Le Jardin Sec

For String Quartet

Music by Nigel Morgan

Words by Margaret Morgan

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Le Jardin Sec

For String Quartet

Nigel Morgan

About the music

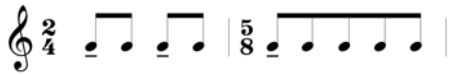
Le Jardin Sec is taken from a sequence of twelve short works for string quartet celebrating The Garden and its relationship to the elements that give it life: sun, water and shade. The music in its duration, character and intent offers something a little different for string players and their audience. The writing for quartet contains very particular characteristics: gentleness, the ornamental, attention to group articulation, a lightness that comes from a velocity of bowing action, playing as 'one body of sound', the employment of a limited pitch compass. Above all, the music is conceived to provide plenty of interpretative space and opportunity. This extends to encouraging the player to explore octave transpositions and the use of timbral effects (*sul ponticello, sul tastiera, glissando, portamento* and *tremolando*).

The music is imagined as four walks around a garden. The musical material is a collection of phrases, some long, some very short. During each 'walk' the musical material undergoes a metamorphosis passing from a unison orchestration of the phrase collection with ornamental embellishments to an exploration of octave displacement and the intervention of silences through discrete pauses; to a play of articulation (using an extended notation for *staccato*), effects of varying proximity, and finally moments of stillness and repose in sustained chords and harmonic textures.

Movement 1	***Allegramente***	*mp*
Movement 2	***Disonvolto***	*mf*
Movement 3	***Chiaro***	*p*
Movement 4	***Con garbo e sonora***	*mp*

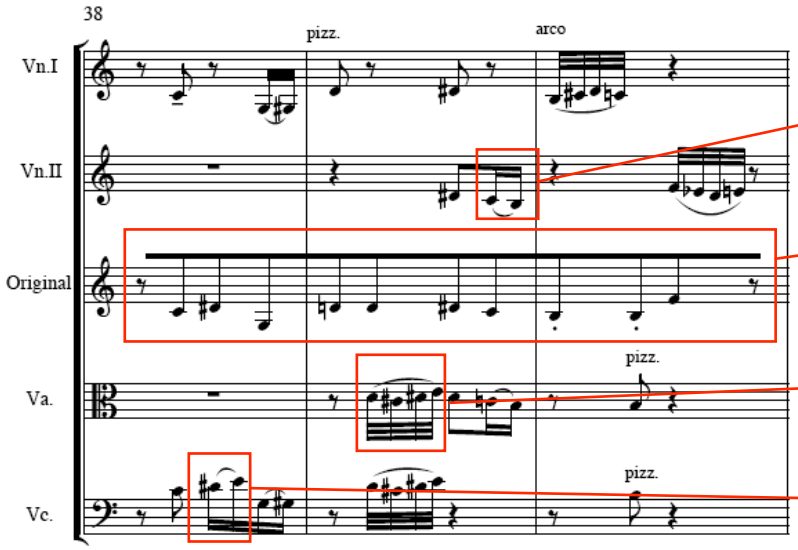
The dynamic marking indicated for each movement should be regarded as a mean from which all further expressive terms, accents and signs are measured.

Additive metric time-signatures such as 3/8, 5/8 and 7/8 used in this piece suggest a group of even 1/8th beats with a slight emphasis on the first beat of the group. Thus 2/4 followed by 3/8 will be:



Le Jardin Sec: A brief overview

Movement 1 (allegramente)



Lower ornament on C in the original melody.

The music for each of the voices in the piece is derived from a single 'nuclear melody'. In the first movement the voices play in unison with ornamented fragments of the melody.

Mordent-style ornamentation on D in original melody.

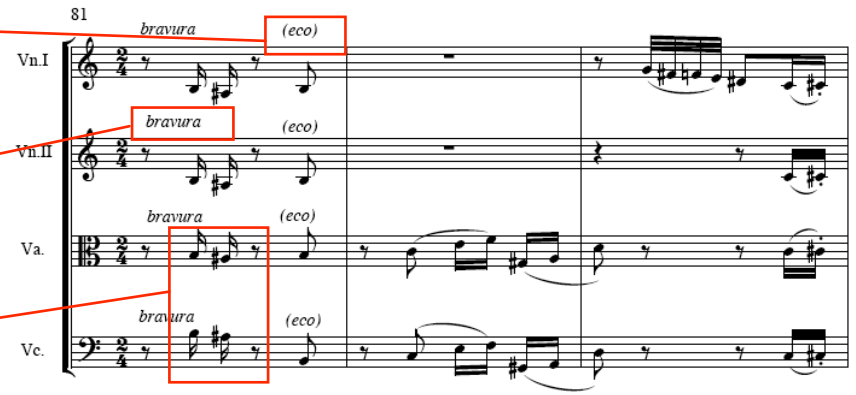
Upper ornament on D# in the original melody.

Movement 2 (disonvolto)

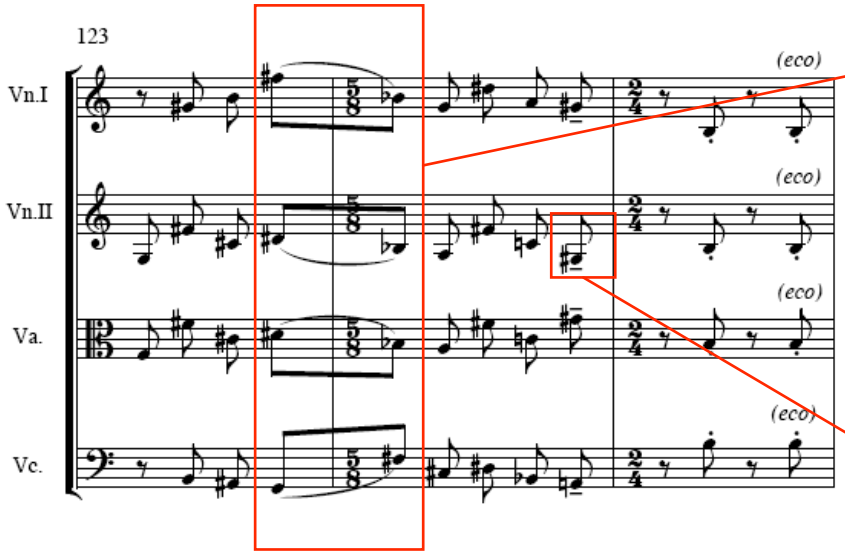
Expressive terms suggest dynamics throughout the piece.

The jeté or thrown bow technique might be used to great effect in the passages marked *con bravura*.

This movement adds octave transpositions and expressive terms to the ornamented melody.

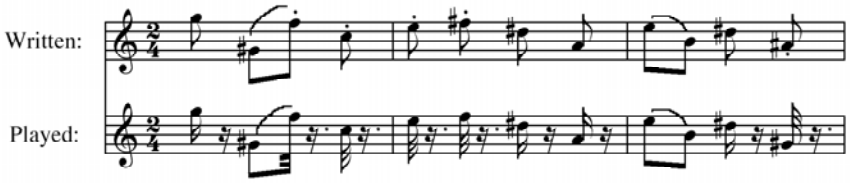


Movement 3 (chiaro)



In the third movement the tonal content becomes more complex, the two outer voices often 'reflecting' each other, creating a wider range of pitches, while the central voices play in unison.

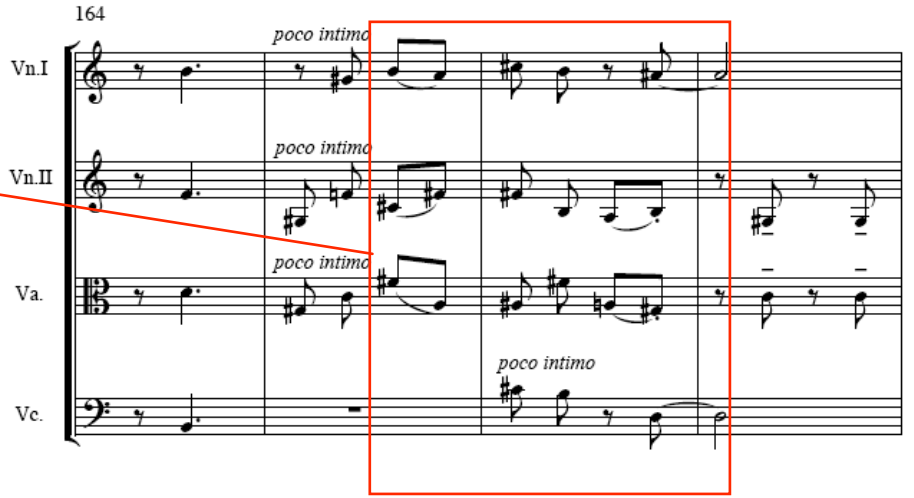
Both the third and fourth movements employ an extended notation to indicate degrees of articulation.



The use of the *agogic* accent or *tenuto* line indicates a note should be played with a little <u>more</u> than its full value.

Movement 4 (con garbo e sonora)

The final movement uses the same extended notation of articulation. Sustained notes, harmonic textures and chords are now introduced.



Le Jardin Sec

Bees scorch
Round the red bosses
Of Rosa Moyseii,
Buzz like train sets.

Apples thunder
Like gorilla gangs
Crushing their way
To the jungle floor.

Butterfly pumps
Her faded wings,
No more stained glass
But worn tapestries.

White currants in cells
In pitiless sun
Sweat oval beads.
Poppies roll drums.

Cross brown grass
Under cube-cut trees,
An avenue of golden
Propped boxes,

And the vista races
Towards us, an actor
Late for his cue,
Cloaked in flames.

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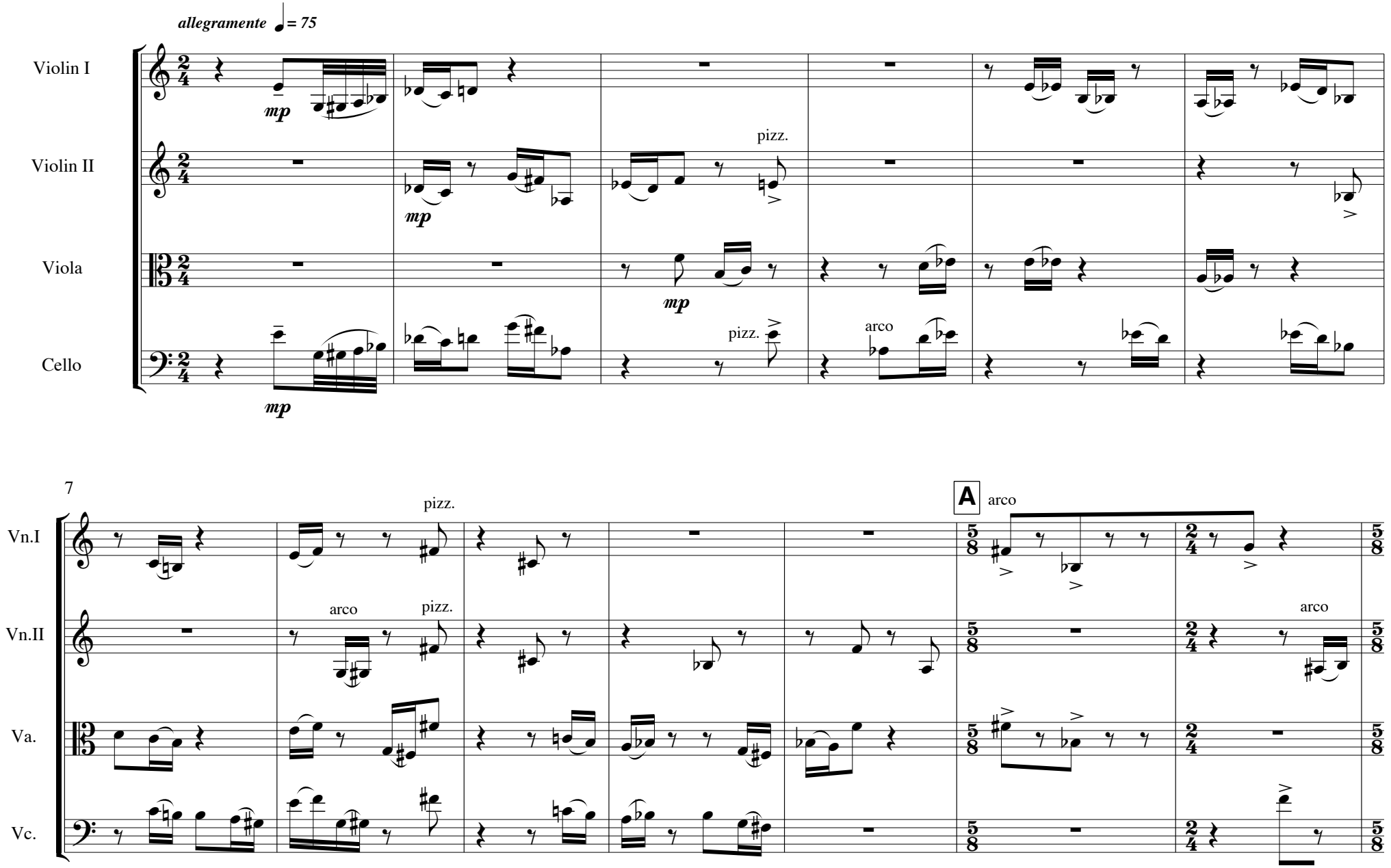
Le Jardin Sec



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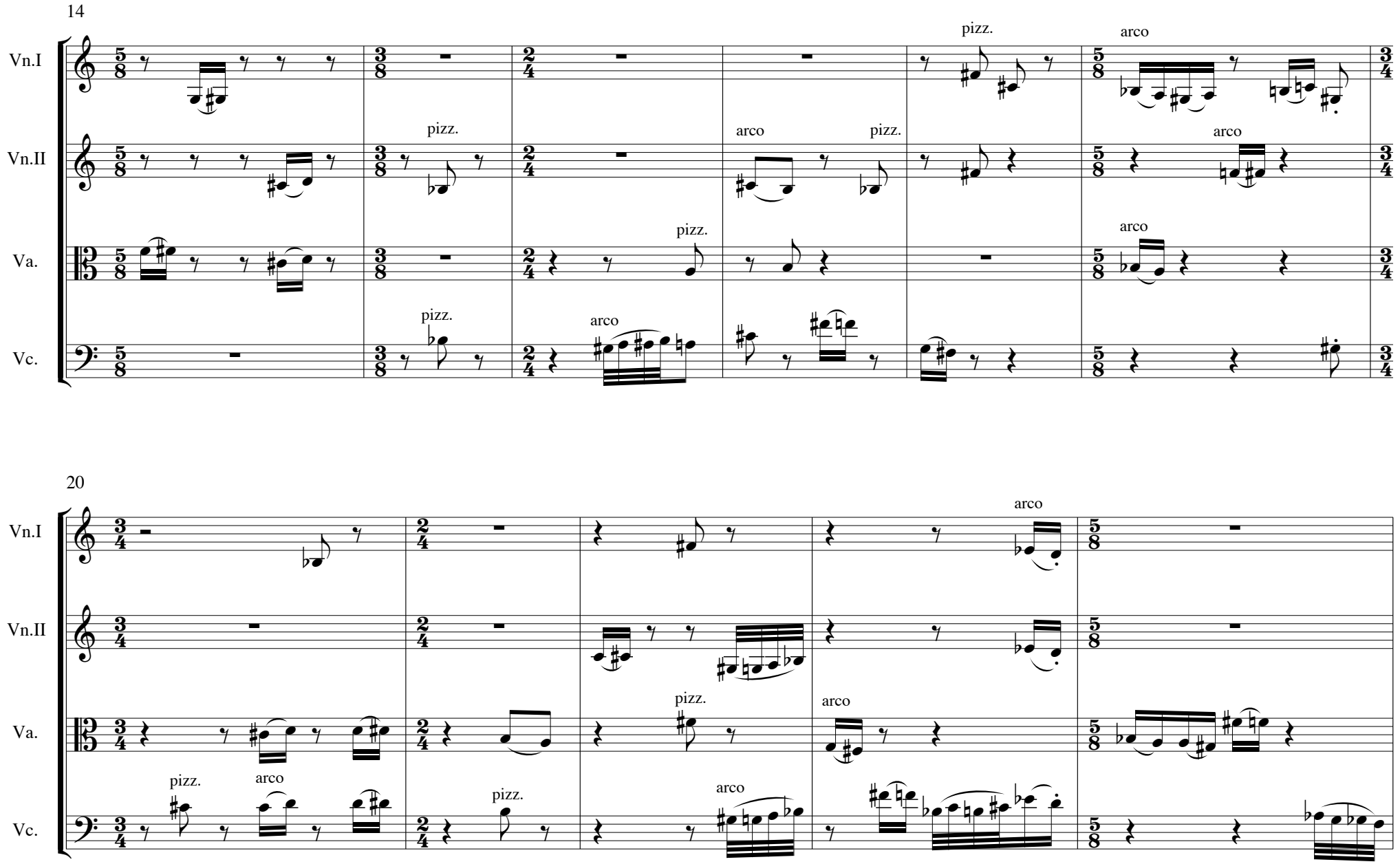
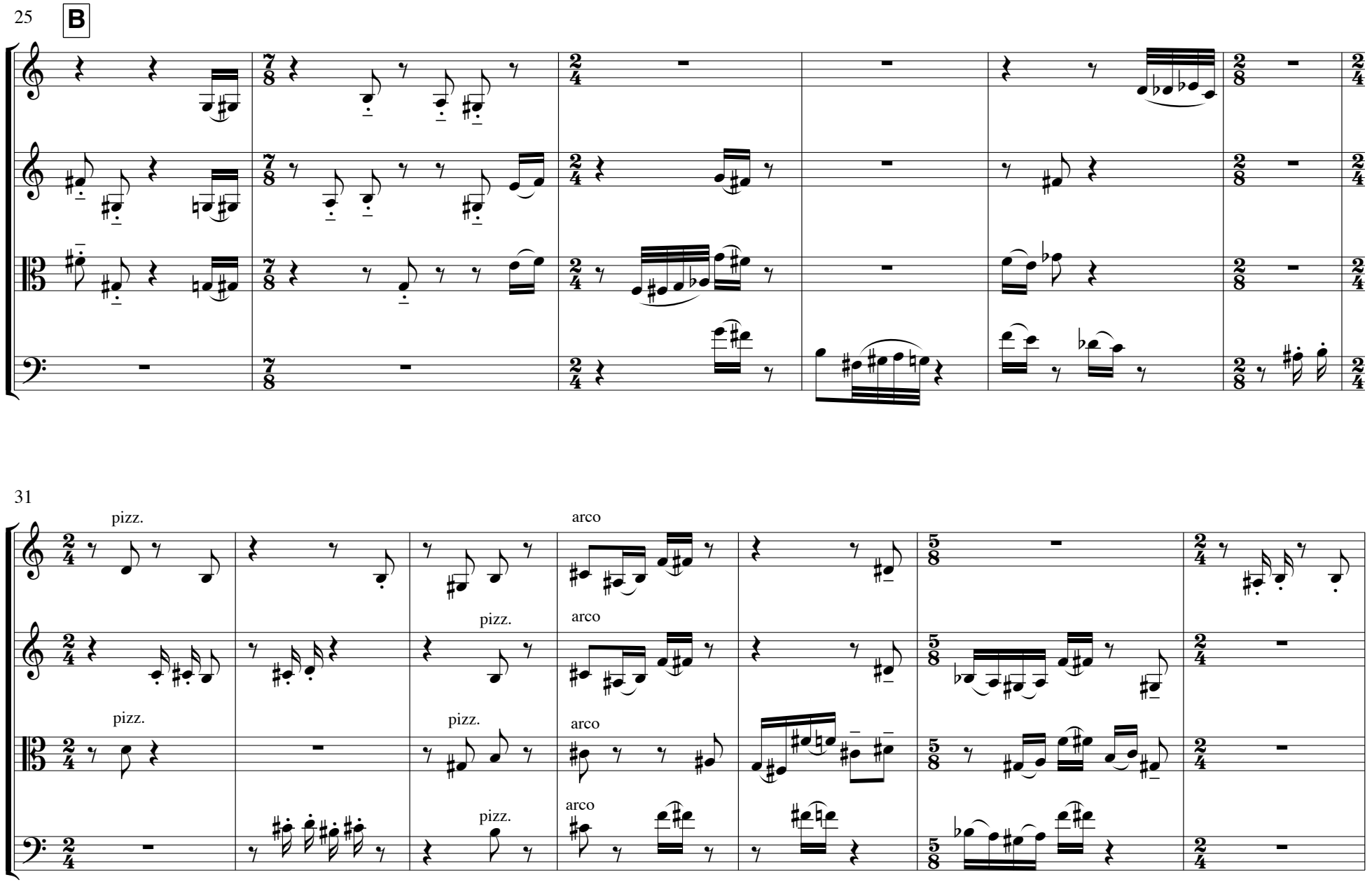
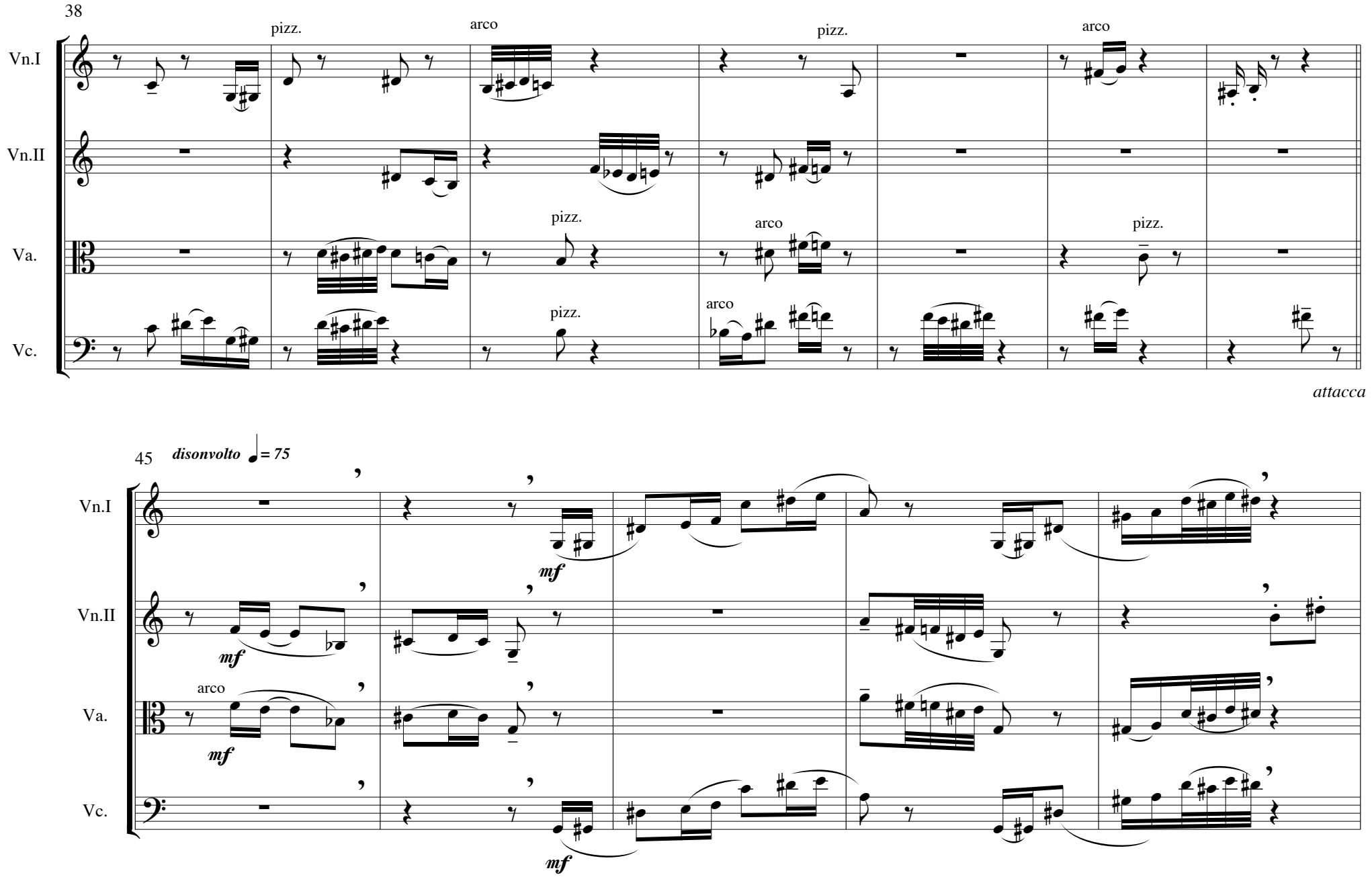
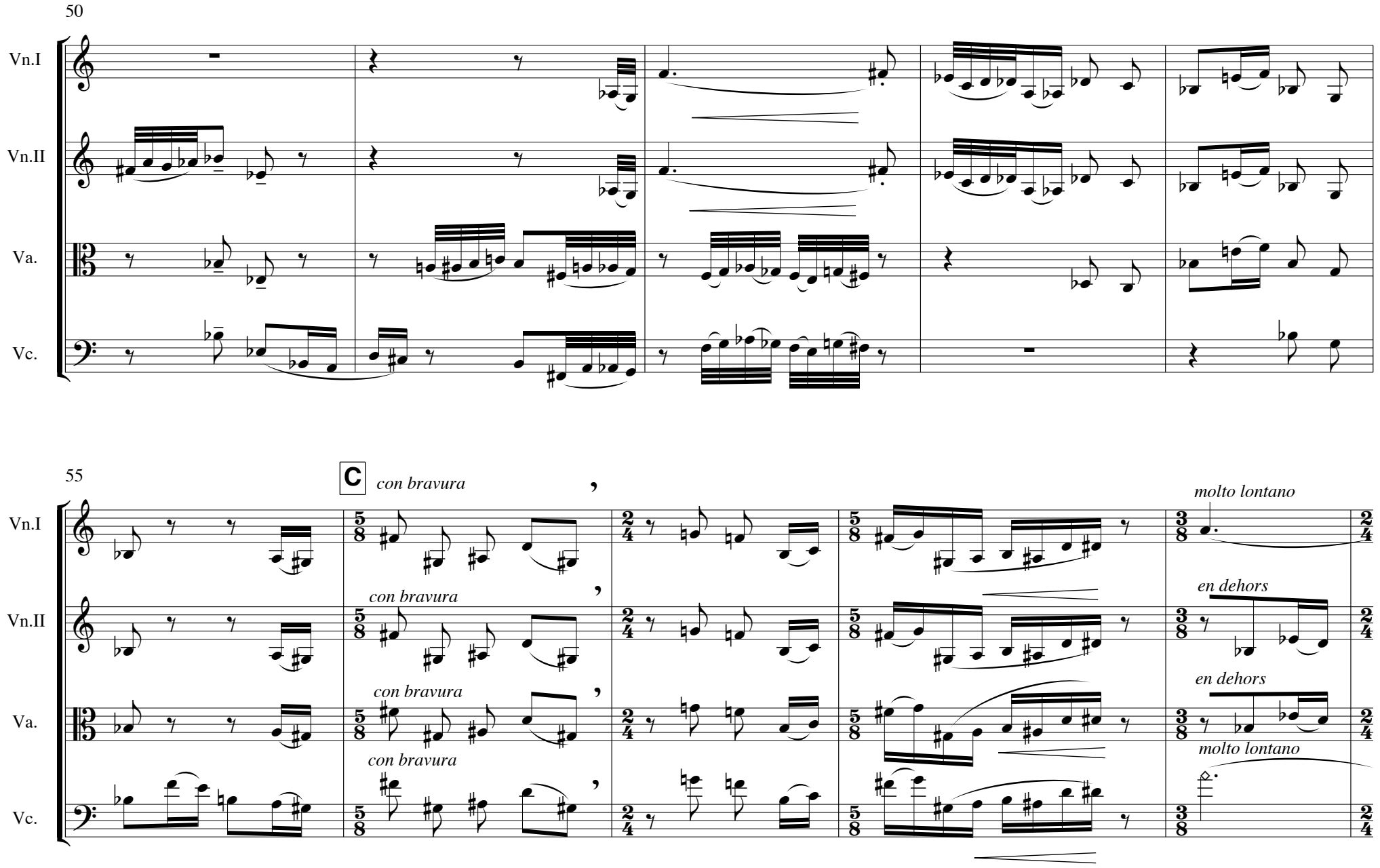
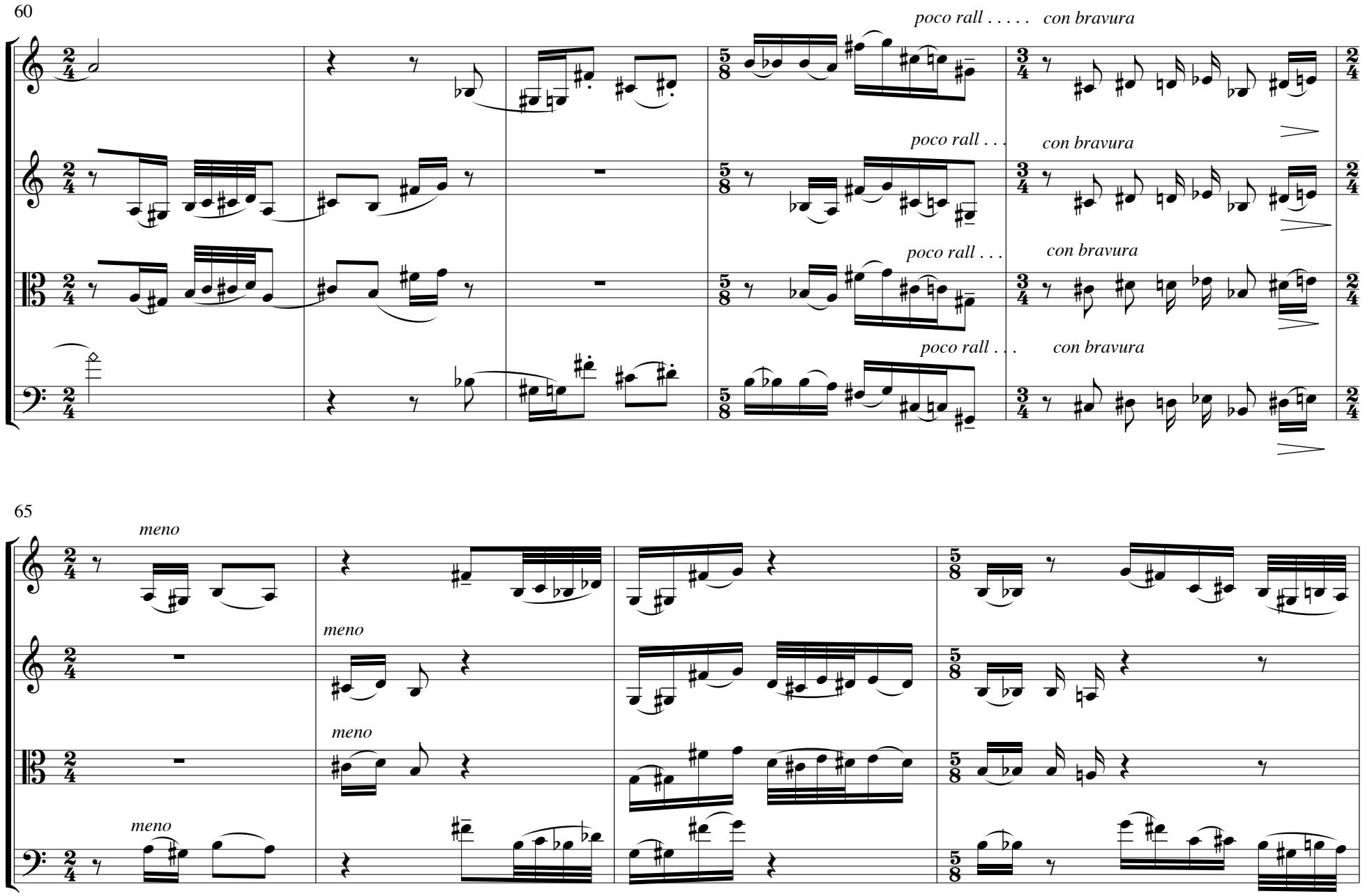
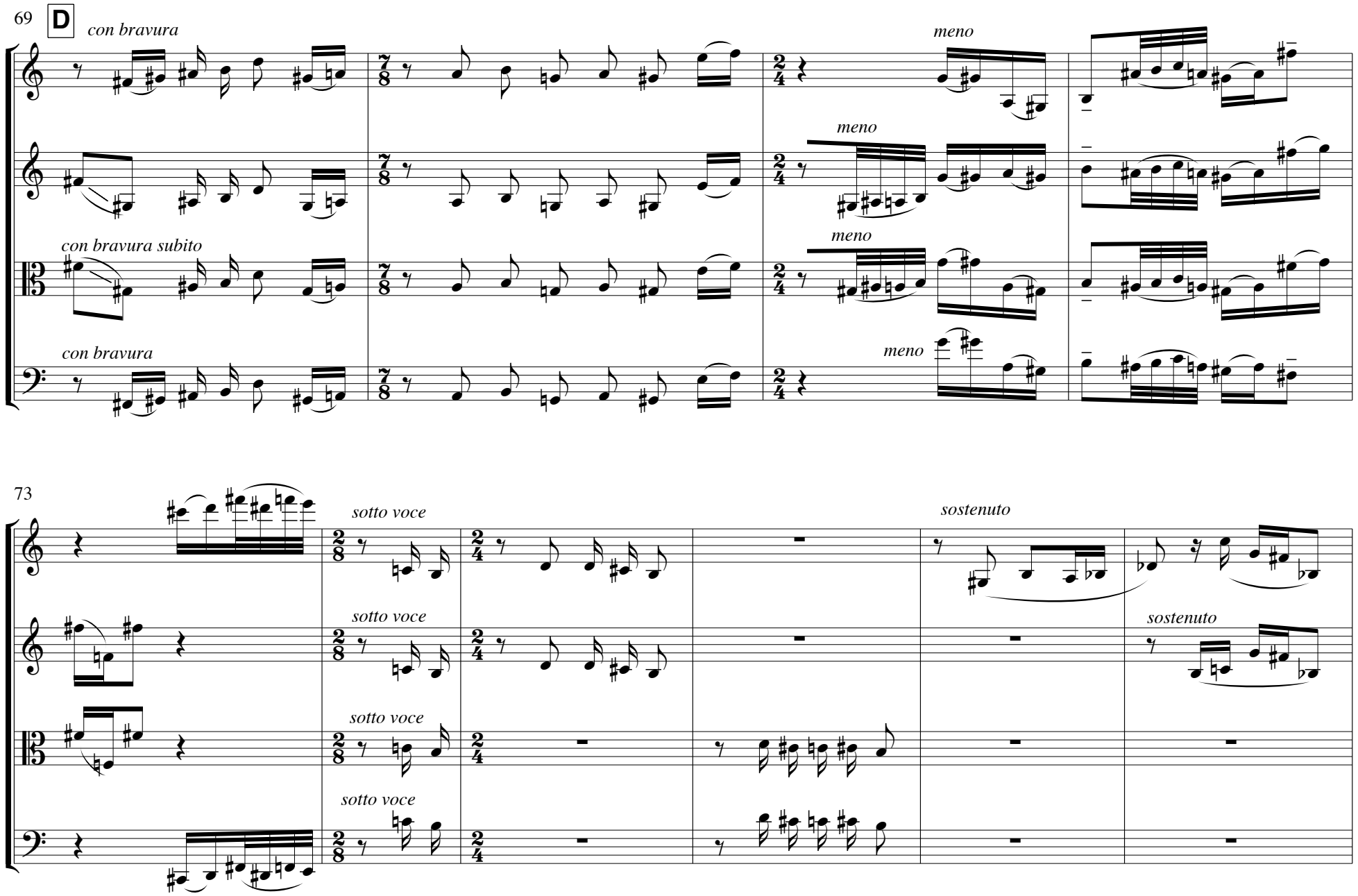

14
Vn.I
Vn.II
Va.
Vc.
pizz.
arco
20

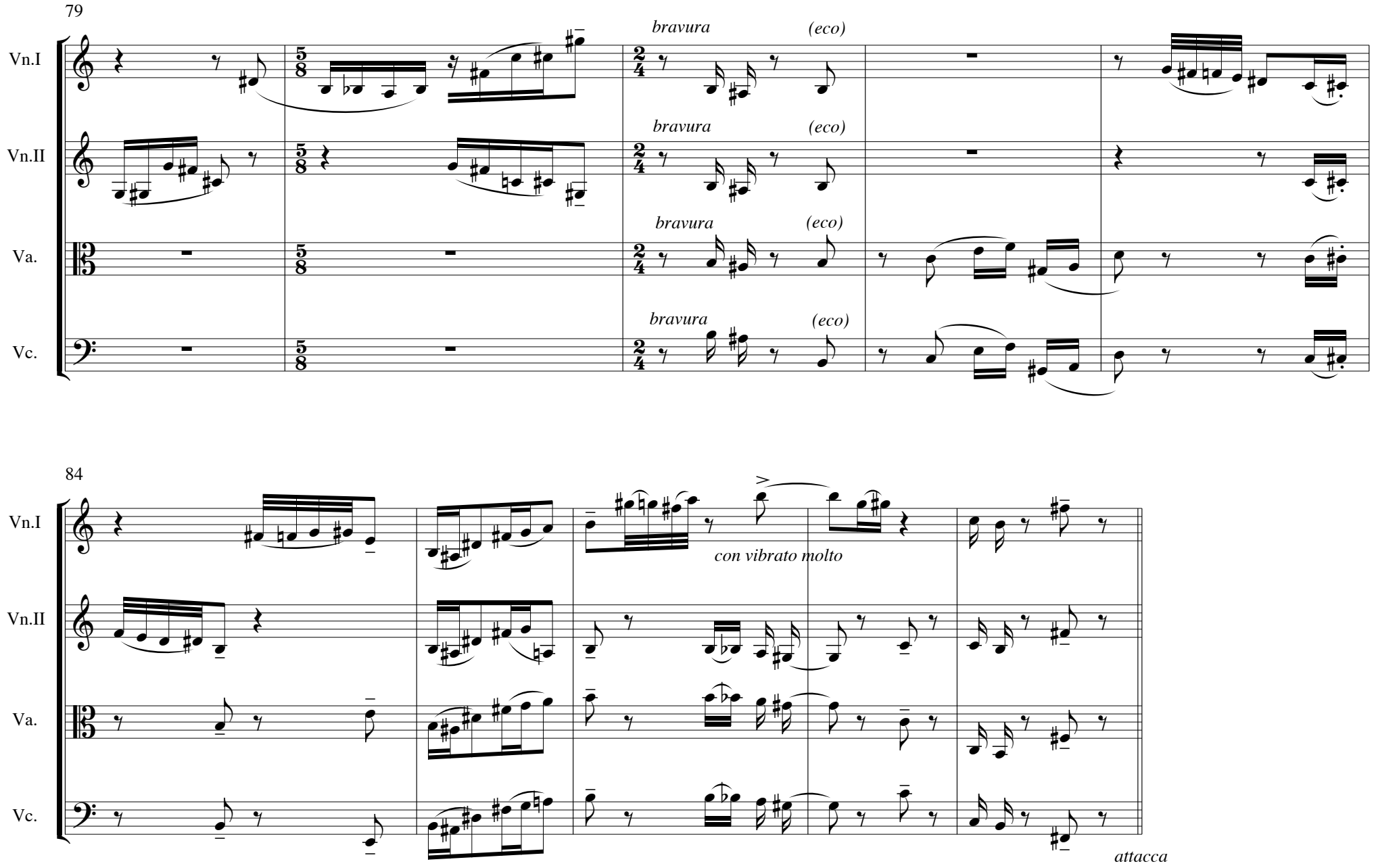

25
B
Vn.I
Vn.II
Va.
Vc.
31
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco

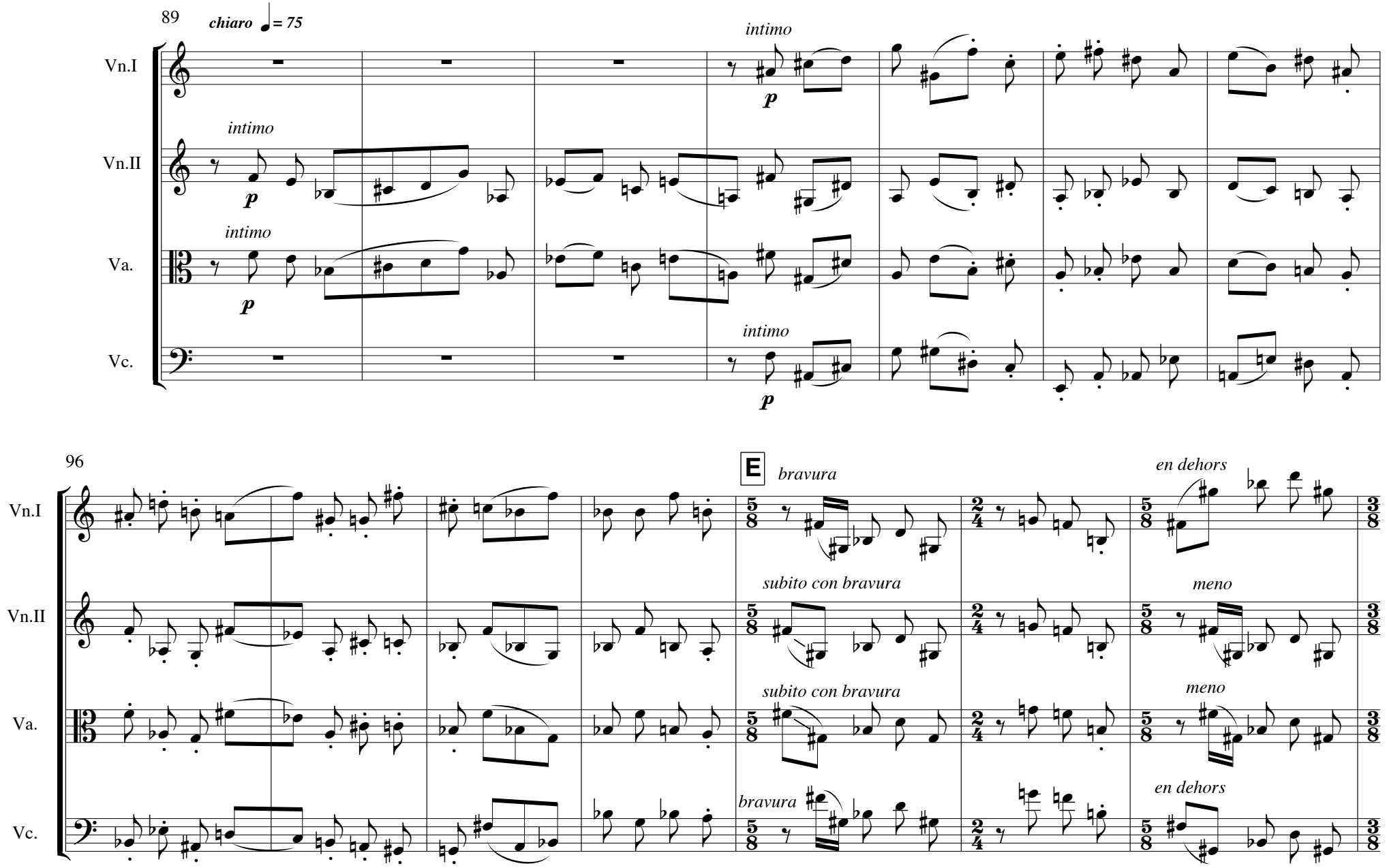

38
Vn.I
Vn.II
Va.
Vc.
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
attacca
45
disonvolto ♩= 75
mf
mf
arco
mf
mf

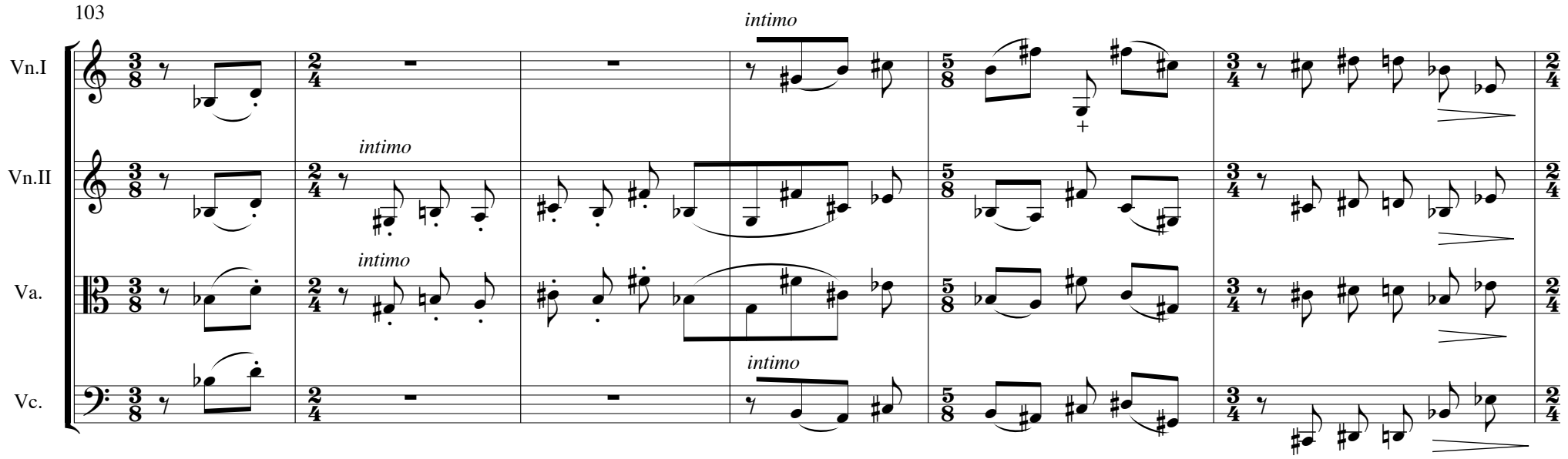

50
Vn.I
Vn.II
Va.
Vc.
55
C
con bravura
molto lontano
en dehors

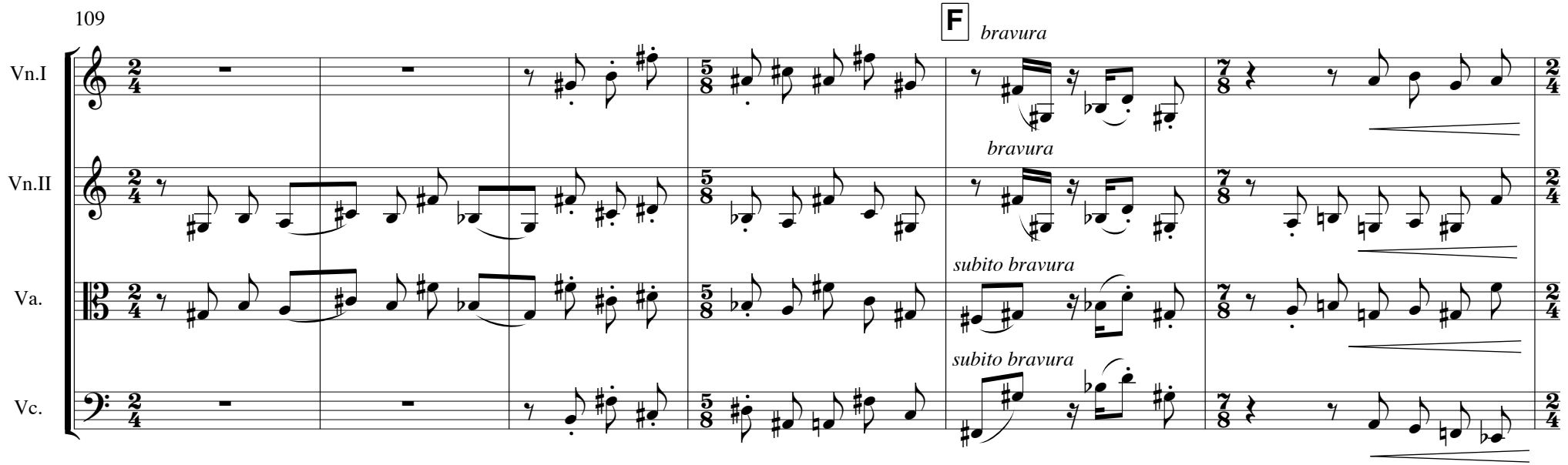

60
Vn.I
Vn.II
Va.
Vc.
poco rall . . . . . con bravura
poco rall . . . con bravura
poco rall . . . con bravura
poco rall . . . con bravura
65
meno
meno
meno
meno

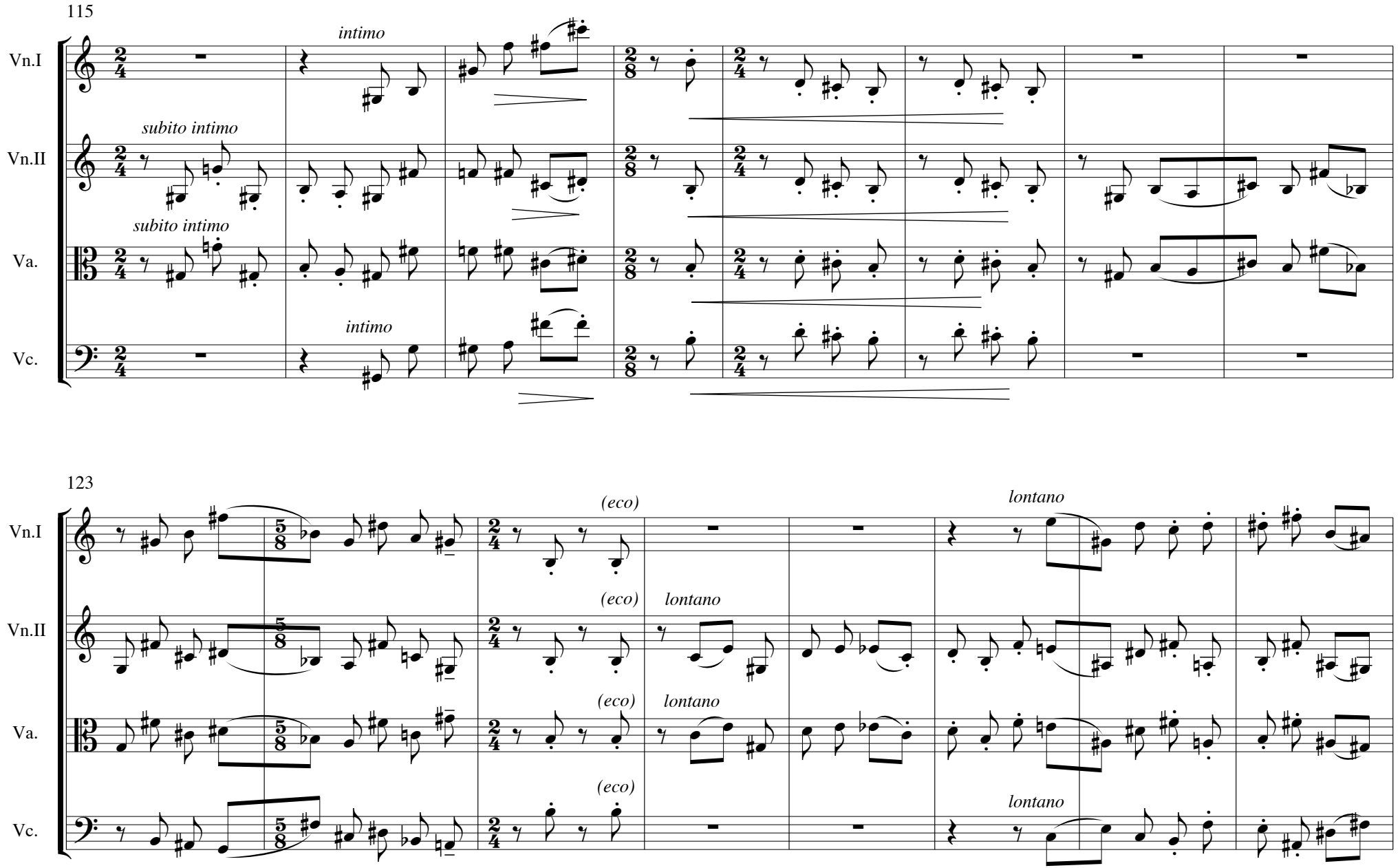

69
D
con bravura
Vn.I
Vn.II
Va.
Vc.
con bravura subito
con bravura
meno
meno
meno
meno
73
sotto voce
sotto voce
sotto voce
sotto voce
sostenuto
sostenuto


79
Vn.I
Vn.II
Va.
Vc.
bravura
(eco)
84
con vibrato molto
attacca

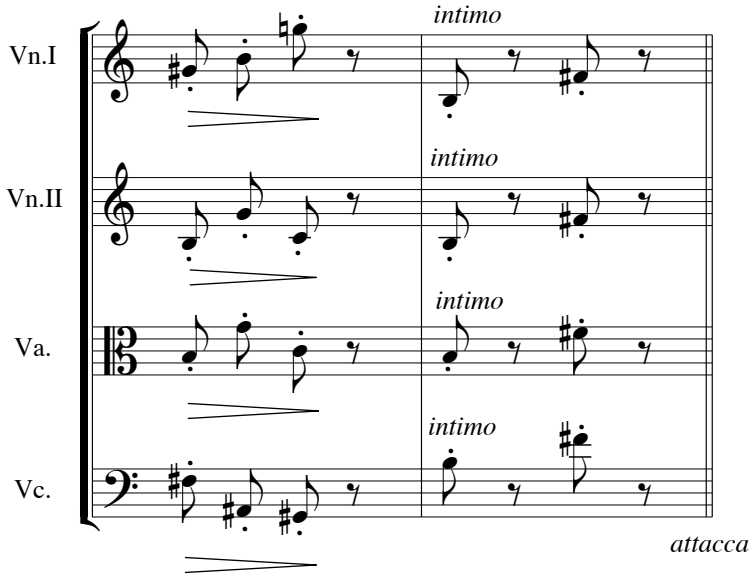

89
chiaro ♩= 75
Vn.I
Vn.II
Va.
Vc.
intimo
p
96
E
bravura
en dehors
subito con bravura
meno


103
Vn.I
Vn.II
Va.
Vc.
intimo
intimo
intimo
intimo

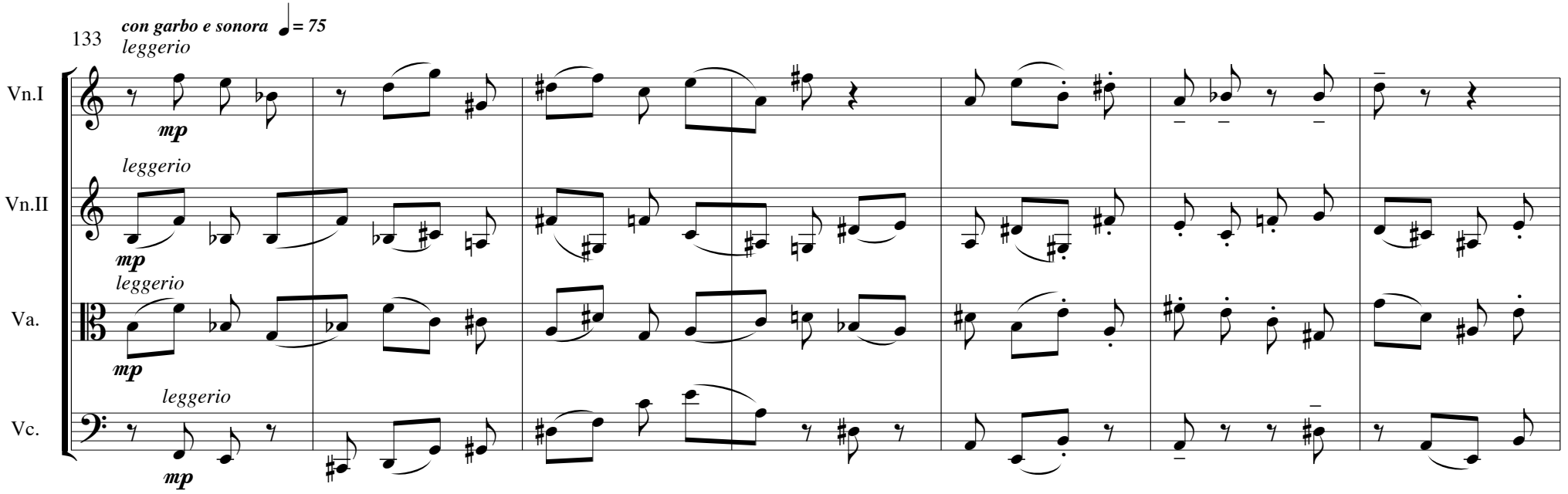

109
F
bravura
Vn.I
Vn.II
Va.
Vc.
bravura
subito bravura
subito bravura

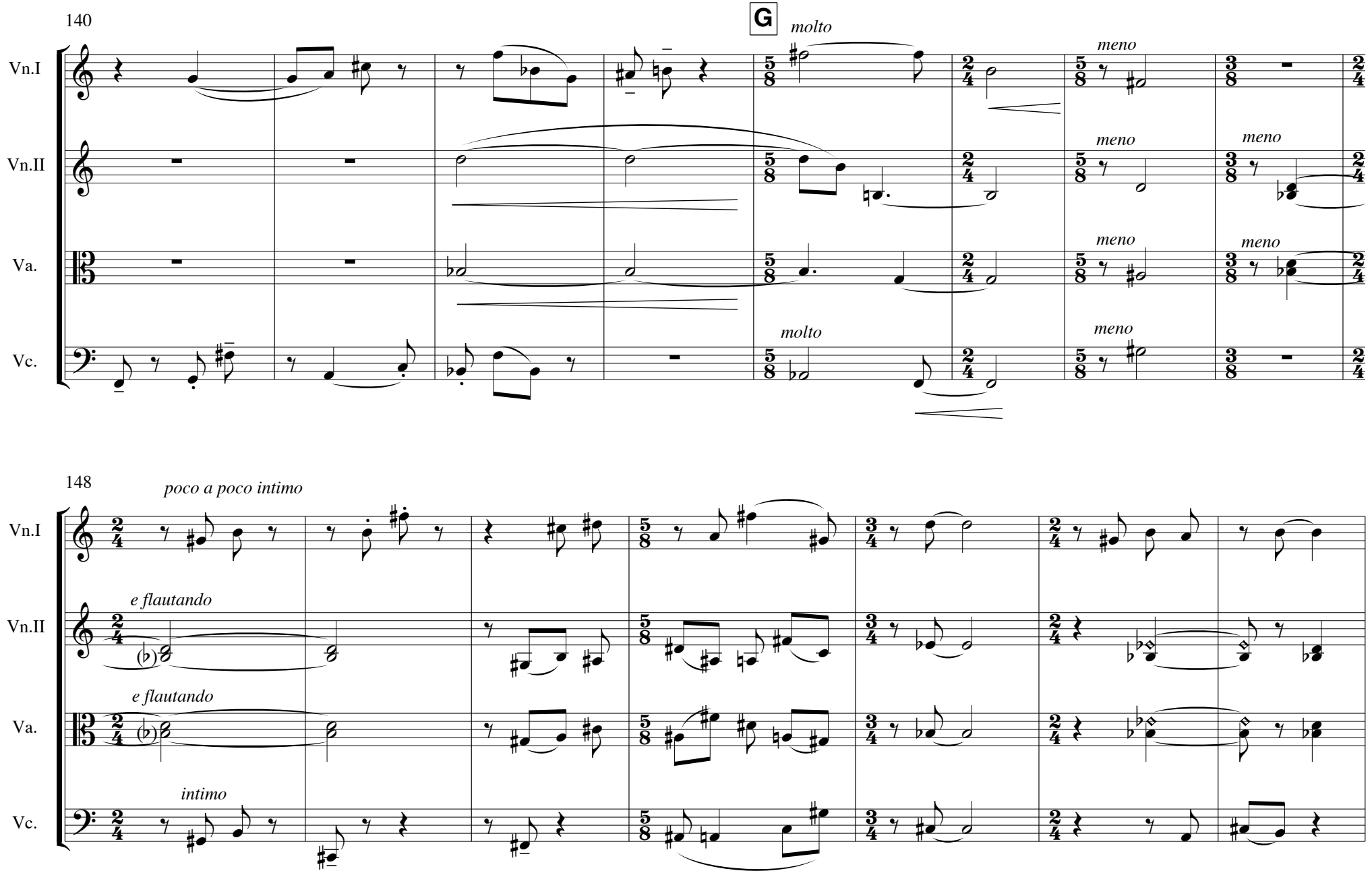

115
Vn.I
Vn.II
Va.
Vc.
intimo
subito intimo
subito intimo
intimo
123
(eco)
(eco)
lontano
(eco)
lontano
(eco)
lontano

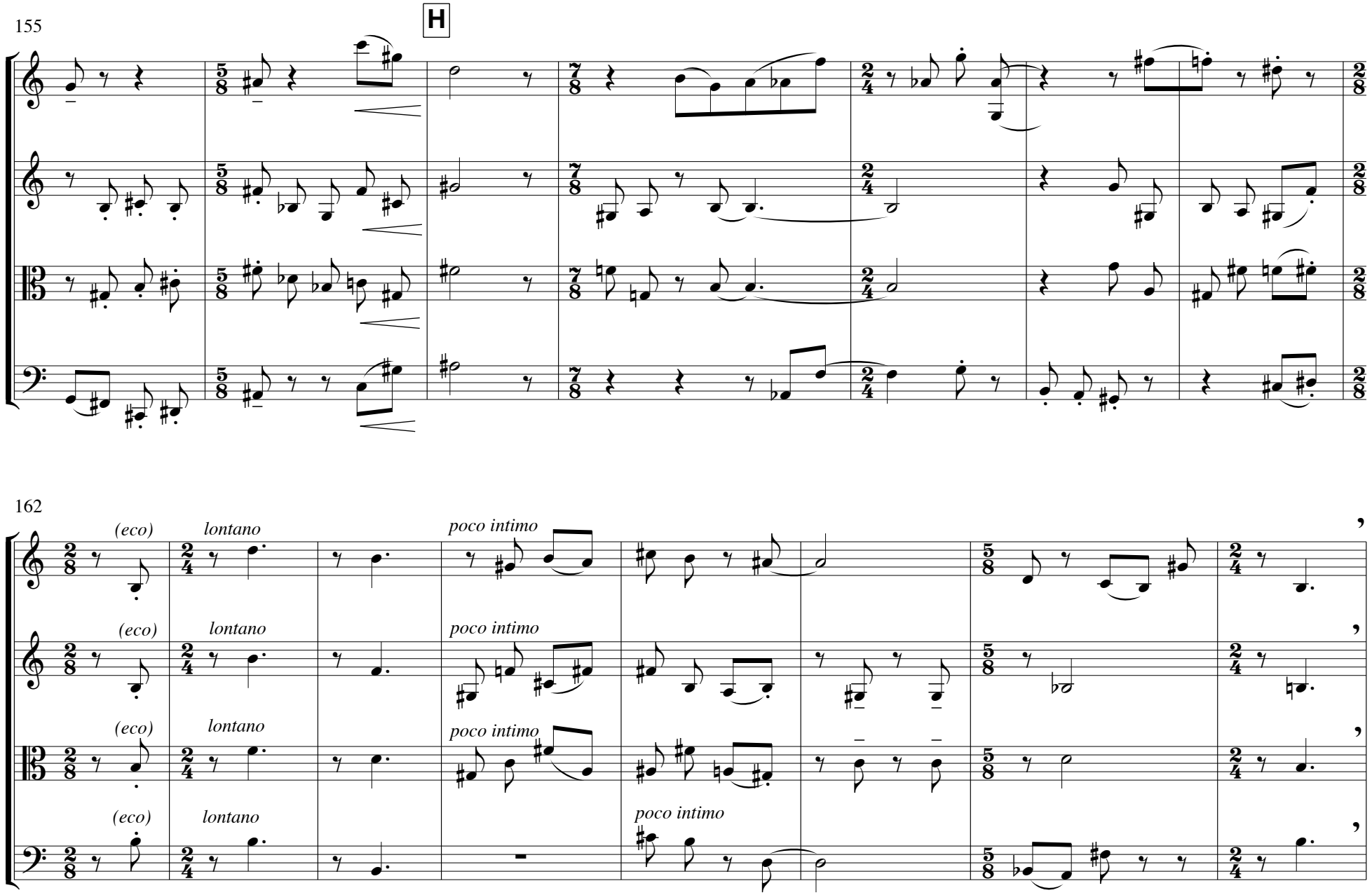
131

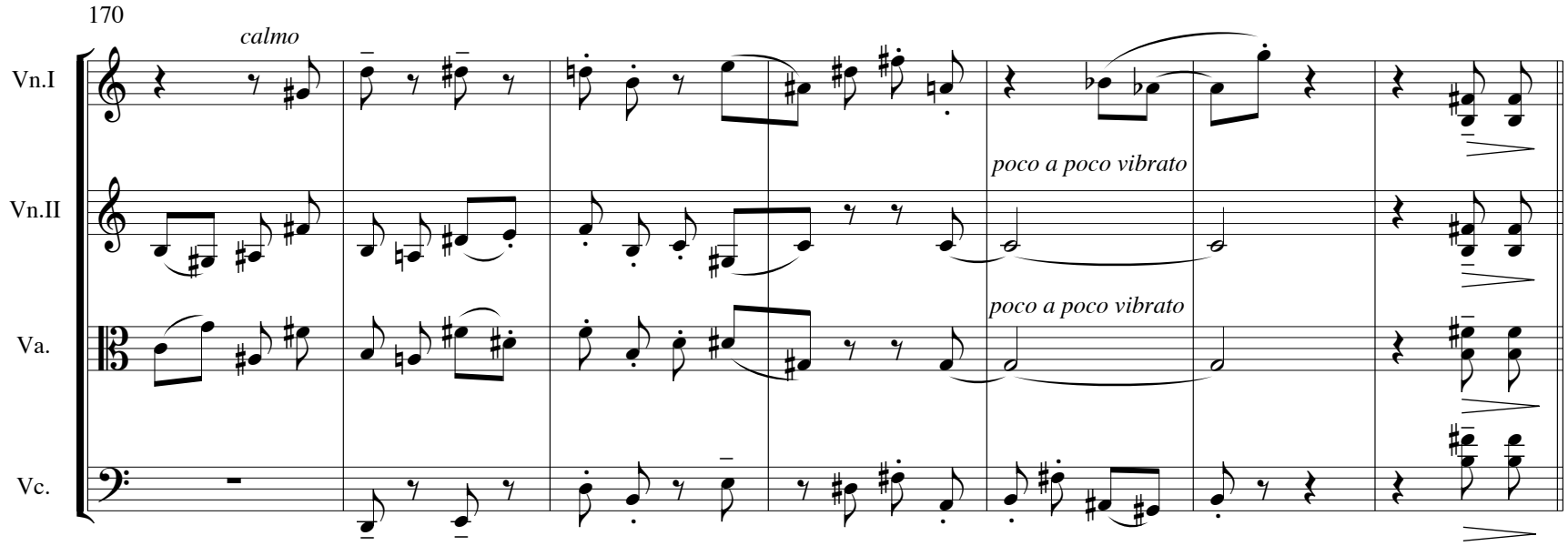

Vn.I
Vn.II
Va.
Vc.
intimo
intimo
intimo
intimo
attacca

133


con garbo e sonora
= 75
Vn.I
Vn.II
Va.
Vc.
leggerio
leggerio
leggerio
leggerio
mp
mp
mp
mp


140
G
molto
meno
Vn.I
Vn.II
Va.
Vc.
molto
148
poco a poco intimo
e flautando
e flautando
intimo


155
H
Vn.I
Vn.II
Va.
Vc.
162
(eco)
lontano
poco intimo


170
calmo
Vn.I
Vn.II
Va.
Vc.
poco a poco vibrato
poco a poco vibrato