Rand Steiger

# Undone

(2017)

for spatial string octet

Commissioned by Westdeutscher Rundfunk
for the Arditti and JACK String Quartets

**Premiere:** May 6, 2017; Wittener Tage für neue Kammermusik, Blote Vogel Schule, Witten, Germany

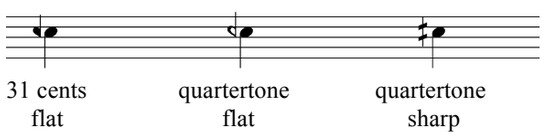
**Program Note:** *Undone* began as an experiment with spatial arrangement of a string octet. My initial aim was to create a work using only acoustic sound that would achieve conditions similar to those I have attained in other pieces that rely on digital signal processing and amplification. Seven performers physically located around the hall spatialize, resonate, and echo (in a variety of ways) the music first played by the principal violinist. But while composing the piece, I became increasingly distracted and dismayed by political developments in the United States and Europe, and the work became much more than a formal exercise in acoustic spatialization.

My grandfather came to America in 1902 when he was 20 years old, leaving behind his parents and twelve brothers and sisters, most of whom were later murdered during the Holocaust. The synagogue where he had his bar mitzvah was almost completely burned; today, one remaining wall has been integrated into a secular building in a town that is devoid of Jews. Yet because the United States accepted him as an immigrant, my grandfather was able to survive, worship freely, start a small business, and raise a family. Although neither he nor my father ever made much money, I was able to get an excellent education and have enjoyed a comfortable life with many extraordinary opportunities — including this one — to do what I love most: make music.

To witness my country elect a racist president and close its doors to refugees, and to read about the rise of right-wing nationalism in Germany and other European countries, has been deeply troubling. As I composed the piece, my thoughts and emotions about my family's past and contemporary events inevitably began to make their way into my music. Drawing on memories of my own bar mitzvah ceremony, I chose to incorporate references to Ashkenazi haftarah incantation (the way 13 year olds chant sacred texts during their bar mitzvah) to honor my deceased family members. These references, along with the more restrained material from earlier in the piece, yield and ultimately give way to the despair that I and so many others feel about our present geopolitical moment.

**Dynamics:** The dynamic marking ***n*** is frequently used to indicate notes that begin imperceptibly and gradually fade in over the length of the indicated crescendo. Similarly, decrescendos that end at a rest without a dynamic marking indicate a complete diminuendo to silence. Please note the starting and ending points of these transitions precisely.

**Accidentals and Microtonality:** Accidentals carry through the length of the bar, but only in the octave in which they appear, although there are frequently redundant accidentals to avoid ambiguity. The backwards filled-in flat is used to indicate -31 cents (7th partial):




**Thrown bow:** Jeté, or "thrown bow" technique is used often throughout the piece. This is indicated by a slur following the note with a series of dots underneath it. The motion begins at the indicated note, and the bow is then allowed to freely bounce as long as possible until preparing the next note.

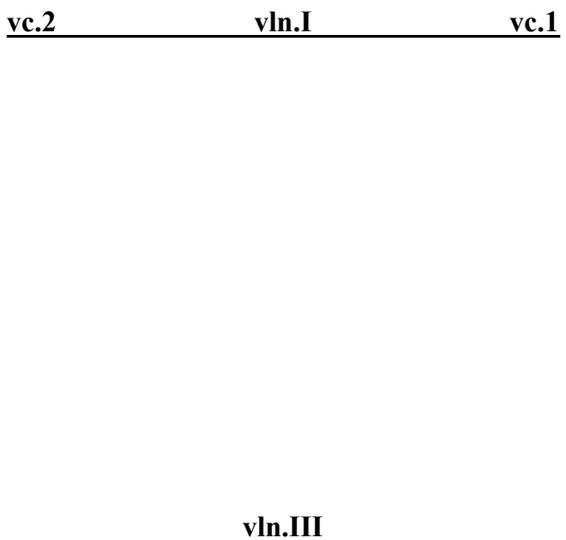
**Trills:** Trills are always a whole step, unless indicated otherwise

**Other conventions:**

**OP** over a note indicates over-pressure, or "bow distortion" which should always produce noise and not a clear pitch. This notation only applies to the note it appears above.

**B** indicates play the note on two adjacent strings, with one slightly lower than the other to create beating

**Physical arrangement:** Violin I is located center stage, with cello II to the far left and cello I to the far right of the stage. The other performers are to be located around the audience following the diagram below:




**Contact:**

For further information please contact the composer by email to this address:
**rand@ucsd.edu**

Additional information may be found on the following web site:
**http://rand.info**

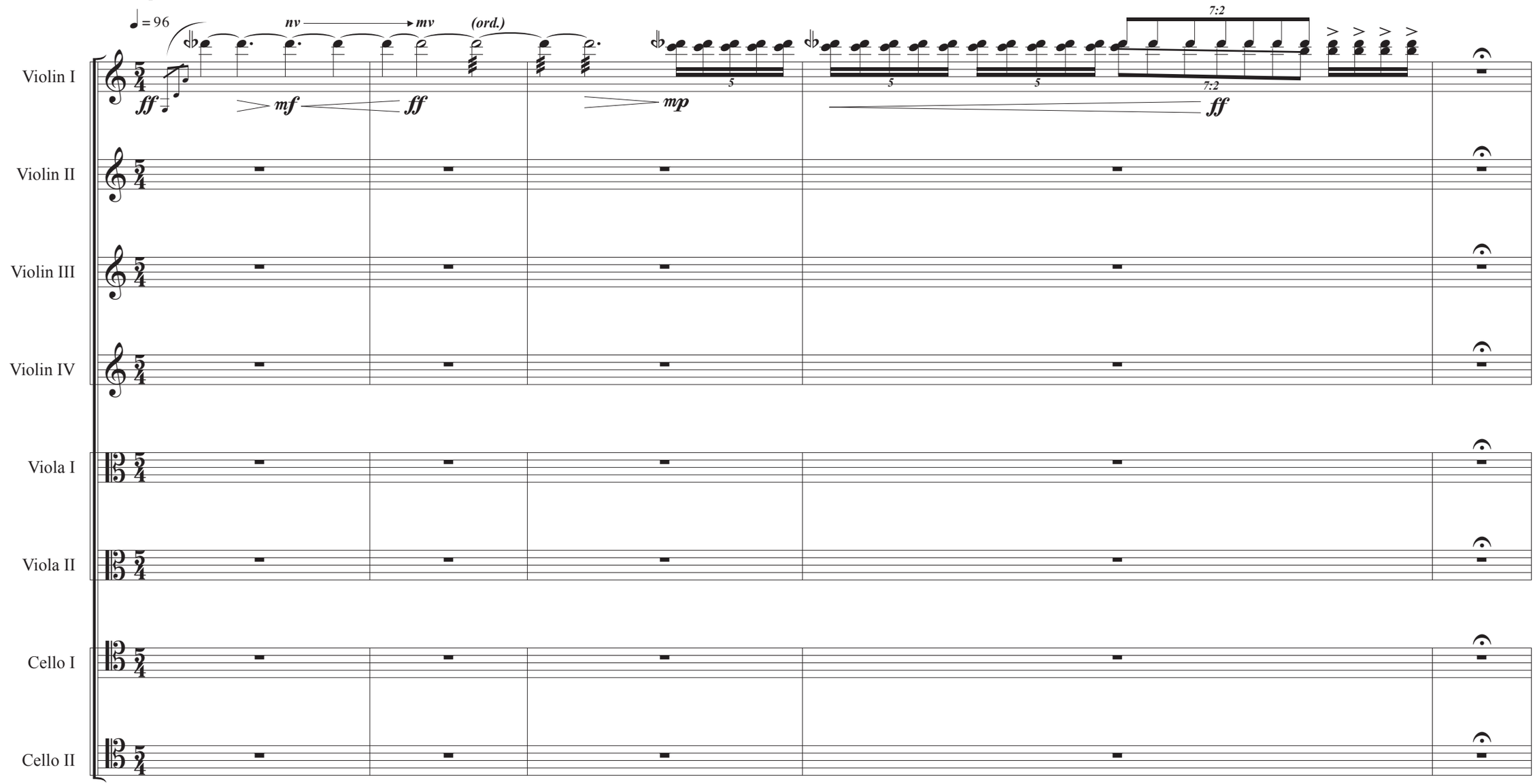
Score

commissioned by Westdeutscher Rundfunk
for the Arditti and JACK Quartets

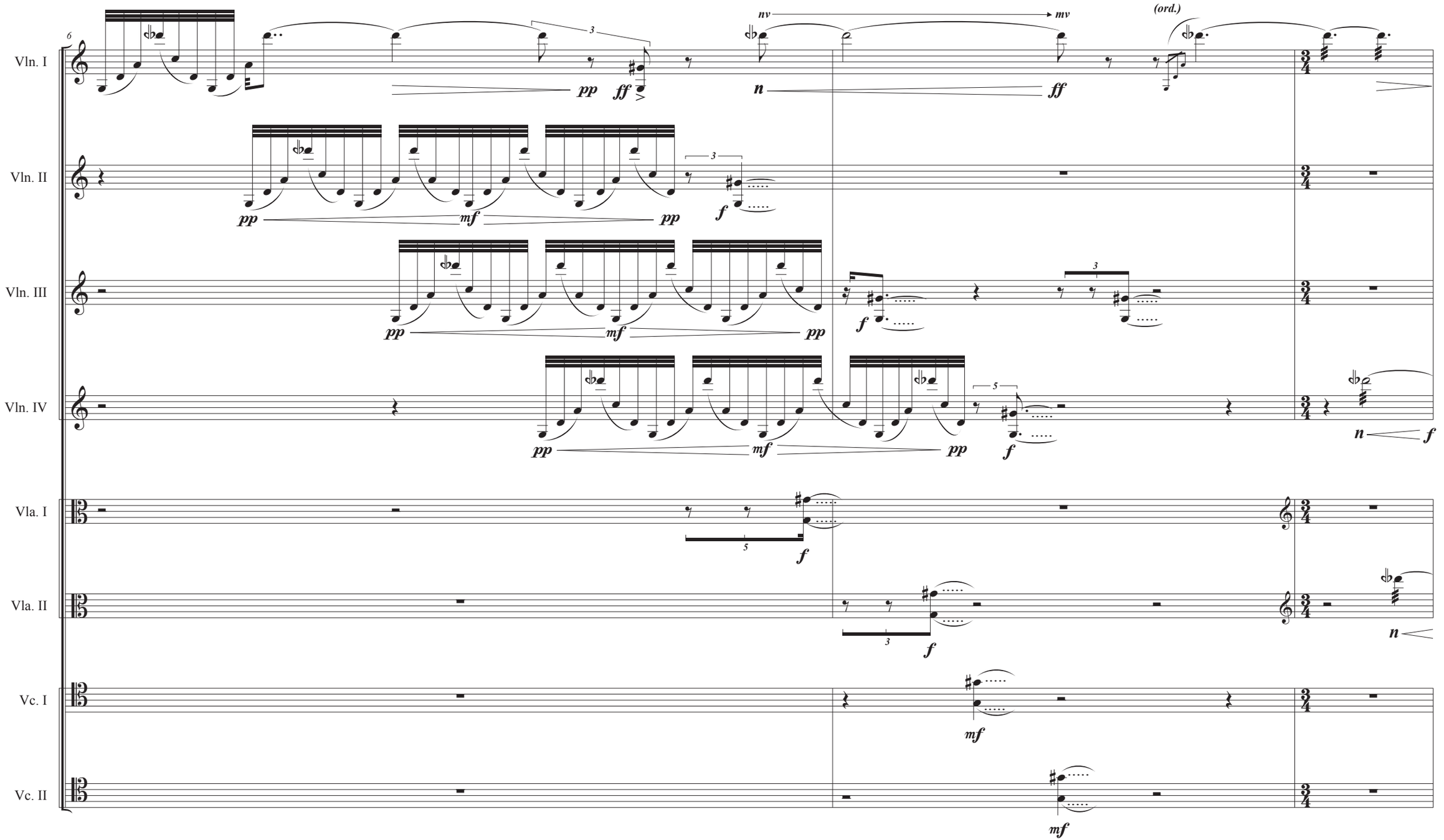
Rand Steiger

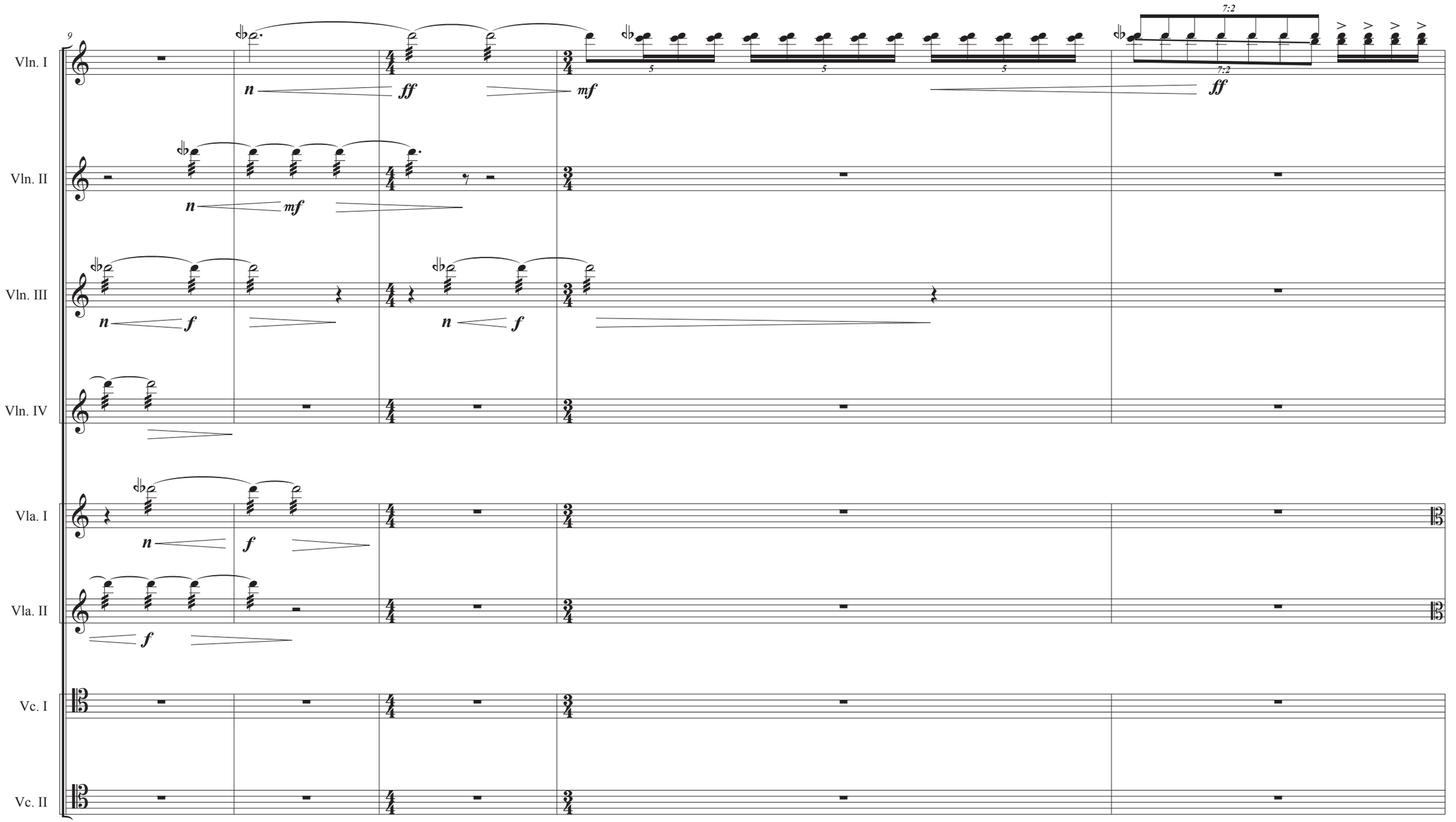
# Undone

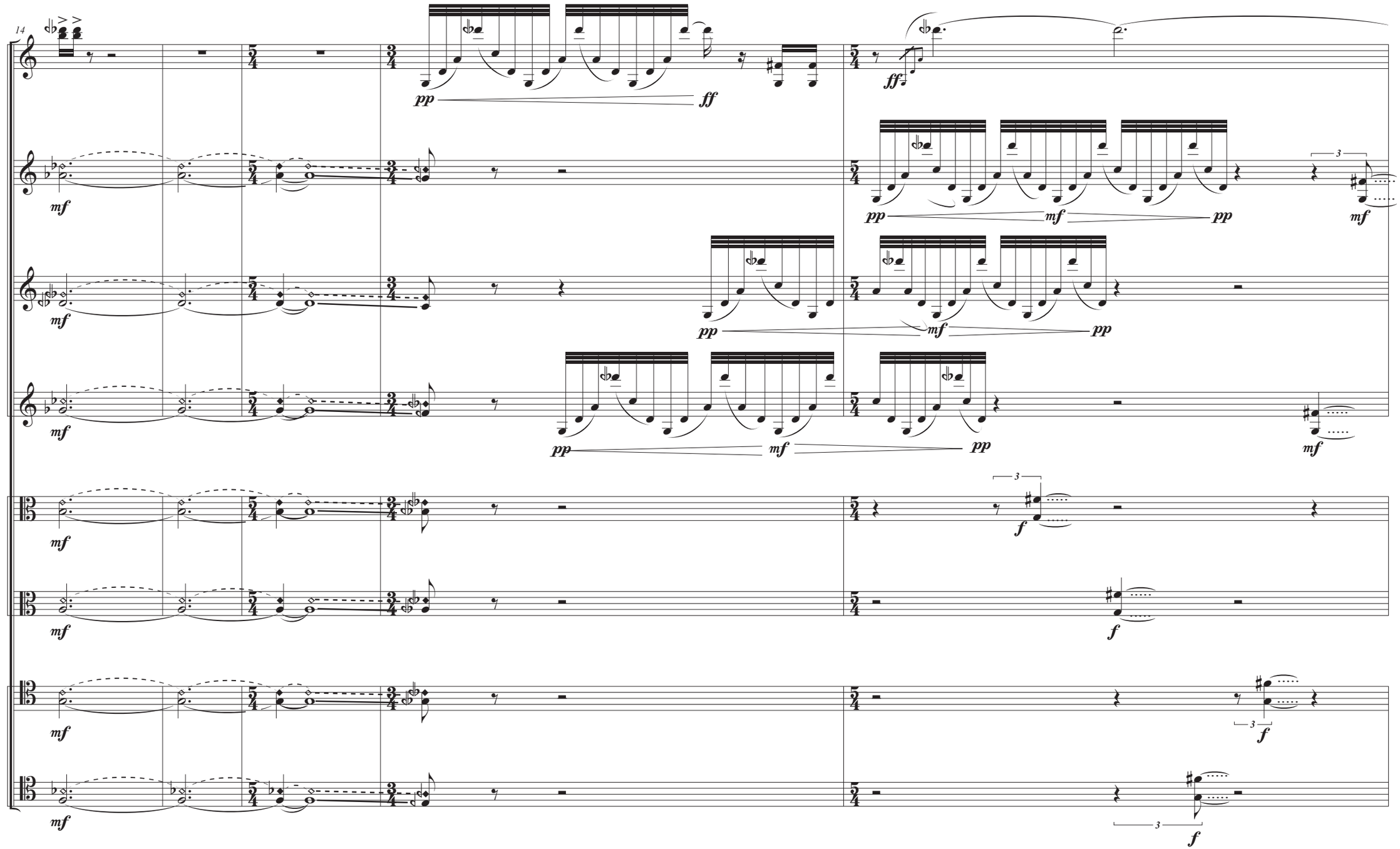
*emphatic and emotional*

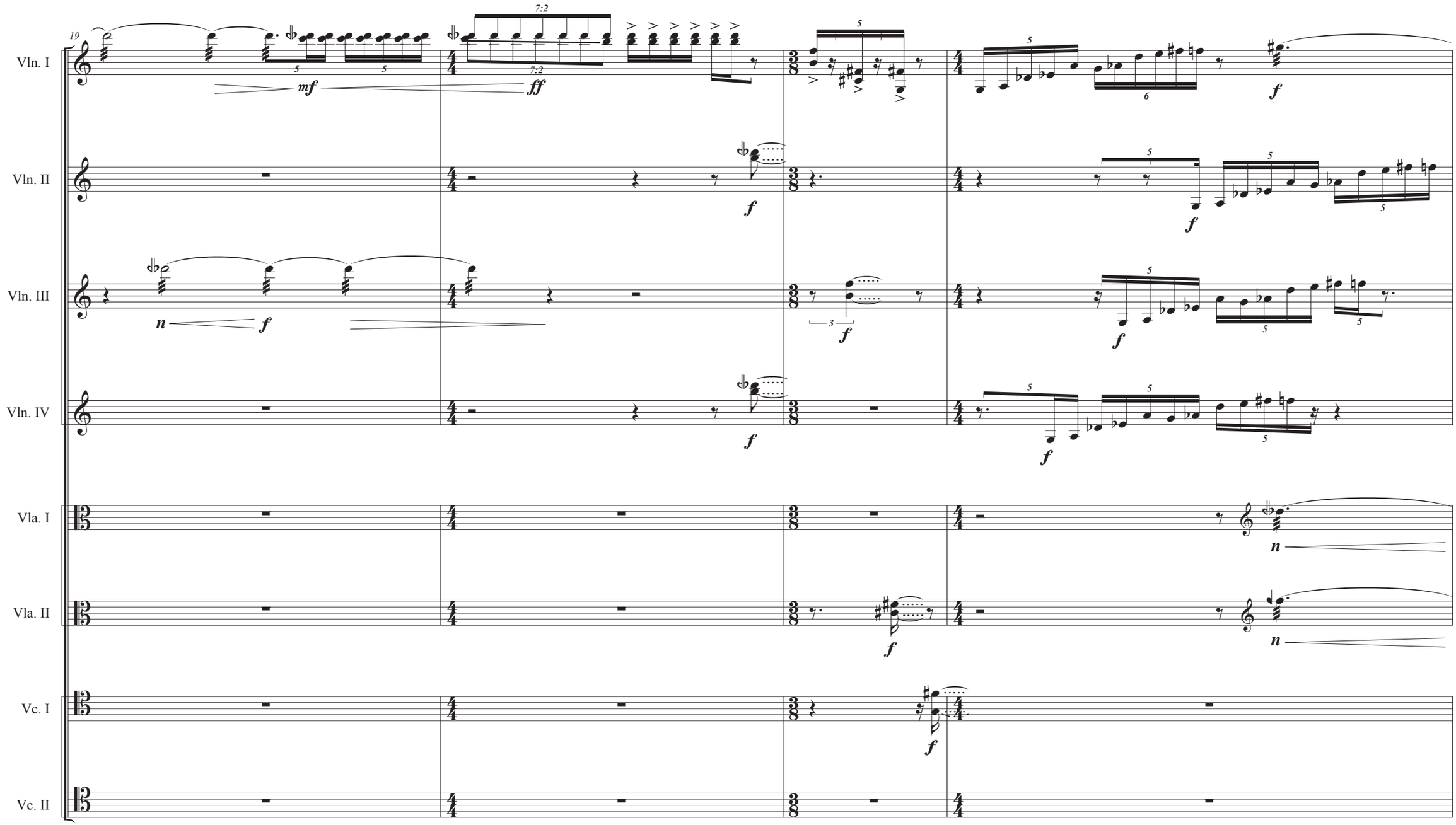


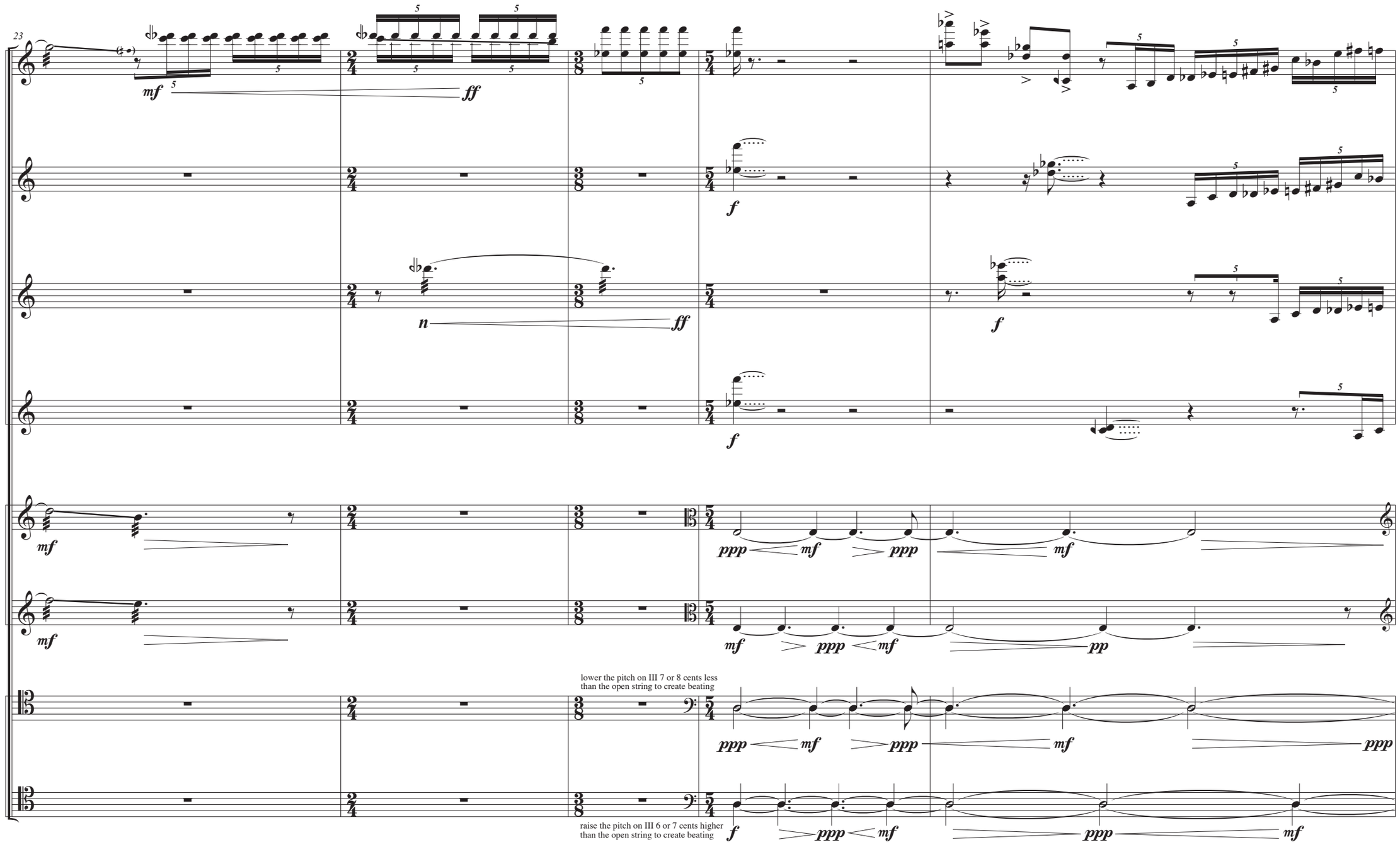

©2017 - Rand Steiger Music

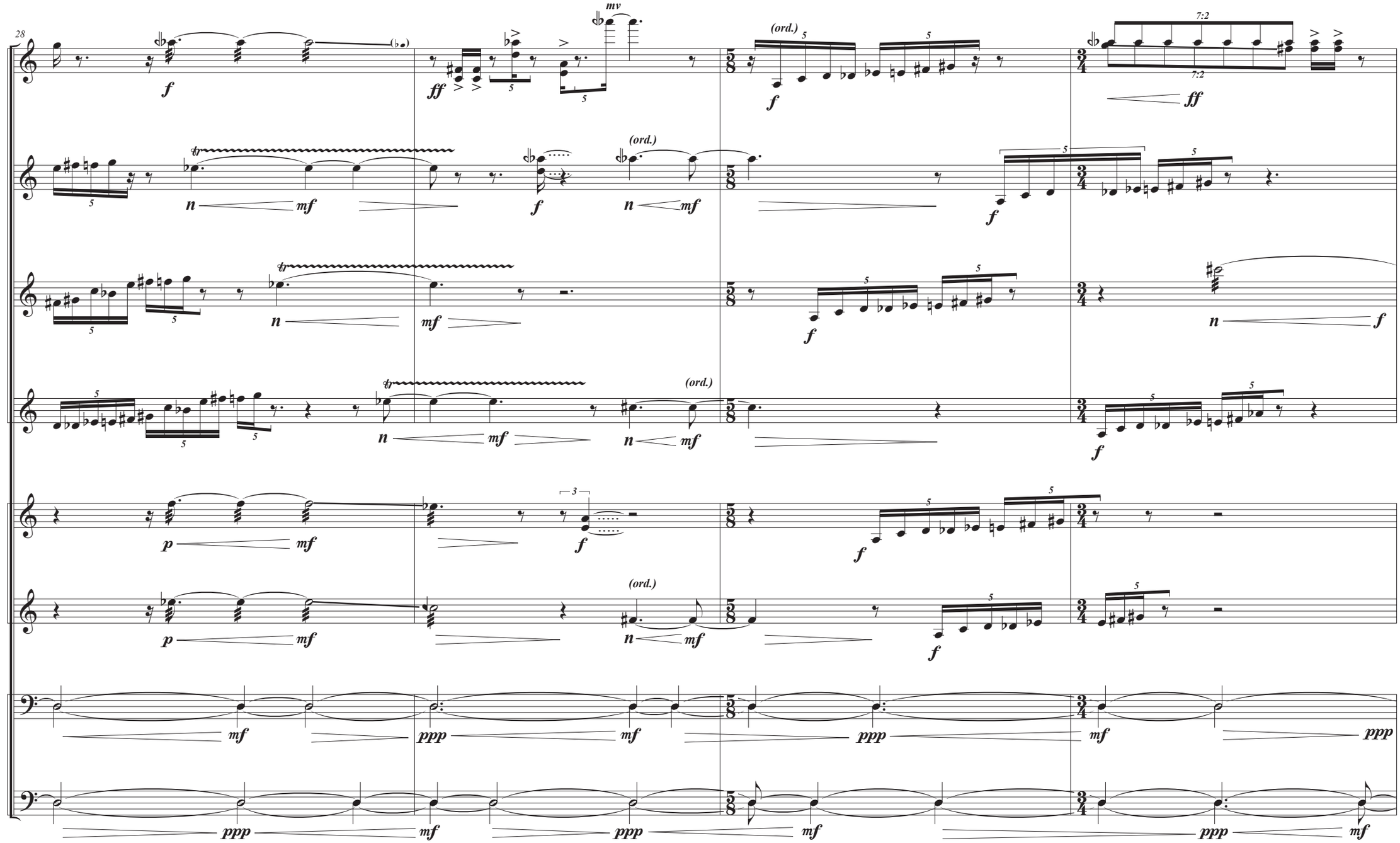

6
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
nv
mv
(ord.)
pp
ff
n
mf
f

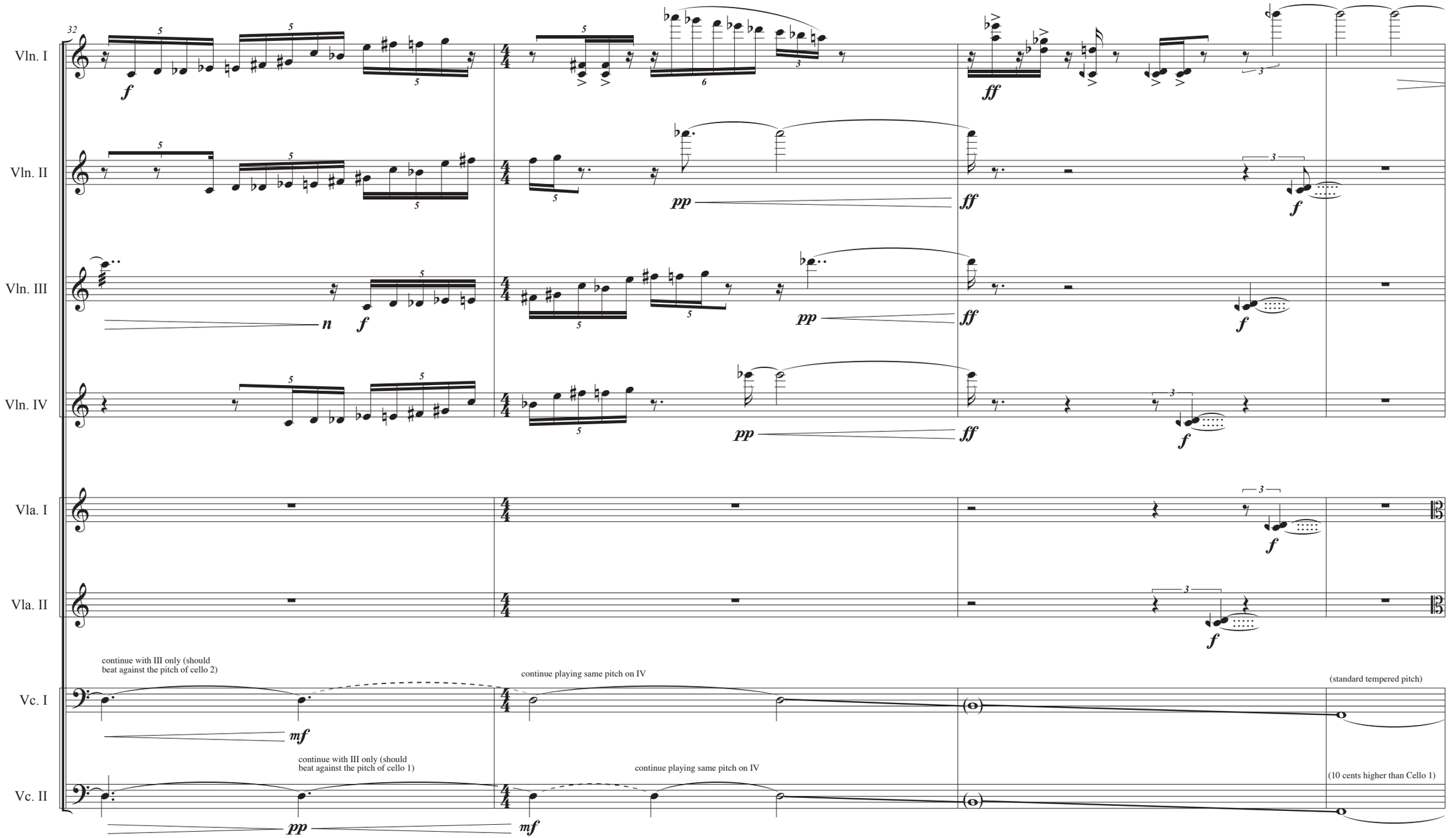

9
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
n
ff
mf
f
5
7:2

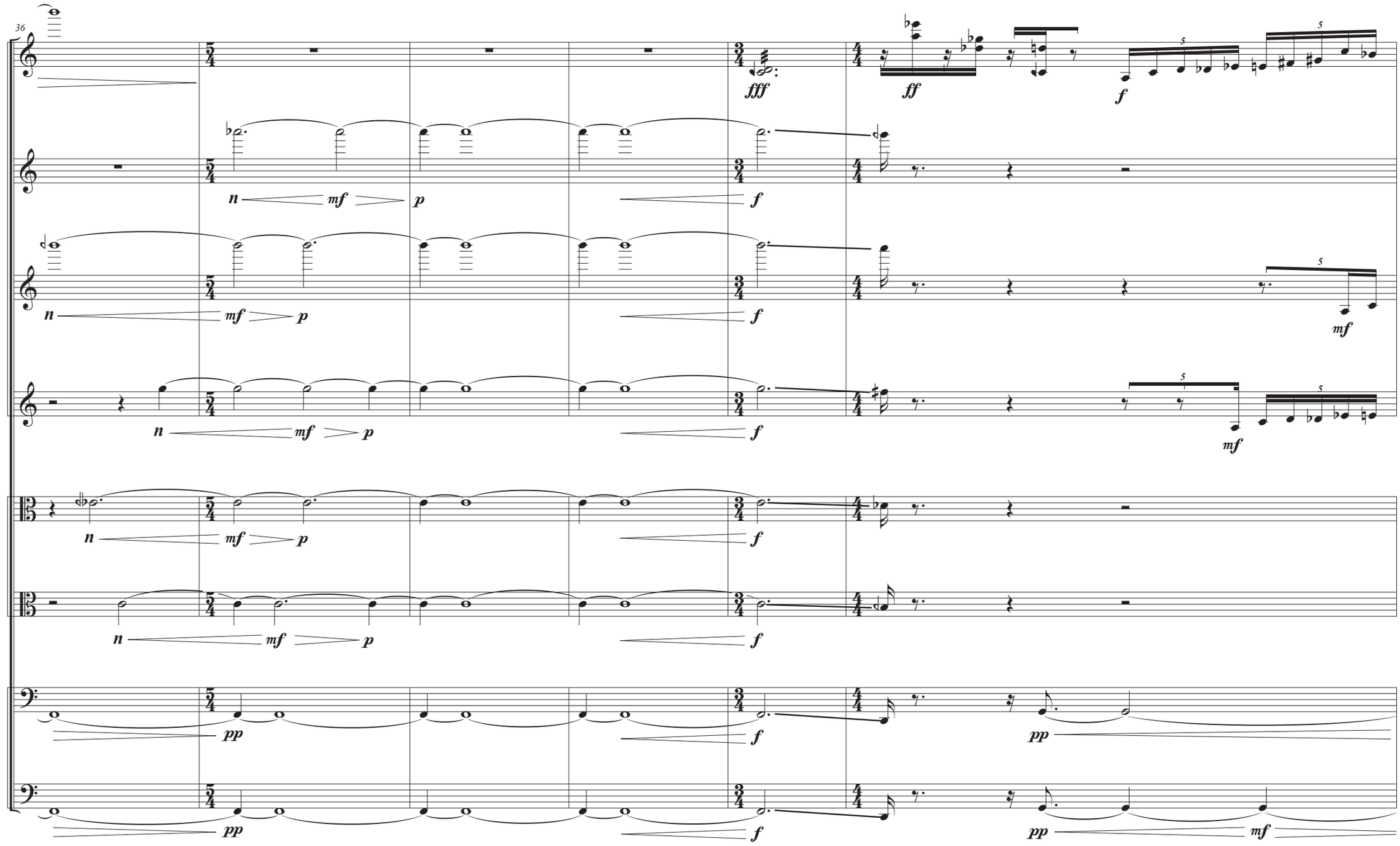

14
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
pp
ff
mf
f
3

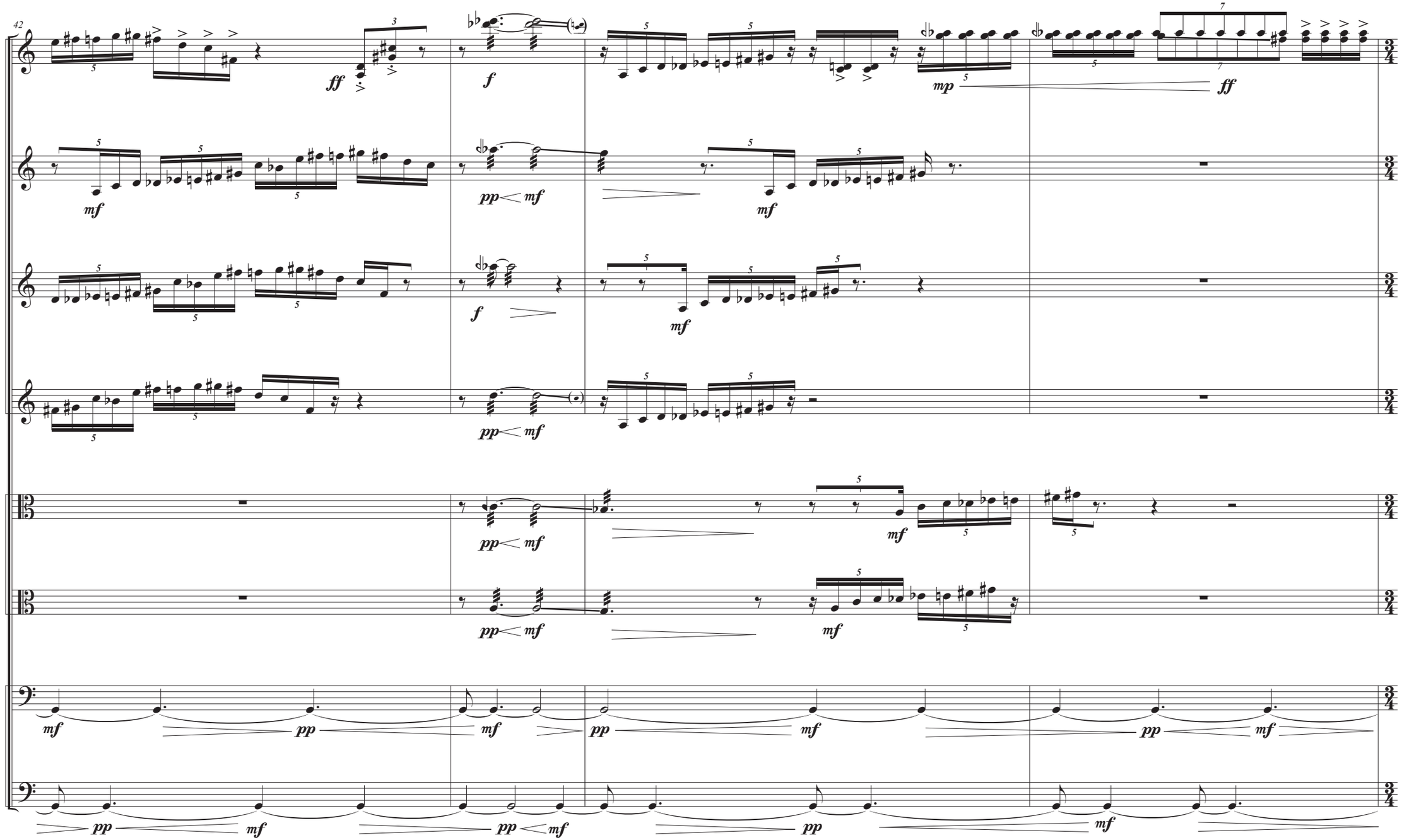

19
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
mf
ff
f
n
7:2
5
6
3

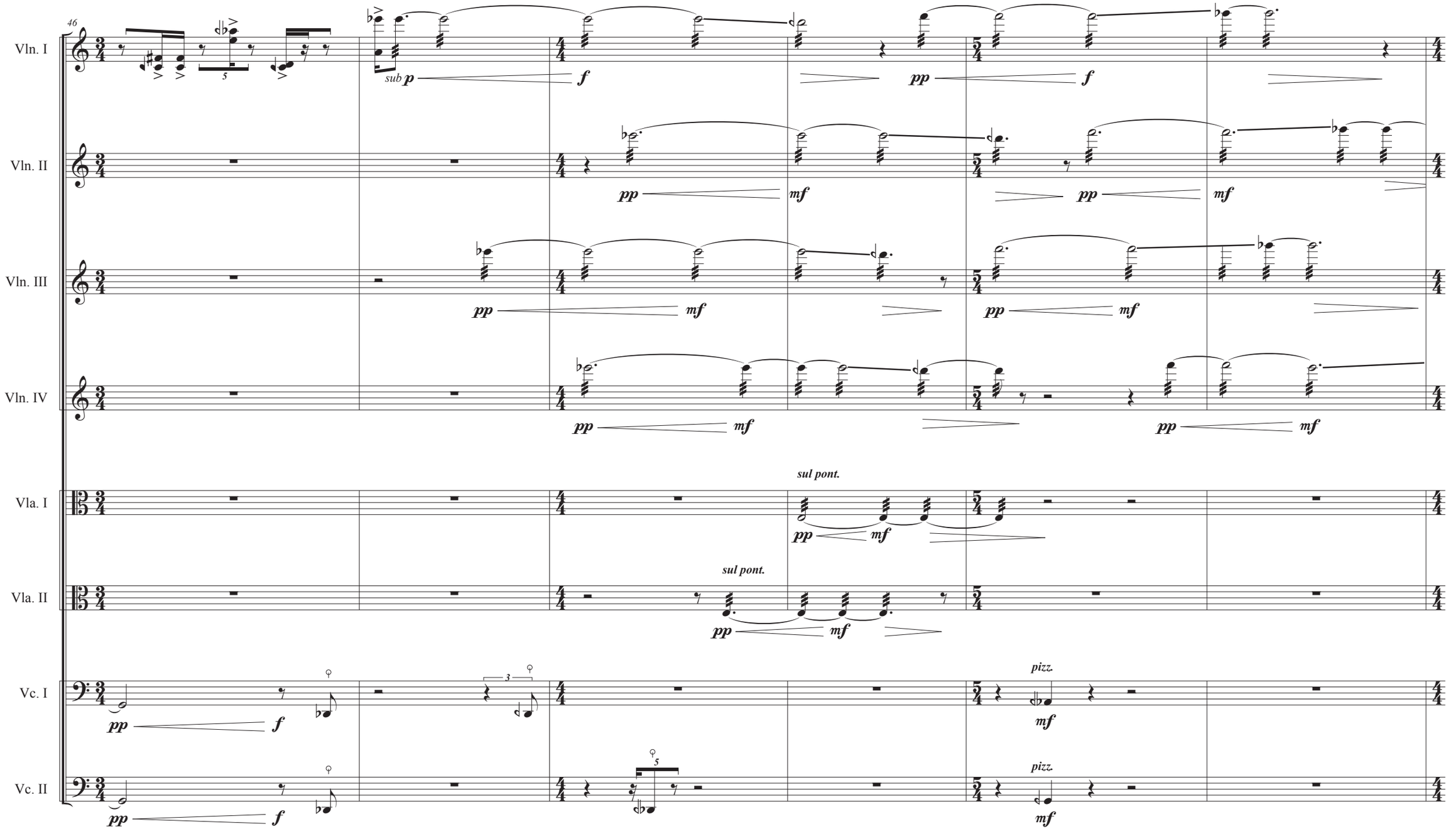

23
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
lower the pitch on III 7 or 8 cents less than the open string to create beating
raise the pitch on III 6 or 7 cents higher than the open string to create beating

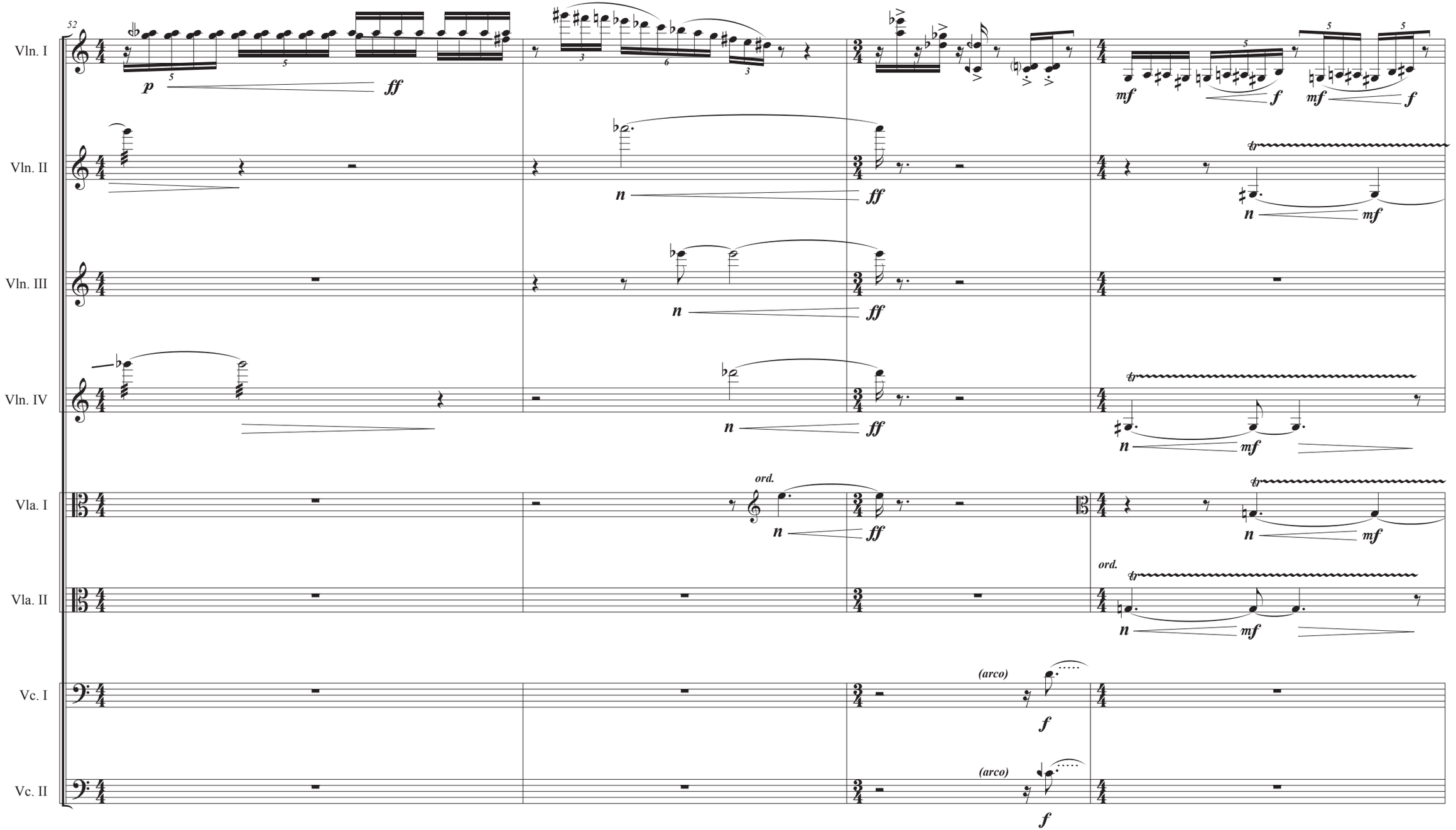

28
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
mv
(ord.)
7:2
tr

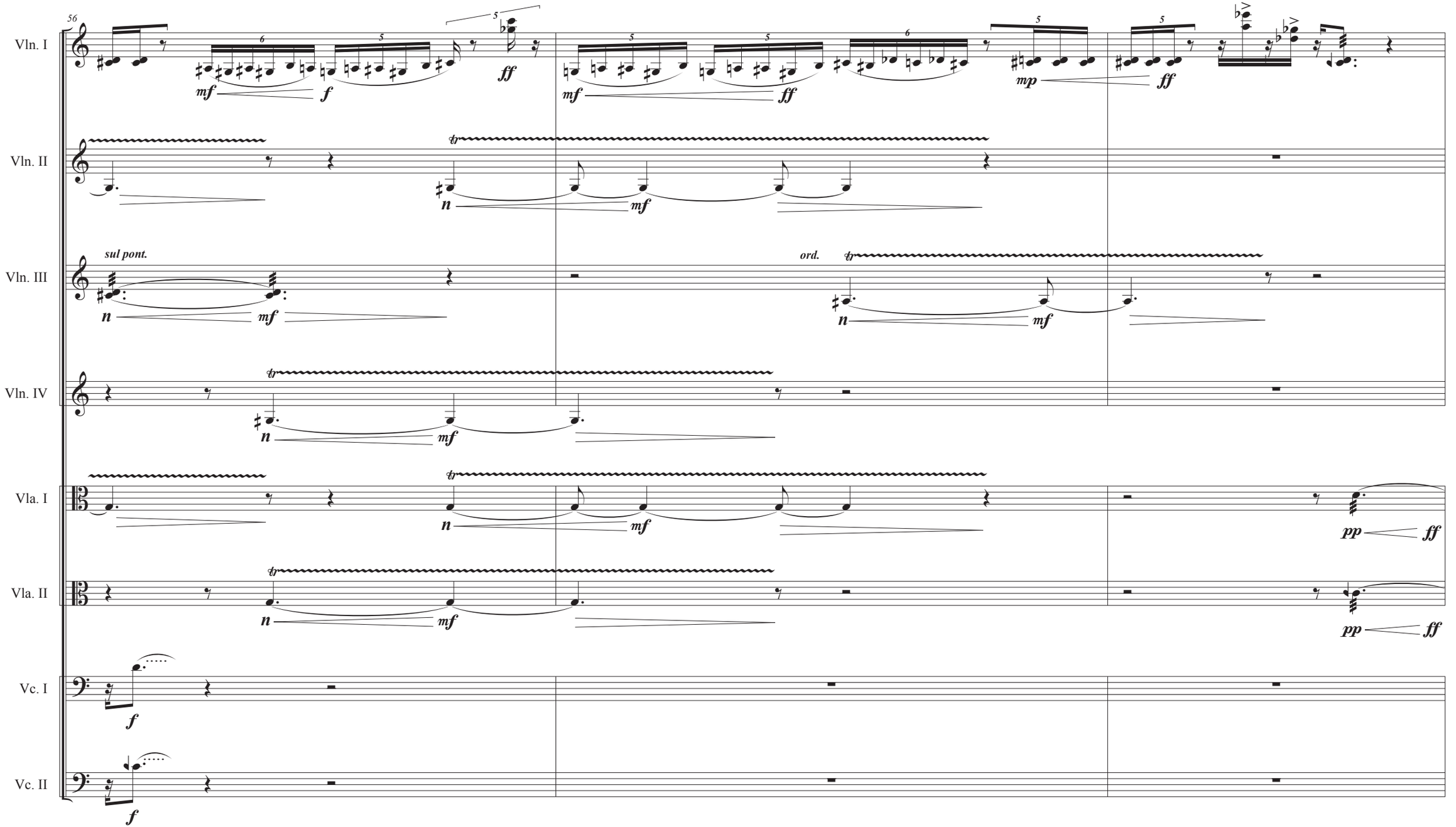

32
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
continue with III only (should beat against the pitch of cello 2)
continue playing same pitch on IV
(standard tempered pitch)
continue with III only (should beat against the pitch of cello 1)
continue playing same pitch on IV
(10 cents higher than Cello 1)

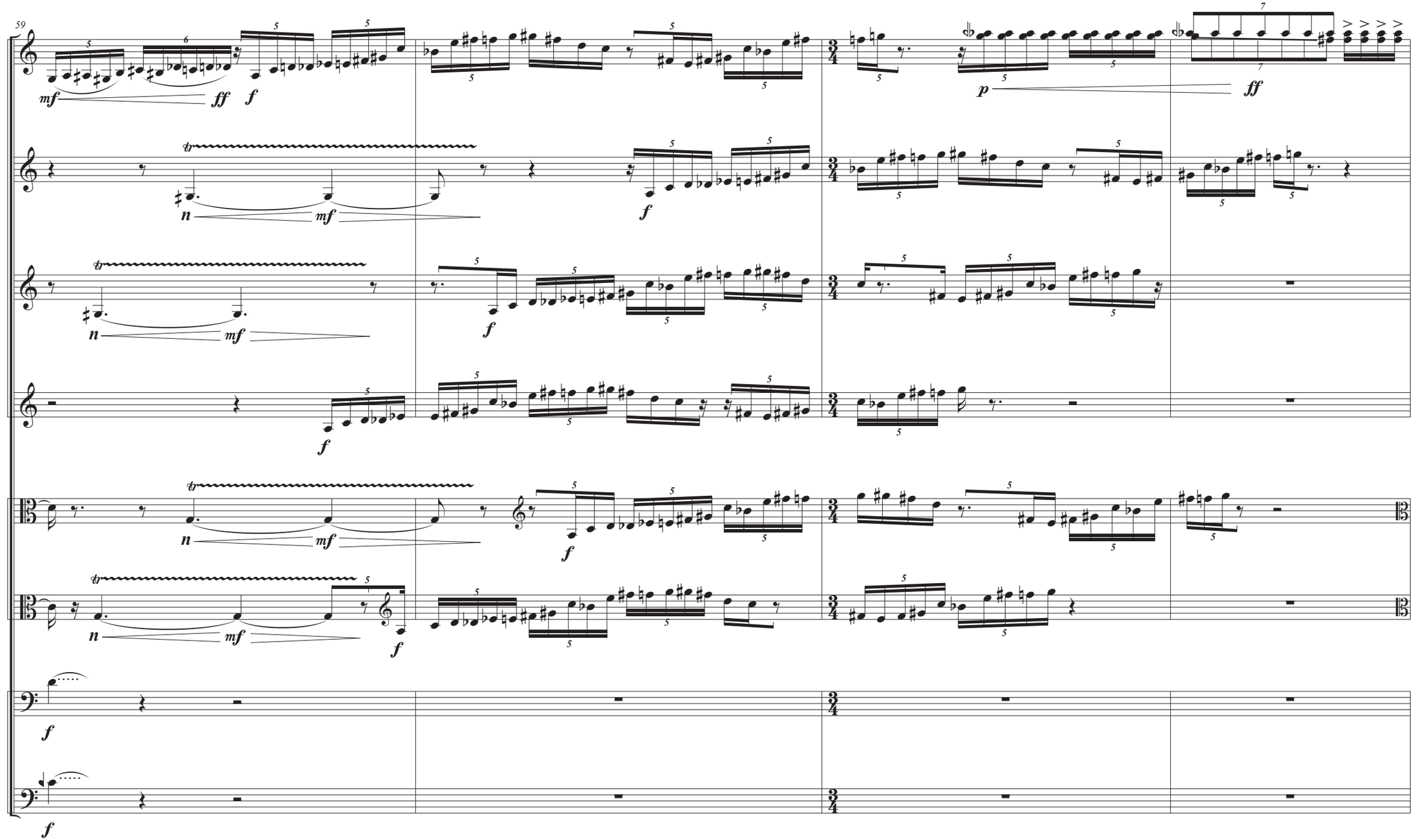

36
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
fff
ff
f
mf
p
n
pp

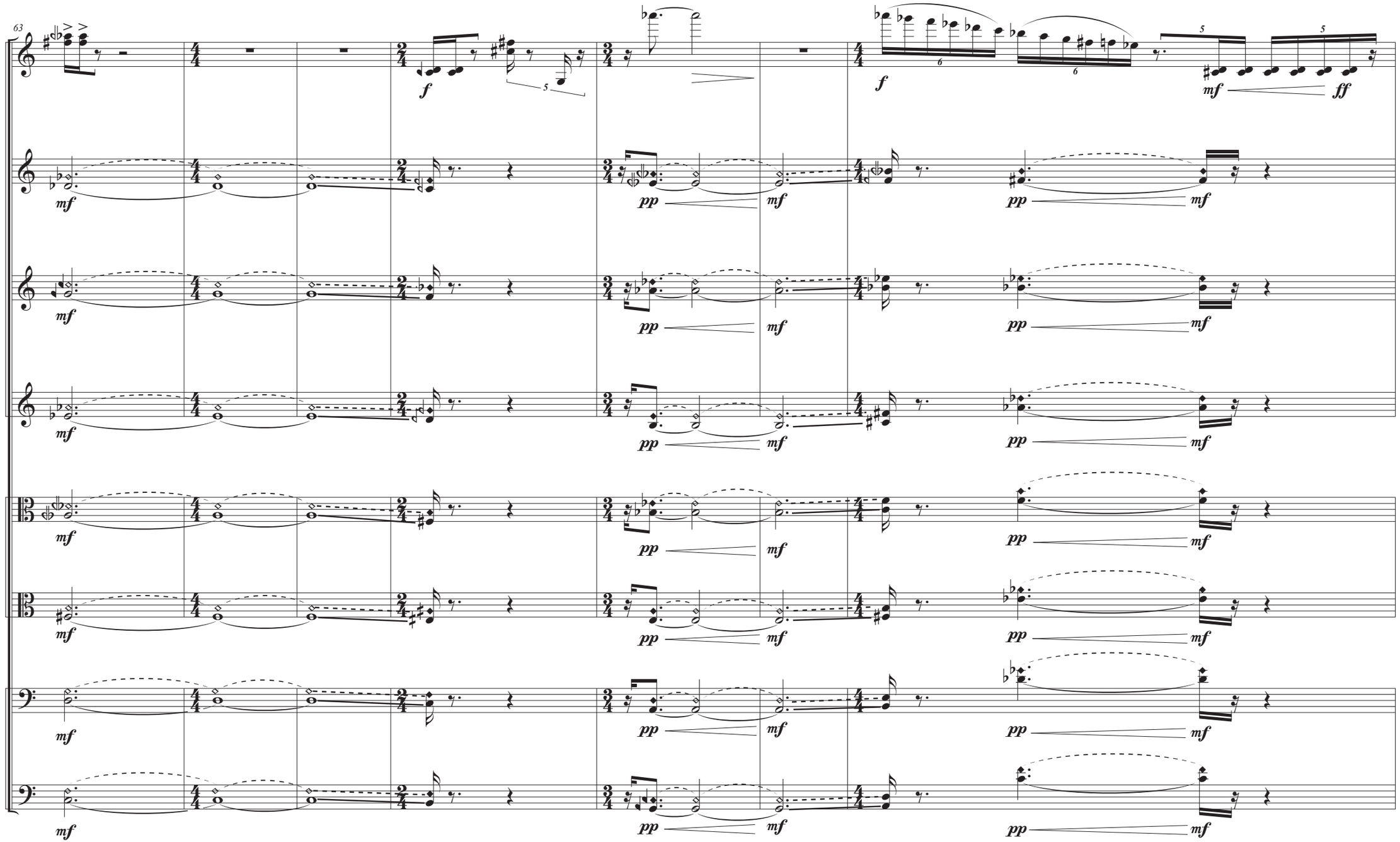

42
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
ff
f
mp
mf
pp
3/4

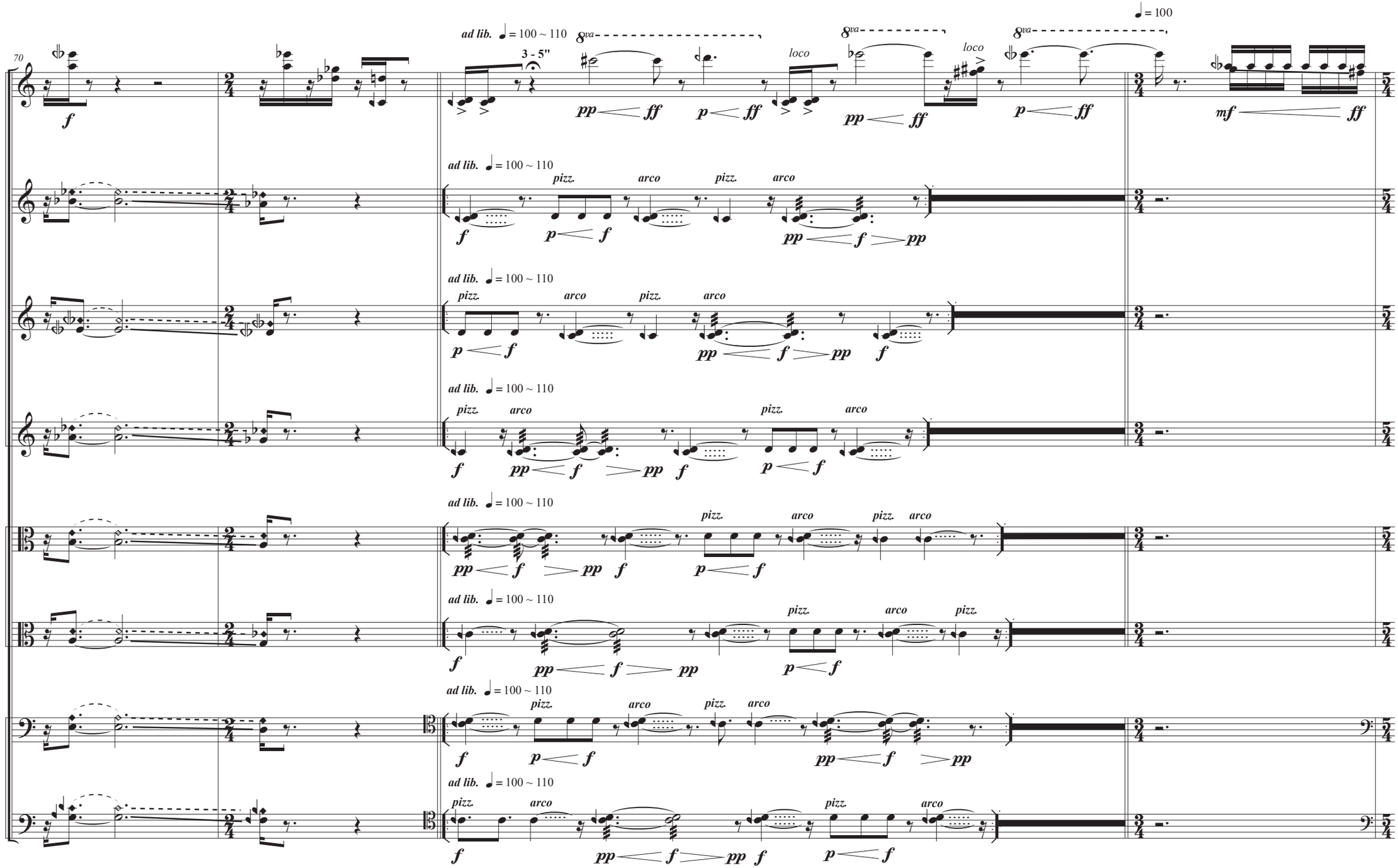

46
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
sub p
f
pp
mf
sul pont.
pizz.

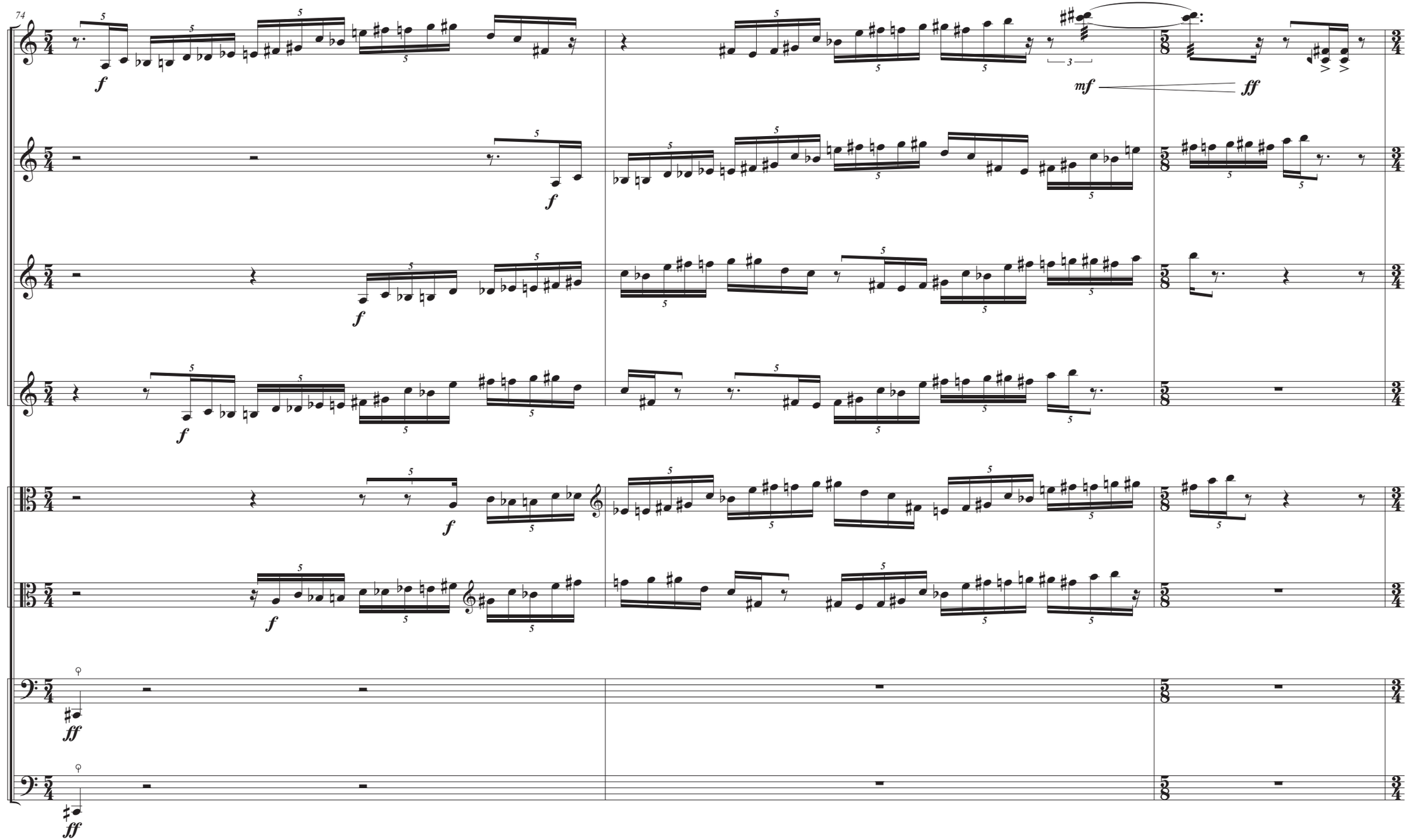

52
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
p
ff
mf
f
n
tr
ord.
(arco)

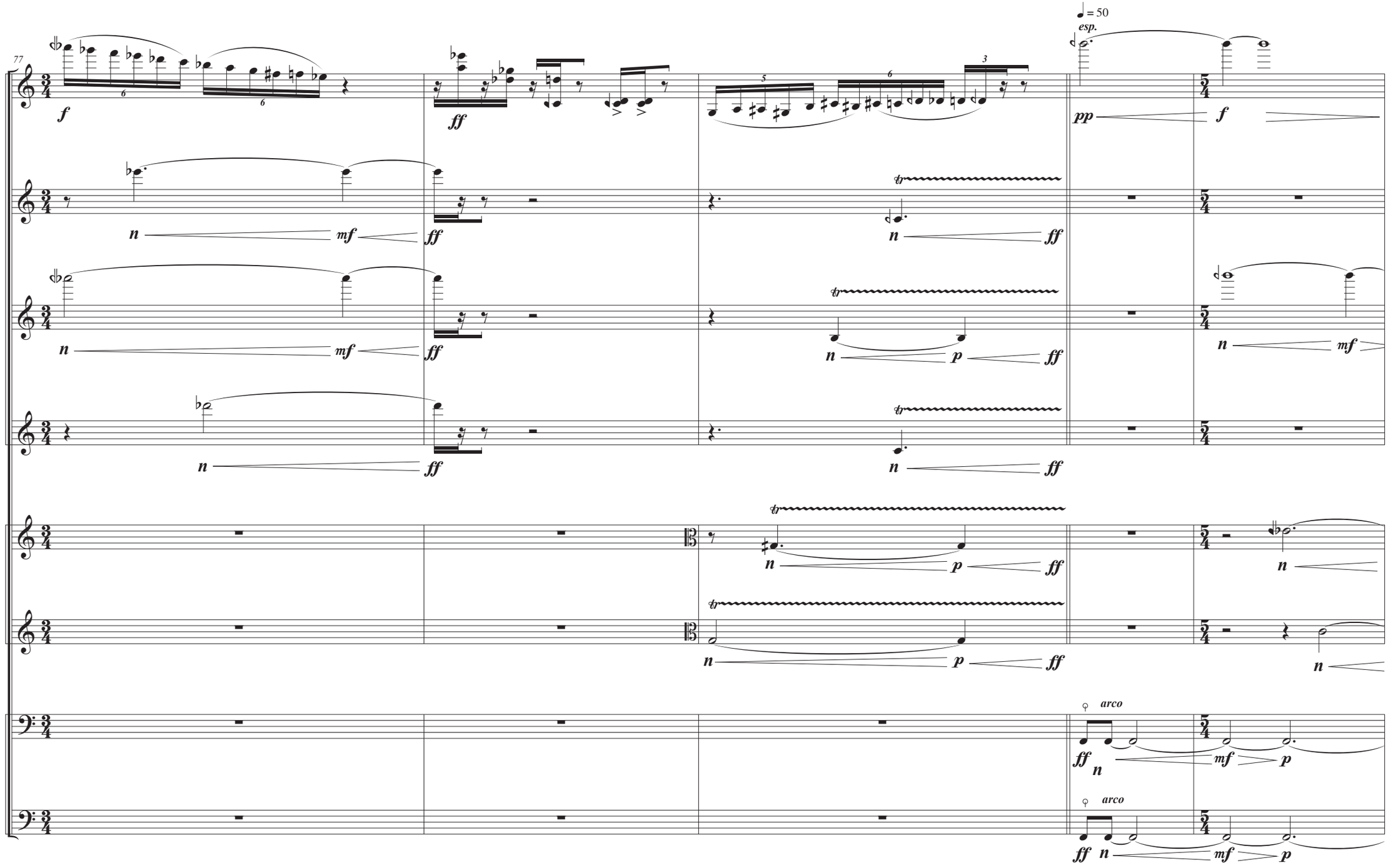

56
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
sul pont.
ord.
tr
n
mf
f
ff
mp
pp

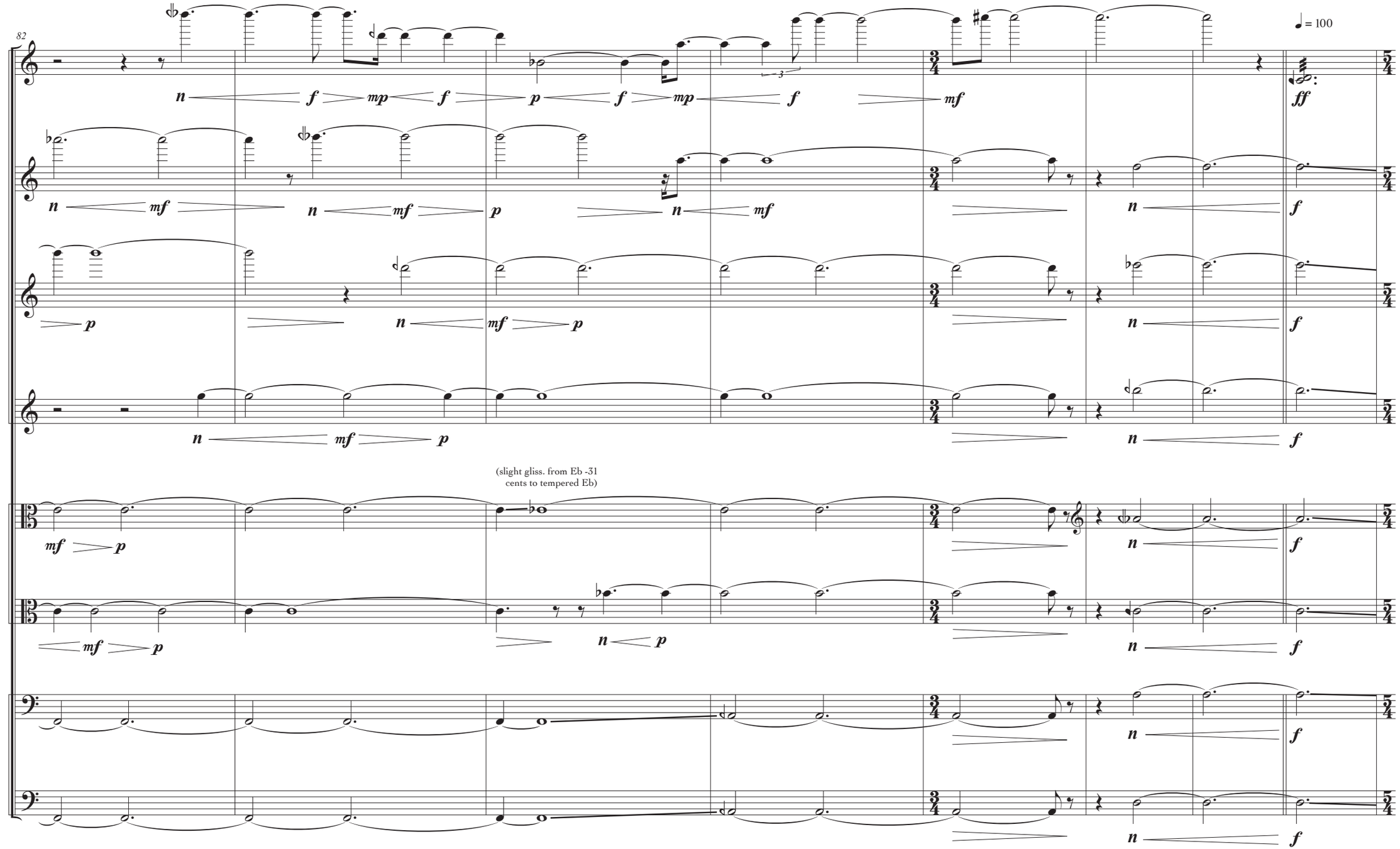

59
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
mf
ff
f
p
n
tr

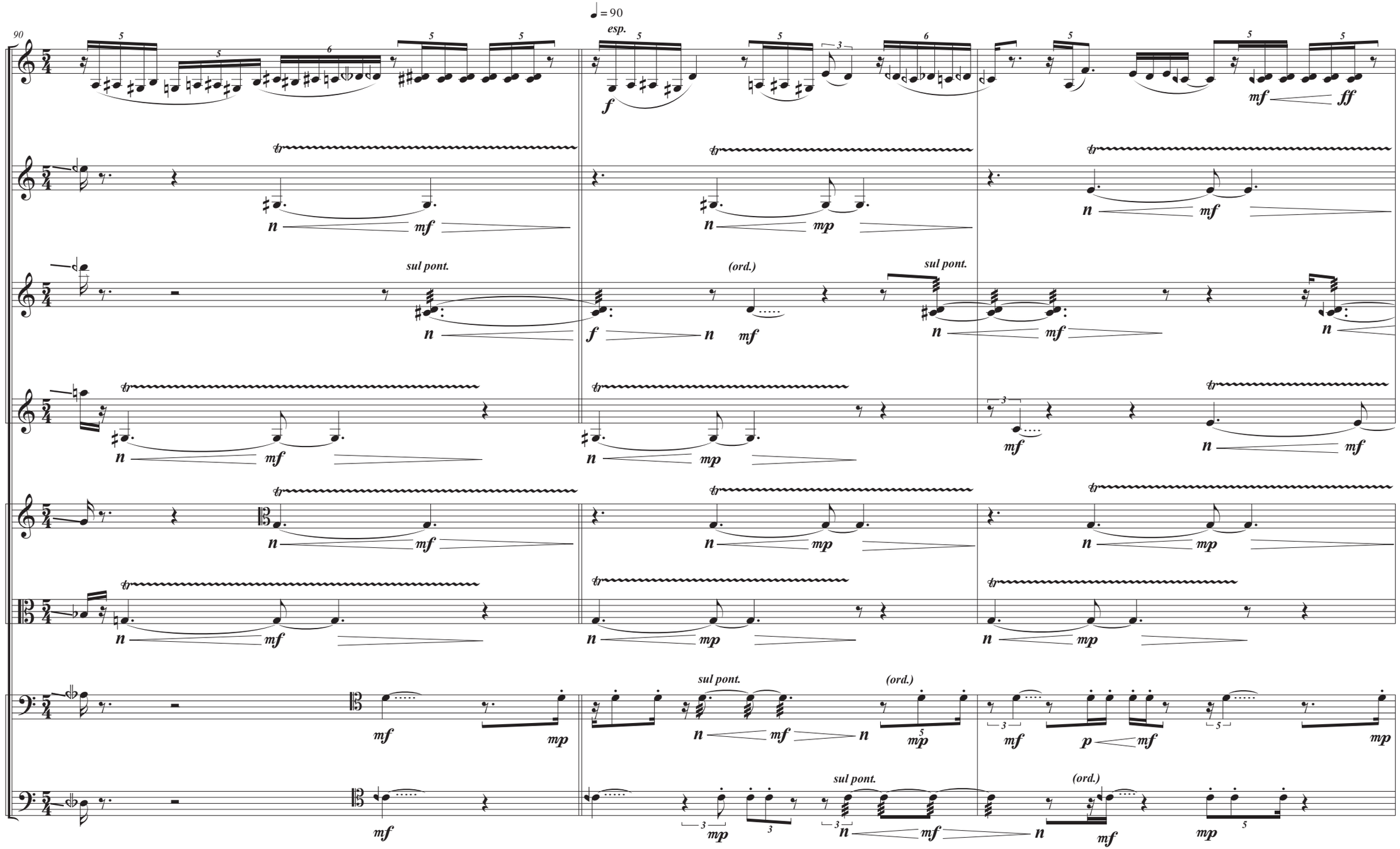

63
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
mf
f
pp
ff

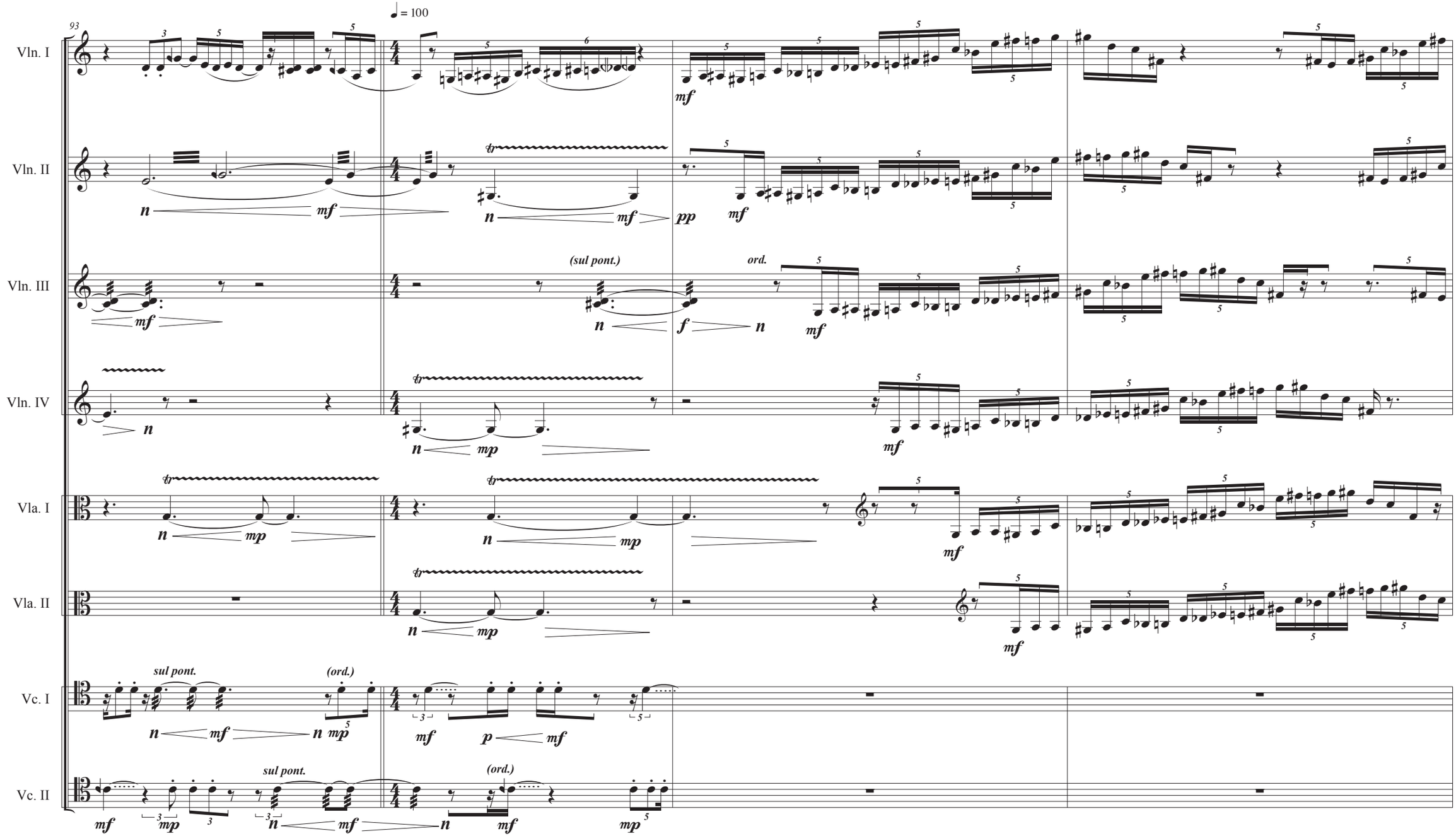

70
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
ad lib. ♩ = 100 ~ 110
3 - 5"
8va
loco
♩ = 100
pizz.
arco
f
ff
p
pp
mf

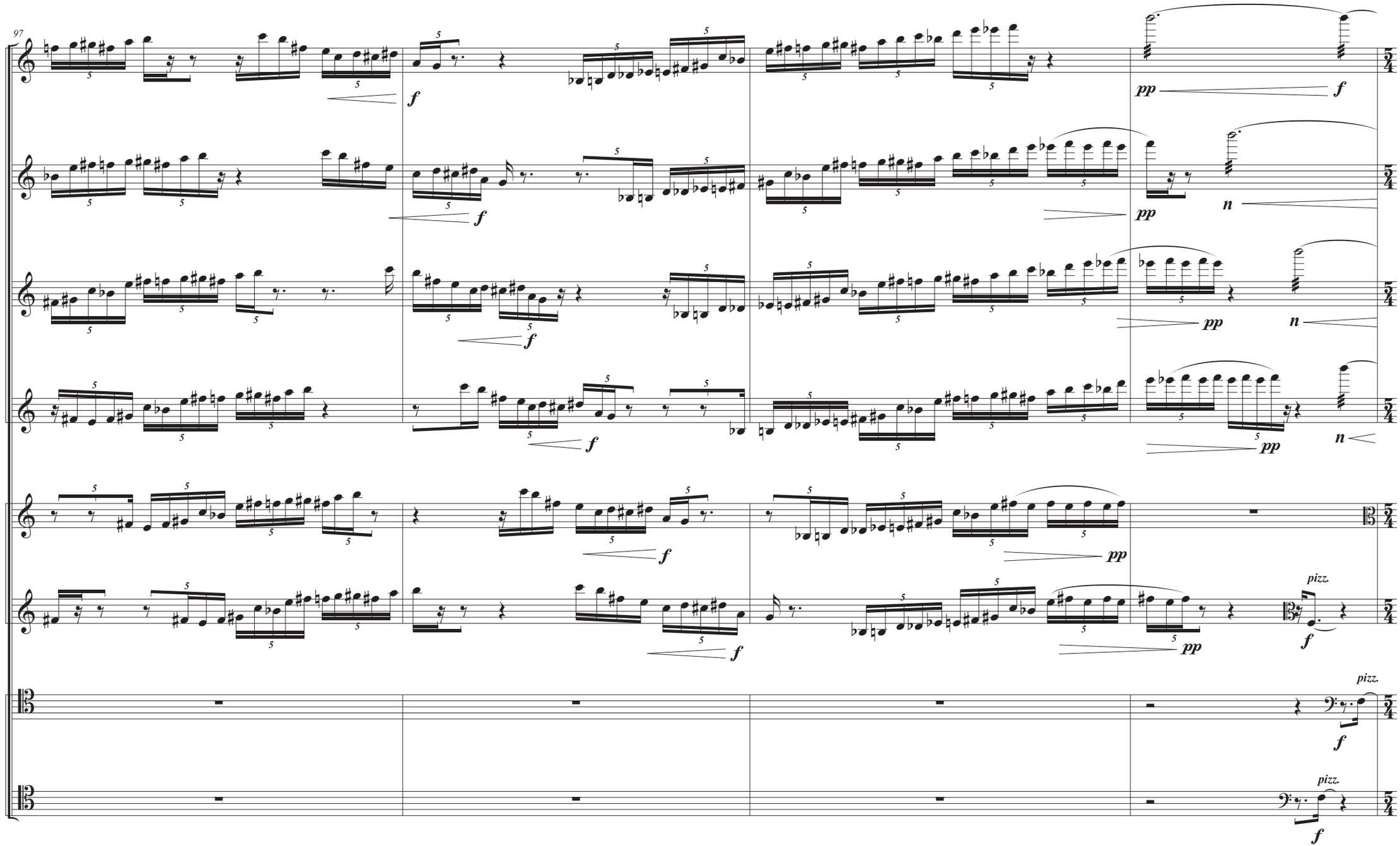

74
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
f
mf
ff

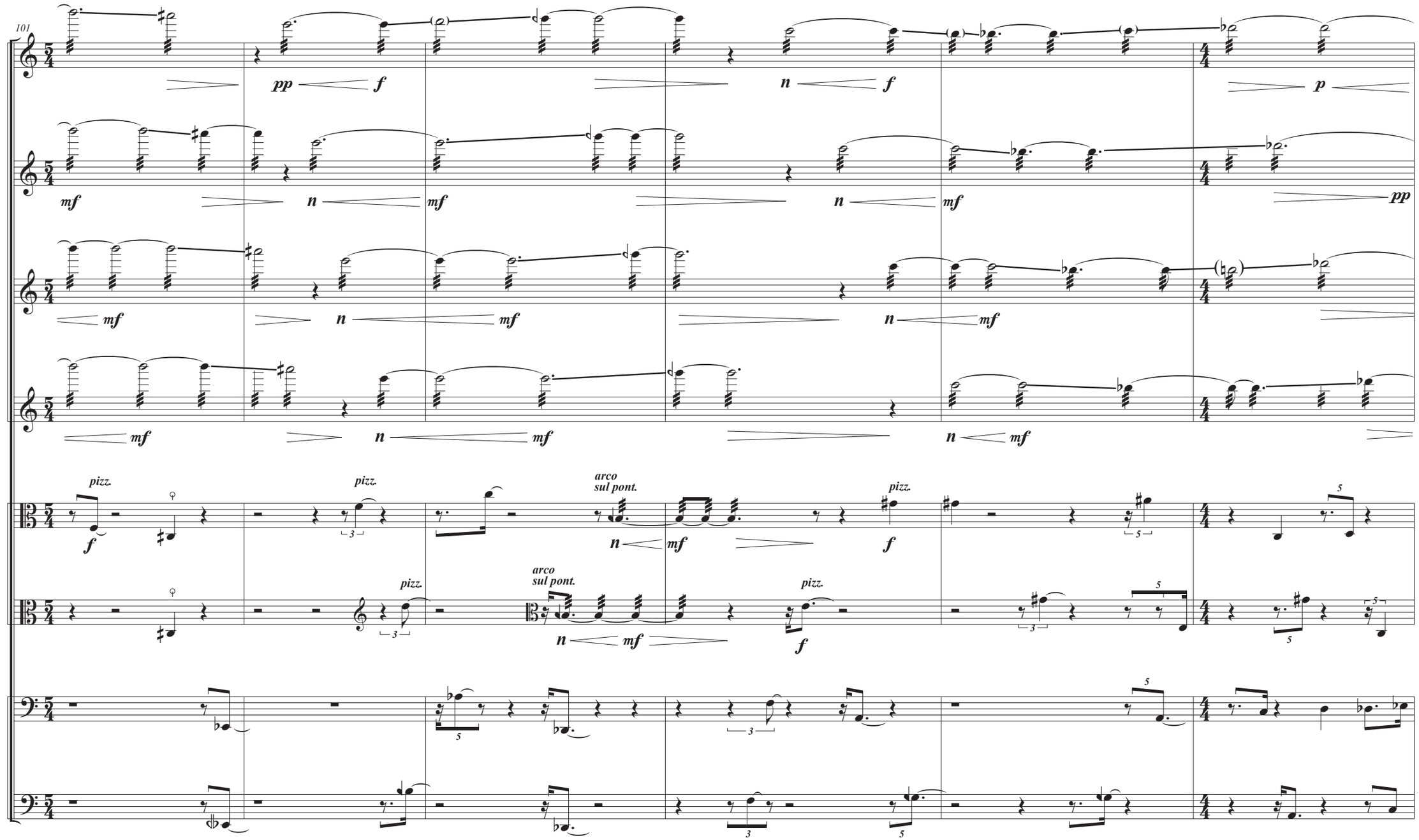

77
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
♩ = 50
esp.
arco
arco

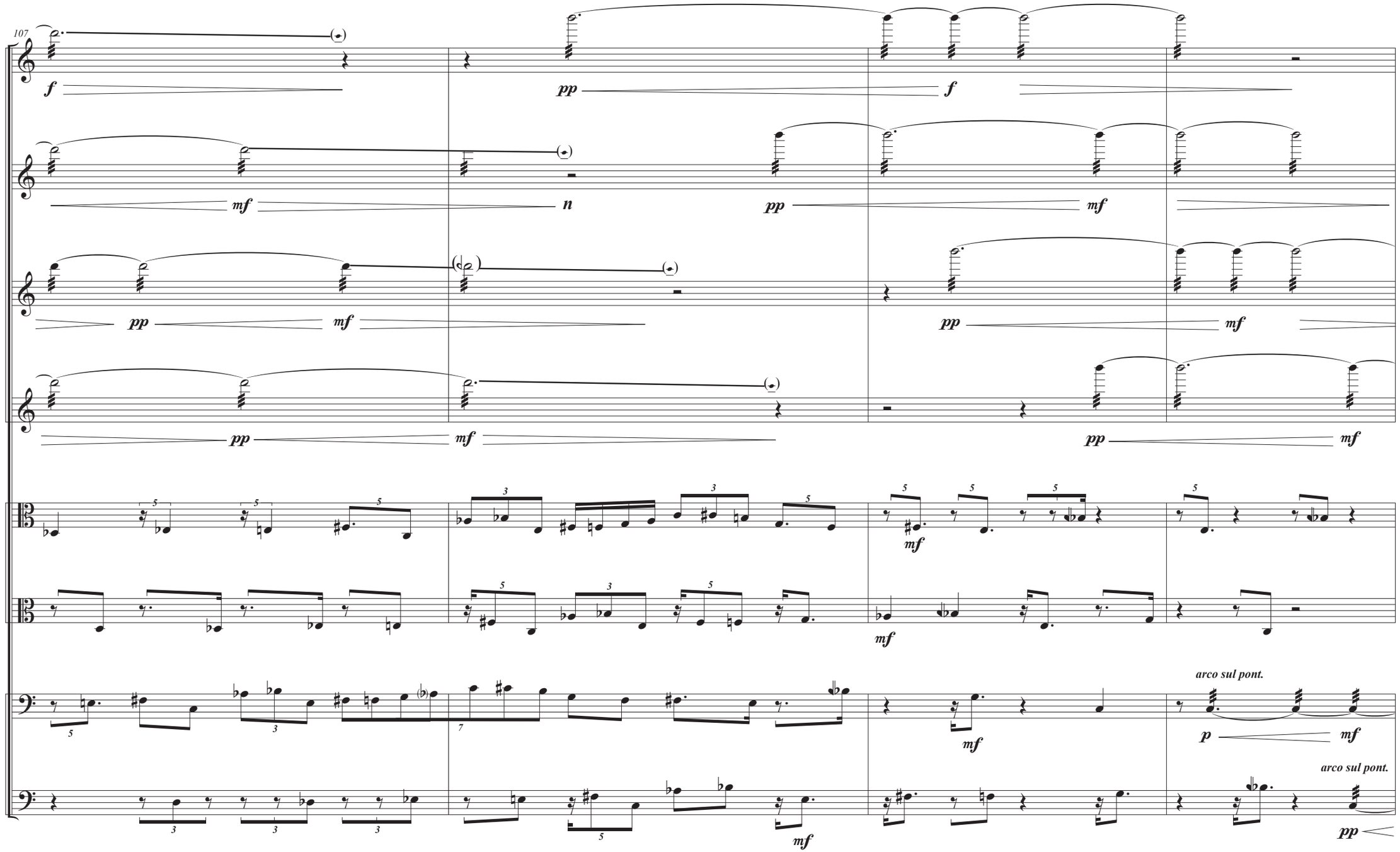

82
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
♩ = 100
(slight gliss. from Eb -31 cents to tempered Eb)

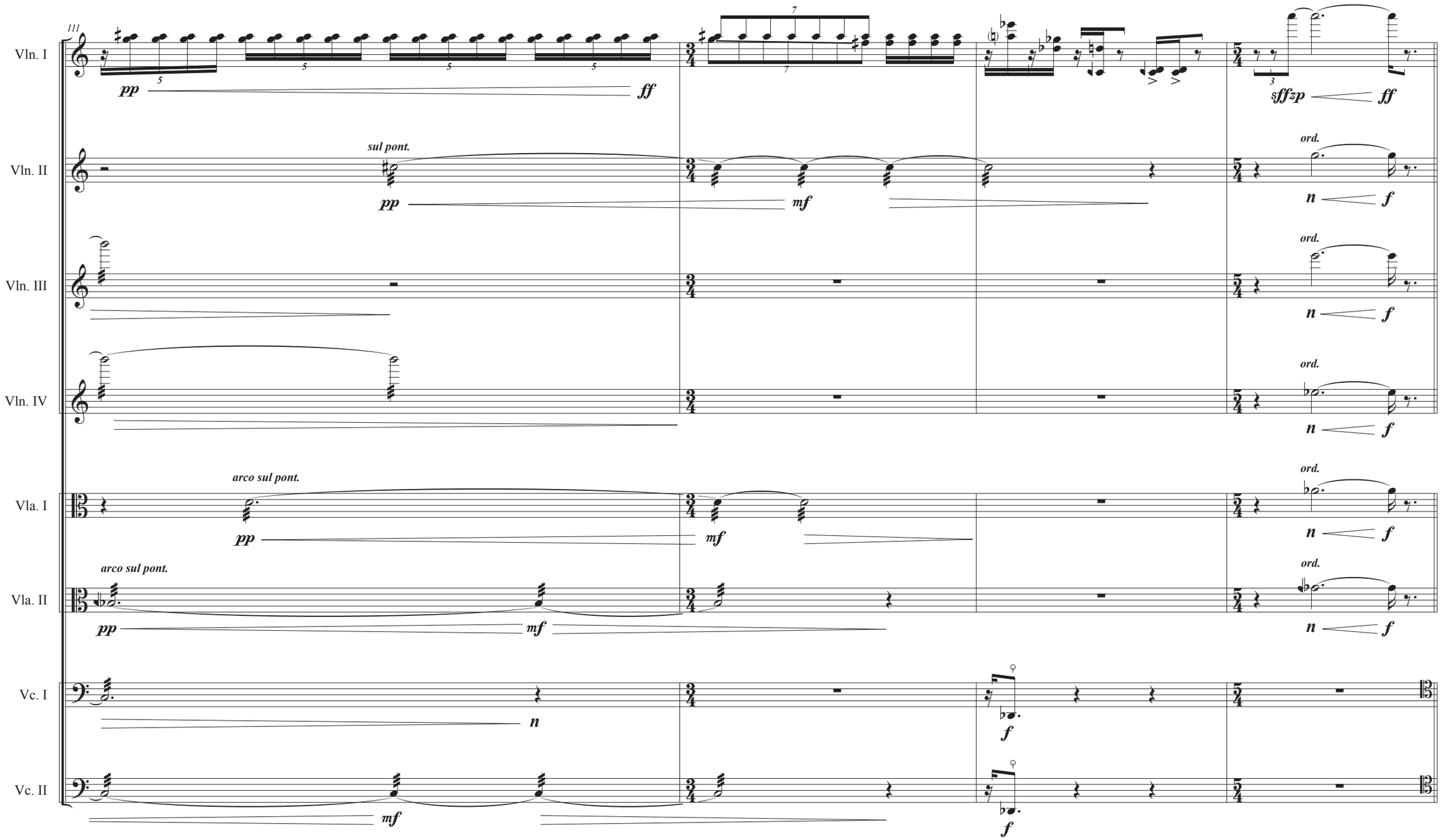

♩ = 90
esp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
sul pont.
(ord.)
sul pont.
sul pont.
(ord.)
sul pont.
(ord.)

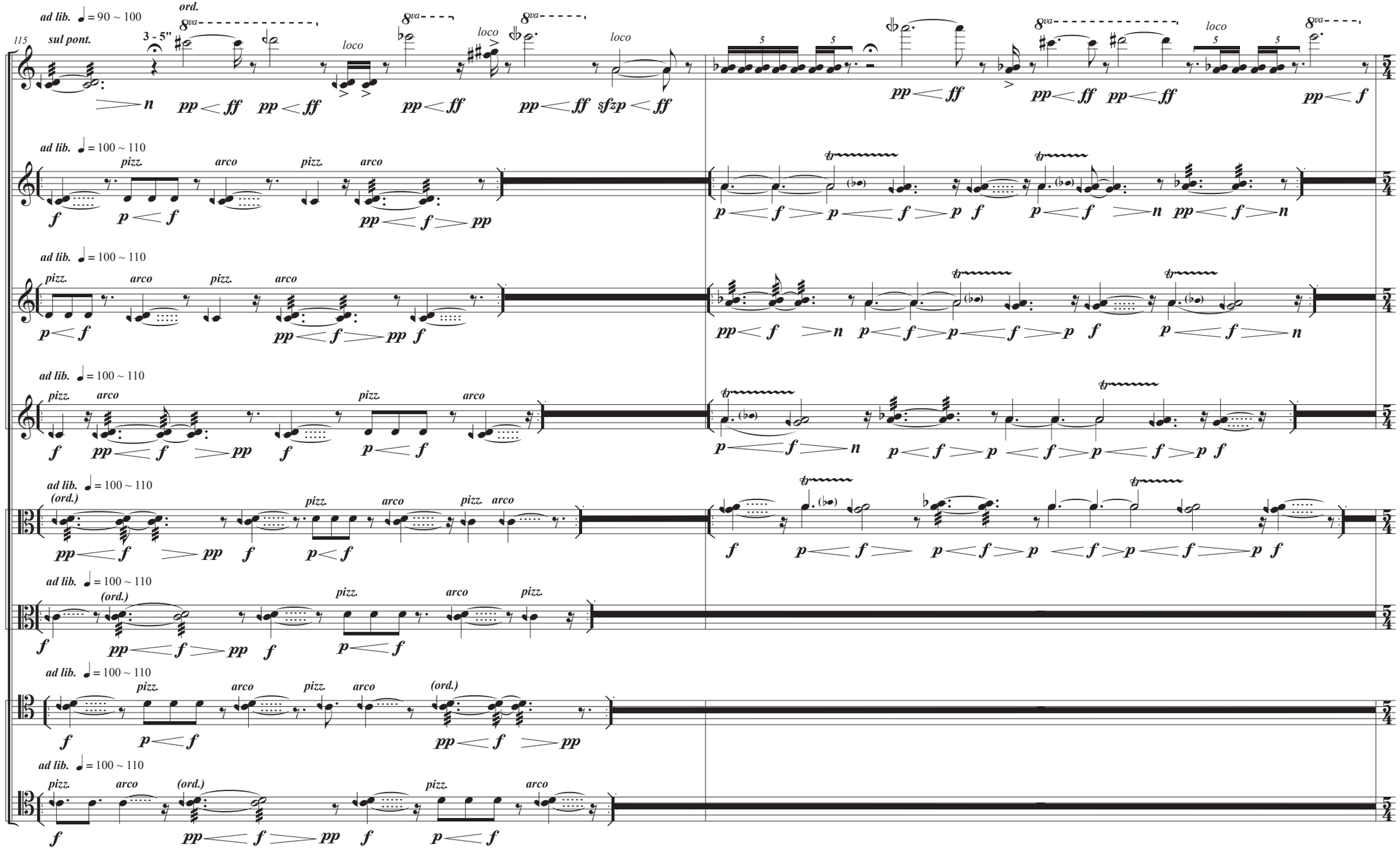

93
♩ = 100
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
(sul pont.)
ord.
sul pont.
(ord.)

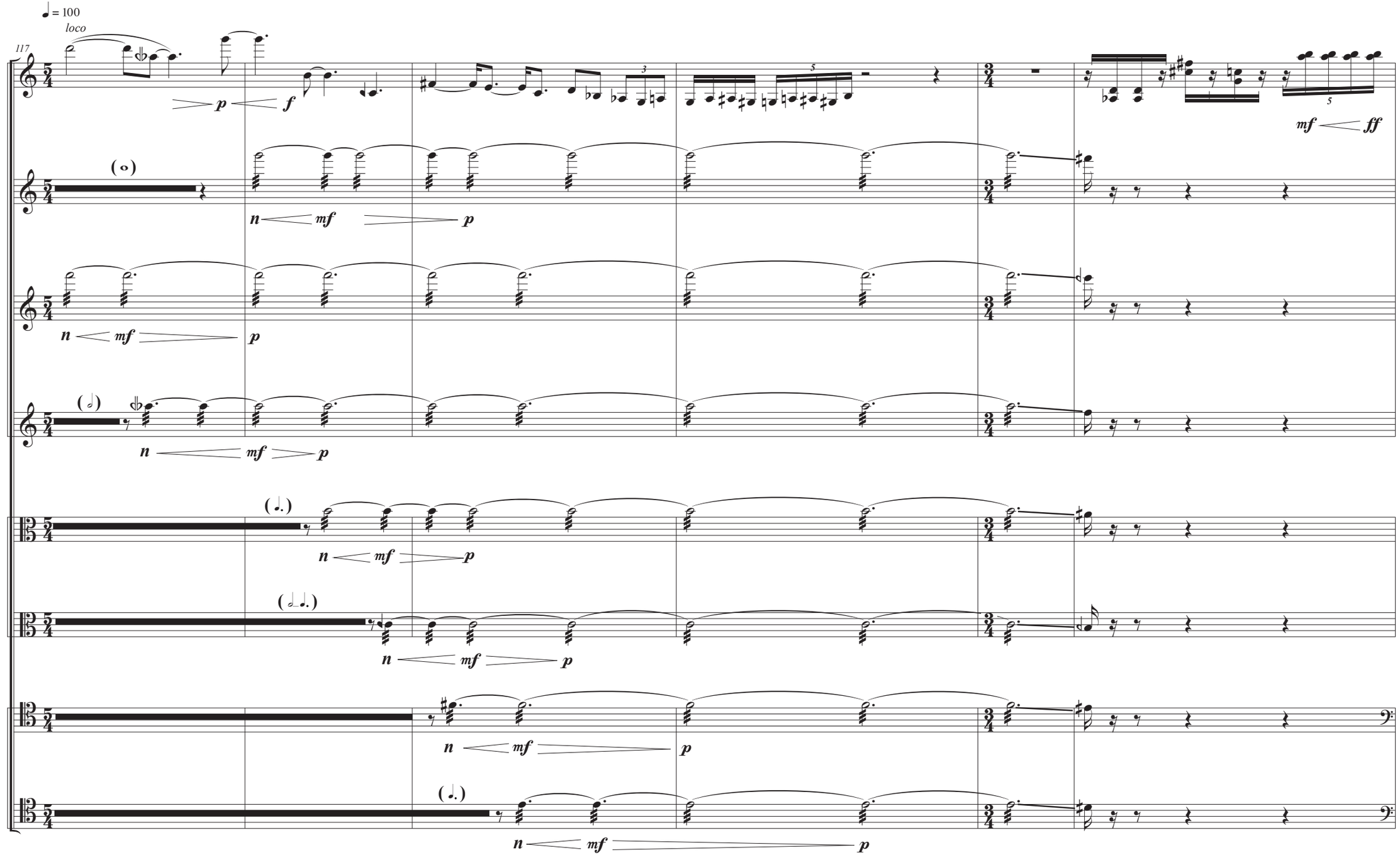

97
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
f
pp
n
pizz.
5/4

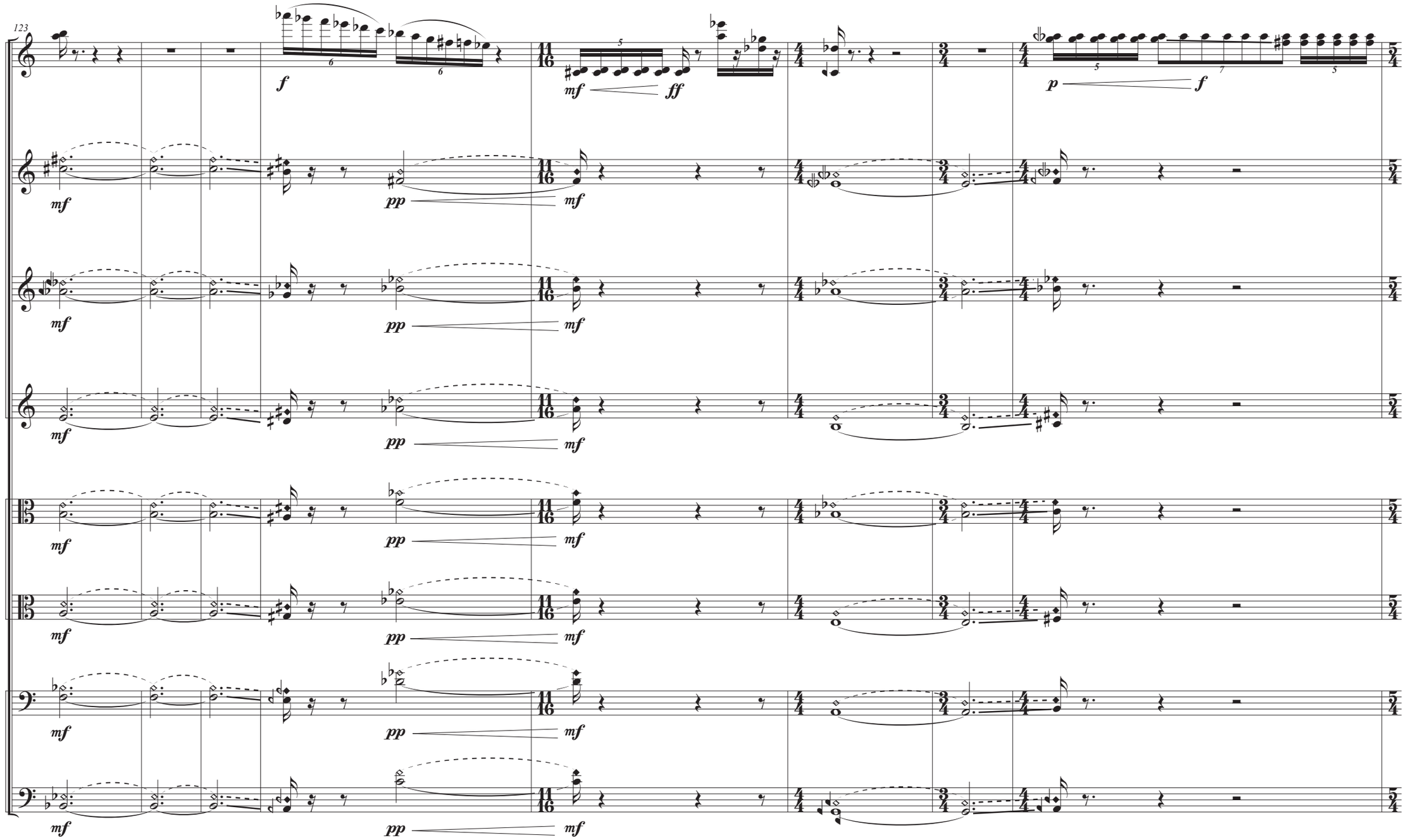

101
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
pp
f
n
mf
p
pizz.
arco
sul pont.

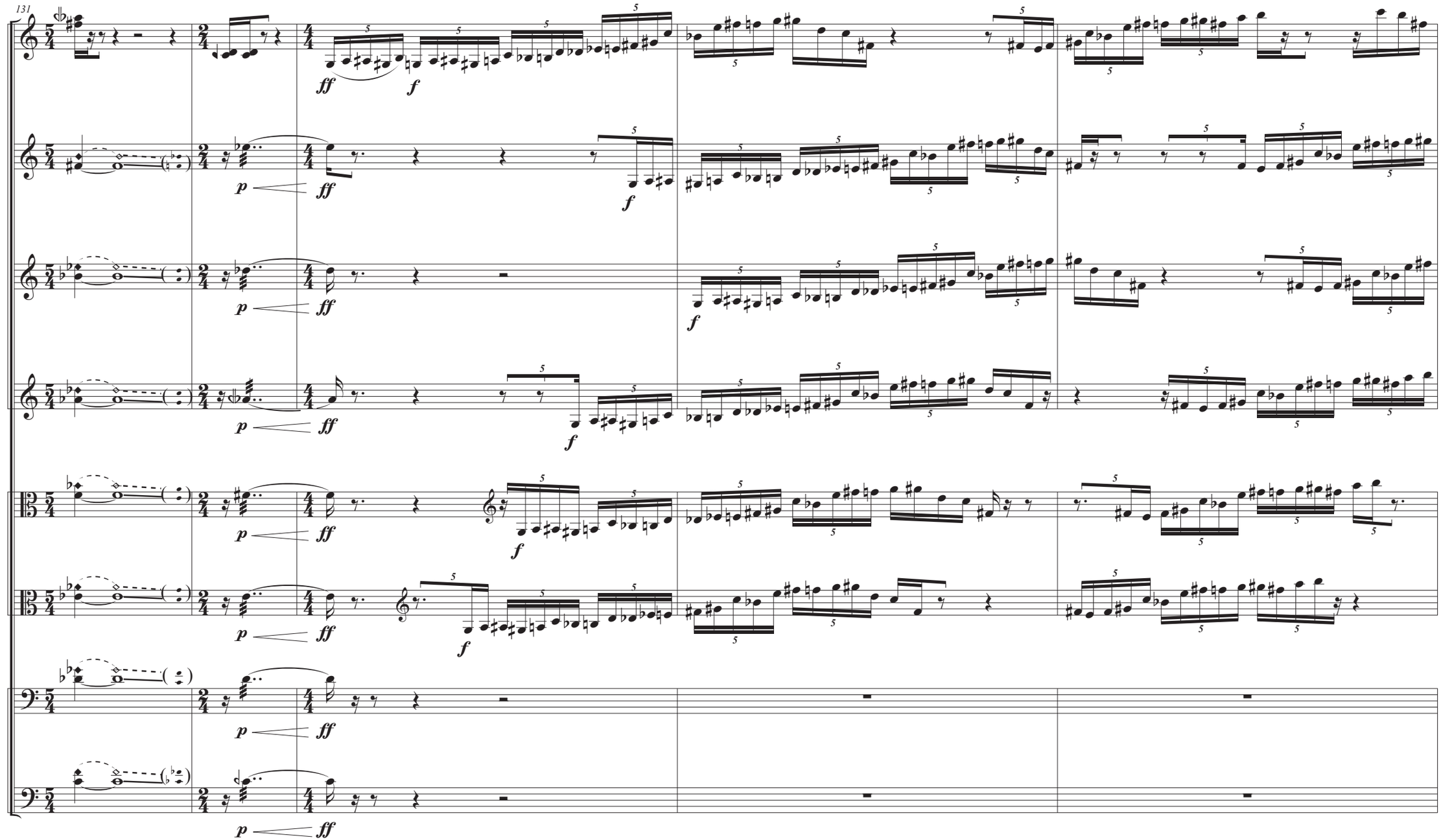

107
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
arco sul pont.
arco sul pont.

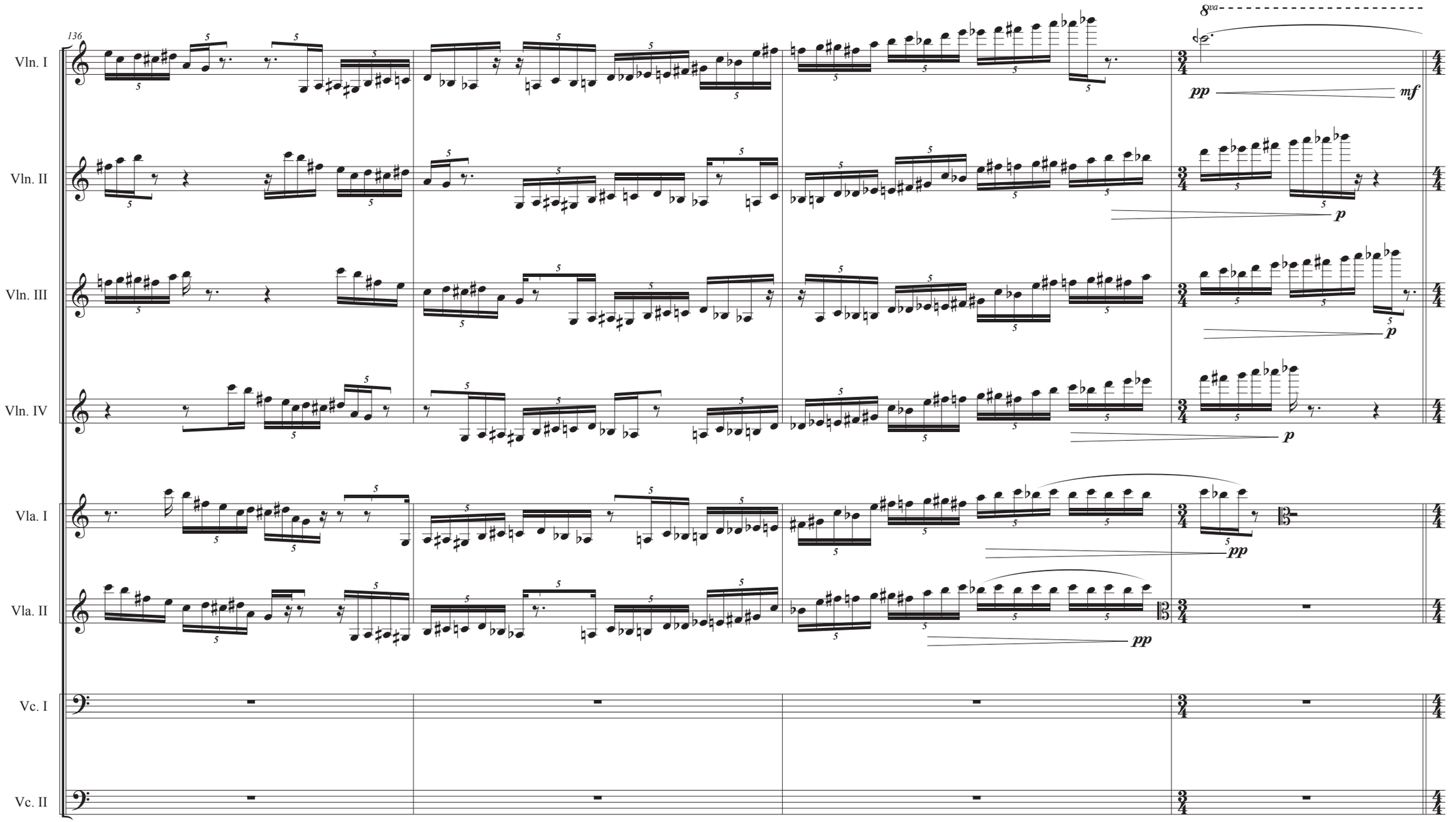

111
Vln. I
pp
ff
sffzp
ff
Vln. II
sul pont.
pp
mf
ord.
n
f
Vln. III
ord.
n
f
Vln. IV
ord.
n
f
Vla. I
arco sul pont.
pp
mf
ord.
n
f
Vla. II
arco sul pont.
pp
mf
ord.
n
f
Vc. I
n
f
Vc. II
mf
f

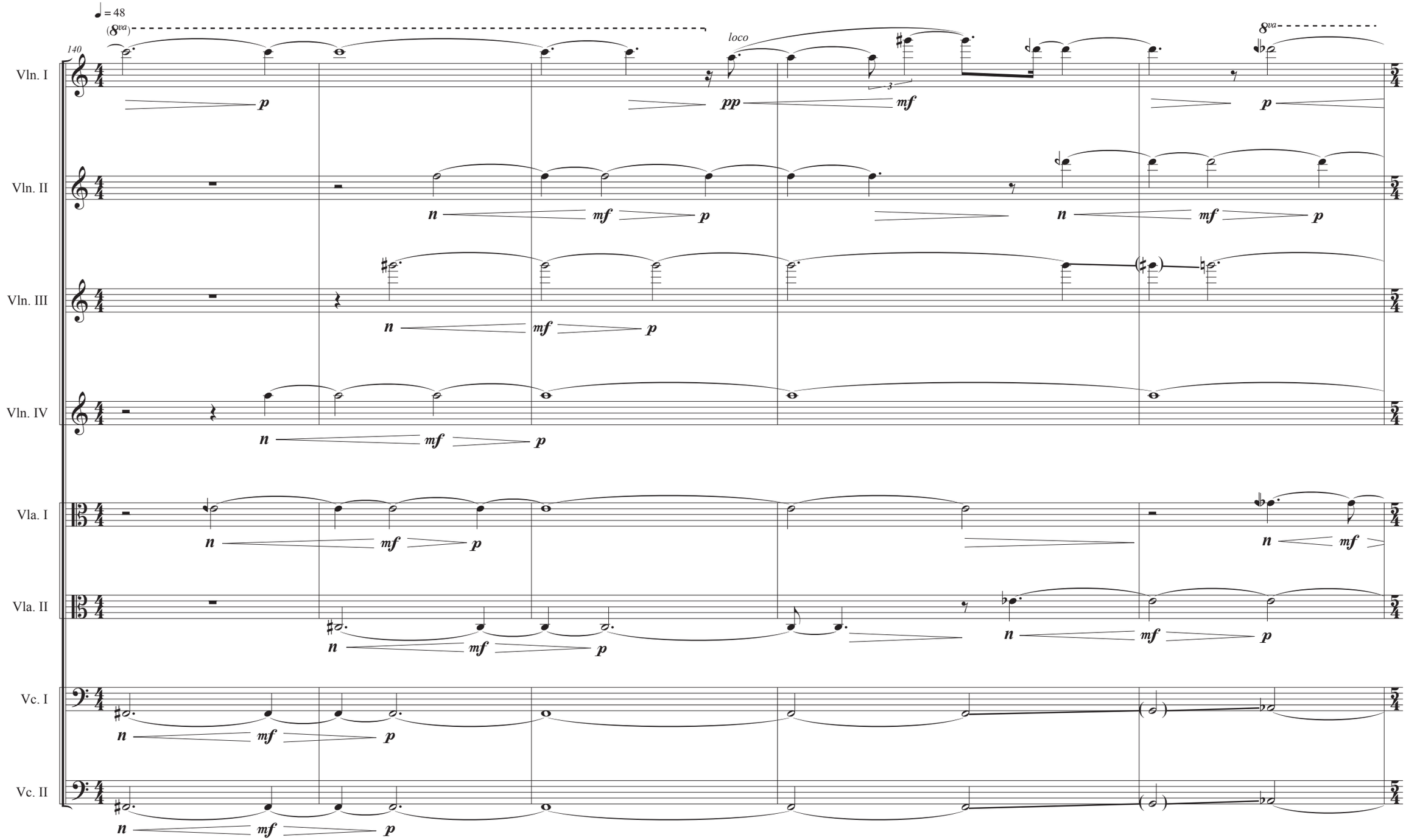

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
ad lib. ♩ = 90 ~ 100
ad lib. ♩ = 100 ~ 110
115
sul pont.
ord.
3 - 5"
8va
loco
pizz.
arco
(ord.)
tr
5

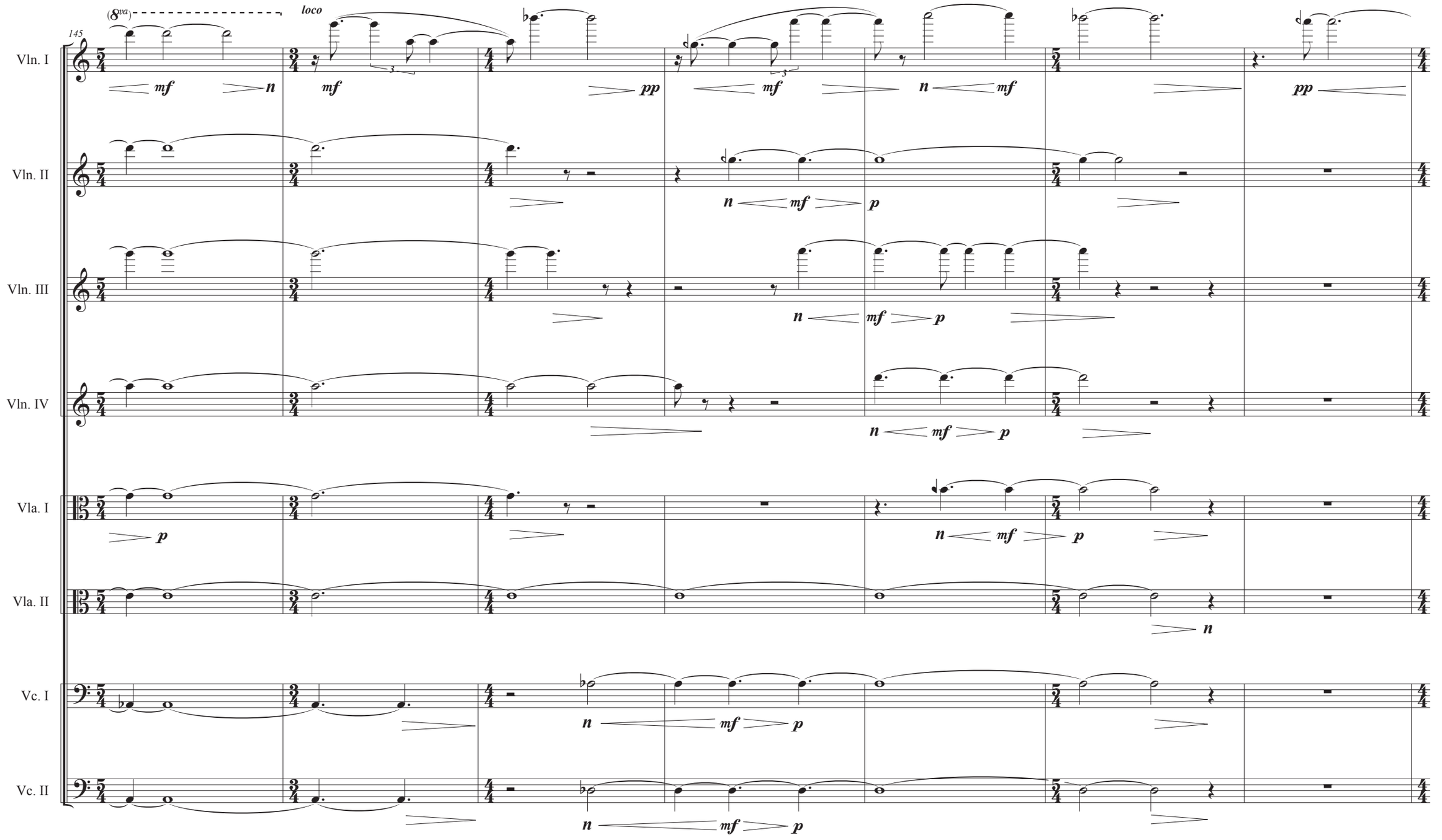

♩ = 100
loco
117
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
p
f
mf
ff
n
(𝅝)
(𝅗𝅥)
(♩.)
(𝅗𝅥♩.)
3
5

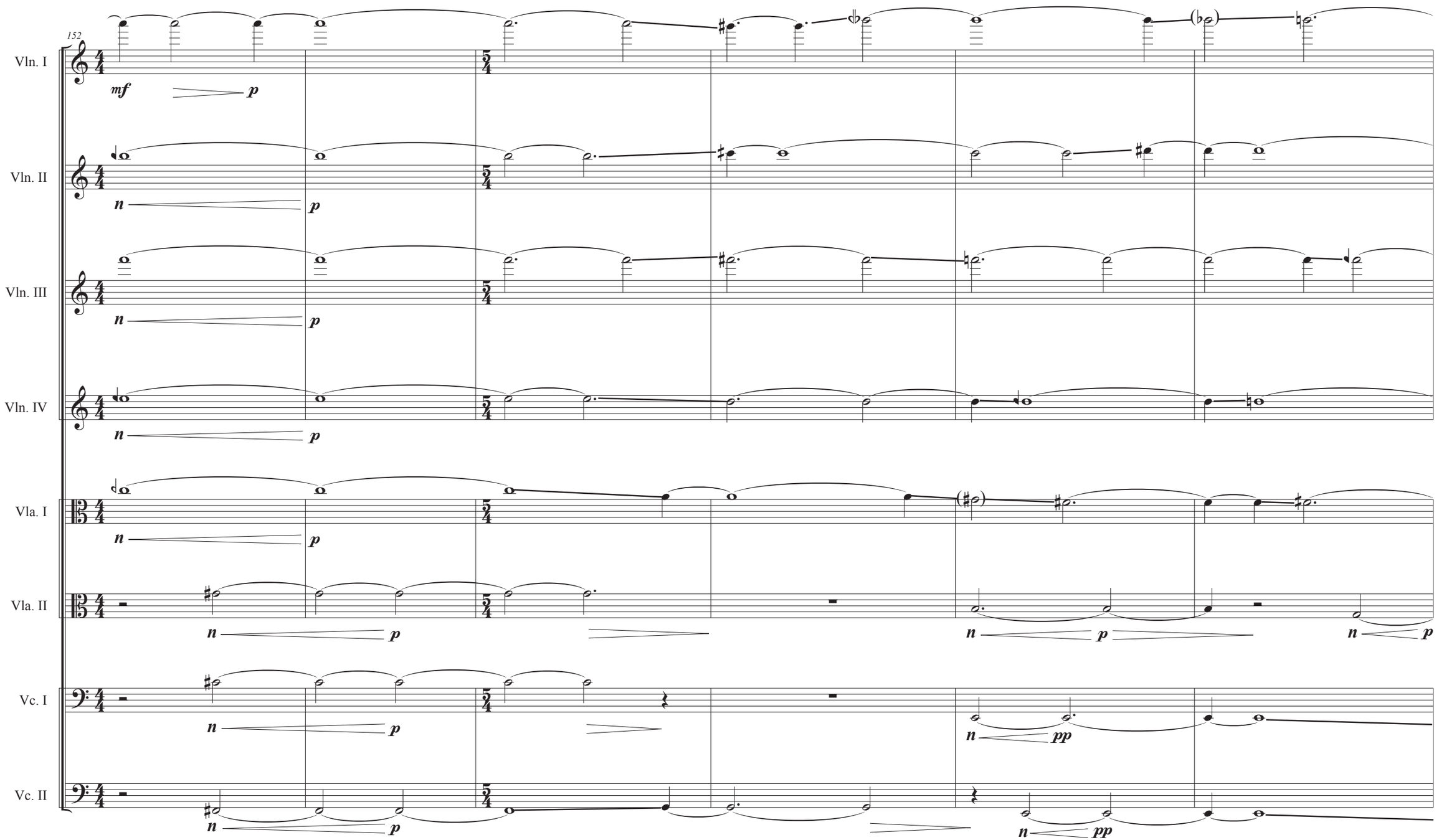

123
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
f
mf
ff
pp
p

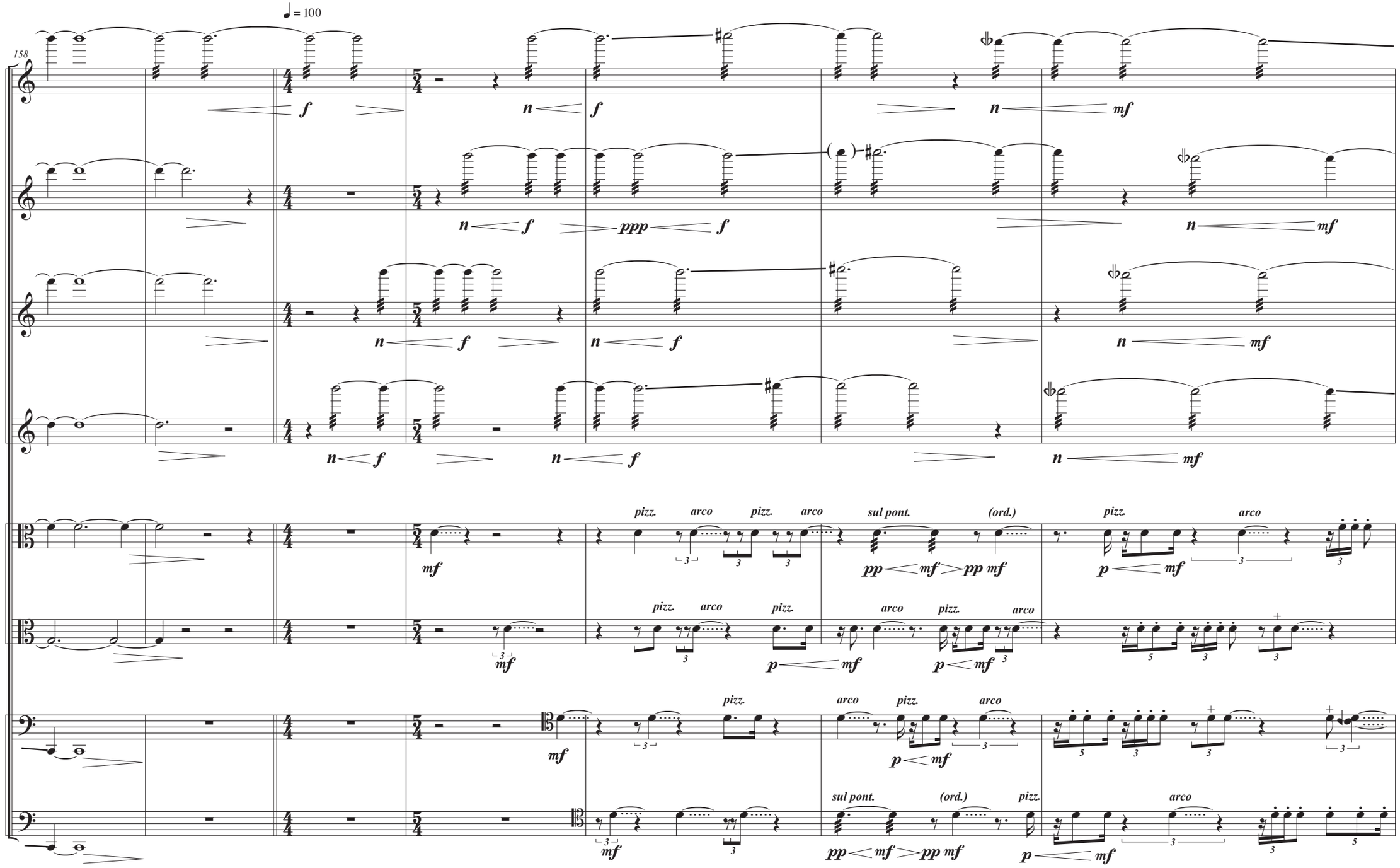

131
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
ff
f
p

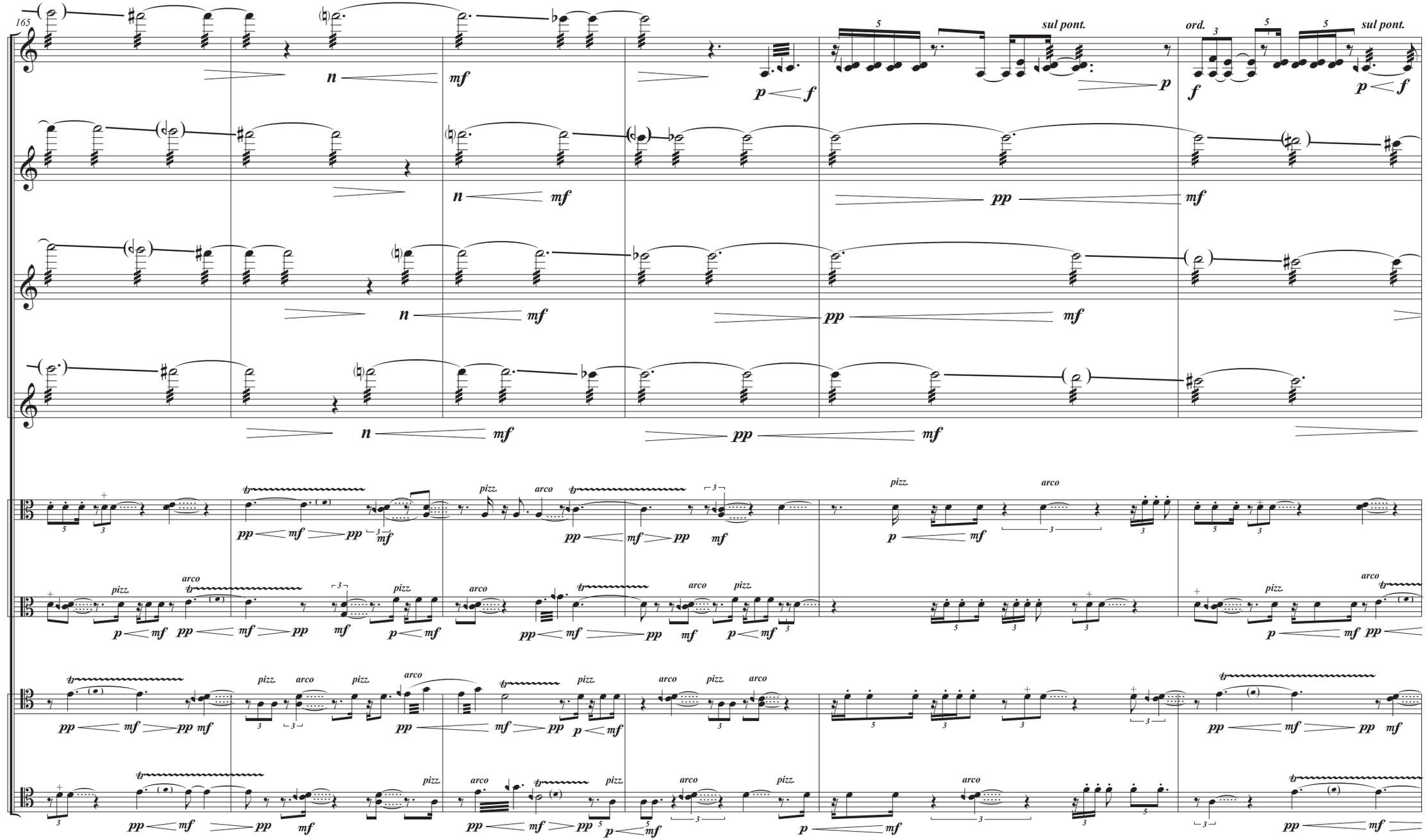

136
8va
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
pp
mf
p
p
p
pp
pp

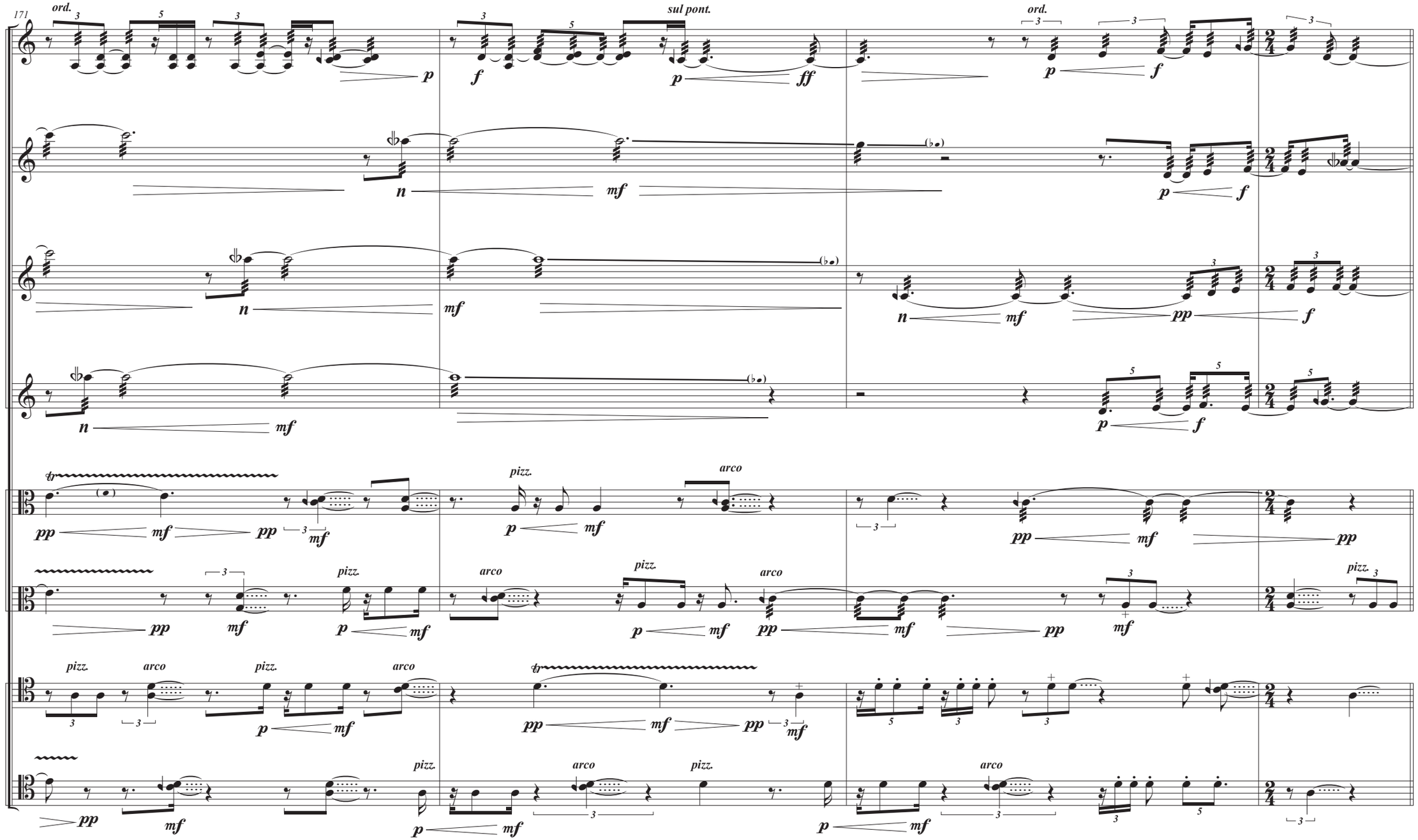

♩ = 48
(8va)
140
loco
8va
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
p
pp
mf
n


145
(8va)
loco
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
mf
pp
p
n

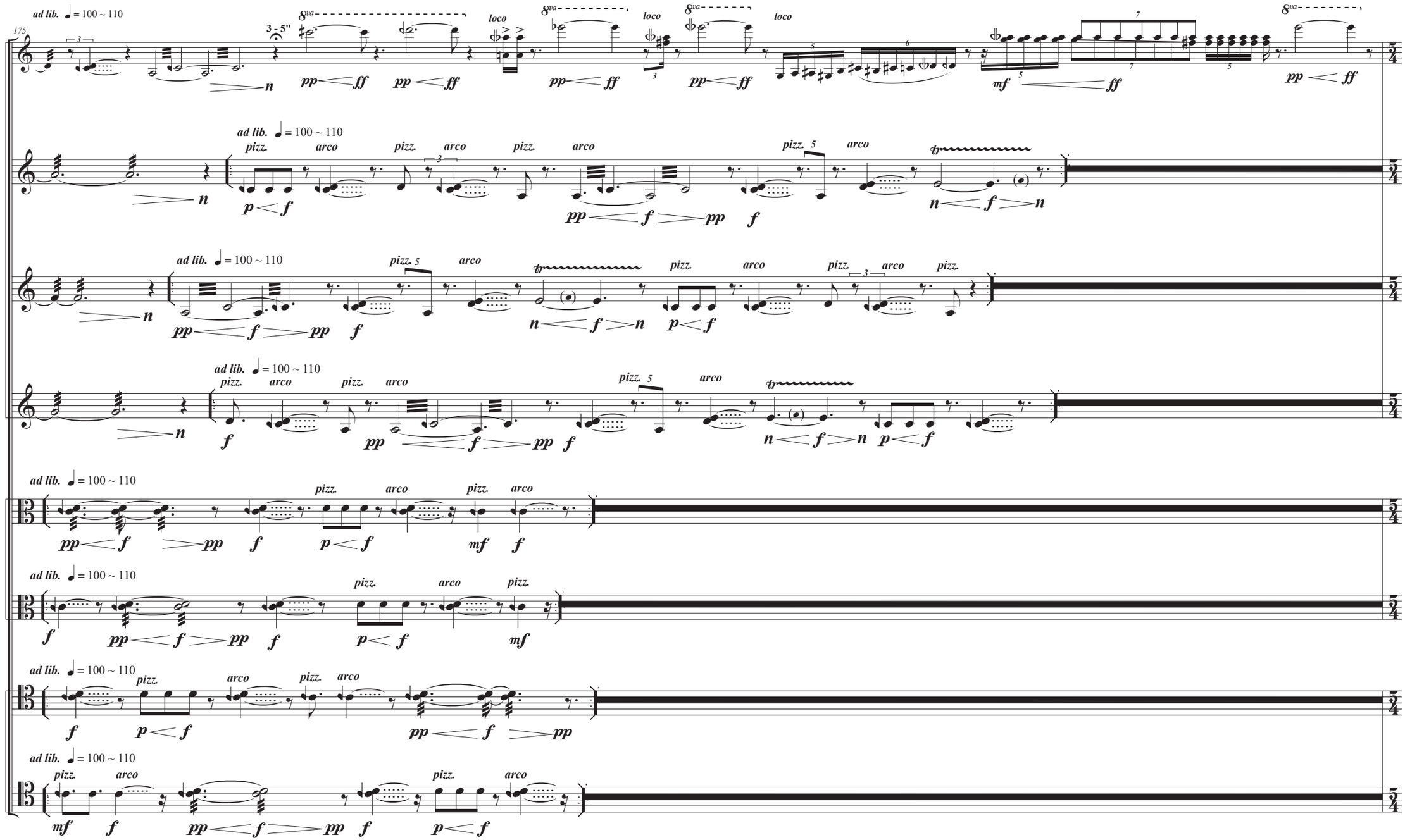

152
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
mf
p
n
pp

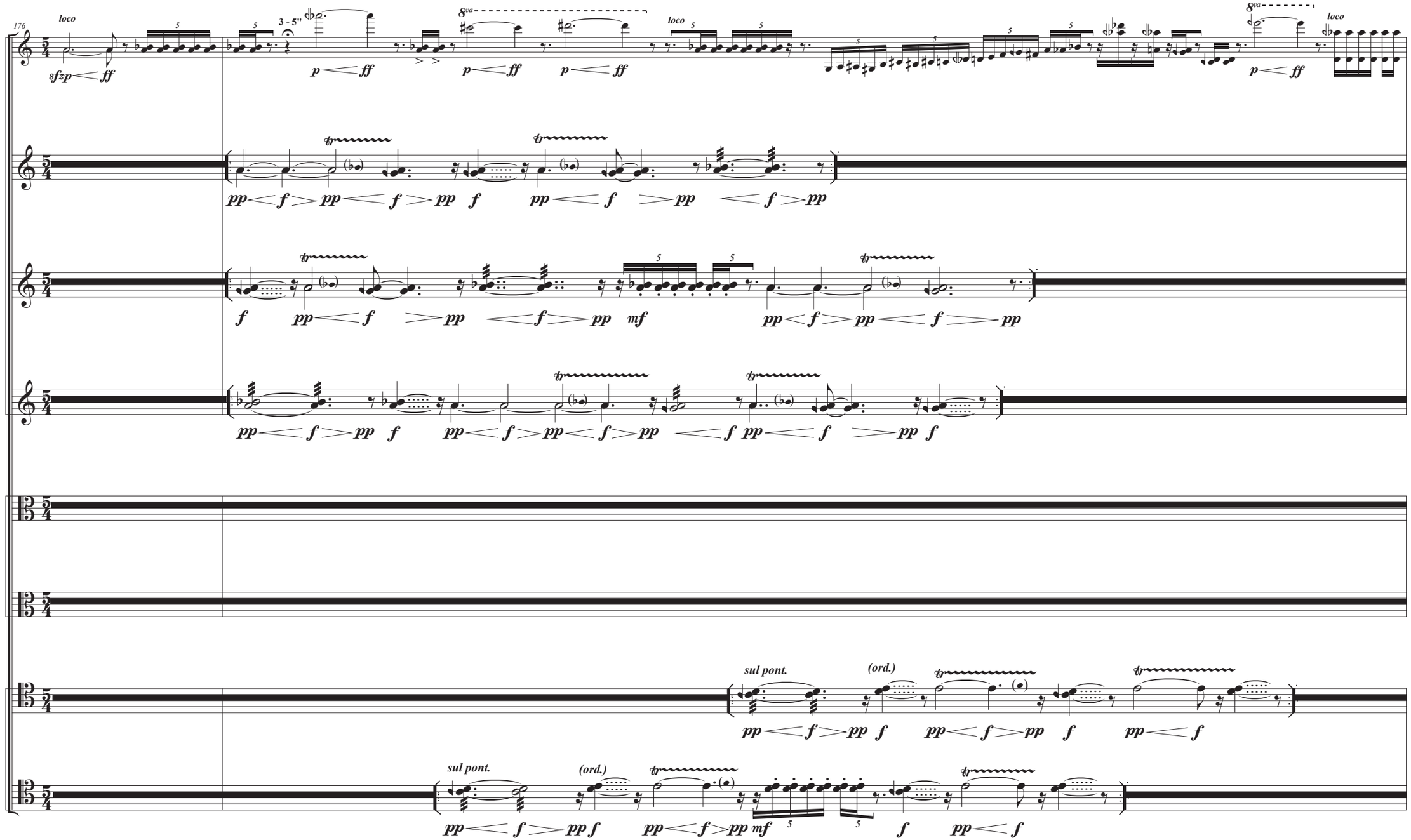

♩ = 100
158
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
pizz.
arco
sul pont.
(ord.)

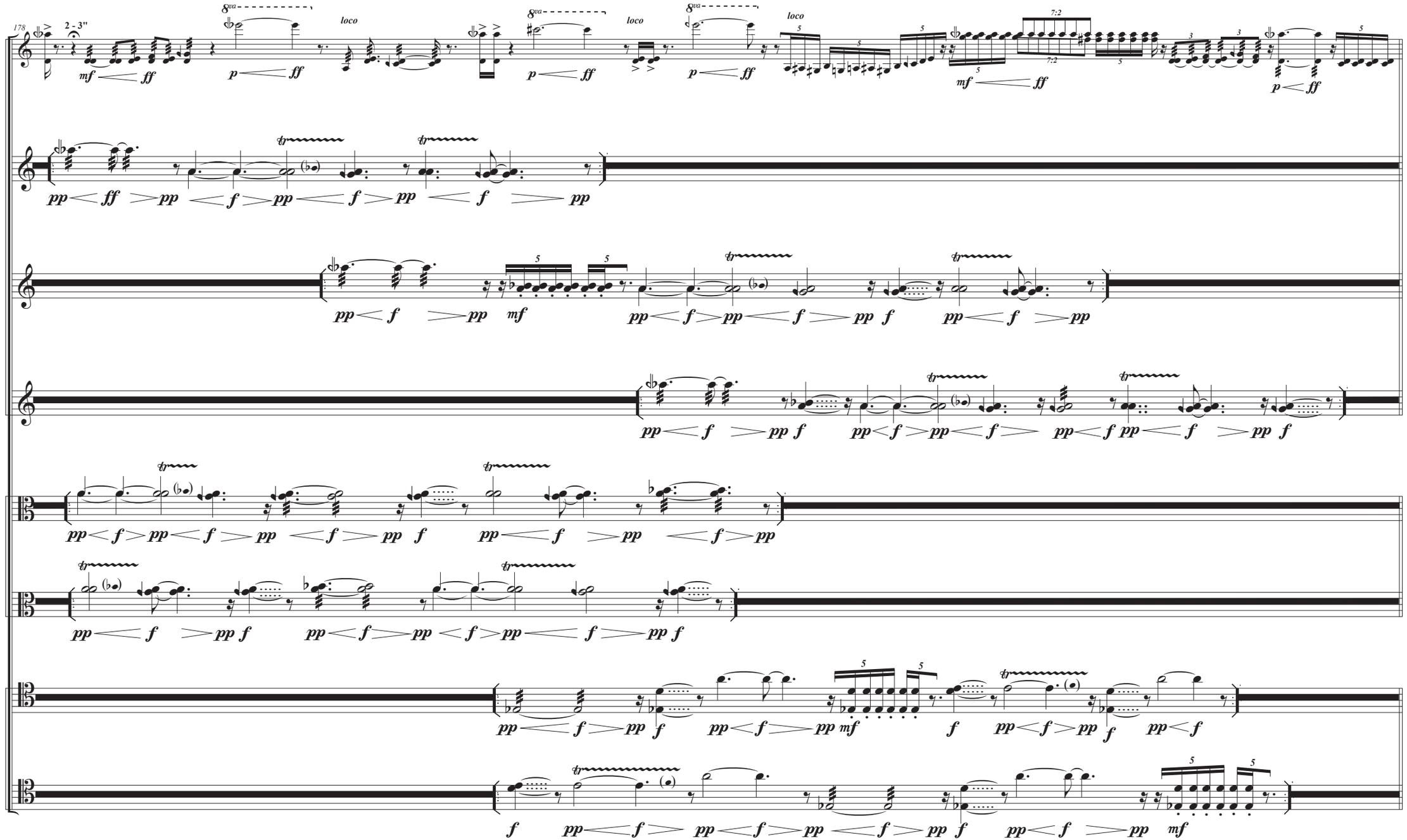

165
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
sul pont.
ord.
sul pont.
pizz.
arco

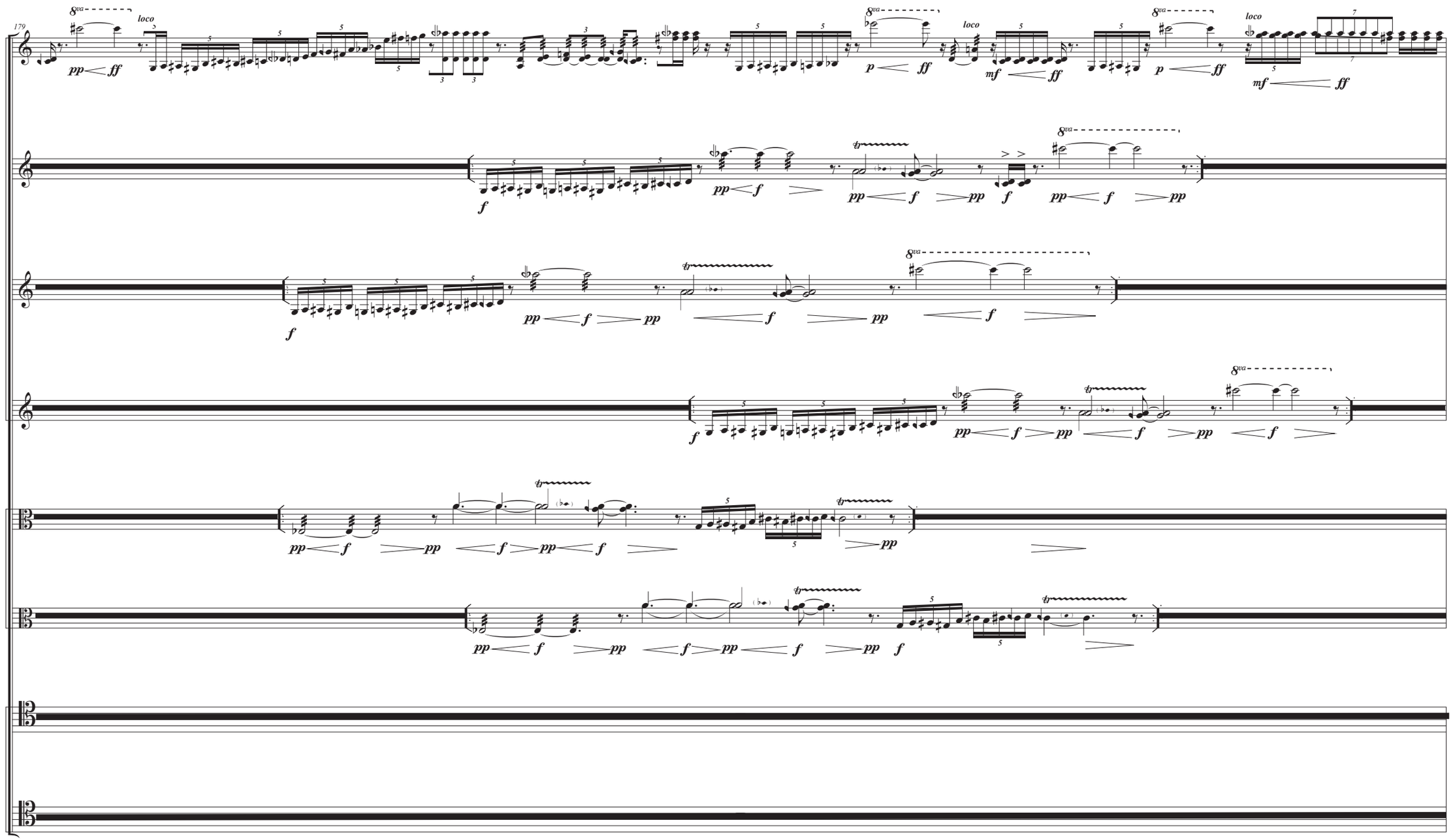

171
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
ord.
sul pont.
pizz.
arco

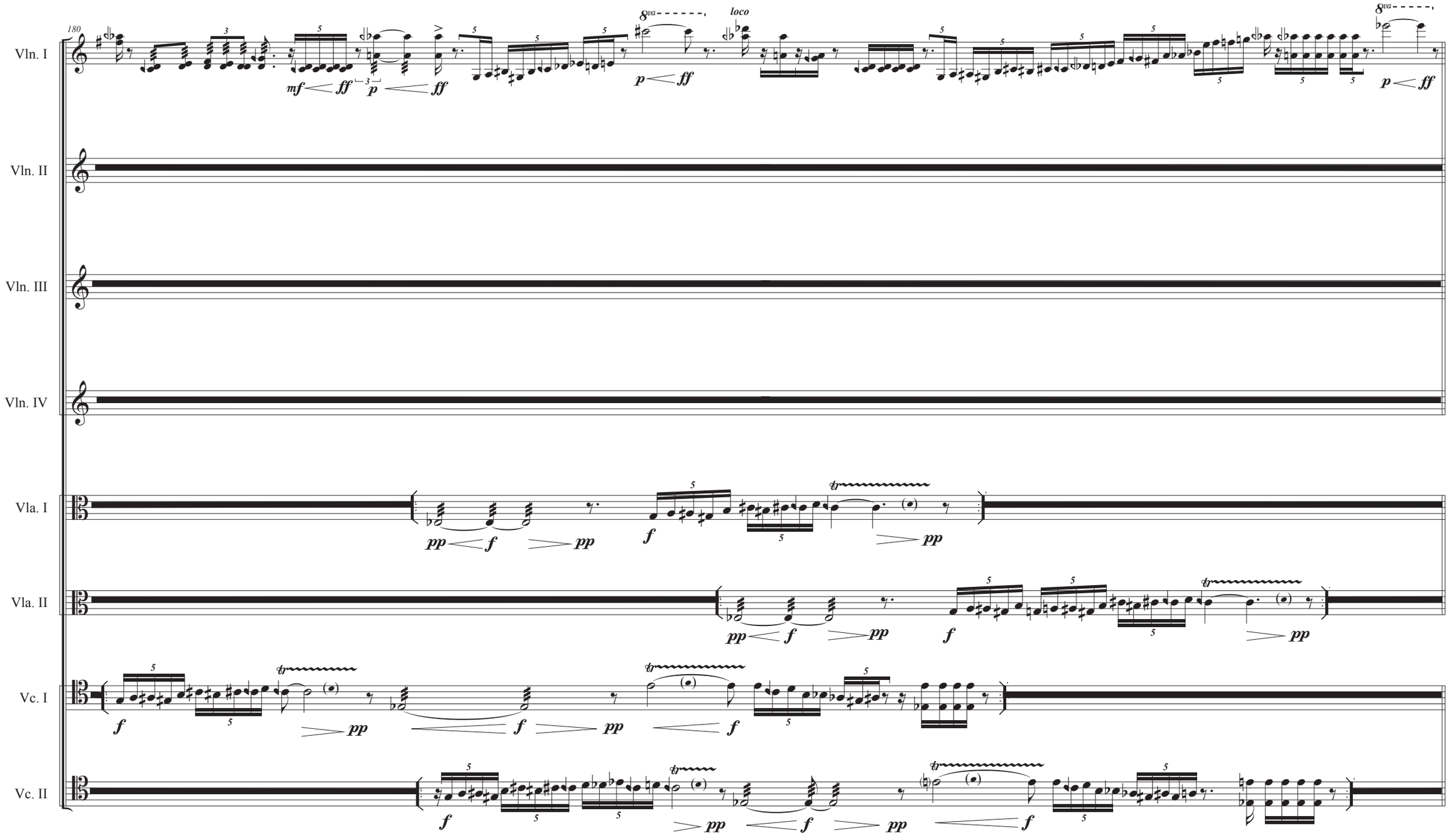
from here to m.184, Vln. 1, play with freedom and gusto, as if playing a solo cadenza, occassionally pausing where indicated

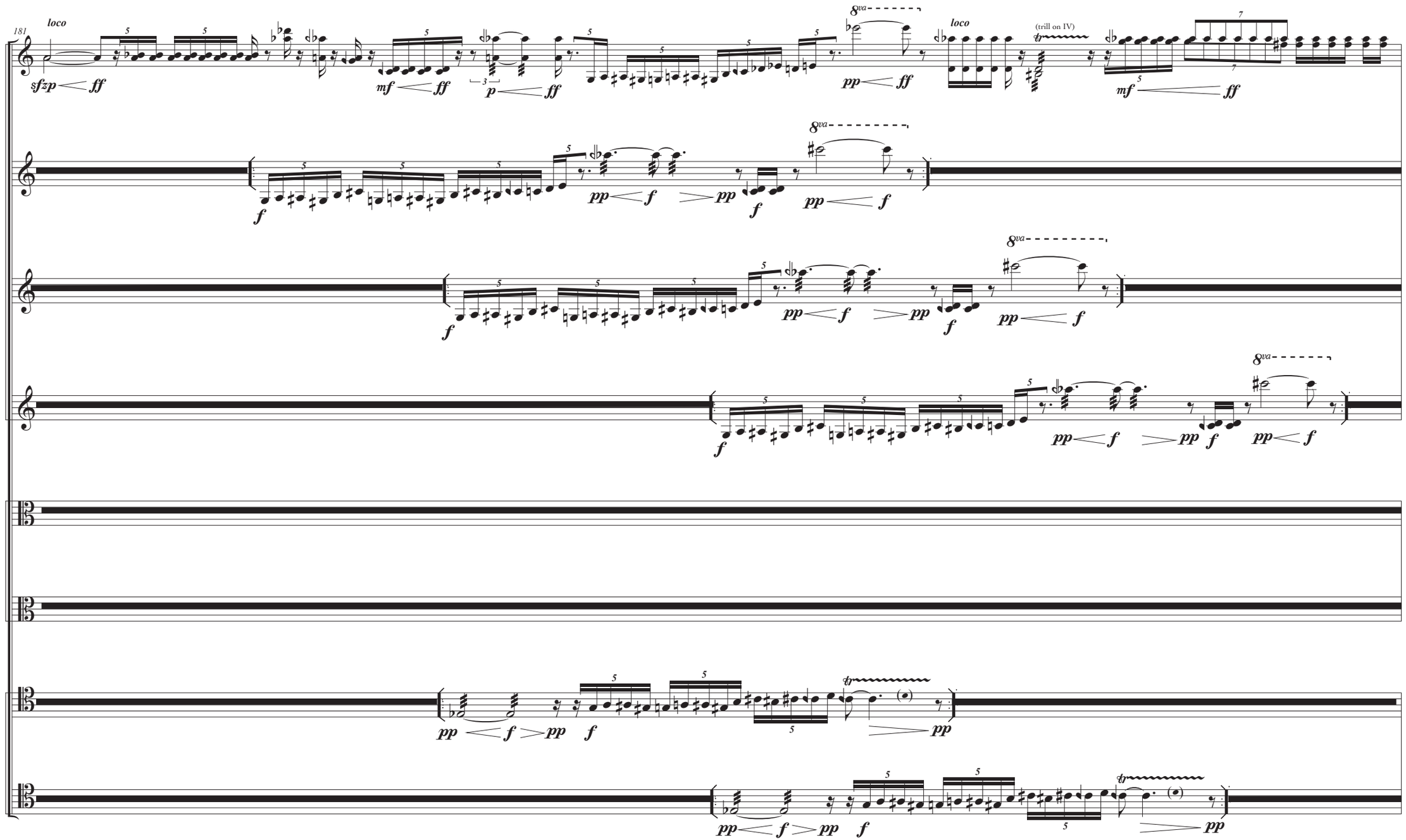


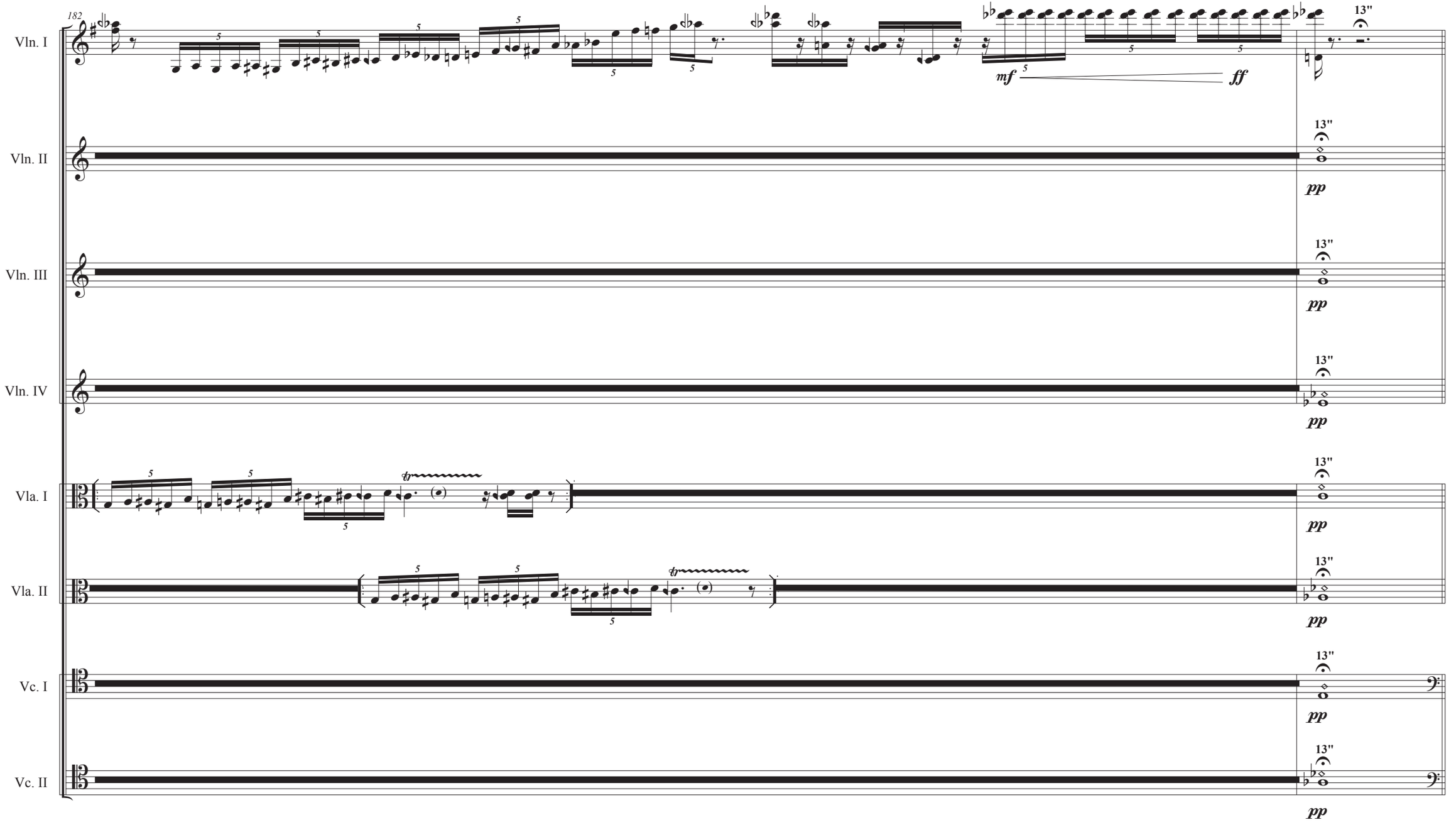

176
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
loco
3 - 5"
8va
sul pont.
(ord.)
tr


178
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
2 - 3"
8va
loco
7:2

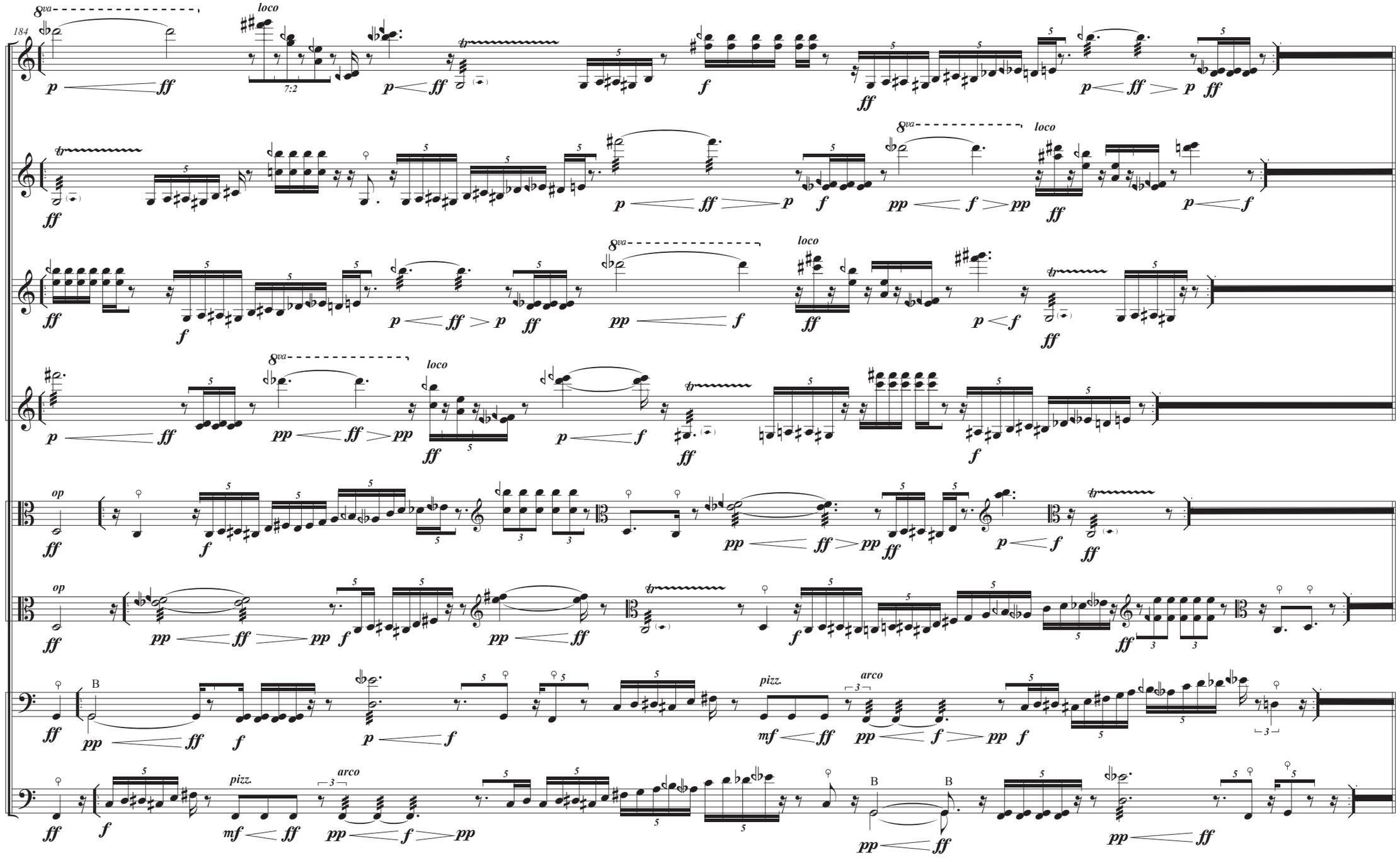

179
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
8va
loco
pp
ff
p
mf
f
tr


180
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
8va
loco
mf
ff
p
pp
f
tr


181
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
loco
(trill on IV)
8va


182
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
mf
ff
13"
pp

Everyone should play this page as if an unrestrained solo, with freedom and gusto. Go on to the next page after about 52".



**Each measure on this page should last 2-3 seconds. Begin playing continuous 16th notes where indicated at independant tempi. Measure 192 should last 5 - 10" followed by one last unison chord. Then freeze for 5 - 8" of silence.**

185

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vln. III

Vln. IV

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

♩ = 128 *ff* 5 - 8"

♩ = 124 *ff*

♩ = 120 *ff*

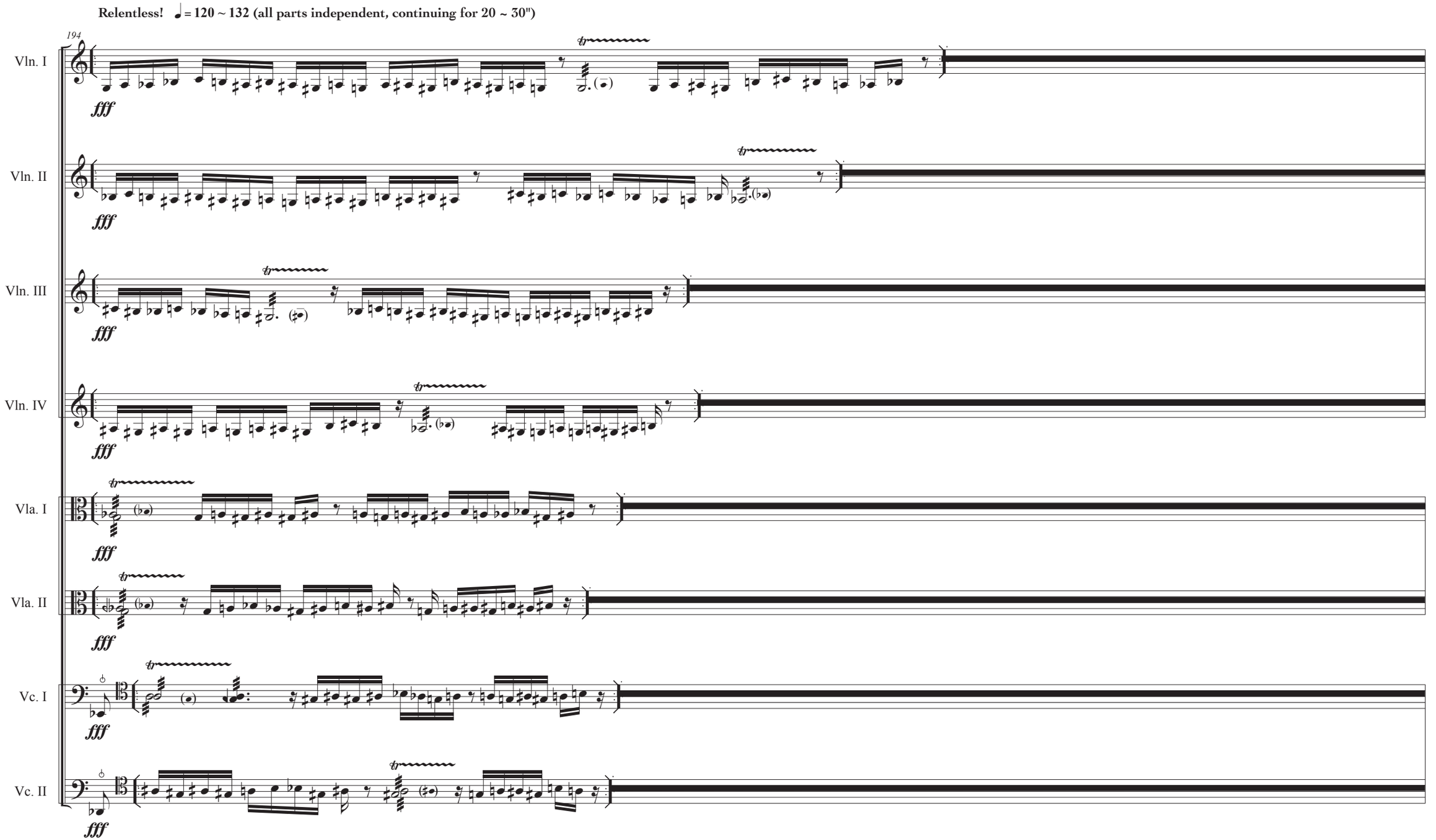
♩ = 116 *ff*

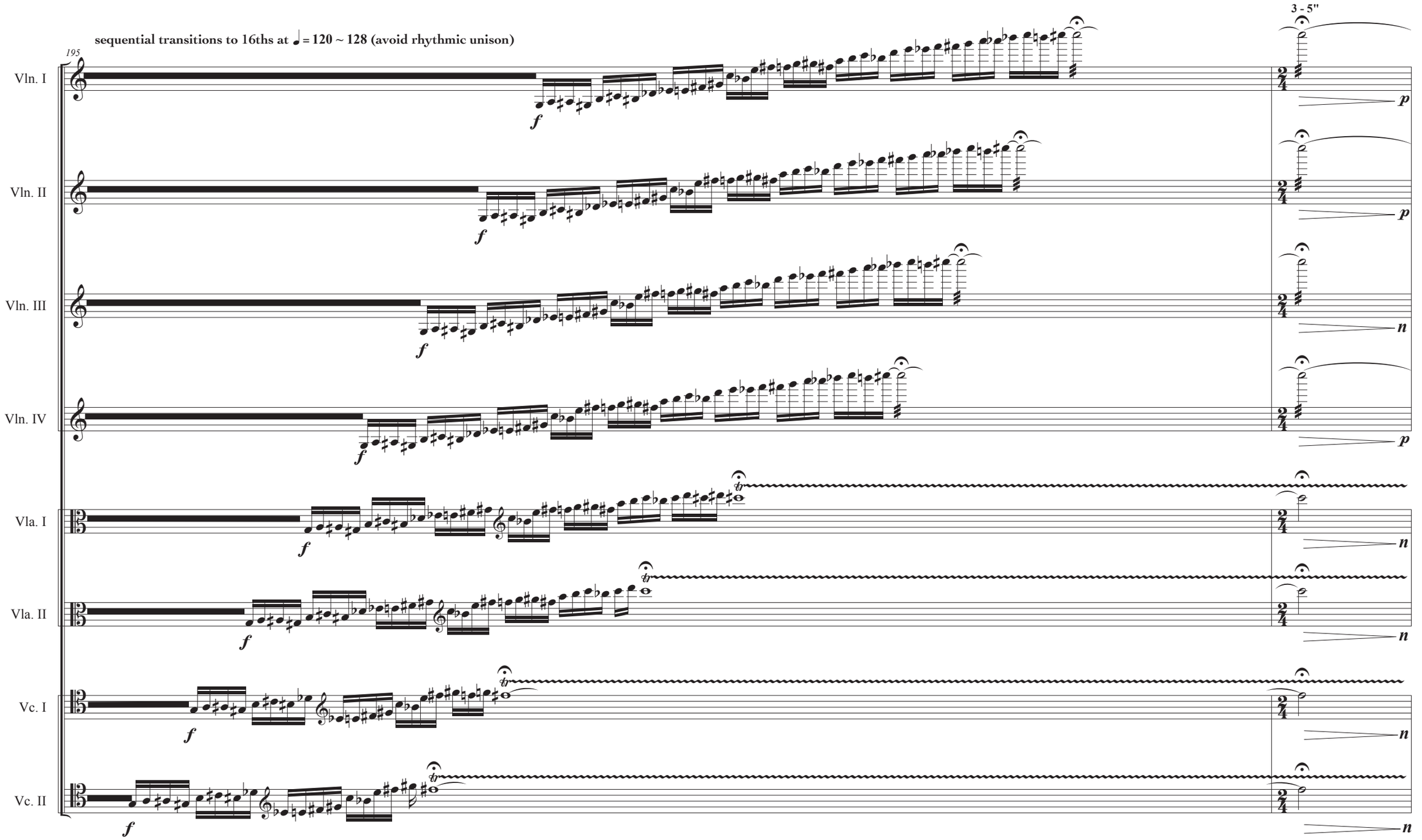
♩ = 112 *ff*

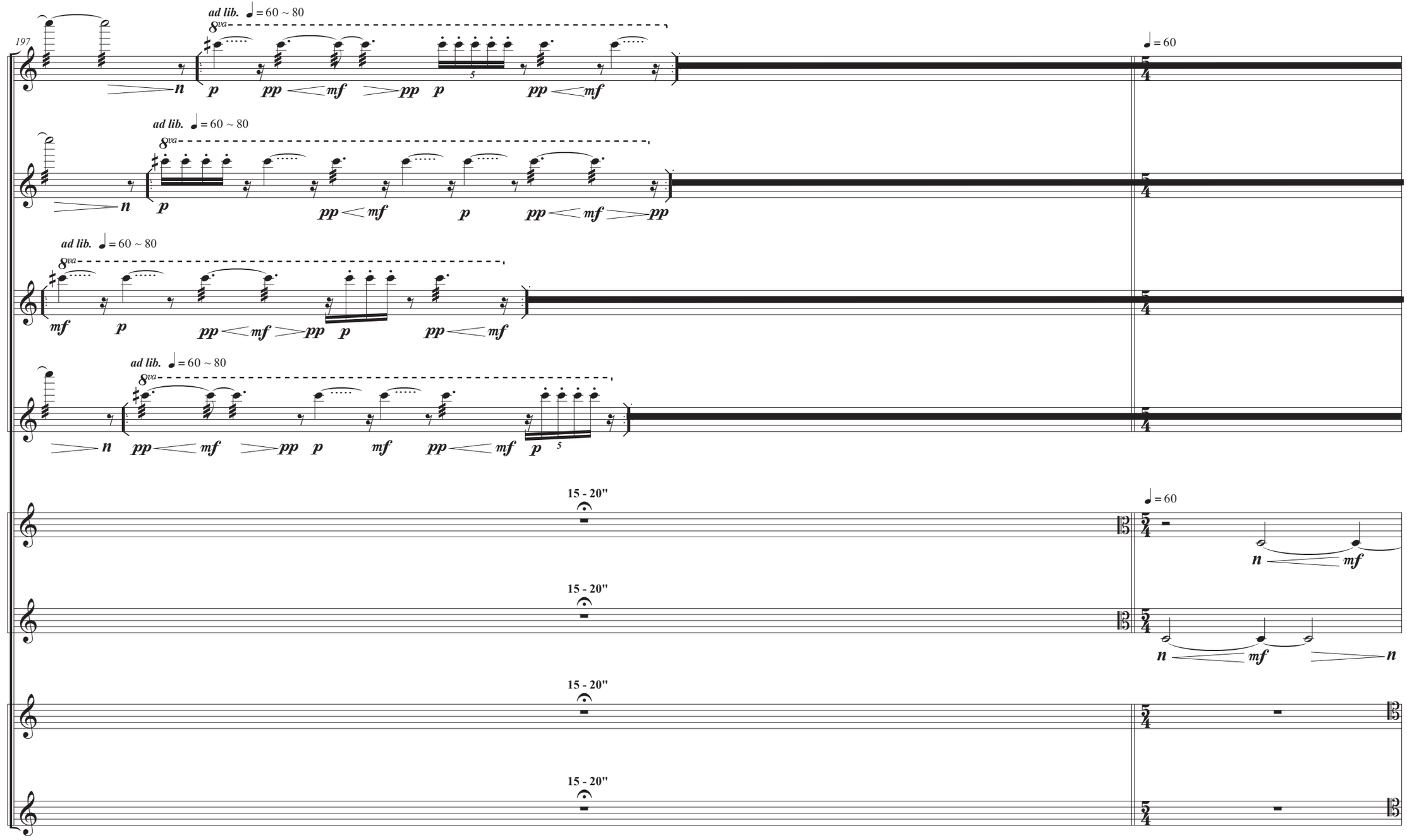
♩ = 108 *ff*

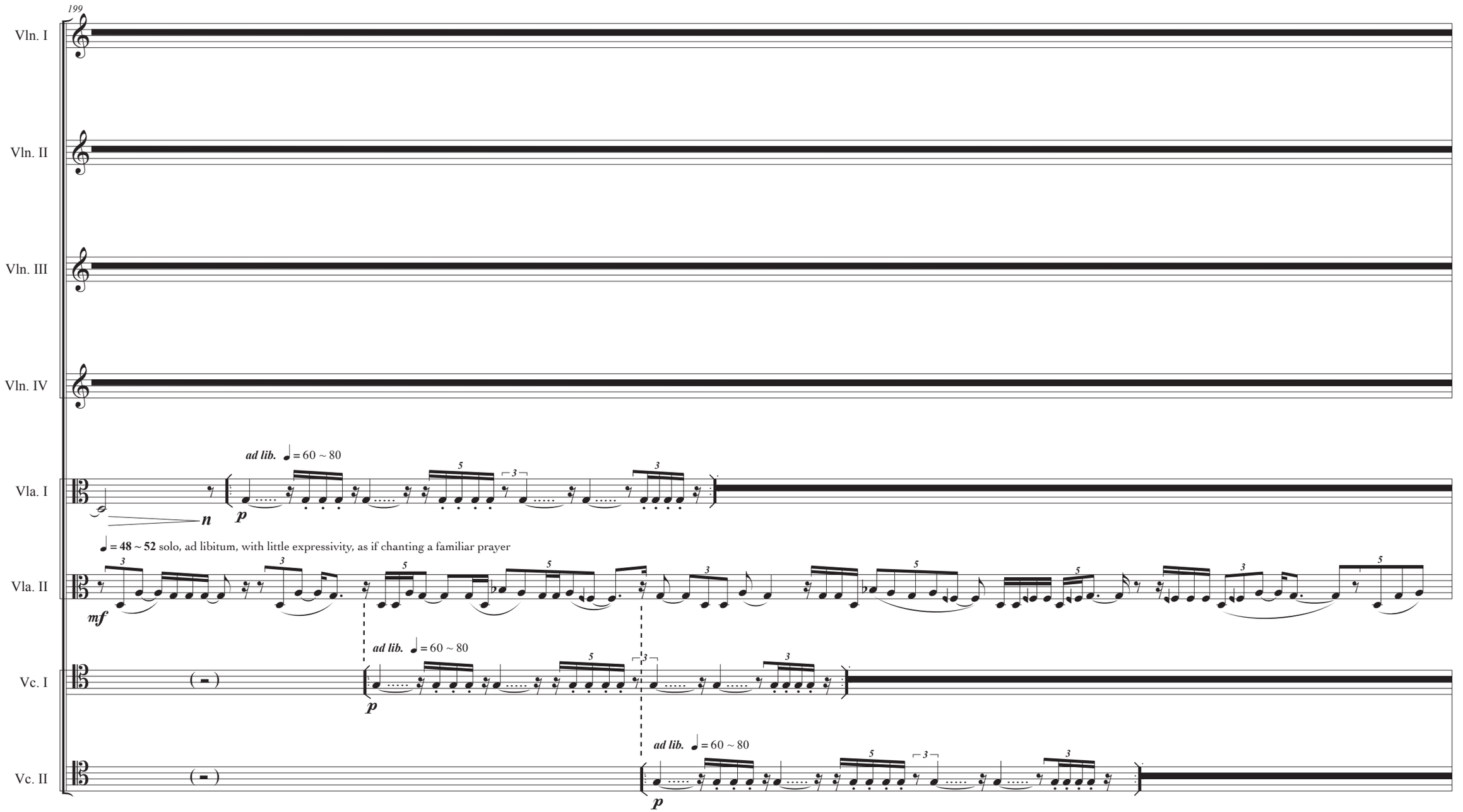
♩ = 104 *ff*

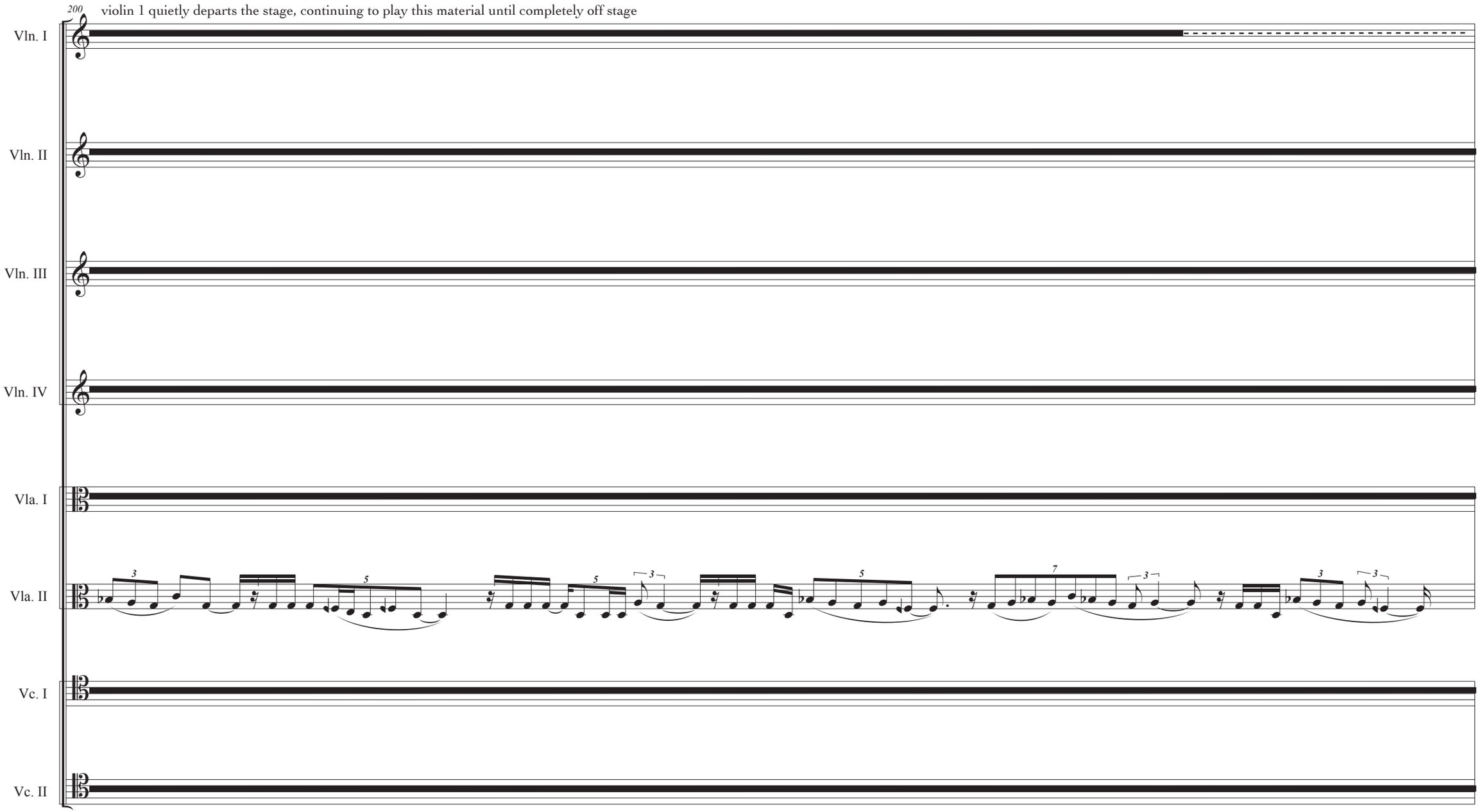
♩ = 100 *ff*

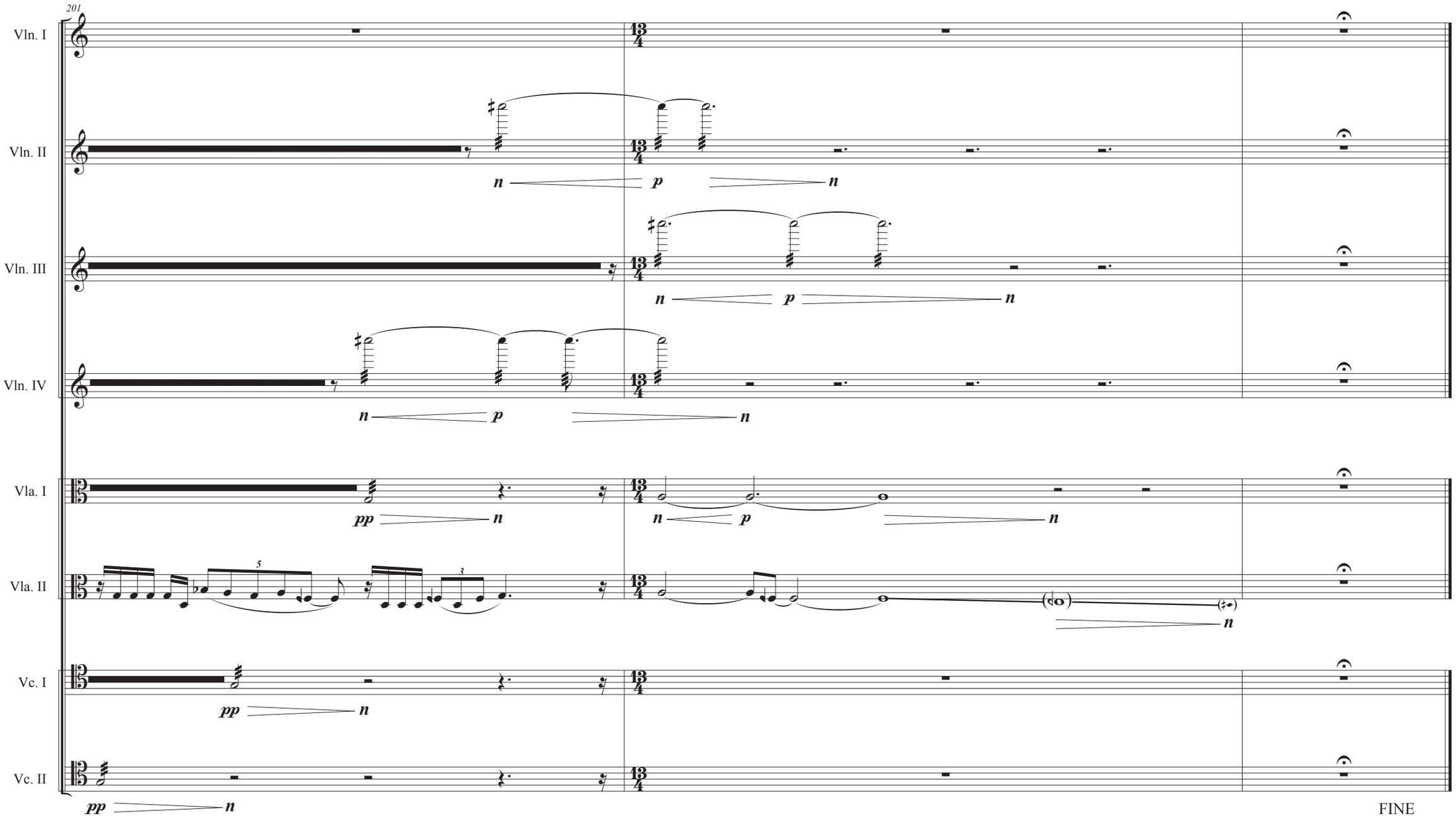

Relentless! ♩= 120 ~ 132 (all parts independent, continuing for 20 ~ 30")
194
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
fff


sequential transitions to 16ths at ♩= 120 ~ 128 (avoid rhythmic unison)
195
3 - 5"
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
f
p
n
tr


197
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
ad lib. ♩ = 60 ~ 80
8va
15 - 20"
♩ = 60
n
p
pp
mf
5


199
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
ad lib. ♩= 60 ~ 80
p
n
Vla. II
♩= 48 ~ 52 solo, ad libitum, with little expressivity, as if chanting a familiar prayer
mf
Vc. I
ad lib. ♩= 60 ~ 80
p
Vc. II
ad lib. ♩= 60 ~ 80
p


200
violin 1 quietly departs the stage, continuing to play this material until completely off stage
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II


201
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. III
Vln. IV
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
pp
n
p
FINE
15.11.16.3.17.25.13