Pamela J. Marshall

Truth Becoming

string quartet no.1

Spindrift Music Company
www.spindrift.com
Publishing contemporary classical music and promoting its performance and appreciation

Truth Becoming

for string quartet
by Pamela J. Marshall

Notes

The string quartet "Truth Becoming" is inspired by the poem "The Process" by May Swenson (in *Nature: Poems Old and New* by May Swenson, Houghton Mifflin 1994, reprinted from *A Cage of Spines* by May Swenson). The poem provides the structural underpinnings of the string quartet. Much of the motivic material came from setting the text of various phrases at significant points in the poem, as if it were a song, then using those melodies, motives, and rhythms as raw material. The ideas of each section of the poem are also reflected in each major section of the quartet.

The poem is about quieting yourself and becoming aware of how you perceive truth. It begins "Lie down upon your side" which provided the rhythms and melodic contours for two main themes of the opening section. The music builds and retreats several times, representing waves of expanding awareness.

At the center of the poem are the lines "Now wait for what will happen; Something will". There is a pause before the cello and viola begin a tentative waiting music. The staccato waiting motive passes from voice to voice, building then subsiding. This transition introduces the second major section of the piece as the different voices search for musical gestures that convey the grace and passion of discovery. The group joins together to play an expansive melody derived from the lines "Wide and clear the eyelid's dome; a galaxy where suns collide…". First the upper strings sing, then the lower strings in a variation.

The final section is about words and how we understand them. It begins "Words are birds" and describes them climbing upward to the forest canopy. This playful image carries us lightly to the coda as we arrive "where it is light and they remain and are believed".

By living with this poem a long time before I wrote the piece, by hearing and refining motives as if I were going to set the text, I feel the quartet music gained an inner consistency of harmonic and motivic gestures that allowed each section to unfold inevitably into the next, just as the poem takes us to a beautiful conclusion.

Duration Approximately 11-12 minutes

Premiere The Arden String Quartet played the premiere of "Truth Becoming" in February 2003 in on the Just In Time concert series in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

About the composer Pamela J. Marshall studied at Eastman and Yale and has been a fellow at the MacDowell Colony. She has written for chamber ensembles, synthesizers, mandolin, and orchestra, including commissions from Enigmatica (a mandolin octet), Axiom Duo, Trio Arundel, mandolinist Neil Gladd, and DanceArt. "Through the Mist" for orchestra was played in New York at a Women's Philharmonic symposium. "Remember the Old Songs" for voice and piano, "Traditional Christmas" for chorus and orchestra and several settings of American carols for choir, horns, and organ reflect her love of old folk and holiday songs. Her "Mandolin Night" is recorded on a Plucked String CD and chamber music is recorded on the Clique Track label. Her company, Spindrift Music, publishes her music (on the Web at www.spindrift.com). She plays horn in the Concord Orchestra in Massachusetts.

The Process

Lie down upon your side
and fold your knees
Bend your hands at the wrist
against your chest
as a cat or dog does in repose

Close your eyes and feel
your brow smooth out like a small
cloth in the wind
or a brook slipping
to gentle waterfall

Now wait for what will happen
Something will

Beneath this hill of breathing hair
a steep mine
Within this ear
oracles of echoes seep
Wide and clear the eyelid's dome
a galaxy where suns collide
and planets spin and moons begin

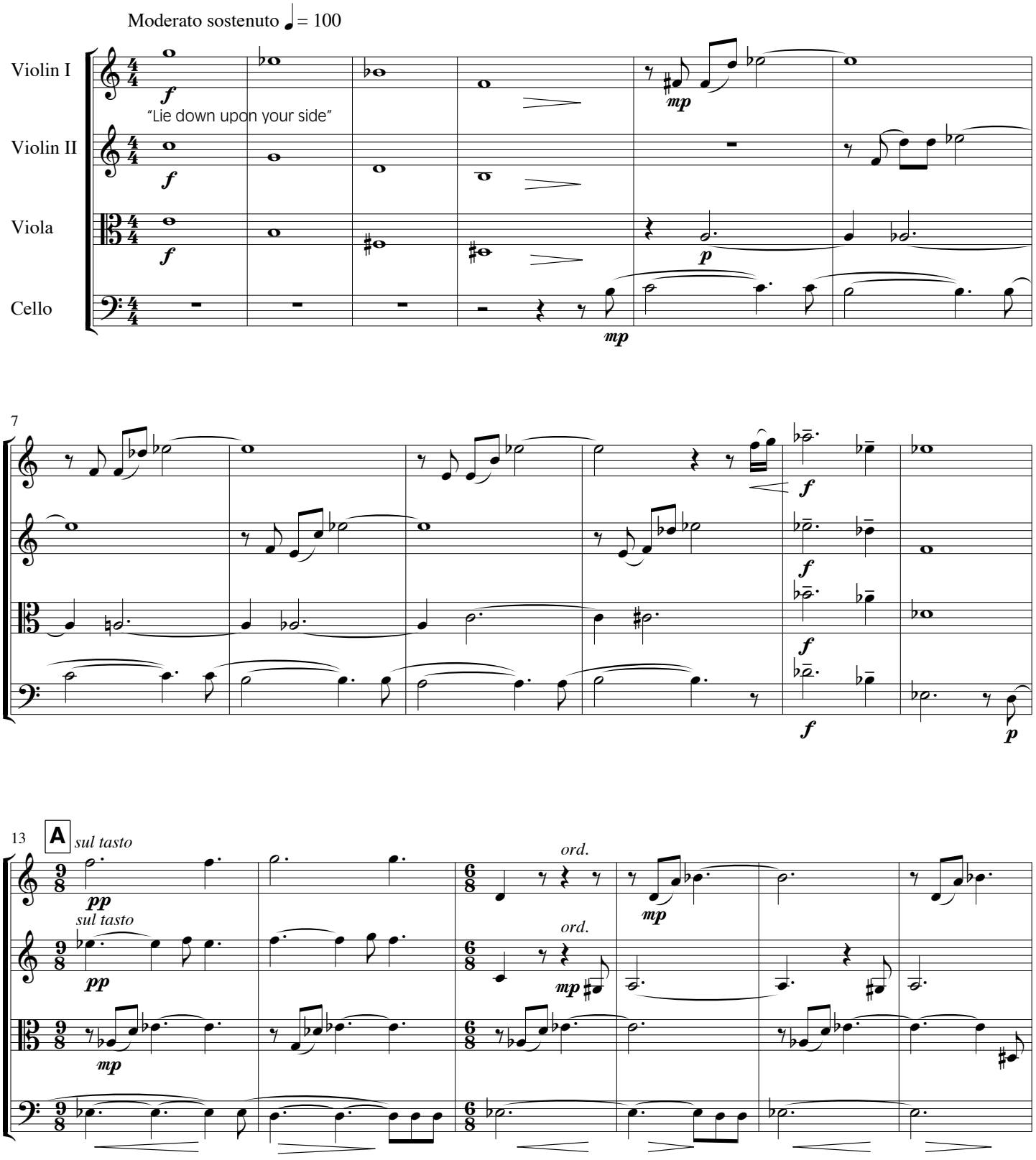
Words are birds perceived
in a secret forest
Fed by nerve and vein they hop
from twig to twig and up
an ivory ladder to the top
where it is light and they remain
and are believed

"The Process" by May Swenson. Used with permission of the Literary Estate of May Swenson.

Truth Becoming

String Quartet No. 1

Pamela J. Marshall



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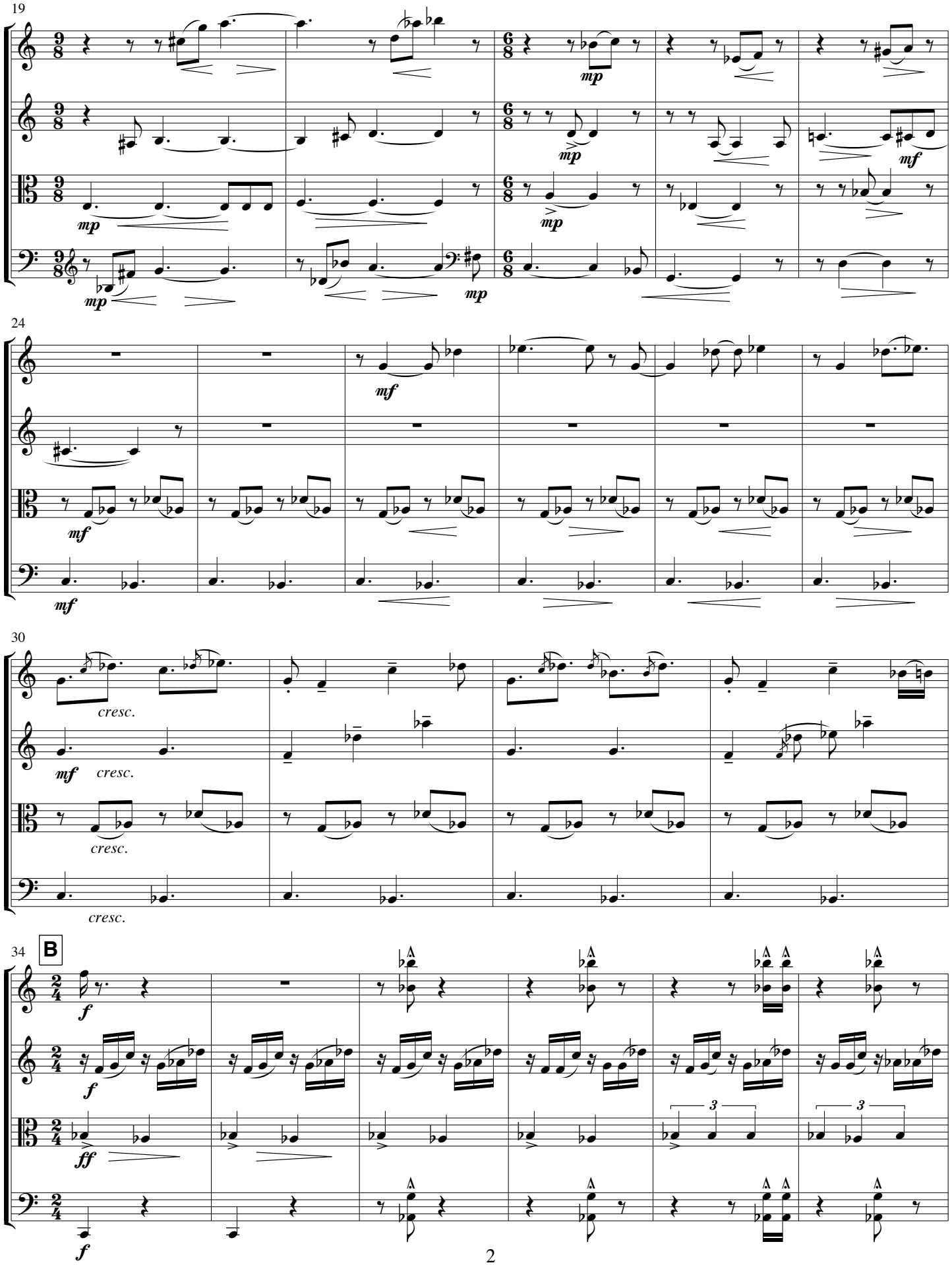
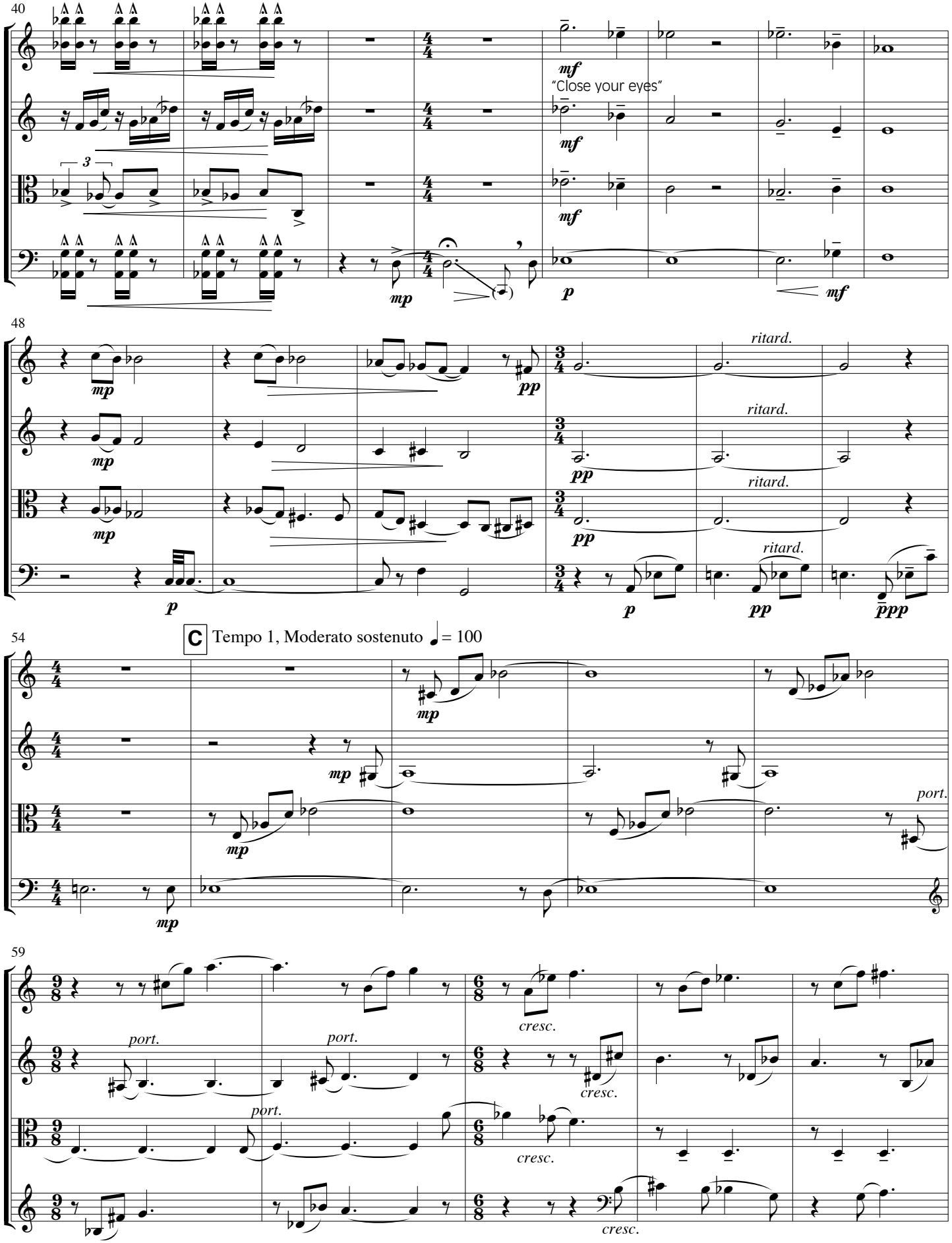
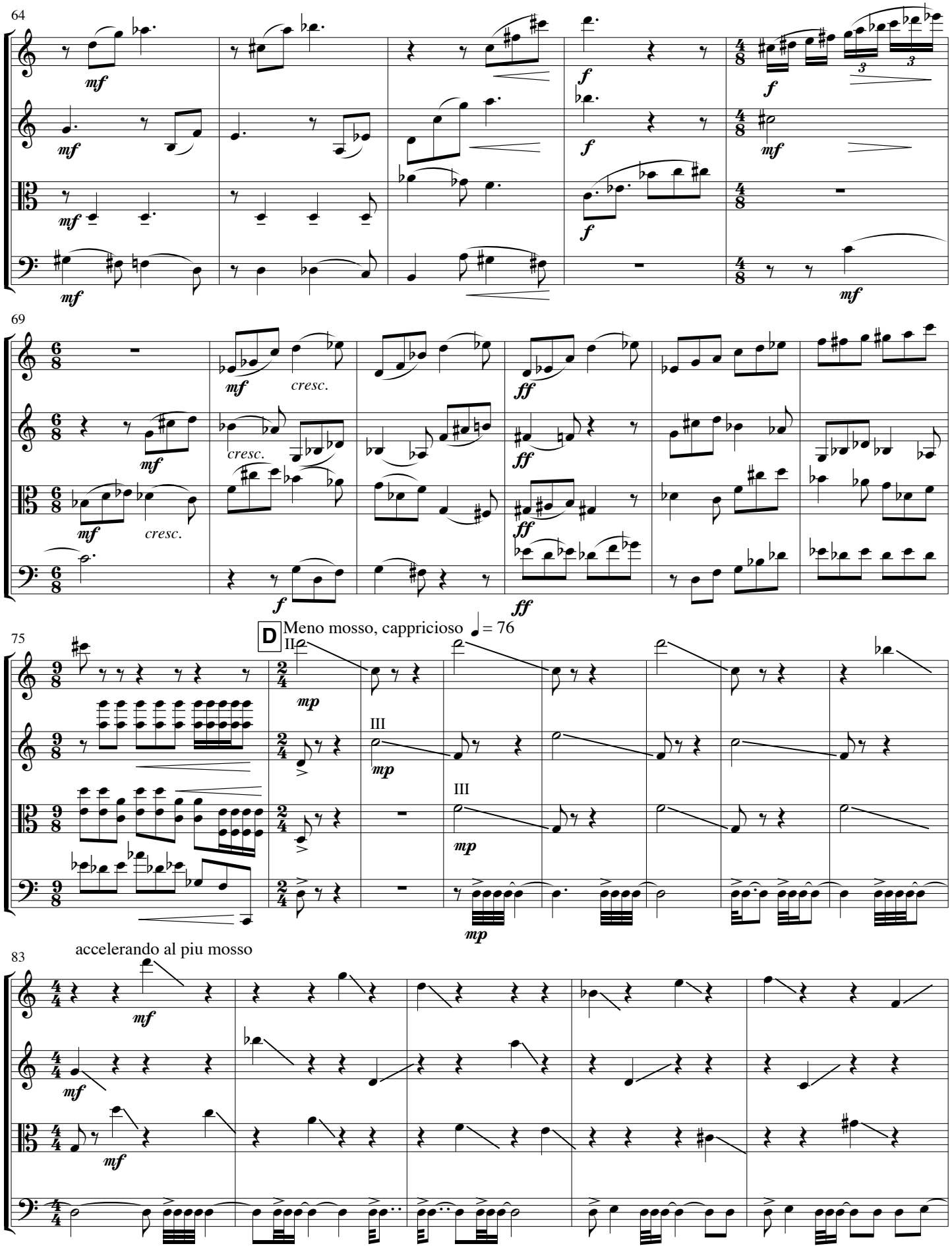
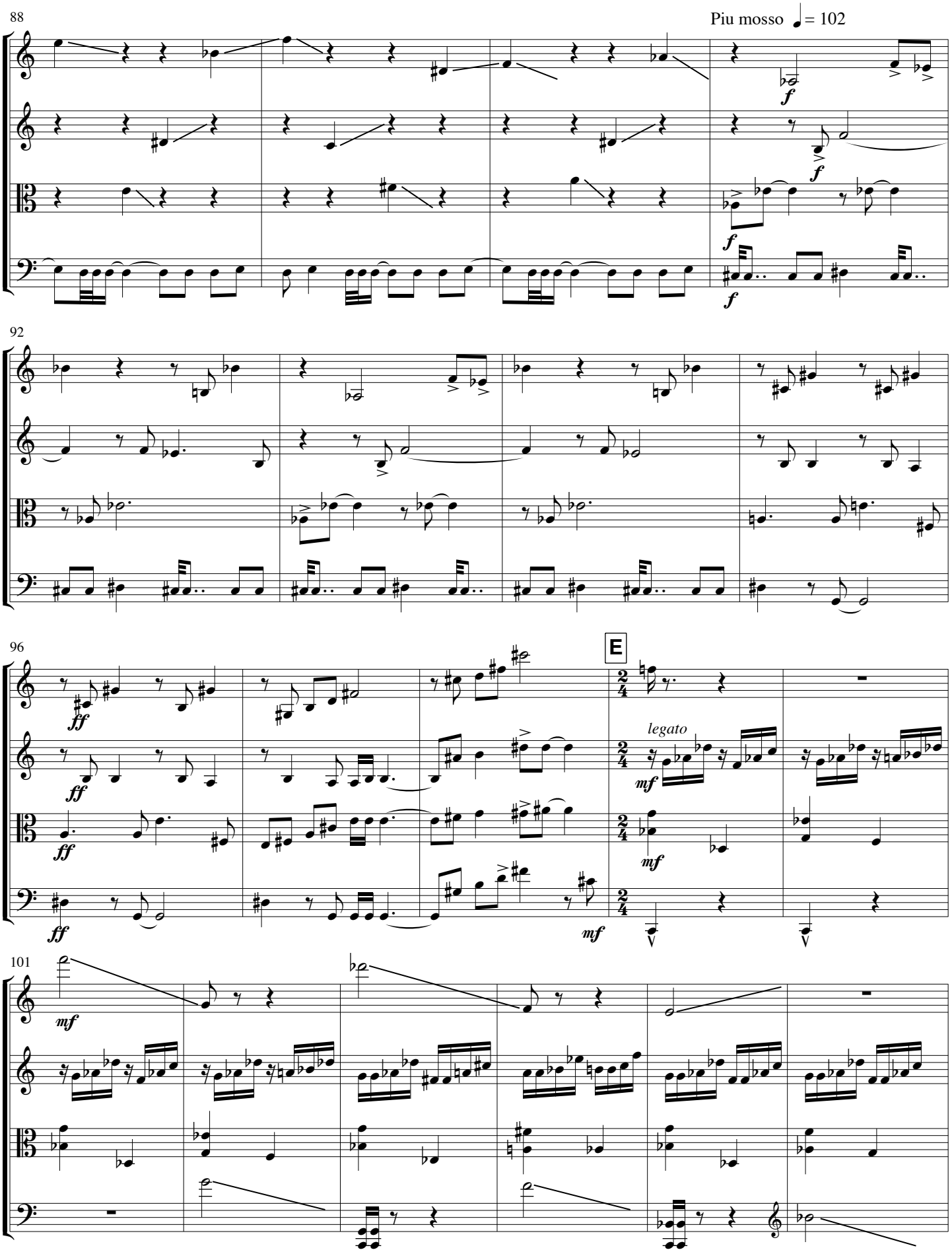
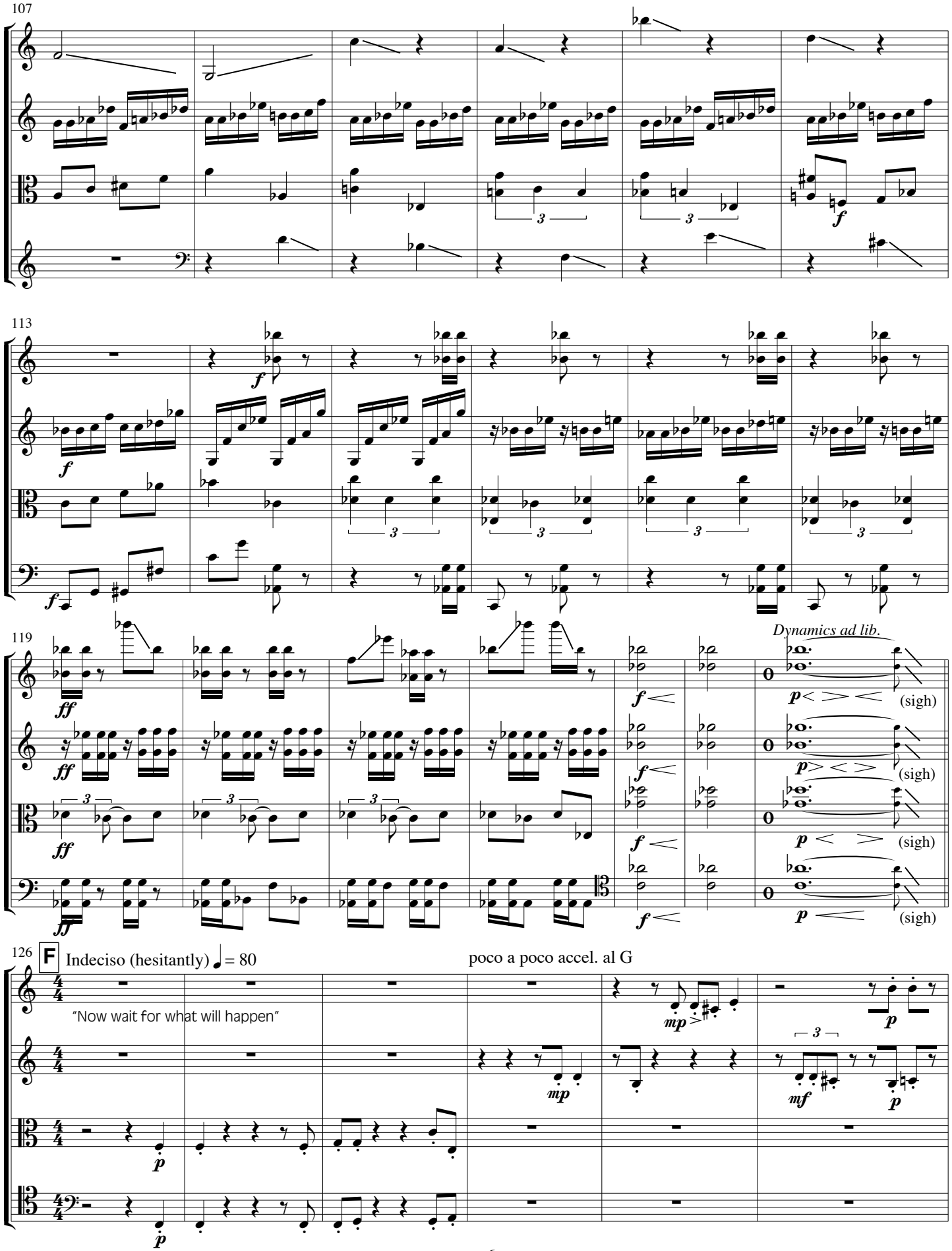
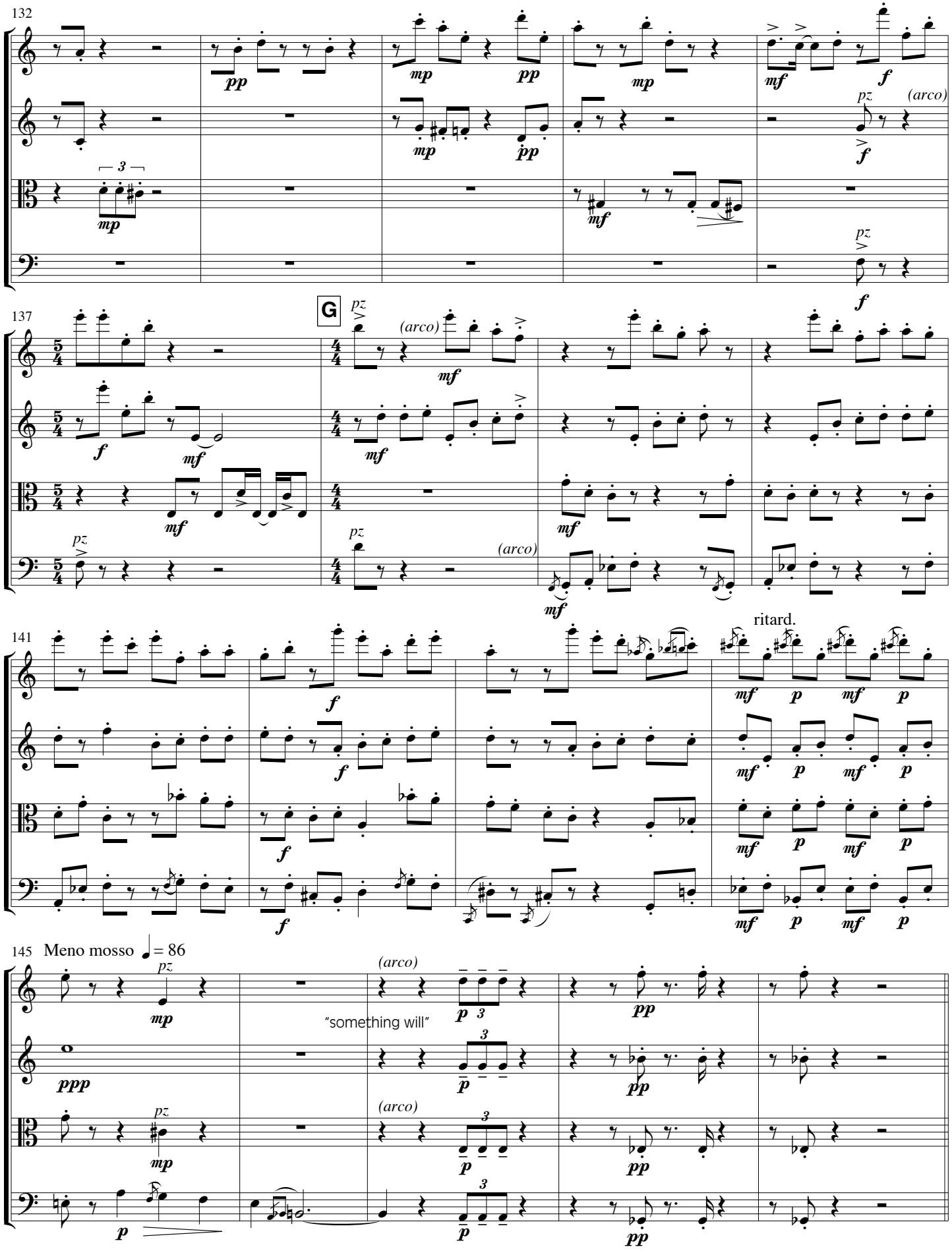

19
mp
mp
mp
mp
mf
24
mf
mf
mf
30
cresc.
mf
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
34
B
f
f
ff
f
3
3

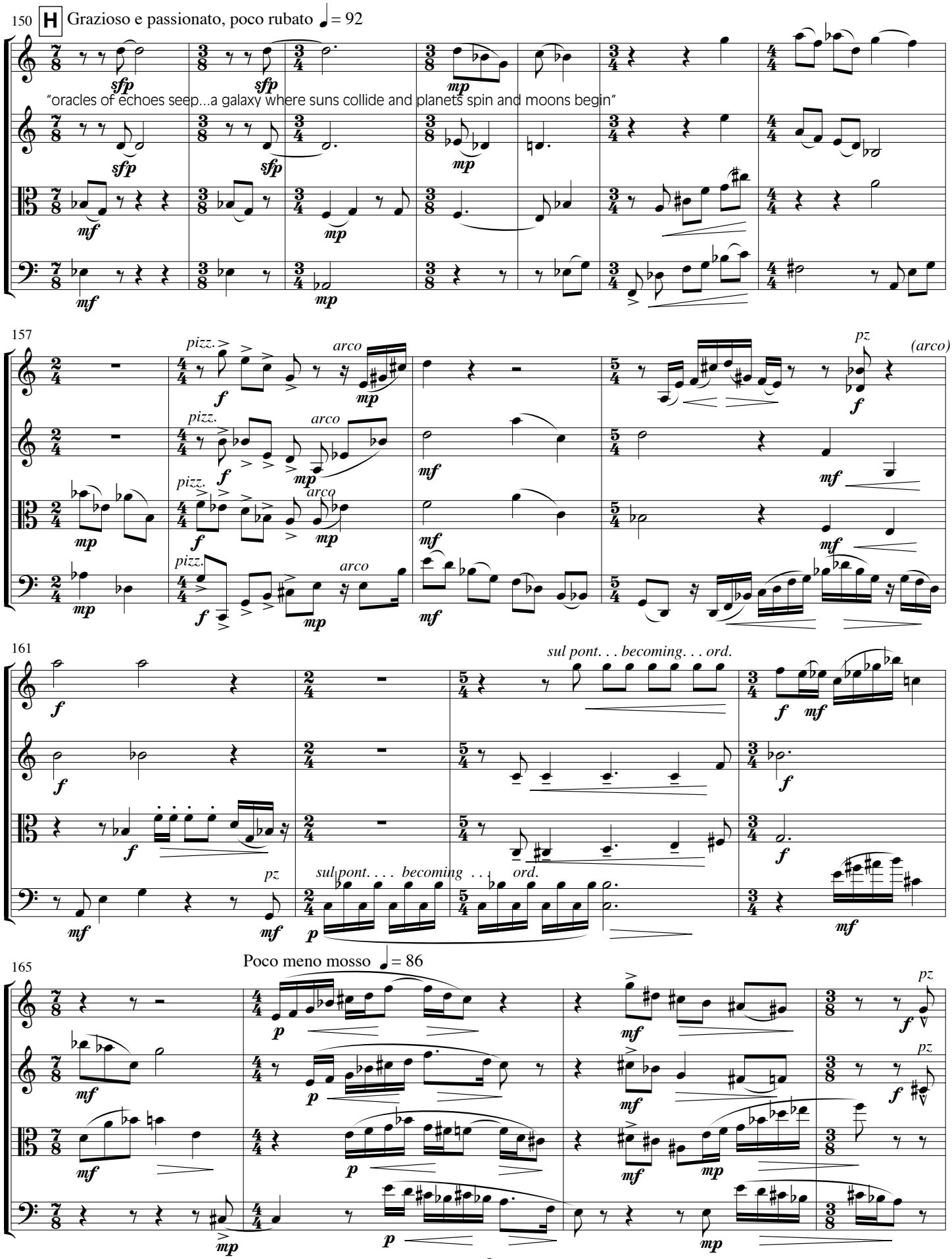

40
mf
"Close your eyes"
mf
mf
mp
p
mf
48
mp
pp
ritard.
mp
pp
ritard.
mp
pp
ritard.
p
p
pp
ppp
54
C
Tempo 1, Moderato sostenuto ♩= 100
mp
mp
mp
port.
mp
59
port.
port.
port.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.

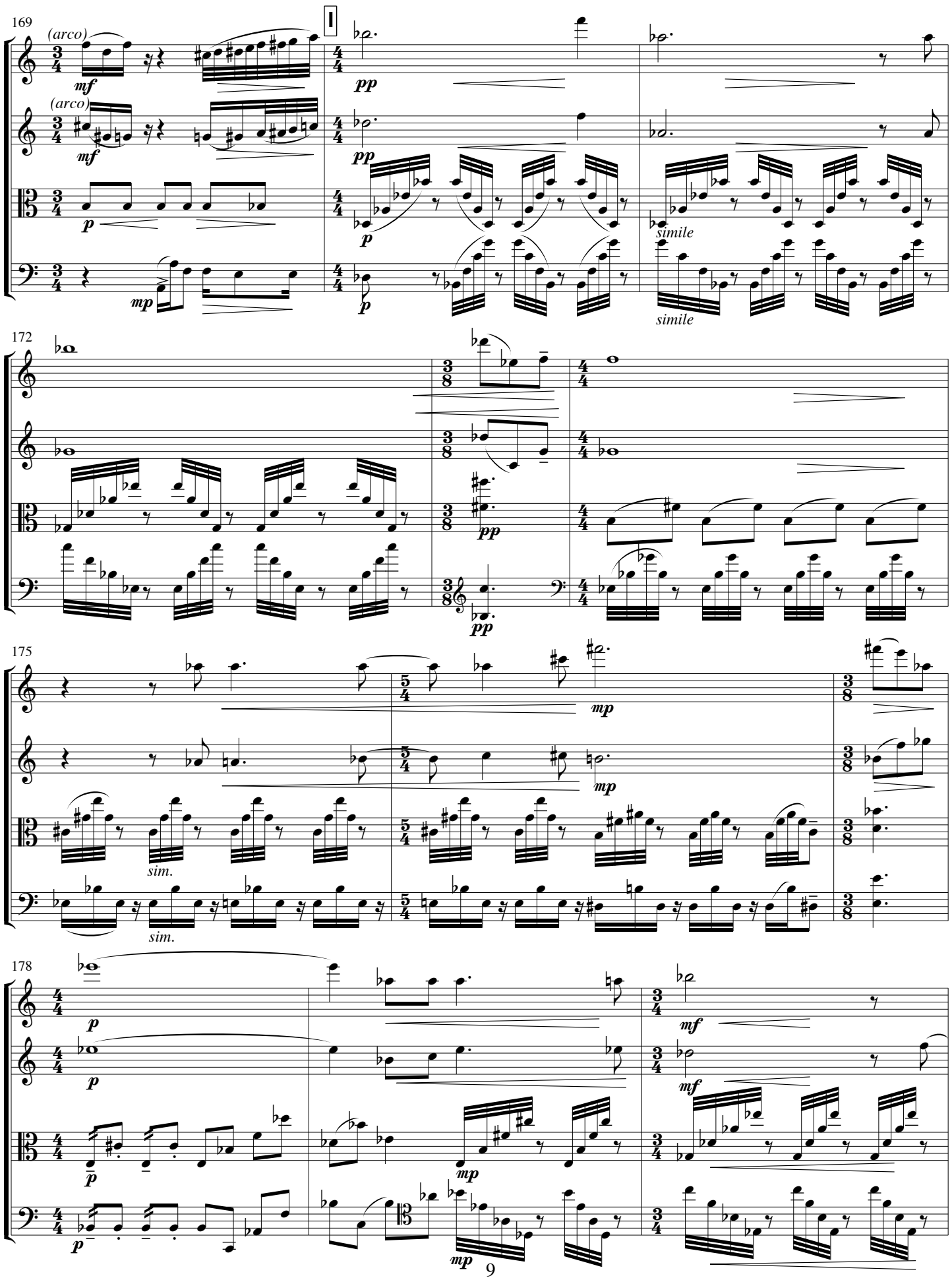

64
mf
f
3
69
cresc.
ff
D
Meno mosso, cappricioso
= 76
II
III
mp
75
accelerando al piu mosso
83

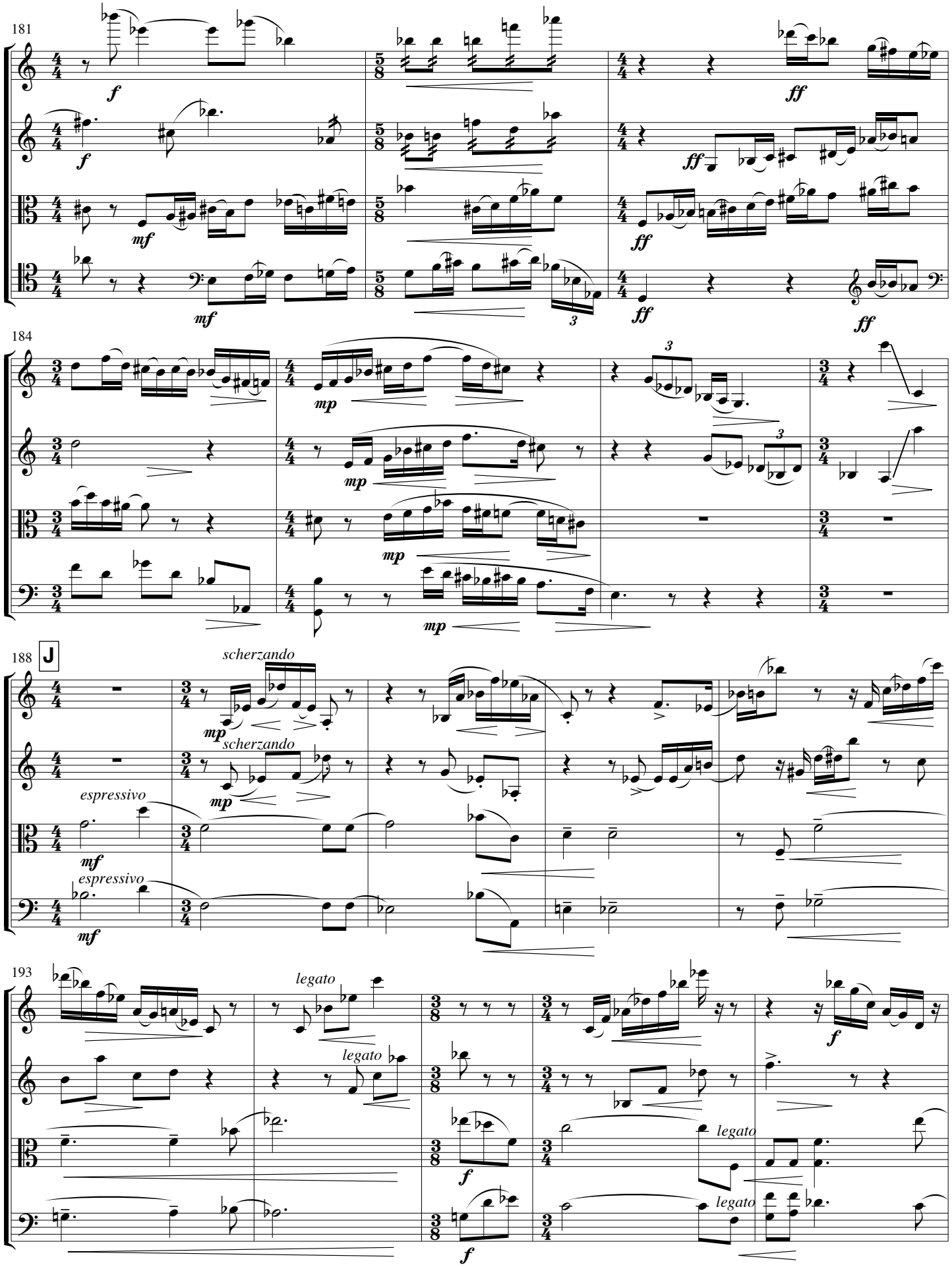

88
Piu mosso ♩= 102
92
96
E
legato
101

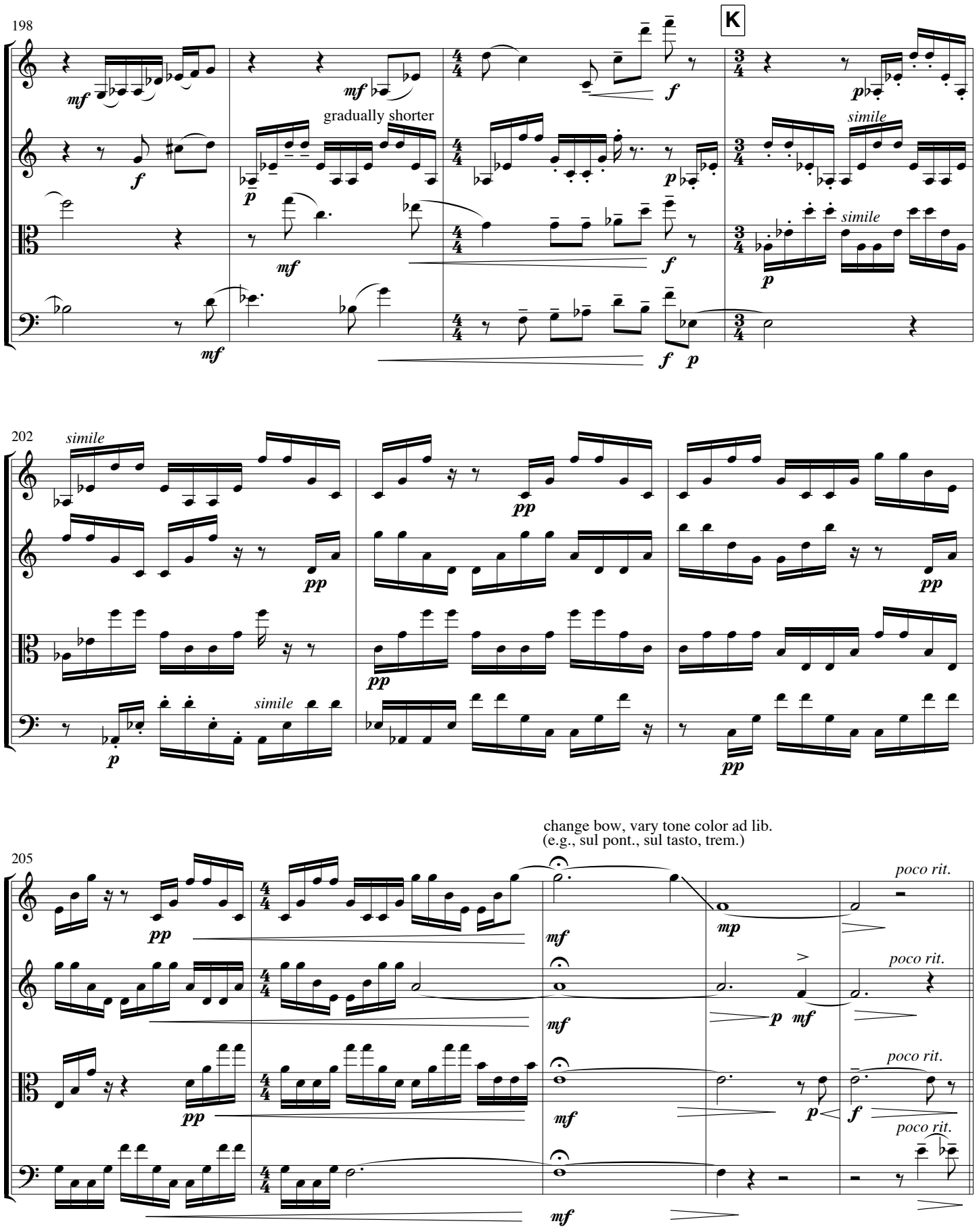

107
113
119
Dynamics ad lib.
(sigh)
(sigh)
(sigh)
(sigh)
126
F
Indeciso (hesitantly) ♩ = 80
poco a poco accel. al G
"Now wait for what will happen"

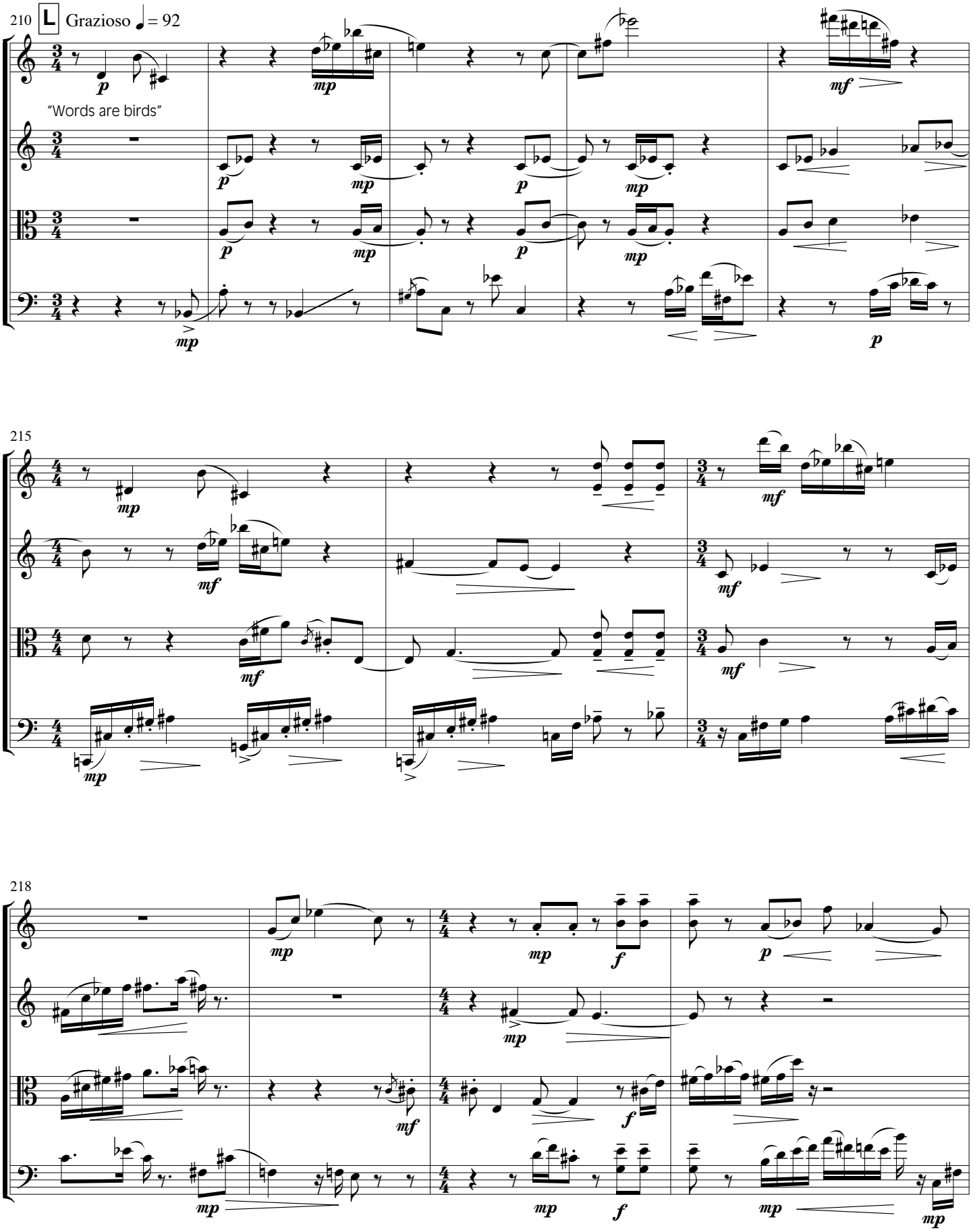

132
pp
mp
pp
mp
mf
f
pz
(arco)
f
mp
mf
pz
f
137
G
pz
(arco)
mf
f
mf
mf
mf
pz
(arco)
mf
141
ritard.
f
f
f
mf
p
mf
p
mf
p
mf
p
mf
p
mf
p
145
Meno mosso ♩= 86
pz
mp
(arco)
"something will"
p
3
pp
ppp
pp
pz
mp
(arco)
p
3
pp
p
3
pp

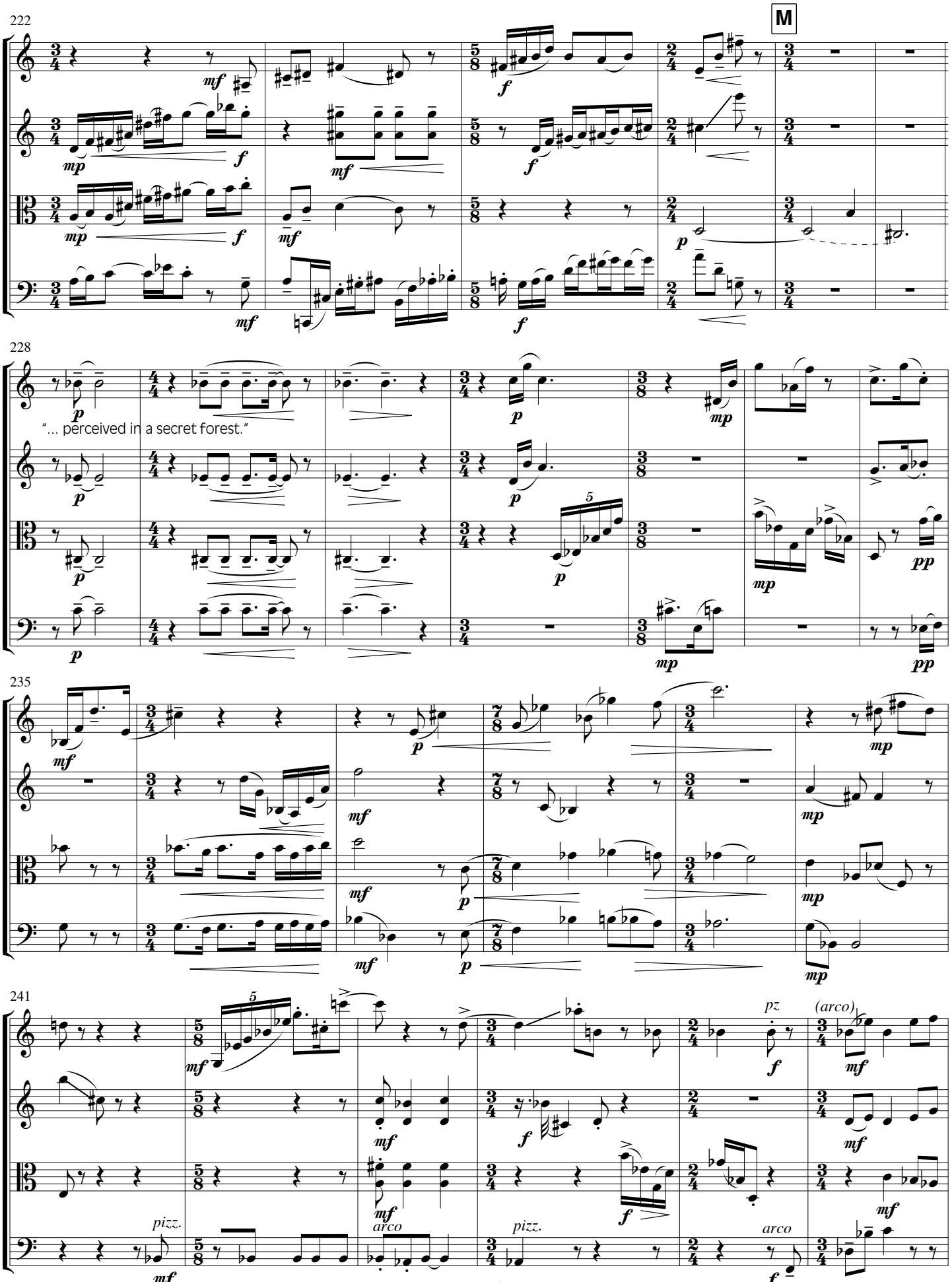

150
H
Grazioso e passionato, poco rubato ♩= 92
"oracles of echoes seep...a galaxy where suns collide and planets spin and moons begin"
157
pizz.
arco
pz
(arco)
161
sul pont. . . . becoming . . . ord.
165
Poco meno mosso ♩= 86

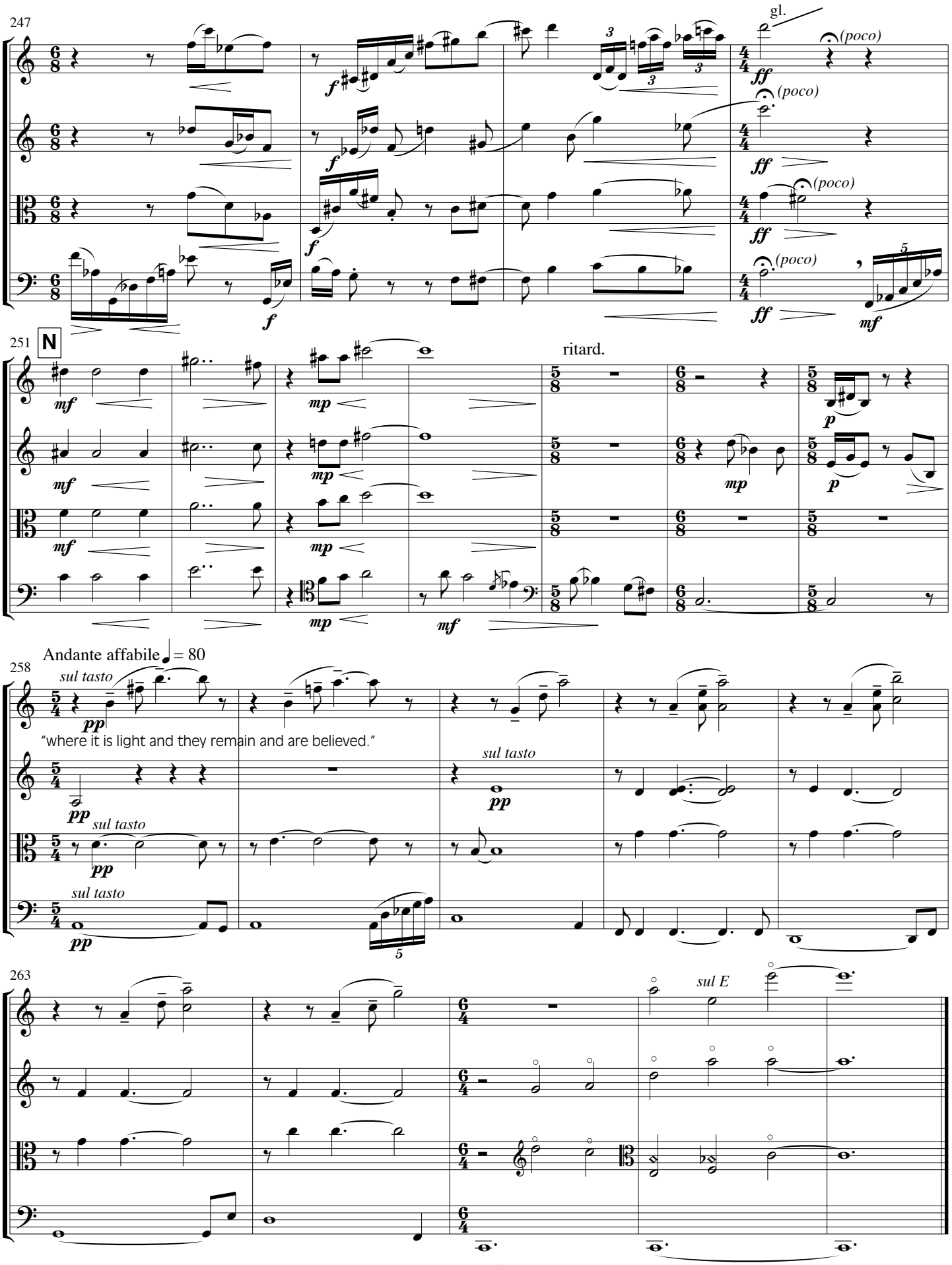

169
(arco)
mf
(arco)
mf
p
mp
I
pp
pp
p
p
simile
simile
172
pp
pp
175
mp
mp
sim.
sim.
178
p
p
p
mf
mf
mp
mp


181
f
f
mf
mf
ff
ff
ff
ff
3
184
mp
mp
mp
mp
3
3
188
J
scherzando
scherzando
espressivo
espressivo
mp
mp
mf
mf
193
legato
legato
f
f
legato
legato
f


198
K
gradually shorter
simile
202
simile
205
change bow, vary tone color ad lib.
(e.g., sul pont., sul tasto, trem.)
poco rit.


210
L
Grazioso ♩ = 92
"Words are birds"
215
218


222
M
228
"... perceived in a secret forest."
235
241
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
pz
(arco)


247
gl.
(poco)
251
N
ritard.
Andante affabile ♩ = 80
258
sul tasto
"where it is light and they remain and are believed."
263
sul E

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Selected Music by Pamela J. Marshall

Orchestra

Through the Mist (2222-2220, harp, 3pc, timp, strings) in 3 mvts
A chill wind in autumn (solo voice, 2222-4221-3pc, strings)
Traditional Christmas (unison or 2pt chorus, 2222-4221, harp, 3pc, timp, strings)
Three Appalachian Carols (2222-4231, harp, 2pc, timp, strings)

Keyboard

Suite for harpsichord or piano
Daydream for piano
Wordless Prayer for piano
Imagine That Time Stops for piano
Stomp for piano

Vocal

Ariel's Songs for high or medium voice and piano
Remember the Old Songs for high voice and piano
Sky's Mirror for voice and cello
A chill wind in autumn for voice and piano

Strings

Arcanum for solo violin
Soliloquy for solo cello
Elusive Sleep for cello and piano
Pascal's Theorems for cello and doublebass
Triptoe Suite for intermediate violinist and piano
Truth Becoming for string quartet

Winds & Brass

Waves and Fountains for oboe, horn, piano
Wanderer for brass quintet
Hillslide for brass quintet
Colored Leaves for solo horn
Star in the East (traditional carol) for 8 horns
Also Sprach Zarathustra by R. Strauss - excerpts - for 8 horns

Recordings

Noises, Sounds & Strange Airs (Clique Track)
    includes Soliloquy and Sky's Mirror
    performed by D'Anna Fortunato and Emmanuel Feldman
Mandolin X 4 (Plucked String Inc.)
    includes Mandolin Night performed by Neil Gladd