Katharina S. G. Mueller

Variations on an Original Theme

for Sinfonietta

(2022)

Instrumentation

Flute (dbl. Piccolo)
Oboe (dbl. English Horn)
Bb Clarinet
Bassoon (dbl. Contrabassoon)
Horn in F
Bb Trumpet
Trombone
Percussion I (Snare, Bass, 5-octave marimba, Crotales)
Percussion II (Temple Blocks, Suspended Cymbal, Vibraphone, Glockenspiel, Pitched Gongs (C#, E))
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Contrabass

Performance Notes

All accidentals carry through the measure and apply only to the octave in which they appear. Phrases marked with "poco accel." and "poco rit" without indicated destination tempi are intended to be subtle and gestural, and are at the descretion of the conductor. Likewise, any tempo marked with "≈" need not be exact. Quarter = quarter at all meter changes. A single dotted eighth note tied to the end of a long sustained note always indicates the beat or subdivision on which the sustained note should stop.

Duration ca. 15 minutes

Program notes

A simple theme of fourteen notes is stated plainly at the beginning of this work. From there begins a journey of transformation as the theme develops, over-exerts itself, and eventually falls apart: In the first variation, the contour of the theme's first seven notes is contained within a minor third, the second seven within a perfect fourth. Throughout its restatements, the theme expands intervalically, while fragments of its various iterations accumulate as motivic material as the work progresses. Halfway through the piece, the music reaches a climactic point that collapses on itself, the theme swiftly swept down through the registers of the orchestra to the ensemble's rock bottom, a low C. From there, the music resets, and the orchestration rebuilds slowly. The theme grows into ever-larger intervalic space, filling a minor 6th, then a major 7th. The final tutti section is a triumphant, nearly unison statement that ends on an enourmous C minor chord, which then dissolves upward into the stratosphere, as opposed to the downward collaose in the middle of the work. At this point, the theme cannot be contained within a single register. In its final iteration, it exists as independent pitches spread throughout the entire vertical space of the orchestral score, followed by ghostly traces of the theme's original pitches, now out of order and unraveled.

Variations on an Original Theme

for Sinfonietta

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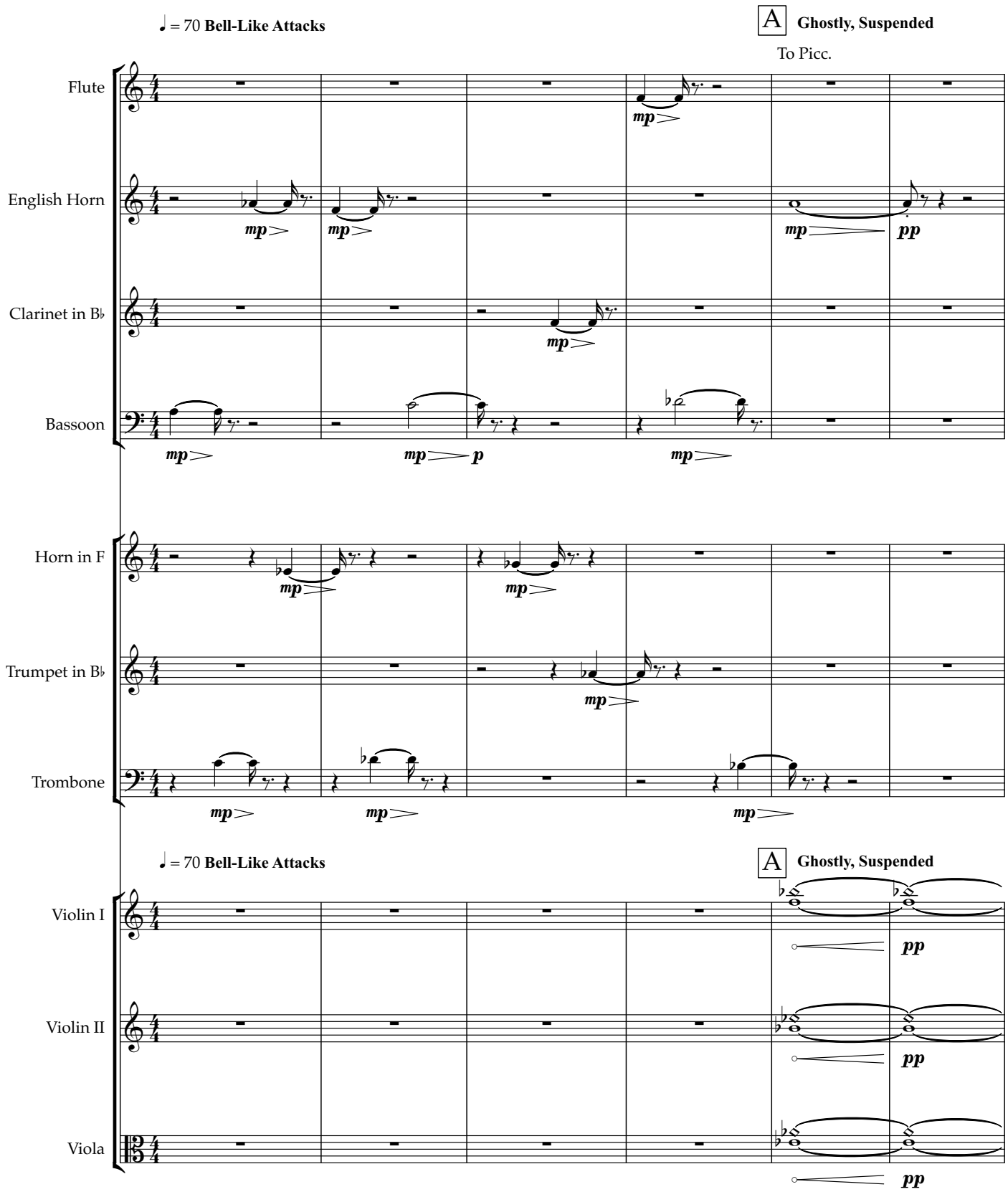

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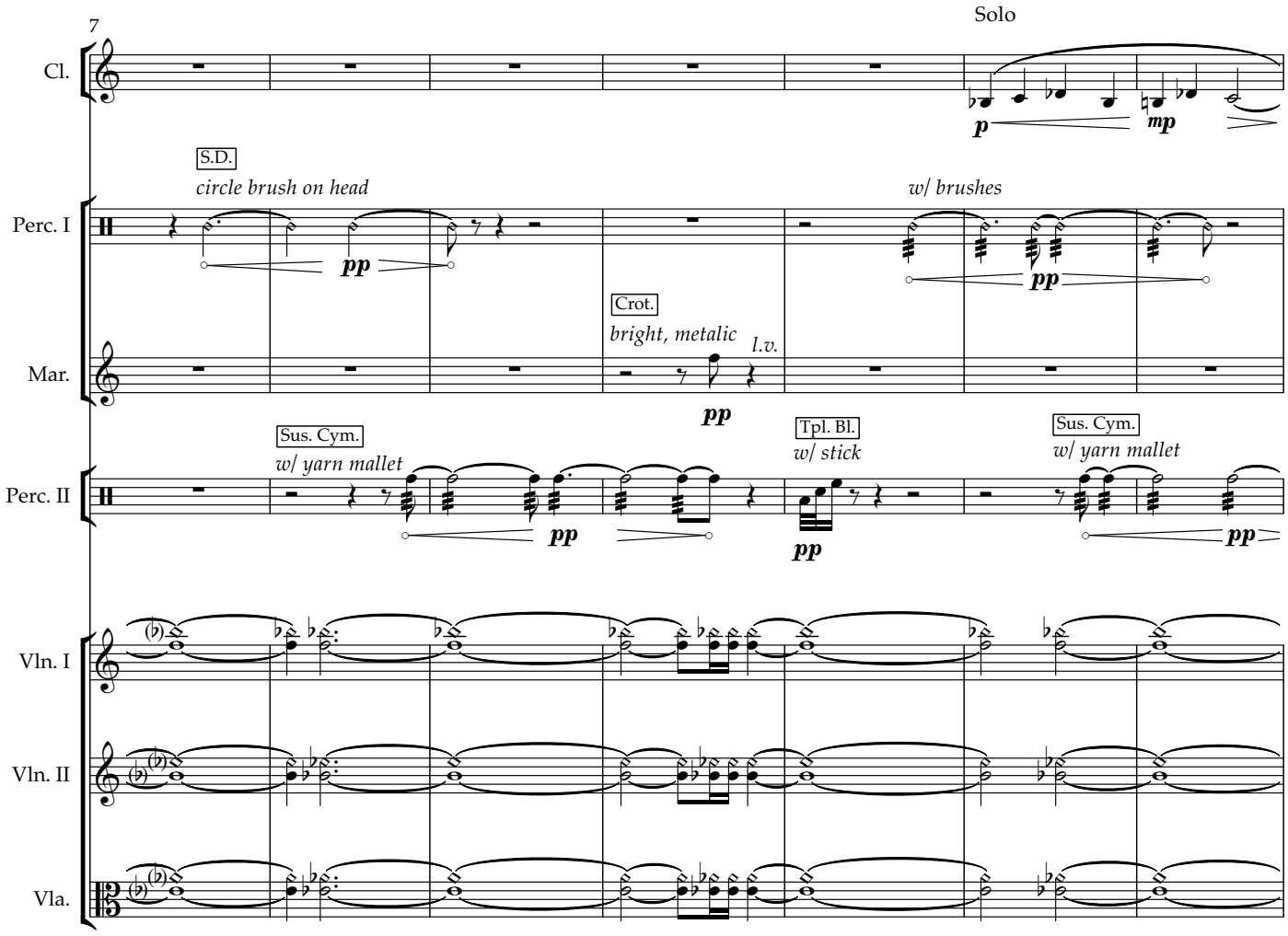
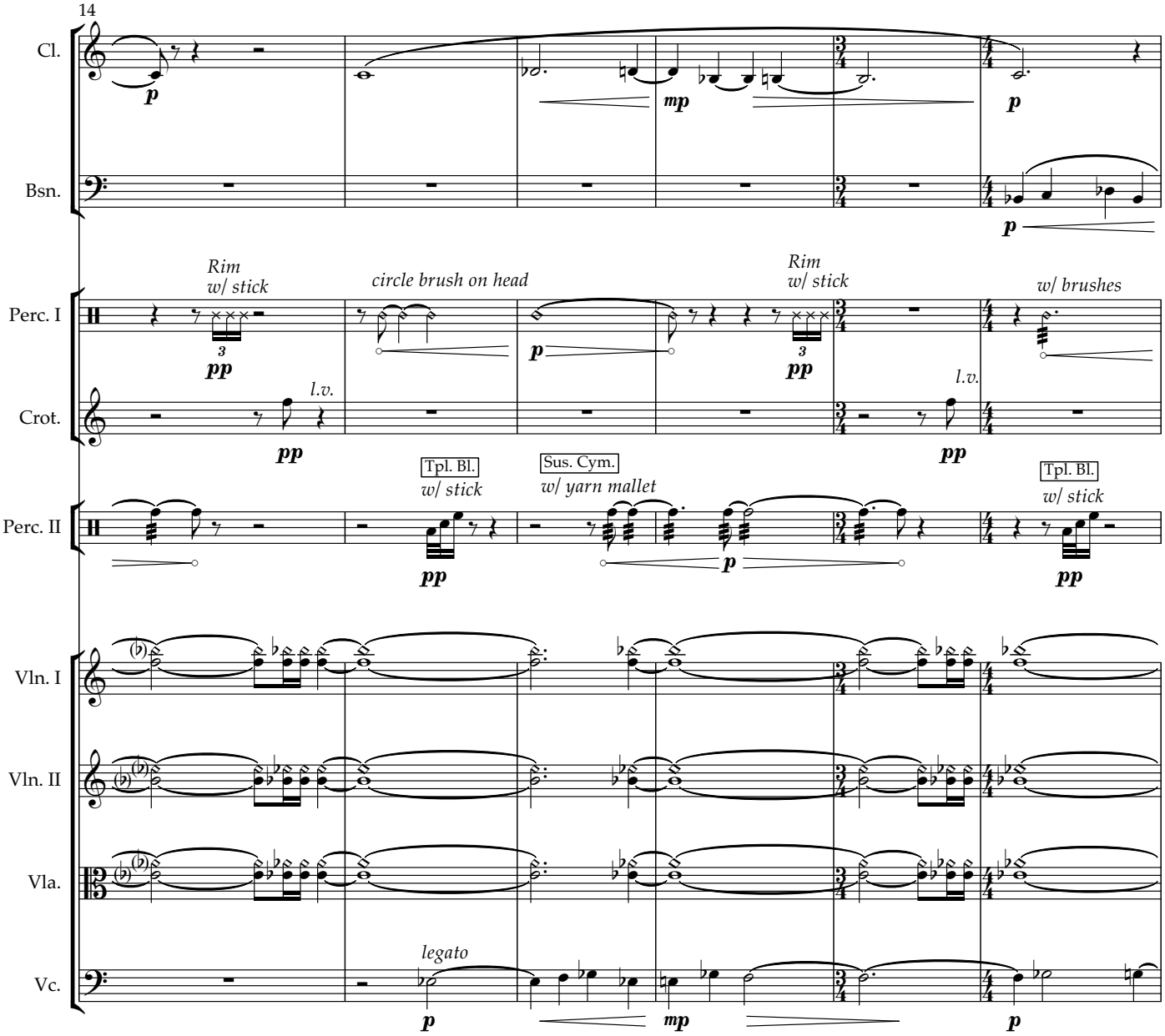
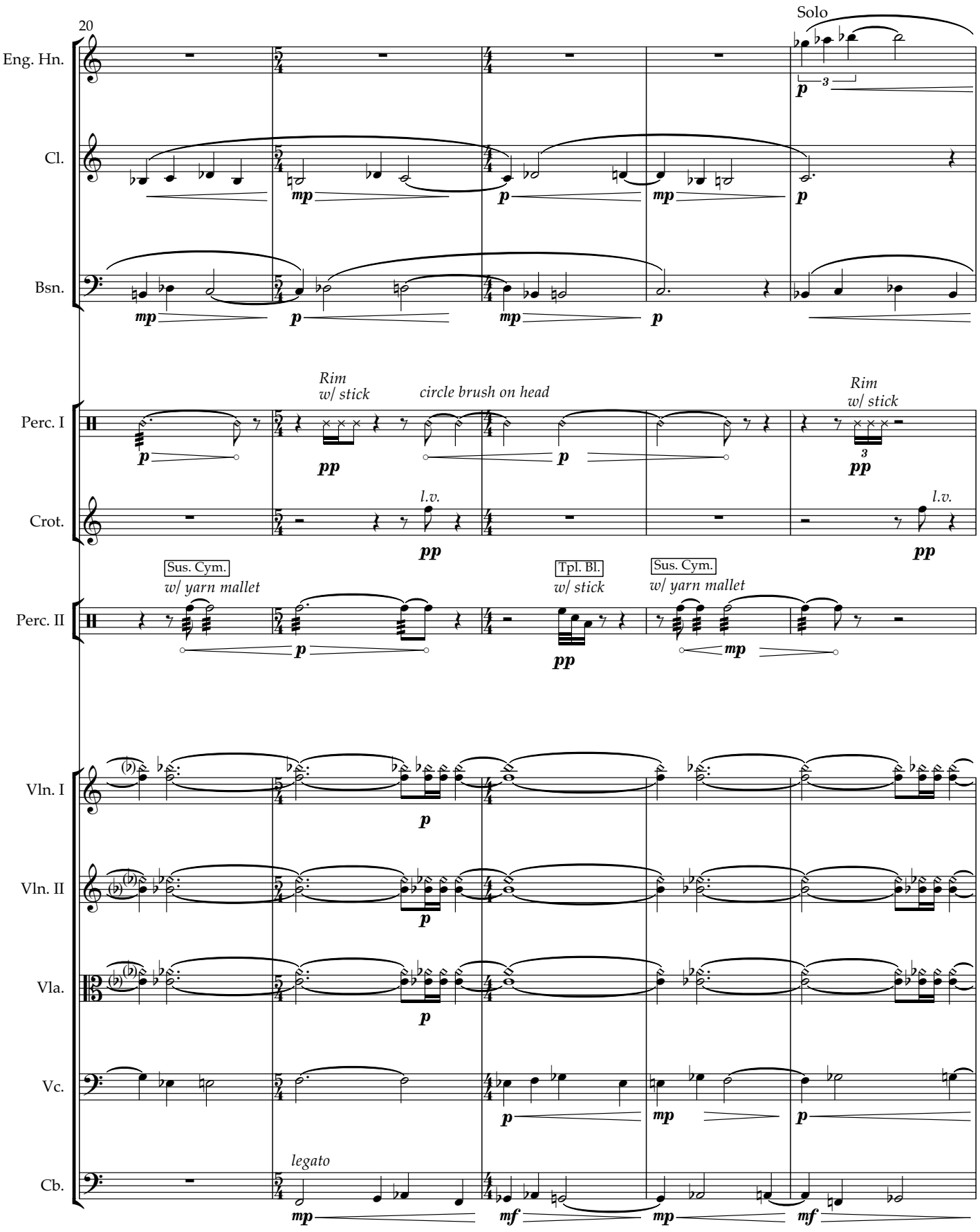

7
Solo
Cl.
p
mp
S.D.
circle brush on head
w/ brushes
Perc. I
pp
pp
Crot.
bright, metalic
l.v.
Mar.
pp
Sus. Cym.
w/ yarn mallet
Tpl. Bl.
w/ stick
Sus. Cym.
w/ yarn mallet
Perc. II
pp
pp
pp
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.


14
Cl.
Bsn.
Perc. I
Crot.
Perc. II
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Rim
w/ stick
circle brush on head
Rim
w/ stick
w/ brushes
l.v.
l.v.
Tpl. Bl.
w/ stick
Sus. Cym.
w/ yarn mallet
Tpl. Bl.
w/ stick
legato



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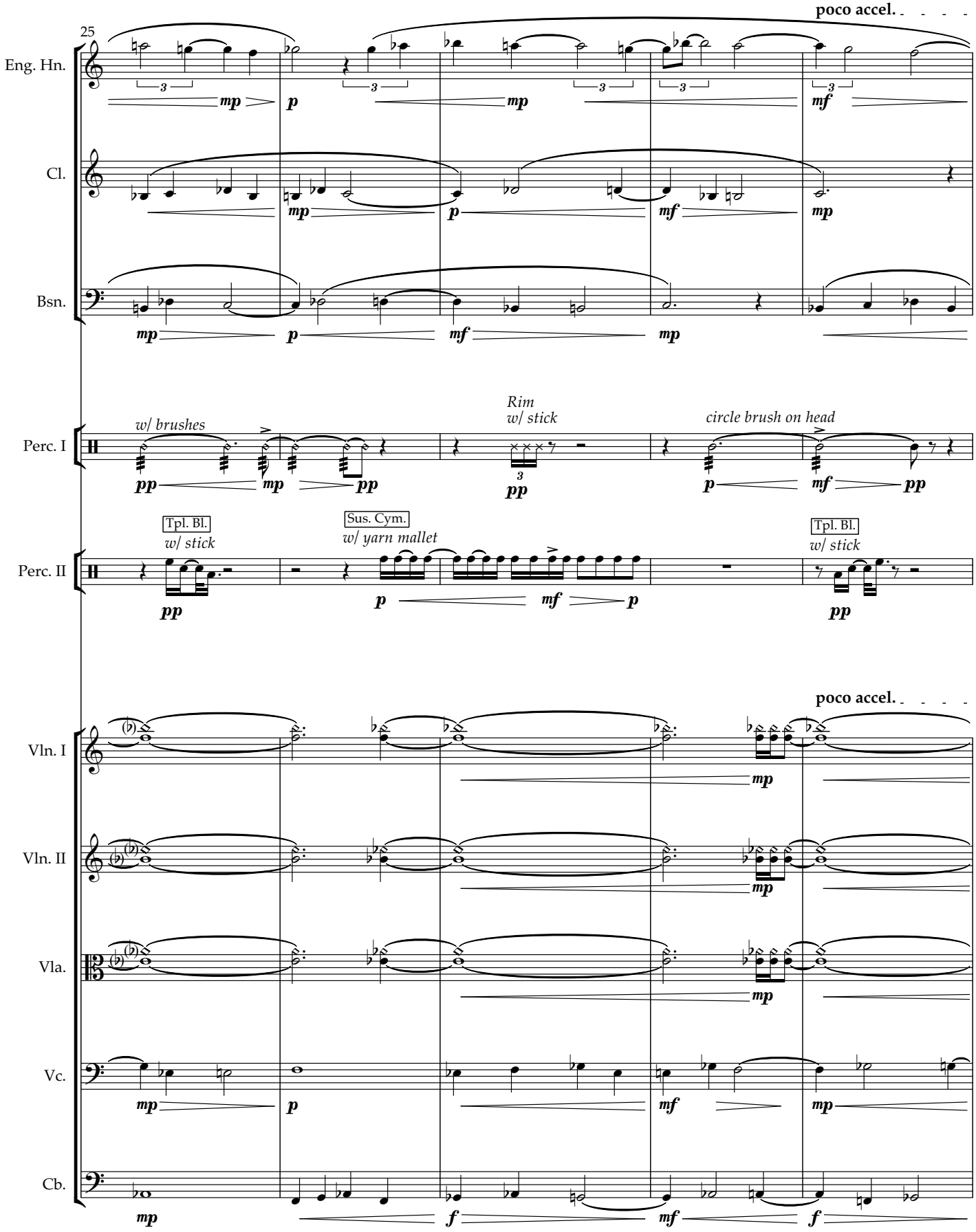
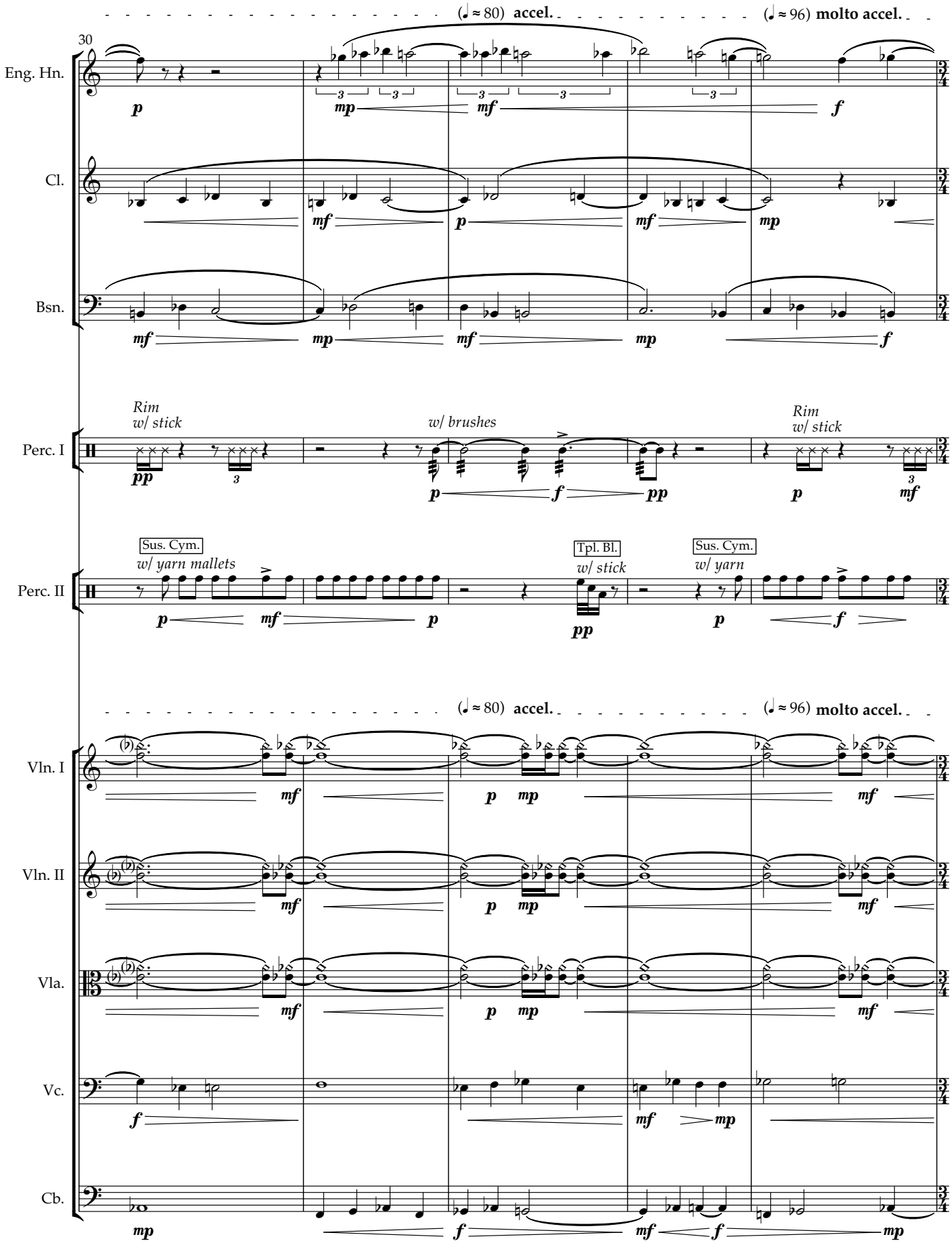

poco accel.
25
Eng. Hn.
Cl.
Bsn.
w/ brushes
Rim
w/ stick
circle brush on head
Perc. I
Tpl. Bl.
w/ stick
Sus. Cym.
w/ yarn mallet
Tpl. Bl.
w/ stick
Perc. II
poco accel.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.



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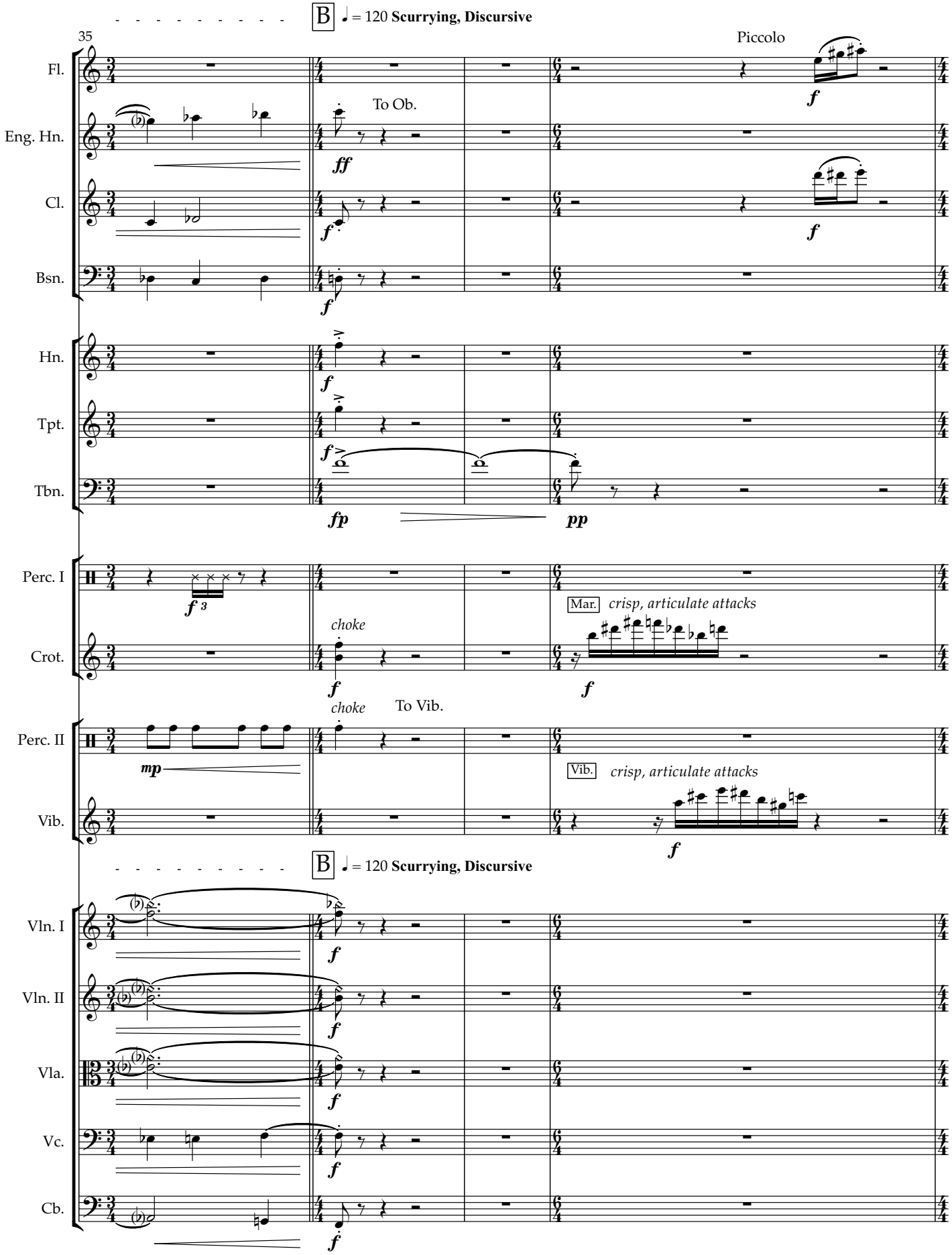

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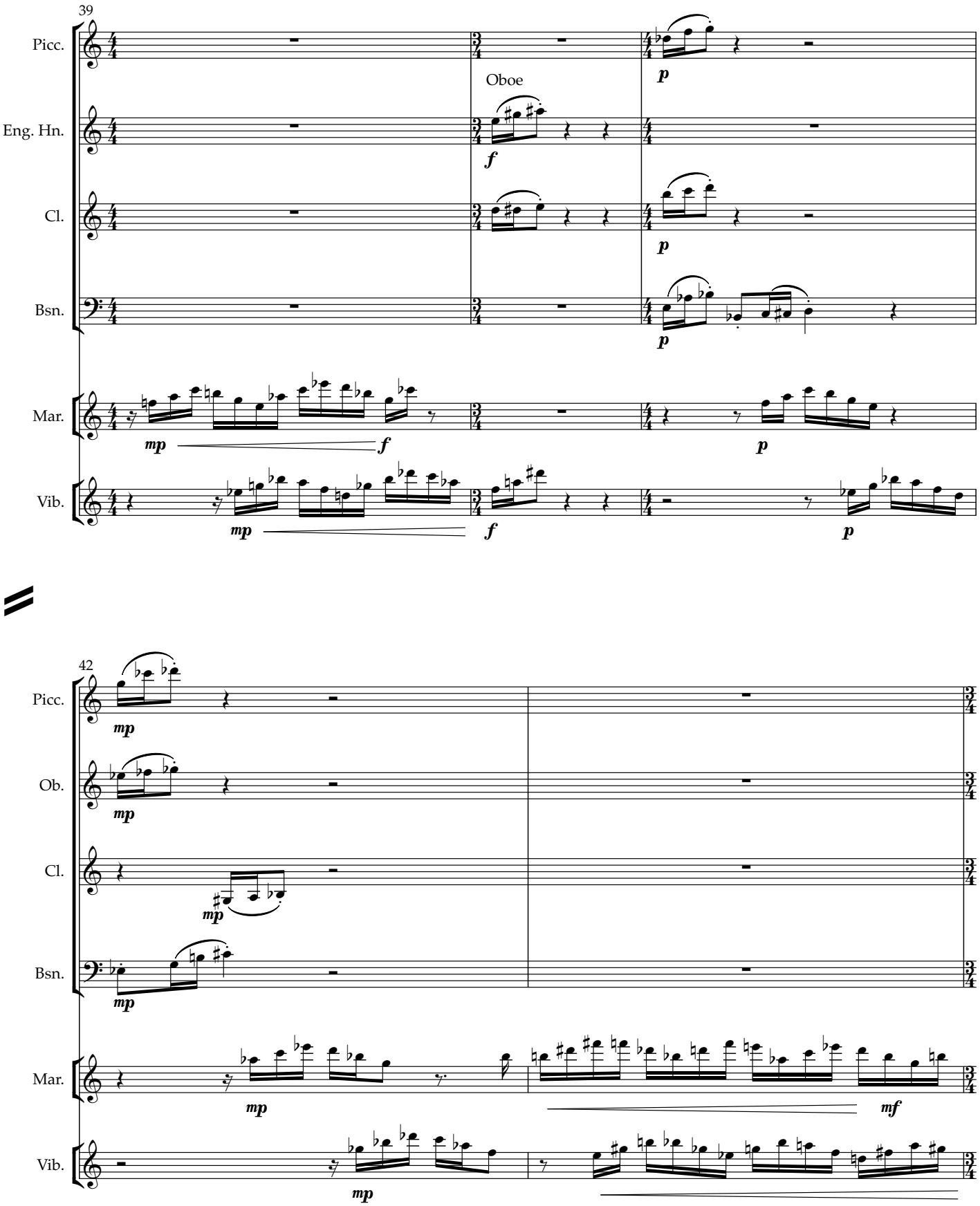
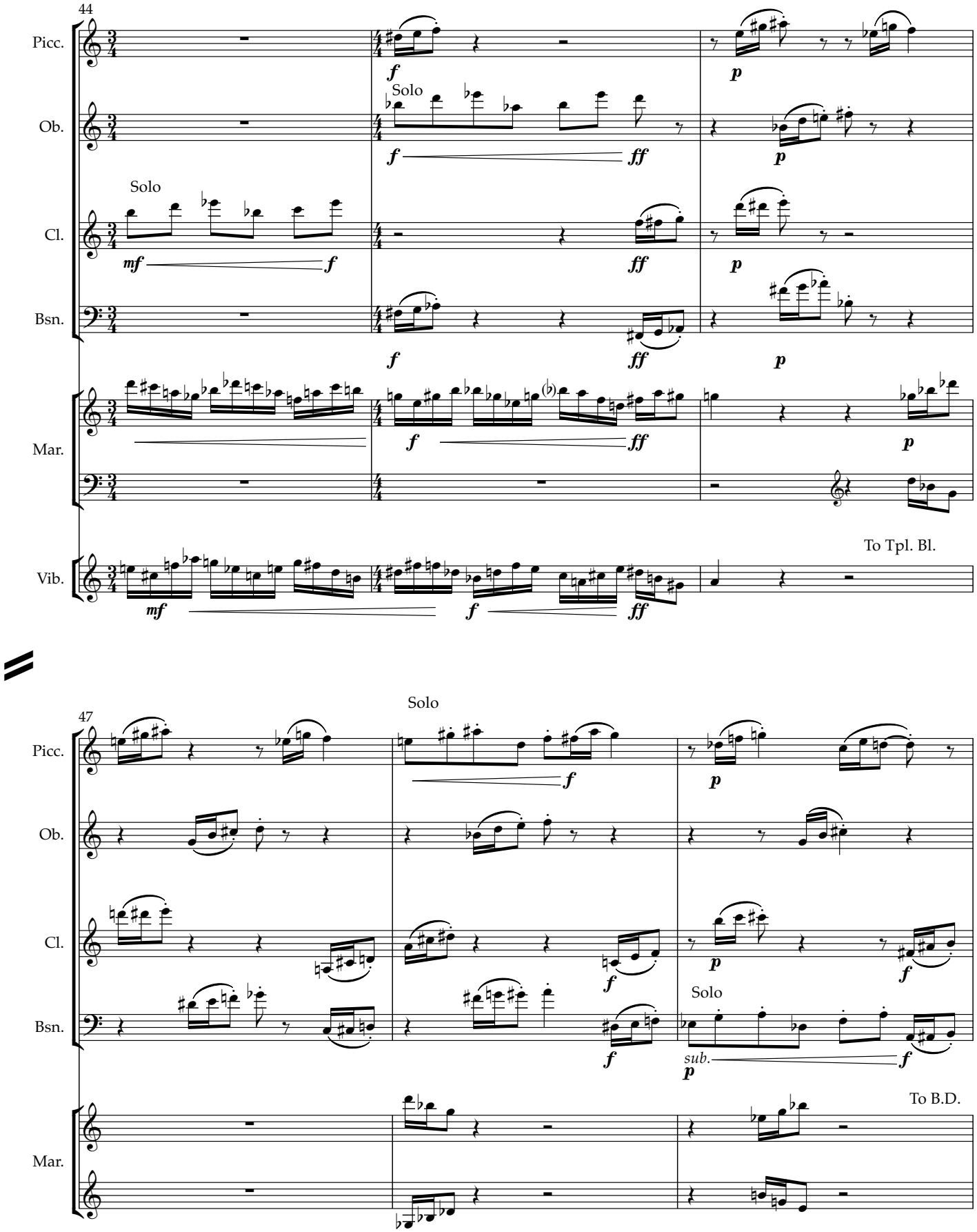
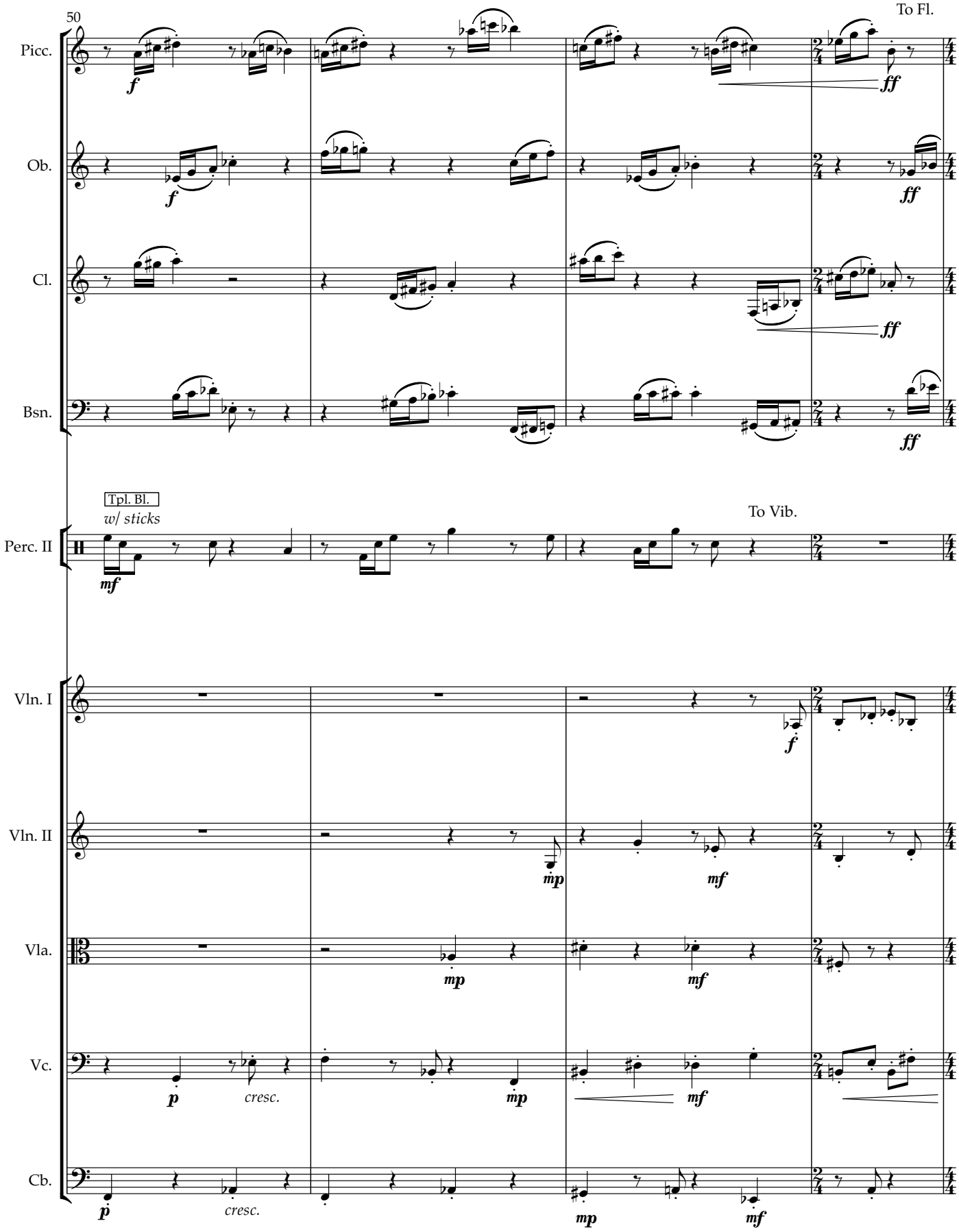

39
Picc.
Eng. Hn.
Cl.
Bsn.
Mar.
Vib.
Oboe
p
f
mp
42
Ob.
mf


44
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Mar.
Vib.
Solo
Solo
To Tpl. Bl.
47
Solo
Solo
sub.
To B.D.



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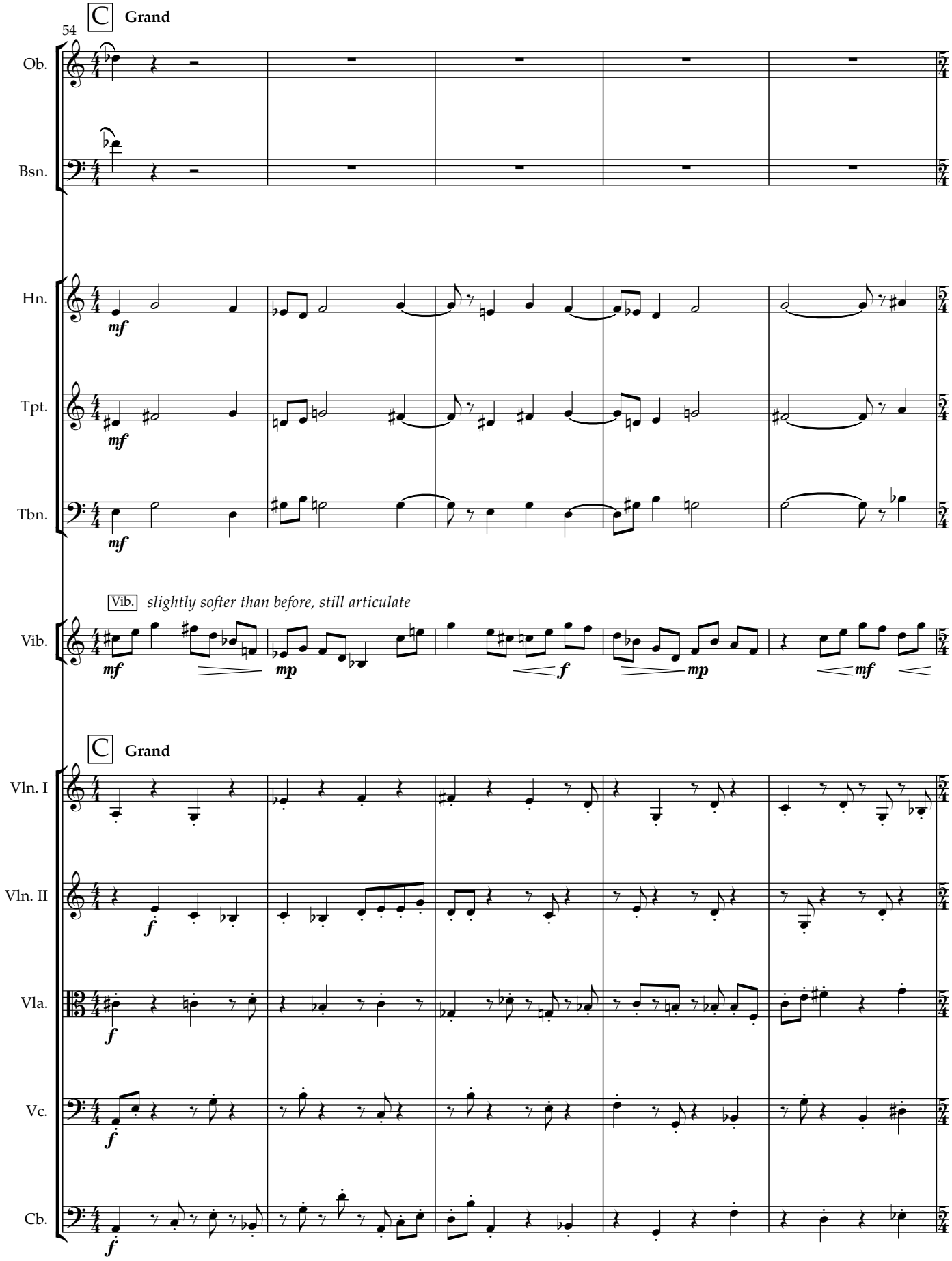
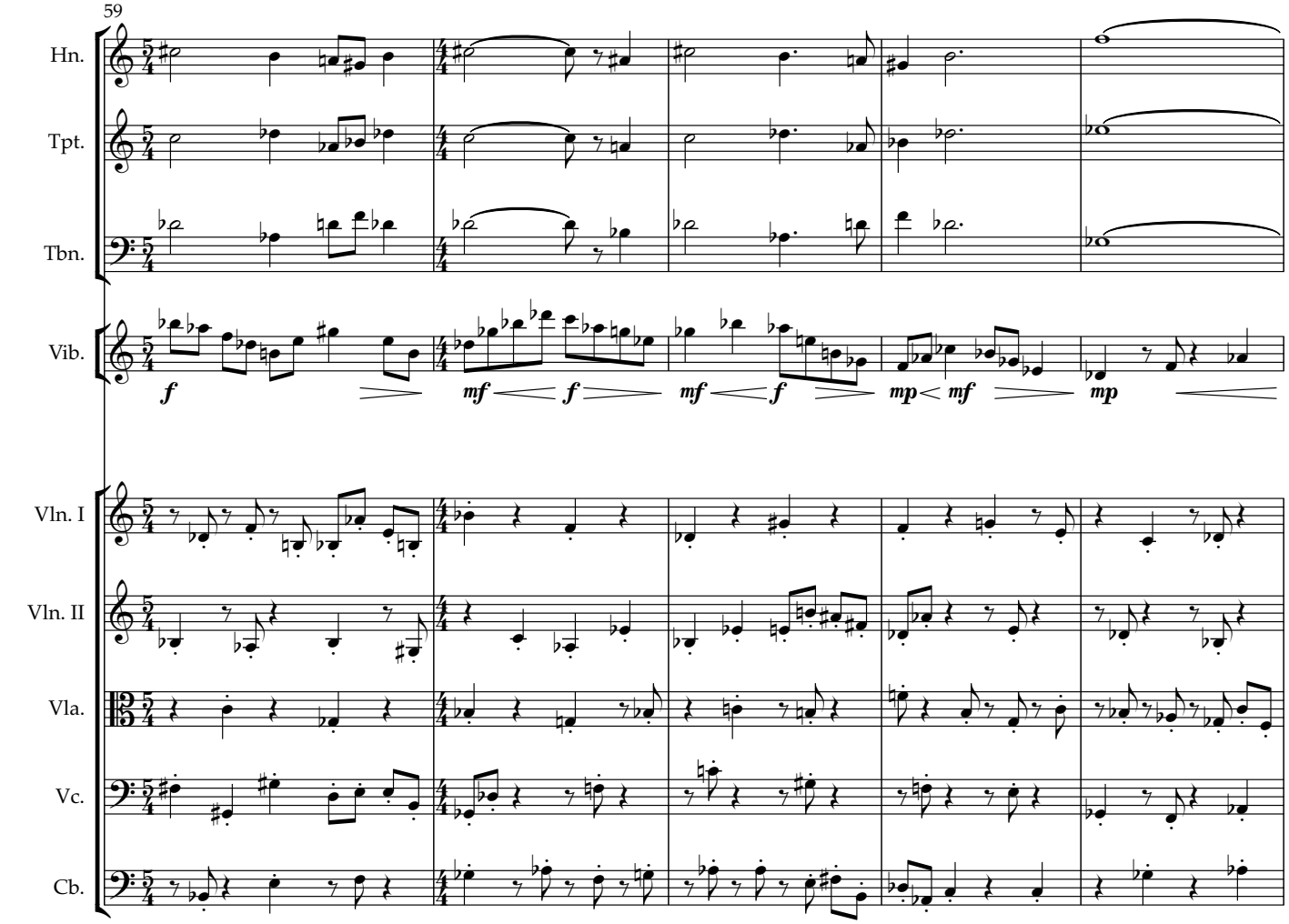
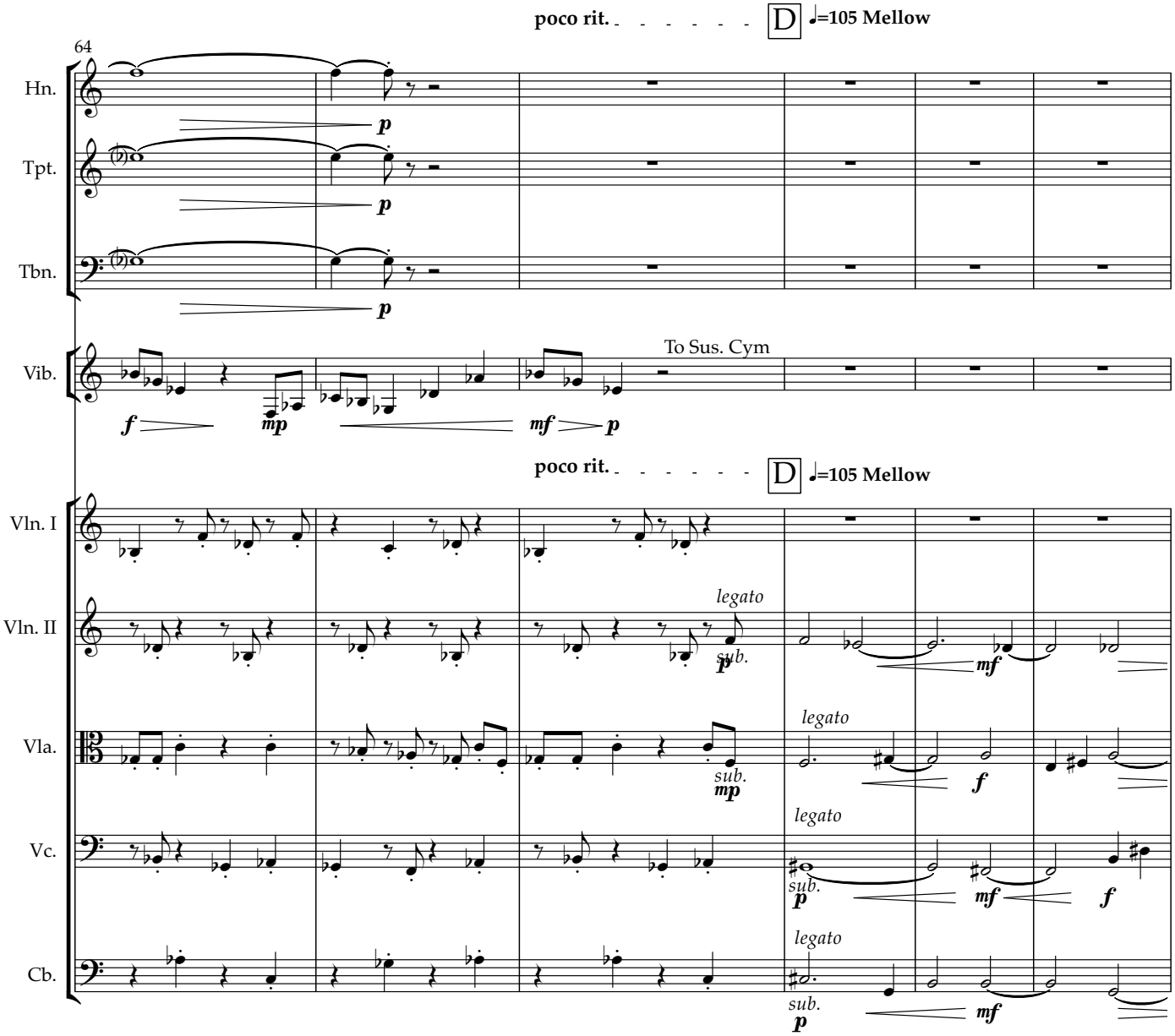
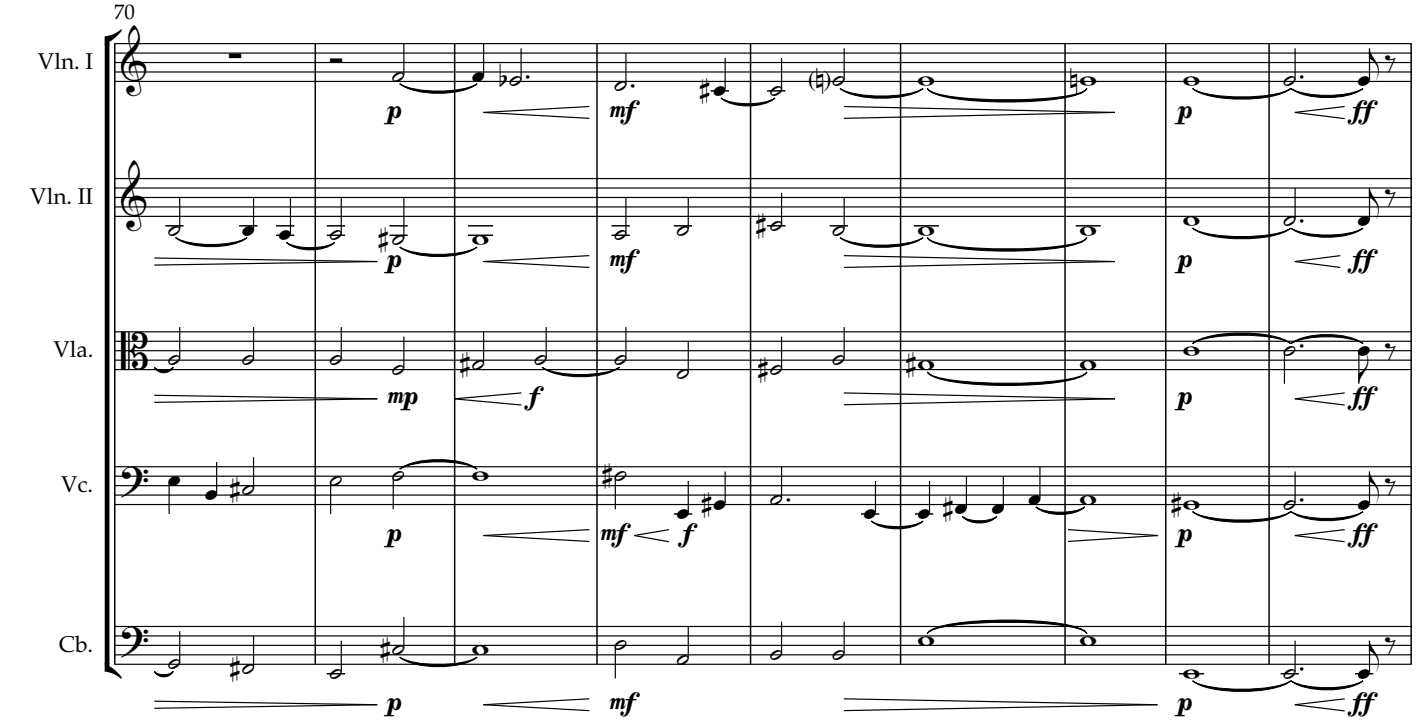
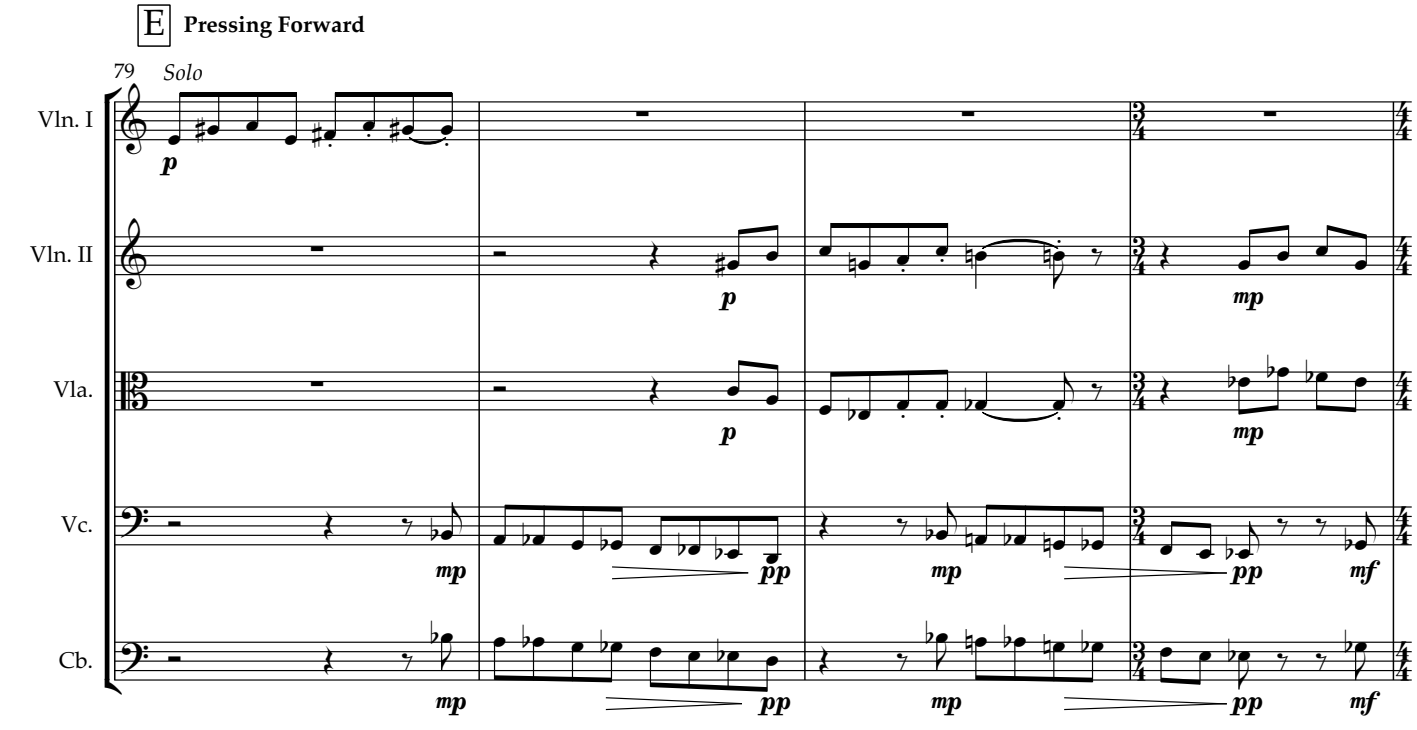
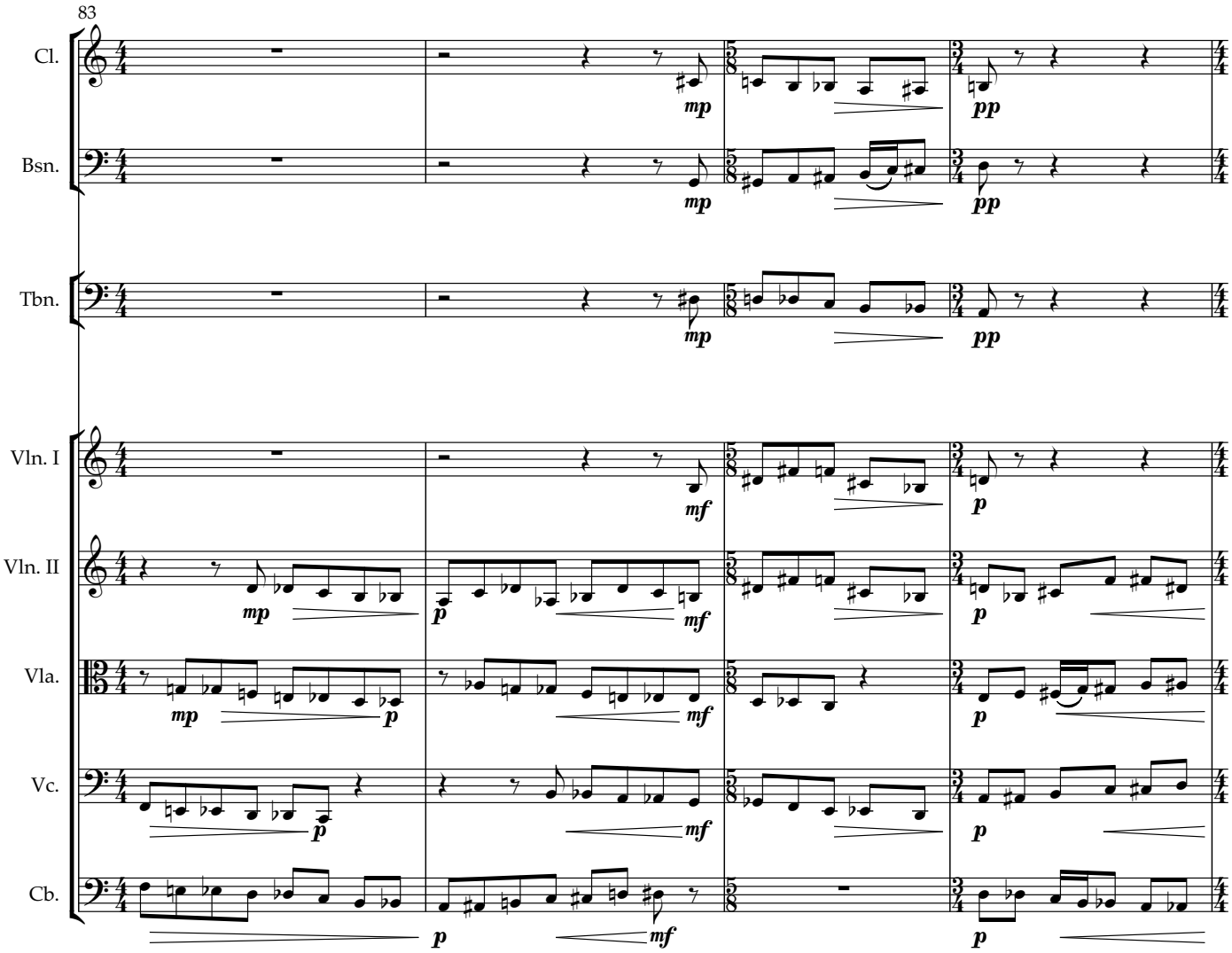

C
Grand
54
Ob.
Bsn.
Hn.
mf
Tpt.
mf
Tbn.
mf
Vib.
slightly softer than before, still articulate
mf
mp
f
mp
mf
C
Grand
Vln. I
Vln. II
f
Vla.
f
Vc.
f
Cb.
f

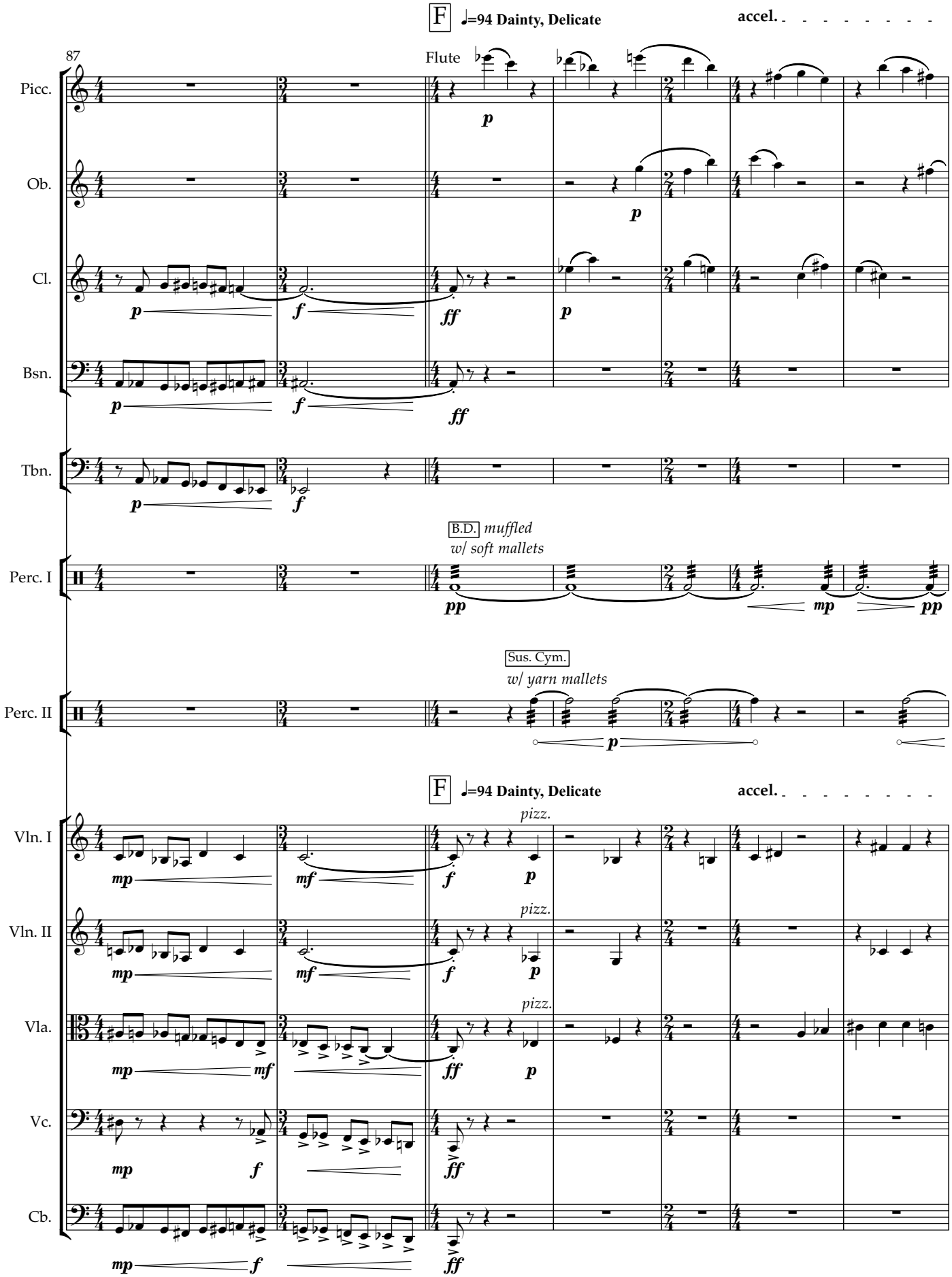

59
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
f
mf
f
mf
f
mp
mf
mp
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

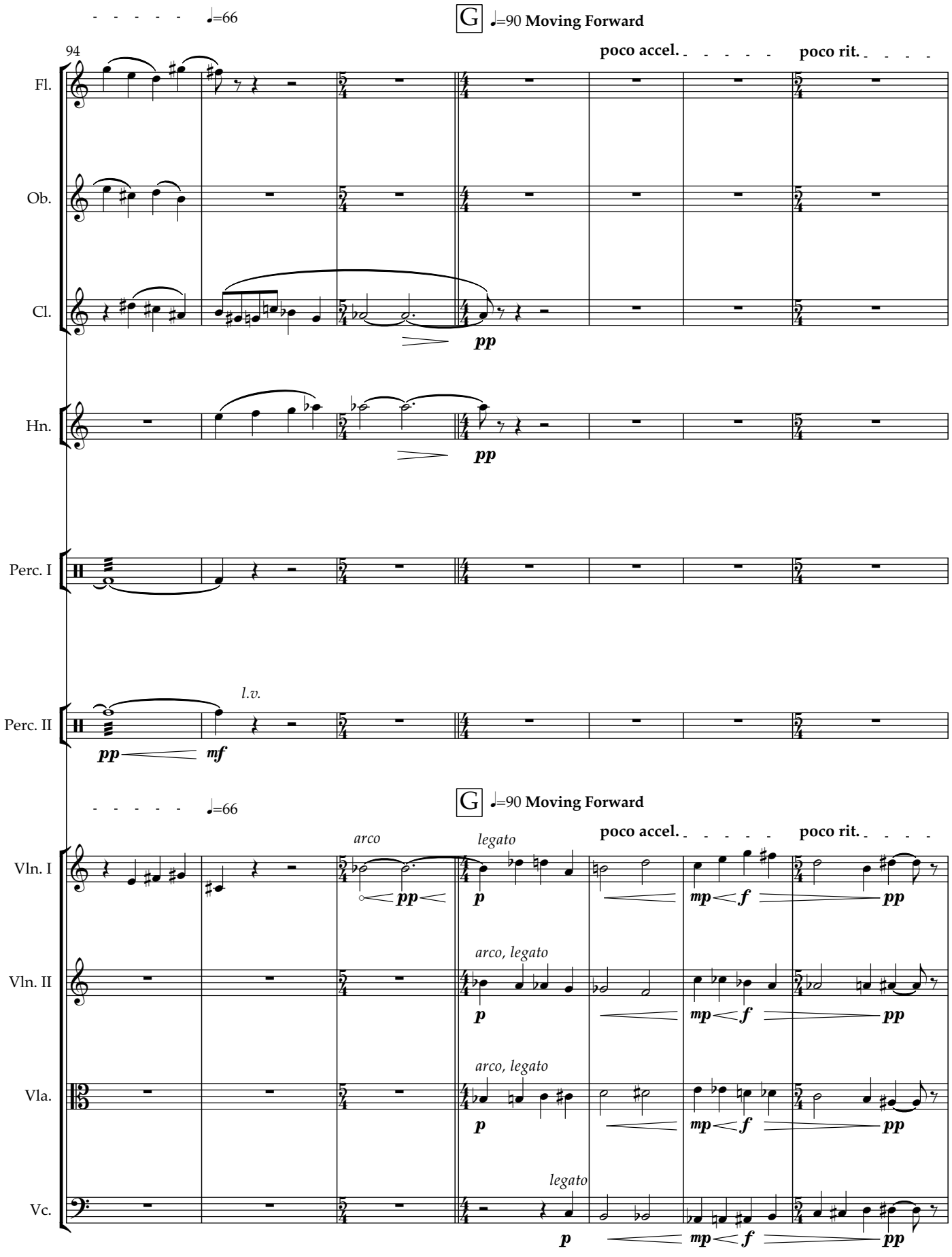

poco rit.
D
♩=105 Mellow
64
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
To Sus. Cym
poco rit.
D
♩=105 Mellow
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
legato
sub.


70
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
p
mf
f
ff
mp


E Pressing Forward
79
Solo
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
p
mp
pp
mf


83
Cl.
Bsn.
Tbn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mp
pp
mf
p


F ♩=94 Dainty, Delicate
accel.
87
Flute
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Tbn.
B.D. muffled
w/ soft mallets
Perc. I
Sus. Cym.
w/ yarn mallets
Perc. II
F ♩=94 Dainty, Delicate
accel.
pizz.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.



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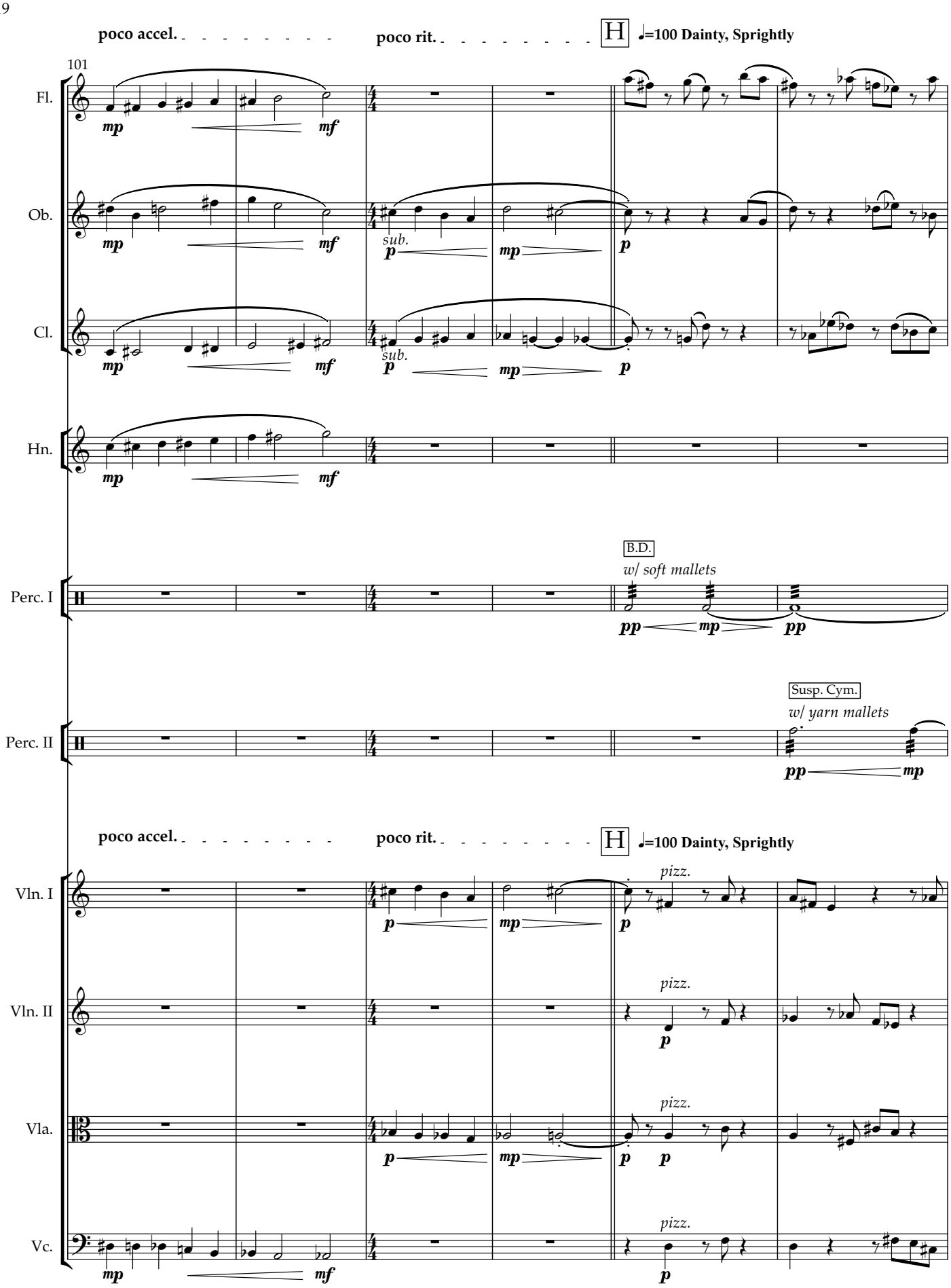

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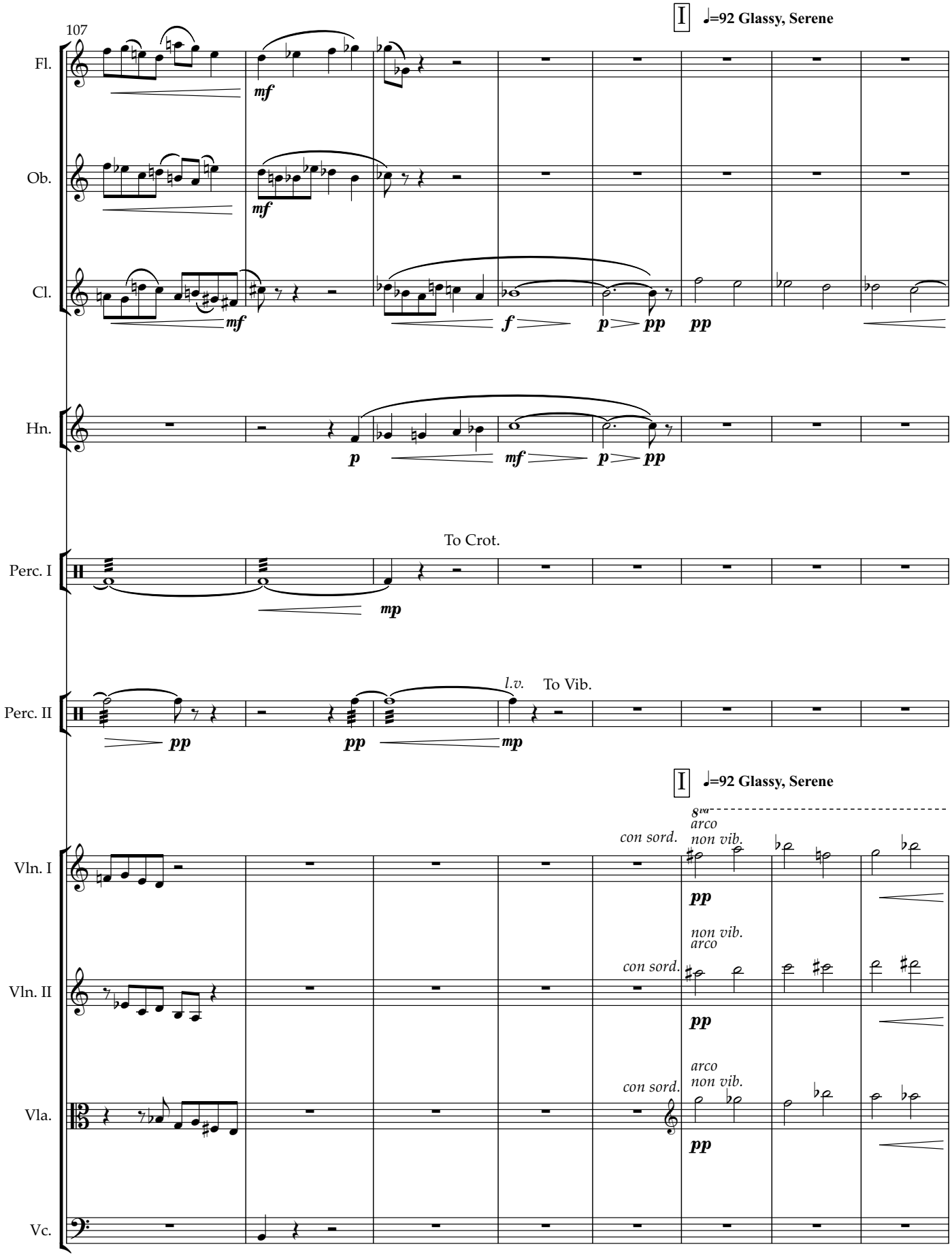
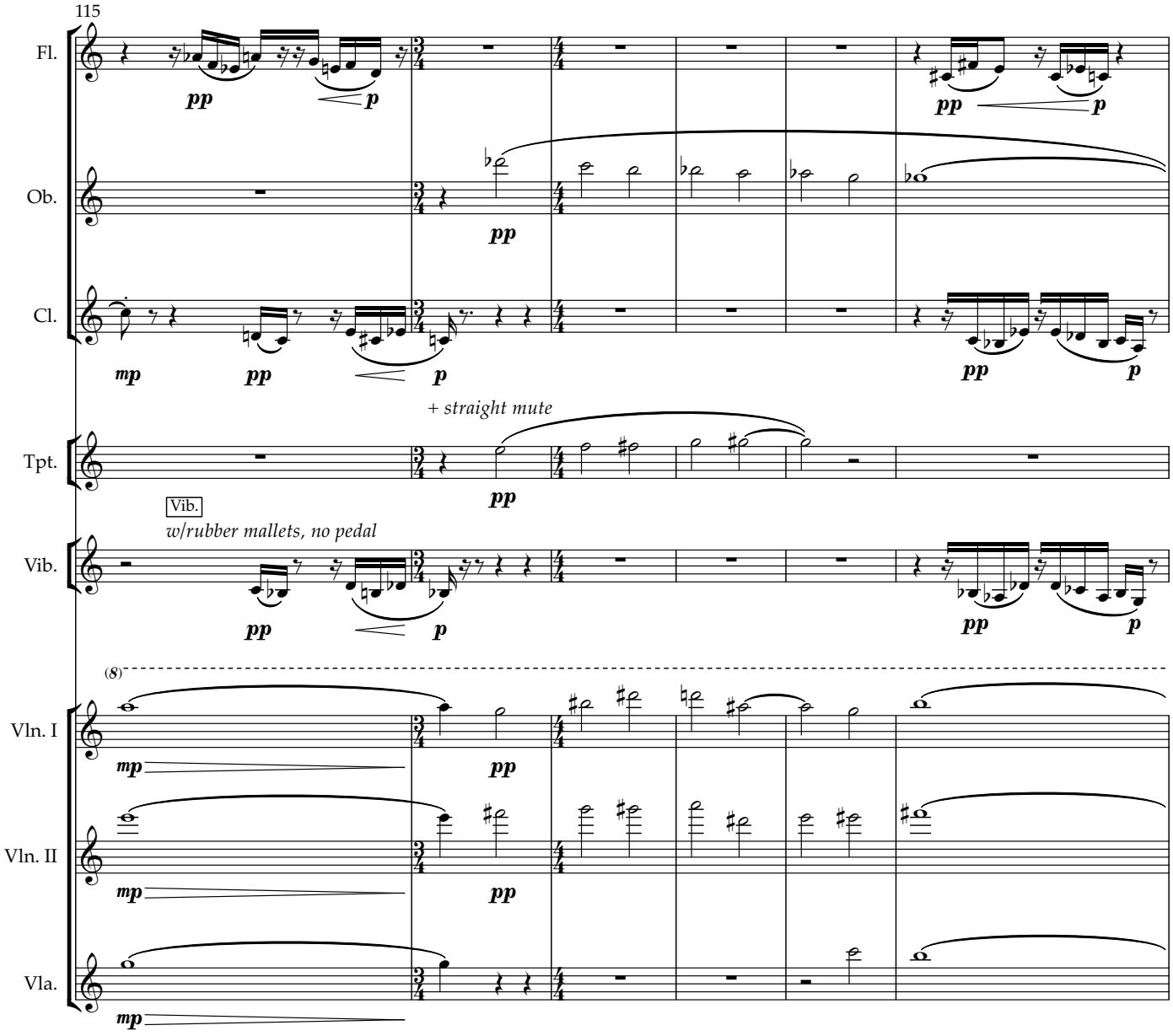
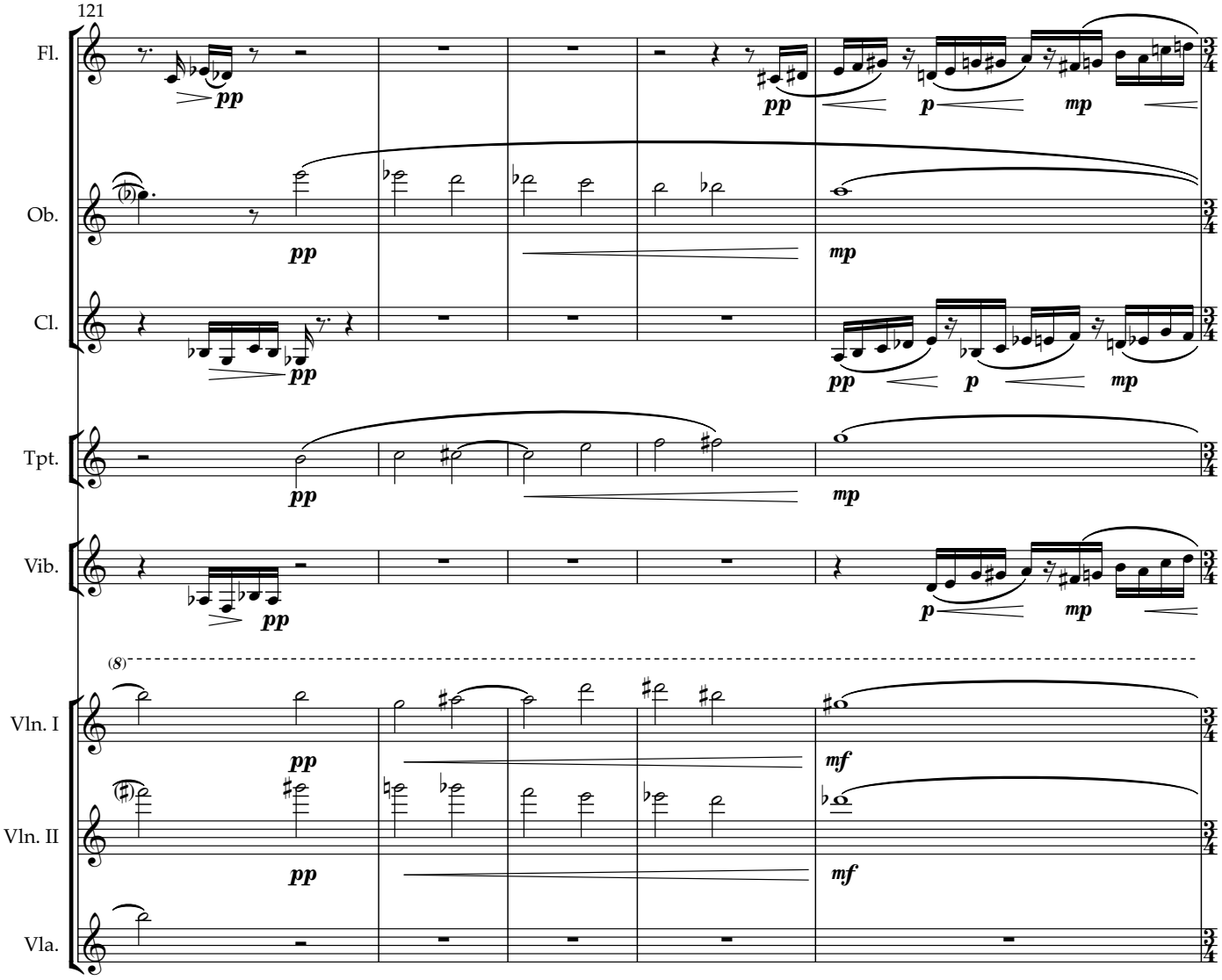
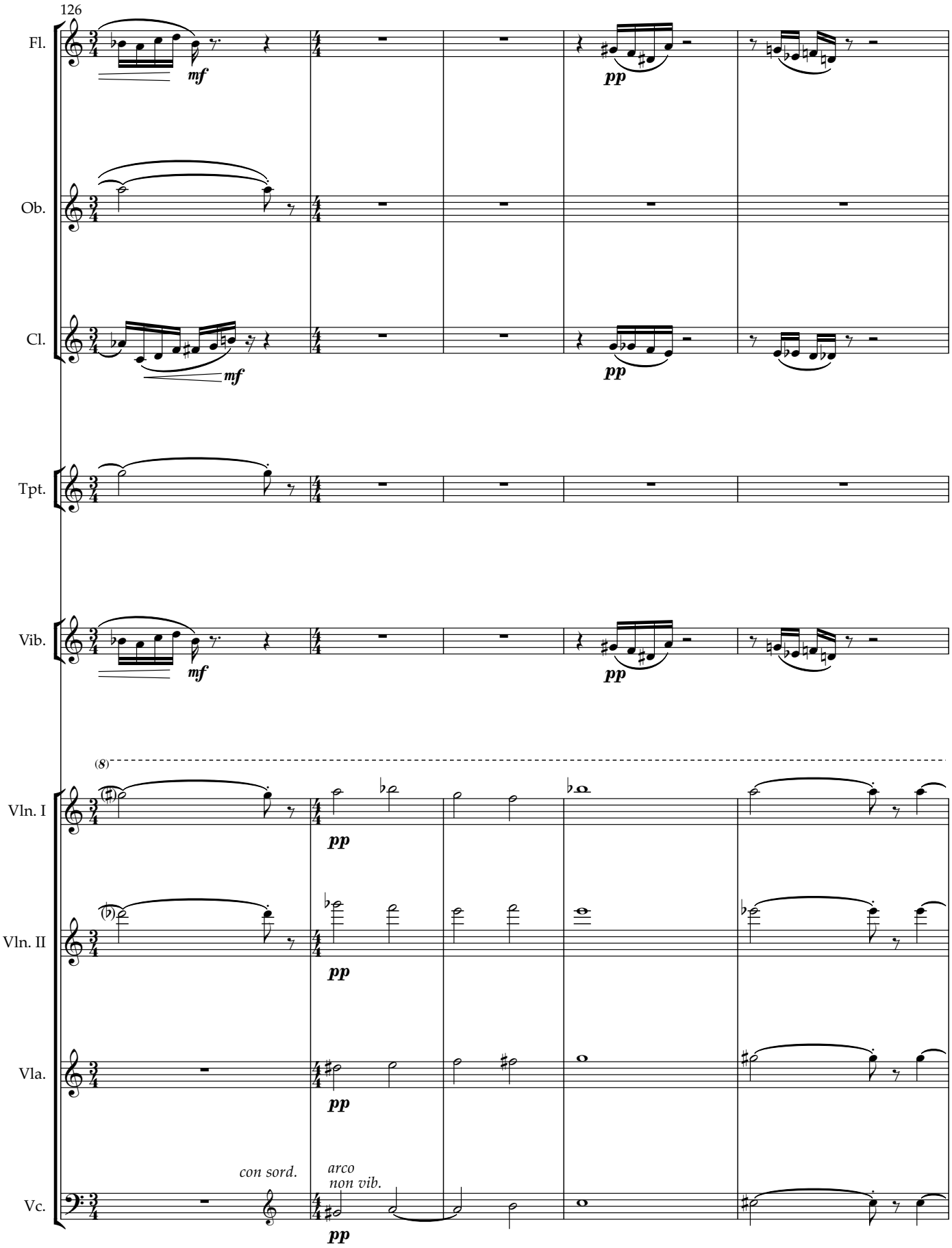
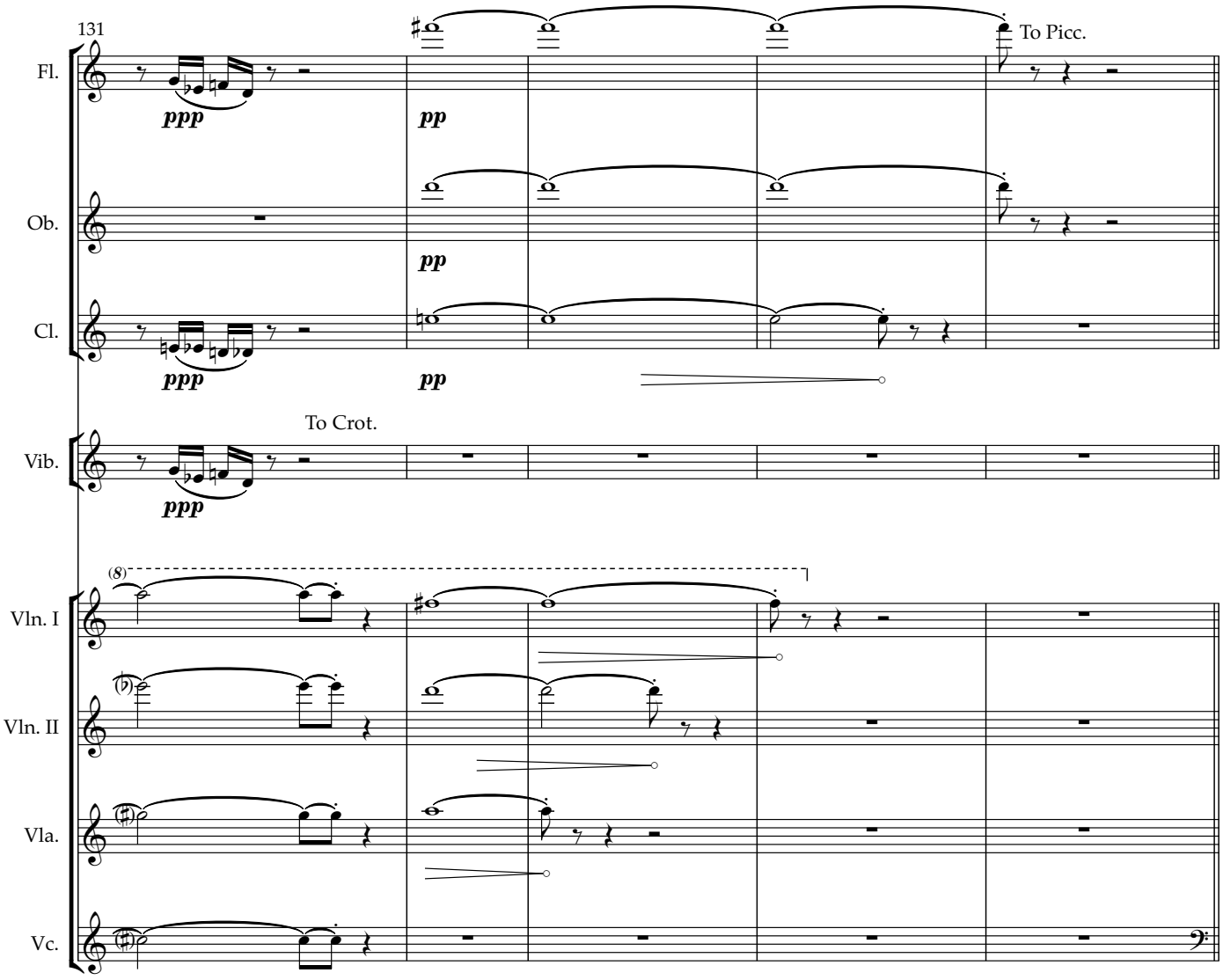

I ♩=92 Glassy, Serene
107
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Perc. I
To Crot.
Perc. II
l.v.
To Vib.
I ♩=92 Glassy, Serene
8va
Vln. I
con sord.
arco
non vib.
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


115
Fl.
pp
p
pp
p
Ob.
pp
Cl.
mp
pp
p
pp
p
+ straight mute
Tpt.
pp
Vib.
w/rubber mallets, no pedal
Vib.
pp
p
pp
p
(8)
Vln. I
mp
pp
Vln. II
mp
pp
Vla.
mp


121
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Tpt.
Vib.
(8)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
pp
p
mp
mf


126
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Tpt.
Vib.
(8)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
pp
con sord.
arco
non vib.



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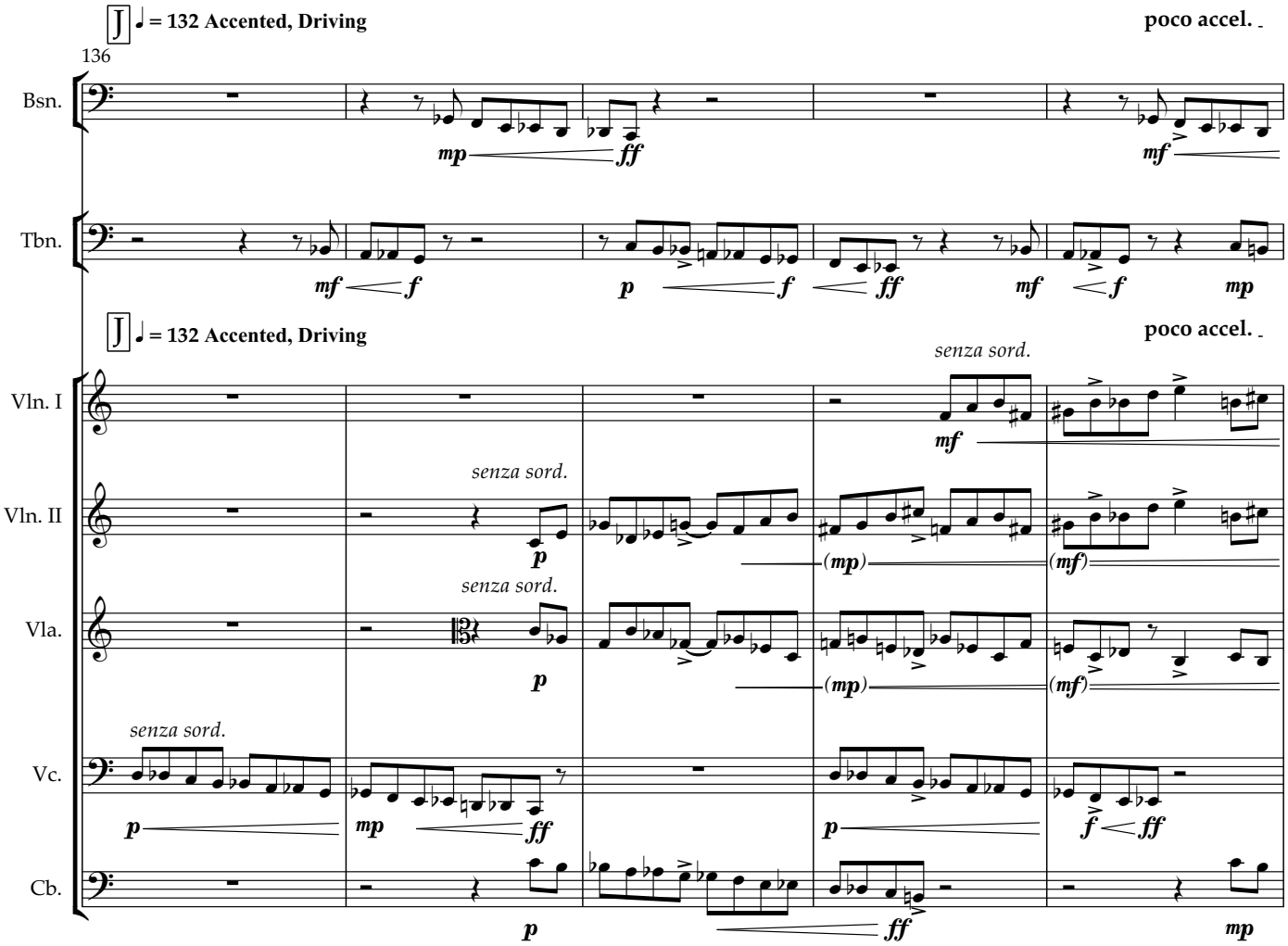
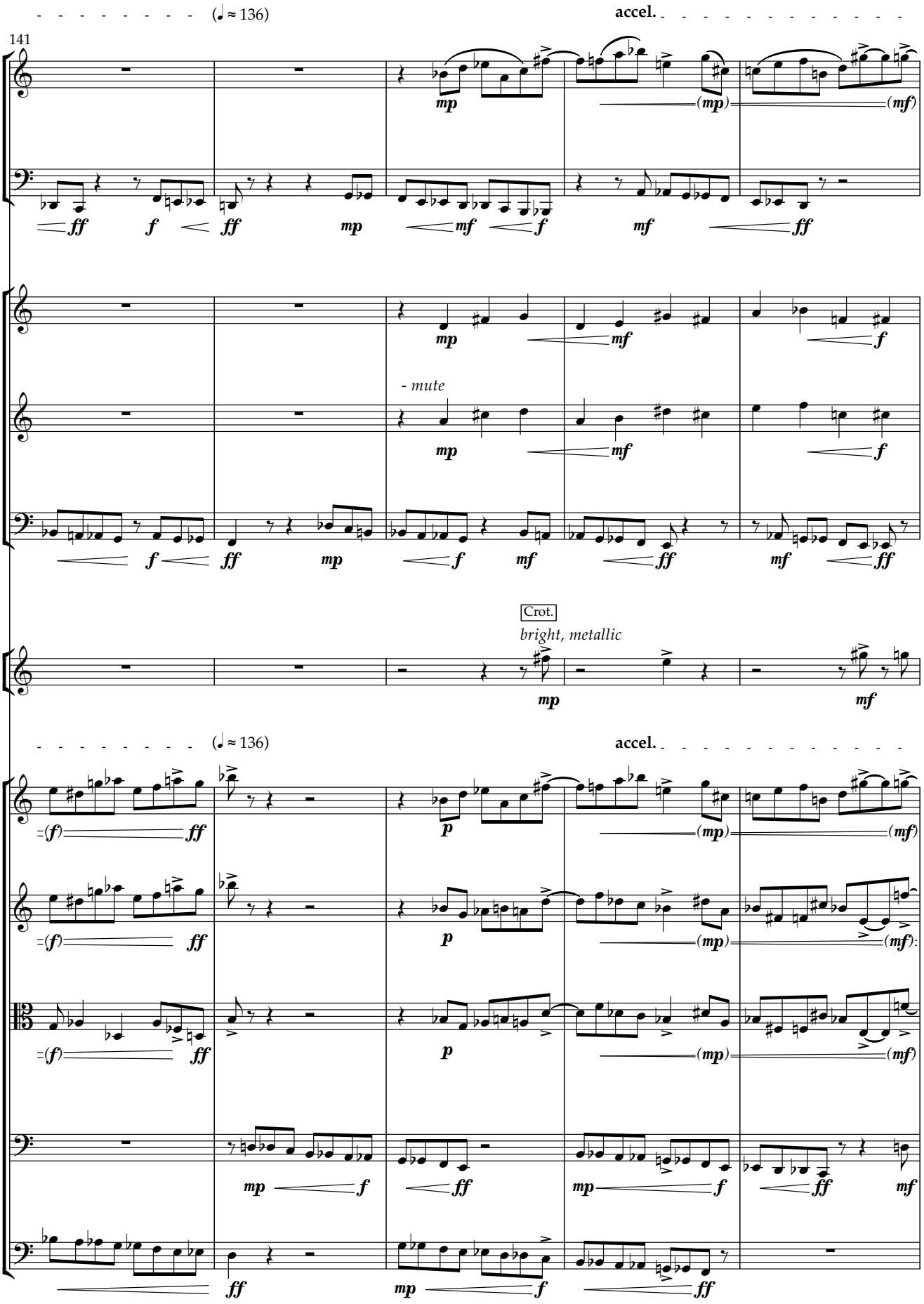
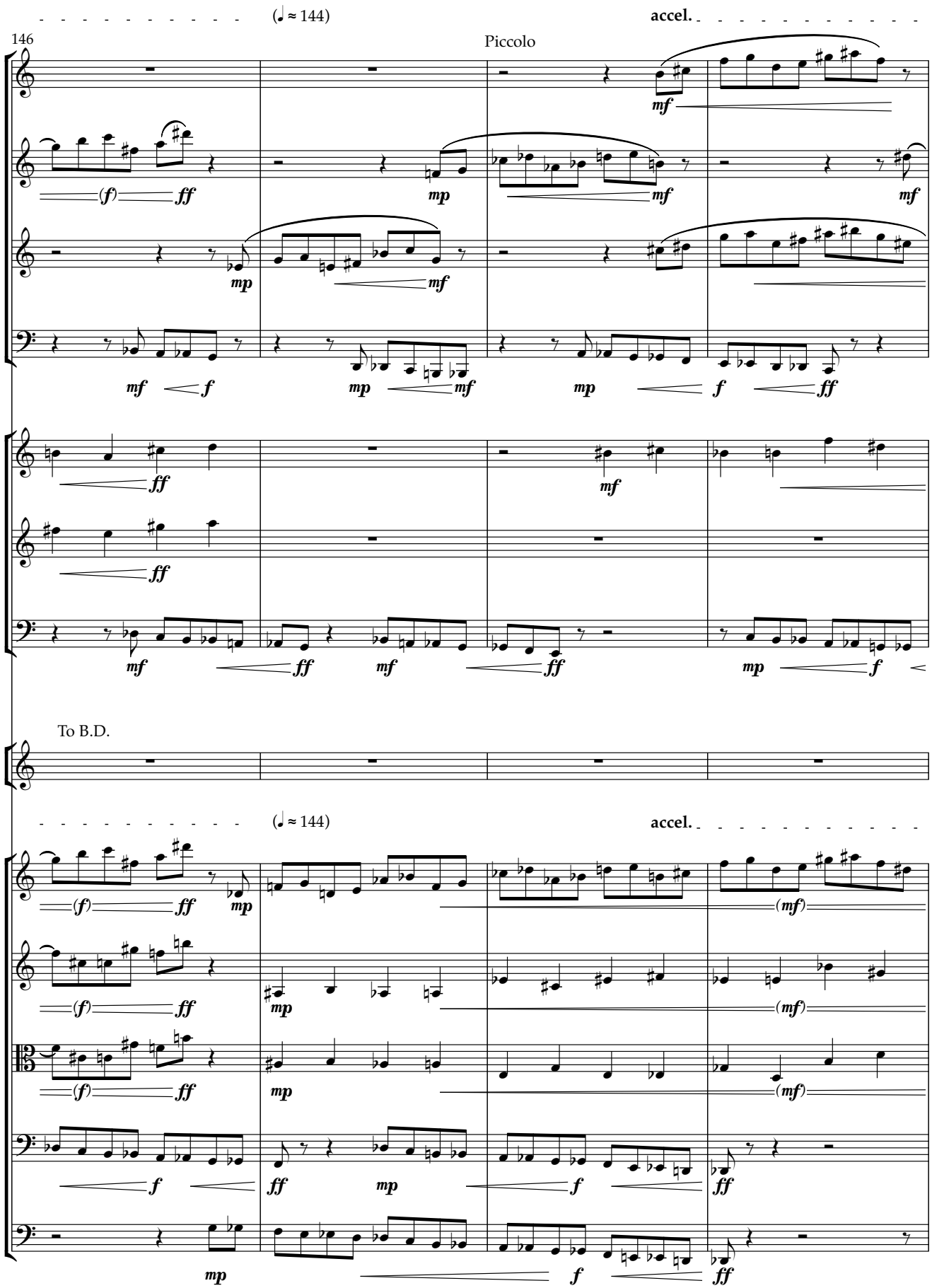

♩ = 132 Accented, Driving
poco accel.
136
Bsn.
Tbn.
♩ = 132 Accented, Driving
poco accel.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
senza sord.


(♩≈136)
accel.
141
Ob.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
- mute
Tbn.
Crot.
bright, metallic
Mar.
(♩≈136)
accel.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.



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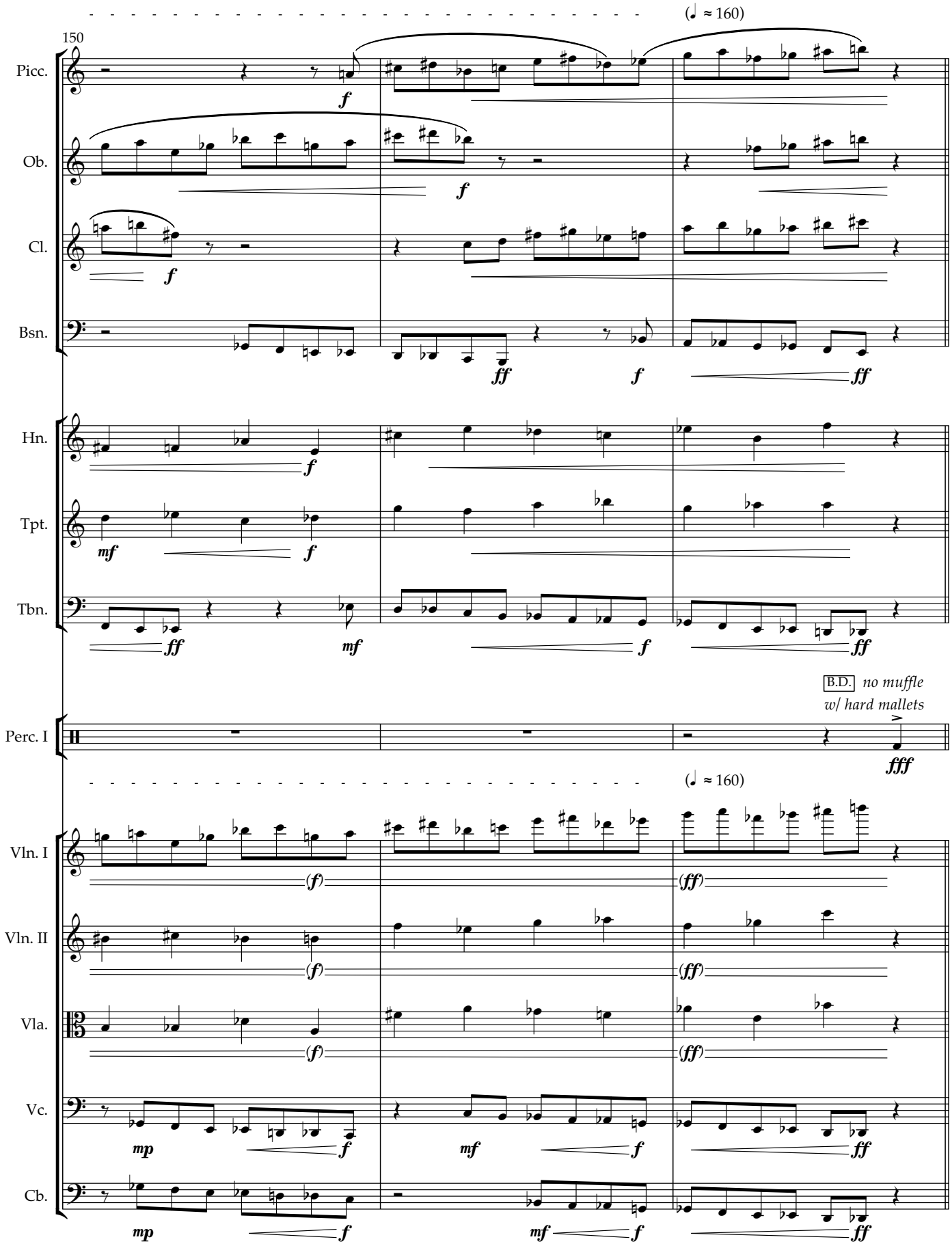

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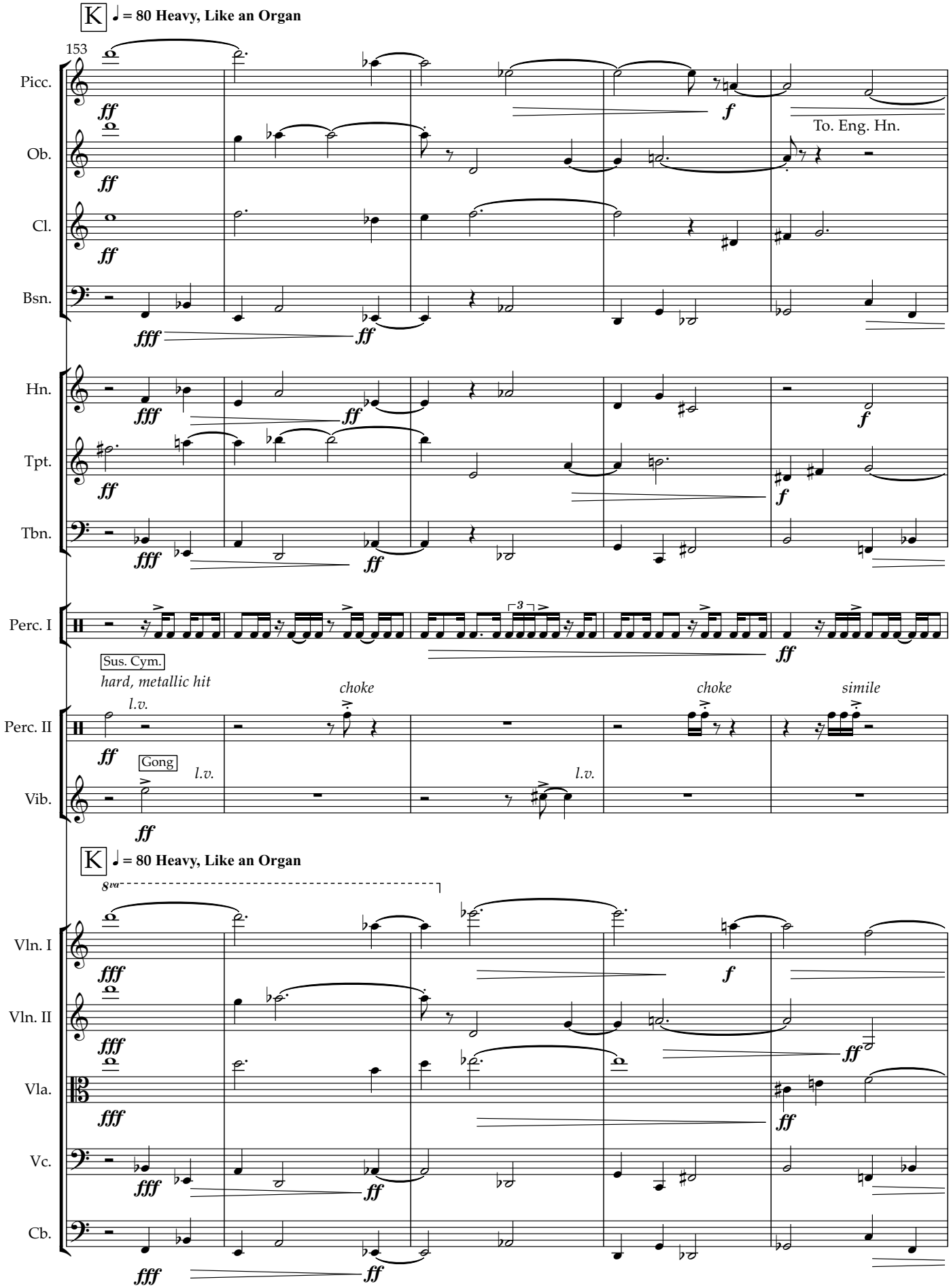

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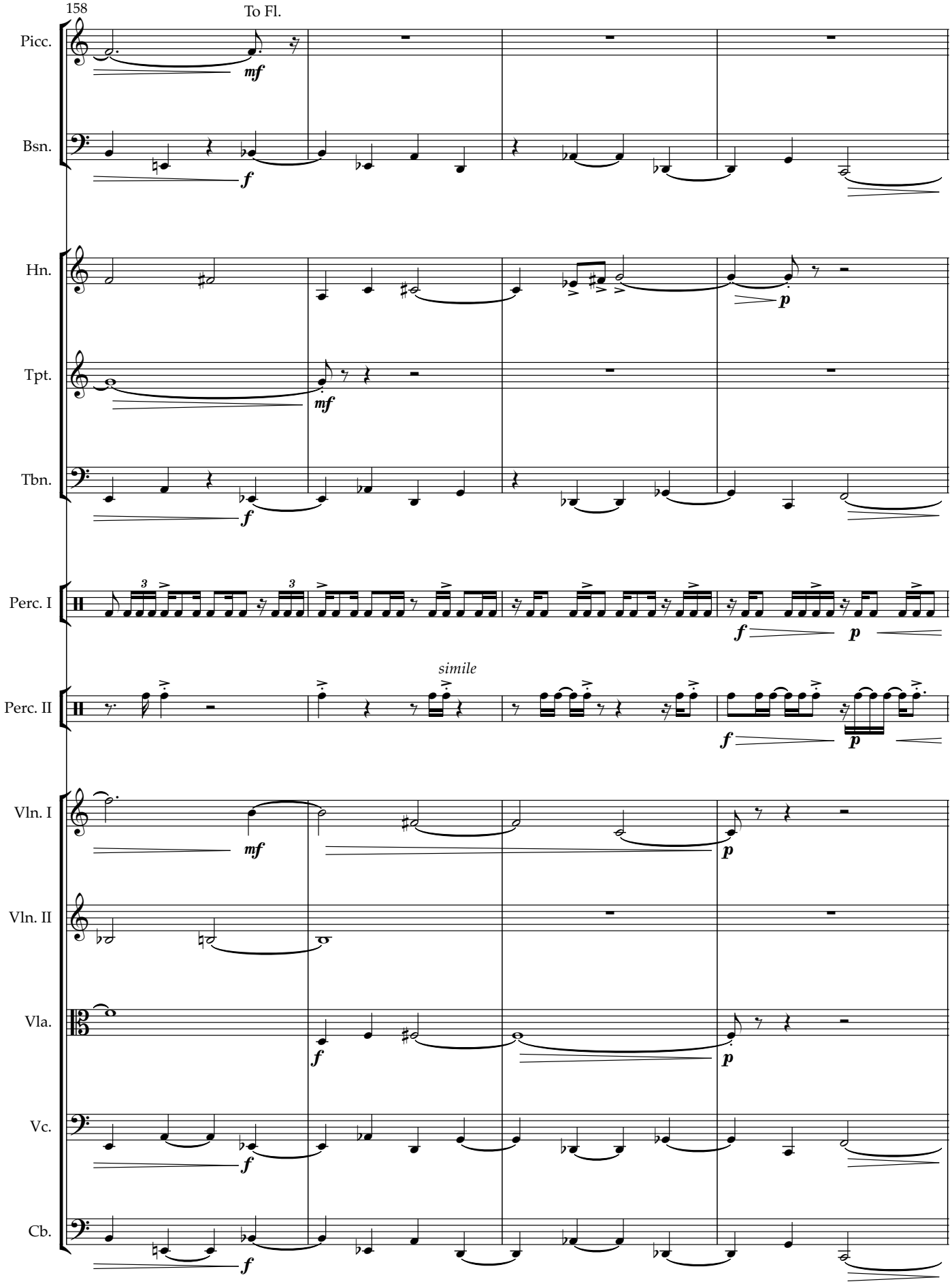
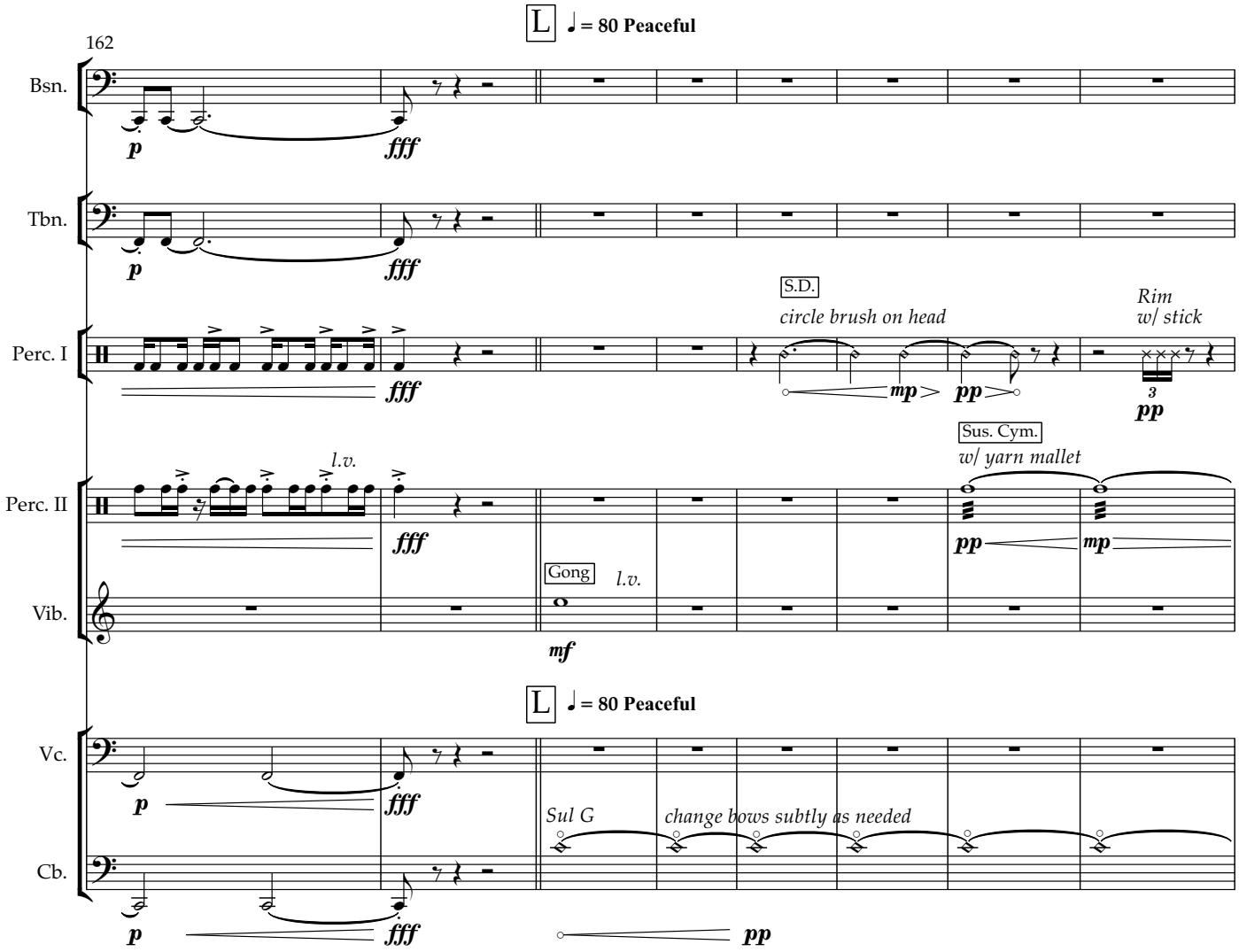
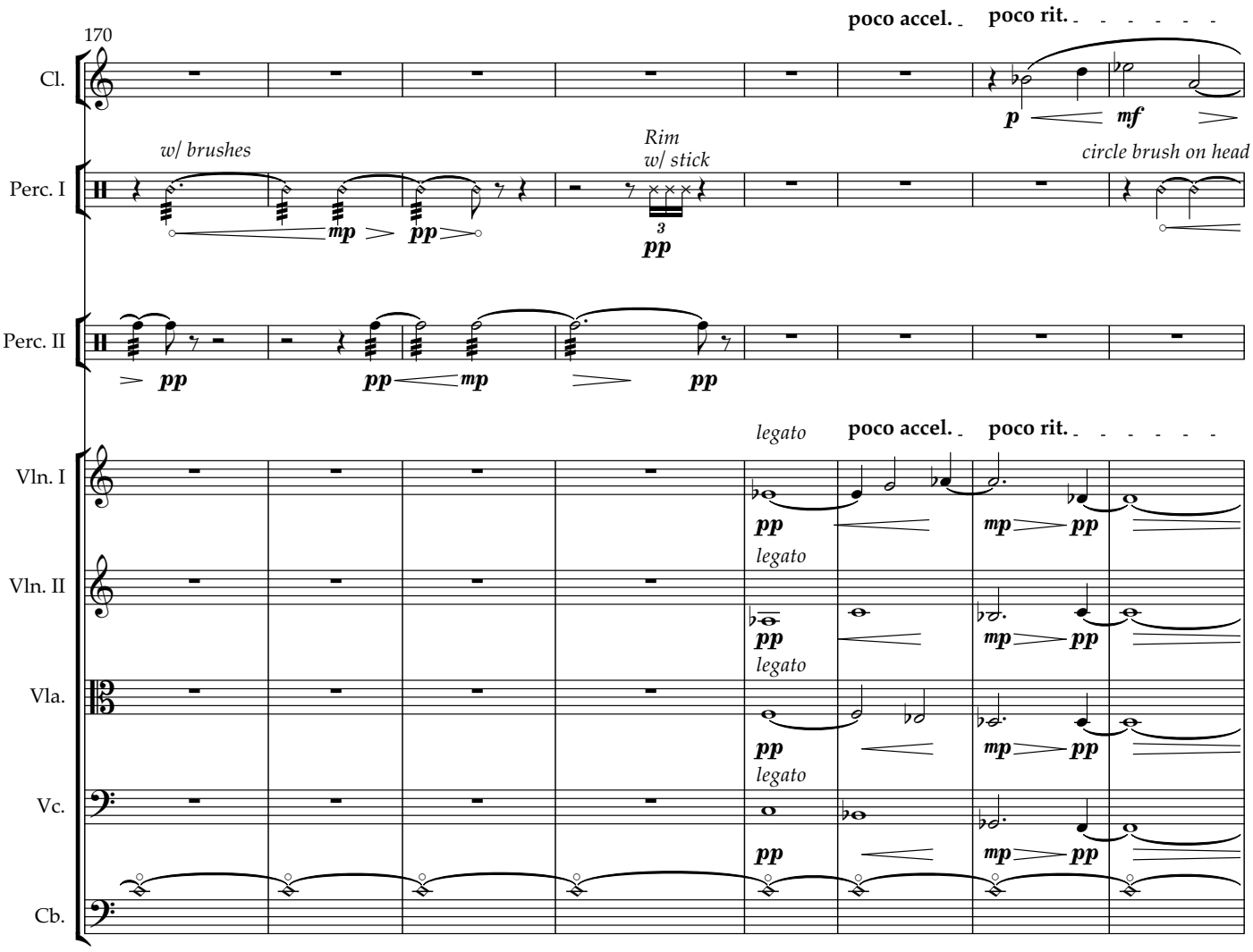

158
To Fl.
Picc.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc. I
Perc. II
simile
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf
f
p


L
♩ = 80 Peaceful
162
Bsn.
Tbn.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Vib.
Vc.
Cb.
p
fff
S.D.
circle brush on head
mp
pp
Rim
w/ stick
3
pp
l.v.
Sus. Cym.
w/ yarn mallet
pp
mp
Gong
l.v.
mf
L
♩ = 80 Peaceful
Sul G
change bows subtly as needed
pp



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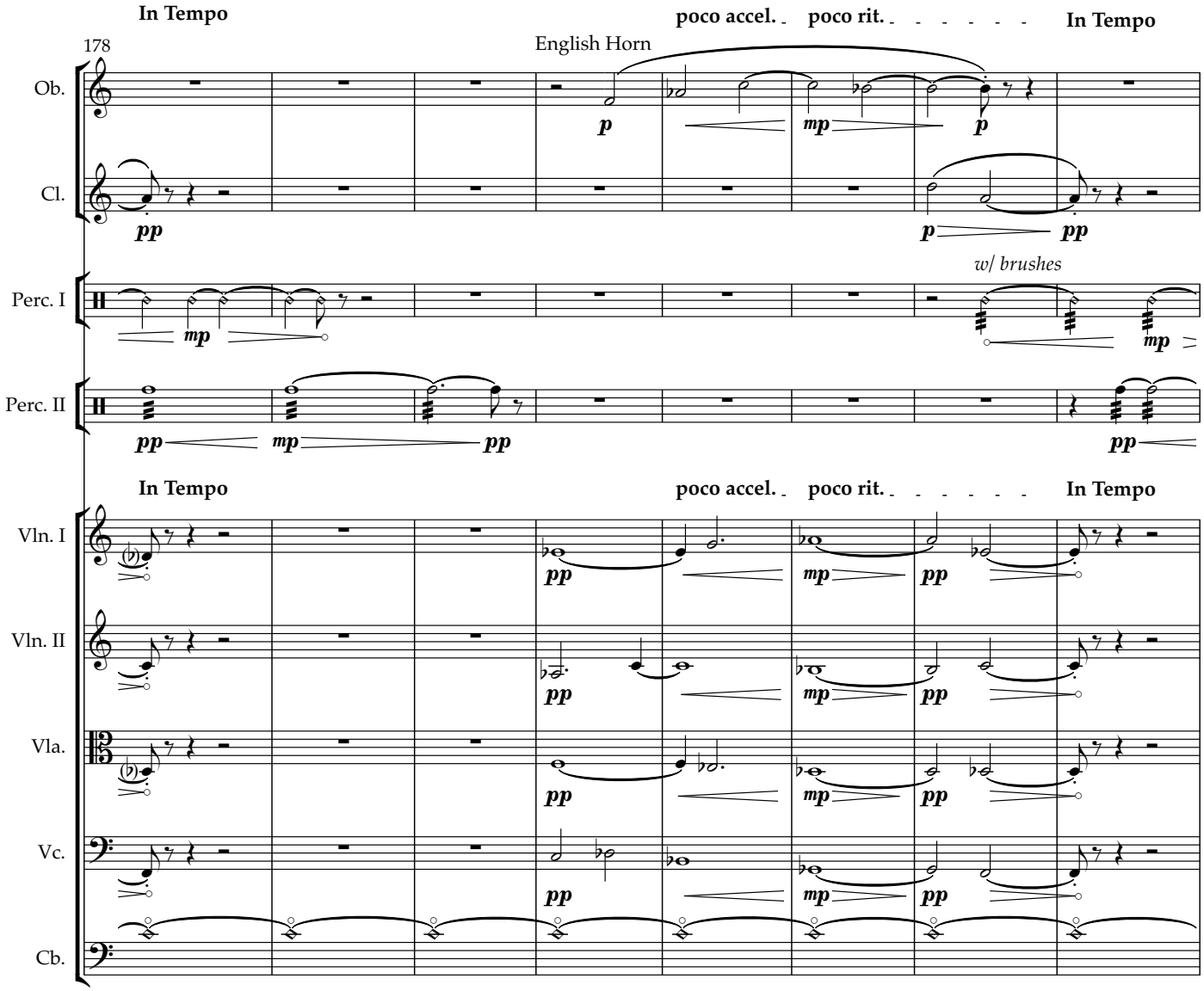
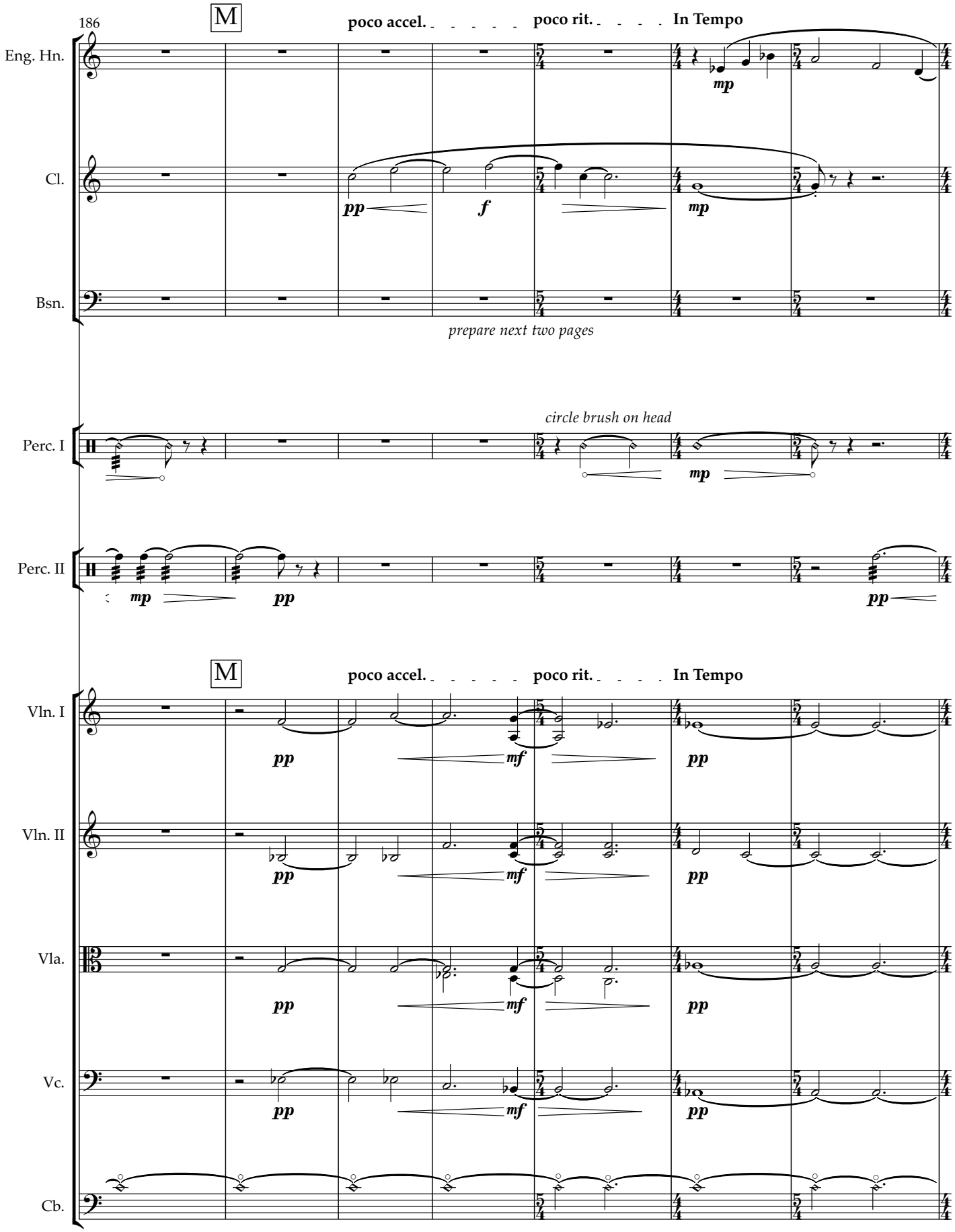

In Tempo
poco accel.
poco rit.
In Tempo
178
English Horn
Ob.
Cl.
Perc. I
w/ brushes
Perc. II
In Tempo
poco accel.
poco rit.
In Tempo
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.



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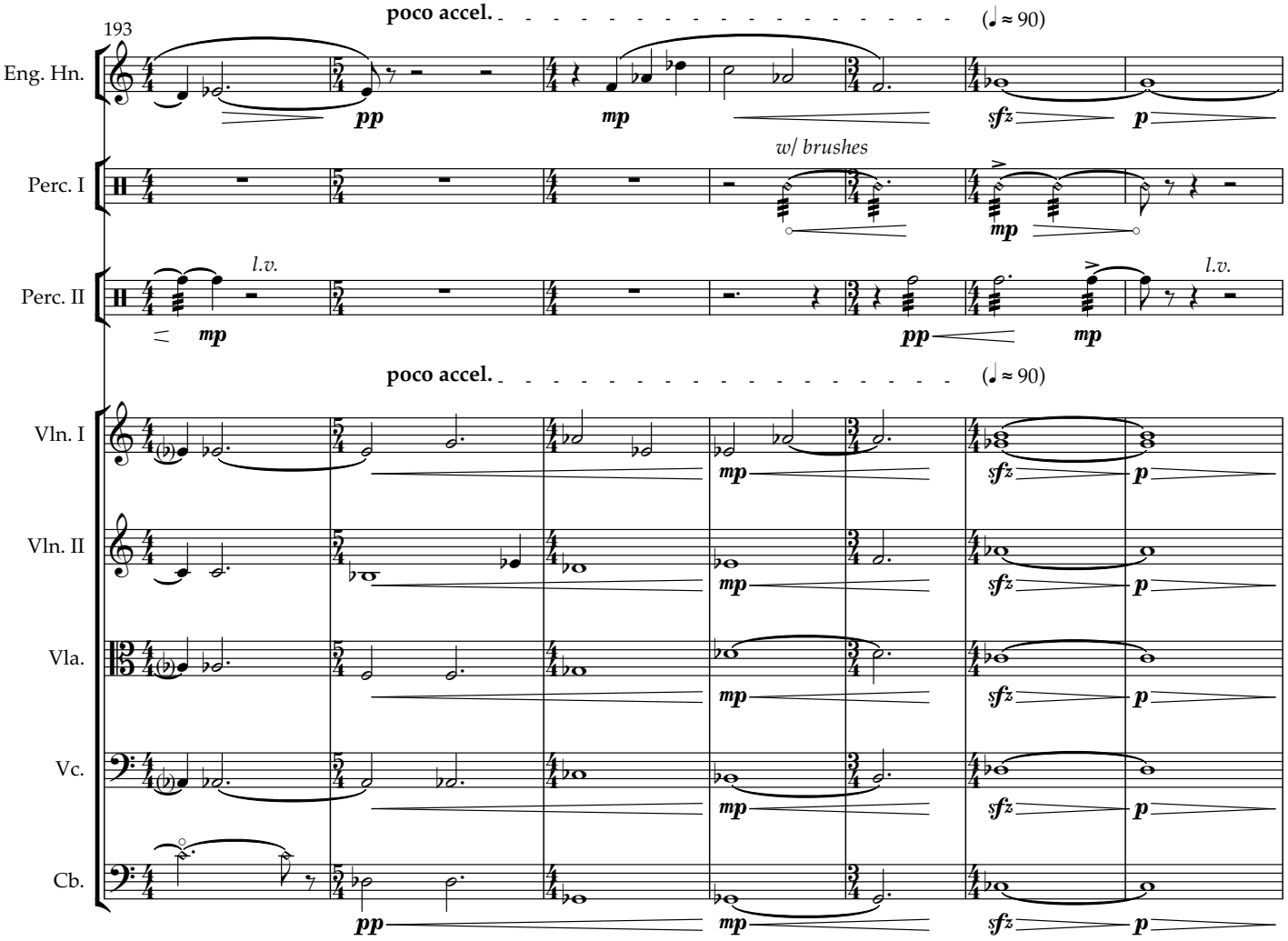
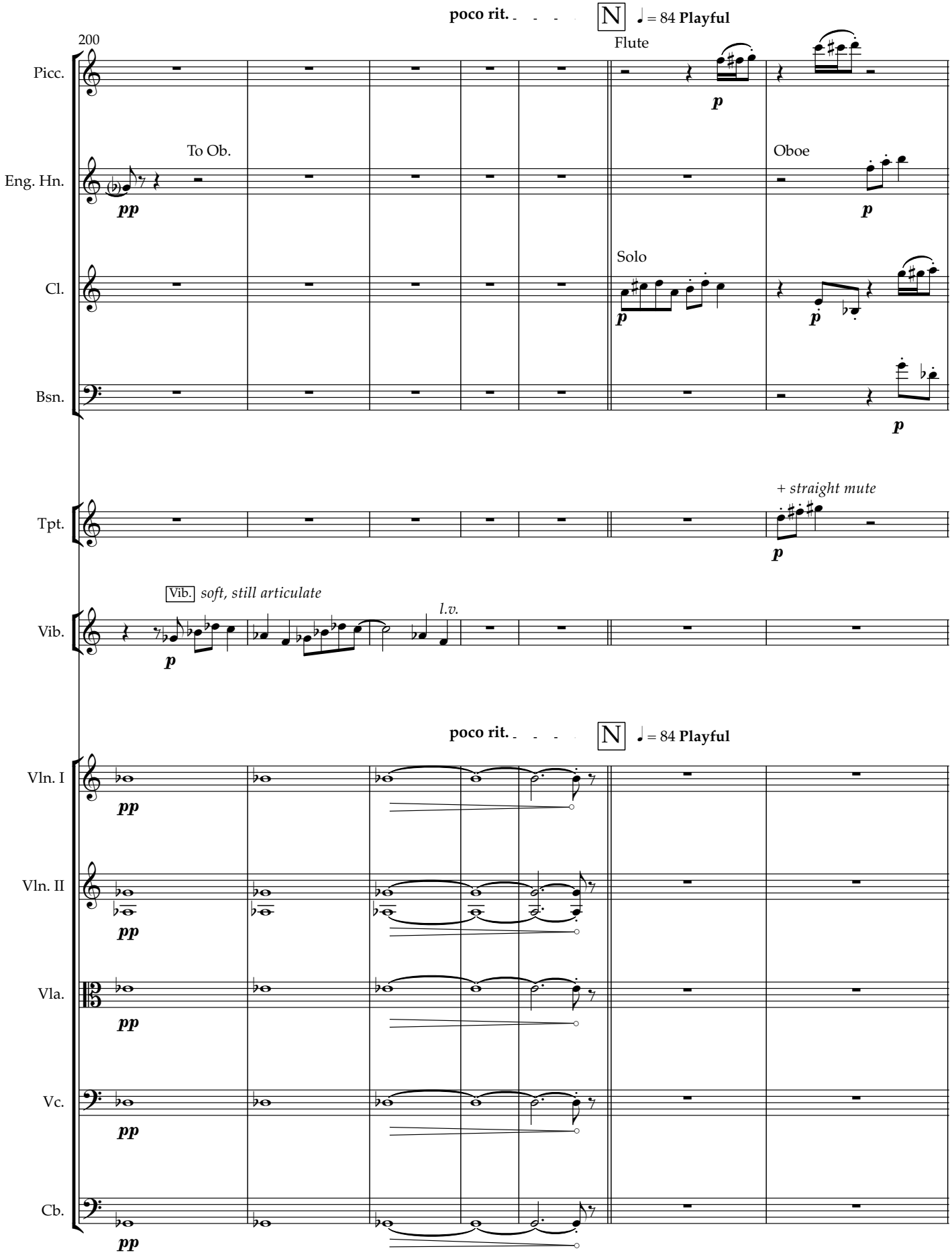

193
poco accel.
(♩≈90)
Eng. Hn.
pp
mp
sfz
p
w/ brushes
Perc. I
mp
Perc. II
l.v.
mp
pp
mp
l.v.
poco accel.
(♩≈90)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
pp
mp
sfz
p



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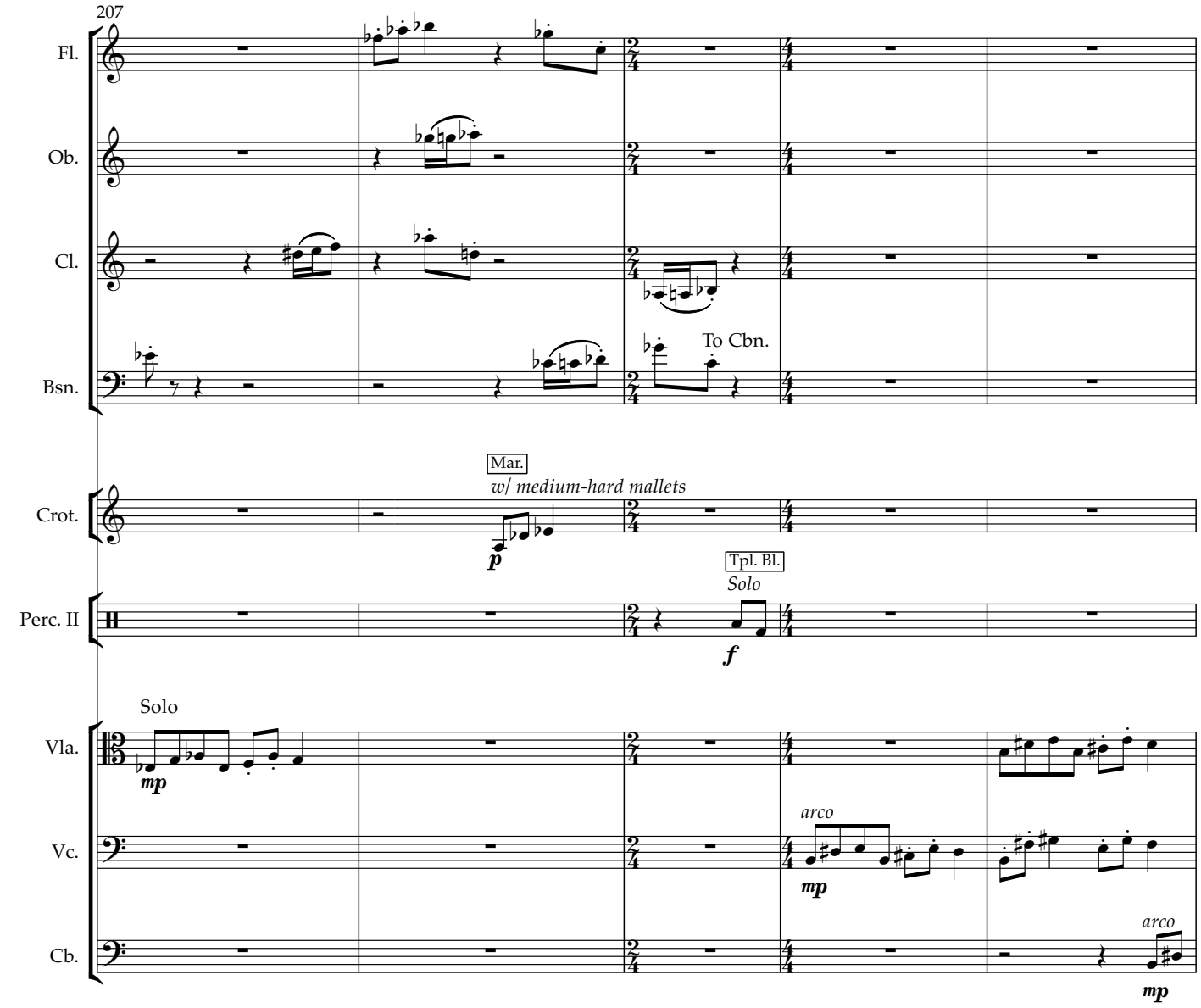
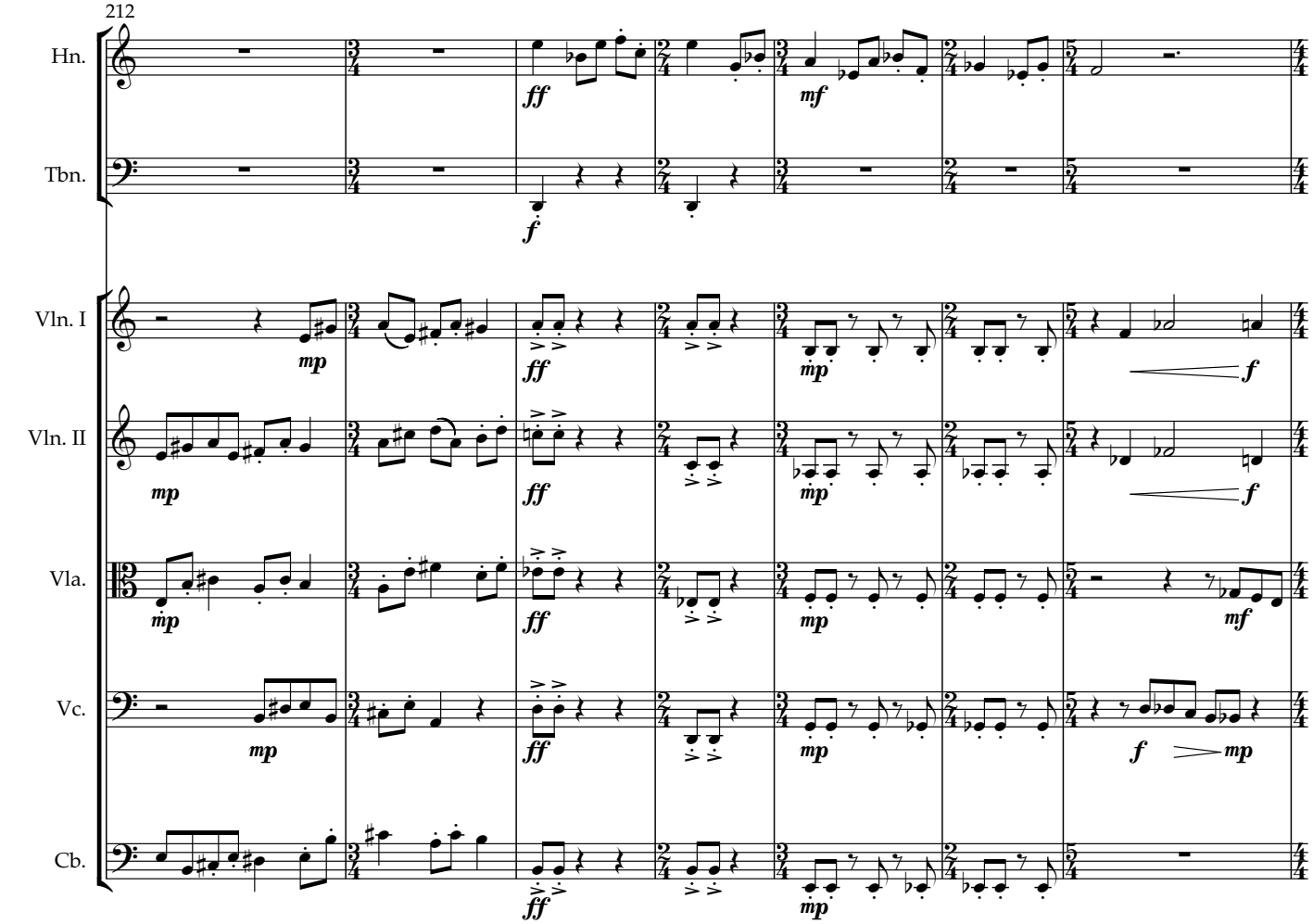
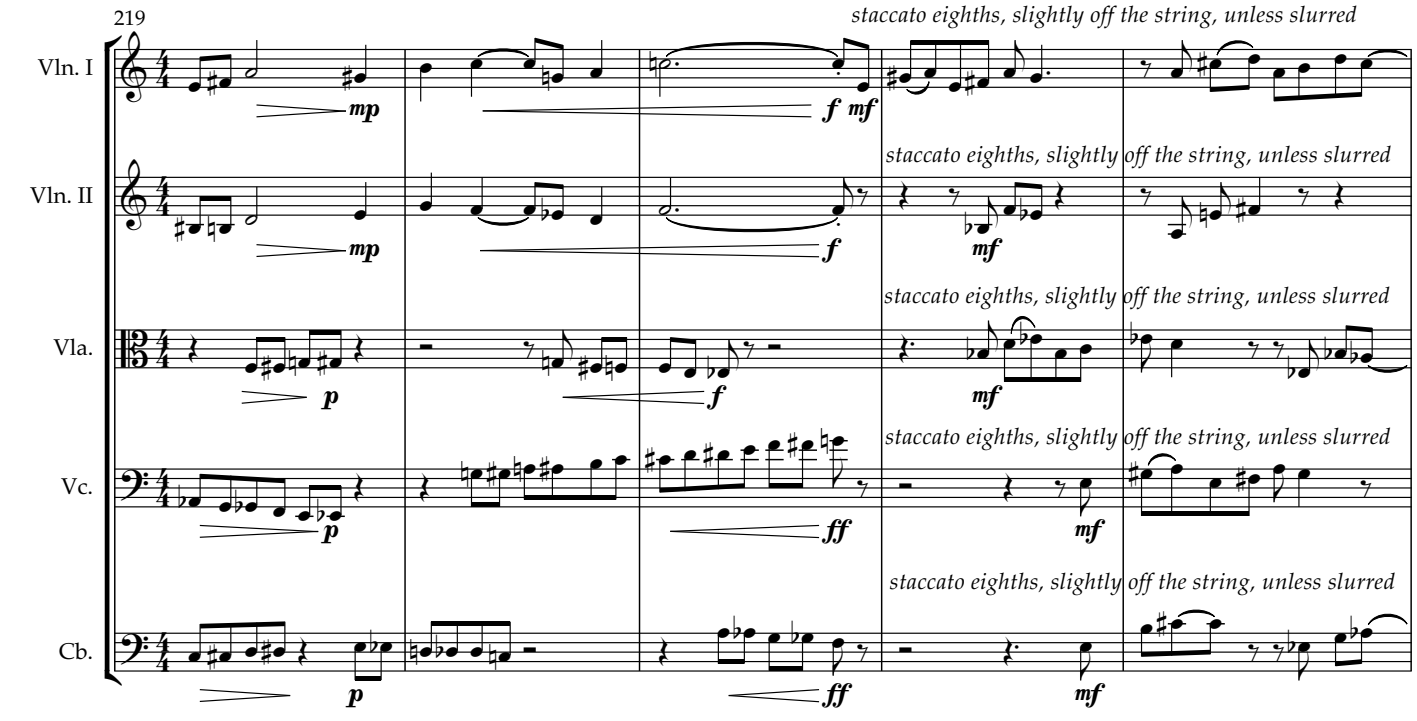
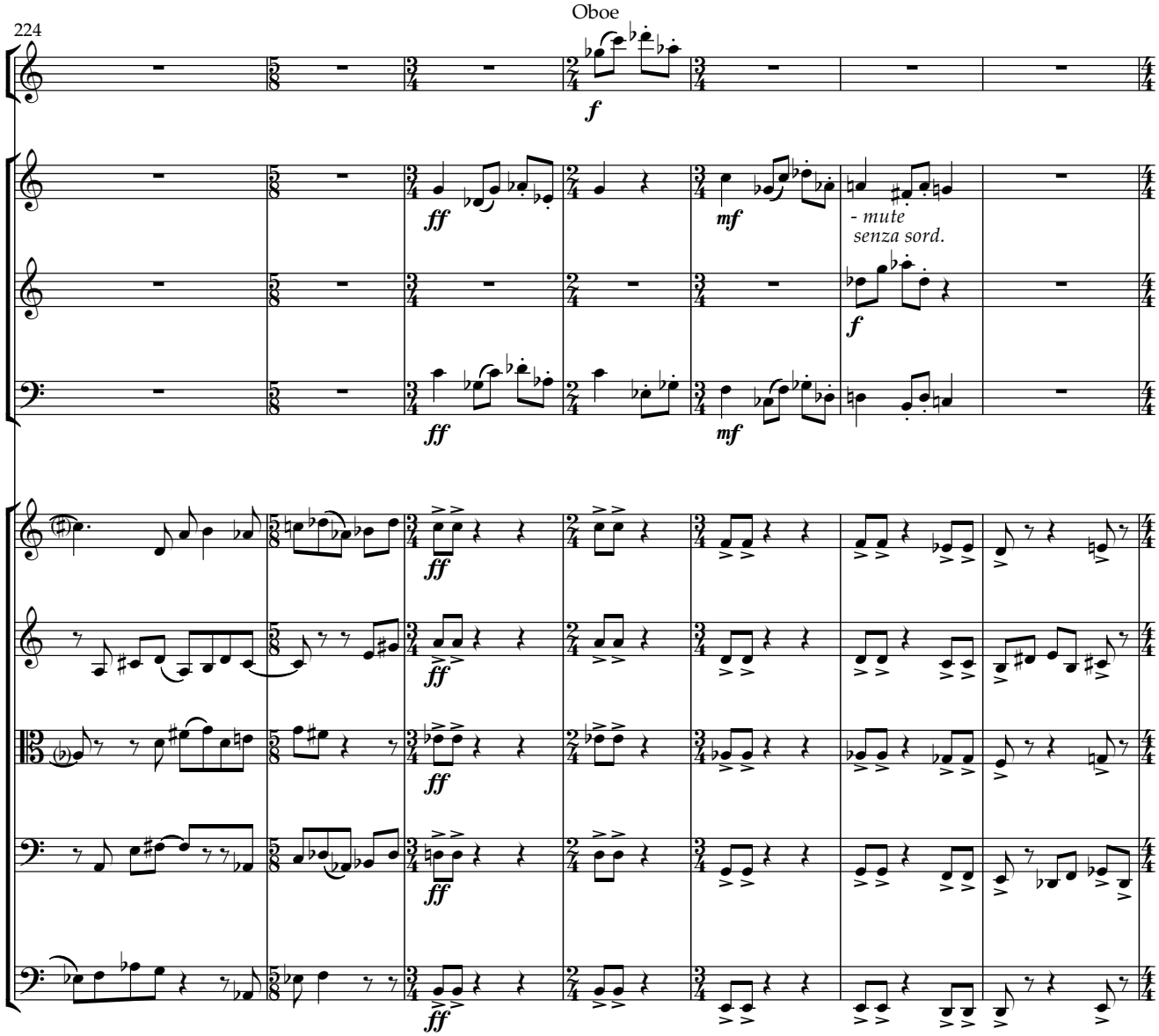

207
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
To Cbn.
Mar.
w/ medium-hard mallets
Crot.
p
Tpl. Bl.
Solo
Perc. II
f
Solo
Vla.
mp
arco
Vc.
mp
arco
Cb.
mp


212
Hn.
Tbn.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.


219
staccato eighths, slightly off the string, unless slurred
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.



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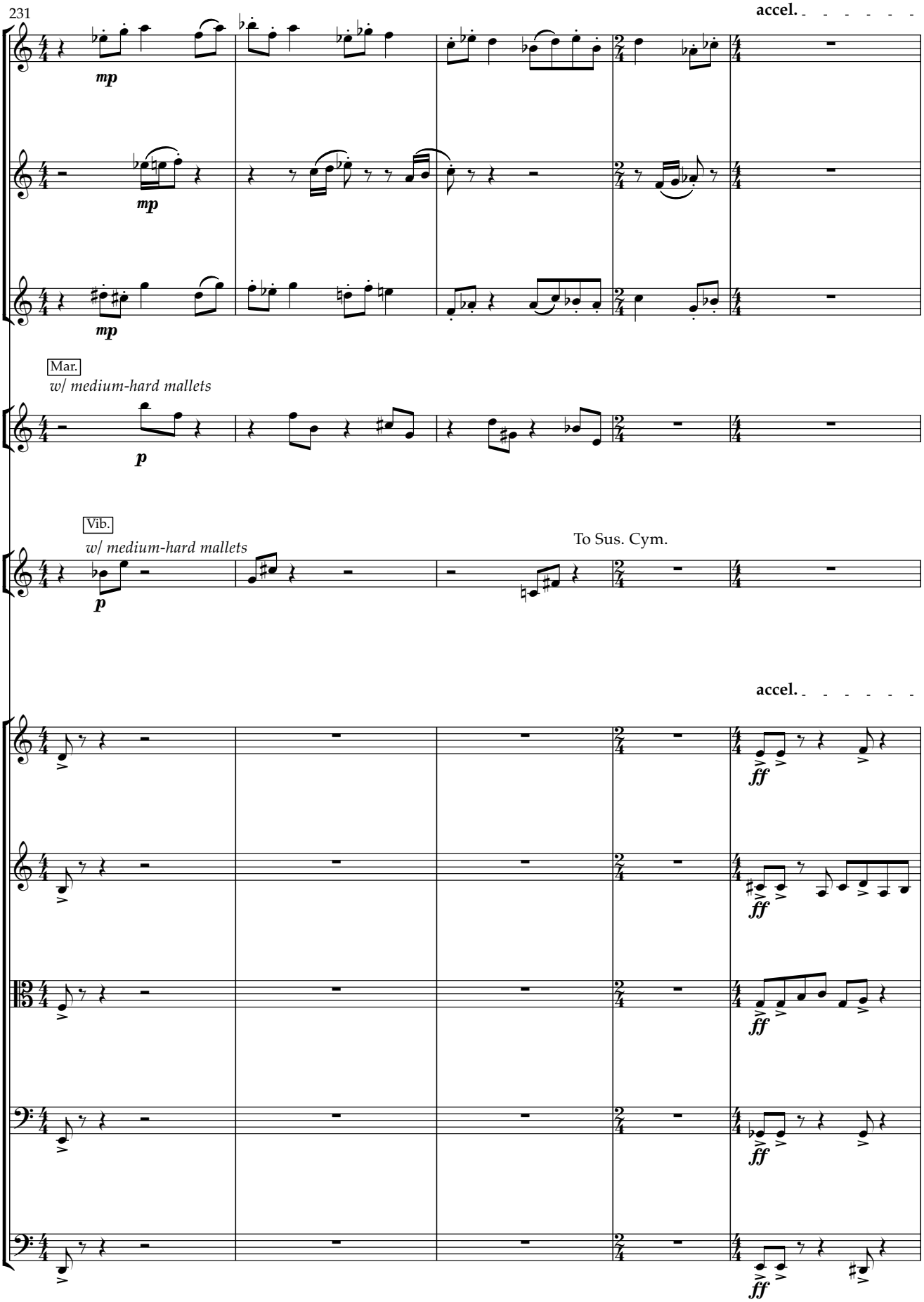
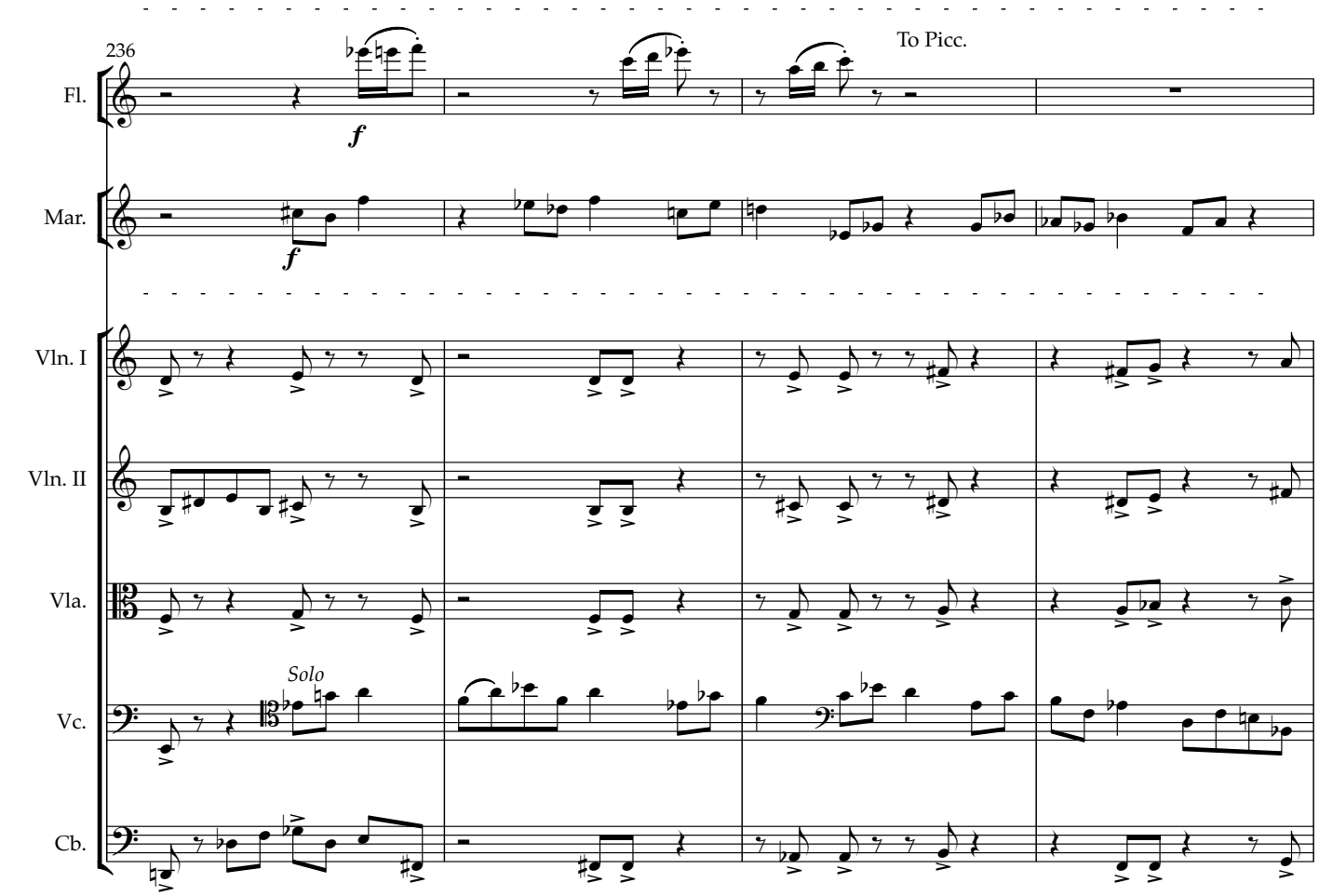
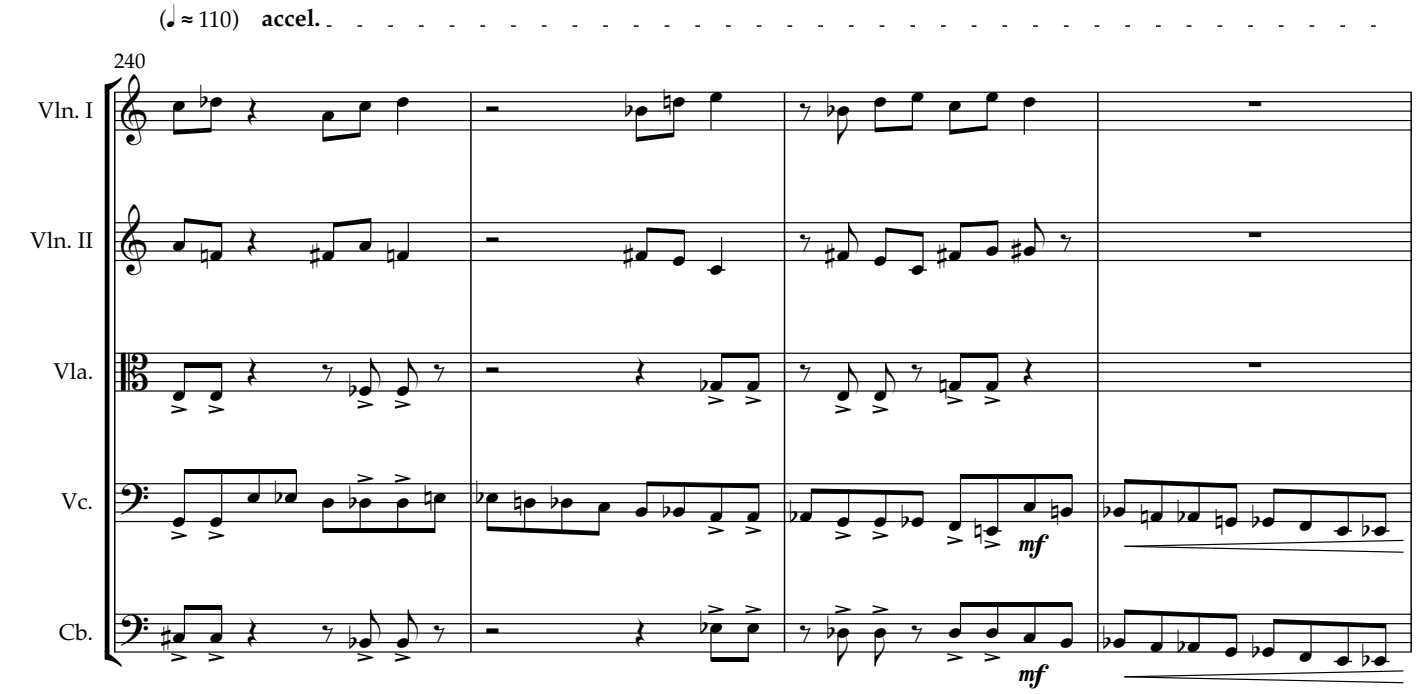
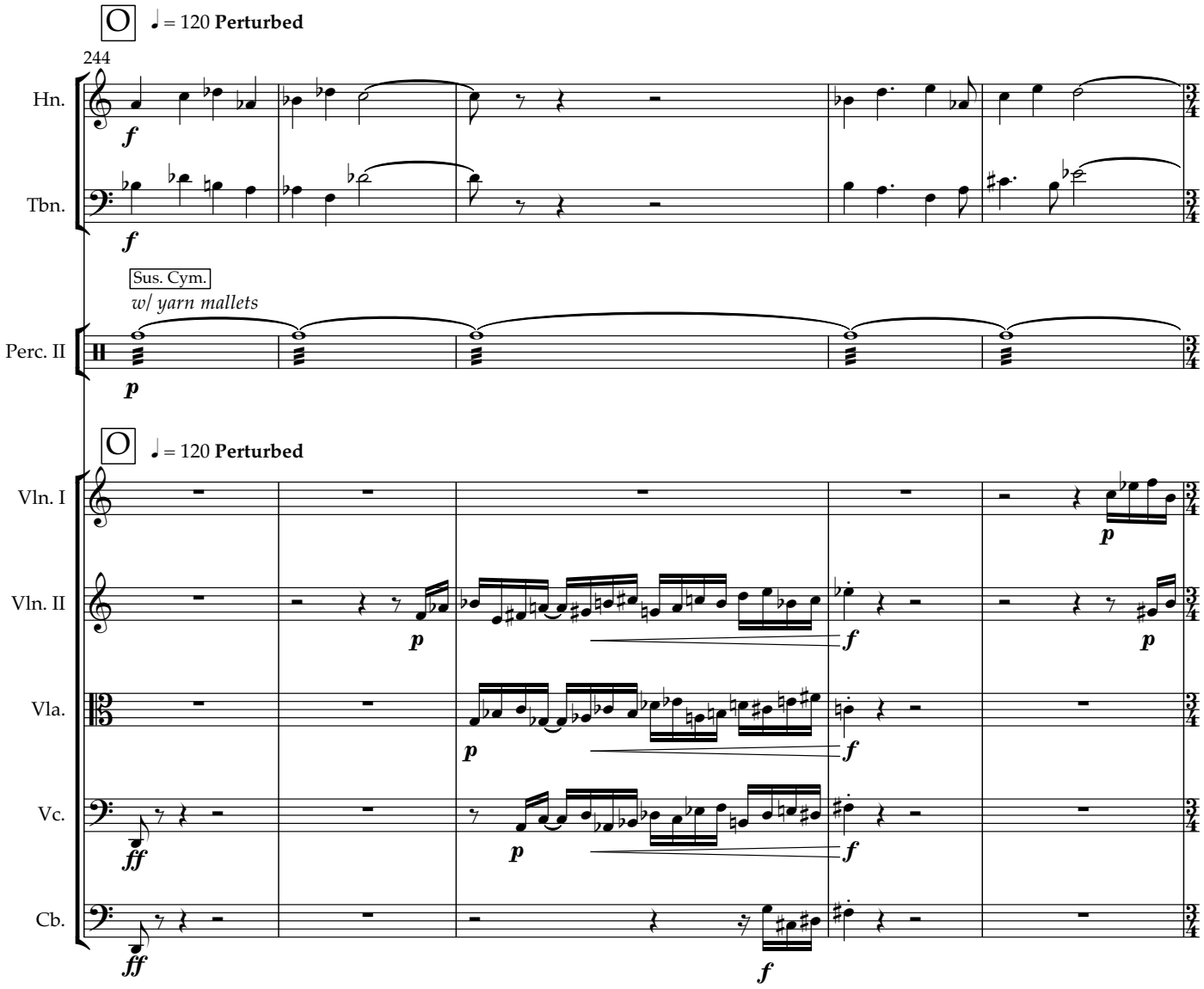
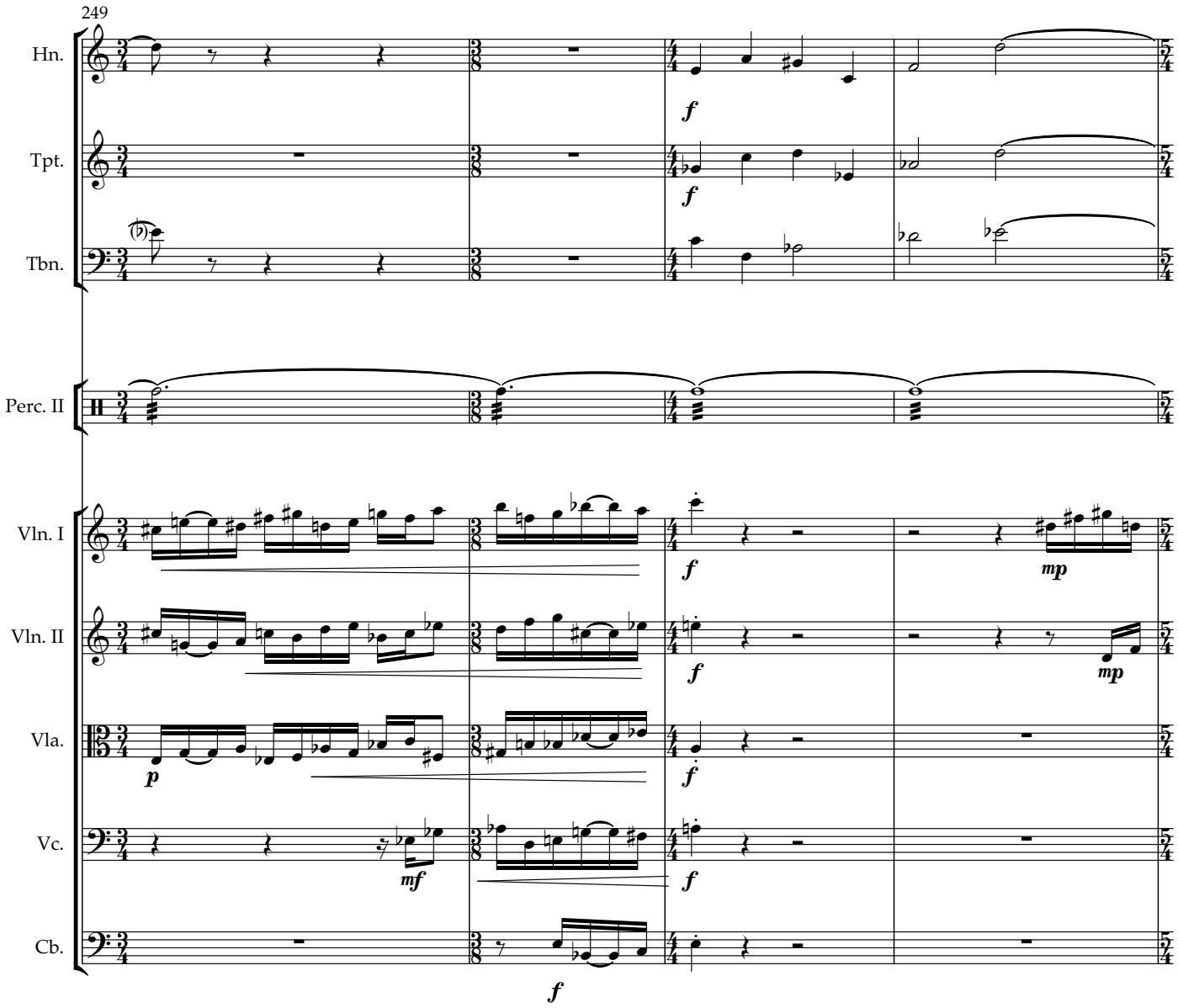
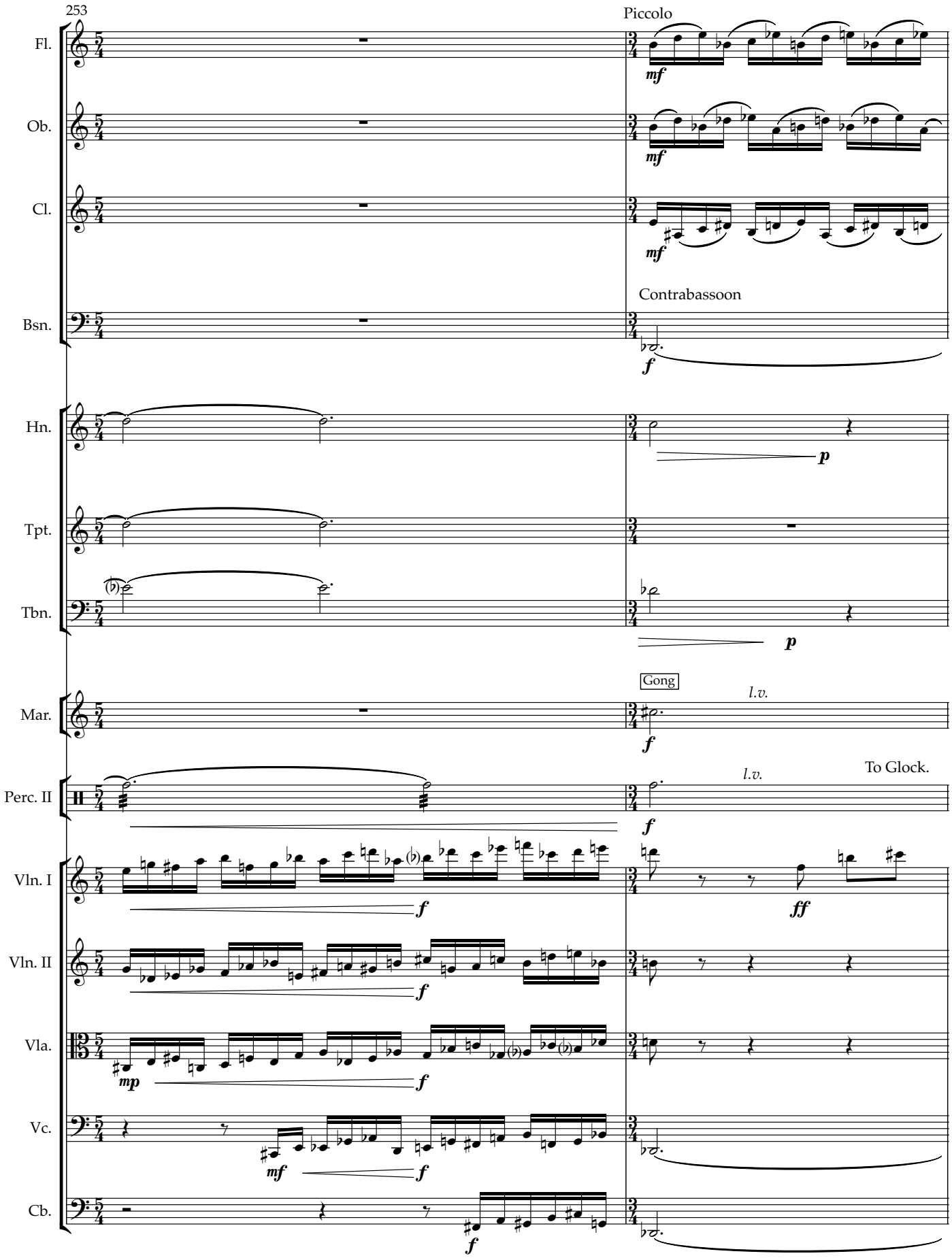

231
accel.
Fl.
mp
Ob.
mp
Cl.
mp
Mar.
w/ medium-hard mallets
Mar.
p
Vib.
w/ medium-hard mallets
Vib.
p
To Sus. Cym.
accel.
Vln. I
ff
Vln. II
ff
Vla.
ff
Vc.
ff
Cb.
ff

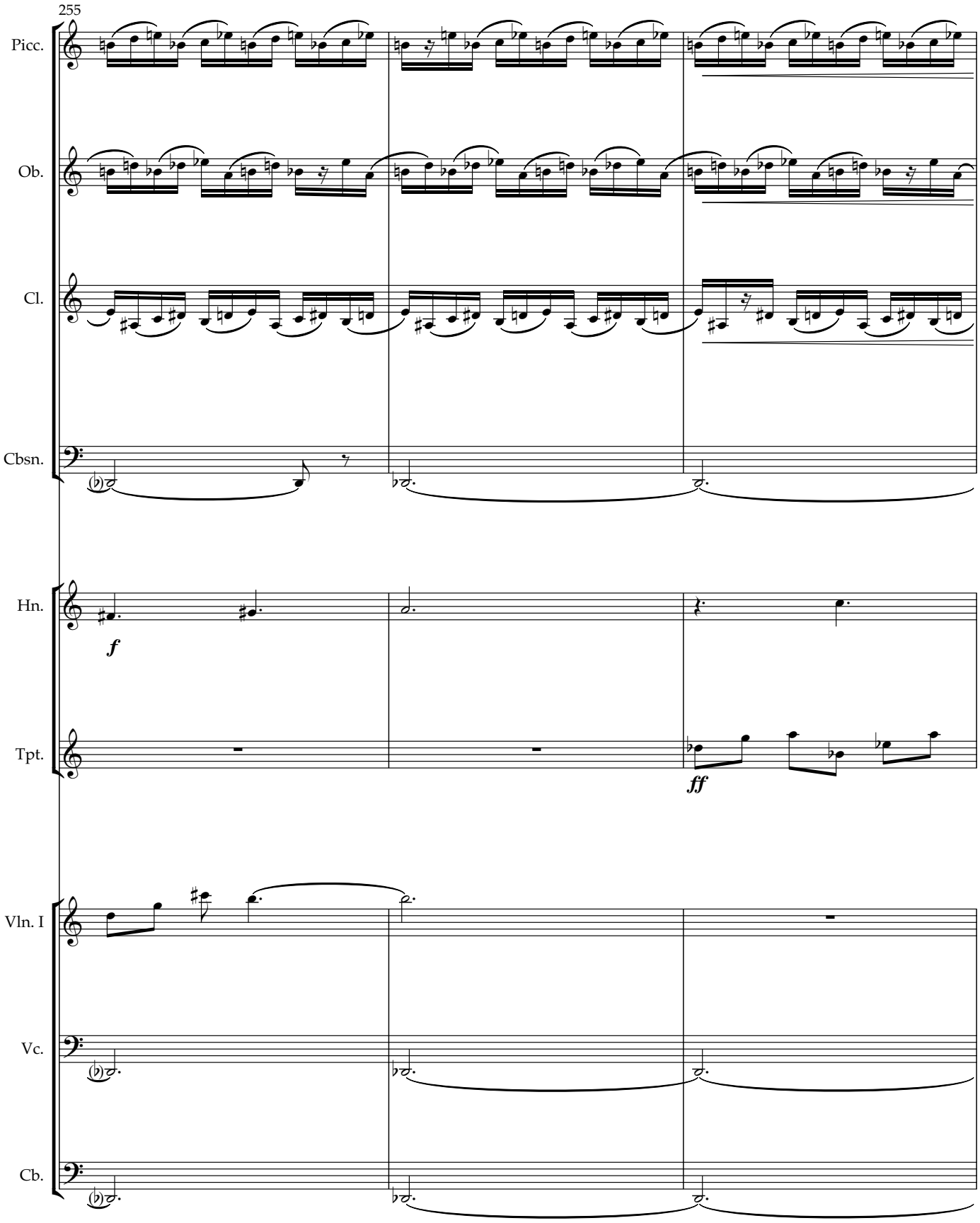

236
To Picc.
Fl.
Mar.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Solo
Vc.
Cb.


(♩ ≈ 110) accel.
240
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
Cb.
mf


244
Hn.
Tbn.
Sus. Cym.
w/ yarn mallets
Perc. II
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
♩ = 120 Perturbed
♩ = 120 Perturbed


249
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc. II
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
f
mp
p
mf


253
Piccolo
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Contrabassoon
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Gong
l.v.
Mar.
l.v.
To Glock.
Perc. II
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.



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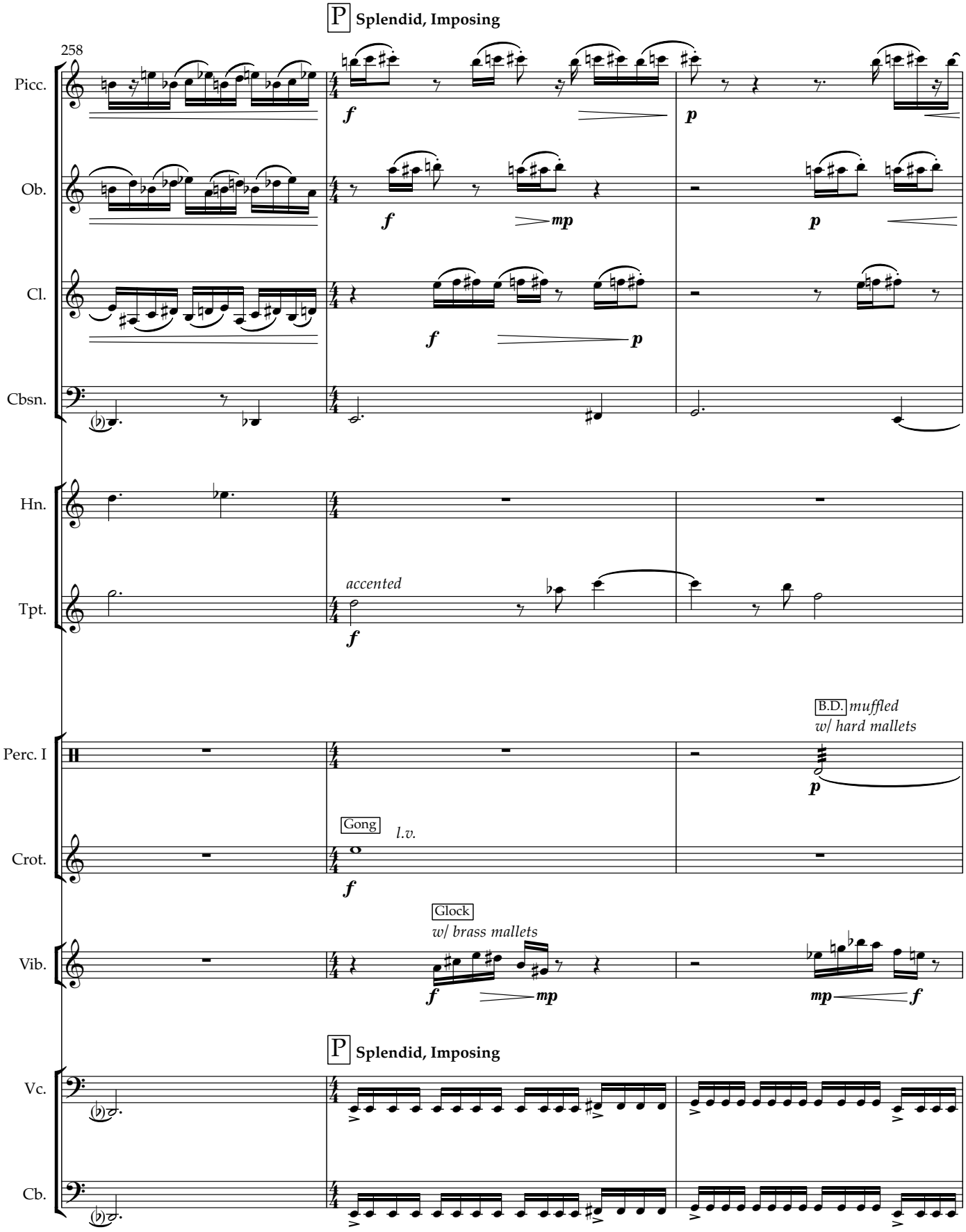

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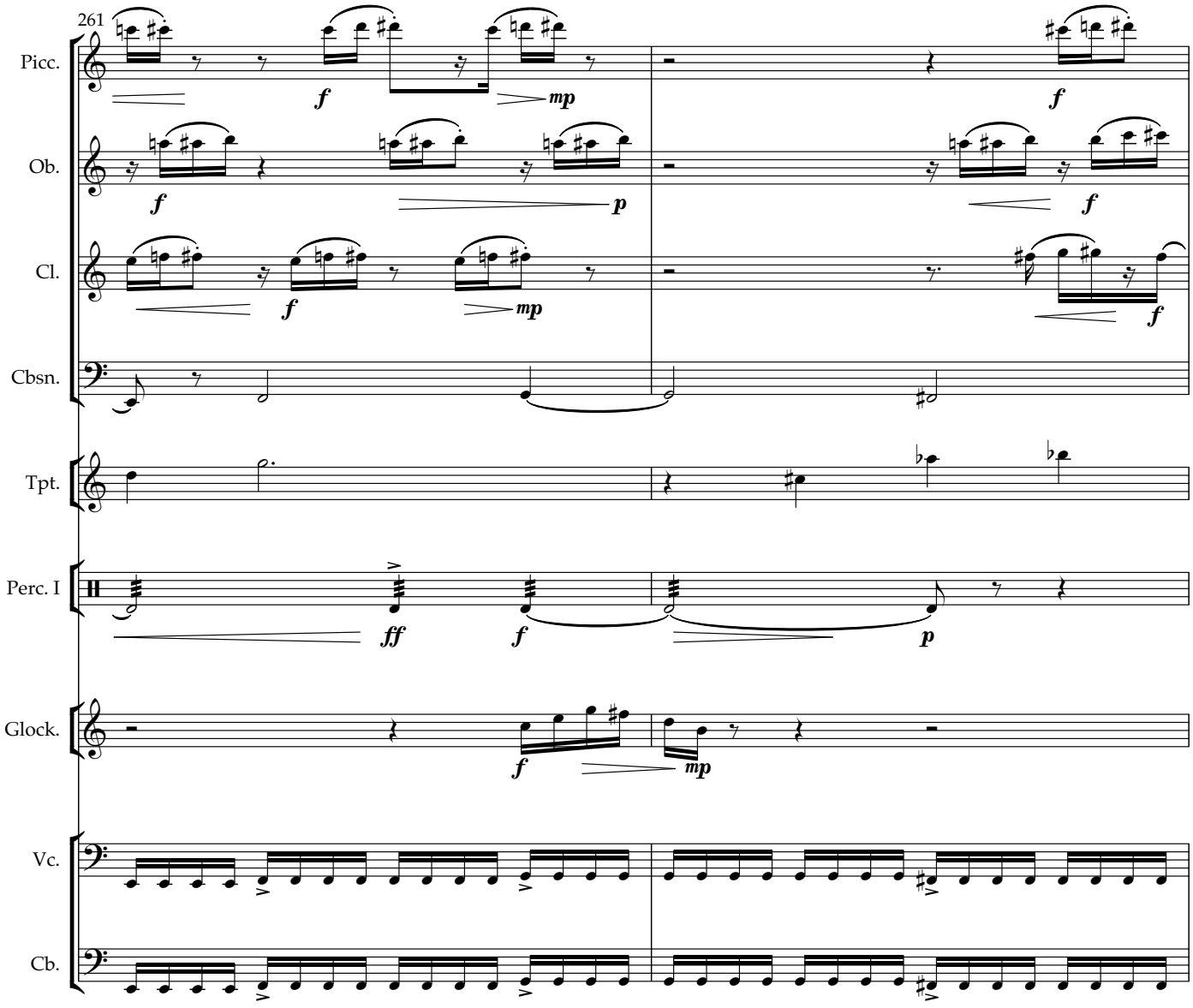
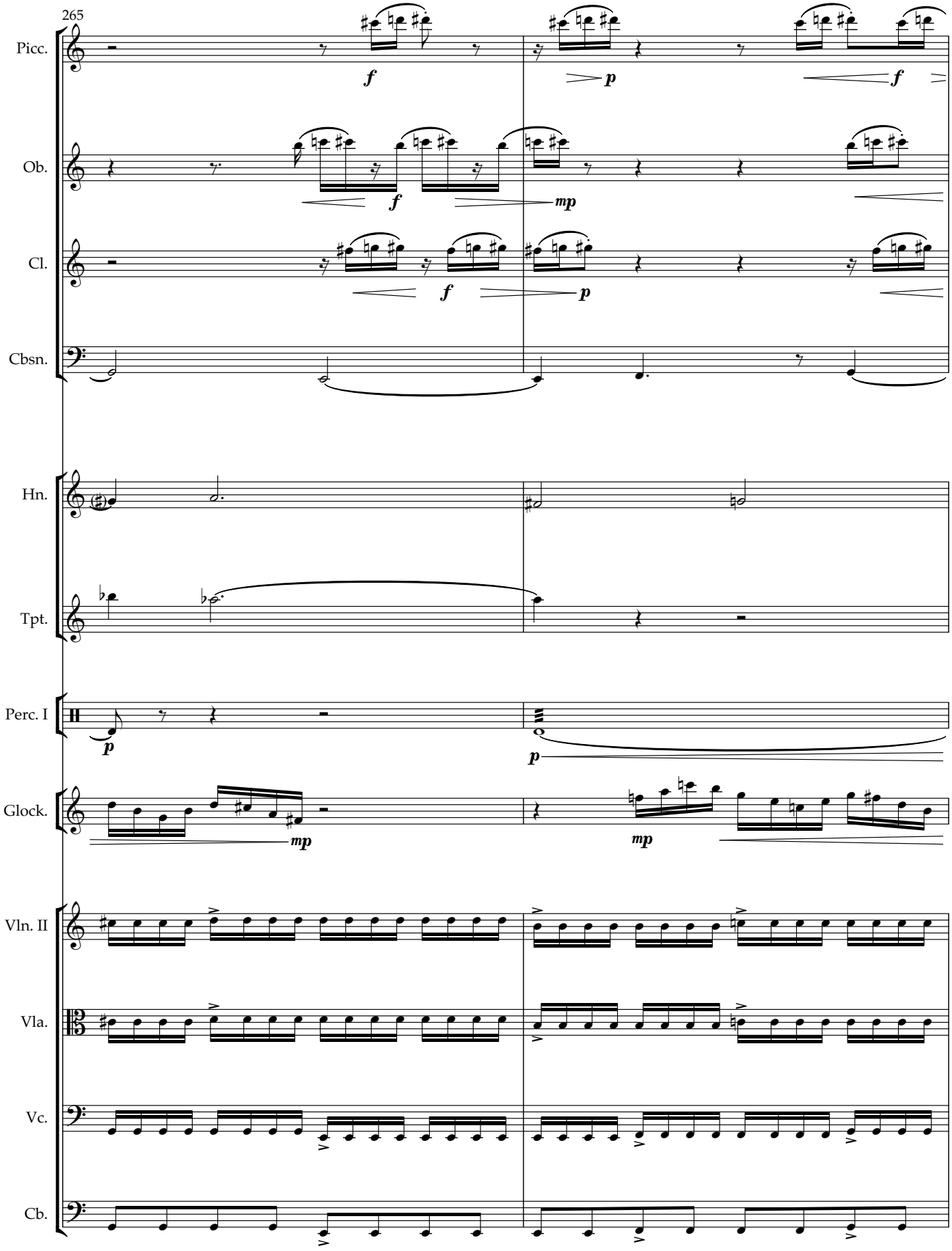
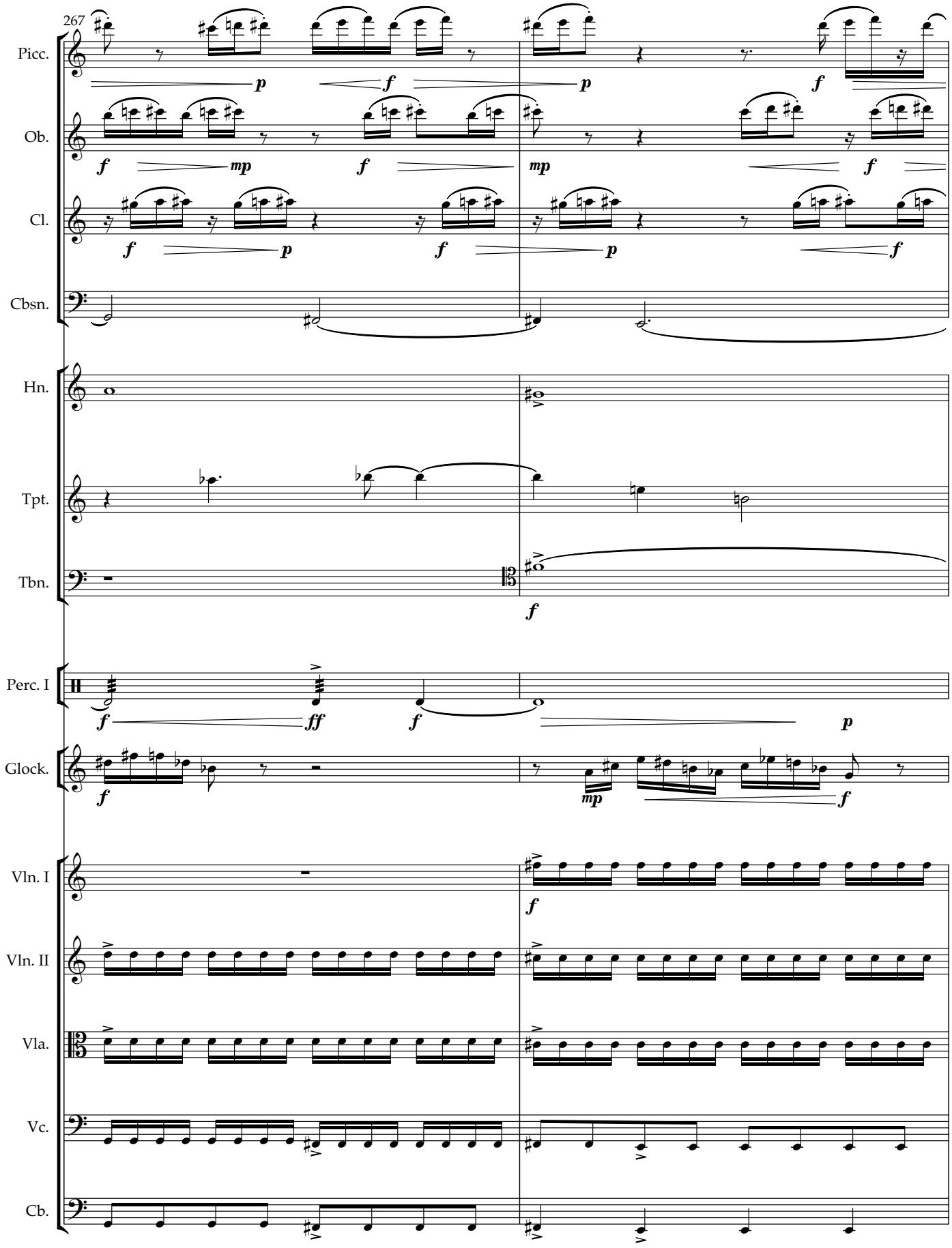
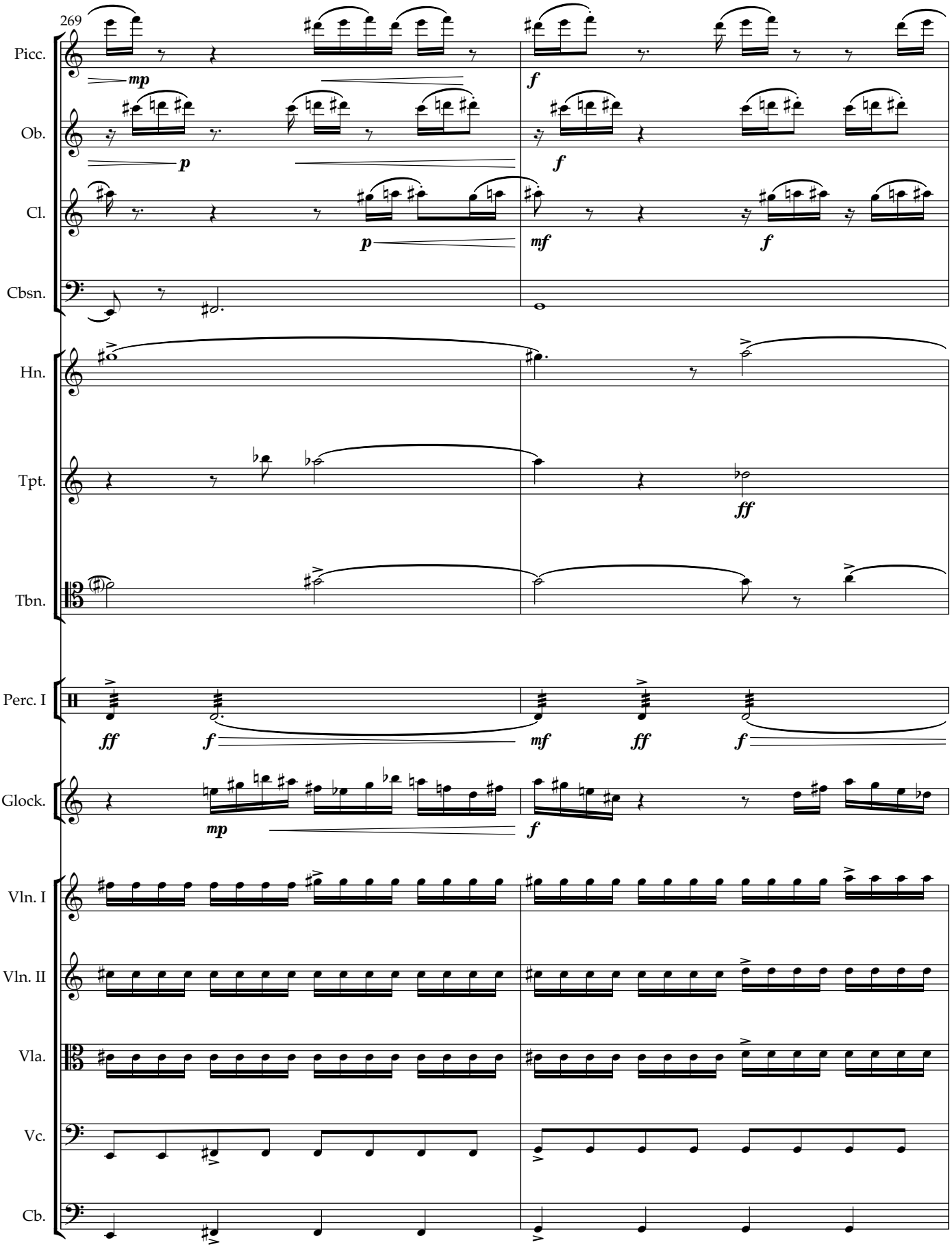

261
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Cbsn.
Tpt.
Perc. I
Glock.
Vc.
Cb.
f
mp
f
f
p
f
f
mp
f
ff
f
p
f
mp

263
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Perc. I
Glock.
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.


265
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Perc. I
Glock.
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
f
p
f
f
mp
f
p
p
p
mp
mp


267
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc. I
Glock.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.



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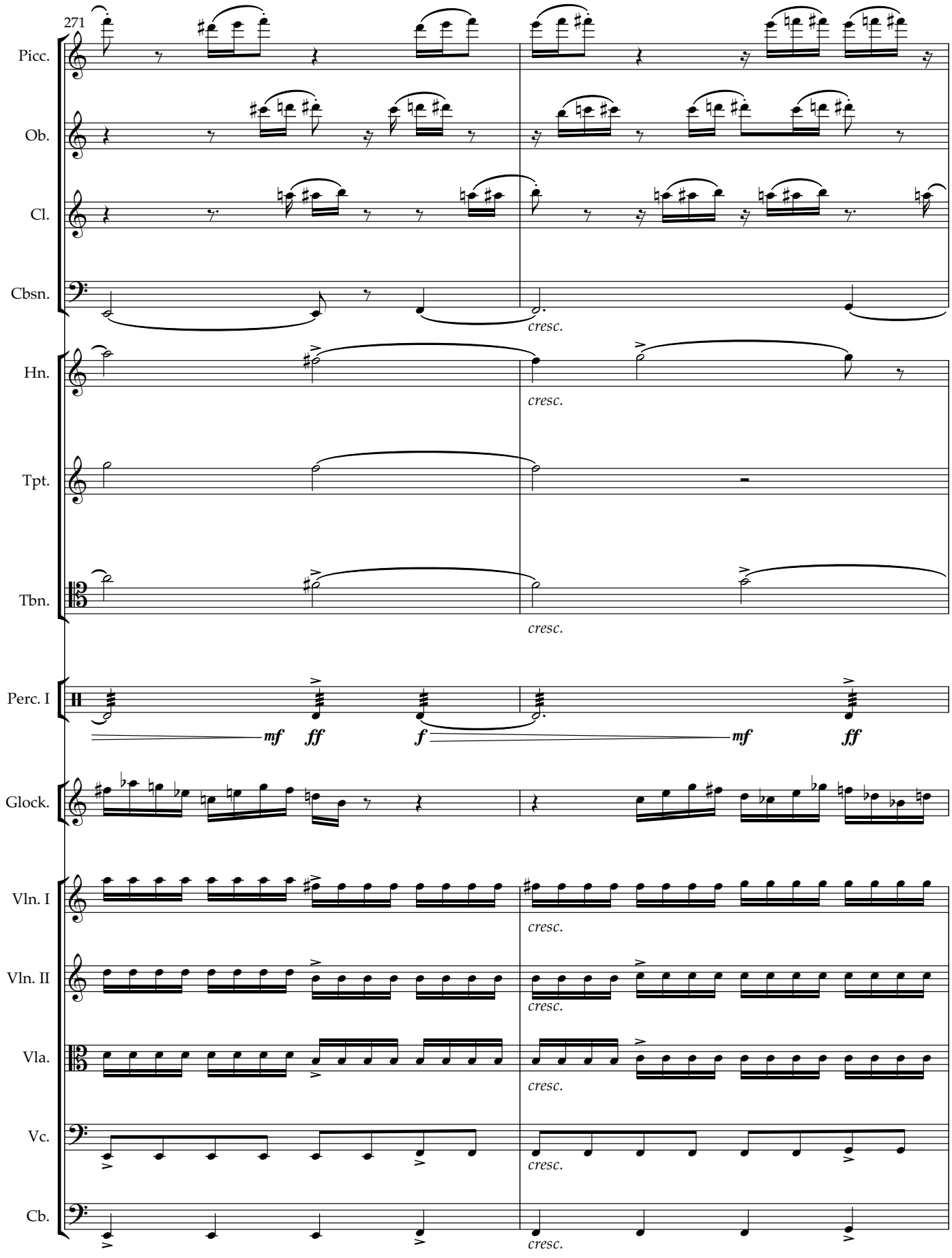
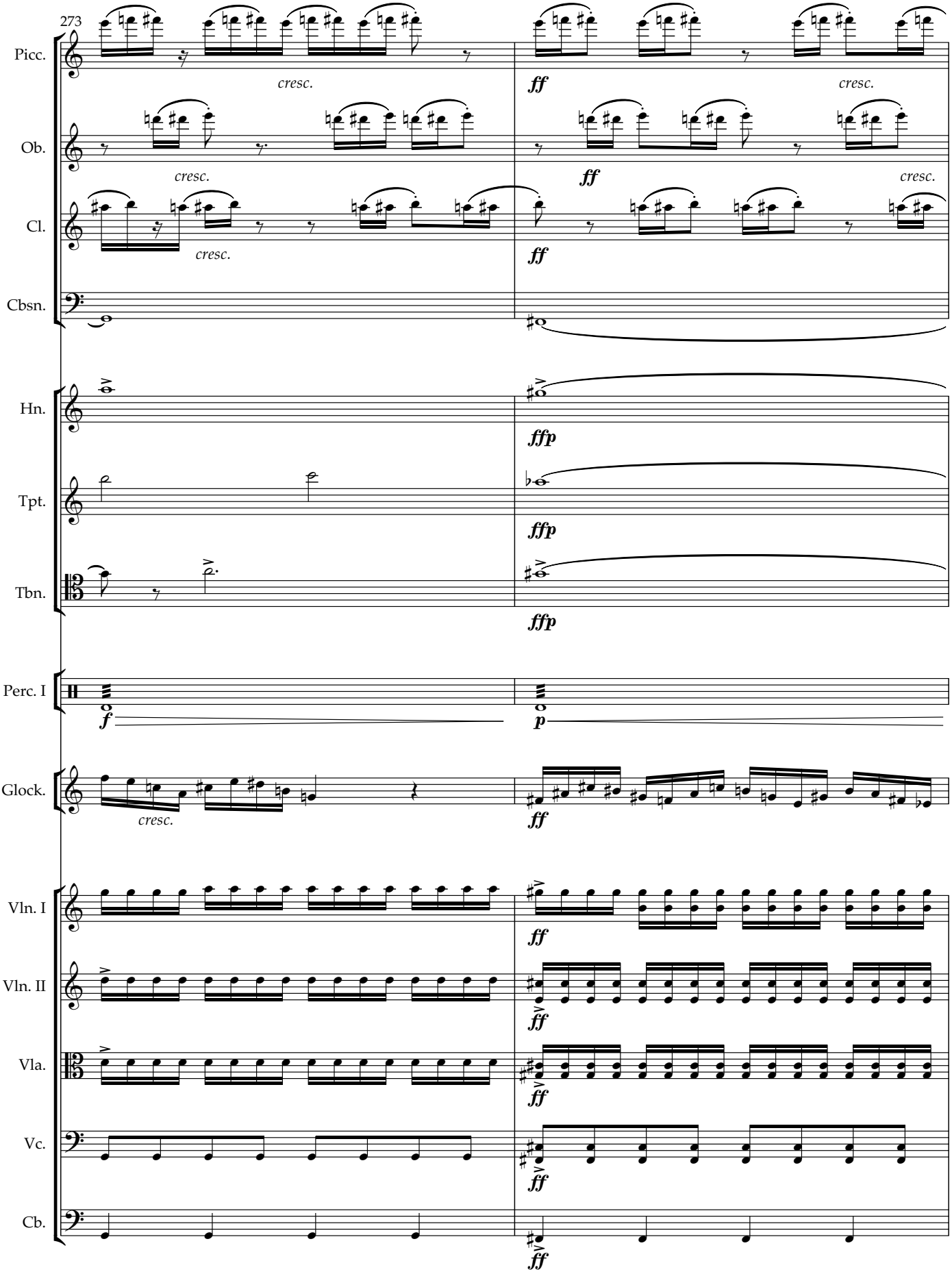

271
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc. I
Glock.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
cresc.
mf
ff
f
mf
ff



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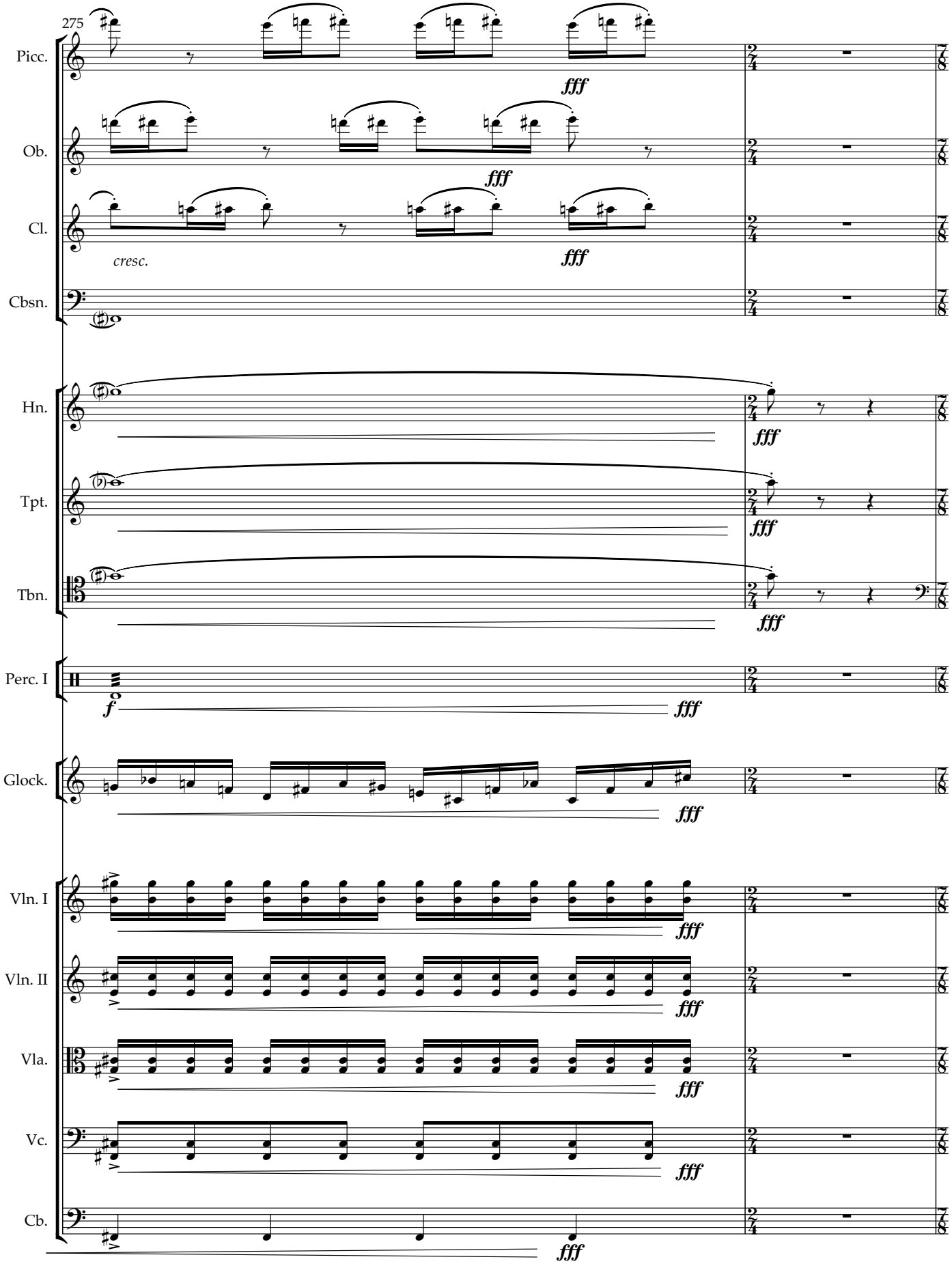

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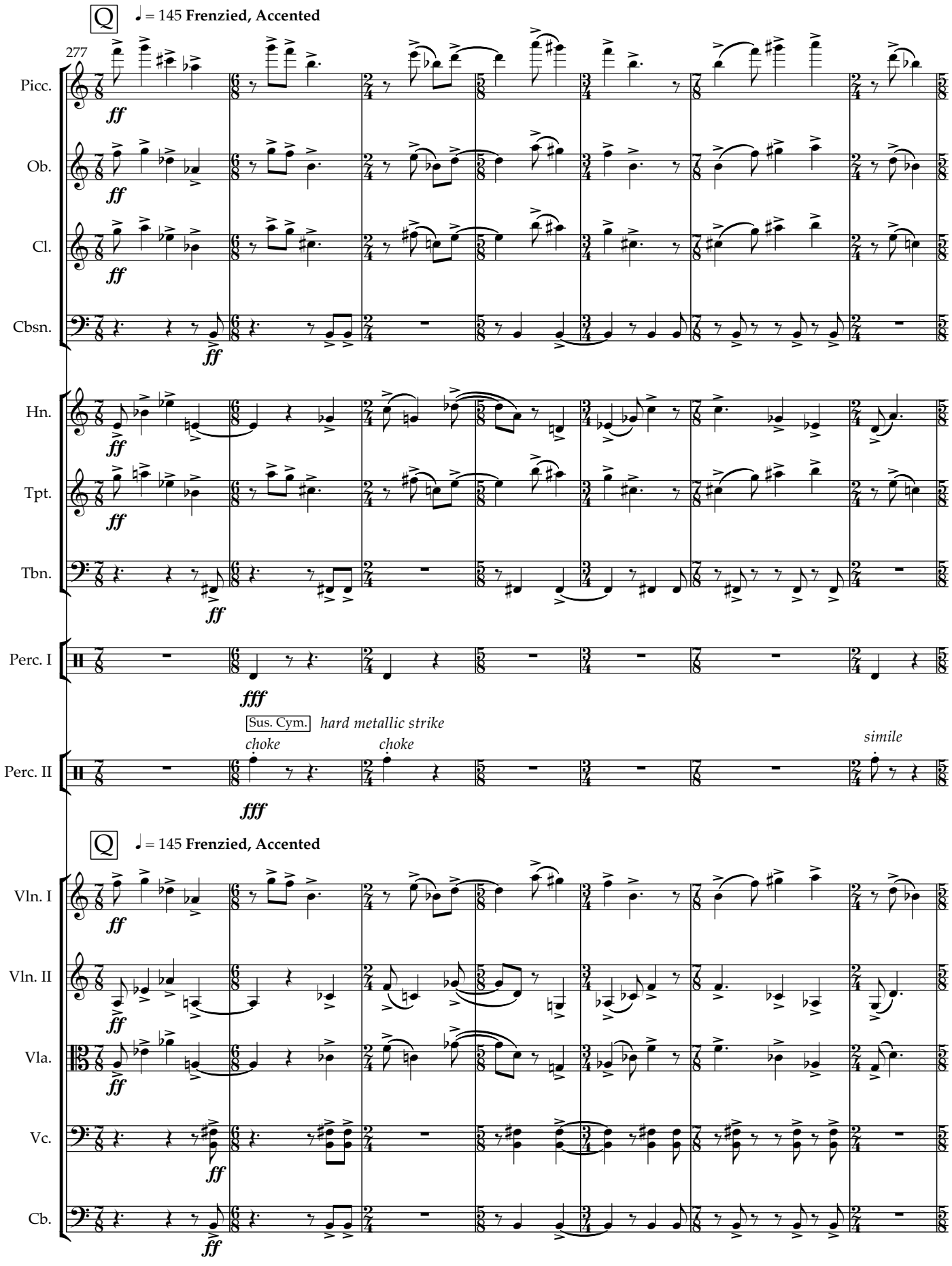
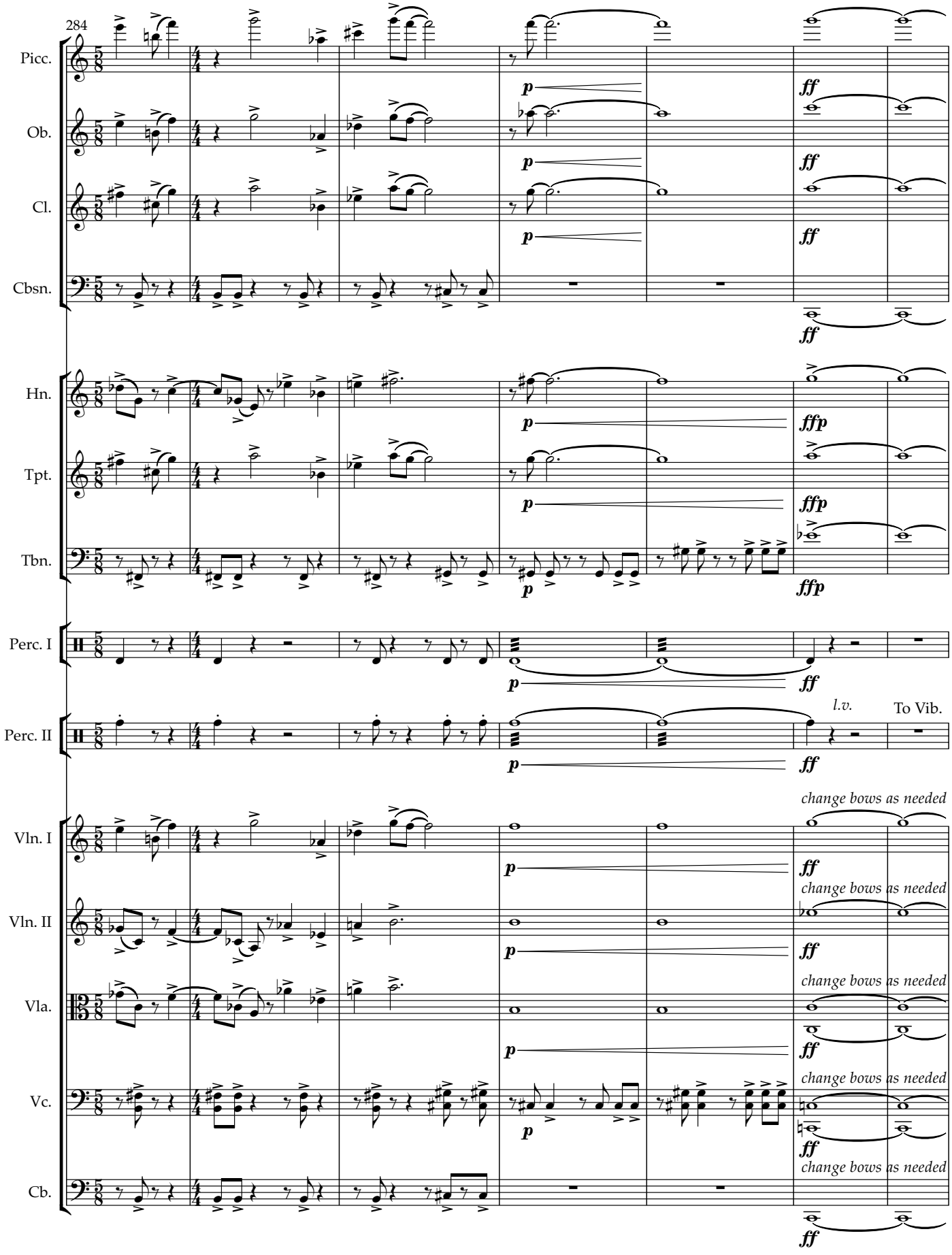
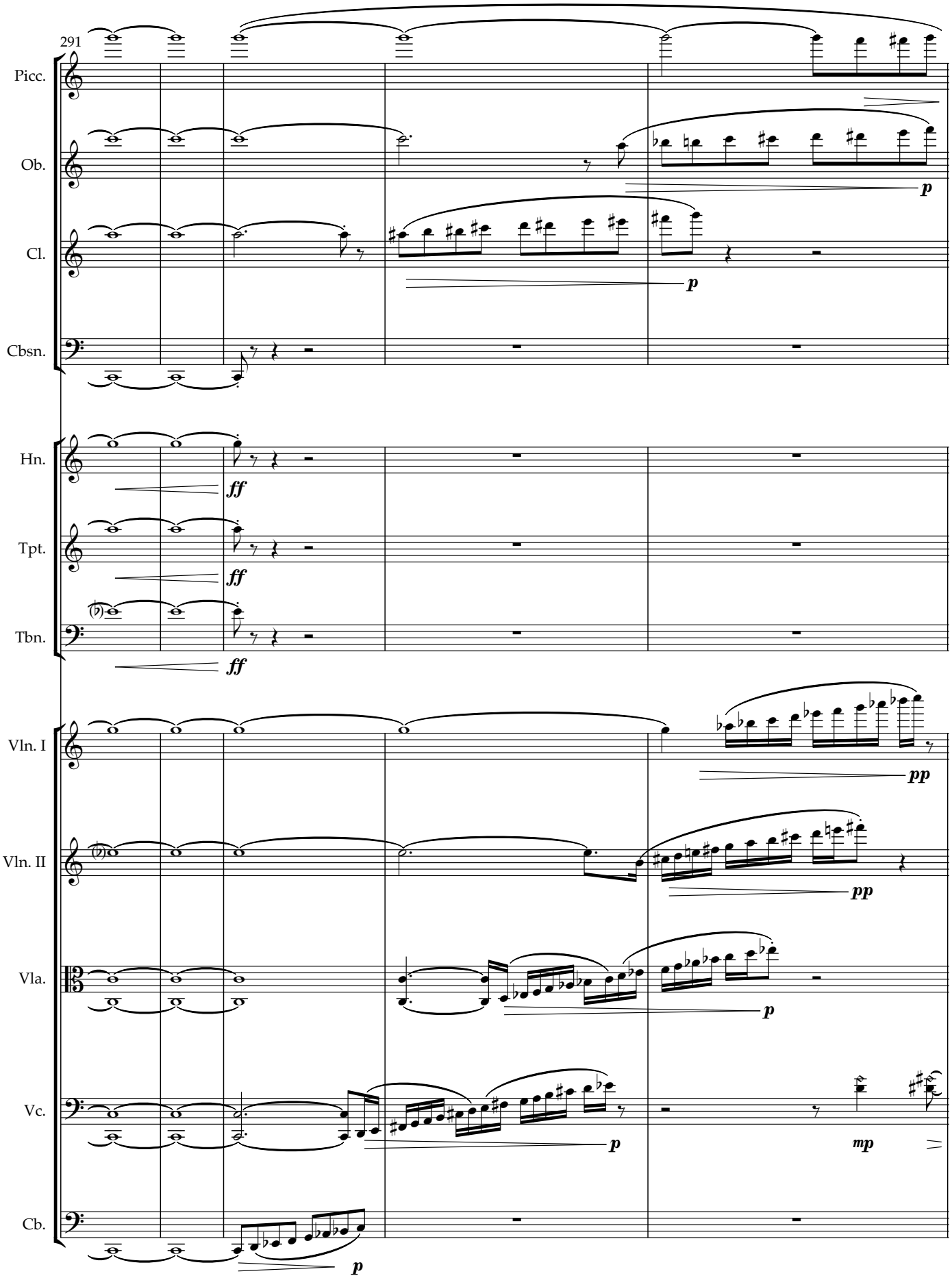

Q
♩ = 145 Frenzied, Accented
277
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Sus. Cym.
hard metallic strike
choke
choke
simile
Q
♩ = 145 Frenzied, Accented
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
ff
fff


284
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
p
ff
ffp
l.v.
To Vib.
change bows as needed



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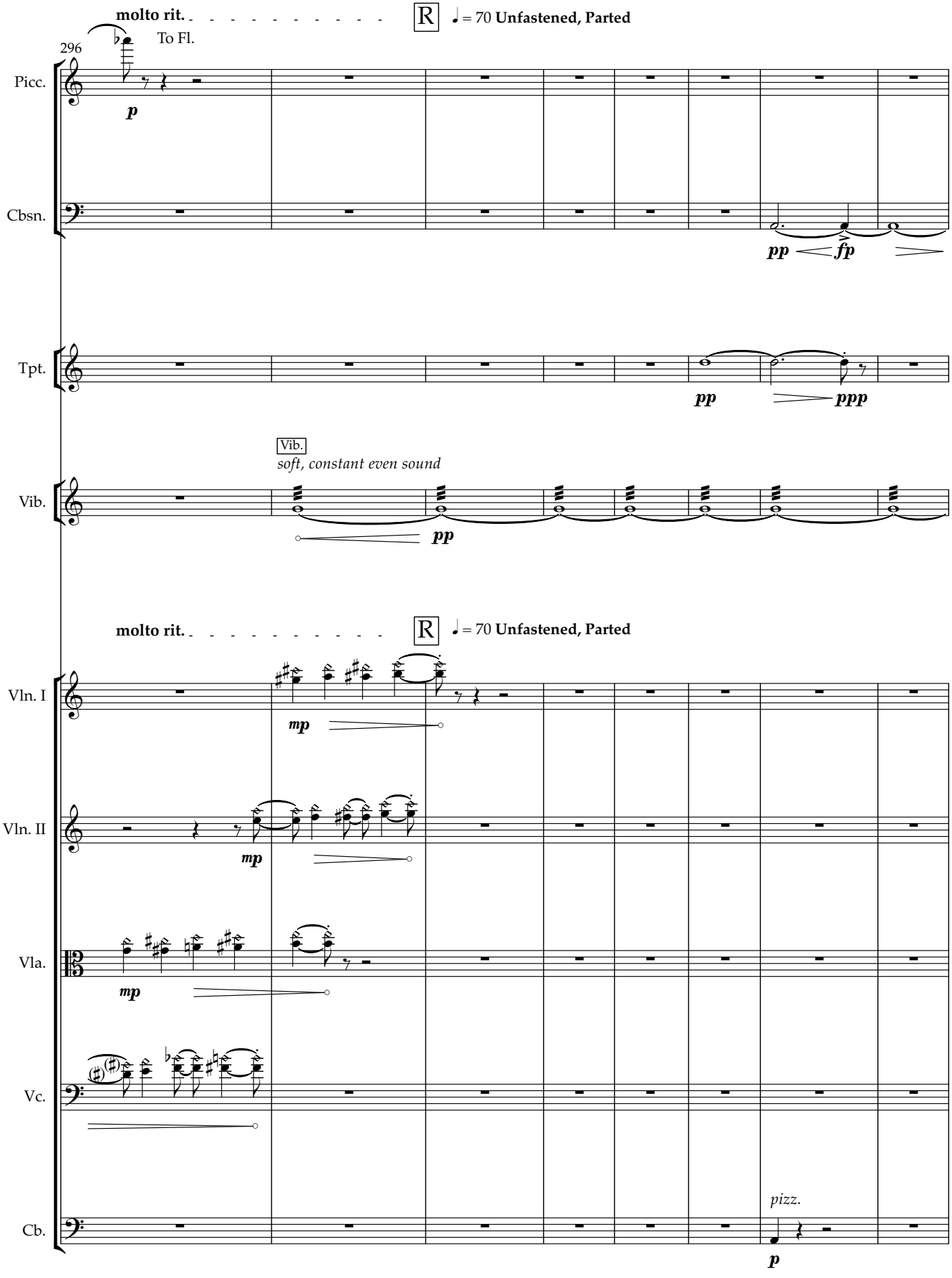
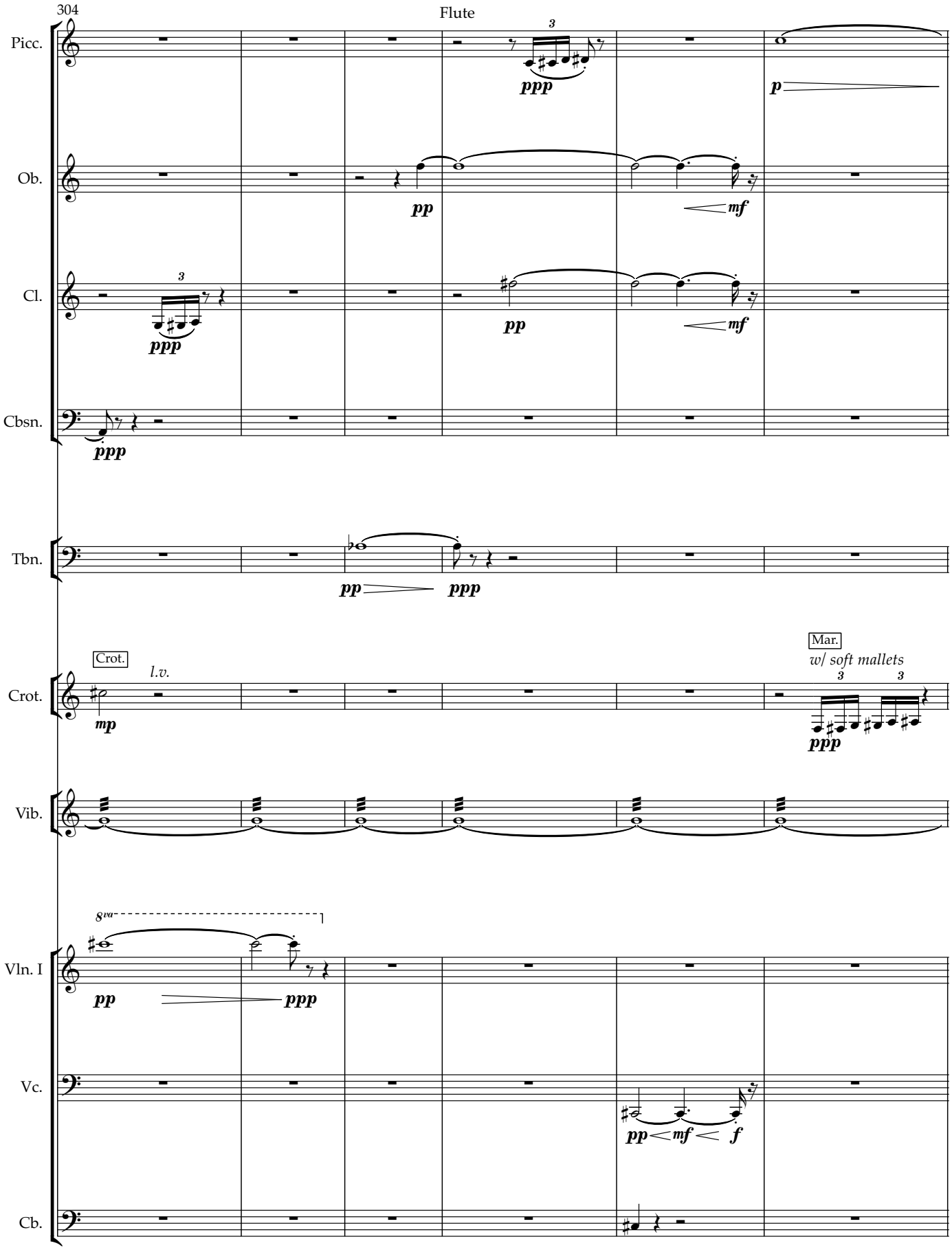
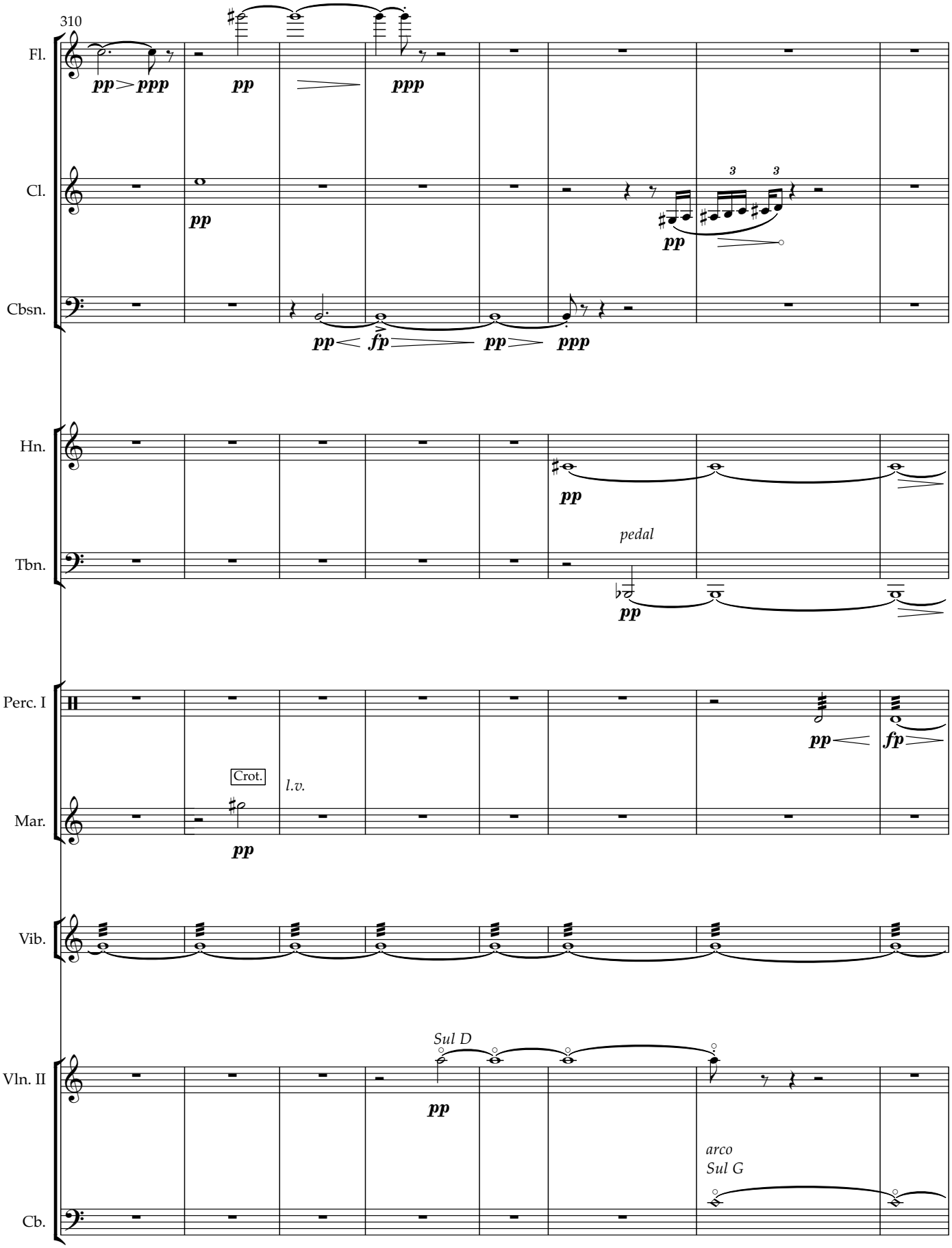
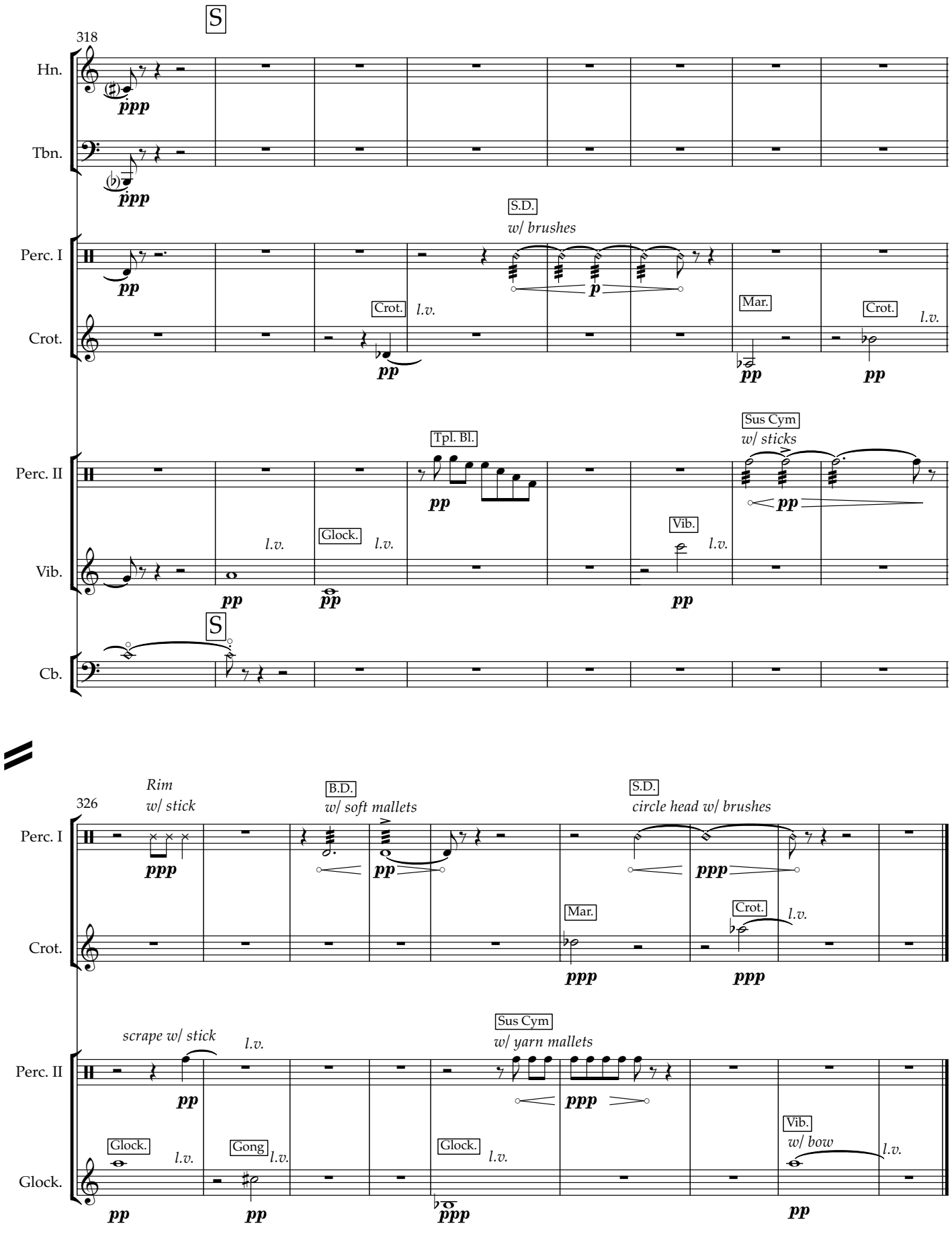

molto rit.
R
♩ = 70 Unfastened, Parted
To Fl.
296
Picc.
p
Cbsn.
pp
fp
Tpt.
pp
ppp
Vib.
soft, constant even sound
pp
molto rit.
R
♩ = 70 Unfastened, Parted
Vln. I
mp
Vln. II
mp
Vla.
mp
Vc.
Cb.
pizz.
p


304
Flute
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Cbsn.
Tbn.
Crot.
l.v.
Mar.
w/ soft mallets
Vib.
8va
Vln. I
Vc.
Cb.


310
Fl.
pp
ppp
pp
ppp
Cl.
pp
3
3
pp
Cbsn.
pp
fp
pp
ppp
Hn.
pp
pedal
Tbn.
pp
Perc. I
pp
fp
Crot.
l.v.
Mar.
pp
Vib.
Sul D
Vln. II
pp
arco
Sul G
Cb.



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