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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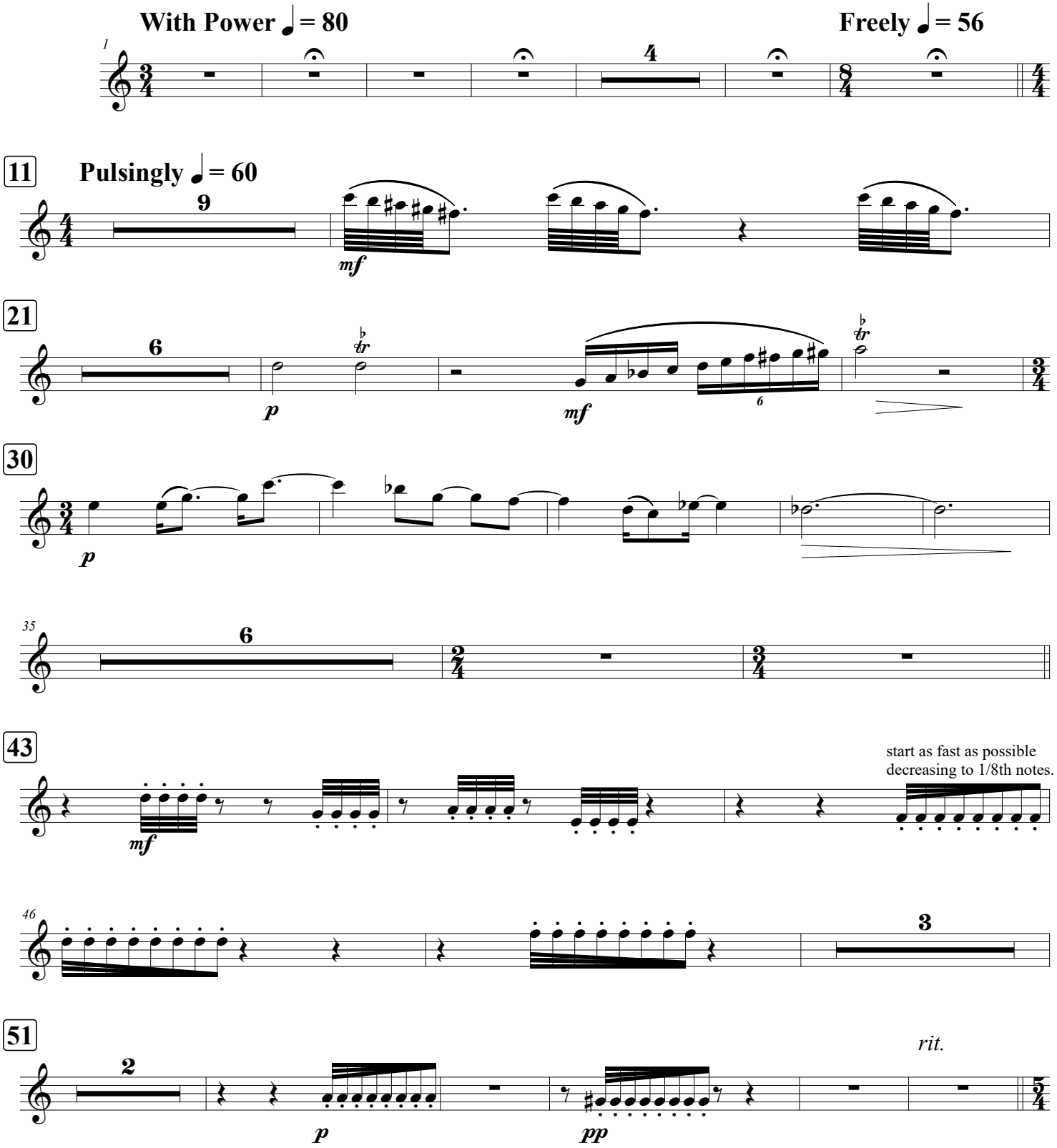
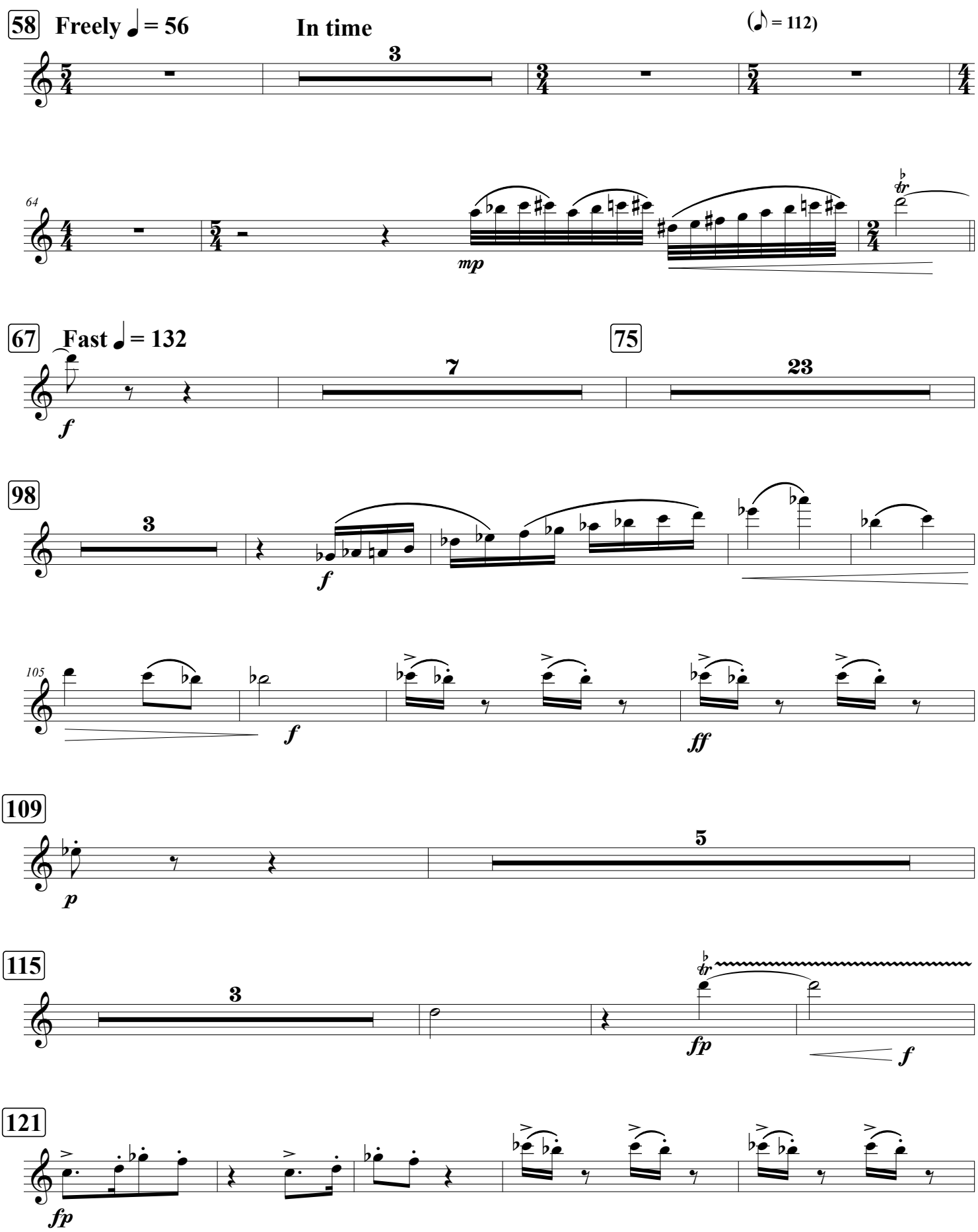
Ballet for Cello and Orchestra

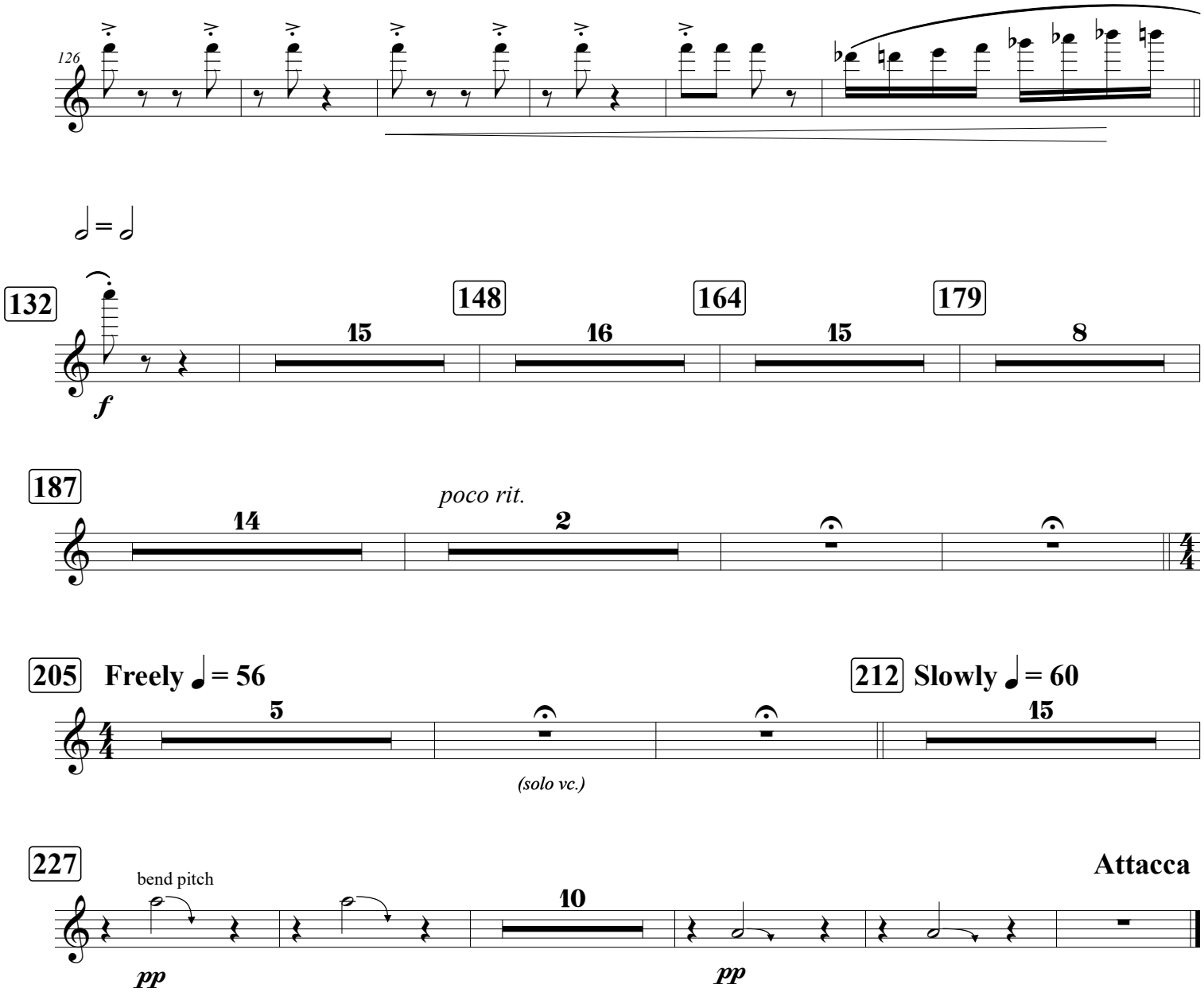
I. Walking

Piccolo

Rebecca Burkhardt (2025)

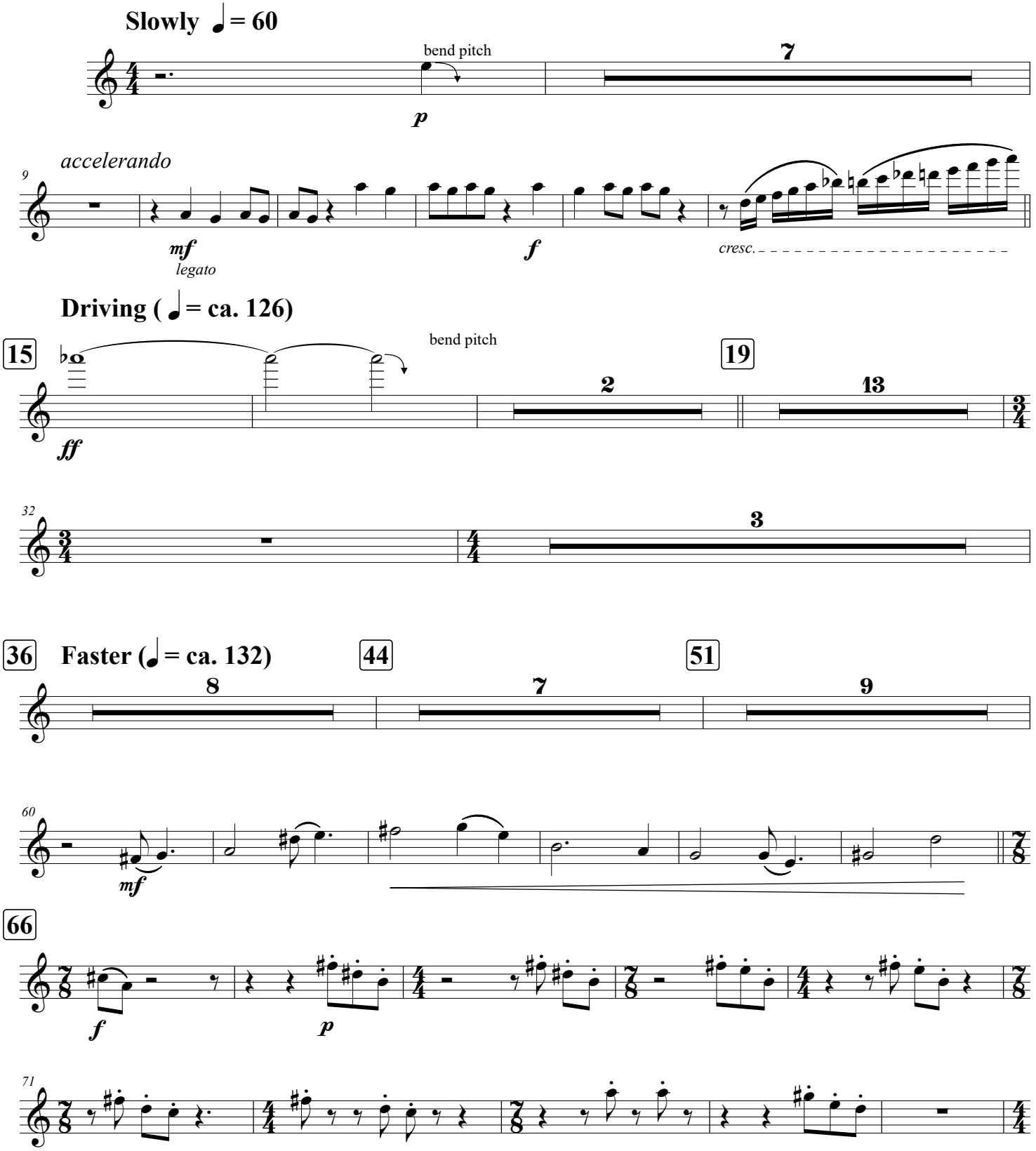


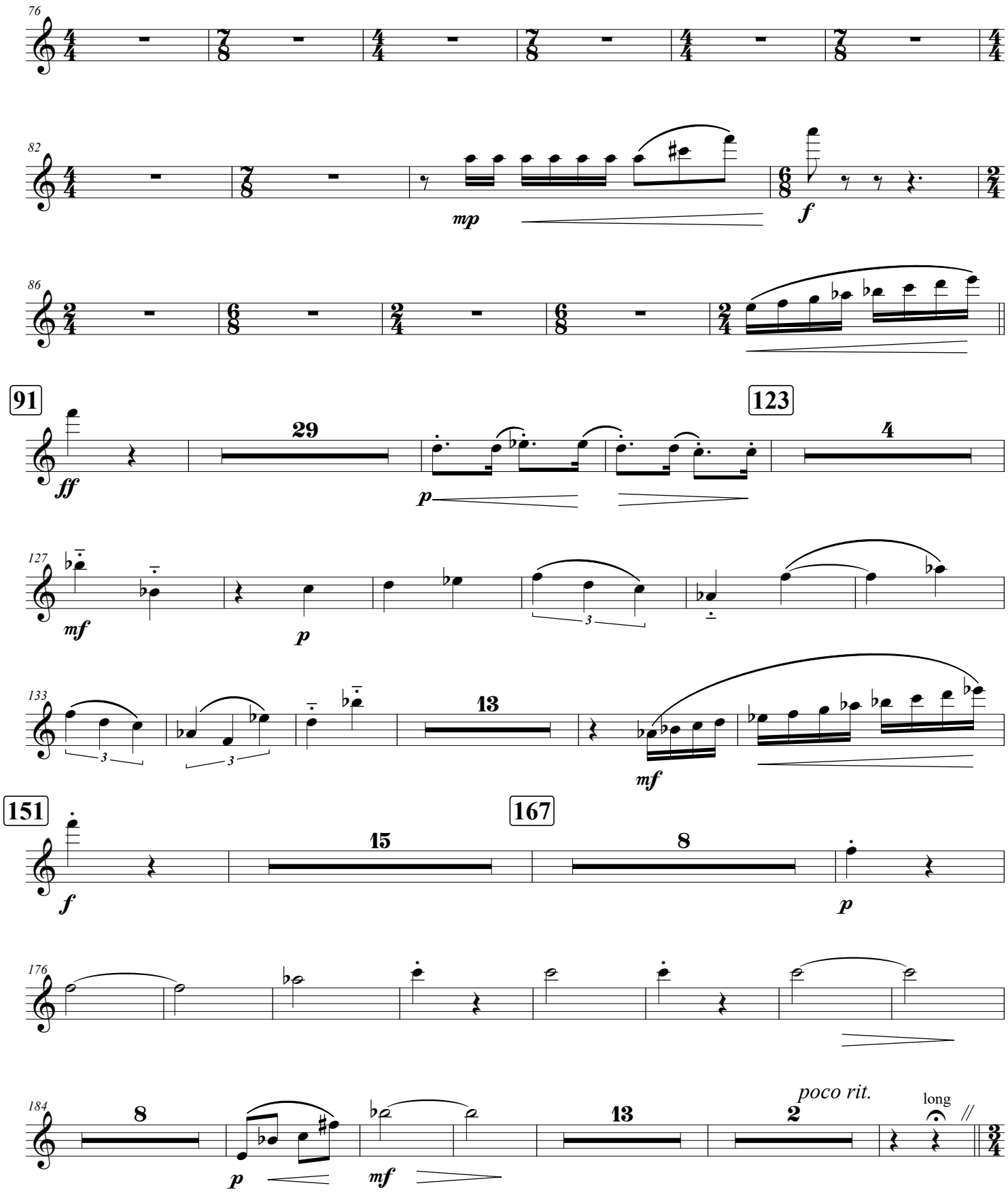

58
Freely ♩ = 56
In time
(♪ = 112)
3
64
mp
67
Fast ♩ = 132
f
7
75
23
98
3
f
105
f
ff
109
p
5
115
3
fp
f
121
fp

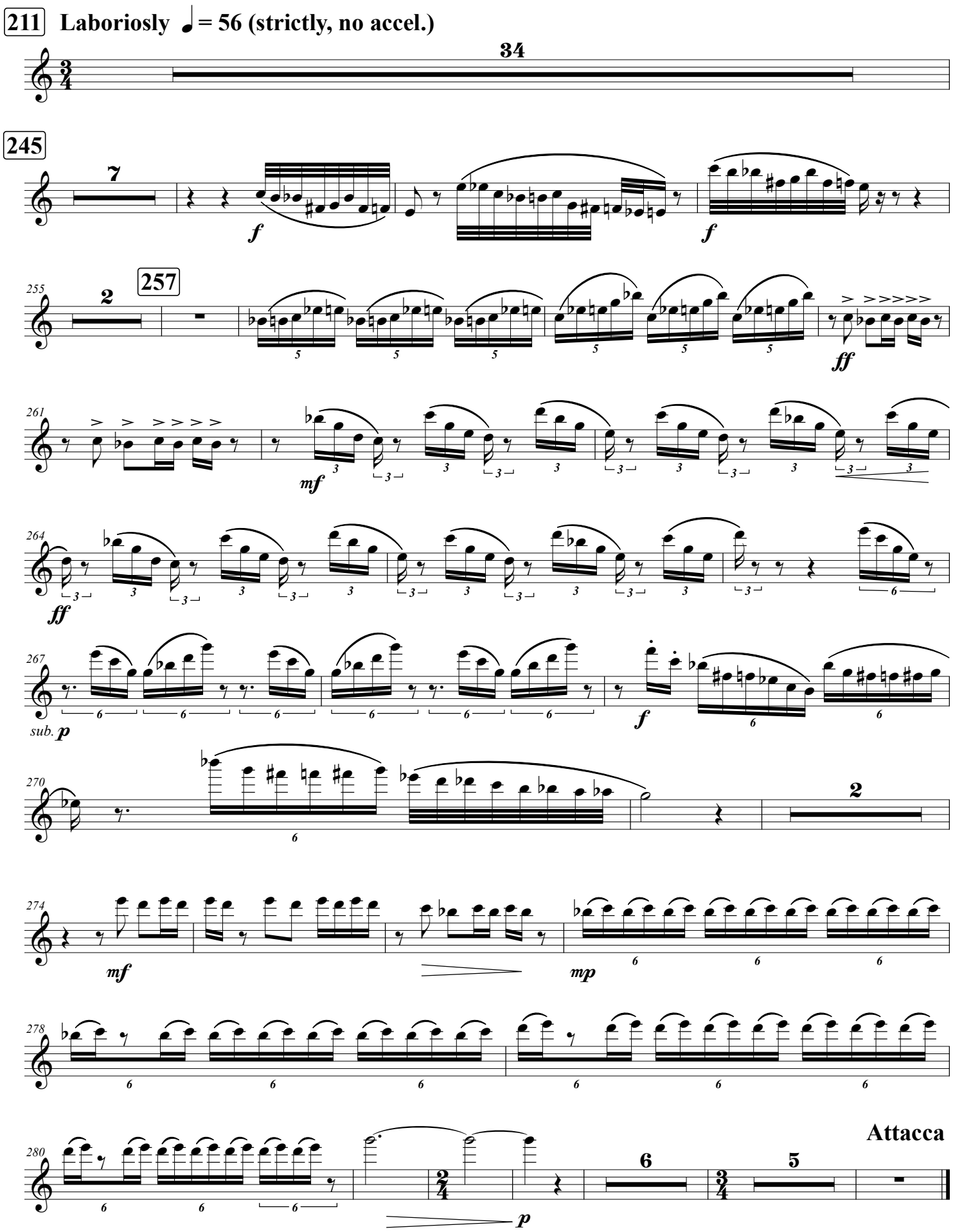

126
132
148
164
179
187
poco rit.
205
Freely
212
Slowly
(solo vc.)
227
bend pitch
Attacca

Piccolo

II. Working

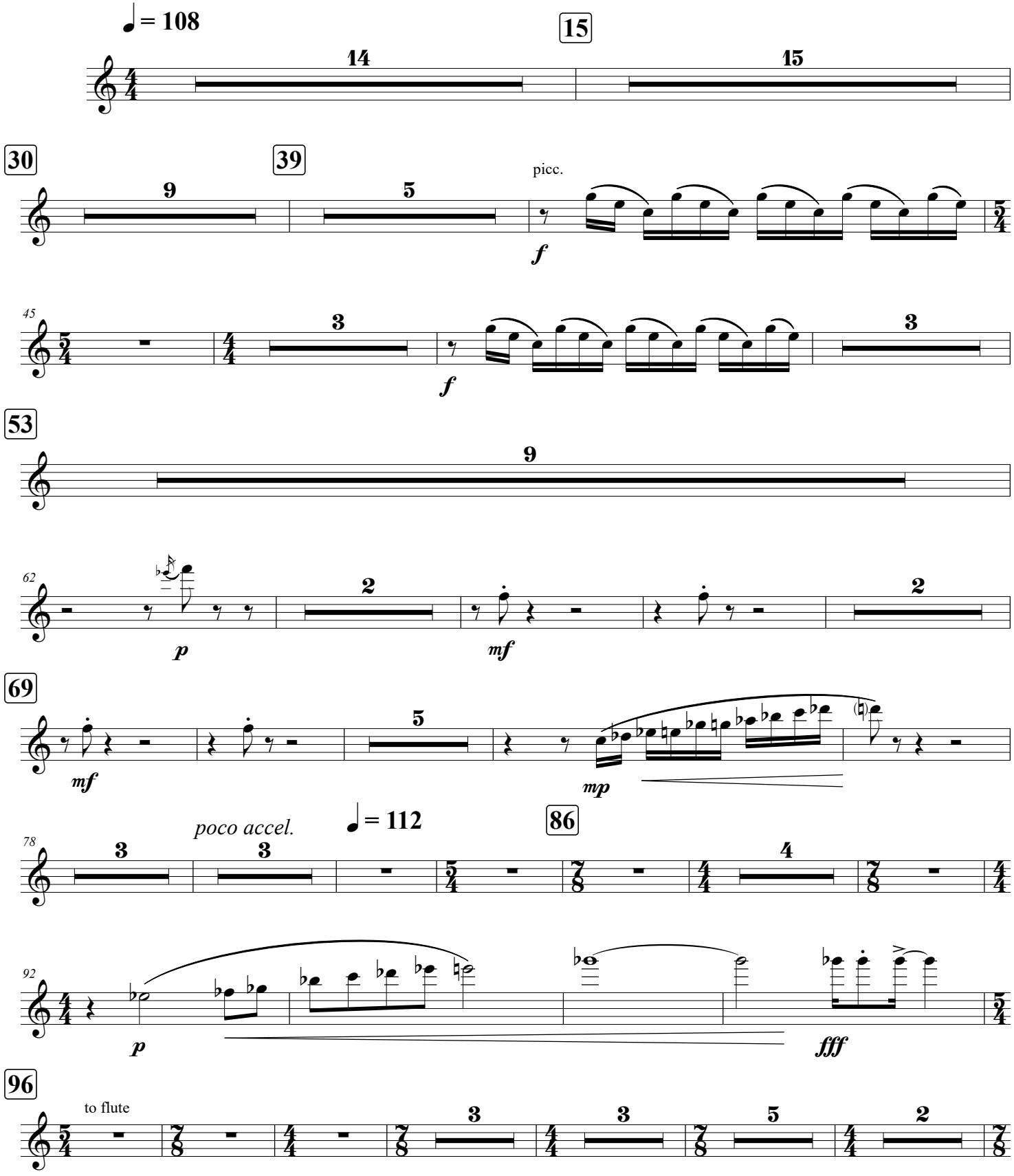


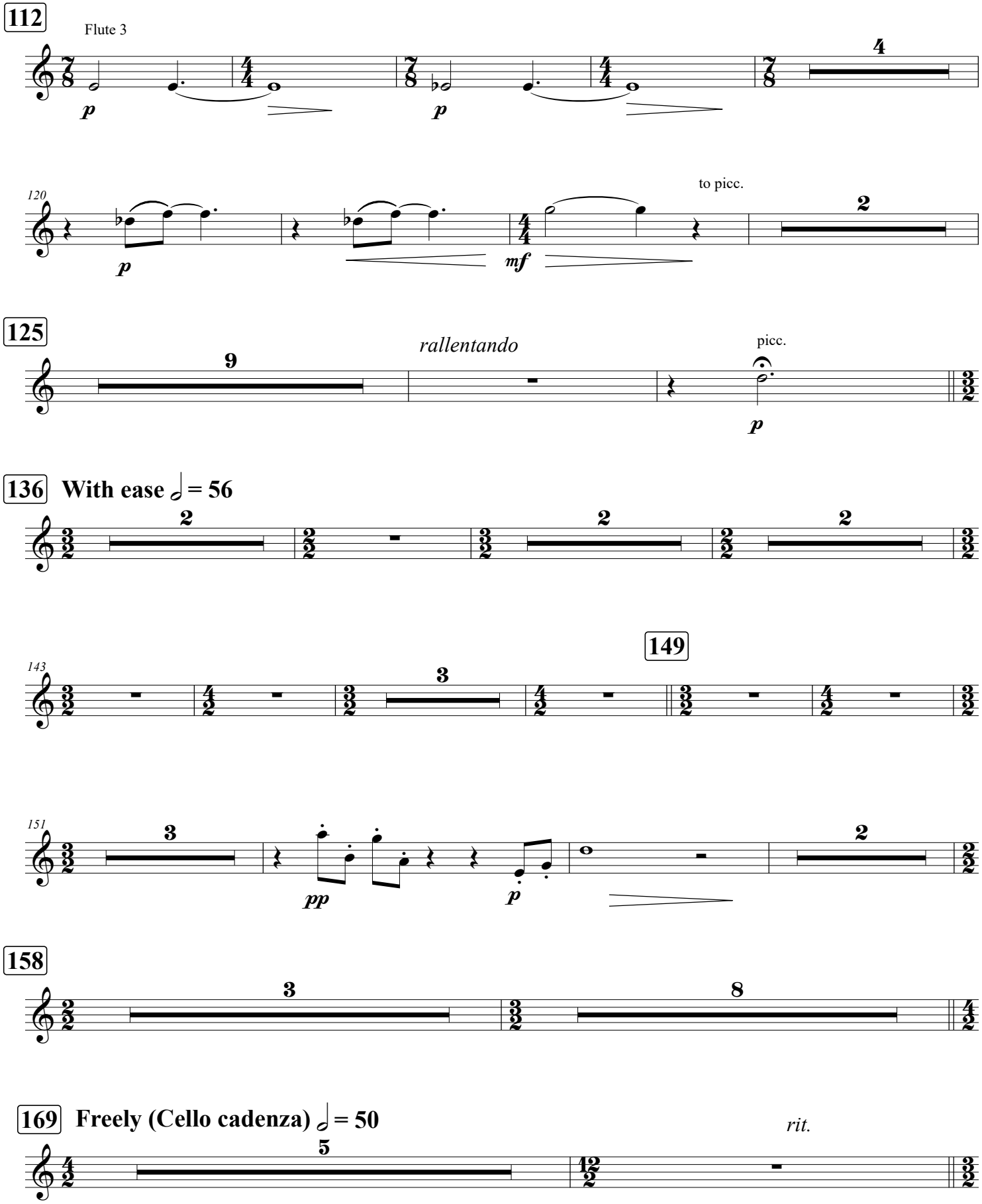

76
82
mp
f
86
91
ff
29
p
123
4
127
mf
p
3
133
13
mf
151
f
15
167
8
p
176
184
8
p
mf
13
2
poco rit.
long

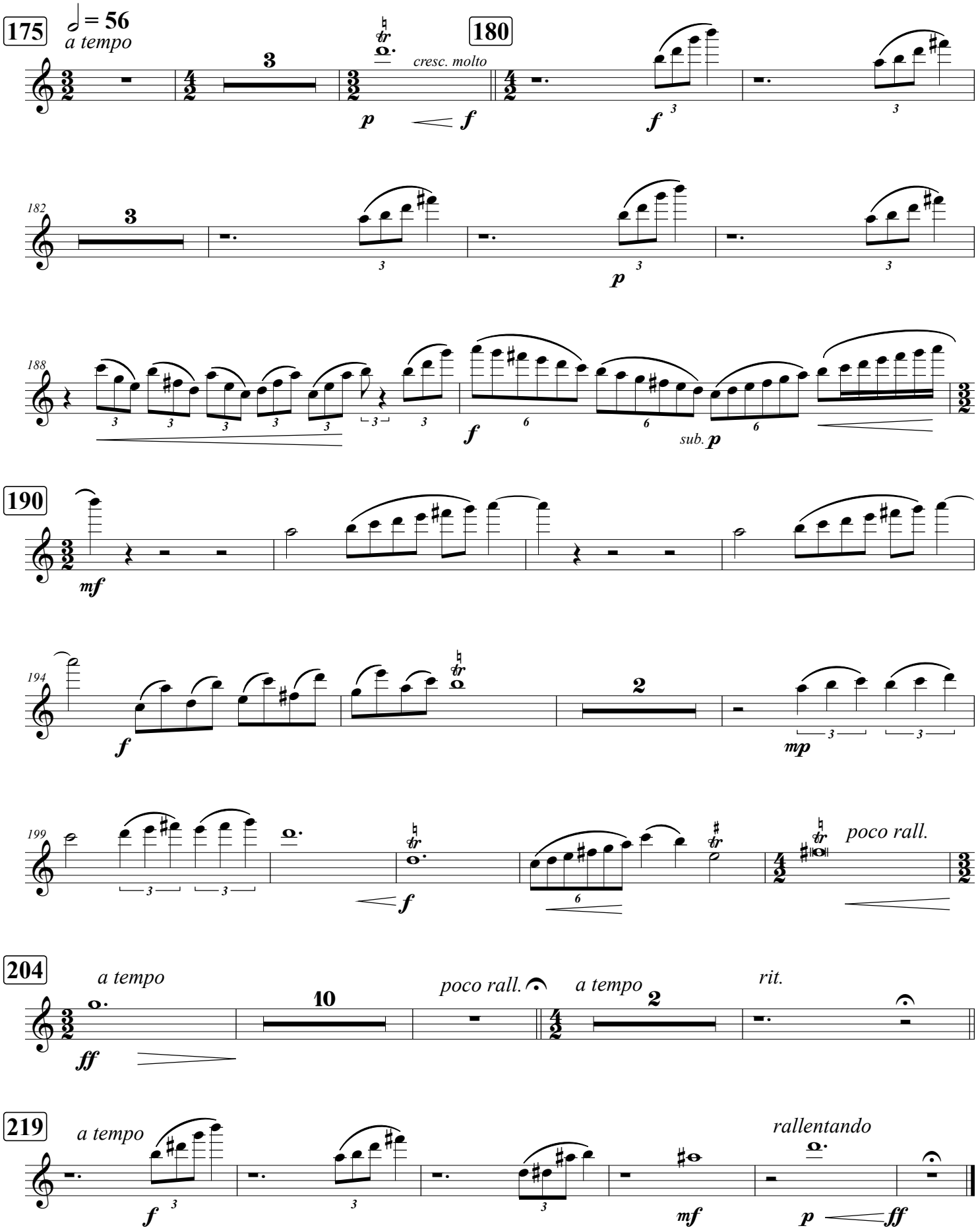

211
Laboriously ♩= 56 (strictly, no accel.)
34
245
7
f
f
255
2
257
ff
261
mf
264
ff
267
sub. p
f
270
2
274
mf
mp
278
280
Attacca
6
5
p

Piccolo (dbl. Flute 3)

III. Wondering




112
Flute 3
p
p
4
120
p
mf
to picc.
2
125
9
rallentando
picc.
p
136
With ease ♩ = 56
2
2
2
143
3
149
151
3
pp
p
2
158
3
8
169
Freely (Cello cadenza) ♩ = 50
5
rit.


175
♩ = 56
a tempo
cresc. molto
180
182
188
sub.
190
194
199
poco rall.
204
a tempo
poco rall.
a tempo
rit.
219
a tempo
rallentando