Nocturne and Minuet for String Orchestra

(Dec. 2002—April 2003)

From 1991 to 2001, I did not have the housing or other factors in life that would allow me the luxury of composing. None of my compositions had been performed since 1984, so there was little motivation to continue. In 2001, I enrolled at NCSU to study physics, which gave me student housing and a regularized lifestyle. Thus in 2002, I made two electric violins, one with six strings, with adaptive gear in hopes of being able to play violin once again, despite my severe arthritis. This in turn led to the purchase of an old upright piano, and starting to use Finale on my computer for copywork. I made a new edition of my solo violin music, as well as music for my six-string violin using a curved bow allowing polyphonic performance. Once my set of eleven solo violin sonatas was finished, I decided to warm up and flex my compositional muscles with a larger form. This was *Nocturne and Minuet*, written for either string quartet or string orchestra. It was designed to be suited to amateur performance, and for the enjoyment of the general audience that attends classical music concerts. It is not as complex or as long as the works that would follow; this is not an ambitious piece, but rather just something that might be fun to play and hear, and to get me back in the game after a long absence. (This does not presume to be my Big String Quartet at all.) After completing this modest effort, I went on in the following summer to larger projects.

The first movement ended up with a kind of moodiness that justifies the title of *Nocturne*. The second movement is in strict classical minuet form, complete with a trio section and *minuet da capo*. I don't usually get the chance to make musicians flip pages back and forth trying to find the little symbol and hey don't forget the repeat did we agree to take it or not? Always good for a little nail-biting during performance. Don't let the form fool you, though, this is 21st Century music, although it may seem to ignore the last 60 years of thumping and bumping that most in the audience would just as soon forget. You may find a little Prokoviev, a touch of Bartok in his milder moods, maybe a little Ravel, and in the Minuet, more than a touch of Papa Haydn in the stew; but the language is my own.

Nocturne and Minuet was premiered by the strings of the Raleigh Civic Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Randall Foy, in November 2003. This was the first performance of my music in nineteen years. (I had to wait until 2006 for any other performances.) The cover photograph shows me after the concert, speaking with (left to right) Susan Osborne, Stephen Reynolds, Matt Corne, Dean Lee, and on the far right, Bruce Sherwood. Steve, Matt, Dean and Bruce were all on the physics faculty here at NCSU; Susan is Steve's wife and teaches English here.

Should time constraints or other limitations lead to an inability to perform both movements, either may stand alone in a concert.

Bill Robinson

Publisher Parrish Press Raleigh NC 2nd Edition February 2015
billrobinsonmusic.com

Nocturne and Minuet for String Quartet

I. Nocturne

(7.5')

Bill Robinson

Lento ♩ = 72

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

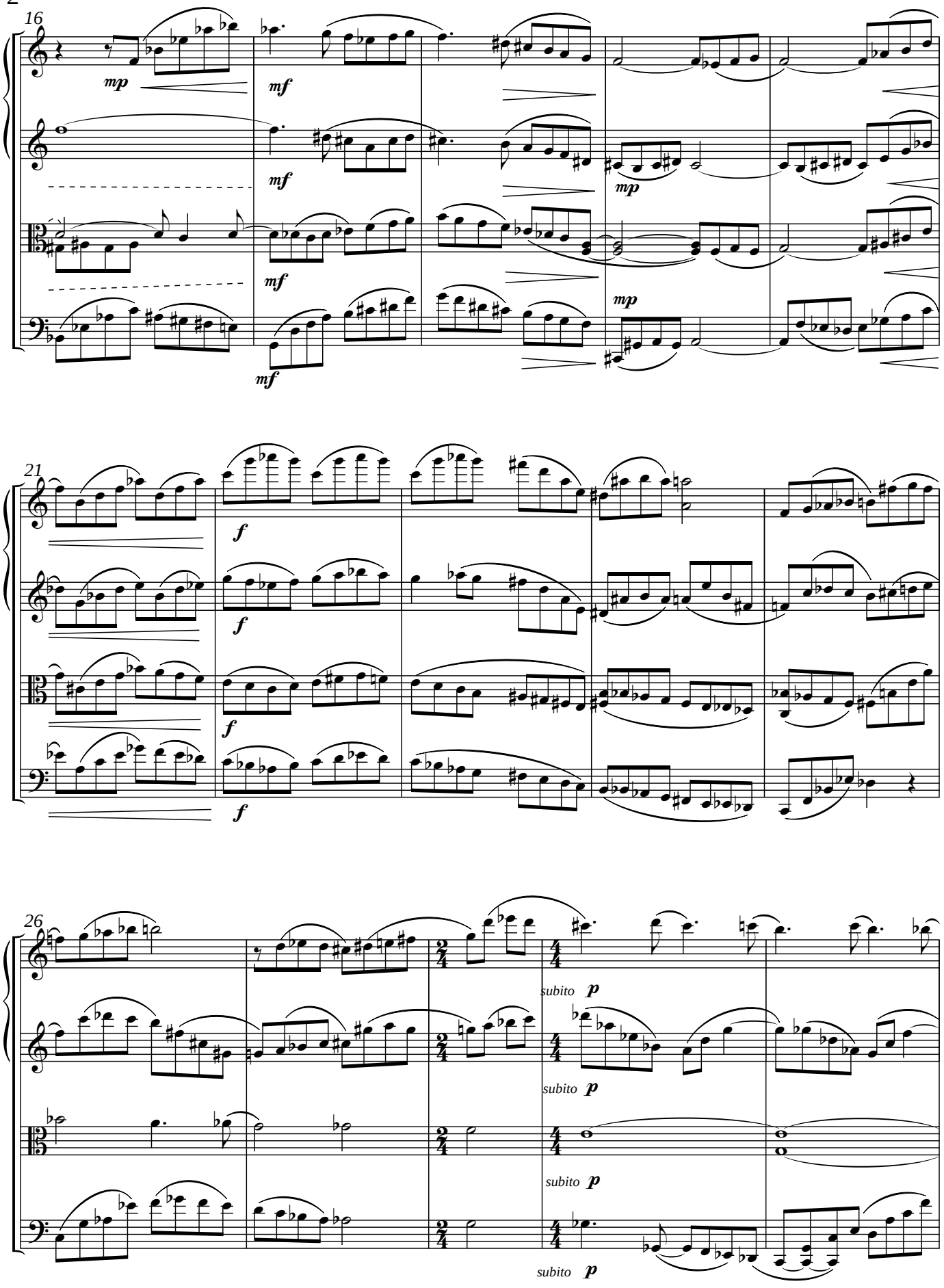
p *dolce*

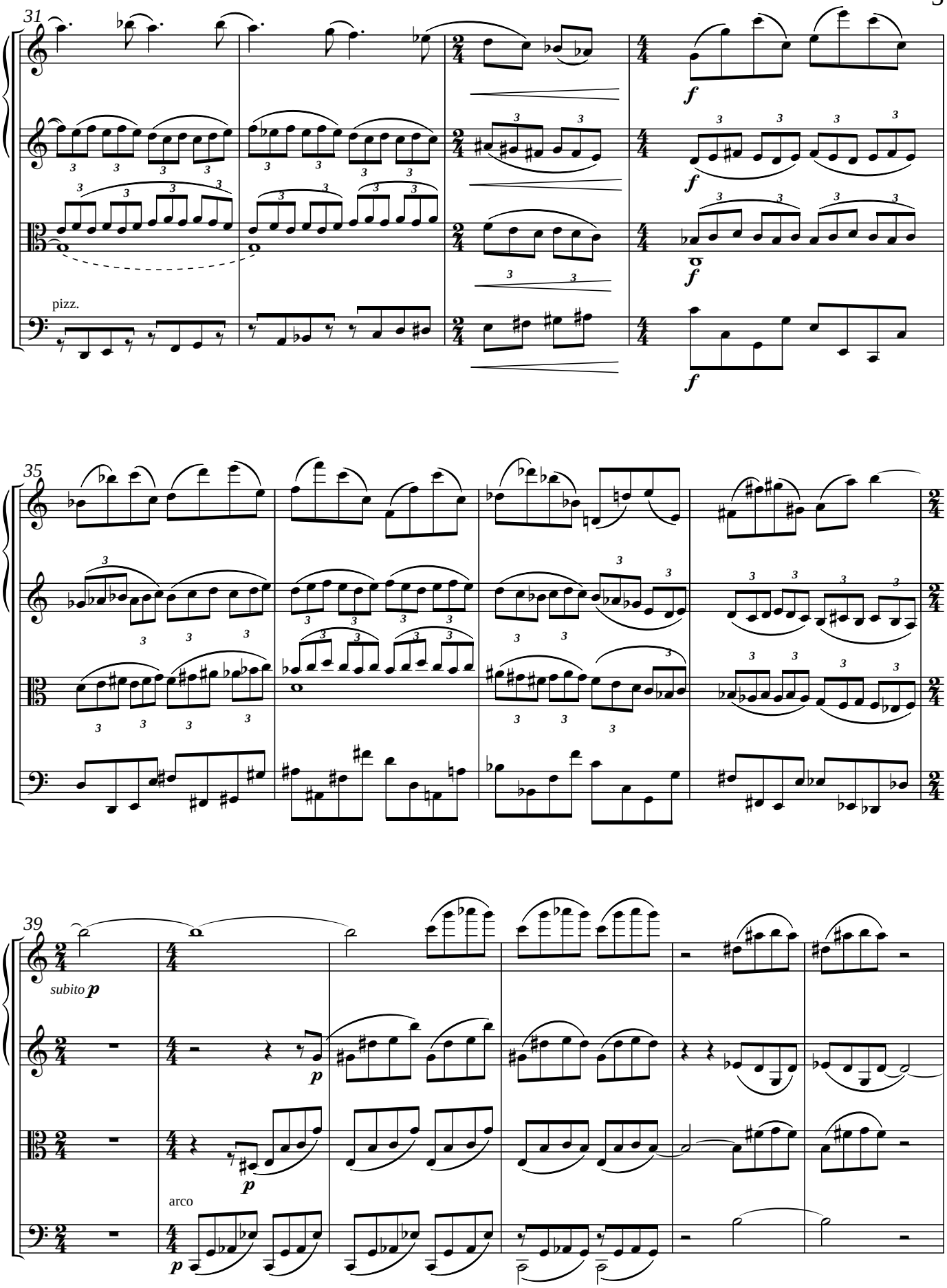
5

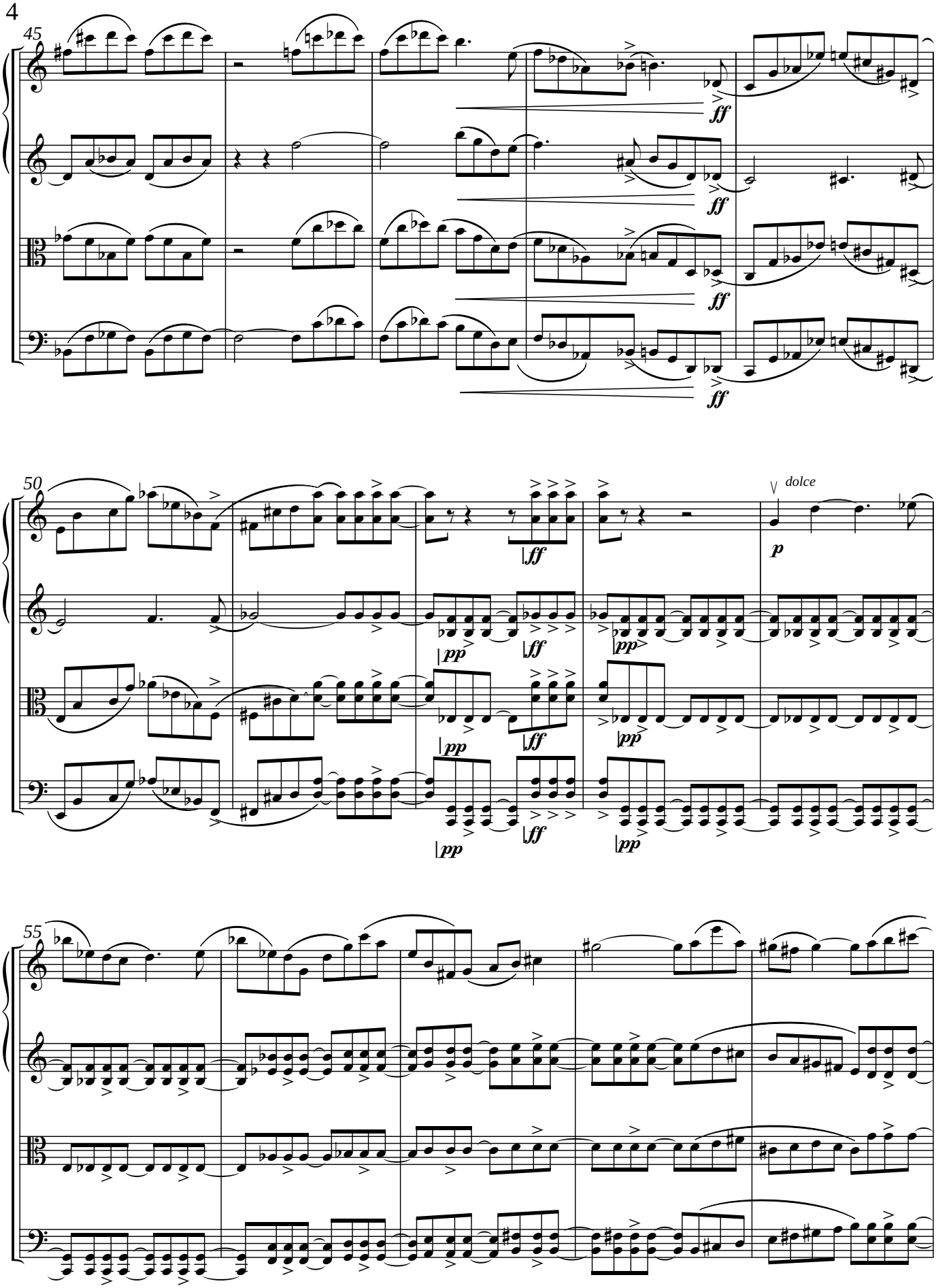
10

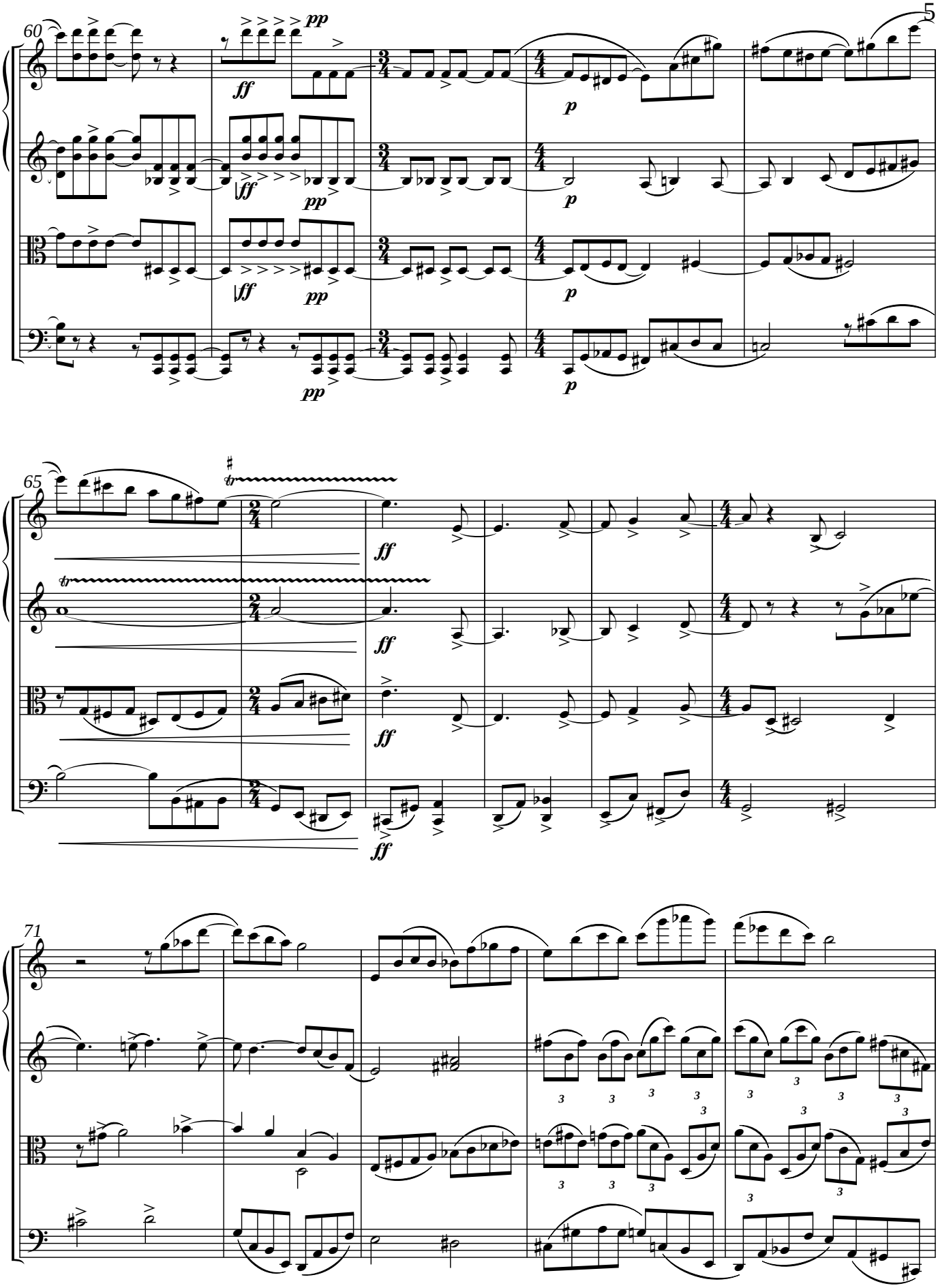
cresc.

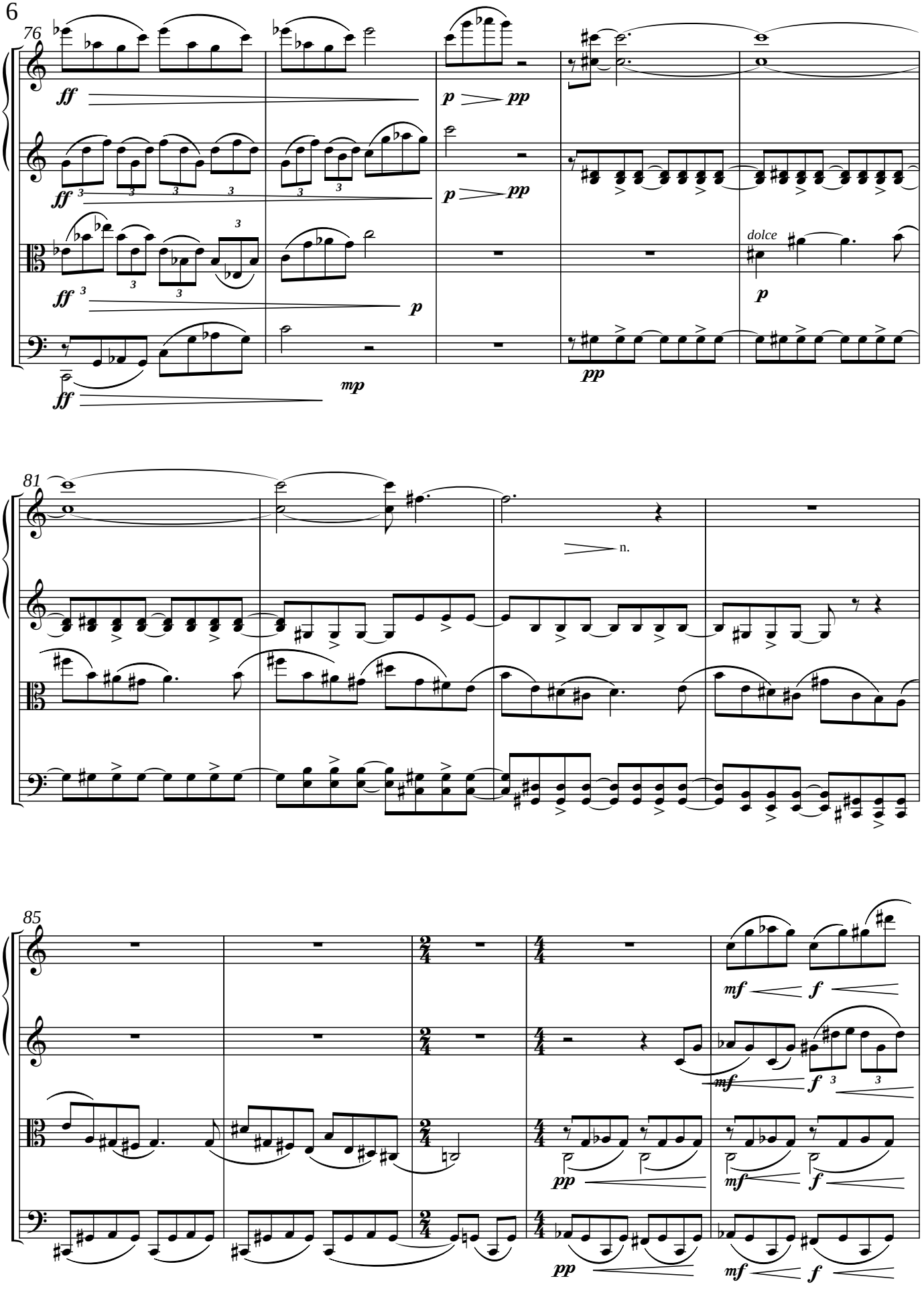
cresc.

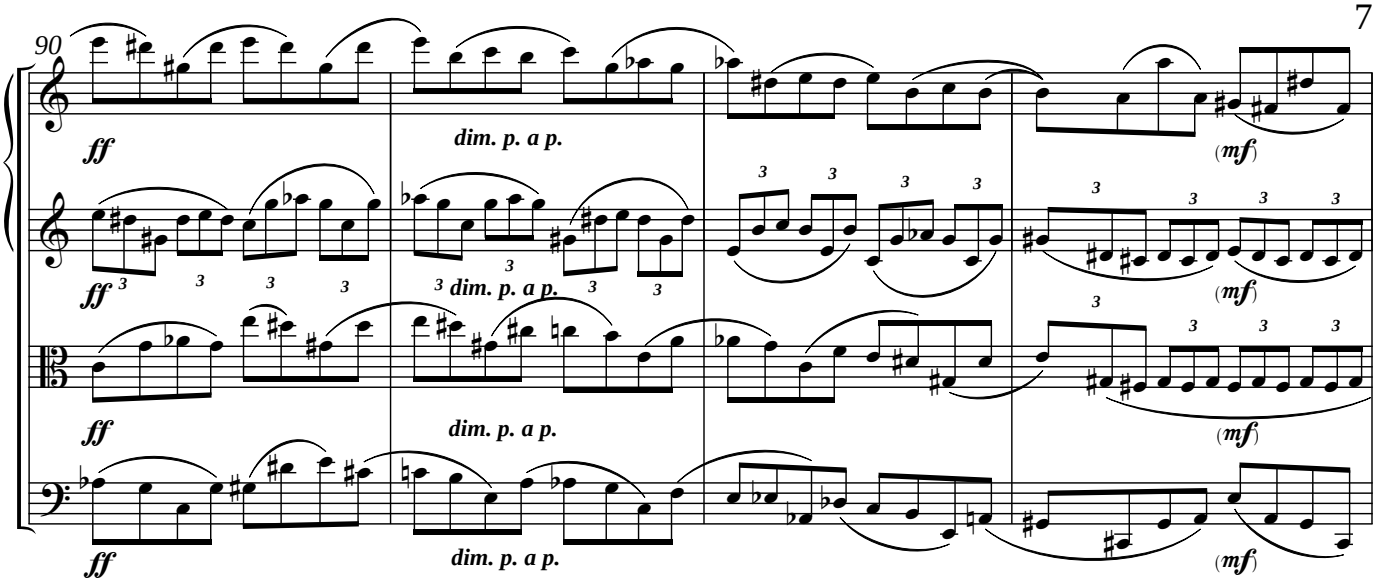

16
mp
mf
mf
mf
mp
mp
21
f
f
f
f
26
subito p
subito p
subito p
subito p

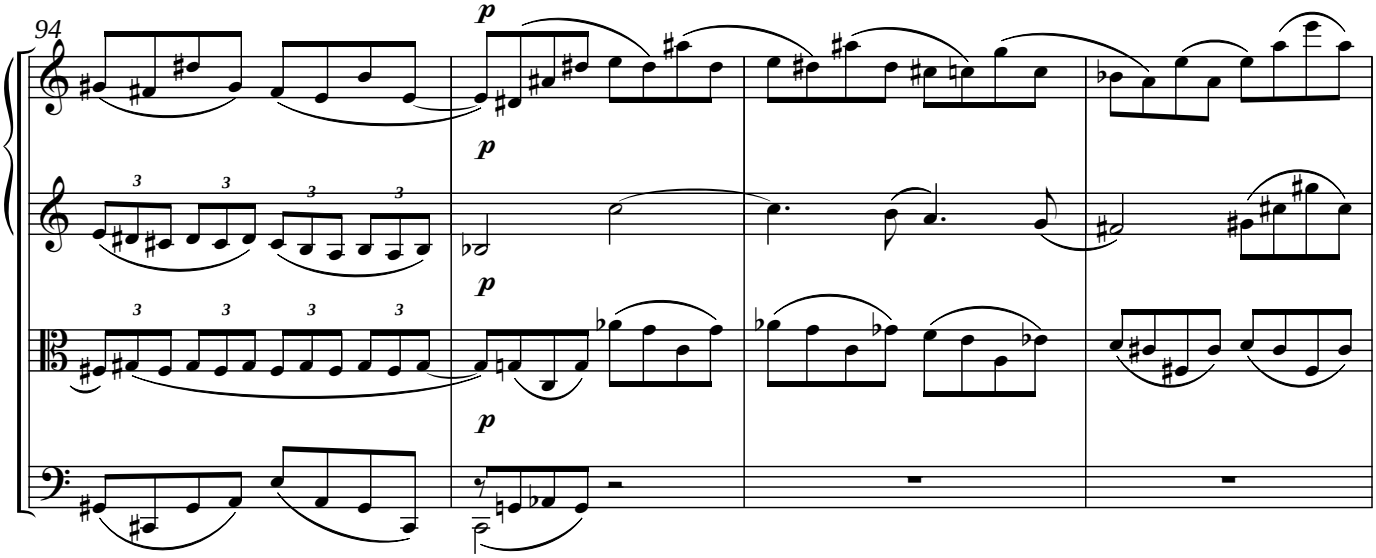

31
pizz.
35
39
subito p
arco

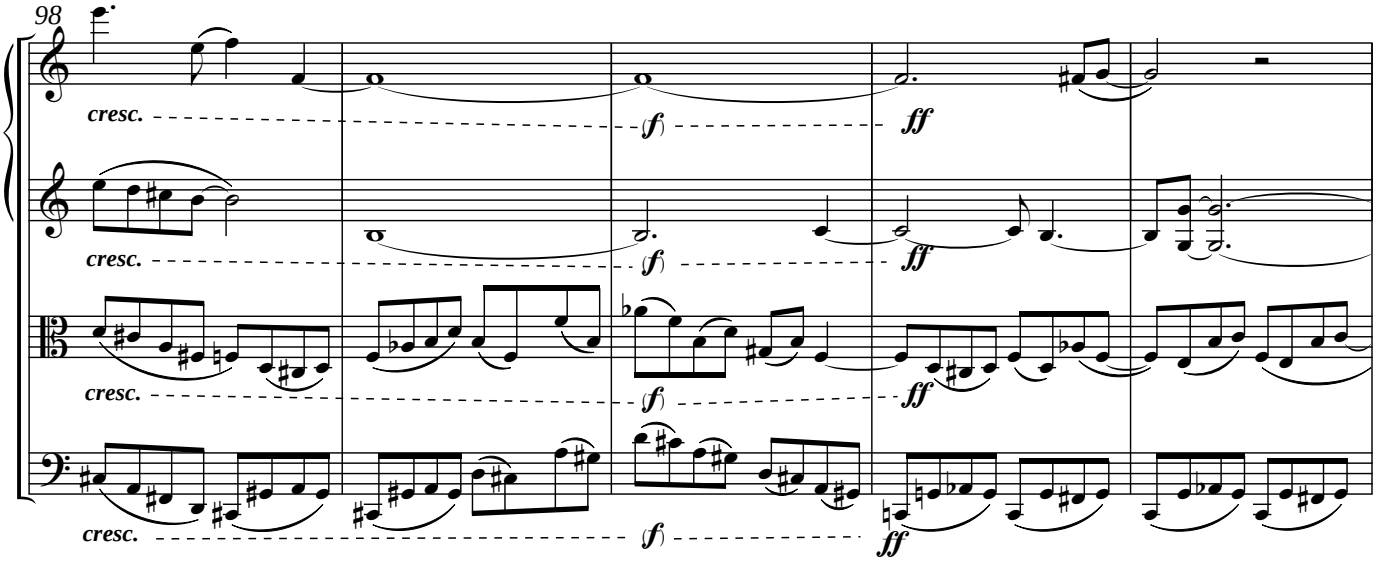

45
ff
ff
ff
ff
50
ff
dolce
p
pp
ff
pp
ff
pp
pp
ff
pp
55

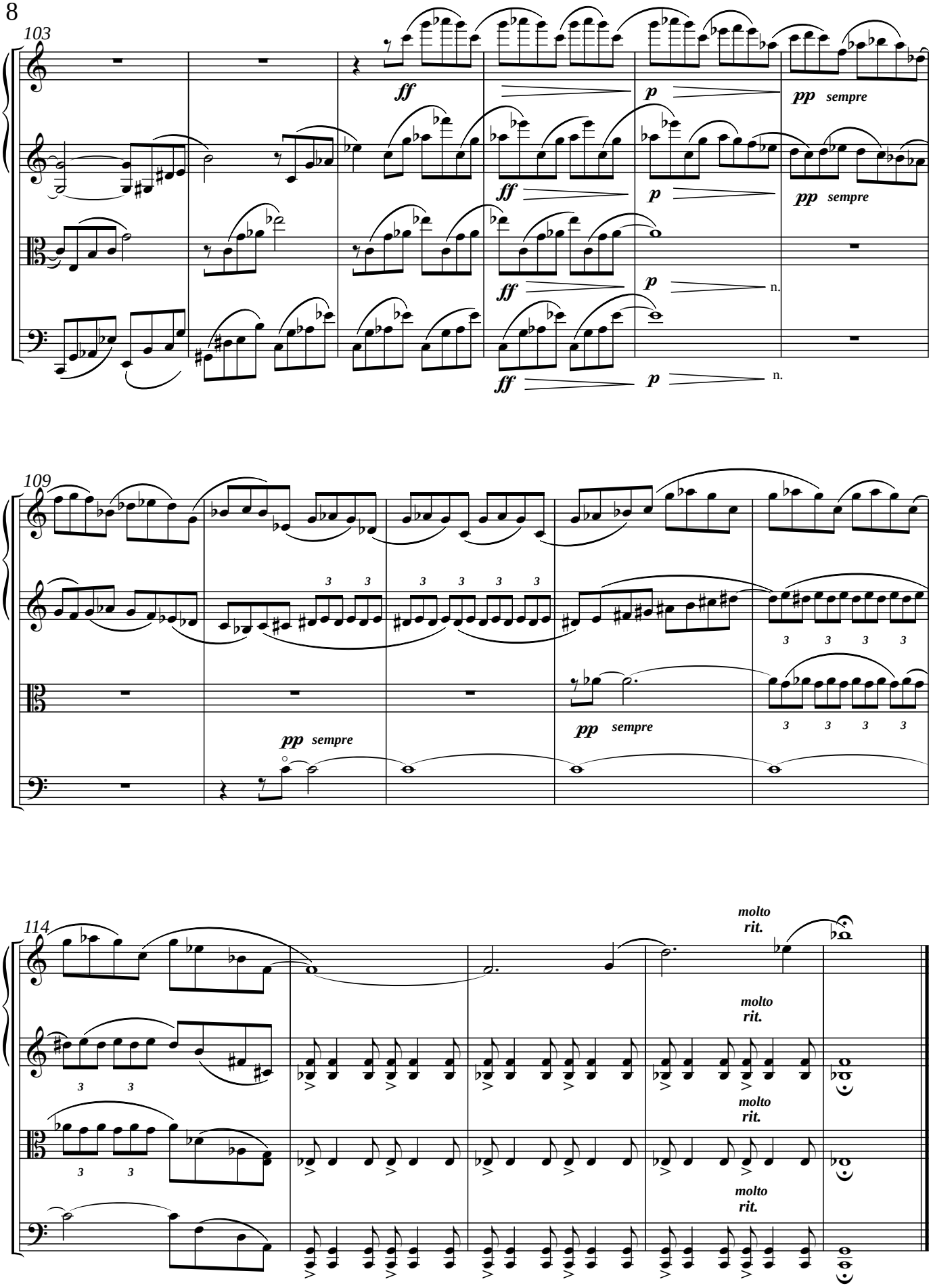

60
pp
ff
pp
p
65
ff
71


76
ff
p
pp
mp
dolce
81
n.
85
mf
f


90
ff
dim. p. a p.
(mf)


94
p


98
cresc.
(f)
ff


103
ff
p
pp sempre
109
114
molto rit.

II. Minuet (6.2')

Vivace ♩ = 160

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

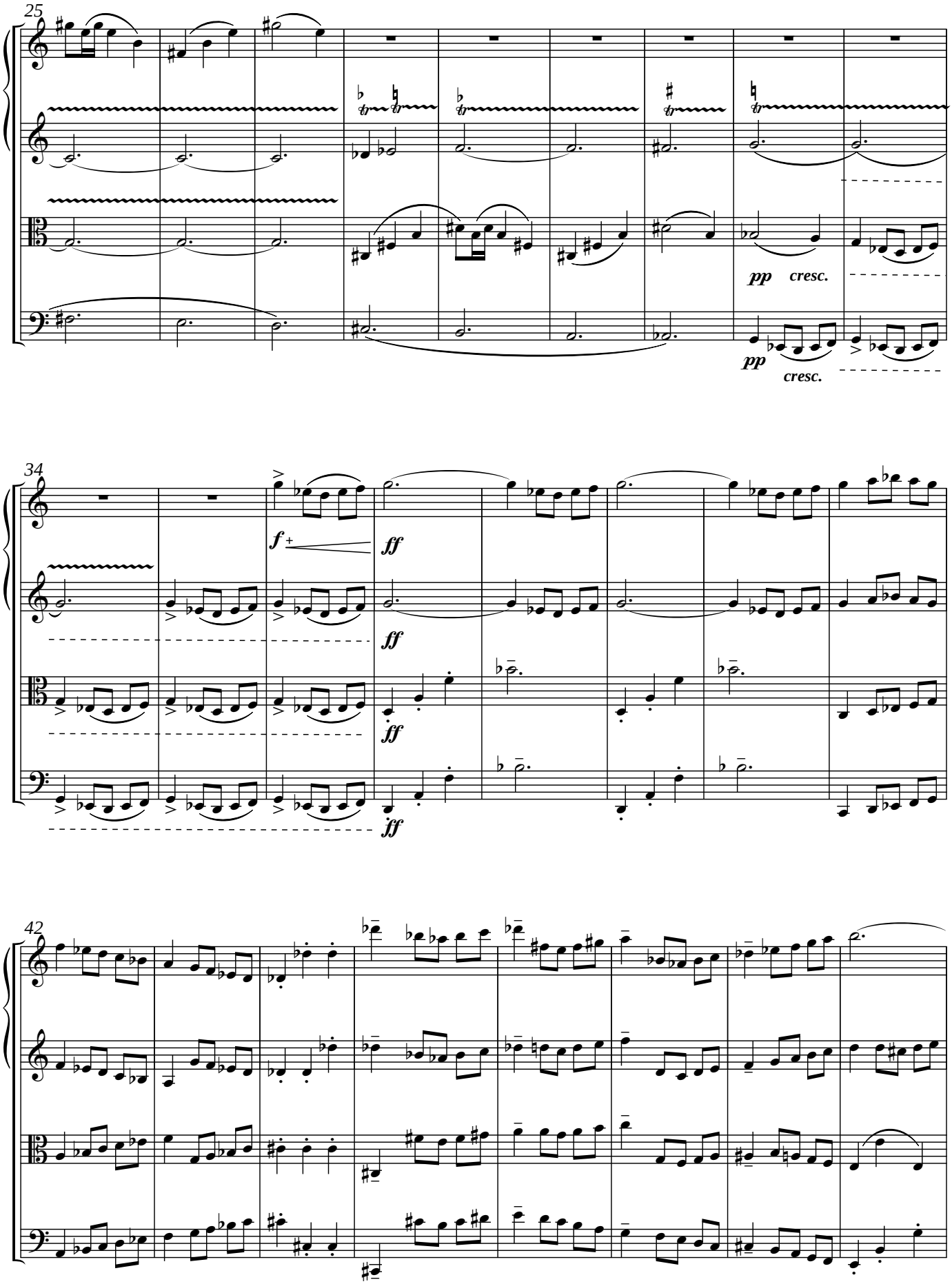
Cello

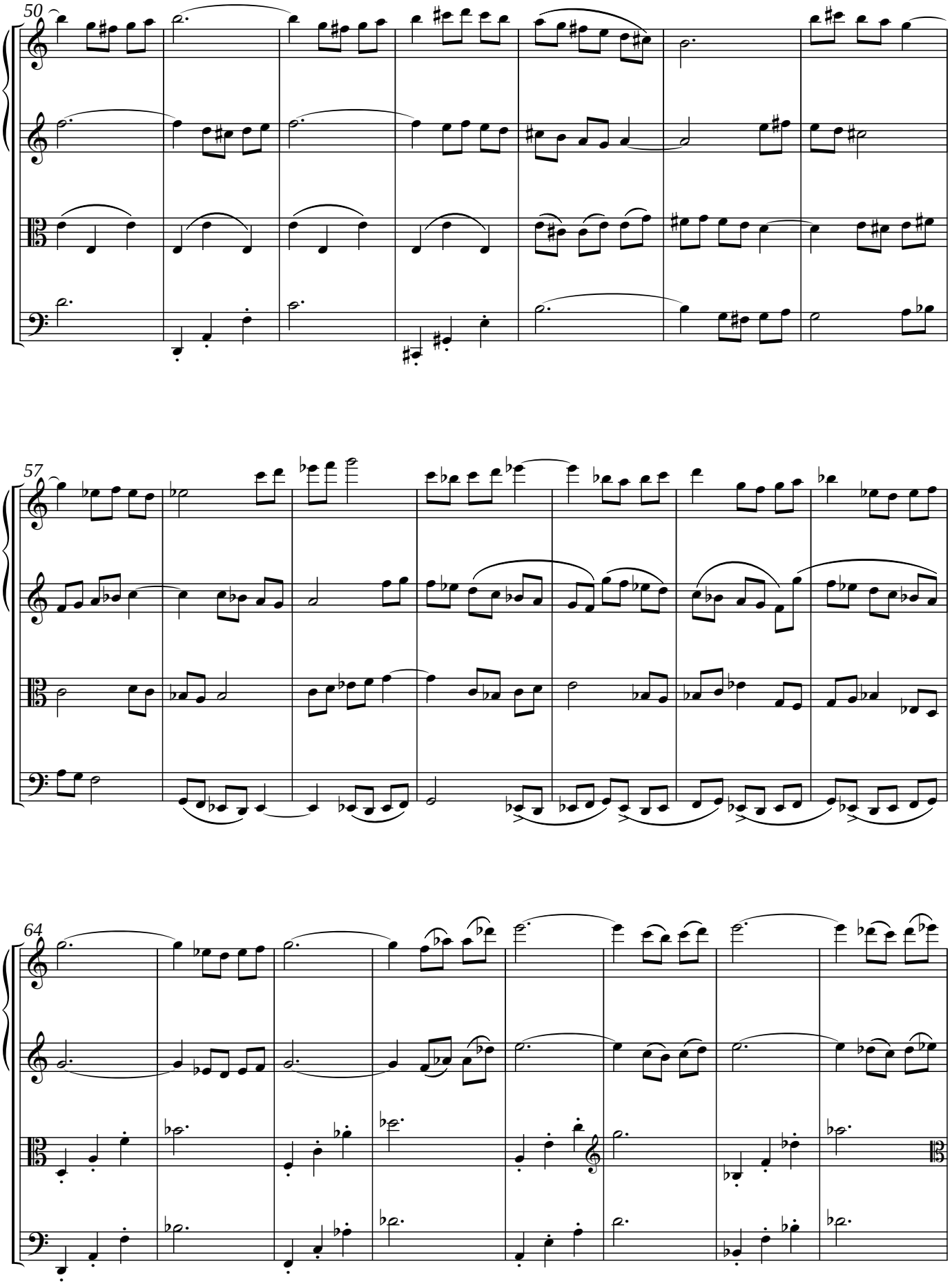
ff

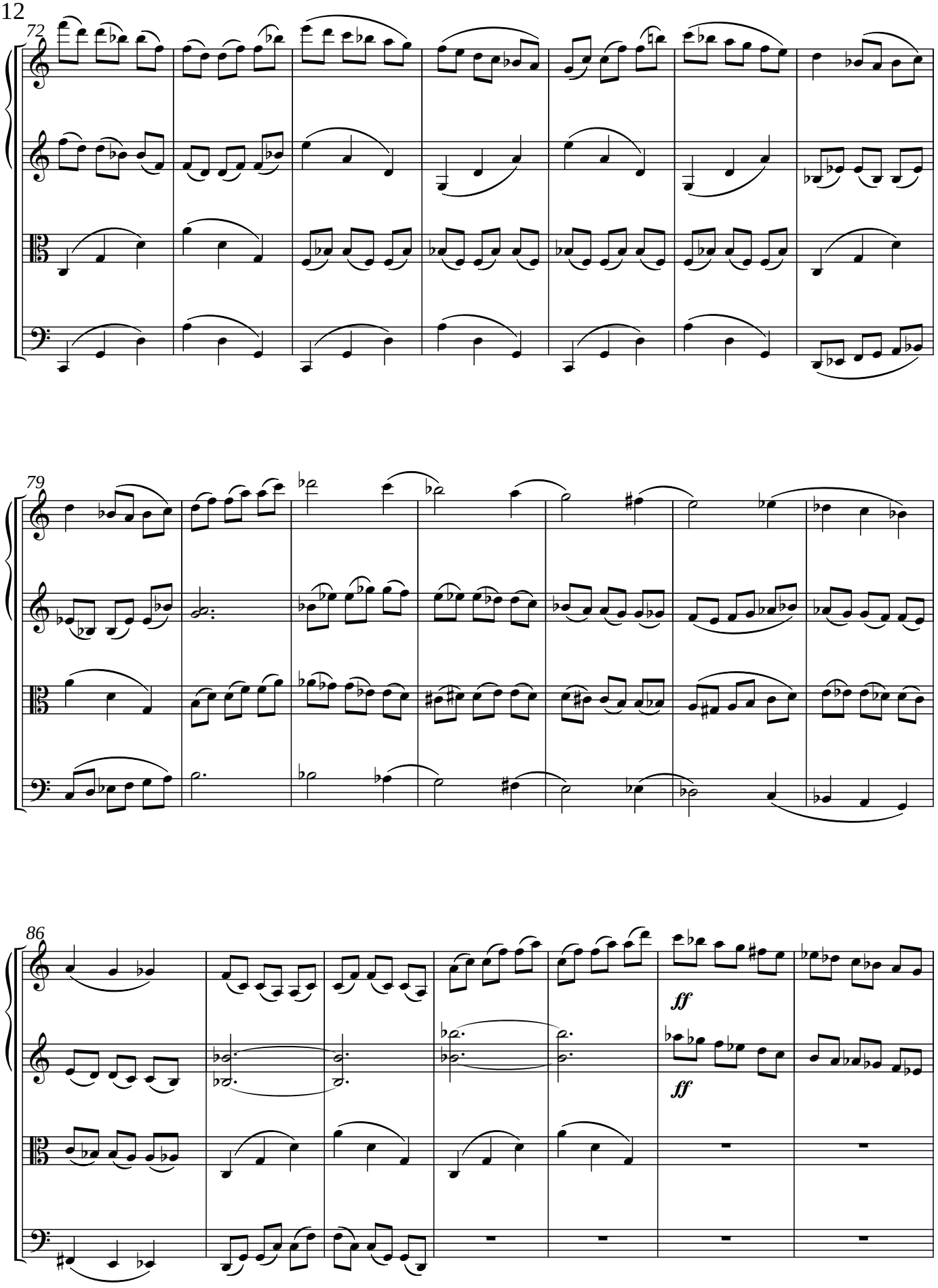
9

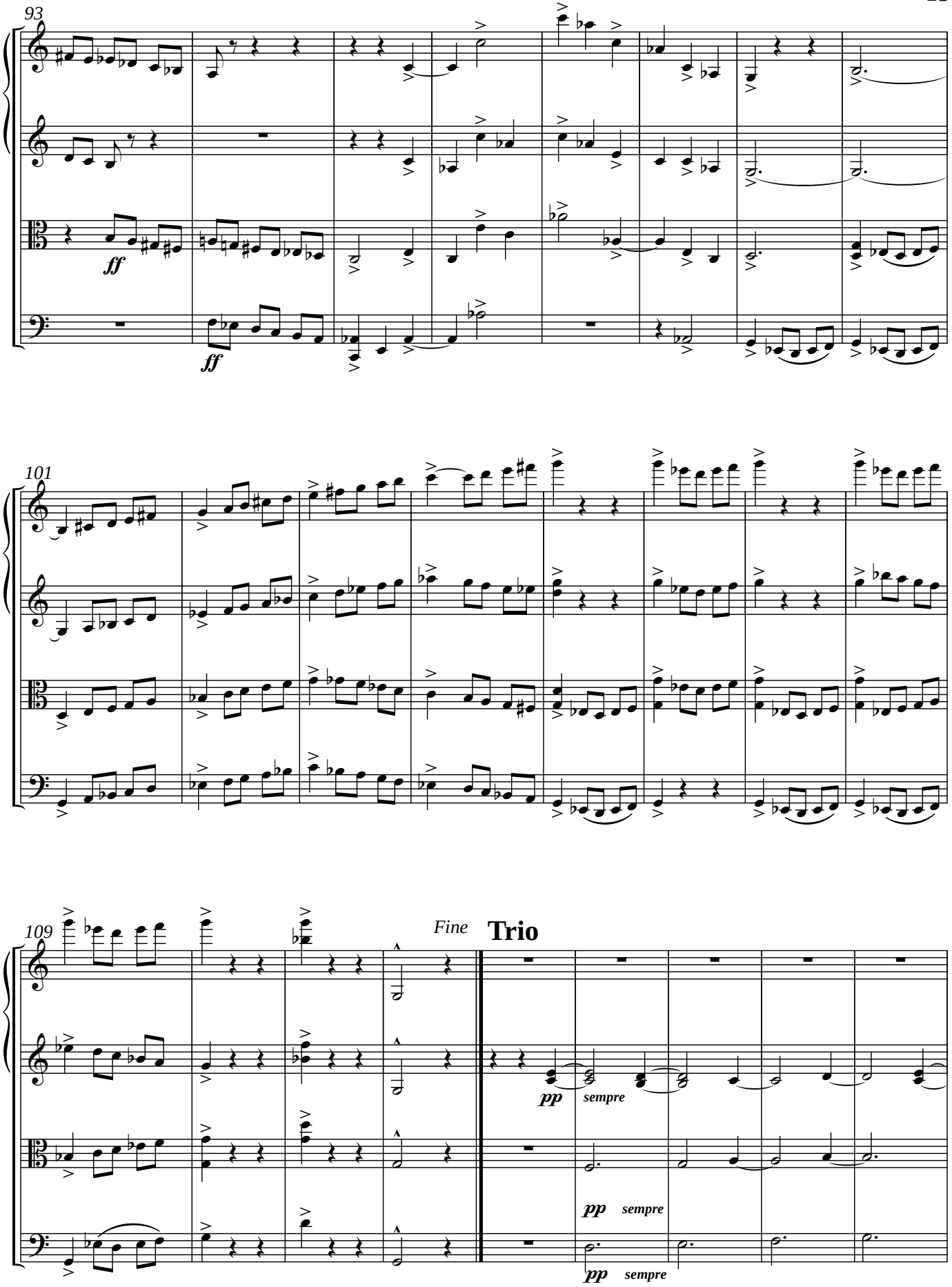
17

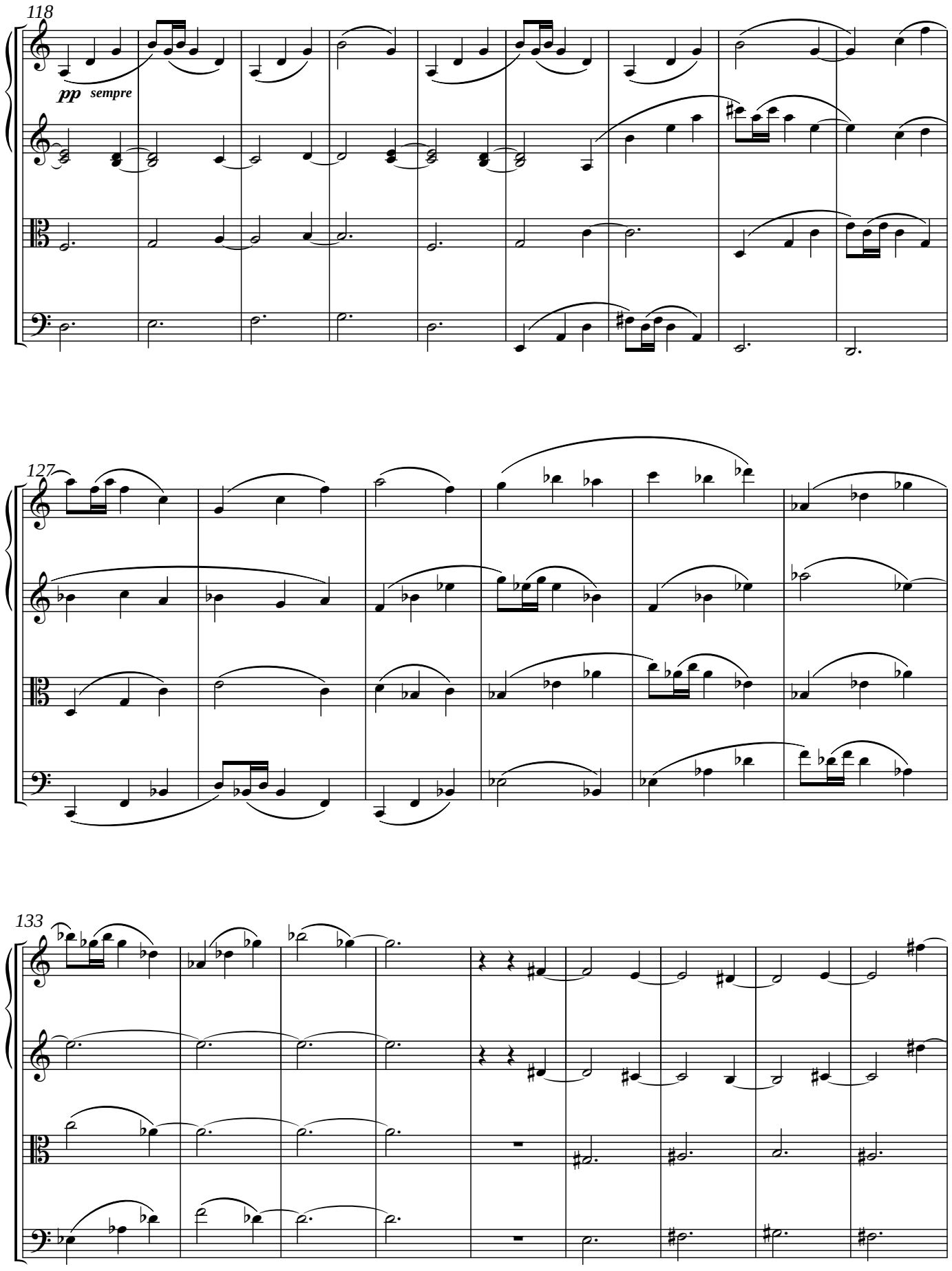
pp


25
pp cresc.
pp
cresc.
34
f
ff
ff
ff
ff
42

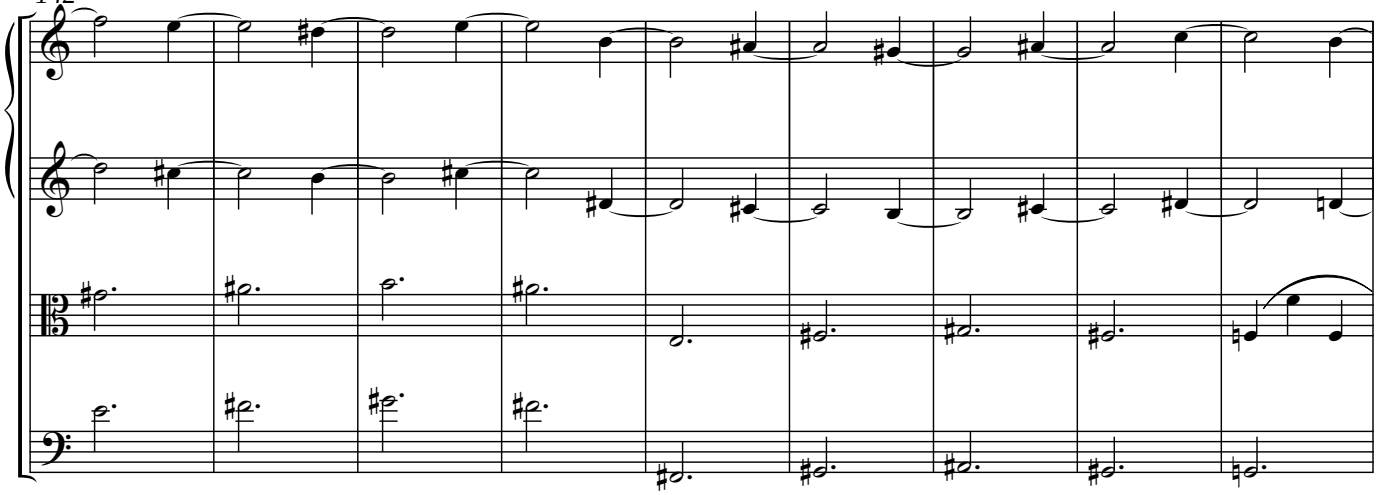

50
57
64


72
79
86
ff
ff

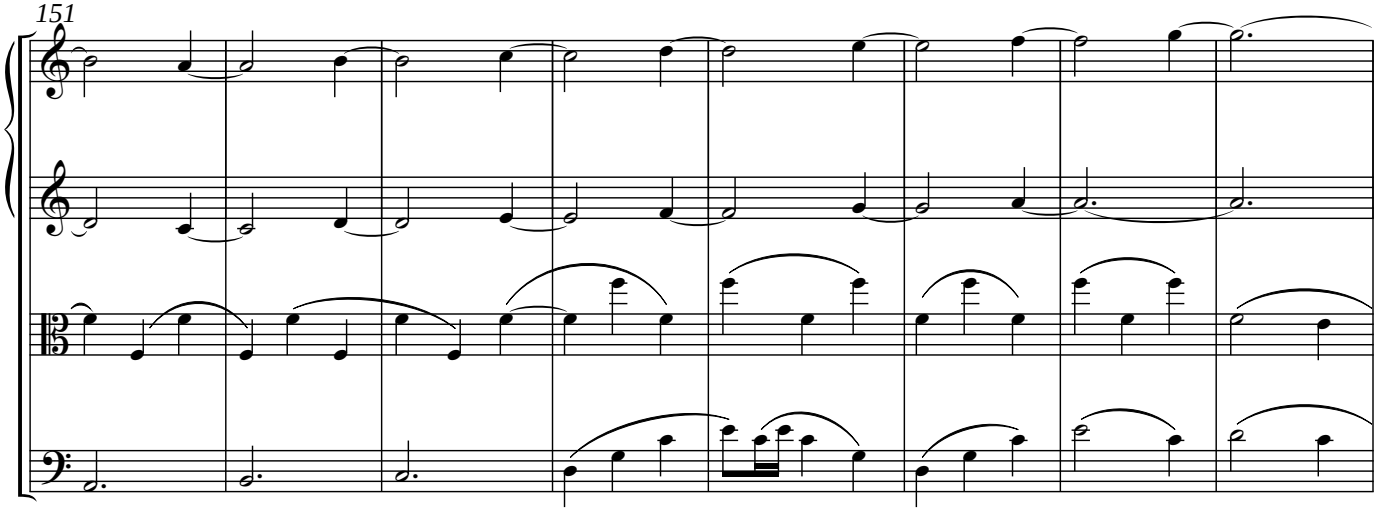

93
ff
ff
101
109
Fine
Trio
pp
sempre
pp
sempre
pp
sempre

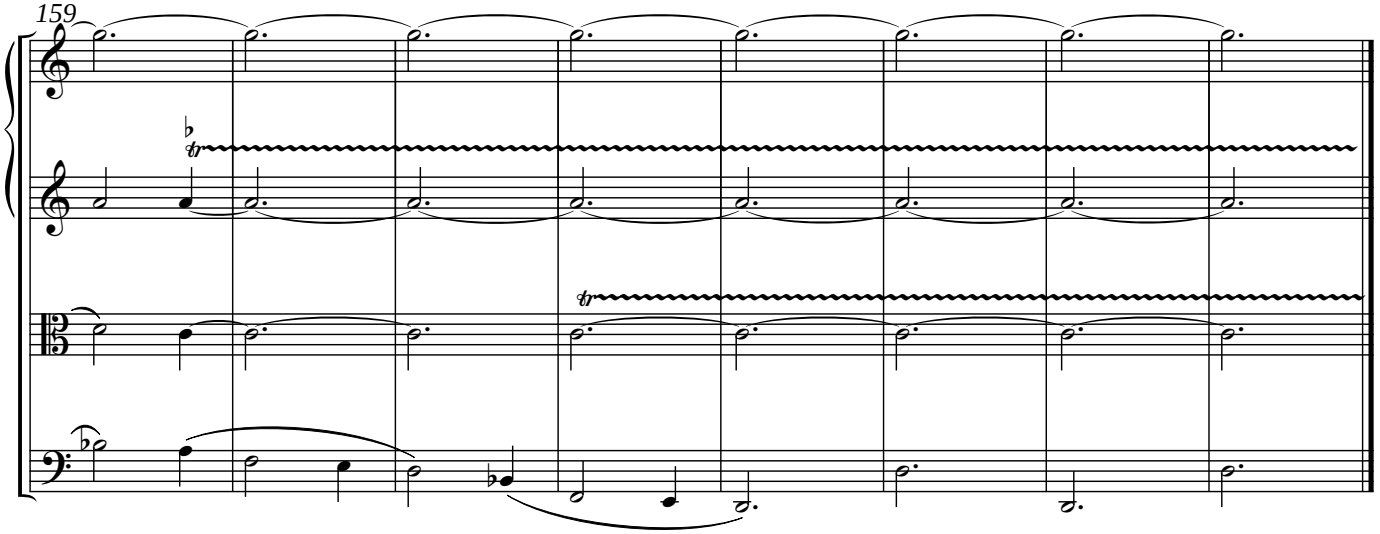

118
pp sempre
127
133

142



151



Minuet Da Capo

159