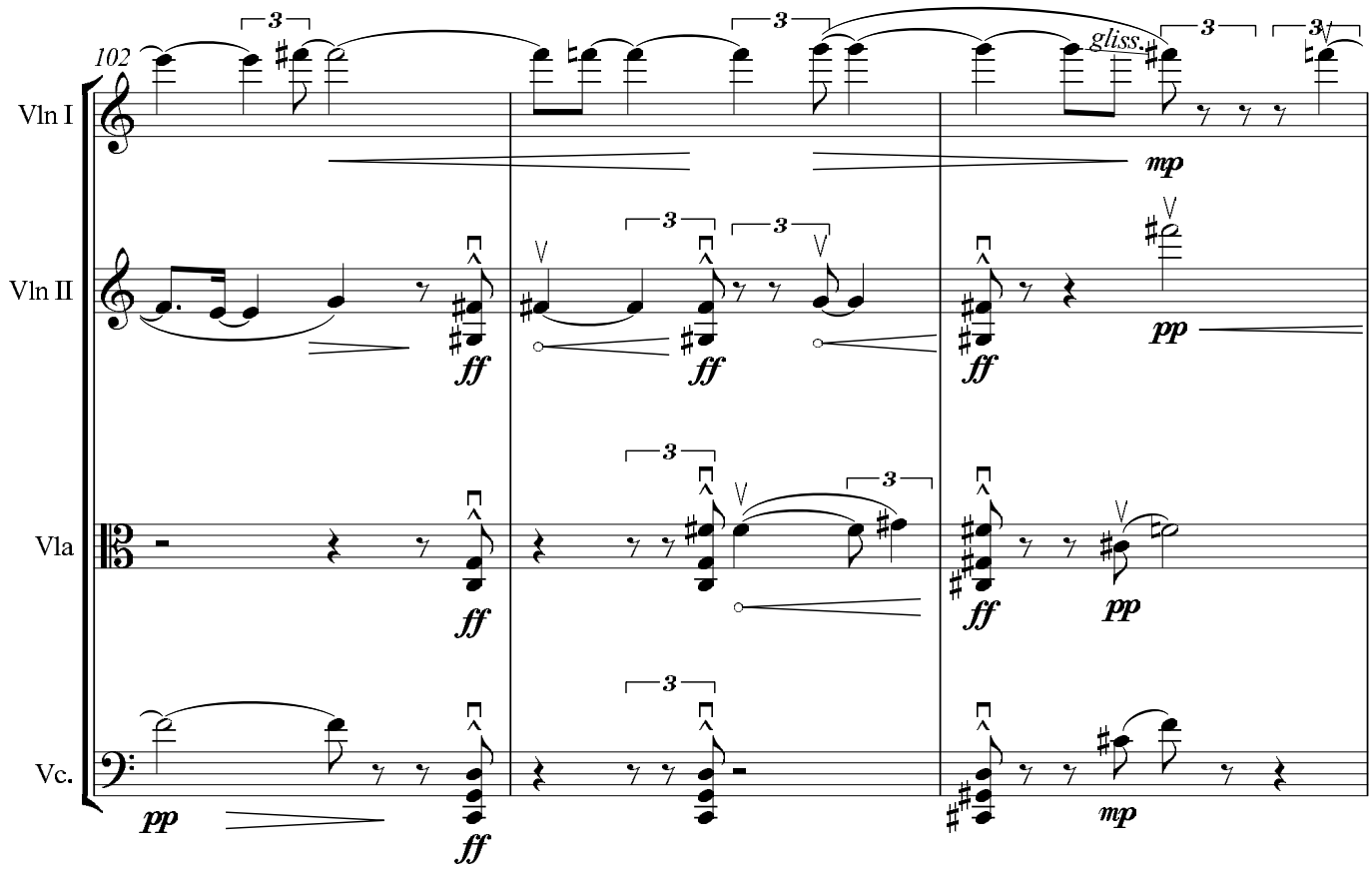

84
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
fff molto vib, intensely, legato
sff
fff
gliss.

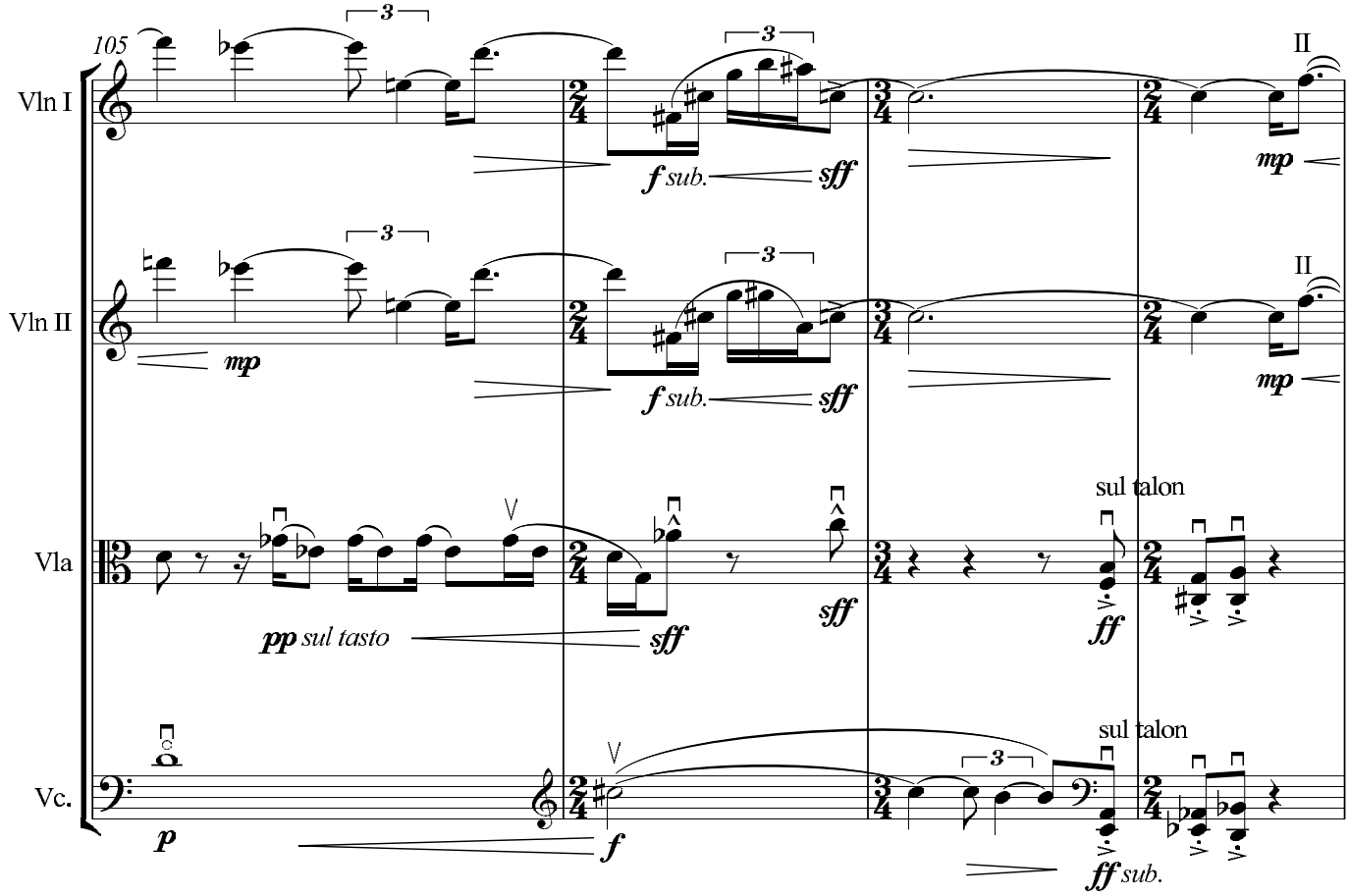

87
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
sff
fff

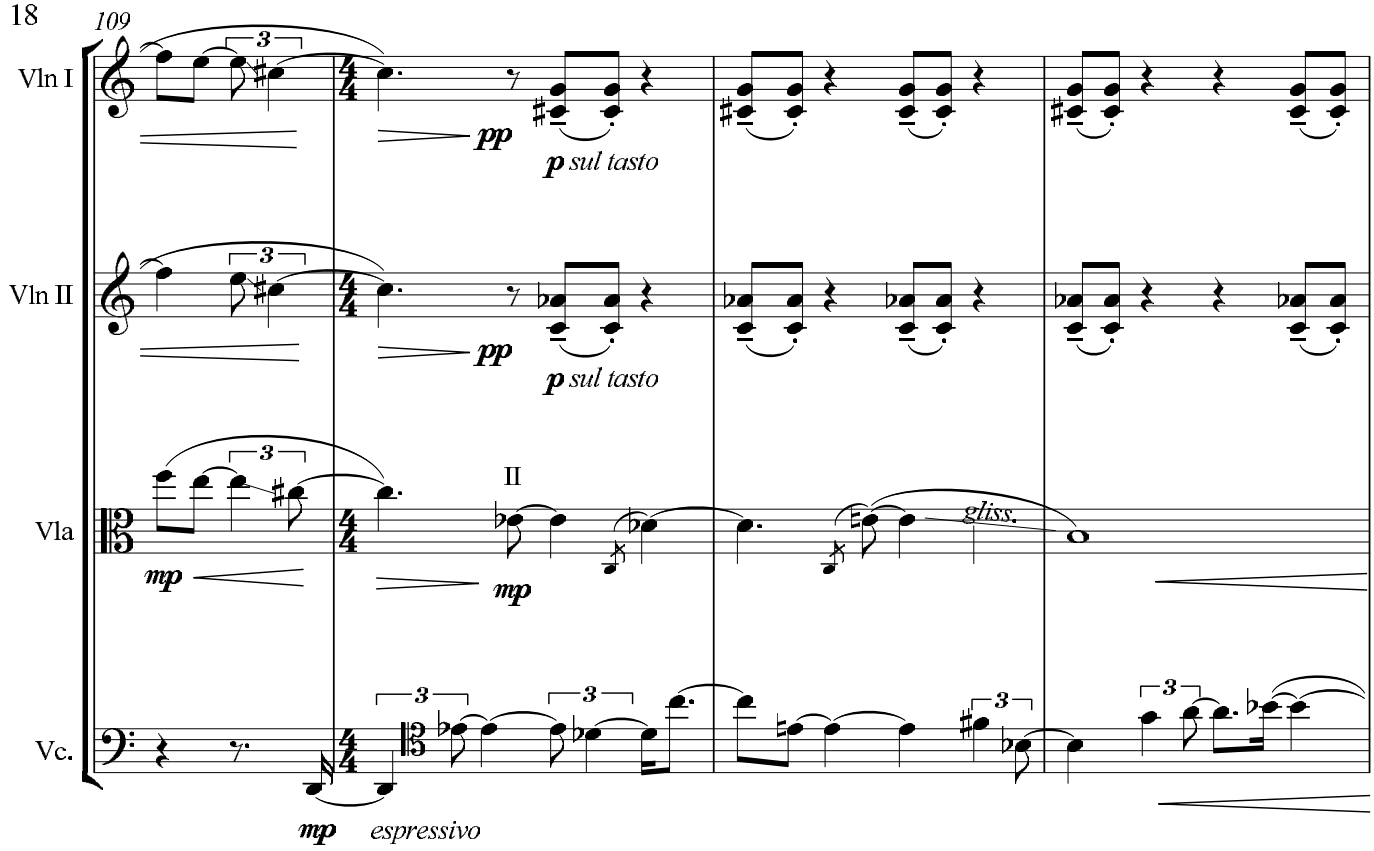

molto rit..... in tempo (𝅗𝅥=c.84)
90
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
gliss.
port.
sff
fff
mf

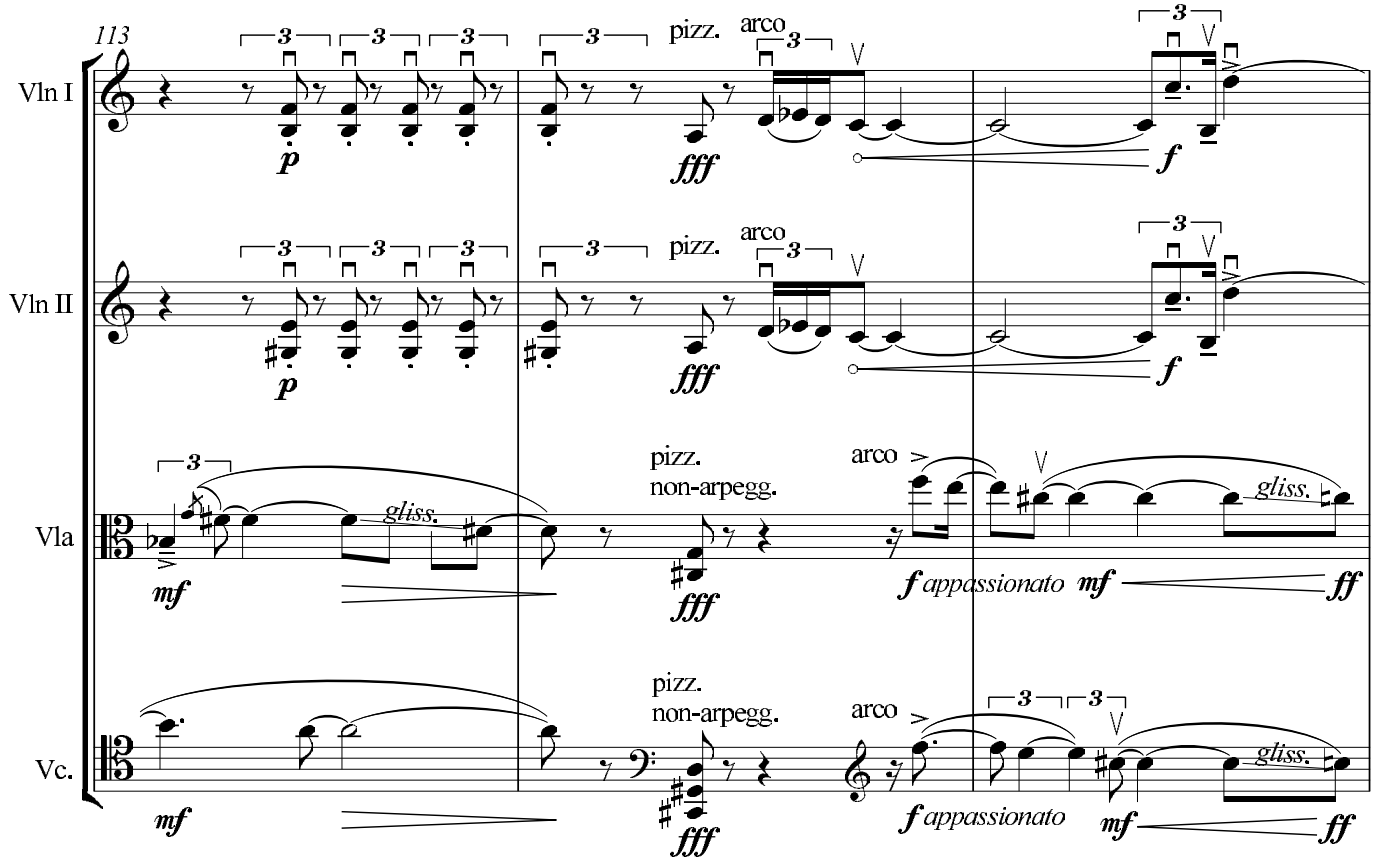

94
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
III
IV
II
pizz.
arco
ff
sff
fff
p
mf
3

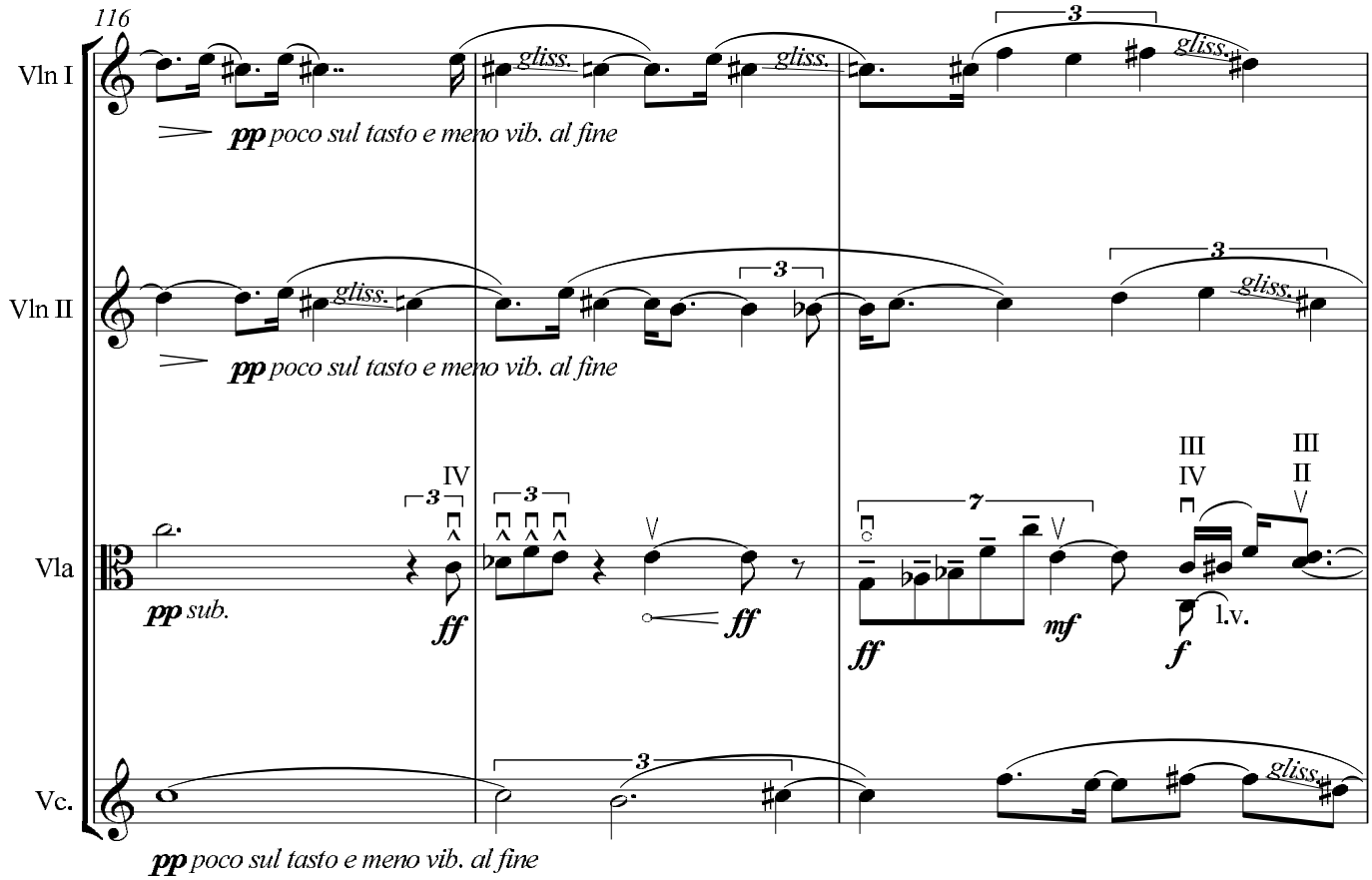

98
slightly slower (♩=66)
trem.
(non harmonic)
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
sff
ppp
mf
espress.
pp
mp
gliss.
p poco sul tasto
sff-pp
3

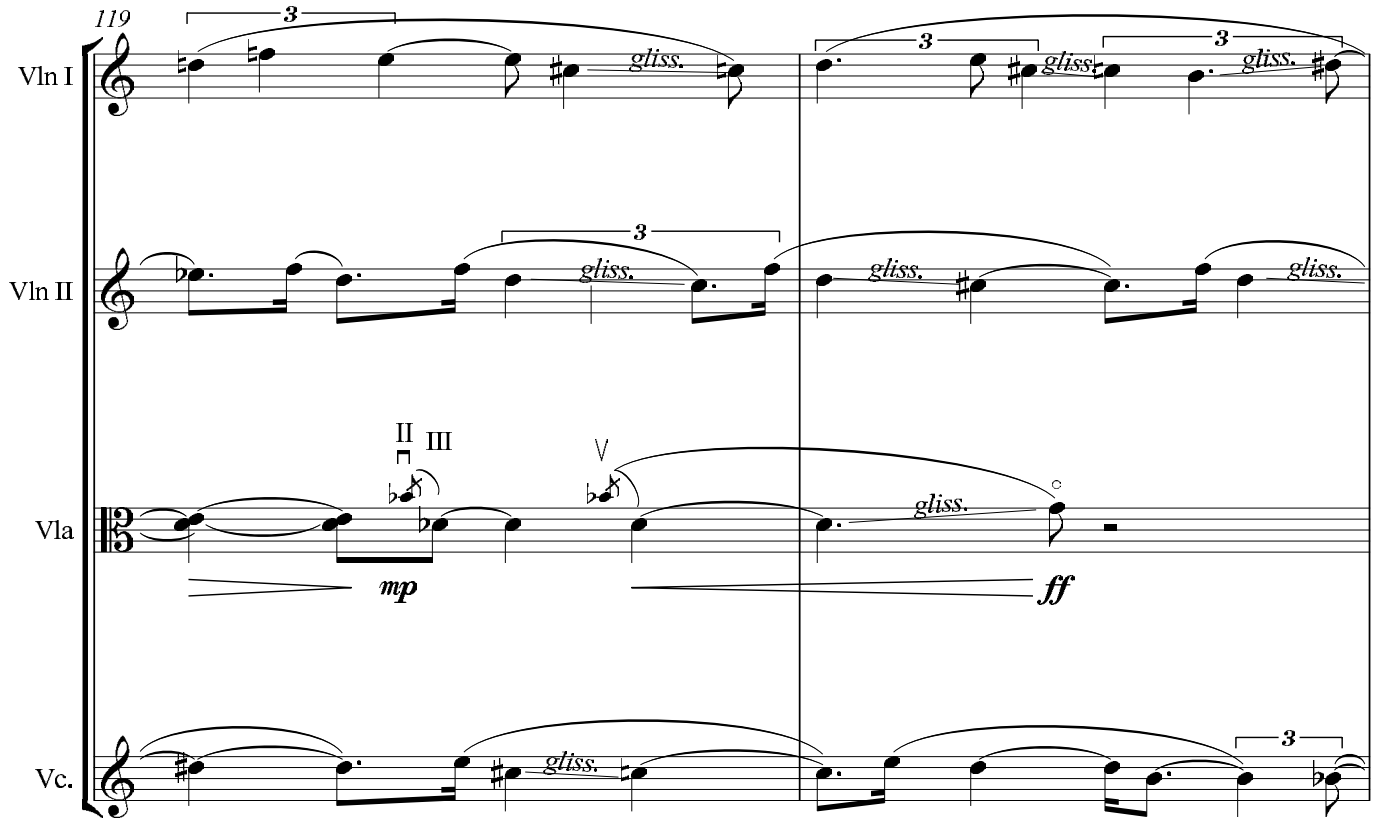

102
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
gliss.
mp
ff
pp
mp

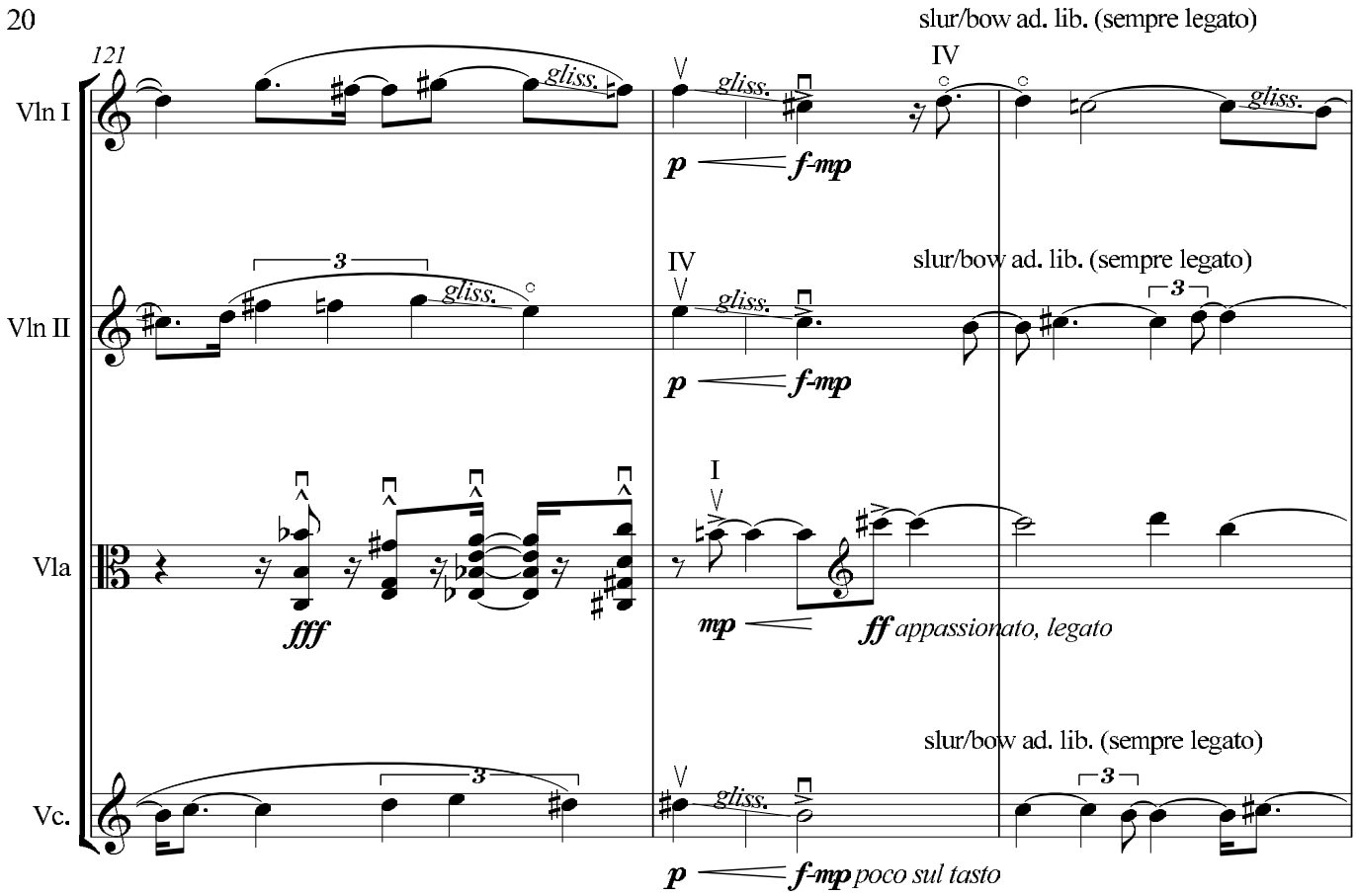

105
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
II
f sub.
sff
mp
pp sul tasto
sul talon
p
f
ff sub.

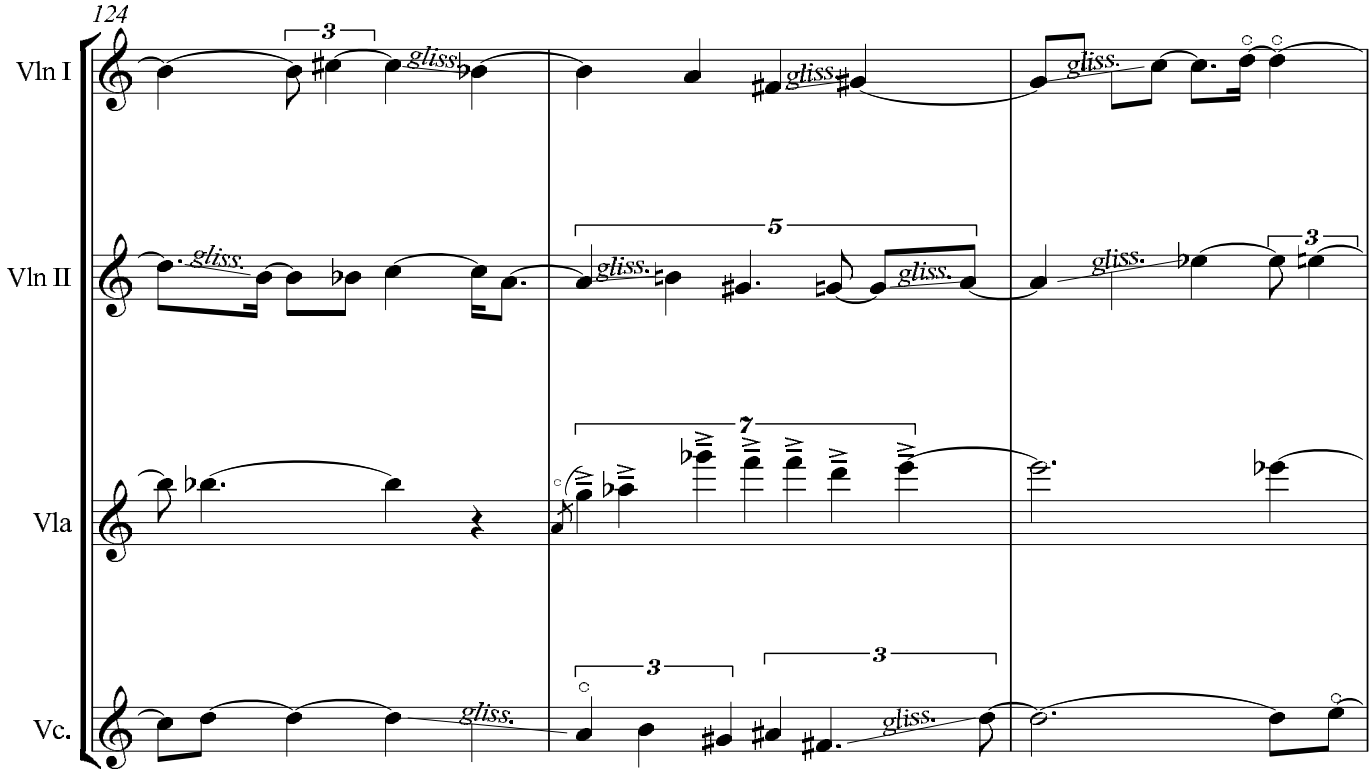

109
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
pp
p sul tasto
mp
espressivo
II
gliss.

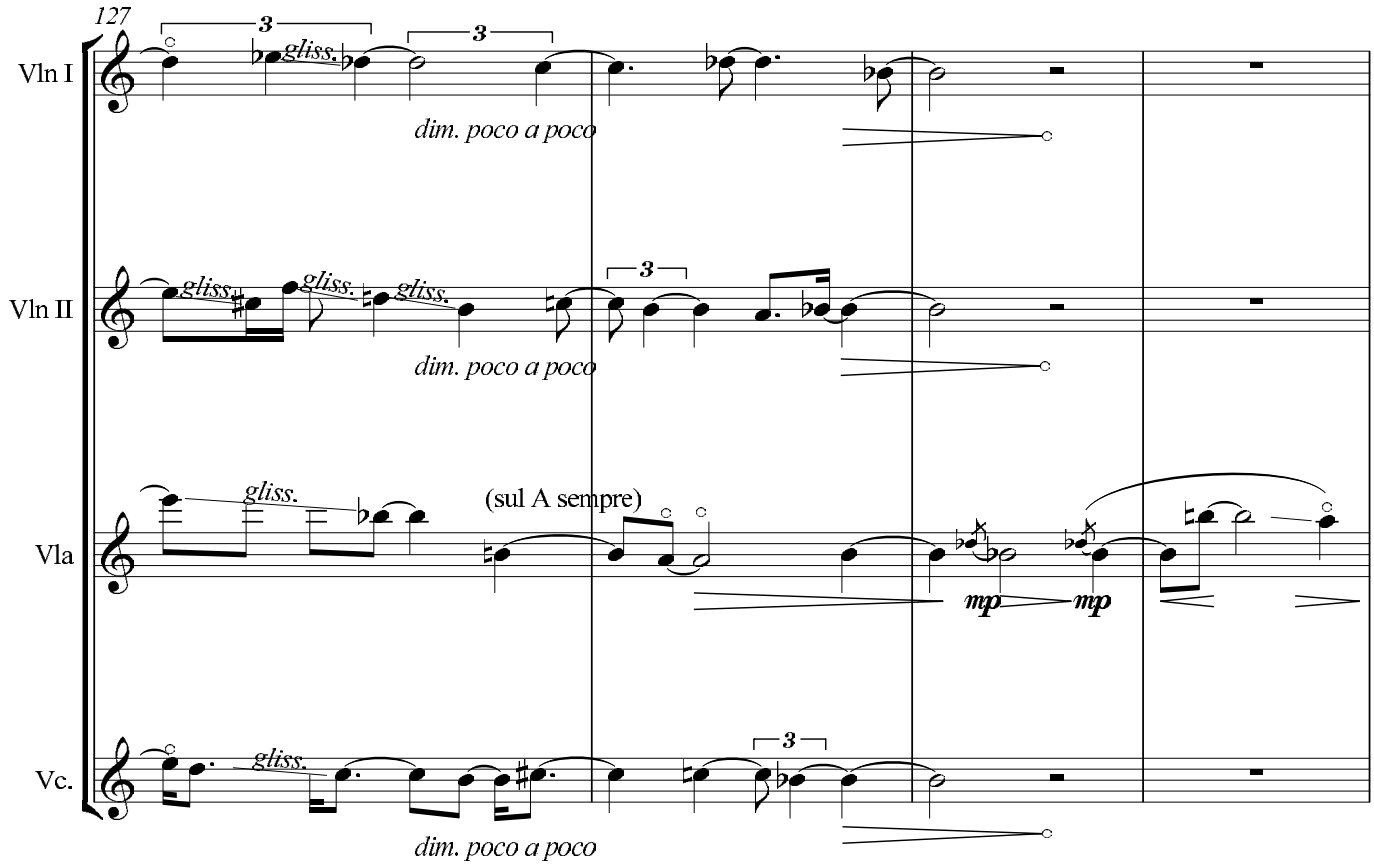

113
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
p
fff
pizz.
arco
f
mf
gliss.
pizz.
non-arpegg.
f appassionato
mf
ff

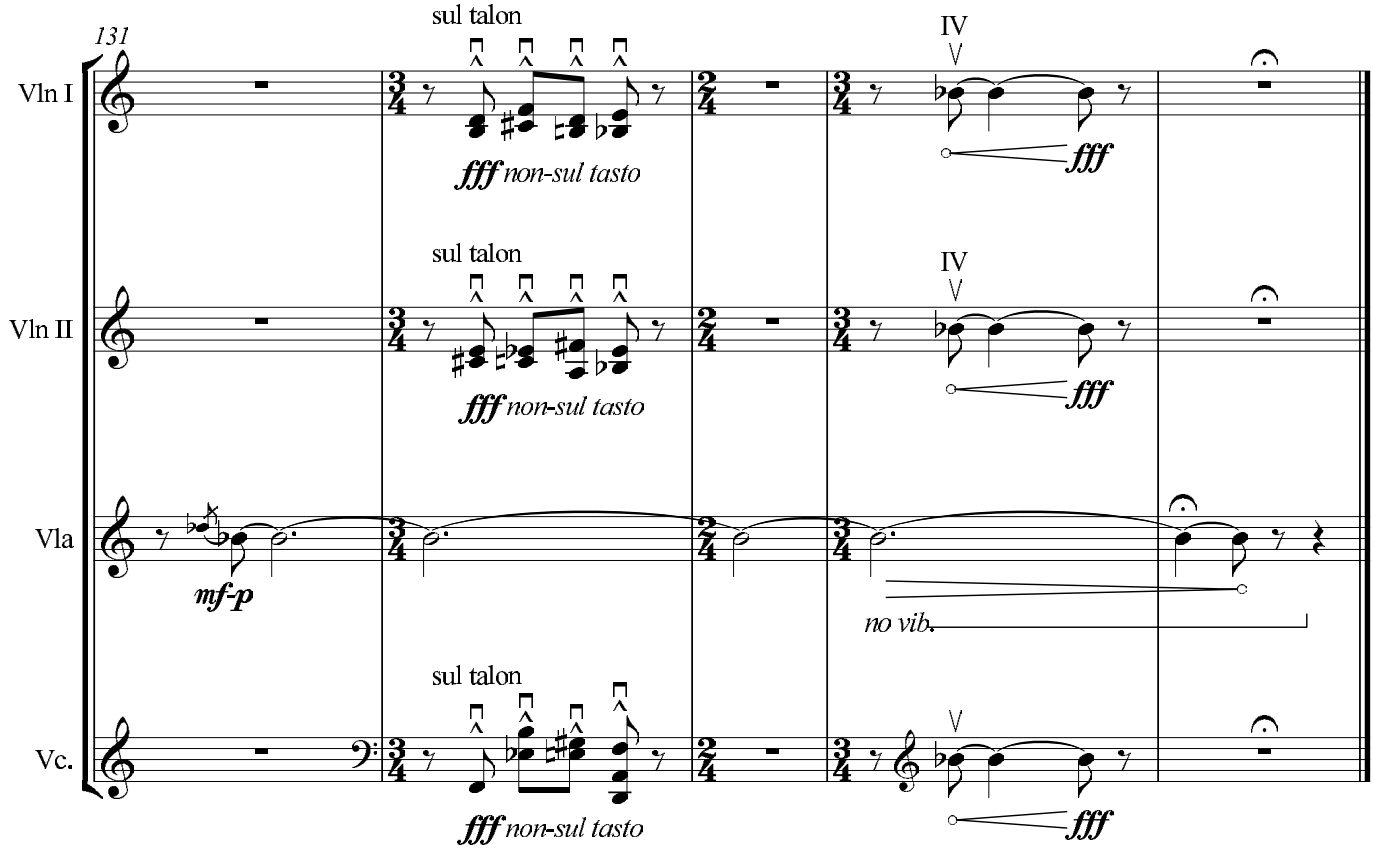

116
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
pp poco sul tasto e meno vib. al fine
pp poco sul tasto e meno vib. al fine
pp sub.
ff
ff
ff
mf
f
l.v.
gliss.
pp poco sul tasto e meno vib. al fine


119
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
mp
ff
gliss.

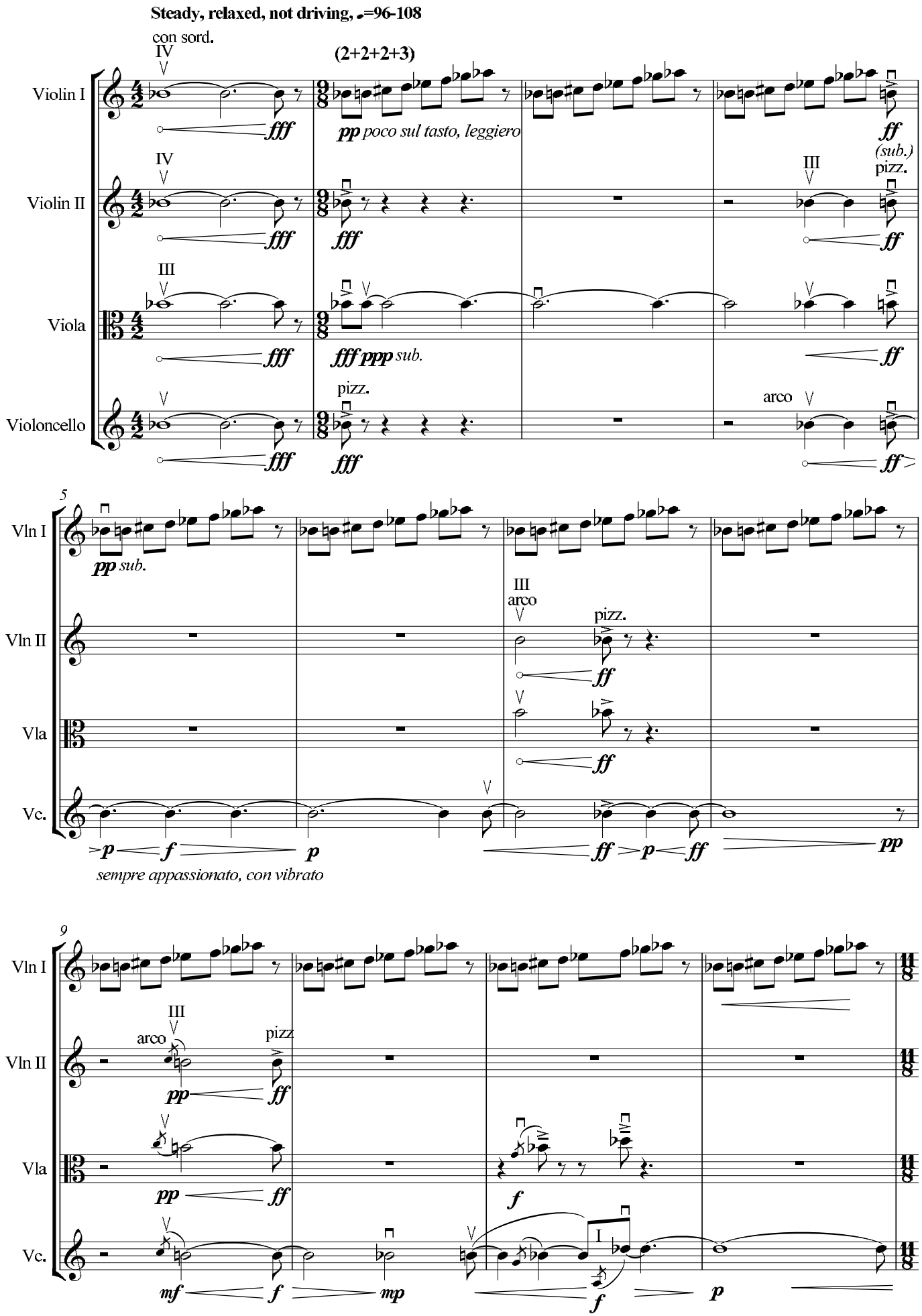

121
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
gliss.
IV
I
slur/bow ad. lib. (sempre legato)
p
f-mp
fff
mp
ff appassionato, legato
poco sul tasto

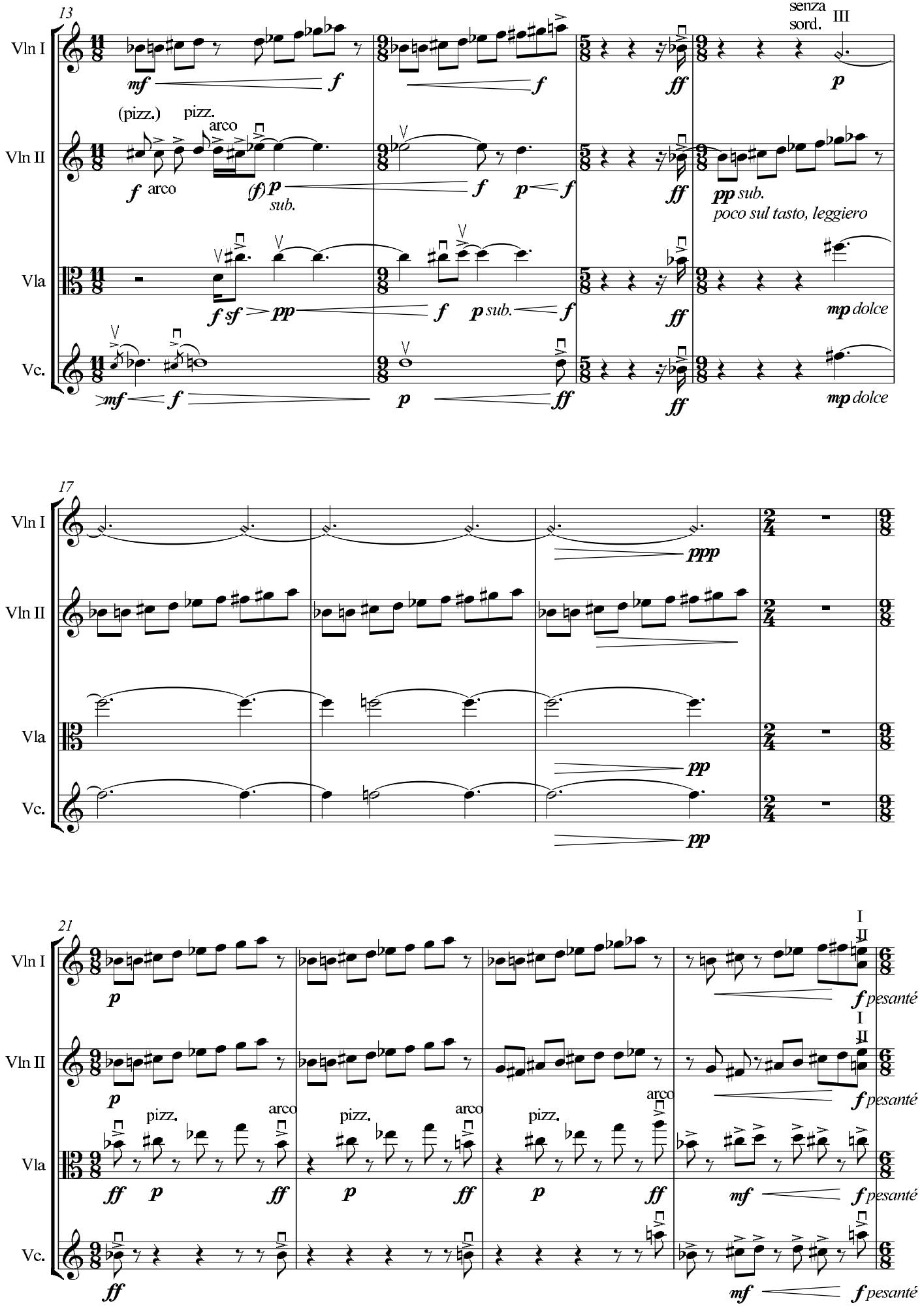

124
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
gliss.

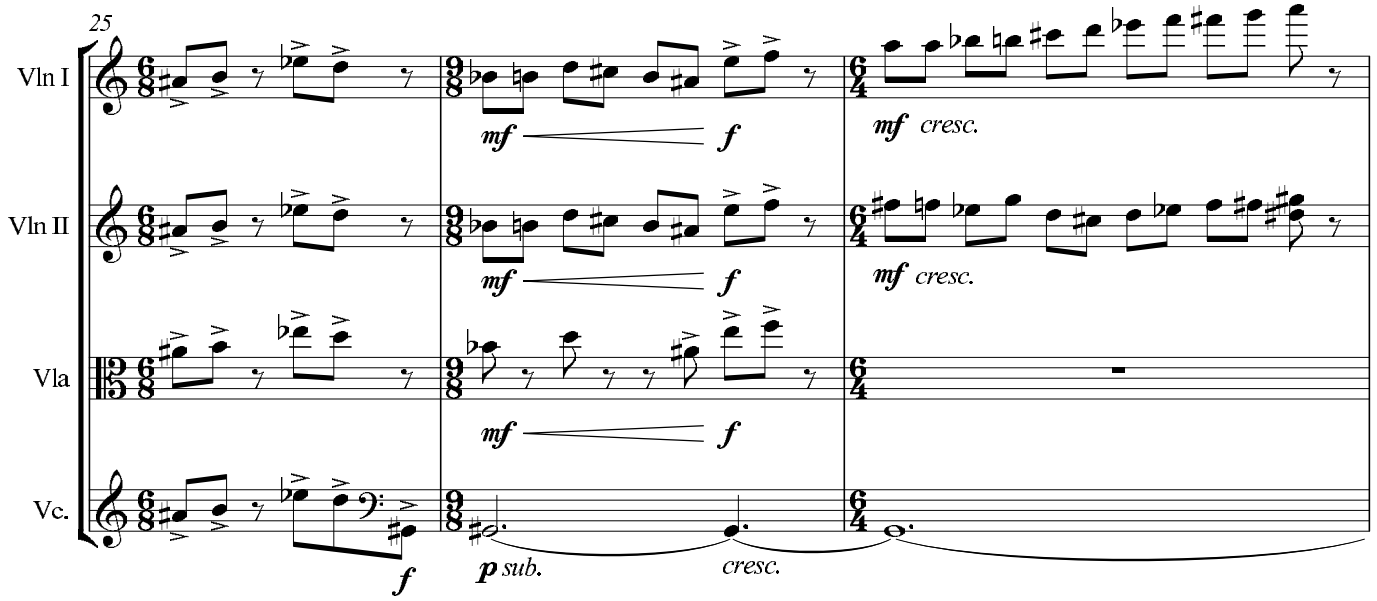

127
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
gliss.
dim. poco a poco
(sul A sempre)
mp

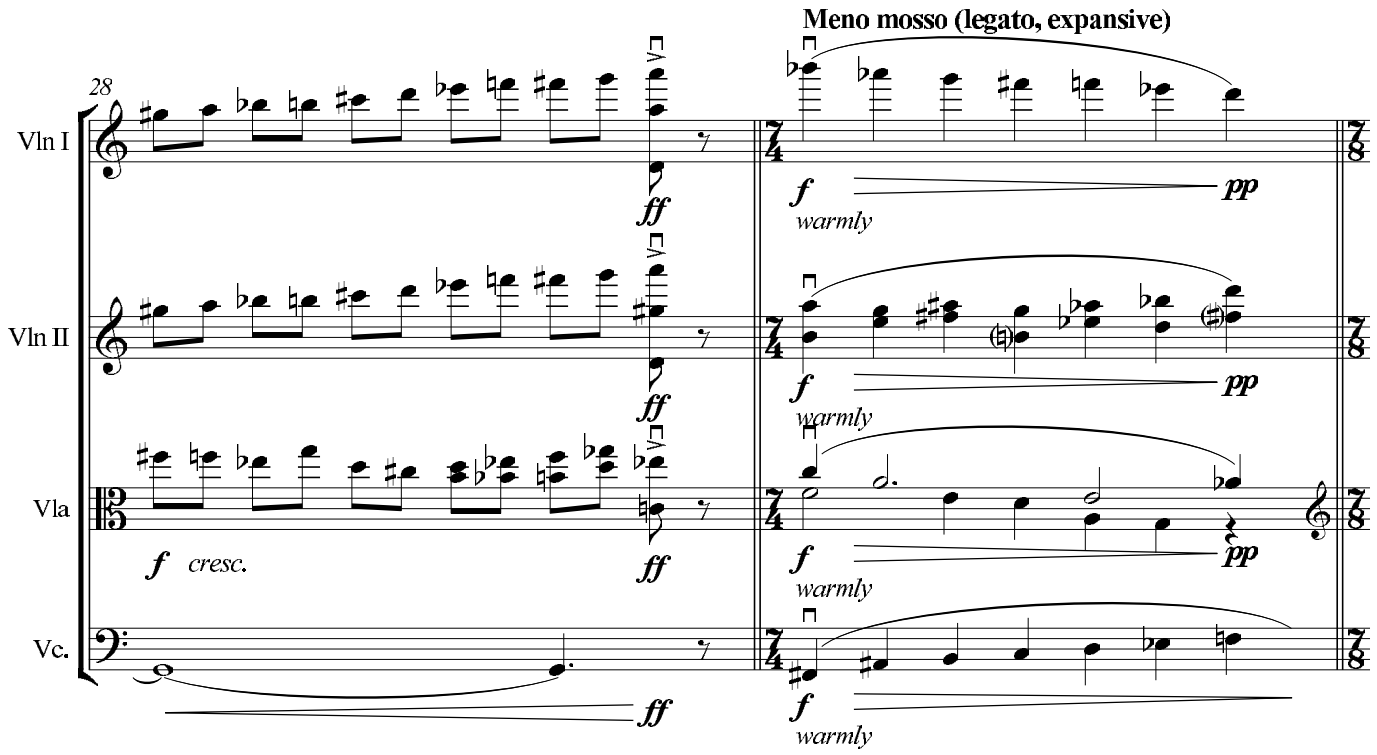

131
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
sul talon
fff non-sul tasto
IV
fff
mf-p
no vib.

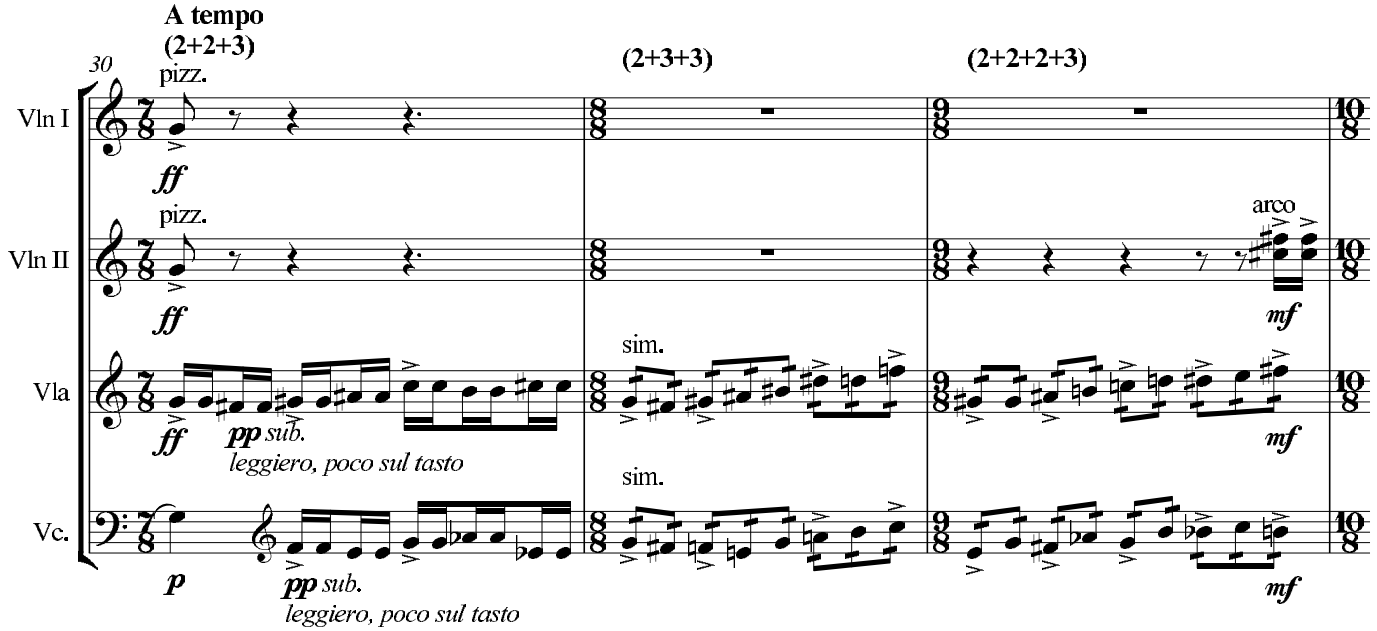
# II

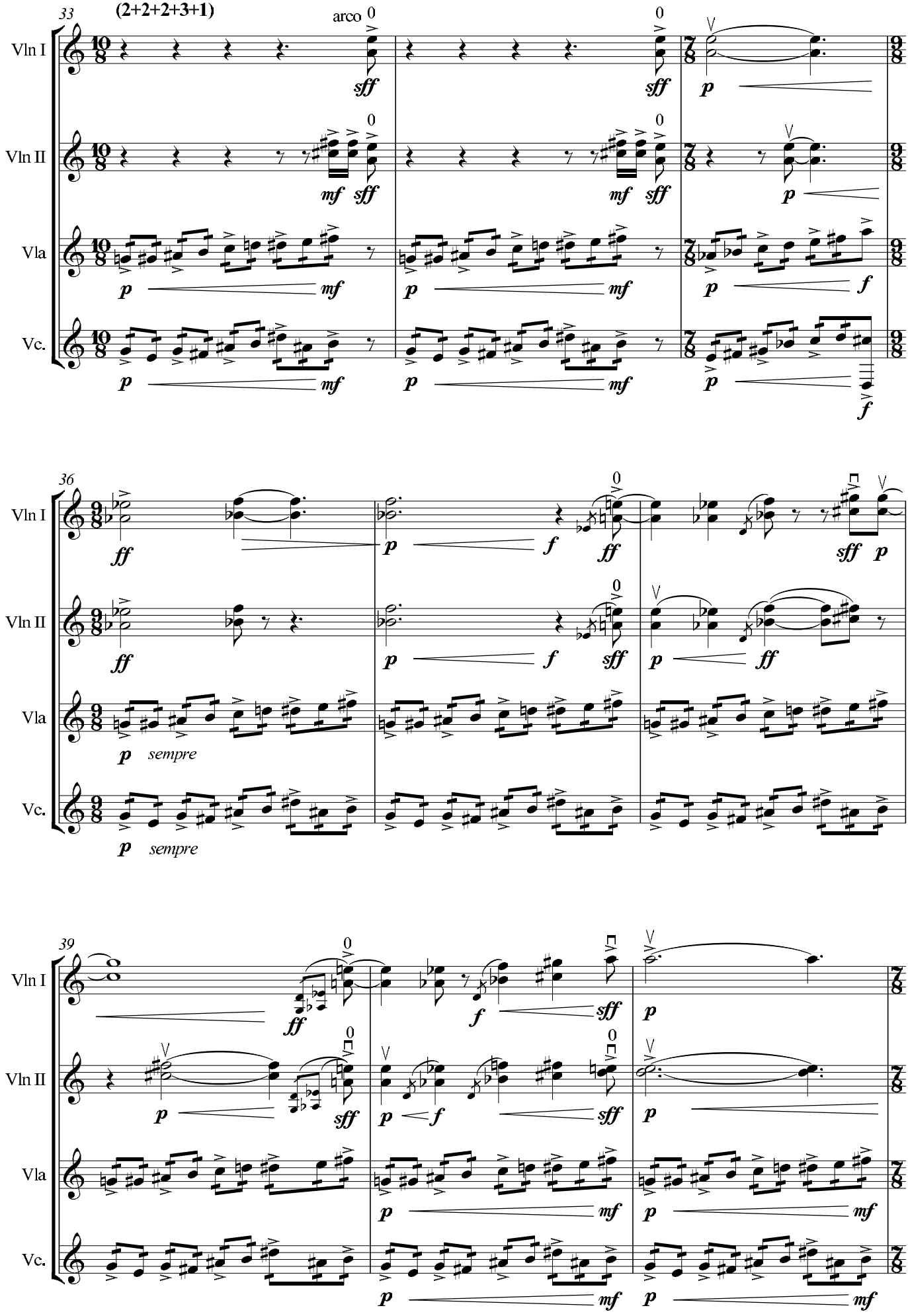

Steady, relaxed, not driving, ♩=96-108
con sord.
(2+2+2+3)
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
pp poco sul tasto, leggiero
fff ppp sub.
pizz.
arco
(sub.)
sempre appassionato, con vibrato
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.

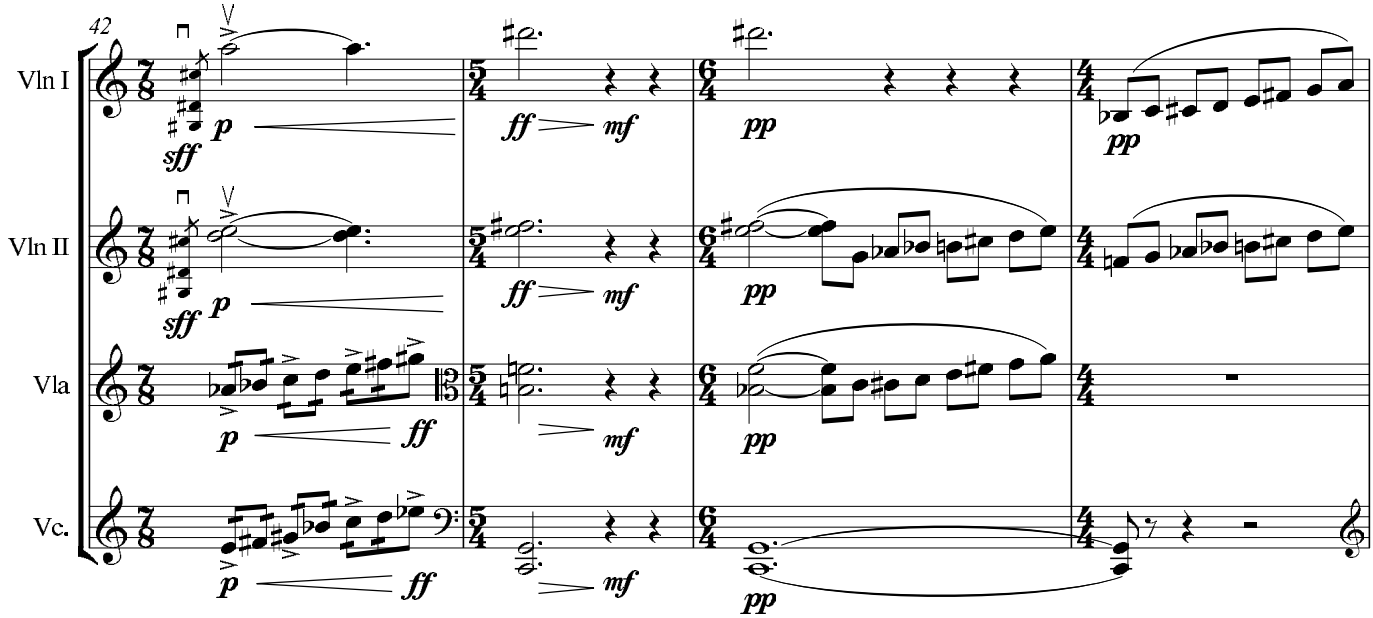

13
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
senza sord.
III
(pizz.)
pizz.
arco
sub.
poco sul tasto, leggiero
dolce
17
ppp
pp
21
I
II
pesanté
arco

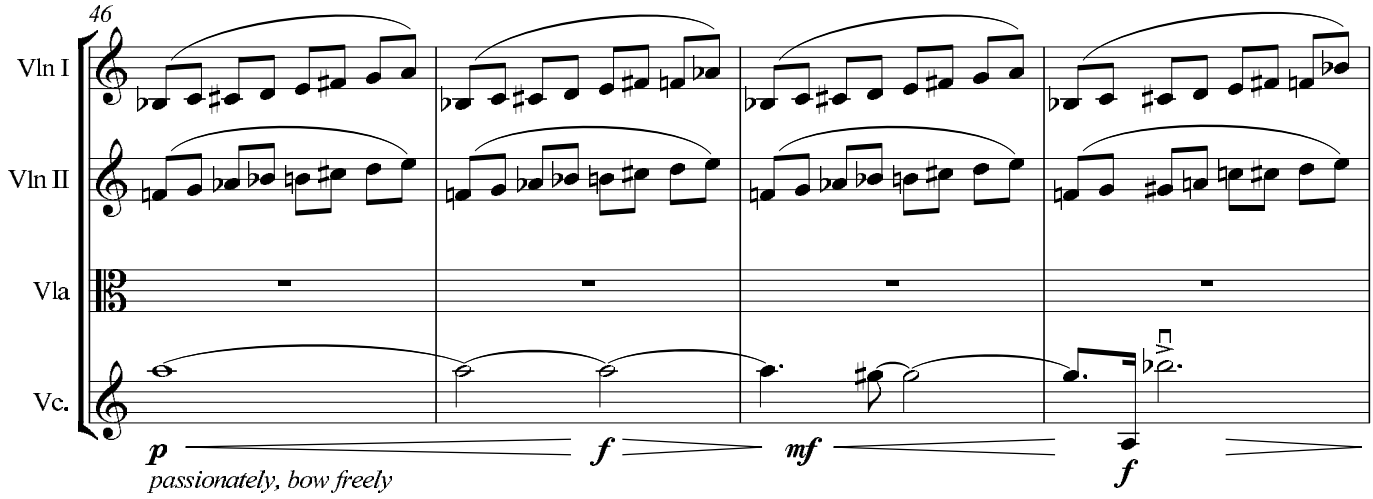

25
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
mf
f
mf cresc.
f sub.
cresc.

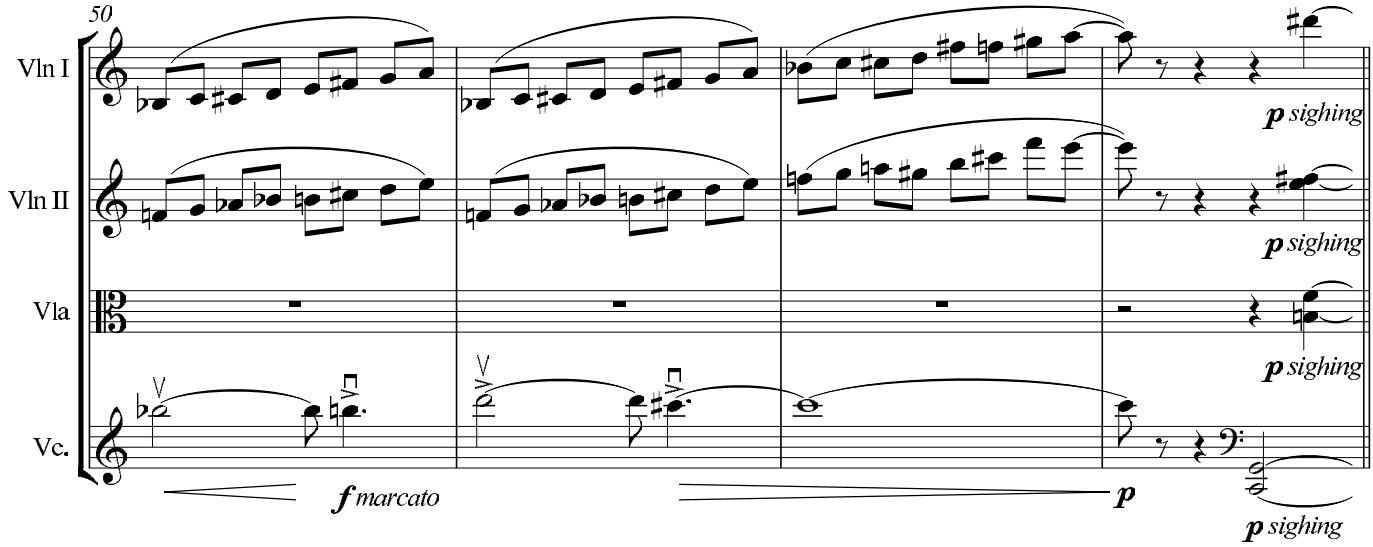

Meno mosso (legato, expansive)
28
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
ff
f
pp
warmly
f cresc.

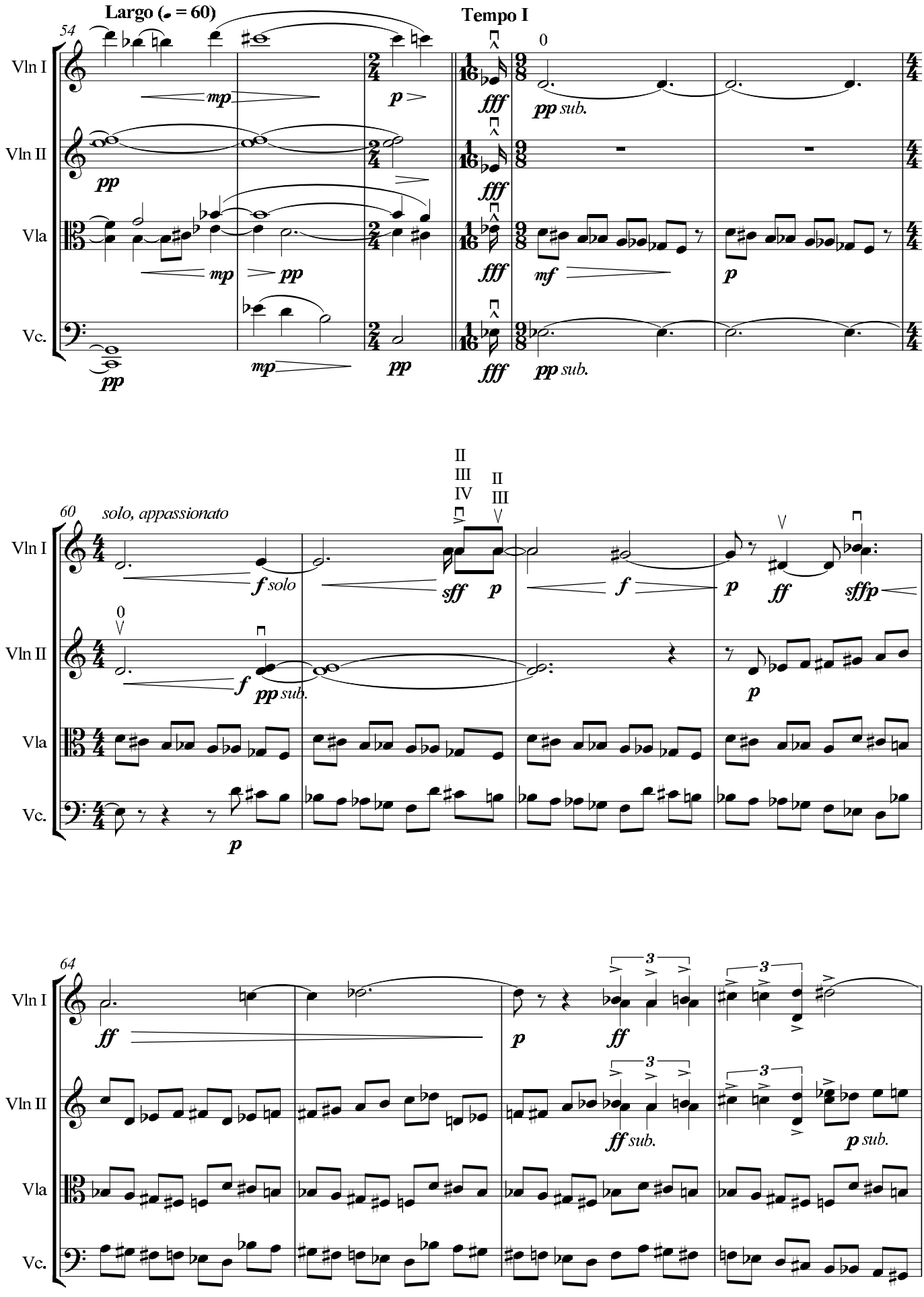

A tempo
(2+2+3)
(2+3+3)
(2+2+2+3)
30
pizz.
arco
sim.
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
ff
mf
p
pp sub.
leggiero, poco sul tasto

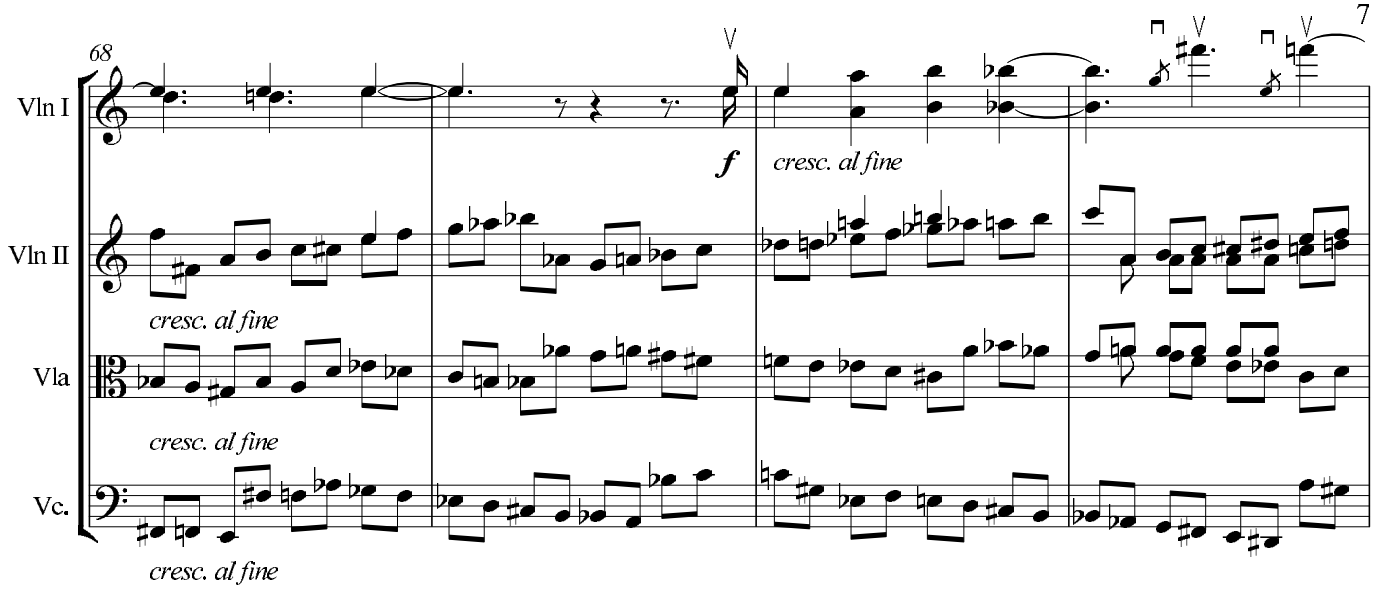

33
(2+2+2+3+1)
arco
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
36
sempre
39

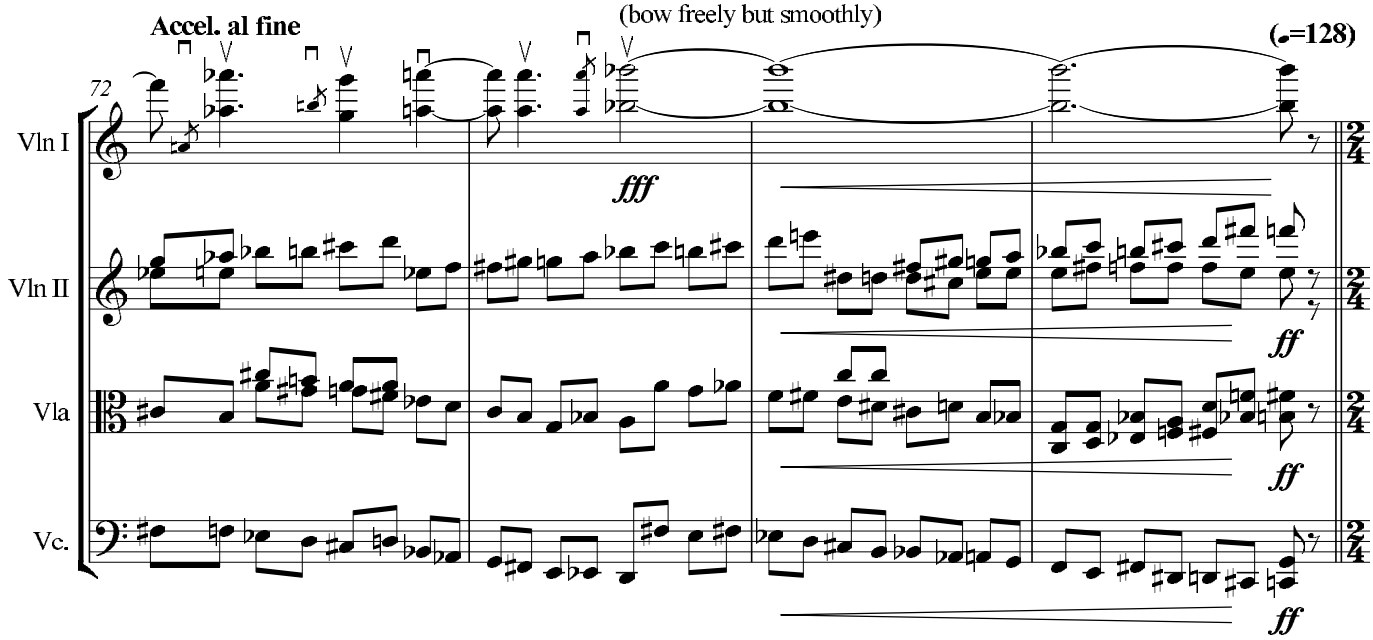

42
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
sff
p
ff
mf
pp

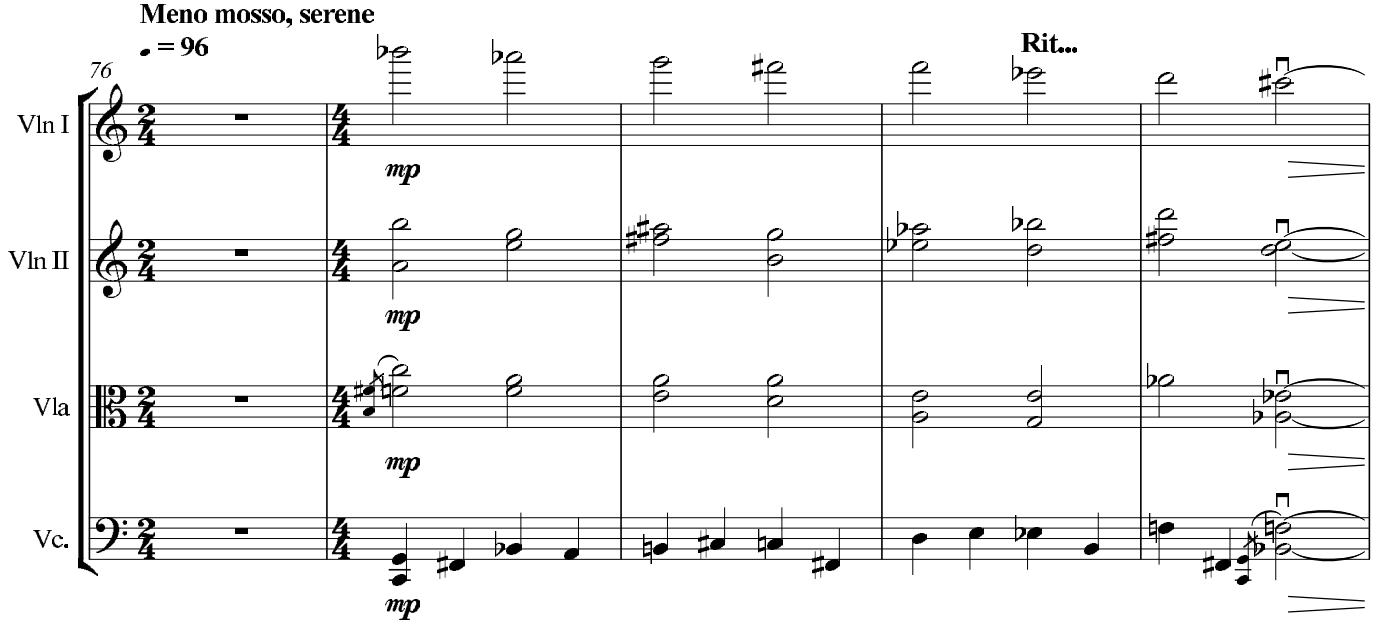

46
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
p
passionately, bow freely
f
mf
f

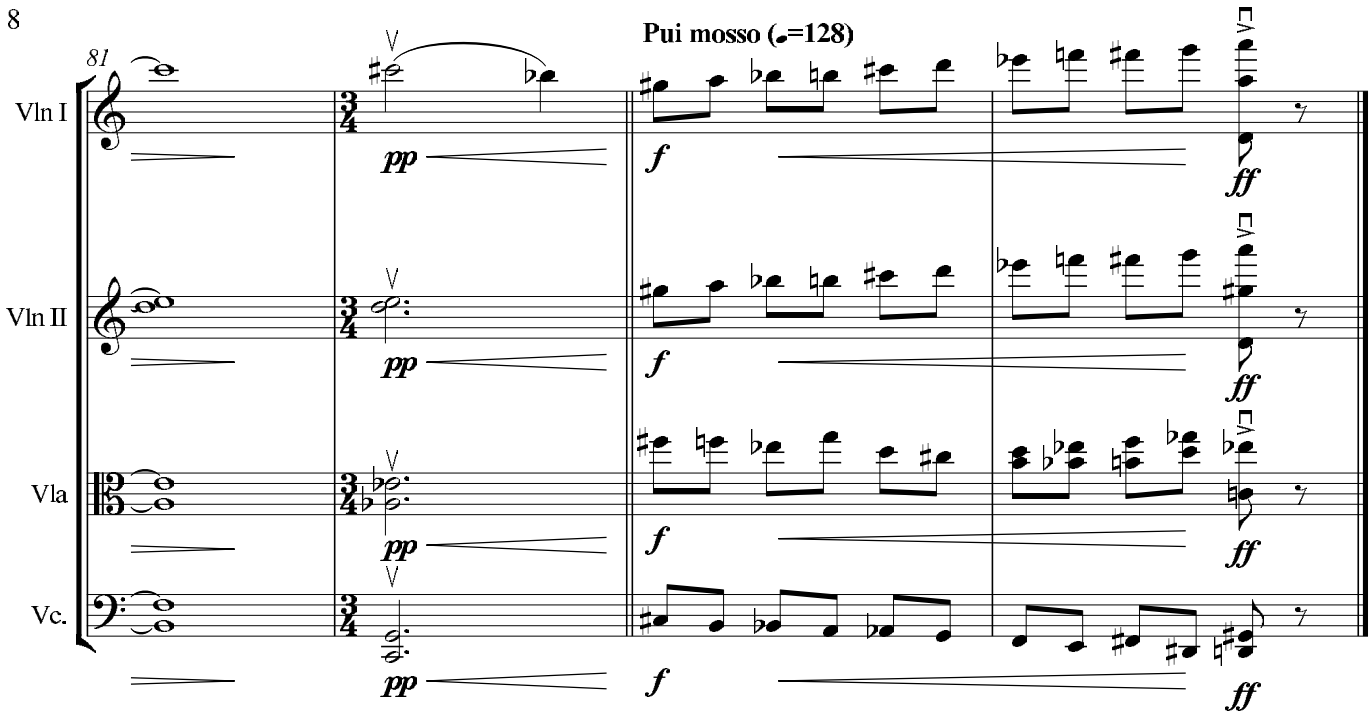

50
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
f marcato
p
p sighing


Largo (𝅗𝅥 = 60)
Tempo I
54
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
60
solo, appassionato
64

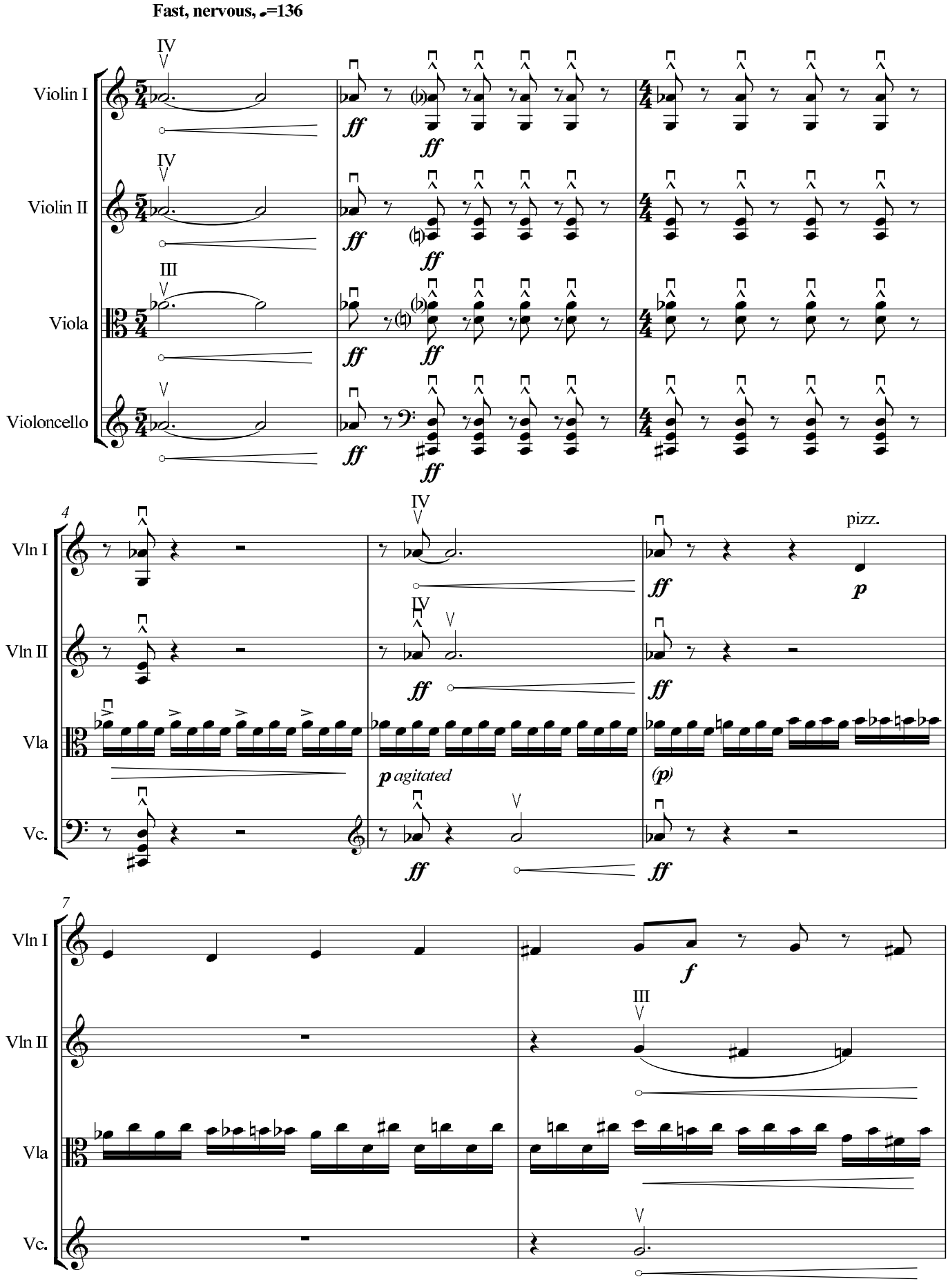

68
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
f
cresc. al fine
cresc. al fine
cresc. al fine
cresc. al fine

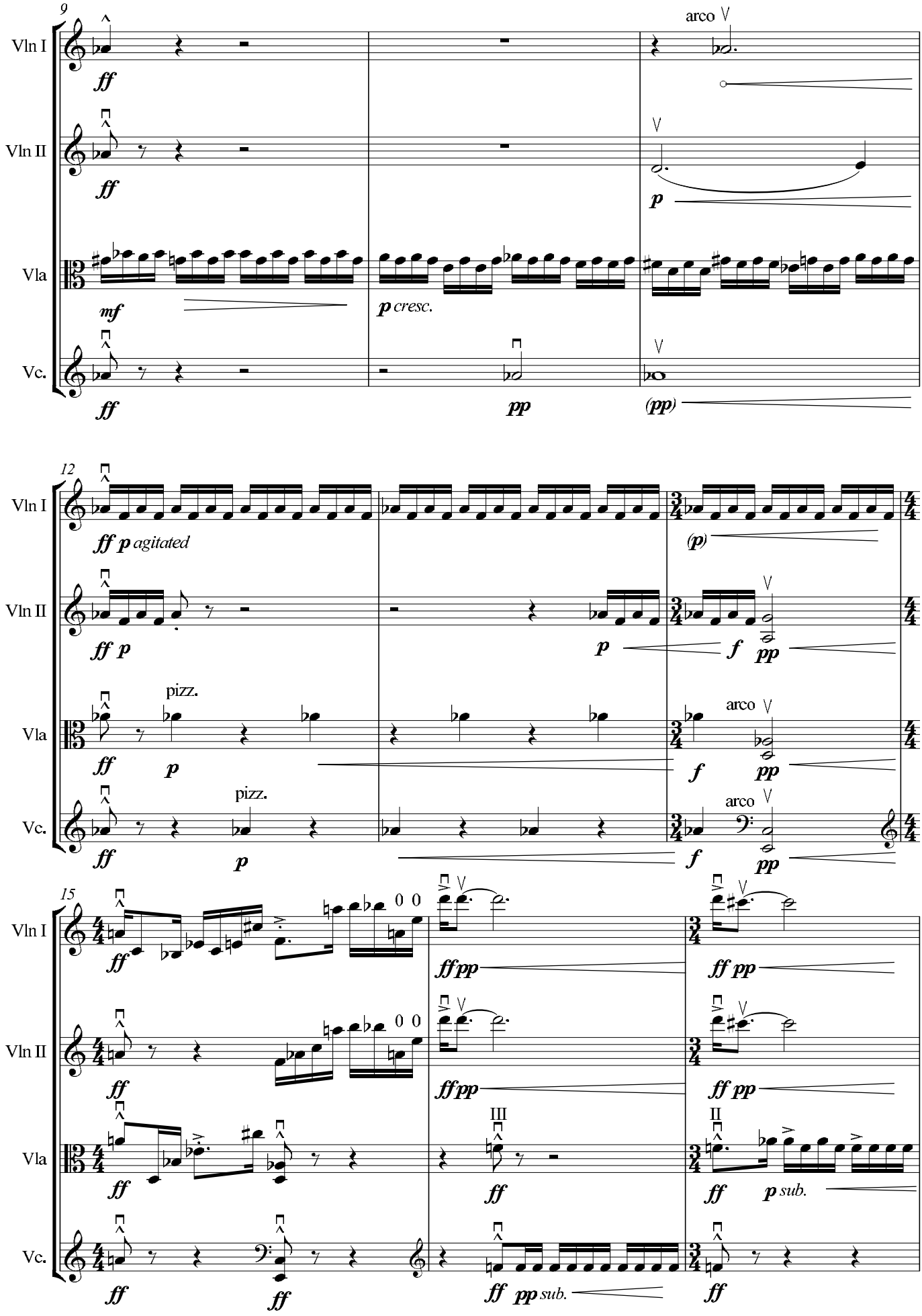

Accel. al fine
(bow freely but smoothly)
(𝅗𝅥=128)
72
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
fff
ff
ff
ff

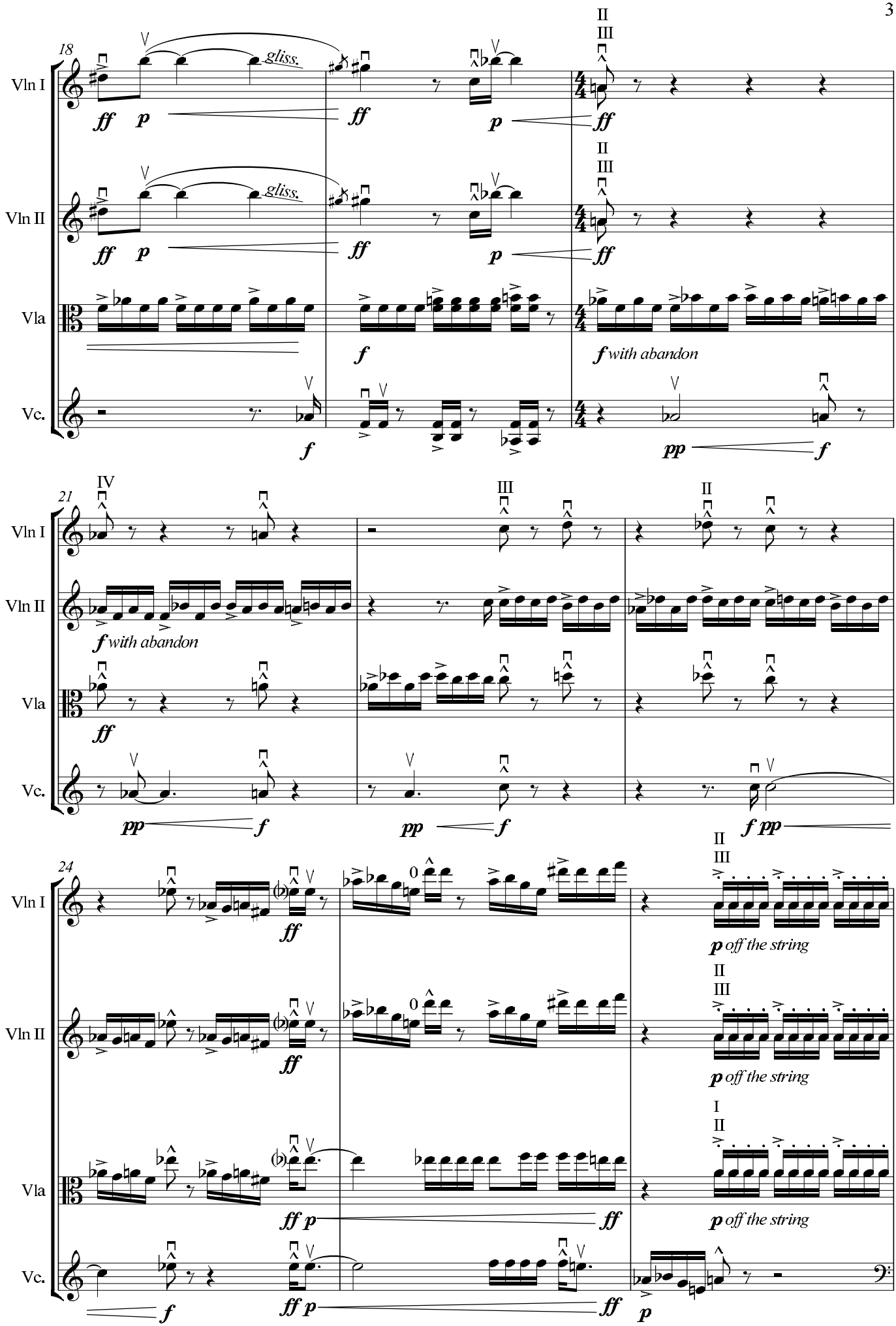

Meno mosso, serene
𝅗𝅥 = 96
Rit...
76
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
mp
mp
mp
mp

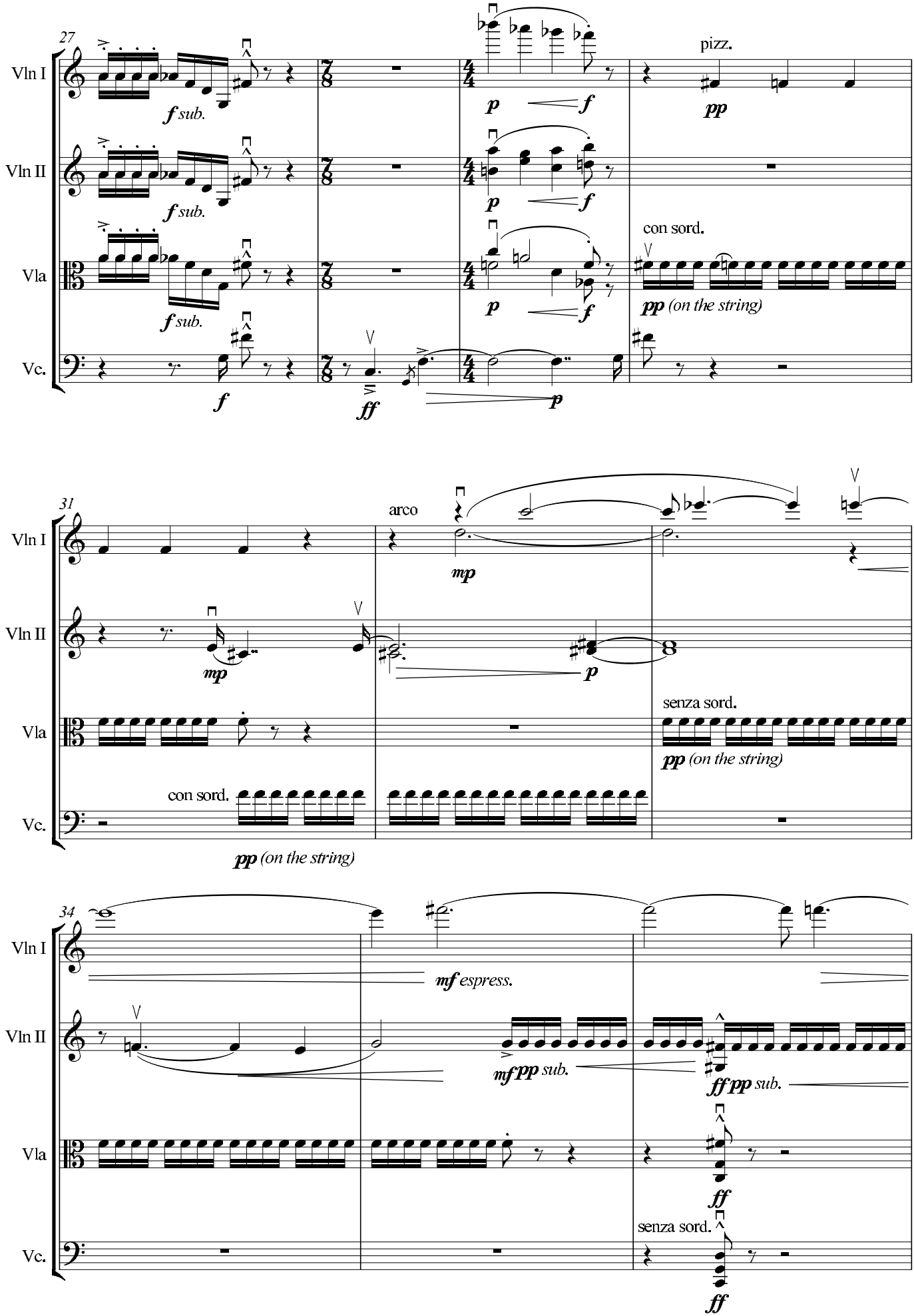

81
Pui mosso (♩=128)
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
pp
f
ff

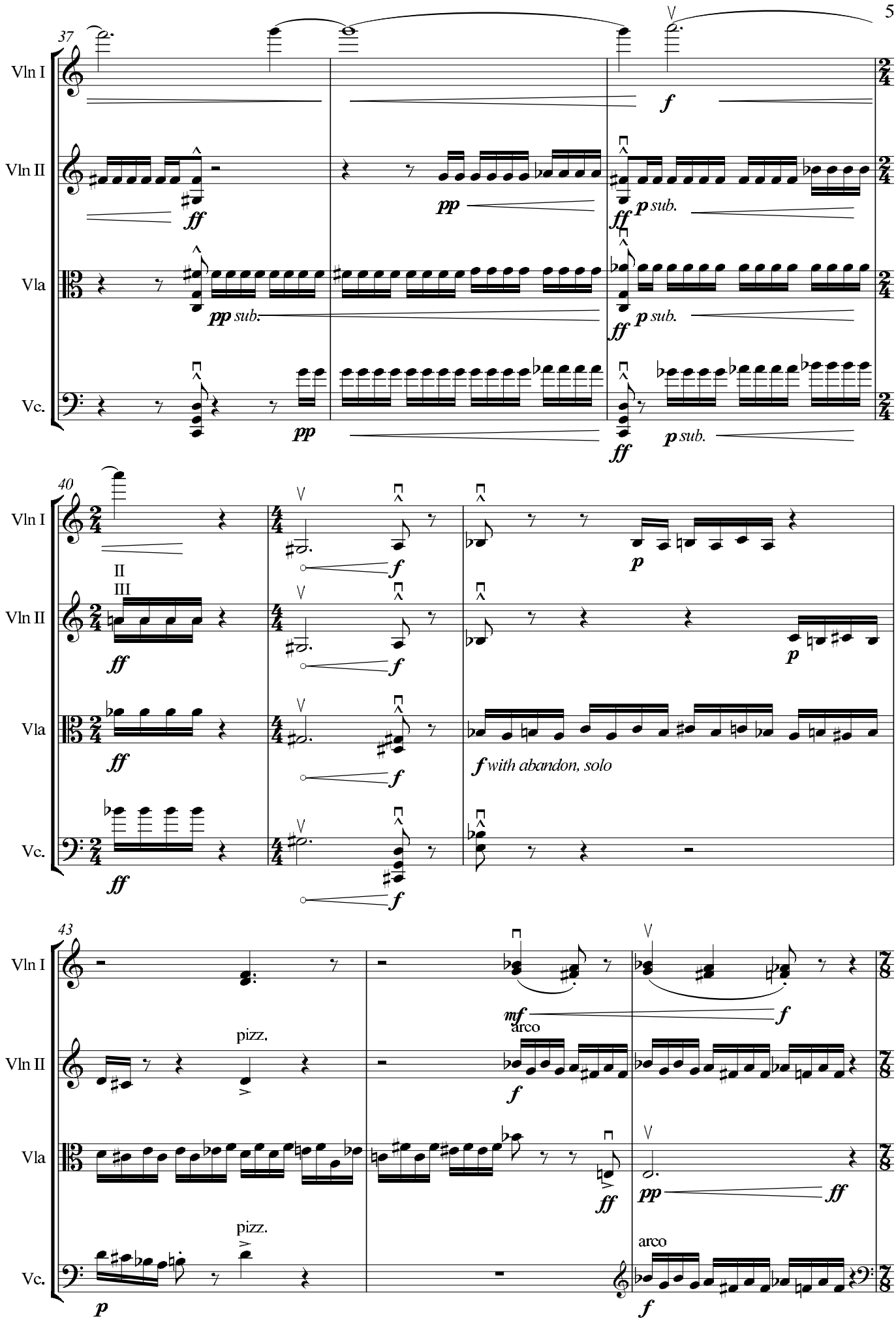
# III

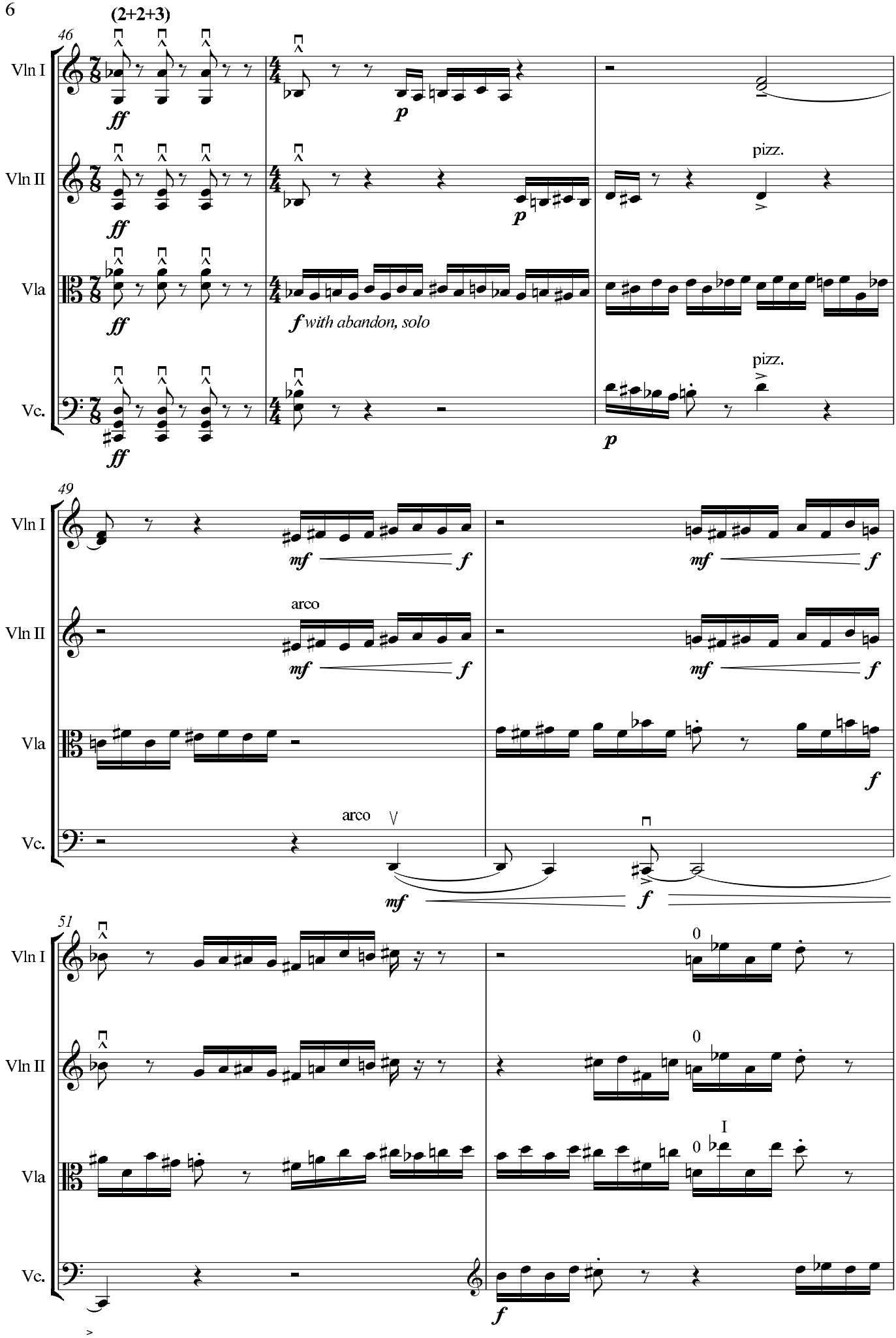

Fast, nervous, ♩=136
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
pizz.
p agitated

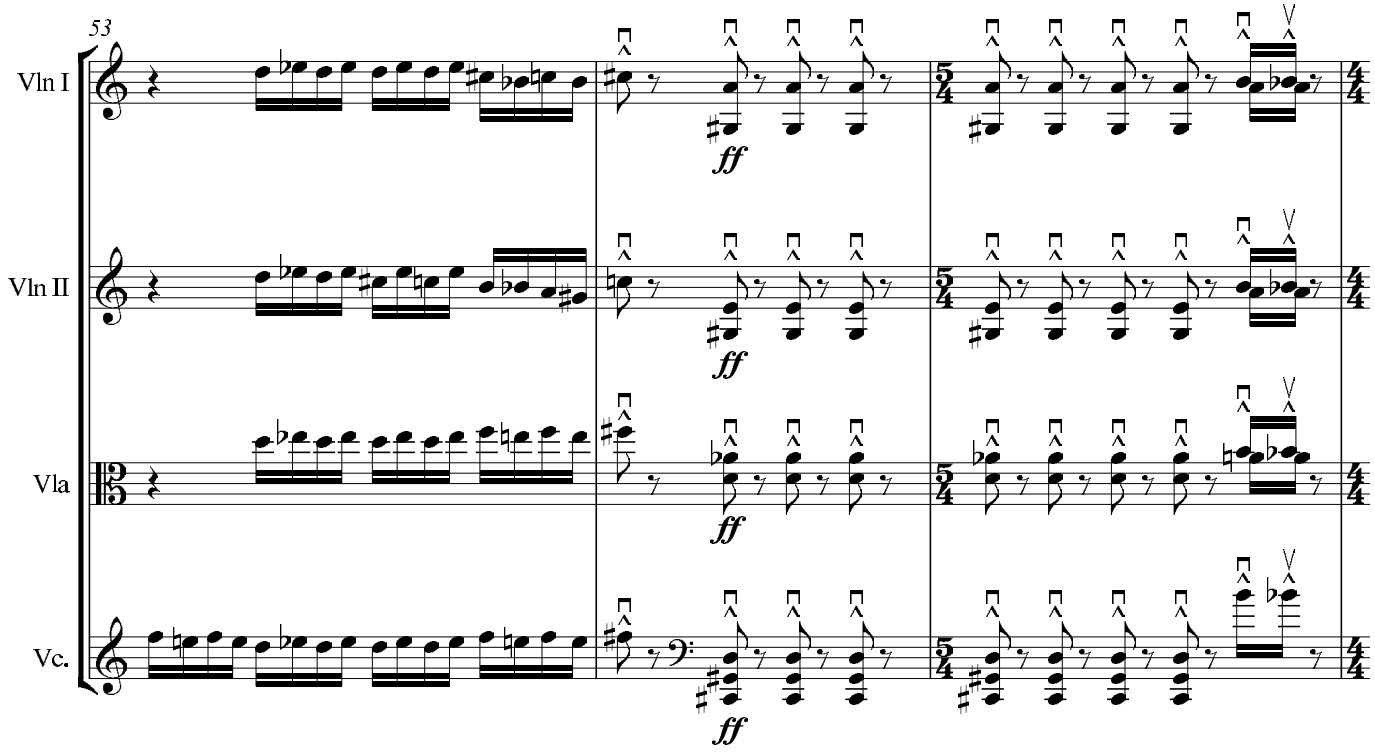

9
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
ff
mf
p cresc.
pp
(pp)
arco
p
12
ff p agitated
(p)
ff p
f
pp
pizz.
15
ff pp
III
II
p sub.
pp sub.

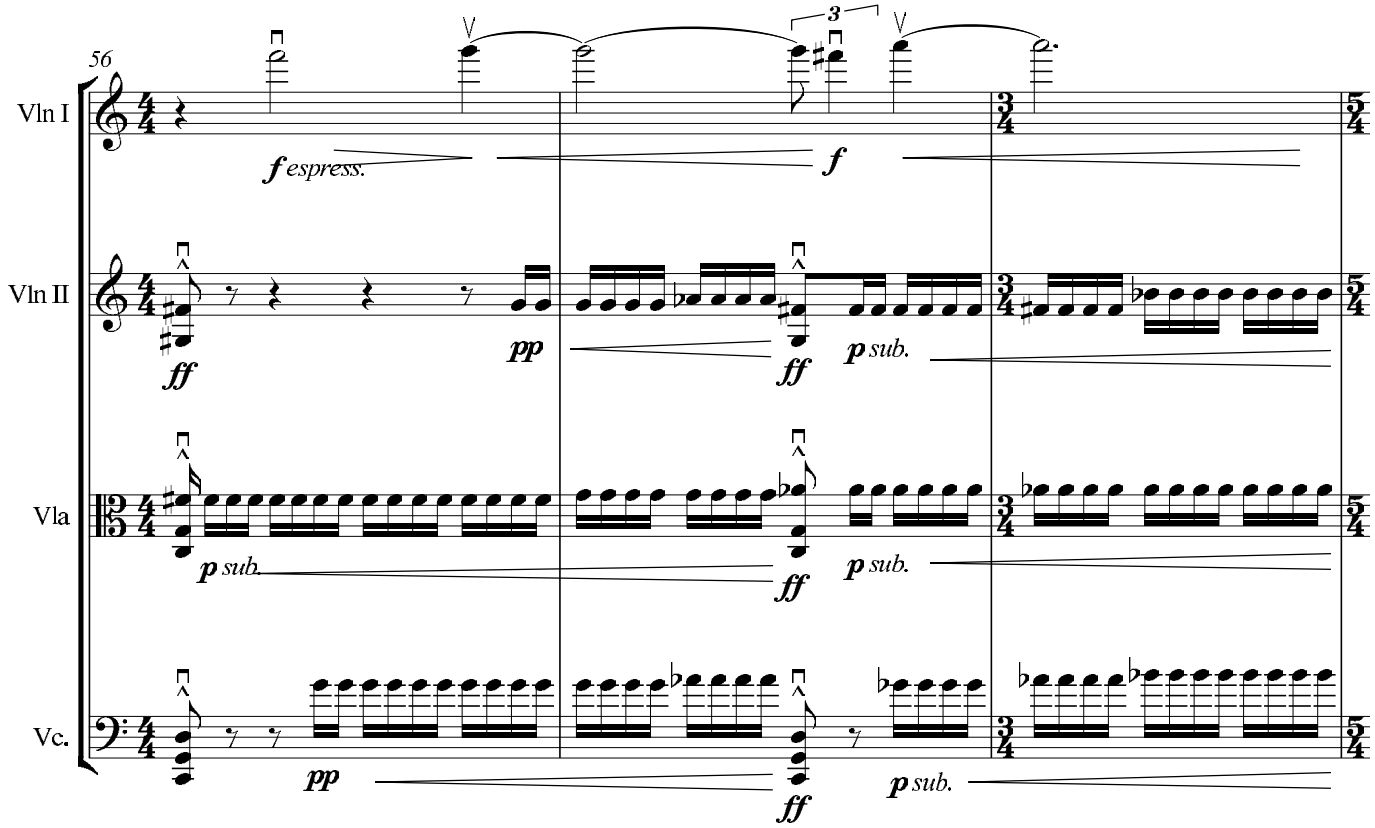

18
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
gliss.
ff
p
f
f with abandon
pp
21
IV
III
II
24
I
p off the string

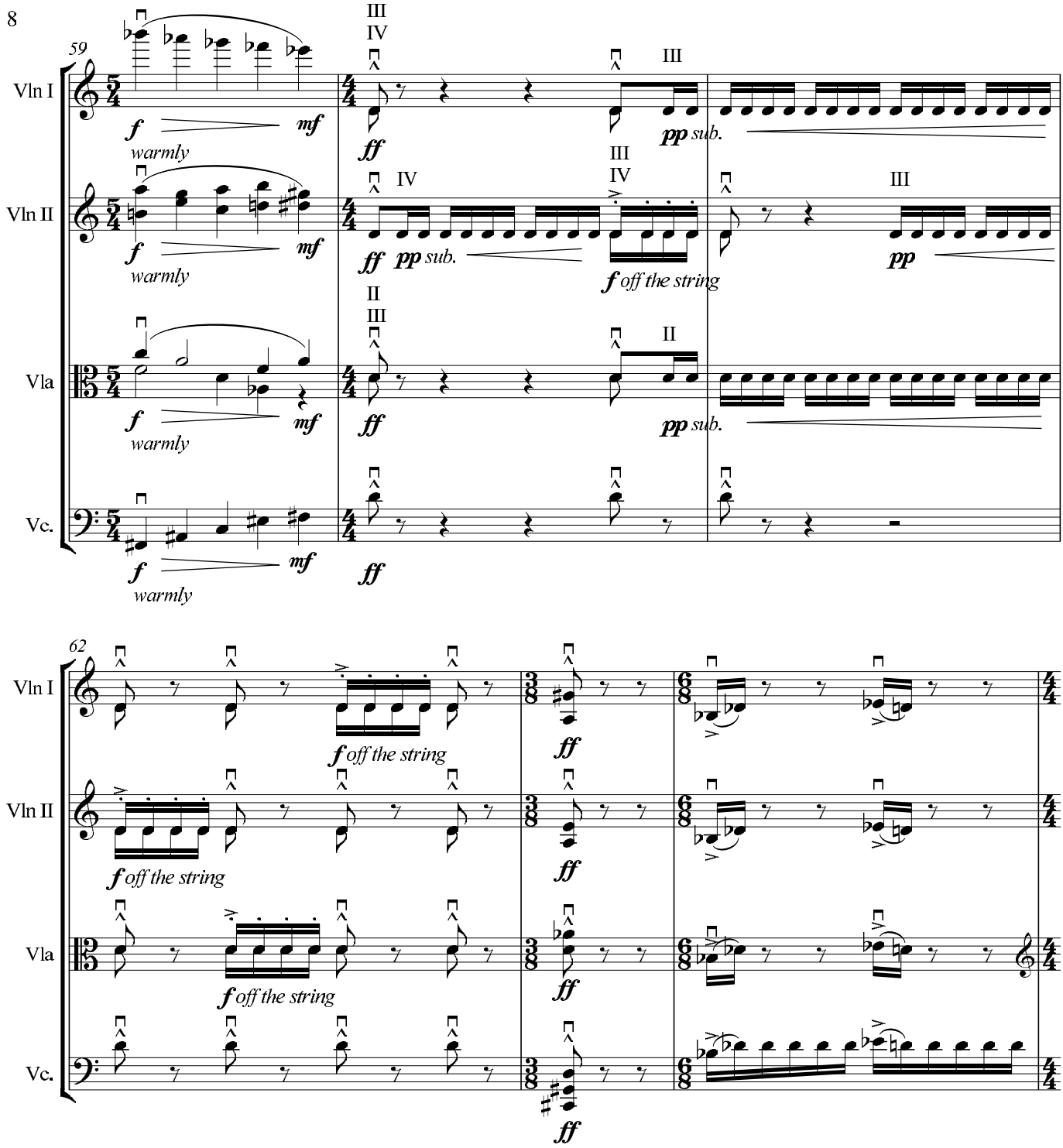

27
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
f sub.
f sub.
f sub.
f
ff
p
f
p
f
p
f
pizz.
pp
con sord.
pp (on the string)
p
31
arco
mp
mp
p
con sord.
pp (on the string)
senza sord.
pp (on the string)
34
mf espress.
mf pp sub.
ff pp sub.
ff
senza sord.
ff

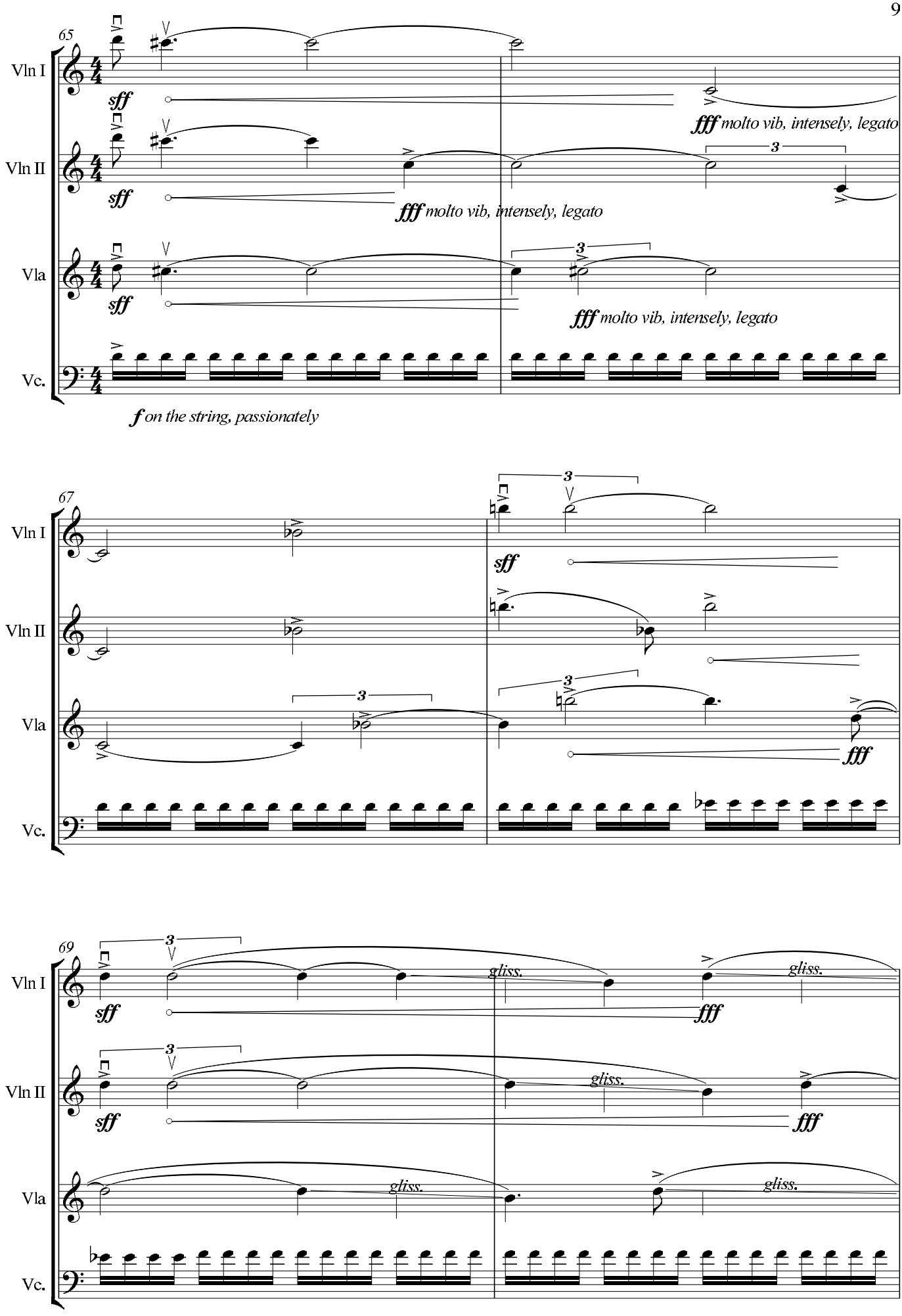

37
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
ff
pp
pp sub.
p sub.
f
40
II
III
p
f with abandon, solo
43
pizz.
arco
mf
pp

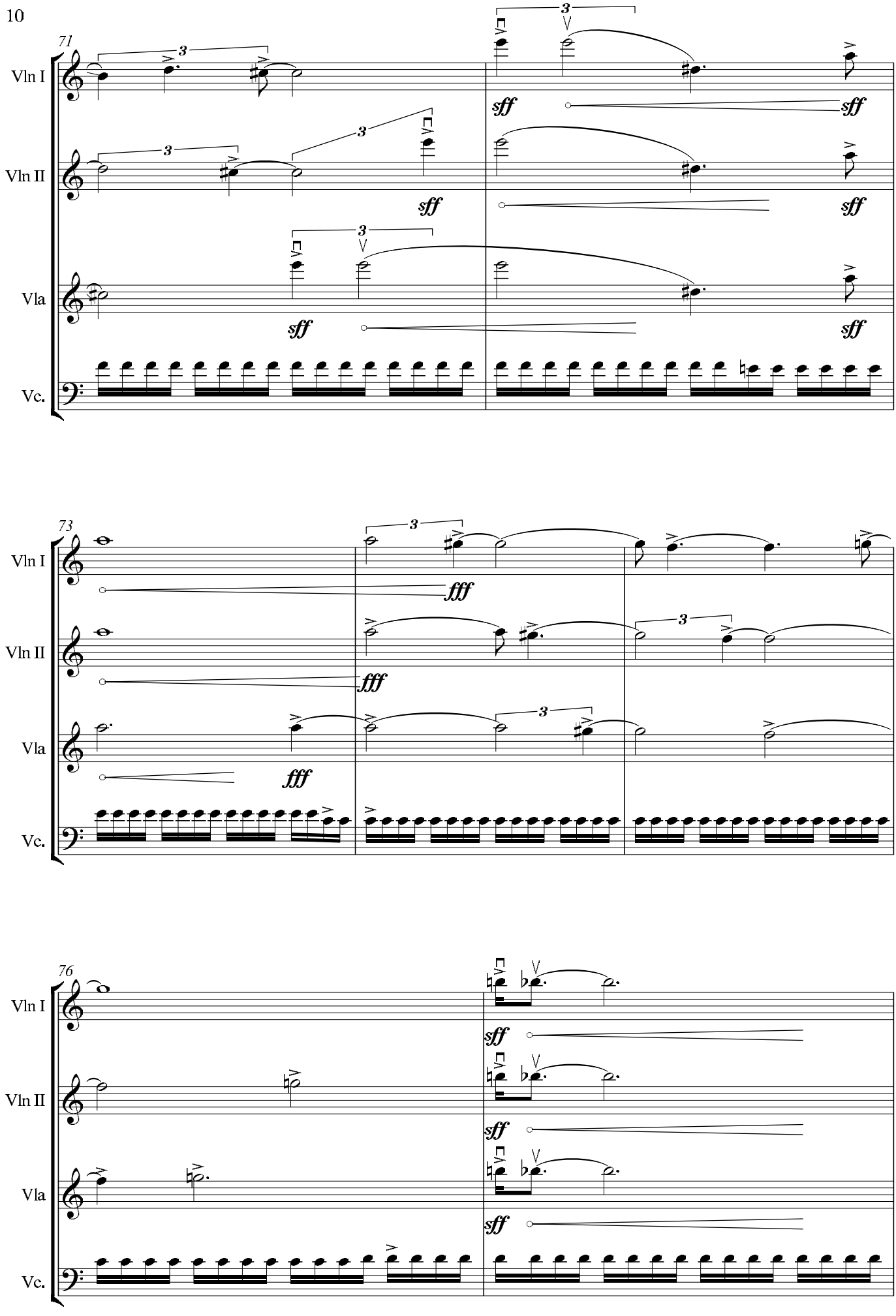

(2+2+3)
46
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
ff
p
pizz.
f with abandon, solo
49
mf
f
arco
51
0
I

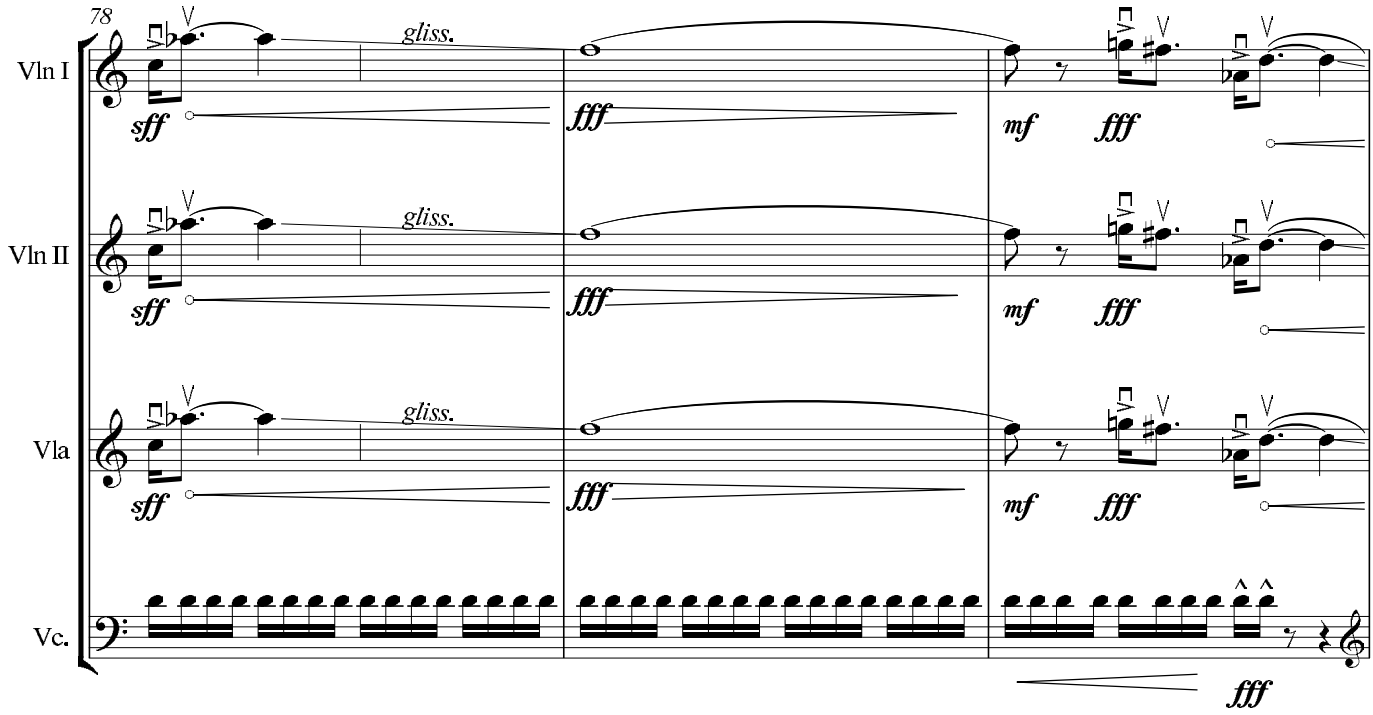

53
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
ff

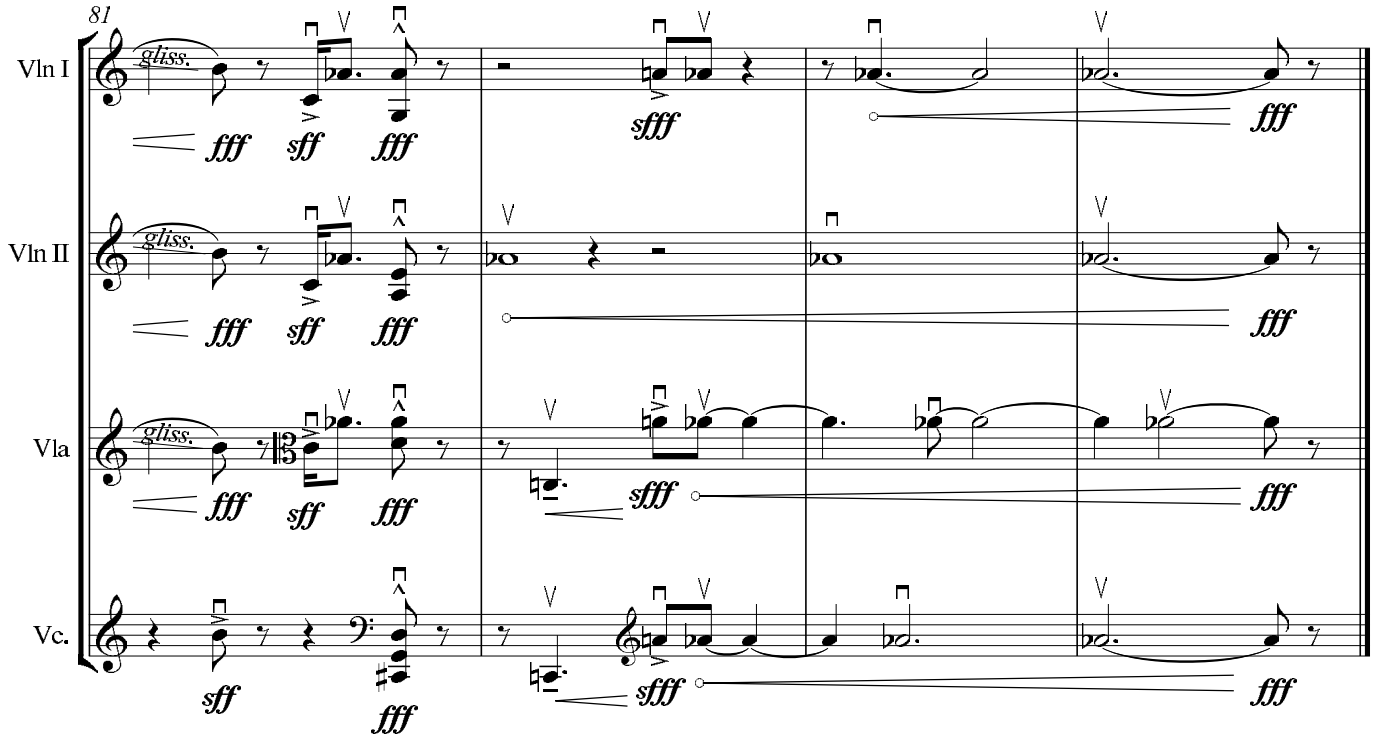

56
3
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
f espress.
f
ff
pp
p sub.


59
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
f warmly
mf
III
IV
ff
pp sub.
f off the string
pp
II
62


65
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
sff
fff molto vib, intensely, legato
f on the string, passionately
67
fff
69
gliss.


71
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
3
sff
73
fff
76


78
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
gliss.
sff
fff
mf


81
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
gliss.
fff
sff
sfff

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