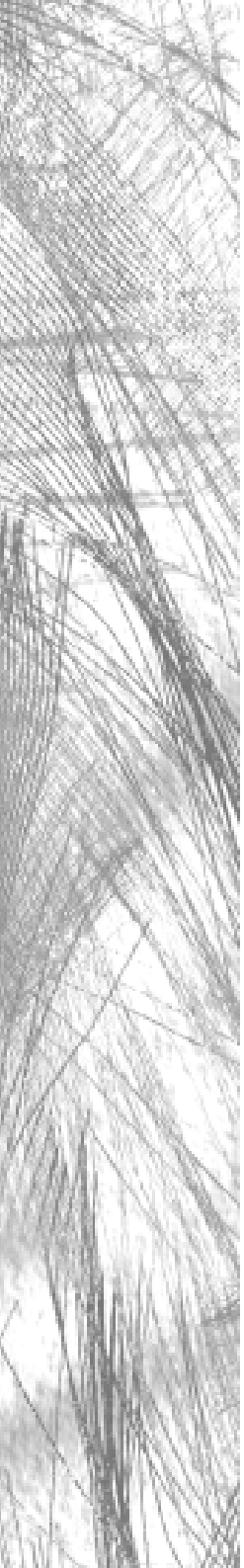

DUO

from TOUCHED BY MACHINE?

for horn in F and percussion (jazz kit)

Nigel Morgan

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ISMN 979-0-57043-053-6 (Study Score for Horn Version)
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DUO

from TOUCHED BY MACHINE?

for horn in F and percussion (jazz-kit)

Nigel Morgan

About the piece

Between 1988 and 1991 Nigel Morgan created a sequence of four works, DUO (horn and percussion), TRIO (violin, clarinet and piano), QUARTET (string quartet) and EDGE (wind quartet). These pieces, forming a CD-length concert called *TOUCHED BY MACHINE?*[1], were part of a sustained project to explore computer-assisted composition using the tools of the MIDI studio.

DUO uses as its composition environment David Zicarelli's M software. This software is one of the most successful attempts to create a device that enables composing through improvisation. Indeed, M is one of the few software tools that can be used for live improvisation with other instruments. In 2000-1 the composer performed a series of concerts with a free jazz drummer and bass player using 2 Apple Classic computers driving samplers and synthesizers all coordinated by the M software.

In composing DUO the element of pre-composition lies in the preparation of data for the M software to store, process and then call up on-cue during an improvisation. The middle two movements (II and III) were devised entirely in this manner. What exists in the notated score is the result of recording improvisations triggered in real-time from a Stepp DGI MIDI Guitar. These recordings were made by M itself as MIDI data. This data was then transferred to a scorewriter using the MIDIfile protocol.

Movement II features the percussionist using a reduced kit of bongos, cowbell and woodblock set against low horn pedal tones. The music 'plays' with ideas of open-form organization through exploring different combinations of material on two instruments simultaneously. Movement III is an extended improvisation for horn accompanied by hi-hat and cymbals alone. In this movement aspects of pitch ordering, rhythmic incidence, dynamics and the

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[1] This title comes from an article by Stephen Travis Pope called *Touched by Machine? – Composition and Performance in the Digital Age*. This text presents responses from composers who were asked the following questions: How have new technologies changed the process of composition and performance? What new possibilities are aesthetically and artistically relevant? How do the new tools allow us to use musical material differently?

Computer Music Journal: vol 19. No.3. Cambridge MA. MIT Press.

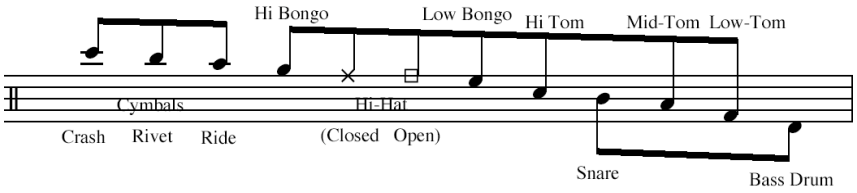
horn's articulation were subject to Markov Chain processing by M during the course of the improvisation.

Aside from the technical aspects of DUO's composition there is an important extra-musical element to the work. This comes from the composer's interest in the artist Bridget Riley, in particular her ability to engage the viewer actively in her monochrome paintings and then later her work with colour stripes. In these paintings it is the viewer's position in, and movement across, the pictorial space that appears to make the image 'move' playfully. The music that makes up all the pieces in the *TOUCHED BY MACHINE?* sequence attempts something of the same, only with sound and the listener. The four movements of DUO take their titles from a group of Riley's paintings from the mid 1960s: *Intake, Shift, Movement in Squares* and *Hero*.

Notes for Performance

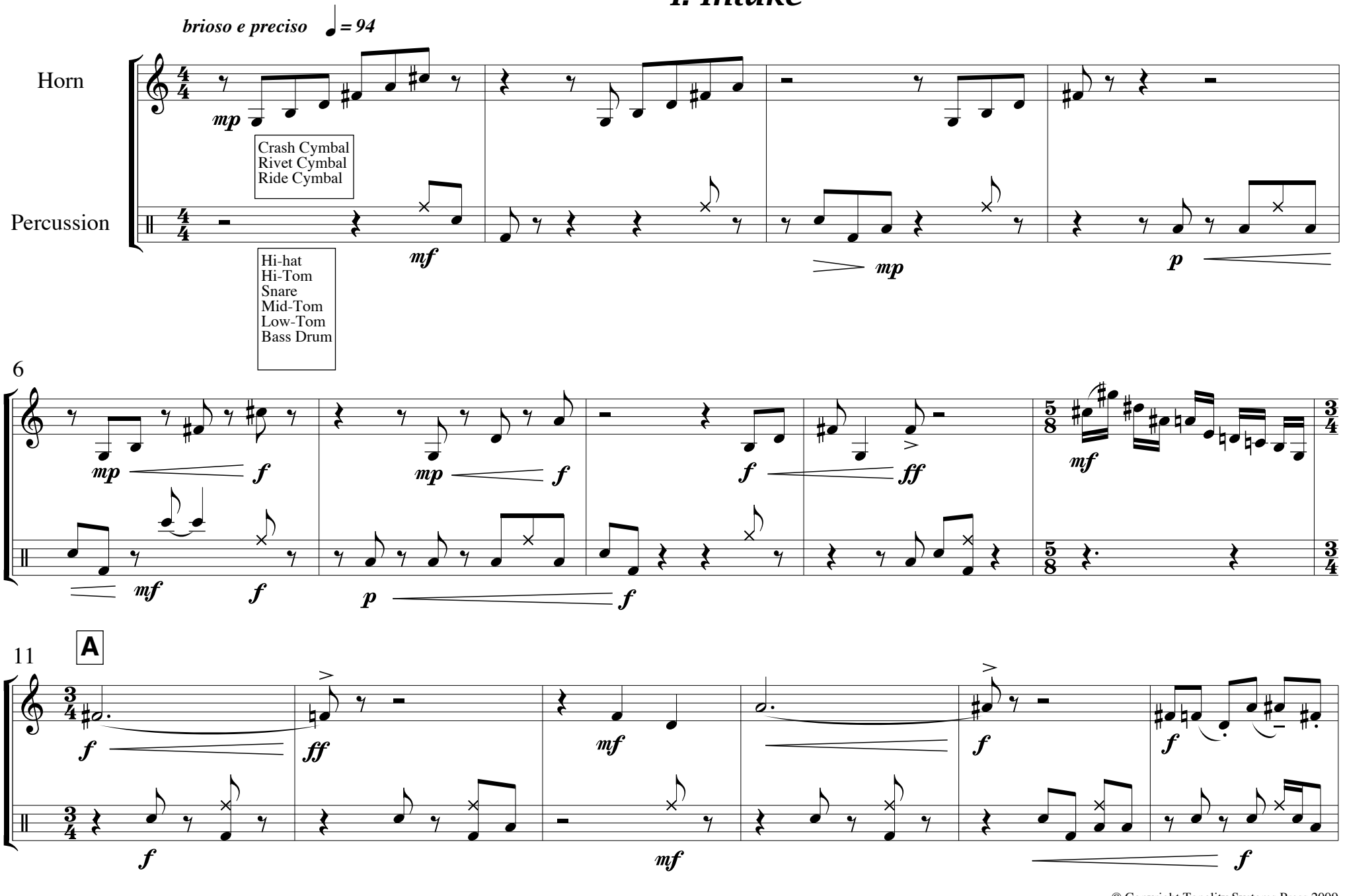
One of the prevailing ideas during the composition of this work was to create a very abstract and detached 'surface' of musical interaction between two very different musical instruments. Although a simple dynamic scheme has been put in place in the score this should be regarded as a starting point for more elaborate schemes devised by the performers: the work offers many possibilities for different perspectives to be opened up by altering the balance of the ensemble in much the same way as moving around a Bridget Riley painting engenders different qualities of experience for the viewer.

The Jazz-Kit sought for DUO should contain the following instruments:



The percussionist is encouraged to add in further instruments if appropriate and is free to use a wide range of sticks and beaters.

I. Intake



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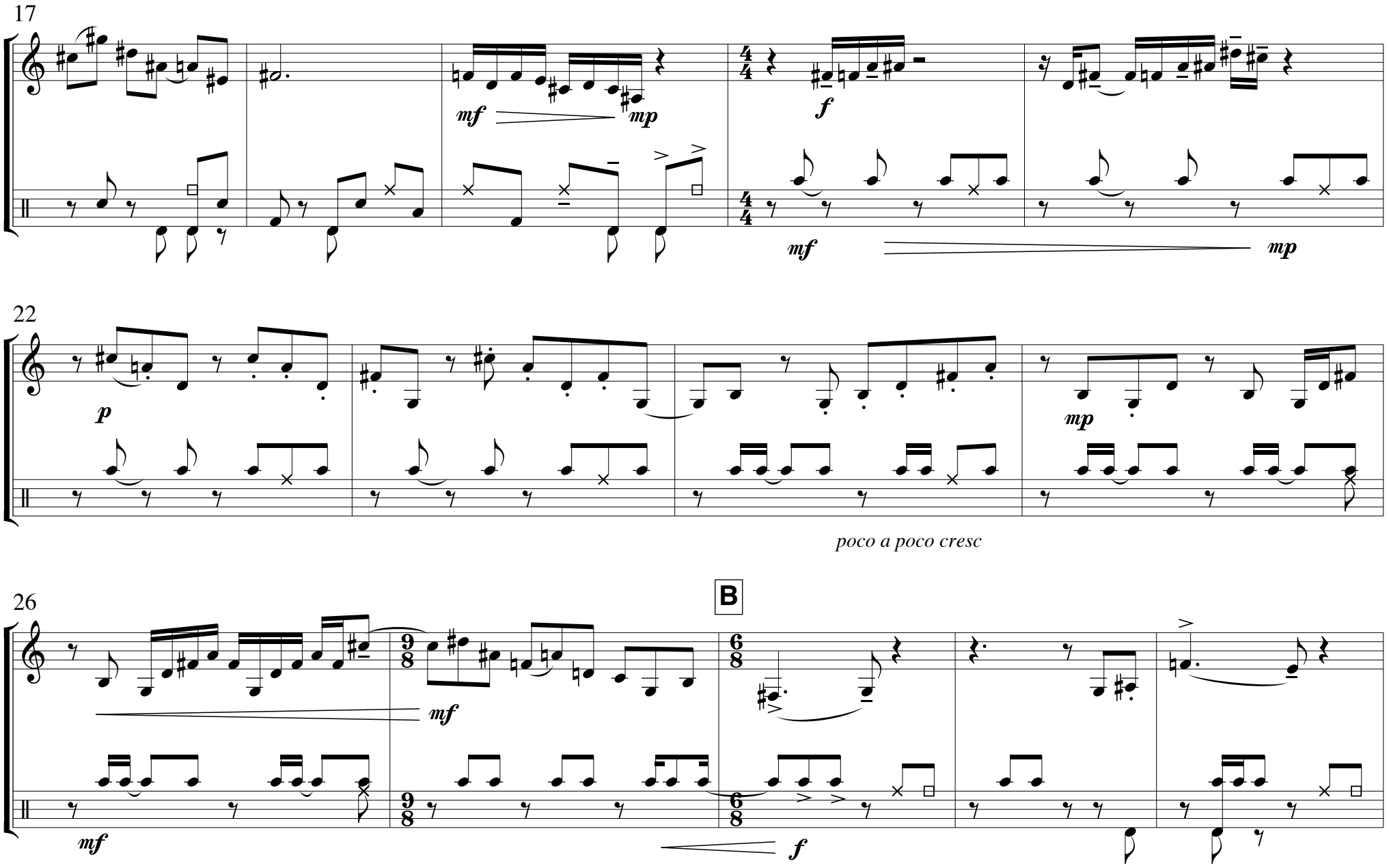
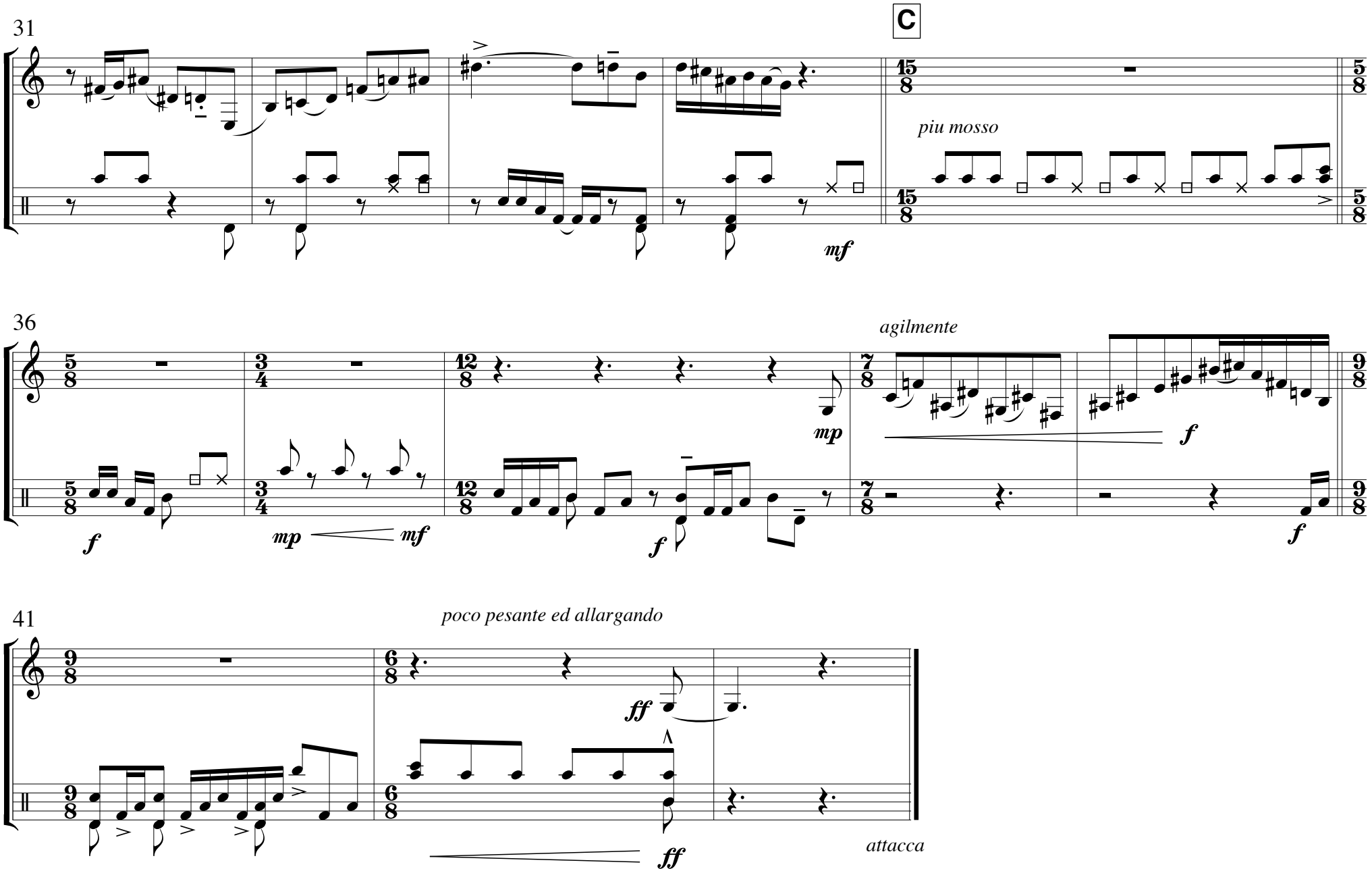

17
mf
mp
f
4/4
mf
mp
22
p
mp
poco a poco cresc
26
B
mf
9/8
6/8
f


31
C
mf
piu mosso
36
agilmente
f
mp
mf
41
poco pesante ed allargando
ff
attacca

II. Shift

43 *giustamente* ♩ = 84 *agilmente e sonore*

Cowbell
Wood block
Hi Bongo
Low Bongo

pp *mf*

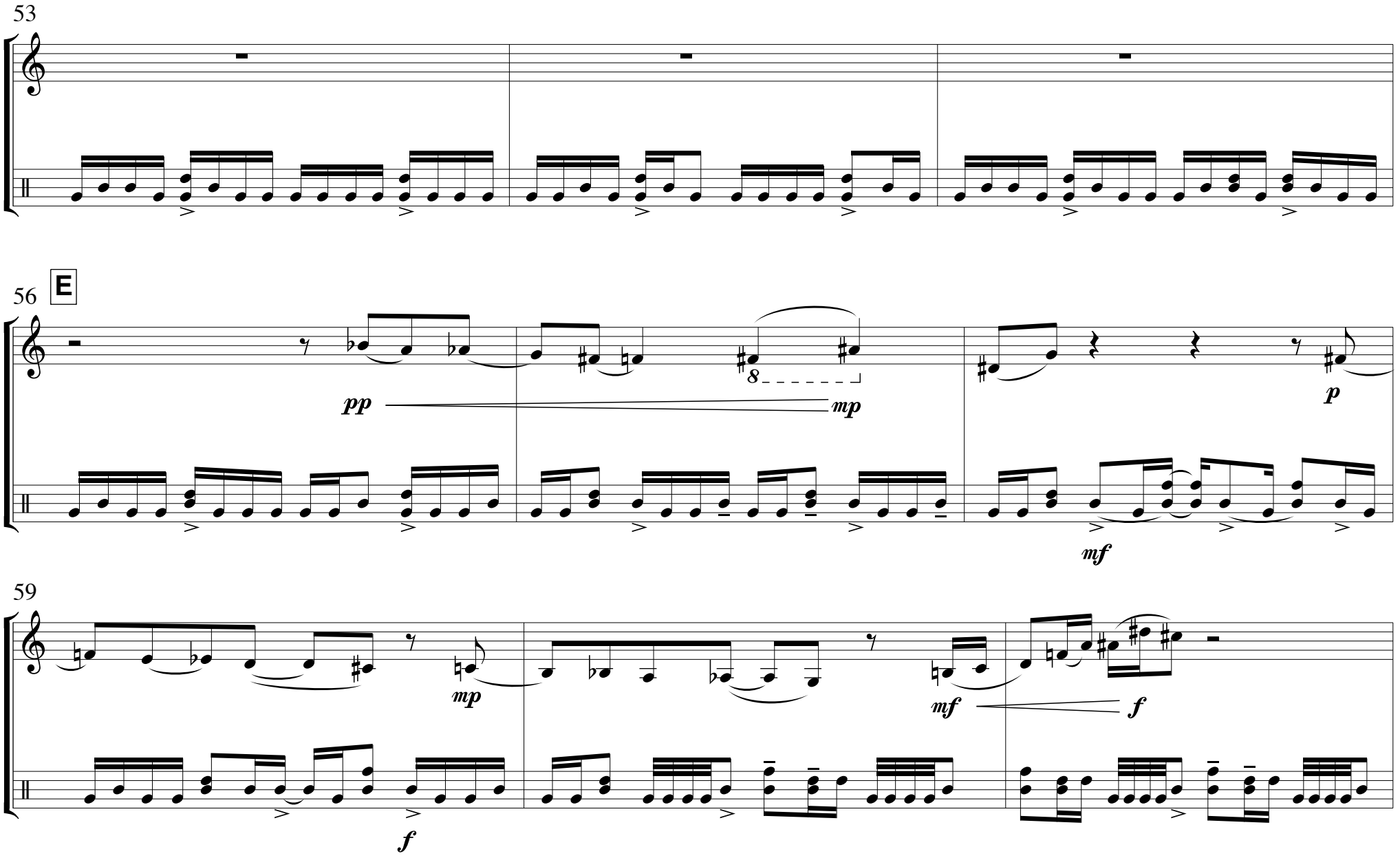
47

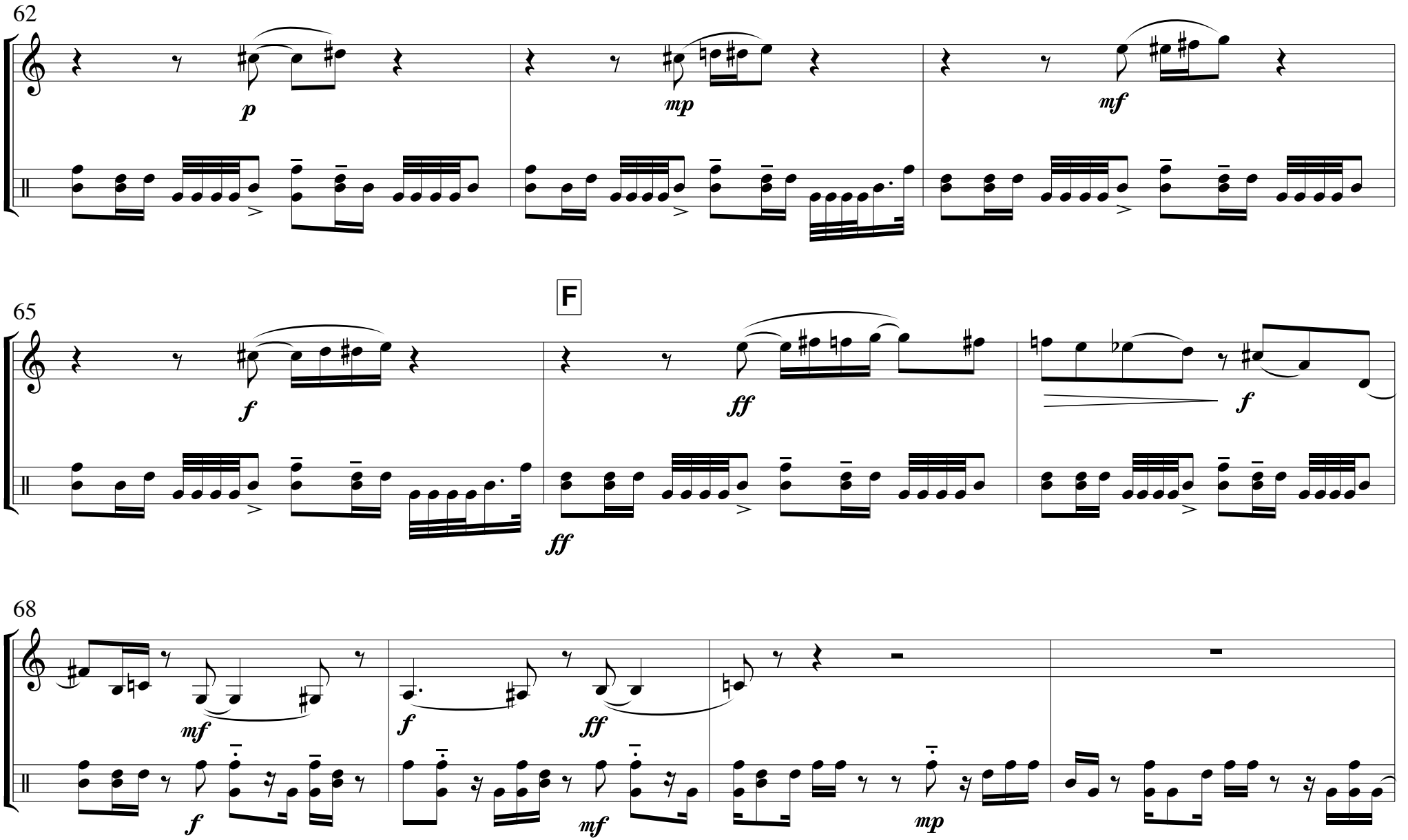
mp *f* *mf*

D

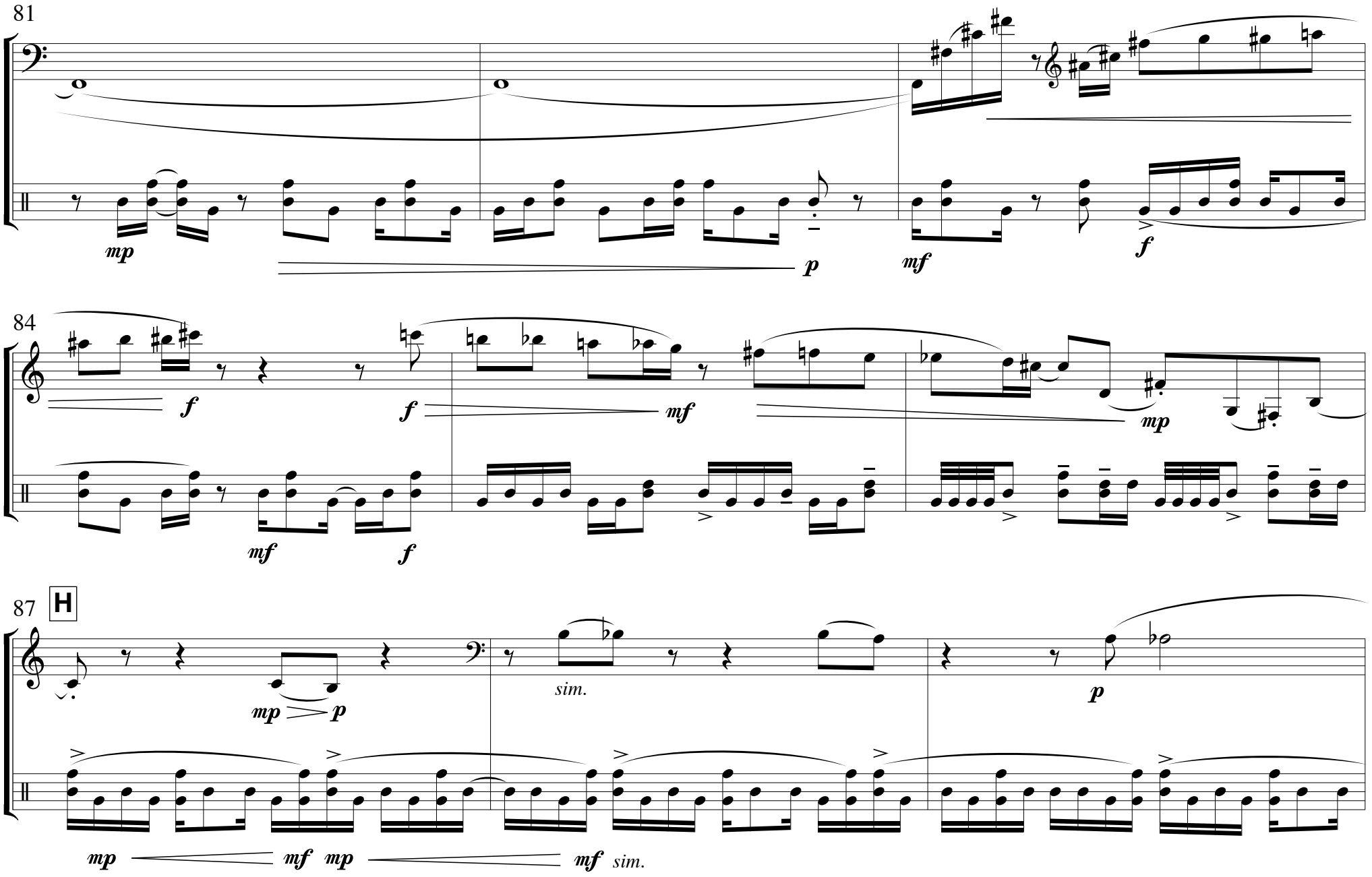
50

pp *mp* *f*

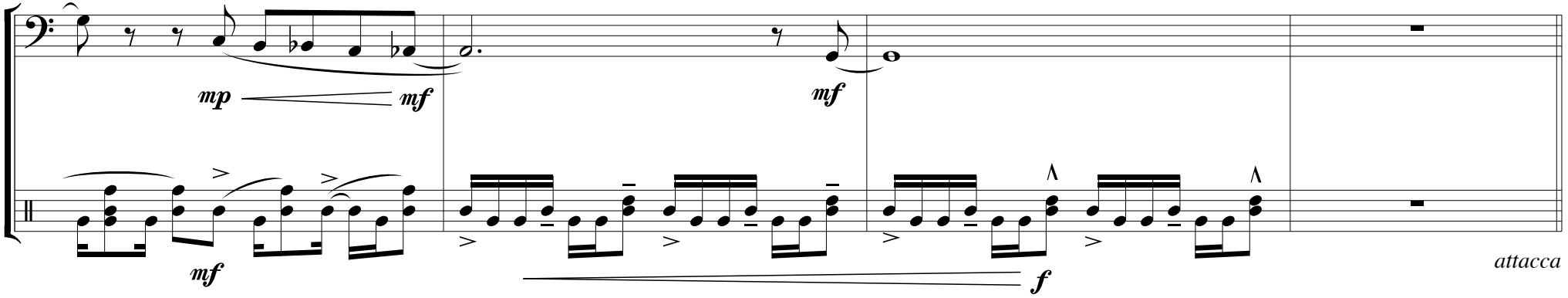

53
56
E
pp
mp
p
mf
59
mp
mf
f
f


62
p
mp
mf
F
65
f
ff
ff
f
68
mf
f
ff
f
mf
mp

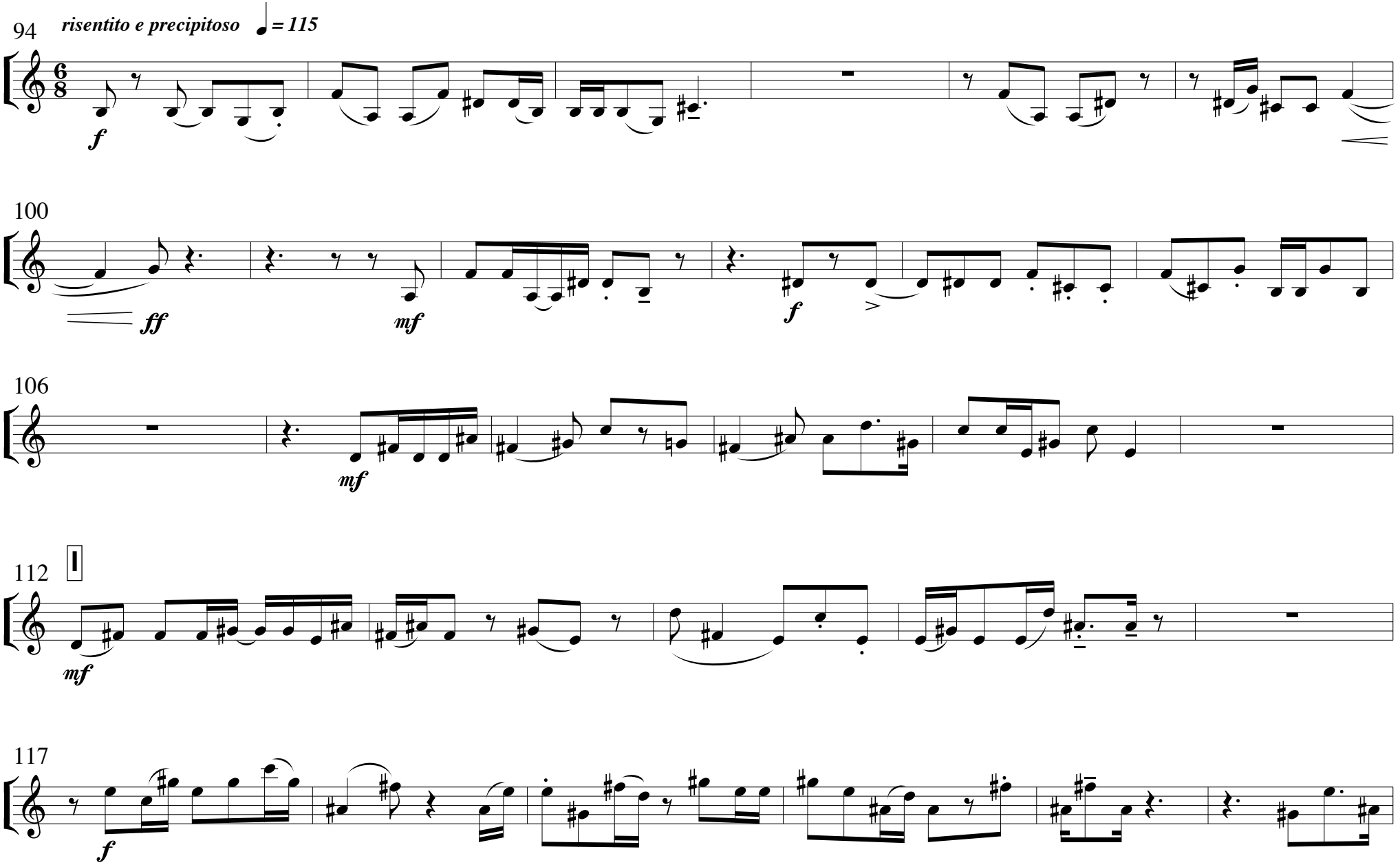
72
mf
mp
f
75
G
pp
f
mf
78
p
mp
f
mf

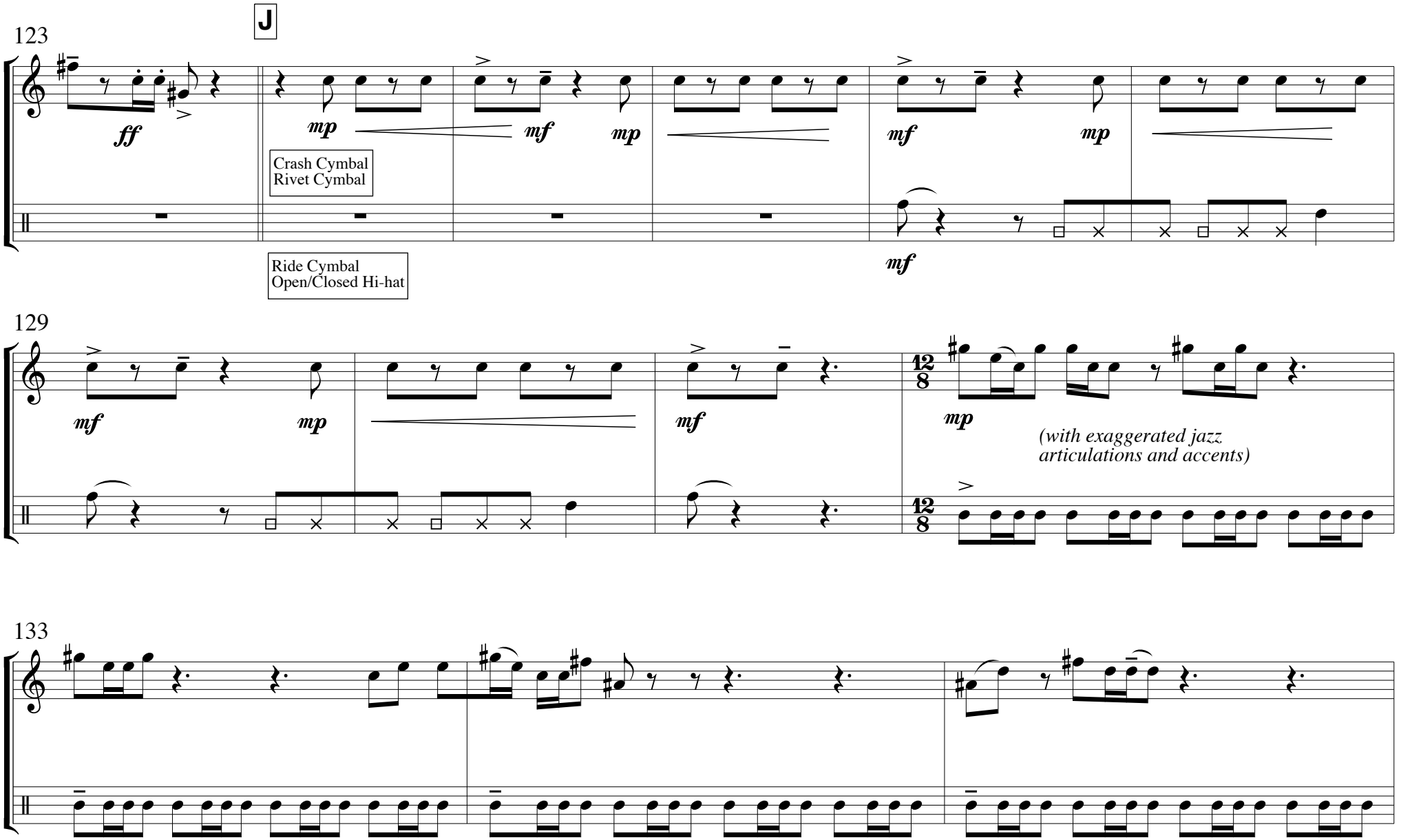

81
mp
p
mf
f
84
f
f
mf
mp
mf
f
87
H
mp
p
sim.
p
mp
mf
mp
mf
sim.

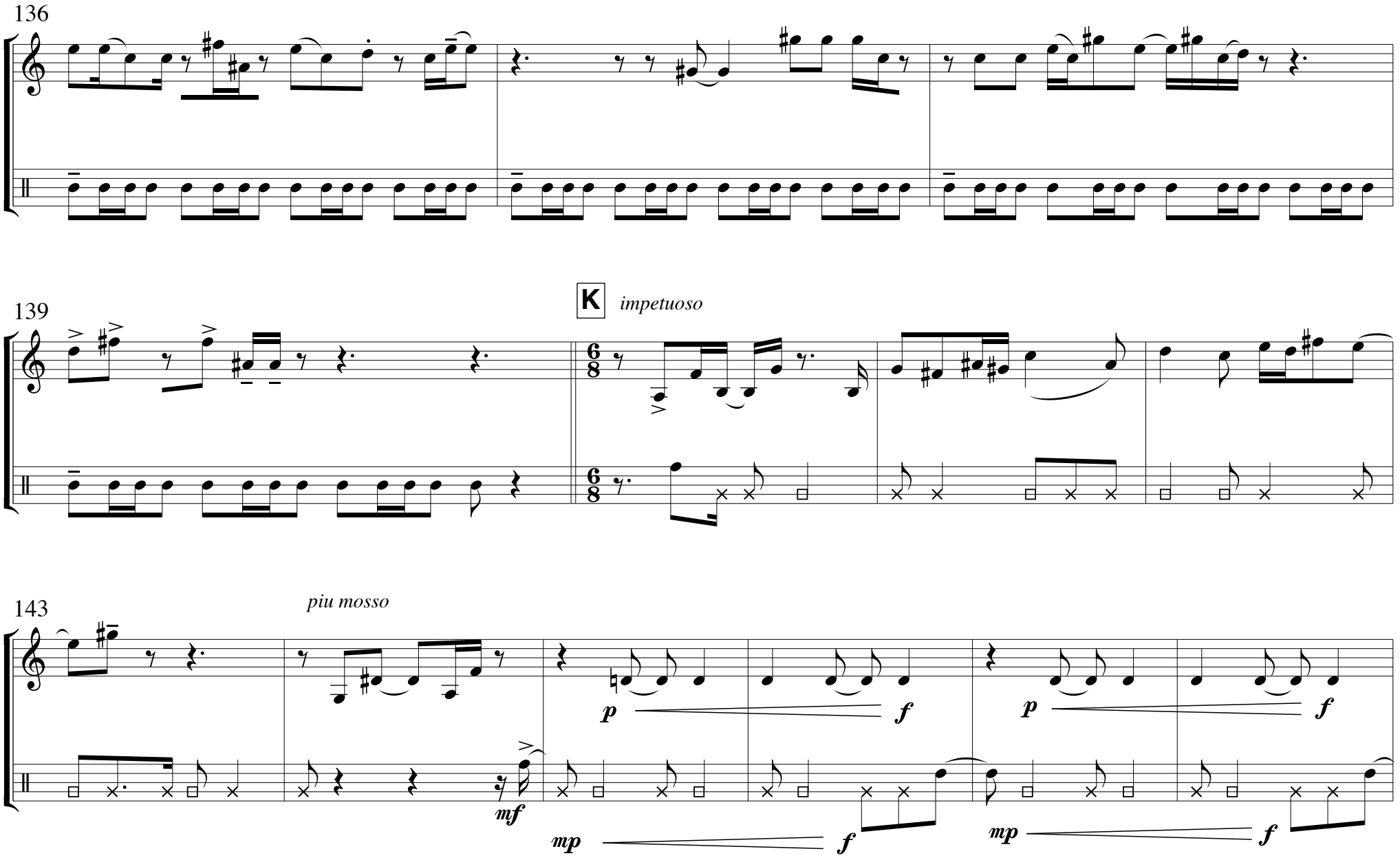
90

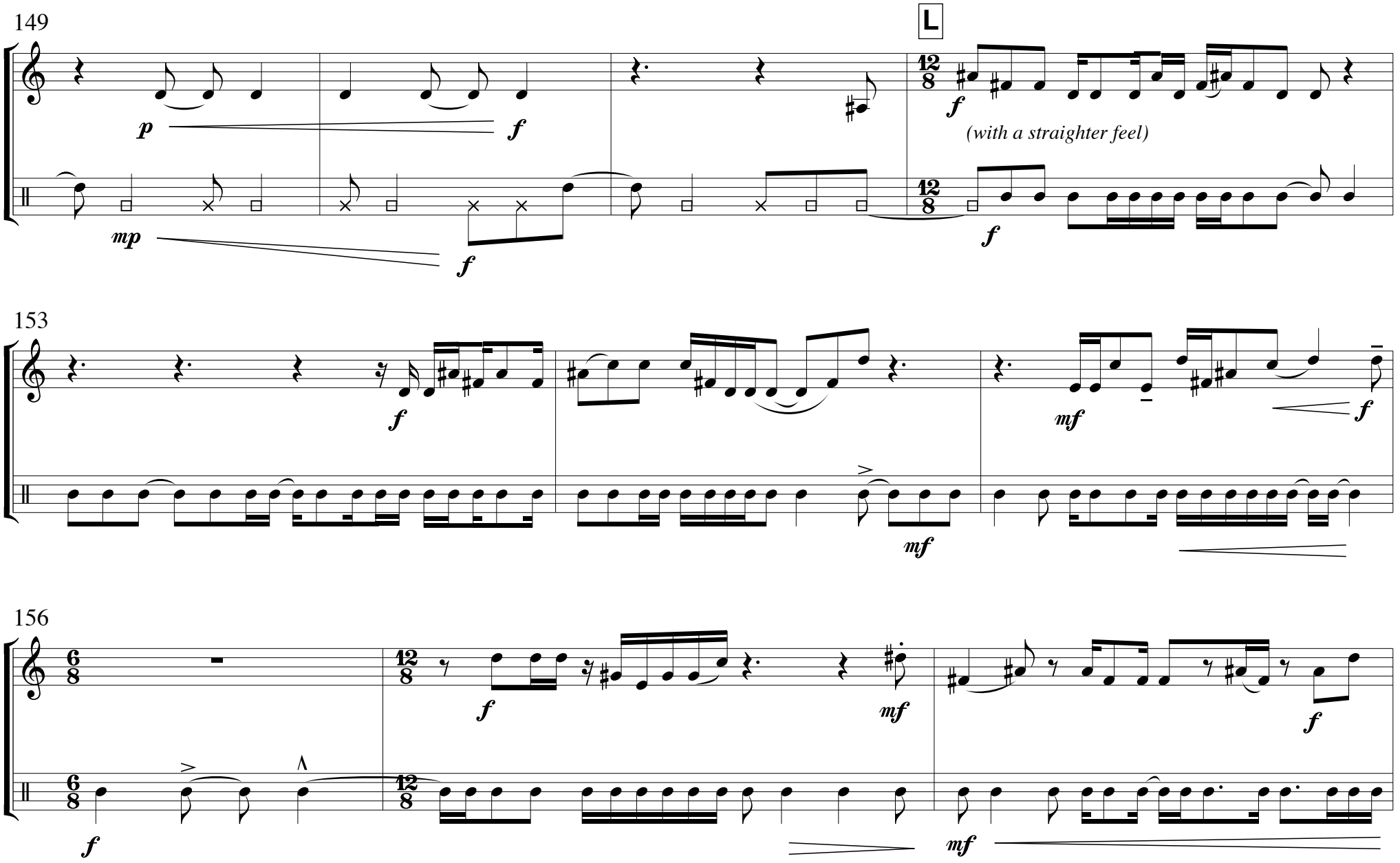


III. Movement in Squares

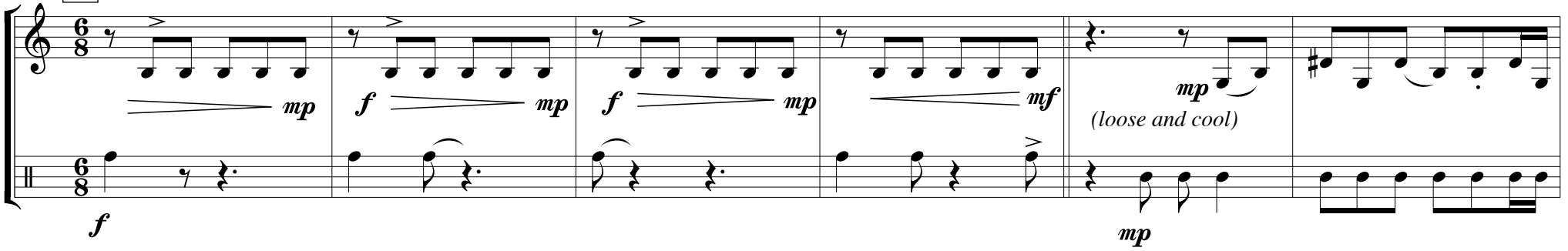



123
J
ff
mp
mf
mp
mf
mp
Crash Cymbal
Rivet Cymbal
Ride Cymbal
Open/Closed Hi-hat
mf
129
mf
mp
mf
12/8
mp
(with exaggerated jazz articulations and accents)
12/8
133

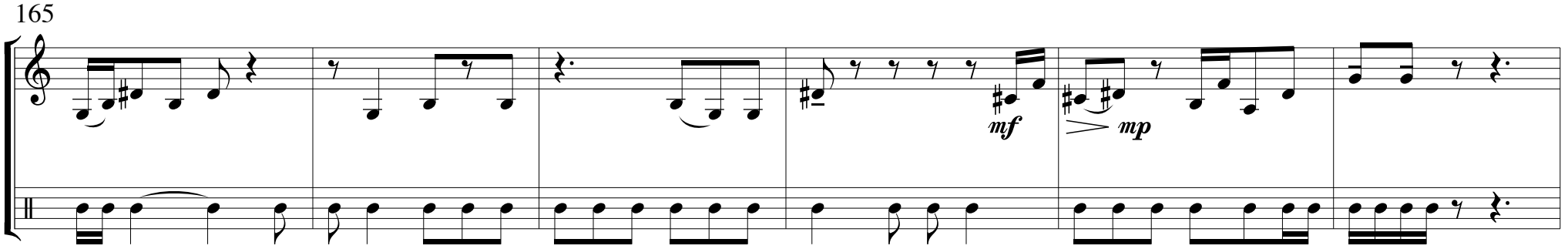

136
139
K
impetuoso
143
piu mosso
p
f
mf
mp


149
L
12/8
(with a straighter feel)
153
156
6/8
12/8

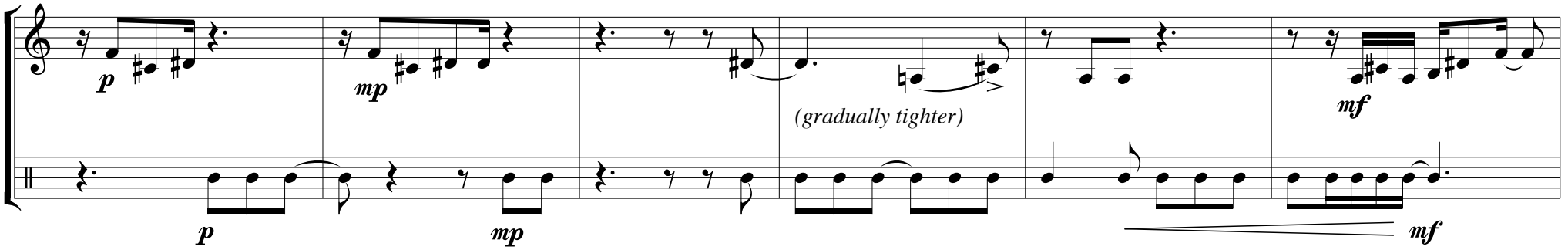
159 **M**

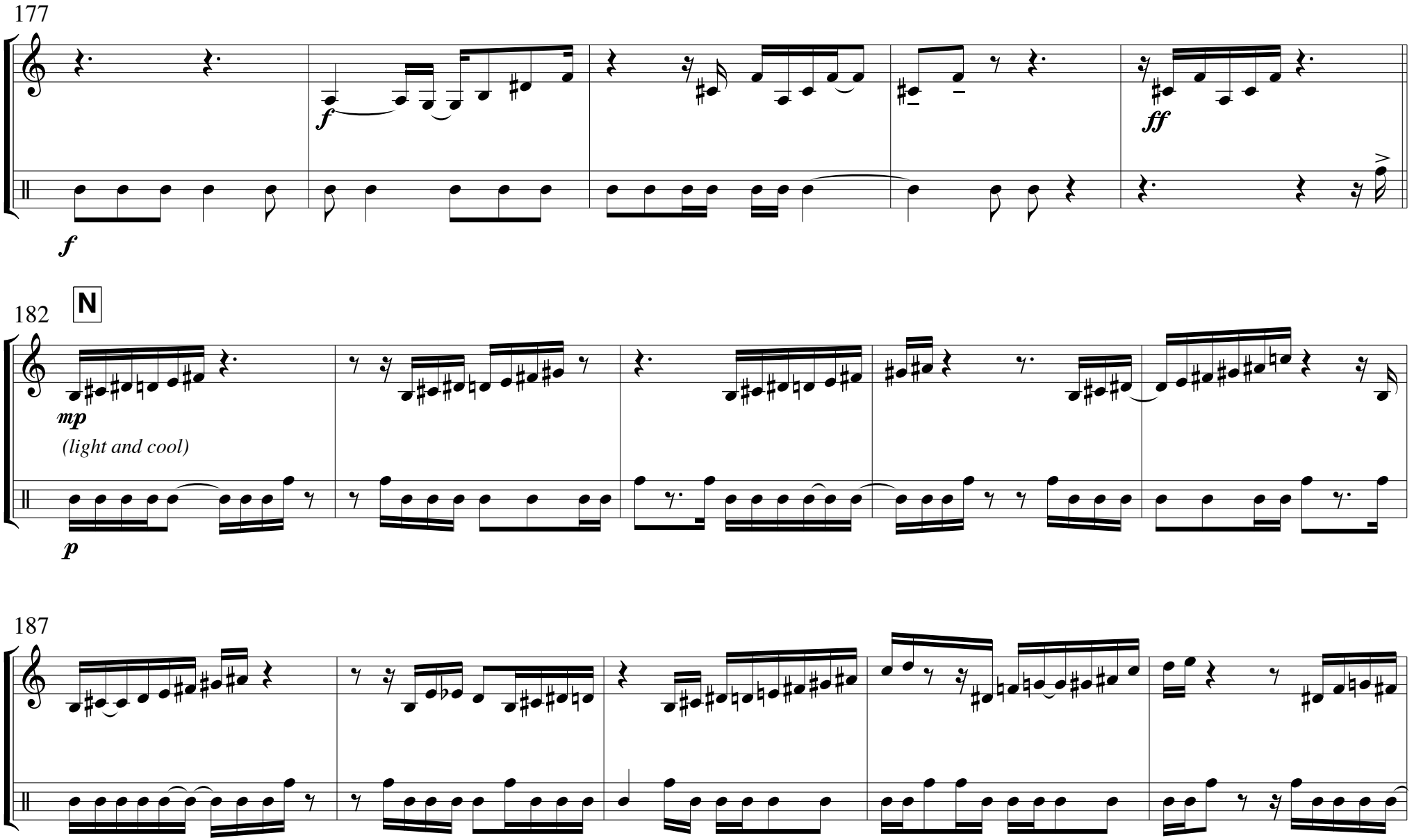

mp
f
mp
f
mp
mf
mp
(loose and cool)
f
mp

165

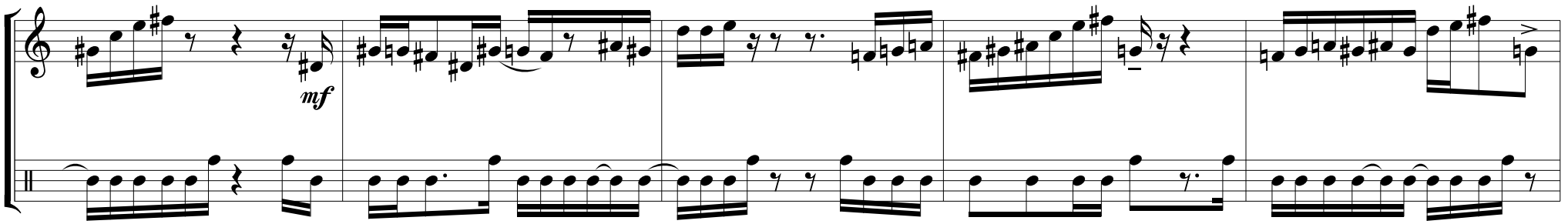

mf
mp

171

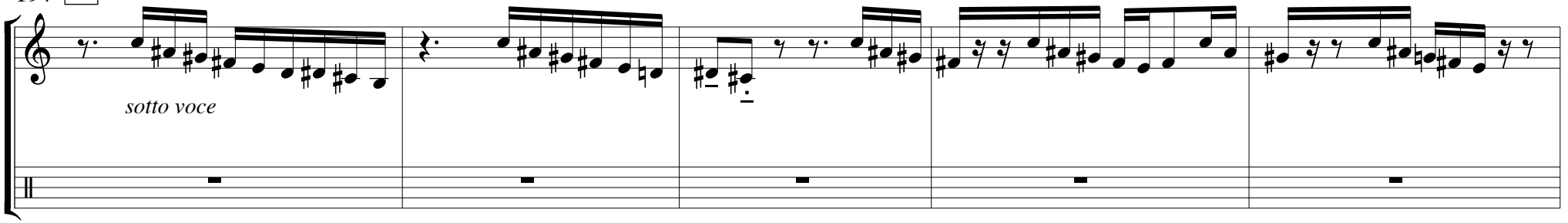

p
mp
(gradually tighter)
mf
p
mp
mf


177
f
f
ff
182
N
mp
(light and cool)
p
187

192



197 O



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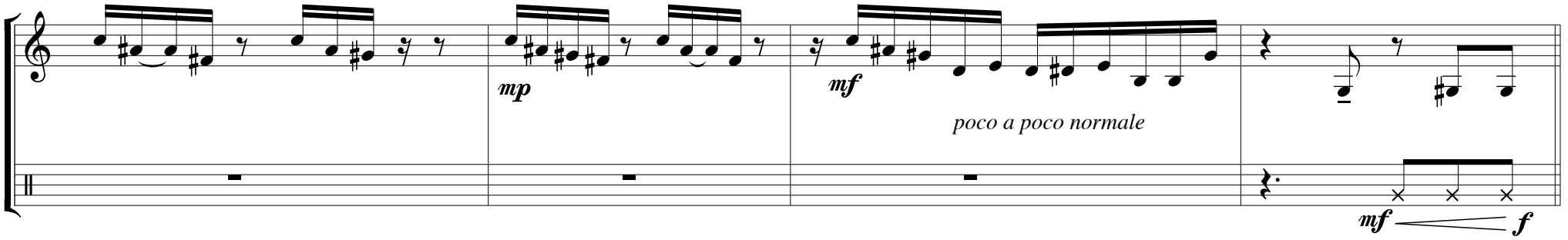
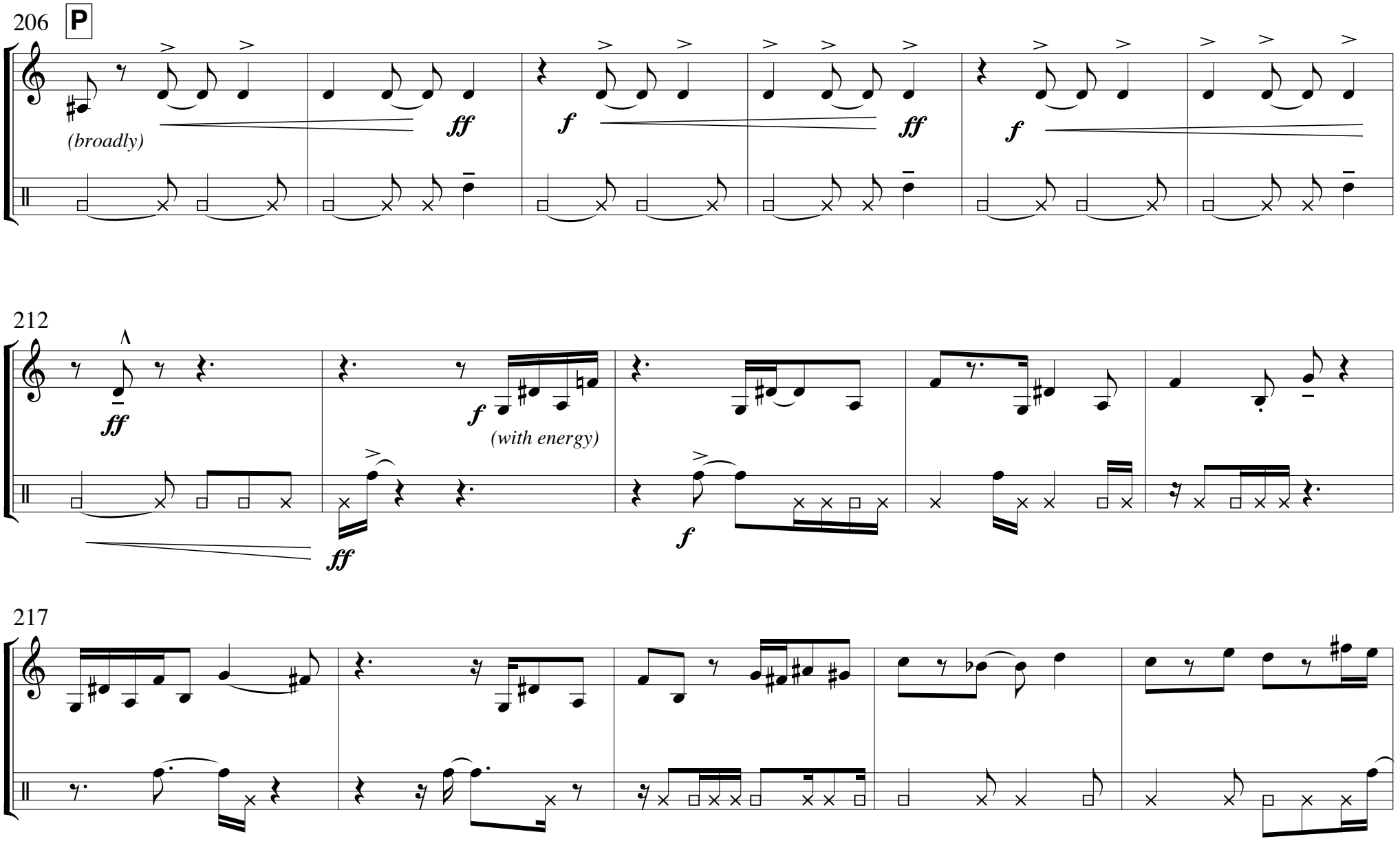
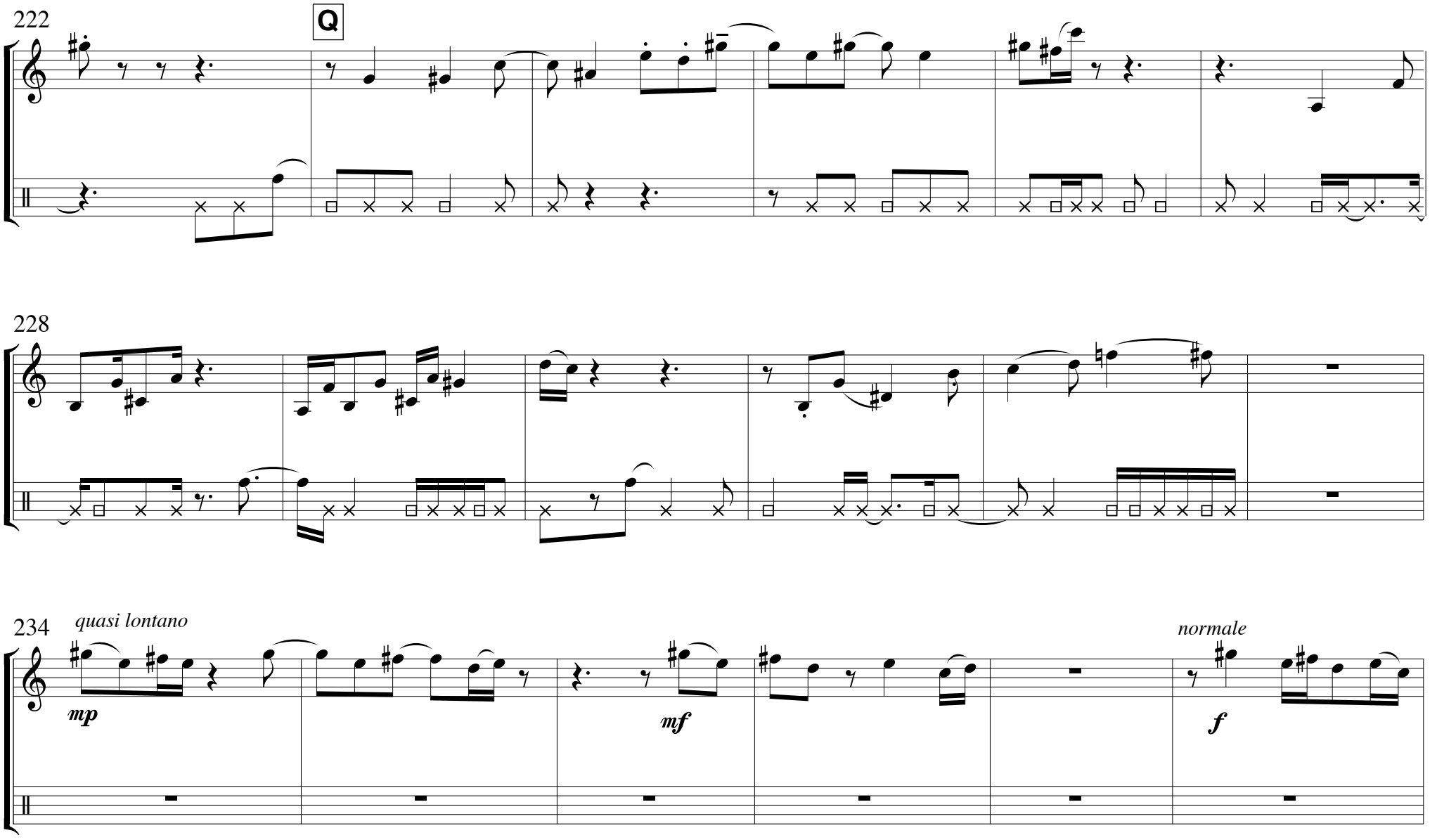
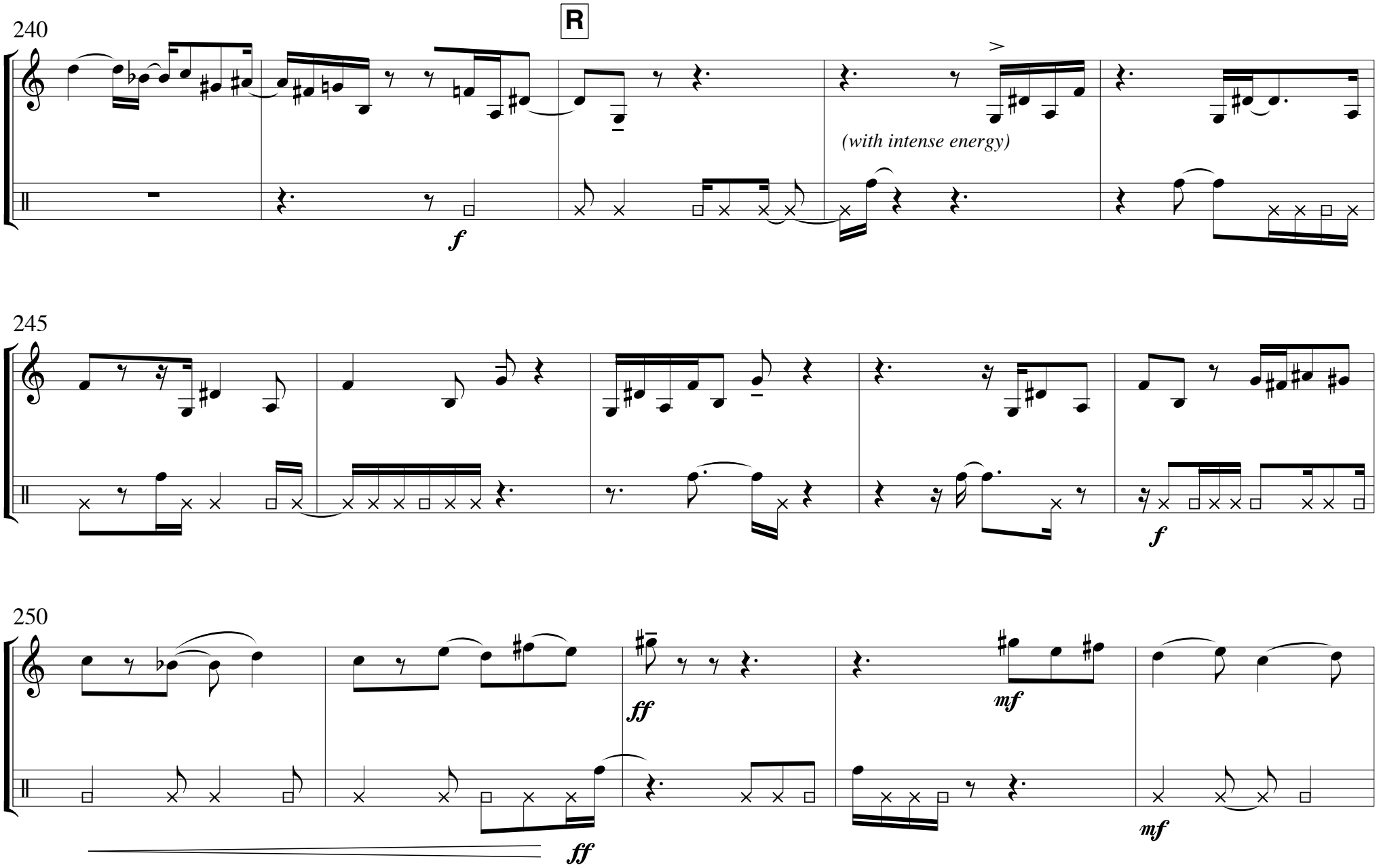
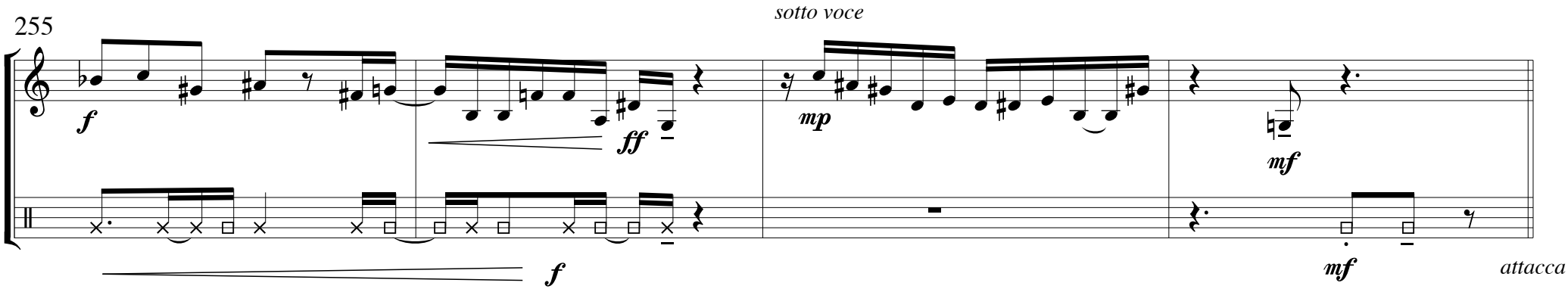



206
P
(broadly)
ff
f
ff
f
212
ff
f
(with energy)
ff
f
217

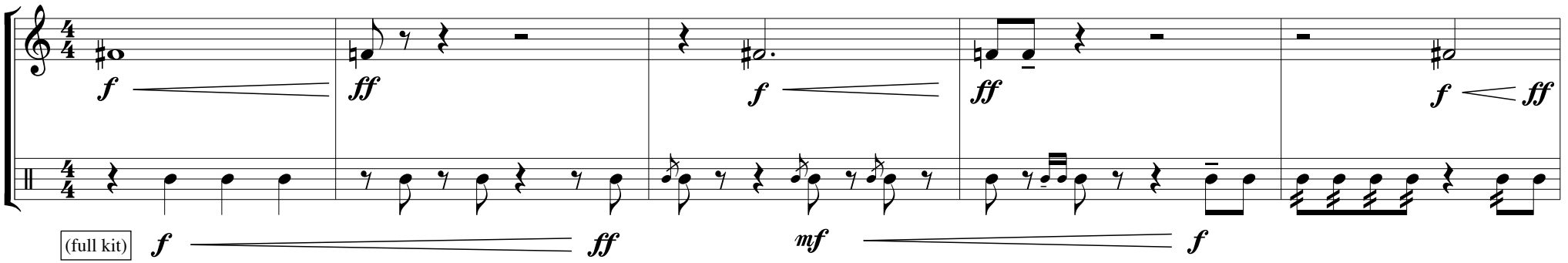

222
Q
228
234
quasi lontano
mp
mf
normale
f


240
R
(with intense energy)
f
245
f
250
ff
ff
mf
mf

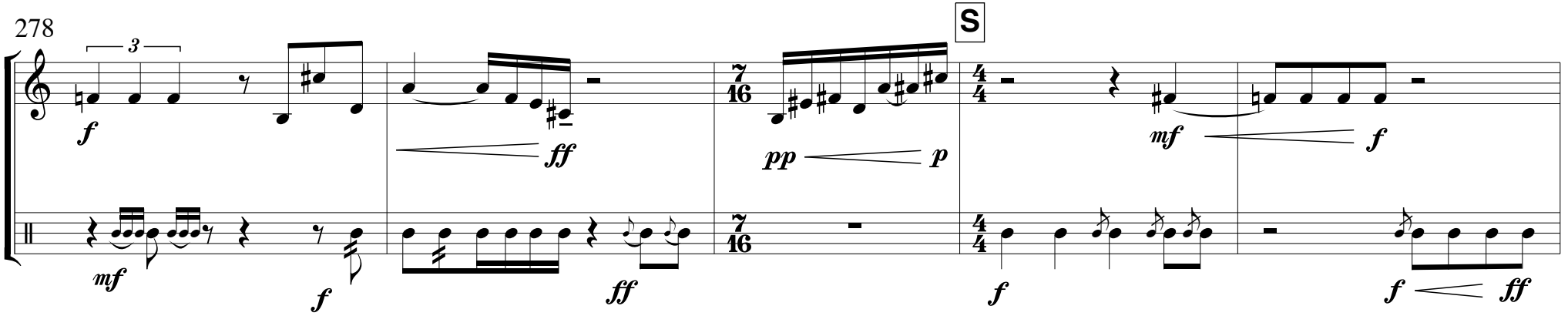

255
sotto voce
f
ff
mp
mf
f
mf
attacca

IV. Hero

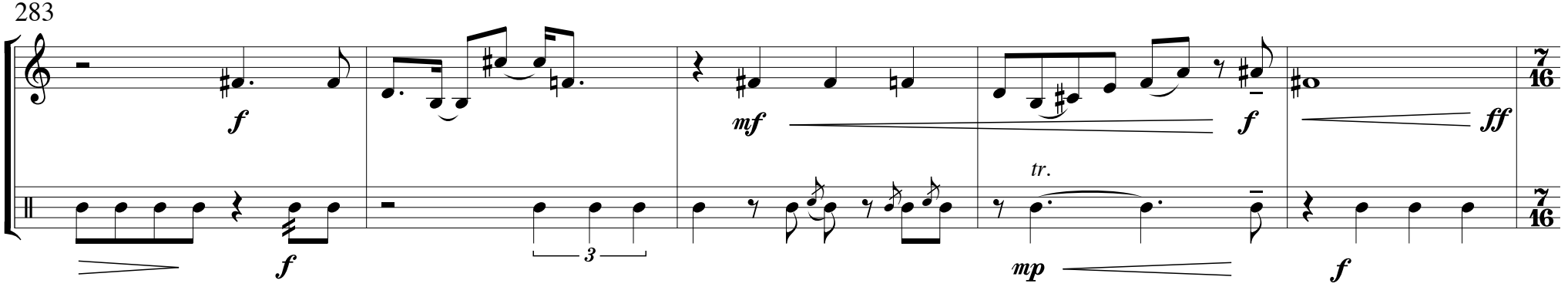
273 *deliberato e serioso* ♩ = 60

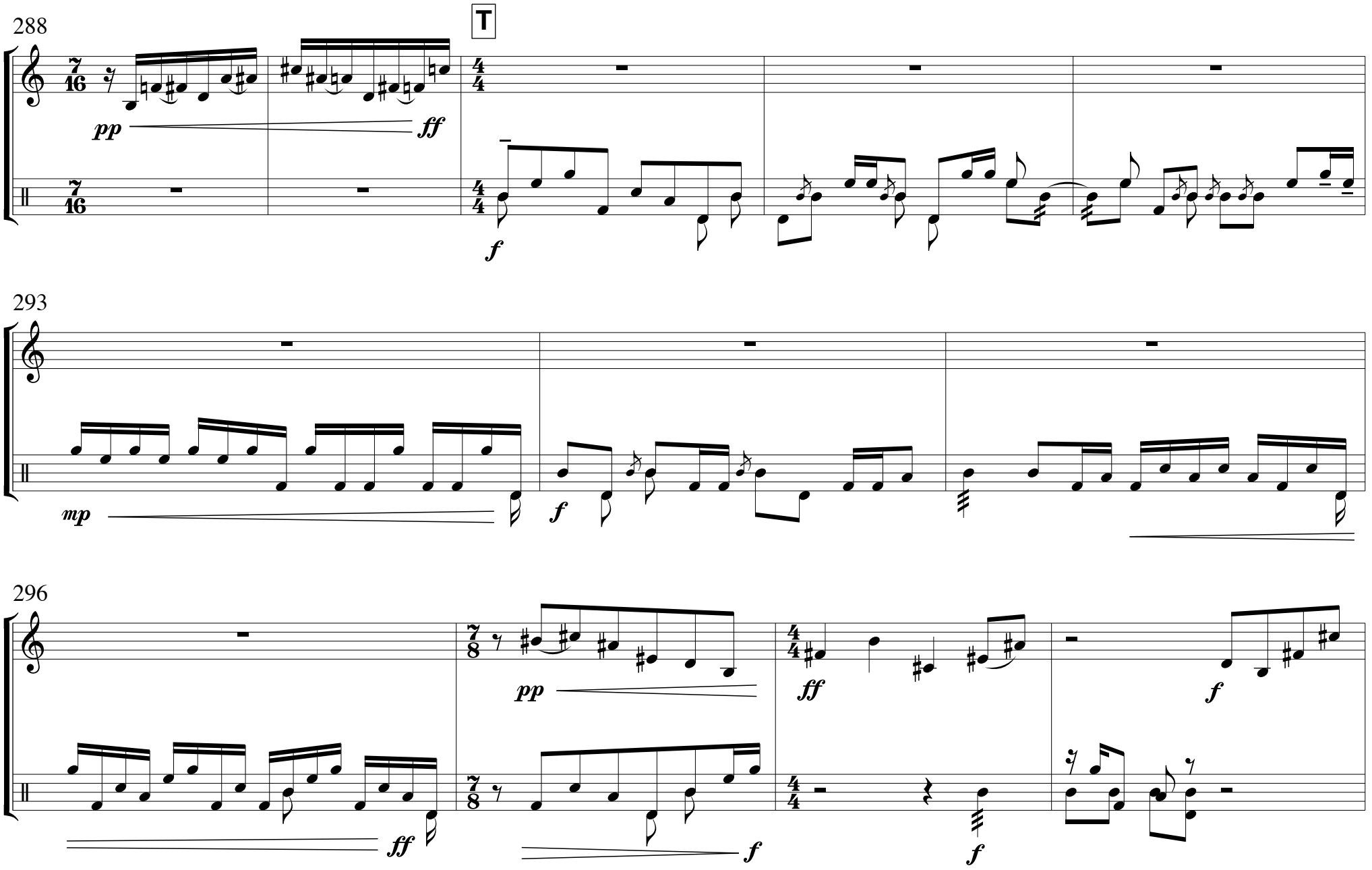


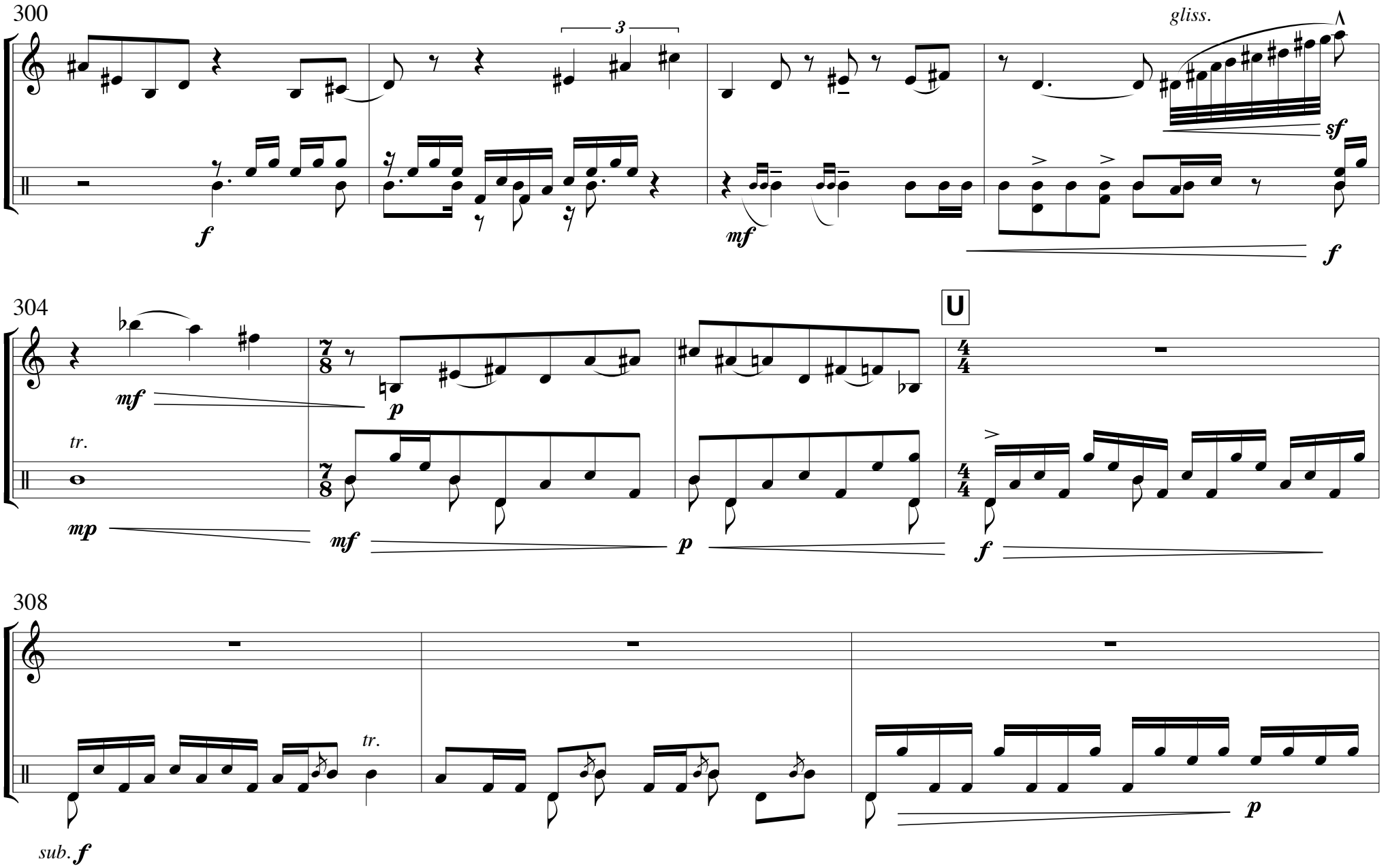
278

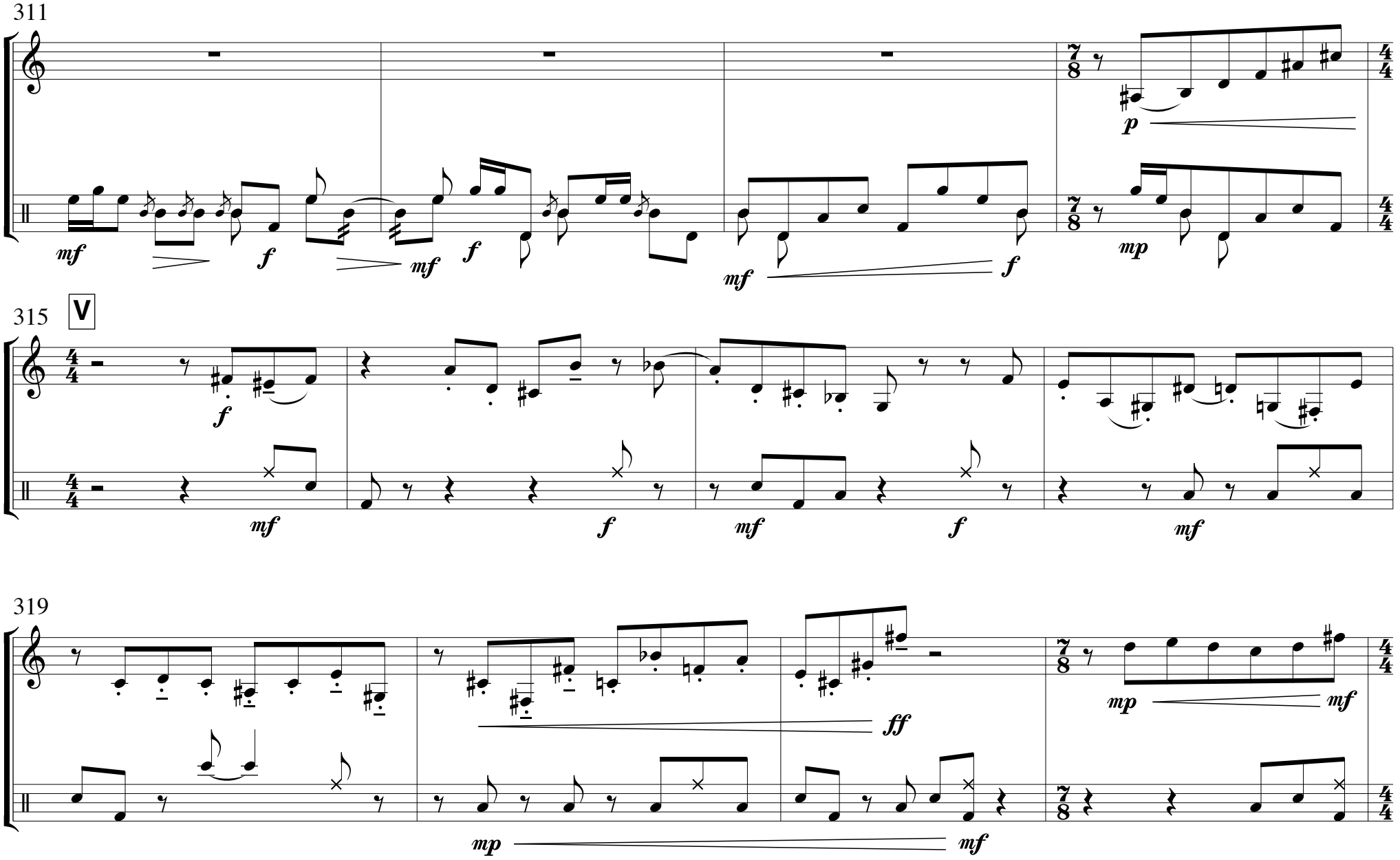


283




288
T
pp
ff
f
293
mp
f
296
pp
ff
f
ff
f
f


300
3
gliss.
sf
f
mf
f
304
U
mf
p
tr.
mp
mf
p
f
308
tr.
sub. f
p


311
mf
f
mf
f
mf
f
p
mp
315
V
f
mf
f
mf
f
mf
319
ff
mp
mf
mp
mf

323
W
poco stacc.
mf
mp
f
ff
327
semplice
mp
mf
f
mf
mp
f
mf