stanley grill

American Landscapes

for string quartet

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MUSIC BY STAN GRILL

VOCAL MUSIC

The Snow Begins (W.C. Williams)	1975	soprano, piano	3 min
Earth and Sea (Eskimo texts)	1975	soprano, piano	3 min
Preludes (T.S. Eliot)	1978	soprano, violin, cello	10 min
6 Songs (W.B. Yeats)	1983	soprano, piano	15 min
To a Child (W.B. Yeats)	1987	soprano, string quartet	20 min
Crazy Jane Sings (W.B. Yeats)	1999	soprano, fl, vn, va, vc, pn	25 min
Vignettes/Flowers (W.C. Williams)	2002	SATB, cello	18 min
Love Poems (W.C. Williams)	2003	SSAA	10 min
Vignettes/Trees (W.C. Williams)	2004	2 voices, 2 cellos	15 min
Thinking of You (John MacKenzie)	2005	soprano, vc, harp	7 min
Arietta s without words	2005	soprano, vc, harp	9 min
Scetate (Ferdinando Russo)	2005	SSATTBB	6 min
In Their Flight (Mark Doty)	2006	soprano, mezzo soprano, vn, vc	6 min
Rilke Songs	2009	soprano, va d'amore, vc	15 min
4 Songs to Poems by Hart Crane	2010	tenor, piano	12 min
Sonnets to Orpheus	2012	tenor, piano	35 min

MUSIC FOR STRINGS ALONE

6 Contrapuntal Pieces	1986	string quartet	20 min
For Laura	1987	string quartet	25 min
As Easy as 1,2,3	1987	string trio	10 min
The Beckoning Stars	2001	string quartet	13 min
Imaginary Dances	2001	violin solo	18 min
Short Stories	2003	vn, va, vc, db	18 min
Passion (a love duet)	2003	va, vc	9 min
Pavanne (for a world without war)	2005	string orchestra	8 min
Meditations for String Orchestra	2006	string orchestra	8 min
American Landscapes	2007	string quartet	24 min
Motet for String Orchestra	2008	string orchestra	7 min
Ecstasy	2009	viola solo	9 min
Transformations	2009	viola da gamba solo	12 min
Sonatine	2010	3 violins	9 min

CHAMBER MUSIC

Three for Three	1992	vn, vc, pn	16 min
Civil War Songs	1992	va, pn	18 min
Take Five	1993	2 vns, va, vc, pn	25 min
Serenade	1999	fl, vn, va, vc	11 min
Distant Music	2000	cl, vn/va, vc, pn	20 min
Driven by the Wind	2001	fl, vc, pn	25 min
Nonet (for New York)	2002	fl, ob, cl, hn, bn, 2vns, va, vc	35 min
A Little Sweet	2003	fl, vc	10 min
On the edge of sleep & dreaming	2003	hn, vc, harp	31 min
5 Pastoral Scenes	2004	ob, bn, vn, va, vc	30 min
I was dreaming of the sea…	2004	vn (or fl), vc, pn	7 min
Little Tales of Mirth & Woe	2004	vn (or fl), vc, pn	6 min
An Ode to the Possibility of Peace	2005	cl, vn, vc	15 min
Elements	2006	fl, ob, cl, hn, bn	11 min
Motet for Brass Instruments	2006	2 trp, hn, trb, tu	7 min

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

Appalachian Songs	1988	chamber orchestra	25 min
Morning Music	2001	cl, string orchestra	22 min
Two Sad Songs (W.B. Yeats)	2002	soprano, string orchestra	15 min
Invisible Ballet	2003	strings & diverse instruments	33 min
Pluto	2005	orchestra	15 min
Ophelia Songs (Shakespeare)	2005	soprano, harp, string orchestra	12 min
Love's Little Pleasures	2008	soprano, string orchestra	15 min
The Four Elements	2009	va, string orchestra	22 min
Mystical Songs	2009	soprano, va, string orchestra	18 min

AMERICAN LANDSCAPES

American Landscapes is a quartet for strings in 4 movements. As often happens when I write music, an image is evoked by some initial musical ideas. These create a mental landscape which I then follow, whereever it happens to lead. I start at the first notes and these lead to the next, like traveling down a winding road whose ultimate direction and destination is out of sight and unknown. In an abstract way, I was trying to capture something of the America that exists in my imagination – one which happens to be a far better place than the reality. My mental America is populated by the same disparities that exist in the real one: the stark contrasts between hectic cities teeming with people of all kinds, small quiet towns with houses out of Hopper paintings, vast stretches of unpopulated forests and mountains, smoke stacks belching smoke for miles, trains that go on forever, endless fields of grain. It is an America that exists only in books: it lacks, because I dream of better, the violence, crassness and extremism that is as ingrained in American culture as what is best about us.

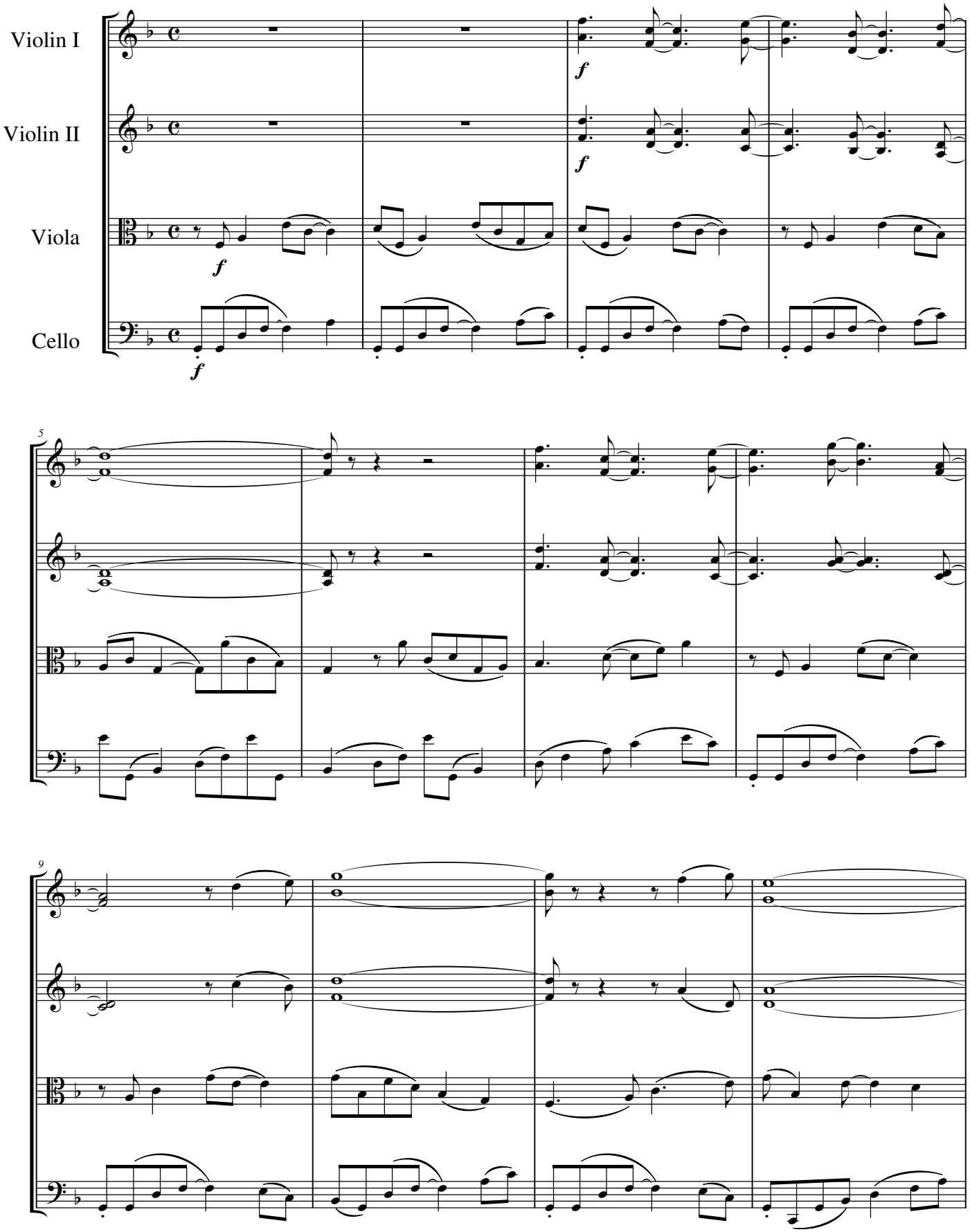
Stan Grill
Haworth, NJ
2006

American Landscapes

I

stan grill

Allegro (M.M. ♩ = c. 120)



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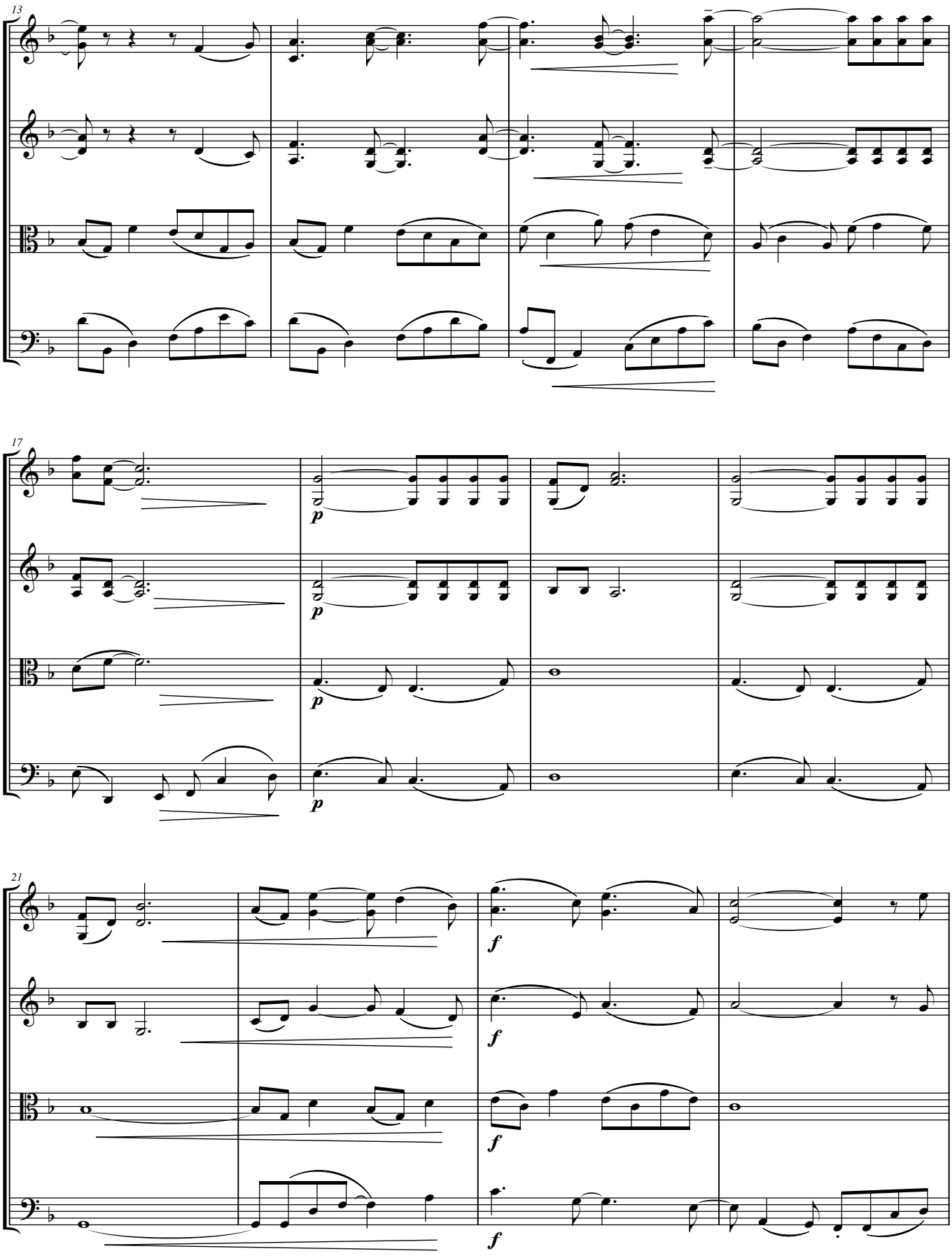
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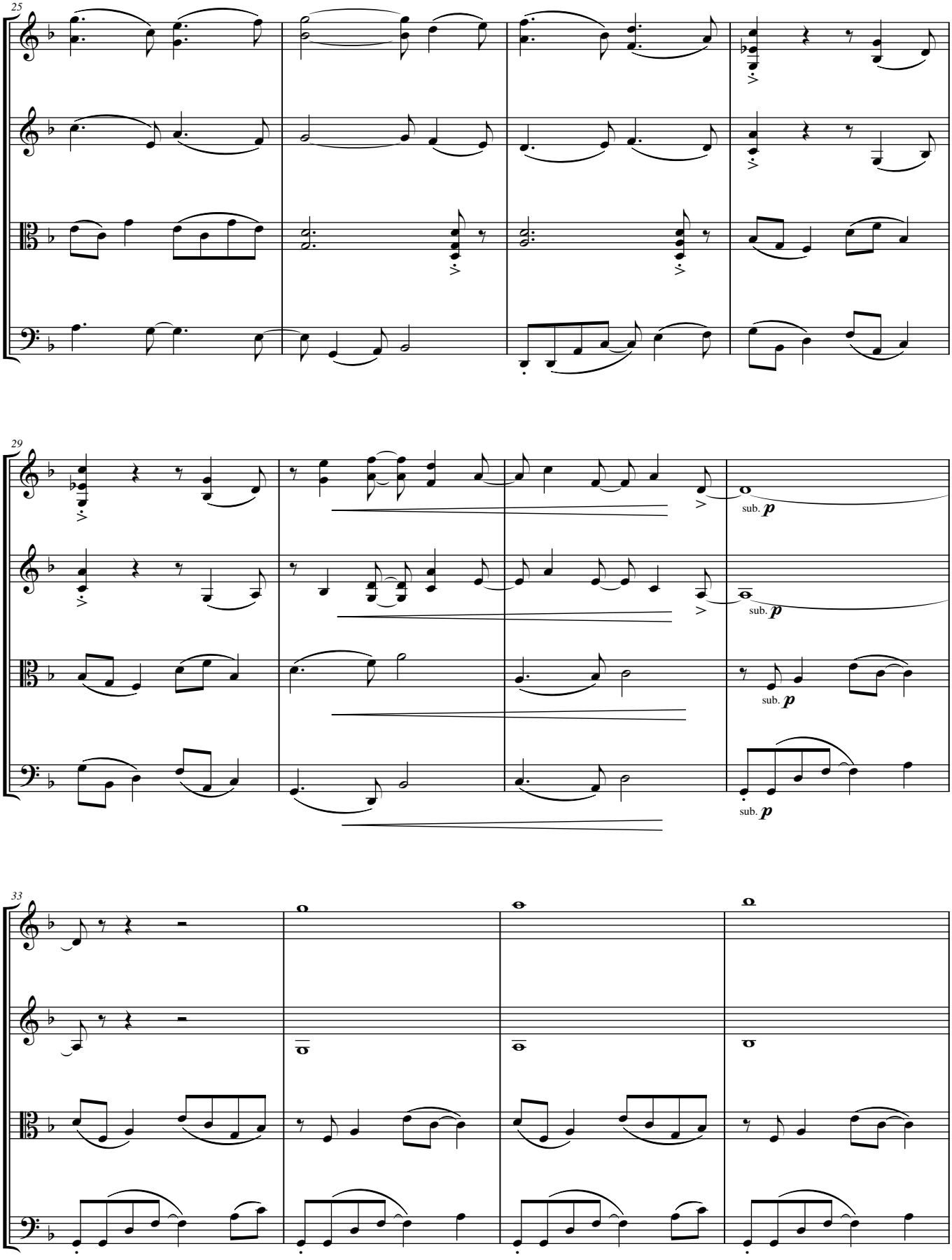
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sub. p
sub. p
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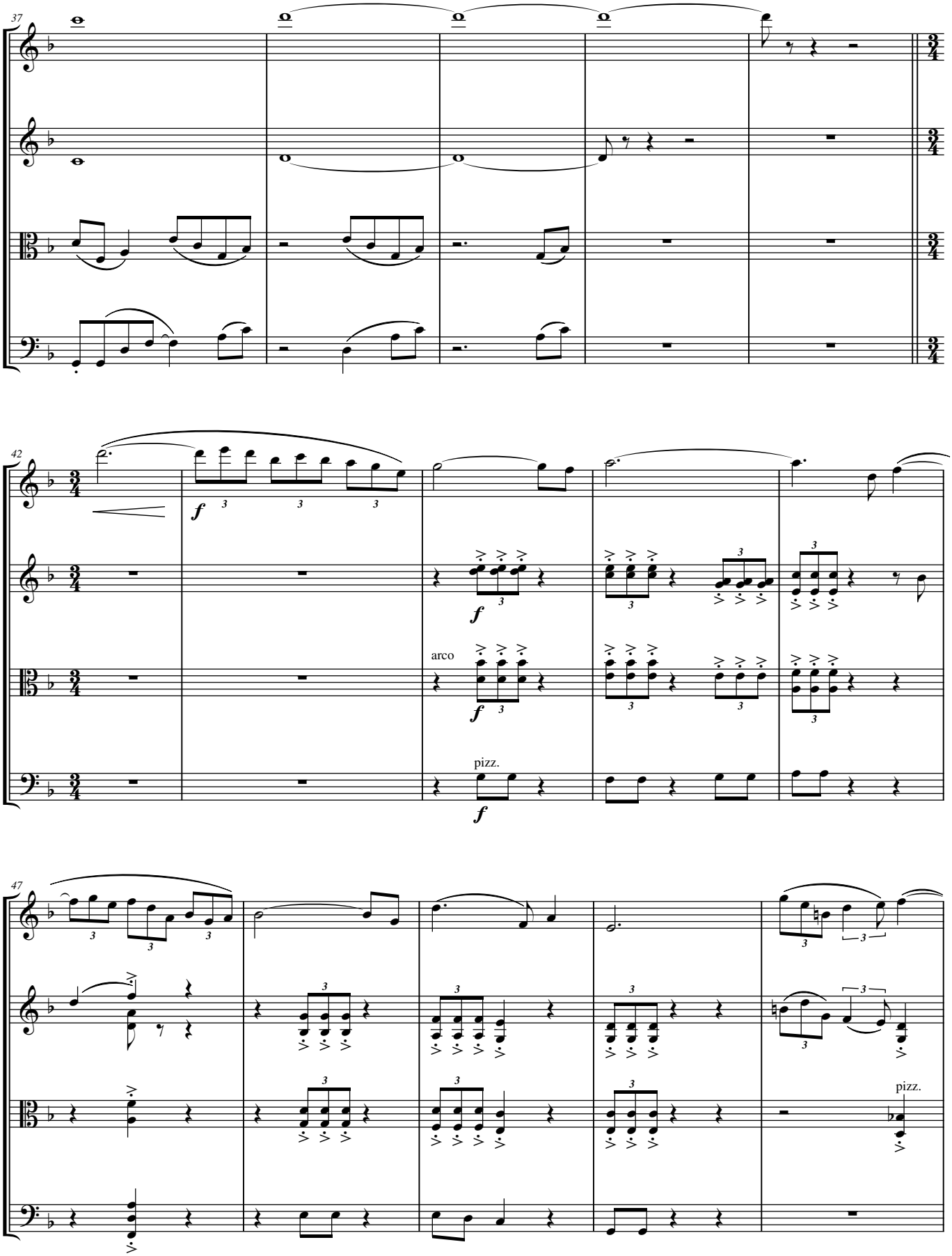
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42
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arco
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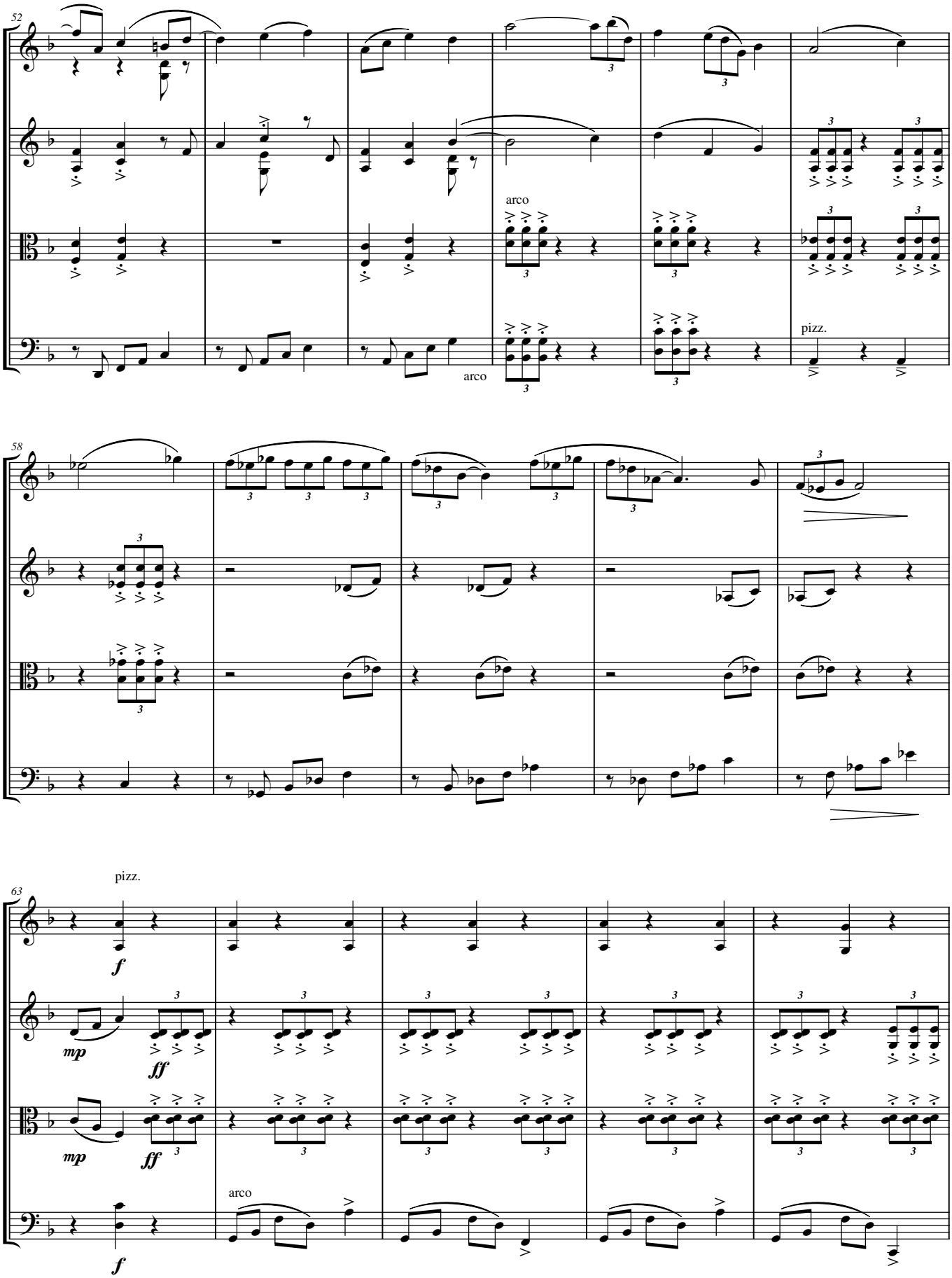
pizz.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mp
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mp
ff
f
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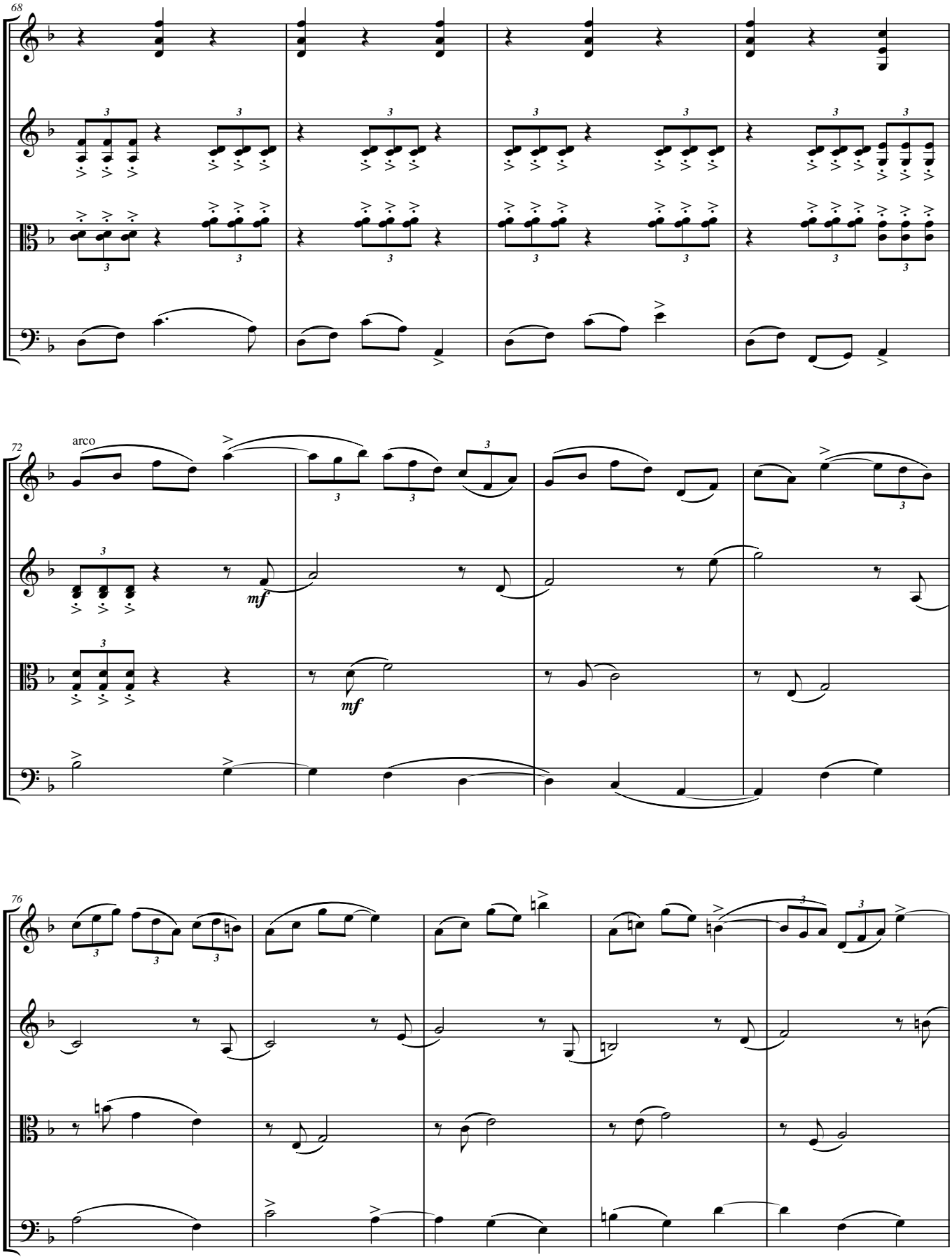
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mf
mf
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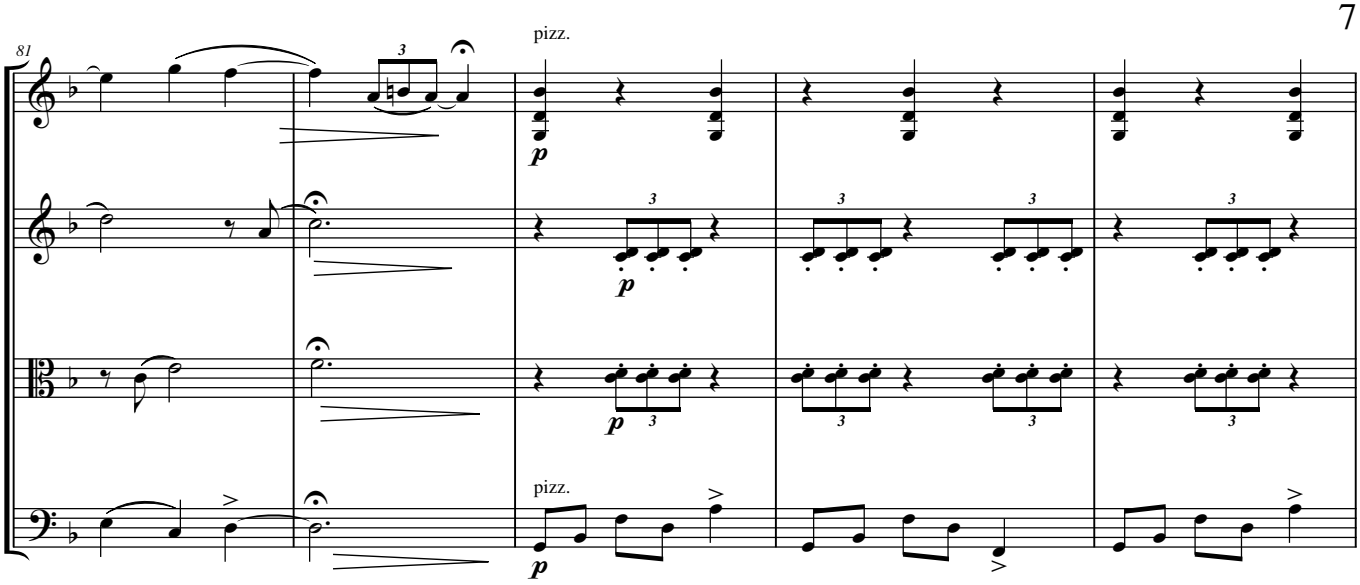
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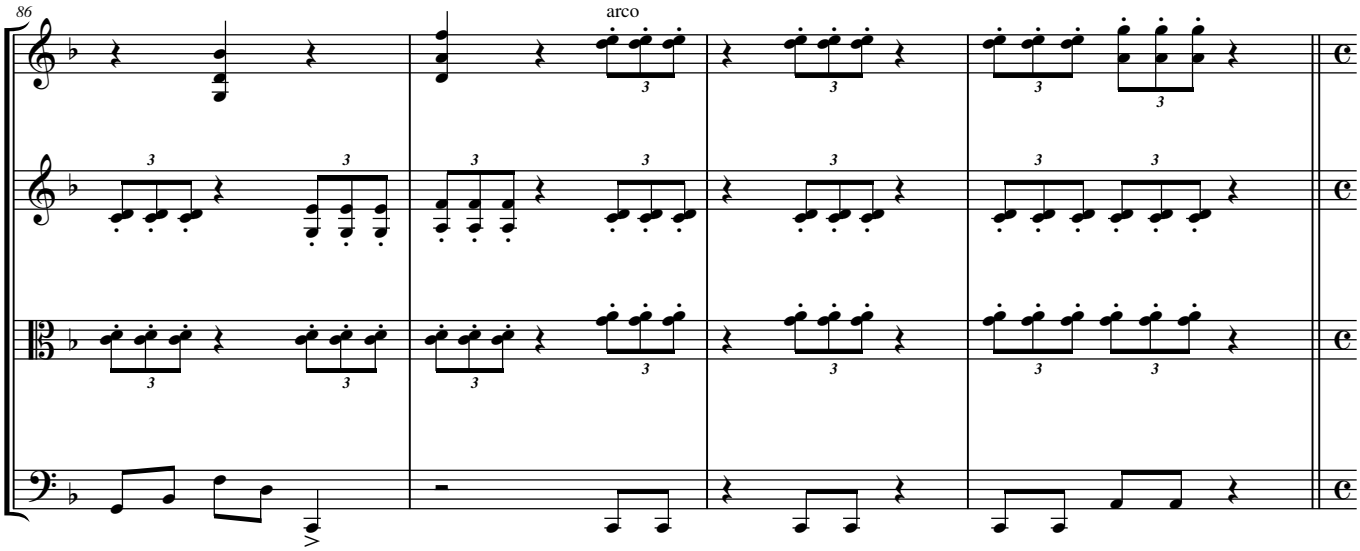
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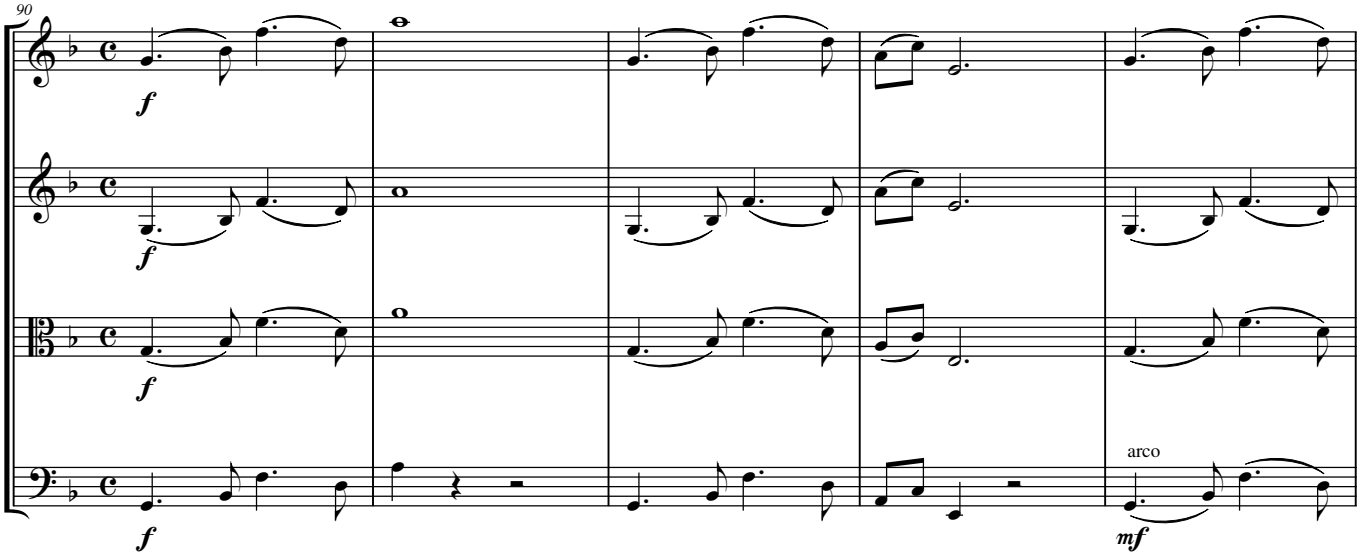
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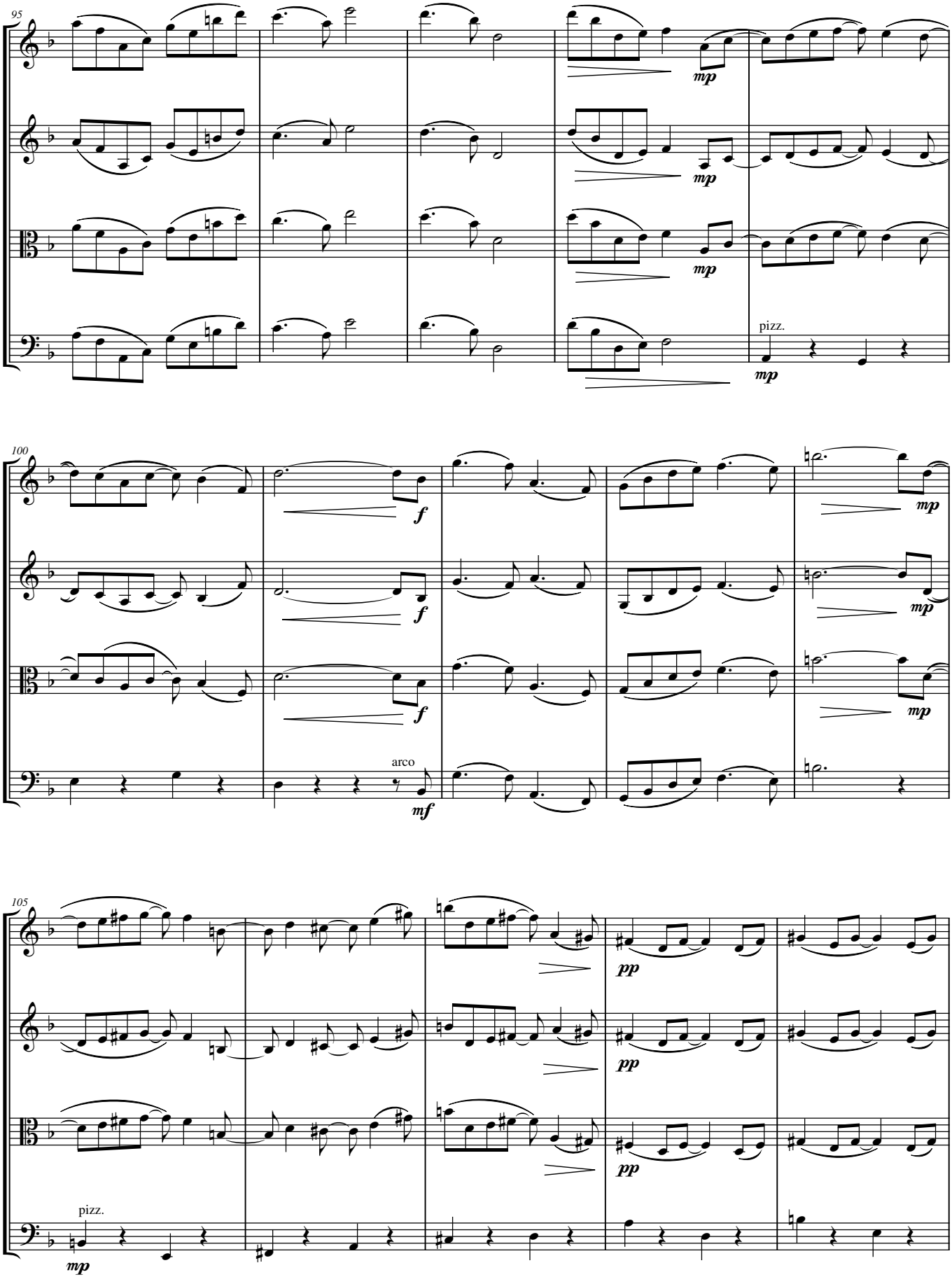
f
f
arco
mf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mp
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mp
mp
arco
mf
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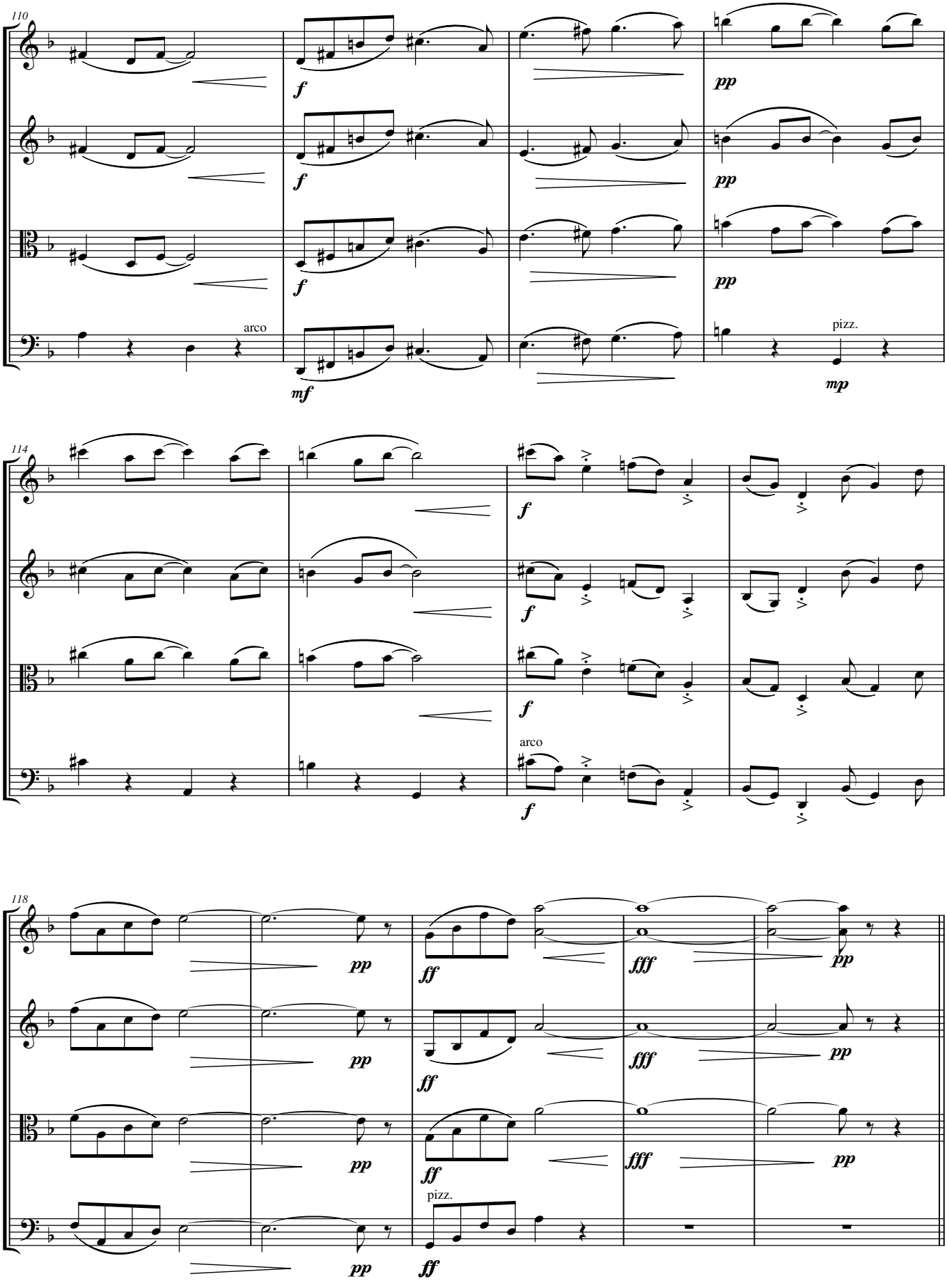
pp
pp
pp
pizz.
mp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118
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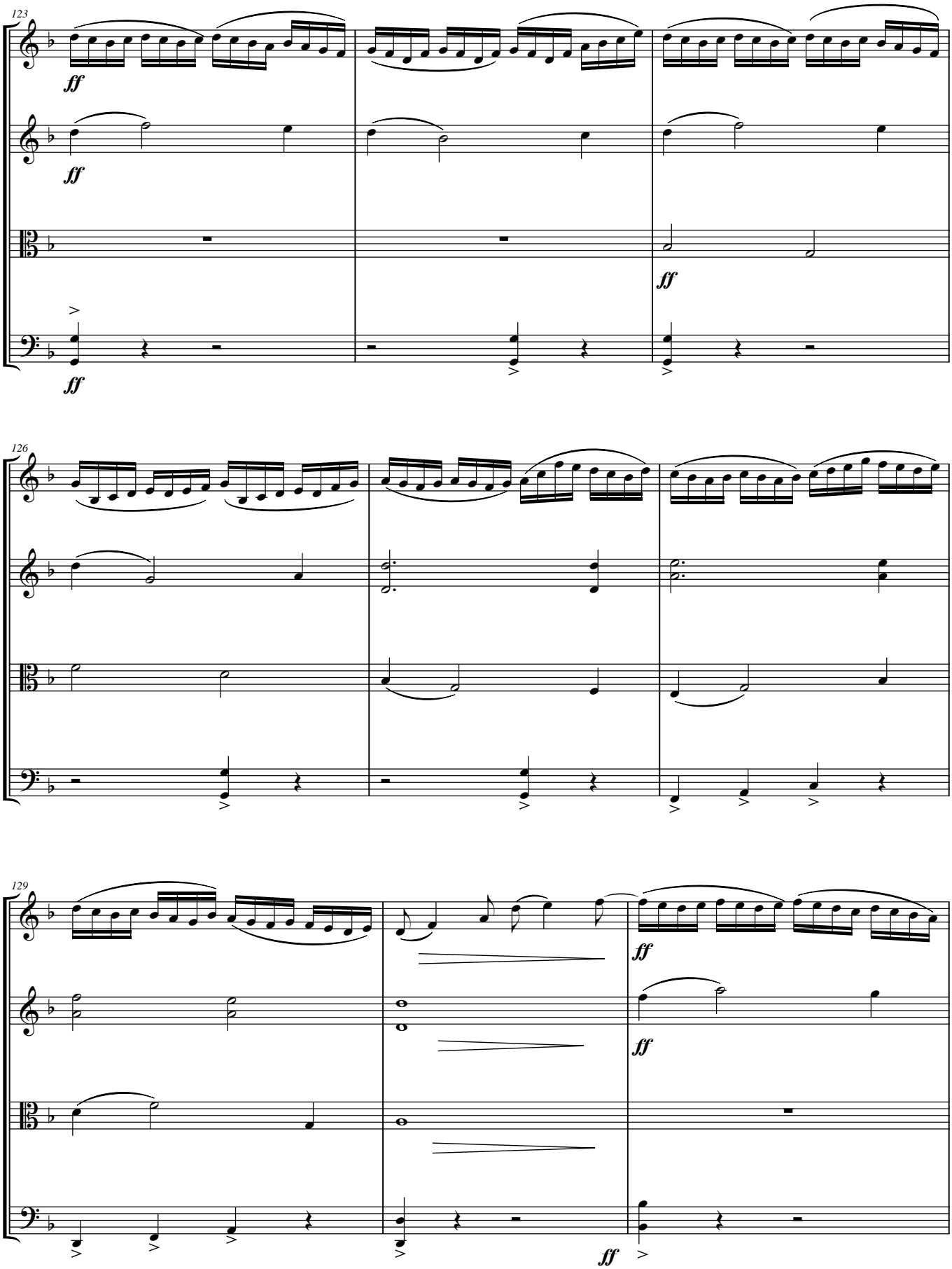
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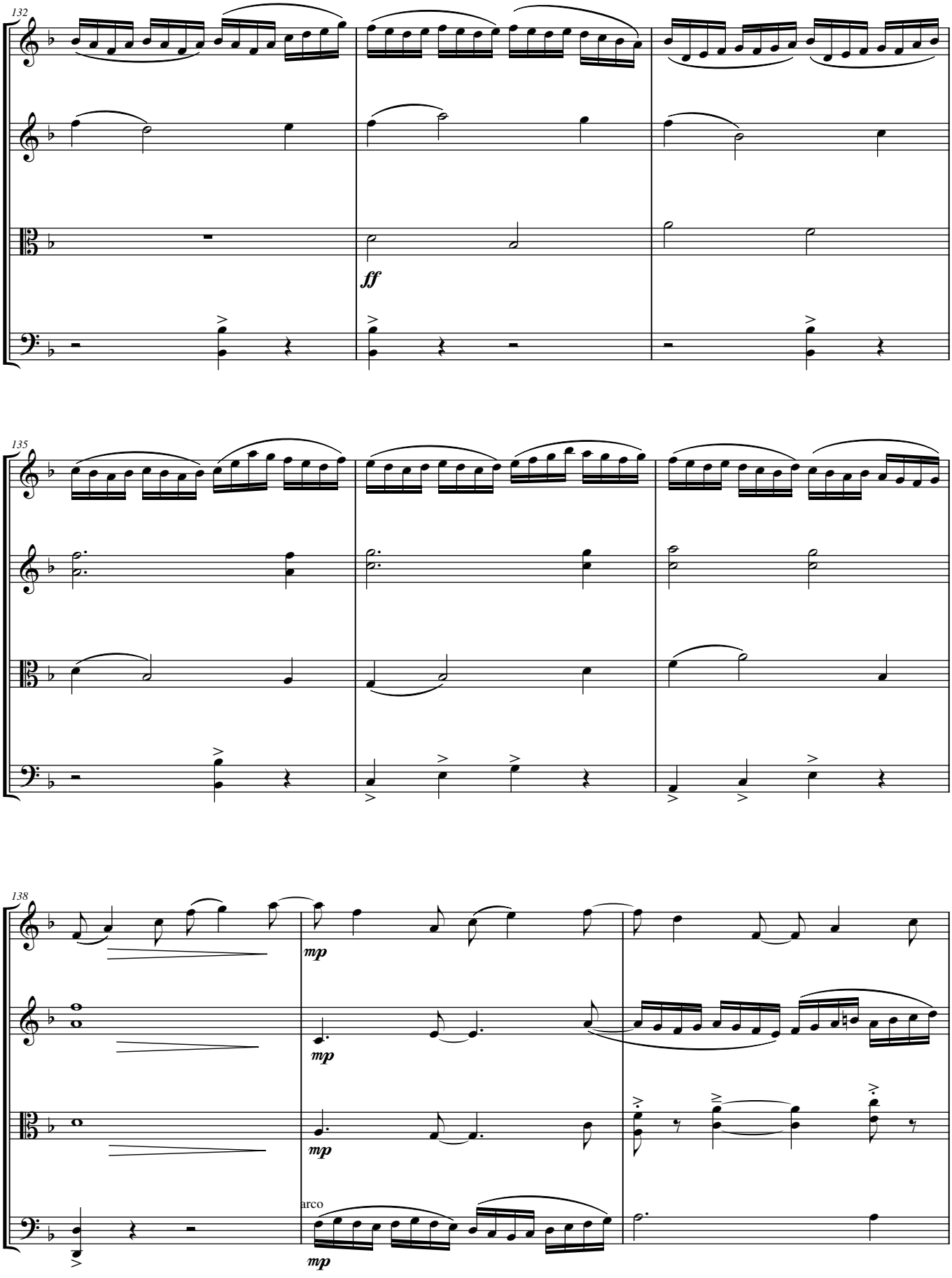
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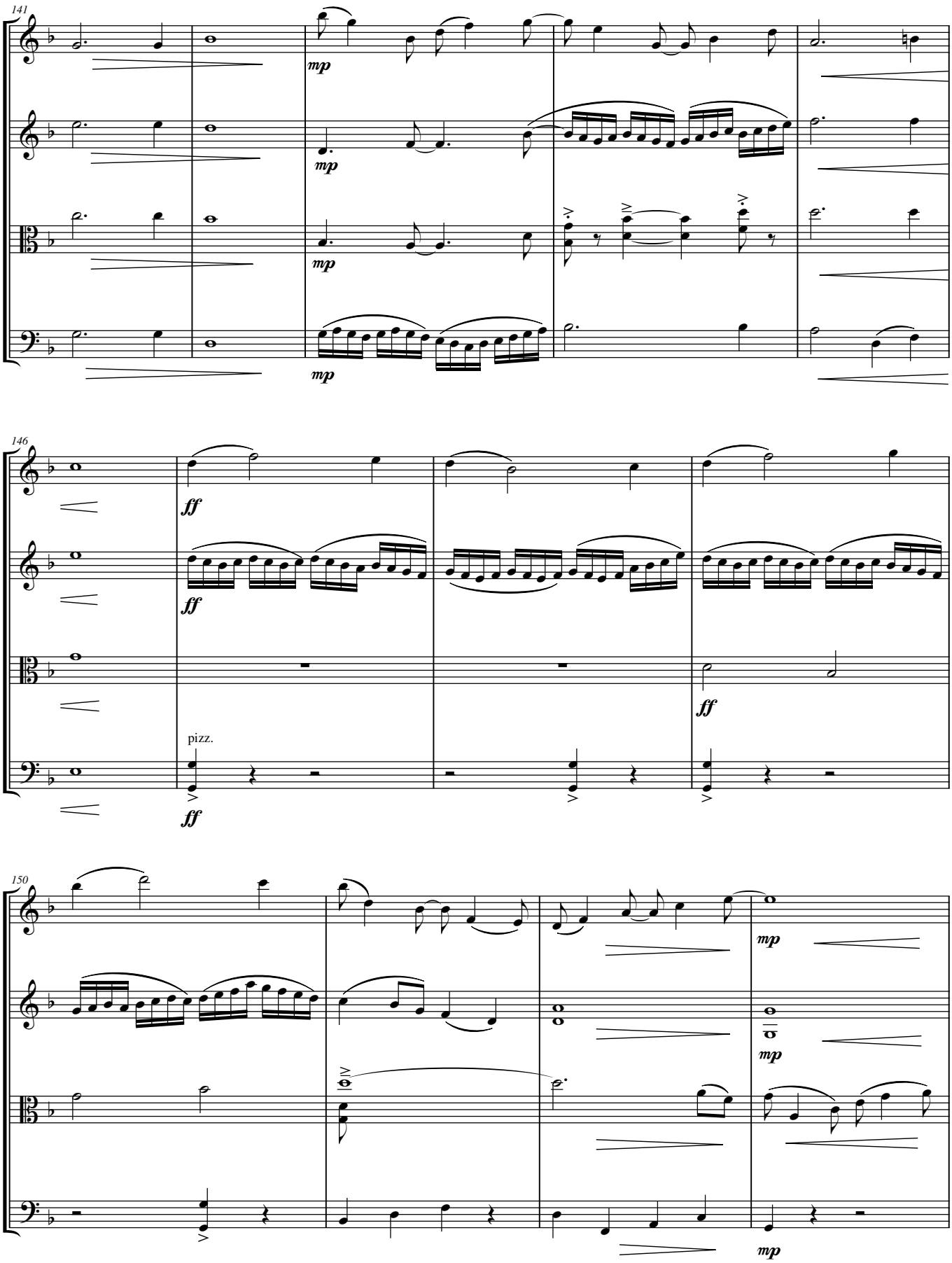
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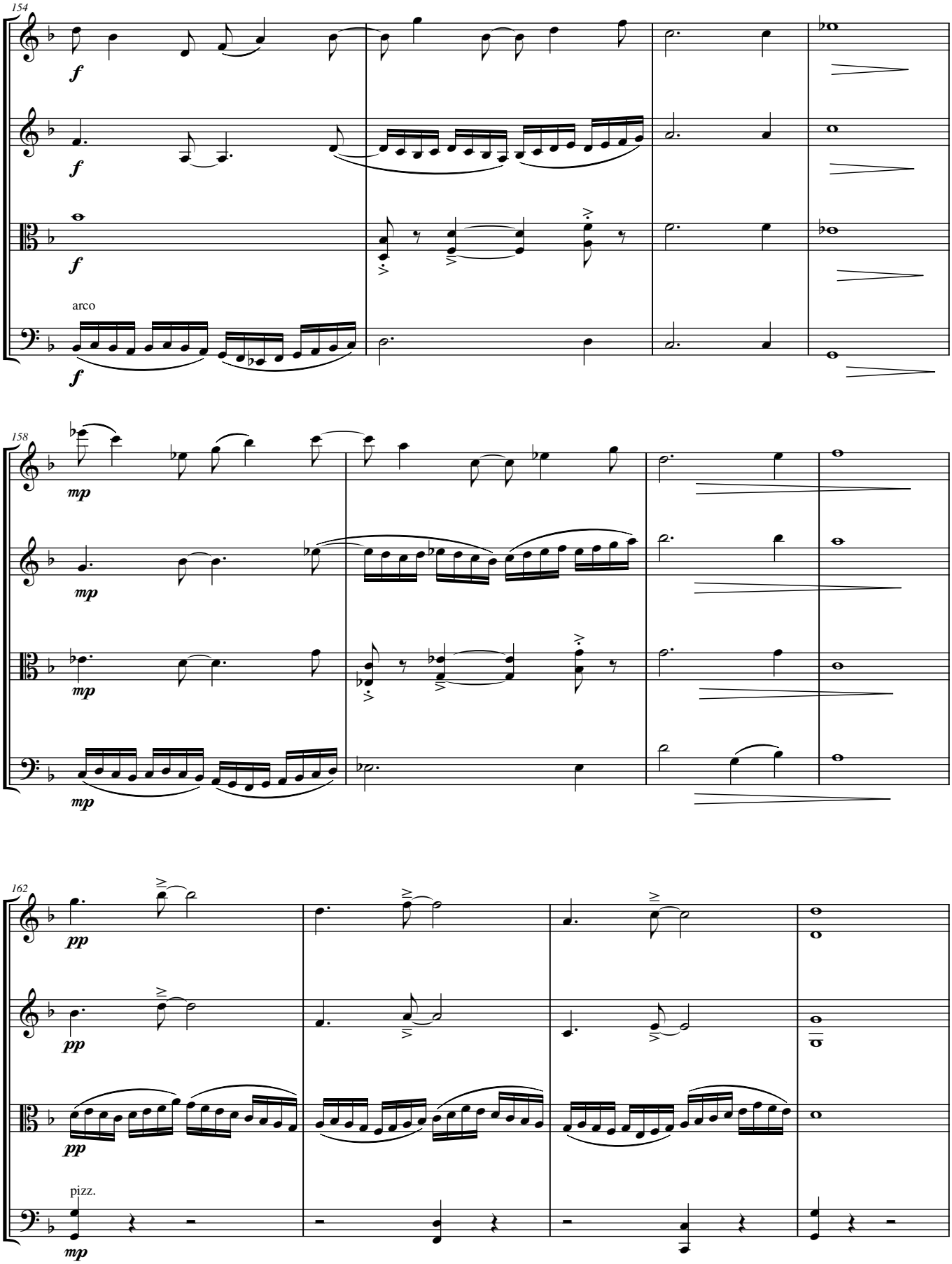
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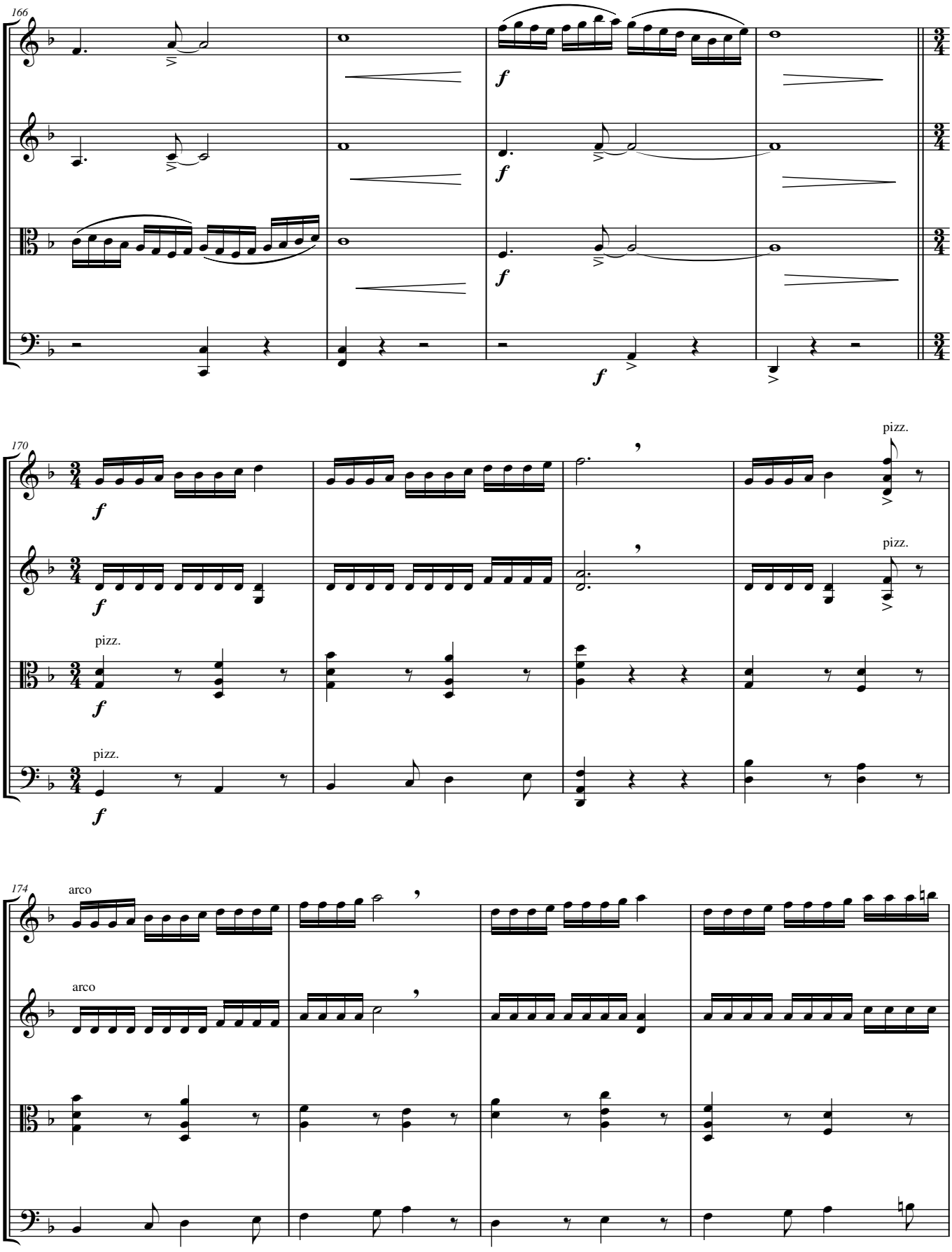
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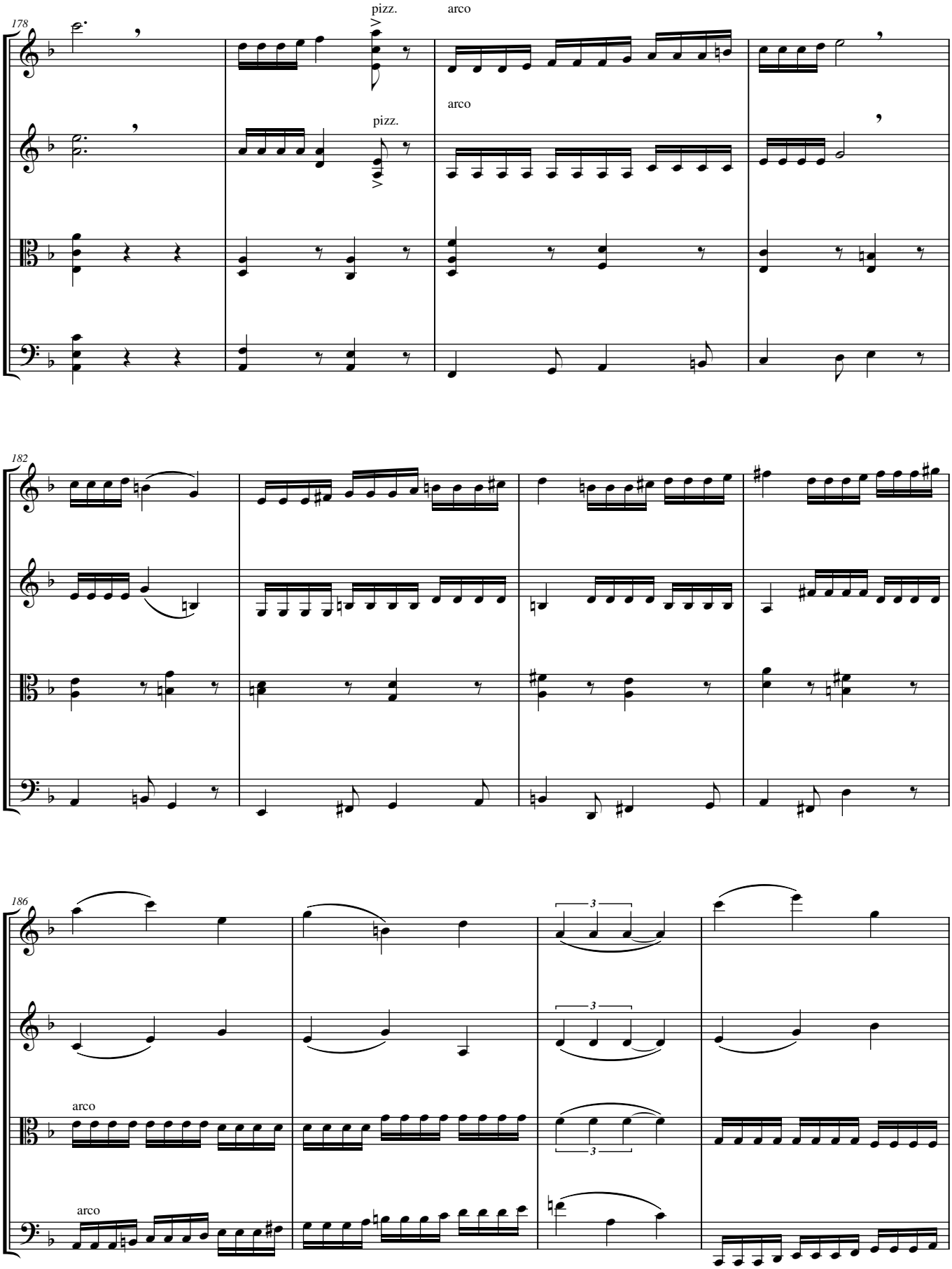
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3
3
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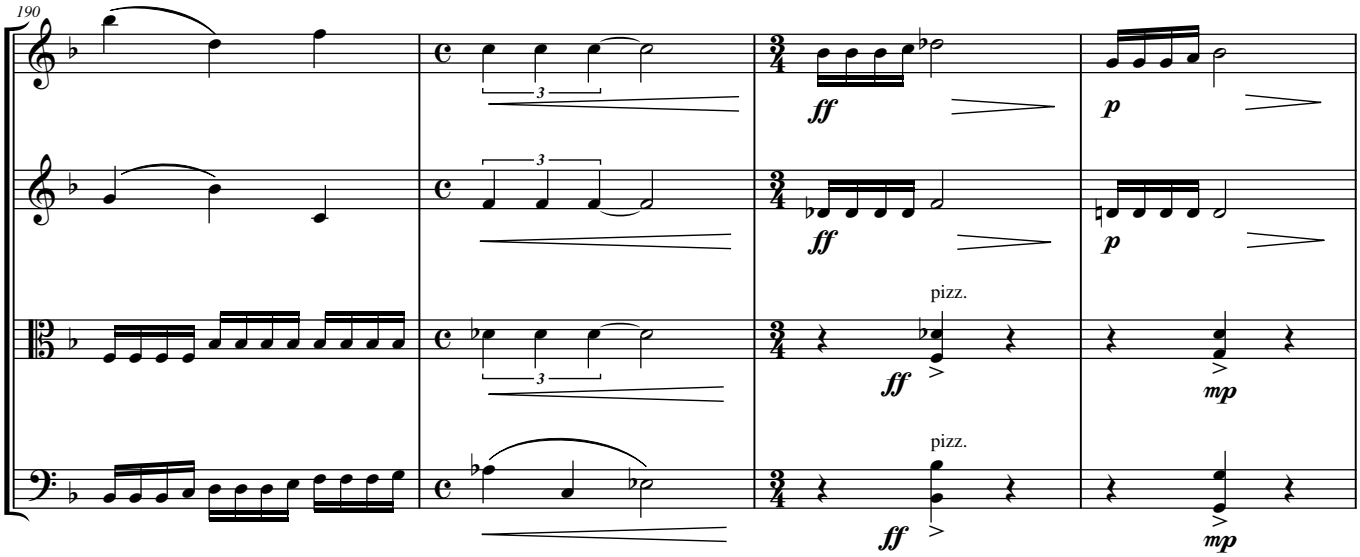
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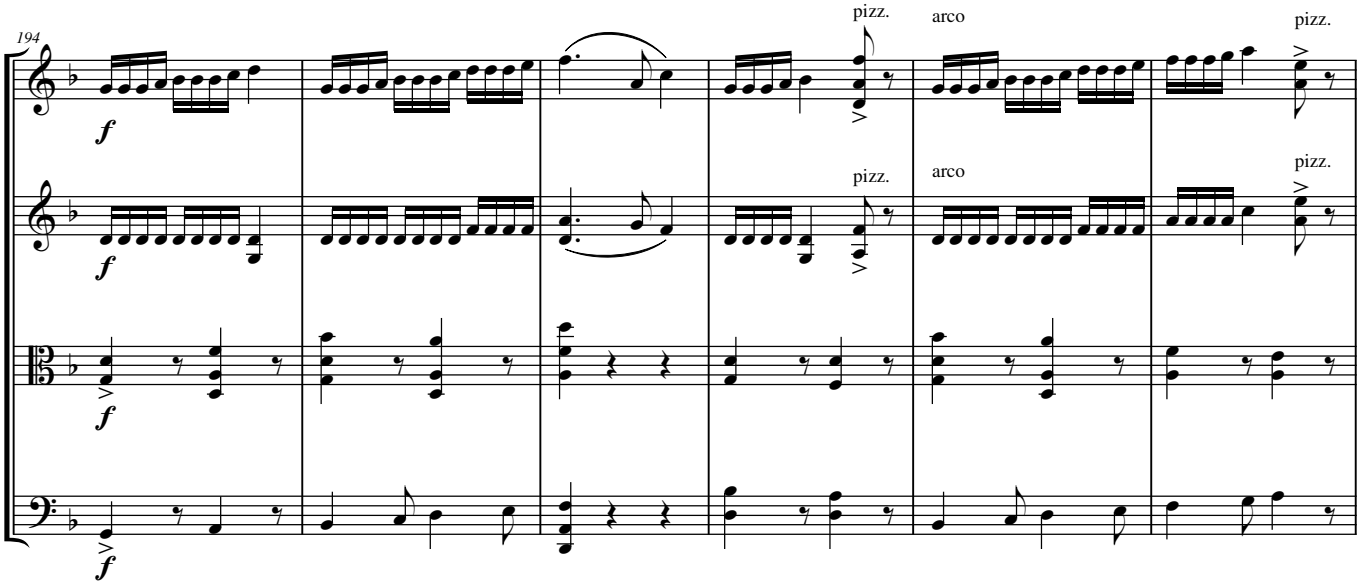
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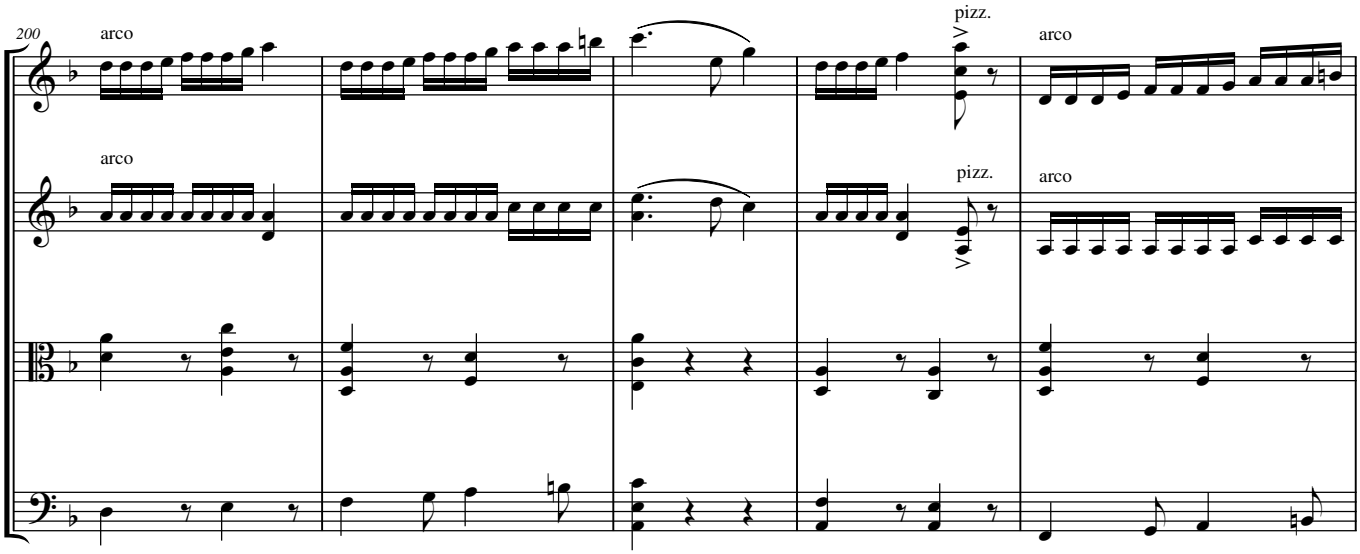
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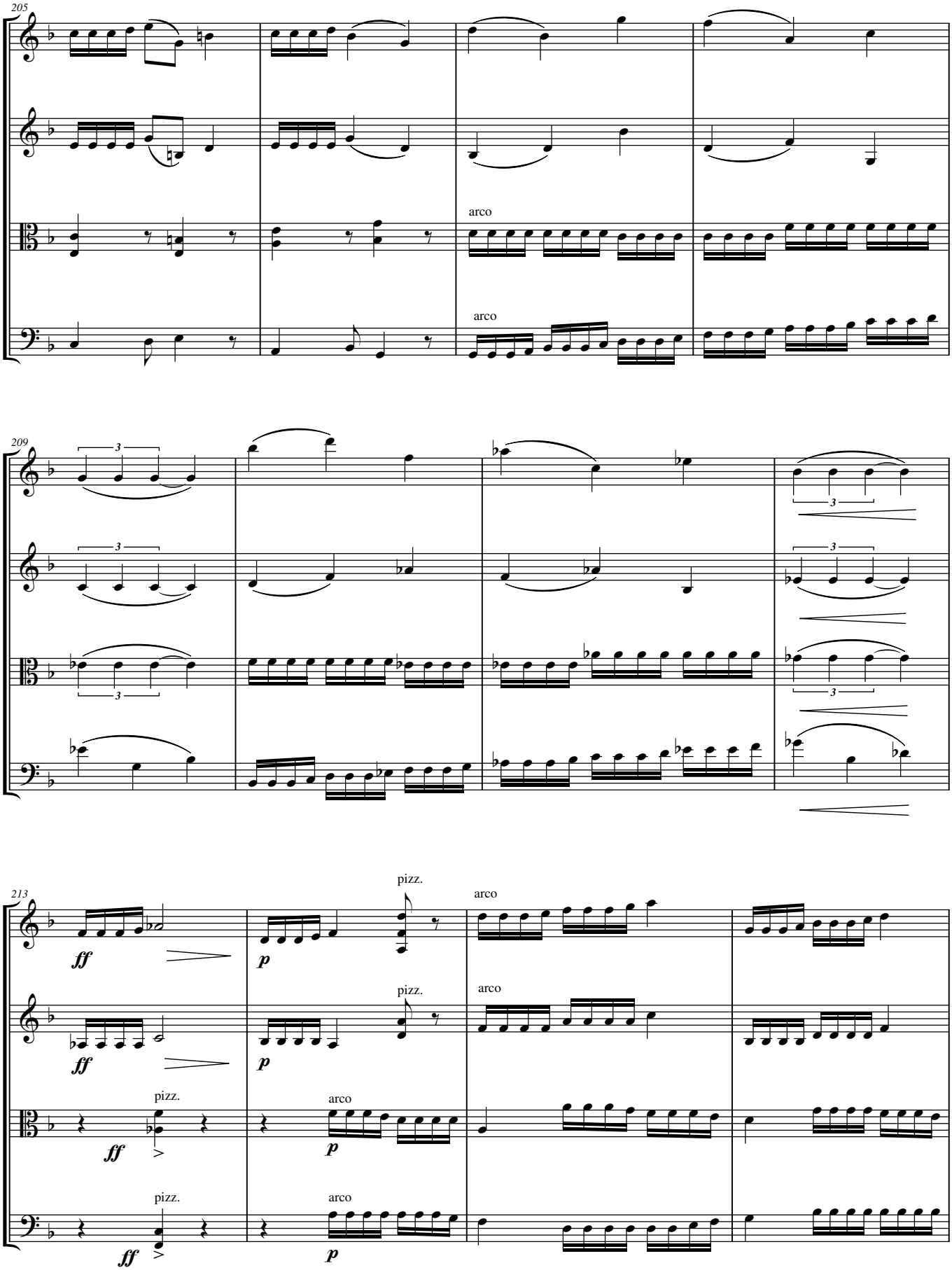
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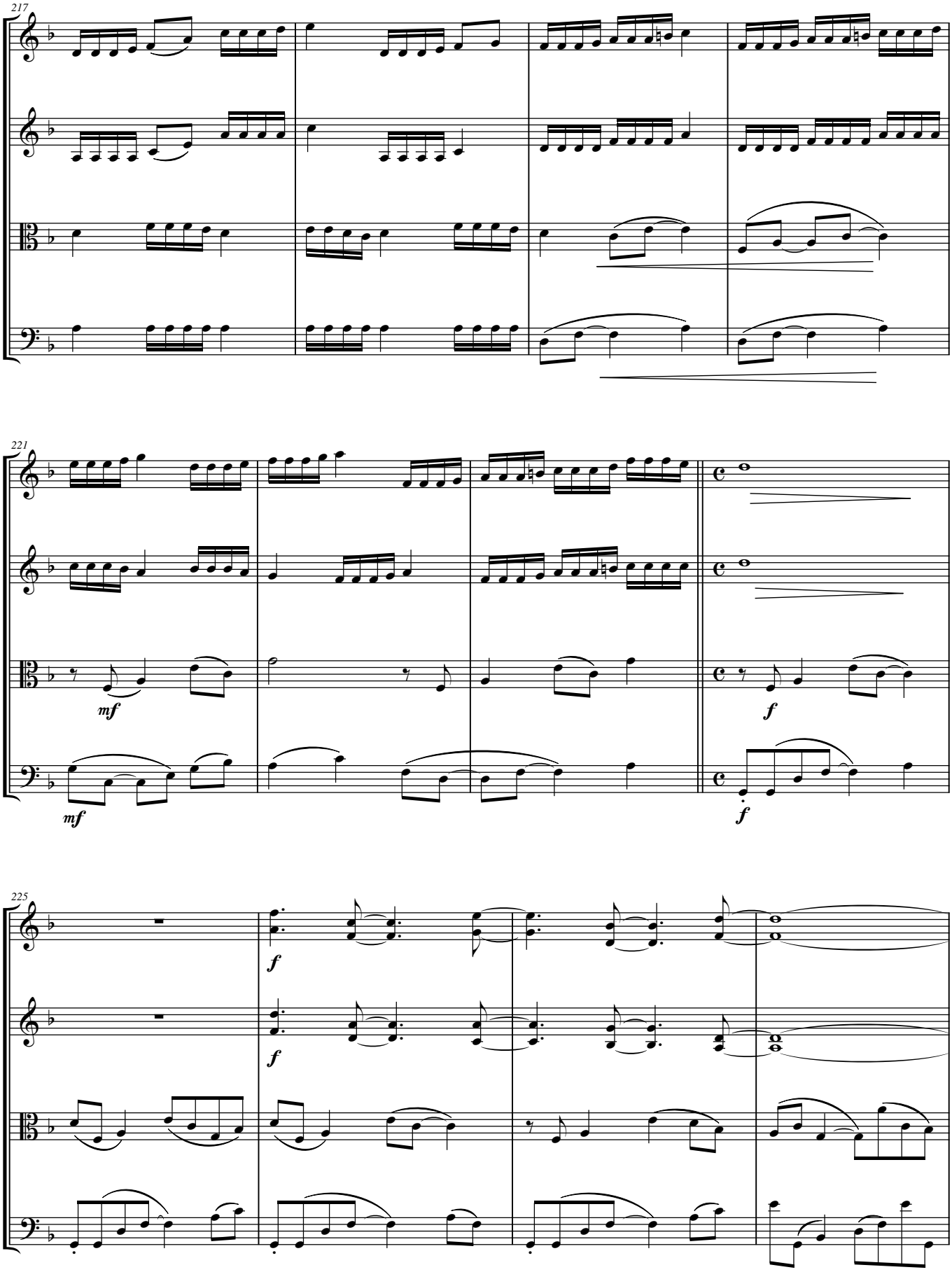
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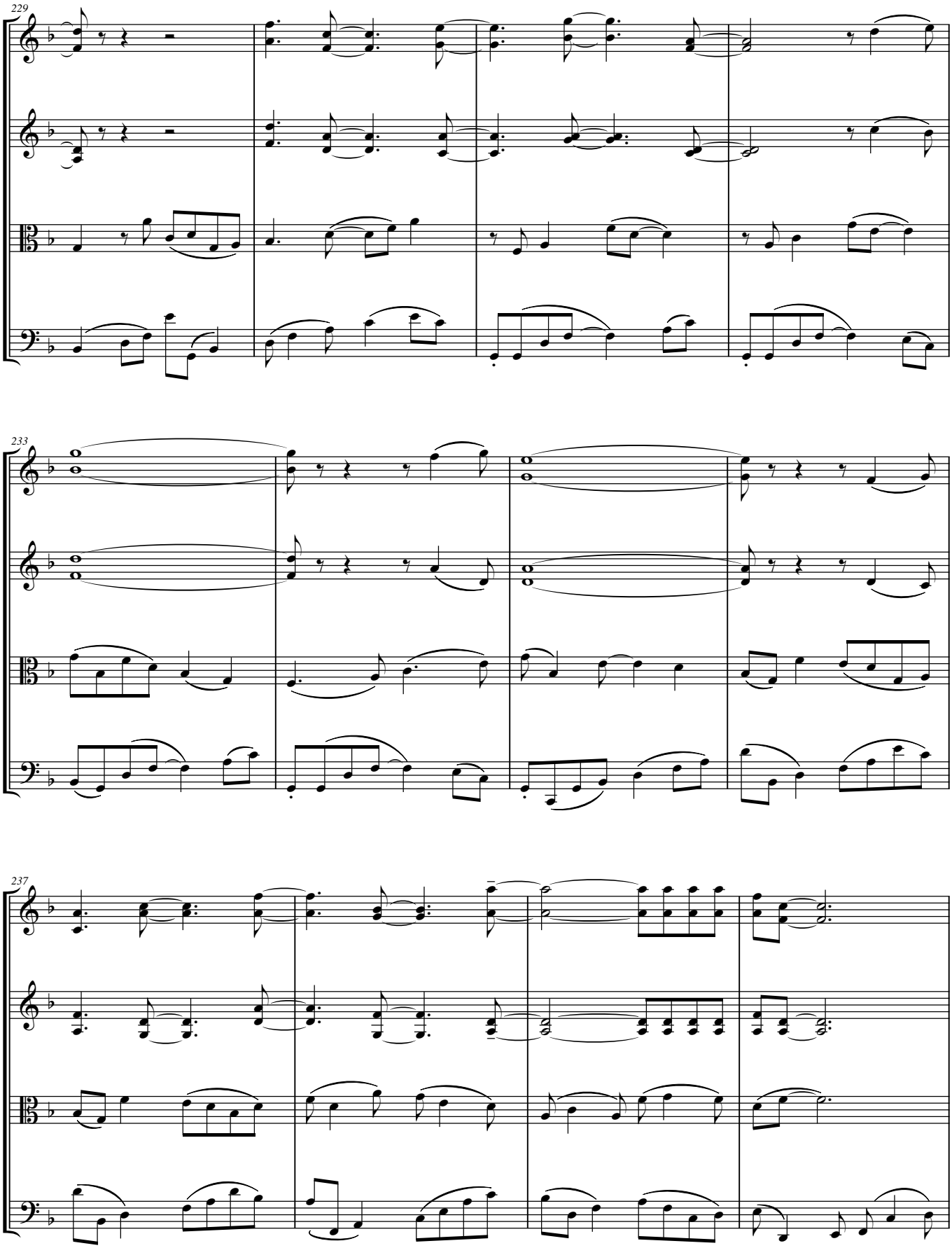
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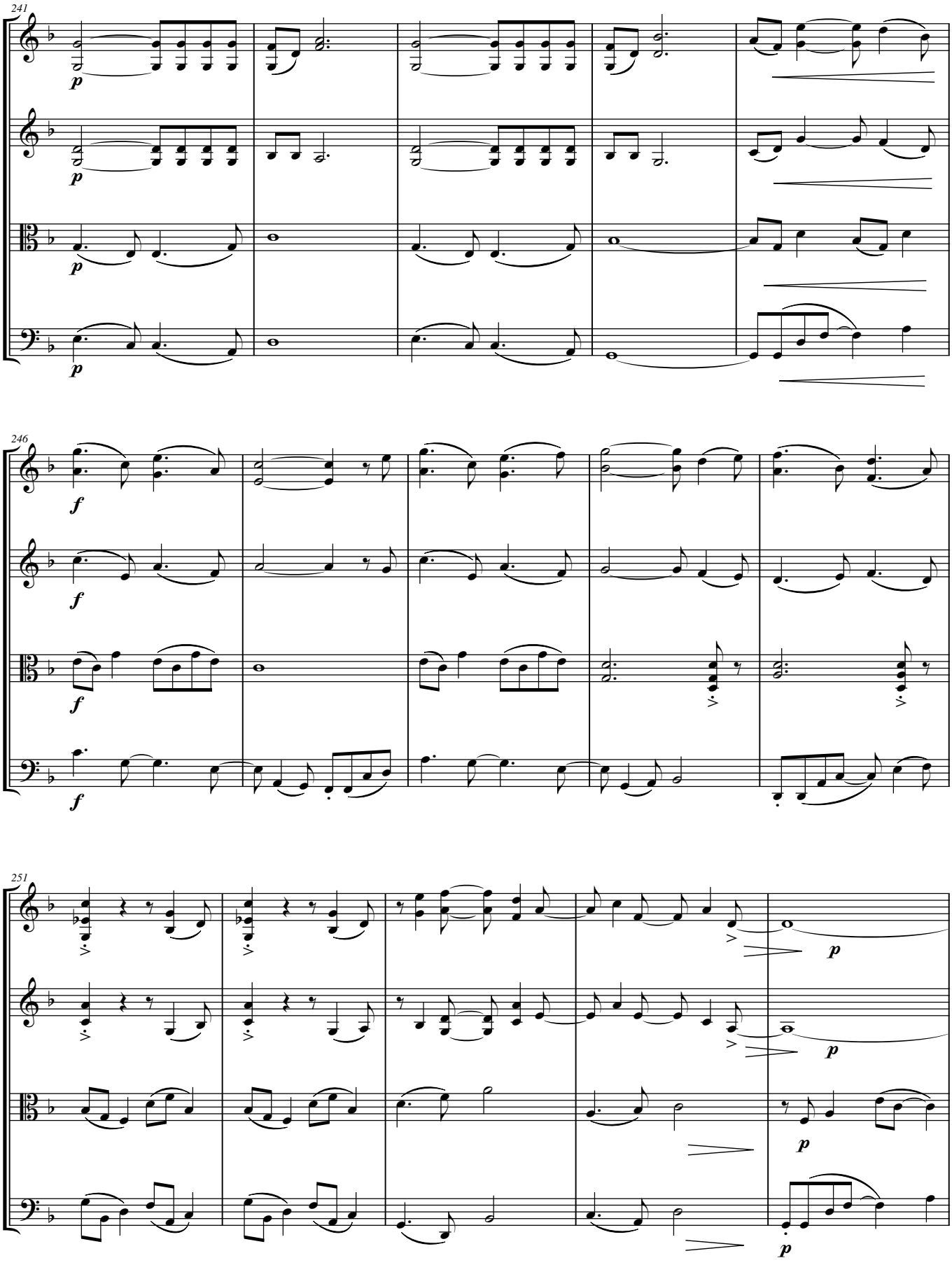
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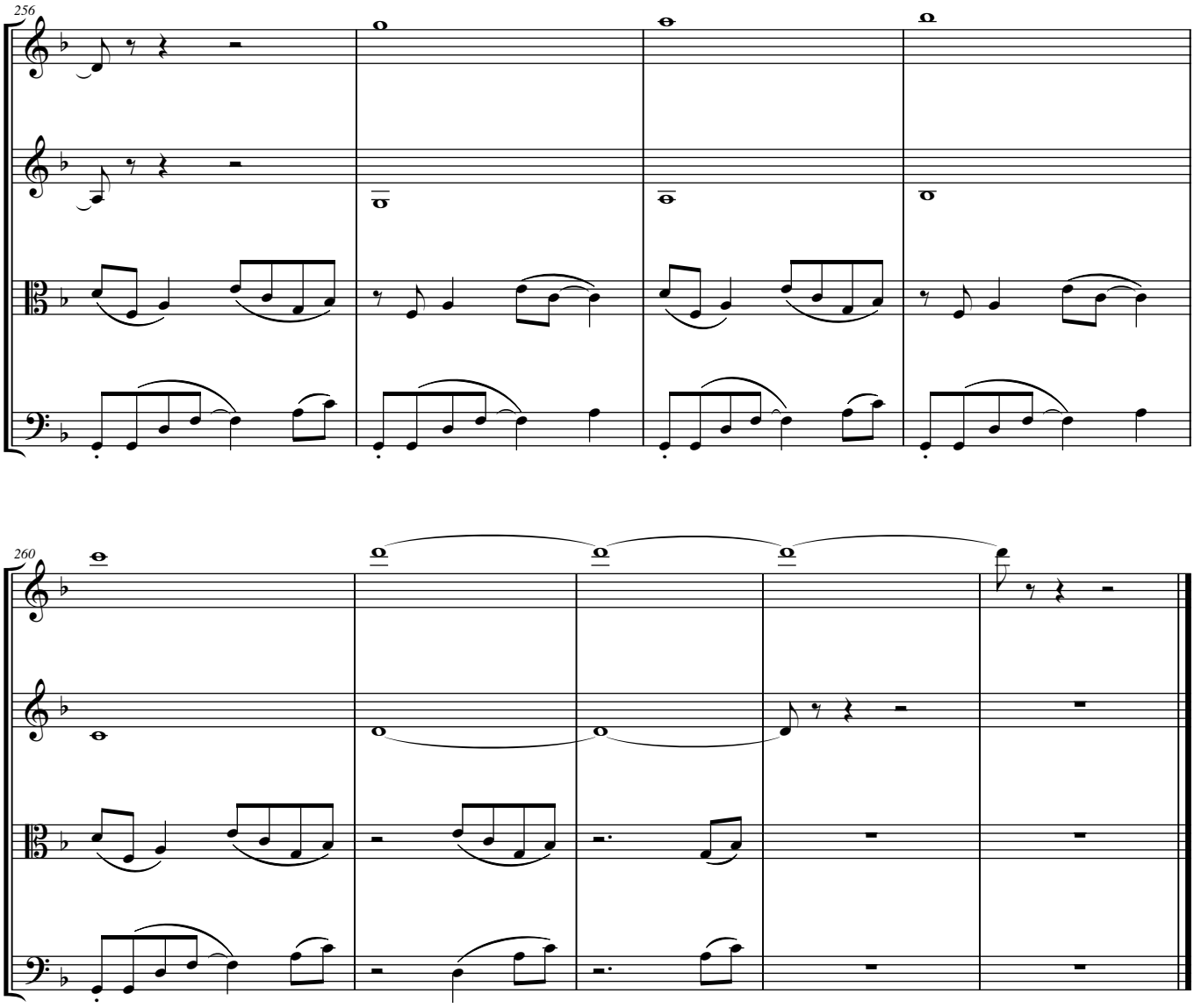
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American Landscapes

Presto

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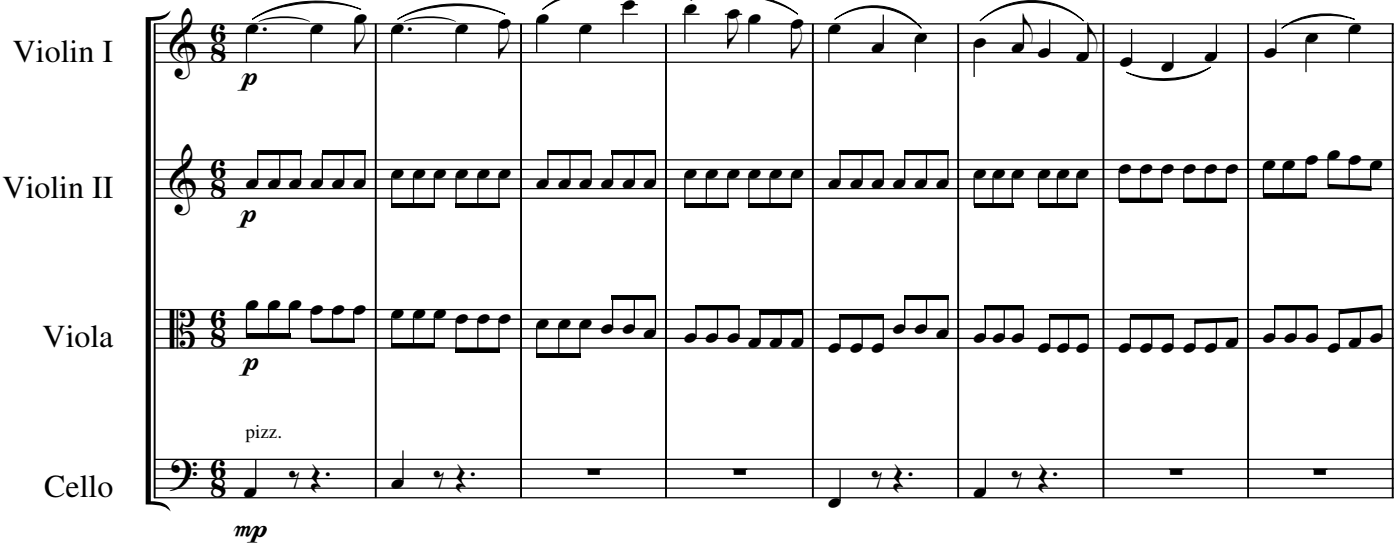
Violin I

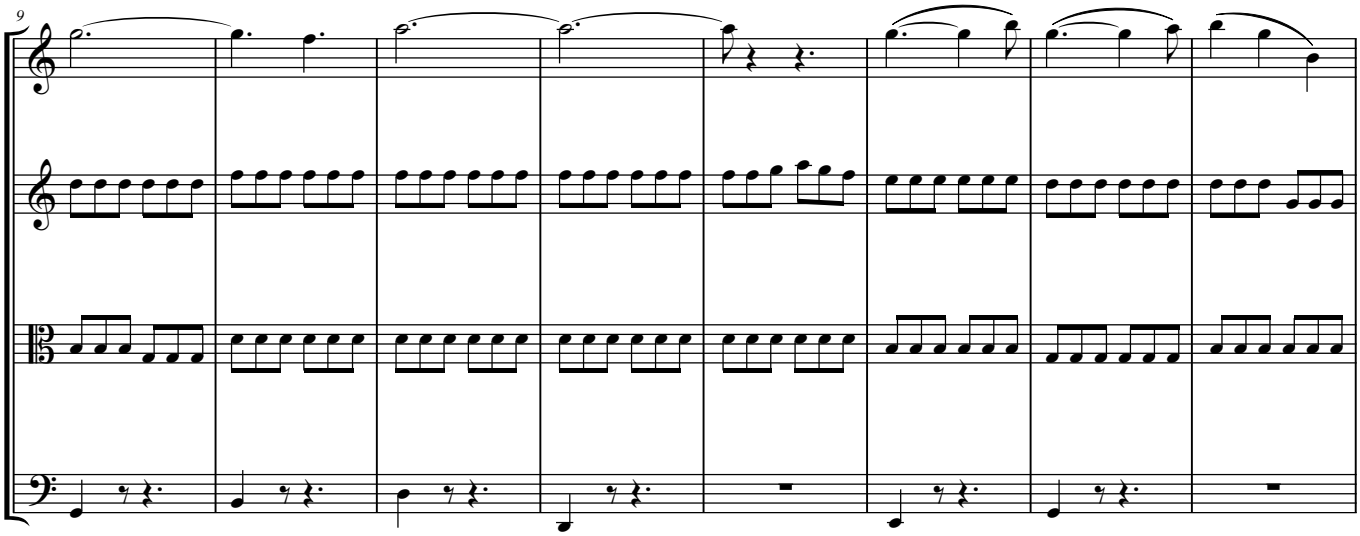
Violin II

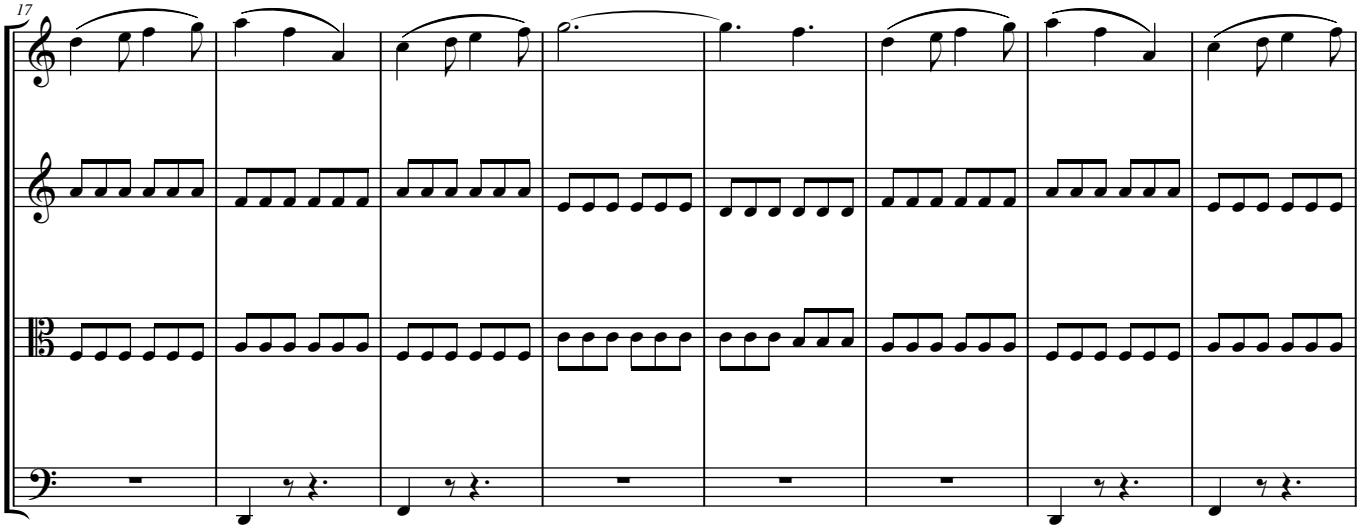
Viola

pizz.

Cello







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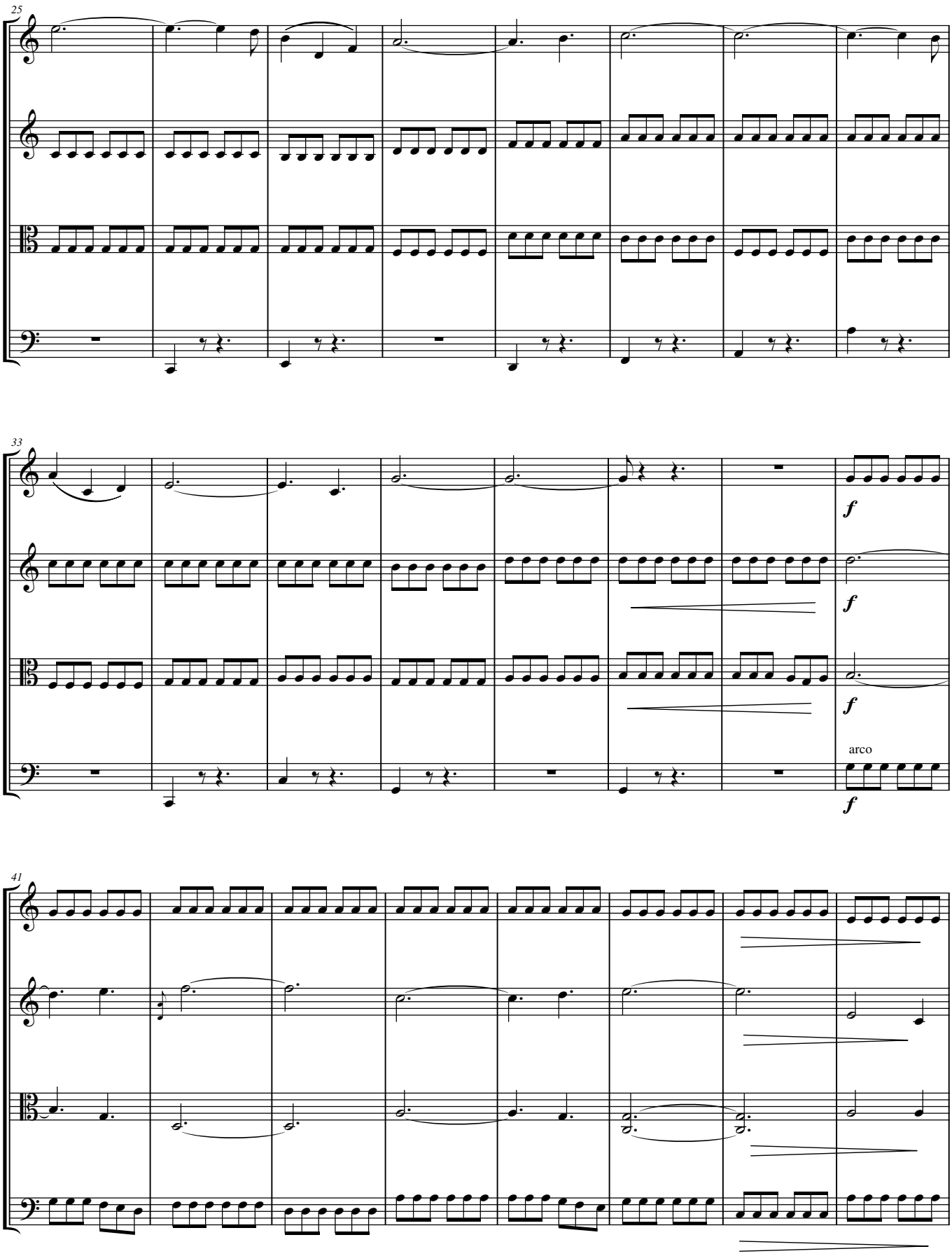
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f
f
arco
f
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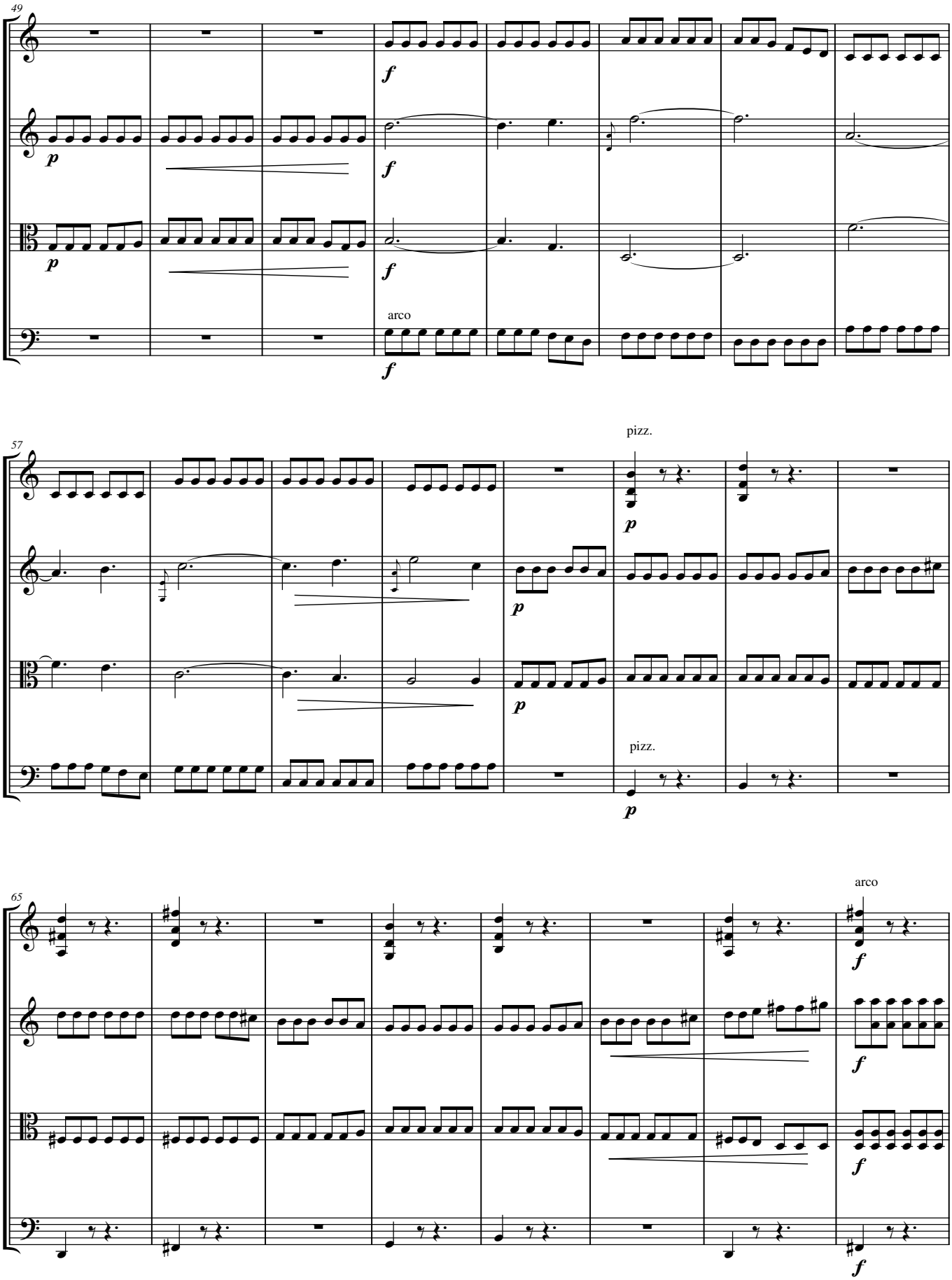
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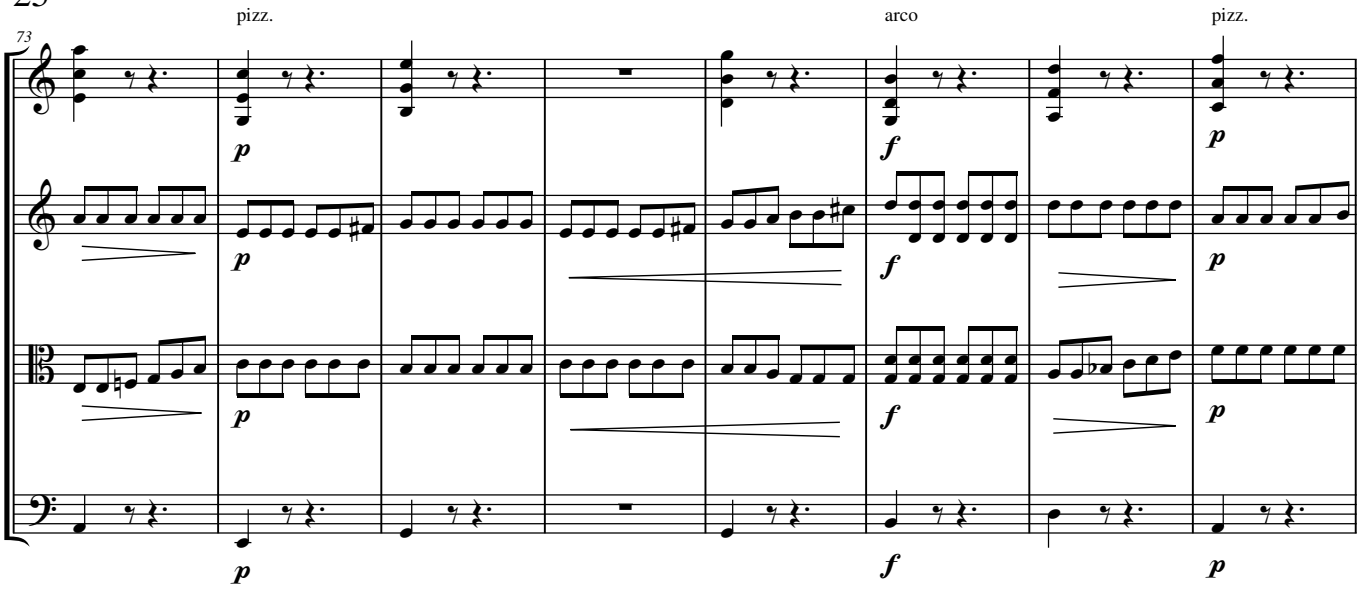
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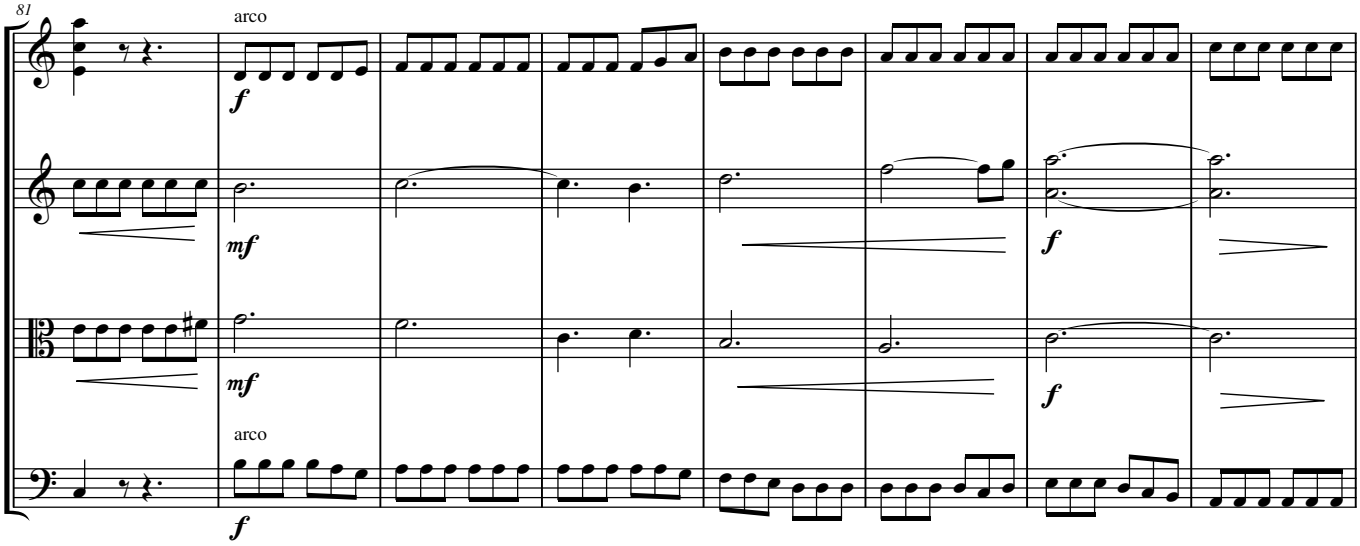
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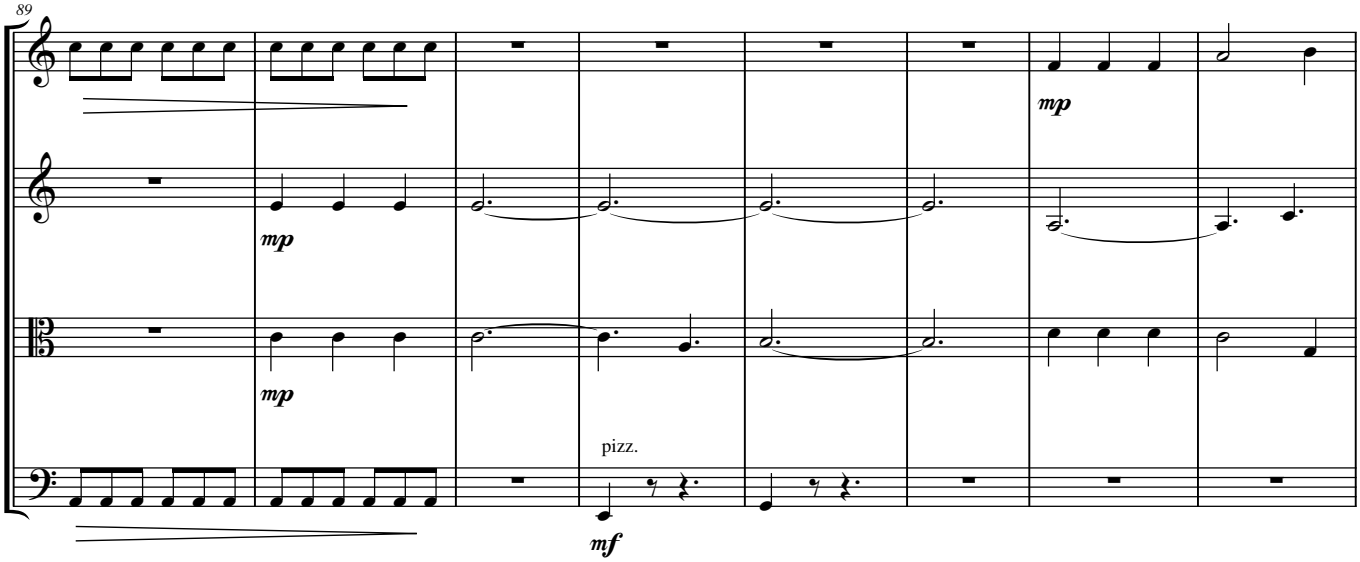
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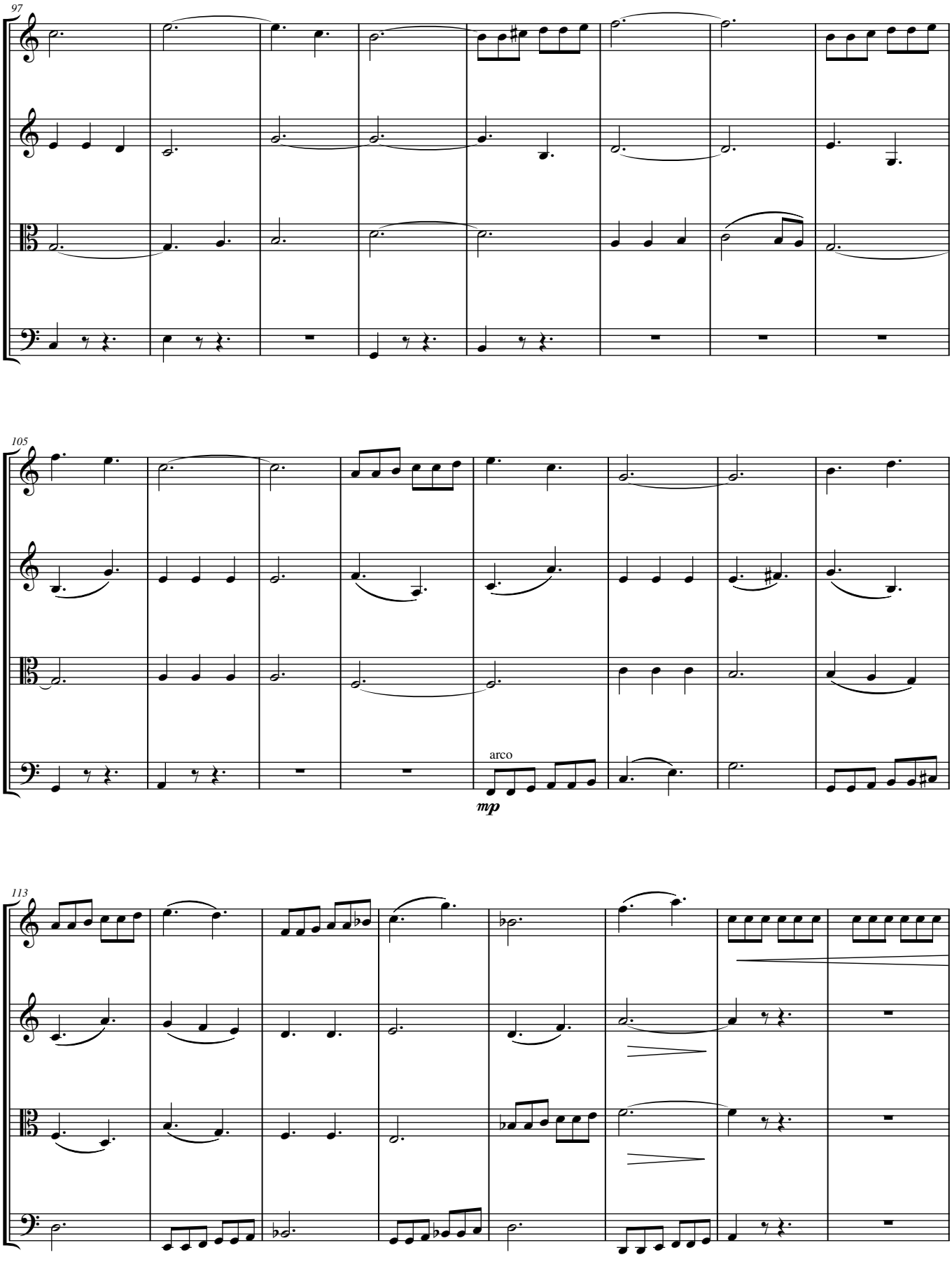
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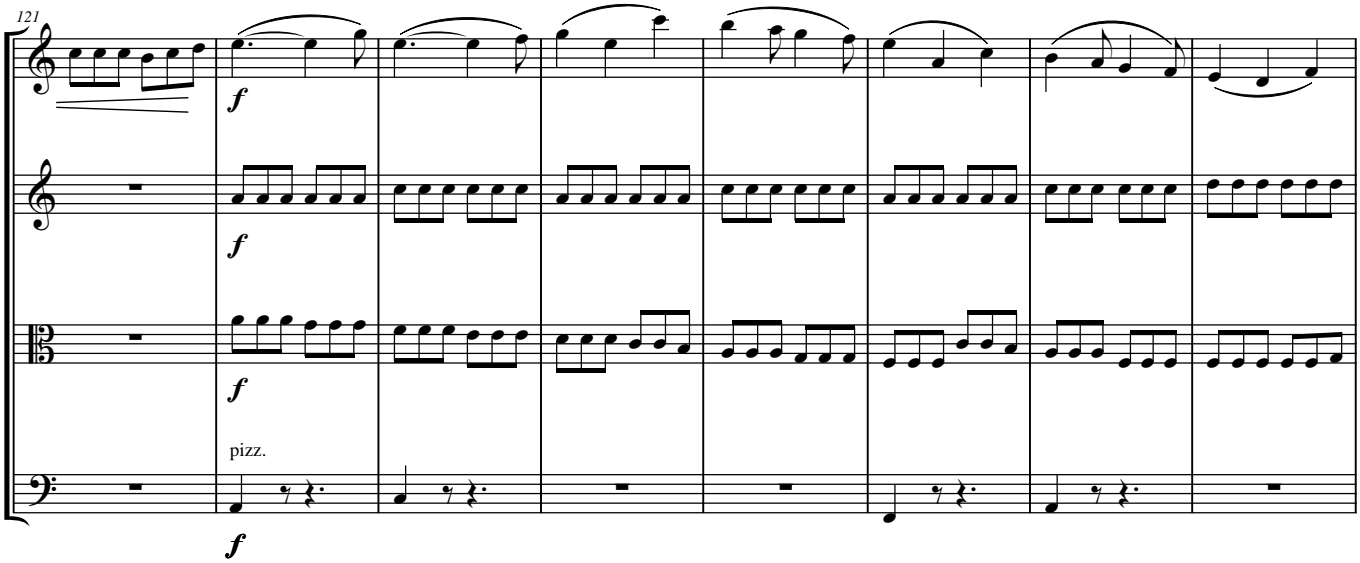
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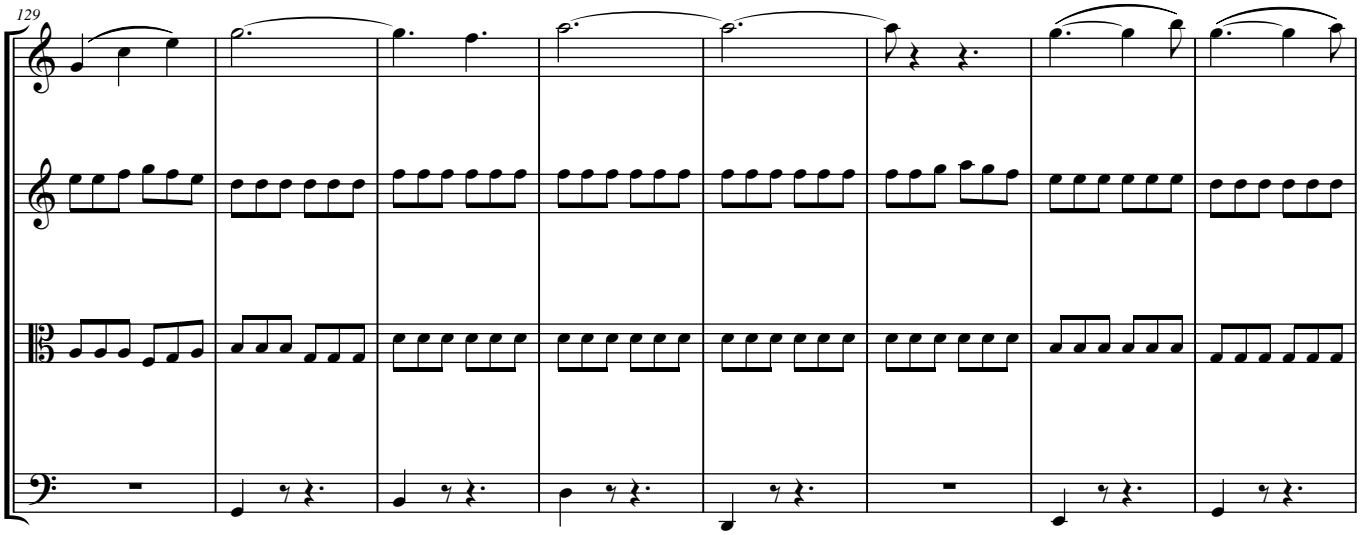
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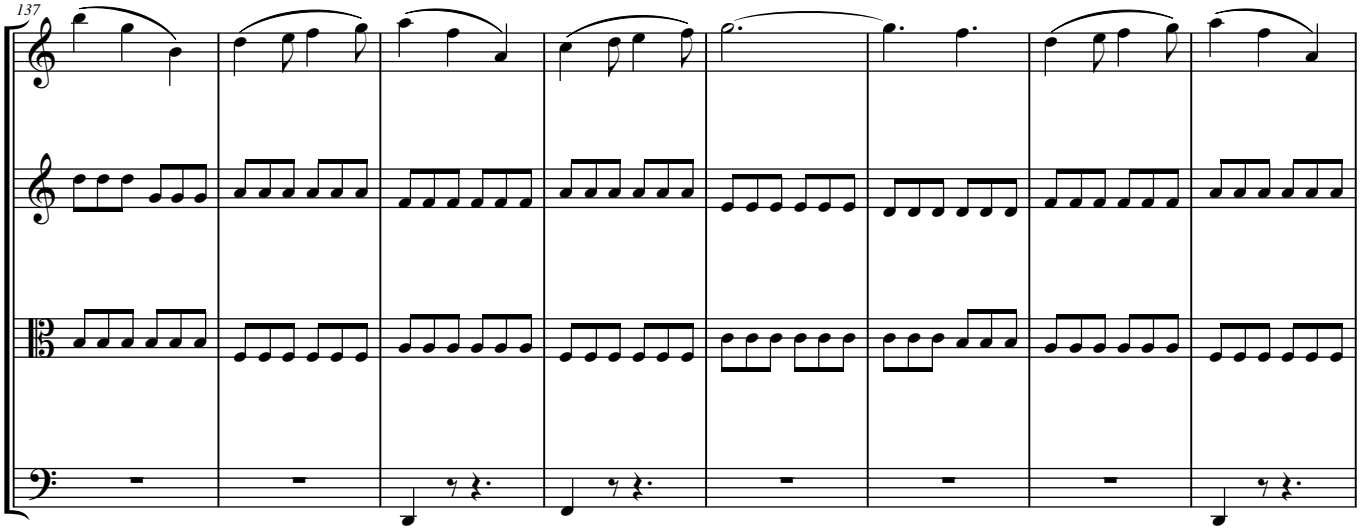
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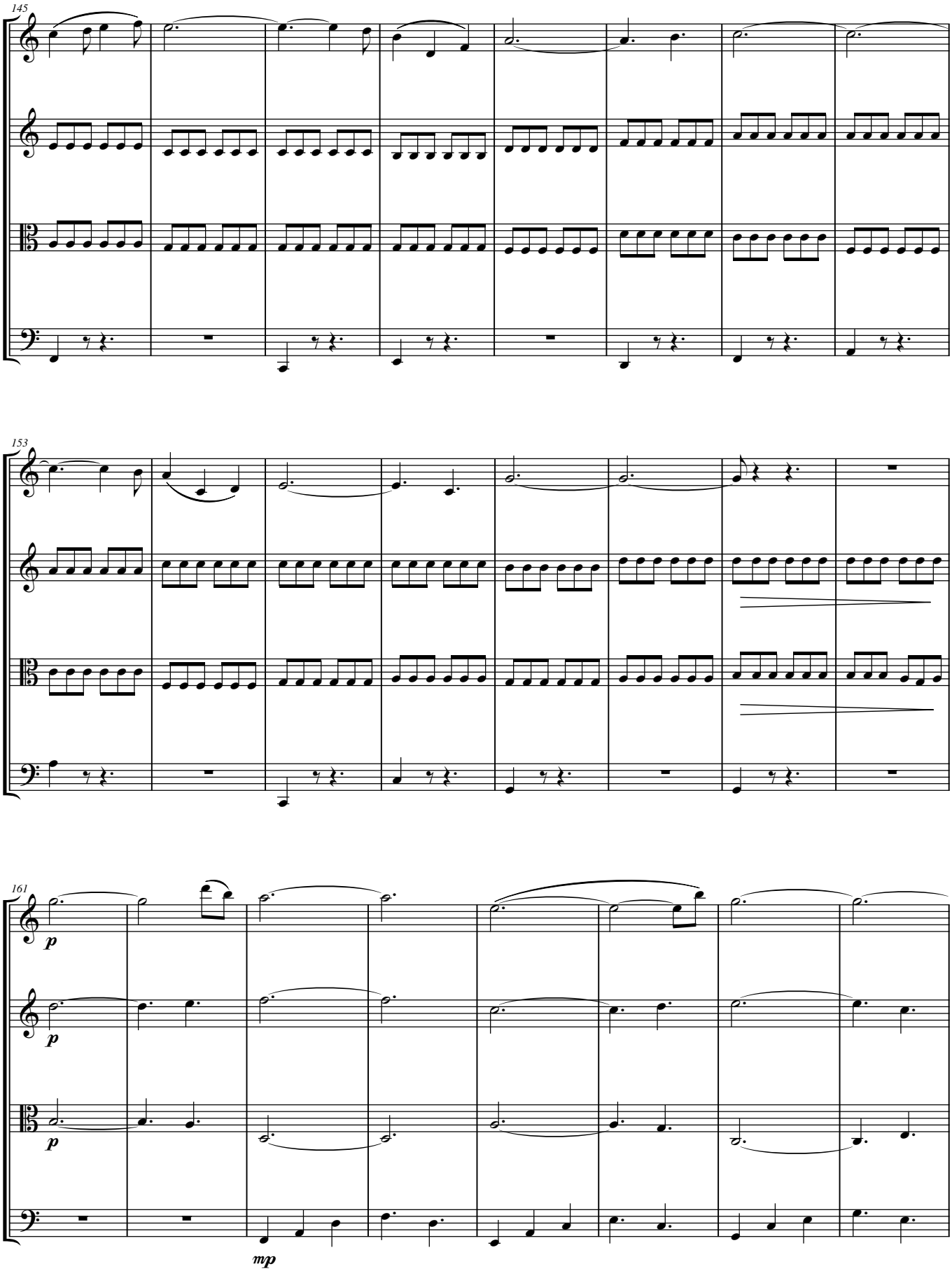
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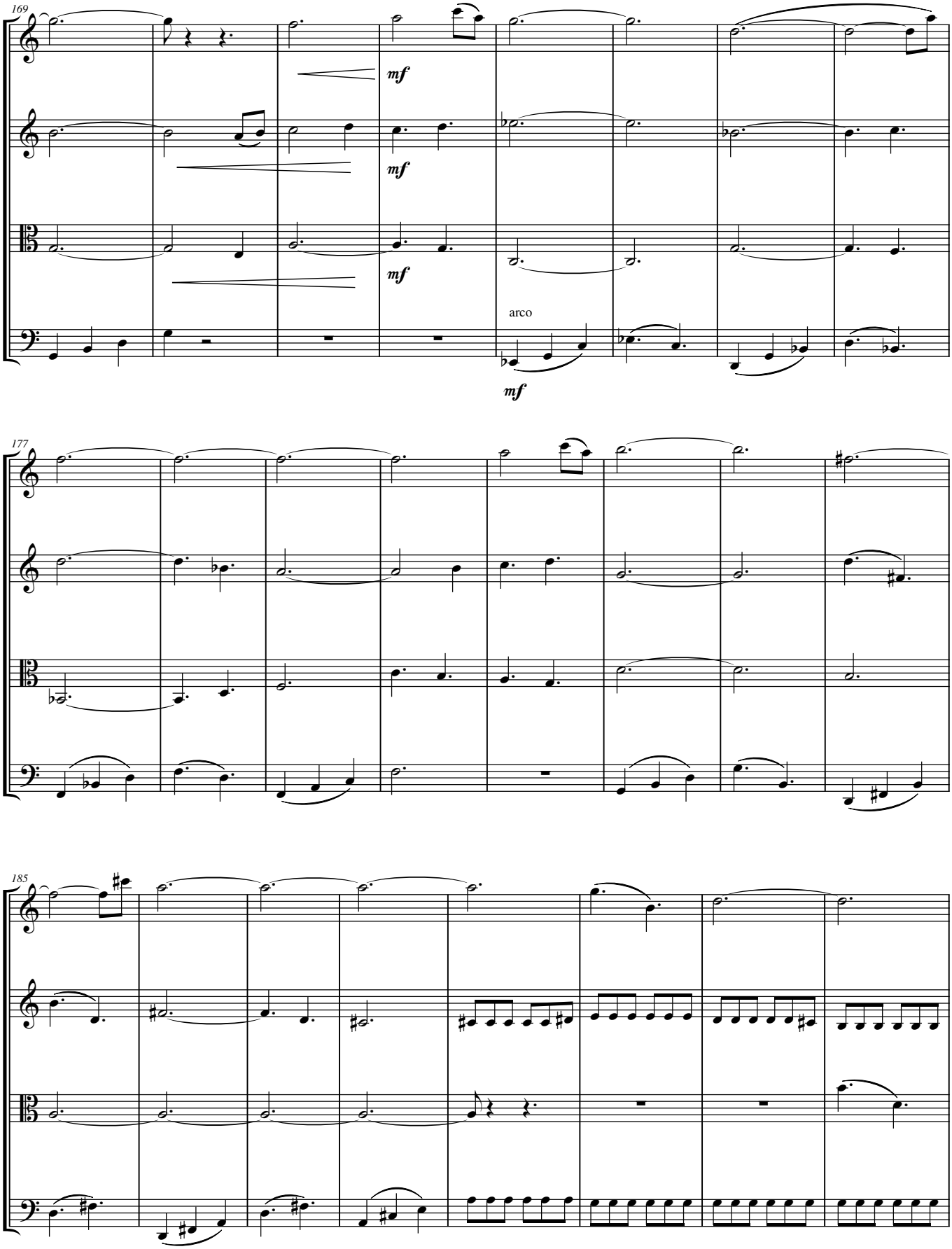
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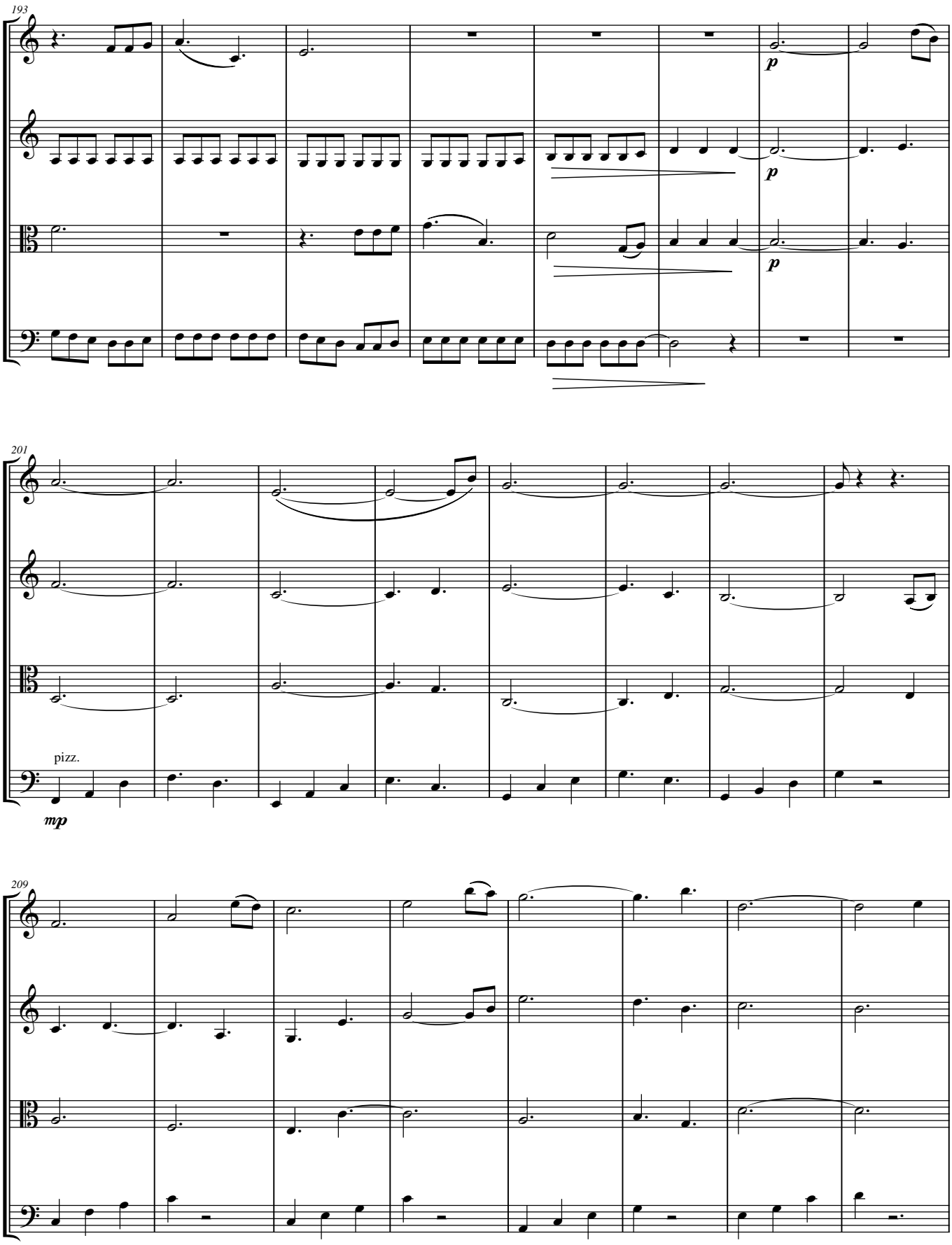
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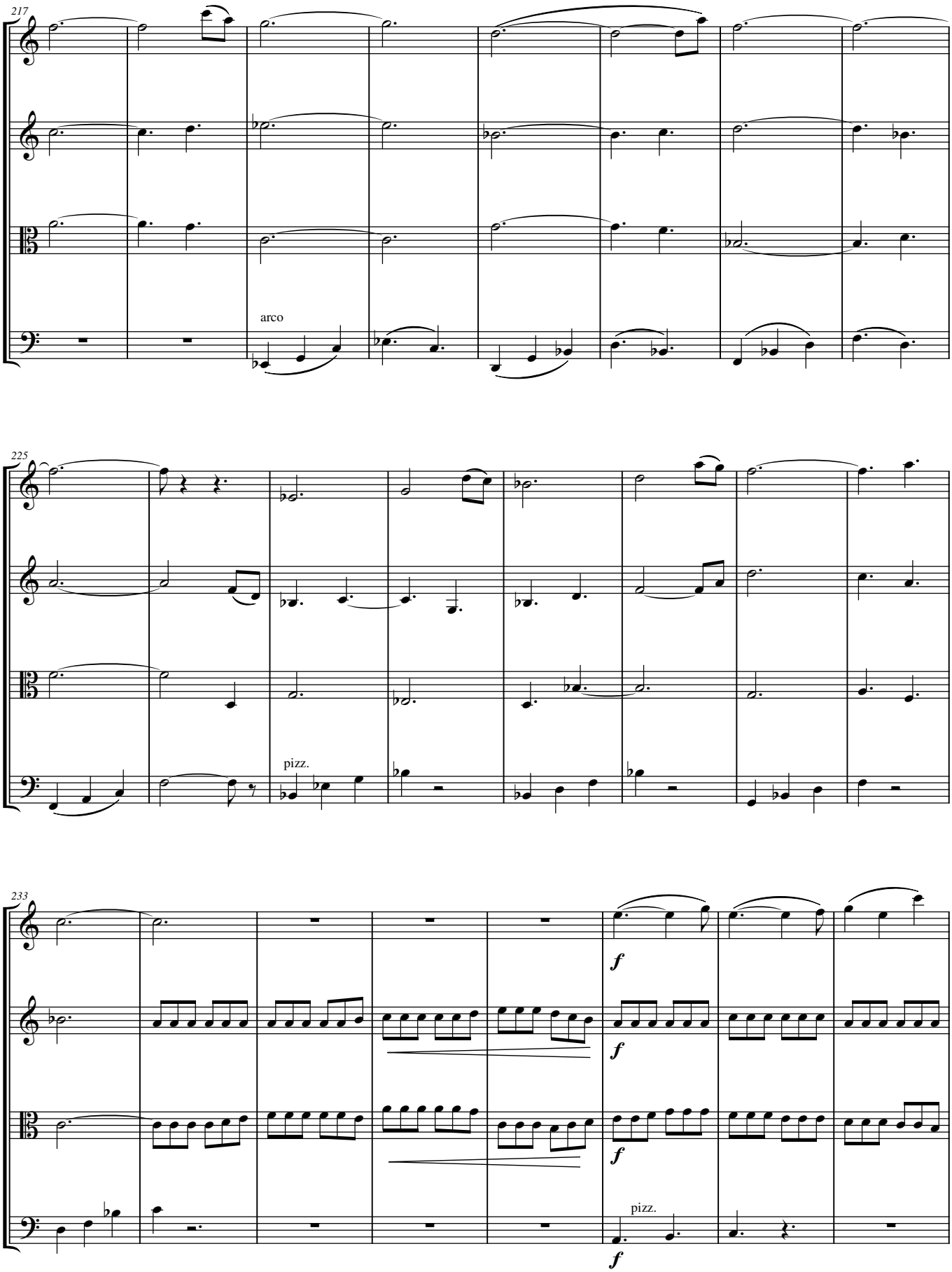
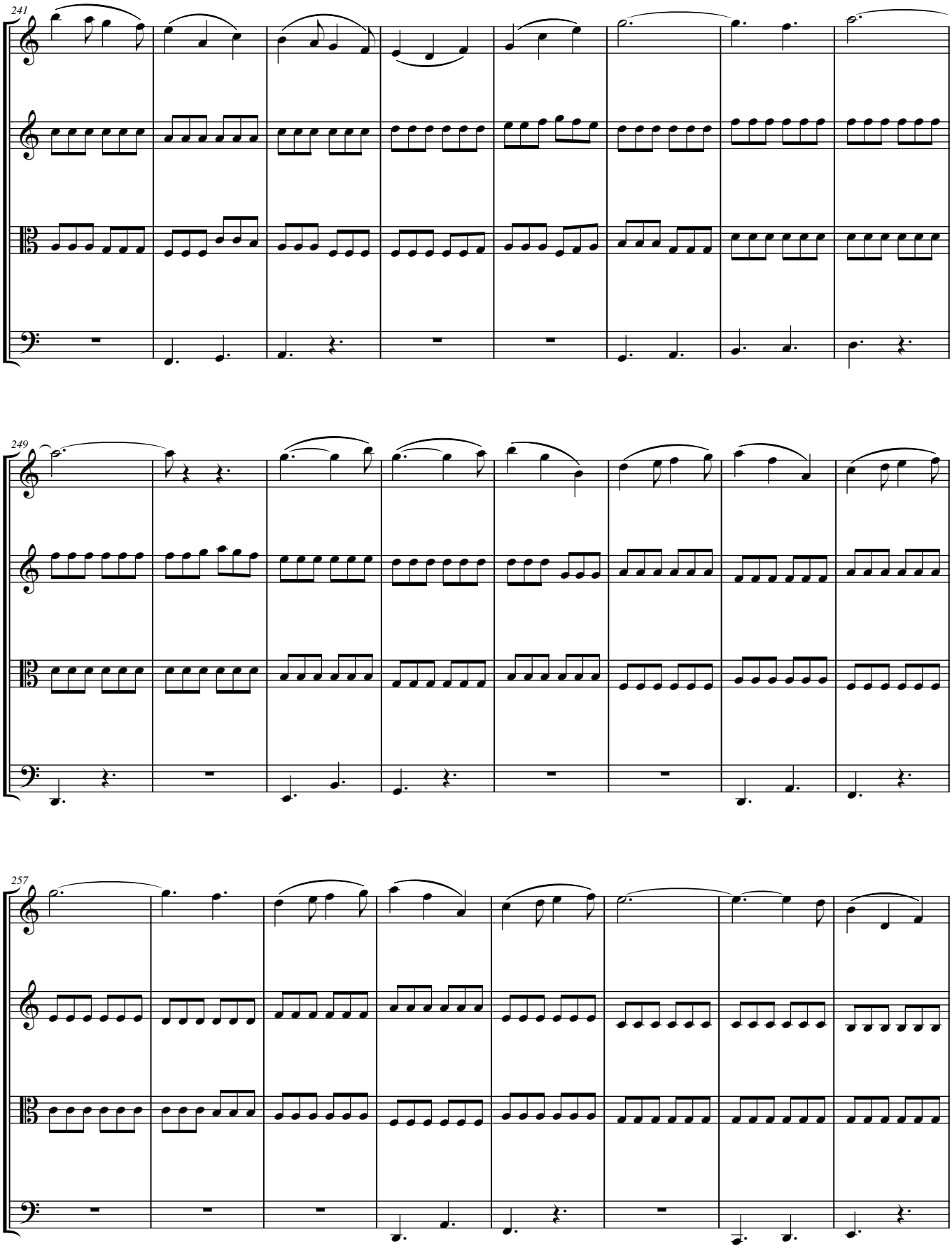
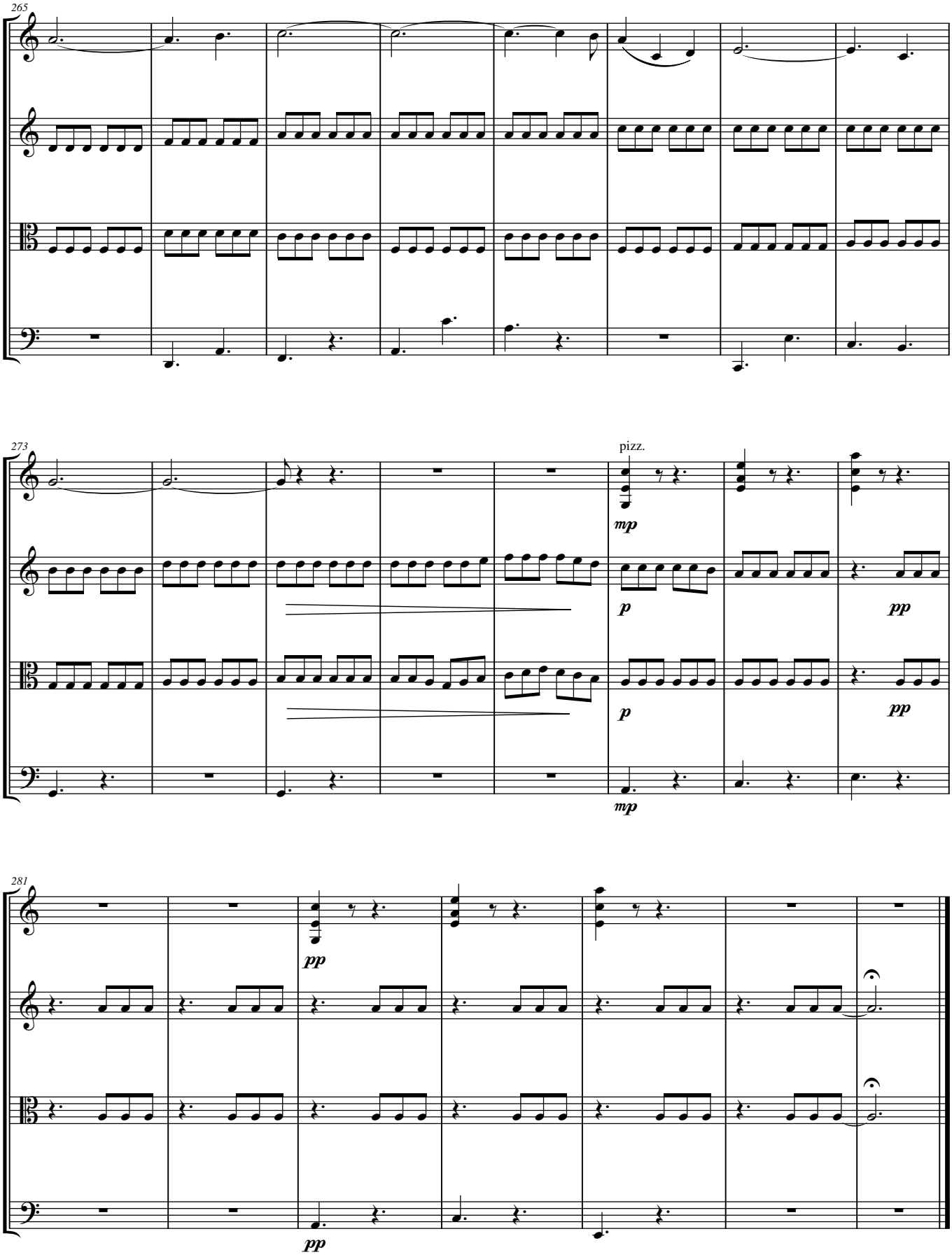
mp
209


217
arco
225
pizz.
233
f
f
f
pizz.
f

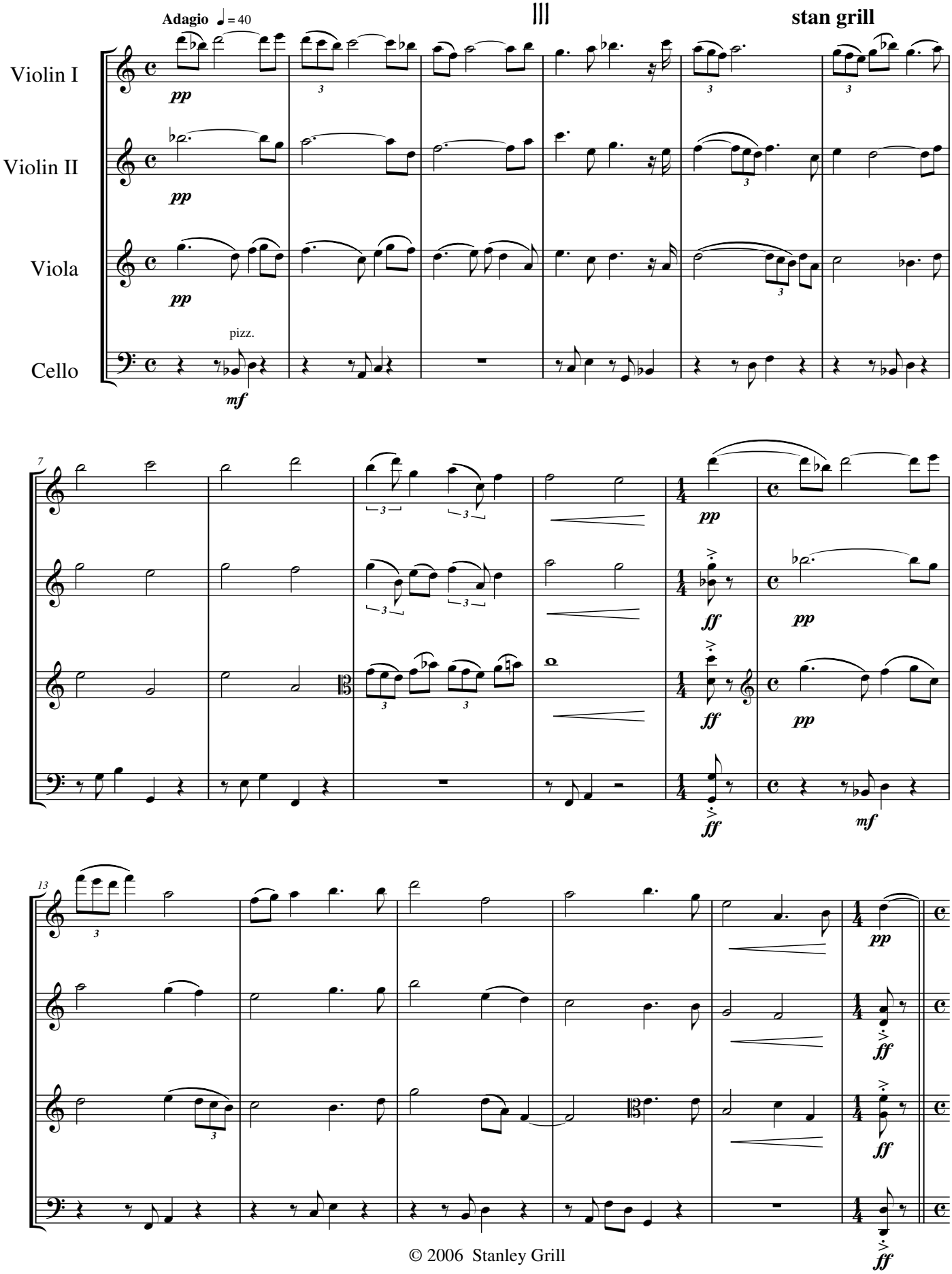

241
249
257


265
273
pizz.
mp
p
pp
p
pp
mp
281
pp
pp

American Landscapes

III

stan grill



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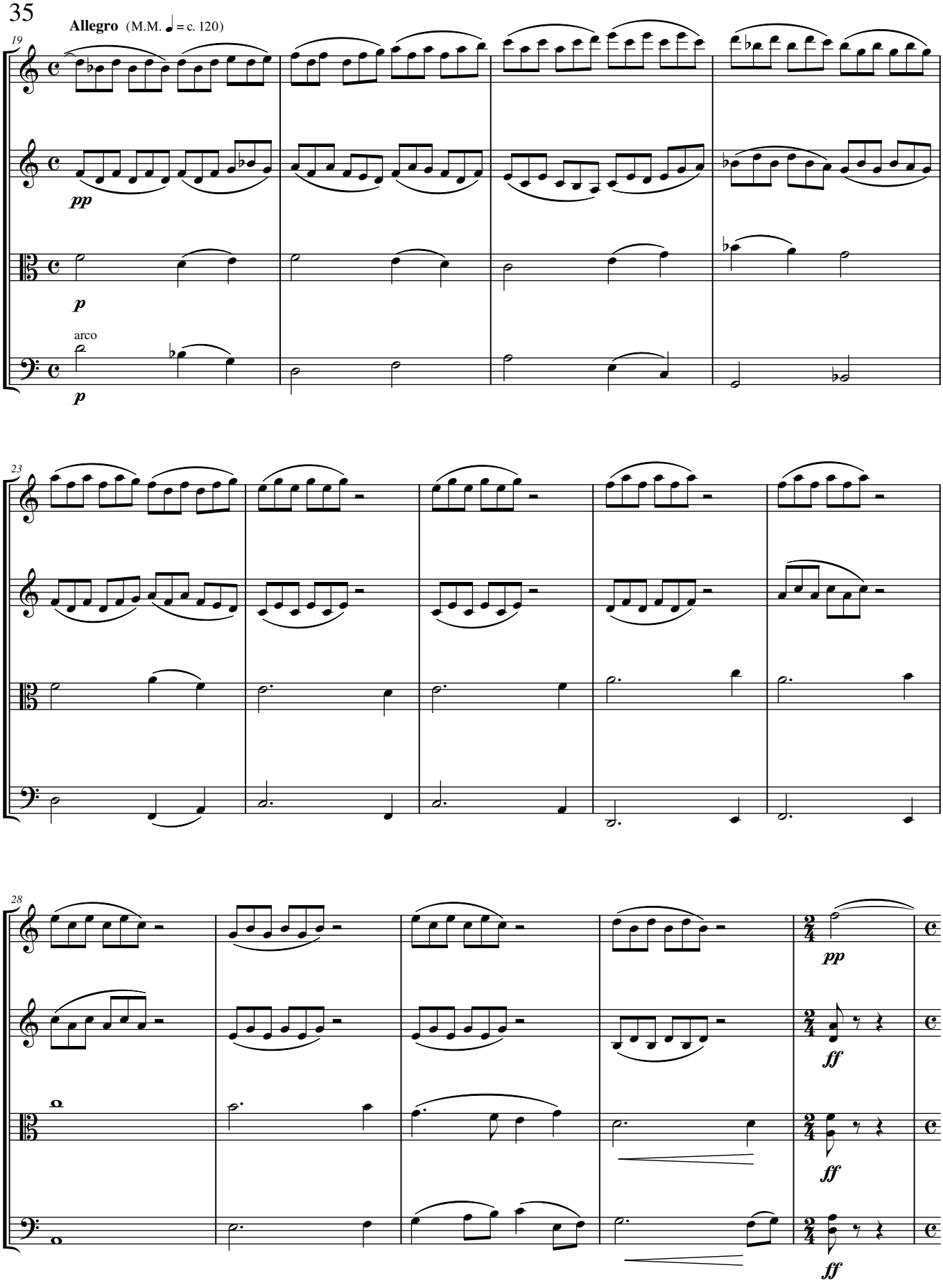
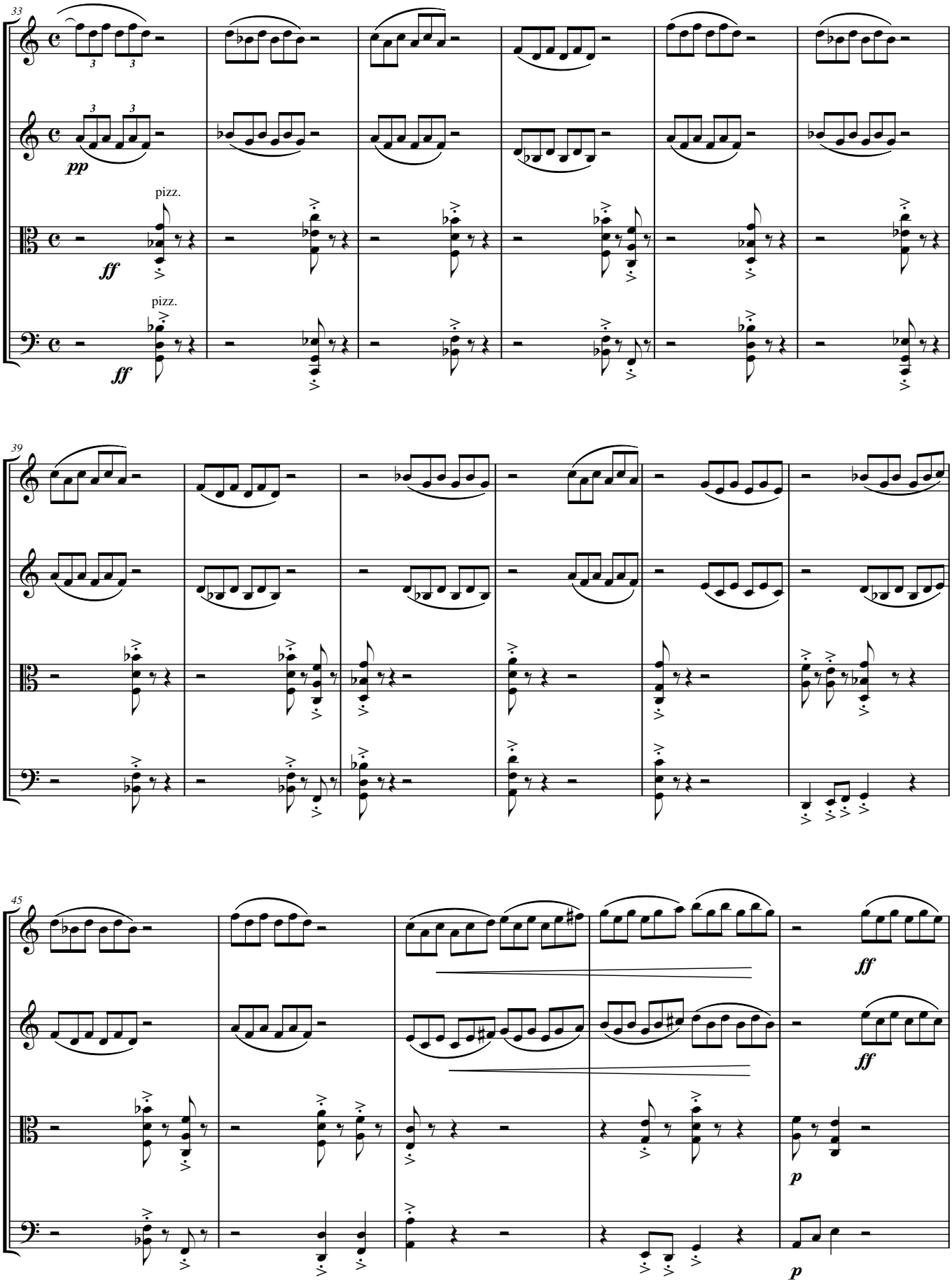
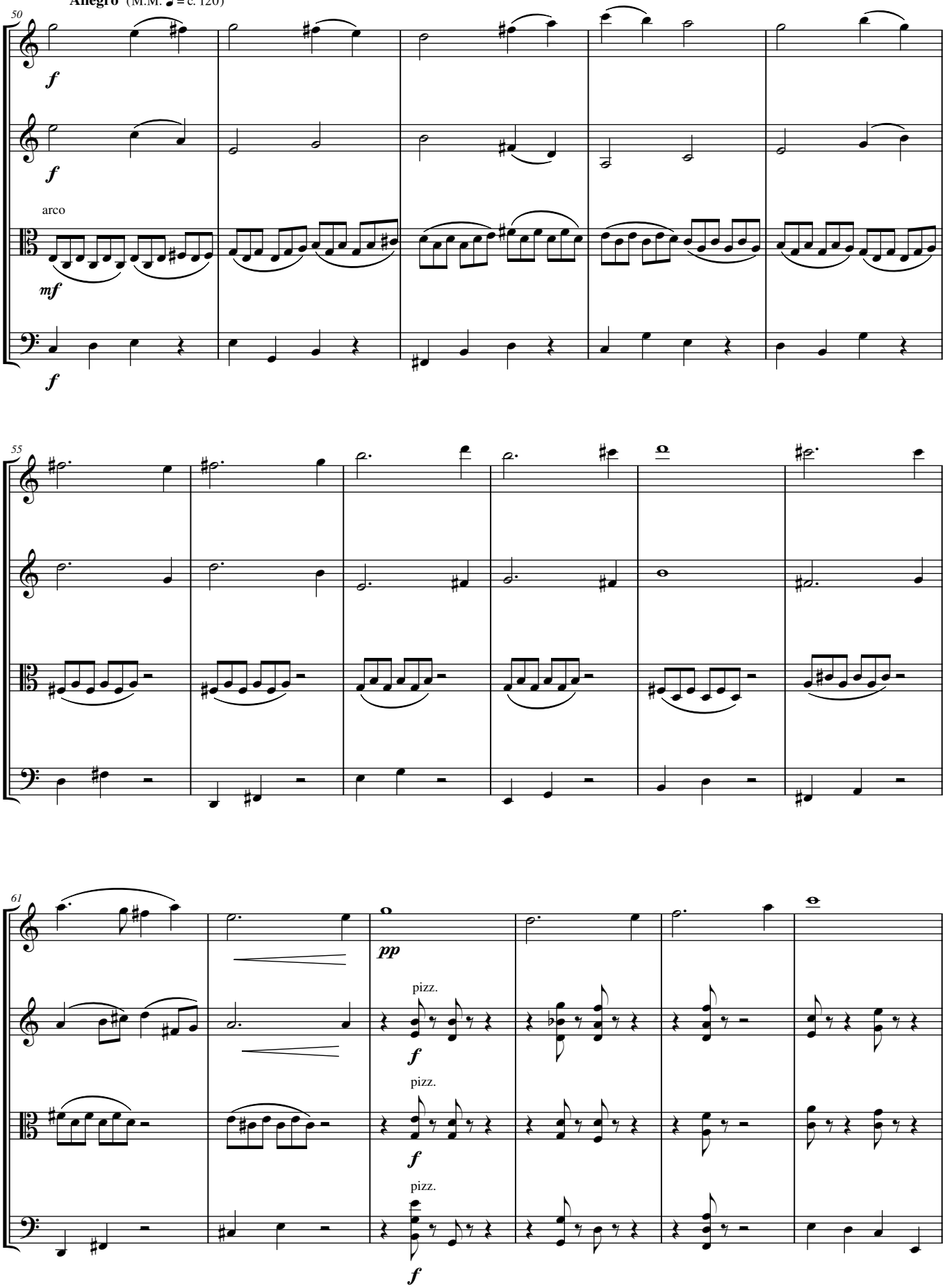
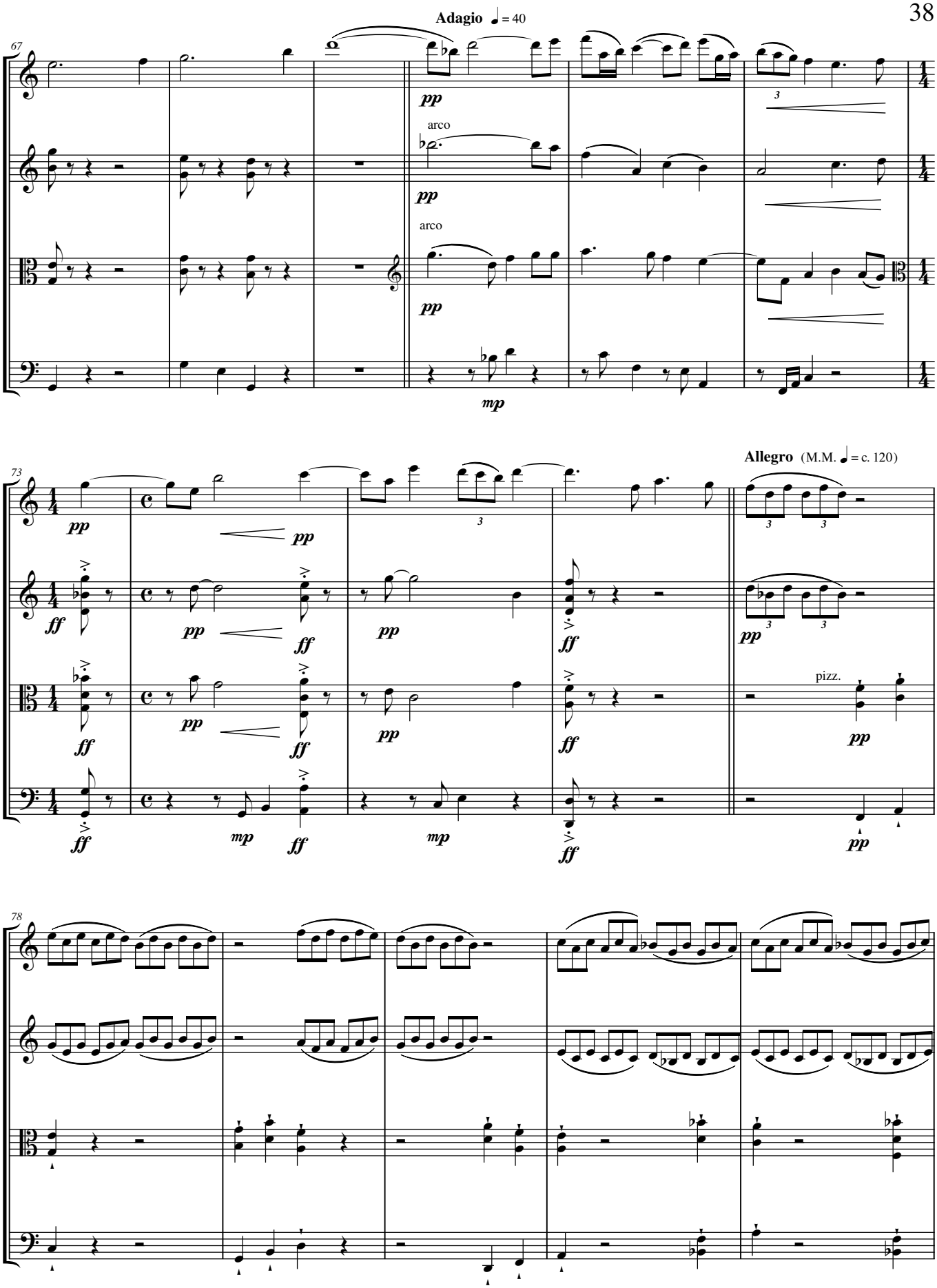
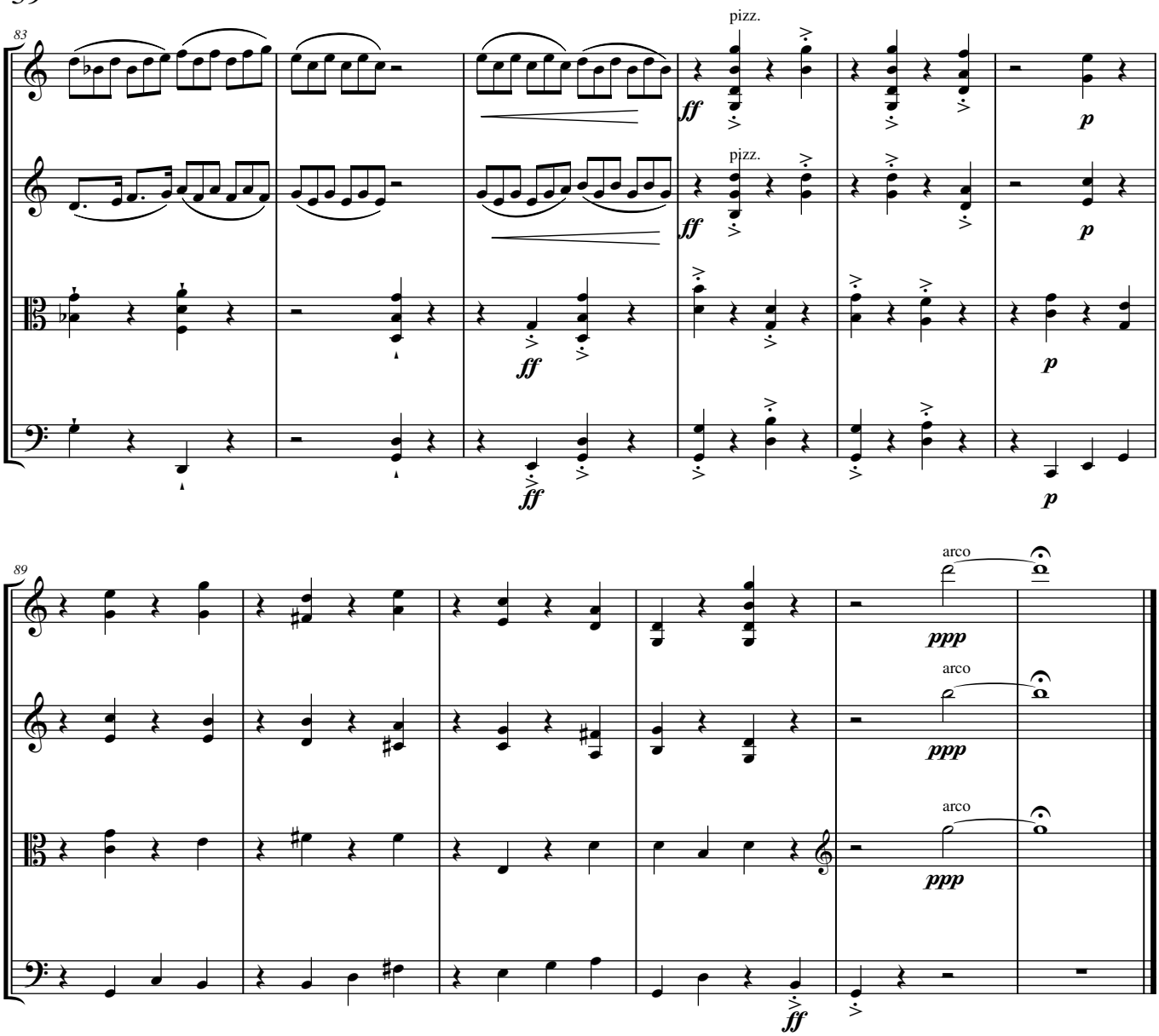

Allegro (M.M. ♩ = c. 120)
19
pp
p
arco
p
23
28
pp
ff
ff
ff


33
pp
pizz.
ff
pizz.
ff
39
45
ff
ff
p
p

Allegro (M.M. ♩ = c. 120)




Adagio ♩ = 40
67
pp
arco
pp
arco
pp
mp
73
pp
pp
ff
pp
ff
pp
ff
mp
ff
mp
ff
Allegro (M.M. ♩ = c. 120)
pp
pizz.
pp
78

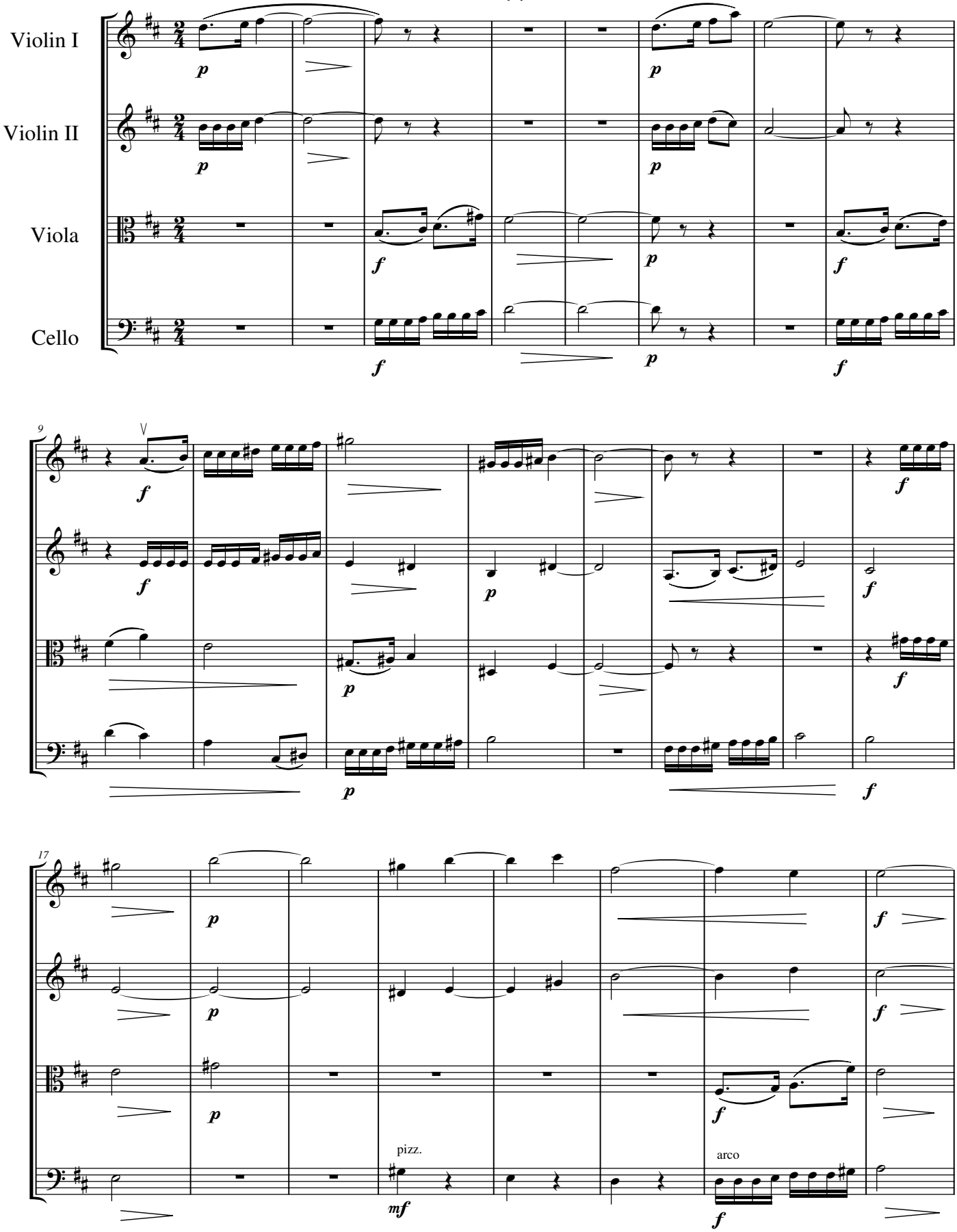

83
pizz.
ff
p
pizz.
ff
p
ff
p
ff
89
arco
ppp
arco
ppp
arco
ppp
ff

American Landscapes

IV

stan grill

Allegro (M.M. ♩ = c. 120)



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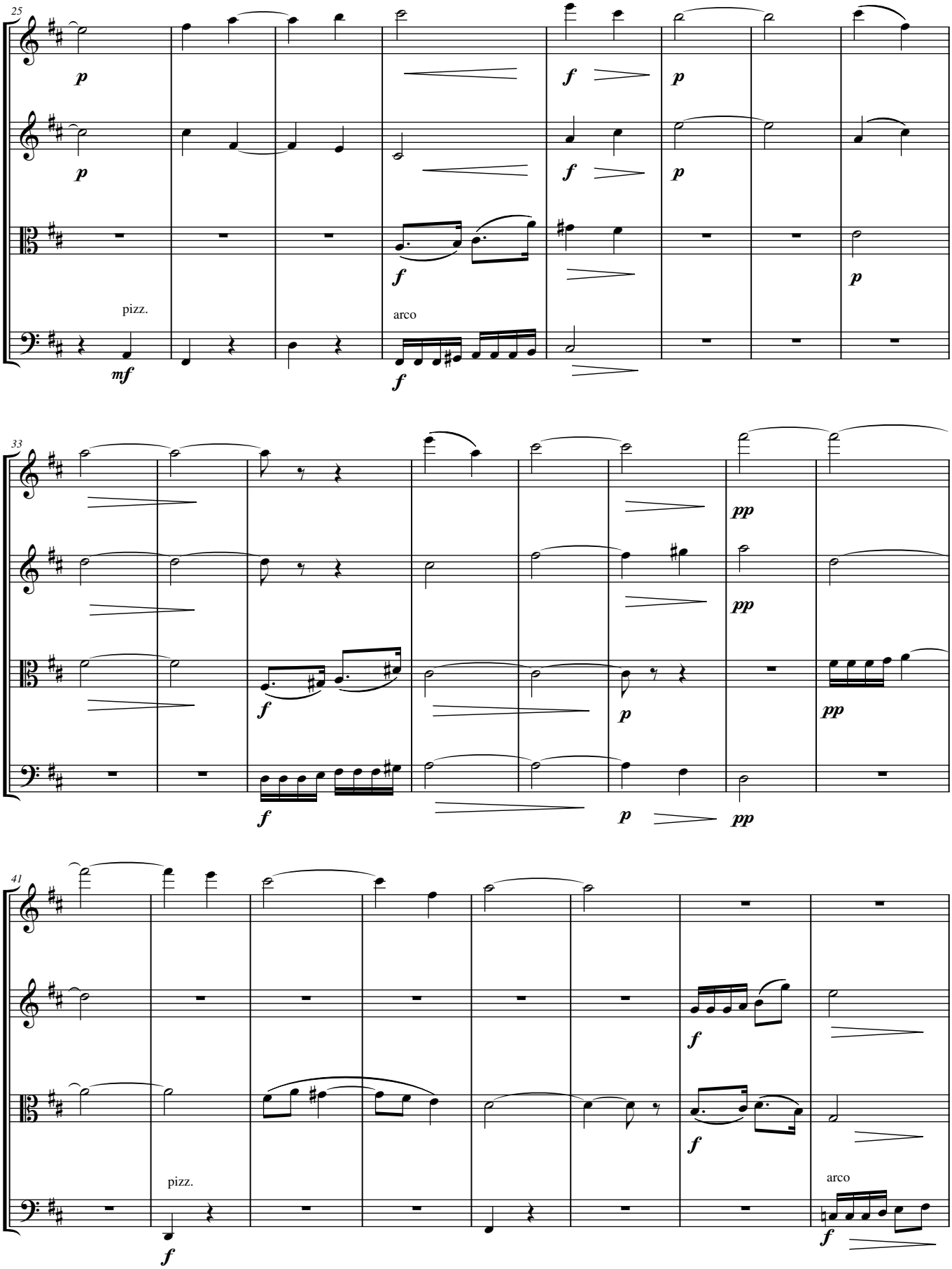
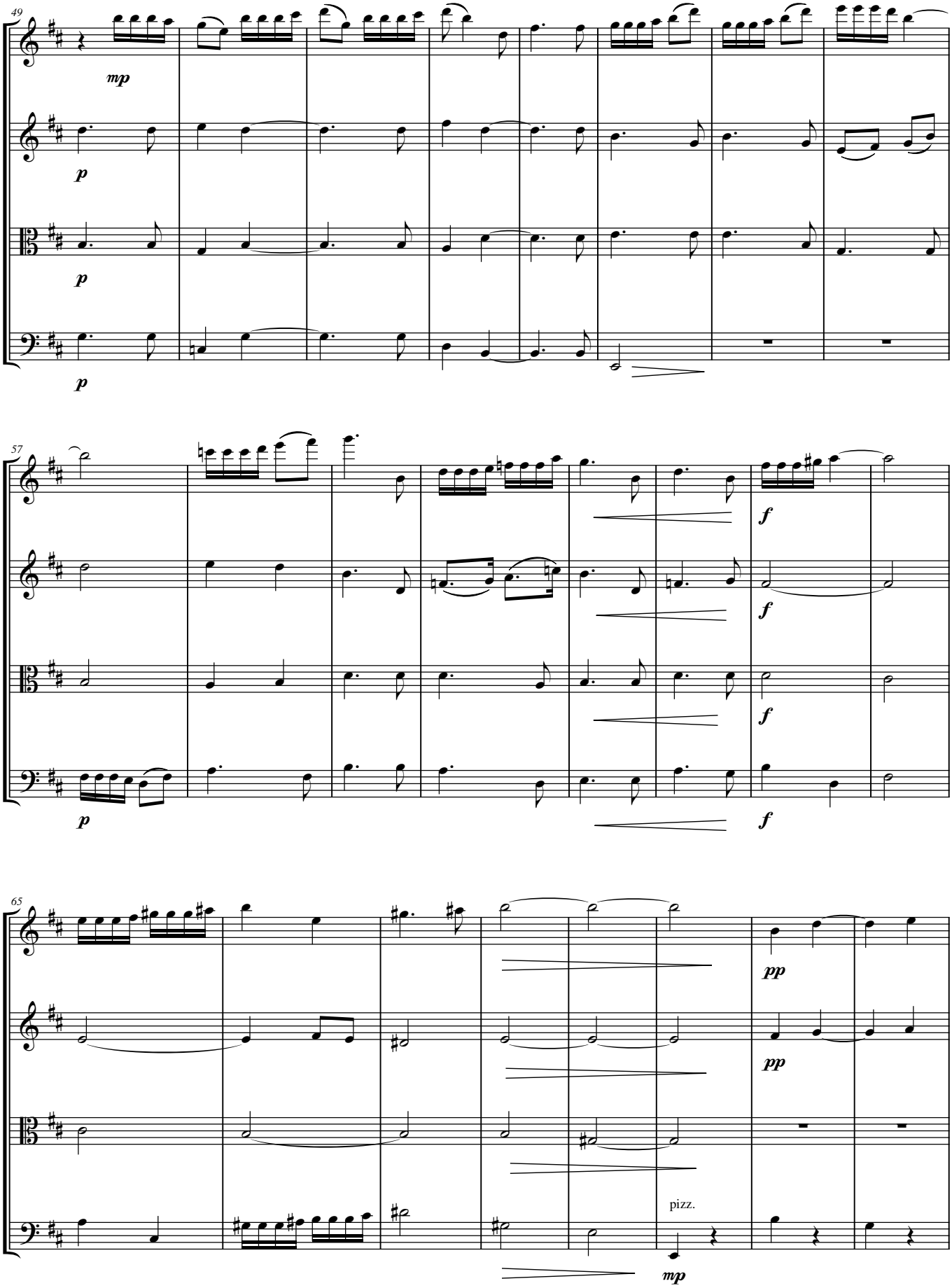
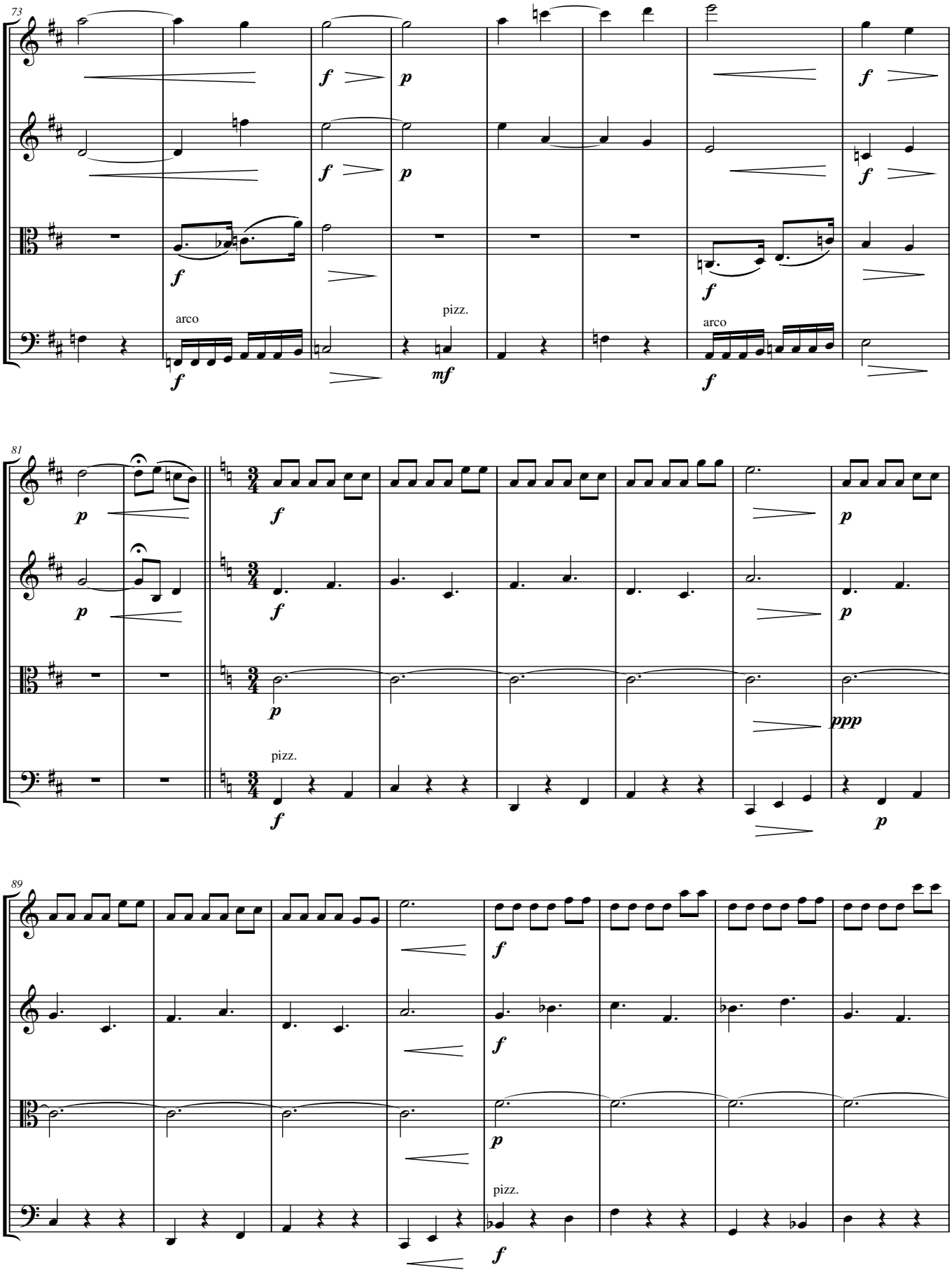
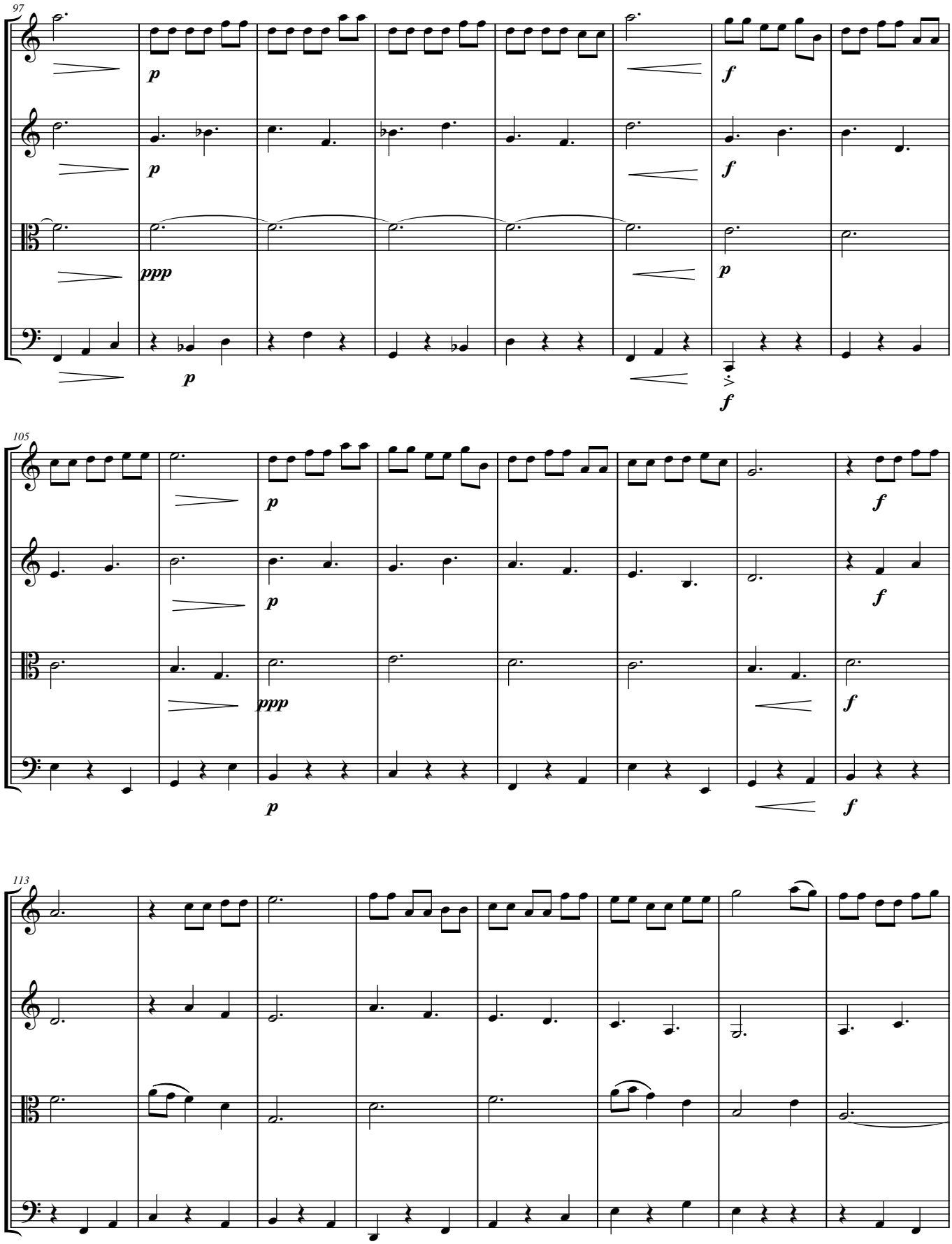
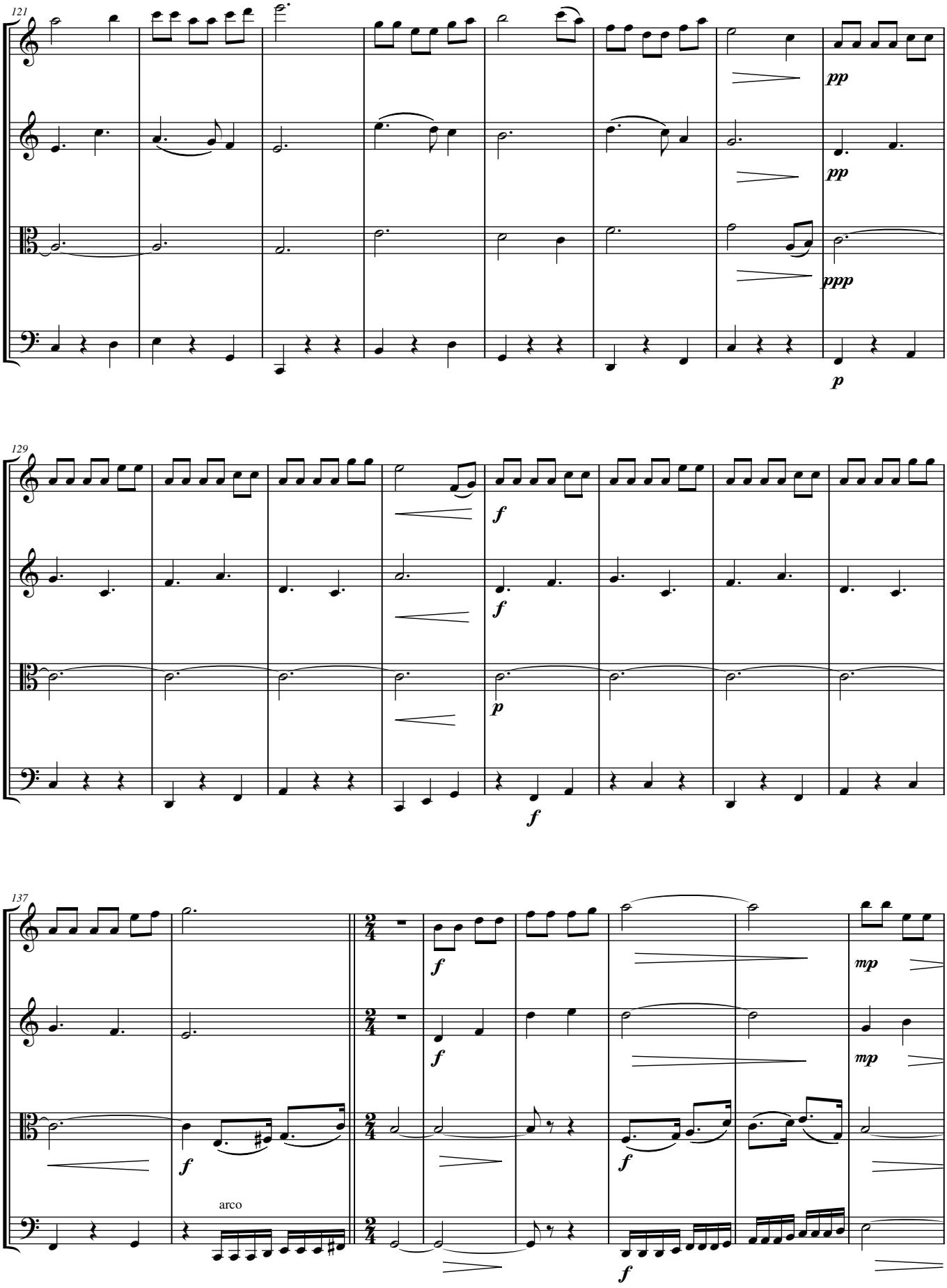
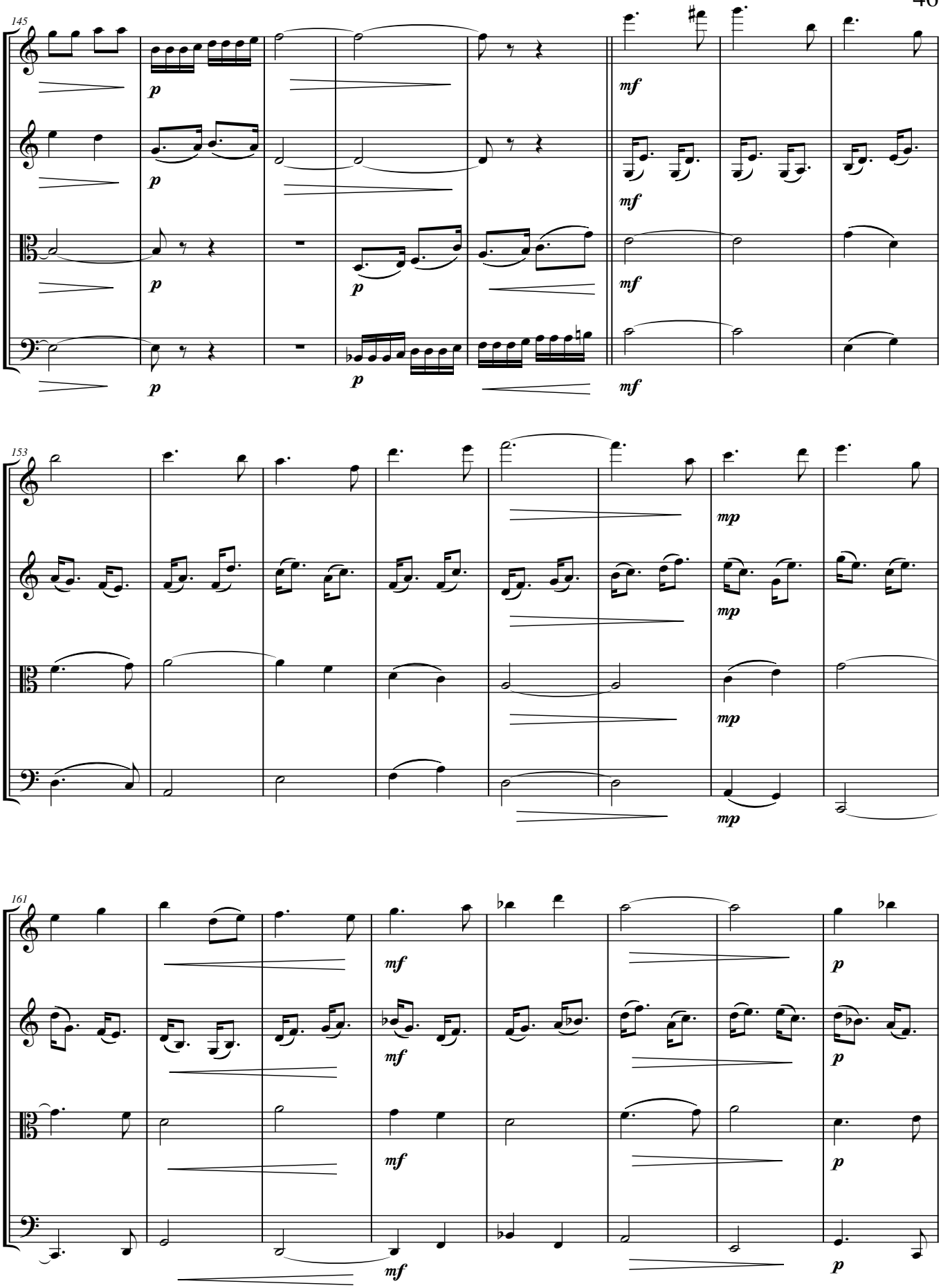

25
p
p
f
p
f
f
p
pizz.
mf
arco
f
33
pp
pp
f
f
p
p
pp
pp
41
f
f
pizz.
f
arco
f

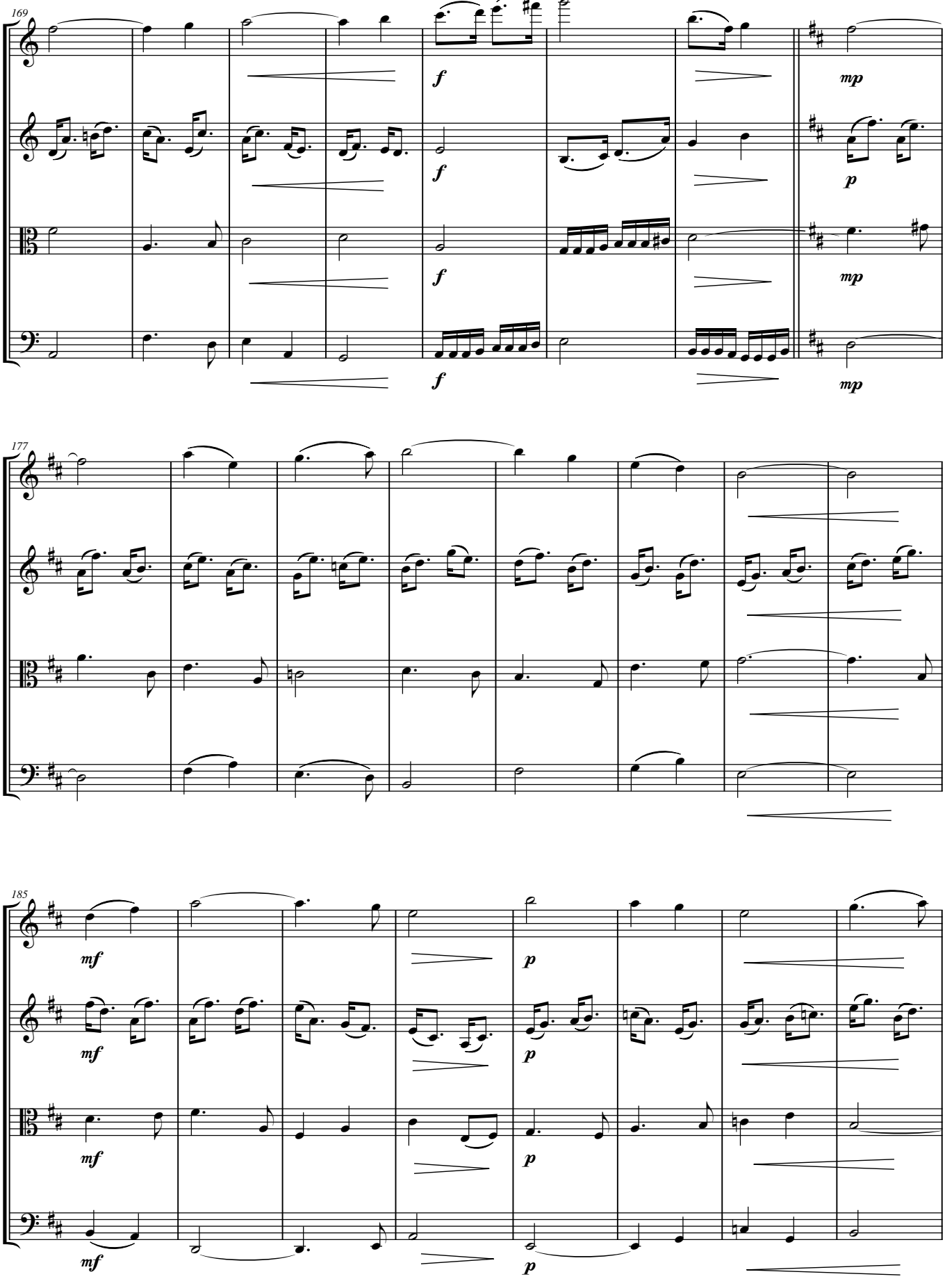

49
mp
p
p
p
57
f
f
f
p
f
65
pp
pp
pizz.
mp

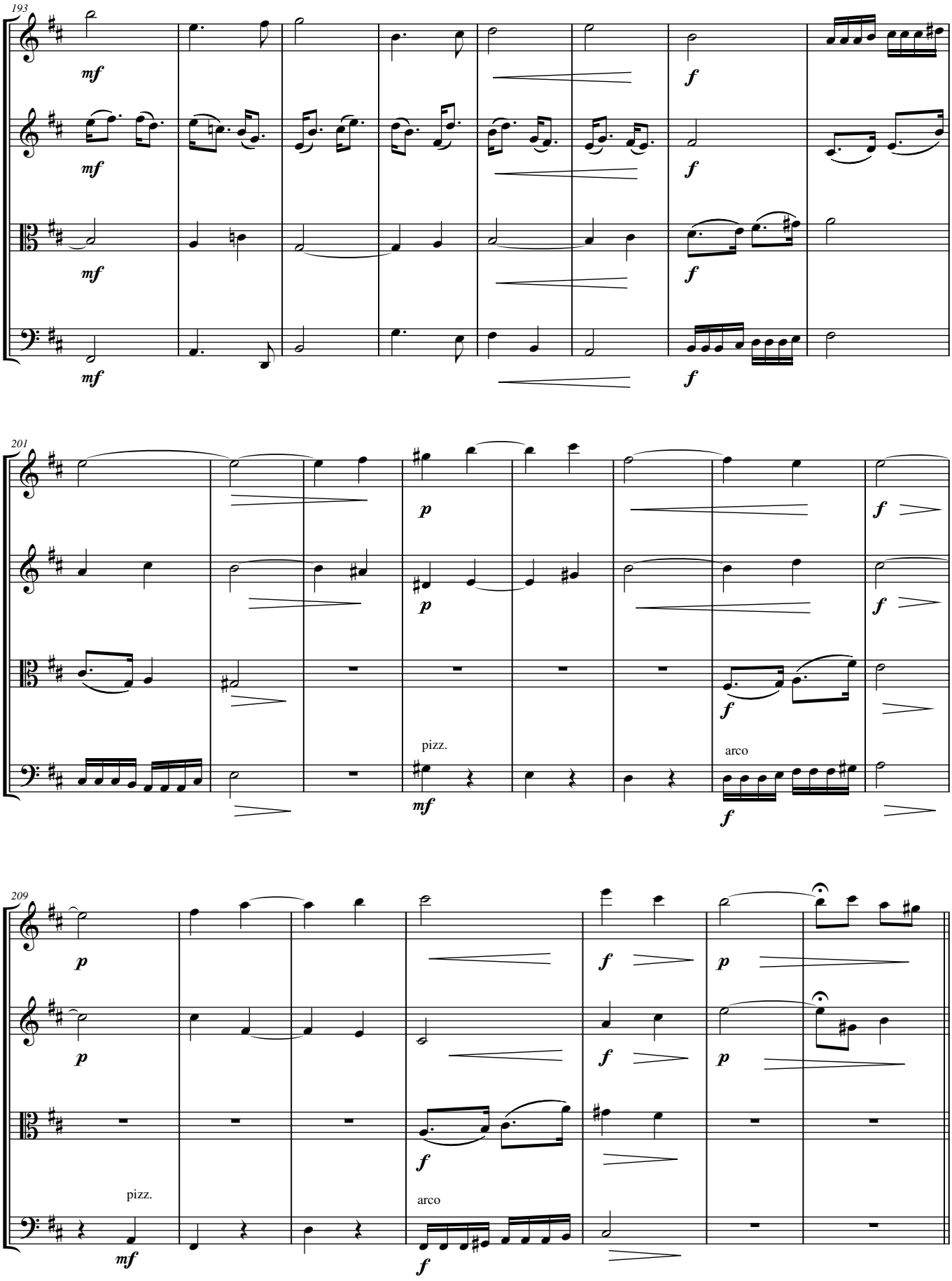

73
arco
pizz.
arco
81
pizz.
89
pizz.

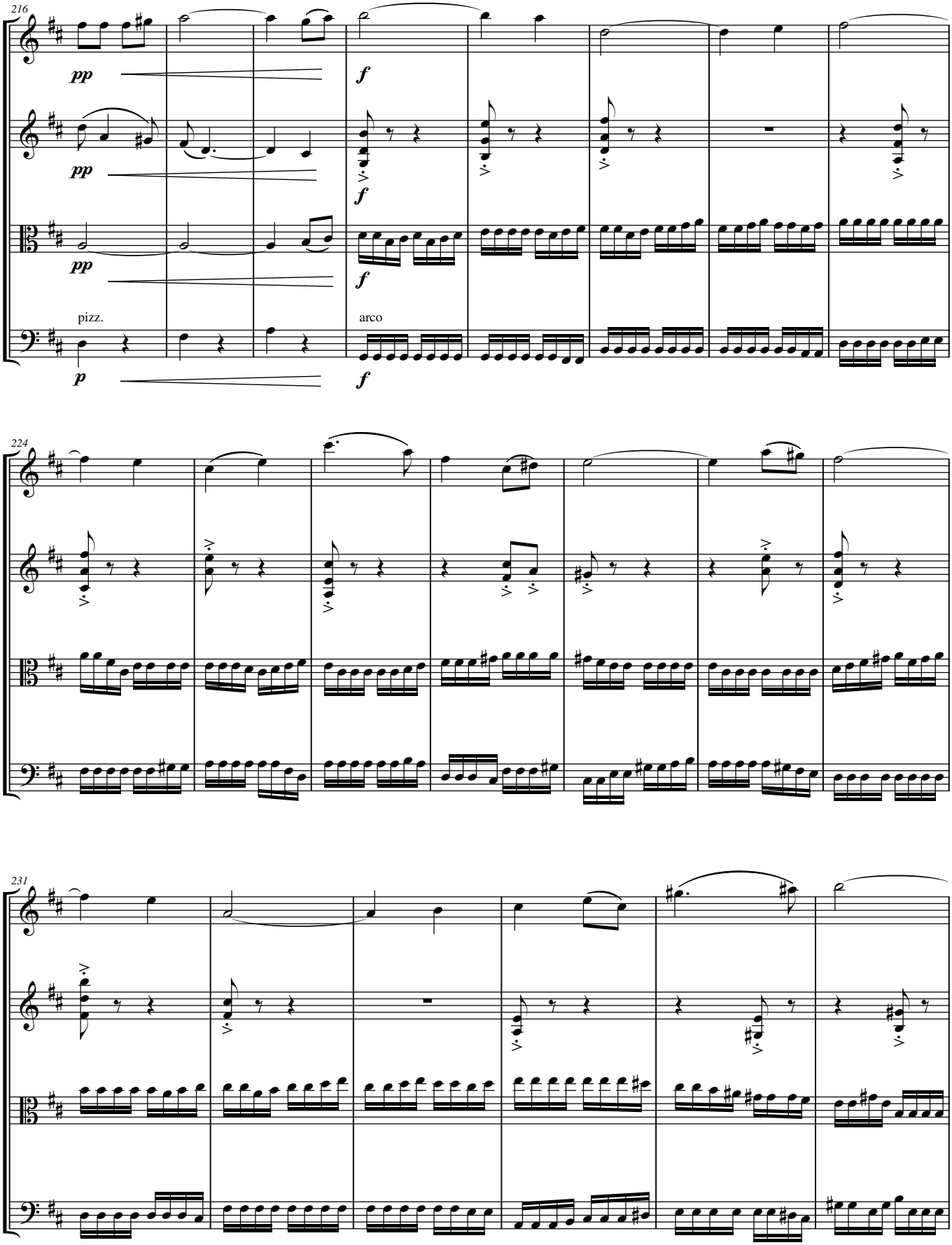

97
p
p
ppp
p
f
f
f
p
105
p
p
ppp
p
f
f
f
f
113

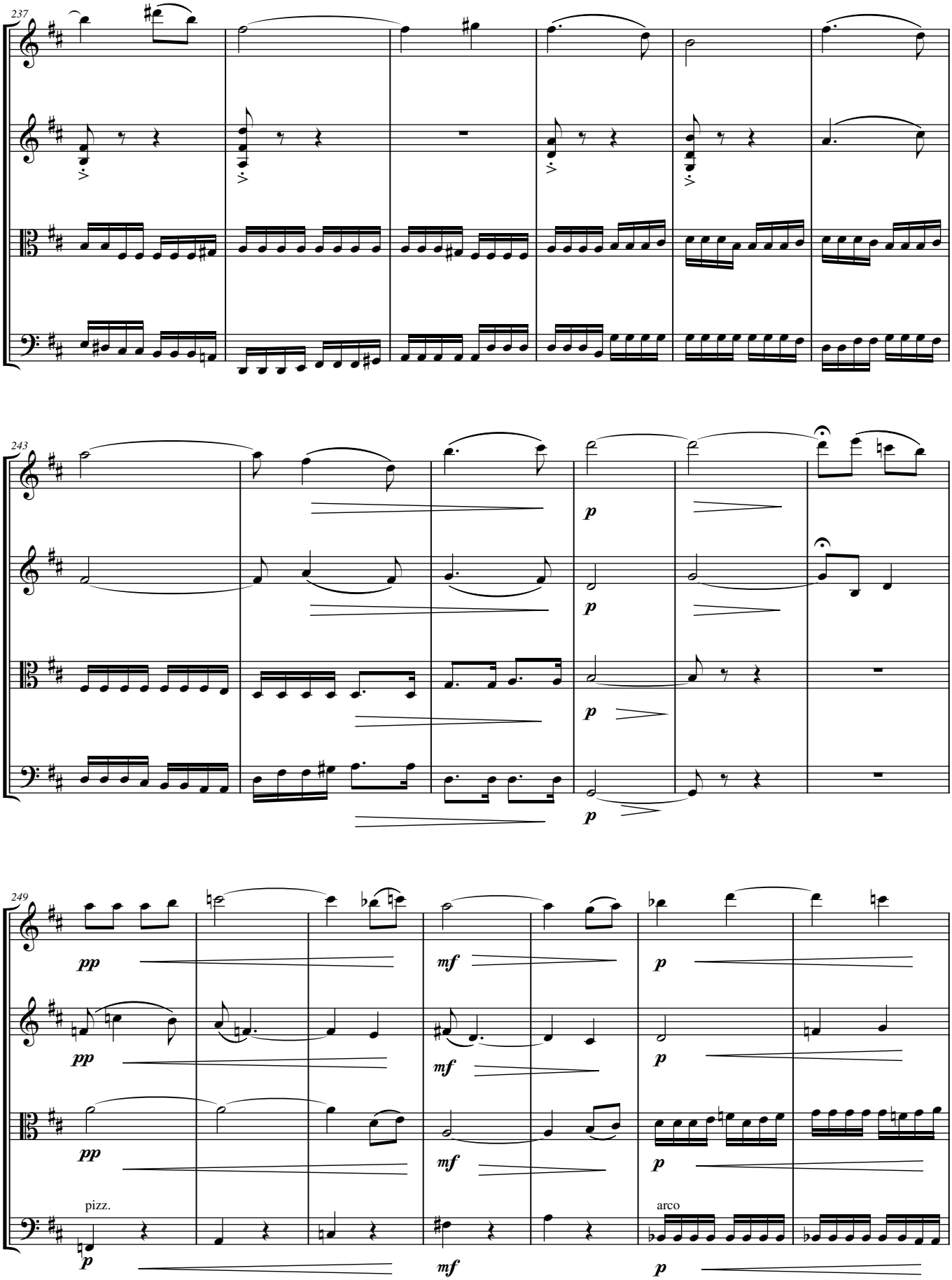

121
pp
pp
ppp
p
129
f
f
p
f
137
f
f
mp
mp
f
arco
f

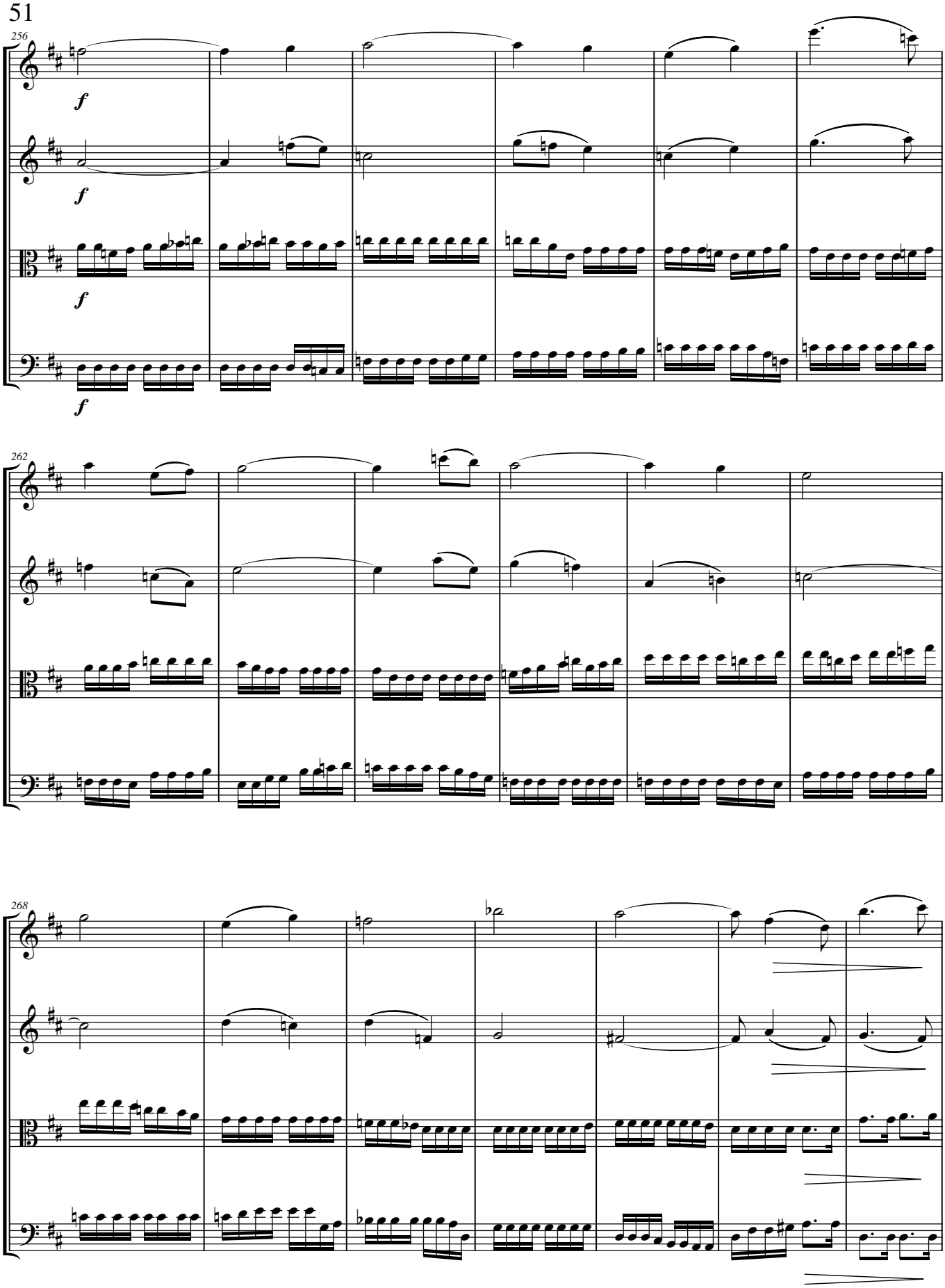

145
p
mf
153
mp
161
mf
p

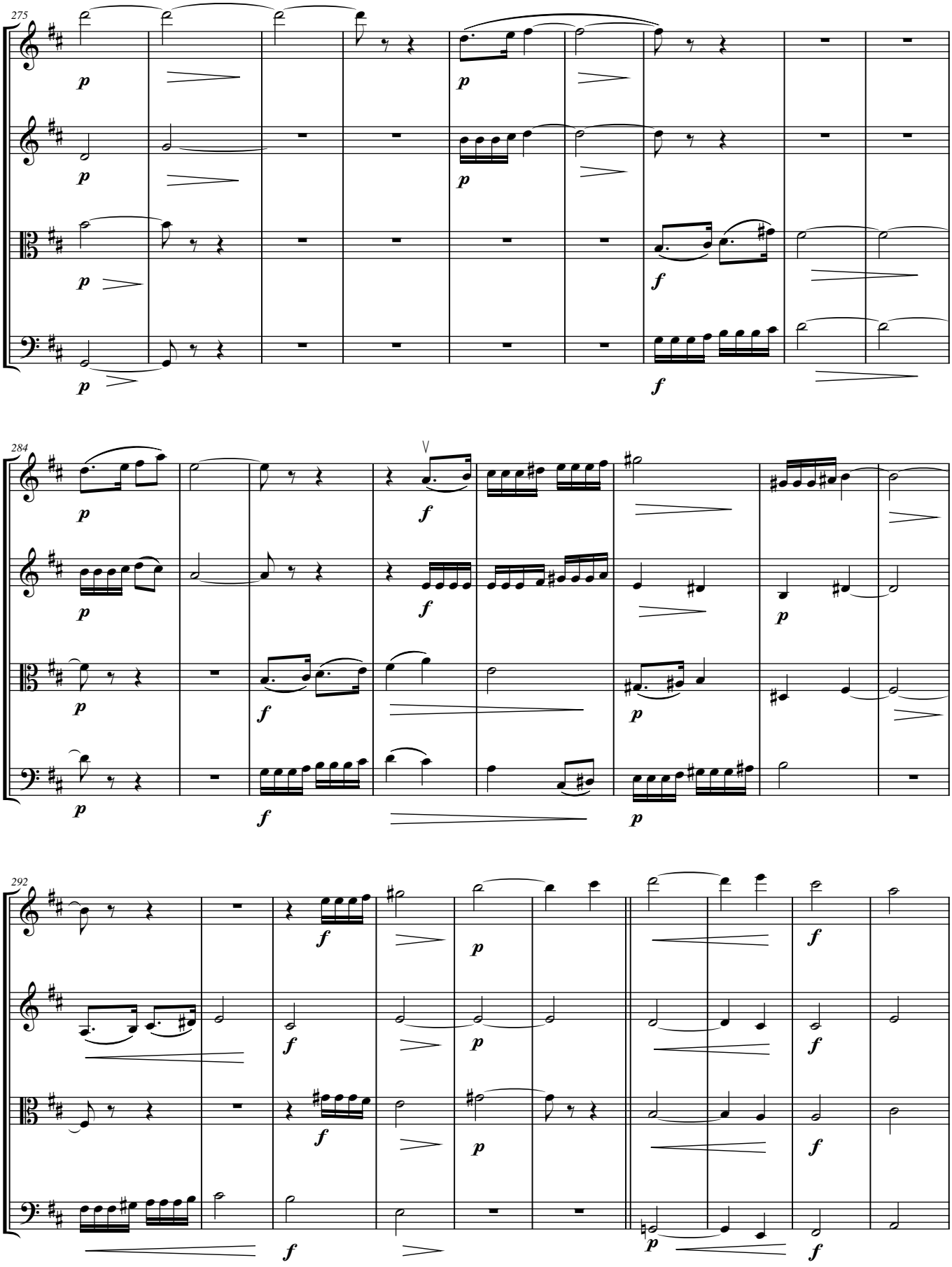

169
f
f
f
f
mp
p
mp
mp
177
185
mf
mf
mf
mf
p
p
p

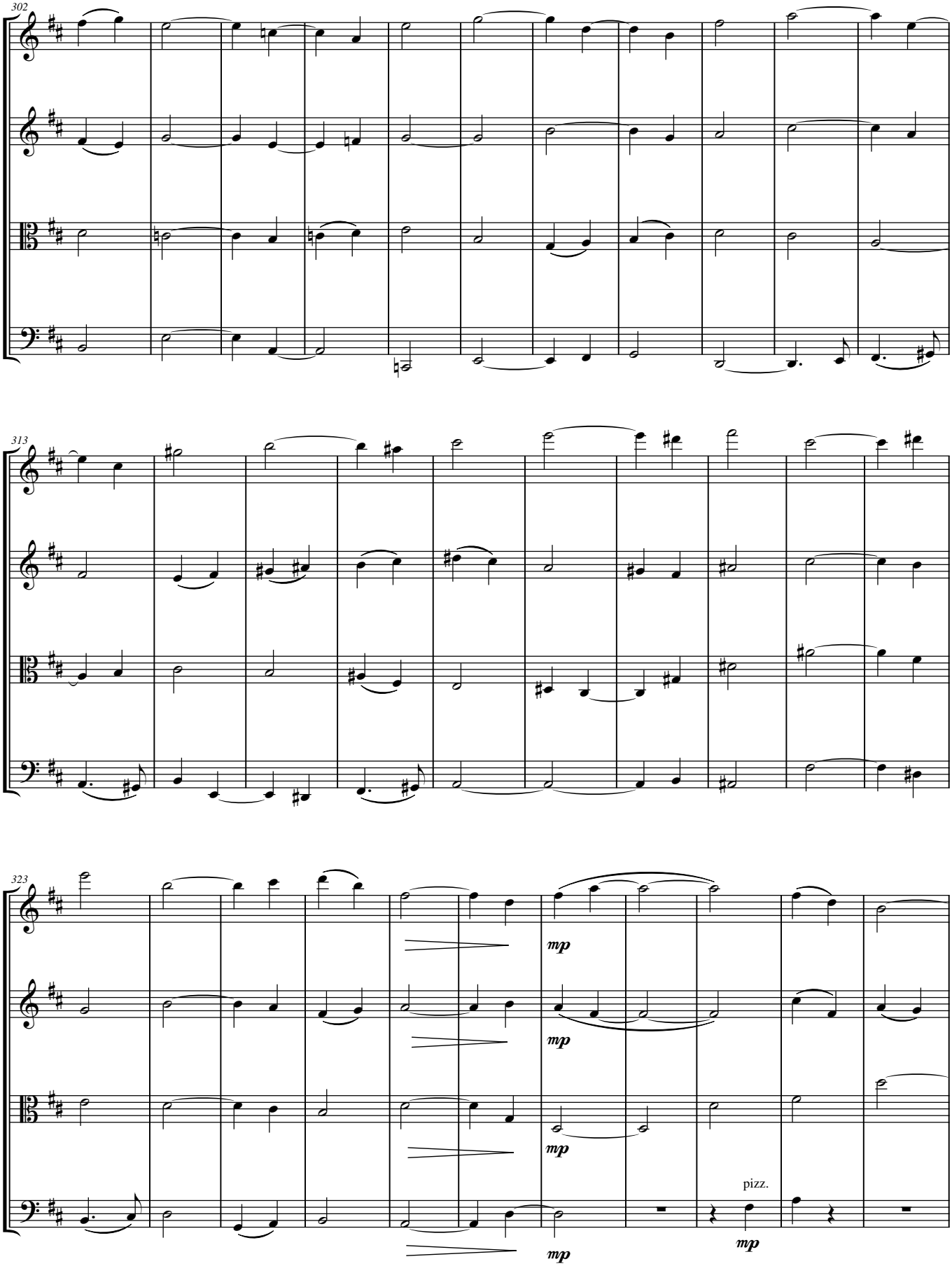

193
mf
f
201
p
f
pizz.
arco
mf
209
pizz.
arco

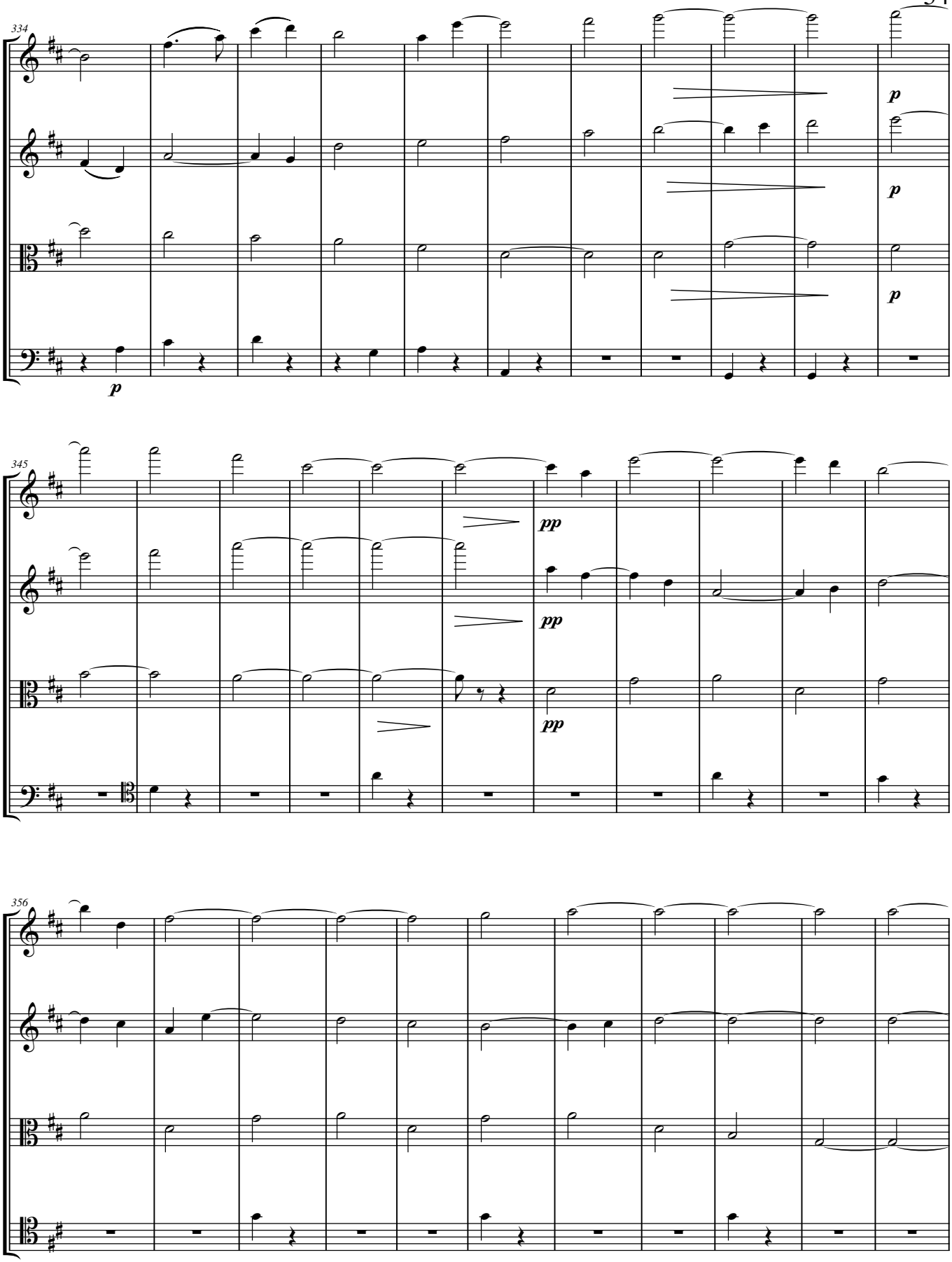

216
pp
pp
pp
pizz.
p
f
f
f
arco
f
224
231

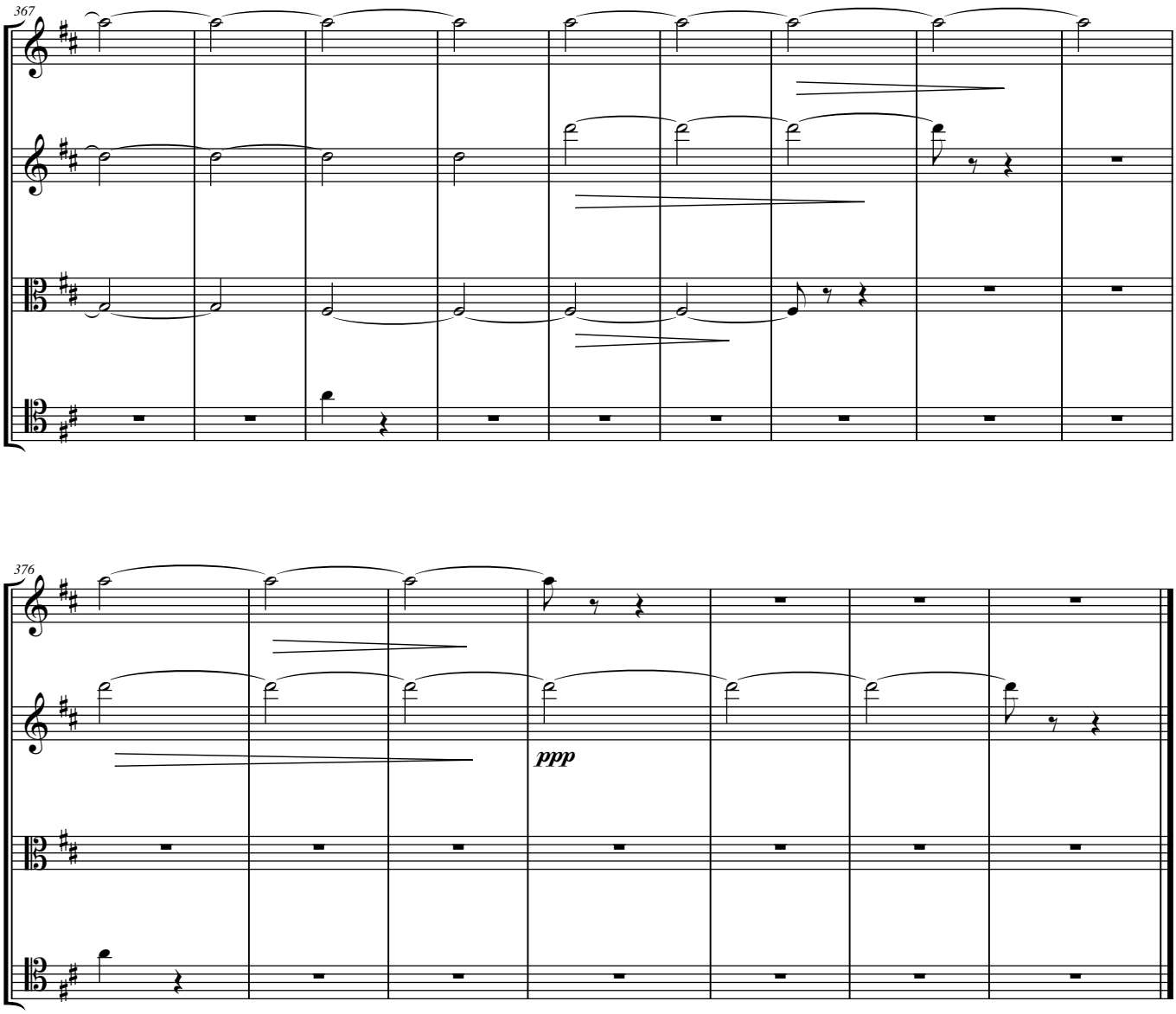

237
243
249
pizz.
arco


256
f
f
f
f
262
268


275
p
f
284
292


302
313
323
mp
mp
mp
mp
pizz.


334
p
p
p
p
345
pp
pp
pp
356


367
376
ppp

A few words about (and by) the composer

Stan Grill was raised in the Bronx, studied at the Bronx House School of Music, and later graduated from the Manhattan School of Music with undergrad and graduate degrees in music theory. He studied piano with Robert Helps and Leon Kushner and composition with Ursula Mamlok and Joseph Prostakoff. Major works include music for string orchestra and voice, string orchestra and clarinet, a nonet for winds and strings, and several song cycles for mixed voices and chamber ensemble. Performances have been produced by the composer, as well as presented by the Composers Guild of New Jersey, the St. Paul's Church Festival of the Arts, the Leonia Chamber Players, the New York Composers Circle, the Northern New Jersey Camerata, the Bronx Arts Ensemble and the Duo + Ensemble. During the 2004-06 seasons, he was composer in residence of One World Symphony, a New York City based orchestra. One World Symphony has premiered several major works, including "Invisible Ballet" for orchestra, "Two Sad Songs" setting poems by W.B. Yeats for soprano & string orchestra, and a cycle of songs for two cellos and two mezzo sopranos setting poems by the New Jersey poet William Carlos Williams. In 2006, One World commissioned three works – a setting of the Ophelia songs from Shakespeare's "Hamlet" for soprano, harp and string orchestra, an orchestral work, "Pluto," for a program featuring Holst's "The Planets," and a setting of poetry for a concert honoring those who lost their lives on 9/11. Recent works include "The Four Elements" for viola and string orchestra commissioned by violist Brett Deubner and "Mystical Songs" for soprano, viola and string orchestra commissioned by the Universidad Tecnica Particular de Loja. In 2009, an entire program of music by Stan Grill was performed in Tokyo by the Duo + Ensemble. He currently works in Philadelpia, and lives happily in New Jersey with his wife, cats and piano.

"As I see it, as much as we strive to find reason and purpose in our having been born into this amazing, mysterious and awe-inspiring universe, that attempt is largely futile. It is however, the best part of our nature that obliges us to make the attempt, though the most we can hope for is to gain some small degree of understanding of the world around us, and, more importantly, of ourselves. To achieve this, we each approach the problem in our own way, uniquely shaped by our cultural background, innate talents and abilities, education and so on. For some, science may be the window through which they best perceive and interpret the world, for others, religion. For those to whom the world seems to express itself most clearly and beautifully through sound, music is the voice that speaks to us and through which we, in turn, best express ourselves. Now, I can write notes that will make pretty music because I've been trained to do so – but the best of my music has arrived, rather inexplicably, as part of a personal effort to understand the world and myself. It is, in a way, an act of translation. The world says something, I try to understand it, and then translate it into musical language. The particular musical language which I speak, is, of course, a product of my conservatory training and personal musical tastes, but hopefully, the outcome, imperfect a translation as it may be, will convey to others something of its original intent."

Stan's music is melodic, modal, contrapuntal, characterized by extended, interweaving lines. His musical influences span the centuries, and include Machaut, Josquin, Palestrina, Monteverdi, Lassus, Britten, Ives, Vaughn Williams and Shostakovich. Two main themes permeate many of the pieces - music intended to influence the minds and hearts of those who hear it in such a way as to encourage thoughts about the possibility of world peace - and music composed in an attempt to translate something about the nature of the physical world.

Complete scores are available in the American Music Center's on-line library. Please go to Stan's web page at **American Music Center**.

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