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Benjamin Potts_____ ___04/08/10_____
Date

Ex Tenebris Lux: Senior Honors Recital in Composition

by

Benjamin Potts

Adviser

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Department of Music

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Committee Member

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Dr. Andrew Mitchell
Committee Member

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04/08/10

Ex Tenebris Lux: Senior Honors Recital in Composition

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An abstract of
A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Department of Music

2010

Abstract

Ex Tenebris Lux: Senior Honors Recital in Composition
By Benjamin Potts

The title of this thesis identifies the feature component of Benjamin Potts' honors recital in composition, which took place on April 3, 2010. The audio file of the entire recital is entitled Potts_04-03-10.mp3 and can be accessed at Emory University's Woodruff Library. *Ex Tenebris Lux* is a thirty-minute, five-movement musical work for string quartet, vocal octet, piano, and electronics. It aims to capture the universal human experience of pain, suffering, and the desire for a better world. Through the employment of both modern and traditional compositional techniques, the composer illuminates the perpetual cyclical process of creation, corruption, and renewal that characterizes the development and evolution of life in our universe. The first movement depicts the formation of the Earth out of chaos. Musical ideas slowly revolve and merge closer and closer together, until they finally achieve one body in unison. The second movement chronicles a "descent into darkness," from primeval energy and optimism into a distorted, heavy, and oppressive reality. The third movement features the human voice, crying out against this darkness, unable to escape it. Amidst the sorrow, there is a faint plea for mercy in the form of a Latin prayer. Movement four is a transitional section that portrays the ascent from a place of sorrow and darkness into joy and light. The piano begins by playing a single note each second, signifying the passage of time in the depths before a gradual breaking away. The final climax of the fourth movement leads directly into the fifth movement, which embodies a common hope for glory, paradise, heaven, or simply a more perfect world. The Latin prayer from the third movement is fully developed into a contrapuntal passage, which then gives way to an ostinato that gains energy and momentum until the work's climax. The final echoes of the "Lux Aeterna" instill a sense of renewal, rest, and repose. After the long journey and struggle, joy is found—*Ex Tenebris lux*: from darkness, light.

Ex Tenebris Lux: Senior Honors Recital in Composition

By

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Adviser

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Ex Tenebris Lux

A five-movement work for string quartet,
vocal octet, piano and electronics.

By: Benjamin Potts

April 3rd, 2010

Ex Tenebris Lux

Movement I – Prima Luce

String quartet, vocal octet, piano, electronics. Electronics should be a low, non-pitched rumble. All instruments and singers should be amplified. Heavy reverb can be used on the singers' microphones until mm. 63. Light reverb is appropriate for the rest of the movement.

Movement II – Descensus

String quartet, amplified.

Movement III – Despero

Cello, two soprano soloists, TTBB. The vocalists should be amplified with moderate reverb. The cello needs only minimal amplification with very little reverb.

Movement IV – Ascension

Amplified piano, electronics. The electronics are in the form of a track that should be started when the pianist begins the movement. The track is approximately three minutes long and finishes as the pianist completes the opening section of the movement.

Movement V – Lux Aeterna

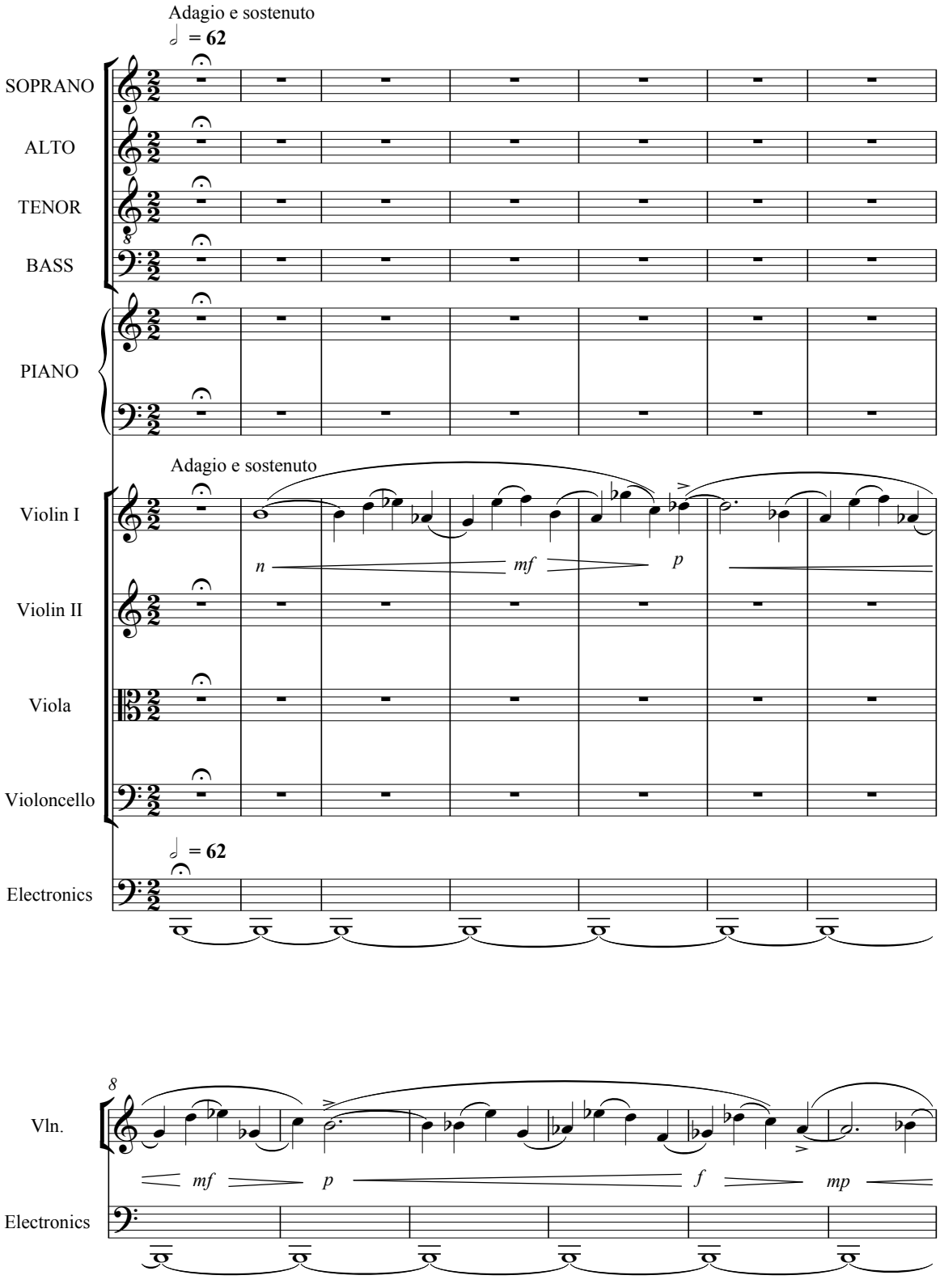
String quartet, vocal octet, piano, electronics. All instruments and singers should be amplified. Light reverb should be used on the singers, and little to none on the strings.

*General Notes: The amplification is not intended to draw attention, but merely enhance the balance and overall sound quality. The electronic tracks do not require synchronization with performers; they must simply be started at the right time in order to end within an acceptable margin.

Total run time: approximately 30:00.

I. Prima Luce

Benjamin Potts



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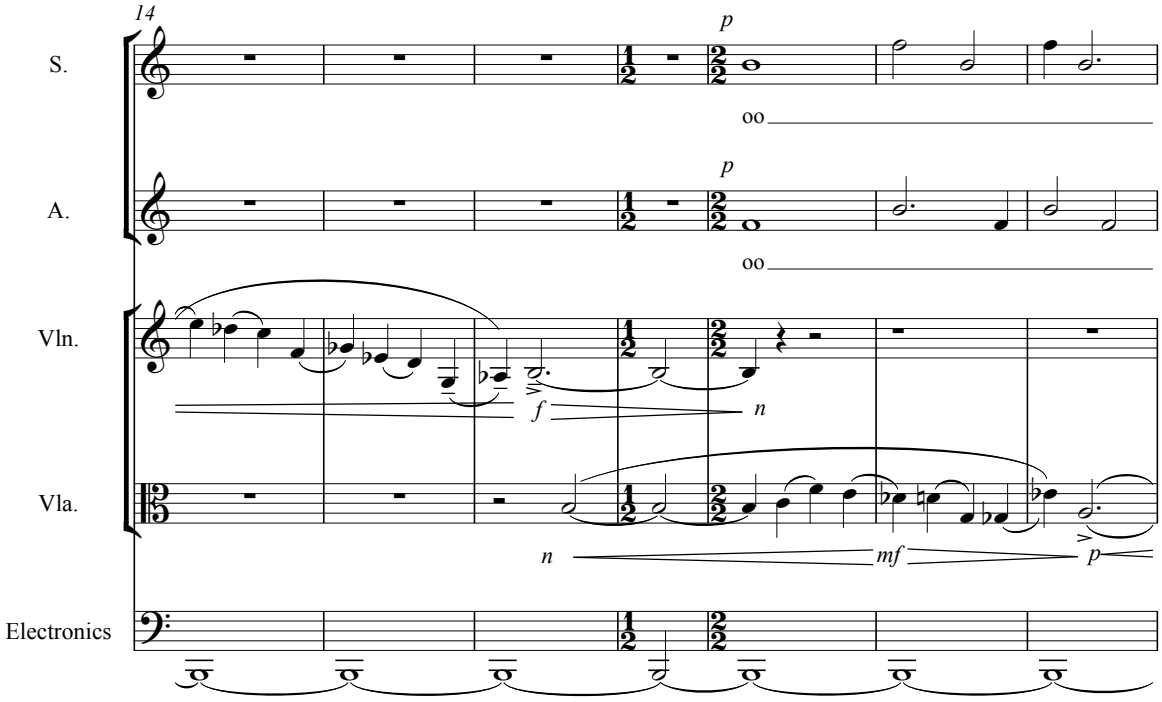
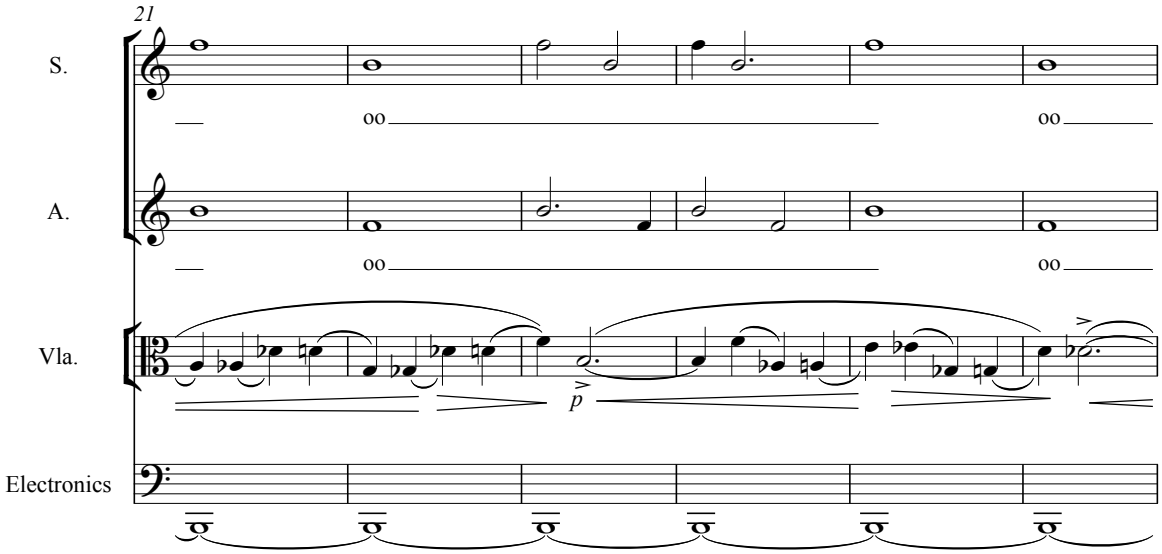
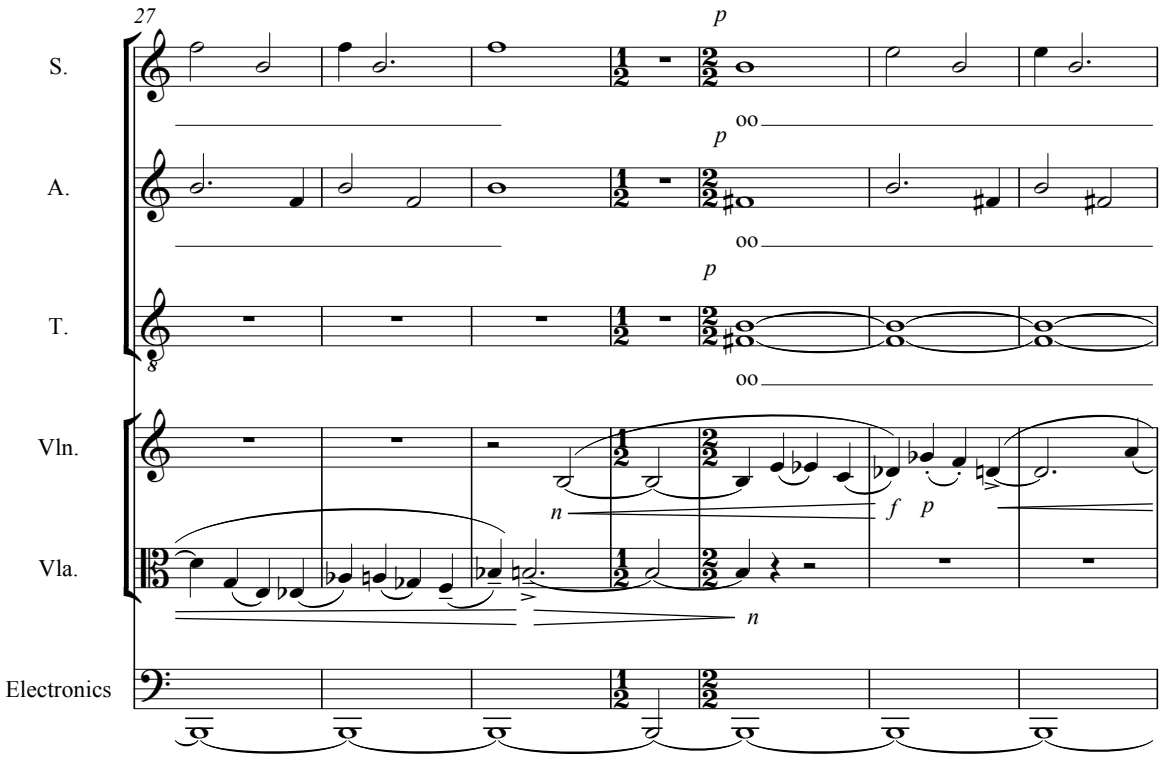
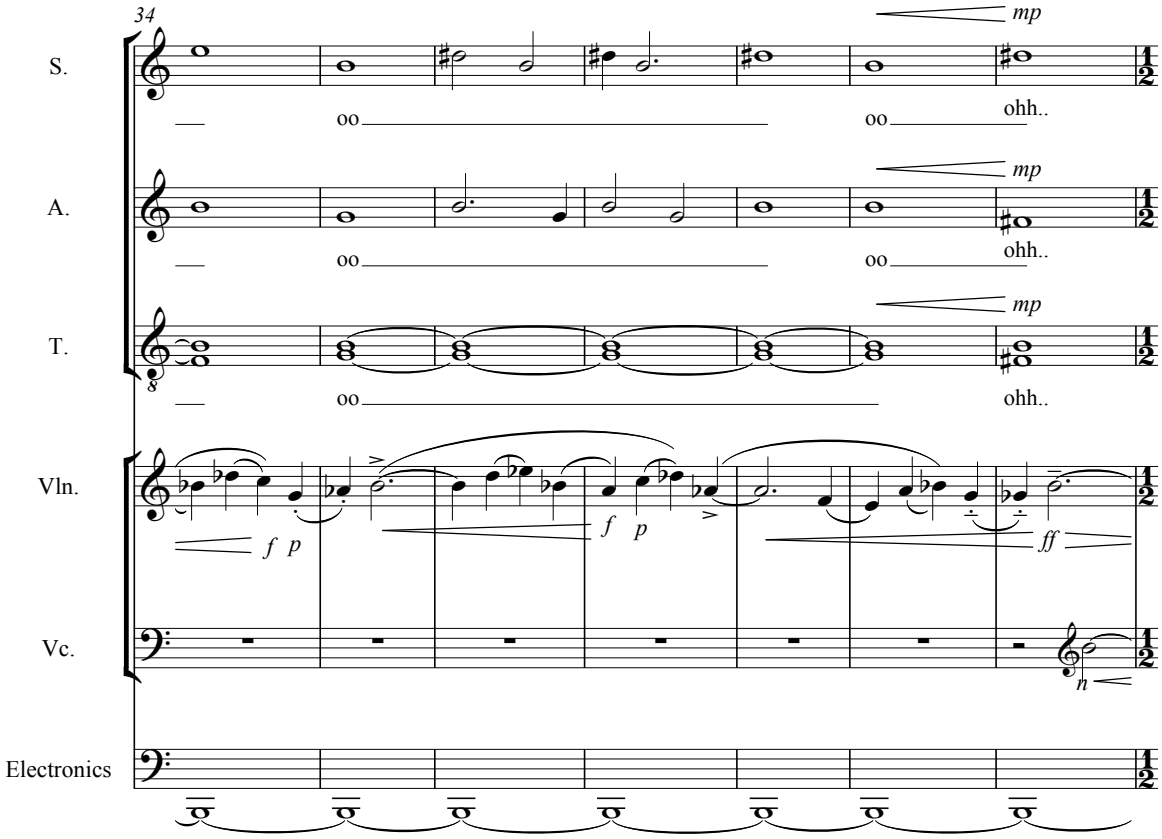
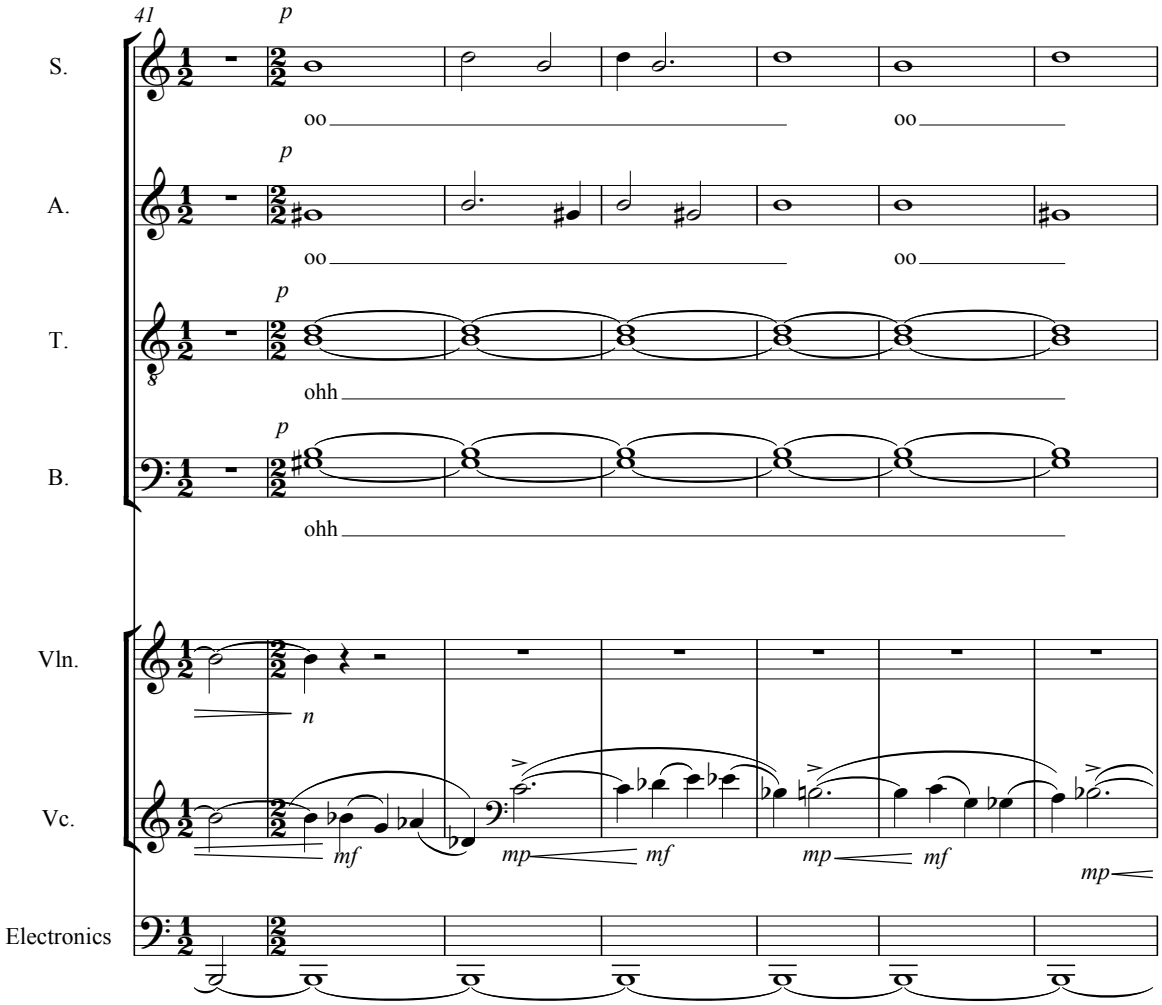
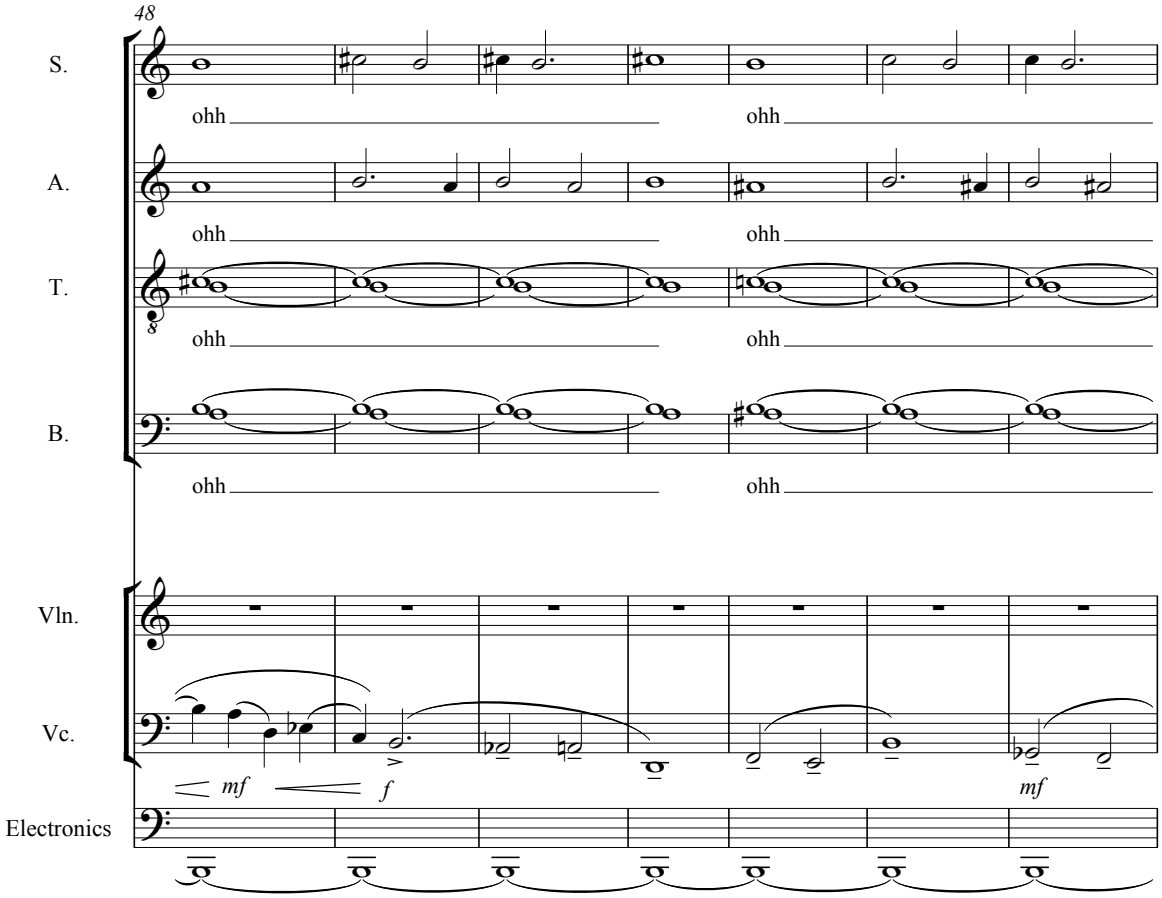

14
S.
A.
Vln.
Vla.
Electronics
p
oo
p
oo
f
n
n
mf
p

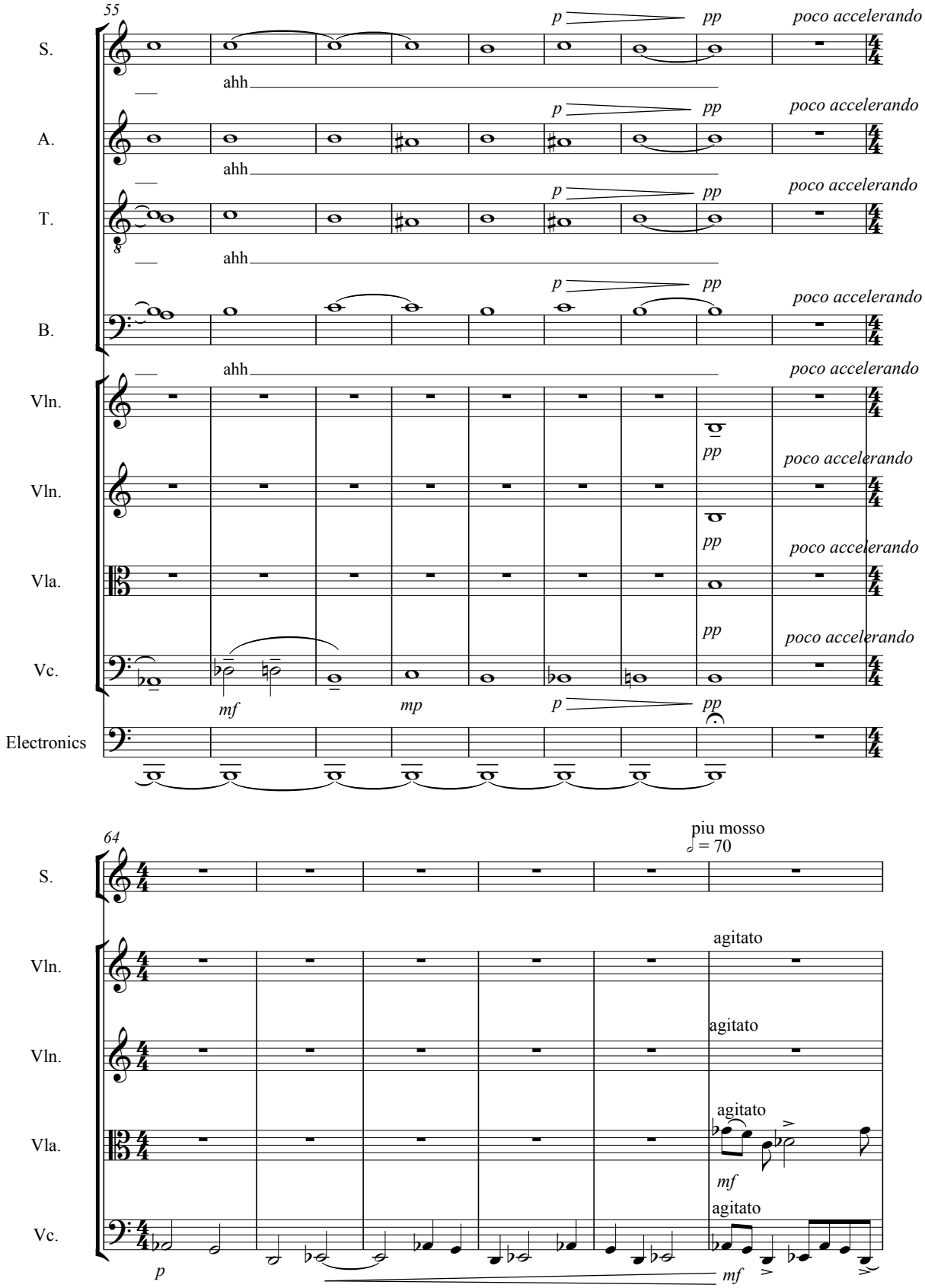

21
S.
A.
Vla.
Electronics
oo
oo
oo
oo
p

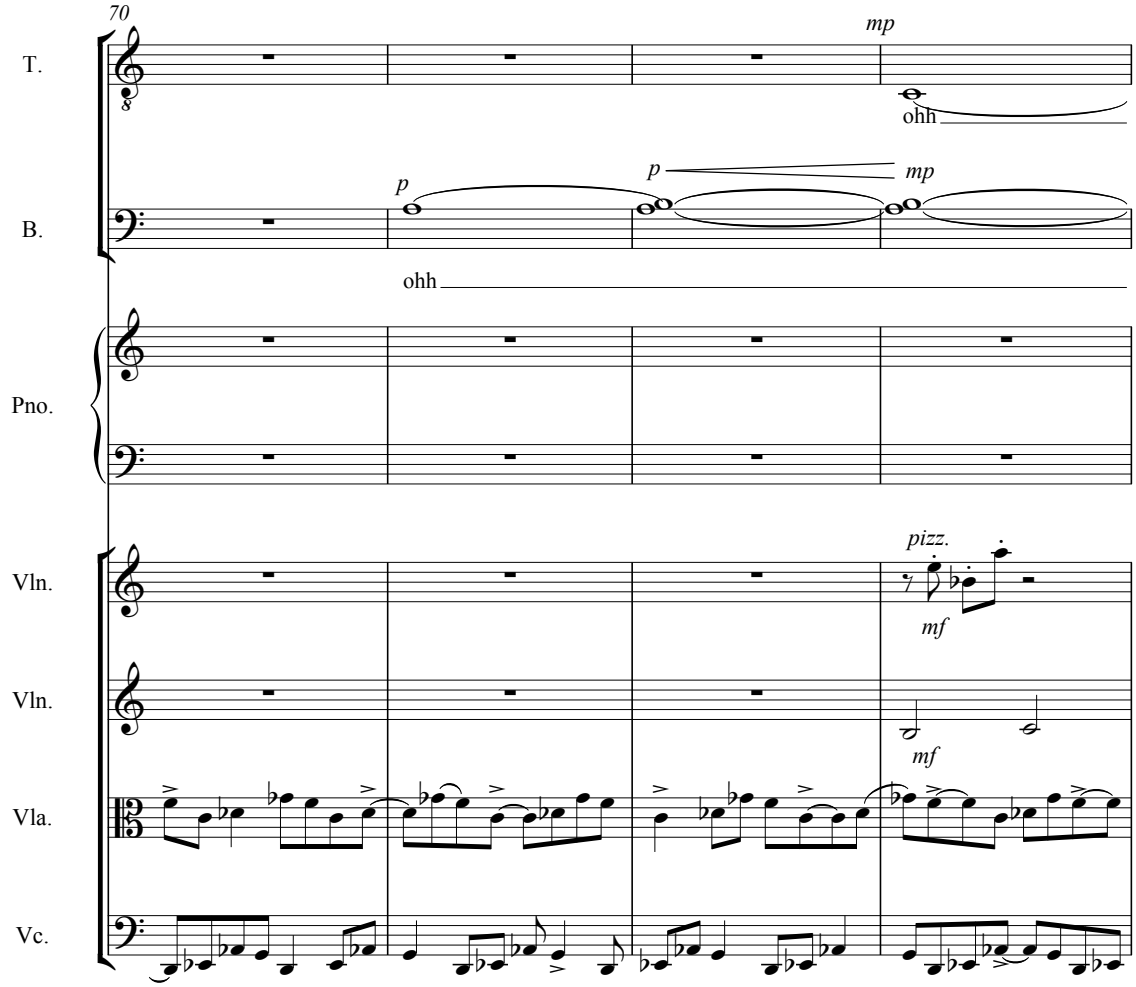

27
S.
A.
T.
Vln.
Vla.
Electronics
p
oo
n
f p

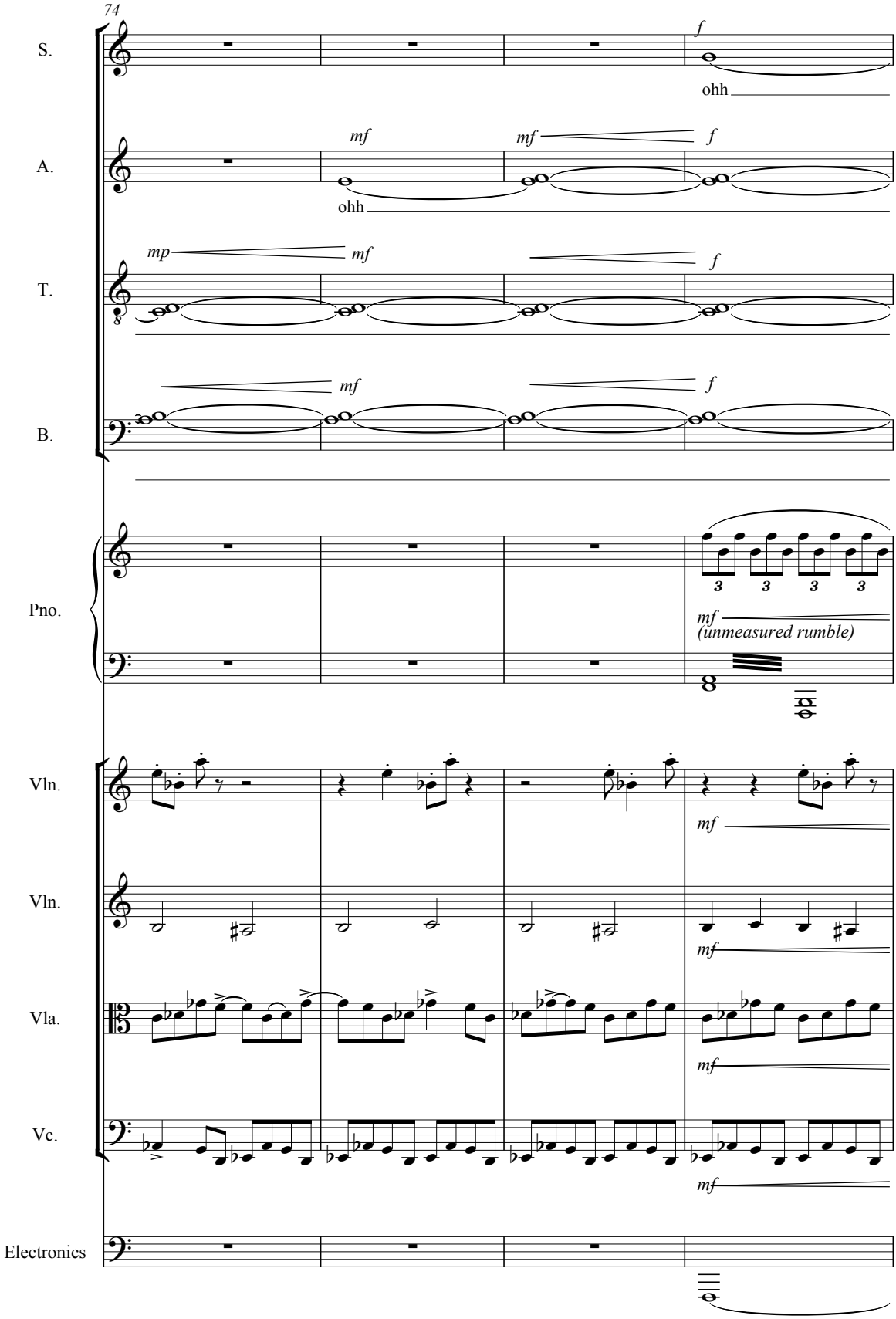

34
S.
A.
T.
Vln.
Vc.
Electronics
mp
oo
ohh..
f p
ff
n

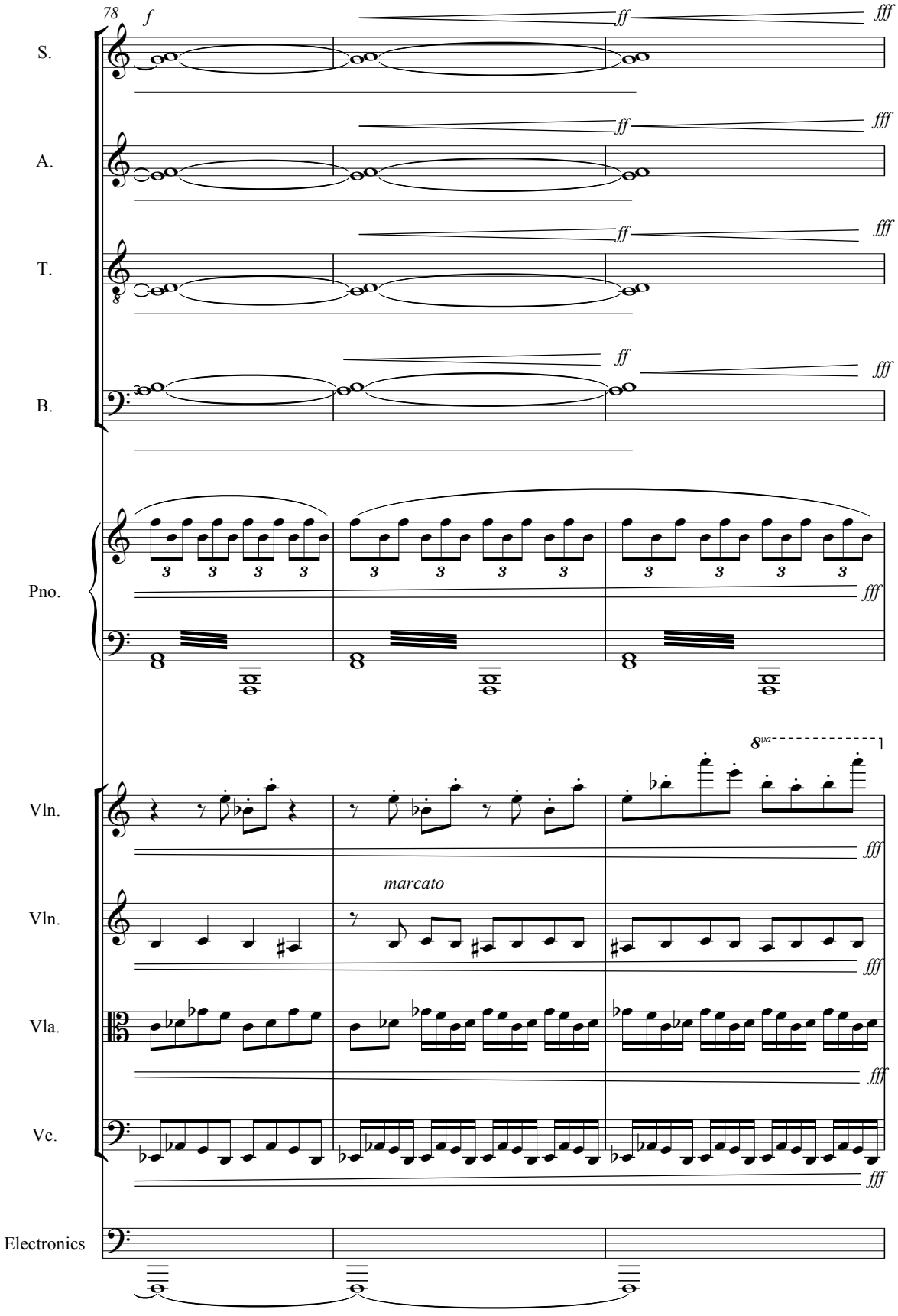

41
S.
A.
T.
B.
Vln.
Vc.
Electronics
p
oo
ohh
n
mf
mp

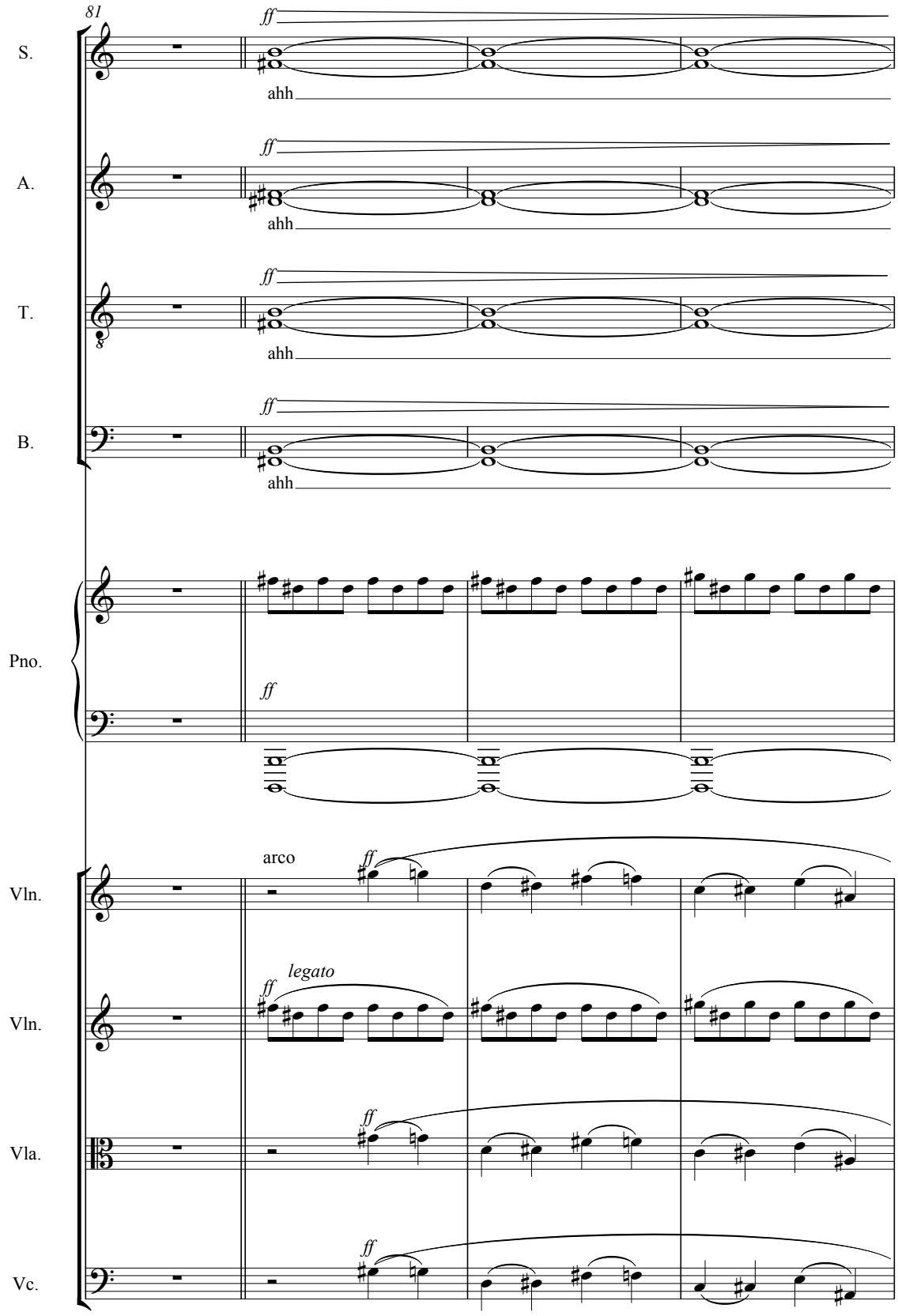

48
S.
ohh
ohh
A.
ohh
ohh
T.
ohh
ohh
B.
ohh
ohh
Vln.
Vc.
mf
f
mf
Electronics

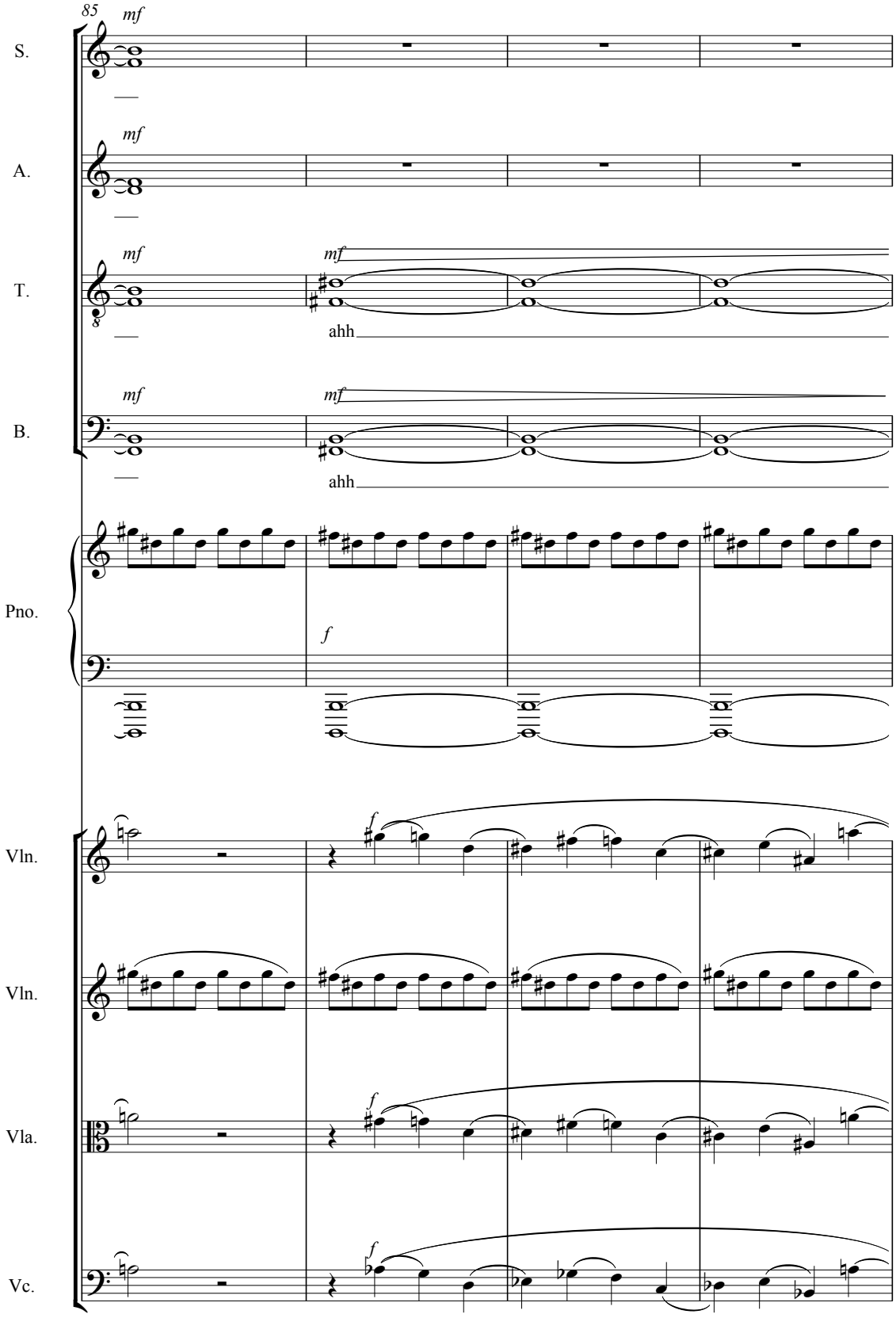

55
S.
A.
T.
B.
Vln.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Electronics
ahh
p
pp
poco accelerando
mf
mp
64
piu mosso
♩ = 70
agitato

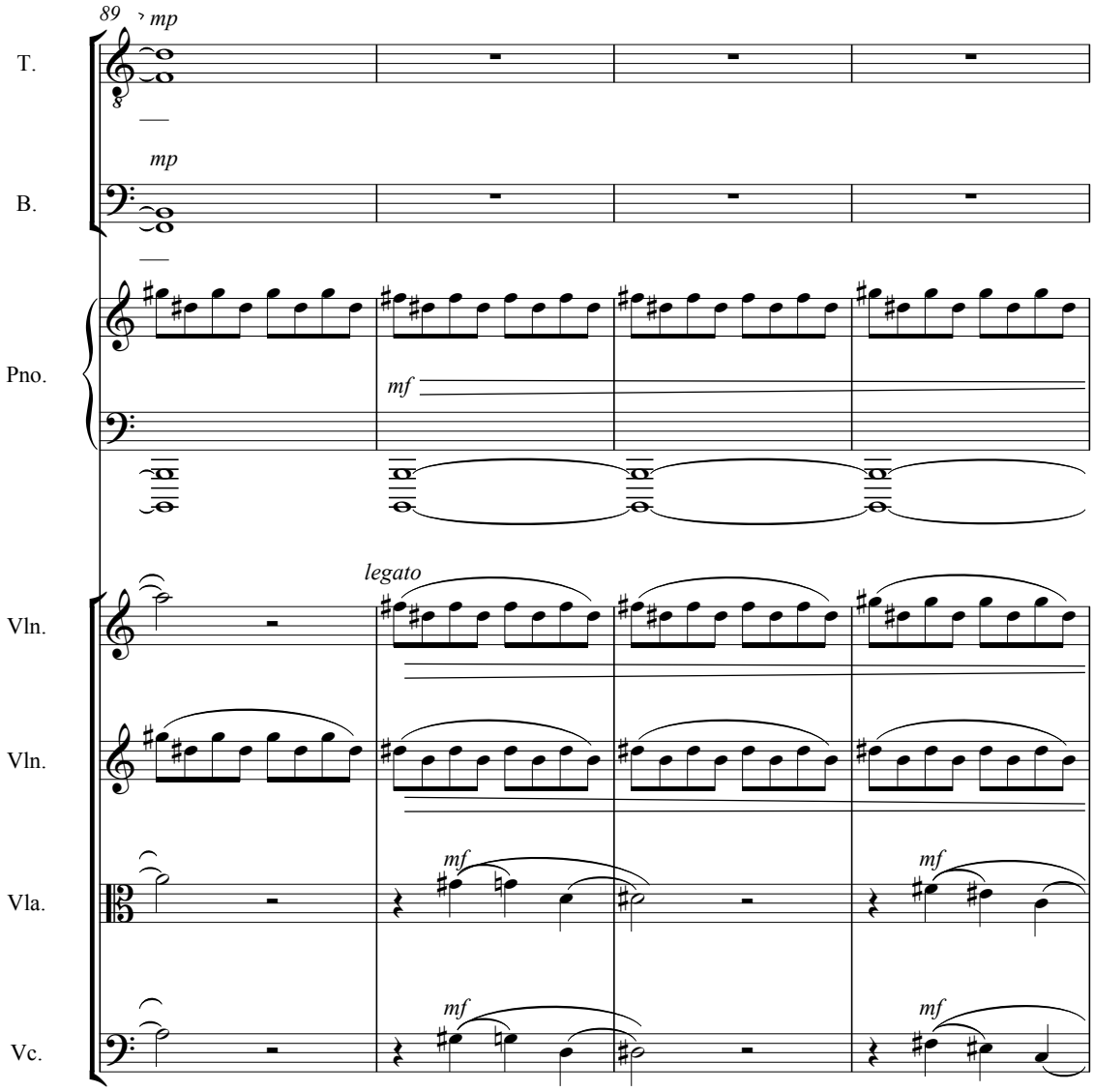

70
T.
B.
Pno.
Vln.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
mp
ohh
p
p
mp
ohh
pizz.
mf
mf

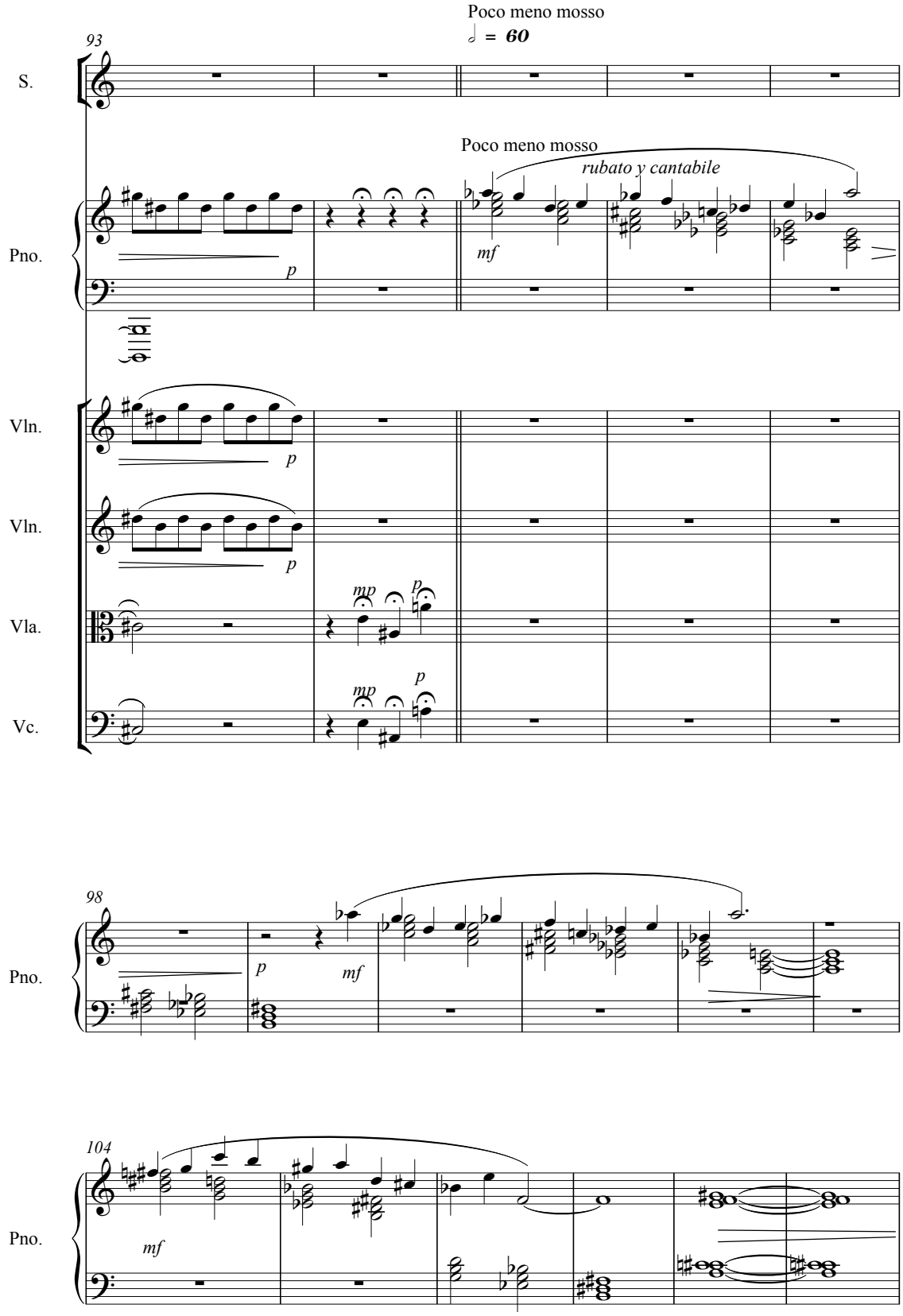

74
S.
A.
T.
B.
Pno.
Vln.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Electronics
f
ohh
mf
mf
f
ohh
mp
mf
f
mf
f
3 3 3 3
mf
(unmeasured rumble)
mf
mf
mf
mf

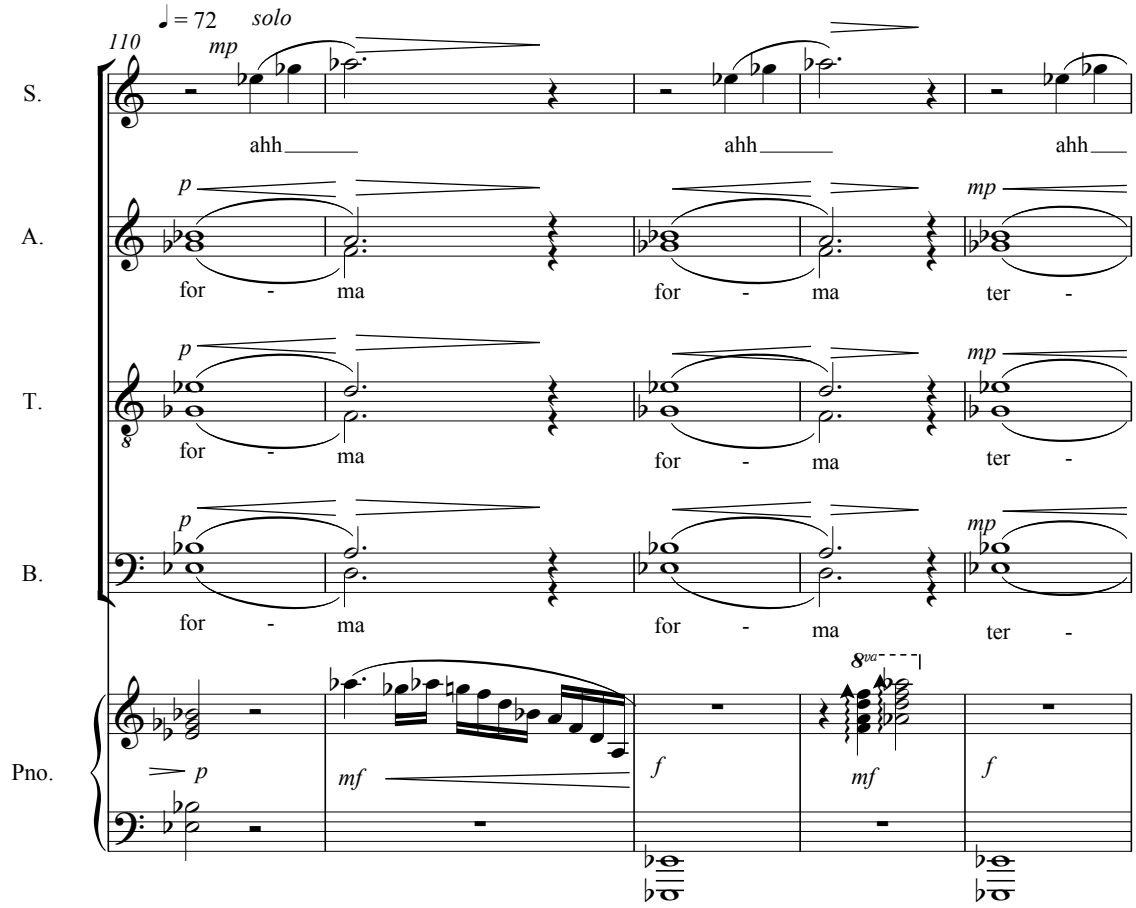

78
f
ff
fff
S.
A.
T.
B.
Pno.
Vln.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Electronics
8va
marcato

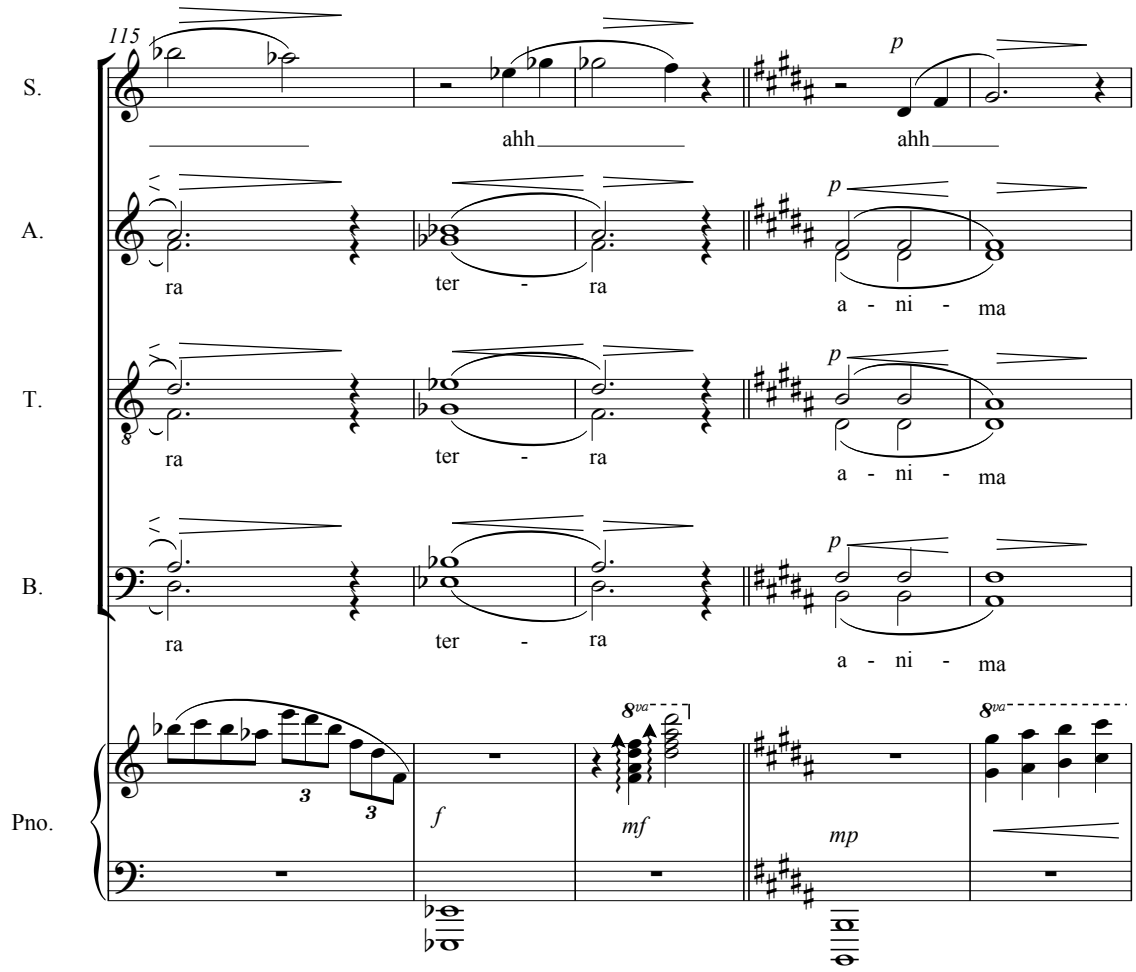

81
S.
A.
T.
B.
Pno.
Vln.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
ff
ahh
arco
legato

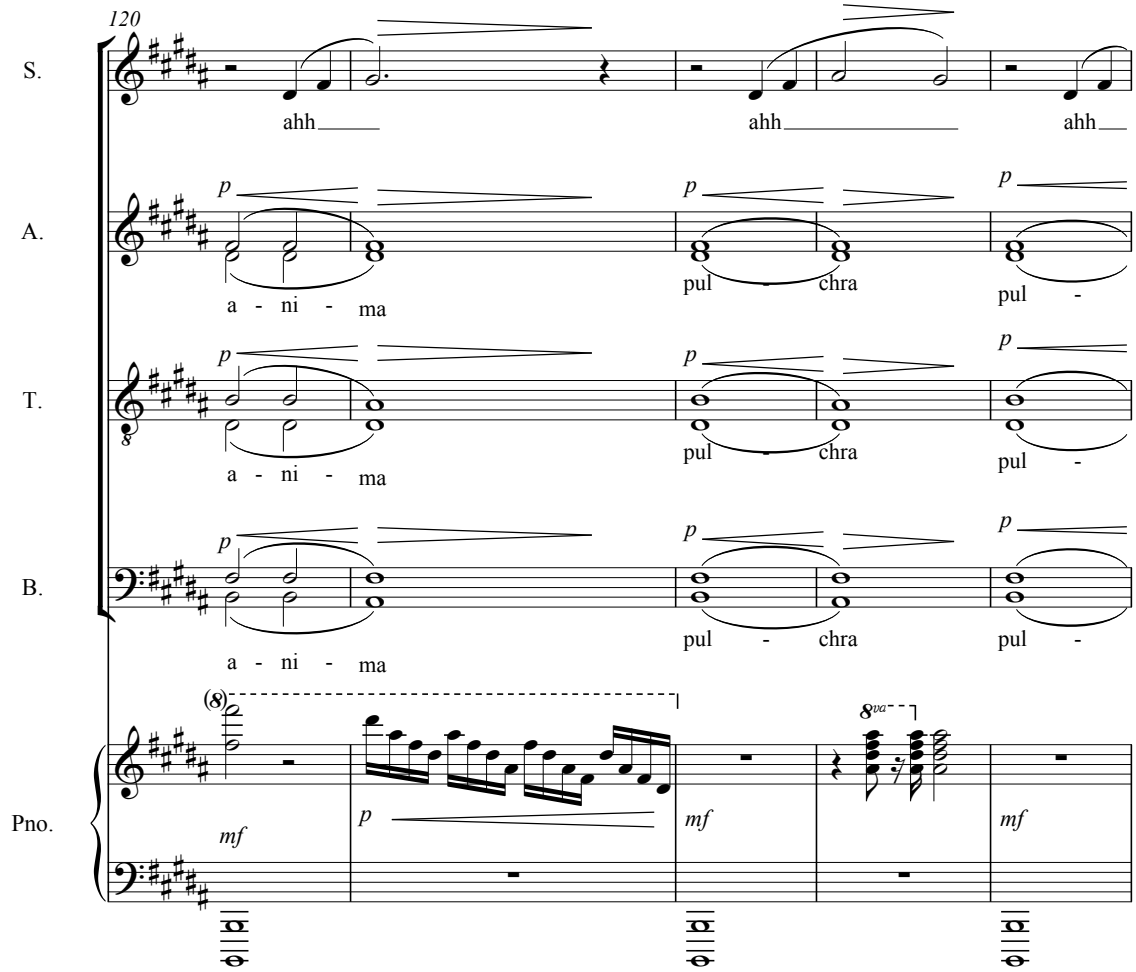

85
S.
A.
T.
B.
Pno.
Vln.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
mf
f
ahh

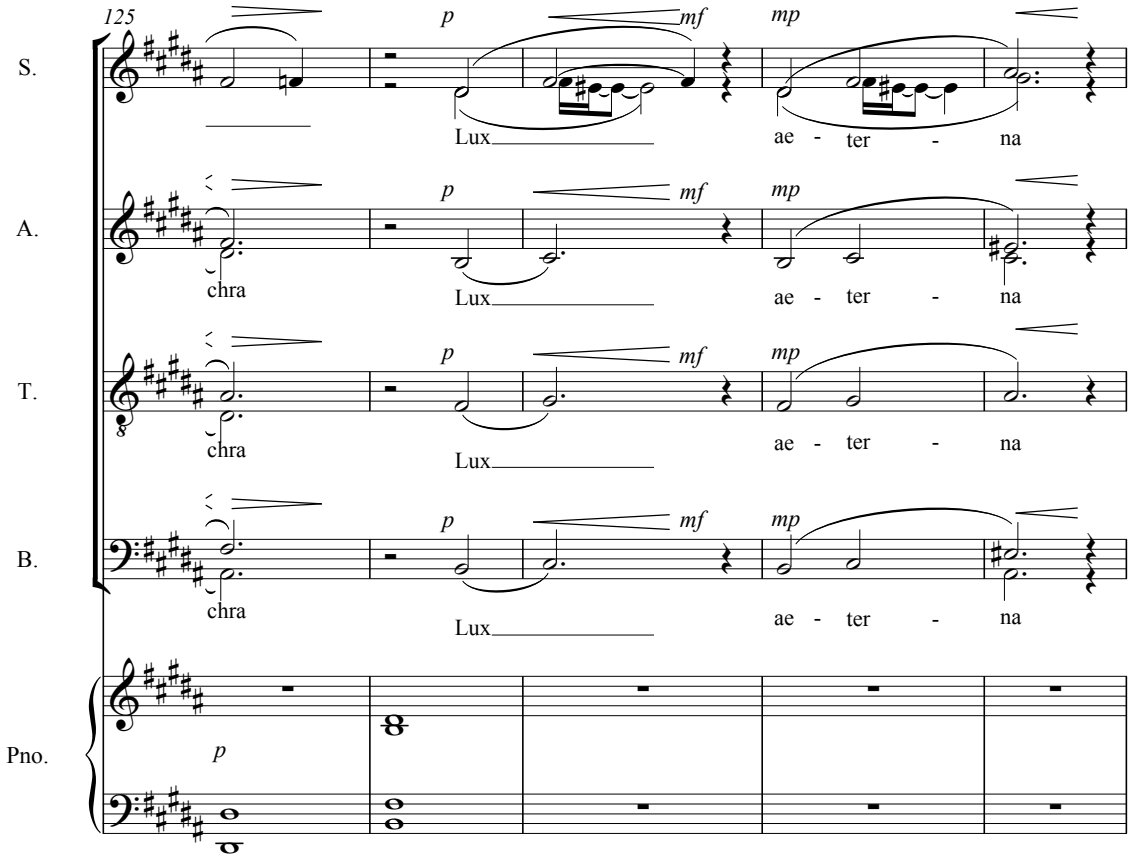

89
mp
T.
mp
B.
Pno.
mf
legato
Vln.
Vln.
mf
mf
Vla.
mf
mf
Vc.

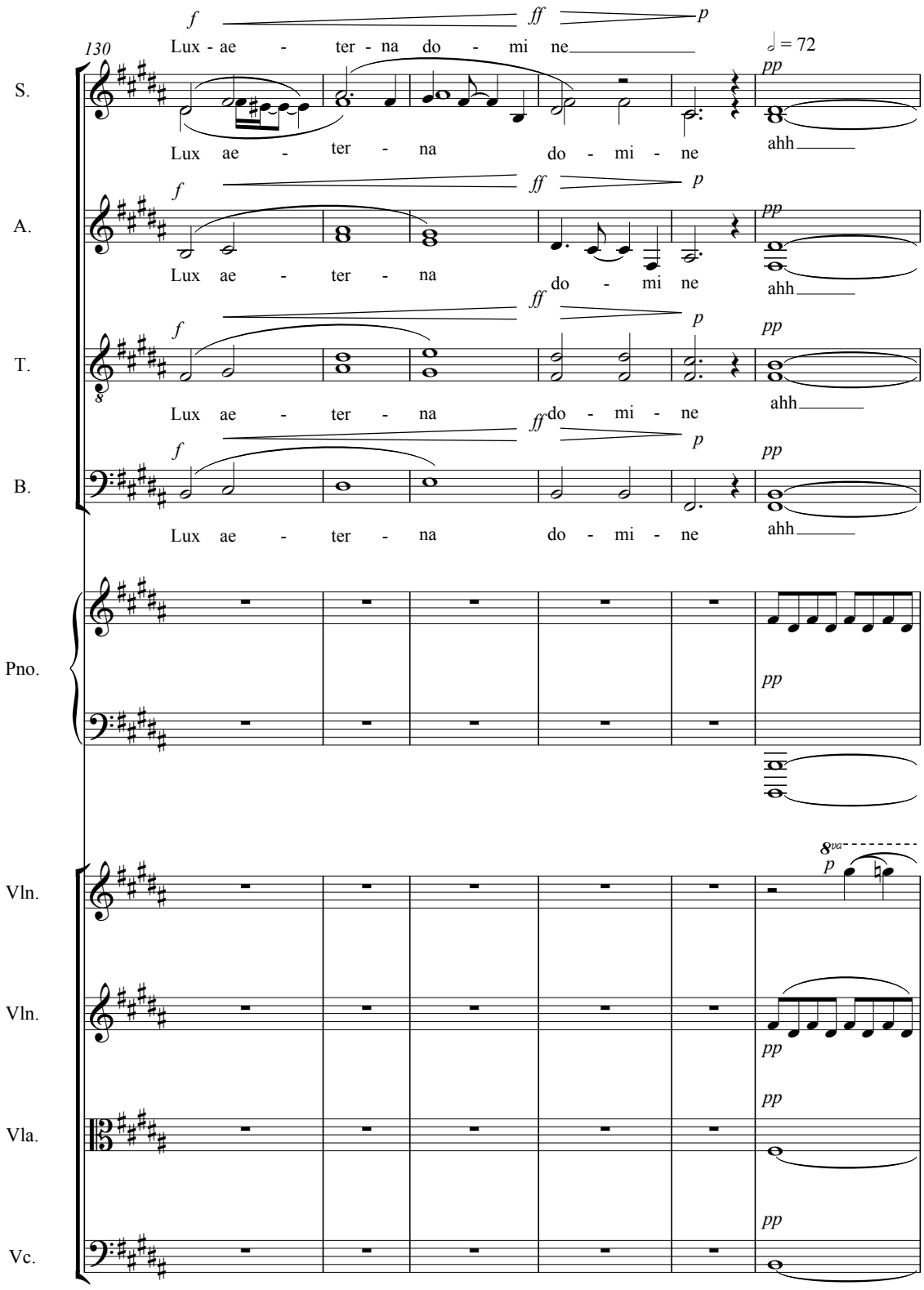

Poco meno mosso
♩ = 60
93
S.
Poco meno mosso
rubato y cantabile
Pno.
p
mf
Vln.
p
Vln.
p
Vla.
mp
p
Vc.
mp
p
98
Pno.
p
mf
104
Pno.
mf

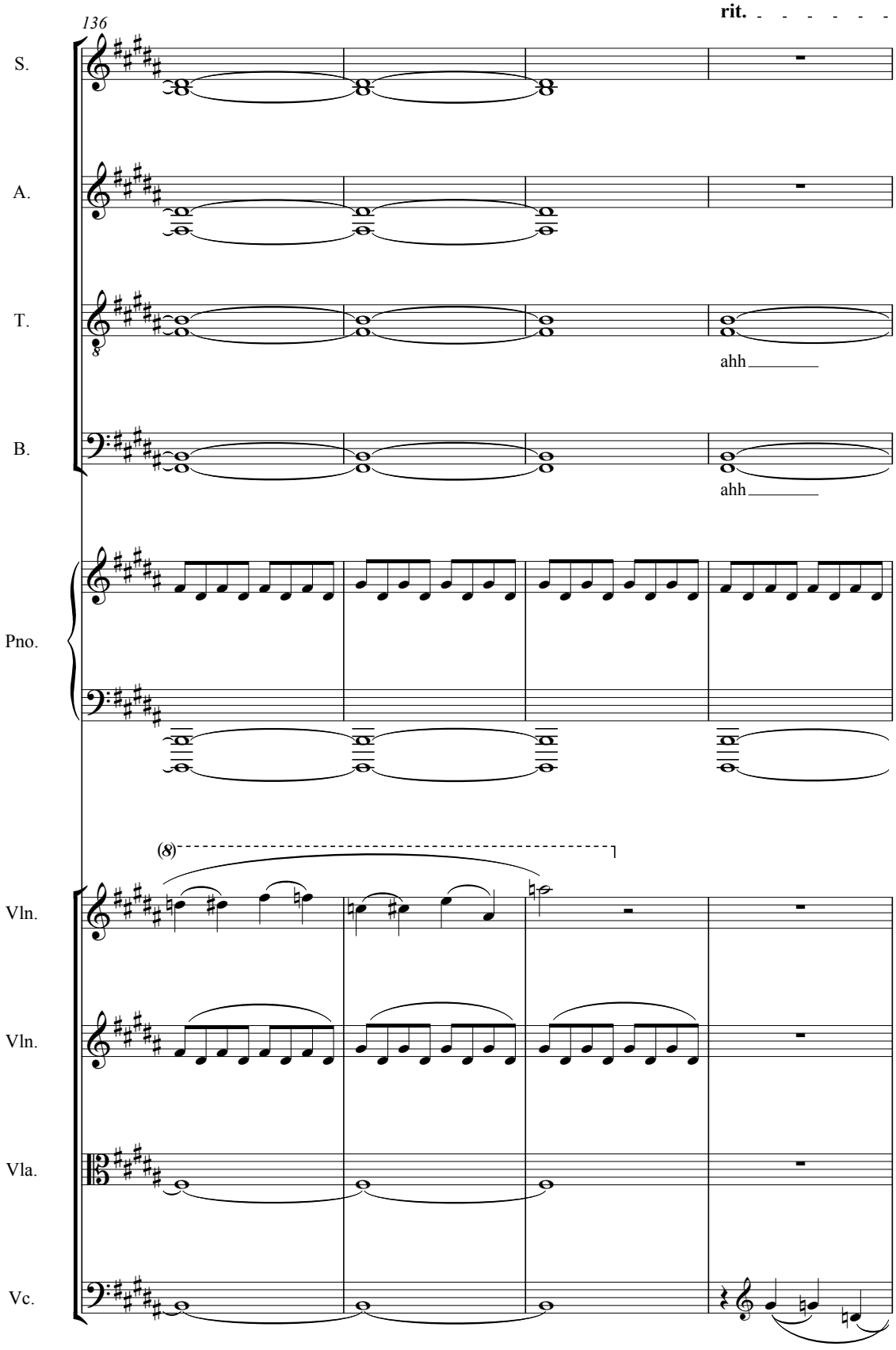

110
♩ = 72
solo
mp
S.
ahh
ahh
ahh
p
mp
A.
for - ma
for - ma
ter -
p
mp
T.
for - ma
for - ma
ter -
p
mp
B.
for - ma
for - ma
ter -
8va
Pno.
p
mf
f
mf
f

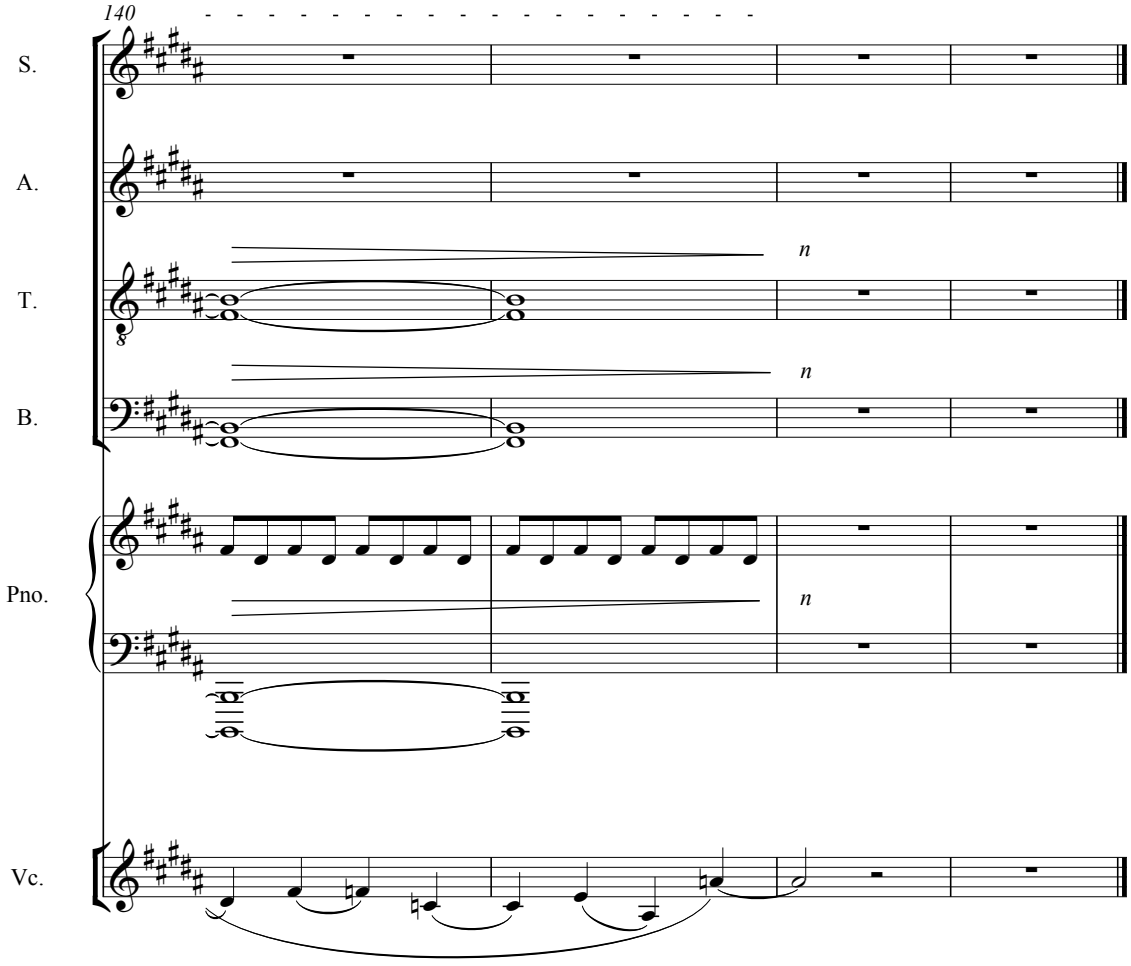

115
S.
A.
T.
B.
Pno.
ahh
ahh
ra
ter - ra
a - ni - ma
p
f
mf
mp
8va


120
S.
ahh
ahh
ahh
A.
p
a - ni - ma
pul - chra
pul -
T.
a - ni - ma
pul - chra
pul -
B.
a - ni - ma
pul - chra
pul -
Pno.
(8)
mf
p
mf
8va
mf


125
S.
A.
T.
B.
Pno.
p
mf
mp
Lux
ae - ter - na
chra


130
S.
A.
T.
B.
Pno.
Vln.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Lux - ae - ter - na do - mi ne
Lux ae - ter - na do - mi - ne
Lux ae - ter - na do - mi ne
Lux ae - ter - na do - mi - ne
Lux ae - ter - na do - mi - ne
ahh
= 72
8va


136
rit.
S.
A.
T.
ahh
B.
ahh
Pno.
(8)
Vln.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.

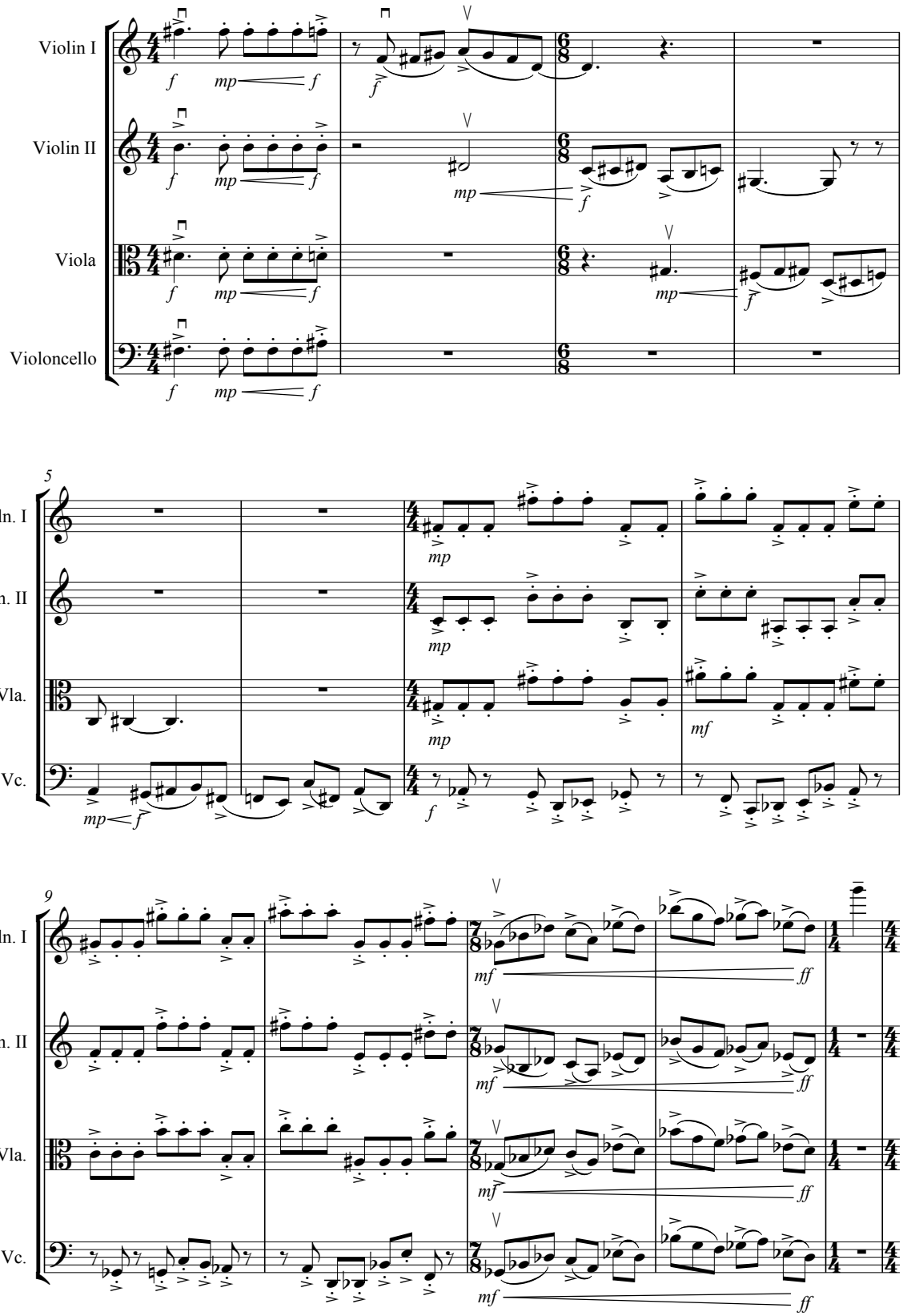

140
S.
A.
T.
B.
Pno.
Vc.
n
n
n

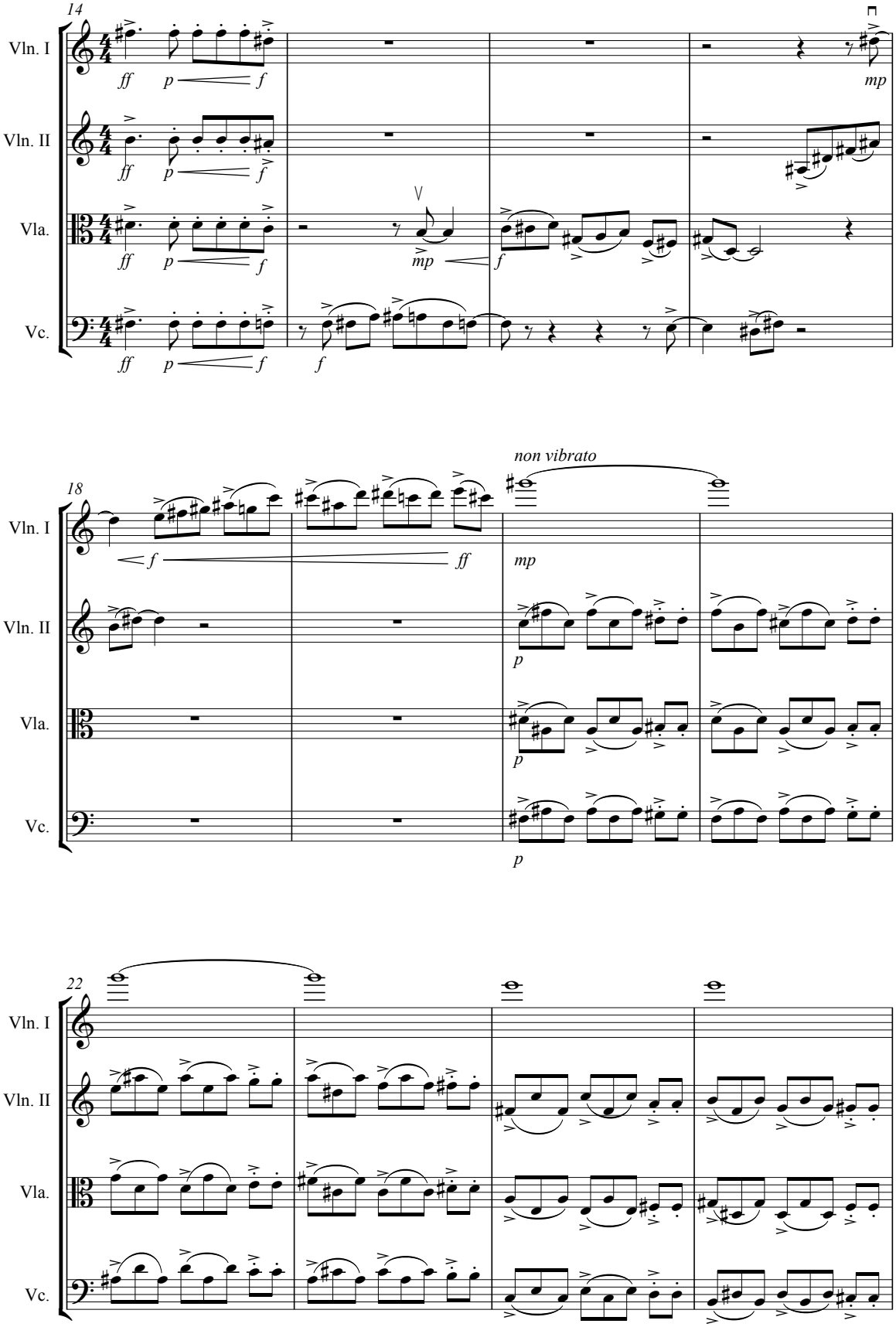
II. Descensus

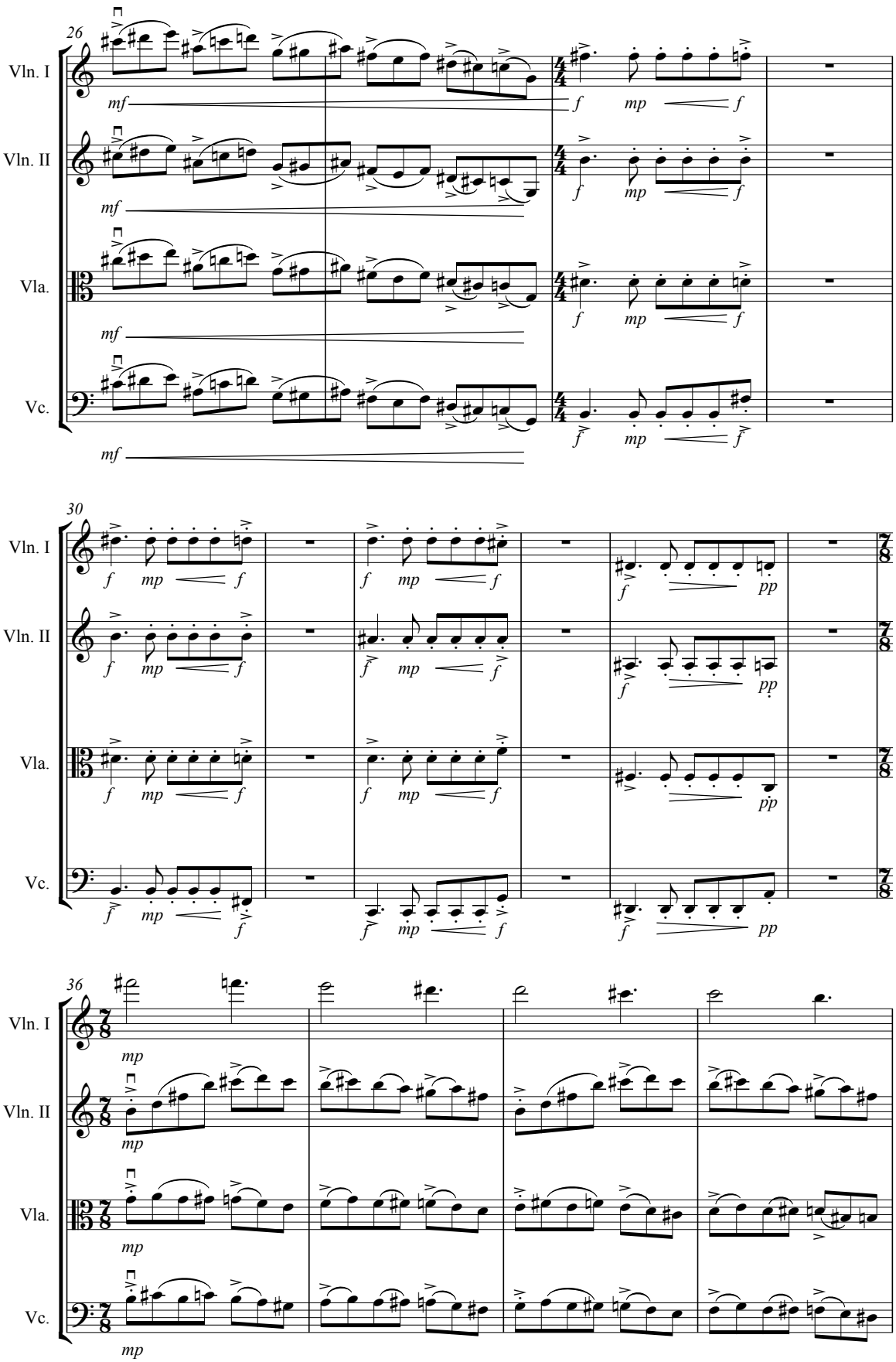
brilliante y spiritoso

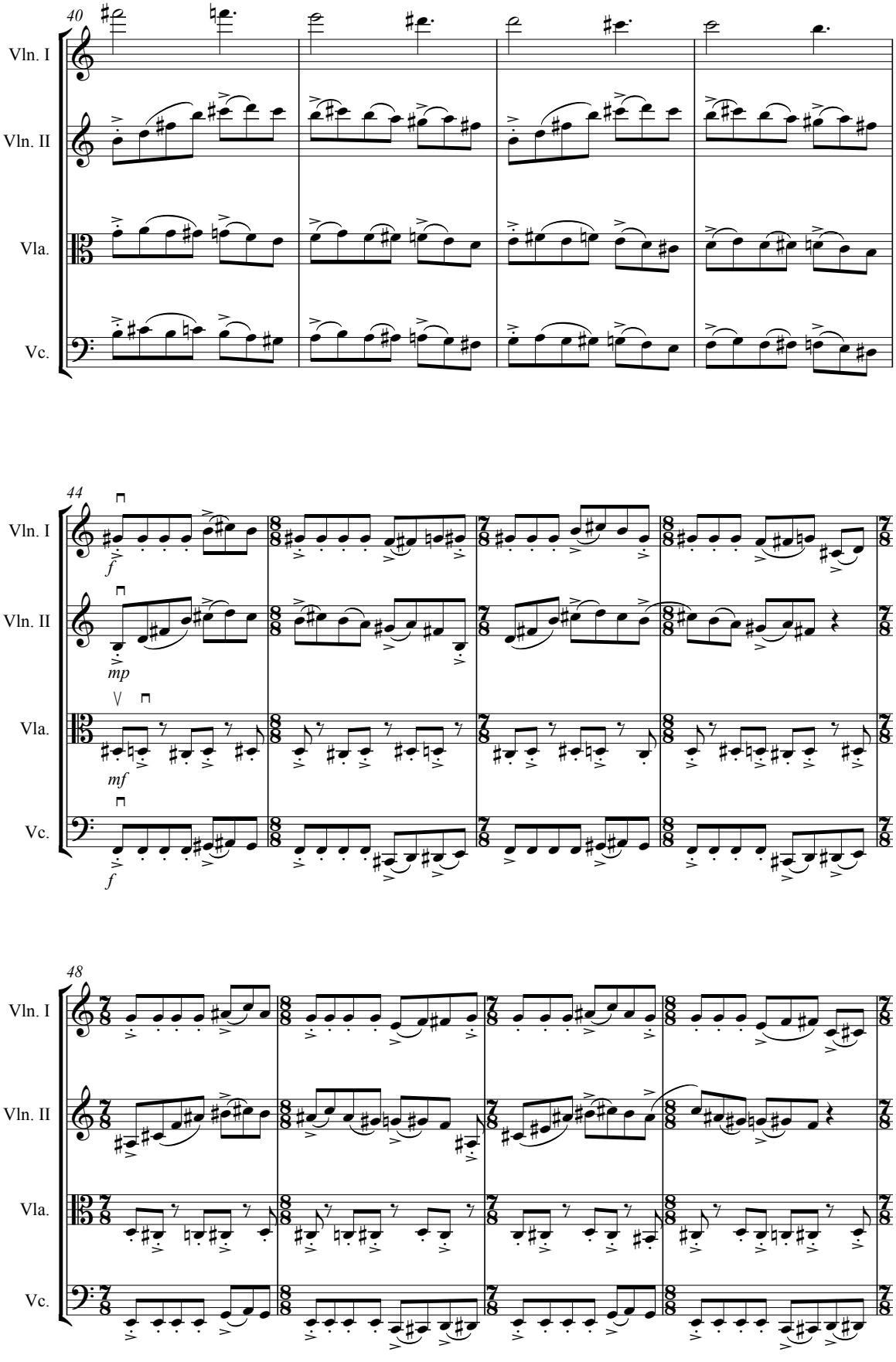
♩ = 164

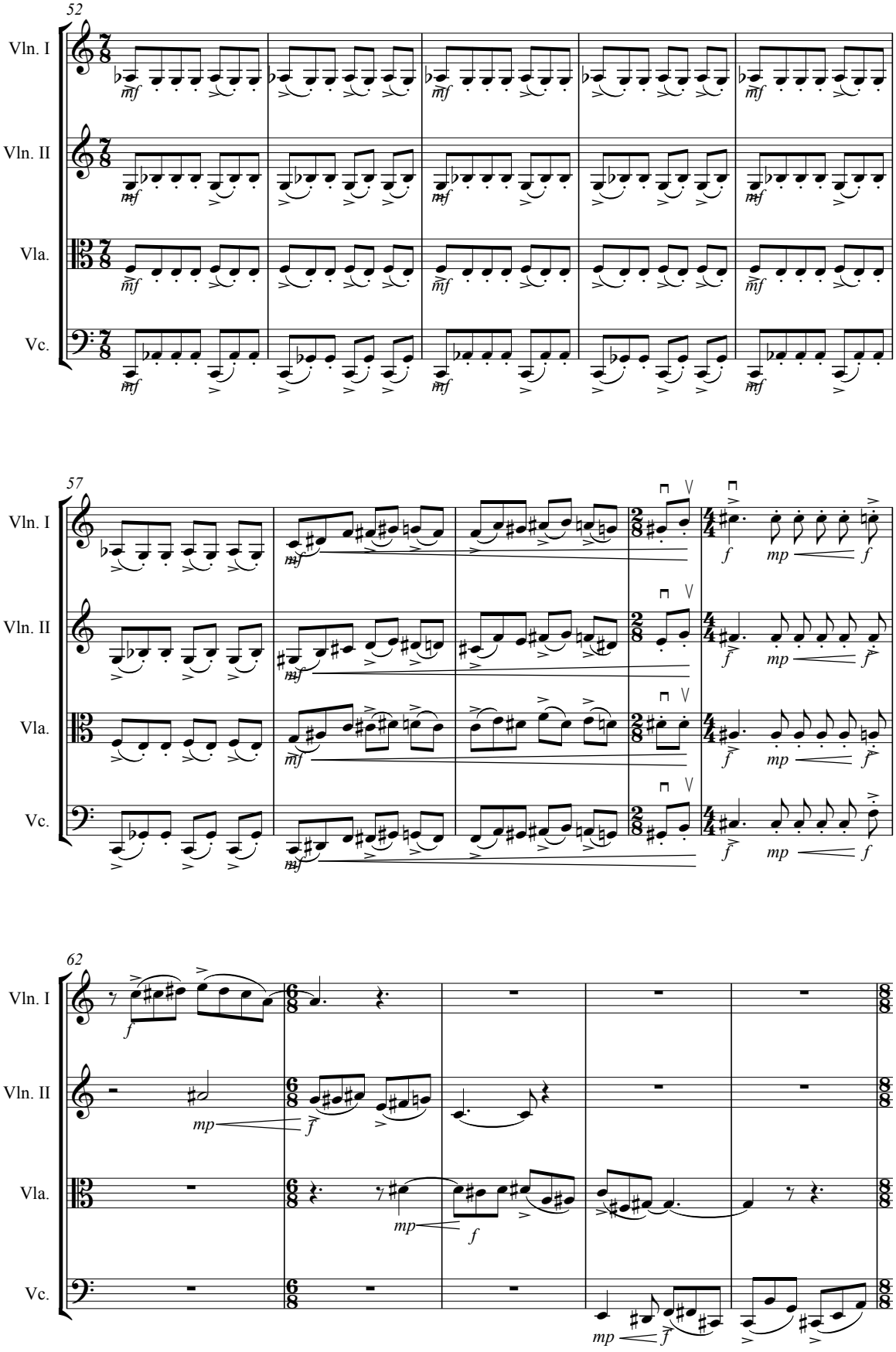
Benjamin Potts

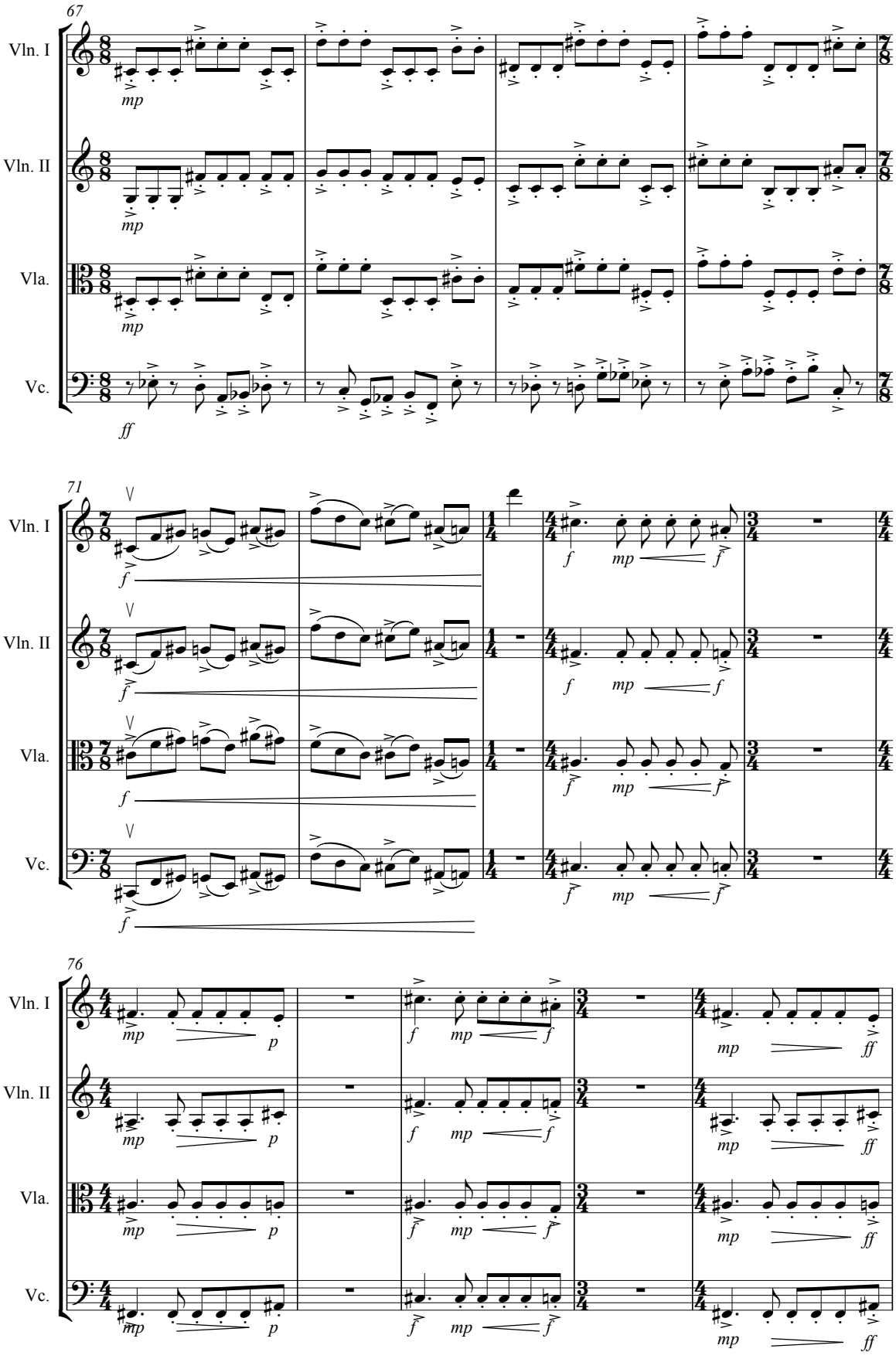


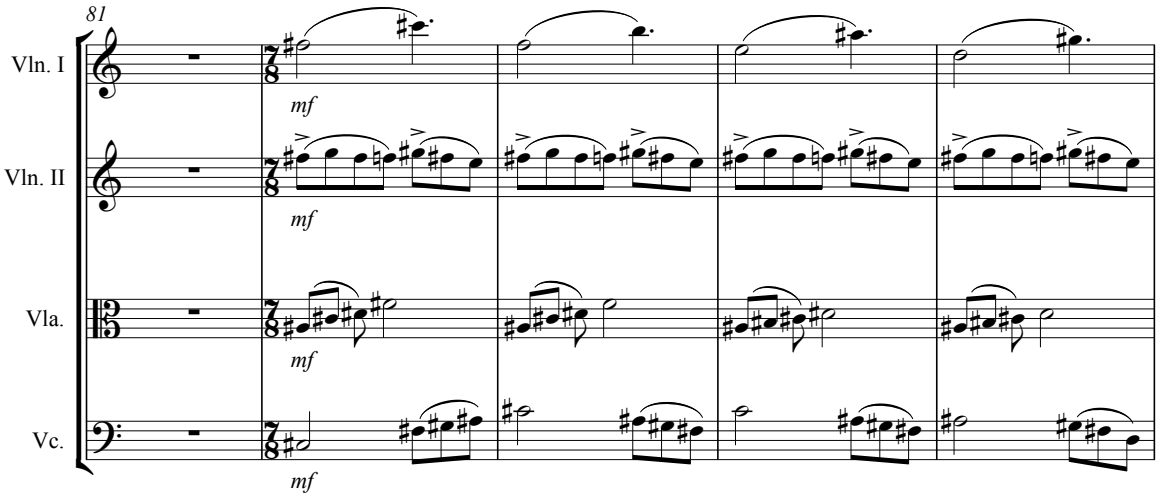

14
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ff
p
f
mp
18
non vibrato
22

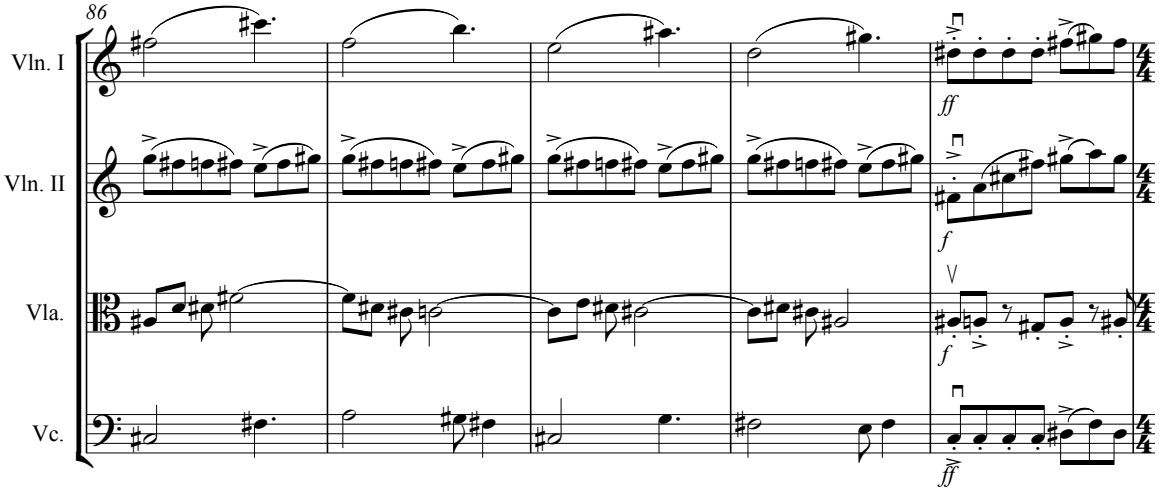

26
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
f
mp
30
pp
36

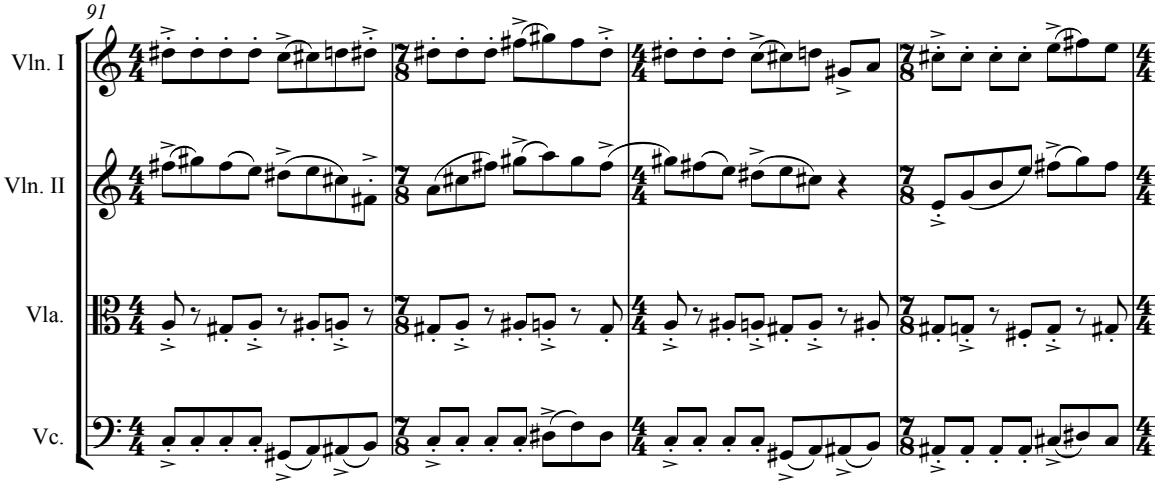

40
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
44
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
f
mp
mf
f
48
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

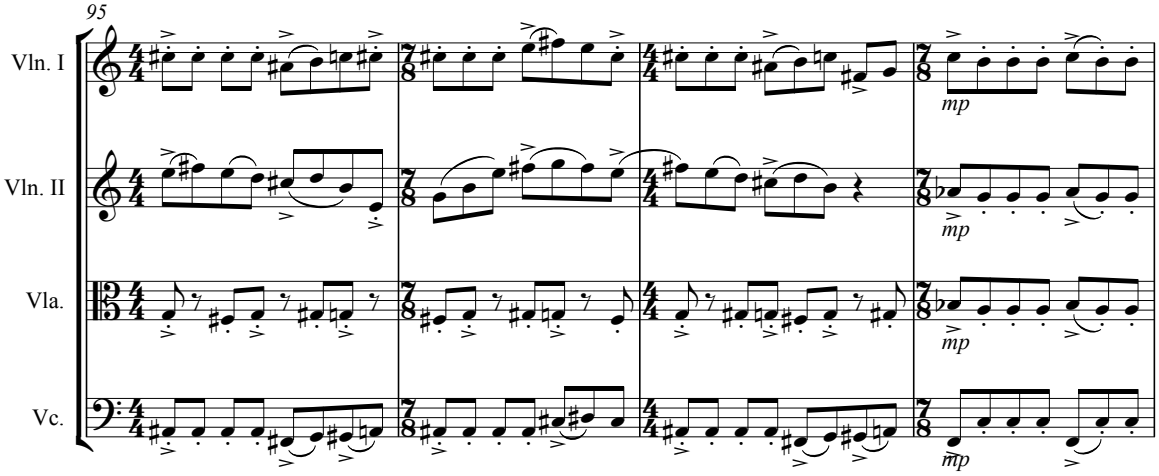

52
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
57
f
mp
62

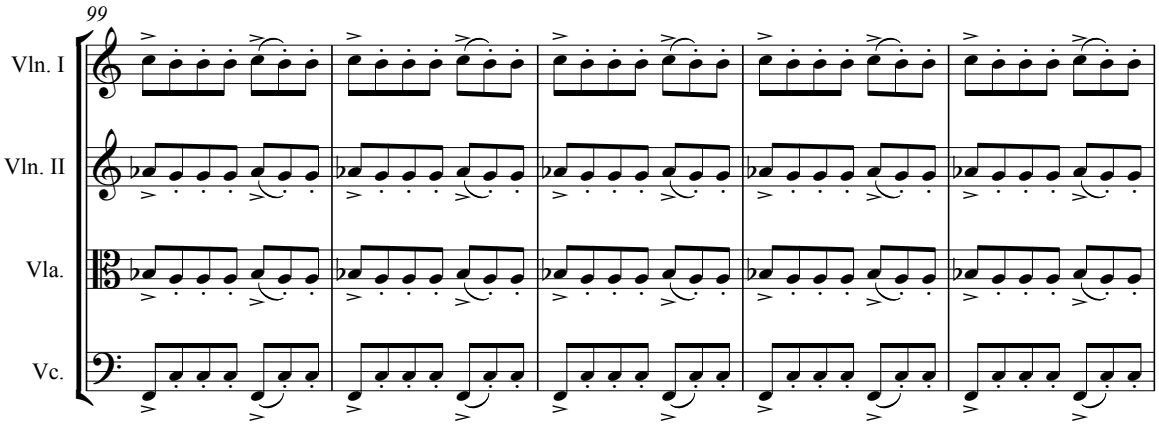

67
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
ff
71
f
mp
76
p
ff

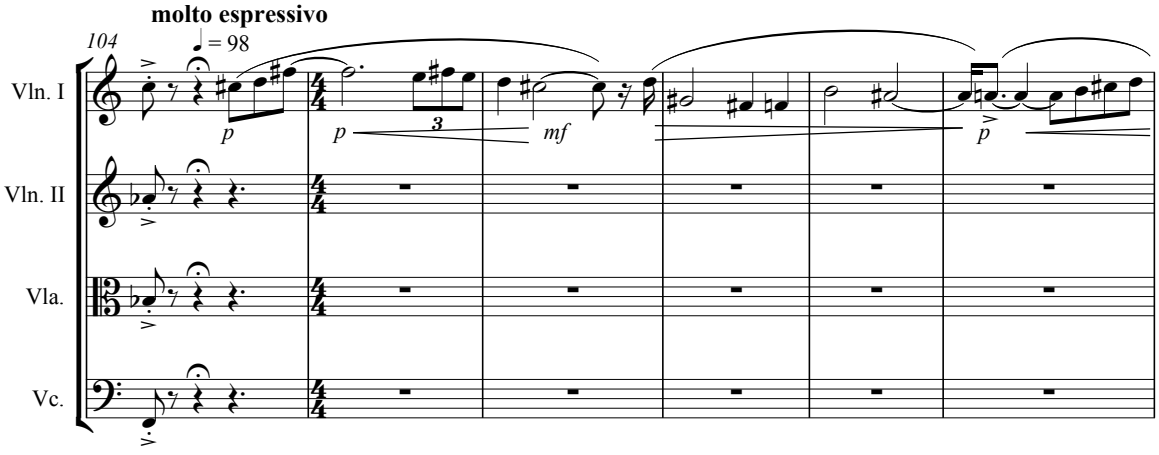

81
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf

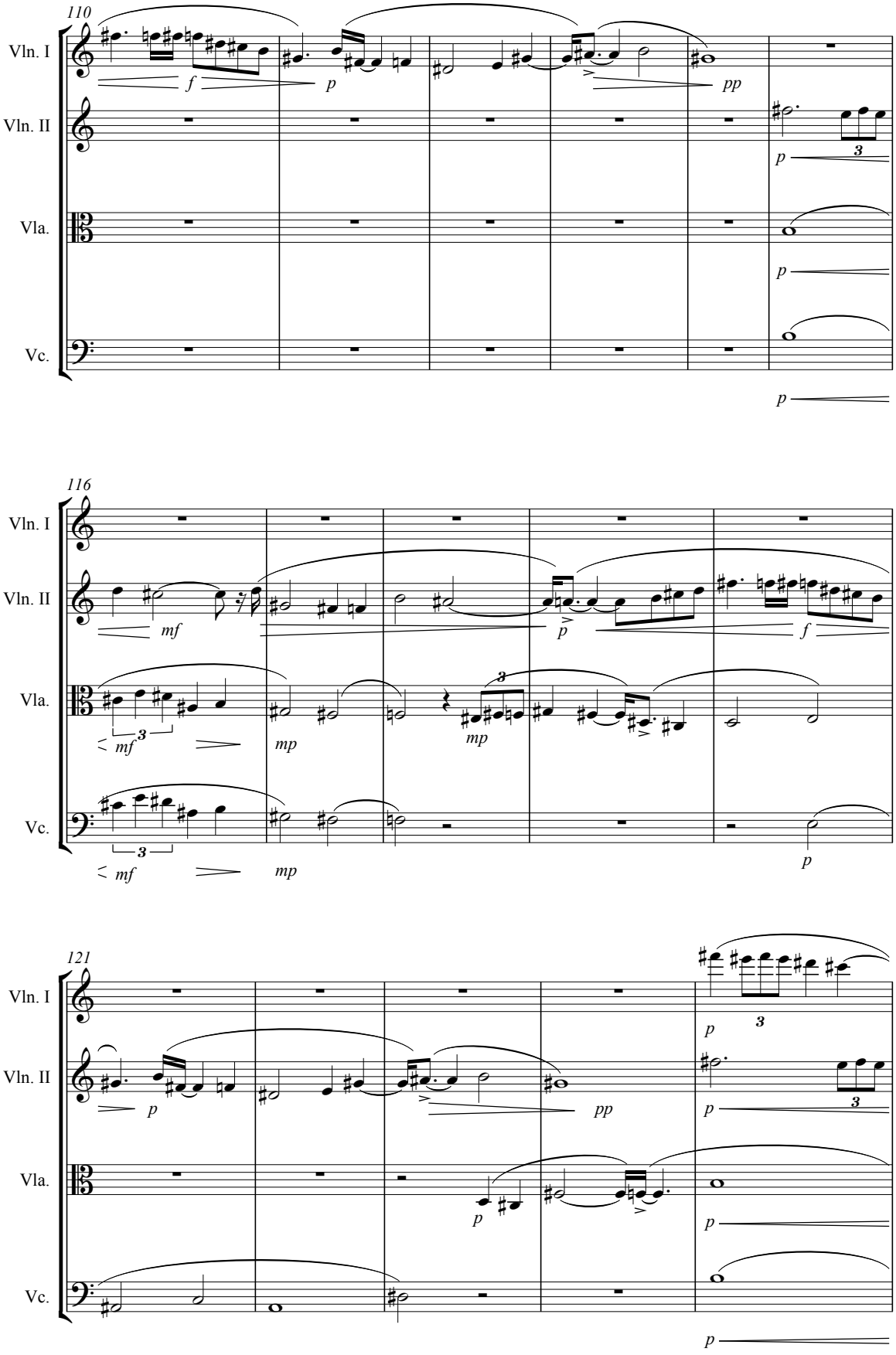

86
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ff
f

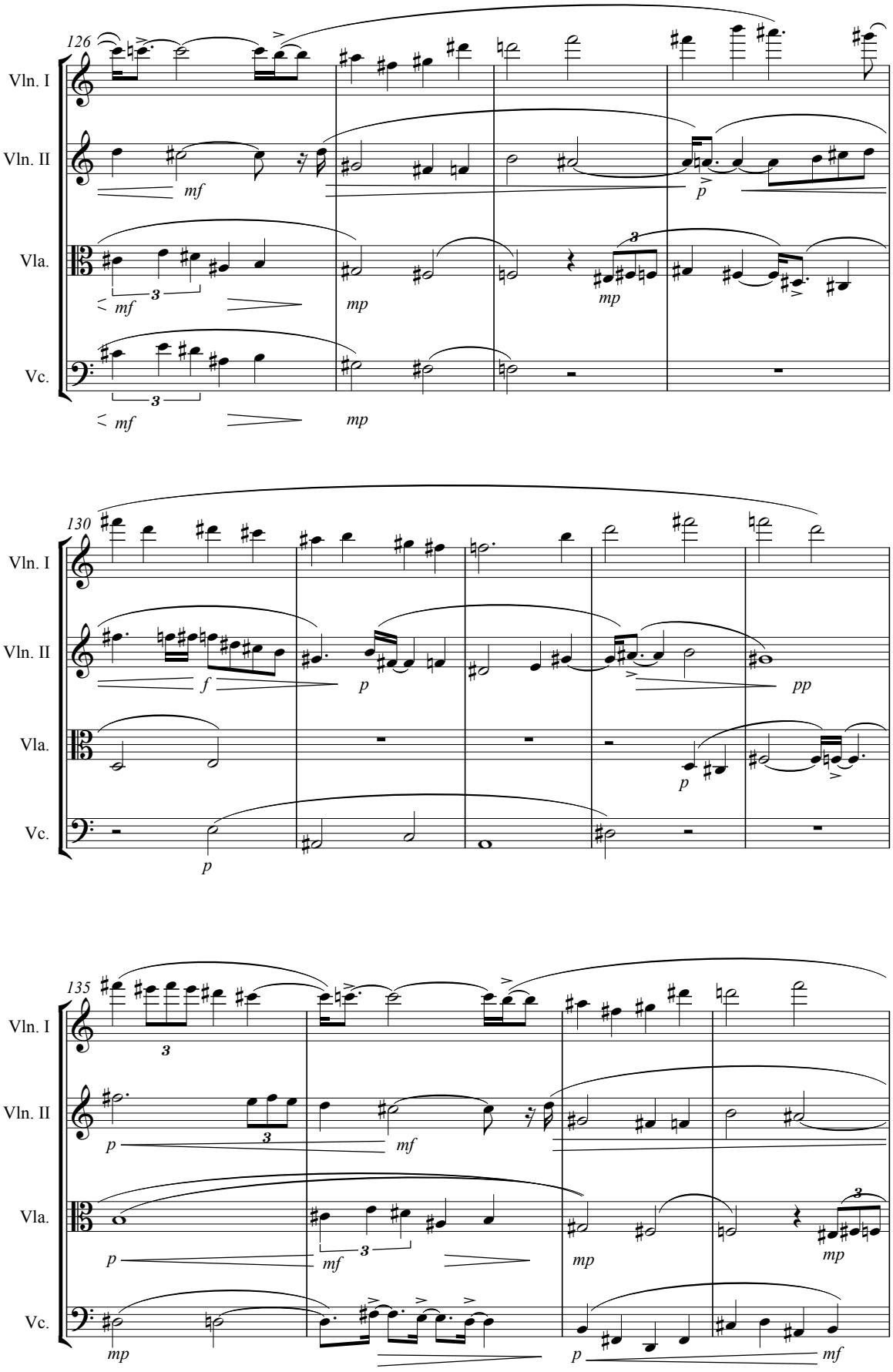

91
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

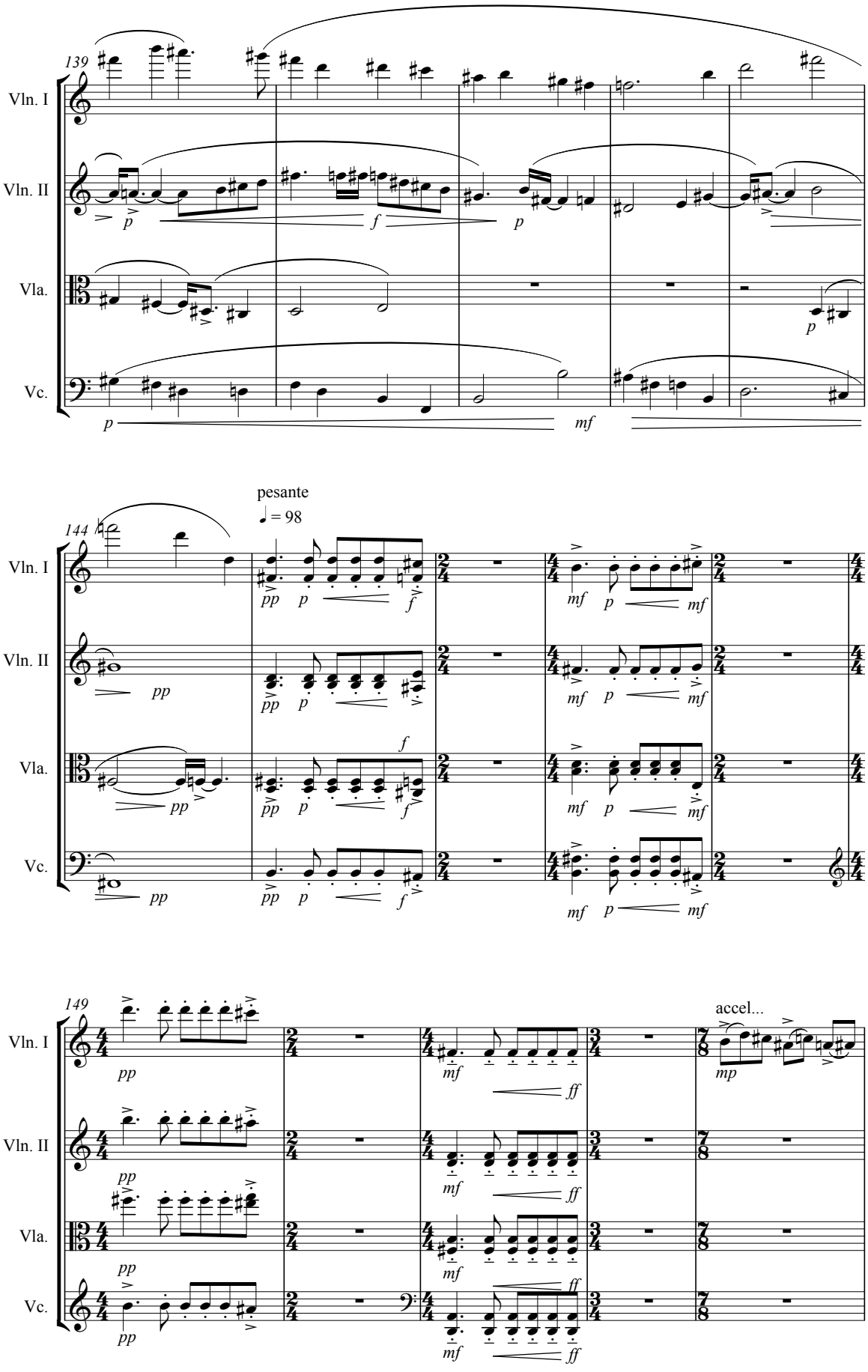

95
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
mp
mp
mp

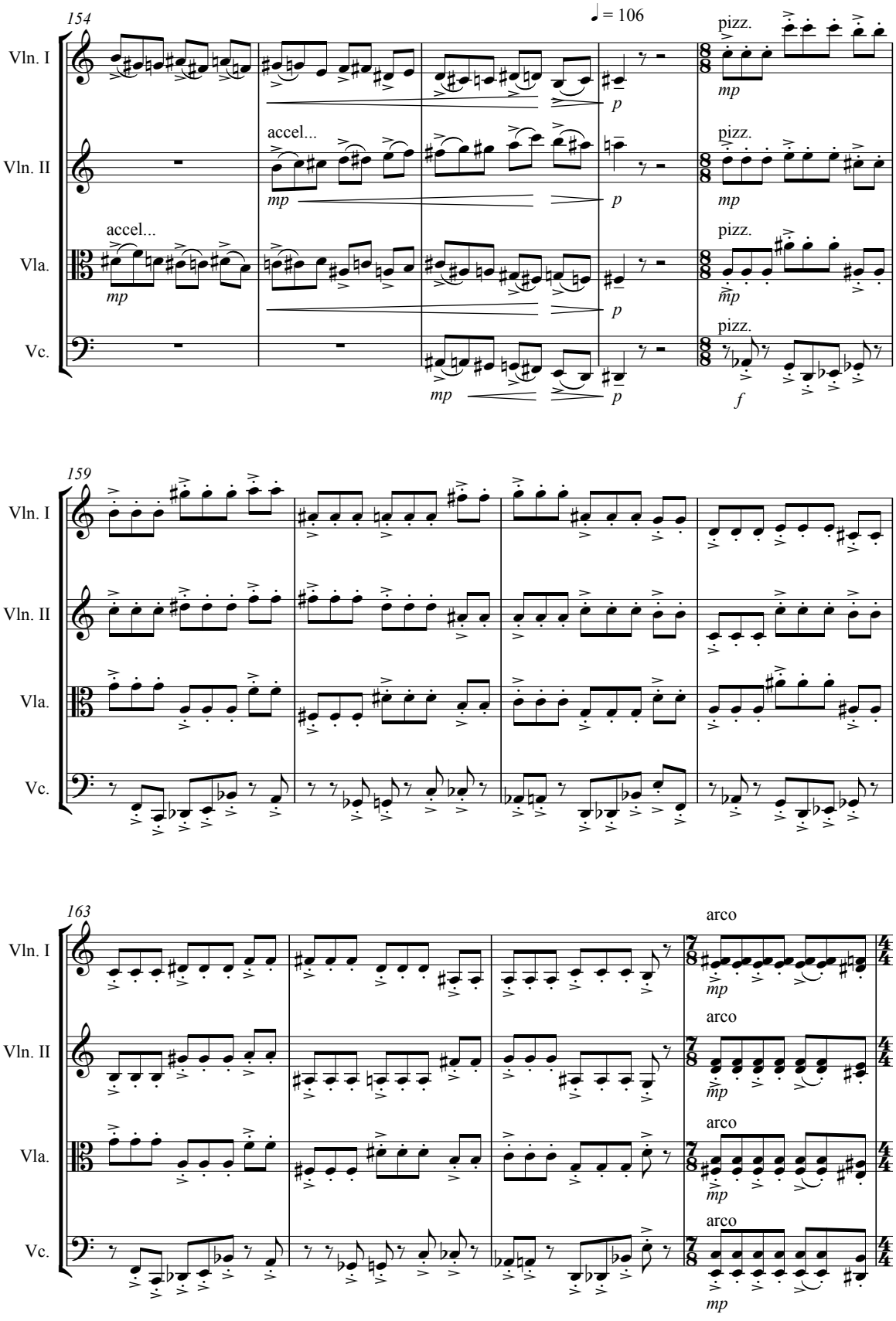

99
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

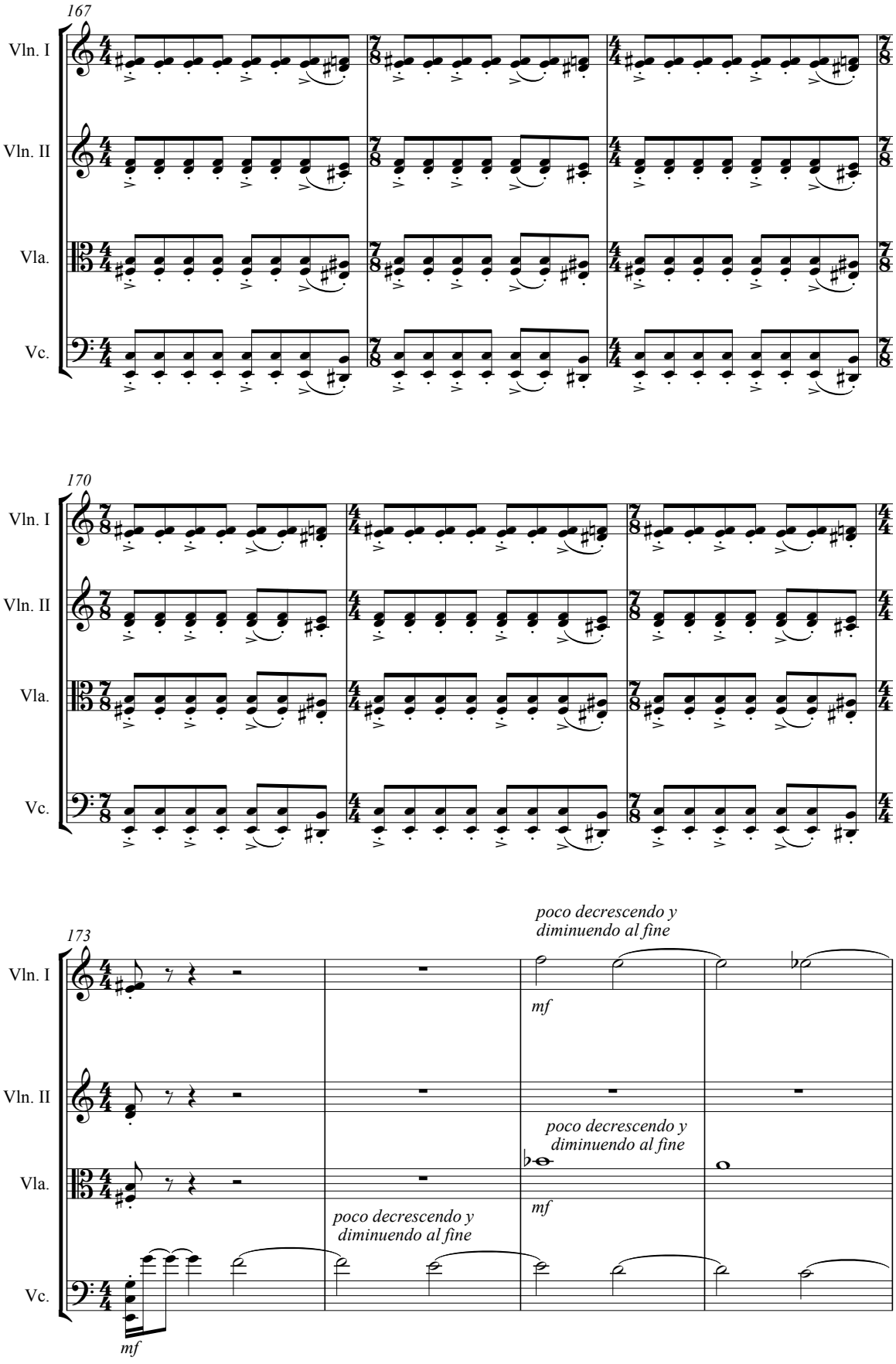

molto espressivo
104
♩ = 98
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
p
3
mf
p

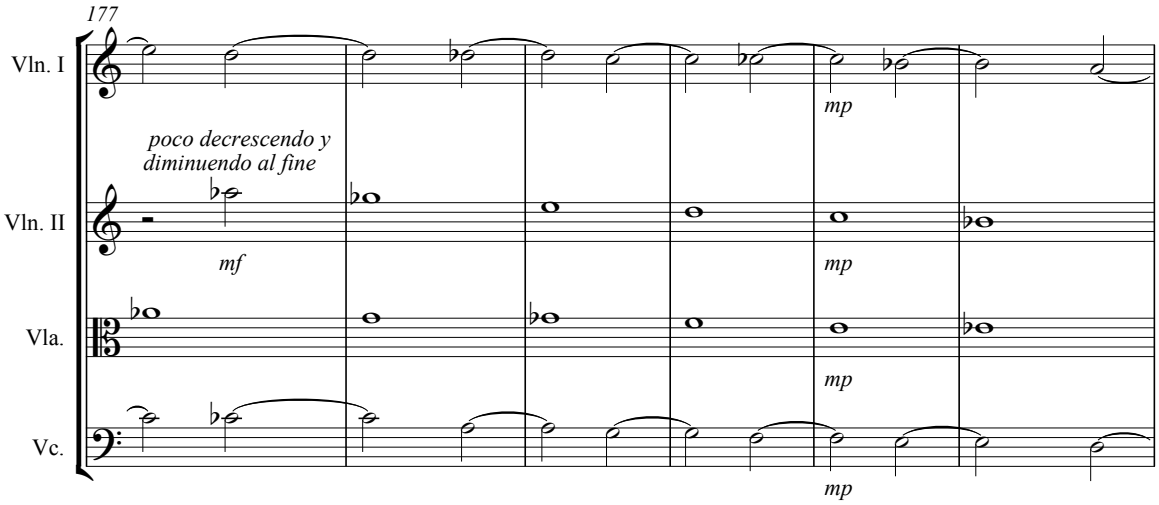

110
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
f
p
pp
p
p
p
116
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
p
f
mf
mp
mp
mf
mp
p
121
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
p
pp
p
p
p
p

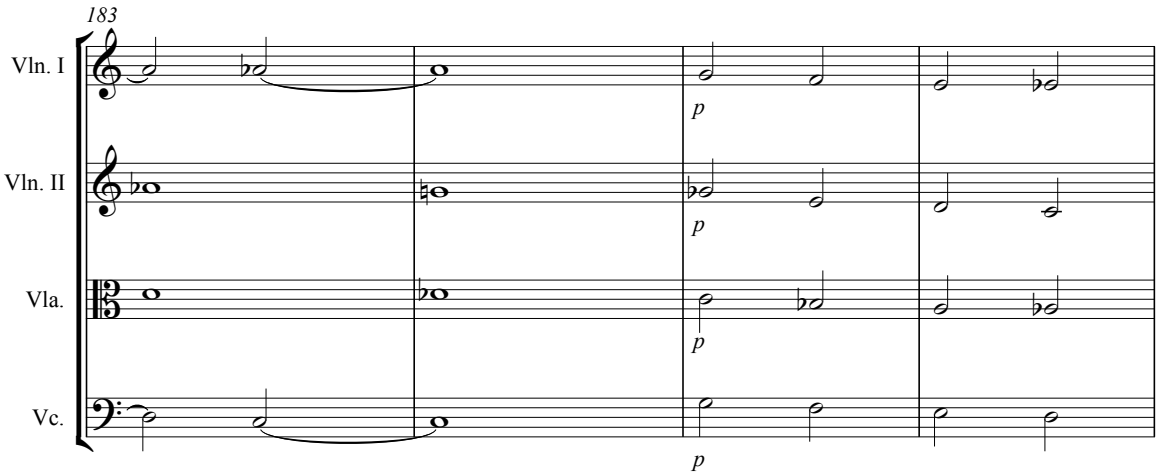

126
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
mp
p
130
f
pp
135

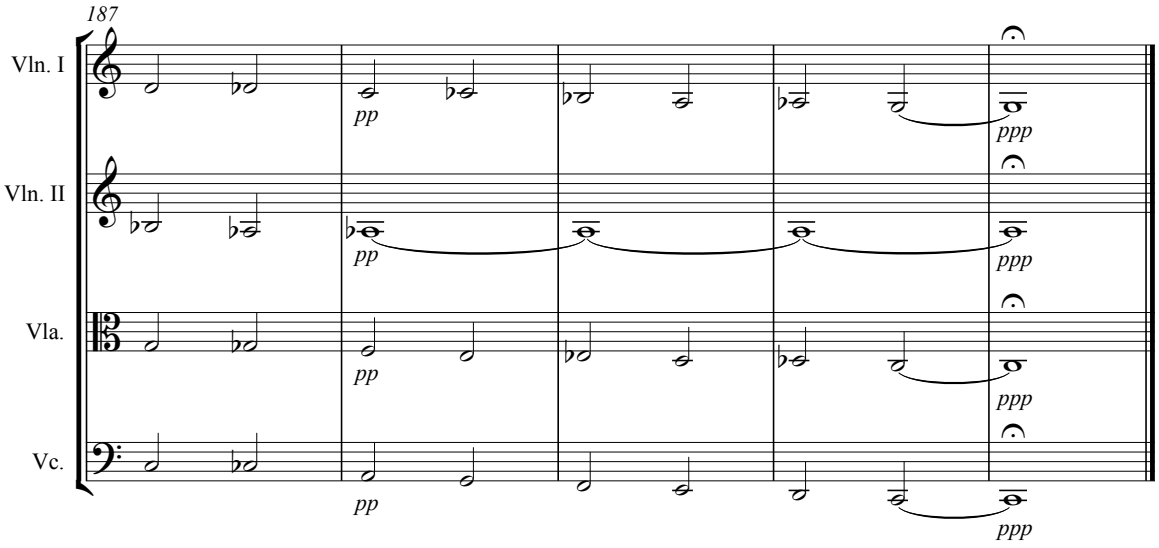

139
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
144
pesante
♩ = 98
149
accel...


154
♩ = 106
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
accel...
pizz.
arco
mp
p
f
159
163


167
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
170
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
173
poco decrescendo y
diminuendo al fine
mf
Vln. I
Vln. II
poco decrescendo y
diminuendo al fine
Vla.
mf
poco decrescendo y
diminuendo al fine
Vc.
mf


177
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
poco decrescendo y
diminuendo al fine
mf
mp
mp
mp
mp

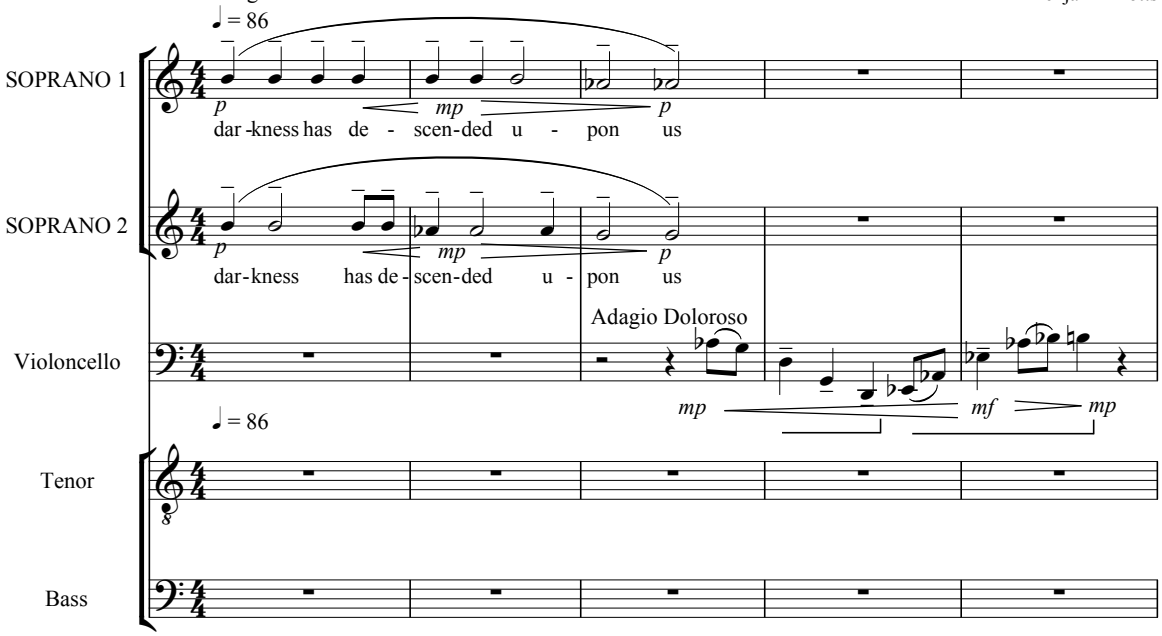

183
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
p
p
p

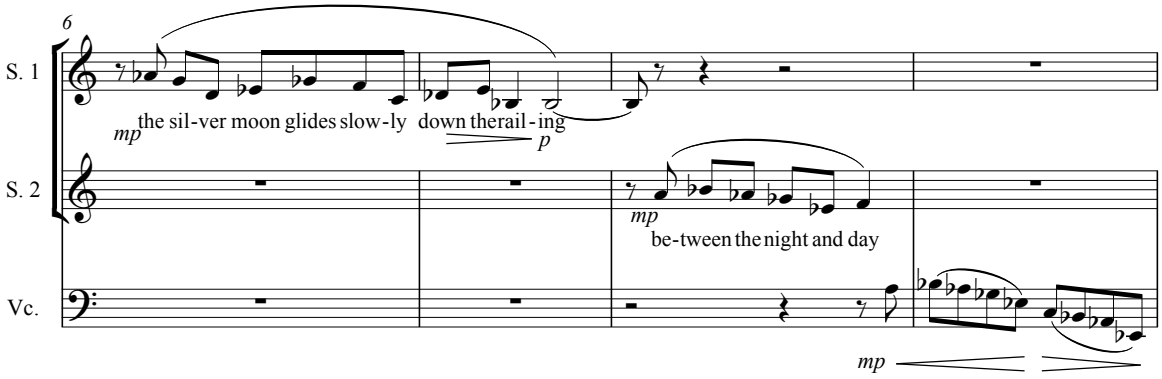

187
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pp
pp
pp
pp
ppp
ppp
ppp
ppp

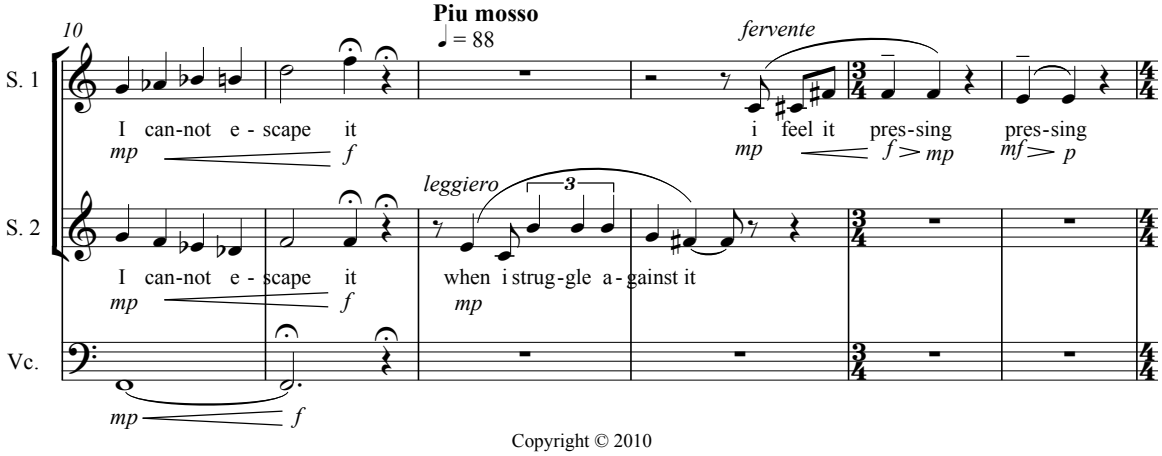
III. Despero

Adagio doloroso

Benjamin Potts







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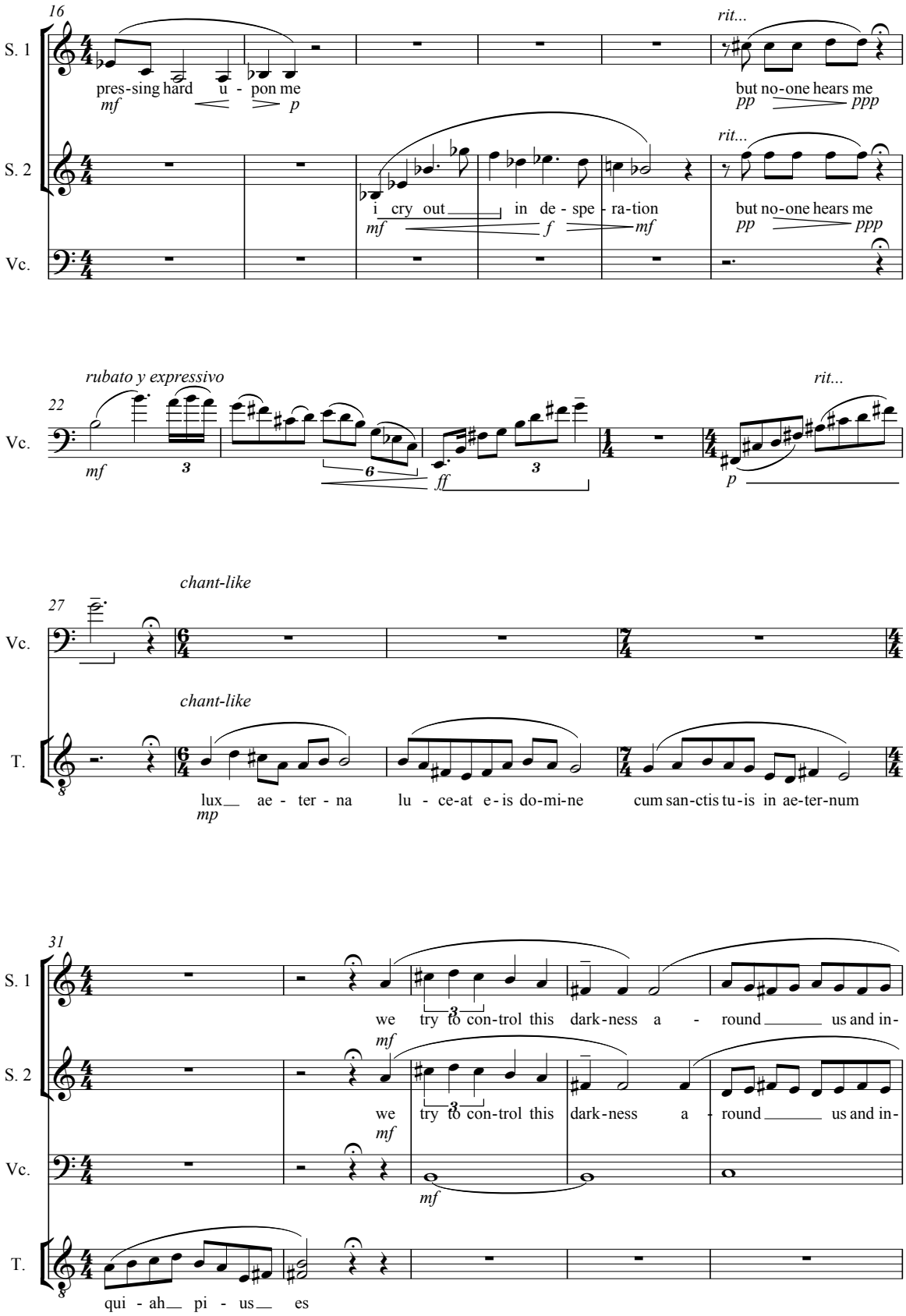
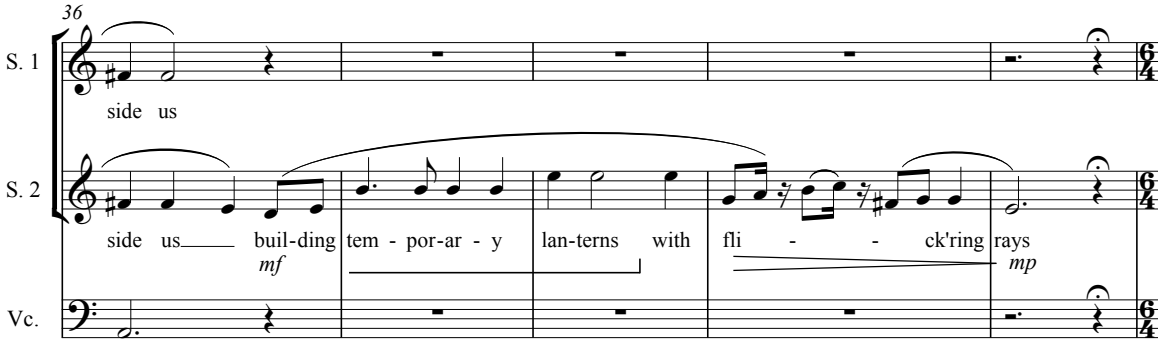
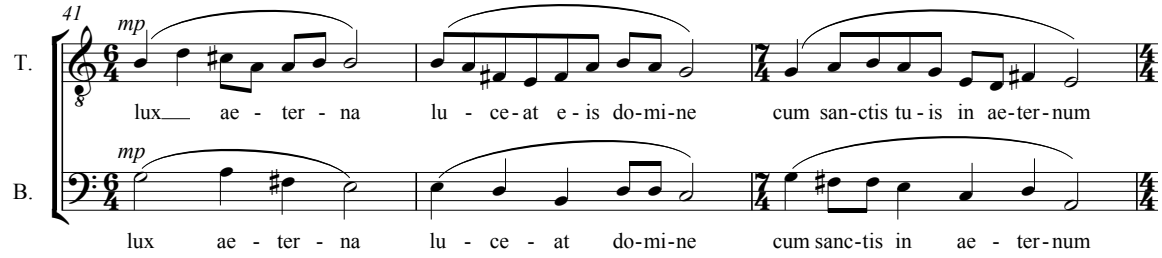
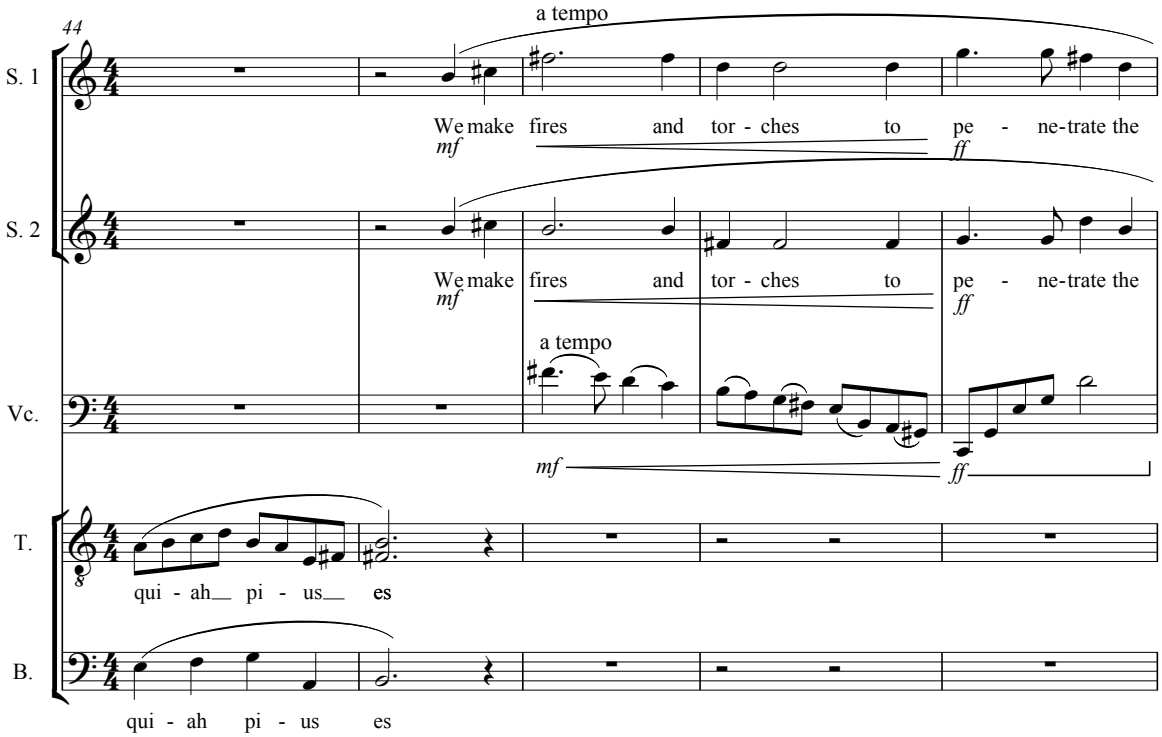
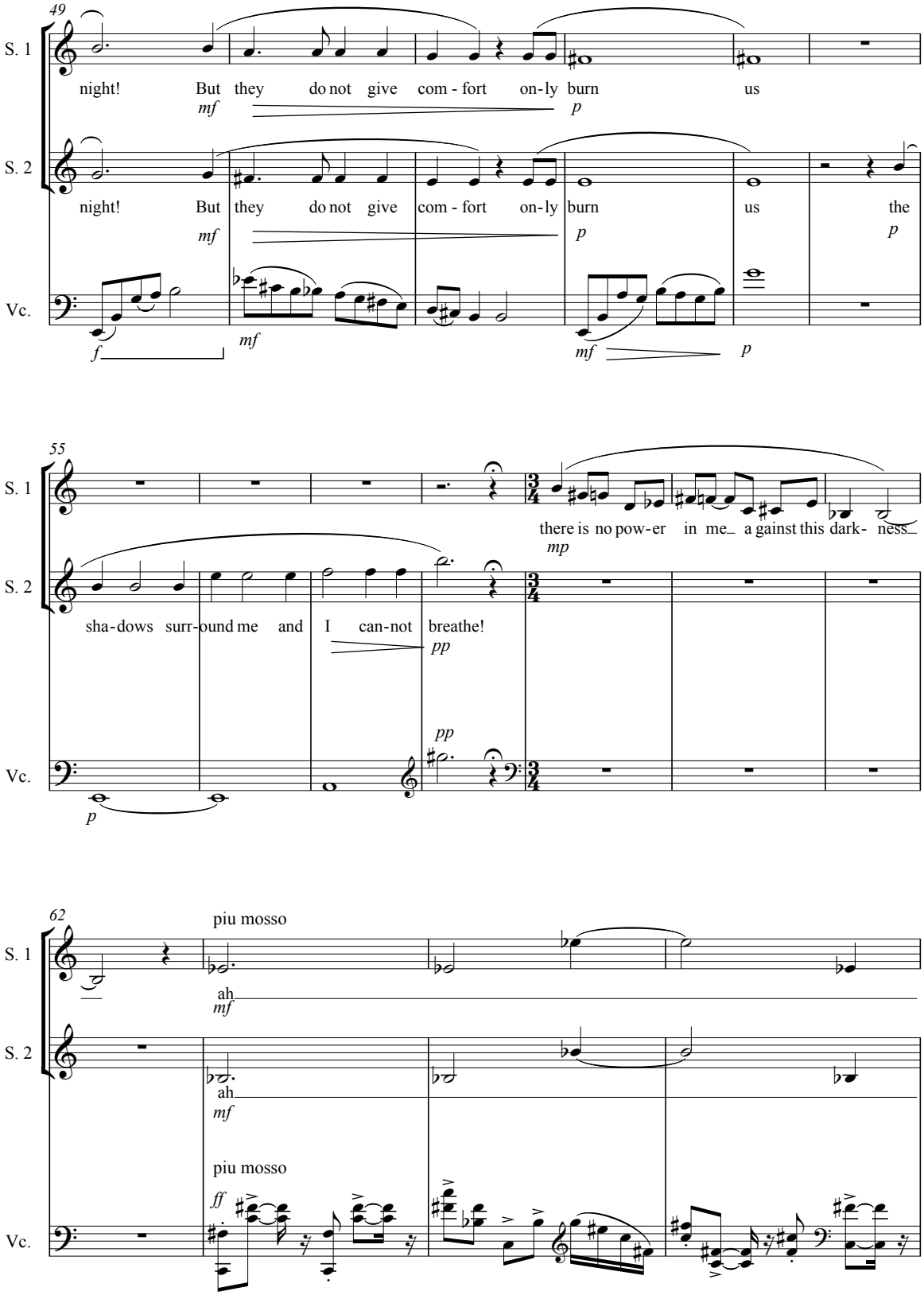
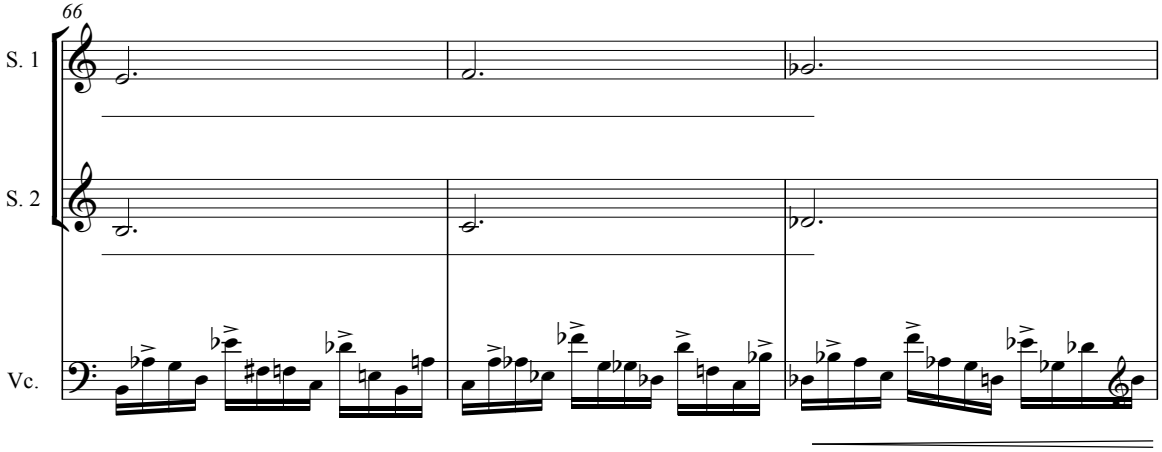

16
S. 1
pres-sing hard u - pon me
mf p
rit...
but no-one hears me
pp ppp
S. 2
i cry out in de - spe - ra-tion
mf f mf
rit...
but no-one hears me
pp ppp
Vc.
rubato y expressivo
22
Vc.
mf
ff
rit...
p
chant-like
27
Vc.
chant-like
T.
lux ae - ter - na lu - ce-at e - is do-mi-ne cum san-ctis tu - is in ae-ter-num
mp
31
S. 1
we try to con-trol this dark-ness a - round us and in-
mf
S. 2
we try to con-trol this dark-ness a - round us and in-
mf
Vc.
mf
T.
qui - ah pi - us es

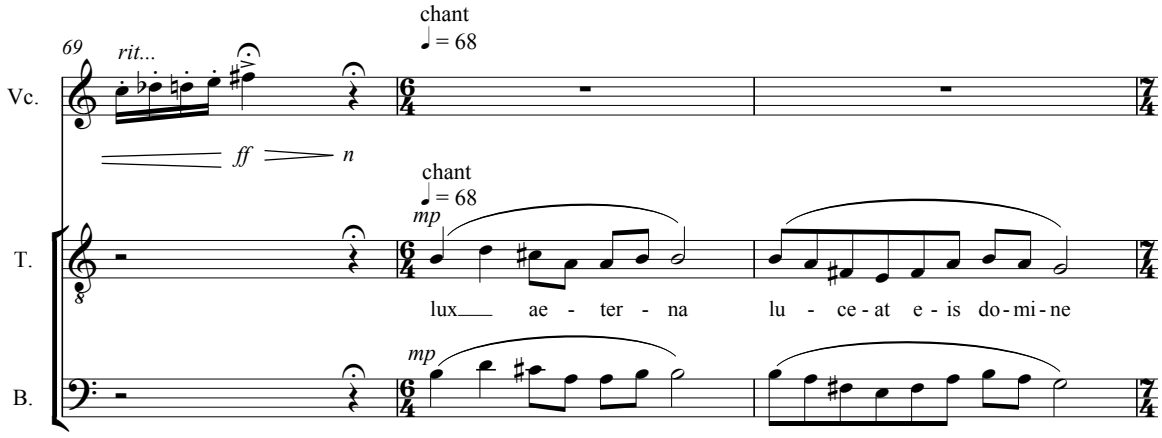

36
S. 1
side us
S. 2
side us buil-ding tem - por-ar - y lan-terns with fli - - ck'ring rays
mf
mp
Vc.

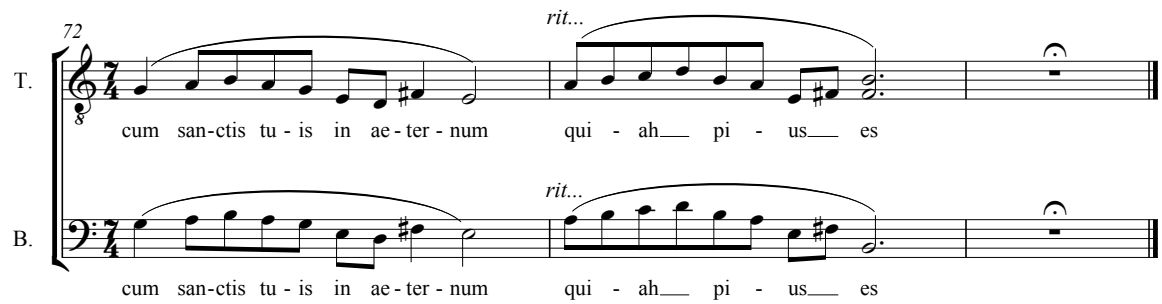

41
T.
mp
lux ae - ter - na lu - ce-at e-is do-mi-ne cum san-ctis tu-is in ae-ter-num
B.
mp
lux ae - ter - na lu - ce - at do-mi-ne cum sanc-tis in ae - ter-num


44
a tempo
S. 1
We make fires and tor - ches to pe - ne-trate the
mf
ff
S. 2
We make fires and tor - ches to pe - ne-trate the
mf
ff
a tempo
Vc.
mf
ff
T.
qui - ah pi - us es
B.
qui - ah pi - us es


49
S. 1
night! But they do not give com - fort on-ly burn us
mf
p
S. 2
night! But they do not give com - fort on-ly burn us the
mf
p
p
Vc.
f
mf
mf
p
55
S. 1
there is no pow-er in me_ a gainst this dark- ness_
mp
S. 2
sha-dows surr-ound me and I can-not breathe!
pp
pp
Vc.
p
62
piu mosso
S. 1
ah
mf
S. 2
ah
mf
piu mosso
ff
Vc.


66
S. 1
S. 2
Vc.


69
rit...
chant
= 68
Vc.
ff
n
chant
= 68
mp
T.
lux ae - ter - na lu - ce - at e - is do - mi - ne
mp
B.
lux ae - ter - na lu - ce - at e - is do - mi - ne


72
rit...
T.
cum san-ctis tu - is in ae - ter - num qui - ah pi - us es
rit...
B.
cum san-ctis tu - is in ae - ter - num qui - ah pi - us es

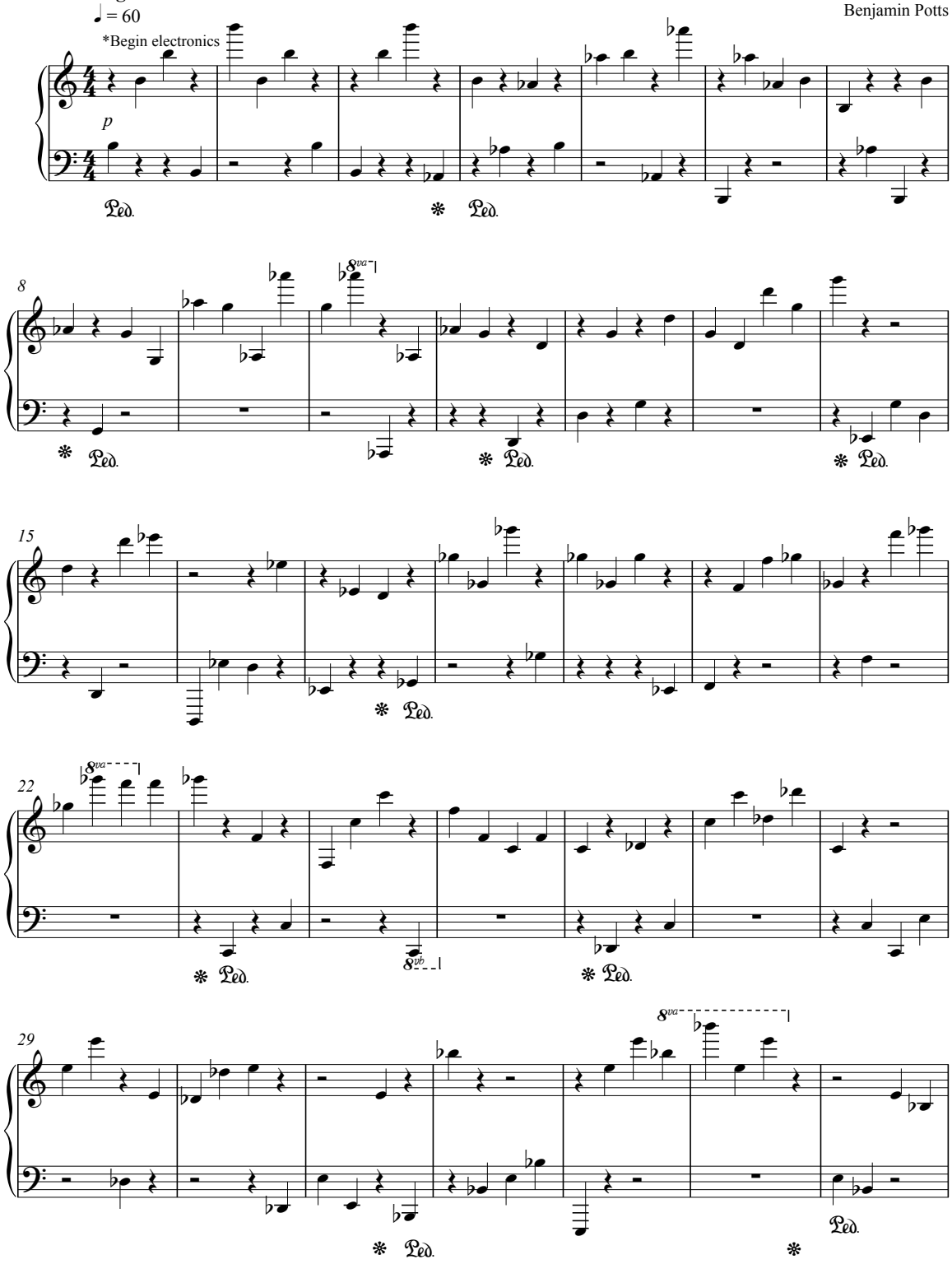
IV. Ascension

Legato but Mechanical

♩ = 60

Benjamin Potts

*Begin electronics



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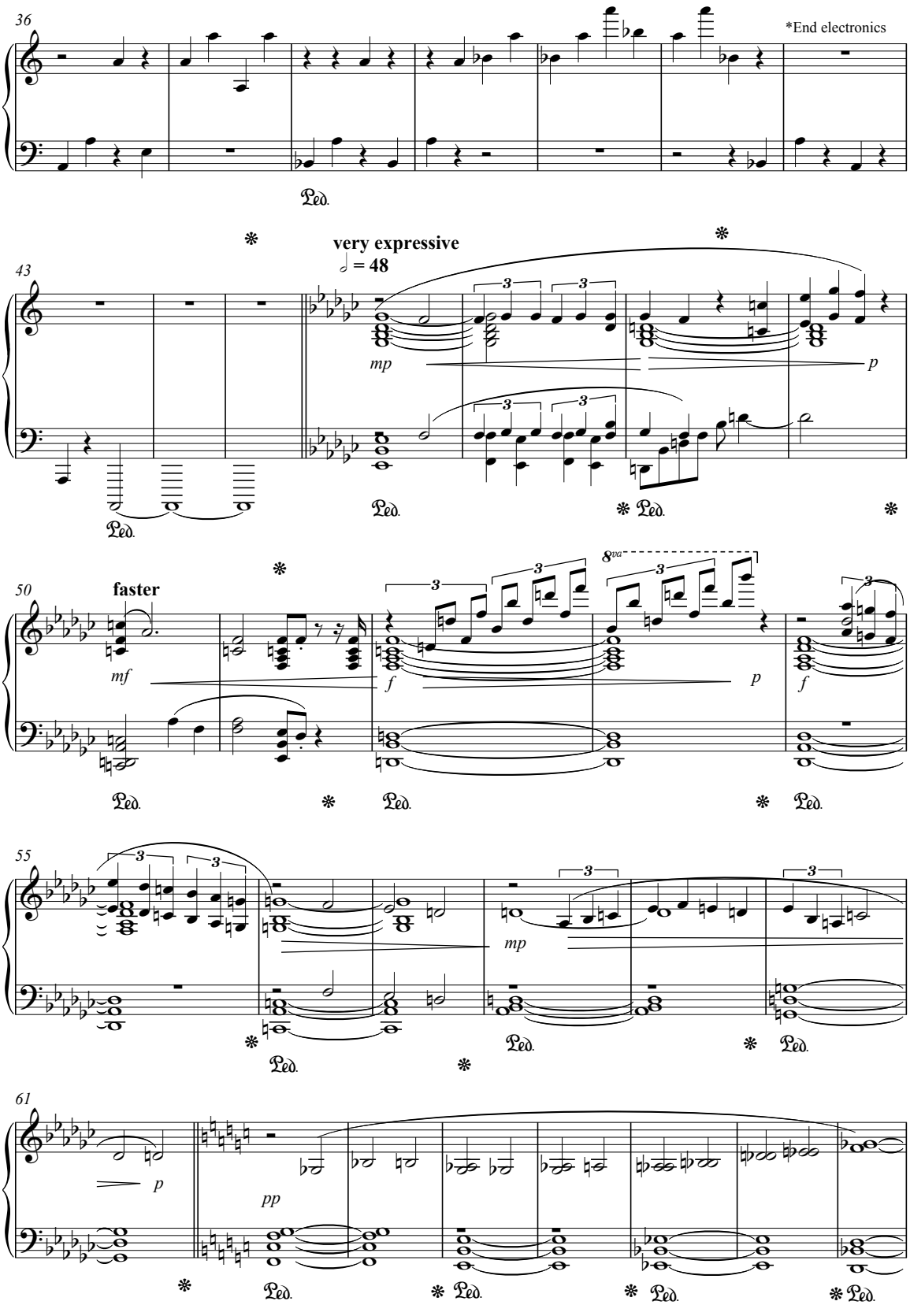
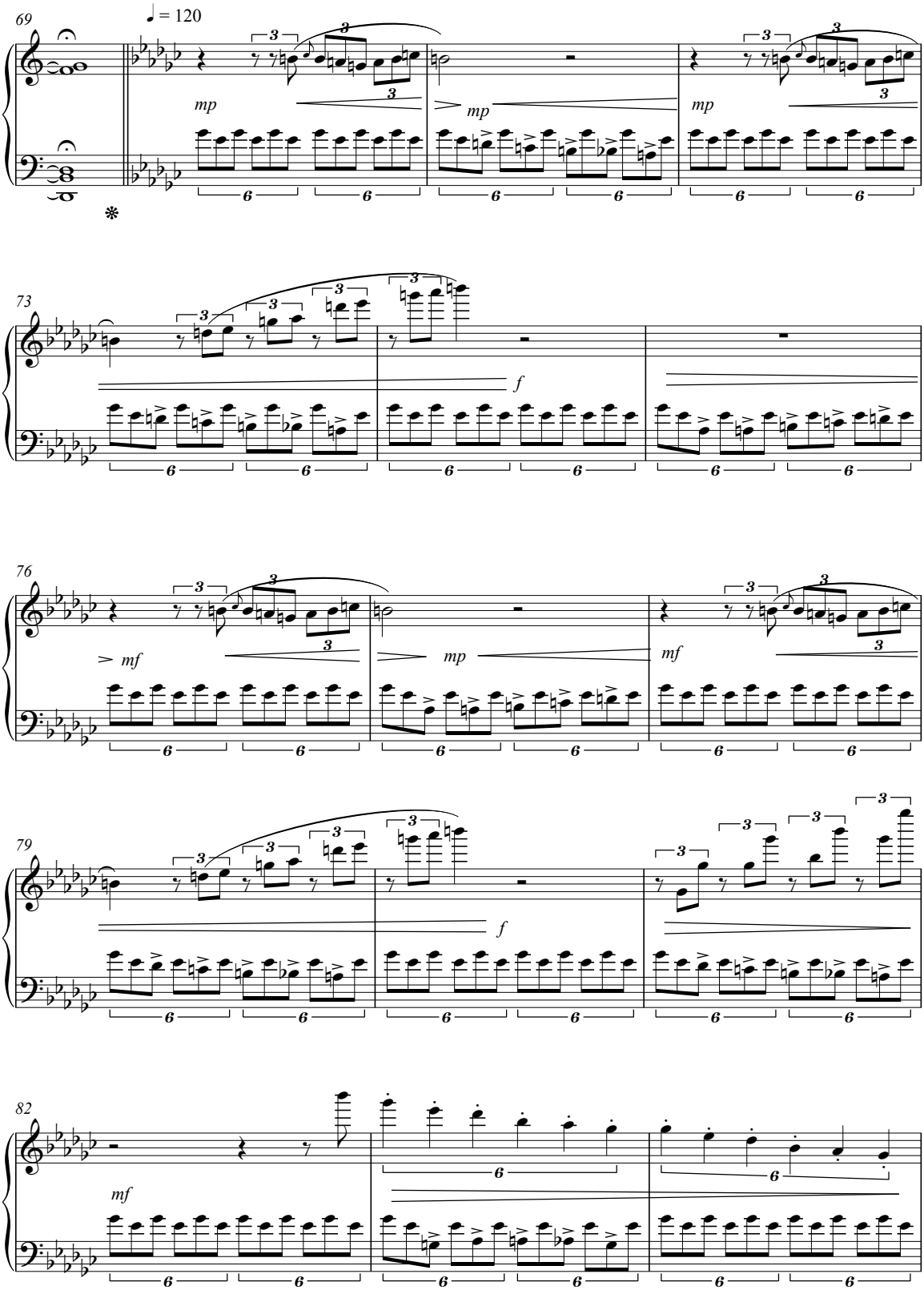
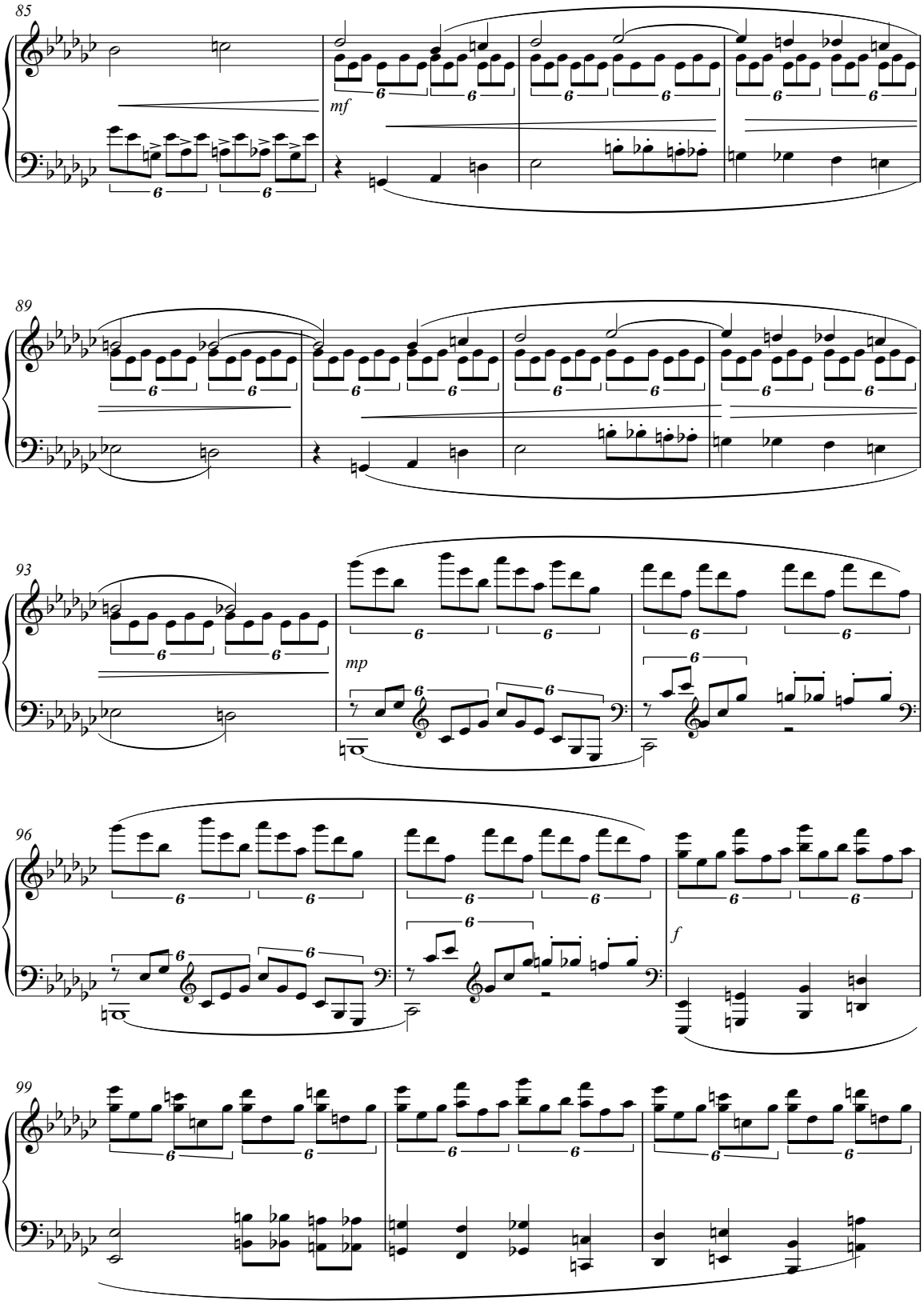
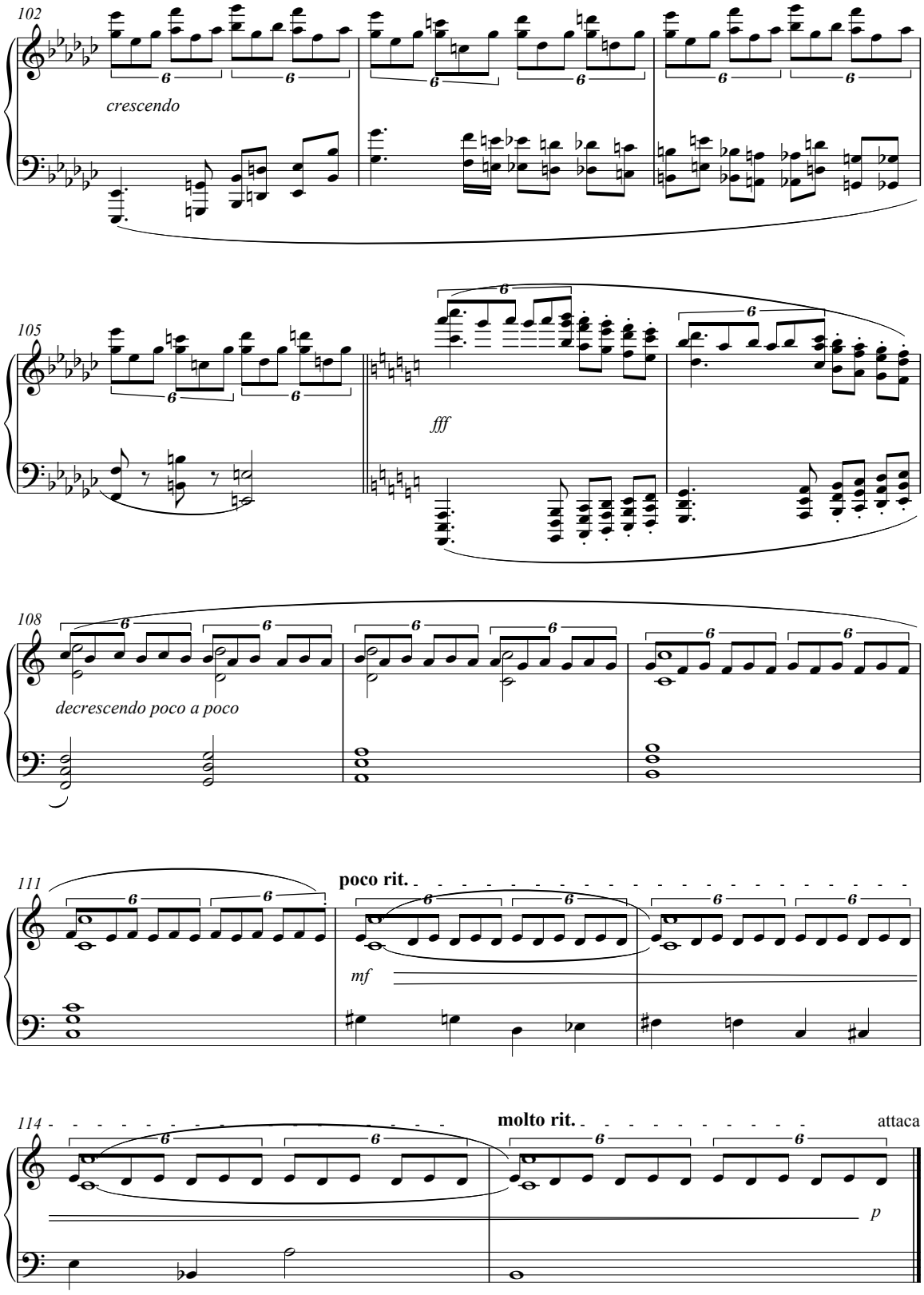

36
*End electronics
Ped.
very expressive
43
mp
p
Ped.
50
faster
mf
f
p
8va
55
mp
61
p
pp

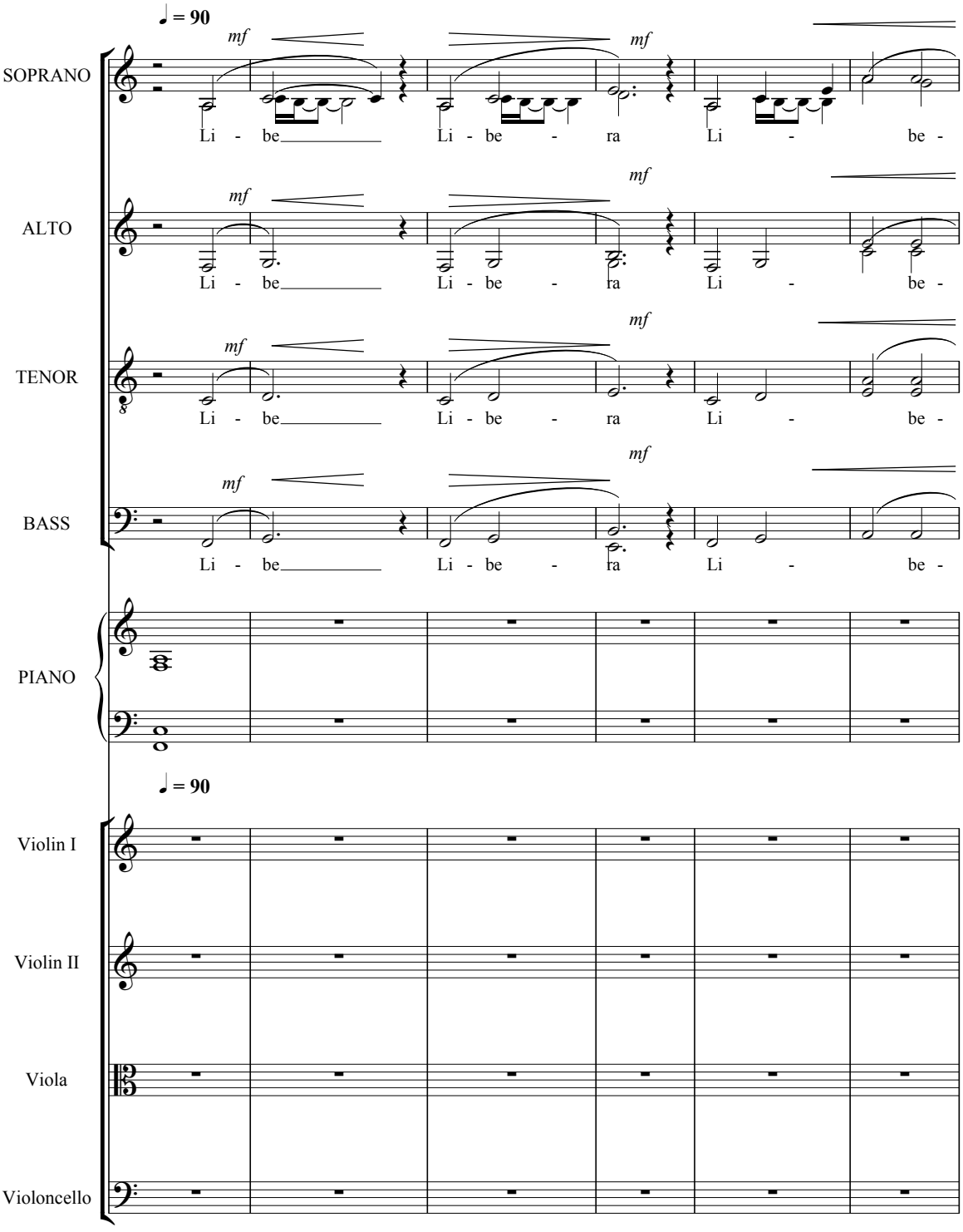

69
♩ = 120
mp
mp
mp
73
f
76
mf
mp
mf
79
f
82
mf

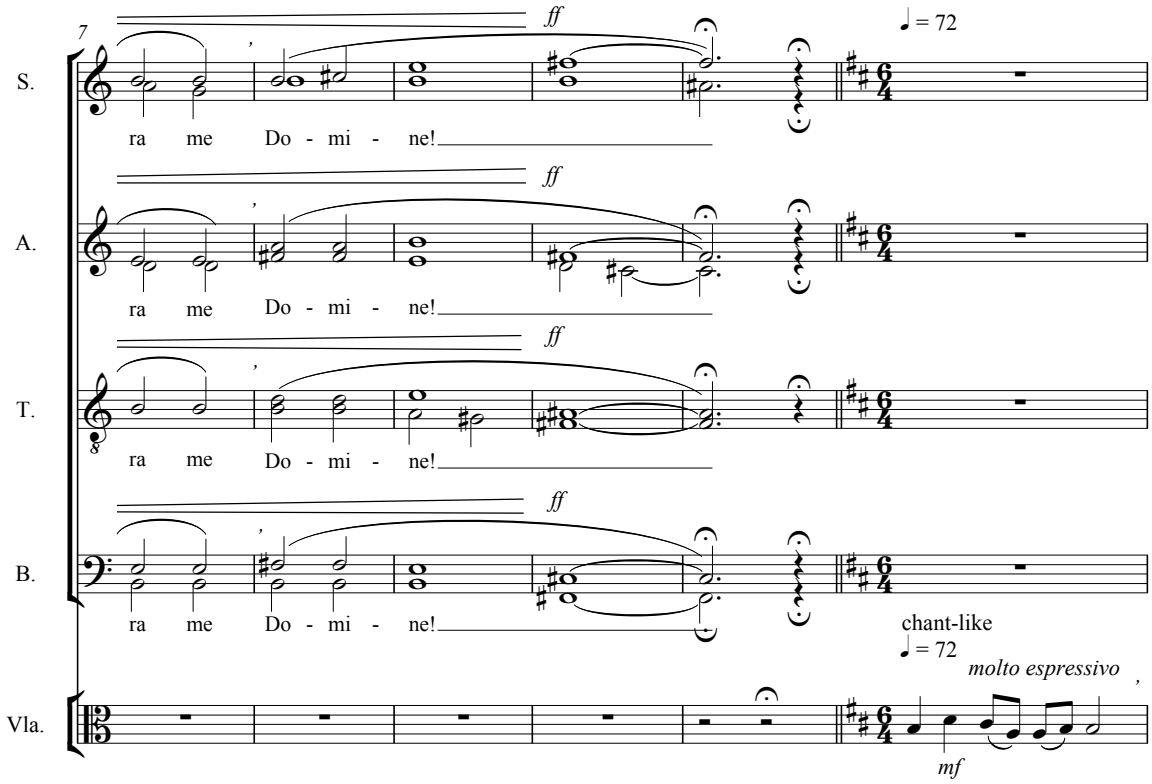

85
mf
89
93
mp
96
f
99

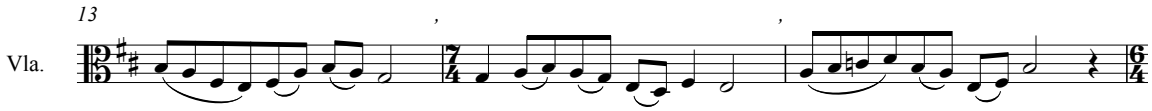

102
crescendo
105
fff
108
decrescendo poco a poco
111
poco rit.
mf
114
molto rit.
attaca
p

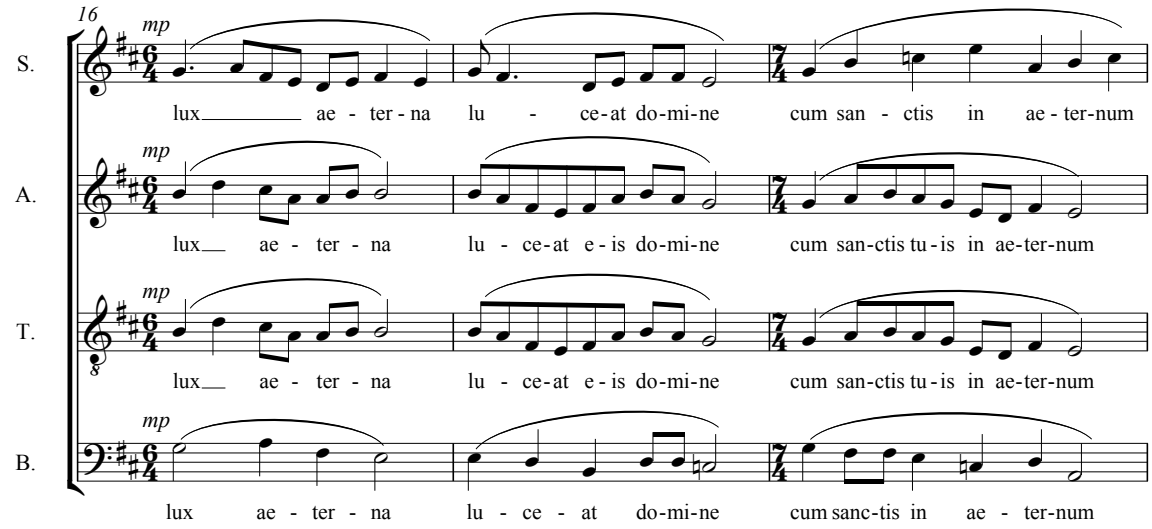
V. Lux Aeterna

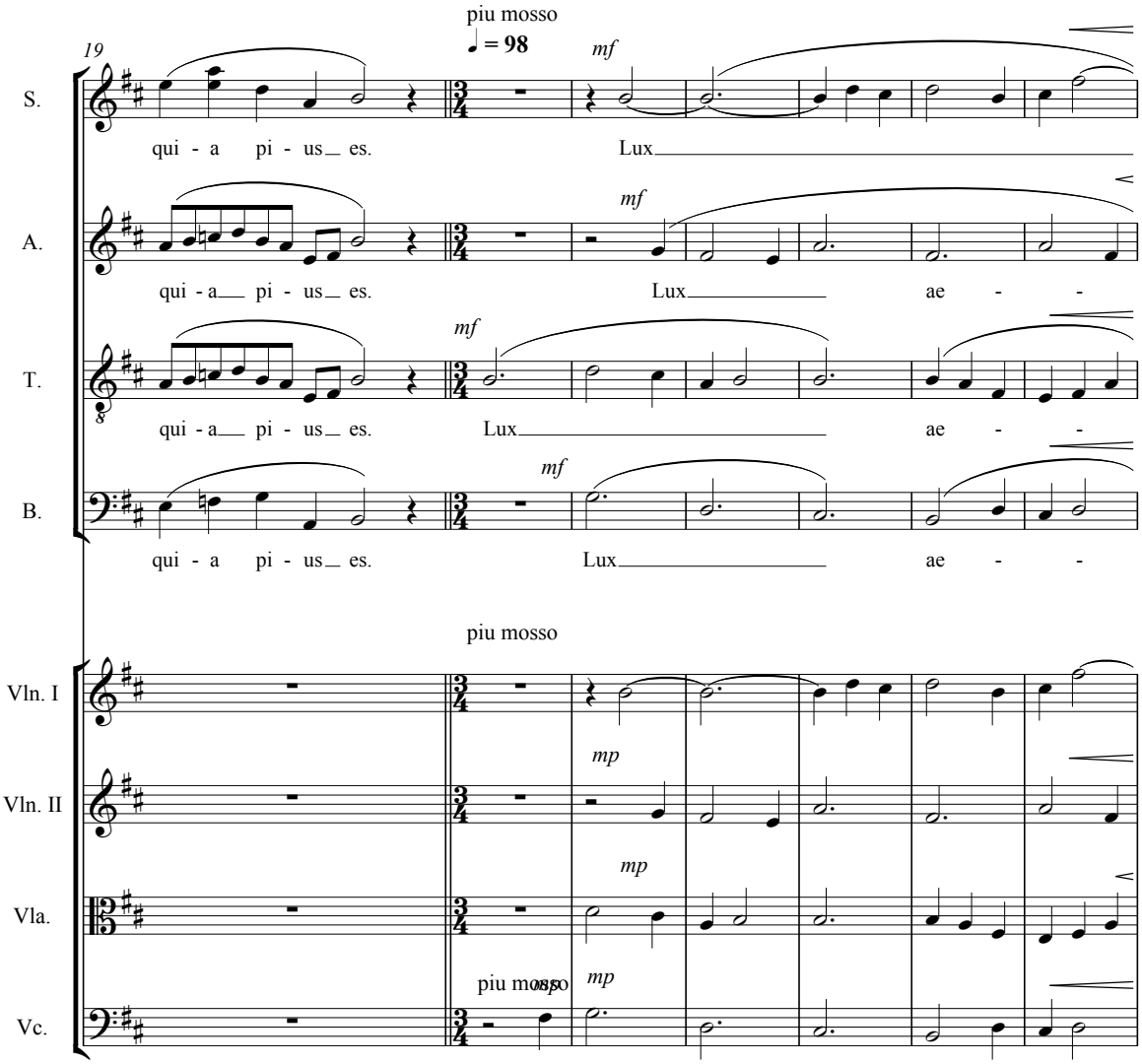
Benjamin Potts

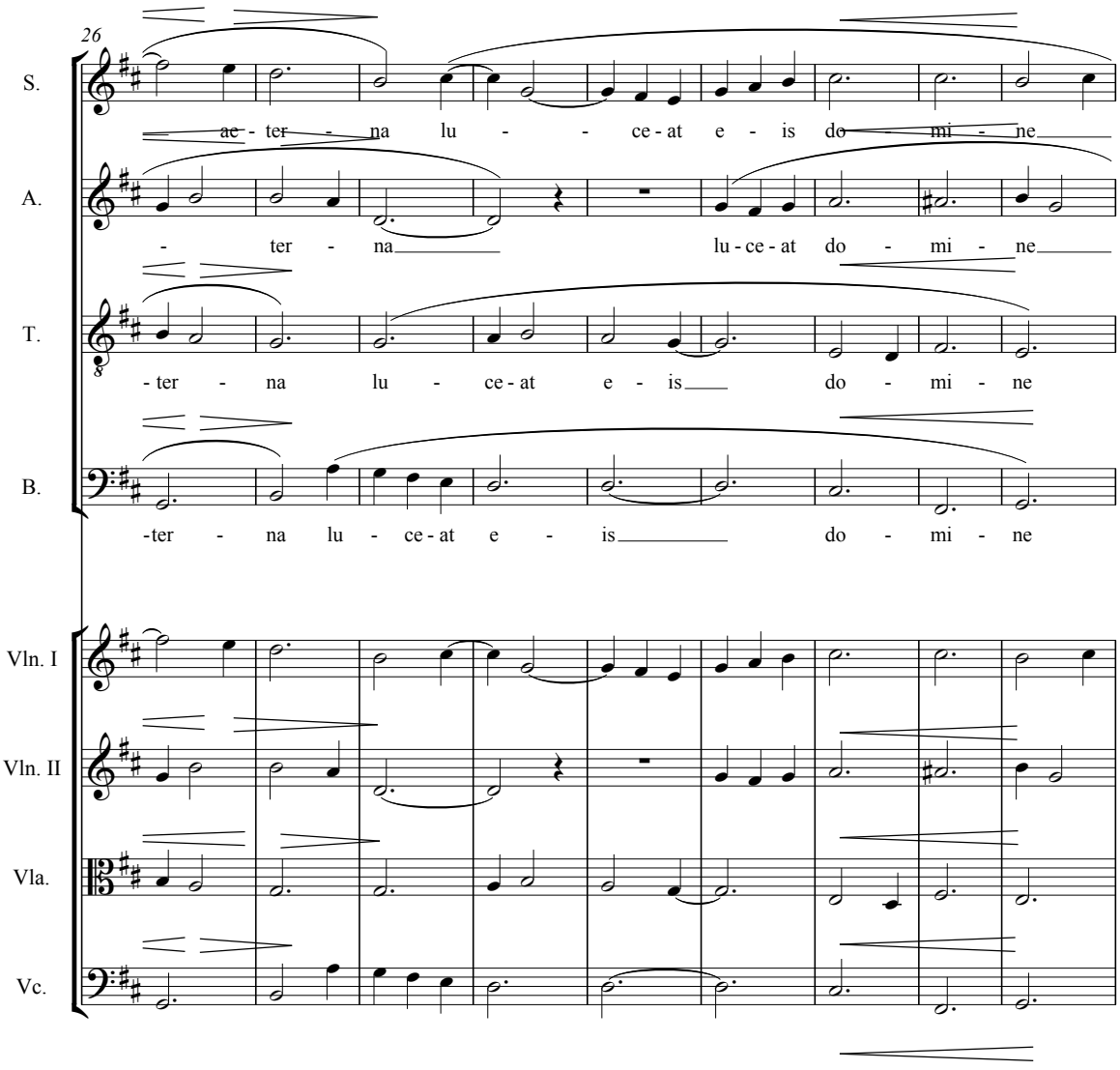


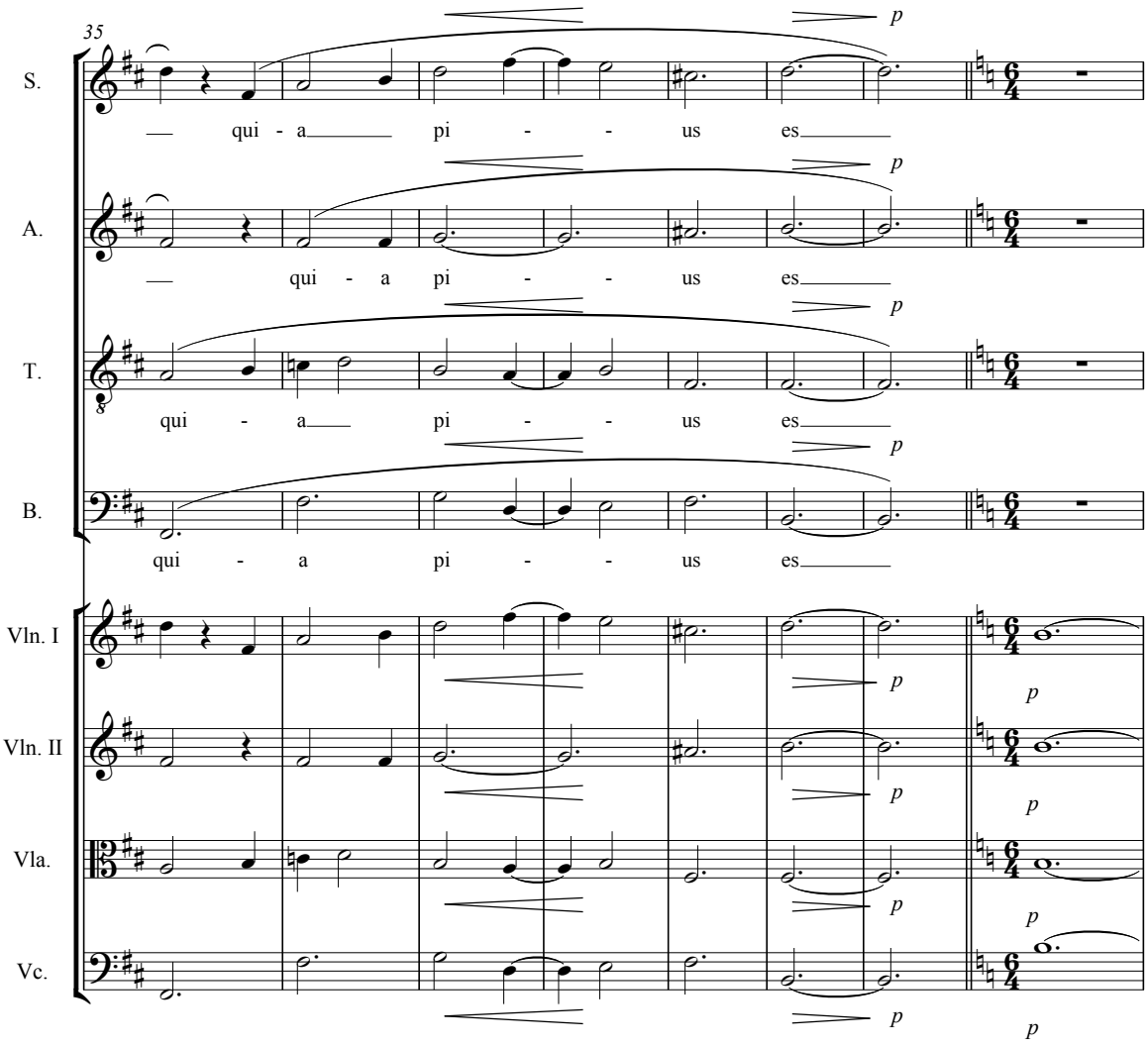

7
S.
A.
T.
B.
Vla.
ff
ra me Do - mi - ne!
♩ = 72
chant-like
♩ = 72
molto espressivo
mf

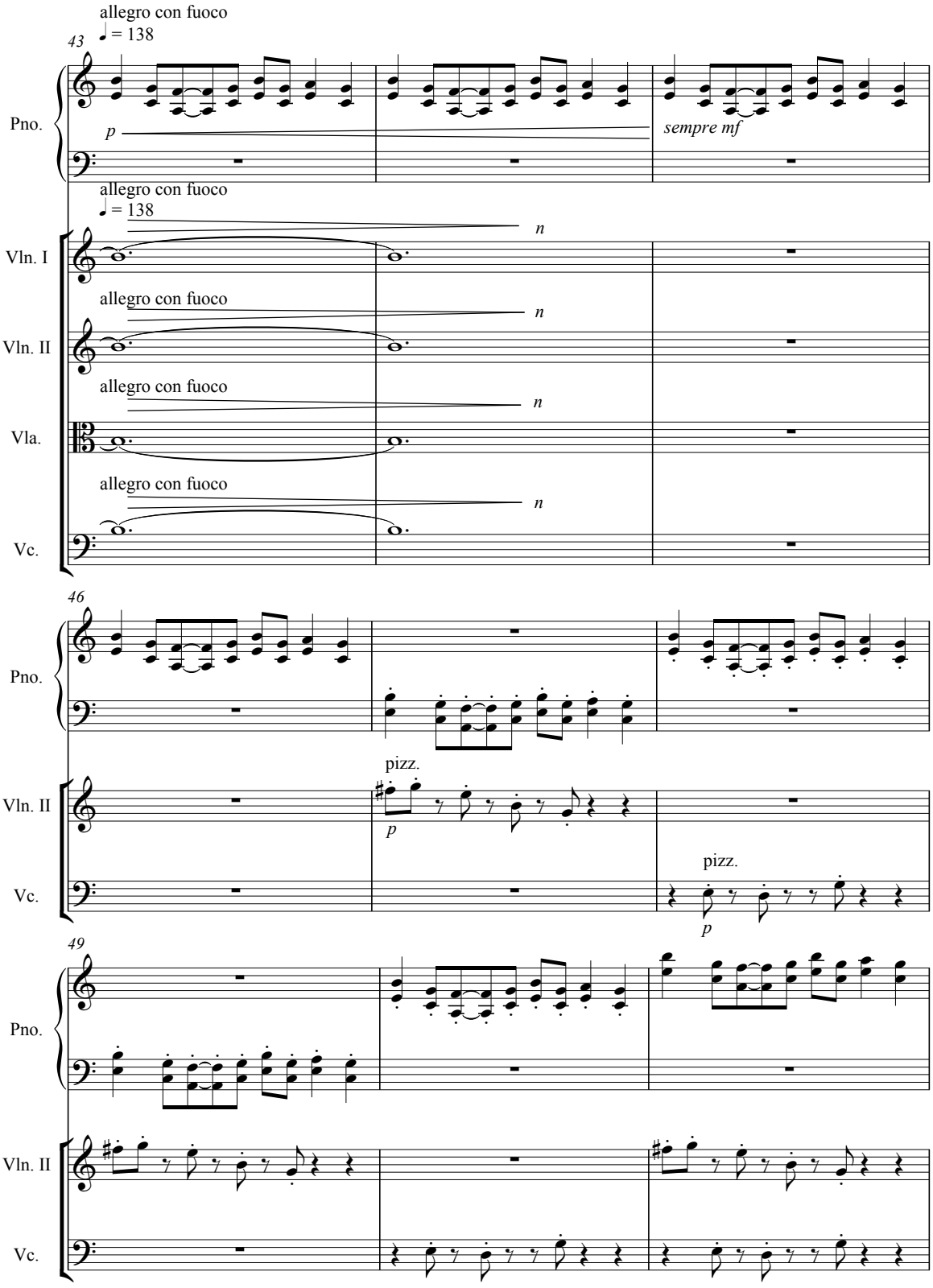

13
Vla.

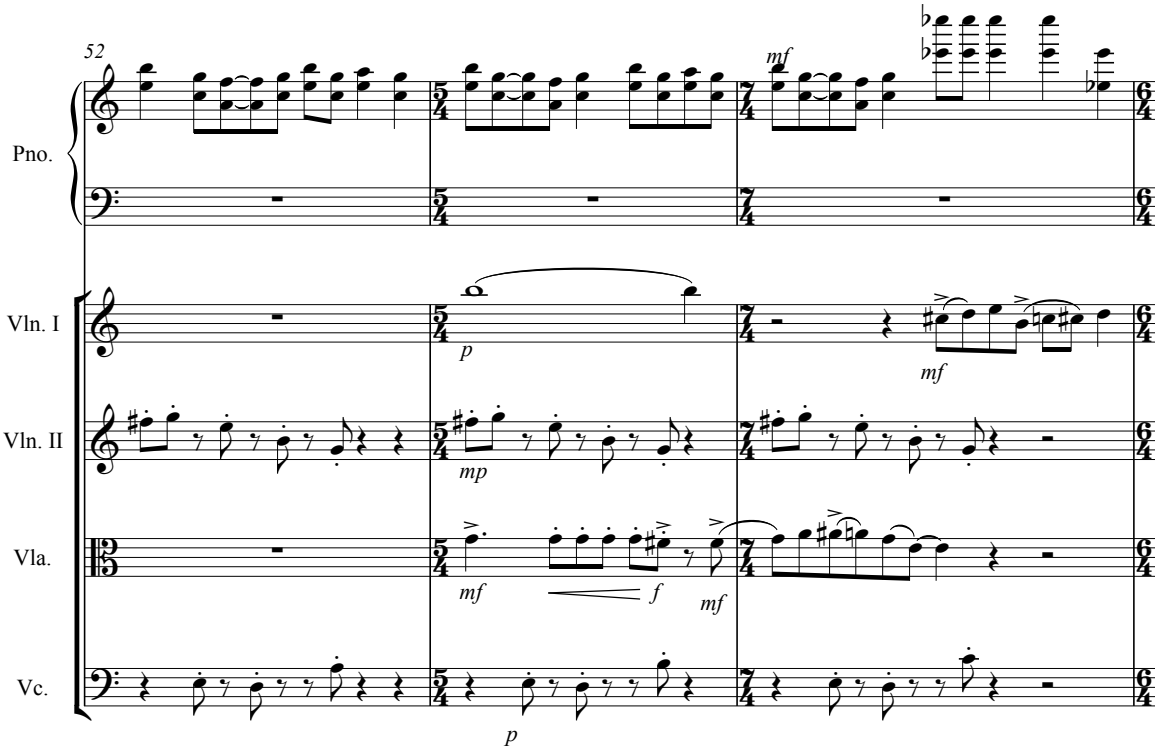

16
S.
A.
T.
B.
mp
lux ae - ter - na lu - ce-at do-mi-ne cum san - ctis in ae - ter-num
lux ae - ter - na lu - ce-at e - is do-mi-ne cum san-ctis tu - is in ae-ter-num
lux ae - ter - na lu - ce - at do-mi-ne cum sanc-tis in ae - ter-num

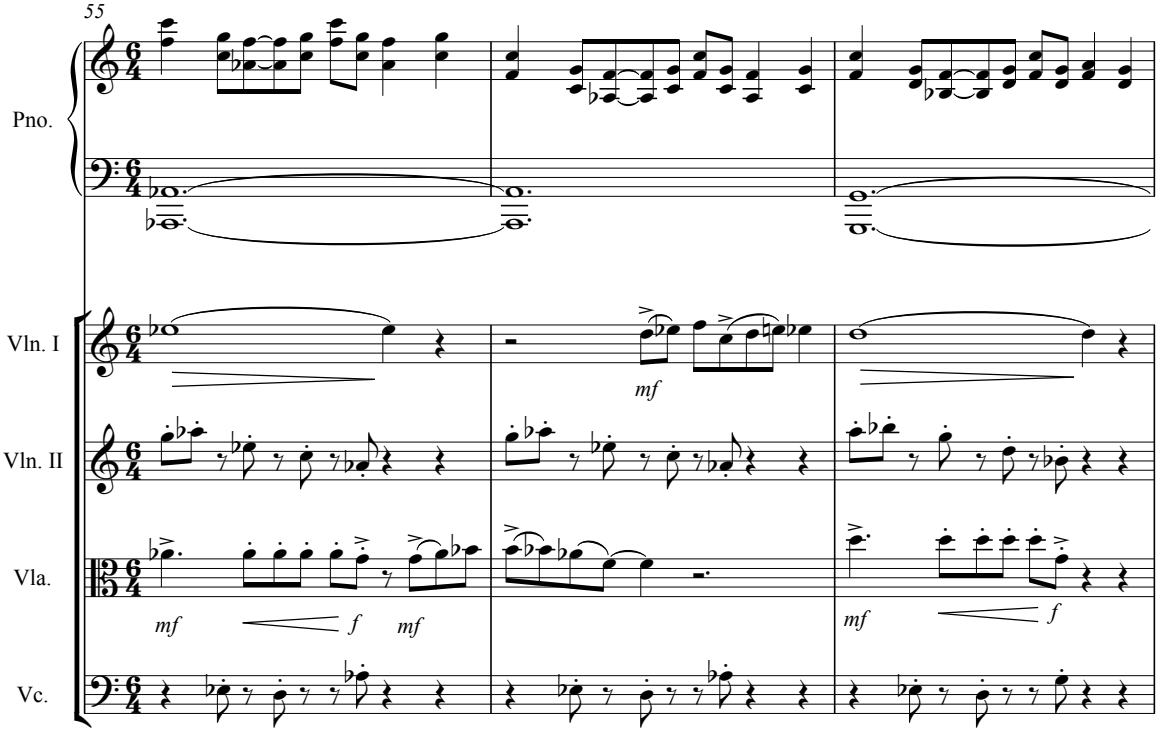

piu mosso
♩ = 98
19
S.
qui - a pi - us_ es.
mf
Lux
A.
qui - a_ pi - us_ es.
mf
Lux
ae - -
T.
qui - a_ pi - us_ es.
mf
Lux
ae - -
B.
qui - a pi - us_ es.
mf
Lux
ae - -
piu mosso
Vln. I
Vln. II
mp
Vla.
mp
Vc.
piu mosso
mp

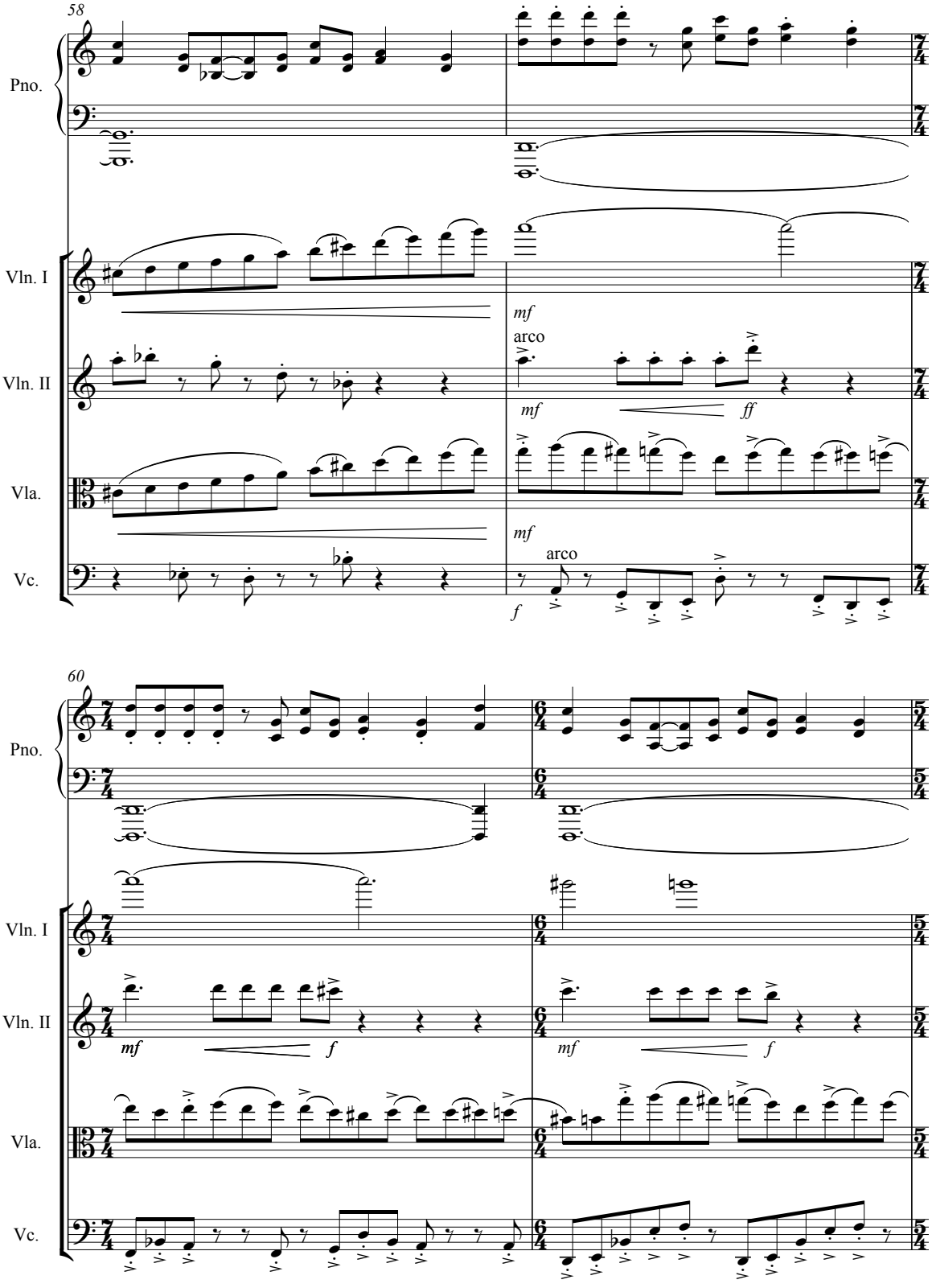

26
S.
ae - ter - na lu - - ce - at e - is do - mi - ne
A.
- ter - na lu - ce - at do - mi - ne
T.
- ter - na lu - ce - at e - is do - mi - ne
B.
- ter - na lu - ce - at e - is do - mi - ne
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

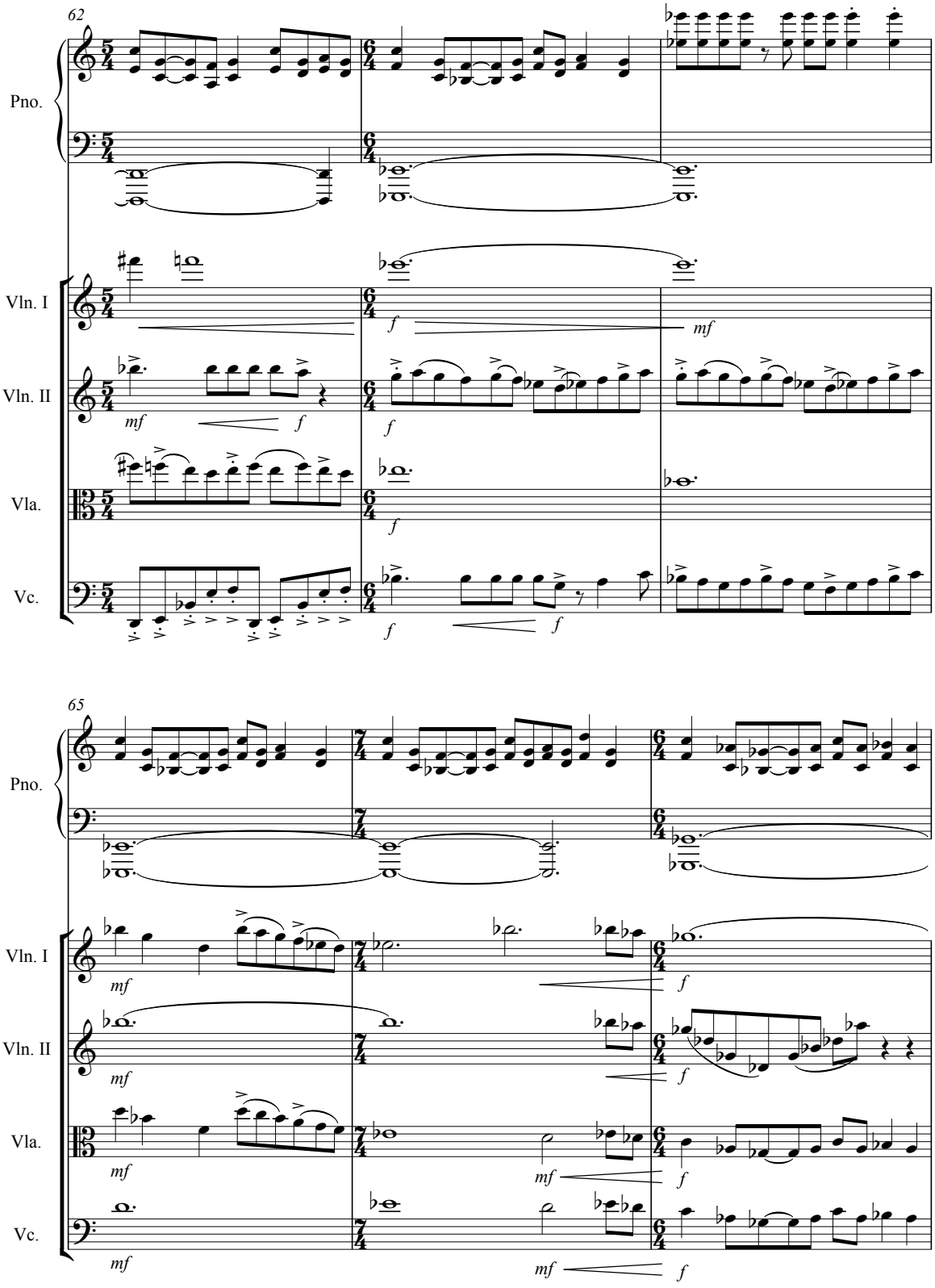

35
S.
qui - a pi - - us es
A.
qui - a pi - - us es
T.
qui - a pi - - us es
B.
qui - a pi - - us es
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p

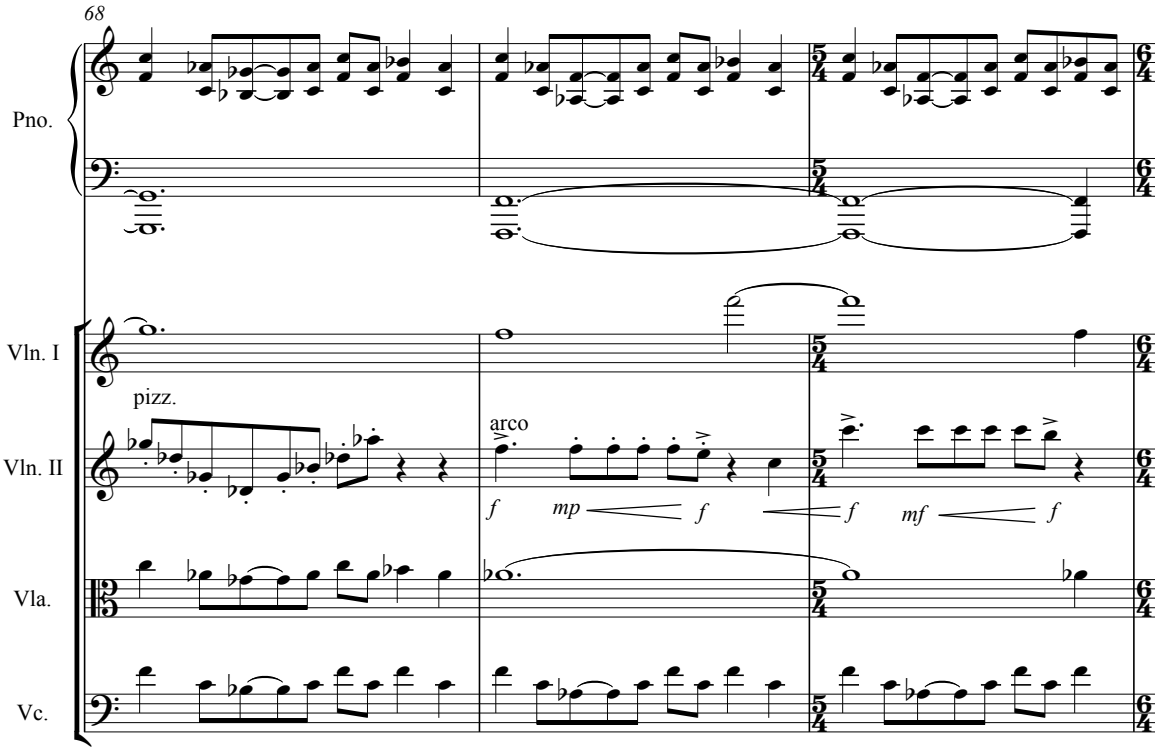

allegro con fuoco
♩ = 138
43
Pno.
p
sempre mf
allegro con fuoco
♩ = 138
Vln. I
n
allegro con fuoco
Vln. II
n
allegro con fuoco
Vla.
n
allegro con fuoco
Vc.
n
46
Pno.
Vln. II
pizz.
p
Vc.
pizz.
p
49
Pno.
Vln. II
Vc.

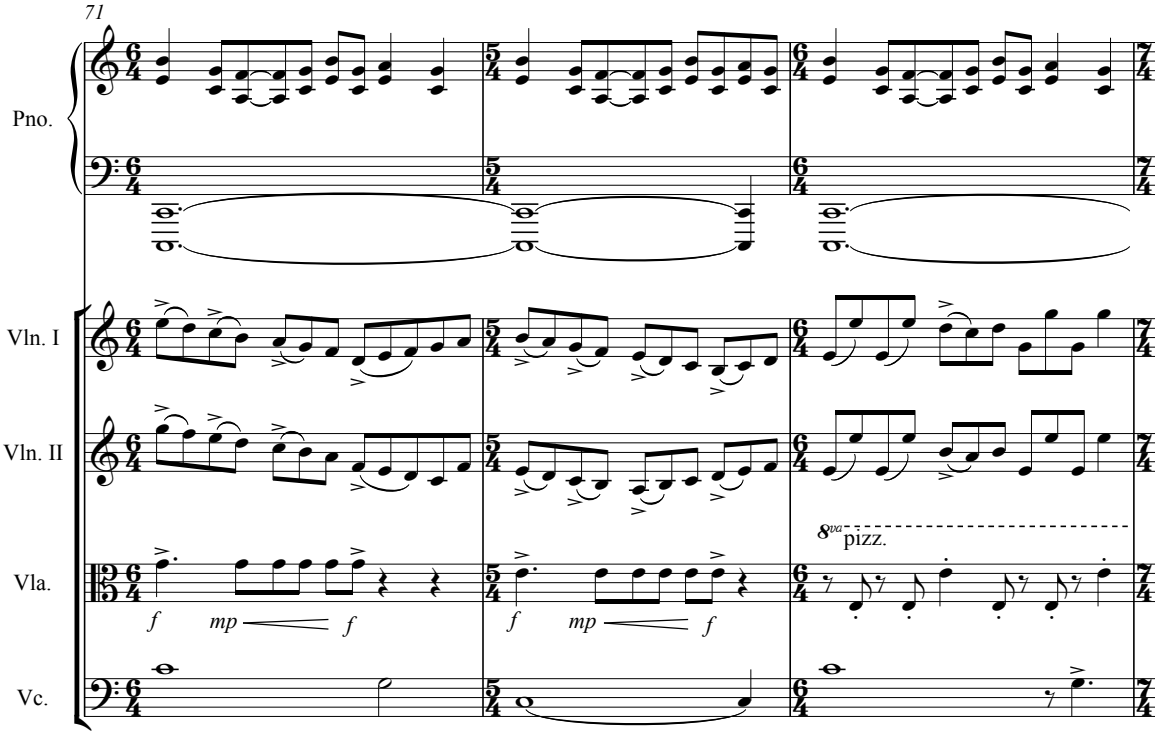

52
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
p
mf
mp
mf
f
mf
p

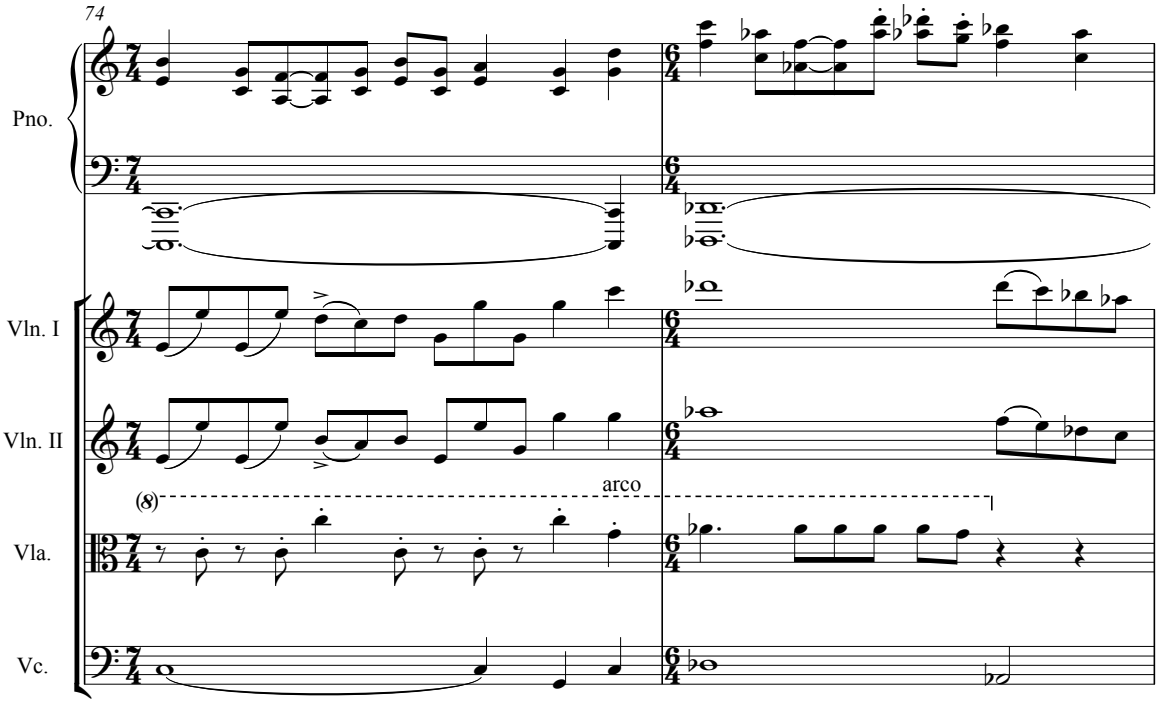

55
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
mf
f
mf
mf
f

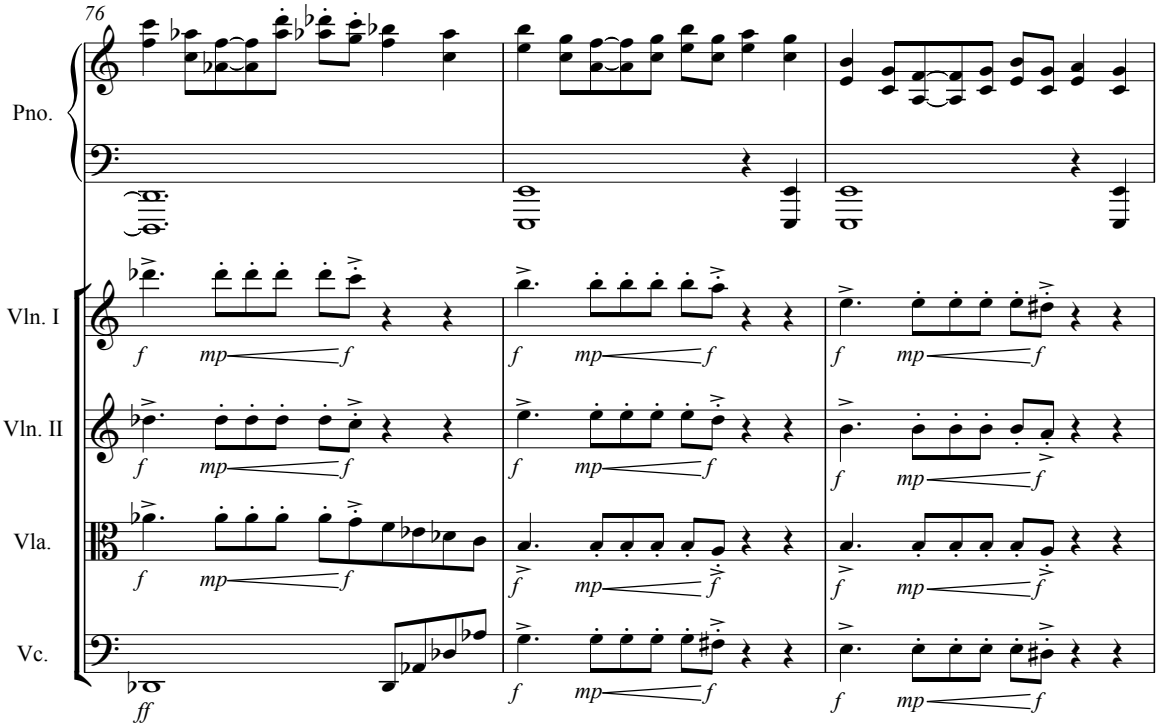

58
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
arco
mf
ff
mf
arco
f
60
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
f
mf
f

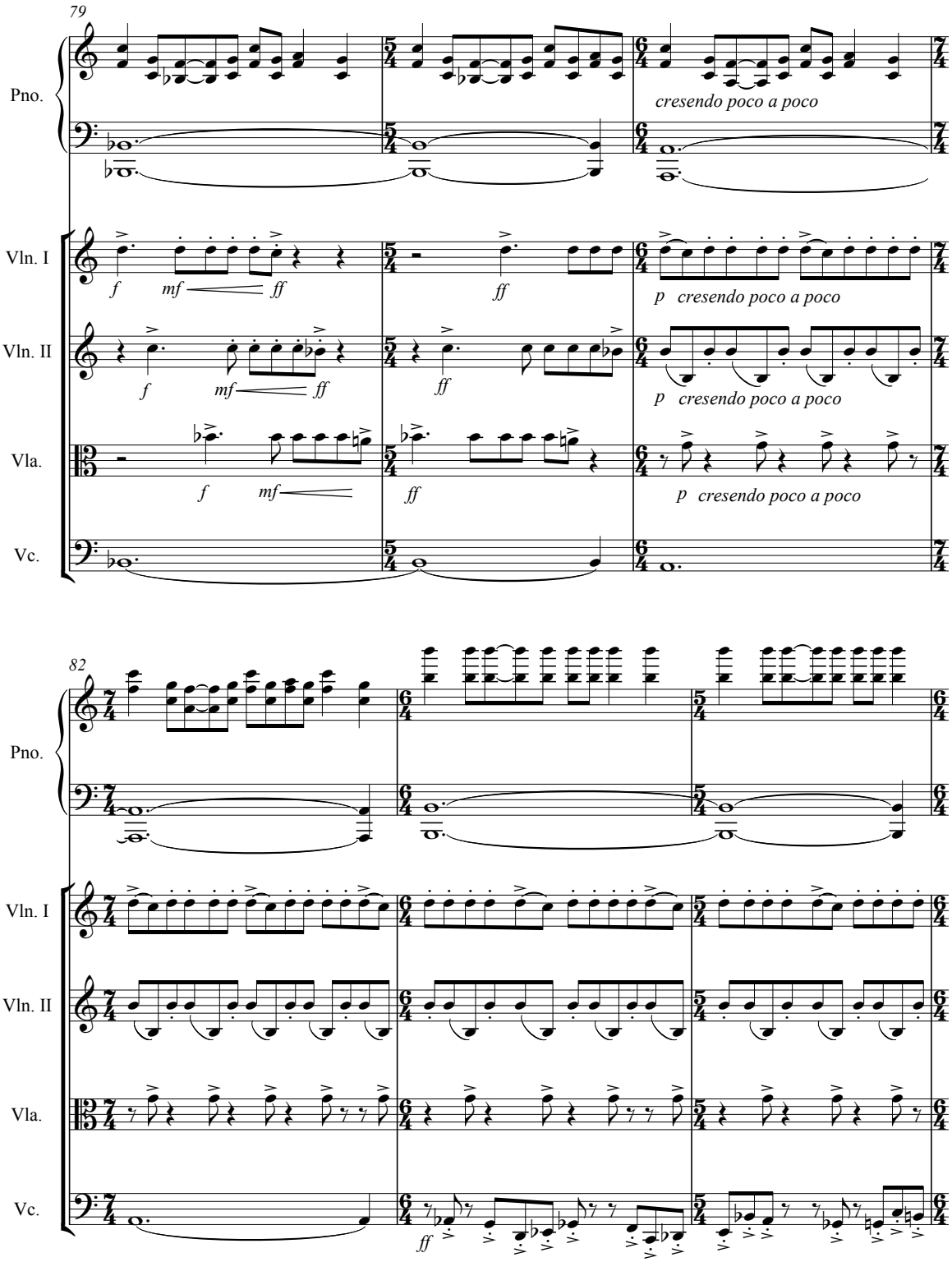

62
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
65
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

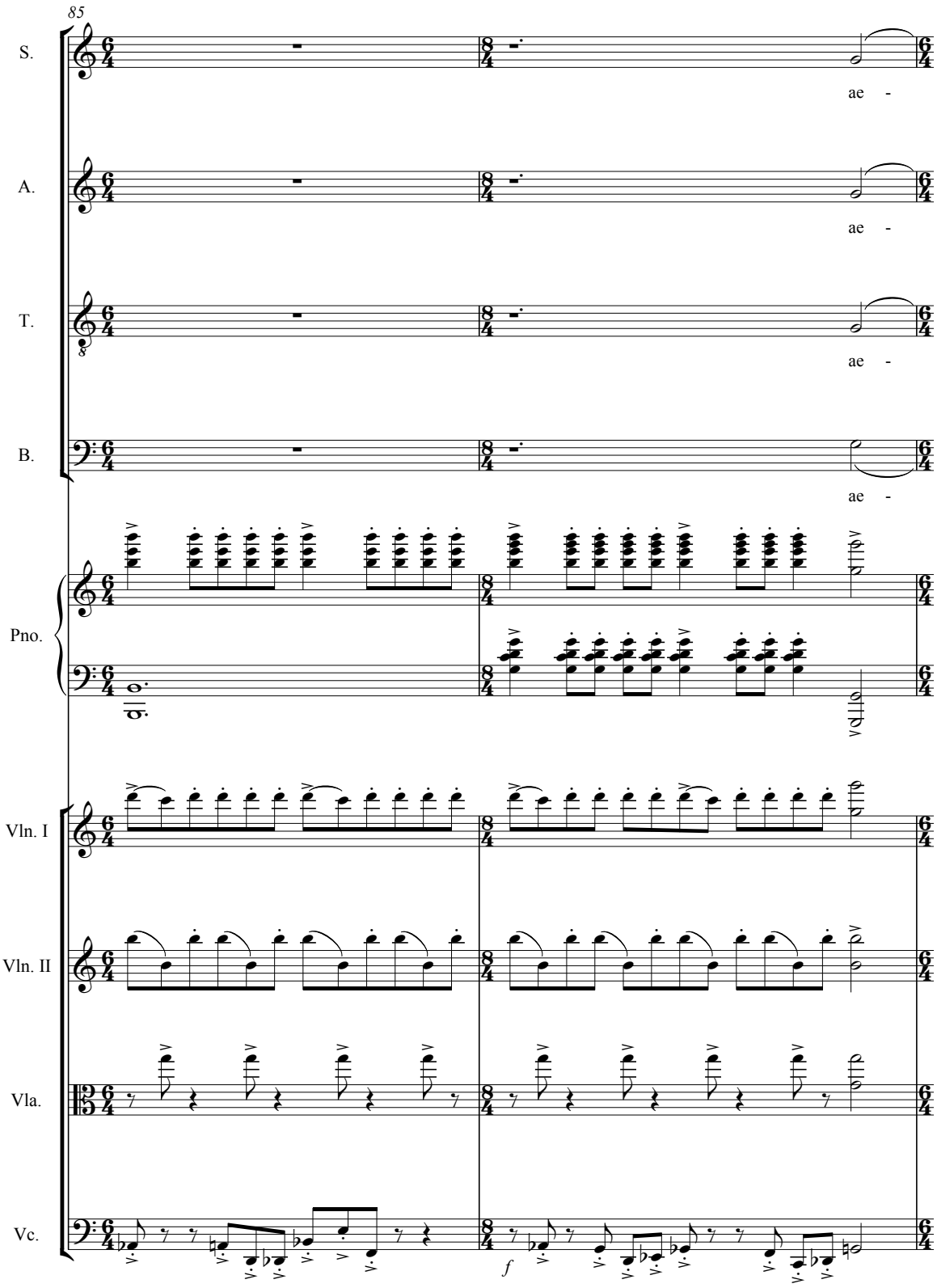

68
Pno.
Vln. I
pizz.
Vln. II
arco
f
mp
f
f
mf
f
Vla.
Vc.

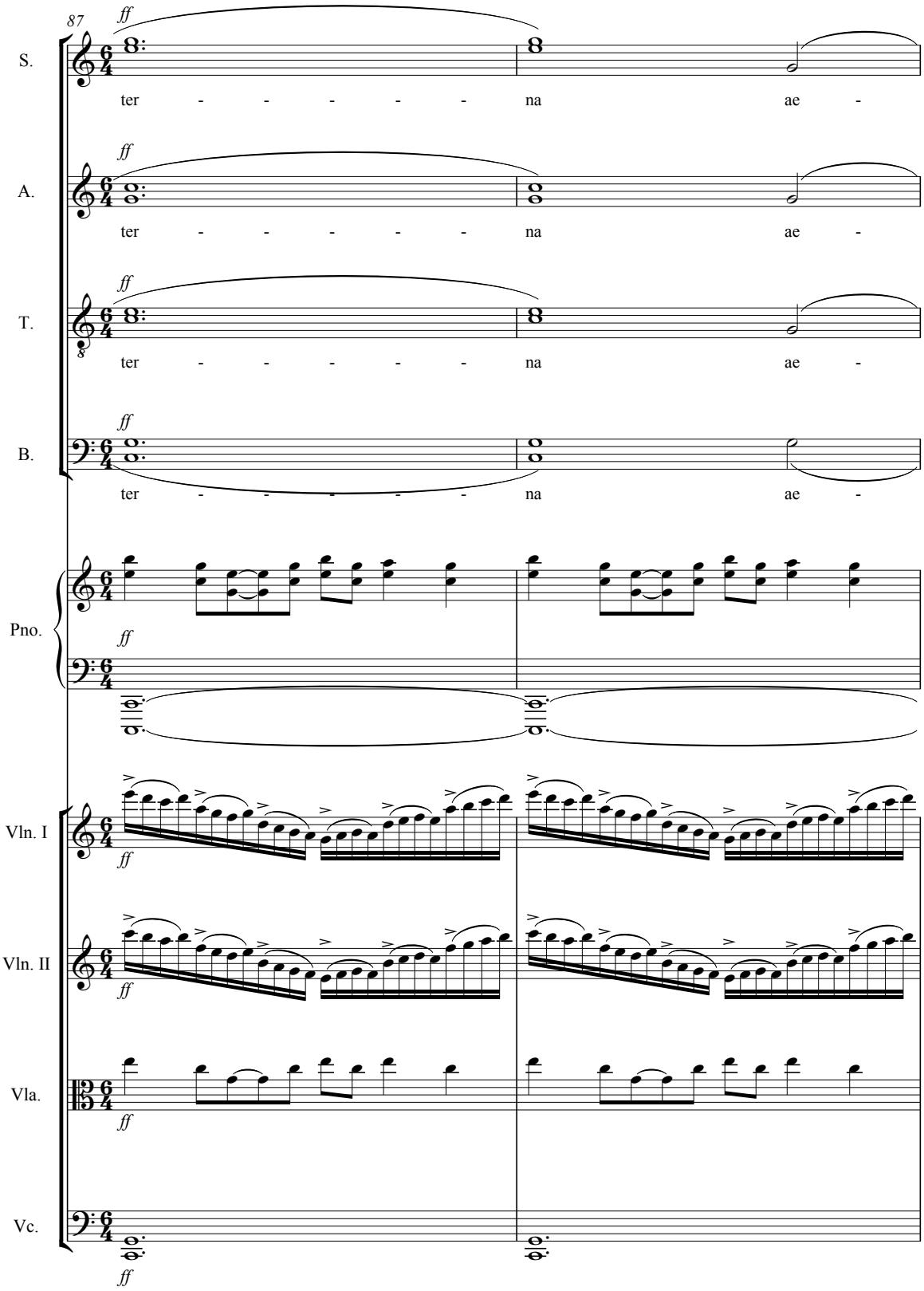

71
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
f
mp
f
f
mp
f
8va
pizz.
Vc.

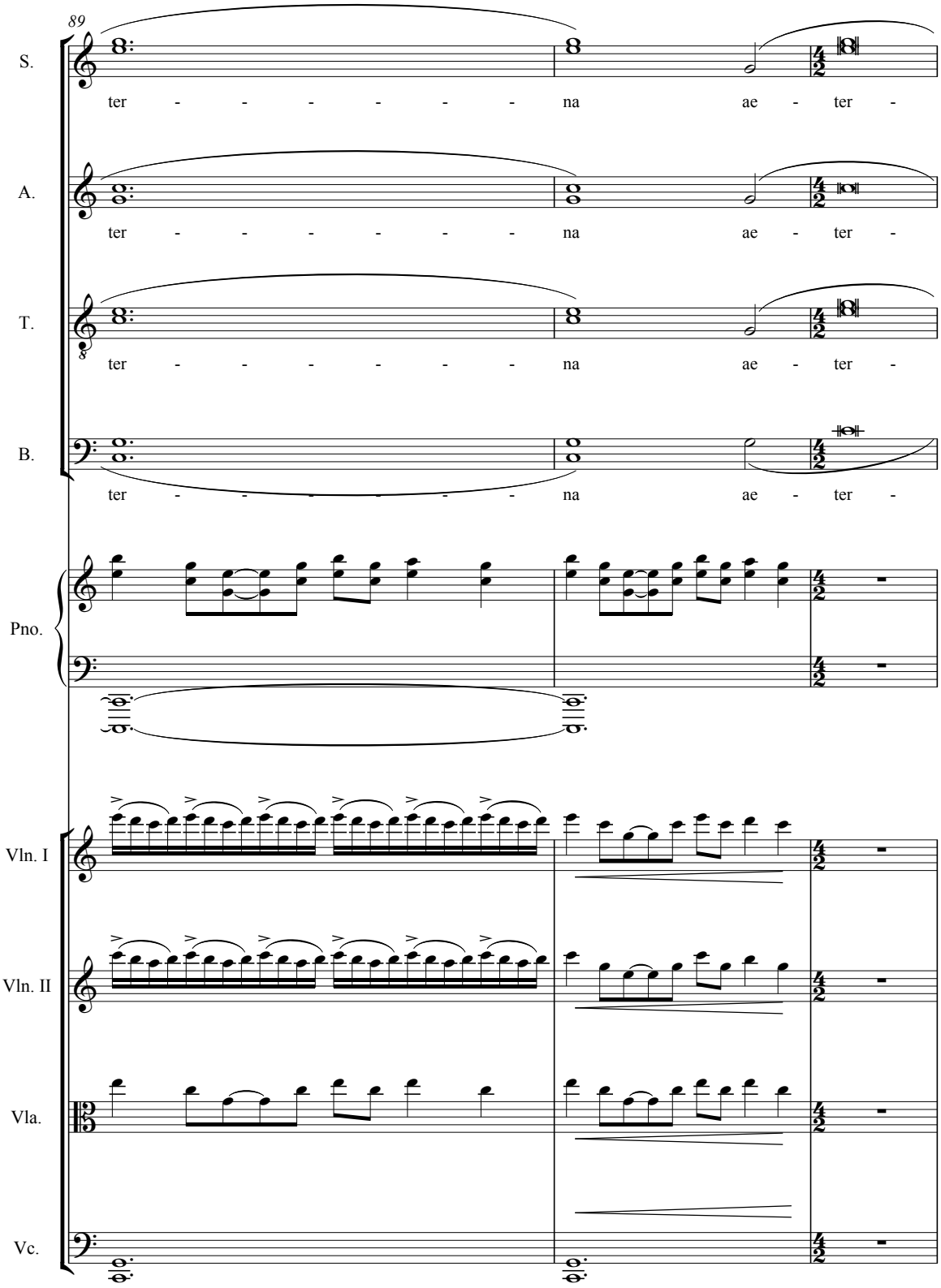

74
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
(8)
arco
Vla.
Vc.

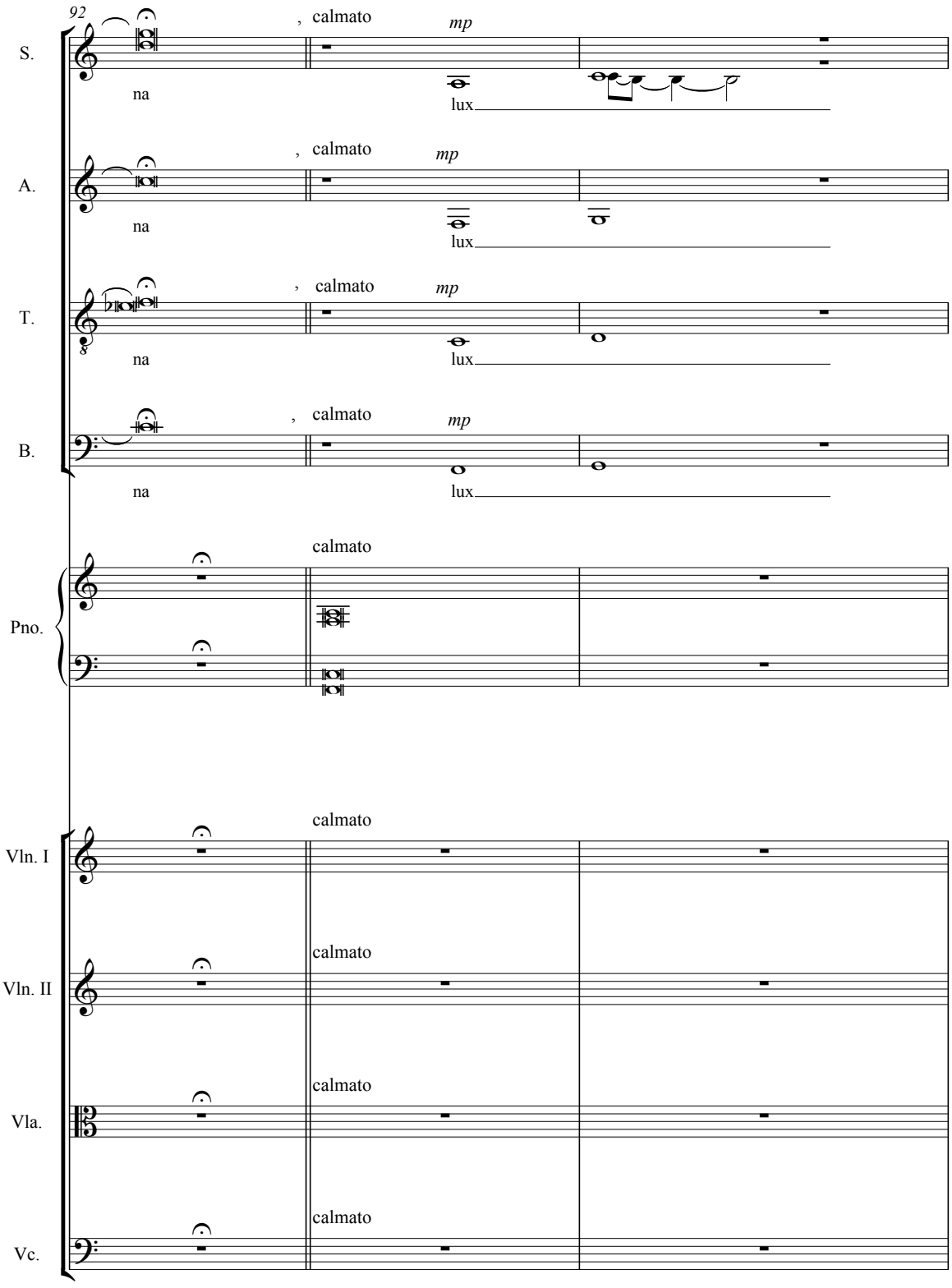

76
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
f
mp
ff

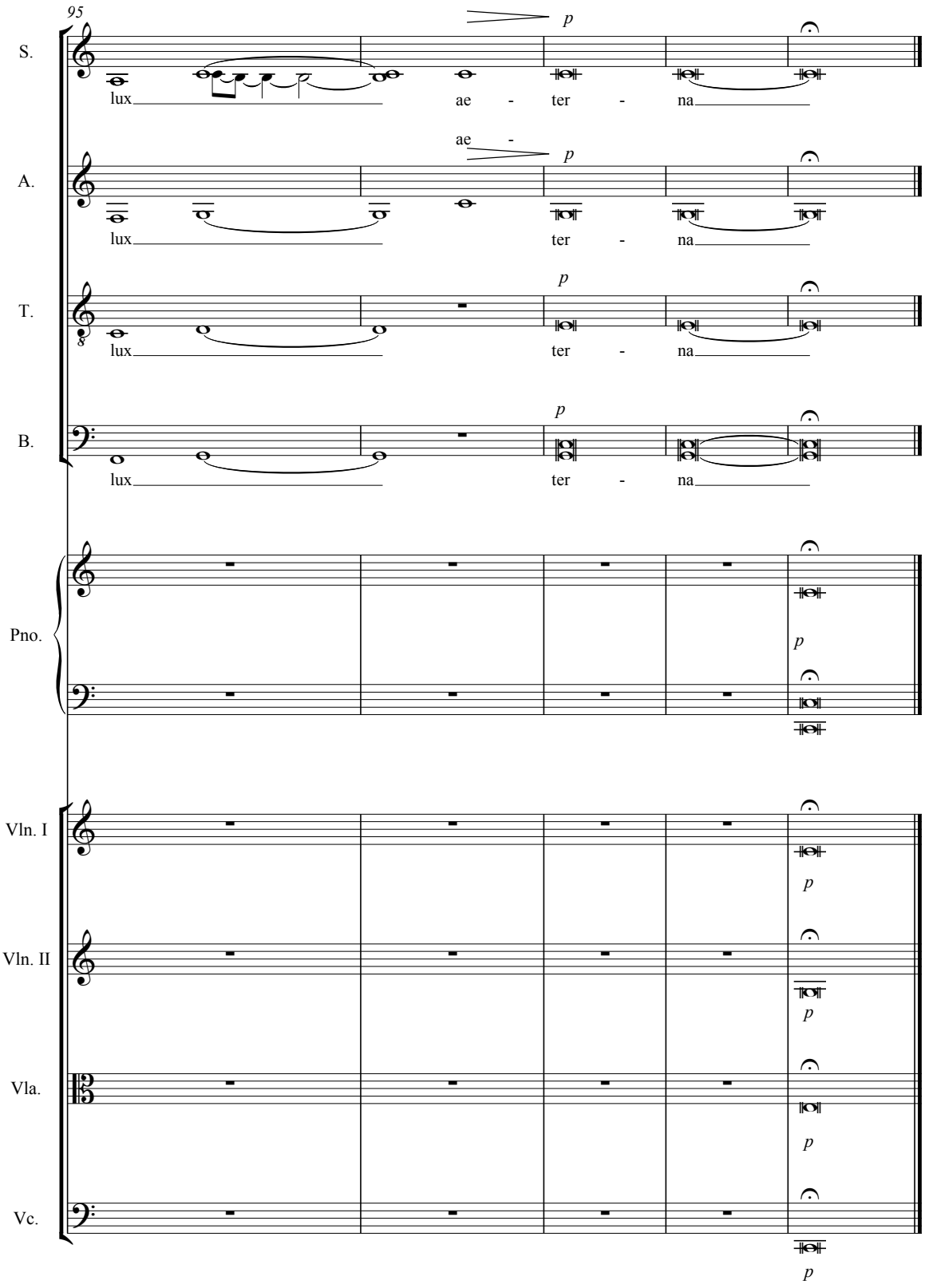

79
Pno.
cresendo poco a poco
Vln. I
f
mf
ff
ff
p cresendo poco a poco
Vln. II
f
mf
ff
ff
p cresendo poco a poco
Vla.
f
mf
ff
p cresendo poco a poco
Vc.
82
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ff


85
S.
ae -
A.
ae -
T.
ae -
B.
ae -
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
f


87
S.
A.
T.
B.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ff
ter - - - - - na ae -


89
S.
ter - - - - - - - na ae - ter -
A.
ter - - - - - - - na ae - ter -
T.
ter - - - - - - - na ae - ter -
B.
ter - - - - - - - na ae - ter -
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


92
S.
, calmato
mp
na
lux
A.
, calmato
mp
na
lux
T.
, calmato
mp
na
lux
B.
, calmato
mp
na
lux
Pno.
calmato
Vln. I
calmato
Vln. II
calmato
Vla.
calmato
Vc.
calmato


95
S.
A.
T.
B.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
lux
ae - ter - na
p