Four Essays

String Quartet

Hannes Taljaard

2001 — 2005

Four Essays for String Quartet

The four movements should be performed in sequence when the whole work is performed. Any three movements can be performed together, and movements can be performed in pairs or separately. If three or less movements are performed, the performers can decide on the order of the movements.

First Movement: Serioso

TEMPO: The very fast tempo is an ideal.
The tempo changes are abrupt, unless indicated otherwise.

TRILLS: All trills involve semitones, usually the semitone above the notated tone.
Sometimes the second tone of the trill is notated as an accidental (in parenthesis).

BOWING: Only some bowing marks are indicated. This should provide sufficient information to the performers for further decisions.

- Measure 10 — 12: a glissando is executed from the first note into the slurred second note. The slurred second note is not sounded independently.
- Measure 16 — 18: the shorter note values are played as ornamentation, not as separate tones.
- Measure 51 — 58 & 13 — 137, 159, 161: *punta d'arco battutte*. The strings are hit softly with the hair close to the tip of the bow, as part of an up bow or a down bow. This should not give a percussive sound.
- Measure 140-152: the texture consists of one melody with a drone. The shorter notes values should be played as ornamentation.

Second Movement: Intermezzo

TEMPO: The tempo should not be thought of as fast.
The semiquaver is not the beat: one beat mostly equals a measure.
The short note values in the violins are to be played as one movement, one idea or one gesture. If these notes are simply too fast, the tempo may be reduced somewhat.

punta d'arco battutte (p.d'a batt.): See notes to the first movement.

mezza voce: the bow is drawn over the strings quicker than usual, but with less pressure on the strings. This should produce a sound somewhat like a whisper.

- Measure 41, 43, 51 — 58: the glissandi are very fast and over a small interval — about a quarter tone in the direction indicated by the small line attached to the note head.
- Measure 69 & 71: the small notes are played as part of the ornamentation starting with the trill.

Third Movement: Scherzo

TEMPO: The fast tempo is an ideal. It may be reduced somewhat, and the tempo of the meno mosso sections accordingly. Meno mosso should, however, not become too slow.

- Measure 77-94: the texture consists of one melody with a drone. The shorter note values should be played as ornamentation. When printed smaller, these notes should be played somewhat softer than the melody tones, as if they occur inside the melody tones.

Fourth Movement: Lyrico

Notes that are printed smaller should be played as ornaments. They should still be clearly audible, except when marked *pp*.

mezza voce: see notes to the second movement.

- Short note values (32nd notes) should form one idea and should be played very smoothly.
- Measure 38 — 47: the slurred movement in semiquavers in the violins should form a single idea every time they occur.
- Measure 79 — 90: notes joined with a dotted phrase mark should be played as one gesture, but may be played with bow changes.

The pauses between the movements are essential to the work, and may be rather long. The total duration of the work will be about 26 minutes.

The work was written for the RUBIO String Quartet from Belgium who gave the first performance on 22 September 2004 in Potchefstroom and another performance — which was recorded — on 26 September 2004 in Pretoria. The fourth essay (Lyrico) was subsequently rewritten. RUBIO consisted of Dirk van de Velde (Violin I), Dirk van den Hauwe (Violin II), Esther van Strahlen (Viola) and Peter Devos (Cello). Their tour was supported by the Government of Flanders.

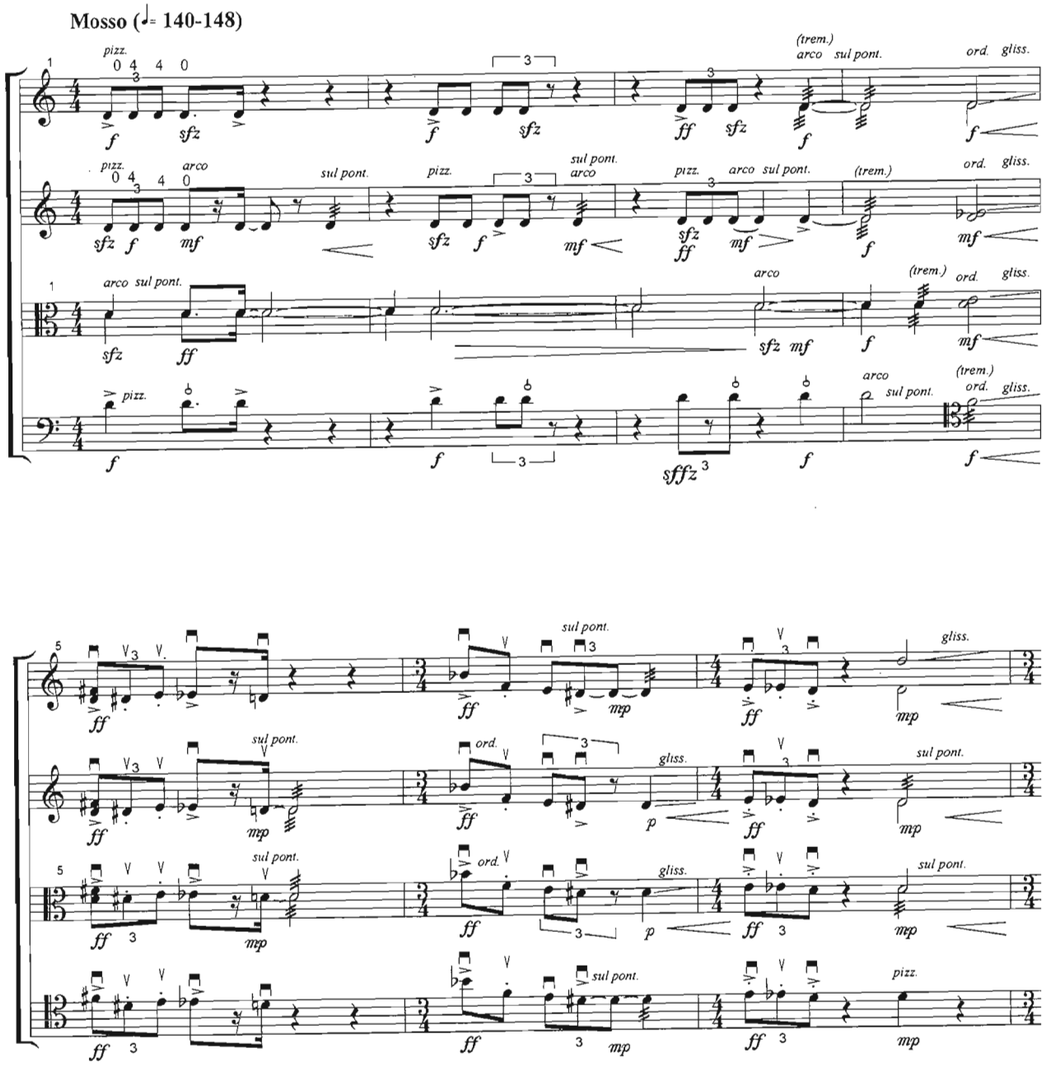
Hannes Taljaard 2001-2005

Four Essays

String Quartet

1. Serioso

Mosso (♩= 140-148)



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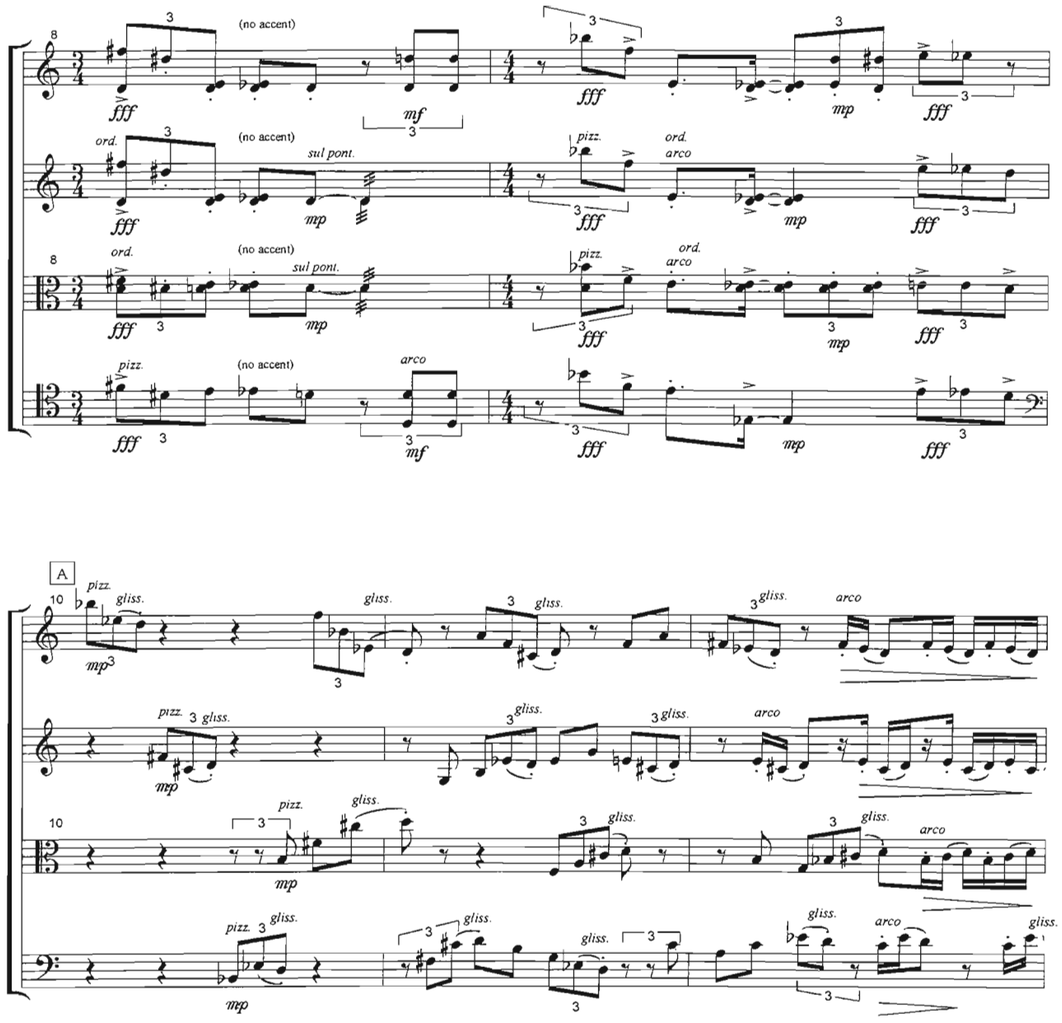
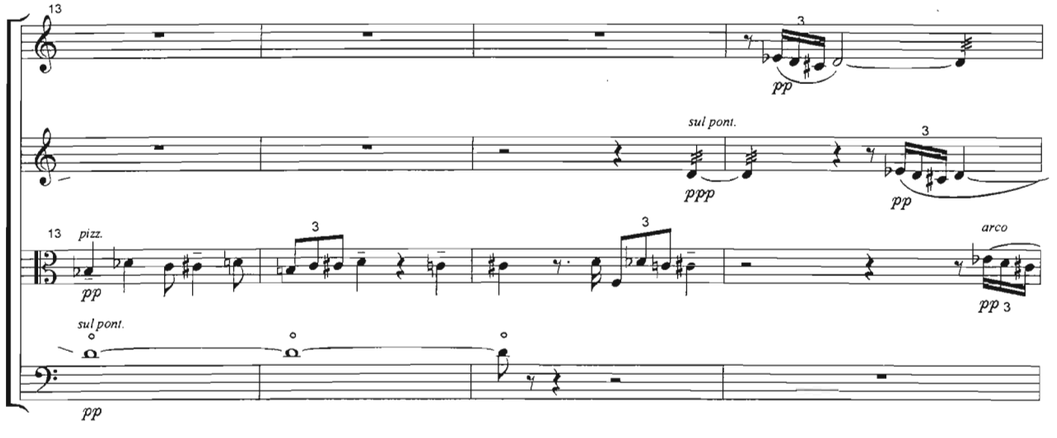




17 sul pont. ppp

3 3 pizz. pp

17 3 pizz. pp 3

sul pont. ppp

B

21 ord. ff gliss. mf f fff

arco mf ff mf f fff pizz.

21 arco ff mf ff mf fff 3 pizz.

ord. ff 3 3 gliss. mf pizz. fff 3 arco

24 3 mp 3

arco mf mp

24 arco 3 3 mp 3

mp 3

27 3 pp

pp

27 3 pp

3 pp

C

30 f ff f

tr tr f tr

30 tr tr f tr

f ff f

34 mf

sul pont. mf

34 sul pont. mf

mf

37 *gliss.*

mf

6

37

6

gliss.

mf

40 D

f *mf* *gliss.*

decresc.

ord. *gliss.* *sul pont.*

f *mf* *decresc.*

40 *ord.* *gliss.* *sul pont.*

f *mf* *decresc.*

f *mf* *gliss.*

decresc.

43 E *sul pont.*

mf

mp *p* *mf*

43

mp *p* *mf*

sul pont.

mf

46

46

49 *rit.*

rit.

49 *rit.*

rit.

Meno mosso (♩.= 128)

51 F *punta d'arco battute*

pp

pizz. *arco* *punta d'arco battute*

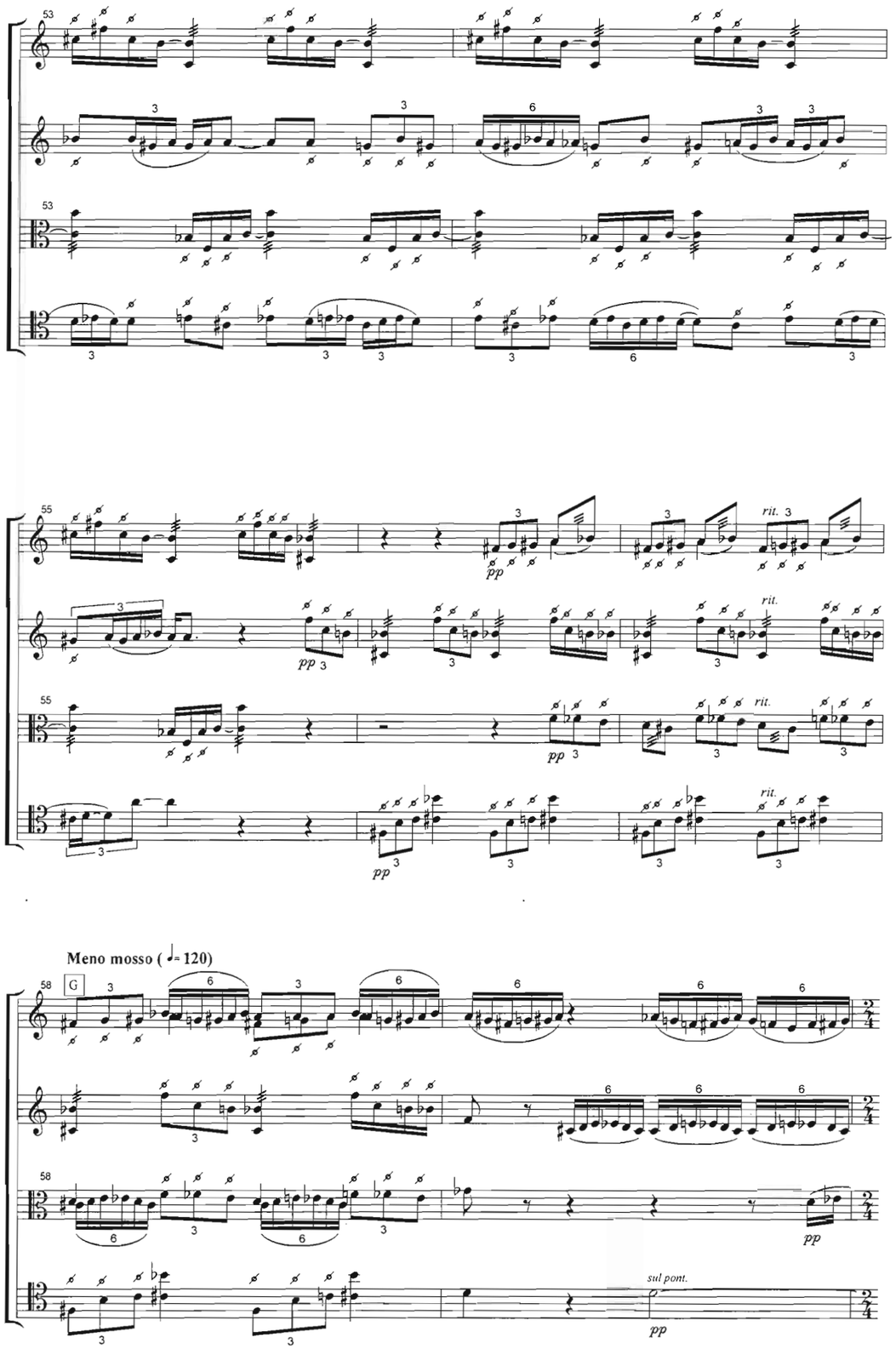
p 3 3

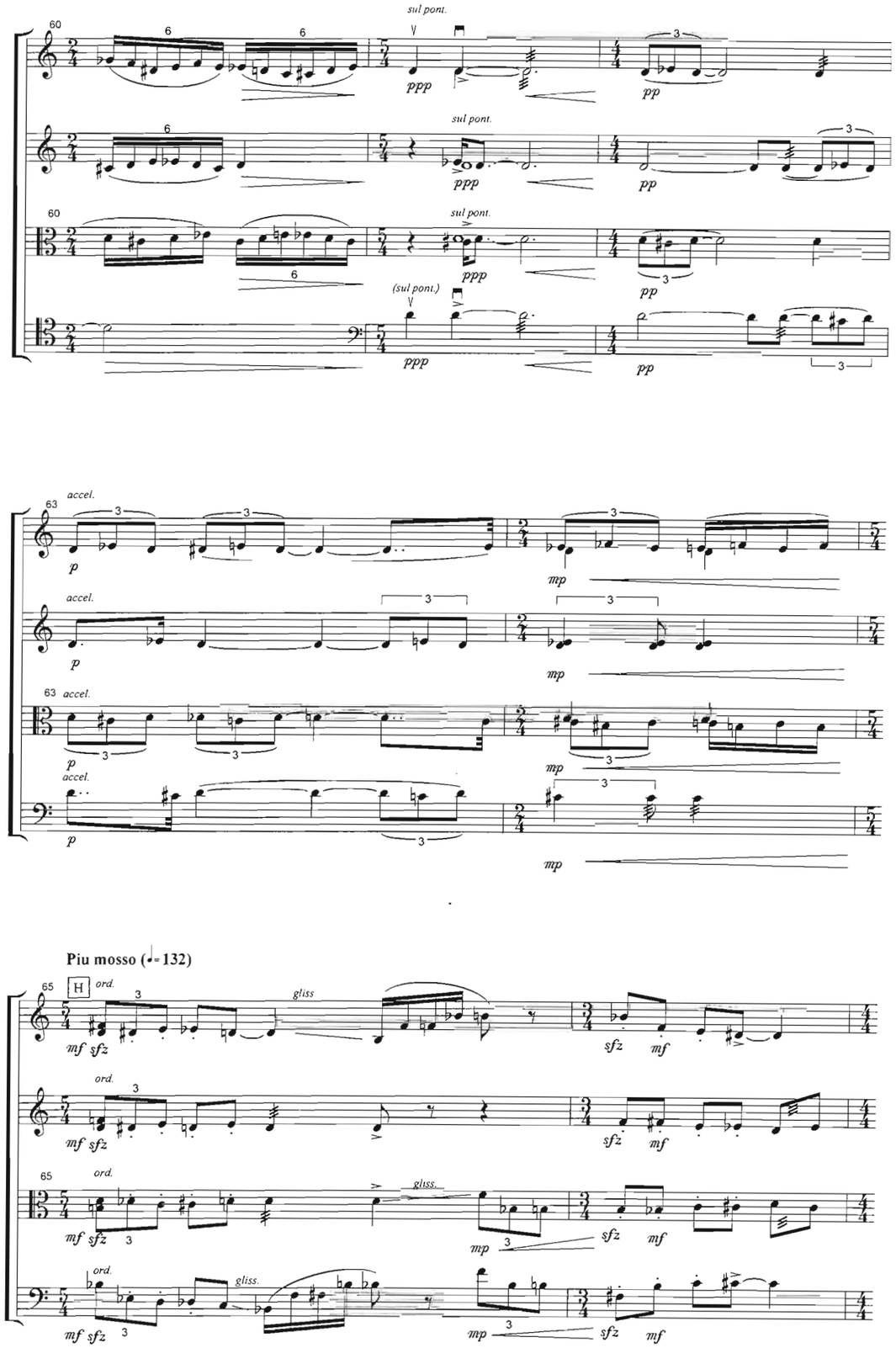
51 *punta d'arco battute*

pp

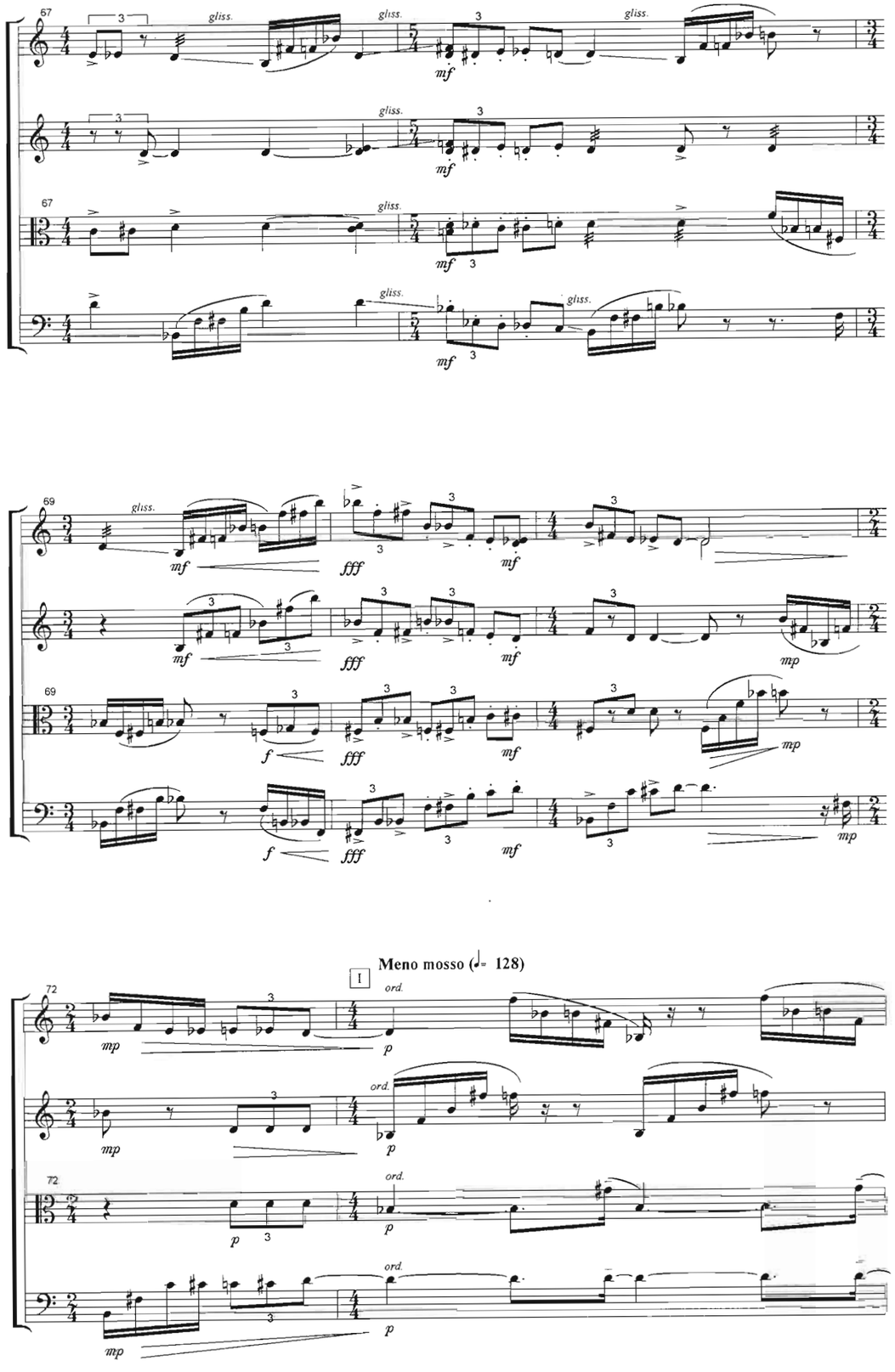
pizz. *arco* *punta d'arco battute*

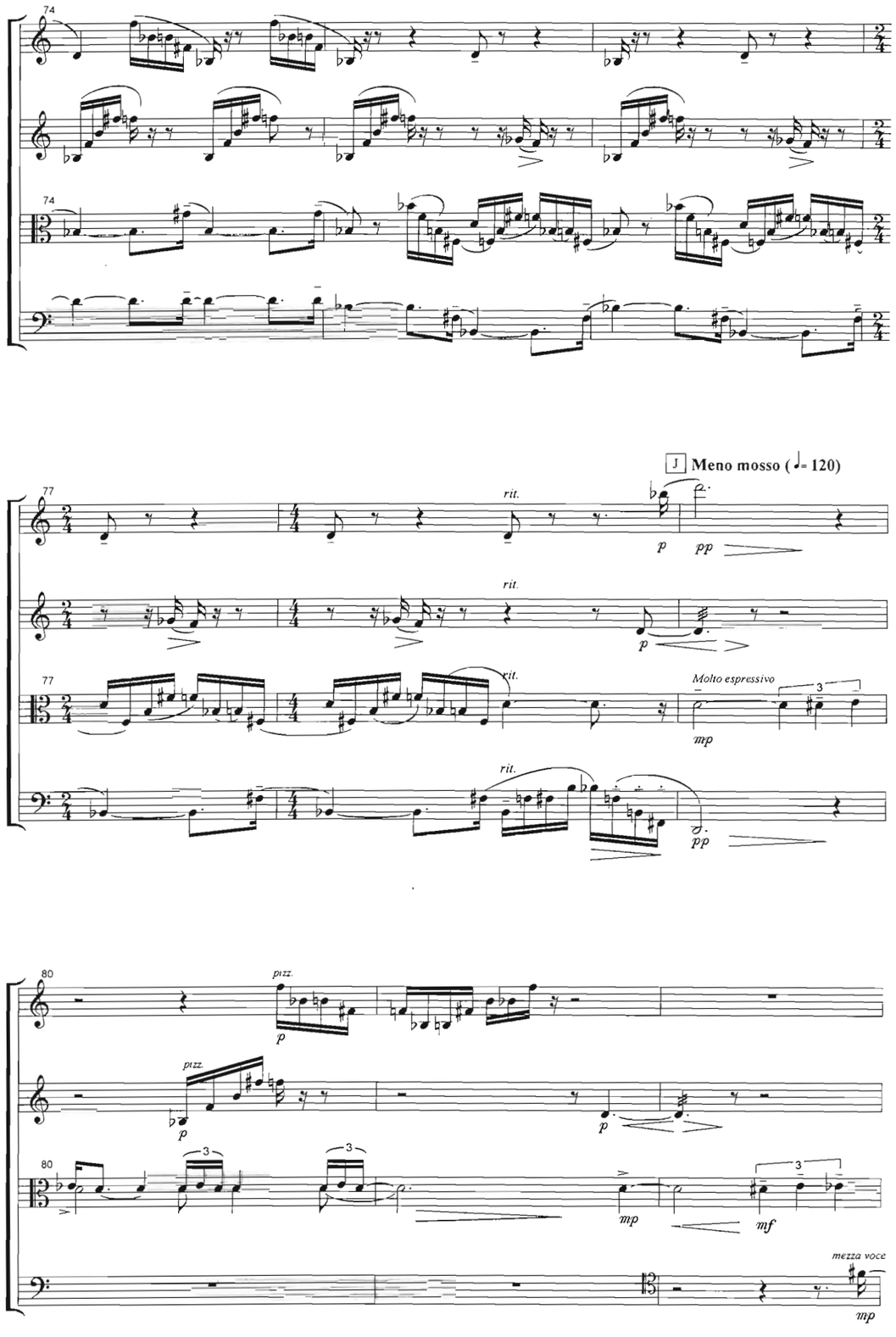
p 3 3 3 3 3 3


53
55
rit.
pp
Meno mosso (♩= 120)
58
G
sul pont.

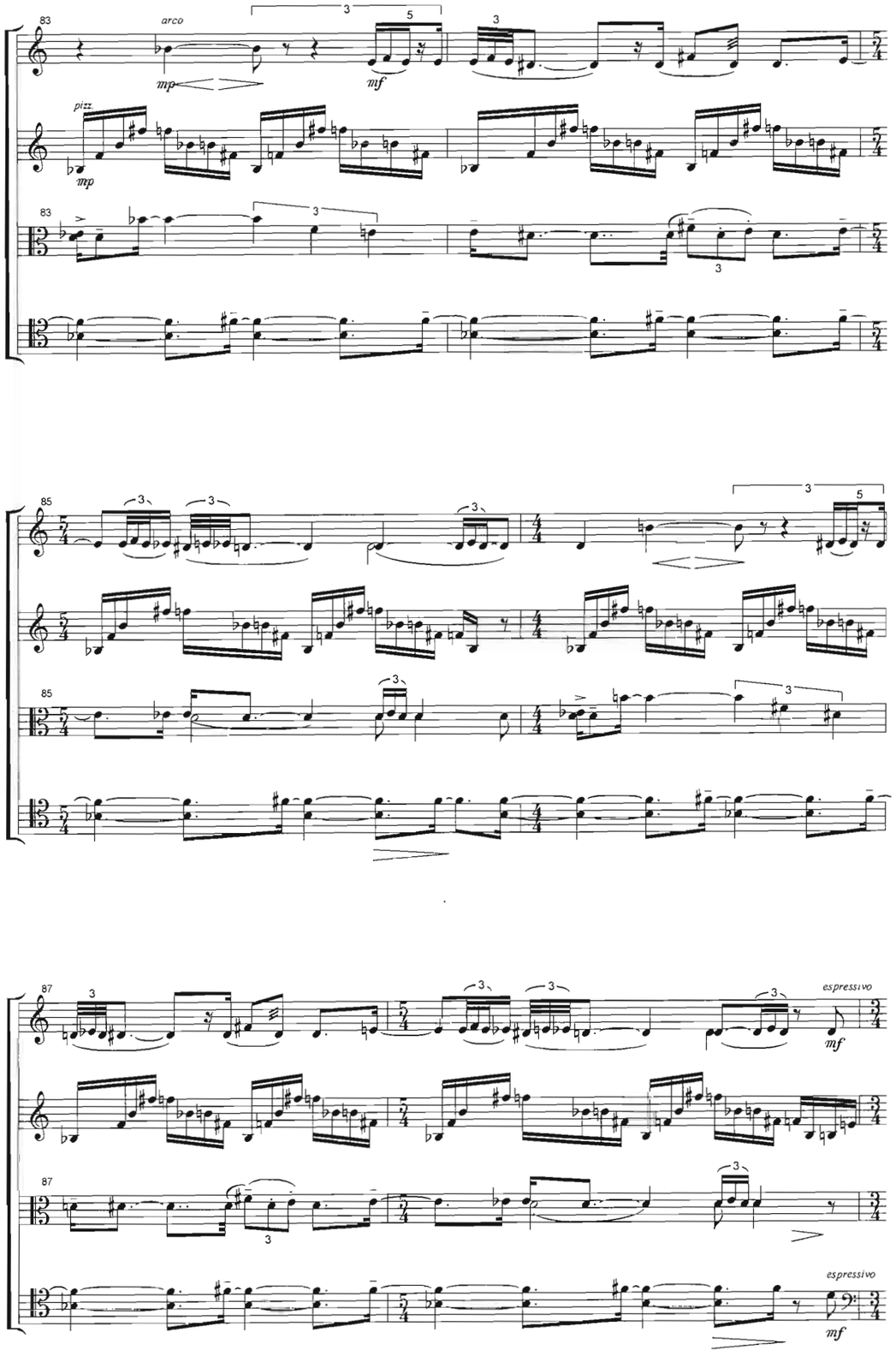

60
sul pont.
ppp
pp
(sul pont.)
63
accel.
p
mp
Piu mosso (♩= 132)
65
H
ord.
gliss
mf sfz
sfz
gliss.

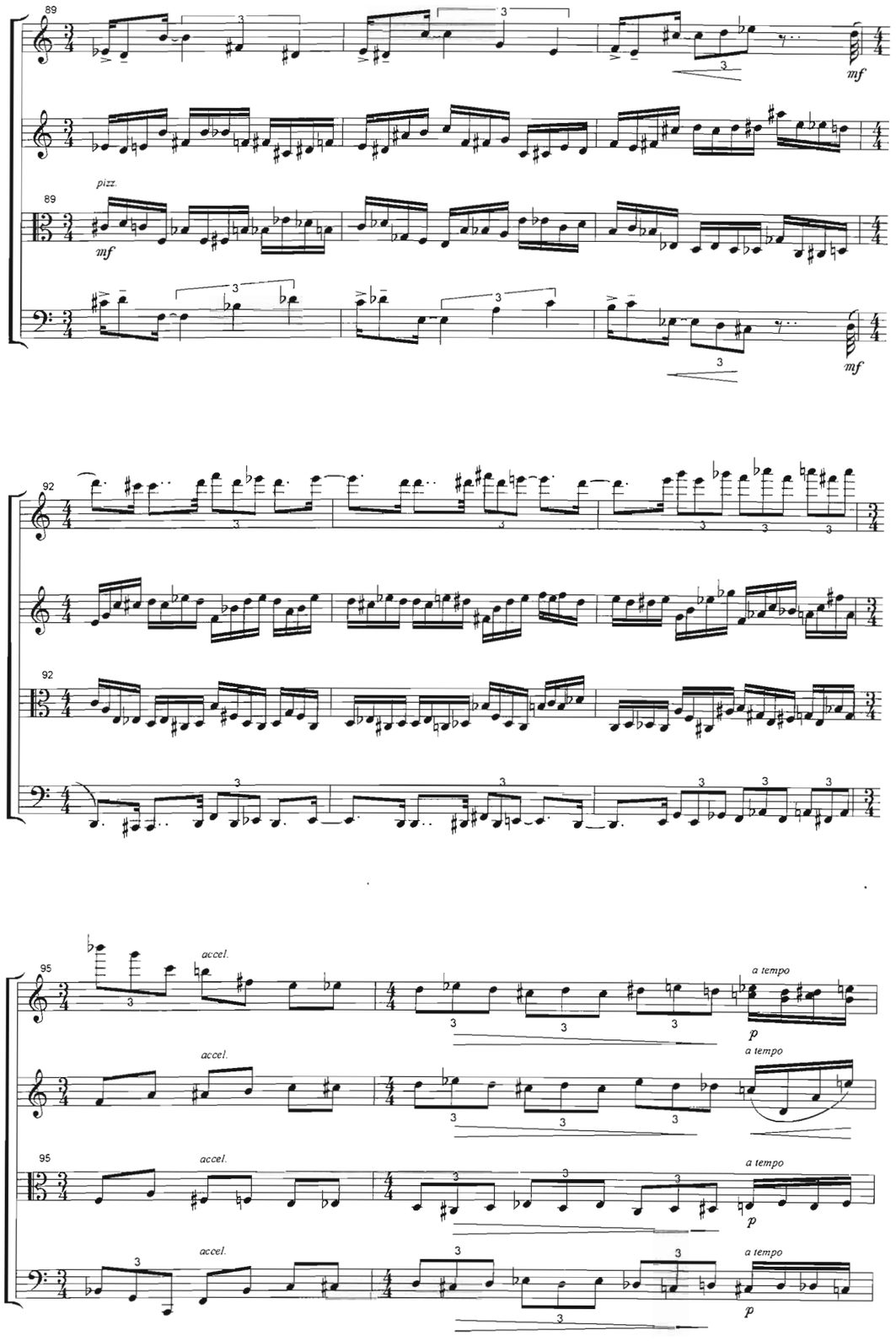
37


gliss.
mf
fff
mp
f
Meno mosso (♩= 128)
I
ord.
p

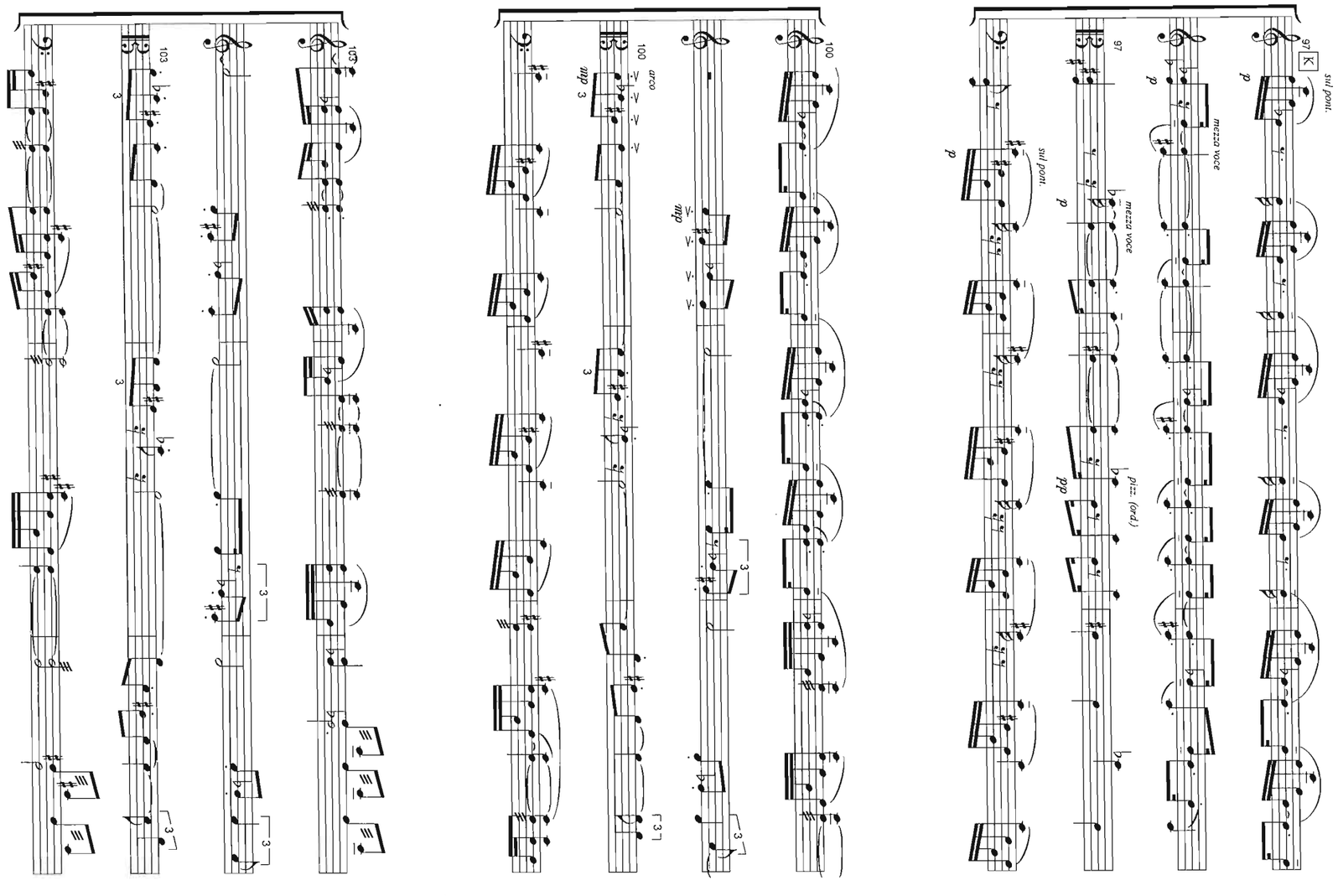

J
Meno mosso (♩= 120)
rit.
p
pp
Molto espressivo
mp
pizz.
mf
mezza voce

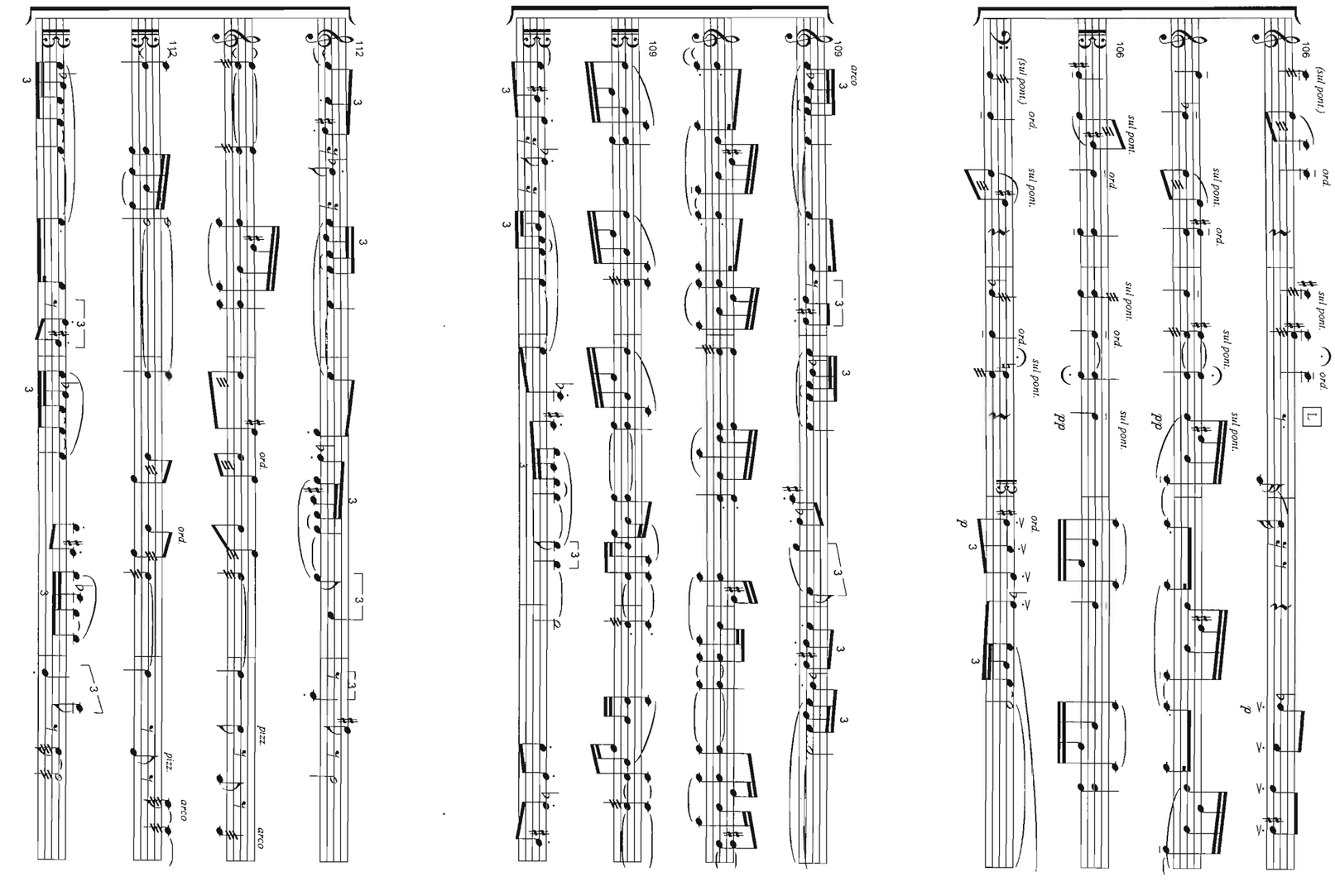
38

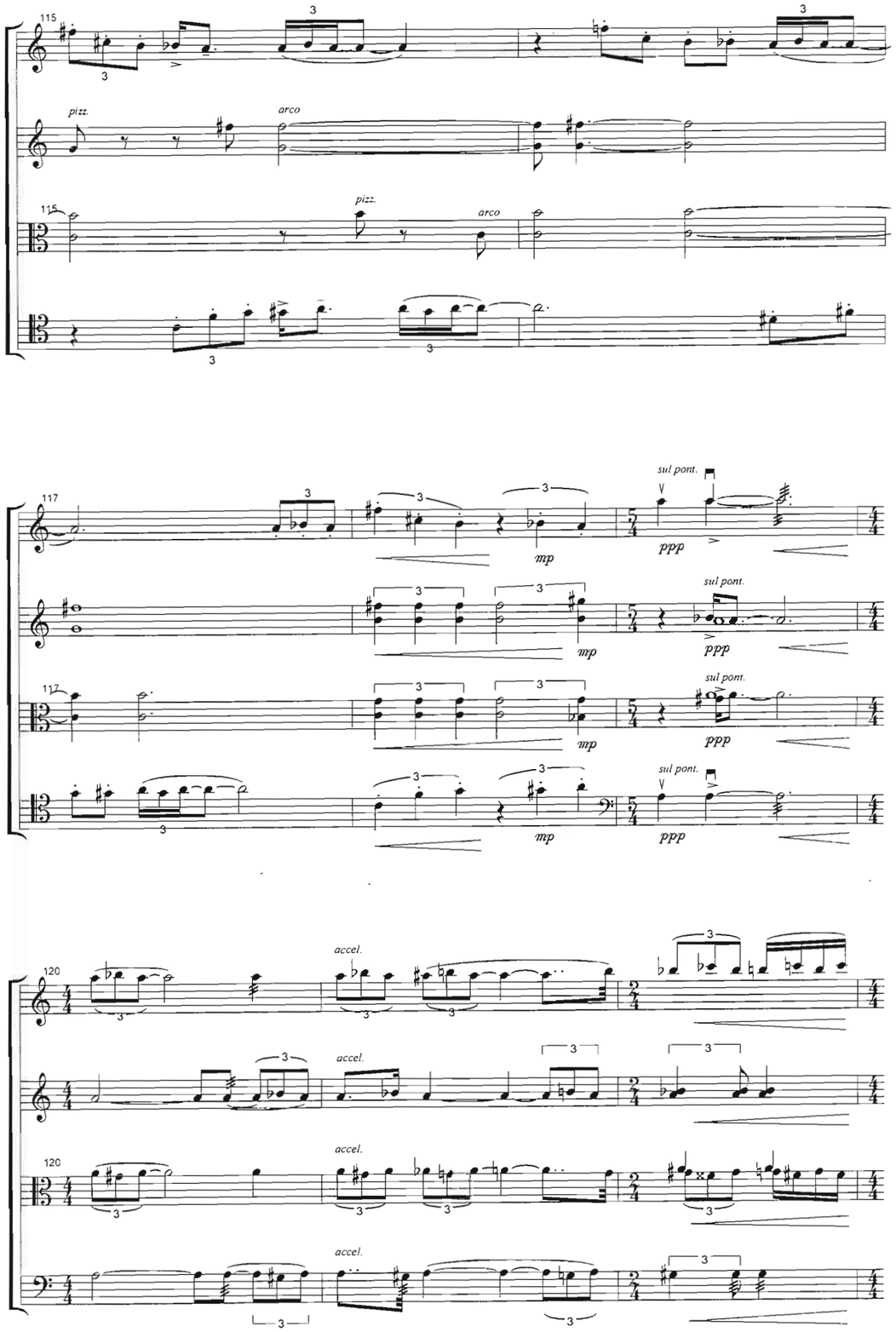


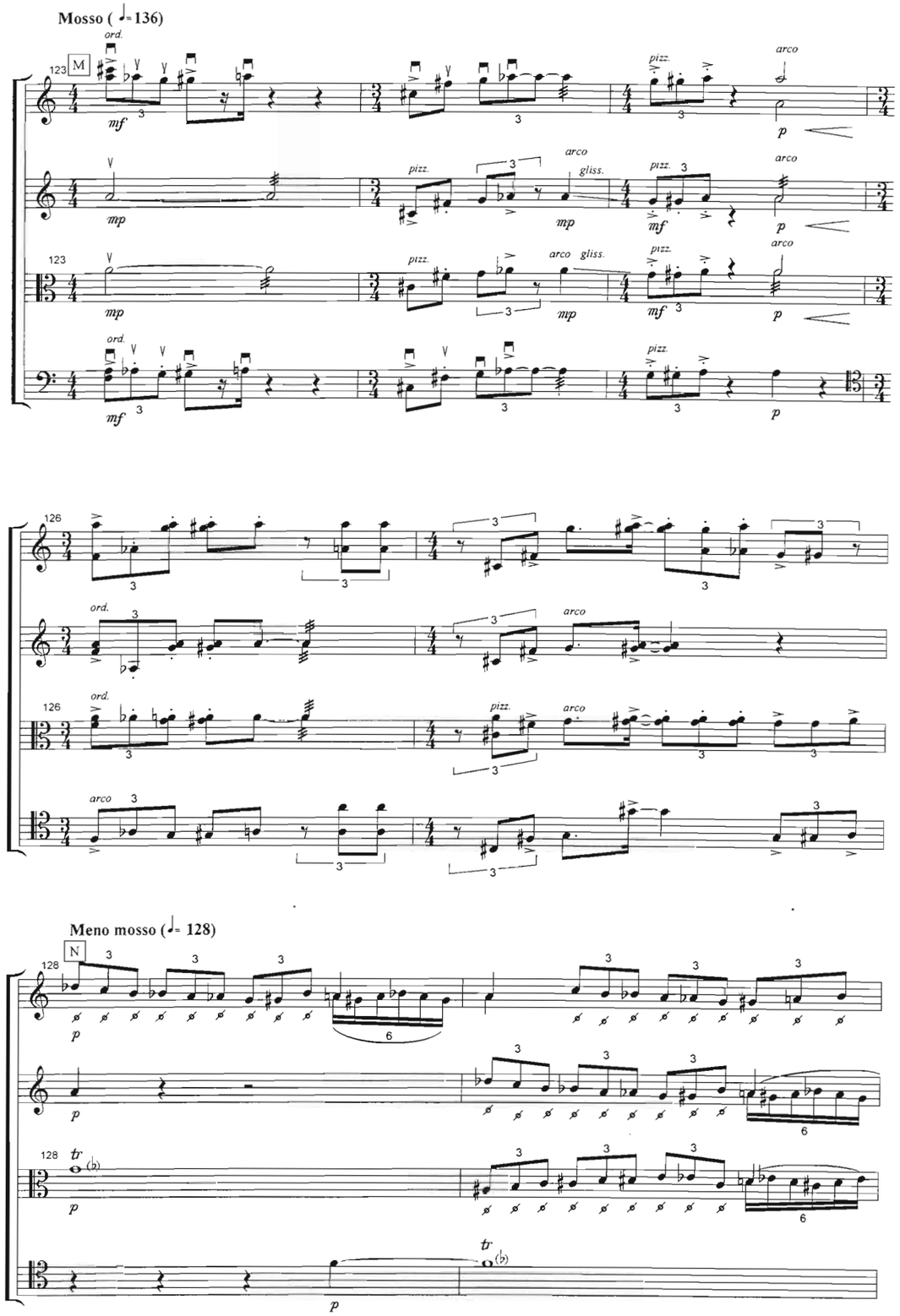


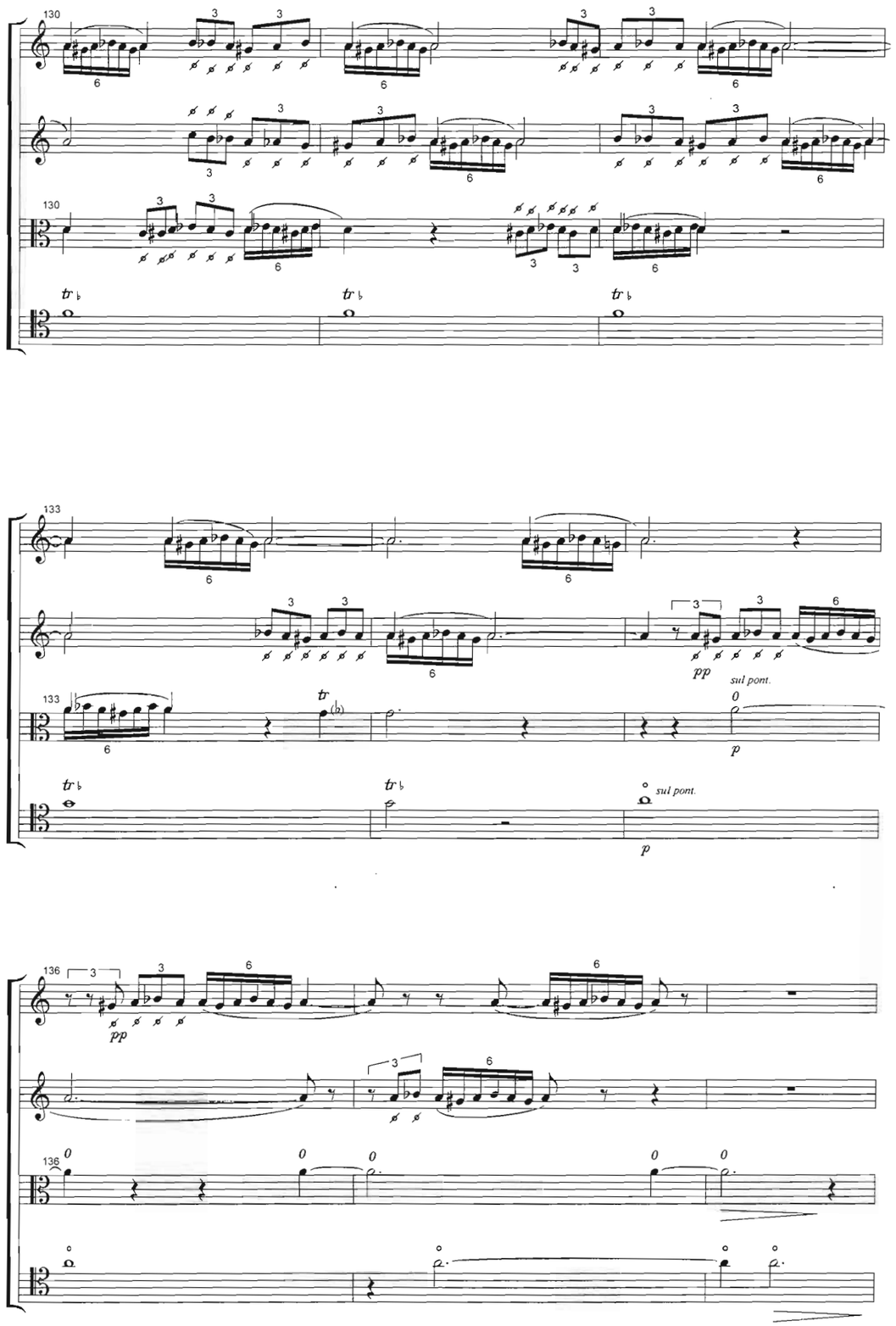
39

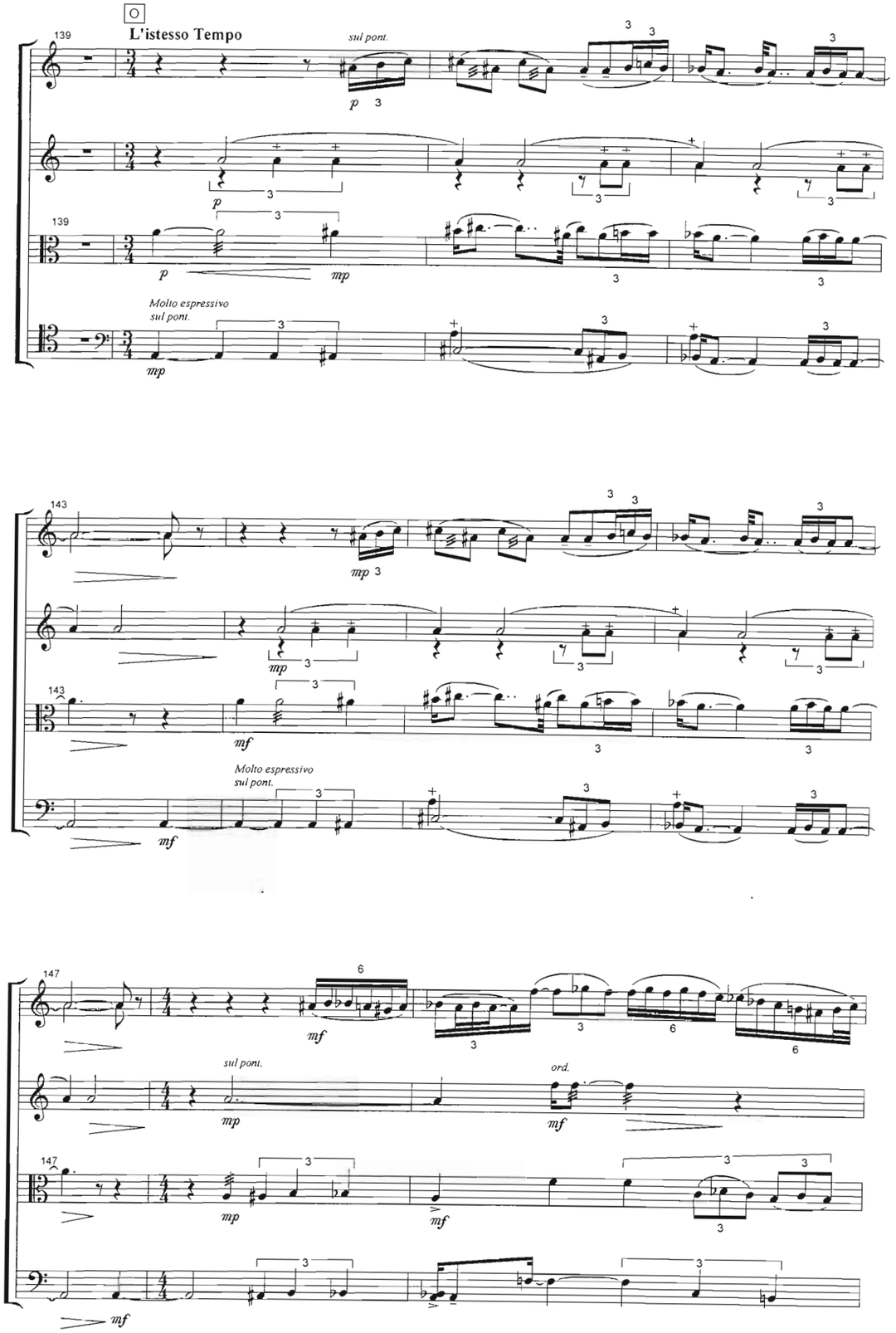

97
K
sul pont.
mezza voce
pizz. (ord.)
100
arco
mp
103


106
L
(sul pont.)
ord.
sul pont.
pp
109
arco
112
pizz.
arco

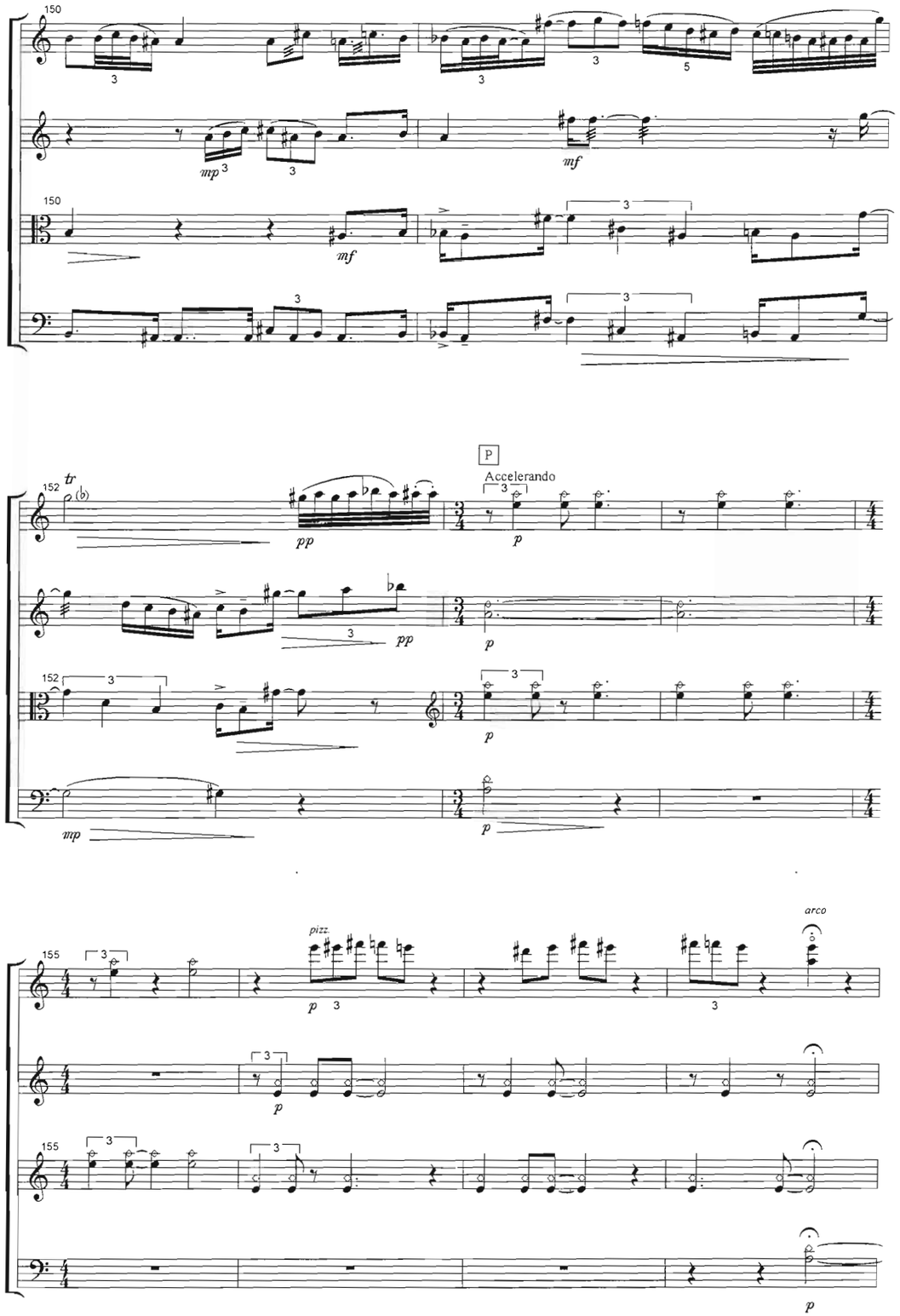

115
pizz.
arco
117
sul pont.
mp
ppp
120
accel.

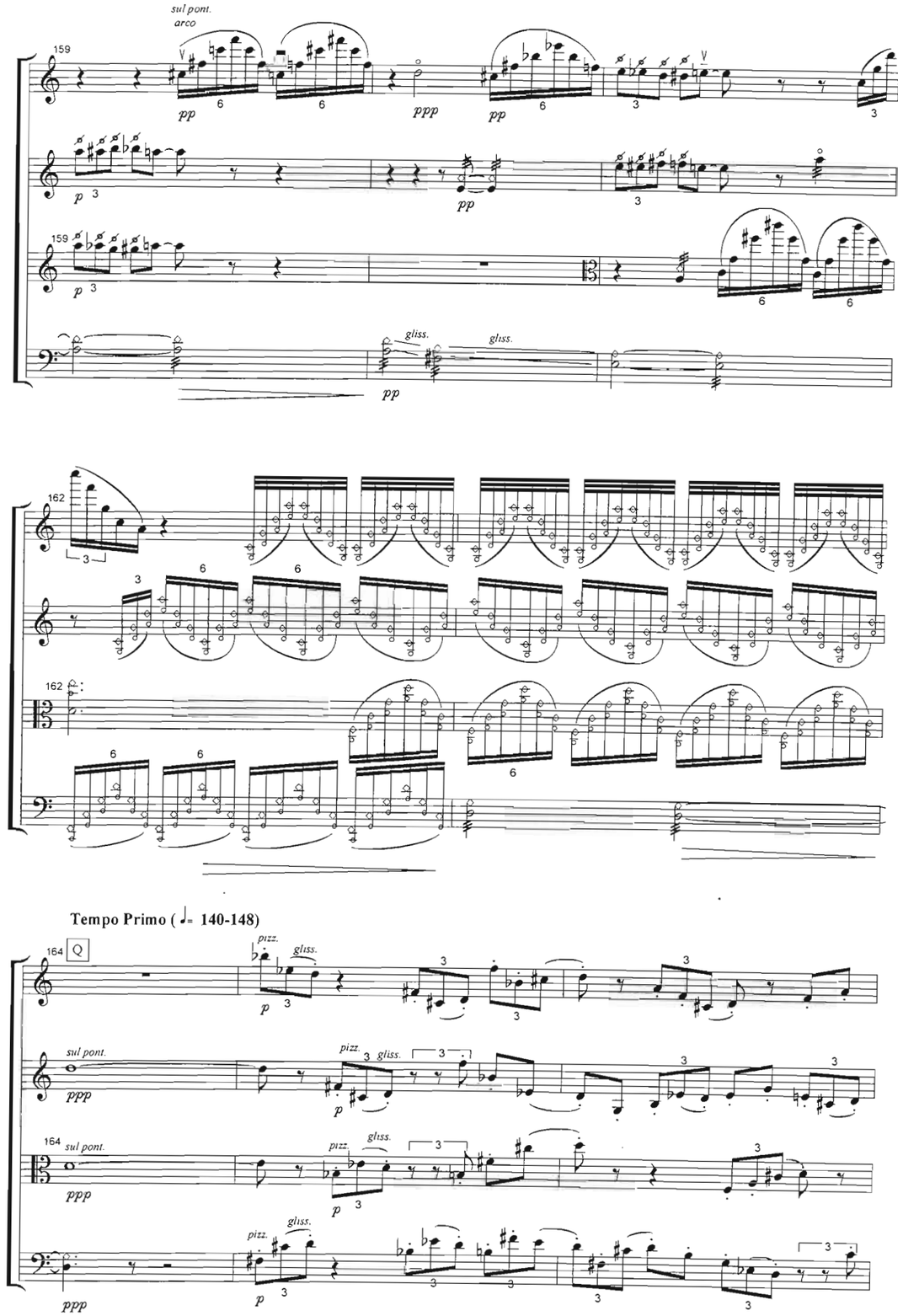

Mosso (♩= 136)
123
M
ord.
mf
pizz.
arco
p
mp
gliss.
126
Meno mosso (♩= 128)
128
N
tr


130
133
sul pont.
136

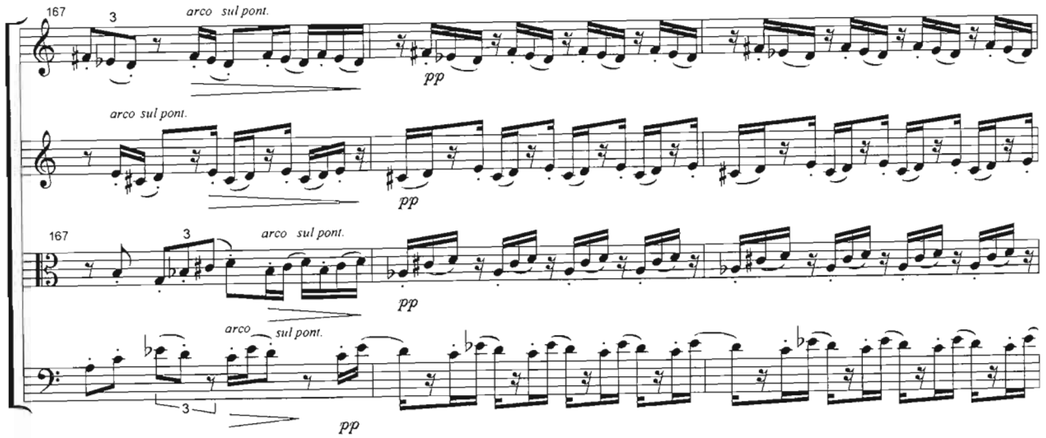

O
L'istesso Tempo
139
sul pont.
Molto espressivo
sul pont.
143
Molto espressivo
sul pont.
147
sul pont.
ord.

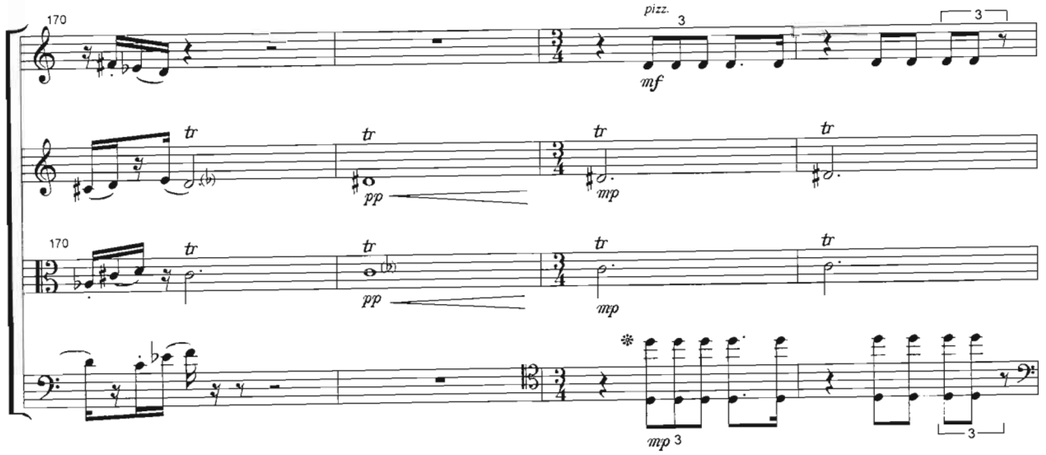
42

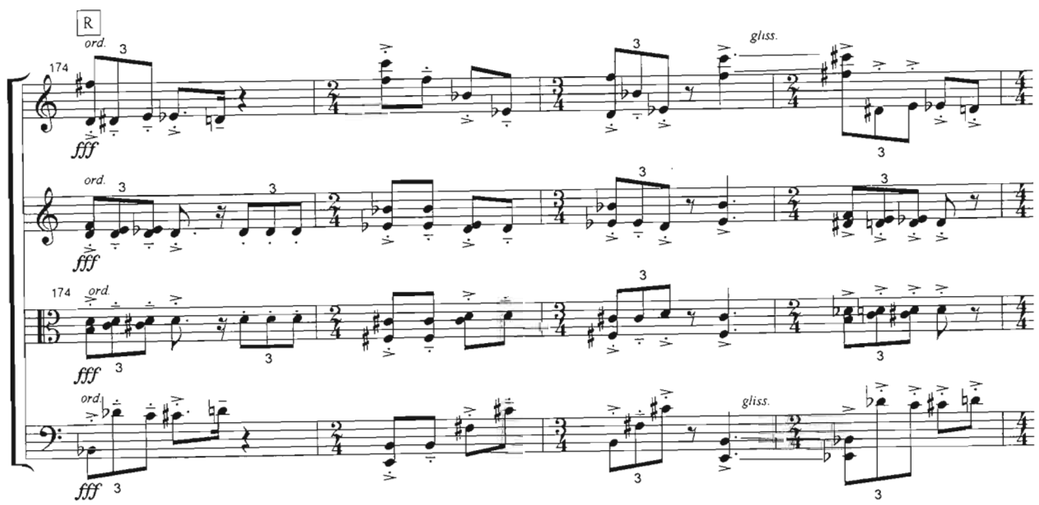

150
mp
mf
152
tr
P
Accelerando
pp
p
mp
155
pizz.
arco

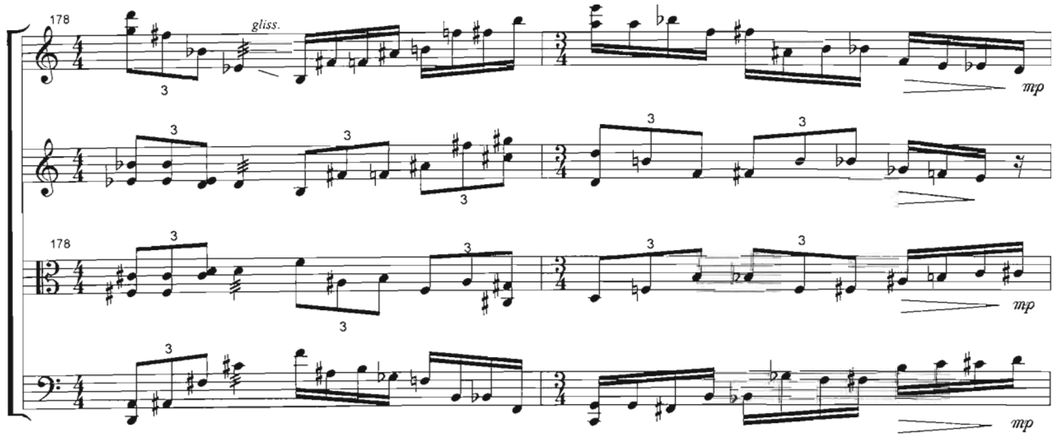

sul pont.
arco
159
pp
ppp
p
gliss.
162
Tempo Primo (♩= 140-148)
164
Q
pizz.
gliss.
sul pont.
ppp

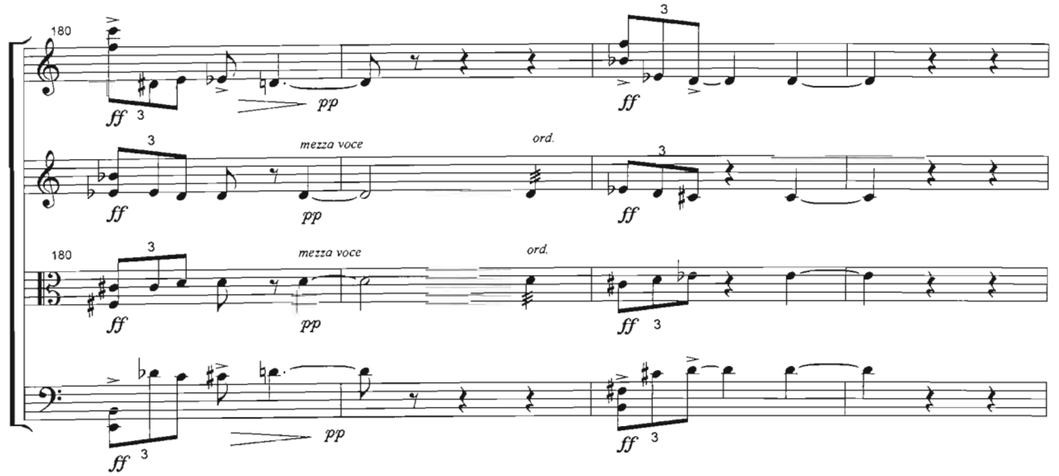
43

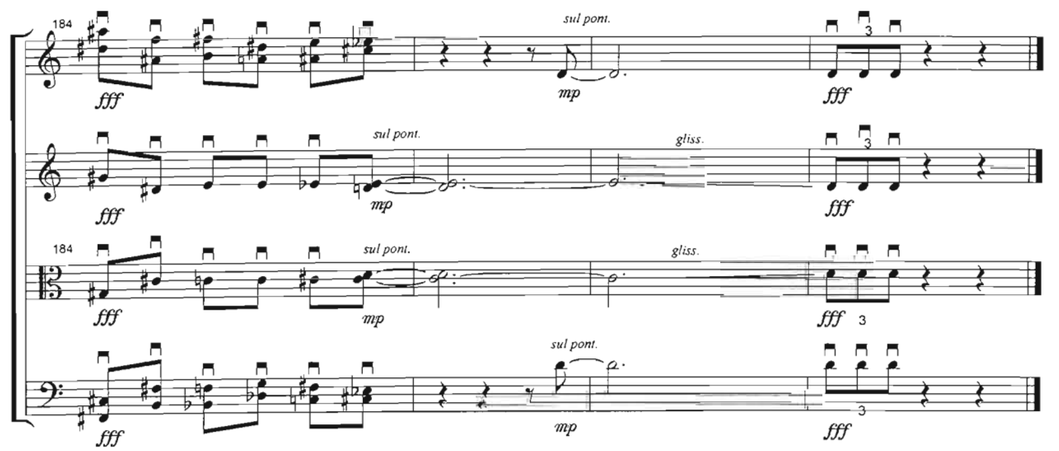






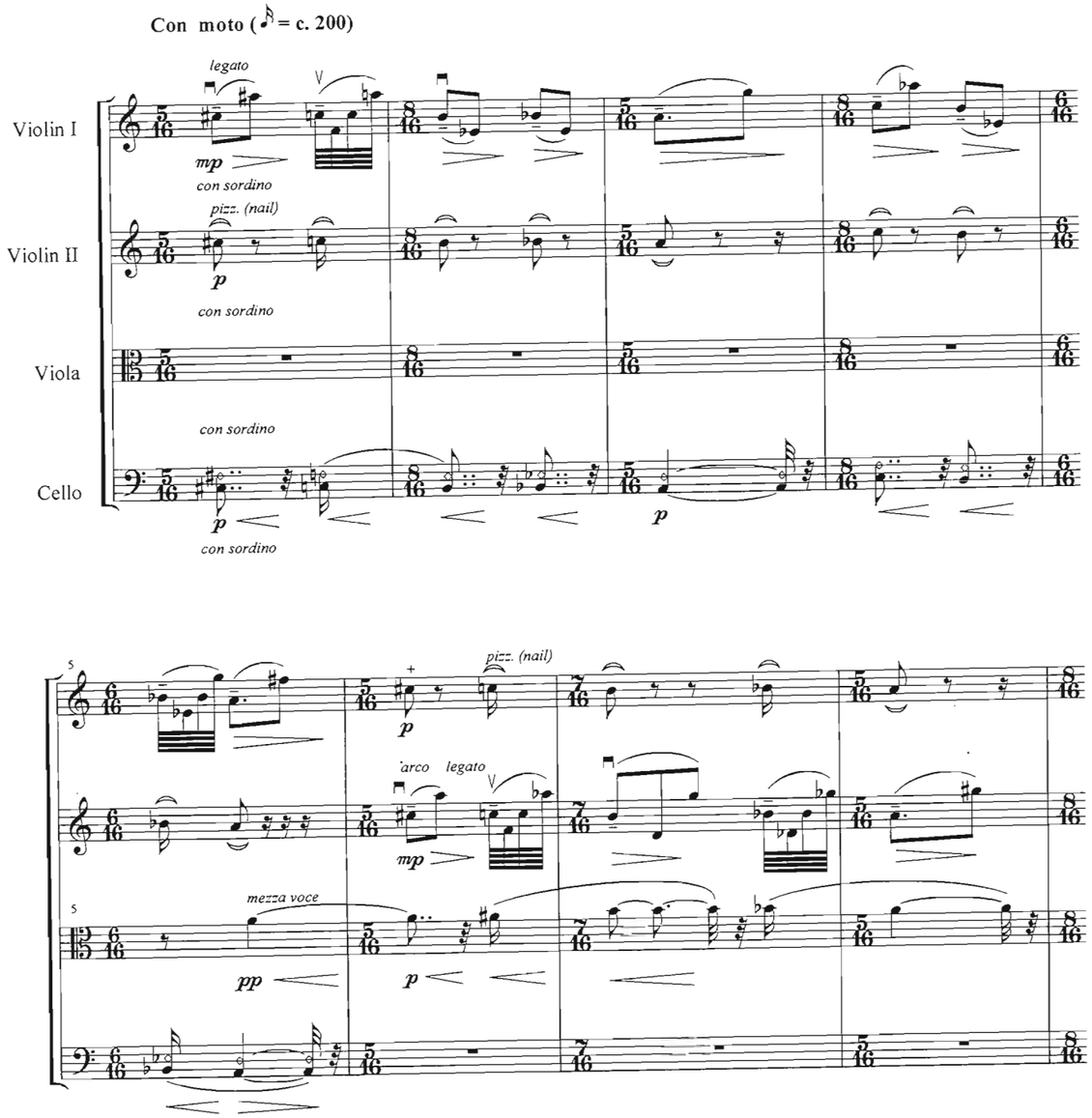






Duration: c. 8 min.

2. Intermezzo



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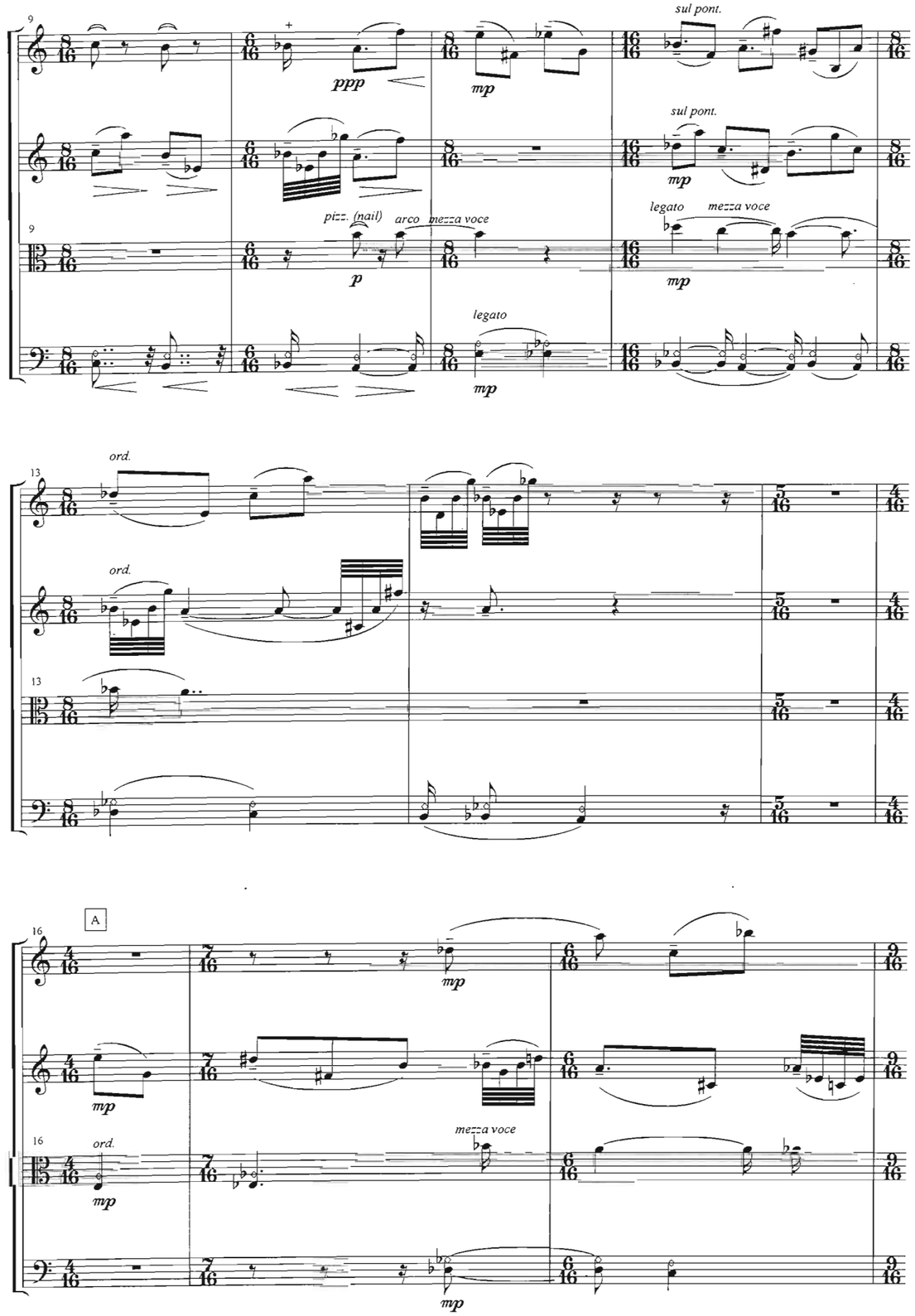


19

rit. 3

rit.

rit.

rit.

B

Meno mosso (= c.160)

21

increase vibr.

23

ord.

increase vibr.

25

p.d'a batt.
sul pont.

ord.

sul pont.

ord.

sul pont.

ord.

sul pont. p.d'a batt.

ord.

28

p.d'a batt.
sul pont.

ord.

gliss. about a quarter tone
sul pont. p.d'a batt.

tratto

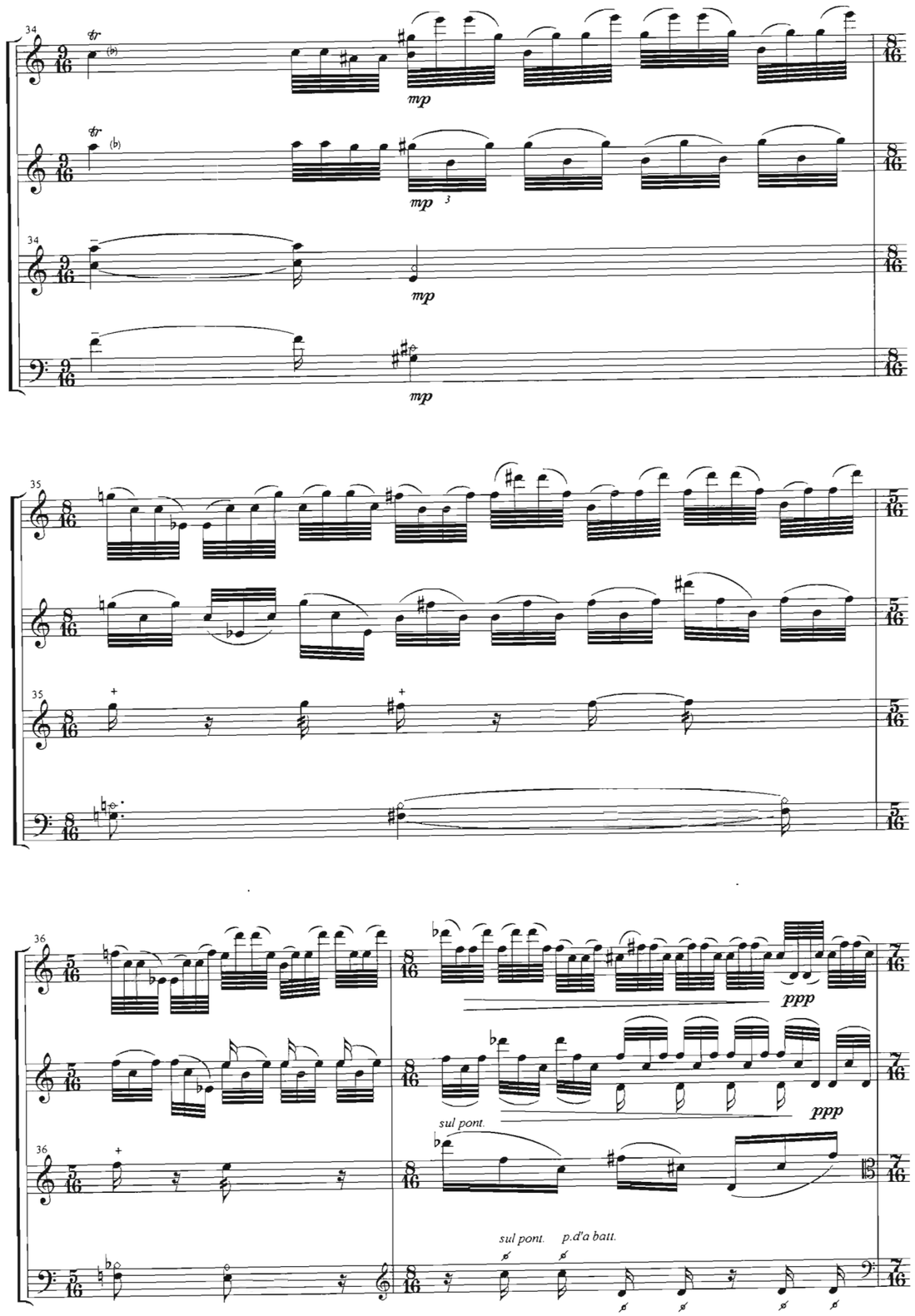
ord.

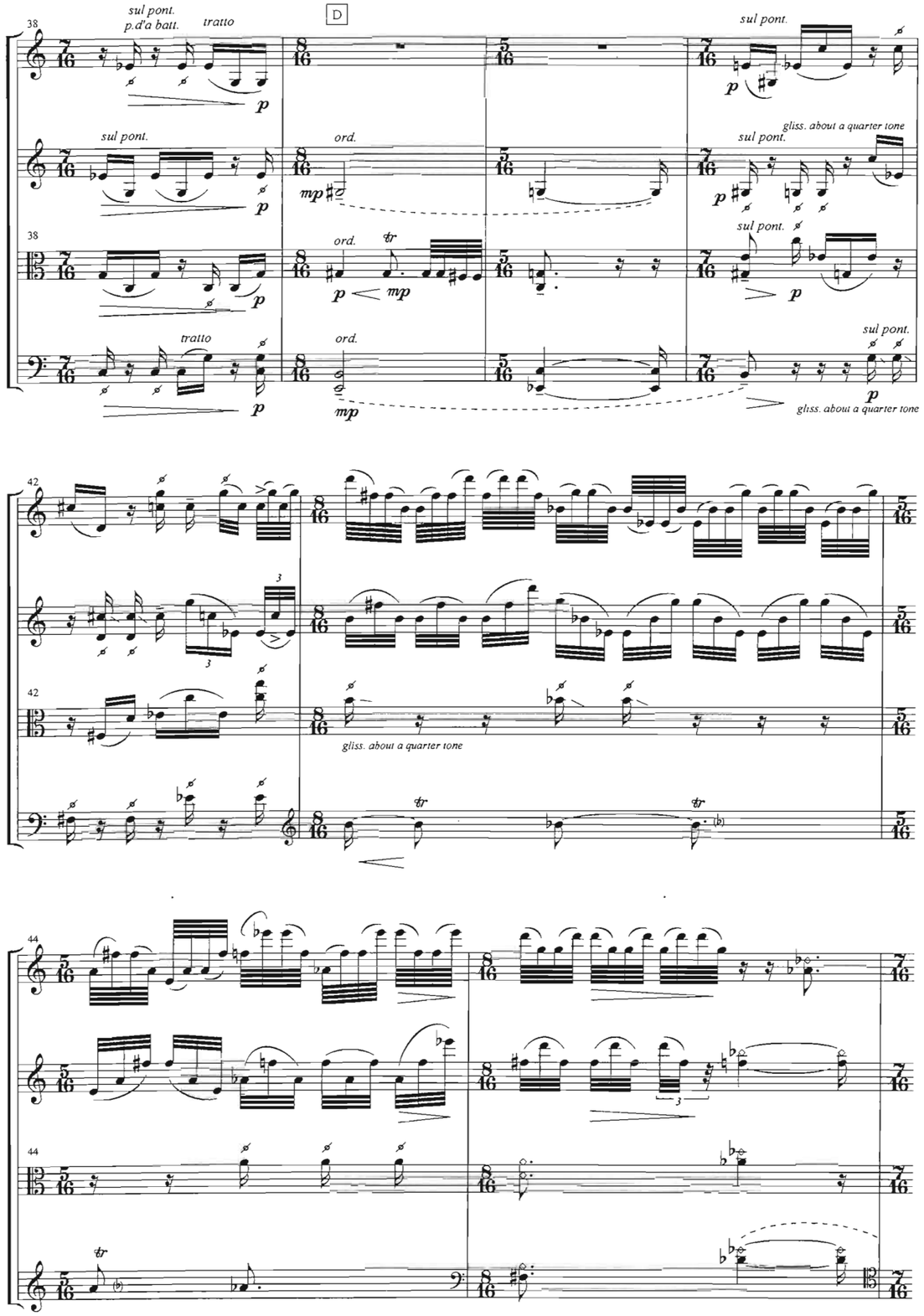
sul pont.

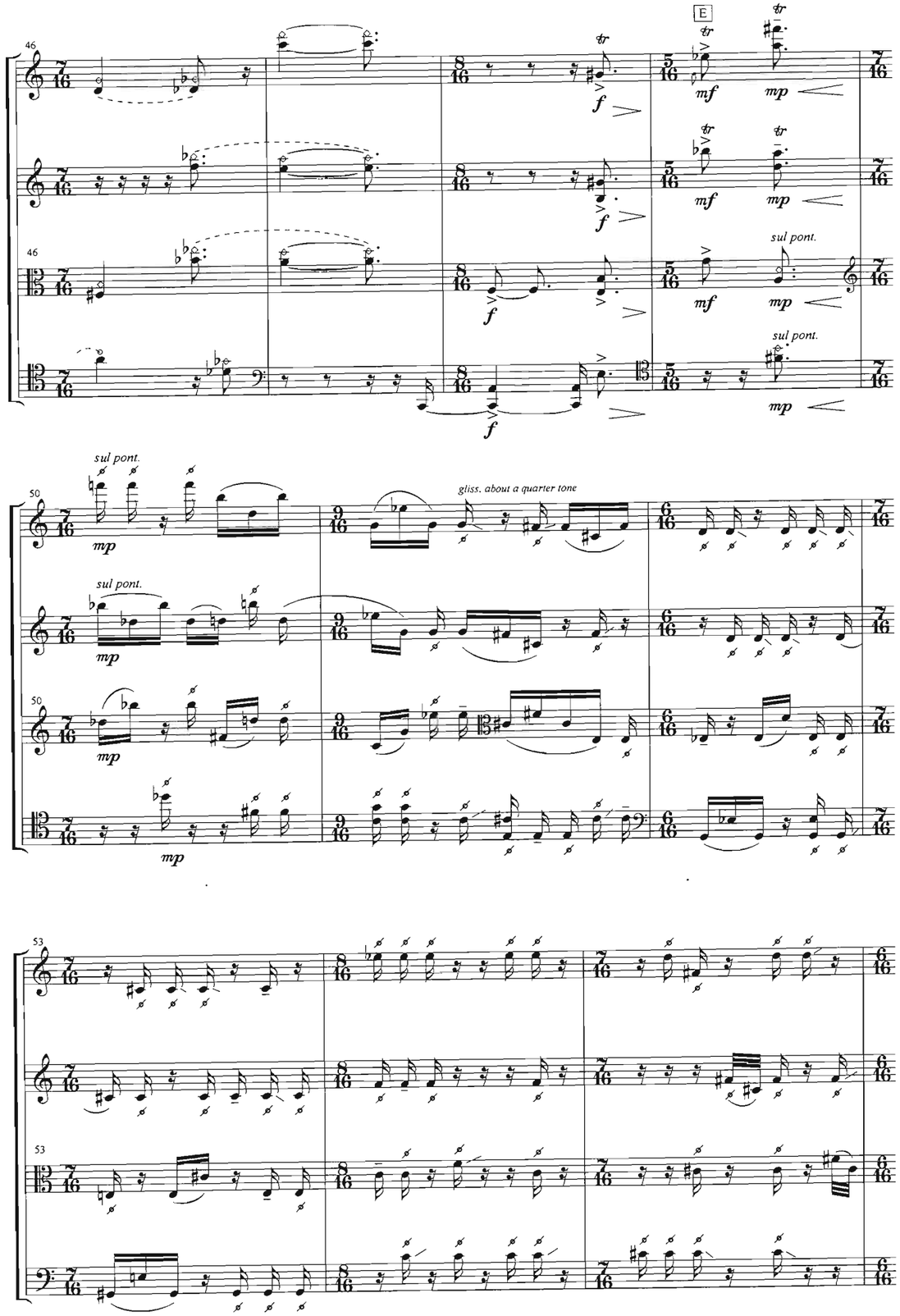
30

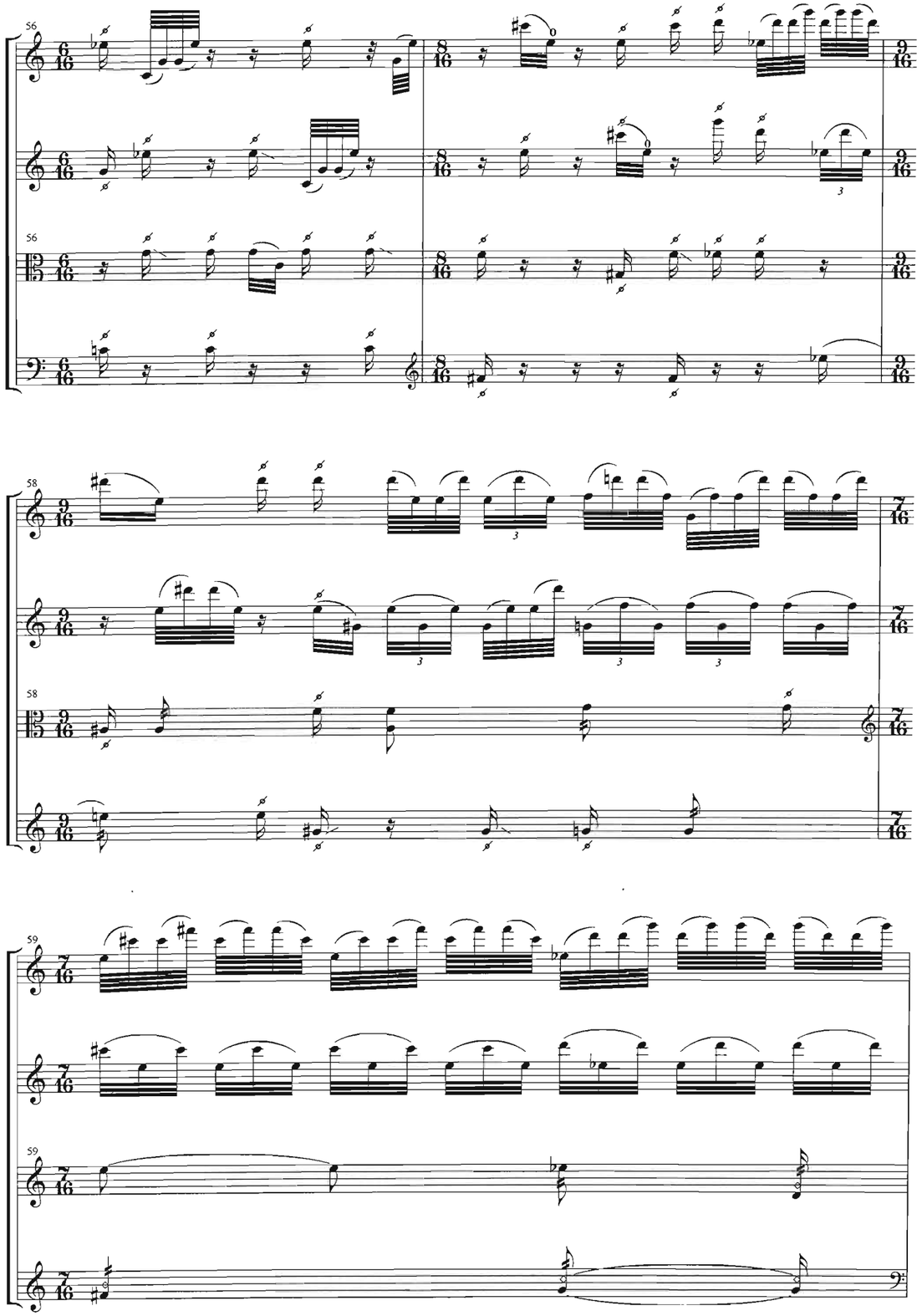
C

increase vibr.


mp
mp
mp
mp
ppp
ppp
sul pont.
sul pont.
p.d'a batt.


D
sul pont.
p.d'a batt.
tratto
sul pont.
ord.
gliss. about a quarter tone
sul pont.
ord.
sul pont.
tratto
ord.
sul pont.
gliss. about a quarter tone
gliss. about a quarter tone


E
sul pont.
gliss. about a quarter tone



60

60

61

61

63

F

senza vibrato

pp

poco vibrato

mf p

63

senza vibrato

mf pp

senza vibrato

mf pp

68

tr

pp

tr

5

pp

68

tr

pp

pp

tr

72

pp

p

72

tr

pp

76

pp

76

pp

pp

Duration: c. 5'10"

3. Scherzo

Mosso (♩. c.152)

A

B punta d'arco

C al tallone

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non cresc.

D

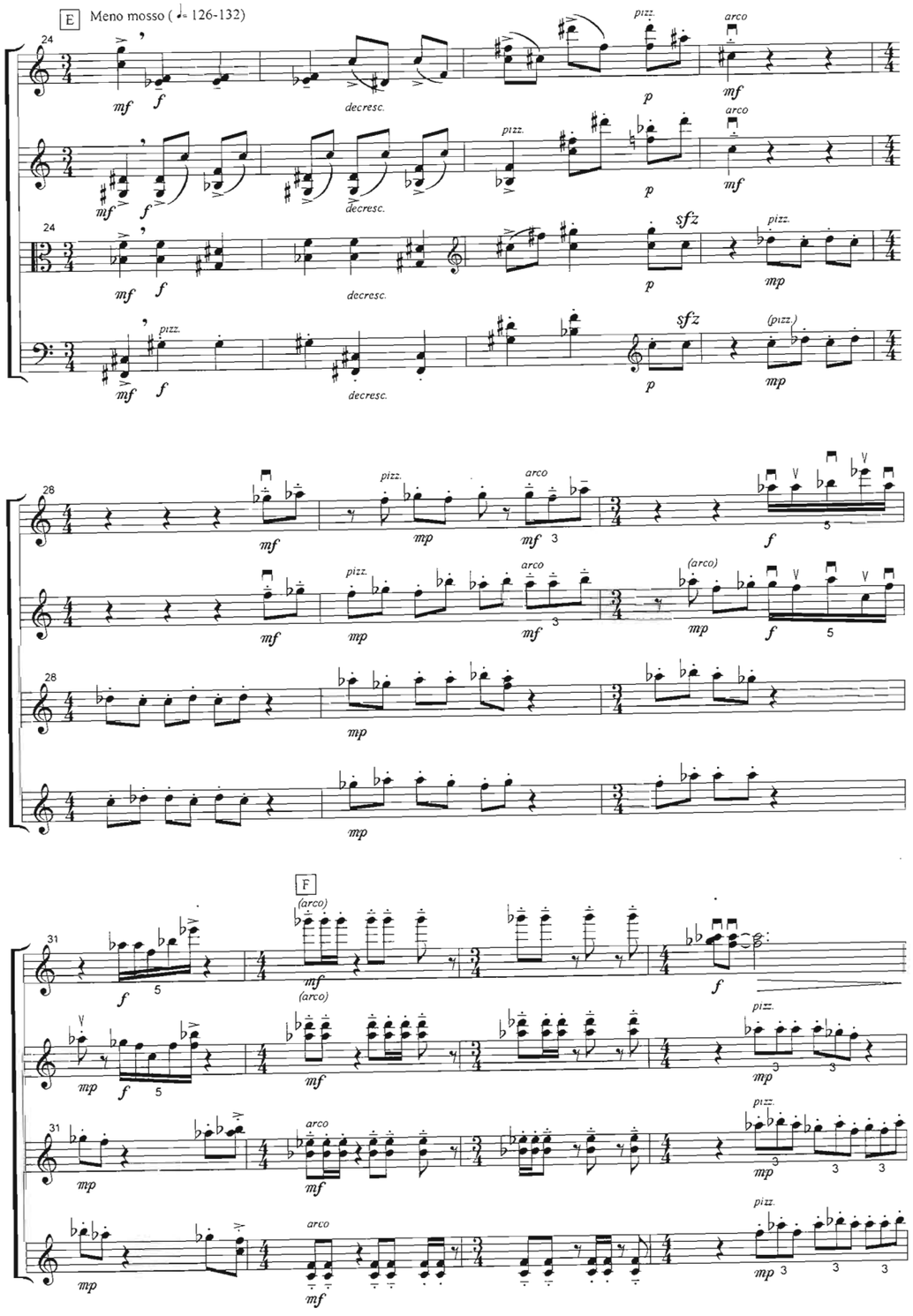
pizz.

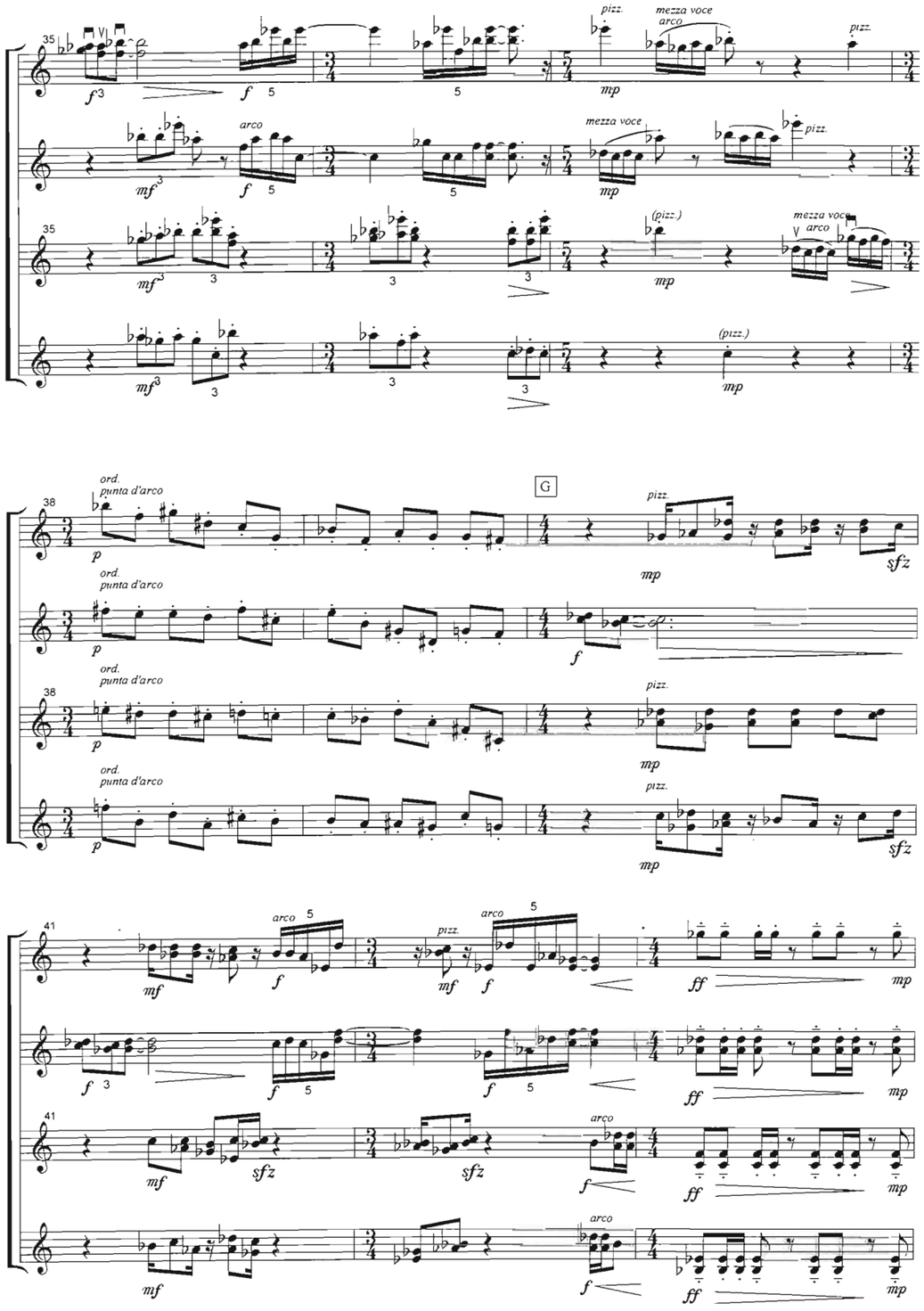
arco

(arco)

decresc.

cresc.





Mezza voce: like a whisper.
Use lots of bow with little pressure.

51

H

44 *mezza voce* *p* 3 5

pizz. *p* 3 3 3 3 *ord.* 5

44 *pizz.* *p* *arco* *mezza voce* 5 5

mezza voce 5 5 *p* *pizz.*

46 5 *(ord.) punta d'arco* *p*

arco *jété* 3 *(ord.) punta d'arco* *p*

46 *mezza voce* 5 *ord.* 5 *(arco) jété* 3 *(ord.) punta d'arco* *p*

arco 5 *(ord.) punta d'arco* *p*

49 *ritardando* 3 5 *p*

ritardando 3 5 *p*

49 *ritardando* *p* 3 3 5 5

ritardando *p* 5 5

I

51 *a tempo* *pp* *pp* *cresc.*

a tempo *pp* *pp*

51 *a tempo* *pp* *pp*

a tempo *pp* *pp* *cresc.*

Tempo Primo (♩. 152)

55 *mp* *cresc.* *f* *ff*

mp *cresc.* *f* *ff*

55 *mp* *cresc.* *mf* *ff*

mp *cresc.* *mf* *ff*

58 *f* *ff* *f*

f *ff* *f*

58 *f* *ff* *ff*

f *ff* *f*

52

60

J

punta d'arco

ord.

mf *p* *cresc.* *mp* *cresc.*

63

mf

65

ff *mf*

67

K

mf *ff*

71

punta d'arco

mf *decresc.*

f

75

L

Meno mosso (♩= c.120)

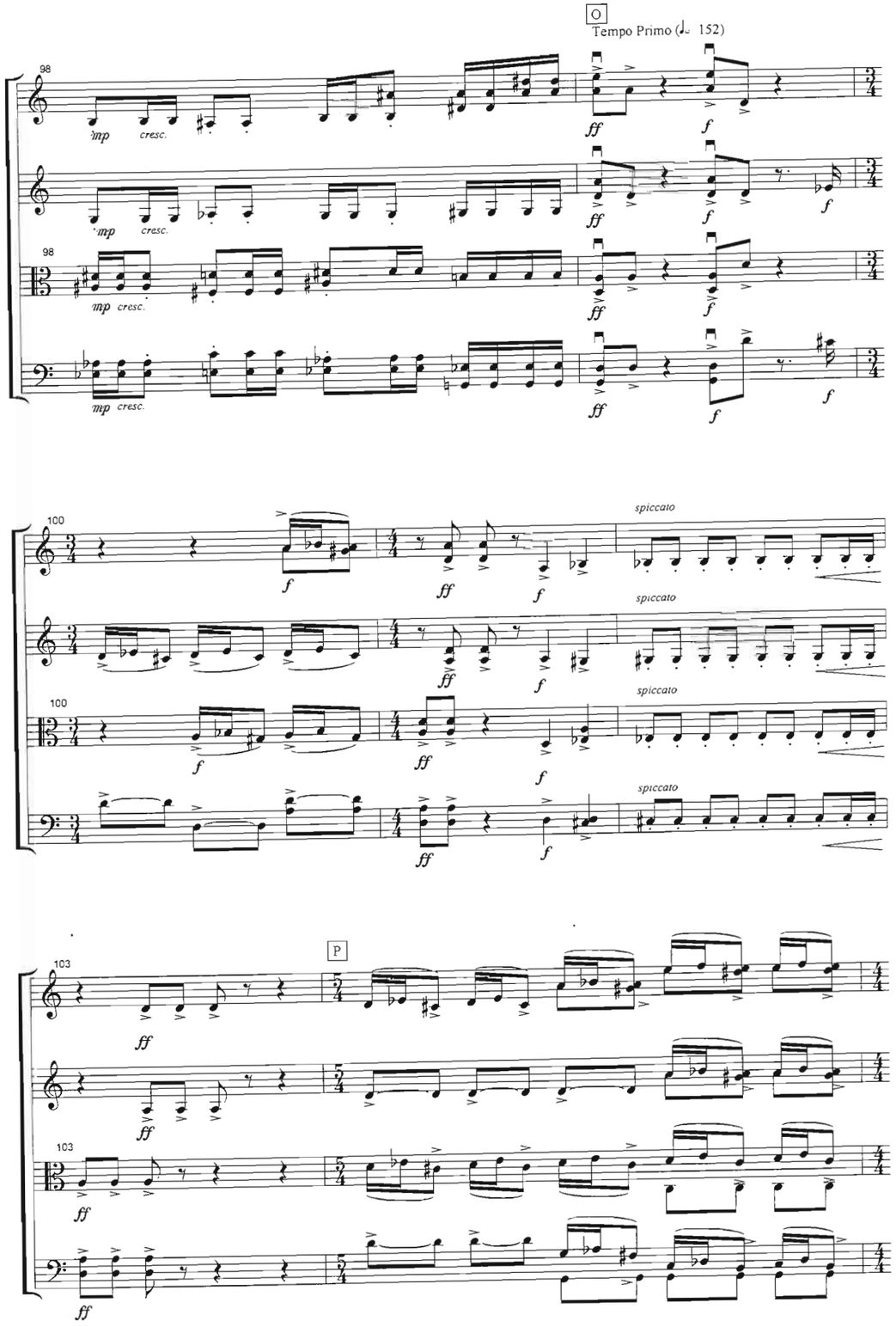
pizz. *non rit.* *arco* 3 5

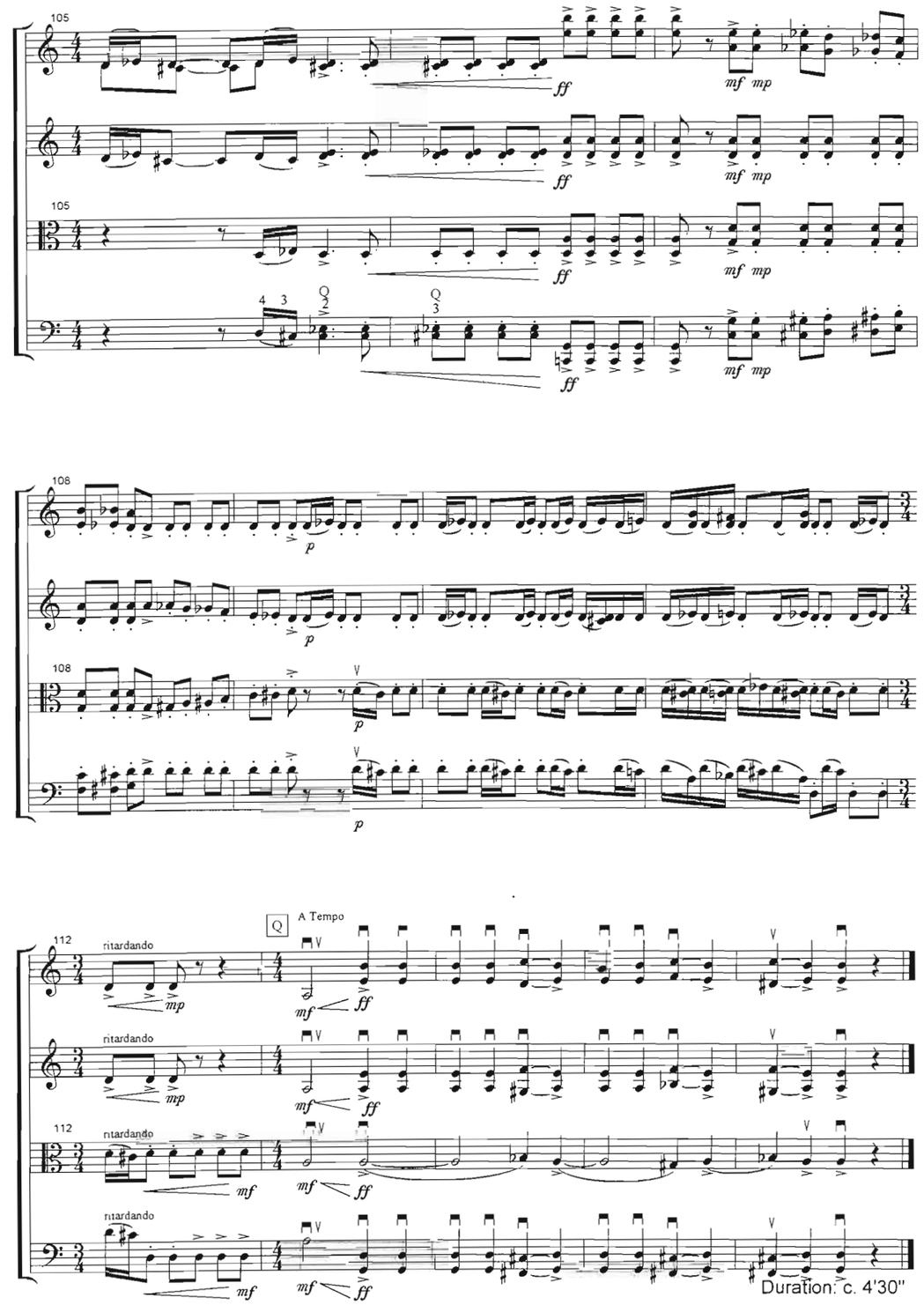
mp *decresc.* *p*

gliss.

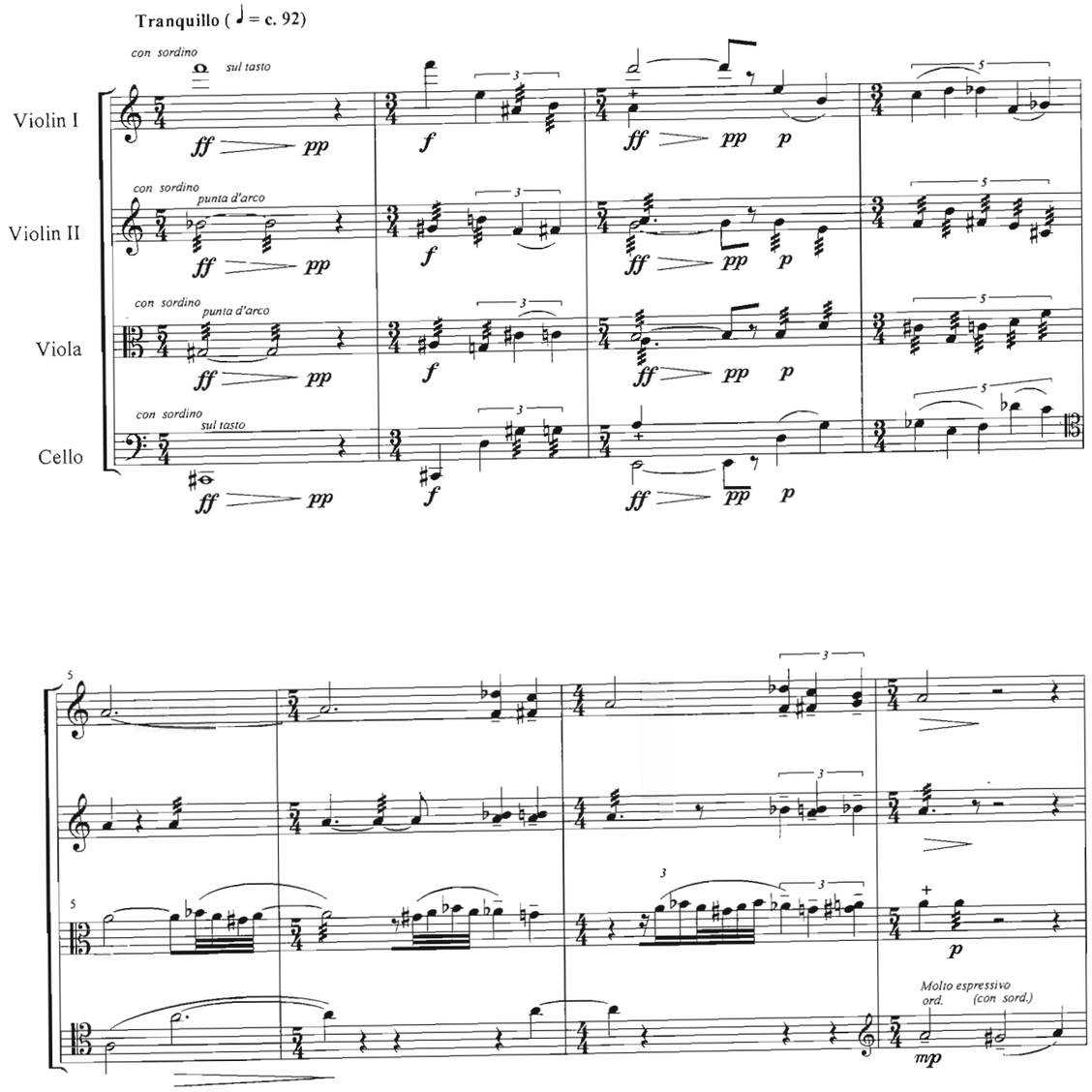
53

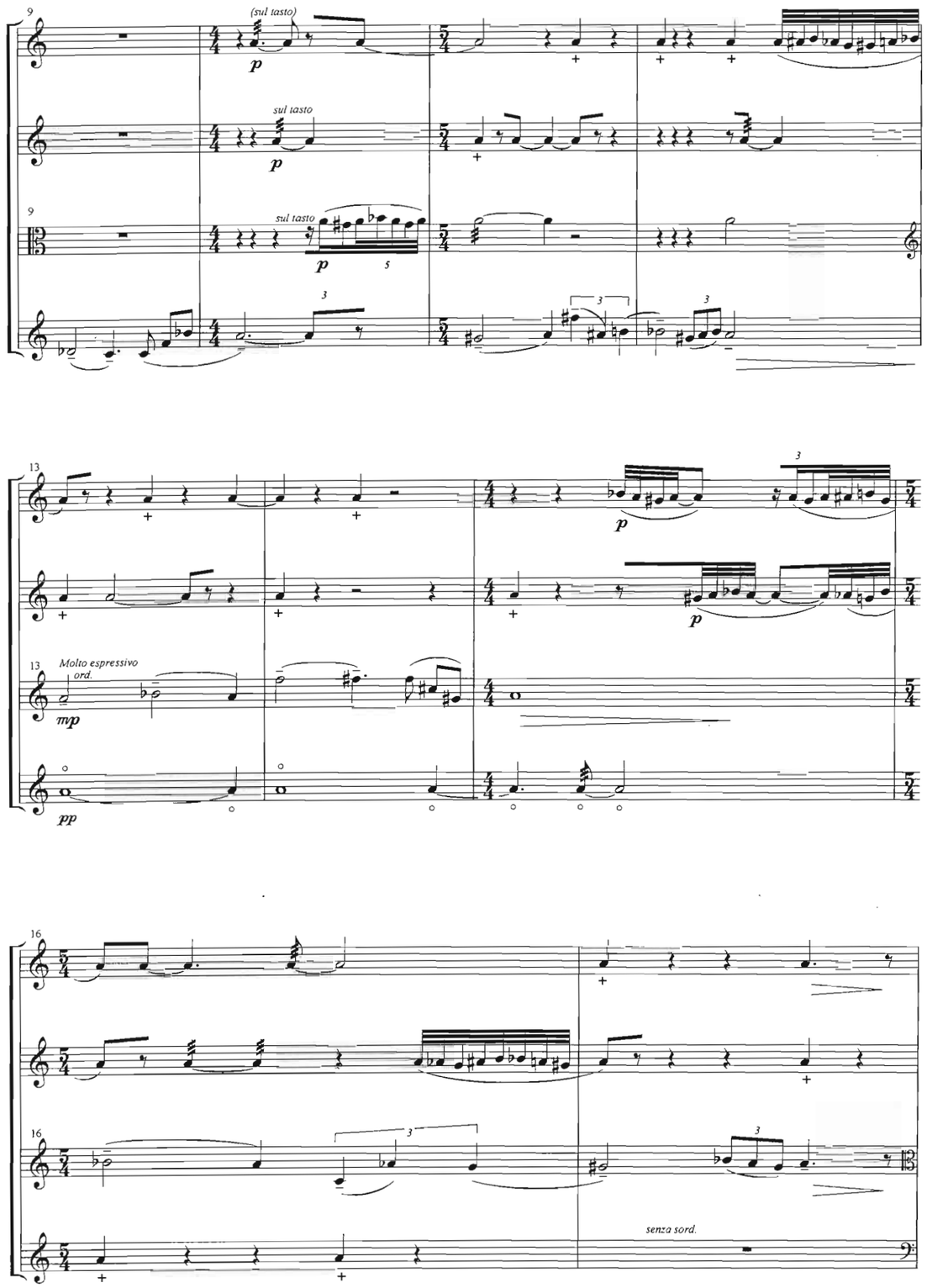
Groups of smaller notes should be played as one gesture, one idea.


O
Tempo Primo (♩= 152)
98
mp cresc.
ff
f
100
spiccato
103
P


105
ff
mf mp
108
p
112
ritardando
Q
A Tempo
mp
mf
Duration: c. 4'30"

4. Lyrico





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18 sul pont. pp

sul pont. pp

18 sul pont. pp

sul pont. mezza voce pp

A

19 tr

tr

19 tr

tr

Molto espressivo ord. mf

21 ord. gliss. p

ord. gliss. p

21 ord. p

24 Espressivo senza sord. mf

24 mezza voce

con sordino

26 sul tasto

26

28 senza sord.

B sul tasto ff pp

senza sord.

punta d'arco ff pp

28 tr gliss. to f♯

punta d'arco ff pp

tr gliss. to C

sul tasto ff pp

30

f *ff* *pp* *p*

30

f *ff* *pp* *p*

30

f *ff* *pp* *p*

33

C

pp *jété* *p*

33

pp *jété* *p*

33

pp *jété* *p*

36

punta d'arco batt. *sul pont. mezza voce* *ord.*

pp *p*

36

punta d'arco batt. *pp* *p*

punta d'arco batt.

punta d'arco batt. *pp* *p*

39

sul pont. mezza voce *ord.* *sul pont. mezza voce*

pp *p*

sul pont. mezza voce *ord.* *sul pont. mezza voce*

pp *p* *pp*

39

pp *p* *pp*

pp *p* *pp*

41

D

ord. *sul pont. mezza voce*

p *pp*

ord.

41

gliss. *gliss.*

p *pp*

p *pp*

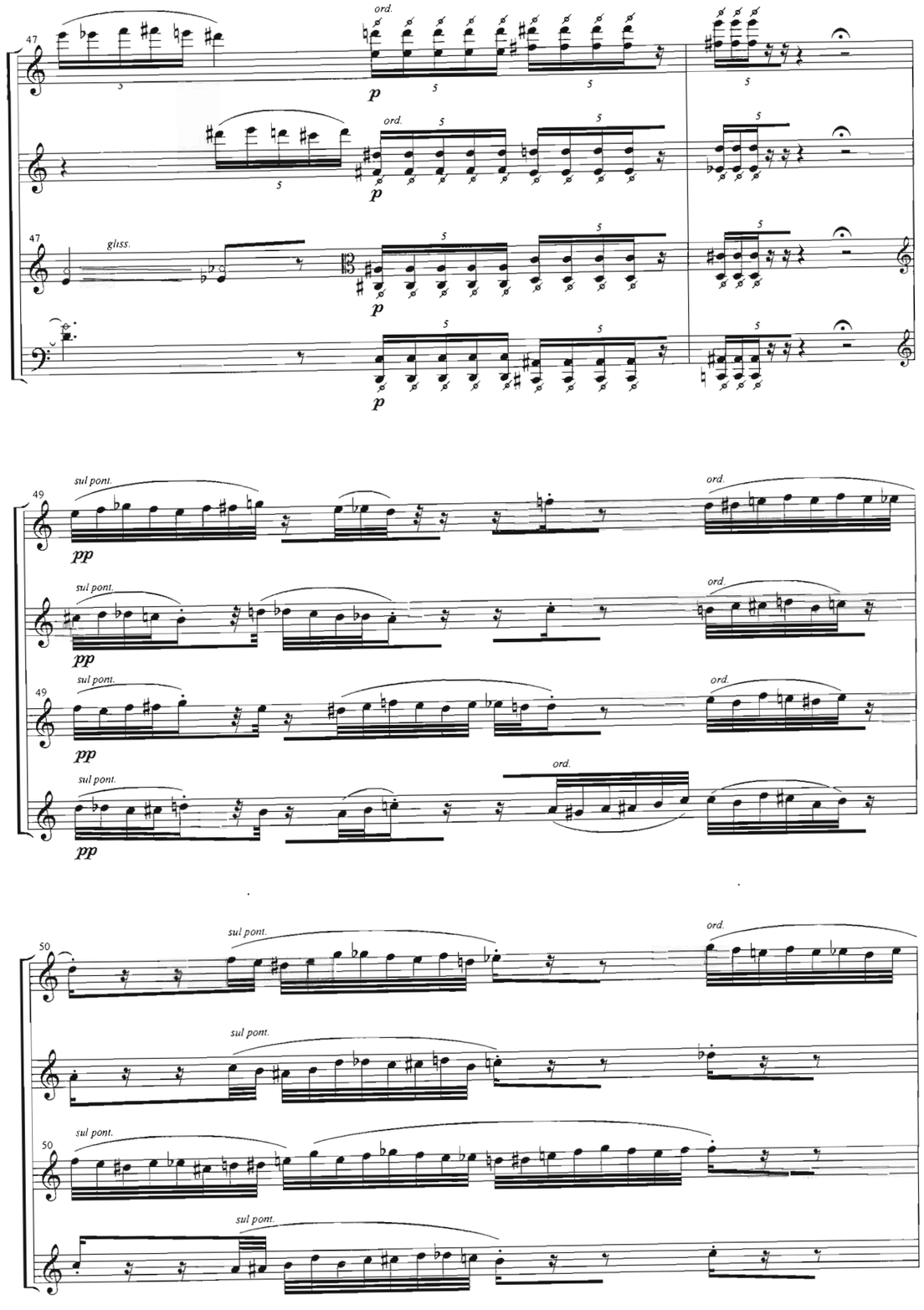
44

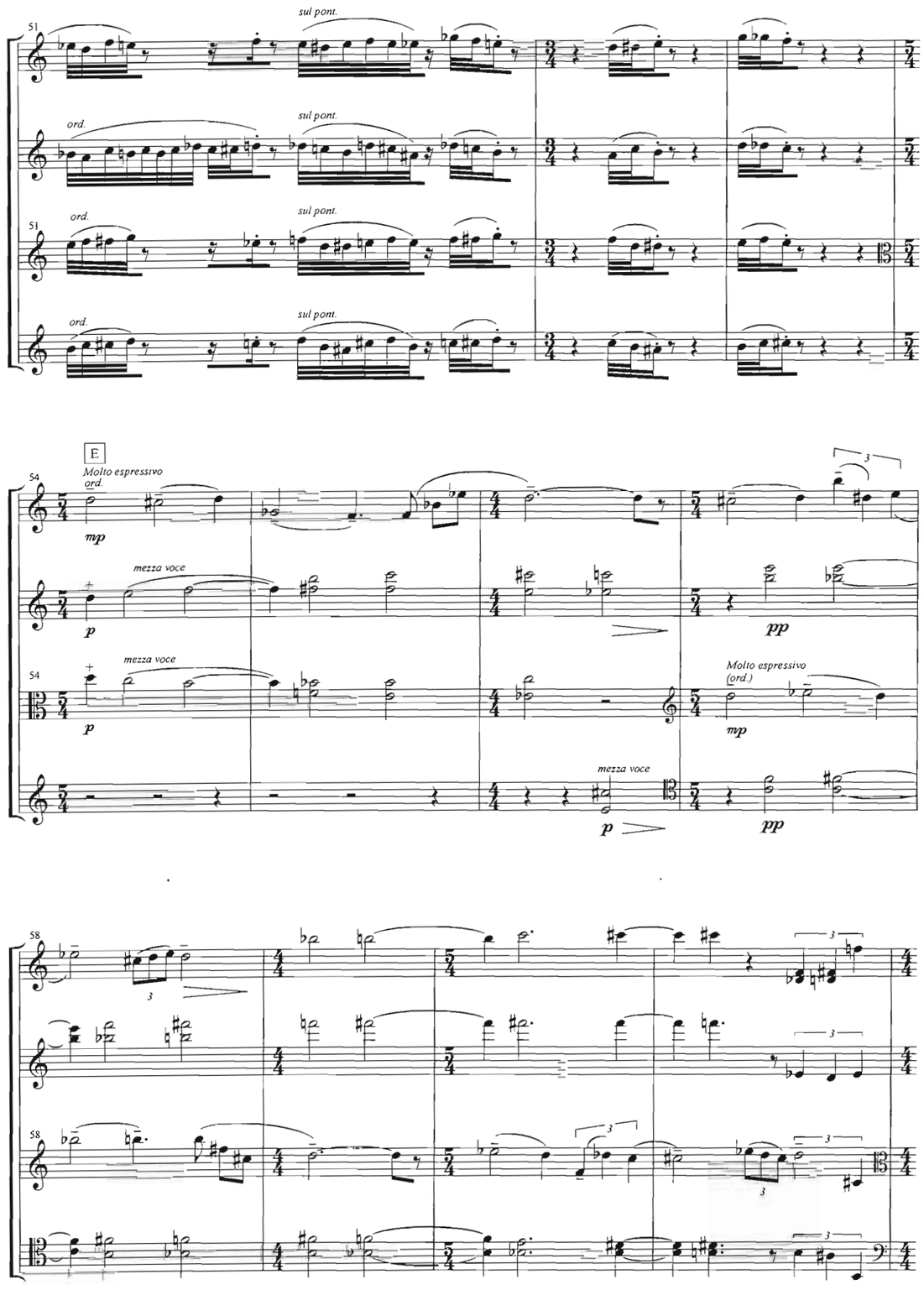
sul pont. mezza voce

44

gliss. *gliss.* *gliss.*

58


ord.
gliss.
sul pont.
ord.


sul pont.
ord.
E
Molto espressivo
ord.
mezza voce
Molto espressivo
(ord.)

59

G

Poco piu mosso

62

p *leggiero*

62

p *leggiero*

64

cresc.

64

cresc.

66

mf *mp* *cresc.* *f*

66

mf *mp* *cresc.* *f*

09

68

mf *cresc.* *gliss.* *sf*

68

mf *cresc.* *gliss.* *sf*

70

sf

70

sf

H

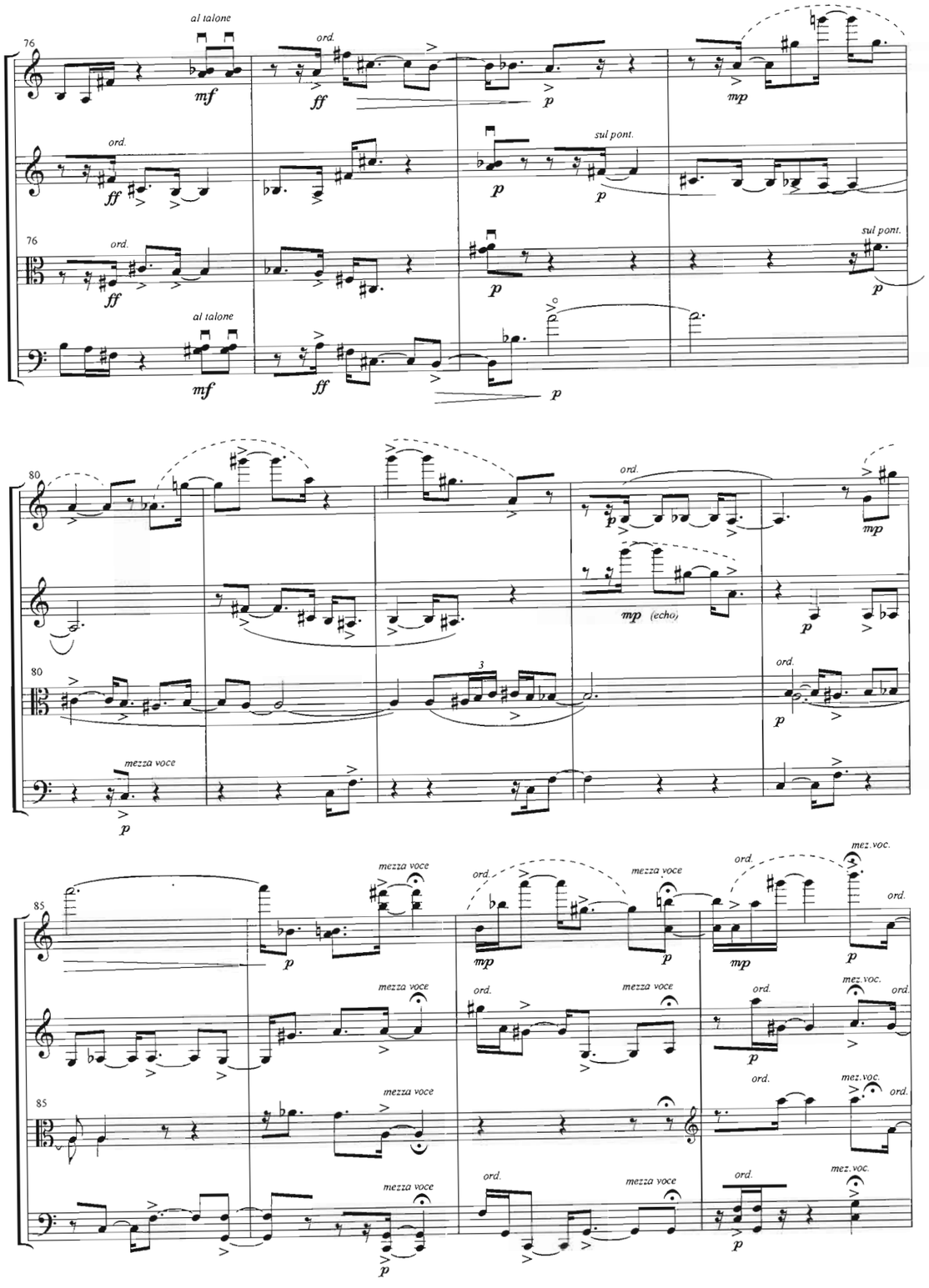
al talone

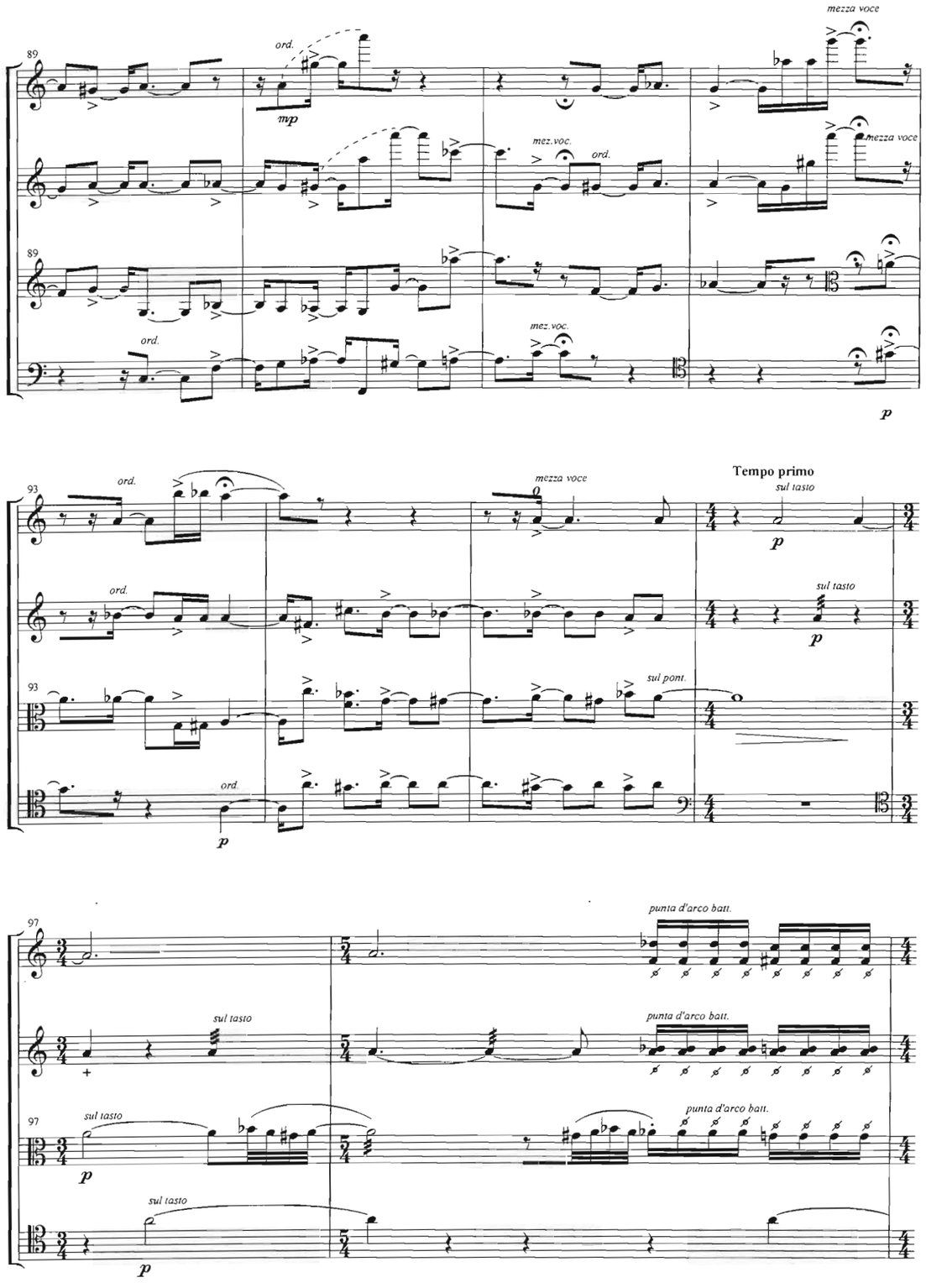
73

ff *ord.*

73

al talone *f*


76
al talone
ord.
sul pont.
80
mezza voce
mp (echo)
85
mez.voc.


89
ord.
mezza voce
mez.voc.
93
Tempo primo
sul tasto
sul pont.
97
punta d'arco batt.

99

1

ord. mezza voce

p

99

3

ord. mezza voce

p

Molto espressivo

ord.

mp

102

Espressivo

mp

3

102

3

3

J

105

jété

p

5

jété

p

5

105

jété

p

5

jété

p

5

108

5

p leggiero

5

p leggiero

108

5

p leggiero

5

p leggiero

111

111

K

114

mezza voce

p

mezza voce

p

114

ord.

Molto espressivo

p

Molto espressivo

(arco)

mp

118

Molto espressivo
ord.

mp

118

mezza voce

p

121

121

124

con sordino

124

con sordino

128

gliss.

pizz.

ppp

K

Espressivo
arco

mp

sul pont.

pp

128

sul pont.

pp

pizz.

Espressivo
arco

gliss.

ppp

mp

132

pizz.

mp

Espressivo

mp

132

Espressivo

mp

pizz.

mp

135

arco
sul pont.

mp

pizz. in relievo

mf

+ : quarter tone sharp

135

mf

+ : quarter tone flat

sul pont. *arco*

mp

Duration c. 8 min.