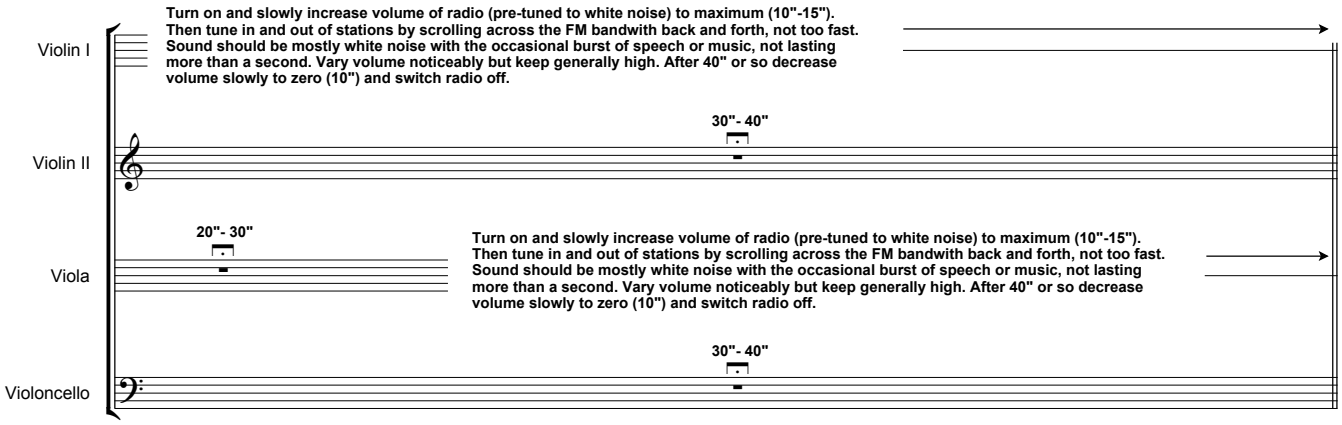
Commissioned by RTÉ for the RTÉ Vanbrugh Quartet
on the occasion of Seamus Heaney's 70th birthday

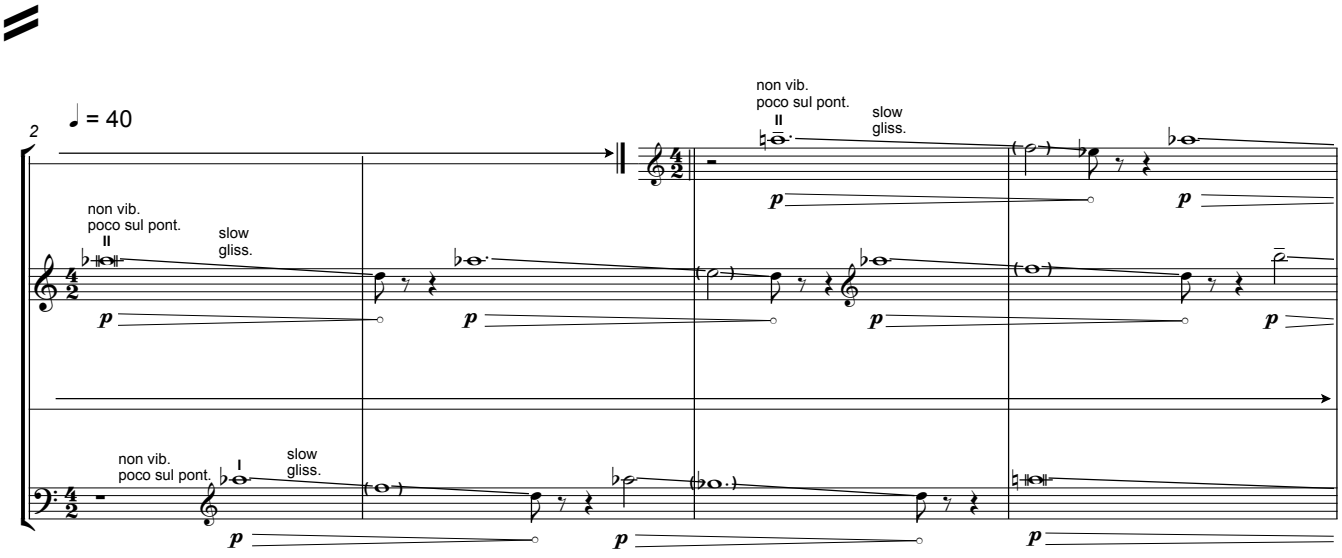
Across a clear blue sky

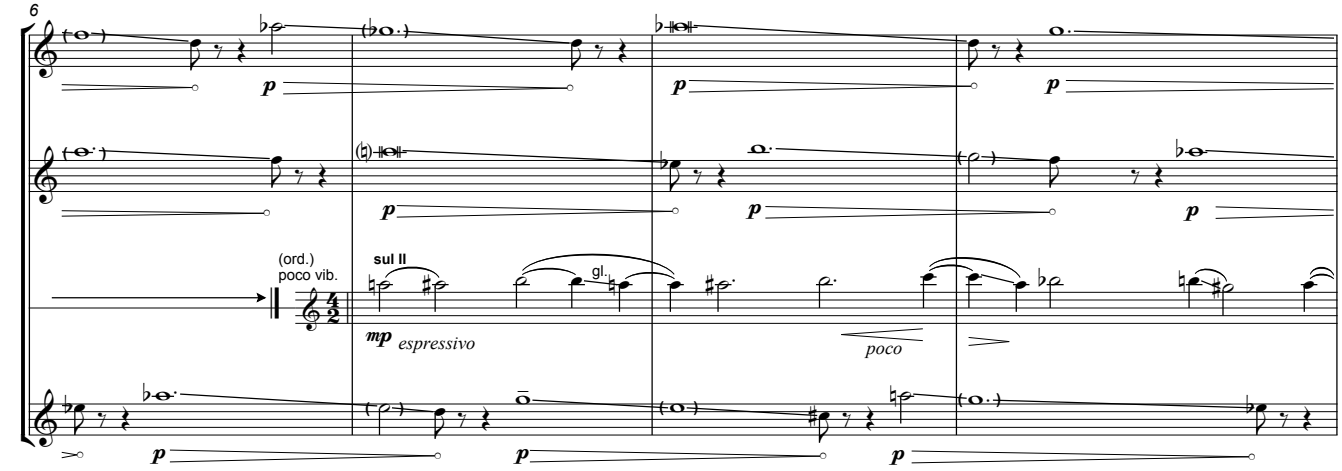
(after Seamus Heaney's poem ***Horace and the Thunder***)

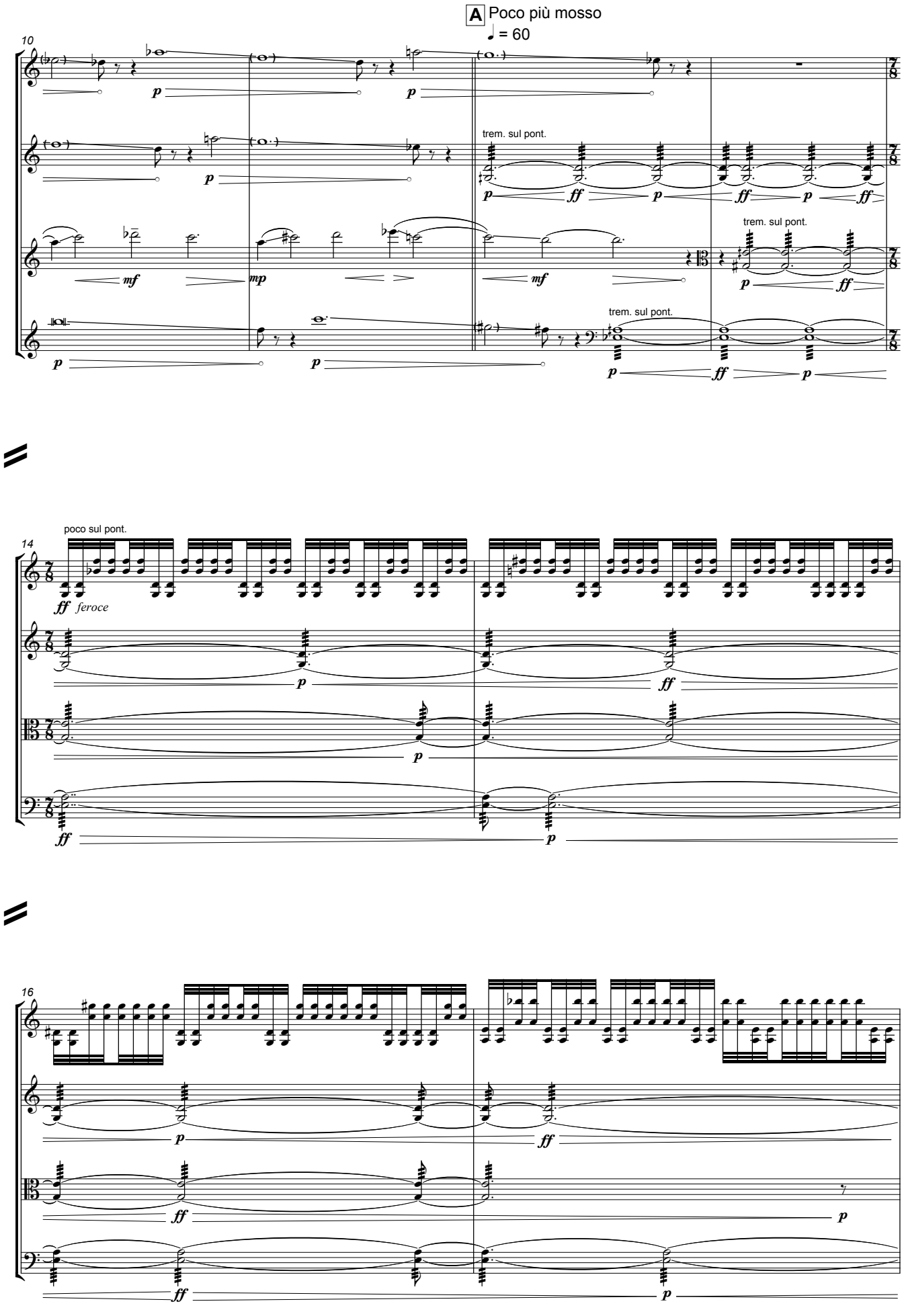
Ian Wilson
(2009)

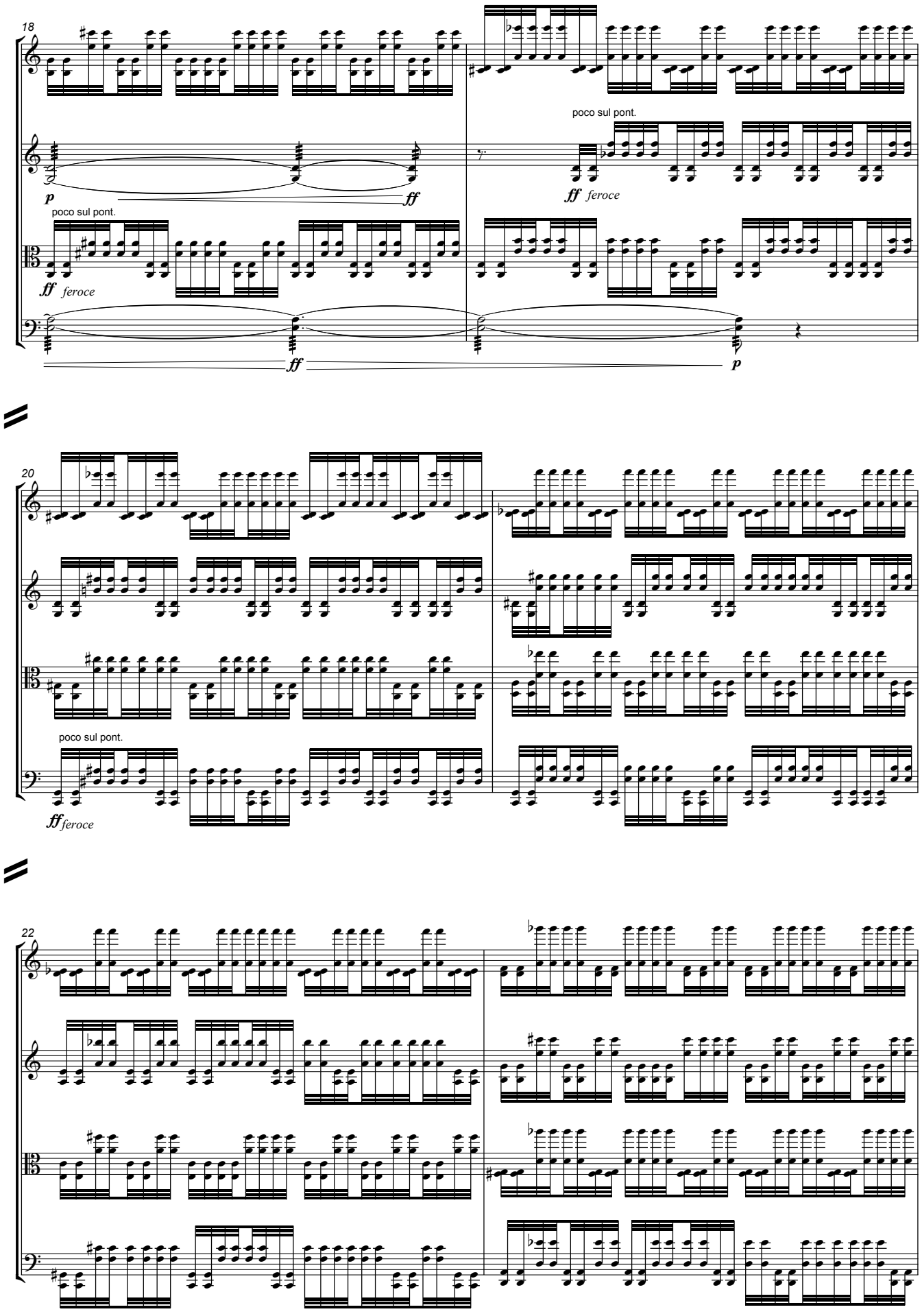
for string quartet, two portable analogue
radios and four wind-up drummer toys

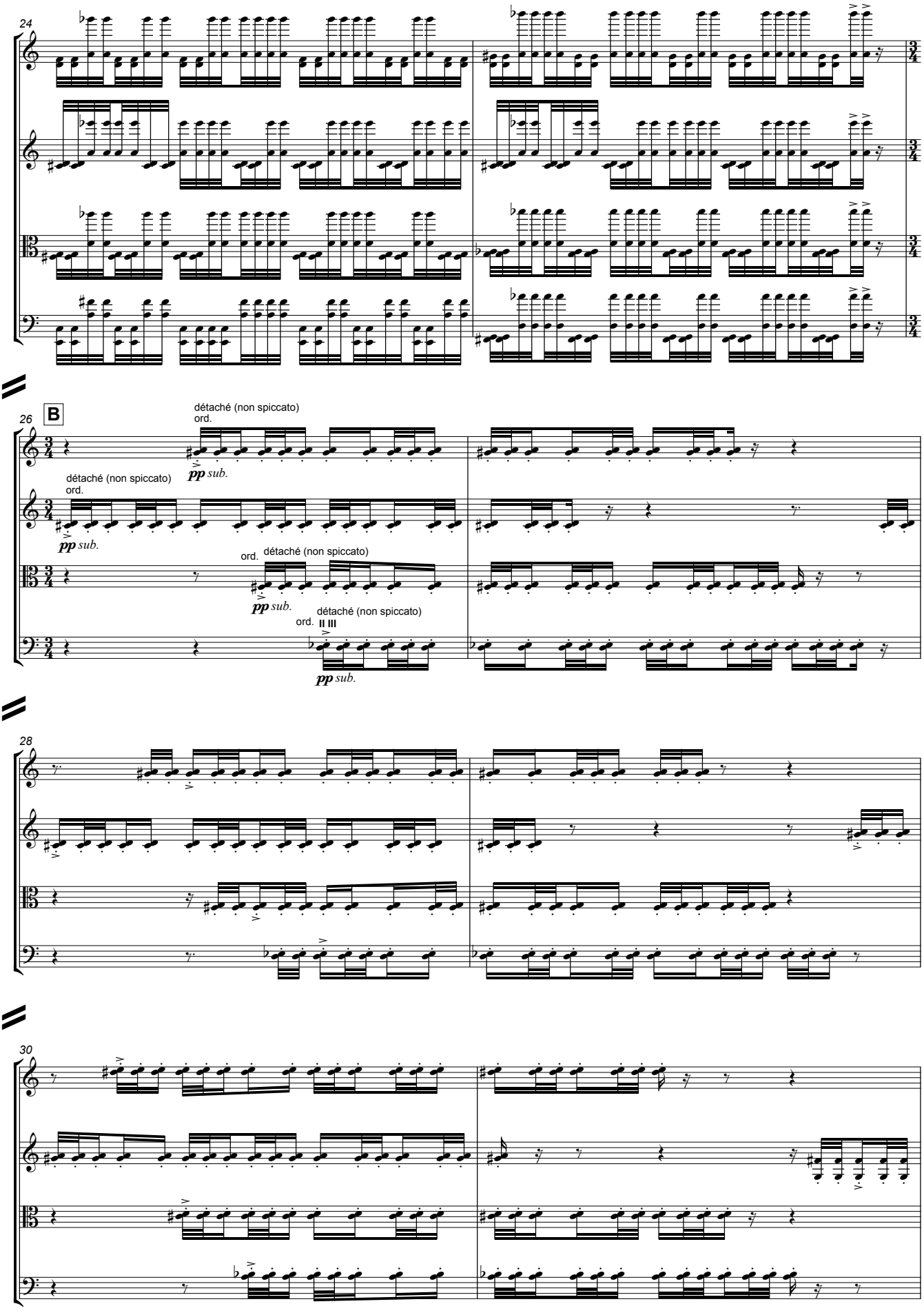


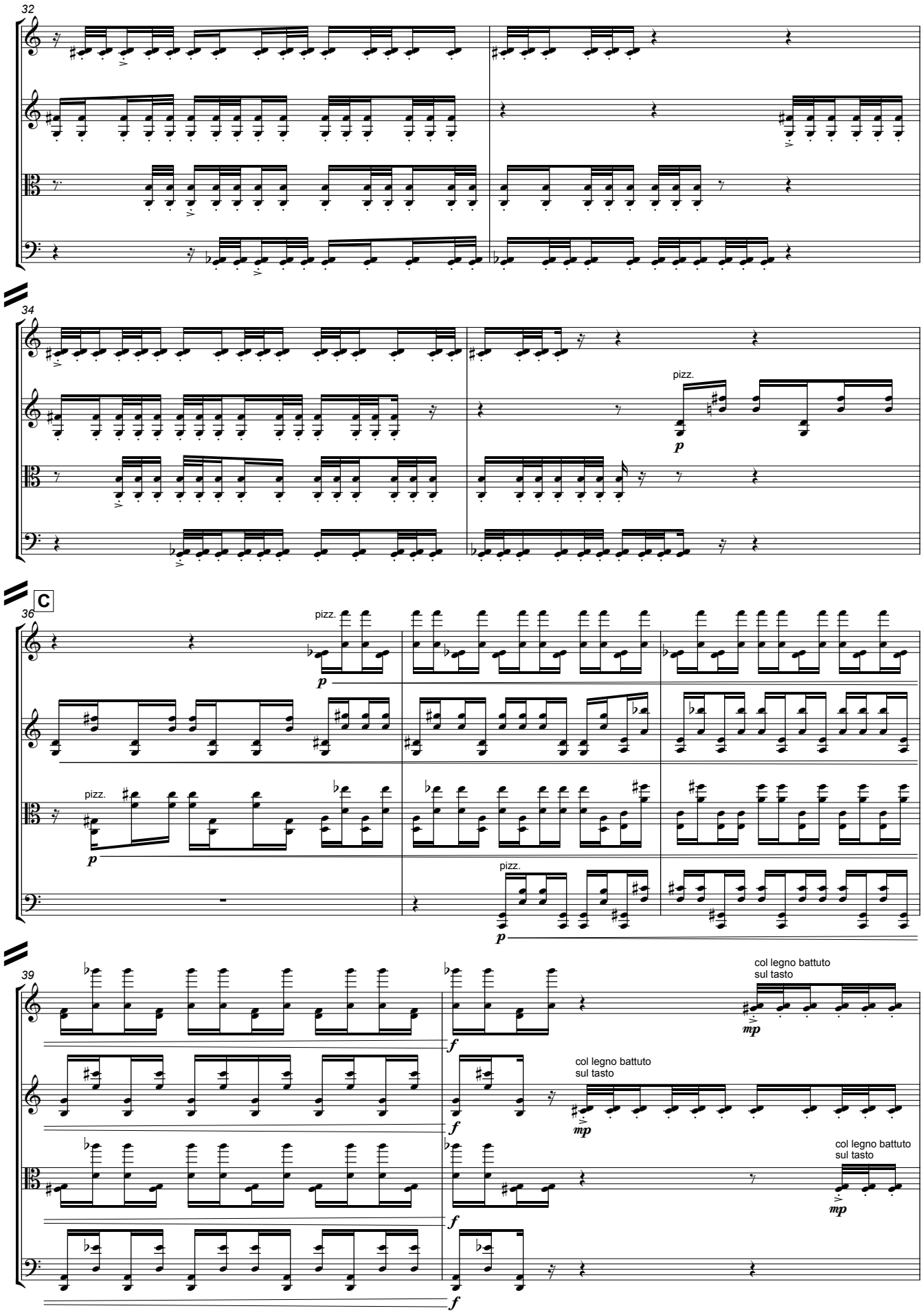


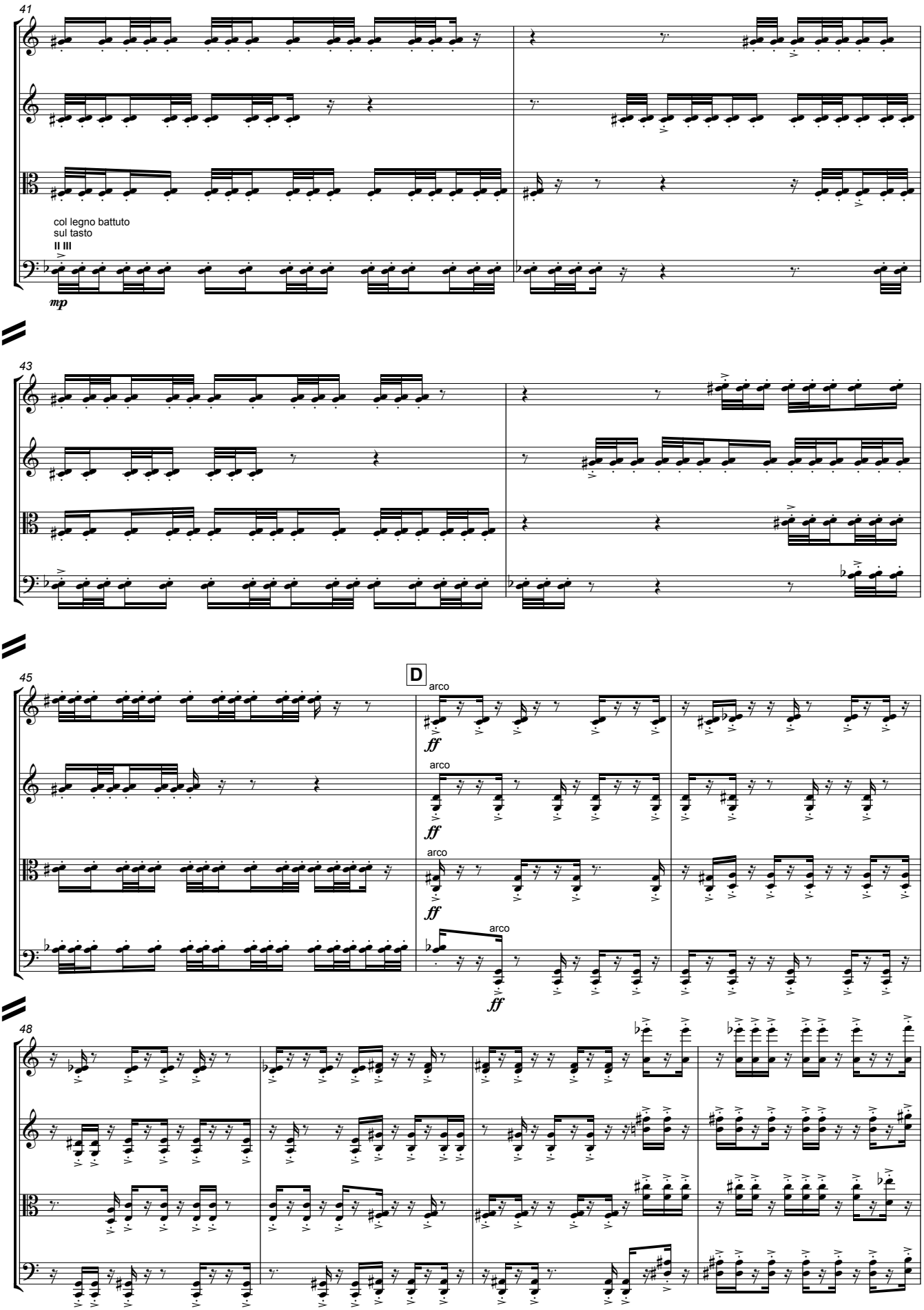


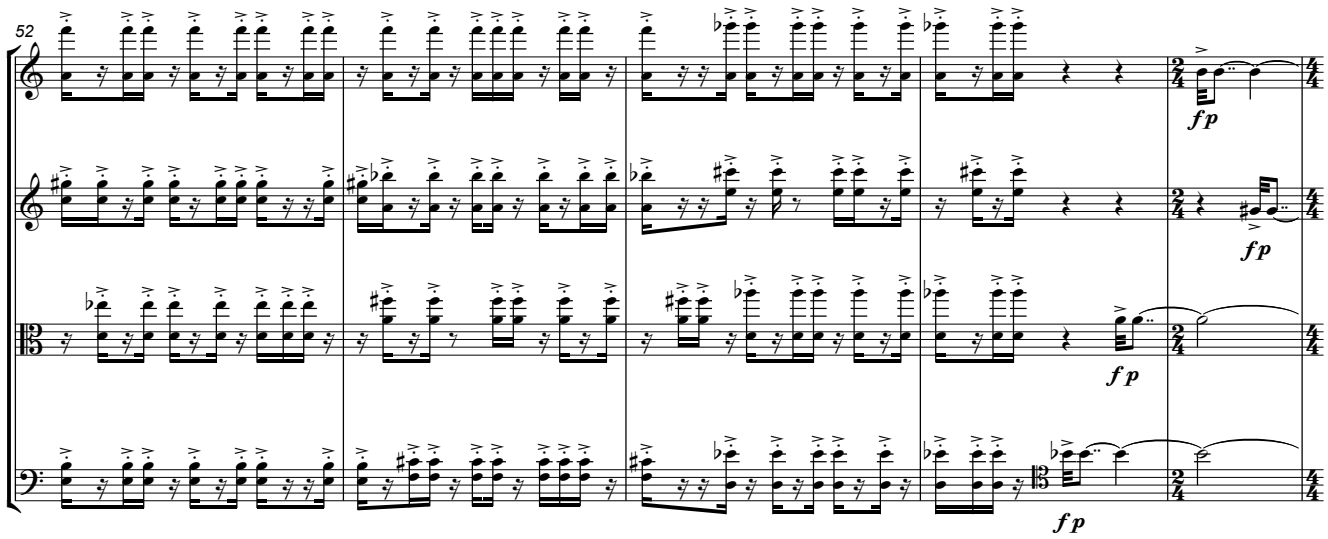

A Poco più mosso
♩ = 60
10
trem. sul pont.
trem. sul pont.
trem. sul pont.
14
poco sul pont.
ff feroce
16

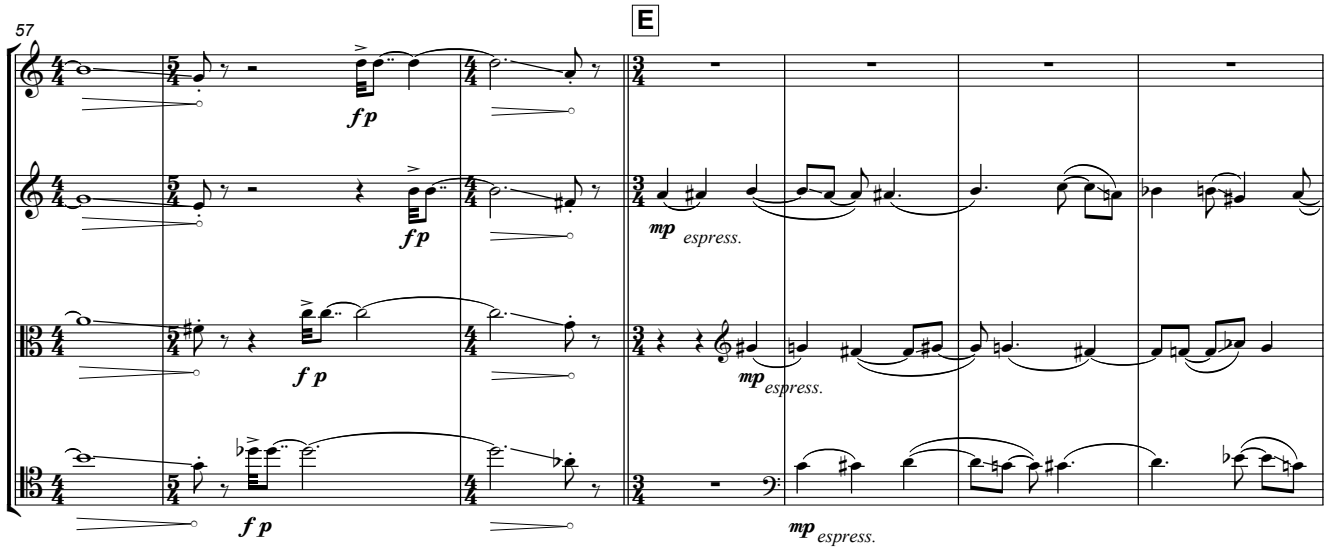

18
poco sul pont.
poco sul pont.
20
poco sul pont.
22

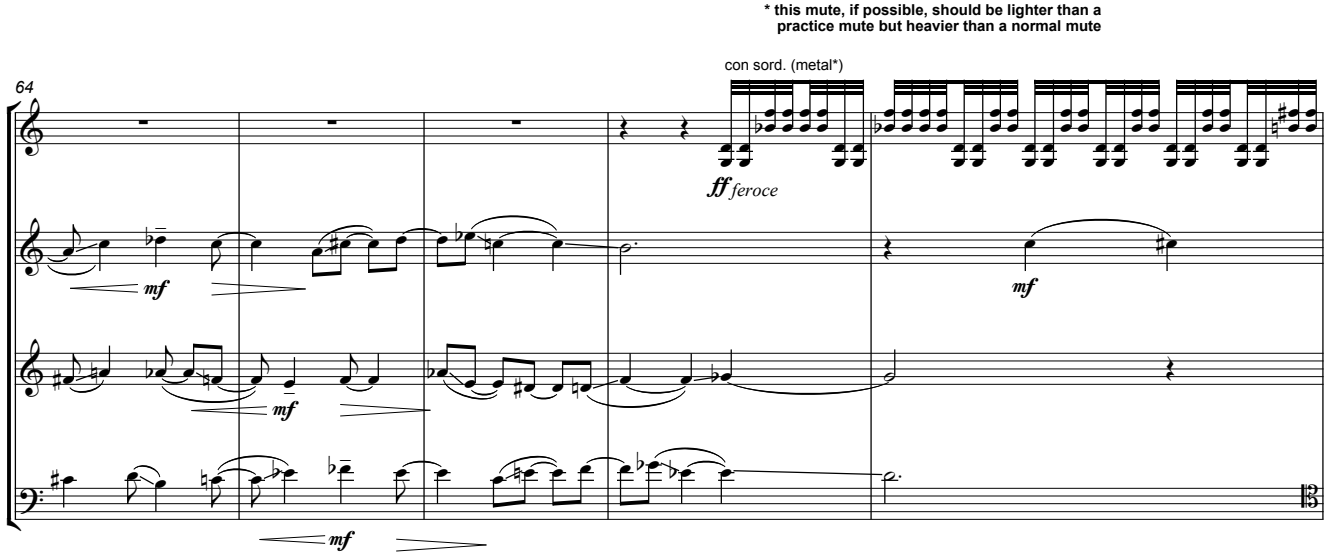

24
26
B
détaché (non spiccato)
ord.
pp sub.
détaché (non spiccato)
ord.
pp sub.
ord.
détaché (non spiccato)
pp sub.
ord.
détaché (non spiccato)
II III
pp sub.
28
30

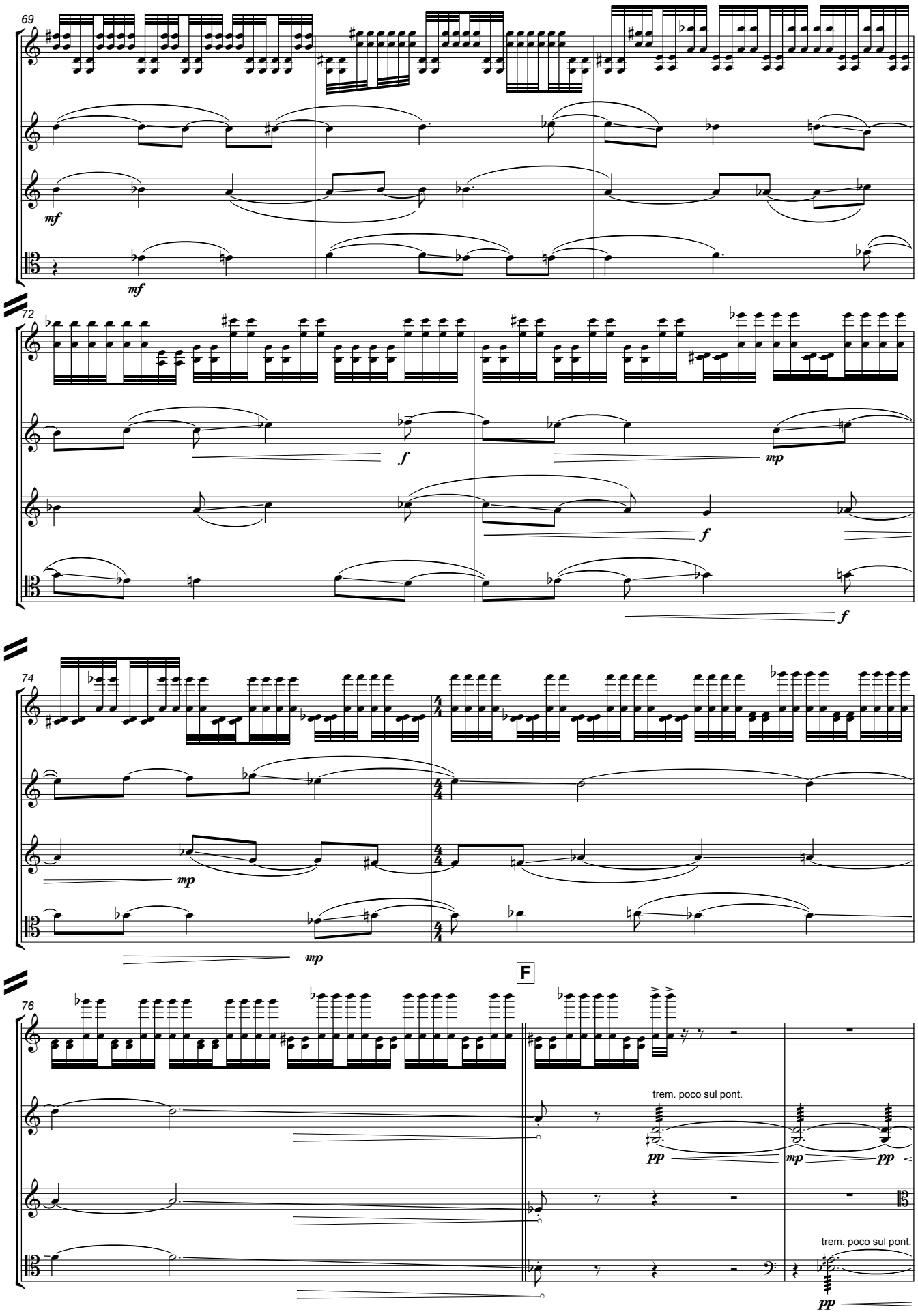

32
34
pizz.
p
C
36
pizz.
p
pizz.
p
39
col legno battuto
sul tasto
mp
f
col legno battuto
sul tasto
mp
f
col legno battuto
sul tasto
mp
f
f

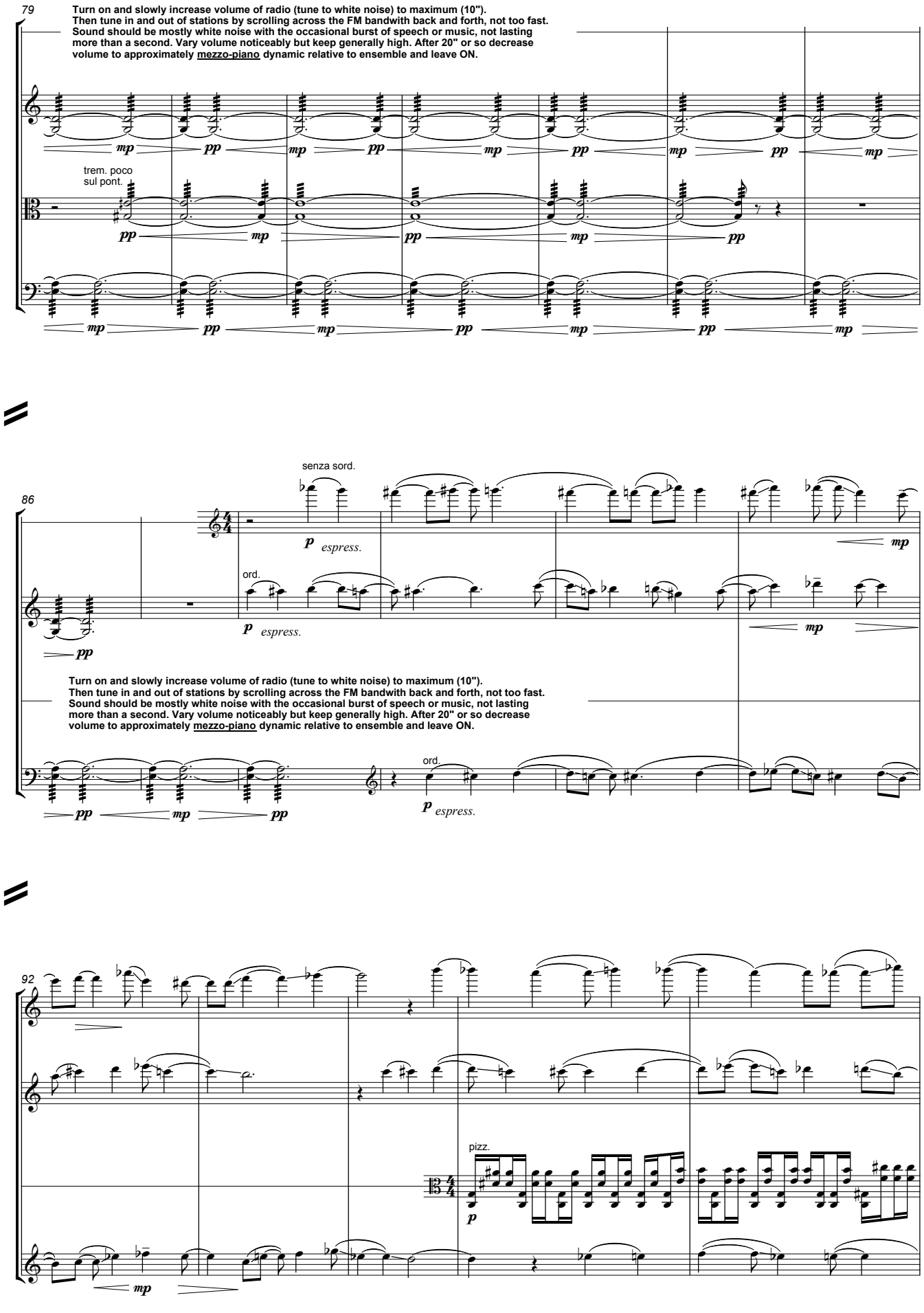

41
col legno battuto
sul tasto
II III
mp
43
45
D
arco
ff
48

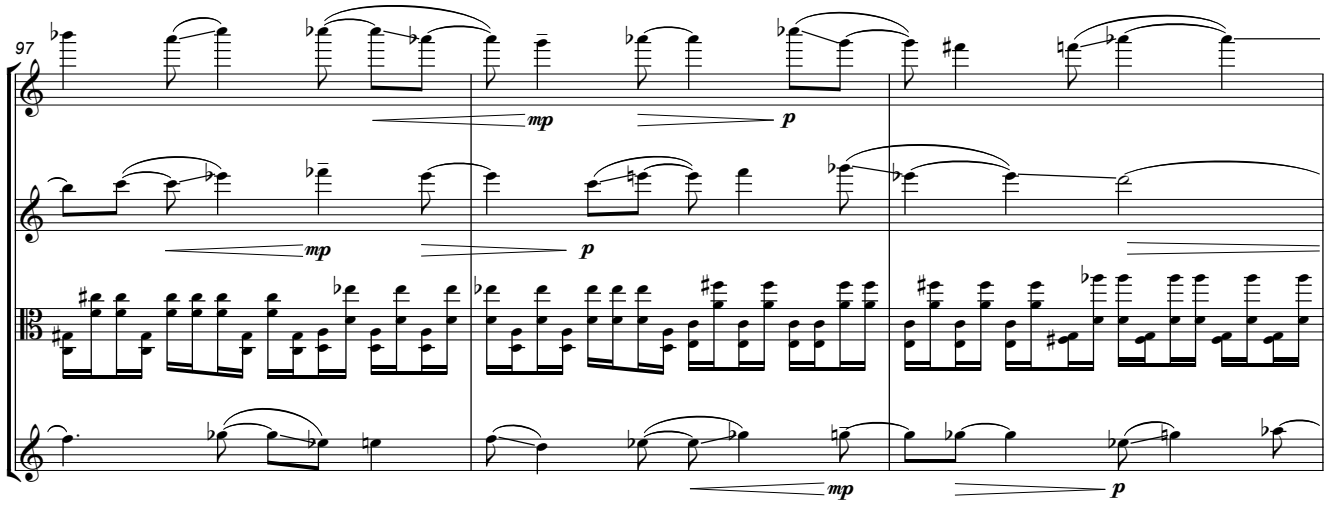

52
fp
fp
fp
fp

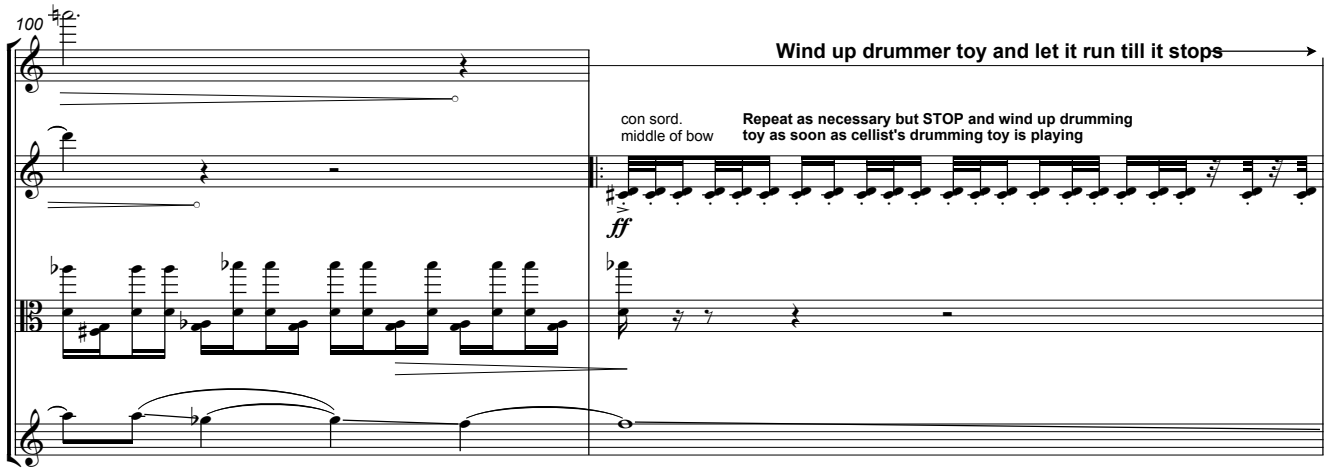

E
57
fp
fp
fp
mp espress.
mp espress.
mp espress.

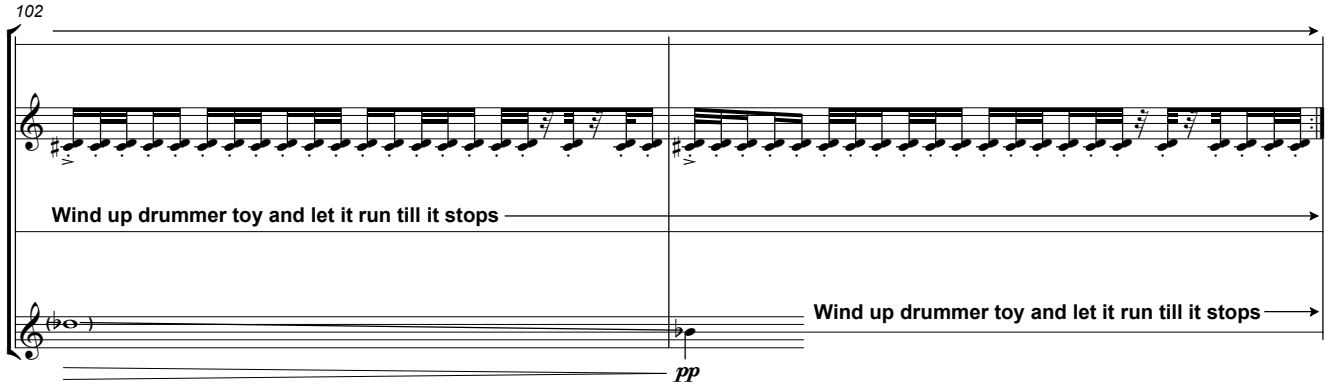

* this mute, if possible, should be lighter than a practice mute but heavier than a normal mute
con sord. (metal*)
64
ff feroce
mf
mf
mf
mf

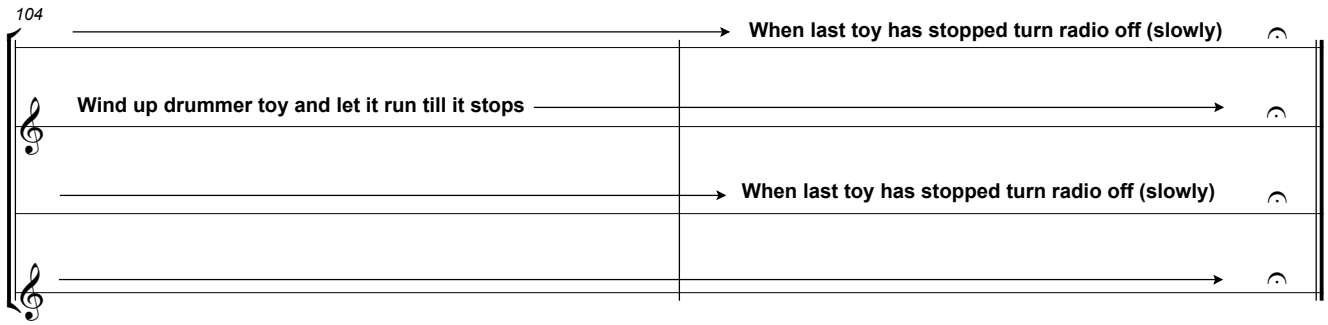

69
mf
mf
72
f
mp
f
f
74
mp
mp
F
76
trem. poco sul pont.
pp
mp
pp
trem. poco sul pont.
pp


79
Turn on and slowly increase volume of radio (tune to white noise) to maximum (10").
Then tune in and out of stations by scrolling across the FM bandwith back and forth, not too fast.
Sound should be mostly white noise with the occasional burst of speech or music, not lasting
more than a second. Vary volume noticeably but keep generally high. After 20" or so decrease
volume to approximately mezzo-piano dynamic relative to ensemble and leave ON.
trem. poco
sul pont.
86
senza sord.
espress.
ord.
Turn on and slowly increase volume of radio (tune to white noise) to maximum (10").
Then tune in and out of stations by scrolling across the FM bandwith back and forth, not too fast.
Sound should be mostly white noise with the occasional burst of speech or music, not lasting
more than a second. Vary volume noticeably but keep generally high. After 20" or so decrease
volume to approximately mezzo-piano dynamic relative to ensemble and leave ON.
92
pizz.


97
mp
p
mp
p
mp
p


100
Wind up drummer toy and let it run till it stops
con sord.
middle of bow
Repeat as necessary but STOP and wind up drumming
toy as soon as cellist's drumming toy is playing
ff


102
Wind up drummer toy and let it run till it stops
Wind up drummer toy and let it run till it stops
pp


104
When last toy has stopped turn radio off (slowly)
Wind up drummer toy and let it run till it stops
When last toy has stopped turn radio off (slowly)