colin broom

the deep

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the deep

2006

to katherine

about the piece

the deep refers neither to water nor the ocean specifically, which is of what i would assume most people would first think. rather, the title refers to a painting of the same name by american artist **jackson pollock** (1912-1956). it dates from 1953, and is one of a very few paintings completed in his final years.

the deep stands apart in pollock's oeuvre. while he is most famed for the many "dripped" paintings created between 1946 and 1950, in which he used sticks coated in paint to drip onto the canvas stretched on the floor and even poured directly from the can; *the deep*, like a number of the other paintings created in his last years, seems to represents a departure from these pouring techniques and a return to the use of the brush. it has been hypothesized that these late works were pollock searching for a way out of his "signature style" in which he had become somewhat trapped. this is something i personally identify with, and in a case of art mirroring other art, this composition was for me an attempt to move away from the very line orientated nature of my previous works and towards a sound somewhat more "vertical" or textural in character.

pollock's painting is largely white, comprising multiple layers of very intense brushwork. tearing straight up through the middle of this is a dark, black rift which seems to reach inwards, suggesting an almost infinite depth.

in contrast to the dripped works, which are on the whole characterized by an "all over" approach, resulting in an ultimately flat, surface-level texture, *the deep* is just this, and it is the depth suggested in this painting which interests me compositionally.

i tend to visualize musical structure as a series of interiors or rooms, through which the listener passes. my job then as a composer is to work out the exact size and shape of each of these spaces, their relationship to each other and thus the overall layout, and finally the route to be taken by the listener and how much time is spent in each space.

the space suggested to me by pollock's painting is cold, dark, severe and impoverished. it has no end, and leads only further inwards. it is at times cavernous and at others claustrophobic. ultimately it is empty, untouched and unyielding. yet despite this emptiness and this inhospitable character or perhaps because of it, i somehow also find it very beautiful. this, then, is the starting point for my piece.

note for pianist on *bisbigliando* section

bisbigliando is a term borrowed from harp technique, meaning "murmuring". unlike a traditional tremolo technique, which is essentially a rapid alternation between two notes or two chords, the bisbigliando in this piece should be an equally rapid but almost random fluctuation between several notes (as notated in the score). with the addition of the sostenuto pedal, the desired result should be a consistent chord which has a slightly shimmering, ever-shifting quality. to put it in even less technical terms: you wriggle your fingers on the correct keys, while keeping overall control of the dynamics and consistency of the texture. (note: in an earlier piece i referred to this effect as "random tremolando", but decided that sounded too much like an italian gameshow host.)

the intended effect is entirely textural; there should be no discernible melodic patterns nor rhythmic figurations. it should not reflect or imply the tempo of the piece in any way. the pianist should take care not to bring any one note of the chord into more prominence than any of the others (this is a particular danger with the outer notes of the chord, especially the lowest). additionally, an overall increase in volume over time should be avoided. s/he should use his/her ear to counteract the natural accumulatory effect that the sostenuto pedal has on the chord, so as to maintain a texture consistent both in dynamic and in timbre. if there is to be any miscalculation in dynamics during these sections it would be preferable to err on the side of being too quiet.

finally, the player should be careful of adopting one single fingering pattern for the entire duration of the chord. if for example, my fingering in the right hand is consistently 1,2,3,1,2,3,1,2,3.etc., the overall effect over an extended period will be the emergence of a rising three note melodic pattern, even with the sustain pedal down. the player should alter his/her fingering as needed to avoid any discernible patterns emerging, even easing off on a note if it becomes too prominent.

it goes without saying that the pedal sustain pedal should be held throughout a bisbig. chord, and used in the normal manner for a change of chord.

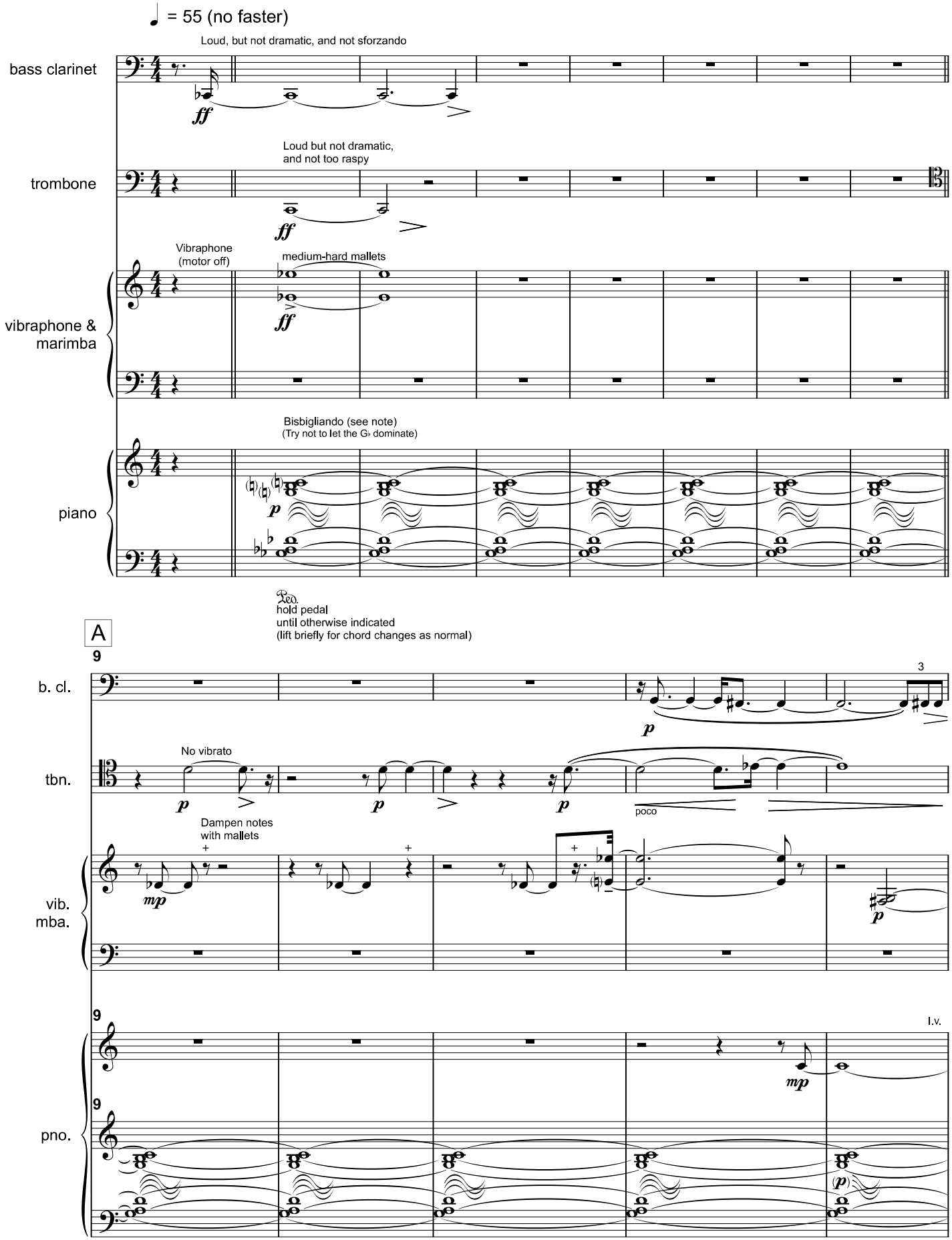
colin broom. may 2006.

bass clarinet
trombone (with f trigger)
vibraphone, doubling marimba
piano

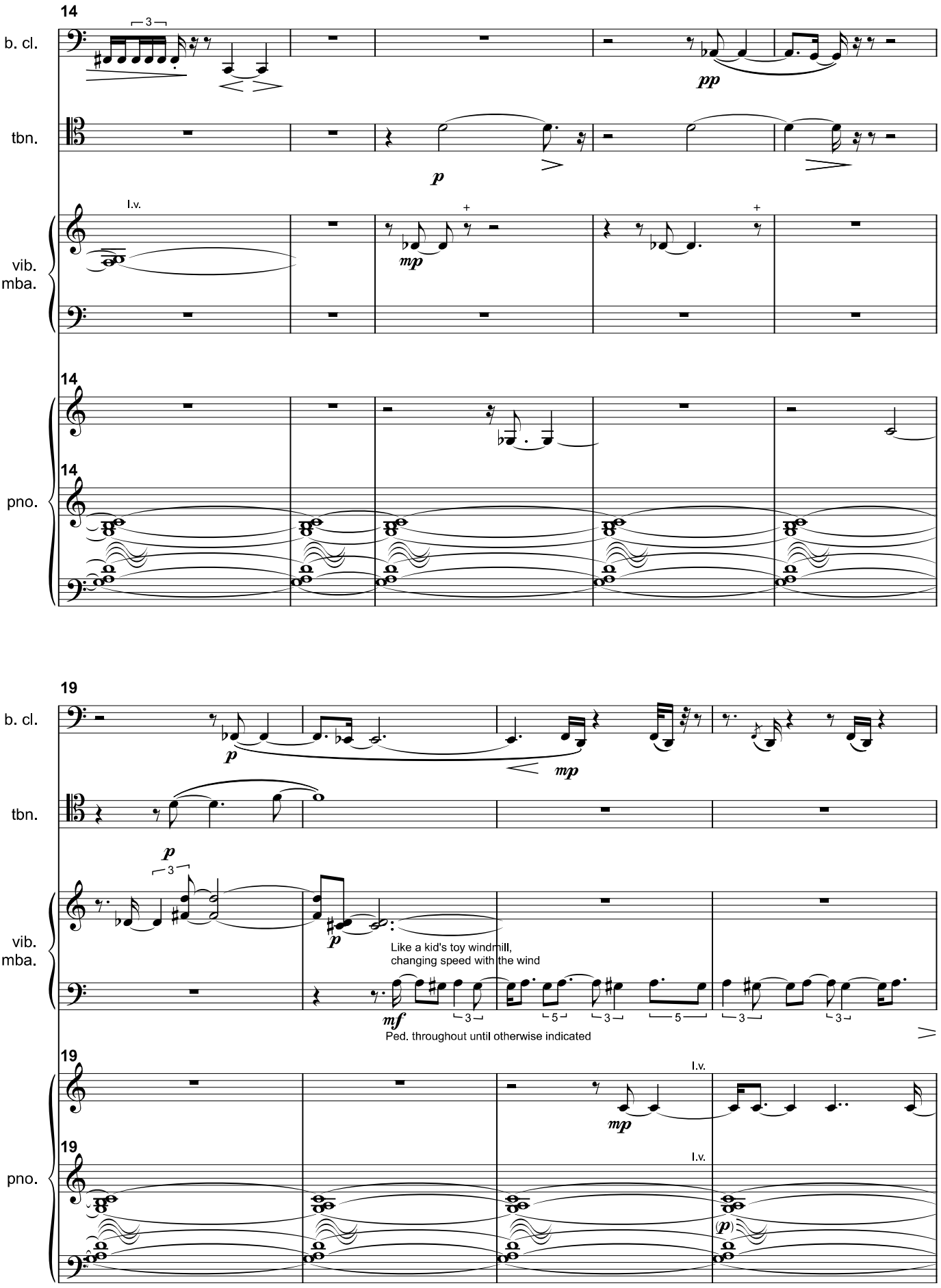
Score

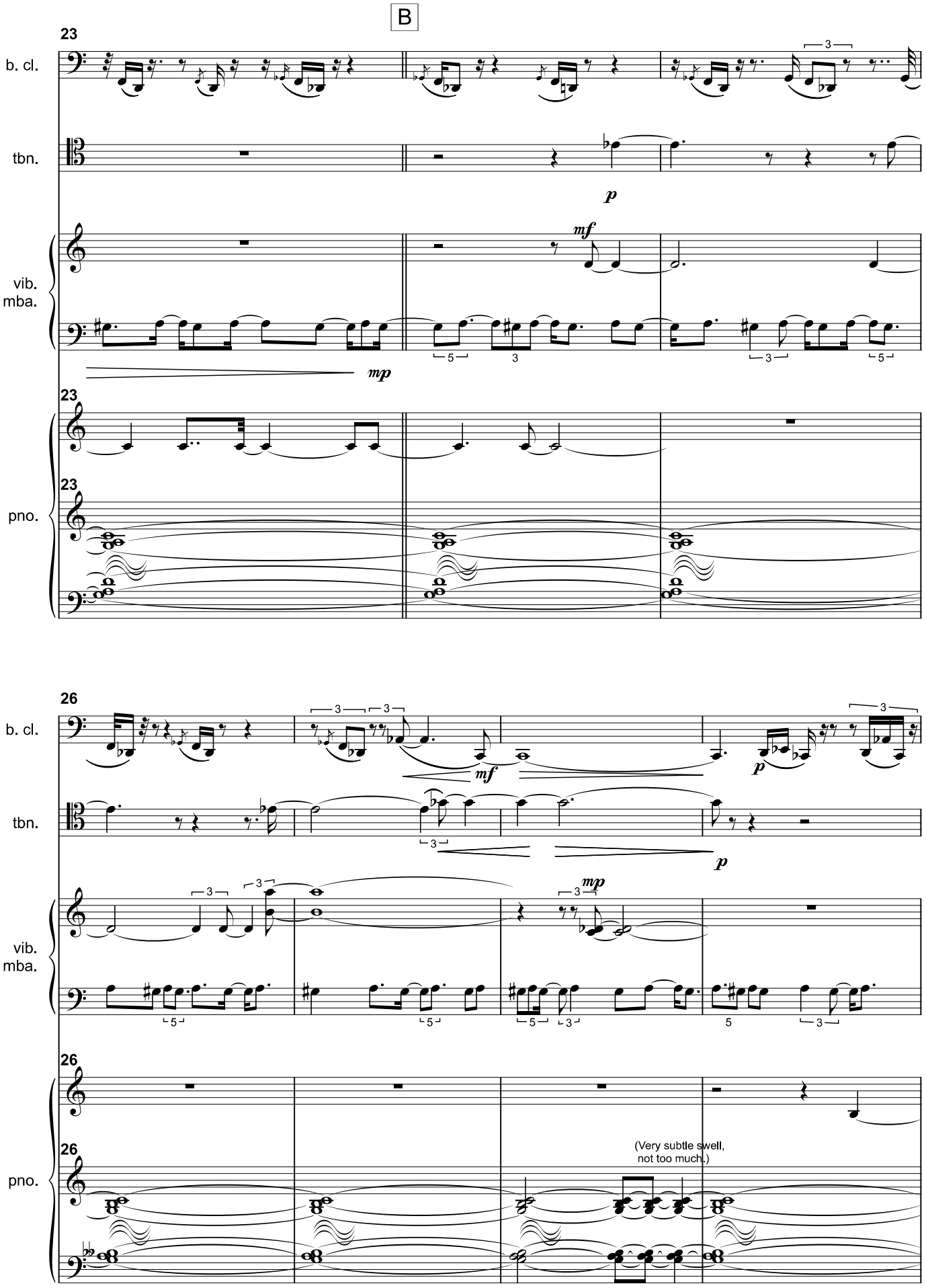
the deep

colin broom

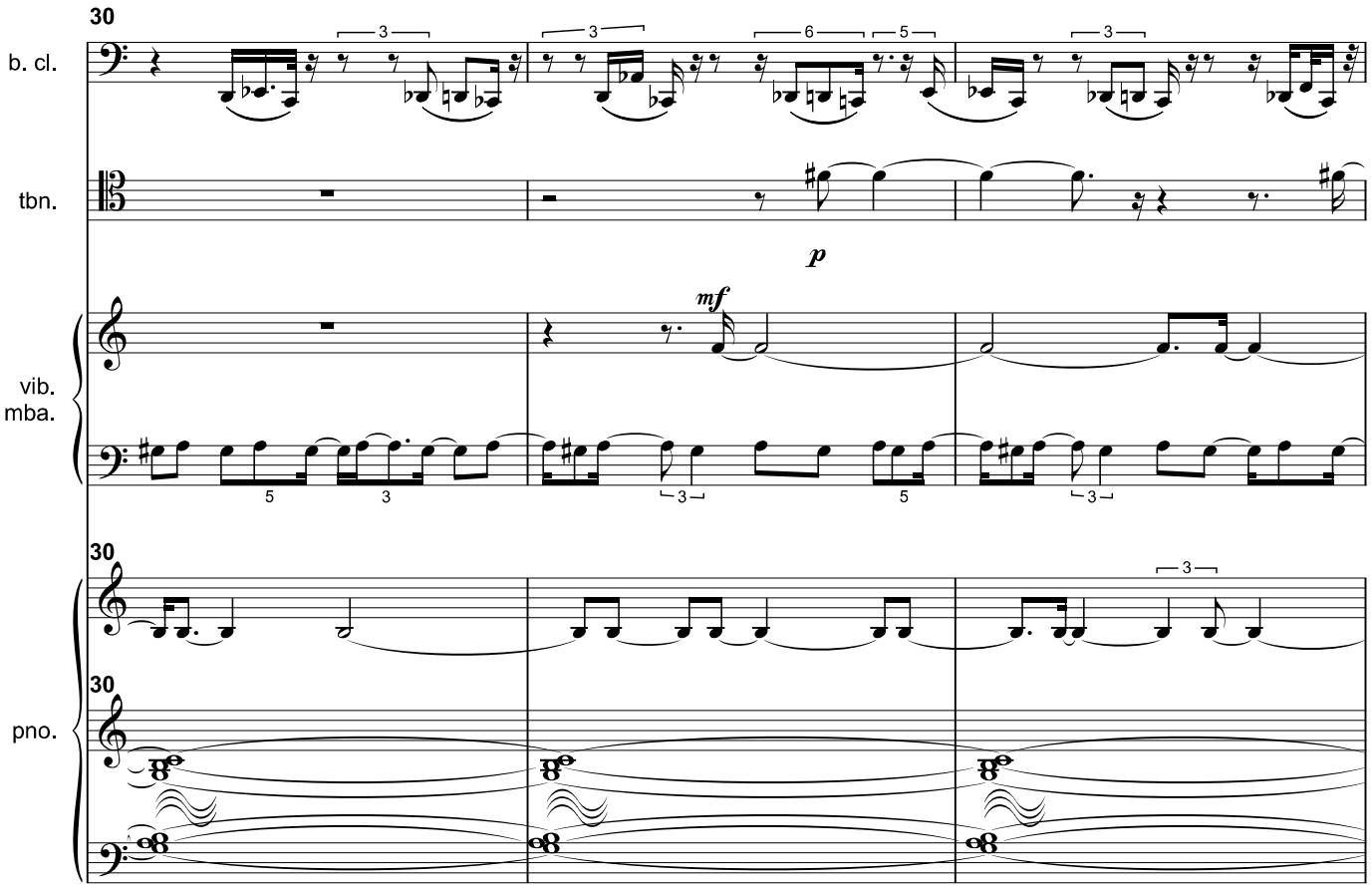


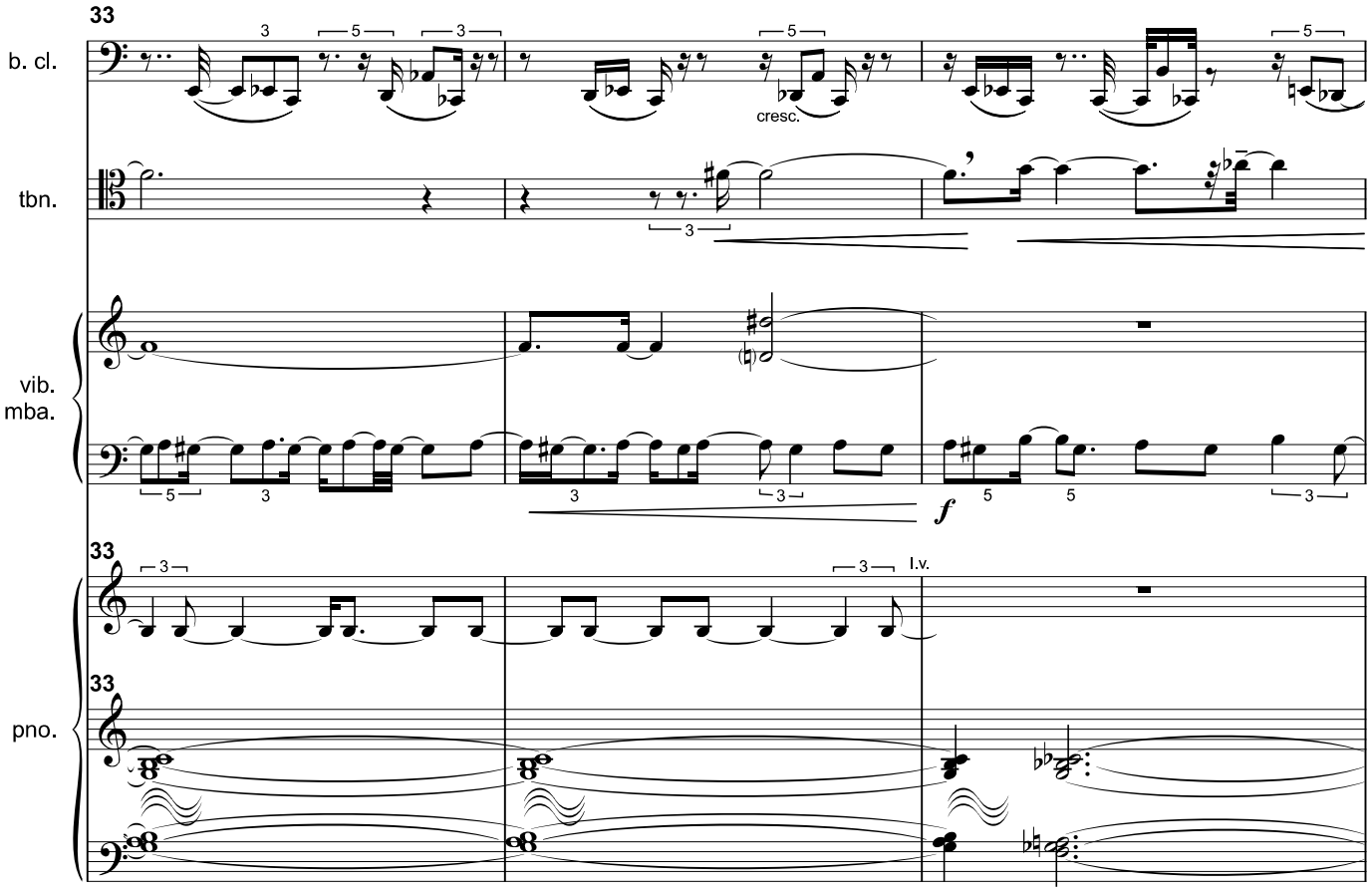
©2006. colin broom

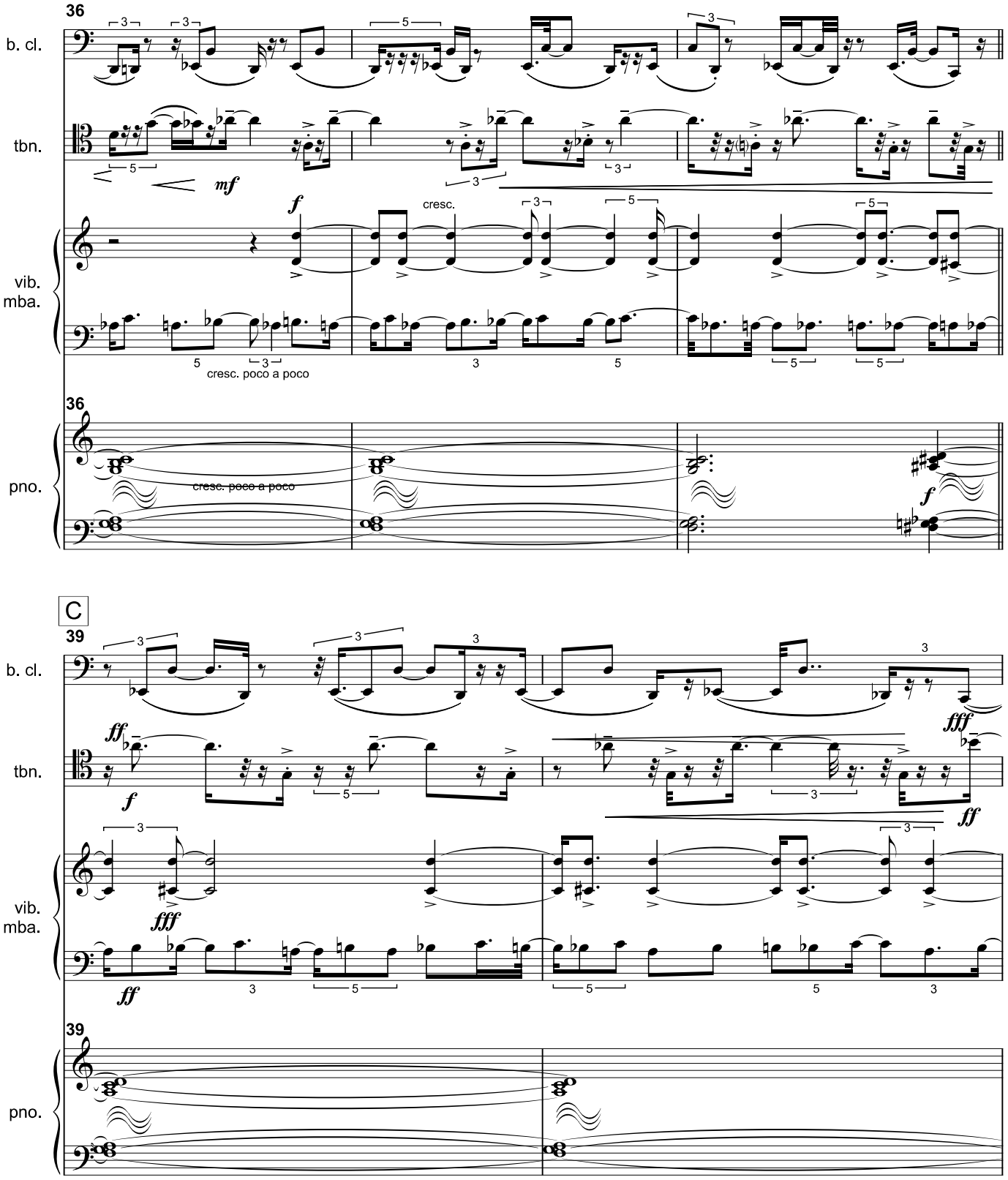

14
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
pno.
l.v.
pp
p
mp
19
Like a kid's toy windmill,
changing speed with the wind
mf
Ped. throughout until otherwise indicated

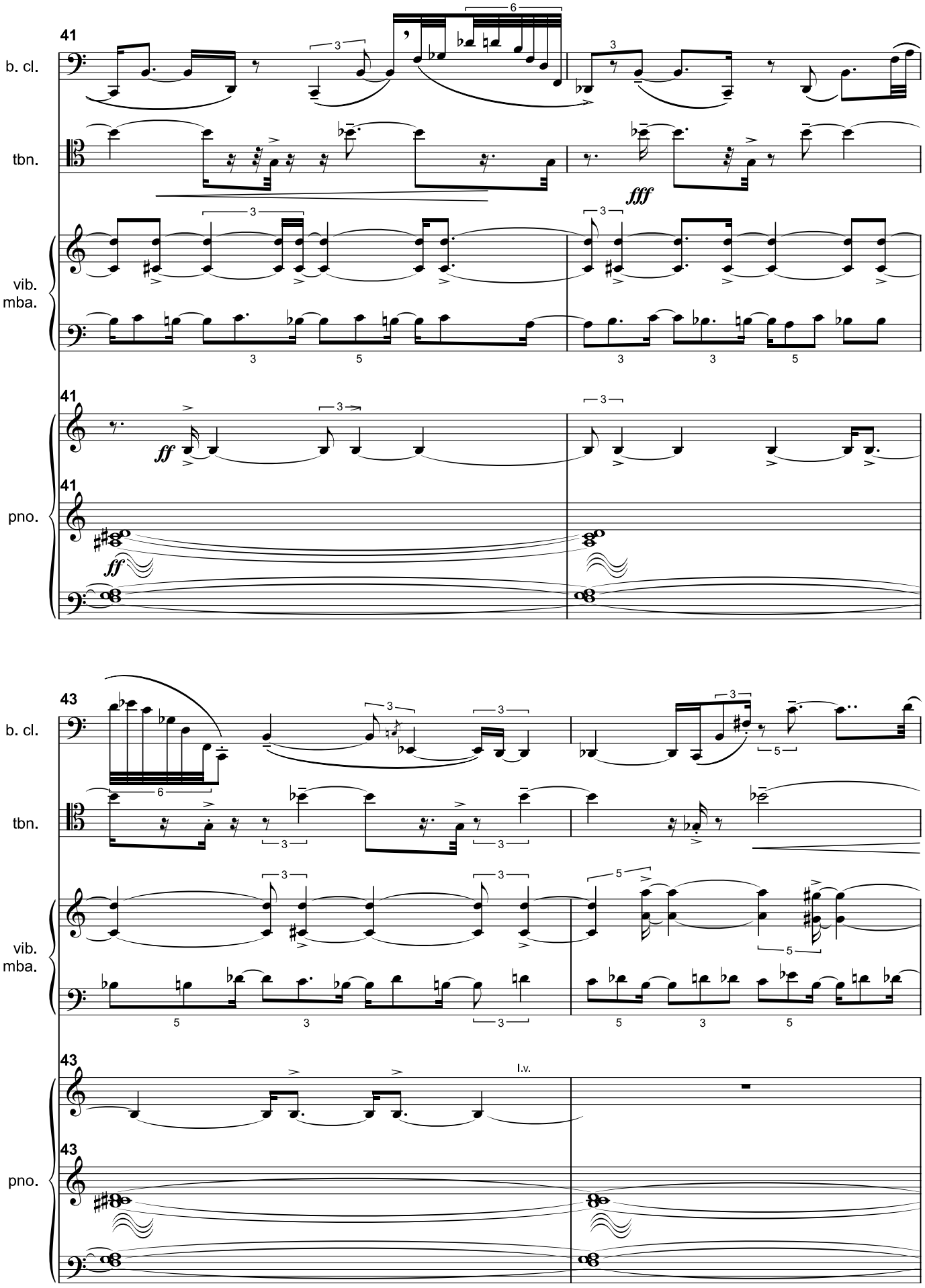


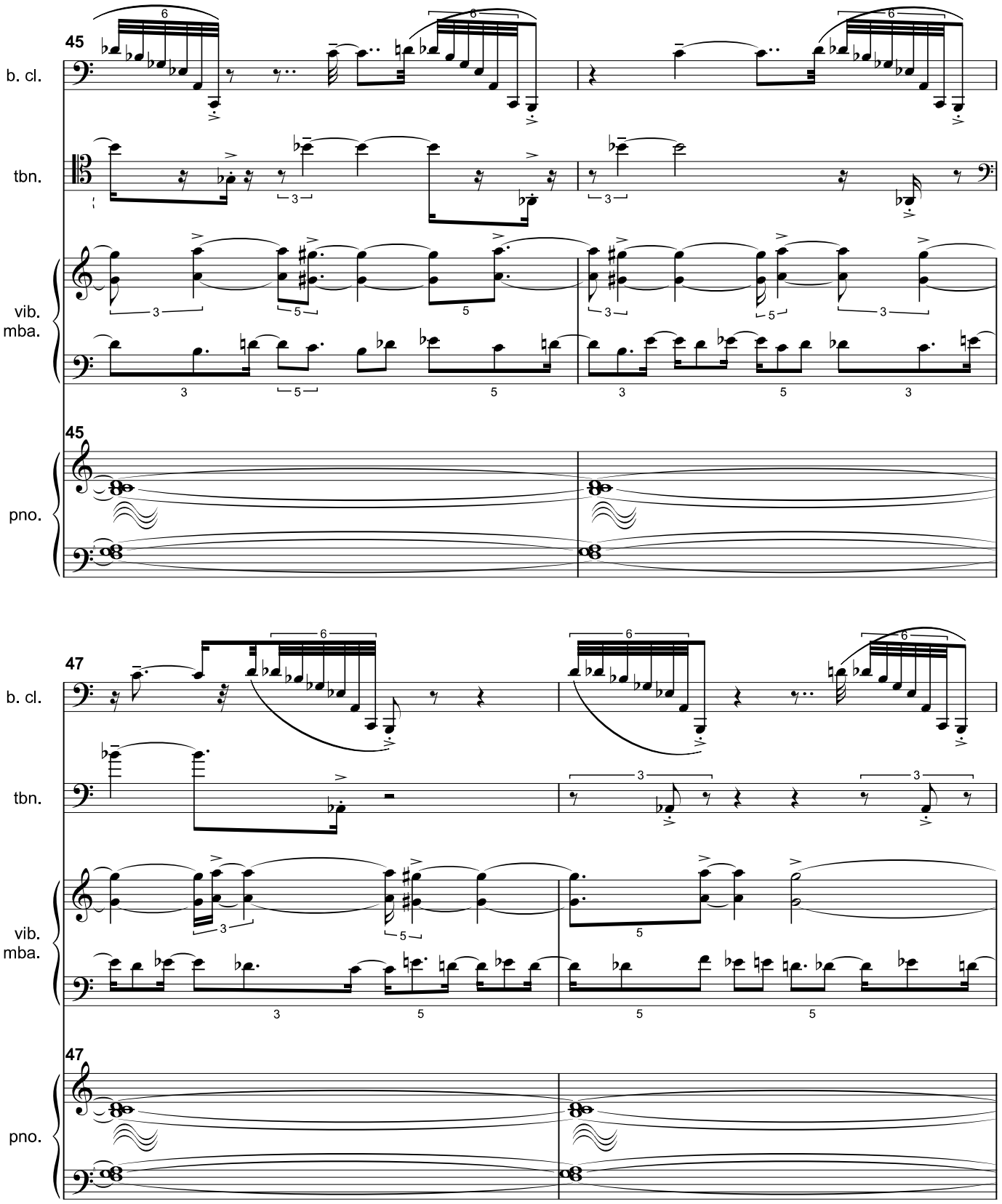
(There's only one actual change of pitch here,
but this fingering's probably easier.)

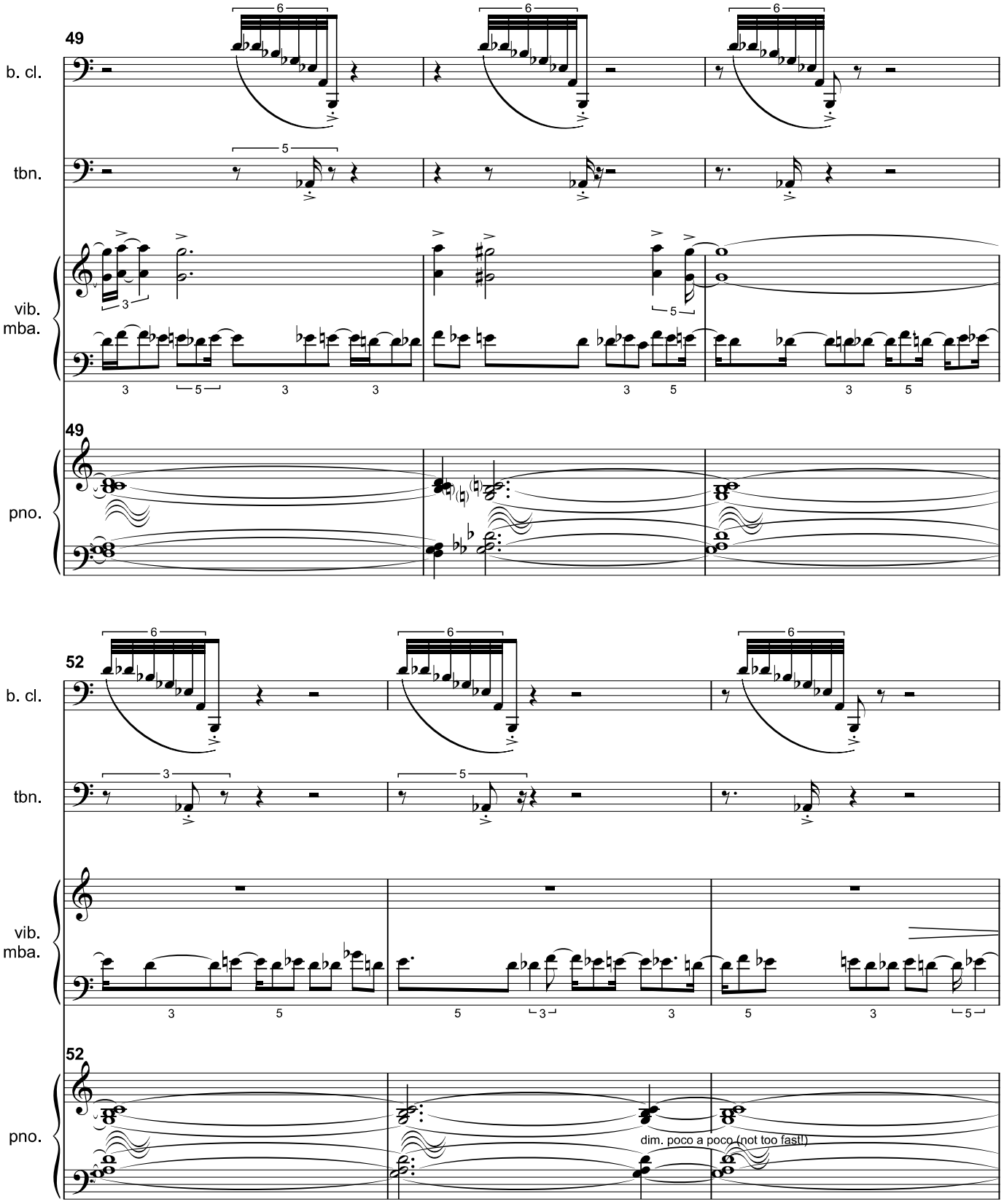

30
b. cl.
tbn.
p
mf
vib.
mba.
30
pno.
30

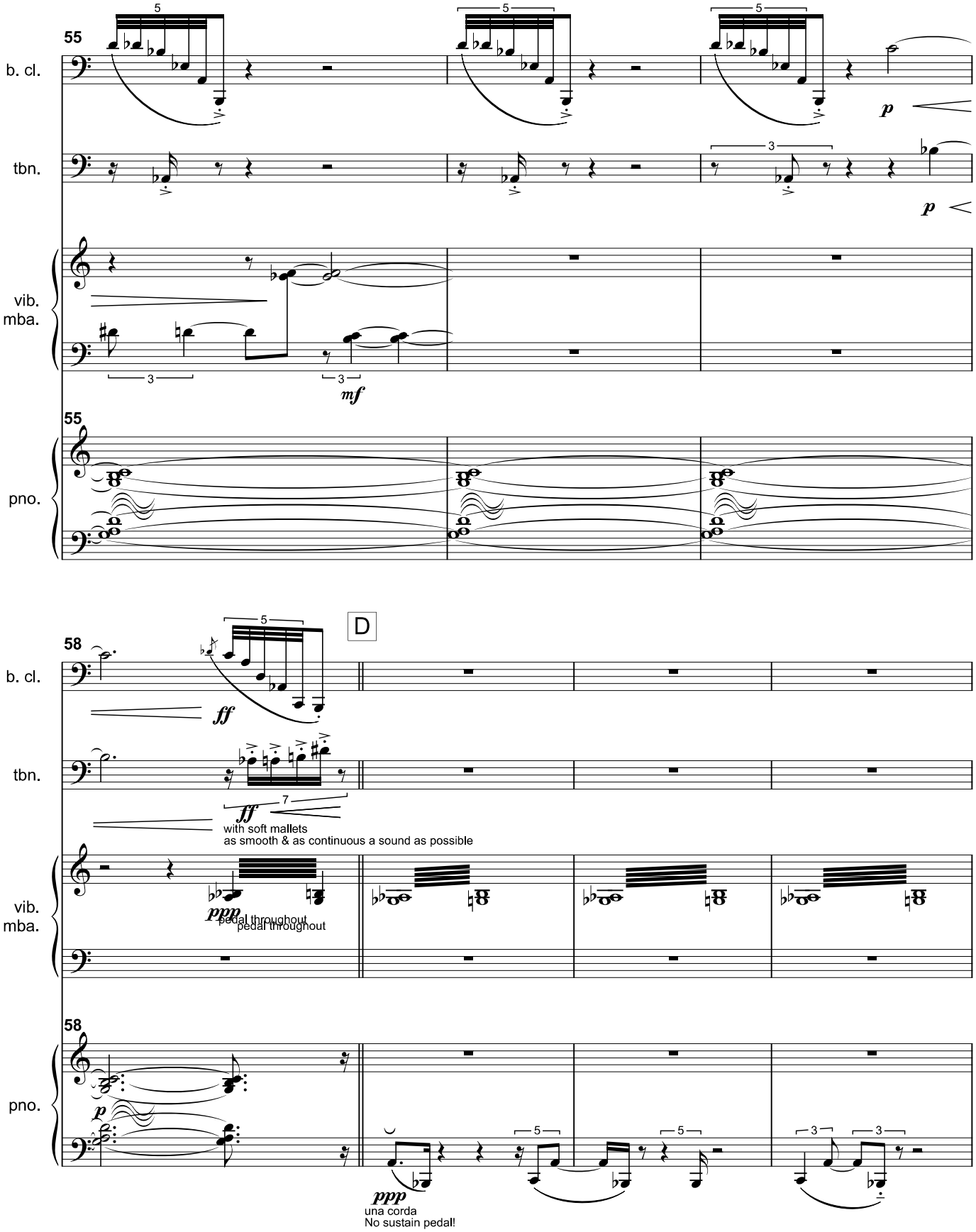

33
b. cl.
cresc.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
f
33
l.v.
pno.
33

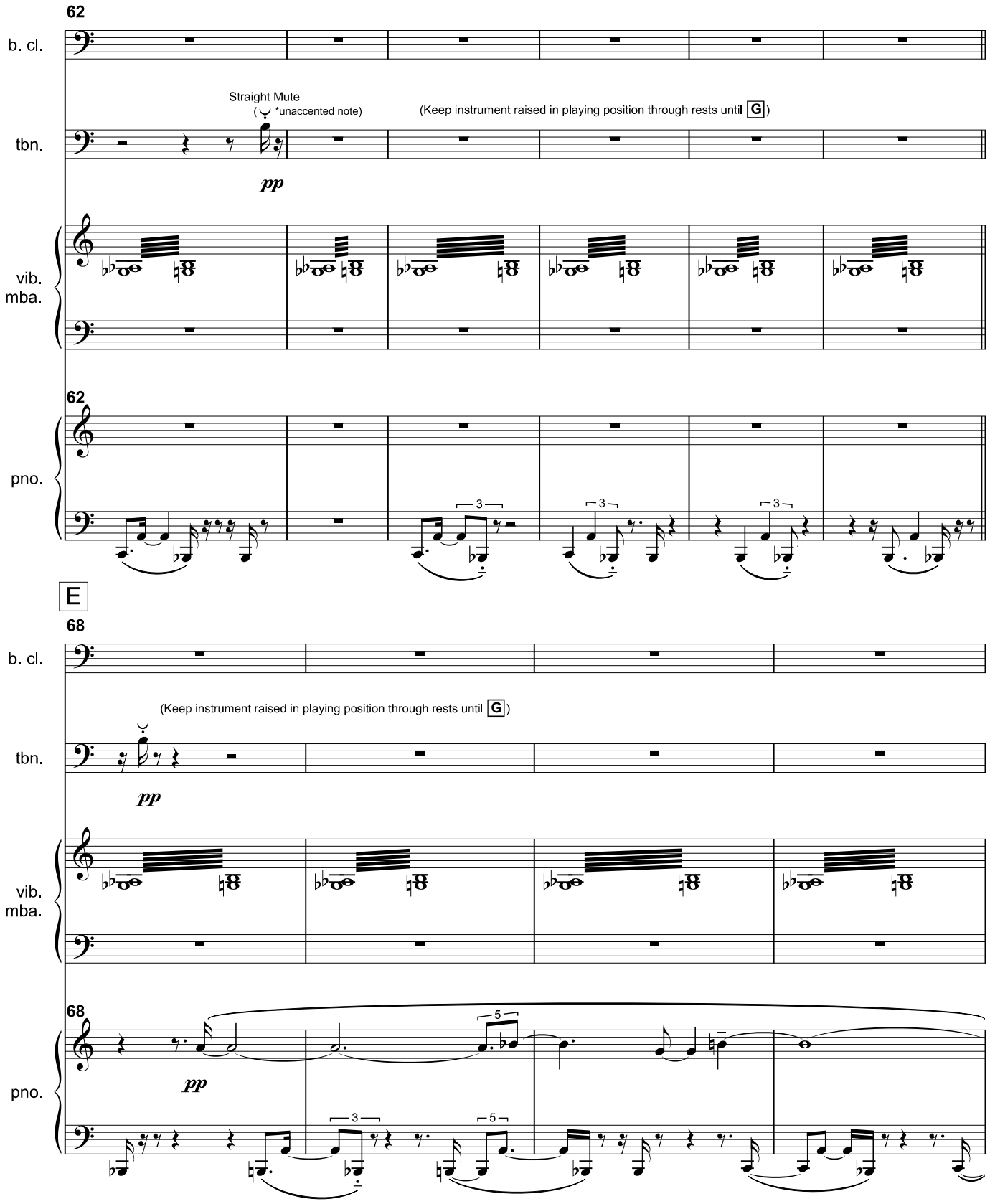

36
b. cl.
tbn.
mf
f
cresc.
vib.
mba.
cresc. poco a poco
36
pno.
cresc. poco a poco
f
C
39
b. cl.
ff
f
fff
tbn.
ff
fff
vib.
mba.
ff
39
pno.

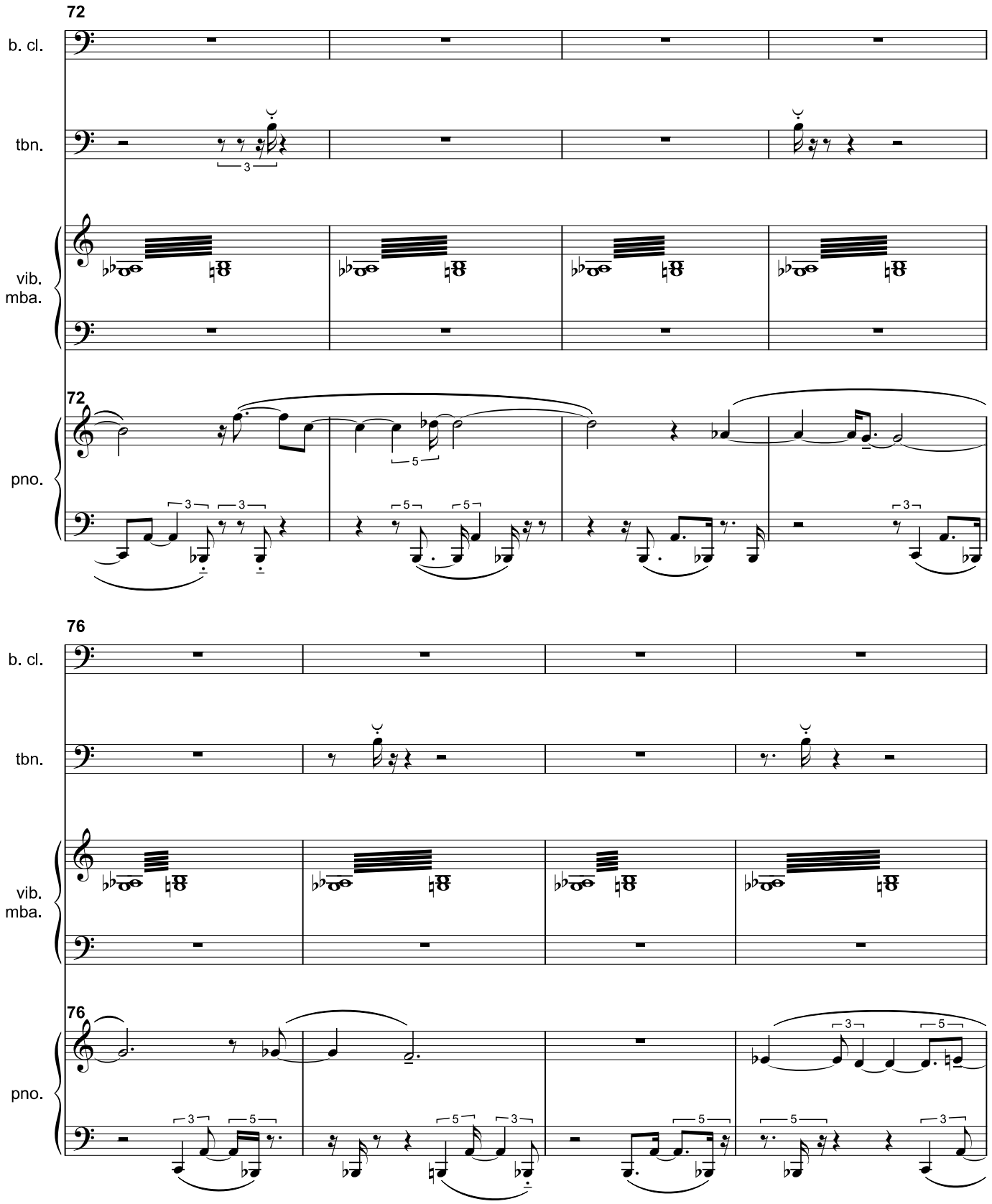

41
b. cl.
tbn.
fff
vib.
mba.
41
ff
pno.
41
ff
43
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
43
l.v.
pno.
43

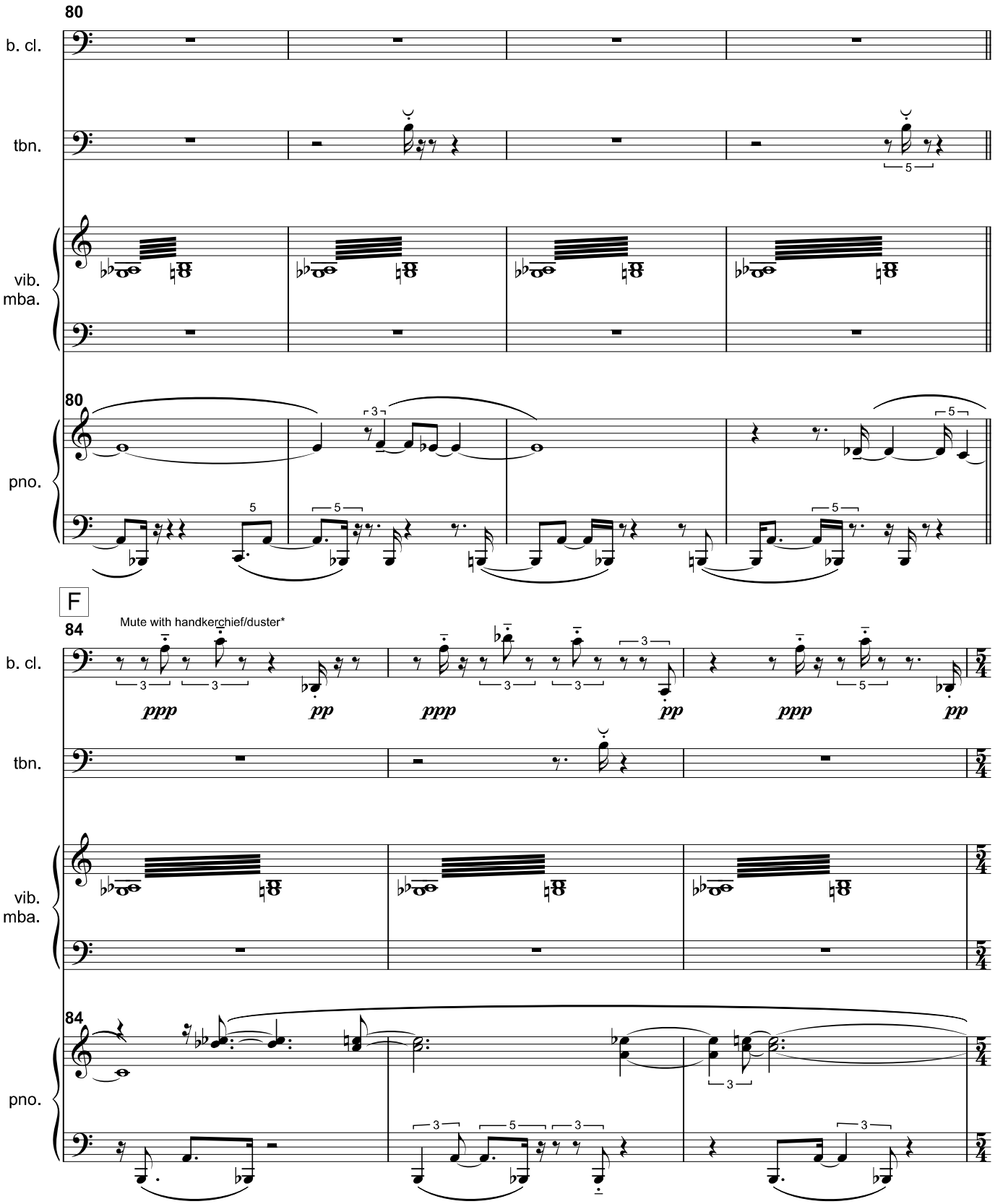

45
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
45
pno.
47
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
47
pno.

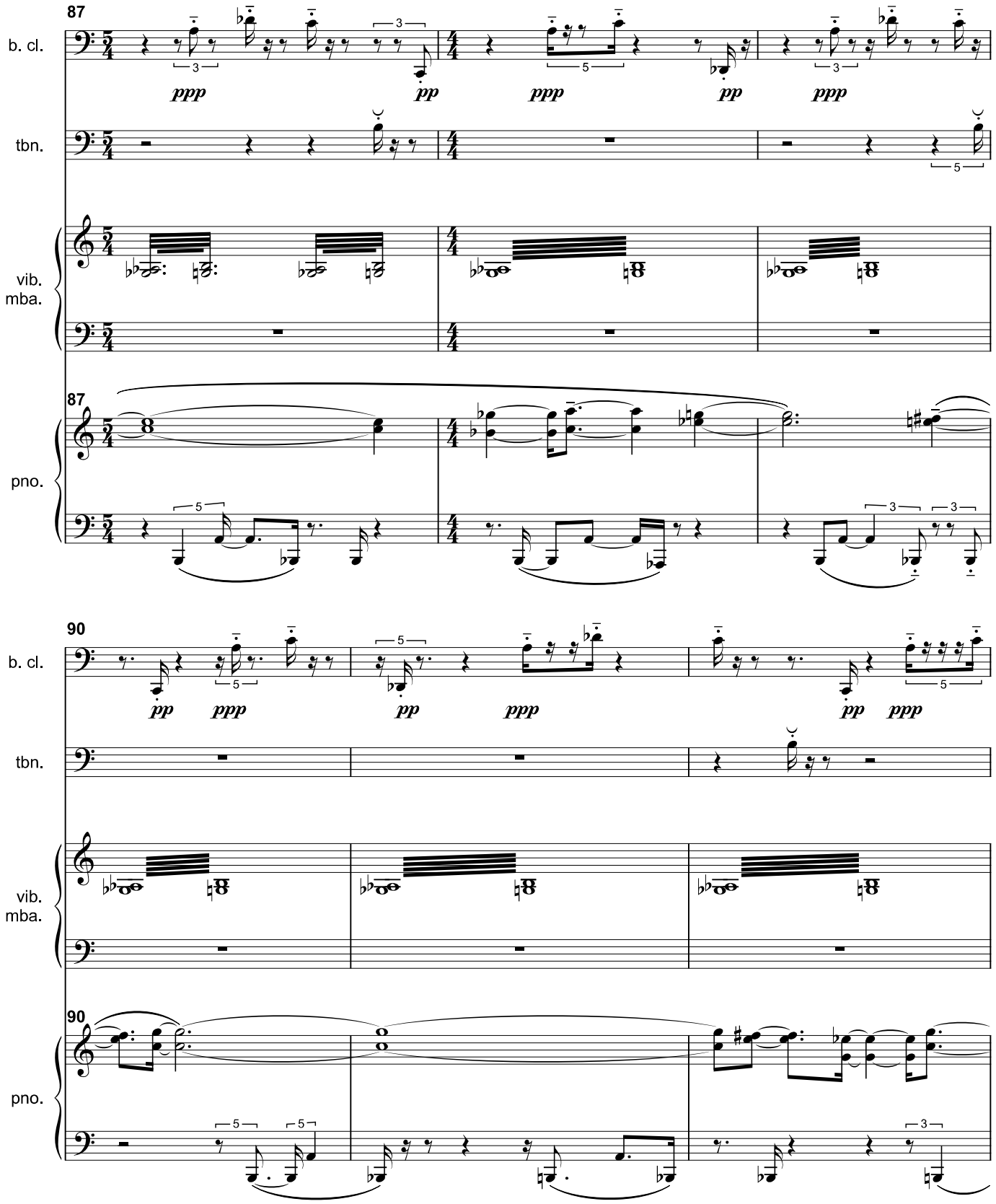

49
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
49
pno.
52
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
52
pno.
dim. poco a poco (not too fast!)

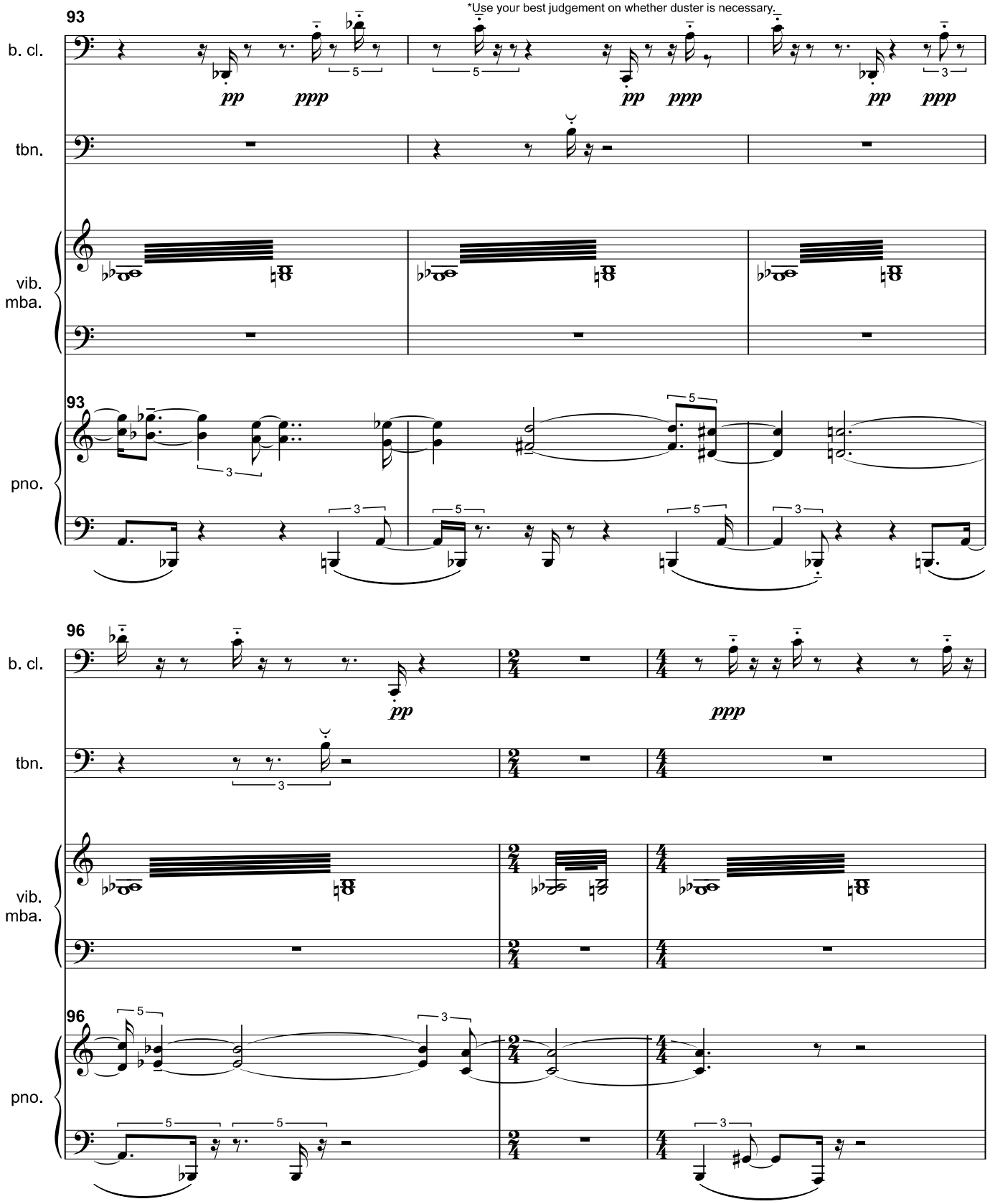

55
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
pno.
p
mf
58
D
ff
with soft mallets
as smooth & as continuous a sound as possible
ppp
pedal throughout
una corda
No sustain pedal!

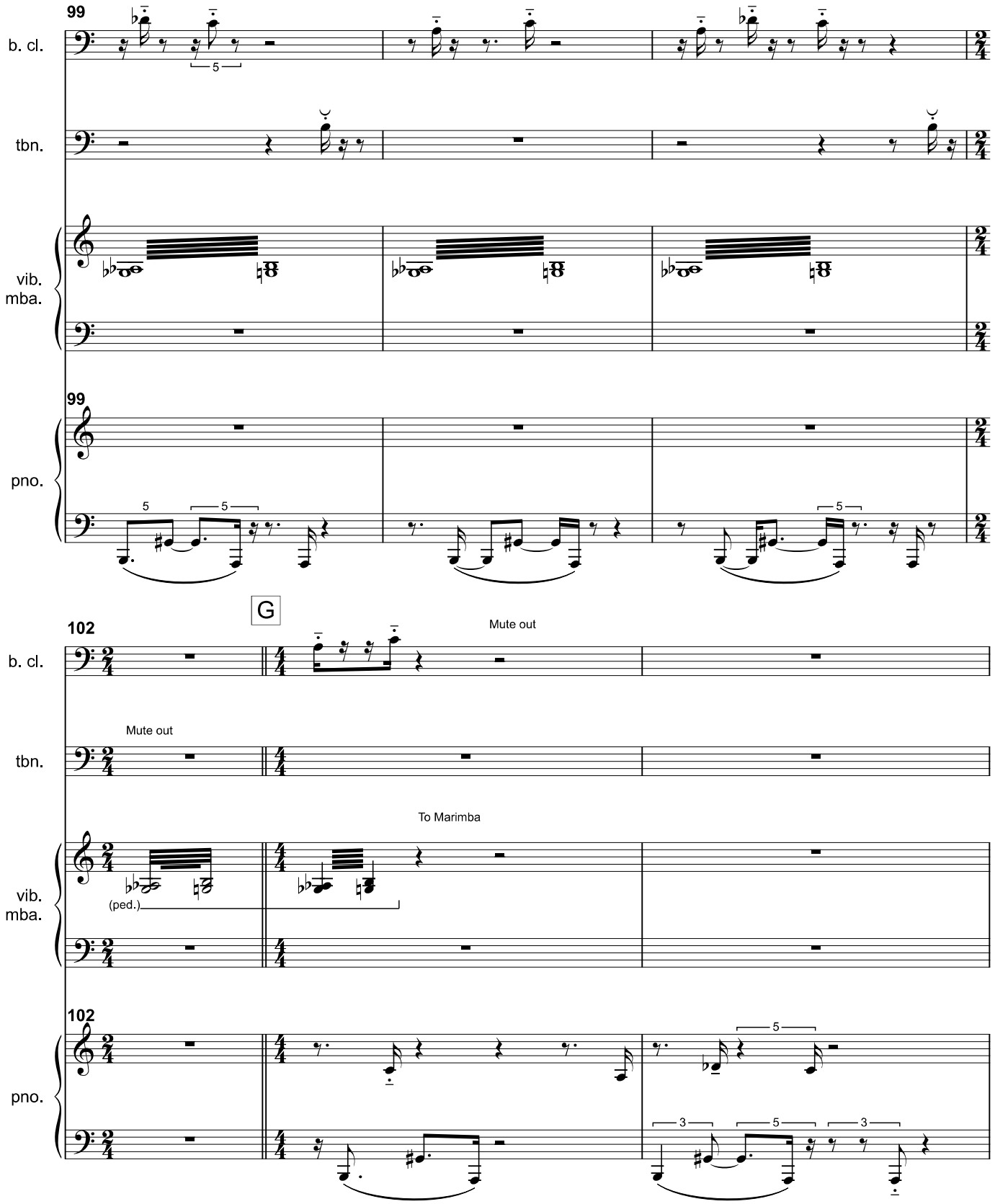

62
b. cl.
Straight Mute
(*unaccented note)
(Keep instrument raised in playing position through rests until G)
tbn.
pp
vib.
mba.
62
pno.
3
3
3
E
68
b. cl.
(Keep instrument raised in playing position through rests until G)
tbn.
pp
vib.
mba.
68
pno.
pp
5
3
5

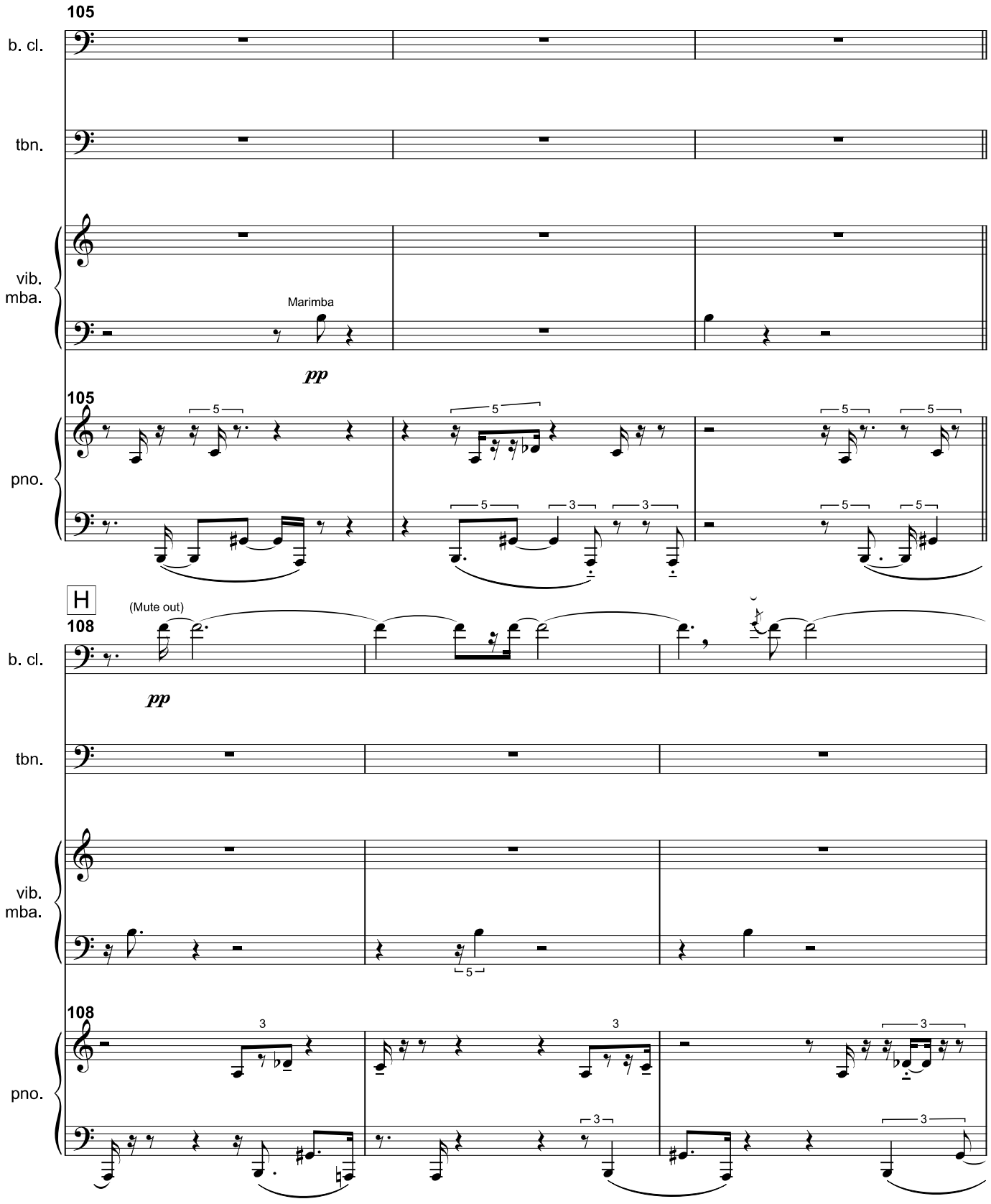

72
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
72
pno.
76
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
76
pno.

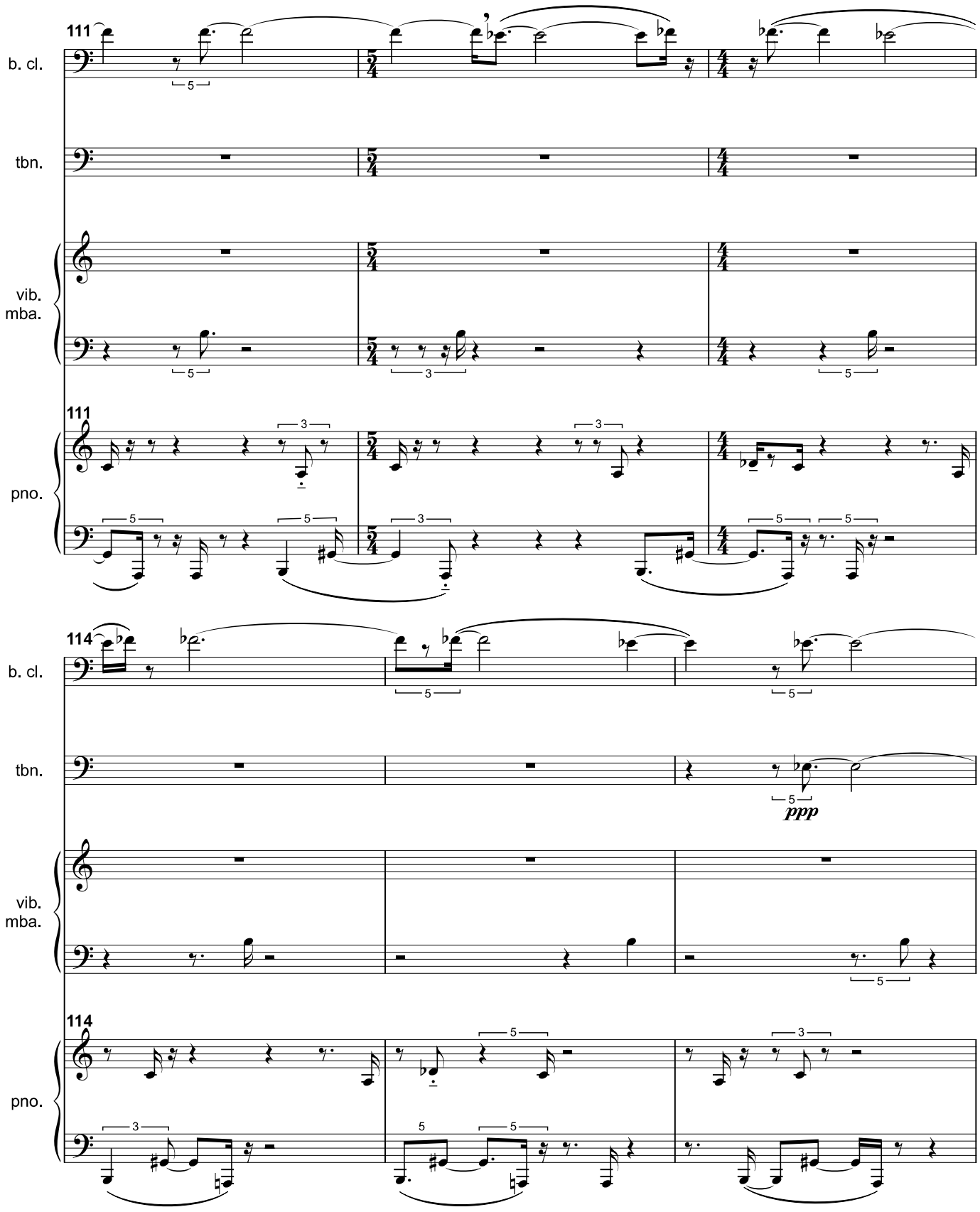

80
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
80
pno.
F
84
Mute with handkerchief/duster*
b. cl.
ppp
pp
ppp
pp
ppp
pp
tbn.
vib.
mba.
84
pno.

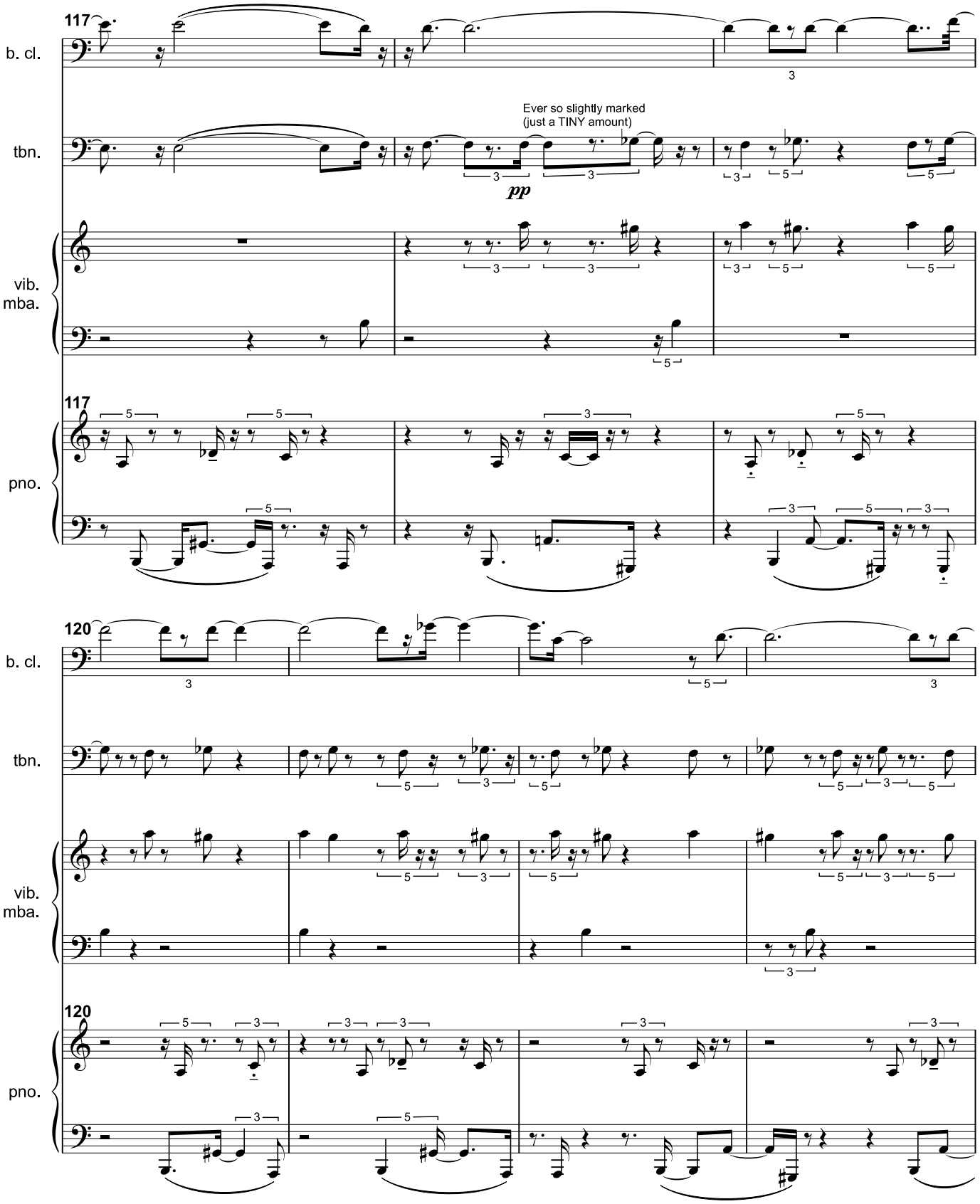

87
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
pno.
ppp
pp
90

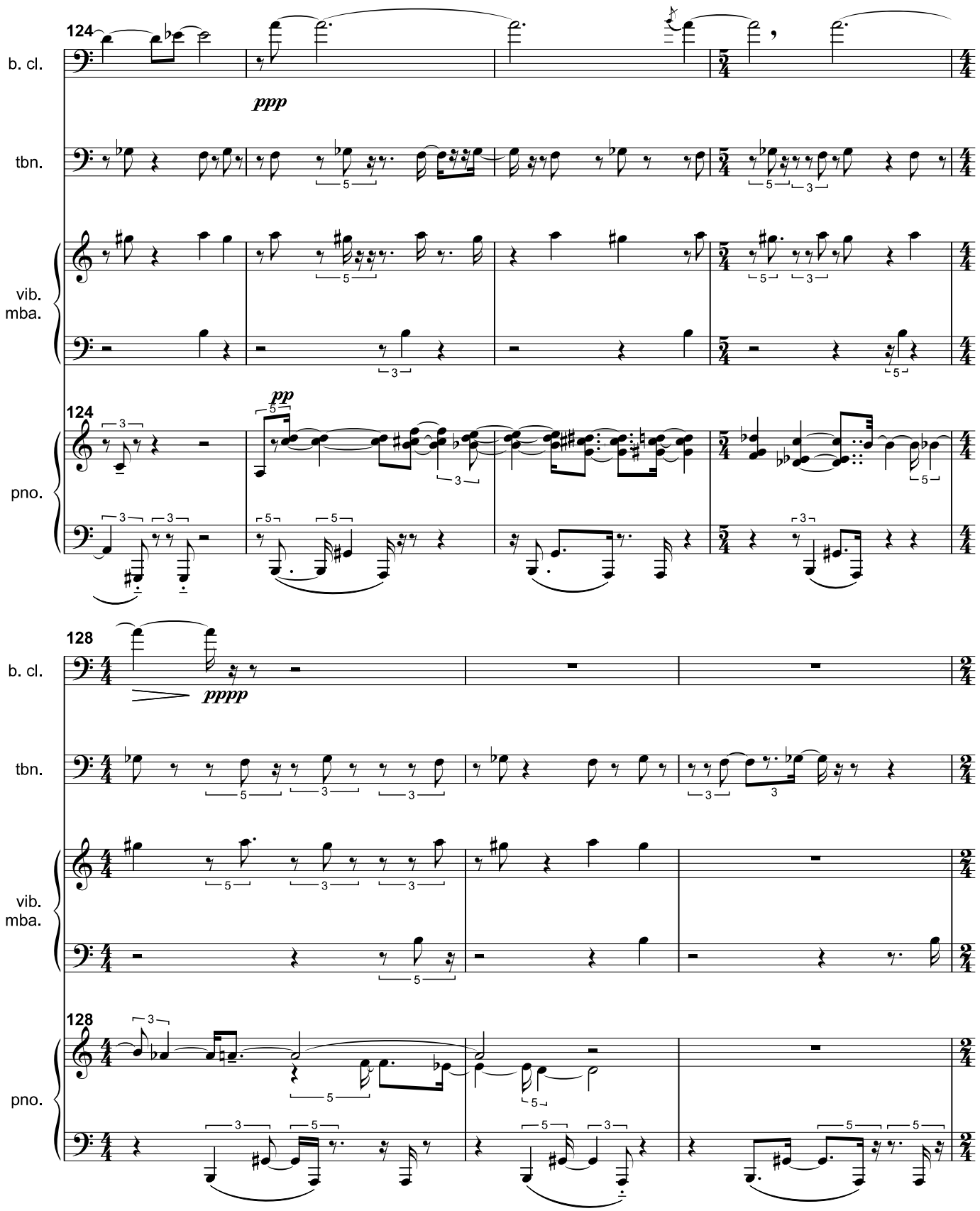

93
*Use your best judgement on whether duster is necessary.
b. cl.
pp
ppp
tbn.
vib.
mba.
pno.
96

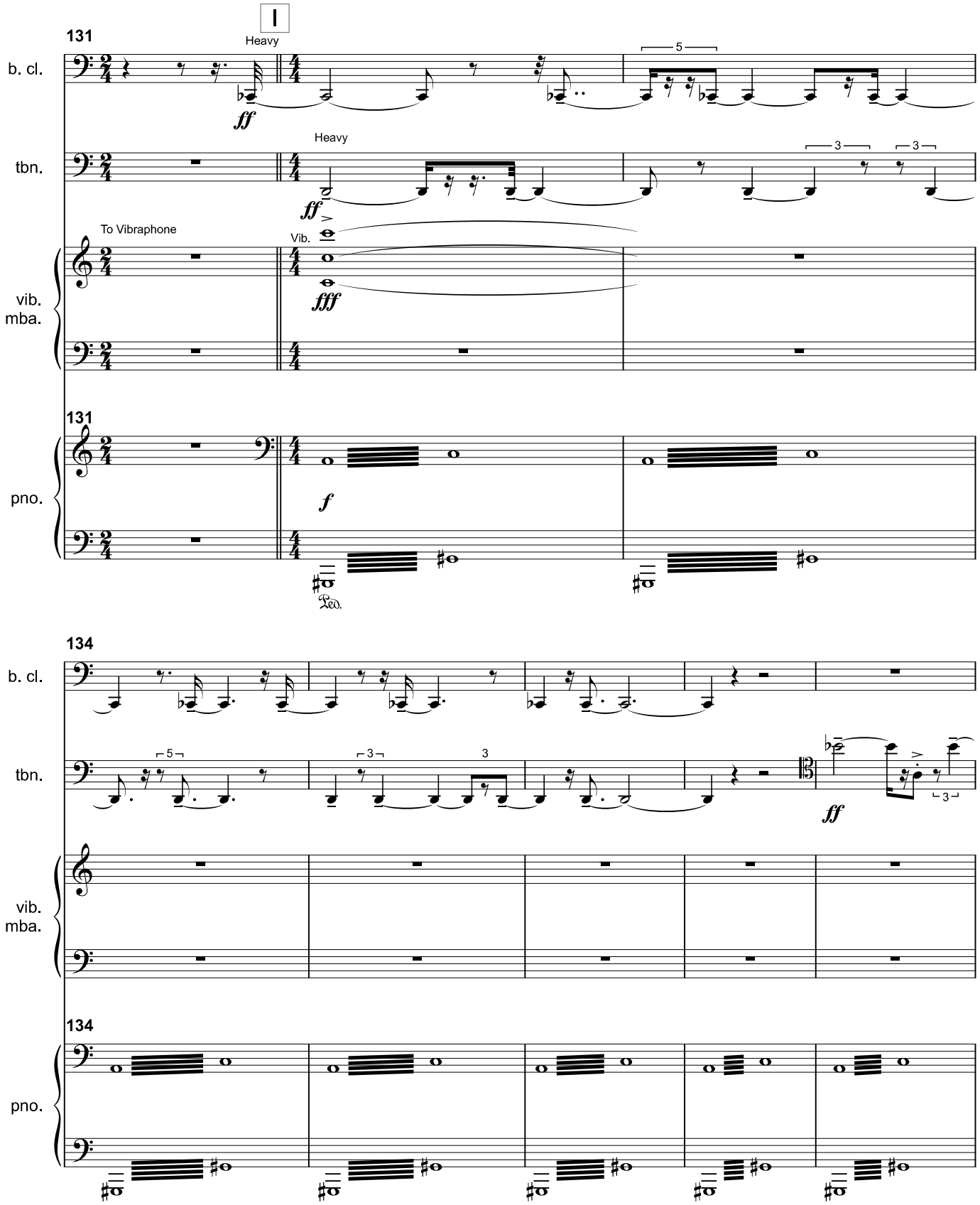

99
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
99
pno.
G
102
Mute out
b. cl.
Mute out
tbn.
To Marimba
vib.
mba.
(ped.)
102
pno.

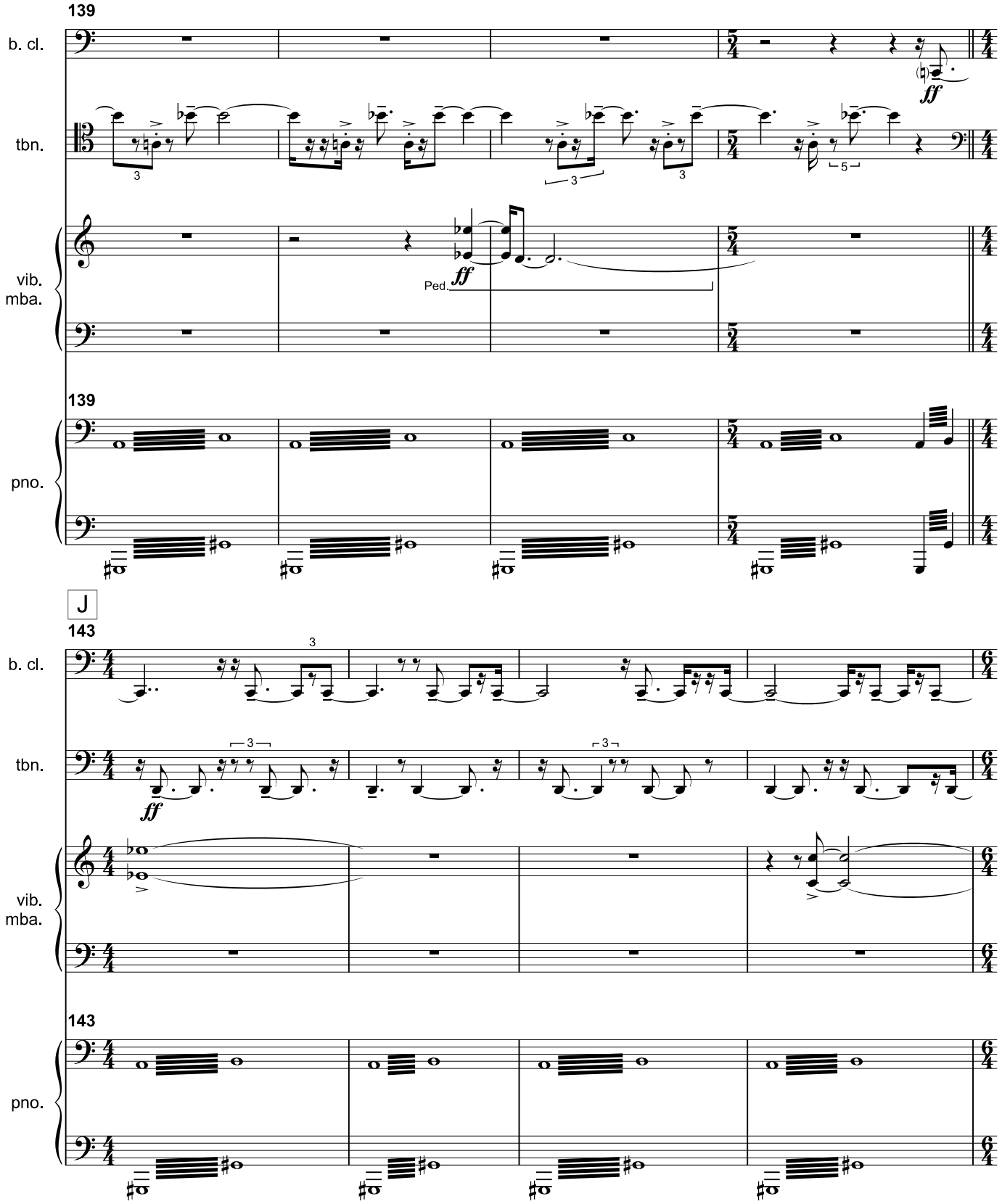

105
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
Marimba
pp
105
pno.
H
(Mute out)
108
b. cl.
pp
tbn.
vib.
mba.
108
pno.

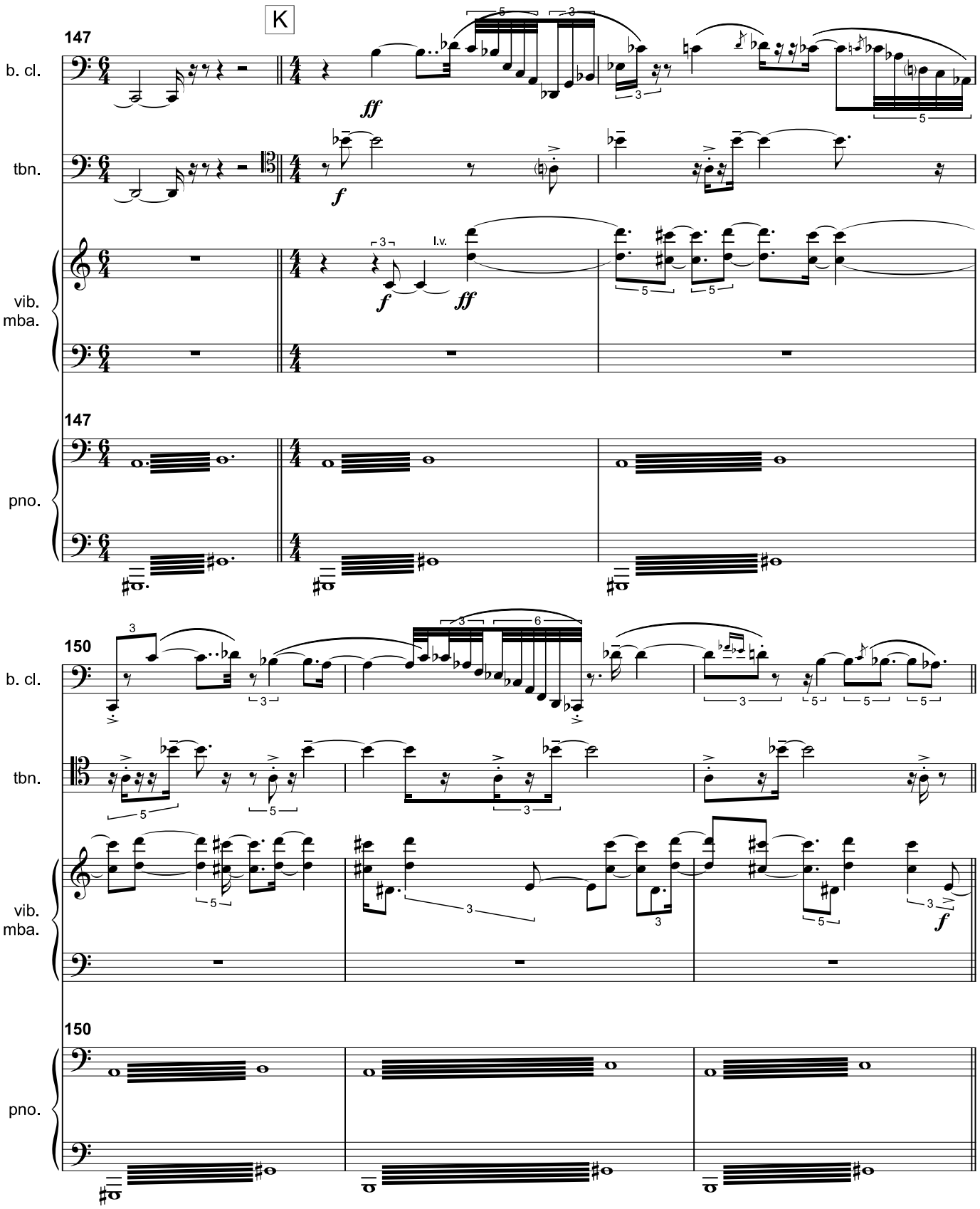

111
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
pno.
111
114
b. cl.
tbn.
ppp
vib.
mba.
pno.
114

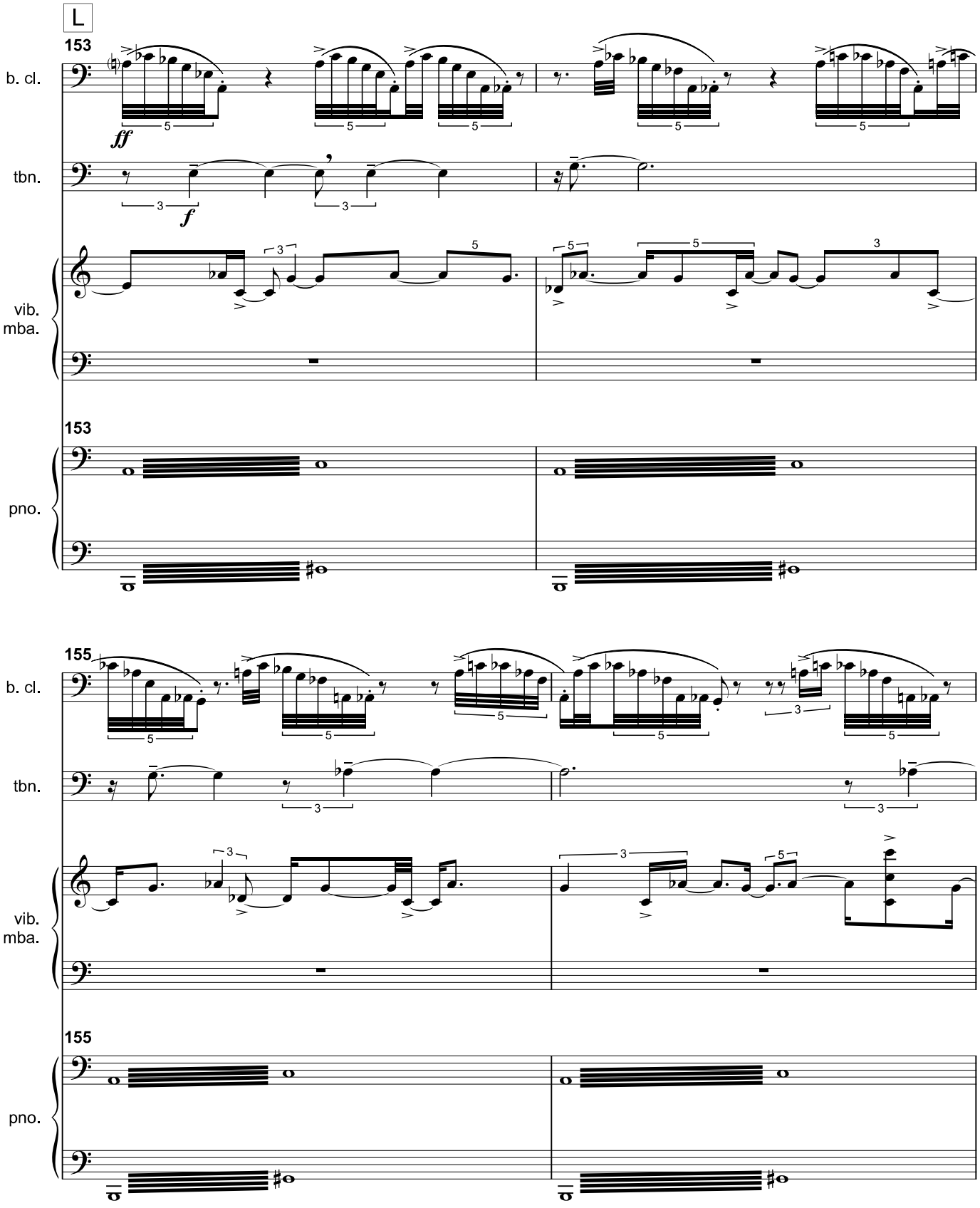

117
b. cl.
tbn.
Ever so slightly marked
(just a TINY amount)
pp
vib.
mba.
pno.
117
120
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
pno.
120

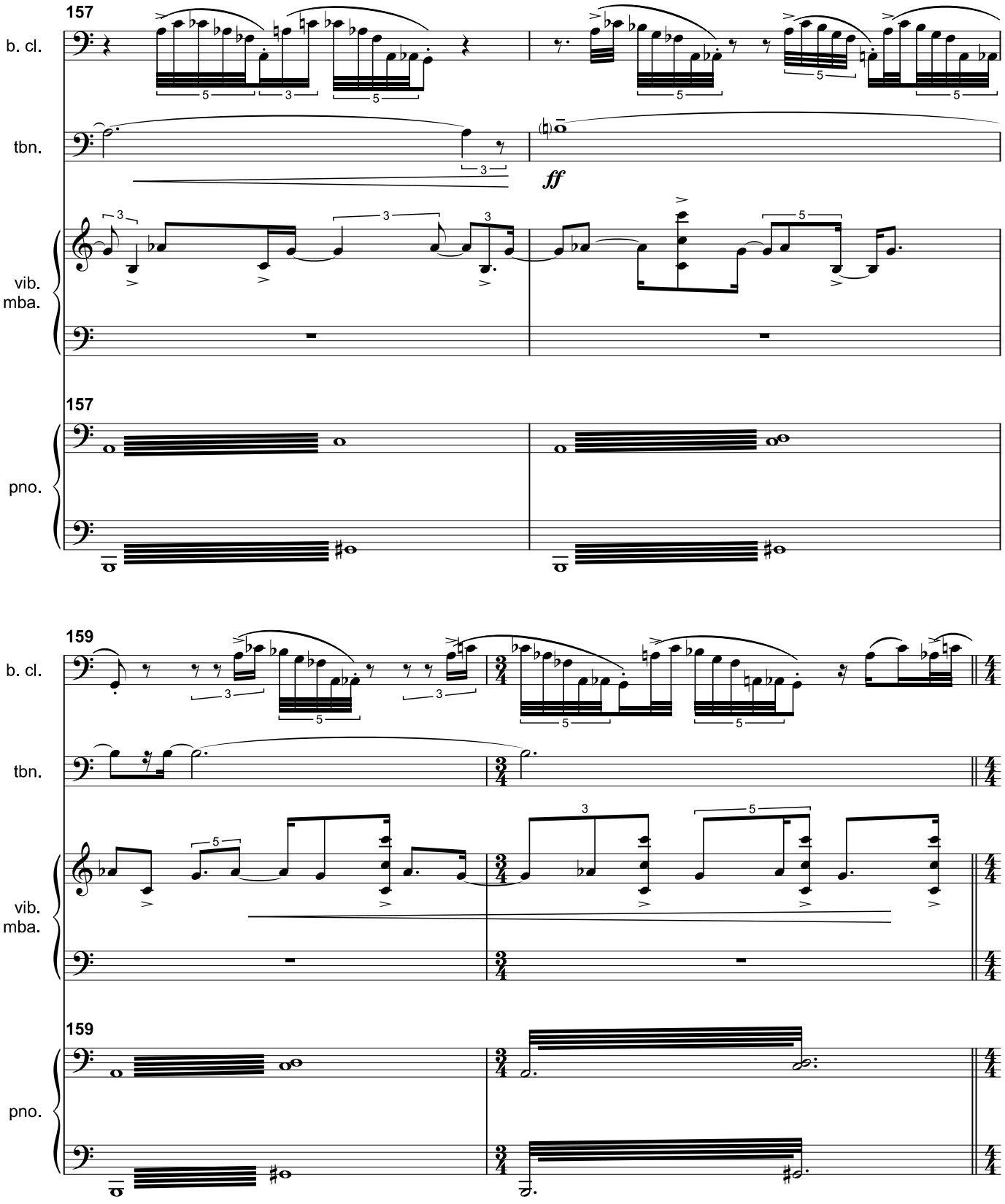

124
b. cl.
ppp
tbn.
vib.
mba.
pno.
pp
128
pppp

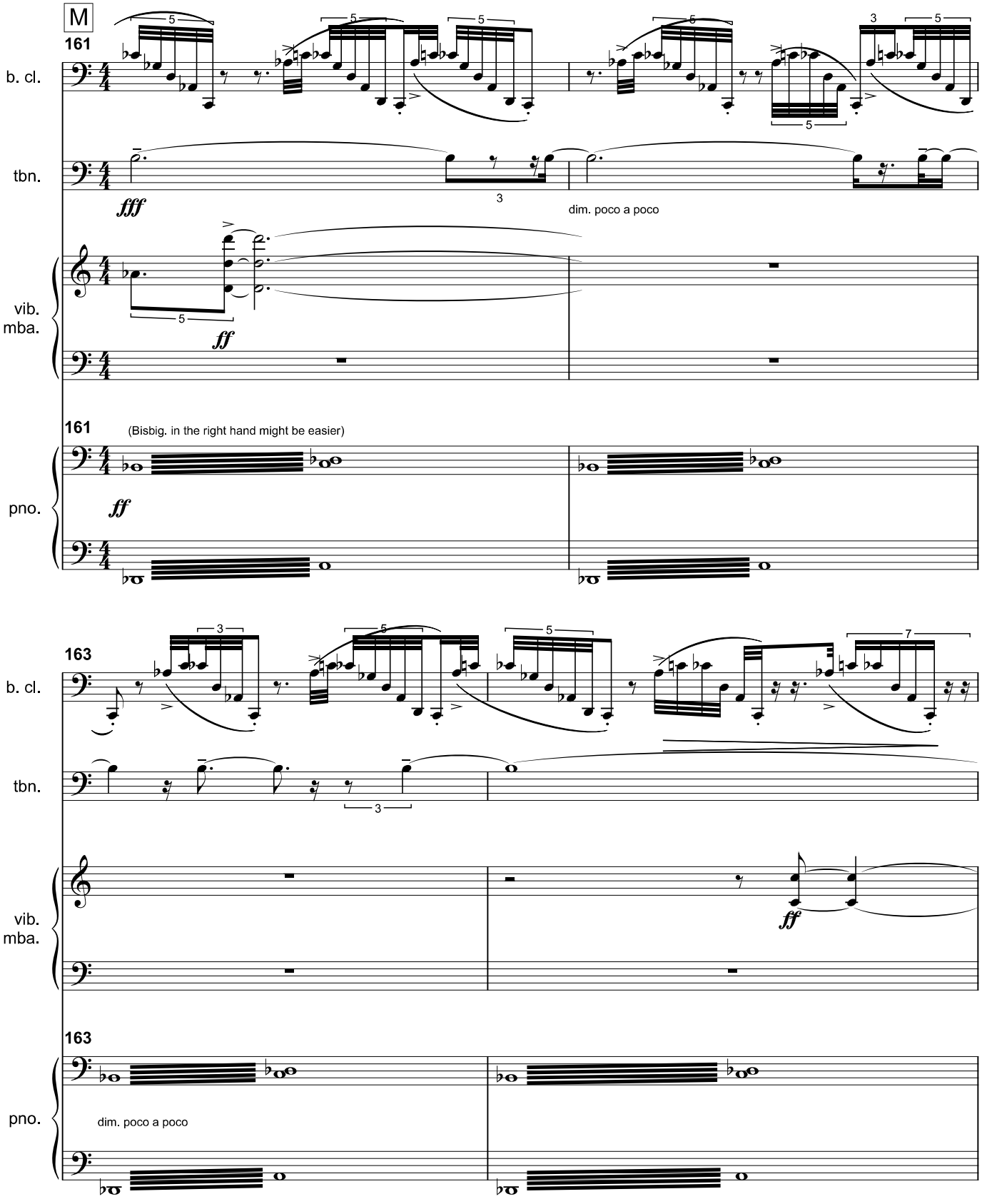

I
131
Heavy
b. cl.
ff
5
tbn.
Heavy
ff
3
3
To Vibraphone
Vib.
vib.
mba.
fff
131
pno.
f
Ped.
134
b. cl.
tbn.
5
3
3
ff
3
vib.
mba.
134
pno.

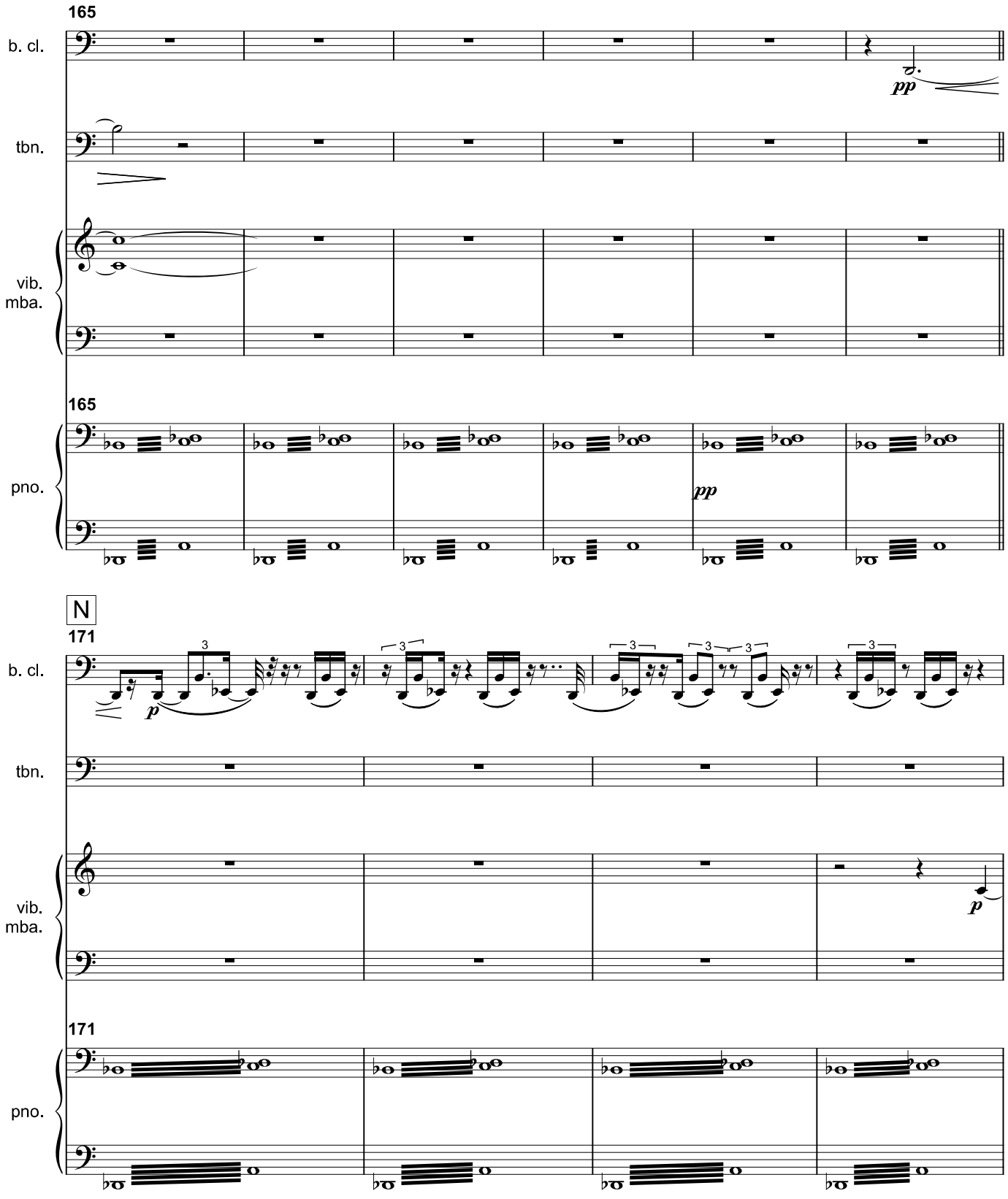

139
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
Ped.
pno.
J
143

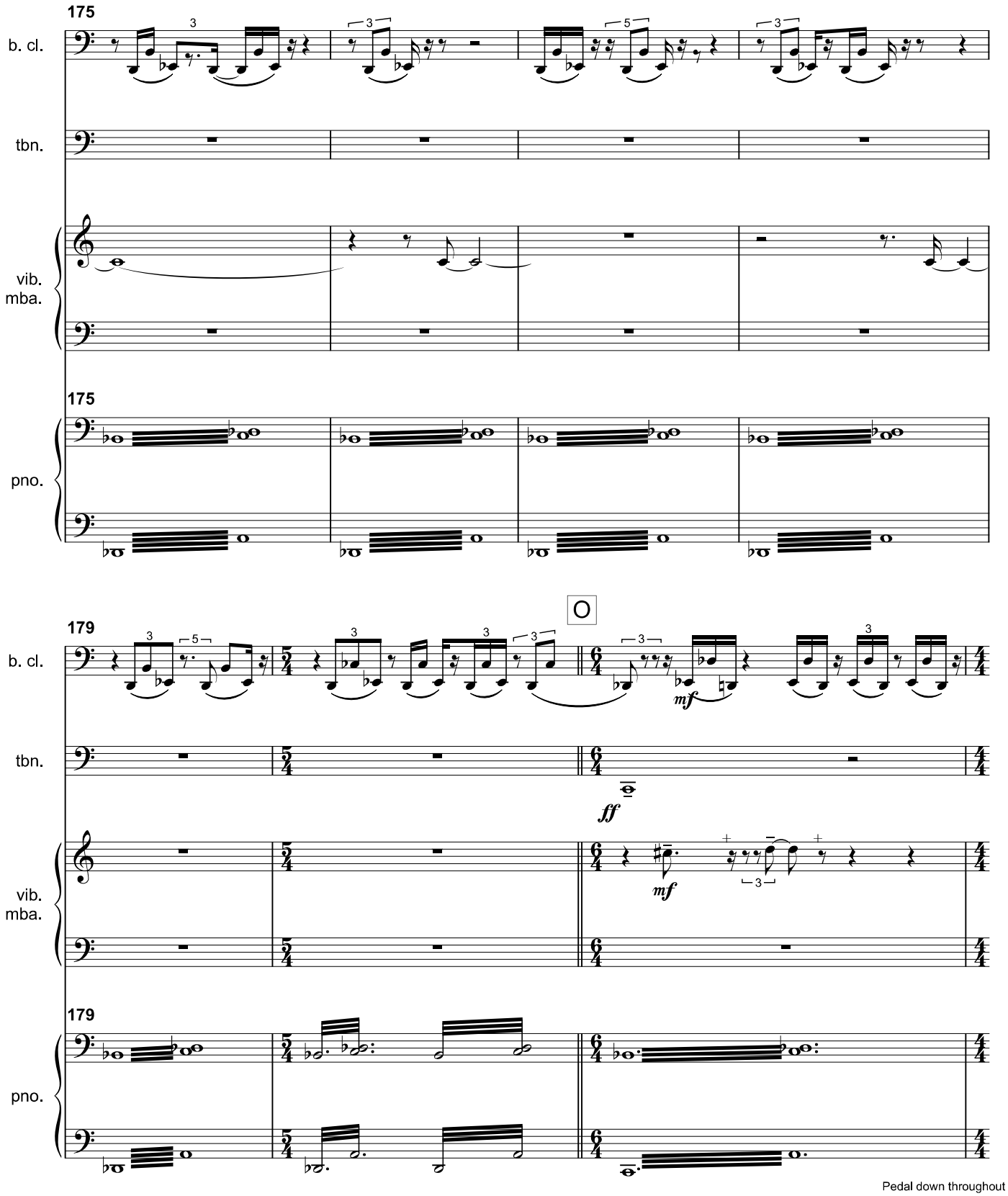

K
147
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
147
pno.
150
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
150
pno.

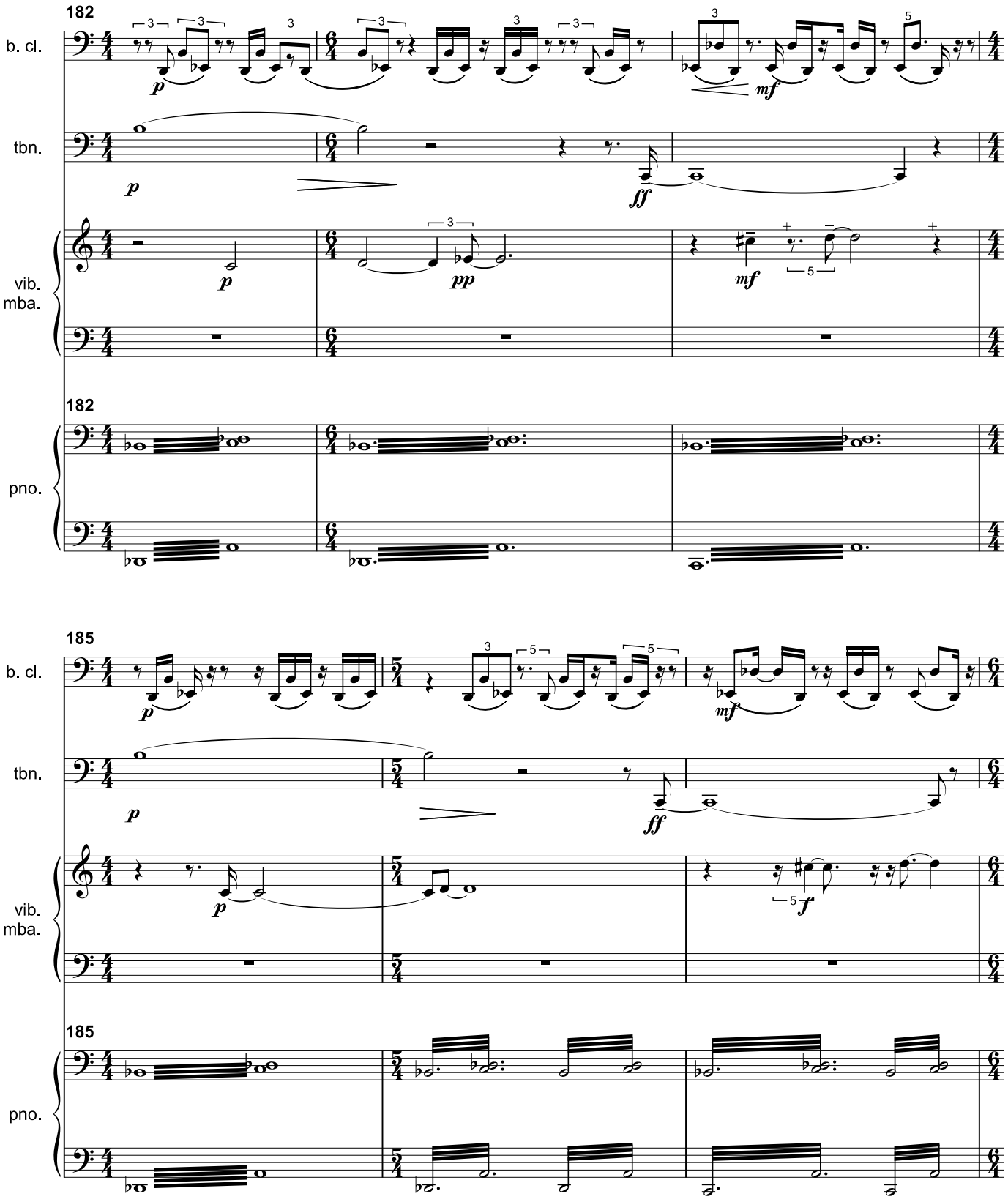

L
153
b. cl.
ff
tbn.
f
vib.
mba.
153
pno.
155
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
155
pno.

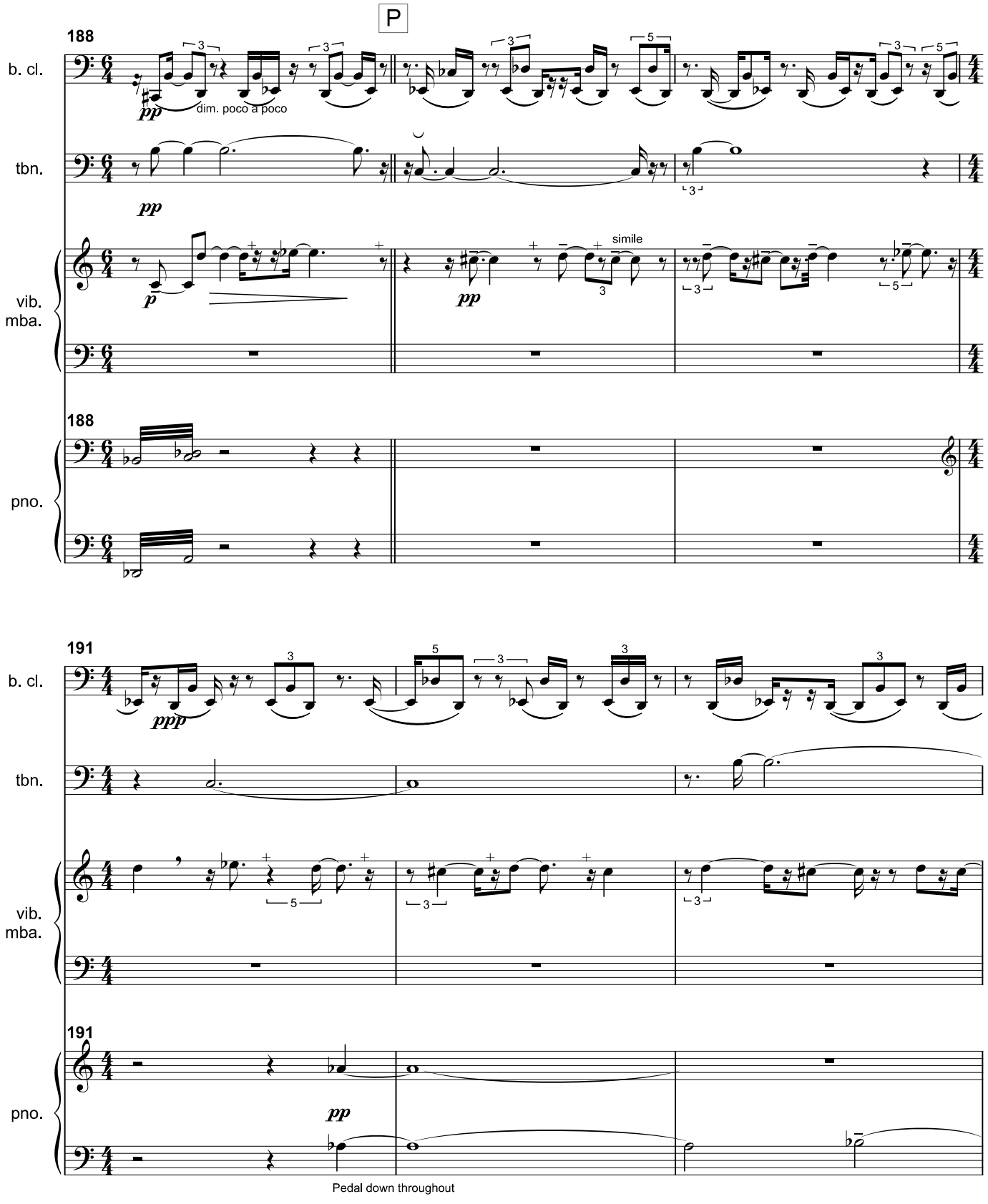

157
b. cl.
tbn.
ff
vib.
mba.
157
pno.
159
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
159
pno.

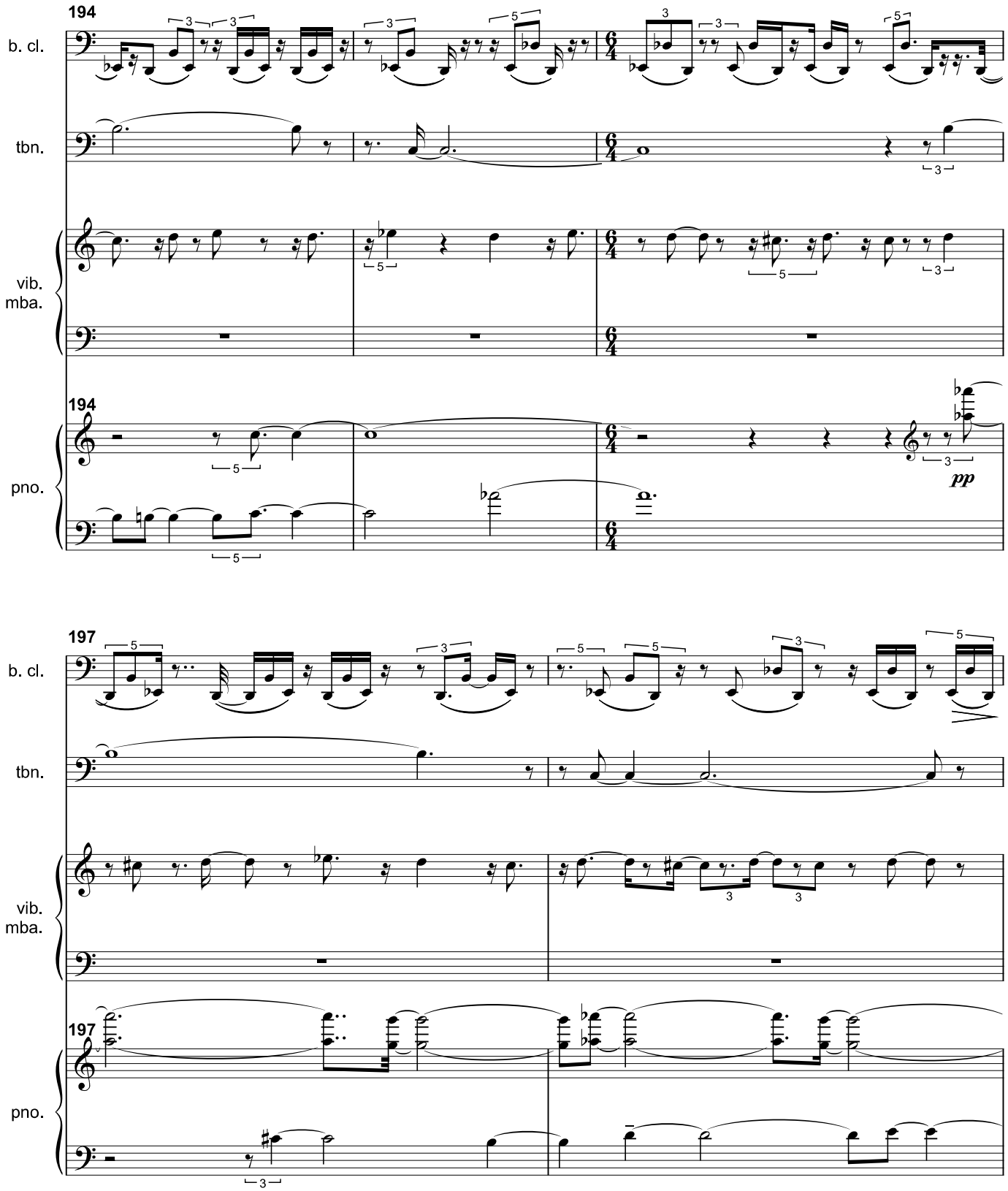

M
161
b. cl.
tbn.
fff
dim. poco a poco
vib.
mba.
ff
161
(Bisbig. in the right hand might be easier)
pno.
ff
163
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
ff
163
pno.
dim. poco a poco

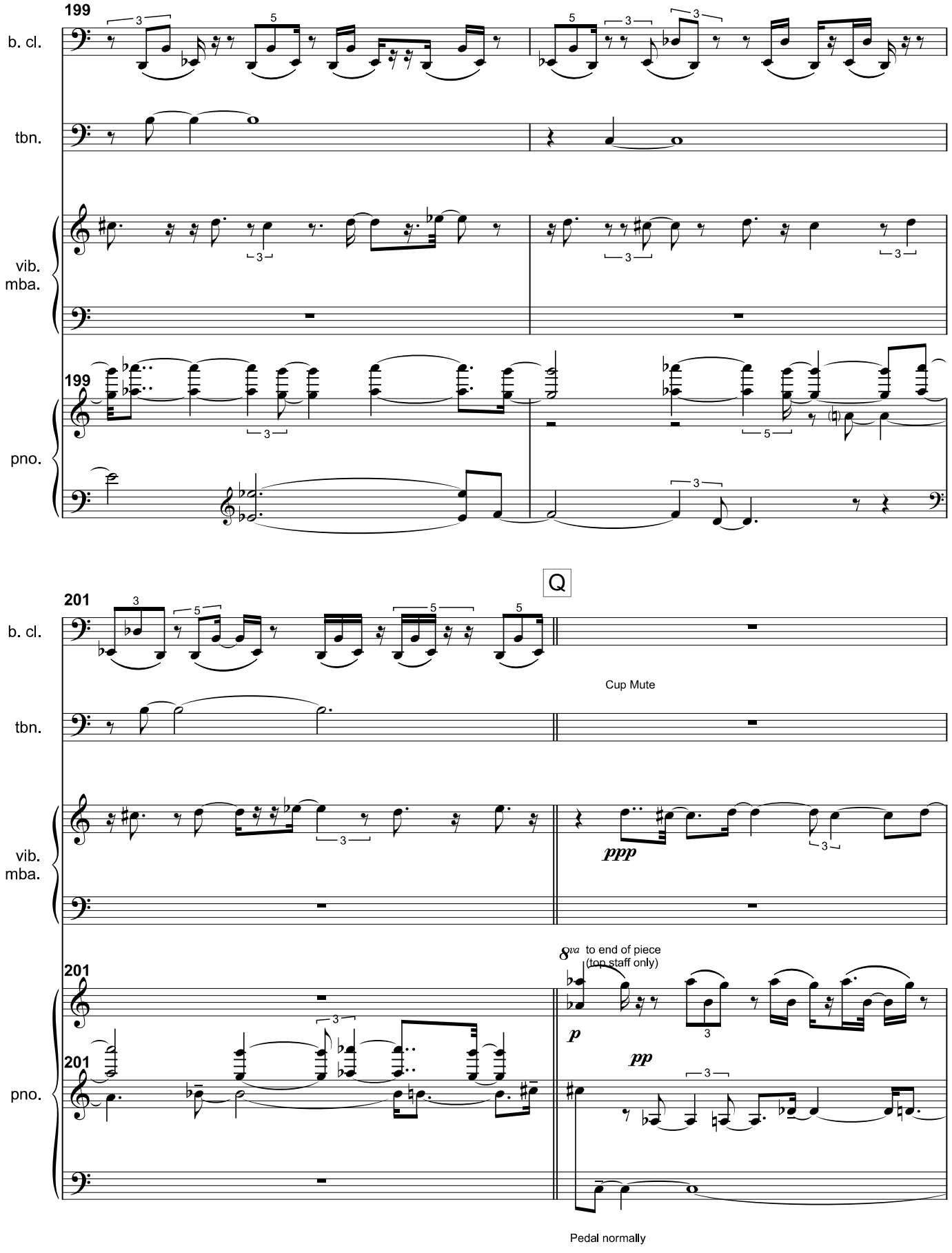

165
b. cl.
pp
tbn.
vib.
mba.
165
pno.
pp
N
171
b. cl.
p
3
tbn.
vib.
mba.
p
171
pno.

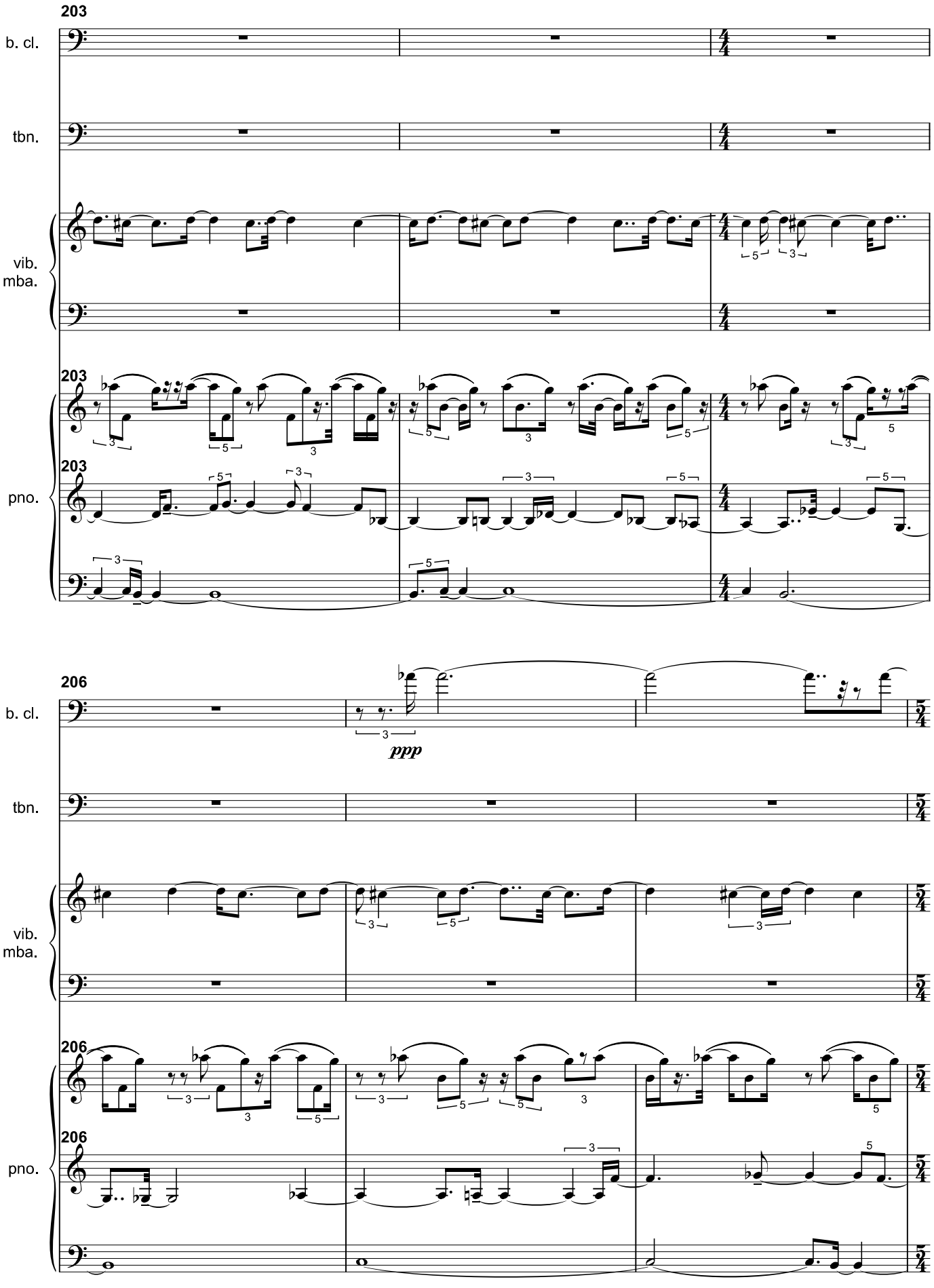

175
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
175
pno.
179
O
b. cl.
tbn.
mf
ff
mf
vib.
mba.
179
pno.
Pedal down throughout

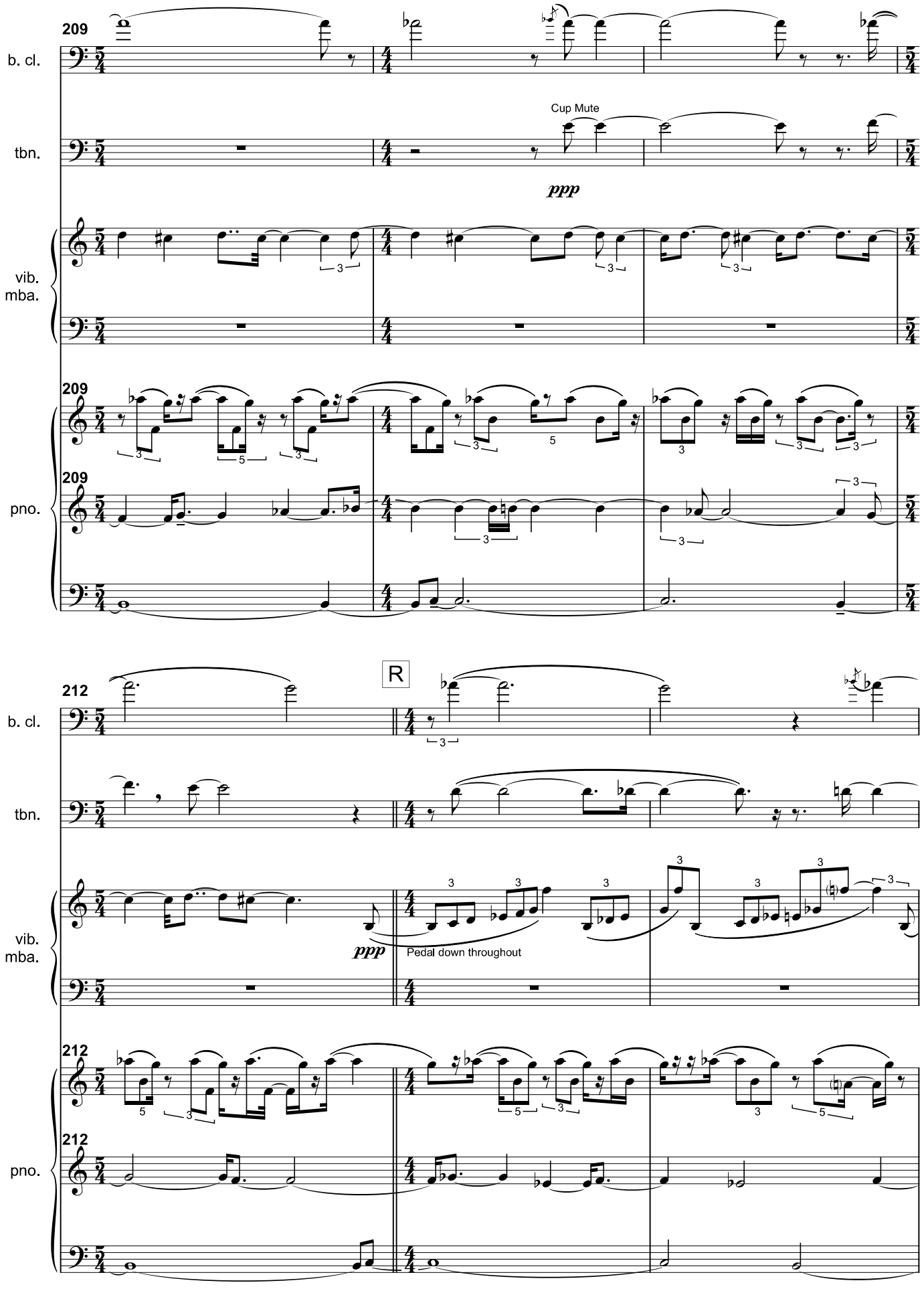

182
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
182
pno.
185
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
185
pno.

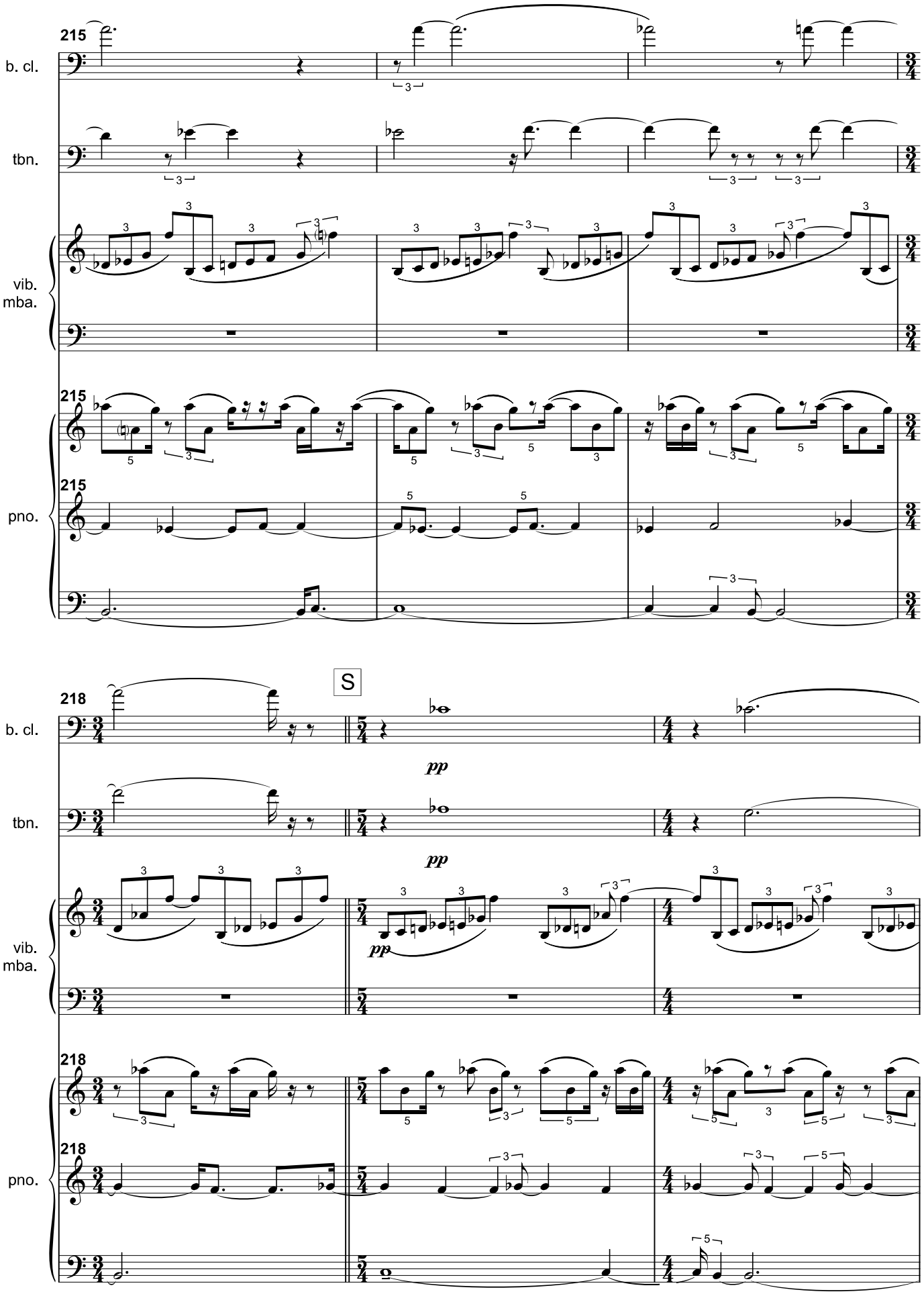

P
188
b. cl.
pp
dim. poco a poco
tbn.
pp
vib.
mba.
p
pp
simile
pno.
188
191
b. cl.
ppp
tbn.
vib.
mba.
pno.
191
pp
Pedal down throughout


194
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
194
pno.
pp
197
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
197
pno.


199
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
199
pno.
201
Q
b. cl.
Cup Mute
tbn.
vib.
mba.
ppp
8va to end of piece
(top staff only)
201
201
p
pp
pno.
Pedal normally


203
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
203
pno.
206
b. cl.
ppp
tbn.
vib.
mba.
206
pno.


209
b. cl.
tbn.
Cup Mute
ppp
vib.
mba.
209
pno.
209
212
R
b. cl.
tbn.
ppp
Pedal down throughout
vib.
mba.
212
pno.
212


215
b. cl.
tbn.
vib.
mba.
215
pno.
215
S
218
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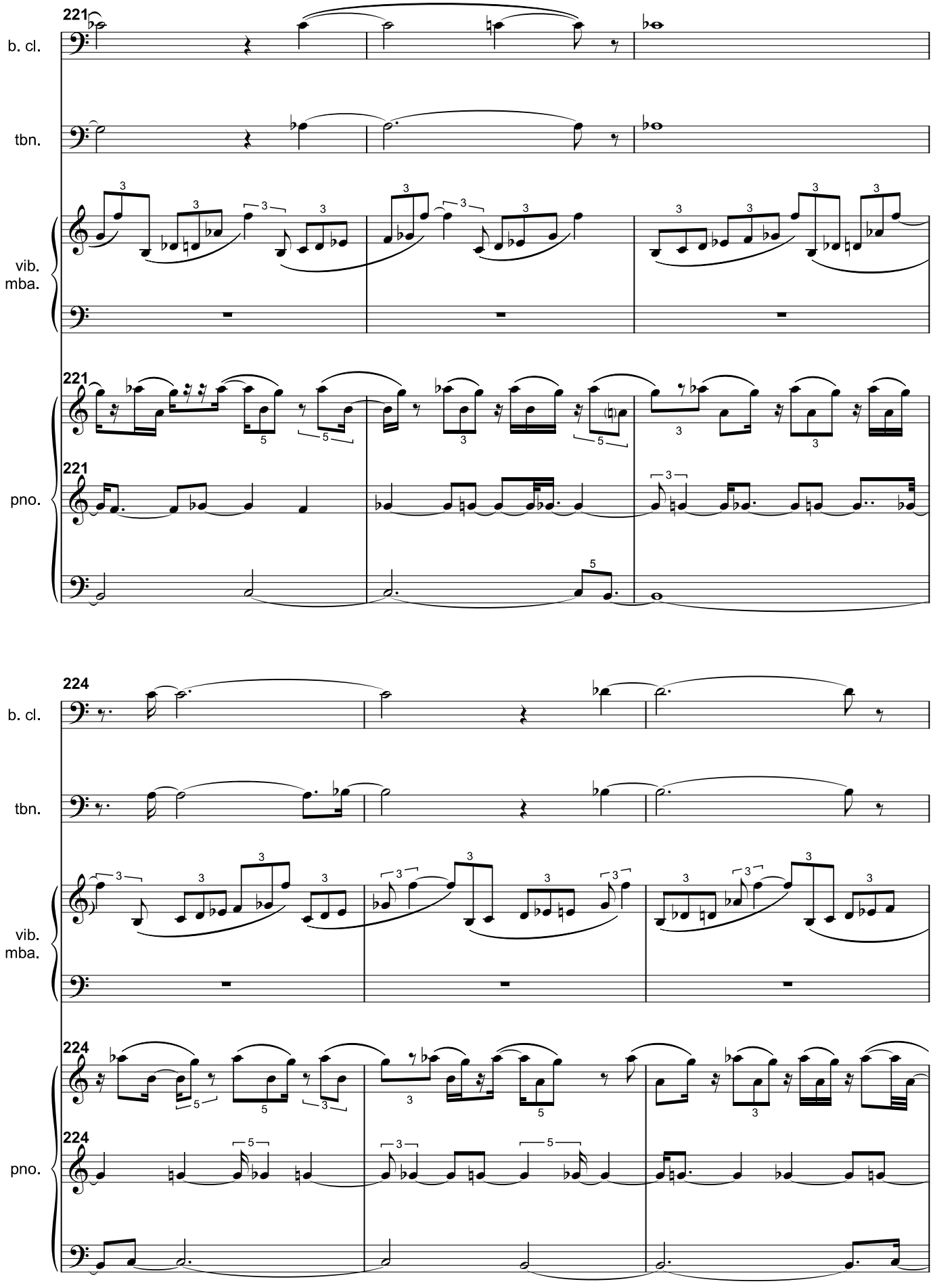
pp
tbn.
pp
vib.
mba.
pp
218
pno.
218


221
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221
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221
224
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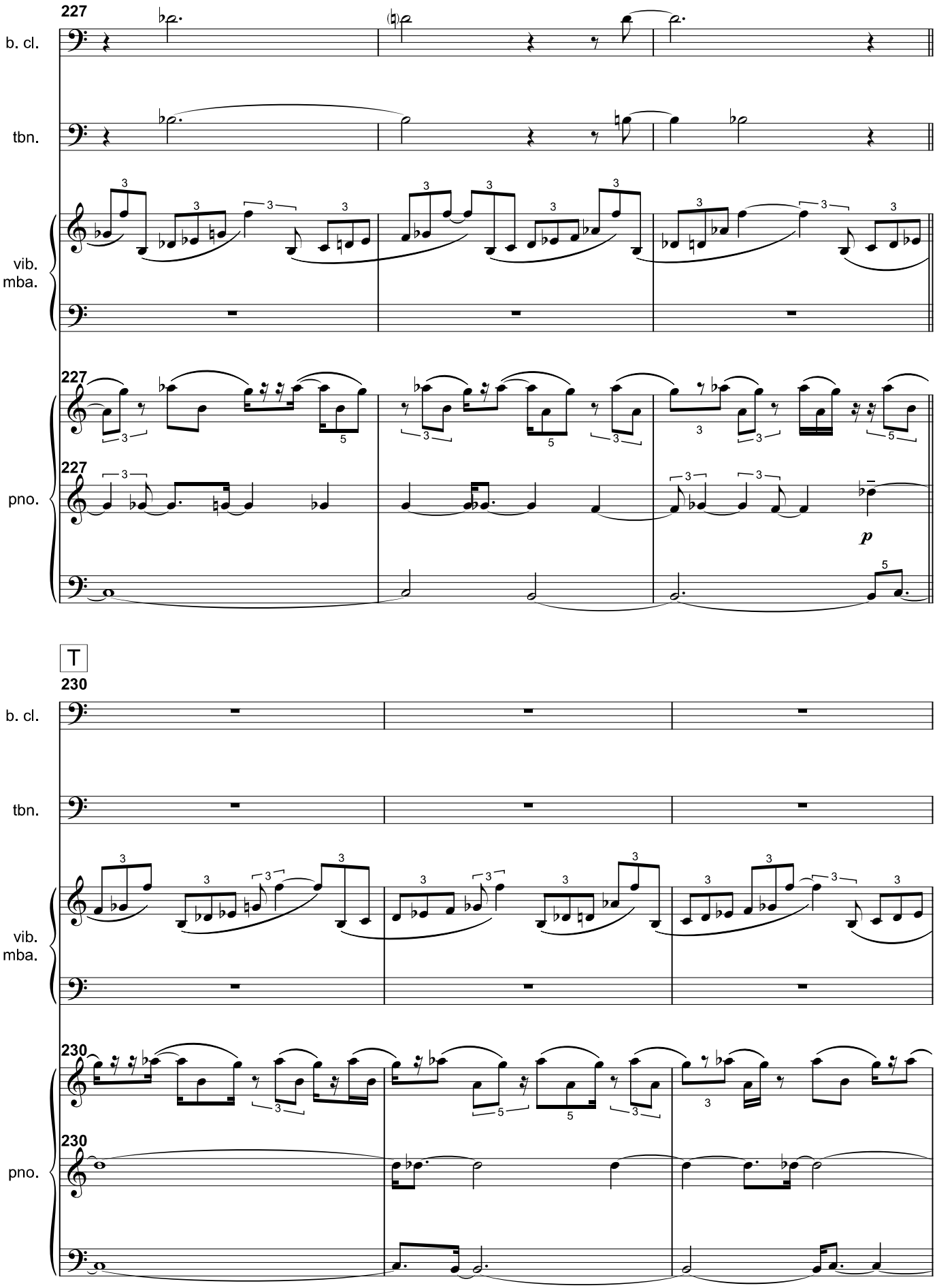
tbn.
vib.
mba.
224
pno.
224


227
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tbn.
vib.
mba.
227
pno.
227
p
T
230
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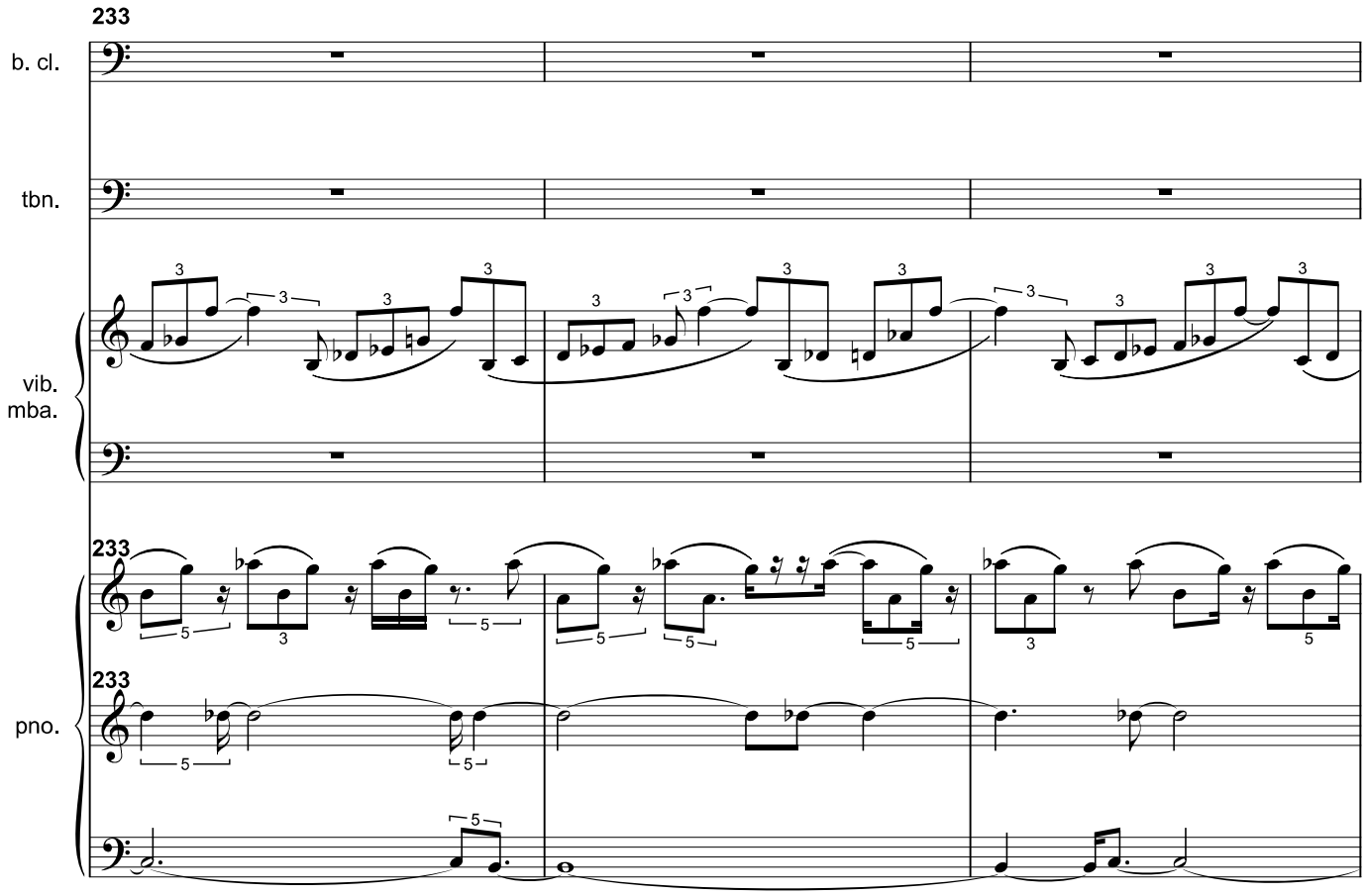
vib.
mba.
230
pno.
230


233
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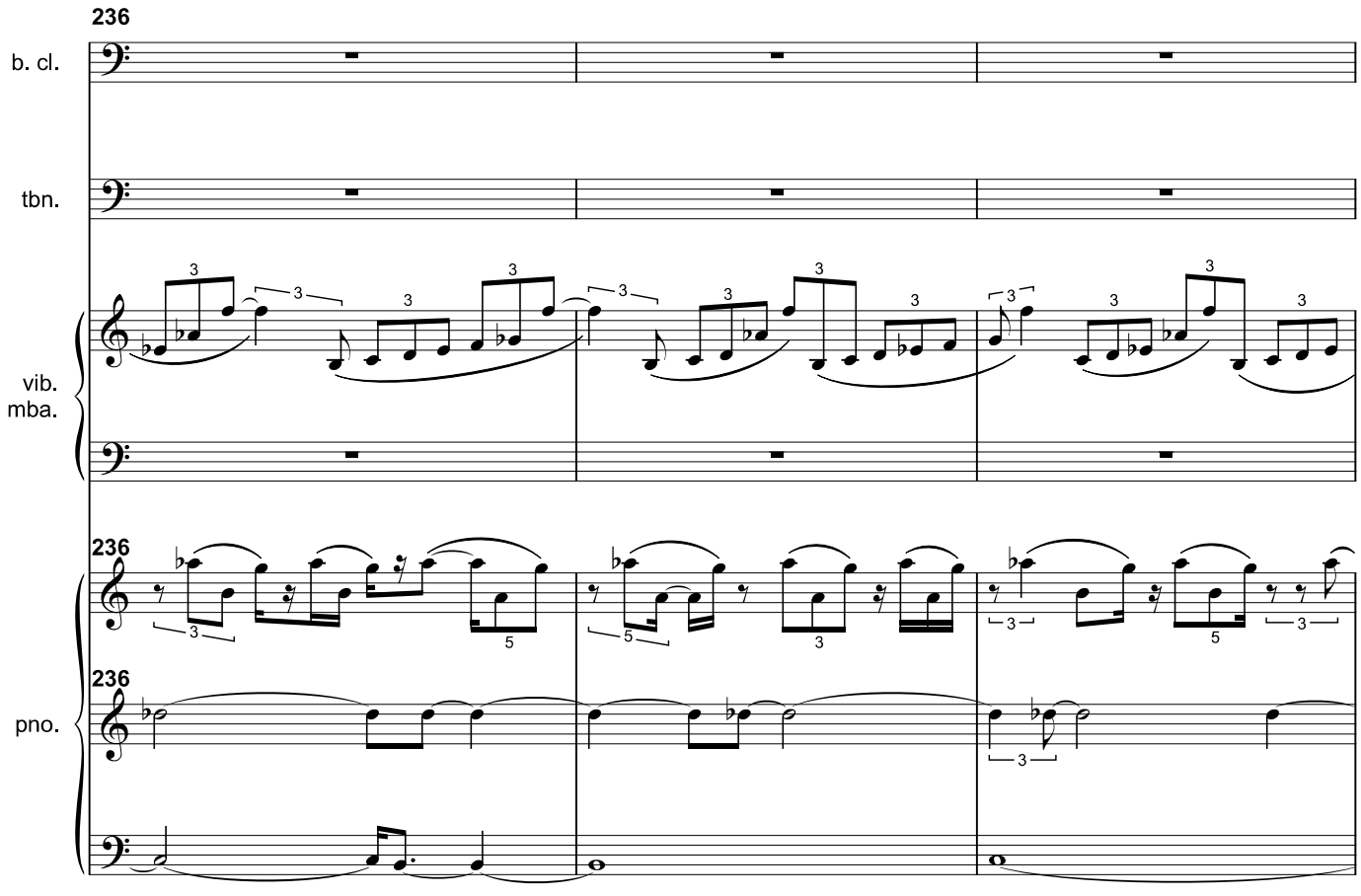
236
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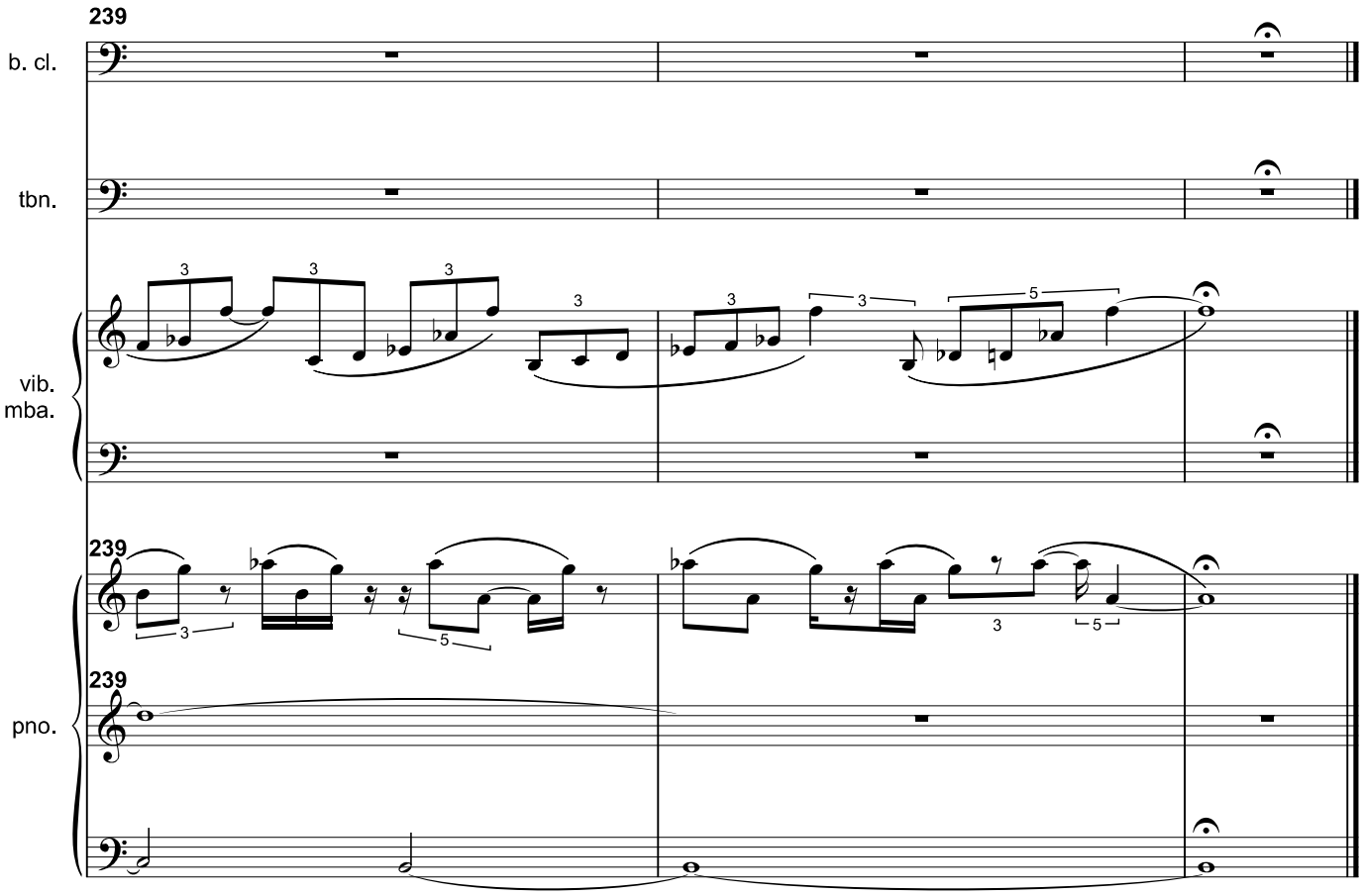
236


239
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239
pno.
239