ELAINE FINE

SKIN IN THE GAME

for ten instruments or chamber orchestra

inspired by Honoré de Balzac's *La Peau de chagrin*

Skin in the Game, for ten musicians (or chamber orchestra), explores the state of mind of Raphael de Valentine, the protagonist of Honoré de Balzac's 1831 novel *La peau de chagrin* [The wild ass's skin]. Raphael is a writer who seeks to make his way into the high levels of Parisian society. Raphael's friend Eugène de Rastinac advises him to try to impress the rich, well-connected, and beautiful Foedora but not fall in love with her. Raphael does fall in love with her, and after months of courtship, she rejects him.

Devastated by Foedora's rejection, Raphael returns to the inn where he rents a room, and hears Pauline, the innkeeper's daughter, telling her mother she finds Raphael handsome. Pauline is as kind as she is poor, but Raphael is too wrapped up in rejection to open his heart to her.

Skin in the Game is in six parts. It begins with an overture, followed by portraits of Pauline and Foedora. The final three movements, "The Bridge," "The Curiosity Shop," and "The Wild Ass's Skin," are played without pause.

"The Bridge" shows Raphael, after squandering nearly all his money courting Foedora, and losing the rest in a casino, standing on a bridge over the Seine with the intention of committing suicide. He decides to wait until dark so that he can jump without being seen, and slips into a nearby curiosity shop filled with ancient treasures from every part of the world. An old shopkeeper shows Raphael a wild ass's skin with an inscription in Sanskrit. Raphael, who can read Sanskrit, learns that the skin will grant its owner every wish but will shrink slightly every time a wish is fulfilled. The shopkeeper offers Raphael the skin for free but advises him not to accept. He tells Raphael that to wish on the skin is to commit suicide.

Still planning to jump into the Seine, Raphael dismisses the shopkeeper's warning. In order to experience all the delights of life before killing himself, he wishes for a three-day-long banquet and orgy with witty friends and beautiful women. He also wishes for a large inheritance so that he can live what remains of his life without worrying about money. Raphael pockets the skin, leaves the shop, and bumps into three friends who invite him to a party that evening. At the party Raphael learns that he is the sole heir to a relative's fortune. He takes the skin out of his pocket and notices that it is smaller. He soon realizes that he no longer loves Foedora, but is deeply in love with Pauline. He begins a relationship with her and abandons his idea to commit suicide.

The final section of the novel takes place three years after the party. Raphael cannot stay with Pauline because his desire for her happiness causes the skin to shrink. He lives in isolation, protected by servants who anticipate his every need. He burns unread the many letters that Pauline has written him. But he cannot keep himself from wishing now and then on behalf of others. So the skin shrinks, and Raphael's health declines.

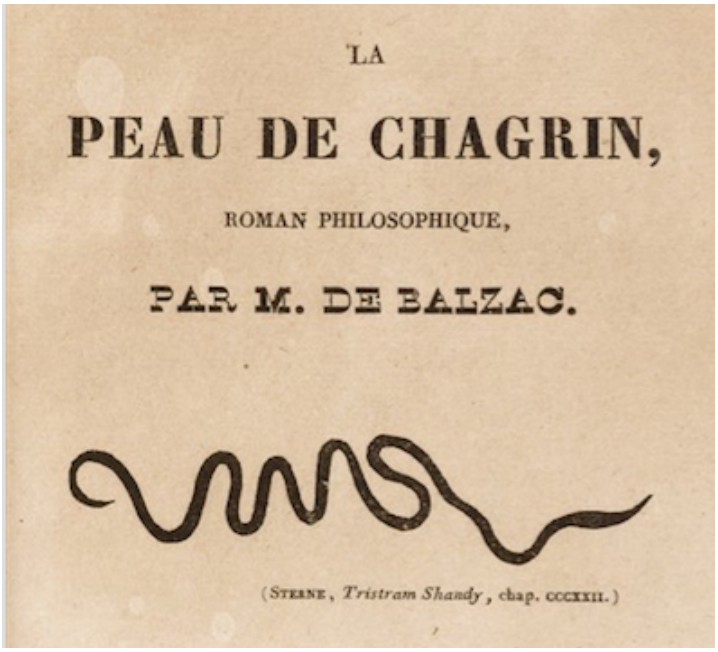
When Pauline visits Raphael to declare her love, he is very weak, and the skin has shrunken to the size of a periwinkle leaf. Pauline is horrified when he tells her about the skin, and she runs from the room, locks the door, and tries to strangle herself to free Raphael from his desire for her. Unable to control his desire, Raphael breaks down the door and dies in Pauline's arms.

PERFORMING NOTES:

In the final movement each of the woodwind players and the horn also play percussion instruments. Any instruments, even those made from found objects, that correspond to the general sounds of high and low drums, the metallic shake of a tambourine, the dull and grainy sound of a shaker or a sand block, and the crisp and dry sound of a slapstick or hand clap, can be used. The drums can be hit with sticks or with the hands.

The piece can be performed with a narrator (even someone from within the ensemble), or the narration can be printed in a program.

I would like to dedicate this piece to my dear friend and life-long teacher Daniel Morganstern, who encouraged me to turn the abandoned sketches that I had made for an opera into an instrumental piece.


LA

PEAU DE CHAGRIN,

ROMAN PHILOSOPHIQUE,

PAR M. DE BALZAC.

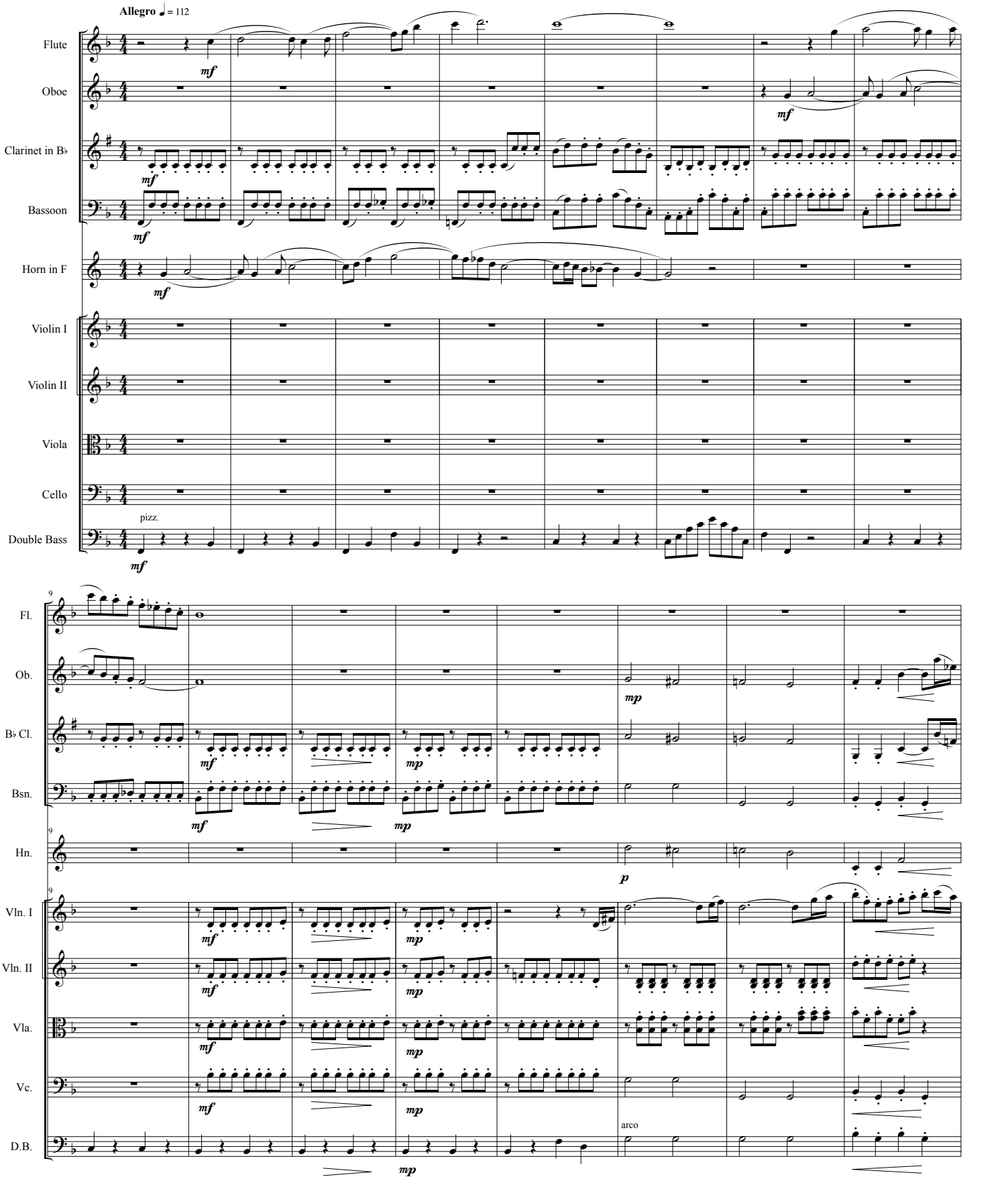
(STERNE, *Tristram Shandy*, chap. CCCXXII.)

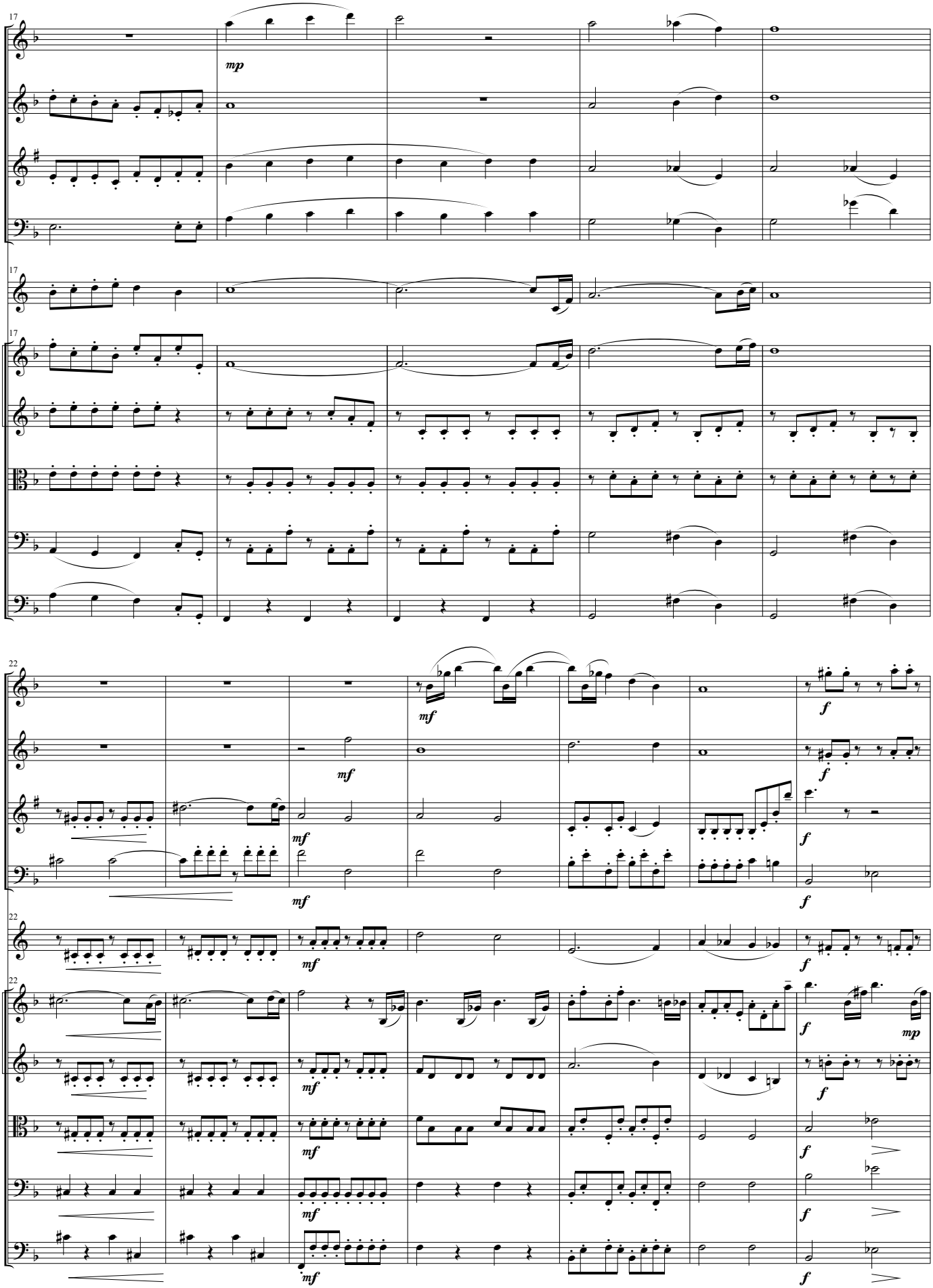
for Daniel Morganstern

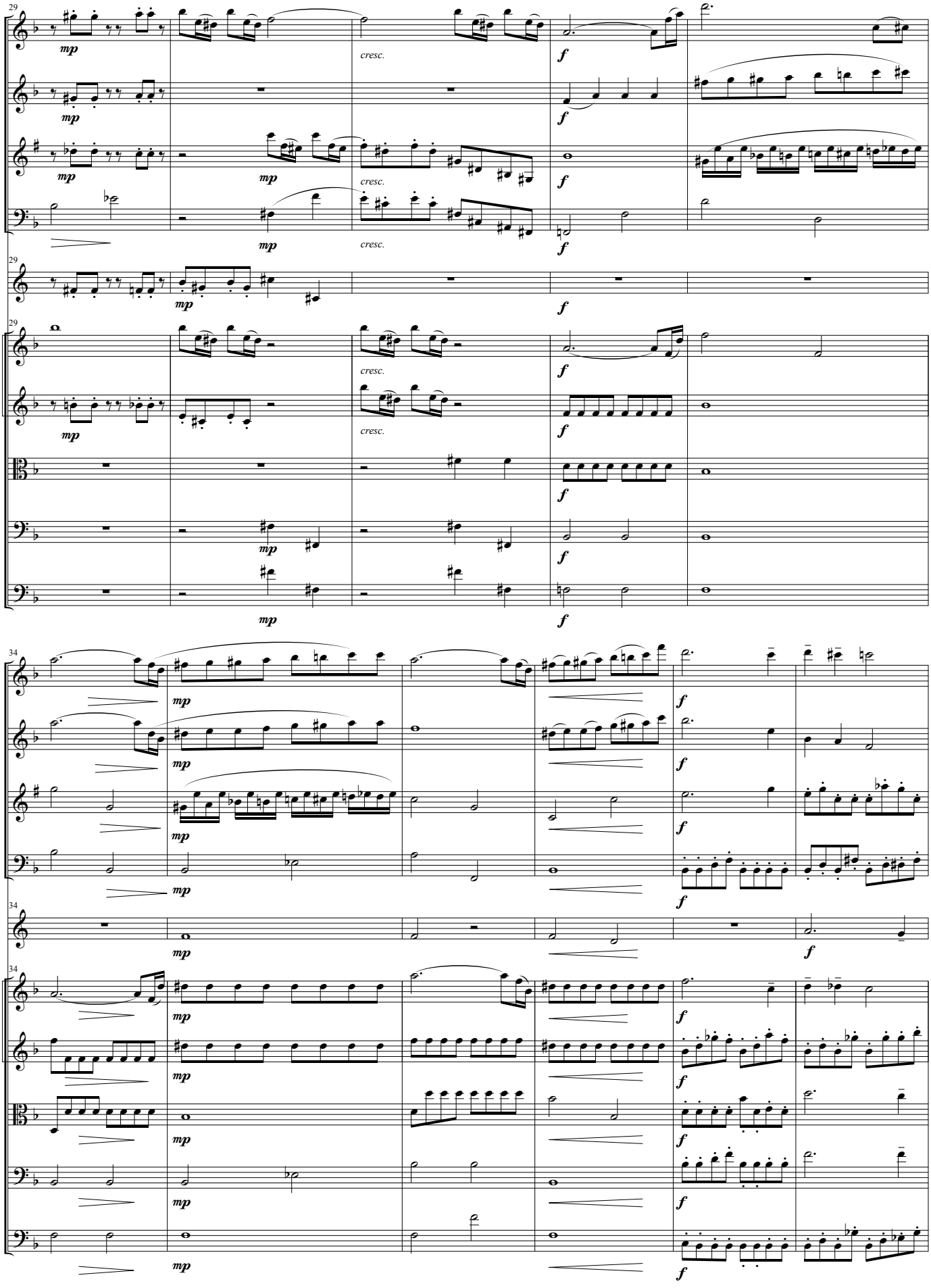
Skin in the Game

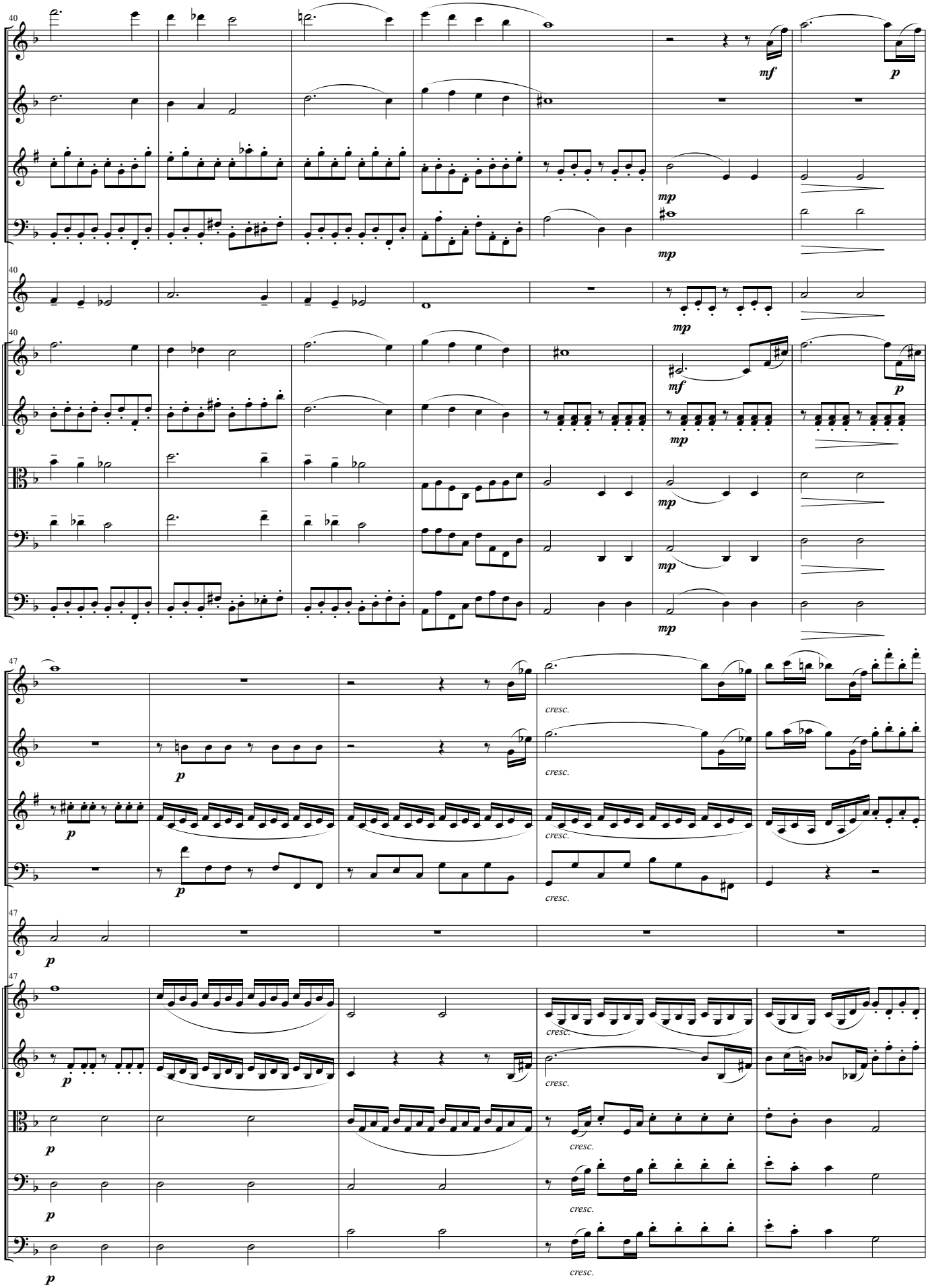
Overture

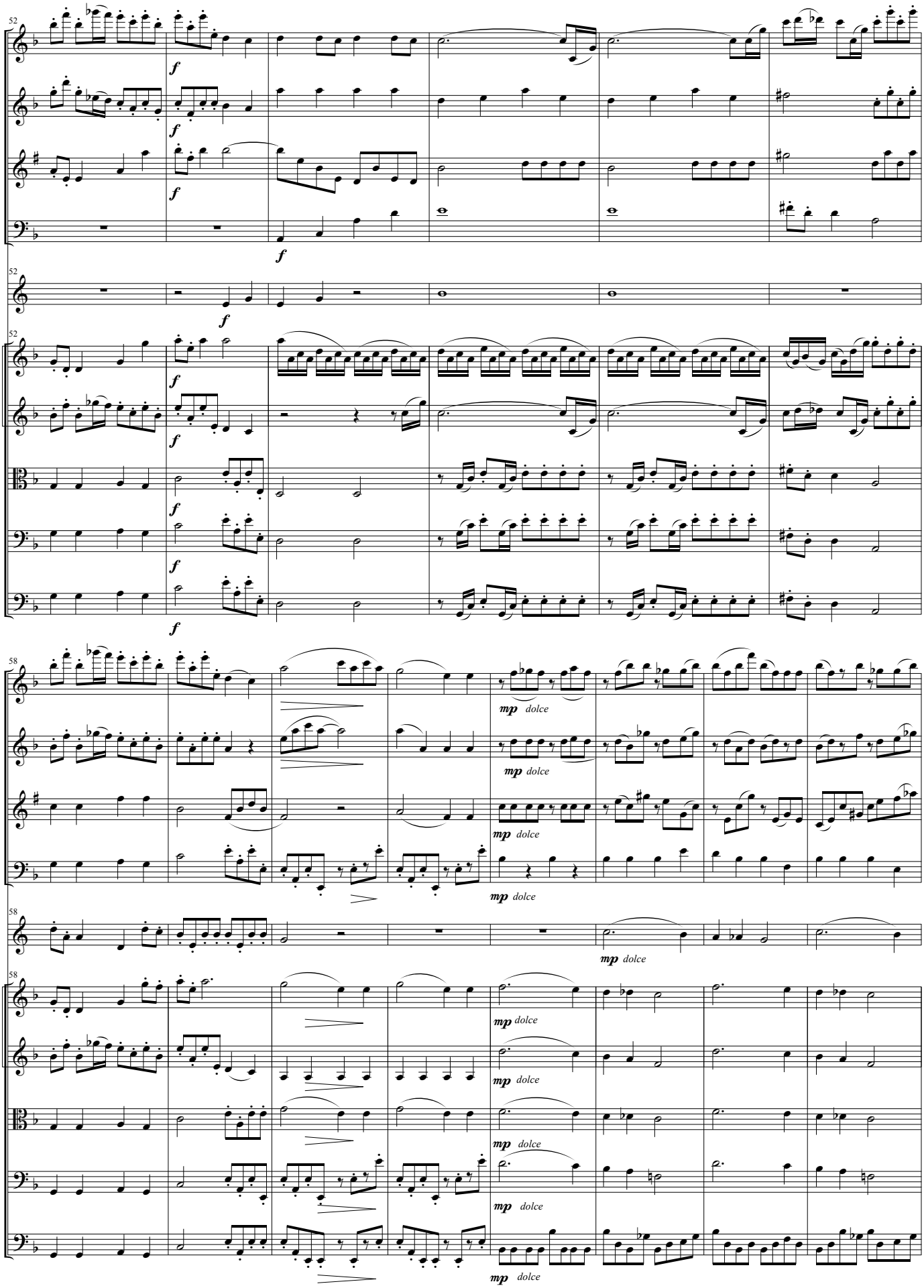
Elaine Fine

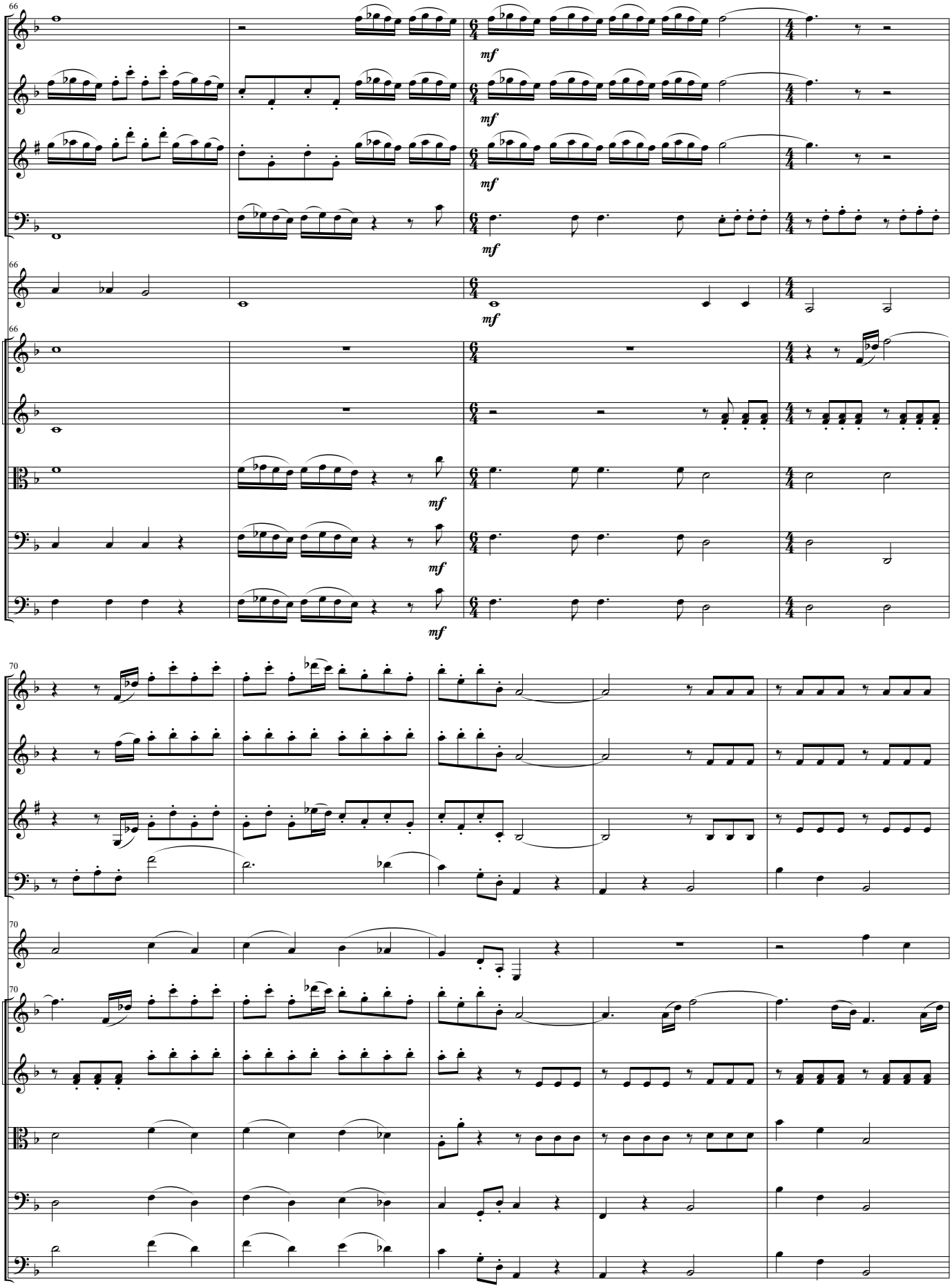


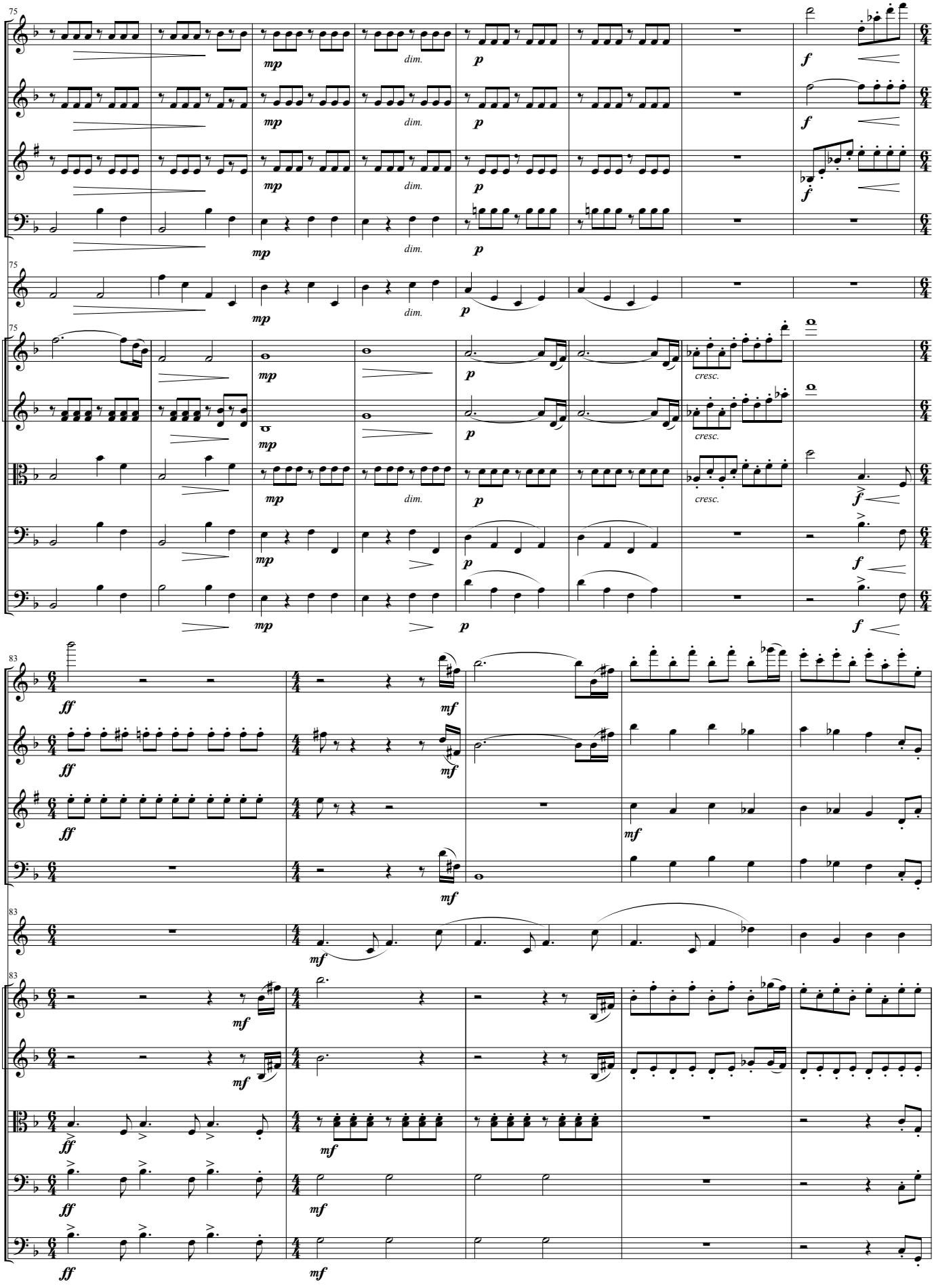

17
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mp
22
mf
f
mp

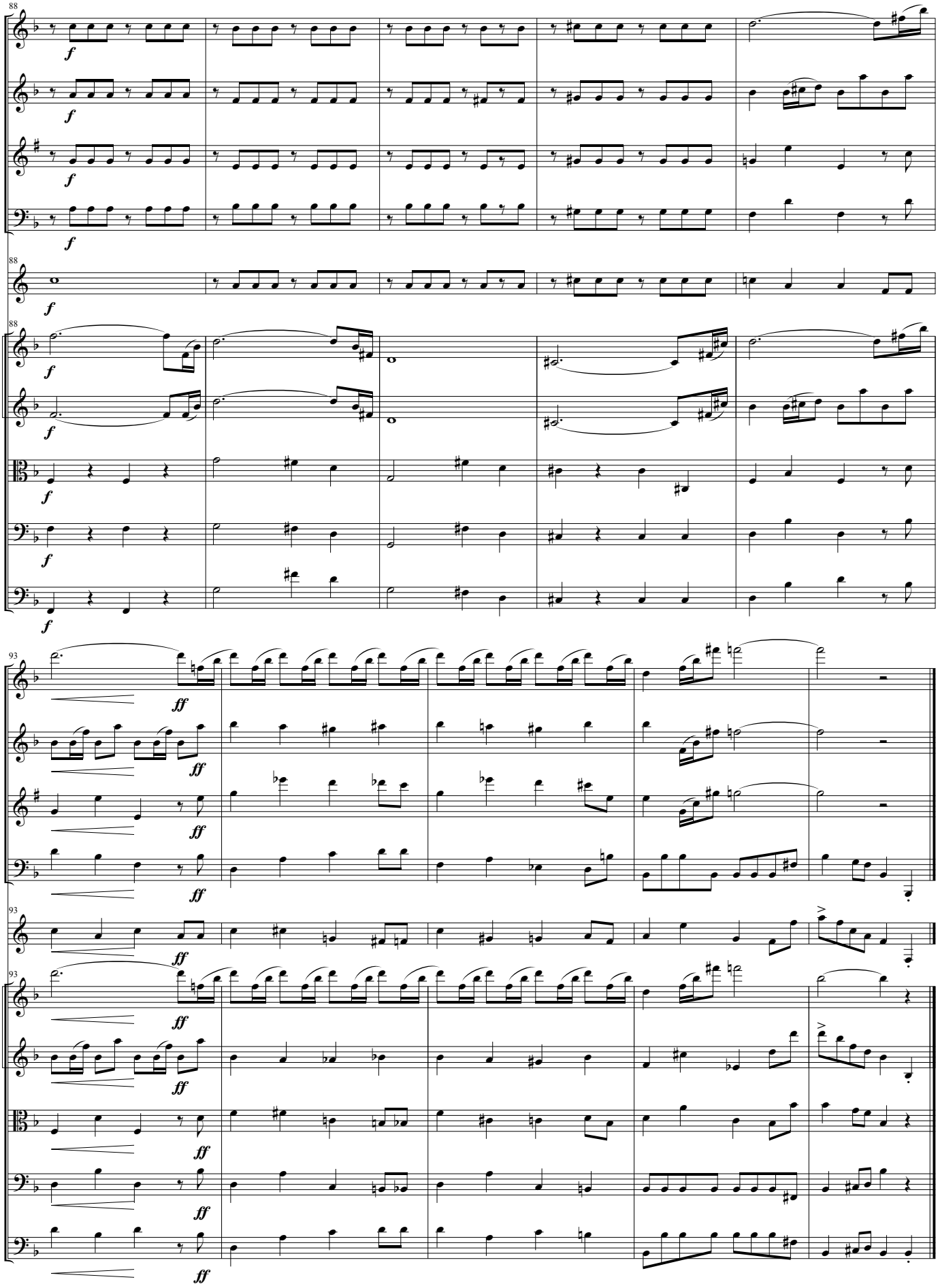

29
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mp
cresc.
f
34


40
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
p
mp
47
cresc.

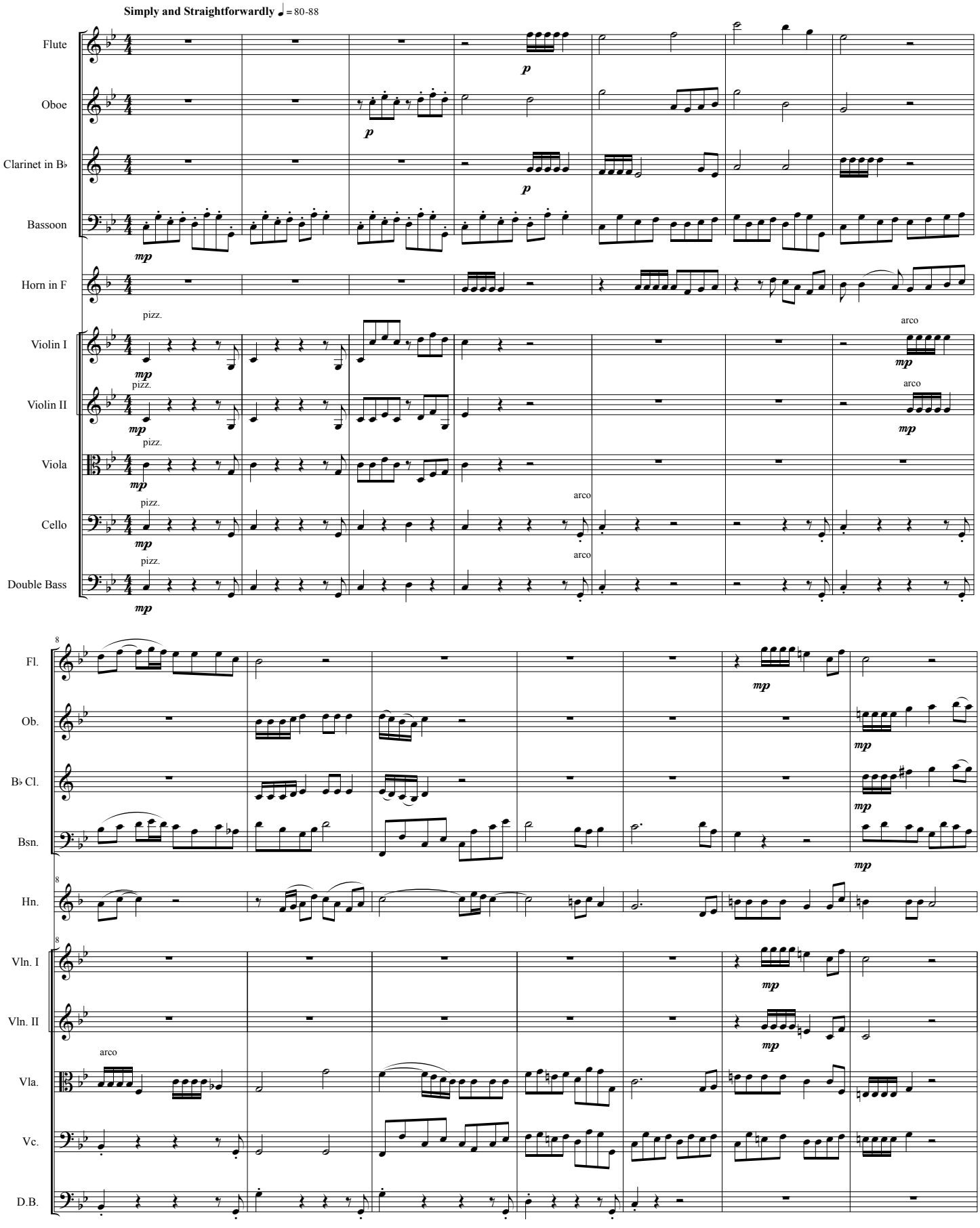

52
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
f
58
mp dolce

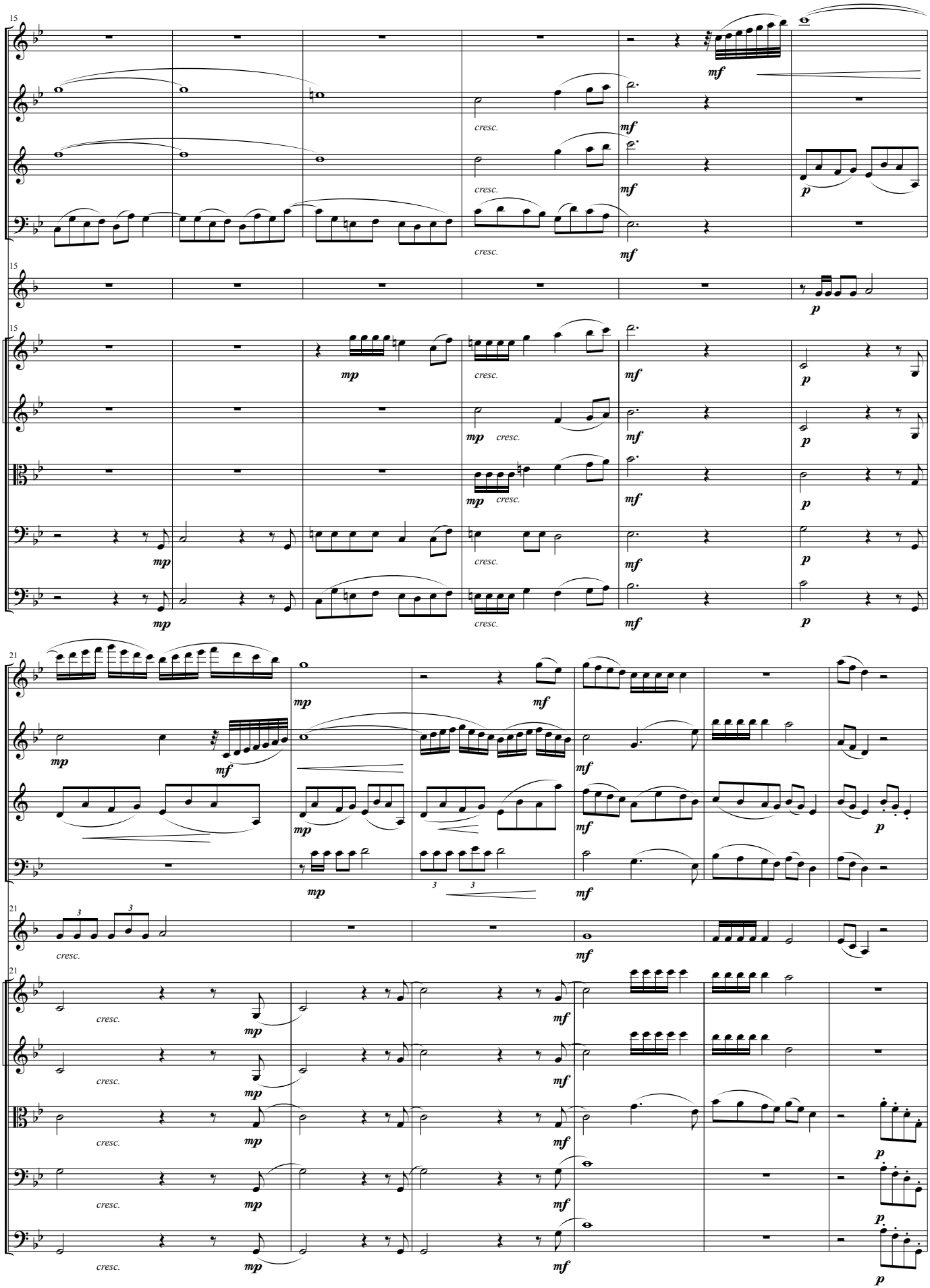

66
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
70

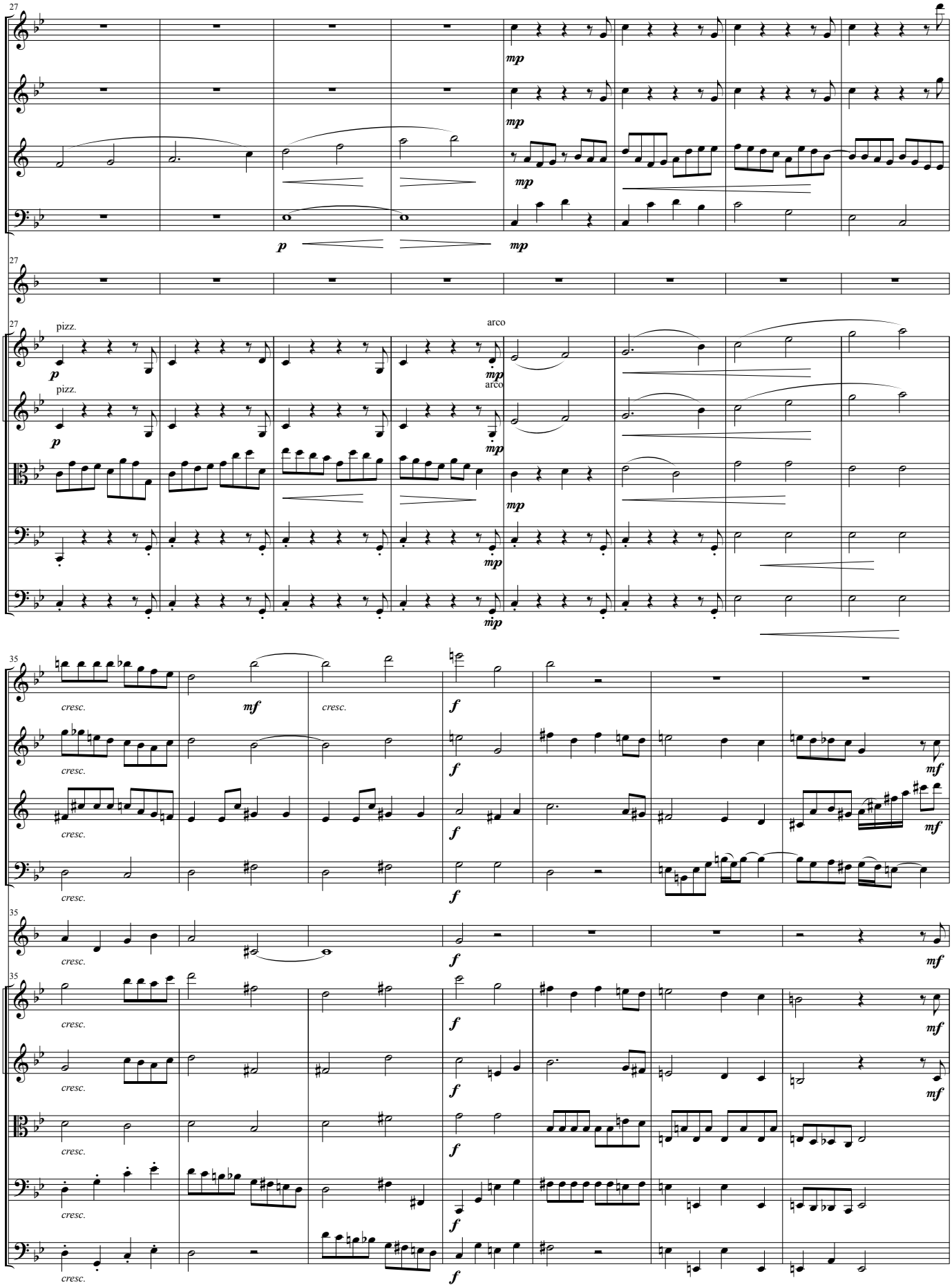

75
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mp
dim.
p
f
cresc.
83
ff
mf

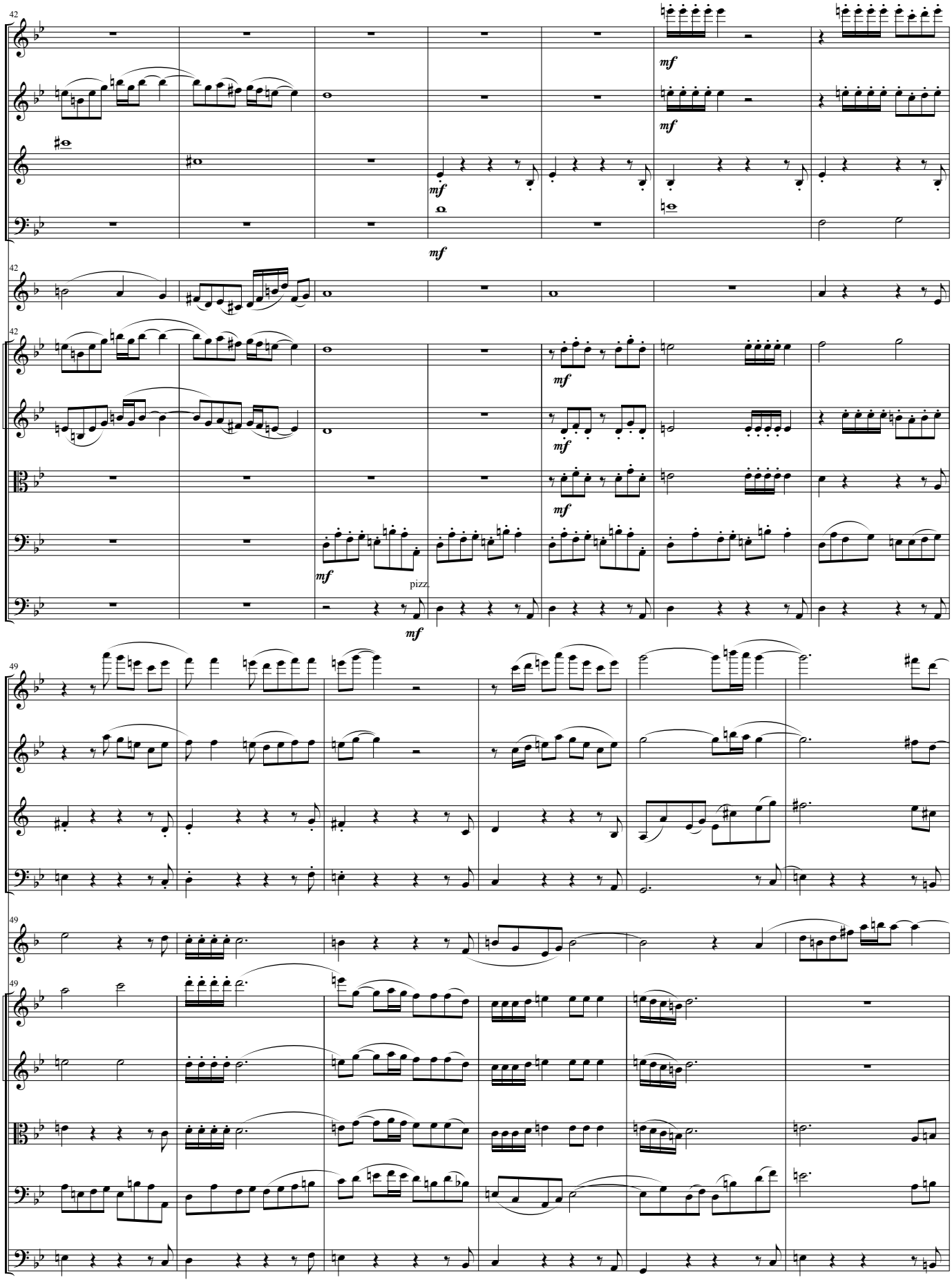

88
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
f
93
ff

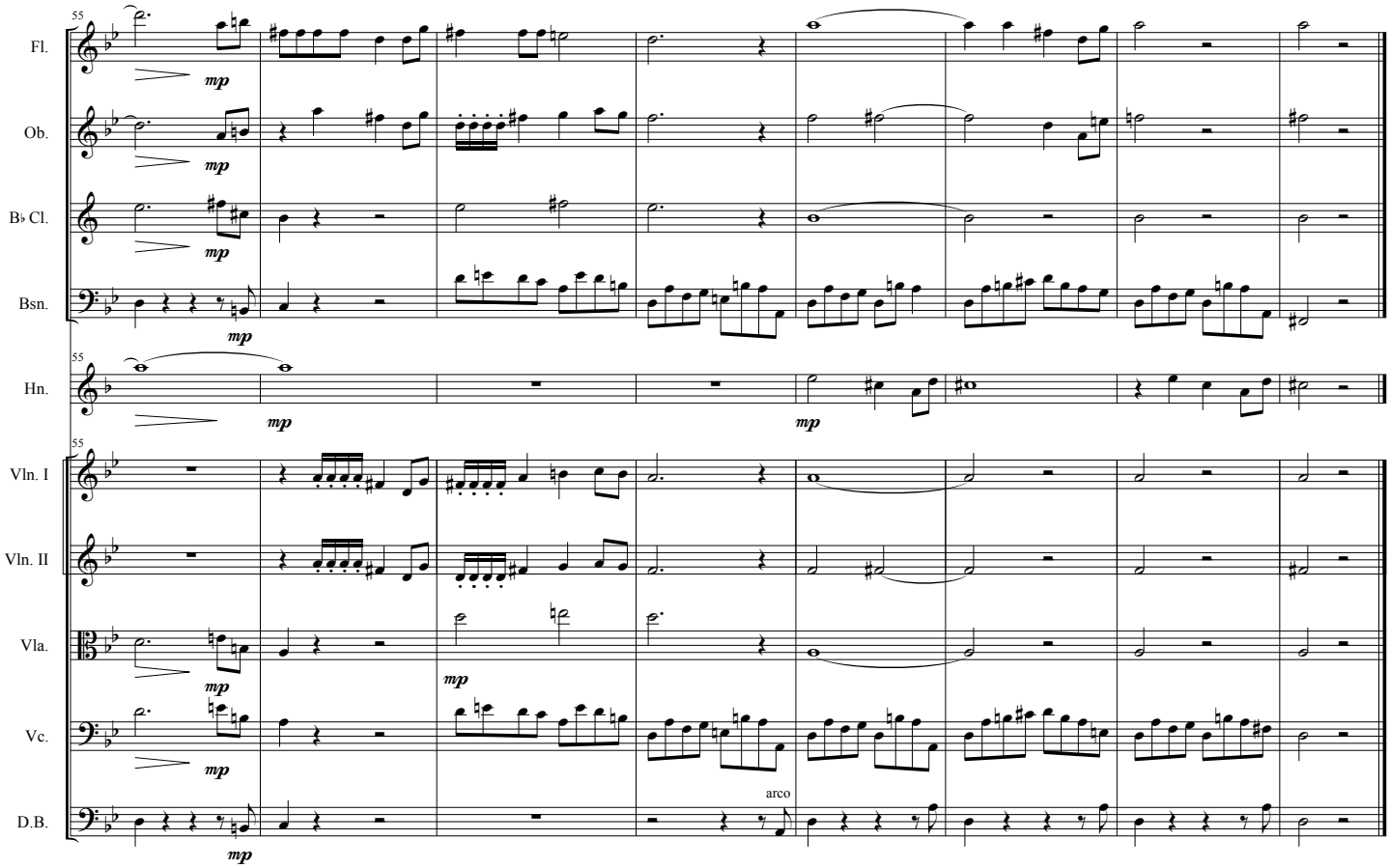
II. Pauline


Simply and Straightforwardly ♩= 80-88
Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in B♭
Bassoon
Horn in F
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass
pizz.
arco
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.

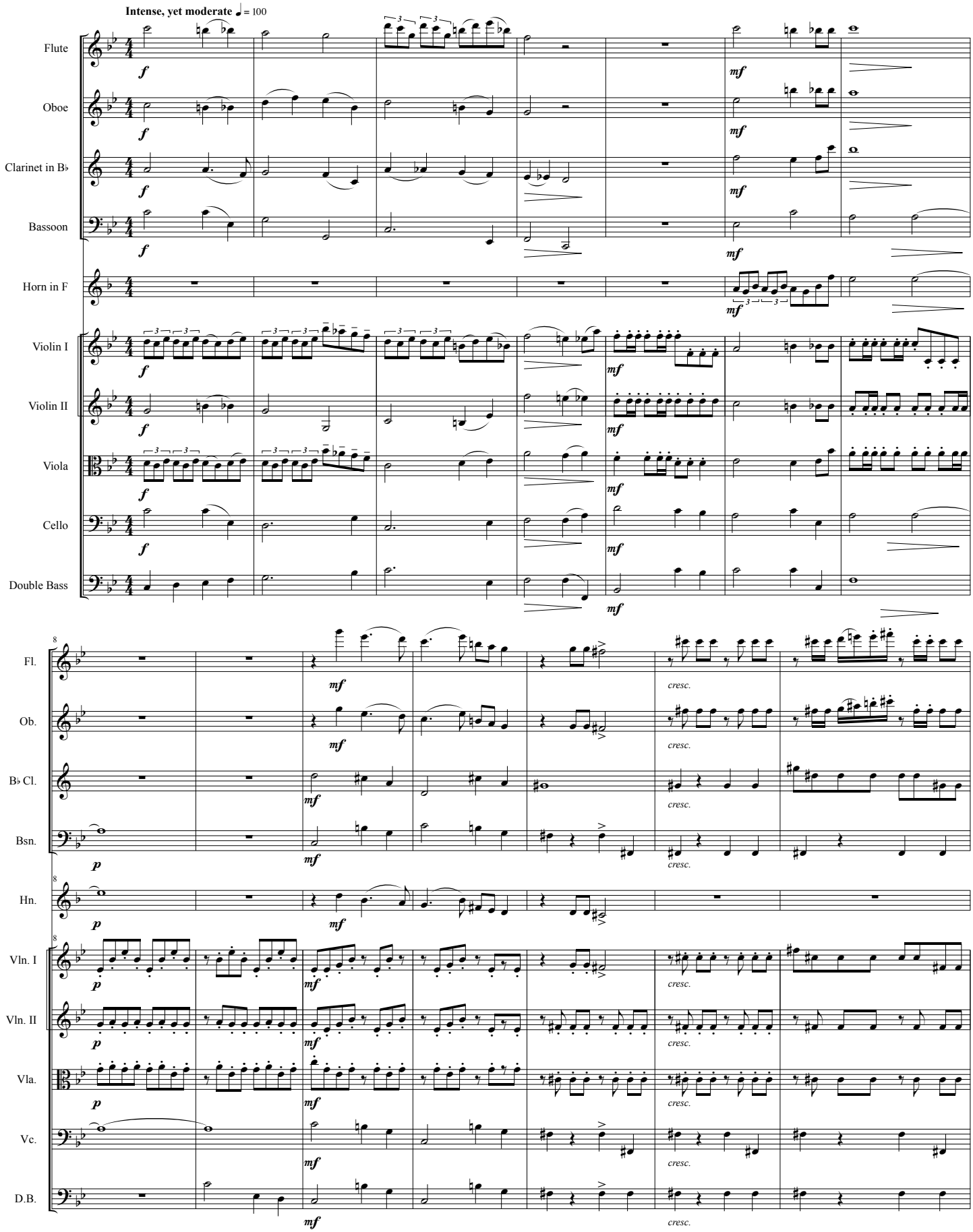

15
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
cresc.
p
mp
21
cresc.

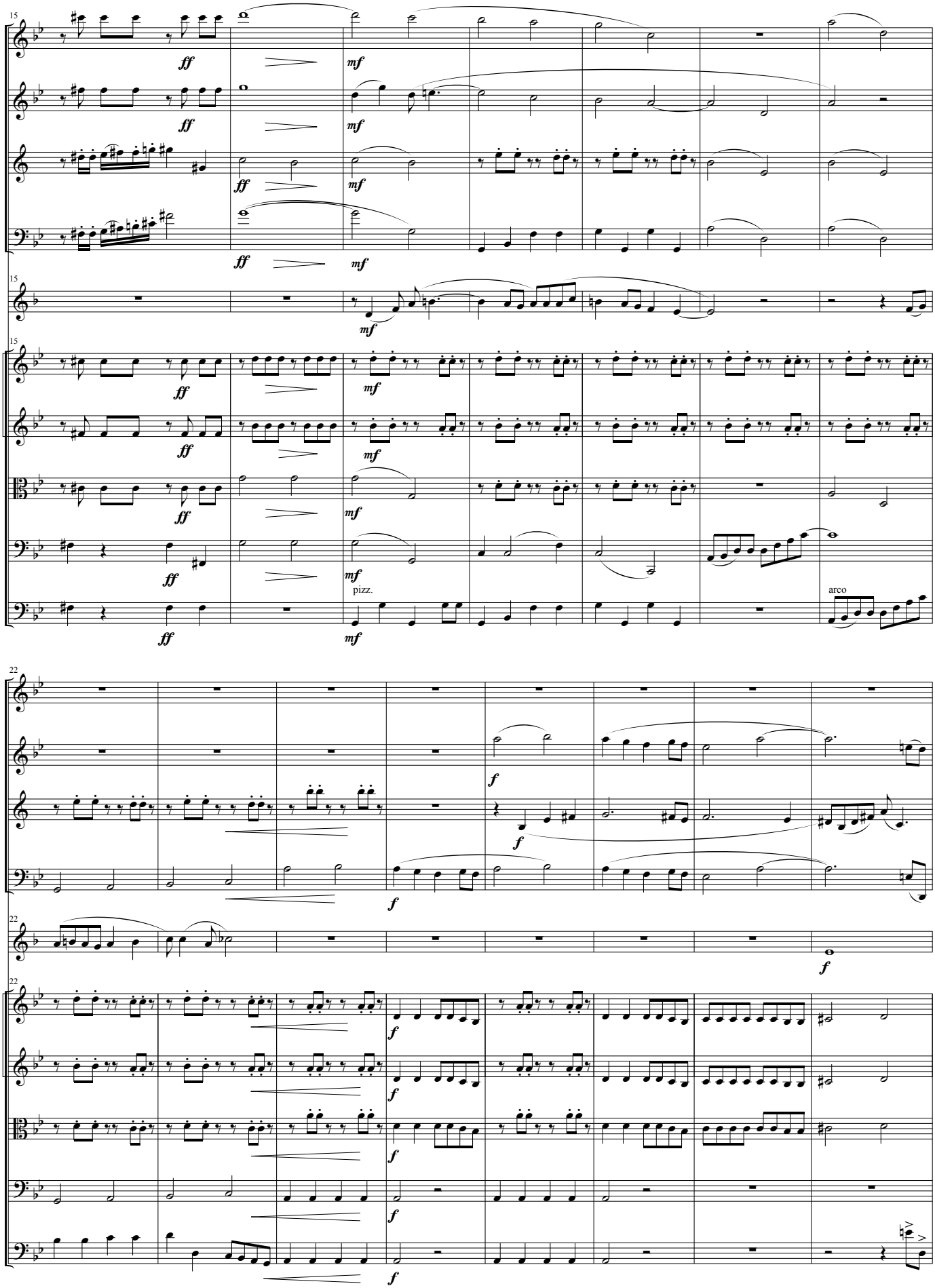

27
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
pizz.
arco
p
mp
35
cresc.
mf
f

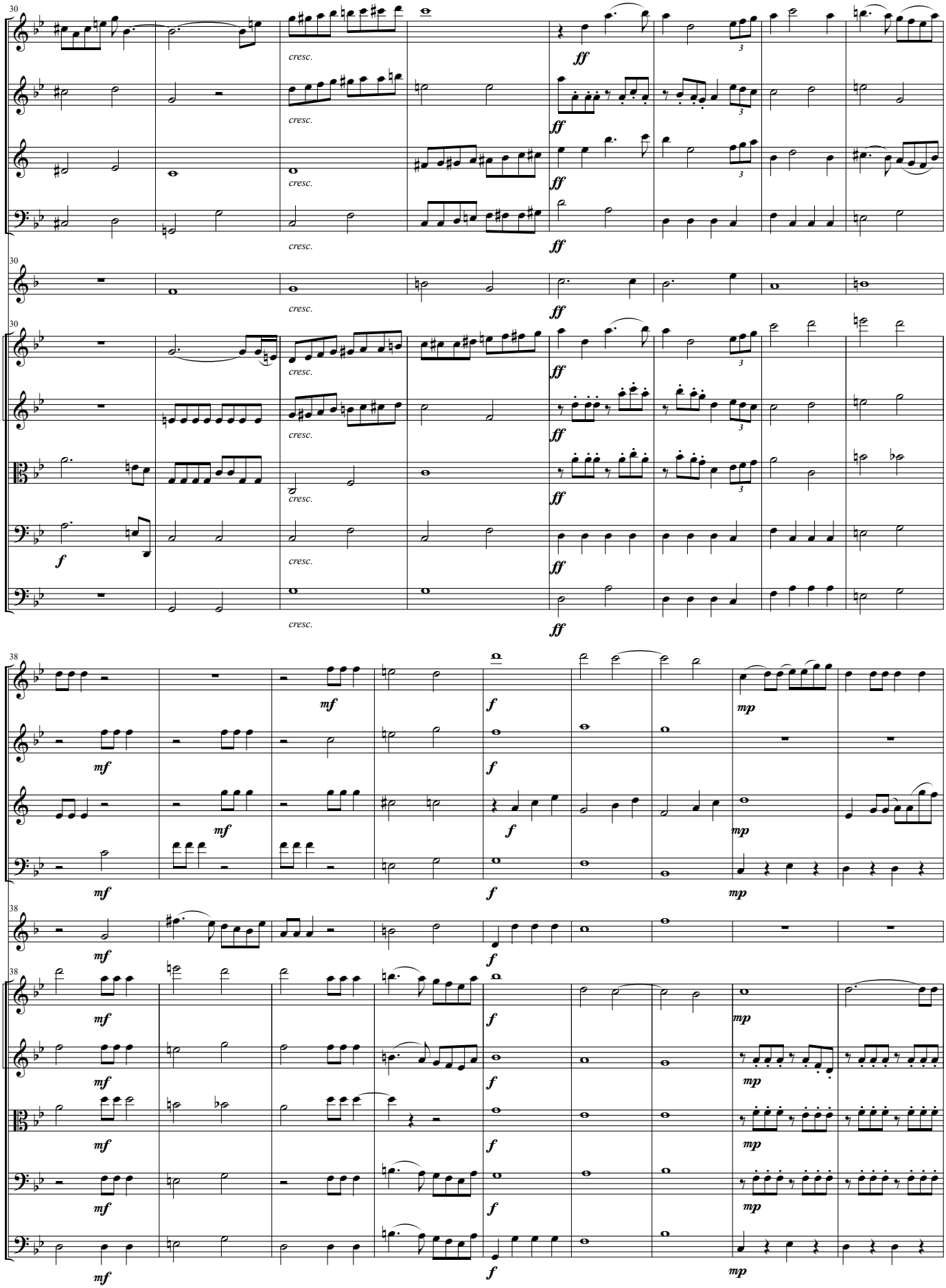

42
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
pizz.
49

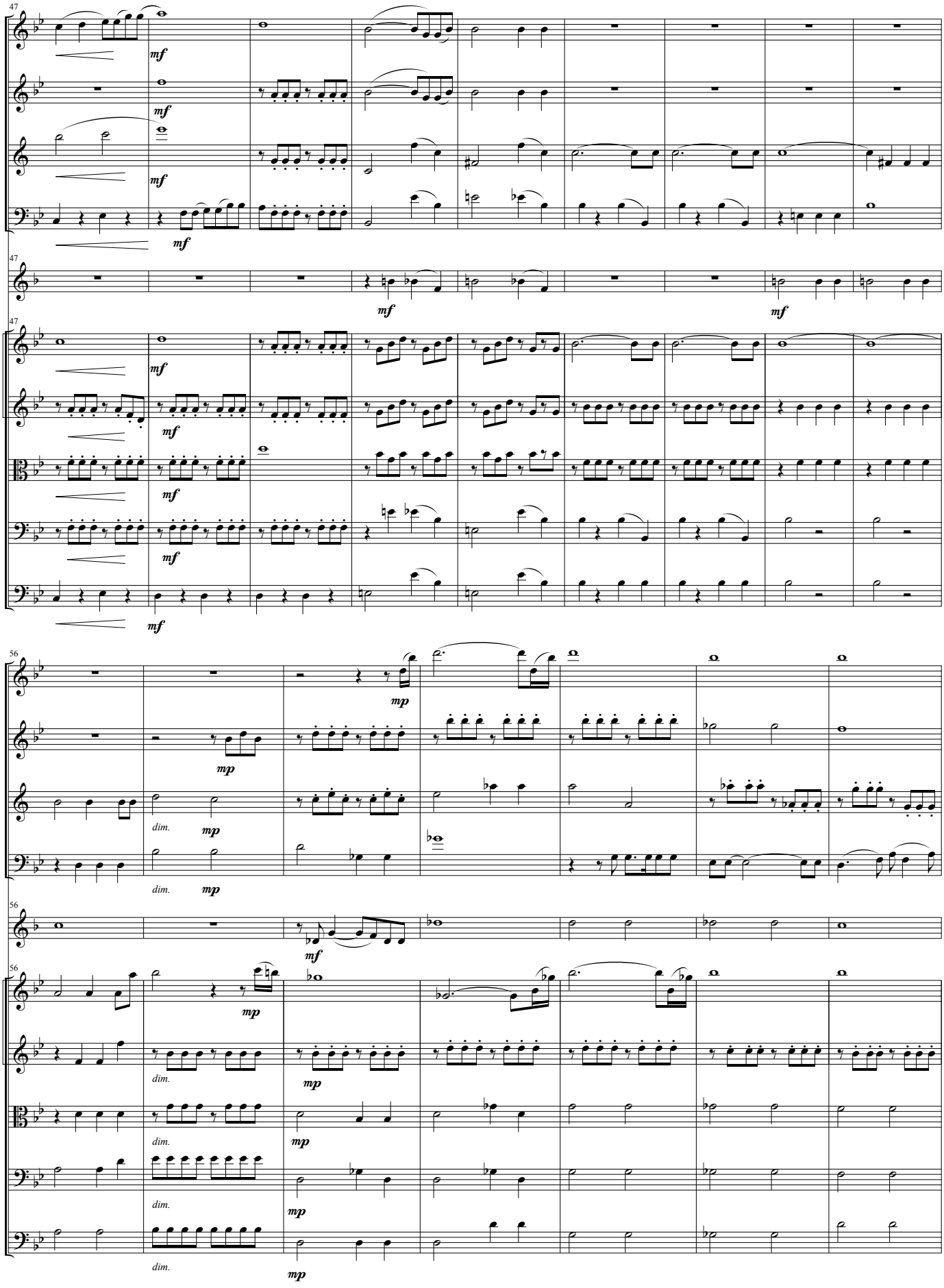

55
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mp
arco

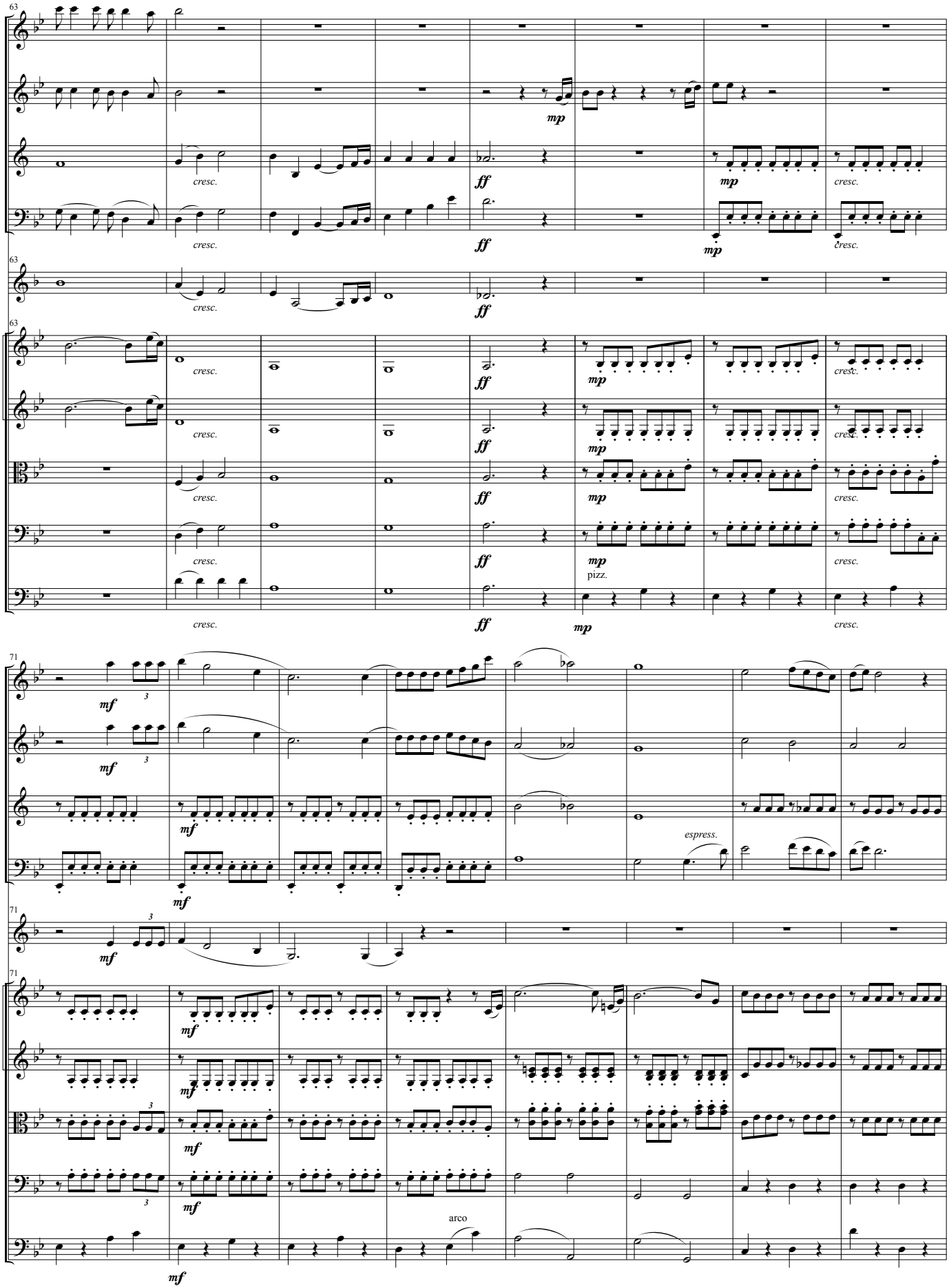
III. Foedora

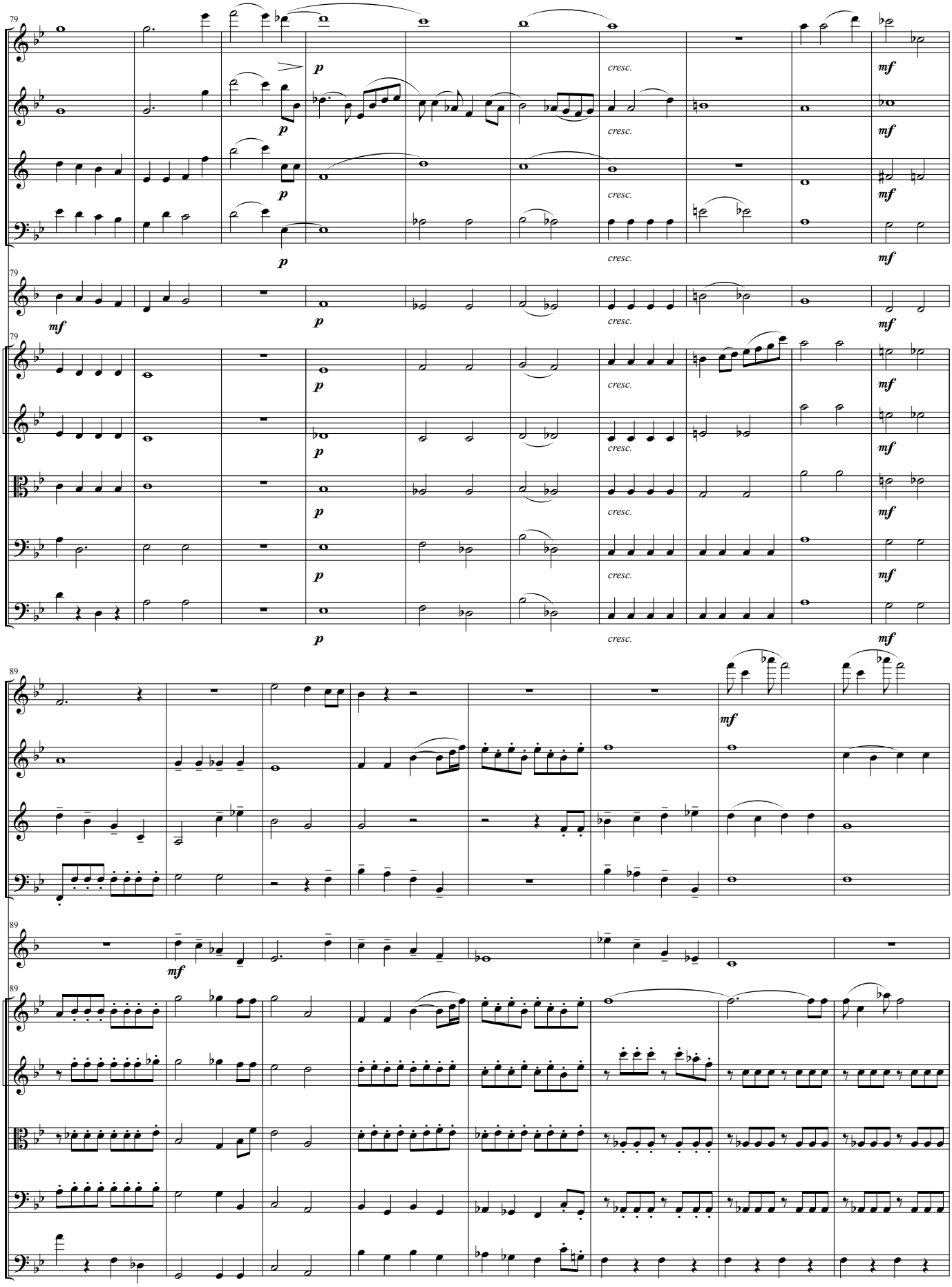

Intense, yet moderate ♩ = 100
Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in B♭
Bassoon
Horn in F
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
cresc.

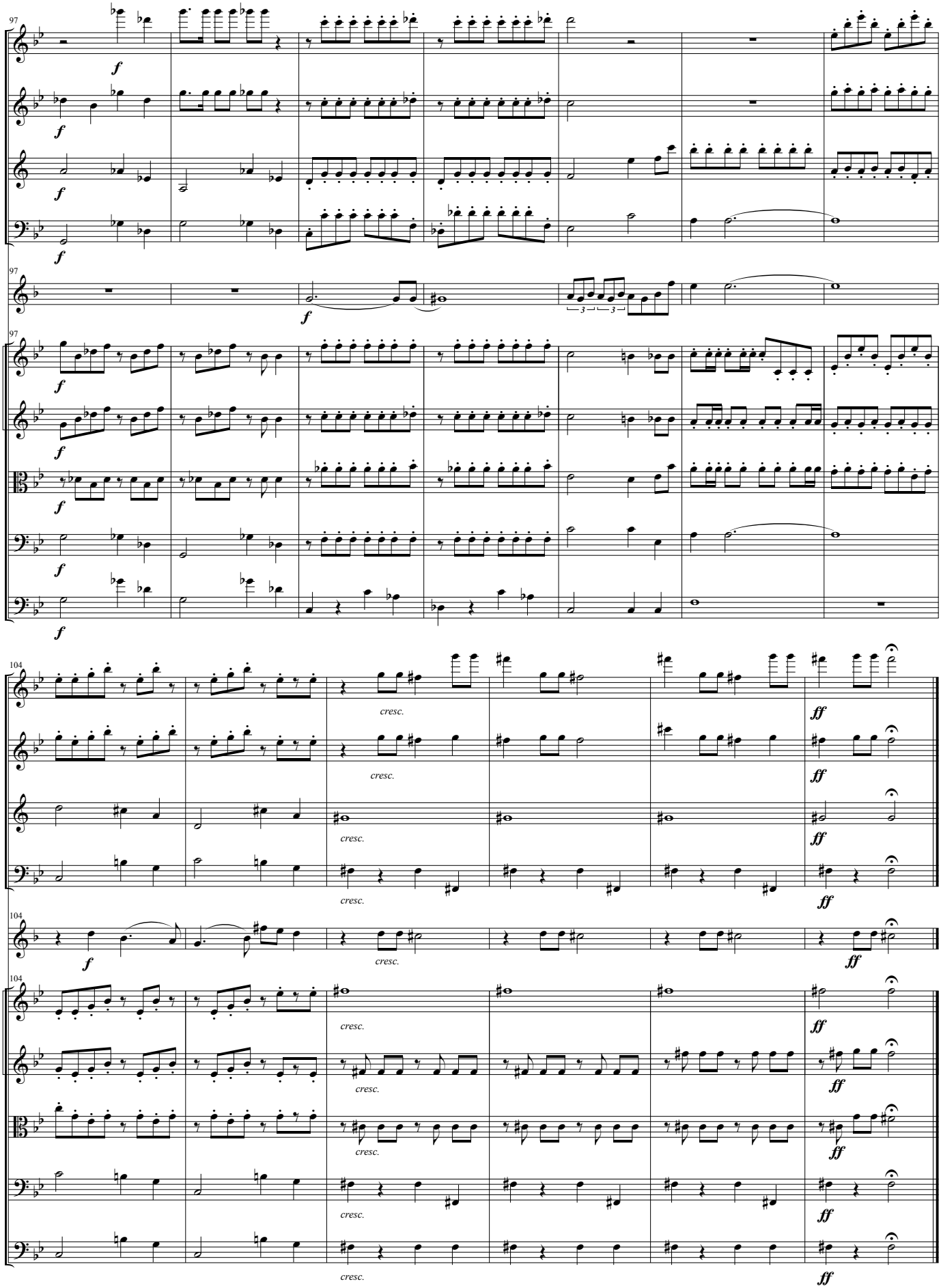

15
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
ff
mf
pizz.
arco
22
f


30
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
cresc.
ff
f
38
mf
mp


47
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
56
mp
dim.

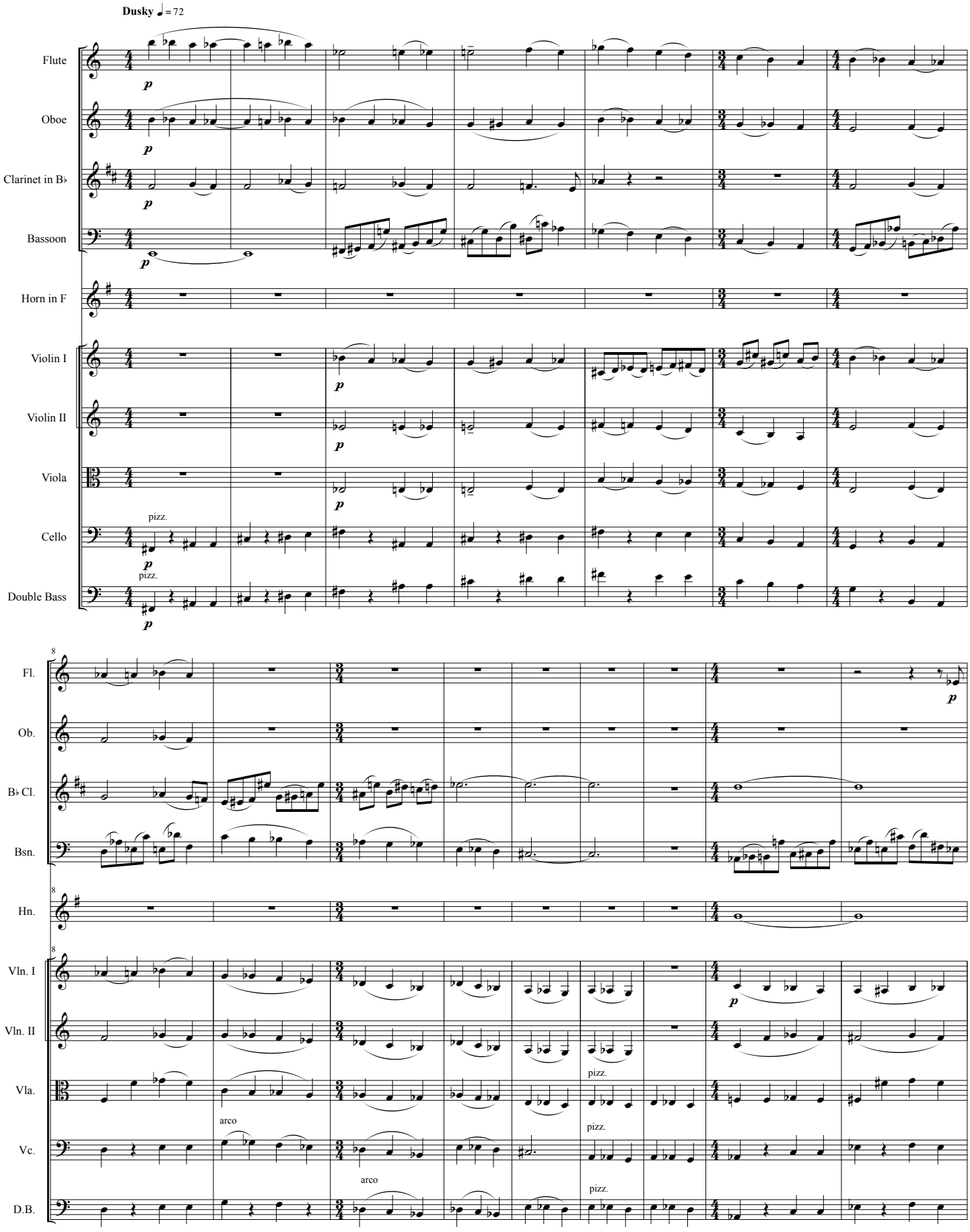

63
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
cresc.
ff
mp
pizz.
71
mf
espress.
arco

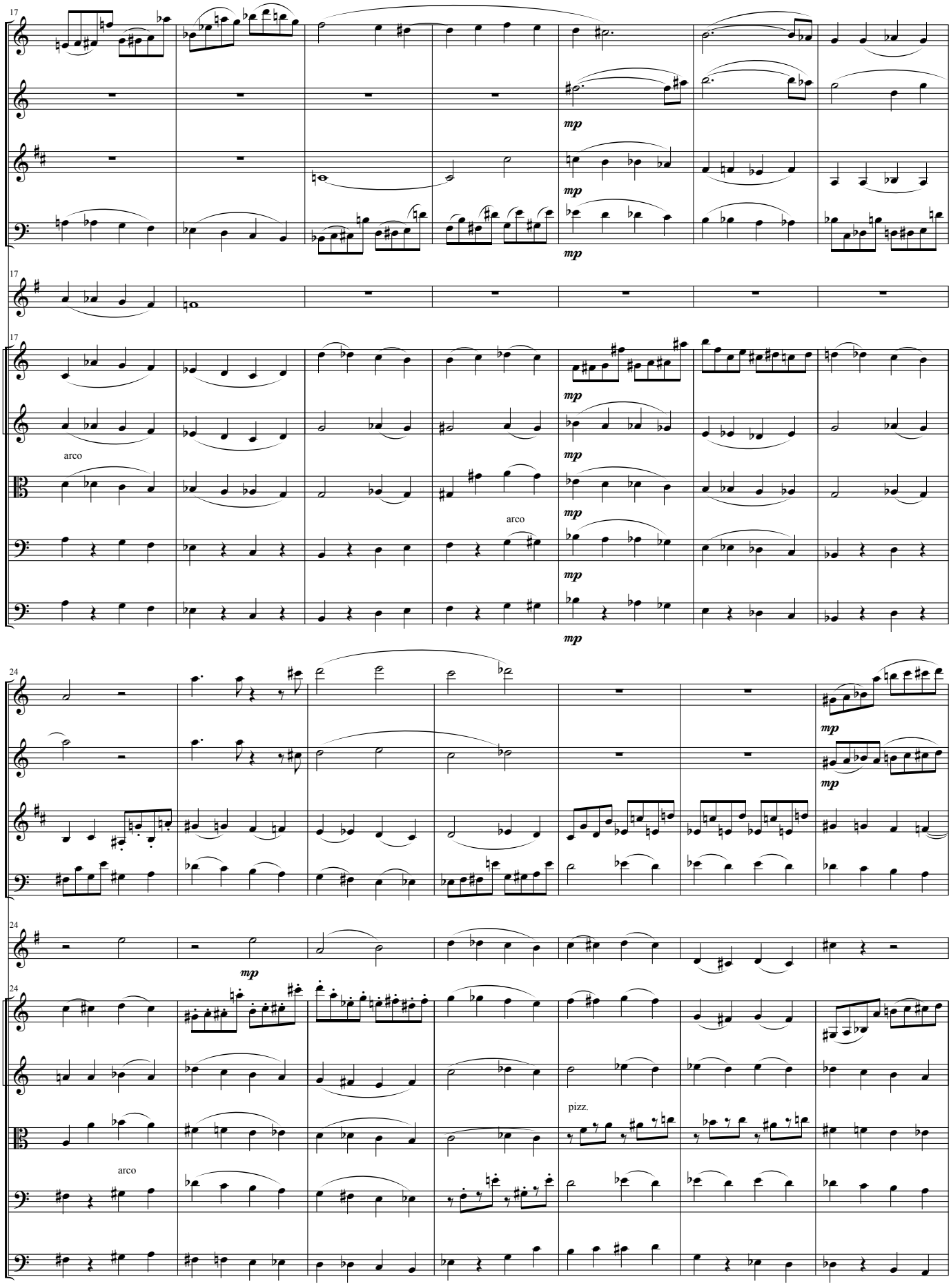

79
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
mf
cresc.
89

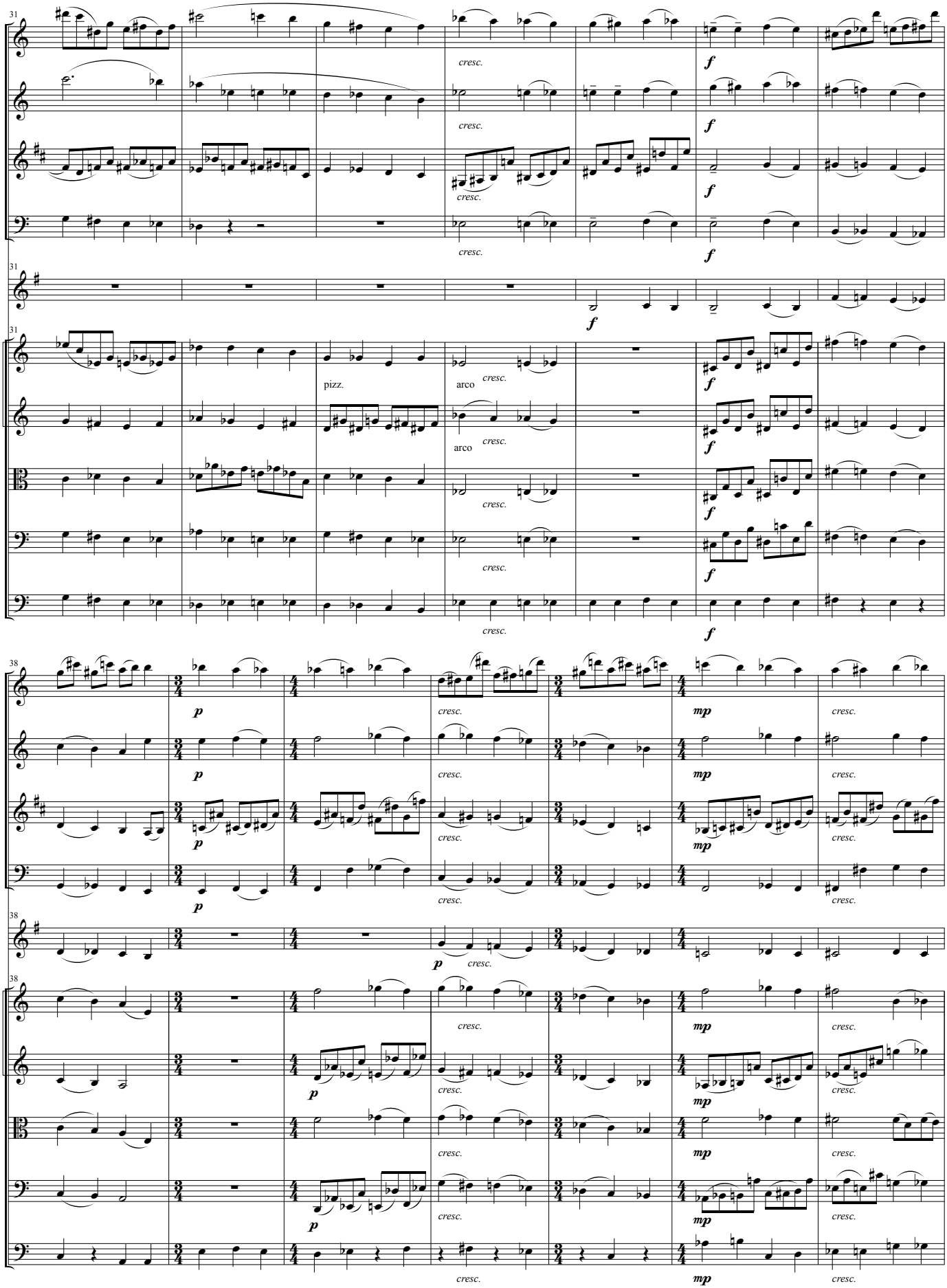

97
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
f
104
cresc.
ff

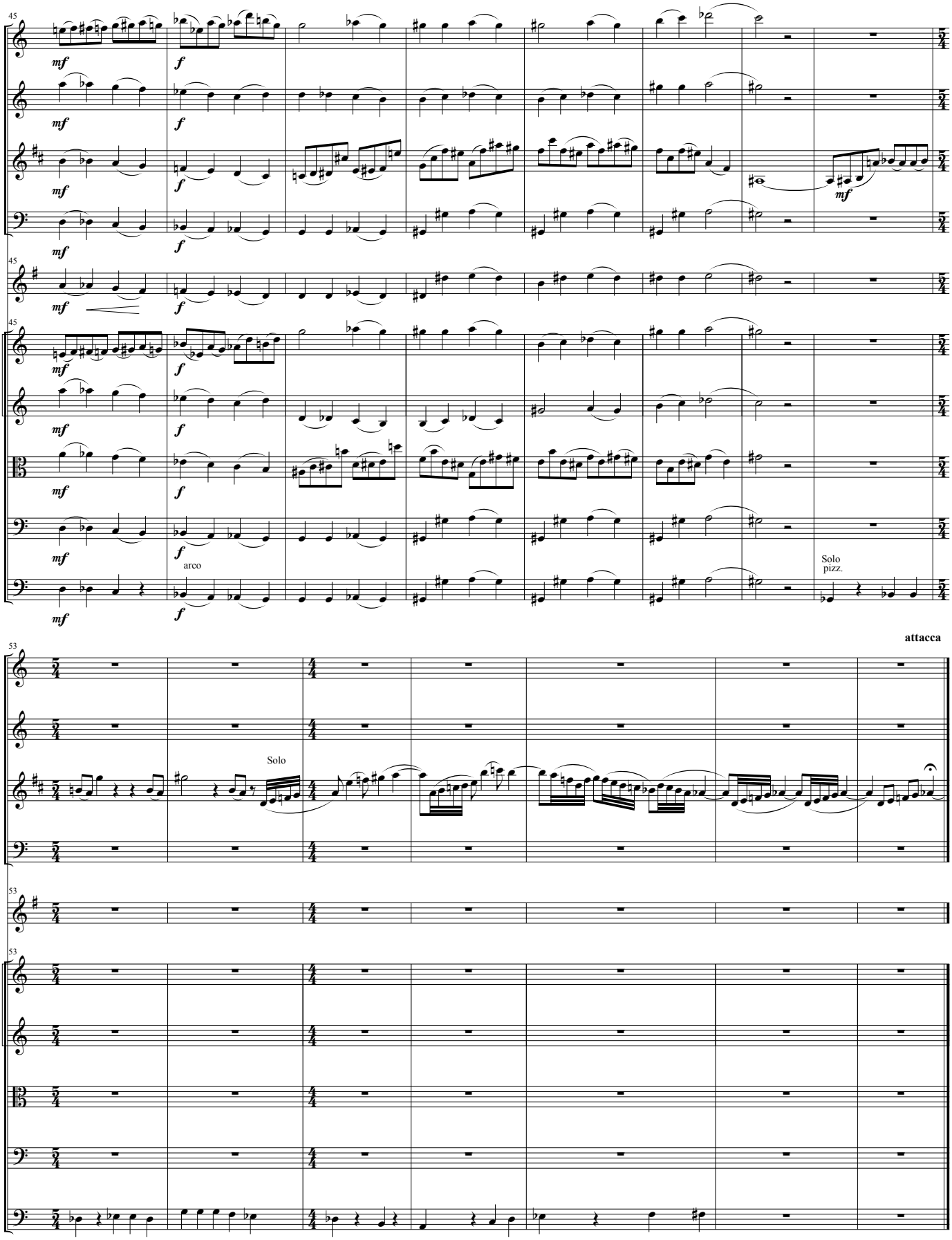
IV. The Bridge

Dusky ♩ = 72

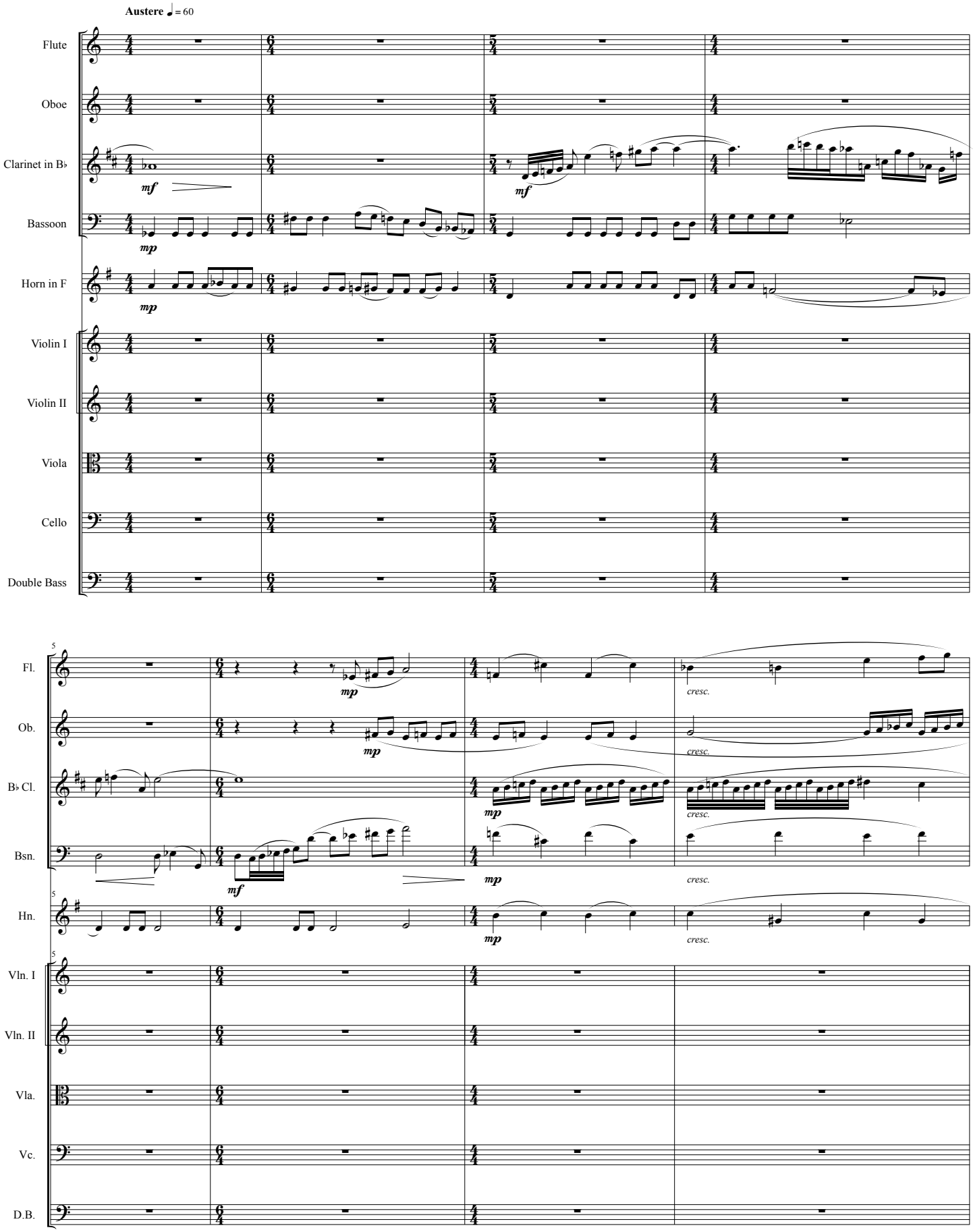


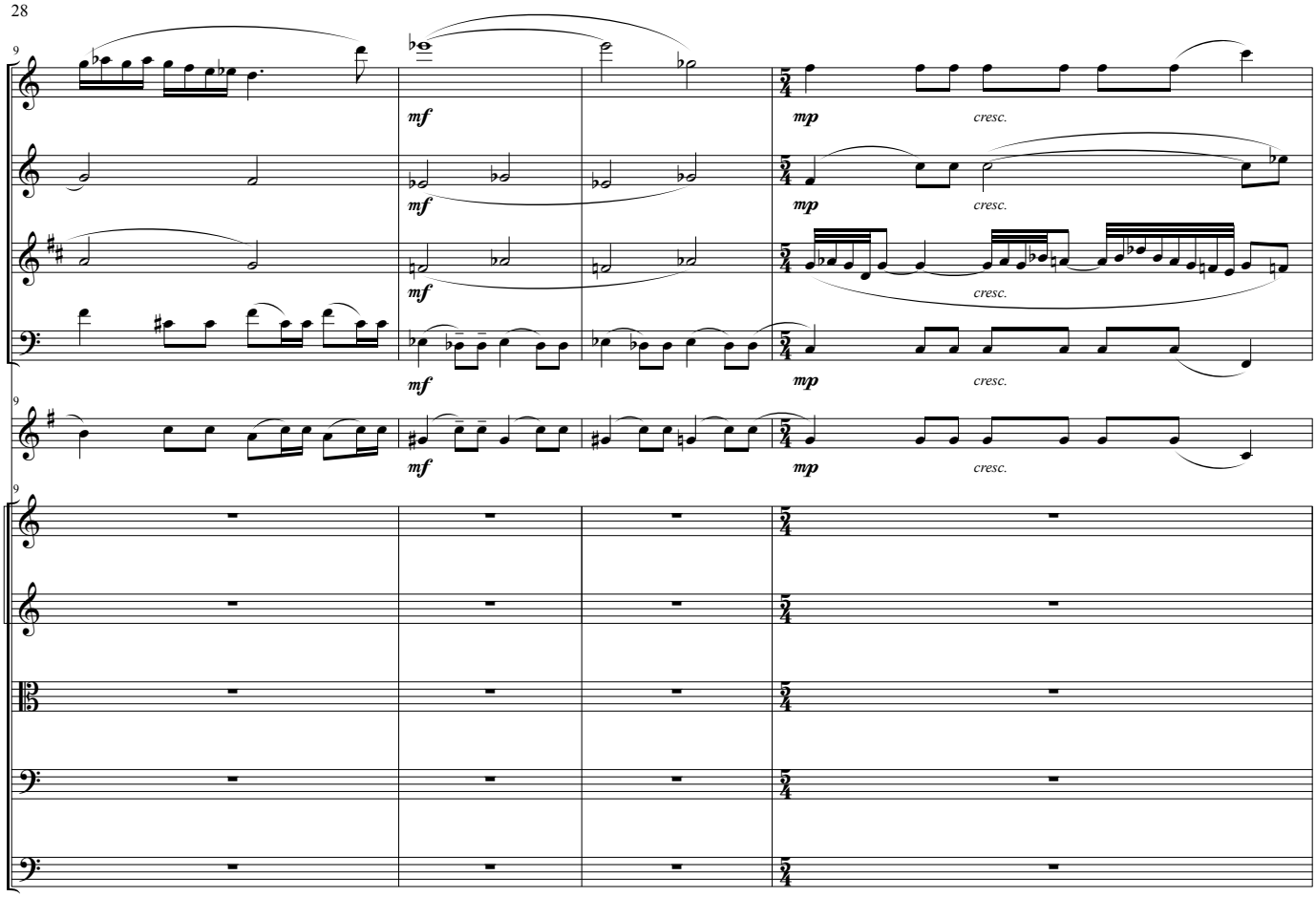

17
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
mp
mp
mp
17
Hn.
17
Vln. I
Vln. II
arco
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mp
mp
mp
arco
mp
24
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
mp
mp
24
Hn.
mp
24
Vln. I
Vln. II
pizz.
Vla.
arco
Vc.
D.B.

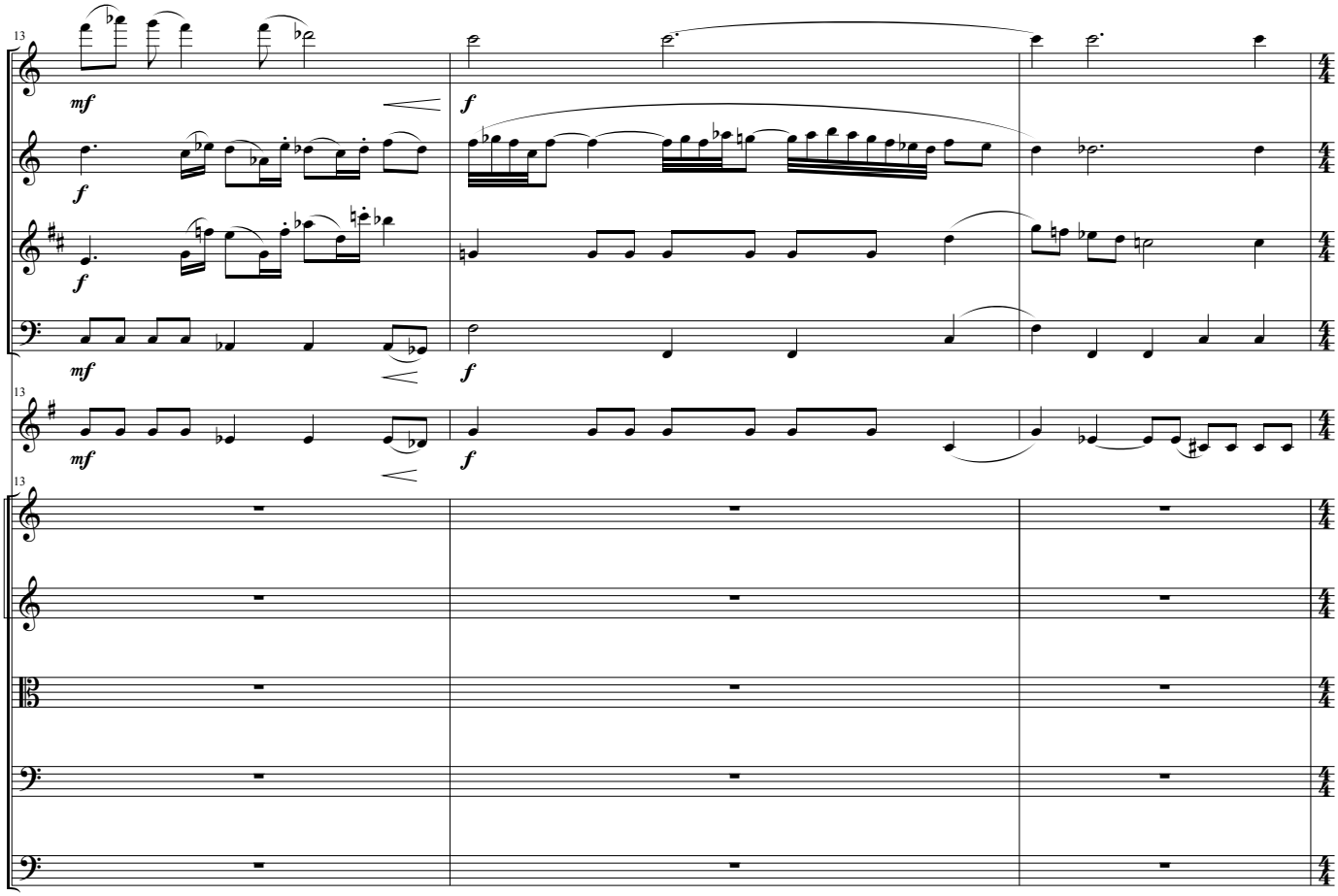

31
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
cresc.
f
pizz.
arco
38
p
mp

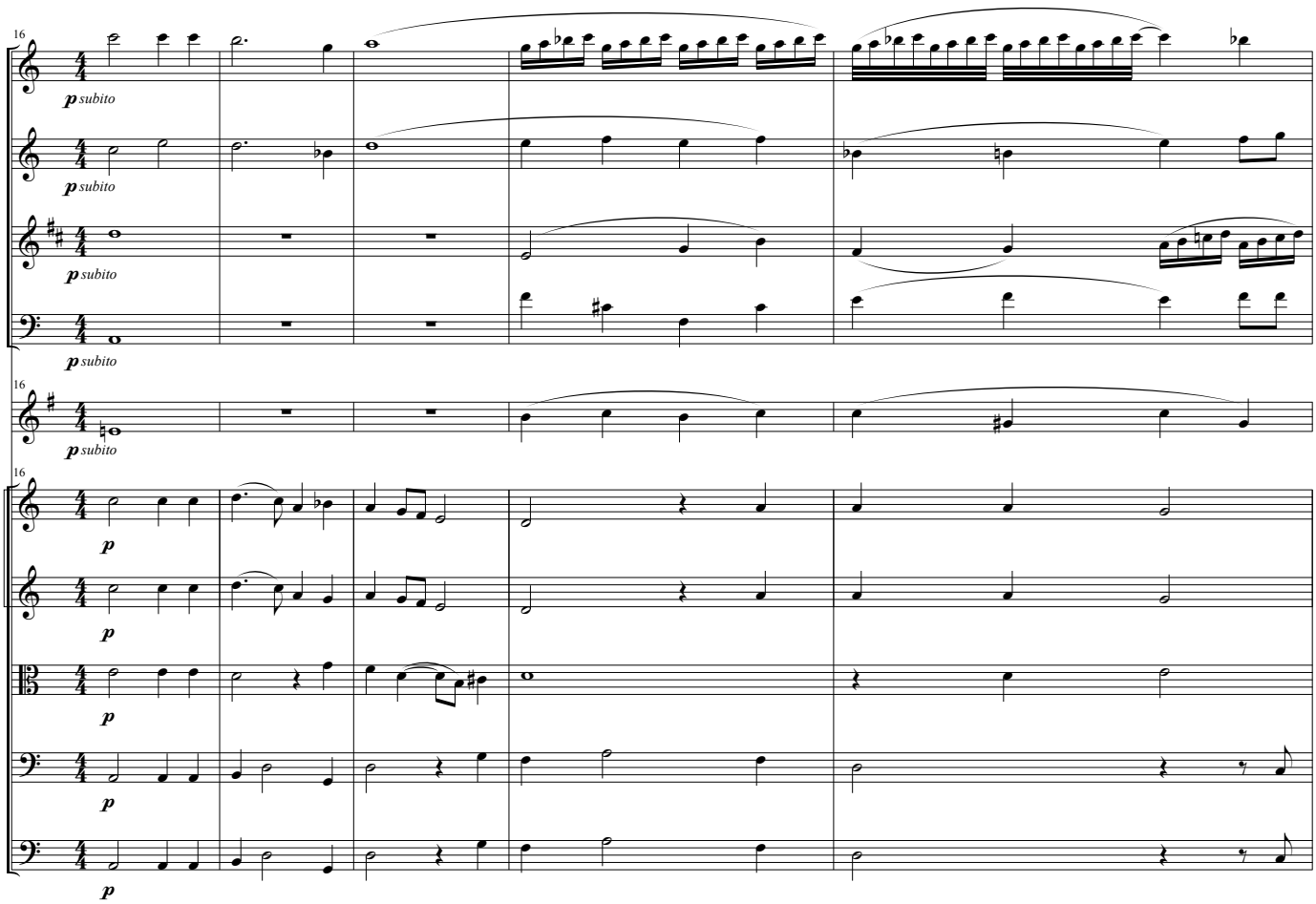

45
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
f
arco
Solo
pizz.
53
Solo
attacca

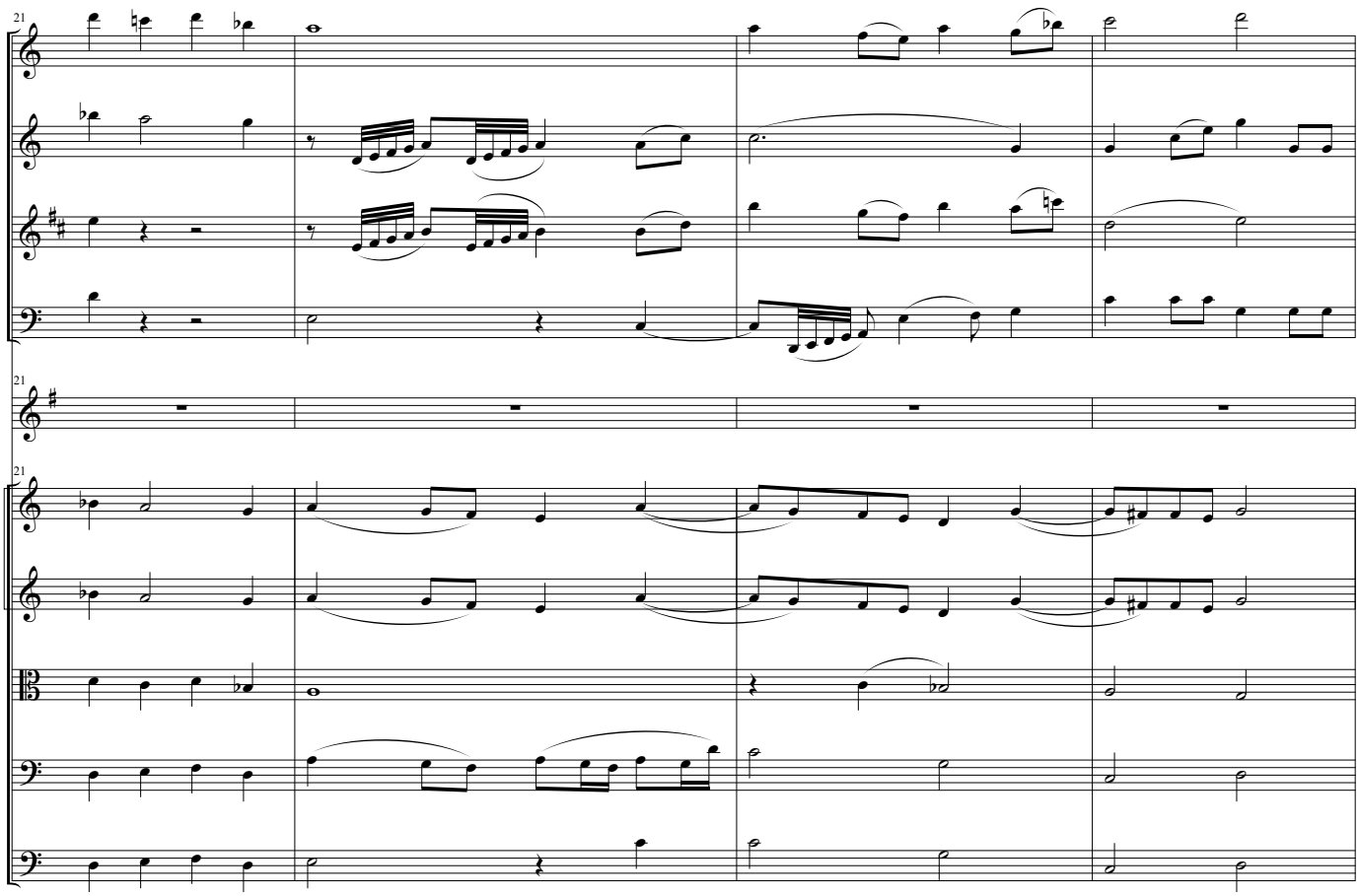
V. The Curiosity Shop

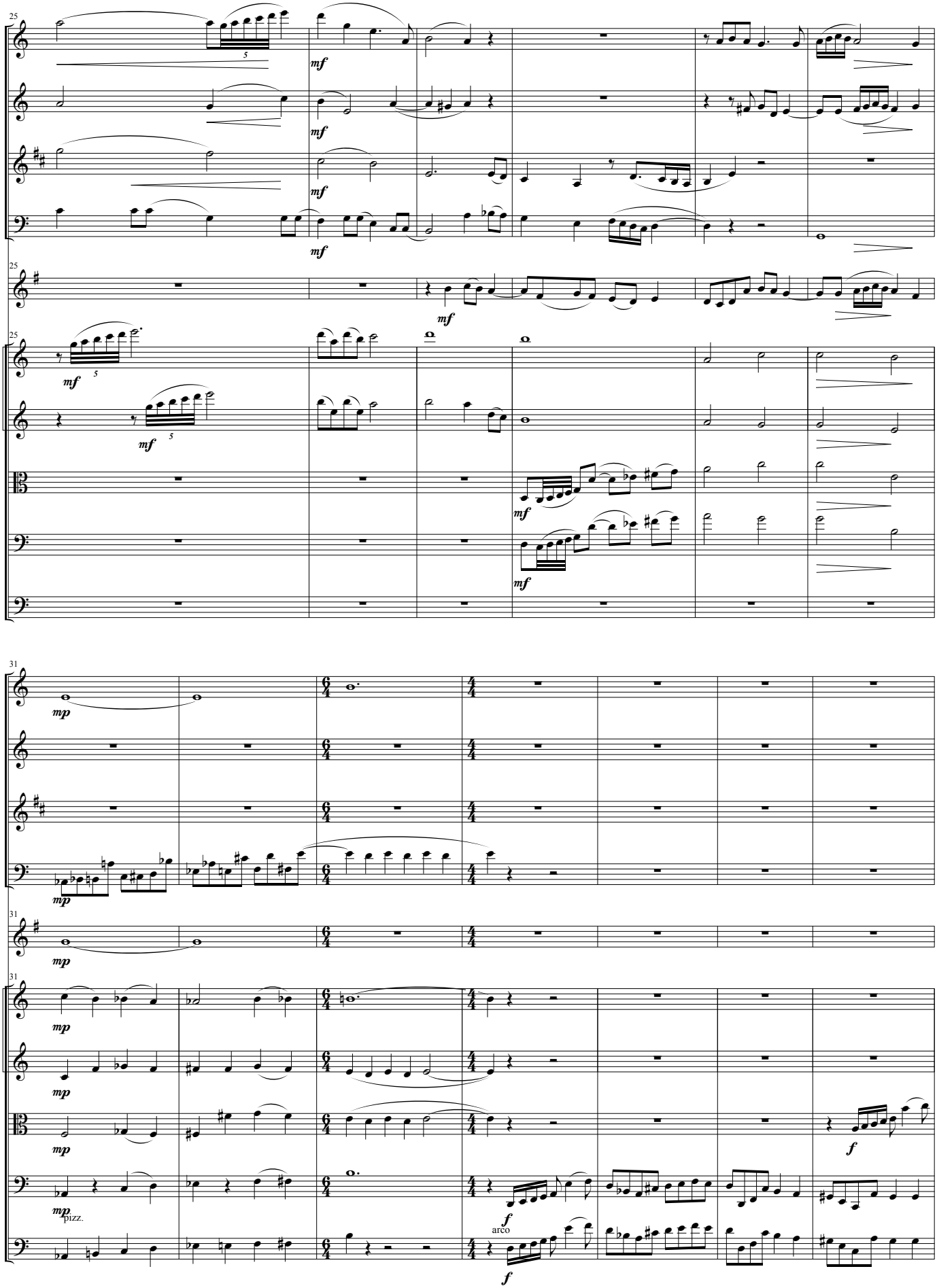


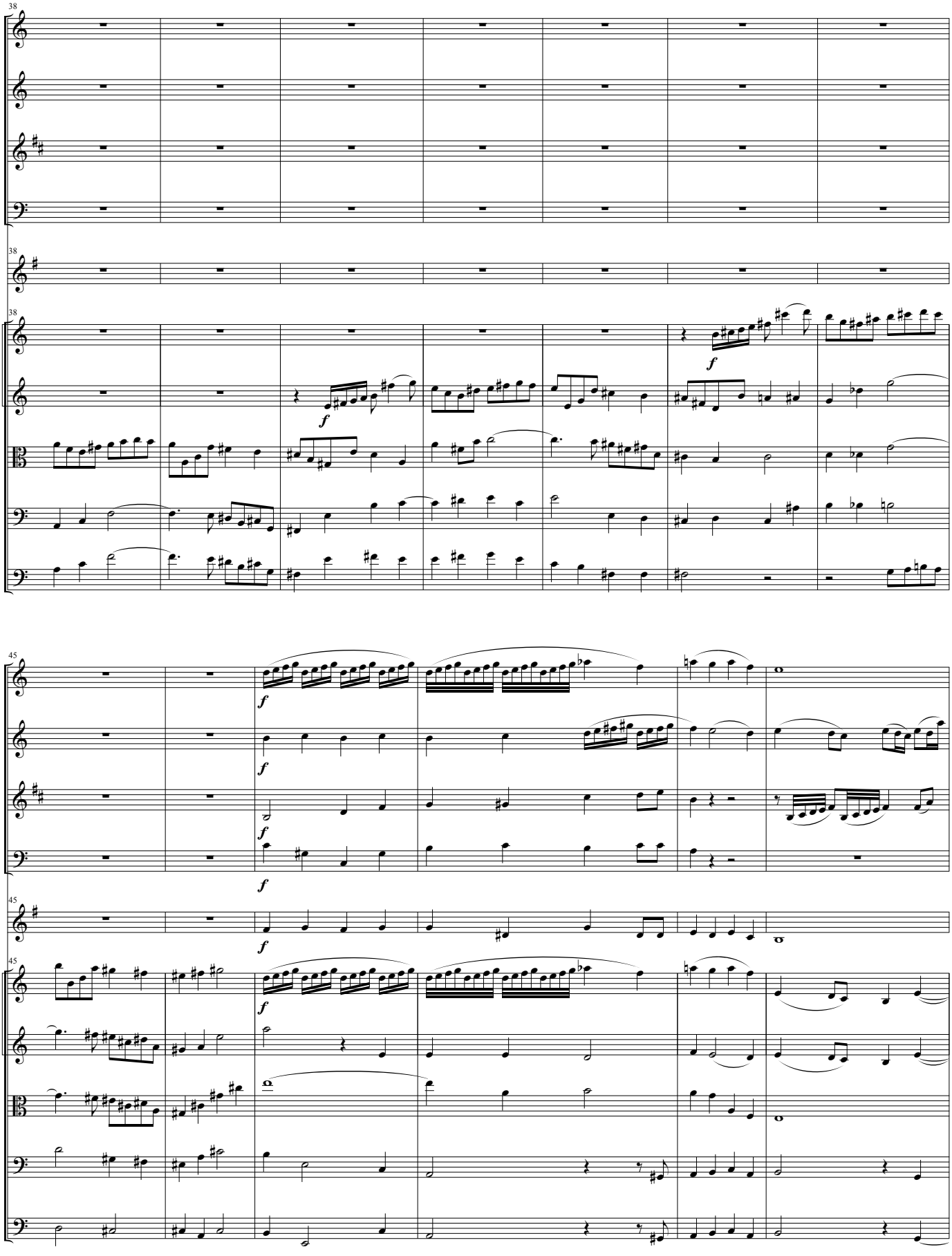

9
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
mp
cresc.

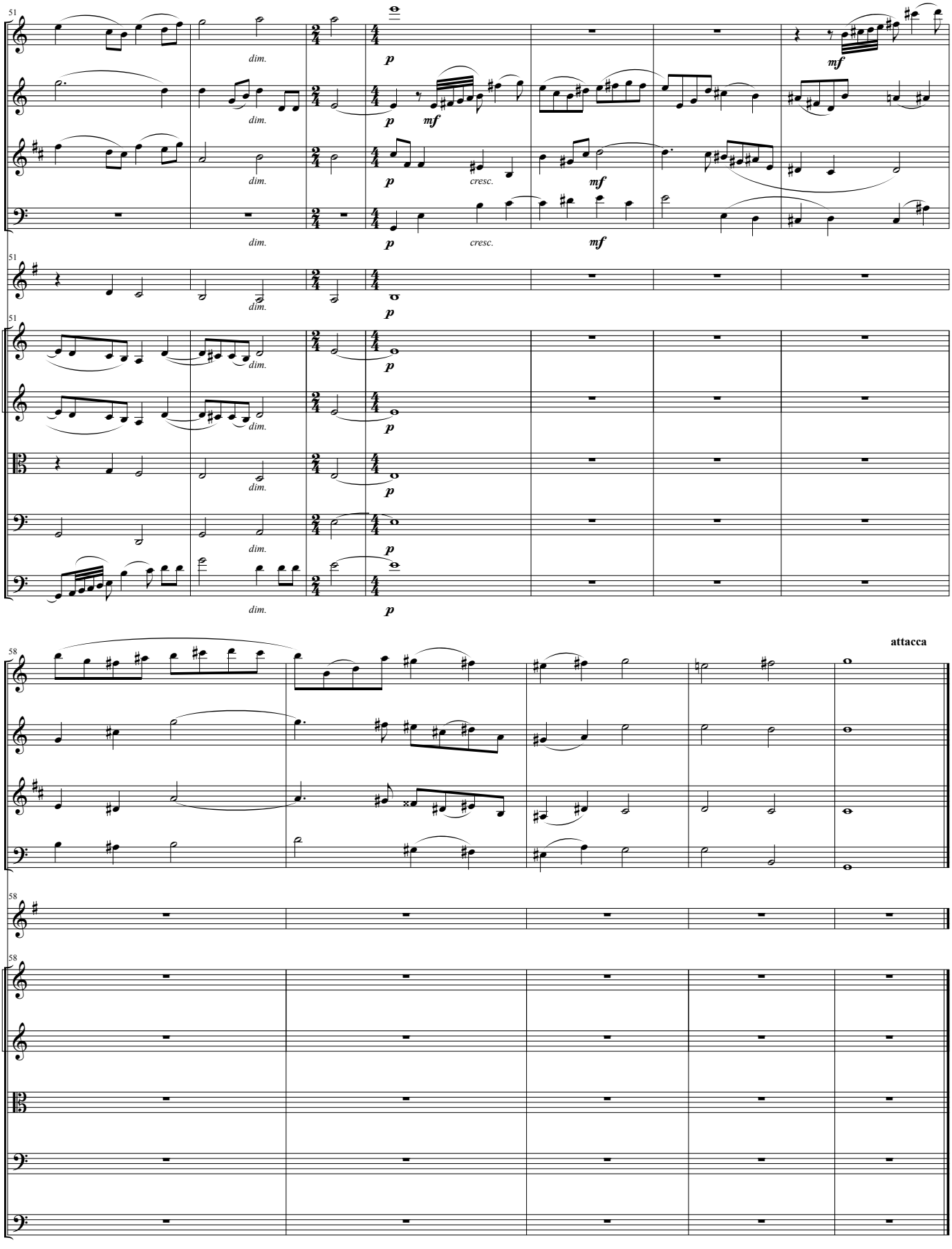

13
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
f


16
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p subito
p


21
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.

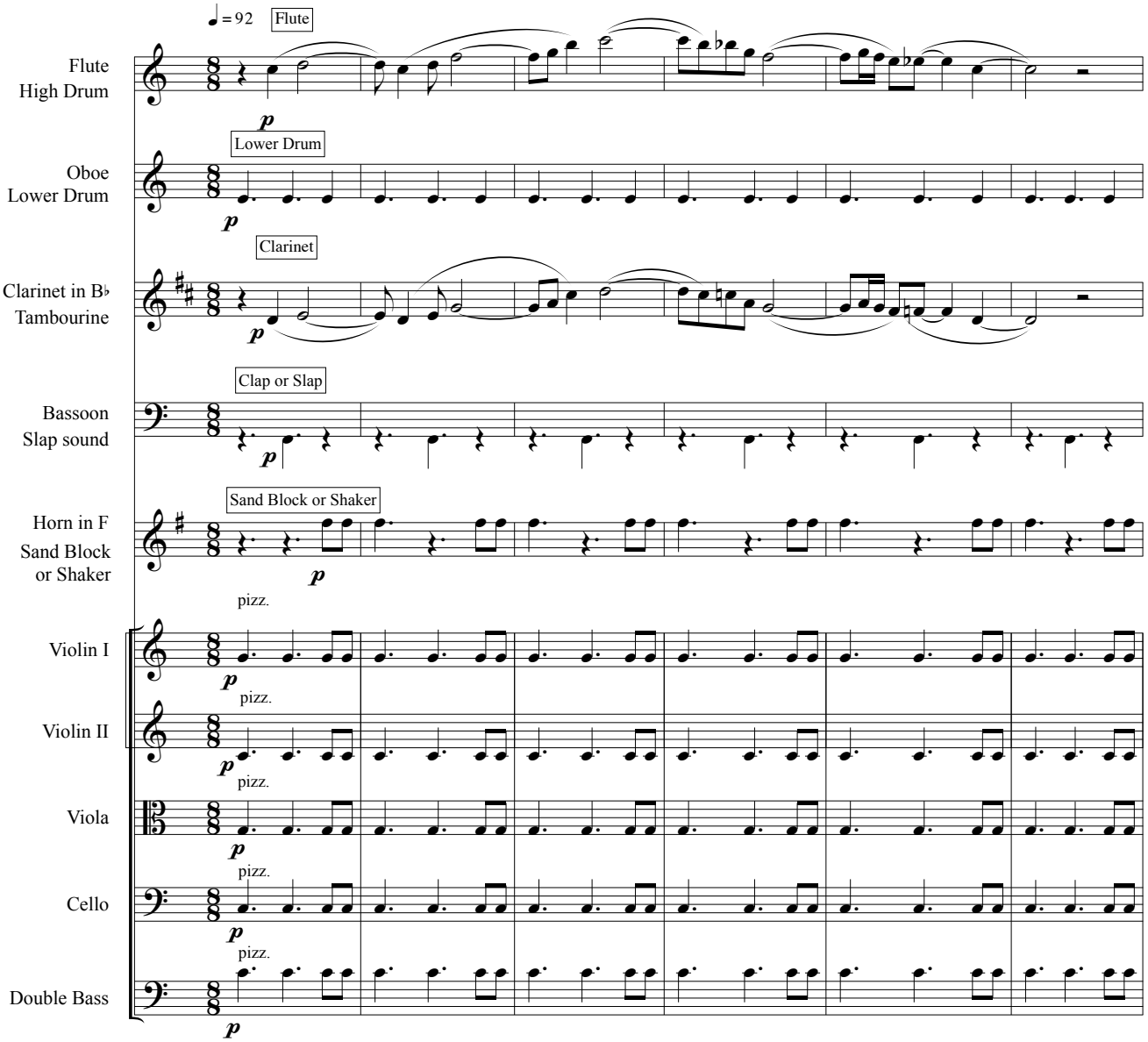

25
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
5
31
mp
pizz.
arco
f

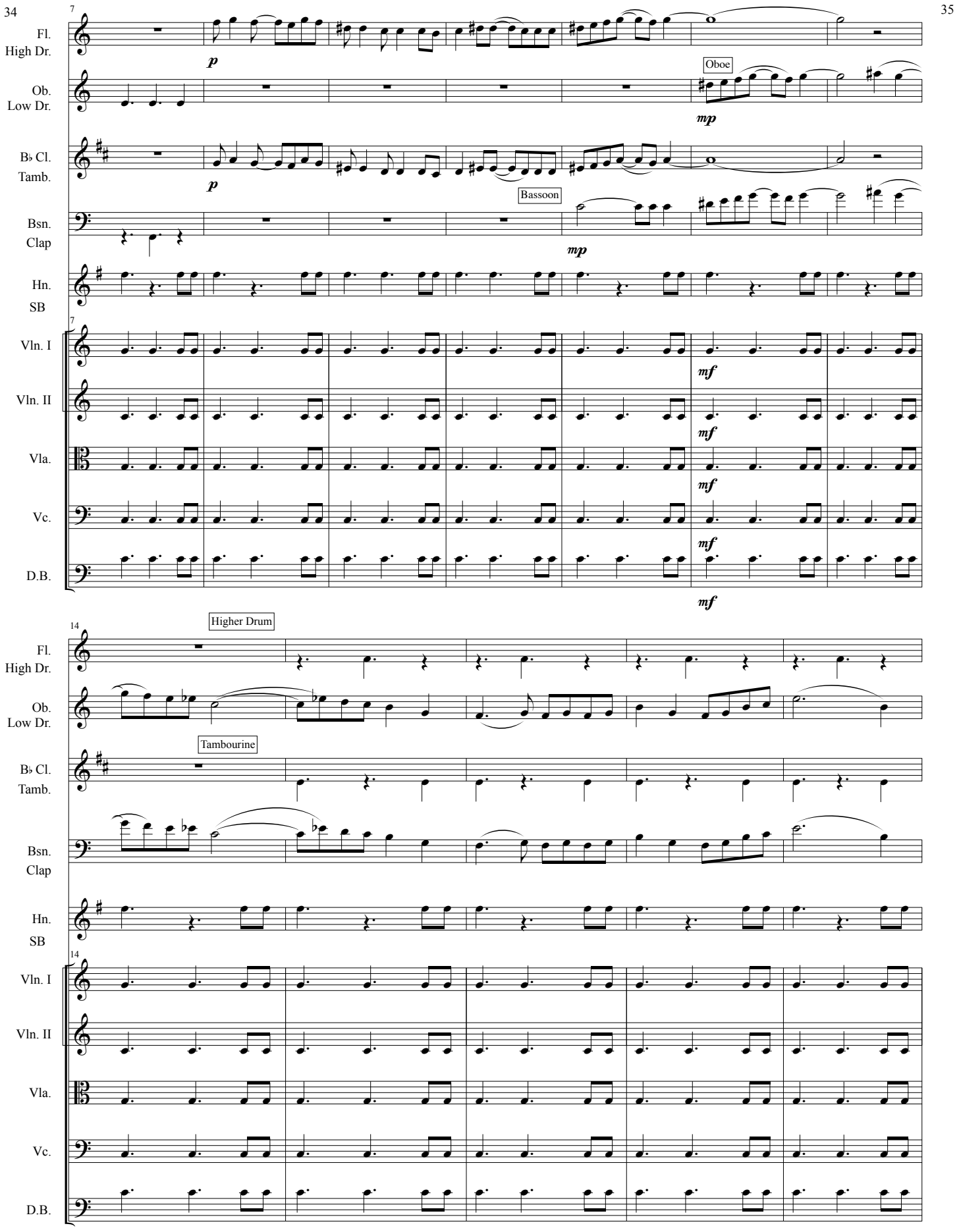

38
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
38
Hn.
38
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
f
f
45
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
45
Hn.
45
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
f
f
f
f
f
f

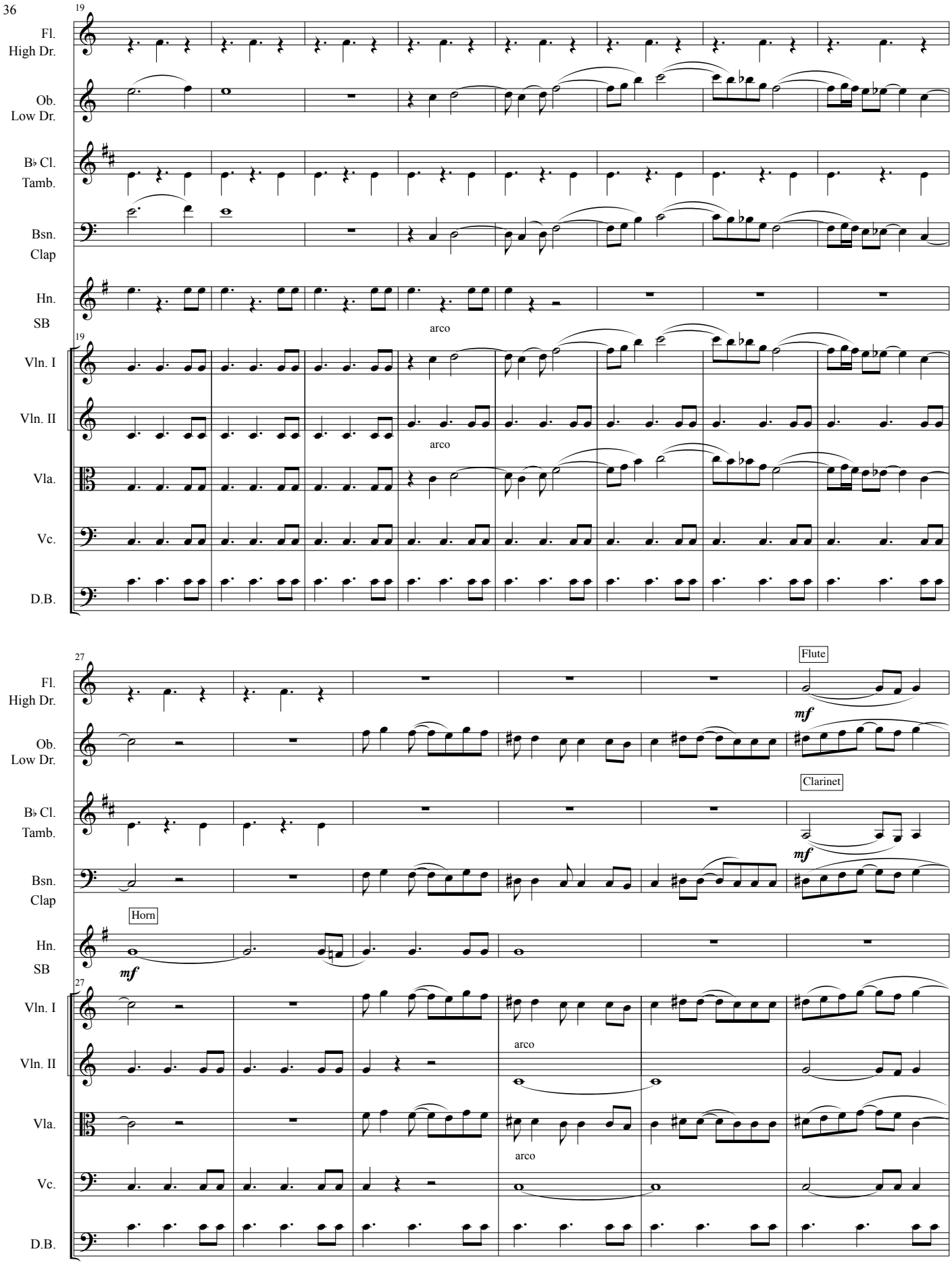

51
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
dim.
p
mf
cresc.
58
attacca

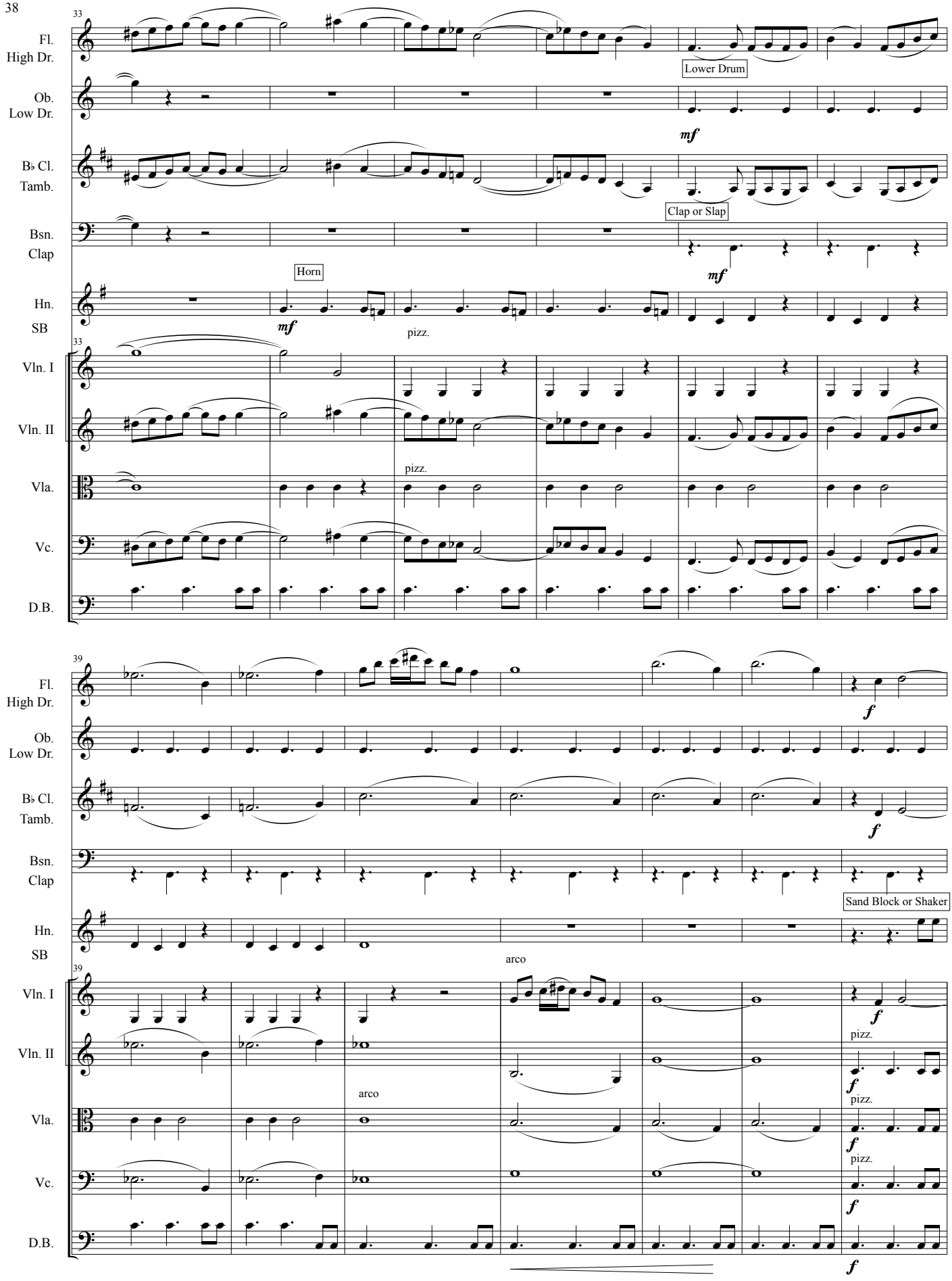
VI. The Wild Ass's Skin

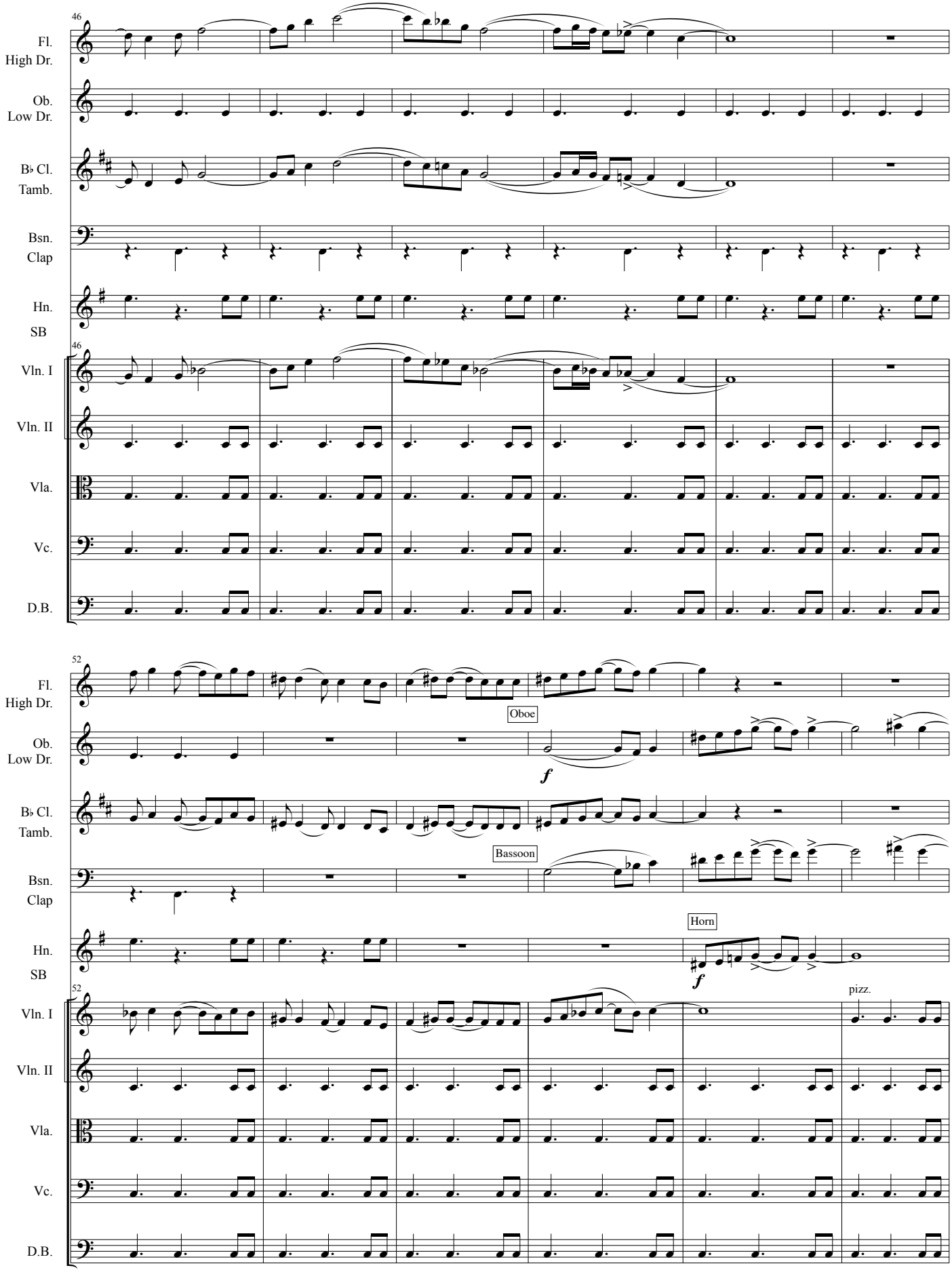
Note that the flute also plays a high drum,
the oboe also plays a low drum,
the clarinet also plays a tambourine,
the bassoon also plays a slapstick or claps,
and the horn also plays a sand block or a shaker.

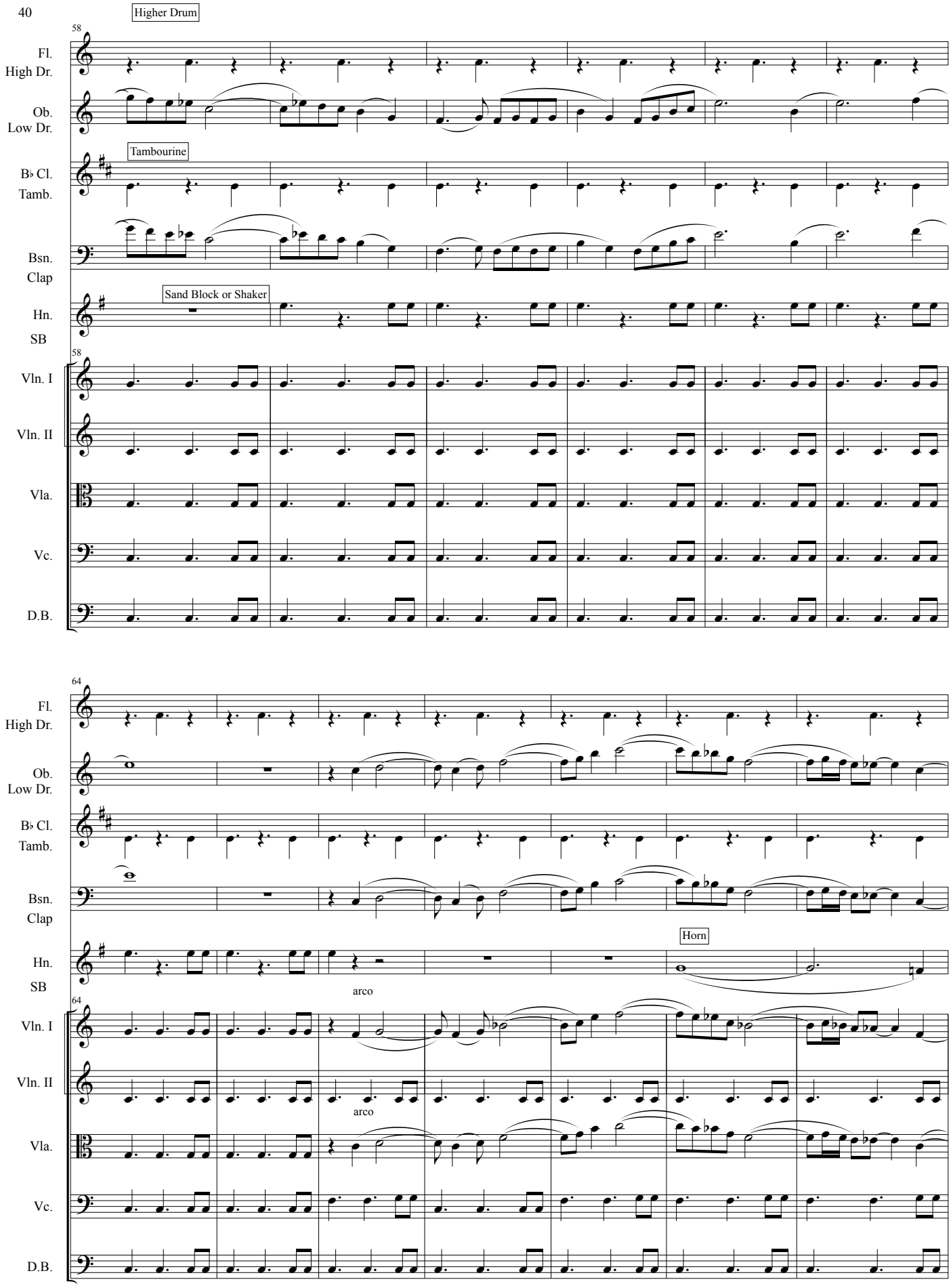


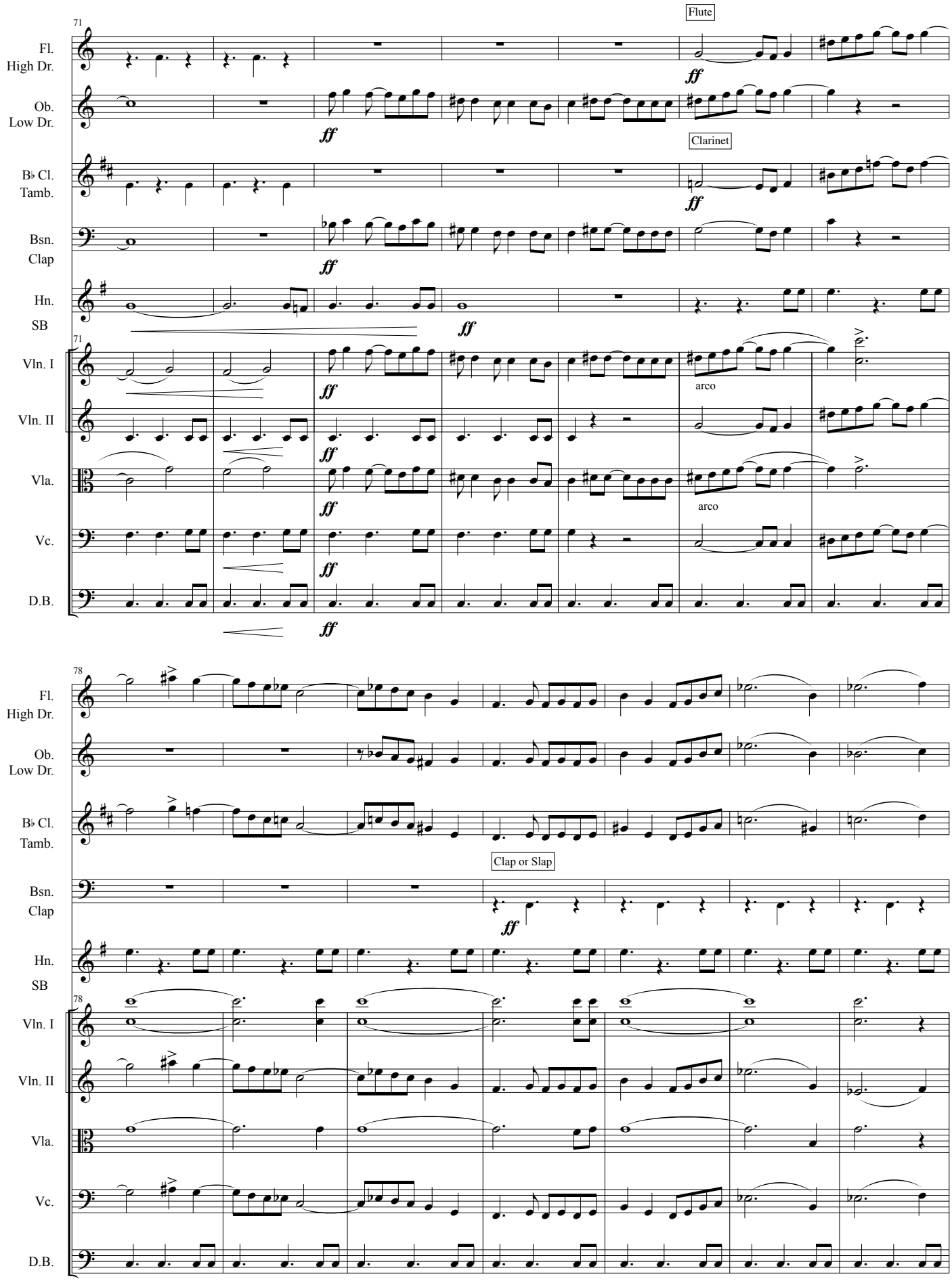

7
Fl.
High Dr.
Ob.
Low Dr.
B♭ Cl.
Tamb.
Bsn.
Clap
Hn.
SB
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
mp
mf
Oboe
Bassoon
14
Higher Drum
Tambourine

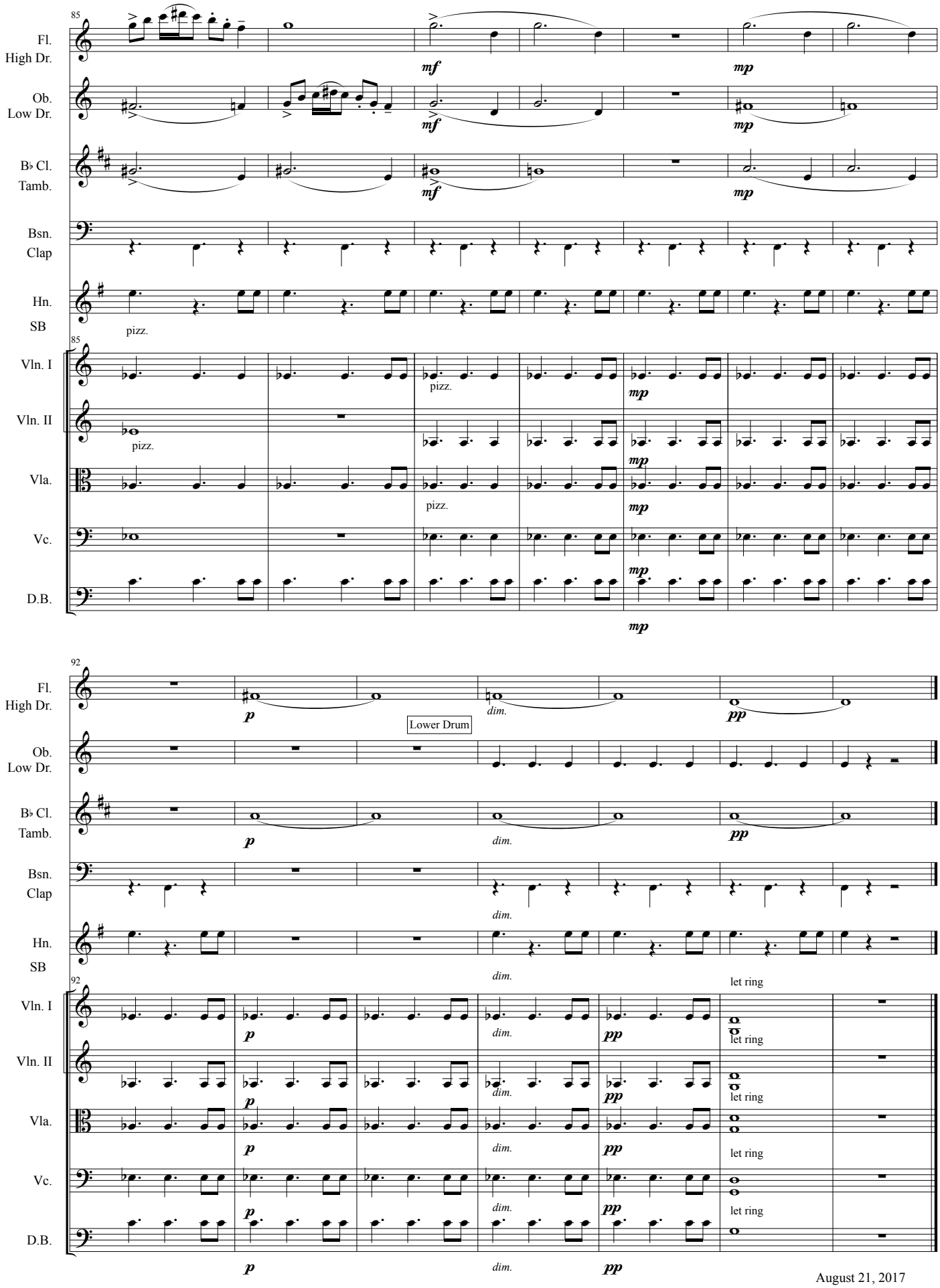

19
Fl.
High Dr.
Ob.
Low Dr.
B♭ Cl.
Tamb.
Bsn.
Clap
Hn.
SB
arco
19
Vln. I
Vln. II
arco
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
27
Flute
Fl.
High Dr.
mf
Ob.
Low Dr.
Clarinet
B♭ Cl.
Tamb.
mf
Bsn.
Clap
Horn
Hn.
SB
mf
27
Vln. I
Vln. II
arco
Vla.
arco
Vc.
D.B.


33
Fl.
High Dr.
Ob.
Low Dr.
B♭ Cl.
Tamb.
Bsn.
Clap
Hn.
SB
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
Lower Drum
mf
Clap or Slap
mf
Horn
mf
pizz.
pizz.
39
f
f
Sand Block or Shaker
arco
arco
pizz.
f
pizz.
f
pizz.
f
f


46
Fl.
High Dr.
Ob.
Low Dr.
B♭ Cl.
Tamb.
Bsn.
Clap
Hn.
SB
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
52
Oboe
f
Bassoon
Horn
f
pizz.


Higher Drum
58
Fl.
High Dr.
Ob.
Low Dr.
Tambourine
B♭ Cl.
Tamb.
Bsn.
Clap
Sand Block or Shaker
Hn.
SB
58
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
64
Fl.
High Dr.
Ob.
Low Dr.
B♭ Cl.
Tamb.
Bsn.
Clap
Horn
Hn.
SB
arco
64
Vln. I
Vln. II
arco
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.


71
Flute
Fl.
High Dr.
Ob.
Low Dr.
Clarinet
B♭ Cl.
Tamb.
Bsn.
Clap
Hn.
SB
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
ff
arco
78
Clap or Slap



August 21, 2017
c. 23 minutes