A Mancunian artist's practical creative reply to just criticism

He Was Despised

Variations on a theme of Handel
An Entertainment for String Orchestra

Nicholas Simpson

I had the idea for a set of variations on the famous *Messiah* aria some years ago, at a time when I had experienced a chastening professional reverse, largely self-inflicted, one which caused a generally robust self-esteem to falter.

Any music dwelling on the things for which I had proper cause for self-pity, however, would be over embarrassingly quickly, and in the interests of balance I thought I would have to deal with my general all-round startling good fortune as well.

(The piece is described on the title page as an "entertainment" because while I was writing it I imagined that it was being played at a concert performed by people who liked to enjoy what they were playing, attended by people who had come out in order to have a good time).

A truncated version of Handel's aria is followed by eight variations:

One, in which I lament that I am *Not a Famous Conductor*;

Two, in which I regret that I am *Not a Famous Composer;*

Three, in which I notice that I am getting *A Bit Thin on Top;*

Four, in which I acknowledge that I am *Not Much Good at Football;*

Five, in which it occurs to me that nonetheless I have *Drink in the House and Money in the Bank*;*

Six, in which I consider that I have a *Lovely Wife and Kids;*

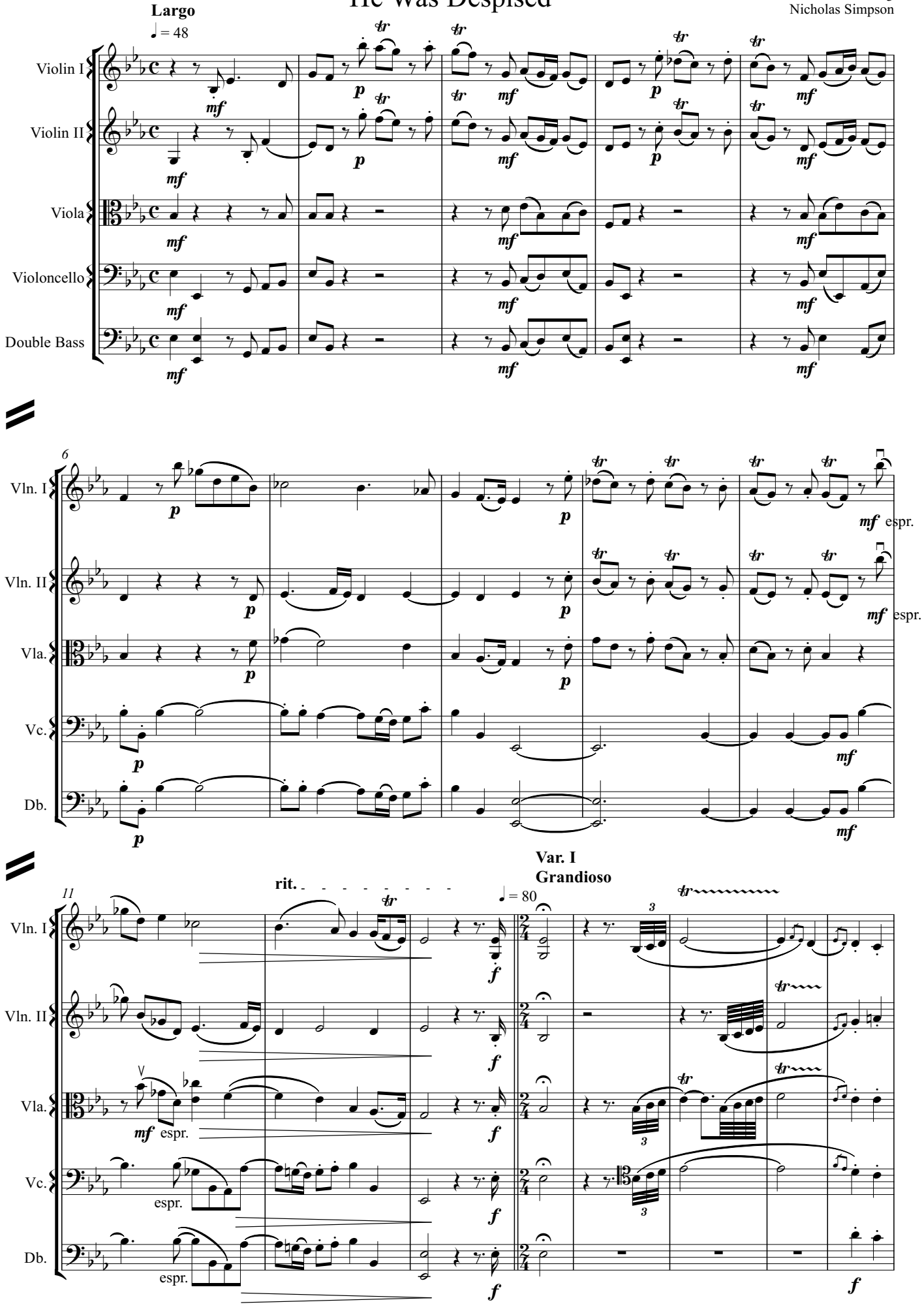
Seven, in which I contemplate the *Little House in the Country;*

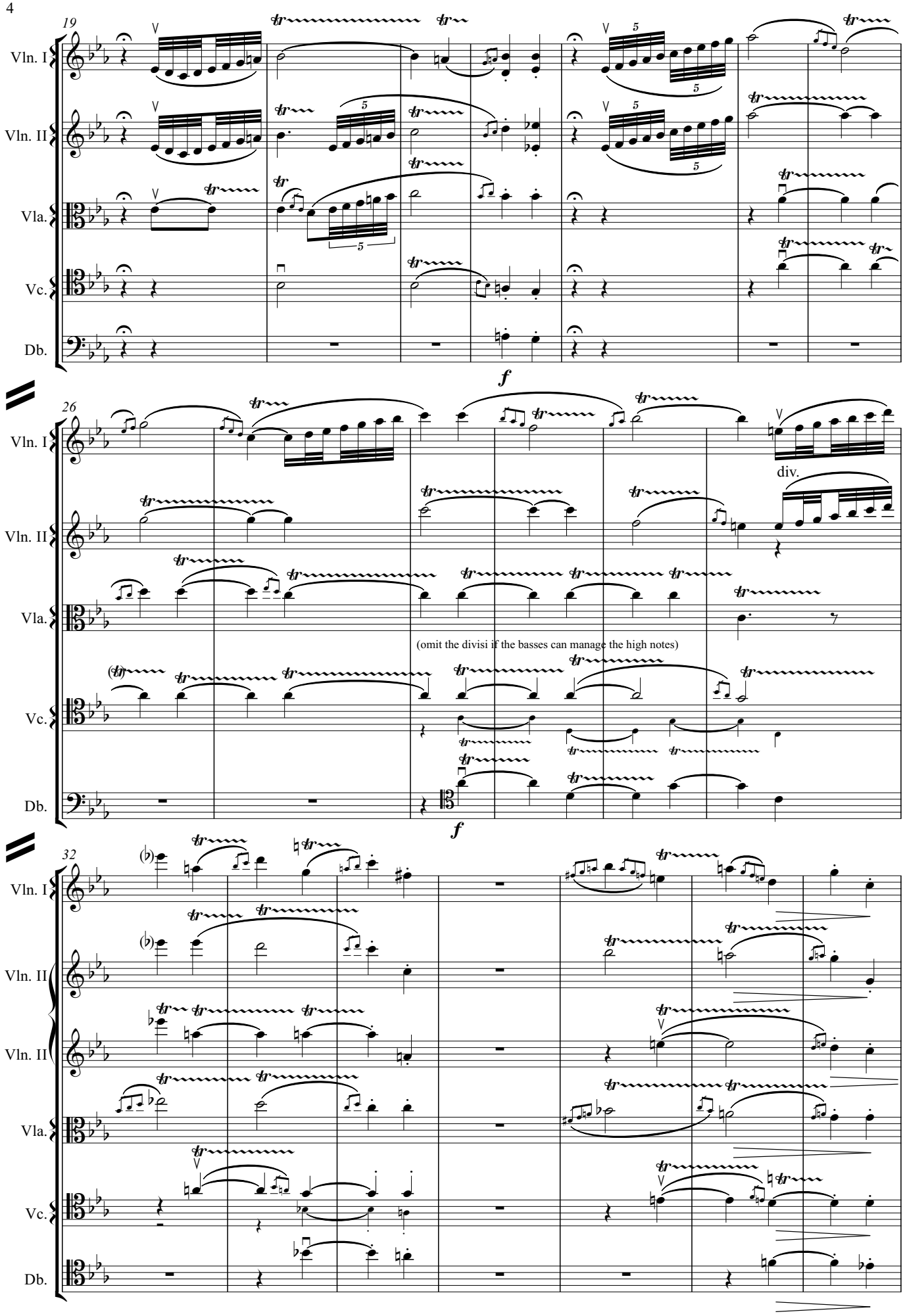
Eight, in which it occurs to me that I am *Not Dead Yet***.

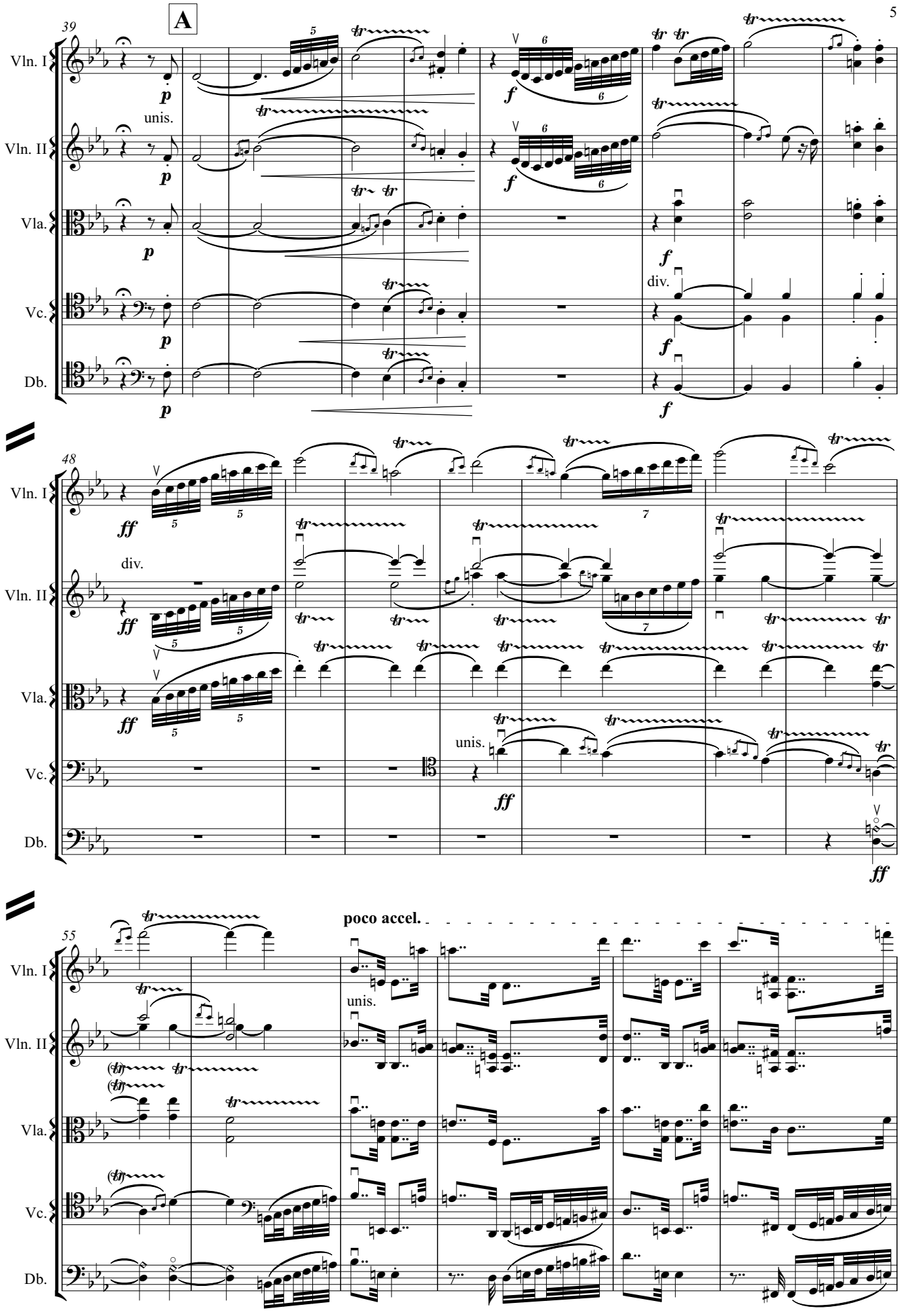
Written Feb / Mar 2009
Duration – c.17 minutes.

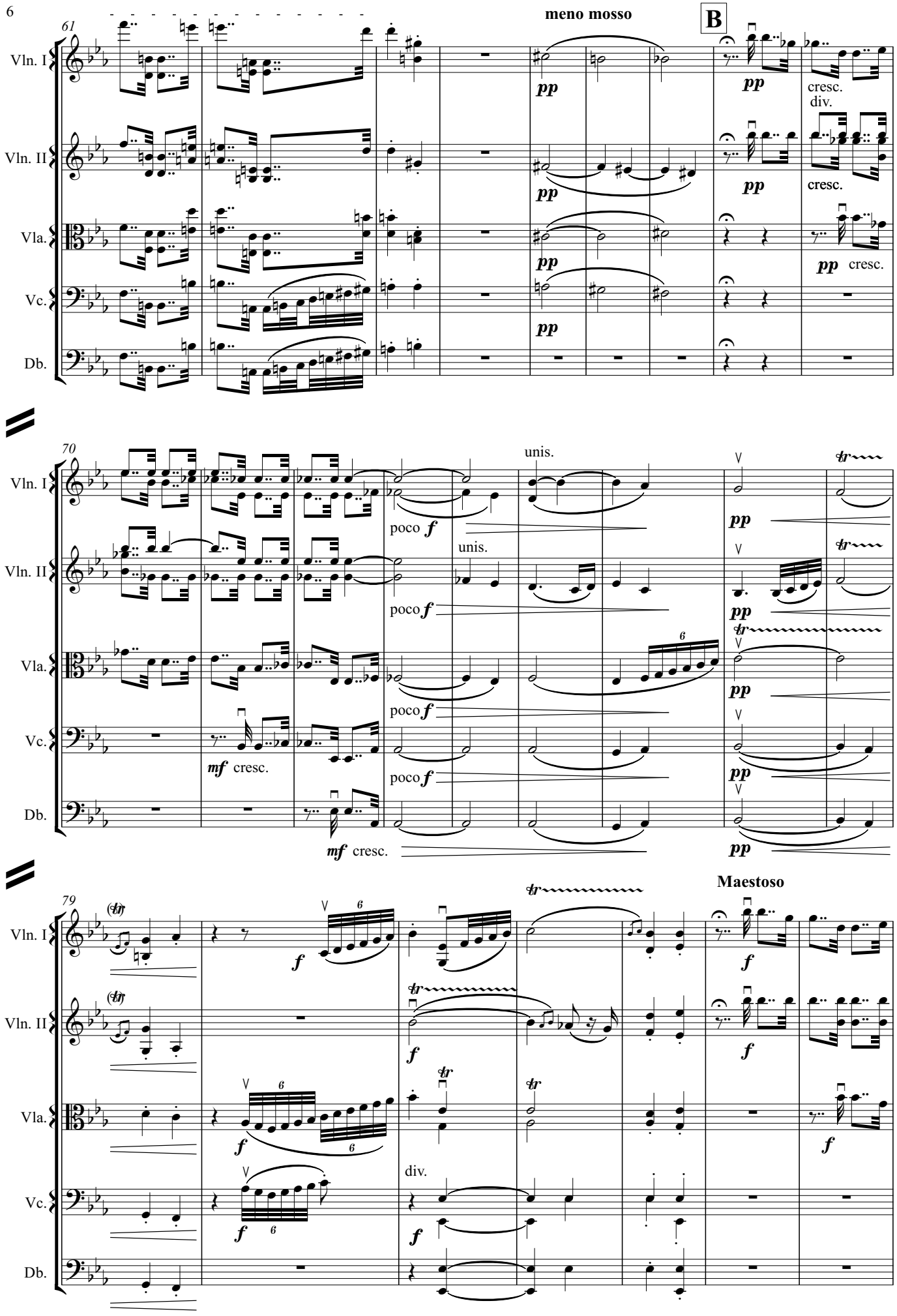
* Pre credit-crunch. Please do not ask for a loan.
** Correct at time of writing. Consult local press for details.

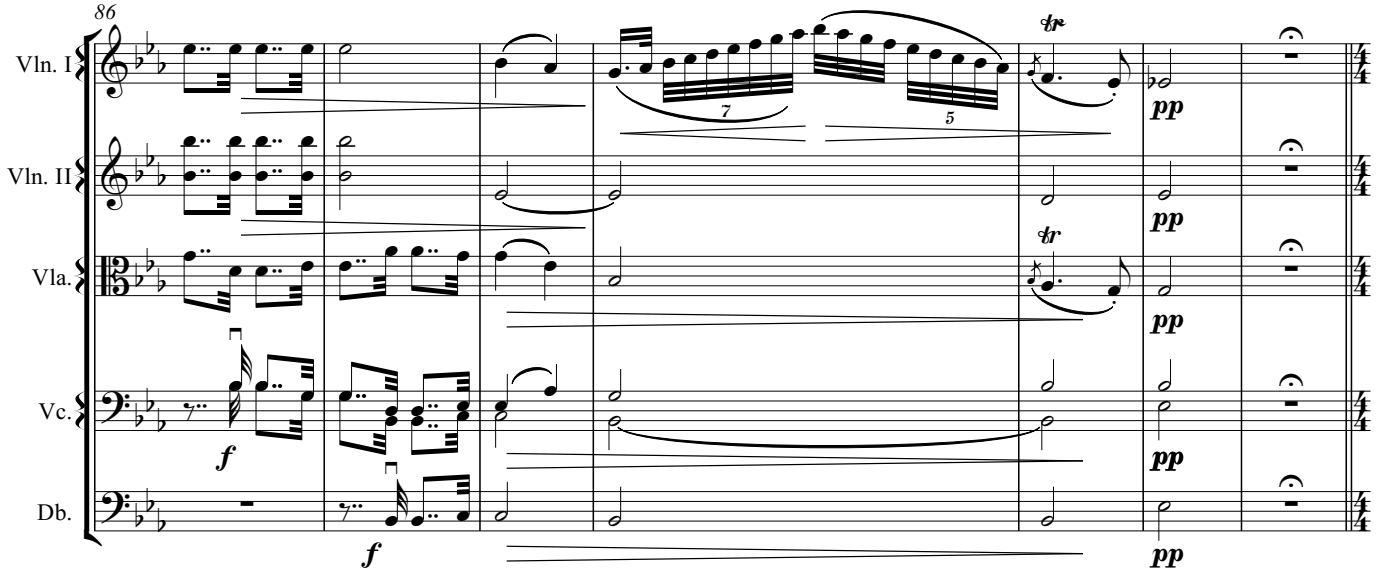
He Was Despised

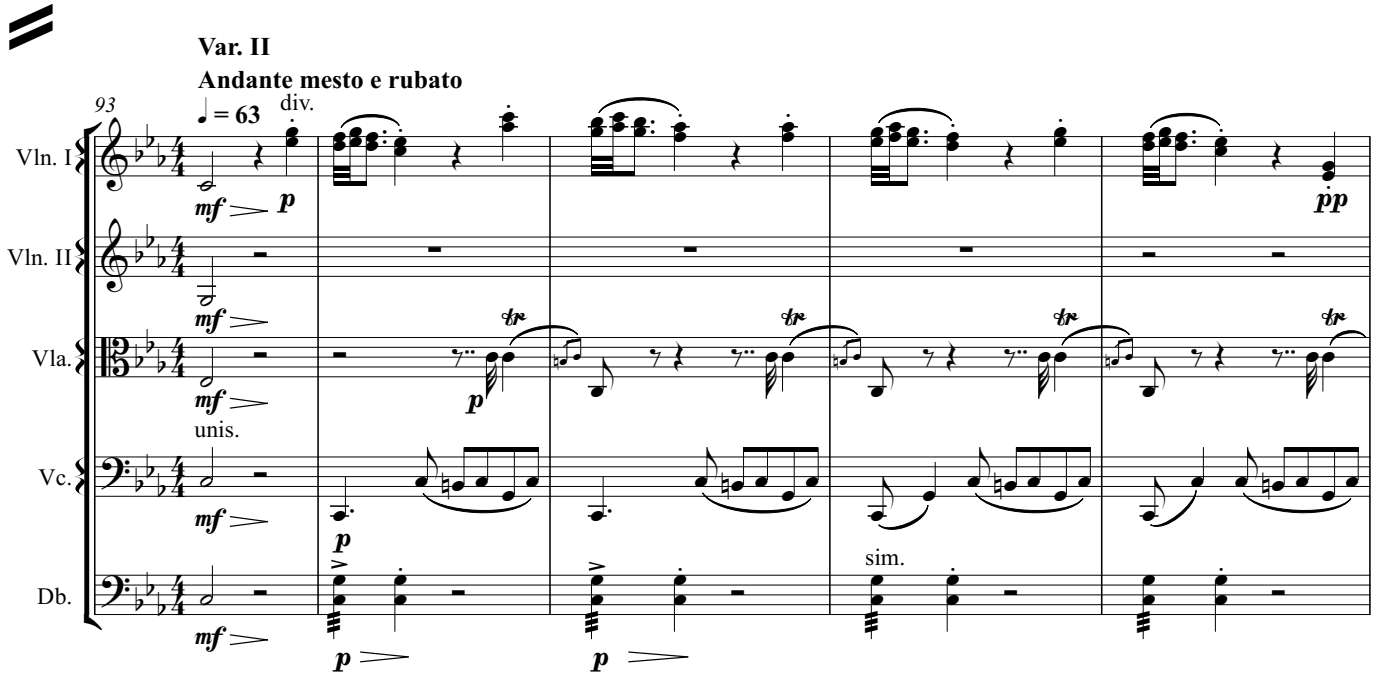


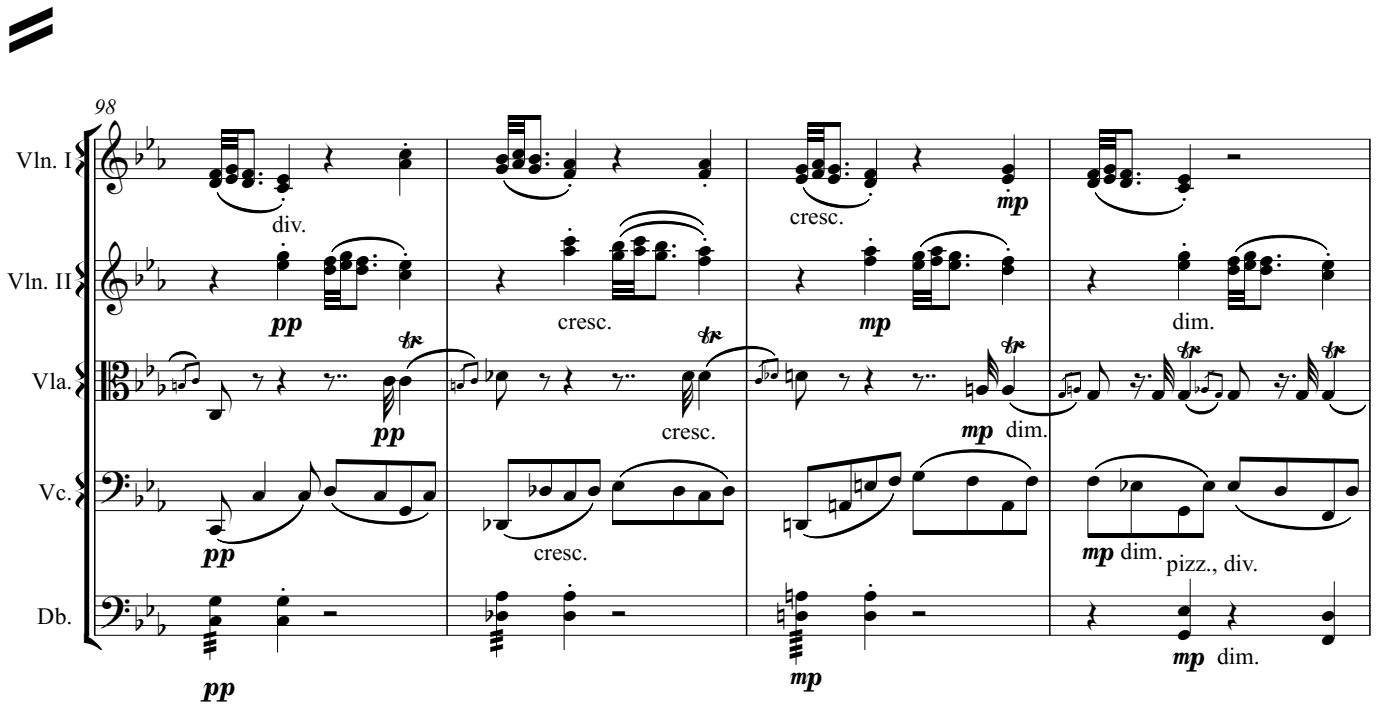

19
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
f
26
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
div.
(omit the divisi if the basses can manage the high notes)
Vc.
Db.
f
32
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

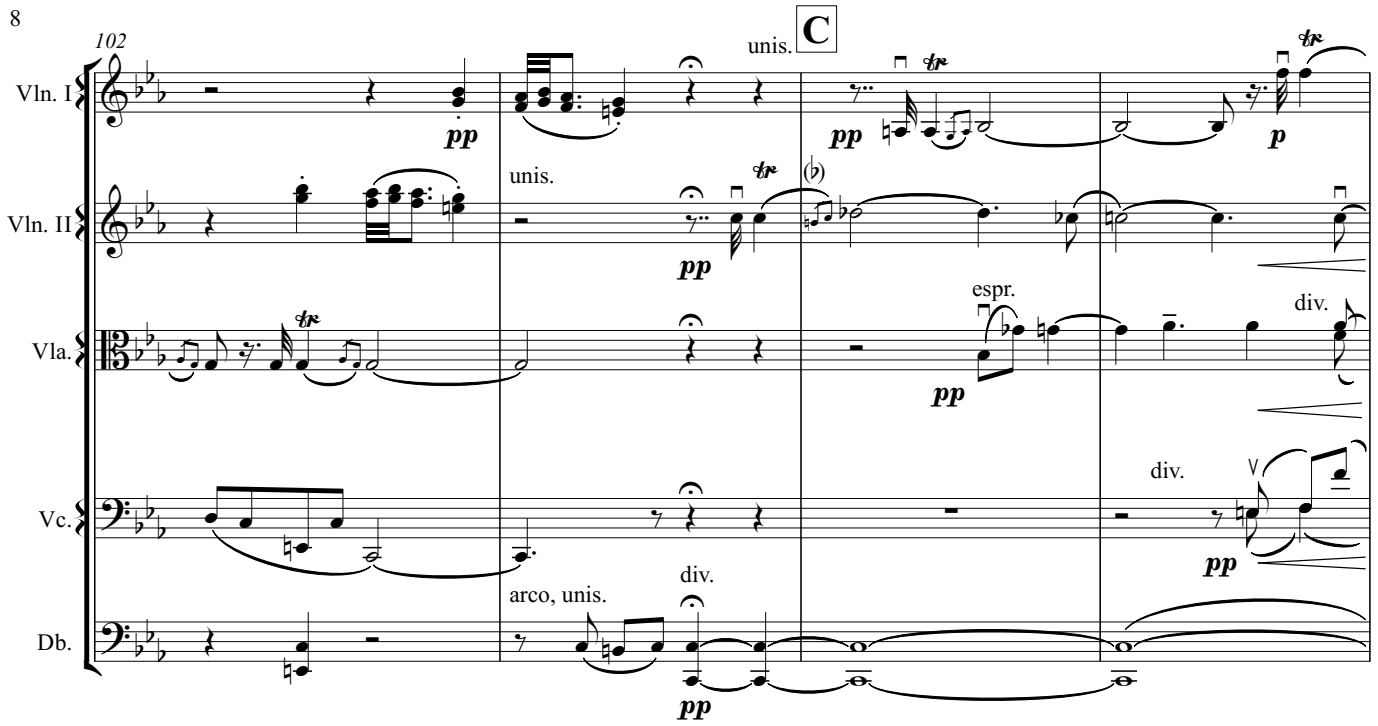

A
39
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
unis.
div.
48
poco accel.
55

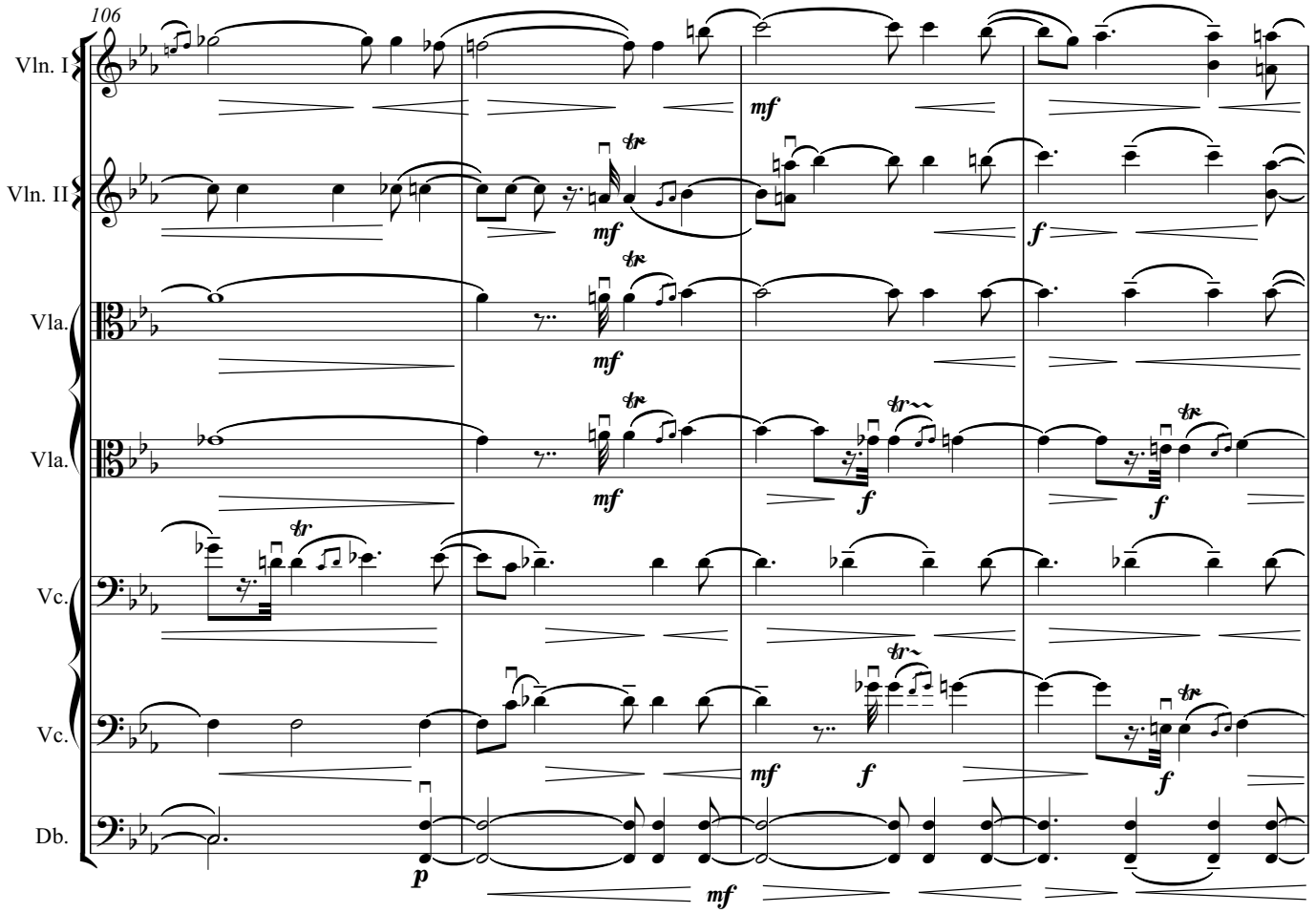

61
meno mosso
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
pp
cresc.
div.
70
unis.
poco f
mf cresc.
79
Maestoso
f
tr
div.

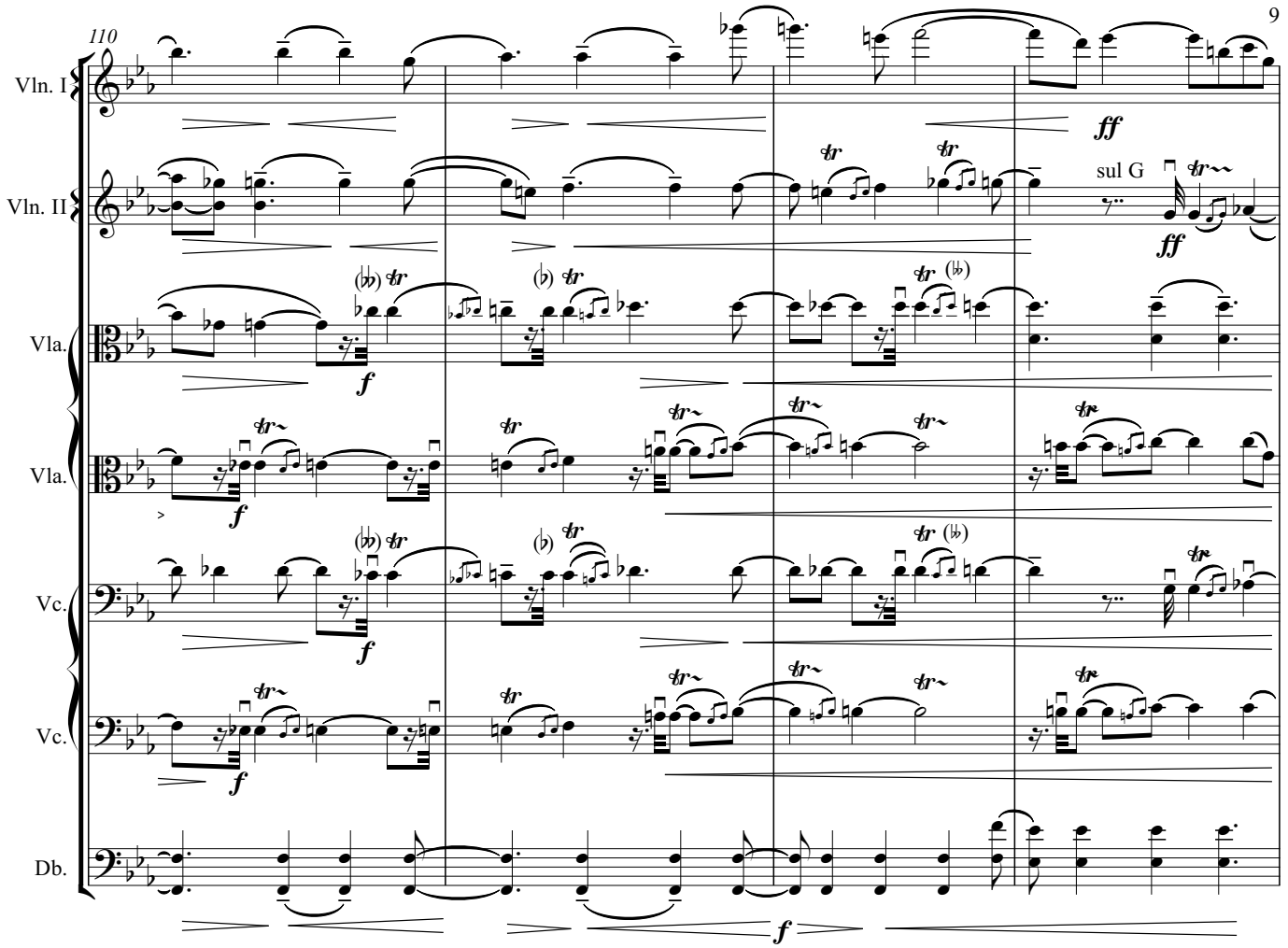

rit.
86
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
f
pp

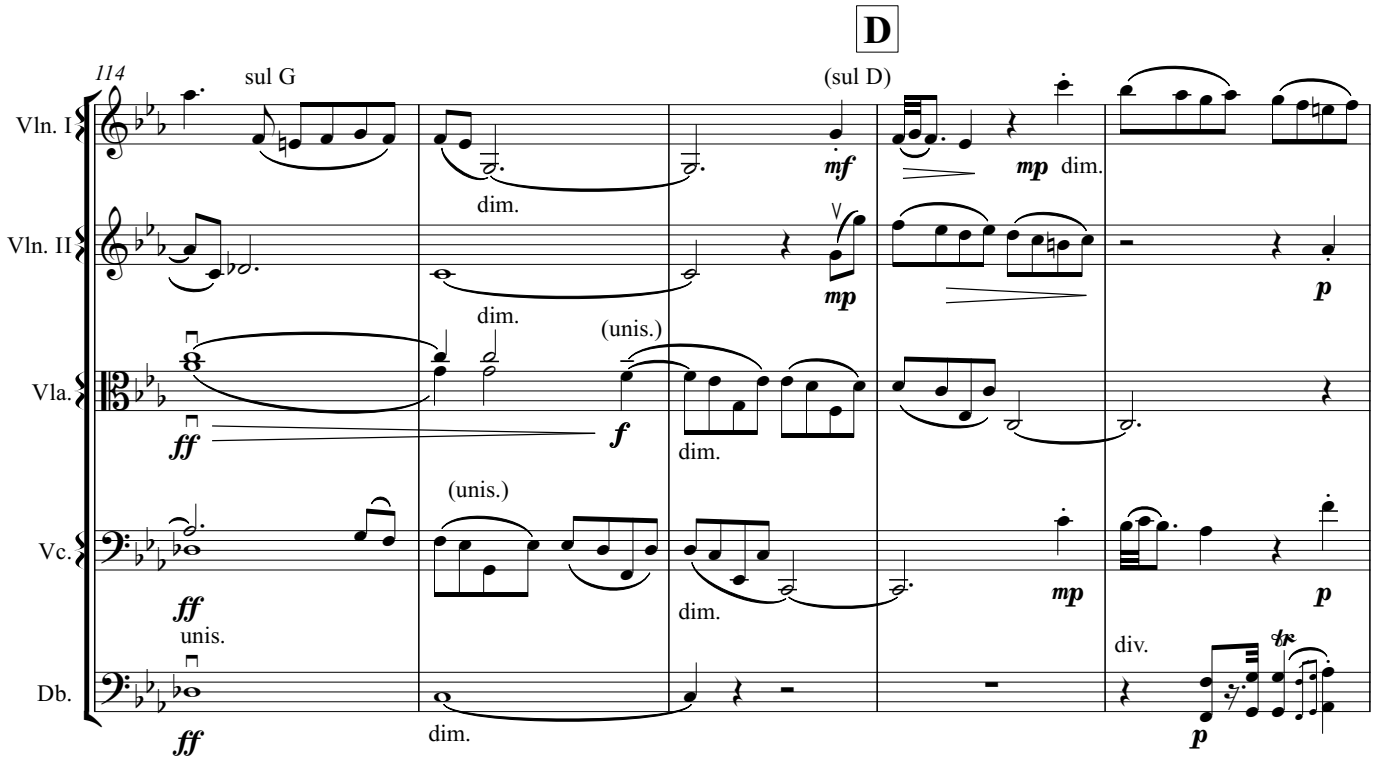

Var. II
Andante mesto e rubato
93
♩ = 63
div.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
mf
p
pp
unis.
sim.

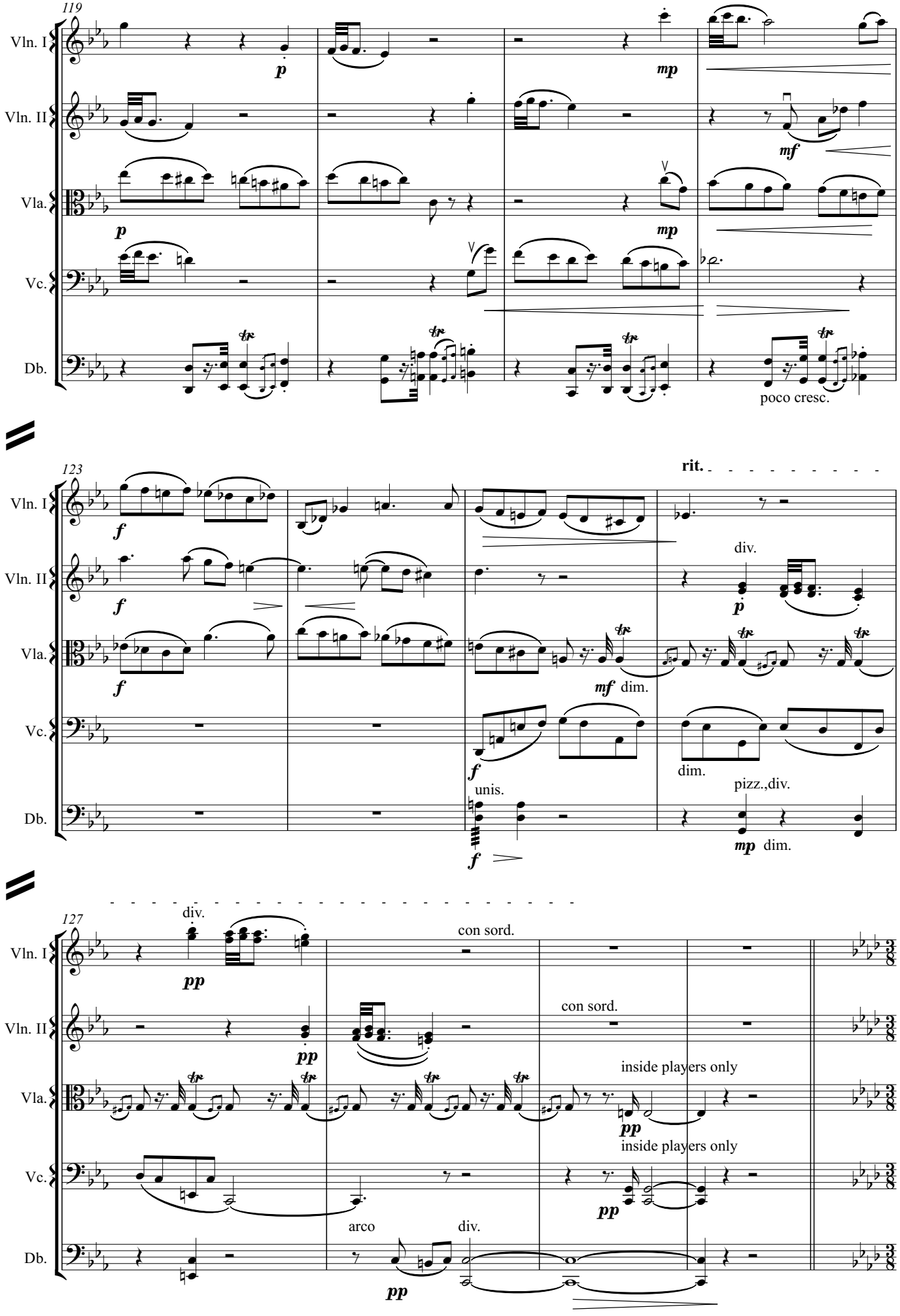

98
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
div.
cresc.
dim.
pizz., div.
pp
mp

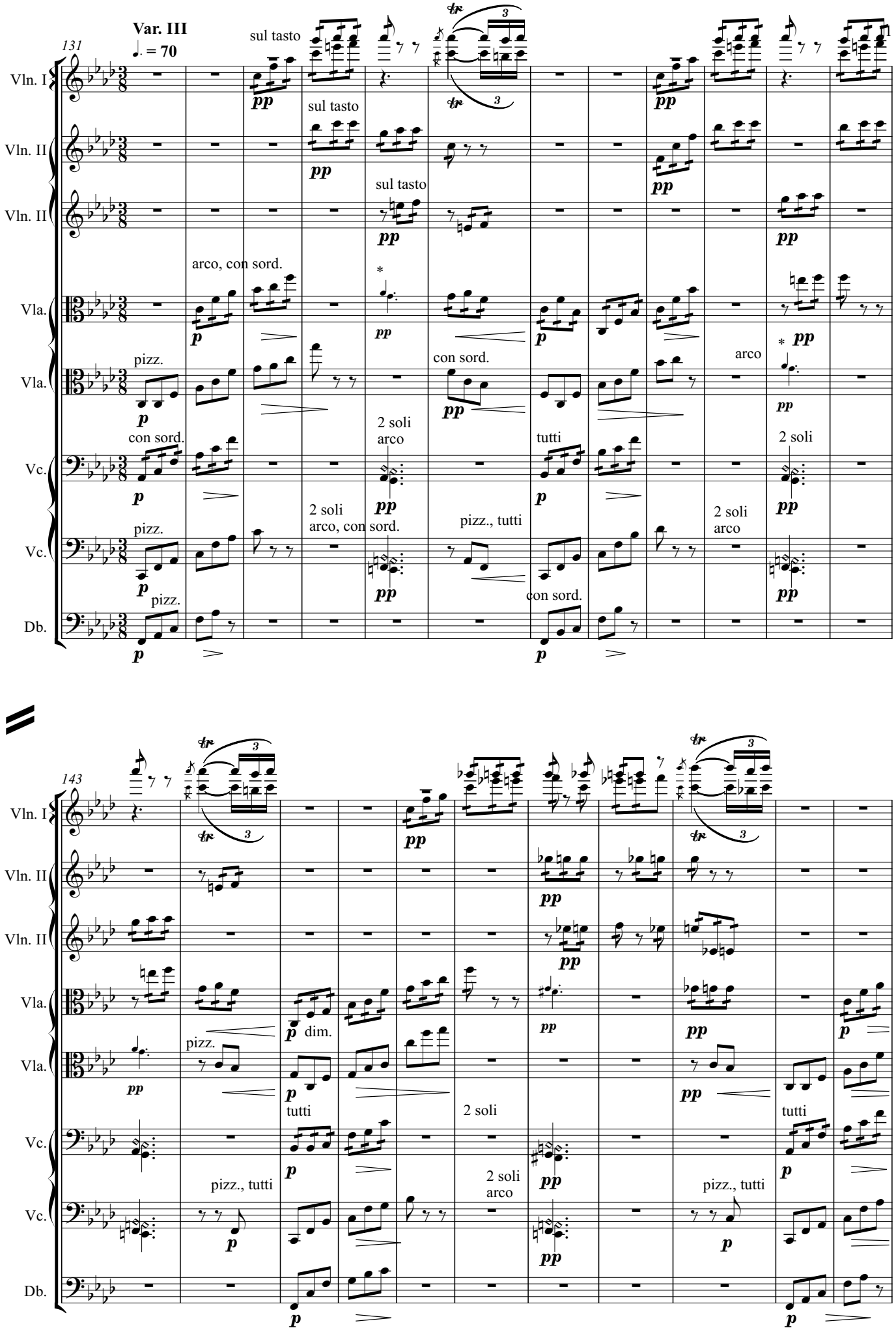

102
C
unis.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
pp
p
unis.
espr.
div.
arco, unis.


106
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vla.
Vc.
Vc.
Db.
mf
f
p

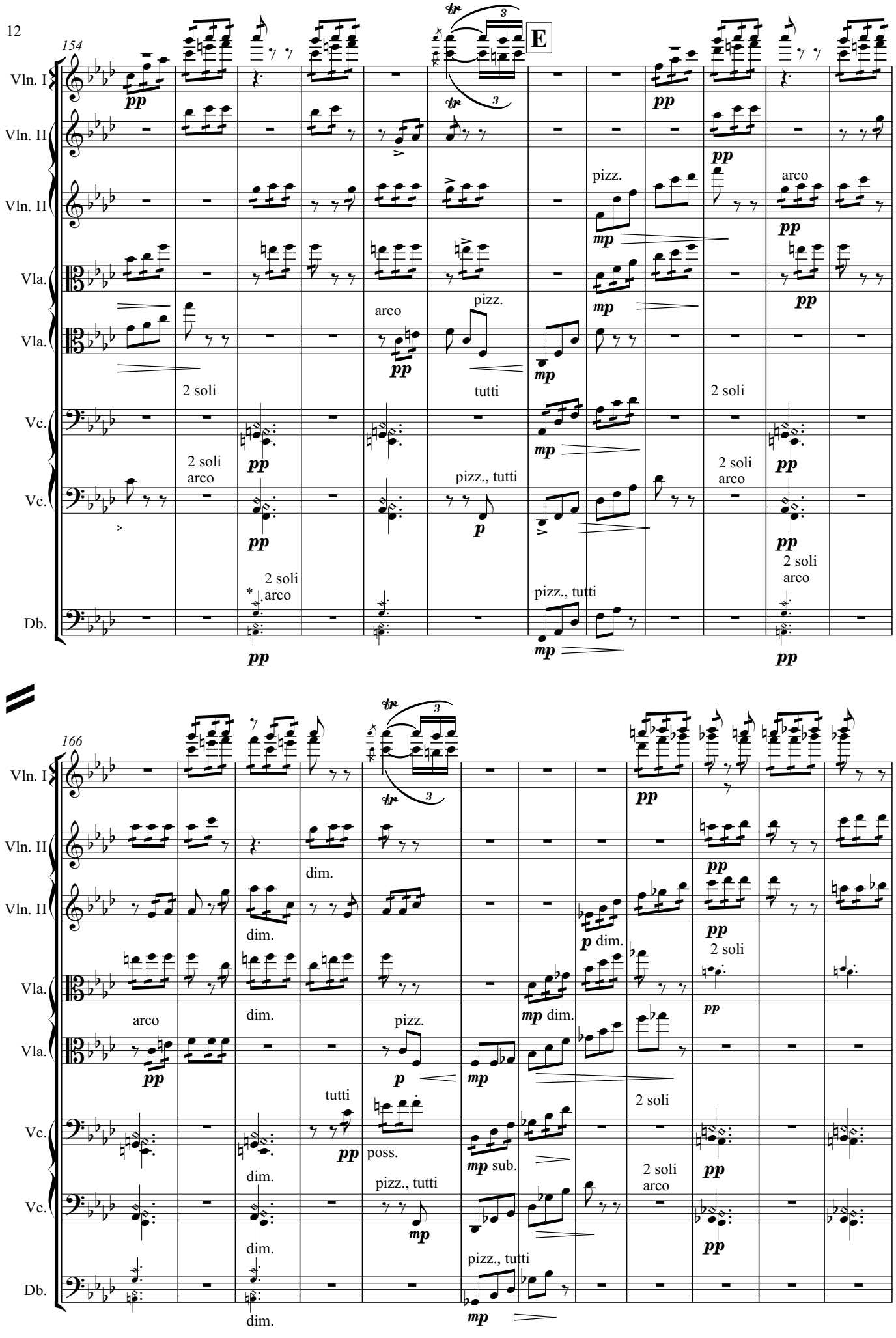

110
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vla.
Vc.
Vc.
Db.
sul G
ff
f

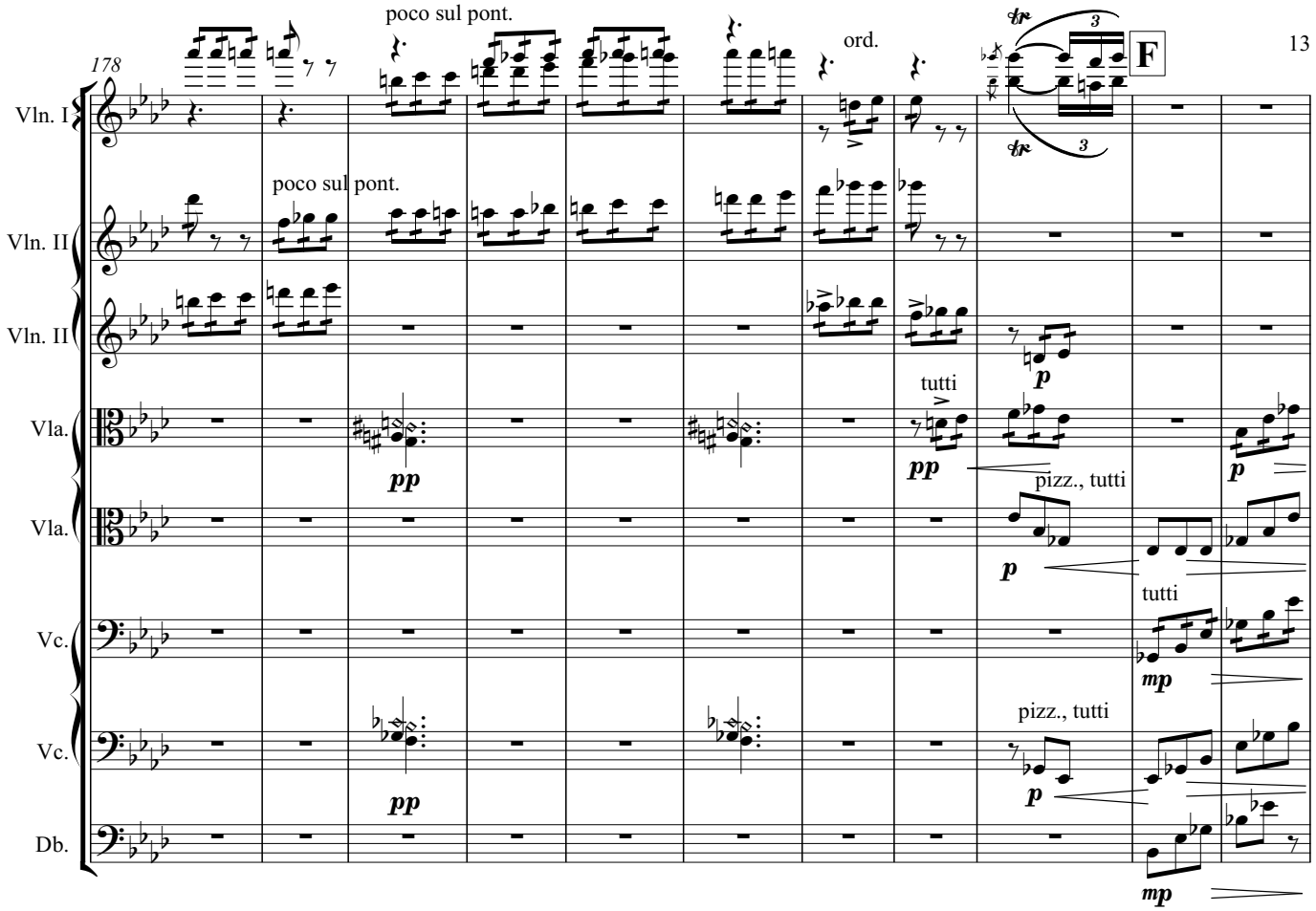

D
114
sul G
(sul D)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
dim.
(unis.)
unis.
div.
mf
mp
p
ff
f

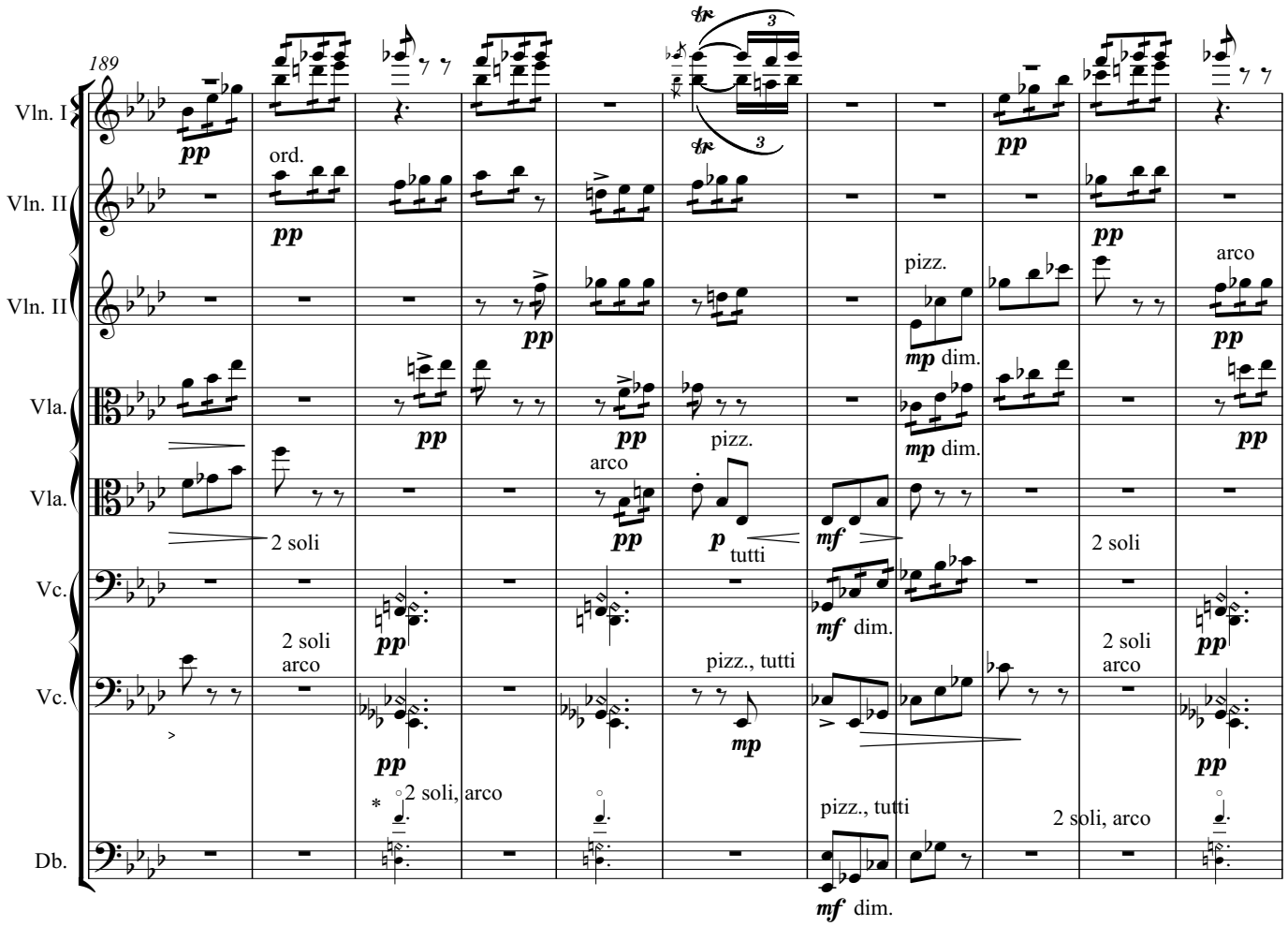

119
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
p
mp
mf
poco cresc.
123
rit.
f
div.
mf dim.
unis.
pizz.,div.
mp dim.
dim.
127
div.
pp
con sord.
inside players only
arco



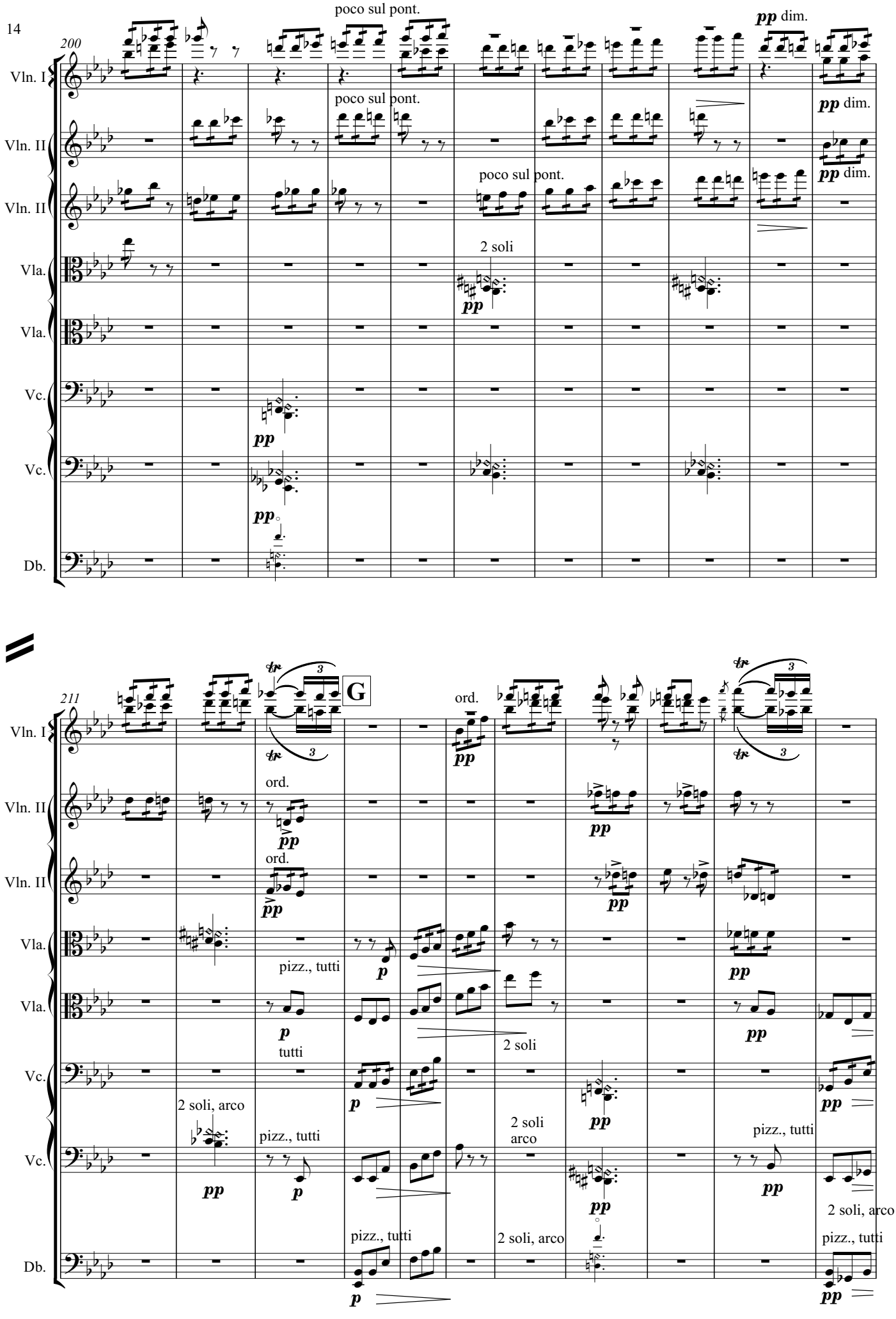
* In this variation play the bars in small print 2 soli, senza vib., but omit them if there enough cellos to play the upper cello parts as well as the lower

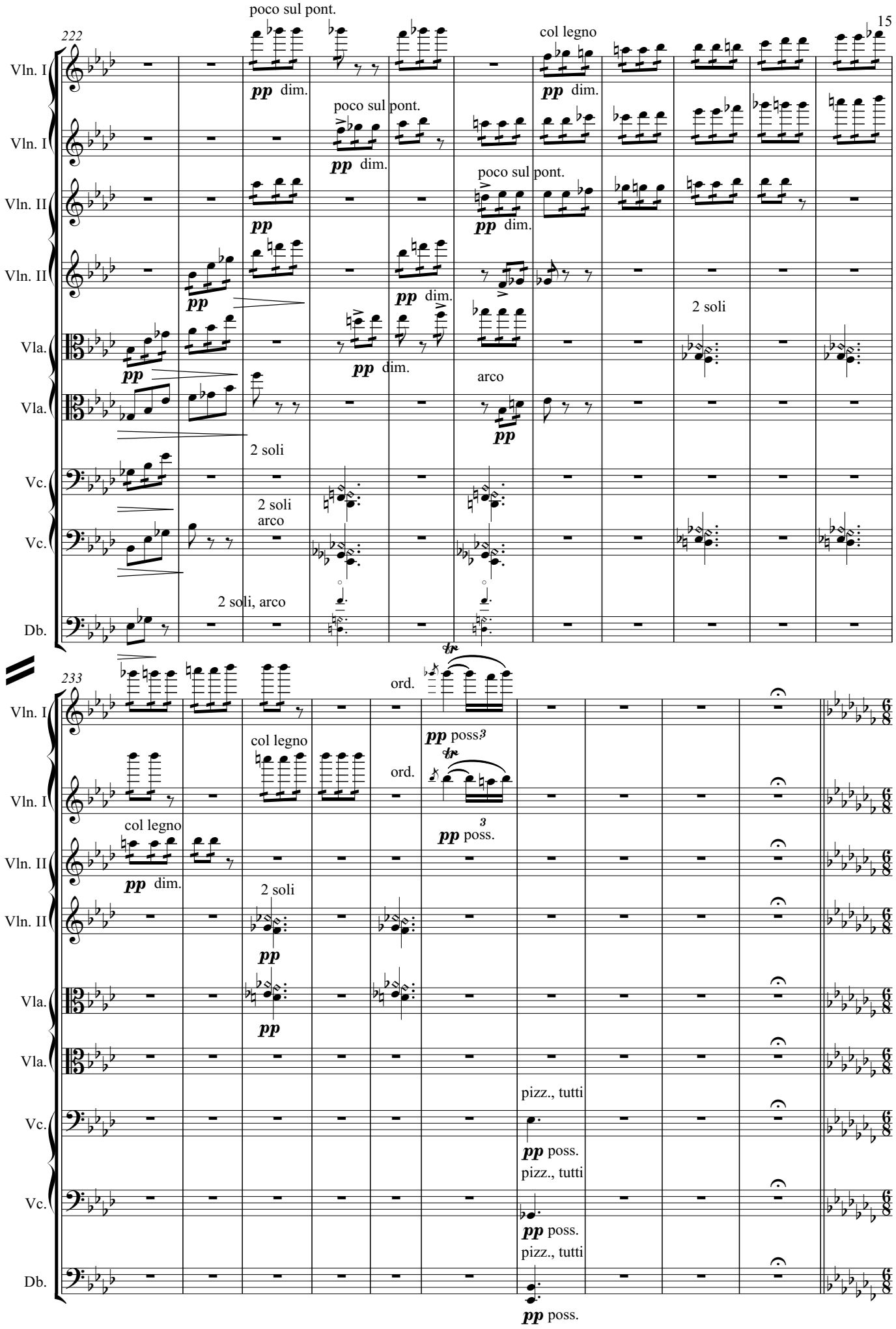

154
E
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. II
Vla.
Vla.
Vc.
Vc.
Db.
pp
pizz.
arco
mp
2 soli
tutti
2 soli
arco
pizz., tutti
p
2 soli
arco
pizz., tutti
166
dim.
p dim.
2 soli
arco
pizz.
tutti
poss.
mp sub.
2 soli
arco
pizz., tutti



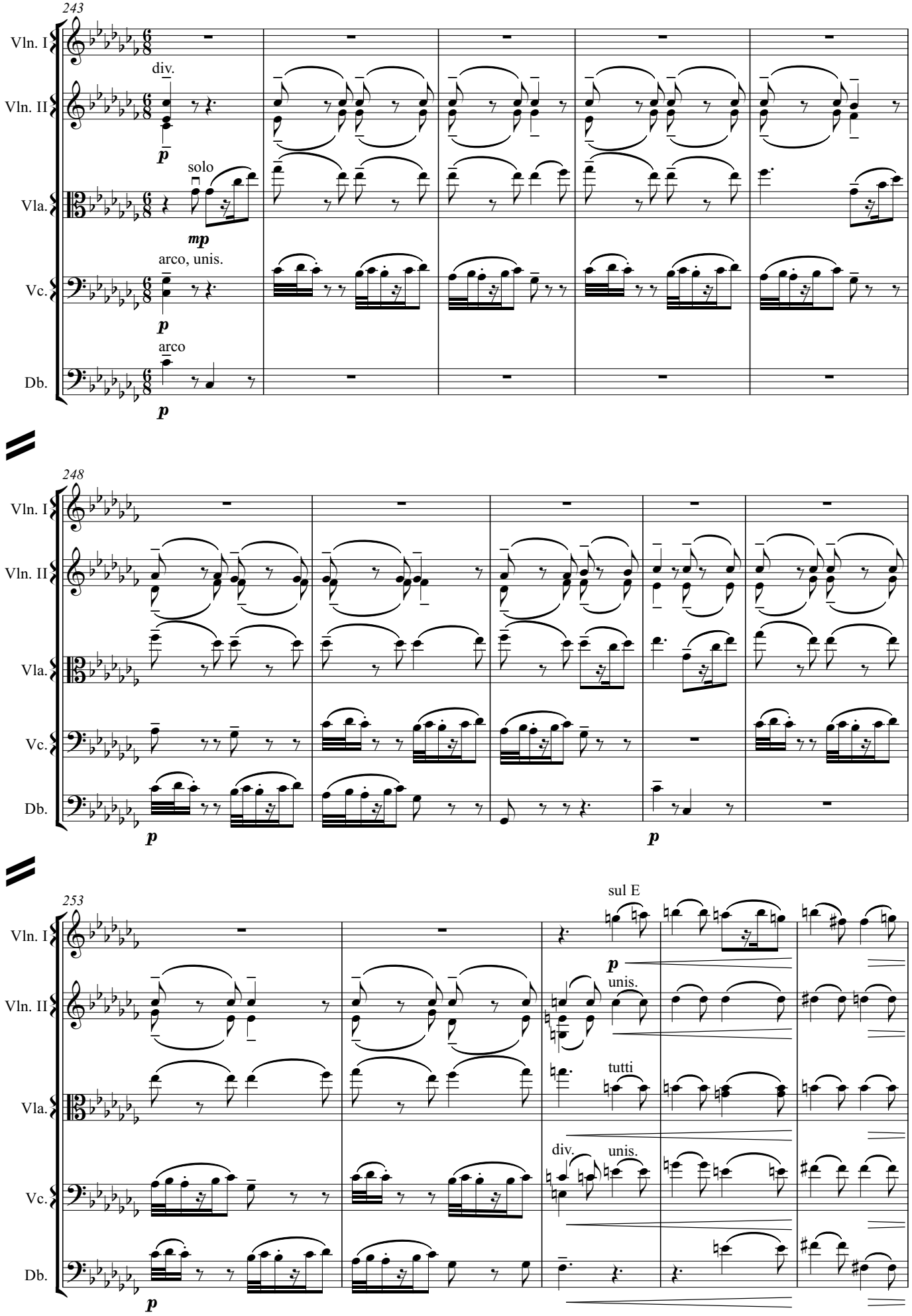


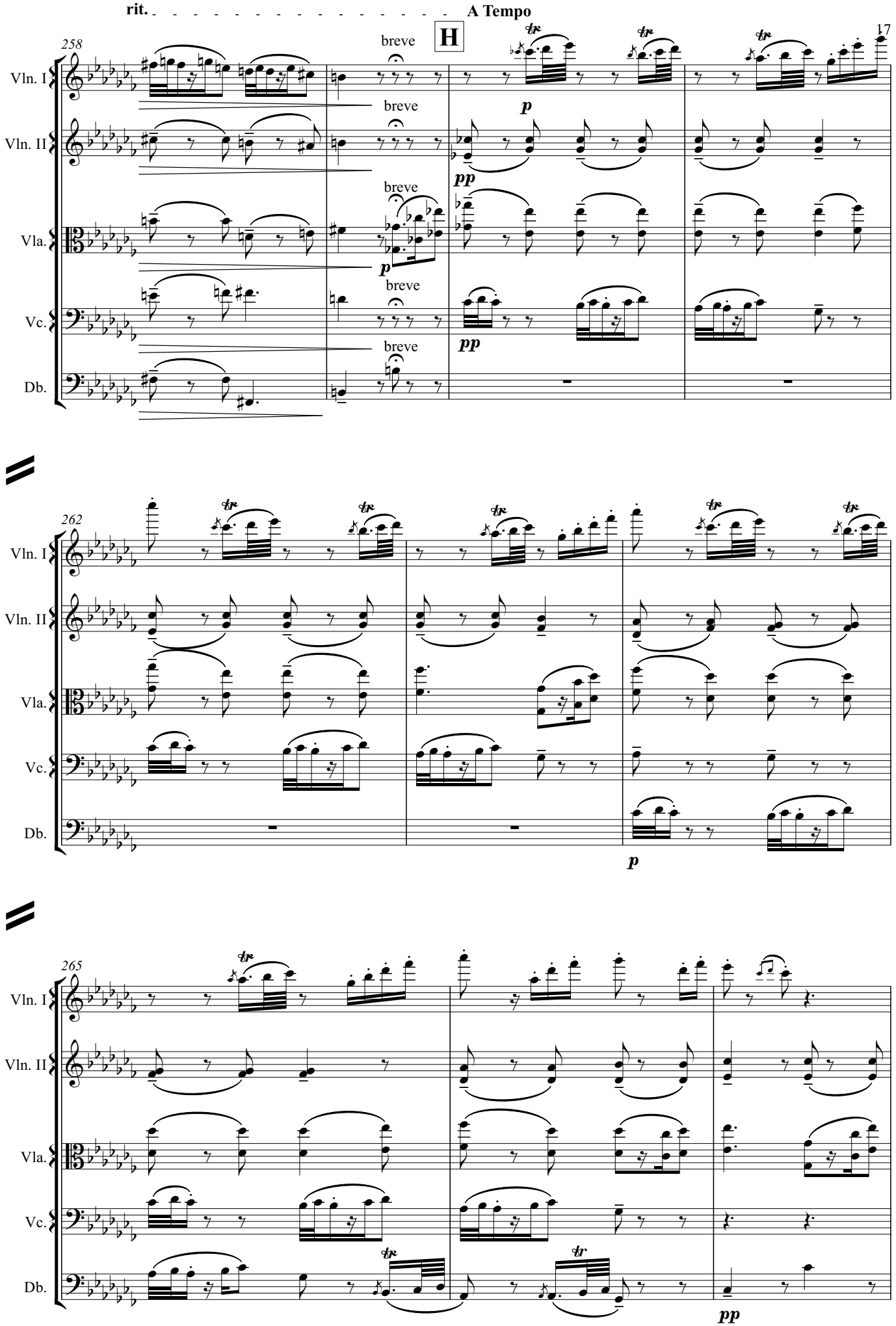
* This harmonic, or something like it, sounding 8ve higher than written, should be playable just above the nut on the G string

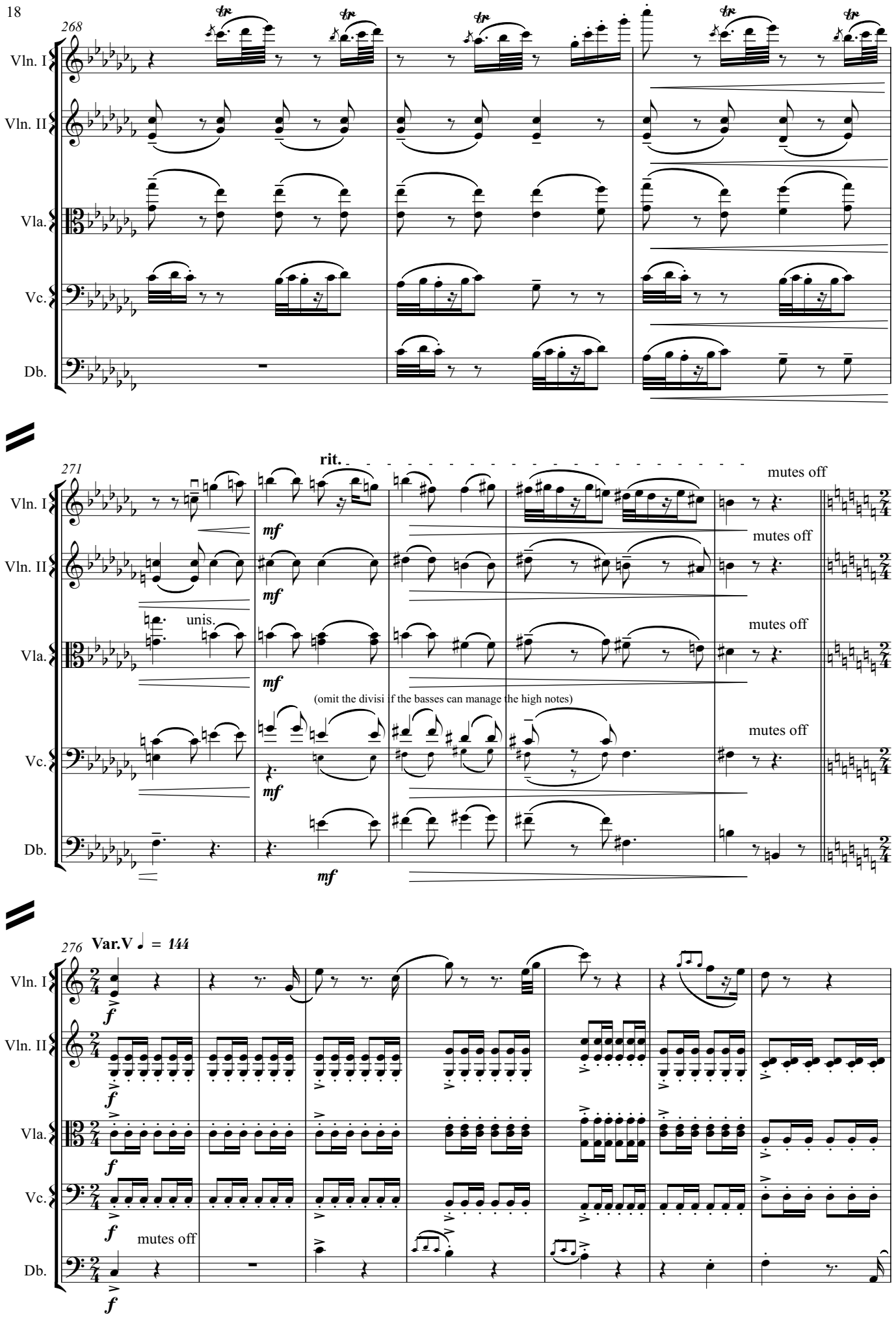

200
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. II
Vla.
Vla.
Vc.
Vc.
Db.
poco sul pont.
poco sul pont.
poco sul pont.
2 soli
pp dim.
pp dim.
pp dim.
pp
pp
pp
211
G
ord.
ord.
ord.
pizz., tutti
tutti
2 soli
2 soli, arco
pizz., tutti
2 soli
arco
pizz., tutti
2 soli, arco
pizz., tutti
2 soli, arco
pizz., tutti
p
pp

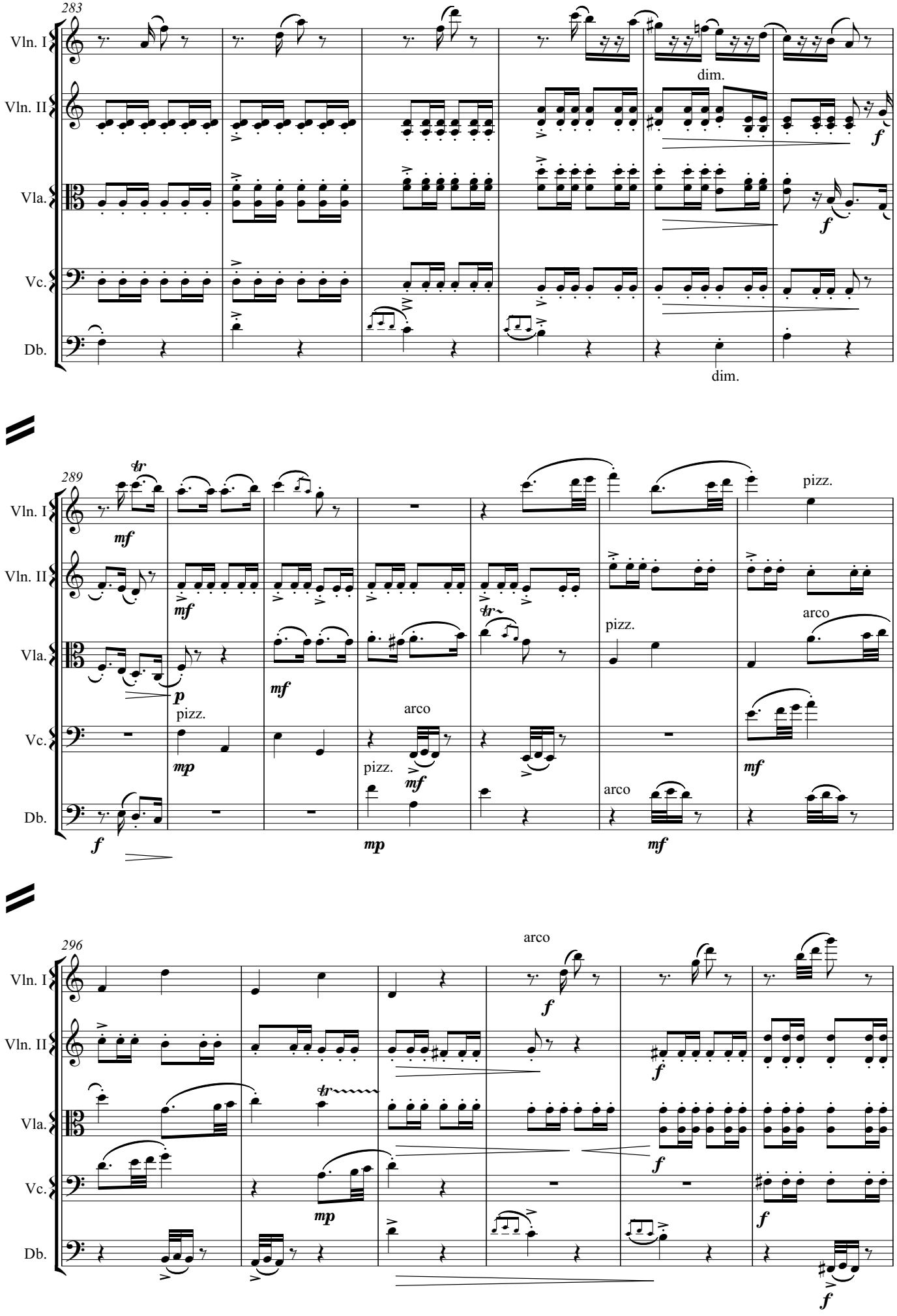

222
Vln. I
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vln. II
Vla.
Vla.
Vc.
Vc.
Db.
poco sul pont.
col legno
pp dim.
2 soli
arco
2 soli, arco
233
ord.
pp poss.
pizz., tutti

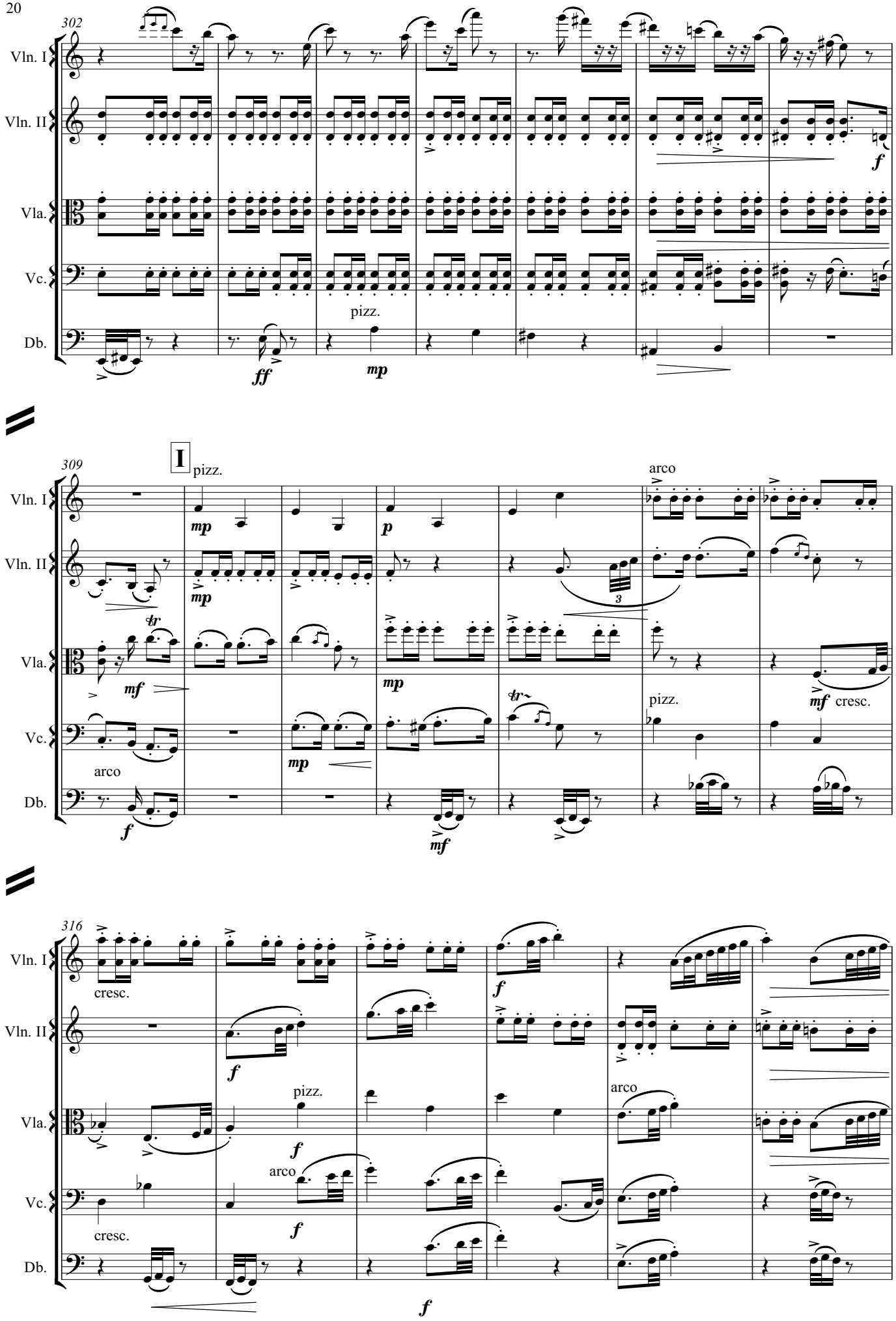
Var. IV
Siciliana ♩. = 42

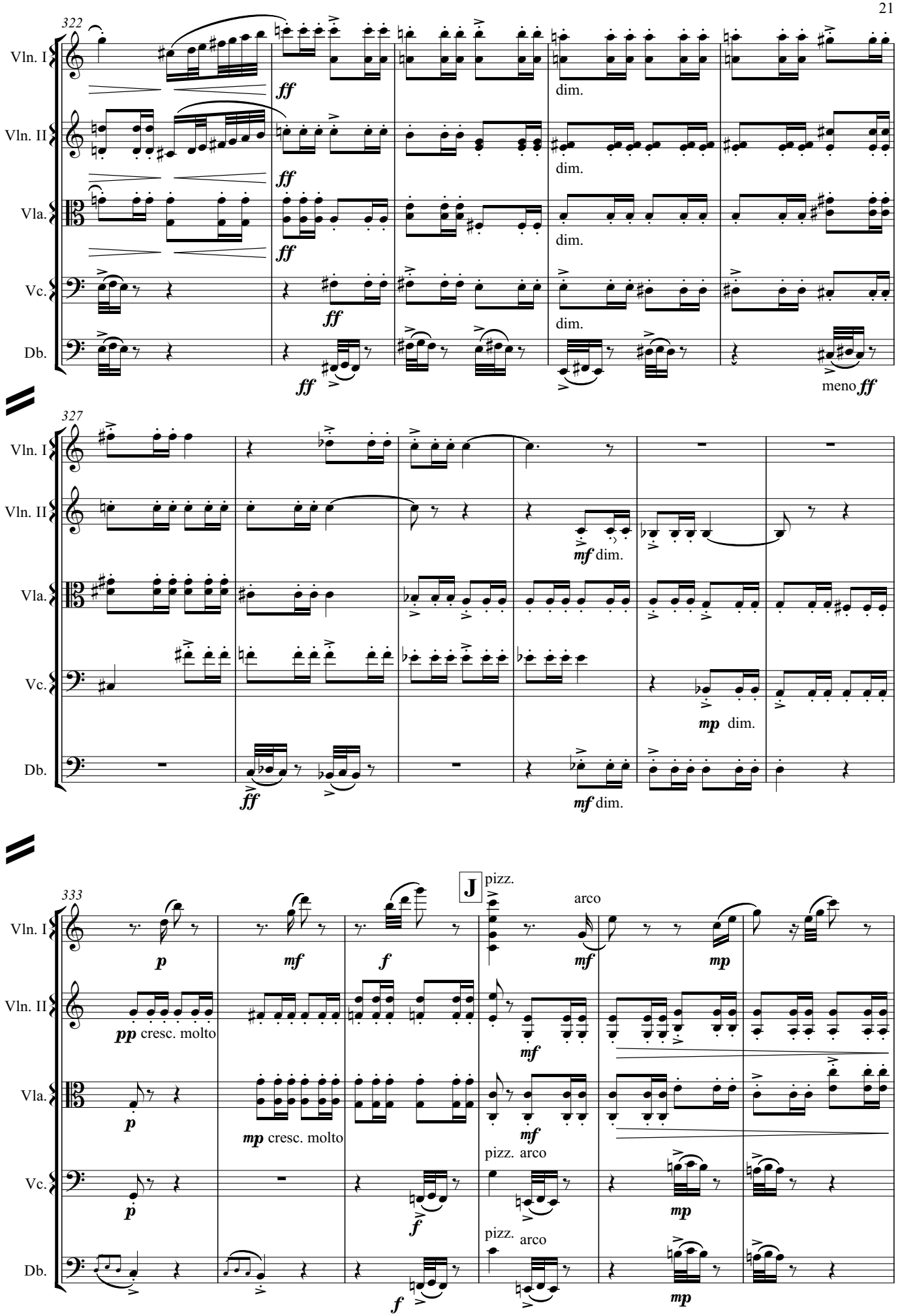


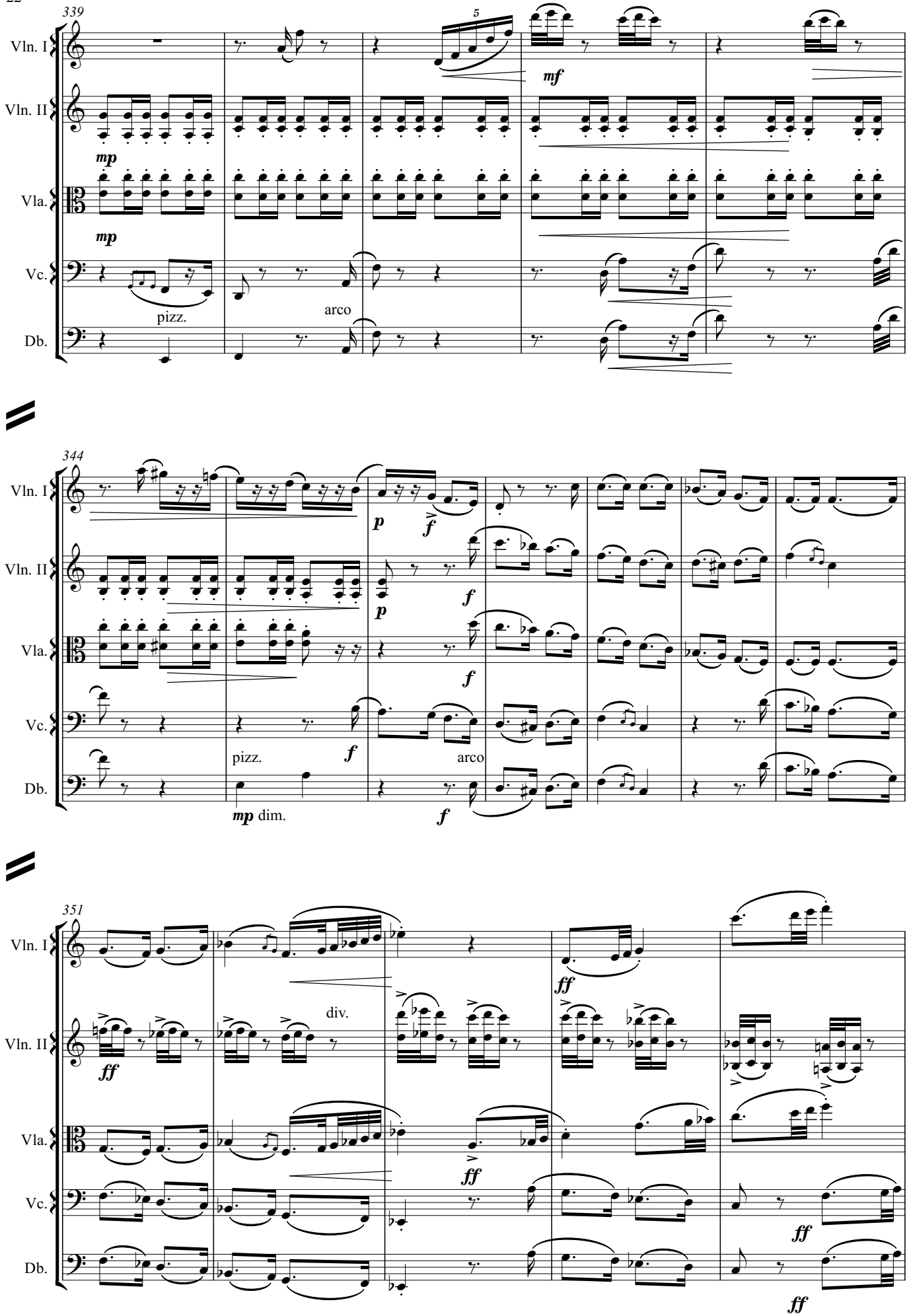

rit.
A Tempo
H
258
262
265
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
breve
p
pp

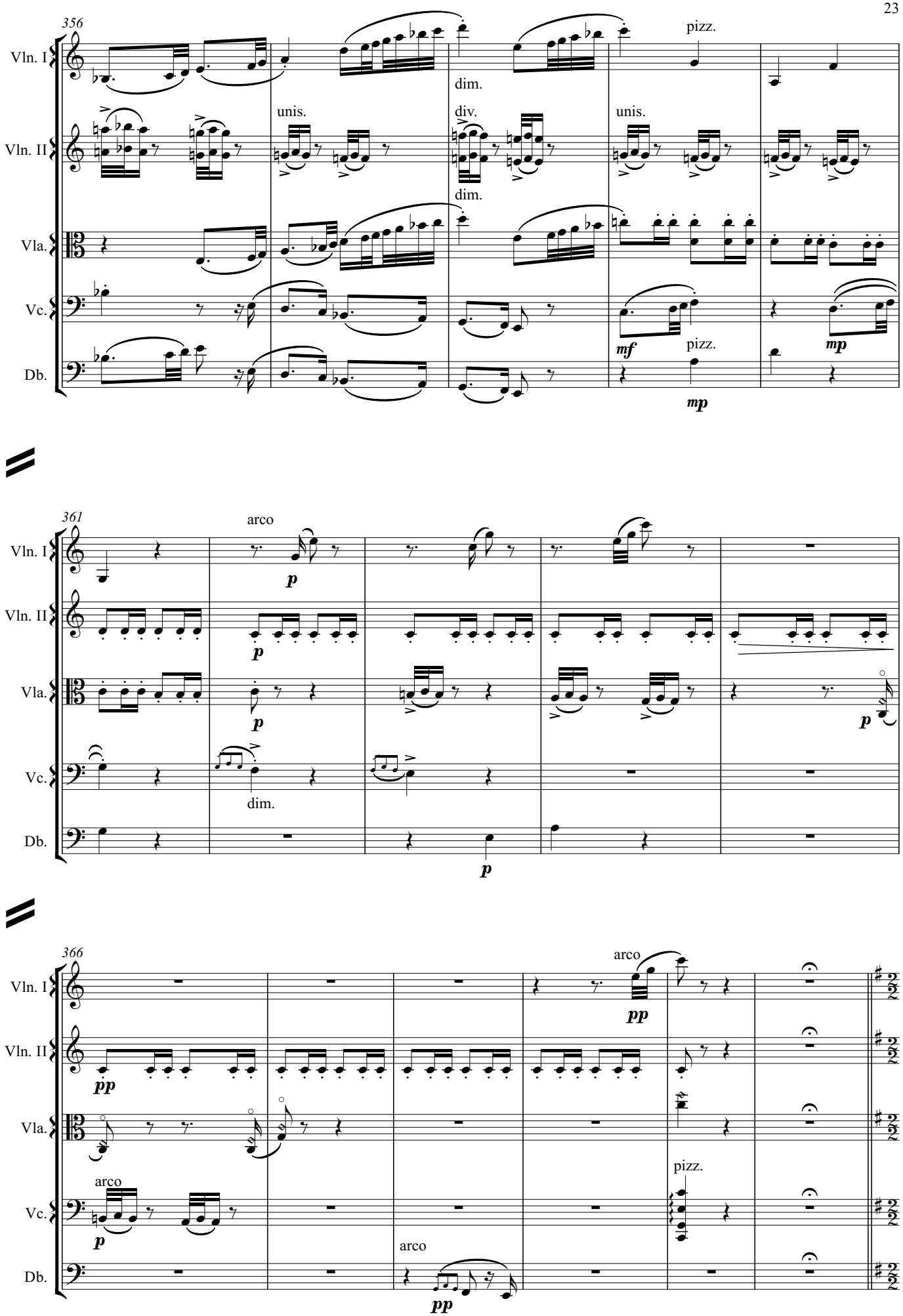

268
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
271
rit.
mutes off
mutes off
mutes off
mutes off
unis.
mf
(omit the divisi if the basses can manage the high notes)
276
Var.V ♩ = 144
f
mutes off

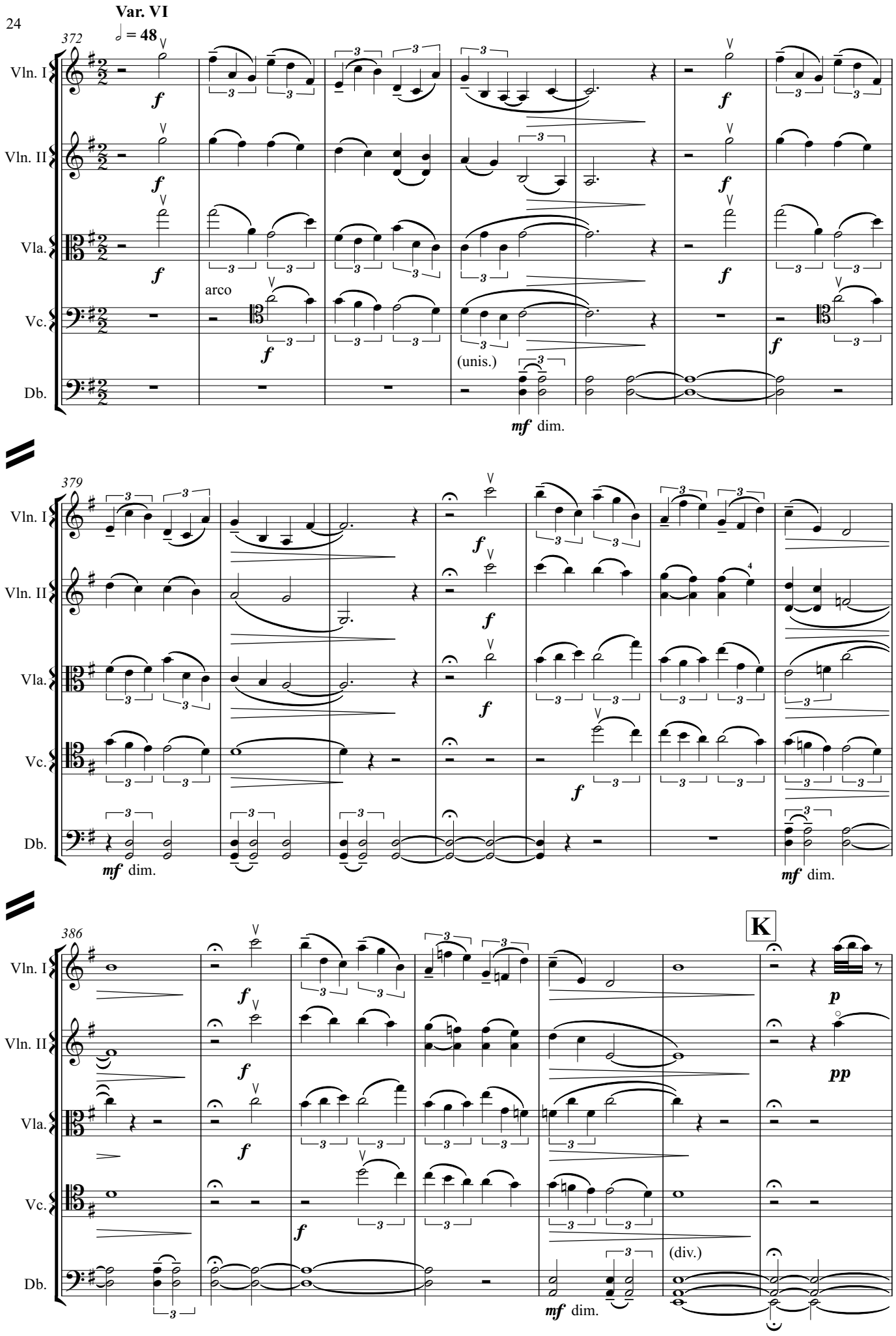

283
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
dim.
dim.
289
pizz.
arco
296
arco

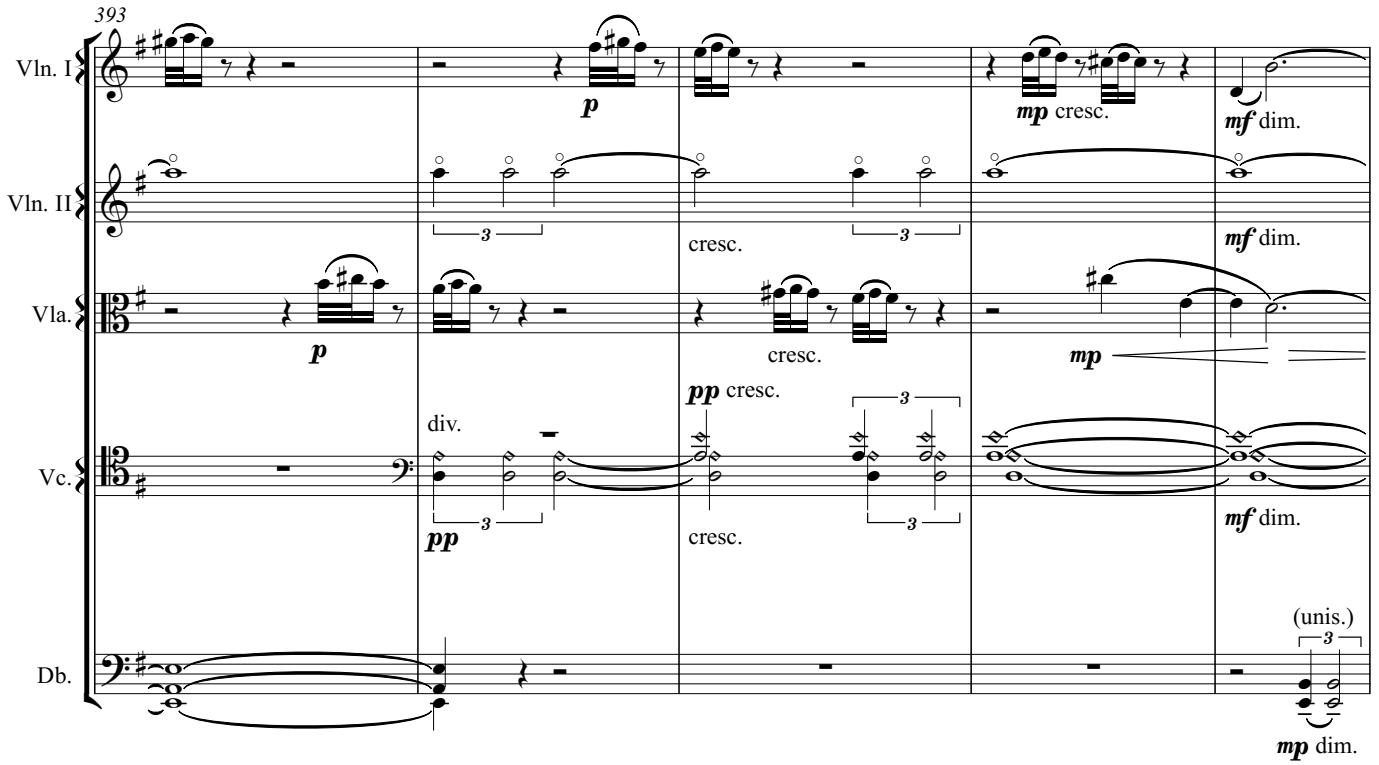

302
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
pizz.
ff
mp
f
309
I
pizz.
mp
p
arco
mf
cresc.
316
cresc.
f
pizz.
arco

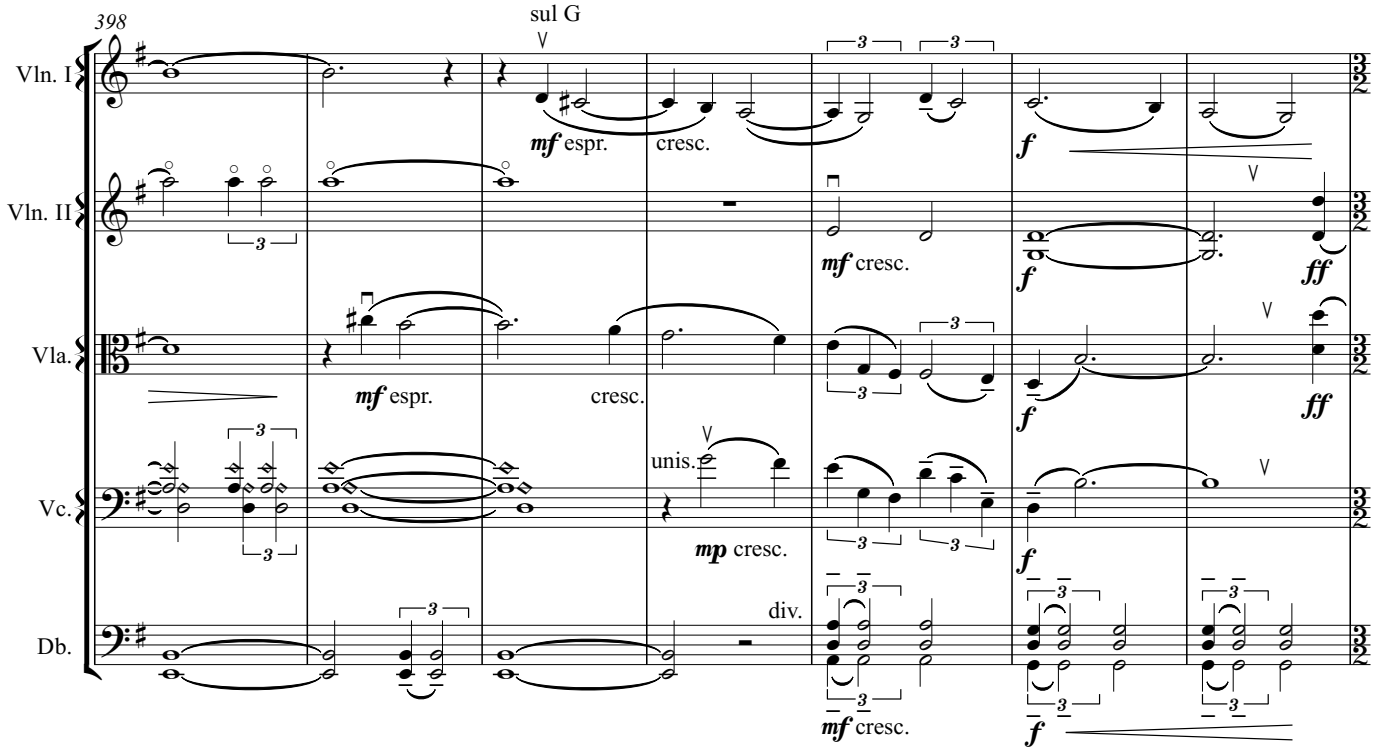

322
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
ff
dim.
meno ff
327
mf dim.
mp dim.
333
J
pizz.
arco
p
mf
f
mp
pp cresc. molto
mp cresc. molto

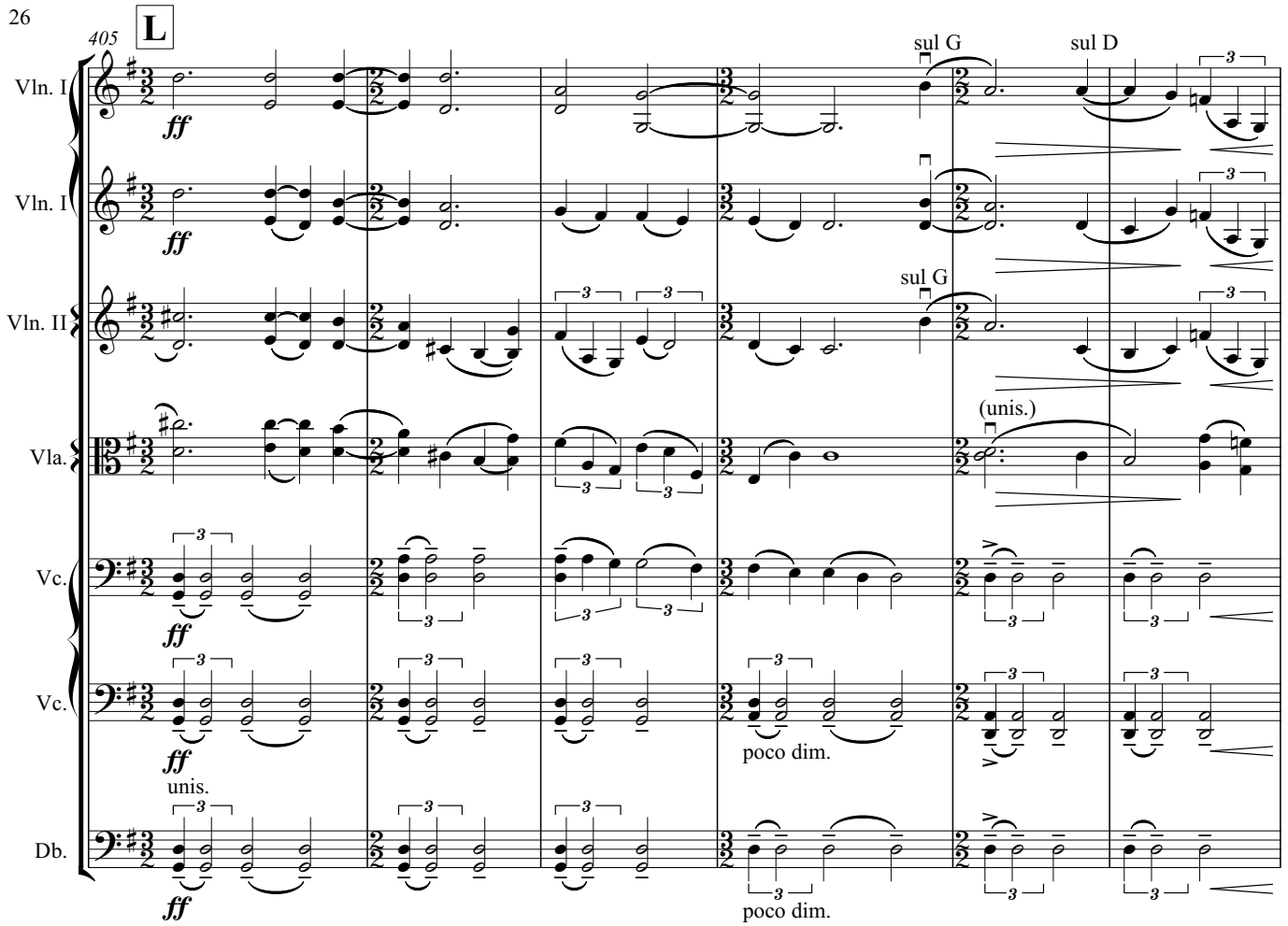

339
5
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
mf
mp
mp
pizz.
arco
344
p
f
f
f
f
pizz.
arco
mp dim.
351
div.
ff
ff
ff
ff
ff

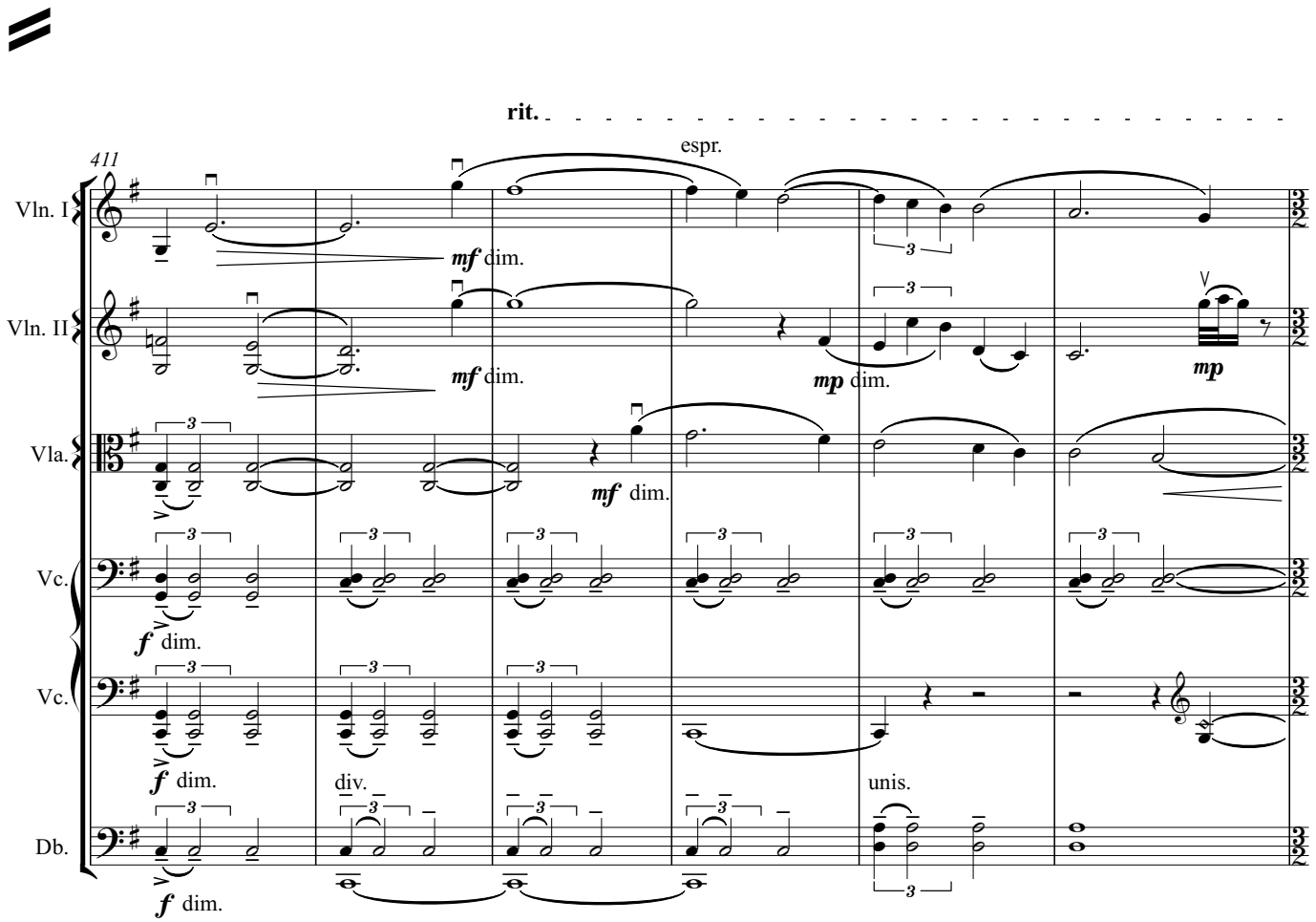

356
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
unis.
div.
dim.
pizz.
mf
mp
361
arco
p
dim.
366
pp
arco
pizz.

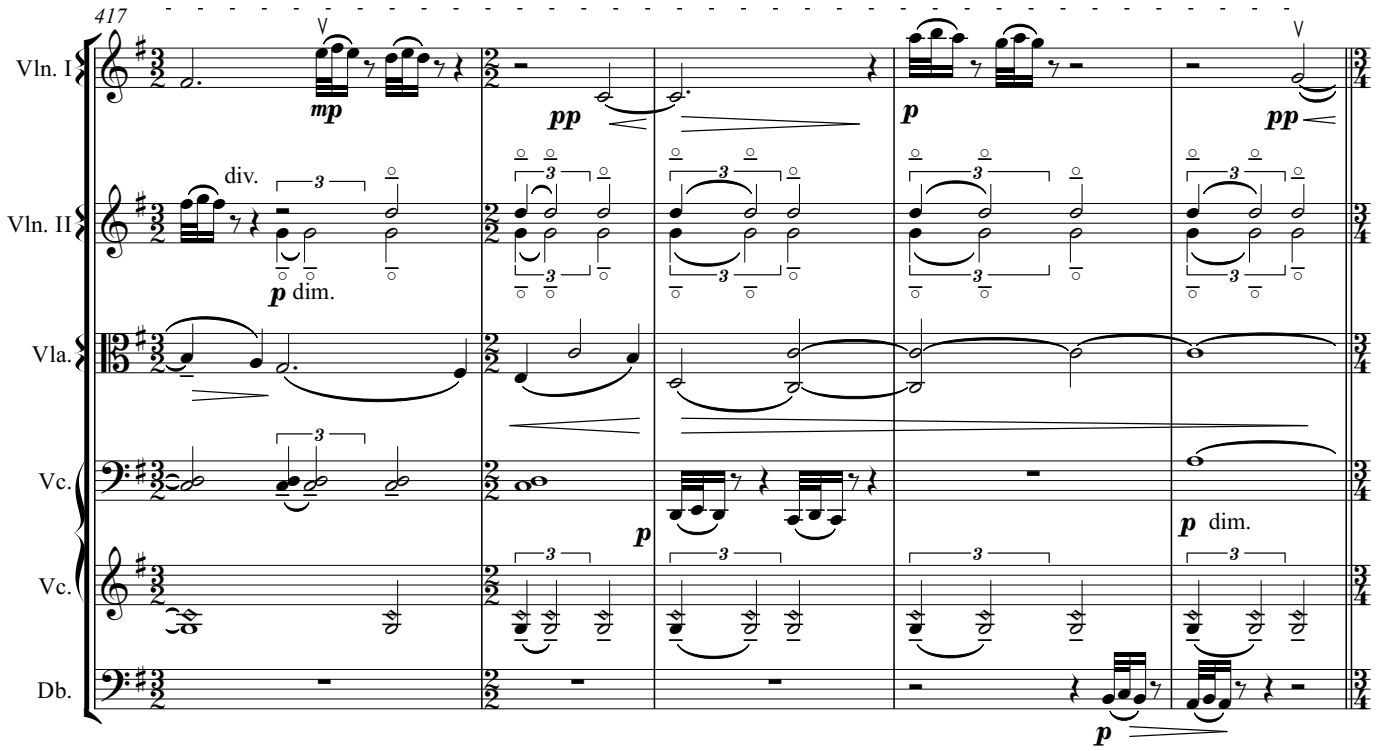

Var. VI
♩ = 48
372
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
arco
(unis.)
mf dim.
379
mf dim.
386
K
(div.)
mf dim.

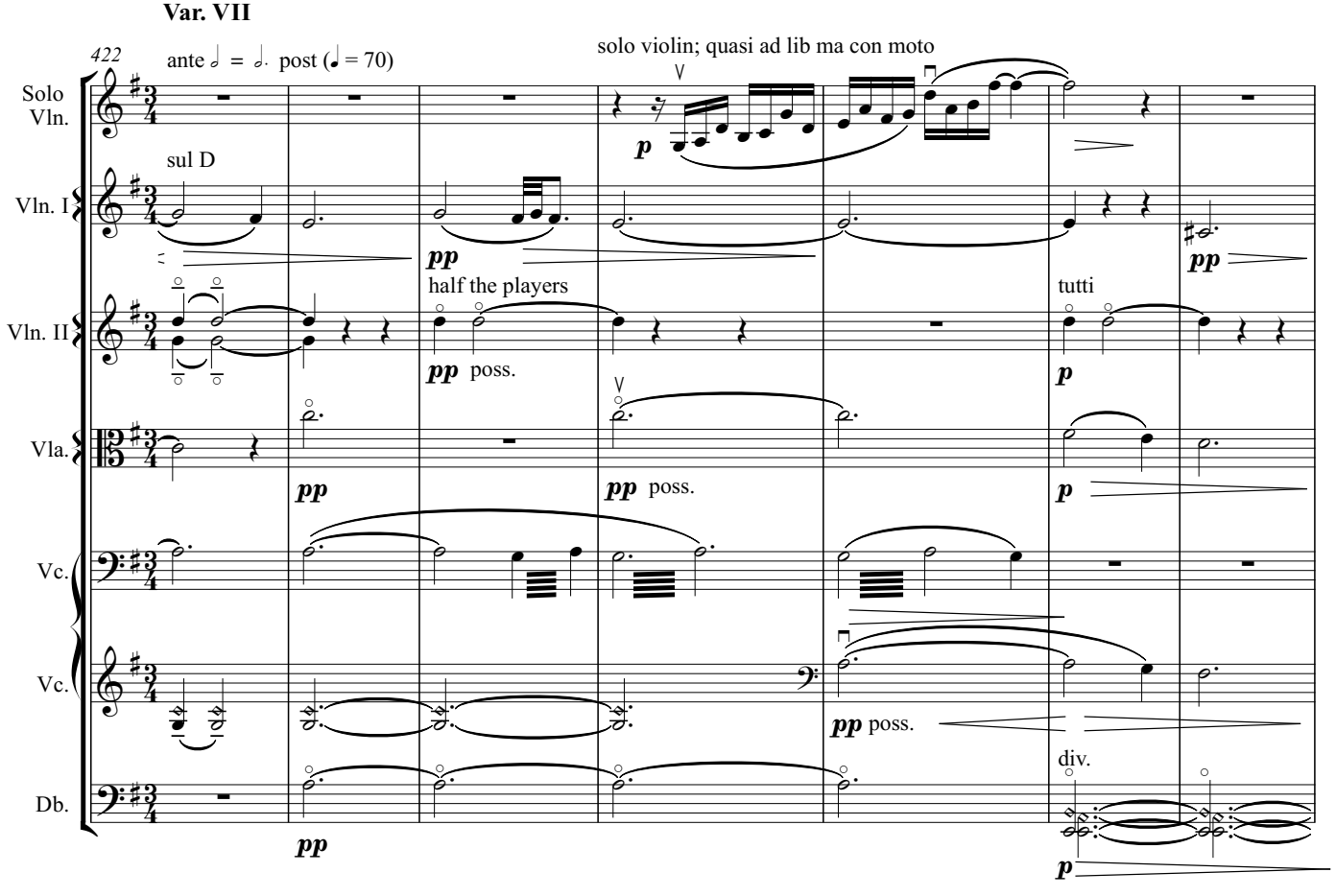

393
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
p
mp cresc.
mf dim.
cresc.
pp cresc.
div.
mp
(unis.)
mp dim.

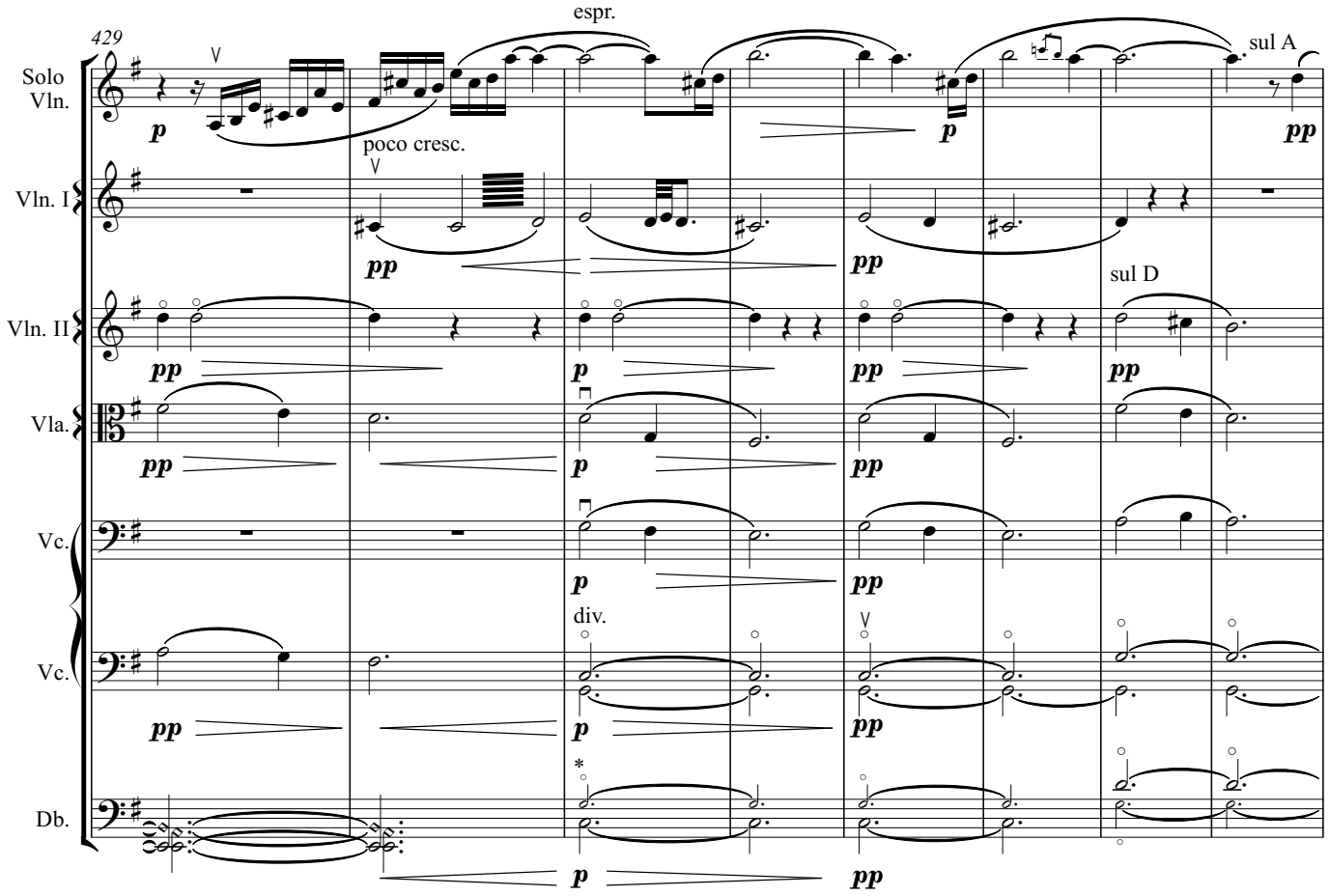

398
sul G
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
mf espr.
cresc.
mf cresc.
f
ff
unis.
mp cresc.
div.

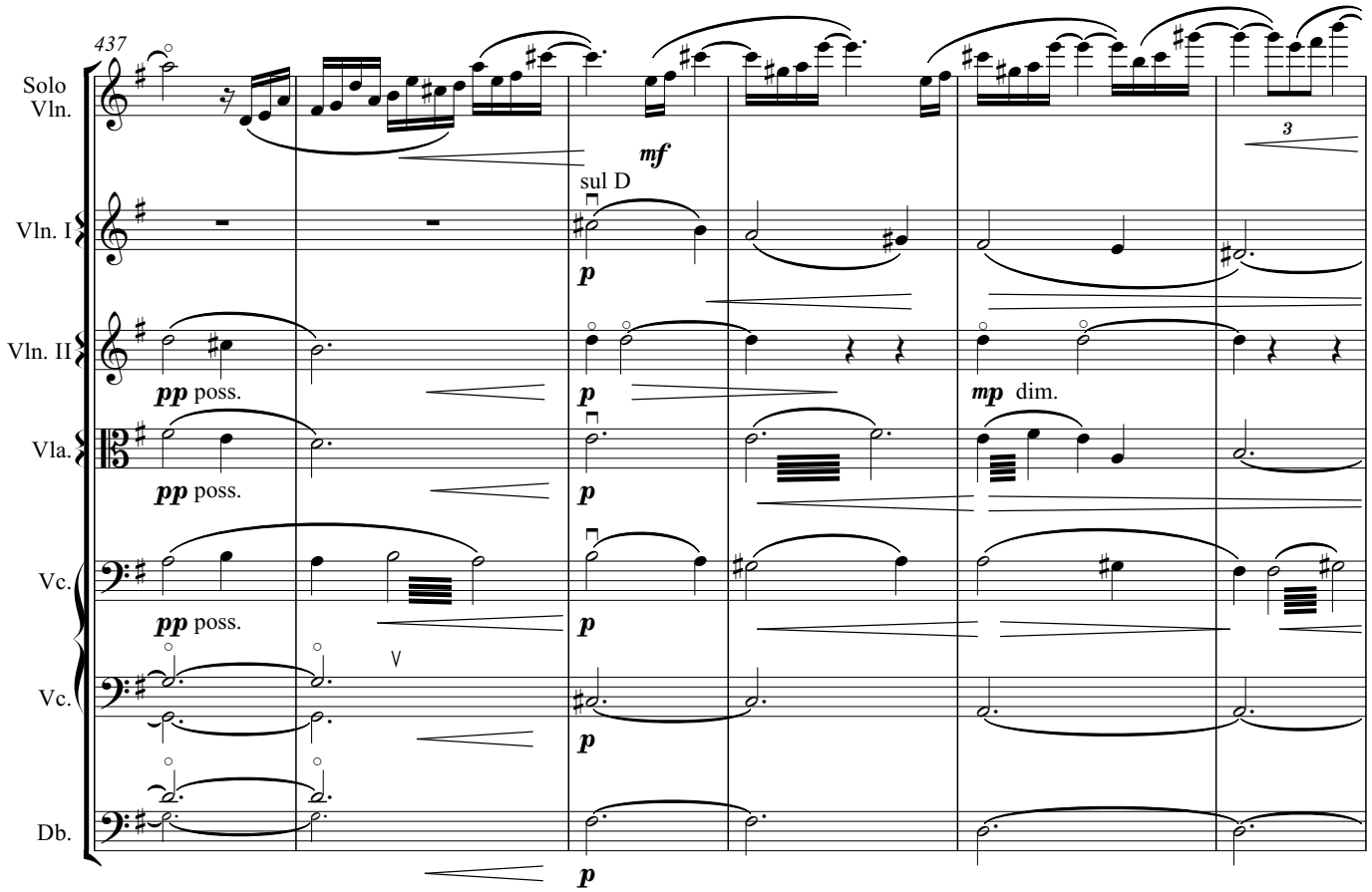

405
L
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
ff
sul G
sul D
(unis.)
poco dim.
unis.


411
rit.
espr.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
mf dim.
mp dim.
mp
f dim.
div.
unis.

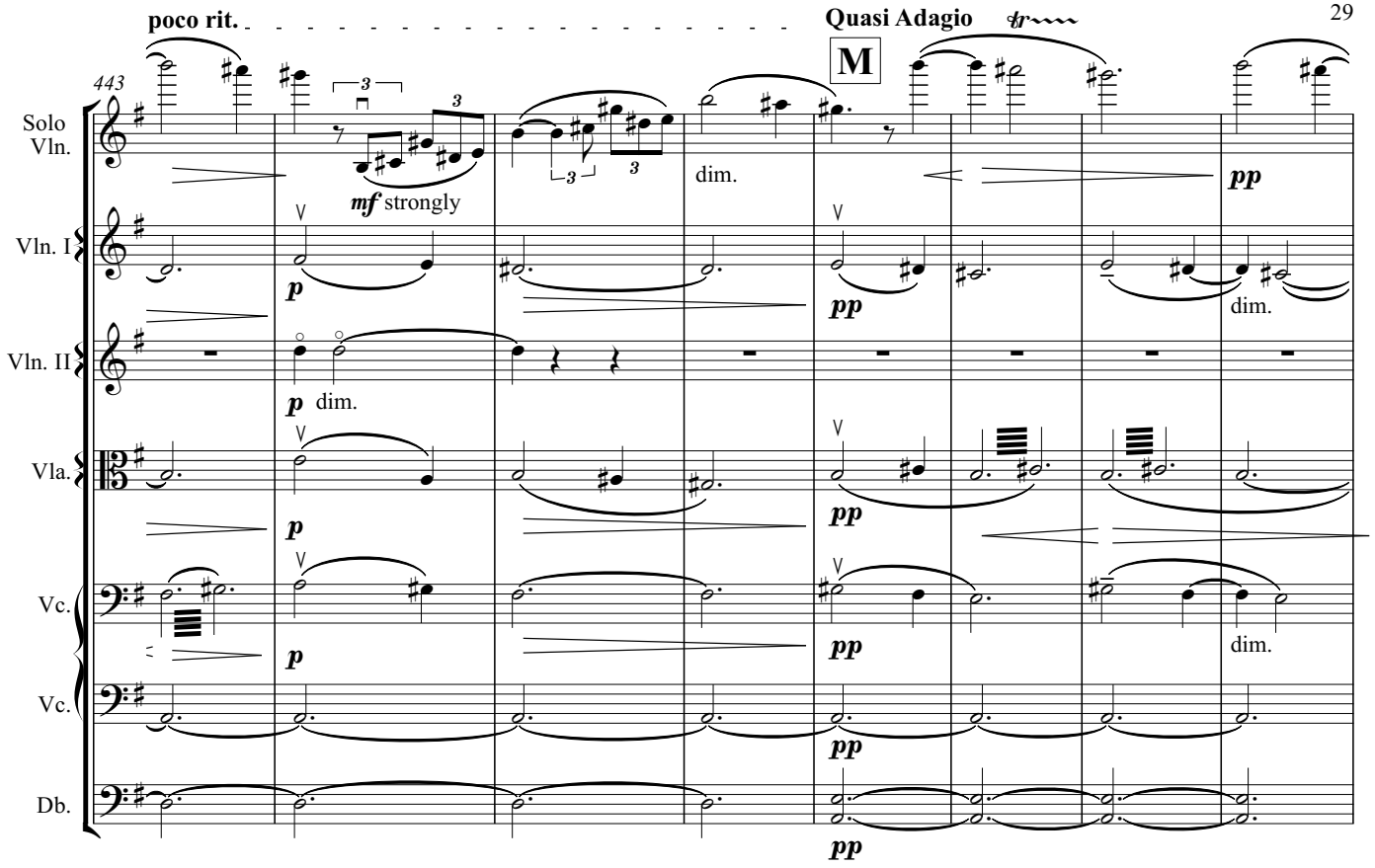

417
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Vc.
Db.
mp
pp
p
pp
div.
p dim.
p
p dim.
p

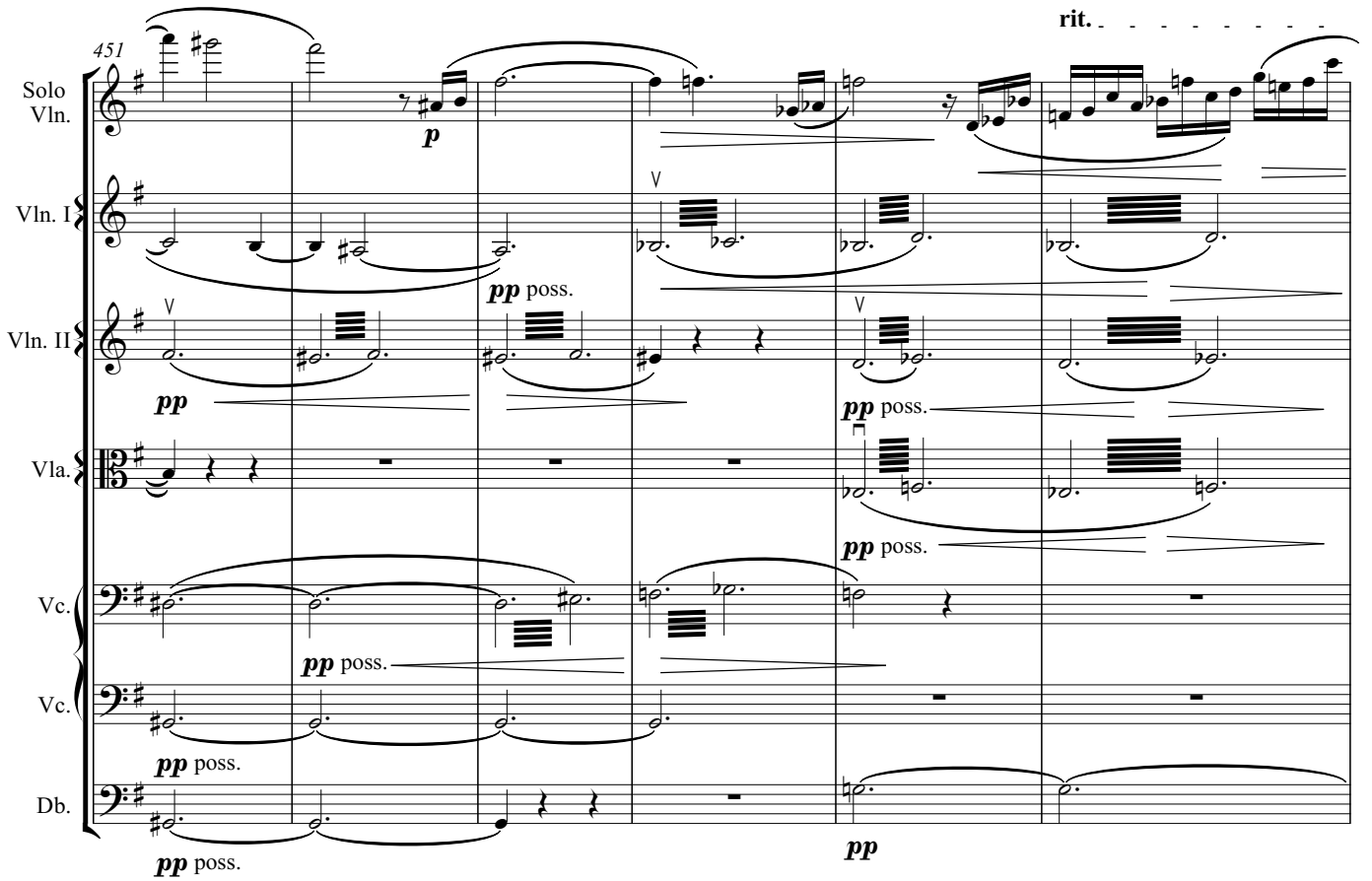

Var. VII
422
ante 𝅗𝅥 = 𝅗𝅥. post (♩ = 70)
solo violin; quasi ad lib ma con moto
Solo Vln.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Vc.
Db.
sul D
p
pp
half the players
pp poss.
tutti
p
pp
pp poss.
p
pp poss.
div.
pp
p

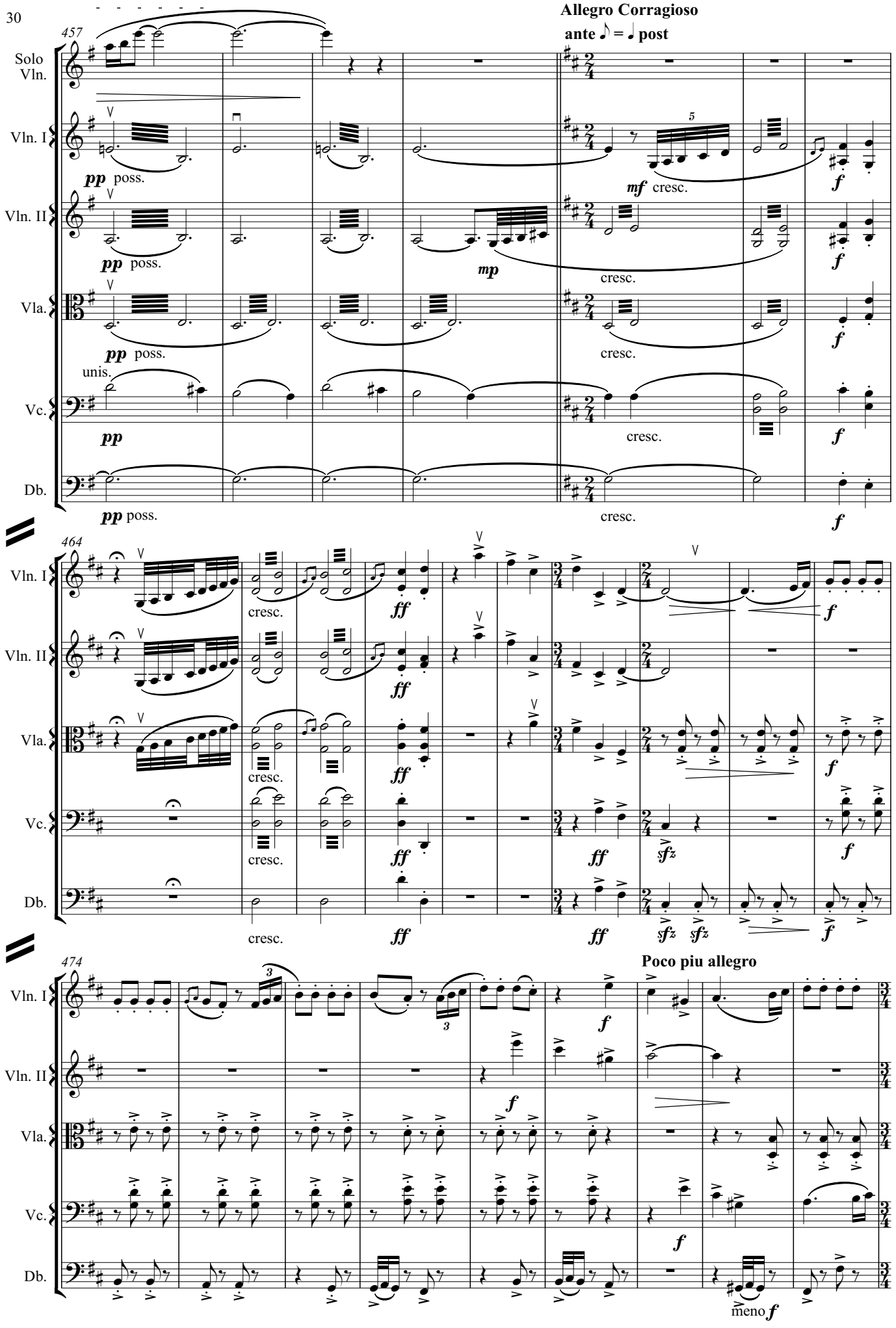


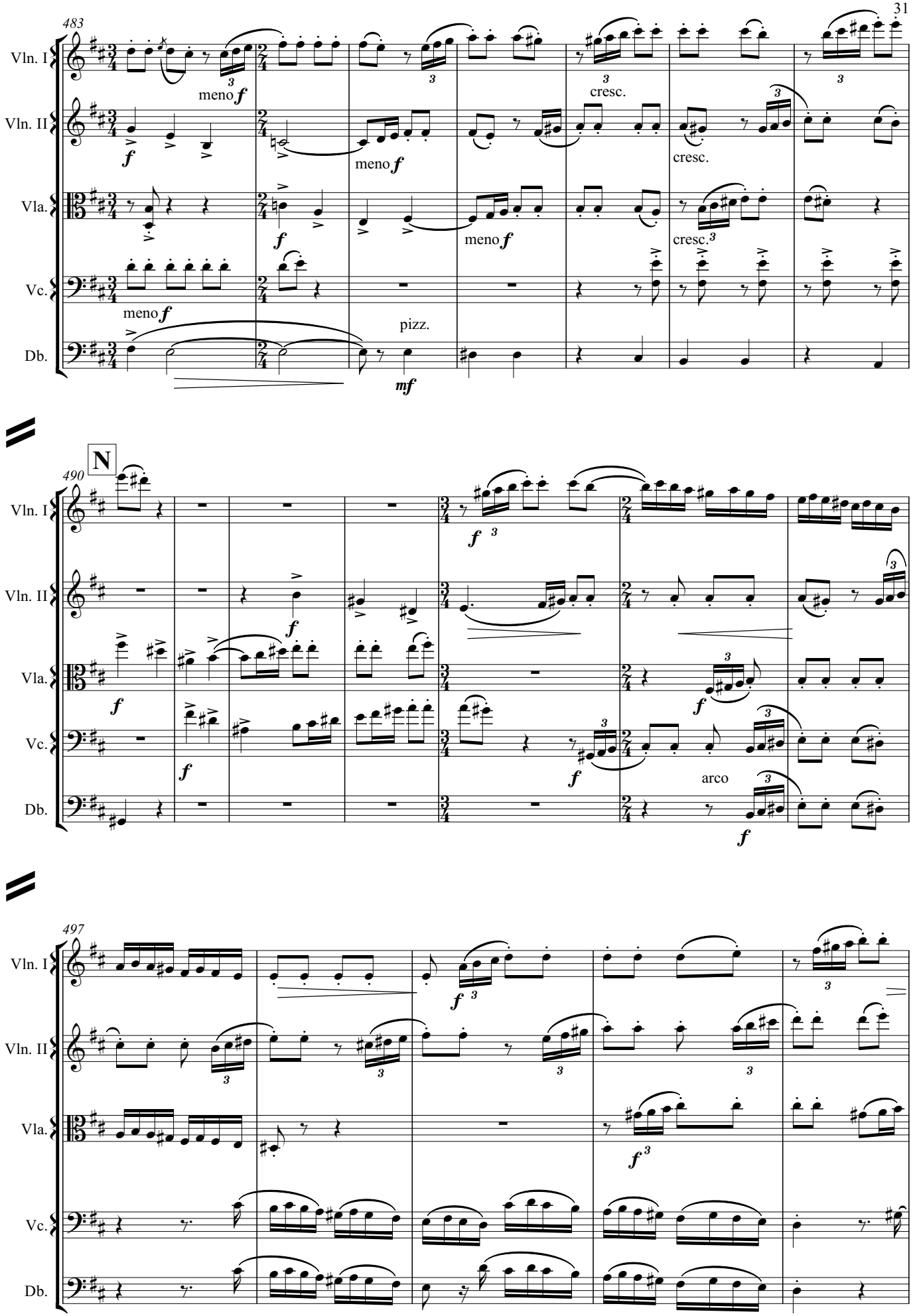


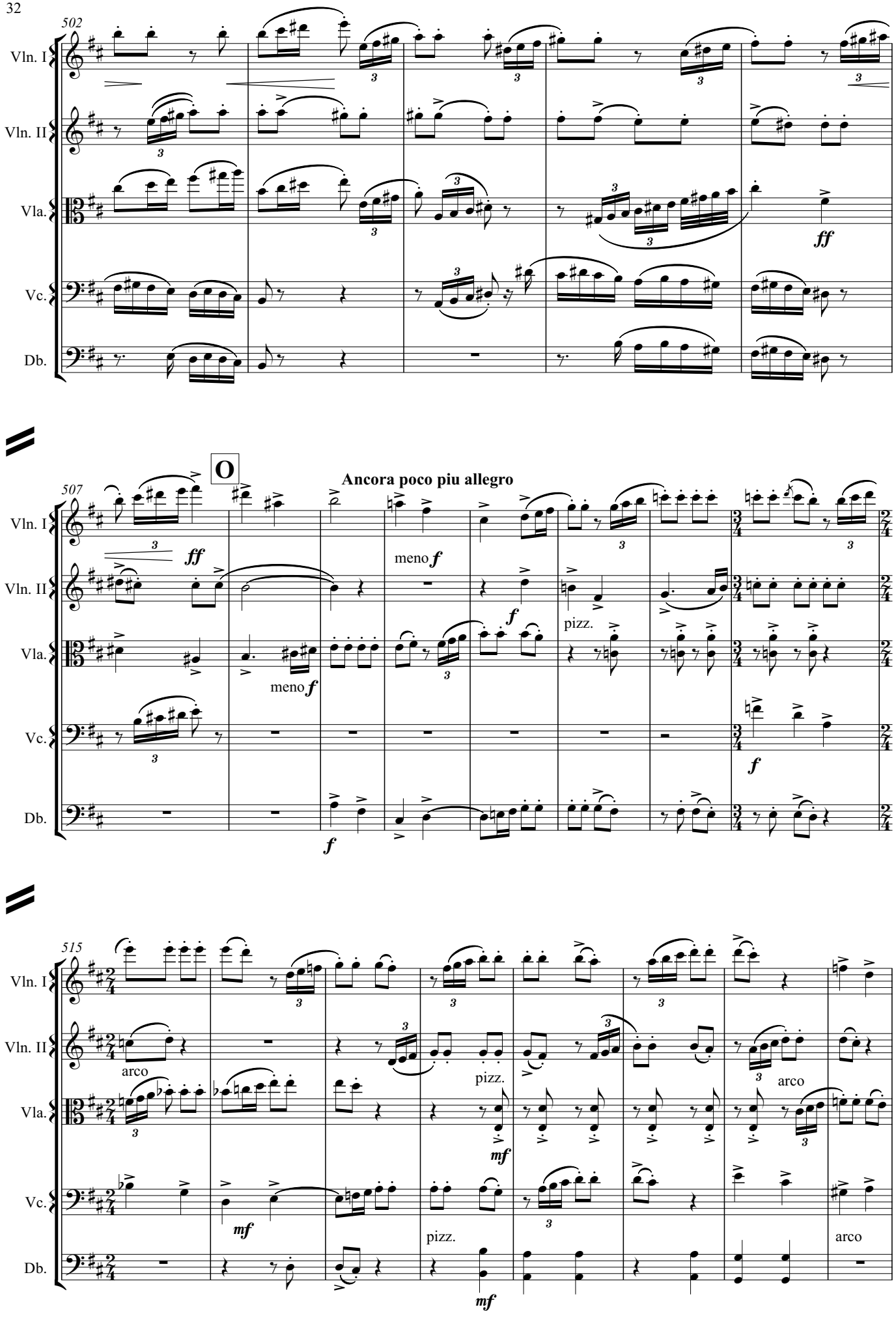
*Basses should only play the small notes here if there aren't enough cellos to play the lowest cello line

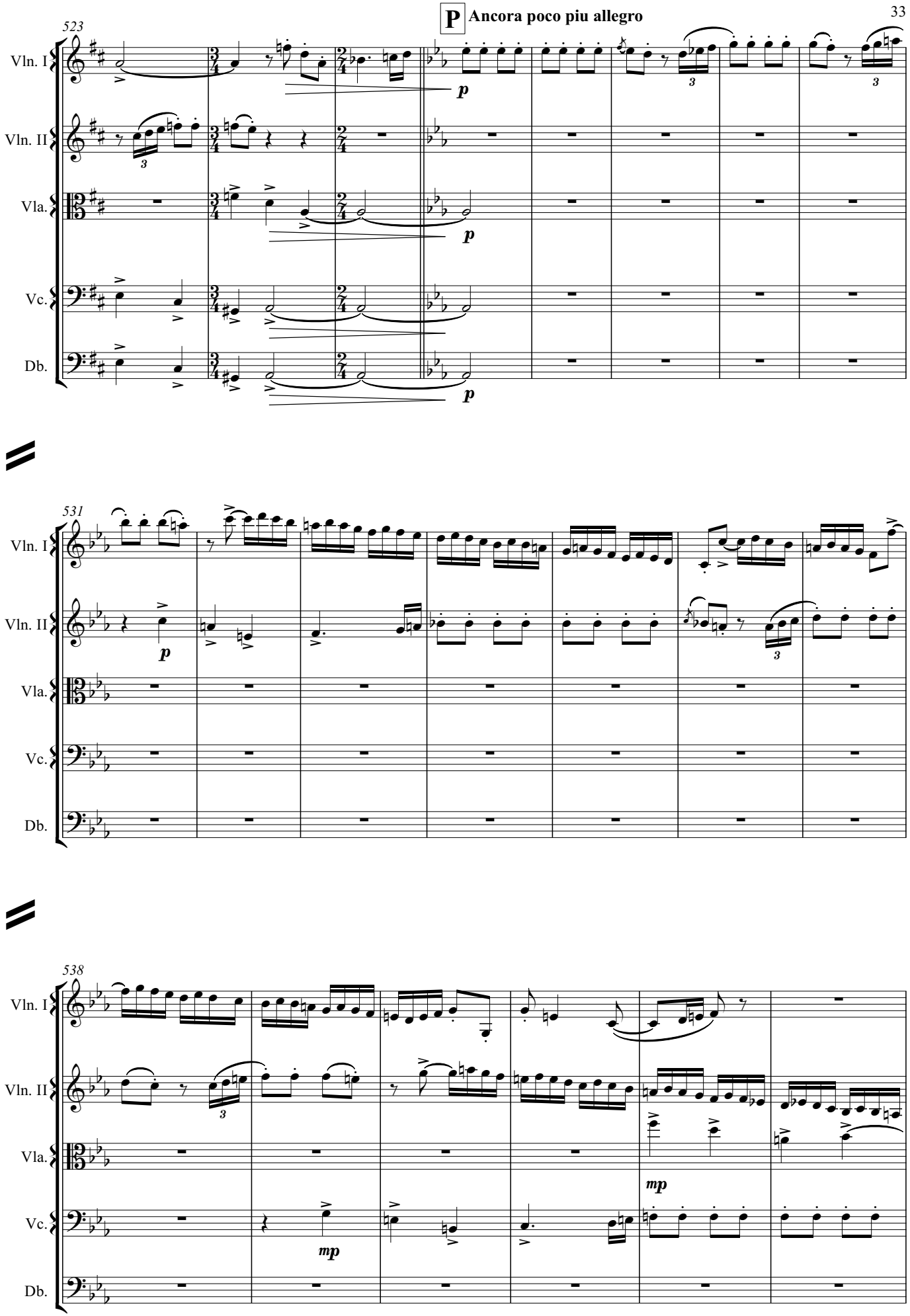

poco rit.
Quasi Adagio
M
443
Solo Vln.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Vc.
Db.
mf strongly
dim.
pp
p
dim.

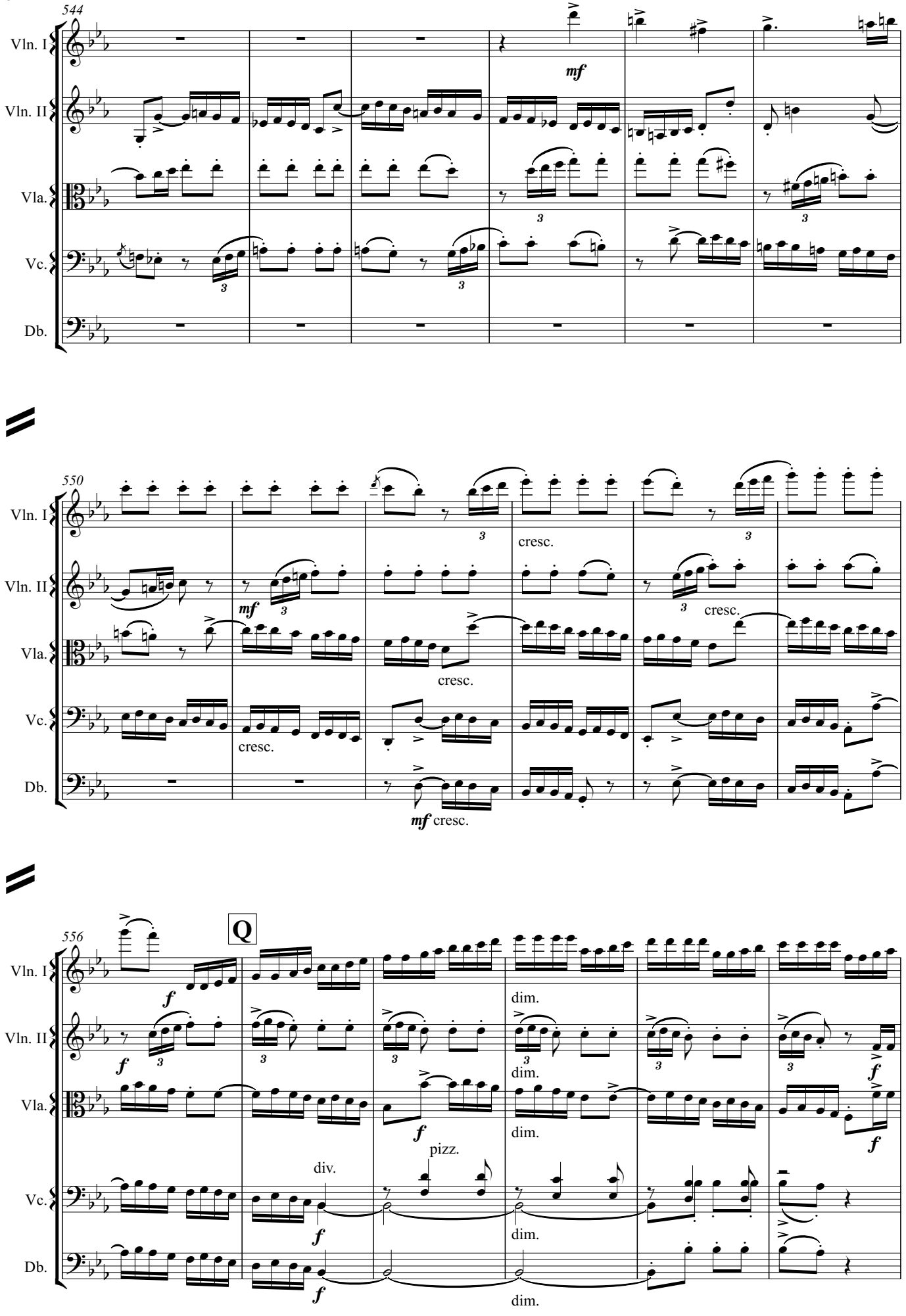

rit.
451
Solo Vln.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Vc.
Db.
p
pp poss.
pp

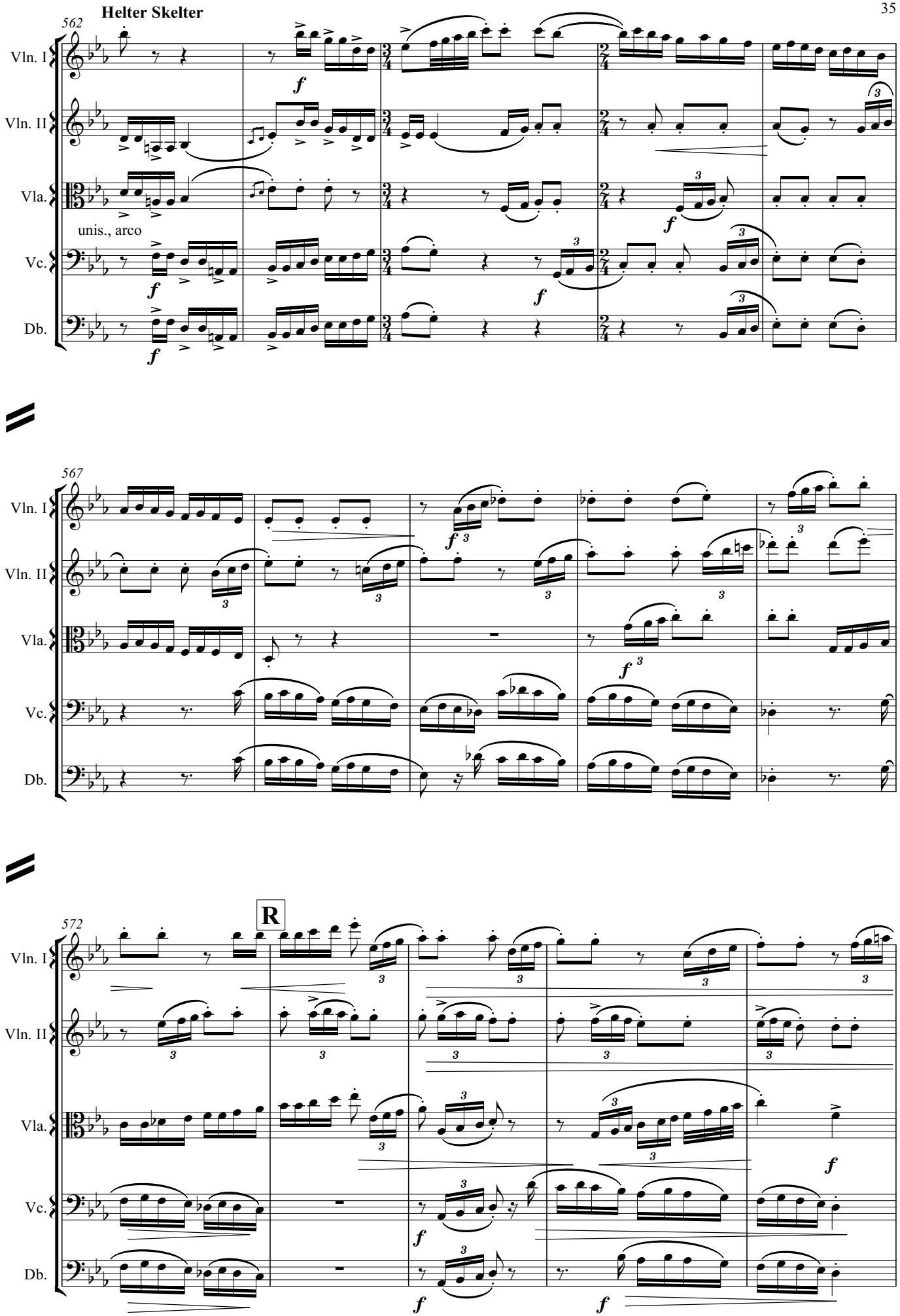

Var. VIII
Allegro Corragioso
ante ♪ = ♩ post
457
Solo Vln.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
pp poss.
unis.
pp
mf cresc.
mp
cresc.
f
464
ff
sfz
Poco piu allegro
474
meno f

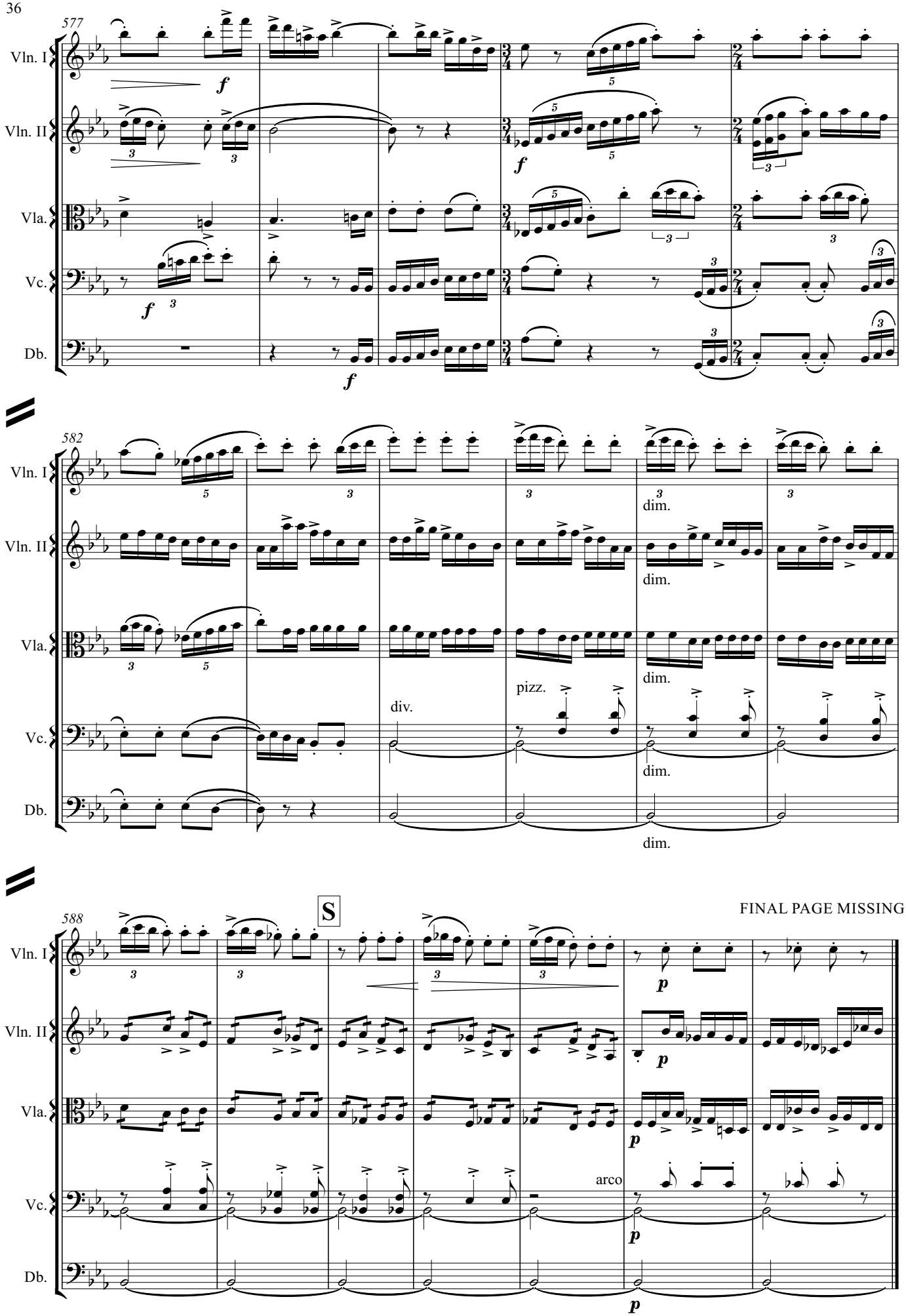

483
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
meno f
cresc.
pizz.
mf
N
490
arco
497


502
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
ff
O
Ancora poco piu allegro
507
meno f
f
pizz.
515
arco
mf
pizz.
arco


P Ancora poco piu allegro
523
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
p
531
mp
538


544
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
mf
3
550
cresc.
mf cresc.
556
Q
f
dim.
pizz.
div.


562
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
unis., arco
Vc.
Db.
567
572
R



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