Looking for the Land that is Nowhere

Hommage à Horatiu Radulescu

for Theremin and String Octet

2010

Christian Mason

Instrumentation: Scordatura* String Octet with Theremin:

Theremin (with *Moogerfooger MF-101 Low-Pass Filter***)
Violin I (-2)
Violin II (non scord.)
Violin III (+1)
Violin IV (-1)
Viola I (non scord.)
Viola II (-2)
Violoncello (-1)
Contrabass (non scord.)

*Indicated by the number of semitones + or – from the standard tuning. Maximum +1 or -2 semitones. All strings remain tuned in 5ths.

**This can either be provided by the composer or bought from Moog Music at www.moogmusic.com

Note on performance:

In order to exploit the possibilites of the scordatura the whole ensemble is treated as a single 'macro-instrument', with the 24 open strings (plus all the related harmonics) being the main material which it explores. The theremin exists at the heart of the ensemble, often holding together the lines and their spectral emanations which are shared around the strings. Even the most pointillistic moments were conceived as lines, and this should be conveyed in performance.

Score in C

Duration c.13 minutes

Christian Mason was one of the winners of the 2009 Royal Philharmonic Society Composition Prize and was consequently commissioned to write this work for the Philharmonia Music of Today Series. The first performance took place on June 29th 2010 at the Royal Festval Hall, played by members of the Philharmonia Orchestra with Lydia Kavina on Theremin.

Ensemble Layout

THEREMIN*

CELLO BASS

VIOLA I VIOLA II

VIOLIN III VIOLIN IV

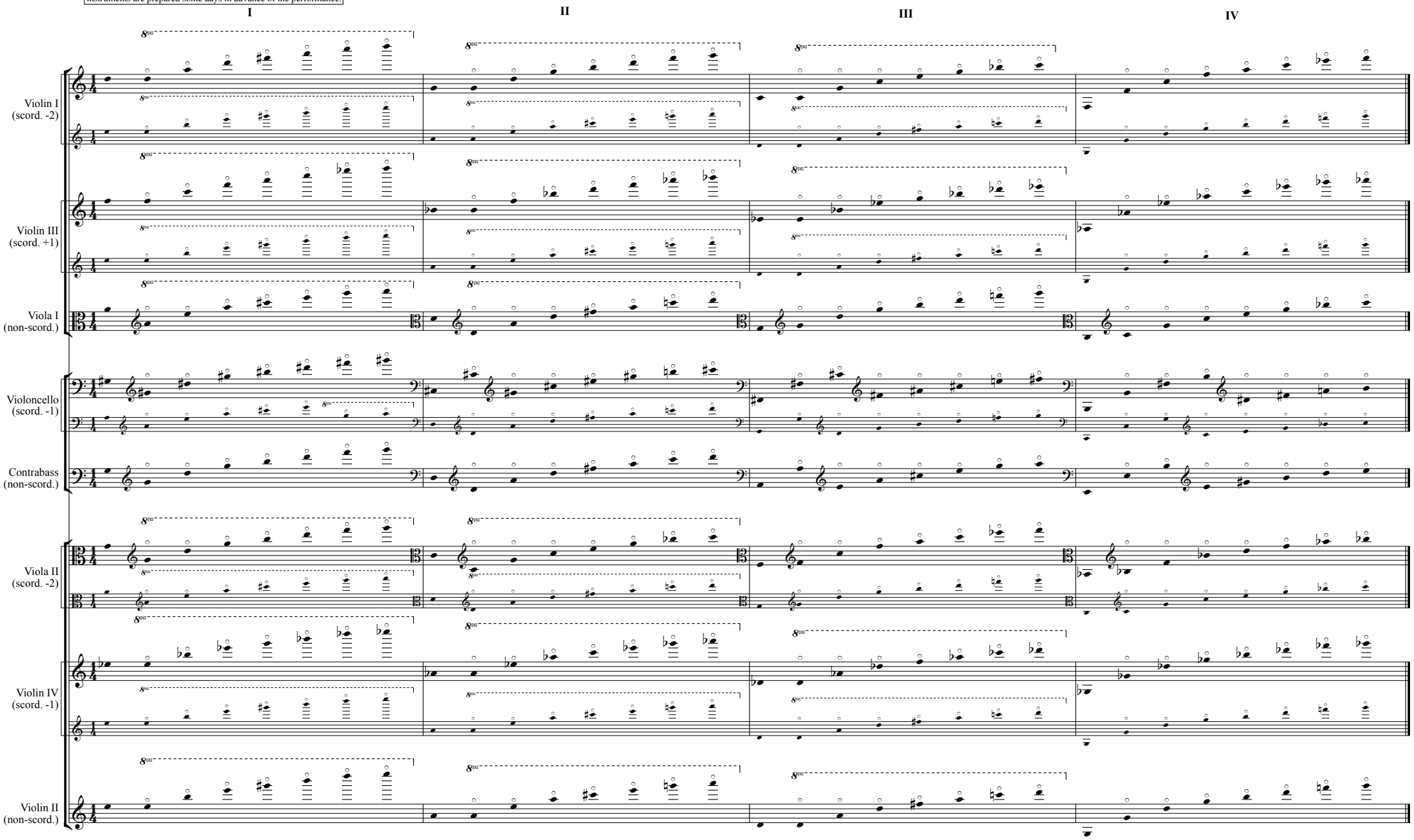
VIOLIN I VIOLIN II

*It is essential that the theremin has sufficient space from surrounding instruments to avoid tuning interference.

N.B. The order of instruments in the score reflects their spatial layout: left to right here = top to bottom in the score.

SCORDATURA OPEN STRINGS and NATURAL HARMONICS (in all cases the 7th will sound slightly flat)

It is understood that the scordatura may result in unstable tuning.
To avoid this as far as possible it is recommended that scordatura instruments are prepared some days in advance of the performance.

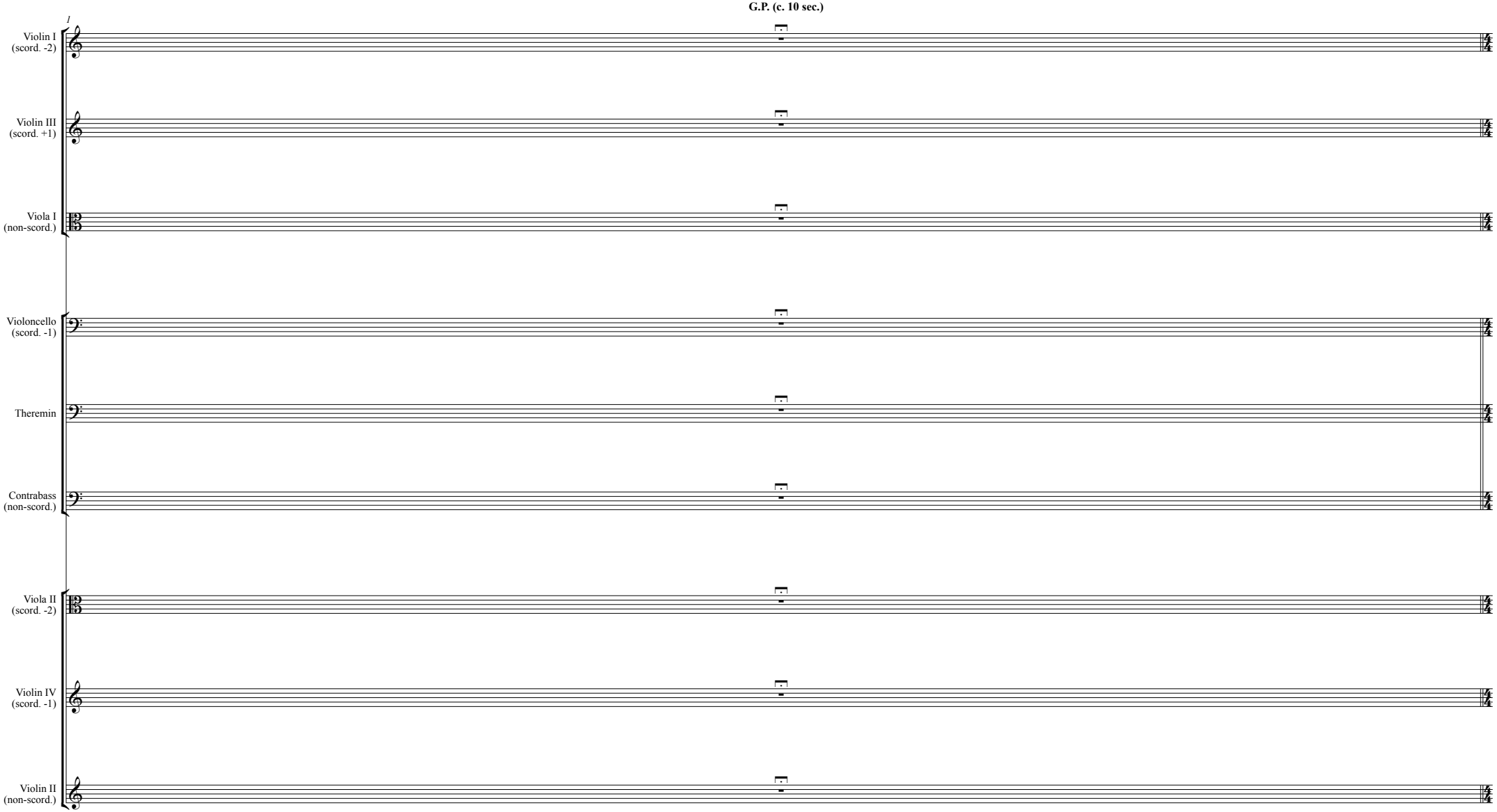


Looking for the Land that is Nowhere

Hommage à Horatiu Radulescu

Christian Mason (January-May 2010)

G.P. (c. 10 sec.)



Portentous ♩ = c.40

2

Vln. I (-2)

Vln. III (+1)

Vla. I

I II IV IV IV IV IV

ff

Pizz. should be articulated approx. half way between stopped note and bridge for a sound with a twangy attack

Vc. (-1)

Sul IV
senza vib.
pizz.

ff

arco flautando

p *ff*

pizz.

ff

3 arco flautando

p *ff*

pizz.

ff

3 arco flautando

p

Th.

Cb.

senza vib.
arco

ff *pp* *ff* *ff* *pp* *ff* *ff* *pp*

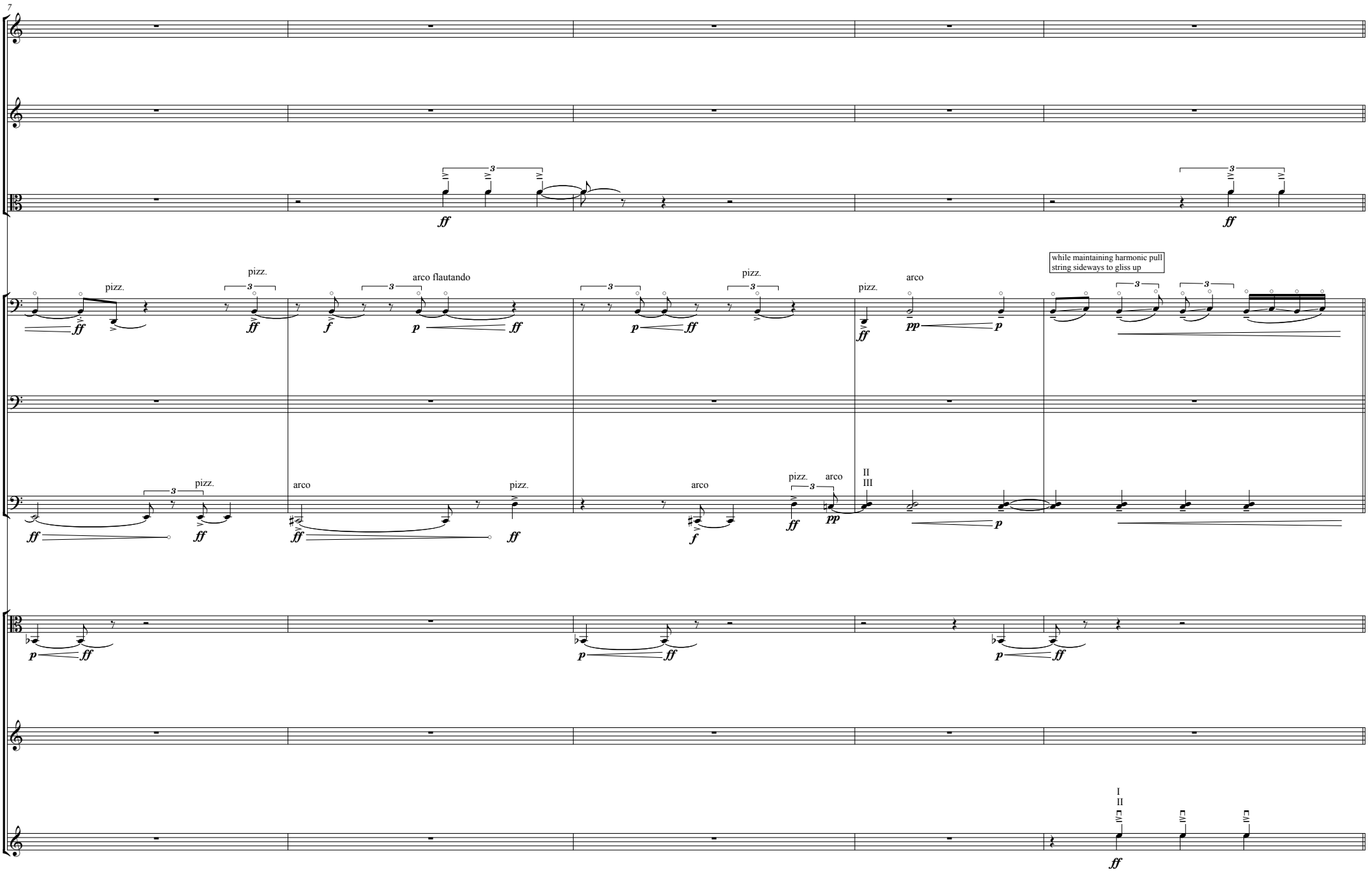
Vla. II (-2)

sempre flautando

p *ff*

Vln. IV (-1)

Vln. II


7
Vln. I (-2)
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
Vc. (-1)
Th.
Cb.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
Vln. II
pizz.
arco flautando
arco
while maintaining harmonic pull
string sideways to gliss up

A **Vast, Expansive**

♩ = c.80

♩ = 𝅗𝅥

12

Vln. I (-2)

Vln. III (+1)

Vla. I

Vc. (-1)

Th.

Cb.

Vla. II (-2)

Vln. IV (-1)

Vln. II

III

nat. harm. gliss.

LOW-PASS FILTER ON:
smooth/4-pole
Amt. 5/Mix 10/Cut 4/Res 7

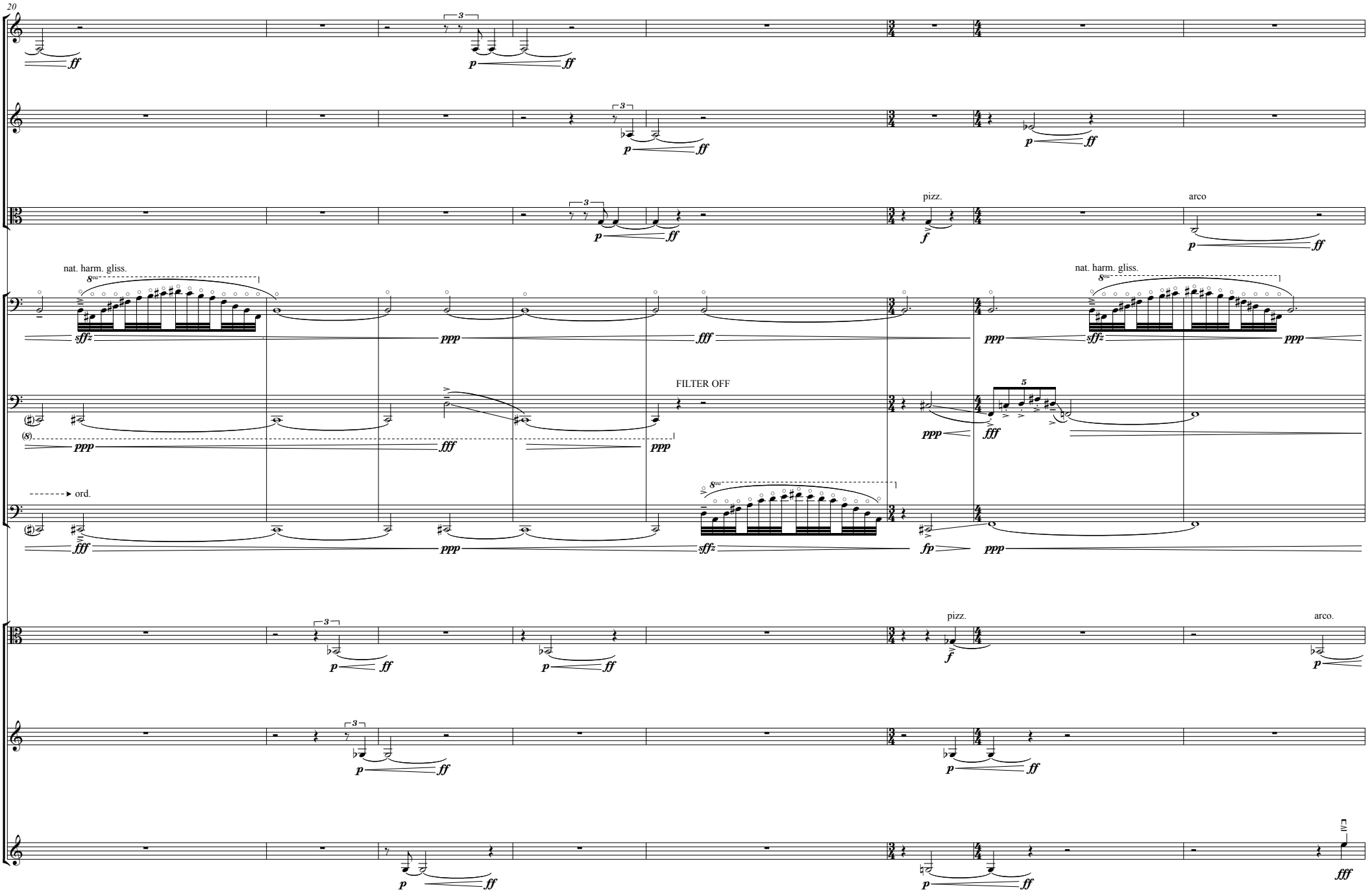
molto sul pont.

poco sul pont.

ord.

sul tasto

flautando


20
Vln. I (-2)
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
Vc. (-1)
Th.
Cb.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
Vln. II
nat. harm. gliss.
FILTER OFF
ord.
pizz.
arco

28

B **Erratically energized!**

Vln. I (-2)

pizz. arco

Vln. III (+1)

Vla. I

nat. harm. gliss.

nat. harm. gliss.

Vc. (-1)

Th.

Sul III:
nat. harm. gliss.

Cb.

pizz.

Vla. II (-2)

Vln. IV (-1)

Vln. II

Slower

rall. ♩ = 60

36

Vln. I (-2)

Vln. III (+1)

Vla. I

Vc. (-1)

Th.

Cb.

Vla. II (-2)

Vln. IV (-1)

Vln. II

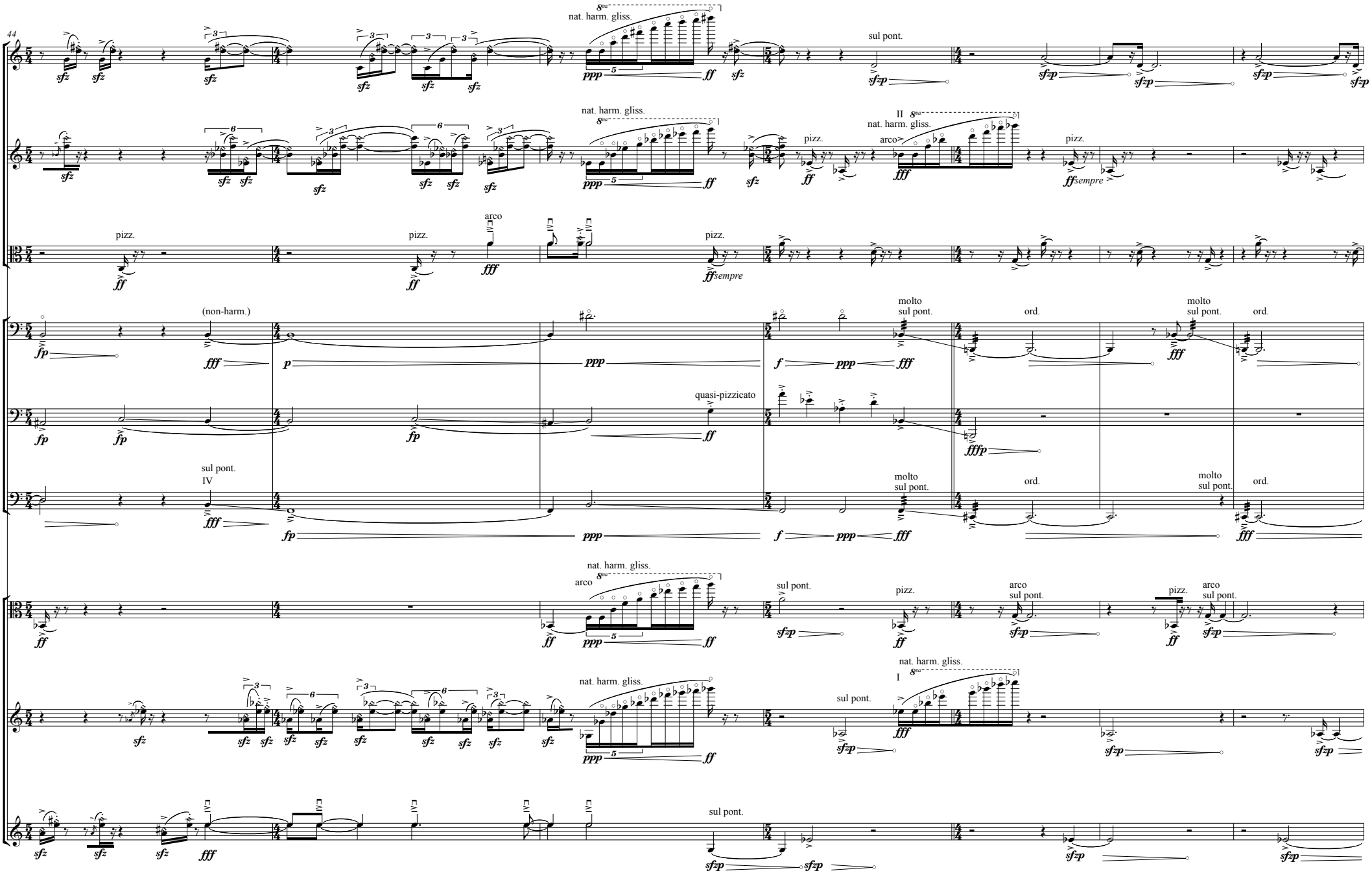
nat. harm. gliss.

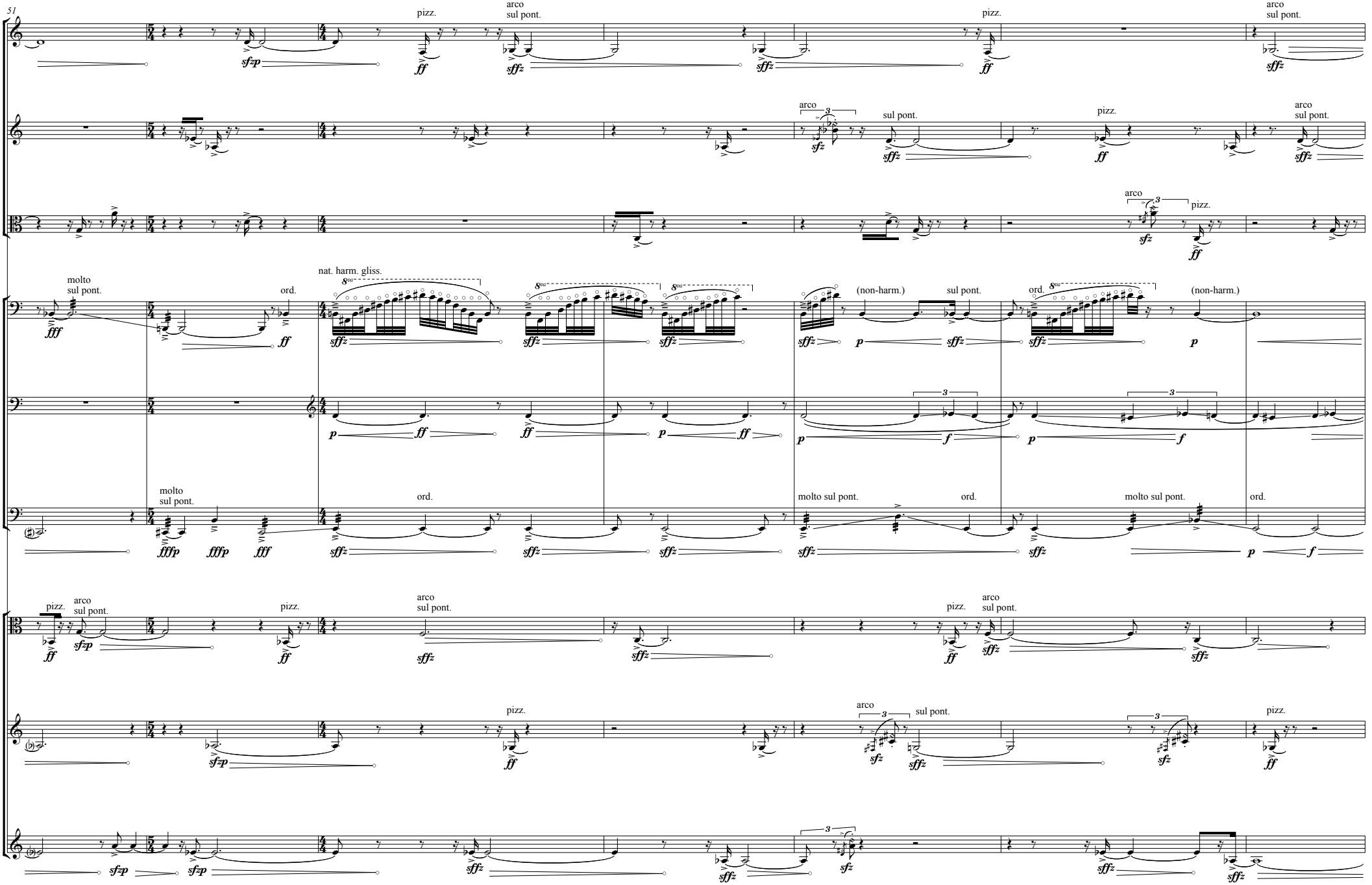
pizz.

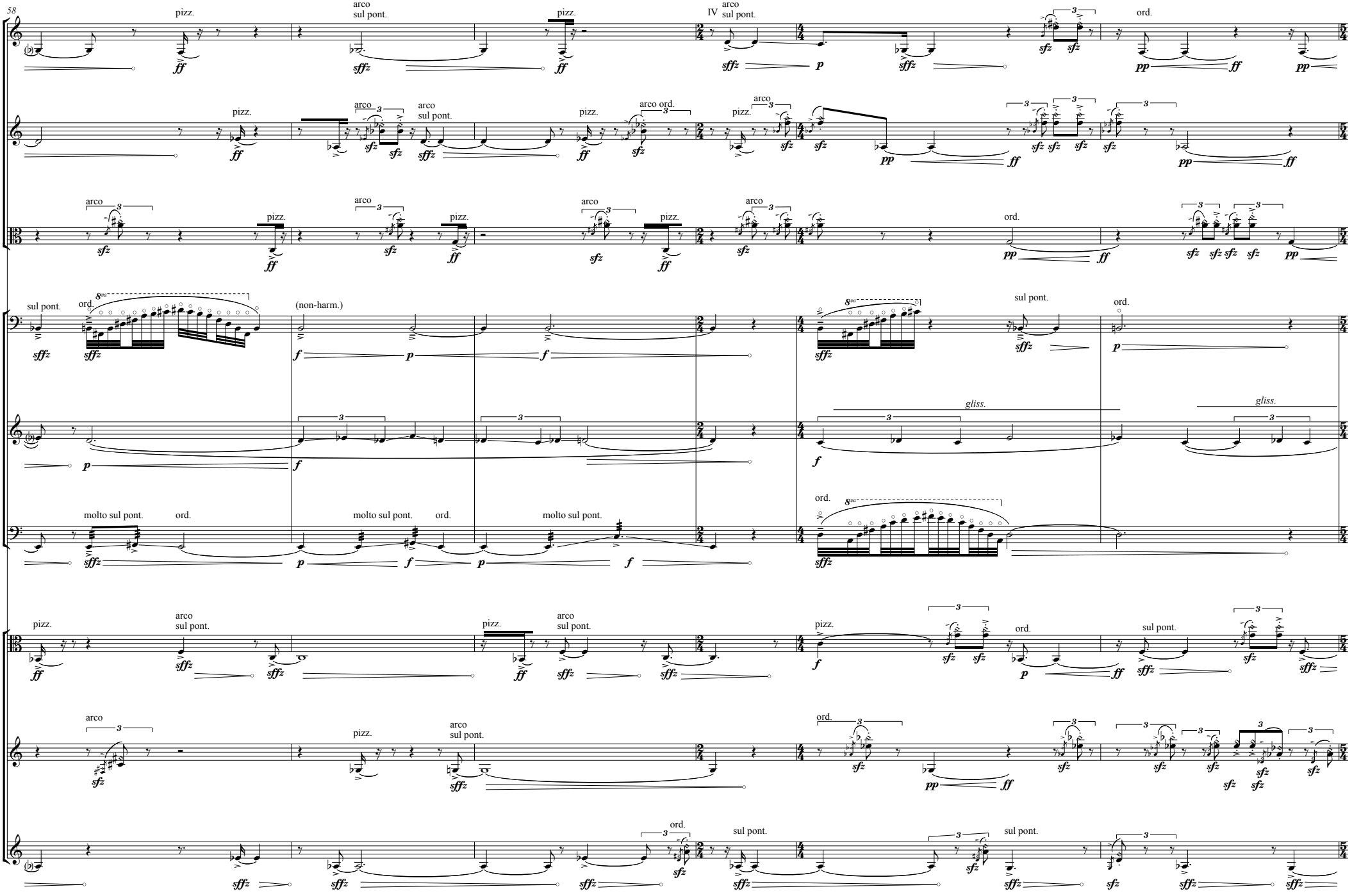
arco

II

III


accel.
C
Clangorous ♩ = 80
44
Vln. I (-2)
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
Vc. (-1)
Th.
Cb.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
Vln. II
nat. harm. gliss.
sul pont.
pizz.
arco
II
(non-harm.)
molto sul pont.
ord.
quasi-pizzicato
IV
I
sempre


51
Vln. I (-2)
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
Vc. (-1)
Th.
Cb.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
Vln. II
pizz.
arco
sul pont.
molto sul pont.
ord.
nat. harm. gliss.
(non-harm.)


58
Vln. I (-2)
pizz.
arco sul pont.
pizz.
IV
arco sul pont.
ord.
Vln. III (+1)
pizz.
arco
arco sul pont.
pizz.
arco ord.
arco
Vla. I
arco
pizz.
ord.
Vc. (-1)
sul pont.
ord.
(non-harm.)
sul pont.
ord.
Th.
gliss.
gliss.
Cb.
molto sul pont.
ord.
molto sul pont.
ord.
molto sul pont.
ord.
Vla. II (-2)
pizz.
arco sul pont.
pizz.
arco sul pont.
pizz.
ord.
sul pont.
Vln. IV (-1)
arco
pizz.
arco sul pont.
ord.
Vln. II
ord.
sul pont.
sul pont.

rall. ♩ = 40 **D** **Serene, wistful** ♩ = 60

64

Vln. I (-2)

Vln. III (+1)

Vla. I

Vc. (-1)

Th.

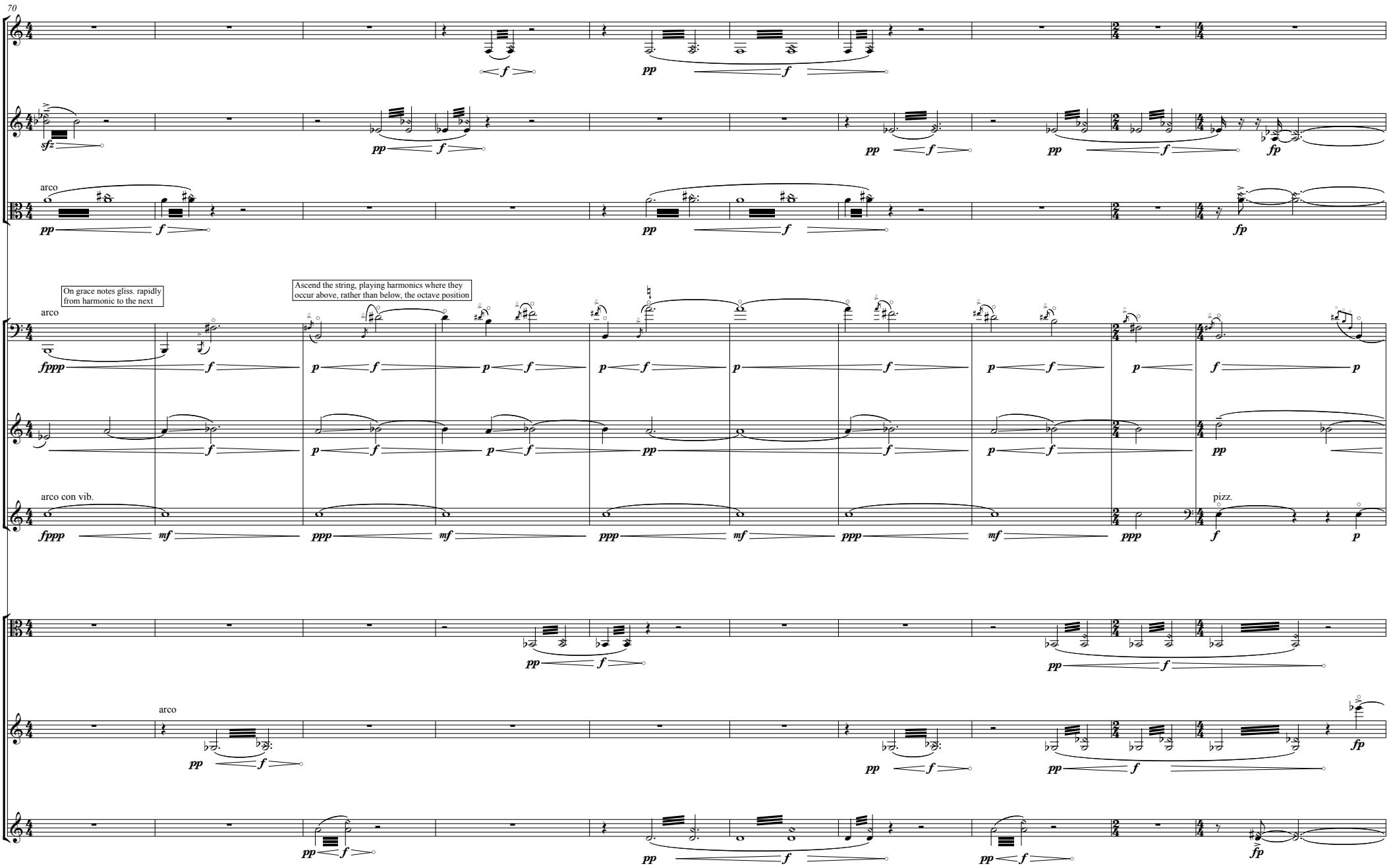
Cb.

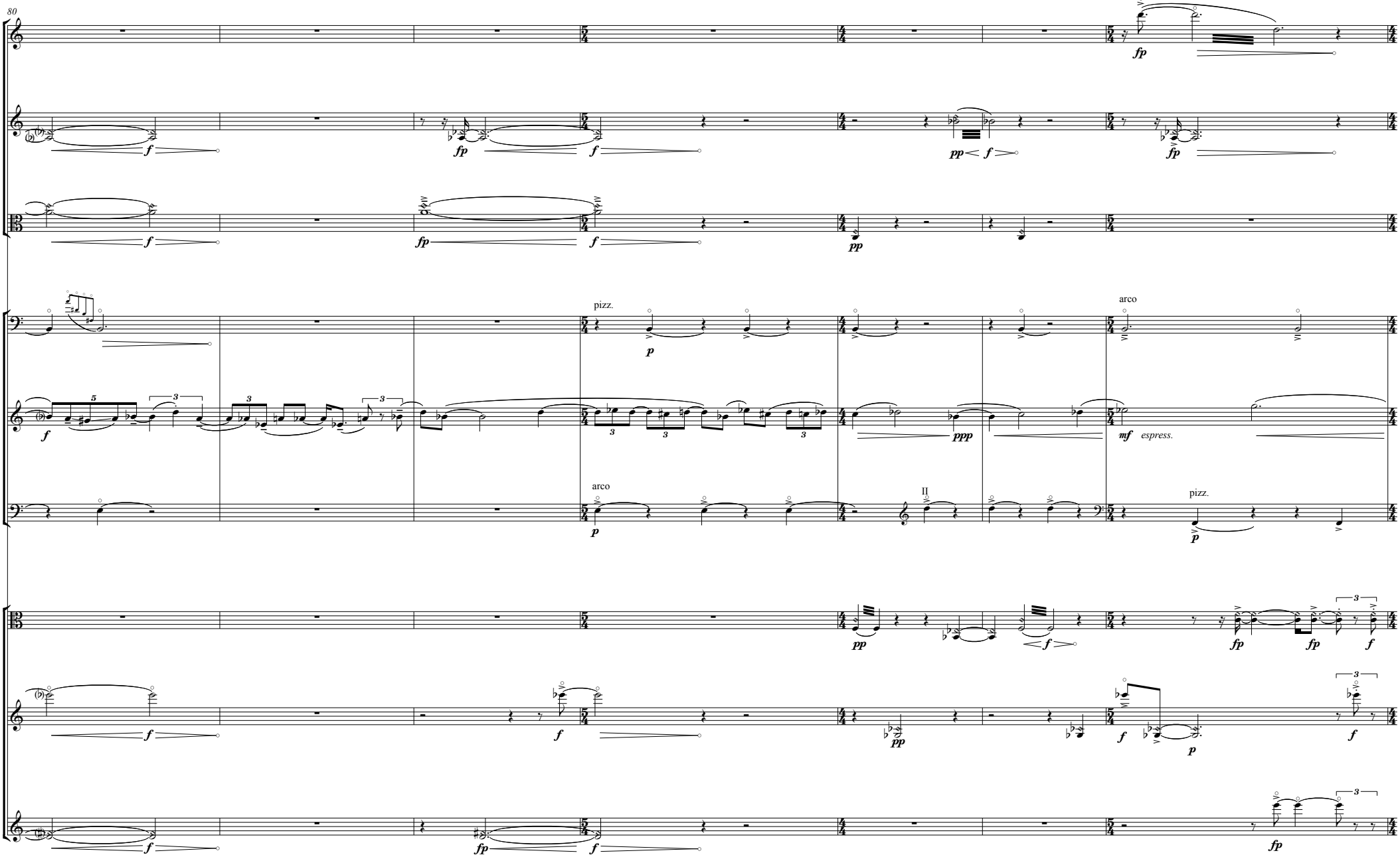
Vla. II (-2)

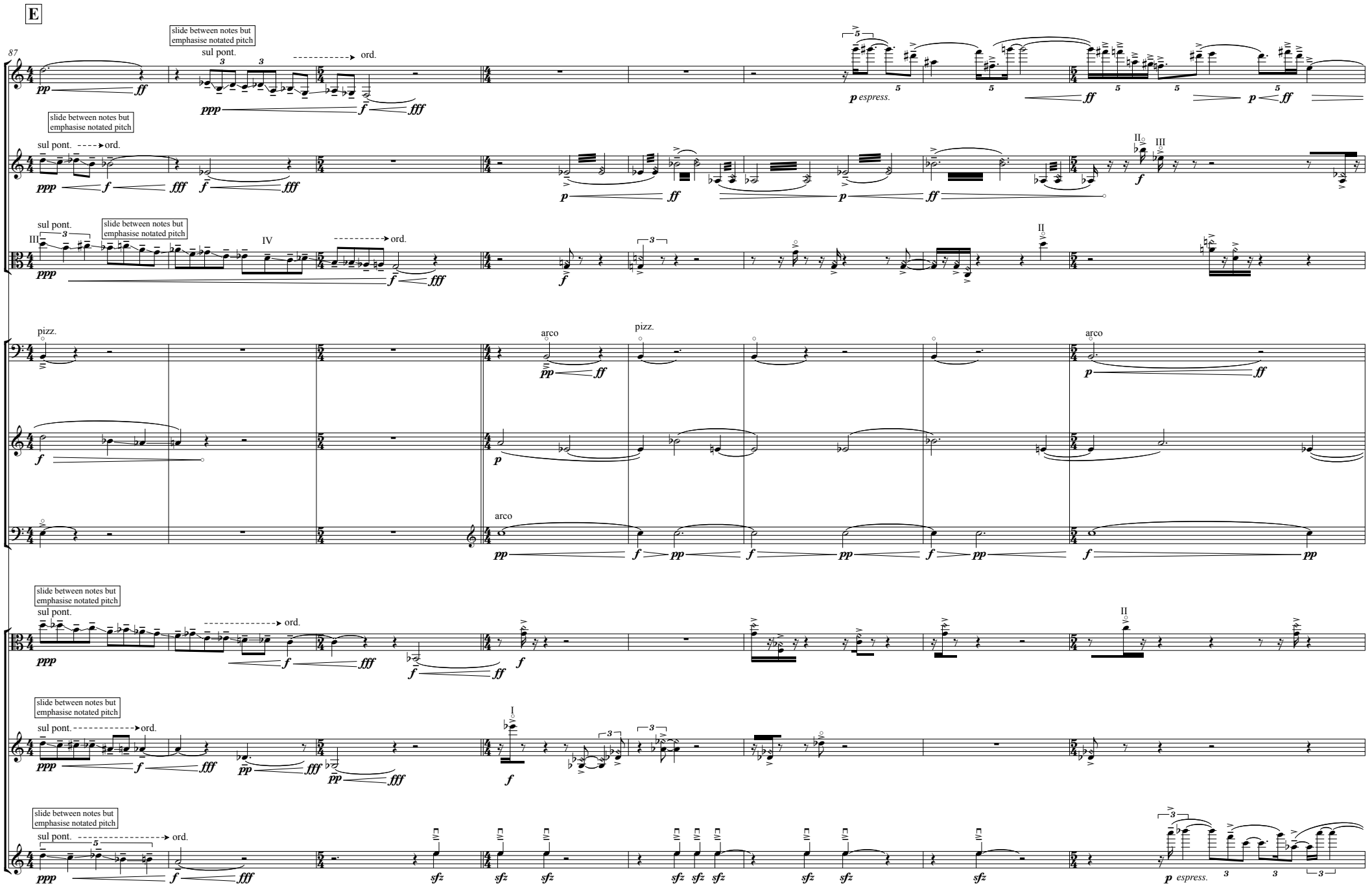
Vln. IV (-1)

Vln. II

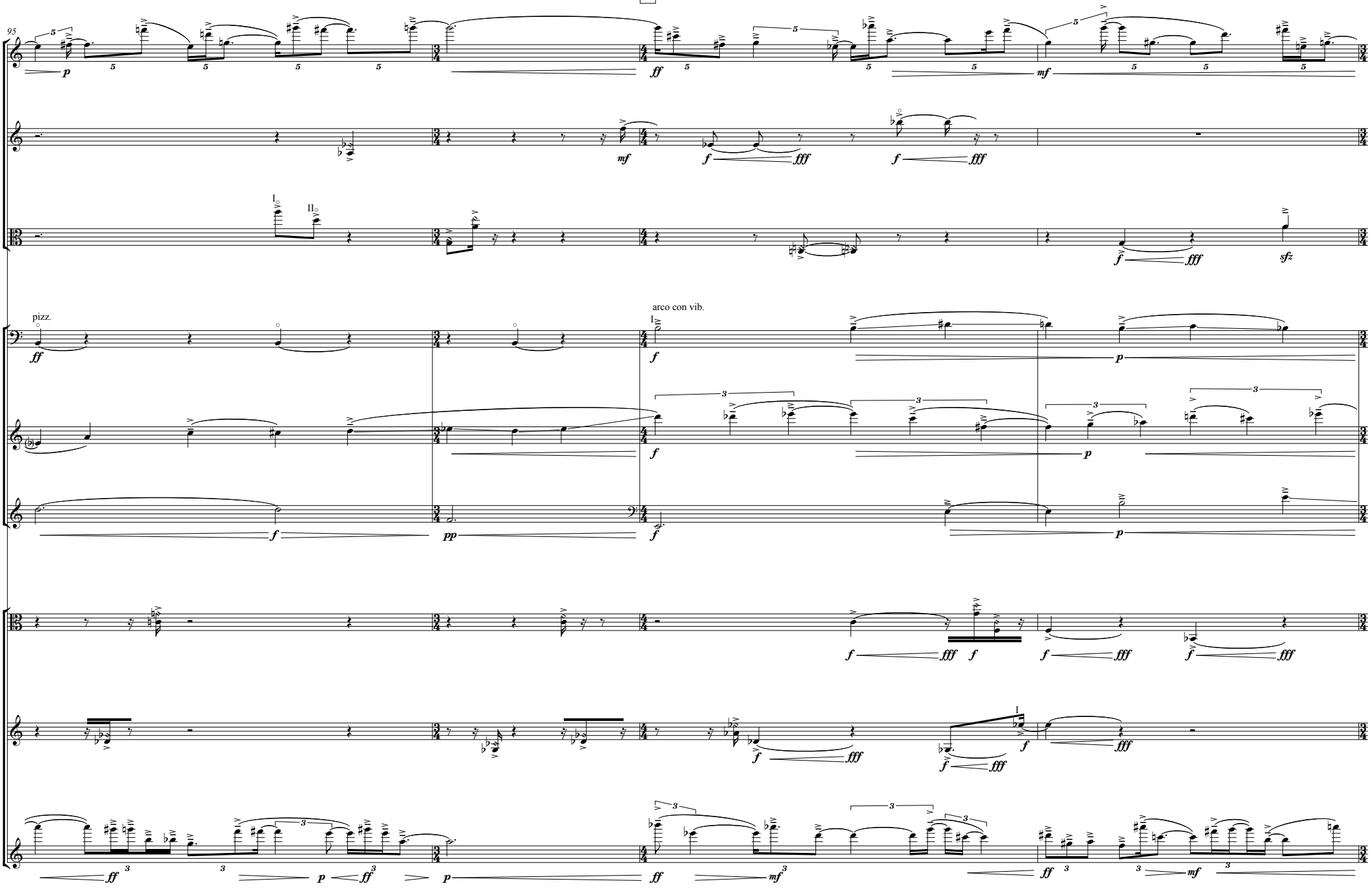
sul pont. ord. pizz. arco gliss. dolce espress.

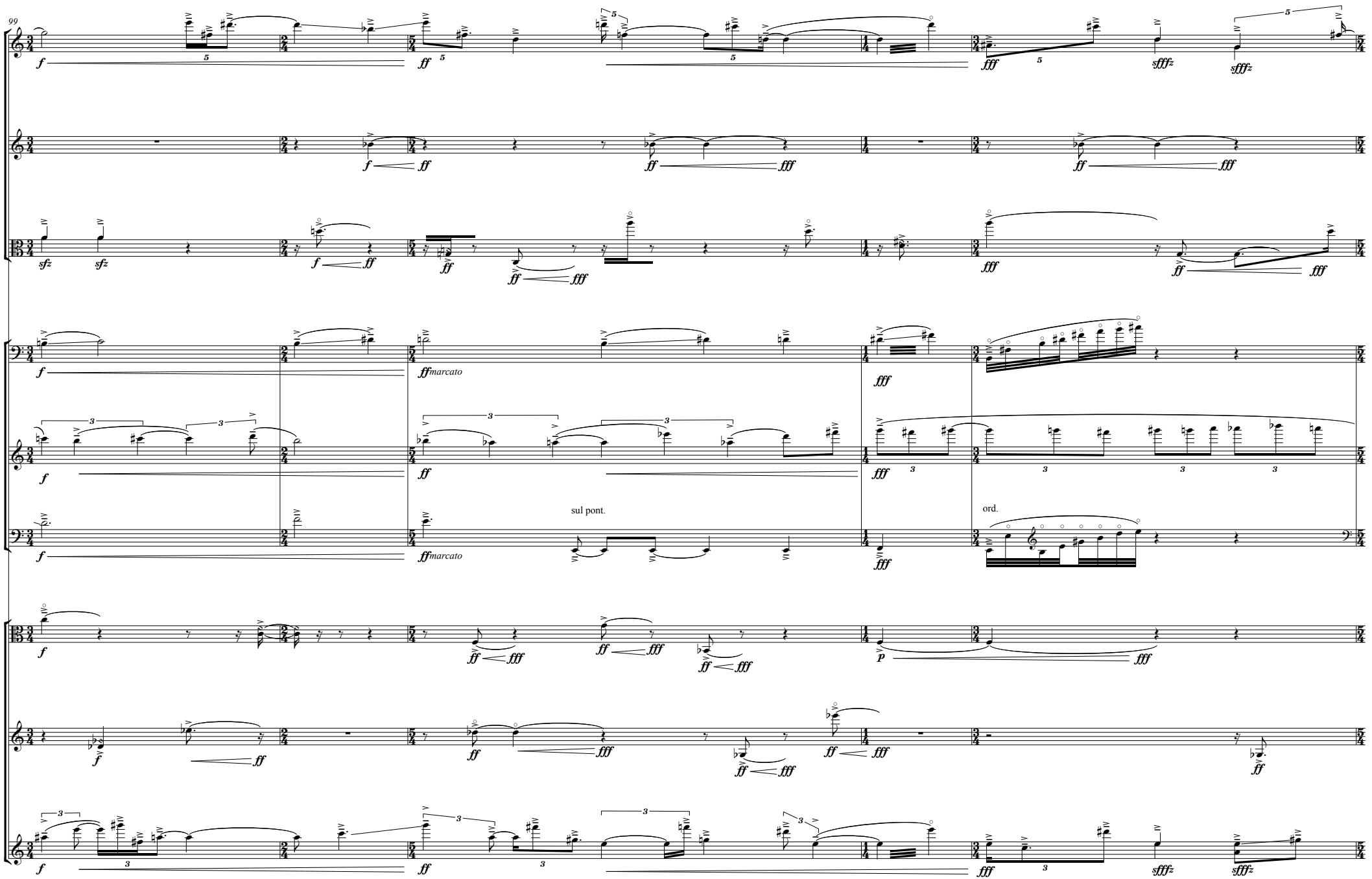

70
Vln. I (-2)
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
arco
On grace notes gliss. rapidly from harmonic to the next
Ascend the string, playing harmonics where they occur above, rather than below, the octave position
Vc. (-1)
arco
Th.
Cb.
arco con vib.
pizz.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
arco
Vln. II


80
Vln. I (-2)
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
Vc. (-1)
Th.
Cb.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
Vln. II
pizz.
arco
espress.
II


E
87
Vln. I (-2)
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
Vc. (-1)
Th.
Cb.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
Vln. II
slide between notes but emphasise notated pitch
sul pont.
ord.
pizz.
arco
espress.

F


95
Vln. I (-2)
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
Vc. (-1)
Th.
Cb.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
Vln. II
pizz.
arco con vib.


99
Vln. I (-2)
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
Vc. (-1)
Th.
Cb.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
Vln. II
sul pont.
ord.

G **Poco a poco rallentando**
(reaching ♩ = 60 at letter M)

♩ = 120

104

play X 4

Vln. I (-2)

ff con forza

ff

Vln. III (+1)

sul pont.

sfffz

sul pont.

ord.

ff

Vla. I

sul pont.

sfffz

ord.

ff

pp

pp

Vc. (-1)

pizz.

sfffz

arco sul pont.

sfz

sfz

sfz

Th.

ff

pp

ff

pp

Cb.

pizz.

sfffz

ff sempre

Vla. II (-2)

sul pont.

sfffz

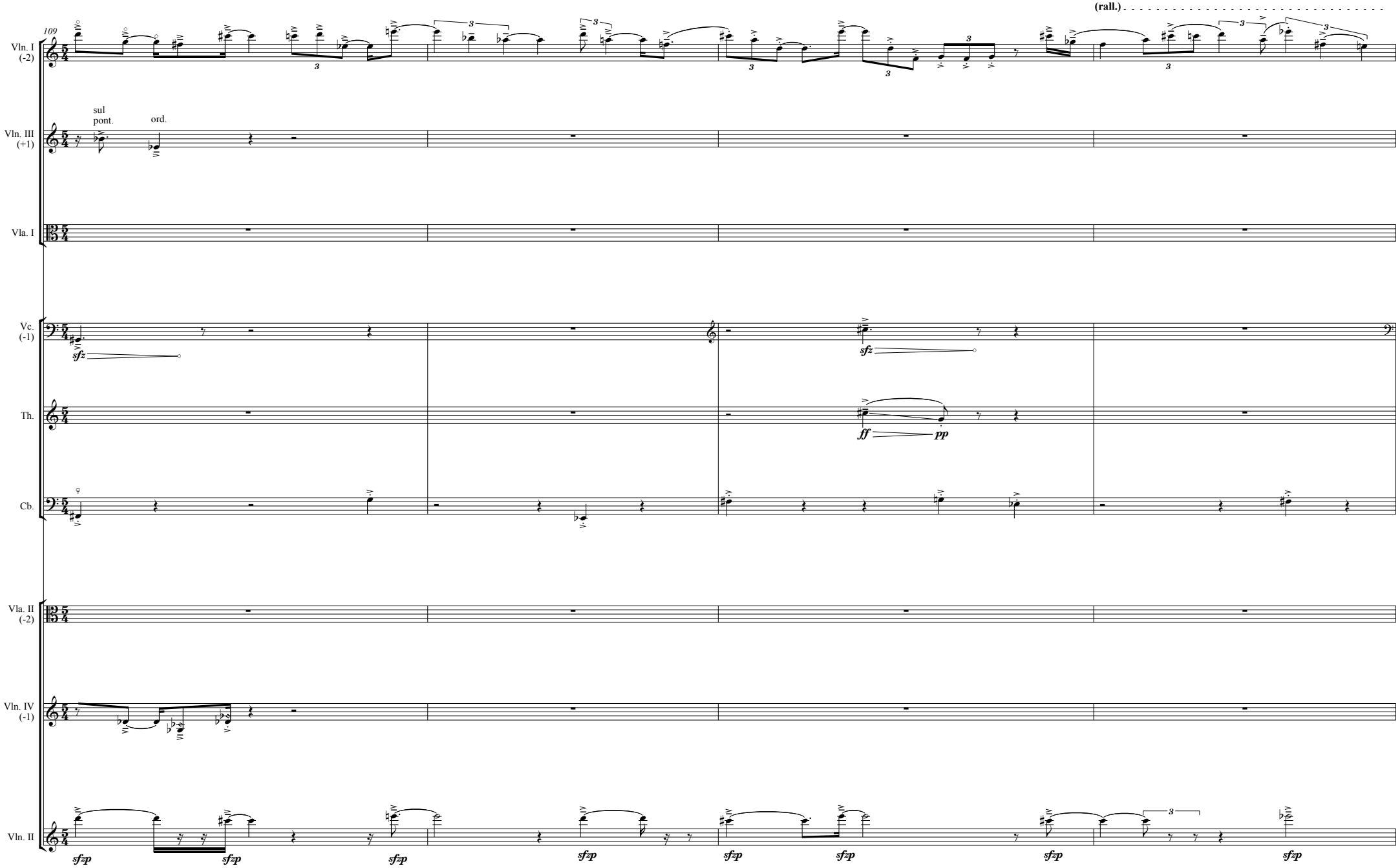
Vln. IV (-1)

sfffz

ff

Vln. II

sfffz


109
(rall.)
Vln. I (-2)
Vln. III (+1)
sul pont.
ord.
Vla. I
Vc. (-1)
sfz
sfz
Th.
ff
pp
Cb.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
Vln. II
sfzp
sfzp
sfzp
sfzp
sfzp
sfzp
sfzp

H ♩ = c.110

113

play X 2

Vln. I (-2)

Vln. III (+1)

Vla. I

Vc. (-1)

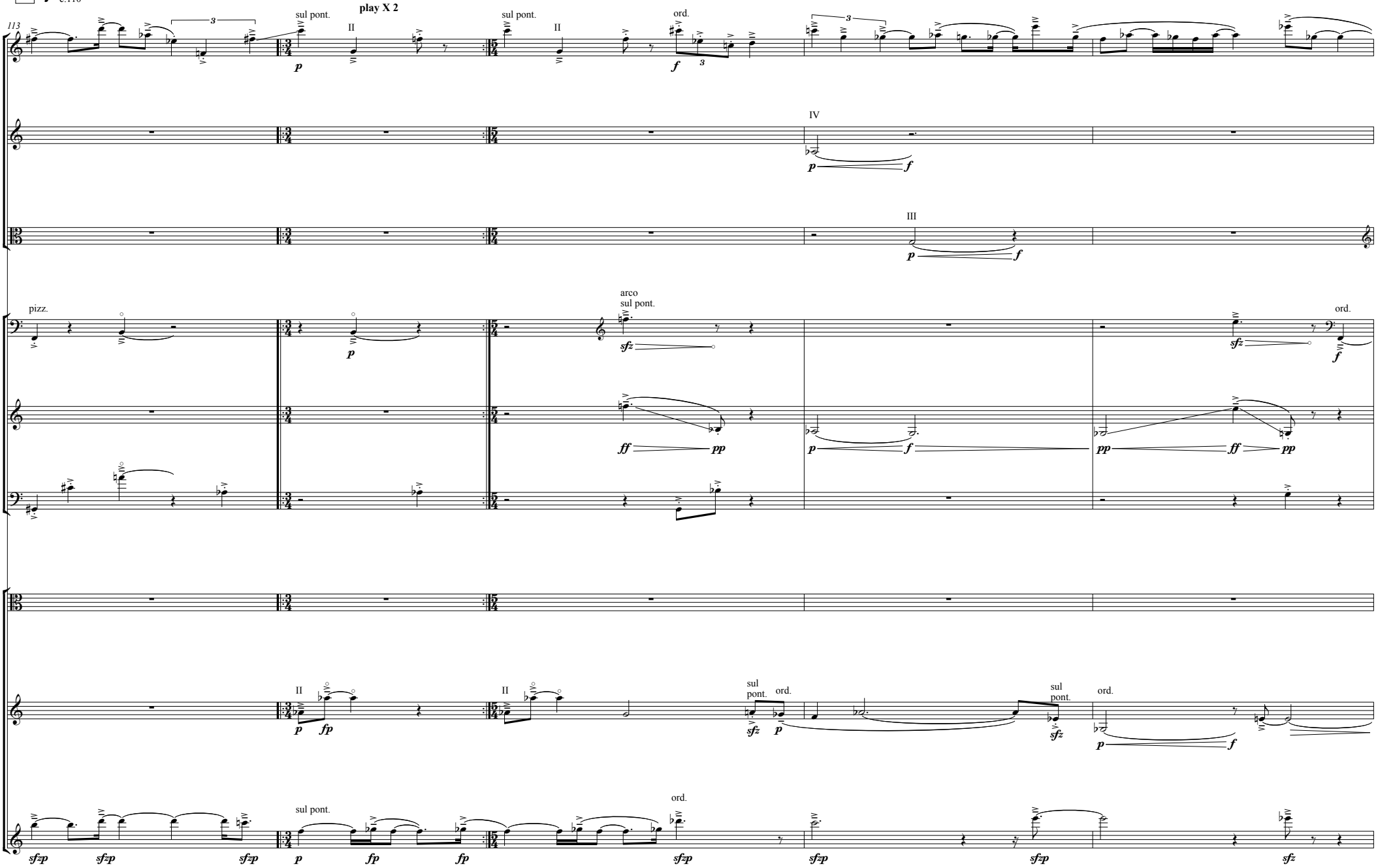
Th.

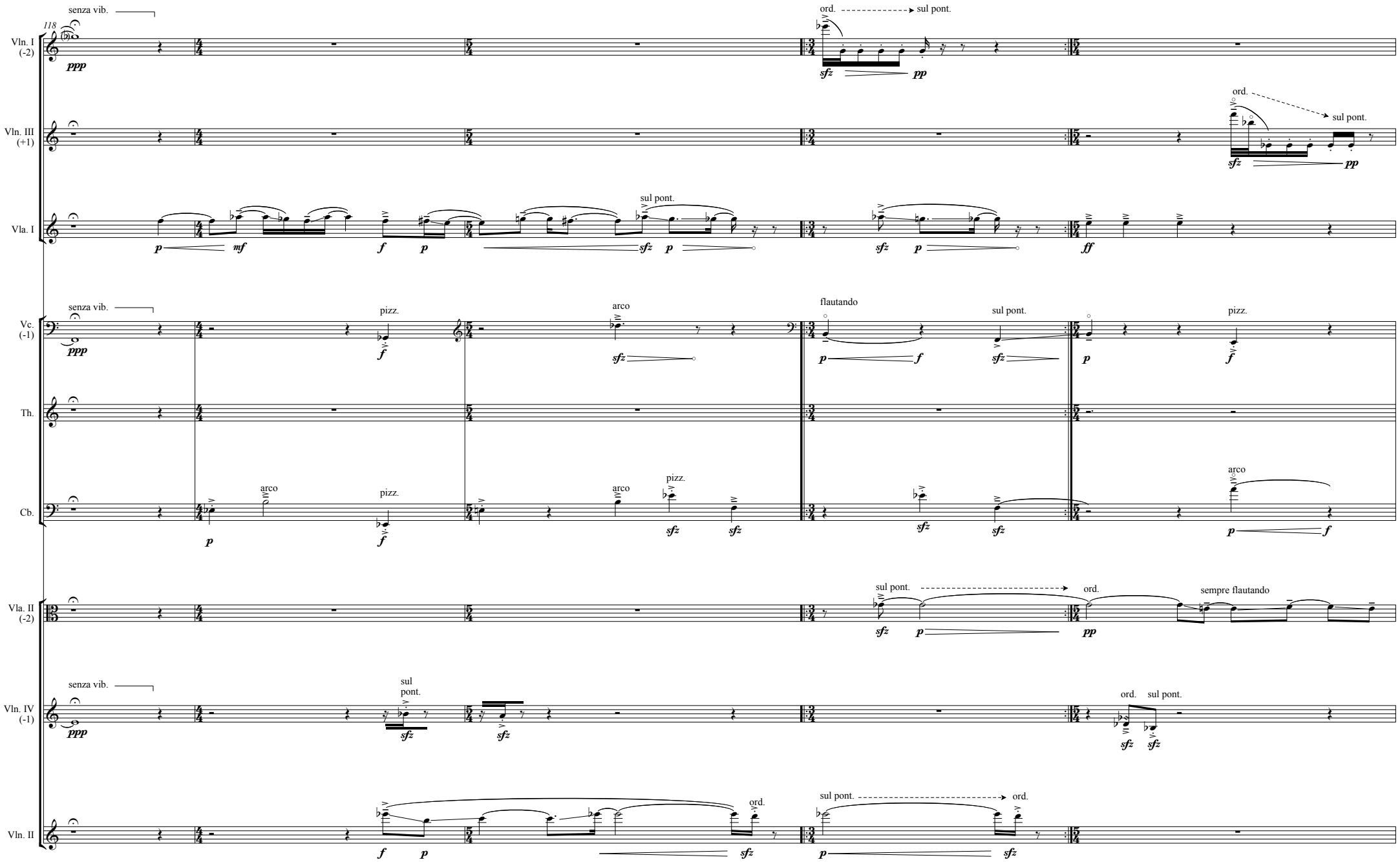
Cb.

Vla. II (-2)

Vln. IV (-1)

Vln. II




play X 3
(rall.)
118
Vln. I (-2)
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
Vc. (-1)
Th.
Cb.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
Vln. II
senza vib.
ord.
sul pont.
pizz.
arco
flautando
sempre flautando
sul pont.
ppp
pp
mf
f
p
sfz
ff

I ♩= c.100

play X 3

123

Vln. I (-2)

Vln. III (+1)

Vla. I

Vc. (-1)

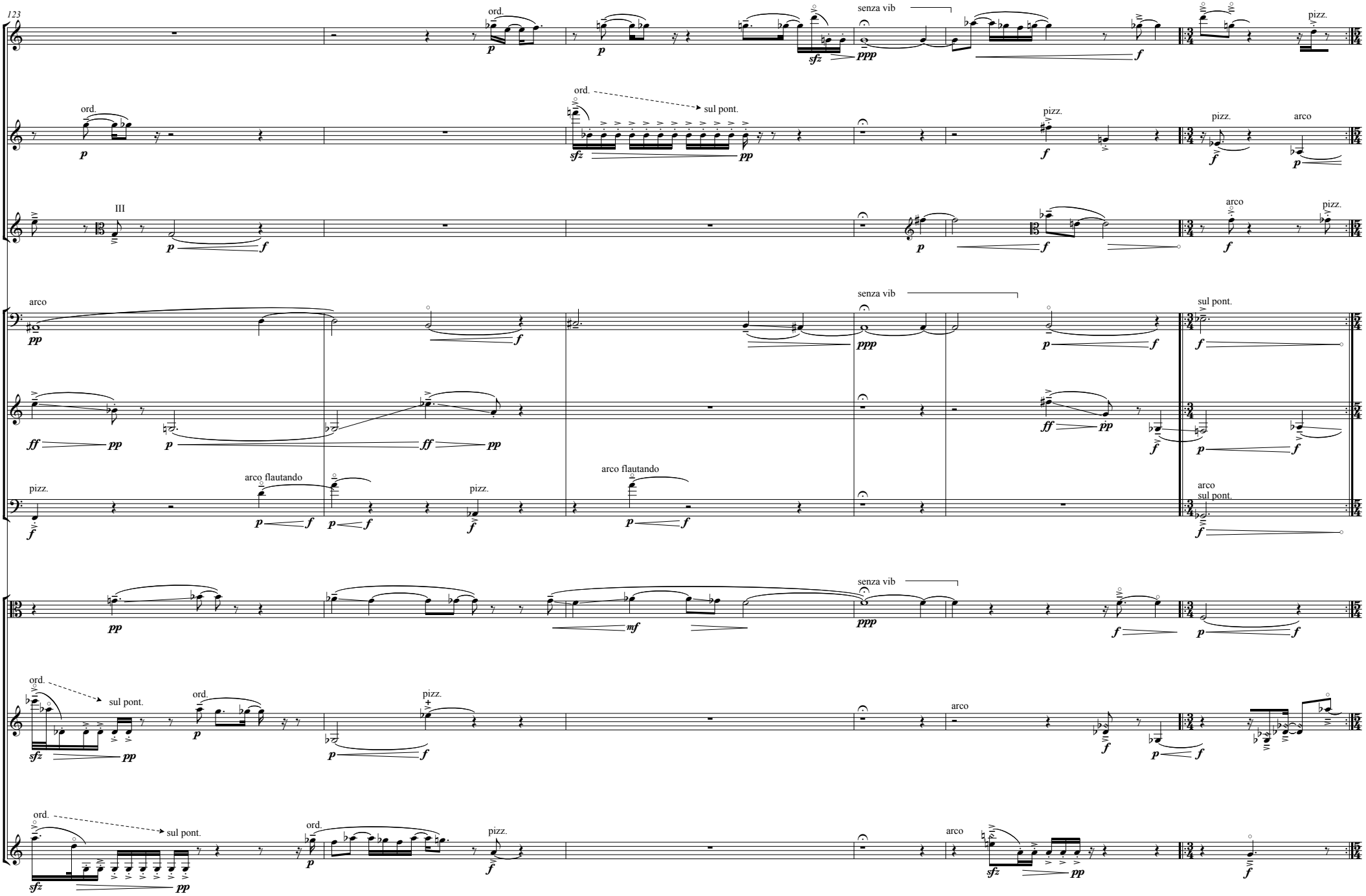
Th.

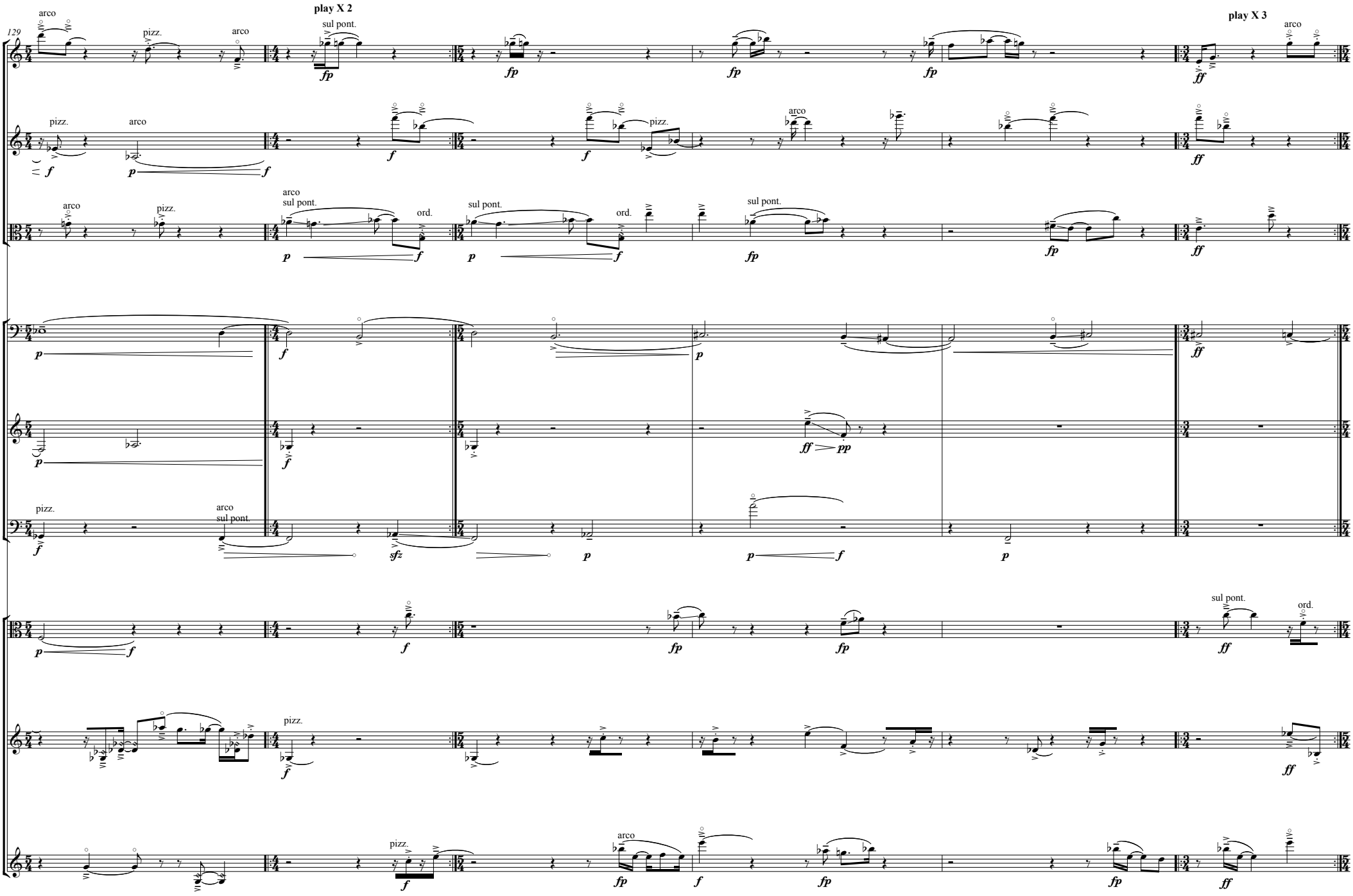
Cb.

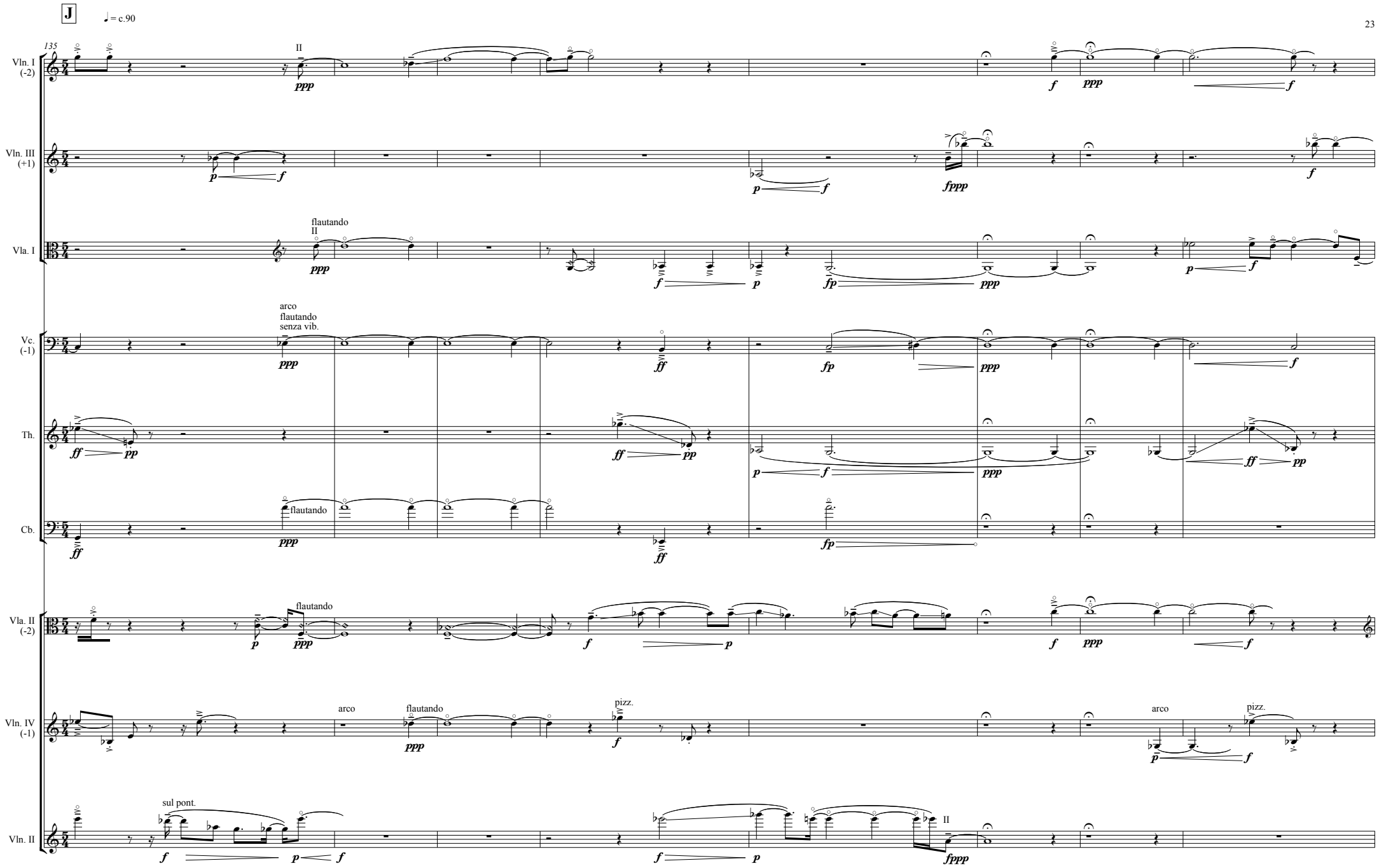
Vla. II (-2)

Vln. IV (-1)

Vln. II




(rall.)
play X 2
play X 3
129
Vln. I (-2)
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
Vc. (-1)
Th.
Cb.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
Vln. II
arco
pizz.
sul pont.
ord.


J
♩ = c.90
135
Vln. I (-2)
II
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
flautando
II
Vc. (-1)
arco
flautando
senza vib.
Th.
Cb.
flautando
Vla. II (-2)
flautando
Vln. IV (-1)
arco
flautando
pizz.
arco
pizz.
Vln. II
sul pont.
II

(rall.) -

play X 4

143

Vln. I (-2)

Vln. III (+1)

Vla. I

Vc. (-1)

Th.

Cb.

Vla. II (-2)

Vln. IV (-1)

Vln. II

pizz. arco ord. sul pont. ord. sul pont.

pizz. arco

flautando ord. sul pont.

arco ord. flautando sul pont.

sul pont.

arco II I sul pont. ord.

K **Becoming ecstatically expansive**

♩ = c.80

148

Vln. I (-2)

f sempre espress.

Vln. III (+1)

f marcato

Vla. I

p *f*

f sempre espress.

Vc. (-1)

ord.

f espress.

arco

flautando

p *f*

Th.

p *f*

p

Cb.

arco ord.

f espress.

f

flautando

p *f*

Vla. II (-2)

ord.

f sempre espress.

sul pont.

Vln. IV (-1)

pizz

fff

arco

p *f*

pizz

fff sempre

arco

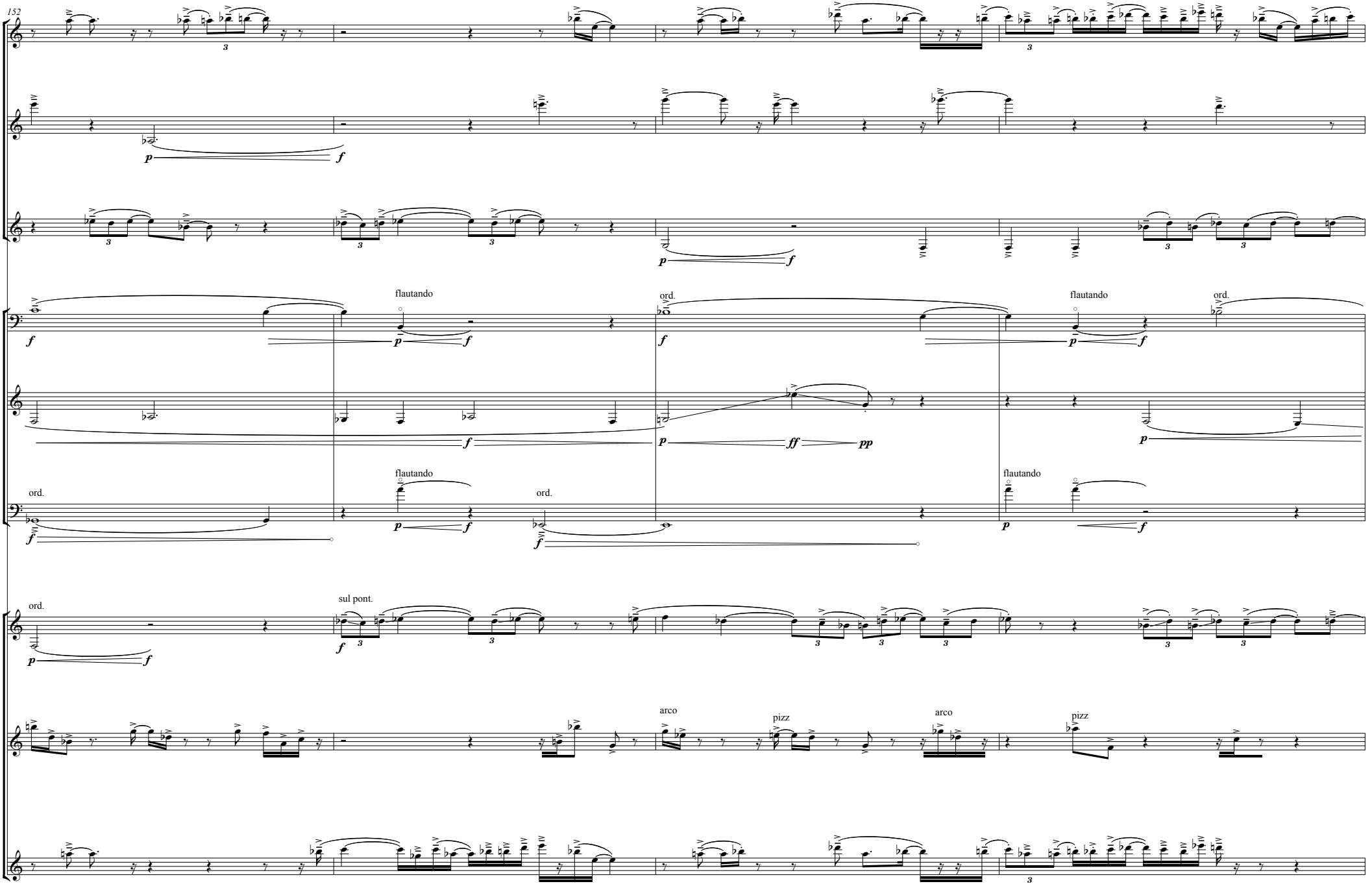
pizz

arco

pizz

Vln. II

f sempre espress.


(rall.)
152
Vln. I (-2)
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
Vc. (-1)
Th.
Cb.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
Vln. II
flautando
ord.
sul pont.
arco
pizz

L ♩ = c.70

156

Vln. I (-2)

Vln. III (+1)

Vla. I

Vc. (-1)

Th.

Cb.

Vla. II (-2)

Vln. IV (-1)

Vln. II

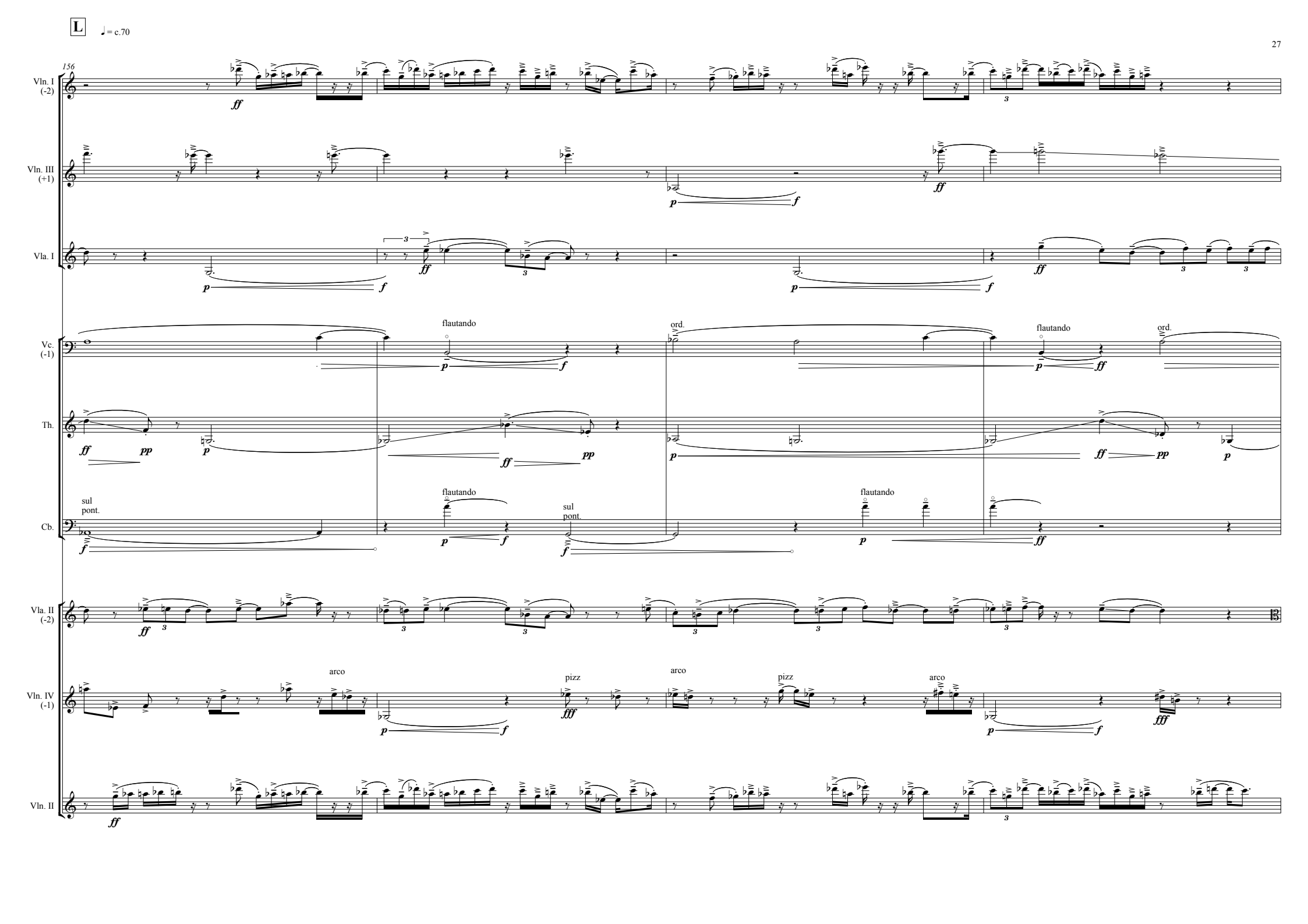
flautando

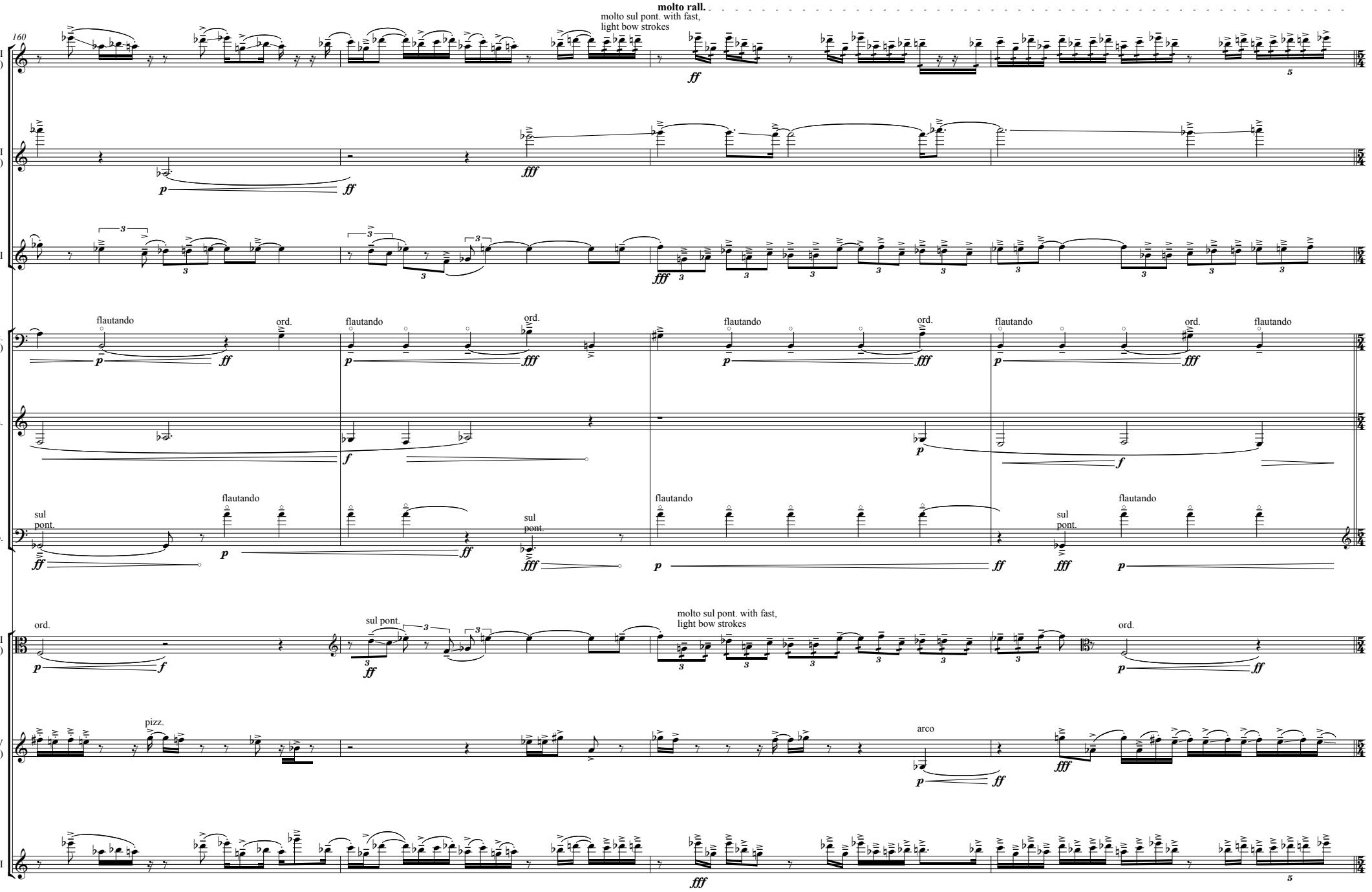
ord.

sul pont.

arco

pizz




molto rall.
160
Vln. I (-2)
molto sul pont. with fast, light bow strokes
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
Vc. (-1)
flautando
ord.
Th.
Cb.
sul pont.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
pizz.
arco
Vln. II

M **Luminous and resonant** ♩ = c. 60

164

Vln. I (-2)
sempre flautando, sempre l.v.
psempre

Vln. III (+1)
sempre flautando, sempre l.v.
psempre

Vla. I
sempre flautando, sempre l.v.
psempre

Vc. (-1)
Always slur glissandi on the natural harmonics
f *p* *f* *p* *f*

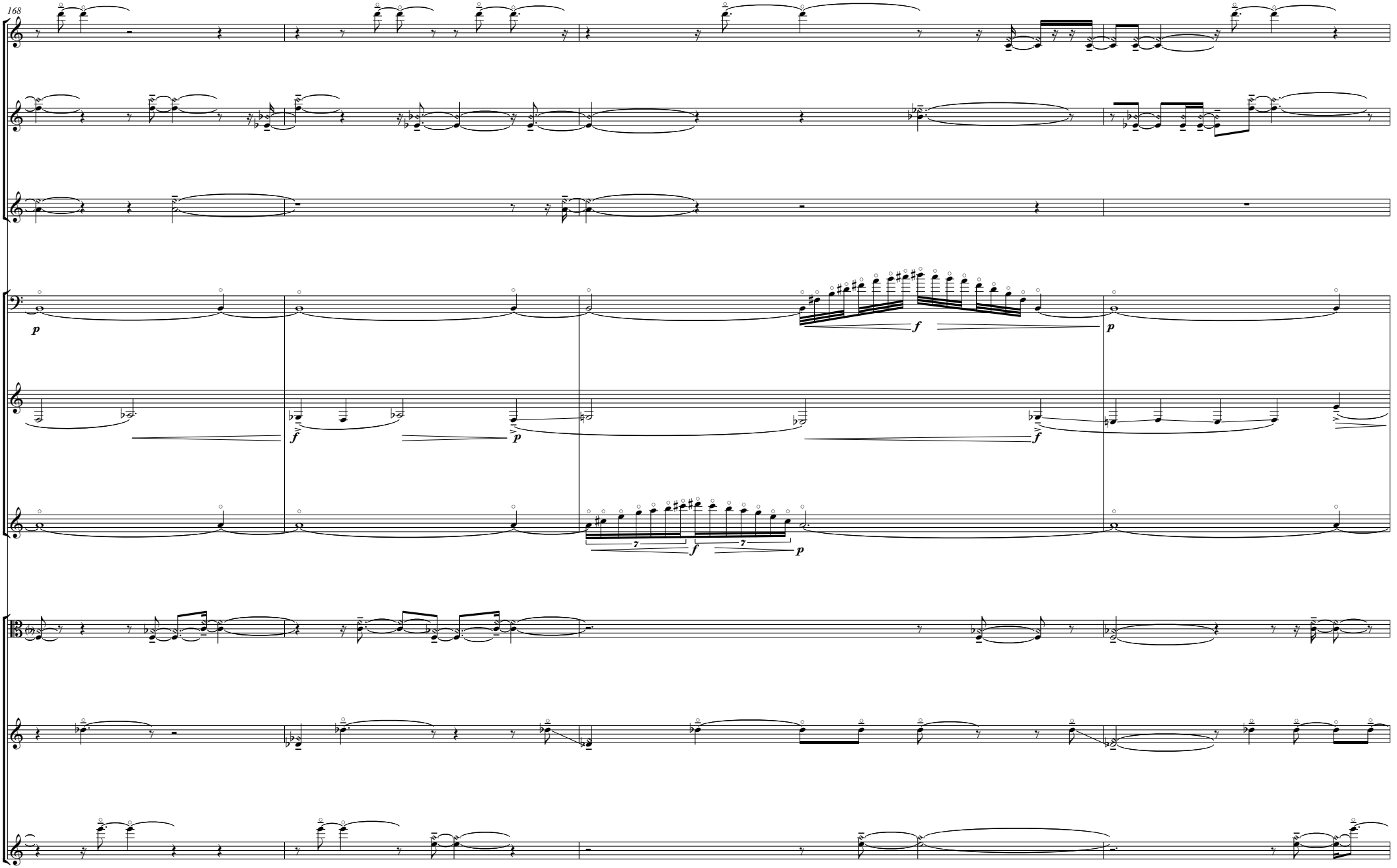
Th.
p *f* *p* *f* *p*

Cb.
Sul A
Always slur glissandi on the natural harmonics
f *p* *f* *p*

Vla. II (-2)
sempre flautando, sempre l.v.
psempre

Vln. IV (-1)
sempre flautando, sempre l.v.
slide between harmonics
psempre

Vln. II
sempre flautando, sempre l.v.
psempre


168
Vln. I
(-2)
Vln. III
(+1)
Vla. I
Vc.
(-1)
Th.
Cb.
Vla. II
(-2)
Vln. IV
(-1)
Vln. II
p
f
p
f
p
f
p
7
7

N

172

Vln. I (-2)

flautando

flautando

Vln. III (+1)

II III

flautando

flautando

Vla. I

sul tasto

Vibrato is proportional to dynamics ranging from senza vib. at ***ppp*** to molto vib. at ***f***

ord.

Vc. (-1)

Th.

Cb.

Vla. II (-2)

sul tasto

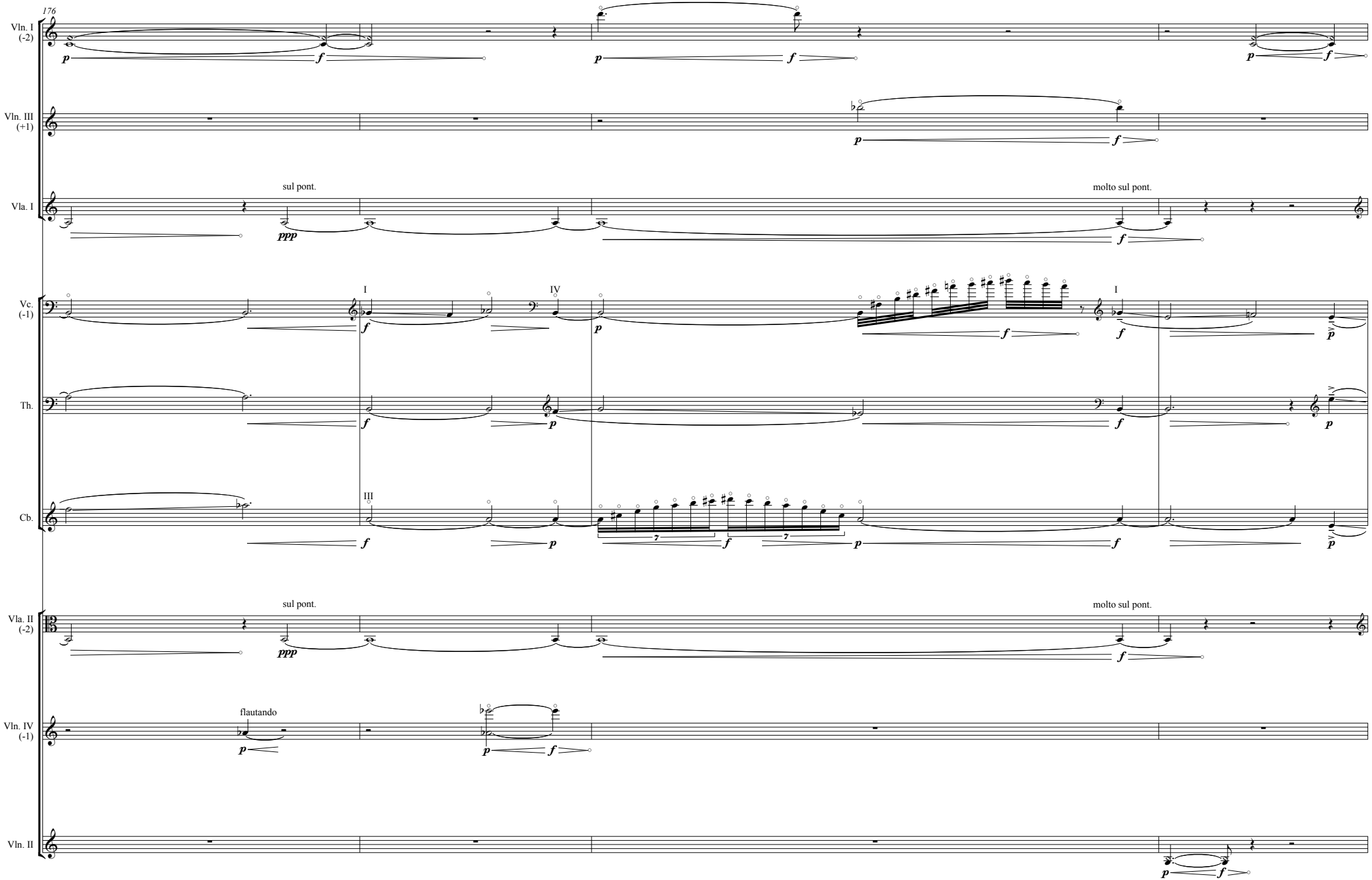
Vibrato is proportional to dynamics ranging from senza vib. at ***ppp*** to molto vib. at ***f***

ord.

Vln. IV (-1)

II III

Vln. II


176
Vln. I (-2)
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
Vc. (-1)
Th.
Cb.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
Vln. II
sul pont.
molto sul pont.
flautando
I
IV
III

O **Ethereal, glistening**

180

Vln. I (-2)

Always slur glissandi on the natural harmonics

Vln. III (+1)

Always slur glissandi on the natural harmonics

Vla. I

ord.

Always slur glissandi on the natural harmonics

Vc. (-1)

Th.

Cb.

Vla. II (-2)

ord.

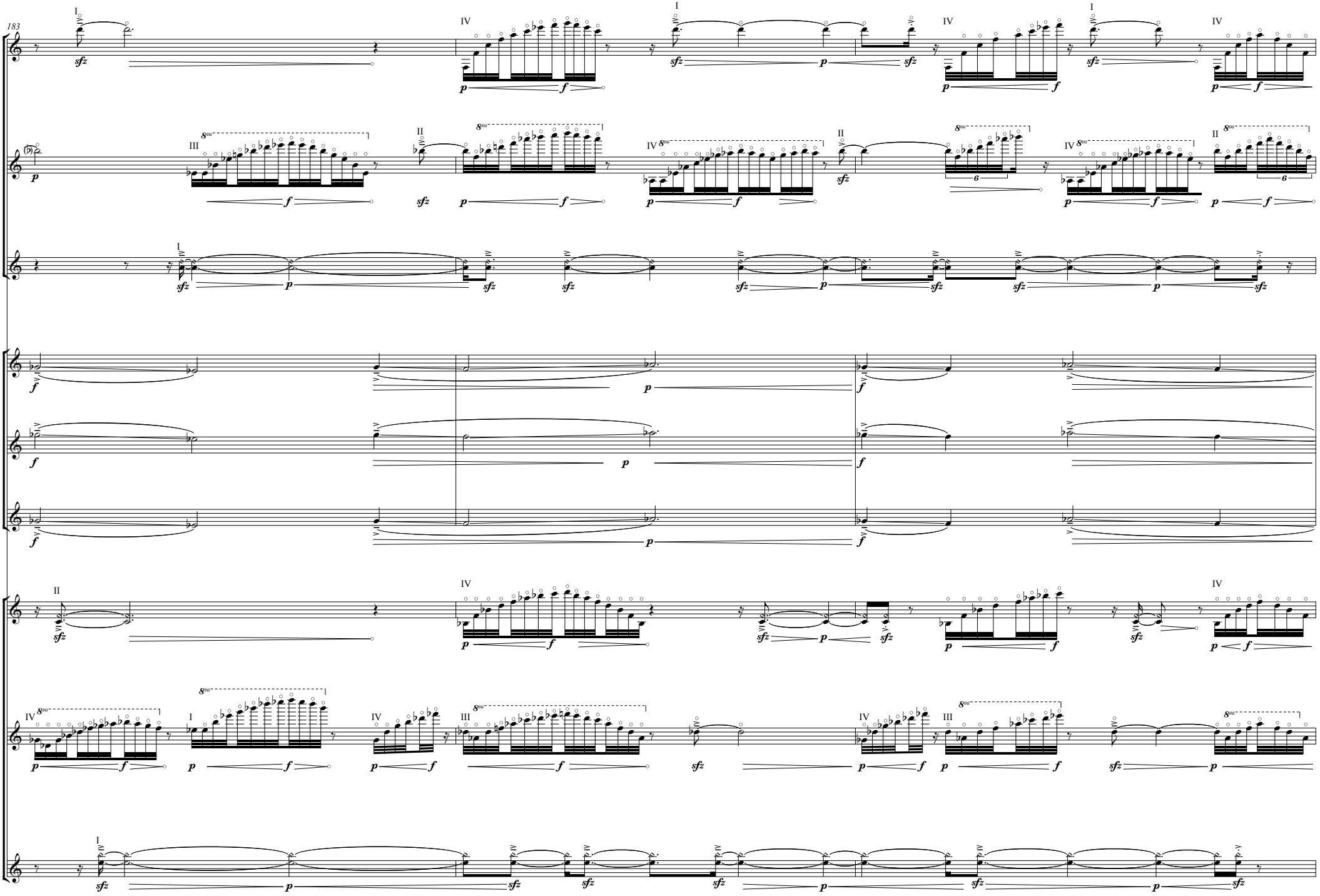
Always slur glissandi on the natural harmonics

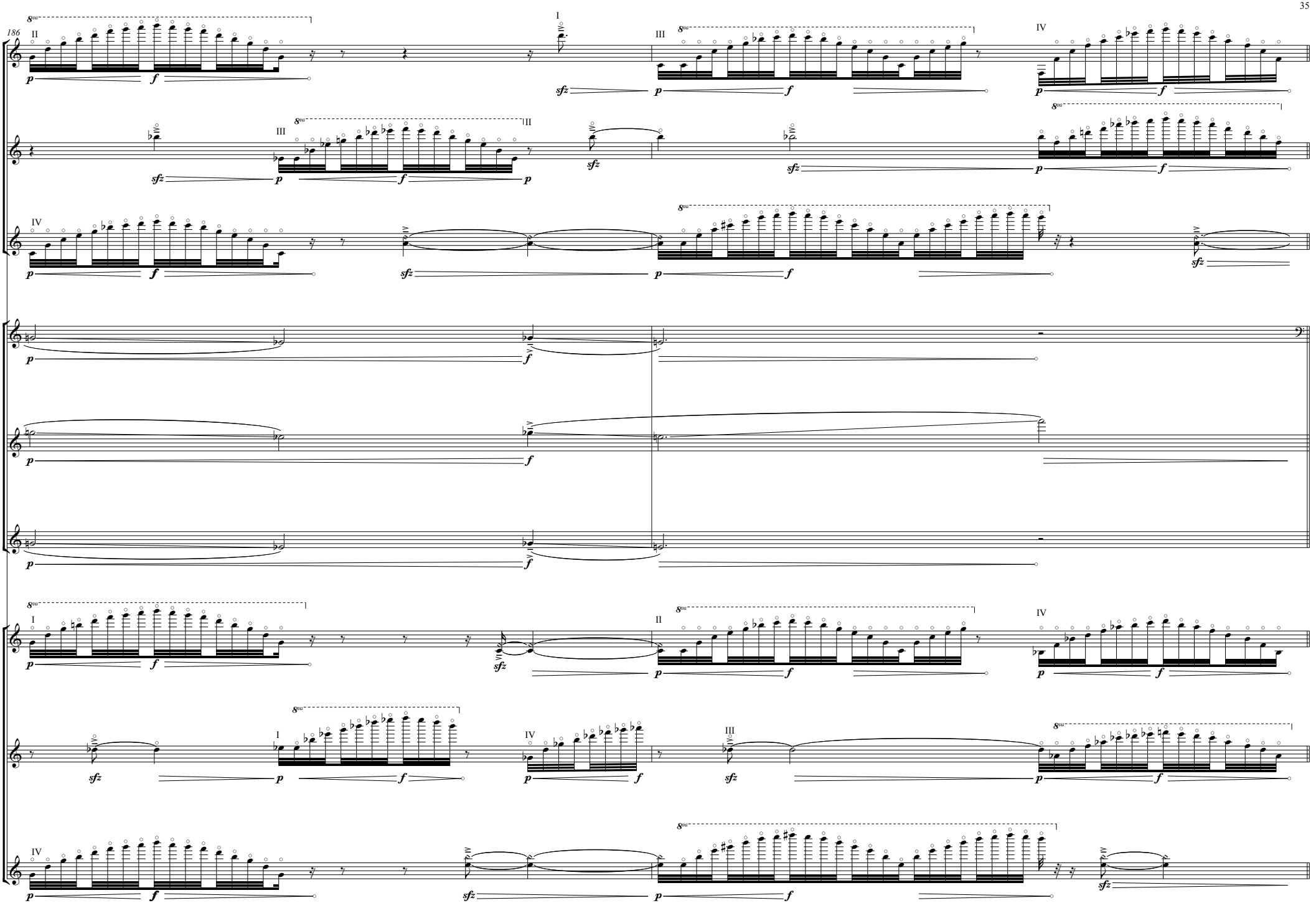
Vln. IV (-1)

Always slur glissandi on the natural harmonics

Vln. II

Always slur glissandi on the natural harmonics


183
Vln. I (-2)
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
Vc. (-1)
Th.
Cb.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
Vln. II


186
Vln. I (-2)
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
Vc. (-1)
Th.
Cb.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
Vln. II
8va
p
f
sfz

rall.
♩ = c.30
Like distant bells chiming
188
accent indicates fp type attack within the notated dynamic context
Vln. I (-2)
Vln. III (+1)
Vla. I
pizz.
f dolce
Vc. (-1)
Th.
Cb.
Vla. II (-2)
Vln. IV (-1)
fast, light bow stroke on open all E's
Vln. II