Vertigo

For string quartet

By David Lancaster

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Vertigo was composed for the Tippett Quartet which first performed it in March 2011. The music took as its starting point a fragment of music from the score which Bernard Herrmann composed for the Hitchcock film of the same name because the original commission had come from the 'Partners in Suspense' conference (held in York that year) which explored the collaboration between Hitchcock and Herrmann.

The link to Herrmann's music was a given but it was always the intention to create an original piece of music which was authentically my own and which could enjoy a life beyond the conference. It isn't in any sense an arrangement of Herrmann's score, rather a creative response to Herrmann's (and Hitchcock's) work on a number of different intertextual levels.

Martin Scorsese wrote in Sound and Vision: '*Hitchcock's film is all about obsession…it's about circling back to the same moment again and again…and the music is also built around spirals and circles – fulfilment and despair…Herrmann really understood that Hitchcock wanted to penetrate to the heart of obsession*'. So just as Hitchcock uses repetition of themes and events to represent Scottie's growing obsession with Madeleine and his spiralling decline, my music is based on a strict cyclic structure in which the series of musical events stated at the outset (beginning with an aggressive gesture from viola) is repeated five times and on each cycle is subject to a different process of development or transformation – but still remains recognisable and therefore becomes increasingly obsessive.

The fifth cycle in particular draws closer to Herrmann's 'obsession' motif – a plaintive falling figure, based on the musical technique of suspension; highly appropriate since falling – physically and emotionally – is at the heart of the film – and it is also a theme which has recurred my work on several occasions.

The sixth cycle begins but the spell is immediately broken and the work ends as it began.

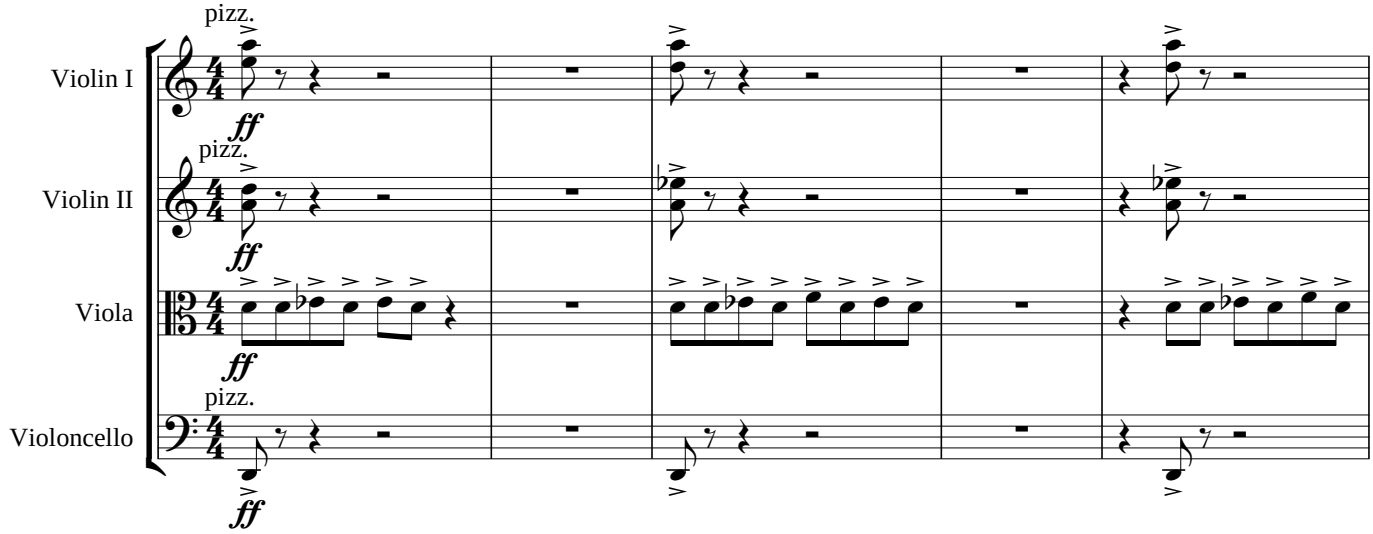
Duration: 8'15"

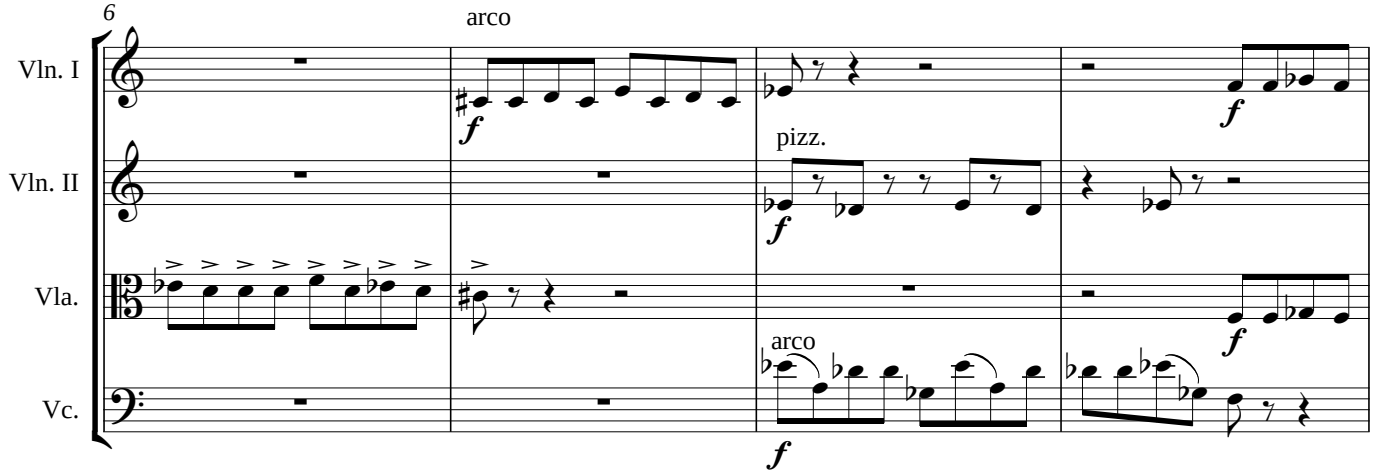
David Lancaster
York, March 2011

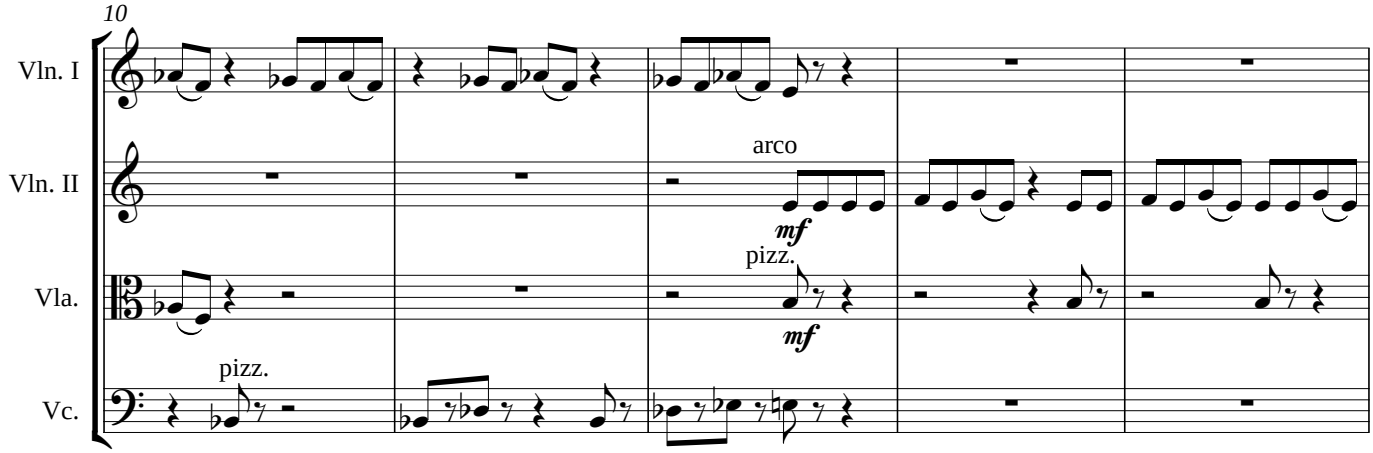
Vertigo

David Lancaster

1 **Con moto** ♩=180







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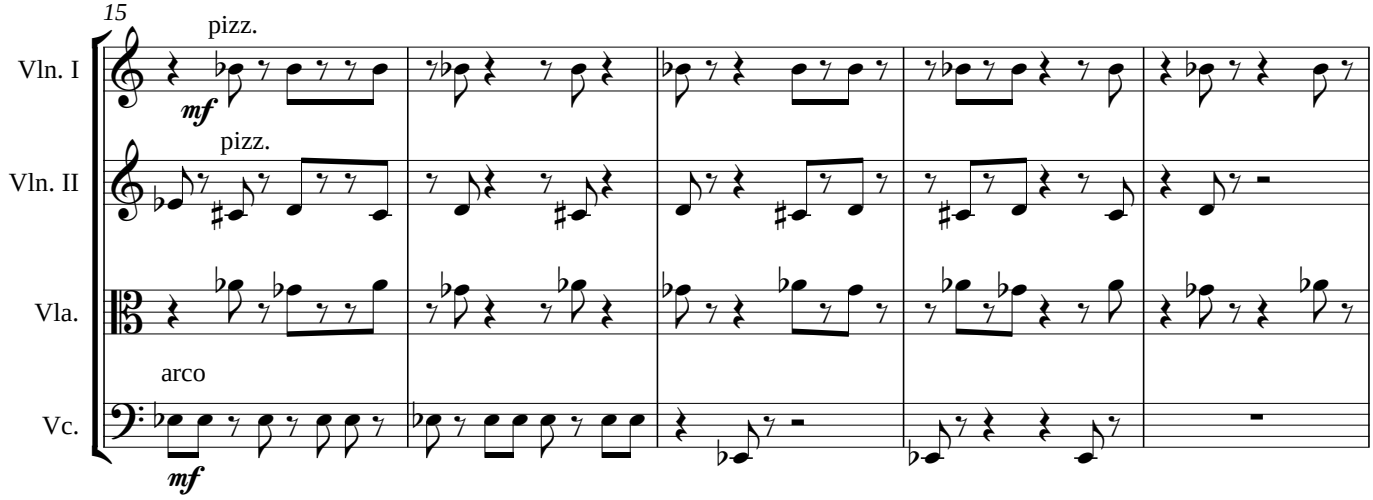
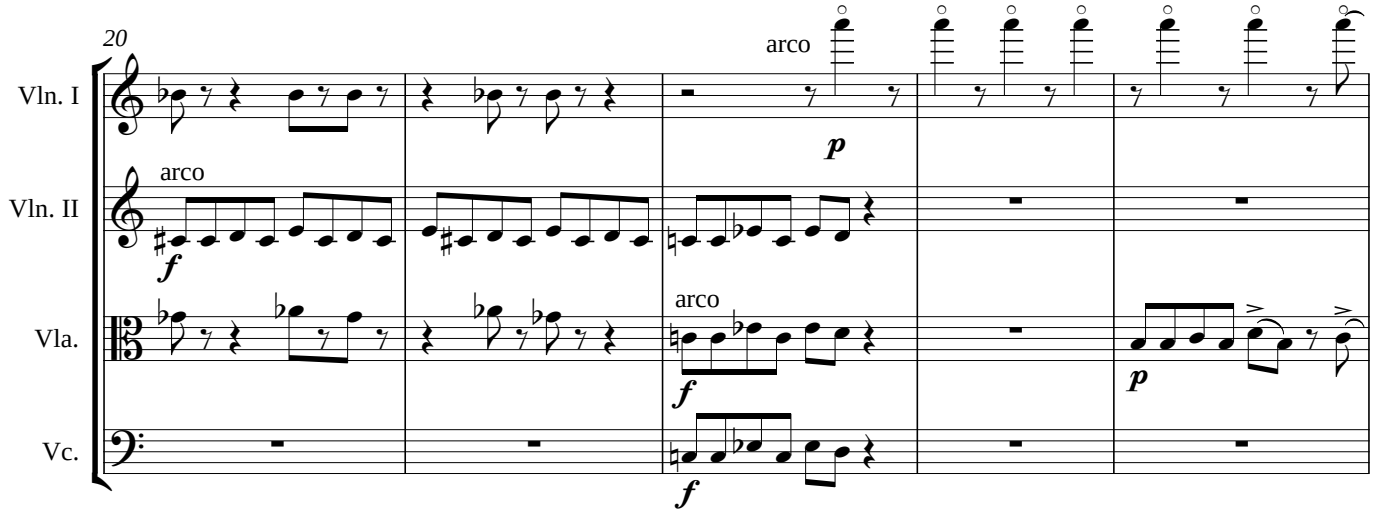
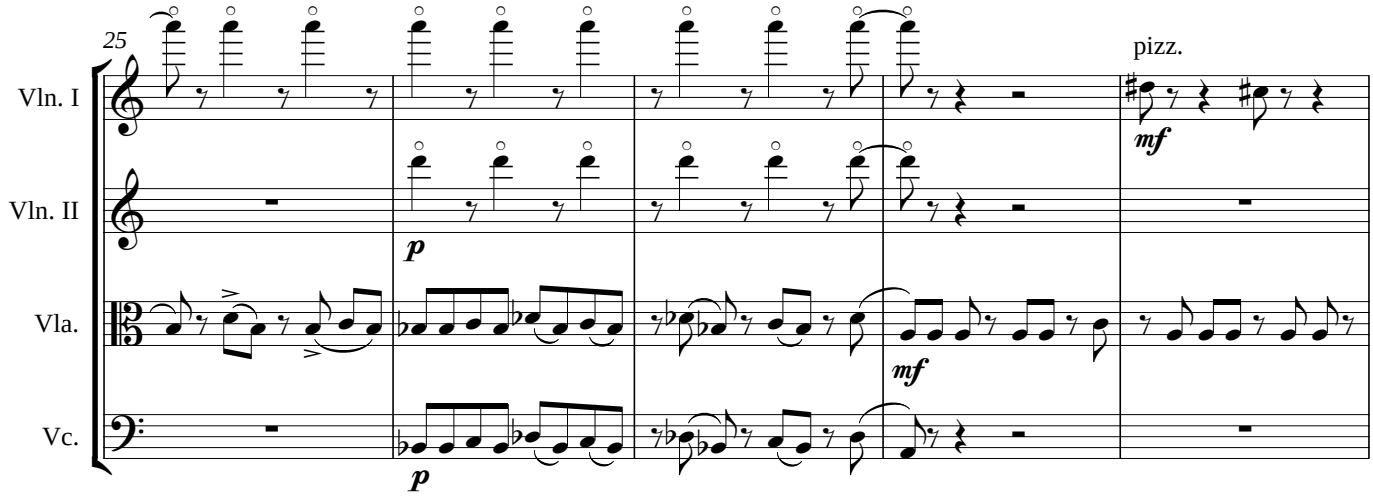
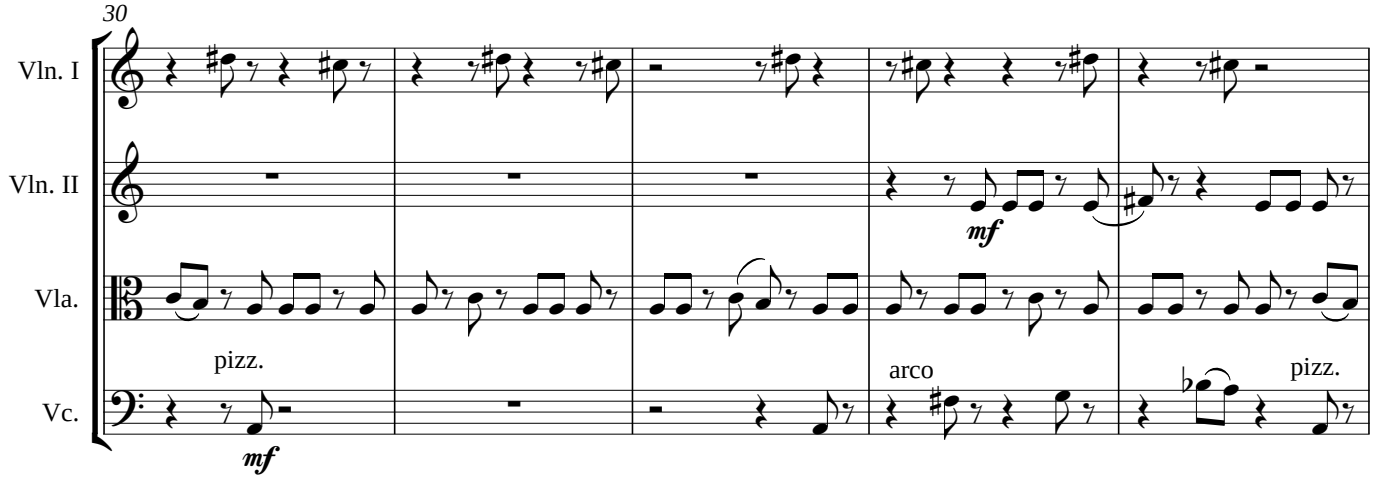
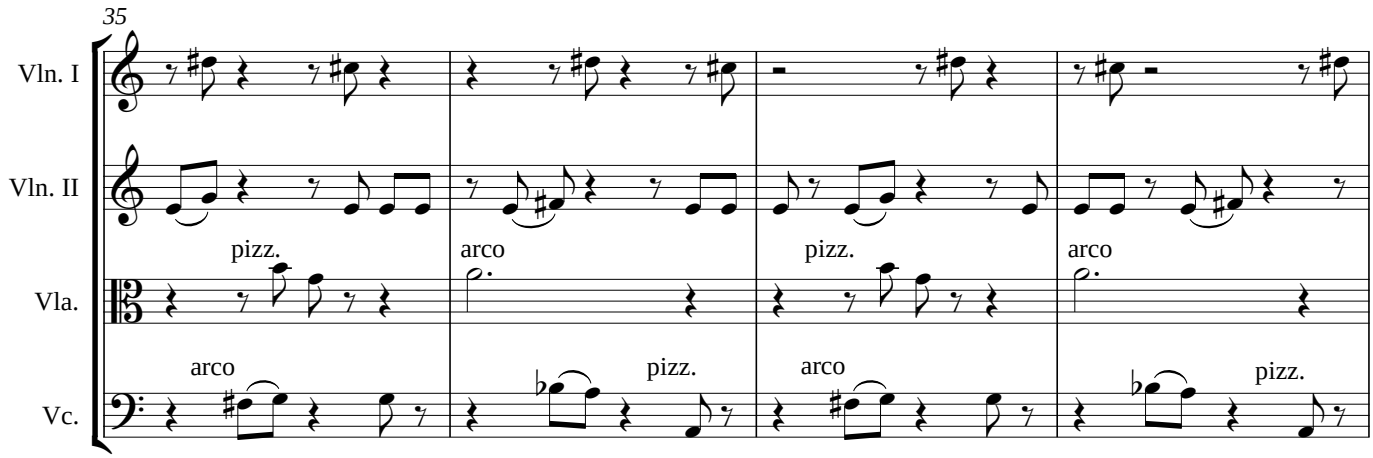
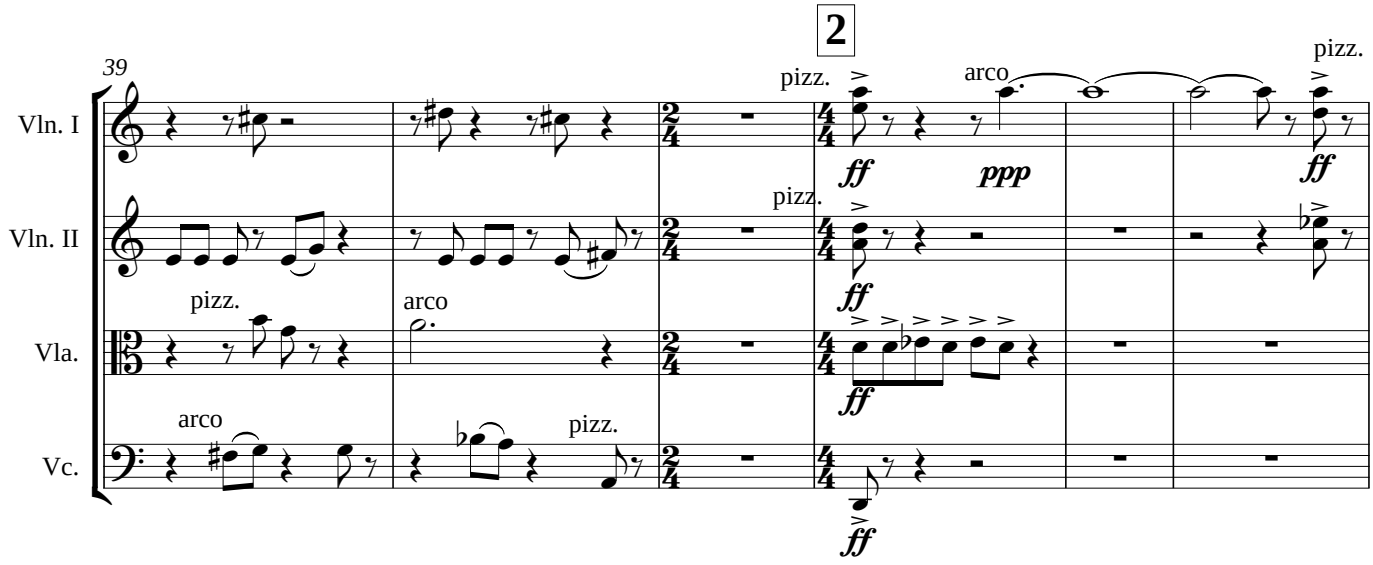

15
pizz.
Vln. I
mf
pizz.
Vln. II
Vla.
arco
Vc.
mf

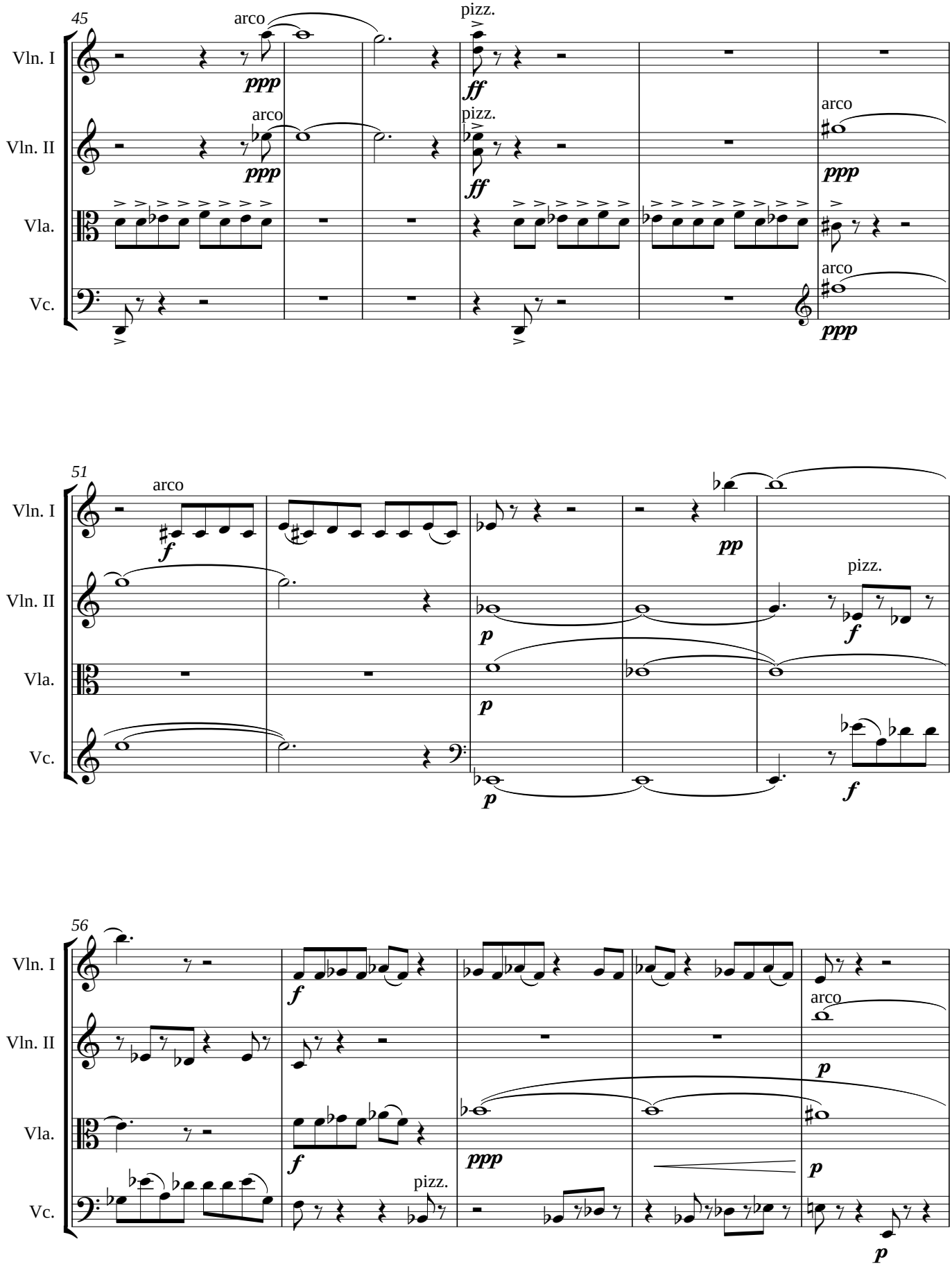

20
arco
Vln. I
p
arco
Vln. II
f
Vla.
arco
f
p
Vc.
f

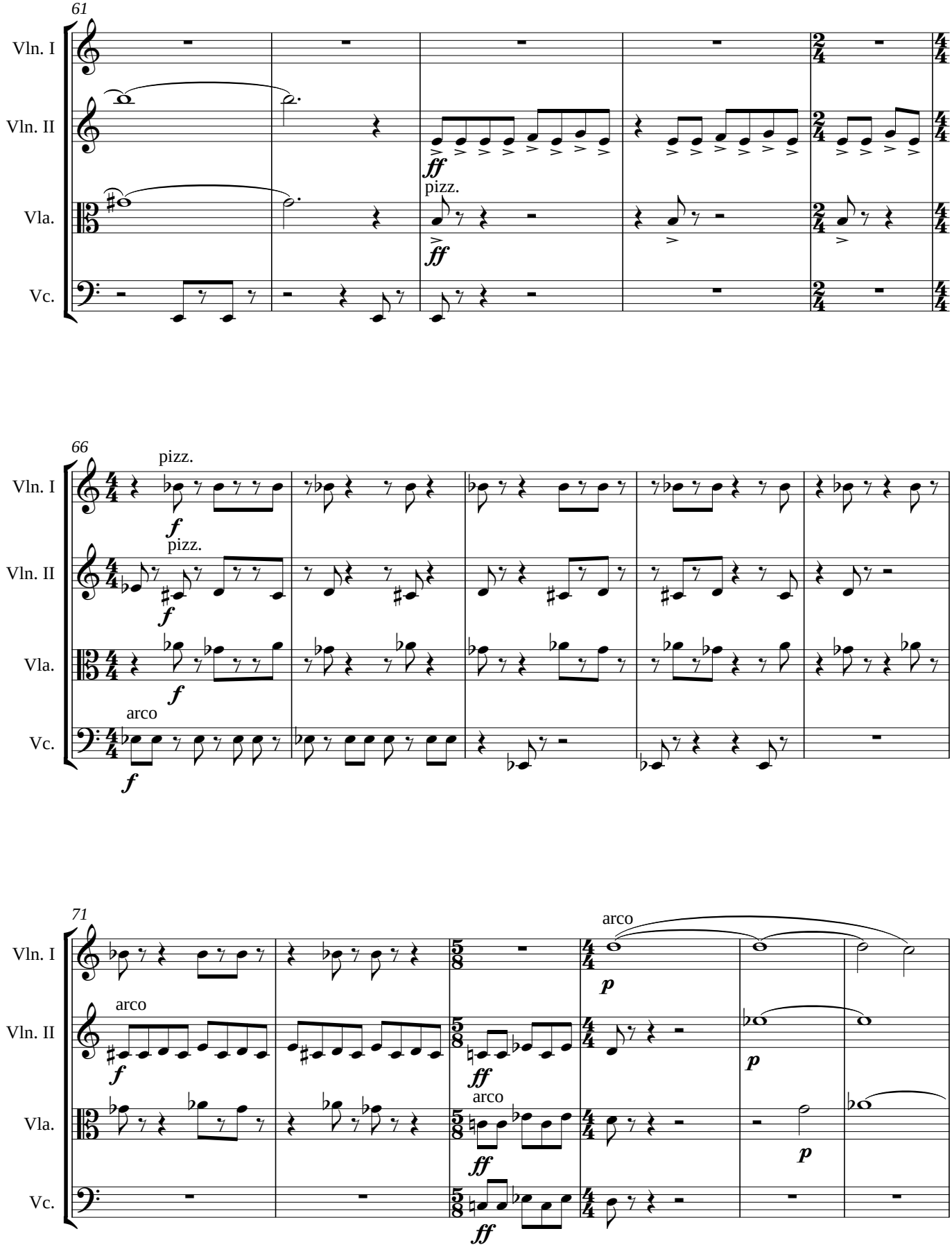

25
pizz.
Vln. I
mf
Vln. II
p
Vla.
mf
Vc.
p

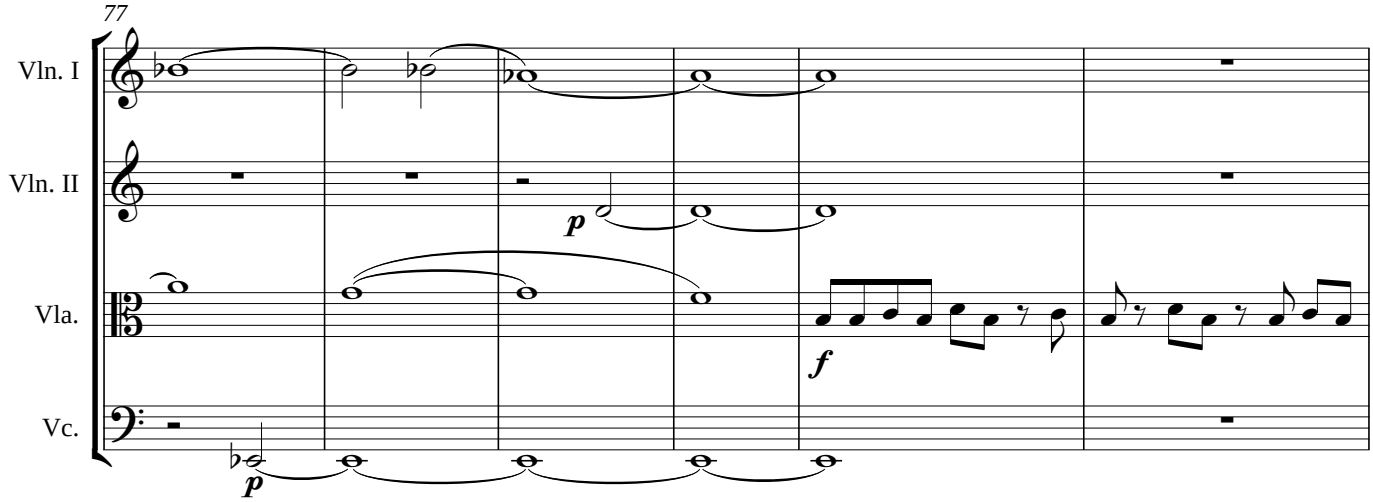

30
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
pizz.
mf
arco
pizz.

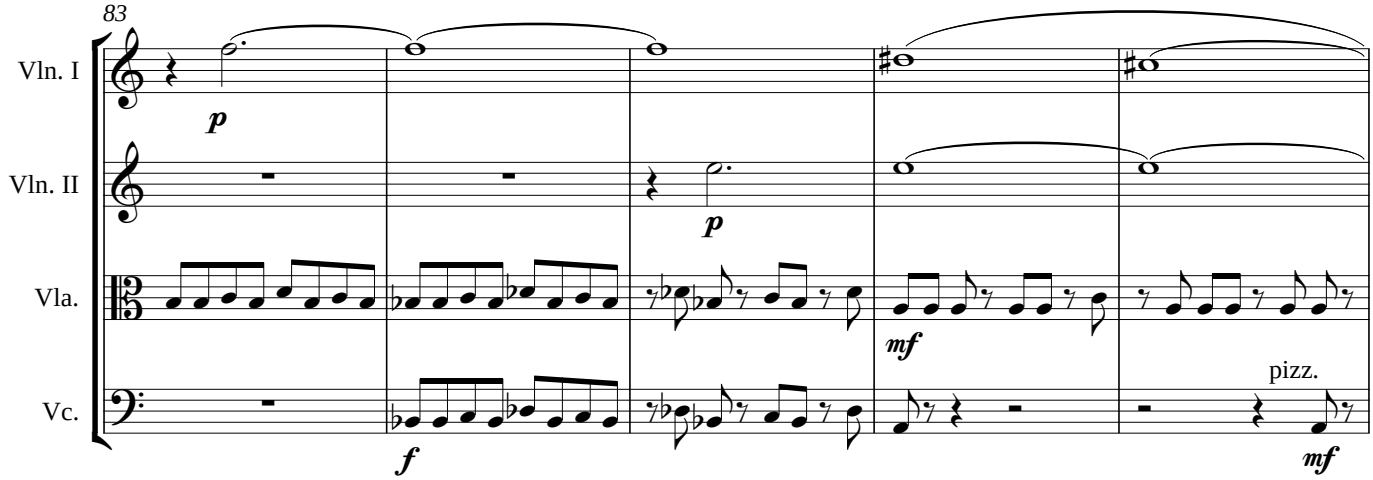

35
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.

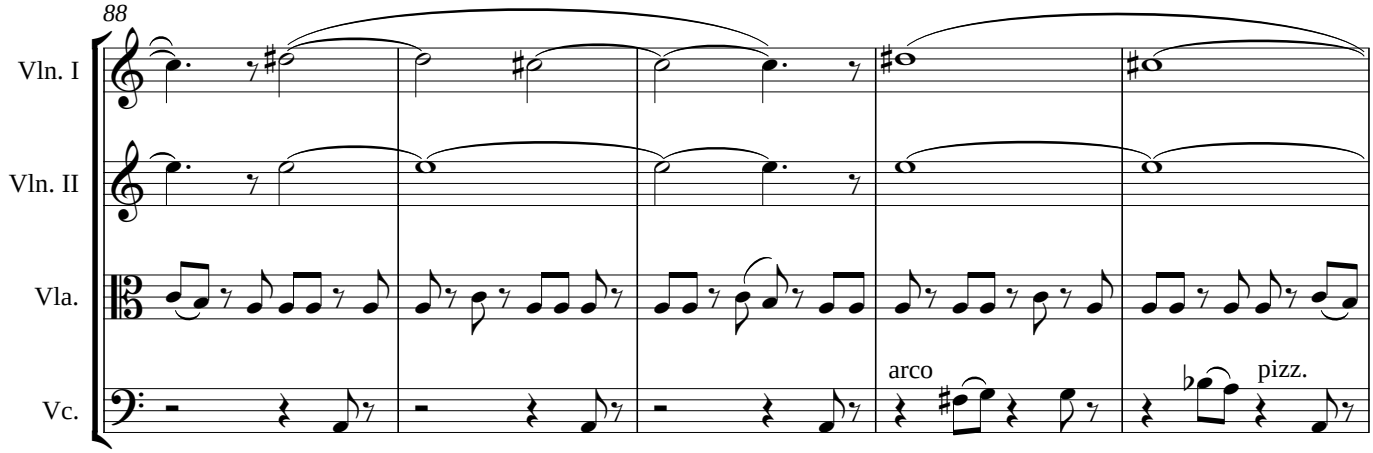

2
39
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
ff
ppp
ff
ff
ff
ff

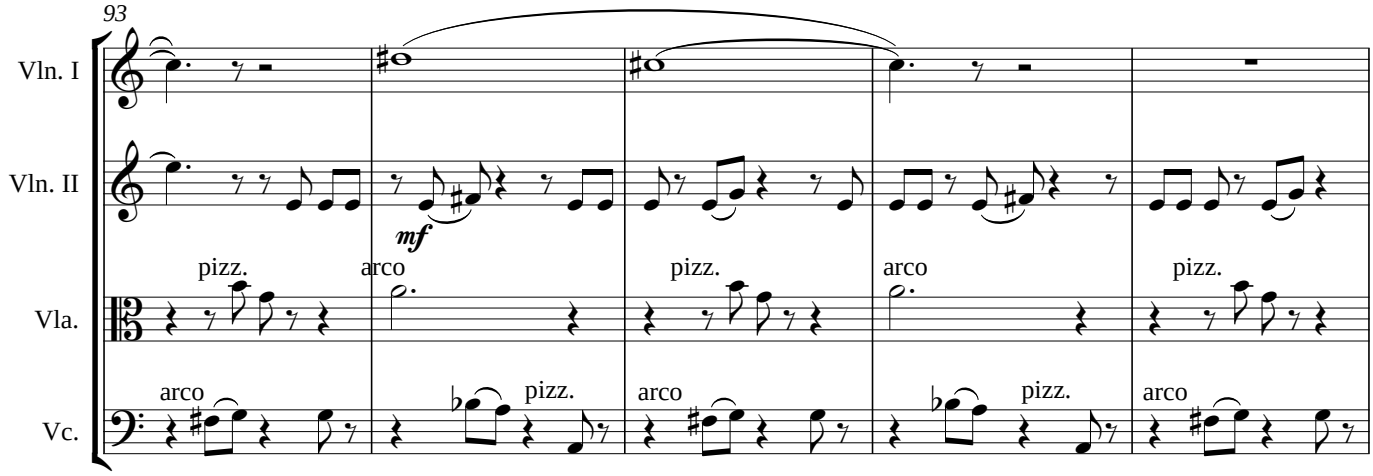

45
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
pizz.
ppp
ff
51
f
p
pp
56

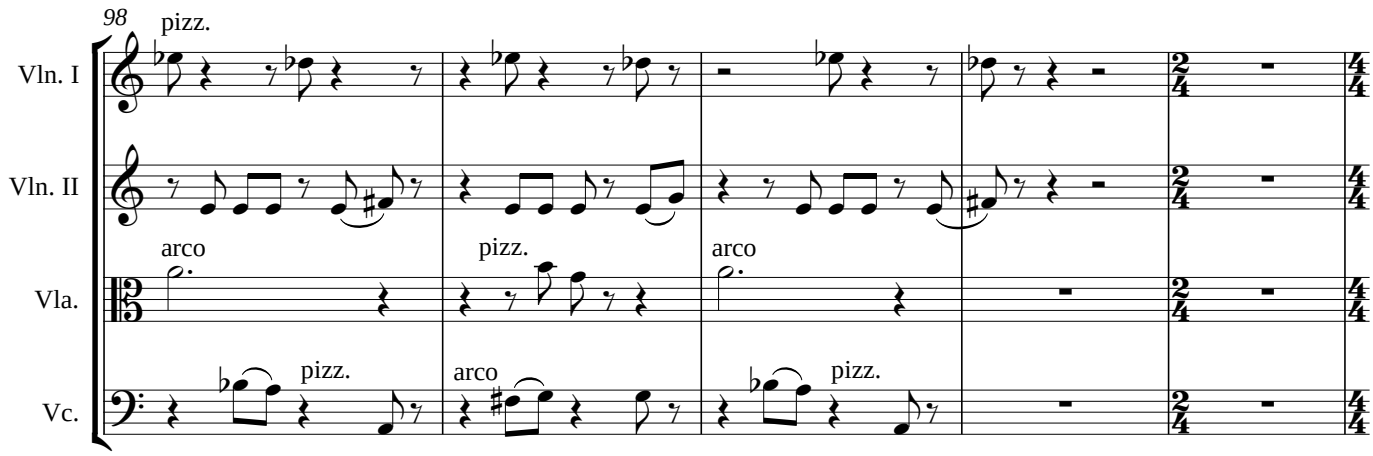

61
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ff
pizz.
ff
66
pizz.
f
pizz.
f
f
arco
f
71
arco
p
arco
f
ff
p
arco
ff
p
ff


77
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
p
f

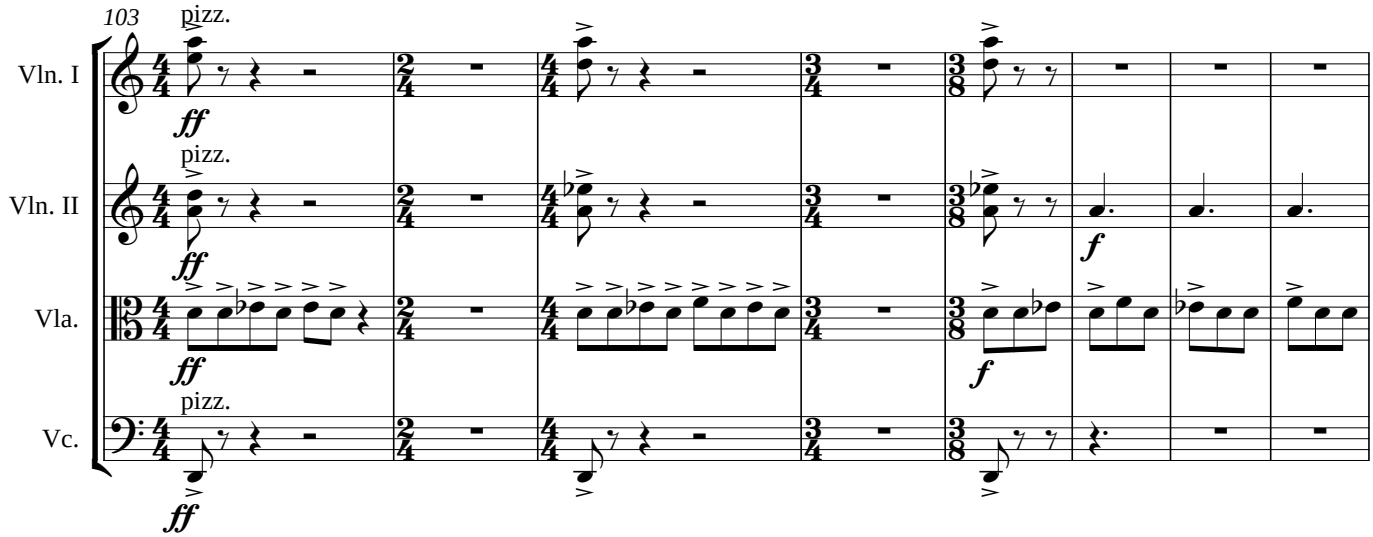

83
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
p
f
mf
pizz.
mf

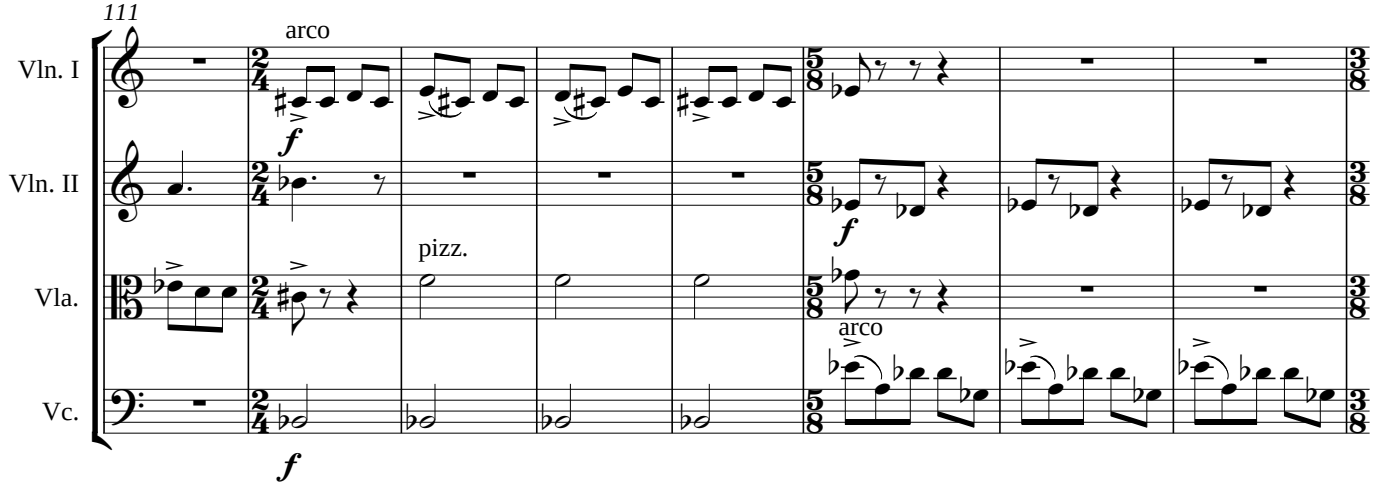

88
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
pizz.

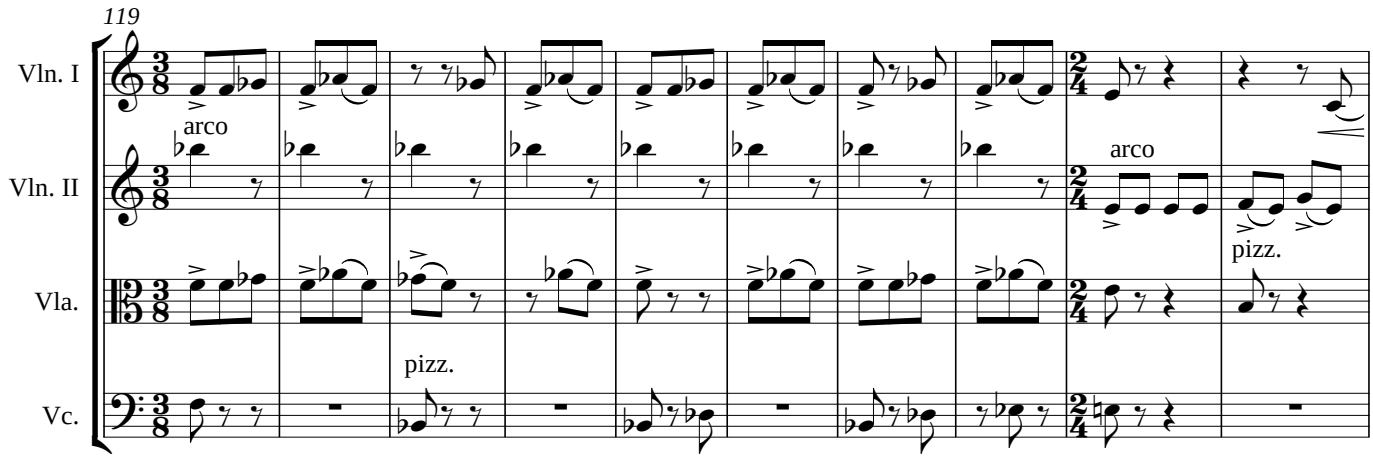

93
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco

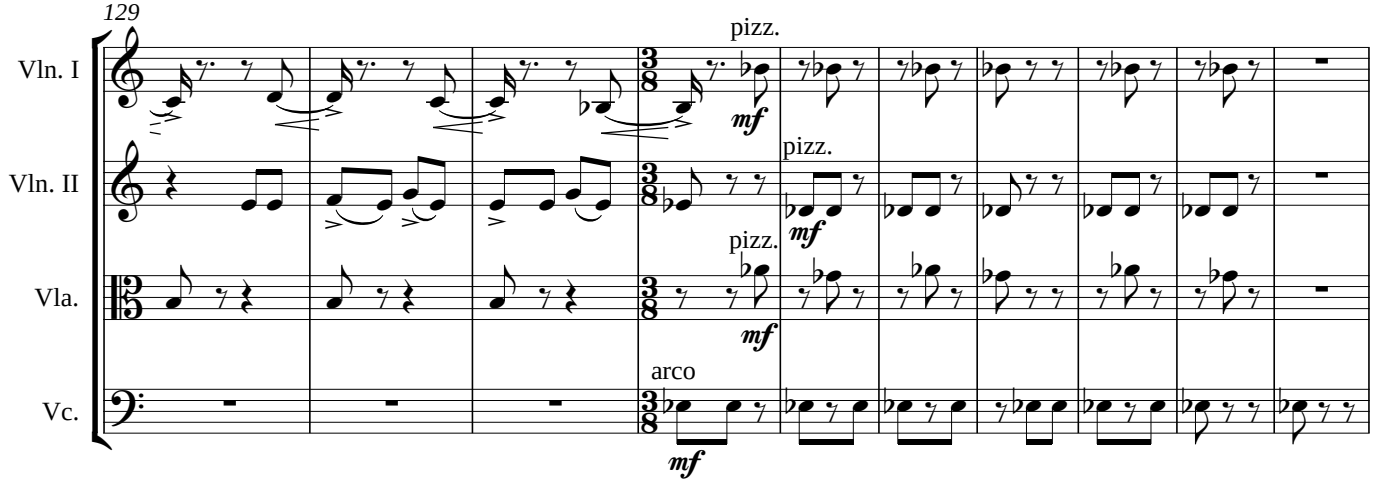

98
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.

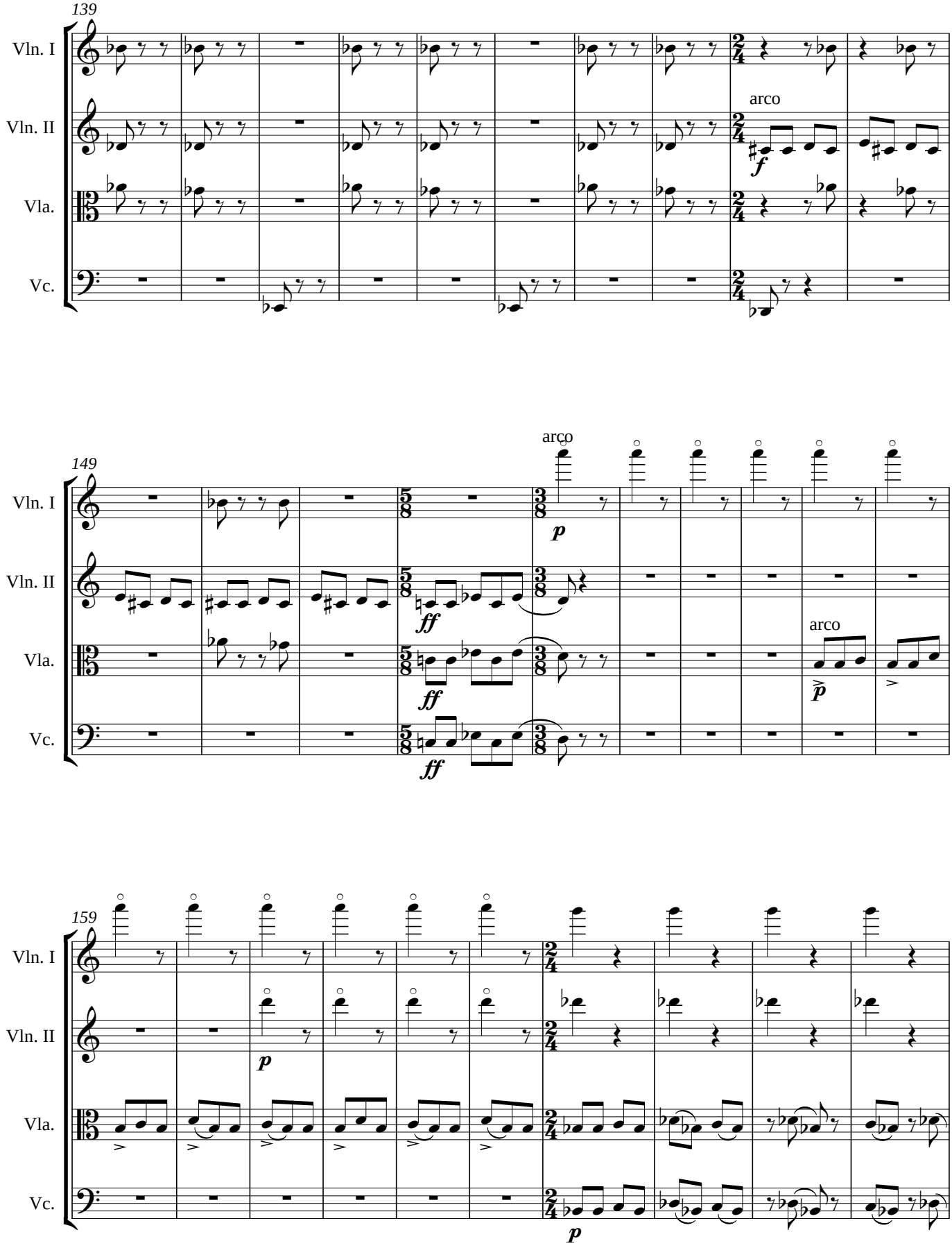
3

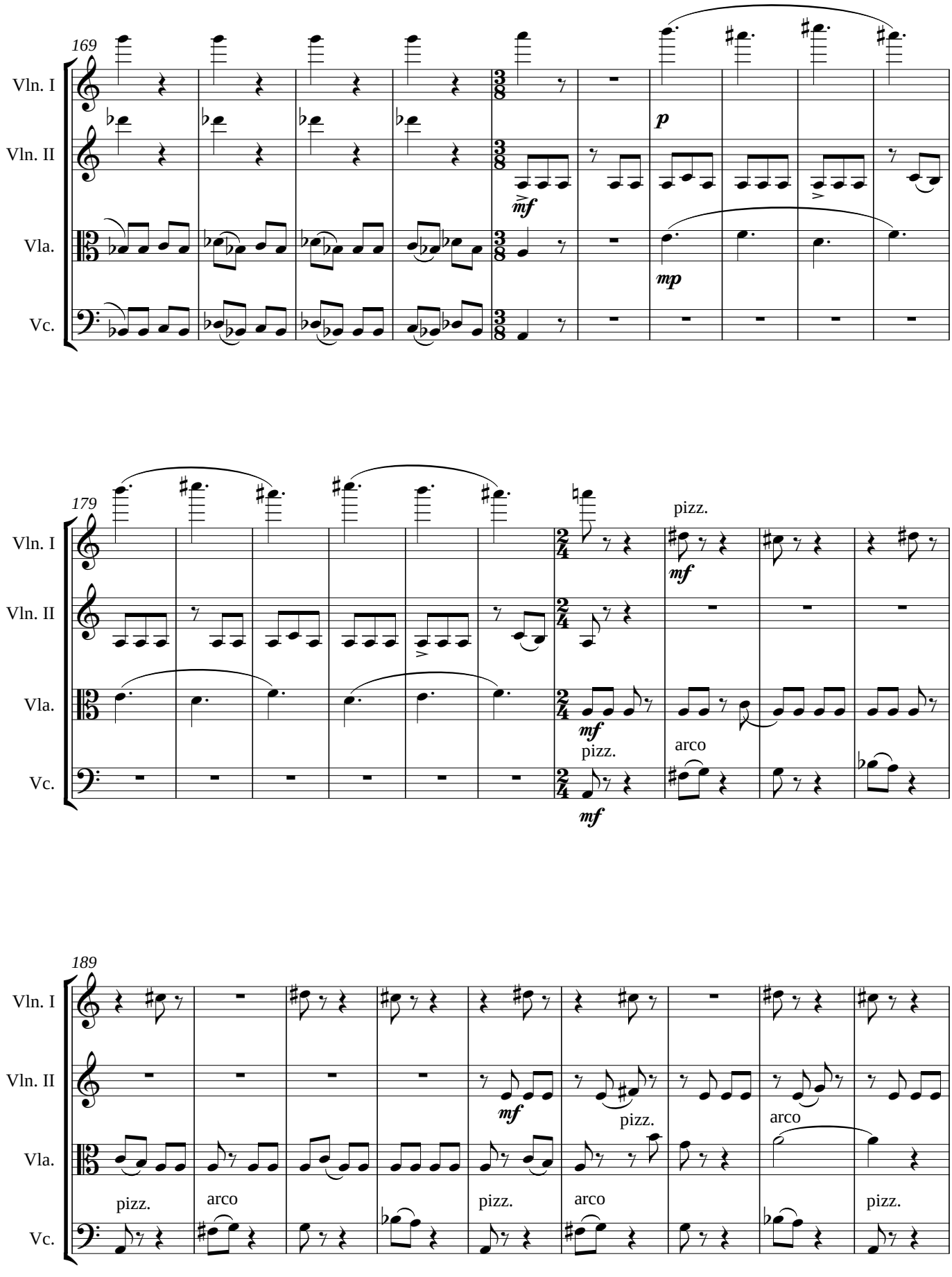

103
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz.
ff
f

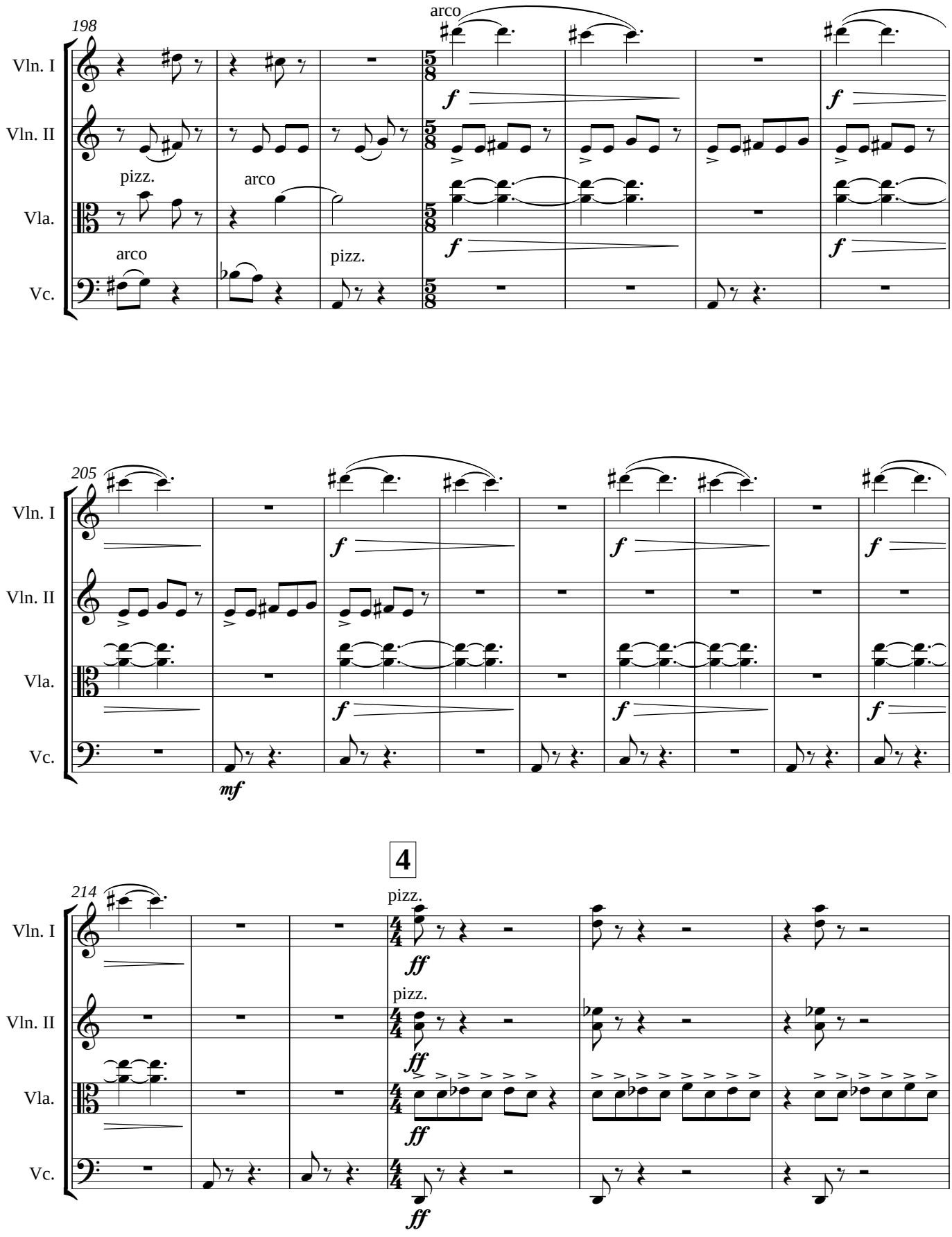

111
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
pizz.
arco

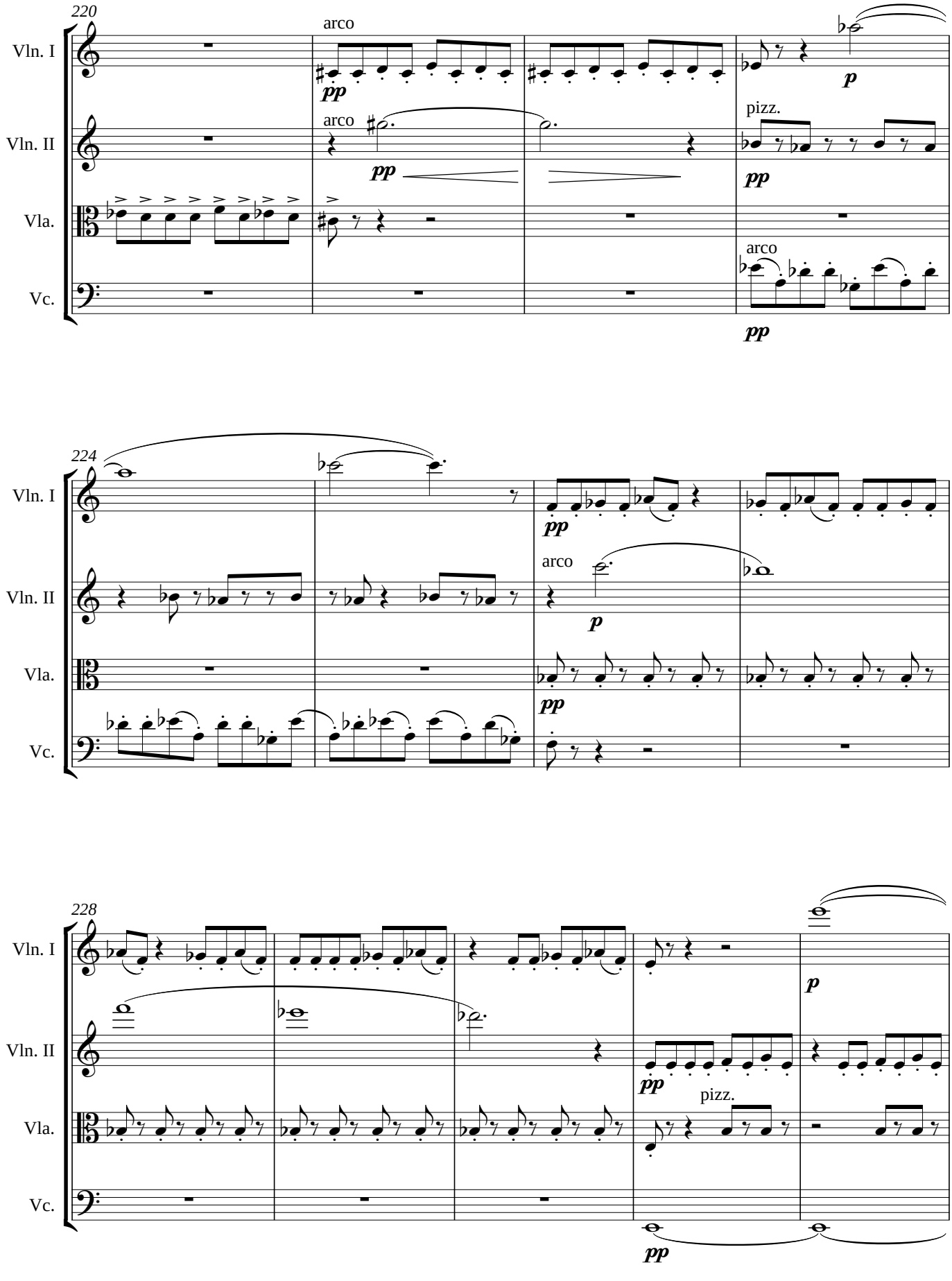

119
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.

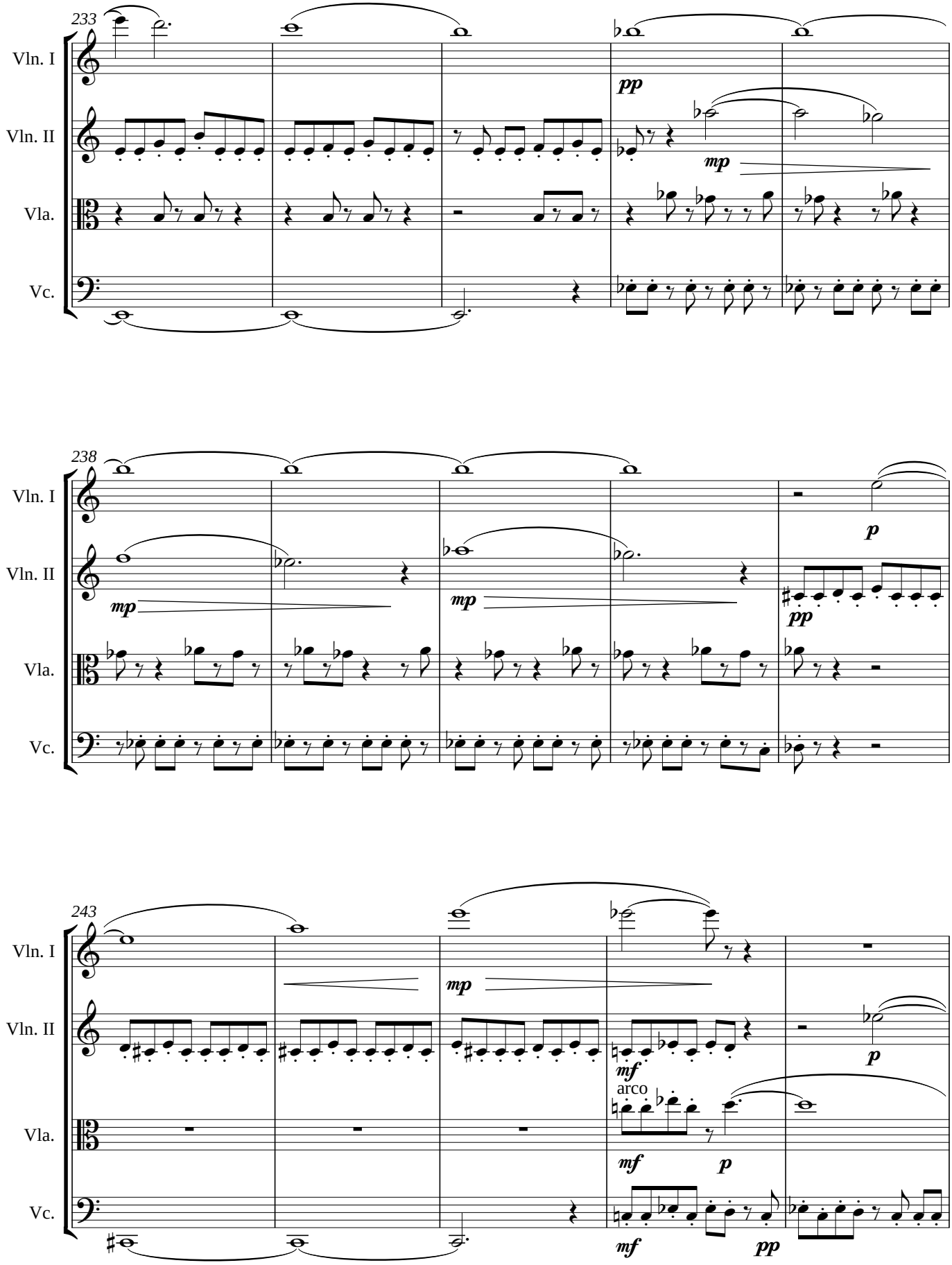

129
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz.
pizz.
pizz.
arco

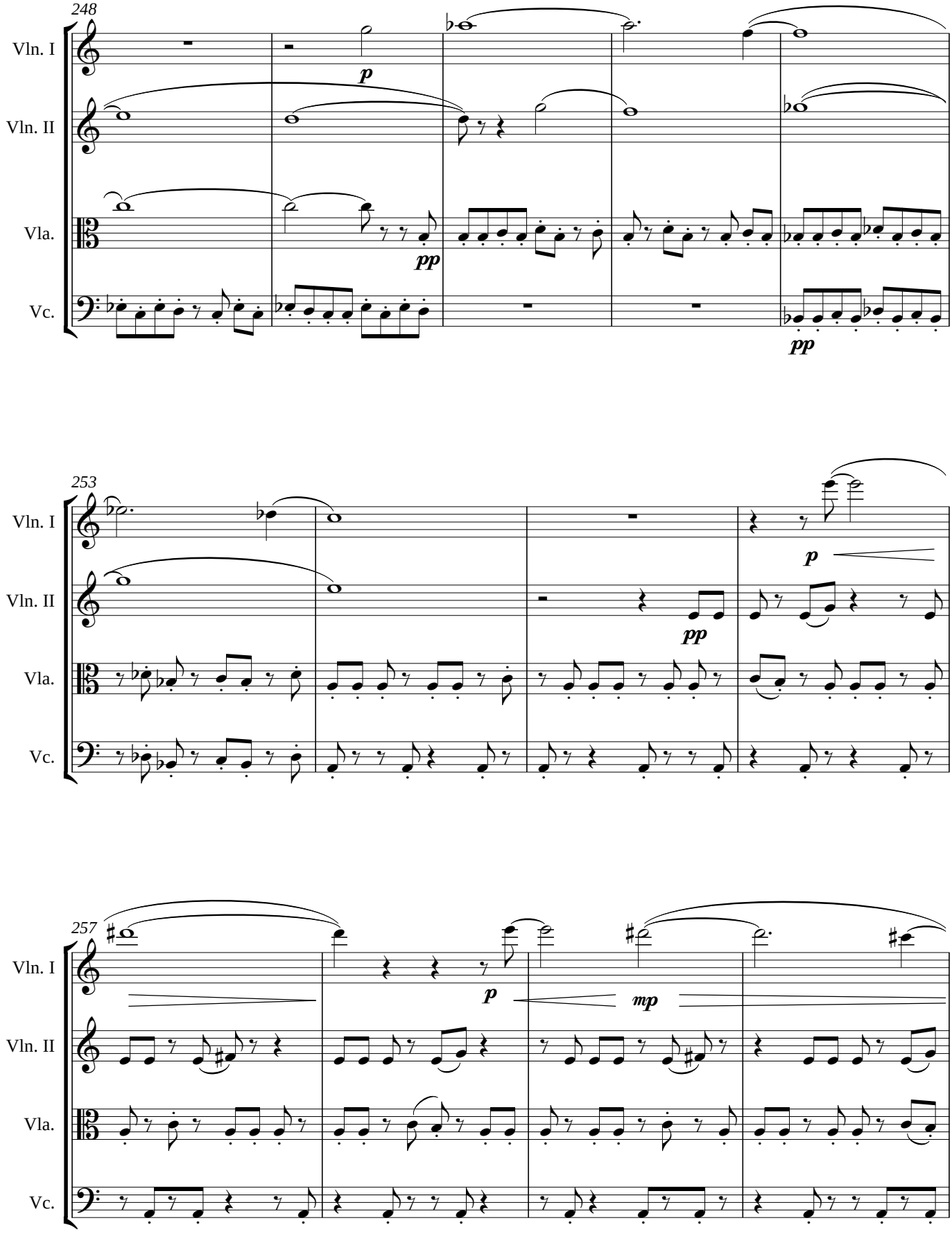

139
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
f
149
arco
p
ff
ff
ff
arco
p
159
p
p

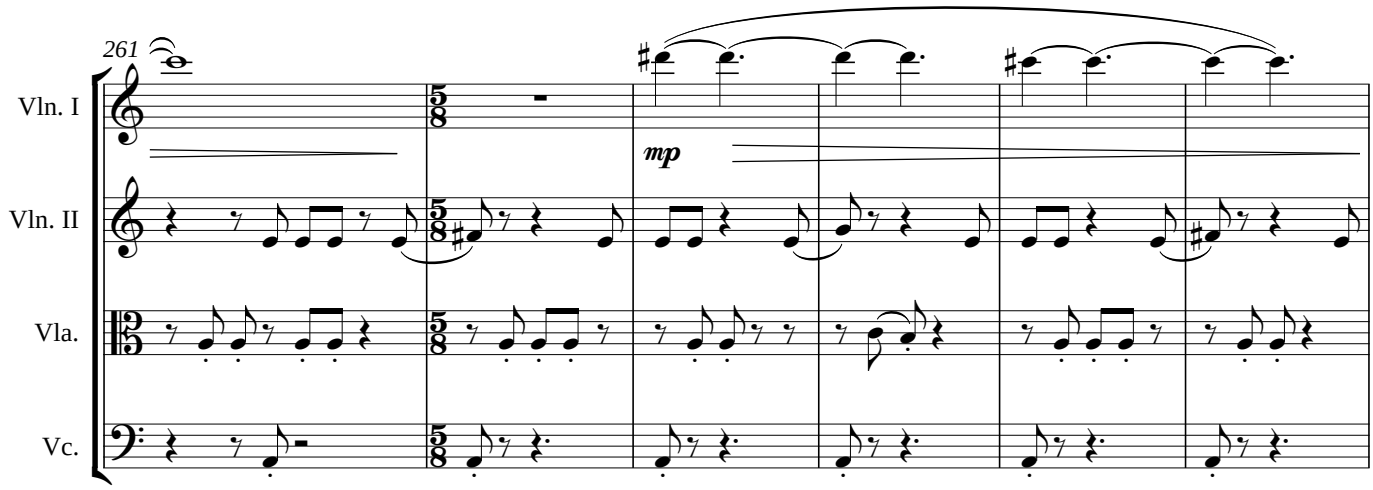

169
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
p
mp
179
pizz.
mf
arco
189
pizz.
arco


198
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz.
arco
arco
arco
pizz.
f
205
mf
4
214
pizz.
pizz.
ff


220
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
pp
arco
pp
p
pizz.
pp
arco
pp
224
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pp
arco
p
pp
228
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
pp
pizz.
pp


233
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pp
mp
238
mp
mp
p
pp
243
mp
mf
arco
p
mf
p
mf
pp


248
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
pp
pp
253
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pp
p
257
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
mp


261
Vln. I
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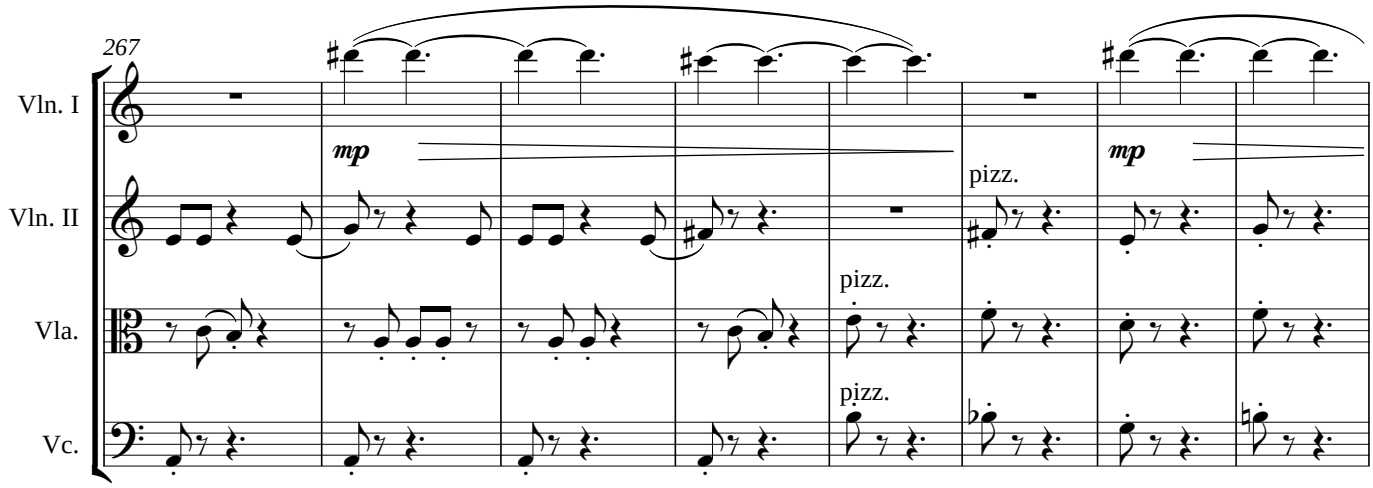
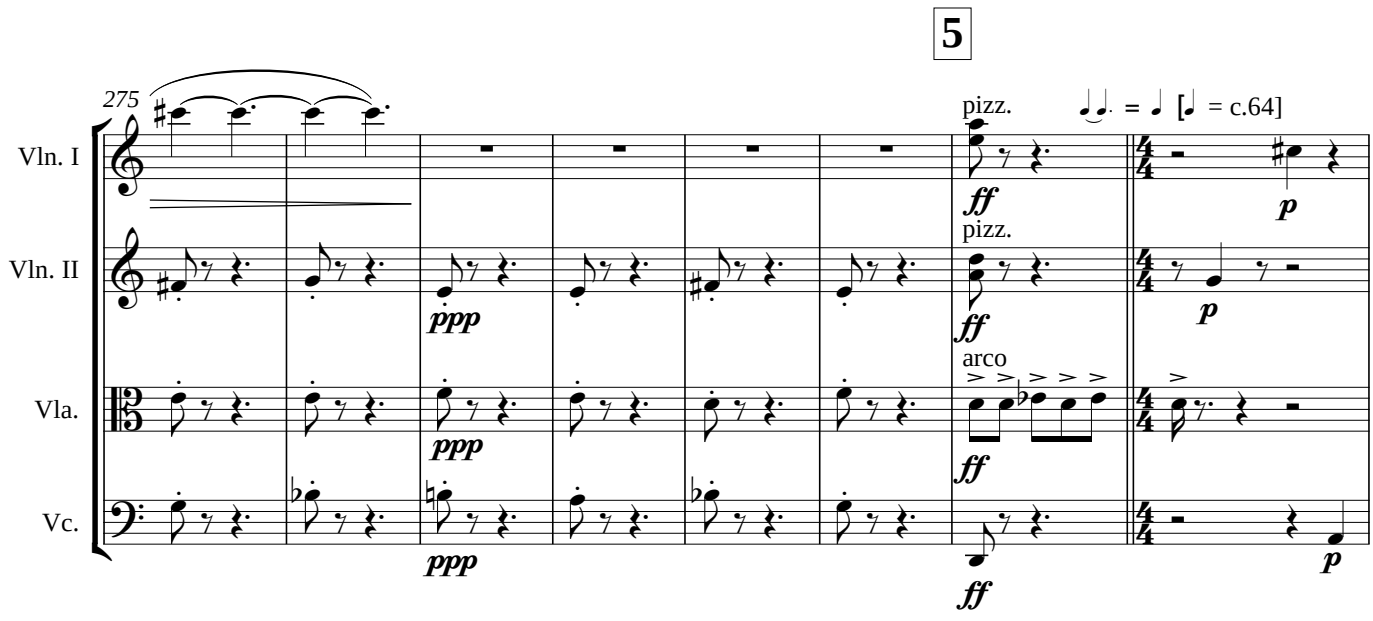
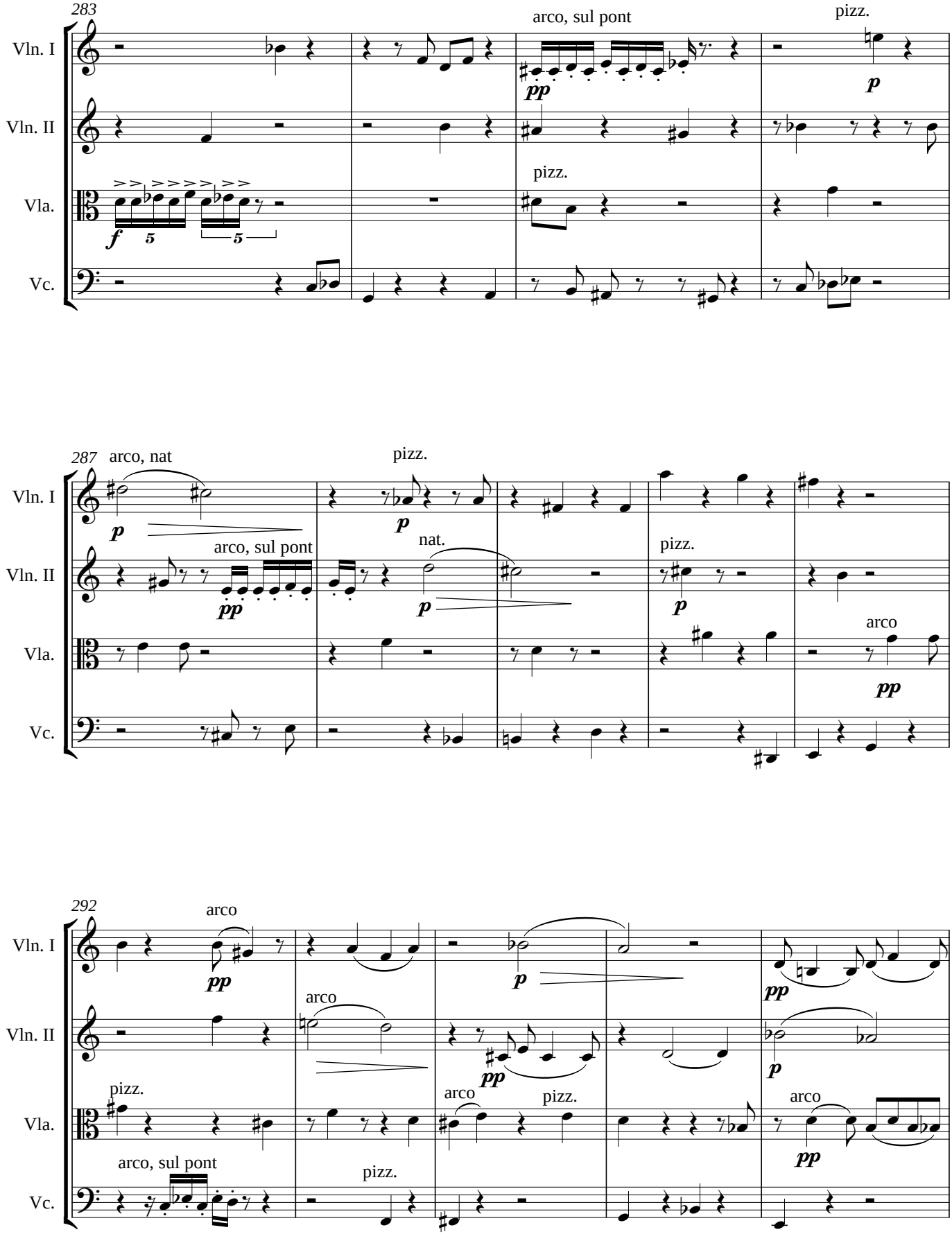
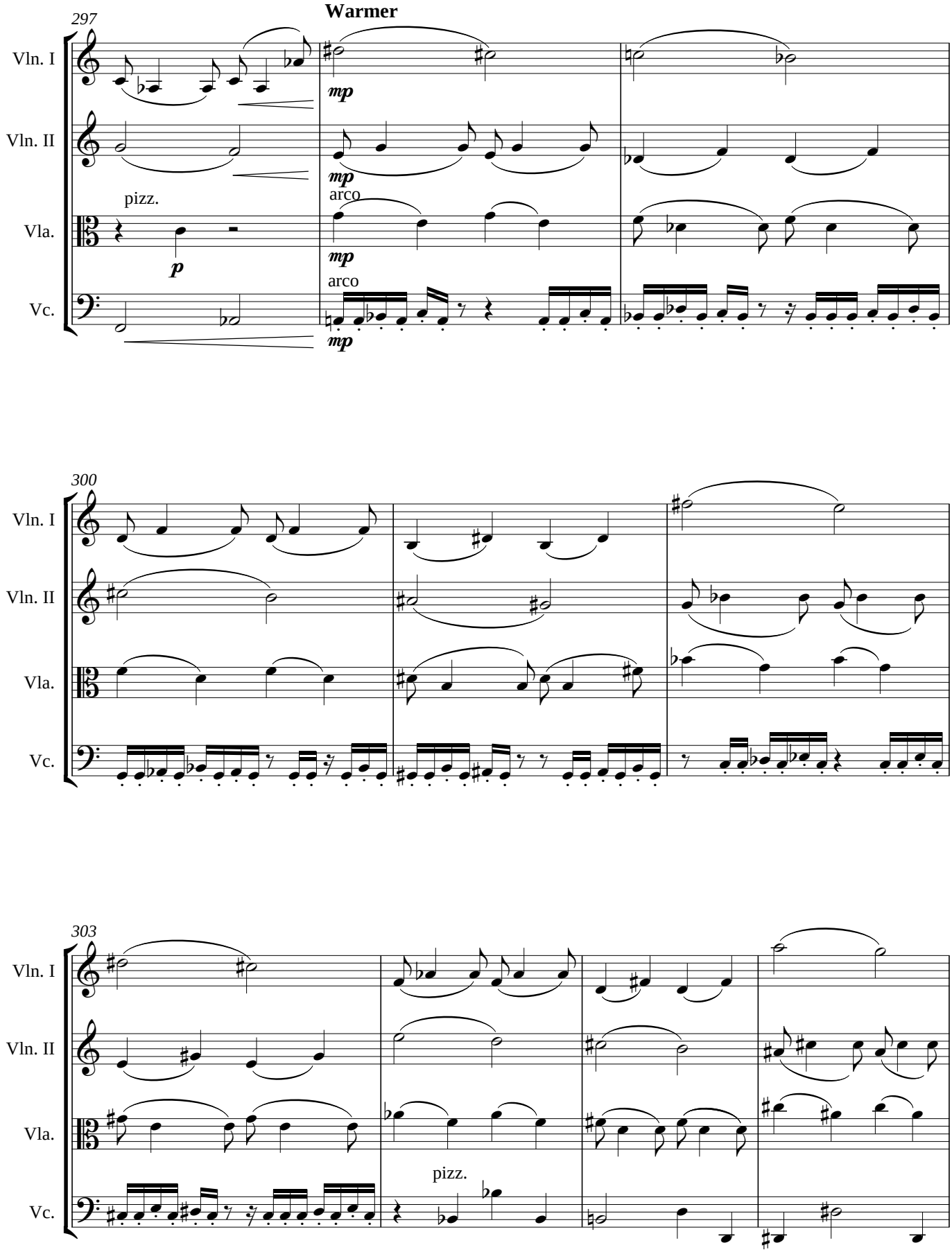
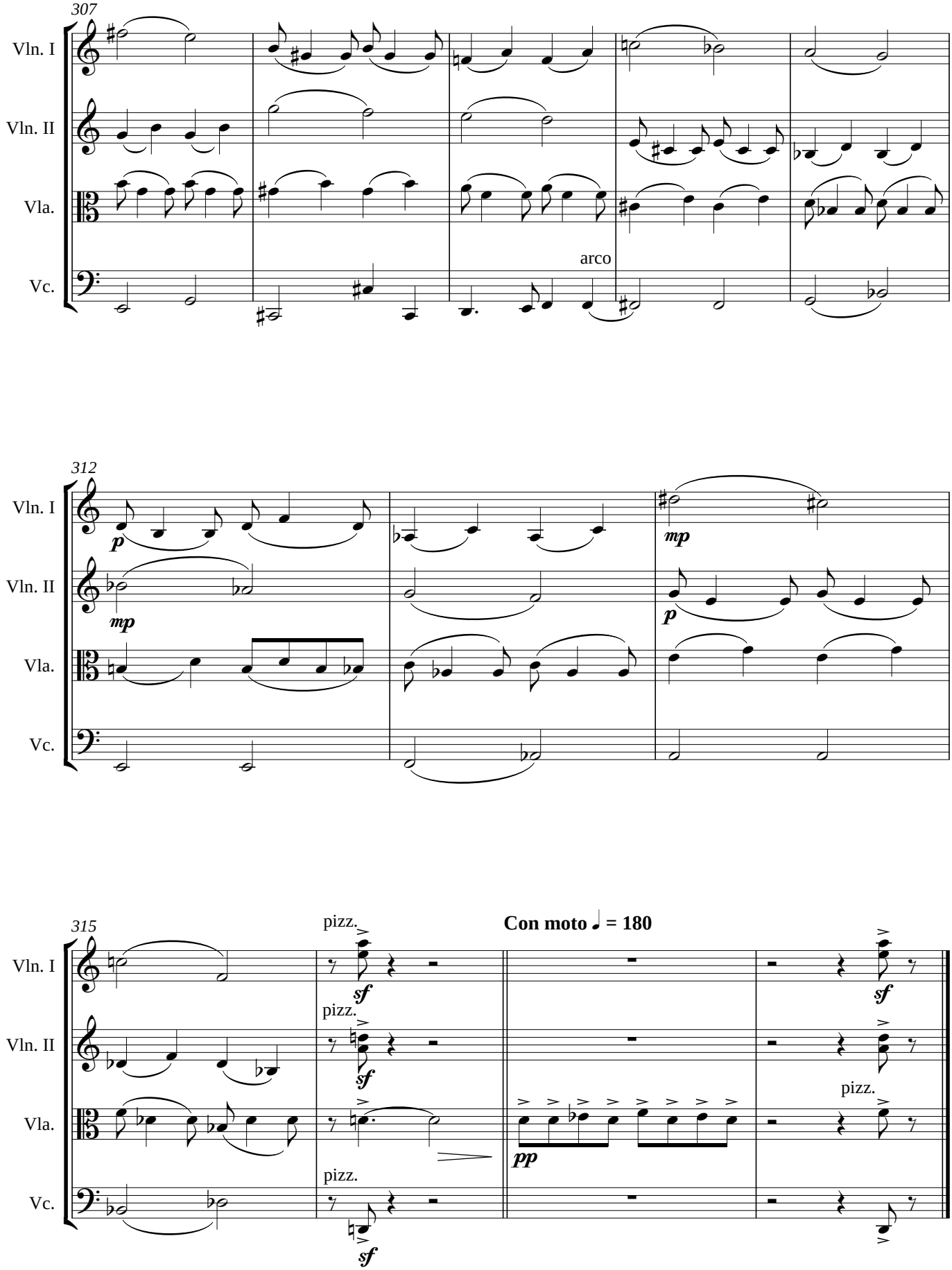
Vla.
Vc.
mp


267
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
pizz.
pizz.
pizz.
mp


5
275
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ppp
ppp
ppp
pizz.
ff
pizz.
ff
arco
ff
ff
= [= c.64]
p
p
p


283
arco, sul pont
pizz.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz.
287
arco, nat
pizz.
arco, sul pont
nat.
pizz.
arco
292
arco
arco
pizz.
arco
arco, sul pont
pizz.
arco


297
Warmer
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
pizz.
p
arco
300
303
pizz.


307
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
312
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
mp
mp
p
315
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz.
sf
pizz.
sf
pizz.
sf
Con moto ♩ = 180
pp
pizz.
sf
sf