# *Mosaics*

String Quartet no. 7

2015, 2025

*Lawrence Kramer*

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This composition originated during work on an *a capella* setting of a short lyric by Walt Whitman, "Twilight." It occurred to me in mid-stream that the piece would also have a nice sound on string quartet, so I began making the new version. It then occurred to me that the fragmentary nature of the poem invited further treatment as well. The result is this quartet, a series of seven short movements that constitute a series of variations without a theme. Each movement is conceived as a kind of mosaic in itself. At the same time, by rearranging (reinterpreting, recasting, reframing) elements shared with the others, each movement also adds itself as a tile to the larger mosaic. The music alternates between contemplative slow movements or passages and lively, spirited ones, seeking to reconcile the impulses that underlie them. The "Twilight" movement, no. 5, forms both a long-awaited point of arrival and a necessary point of departure. The poem (in its entirety) reads:

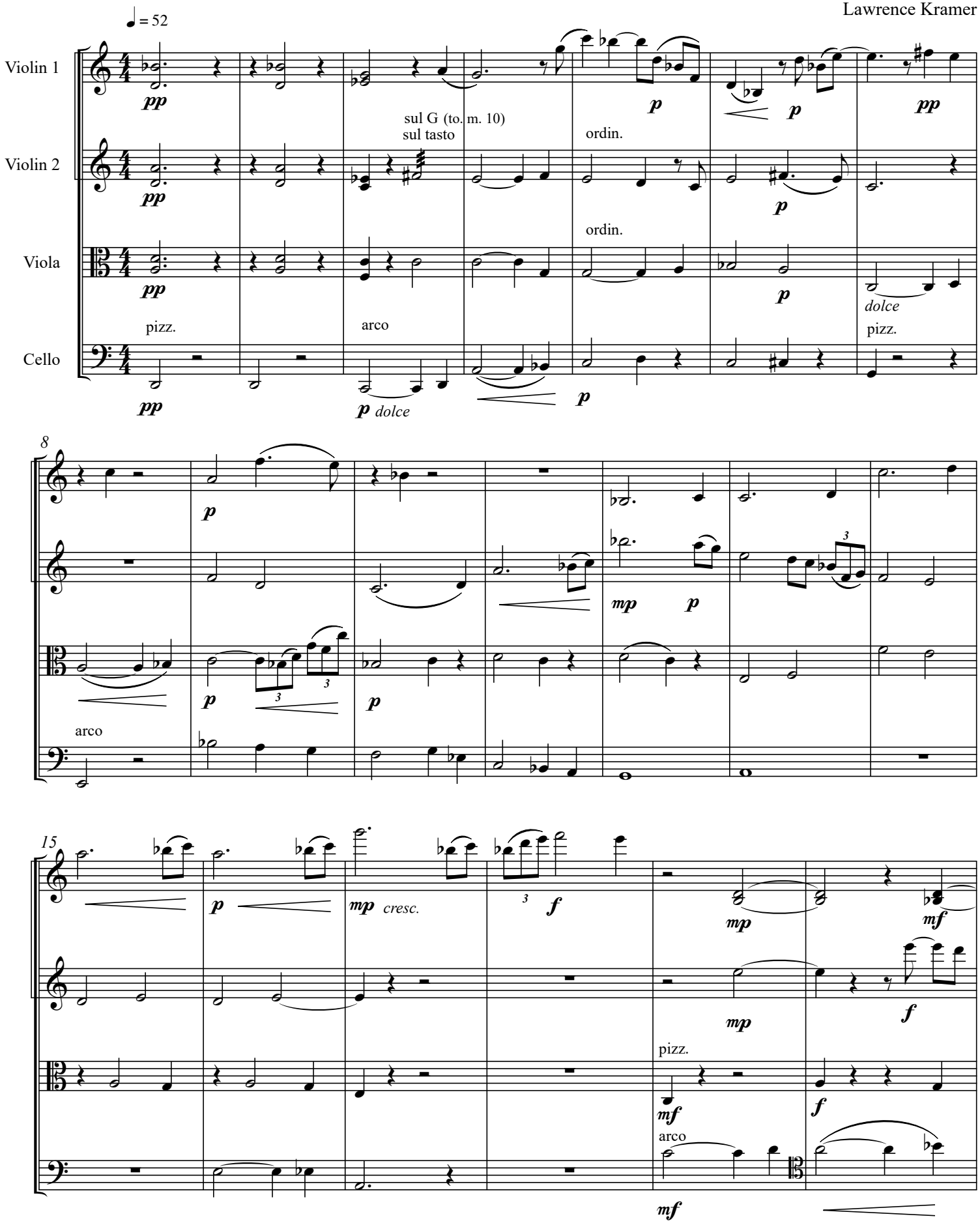
> The soft voluptuous opiate shades,
> The sun just gone, the eager light dispell'd—(I too will soon be gone, dispell'd,)
> A haze—nirwana—rest and night—oblivion.

The music both yields to this evocation and resists it. The poem is one of Whitman's frequent portrayals of oblivion as a quasi-erotic bliss. The beauty of its language is captivating, but I don't want to believe what it's telling me. "Mosaics" is a musical expression of this contradiction.

Composed 2015, revised 2025. Duration: 18 minutes.

# Mosaics

Lawrence Kramer

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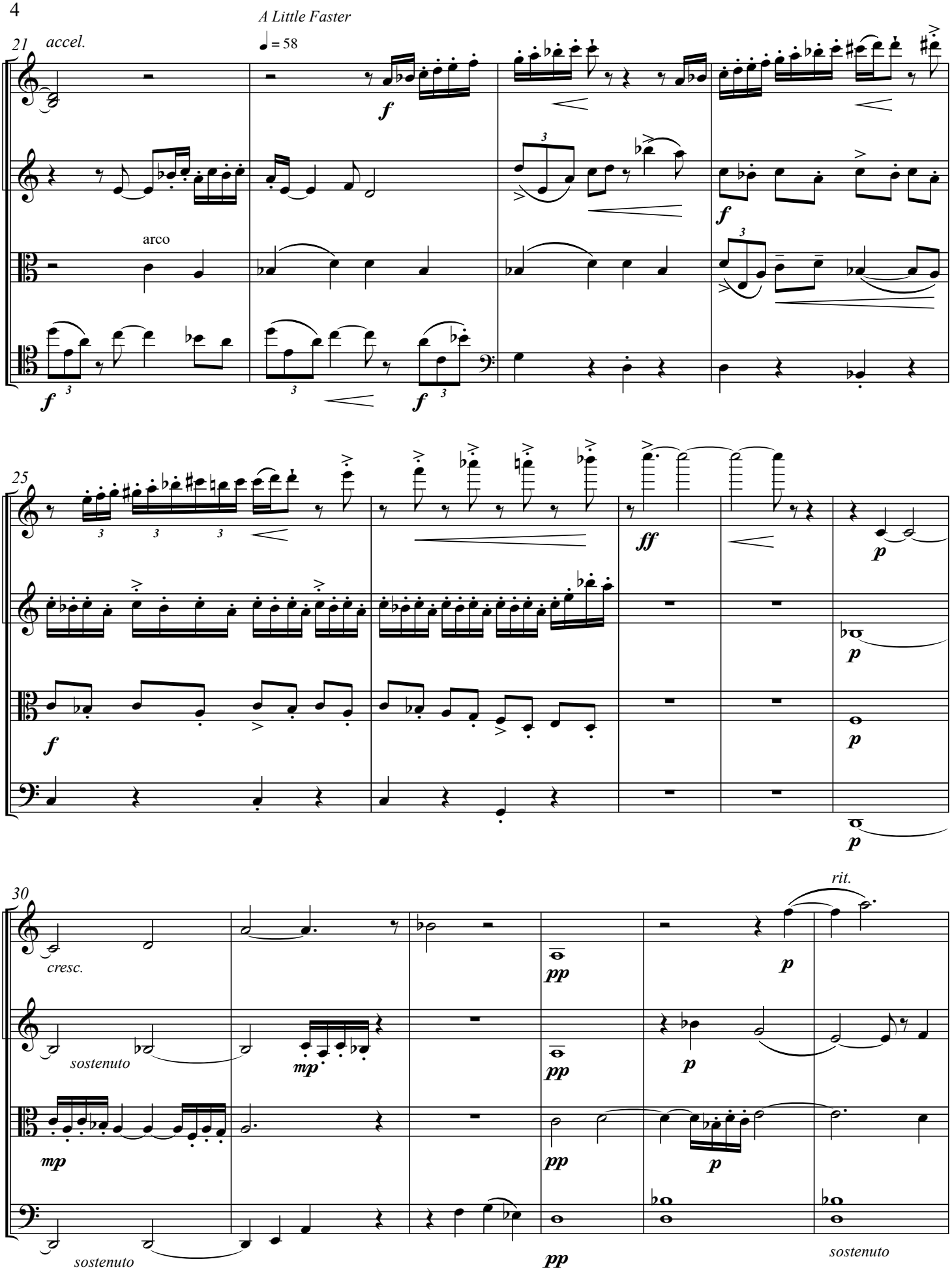
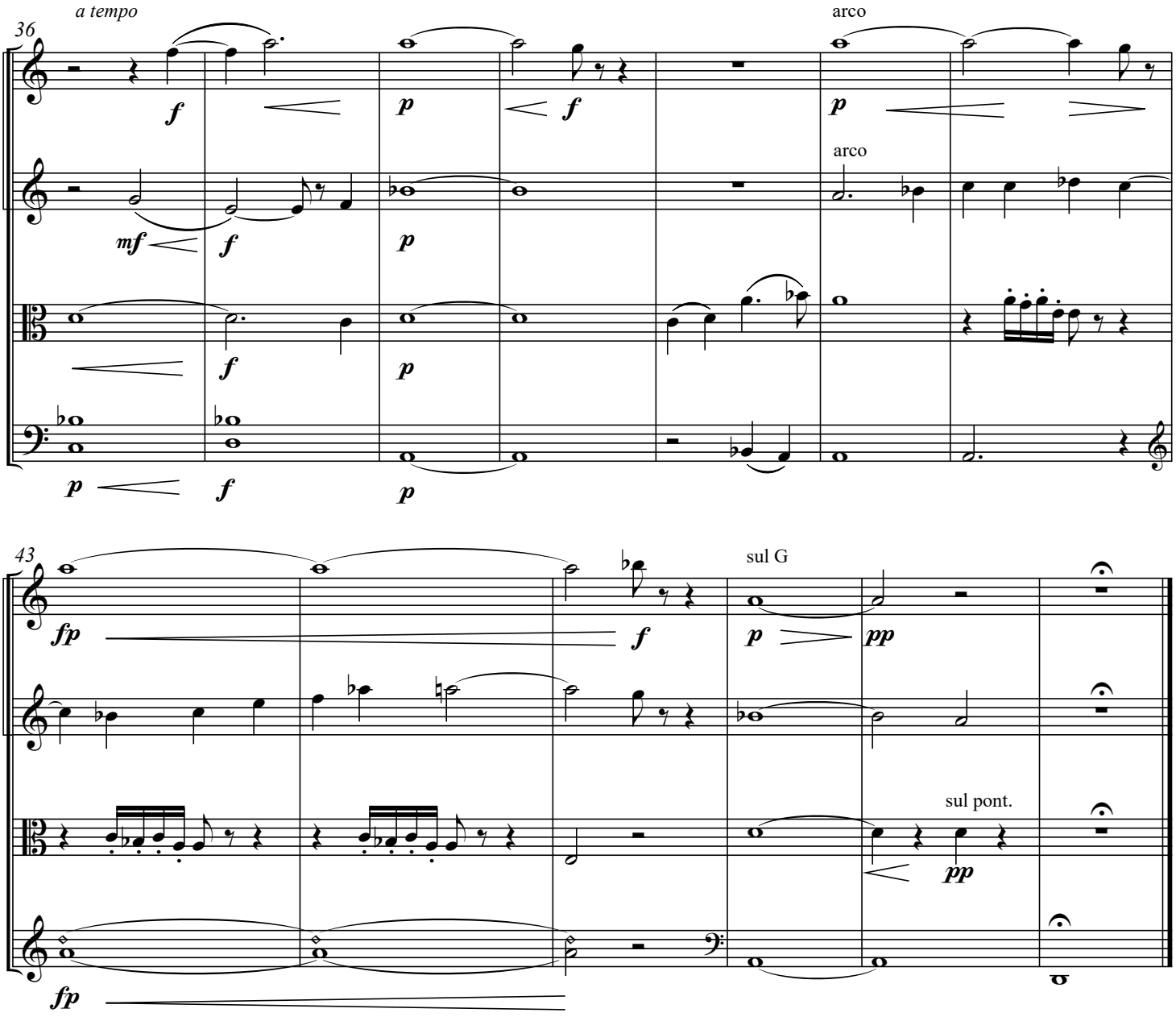
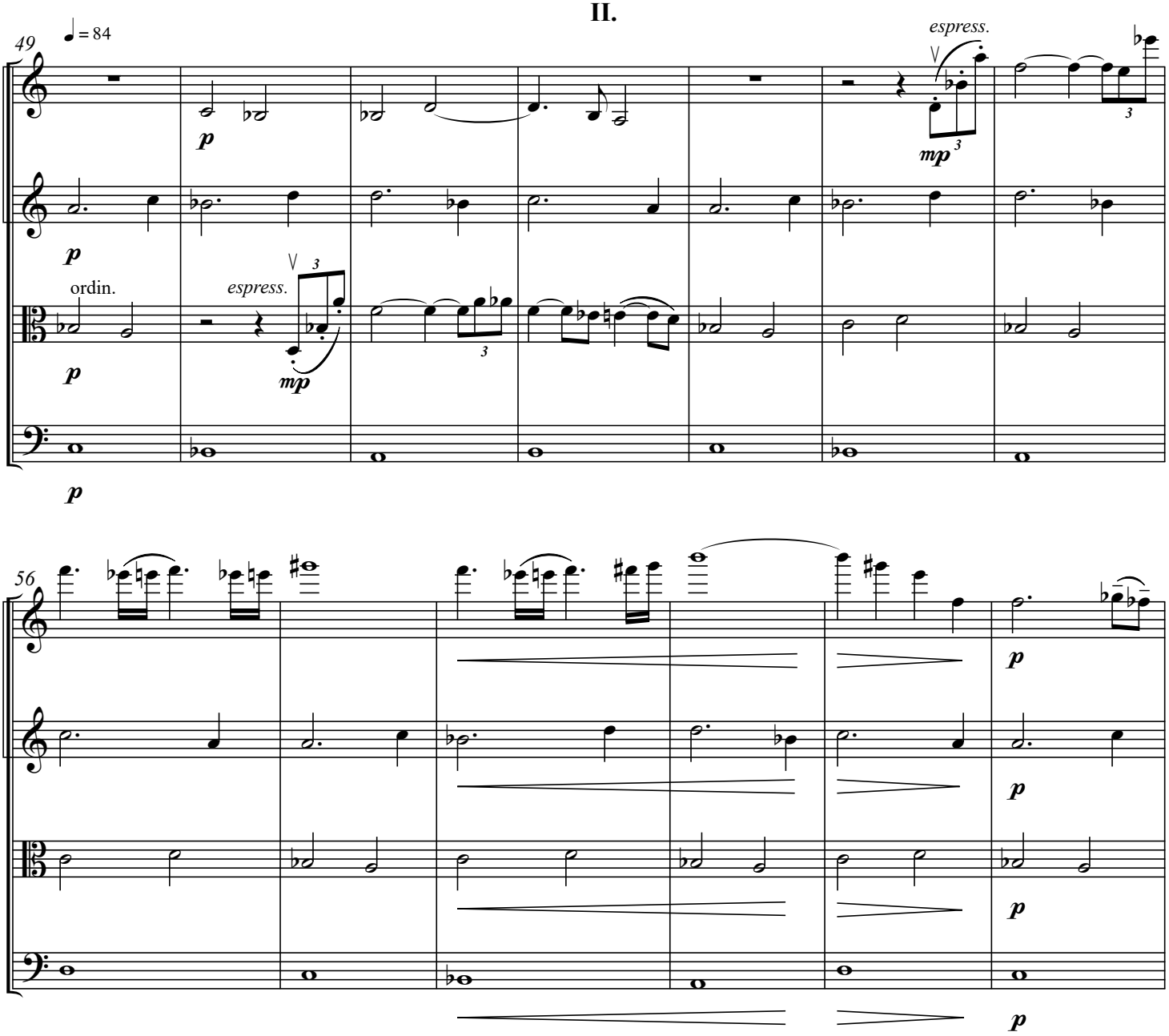
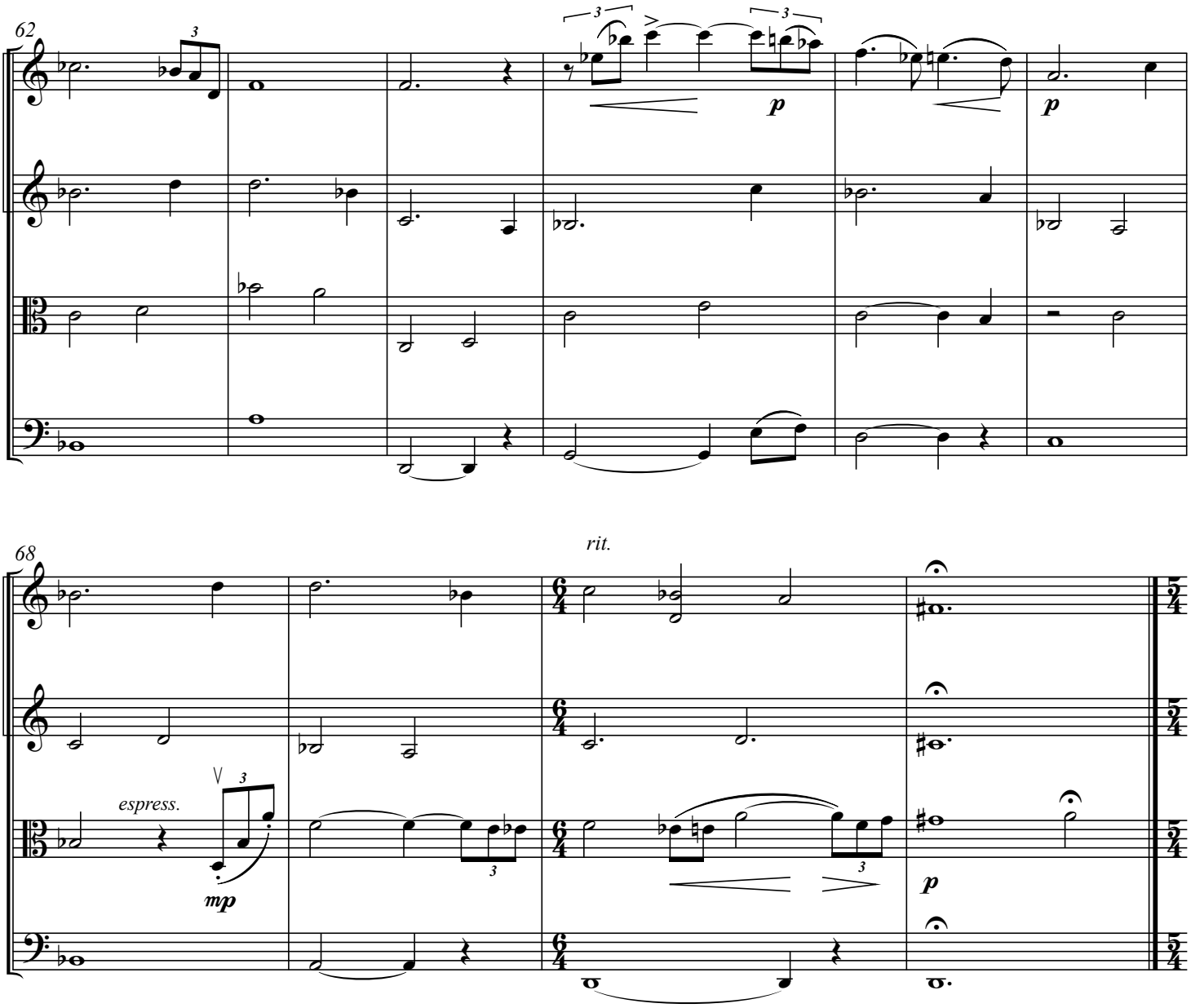

A Little Faster
♩ = 58
21
accel.
arco
25
30
cresc.
sostenuto
rit.

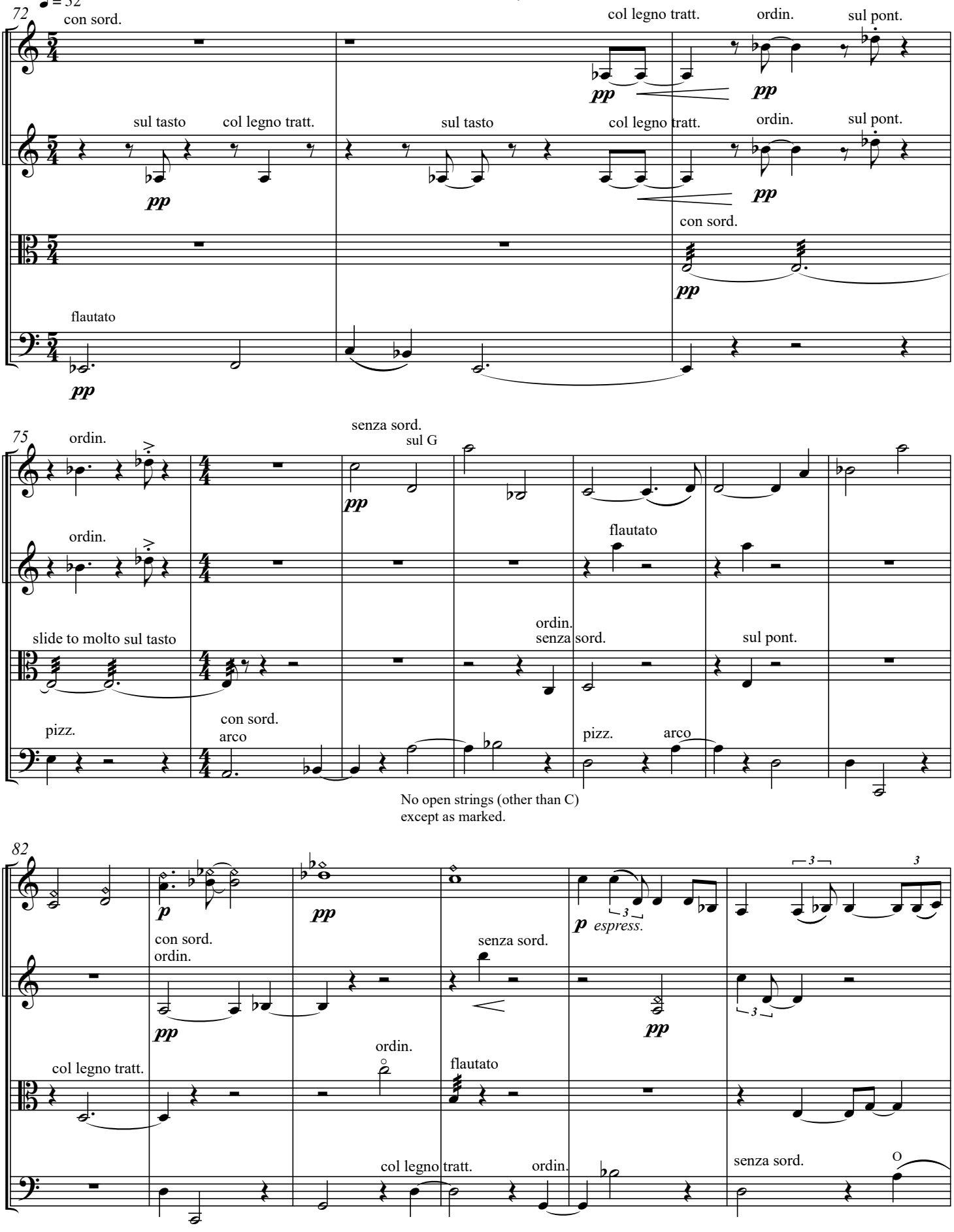

36
a tempo
arco
arco
43
sul G
sul pont.

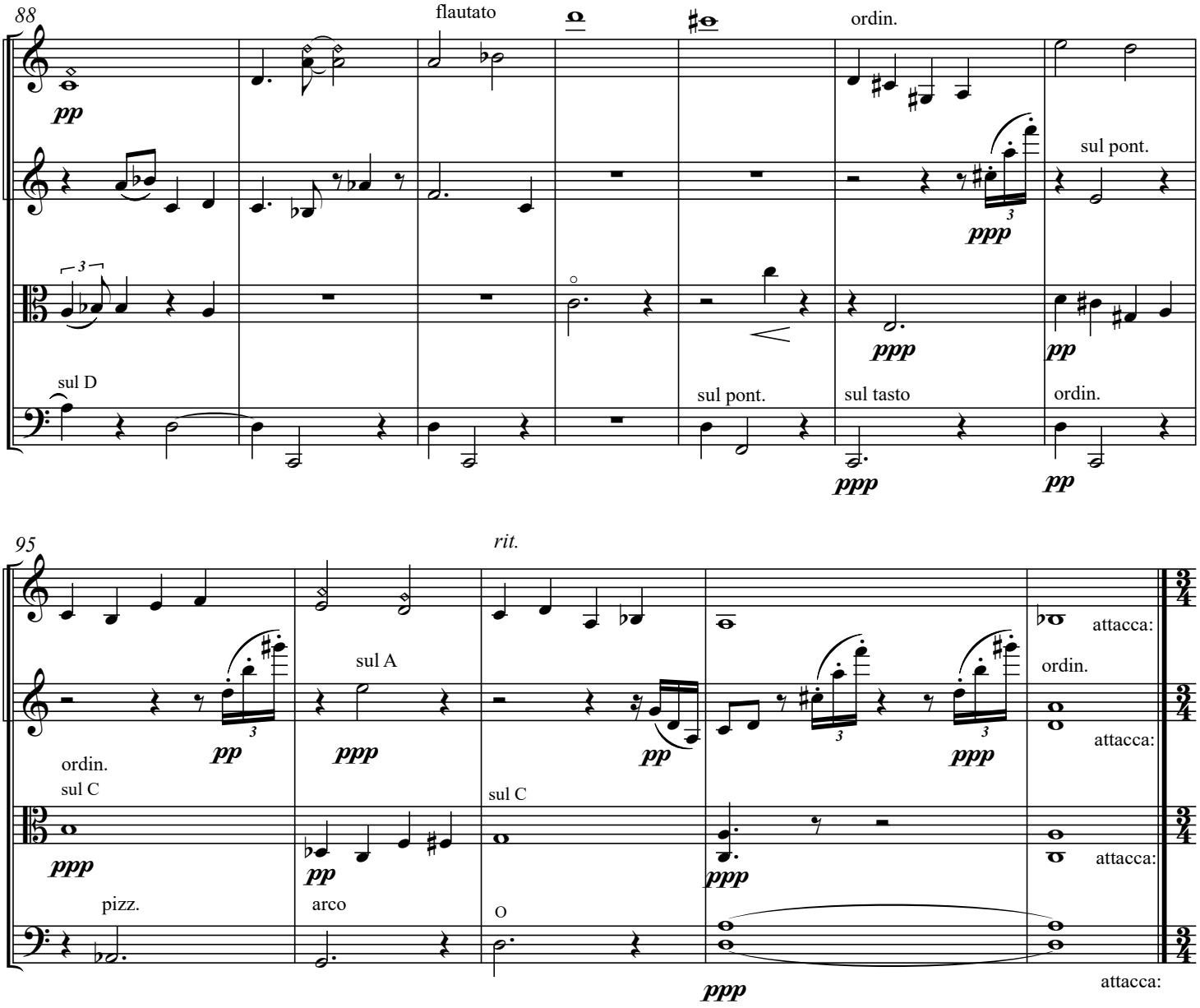
## II.



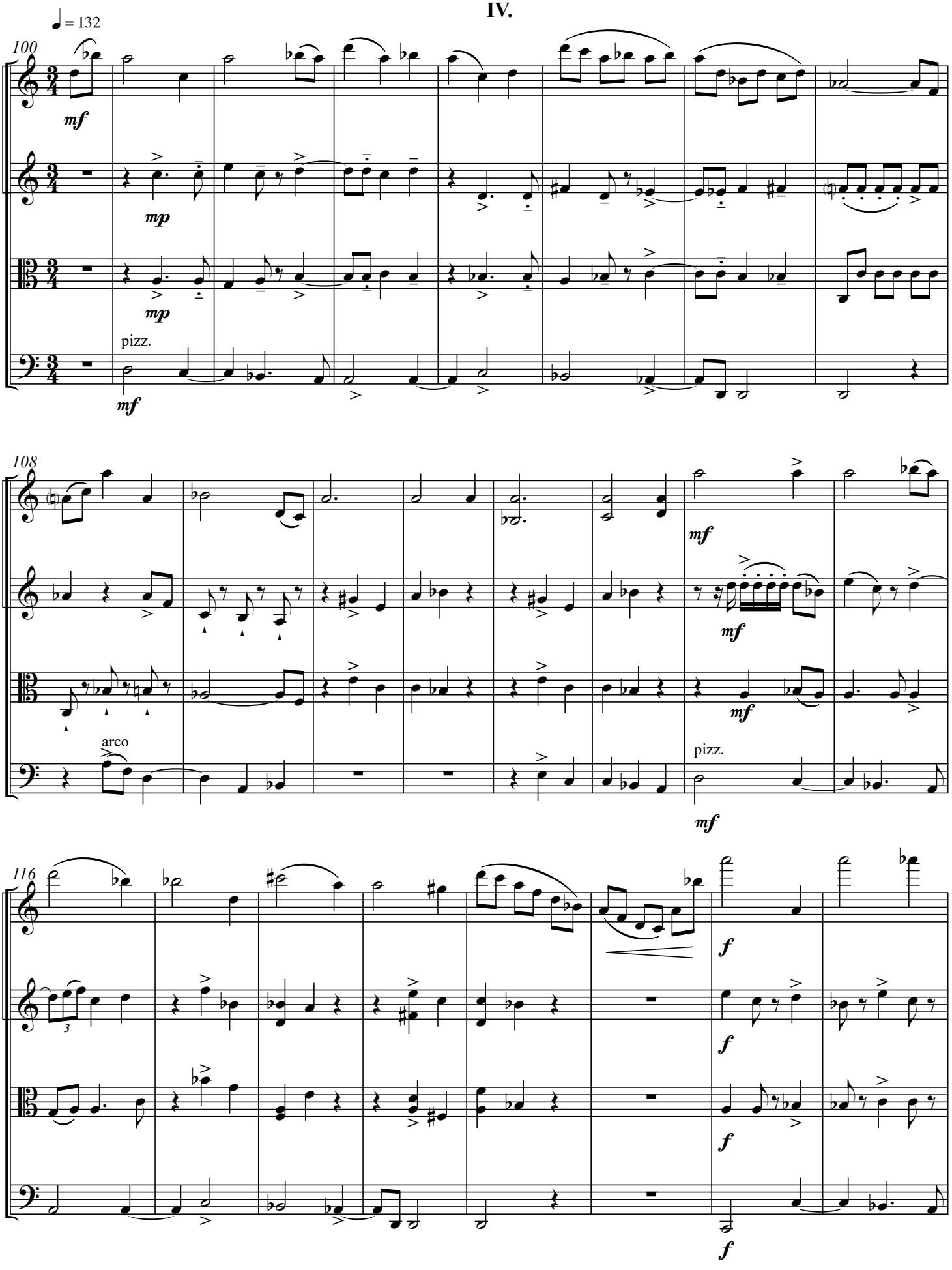

62
3
3
3
p
p
68
rit.
espress.
mp
p

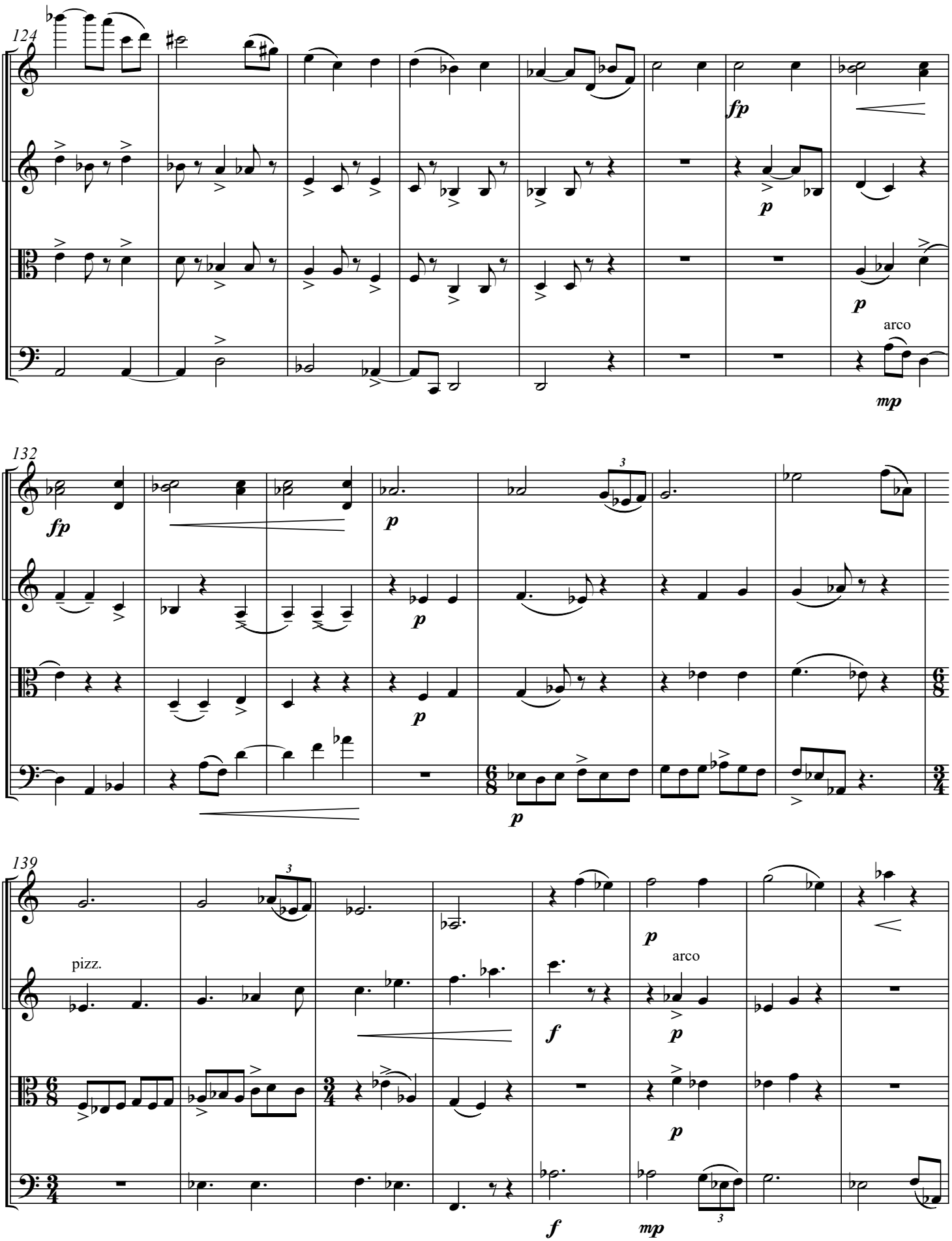
## III.

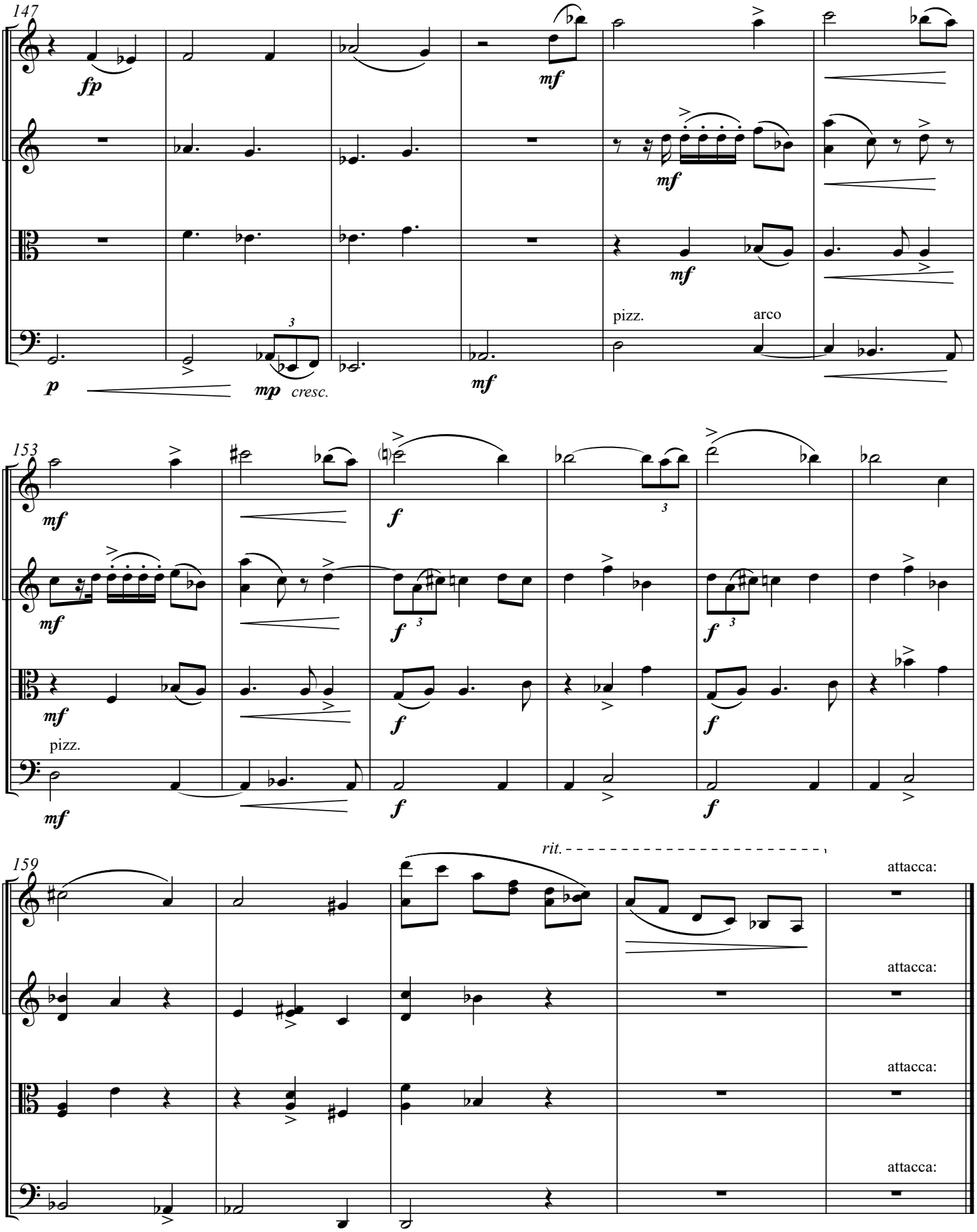

72
♩ = 52
con sord.
col legno tratt.
ordin.
sul pont.
pp
sul tasto
col legno tratt.
sul tasto
col legno tratt.
ordin.
sul pont.
pp
pp
con sord.
pp
flautato
pp
75
ordin.
senza sord.
sul G
pp
ordin.
flautato
slide to molto sul tasto
ordin.
senza sord.
sul pont.
pizz.
con sord.
arco
pizz.
arco
No open strings (other than C)
except as marked.
82
p
pp
p espress.
con sord.
ordin.
senza sord.
pp
pp
col legno tratt.
ordin.
flautato
col legno tratt.
ordin.
senza sord.
O


88
flautato
ordin.
pp
sul pont.
ppp
ppp
pp
sul D
sul pont.
sul tasto
ordin.
ppp
pp
95
rit.
attacca:
sul A
ordin.
pp
ppp
pp
ppp
attacca:
ordin.
sul C
sul C
ppp
pp
ppp
attacca:
pizz.
arco
O
ppp
attacca:

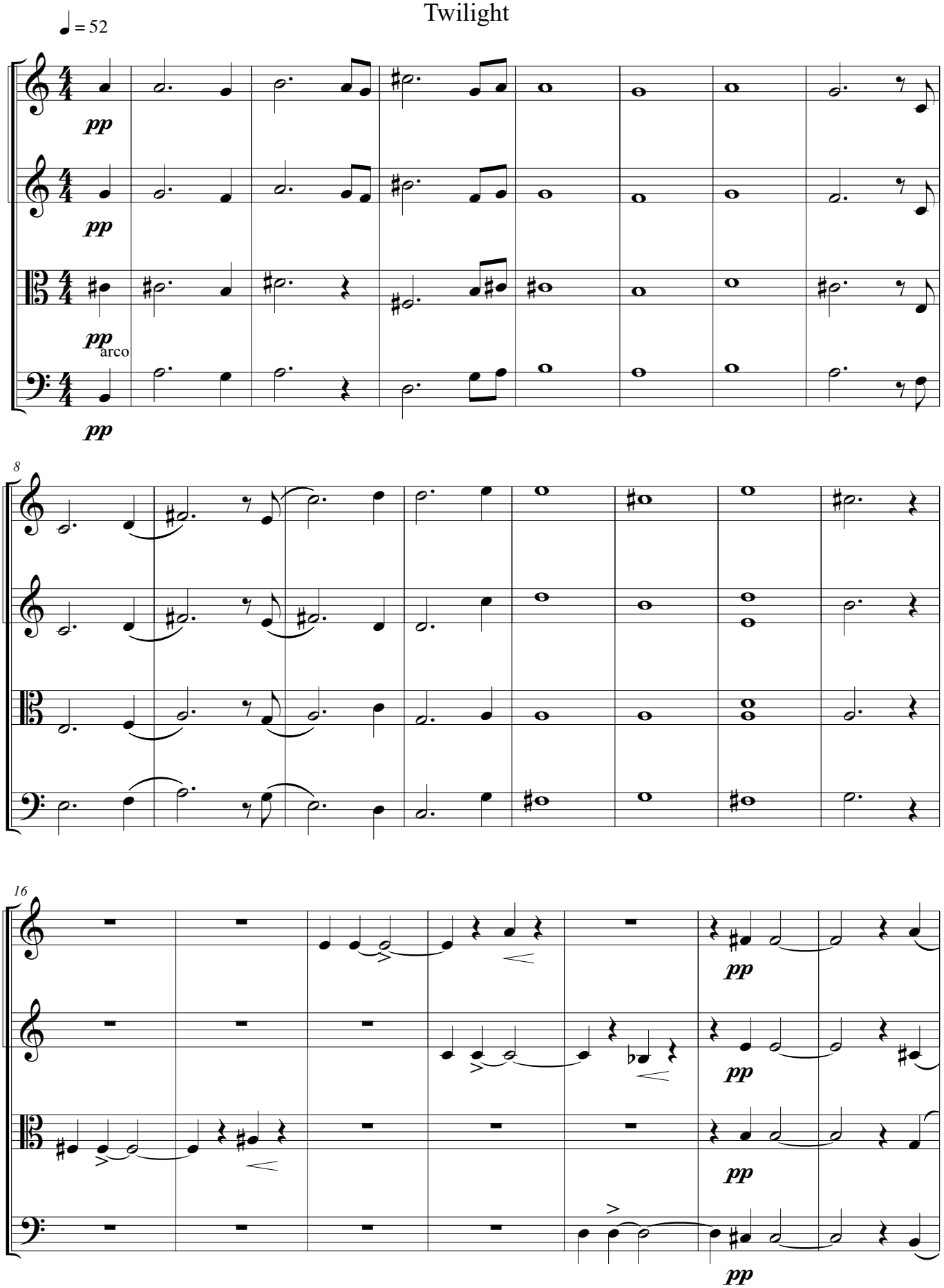
## IV.

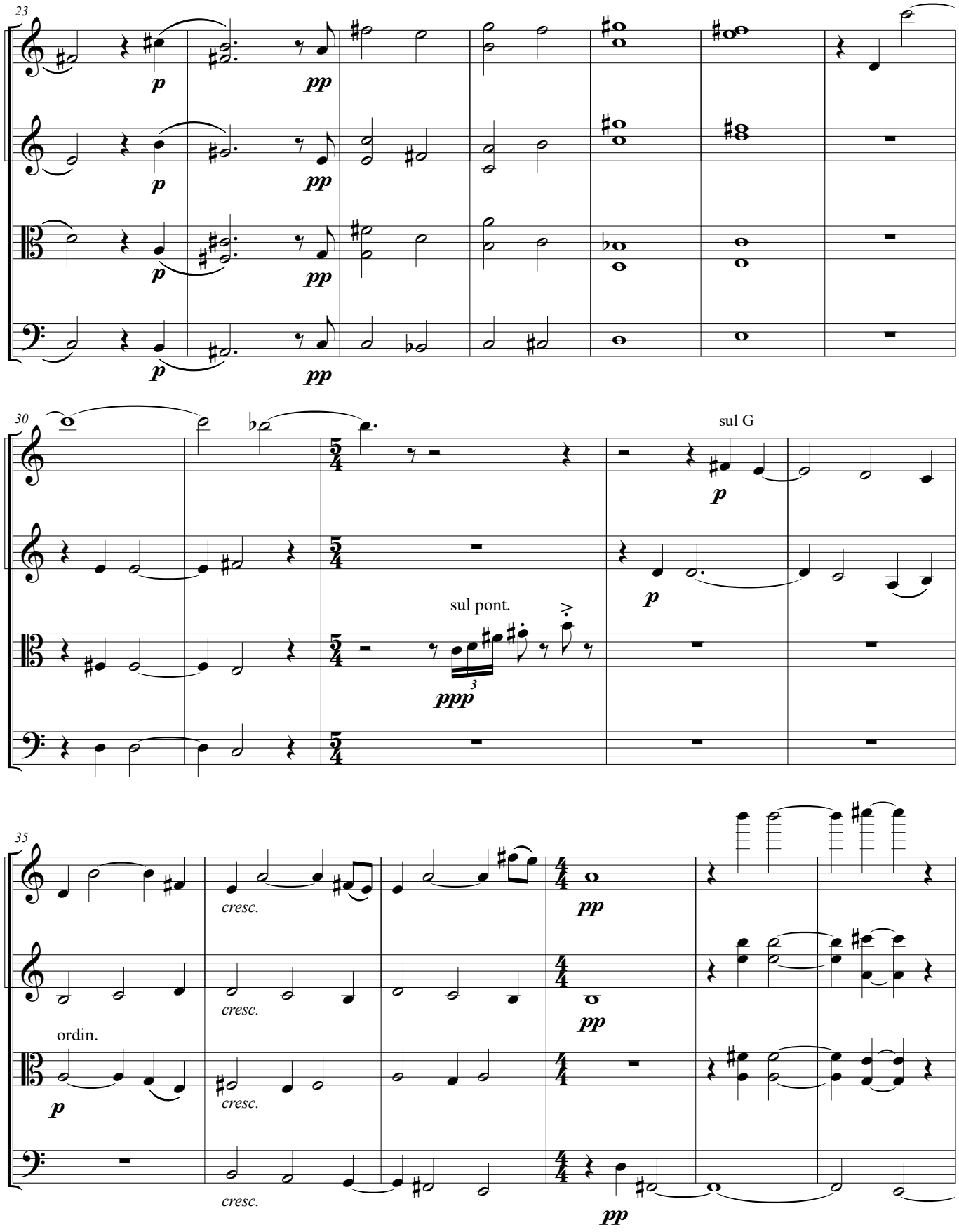


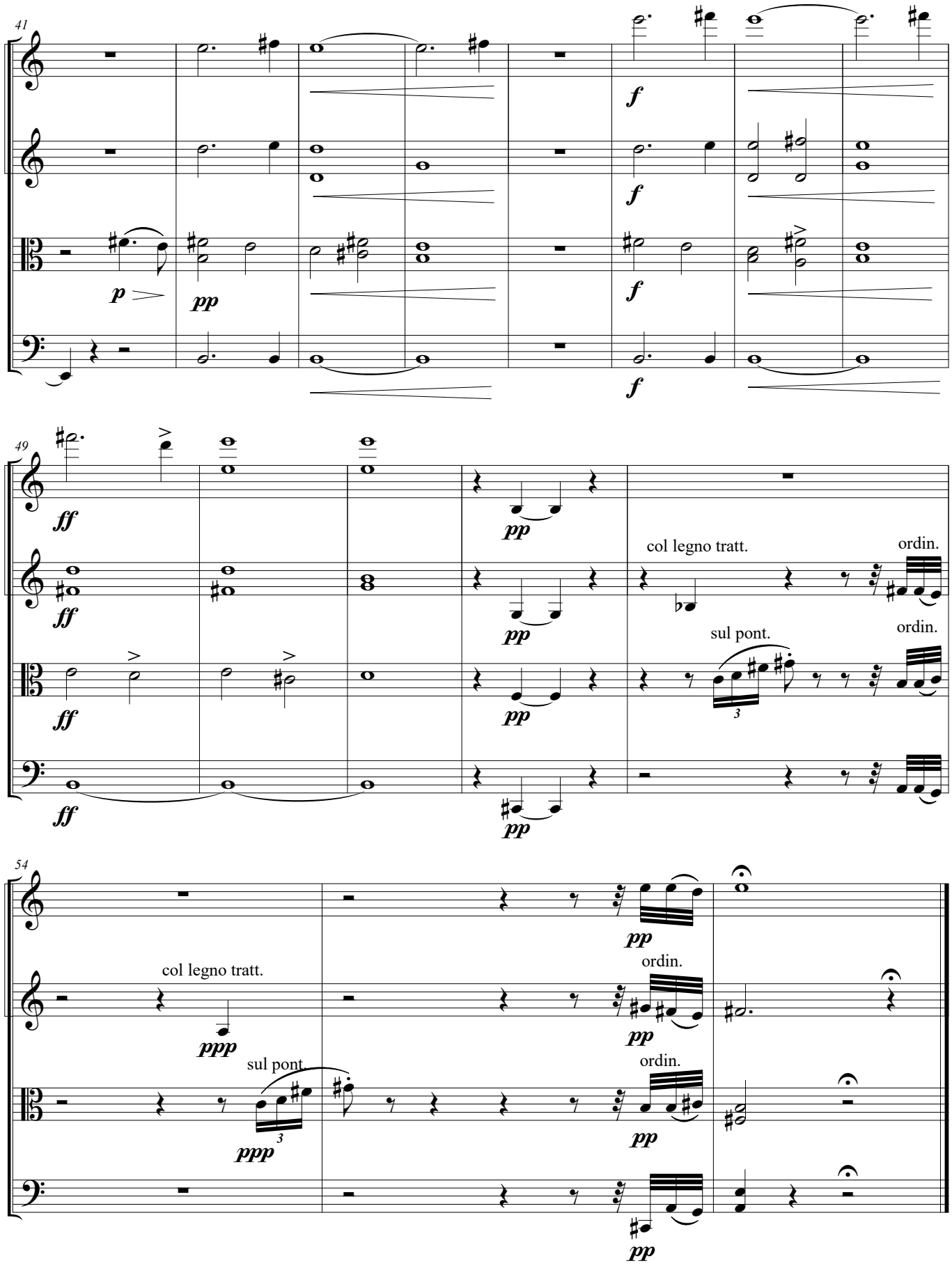

124
fp
p
p
arco
mp
132
fp
p
p
p
p
139
pizz.
f
p
arco
p
p
f
mp


147
fp
mf
mf
mf
p
mp cresc.
mf
pizz.
arco
153
mf
f
mf
f
mf
pizz.
mf
f
f
159
rit.
attacca:
attacca:
attacca:
attacca:

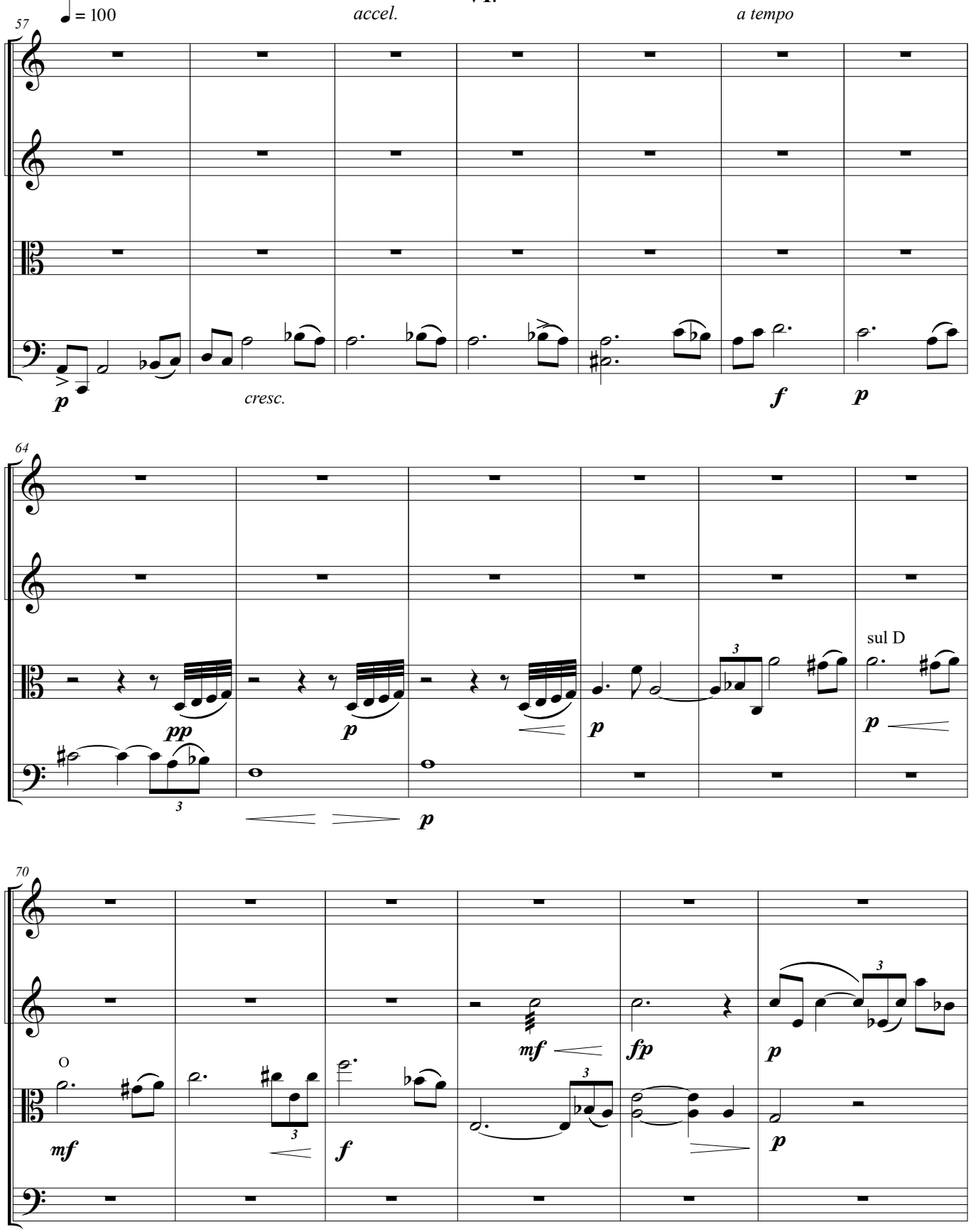
# V.
## Twilight

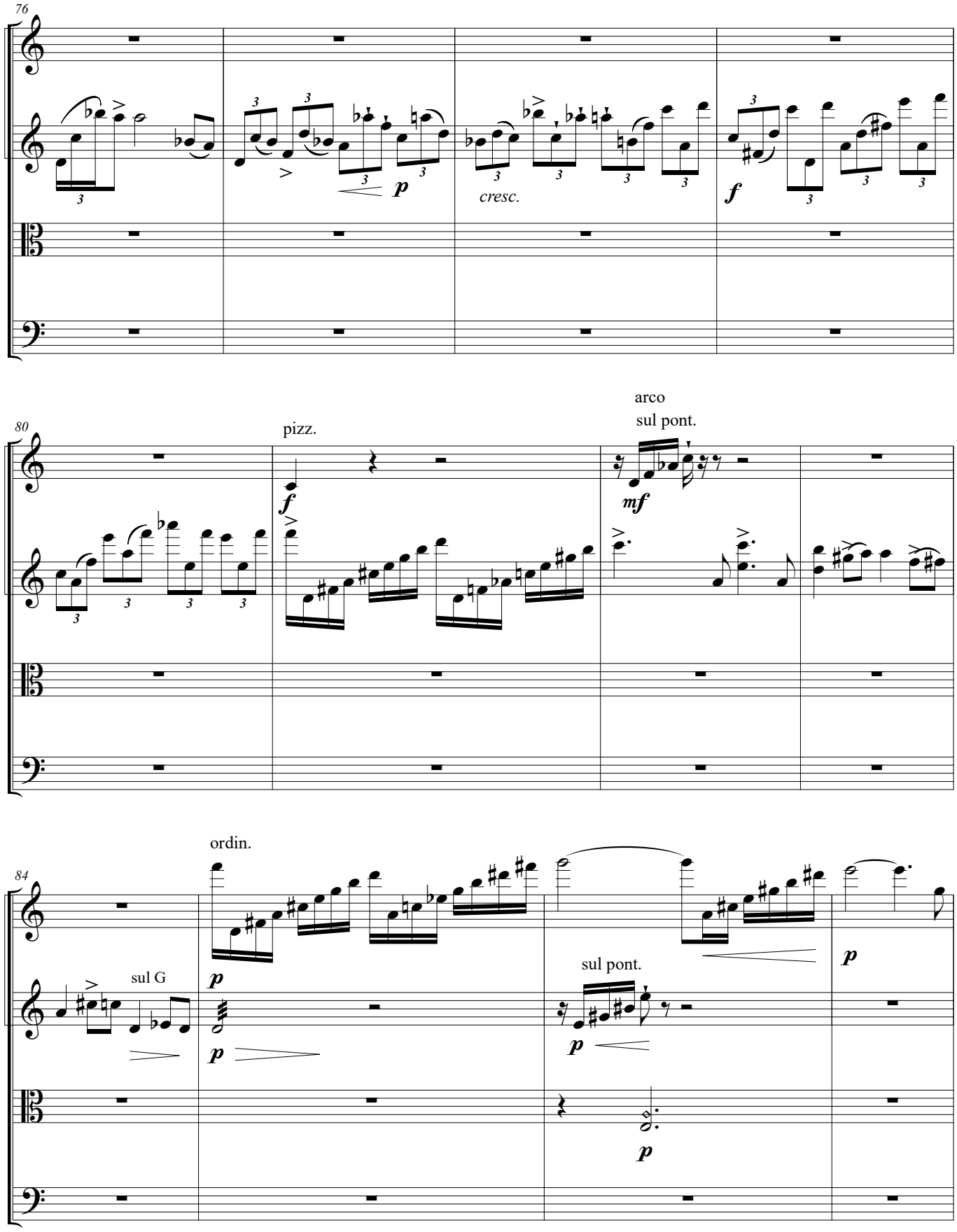


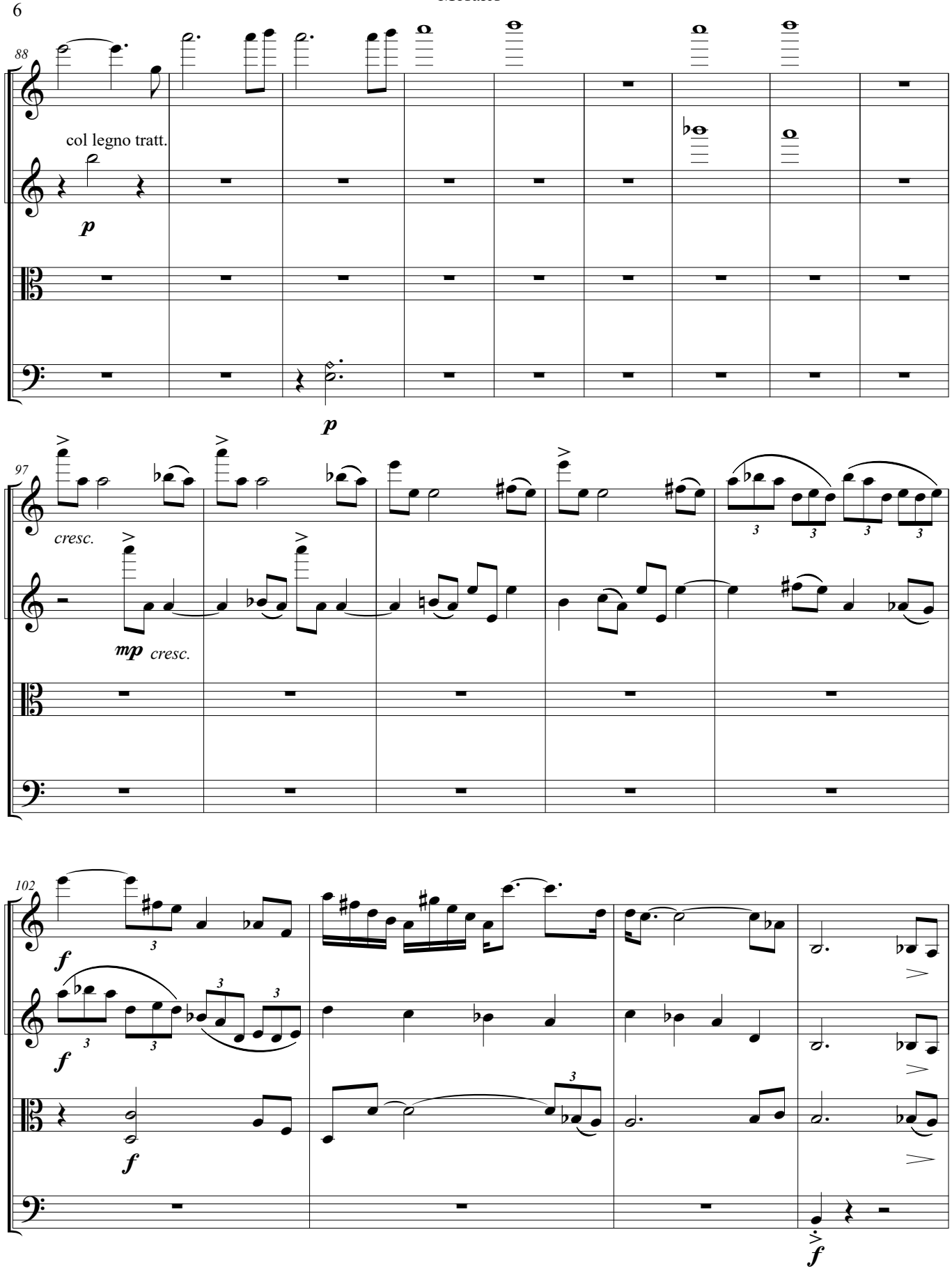

23
p
pp
30
sul G
sul pont.
ppp
35
cresc.
ordin.
pp

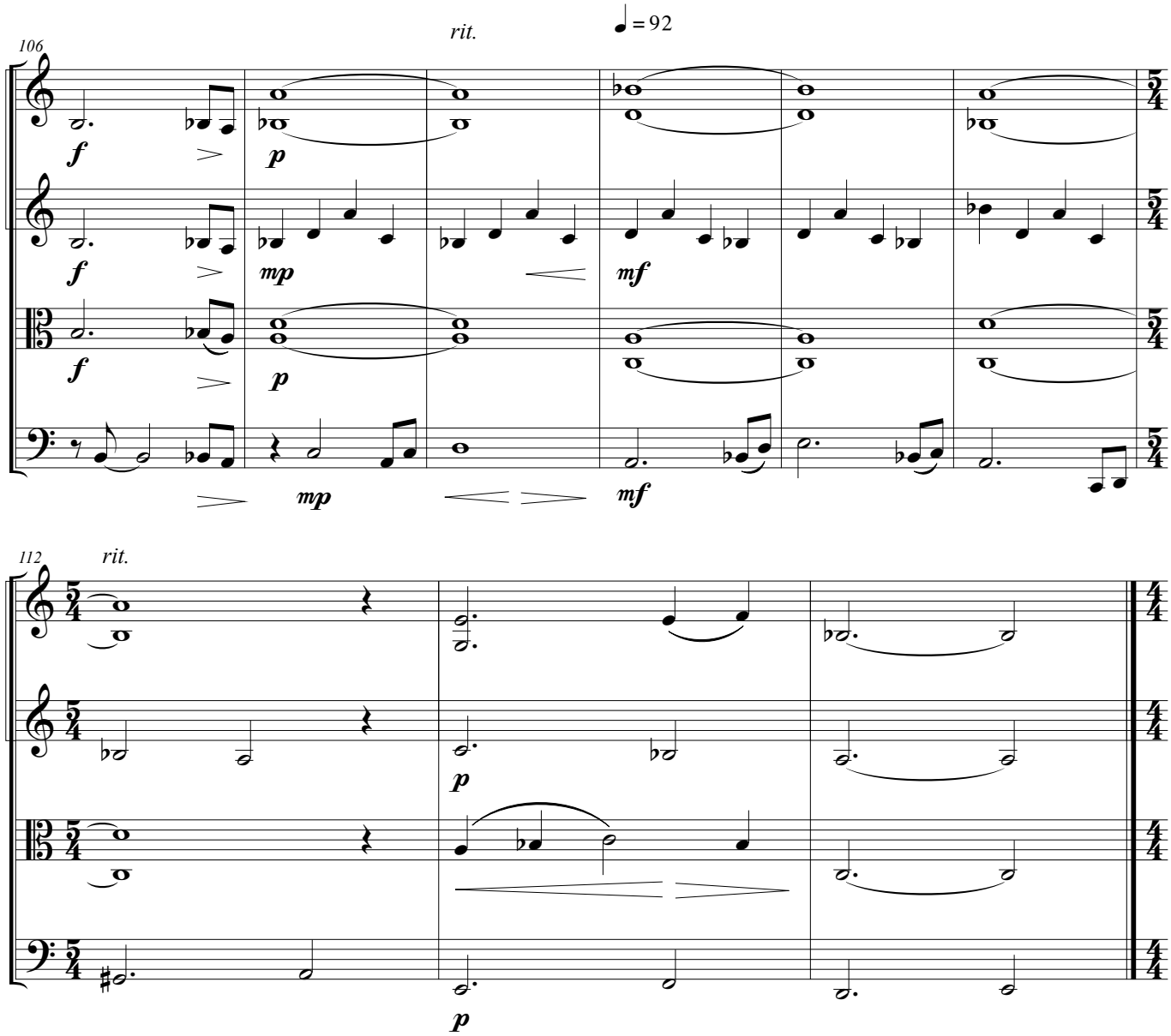

41
p
pp
f
f
f
49
ff
ff
ff
pp
pp
pp
col legno tratt.
ordin.
sul pont.
ordin.
54
col legno tratt.
ppp
sul pont.
ppp
pp
ordin.
pp
ordin.
pp
pp

## VI.

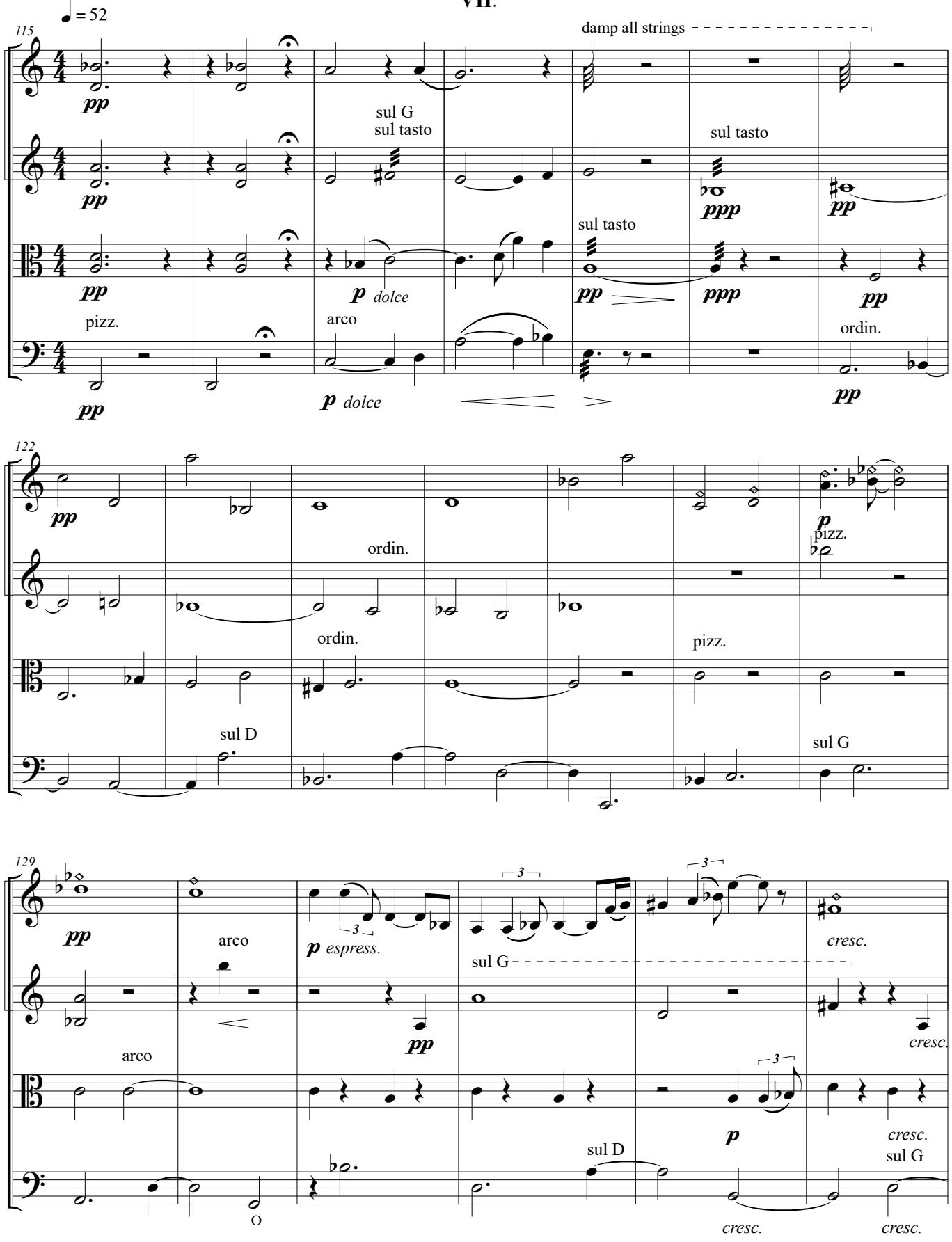


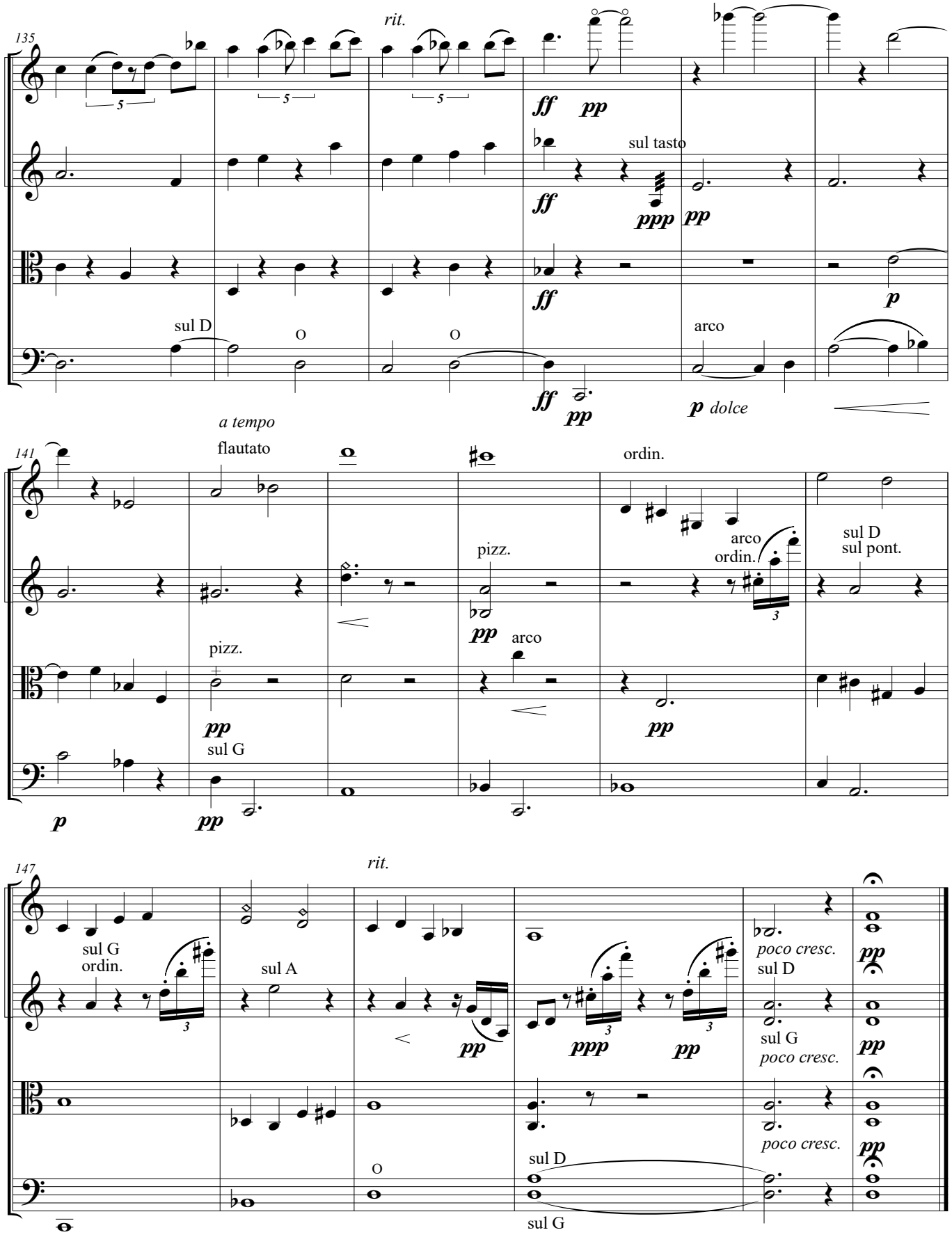

76
p
cresc.
f
80
pizz.
f
arco
sul pont.
mf
84
ordin.
sul G
p
p
sul pont.
p
p
p


88
col legno tratt.
p
p
97
cresc.
mp cresc.
102
f
f
f
f


106
rit.
♩ = 92
f
p
f
mp
mf
f
p
mp
mf
112
rit.
p
p

## VII.


115
♩ = 52
damp all strings
pp
sul G
sul tasto
sul tasto
ppp
pp
sul tasto
pp
ppp
pp
p dolce
pizz.
arco
ordin.
pp
p dolce
pp
122
pp
ordin.
p
pizz.
ordin.
pizz.
sul D
sul G
129
pp
arco
p espress.
sul G
cresc.
arco
pp
cresc.
p
cresc.
sul D
sul G
O
cresc.
cresc.


135
rit.
ff pp
sul tasto
ppp pp
ff
p
sul D
arco
ff pp
p dolce
a tempo
141
flautato
ordin.
pizz.
arco
ordin.
sul D
sul pont.
pp
arco
pizz.
pp
sul G
p
pp
147
rit.
sul G
ordin.
sul A
pp
ppp
pp
poco cresc.
sul D
sul G
poco cresc.
poco cresc.
pp
sul D
sul G