Metamorphoses (15.178)

for Violin, Clarinet, Cello, and Piano

By

Max Caplan

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Submittied in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for

Honors in the Department of Music

UNION COLLEGE

June, 2016

ABSTRACT

CAPLAN, MAX Metamorphoses (15.178), for Violin, Clarinet, Cello, and Piano. Department of Music, June 2016.

ADVISOR: Hilary Tann

A chamber music composition, approximately eight minutes long, for the above instrumentation. The title refers to a line from Ovid's epic, which reads, "All things are fluid, and every shape is born to change." Ovid puts the words in the mouth of the ancient Greek philosopher Pythagoras, who soliloquizes on the meaning of life, the nature of time, and the interconnectedness of all things. The speech centers around his ideas of reincarnation (either literal or metaphorical), which, as a kind of metamorphosis, links the passage thematically to the rest of the poem.

Metamorphoses (15.178) reflects this central notion of change within permanence. Two main musical motives recur throughout the piece and constitute its fundamental fabric, thus paralleling Pythagoras' concept of cosmic unity. Yet each also undergoes metamorphosis: the first, from the ruminative opening melodic statement in the violin to the pounding bass ostinato in the final section; the second, from the playful imitative subject in the *Allegro* sections to the soaring unison melody at the climax.

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MAX D. CAPLAN

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Duration: ca. 8 min.

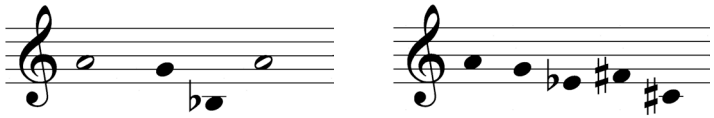
First performance: May 23, 2016, Emerson Auditorium, Taylor Music Center, Union College, with the Musicians of Ma'alwyck (Ann-Marie Barker Schwartz, violin; Brett Wery, clarinet; Petia Kassarova, cello) and Max Caplan, piano

"There is nothing, in all the world, that rests:
all things are fluid, and every shape is born to change.
Time itself marches on in relentless motion –
not unlike a river, for neither the river
nor the fickle hour can stand, but as wave impels wave,
each driving away the last and driven on by the next,
so time flees and gives chase in equal measure
and is ever new; for what was before, is gone;
and what was not, is come to pass;
and each moment is constantly reborn."

Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (15.177-85); tr. composer

Program note: The title refers to the following line from the above passage, quoted from the final book of Ovid's epic: "All things are fluid, and every shape is born to change." Ovid puts the words in the mouth of the ancient Greek philosopher Pythagoras, who soliloquizes on the meaning of life, the nature of time, and the interconnectedness of all things. The speech centers around his ideas of reincarnation (either literal or metaphorical), which, as a kind of metamorphosis, links the passage thematically to the rest of the poem.

Metamorphoses (15.178) reflects this central notion of change within permanence. The two main motives are:



These recur throughout and constitute the fundamental fabric, paralleling Pythagoras' concept of cosmic unity. Yet each undergoes metamorphosis: the first, from the ruminative opening melodic statement in the violin to the pounding bass ostinato in the final section; the second, from the playful imitative subject in the *Allegro* sections to the soaring unison melody at the climax.

Other parts of the passage resonate: the "river" in the piano arpeggios; the "fickle hour" in the flitting, imitative passages (where each statement is soon replaced by the next); and the "relentless motion" of time in the final, inexorable crescendo. In contrast, the opening and inner sections are static and timeless, reflecting Pythagoras' belief in the fundamental eternality of all things.

Acknowledgements: I am grateful to my thesis advisor, Professor Hilary Tann, for her guidance and support at every stage of the compositional process, and to the members of the Musicians of Ma'alwyck.

UNION COLLEGE

April 2016

Metamorphoses (15.178)

Max Caplan

Violin

Clarinet in B♭

Cello

Piano

Very free (♩ = c. 66)

recitando

pizz.

arco

pizz.

arco

dolce

Vln.

B♭ Cl.

Vc.

Pno.

A

Più mosso (♩ = c. 100)

rit.

8va

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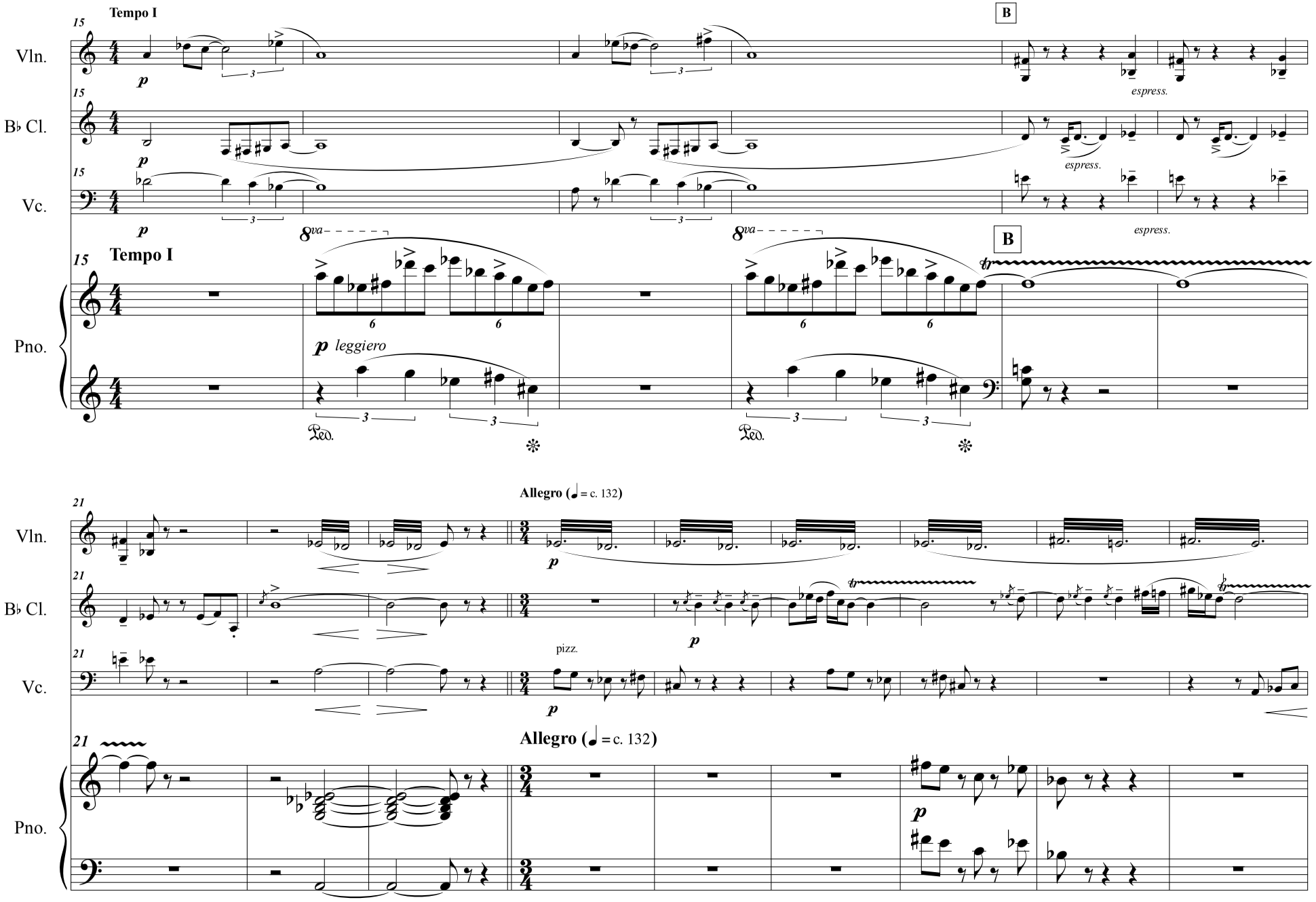
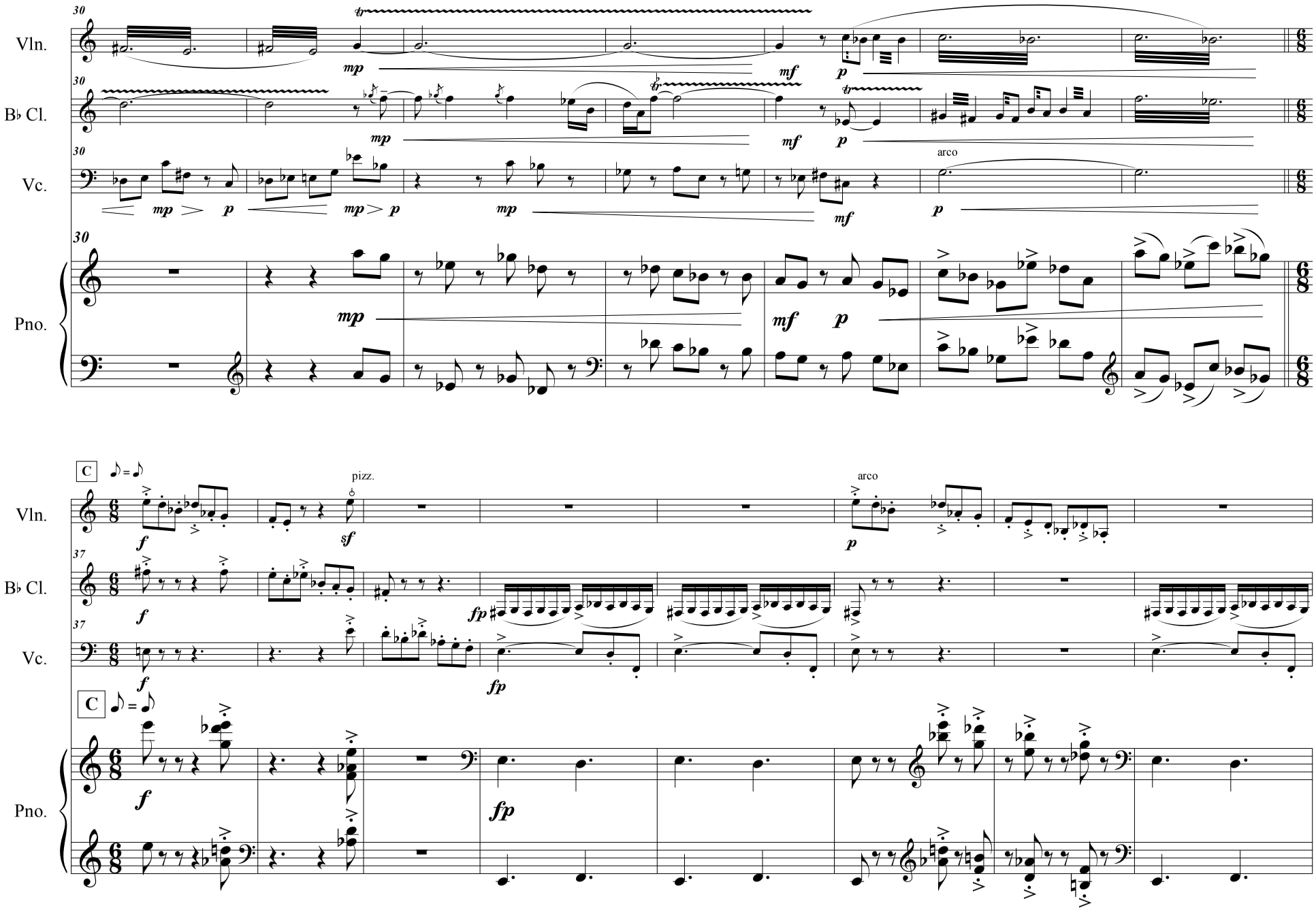
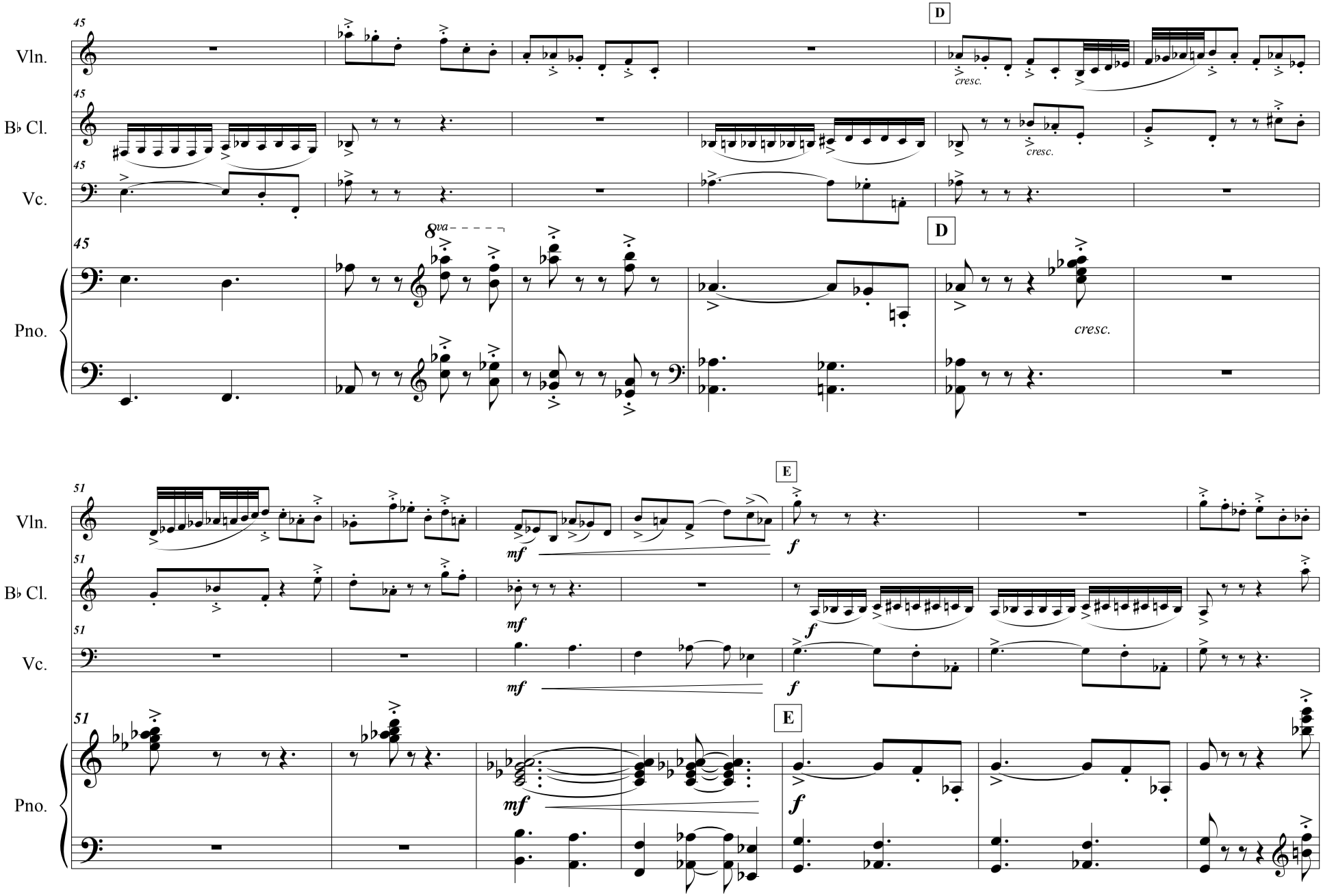
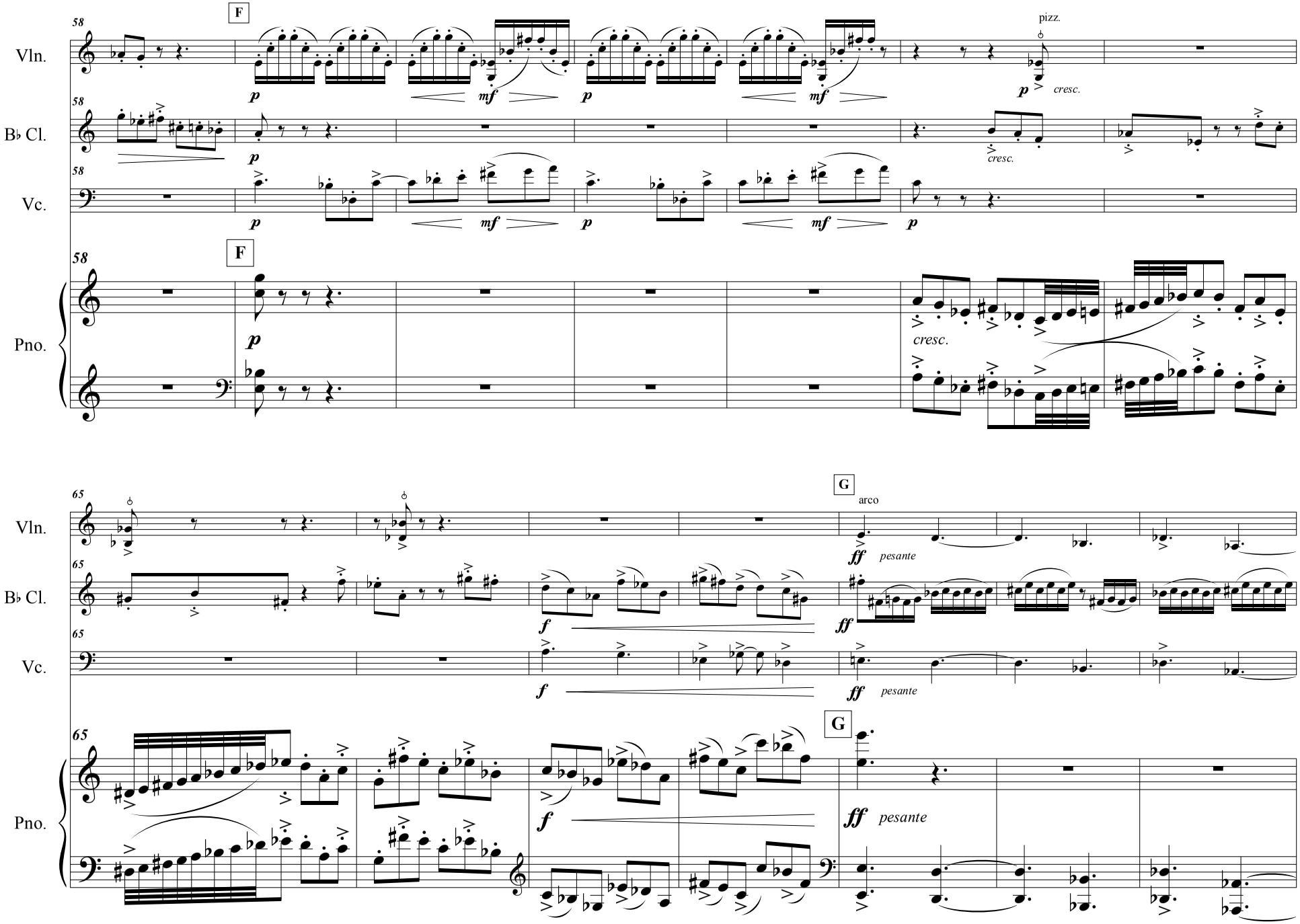
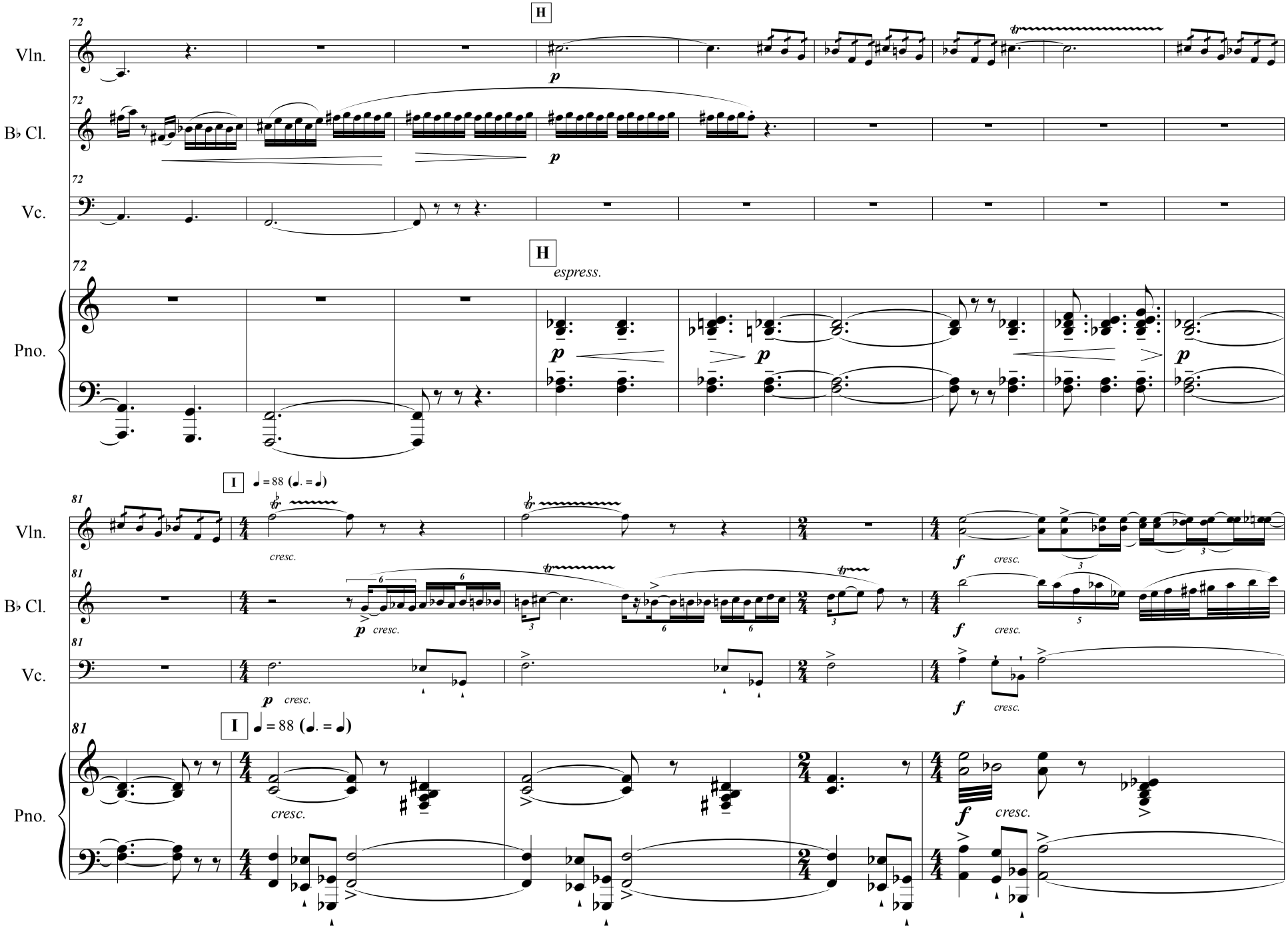
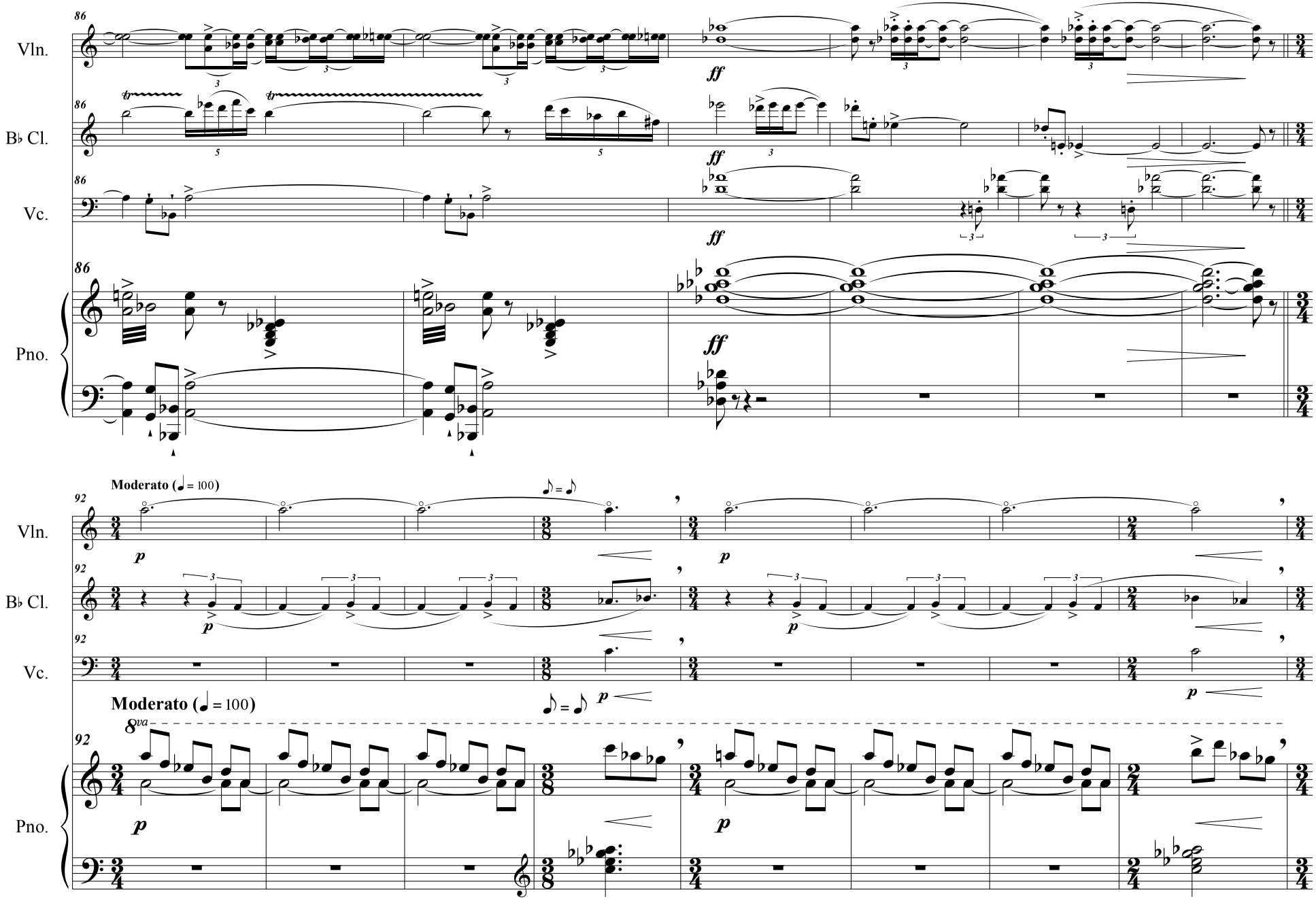

Tempo I
Vln.
B♭ Cl.
Vc.
Pno.
B
espress.
8va
p leggiero
Ped.
Allegro (♩ = c. 132)
pizz.

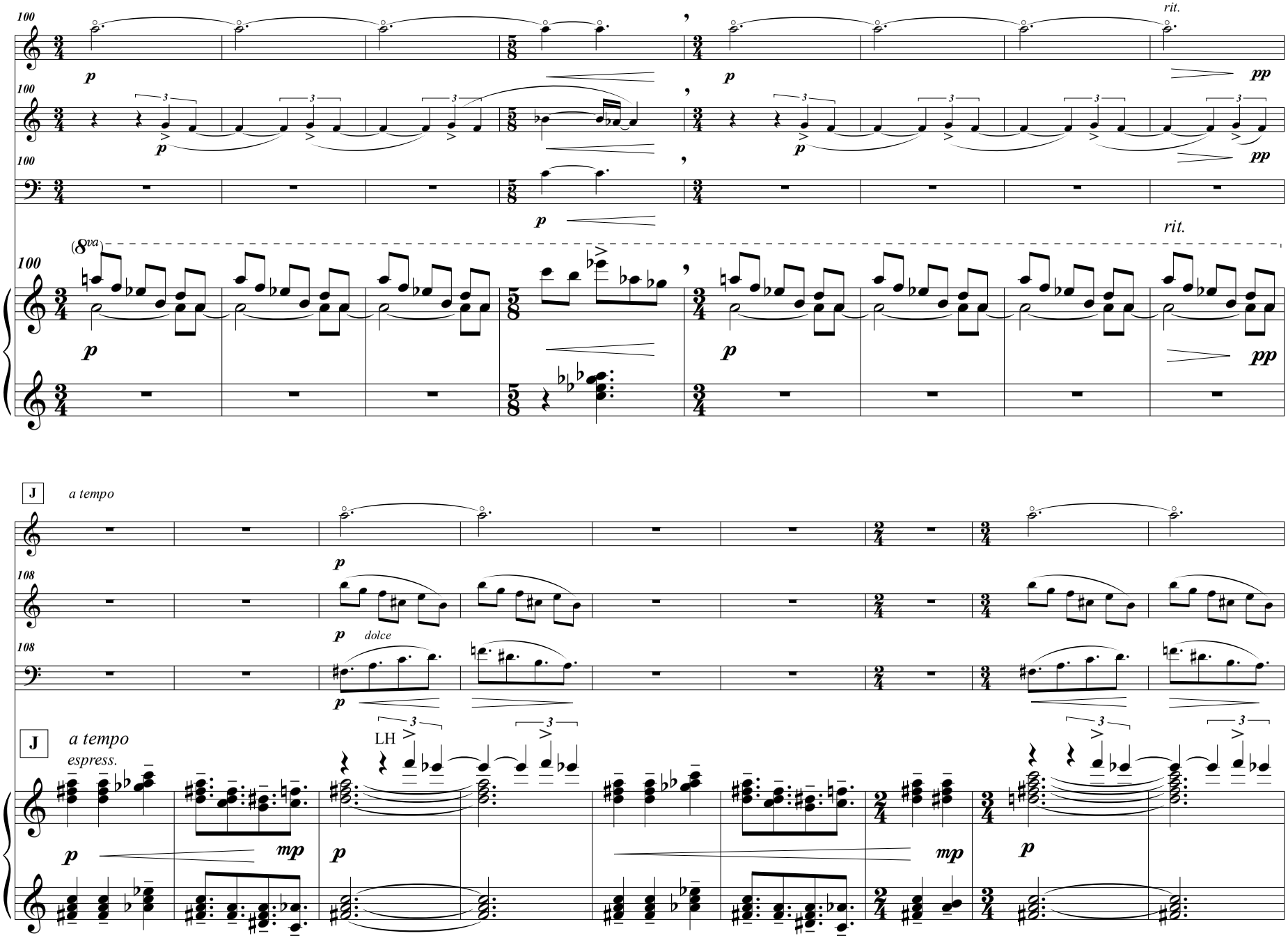

30
Vln.
Bb Cl.
Vc.
Pno.
mp
mf
p
arco
C
pizz.
37
f
sf
fp

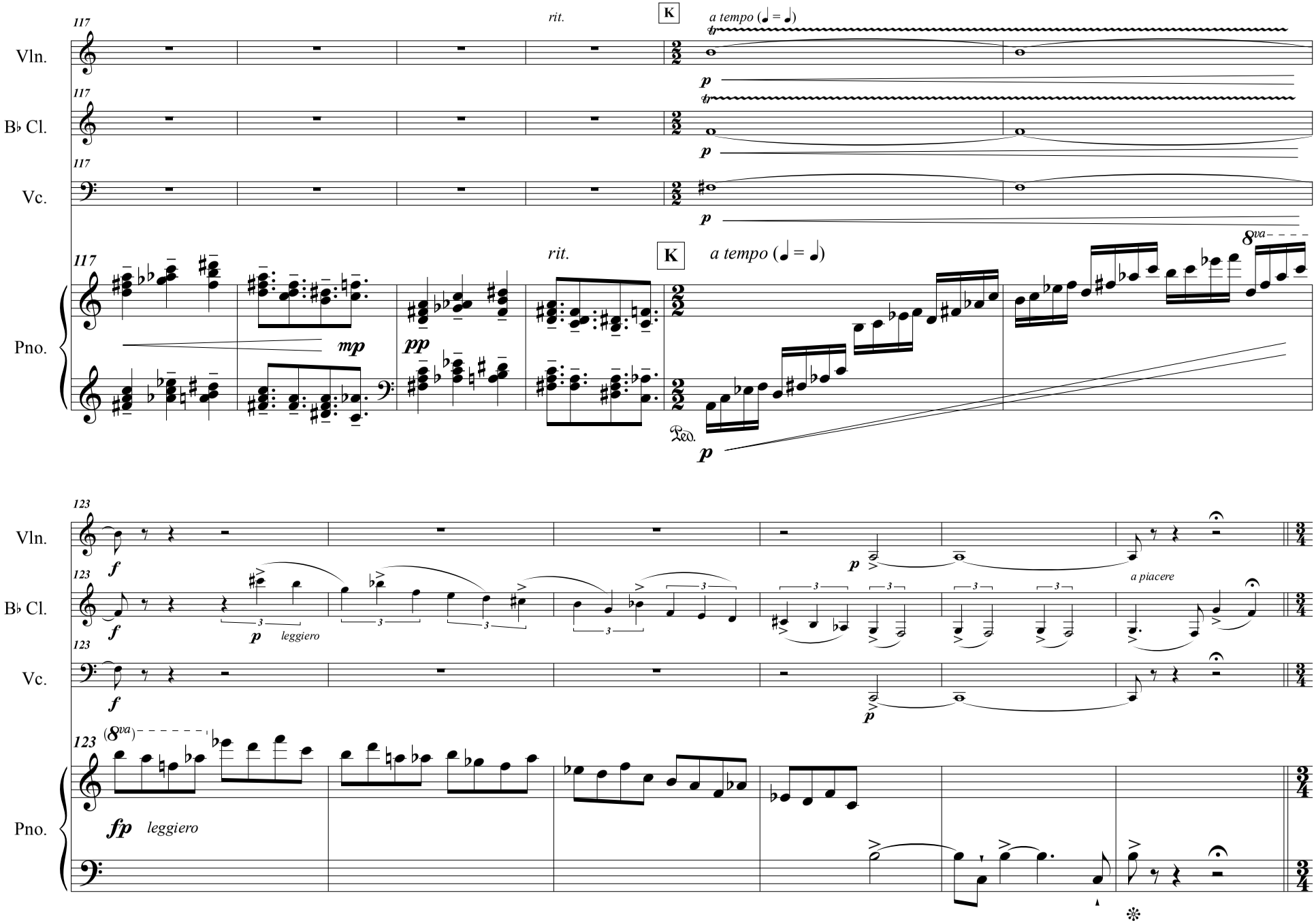

45
Vln.
Bb Cl.
Vc.
Pno.
D
cresc.
8va
51
E
mf
f

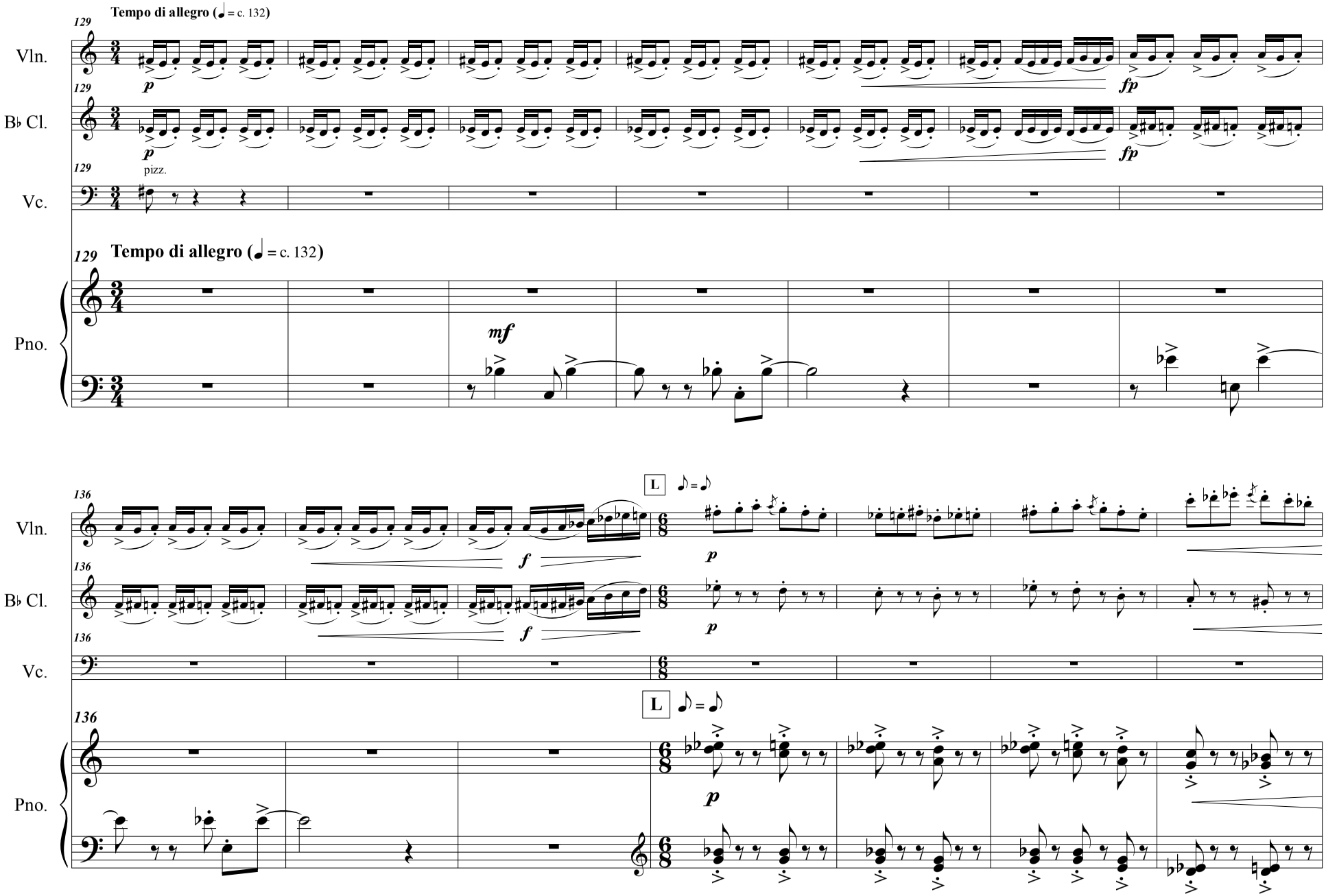

58
F
Vln.
p
mf
p
mf
pizz.
p
cresc.
B♭ Cl.
p
cresc.
Vc.
p
mf
p
mf
p
Pno.
p
cresc.
65
G
arco
Vln.
ff
pesante
B♭ Cl.
f
ff
Vc.
f
ff
pesante
Pno.
f
ff
pesante

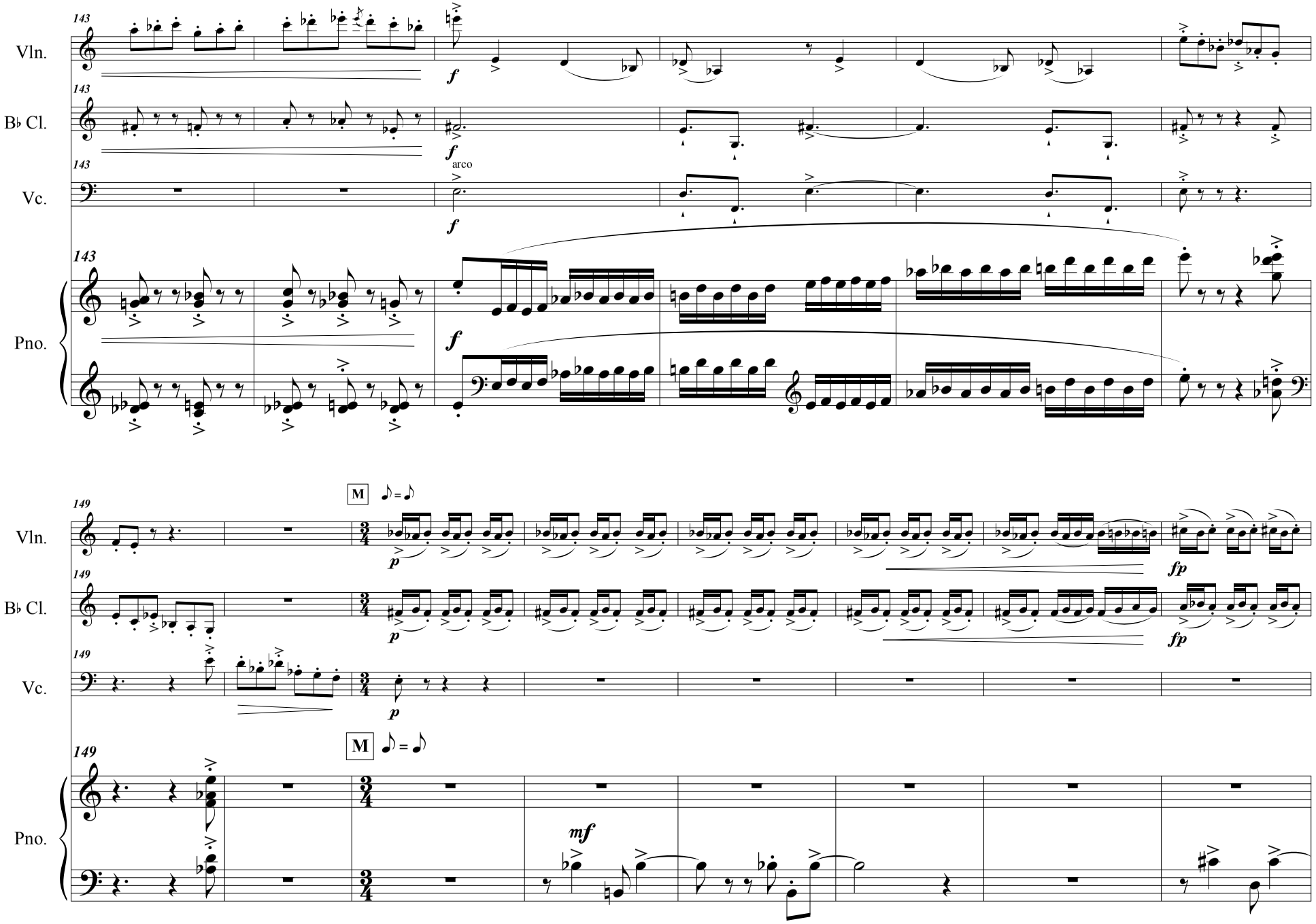

Vln.
B♭ Cl.
Vc.
Pno.
H
p
espress.
I
♩ = 88 (♩. = ♩)
cresc.
f

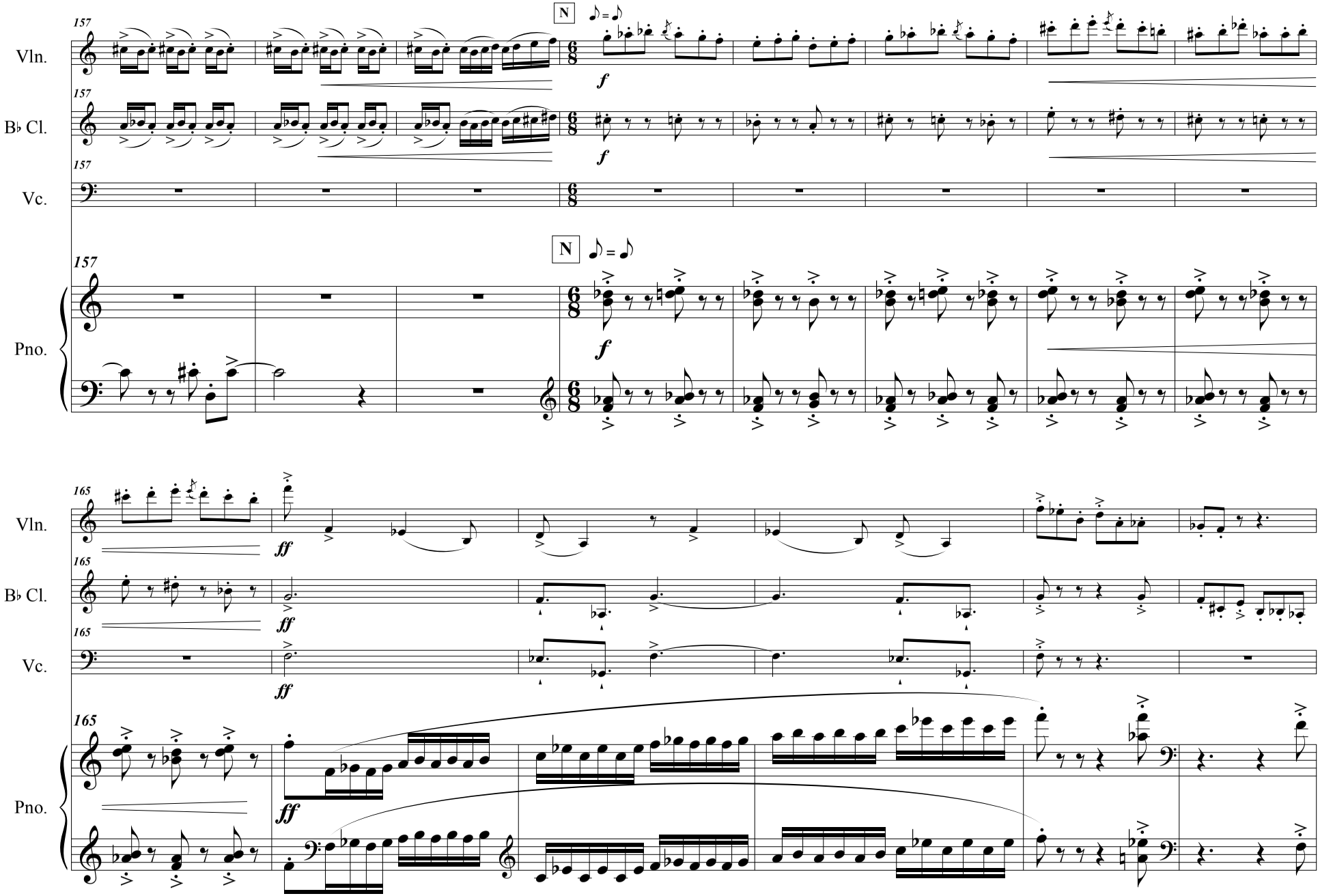

86
Vln.
B♭ Cl.
Vc.
Pno.
ff
92
Moderato (♩ = 100)
p
8va

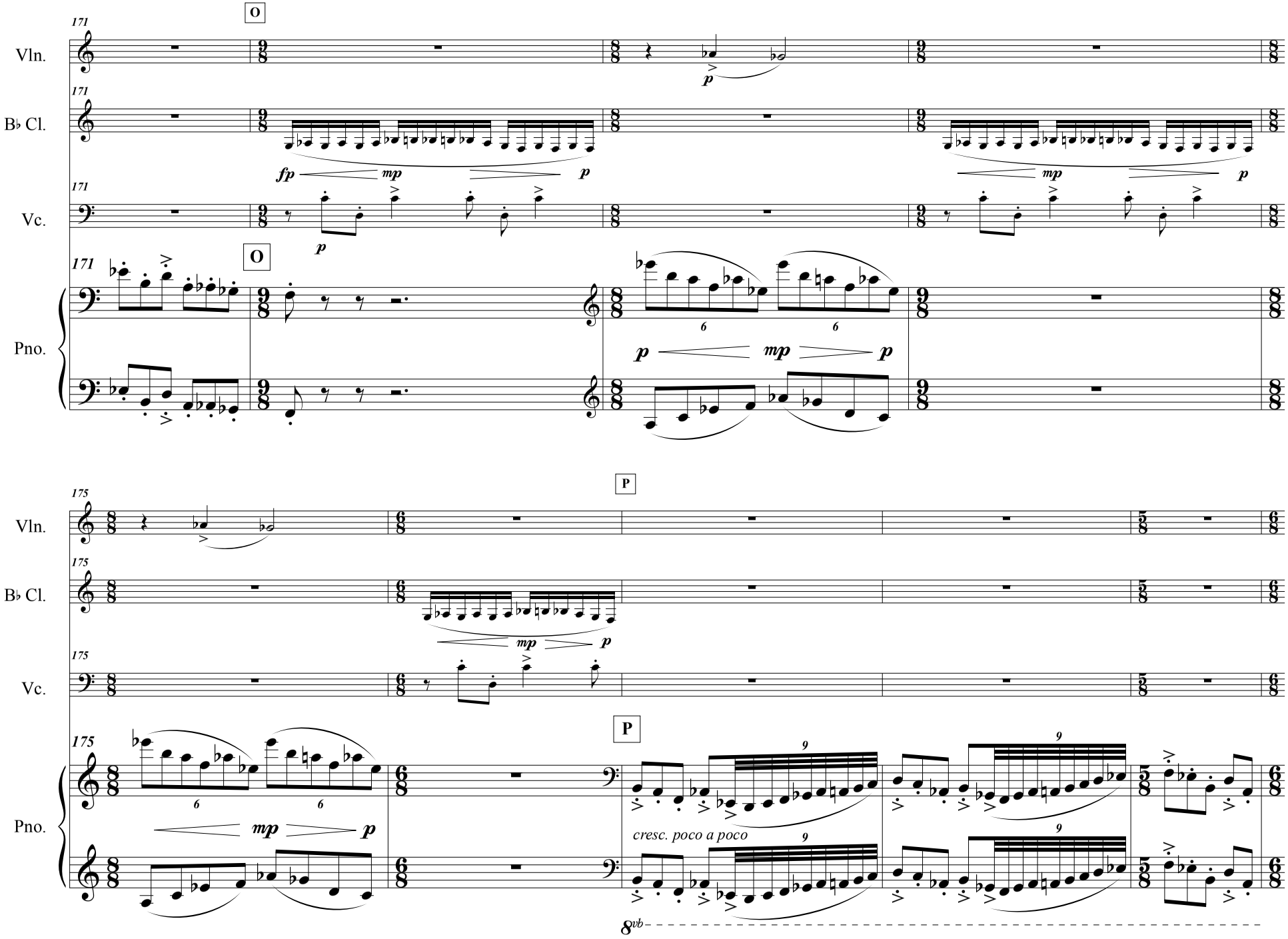

100
Vln.
p
rit.
pp
Bb Cl.
Vc.
(8va)
Pno.
J
a tempo
108
dolce
LH
espress.
mp

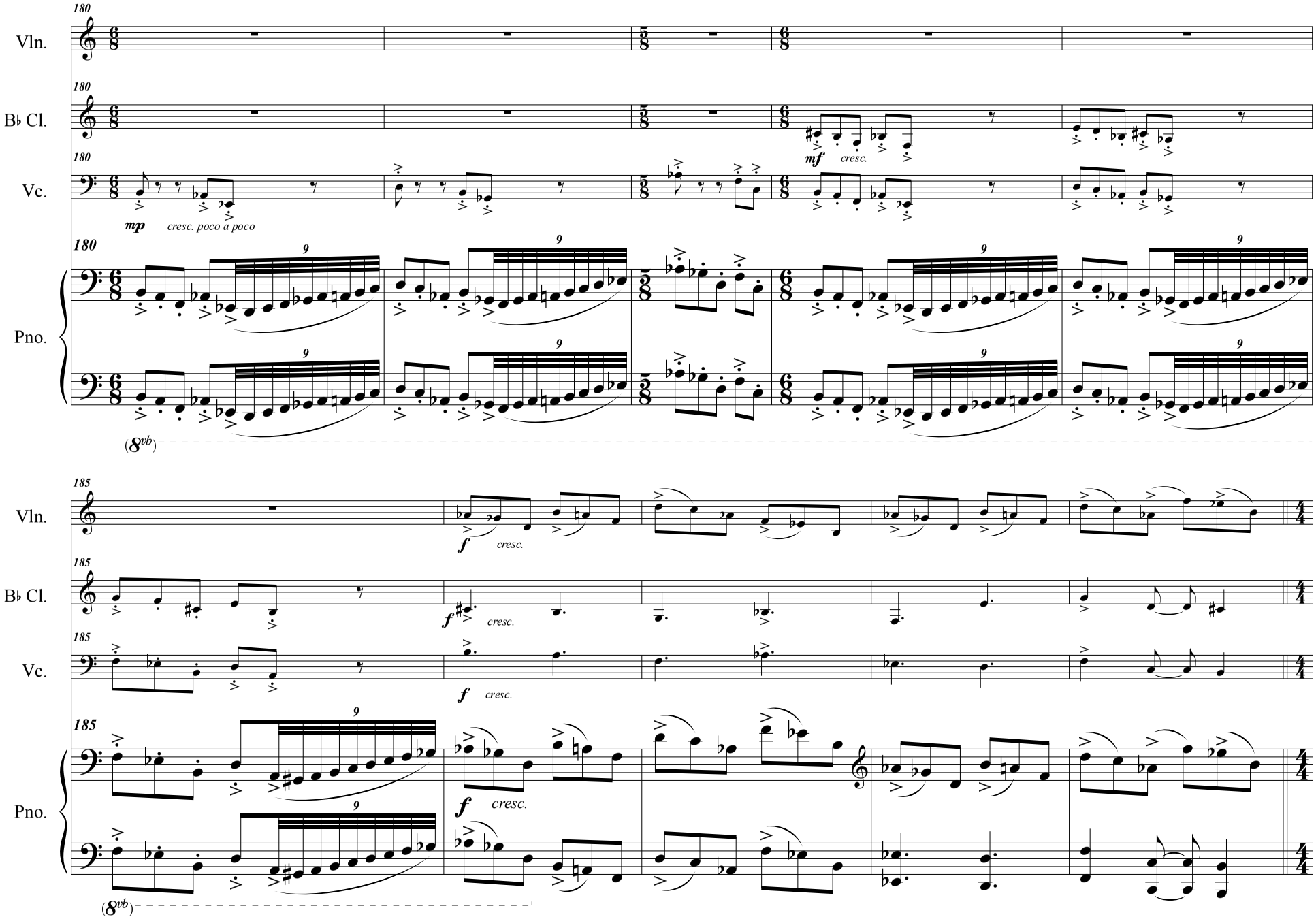

117
Vln.
B♭ Cl.
Vc.
Pno.
rit.
K
a tempo (♩ = ♩)
p
mp
pp
8va
Ped.
123
f
leggiero
a piacere
fp
(8va)

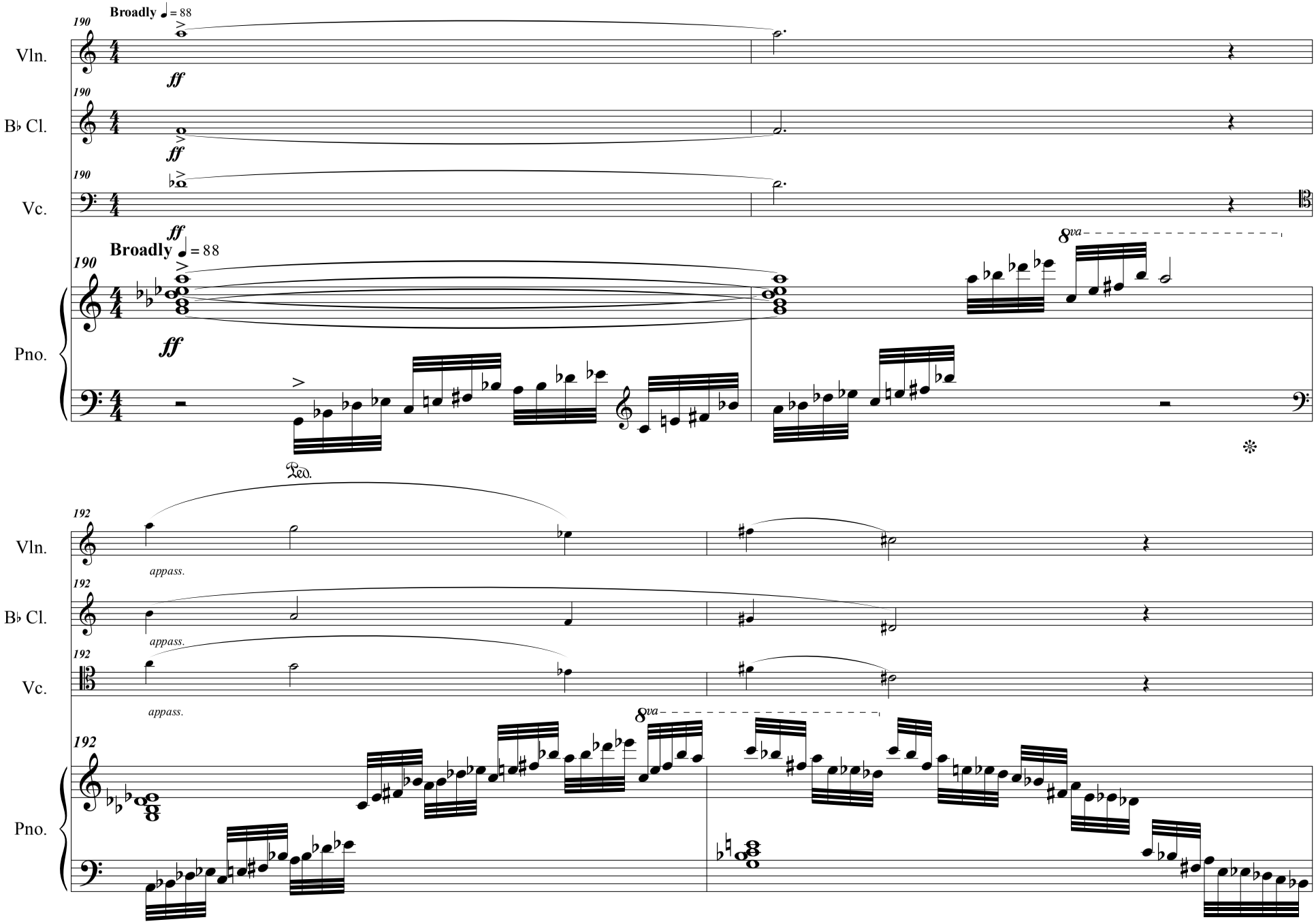

Tempo di allegro (♩ = c. 132)
129
Vln.
p
fp
B♭ Cl.
p
fp
pizz.
Vc.
Tempo di allegro (♩ = c. 132)
Pno.
mf
136
L
♪ = ♪
Vln.
f
p
B♭ Cl.
f
p
Vc.
L
♪ = ♪
Pno.
p

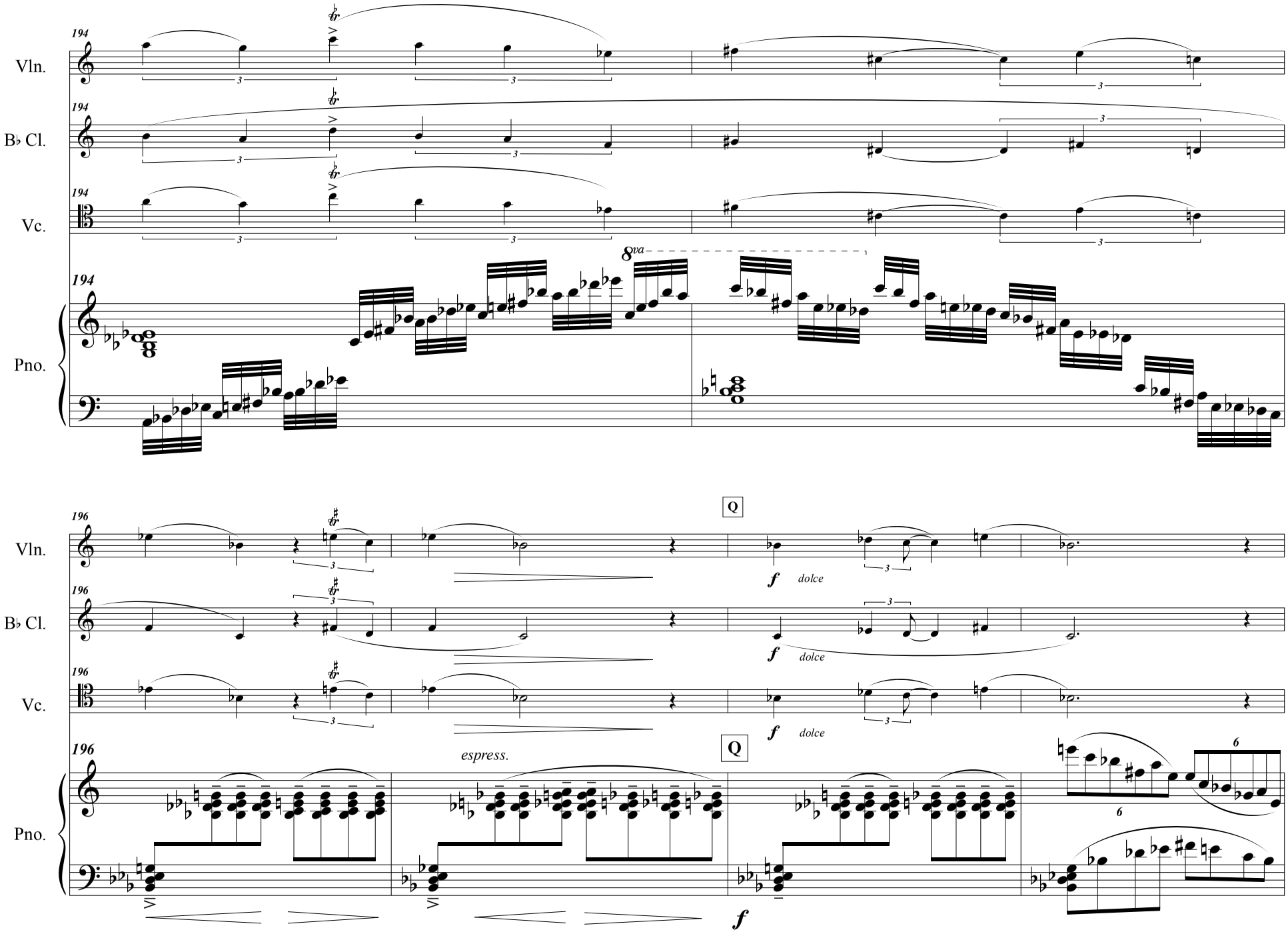

143
Vln.
Bb Cl.
Vc.
Pno.
f
arco
149
M
p
fp
mf

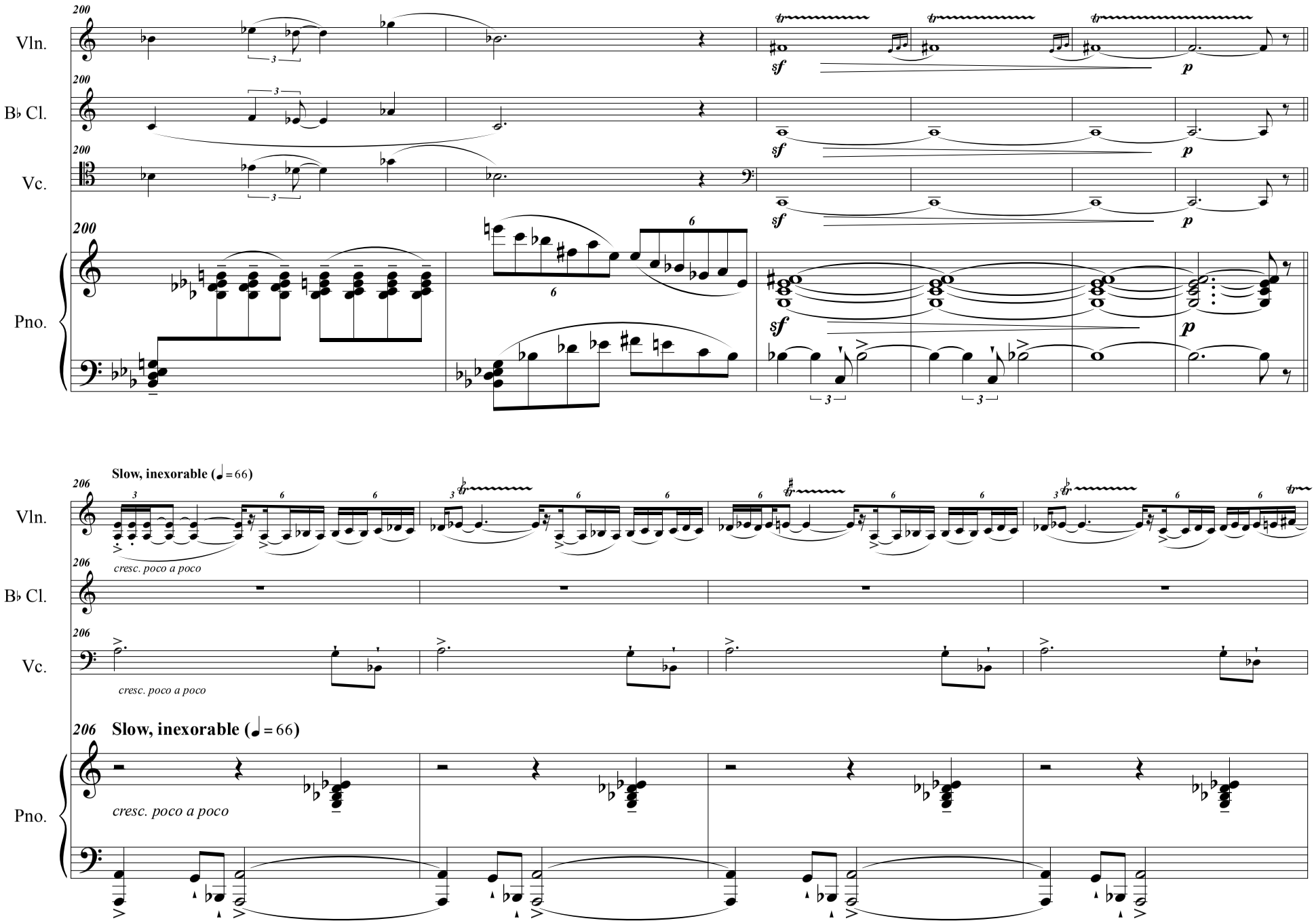

157
Vln.
B♭ Cl.
Vc.
Pno.
N
f
165
ff

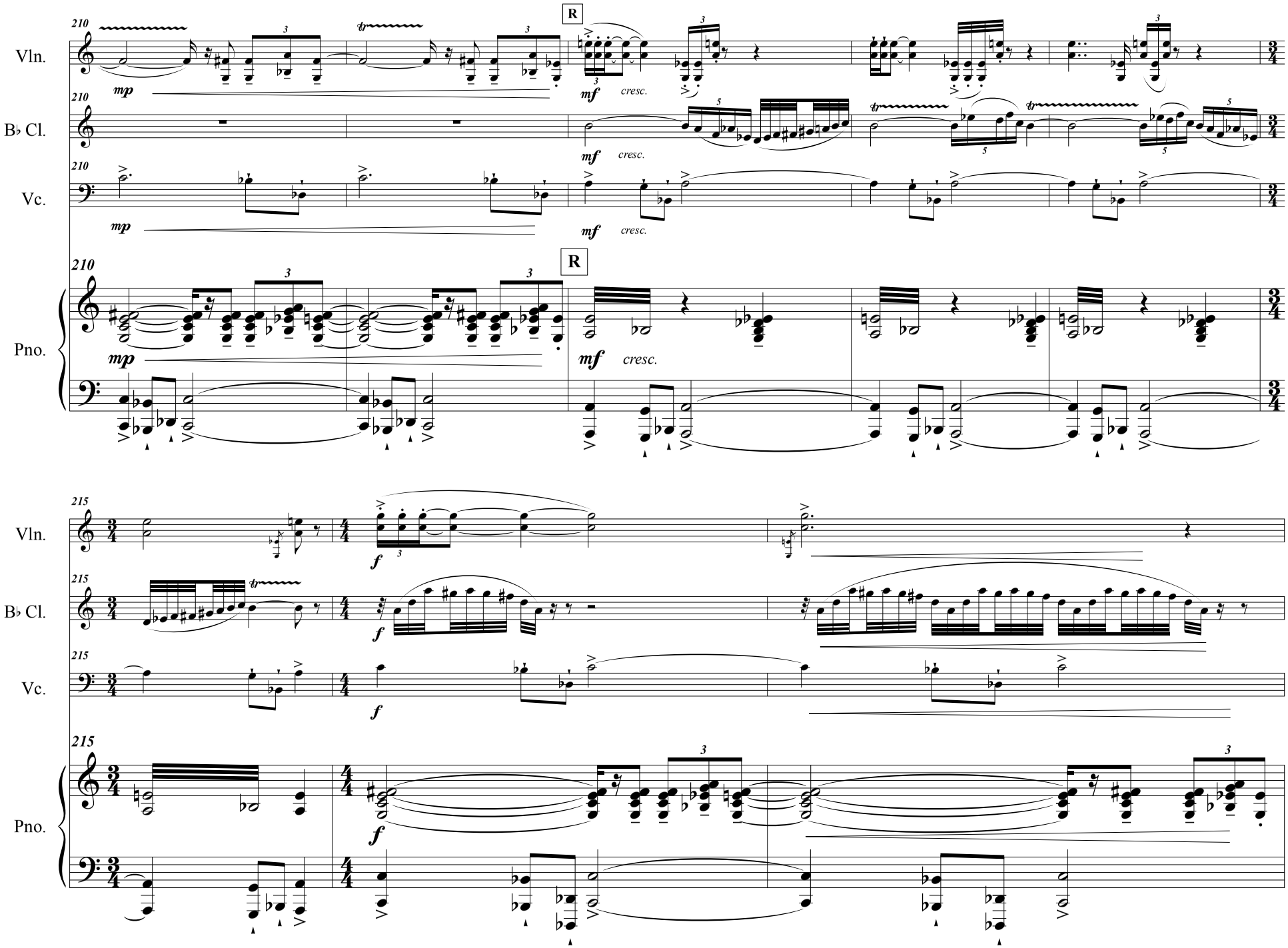

O
171
Vln.
Bb Cl.
Vc.
Pno.
fp
mp
p
P
175
cresc. poco a poco
8vb

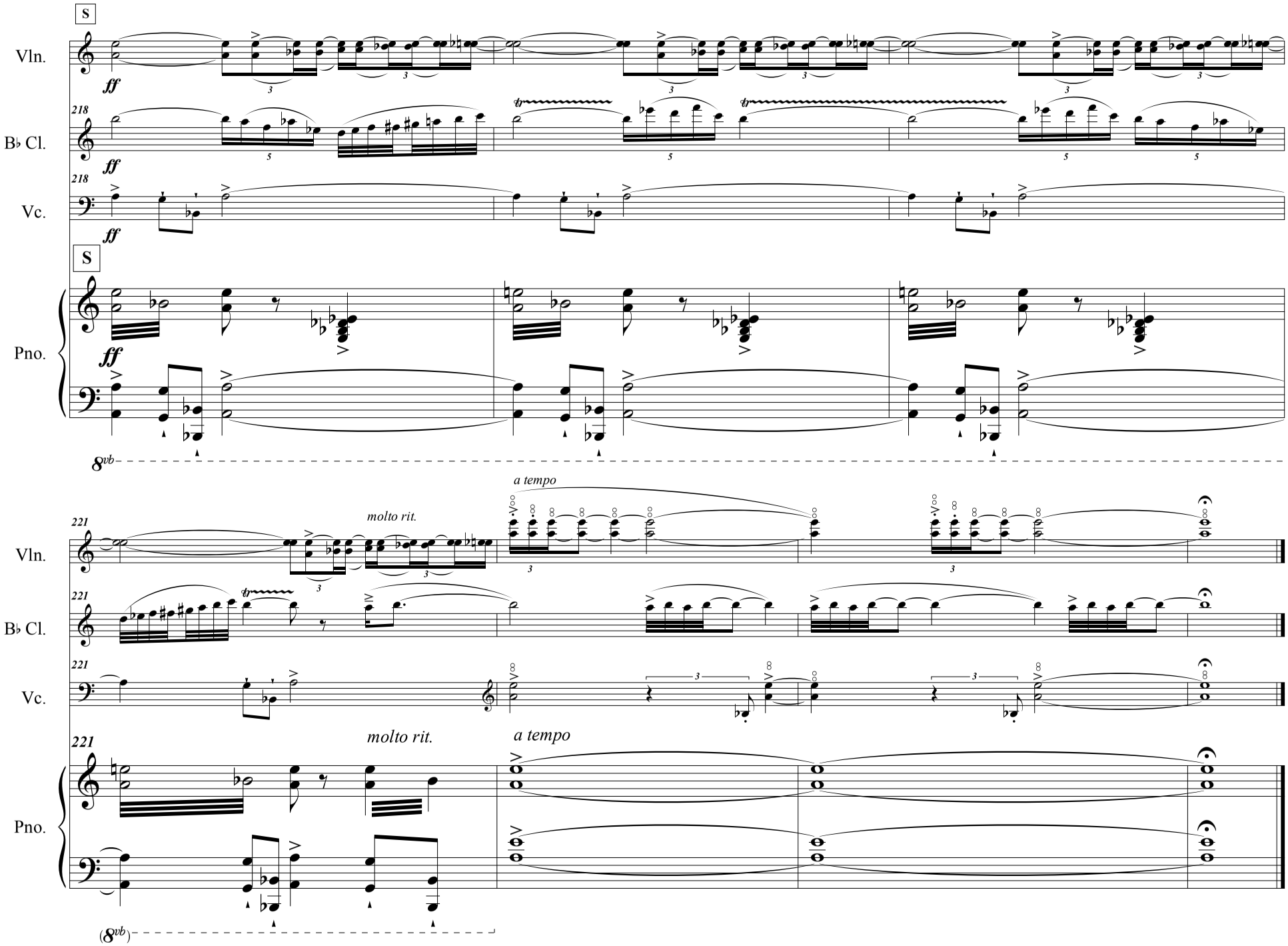

180
Vln.
Bb Cl.
Vc.
Pno.
mp
cresc. poco a poco
mf
cresc.
(8vb)
185
f
cresc.


Broadly ♩ = 88
190
Vln.
ff
Bb Cl.
Vc.
Pno.
8va
Ped.
192
appass.


194
Vln.
B♭ Cl.
Vc.
Pno.
8va
196
Q
f
dolce
espress.


Vln.
B♭ Cl.
Vc.
Pno.
200
206
Slow, inexorable (♩ = 66)
cresc. poco a poco


210
Vln.
mp
R
mf
cresc.
B♭ Cl.
Vc.
Pno.
215
f


S
Vln.
ff
218
B♭ Cl.
ff
218
Vc.
ff
S
Pno.
ff
8vb
221
Vln.
molto rit.
a tempo
221
B♭ Cl.
221
Vc.
221
molto rit.
a tempo
Pno.
(8vb)