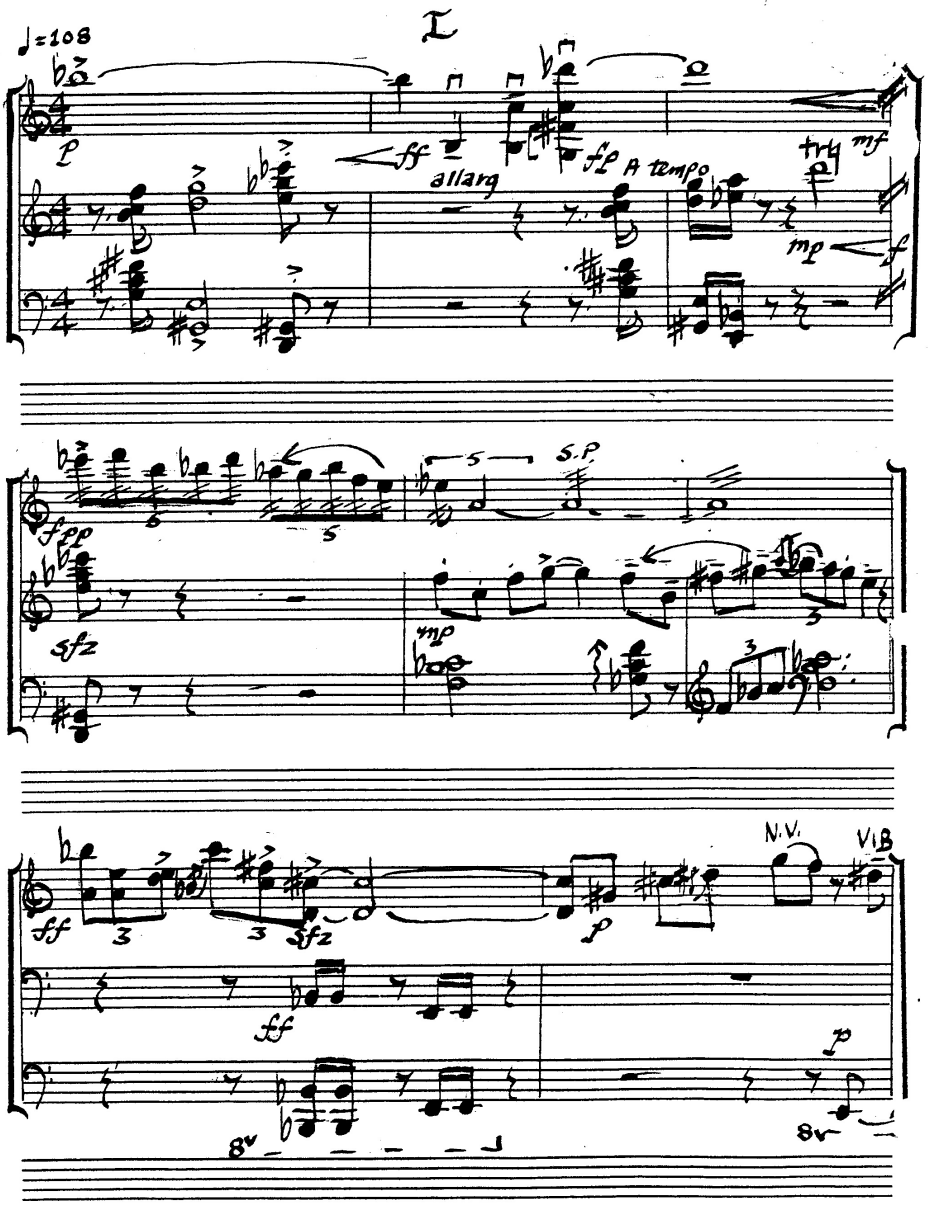
W. Jay Sydeman

Sonata No. 3 “Ben”

for Violin and Piano

(1984)

Arts Aeternum



- 1 -

First page of manuscript

Written for the Sacramento violinist Ben Dominitz, this is a demanding work both musically and technically (as desired by this violinist). The cosmic musing and contemplative movements move in almost ethereal realms – the *allegro* reminds one of a machine run amok, and the *agitato* more than lives up to its title. A sort of "hold on to your seats" piece.

The material of the first movement is decidedly odd and sort of defies description. A few motives are introduced and played with in various unexpected ways, finally at letter E developing a more specific continuity before returning to an almost cadenza-like elaboration of the original statement. The machine-like *allegro* allows the listener to relax a bit in its more obvious continuity. Then comes the "Cosmic Musing" in which very free, very high violin phrases are surrounded by the wispyish of piano figures. Not to mention the *agitato* which roars by like a hurricane, ending with a canon in 16th notes. The fifth movement is back to another extremely delicate, inward-looking violin solo.

– W. Jay Sydeman, July 2012

W. Jay Sydeman's life mirrors the breadth and variety of his music. Born in New York in 1928 and educated at Manhattan's Mannes School of Music, he quickly became one of the most sought-after and honored composers of his generation, receiving commissions from such prestigious groups as the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Tanglewood Music Center, and the Boston Symphony, which premiered his orchestral work in memory of John F. Kennedy in 1966. "Sydeman uses a whole battery of far out techniques," wrote the *New York Times*, "but he has an uncanny ability to throw in the whole avant-garde machinery as if it were the simplest, most normal way of making music in the world ... More than many of his colleagues, he seems to know what will sound well, and he works for some remarkably attractive, pure textures. His sounds seem to grow from a physical sense of exactly what material is right."

In 1970, after a heady period that included awards from the National institute of Arts and Letters, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Library of Congress, Sydeman left New York – and composition – to begin a journey of personal and artistic exploration.

"Around 1980," he has written, "I returned to composition – at first a large number of choral works which reconnected me to the source of all music – the human voice. Out of this new lyric impulse have evolved all of my works since that time – more romantic, more accessible. I create music for the musician."

– Howard Hersh,
Artistic Director of "Music Now"

Sydeman is part of a composers' group in Nevada City annually producing the "Wet Ink Festival of New Music." He now lives in Mendocino and hosts a bi-weekly program on KZYX, "The Mind of a Composer," 10 am to noon on Mondays, introducing and commenting on contemporary music.

Duration:
I. Agitato - Allegro – circa 3:30
II. Allegro – circa 1:15
III. Cosmic musing: Largo rubato – circa 2:30
IV. Agitato – circa 2:00
V. Contemplative – circa 2:30

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707-962-0394
www.williamjaysydeman.com

Edited and engraved by Rick Shinozaki (Albany, CA), consulting with the composer.

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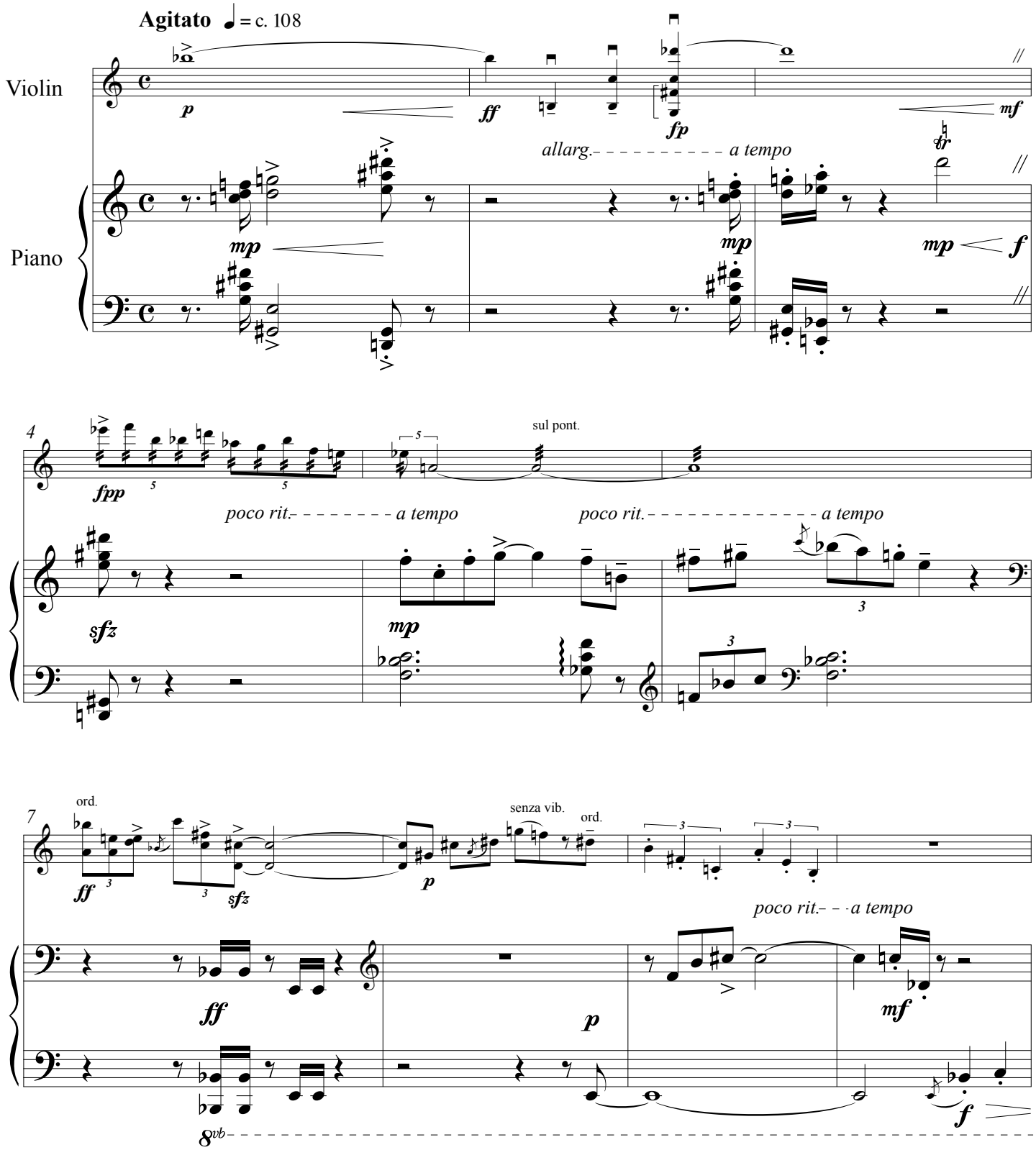
I.



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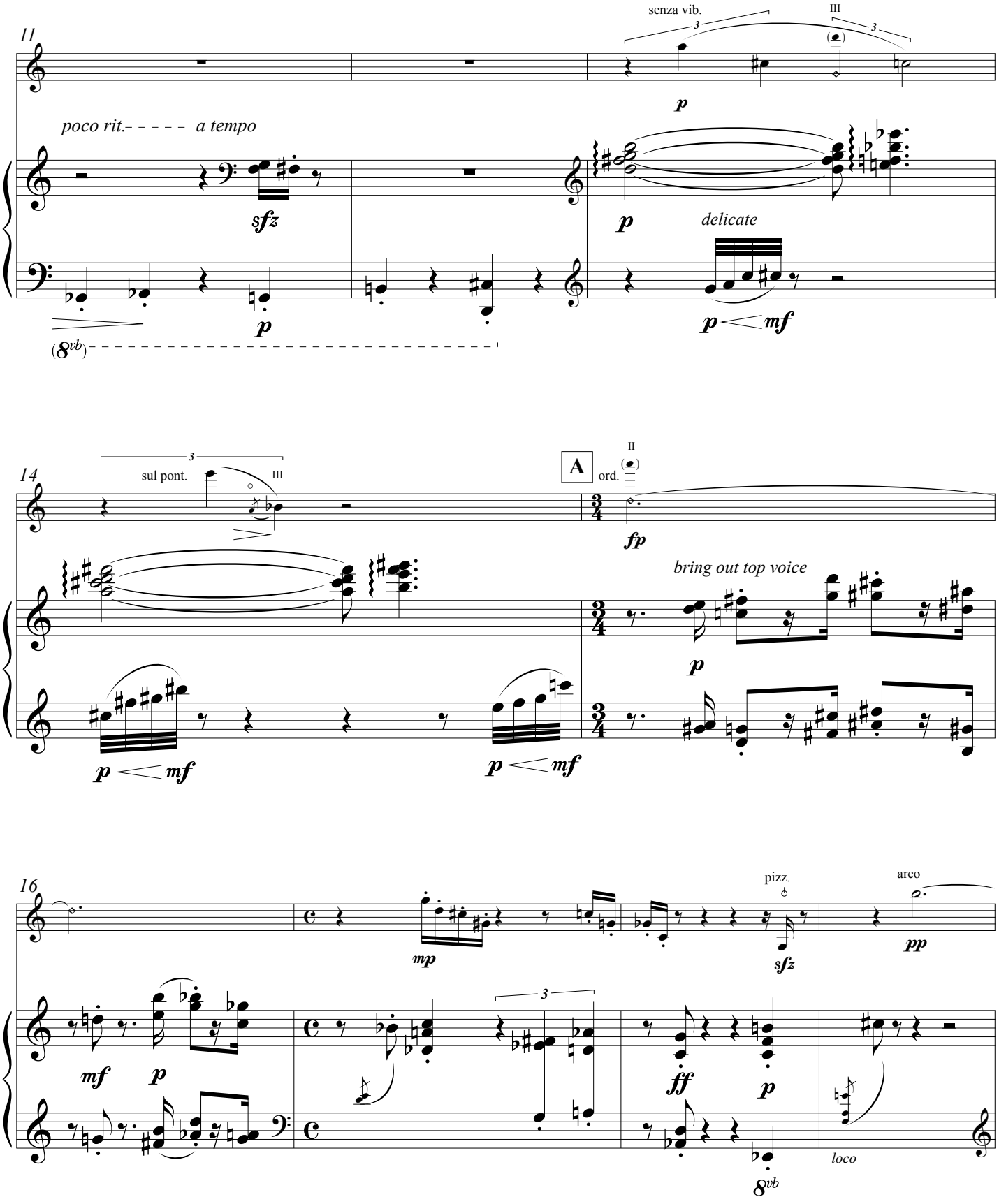
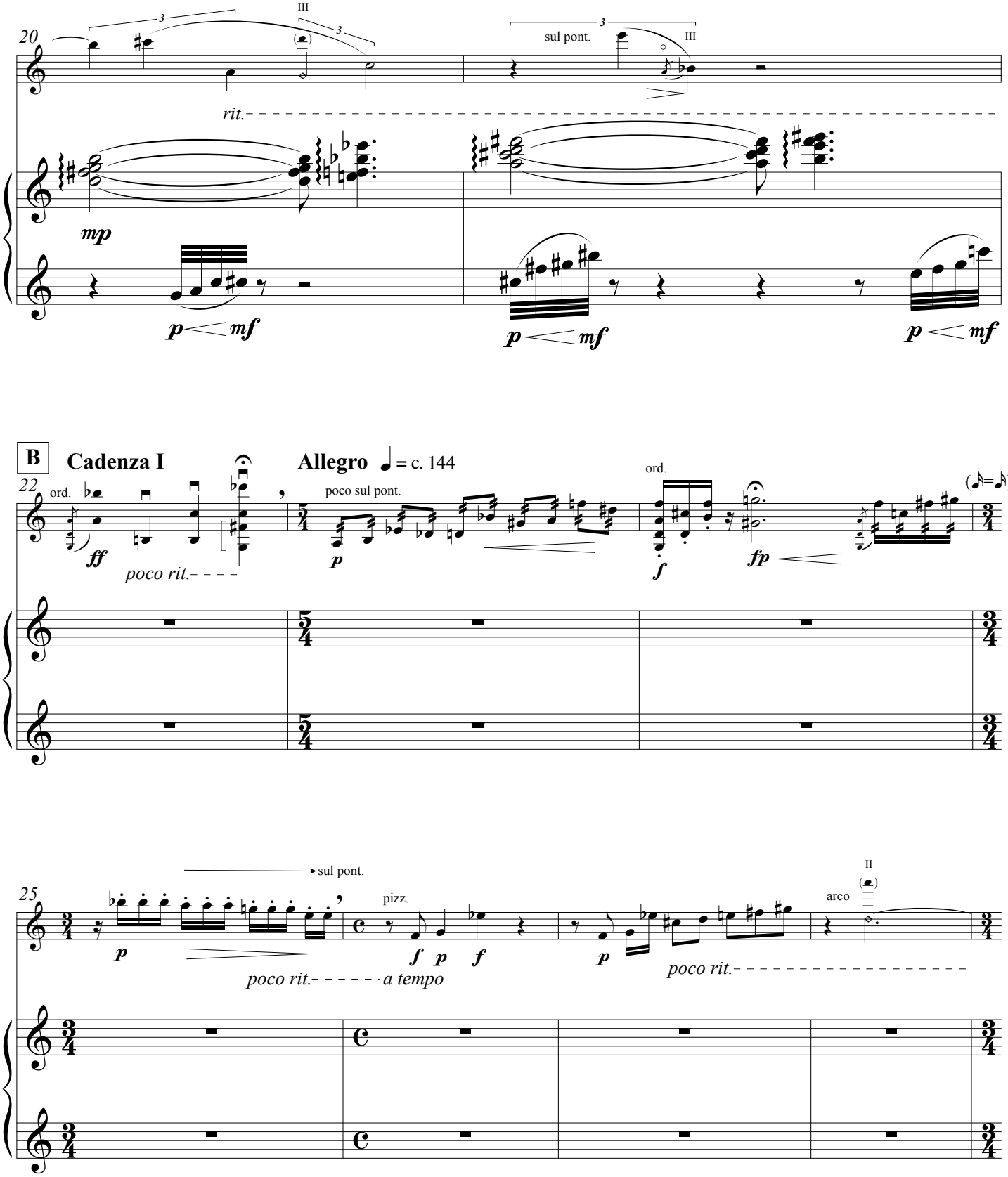

11
senza vib.
III
poco rit. - - - - - a tempo
a tempo
delicate
14
sul pont.
III
A
ord.
II
bring out top voice
16
pizz.
arco
loco
8vb


20
III
sul pont.
III
rit.
mp
p mf
p mf
p mf
B
Cadenza I
Allegro ♩ = c. 144
22
ord.
ff
poco rit.
poco sul pont.
p
ord.
f
fp
(𝅗𝅥=𝅗𝅥)
25
sul pont.
p
poco rit.
pizz.
f p f
a tempo
p
II
arco
poco rit.

C **Tempo I** ♩ = c. 108

29

p *mf*

32

molto rit.

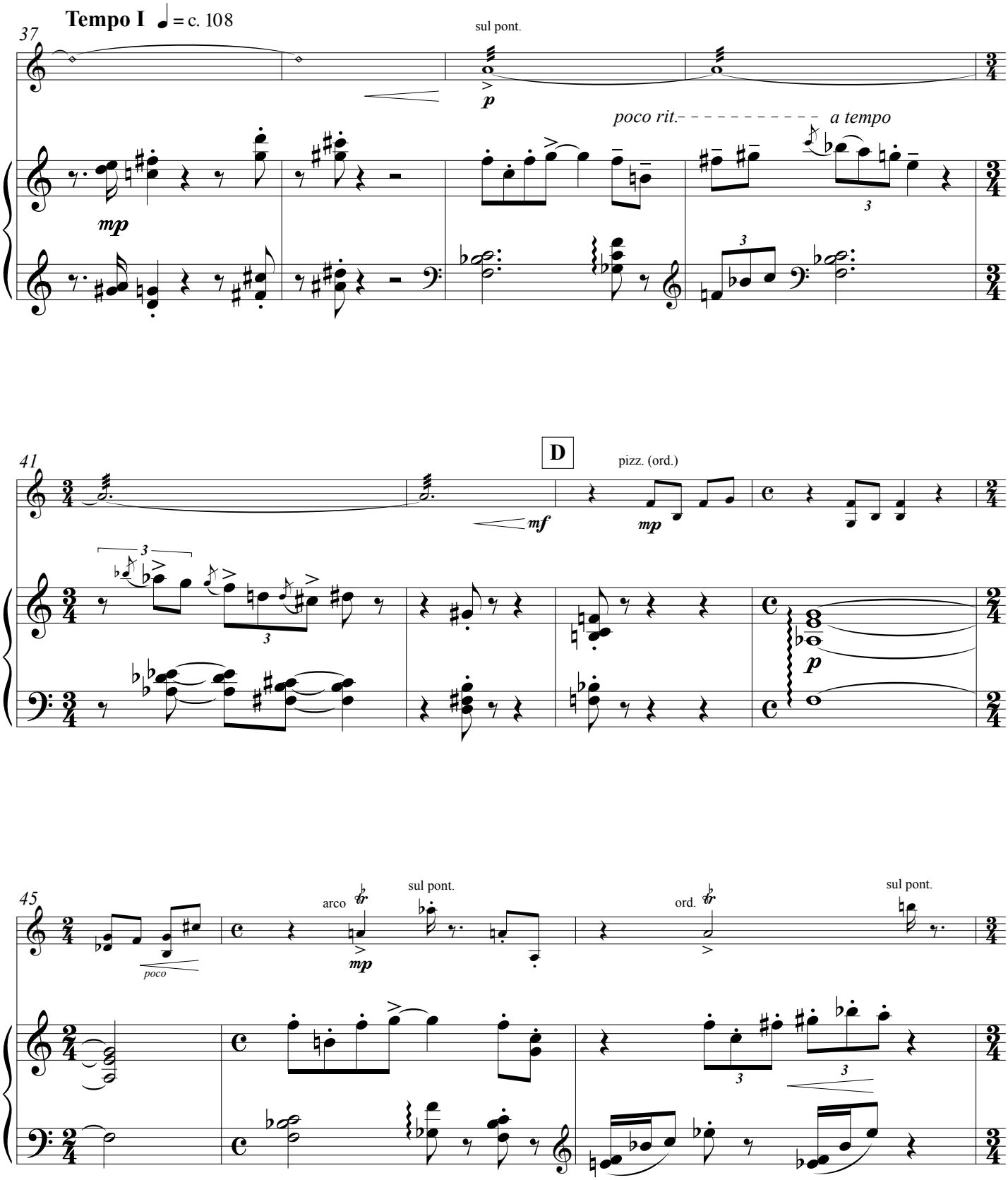
p *mf*

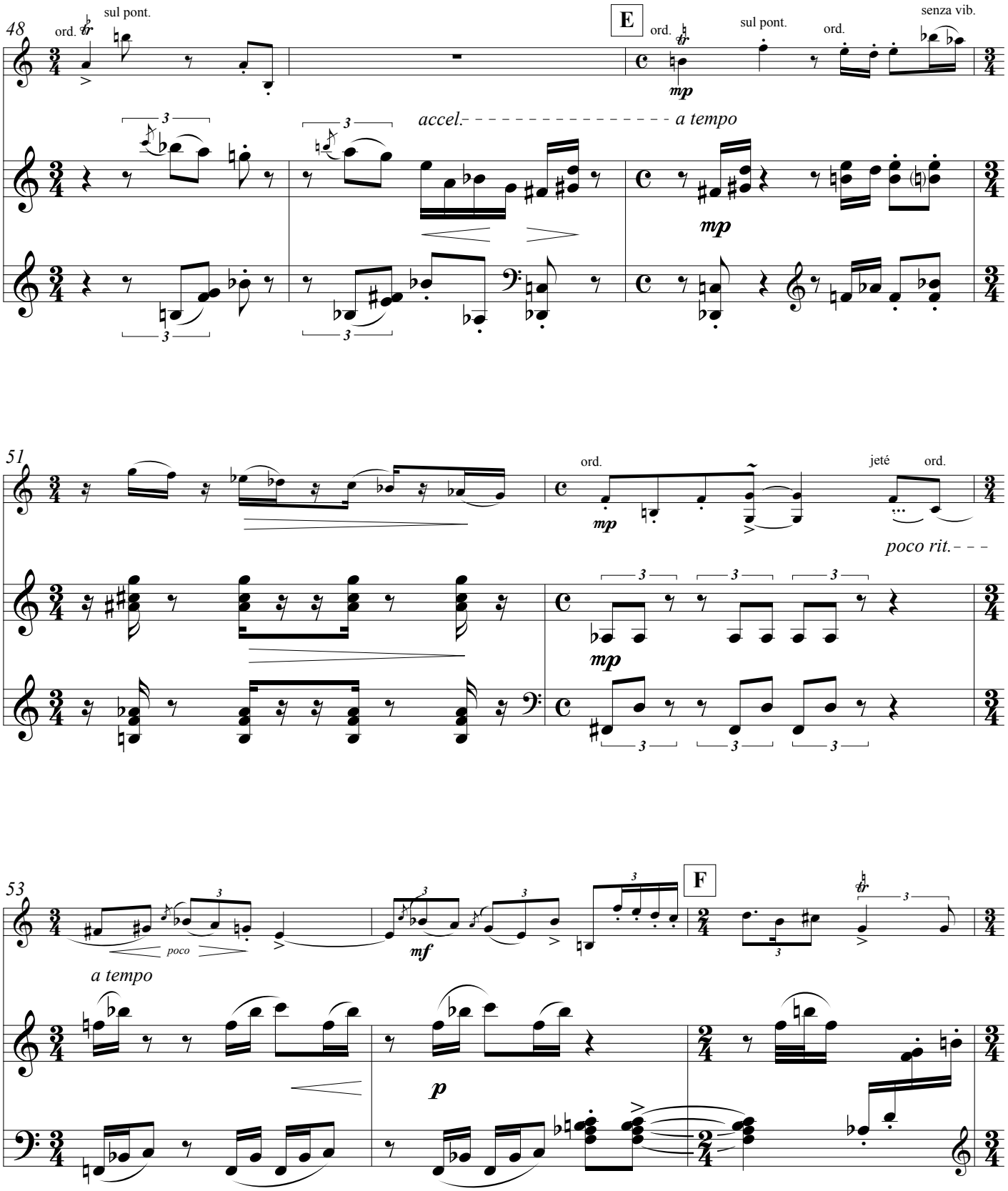
Con brio ♩ = c. 120

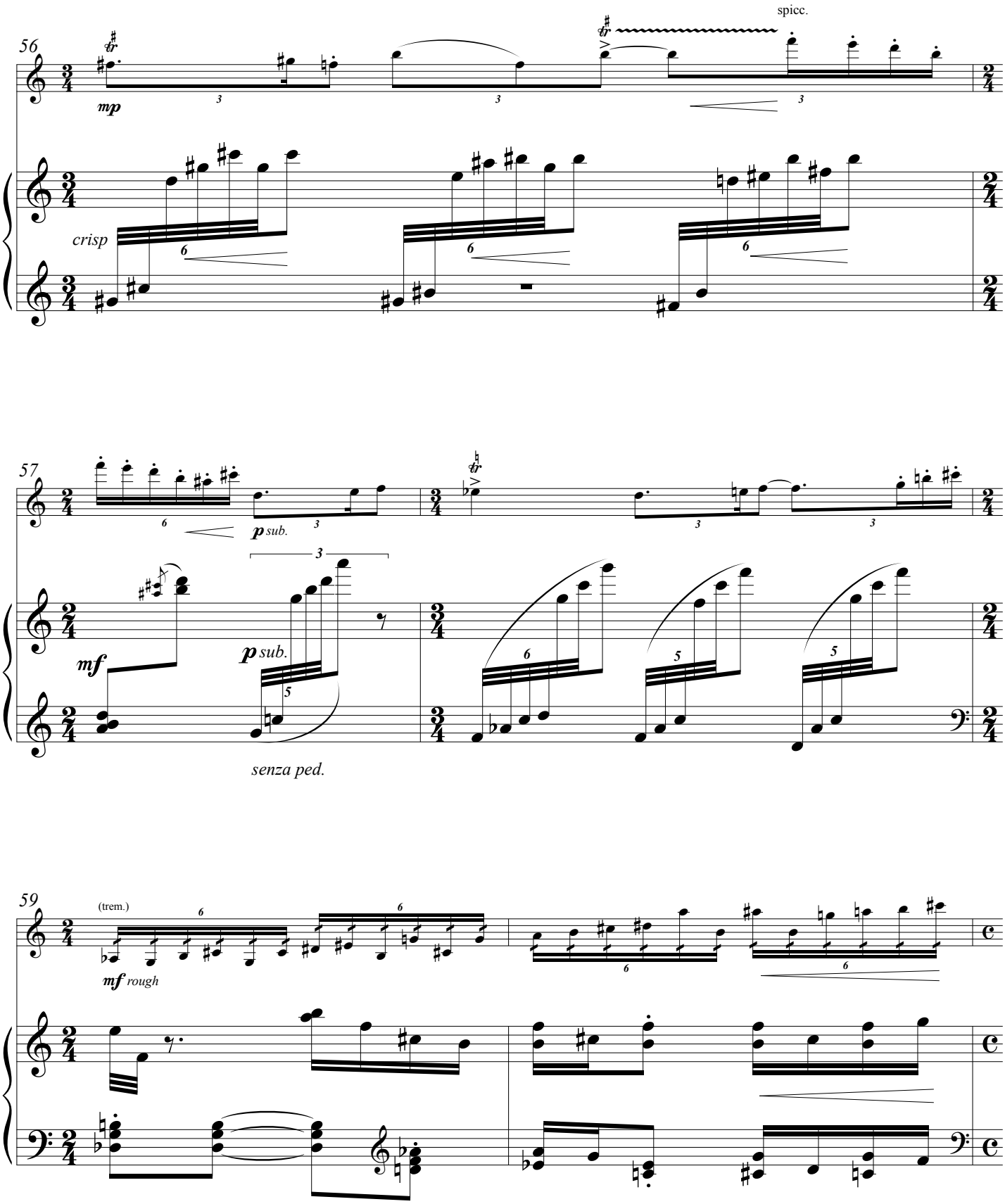
35

semi-stacc.

fff


Tempo I ♩ = c. 108
37
sul pont.
p
poco rit.
a tempo
mp
3
41
D
pizz. (ord.)
mf
mp
p
45
poco
arco
mp
sul pont.
ord.
sul pont.


48
ord.
sul pont.
E
ord.
sul pont.
ord.
senza vib.
accel.
a tempo
mp
51
ord.
jeté
ord.
poco rit.
mp
53
poco
mf
a tempo
F
p


56
spicc.
mp
crisp
57
p sub.
mf
p sub.
senza ped.
59
(trem.)
mf rough

G

61

fp

ff

Con brio ♩ = c. 120

62

semi-stacc.

fff

Cadenza II ♩ = c. 108

63

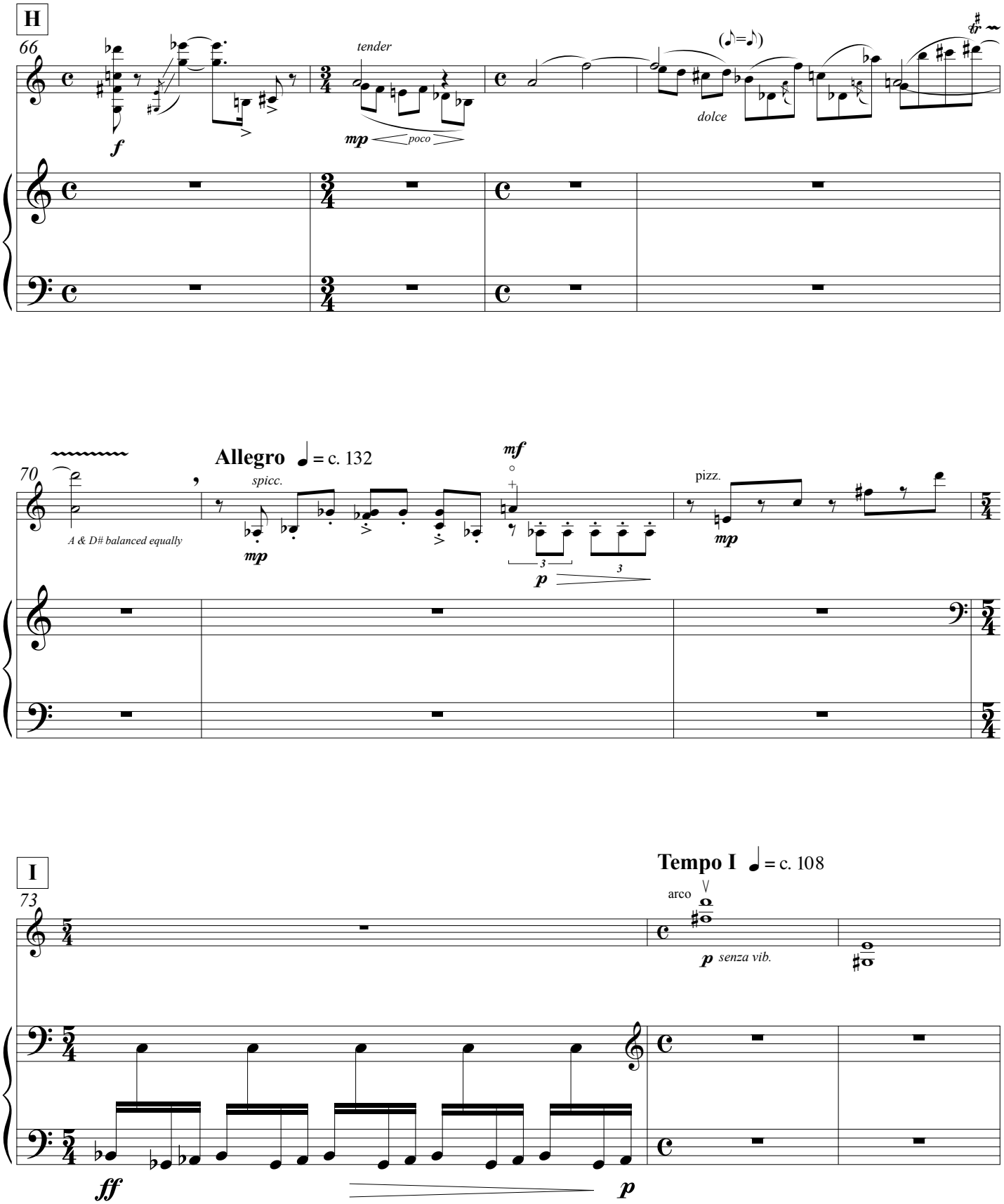
ff

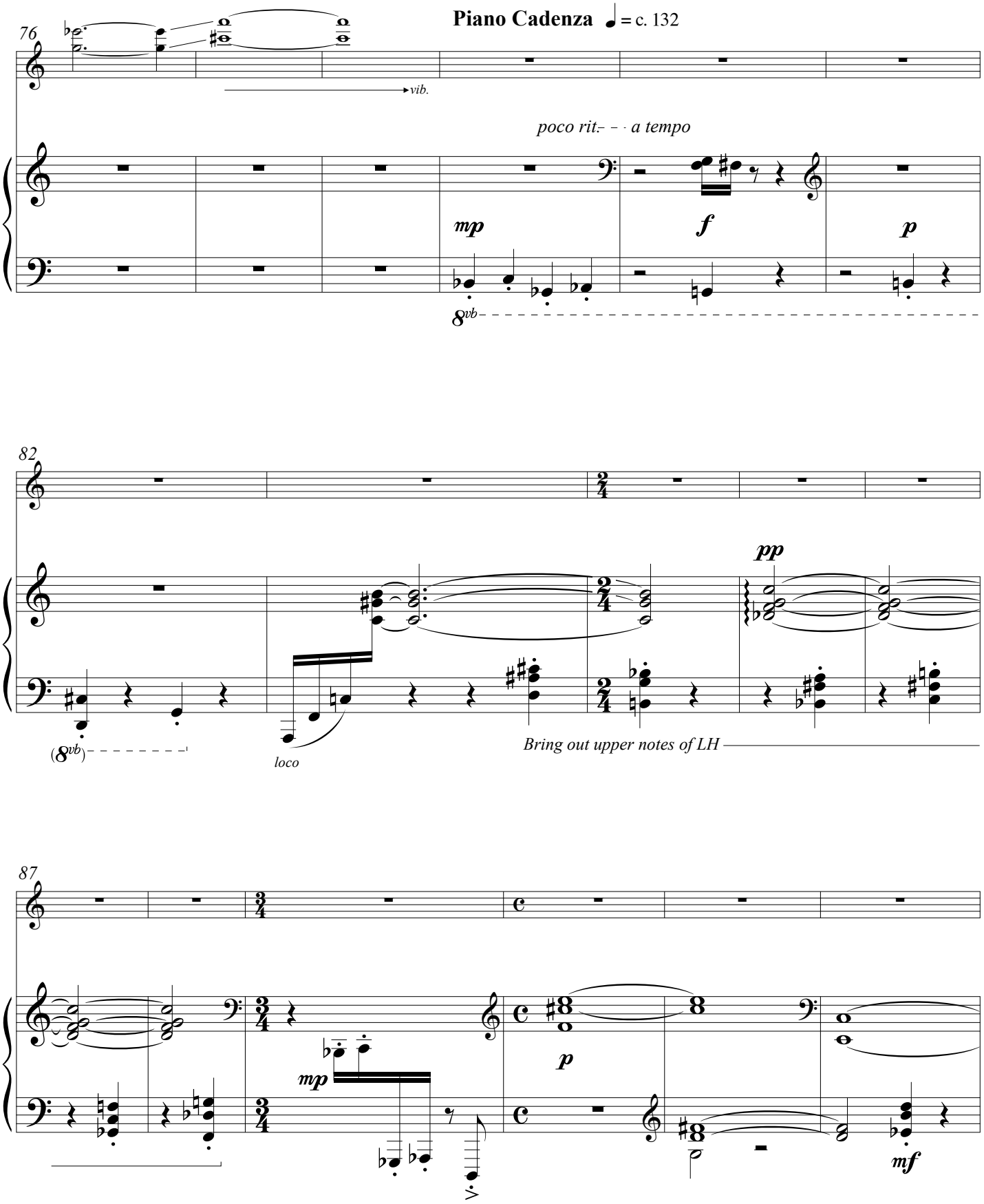
allarg. - - - - - - - - - *a tempo*

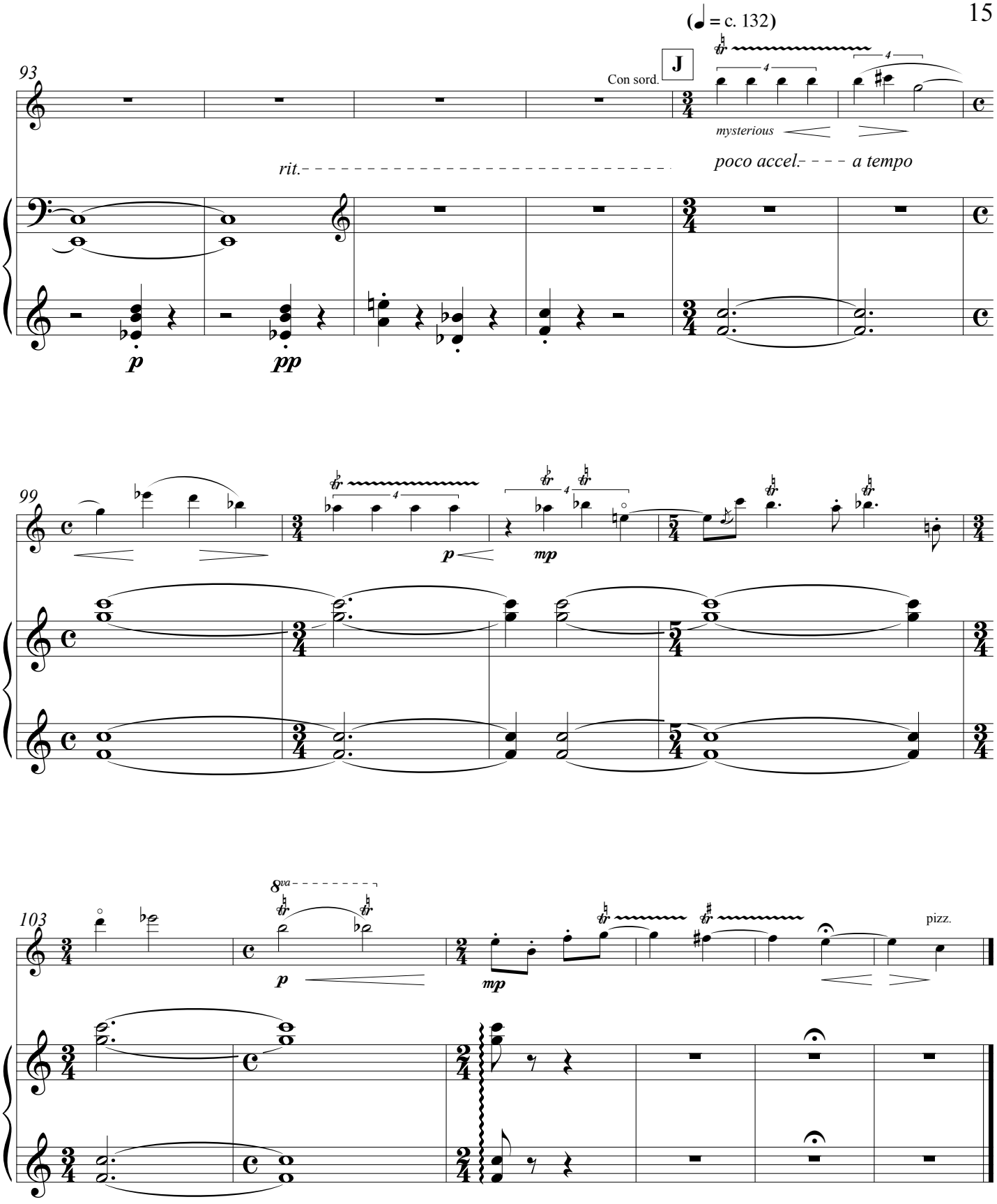
sfzp

fff

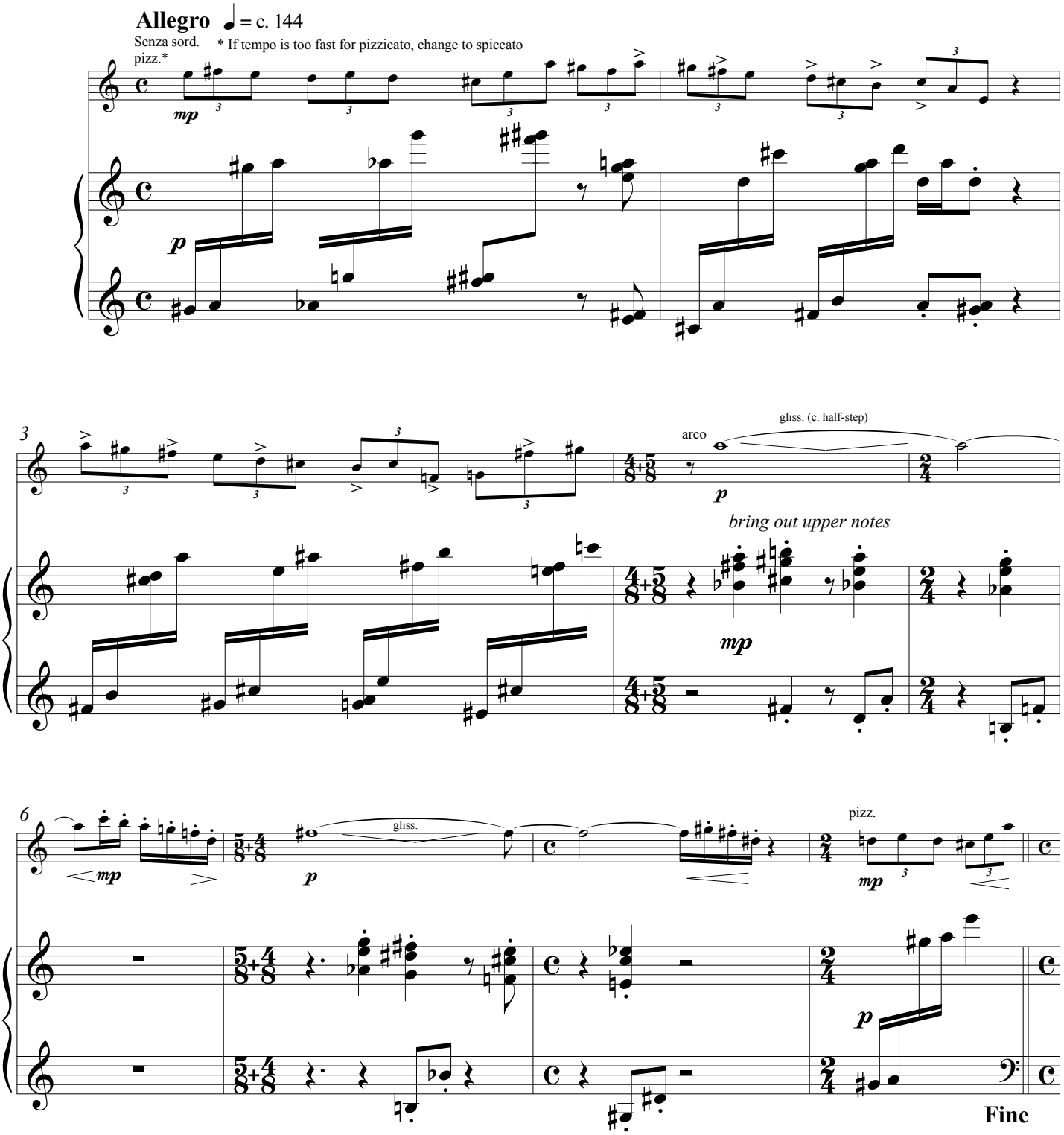
8vb

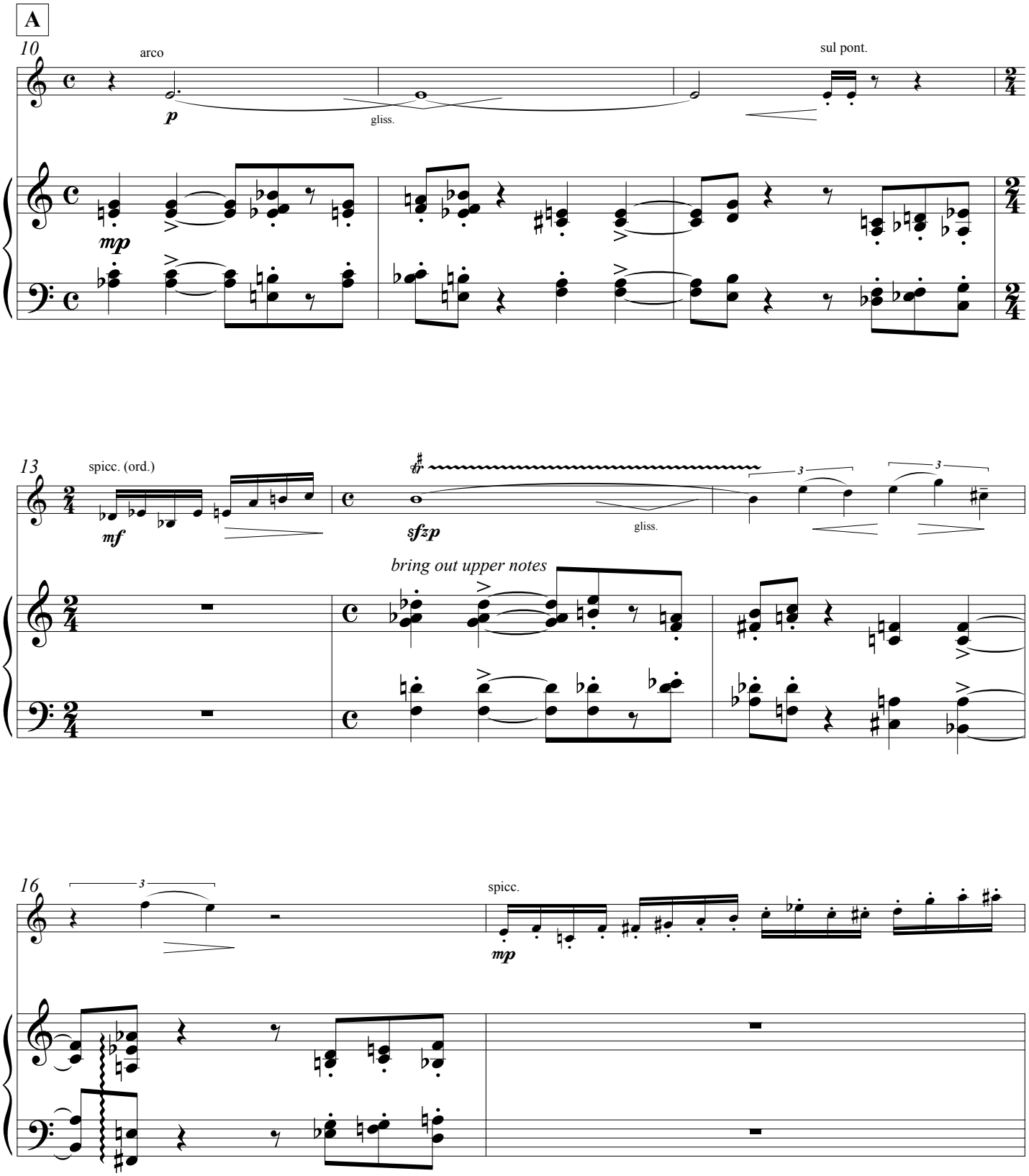

H
66
tender
mp
poco
(♪=♪)
dolce
70
A & D# balanced equally
Allegro ♩= c. 132
spicc.
mp
mf
p
pizz.
mp
I
73
Tempo I ♩= c. 108
arco
p senza vib.
ff
p

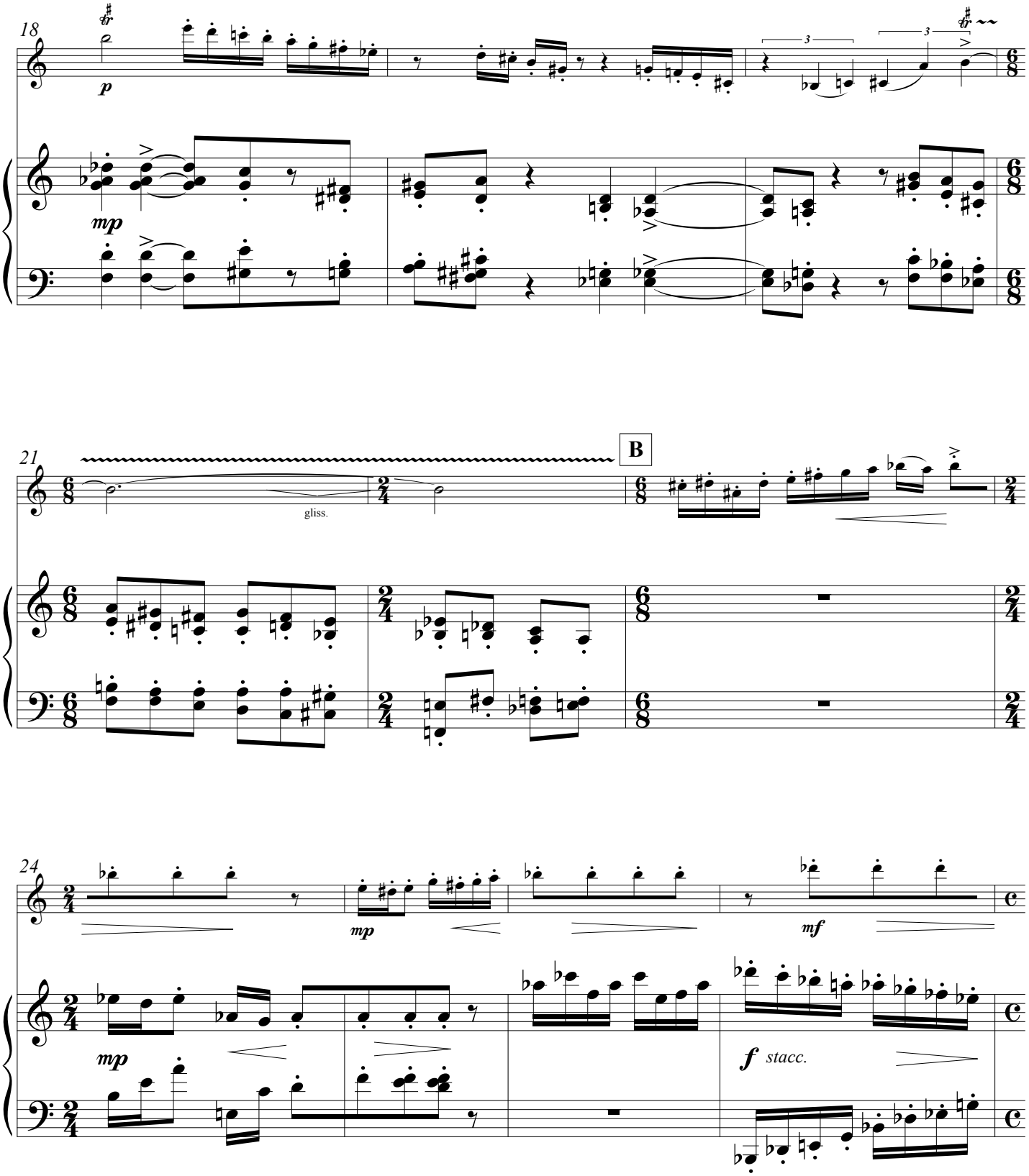

Piano Cadenza ♩ = c. 132
76
vib.
poco rit. - - - a tempo
mp
f
p
8vb
82
pp
(8vb)
loco
Bring out upper notes of LH
87
mp
p
mf

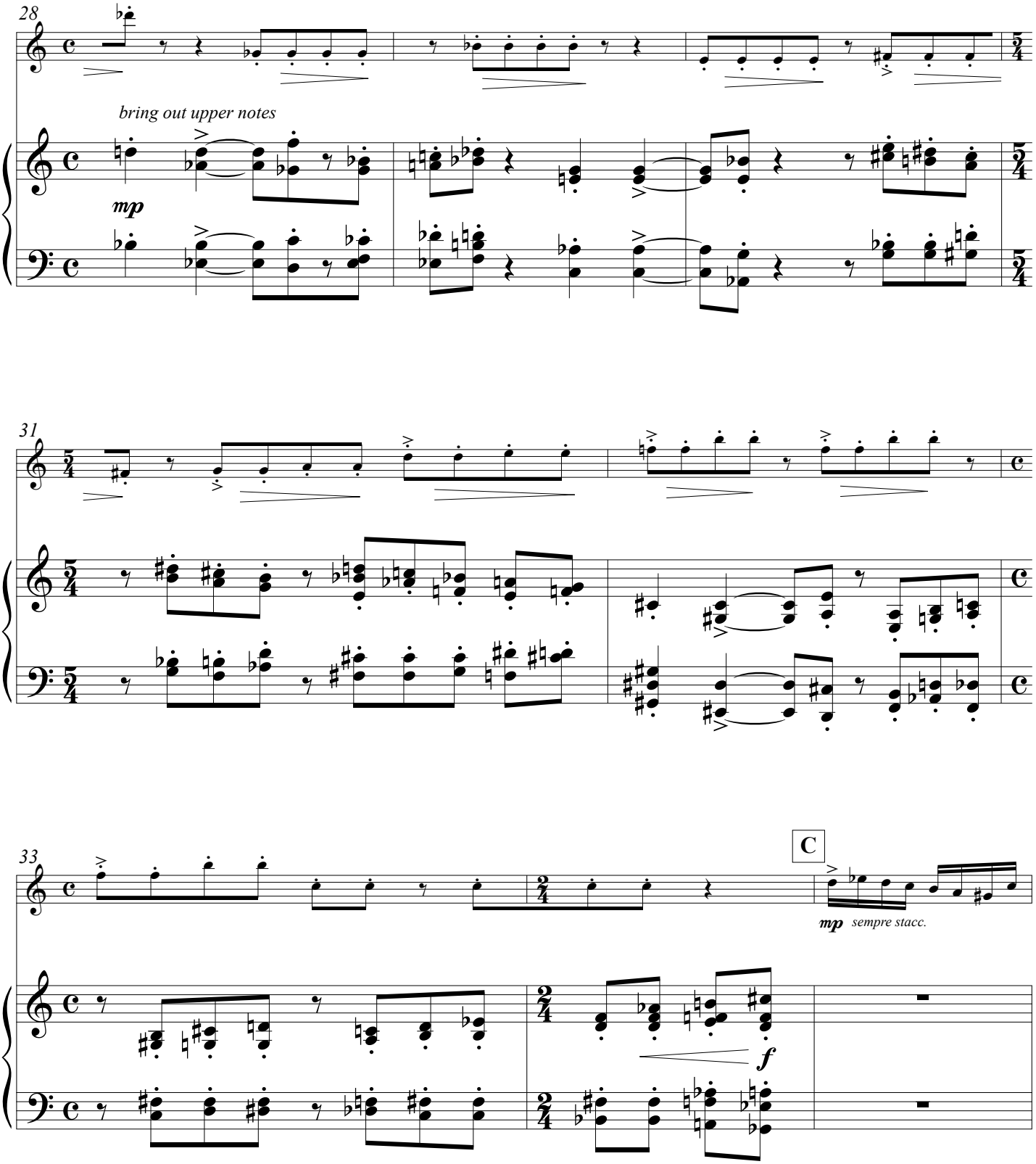

(♩ = c. 132)
93
Con sord.
J
mysterious
rit.
poco accel.
a tempo
p
pp
99
p
mp
103
8va
p
mp
pizz.

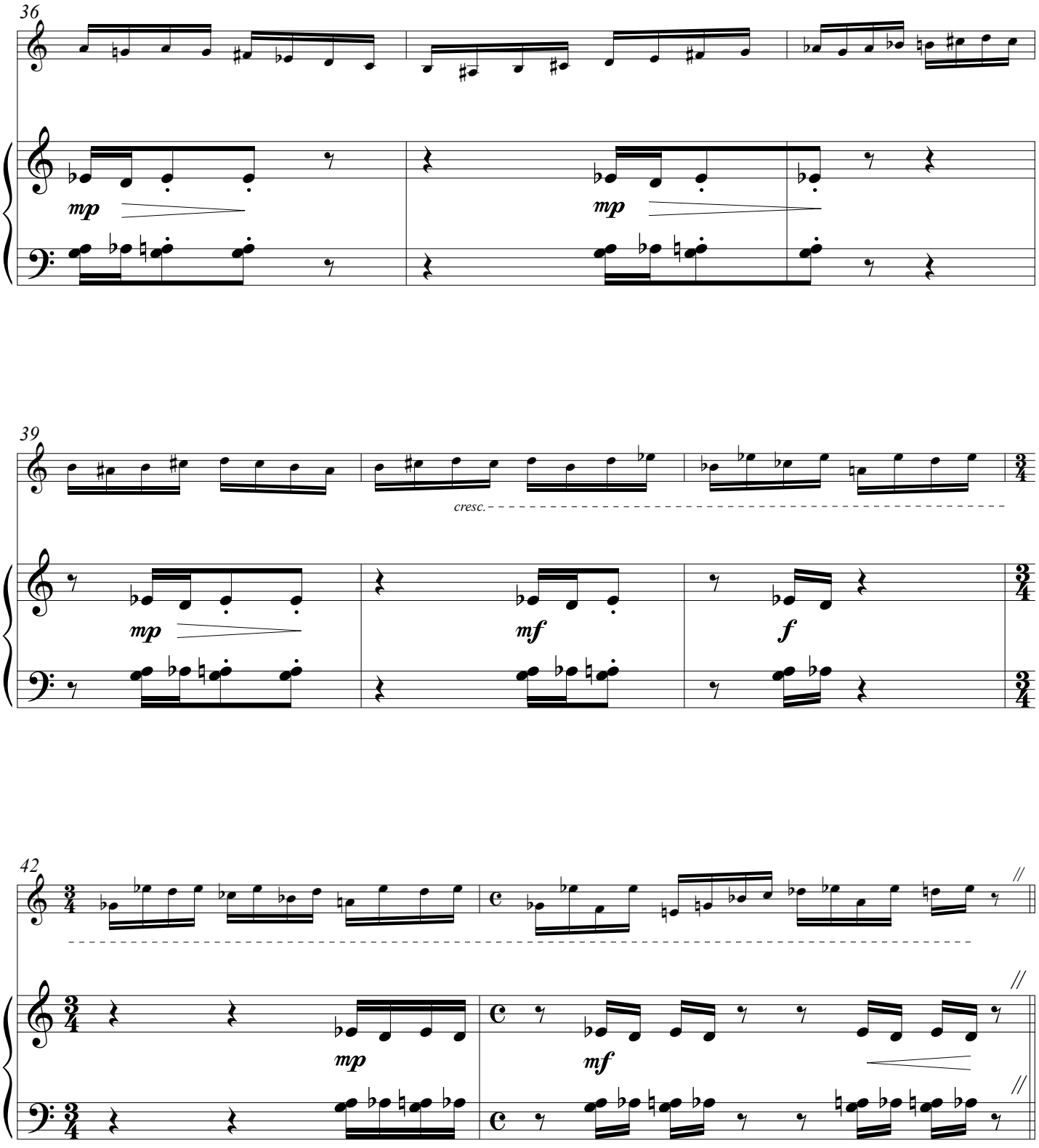
II.


Allegro ♩ = c. 144
Senza sord.
pizz.*
* If tempo is too fast for pizzicato, change to spiccato
mp
p
3
arco
gliss. (c. half-step)
bring out upper notes
mp
6
gliss.
p
pizz.
mp
p
Fine

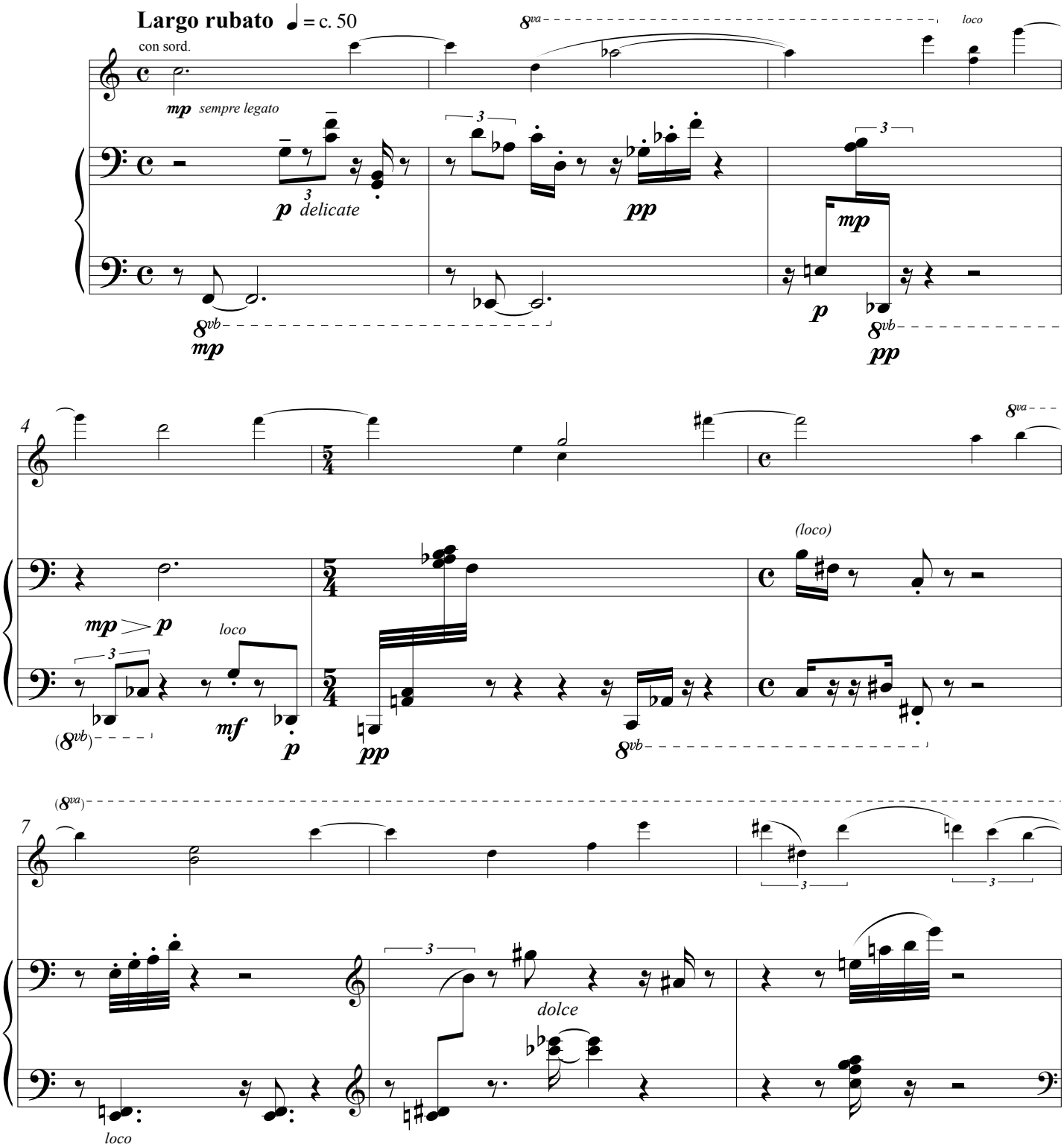

A
10
arco
p
gliss.
sul pont.
mp
13
spicc. (ord.)
mf
sfzp
gliss.
bring out upper notes
16
spicc.
mp

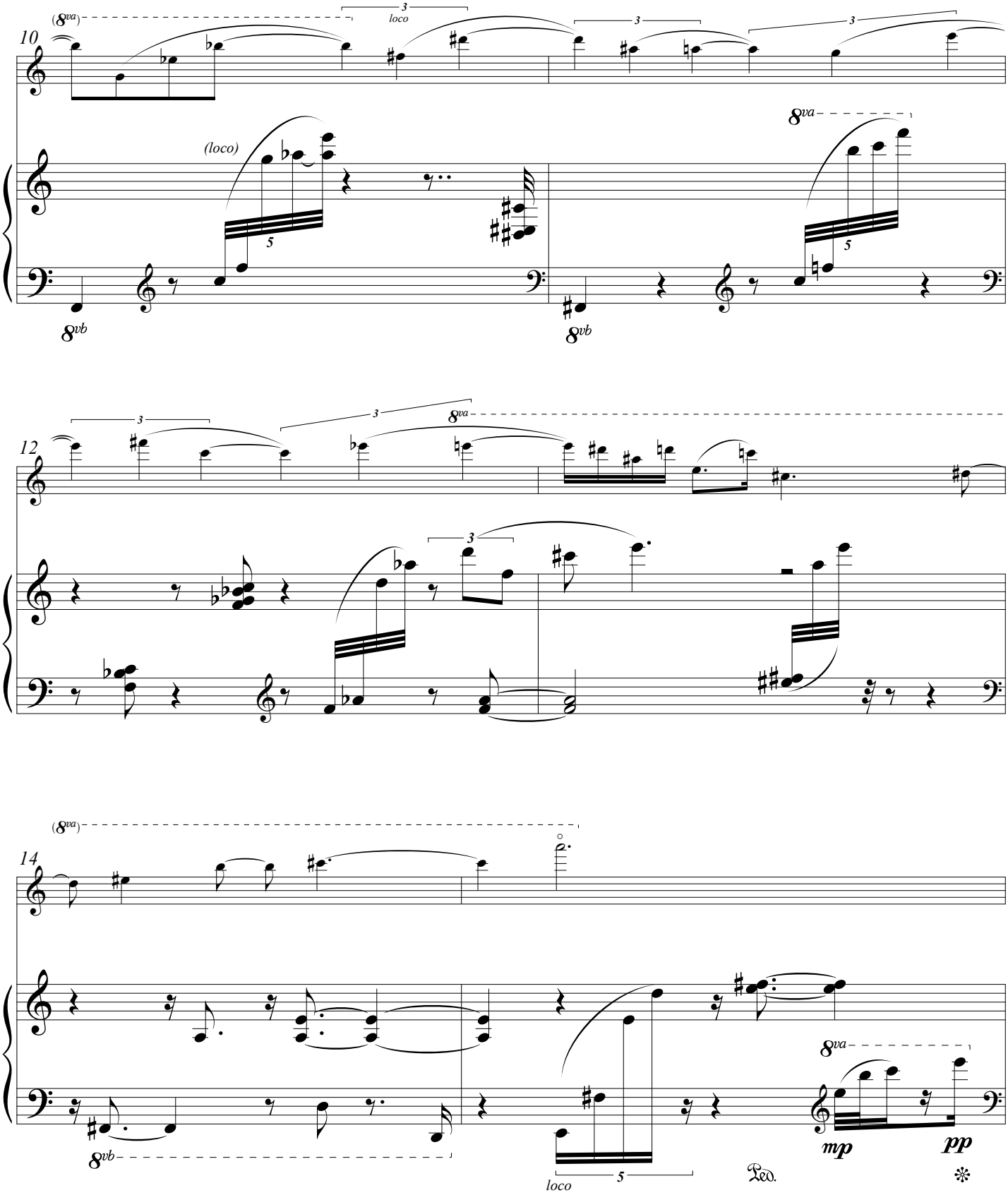

18
p
mp
21
gliss.
B
24
mp
mf
mp
f stacc.

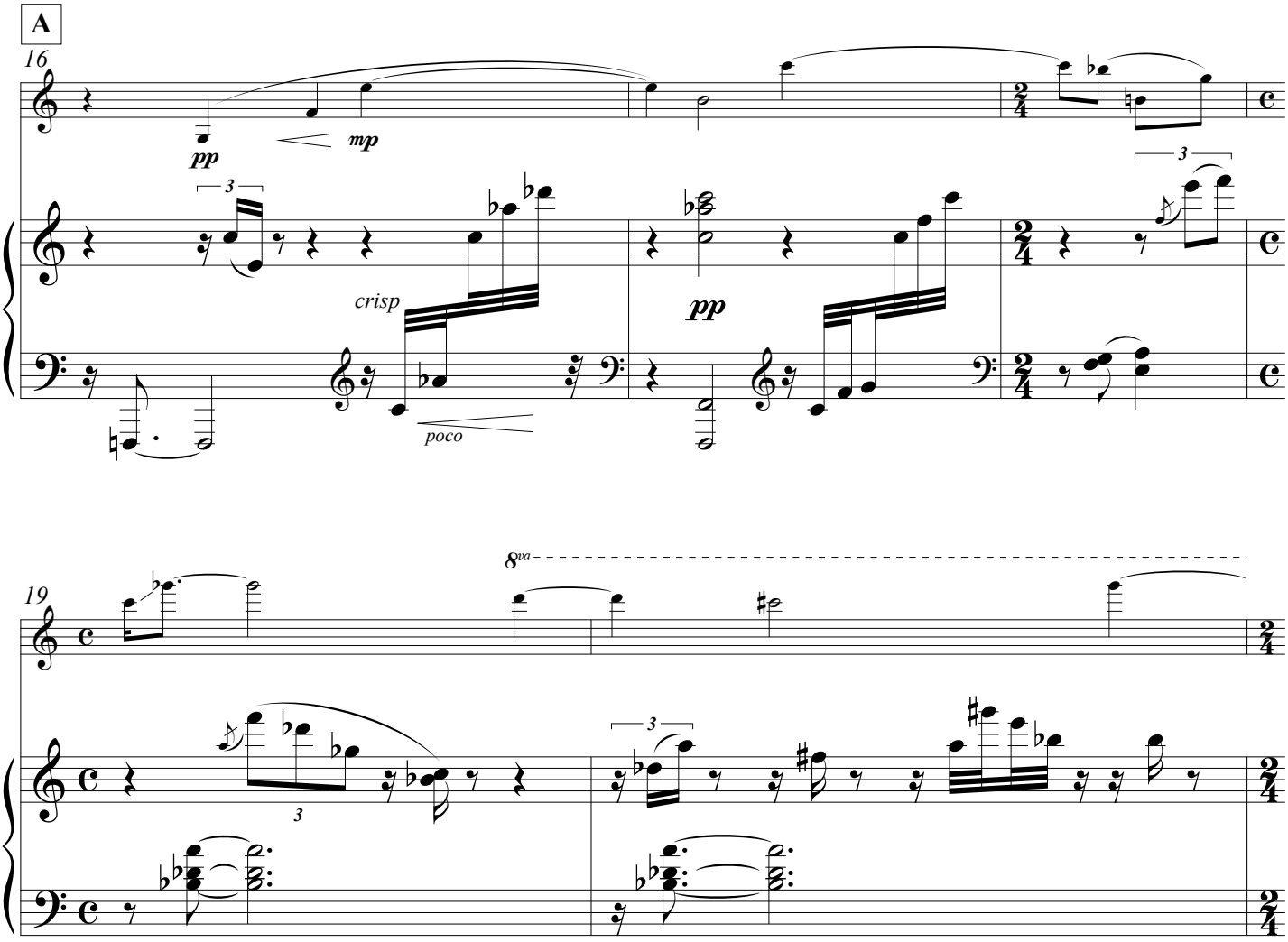

28
bring out upper notes
mp
31
33
C
mp sempre stacc.
f

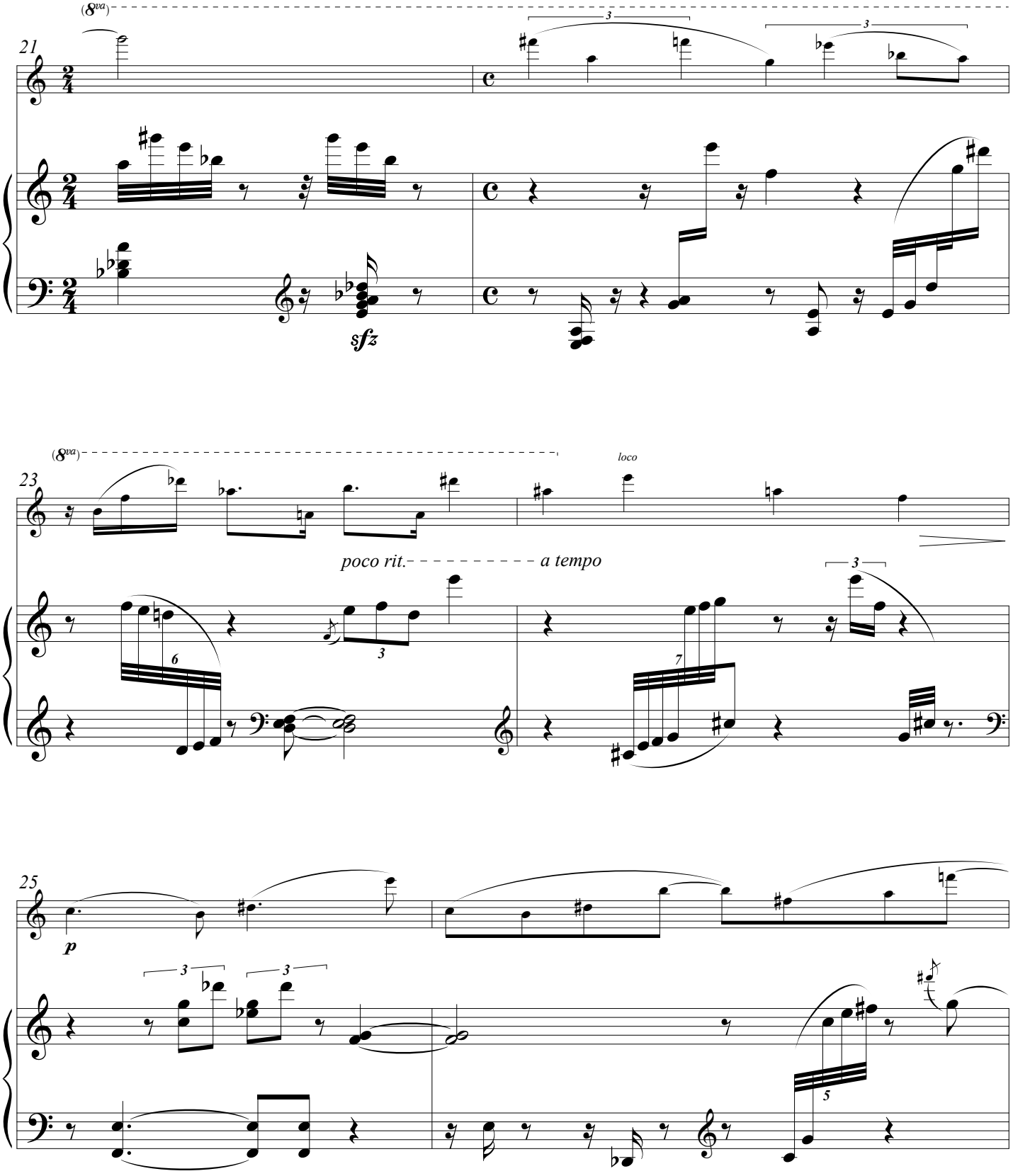

36
mp
mp
39
cresc.
mp
mf
f
42
mp
mf
D.C. al Fine

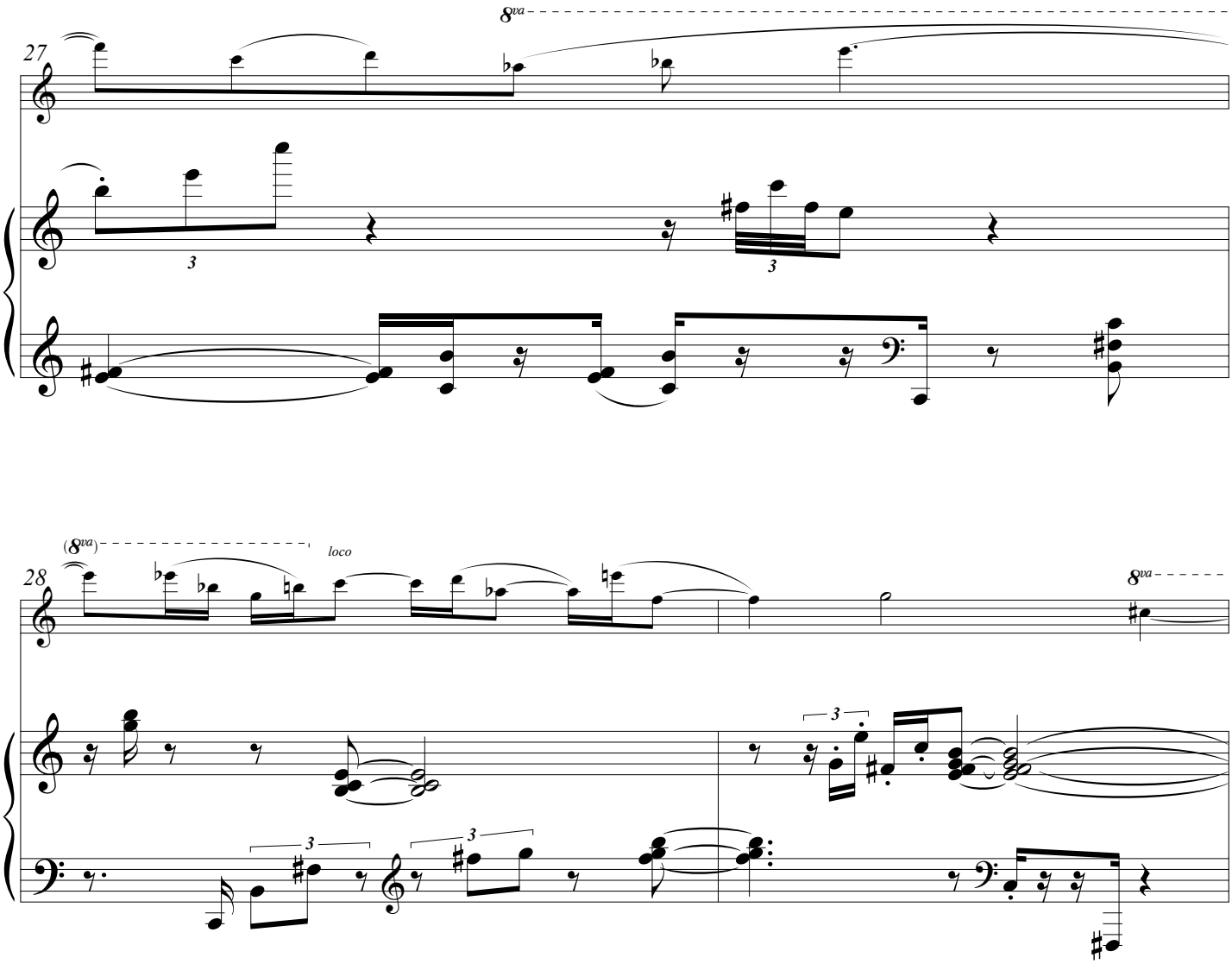
III. Cosmic Musing

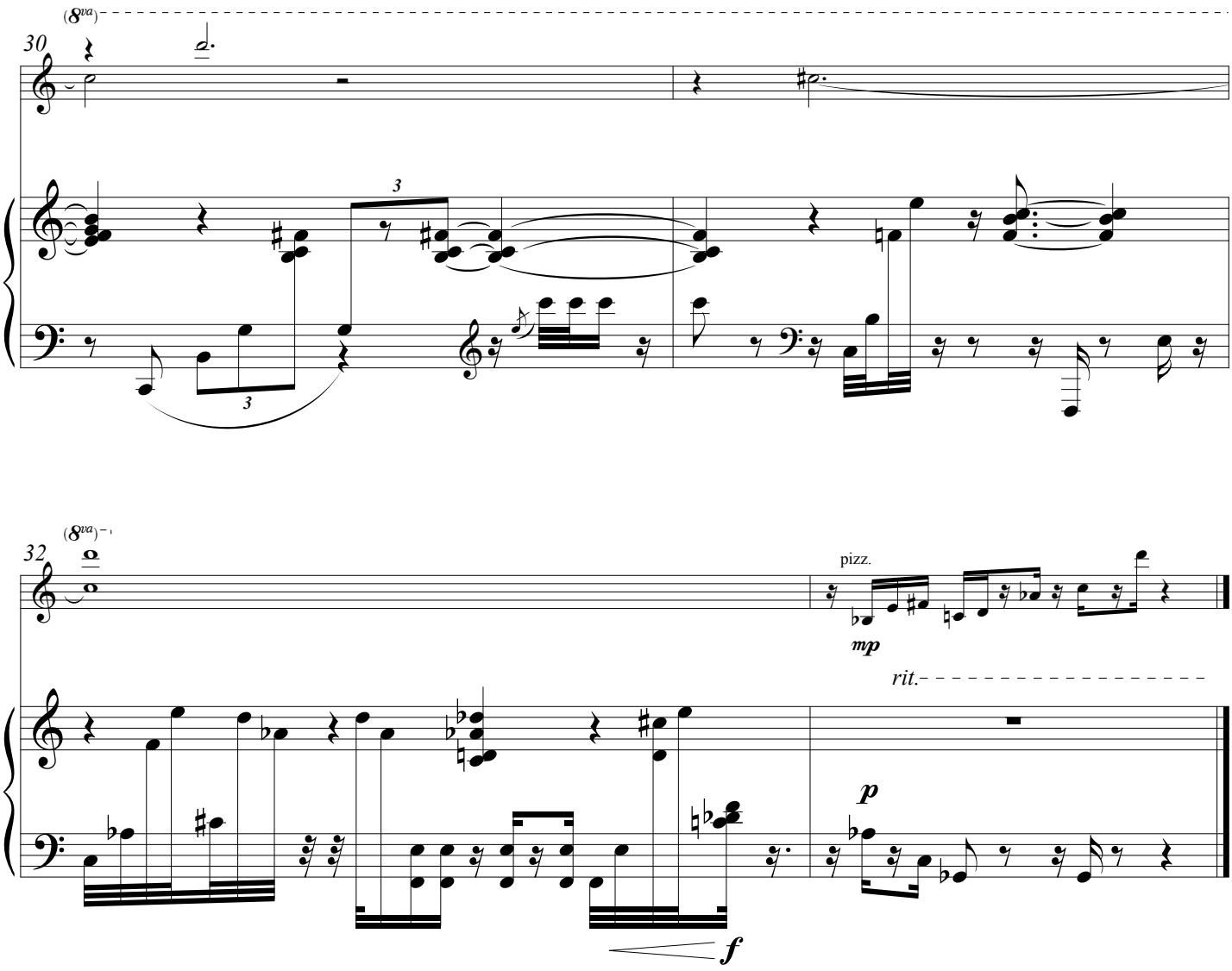



10
(8va)
3
loco
(loco)
8va
8vb
12
14
mp
pp
Ped.

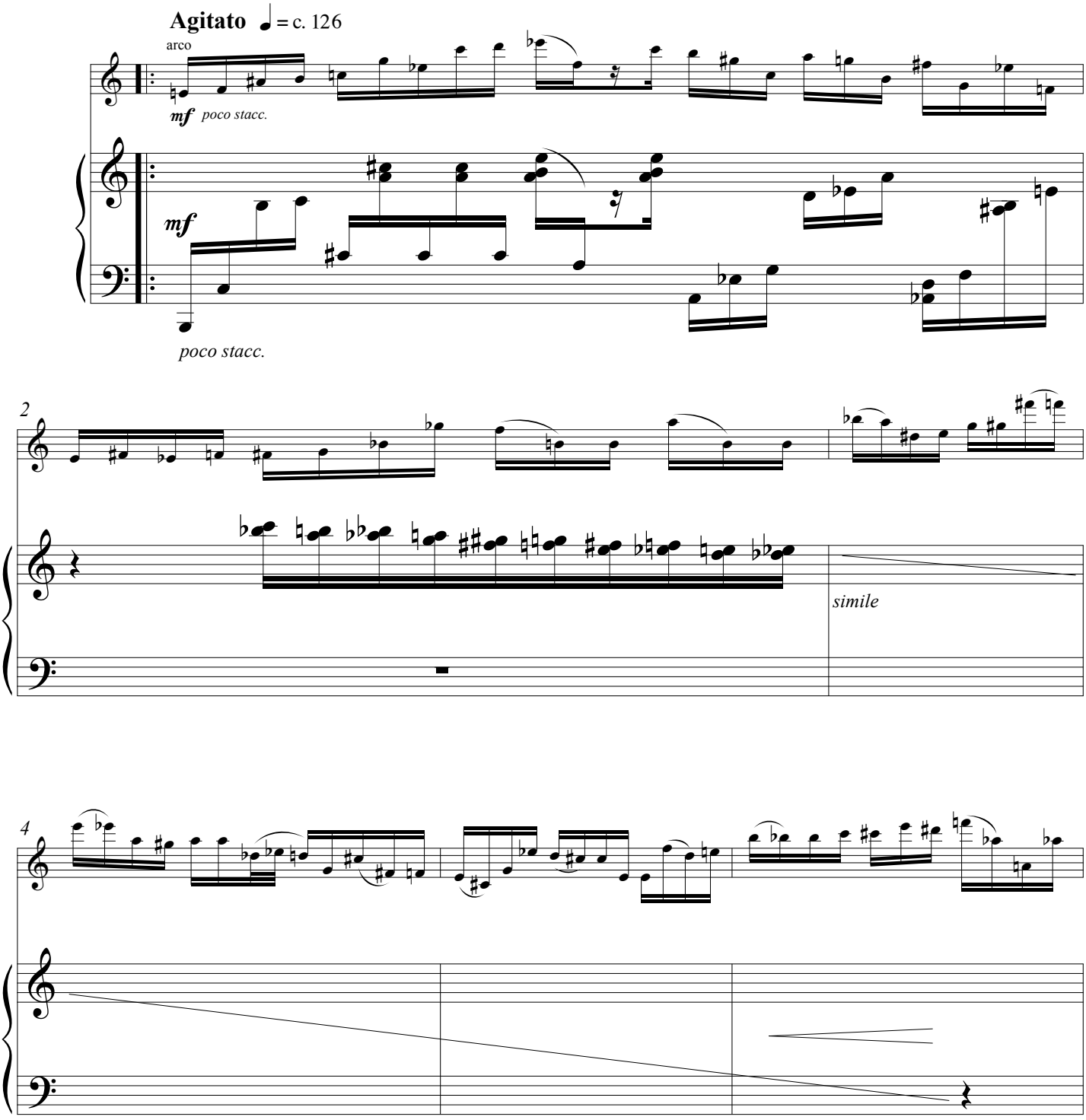

A
16
pp
mp
3
crisp
poco
pp
3
19
8va
3
3

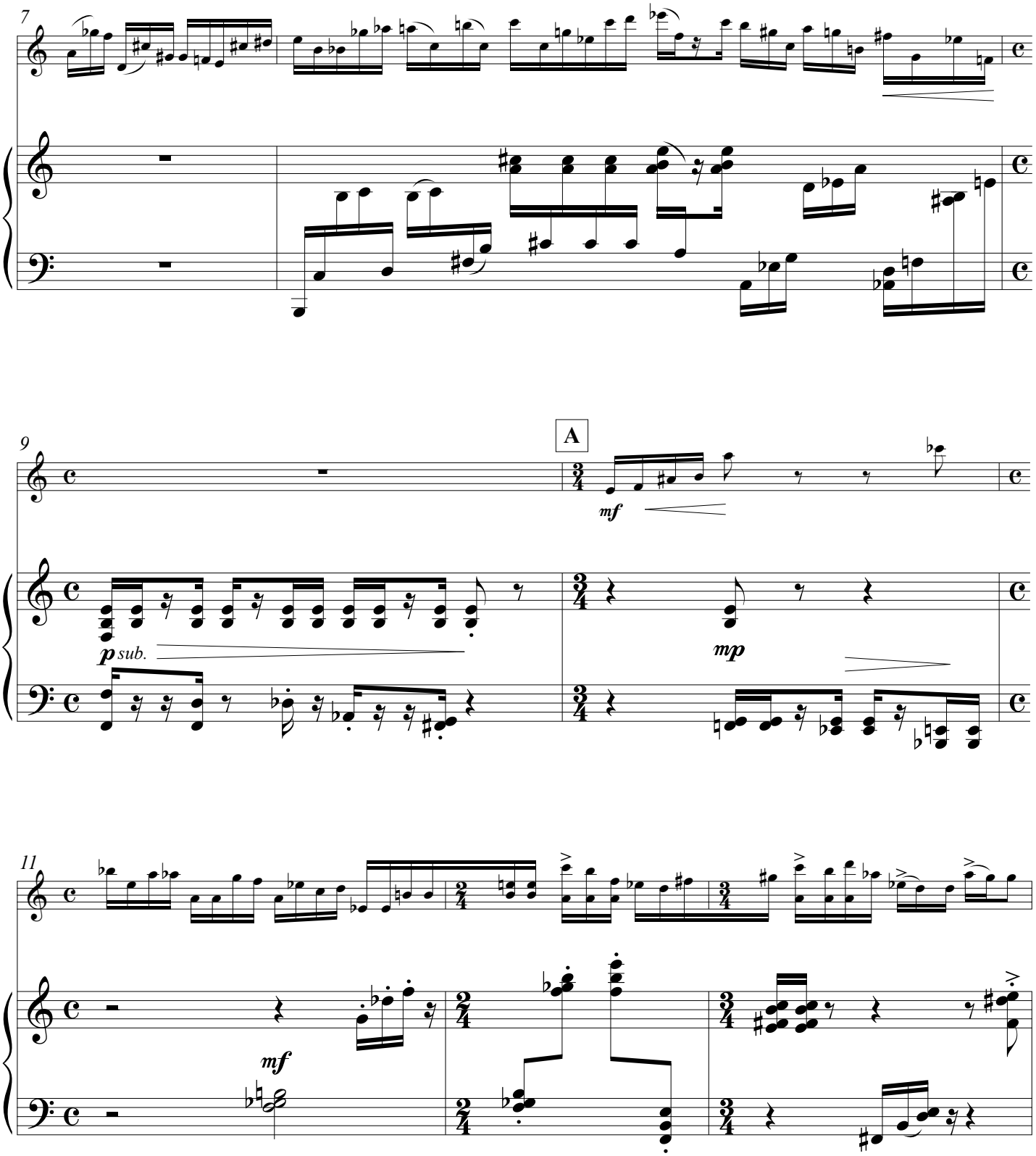

(8va)
21
3
3
sfz
(8va)
23
loco
poco rit.
a tempo
3
6
3
7
25
p
3
3
5

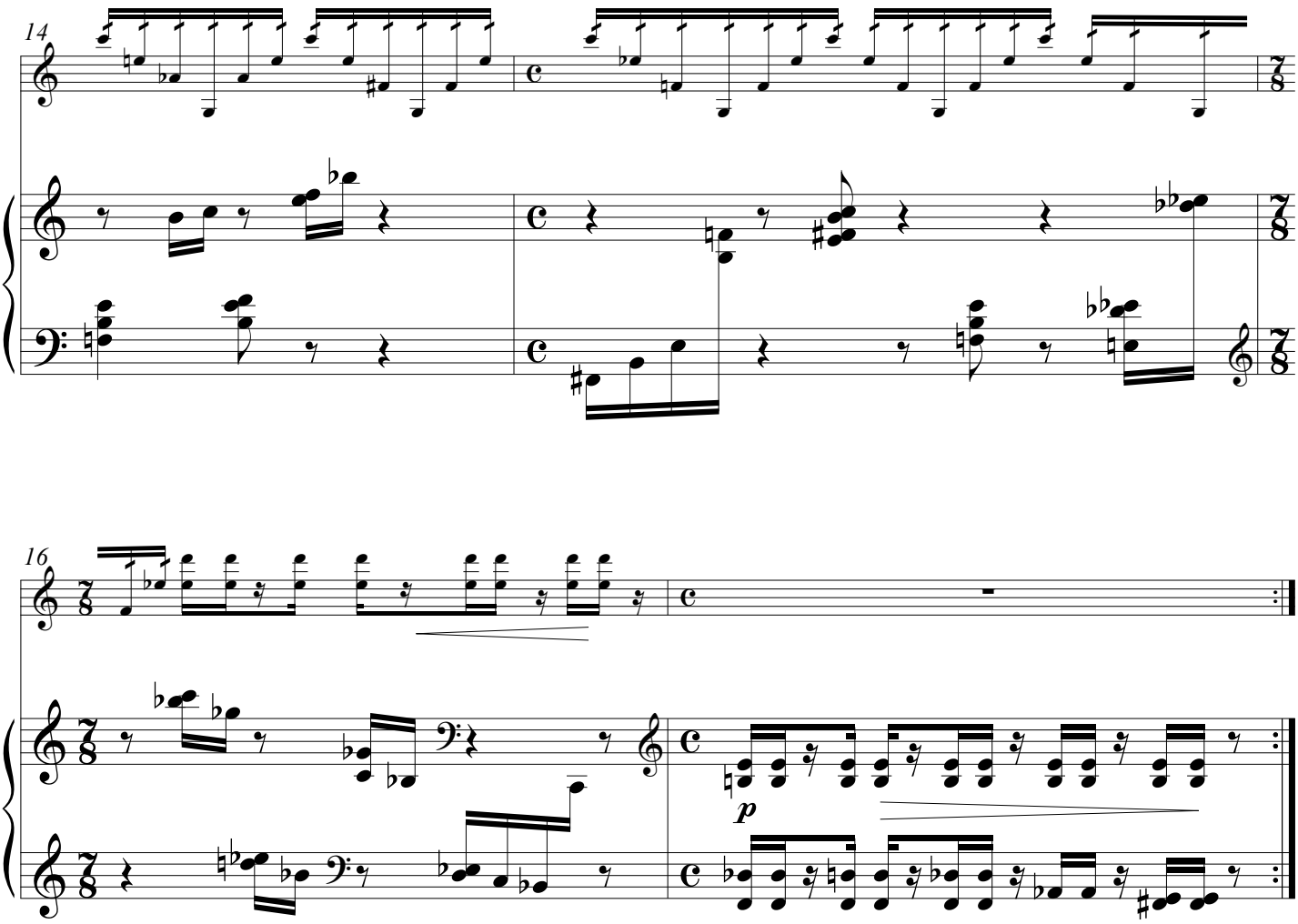

8va
27
3
3
(8va)
loco
28
8va
3
3
3


(8va)
30
3
3
(8va)
32
pizz.
mp
rit.
p
f

IV.




7
9
A
mf
p sub.
mp
11
mf


14
16
p

B

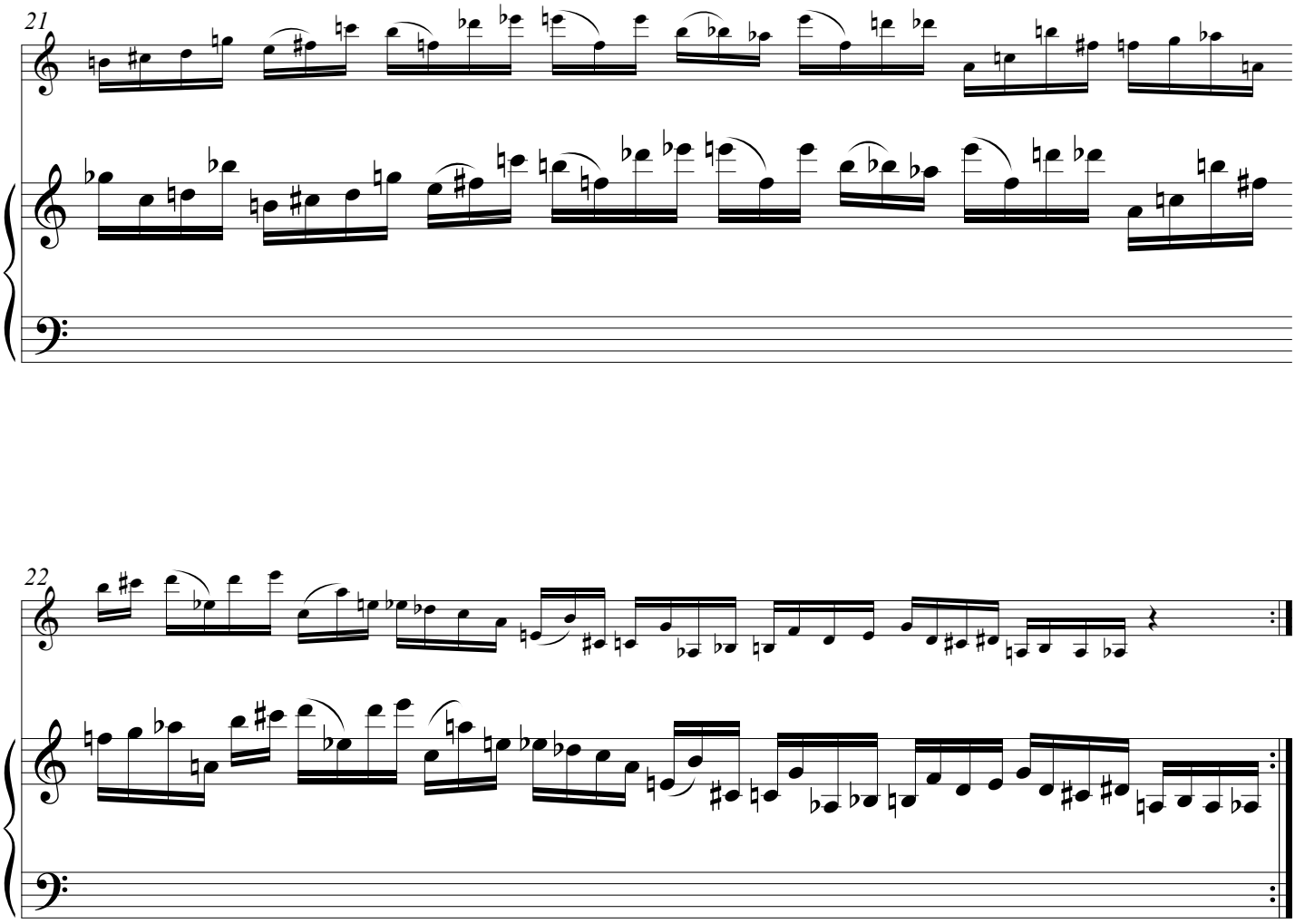
18

mp (first time) *sempre poco a poco dim.*

mp (first time) *sempre poco a poco dim.*

19

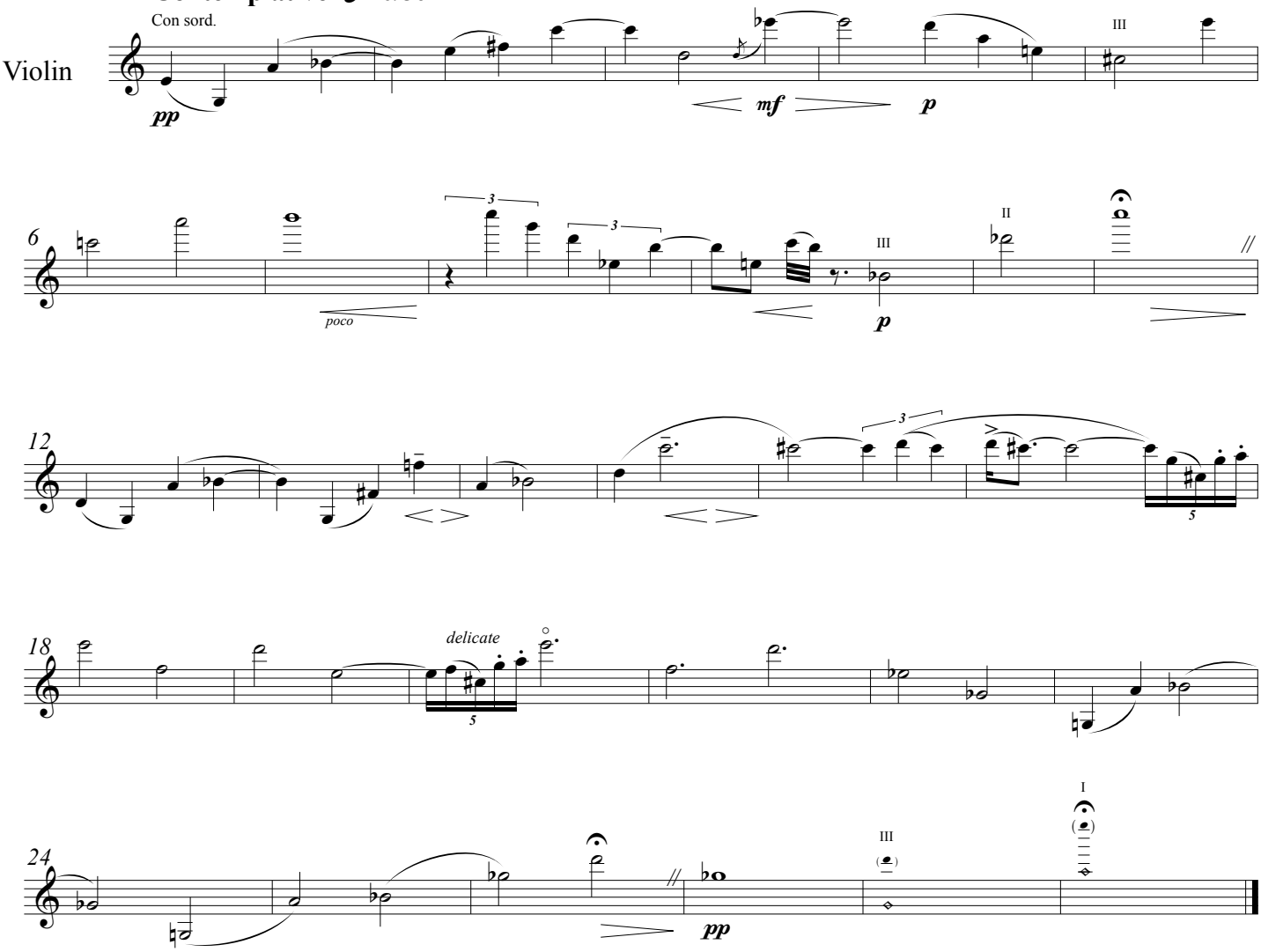
20



Play three times, diminuendo throughout to nothing.
After short pause, begin V.

V.

(Piano tacet)

Contemplative ♩ = c. 50

Violin