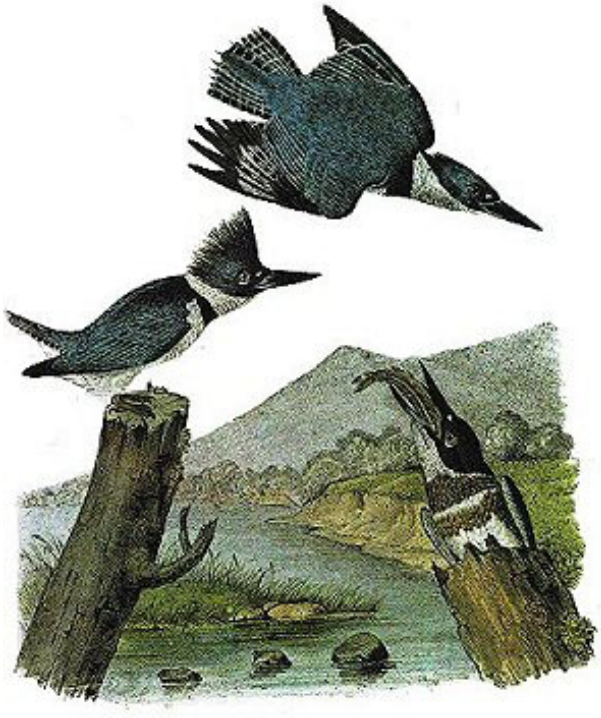
After Alcyon's Dream

for clarinet, viola and piano



After Alcyon's Dream

Although the myth is older still, the myth of Ceyx and Alcyone was first recorded by Ovid, the Roman poet born in 43 B.C:

Ceyx and Alcyone were king and queen of Trachis. One night while her husband was away, Alcyone had a nightmare-premonition of her husband's death in a violent storm at sea. From that night on, Alcyone slept on shore looking over the water hoping for Ceyx's return. But one night, Alcyone half-woke on the shore to find her husband's body washed up before her. Alcyone's grief was so great and her desire to be with Ceyx so intense, that Alcyone threw herself into the sea to join Ceyx in death as she no longer could in life.

Out of compassion, the gods transformed both Alcyone and her beloved husband Ceyx into a pair of kingfishers so that they could always be together again, flying just above the water, rather than beneath it. And once a year, each spring ever since, they still nest and mate and have a chance to raise their young, as they did not have a chance to do in life.

Alcyone's father - Aeolus or Neptune - decreed that, to protect the couple's annual nest, the winds be forbidden to blow for a week before and after the winter solstice. So to this day, the brooding time of the kingfisher has been a time of calm seas; and those weeks just before and after the winter solstice are called the "Halcyon Days," an expression which has come more generally to mean a peaceful time. Halcyon, itself, has come to mean tranquil and free from disturbance or care, prosperous and golden like those two tranquil weeks of winter, warm and welcoming in the midst of storms.

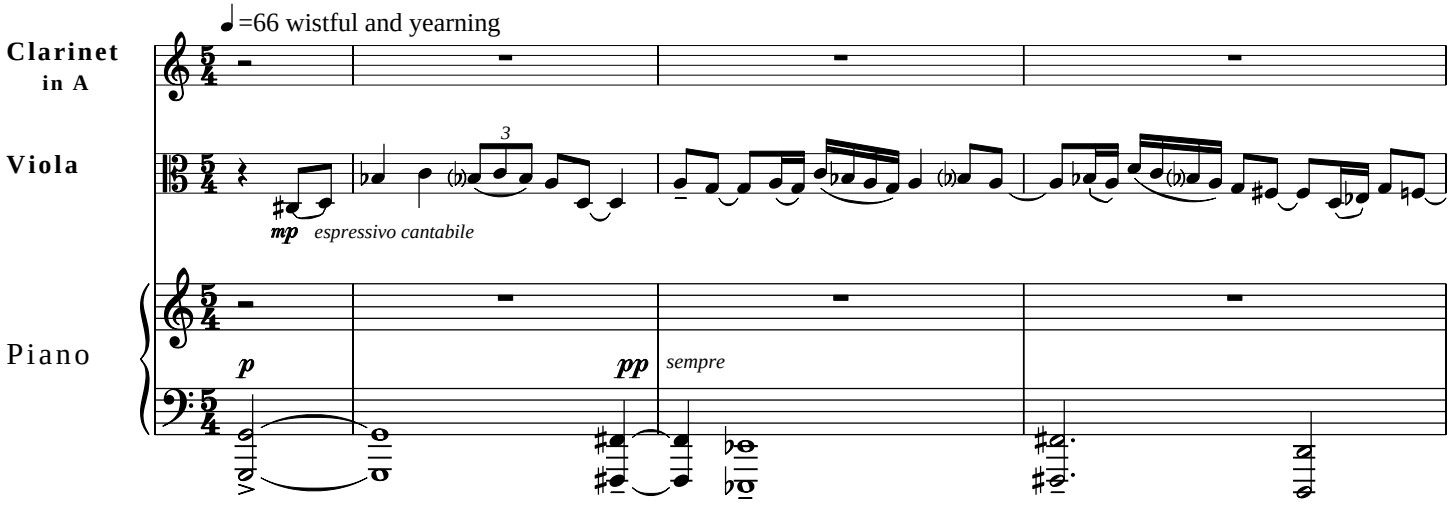
Naturalists tell us that kingfishers do not really nest on water; some species construct colonies of hanging basket nests in trees, while others dig nesting burrows in soft earth with their long beaks. And we all know that some winters a winter respite does not arrive at all.

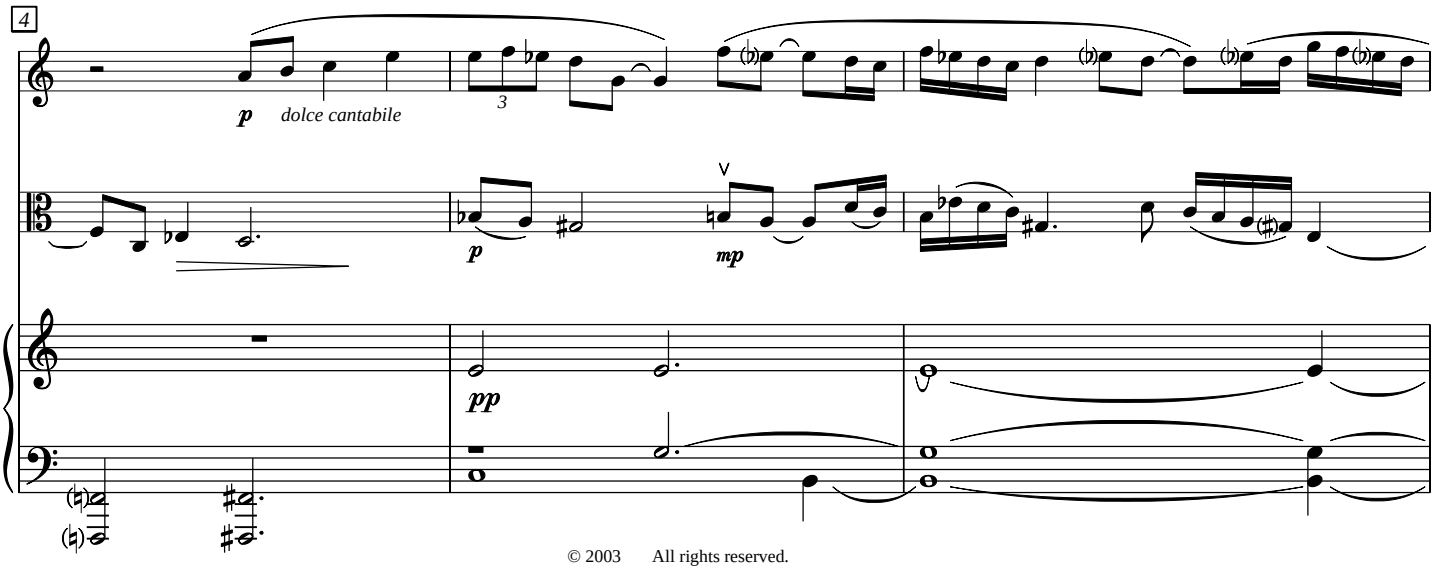
But the story of Ceyx and Alcyone is a myth and so has its own deep truth. **After Alcyon's Dream,** takes us into that private mythological realm where serene communion appears regularly as balm for nightmarish loss. The clarinet and viola swoop and glide, accompanying and responding to one another like birds in flight. And meanwhile, the music echoes the myth's concern with memory, loss, longing and consolation.

After Alcyon's Dream

for clarinet, viola and piano

I





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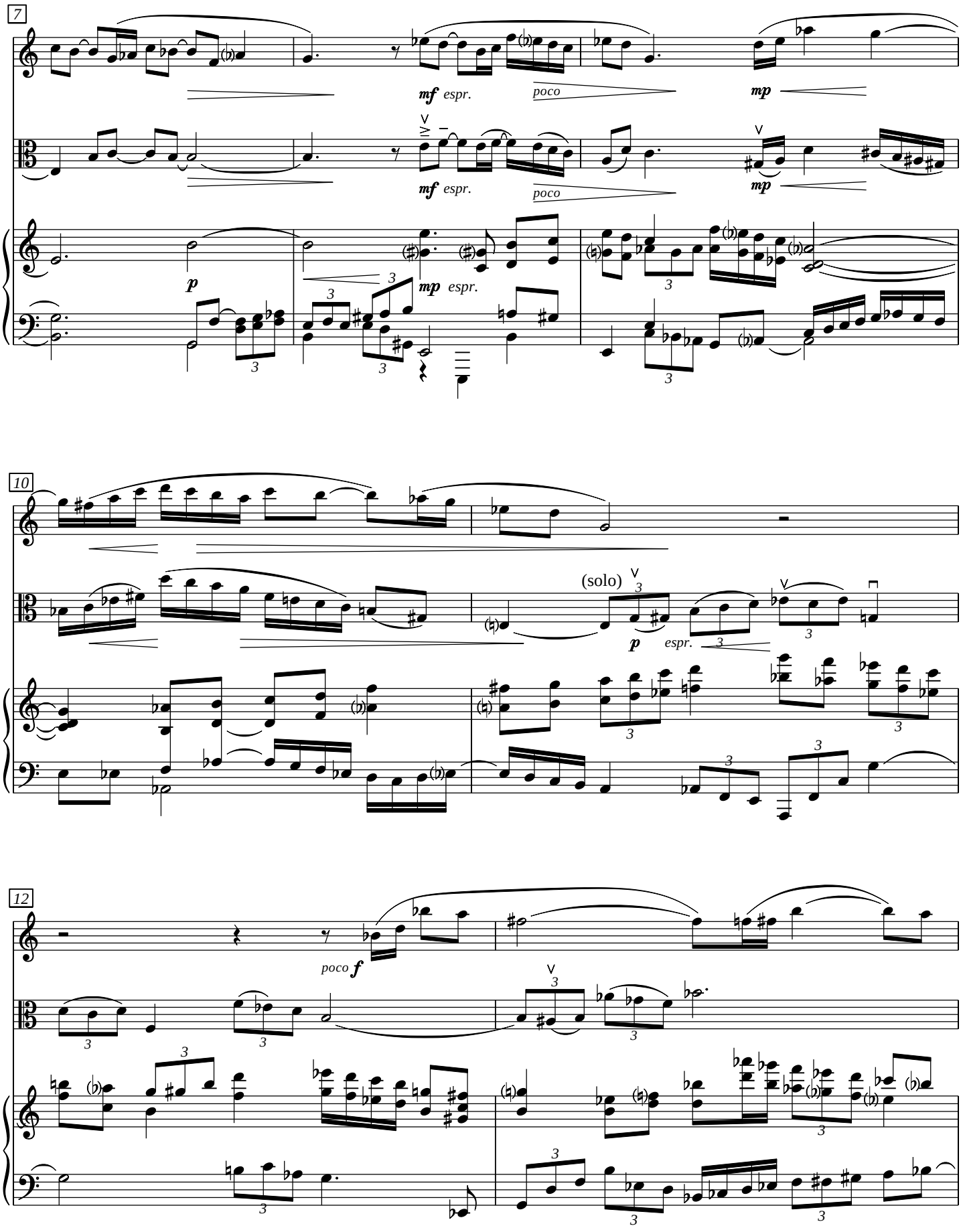
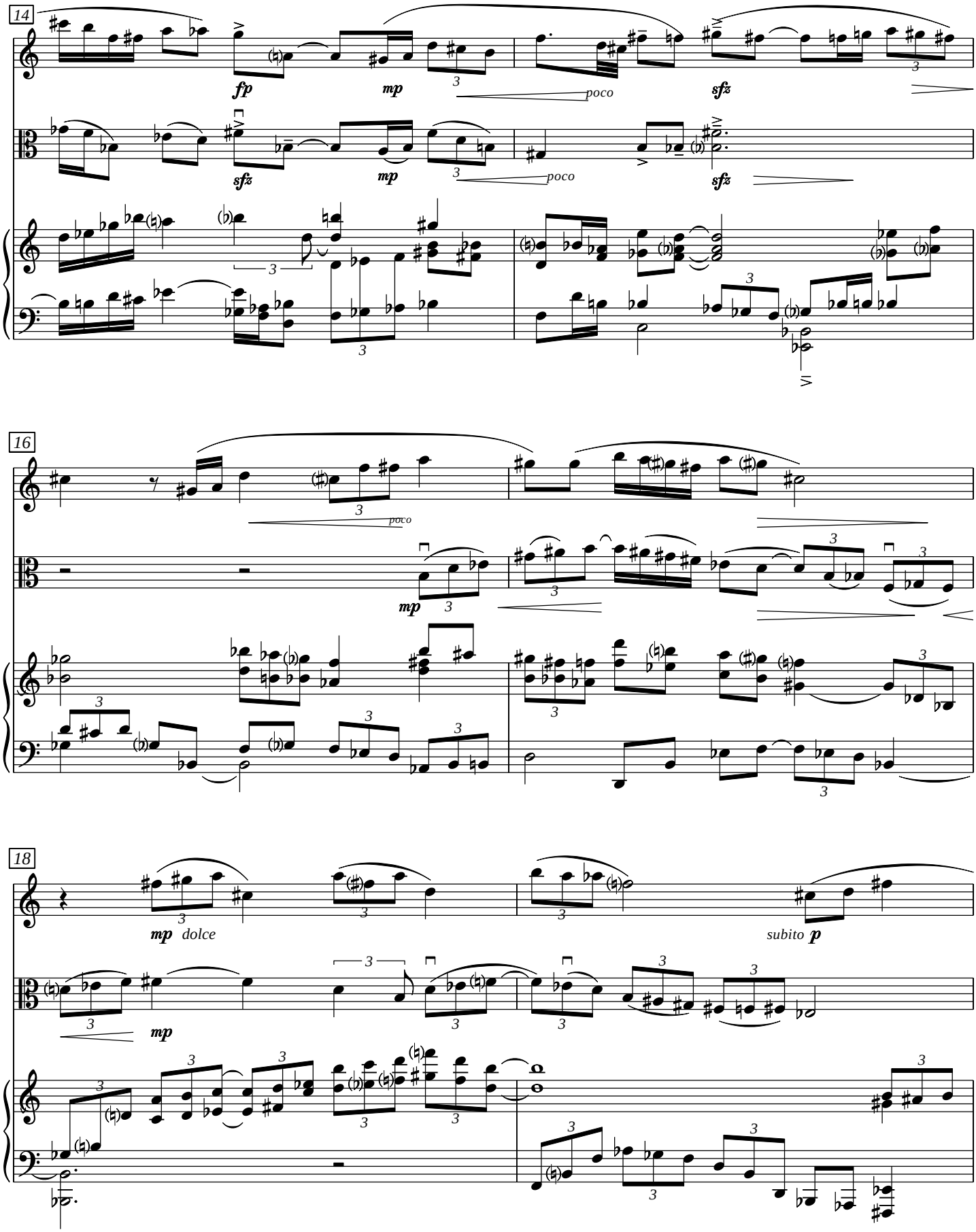
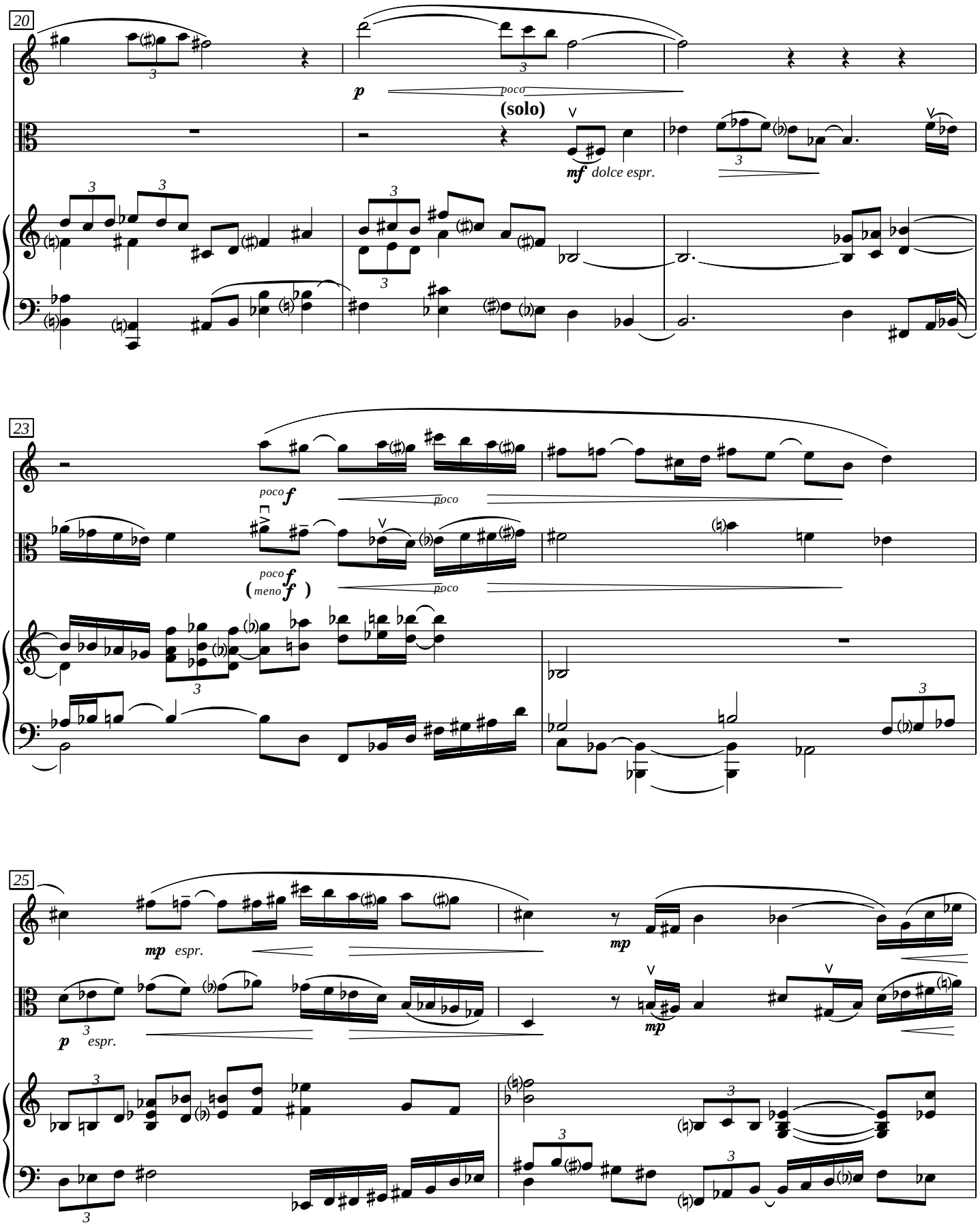
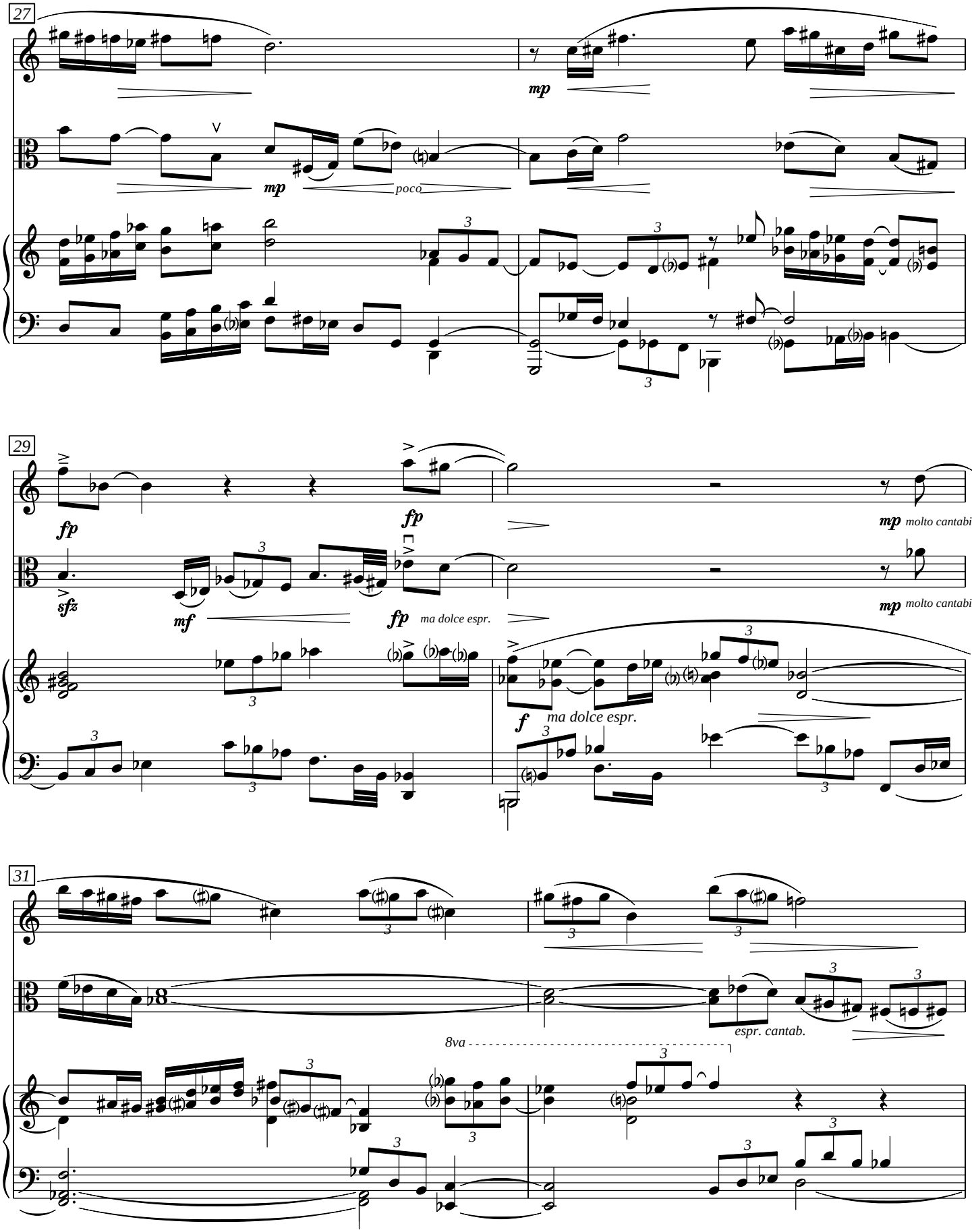
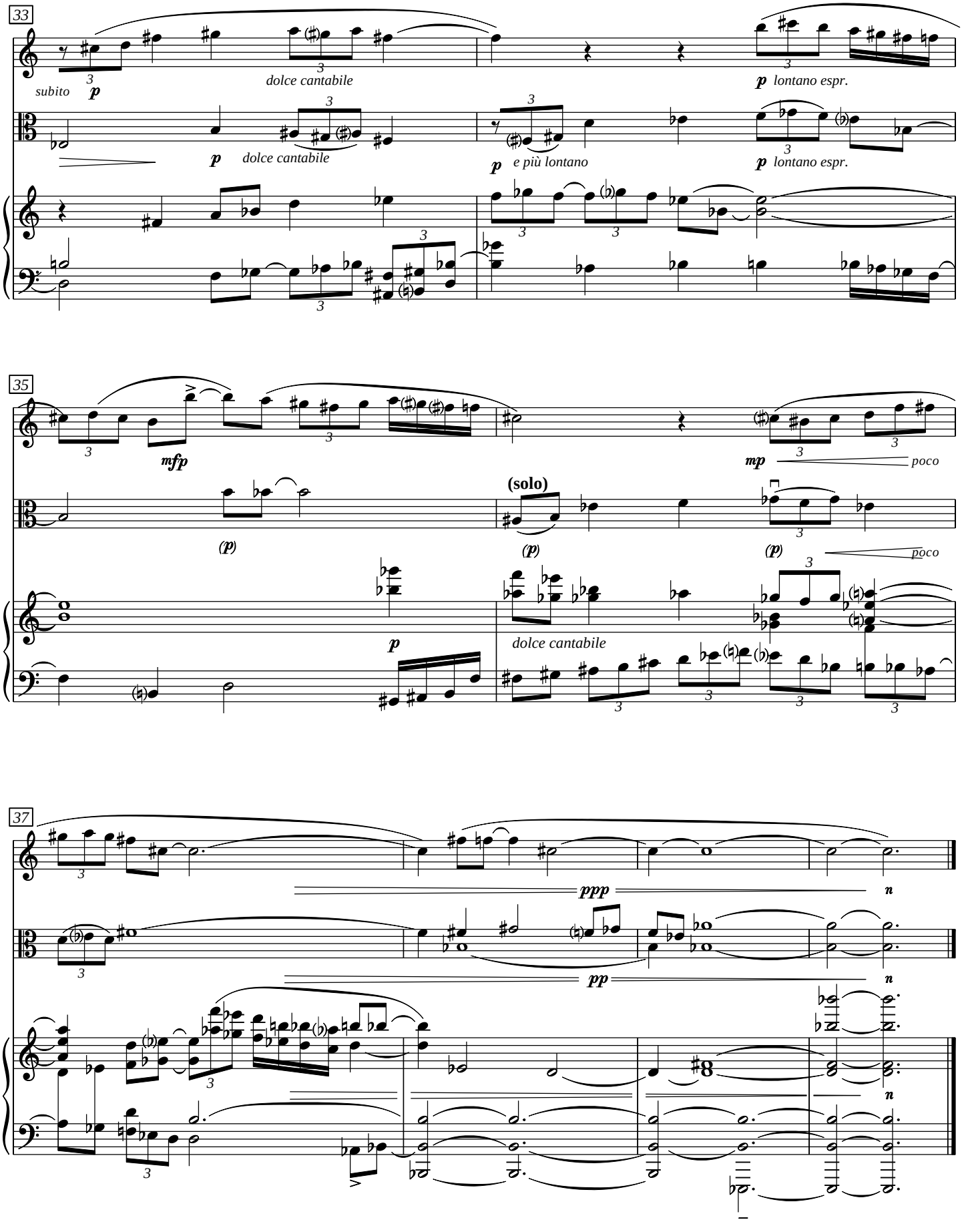

7
mf espr.
poco
mp
mf espr.
poco
mp
p
mp espr.
10
(solo)
p espr.
12
poco f

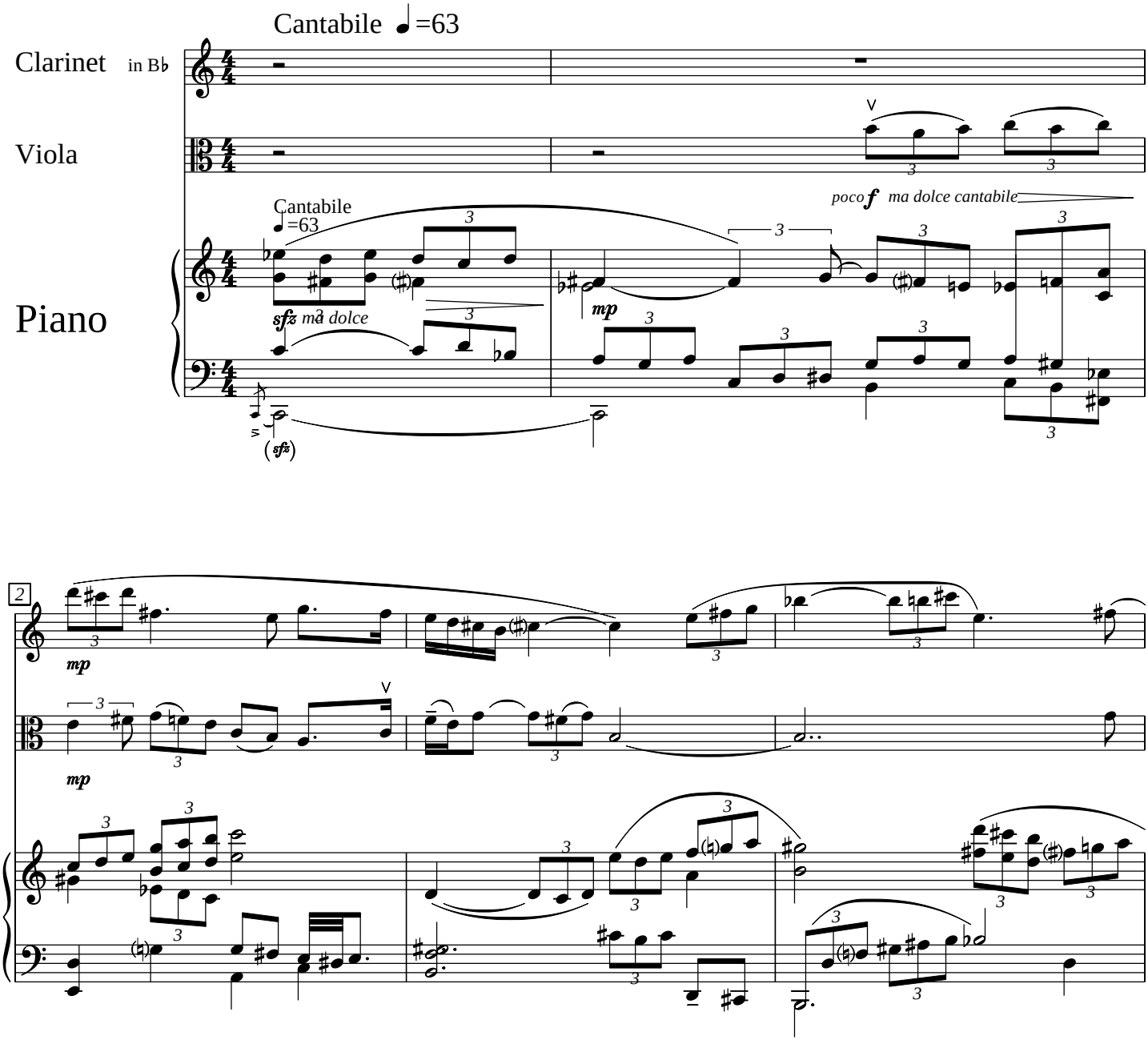

14
fp
mp
poco
sfz
sfz
mp
poco
sfz
16
poco
mp
18
mp dolce
subito p
mp

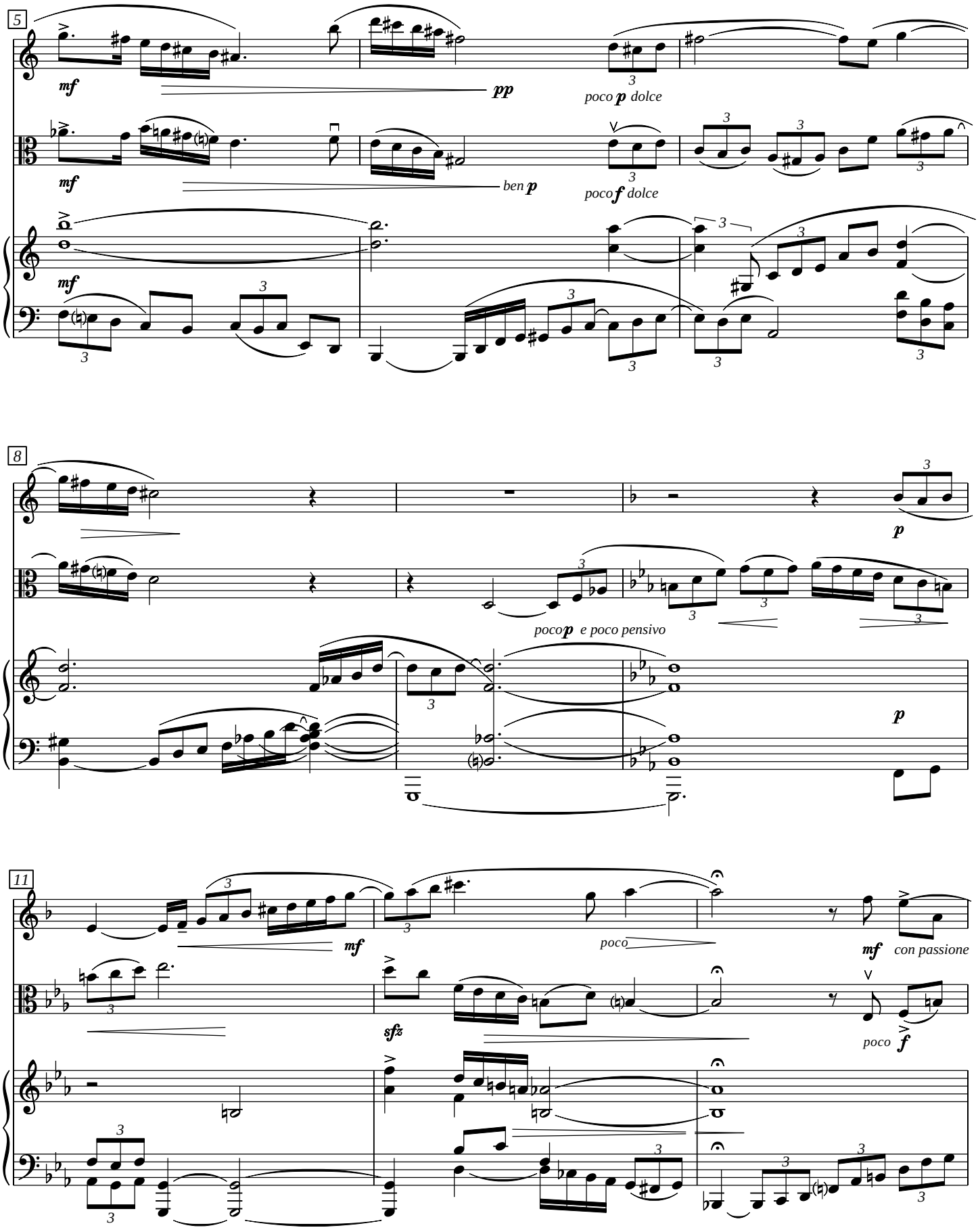

20
p
poco
(solo)
mf dolce espr.
23
poco f
poco
(poco meno f)
poco
25
mp espr.
mp
p espr.
mp

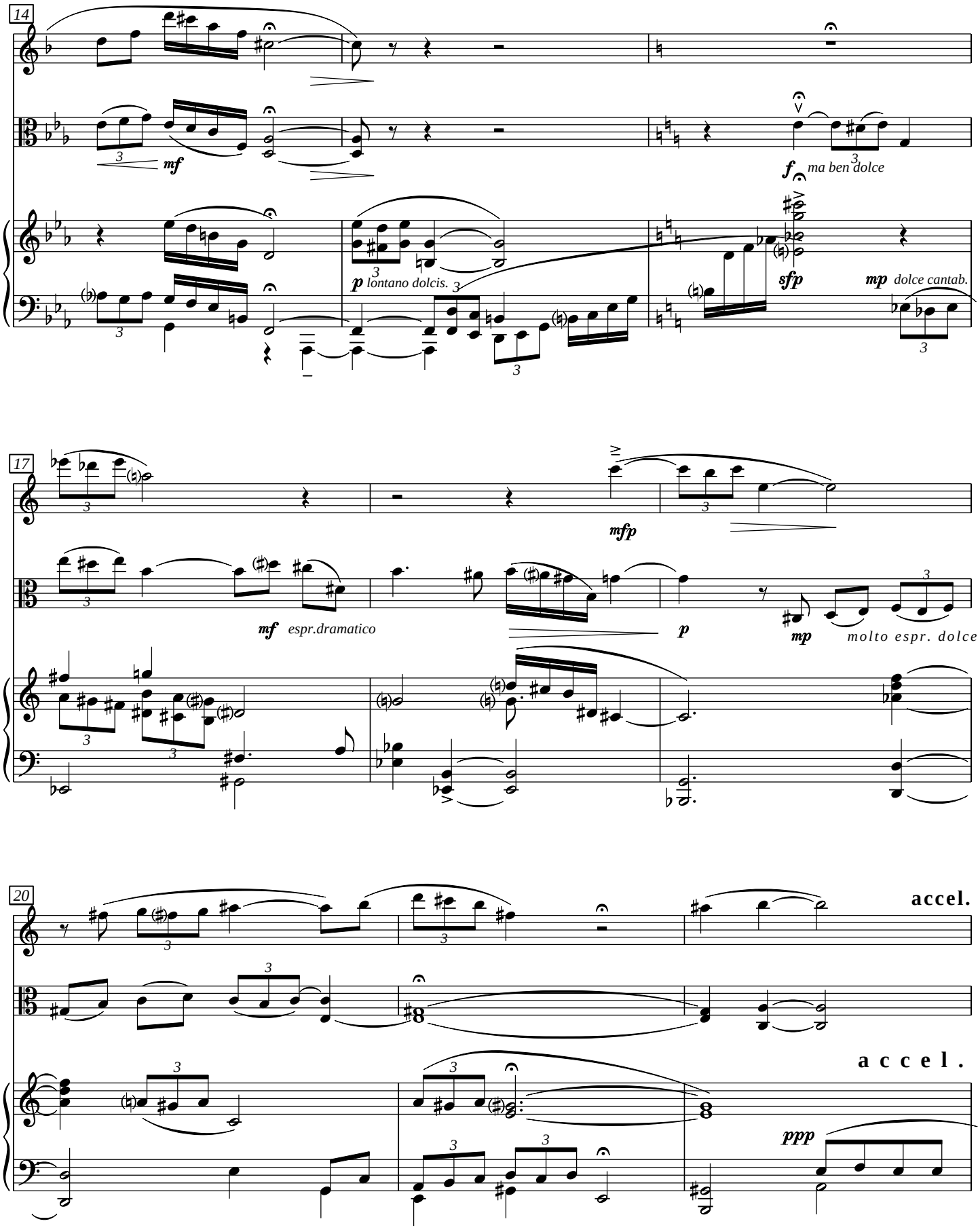

27
mp
mp
poco
29
fp
fp
mp molto cantabile
sfz
mf
fp ma dolce espr.
mp molto cantabile
f ma dolce espr.
31
8va
espr. cantab.

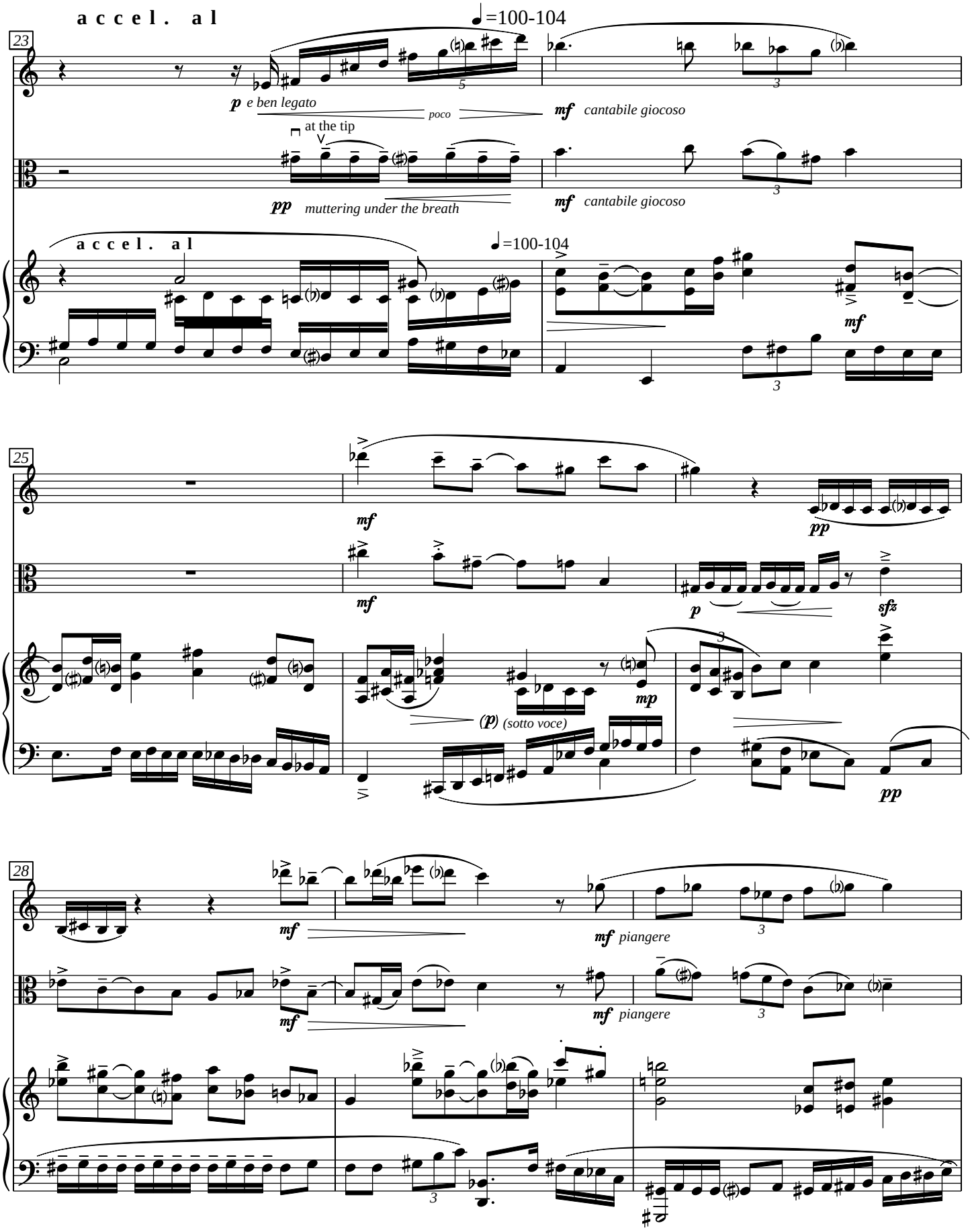

33
subito p
dolce cantabile
p lontano espr.
p dolce cantabile
p e più lontano
p lontano espr.
35
mfp
mp poco
(solo)
(p)
poco
p
dolce cantabile
37
ppp
n
pp
n
n

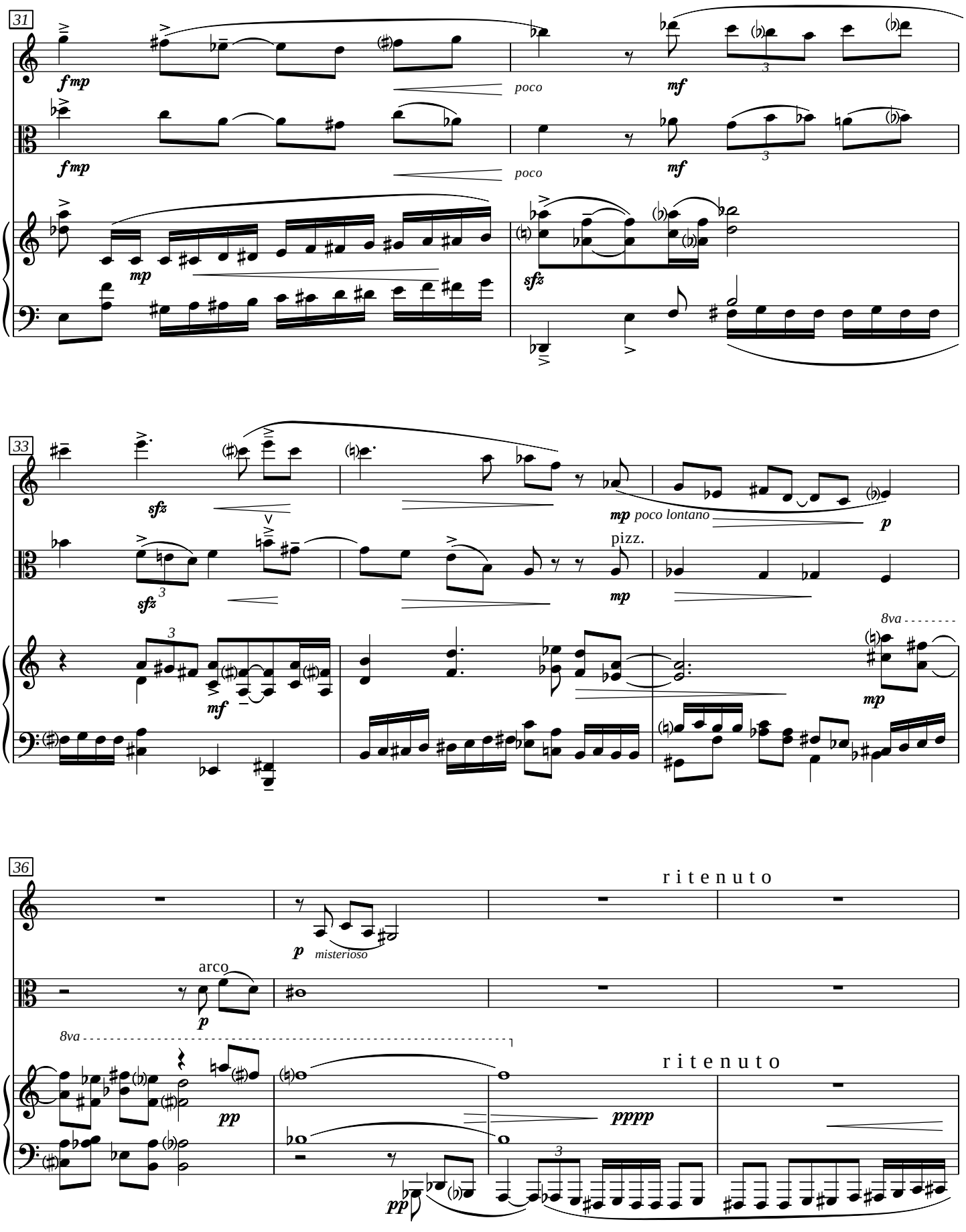
II

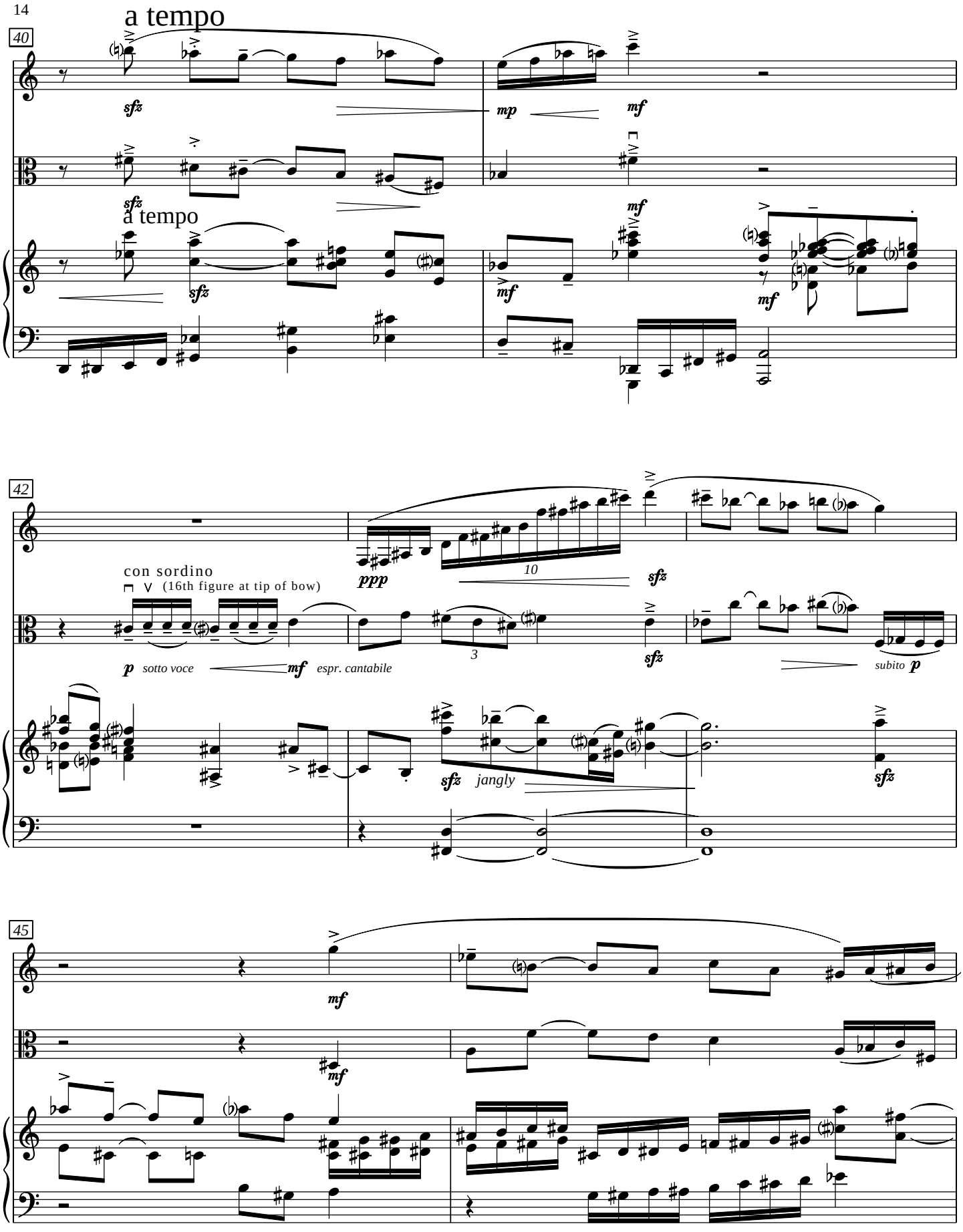

Cantabile ♩=63
Clarinet in B♭
Viola
Piano
Cantabile
♩=63
sfz ma dolce
mp
poco f ma dolce cantabile
2
mp
mp

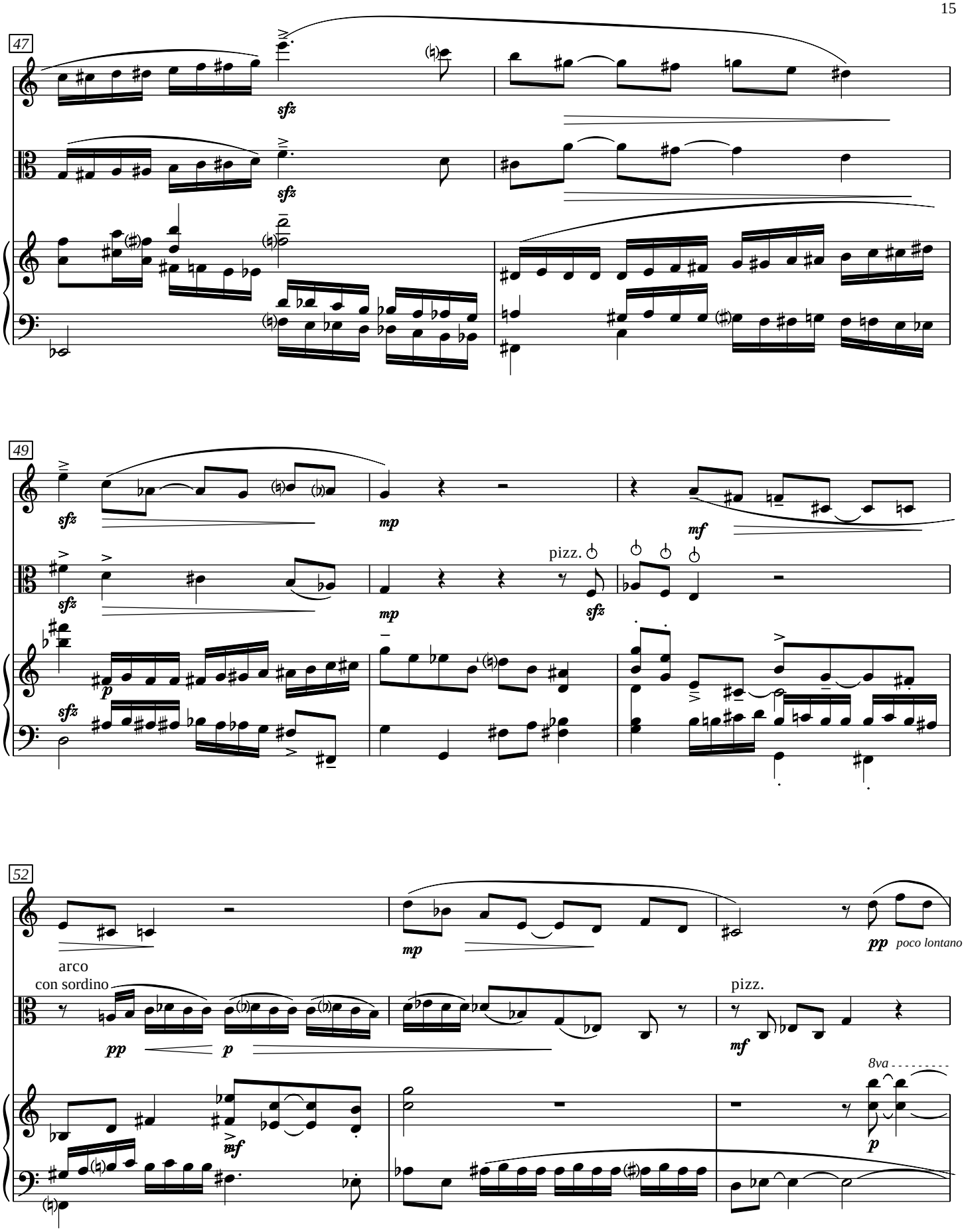

5
mf
pp
poco p dolce
mf
ben p
poco f dolce
mf
8
p
poco p e poco pensivo
p
11
mf
poco
mf con passione
sfz
poco f

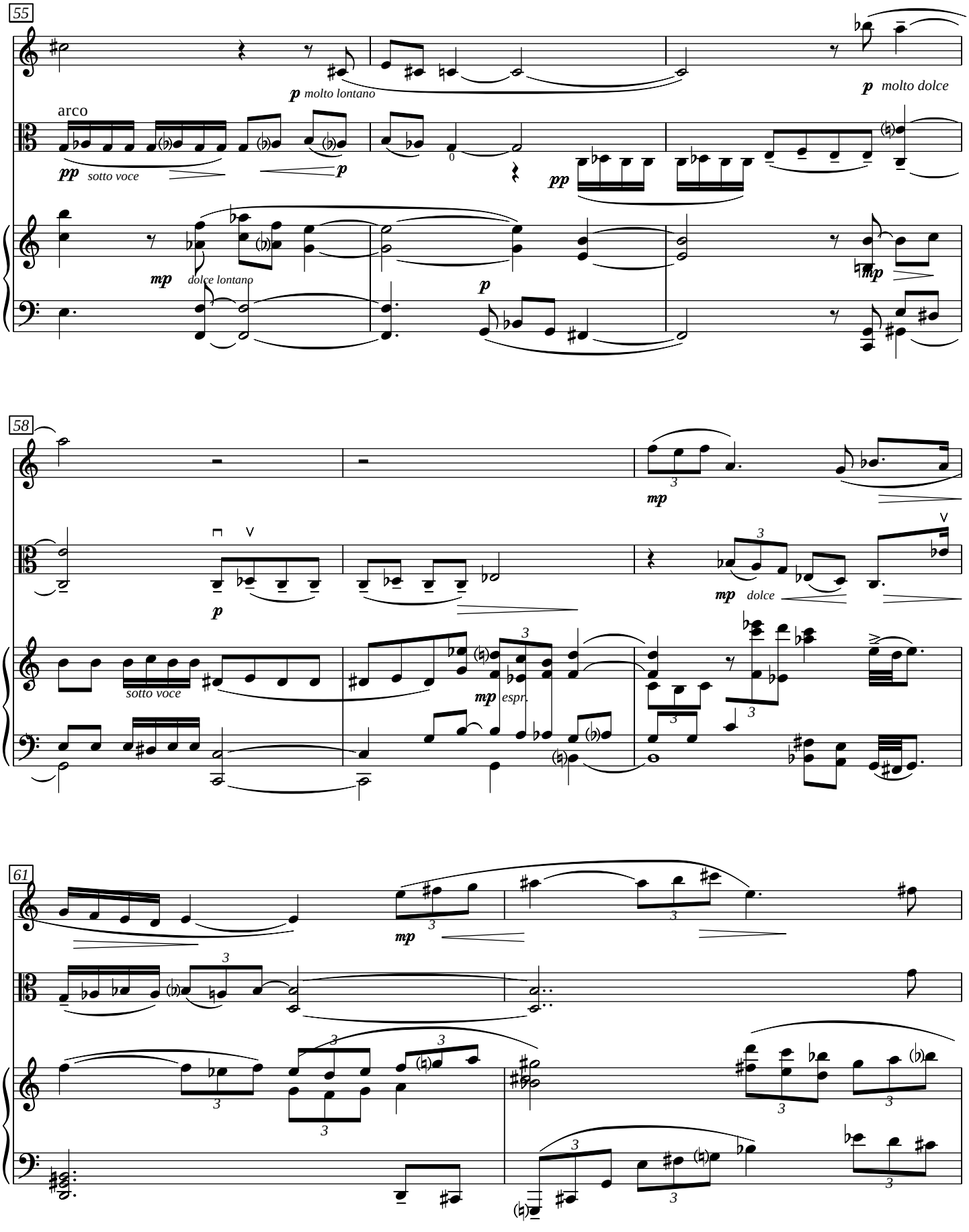

14
mf
f ma ben dolce
p lontano dolcis.
sfp
mp dolce cantab.
17
mfp
mf espr.dramatico
p
mp molto espr. dolce
20
accel.
a c c e l .
ppp

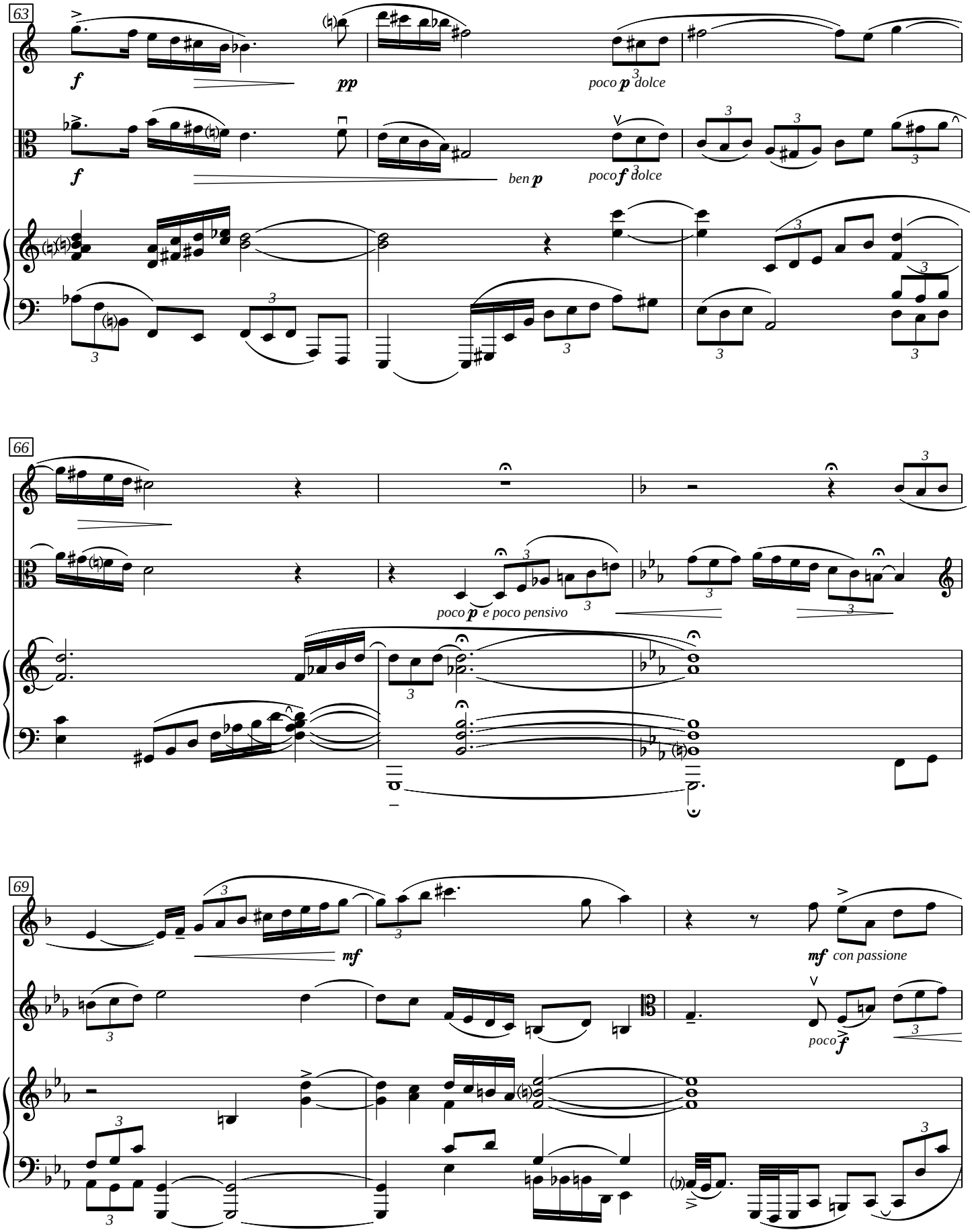

accel. al
=100-104
23
p e ben legato
poco
mf cantabile giocoso
at the tip
pp muttering under the breath
mf cantabile giocoso
accel. al
=100-104
mf
25
mf
p
sfz
(p) (sotto voce)
mp
pp
28
mf
mf piangere
mf
mf piangere

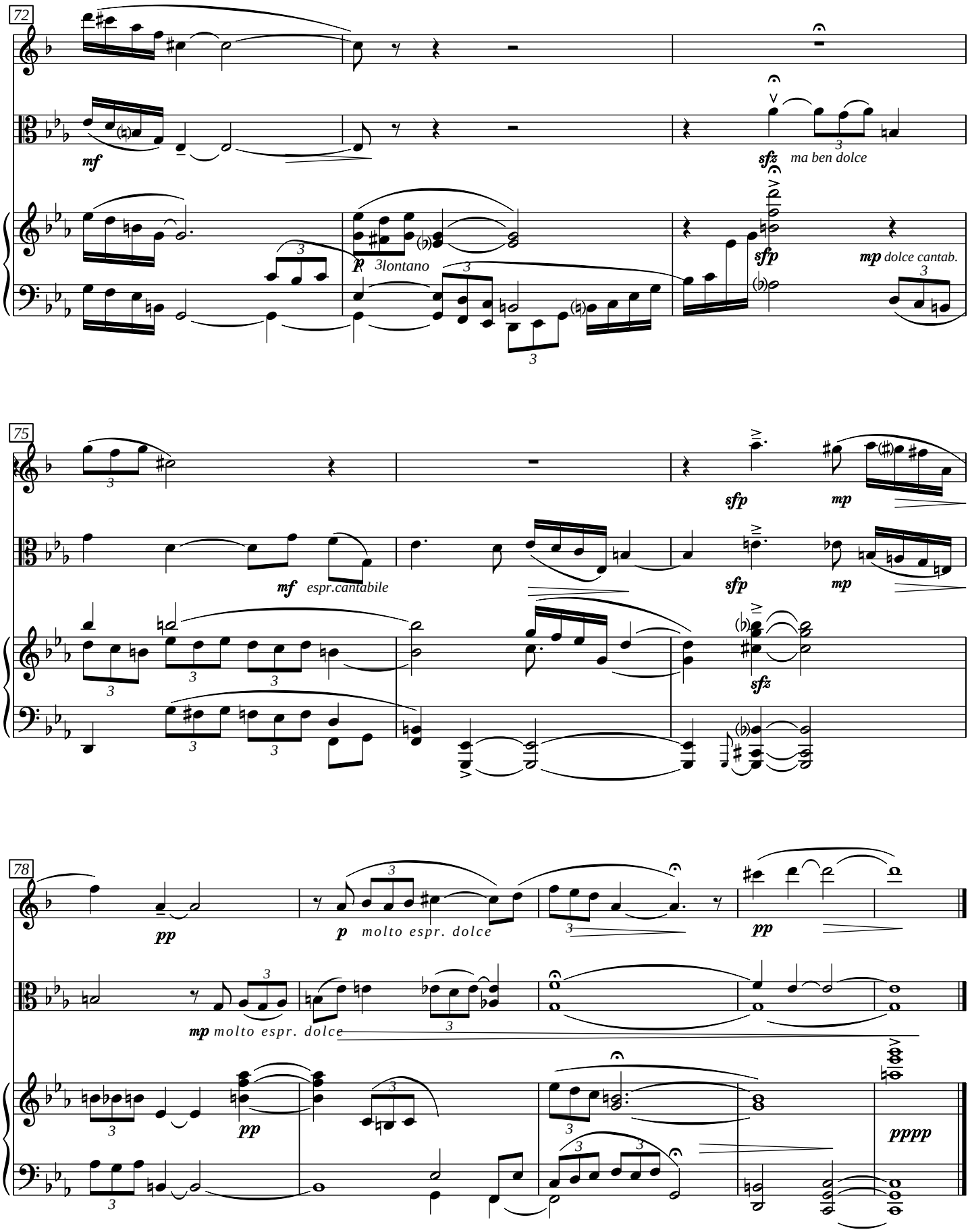

31
fmp
poco
mf
fmp
poco
mf
mp
sfz
33
sfz
mp poco lontano
p
sfz
pizz.
mp
mf
8va
mp
36
ritenuto
p
misterioso
arco
p
8va
ritenuto
pp
pppp
pp


a tempo
40
sfz
mp
mf
a tempo
42
con sordino
(16th figure at tip of bow)
ppp
10
sfz
p sotto voce
mf espr. cantabile
3
subito p
jangly
45


47
sfz
sfz
49
sfz
mp
mf
pizz.
sfz
sfz
mp
p
sfz
52
mp
pp
poco lontano
arco
con sordino
pp
p
pizz.
mf
8va
mf
p


55
p molto lontano
p molto dolce
arco
pp sotto voce
p
pp
mp dolce lontano
p
mp
58
mp
p
mp dolce
sotto voce
mp espr.
61
mp


63
f
pp
poco p dolce
f
ben p
poco f dolce
66
poco p e poco pensivo
69
mf
mf con passione
poco f


72
mf
sfz
ma ben dolce
p
3lontano
sfp
mp
dolce cantab.
75
sfp
mp
mf
espr.cantabile
sfp
mp
sfz
78
pp
p
molto espr. dolce
pp
mp
molto espr. dolce
pp
pppp