BALLET
for
CELLO
and
ORCHESTRA

I. Walking
II. Working
III. Wondering

For
Hannah Holman

Rebecca Burkhardt

(2025)

Composer's Note

When cellist Hannah Holman asked me to write a concerto for her, I asked what was important about where she lived and worked. I wanted this piece to reflect her life and the lives of other women in those places. The locales she thought were most important to her life were: a suburb near Detroit where she grew up, Iowa where she lived, raised her son and still works, and New York City where she currently resides and plays in the NYC Ballet. *Ballet for Cello and Orchestra* is a tribute to her and to those like her who walk, dance, survive, fail, create, toil and aspire to achieve wonderful things. Sometimes we take on this dance alone, and sometimes with a partner or a community. The three movements reflect the sounds, landscapes and essences of Iowa, Detroit, and New York City.

Movement I, Walking, conjures the cry of indigenous ancestors who walked the plains of this country, the migration of settlers, the harshness of conflict between peoples and the starkness of a life enveloped by wilderness and winter.

Movement II, Working, begins with a day breaking into the howl of a factory whistle. Motives of the Motown sound mix with the low grind of factory mechanisms and end in a continuously rising treble shout between the cello and the orchestra.

Movement III, Wondering, continues from movement II with an exploration of dance in the performance wonderland of Manhattan. The sounds of early Harlem and Puerto Rican rhythms combine with classical balletic melodies to invoke the euphoria of creative success, the exasperation of inequity and failure, and a hope and wonder for what might come next.

Duration: approximately 30 minutes

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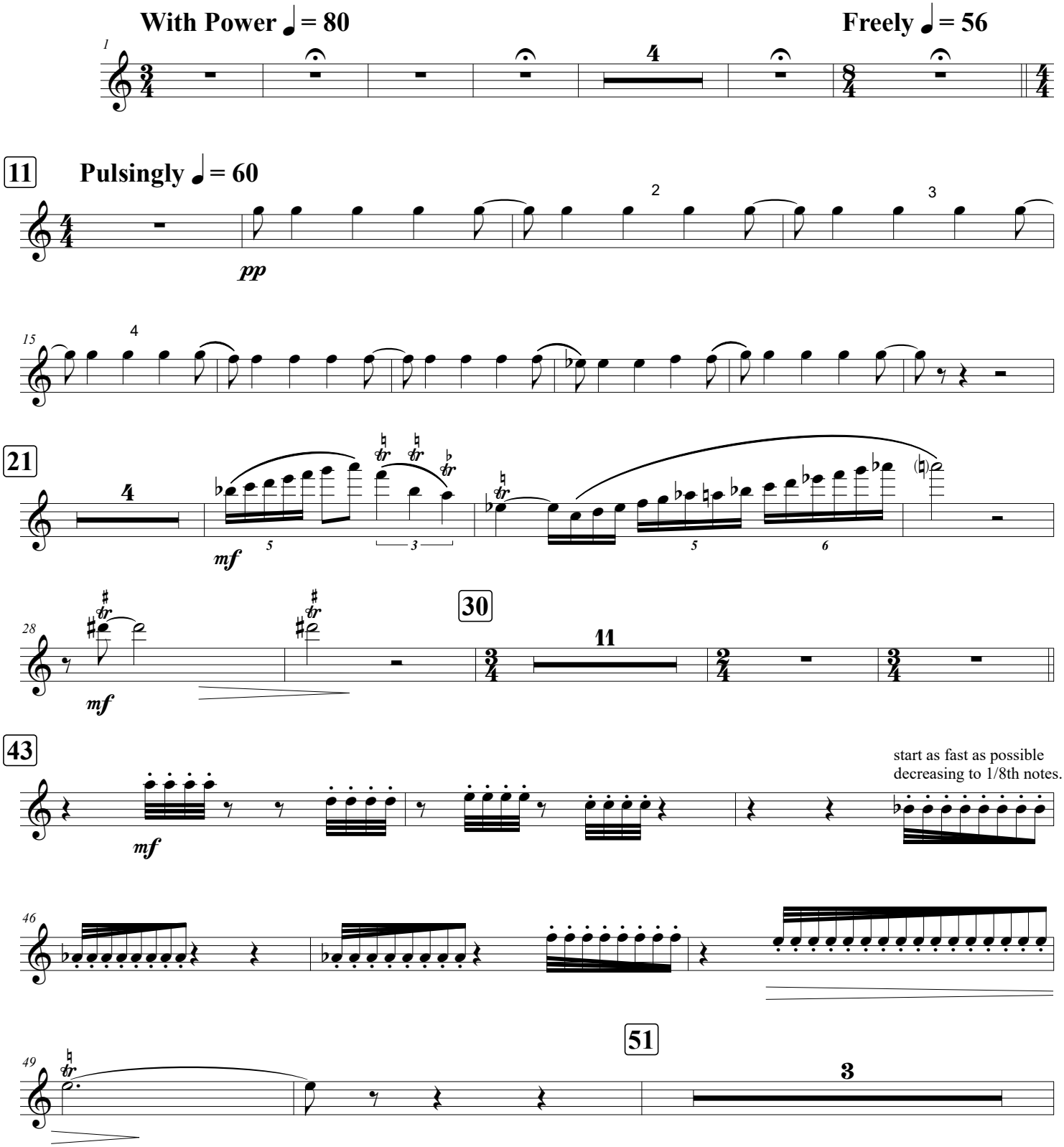
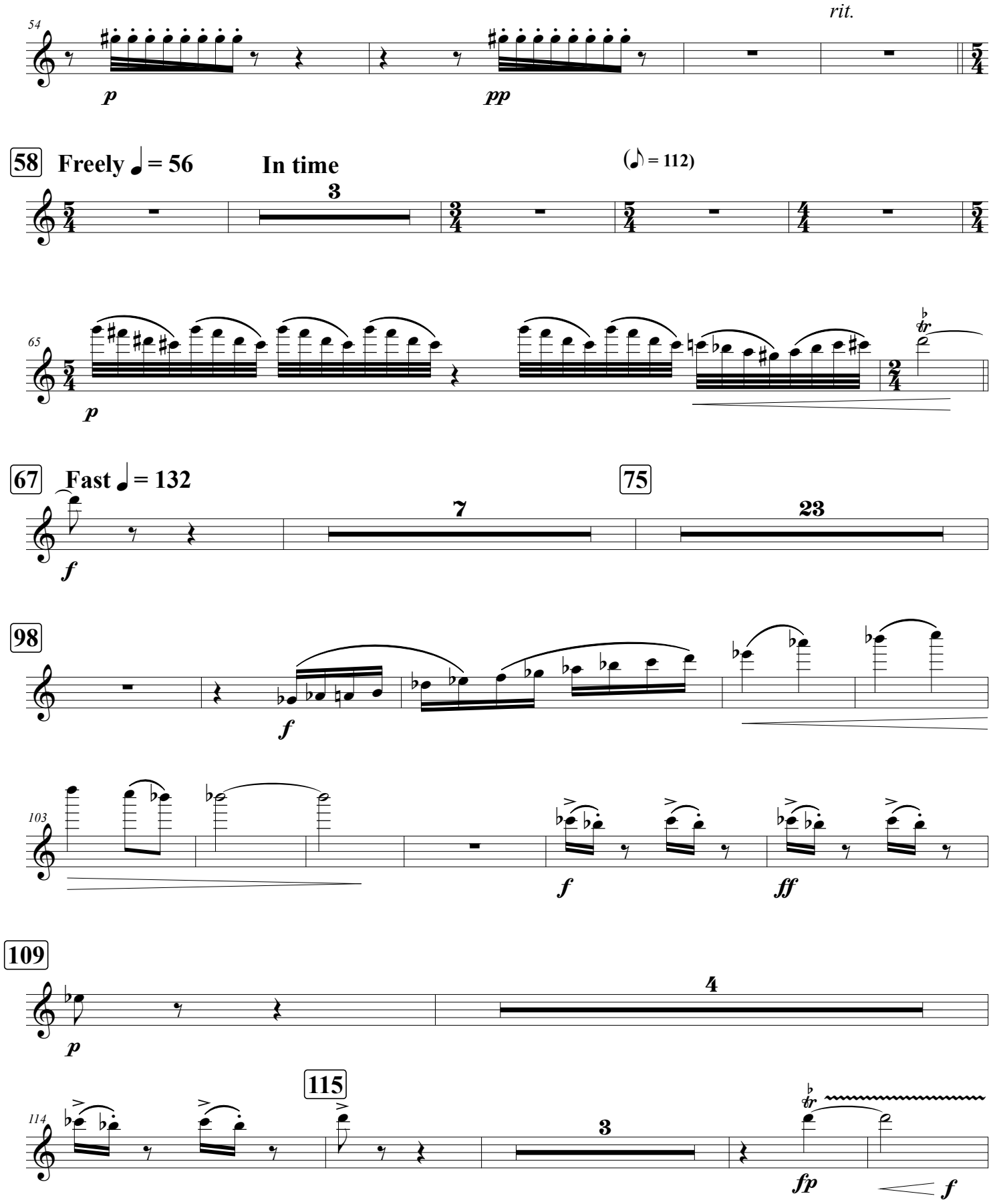
Ballet for Cello and Orchestra

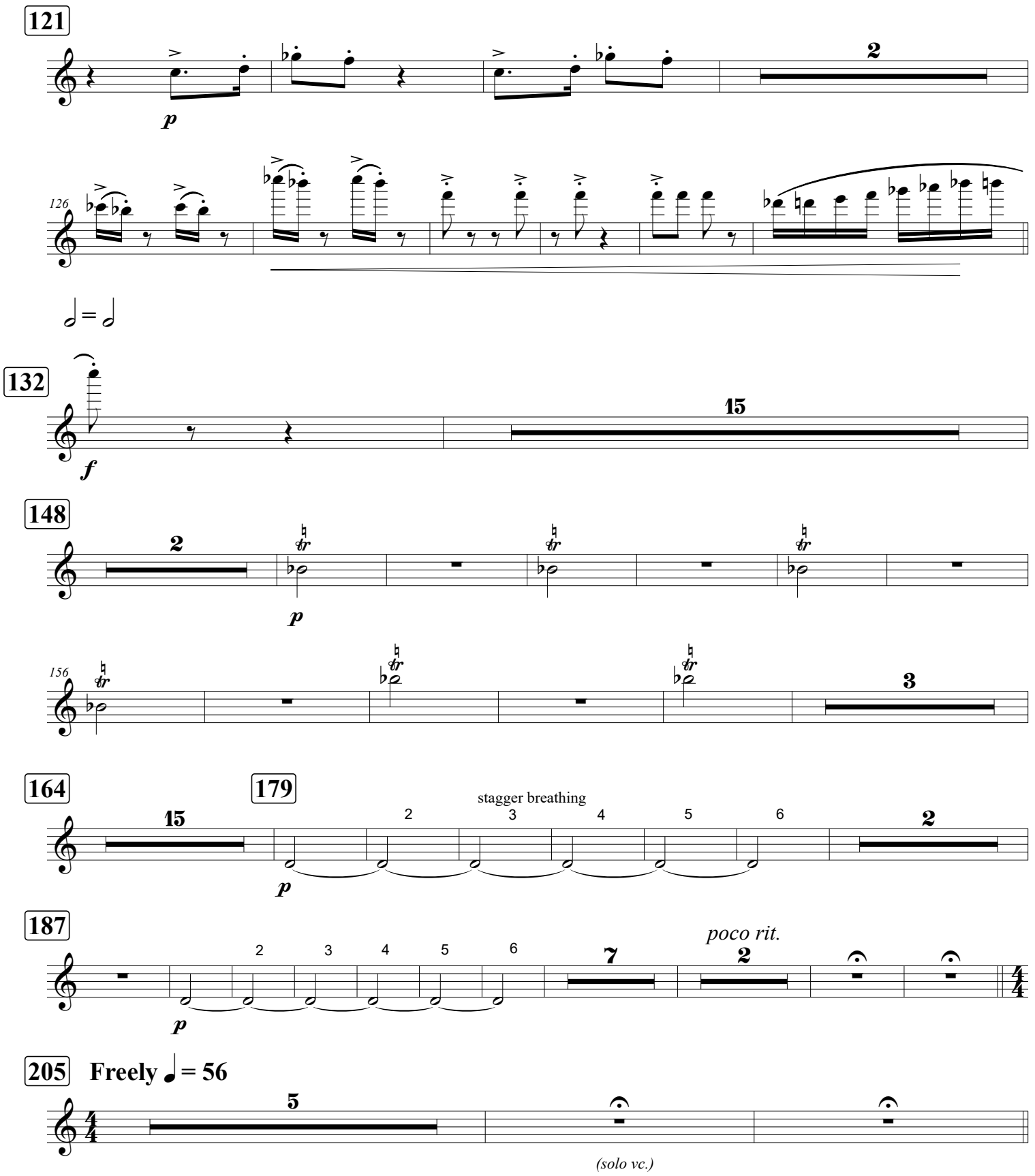
I. Walking

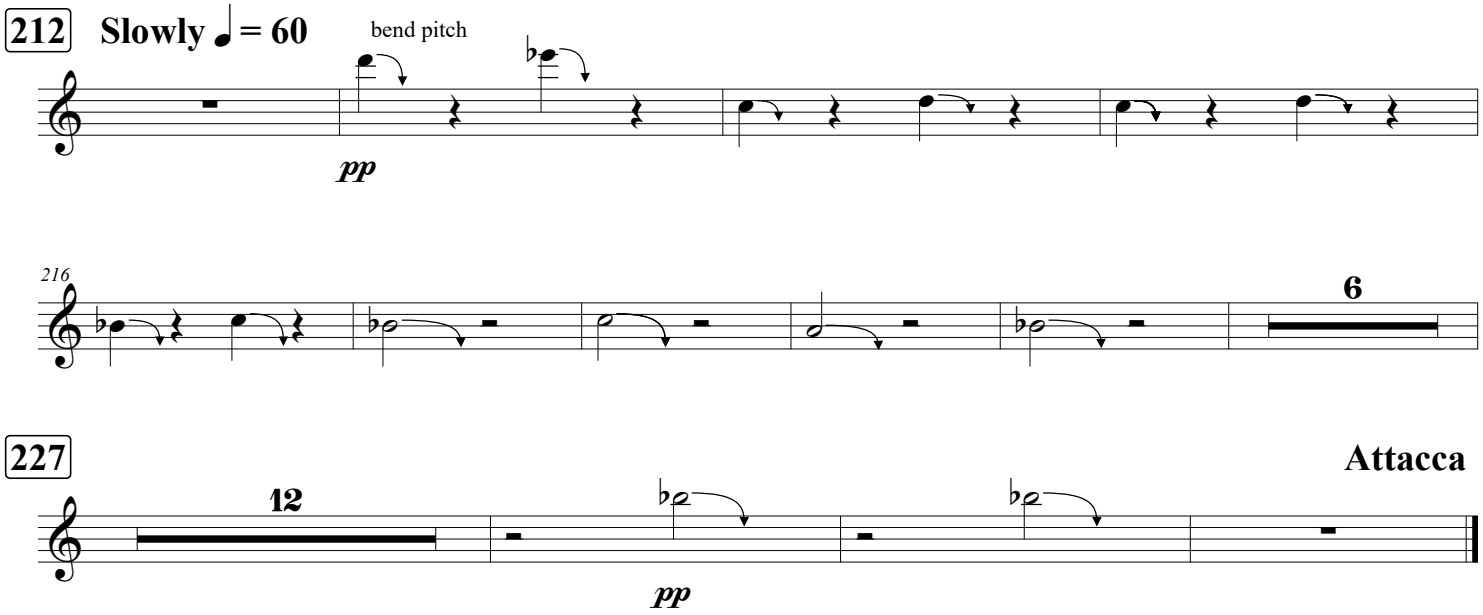
Flute 1

Rebecca Burkhardt (2025)

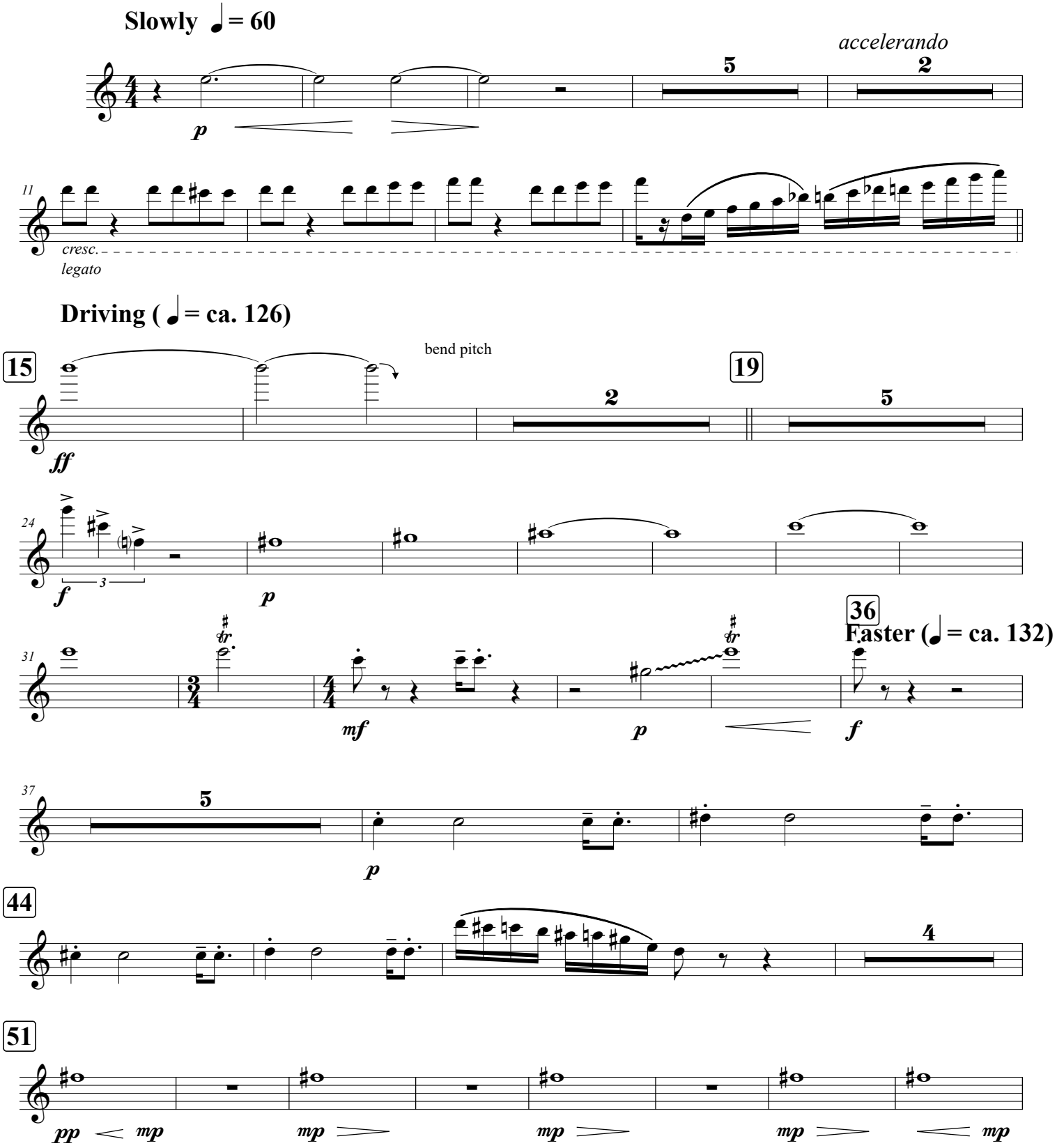


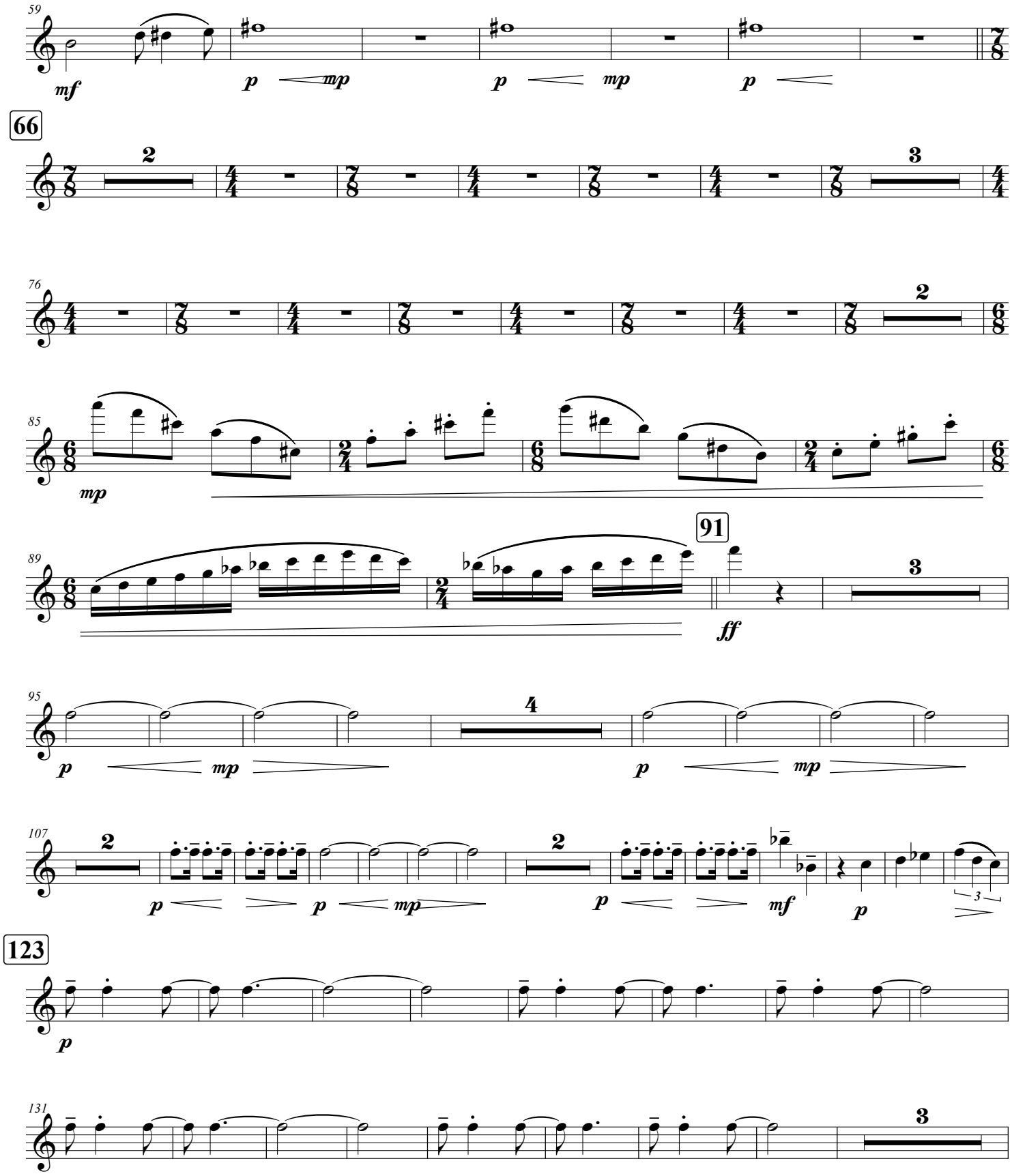

54
rit.
p
pp
58
Freely ♩ = 56
In time
(♪ = 112)
3
65
p
67
Fast ♩ = 132
f
7
75
23
98
f
103
f
ff
109
p
4
114
115
3
fp
f

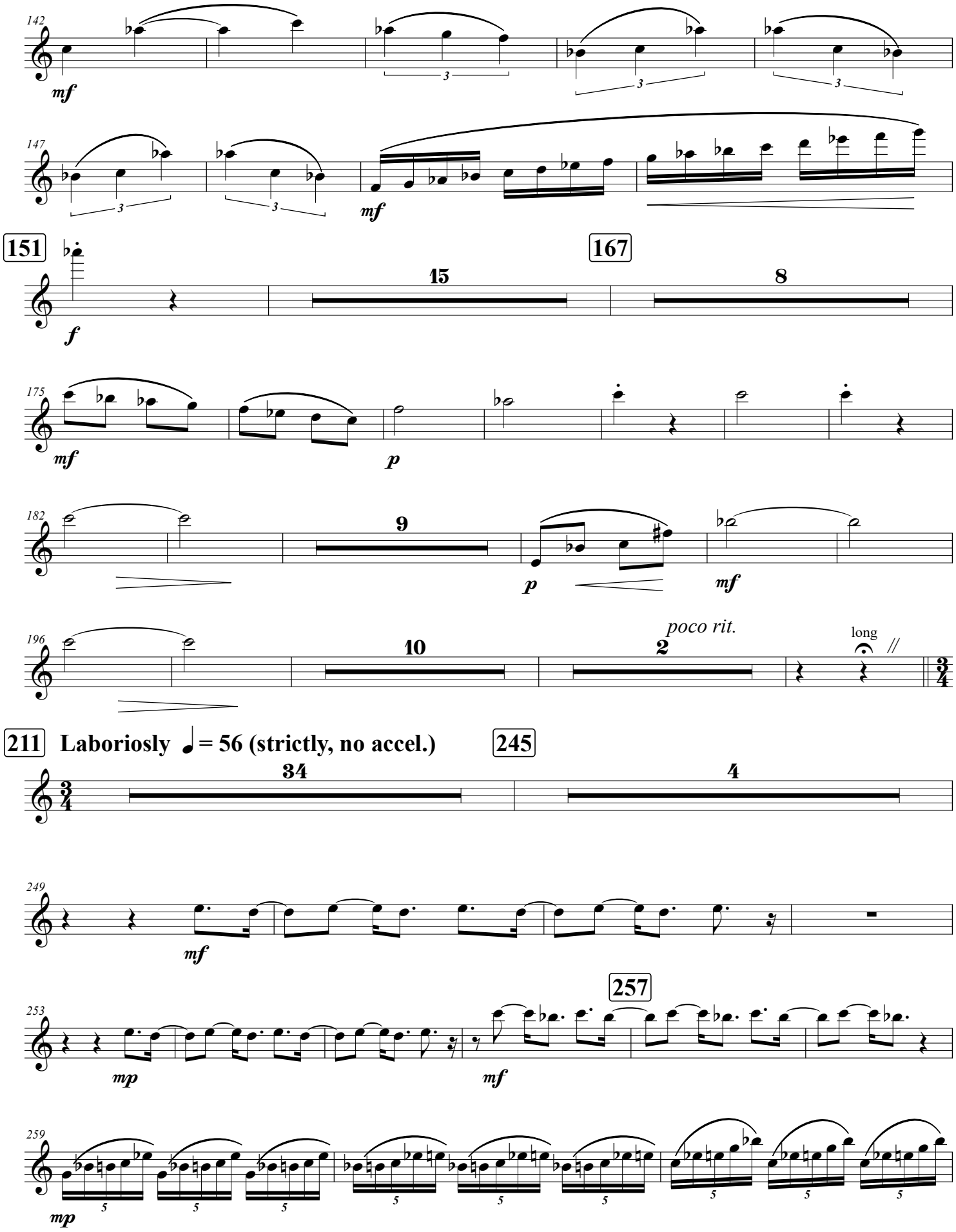

121
p
2
126
132
f
15
148
2
p
156
3
164
15
179
p
stagger breathing
2
3
4
5
6
2
187
p
2
3
4
5
6
7
poco rit.
2
205
Freely ♩ = 56
5
(solo vc.)

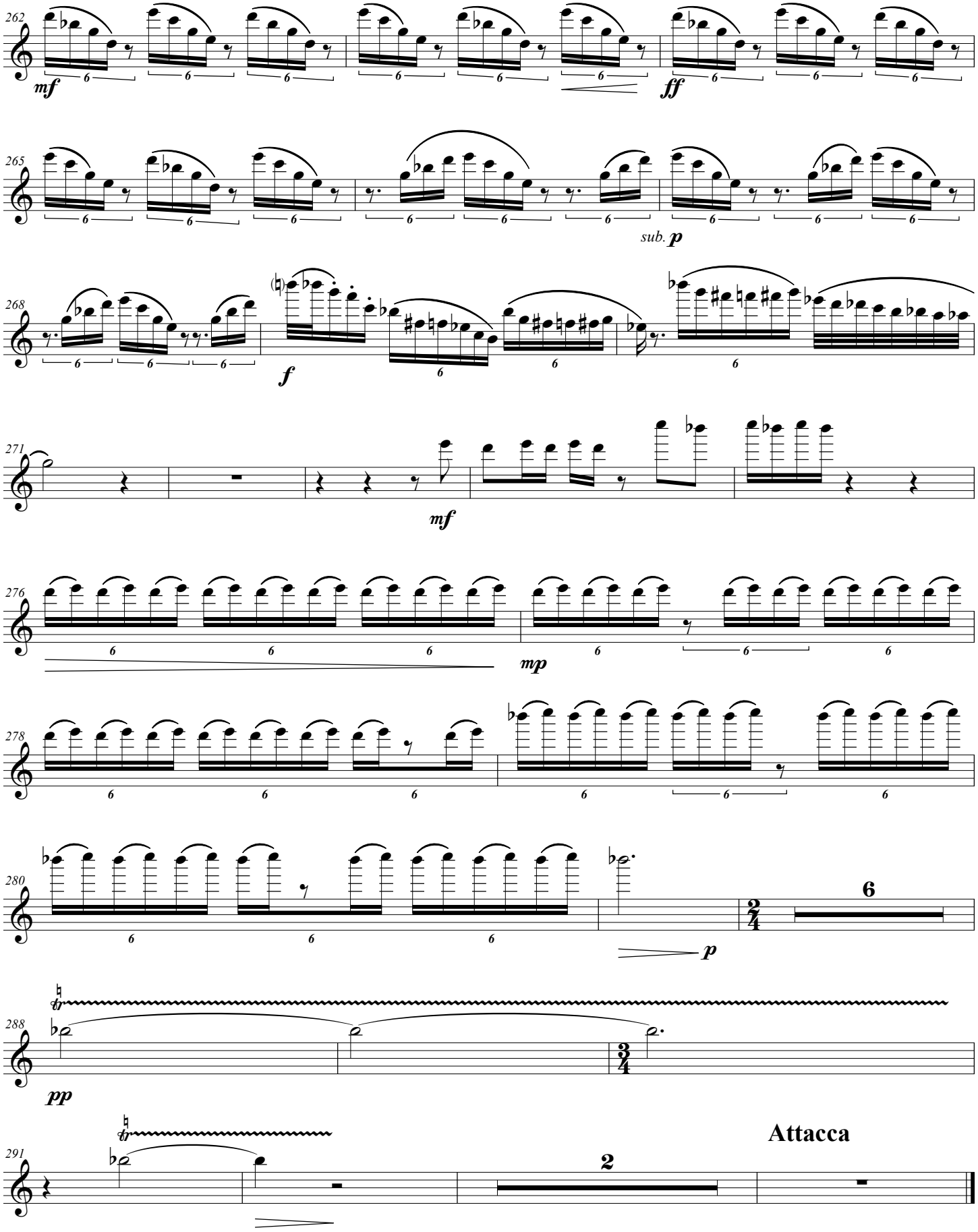

212
Slowly ♩ = 60
bend pitch
pp
216
6
227
Attacca
12
pp

II. Working


Slowly ♩= 60
accelerando
p
cresc.
legato
Driving (♩= ca. 126)
bend pitch
ff
f
p
mf
p
f
Faster (♩= ca. 132)
p
pp
mp
mp
mp
mp
mp

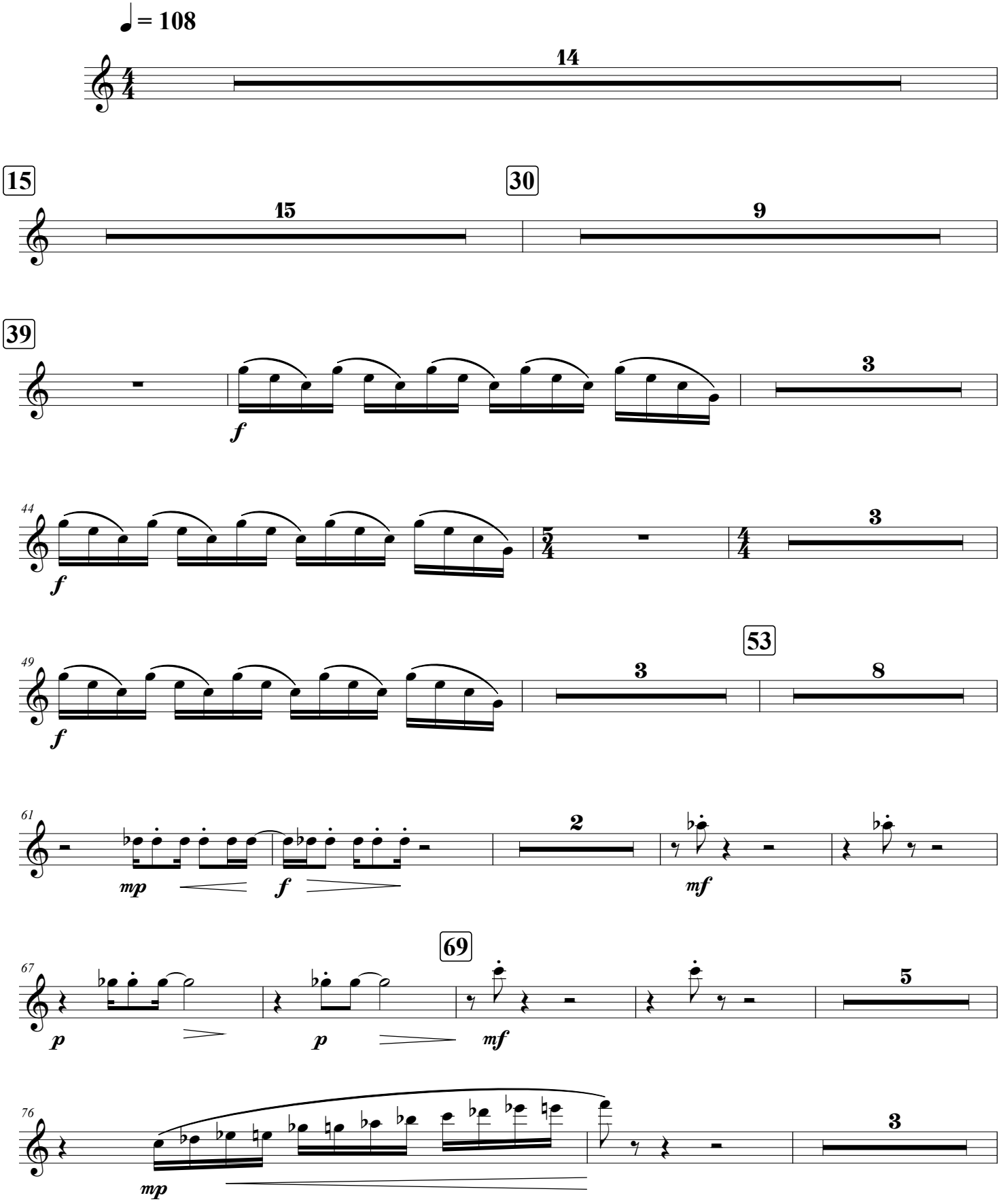

59
mf
p
mp
p
mp
p
66
2
3
76
2
85
mp
89
91
ff
3
95
p
mp
4
p
mp
107
2
p
p
mp
2
p
mf
p
3
123
p
131
3

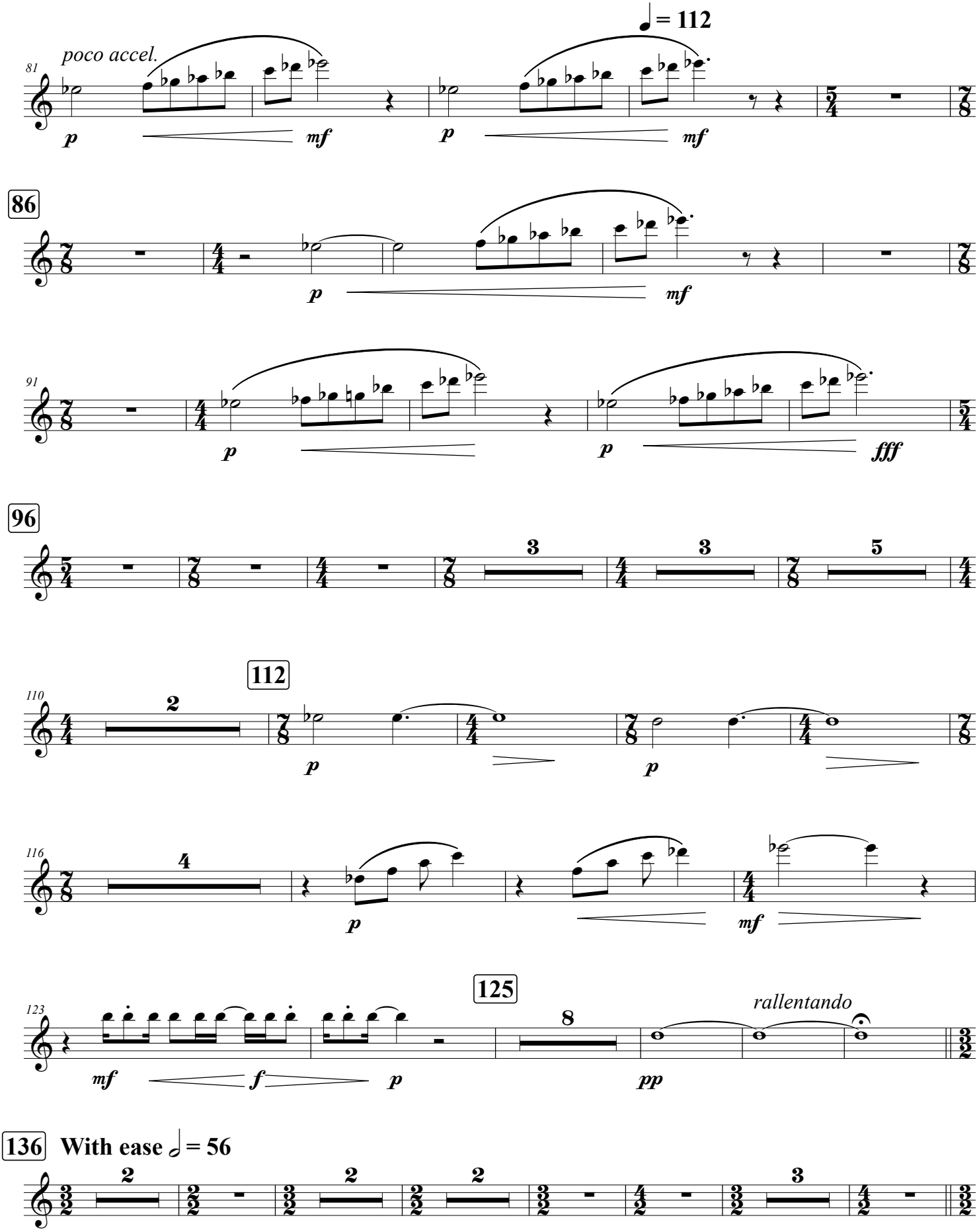

142
mf
147
mf
151
f
15
167
8
175
mf
p
182
9
p
mf
196
10
poco rit.
2
long
211
Laboriosly ♩ = 56 (strictly, no accel.)
34
245
4
249
mf
253
mp
257
mf
259
mp

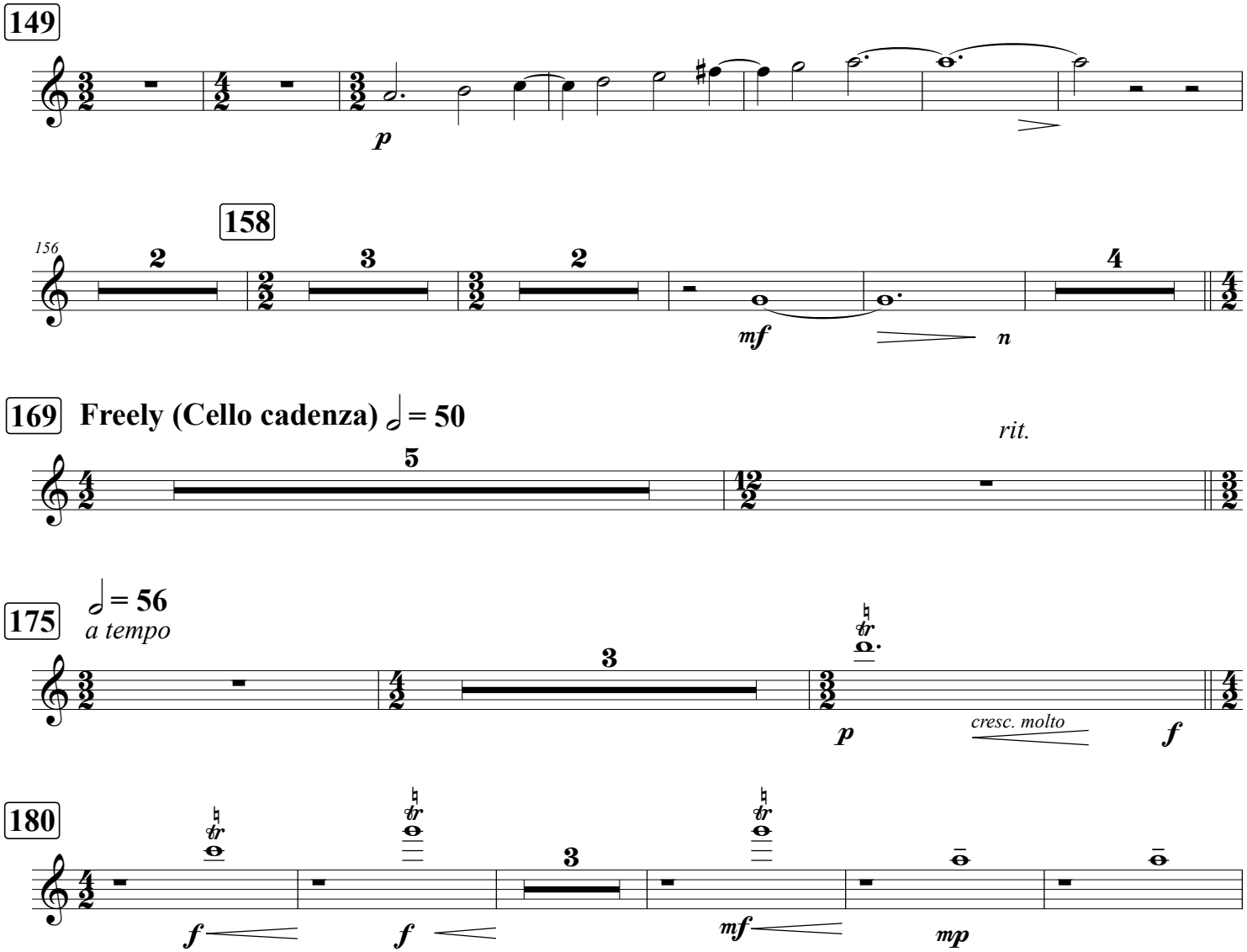

262
mf
ff
265
sub. p
268
f
271
mf
276
mp
278
280
p
6
288
pp
291
2
Attacca

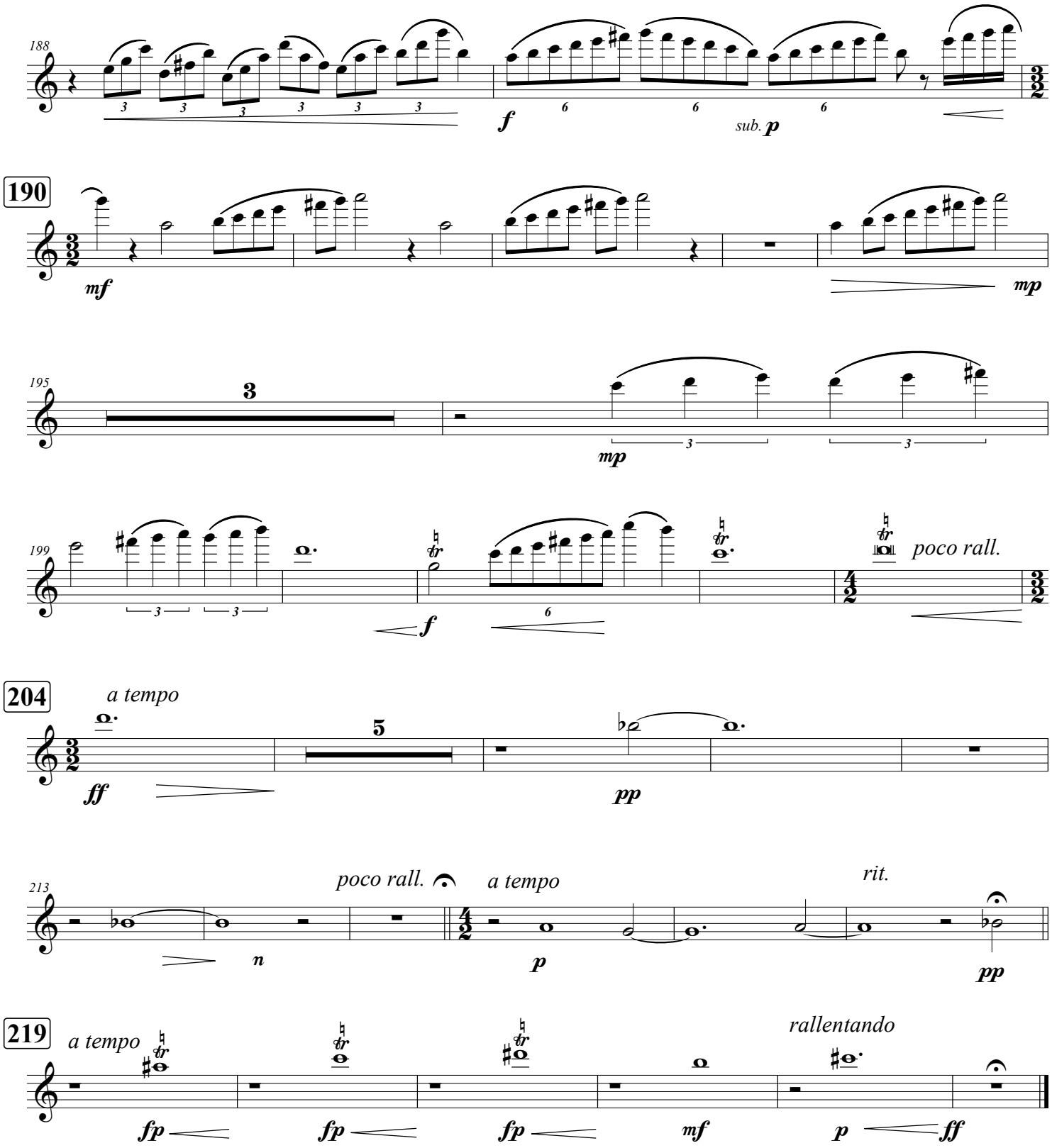
Flute 1

III. Wondering




poco accel.
♩ = 112
86
91
96
112
116
125
rallentando
136
With ease 𝅗𝅥 = 56


149
p
158
156
2
3
2
mf
n
4
169
Freely (Cello cadenza) 𝅗𝅥 = 50
5
rit.
175
𝅗𝅥 = 56
a tempo
3
p
cresc. molto
f
180
f
f
3
mf
mp


188
f
sub. p
190
mf
mp
195
3
mp
199
f
poco rall.
204
a tempo
ff
5
pp
213
poco rall.
a tempo
rit.
n
p
pp
219
a tempo
rallentando
fp
fp
fp
mf
p
ff