PHÆTON

Piano Trio No. 2

JACK PARTON

2002

After the premiere of my first Concerto Grosso in Bar Harbor in August of 1999, I had the pleasure of being introduced to an older gentlemen in a green seersucker suit which I thought befitted him marvellously. He asked if I were related to George P. Parton, US Army, who was my grandfather, and he explained he had worked under Col. Parton during World War II at the founding of the American military hospital at Mont St. Michel, and remembered my grandfather fondly. He asked for my address, as he had something he wanted to send to me, and a week or two later I received, handwritten across five pages, a poem he had written, entitled "Phæton", with the appended note "I hope you can find music in this little scribble."

The poem, by Edgar Clough Perkins (1901-2004) is structured as a dialogue; Phæton is attempting to convince his father Helios to allow him to pilot the sun chariot across the sky; Helios knows it is difficult enough for a god to keep the fiery horses to their appointed track, and nigh impossible for a mortal, let alone an untried youth. They argue, and after a final heartfelt cajoling from the sun god, Phæton prevails, and of course the mythological tale proceeds to its immolative final exegesis.

The poem in fact is not so much about the tale; the more impressive argument Perkins writes is not the protective parent's, but Phæton's, exploring a youth's need to strive and attempt to excel, to free himself from the shadow of his great father, even to the verge of failure. By metaphoric extension Perkins expresses the artist's need to pursue inspiration and his urgency to create and to innovate, if even to the point of self-destruction. Perkins himself had a life-long history of manic-depressive illness, and would produce prodigious quantities of poetry in his manic episodes; his daughter recalls days when he would cover thirty to forty pages of writing in a day, and weeks at a time of nearly needing to force him to eat and bathe, so bound to his desk and pencil he would become.

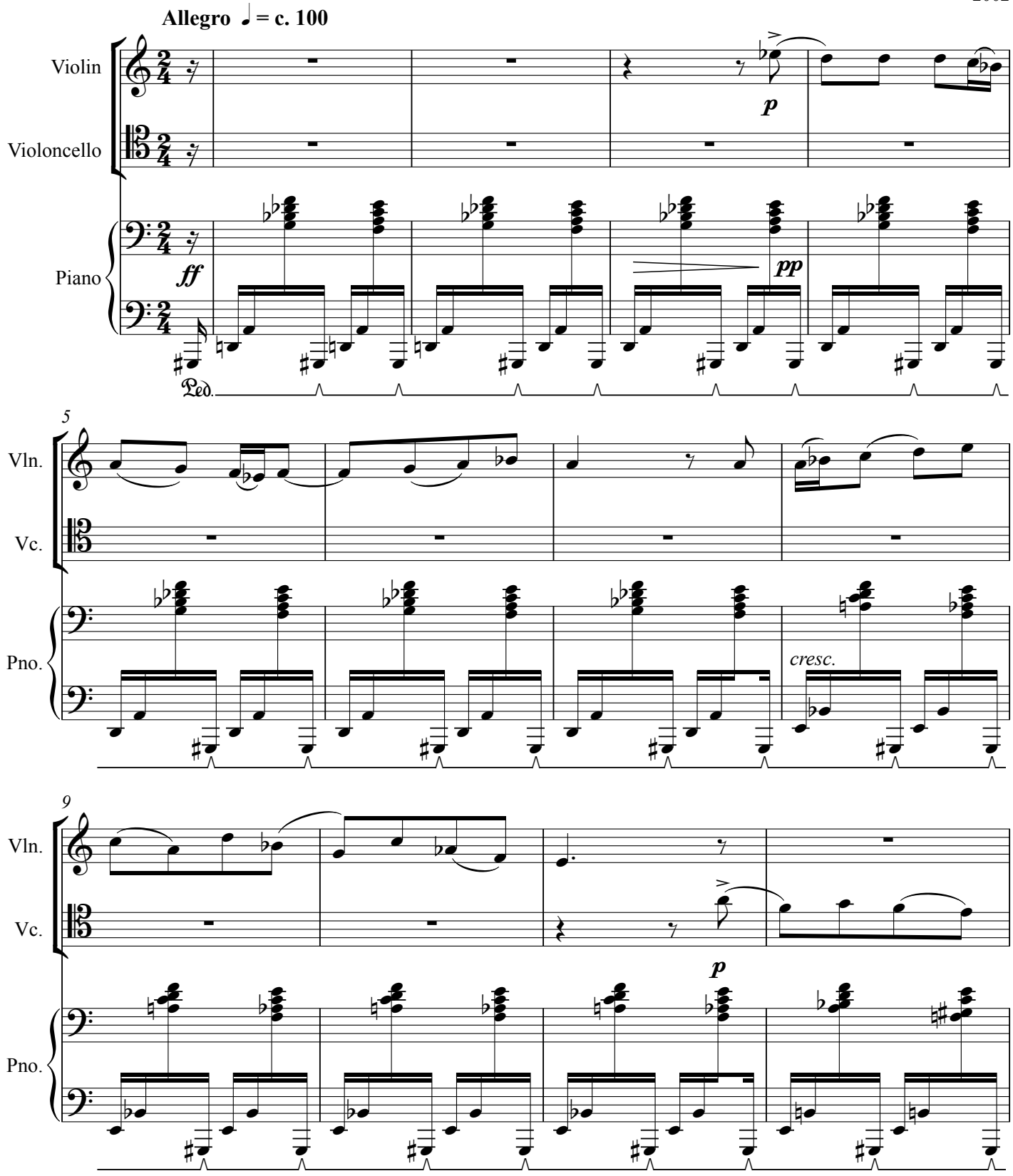
Mr. Perkins was in attendance at the premiere of this work in Bar Harbor, Maine, just a few months before his death in 2004, and due to hearing difficulties in his old age, enjoyed being seated on the stage within a few feet of the performers. I was never sure if he was disappointed not to have received a song setting of the poem, but I received nearly daily phone calls from him for a month afterwards, thrilled as he was with the conception of the music, the reflection of the theme, the thunder of horses' hooves in the piano, the dialogue of the two dramatis personnae, and the sheer violence of the work. He believed he had written the poem around 1935 (basing that recollection on its only publication at about that time, in a local periodical), and he'd expressed verbally the desire that the poem be included with the work should it be published. Alas, he passed away before that permission could be put in writing, and his heirs and estate, having been interested in attempting to publish more of his work and perhaps achieve some warranted fame for their ancestor, are understandably not showing quite the same generosity. The poem, as far as I know at this point, and like the vast majority of Mr. Perkins' output, is sadly not in print anywhere.

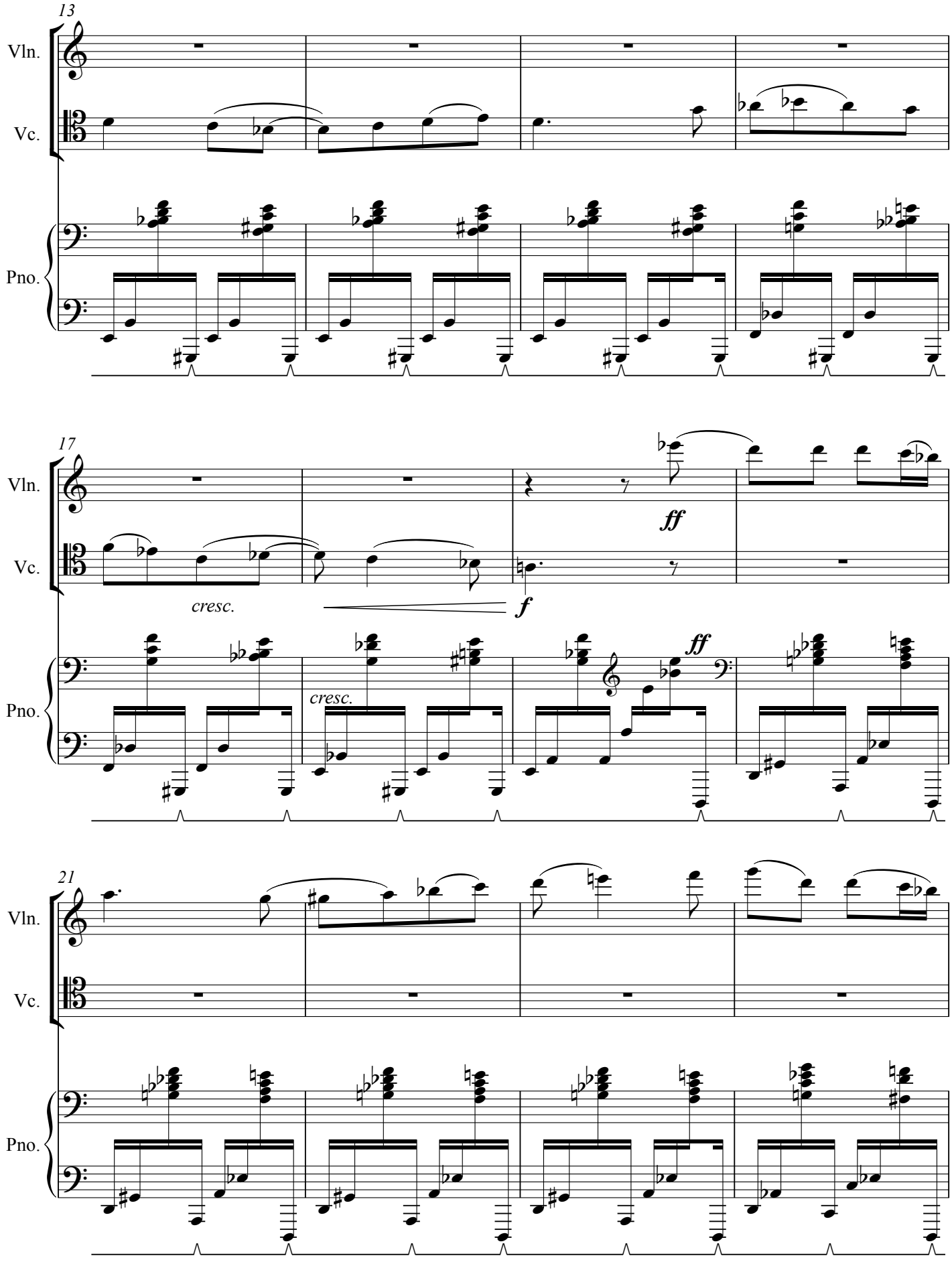
Trio for Violin, Violoncello, & Piano

"Phæton"

after the poem by Edgar Clough Perkins (1901-2004)

JACK PARTON
2002

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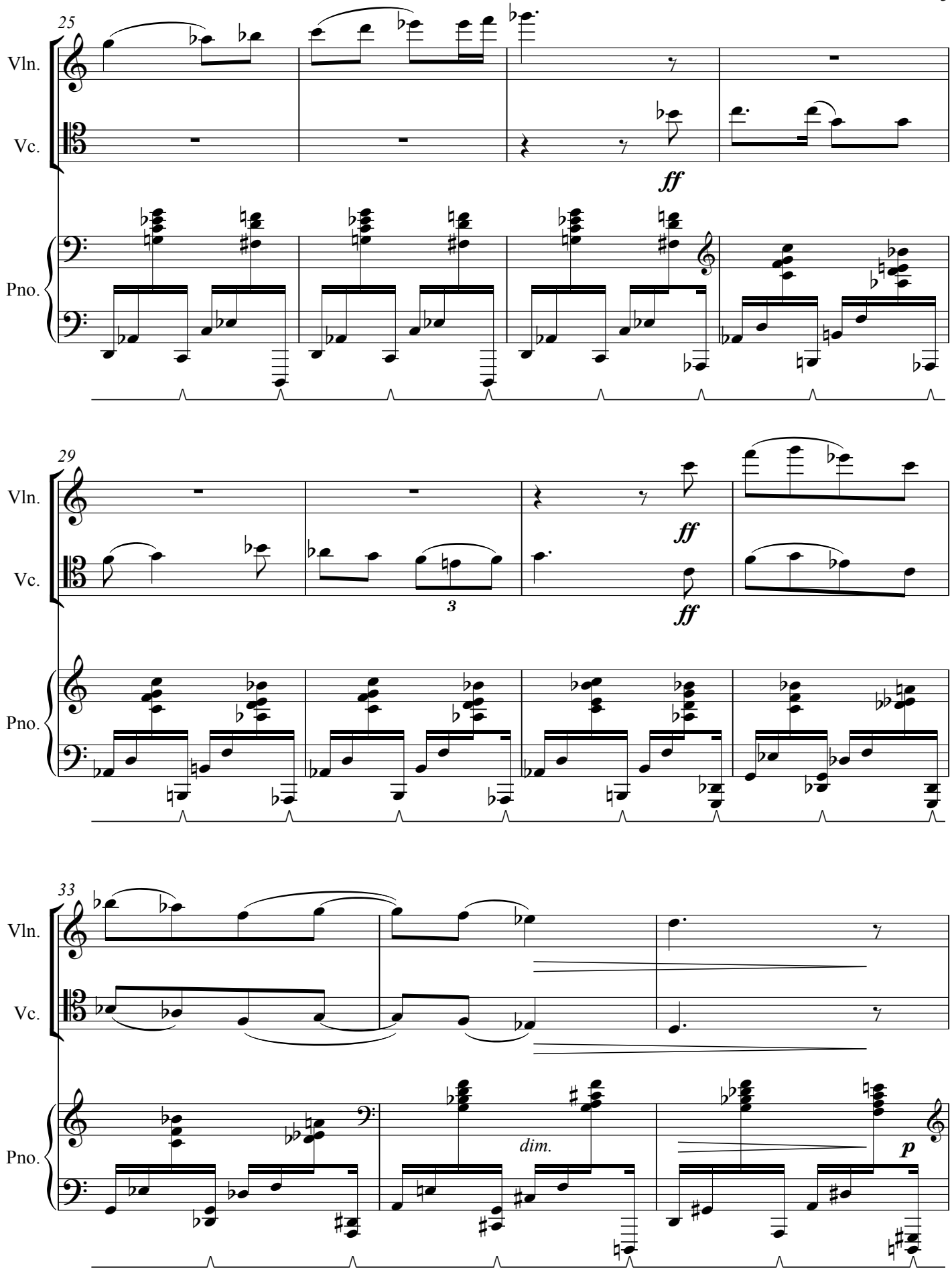
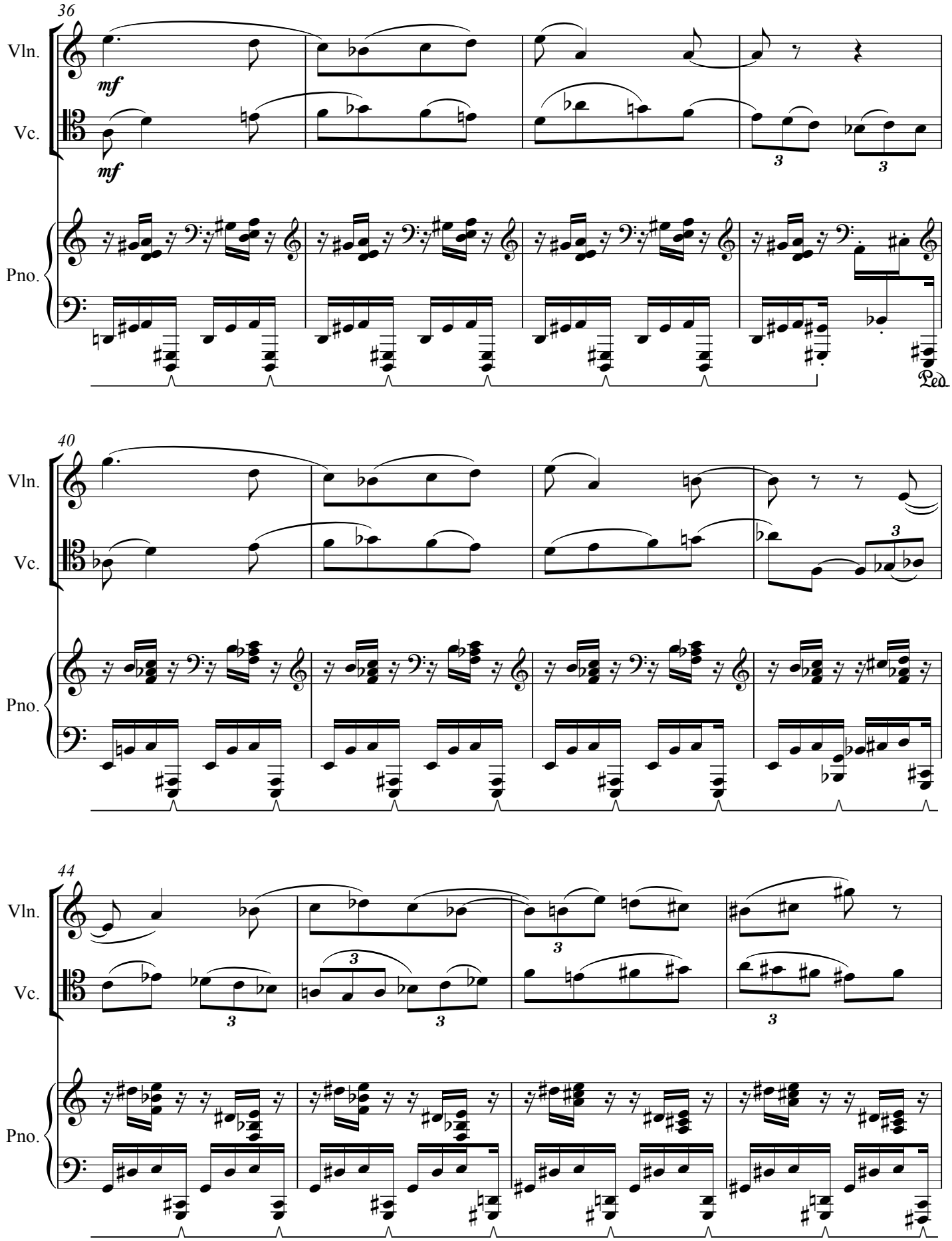
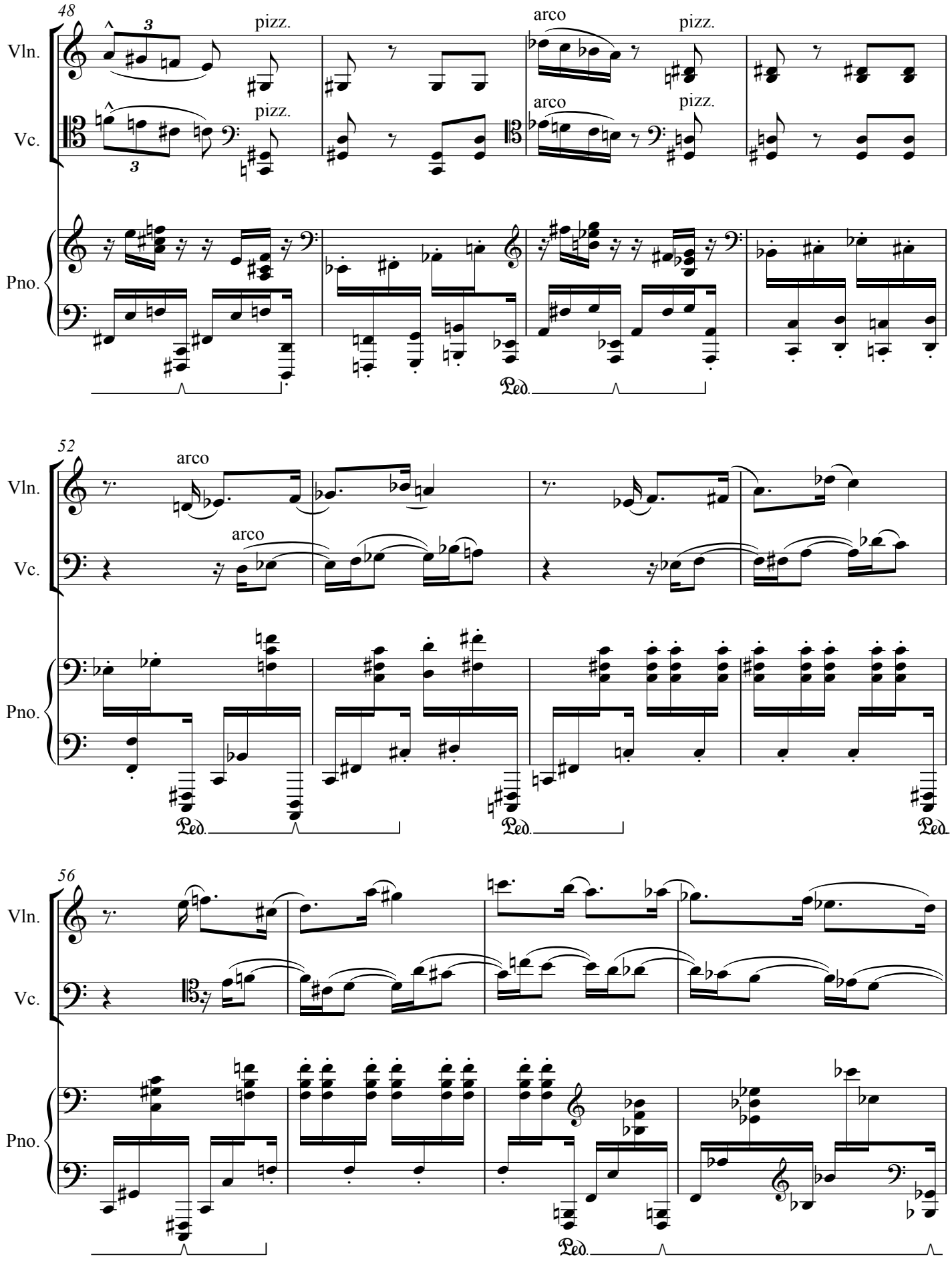
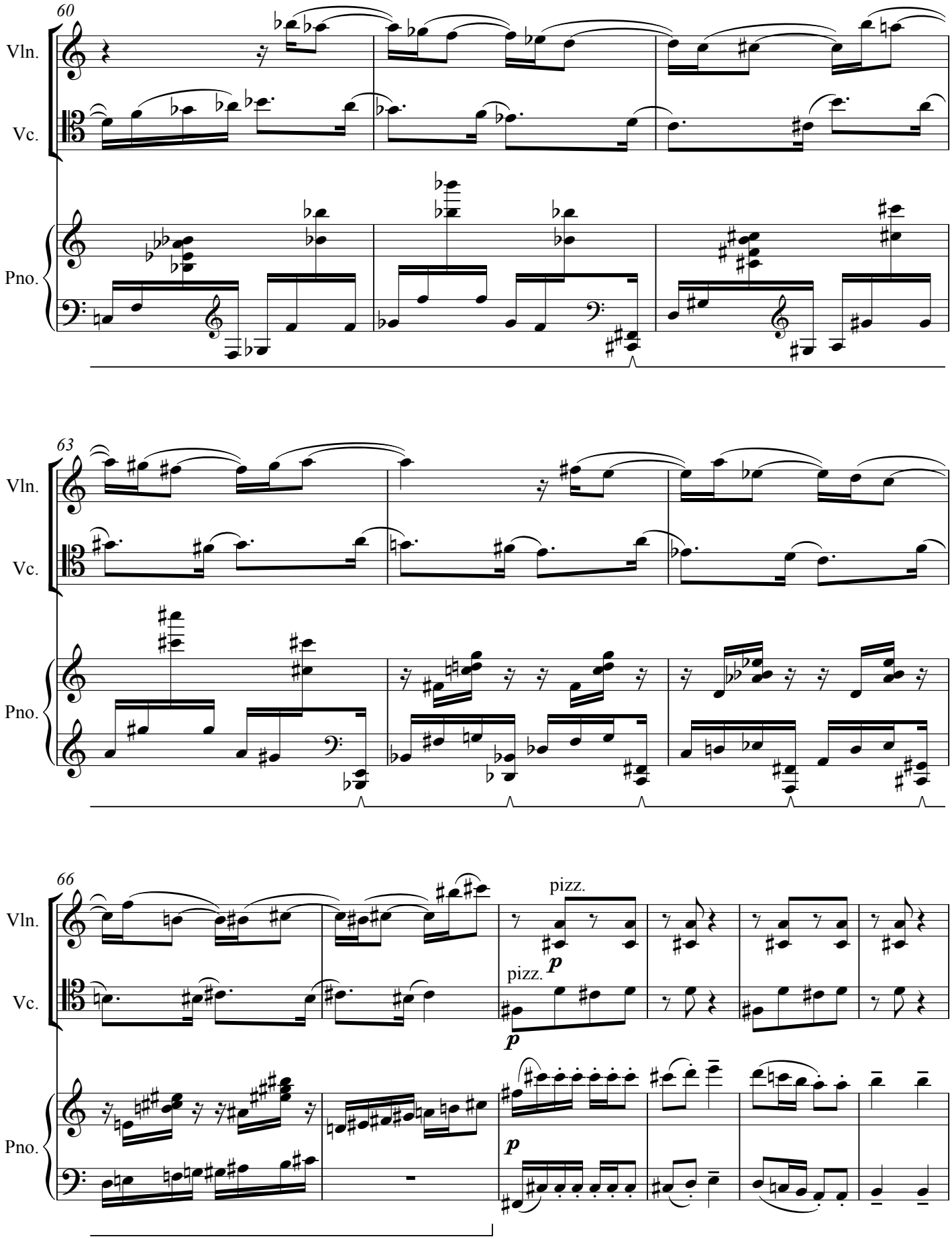
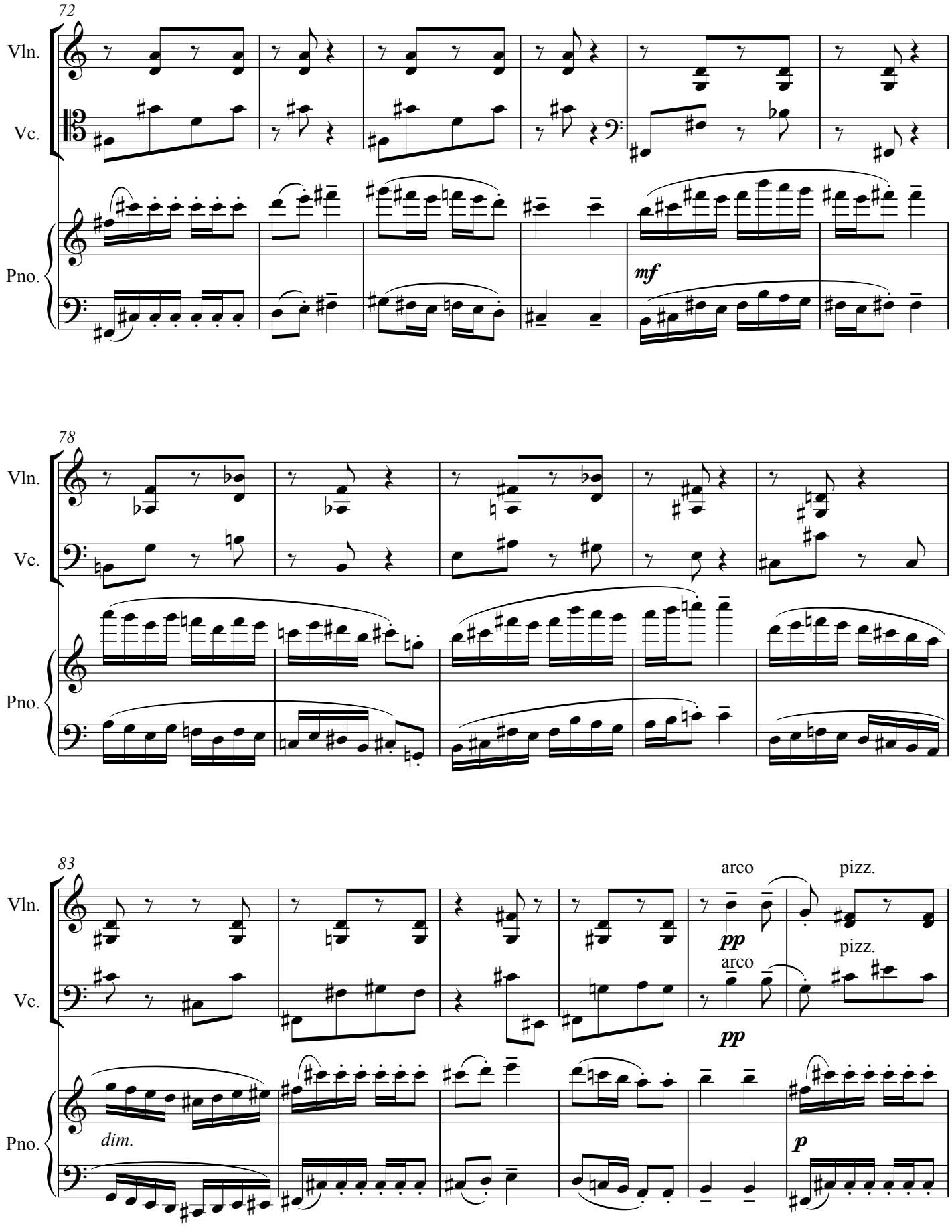
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
17
Vln.
Vc.
cresc.
f
ff
Pno.
cresc.
ff
21
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

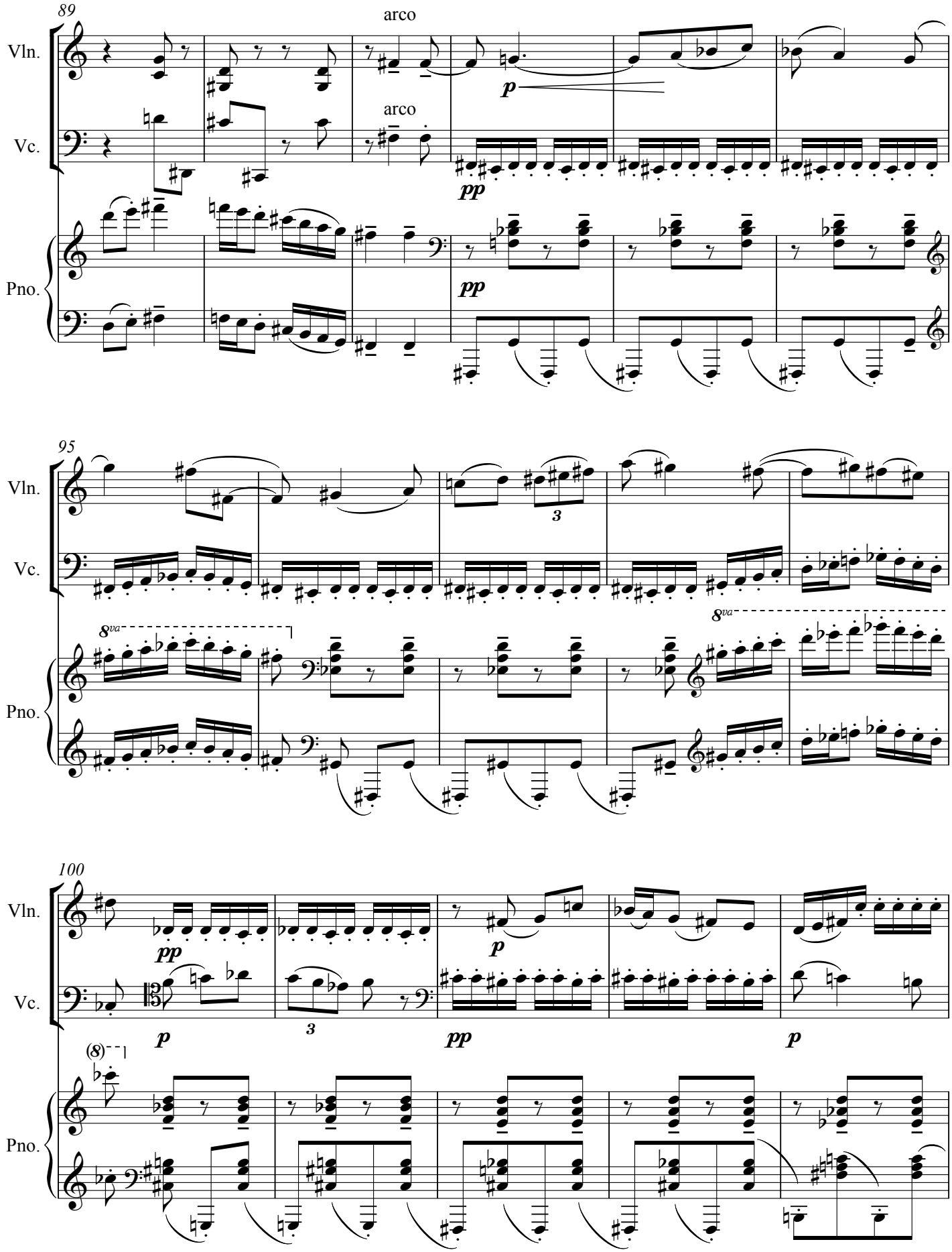

25
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
ff
29
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
3
ff
ff
33
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
dim.
p

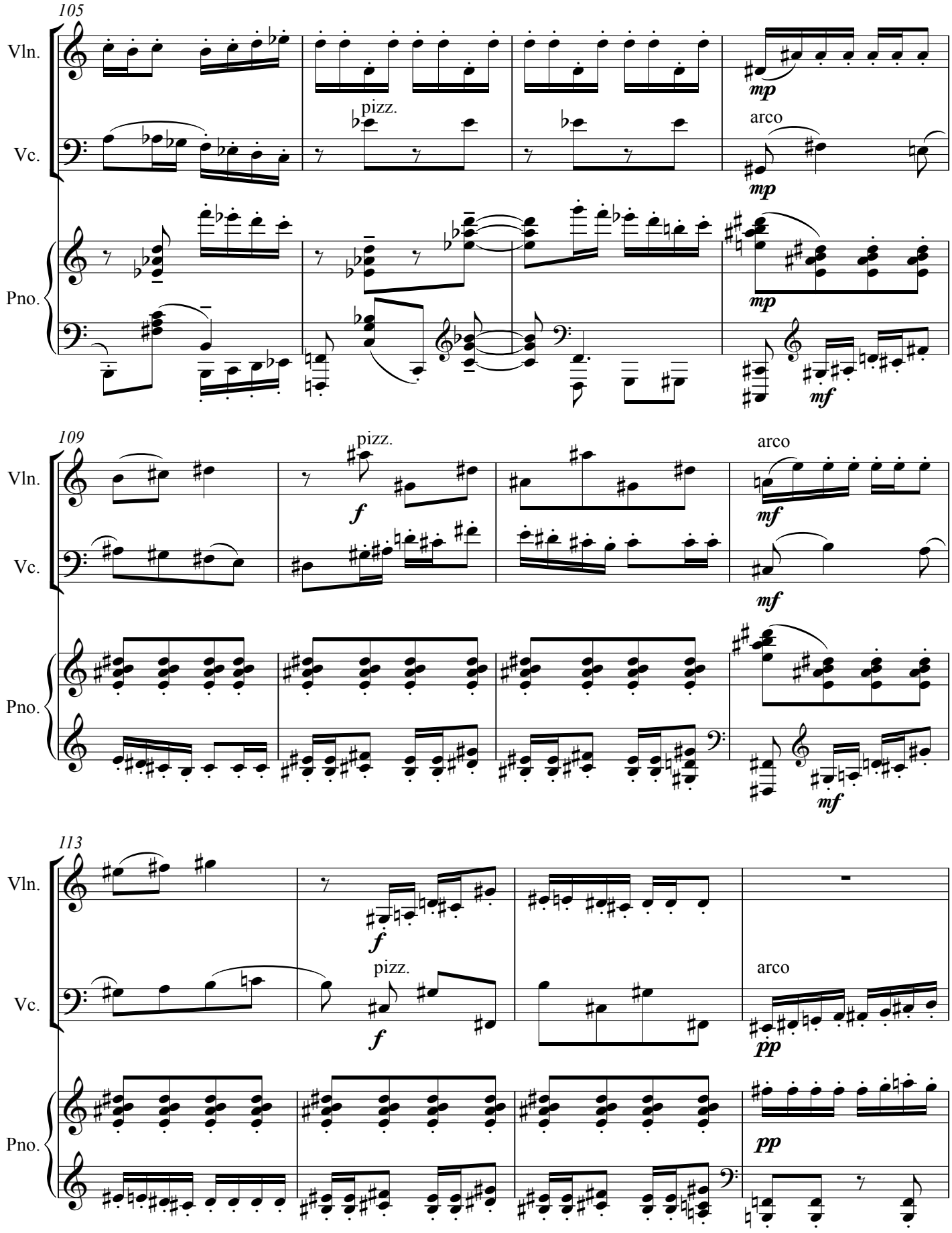

36
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
mf
mf
3
3
Ped
40
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
3
44
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
3
3
3
3

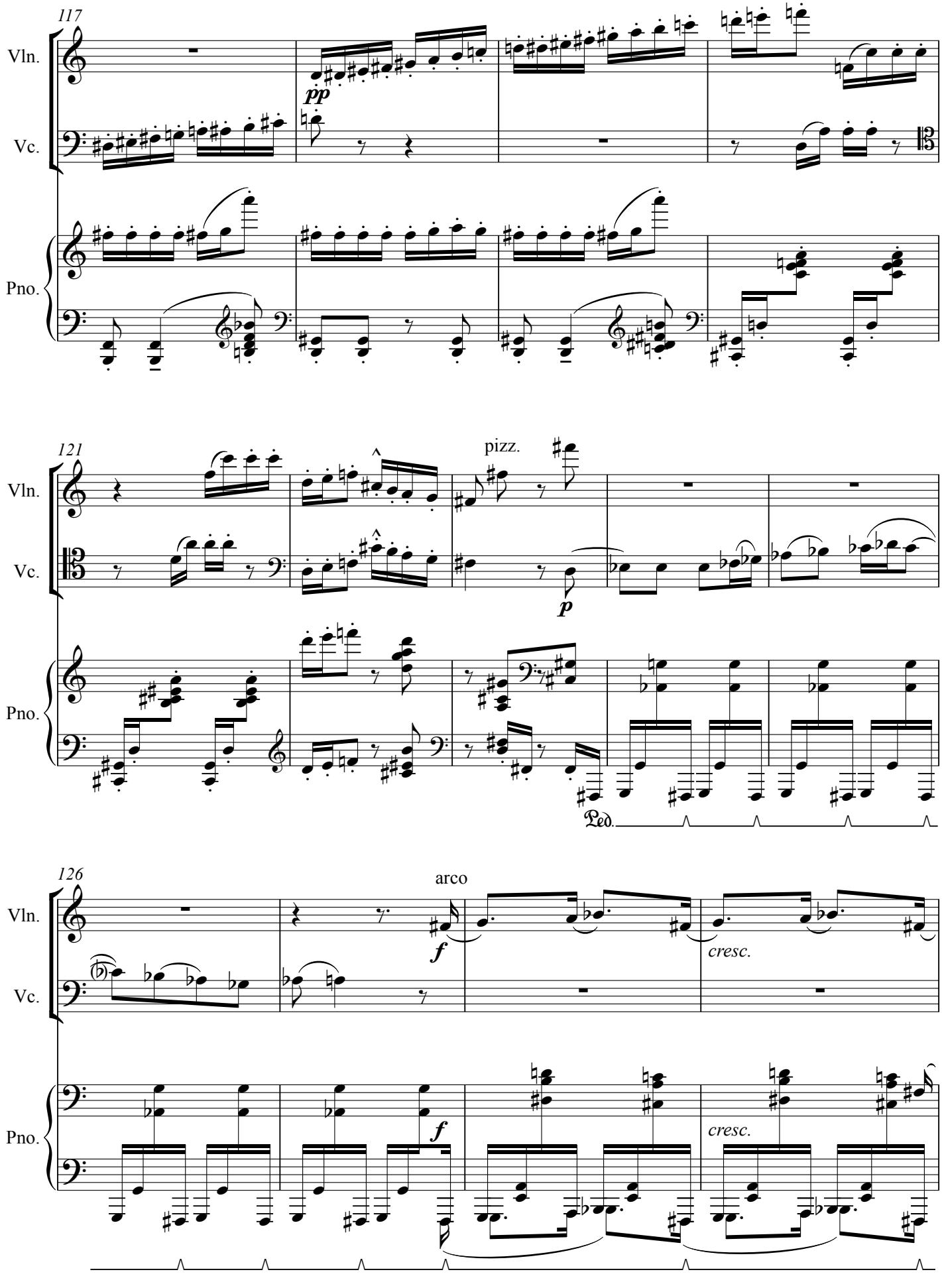

48
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
Ped.
52
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
arco
arco
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
56
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
Ped.

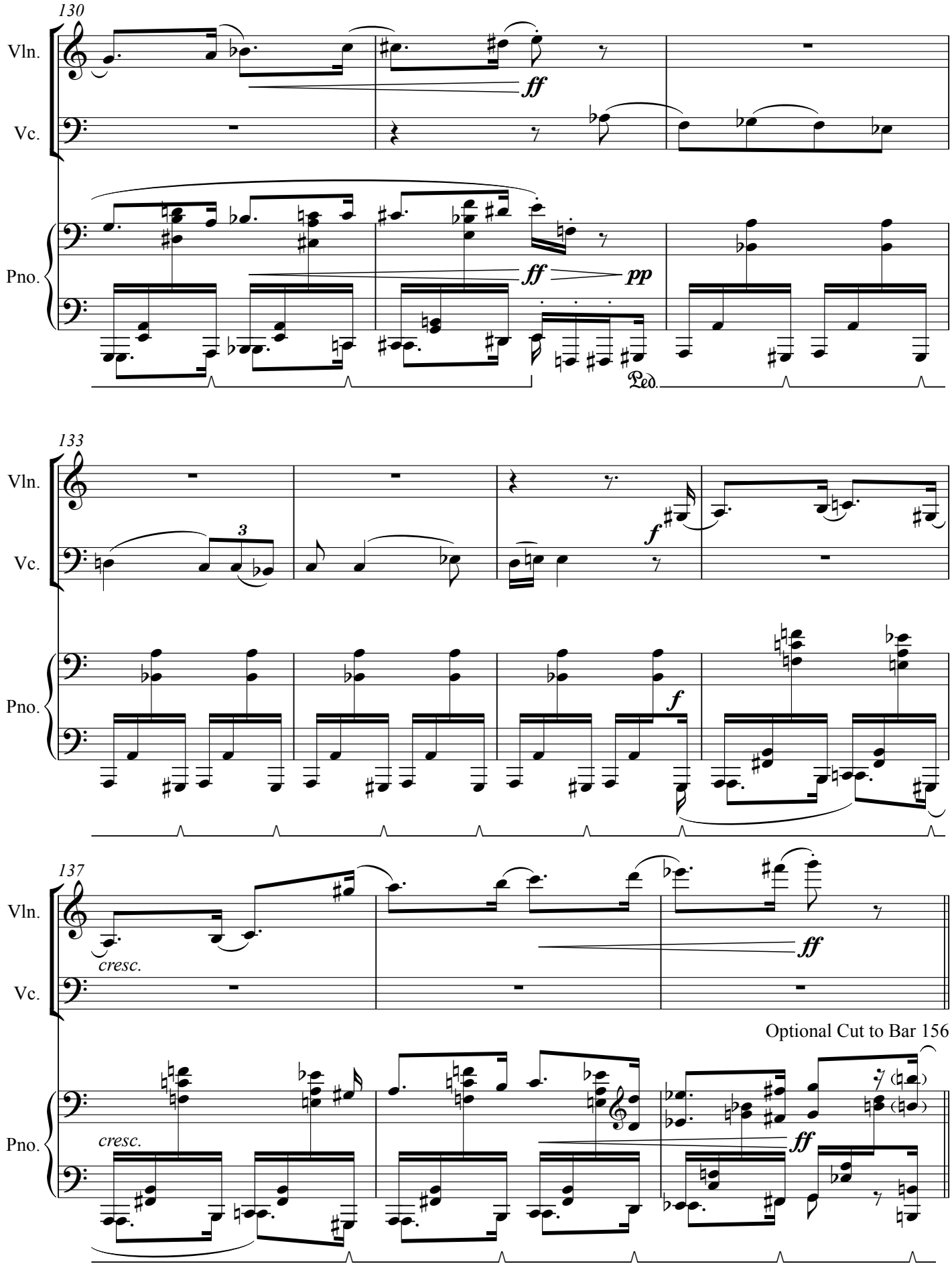

60
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
63
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
66
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
pizz.
p
pizz.
p
p

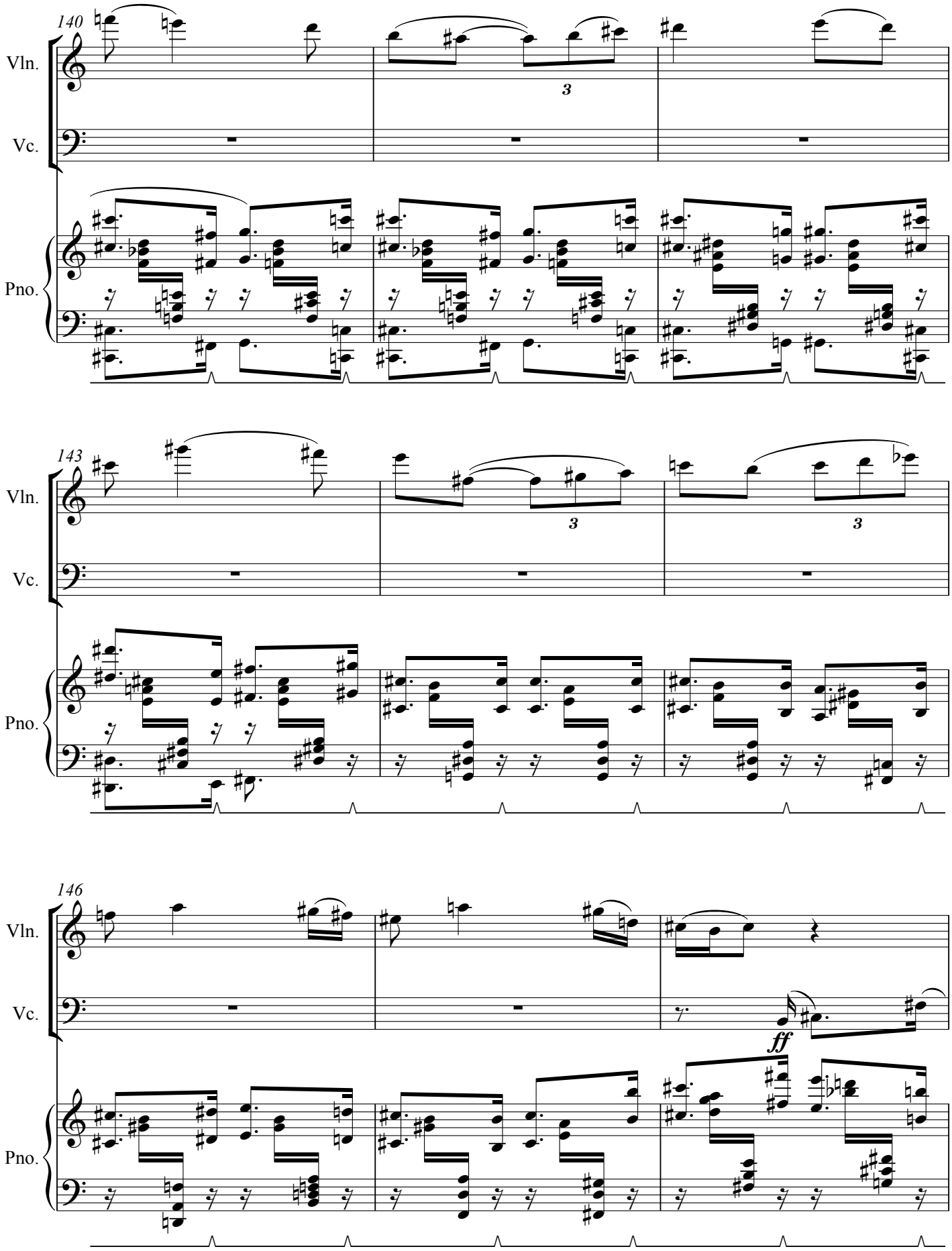

72
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
mf
78
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
83
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
arco
pizz.
pp
arco
pizz.
pp
dim.
p

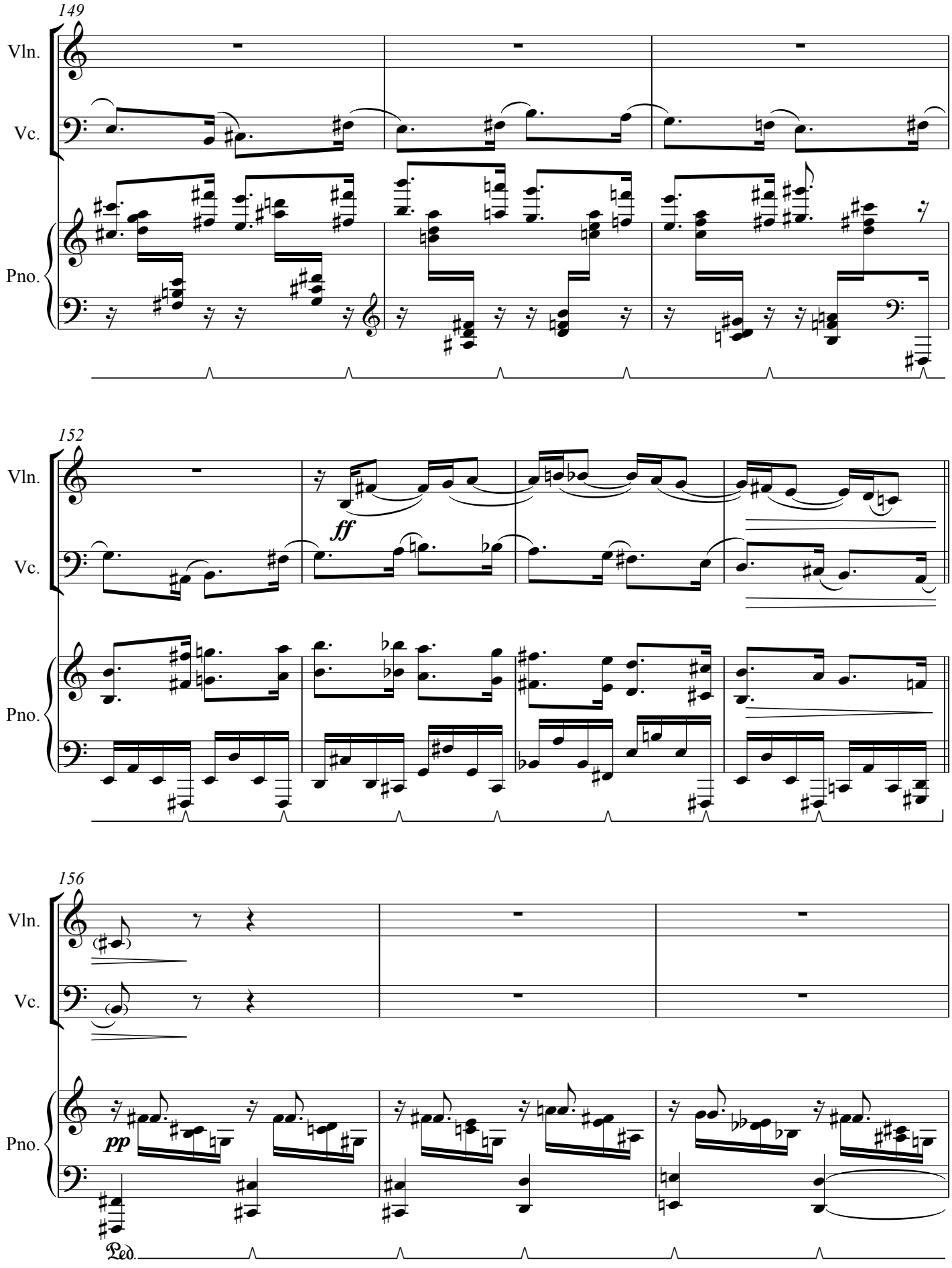

89
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
arco
arco
p
pp
pp
95
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
8va
3
8va
100
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
pp
p
p
3
pp
p
(8)

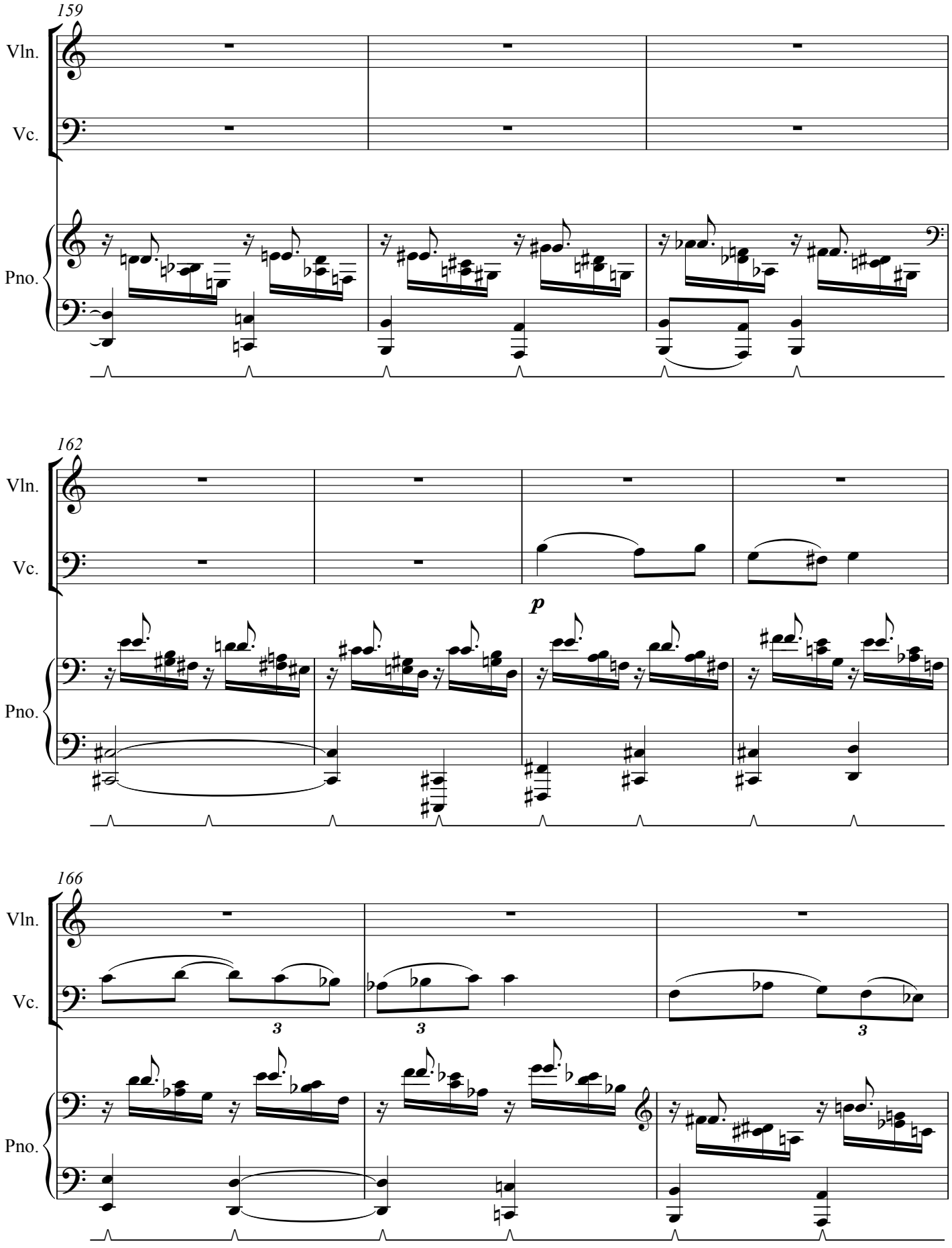

105
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
pizz.
arco
mp
mf
109
f
pizz.
arco
mf
113
f
pizz.
arco
pp

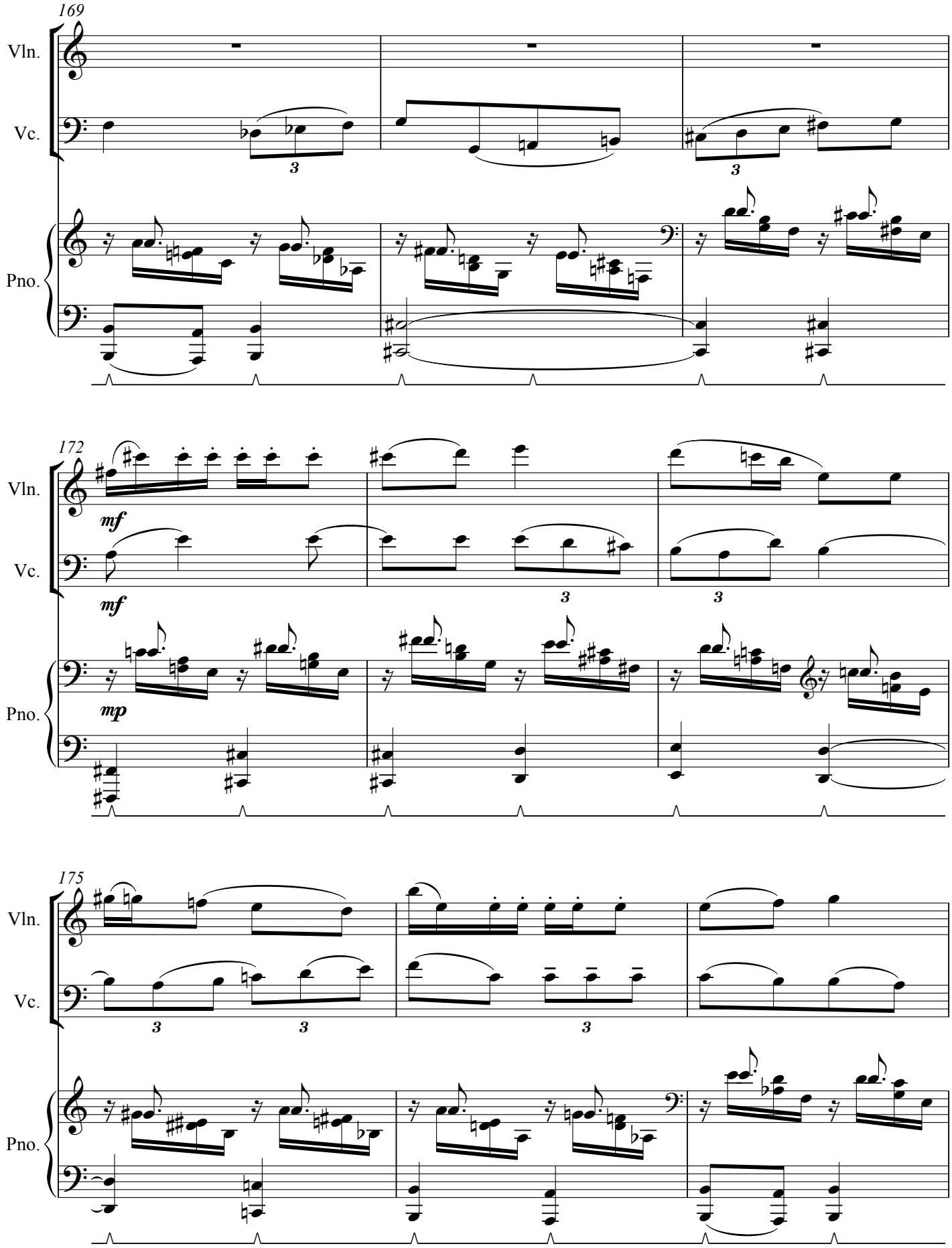

117
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
pp
121
pizz.
p
Ped.
126
arco
f
cresc.

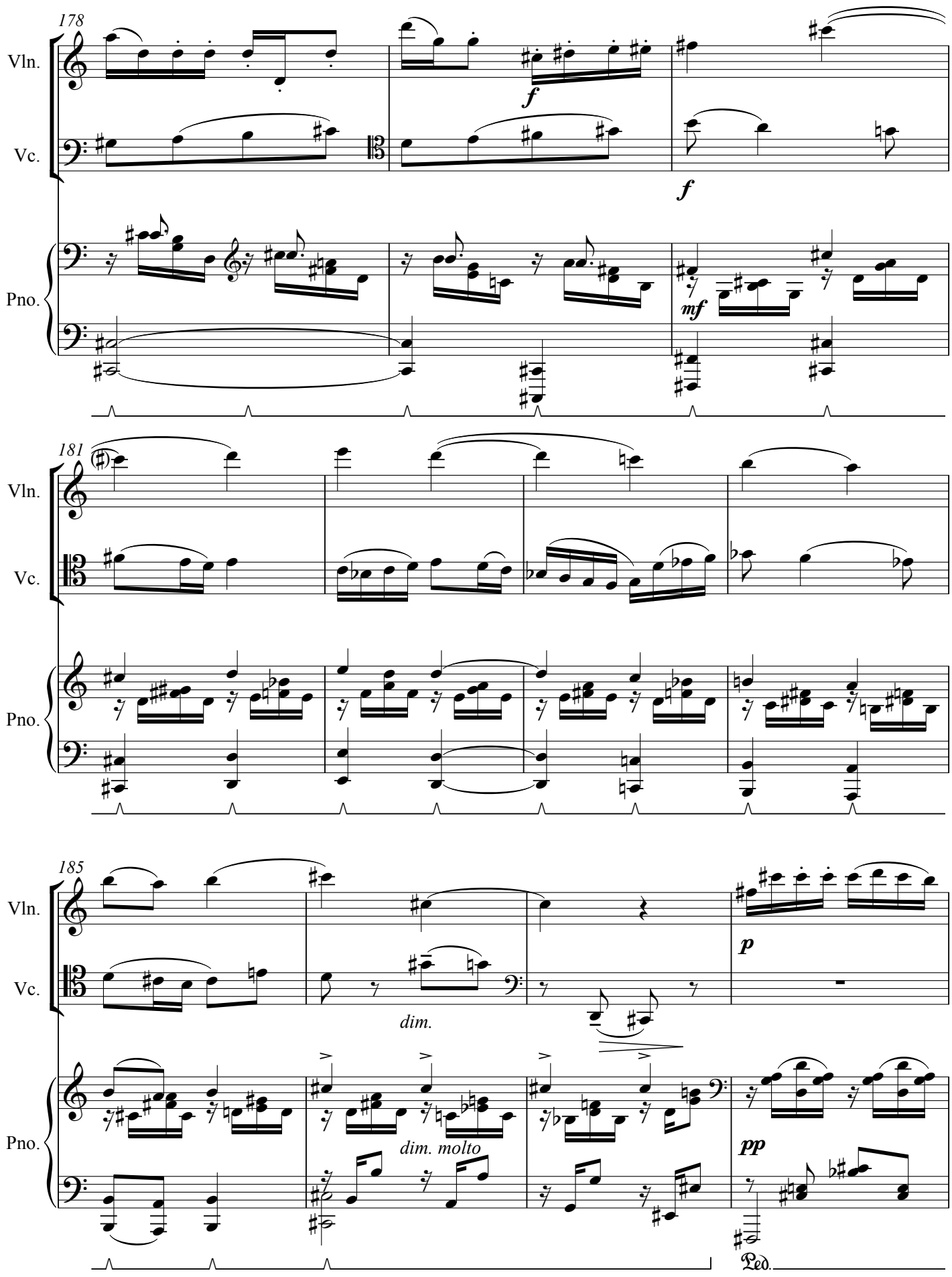

130
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
ff
ff
pp
Ped.
133
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
3
f
f
137
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
cresc.
cresc.
ff
ff
Optional Cut to Bar 156

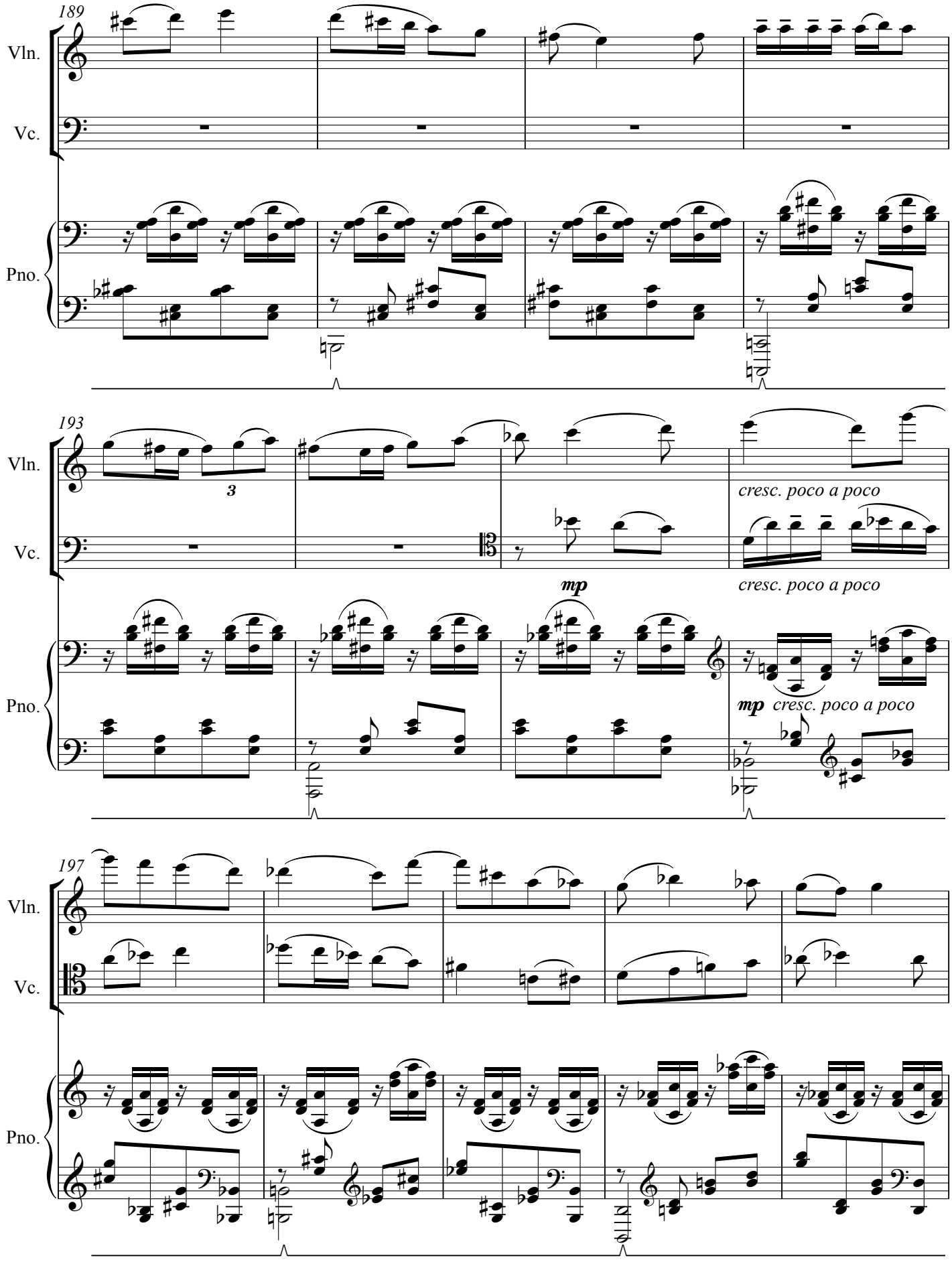

140
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
3
143
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
3
3
146
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
ff

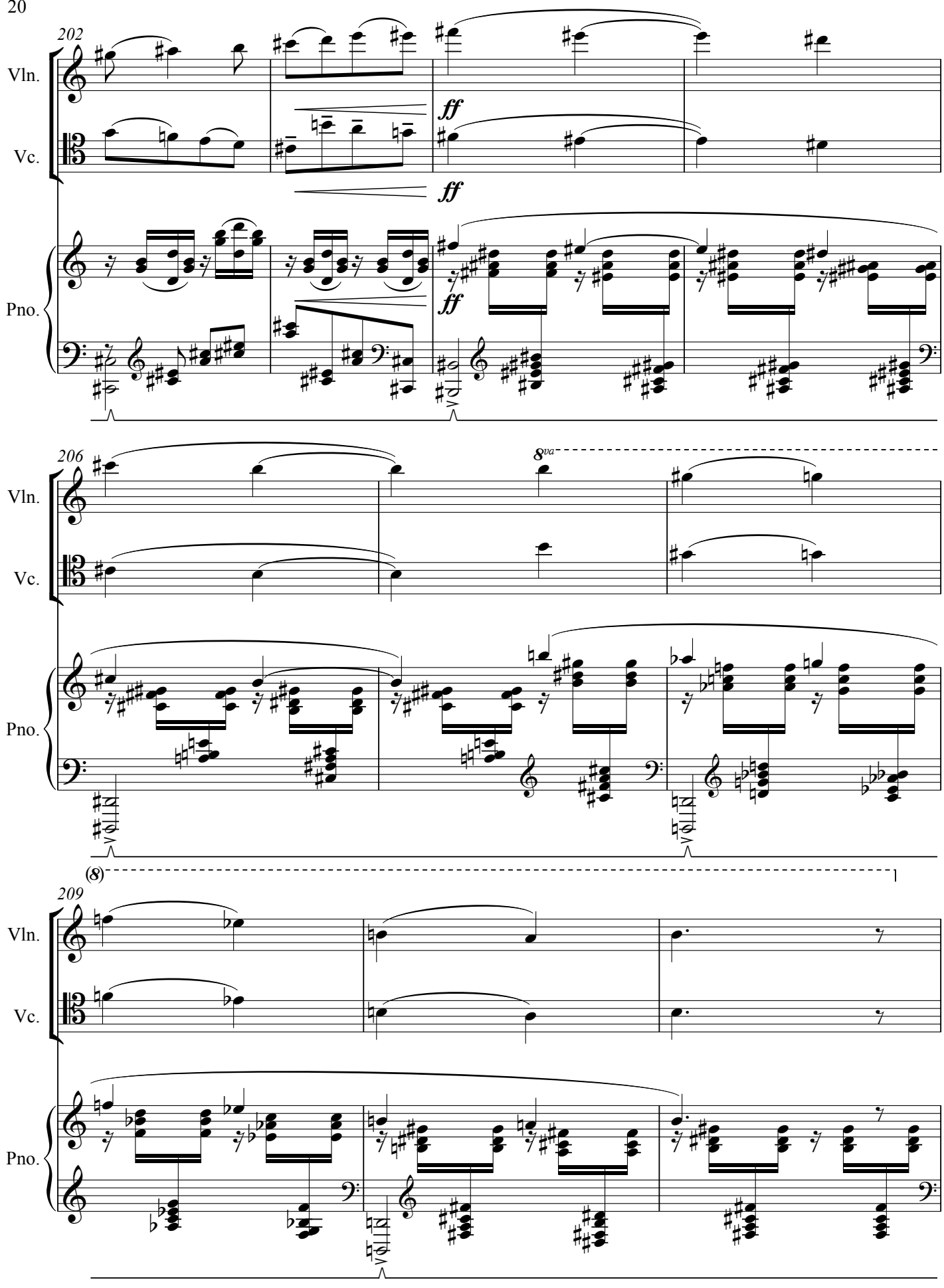

149
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
152
Vln.
Vc.
ff
Pno.
156
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
pp
Ped.

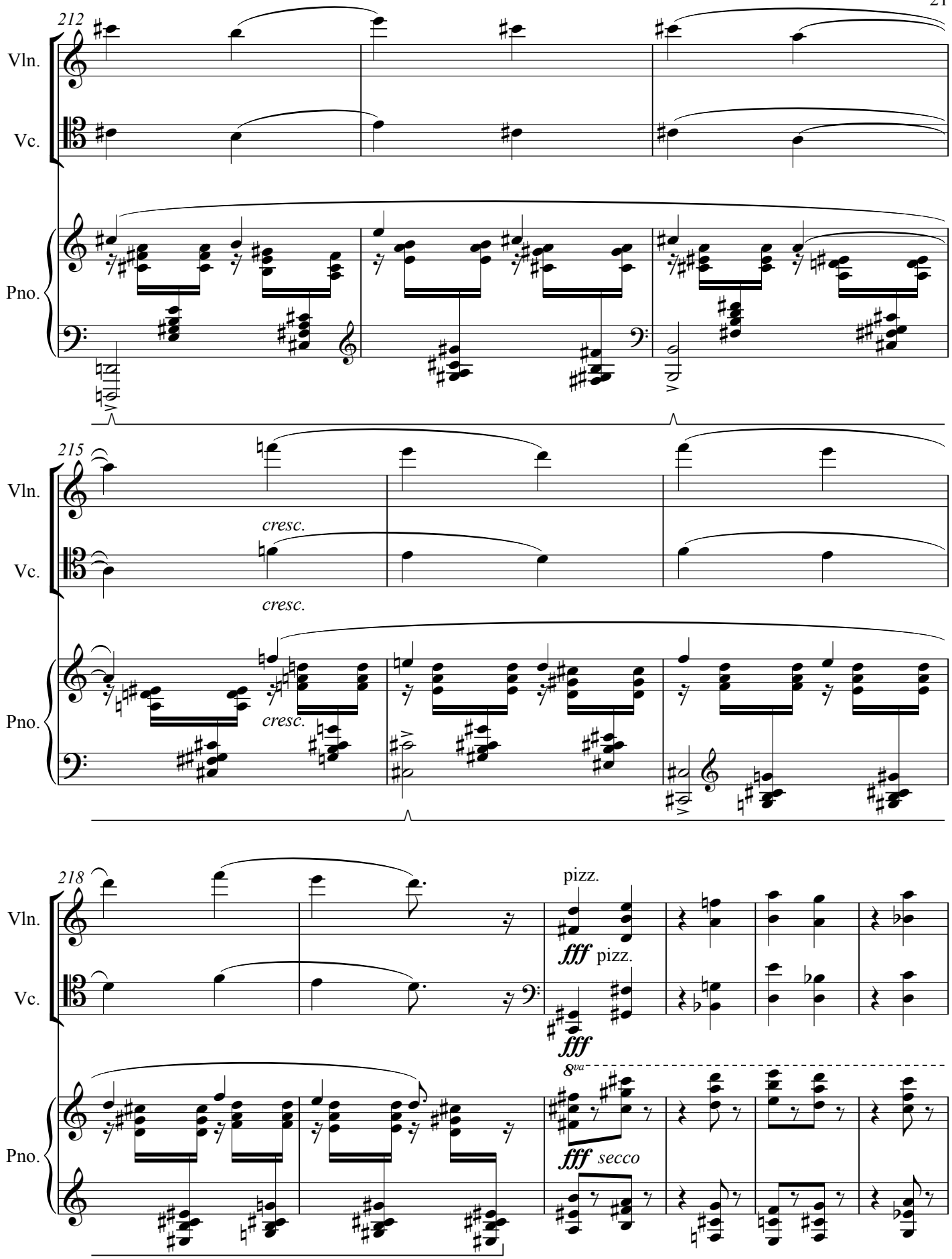

159
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
162
Vln.
Vc.
p
Pno.
166
Vln.
Vc.
3
3
3
Pno.

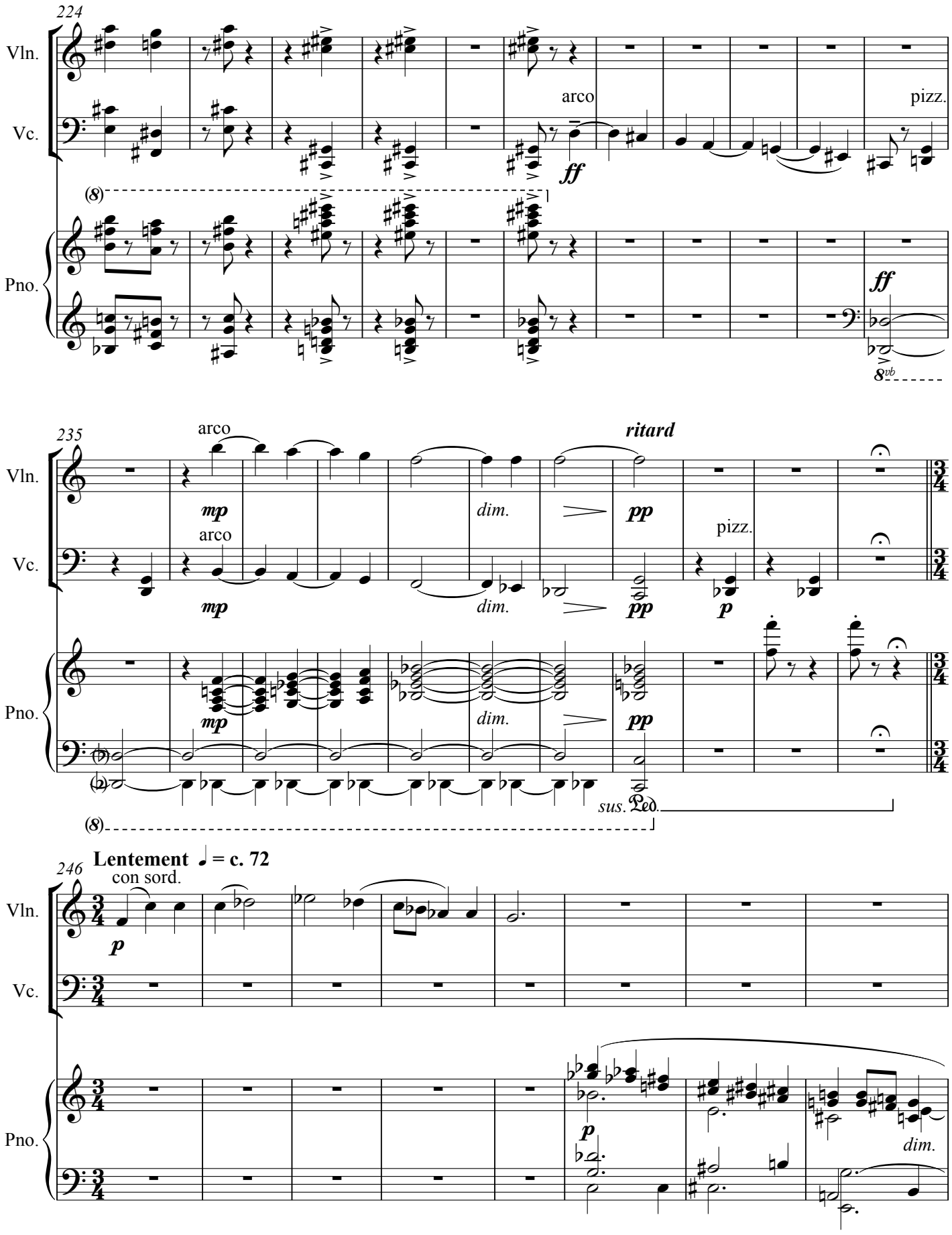

169
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
172
mf
mf
mp
175

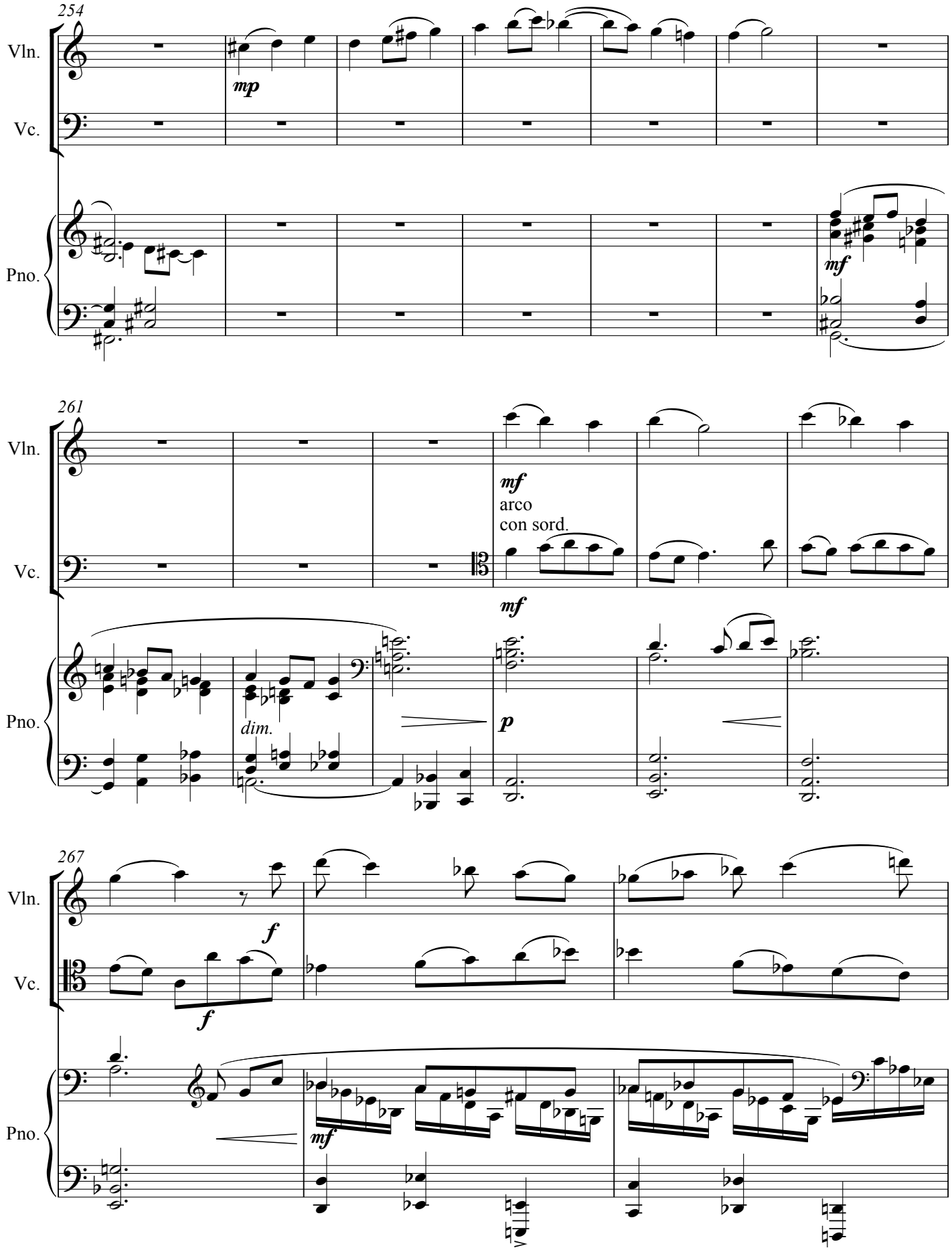

178
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
f
f
mf
181
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
185
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
p
dim.
dim. molto
pp
Ped.

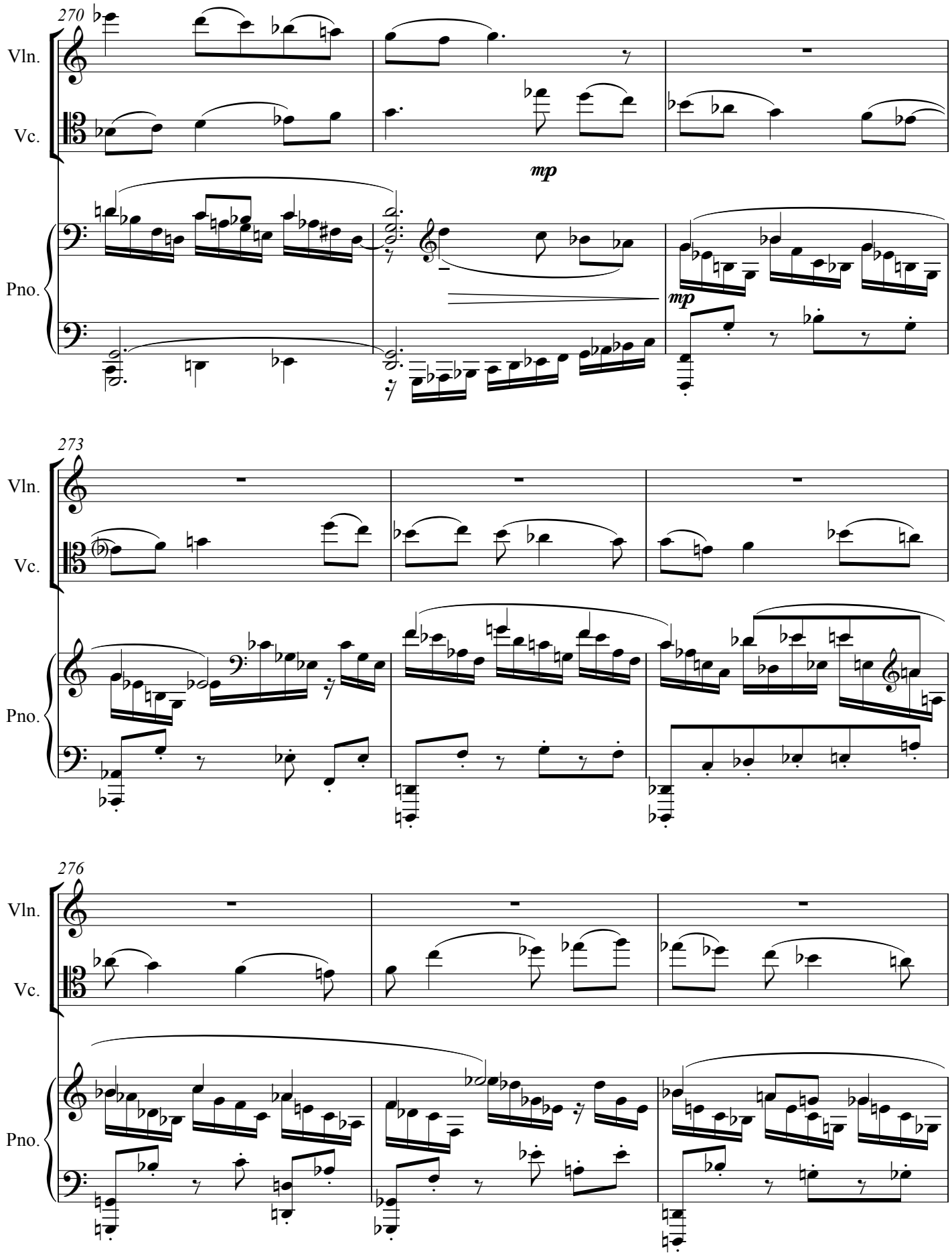

189
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
193
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
3
mp
cresc. poco a poco
cresc. poco a poco
mp cresc. poco a poco
197
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

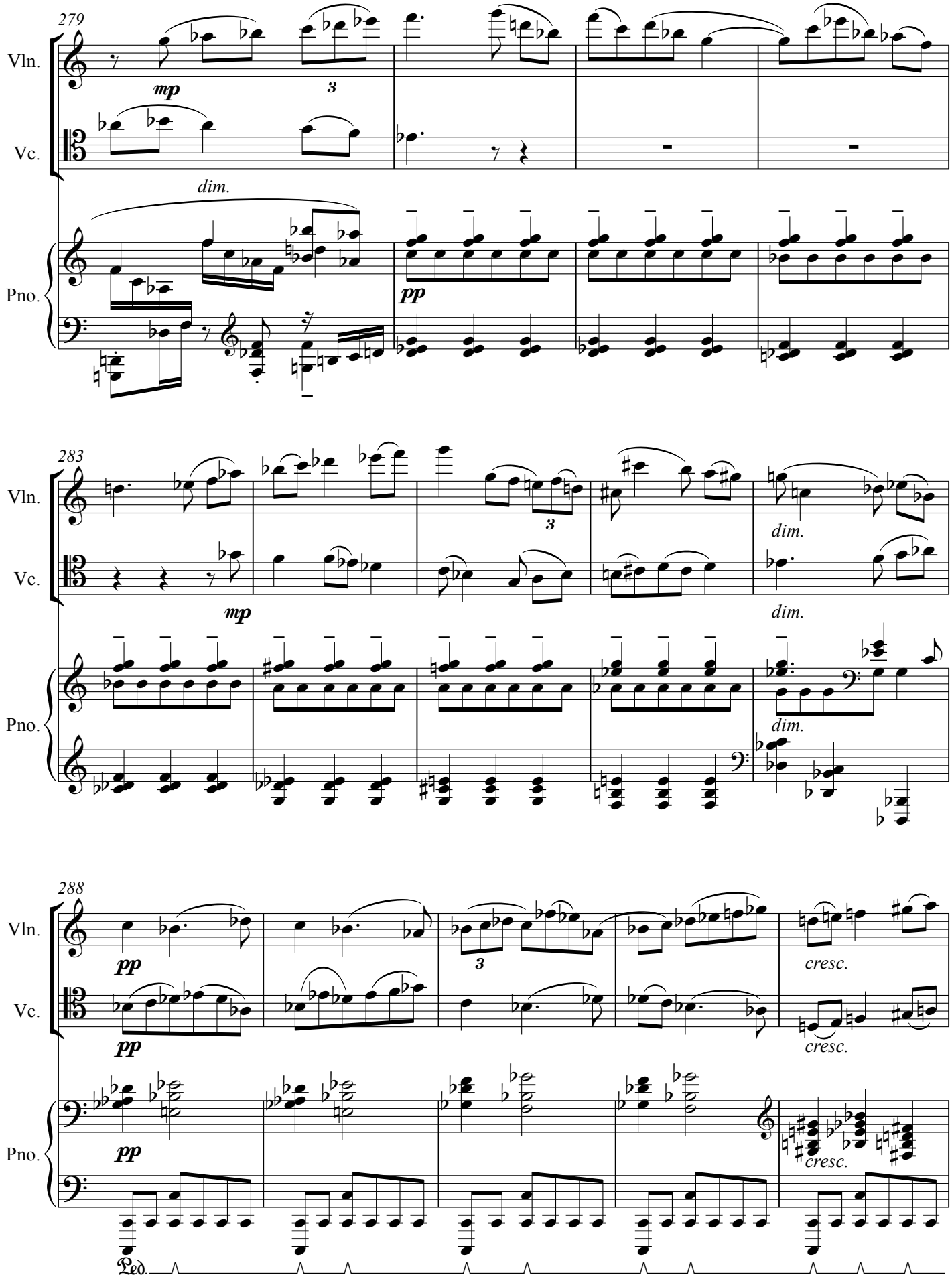

202
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
ff
ff
ff
206
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
8va
(8)
209
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

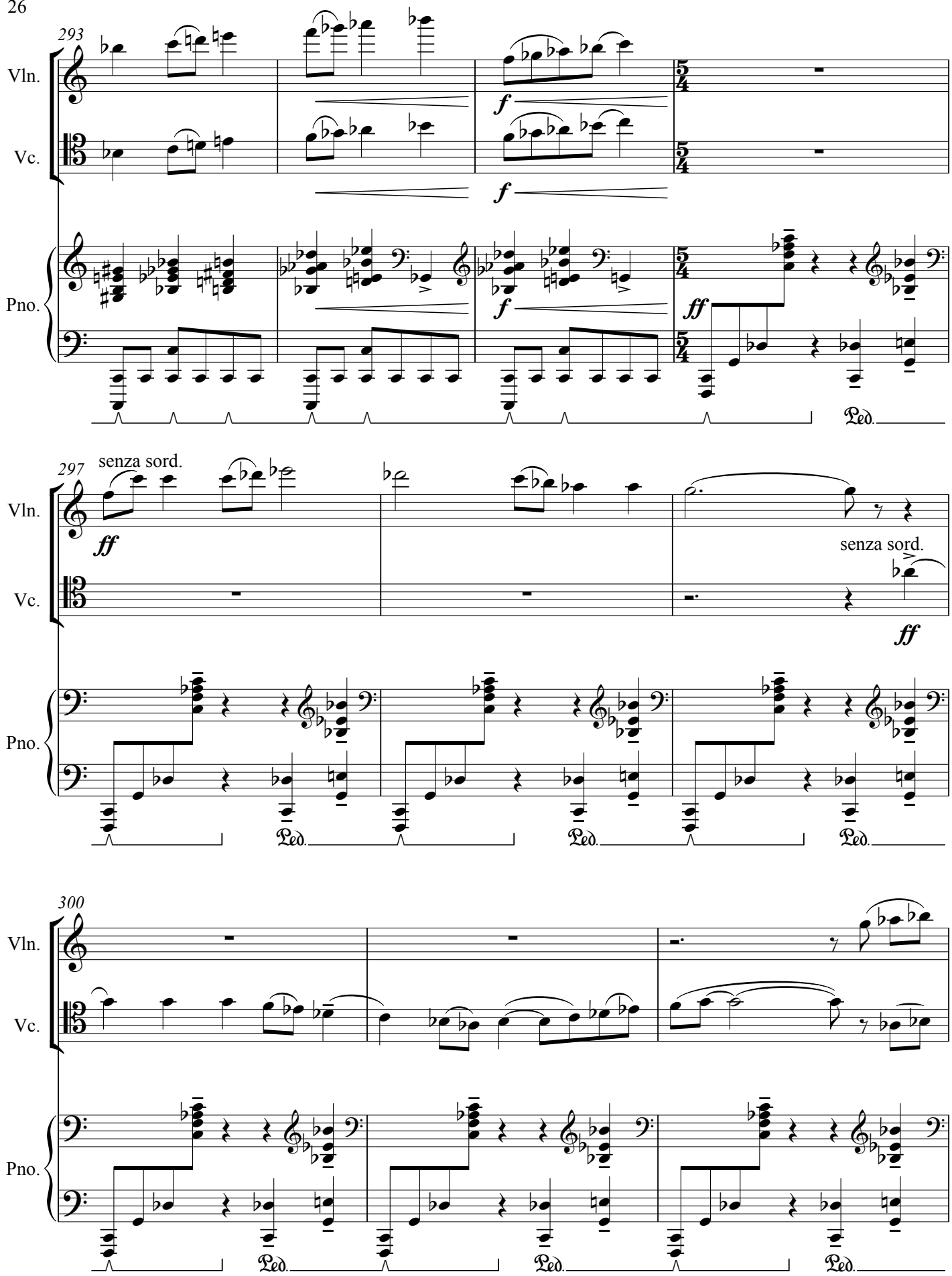

212
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
215
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
218
pizz.
fff pizz.
fff
8va
fff secco

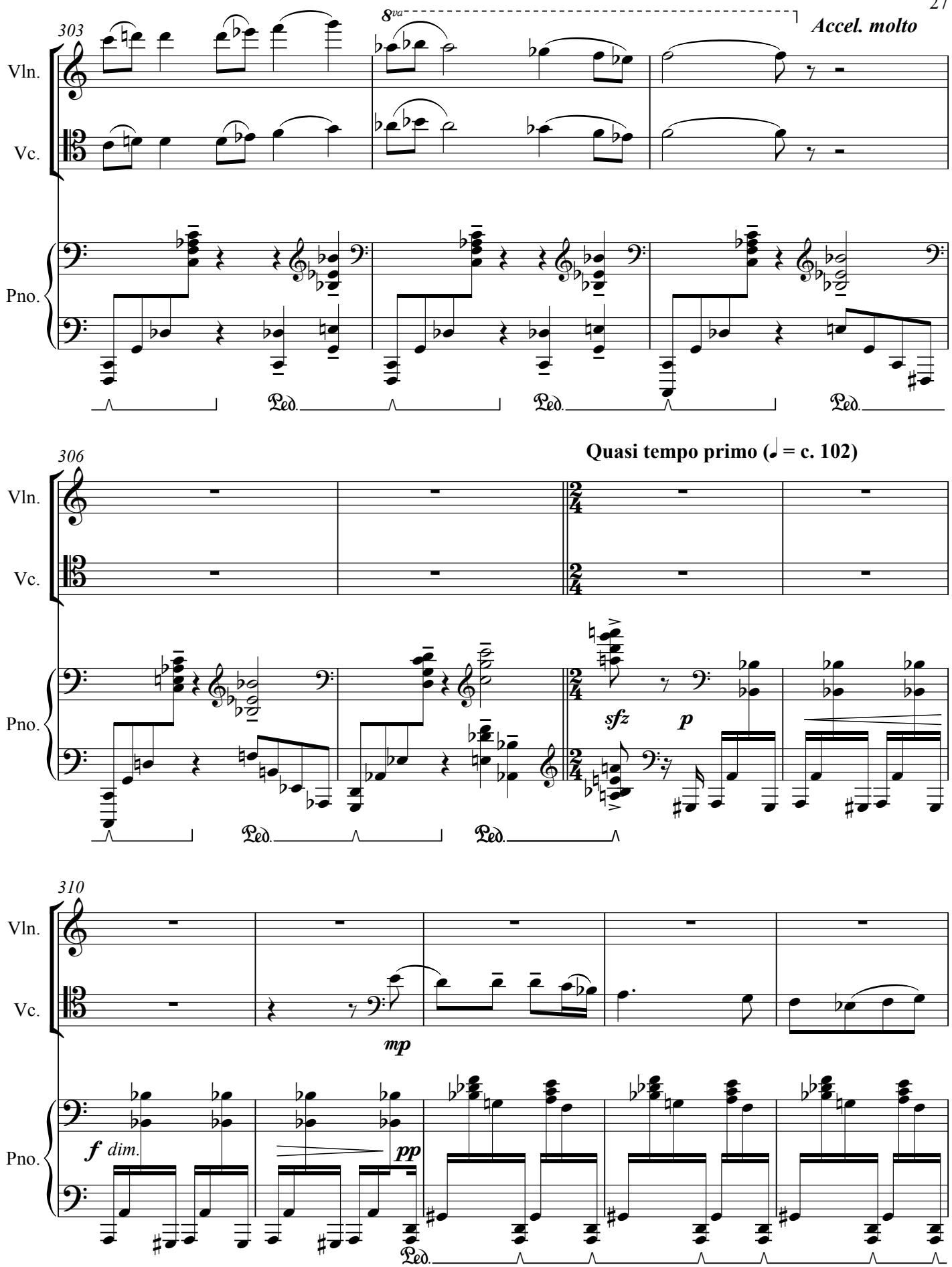

224
Vln.
Vc.
arco
pizz.
ff
(8)
Pno.
ff
8vb
235
arco
ritard
mp
dim.
pp
pizz.
p
sus. Ped.
246
Lentement ♩ = c. 72
con sord.

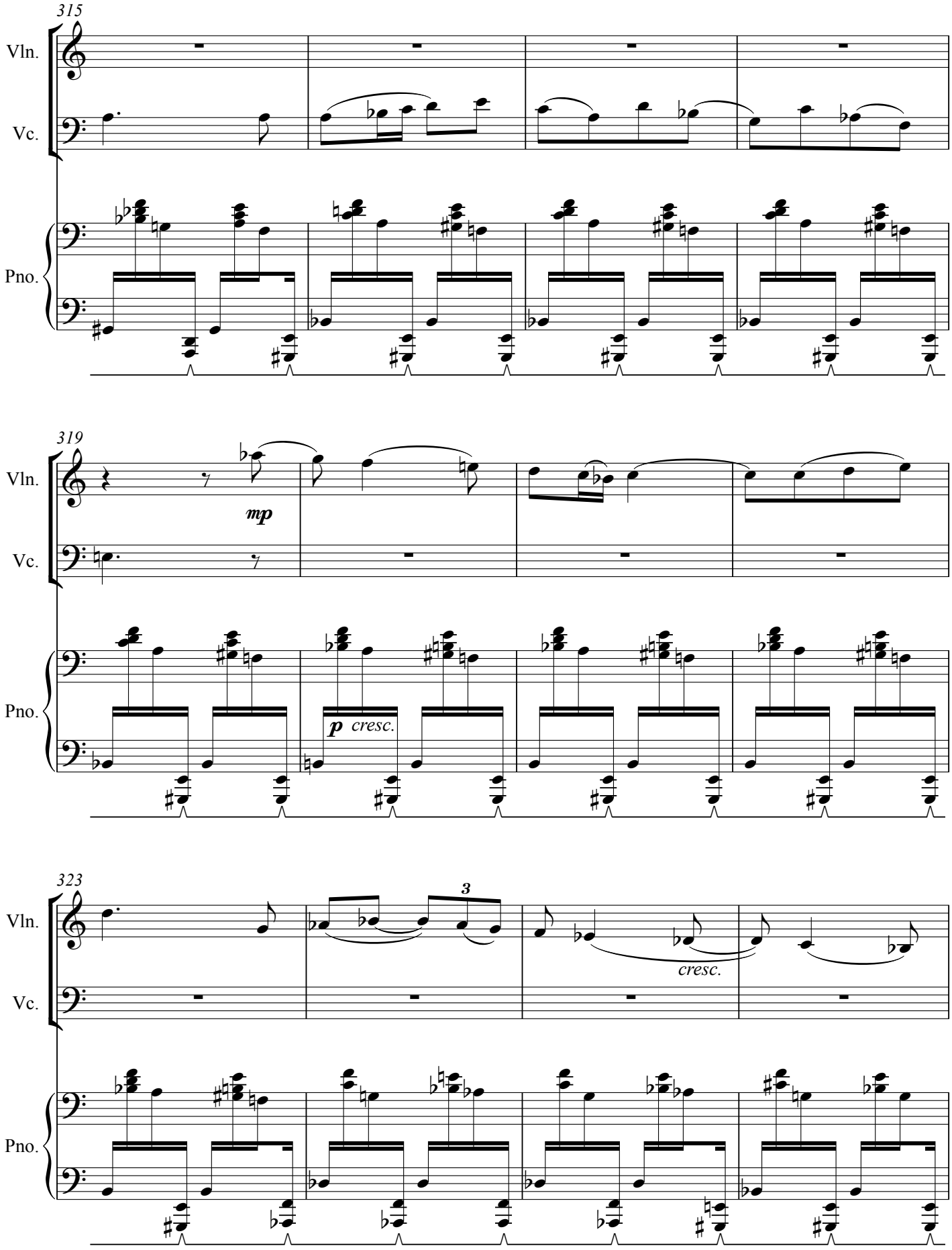

254
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
mp
mf
261
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
mf
arco
con sord.
mf
dim.
p
267
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
f
f
mf

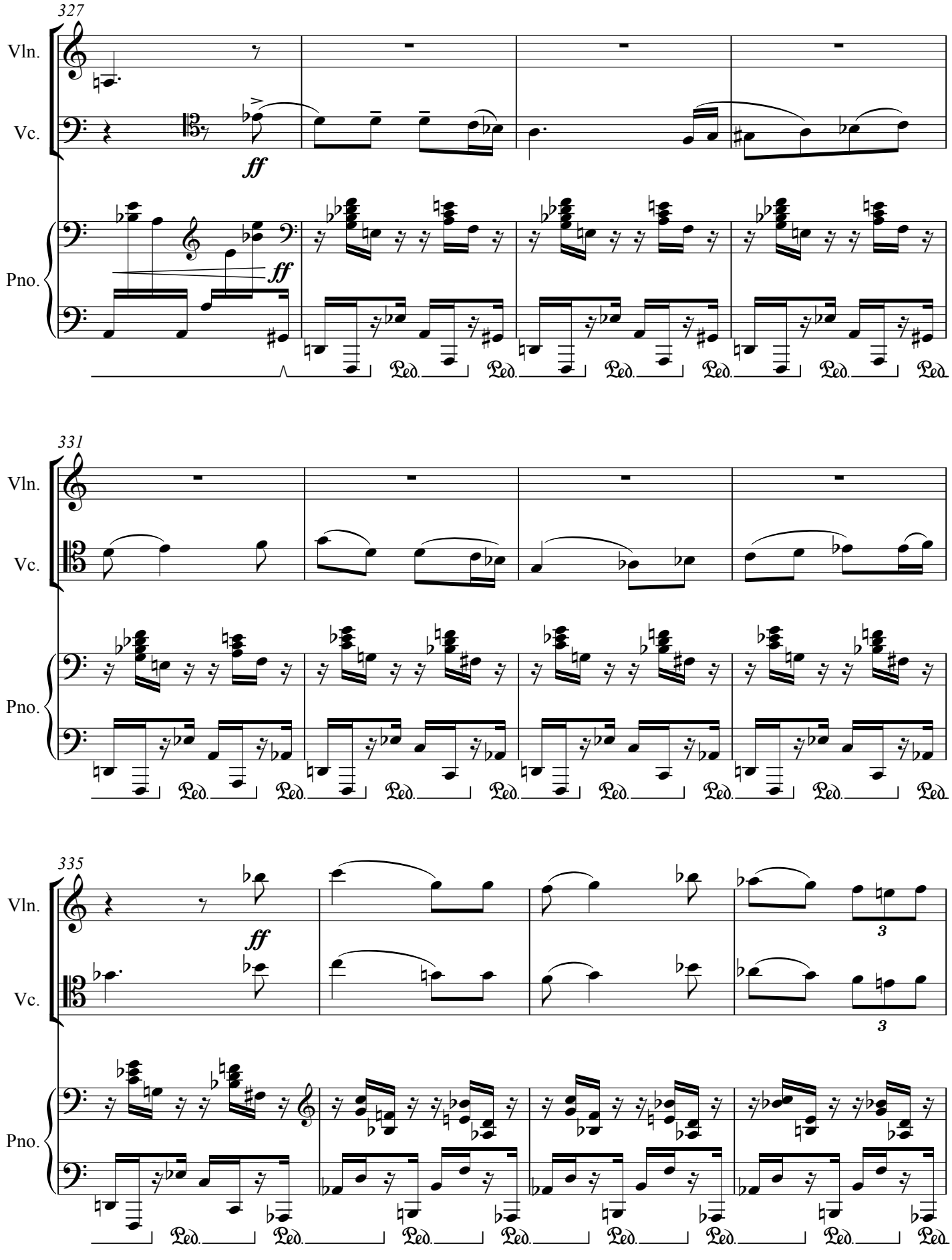

270
Vln.
Vc.
mp
Pno.
mp
273
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
276
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

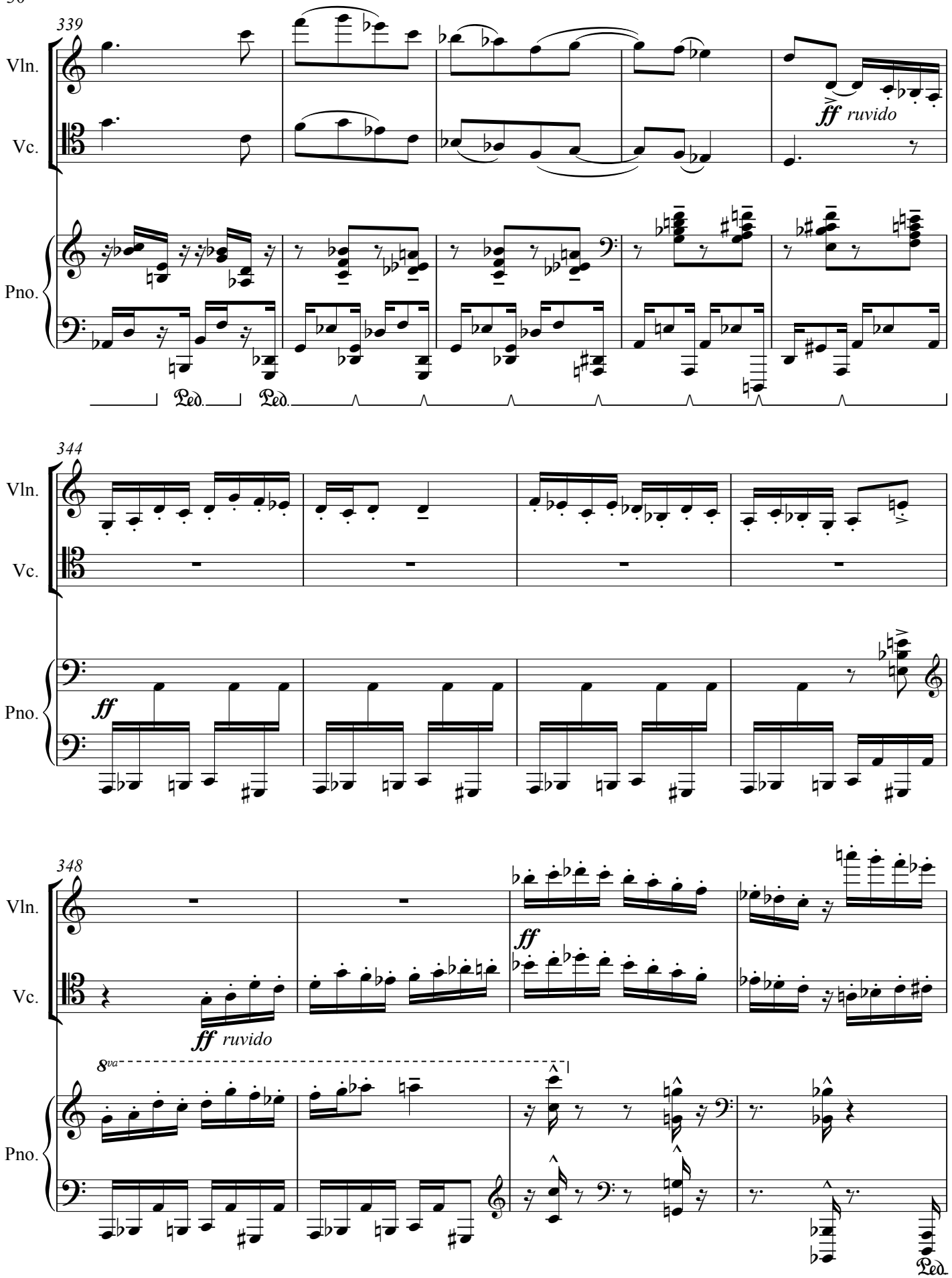

279
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
mp
3
dim.
pp
283
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
mp
3
dim.
dim.
dim.
288
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
pp
pp
pp
3
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
Ped.

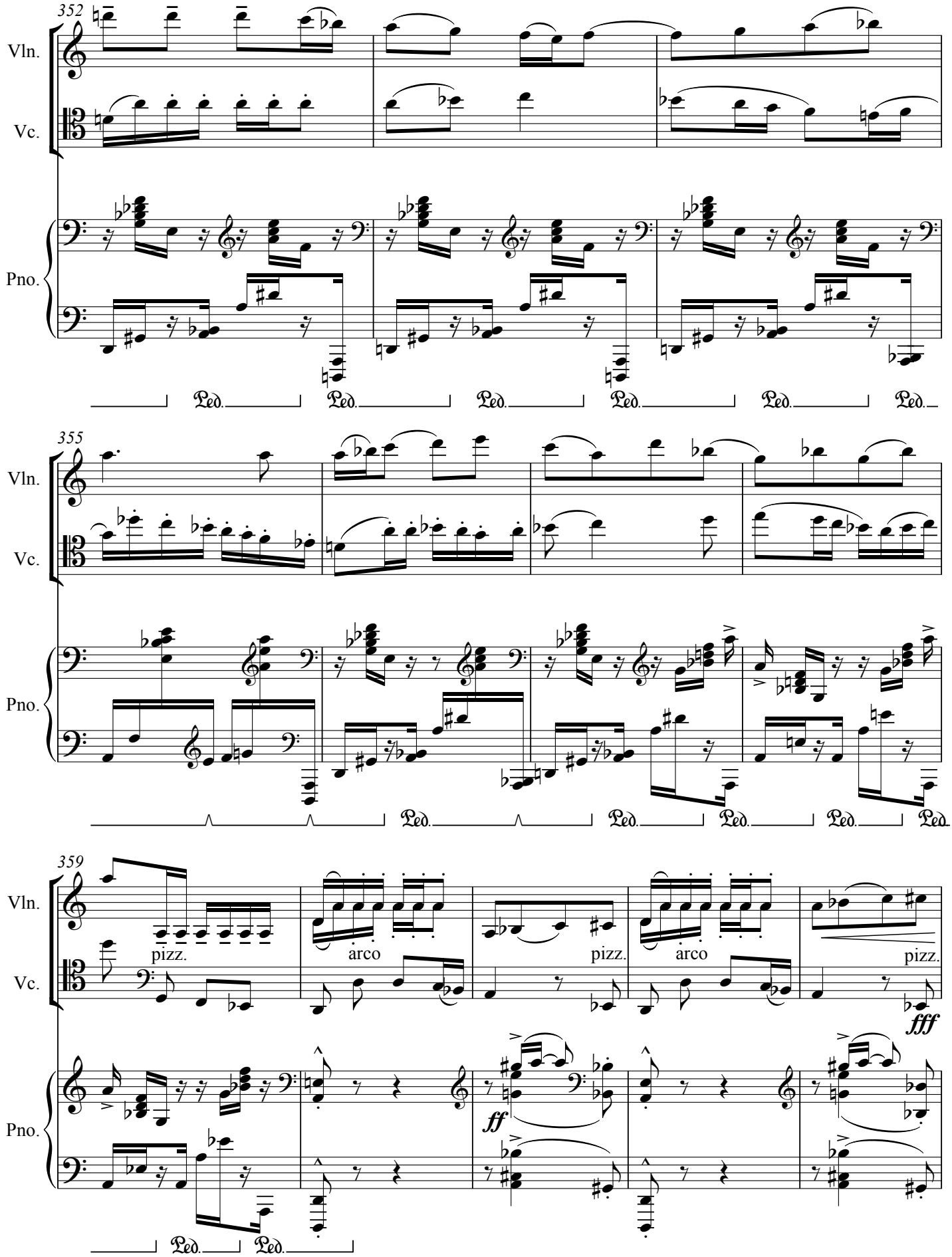

293
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
f
ff
Ped.
297
senza sord.
300

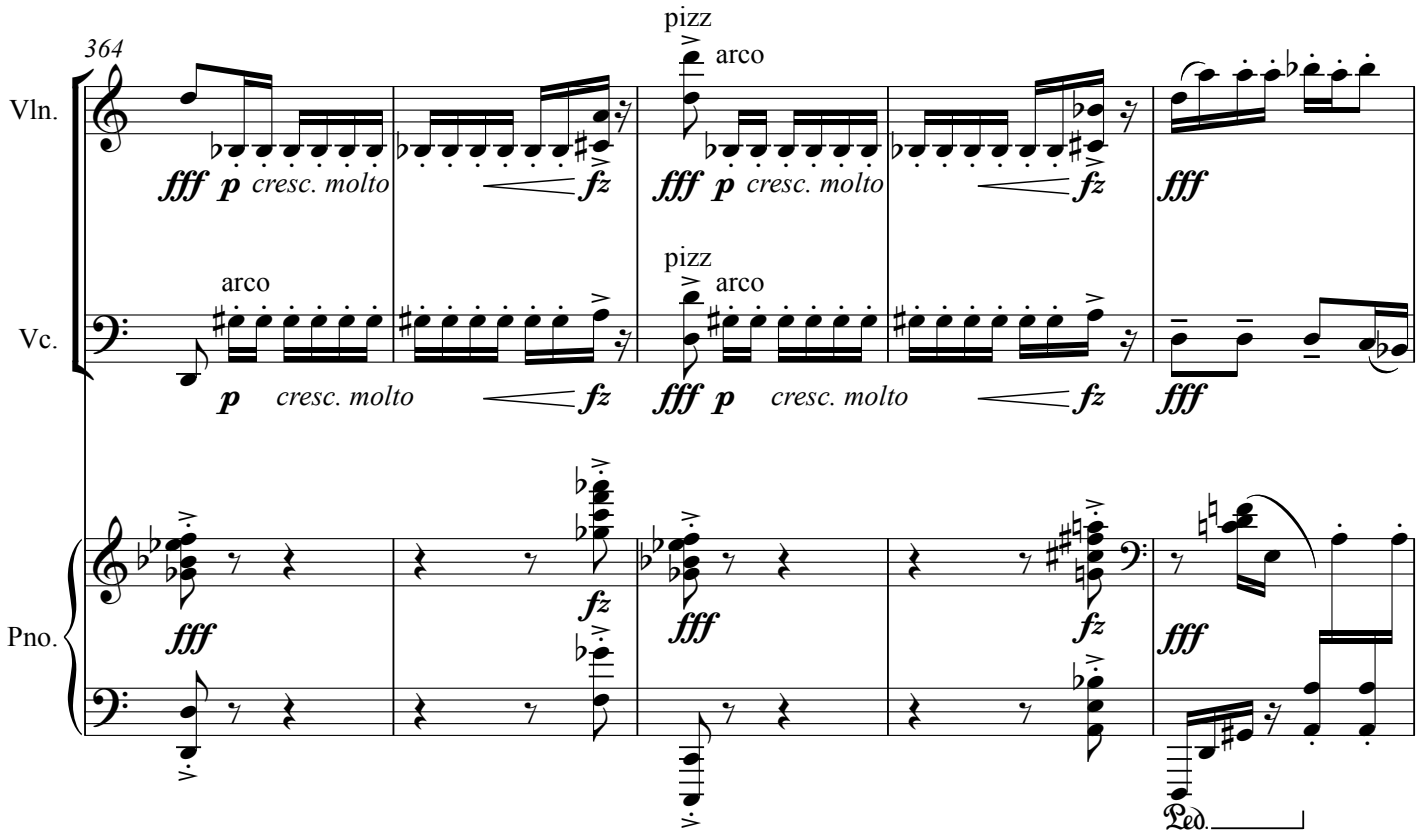

303
8va
Accel. molto
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
Ped.
306
Quasi tempo primo (♩ = c. 102)
sfz
p
310
mp
f dim.
pp

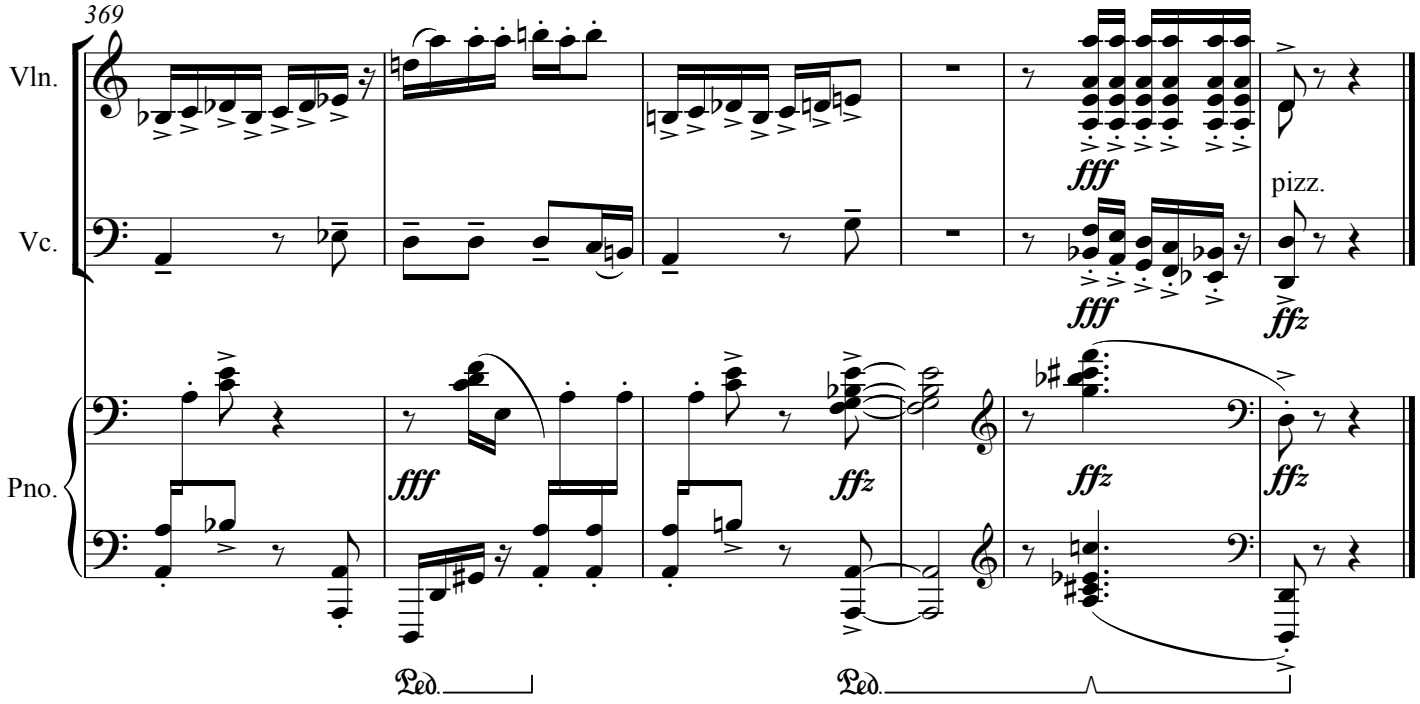

315
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
319
Vln.
mp
Vc.
Pno.
p cresc.
323
Vln.
3
cresc.
Vc.
Pno.


327
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
ff
ff
Ped.
331
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
Ped.
335
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
ff
3
3
Ped.


339
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
ff ruvido
Ped.
Ped.
344
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
ff
348
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
ff
ff ruvido
8va
Ped.


352
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
Ped.
355
pizz.
arco
fff
ff


364
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
pizz
arco
fff p cresc. molto
fz
fff
Ped.


369
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
fff
pizz.
ffz
Ped.