# *Plainer Sailing*

[2012]

Aaron Holloway-Nahum

www.aaronhollowaynahum.com

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Full Score

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**Duration:** 10 minutes

**SCORE IN C**

**Instrumentation**

Solo Soprano
Flute
Bb Clarinet
**(Solo Strings)**
Violin 1, 2
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass
Piano

**Programme Note**

*Plainer Sailing* was written for *The Riot Ensemble,* and was premiered by them on an LSO Discovery Concert on 17 June, 2012. The instruments used in the piece are exactly the same line-up as *Song Offerings* (by Jonathan Harvey), and the work is dedicated to him. The piece sets the words of a poem by Sasha Dugdale, whom I met at the 2011 Jerwood Opera Writing Course in Aldeburgh.

The full title of her poem is "*Plainer Sailing (Alzheimer's) for A.W."* For me, the revealing text of *Plainer Sailing* is the central quatrain that unleashes a central question of life:

> She too surveyed the calm, and was concerned:
> What to make of all the signs, for the sea is rarely blank.
> And there was a circling, a moment returned
> When daughter was mother, and there the sun shrunk

The poem is this collection of images and – as it's put here - 'signs'. The question it asks is: *What to make of all the signs?*

The music doesn't provide a specific answer. It isn't a manifesto, nor do I see music as a philosophical argument. It's more of a record of me exploring that question, and I hope it's heard as an invitation for the listener to join me in considering the question.

*For Jonathan Harvey*

# Plainer Sailing

Words: Sasha Dugdale
*Red House,* Oxford Poets, 2011
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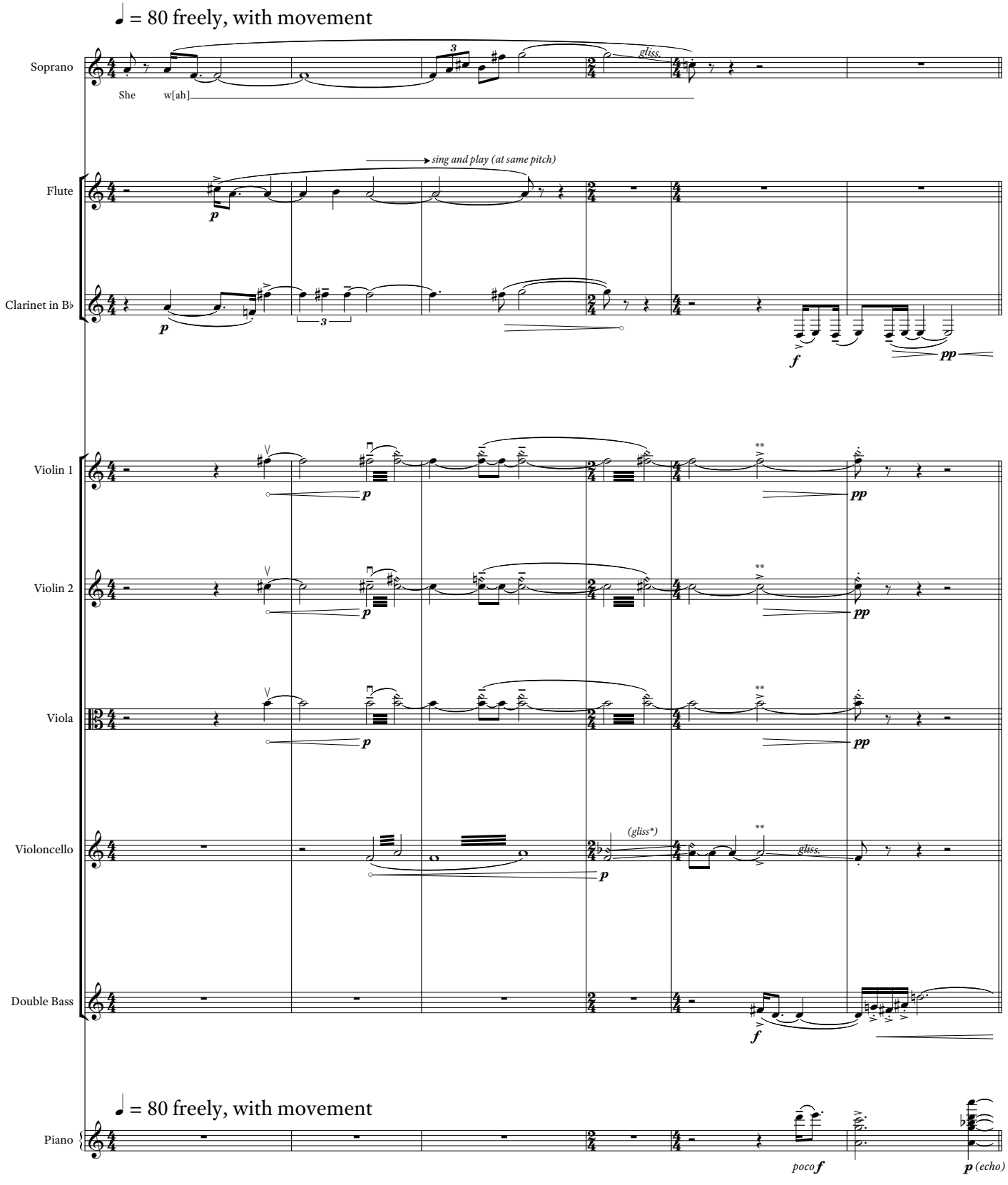
Aaron Holloway-Nahum
2012




*Strings: glissandi always smooth and evenly-paced, lasting for the full duration of the indicated note. Avoid bow changes at the beginning or arrival points.
**Strings: All accents with ties to them are 'vibrato accents'. The note is accentuated with a momentary left hand vibrato rather than the bow.

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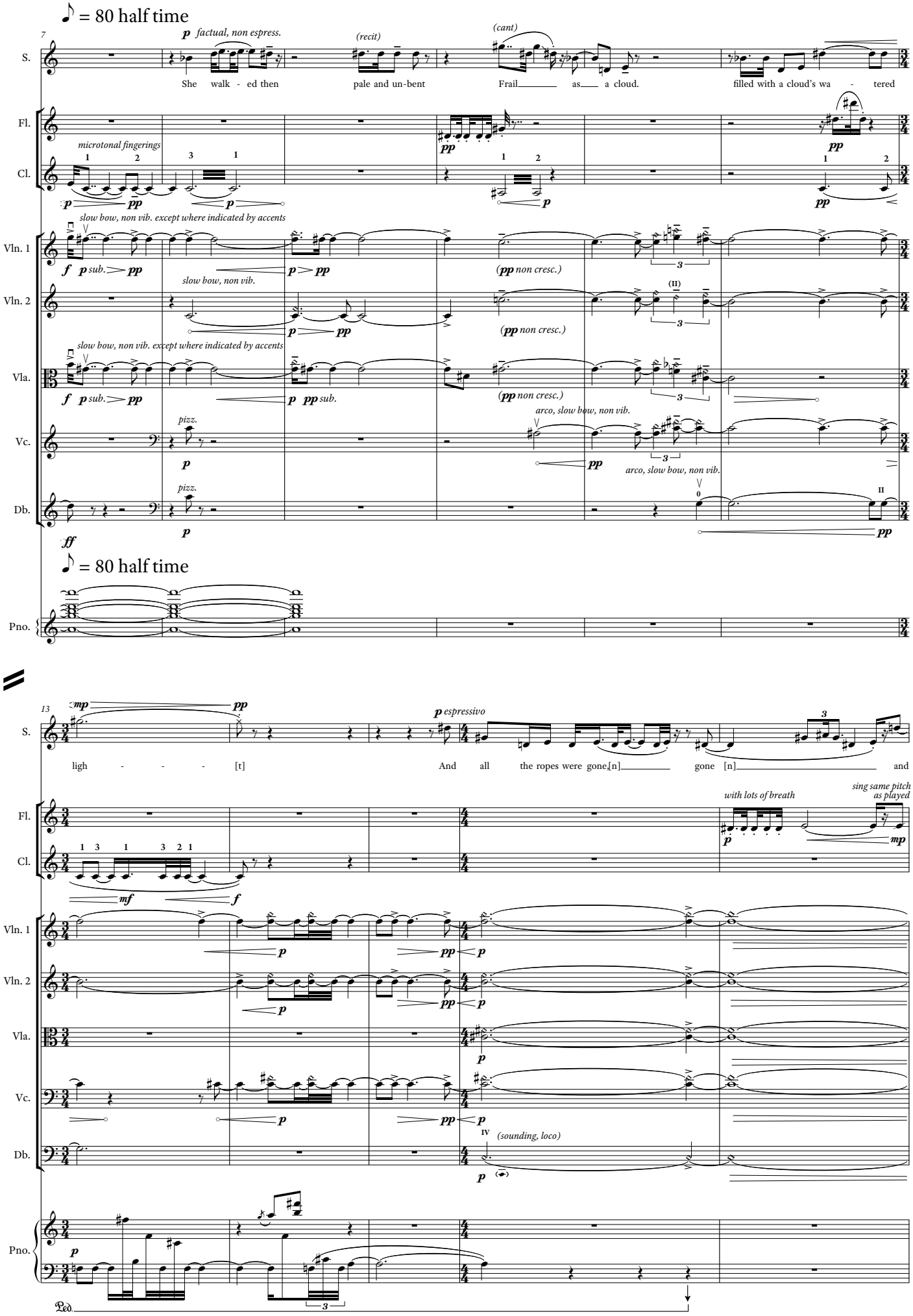
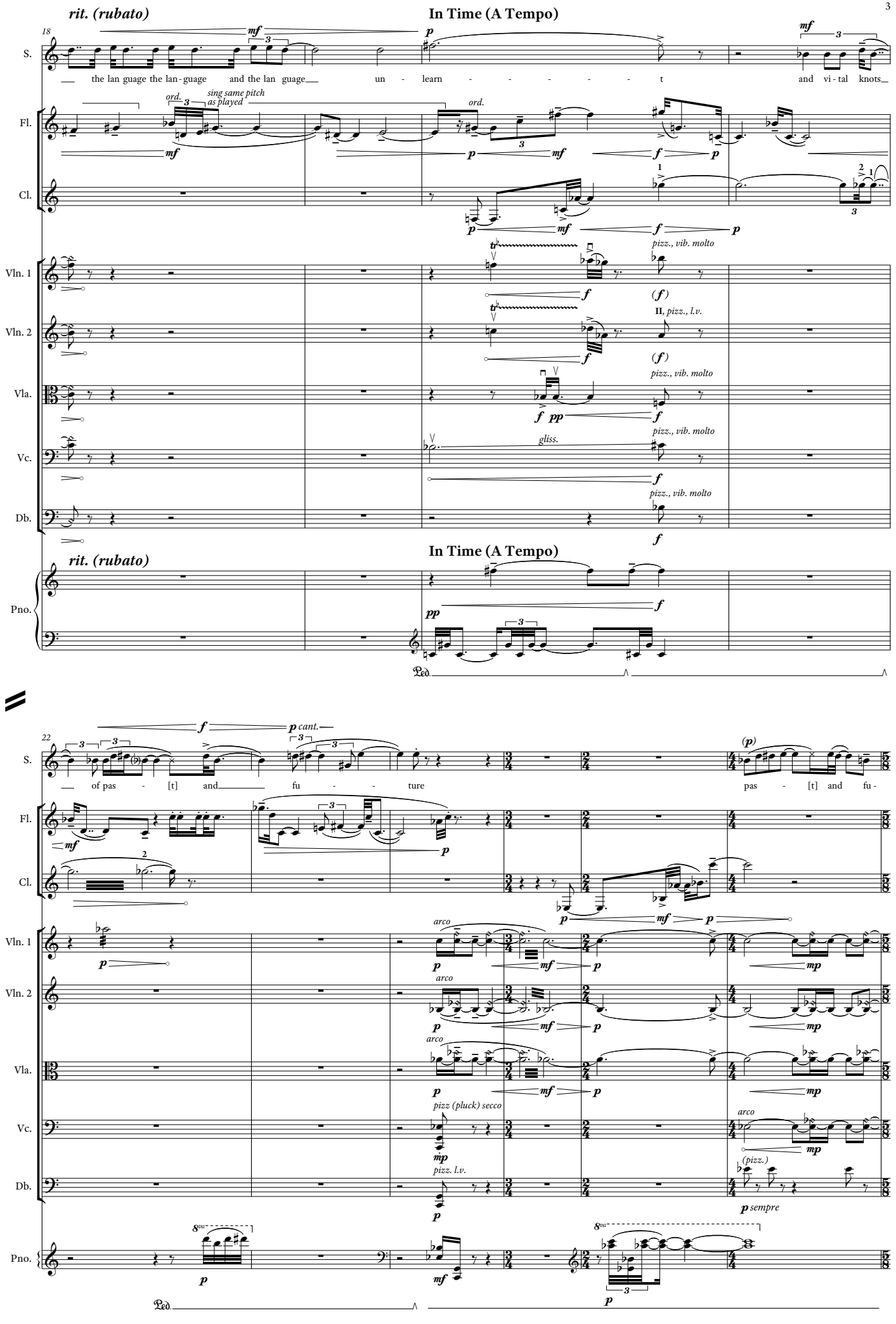
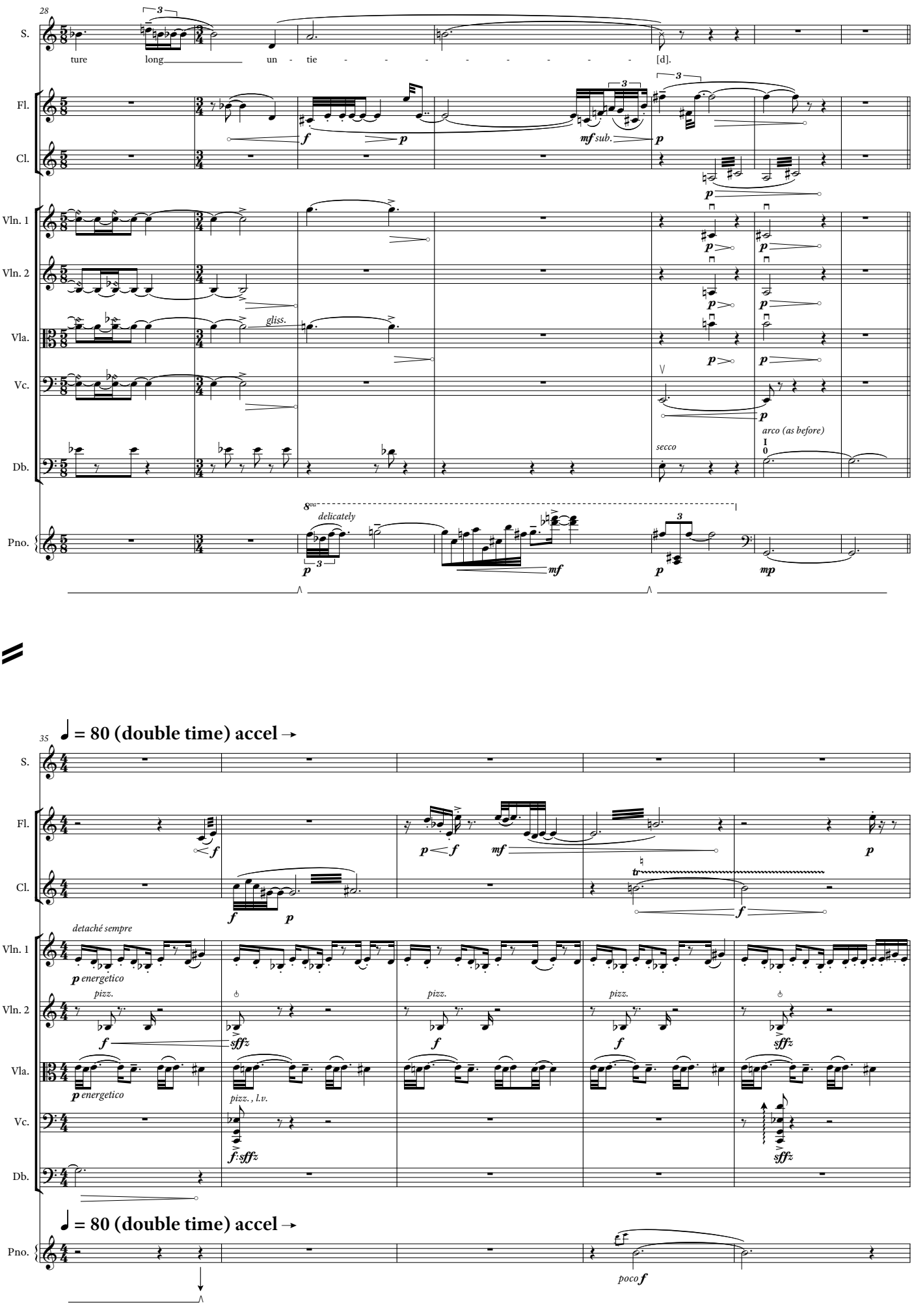
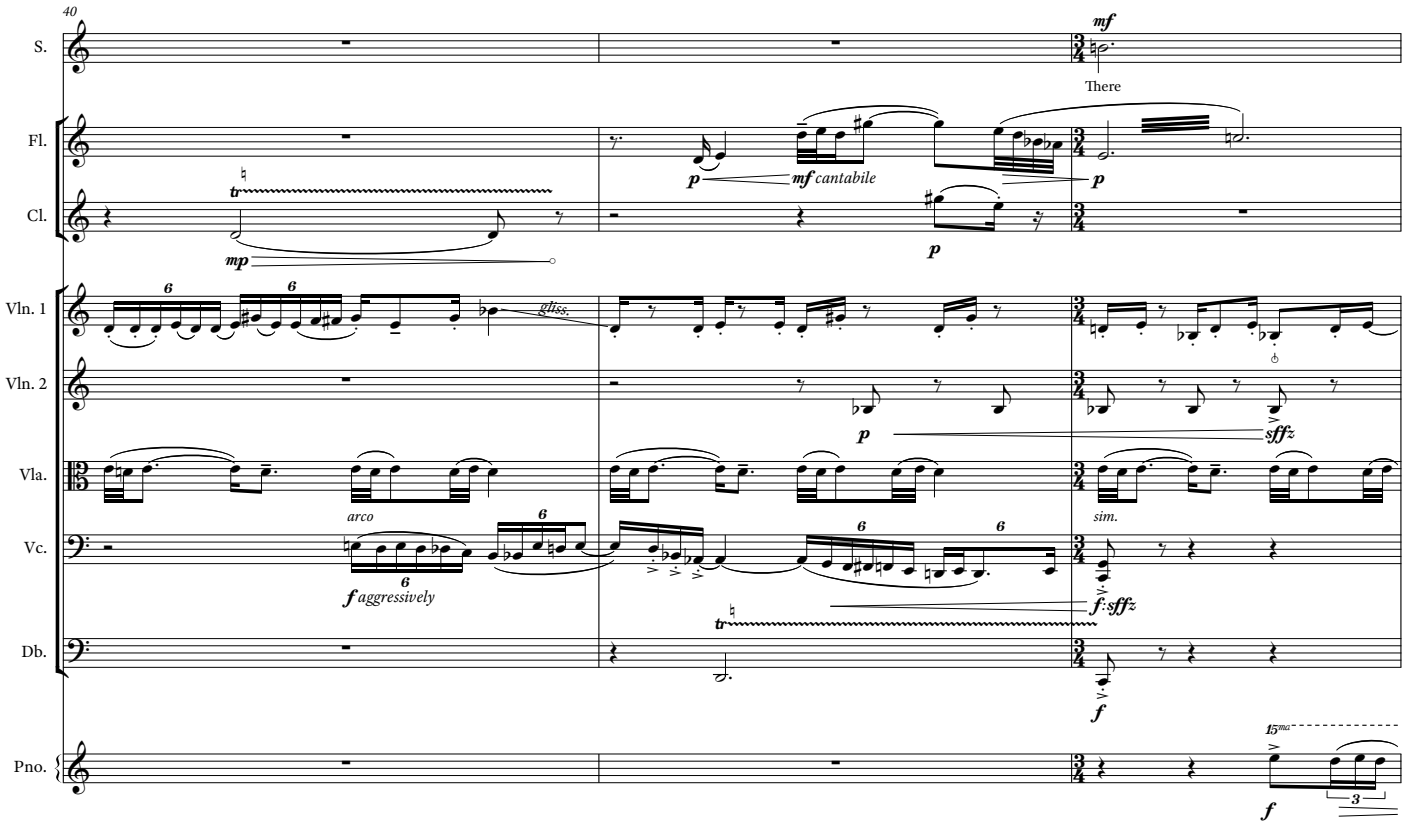
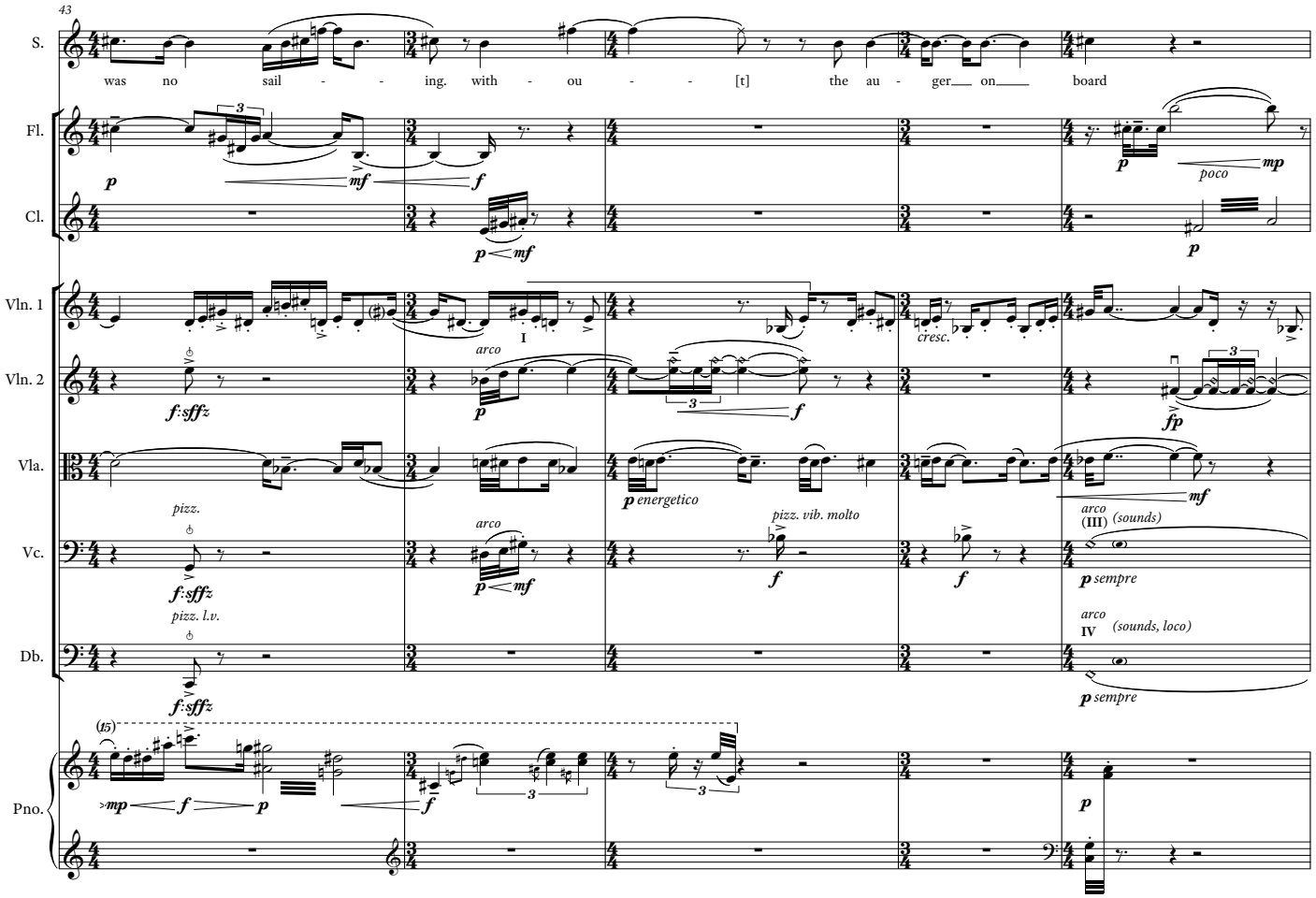
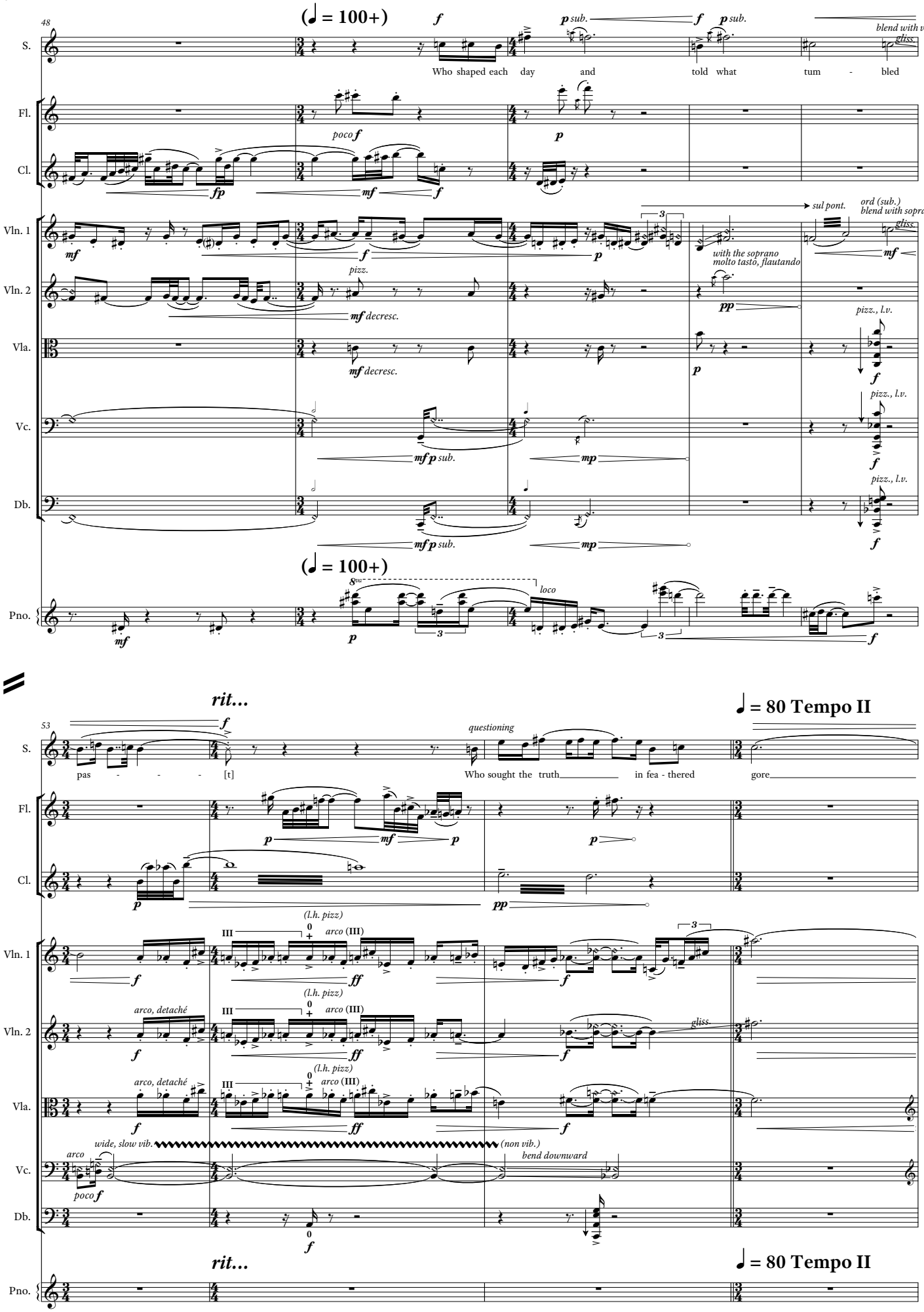

♪ = 80 half time
7
p factual, non espress.
(recit)
(cant)
S.
She walk - ed then pale and un-bent Frail as a cloud. filled with a cloud's wa - tered
Fl.
Cl.
microtonal fingerings
slow bow, non vib. except where indicated by accents
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
pizz.
arco, slow bow, non vib.
(pp non cresc.)
♪ = 80 half time
Pno.
13
mp
pp
p espressivo
ligh - - - [t] And all the ropes were gone, [n] gone [n] and
with lots of breath
sing same pitch as played
(sounding, loco)
Ped.

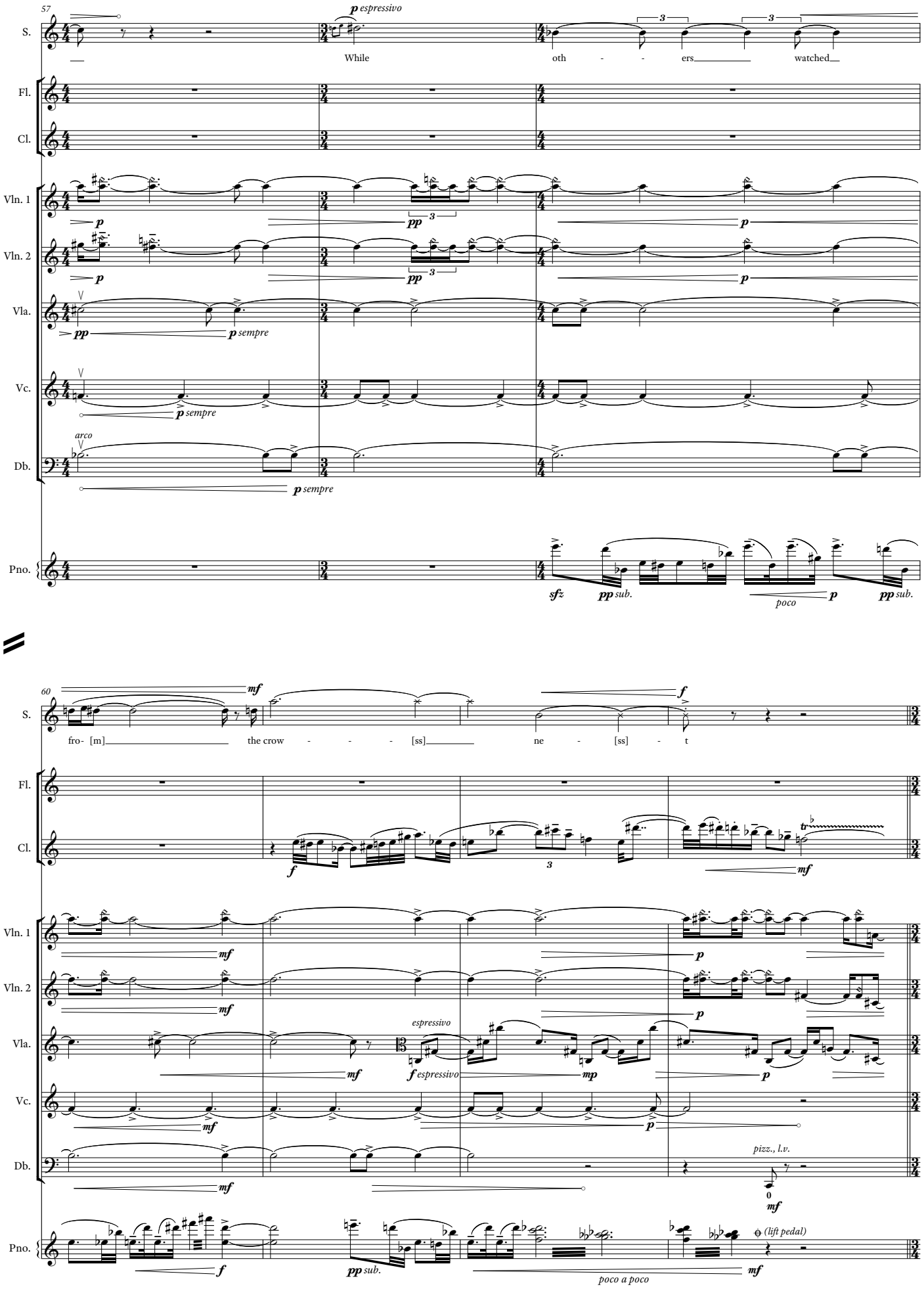

rit. (rubato)
In Time (A Tempo)
18
S.
the lan guage the lan - guage and the lan guage un - learn - - - - - - t and vi - tal knots
Fl.
Cl.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
ord.
sing same pitch as played
pizz., vib. molto
II, pizz., l.v.
gliss.
rit. (rubato)
In Time (A Tempo)
22
of pas - [t] and fu - - - ture
pas - [t] and fu -
cant.
arco
pizz (pluck) secco
pizz. l.v.
(pizz.)
sempre

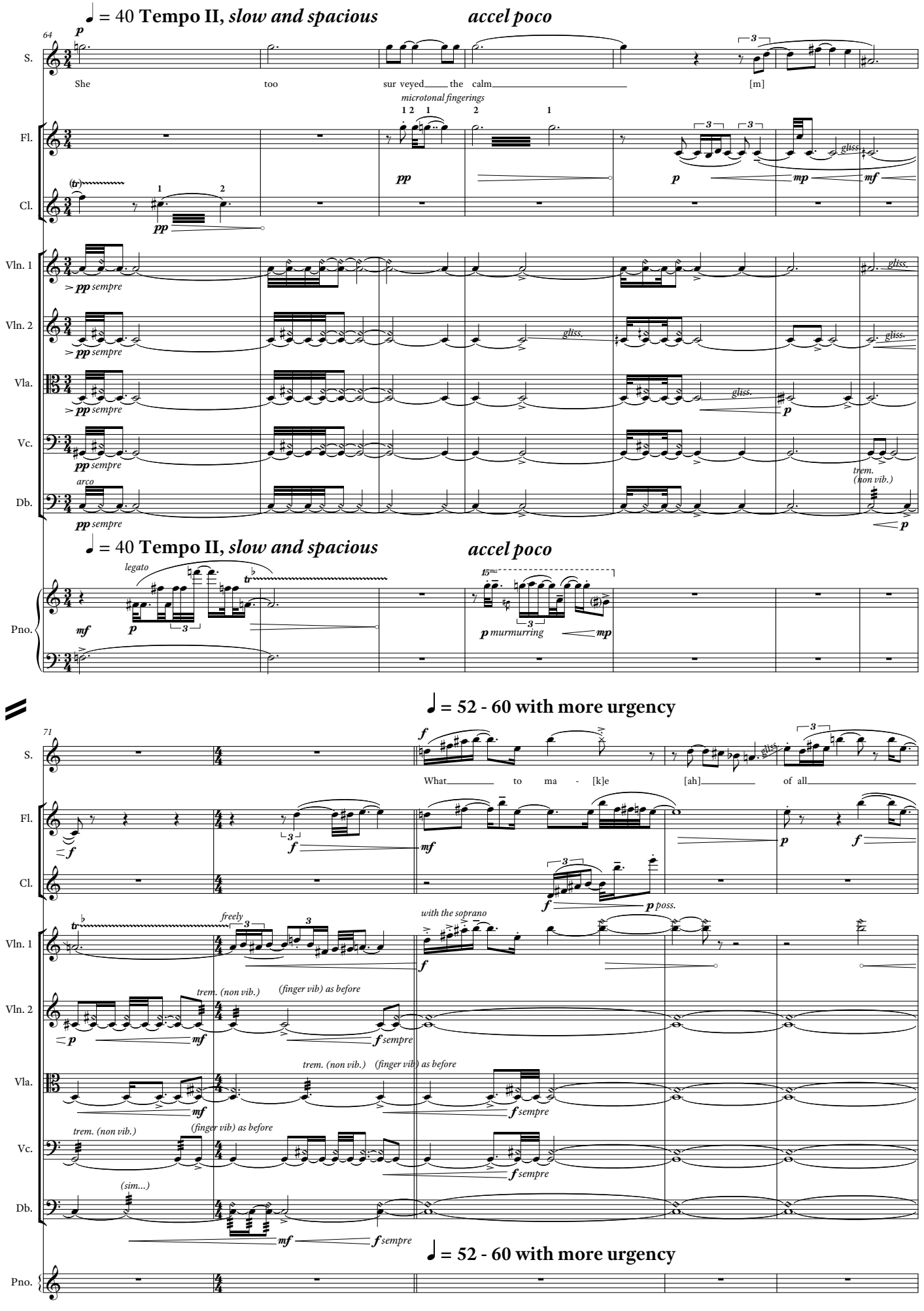

28
S.
ture long un - tie - - - - - - - - [d].
Fl.
Cl.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
gliss.
secco
arco (as before)
delicately
35
= 80 (double time) accel →
detaché sempre
energetico
pizz.
pizz., l.v.
poco f

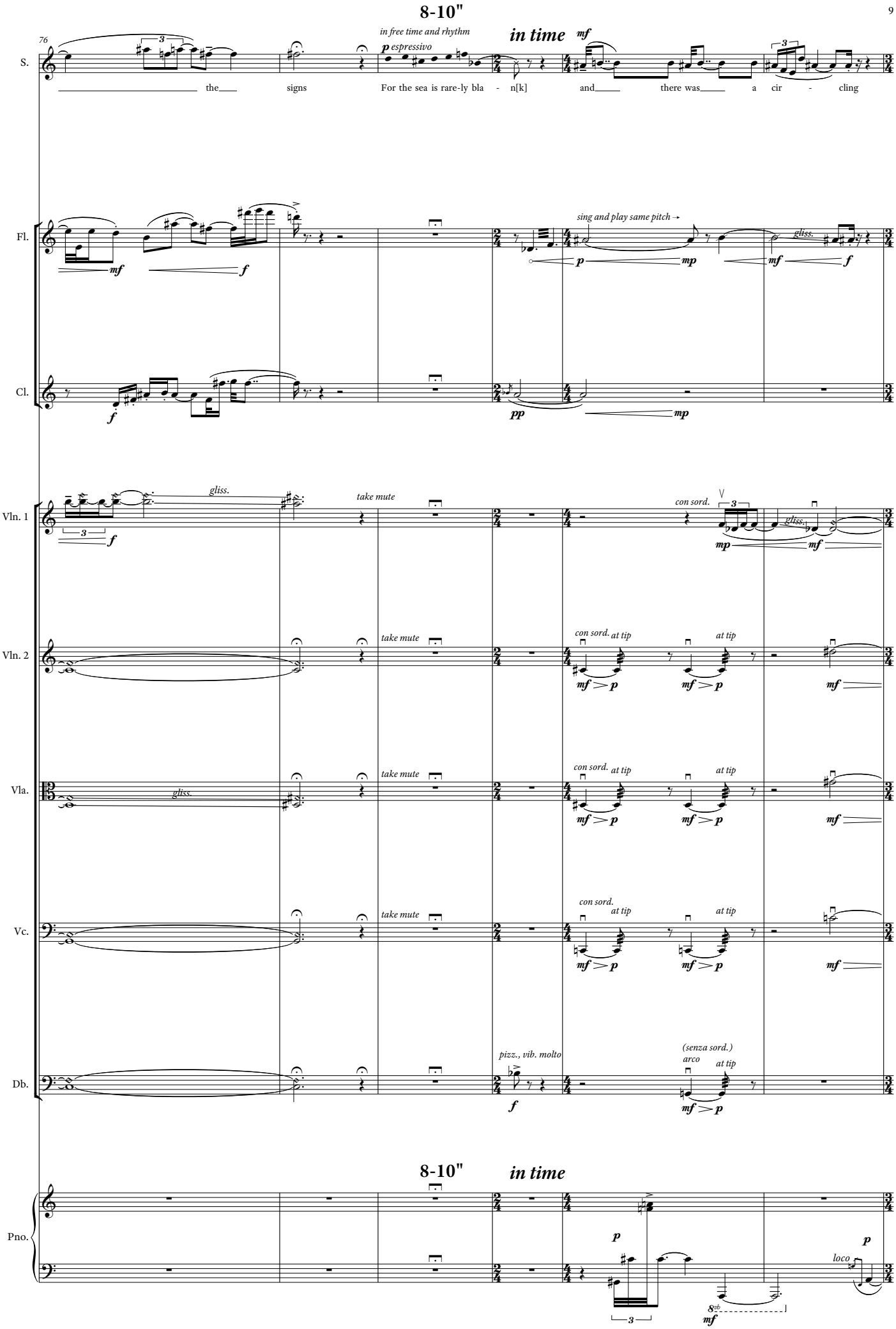

40
S.
There
Fl.
Cl.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
gliss.
arco
sim.
cantabile
aggressively

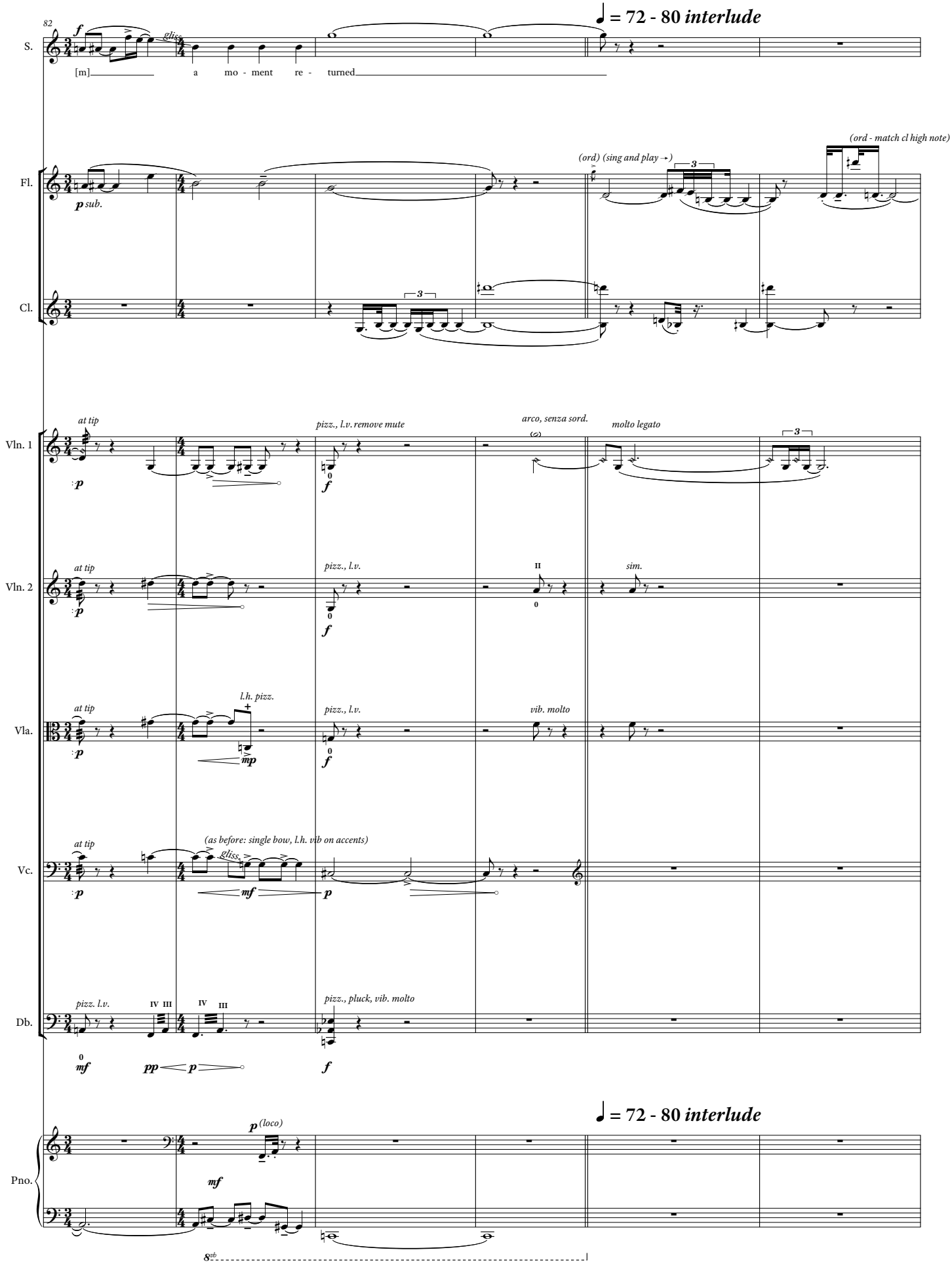

43
S.
was no sail - - ing. with - ou - - [t] the au - ger on board
Fl.
Cl.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
poco
arco
pizz.
pizz. l.v.
pizz. vib. molto
energetico
cresc.
sempre
(sounds)
(sounds, loco)

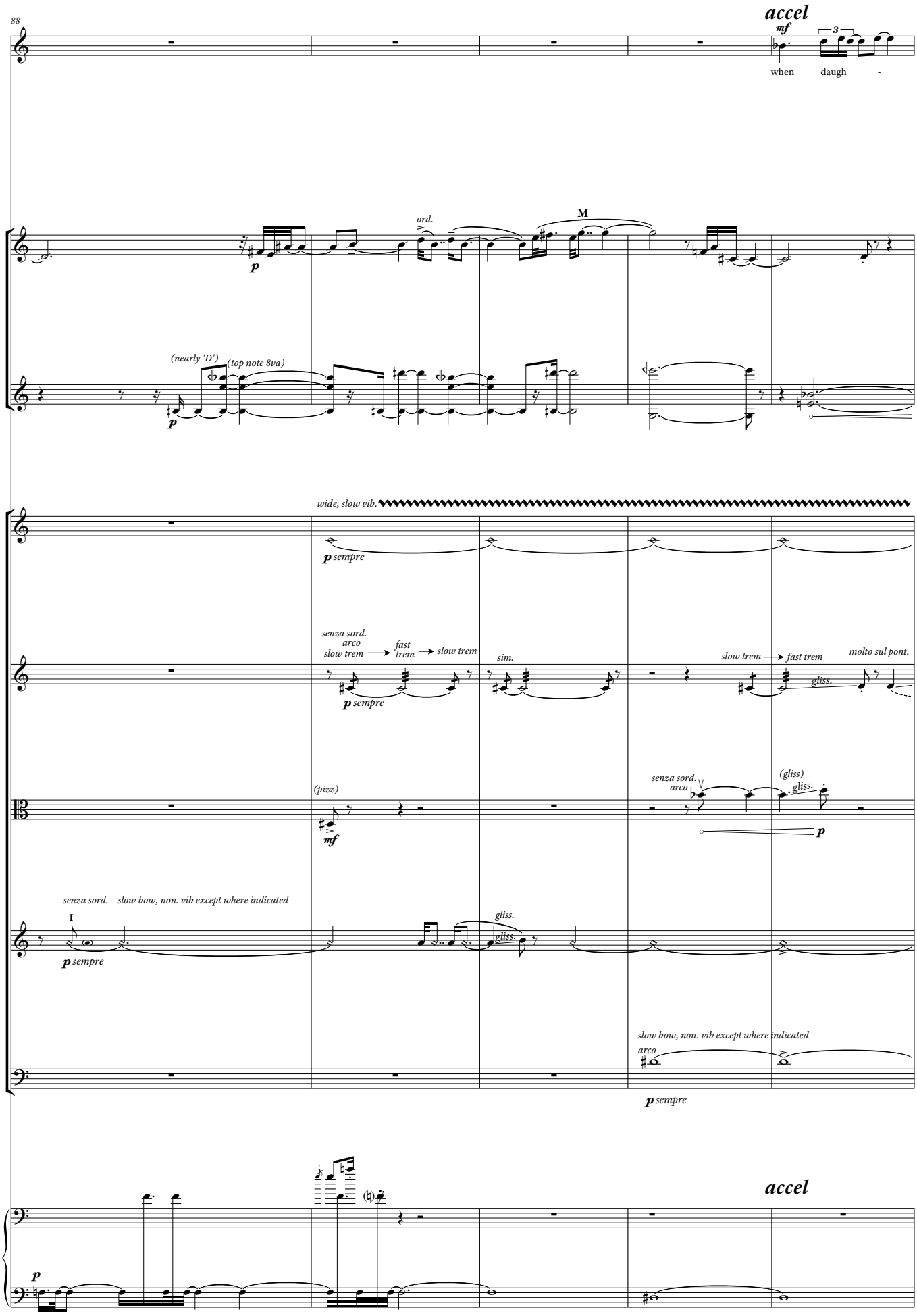

48
(♩ = 100+)
S.
Who shaped each day and told what tum - bled
blend with violin
gliss.
Fl.
Cl.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
sul pont.
ord (sub.)
blend with soprano
with the soprano
molto tasto, flautando
pizz., l.v.
Pno.
(♩ = 100+)
loco
53
rit...
(♩ = 80 Tempo II
questioning
pas - - - [t]
Who sought the truth in fea - thered gore
(l.h. pizz)
arco (III)
arco, detaché
wide, slow vib.
(non vib.)
bend downward
rit...
(♩ = 80 Tempo II

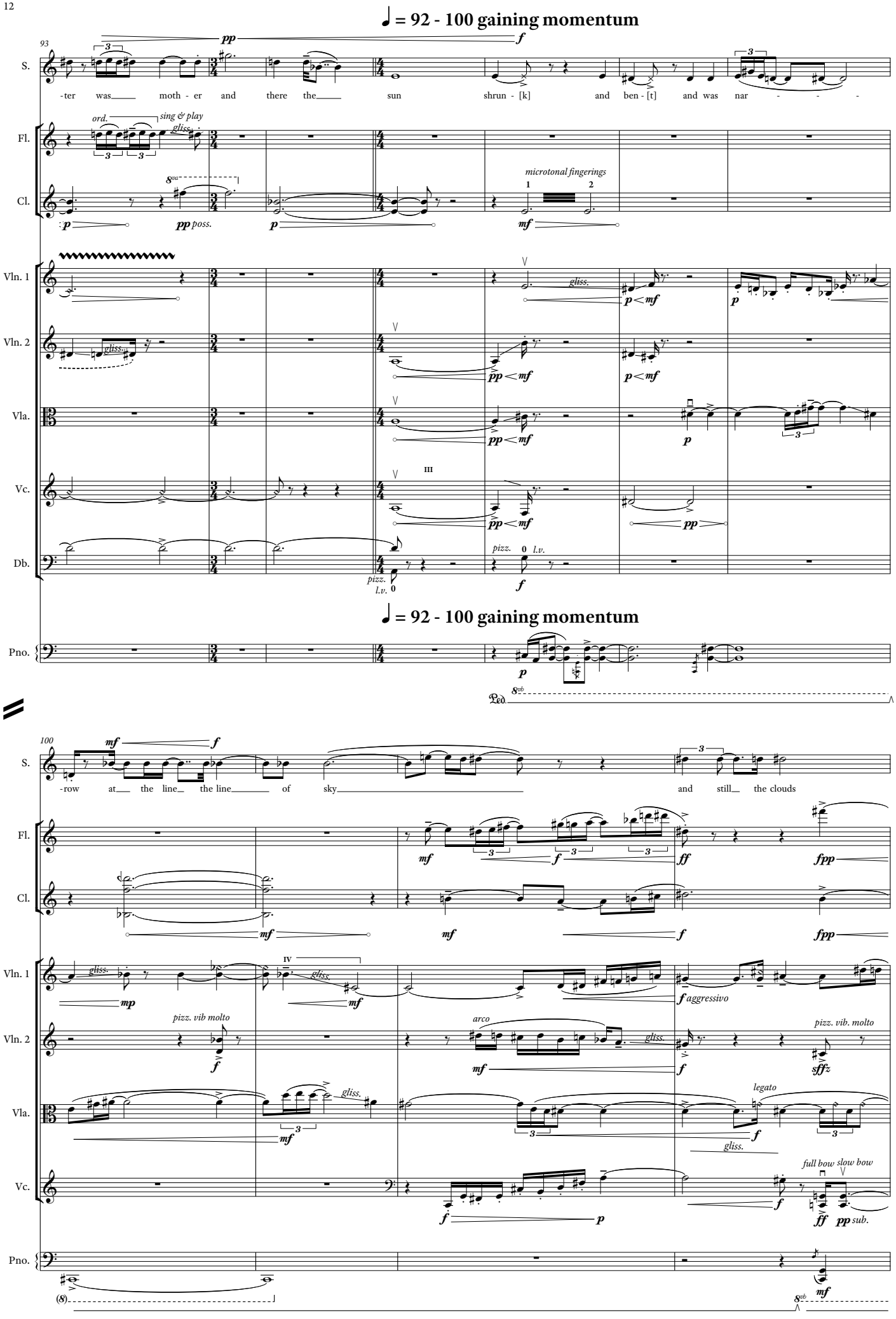

57
S.
Fl.
Cl.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
p espressivo
While
oth - - ers watched
p
pp
p sempre
arco
sfz
pp sub.
poco
60
mf
fro- [m] the crow - - - [ss] ne - [ss] - t
f
espressivo
mp
pizz., l.v.
(lift pedal)
poco a poco

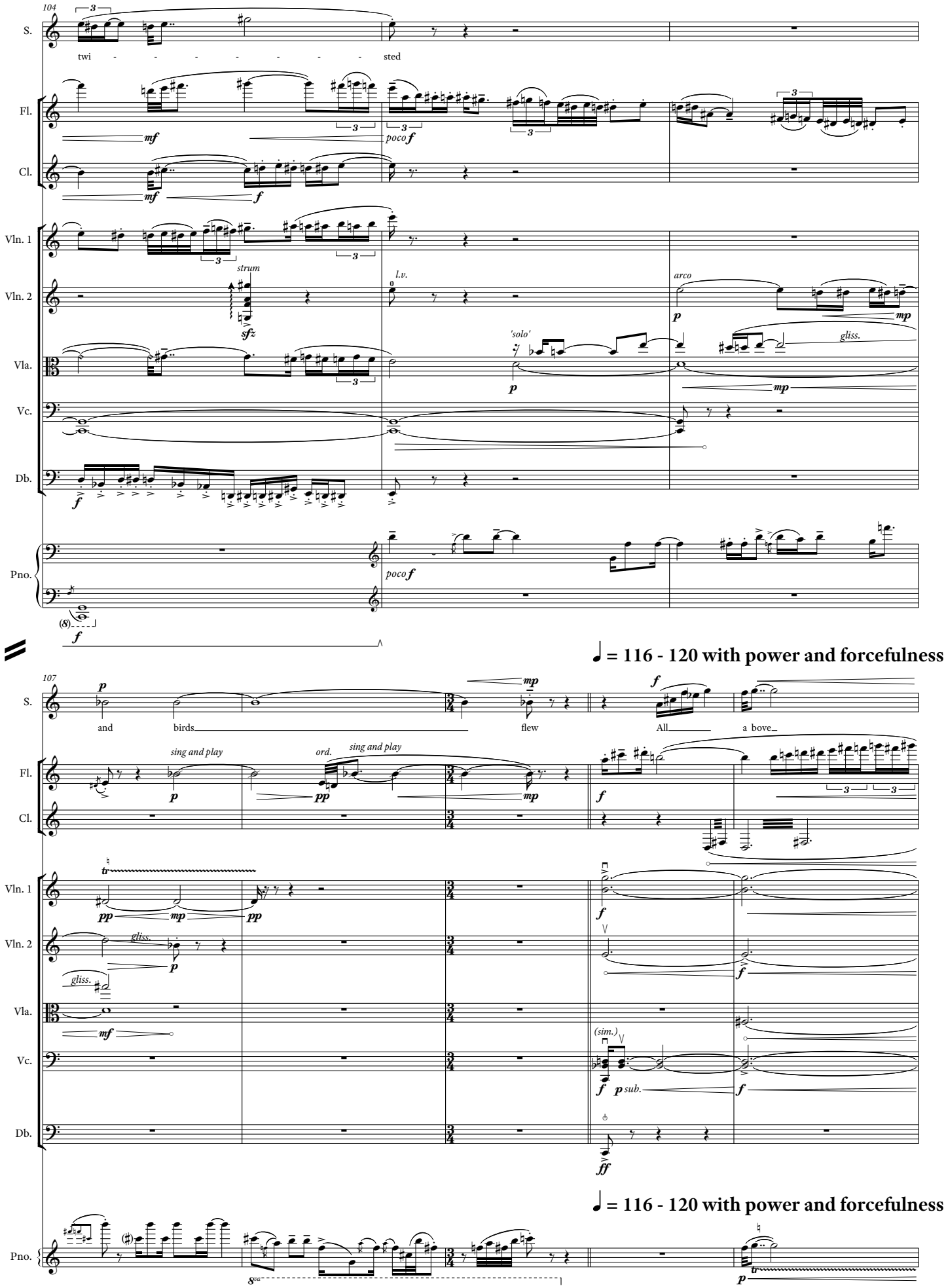

♩ = 40 Tempo II, slow and spacious
accel poco
64
S.
She too sur veyed the calm [m]
microtonal fingerings
Fl.
Cl.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
pp sempre
arco
gliss.
trem. (non vib.)
Pno.
legato
murmurring
♩ = 52 - 60 with more urgency
71
What to ma - [k]e [ah] of all
poss.
freely
with the soprano
trem. (non vib.)
(finger vib) as before
sempre
(sim...)

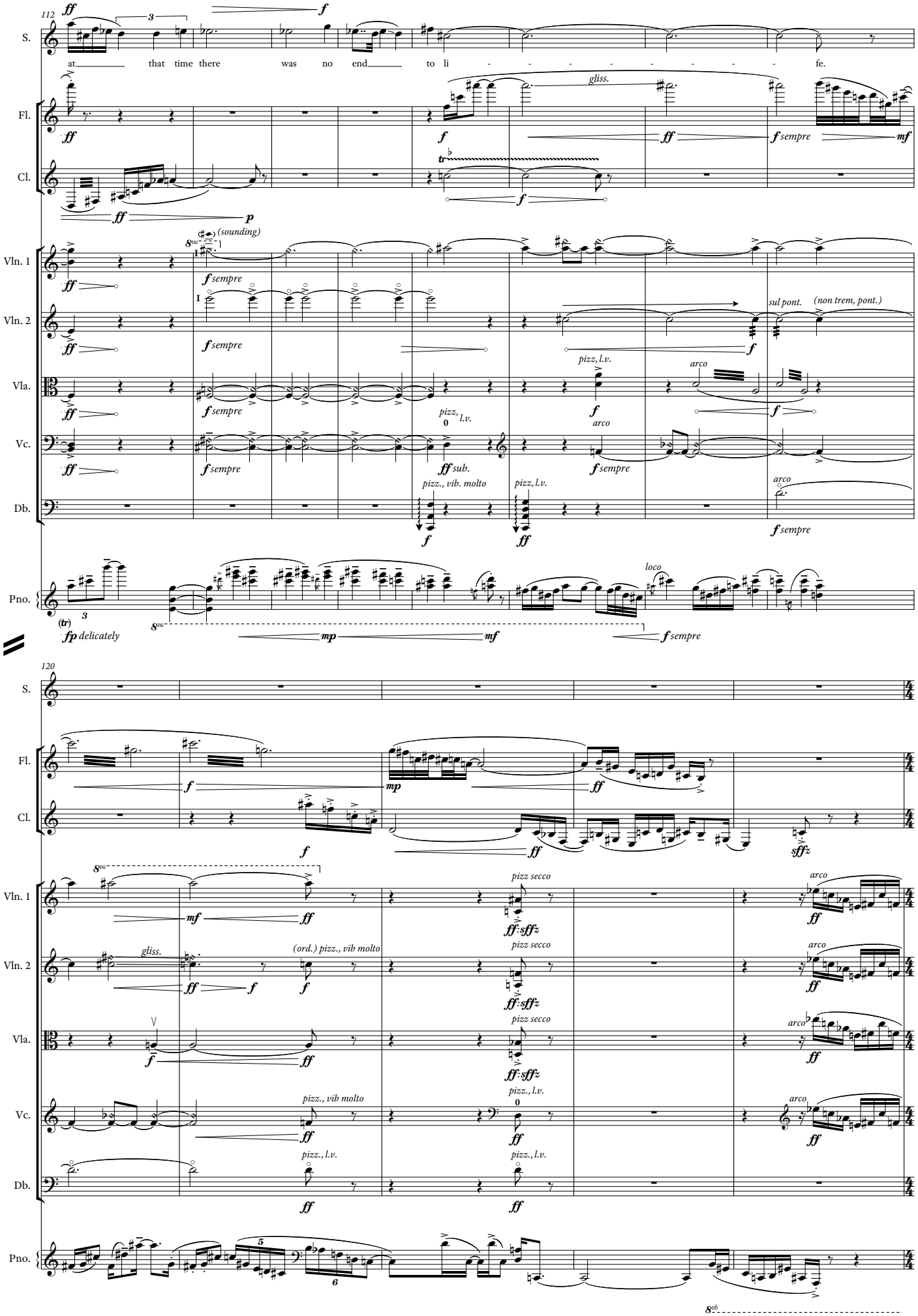

8-10"
in time
76
S.
in free time and rhythm
p espressivo
mf
the signs For the sea is rare-ly bla - n[k] and there was a cir - cling
Fl.
mf
f
sing and play same pitch →
p
mp
mf
gliss.
f
Cl.
f
pp
mp
Vln. 1
gliss.
take mute
con sord.
mp
mf
Vln. 2
take mute
con sord.
at tip
mf > p
Vla.
gliss.
take mute
Vc.
take mute
Db.
pizz., vib. molto
f
(senza sord.)
arco
Pno.
p
loco
8vb
mf

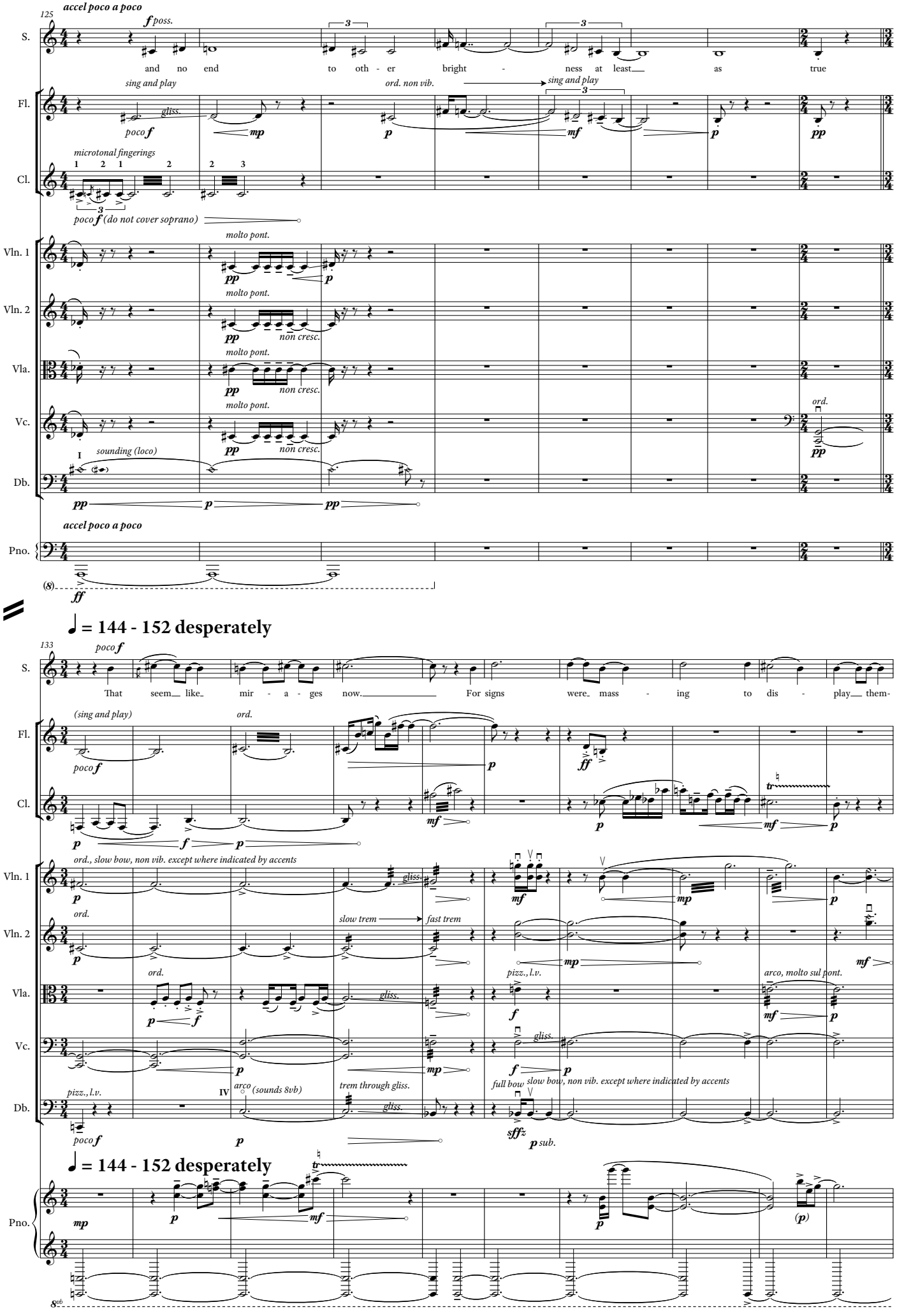

82
♩ = 72 - 80 interlude
S.
[m] a mo - ment re - turned
Fl.
(ord - match cl high note)
(ord) (sing and play →)
Cl.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
at tip
pizz., l.v. remove mute
arco, senza sord.
molto legato
pizz., l.v.
sim.
l.h. pizz.
vib. molto
(as before: single bow, l.h. vib on accents)
pizz. l.v.
pizz., pluck, vib. molto
Pno.
(loco)
8vb

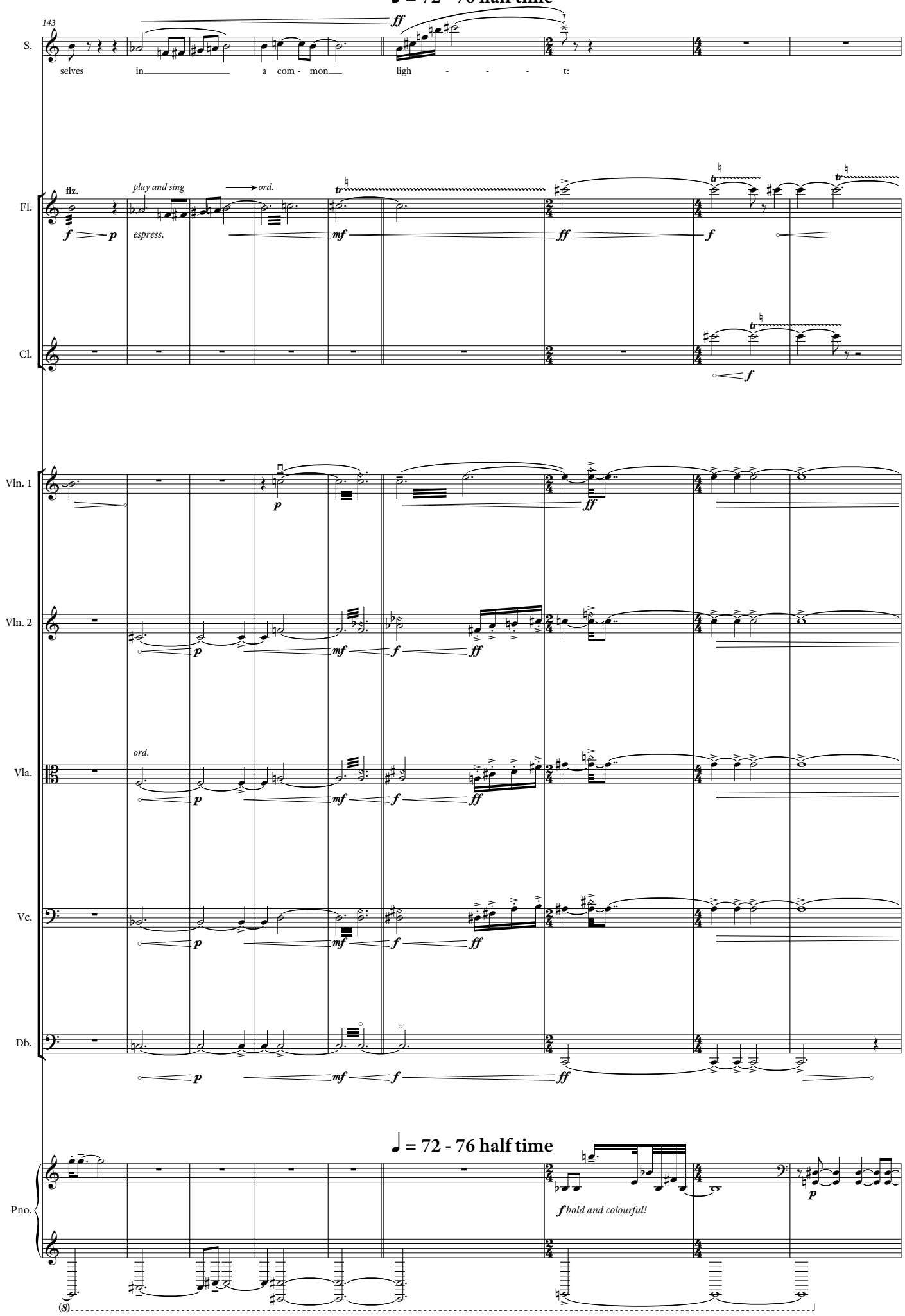

88
accel
mf
3
S.
when daugh -
Fl.
p
ord.
M
(nearly 'D')
(top note 8va)
Cl.
p
wide, slow vib.
Vln. 1
p sempre
senza sord.
arco
slow trem
fast trem
slow trem
sim.
Vln. 2
p sempre
slow trem
fast trem
molto sul pont.
gliss.
(pizz)
mf
Vla.
senza sord.
arco
(gliss)
gliss.
p
senza sord.
slow bow, non. vib except where indicated
I
p sempre
gliss.
gliss.
Vc.
slow bow, non. vib except where indicated
arco
Db.
p sempre
accel
p
Pno.

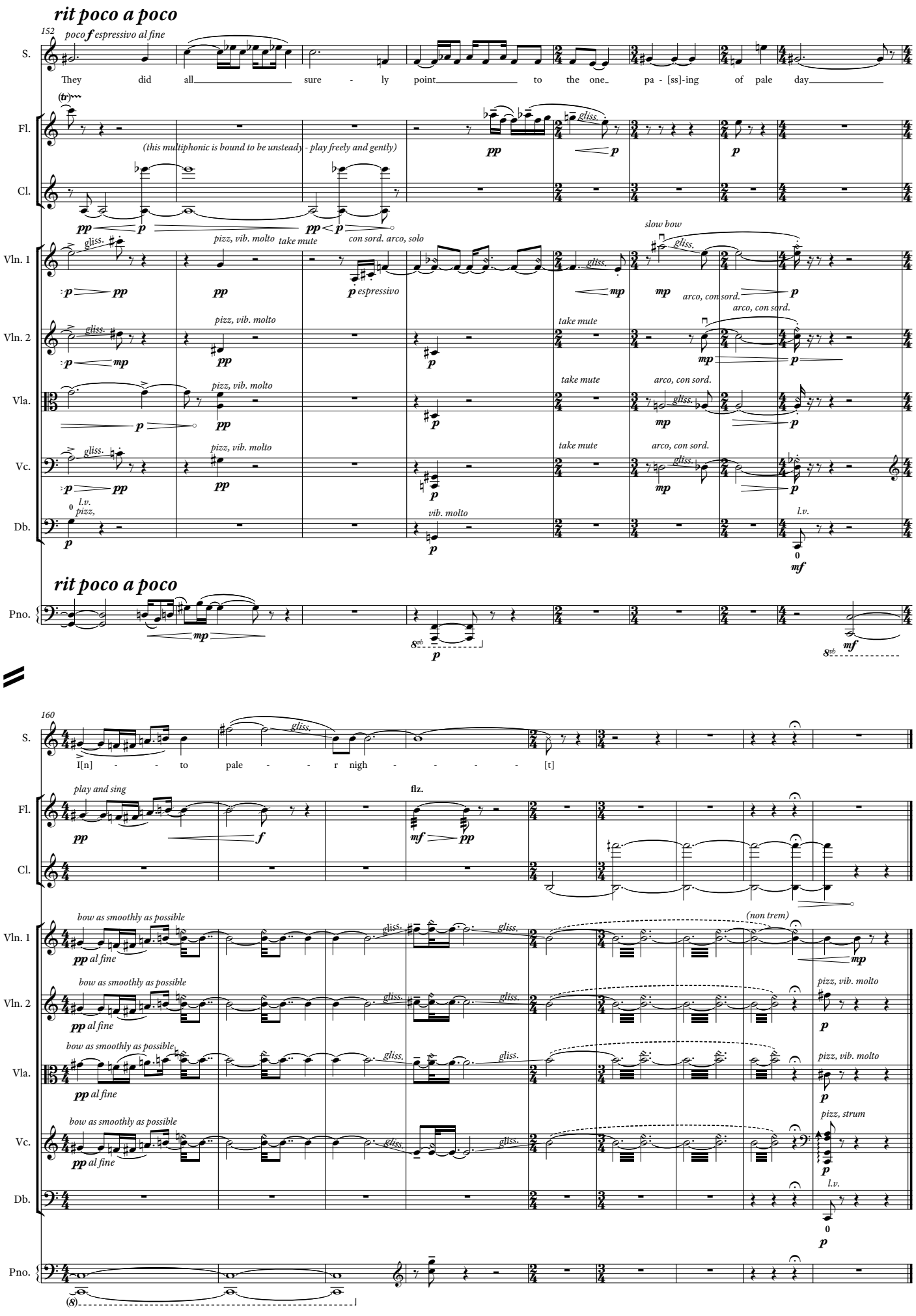

♩ = 92 - 100 gaining momentum
93
pp
f
S.
-ter was moth - er and there the sun shrun - [k] and ben - [t] and was nar - - -
Fl.
ord.
sing & play
gliss.
Cl.
8va
microtonal fingerings
1
2
p
pp poss.
p
mf
Vln. 1
gliss.
p < mf
p
Vln. 2
gliss.
pp < mf
p < mf
Vla.
pp < mf
p
Vc.
III
pp < mf
pp
Db.
pizz.
l.v.
0
pizz.
l.v.
0
f
♩ = 92 - 100 gaining momentum
Pno.
p
8vb
Ped.
100
mf
f
S.
-row at the line the line of sky and still the clouds
Fl.
mf
f
ff
fpp
Cl.
mf
mf
f
fpp
Vln. 1
gliss.
mp
IV
gliss.
mf
f aggressivo
Vln. 2
pizz. vib molto
f
arco
mf
gliss.
f
pizz. vib. molto
sffz
Vla.
gliss.
mf
legato
f
gliss.
Vc.
full bow slow bow
f
p
f
ff
pp sub.
Pno.
(8)
8vb
mf


104
S.
twi - - - - - - - - sted
Fl.
Cl.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
strum
l.v.
arco
'solo'
gliss.
poco f
(8)
♩ = 116 - 120 with power and forcefulness
107
and birds flew
All a bove
sing and play
ord.
sing and play
(sim.)
p sub.
8va
♩ = 116 - 120 with power and forcefulness


112
S.
at that time there was no end to li - - - - - - - - fe.
Fl.
Cl.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
Pno.
(sounding)
sempre
gliss.
sempre
mf
sul pont.
(non trem, pont.)
pizz, l.v.
arco
pizz, vib. molto
sub.
(tr)
fp delicately
mp
mf
loco
120
pizz secco
sffz
(ord.) pizz., vib molto
pizz., vib molto
pizz., l.v.
8va


accel poco a poco
125
S.
and no end to oth - er bright - ness at least as true
sing and play
ord. non vib.
sing and play
Fl.
microtonal fingerings
Cl.
poco f (do not cover soprano)
molto pont.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
non cresc.
Vla.
Vc.
ord.
sounding (loco)
I
Db.
accel poco a poco
Pno.
(8)
= 144 - 152 desperately
133
That seem like mir - a - ges now. For signs were mass - ing to dis - play them-
(sing and play)
ord., slow bow, non vib. except where indicated by accents
slow trem
fast trem
pizz., l.v.
arco, molto sul pont.
arco (sounds 8vb)
IV
trem through gliss.
full bow
slow bow, non vib. except where indicated by accents
sub.
= 144 - 152 desperately
8vb


♩ = 72 - 76 half time
143
S.
selves in a com - mon ligh - - - t:
Fl.
flz.
play and sing
ord.
espress.
Cl.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
ord.
Vc.
Db.
♩ = 72 - 76 half time
Pno.
bold and colourful!
(8)


rit poco a poco
152
poco f espressivo al fine
S.
They did all sure - ly point to the one pa - [ss]-ing of pale day
Fl.
(tr)
(this multiphonic is bound to be unsteady - play freely and gently)
gliss.
pp
p
Cl.
Vln. 1
pizz, vib. molto
take mute
con sord. arco, solo
slow bow
espressivo
arco, con sord.
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
l.v.
pizz,
vib. molto
mf
rit poco a poco
Pno.
mp
8vb
mf
160
I[n] - - to pale - - r nigh - - - - [t]
play and sing
flz.
bow as smoothly as possible
al fine
(non trem)
pizz, vib. molto
pizz, strum