Rand Steiger

Tropes

(2018)

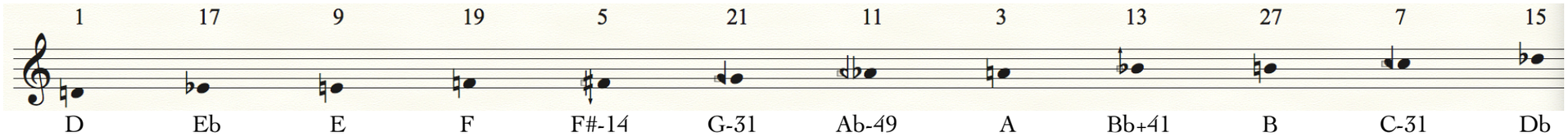
for spatial string quartet

Commissioned by the Muzik 3 Foundation
for the Flux Quartet

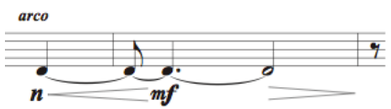
Commission: Muzik 3 Foundation for the Flux Quartet

Premiere: August 9,2018; Flux Quartet, La Jolla Music Society SummerFest, Conrad Prebys Concert Hall, UC San Diego

Accidentals: accidentals carry through the measure, but only in the octave in which they are indicated. The following scale is used in much of the piece, based on just intonation with a fundamental of D. In the chart below, the numbers above the notes indicate the partial the tuning is based on, and the number below the notes indicates the deviation (in cents) from the nearest tempered pitch. Please take note of the special accidentals deployed: backwards flat = -49 cents, black backwards flat = -31 cents, sharp with arrow down = sharp -14 cents (86 cents sharp), and flat with arrow up = flat +41 cents (59 cents flat). All other notes are rounded off to tempered tuning. A reference recording of this scale is available upon request.



Dynamics: The dynamic marking *n* is frequently used to indicate notes that begin imperceptibly and gradually fade in over the length of the indicated crescendo. Similarly, decrescendos that end at a rest without a dynamic marking indicate a complete diminuendo to silence. Please note the starting and ending points of these transitions precisely.



Thrown bow: Jeté, or "thrown bow" technique is used often throughout the piece. This is indicated by a slur following the note with a series of dots underneath it:



The motion begins at the indicated note, and the bow is then allowed to freely bounce as long as possible until preparing the next note.

Physical arrangement: This piece was conceived for a quartet spatially located around the audience. Depending on the performance space, one of these two arrangements should be deployed:

Square:

Violin 1 Cello

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
~~~~~ audience ~~~~~
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Viola Violin 2

Diamond:

Violin 1

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Cello ~~~~~ audience ~~~~~ Viola
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Violin 2

Program Note:

For centuries, Jewish congregations throughout the world have read the text of the Hebrew Bible aloud in synagogue with a kind of ritual chanting referred to as cantillation. A set of small symbols, or tropes, that appear above and below the text provide guidance for the structure and melismatic patterns of this chanting. Yet within different communities, the tropes have been interpreted in a wide variety of ways that reflect the assimilation of local musical practices. While the text and tropes look exactly the same, the resulting sound is quite different in each community, thereby giving voice to the Jewish diaspora.

Drawing on the text of the first four sentences of *B'reisheet*, the opening section of *Genesis*, I have created my own interpretation of the tropes using a single pitch with rhythmic and timbral variations, which appears after a brief introduction. As it is repeated, it is complemented by transcriptions of traditional cantillation patterns, including Sephardic (Syrian and Moroccan) and Ashkenazic (Hungarian and British) versions. By gradually combining these versions and presenting them simultaneously, while positioning the members of the quartet around the audience, I hope to give voice to this remarkable phenomenon – to the way in which the tropes and text have historically traveled with Jewish communities throughout the world, both connecting them and also marking their differences of place through sound.

Tropes was commissioned by the Muzik 3 Foundation for the Flux Quartet. It is dedicated to my grandfather, Samuel Steiger, who emigrated in the late nineteenth century and worked tirelessly in the 1930s and 40s to help family members escape Europe and begin new lives here in the United States.

Contact:

For further information please contact the composer by email to this address:
rand@ucsd.edu

Additional information may be found on the following website:
http://rand.info
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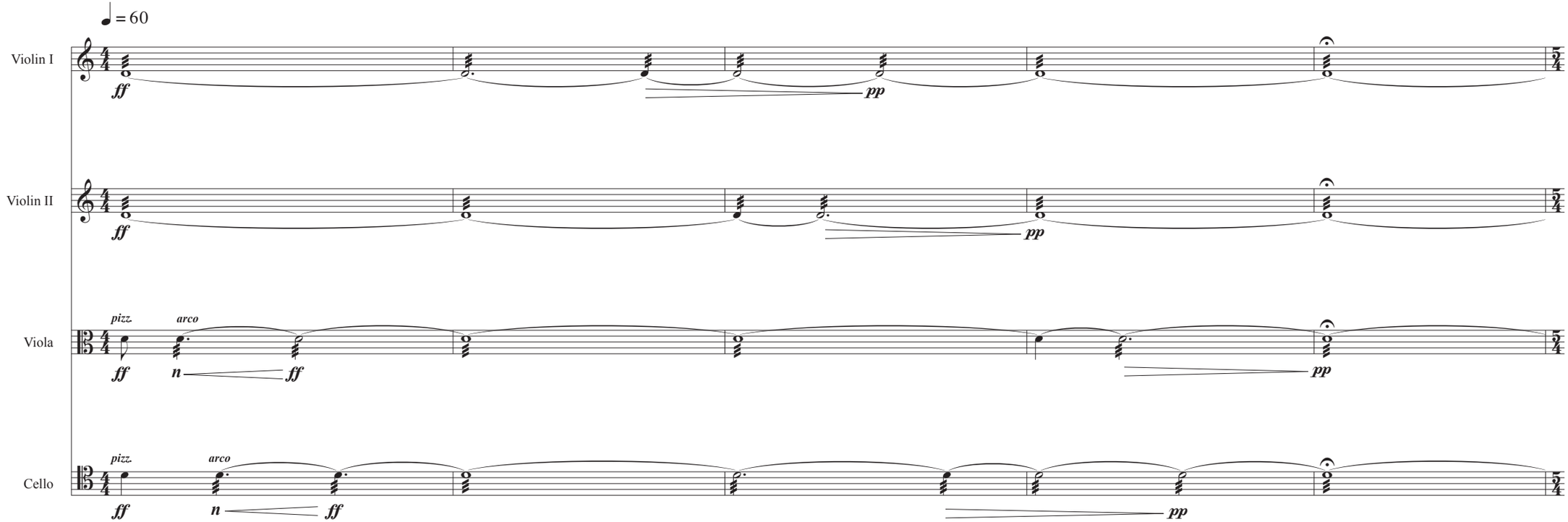
Score

for the Flux Quartet

Tropes

Rand Steiger



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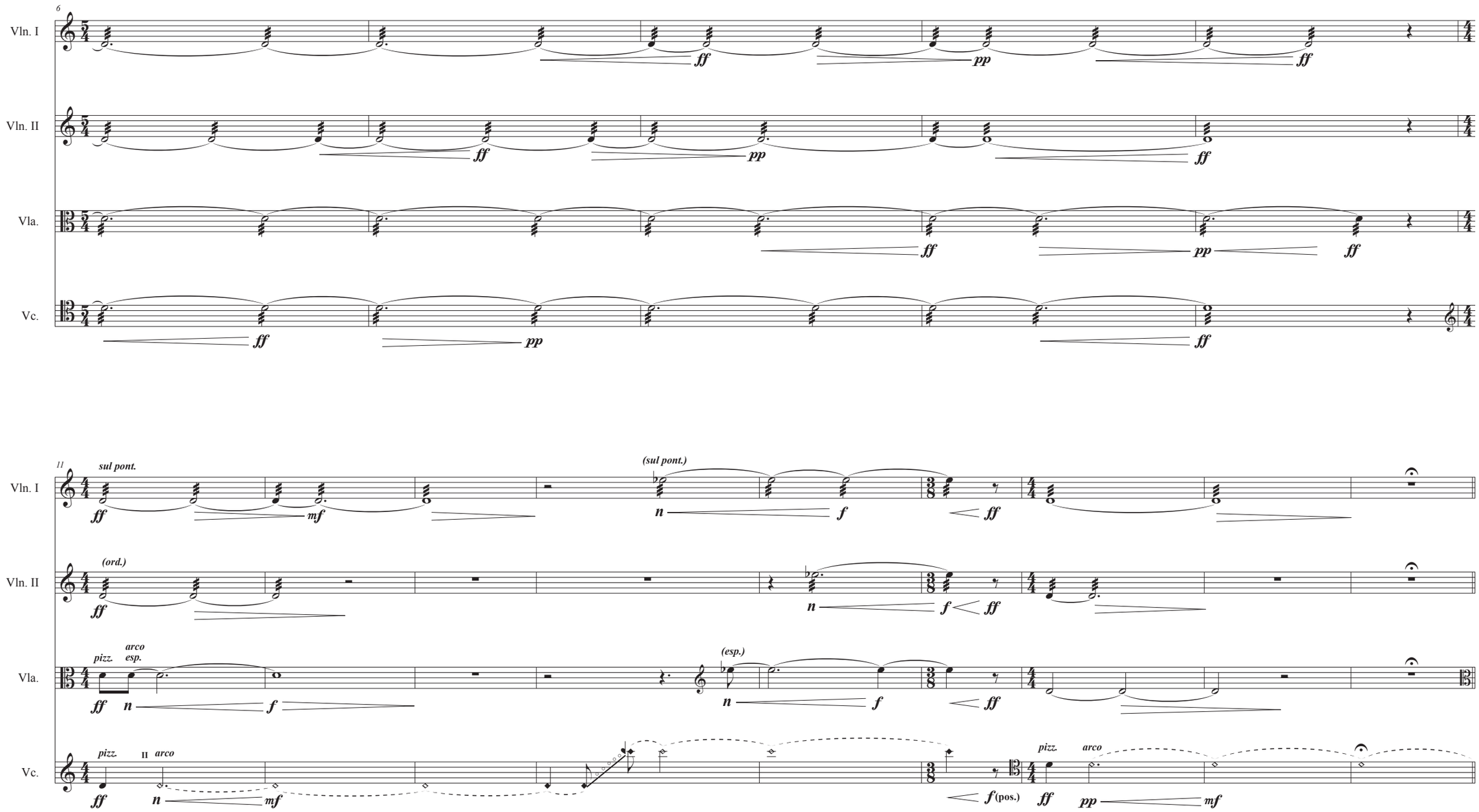
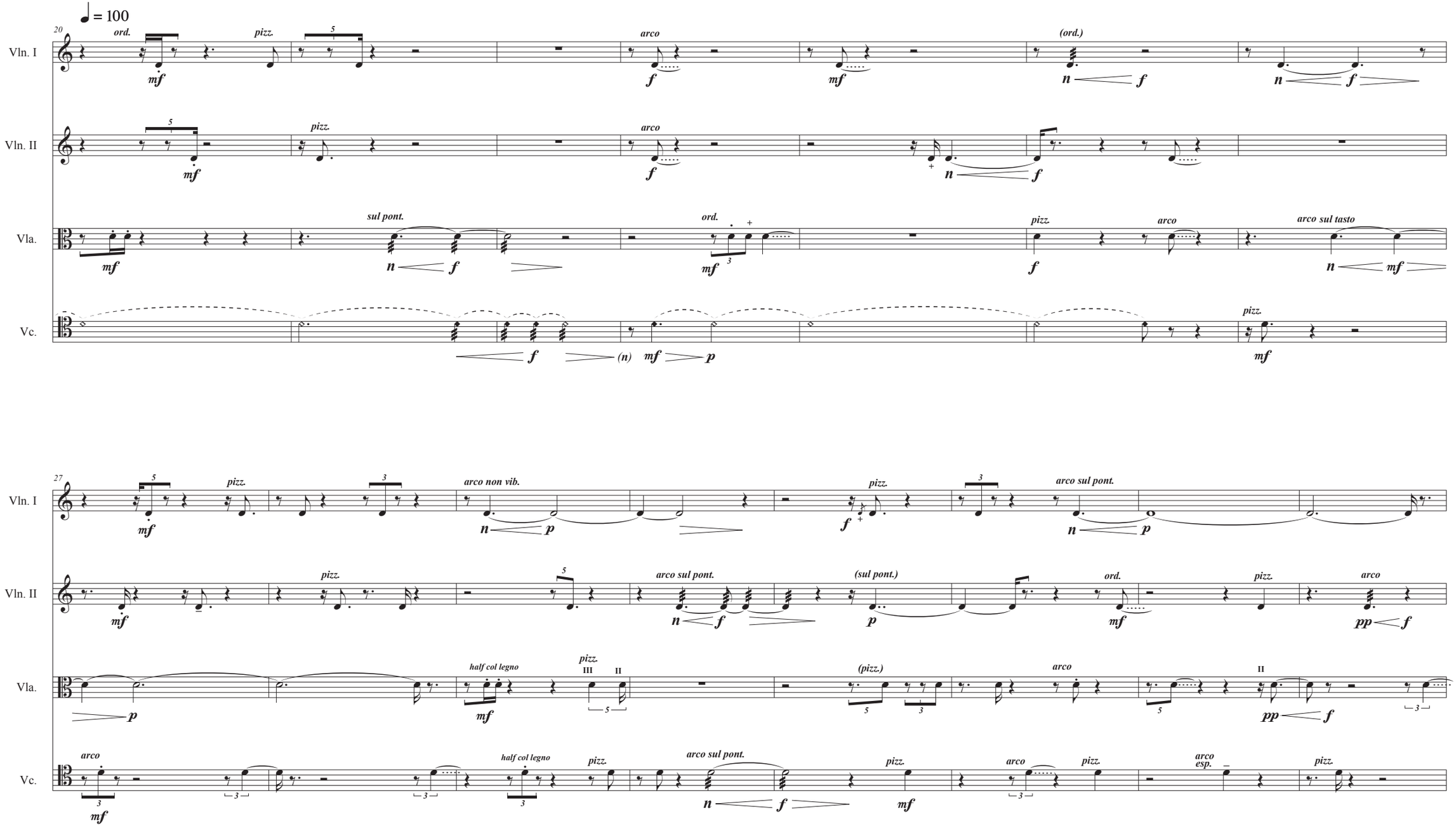
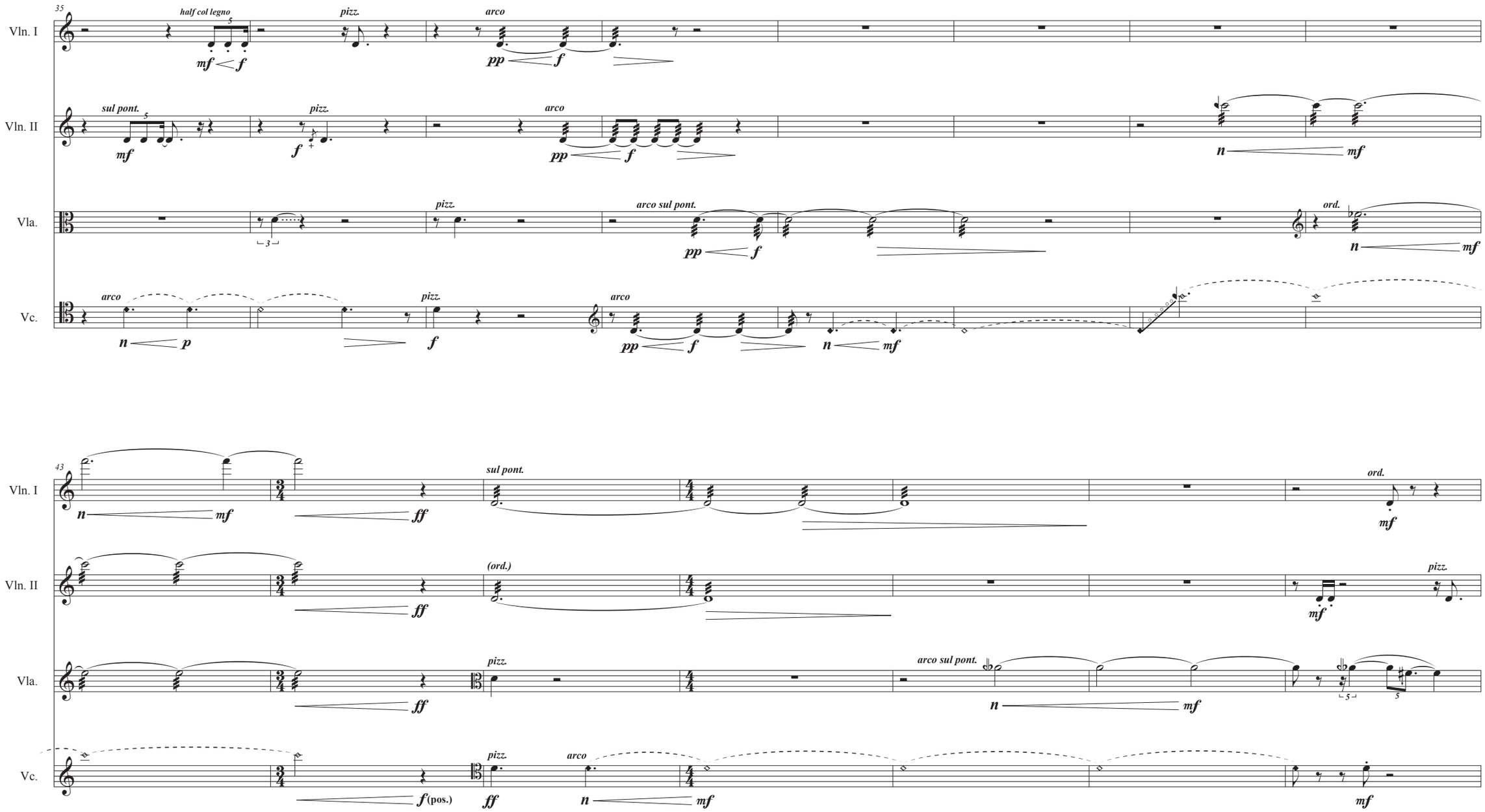
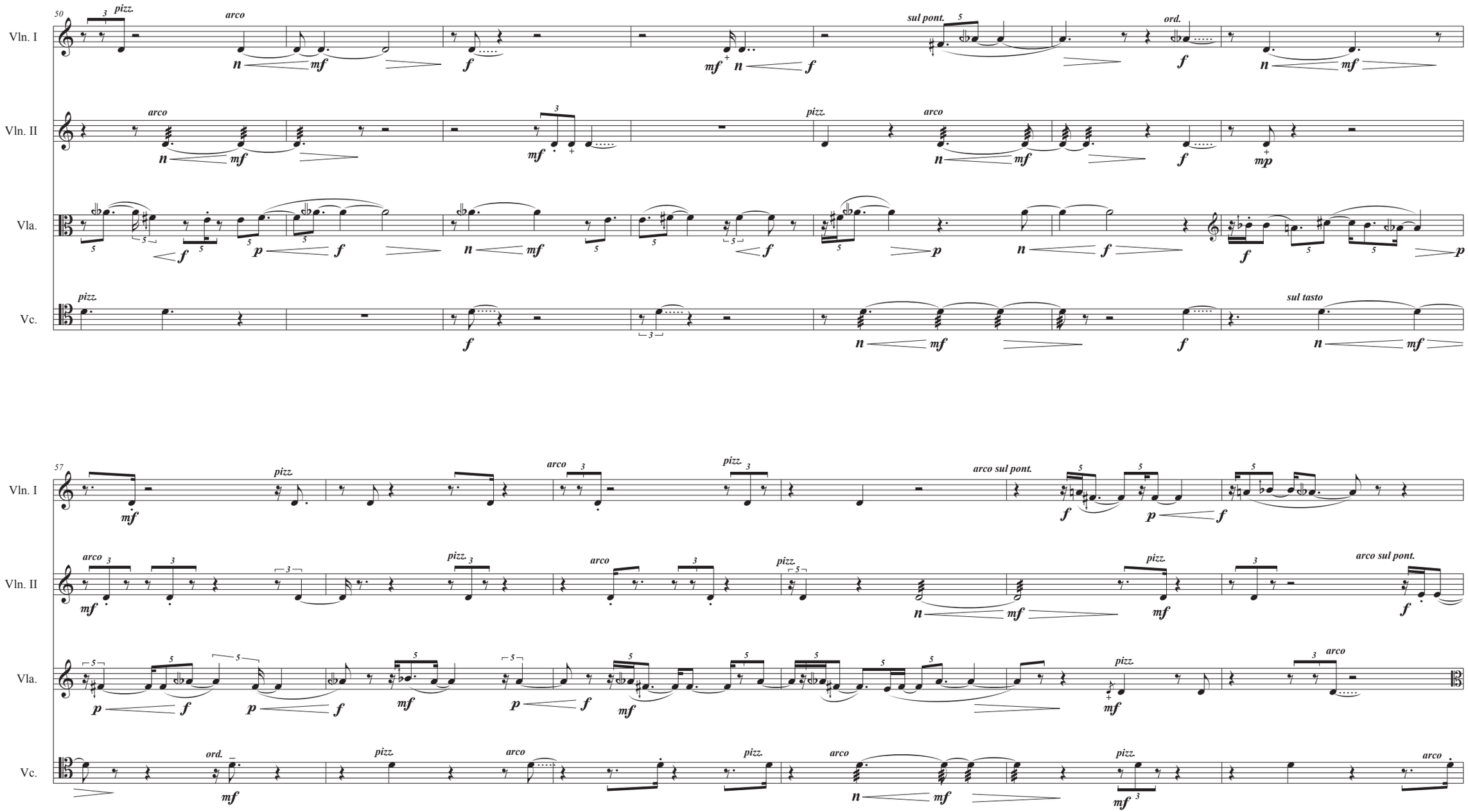
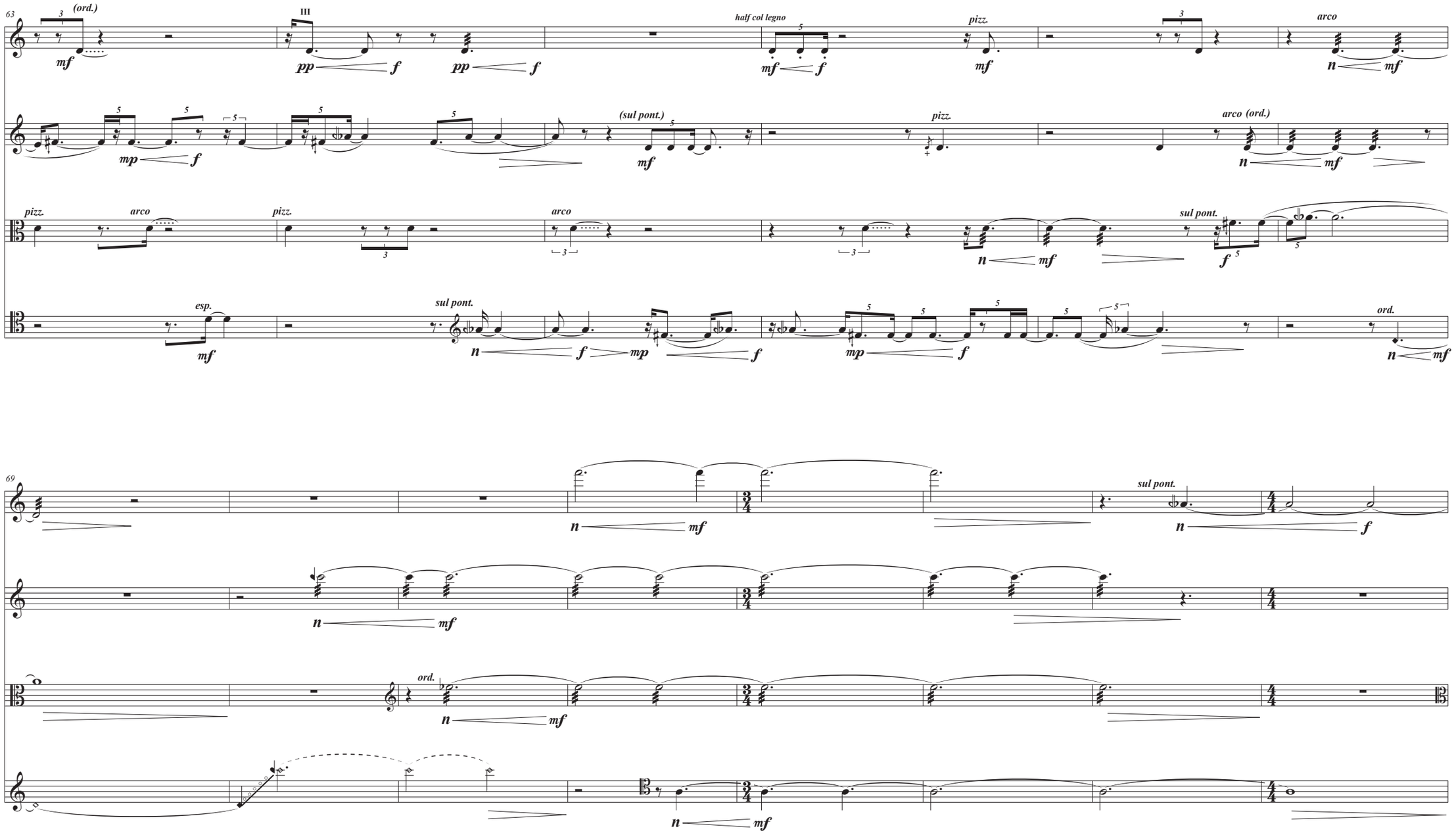
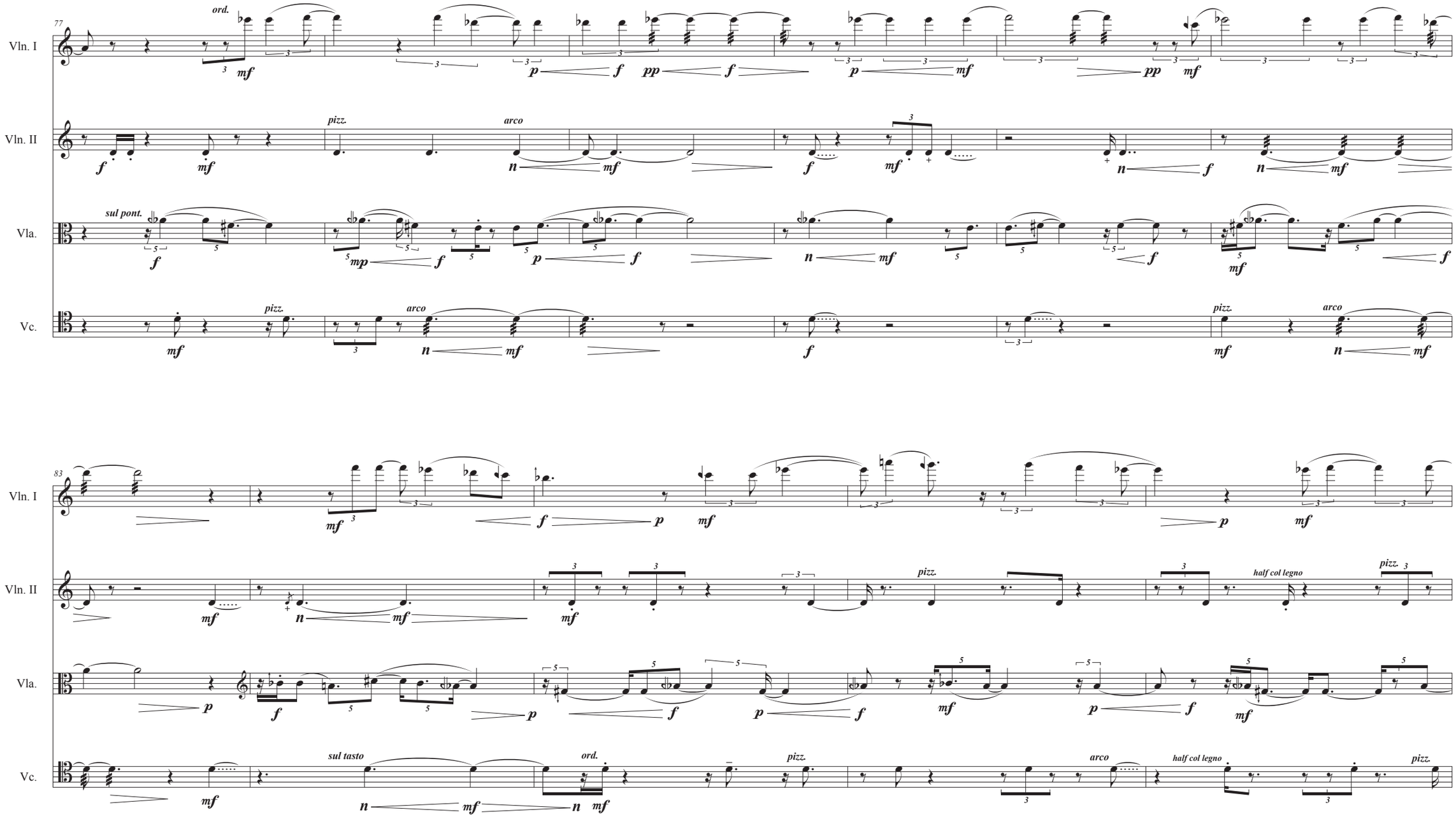

6
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ff
pp
11
sul pont.
(sul pont.)
(ord.)
pizz.
arco
esp.
(esp.)
II
(pos.)
mf
n
f

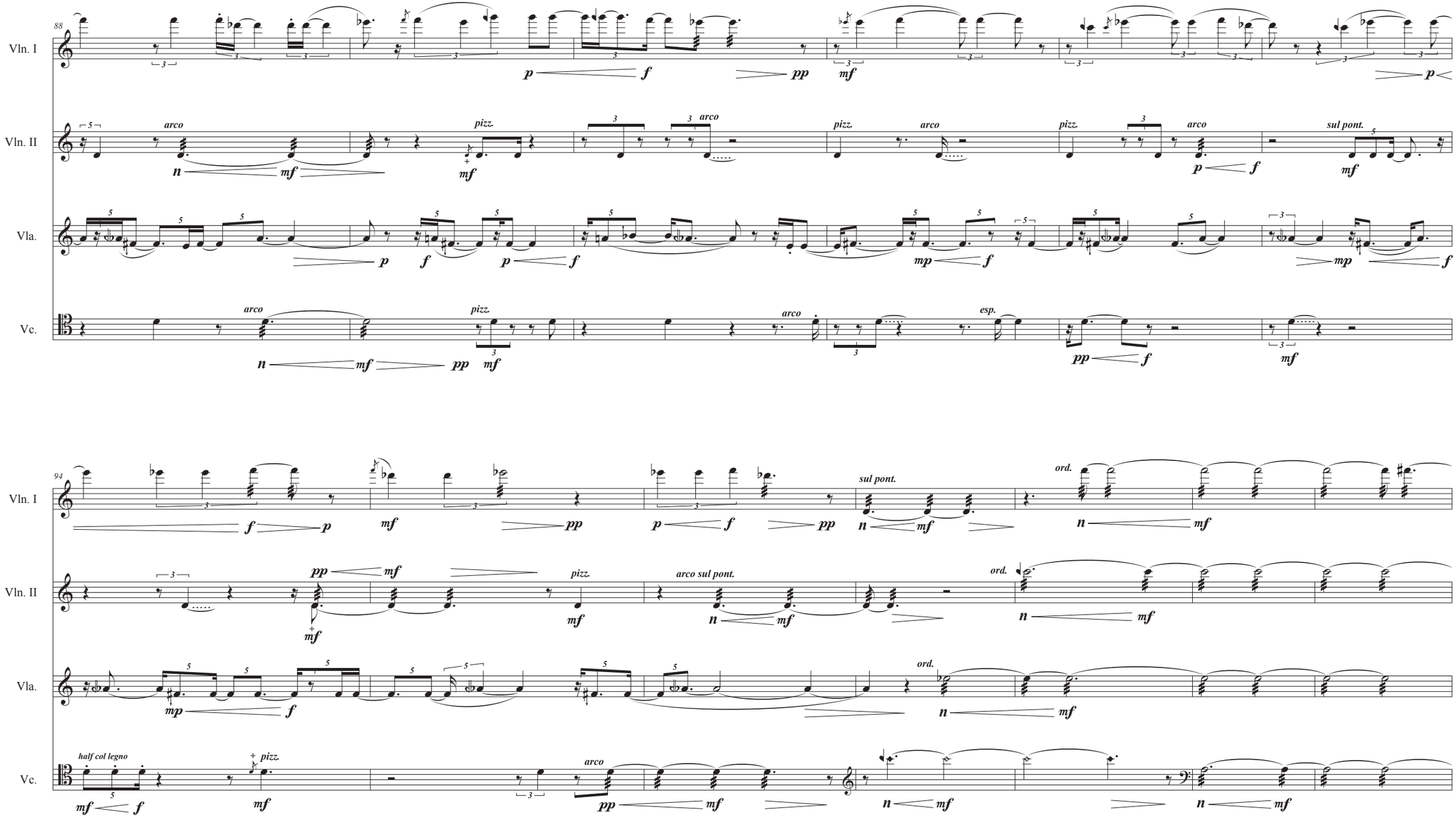

♩ = 100
20
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ord.
pizz.
arco
(ord.)
sul pont.
ord.
pizz.
arco
arco sul tasto
pizz.
27
arco non vib.
pizz.
arco sul pont.
(sul pont.)
ord.
pizz.
arco
half col legno
pizz.
III
II
(pizz.)
arco
II
arco
half col legno
pizz.
arco sul pont.
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
esp.
pizz.

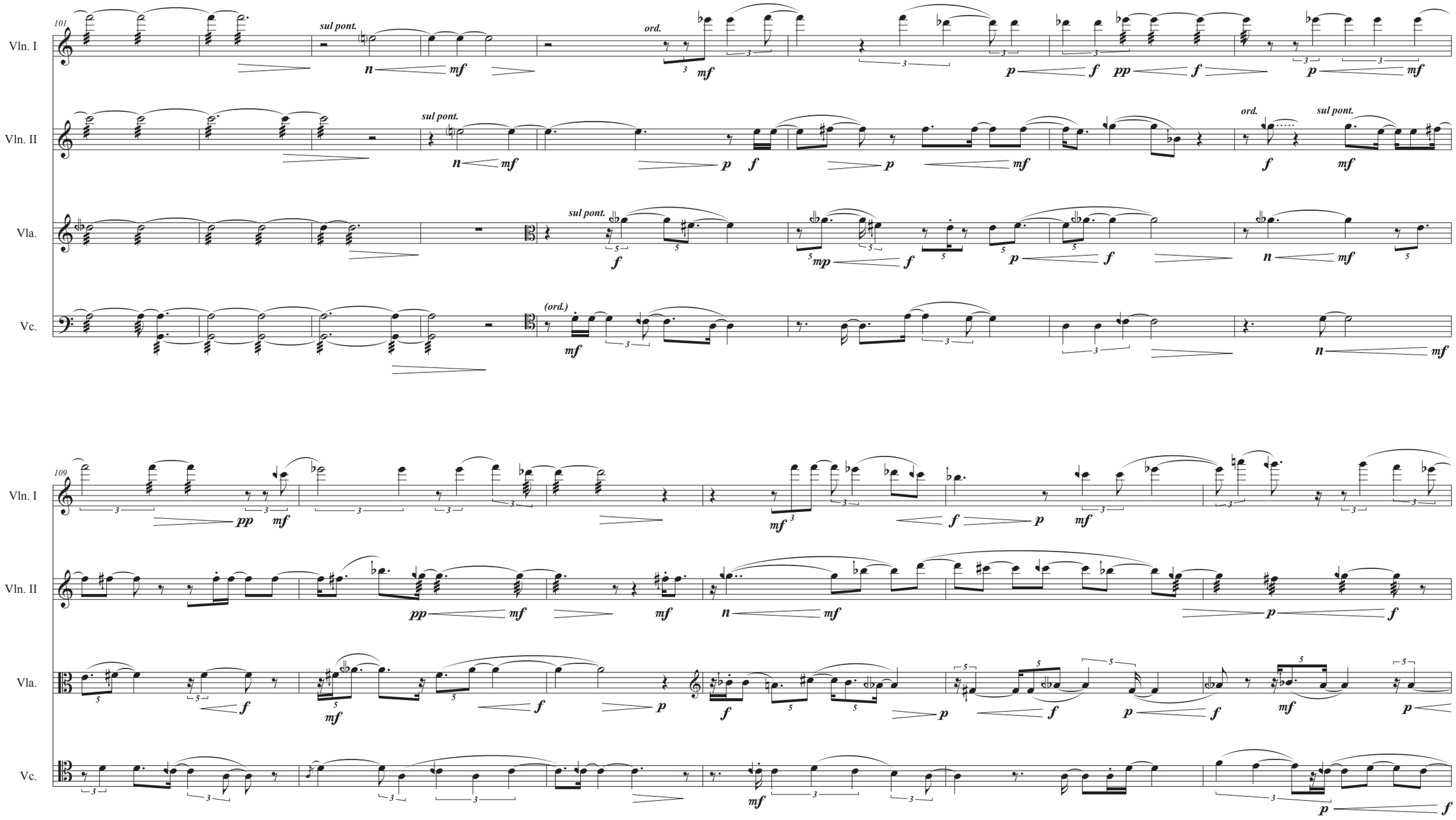

35
Vln. I
half col legno
pizz.
arco
mf f
pp f
Vln. II
sul pont.
pizz.
arco
mf
f
pp f
n mf
Vla.
pizz.
arco sul pont.
ord.
pp f
n mf
Vc.
arco
pizz.
arco
n p
f
pp f
n mf
43
Vln. I
sul pont.
ord.
n mf
ff
mf
Vln. II
(ord.)
pizz.
ff
mf
Vla.
pizz.
arco sul pont.
ff
n mf
Vc.
pizz.
arco
f (pos.)
ff
n mf
mf

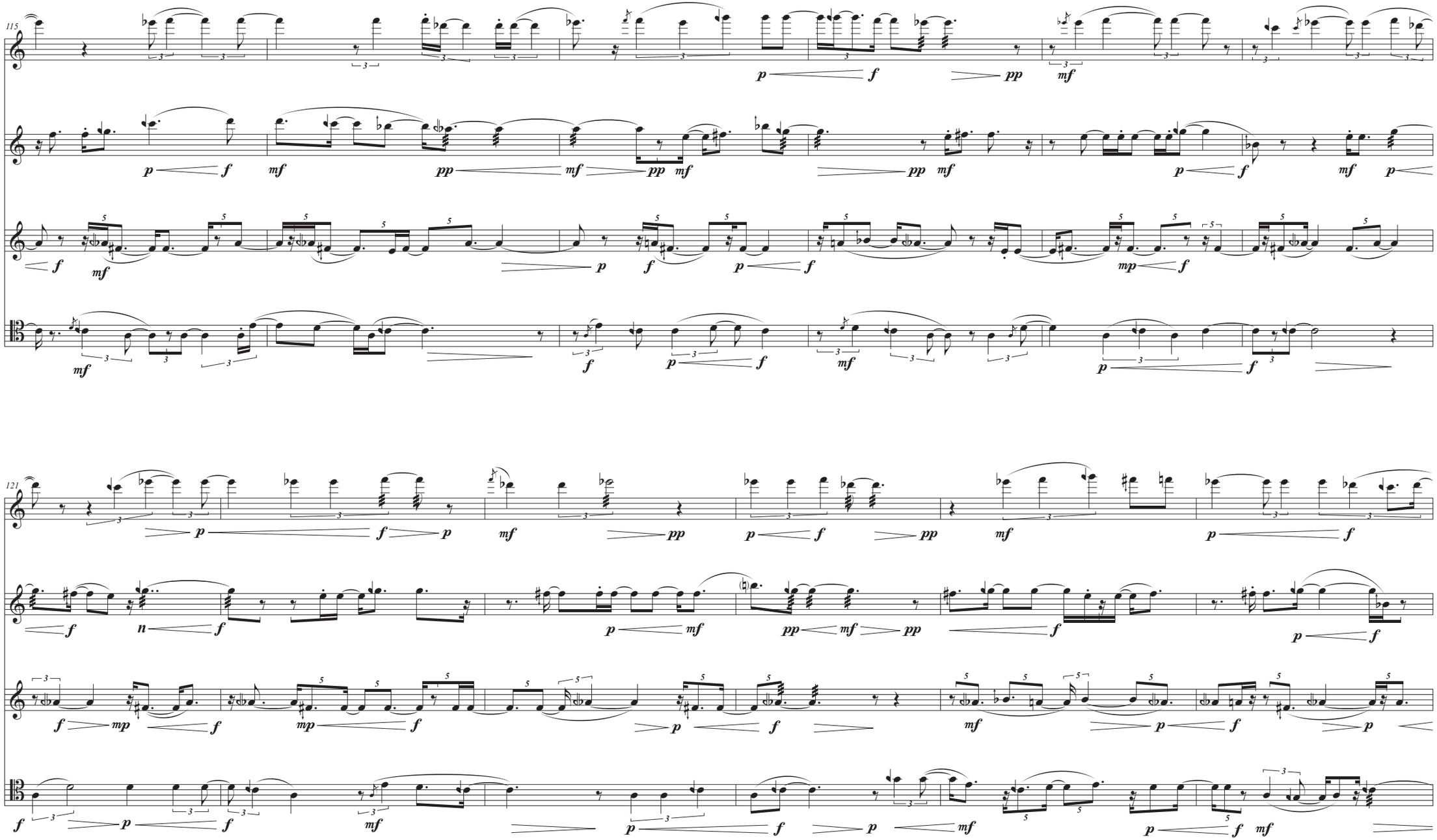

50
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz.
arco
sul pont.
ord.
sul tasto
57
arco sul pont.

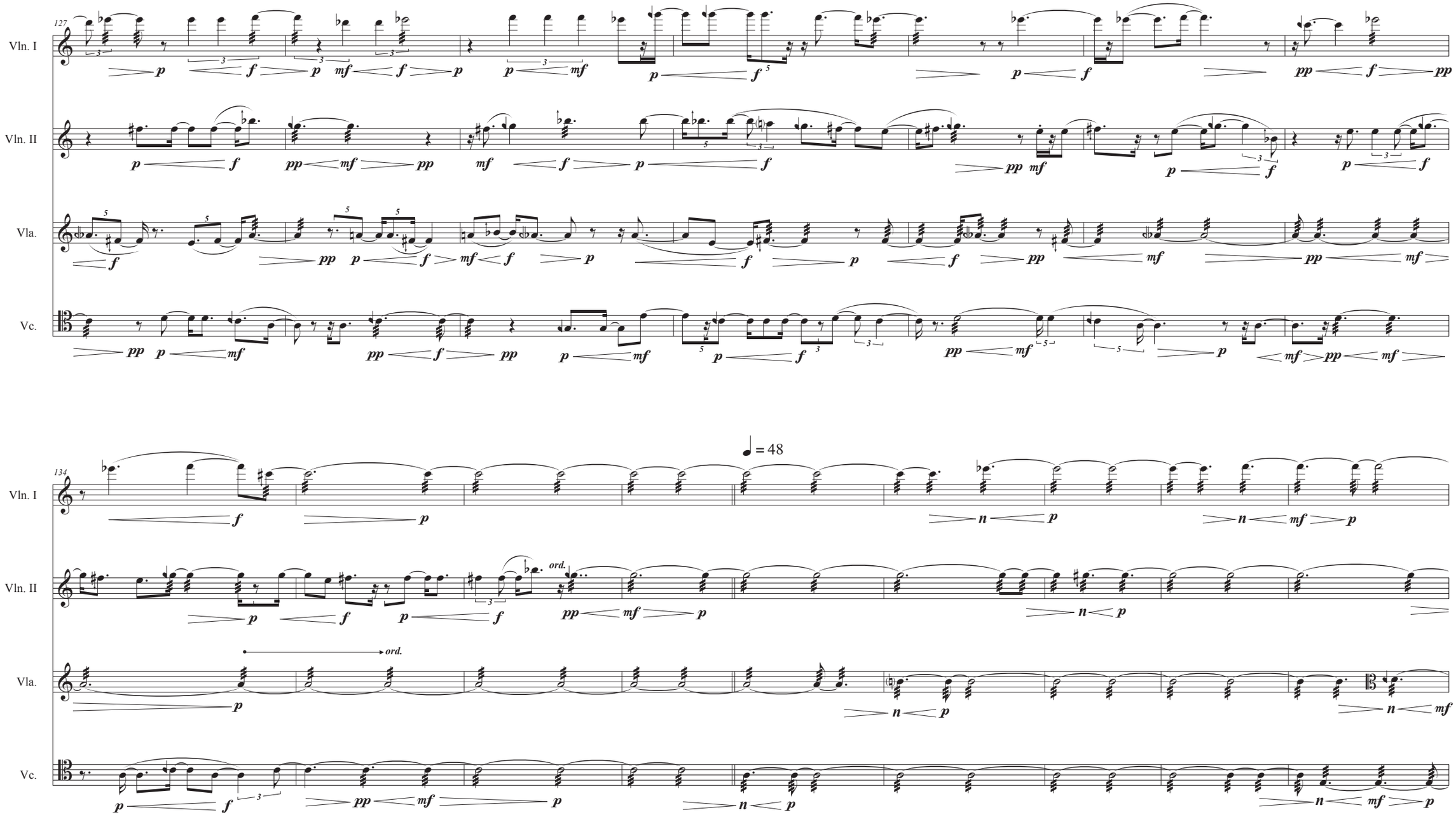

63
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
(ord.)
III
half col legno
pizz.
arco
(sul pont.)
arco (ord.)
sul pont.
esp.
ord.
69

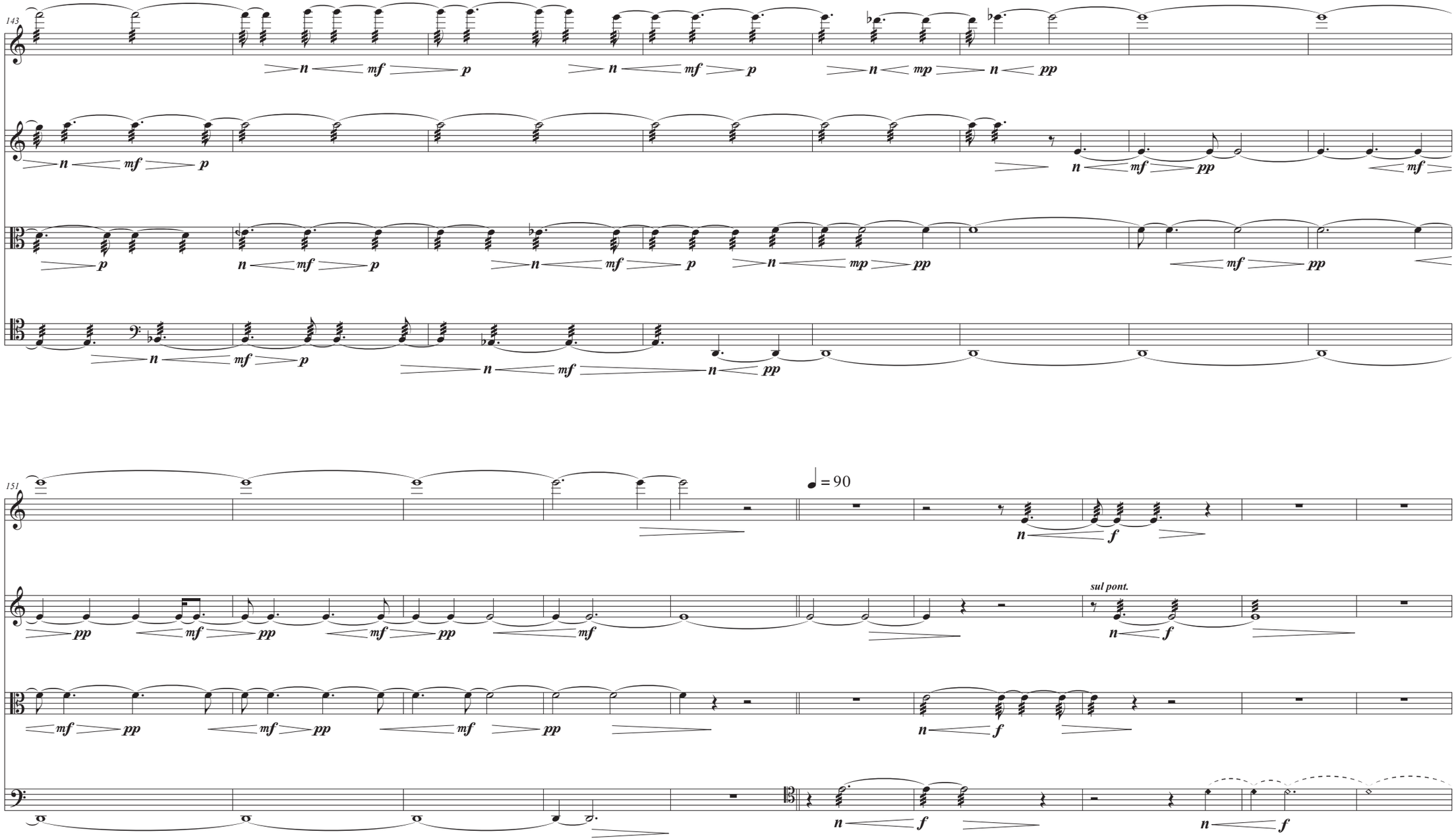

77
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ord.
pizz.
arco
sul pont.
83
sul tasto
half col legno

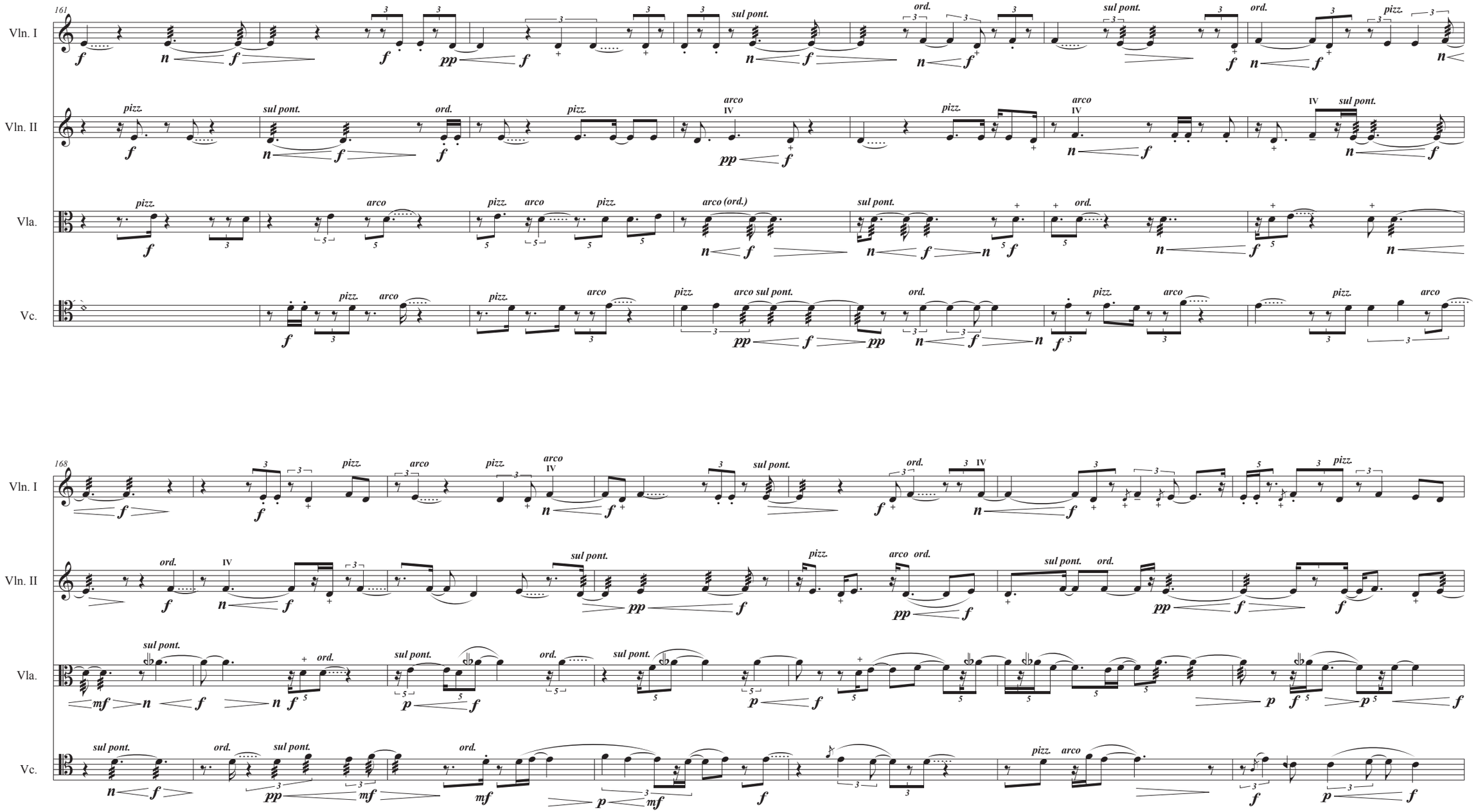

88
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
pizz.
sul pont.
esp.
94
ord.
arco sul pont.
half col legno

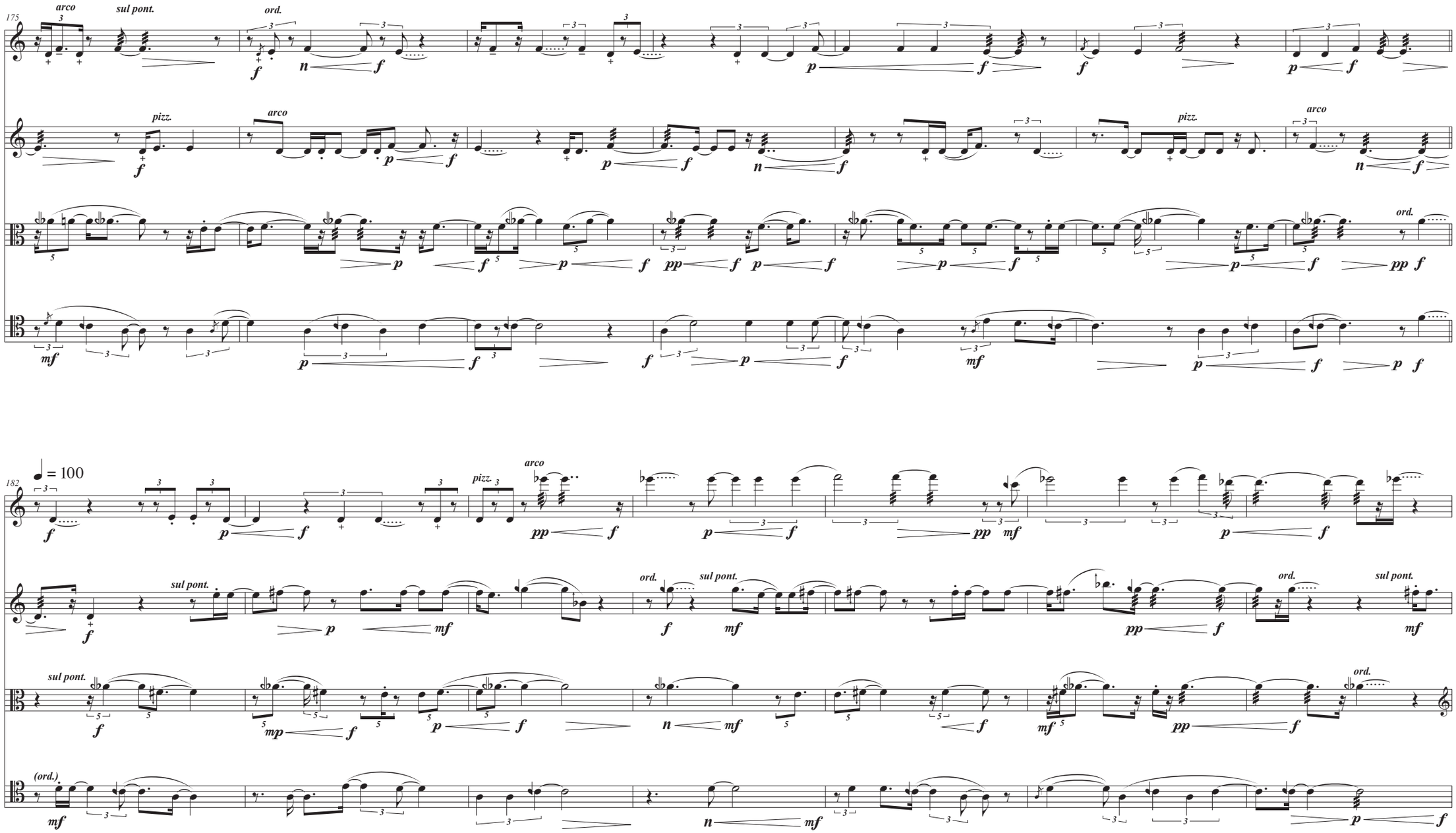

101
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
sul pont.
ord.
(ord.)
109

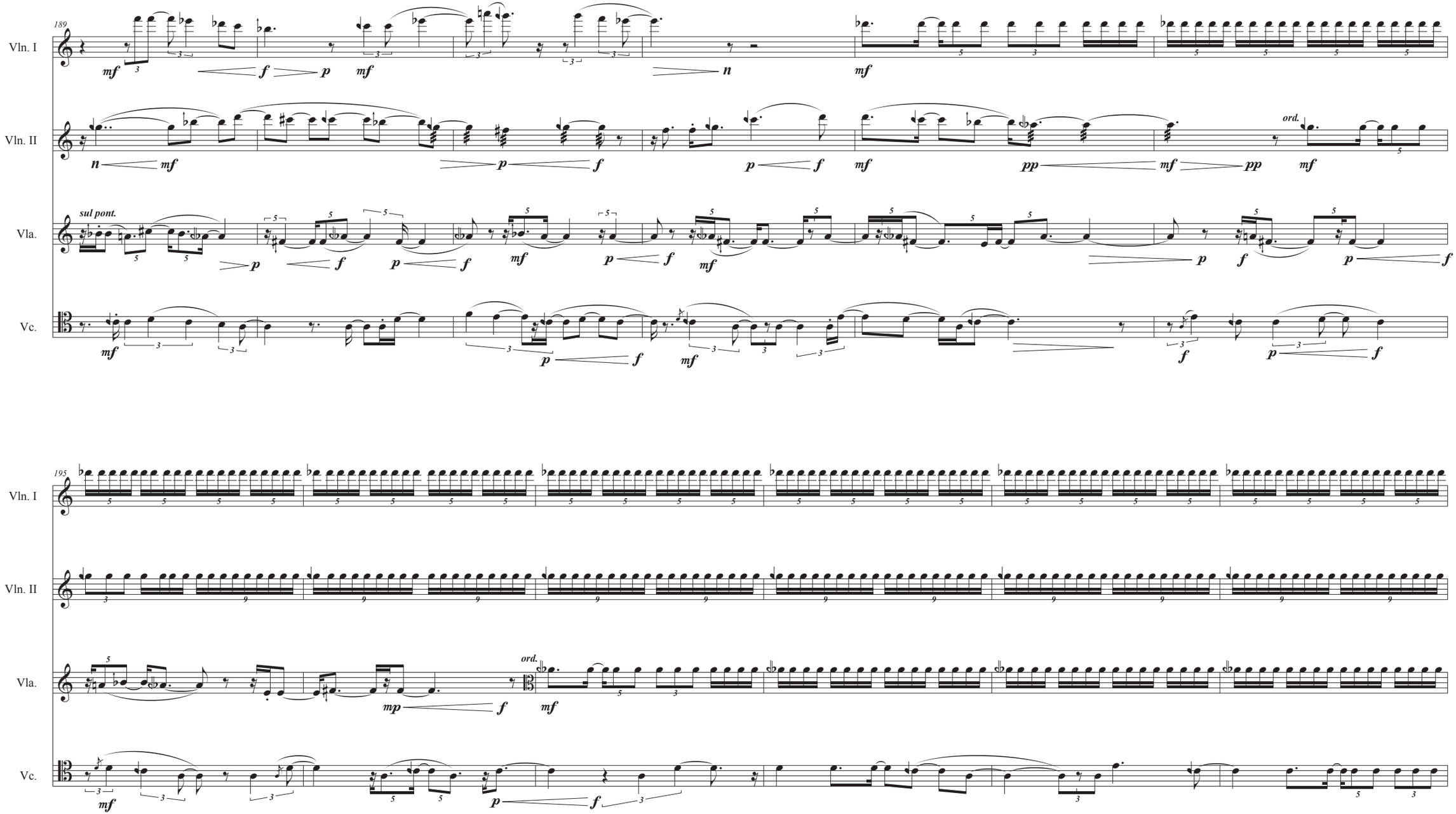

115
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
121
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

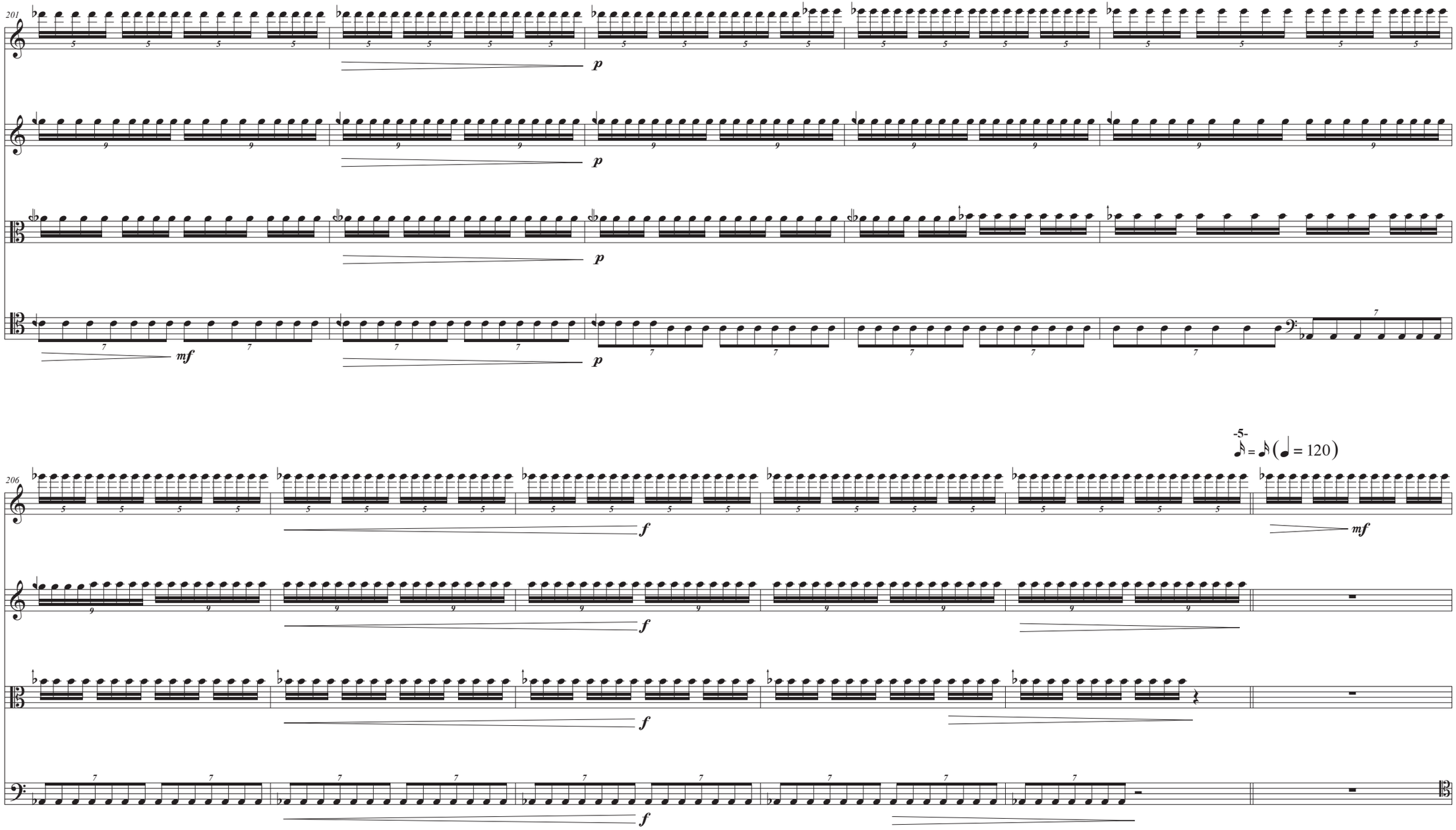

127
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
134
♩ = 48
ord.

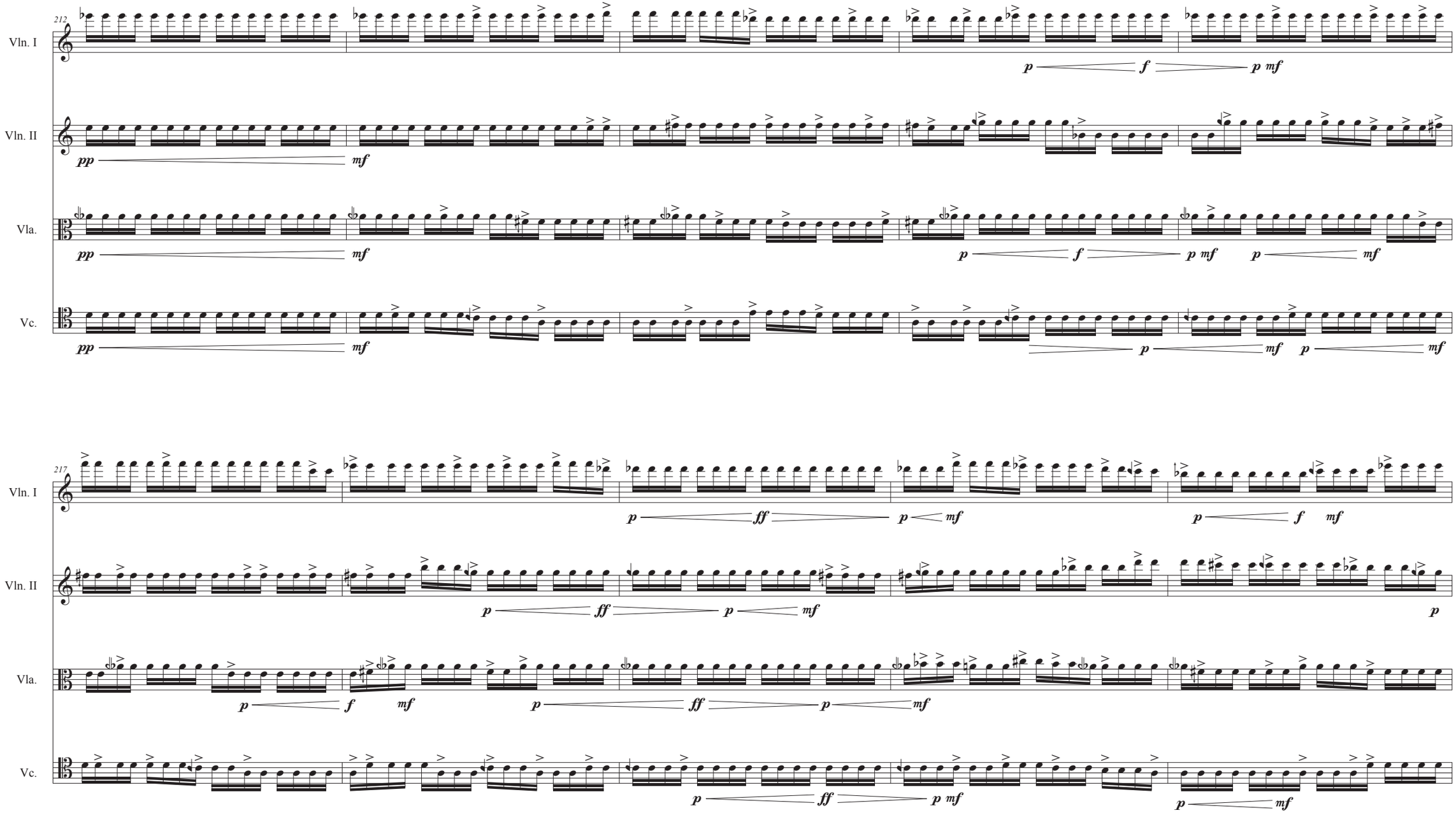

143
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
n mf p
n mf p
n mp n pp
n mf pp
mf
p
n mf p
n mf p
n mp pp
mf pp
n mf p
n mf n pp
151
♩ = 90
n f
sul pont.
pp mf pp mf pp mf
n f
mf pp mf pp mf pp
n f
n f
n f

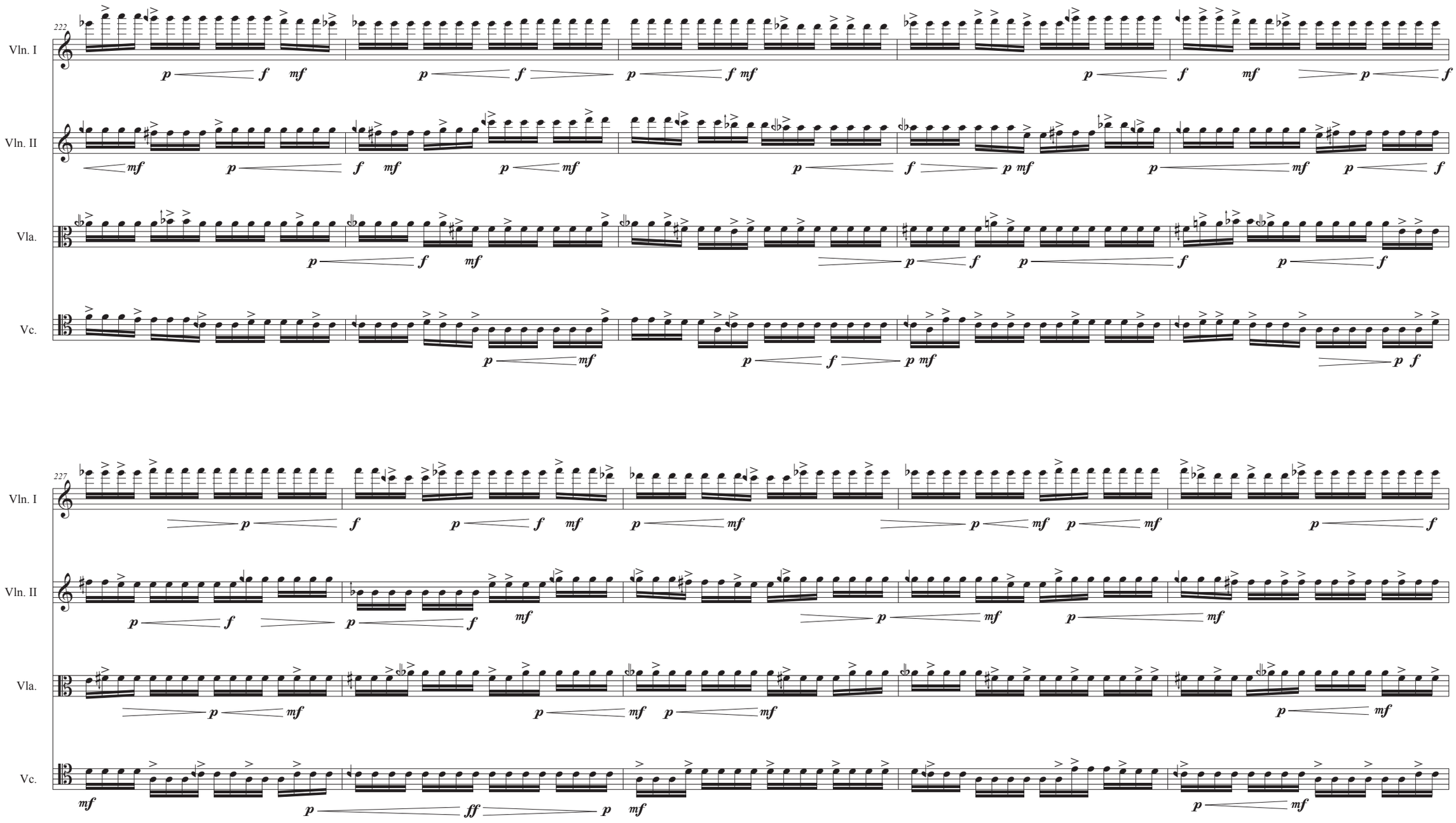

161
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
168
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

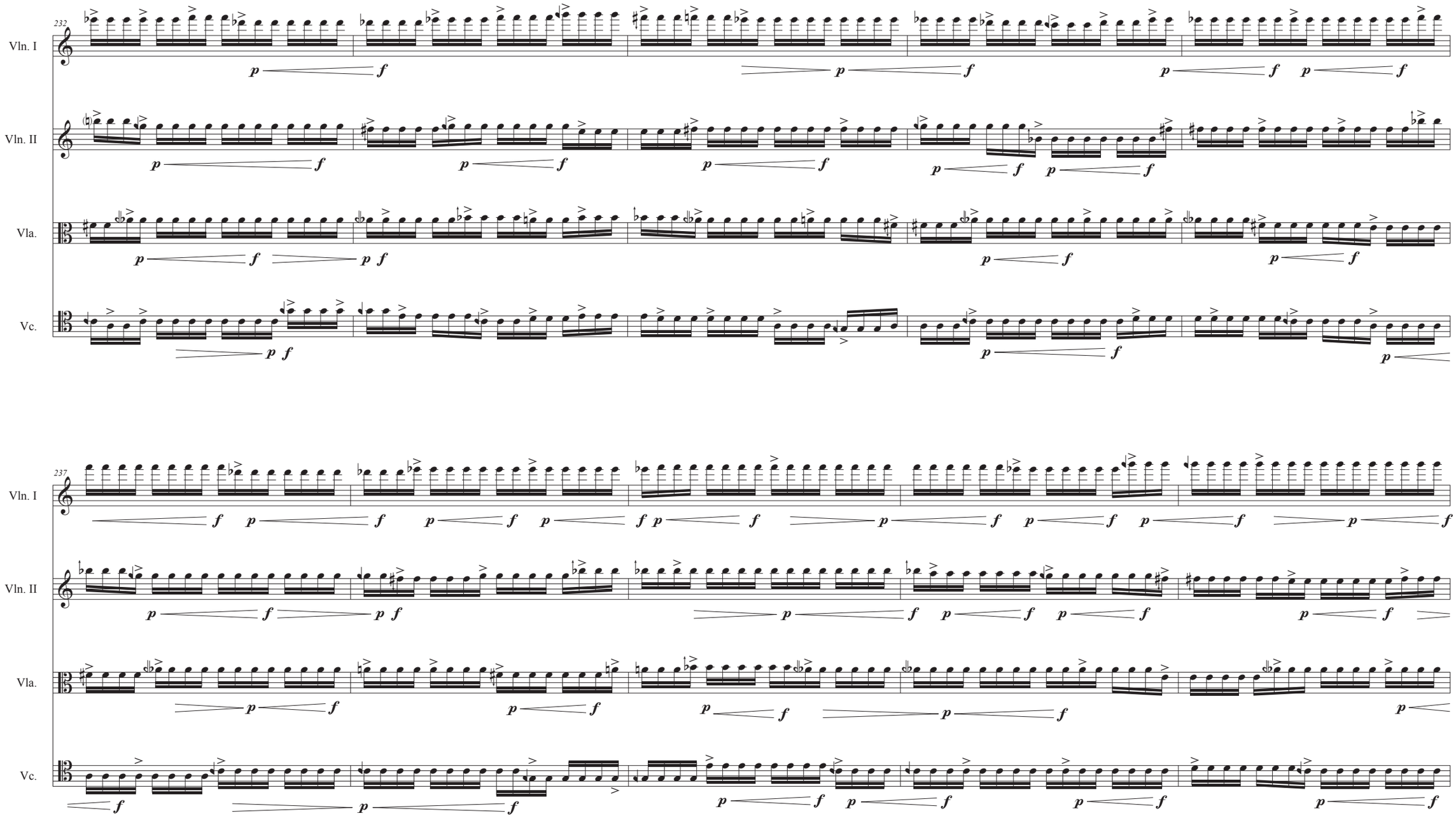

175
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
sul pont.
ord.
pizz.
182
= 100
(ord.)

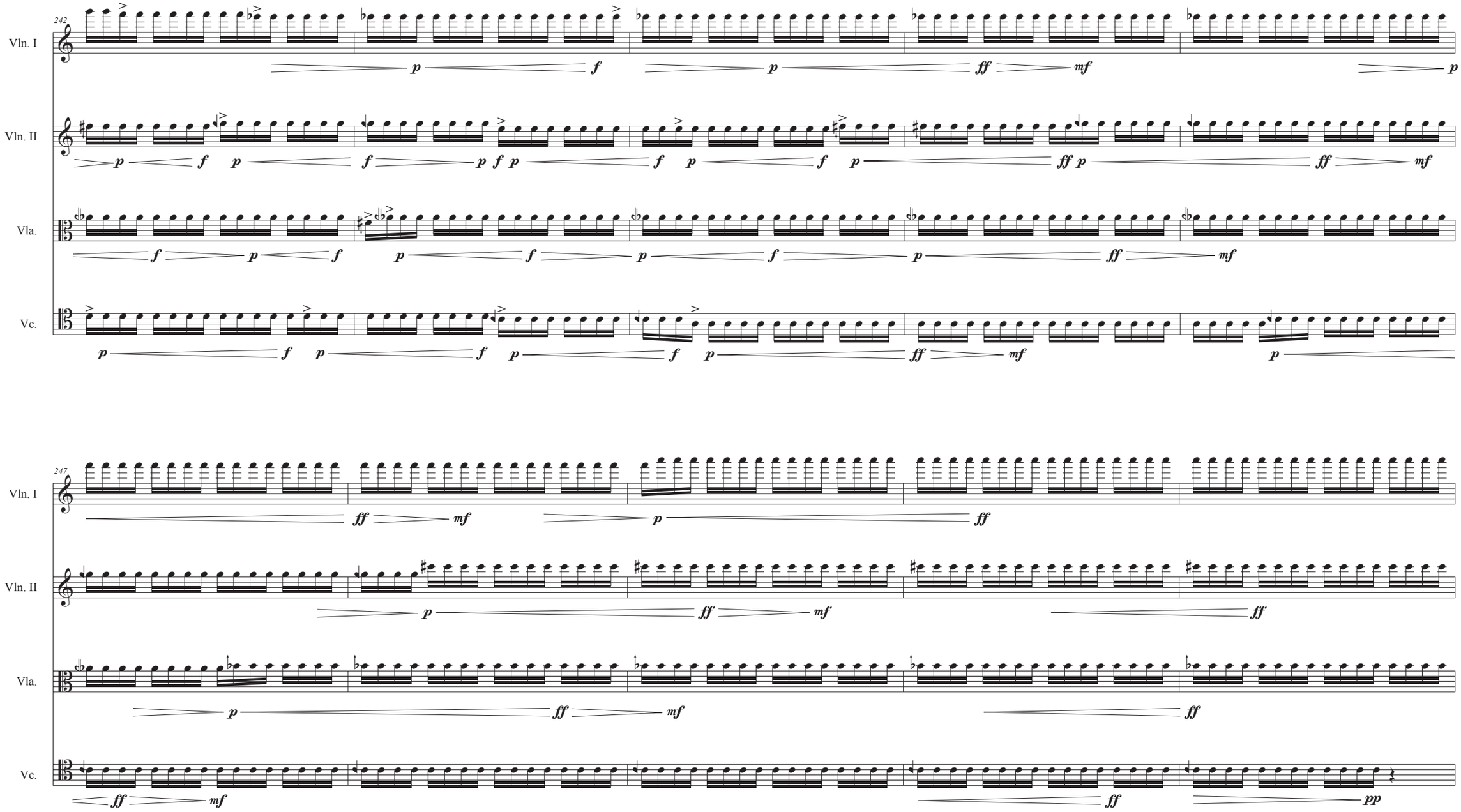

189
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
sul pont.
ord.
195
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ord.

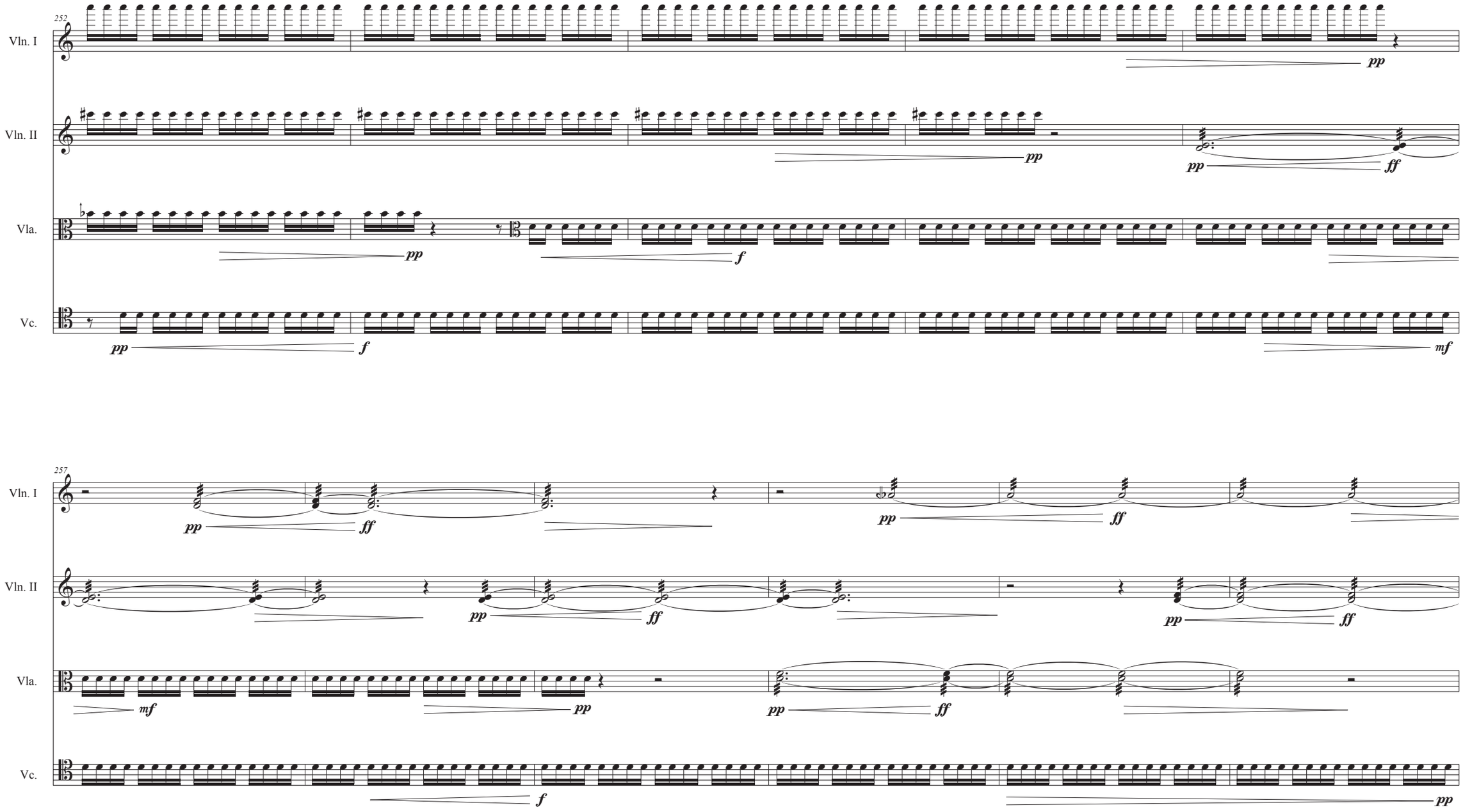

201
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
mf
206
-5-
= (= 120)
f

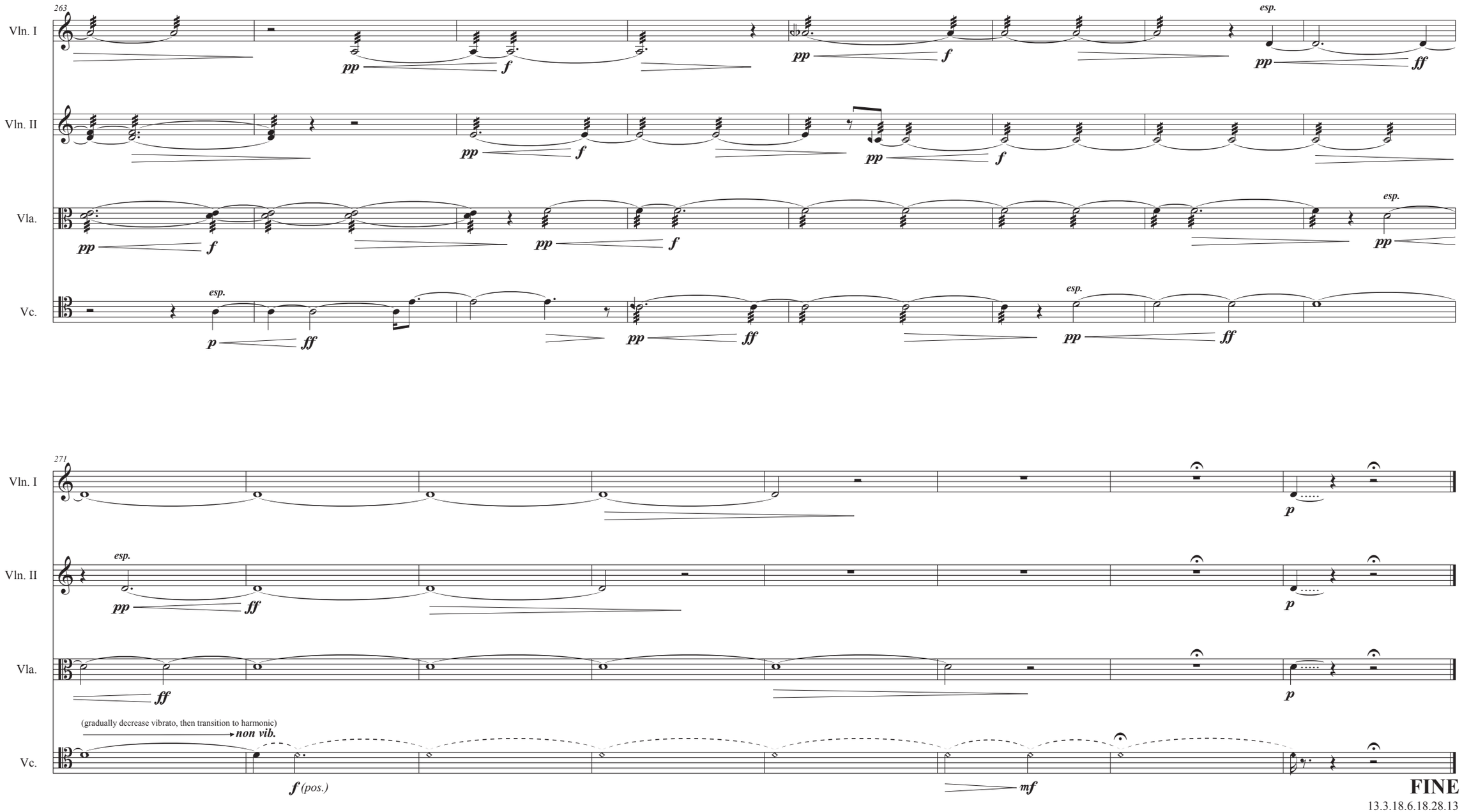

212
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
217
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


222
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
227
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


232
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
237
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


242
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
247
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


252
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
257
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


263
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
esp.
pp
f
ff
271
(gradually decrease vibrato, then transition to harmonic)
non vib.
f (pos.)
mf
FINE
13.3.18.6.18.28.13