John Adams

SHAKER LOOPS

SHAKER LOOPS was composed in the fall of 1978 and first performed on 8 December of that year by members of the San Francisco Conservatory New Music Ensemble, conducted by the composer. Originally written for string septet, the work can also be played by string orchestra. The score exists in two versions, both published by Associated Music Publishers. The original modular version leaves several aspects of the work's repetitive scheme up to the performers. In the present version, which is, in effect, one of many possible realizations of the modular version, all repeats are written out. This "through-composed" version should be used when a full string orchestra is employed.

Although being in its own way an example of "continuous music," SHAKER LOOPS differs from most other works of its kind because it sees so much change within a relatively short amount of time. Also it avoids the formal and temporal purity of much "minimal" music by not adhering to a single unbending tempo throughout. This less severe approach allows a freer movement from one level of energy to another, making a more dramatic experience of the form.

The "loops" are melodic material assigned to the seven instruments, each of a different length and which, when heard together, result in a constantly shifting play among the parts. Thus, while one instrument might have a melody with a period of seven beats, another will be playing one with eleven while yet another will repeat its figure every thirteen beats, and so on. (This is most easily perceived if one counts the beats between the various plucked notes in Hymning Slews.)

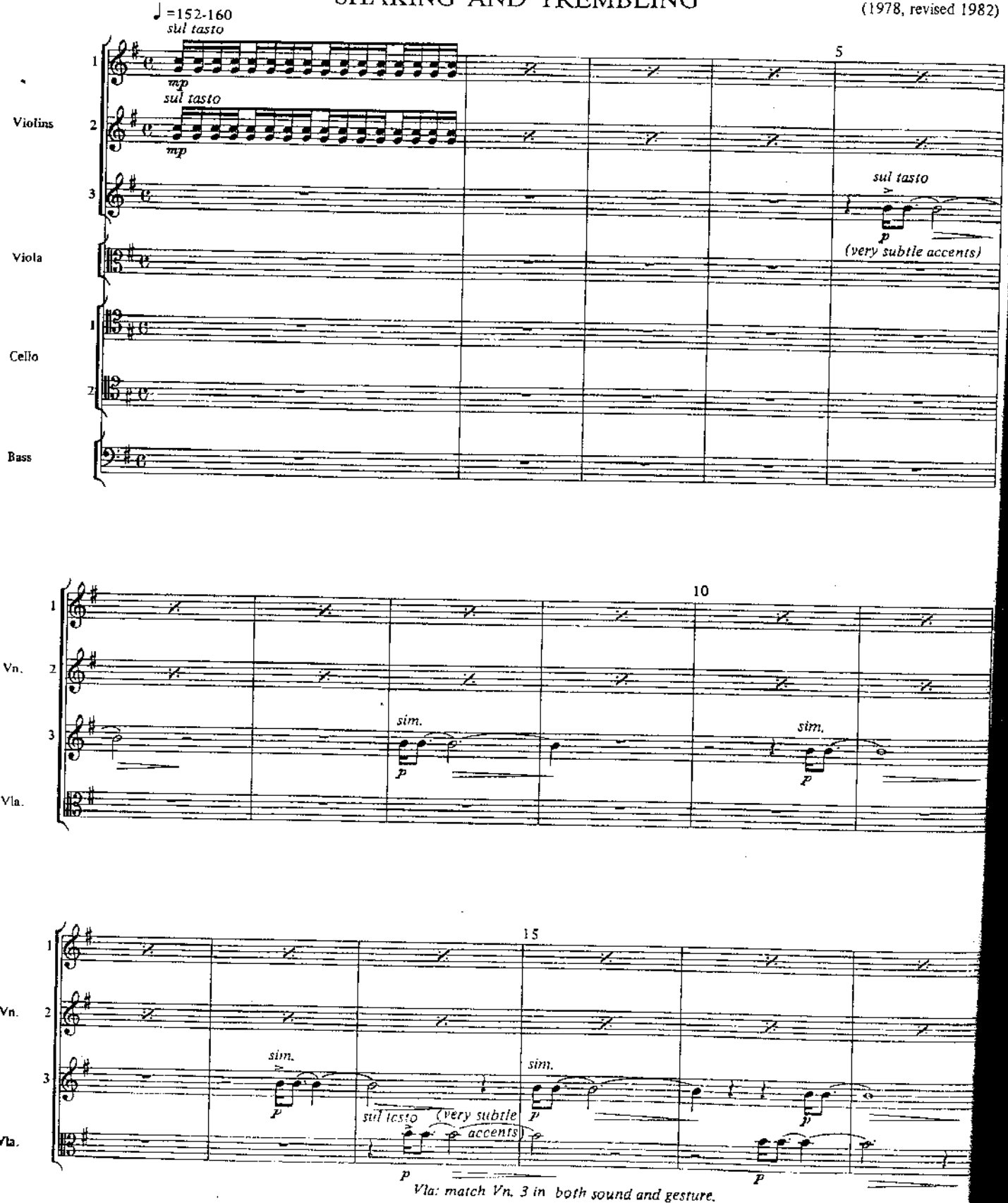
The four sections, although they meld together evenly, are really quite distinct, each being characterized by a particular style of string playing. The outside movements are devoted to "shaking," the fast, tightly rhythmicized motion of the bow across the strings. The "slews" of Part II are slow, languid glissandi heard floating within an almost motionless pool of stationary sound (played *senza vibrato*). Part III is essentially melodic, with the cellos playing long, lyrical lines (which are nevertheless loops themselves) against a background of muted violins, an activity that gradually takes on speed and mass until it culminates in the wild push-pull section that is the emotional high point of the piece. The floating harmonics, a kind of disembodied ghost of the push-pull figures in Part III, signal the start of Part IV, a final dance of the bows across the strings that concludes with the four upper voices lightly rocking away on the natural overtones of their strings while the cellos and bass provide a quiet pedal point beneath.

—John Adams

SHAKER LOOPS

PART I
SHAKING AND TREMBLING

John Adams
(1978, revised 1982)



Vla: match Vn. 3 in both sound and gesture.

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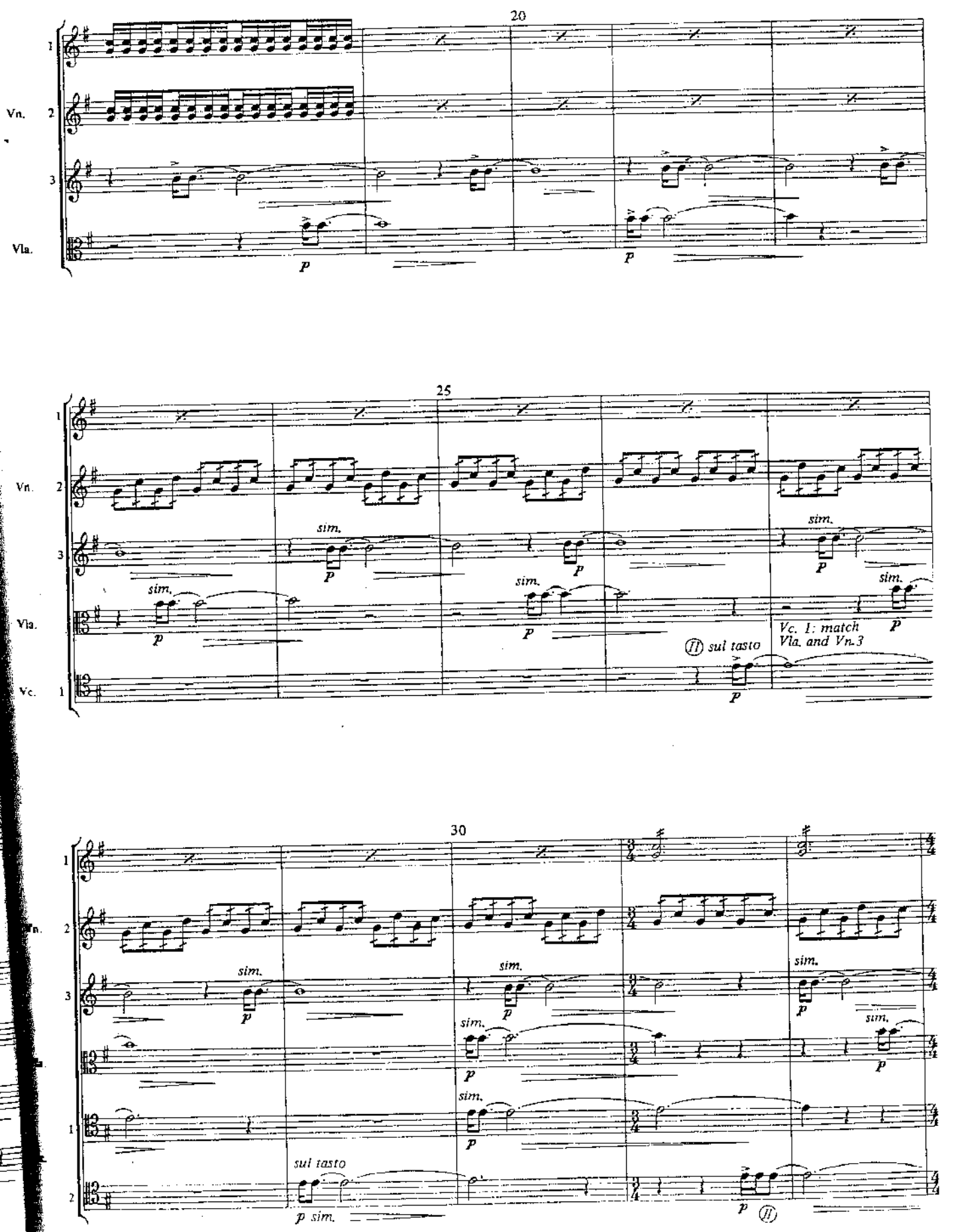
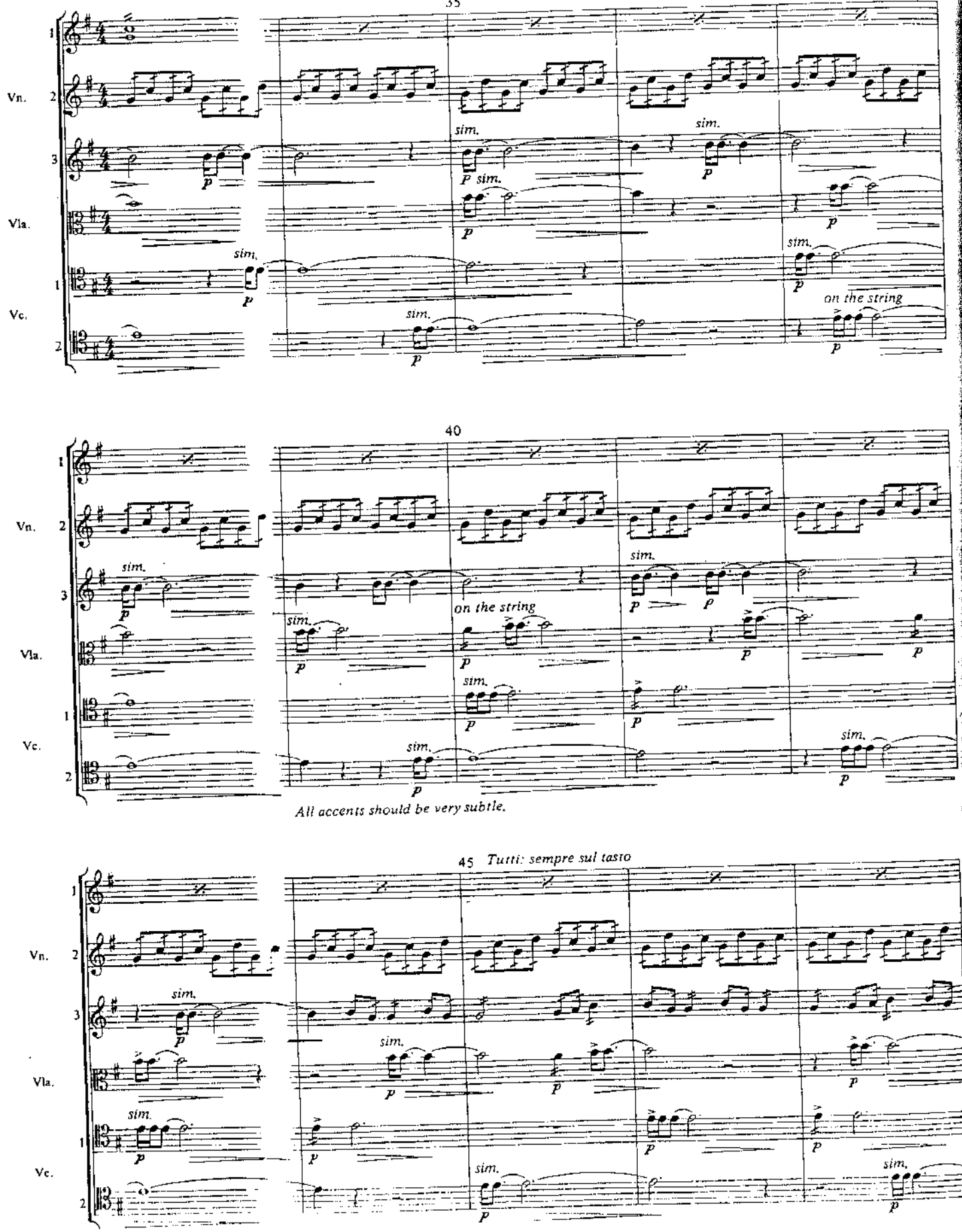
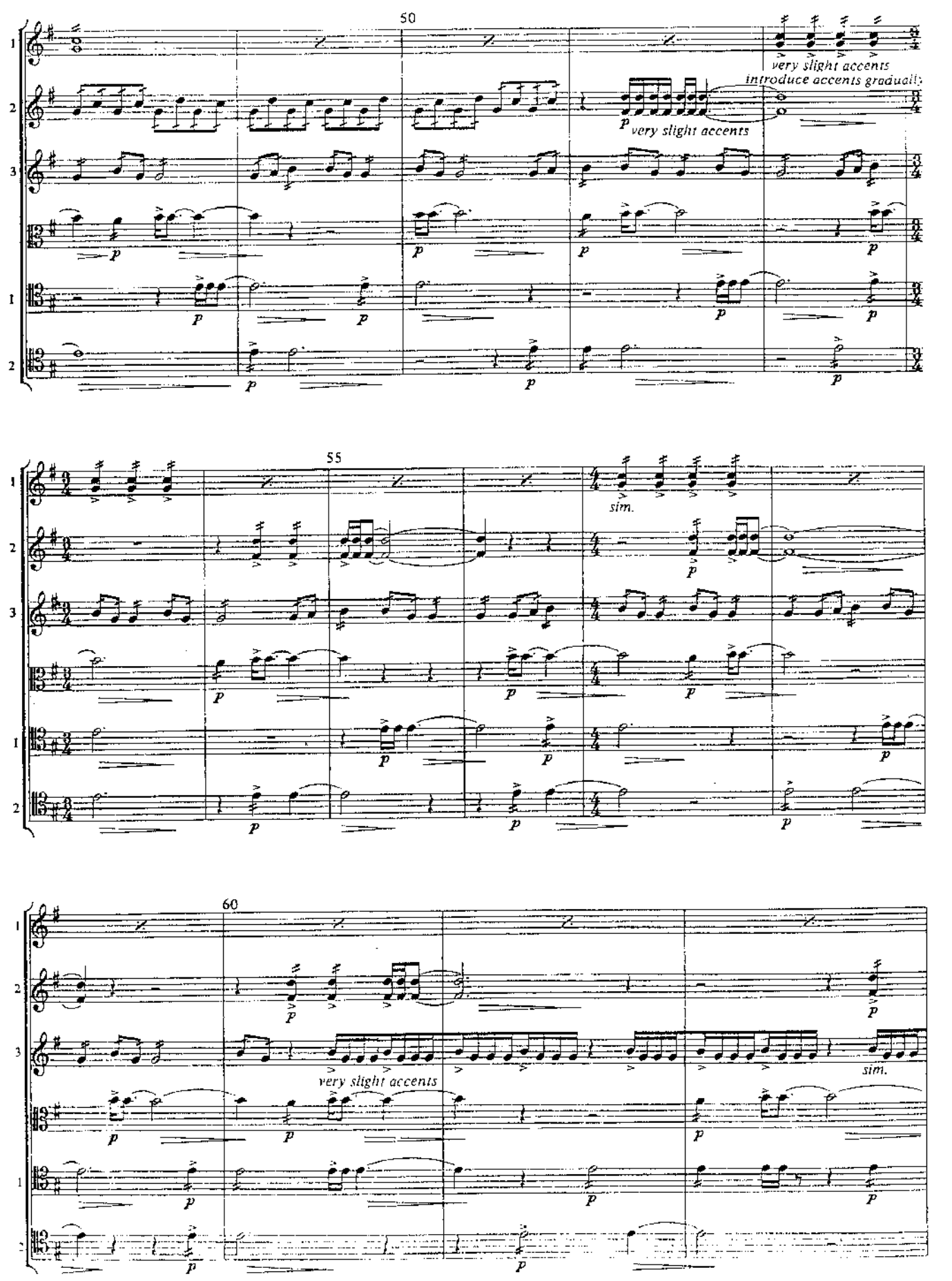
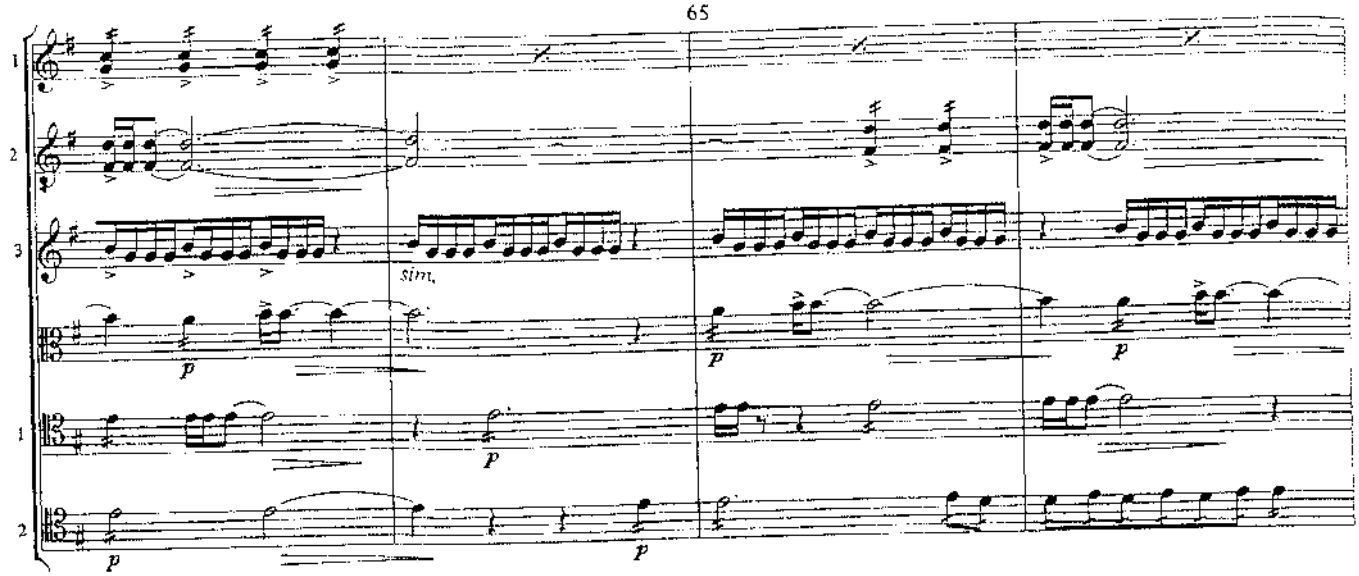
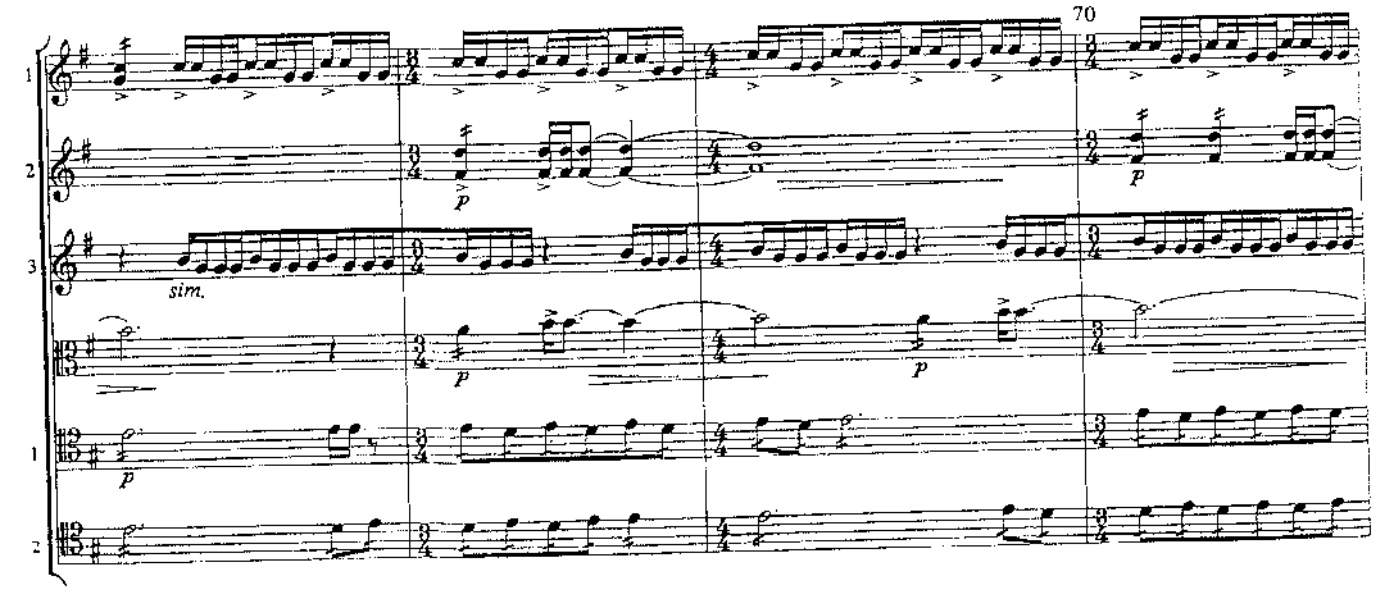
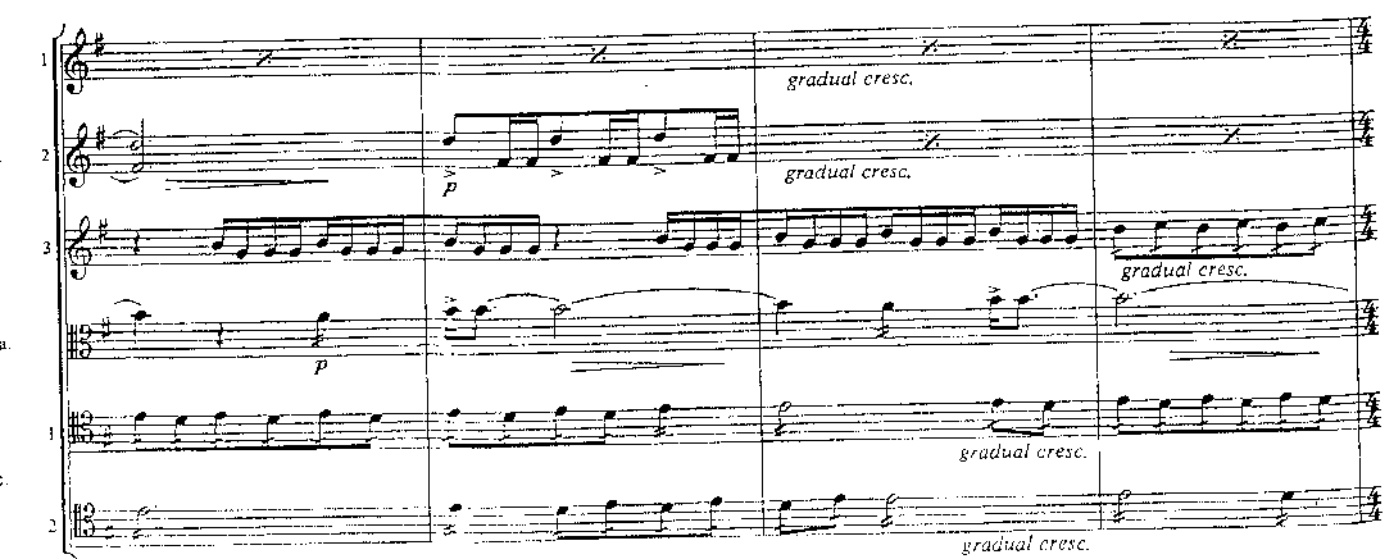

20
Vn. 1
2
3
Vla.
p
p
25
Vn. 1
2
3
Vla.
Vc. 1
sim.
p
sim.
p
sim.
p
sim.
p
sim.
p
sim.
p
(II) sul tasto
p
Vc. 1: match
Vla. and Vn.3
30
1
2
3
1
2
sim.
p
sim.
p
sim.
p
sim.
p
sim.
p
sim.
p
sul tasto
p sim.
p
(II)

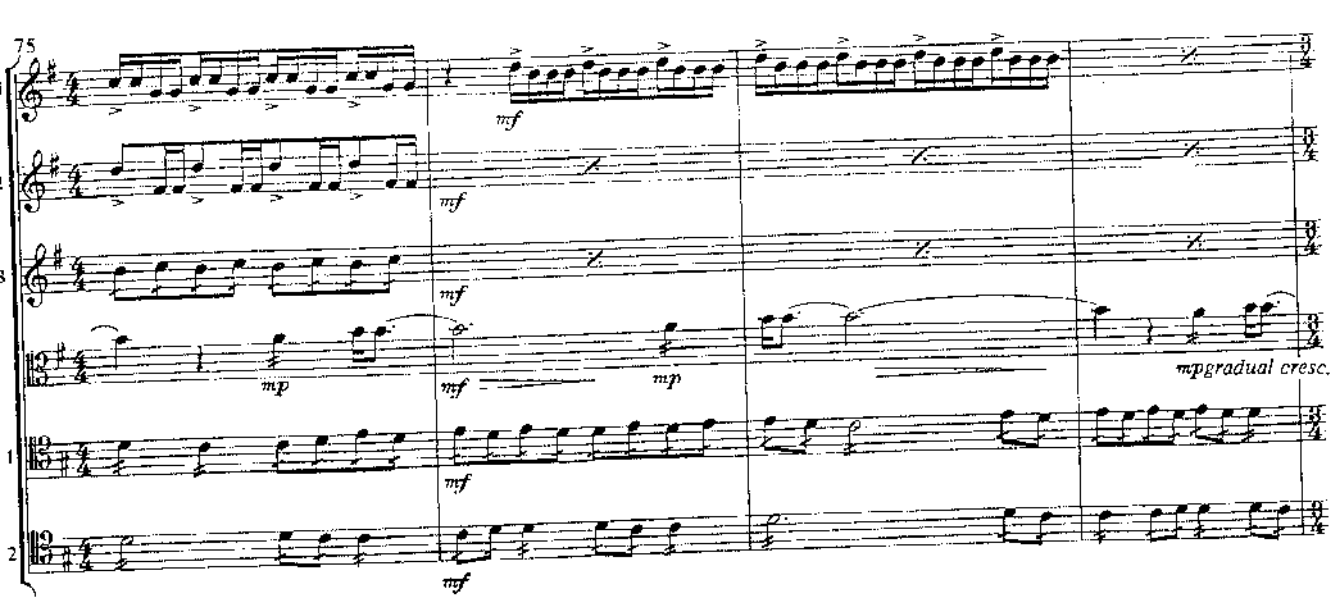

35
Vn.
Vla.
Vc.
sim.
p
on the string
40
All accents should be very subtle.
45 Tutti: sempre sul tasto

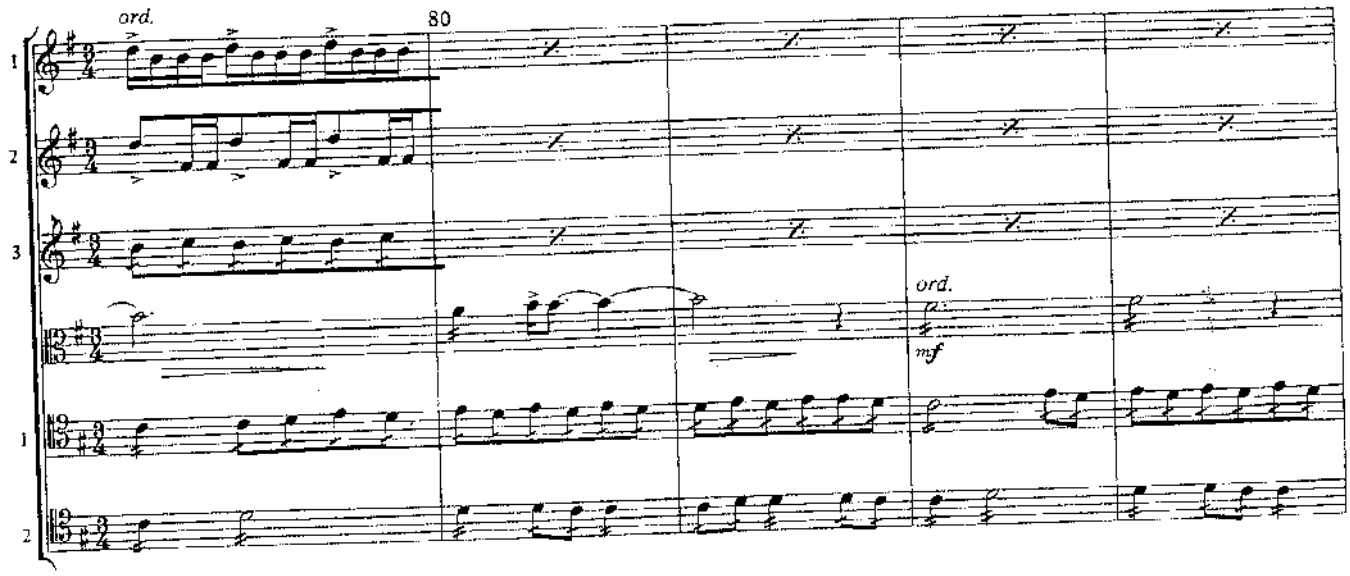

50
very slight accents
introduce accents gradually
very slight accents
55
sim.
60
very slight accents
sim.

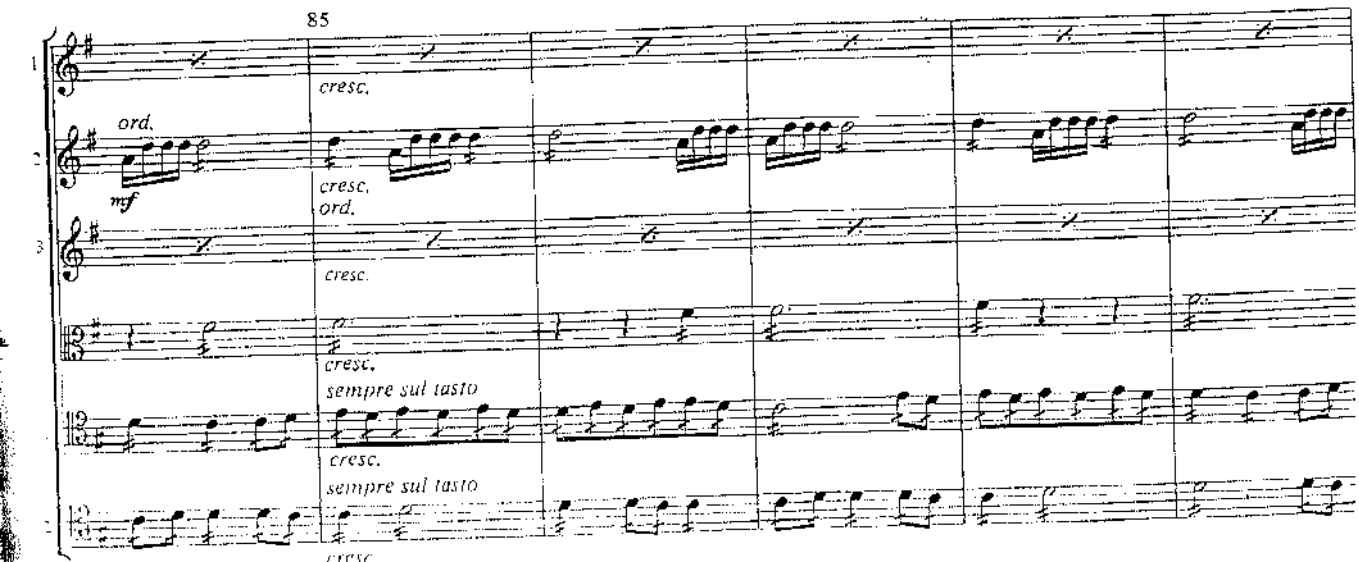

sim.
p
p
p
p
p
p

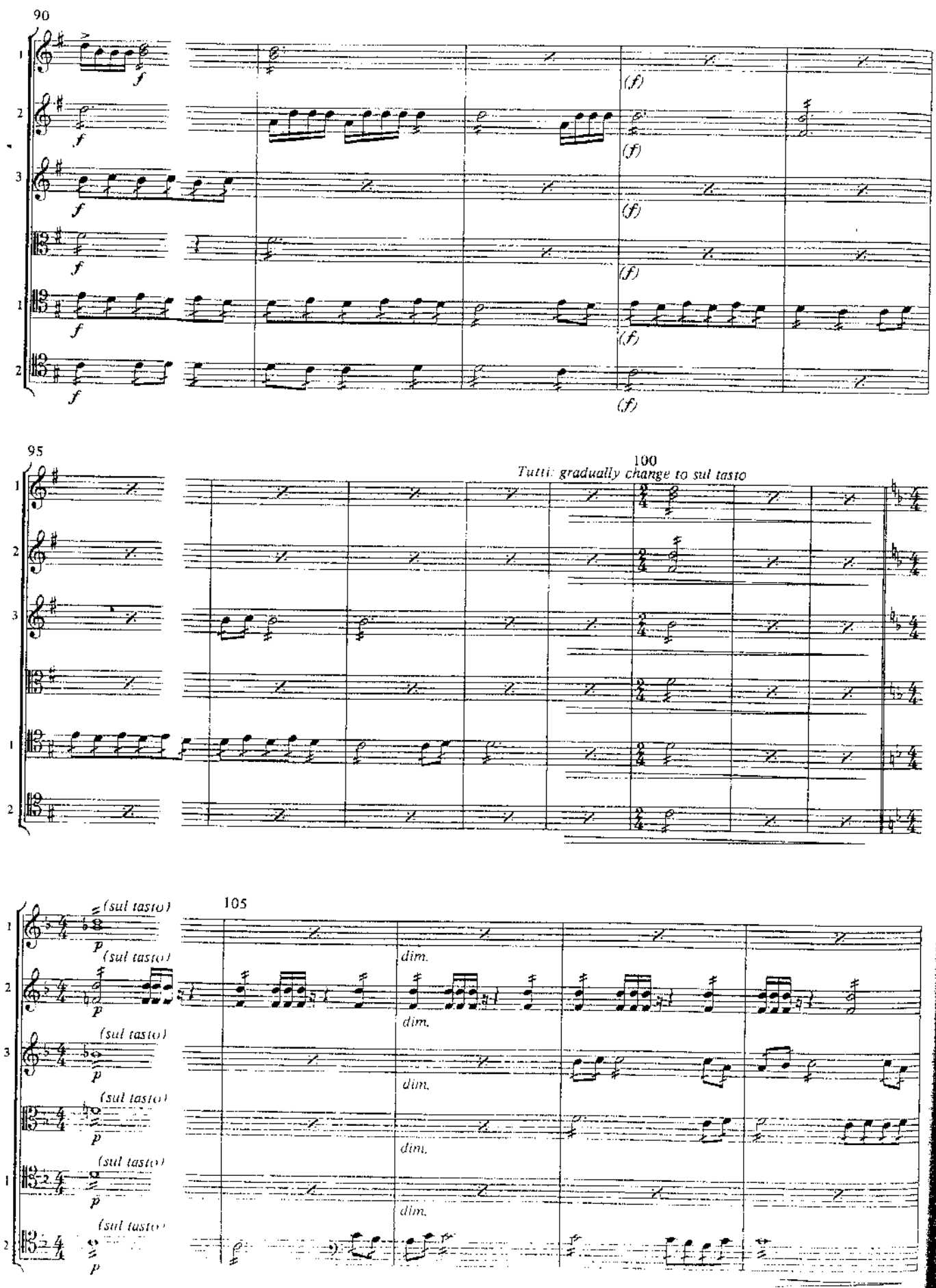

70
sim.
p
p
p
p
p

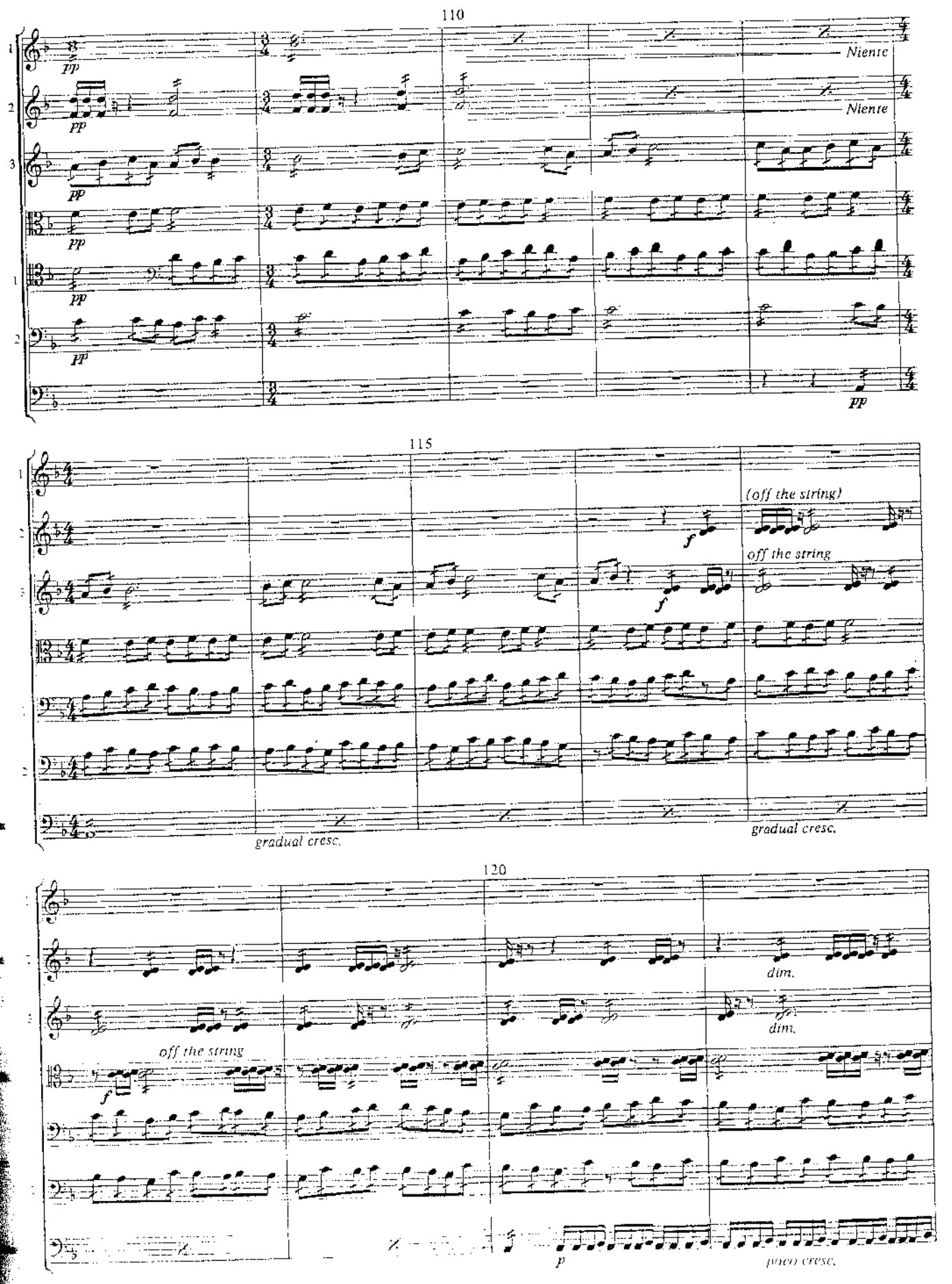

gradual cresc.
gradual cresc.
gradual cresc.
gradual cresc.
gradual cresc.
p
p

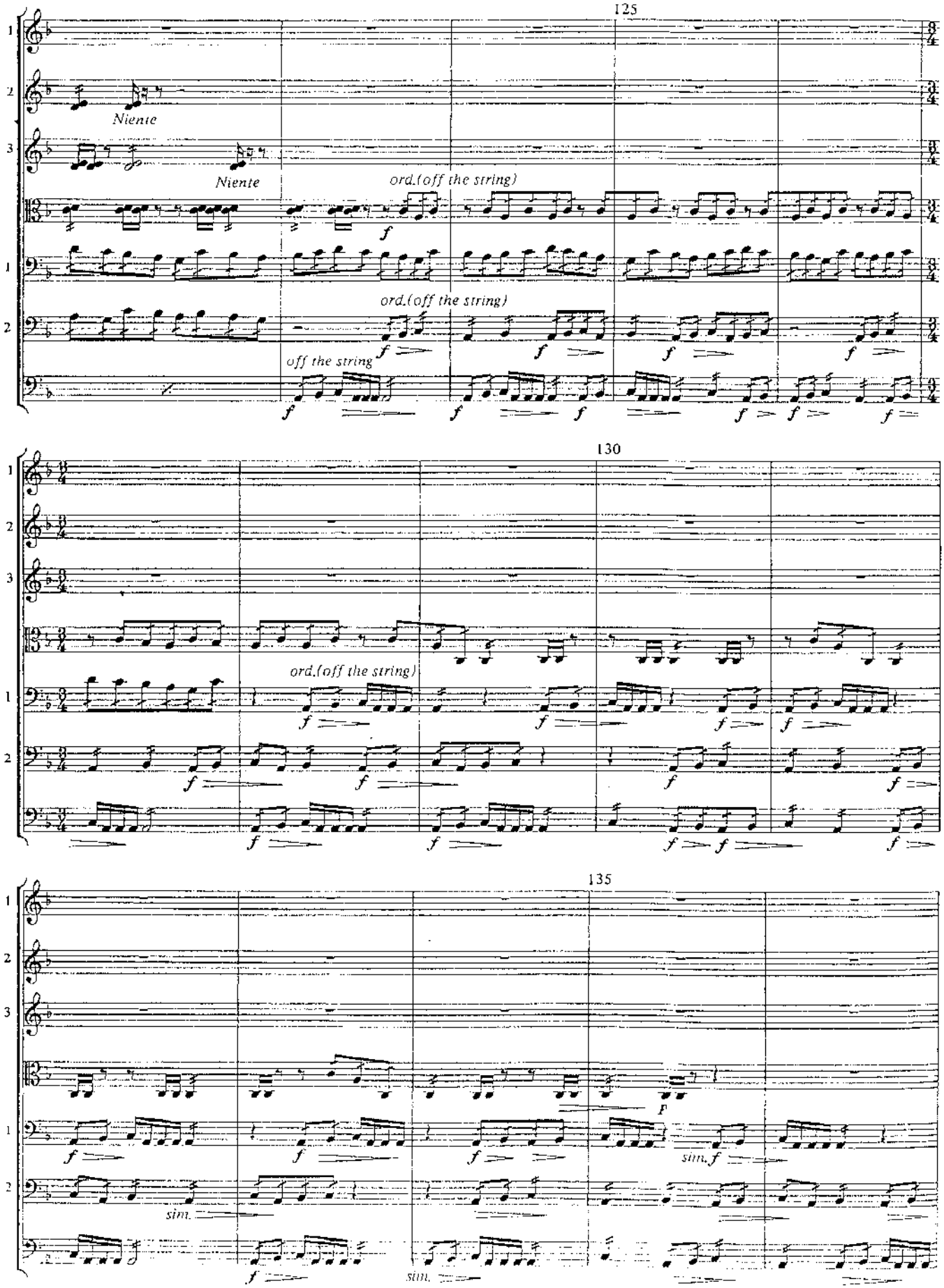

75
mf
mf
mf
mp
mf
mp
mpgradual cresc.
mf
mf

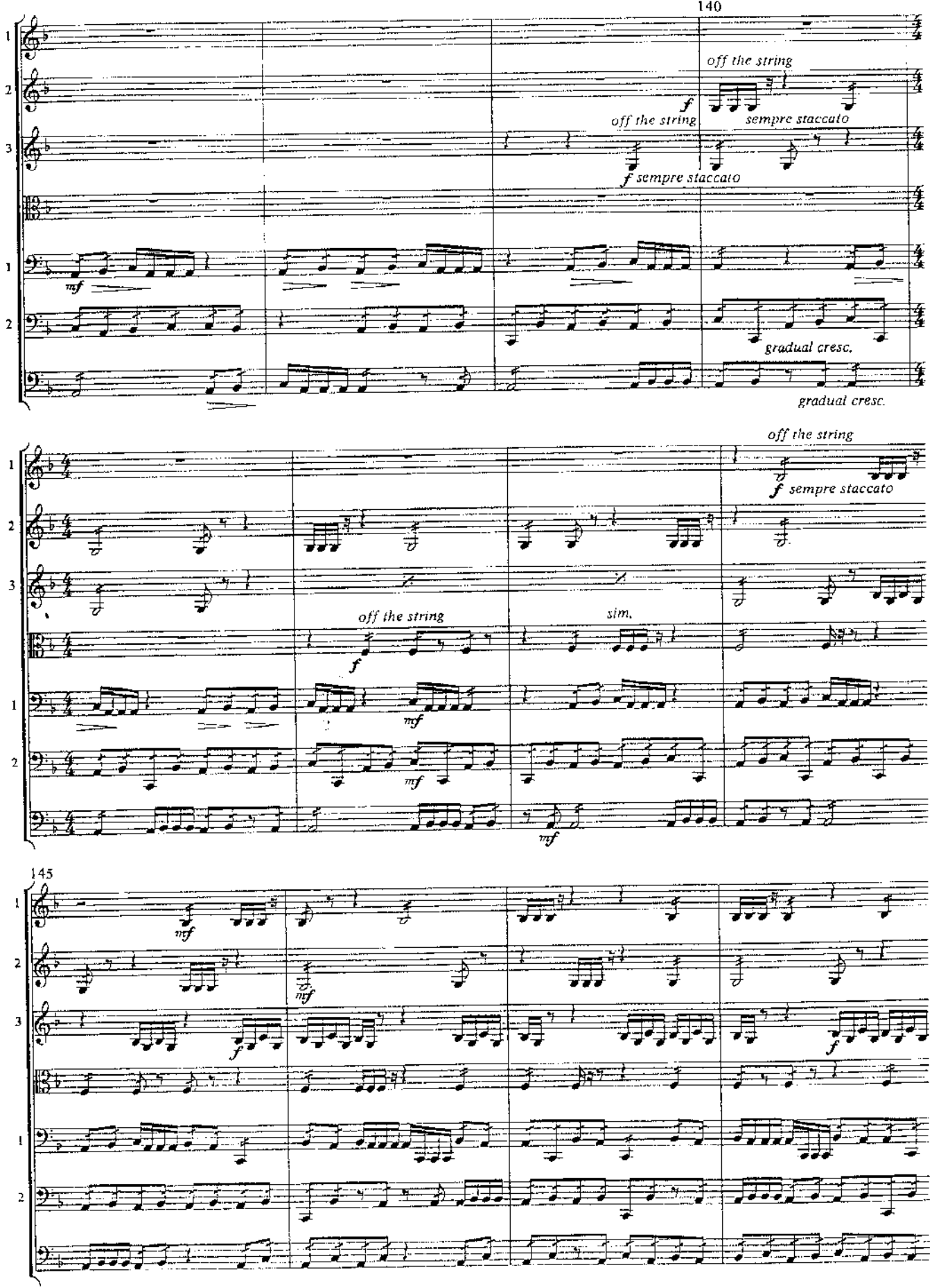

ord.
80
ord.
mf

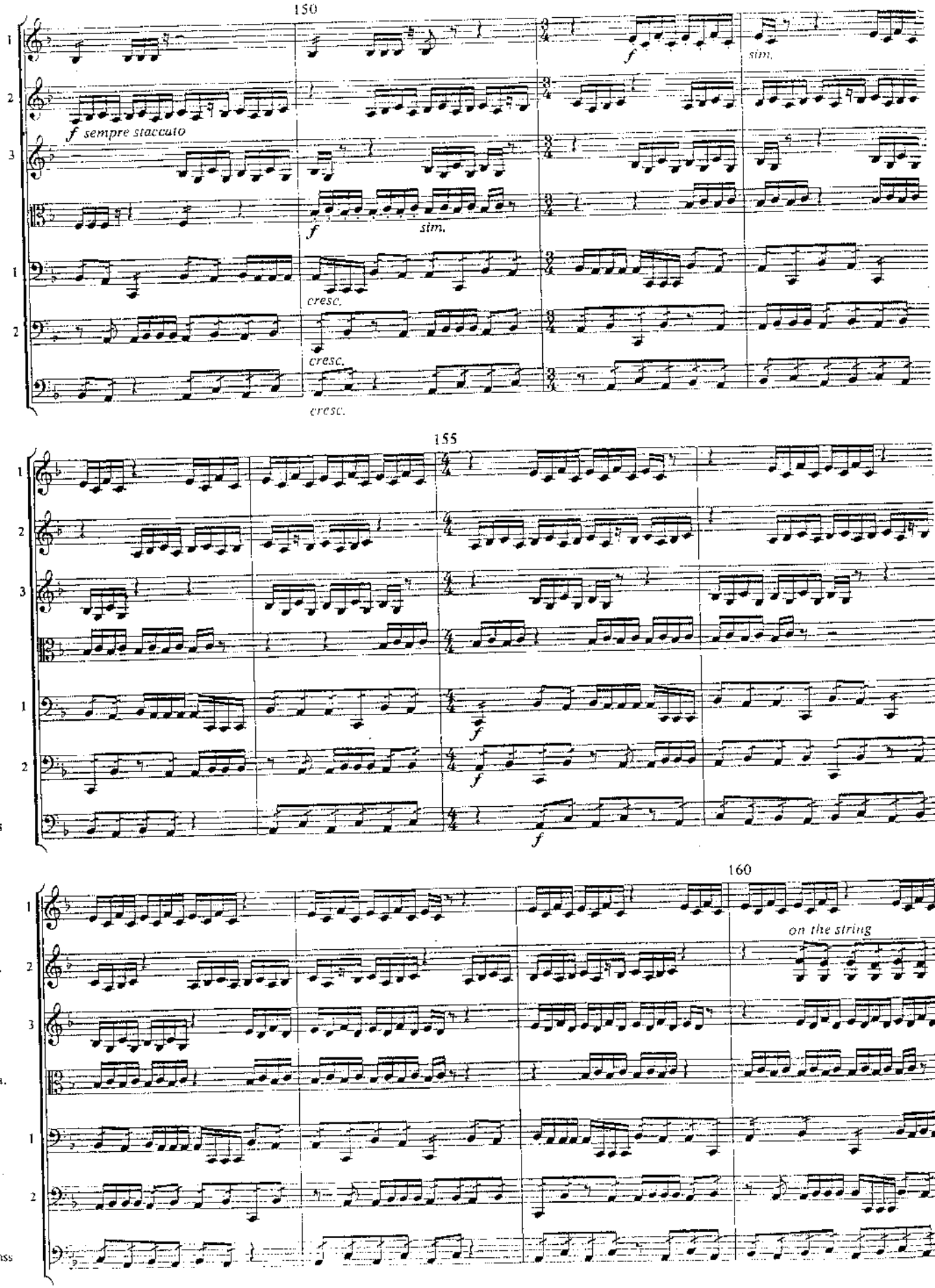

85
cresc.
ord.
mf
cresc.
ord.
cresc.
cresc.
sempre sul tasto
cresc.
sempre sul tasto

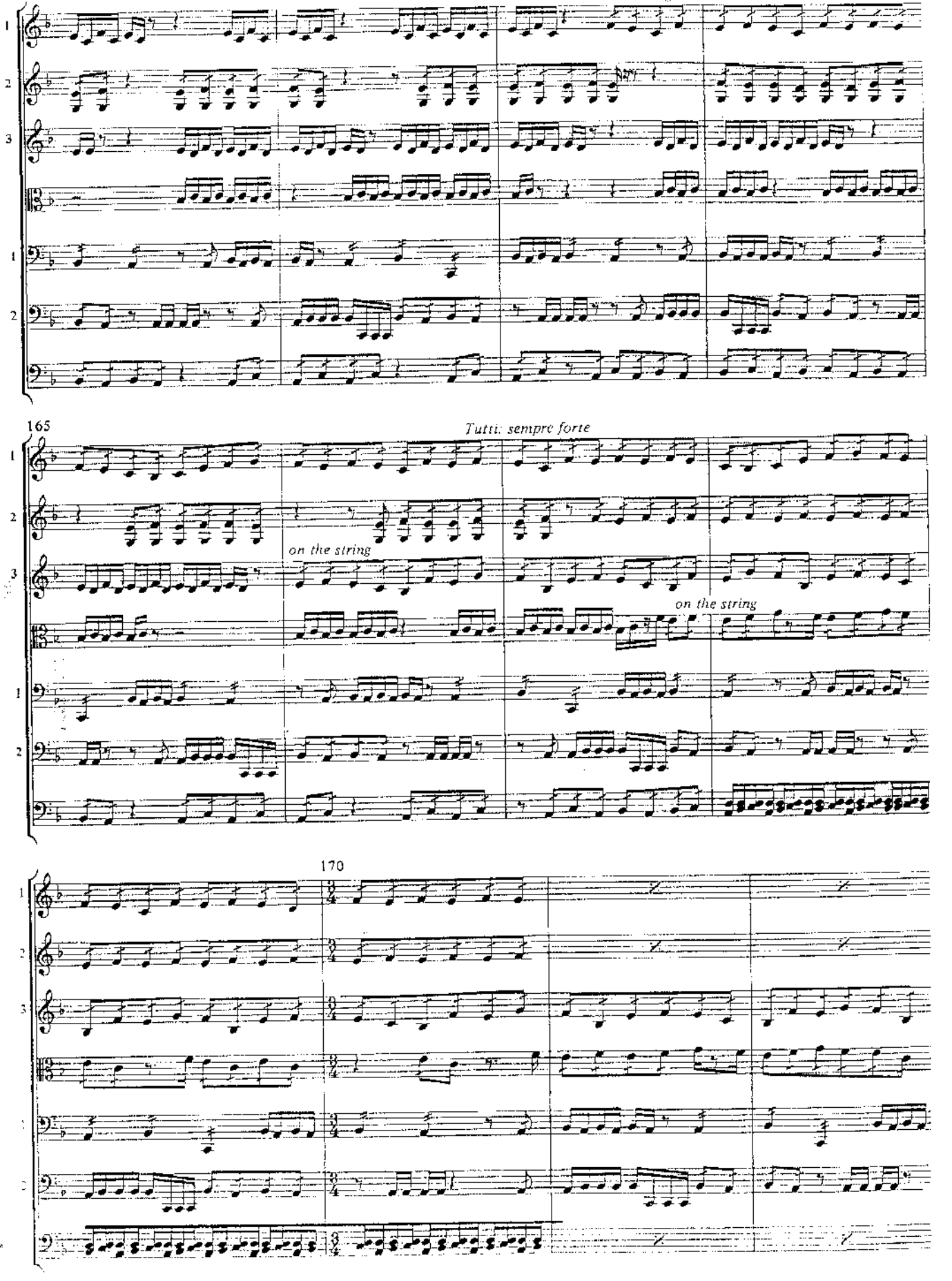

90
95
100
Tutti: gradually change to sul tasto
105
(sul tasto)
dim.

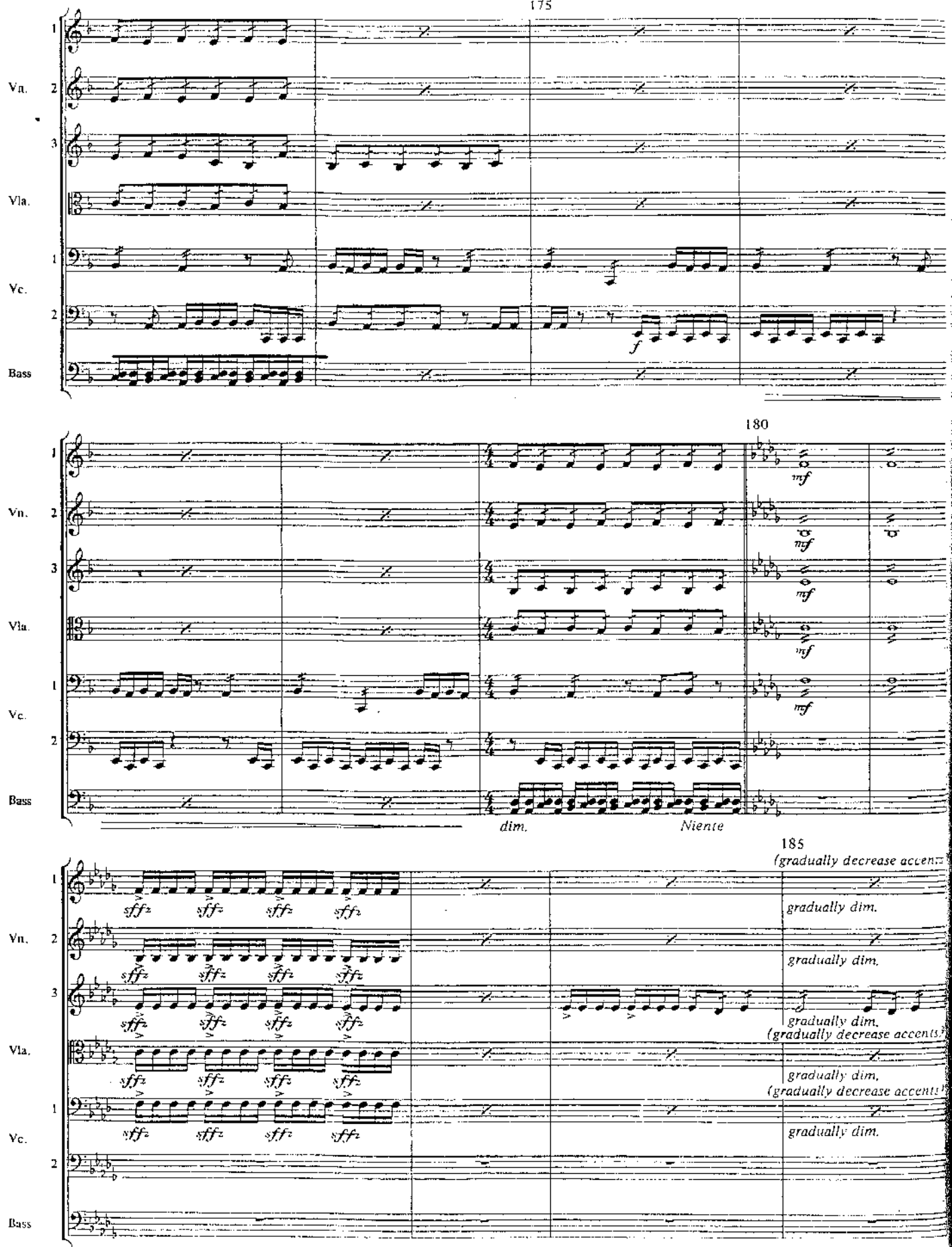

110
pp
Niente
Niente
pp
115
(off the string)
f
off the string
gradual cresc.
gradual cresc.
120
dim.
dim.
off the string
f
p
(poco) cresc.

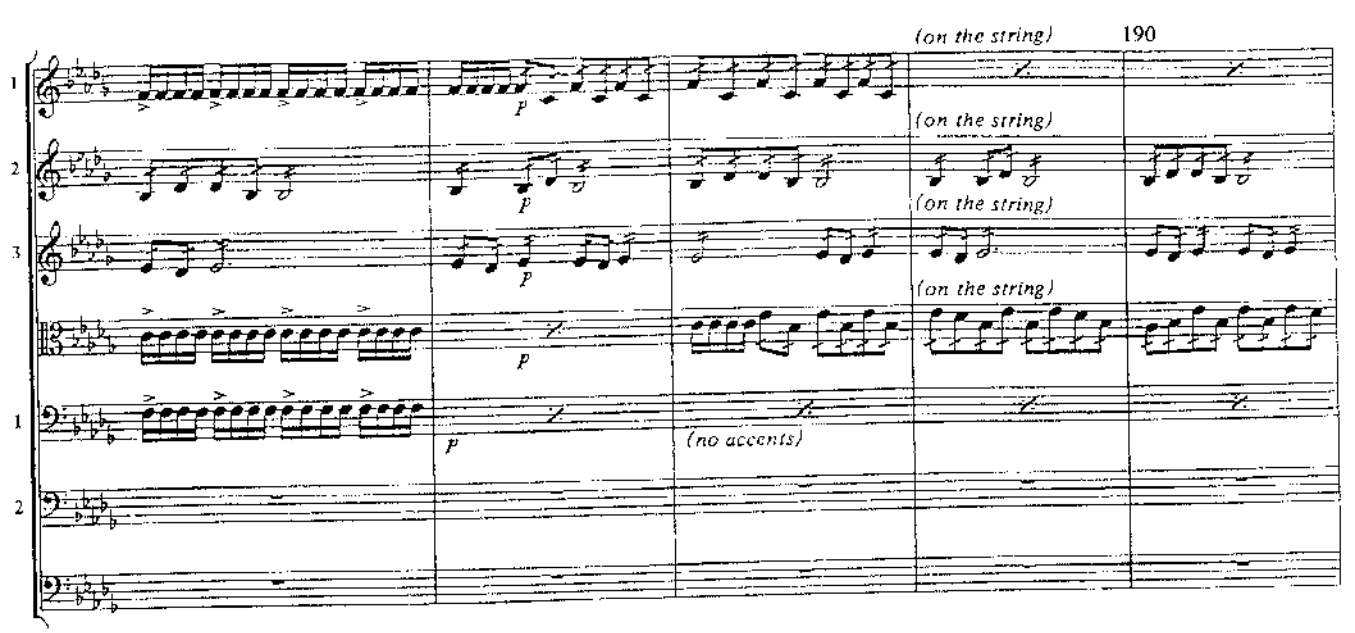

125
Niente
Niente
ord.(off the string)
ord.(off the string)
off the string
130
ord.(off the string)
135
sim.
sim.
sim.f

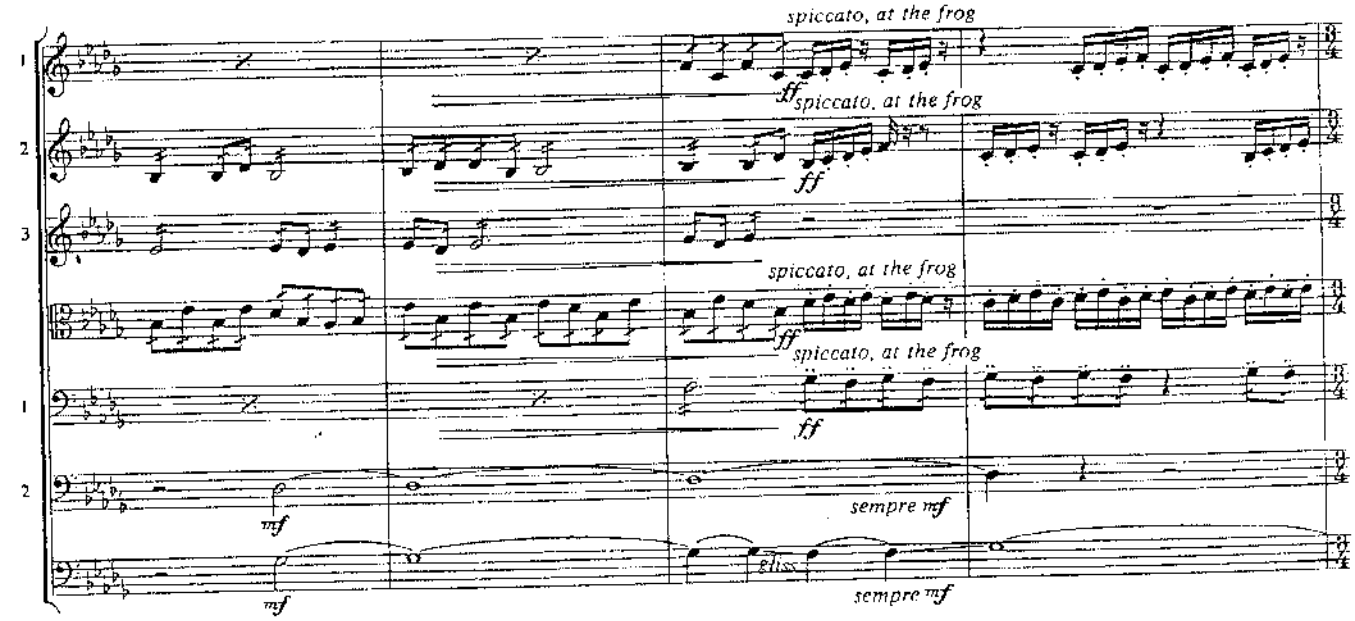

140
off the string
f
off the string
sempre staccato
f sempre staccato
mf
gradual cresc.
gradual cresc.
off the string
f sempre staccato
off the string
sim.
f
mf
mf
mf
145
mf
mf
f
f

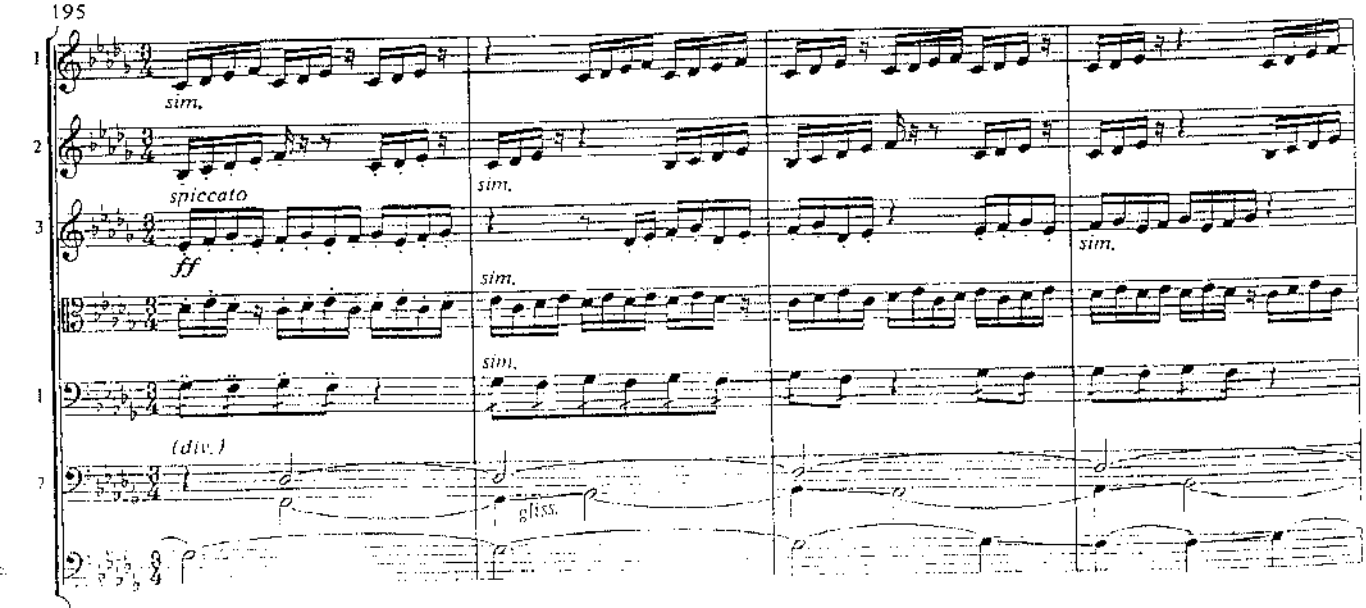

150
f
sim.
f sempre staccato
f
sim.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
155
f
f
f
160
on the string

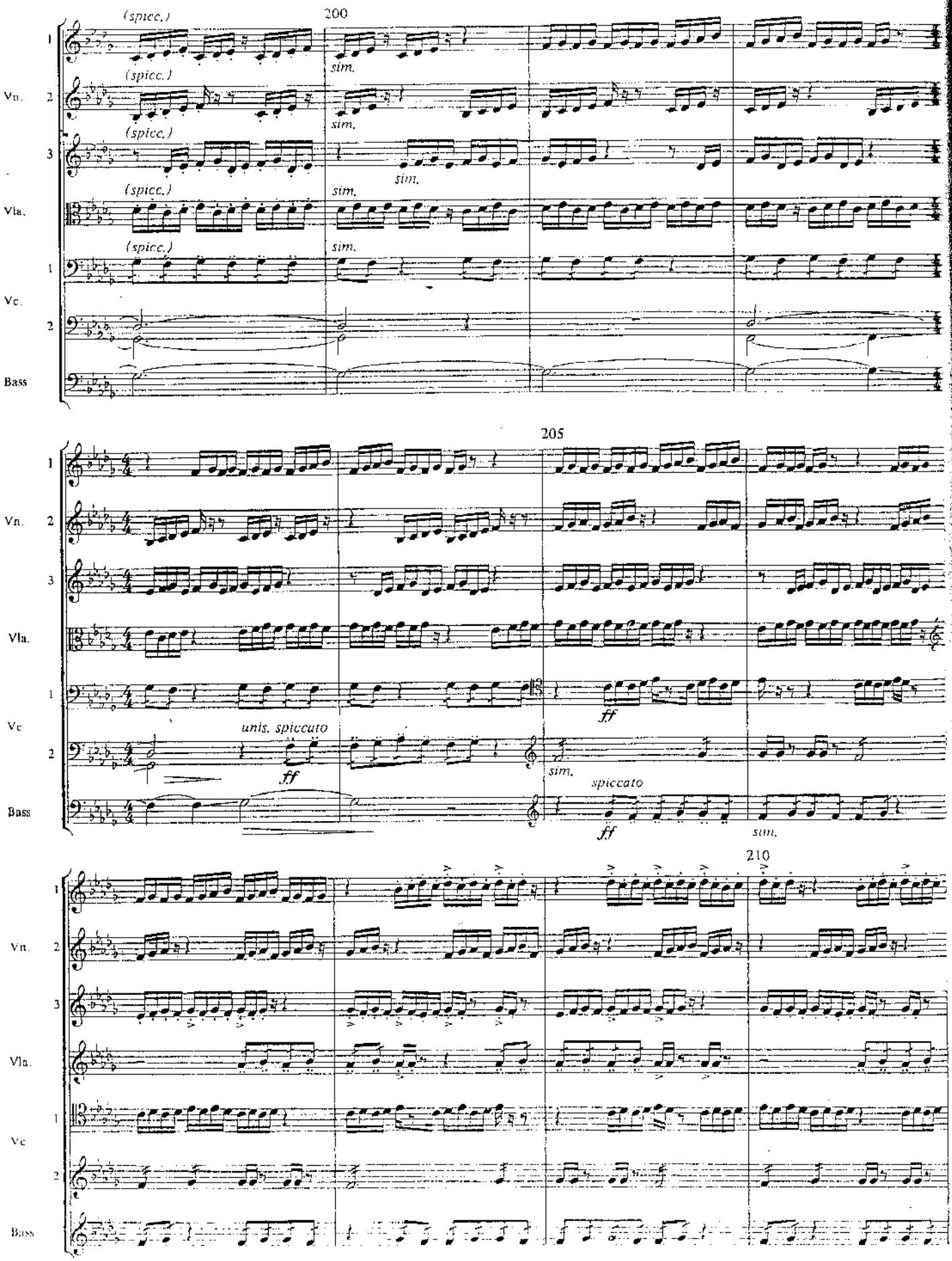

165
Tutti: sempre forte
on the string
on the string
170

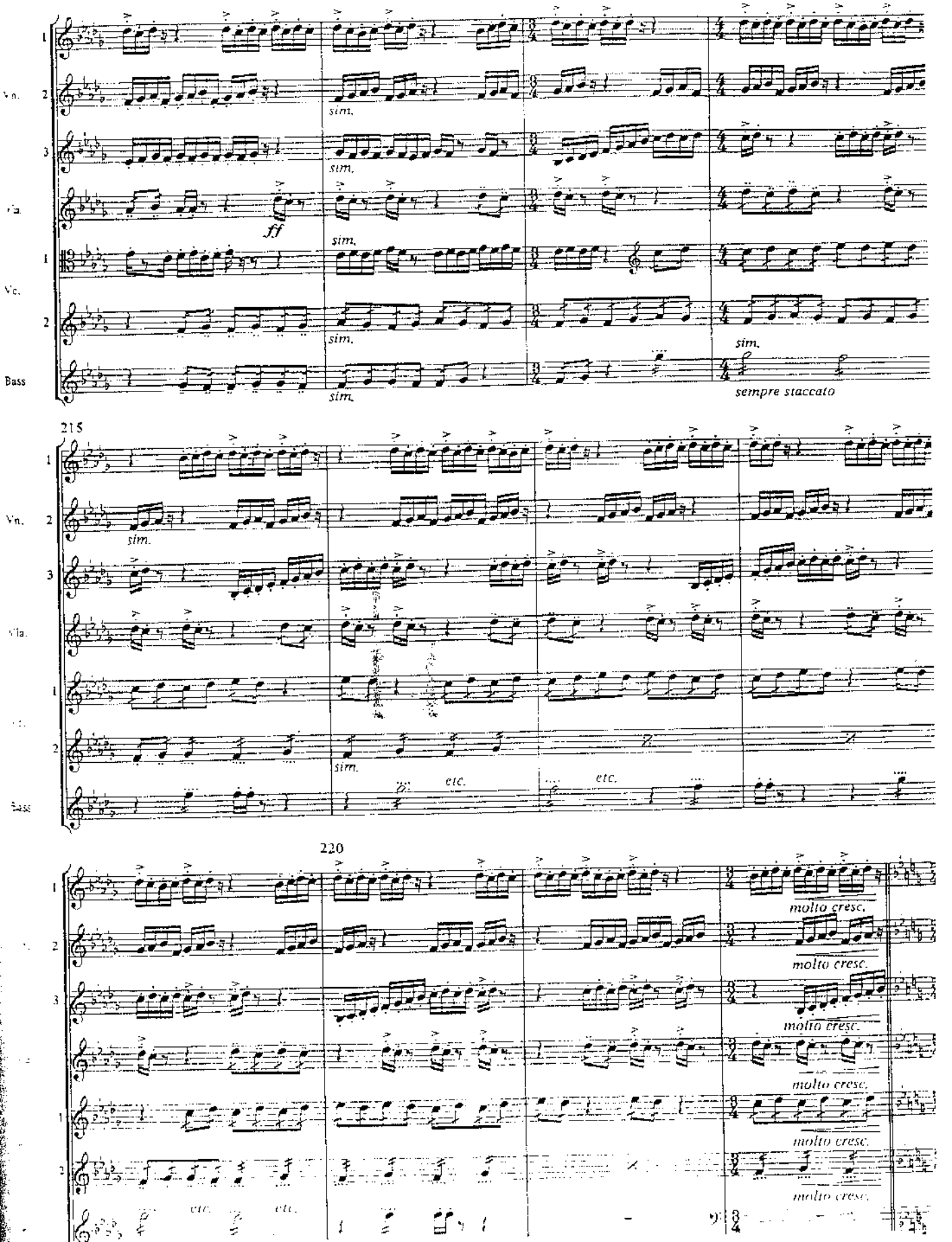

175
Vn. 1
Vn. 2
Vn. 3
Vla.
Vc. 1
Vc. 2
Bass
f
180
mf
dim.
Niente
185
(gradually decrease accents)
sfff
gradually dim.

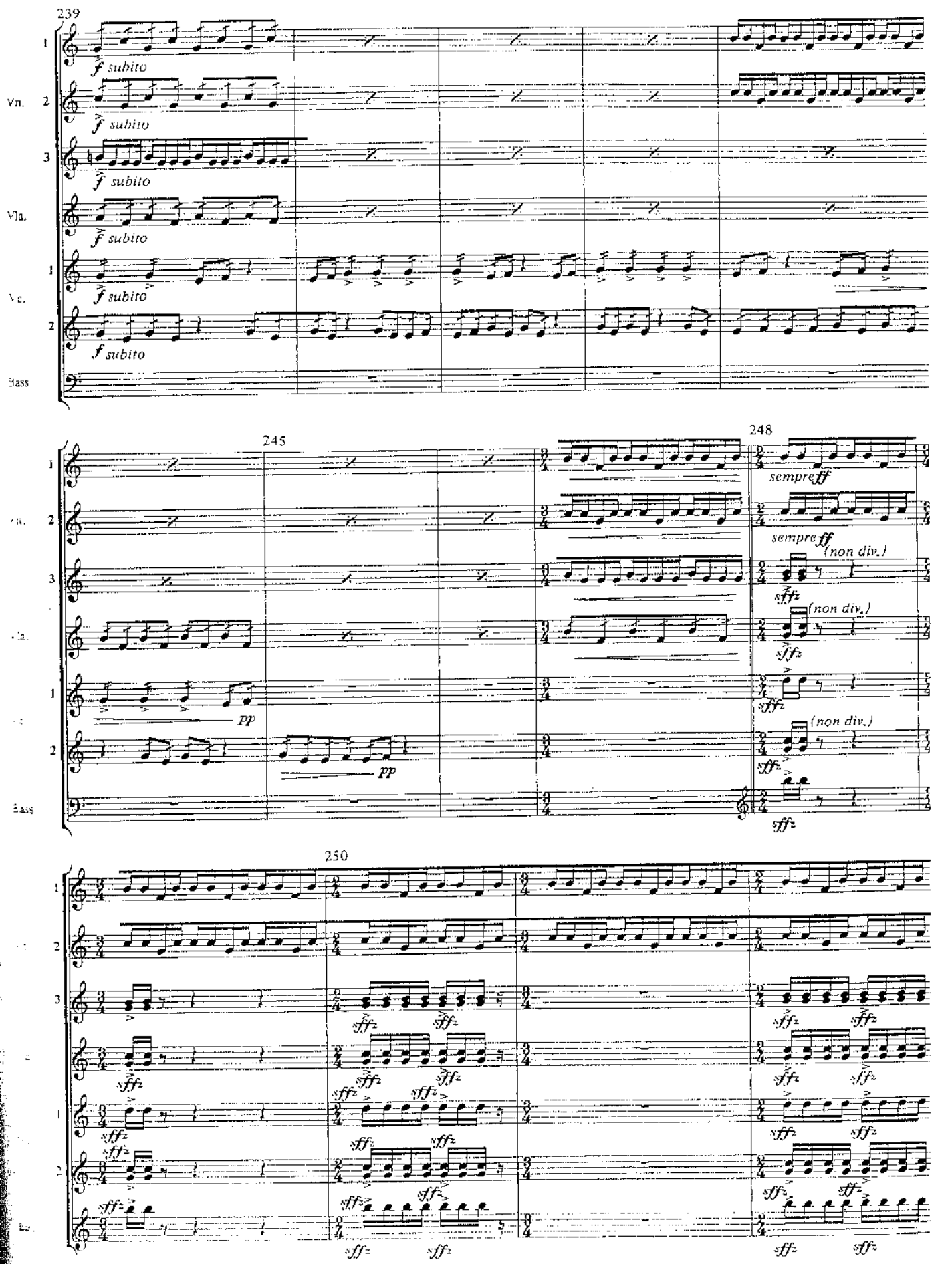

(on the string)
(on the string)
(on the string)
(on the string)
(no accents)

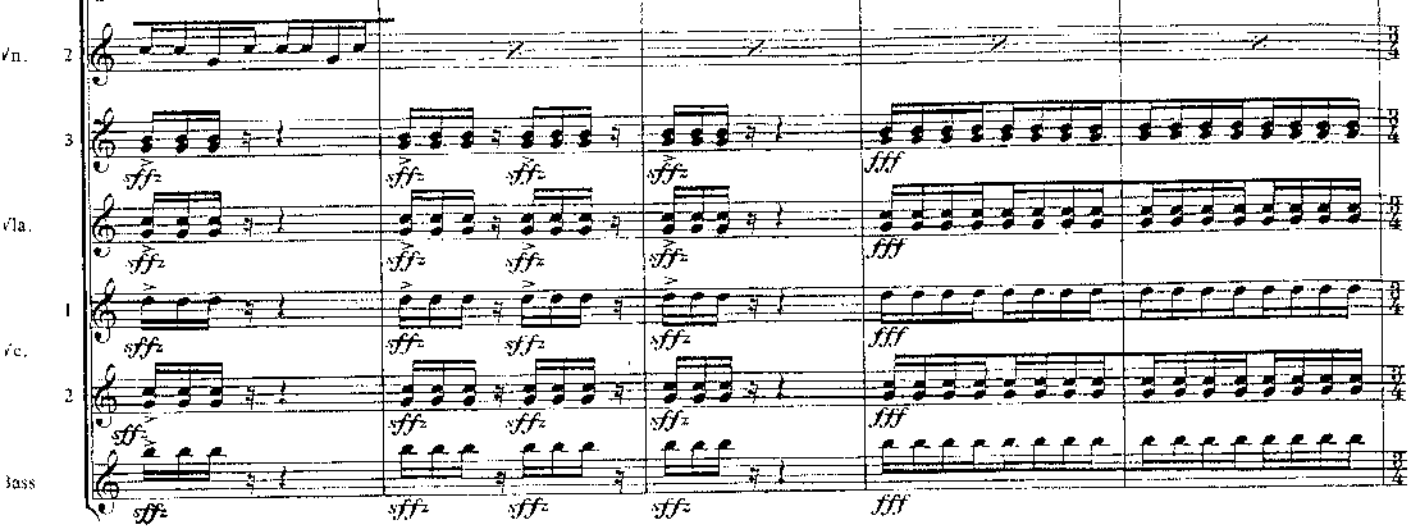

spiccato, at the frog
spiccato, at the frog
spiccato, at the frog
spiccato, at the frog
sempre mf
sempre mf

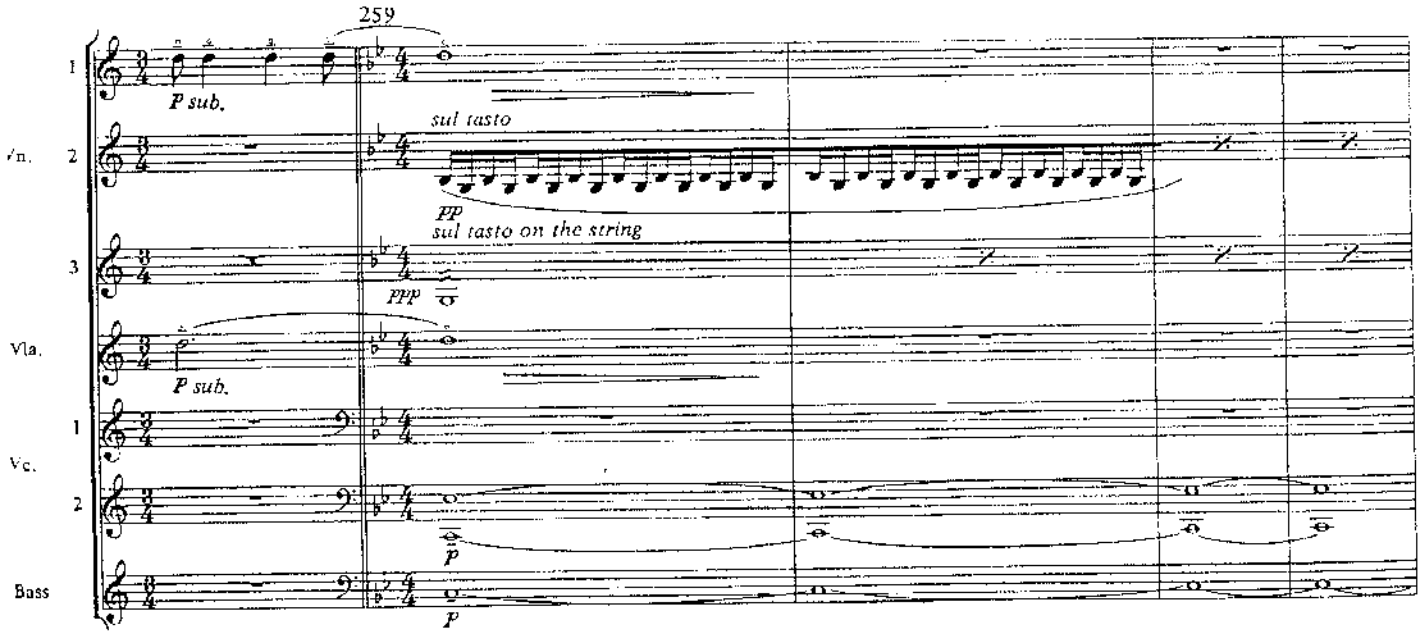

195
sim.
spiccato
sim.
sim.
sim.
sim.
(div.)

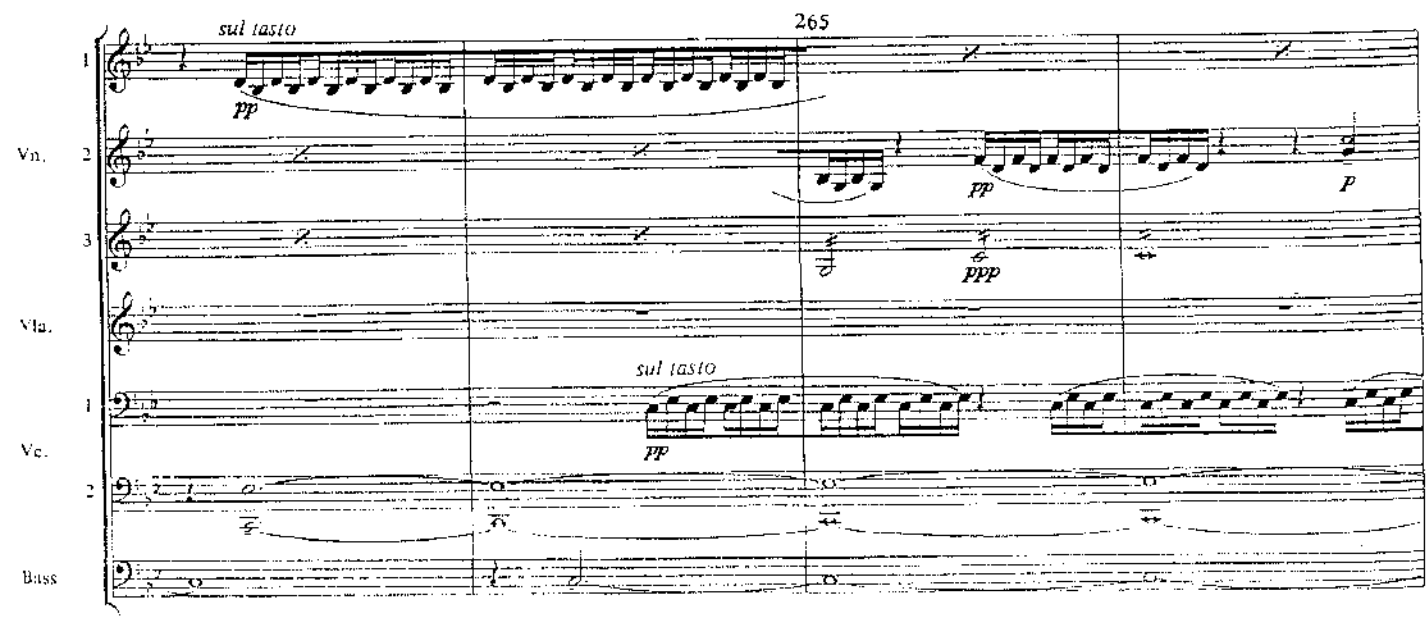

200
(spicc.)
sim.
Vn.
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
205
unis. spiccato
ff
spiccato
210

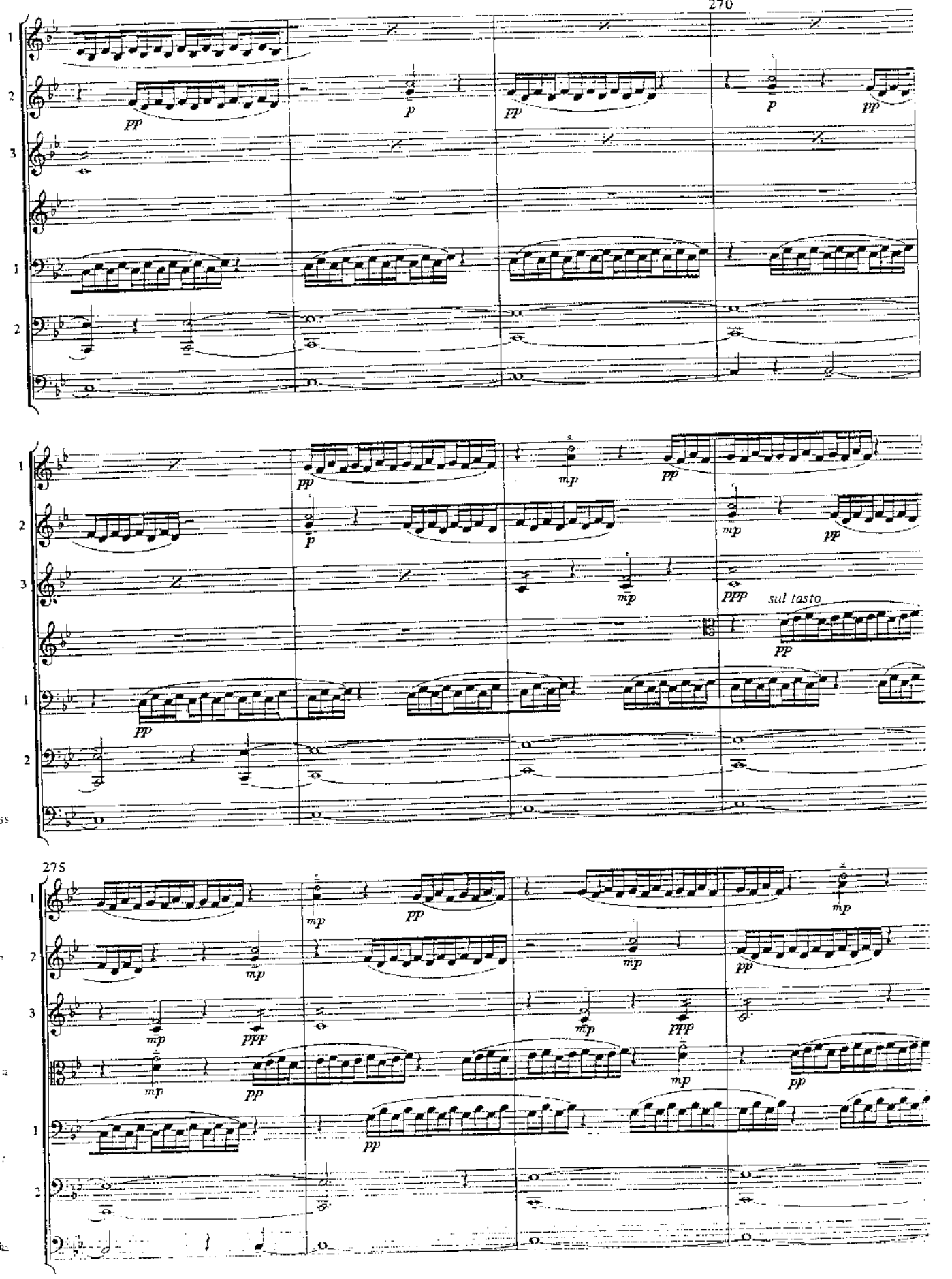

215
220
Vn.
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
sim.
ff
sempre staccato
etc.
molto cresc.

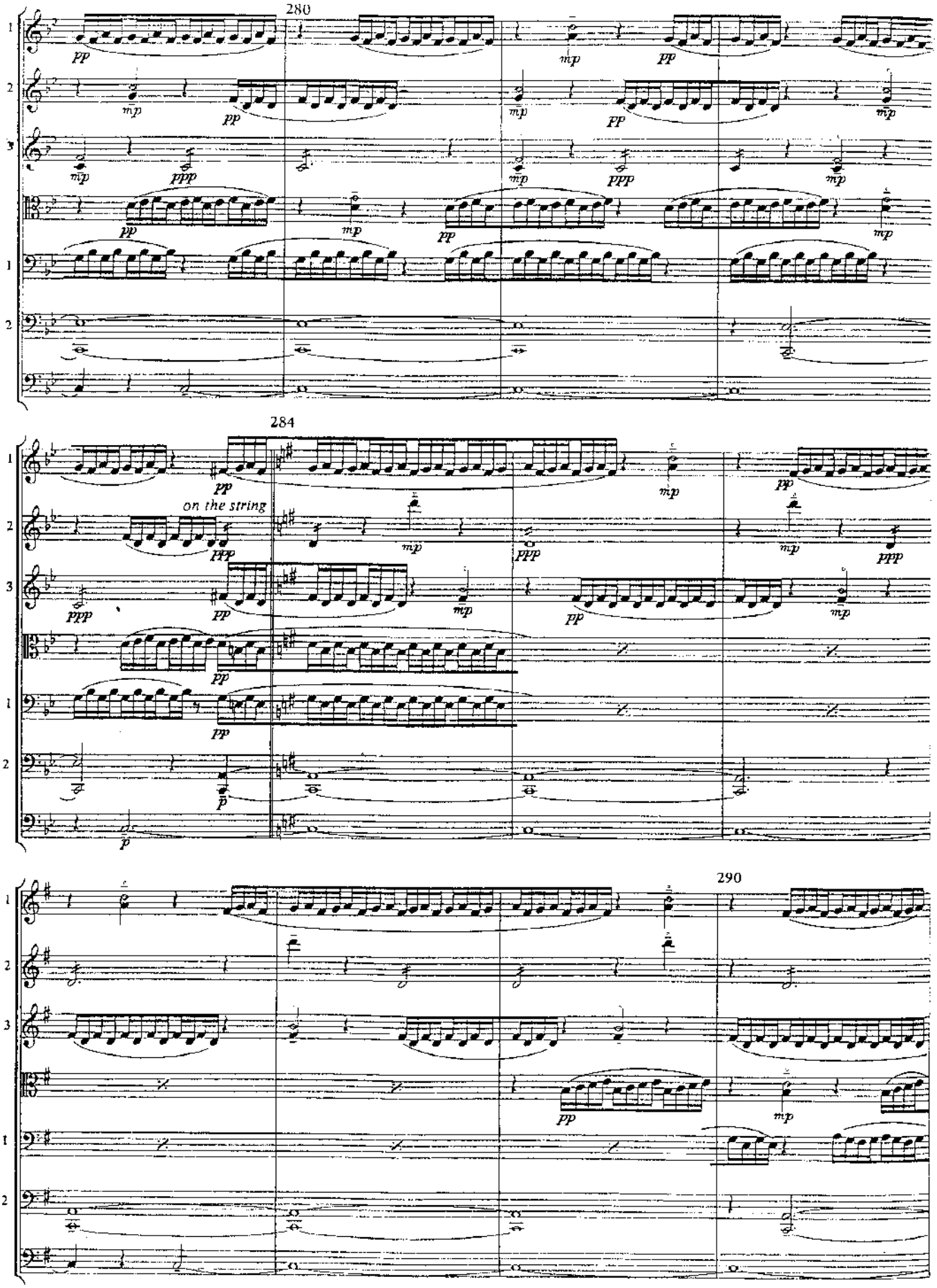

239
Vn. 1
Vn. 2
Vn. 3
Vla.
Vc. 1
Vc. 2
Bass
f subito
245
pp
248
sempre ff
(non div.)
sff
250
sff

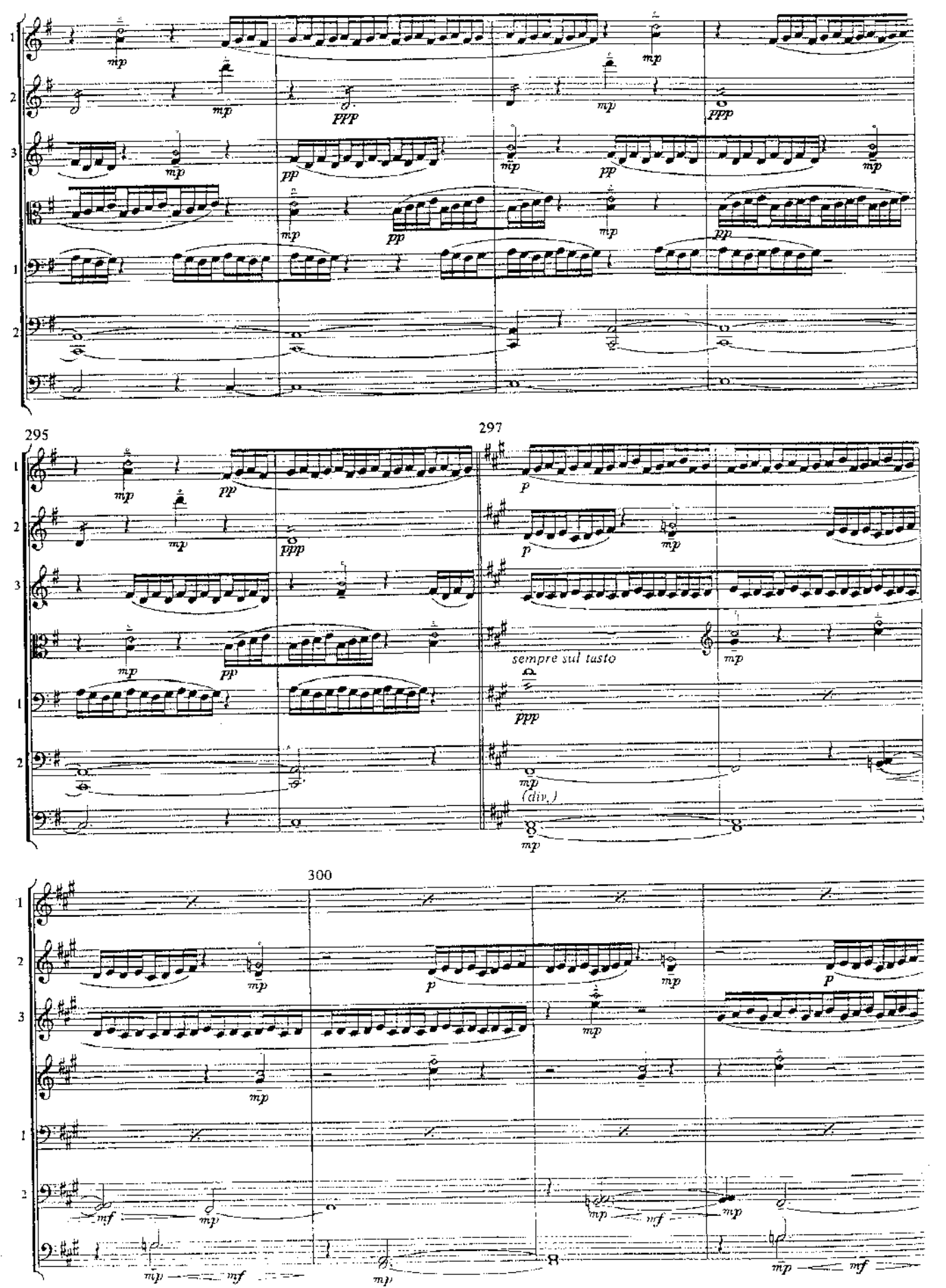

Vn.
2
3
Vla.
1
Vc.
2
Bass
sff
fff

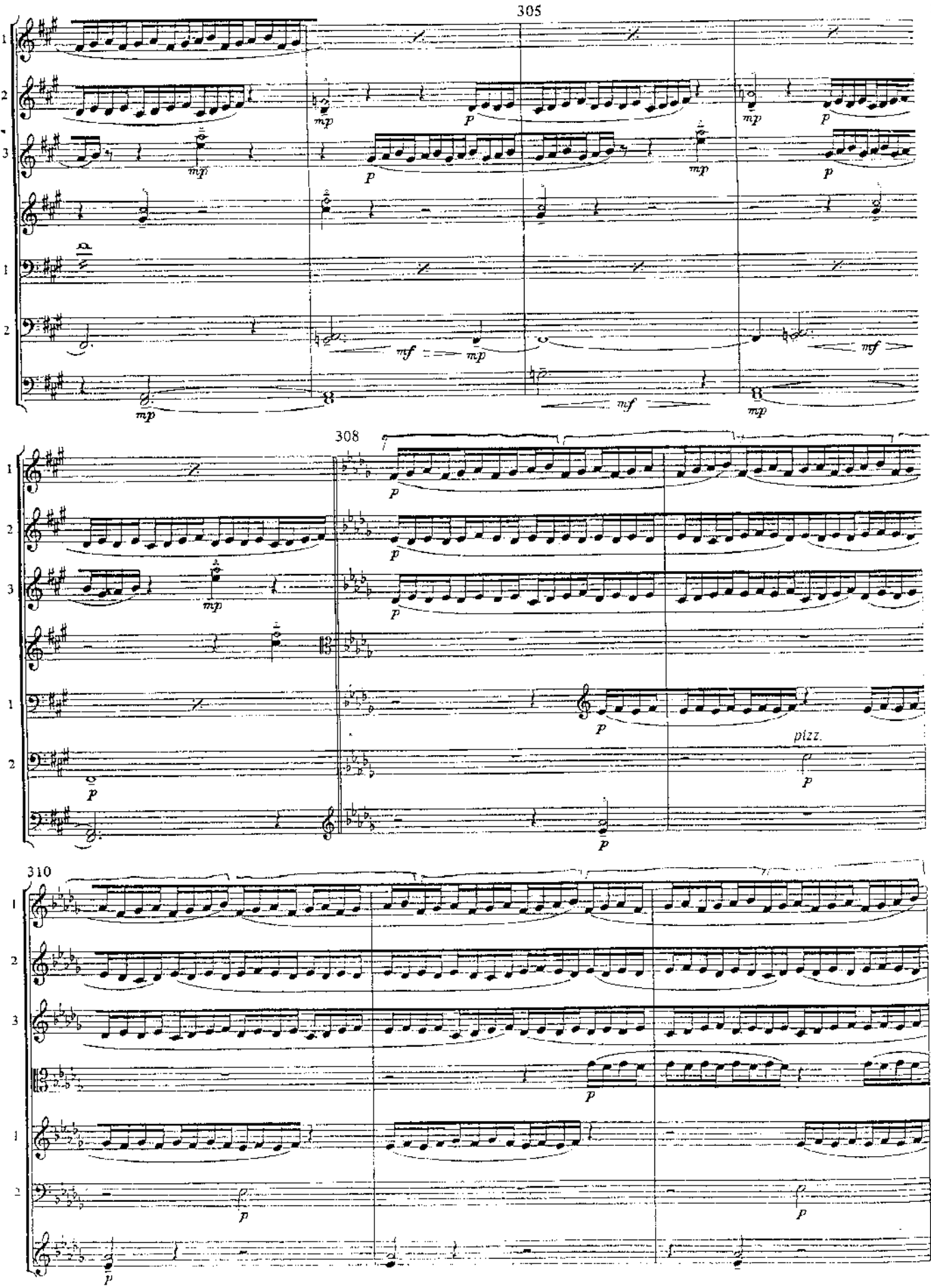

259
1
P sub.
Vn.
2
sul tasto
pp
sul tasto on the string
3
ppp
Vla.
P sub.
1
Vc.
2
p
Bass
p

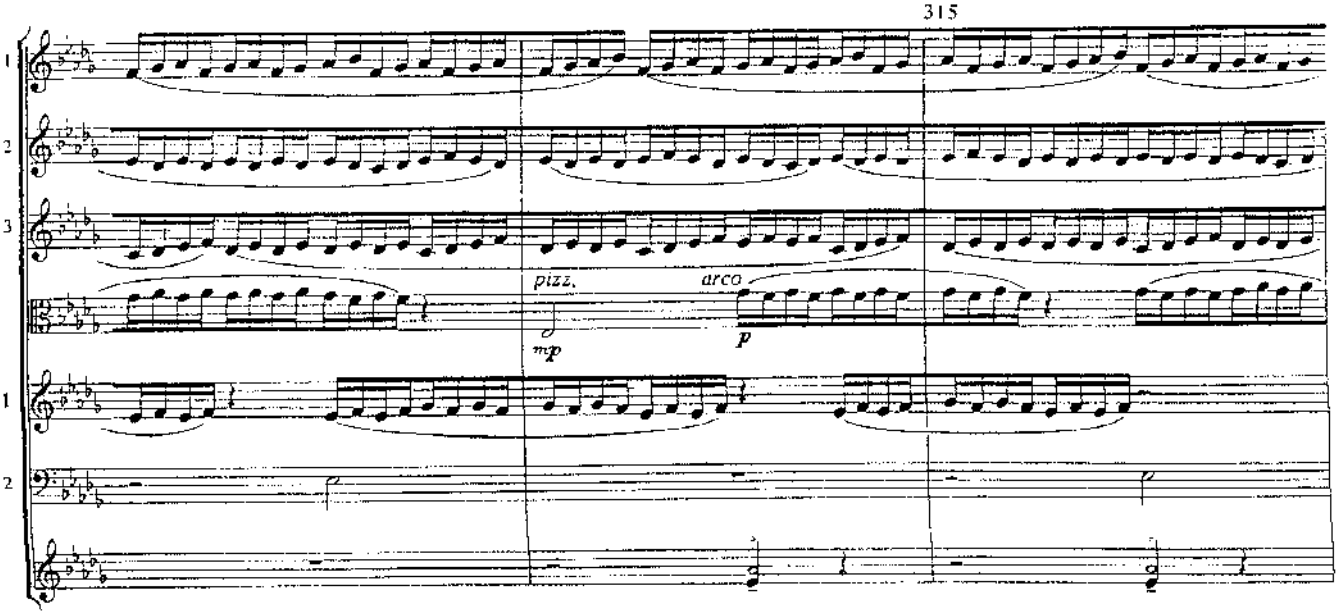

265
1
sul tasto
pp
Vn.
2
pp
p
3
ppp
Vla.
sul tasto
1
Vc.
pp
2
Bass

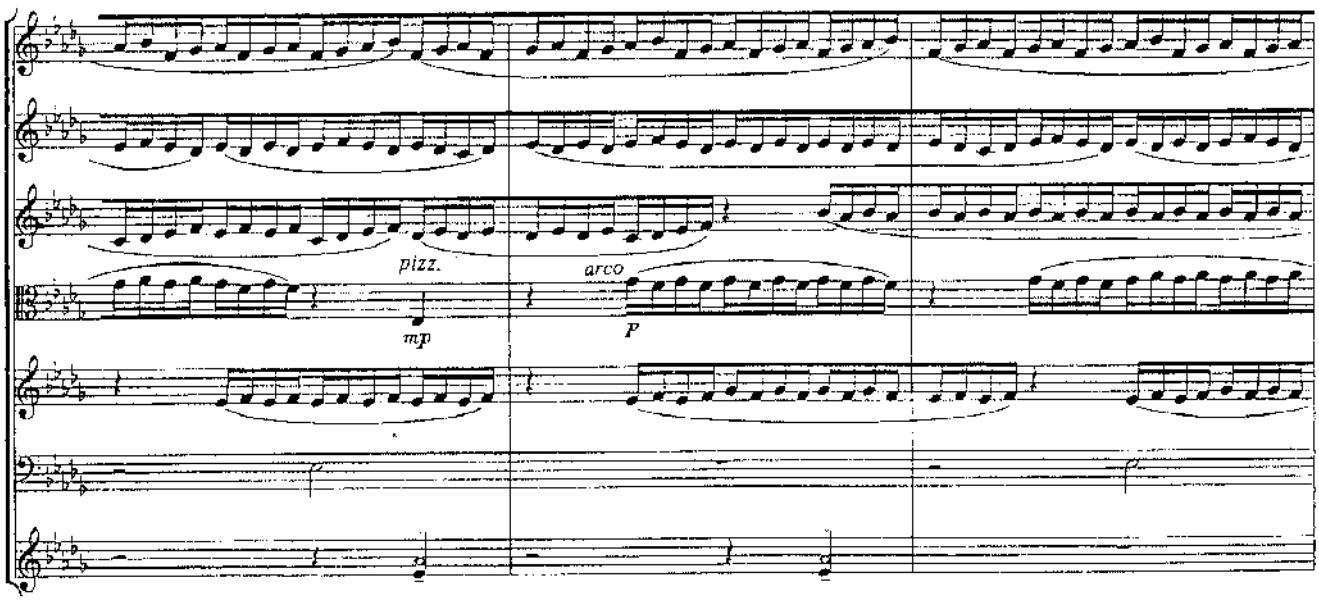

270
275
sul tasto

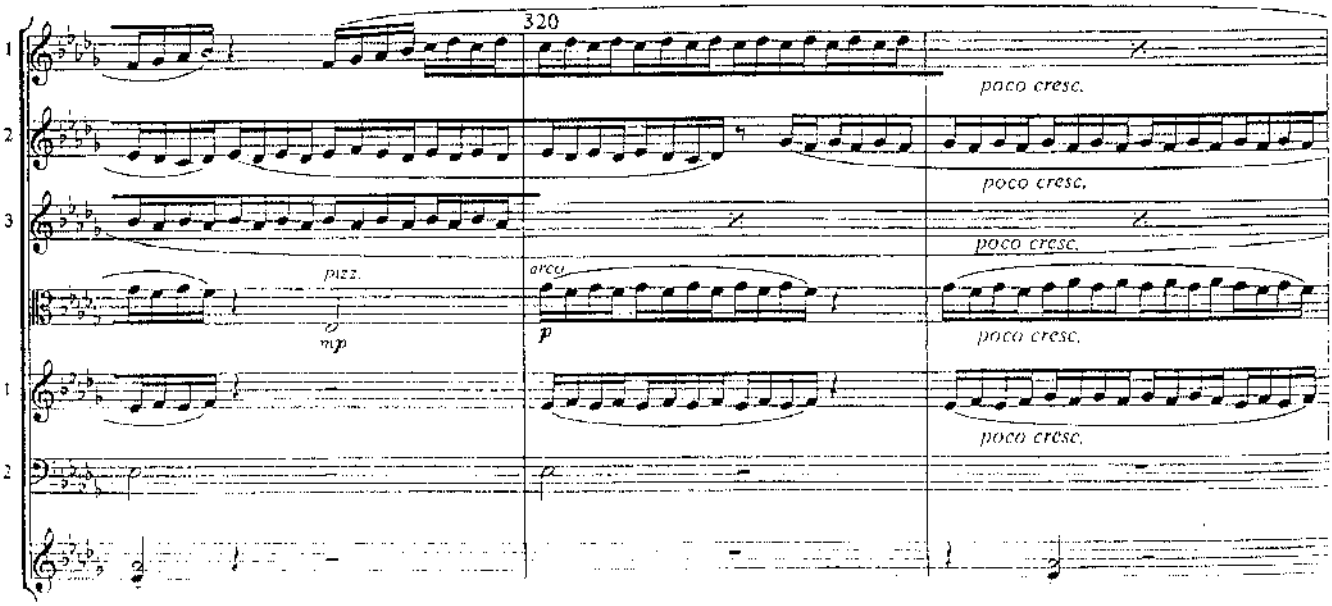

280
284
290
on the string

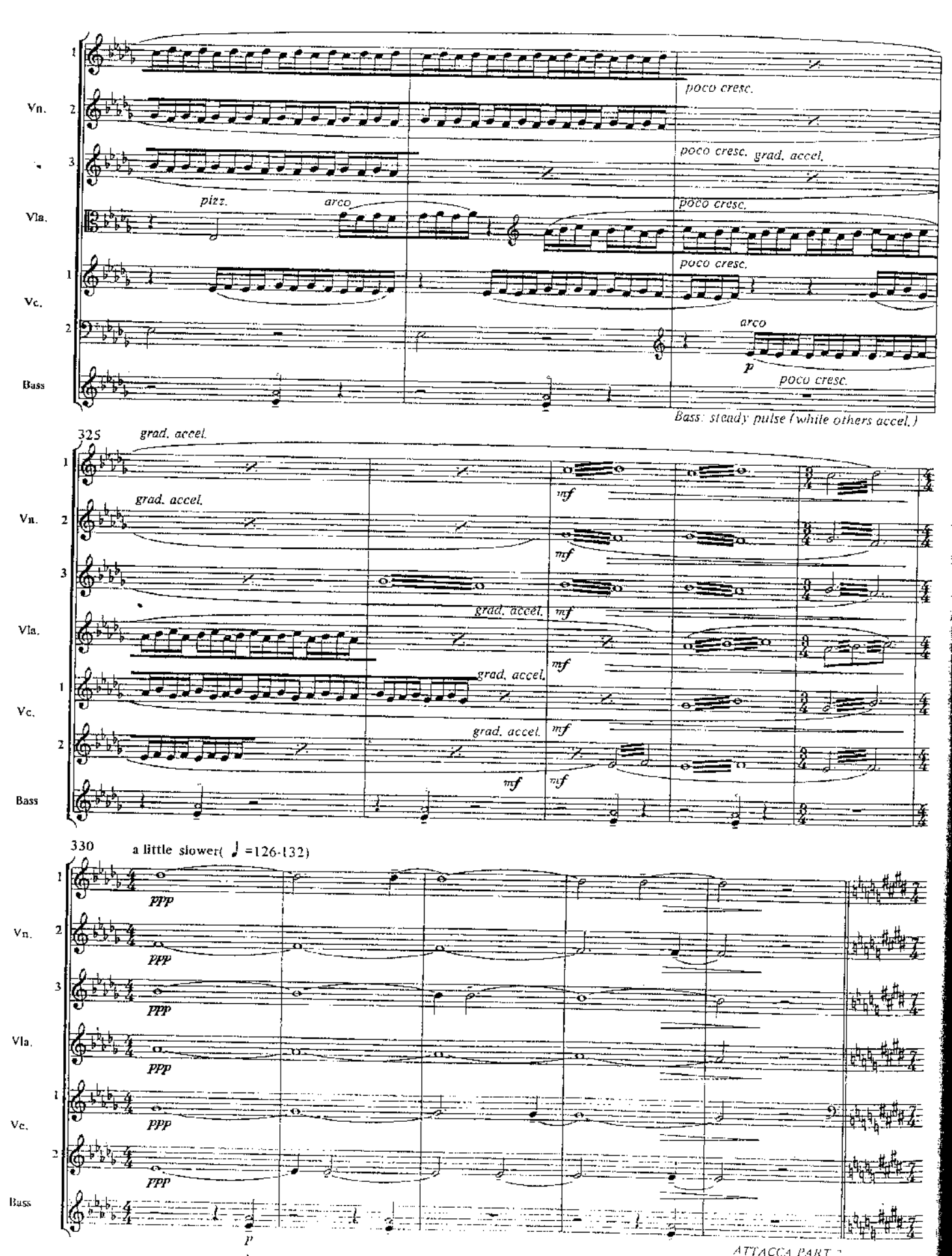

295
297
300
sempre sul tasto
(div.)


305
308
310
pizz.

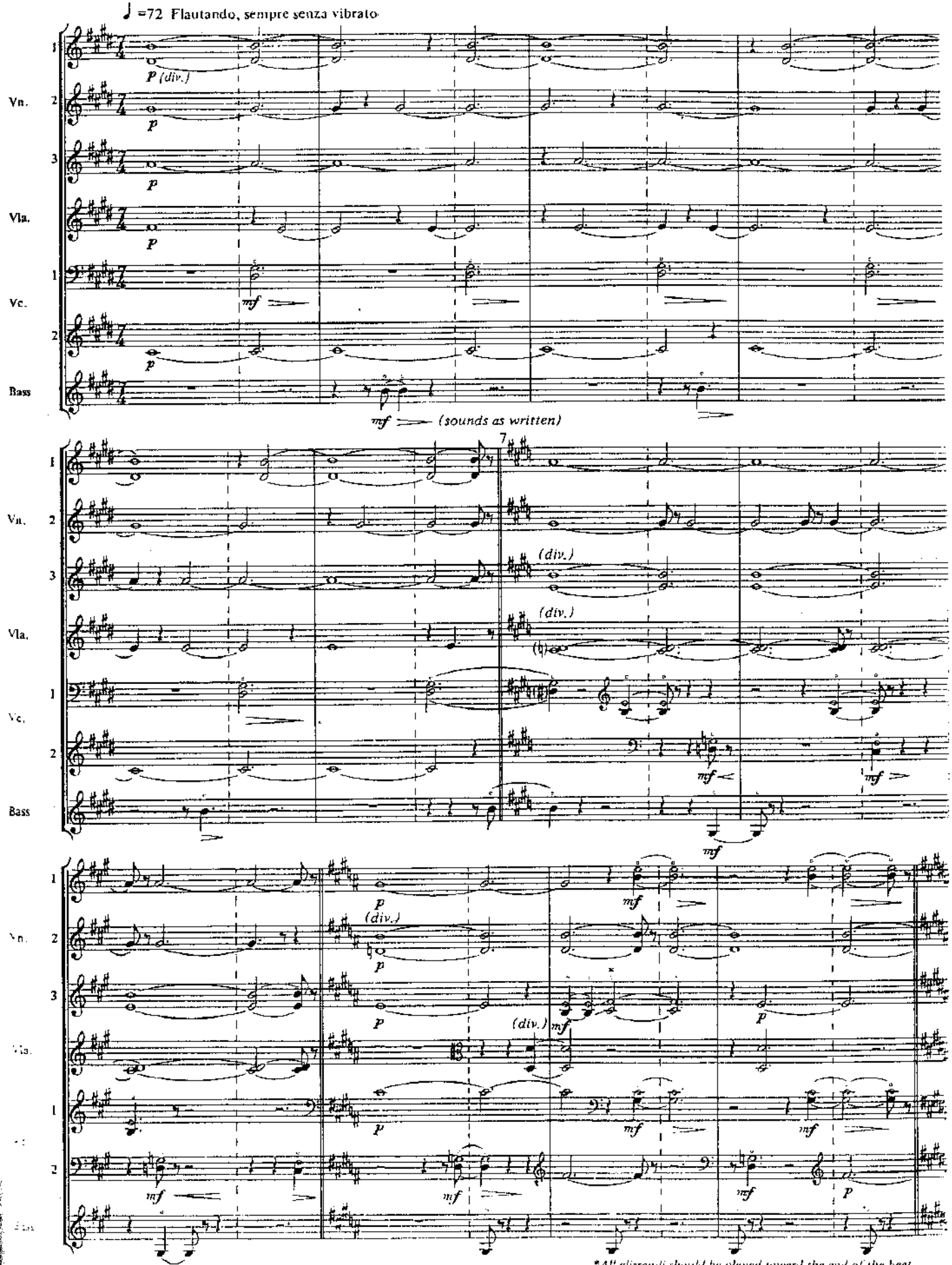

pizz.
mp
arco
p

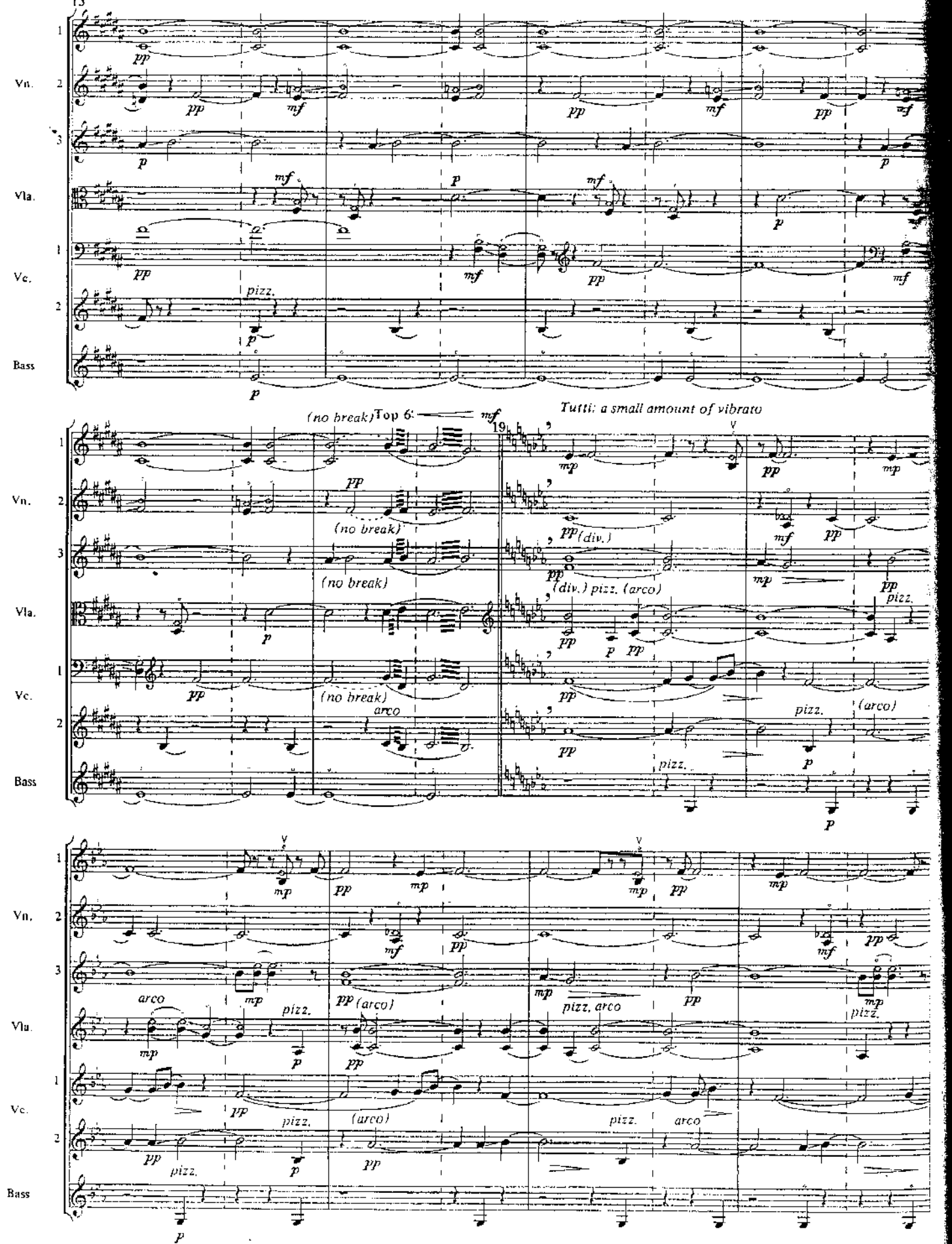

pizz.
mp
arco
p

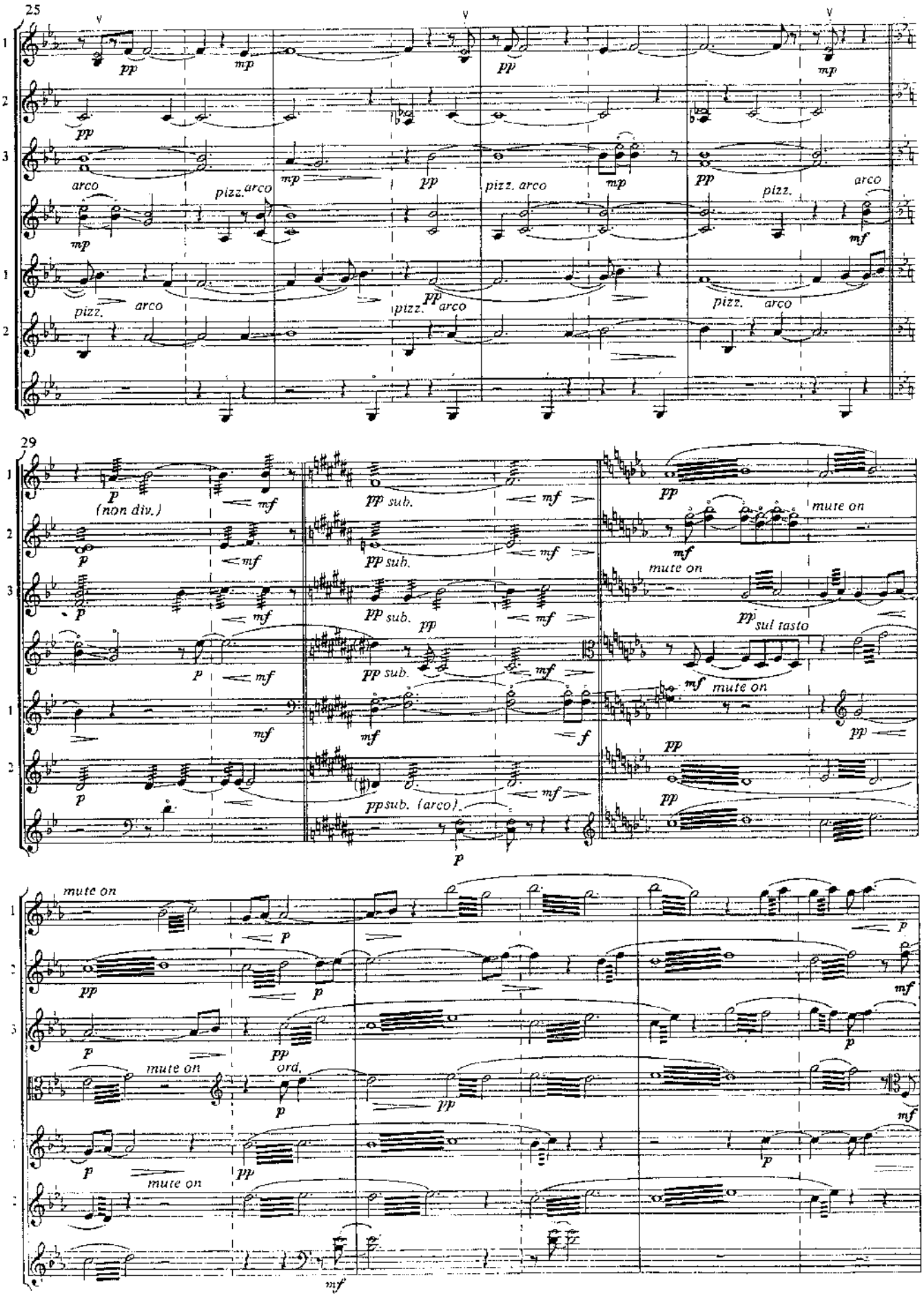

320
poco cresc.
poco cresc.
poco cresc.
poco cresc.
poco cresc.
pizz.
mp
arco
p

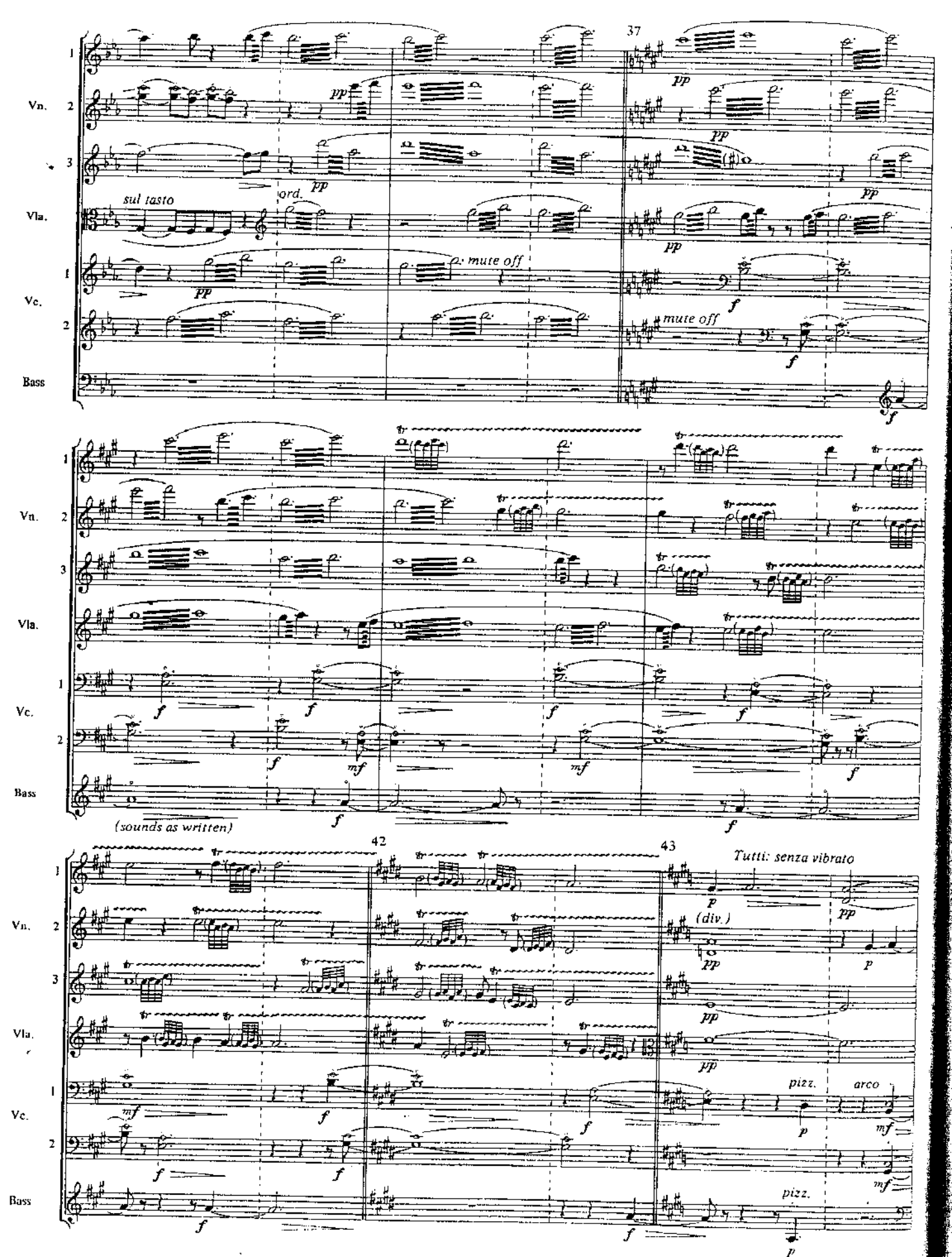

Vn.
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
poco cresc.
poco cresc. grad. accel.
pizz.
arco
poco cresc.
poco cresc.
arco
p
poco cresc.
Bass: steady pulse (while others accel.)
325
grad. accel.
grad. accel.
mf
grad. accel.
grad. accel.
grad. accel.
330
a little slower(♩ =126-132)
ppp
p
ATTACCA PART 3

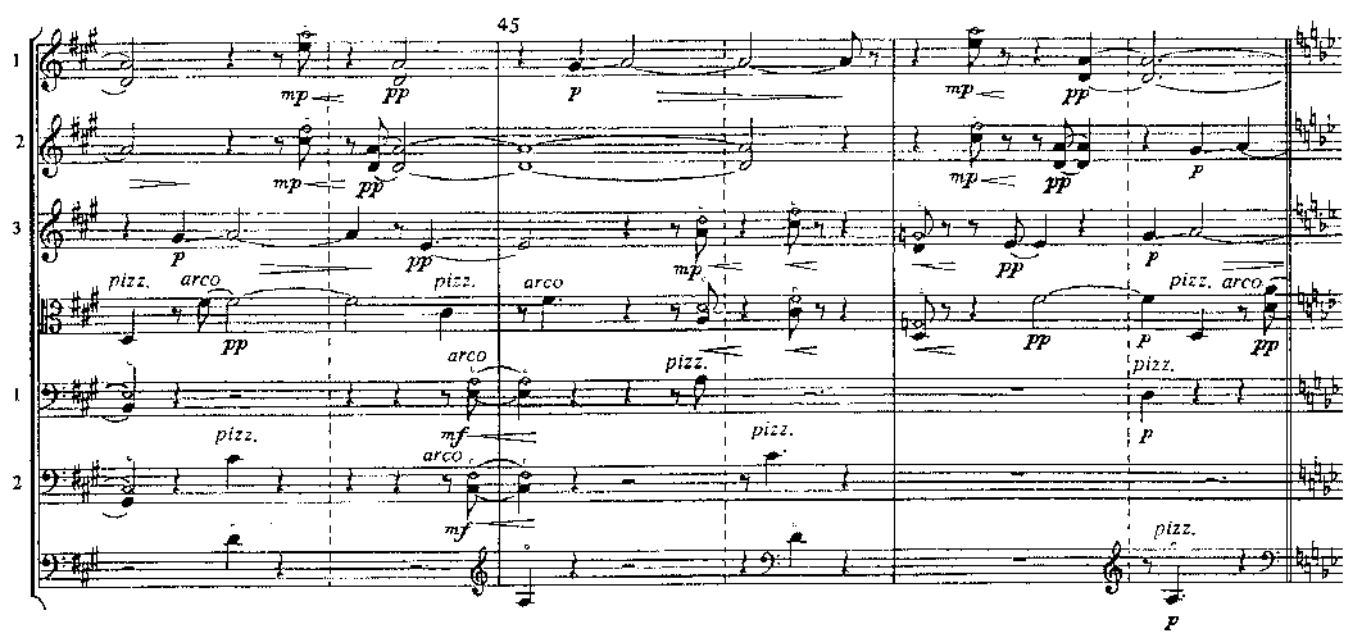
PART II
HYMNING SLEWS



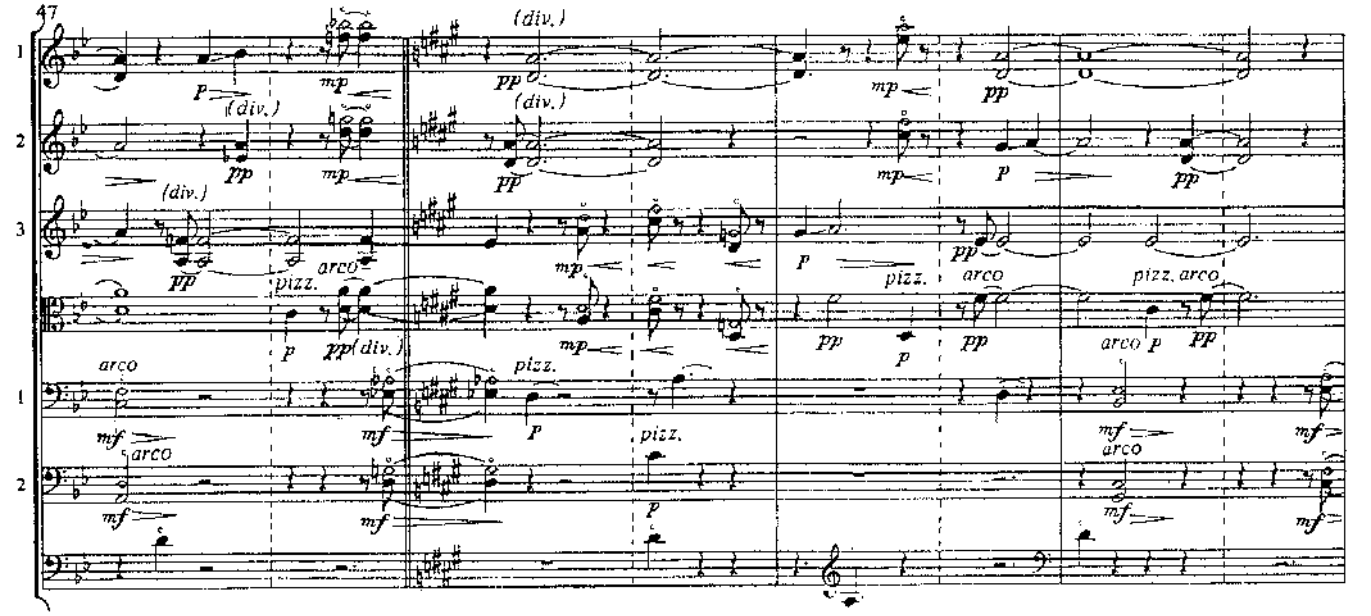

13
Vn.
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
pizz.
(no break)
Top 6:
19
Tutti: a small amount of vibrato
(div.)
(div.) pizz. (arco)
arco
(arco)

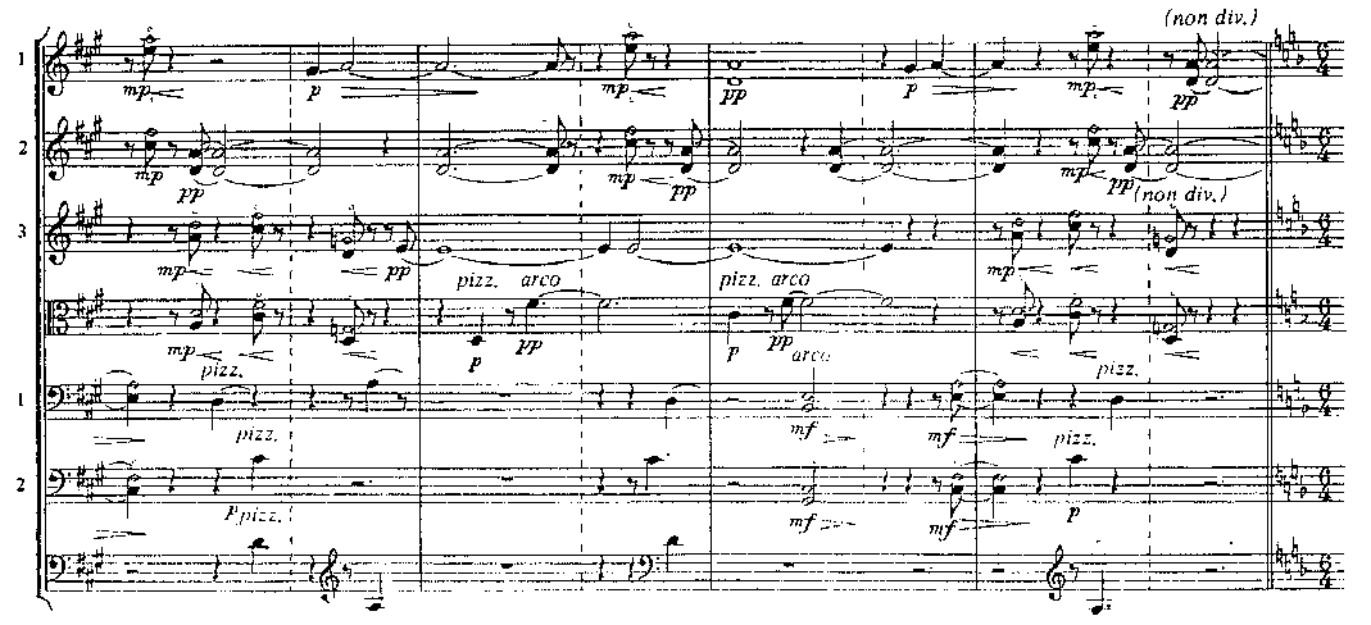

25
29
pp
mp
mf
arco
pizz.
pizz. arco
(non div.)
pp sub.
mute on
sul tasto
ord.
f


37
Vn.
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
sul tasto
ord.
mute off
mute off
(sounds as written)
42
43
Tutti: senza vibrato
(div.)
pizz.
arco
pizz.

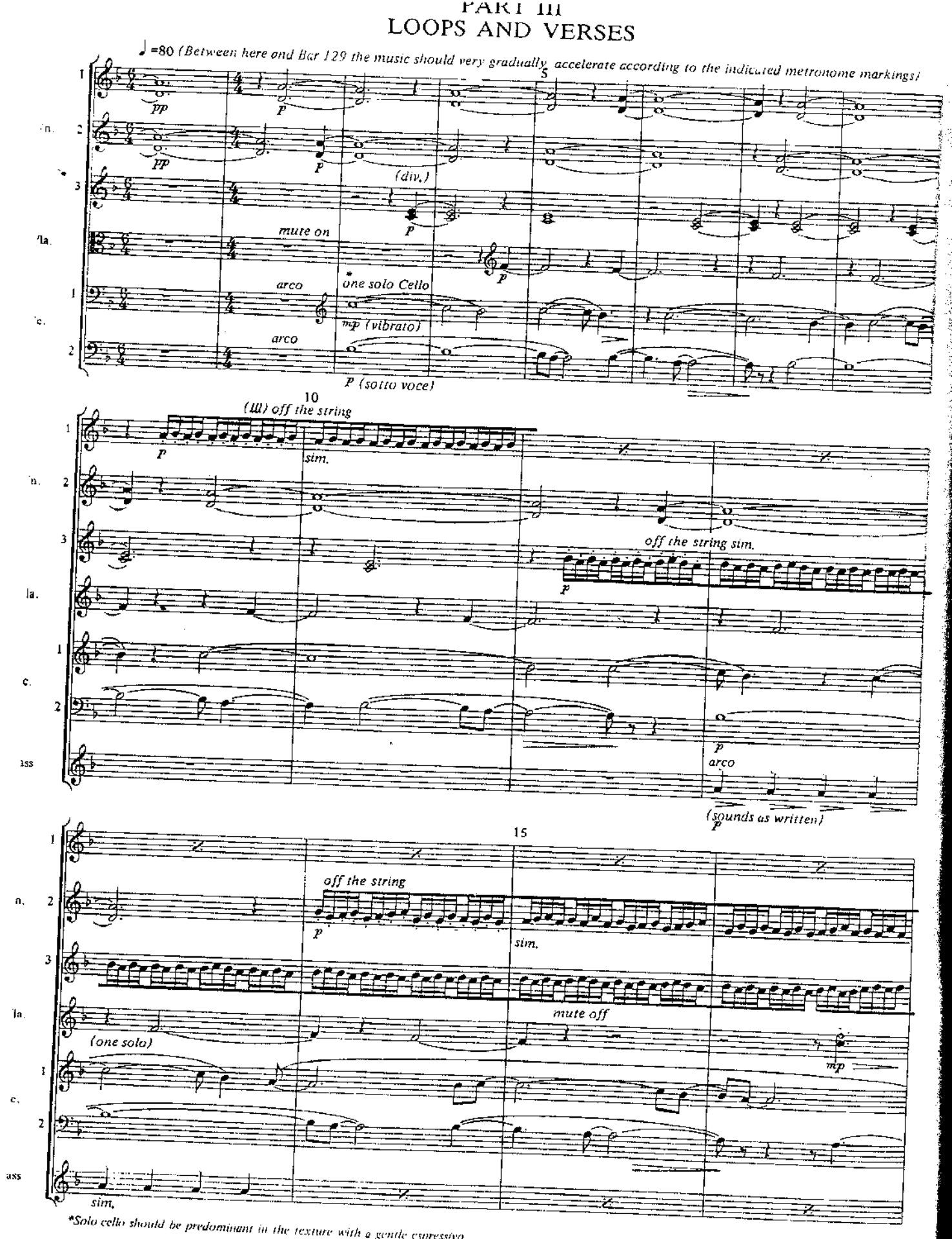

1
2
3
1
2
mp
pp
p
pizz.
arco
mf

47

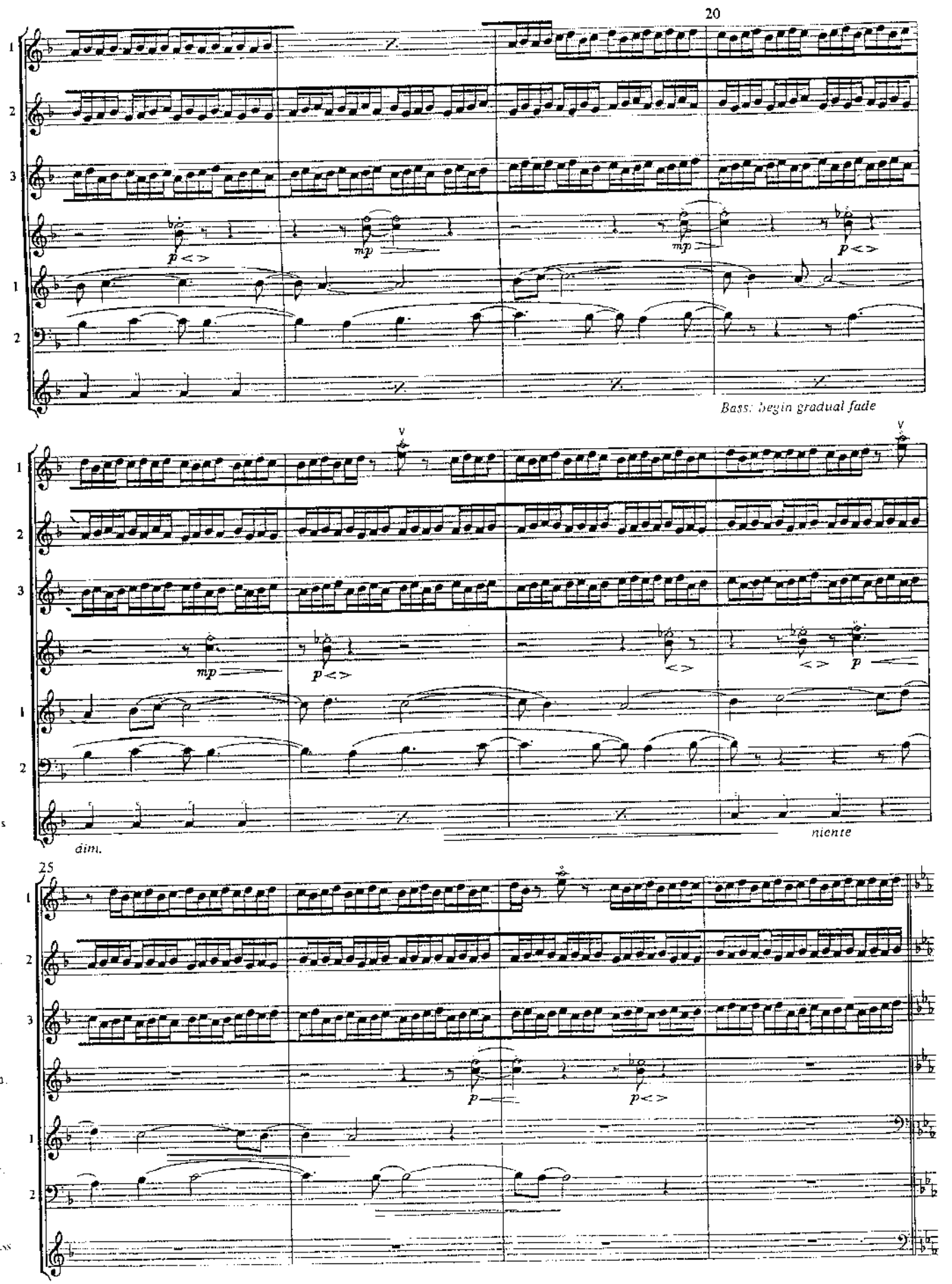

1
2
3
1
2
(div.)
mp
pp
p
arco
pizz.
mf

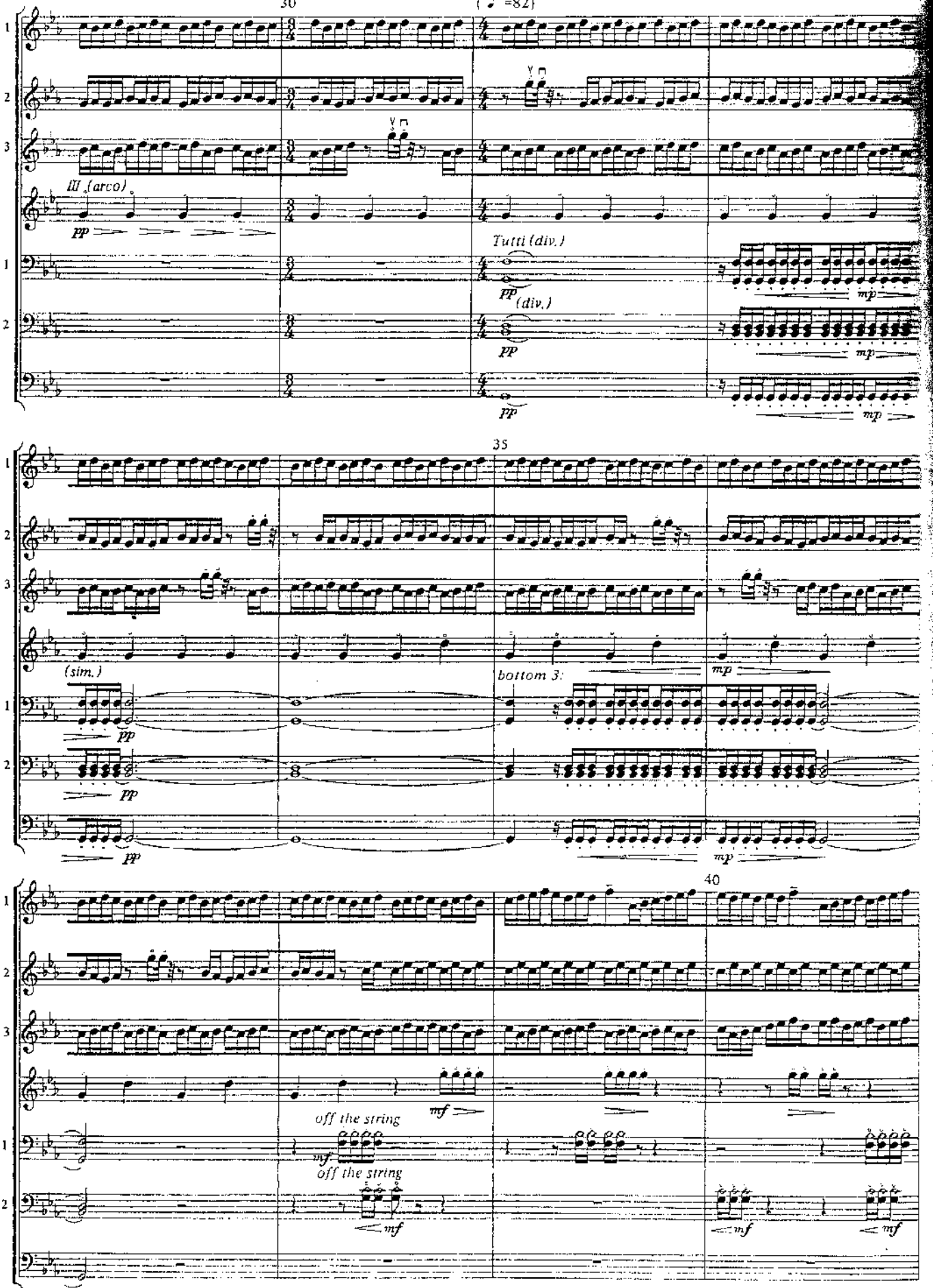

1
2
3
1
2
(non div.)
mp
pp
p
pizz.
arco
mf

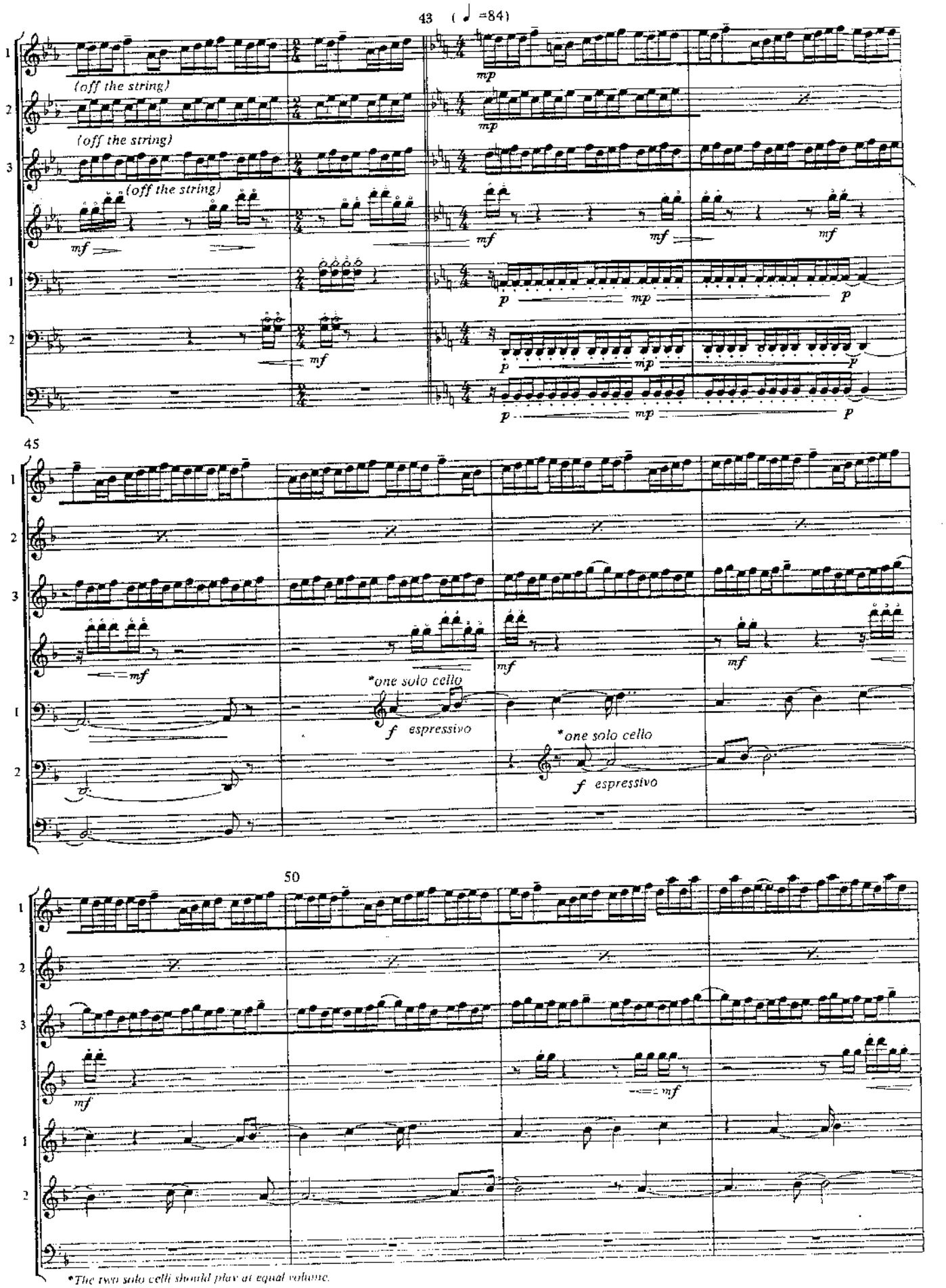
PART III
LOOPS AND VERSES

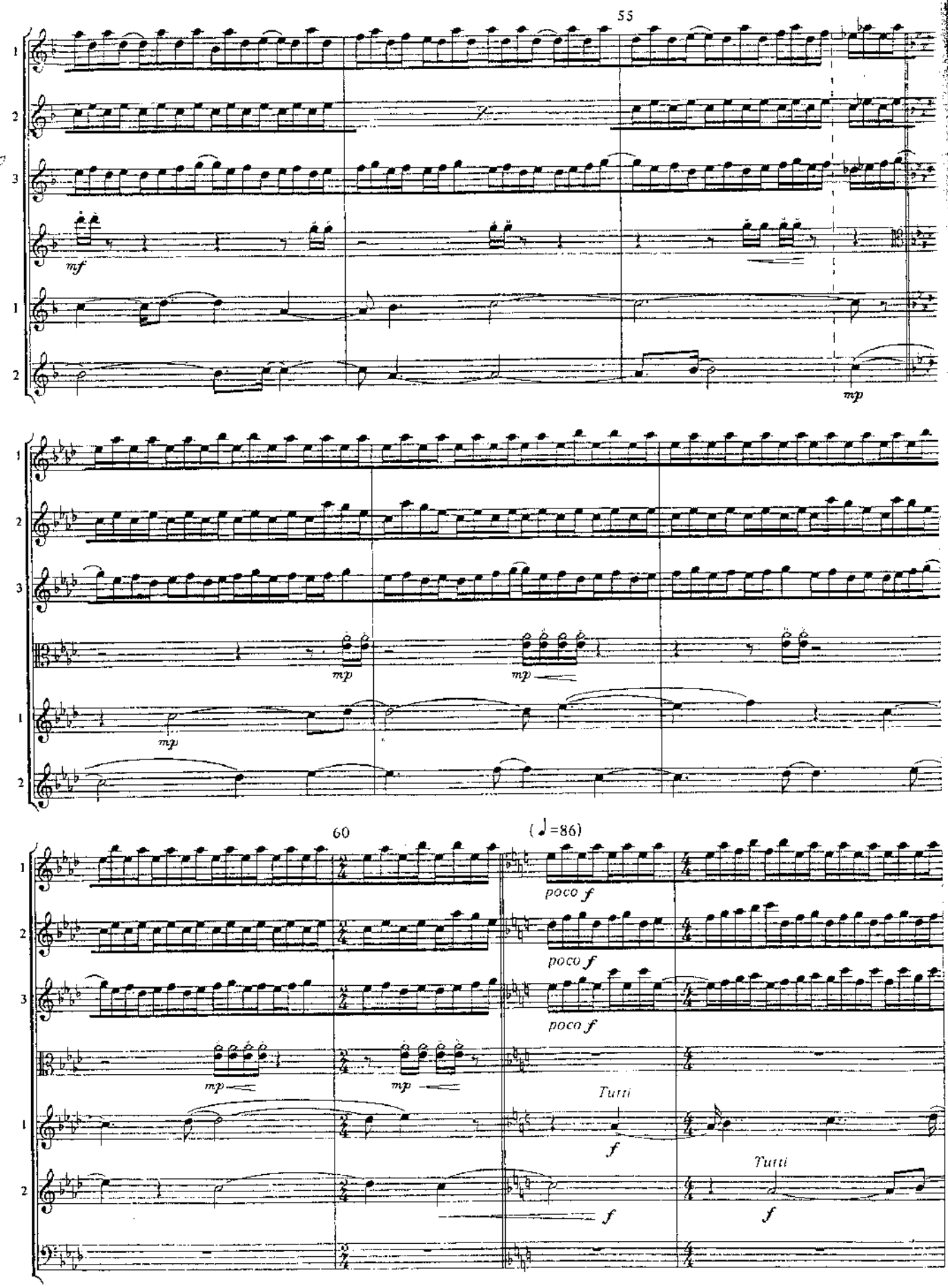


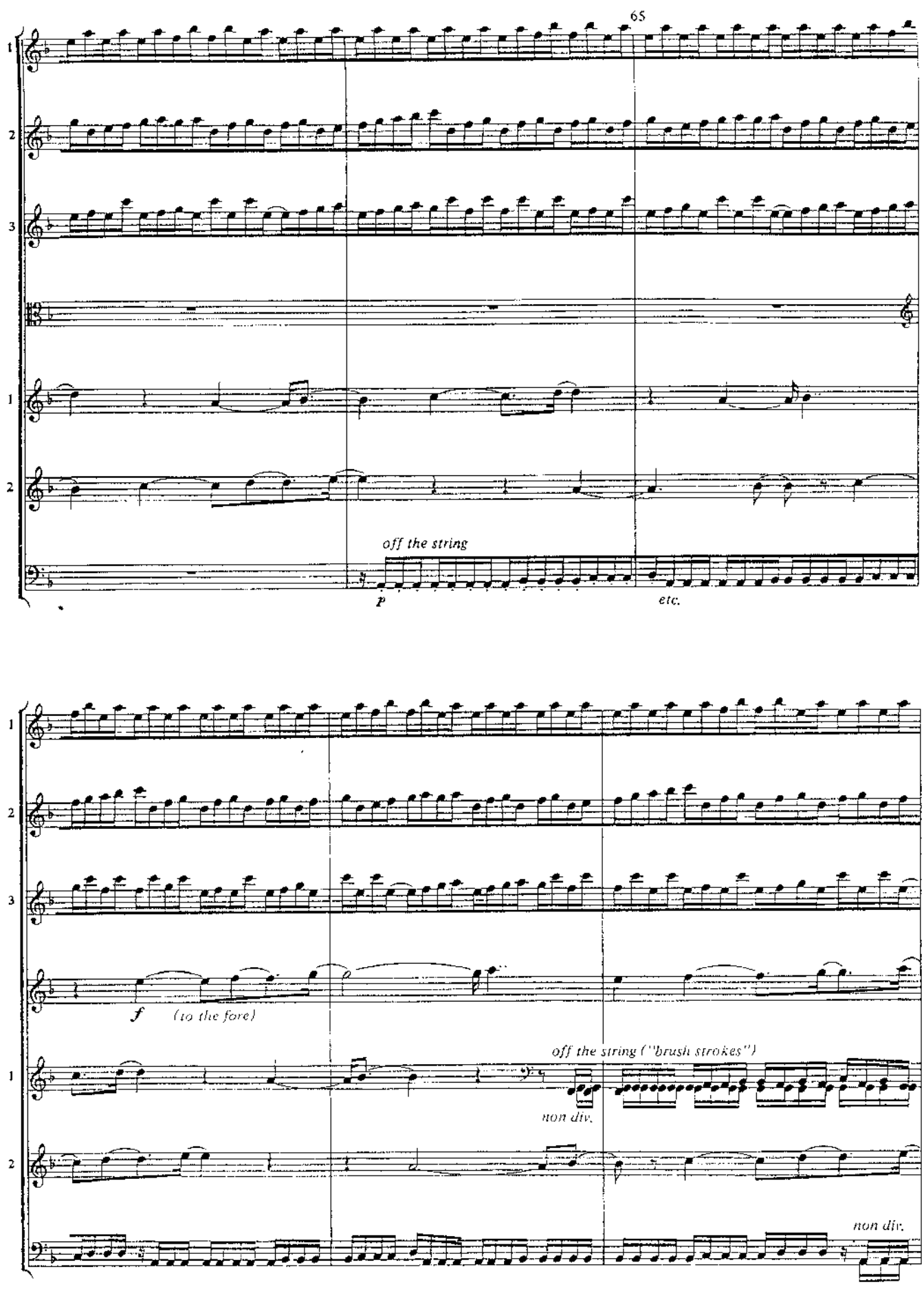
*Solo cello should be predominant in the texture with a gentle expressivo.

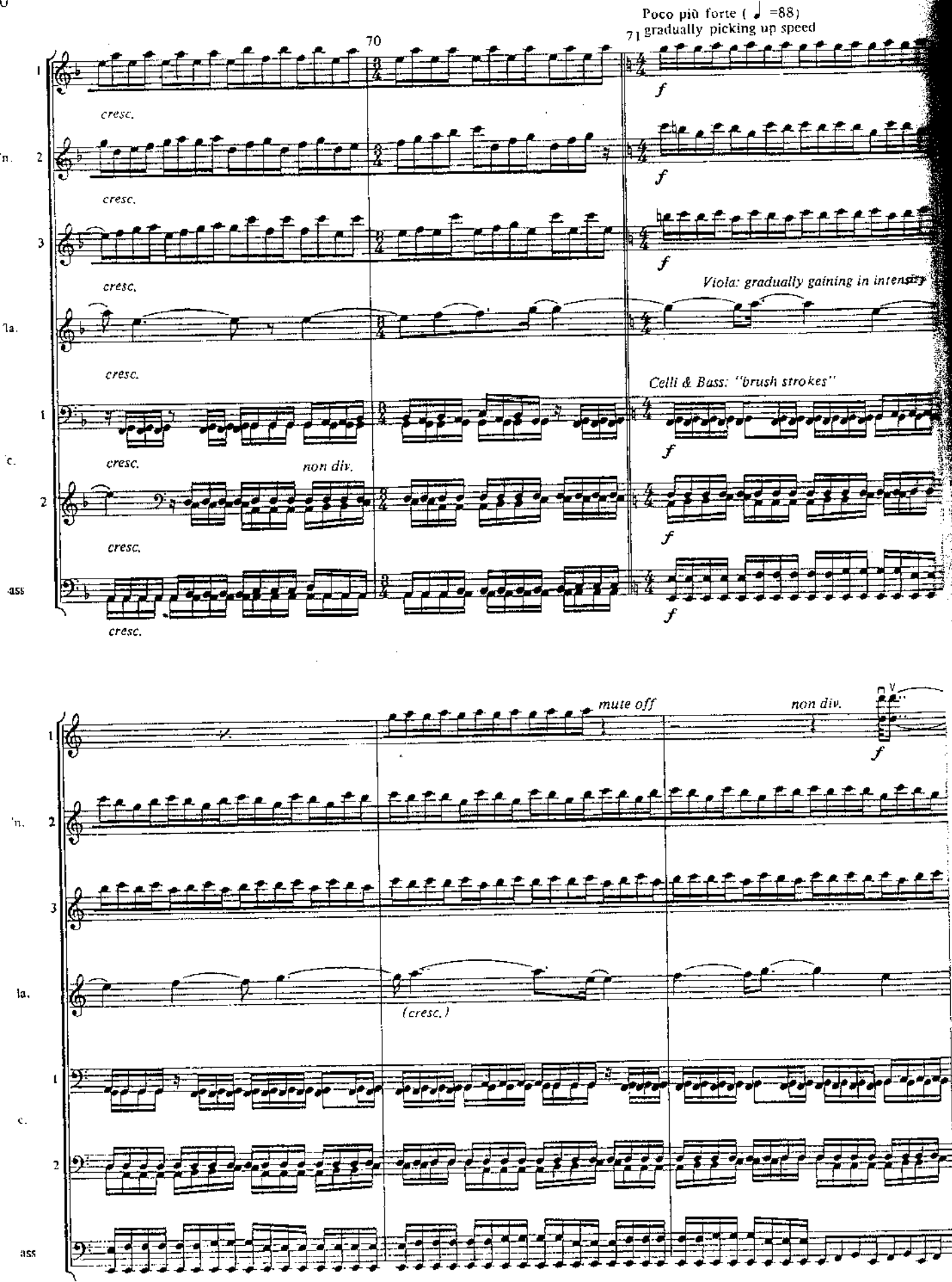

1
2
3
p <>
mp
mp
p <>
1
2
Bass: begin gradual fade
1
2
3
mp
p <>
<>
<>
p
1
2
dim.
niente
25
1
2
3
p
p <>
1
2

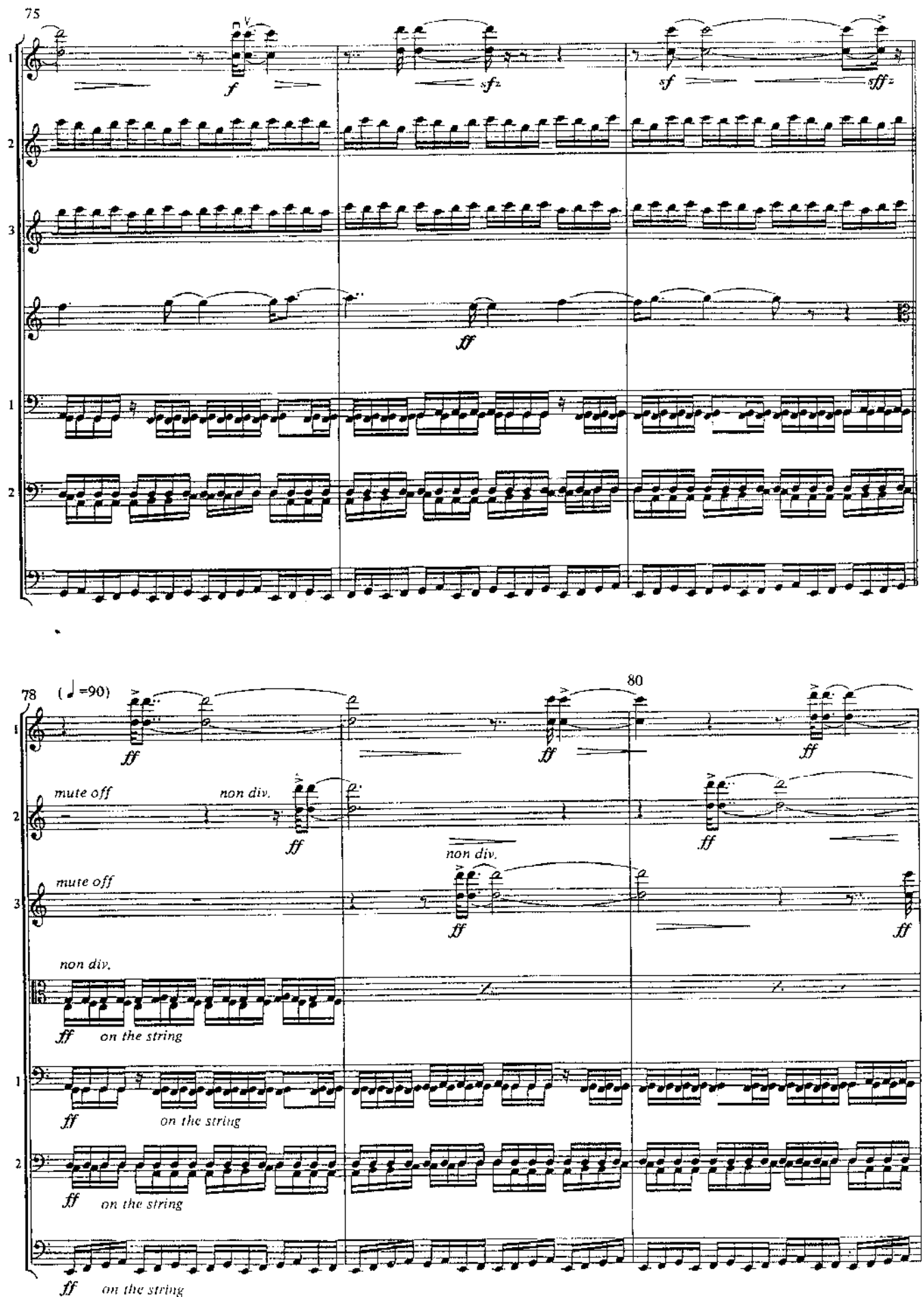

30
35
40
III (arco)
pp
Tutti (div.)
(div.)
mp
(sim.)
bottom 3:
off the string
mf

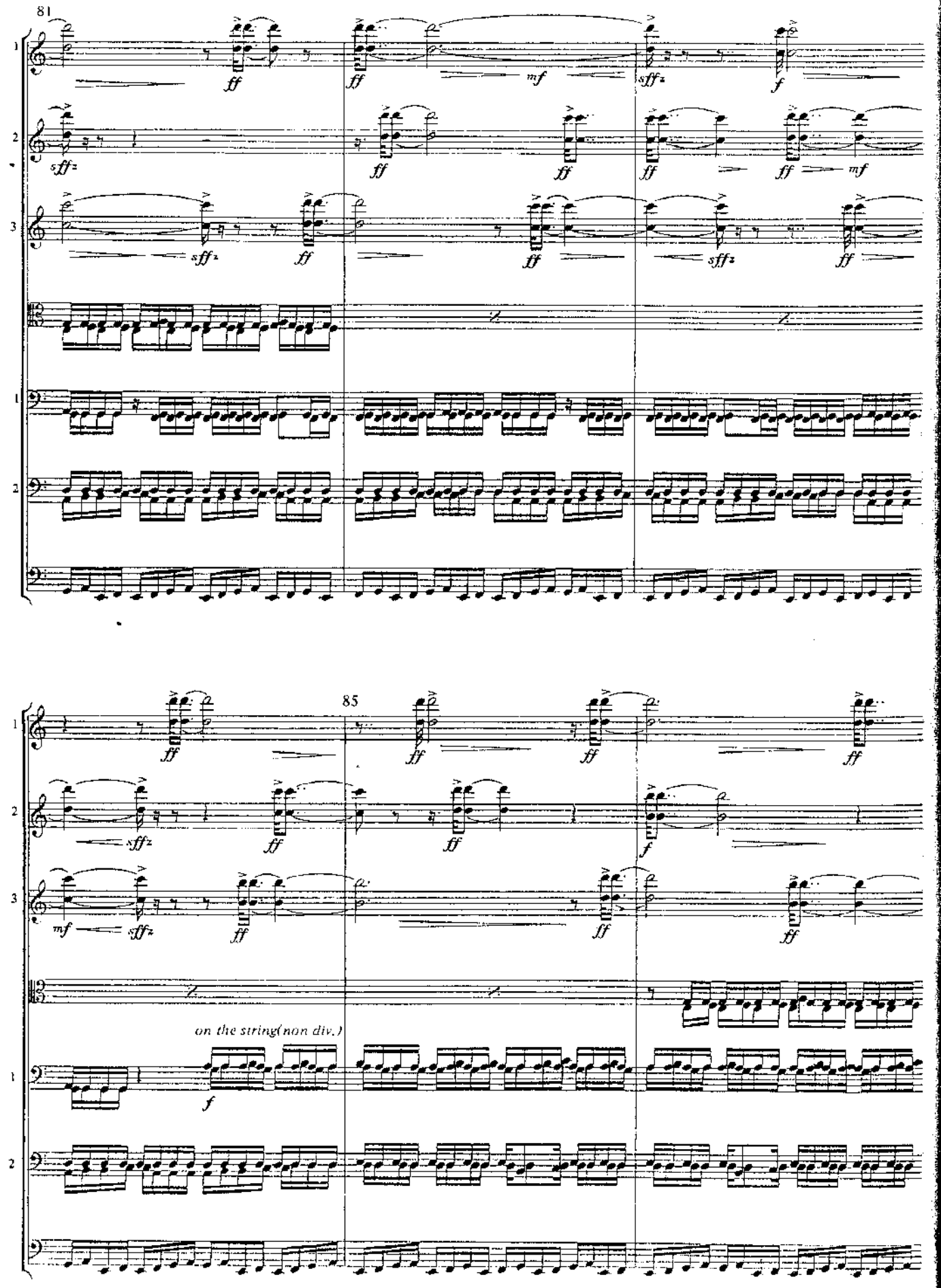

43 (♩=84)
(off the string)
(off the string)
(off the string)
mp
mf
p
45
*one solo cello
f espressivo
*one solo cello
f espressivo
50
*The two solo celli should play at equal volume.

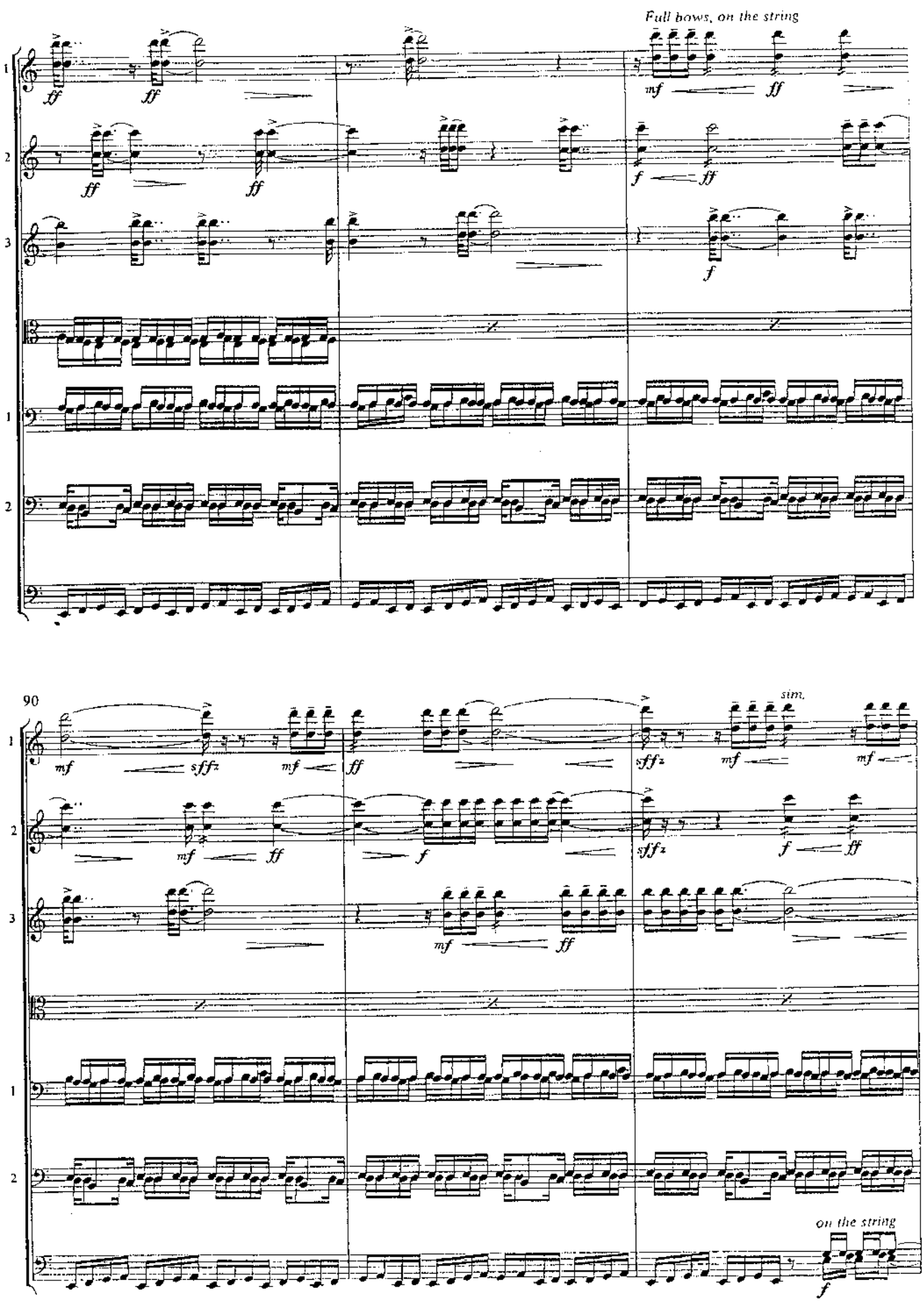

mf
mp
mp
mp
mp
60
(♩=86)
poco f
poco f
poco f
Tutti
f
Tutti
f
f

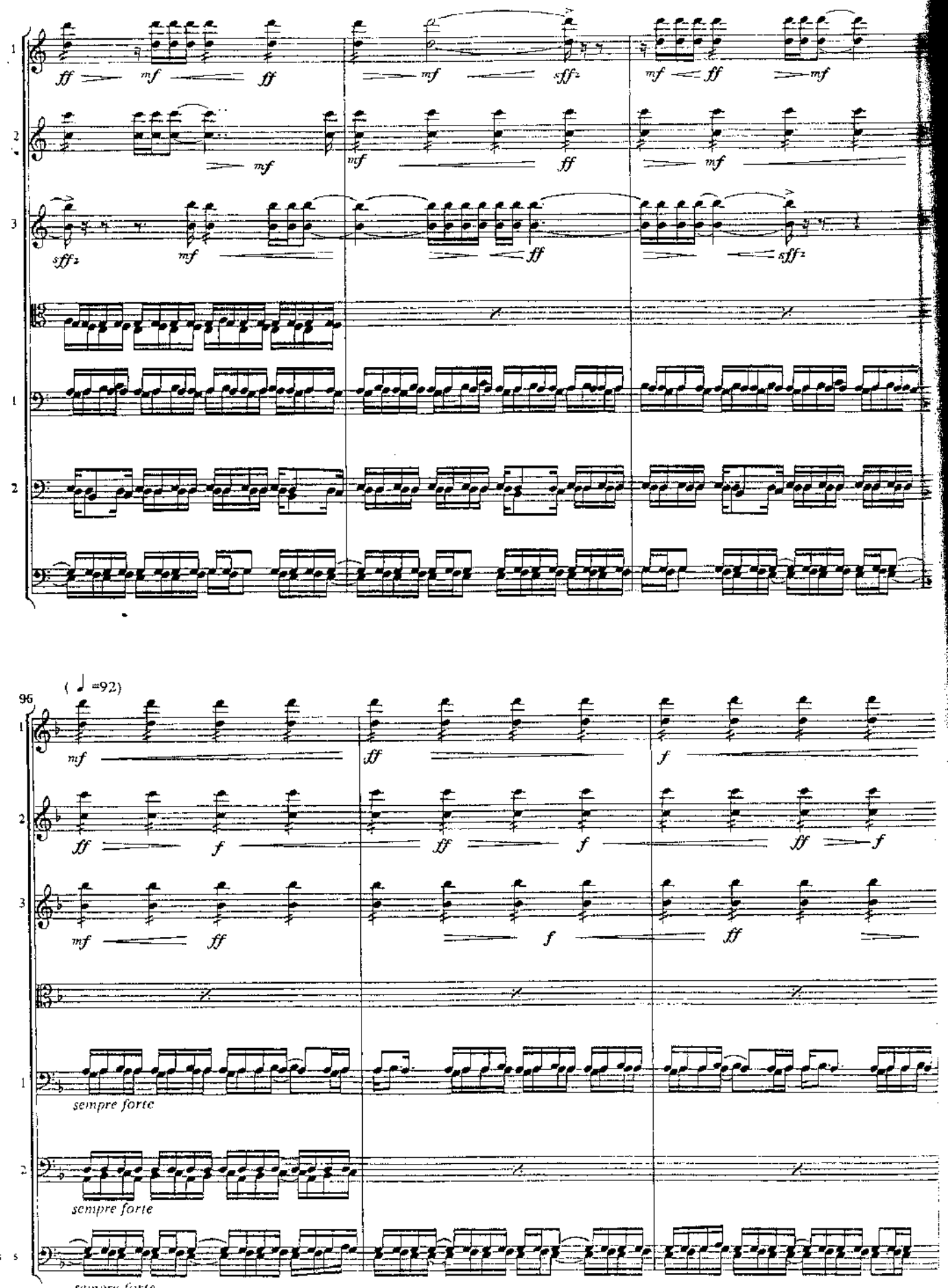

1
2
3
1
2
off the string
p
etc.
1
2
3
f
(to the fore)
off the string ("brush strokes")
non div.
1
2
non div.

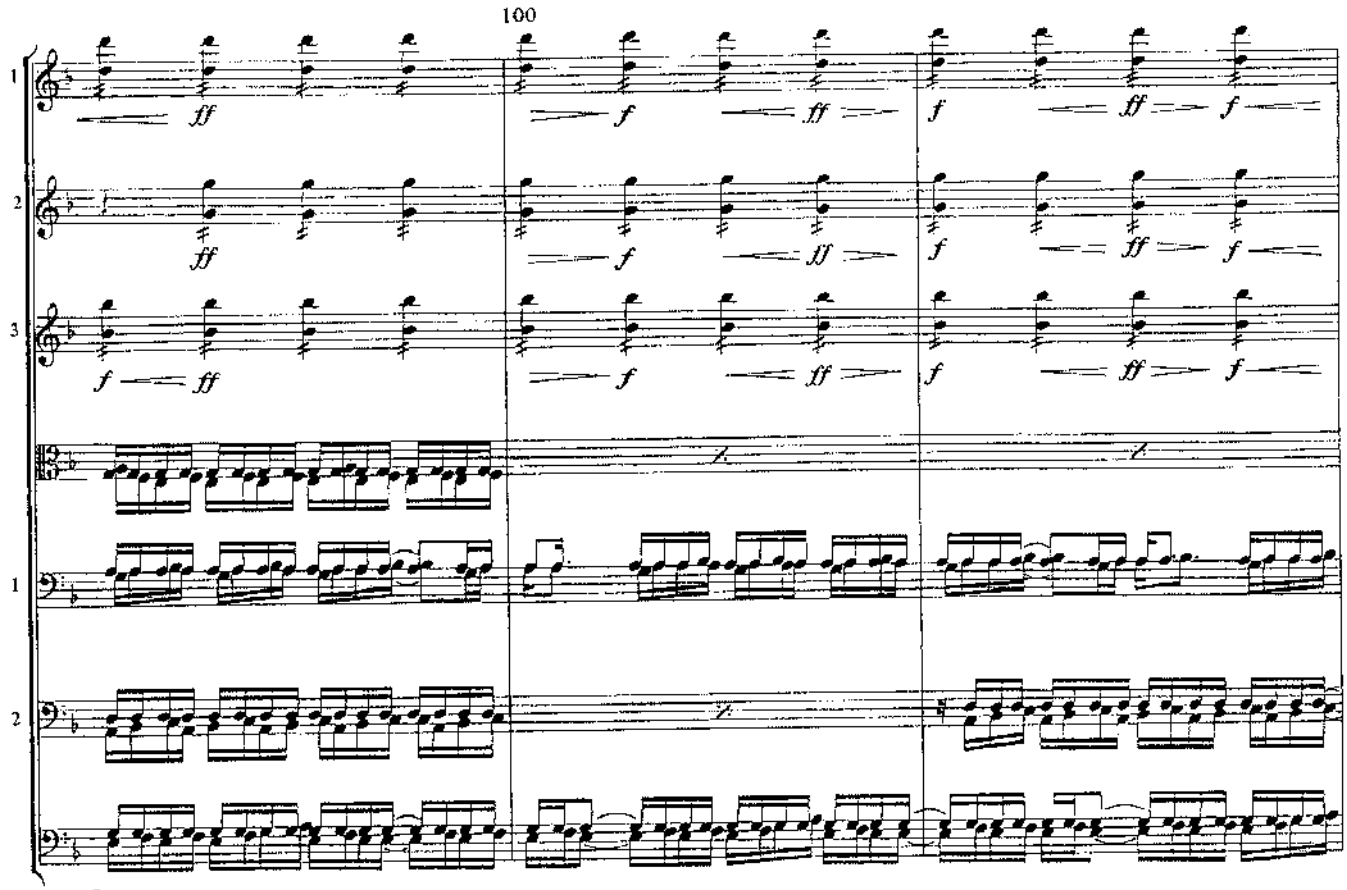

70
71
Poco più forte (♩ =88)
gradually picking up speed
cresc.
f
Viola: gradually gaining in intensity
Celli & Bass: "brush strokes"
non div.
mute off
(cresc.)

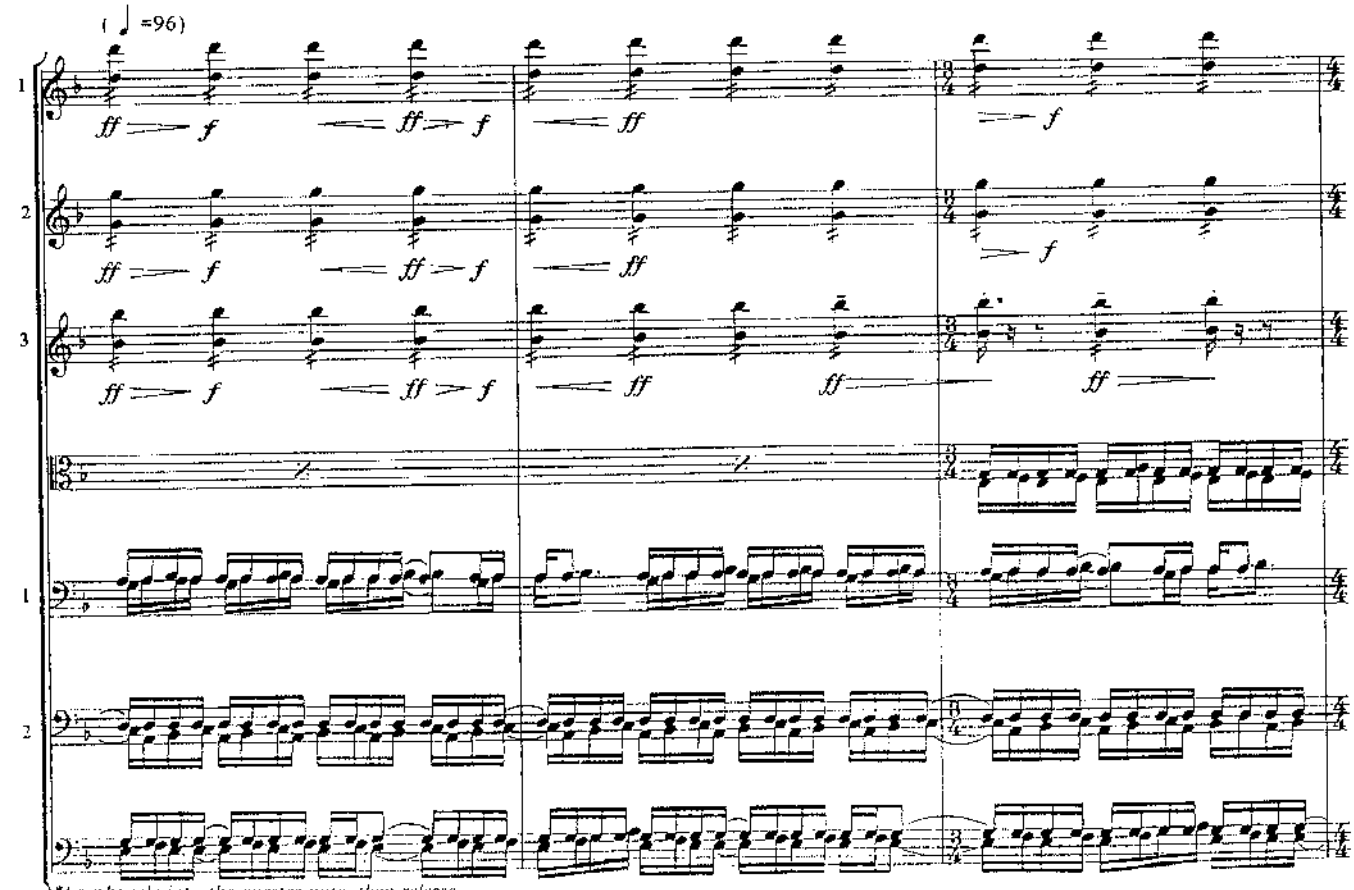

75
f
sfz
sf
sfffz
ff
78
(♩=90)
80
ff
mute off
non div.
mute off
non div.
non div.
ff on the string
ff on the string
ff on the string
ff on the string


81
85
on the string(non div.)

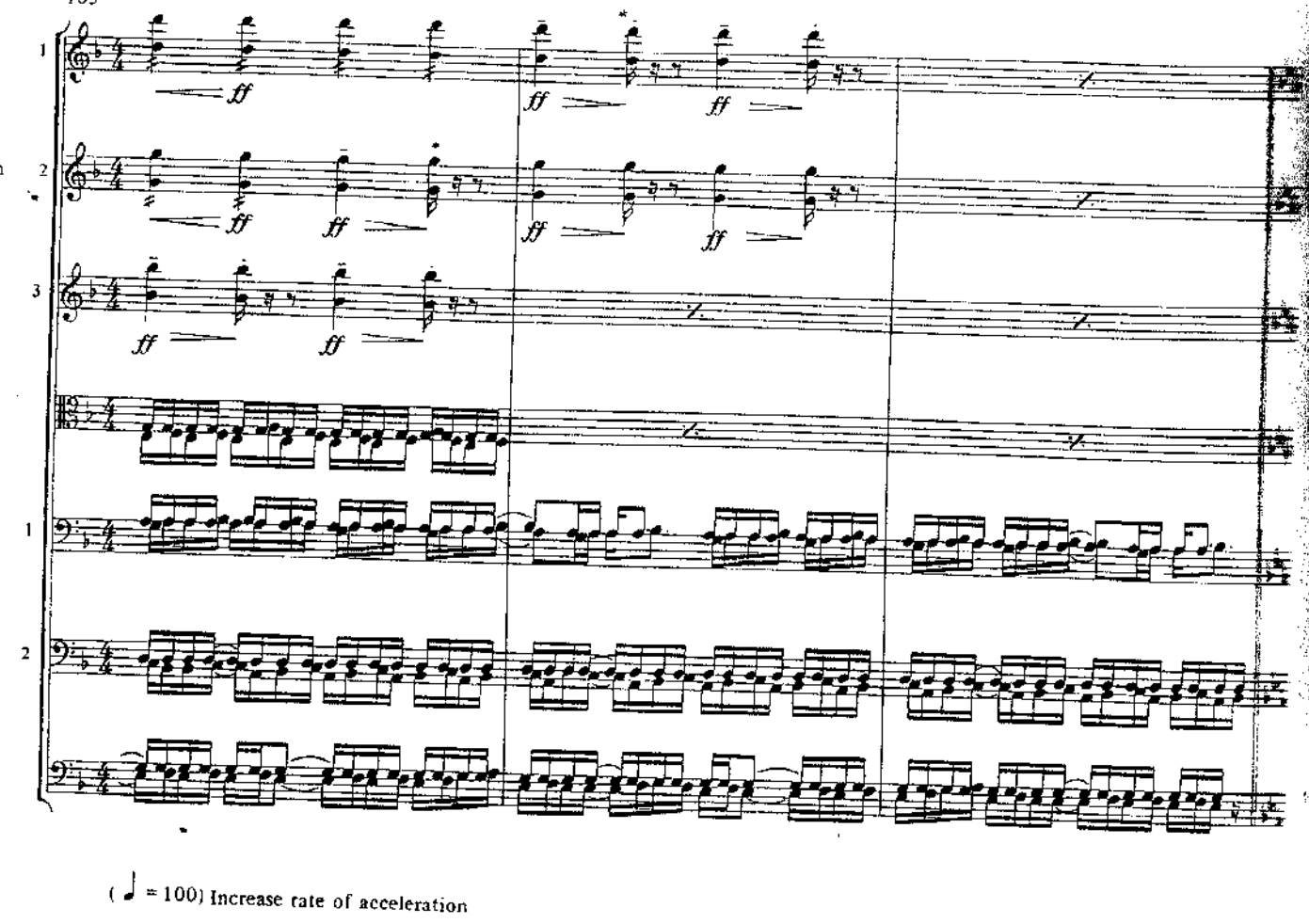

Full bows, on the string
90
sim.
on the string


(♩ =92)
96
sempre forte
sempre forte

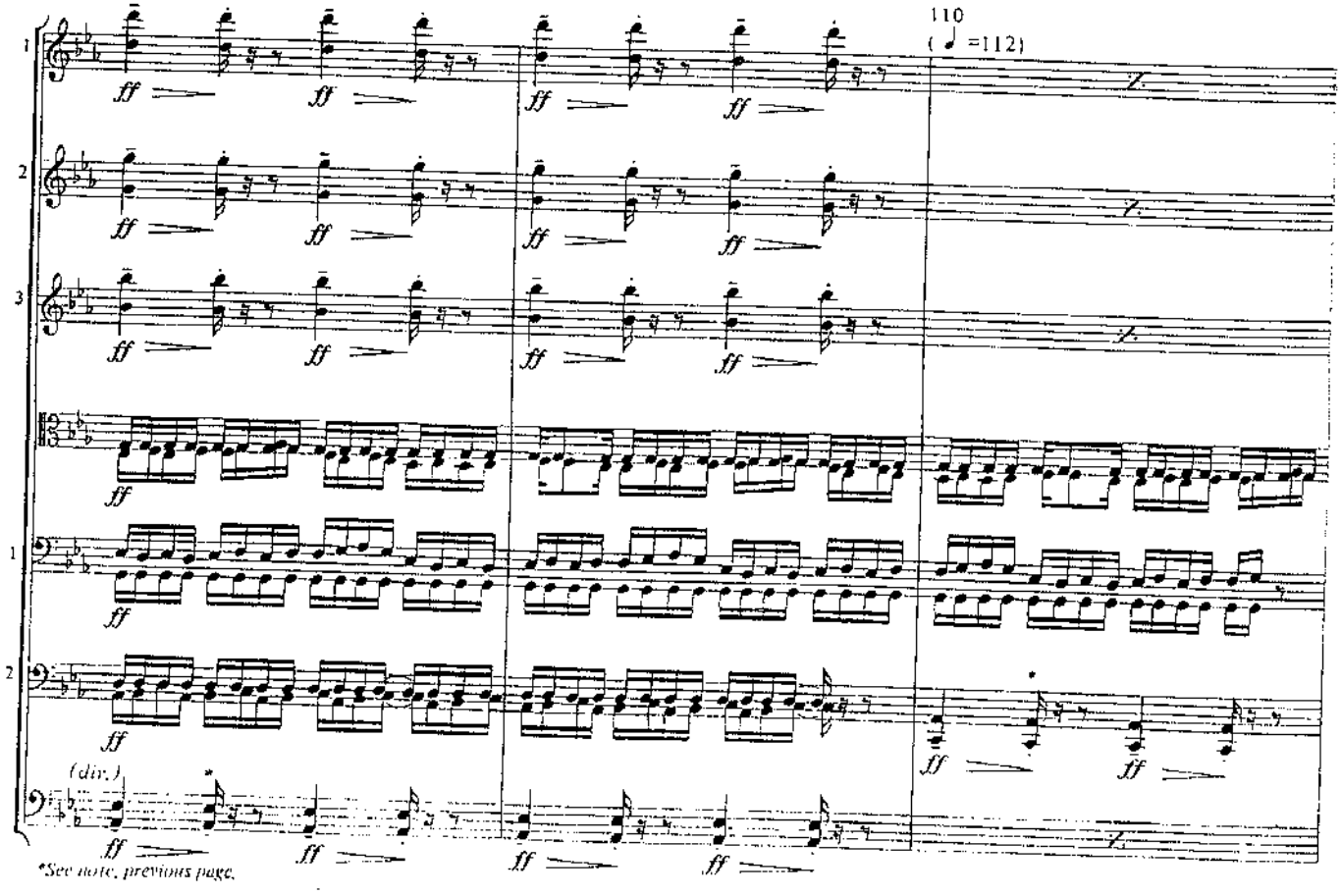




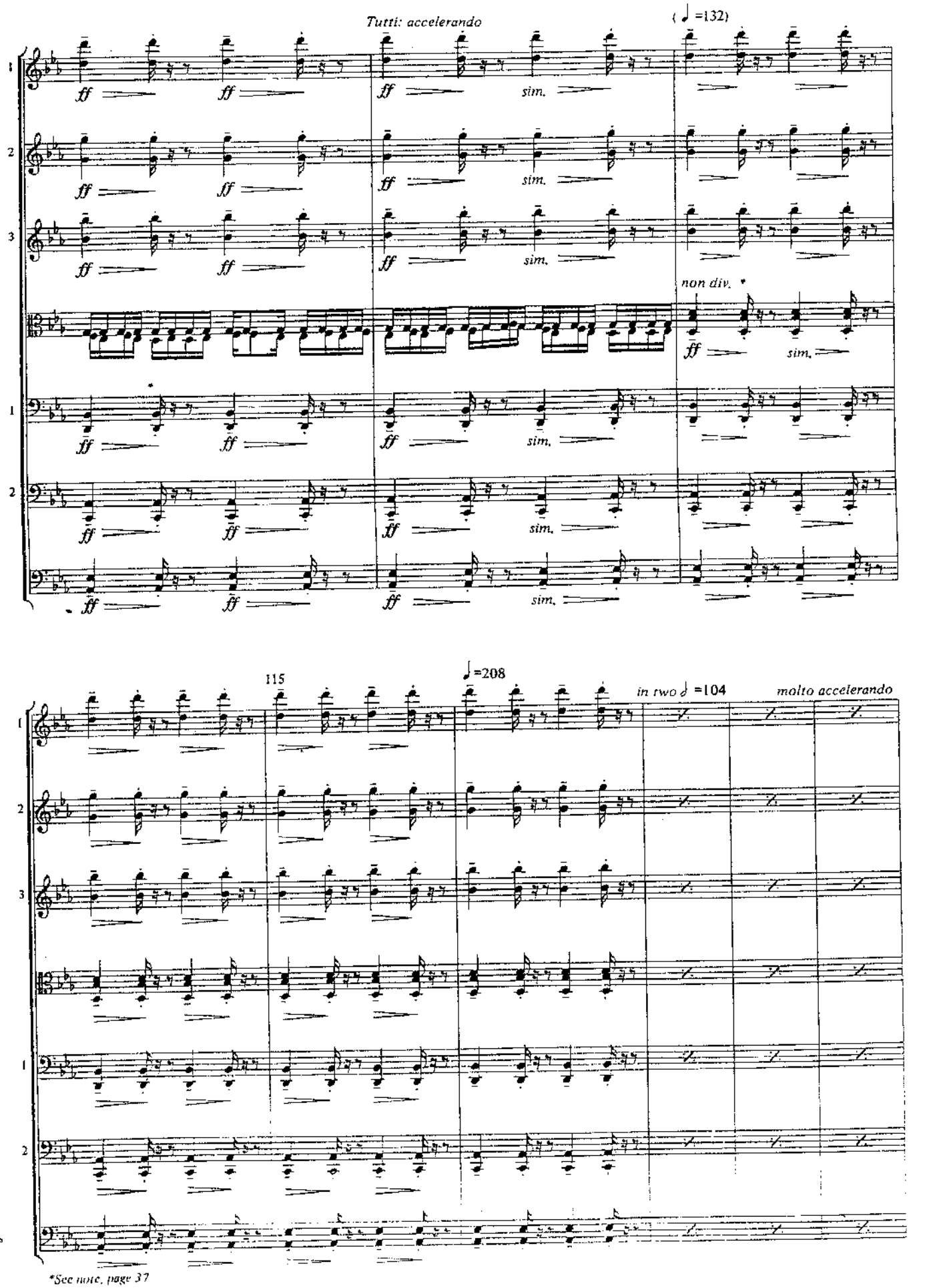
*Lean heavily into the quarter note, then release on the sixteenth (♩ 𝅘𝅥𝅯) should sound "DAAAAH dit"); play the quarter note espressivo and the sixteenth short and light.

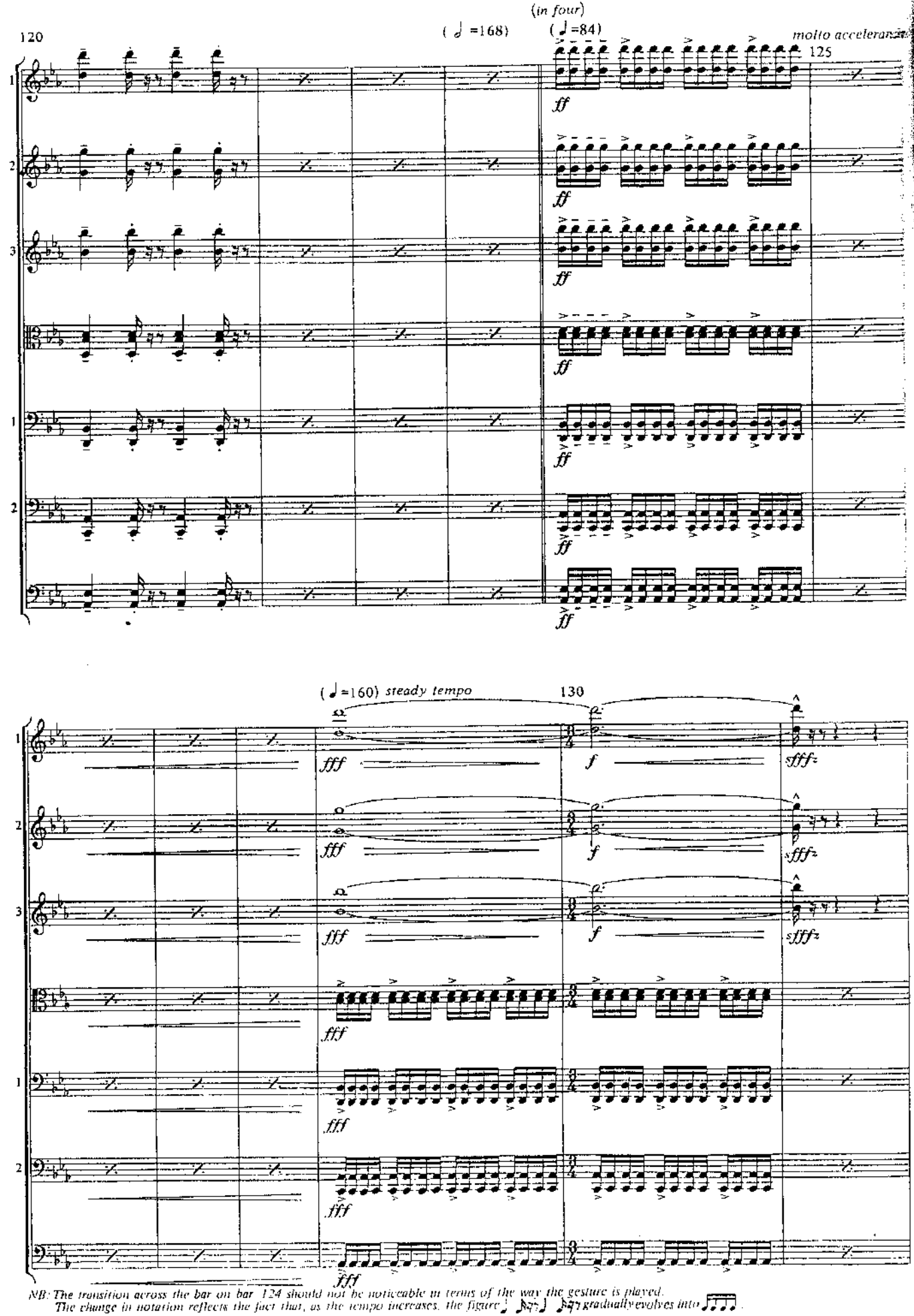


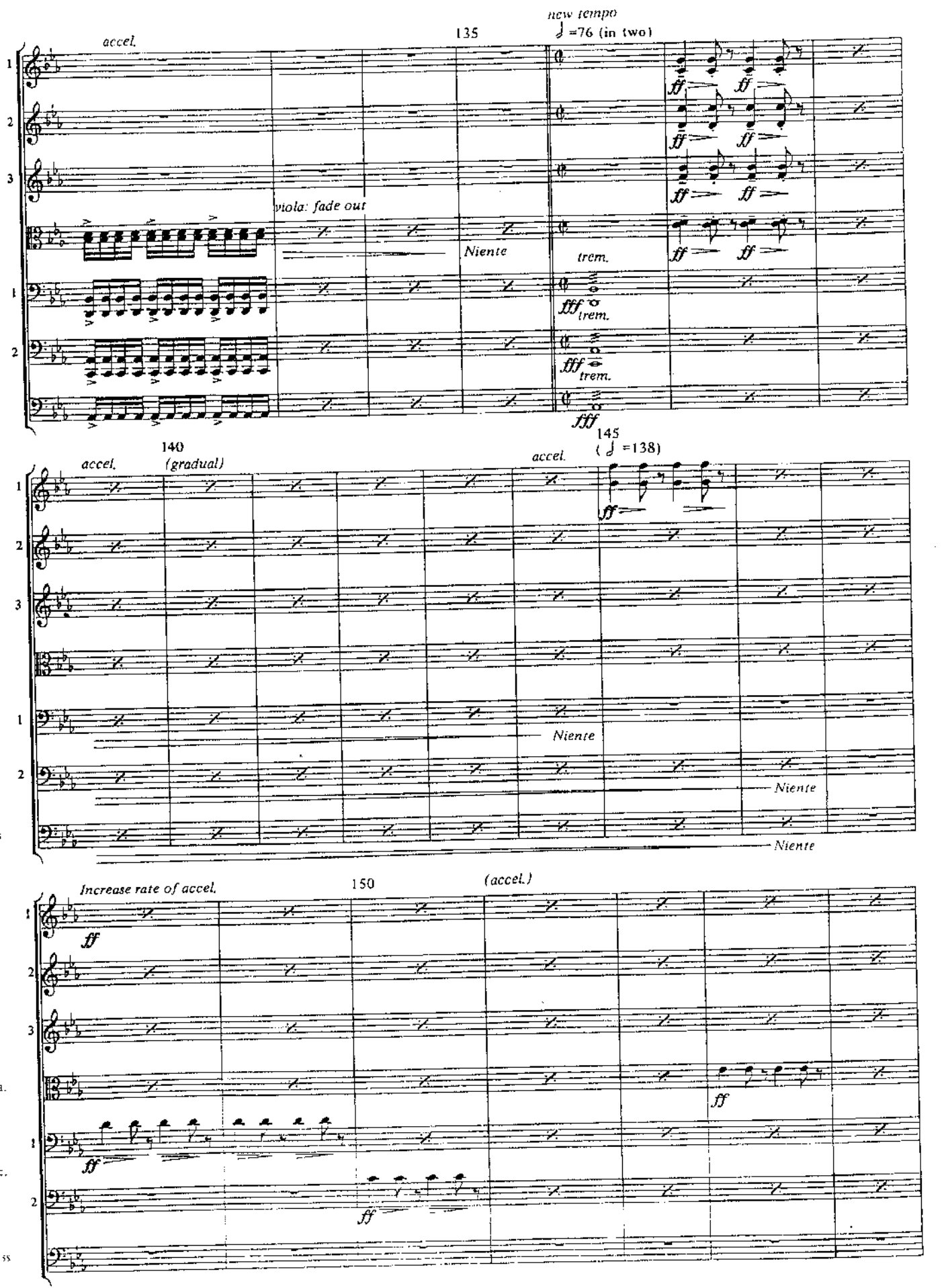
(♩ = 100) Increase rate of acceleration

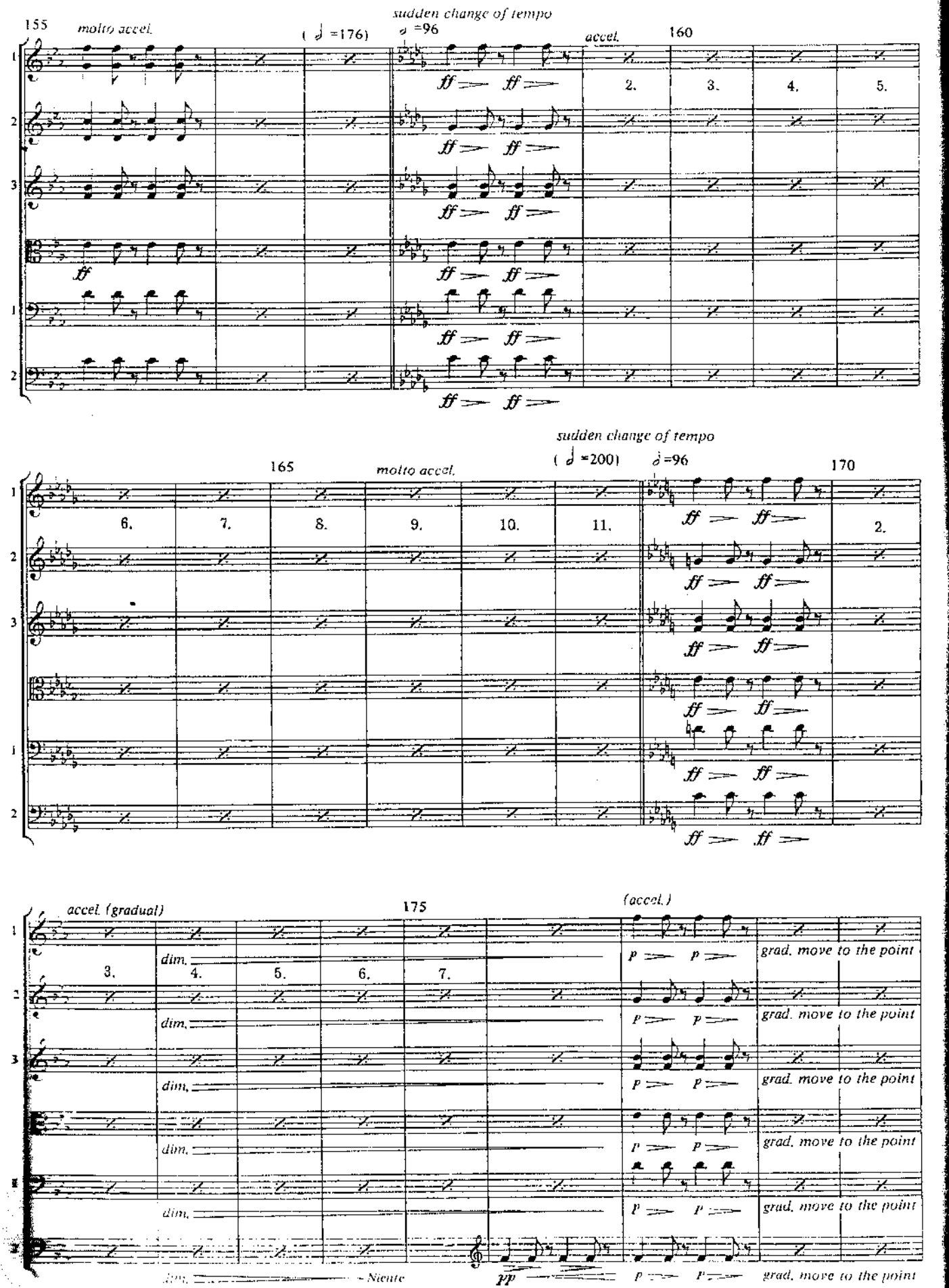


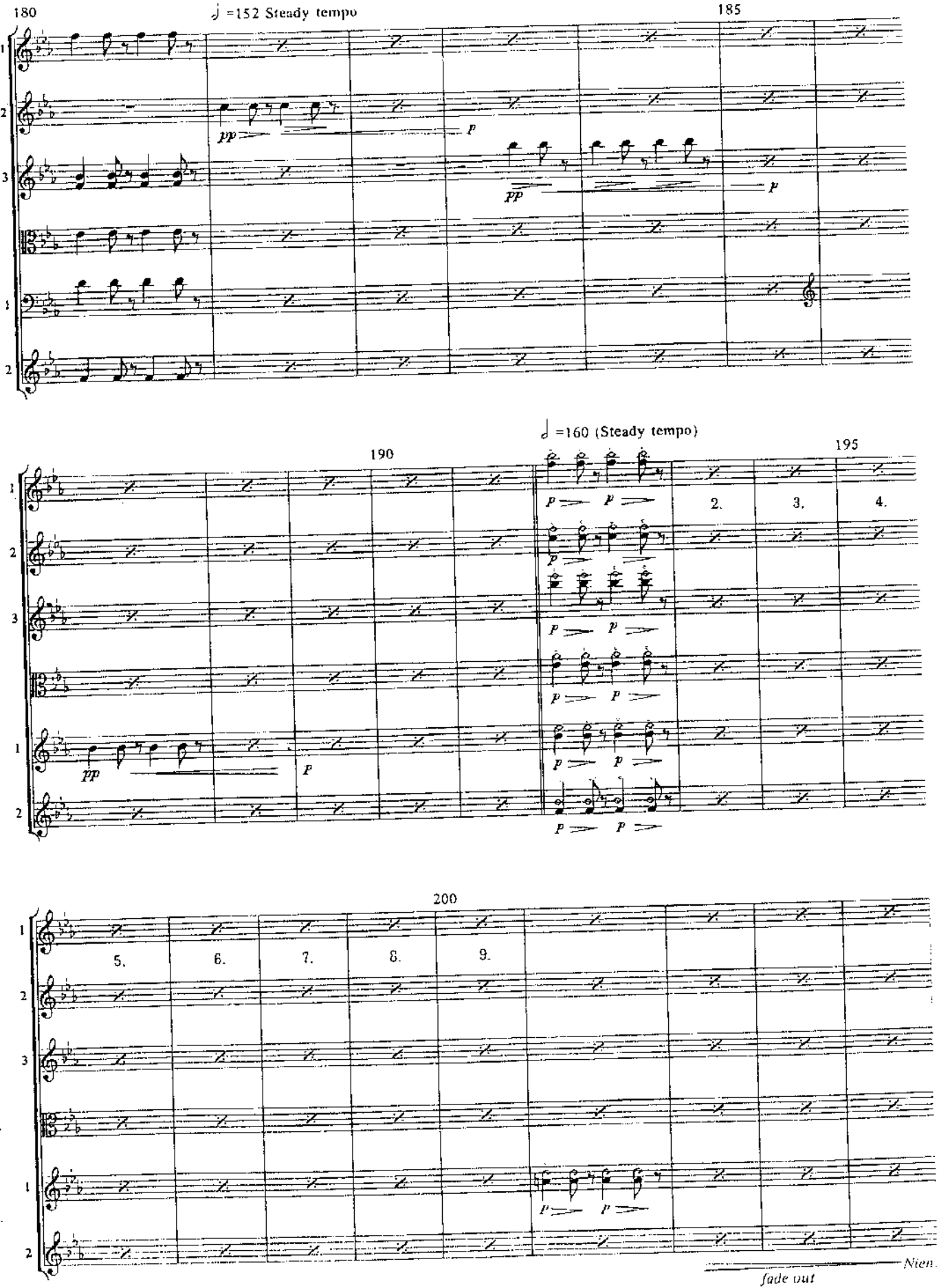
*See note, previous page.

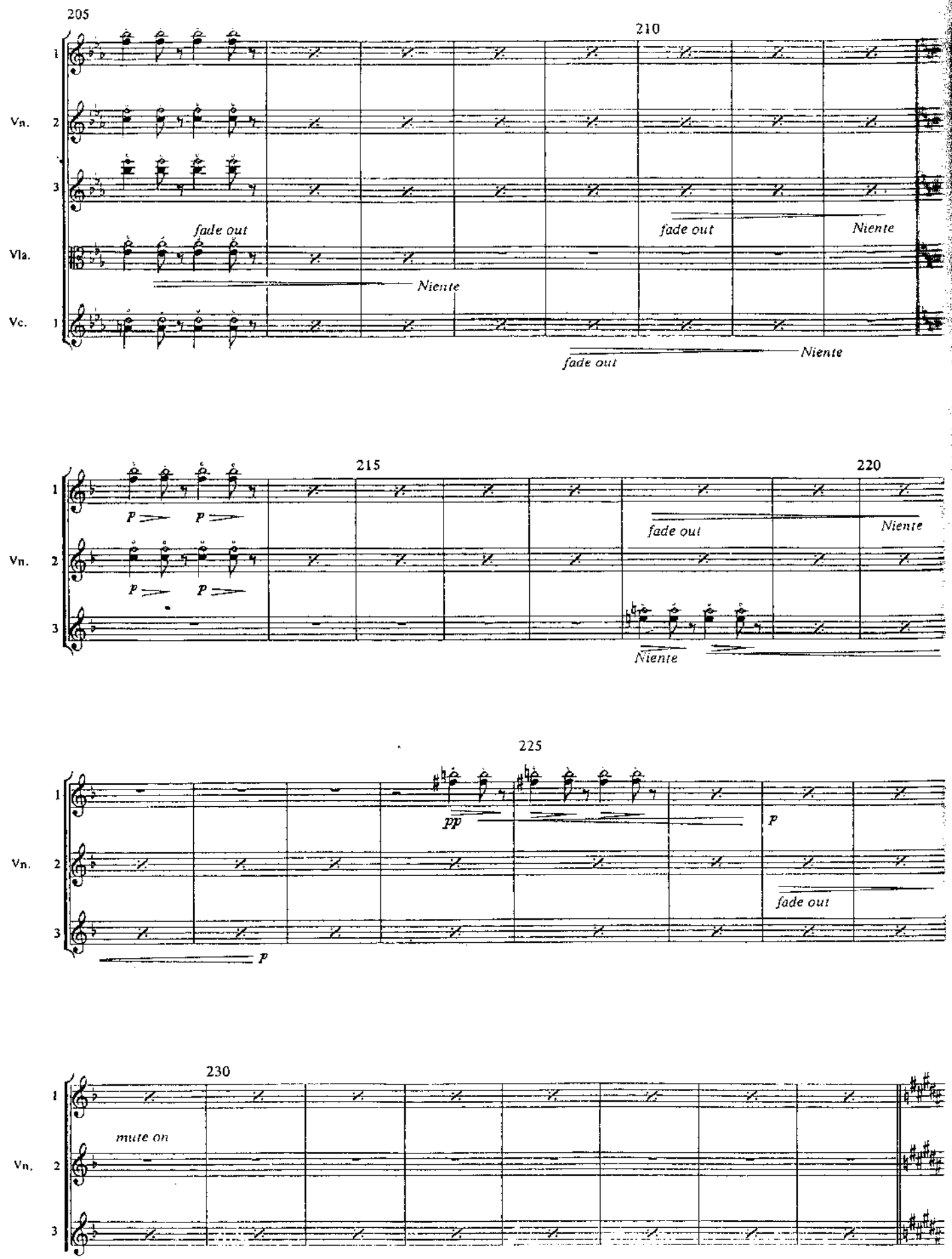

Tutti: accelerando
(♩=132)
non div. *
115
♩=208
in two 𝅗𝅥=104
molto accelerando
*See note, page 37


120
(in four)
(♩=168)
(♩=84)
molto accelerando
125
ff
(♩=160) steady tempo
130
fff
f
sfff
NB: The transition across the bar on bar 124 should not be noticeable in terms of the way the gesture is played.
The change in notation reflects the fact that, as the tempo increases, the figure gradually evolves into


accel.
135
new tempo
♩ =76 (in two)
viola: fade out
Niente
trem.
fff trem.
fff trem.
fff
140
(gradual)
accel.
145
accel.
(♩ =138)
Niente
Niente
Niente
Increase rate of accel.
150
(accel.)


155
molto accel.
(𝅗𝅥 =176)
sudden change of tempo
𝅗𝅥 =96
accel.
160
2.
3.
4.
5.
ff
165
molto accel.
(𝅗𝅥 =200)
sudden change of tempo
𝅗𝅥 =96
170
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
2.
175
accel. (gradual)
(accel.)
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
dim.
p
grad. move to the point
pp
Niente

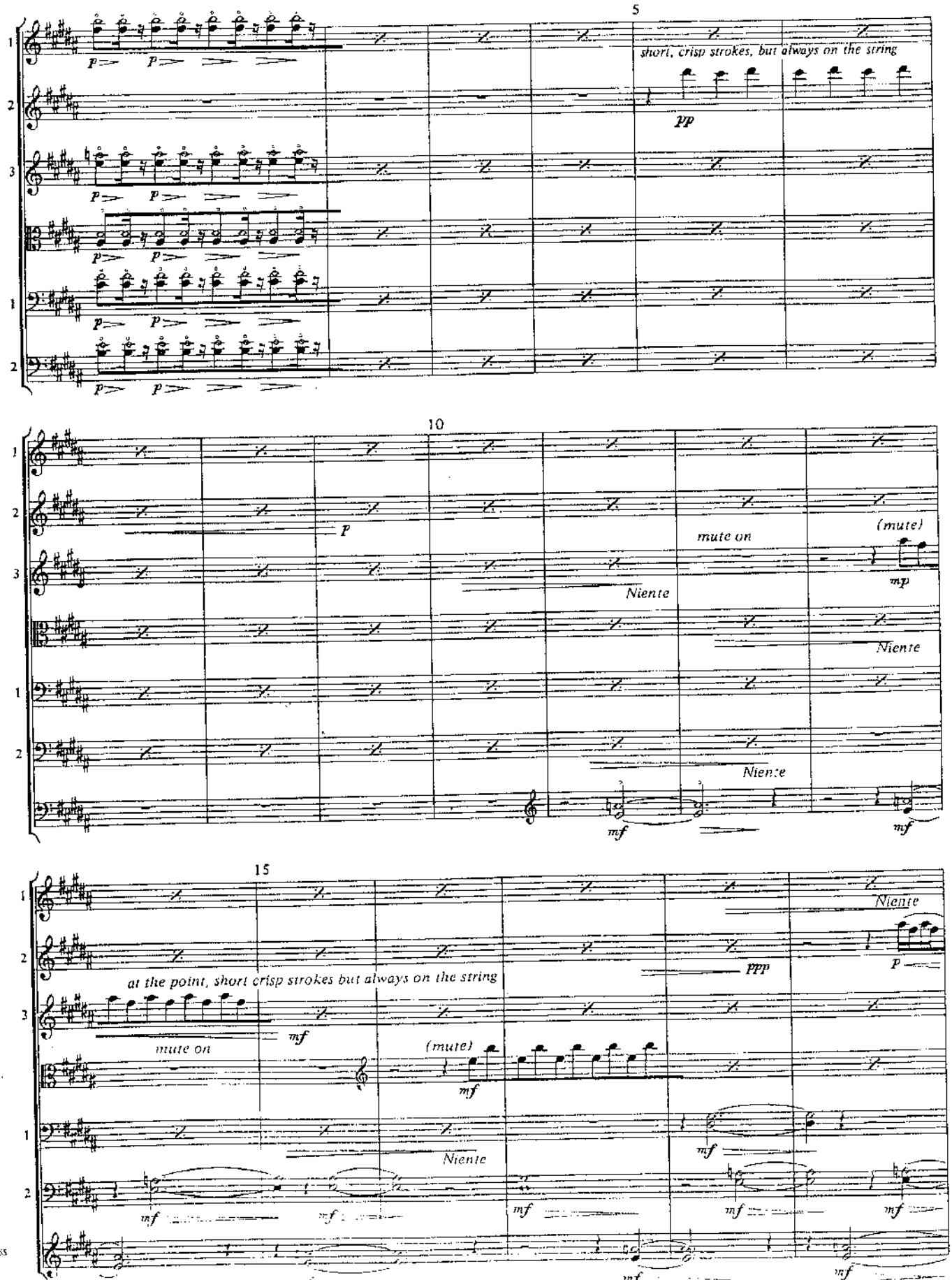

180
♩ =152 Steady tempo
185
190
♩ =160 (Steady tempo)
195
200
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
fade out

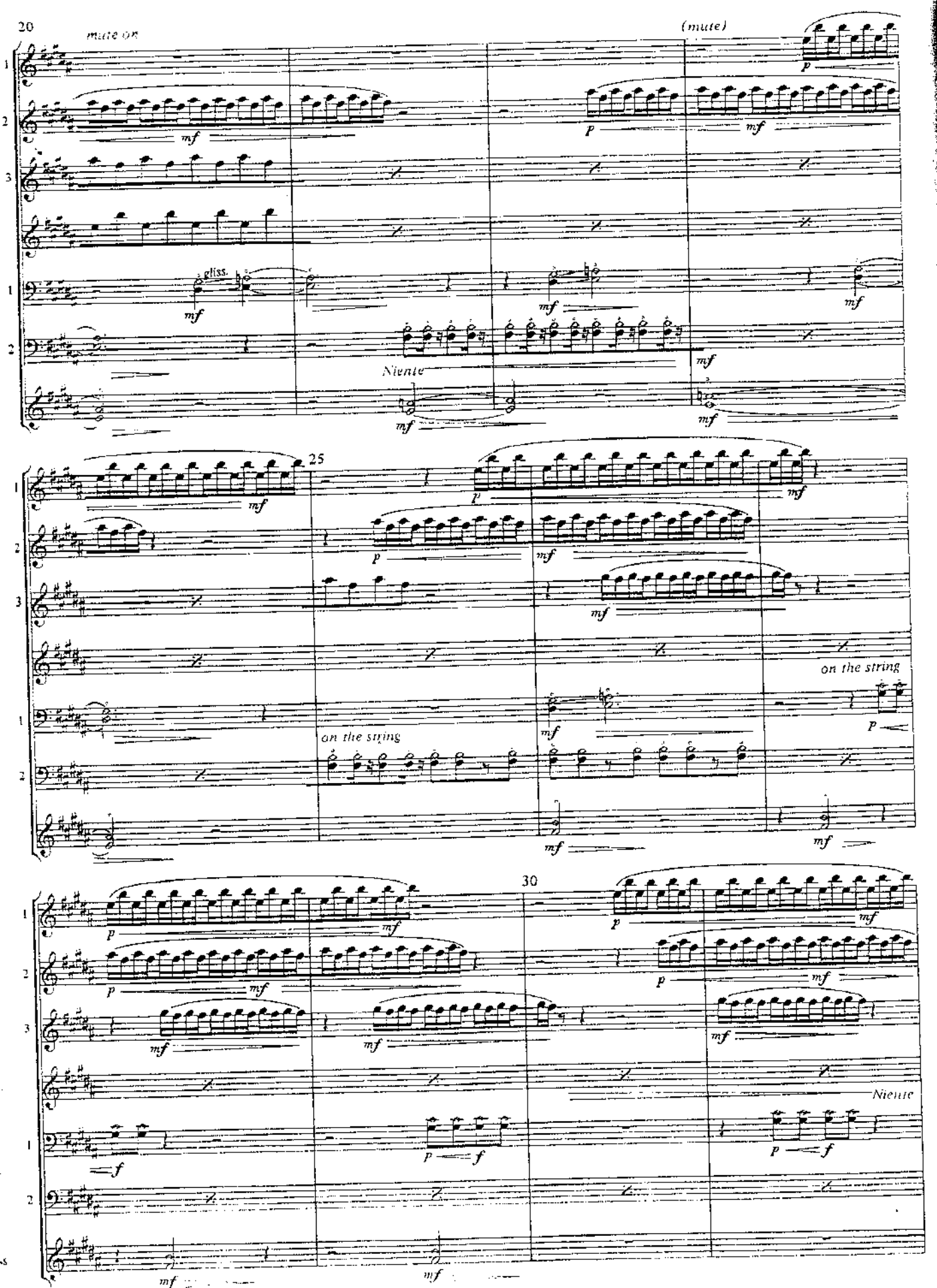


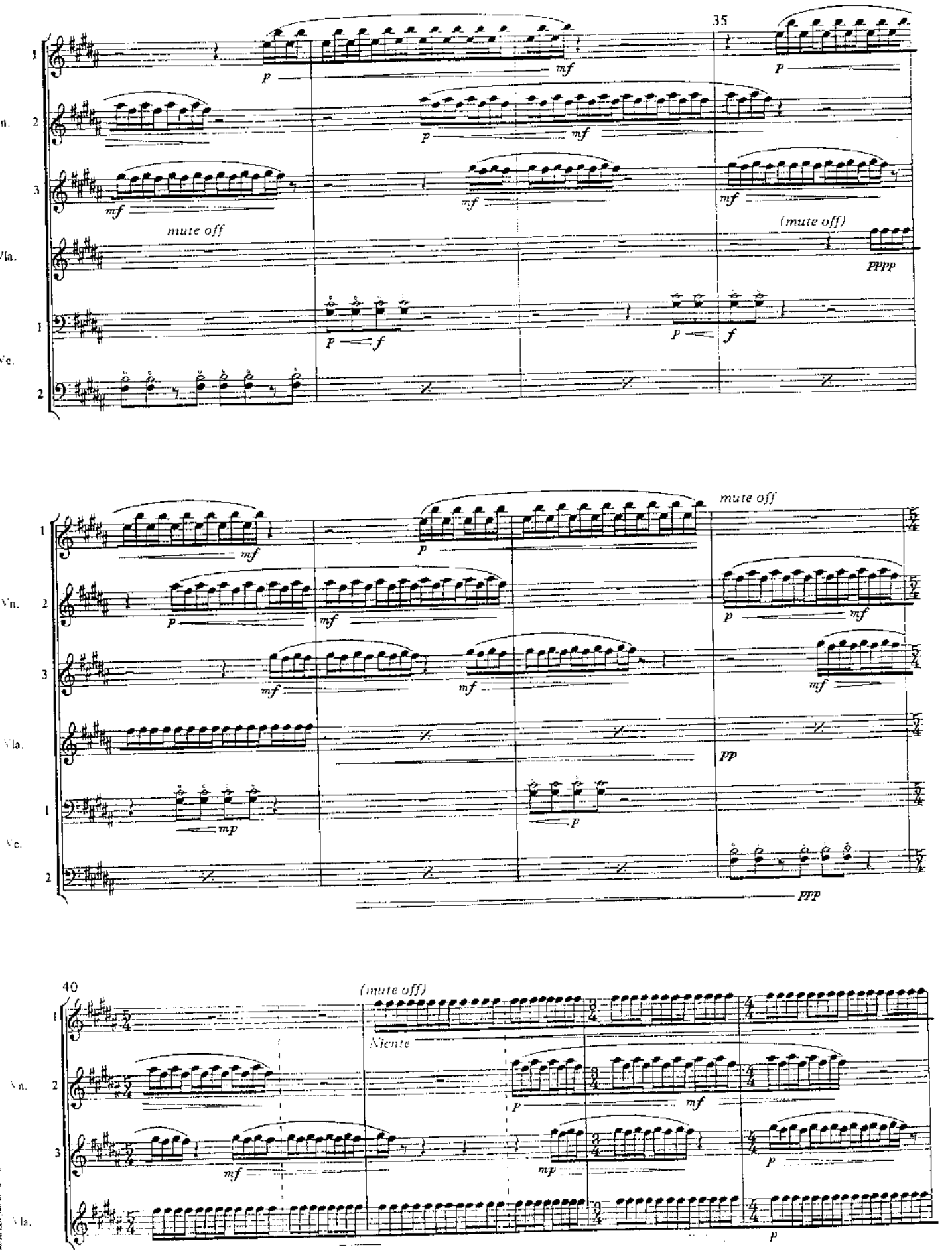
ATTACCA PART 4

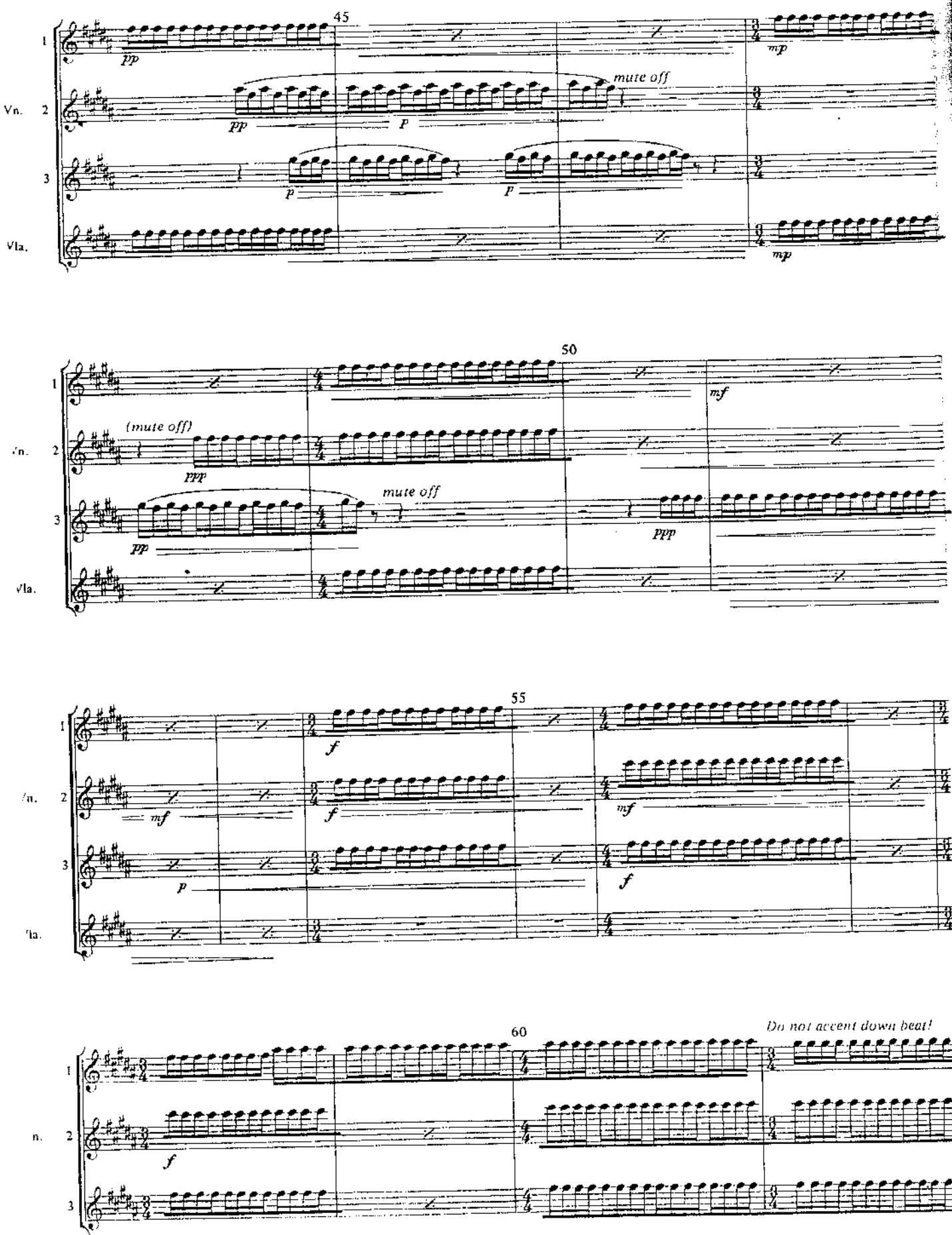
PART IV
A FINAL SHAKING

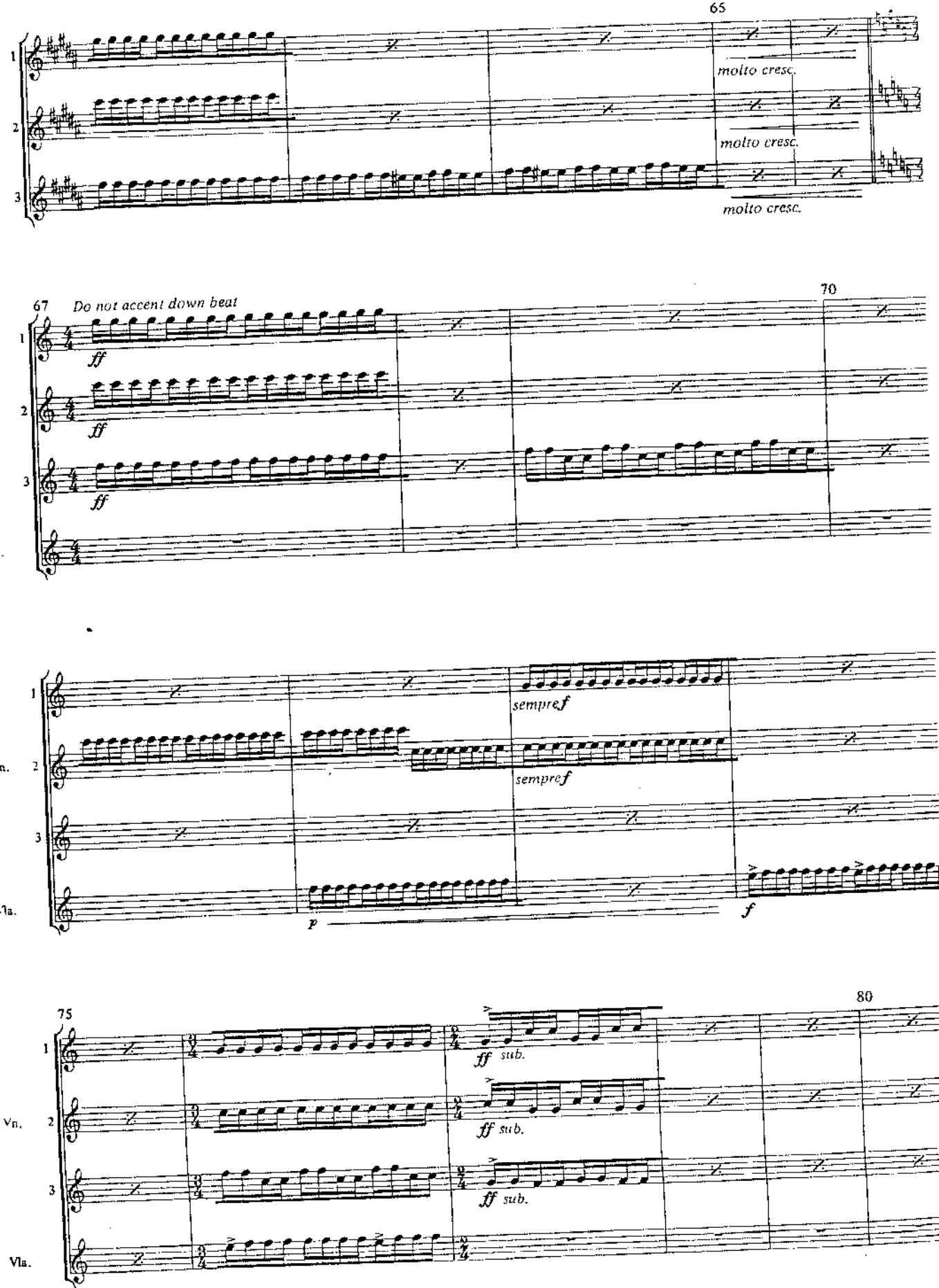
♩ = ♩ (♩ = 152)

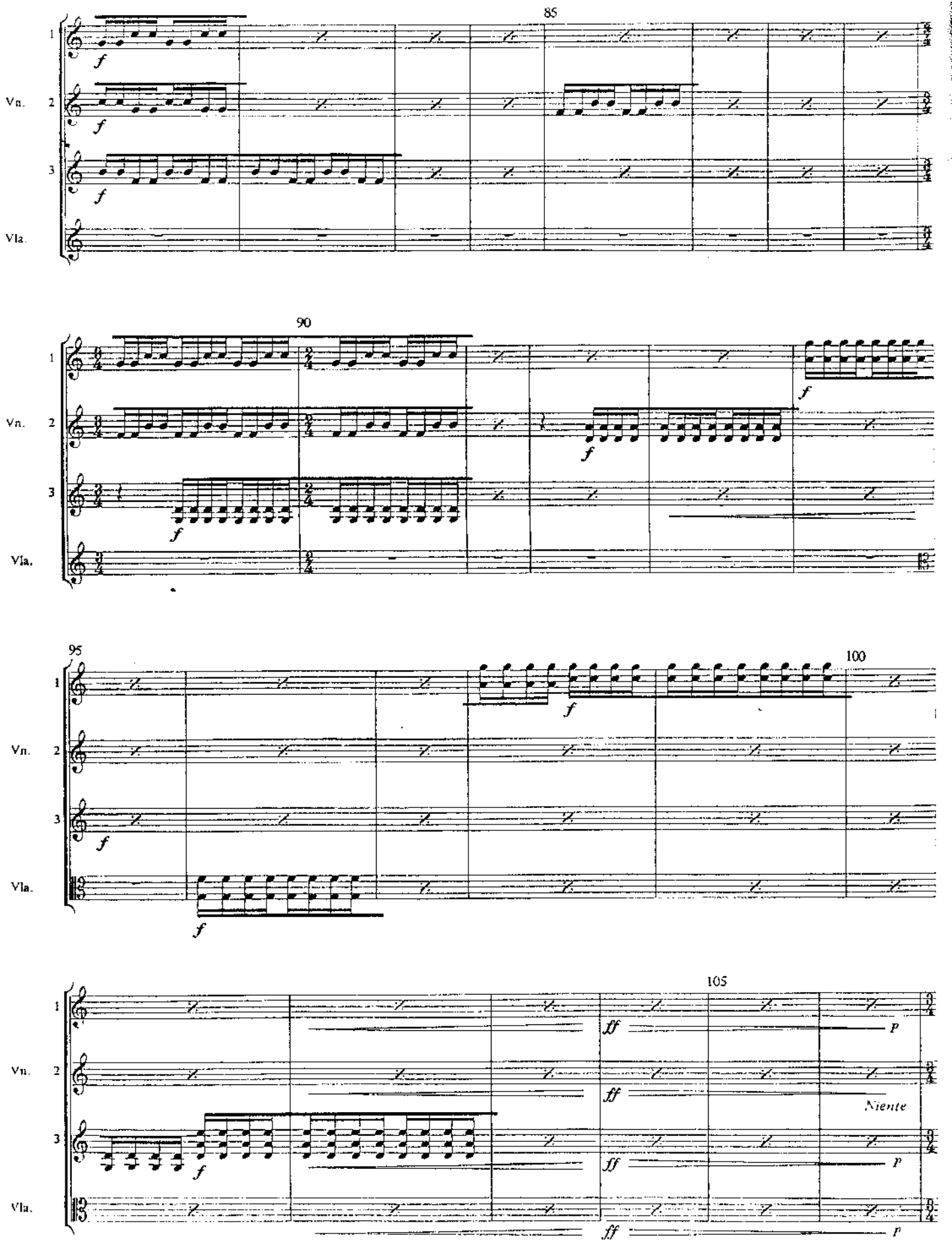


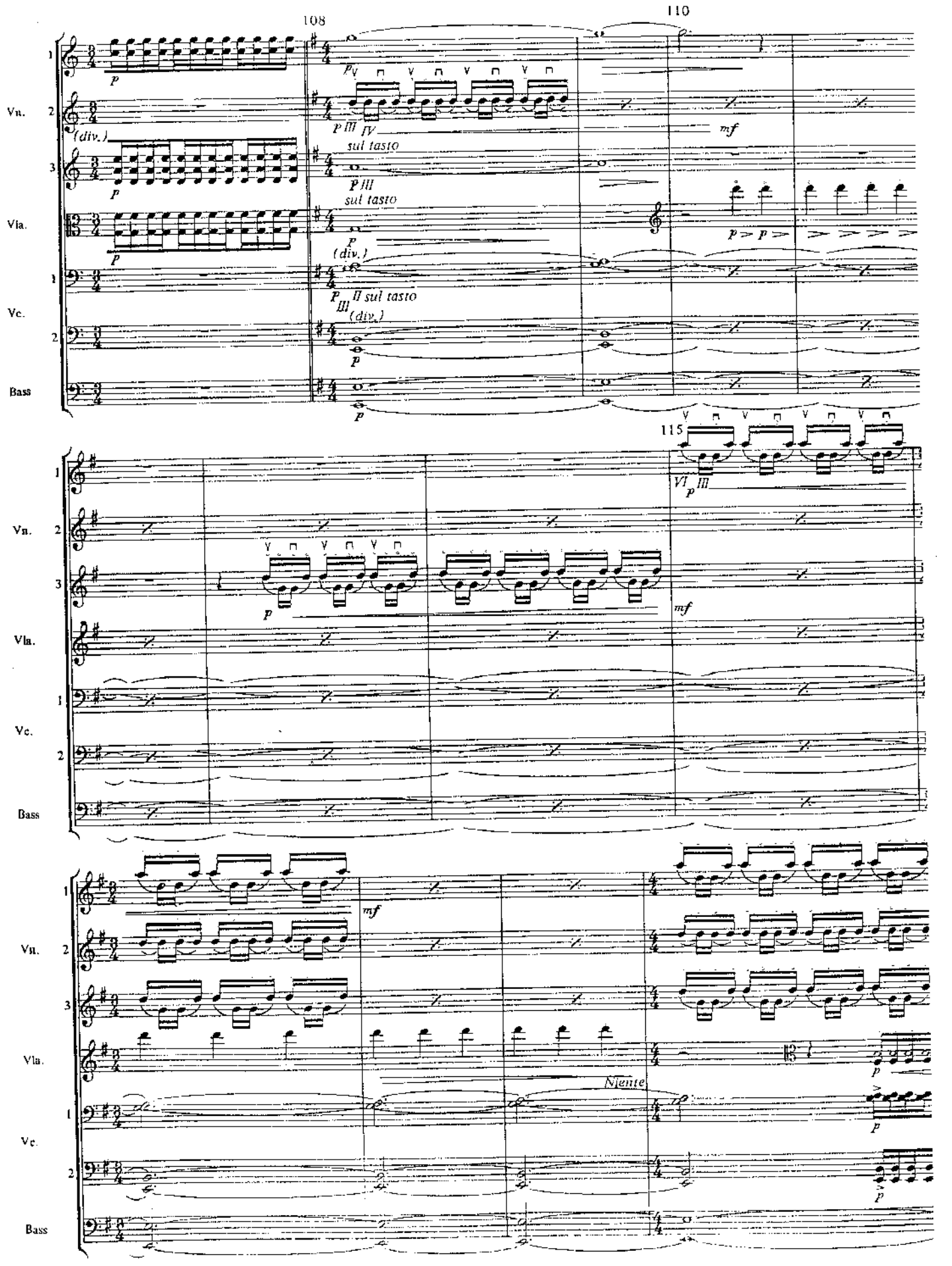

20
mute on
(mute)
gliss.
Niente
25
on the string
on the string
30
Niente

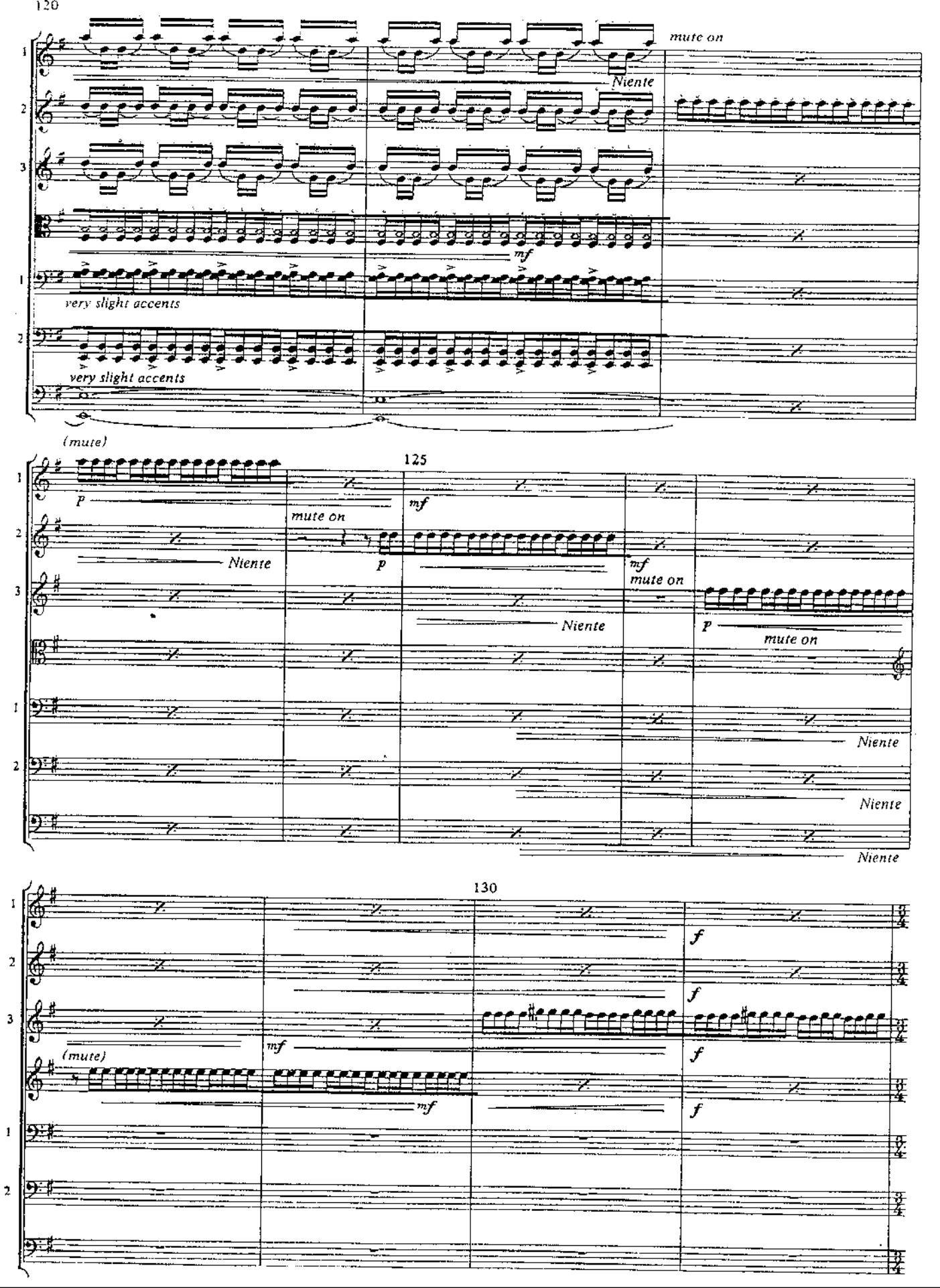

35
mute off
(mute off)
mute off
40
(mute off)
Niente

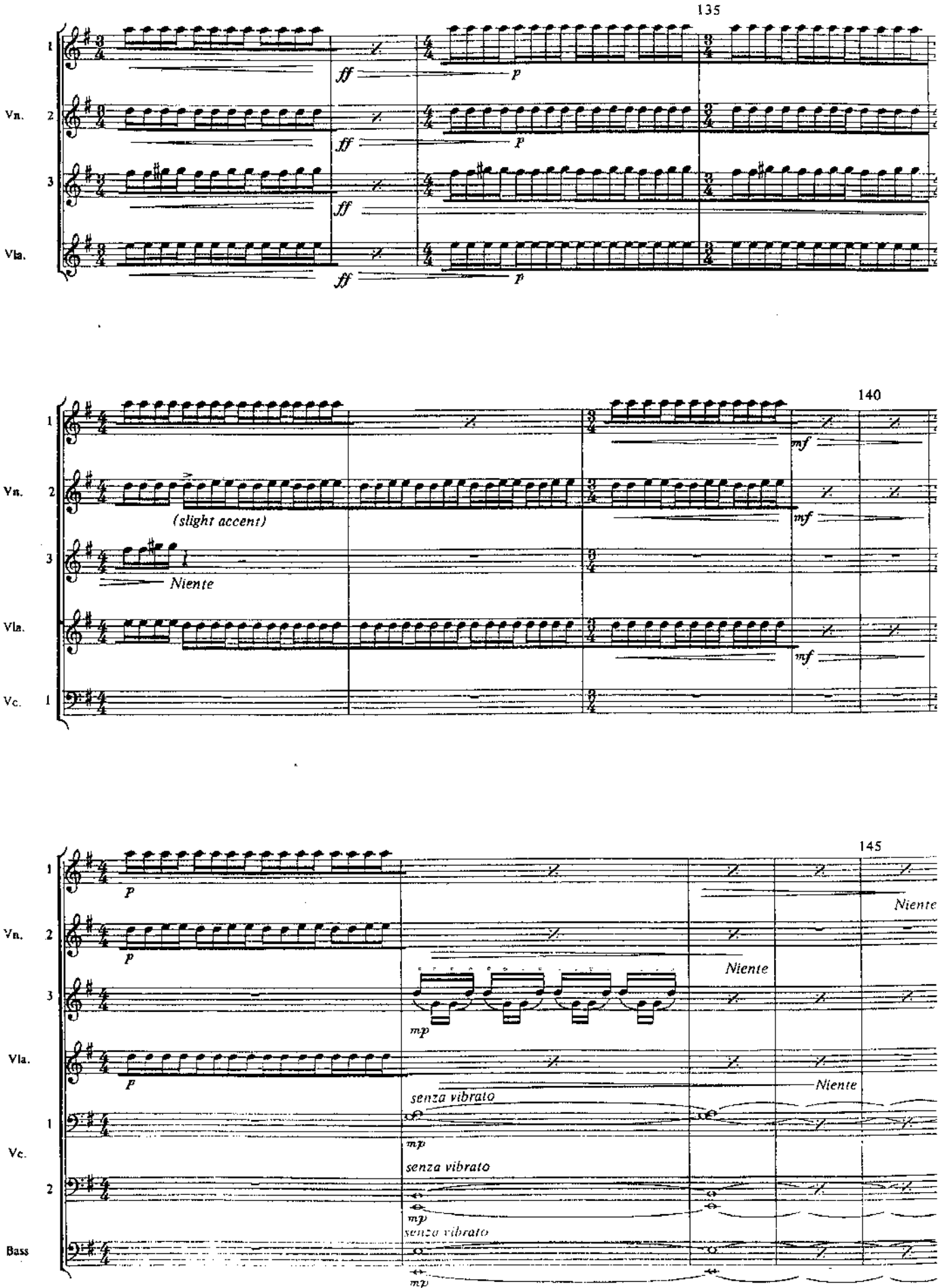

45
Vn. 1
Vn. 2
Vn. 3
Vla.
pp
mute off
p
mp
50
(mute off)
ppp
mf
55
f
60
Do not accent down beat!

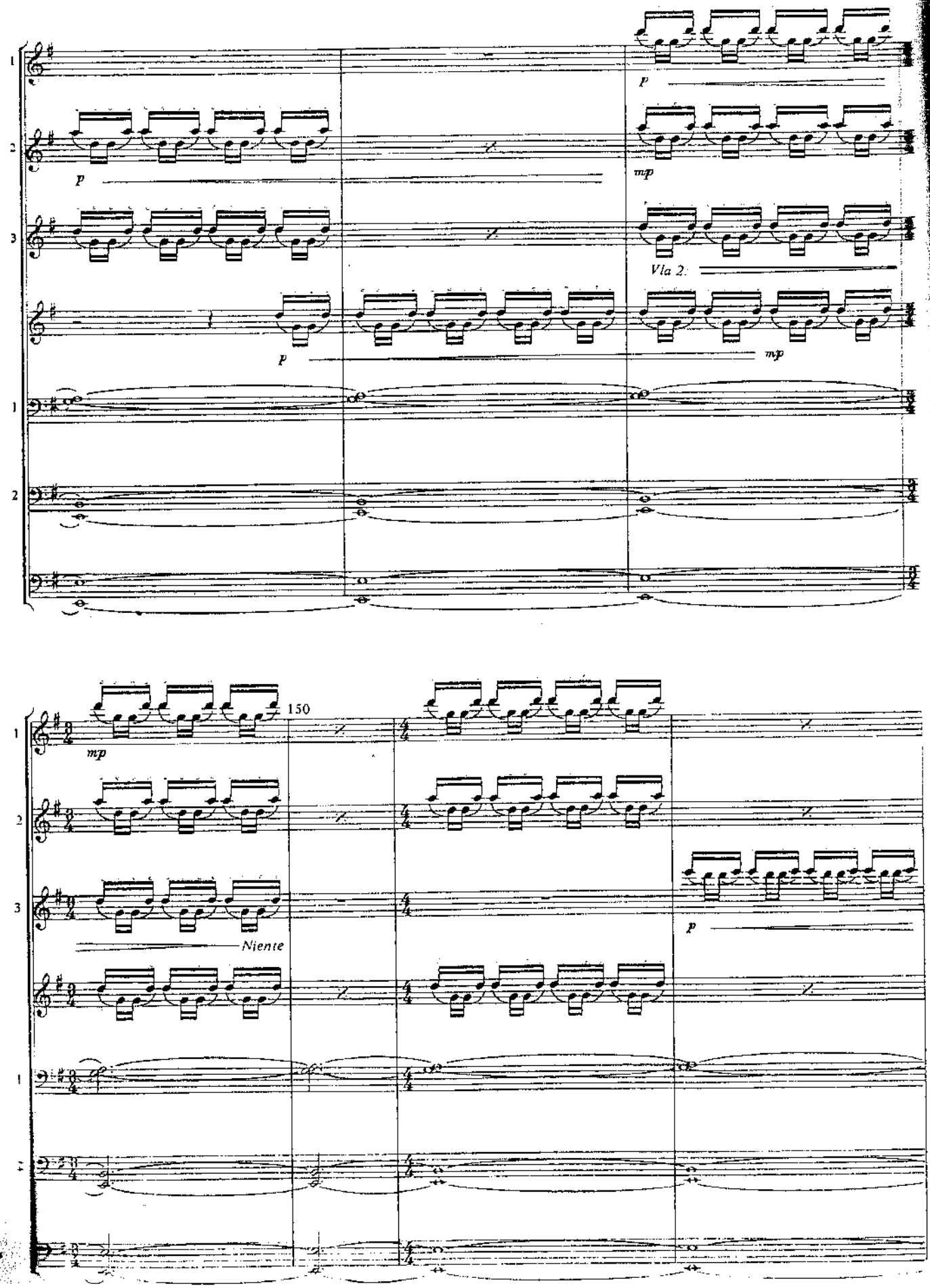

65
molto cresc.
molto cresc.
molto cresc.
67
Do not accent down beat
70
ff
ff
ff
sempre f
sempre f
p
f
75
80
ff sub.
ff sub.
ff sub.
Vn.
Vla.

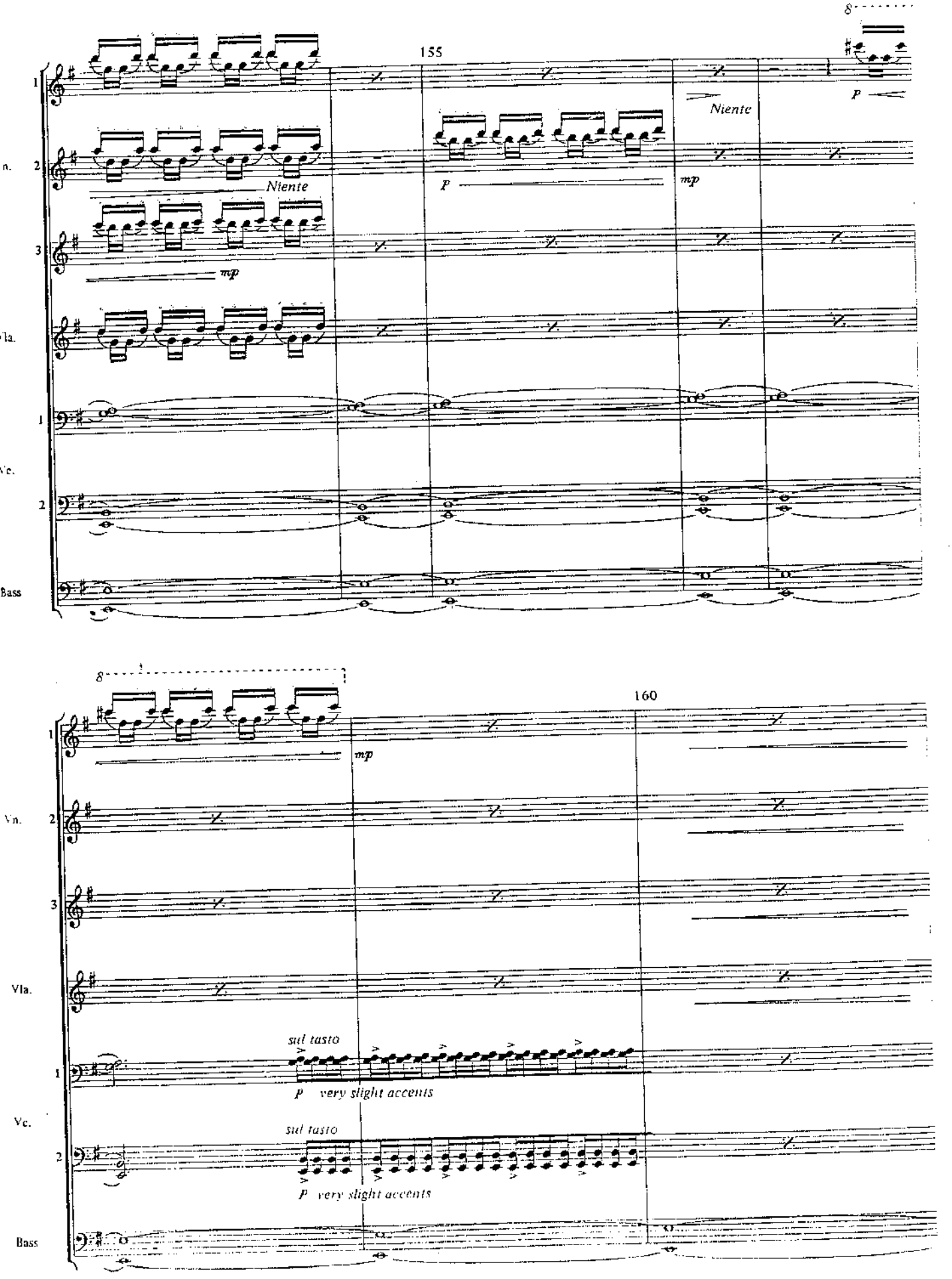

85
90
95
100
105
Vn.
Vla.
1
2
3
f
ff
p
Niente

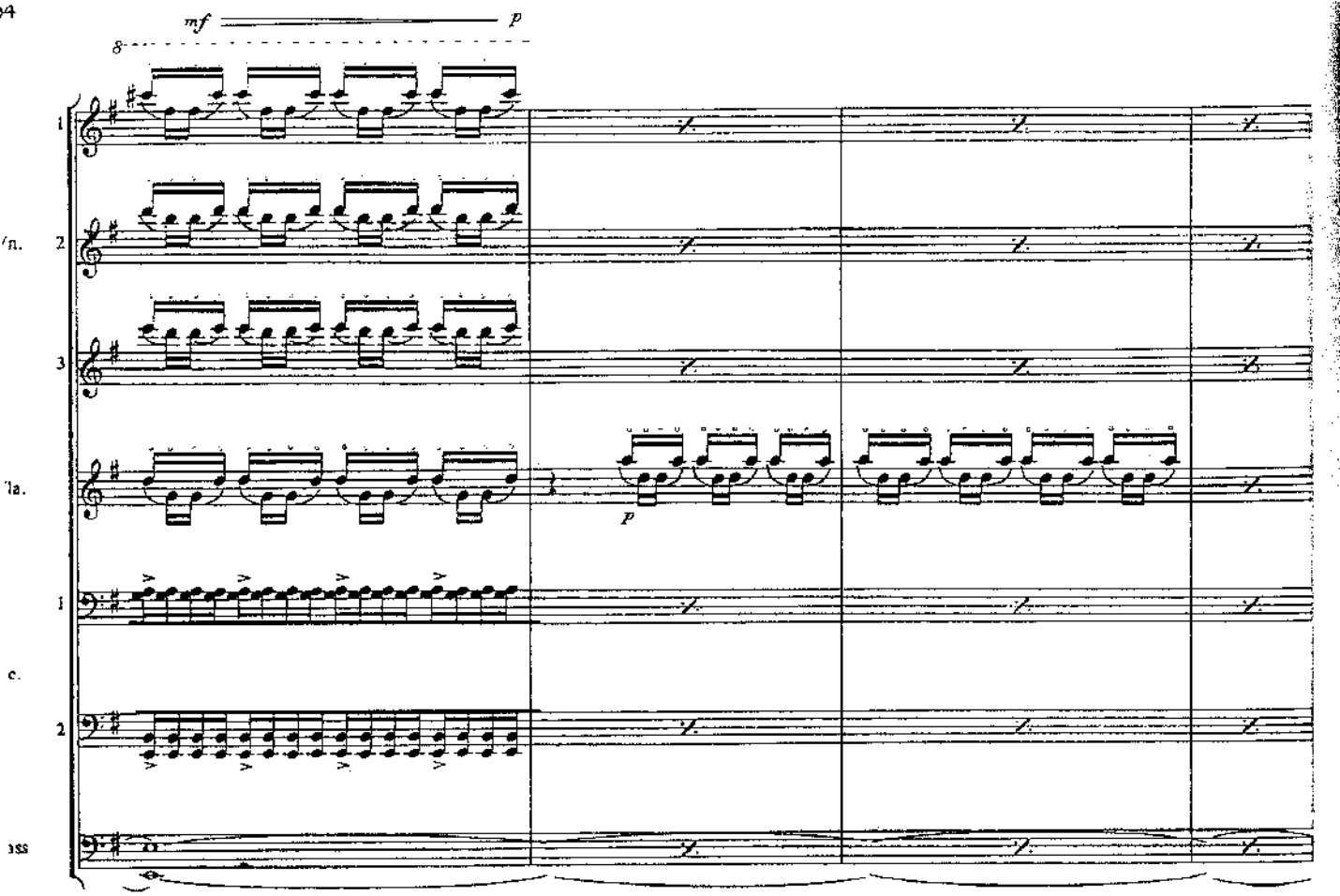

108
110
115
Vn.
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
(div.)
sul tasto
mf
Niente

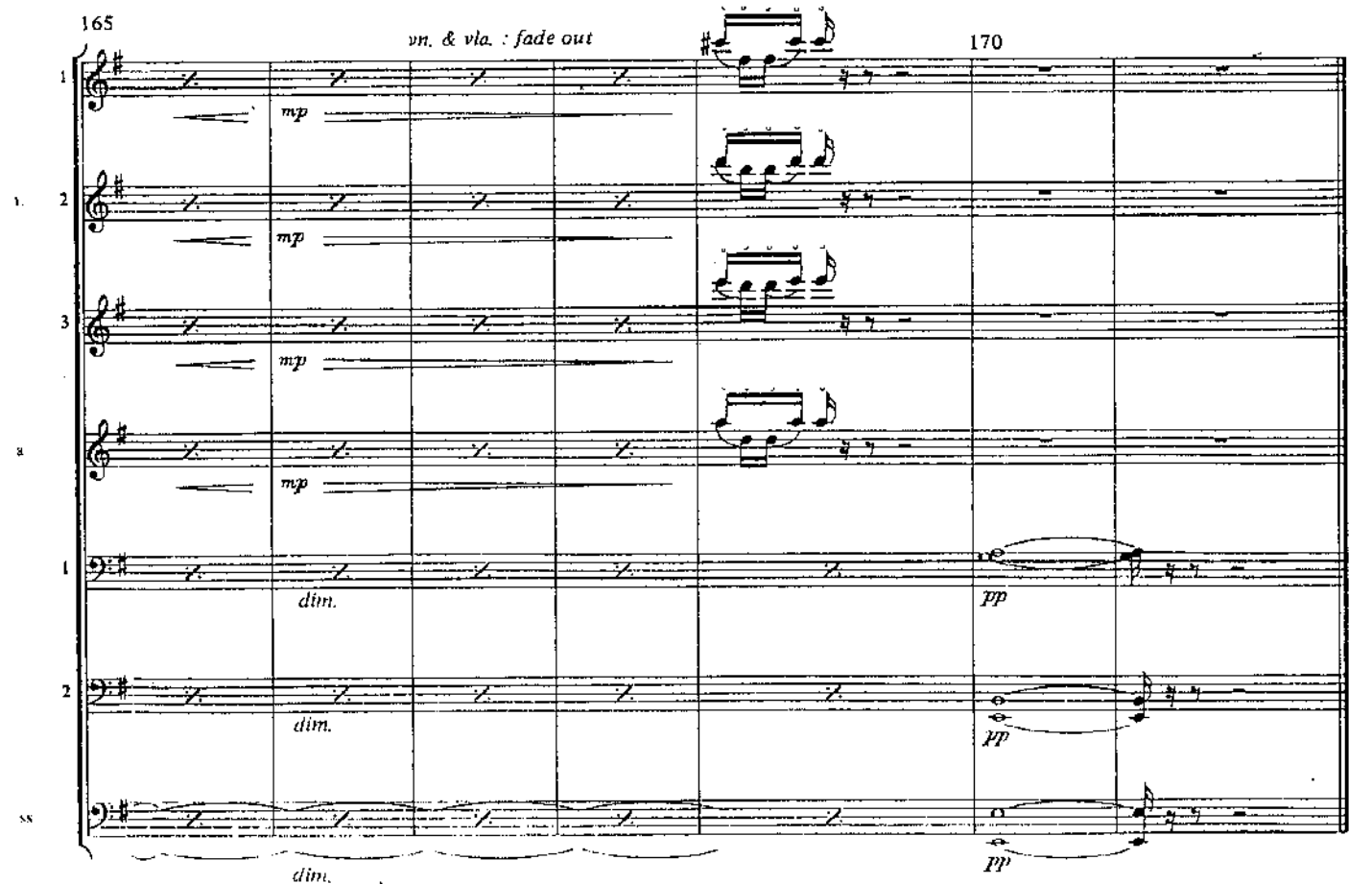

120
mute on
Niente
mf
very slight accents
very slight accents
(mute)
125
P
mf
mute on
Niente
p
mf
mute on
Niente
P
mute on
Niente
Niente
Niente
130
f
f
f
f
(mute)
mf
mf


135
Vn.
Vla.
ff
p
140
(slight accent)
Niente
mf
Vc.
145
mp
senza vibrato
Bass


p
mp
Vla 2.
mp
150
mp
Niente
p


155
Niente
p
mp
Vn.
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
160
sul tasto
p very slight accents


mf
p
p


165
vn. & vla. : fade out
170
mp
mp
mp
dim.
dim.
dim.
pp
pp
pp