Cello Concerto

Chamber Version for Cello and Two Pianos

October 22, 2015–January 25, 2016
Duration: about 27 minutes

for Bonnie Thron and Grant Llewellyn

I have had the pleasure of making music with Principal Cellist of the NC Symphony Bonnie Thron and her husband clarinetist Fred Jacobowitz since 2008. She spoke with Grant Llewellyn, music director of the orchestra, in April 2015 about writing something for her as soloist. Grant then asked me to come up with a piece. After finishing other projects, I got to work on this concerto, after asking Grant for Welsh themes; one of his suggestions is the basis for the first movement.

I. Over the Stone (Tros y Garreg)		
	Adagio; Cyflym; Adagio; Cyflym; Cymedrol; Ychydig yn gyflymach	[9']
II. Heart Song	*Largo*	[8']
III. Contradanza	*Fidelio*	[2']
IV. Schlimmbesserung	*Vivace*	[7:20]

The theme for the first movement is the traditional Welsh song "Tros y Garreg", or "Over the Stone". The song is attributed to Rhys Bodychen, who fought at the Battle of Bosworth Field on the side of the Tutors against Richard III in 1485. The lyrics reflect on those who have fallen in battle. This melody has been altered from the original by George Thompson, who published Welsh airs in 1809, 1811, and 1817. I prefer his version for this purpose to the original. Note that the end of the melody resembles the theme from the last movement of J. S. Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 5*, which factors into my treatment. Also, the traditional harp music of Wales led me to have an important harp part throughout this concerto. After having written music influenced by Russia, France, Germany, Austria, Moravia, Hungary, Romania, Spain, Cuba, India, and Mississippi, it was about time for me to try Wales—somewhere closer to my actual ancestry (English, Dutch, Scotch-Irish, Manx).

I made a point of using particularly incomprehensible, unspellable, and unpronounceable Welsh words for tempo markings in the first movement. *Cyflym* means "fast"; *Cymedrol* means "moderate"; *Ychydig yn gflymach* means "a little faster."

The very short third movement started life back about 1990 as the second movement of my *Fourth Sonata for Solo Violin*. (There is a total of ten such sonatas.) Originally I thought it was a tango, as I am easily bored with details in music theory and sometimes don't look things up. In fact it is a contradanza, with the dance form originating in Havana. Hence the tempo marking "Fidelio". The solo cello part can be performed by itself in a pinch.

The fourth movement is titled *Schlimmbesserung*, which is German for "an effort to make things better that ends up making things worse".

Cover art: frontispiece from *Musical and poetical relicks of the Welsh bards* by Edward Jones, 1784.

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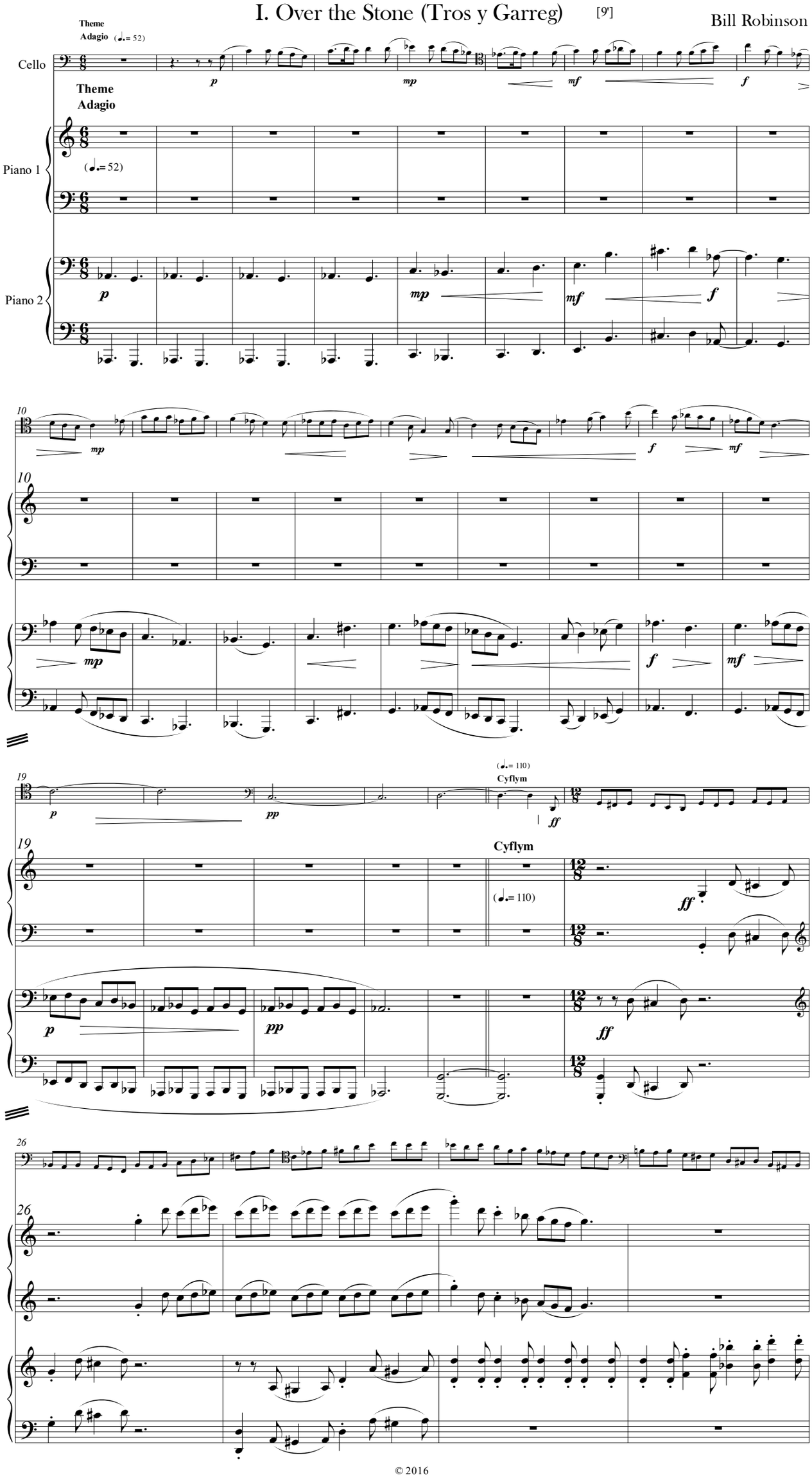
billrobinsonmusic.com

Cello Concerto

I. Over the Stone (Tros y Garreg) [9']

Bill Robinson



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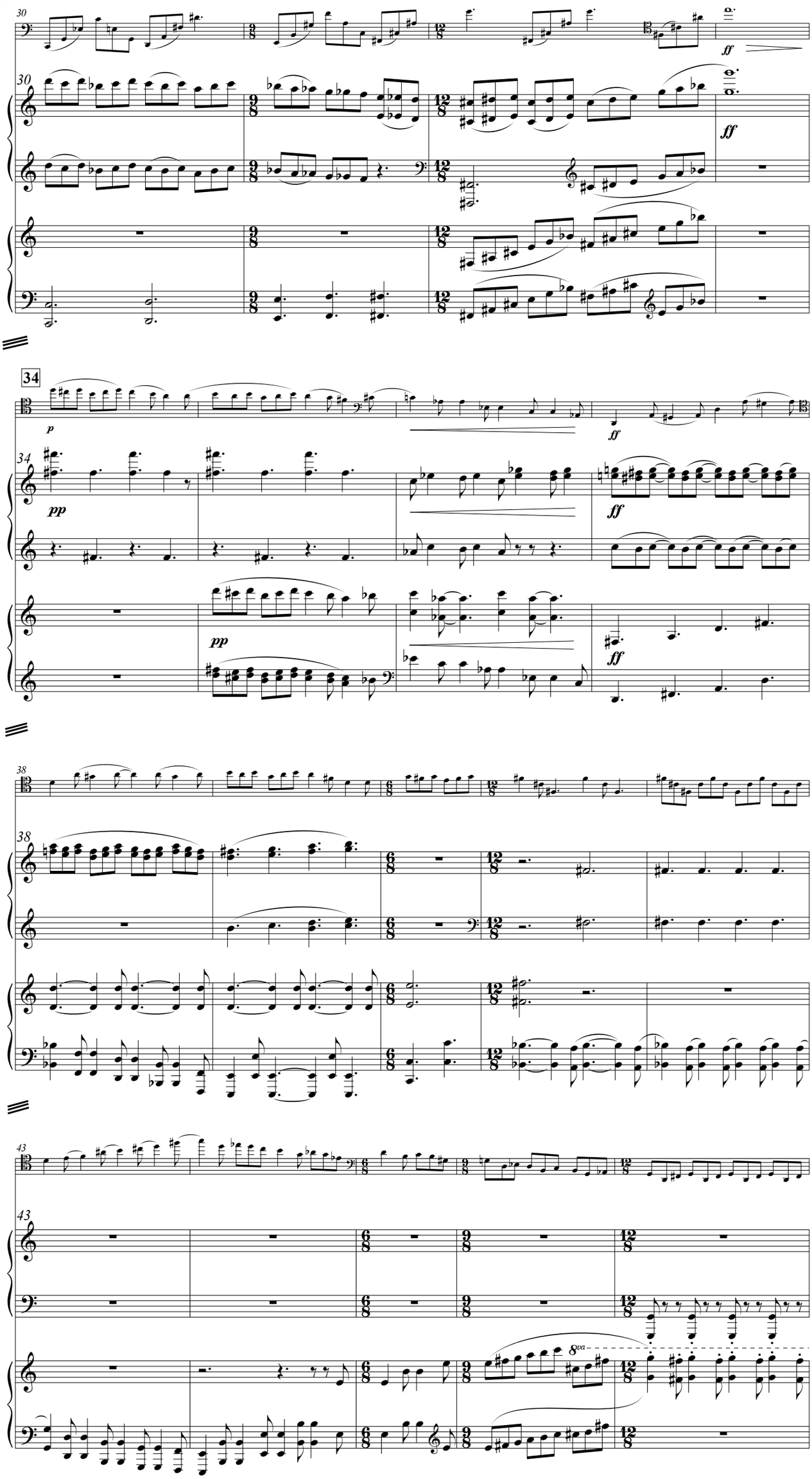
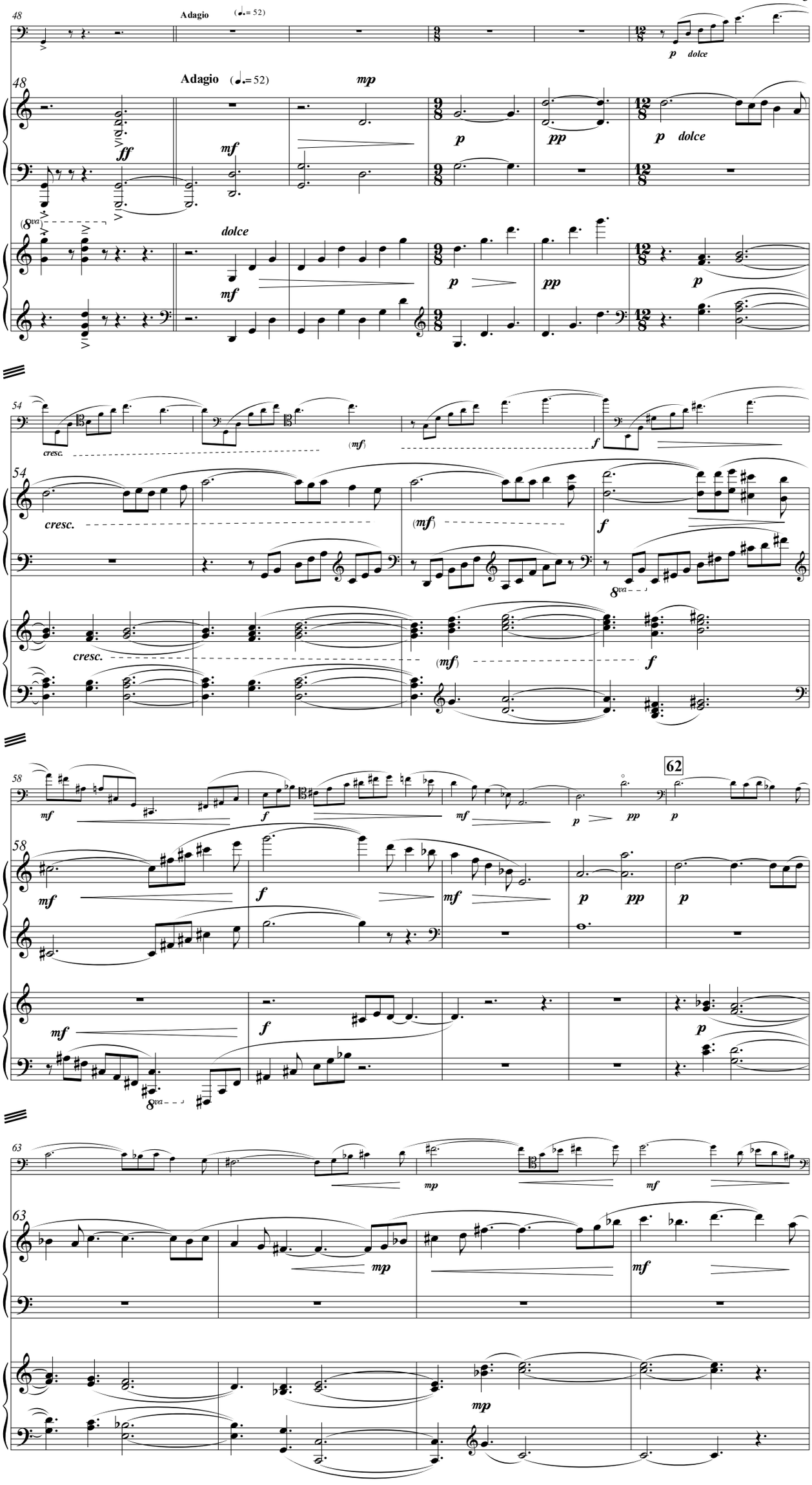
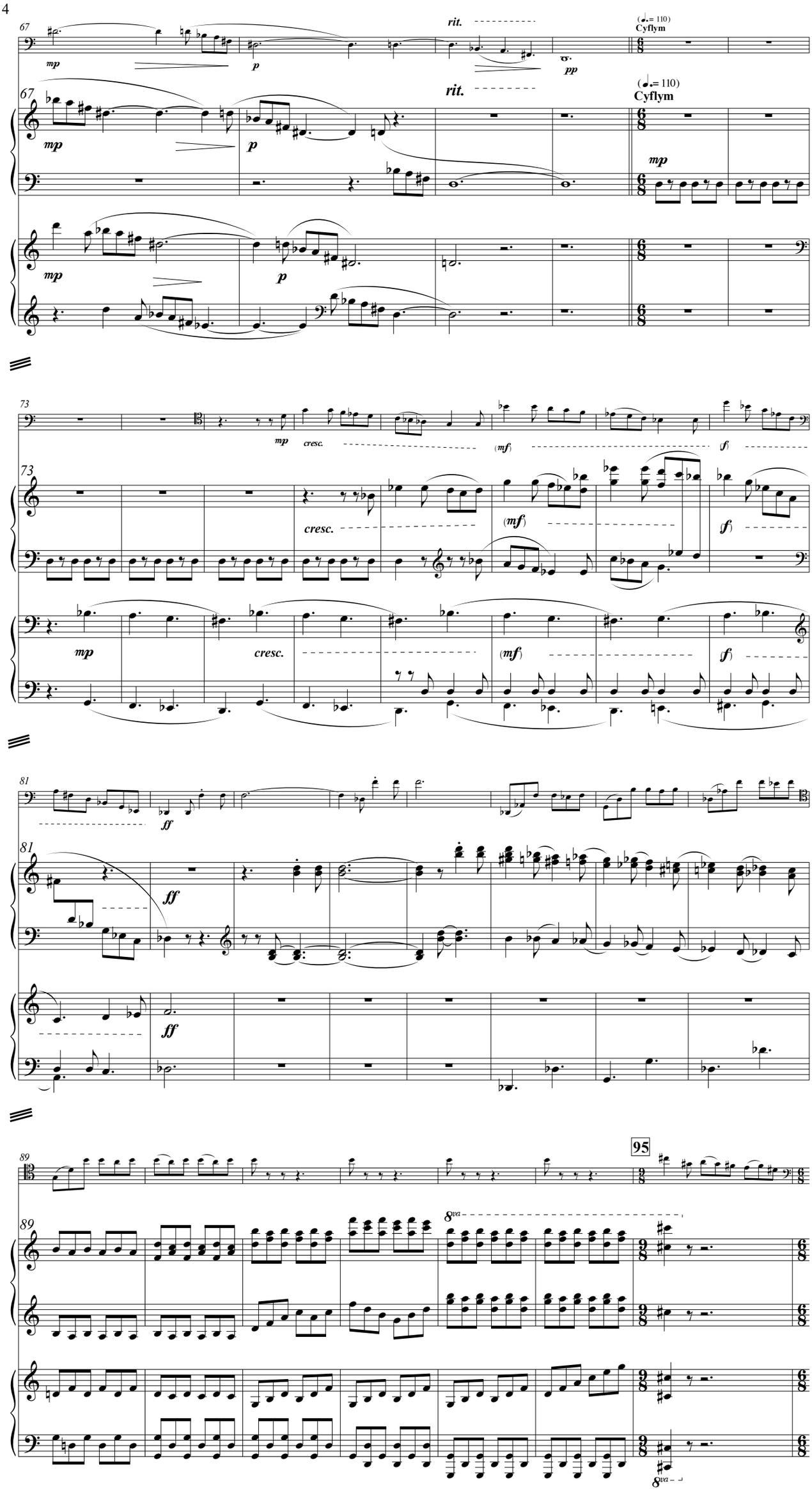
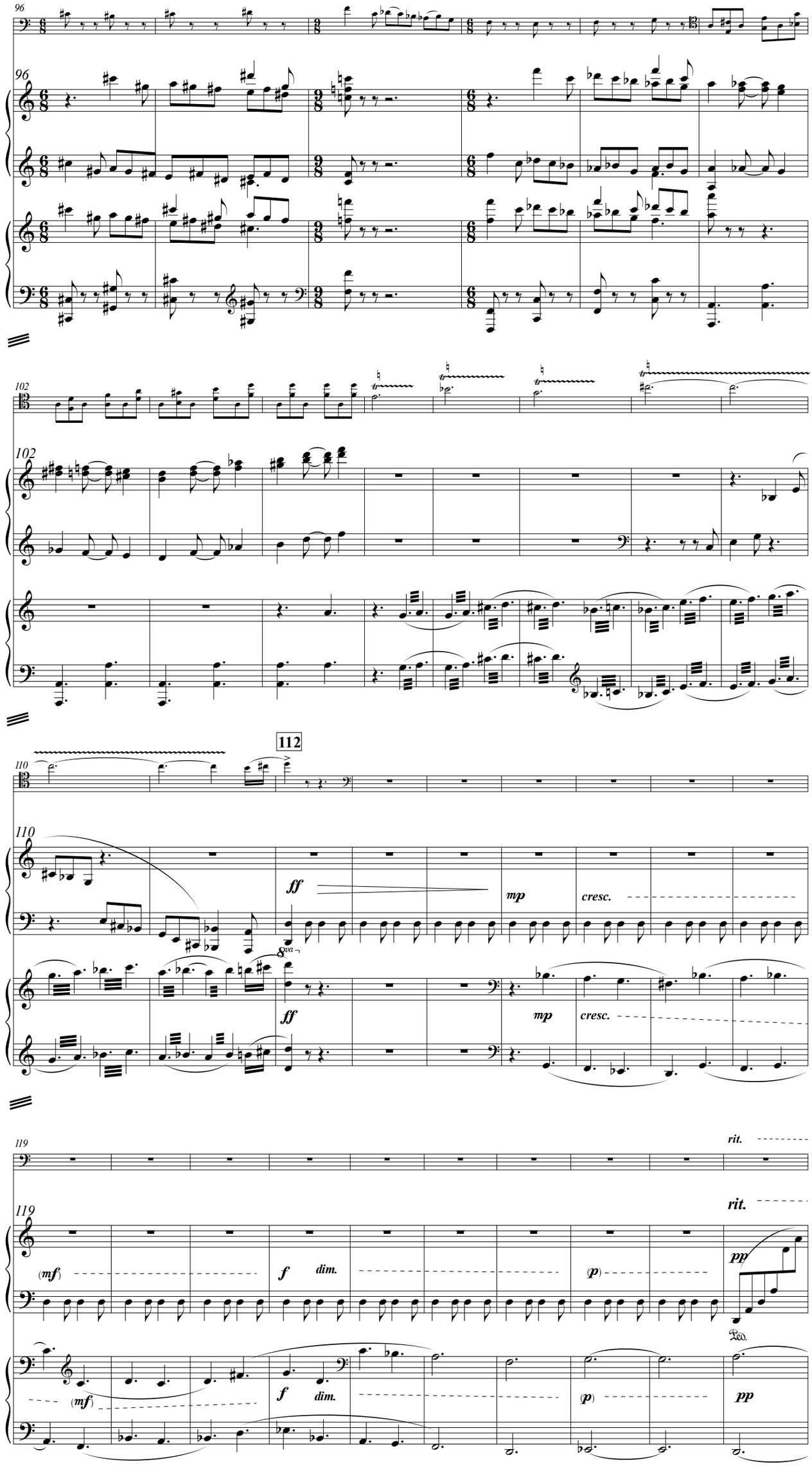
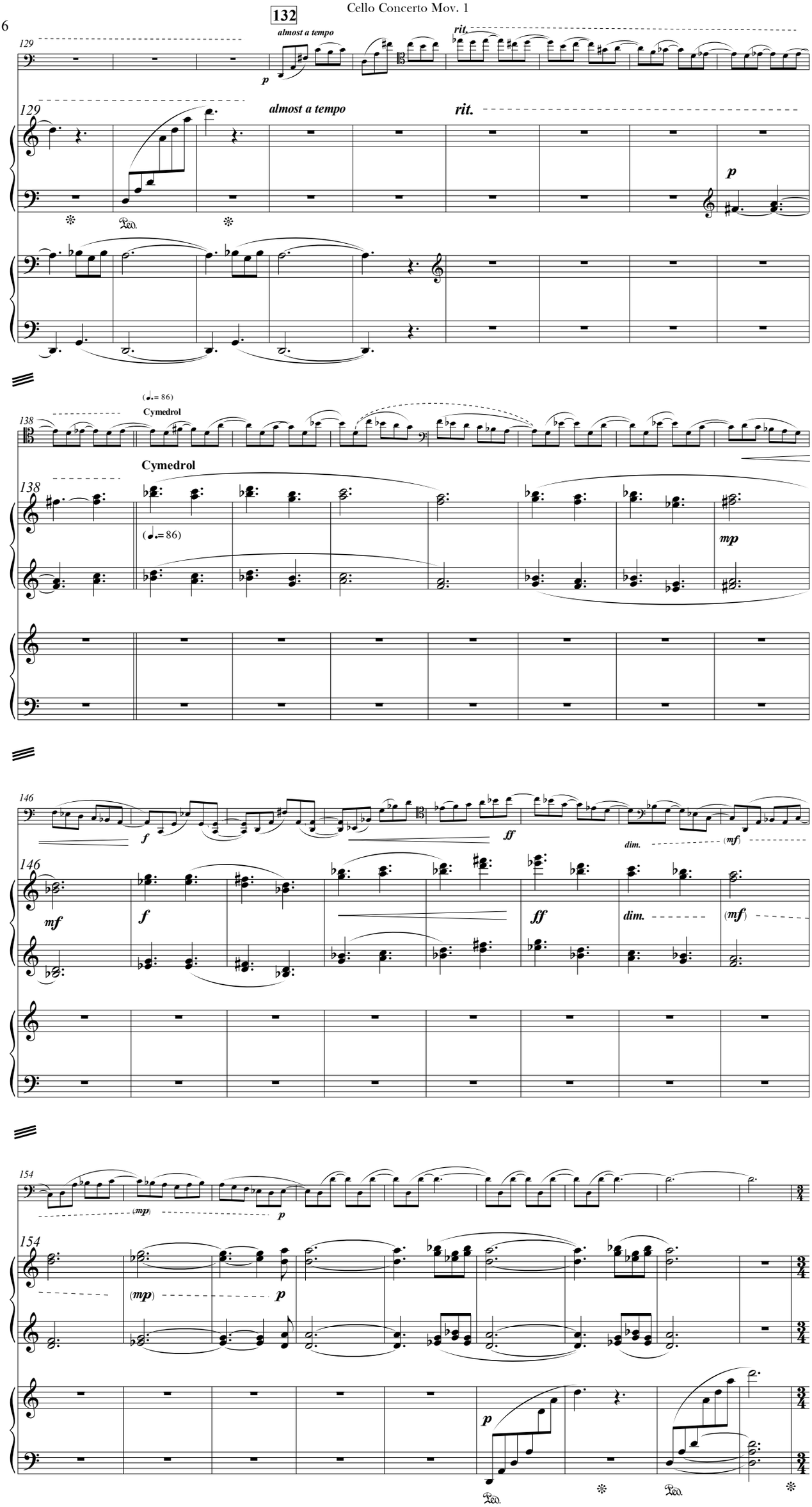
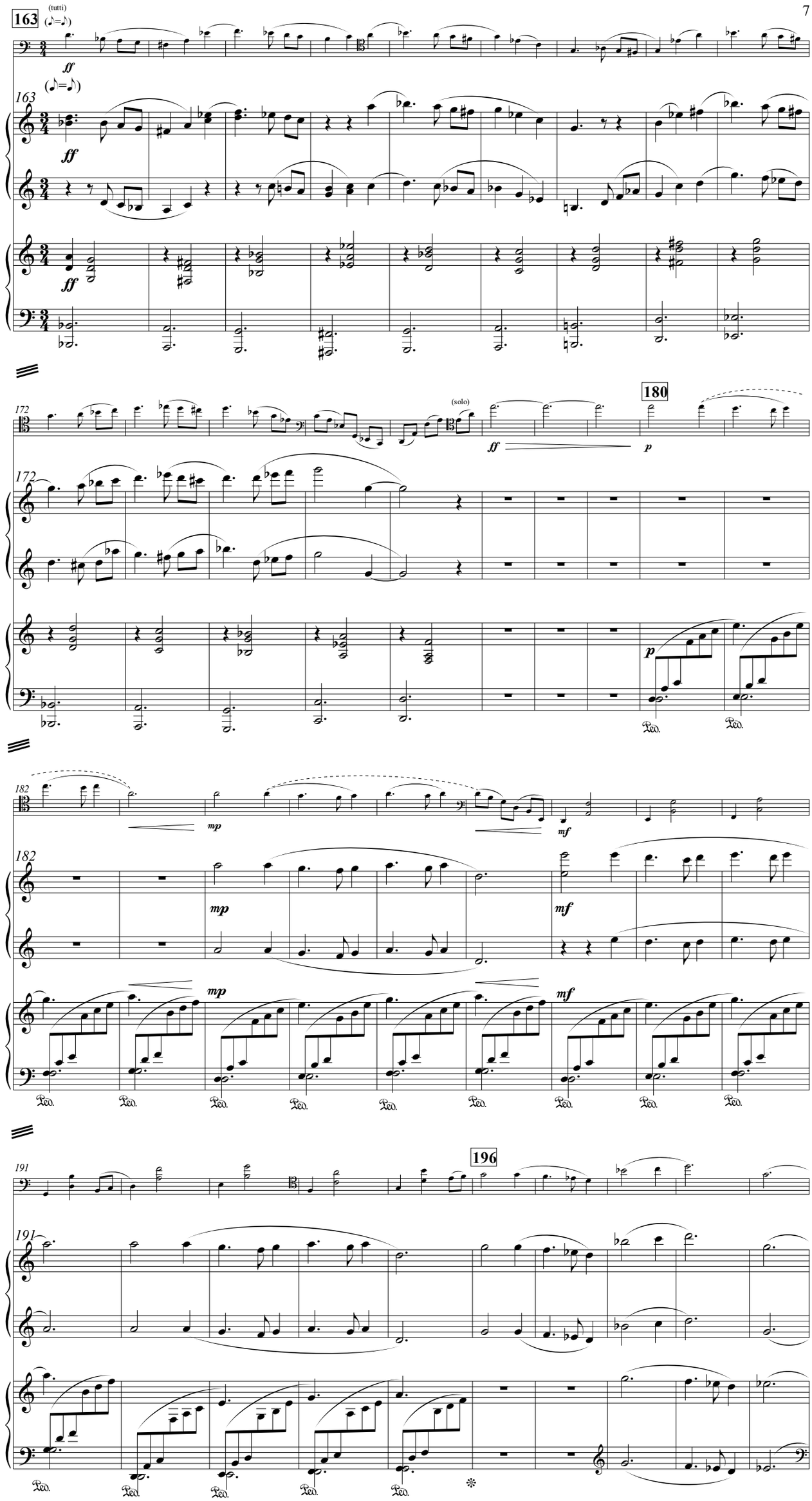

30
ff
34
p
pp
ff
38
43
8va

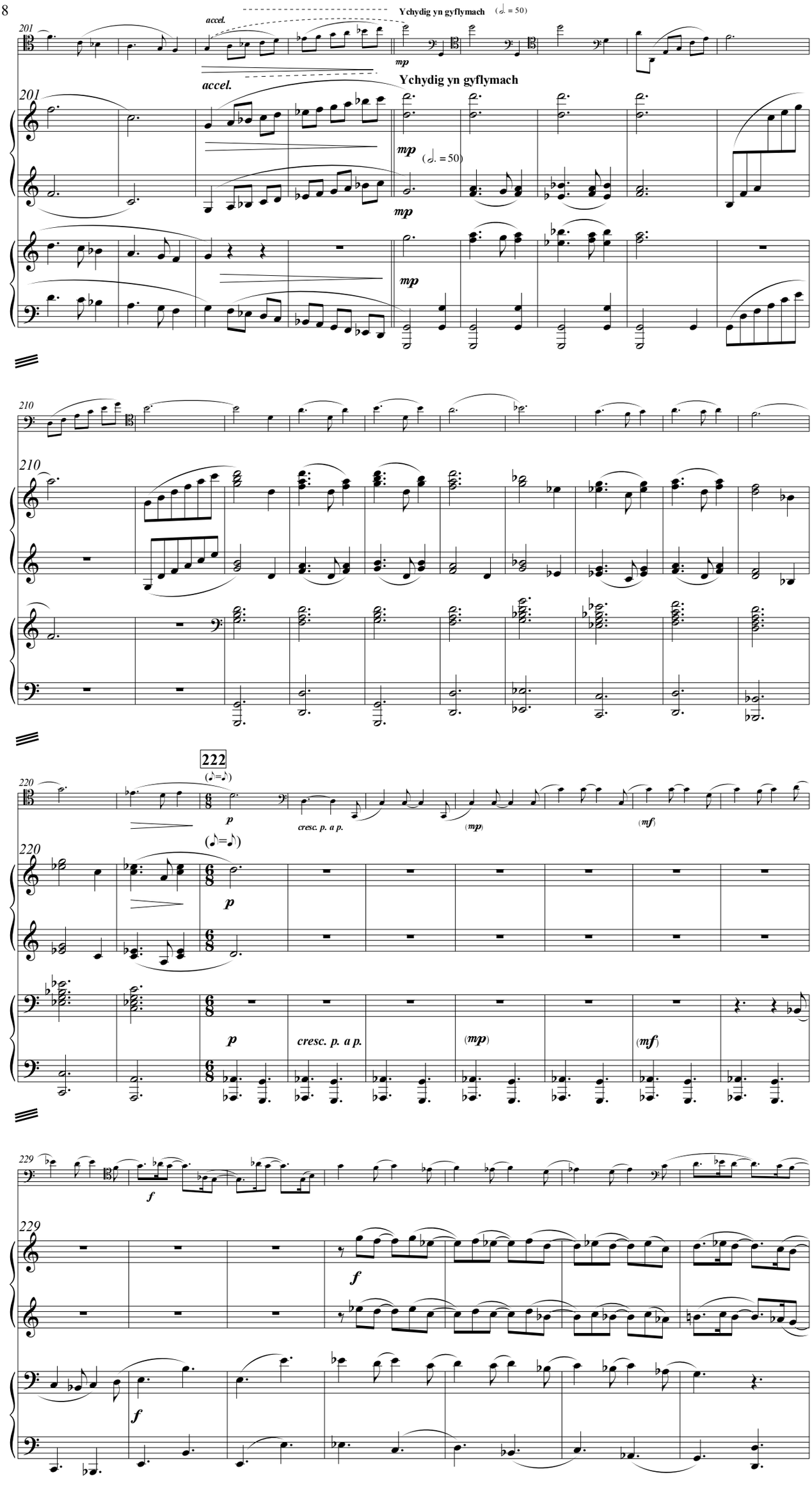

48
Adagio (♩.= 52)
p dolce
48
Adagio (♩.= 52)
mp
ff
mf
p
pp
p dolce
(8va)
dolce
mf
p
pp
p
54
cresc.
(mf)
f
54
cresc.
(mf)
f
8va
cresc.
(mf)
f
58
62
mf
f
mf
p
pp
p
58
mf
f
mf
p
pp
p
8va
mf
f
p
63
mp
mf
63
mp
mf
mp

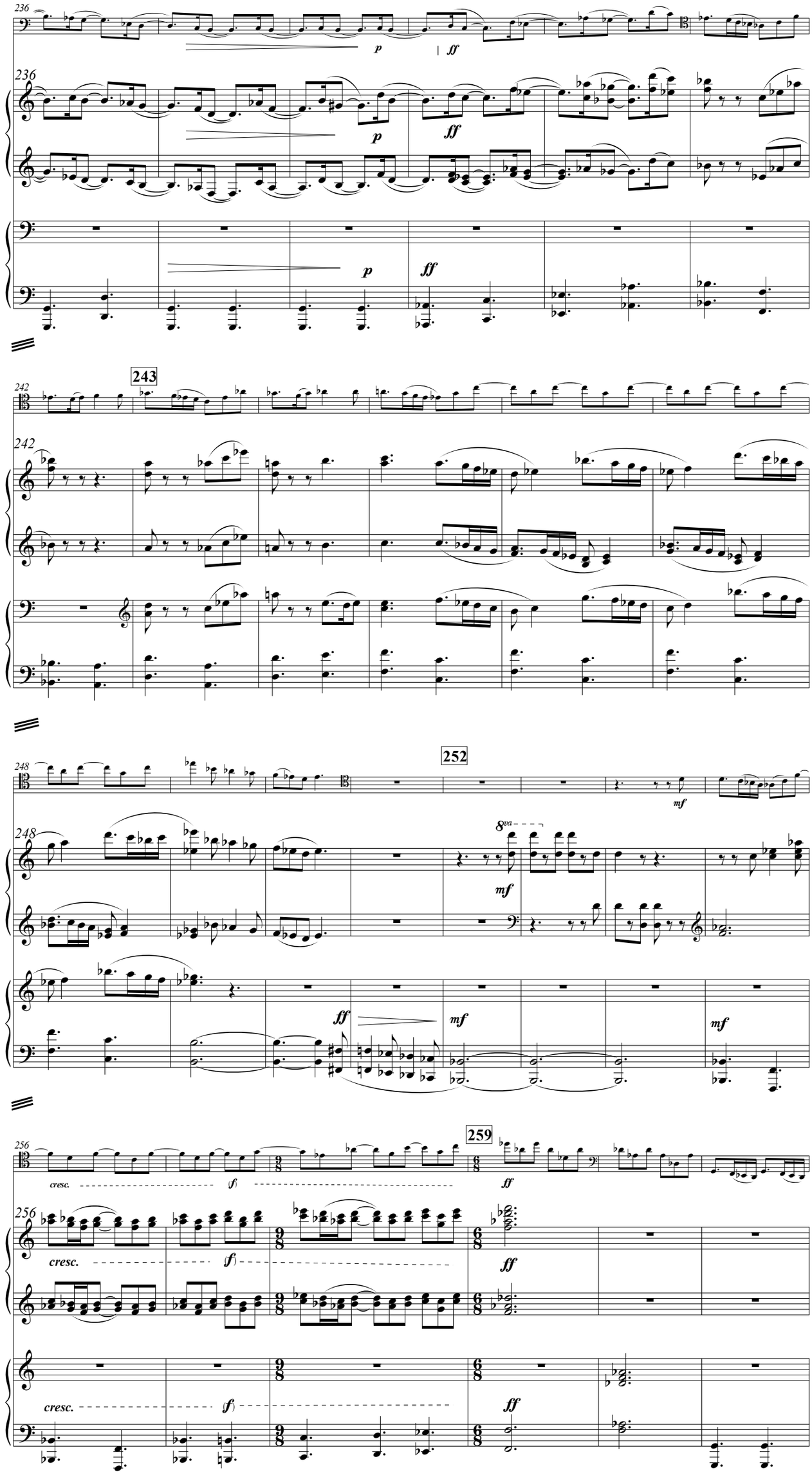

67
rit.
(♩.= 110)
Cyflym
mp
p
pp
73
cresc.
(mf)
f
81
ff
89
95
8va

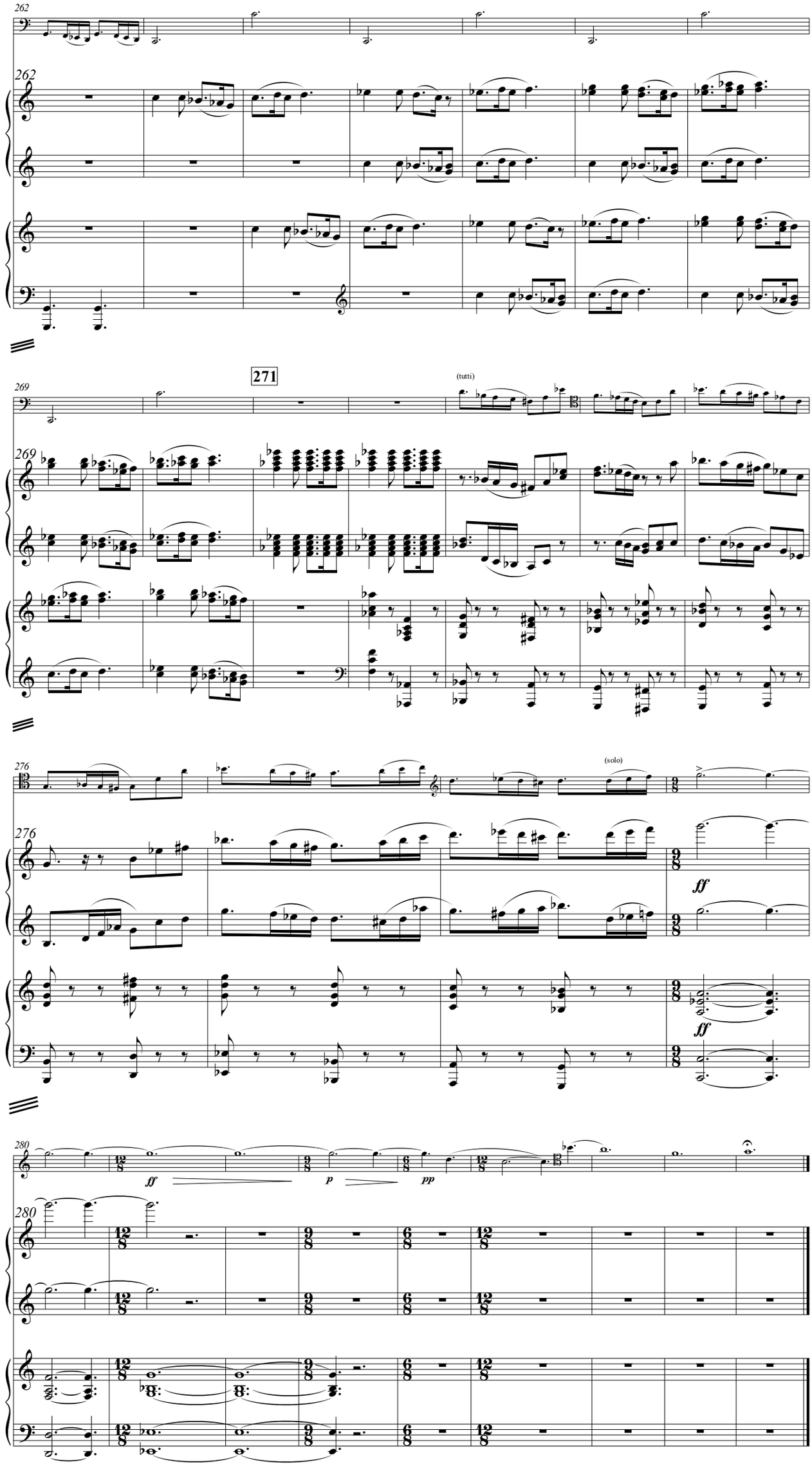

96
102
110
112
119
ff
mp
cresc.
(mf)
f
dim.
(p)
pp
rit.
Ped.

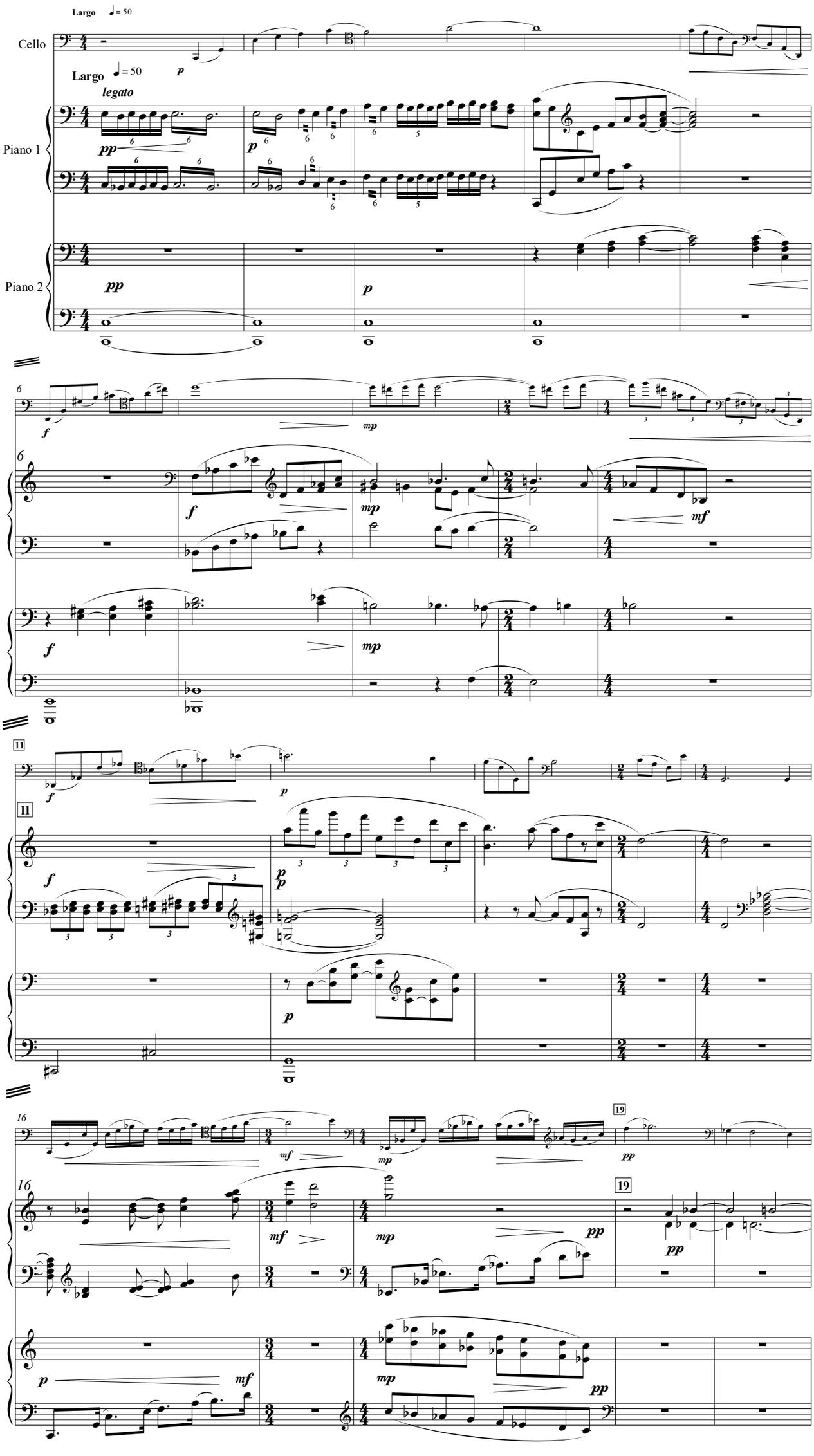

132
almost a tempo
rit.
129
p
Ped.
(♩.= 86)
Cymedrol
138
mp
146
f
ff
dim.
(mf)
mf
154
(mp)
p

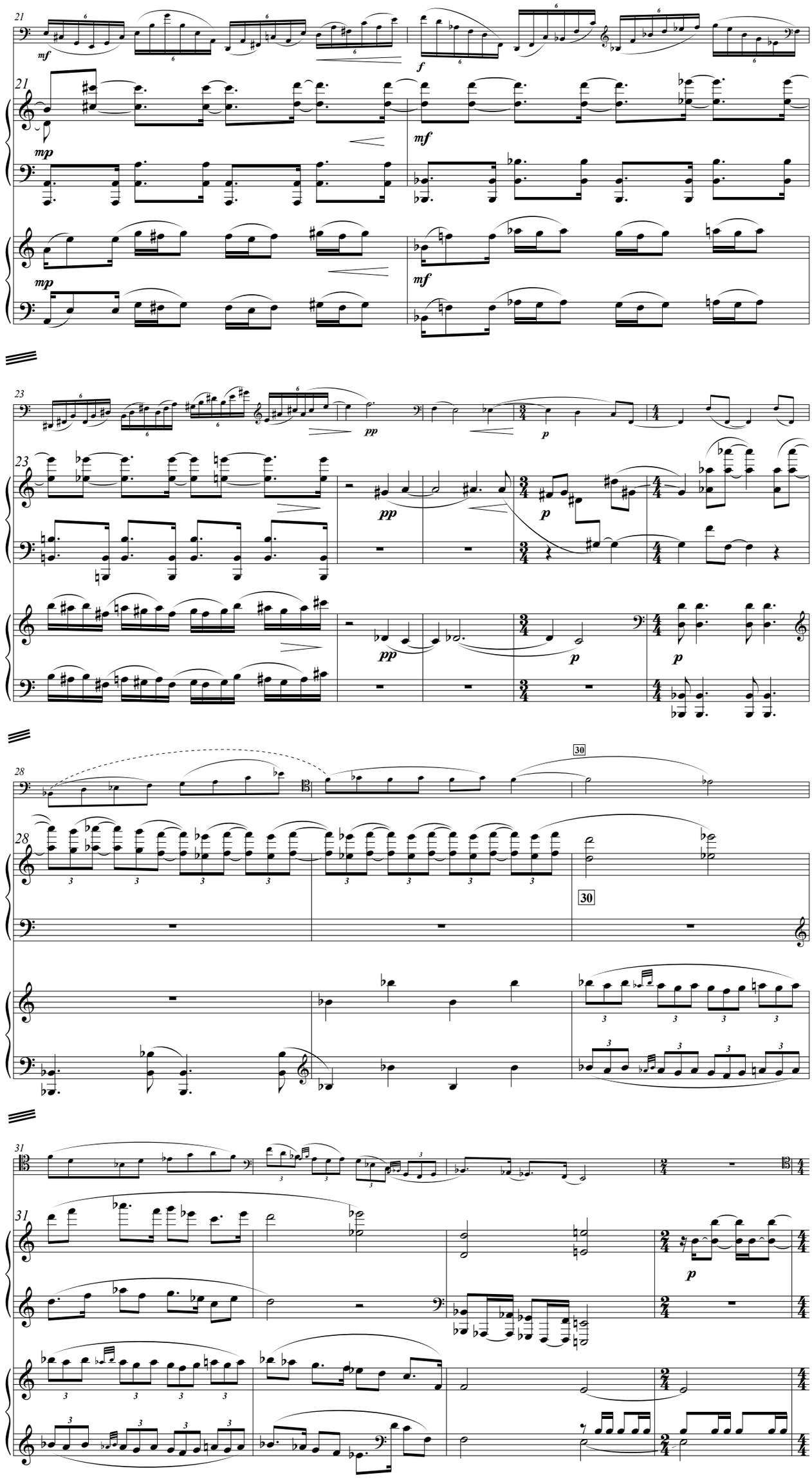

163
(tutti)
ff
163
ff
ff
172
(solo)
ff
180
p
172
p
182
mp
mf
182
mp
mf
mp
mf
191
196
191

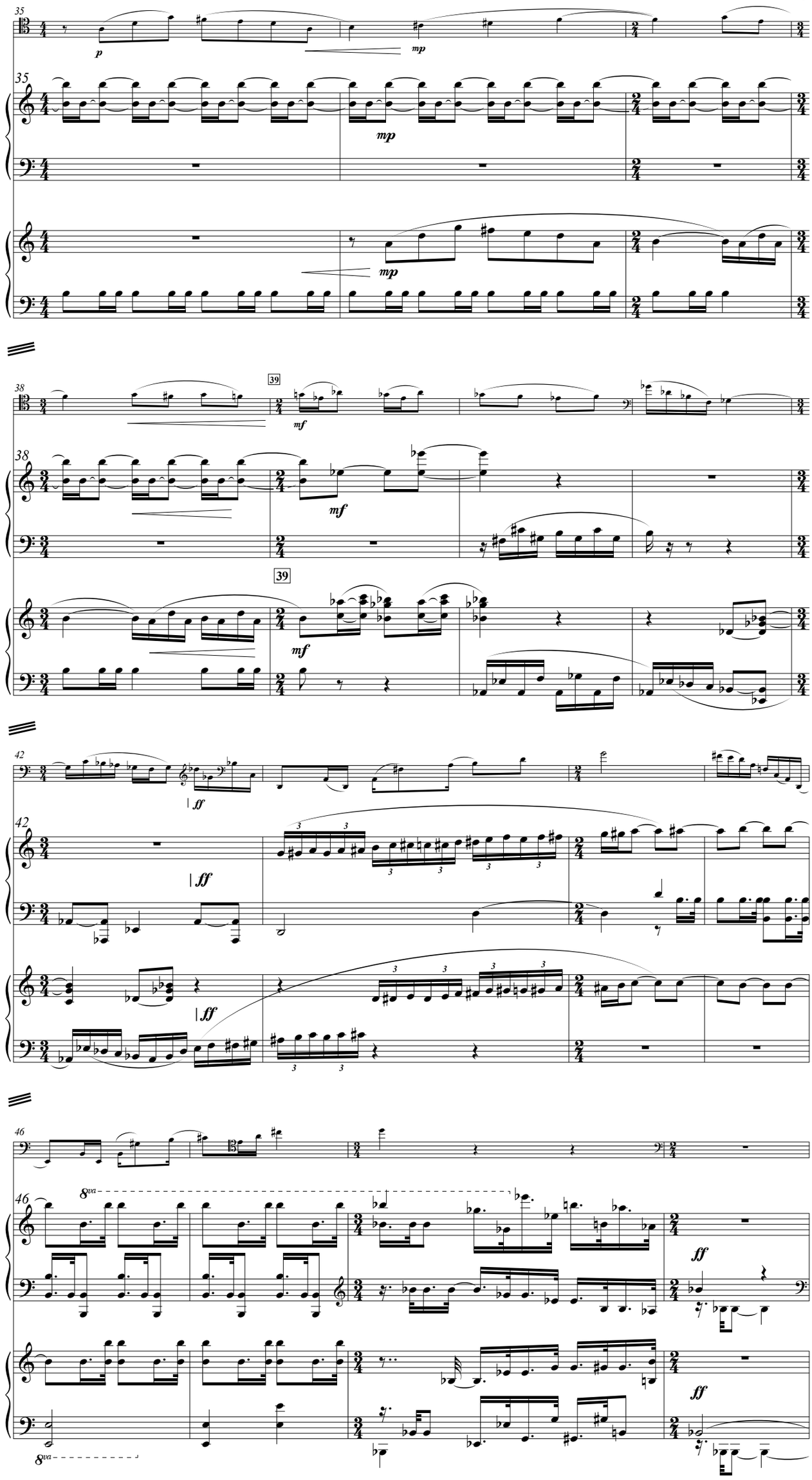

201
accel.
Ychydig yn gyflymach
(♩. = 50)
mp
210
220
222
(♪=♪)
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mp)
(mf)
229
f

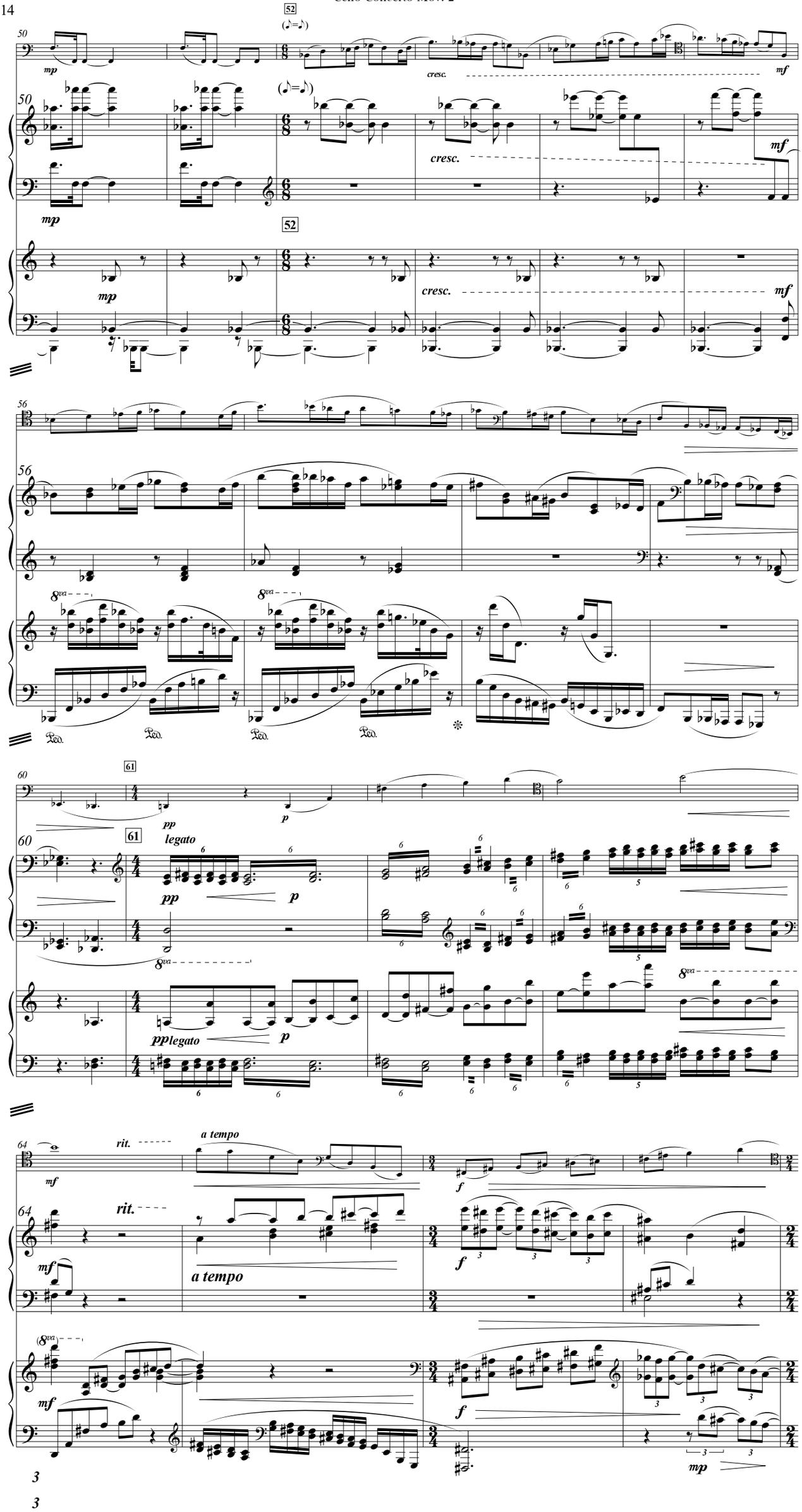

236
p
ff
243
252
mf
8va
259
cresc.
(f)

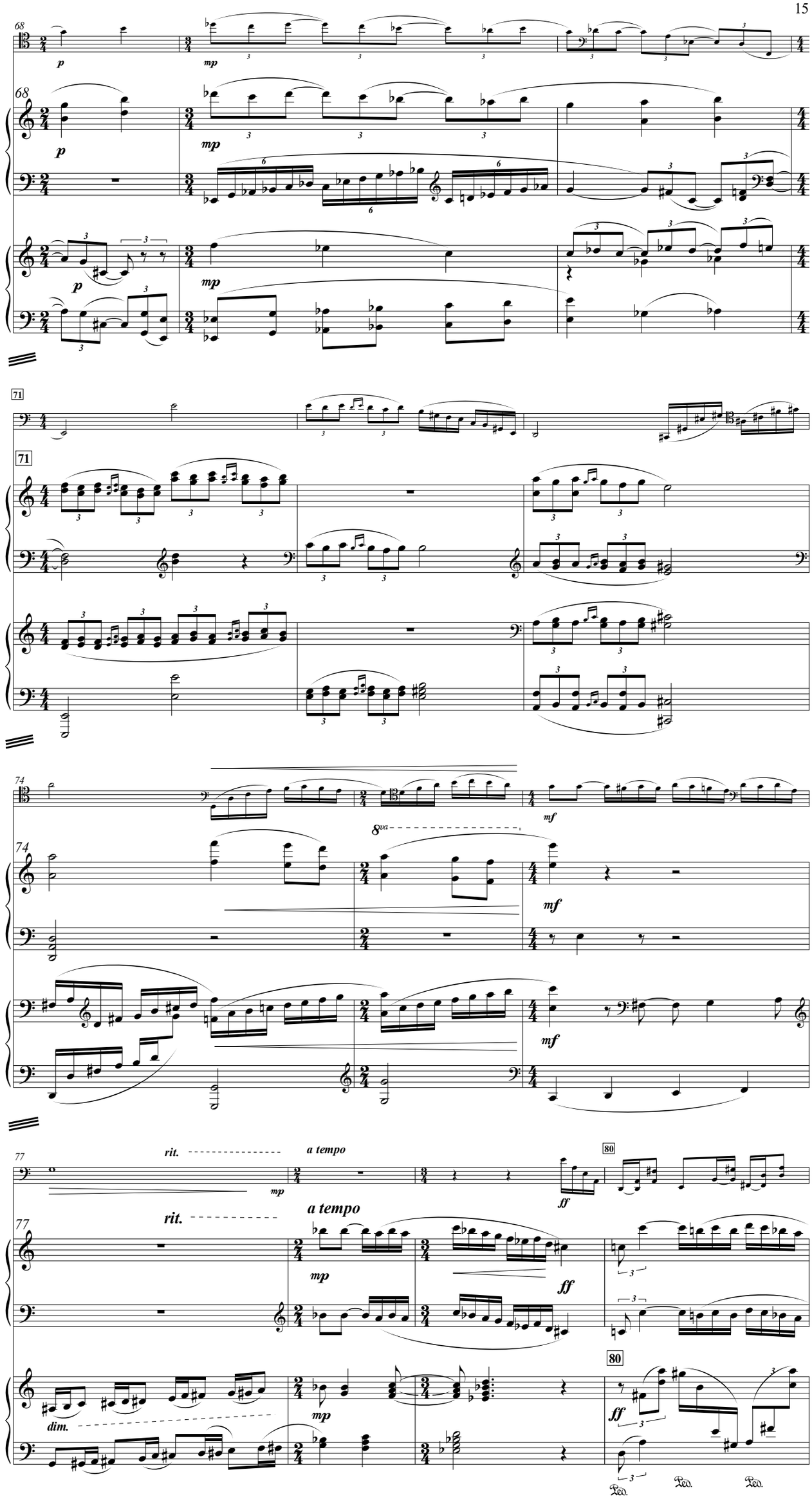

262
271
(tutti)
269
276
(solo)
ff
280
p
pp

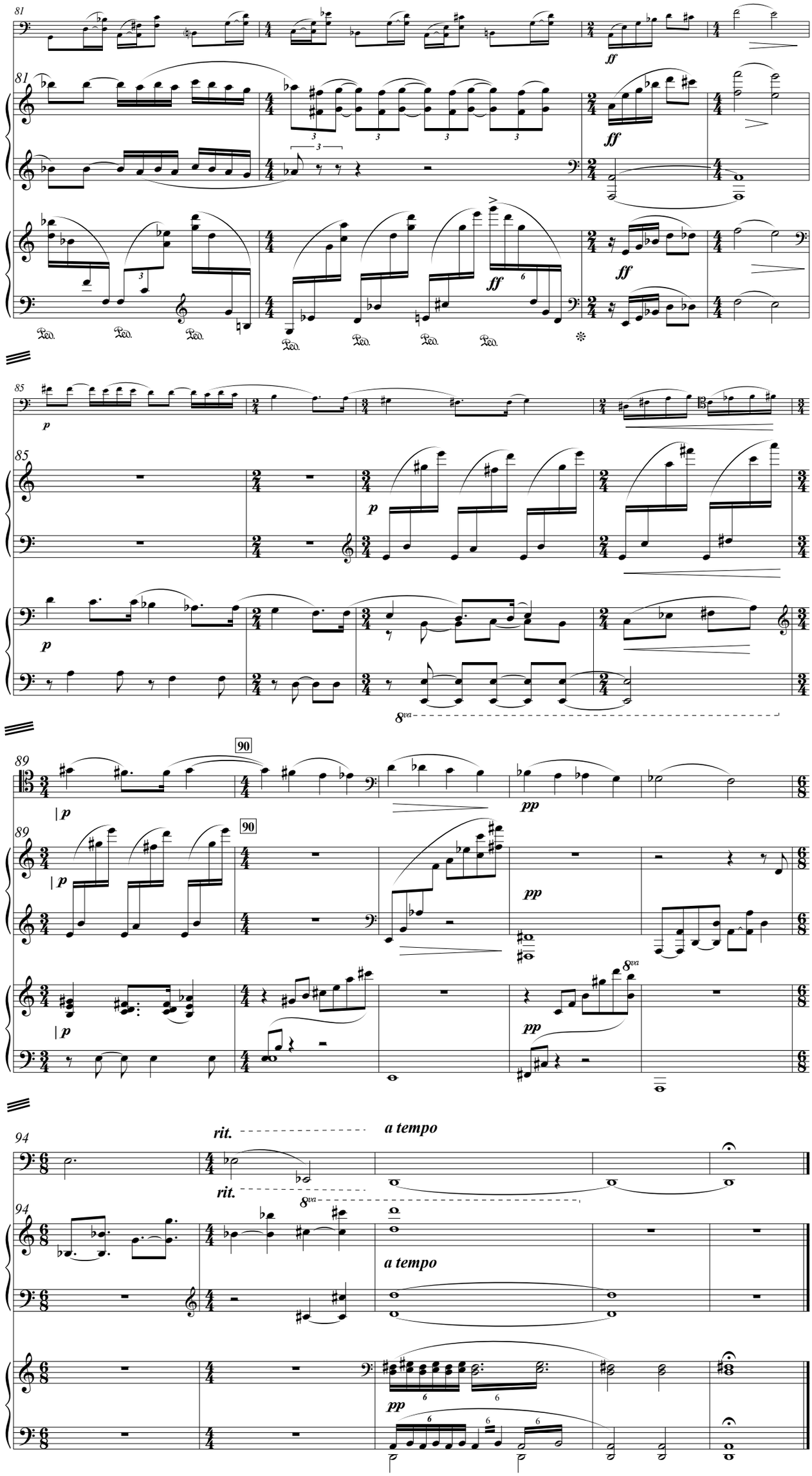

Largo ♩= 50
Cello
Largo ♩= 50
legato
Piano 1
Piano 2
11
16
19

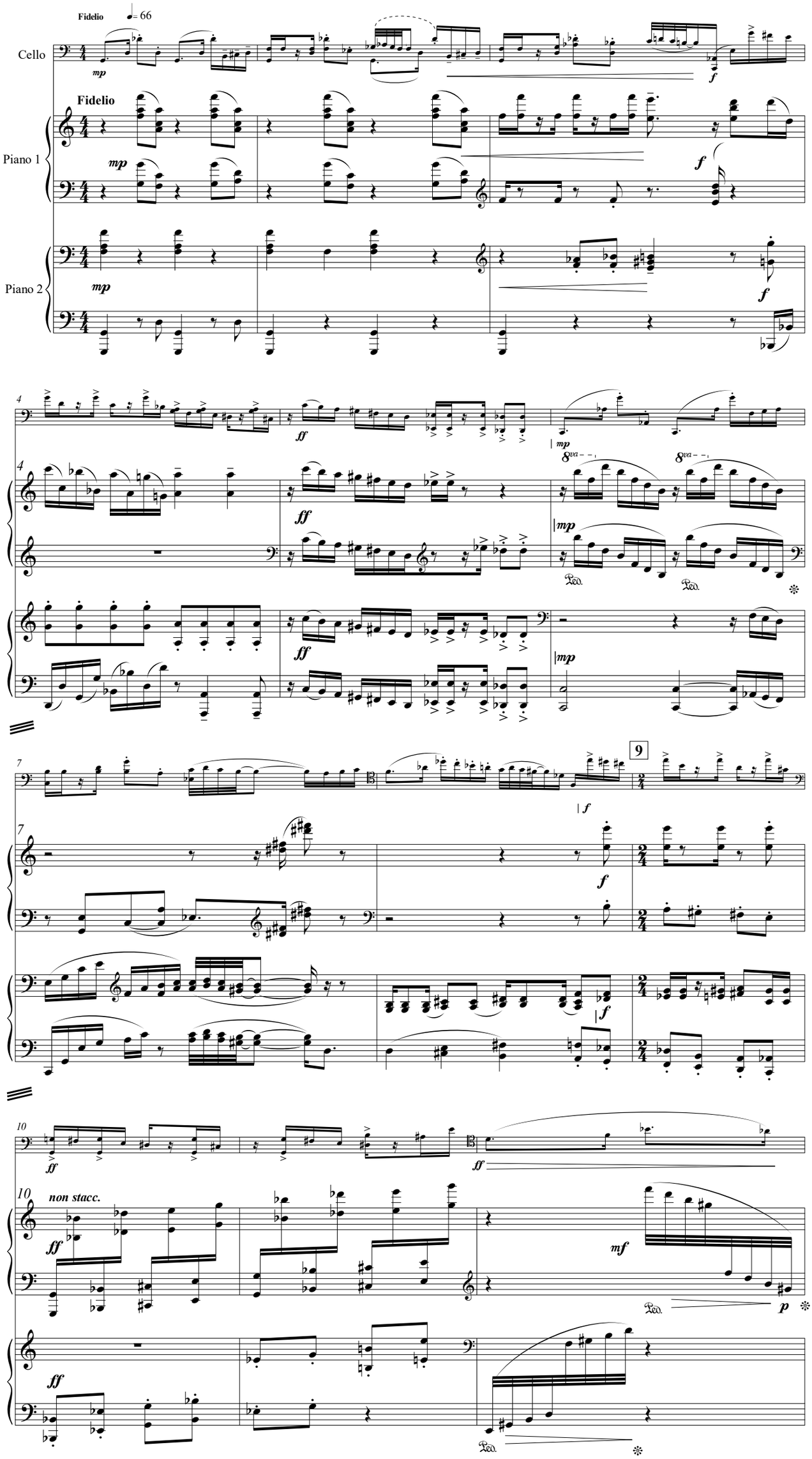

21
mf
f
mp
mf
23
pp
p
28
30
31

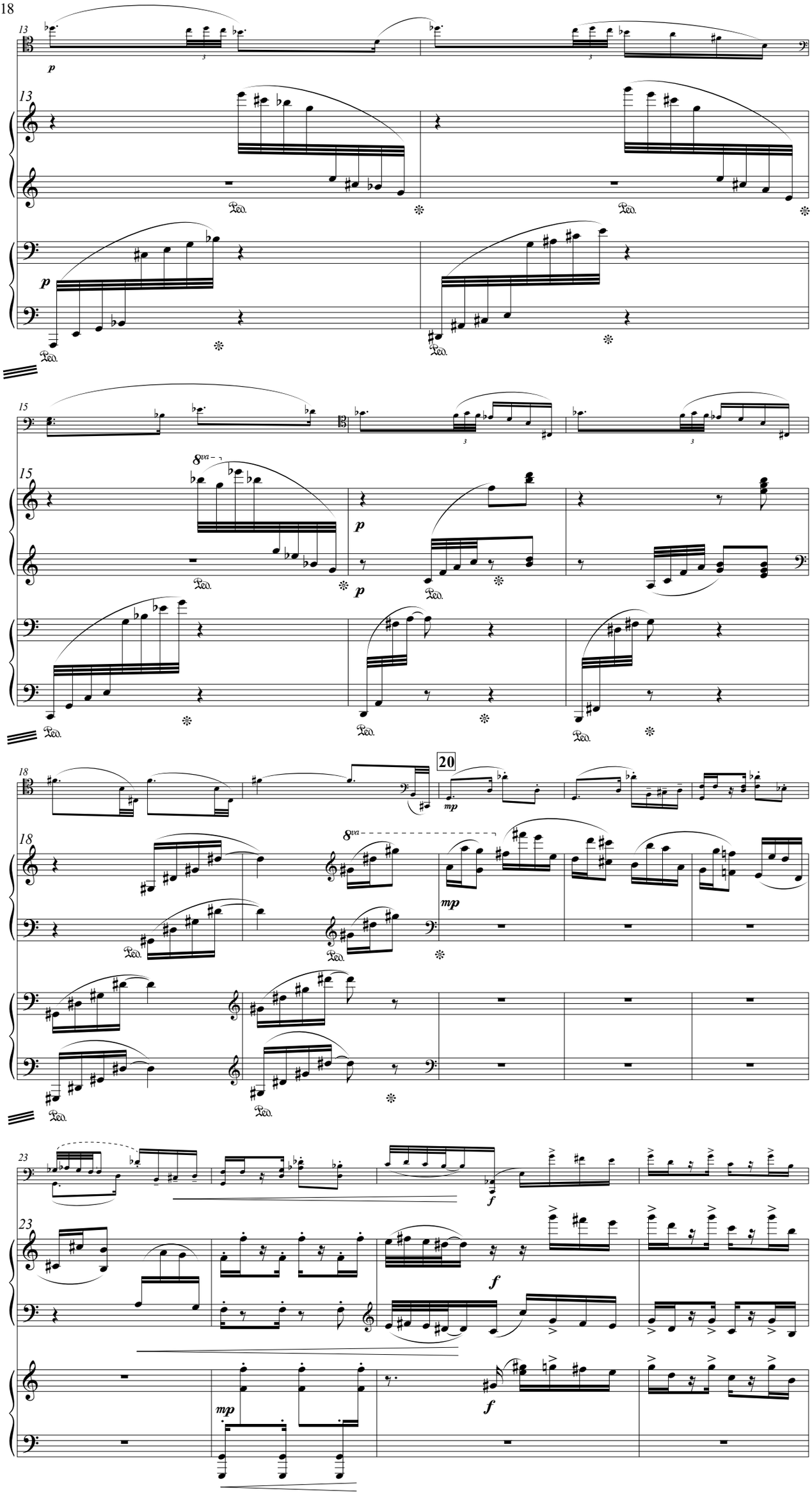

35
p
mp
35
mp
mp
38
39
mf
38
mf
39
mf
42
ff
42
ff
ff
46
8va
46
ff
ff
8va

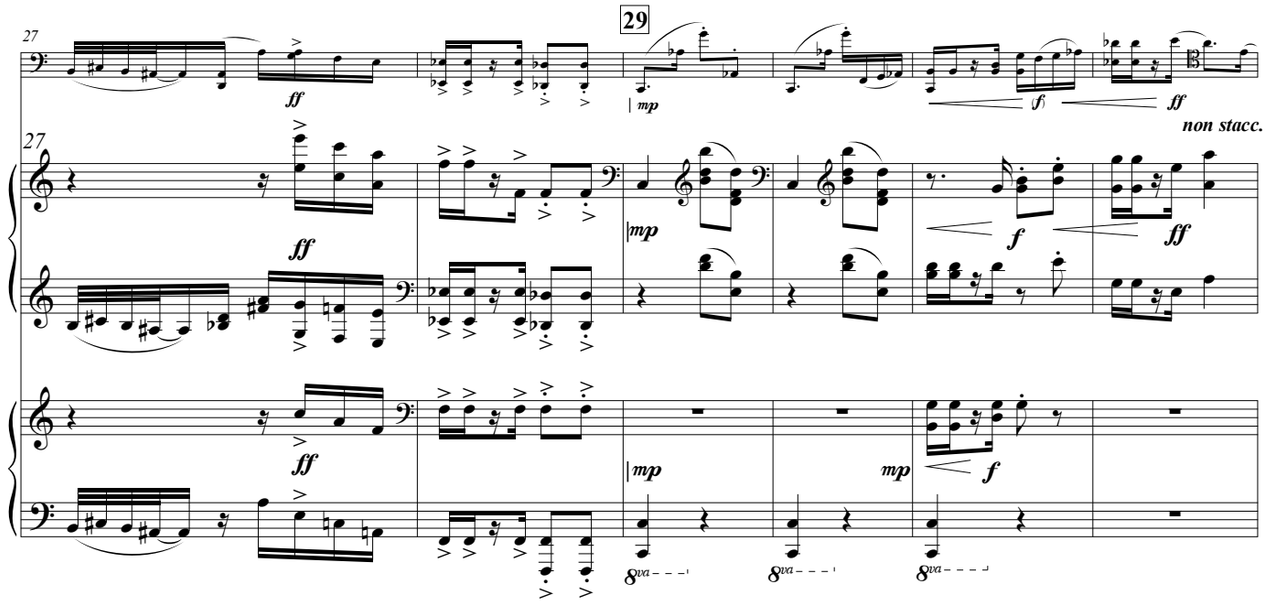

52
cresc.
mp
mf
56
8va
Ped.
61
pp
p
legato
pp legato
64
rit.
a tempo
f
mp

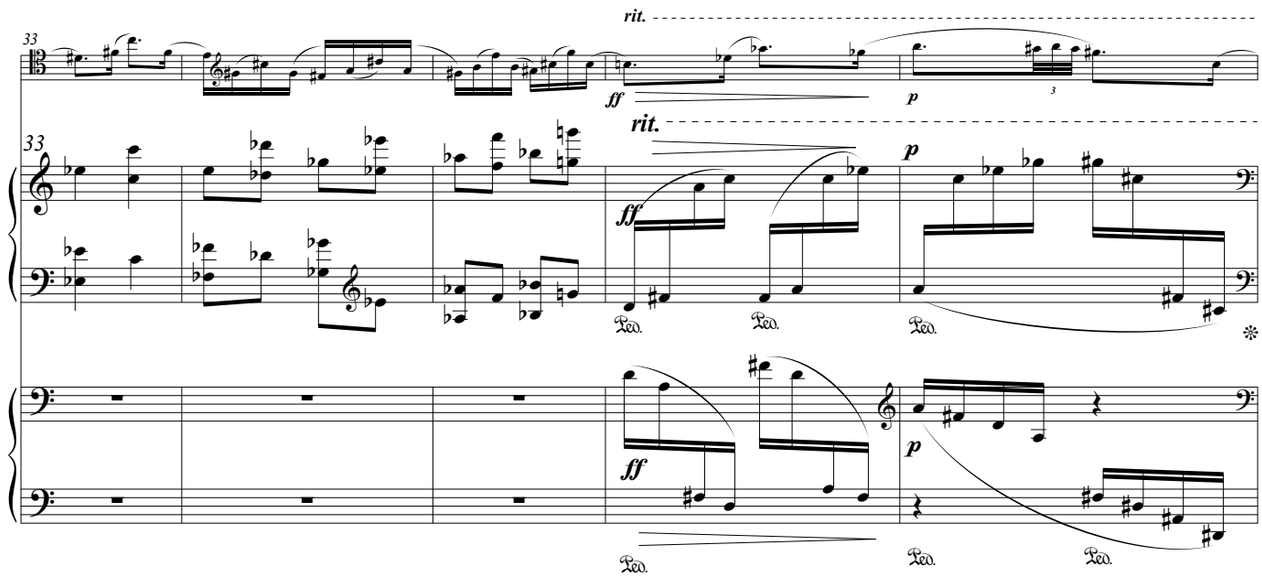

68
p
mp
71
74
8va
mf
77
rit.
a tempo
mp
ff
80
dim.
Ped.

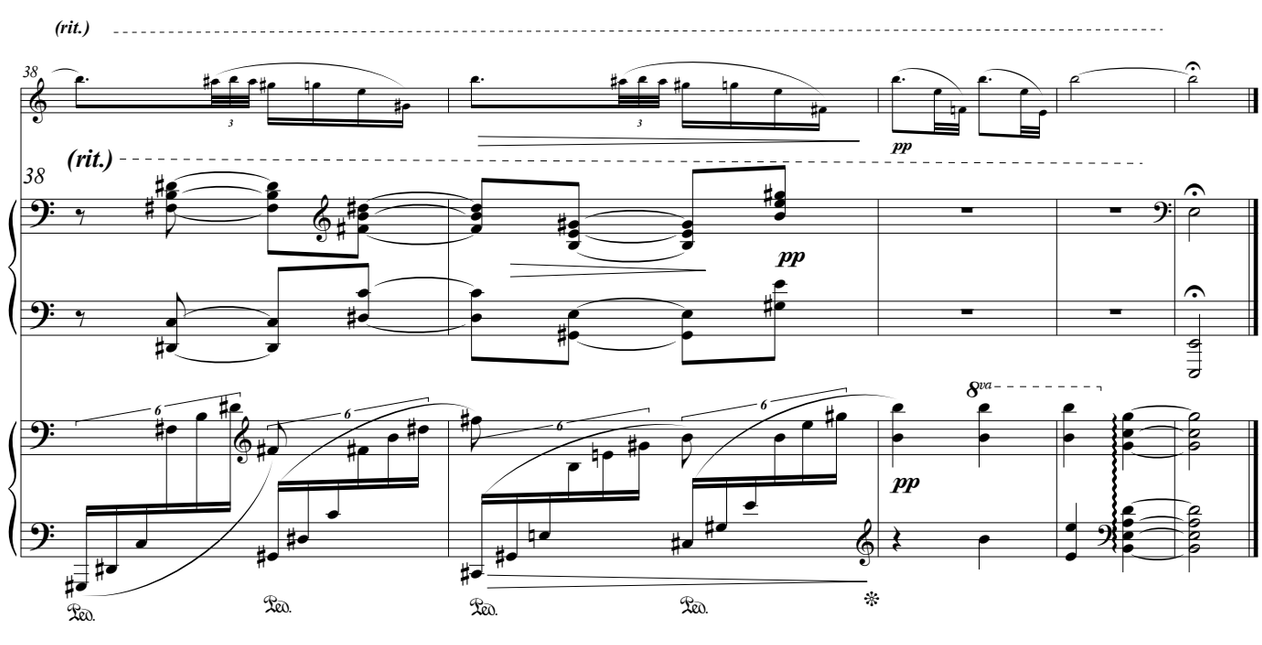

81
ff
Ped.
85
p
8va
89
90
pp
94
rit.
a tempo

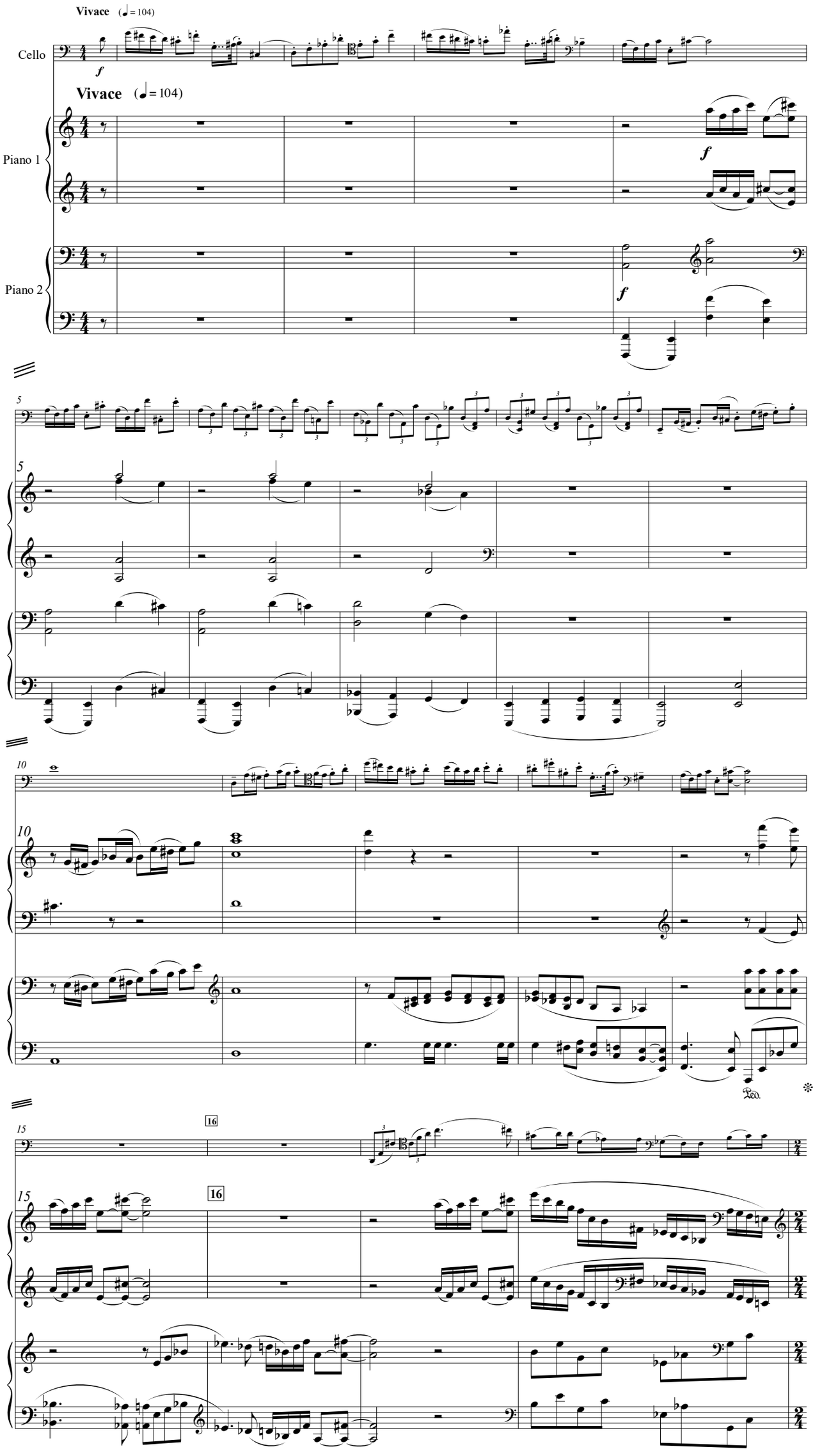

Fidelio
♩= 66
Cello
Piano 1
Piano 2
mp
f
ff
mp
8va
Ped.
9
non stacc.
mf
p

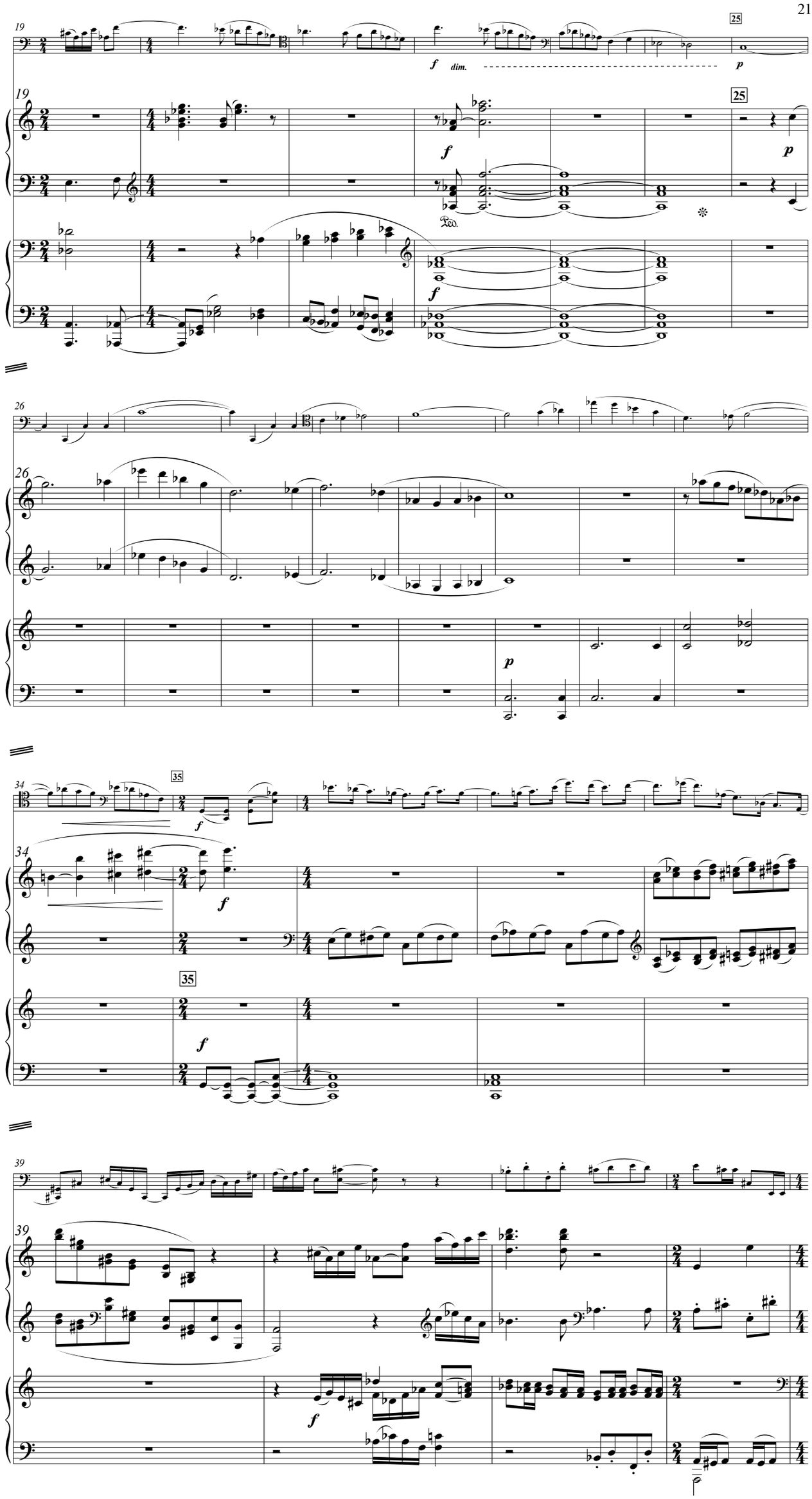

13
p
Ped.
15
8va
18
20
mp
23
f

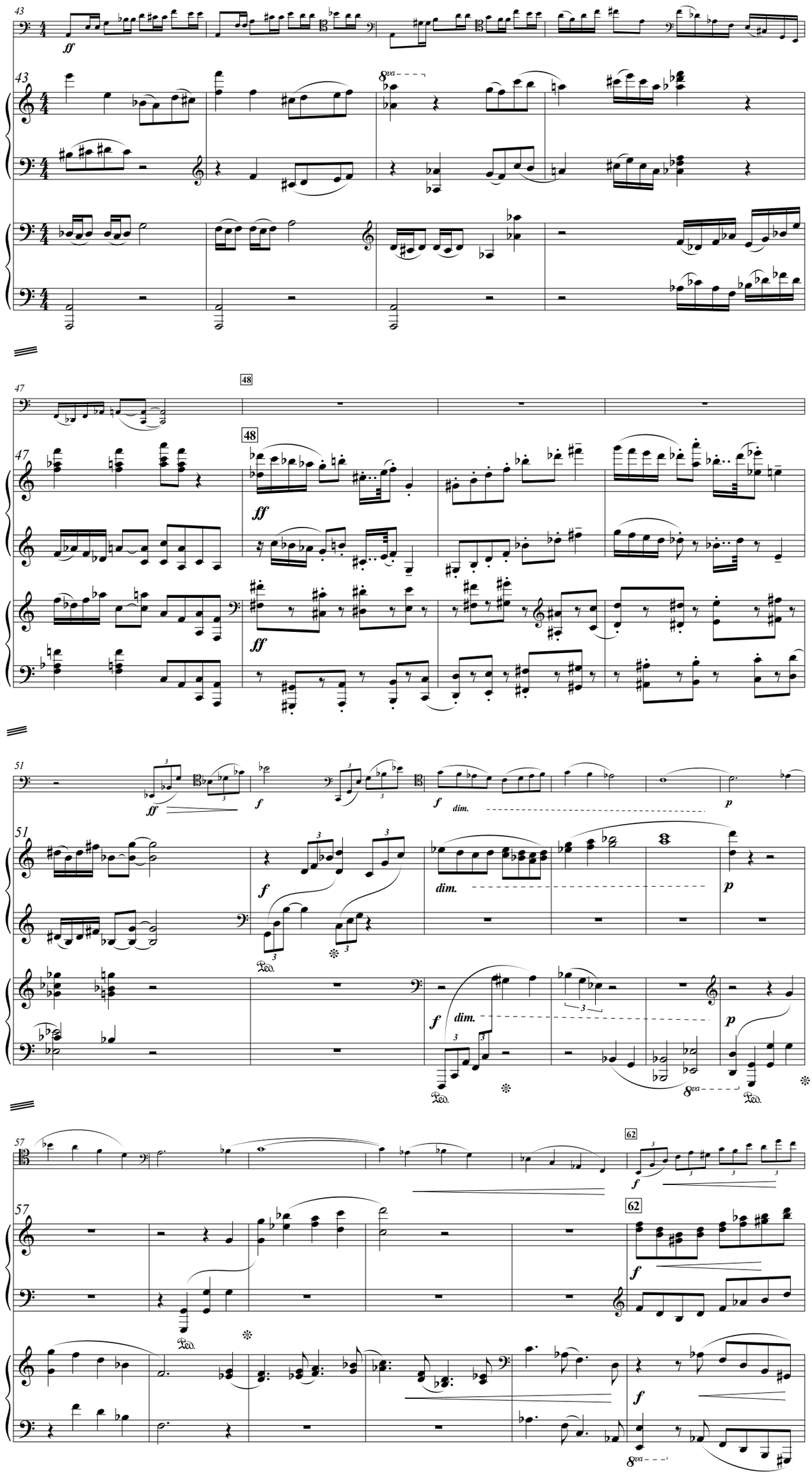

27
29
ff
mp
fp
ff
non stacc.
27
ff
mp
f
ff
ff
mp
mp
f
8va
8va
8va

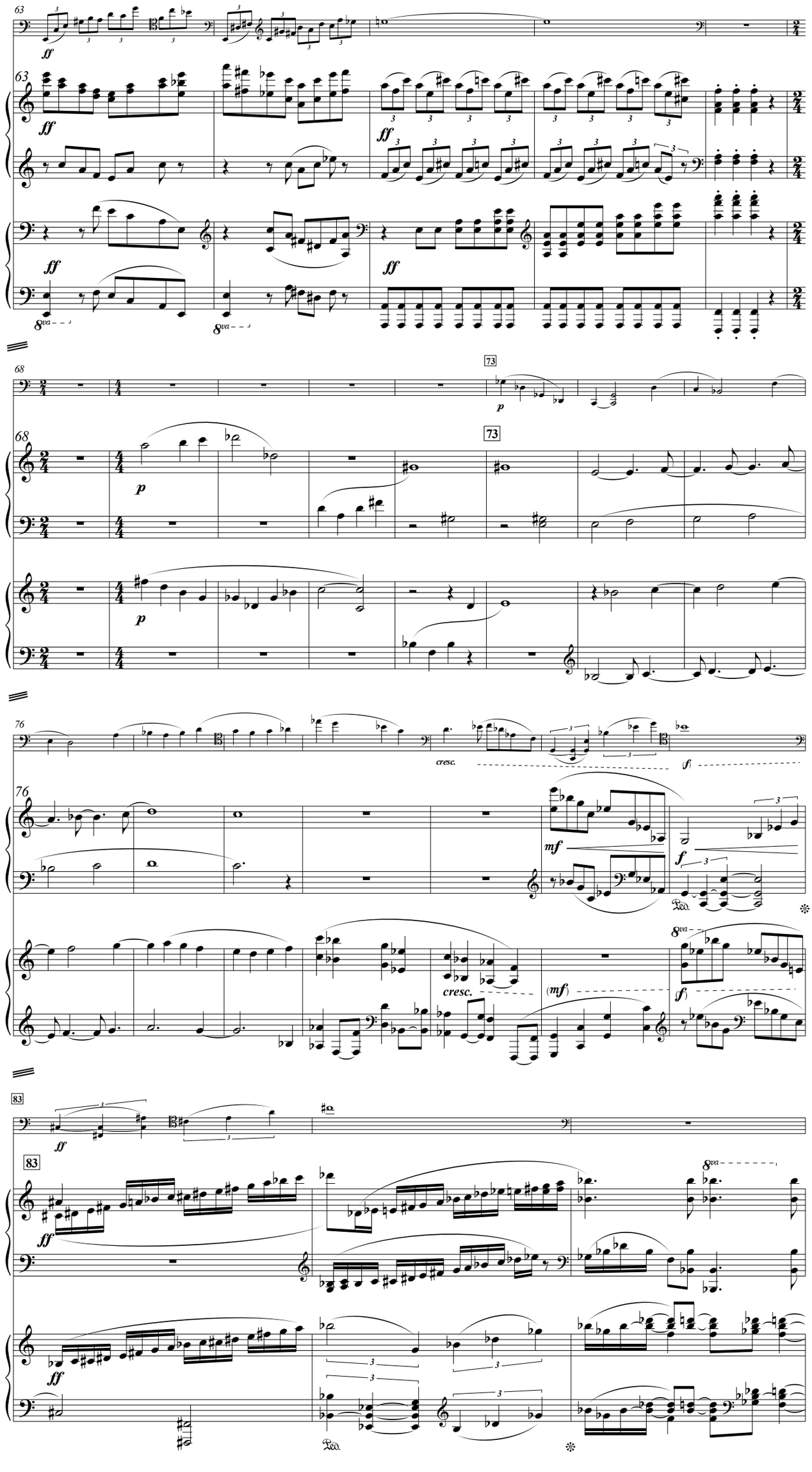

rit.
33
ff
p
rit.
33
ff
p
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
ff
p
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

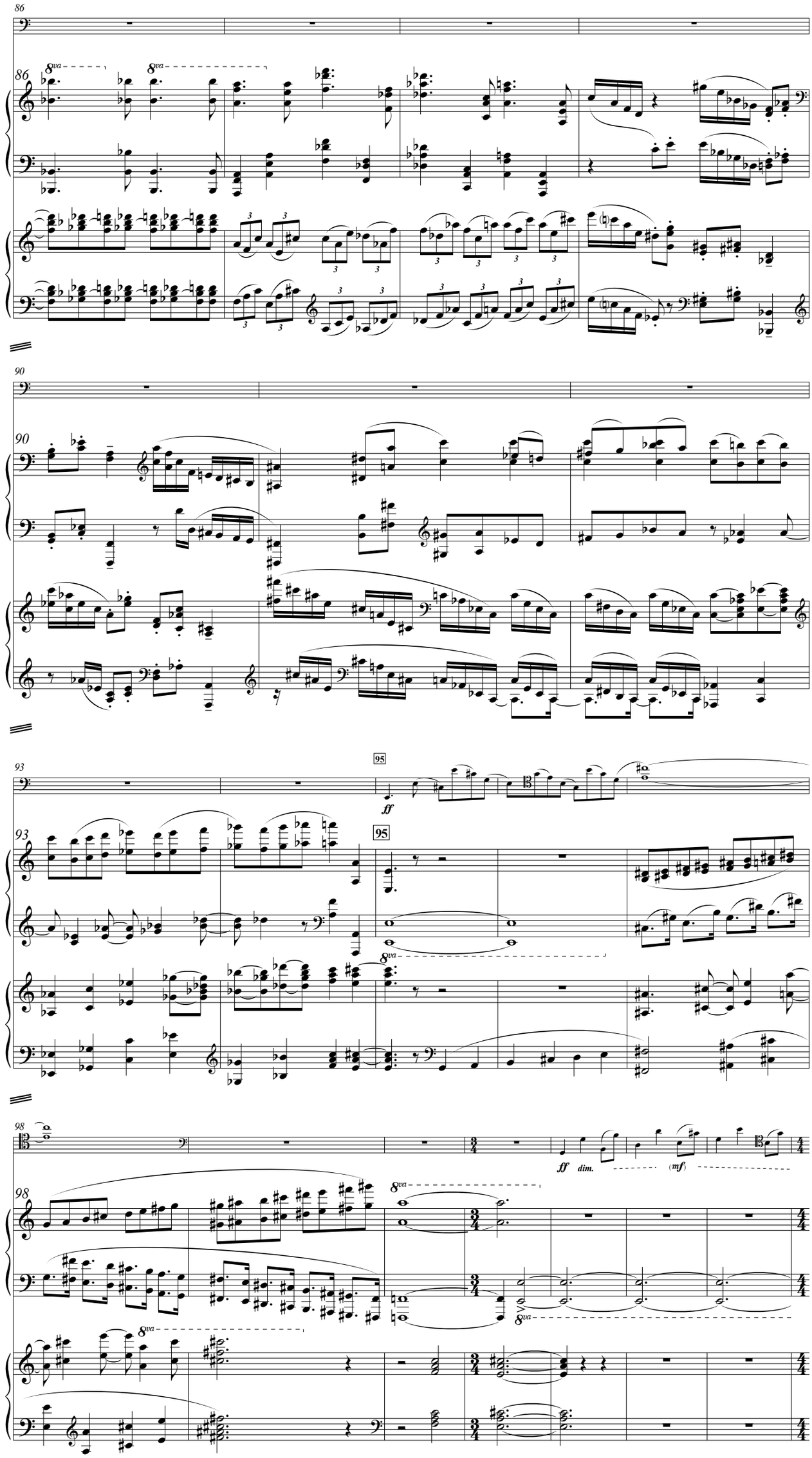

(rit.)
38
3
3
pp
(rit.)
38
pp
6
6
6
8va
pp
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

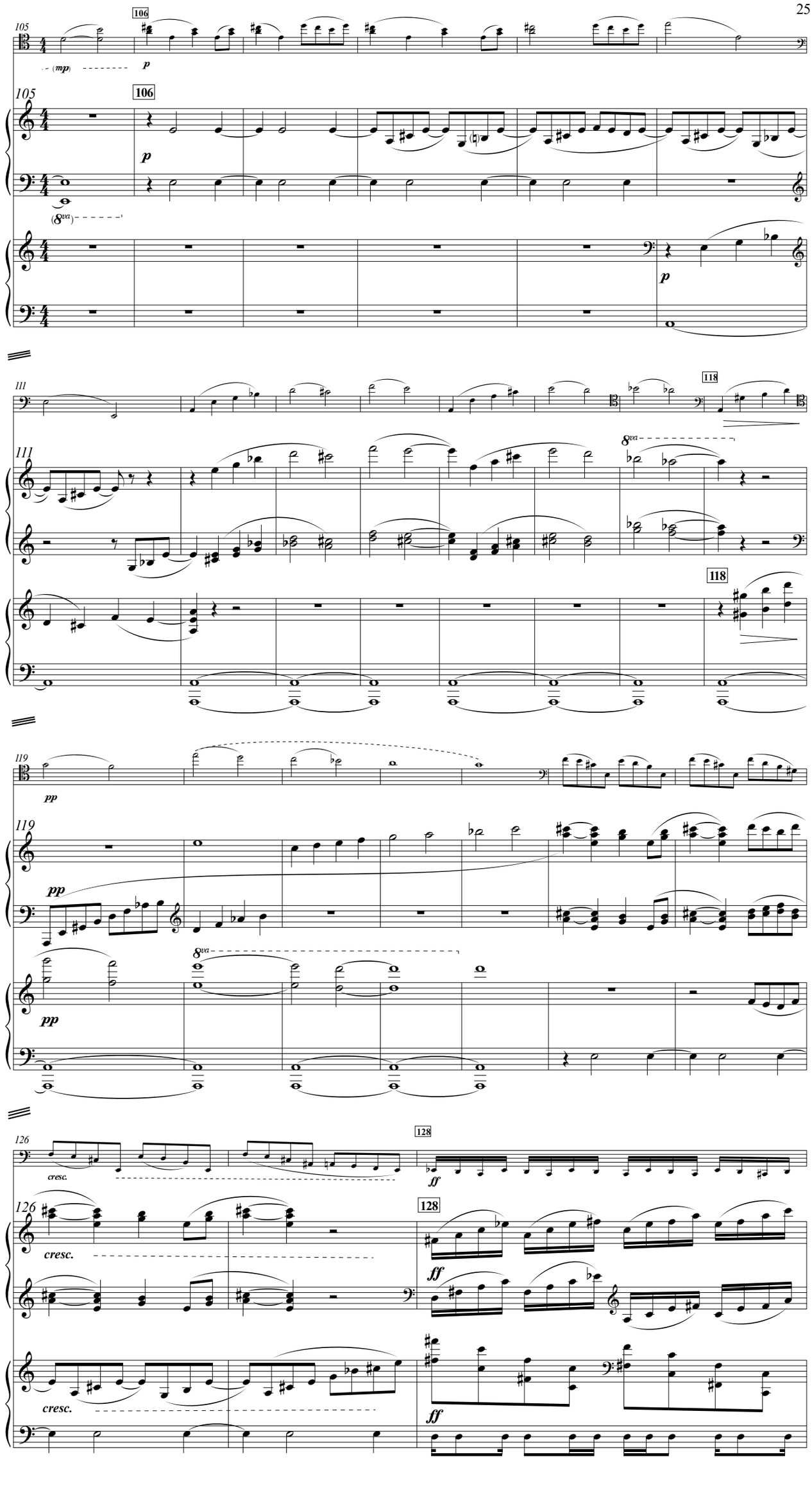

Vivace (♩= 104)
Cello
f
Vivace (♩= 104)
Piano 1
f
Piano 2
f
5
5
10
10
Ped.
15
16
15
16

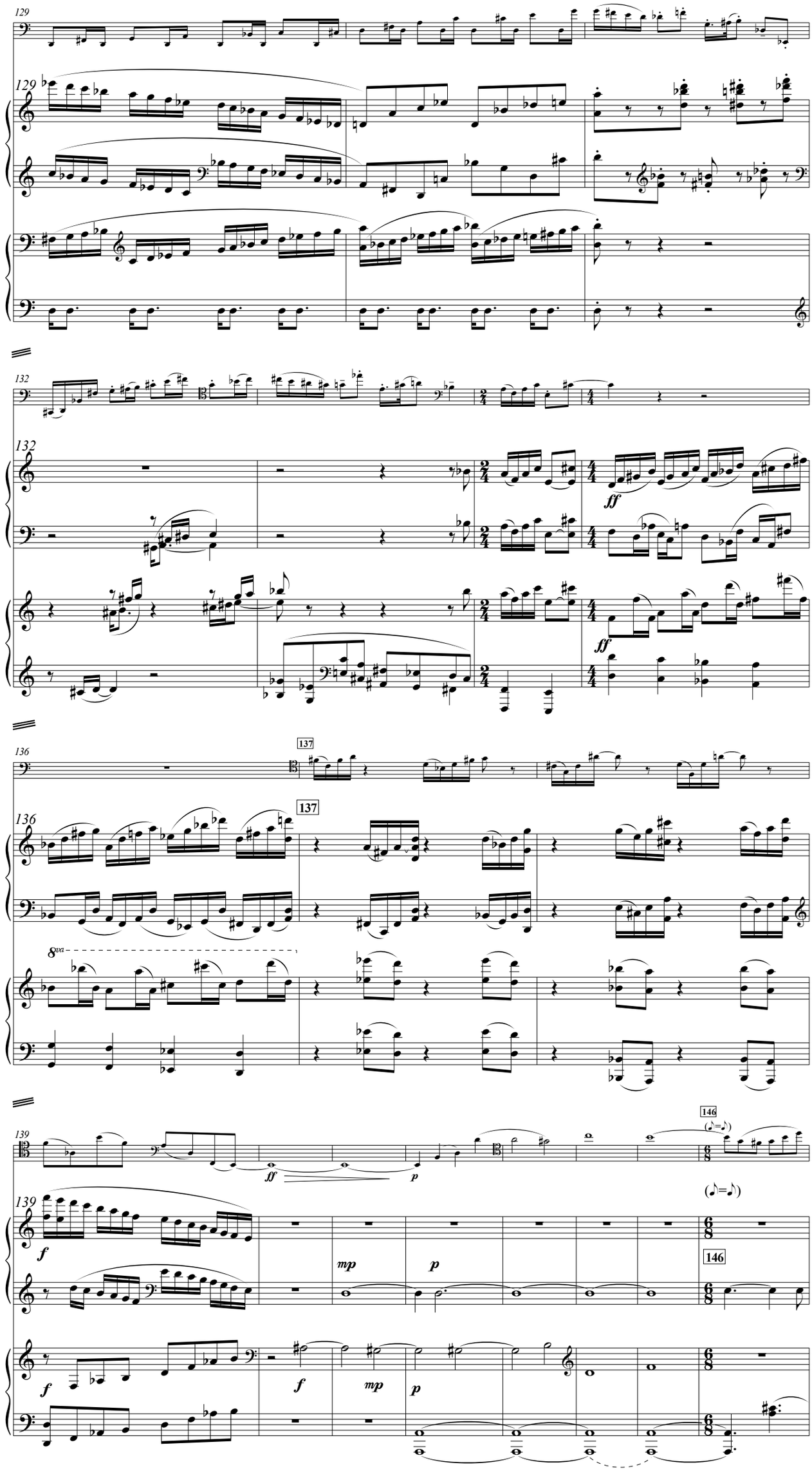

19
25
f
dim.
p
Ped.
26
35
34
39

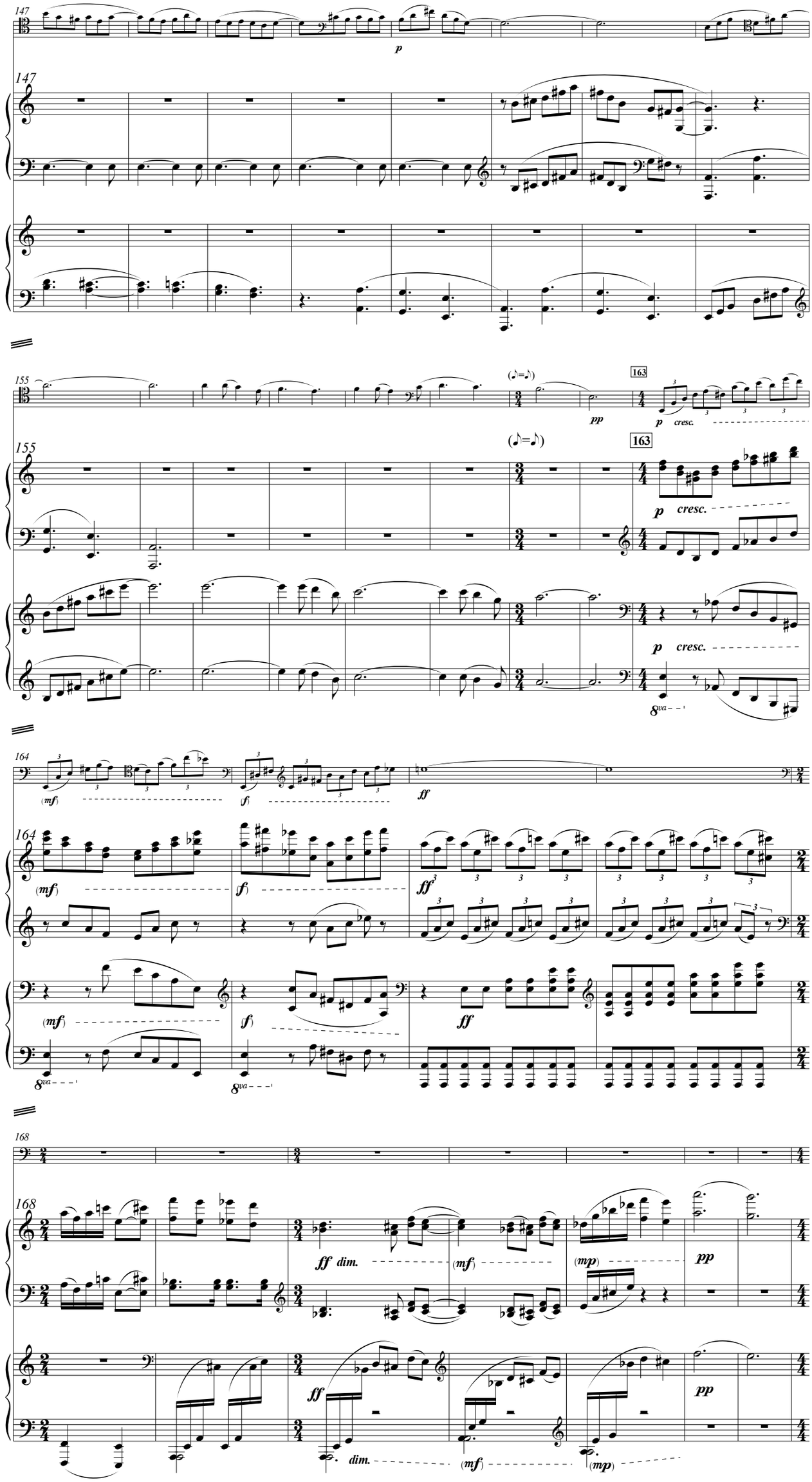

43
ff
8va
47
48
ff
51
f
dim.
p
Ped.
57
62
8va

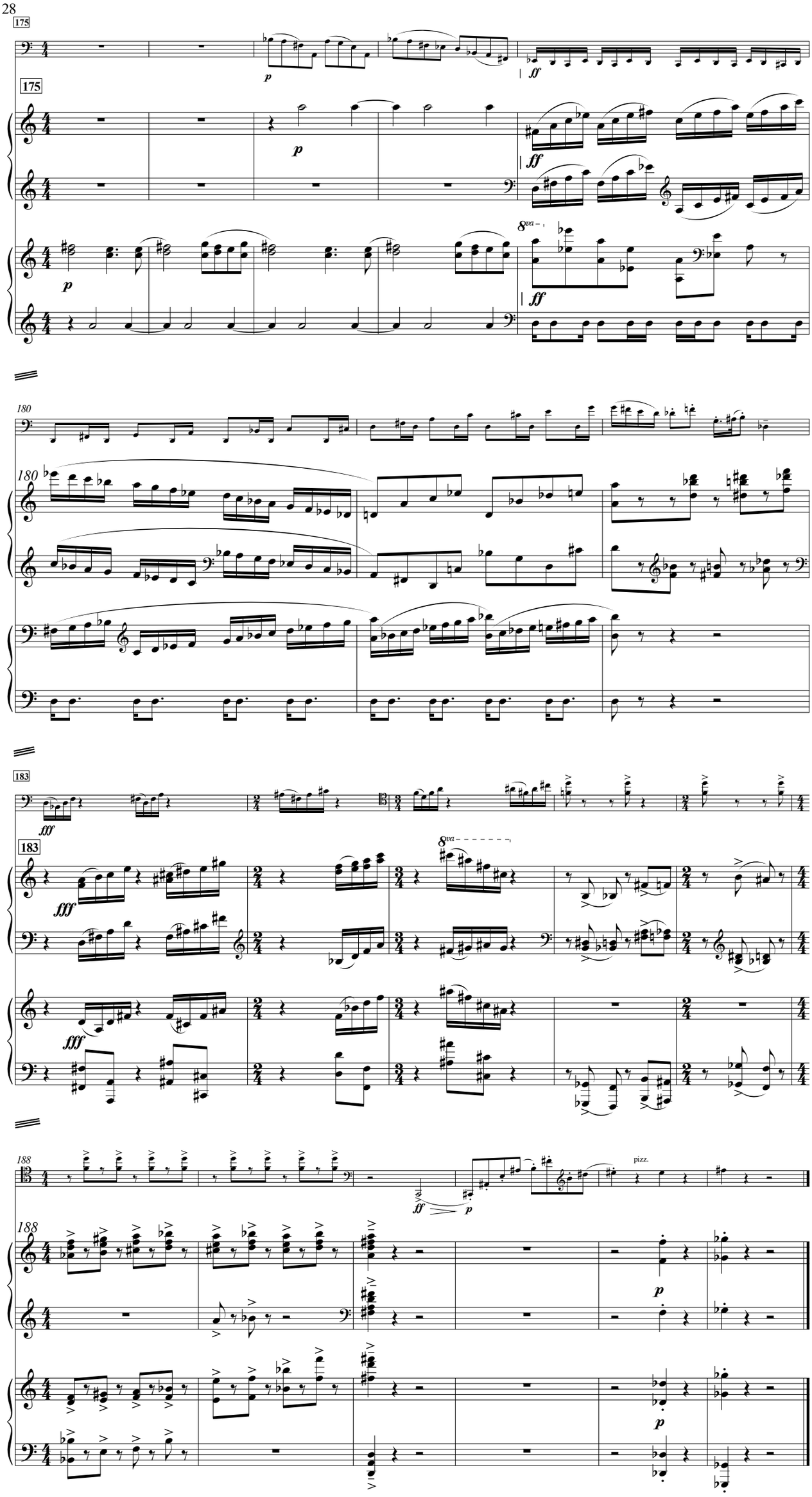

63
ff
8va
68
73
p
76
cresc.
f
mf
(mf)
83


86
8va
90
93
95
ff
98
ff dim.
(mf)


105
106
(mp)
p
105
106
p
(8va)
p
111
118
111
8va
118
119
pp
119
pp
8va
pp
126
128
cresc.
ff
126
128
cresc.
ff
cresc.
ff


129
132
136
137
139
146
ff
mp
p
f
8va


147
p
147
155
(♪=♪)
163
pp
p cresc.
155
(♪=♪)
163
p cresc.
p cresc.
8va
164
(mf)
(f)
ff
164
(mf)
(f)
ff
(mf)
(f)
ff
8va
8va
168
168
ff dim.
(mf)
(mp)
pp
ff
dim.
(mf)
(mp)
pp


175
p
ff
8va
180
183
fff
188
pizz.