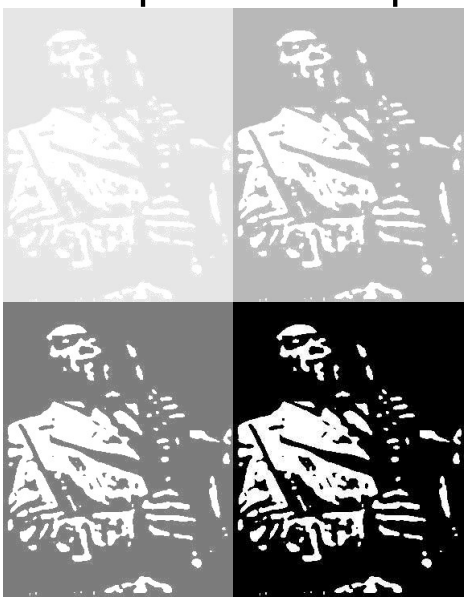
Lansing D. McLoskey

OK-OK

for saxophone quartet



Commissioned by The Fromm Foundation at Harvard University
for The Radnofsky Quartet

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[soprano, alto, tenor, baritone]

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

- Score is transposed.
- Accidentals apply to the octave in which they appear and hold throughout the measure, though in highly chromatic passages courtesy accidentals are given.
- ♩ = ♩ at all meter changes unless otherwise indicated.
- **SM** = senza misura, or "without measure."
- In **SM** sections, whole notes (𝅝) do not indicate a specific number of beats, but rather the note should be held for the stipulated real-time duration or until cued.
- Unless a *crescendo* or *diminuendo* is specified, all dynamics are stepped; that is, there should be no change in dynamic level and dynamic changes are *subito*.
- Approximate duration: 9 minutes

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I heard Charlie "Bird" Parker for the first time when I was an enthusiastic (but only moderately skilled) alto sax player in the junior high jazz band. The solos were so dizzyingly fast I had a hard time believing someone could negotiate their fingers around the instrument that adeptly and quickly. But even more than the "technical" virtuosity, what really blew my mind (and led me to the inescapable conclusion that I would never - could never - be a professional jazz saxophonist) was that I simply couldn't comprehend how someone's brain could negotiate, improvise, execute a solo at such breakneck speed, with every turn of phrase feeling like a surprise and yet inevitable at the same time.

My favorite Bird tune when I was 13 years old remains my favorite to this day: Ko-Ko. When I started thinking about writing a saxophone quartet, I found myself drawn back to the song, and in particular to the arrangement by Buddy Clark and the group Supersax where Bird's solo was transcribed note-for-note and arranged for five sax's playing in drop-dead perfect rhythmic unison. I decided to revisit Ko-Ko again, though rather than make an "arrangement" of the song, my piece is a total recontextualization based entirely on Bird's solo. The harmonic and rhythmic schemes of the original chart were abandoned, and the solo was removed from the context of the song. I then stripped the solo of it's rhythmic component and deleted all rests, creating in effect a tone-row of 1,058 pitches (which Bird jammed into 1 minute and 50 seconds of a 2'53" song!).

Every note of Bird's solo is played in the original order, but it isn't until the very end of the piece that a snippet of the solo is actually quoted (the final phrase of the solo). Throughout there is a recurring chord progression similar to a jazz chart, the chords all derived from a 12-tone row drawn from the opening phrase of the solo.

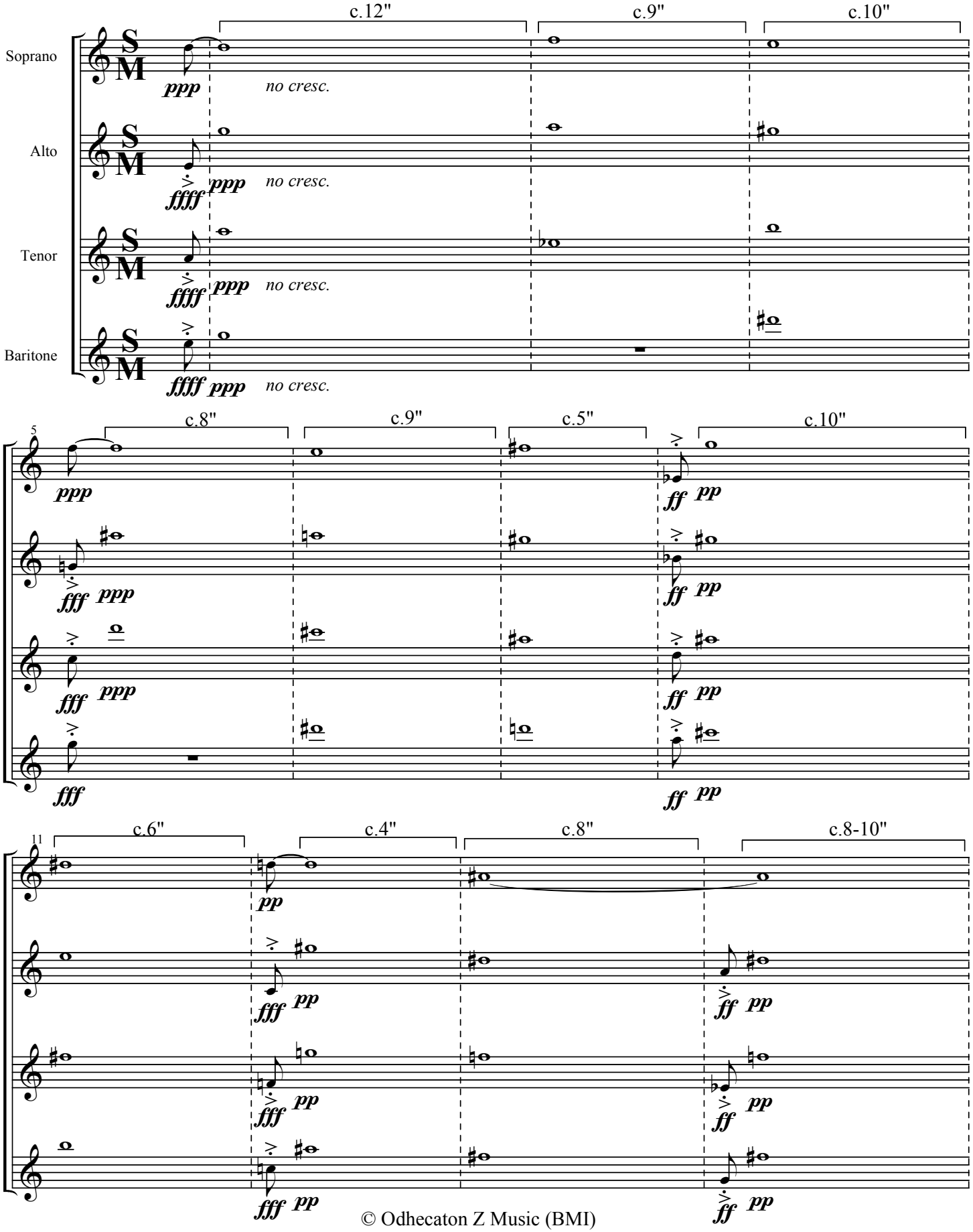
Ok-Ok was commissioned by The Fromm Foundation as part of a special grant to Composers In Red Sneakers. Thanks to Chris "Doc" Stewart for his transcription of the Ko-Ko solo.

LM

transposed score

OK-OK

Lansing D. McLoskey



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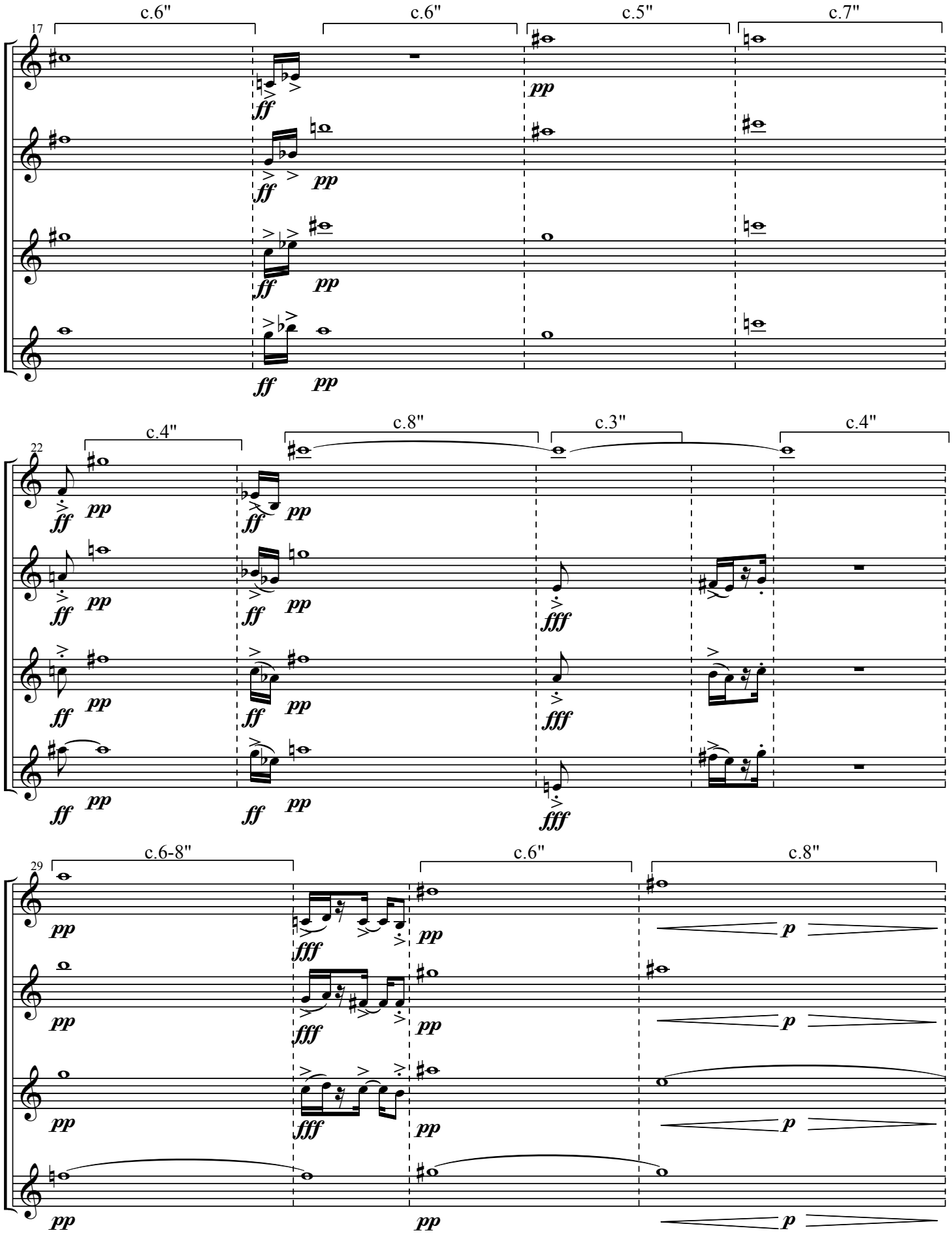
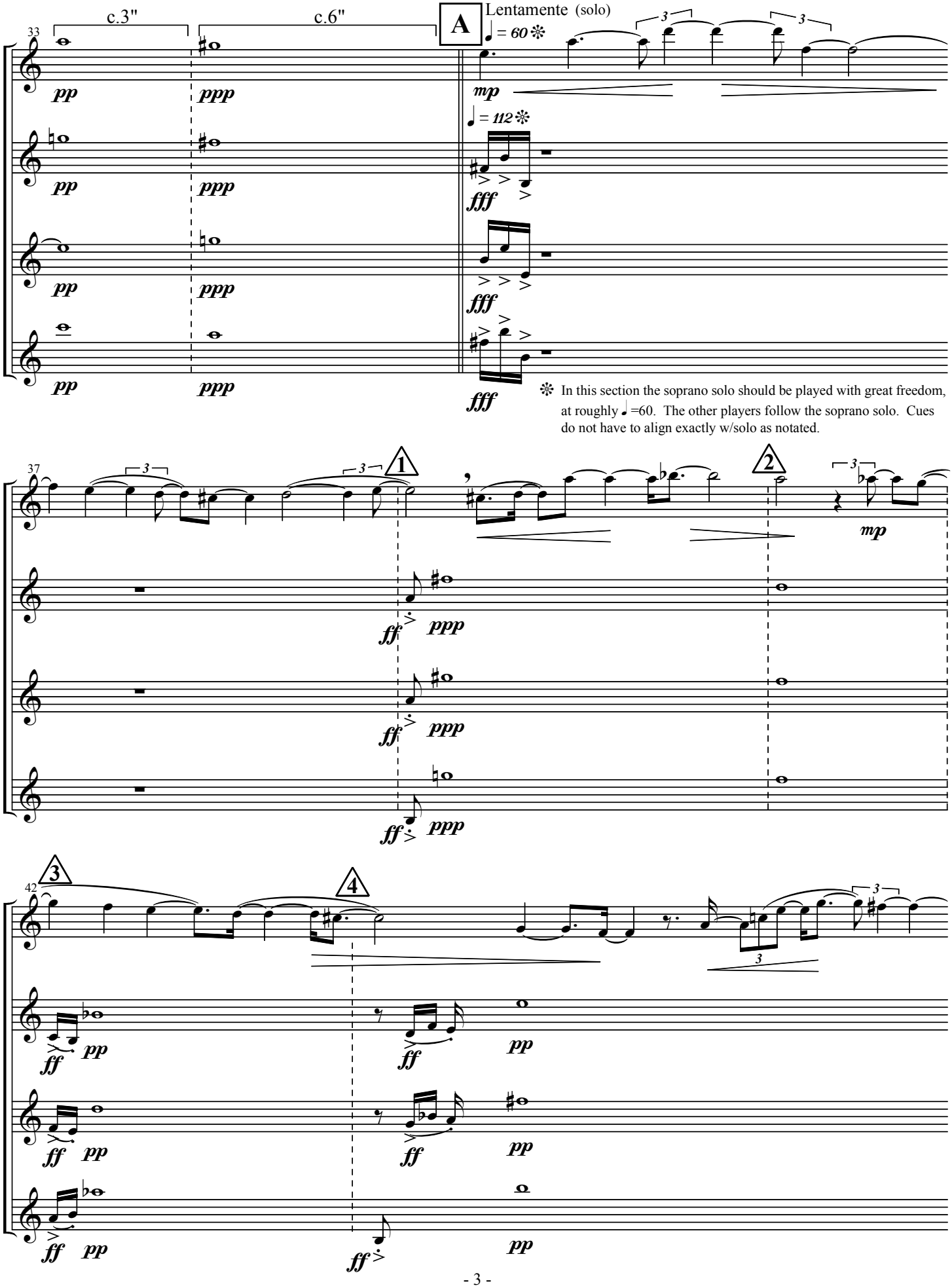
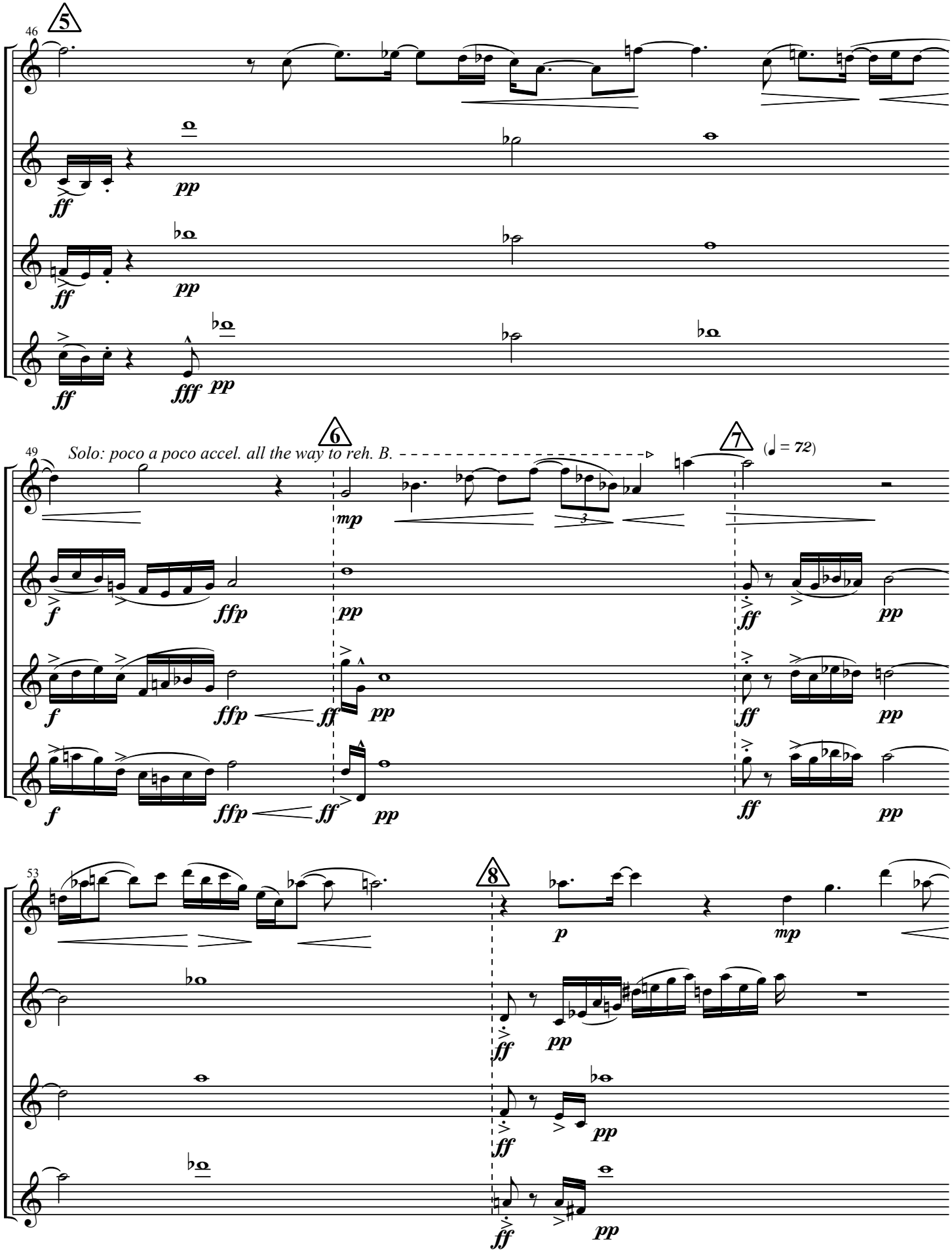
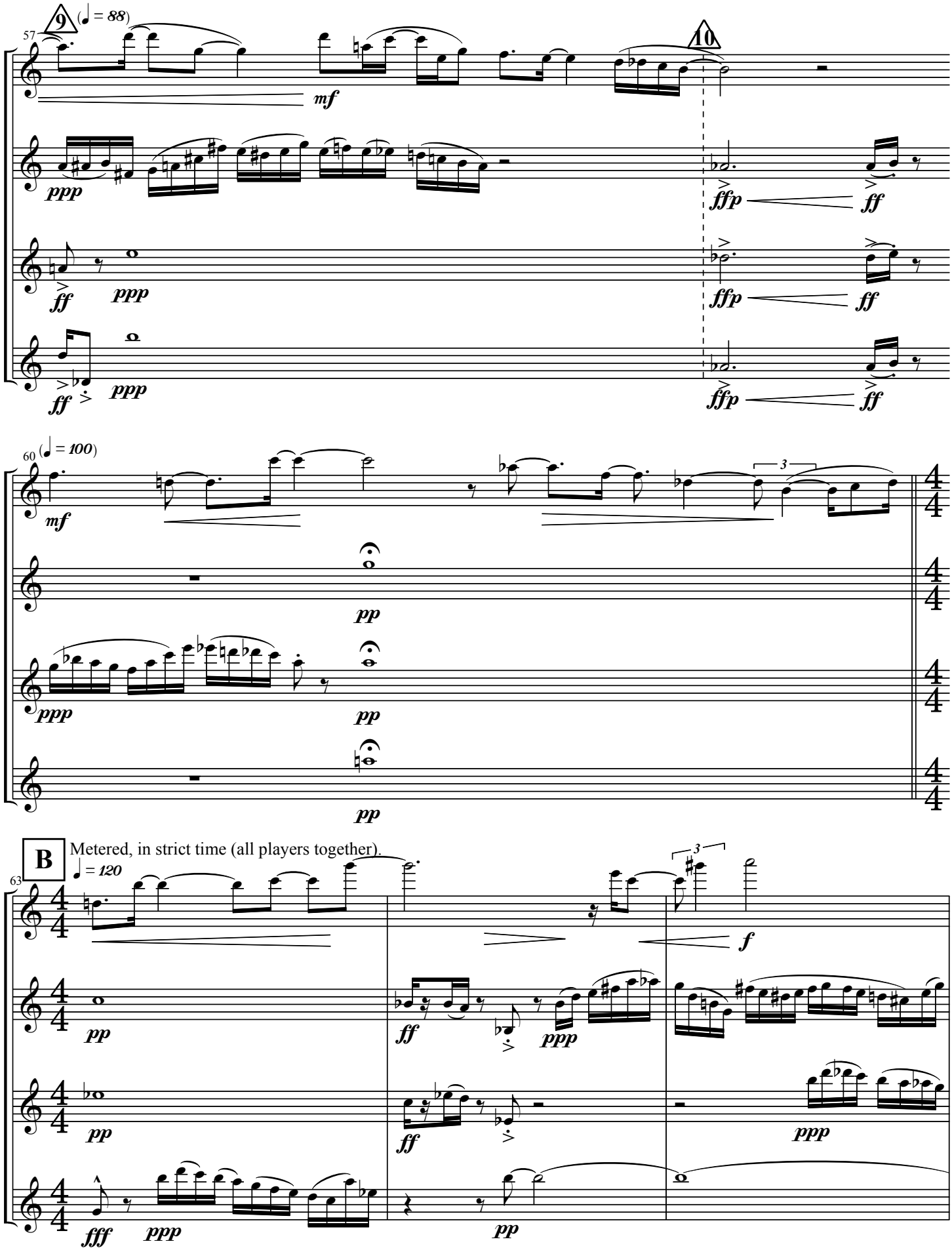
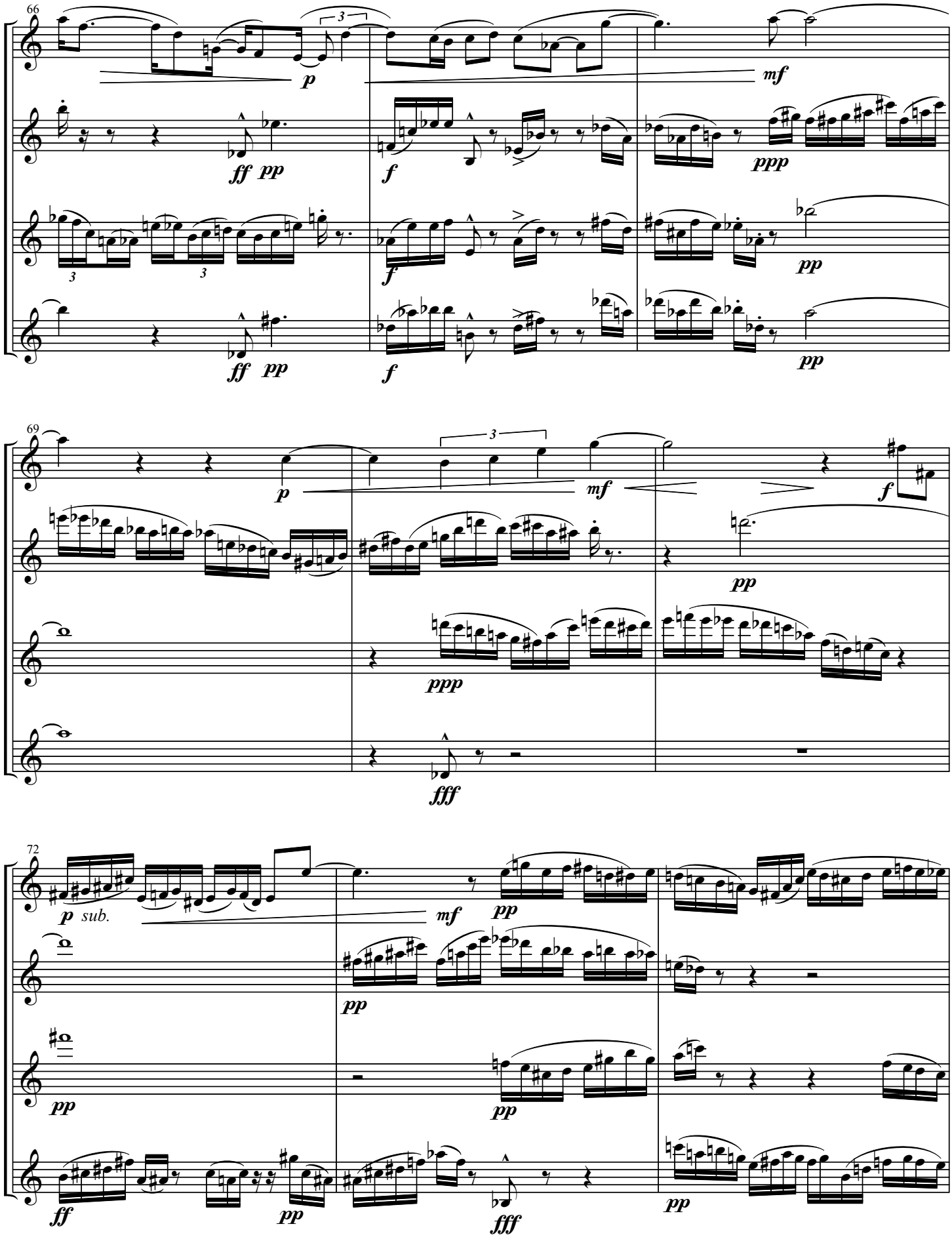

17
c.6"
c.6"
c.5"
c.7"
22
c.4"
c.8"
c.3"
c.4"
29
c.6-8"
c.6"
c.8"

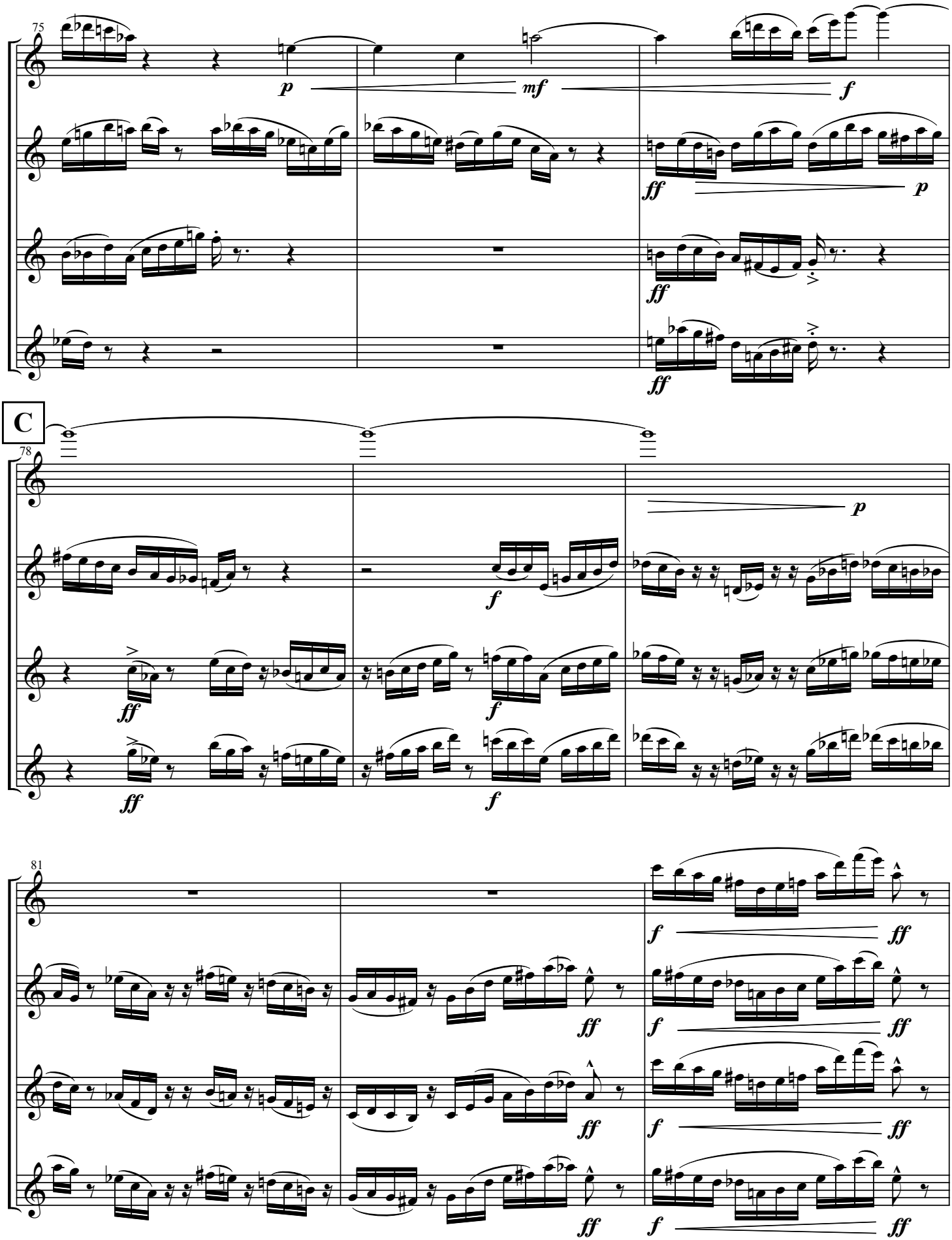


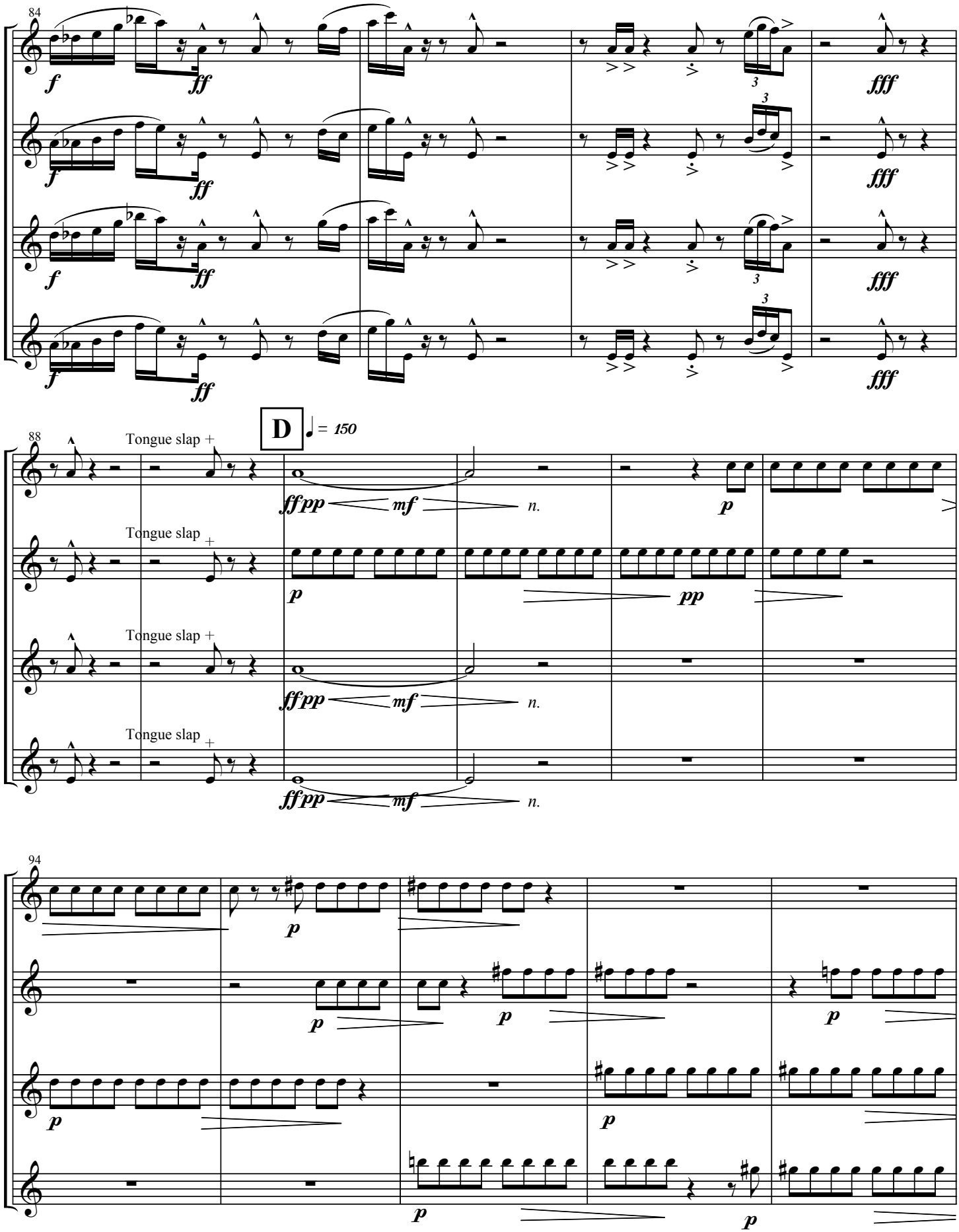
❊ In this section the soprano solo should be played with great freedom, at roughly ♩=60. The other players follow the soprano solo. Cues do not have to align exactly w/solo as notated.

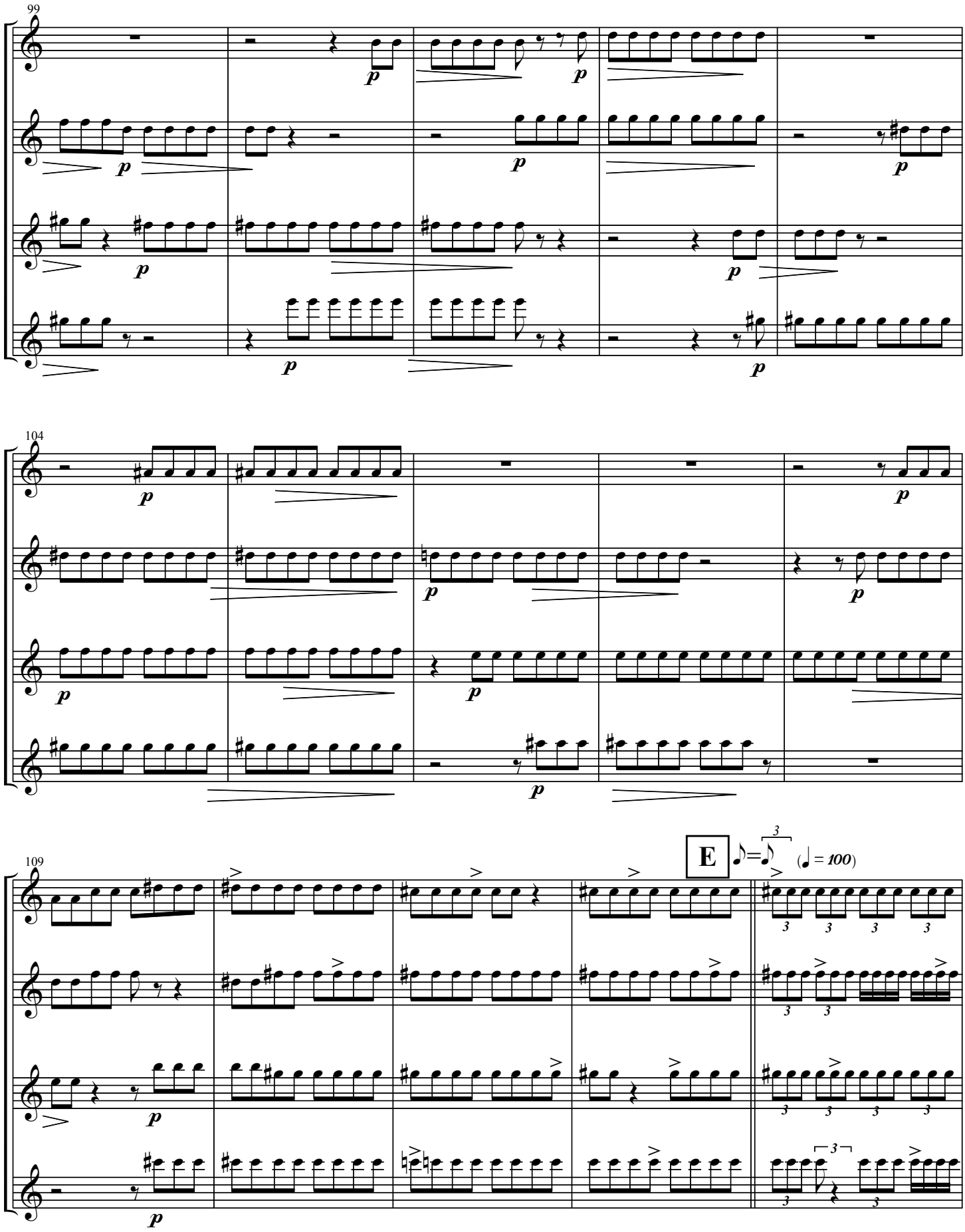

46
5
ff
pp
ff
pp
ff
fff
pp
49
Solo: poco a poco accel. all the way to reh. B.
6
7
(♩ = 72)
mp
3
f
ffp
pp
ff
pp
f
ffp
ff
pp
ff
pp
f
ffp
ff
pp
ff
pp
53
8
p
mp
ff
pp
ff
pp
ff
pp

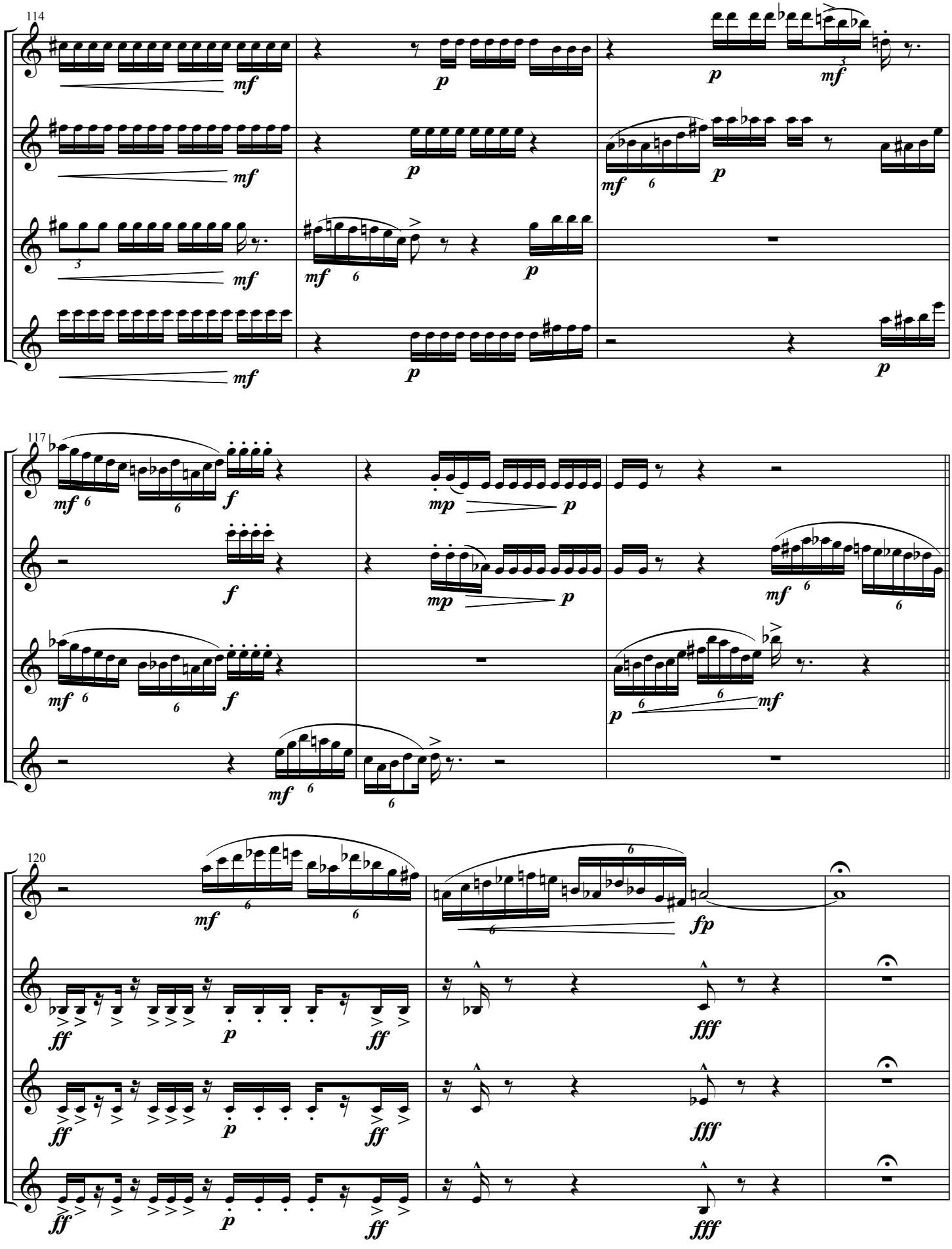

9
(♩ = 88)
57
mf
ppp
ff
ppp
ff
ppp
10
ffp
ff
ffp
ff
ffp
ff
60
(♩ = 100)
mf
3
pp
ppp
pp
pp
B
Metered, in strict time (all players together).
63
♩ = 120
f
3
pp
ff
ppp
pp
ff
ppp
fff
ppp
pp

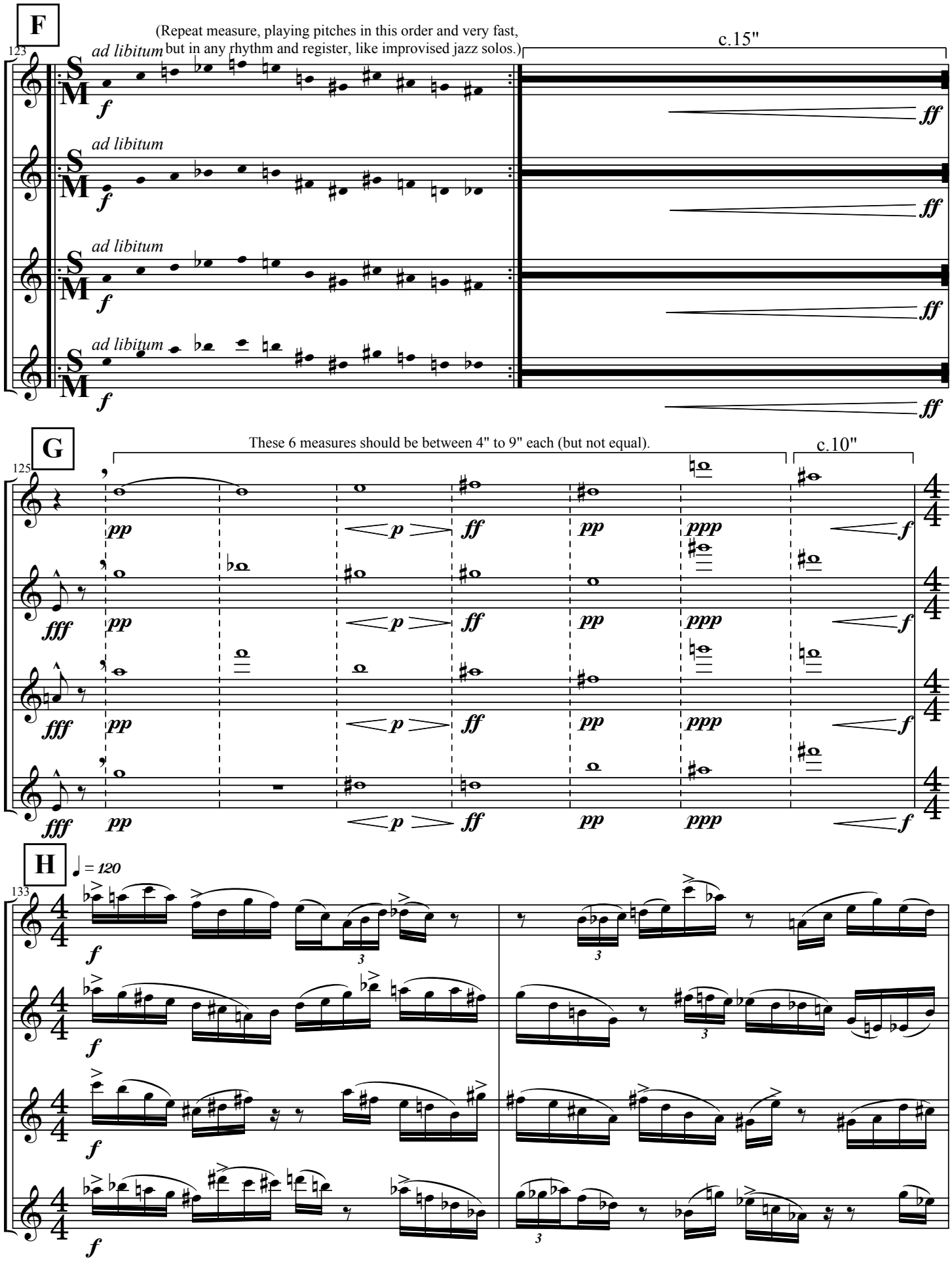

66
p
mf
ff pp
f
ppp
pp
69
p
mf
f
pp
ppp
fff
72
p sub.
mf
pp
ff
fff

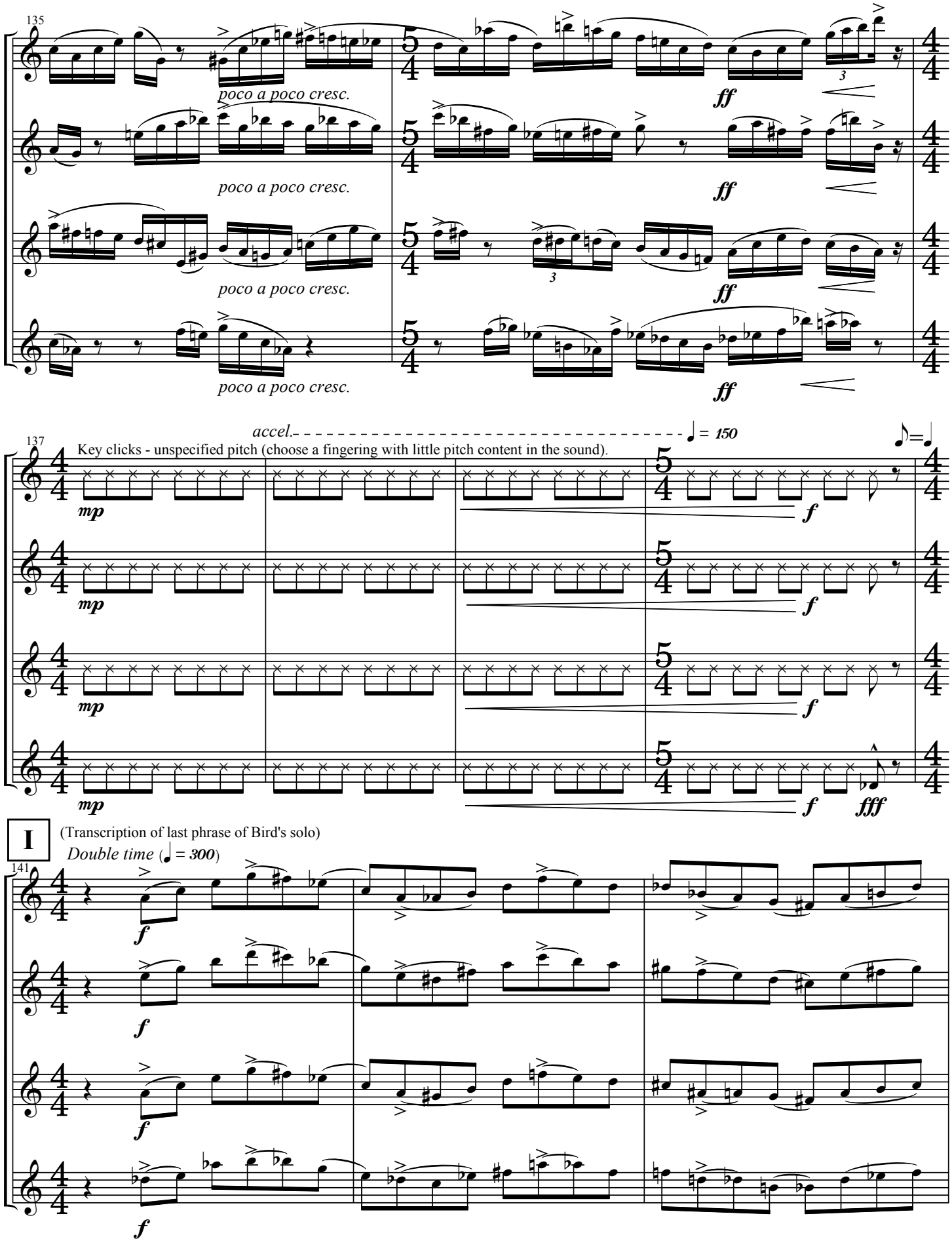

75
p
mf
f
ff
p
ff
ff
C
78
p
f
ff
f
ff
f
81
f
ff
f
ff
ff
f
ff
f
ff
ff
f
ff

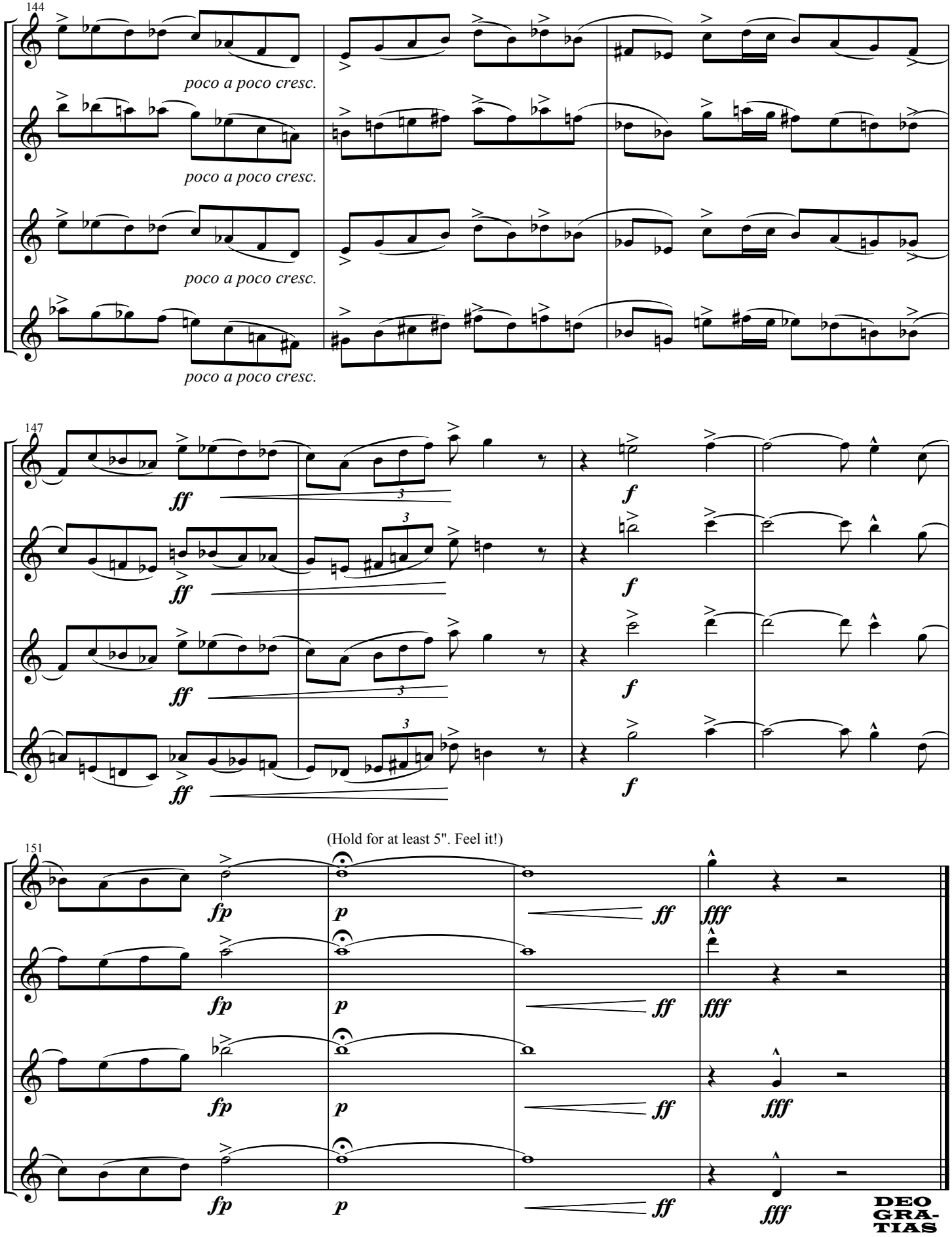

84
f
ff
fff
D
= 150
88
Tongue slap +
ffpp
mf
n.
p
pp
94


99
104
109
E
♪=3♪
(♩ = 100)


114
117
120


F
(Repeat measure, playing pitches in this order and very fast,
but in any rhythm and register, like improvised jazz solos.)
c.15"
123
ad libitum
ad libitum
ad libitum
ad libitum
G
These 6 measures should be between 4" to 9" each (but not equal).
c.10"
125
H
133


135
poco a poco cresc.
poco a poco cresc.
poco a poco cresc.
poco a poco cresc.
ff
ff
ff
ff
accel.
♩ = 150
137
Key clicks - unspecified pitch (choose a fingering with little pitch content in the sound).
mp
mp
mp
mp
f
f
f
f
fff
I
(Transcription of last phrase of Bird's solo)
Double time (♩ = 300)
141
f
f
f
f


144
poco a poco cresc.
poco a poco cresc.
poco a poco cresc.
poco a poco cresc.
147
ff
f
151
(Hold for at least 5". Feel it!)
fp
p
ff
fff
DEO GRA-TIAS