Strike Opponent's Ears With Both Fists

for flute, clarinet, piano and string quartet

JULIAN GRANT

(2008)

STRIKE OPPONENT'S EARS WITH BOTH FISTS

FLUTE, CLARINET, PIANO AND STRING QUARTET

programme note

The title refers to one of the simple components of a Taiji Quan martial arts routine. Taiji Quan, ironically meaning 'ultimate fist', has attained unparalleled popularity today as an exercise which links health and meditation to traditional unarmed combat techniques to bring focus and spiritual relaxation to the practitioner. Lao Tzu, in his philosophical classic, *The Tao Te Ching,* wrote 'the soft and flexible will defeat the hard and the strong'; and in just such a way, Taiji Quan negates the notion of force conquering force. Instead, students are trained to meet force with softness, thereby victorious through the attainment of balance.

The origins of Taiji Quan are obscure, though some sources cite a Daoist of either the twelfth or fifteenth century, Zhang San-feng, who created the art after watching a crane and a snake fighting. The styles of Taiji Quan in favour today can be traced back to a general from the last days of the Ming Dynasty, Chen Wang-ting, who, when the Ming fell in 1644, retired to his village and created seven sets of styles, of which only two survive today.

Correct motion can only be born of absolute stillness. Thus, this piece opens with four very smooth chords that blur into one another, ending with a surprisingly euphonious one. Now focused, the music can move. A single movement would be learned and repeated until perfected; and only then could one proceed to the next. In the music, a lengthy passage ensues of single notes in differing textures and registers that soon streamline, glide into motion and attain a strong yet smooth line, unencumbered by harmony. The aim of Taiji Quan: to generate power using the whole body, is suggested by the piano entering with a rustling harmonic idea, supported by the ensemble, which builds into a powerful sequence. A fleeting moment of angular conflict passes back to the opening smooth chords, after which the single note passage is repeated, but with increasing agility and drama. An intensified return of the piano sequence idea suggests real menace and builds to an ominous climax. The piece concludes with the initial four chords, though not so formally presented. The next to last word is had by the euphonious fourth chord, here presented as a sharp blow of a fist, followed by a dying flute trill, suggesting the possibility of a return to equilibrium.

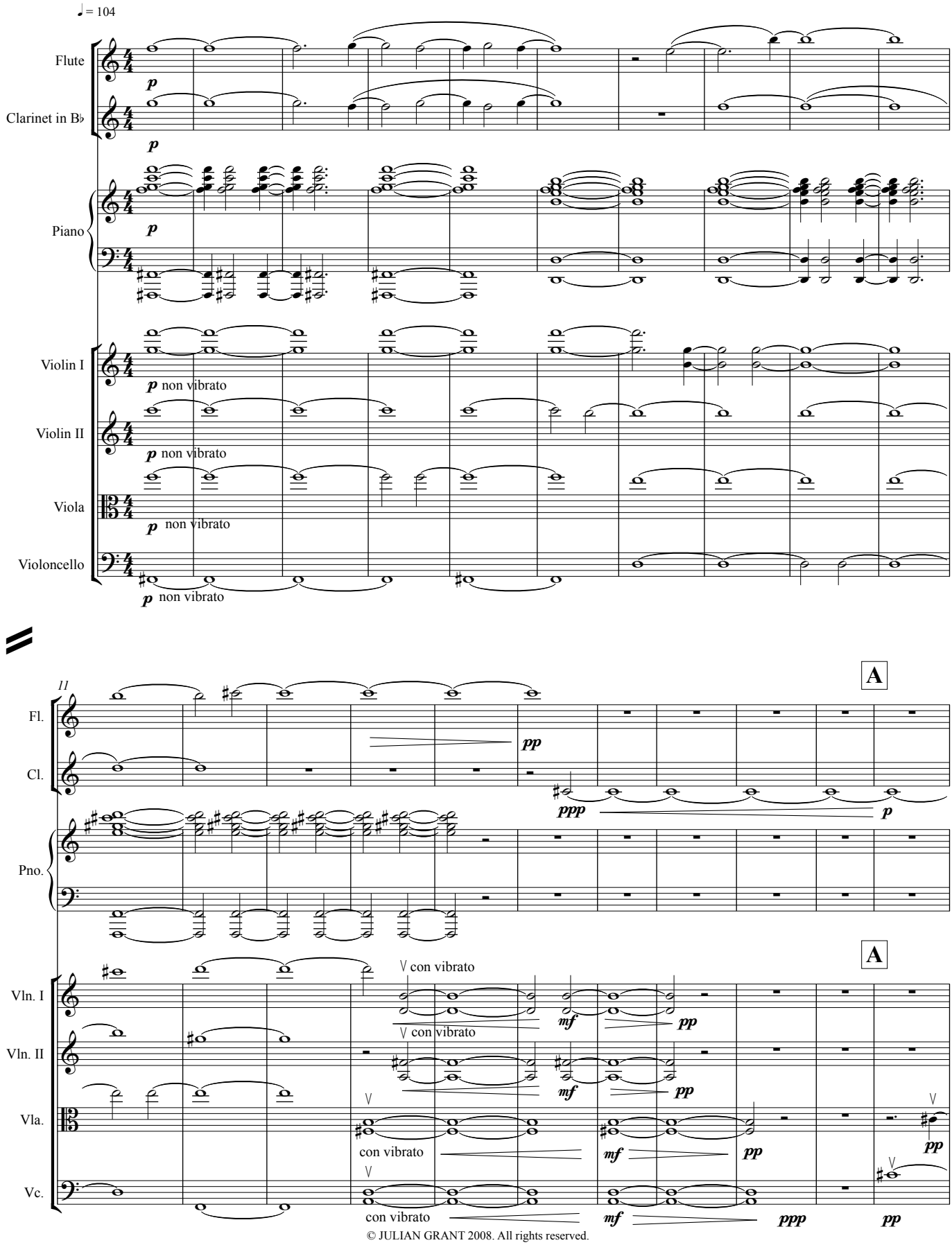
duration 10 minutes

score is written in C

commissioned by Chroma
first performance 8 June 2008
Park Lane Chapel, Norwich, UK

Strike Opponent's Ears With Both Fists

JULIAN GRANT



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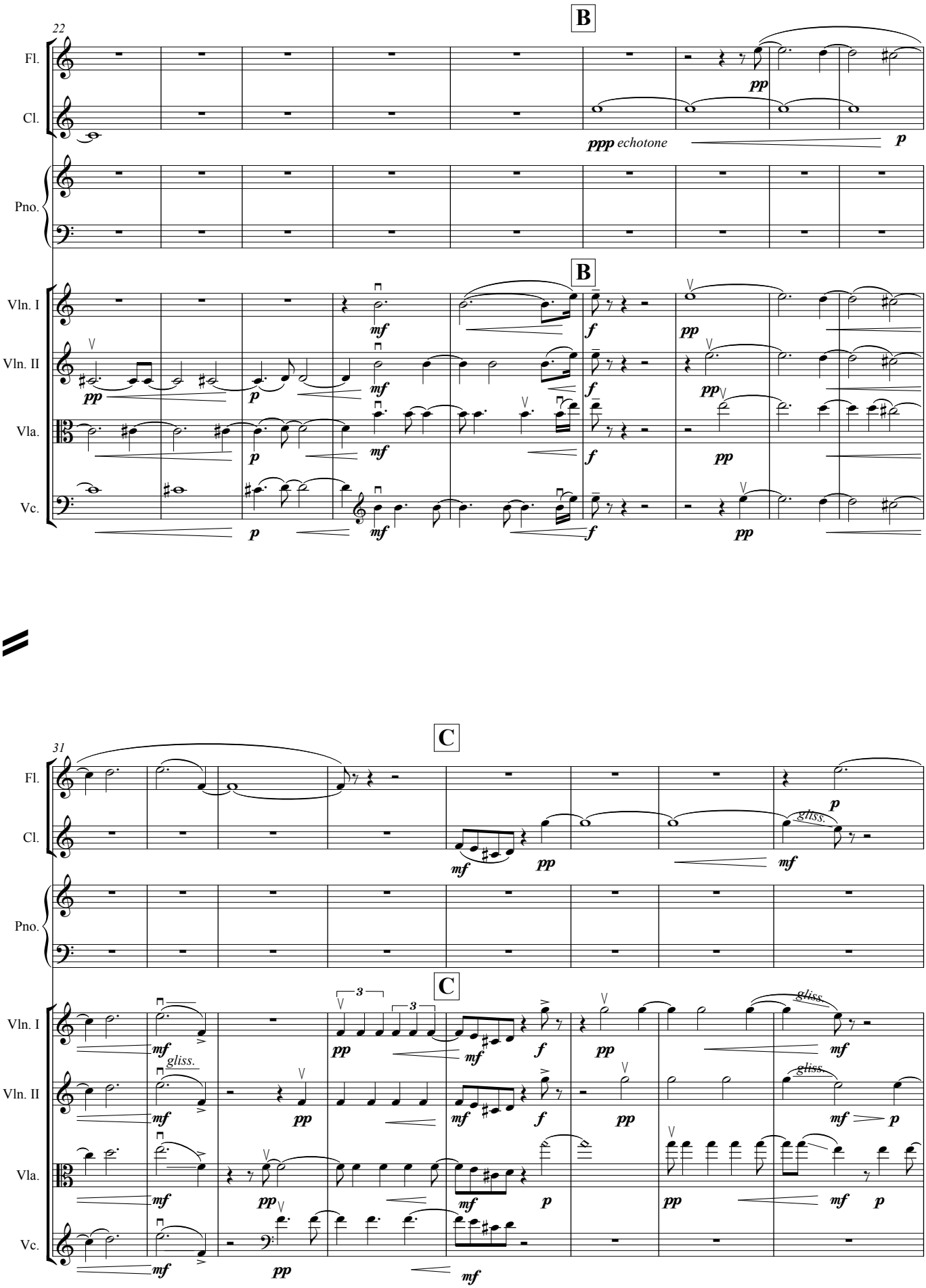
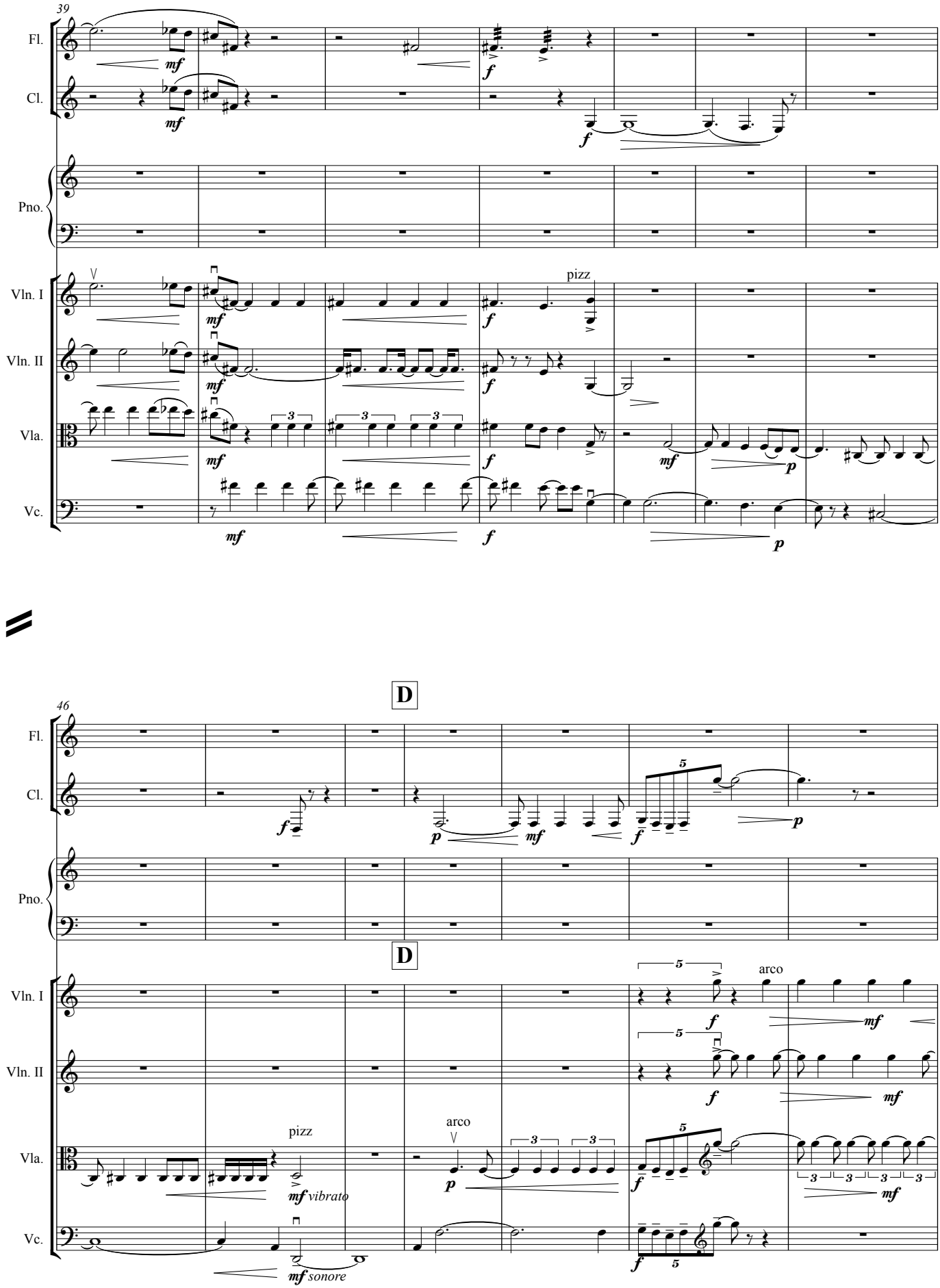
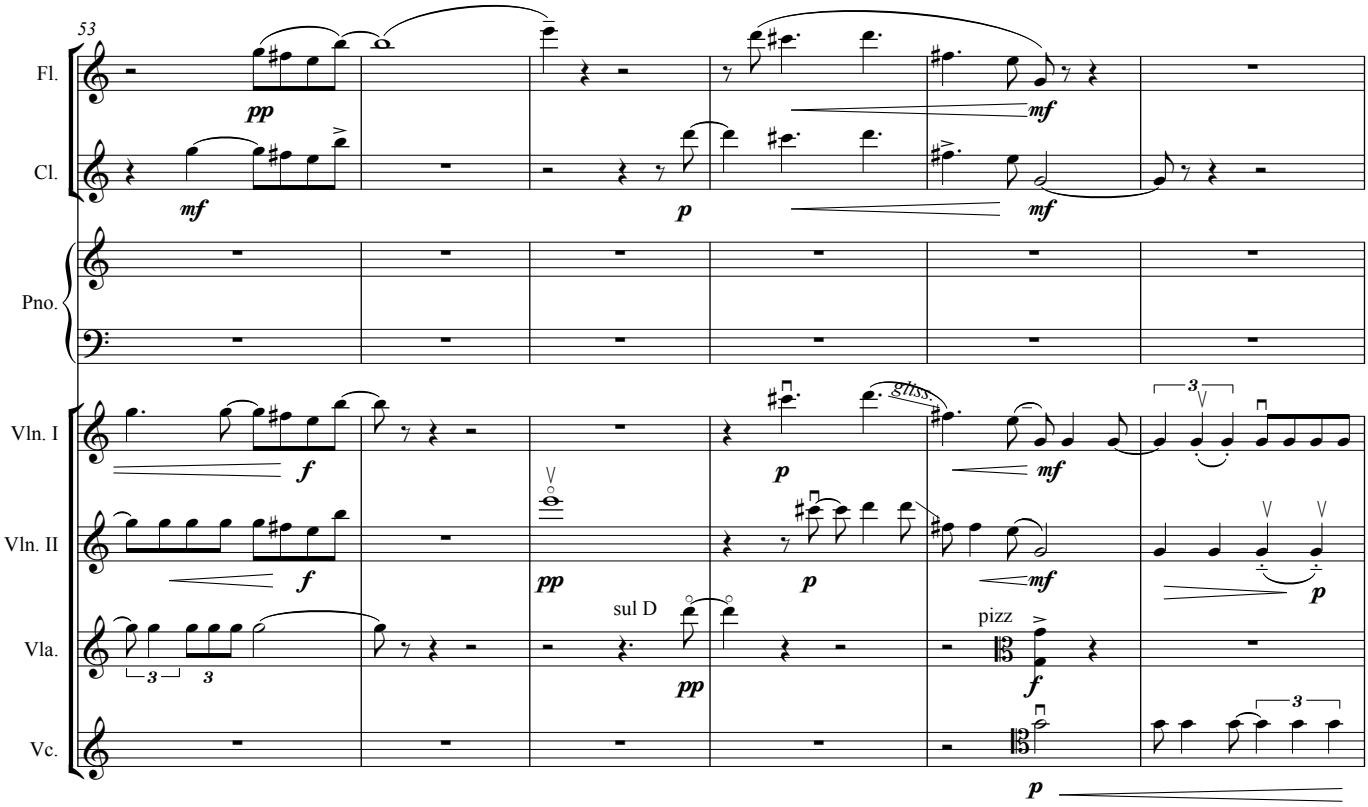
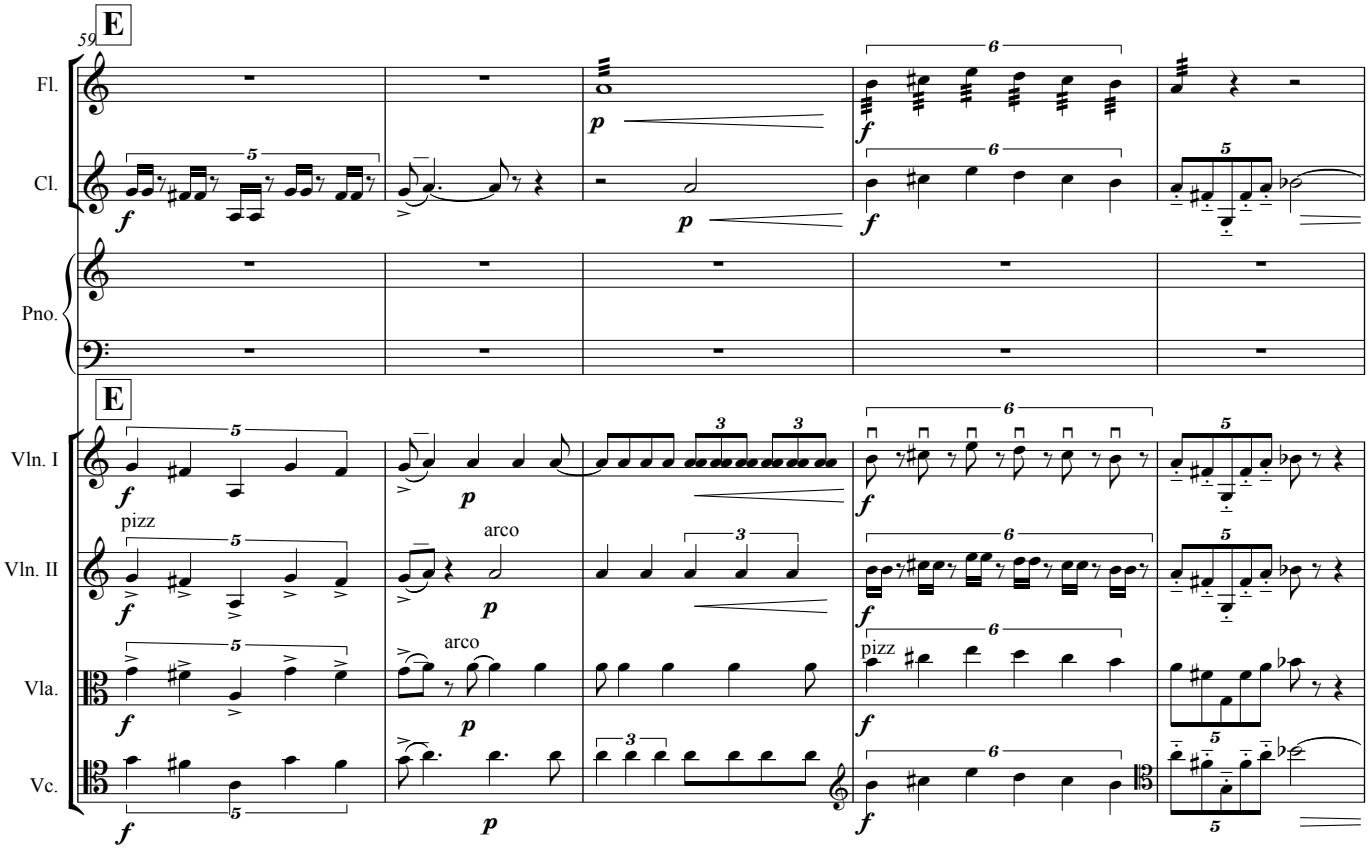
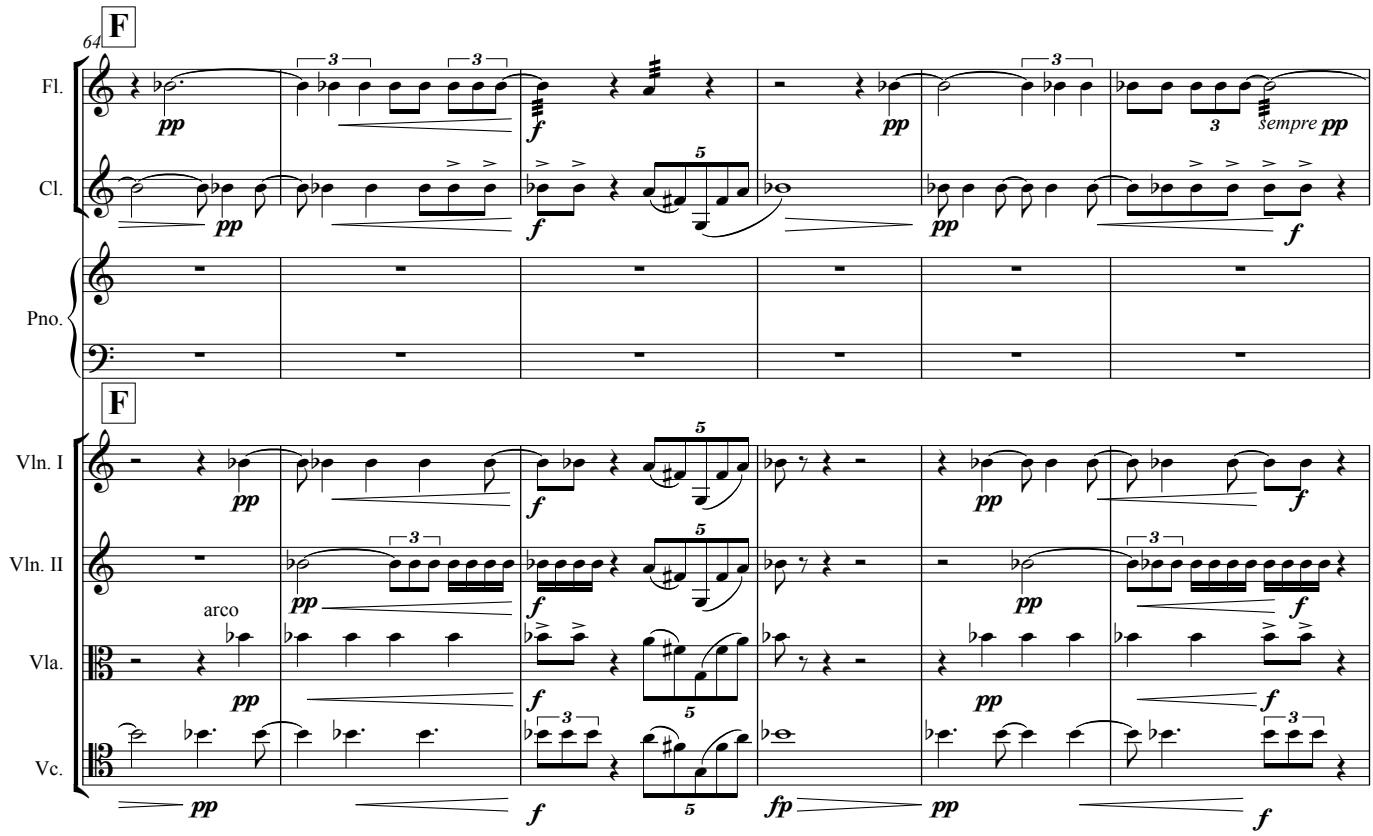
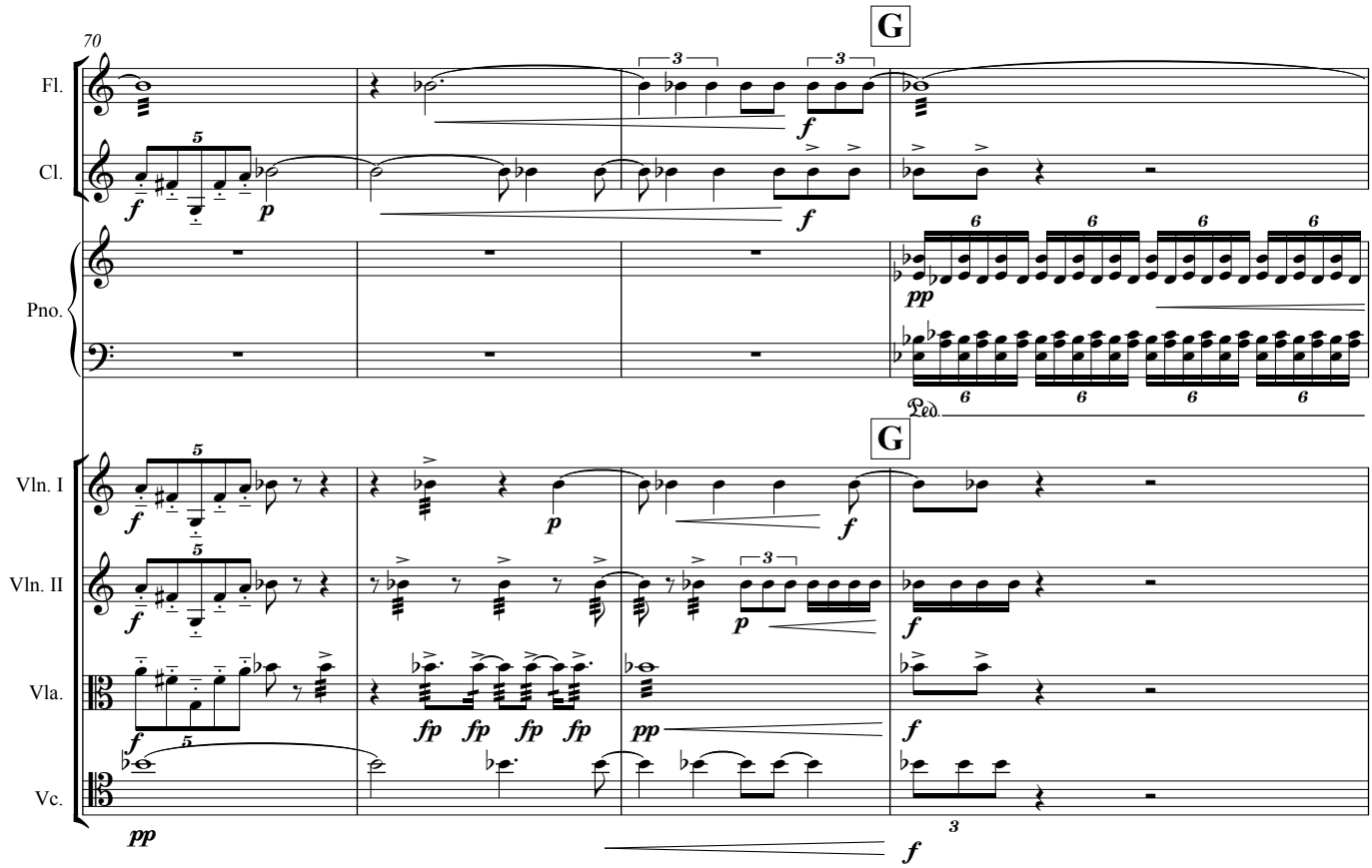

22
B
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ppp echotone
pp
p
mf
f
gliss.
31
C
3

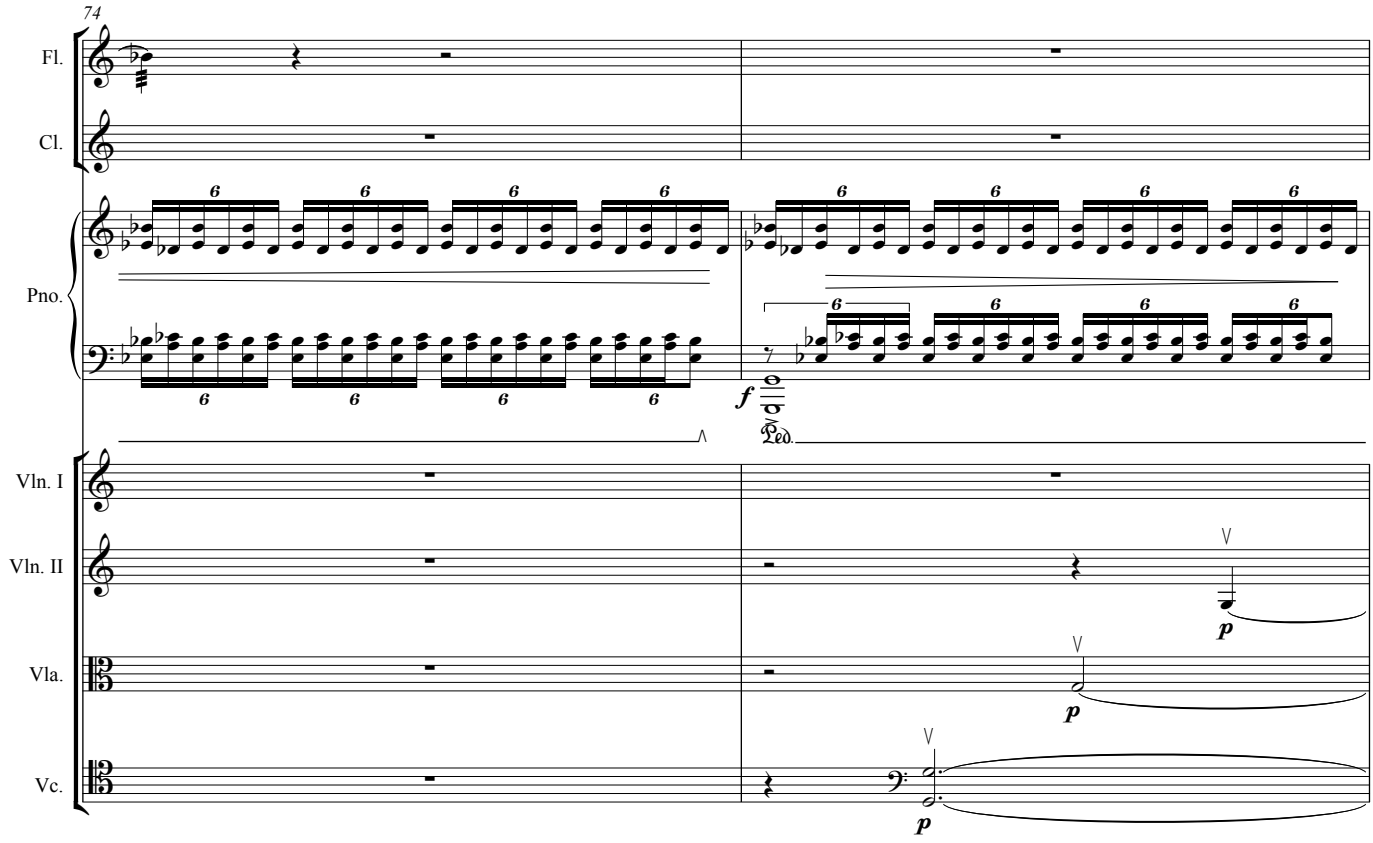

39
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
f
p
pizz
D
46
arco
vibrato
sonore


53
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pp
mf
p
f
gliss.
sul D
pizz


59
E
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz
arco
f
p


64
F
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
arco
Vla.
Vc.
sempre pp


70
G
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Ped.
G
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.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Fl.
Cl.
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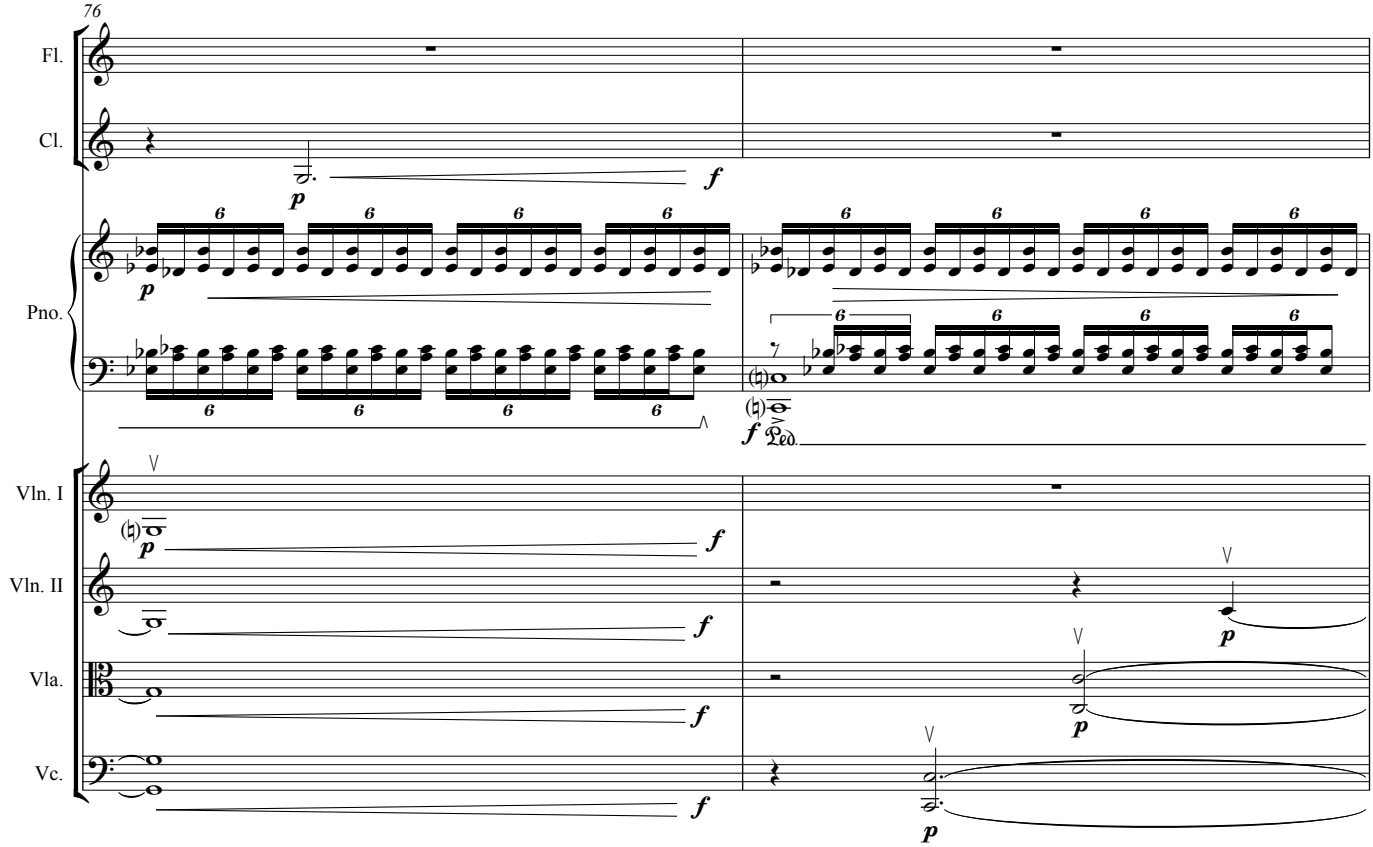
Vla.
Vc.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Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
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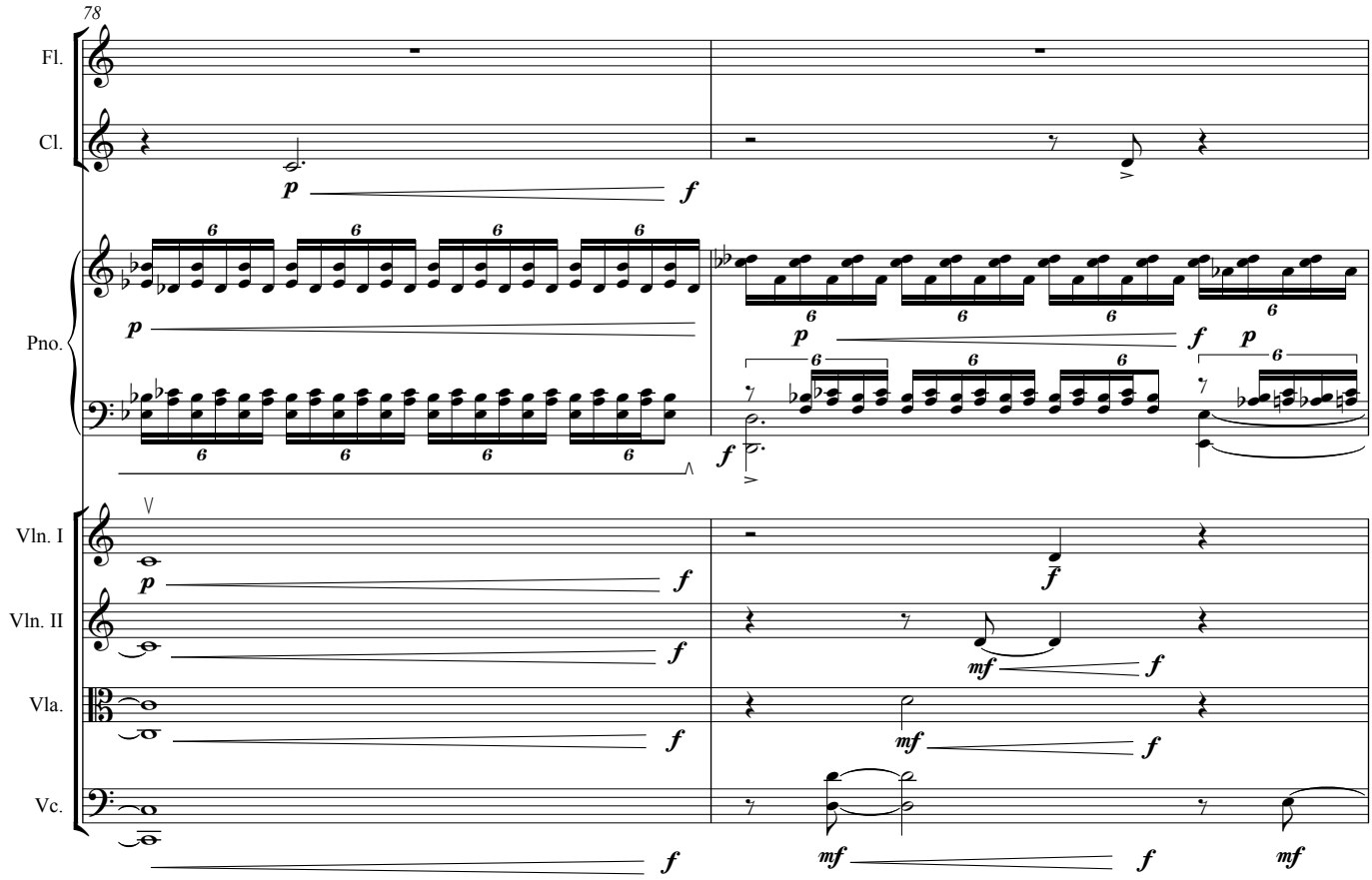
Vla.
Vc.


78
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
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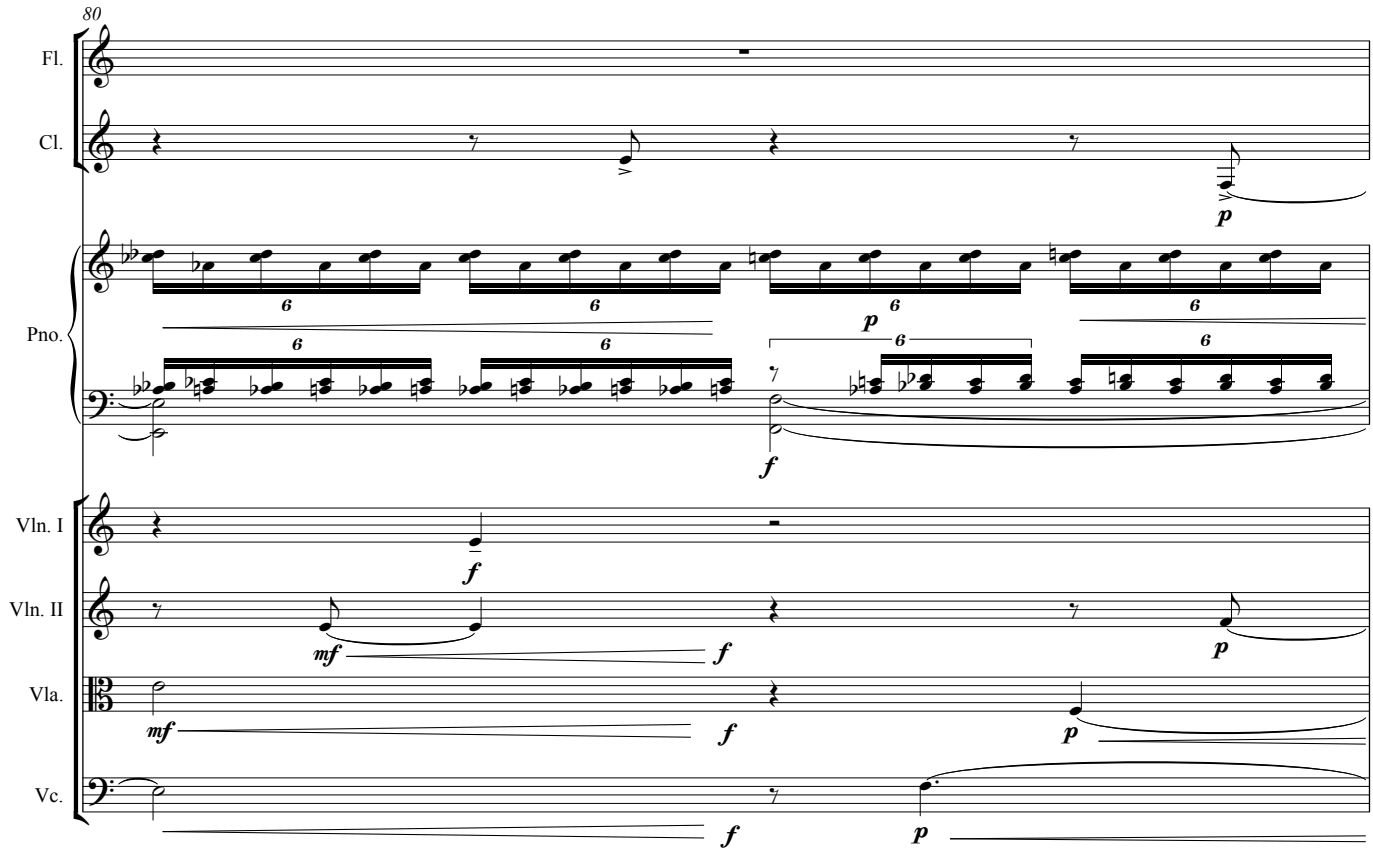
Vla.
Vc.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Fl.
Cl.
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Vln. I
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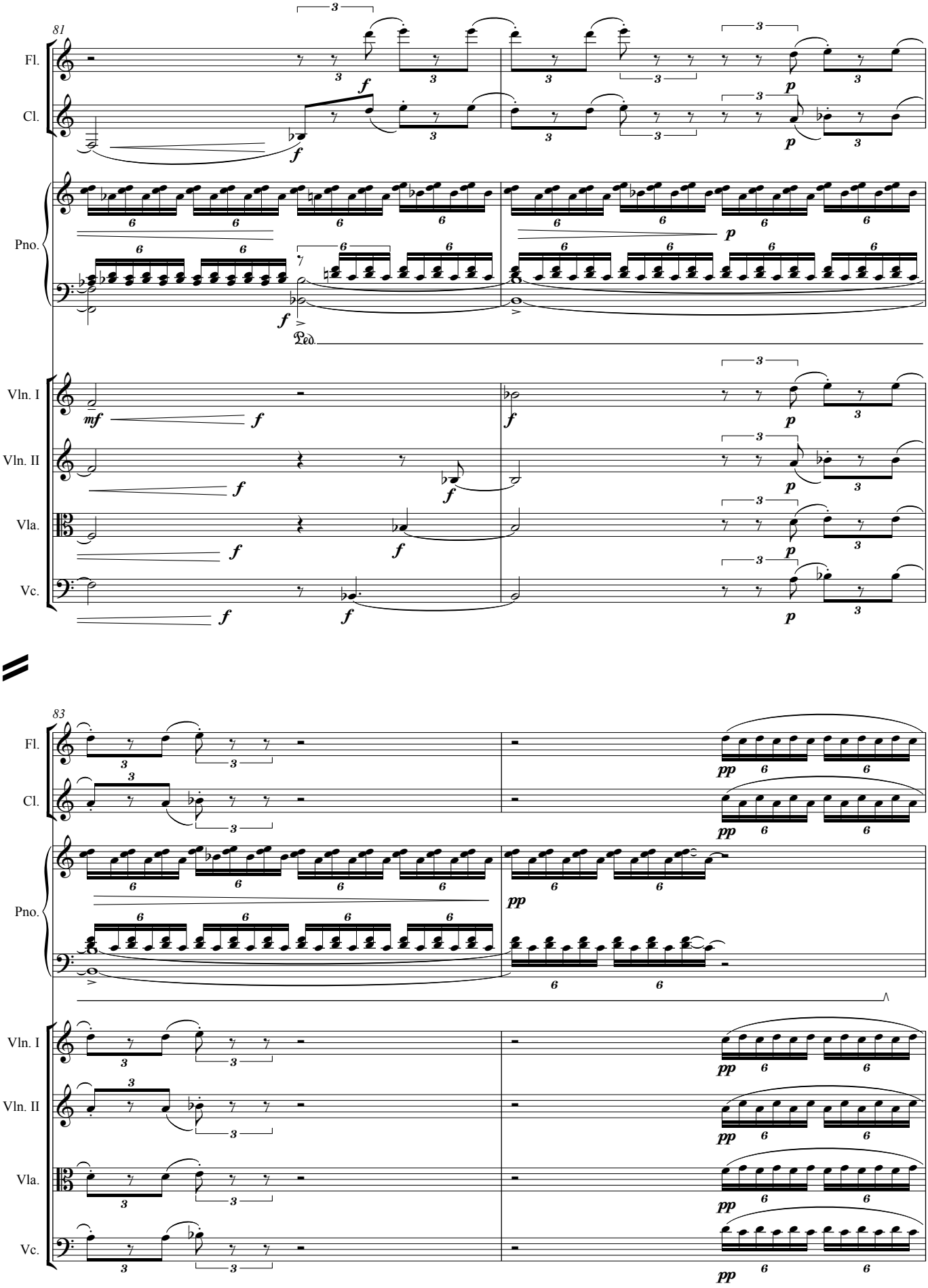
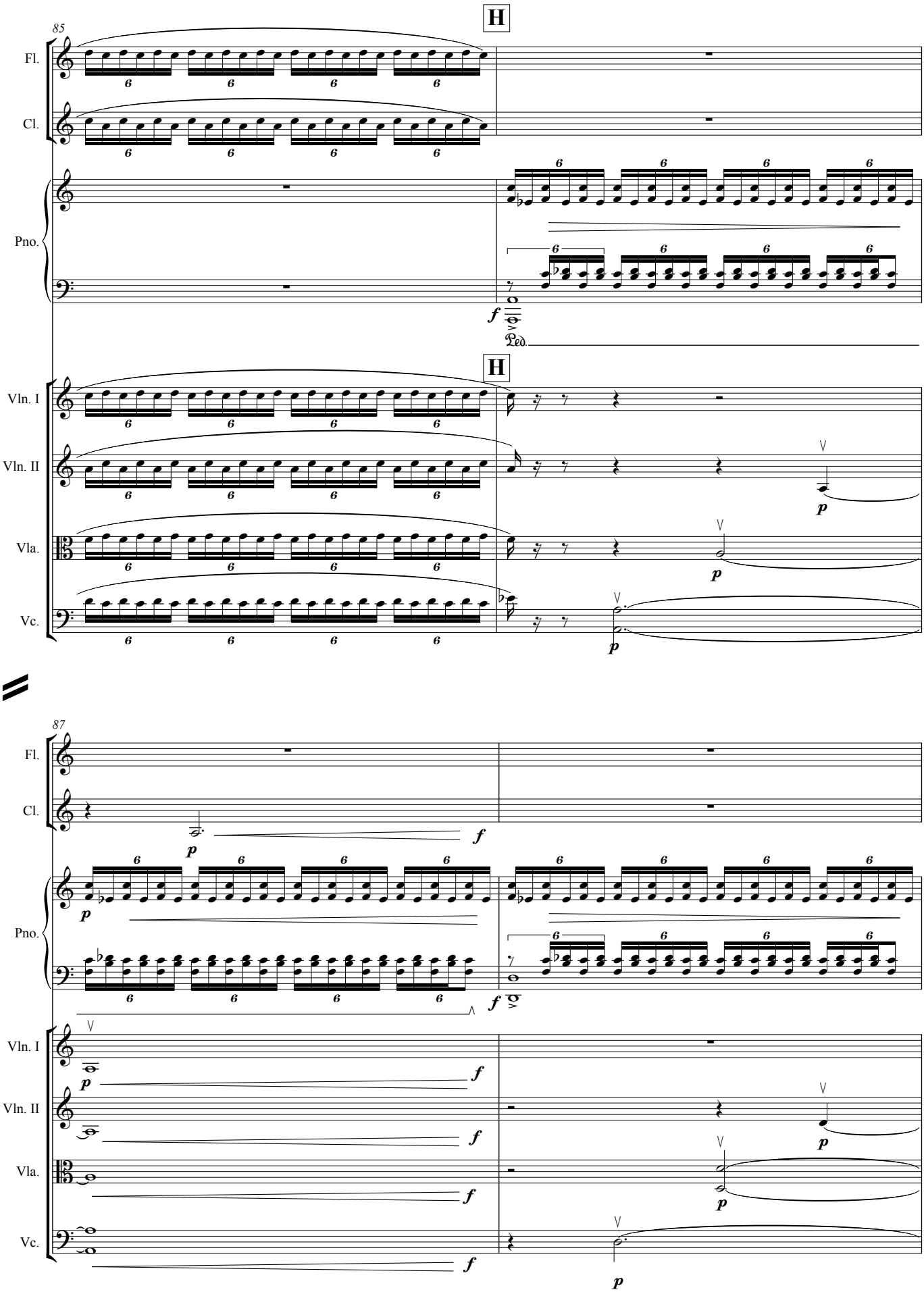
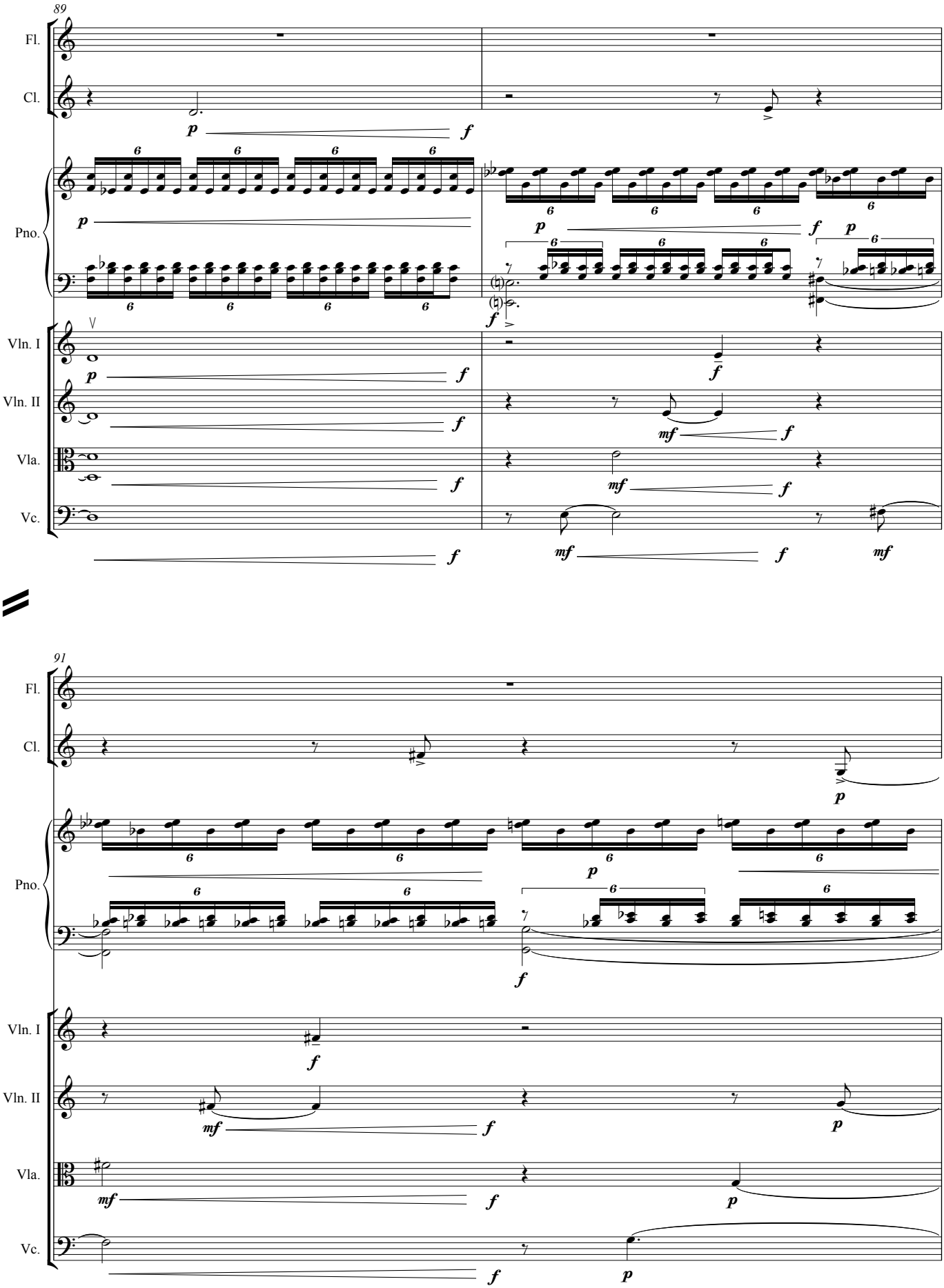
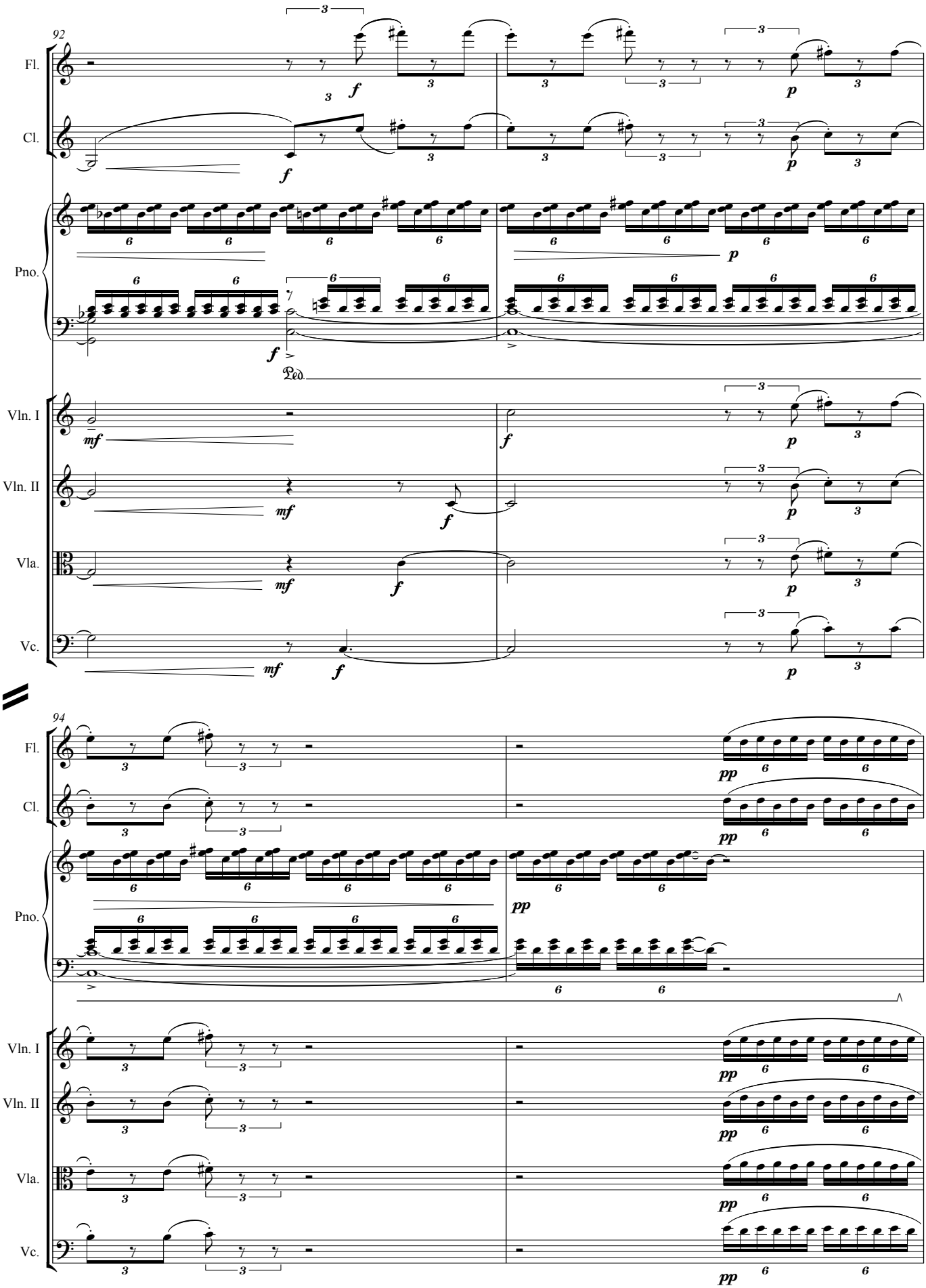
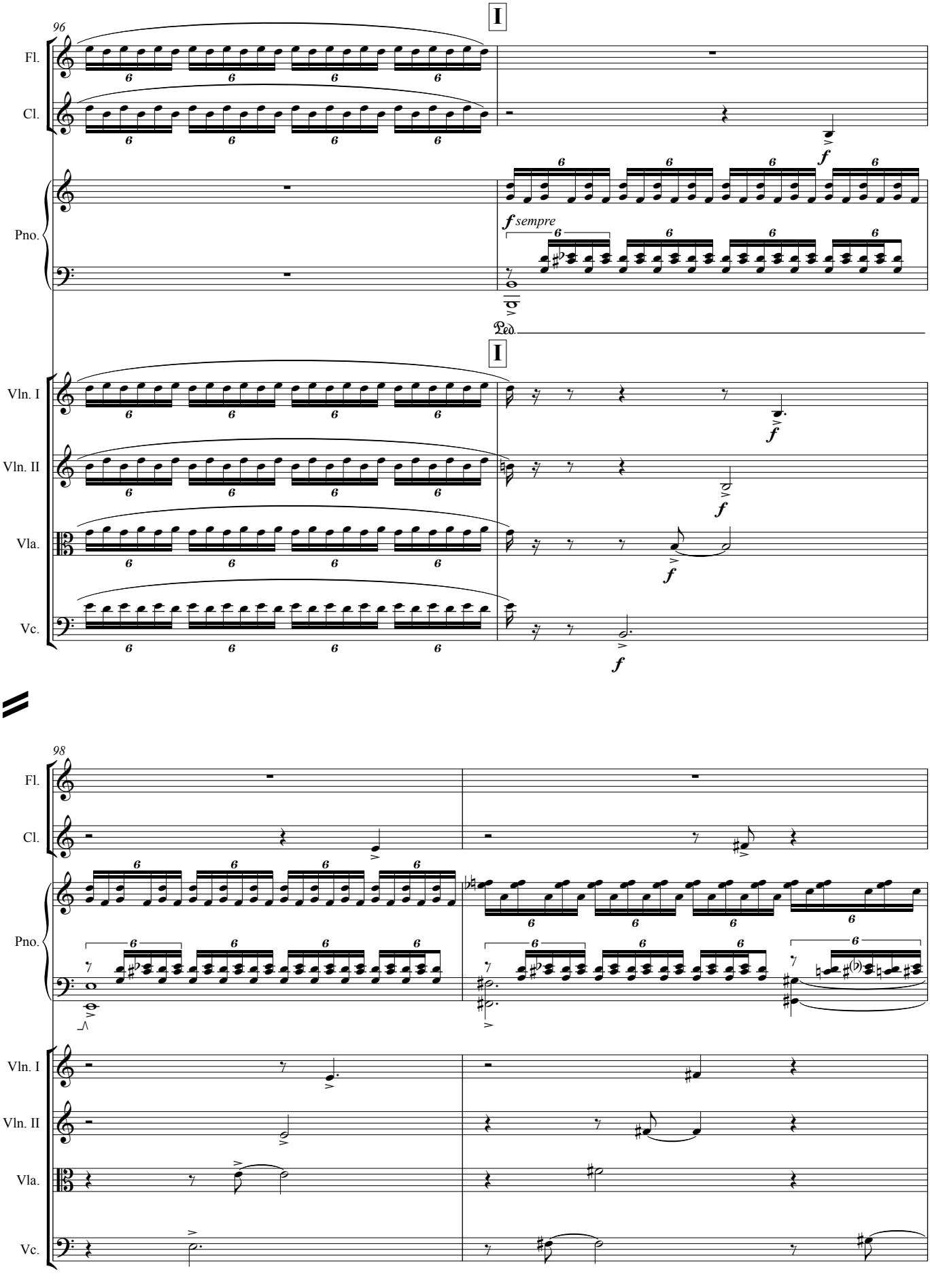
Vc.

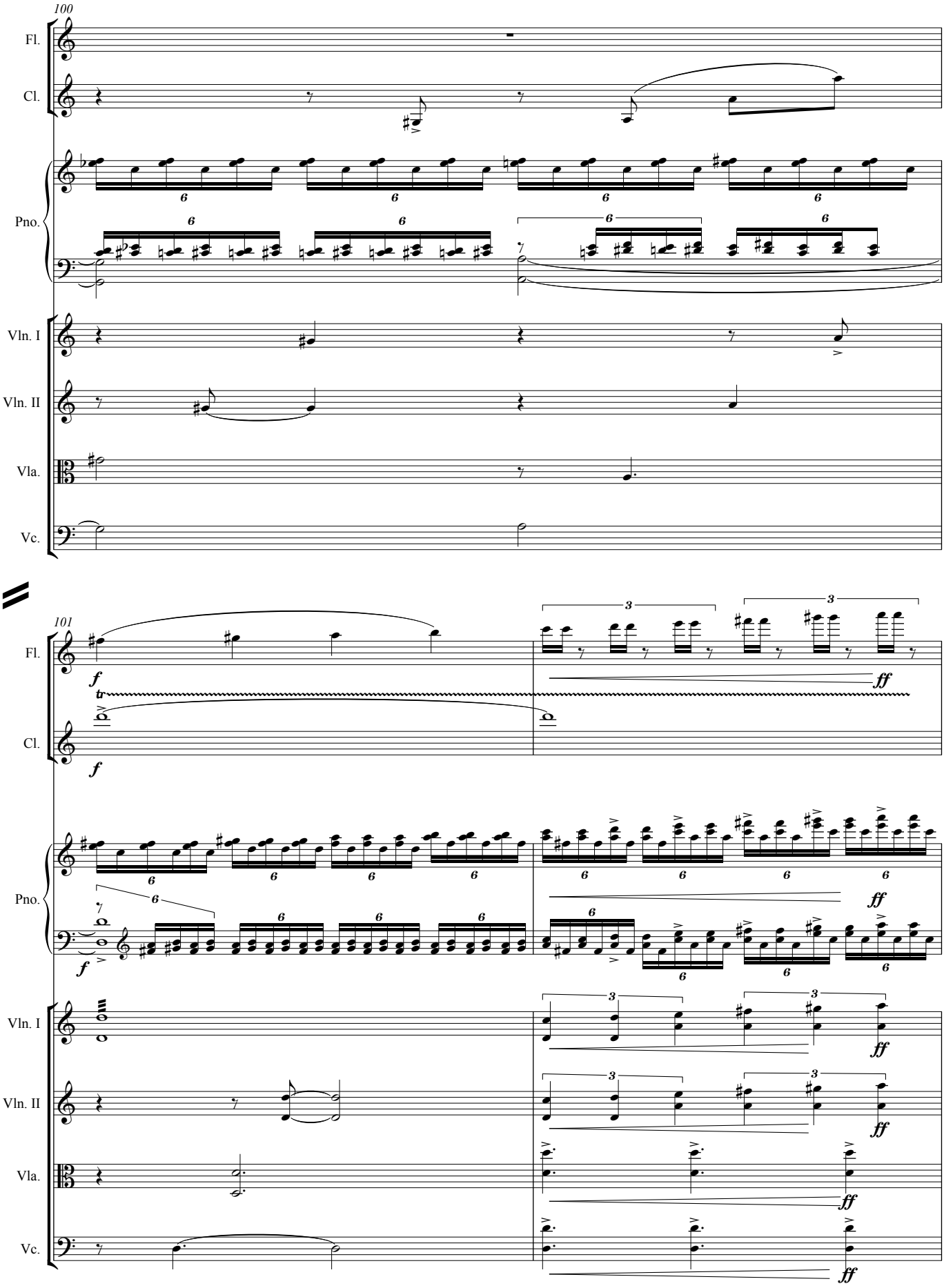

81
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
83
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


H
85
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
f
Ped.
H
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
87
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
f
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p


89
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
91
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


92
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
94


96
I
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
f
f sempre
Ped.
I
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
98
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


100
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
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Fl.
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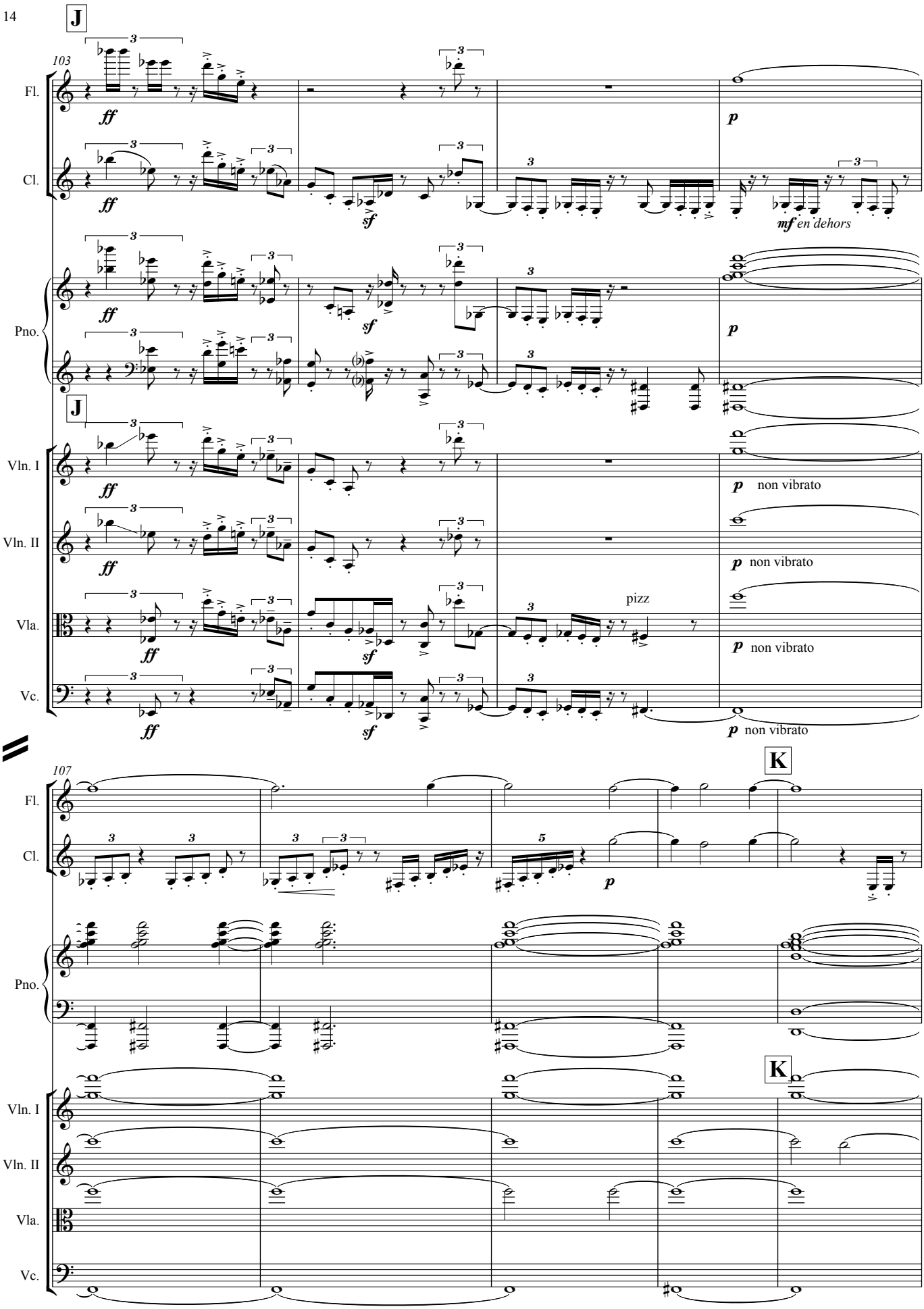
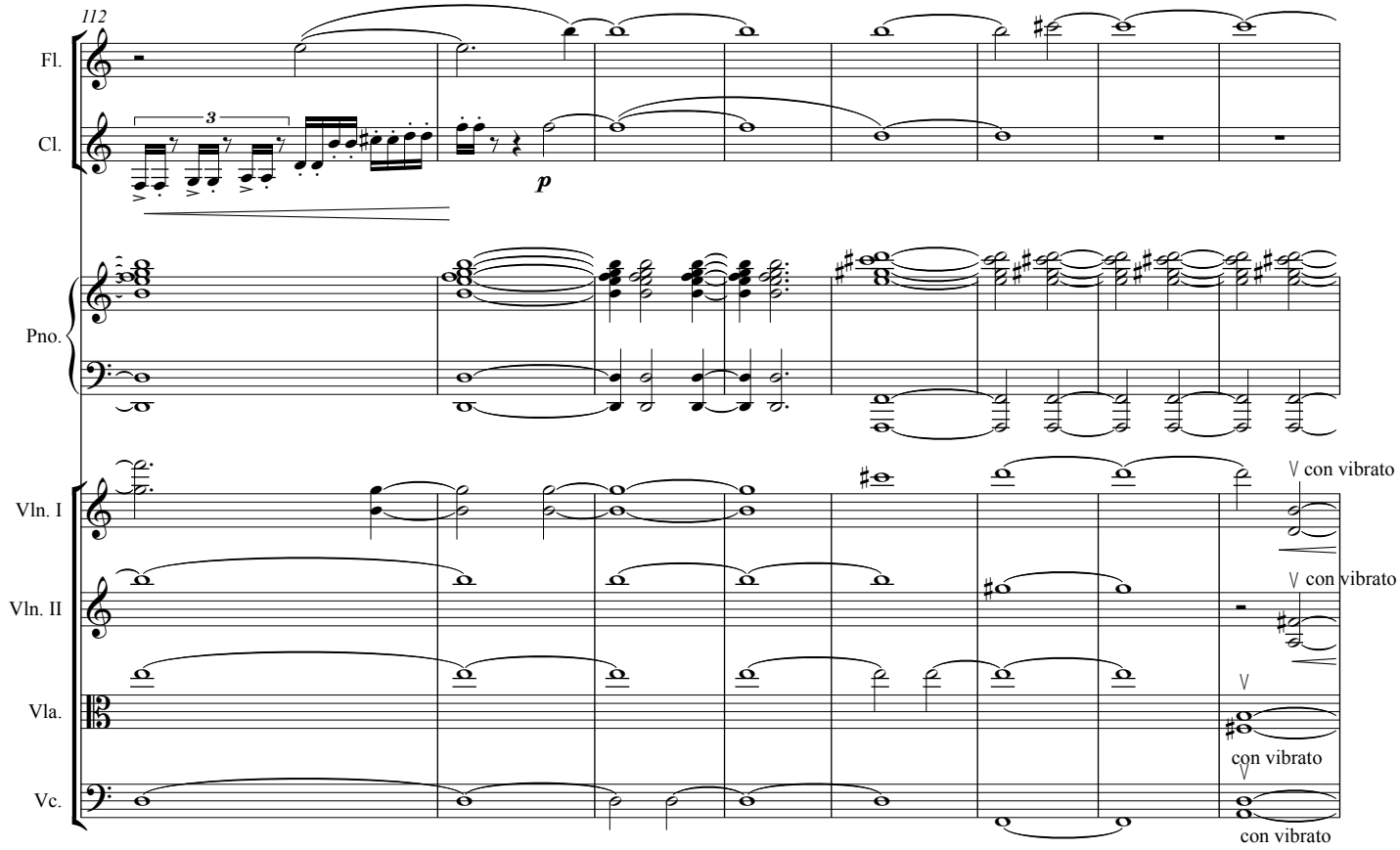
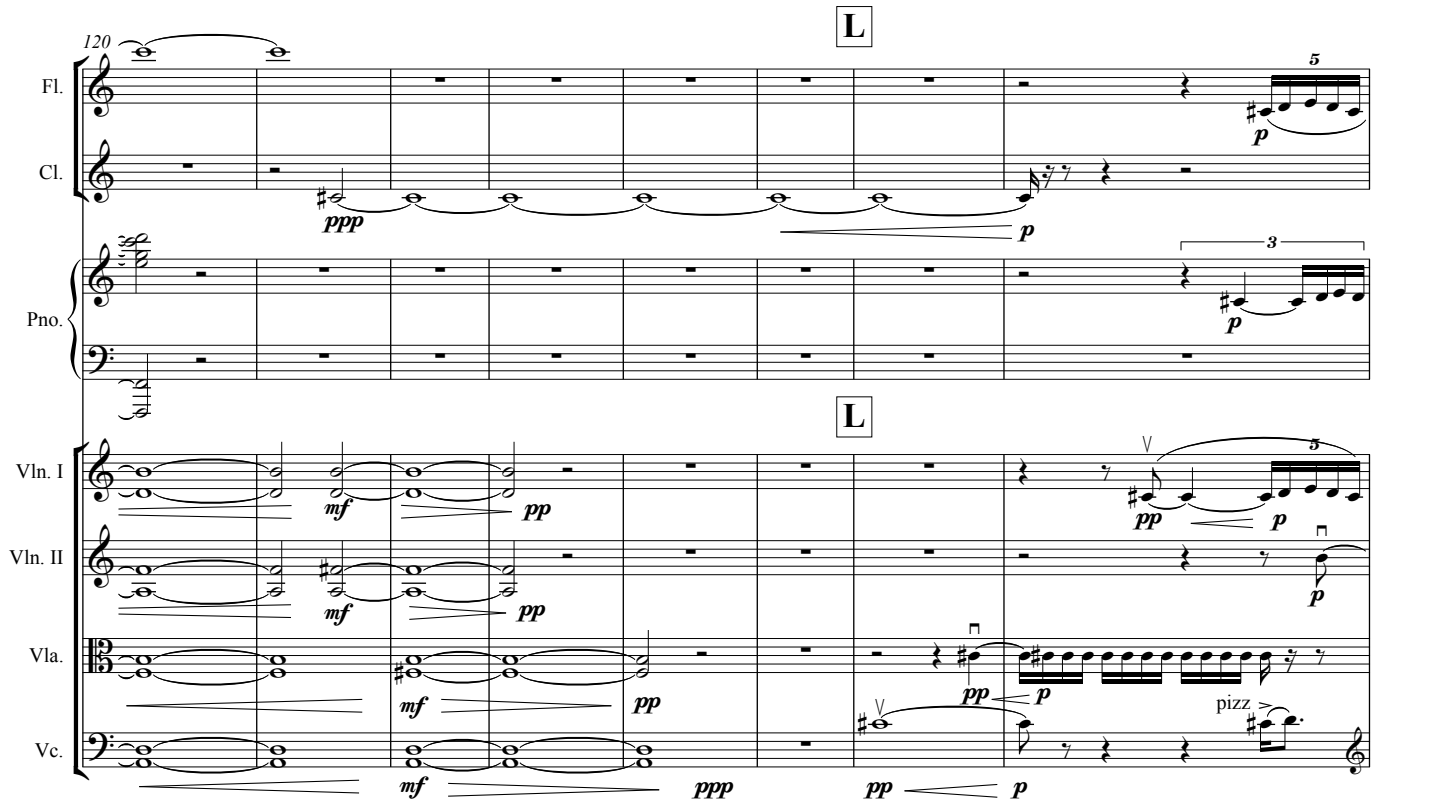
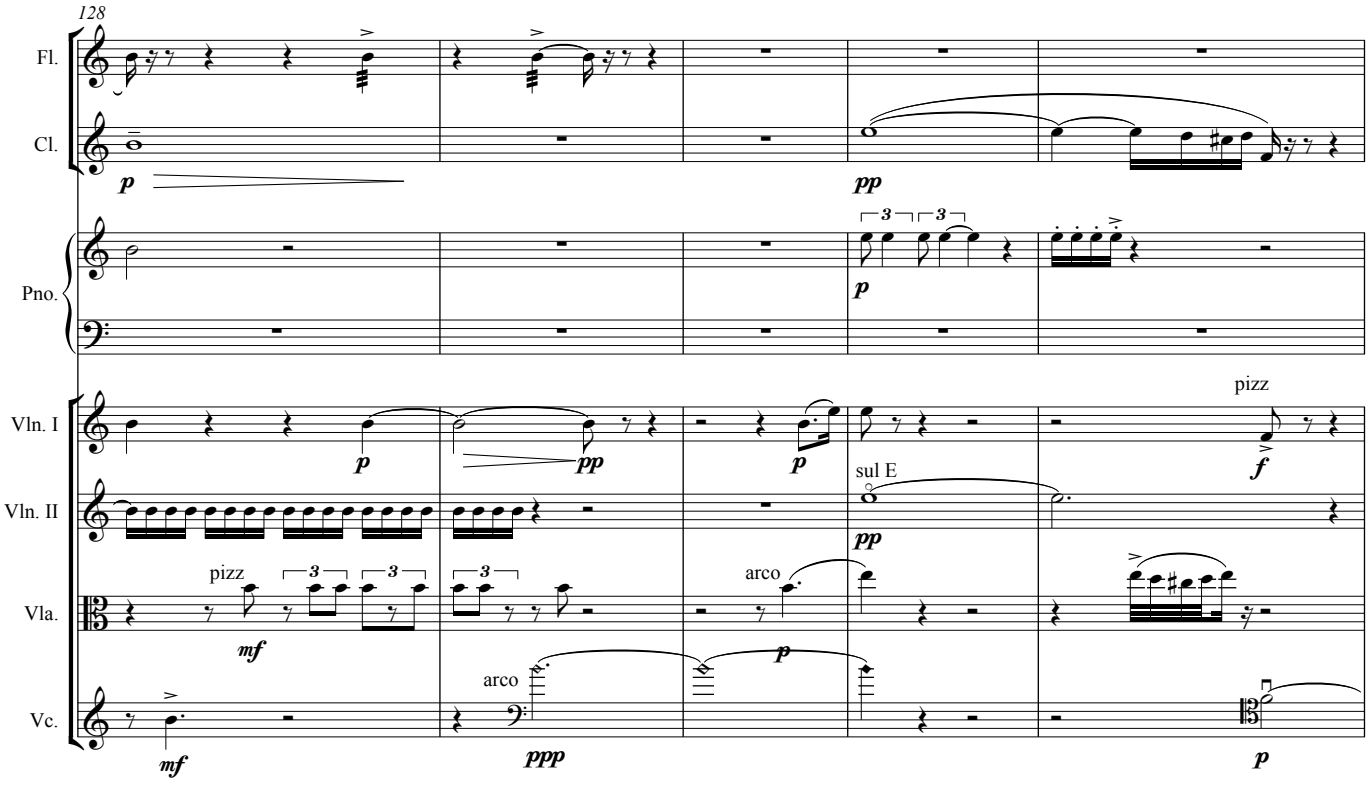
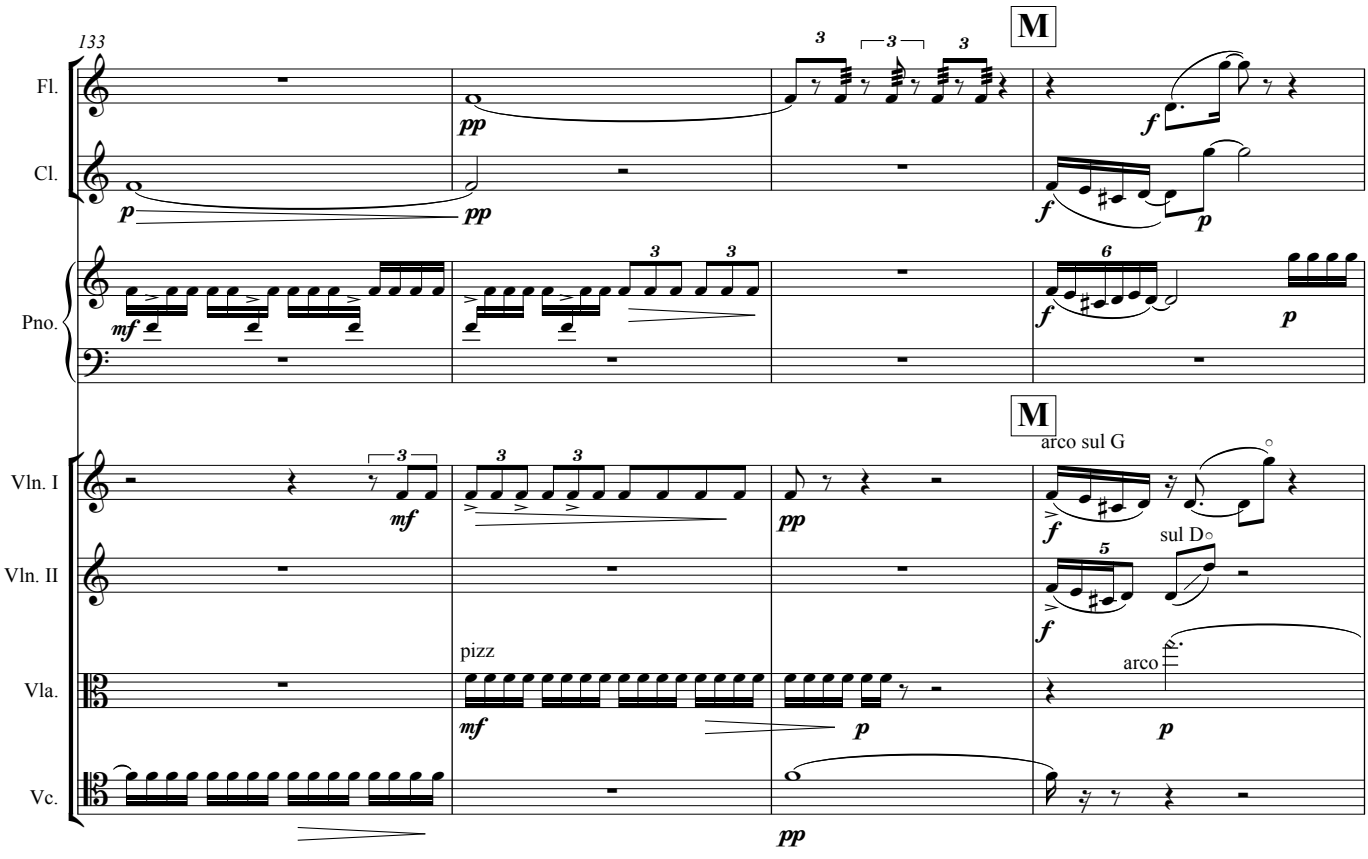
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
f
tr
ff

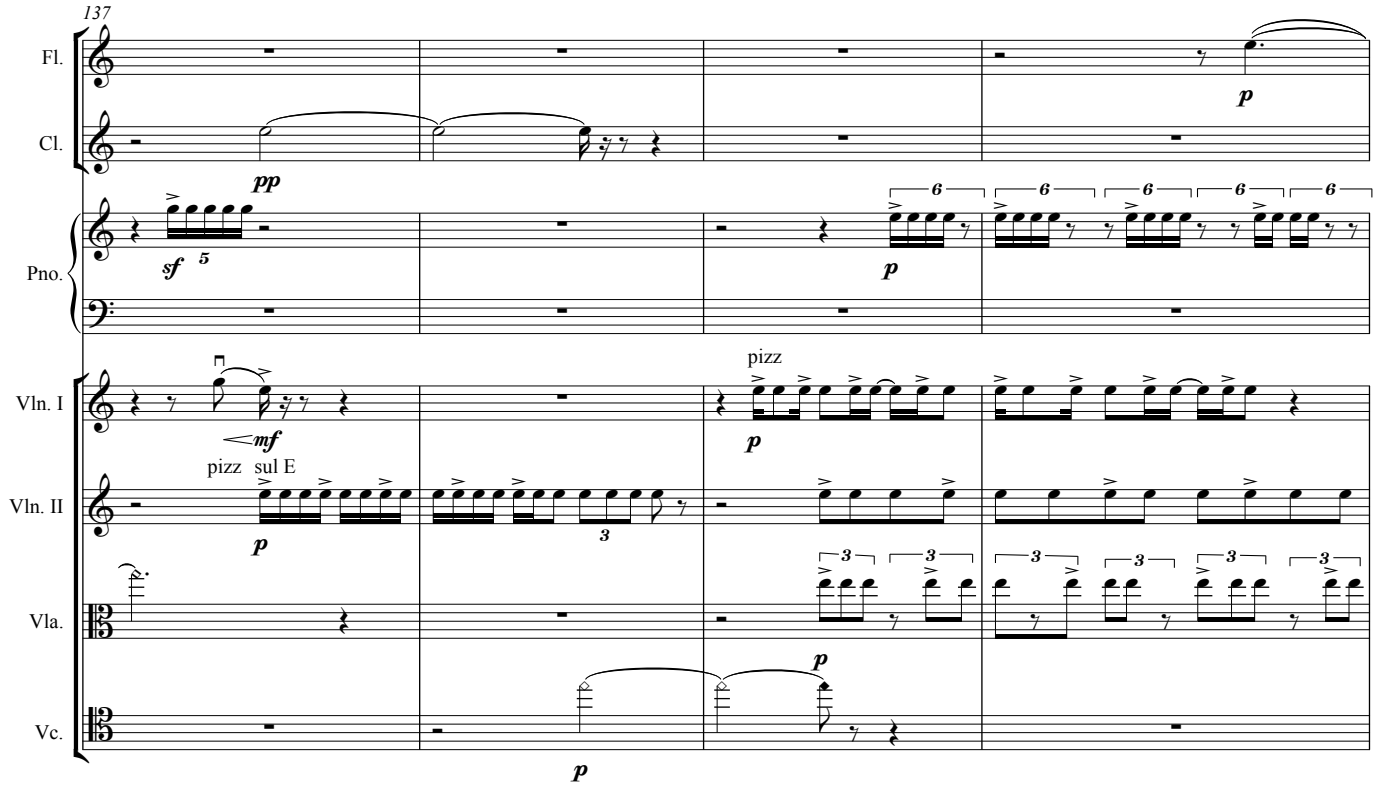

J
103
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ff
sf
p
mf en dehors
non vibrato
pizz
107
K


112
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
3
p
con vibrato
con vibrato
con vibrato
con vibrato


120
L
L
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ppp
p
3
5
mf
pp
mf
pp
mf
pp
mf
ppp
pp
p
pp
p
pp
p
pizz


128
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
pp
mf
ppp
f
pizz
arco
sul E


133
M
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco sul G
sul D
pizz
arco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Fl.
Cl.
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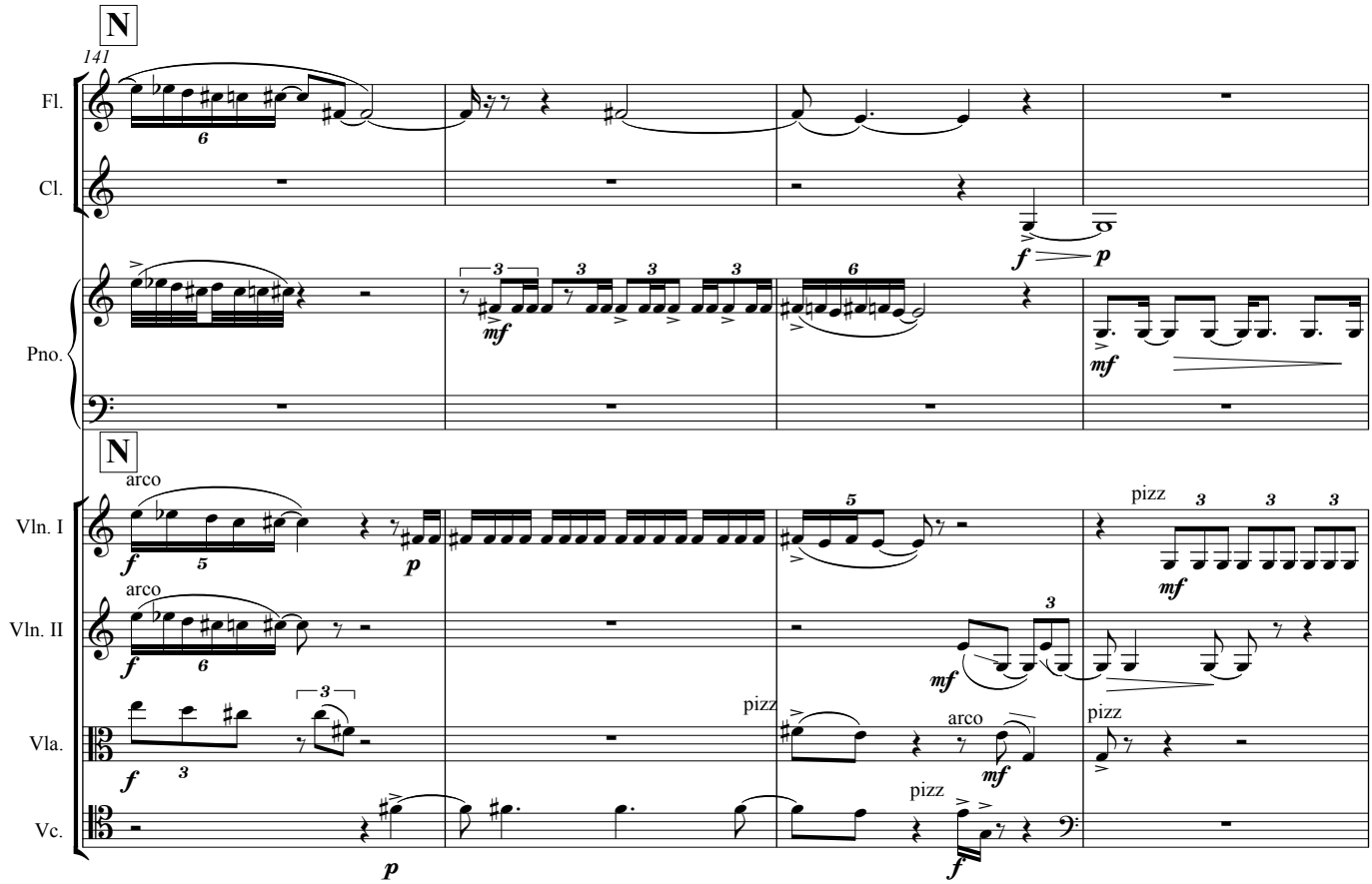
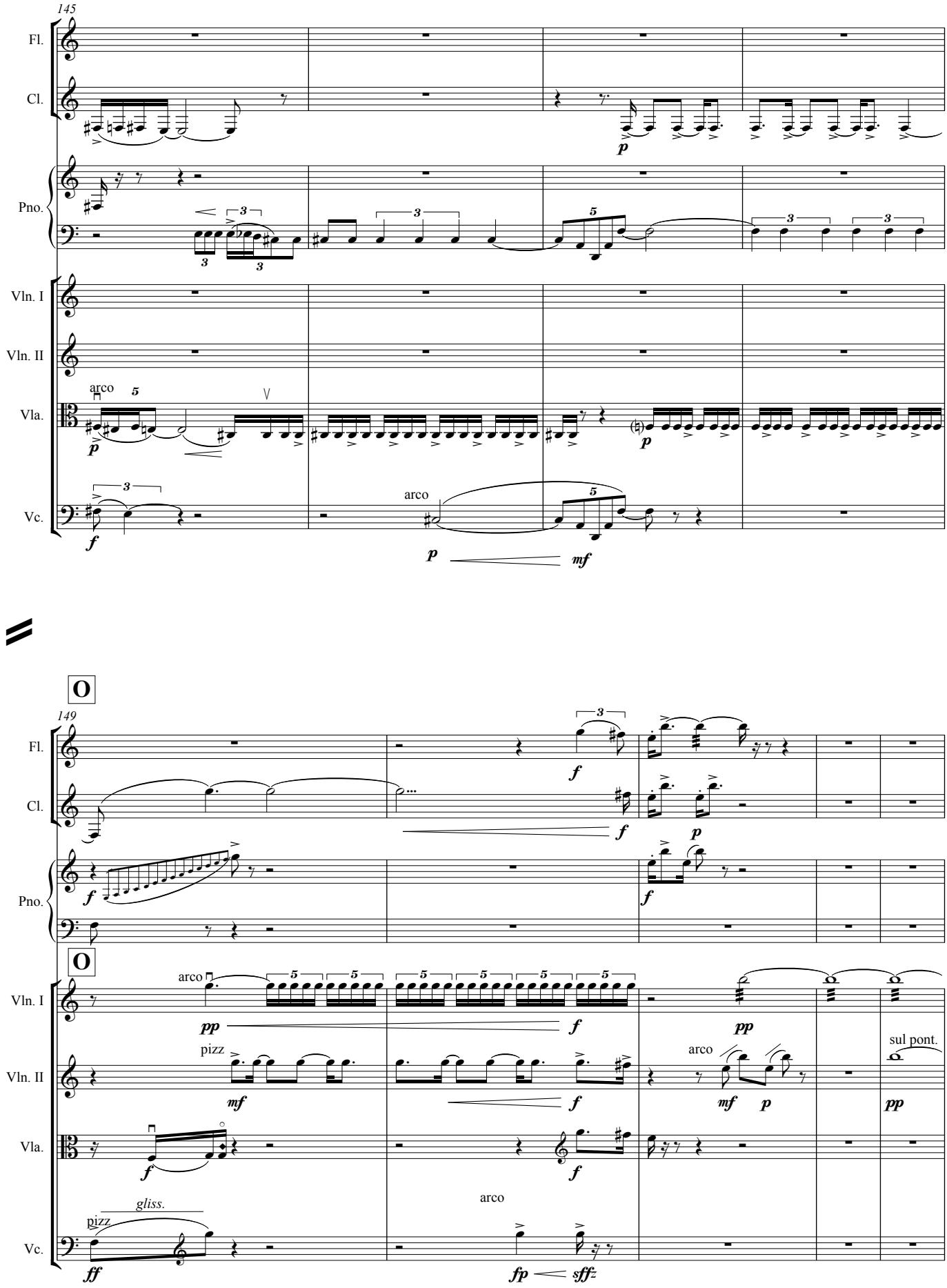
Vla.
Vc.
pizz
pizz sul E


N
141
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
N
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
arco
pizz
pizz
arco
pizz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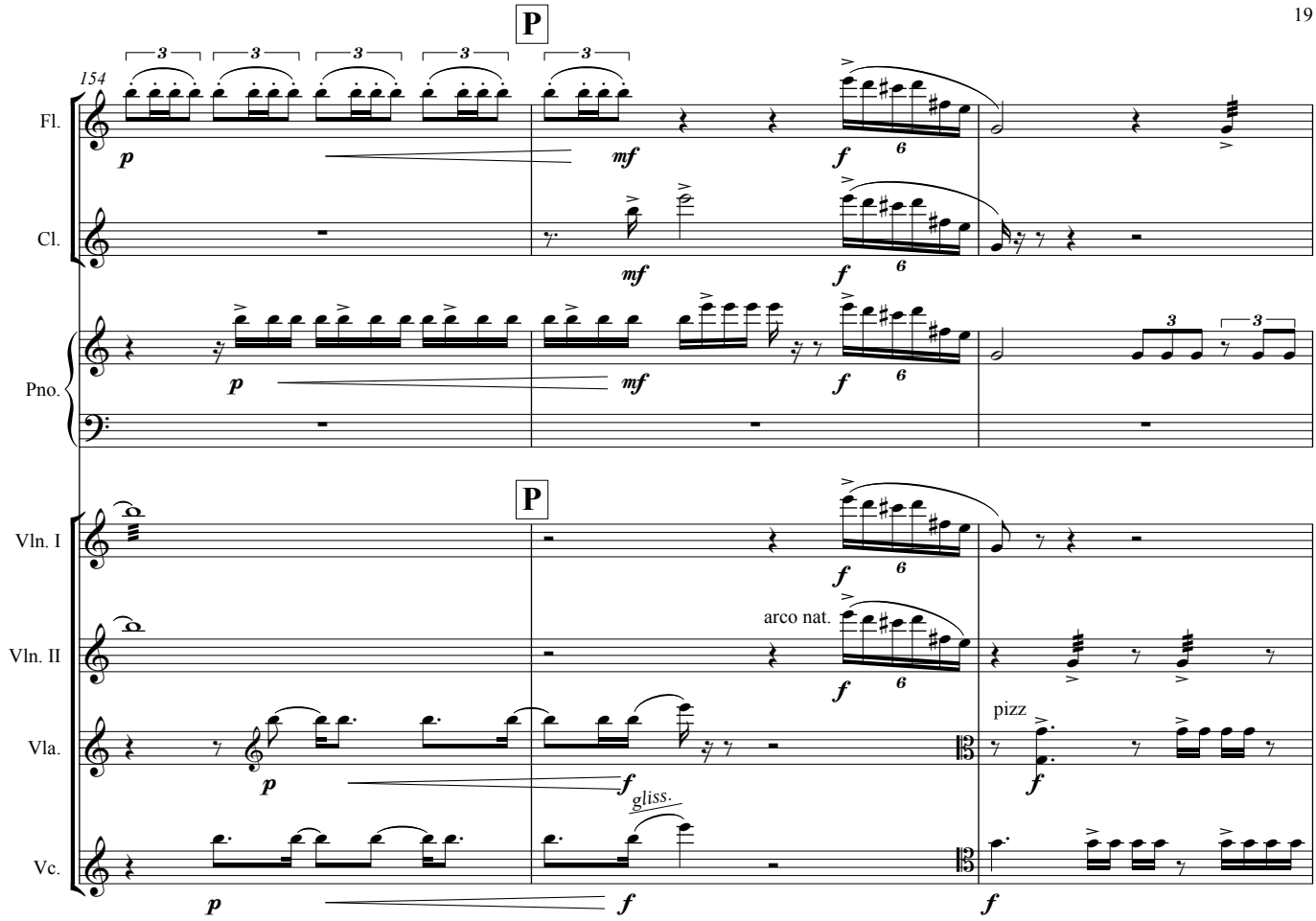
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
arco
O
149
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
O
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
pizz
arco
sul pont.
gliss.
pizz
arco


P
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Fl.
Cl.
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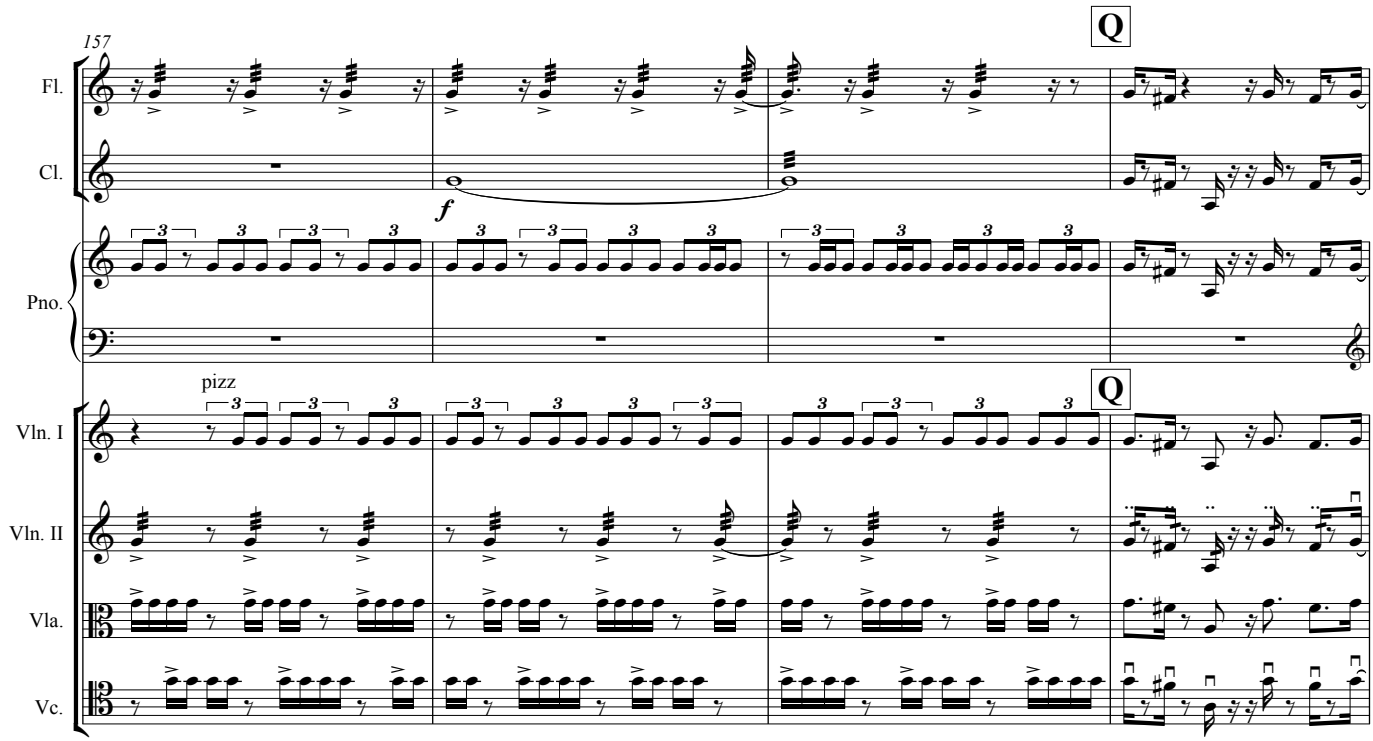
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco nat.
pizz
gliss.


Q
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Fl.
Cl.
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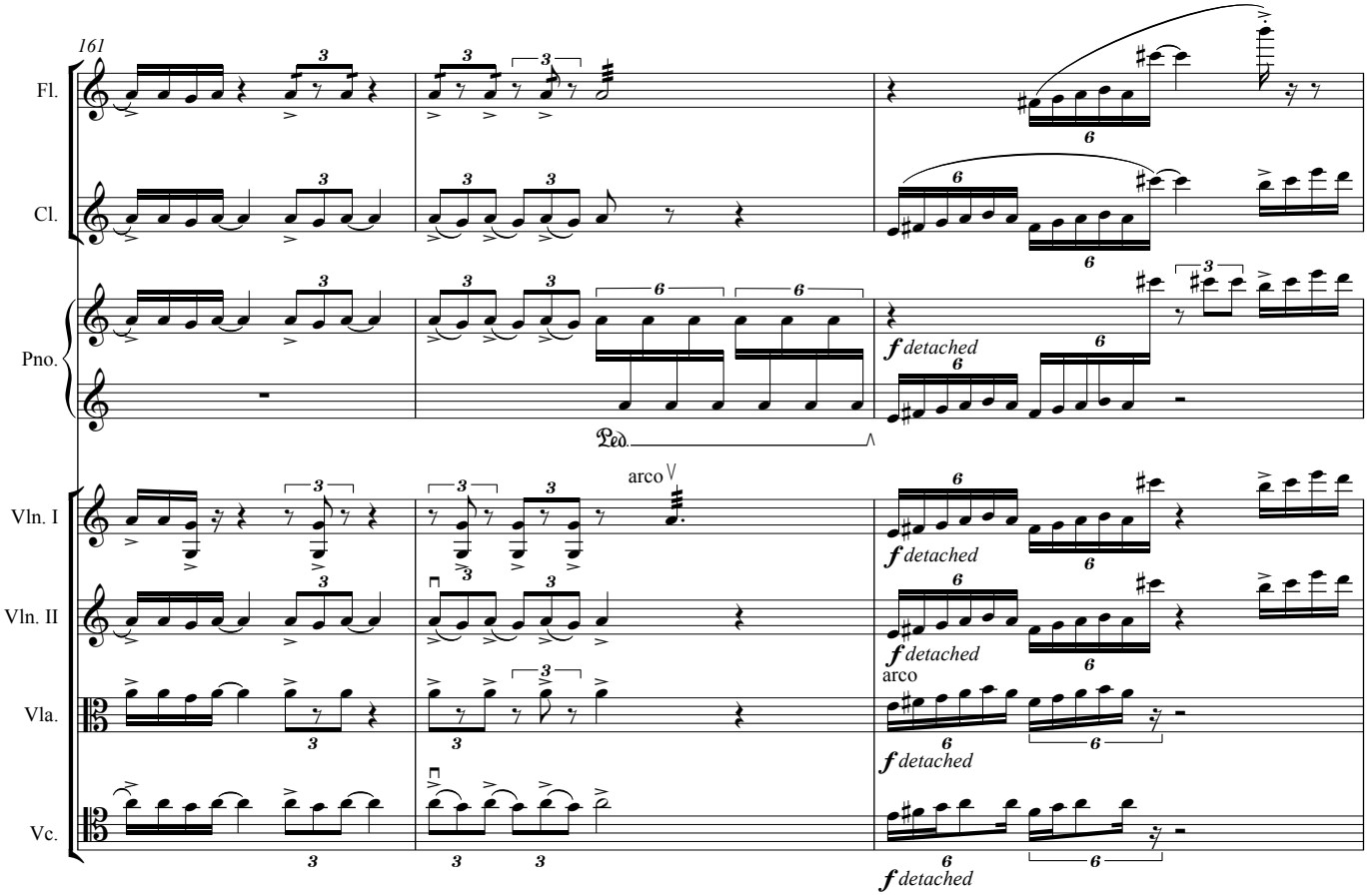
Vc.
pizz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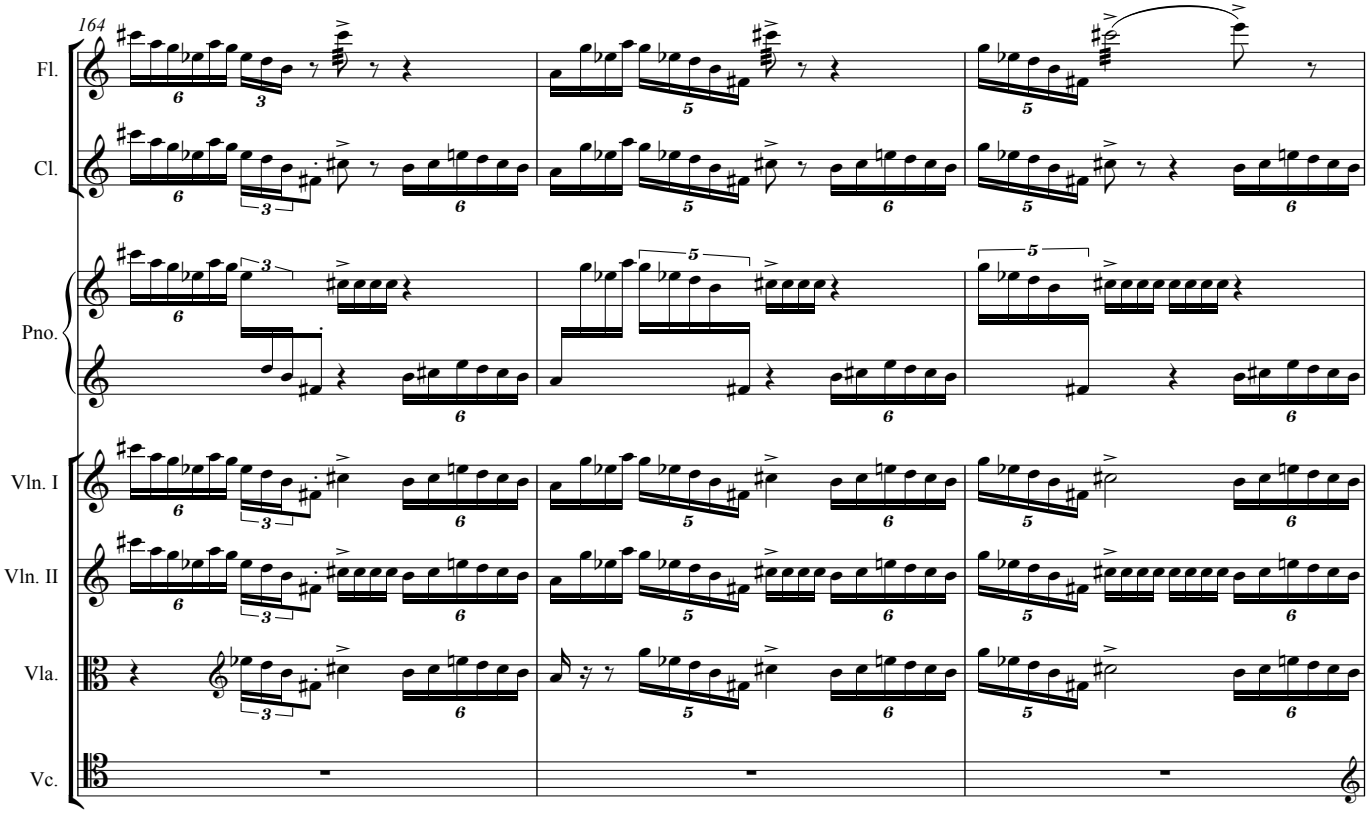
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
f detached
arco
f detached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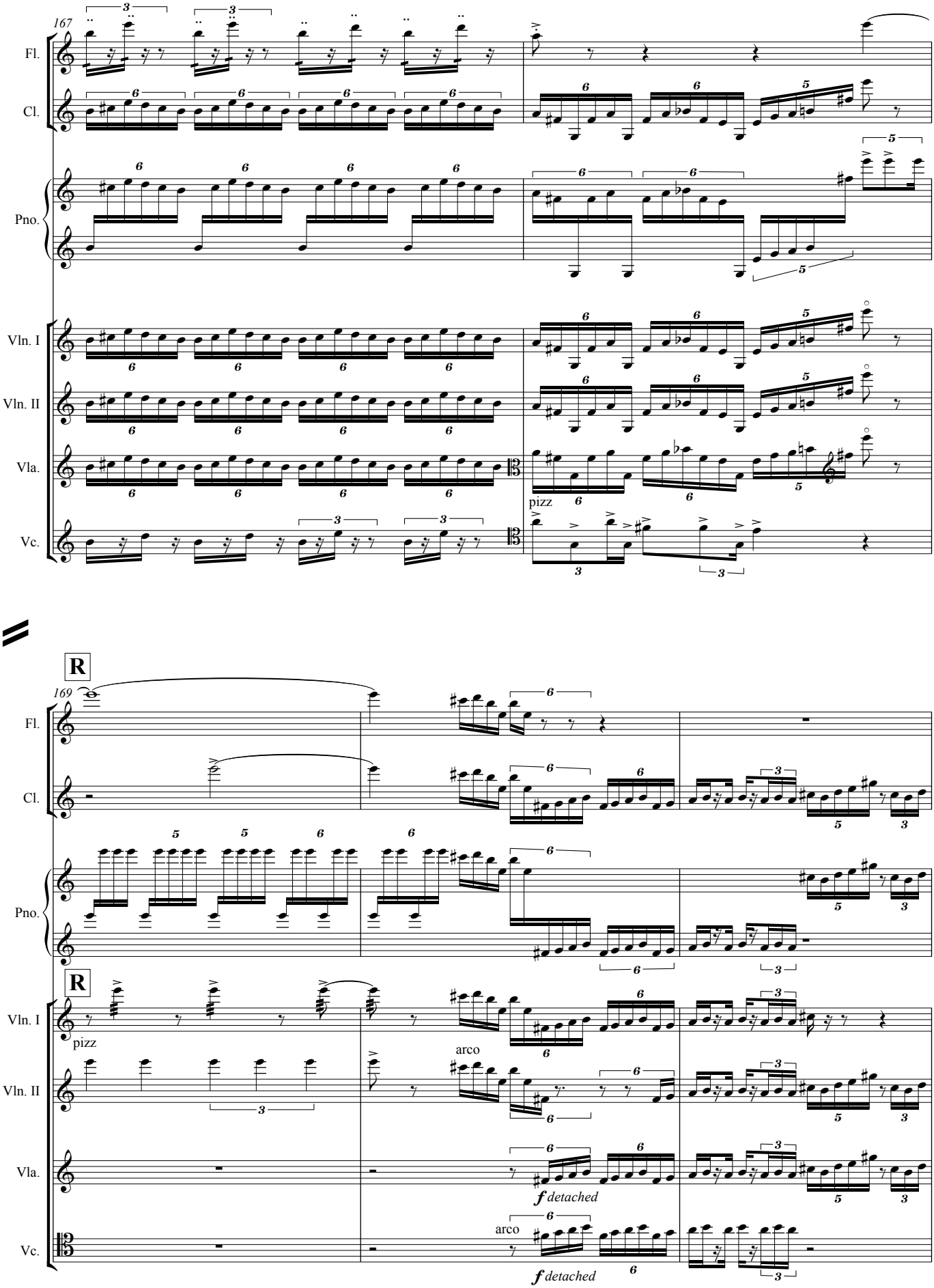
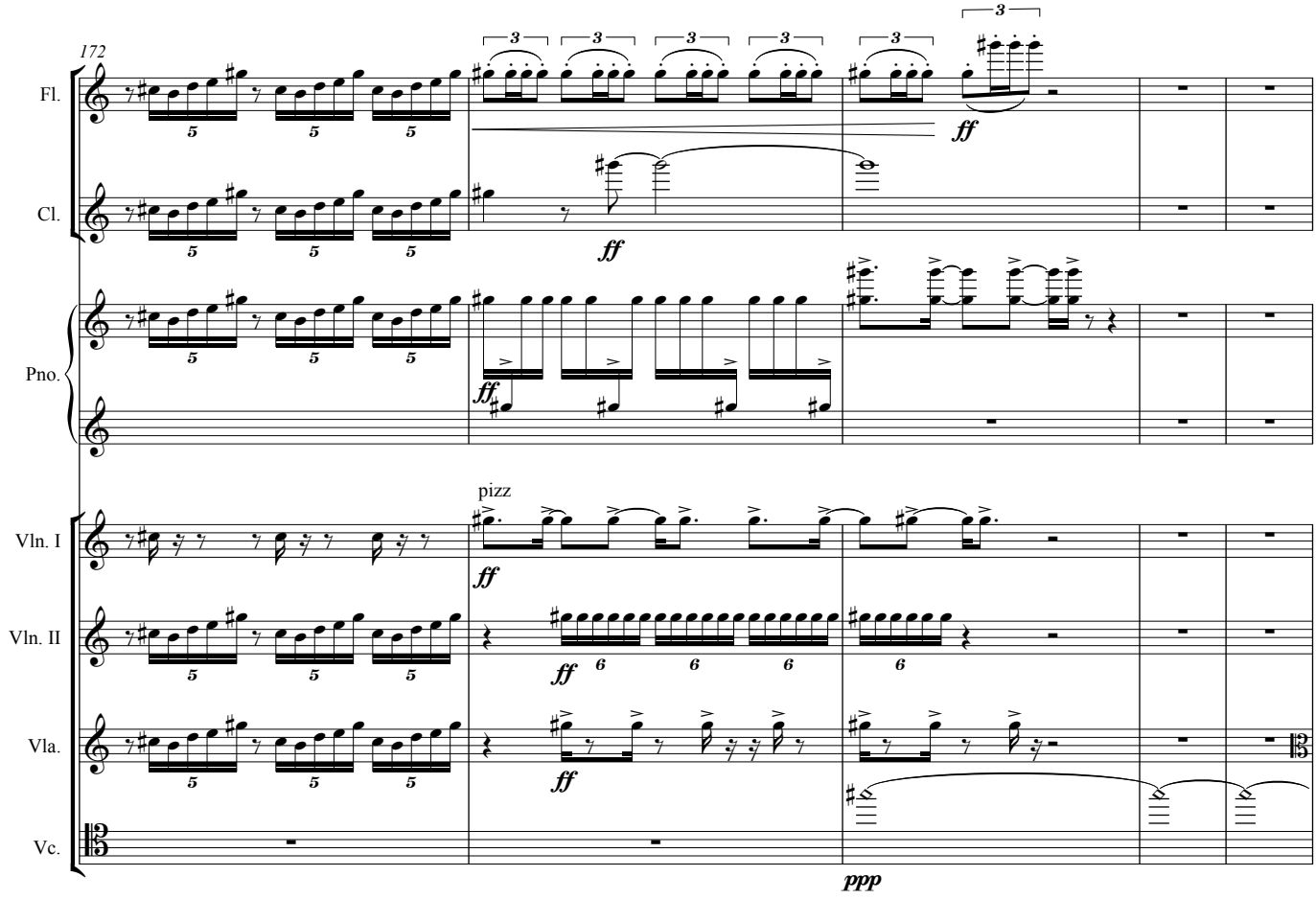
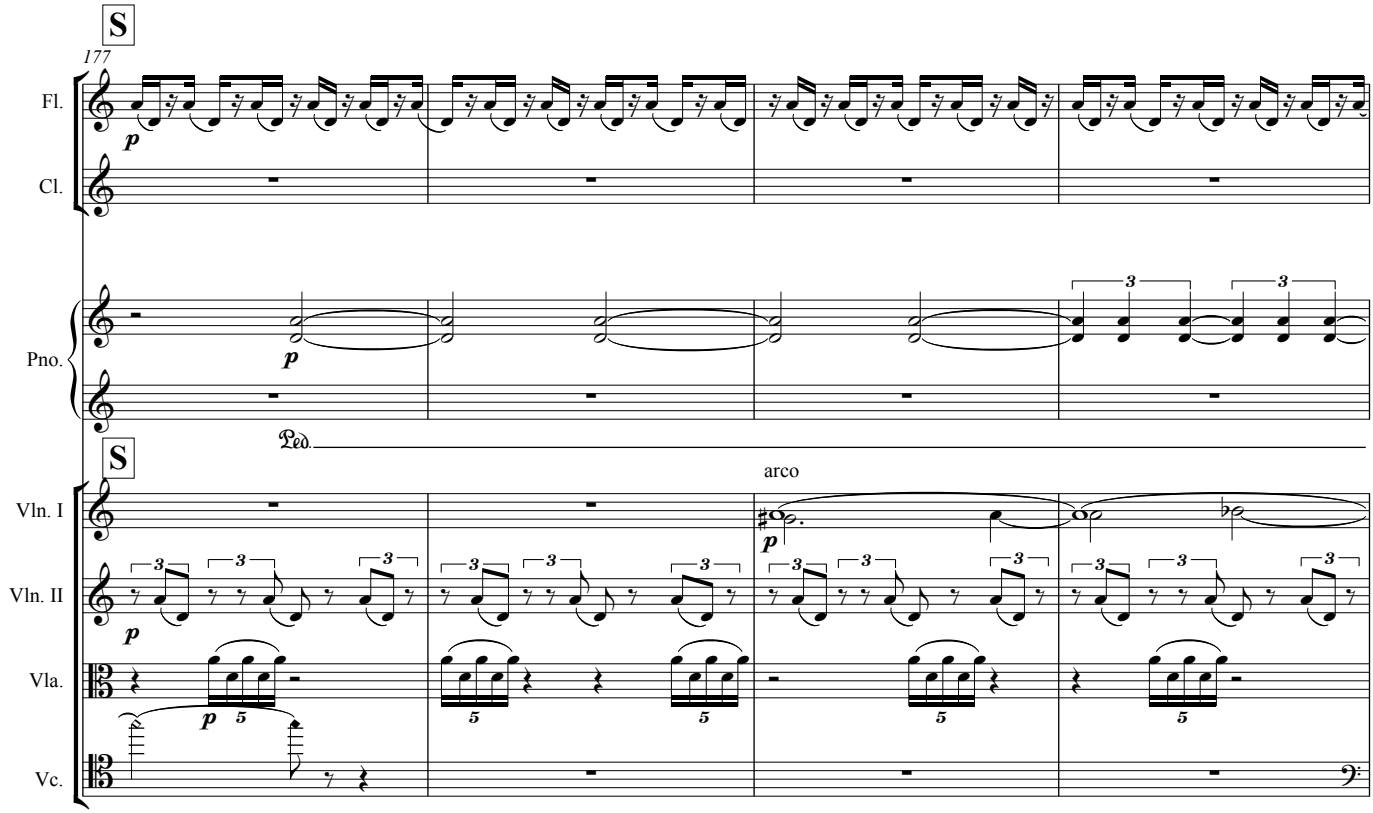
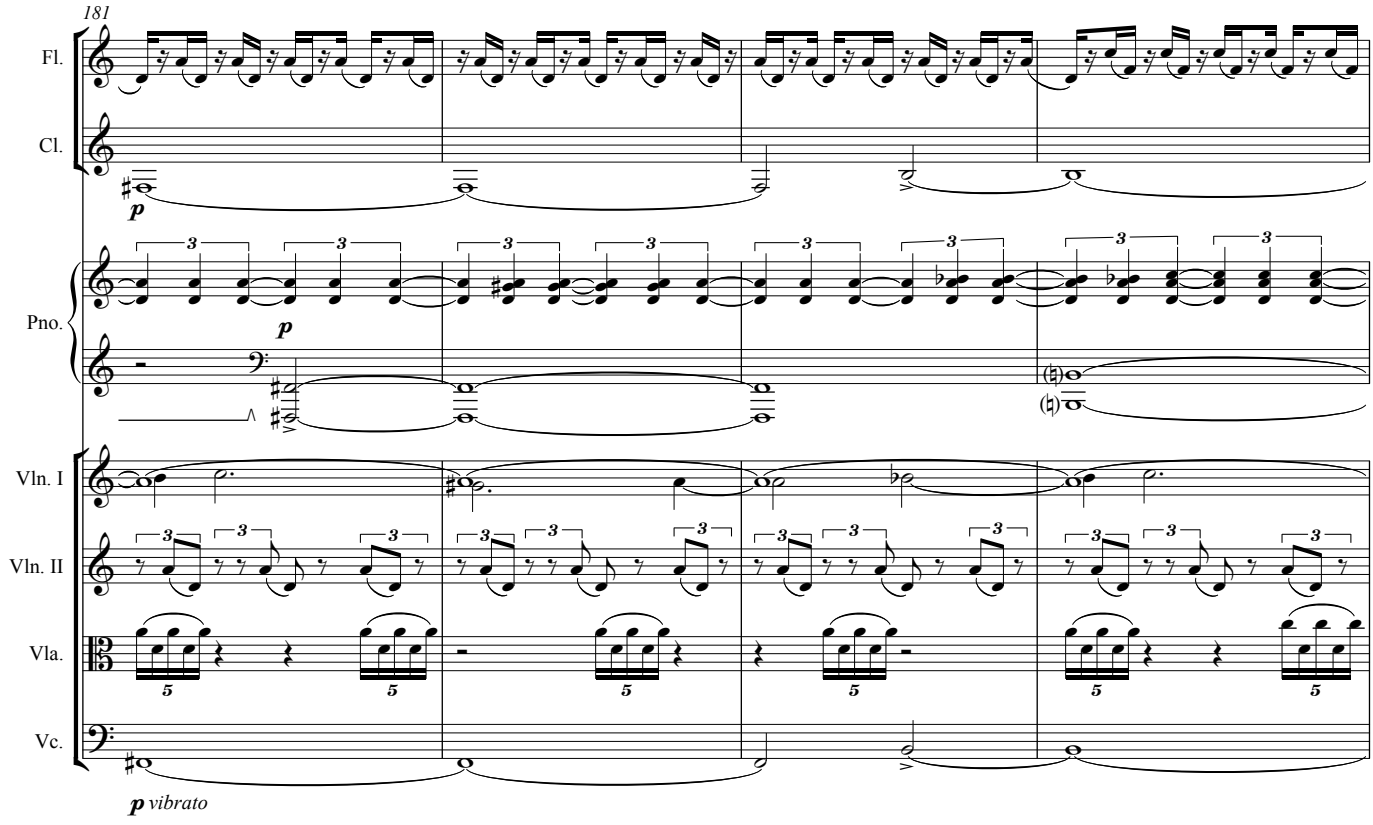
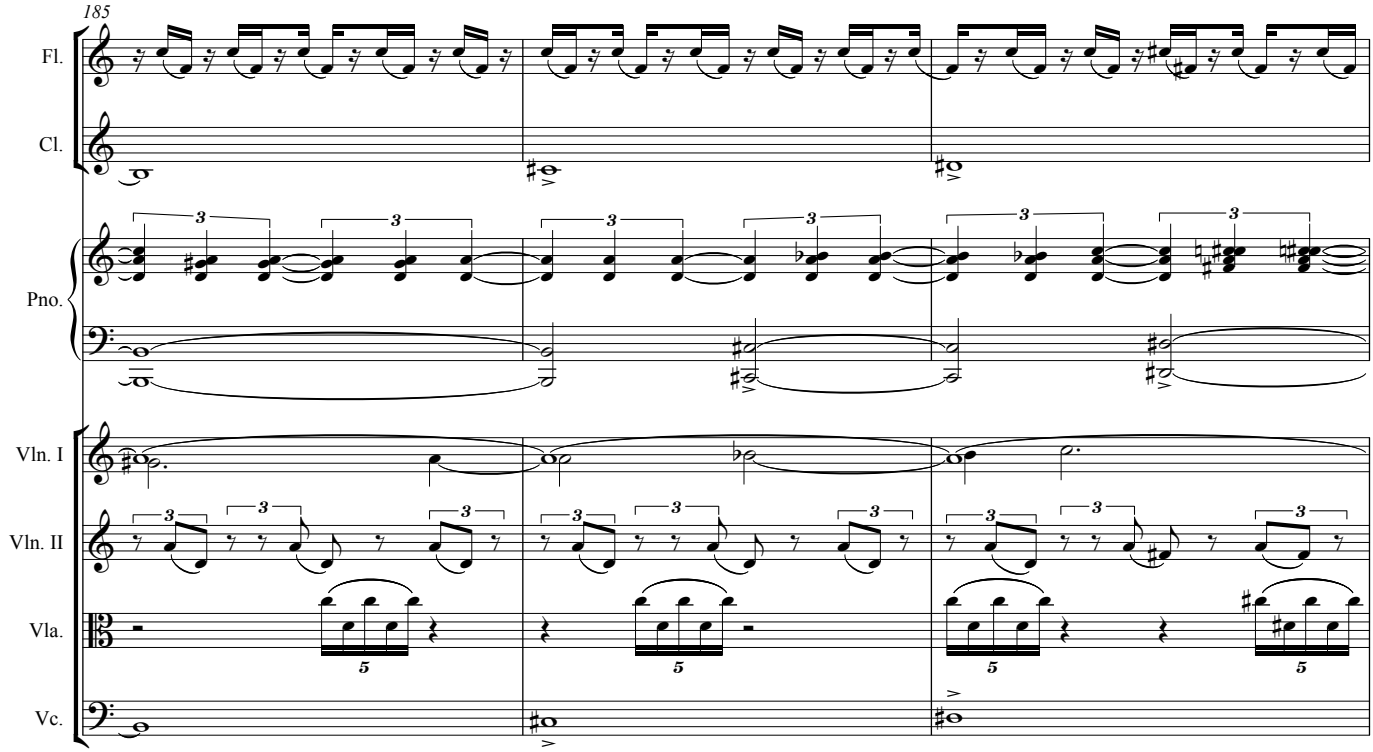
Vla.
Vc.

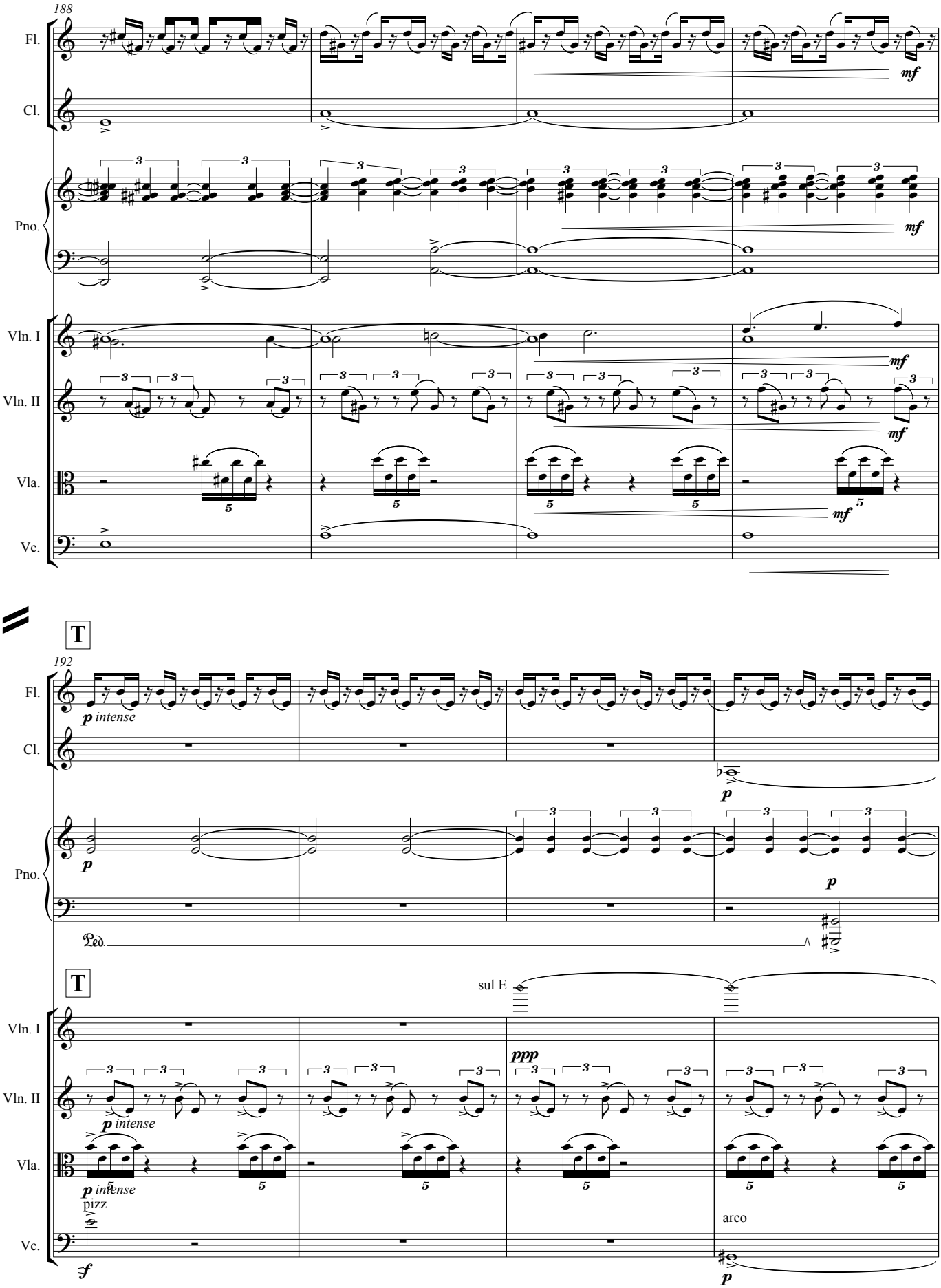

167
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz
R
169
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
R
Vln. I
pizz
arco
Vln. II
Vla.
f detached
Vc.
arco
f detached

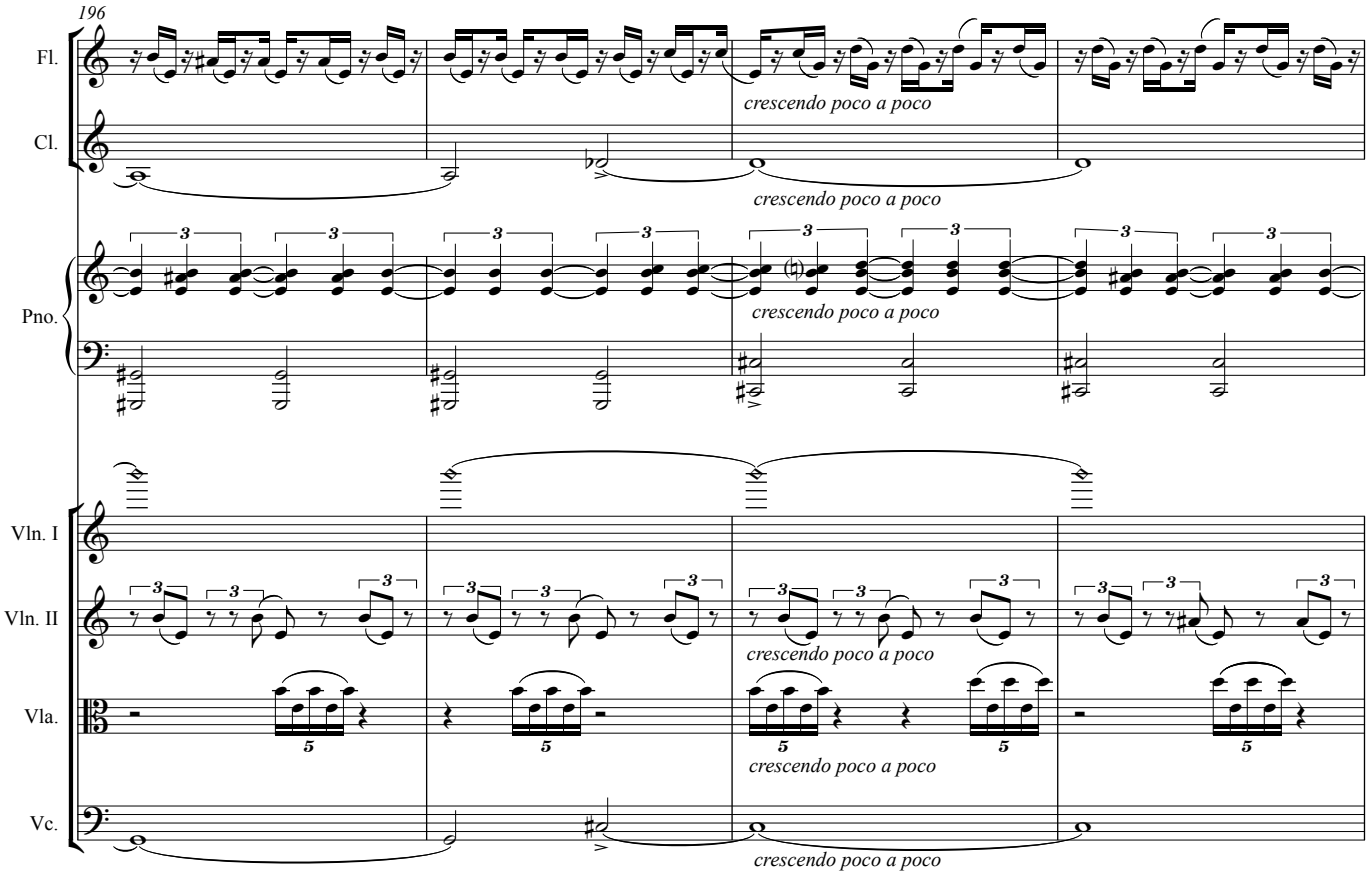

172
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz
ff
ppp

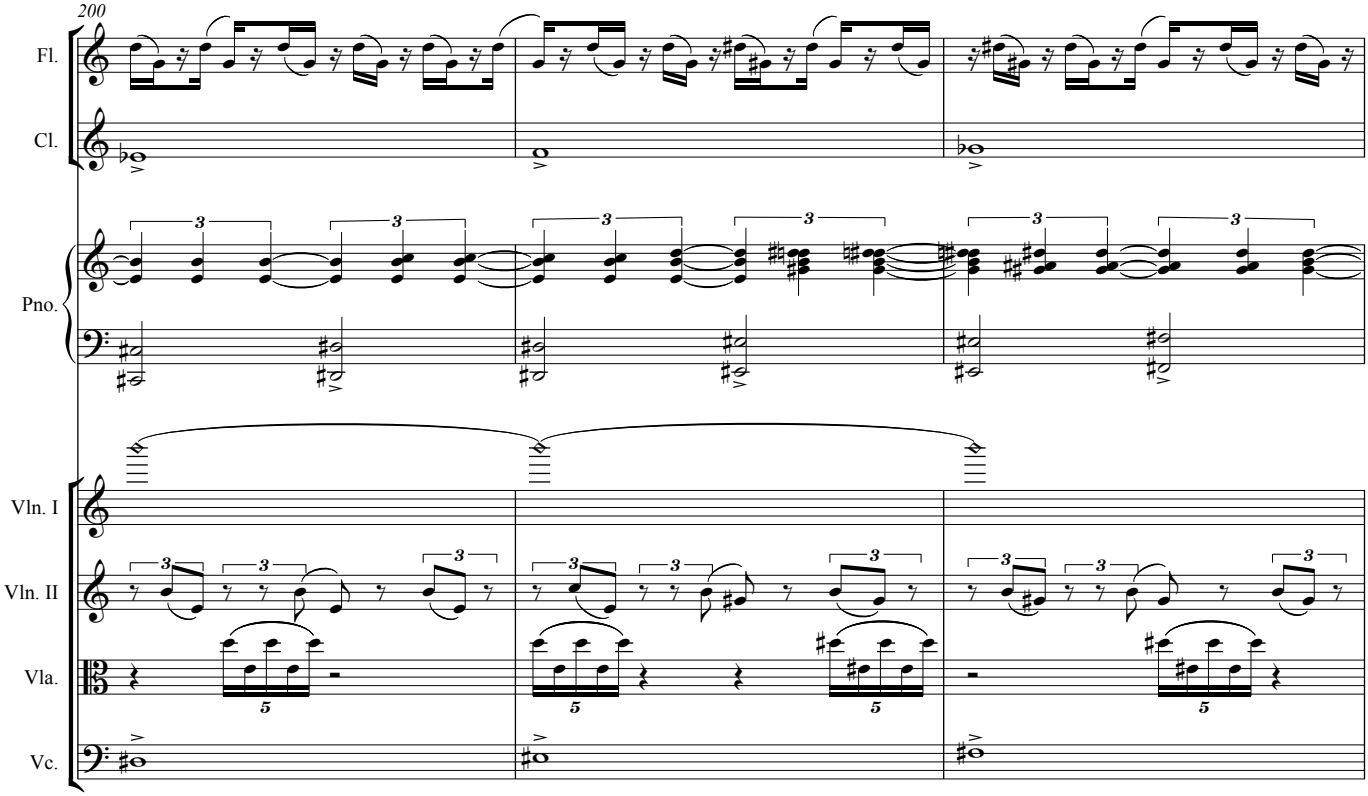

S
177
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Ped.
S
arco
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p

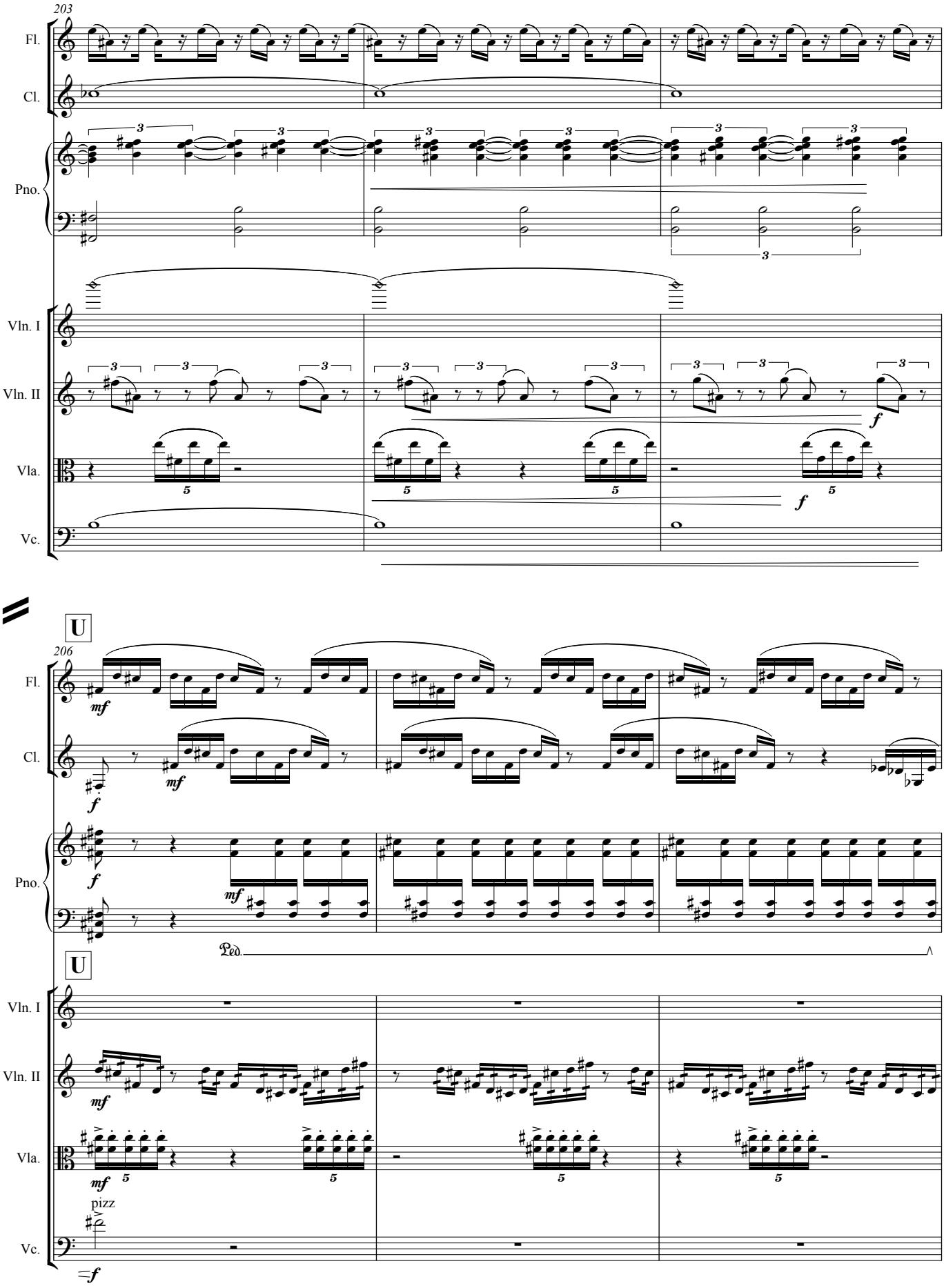

181
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
p
p vibrato

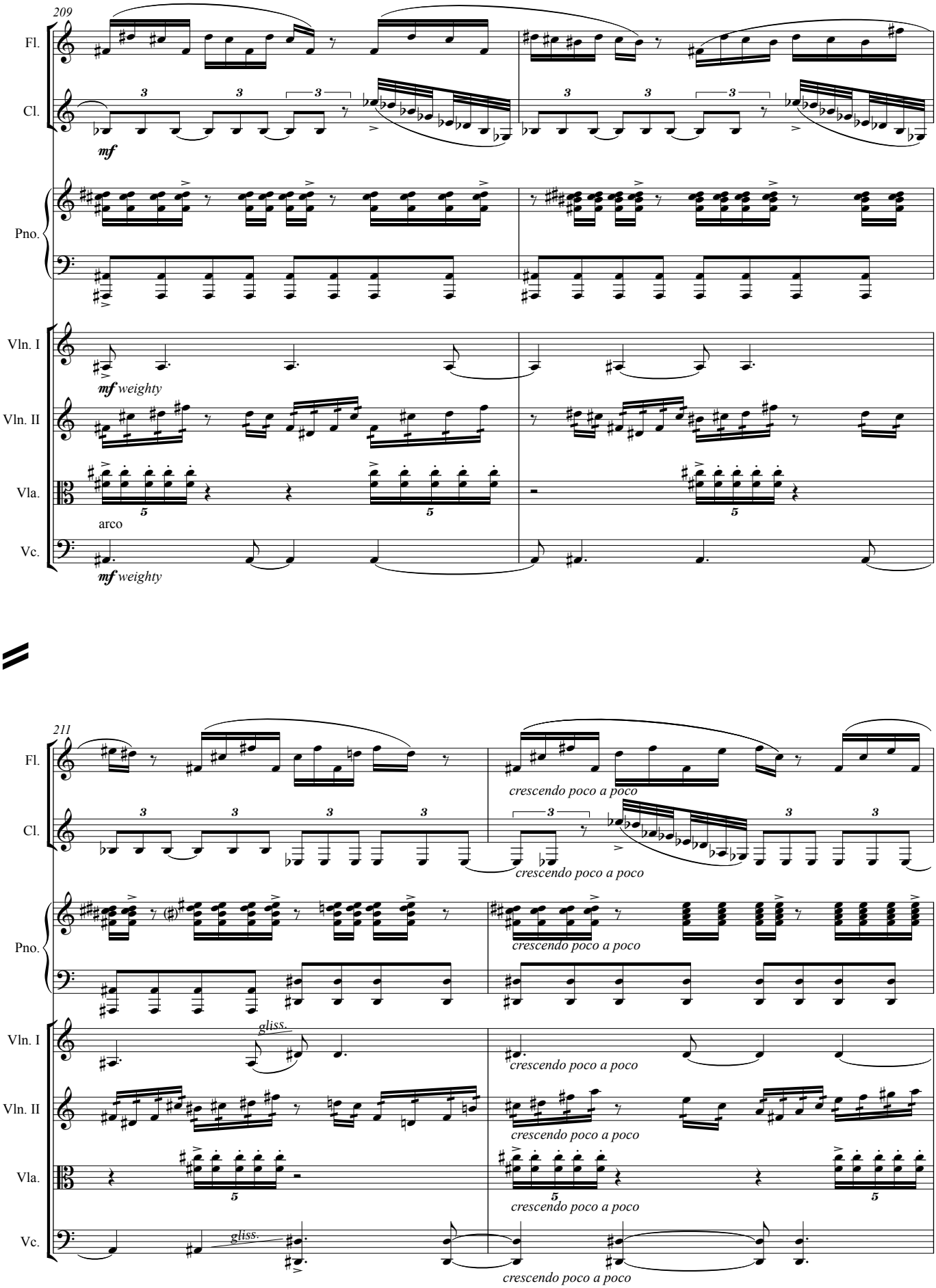

185
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

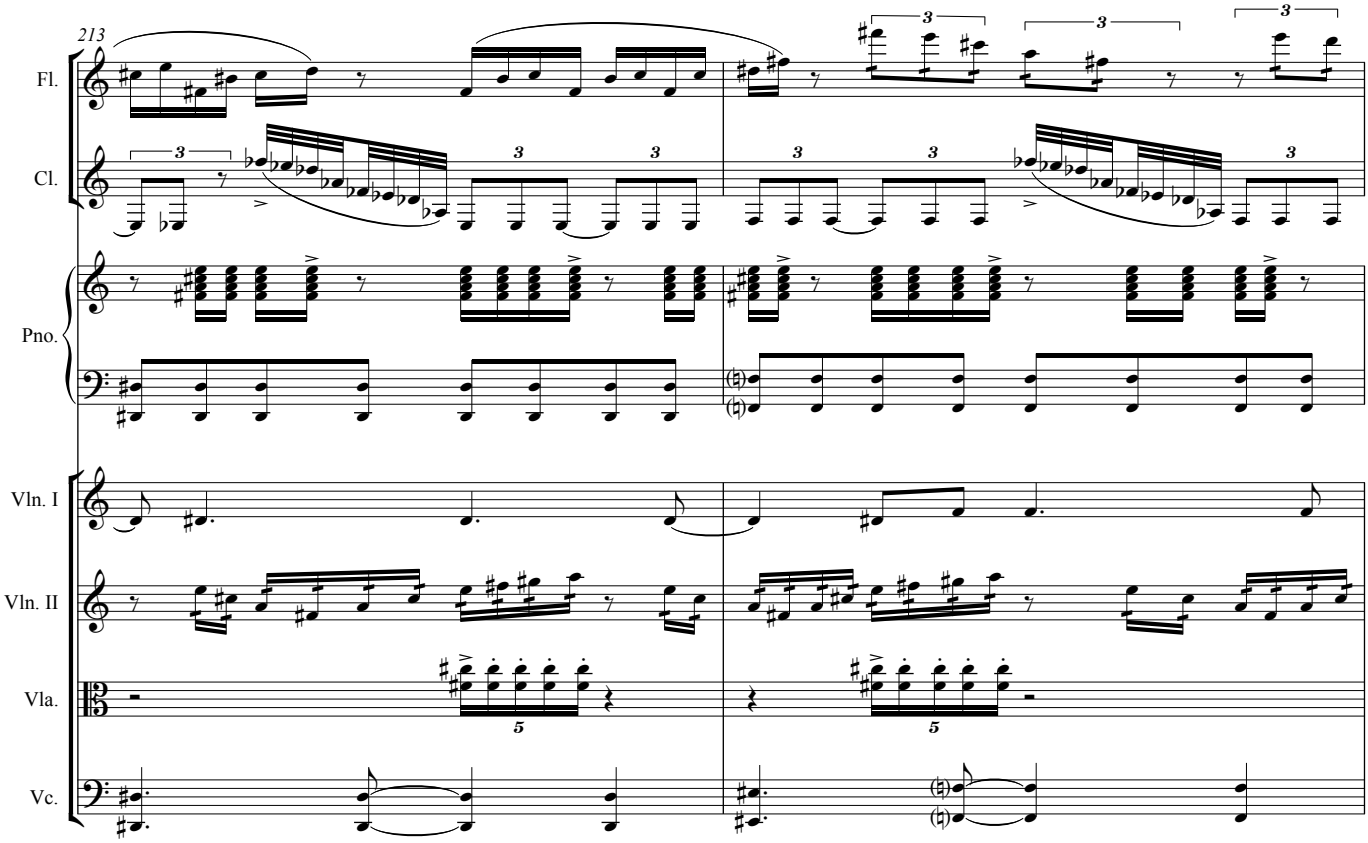

188
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
T
192
p intense
p
Ped.
sul E
ppp
pizz
arco
f

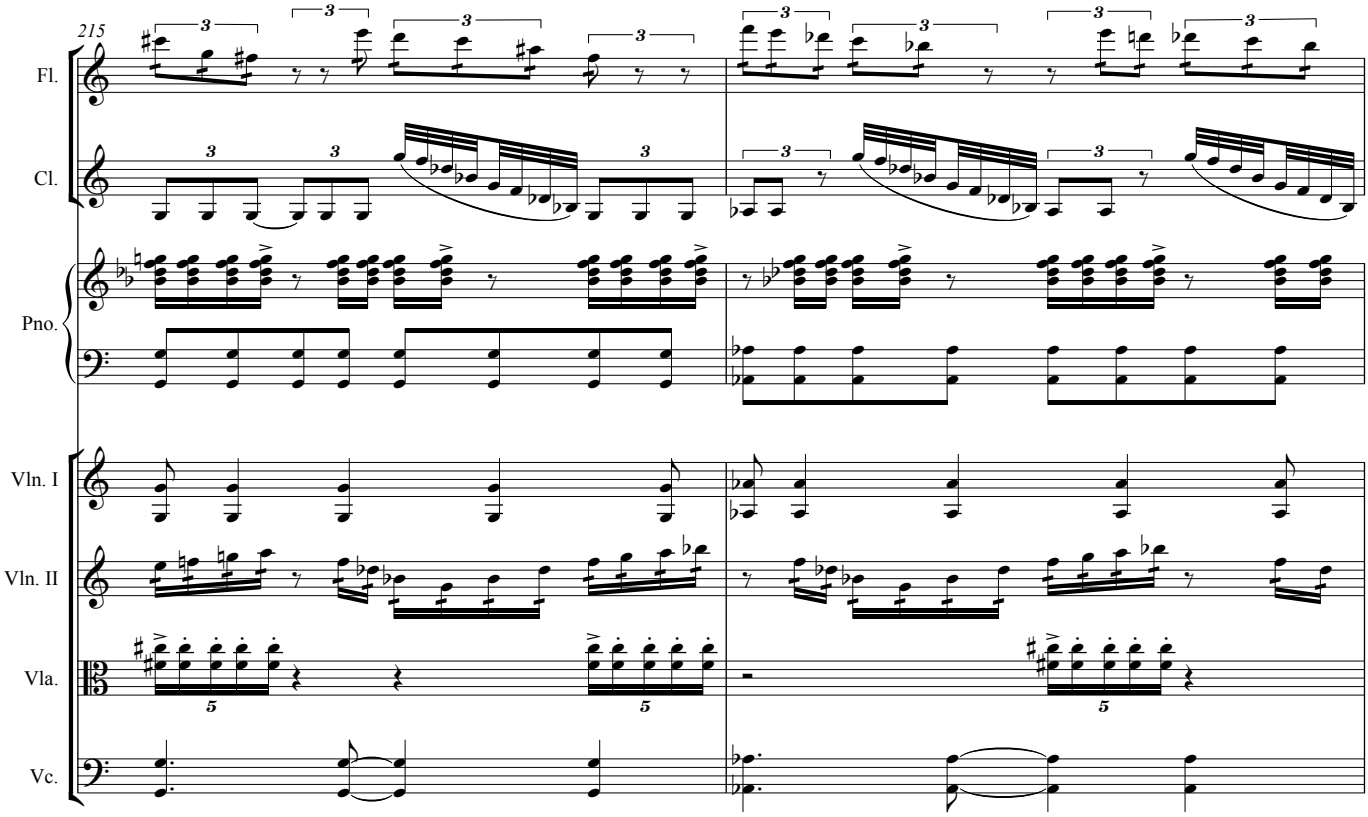

196
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
crescendo poco a poco

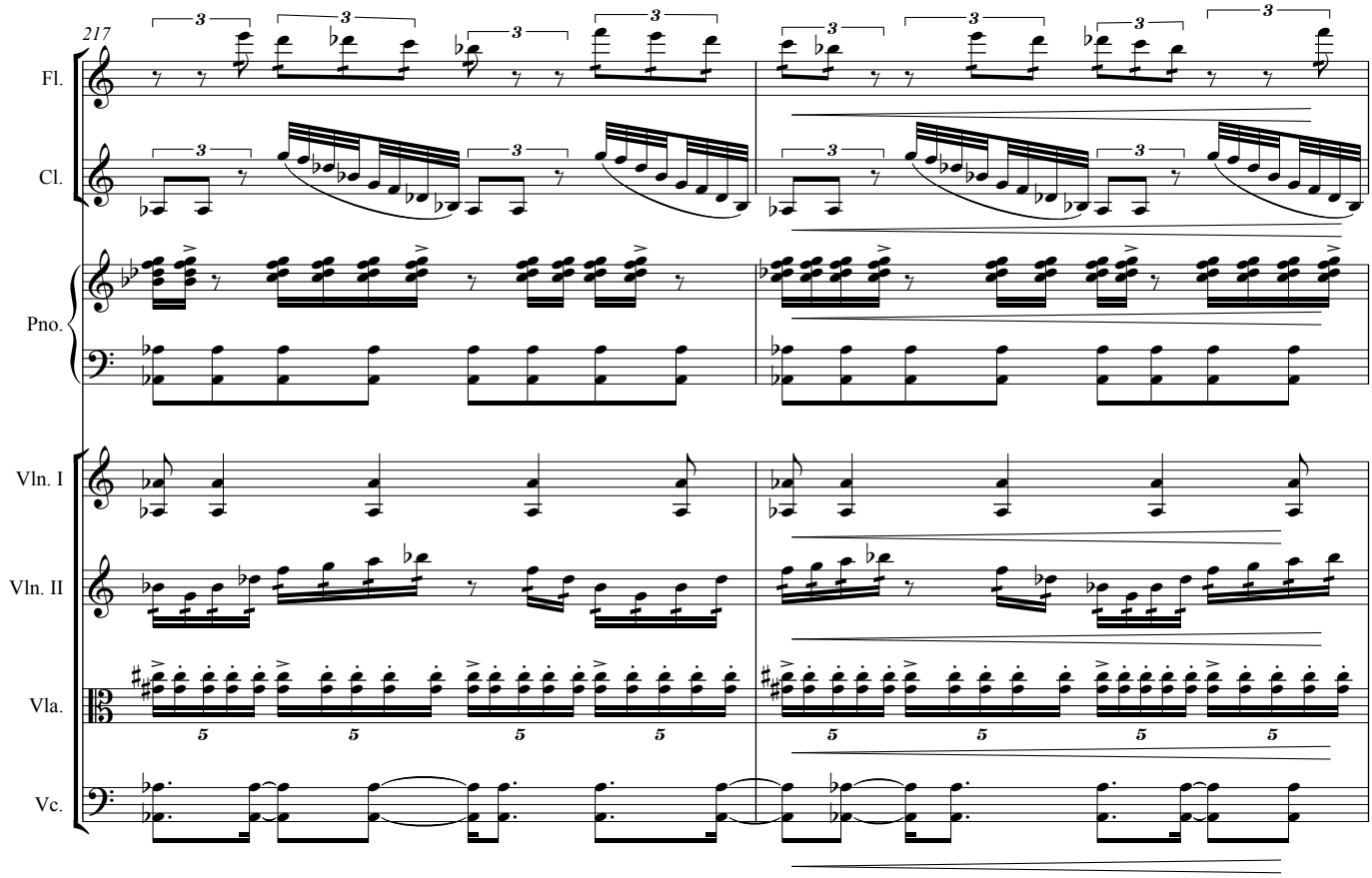

200
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

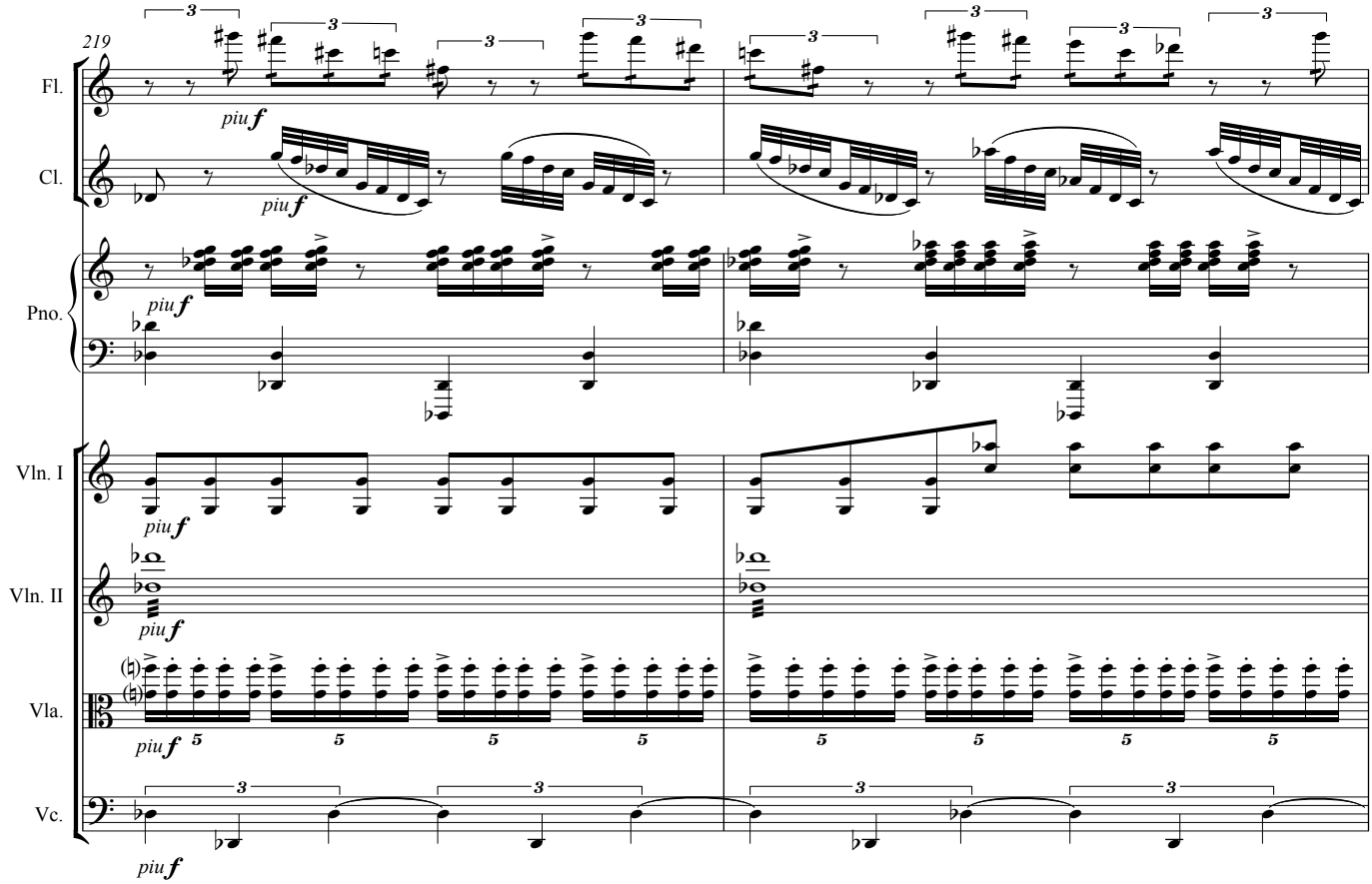

203
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
f
U
206
mf
f
Ped.
pizz

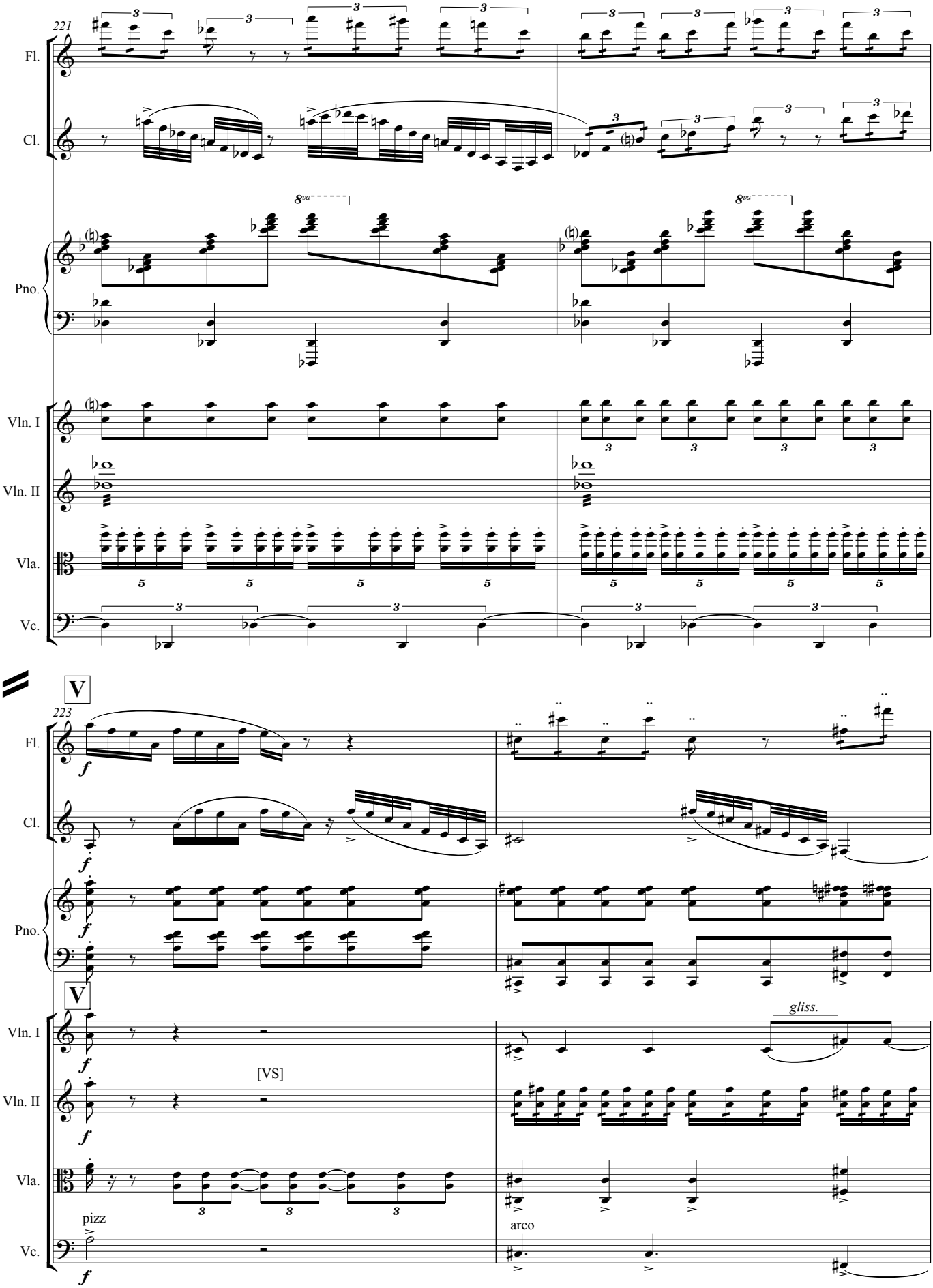

209
Fl.
Cl.
mf
Pno.
Vln. I
mf weighty
Vln. II
Vla.
arco
Vc.
mf weighty
211
crescendo poco a poco
gliss.

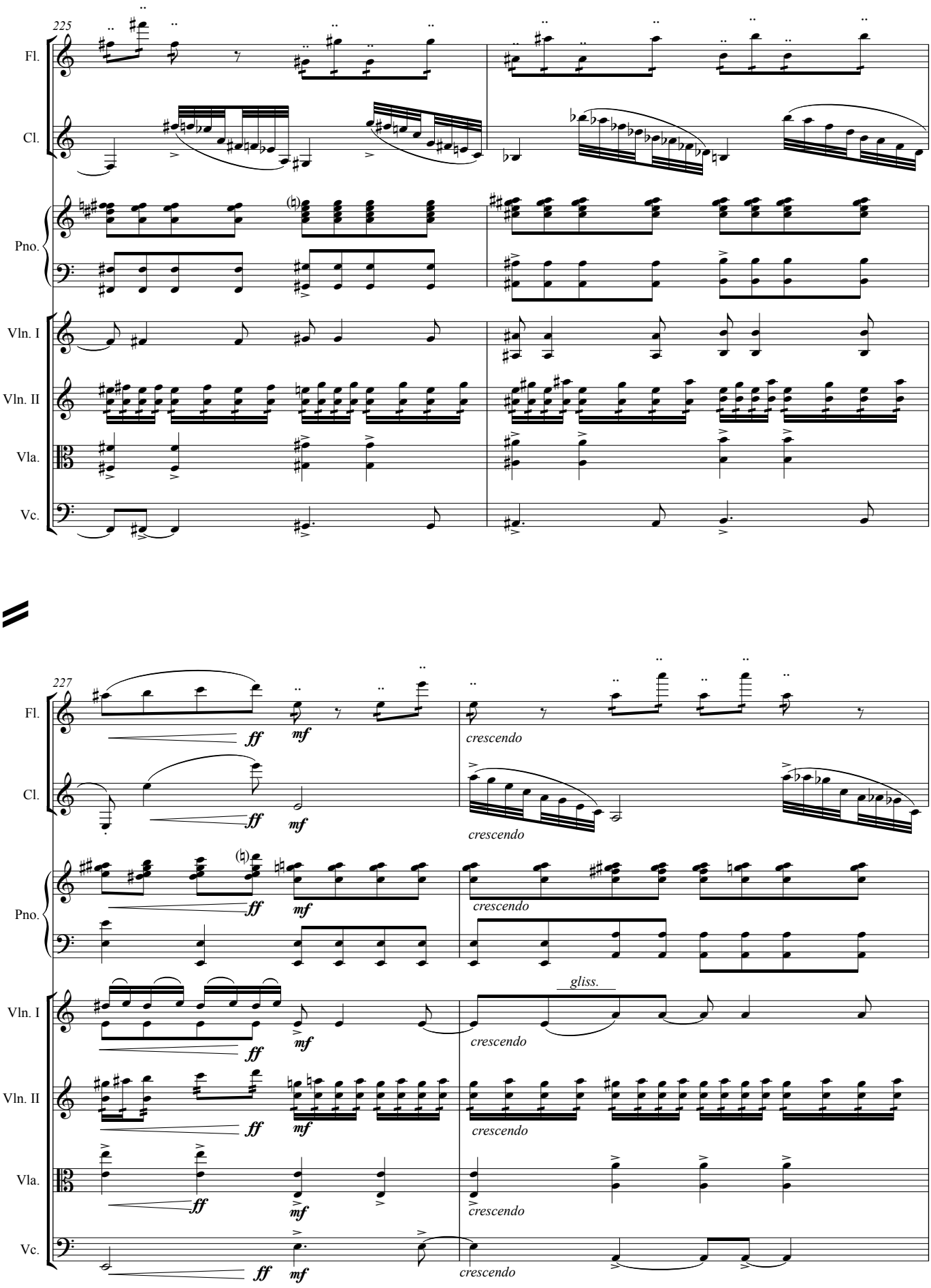

213
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

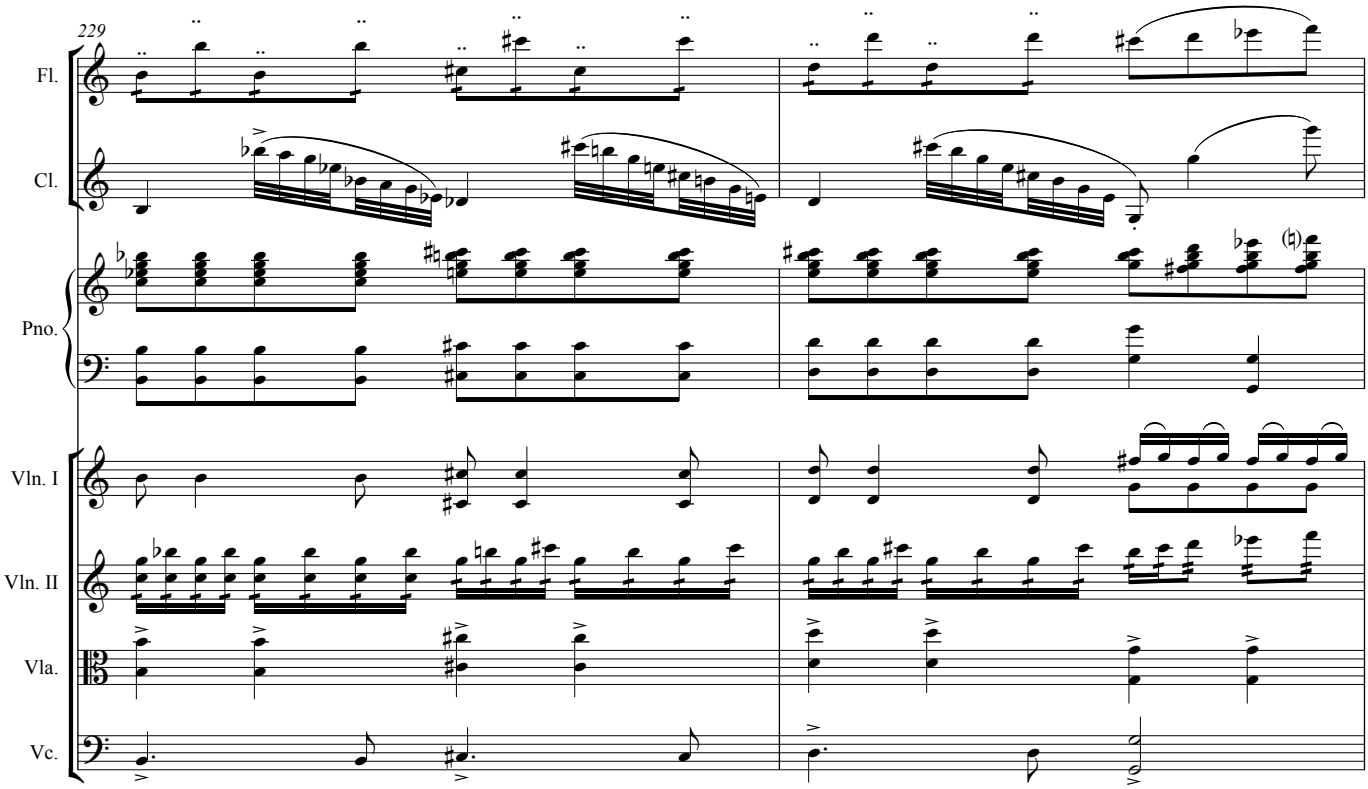

215
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

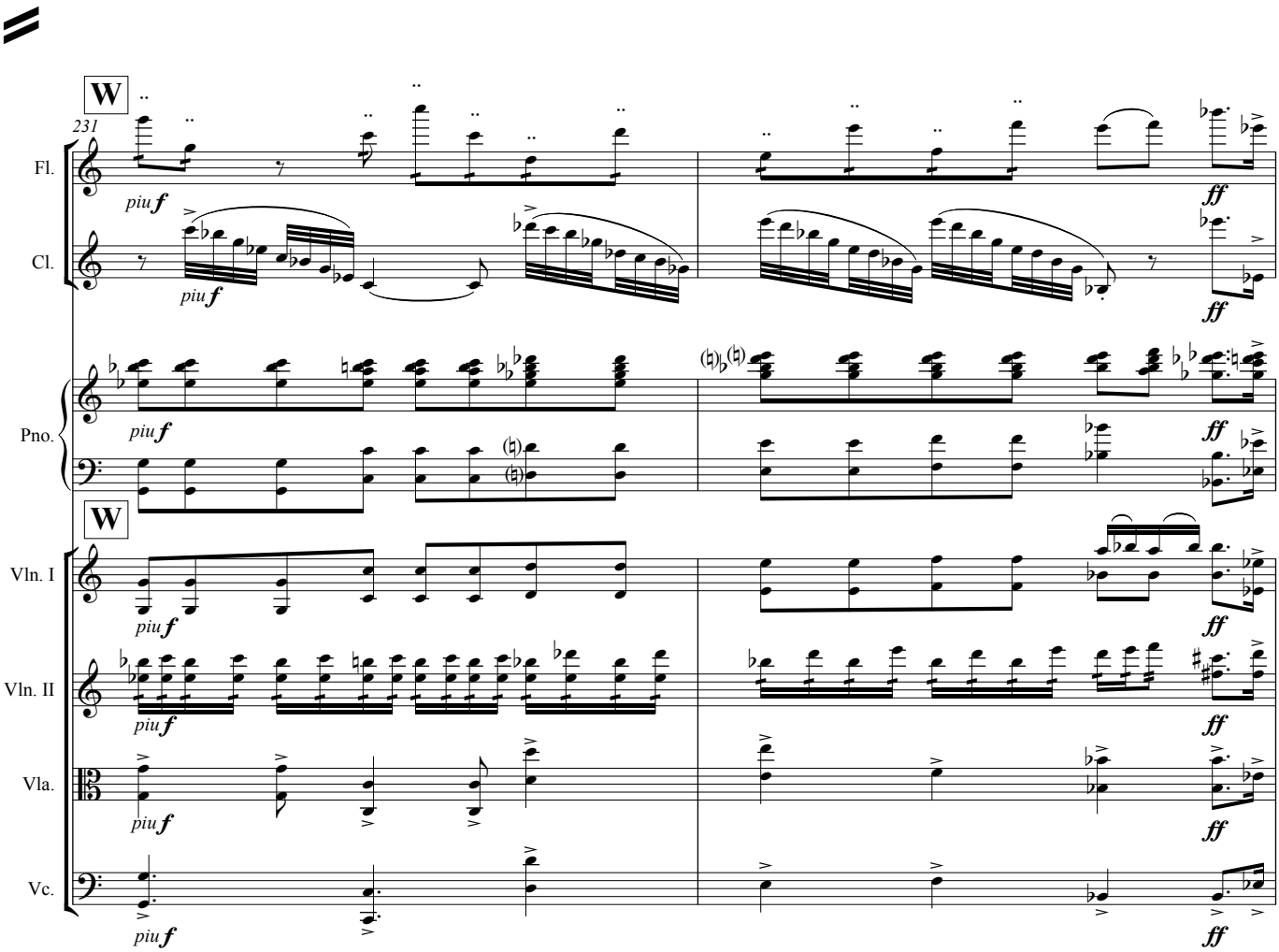

217
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

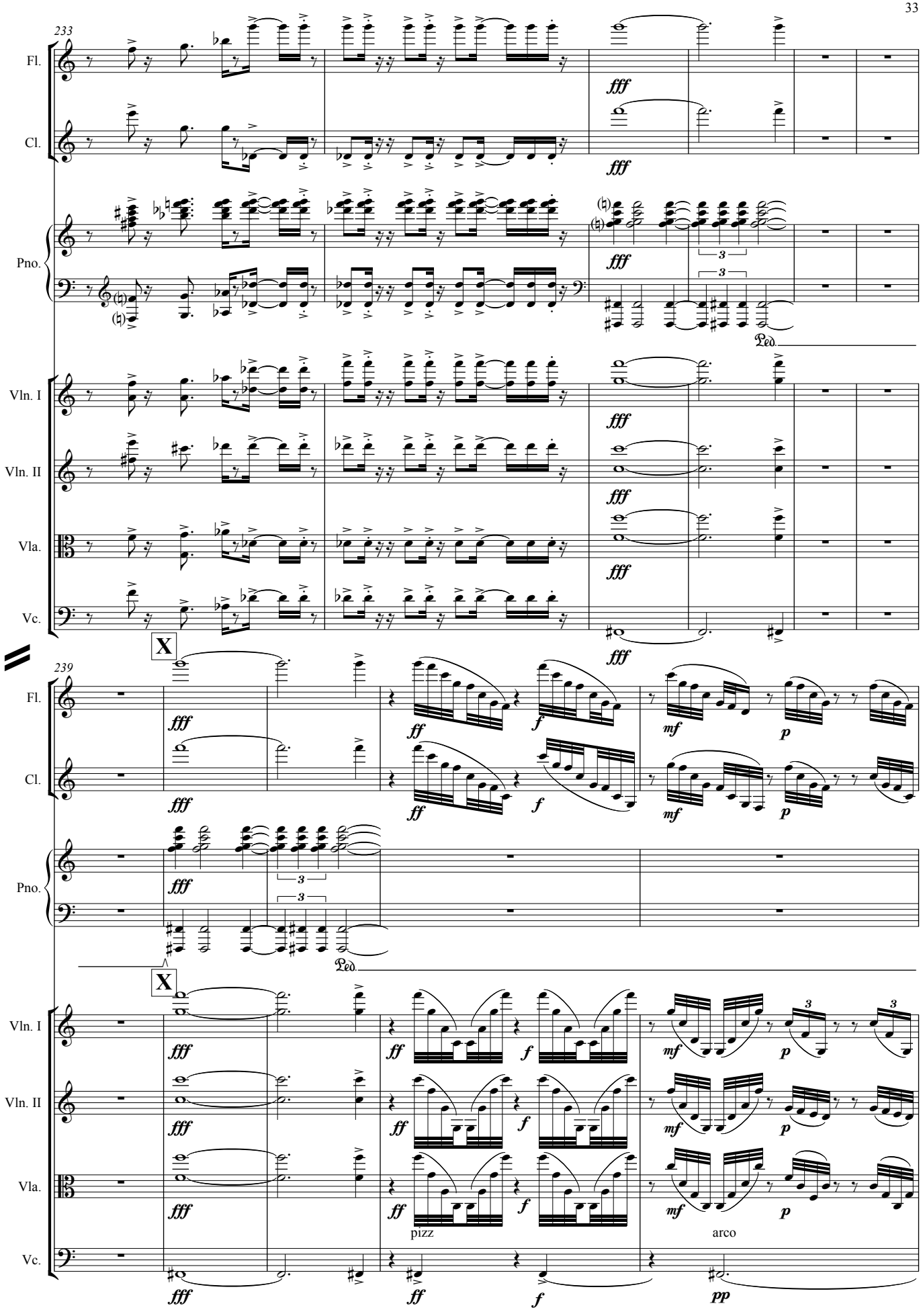

219
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
piu f

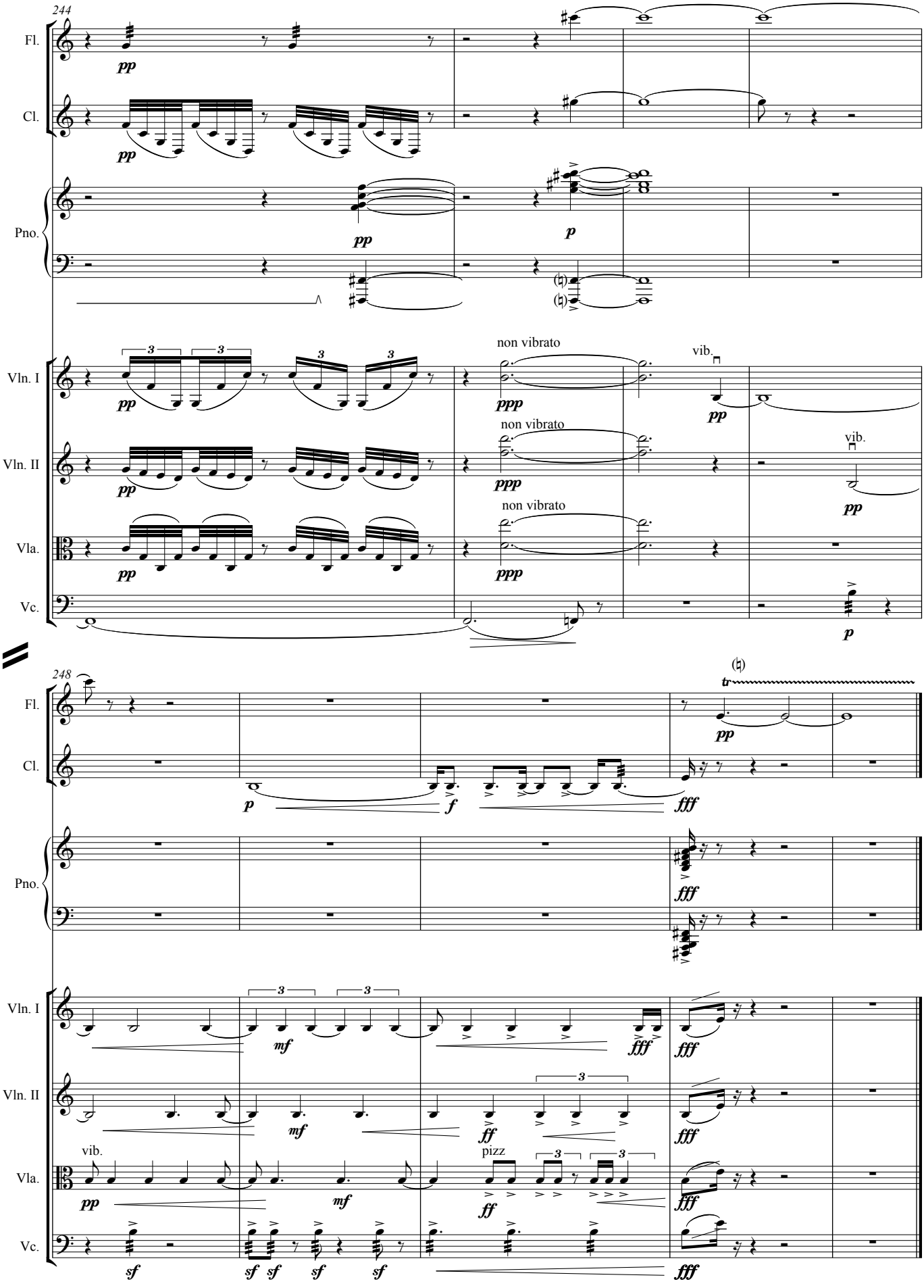

221
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
V
223
f
[VS]
pizz
arco
gliss.


225
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
227
ff
mf
crescendo
gliss.


229
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


W
231
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
W
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
piu f
ff


233
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
fff
Ped.
X
239
ff
f
mf
p
pp
pizz
arco


244
Fl.
Cl.
Pno.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
non vibrato
vib.
248
pizz
FINE: BEIJING May 13 2008