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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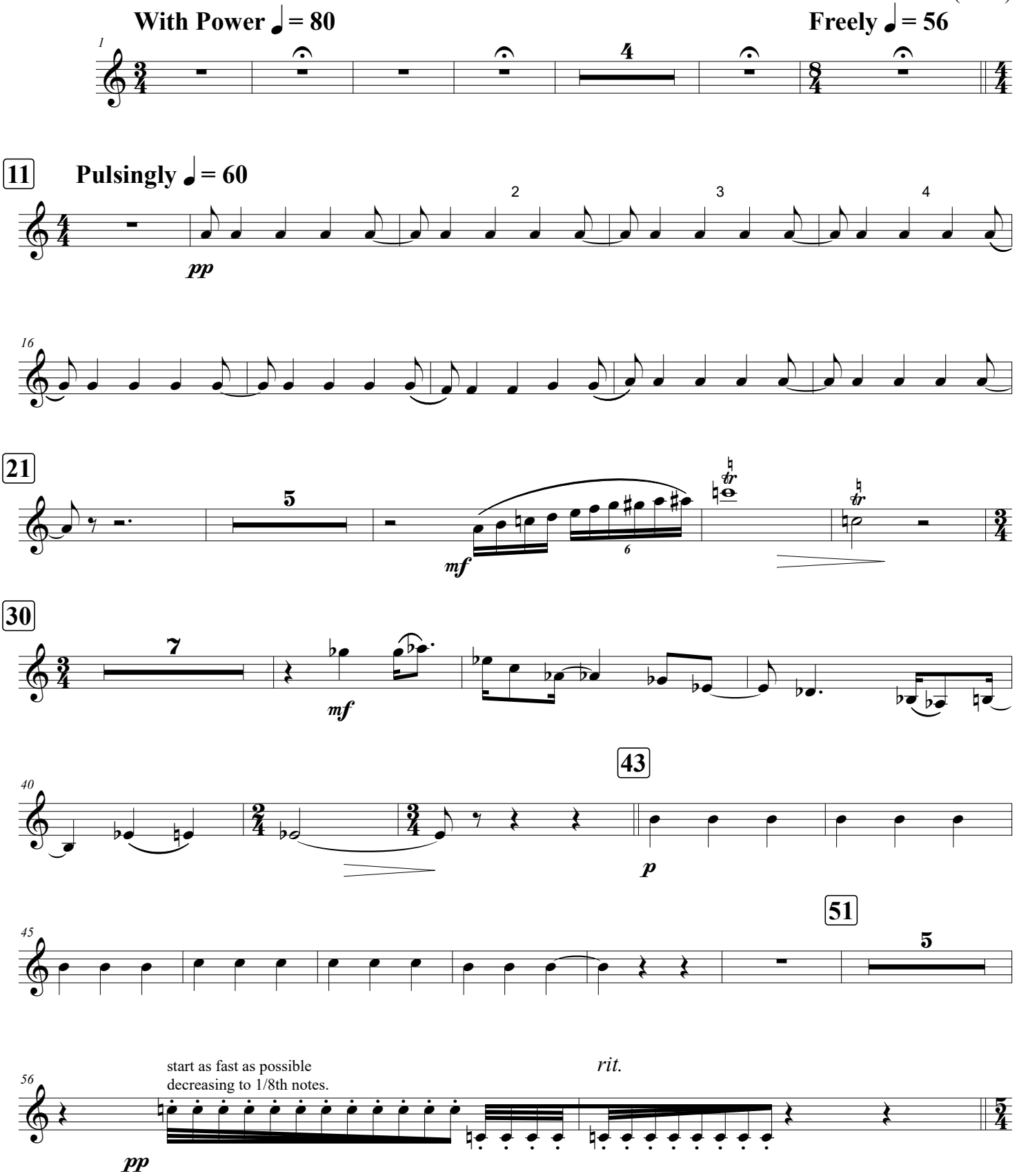
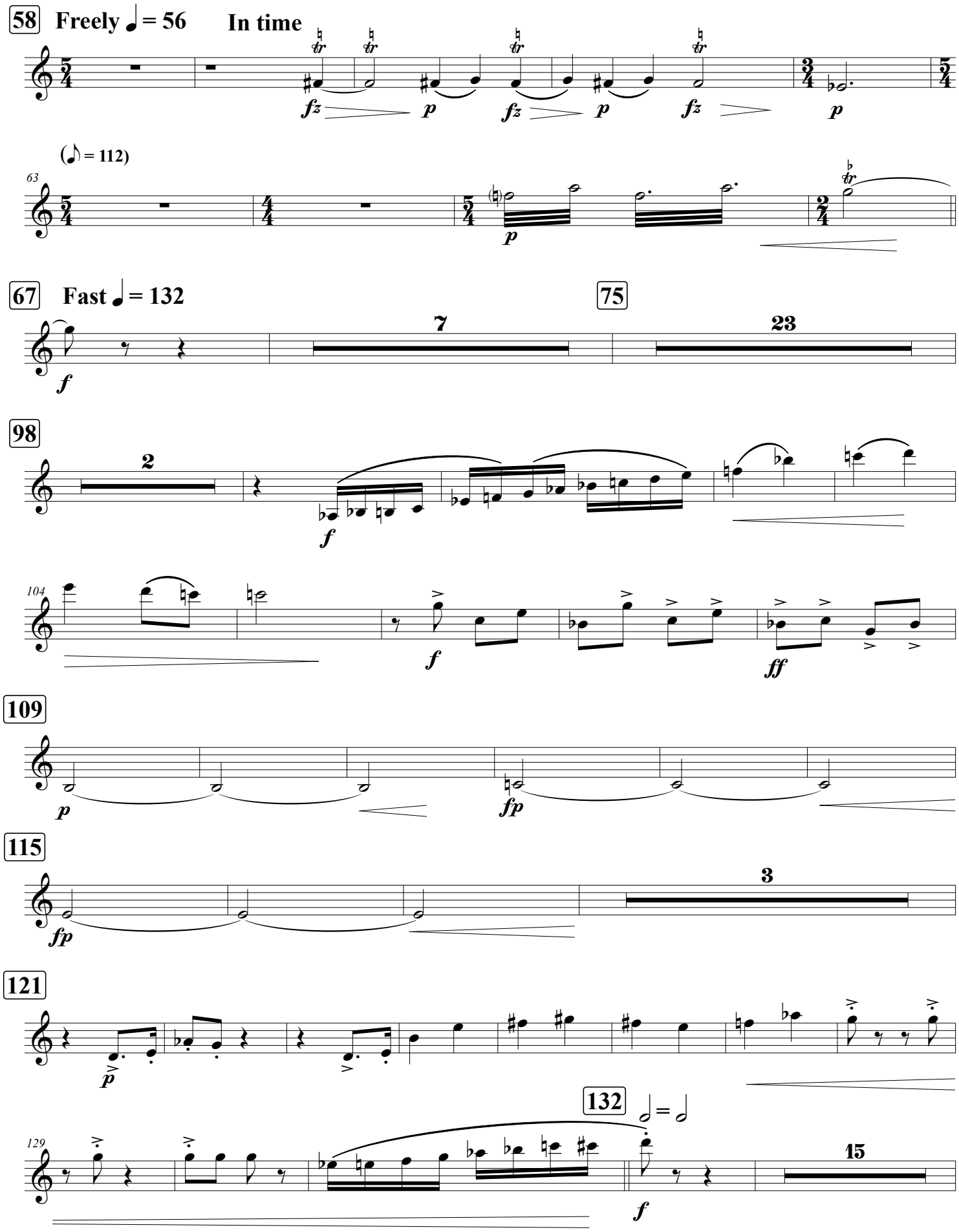
Ballet for Cello and Orchestra

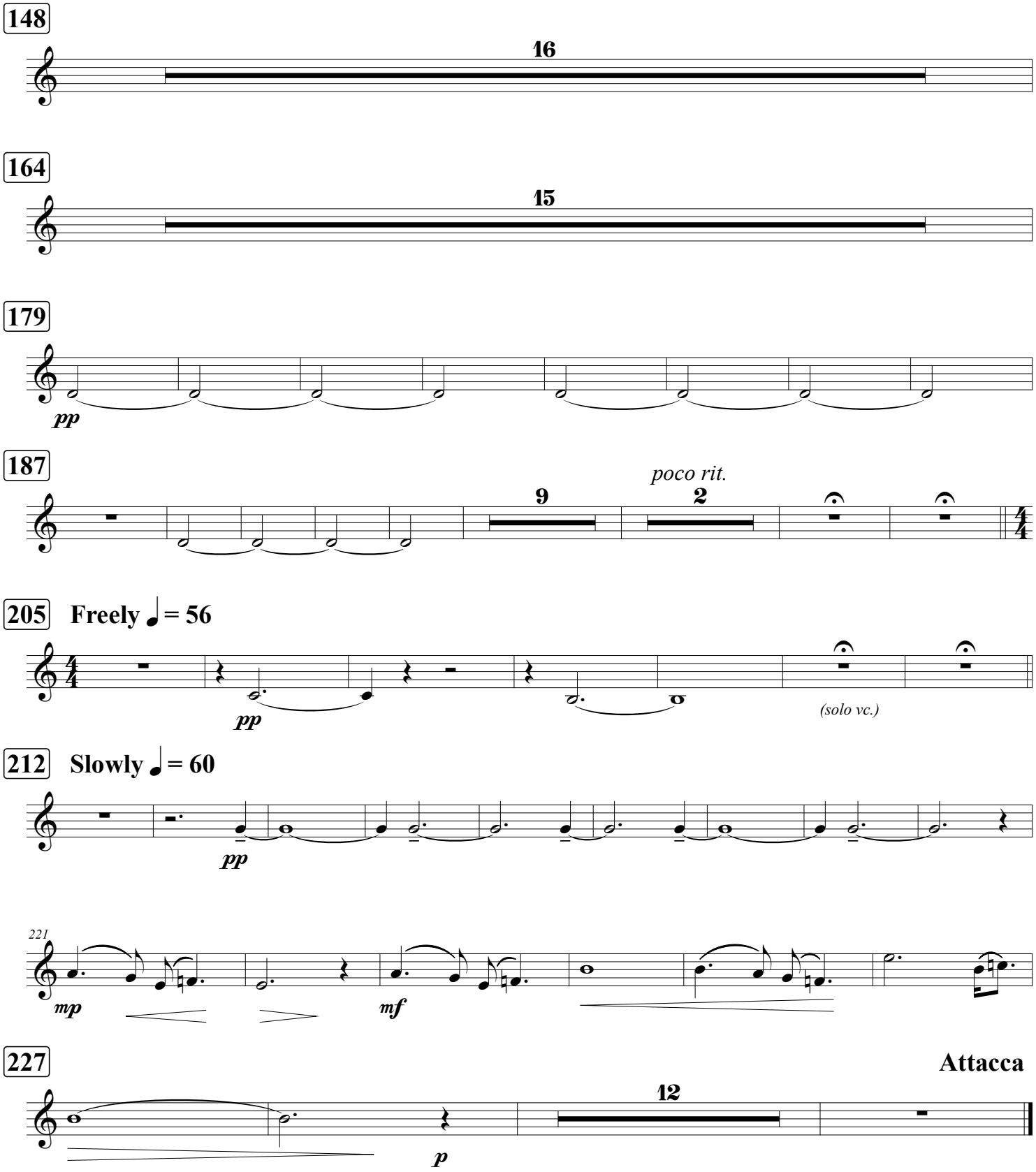
I. Walking

Clarinet in B♭ 1

Rebecca Burkhardt (2025)

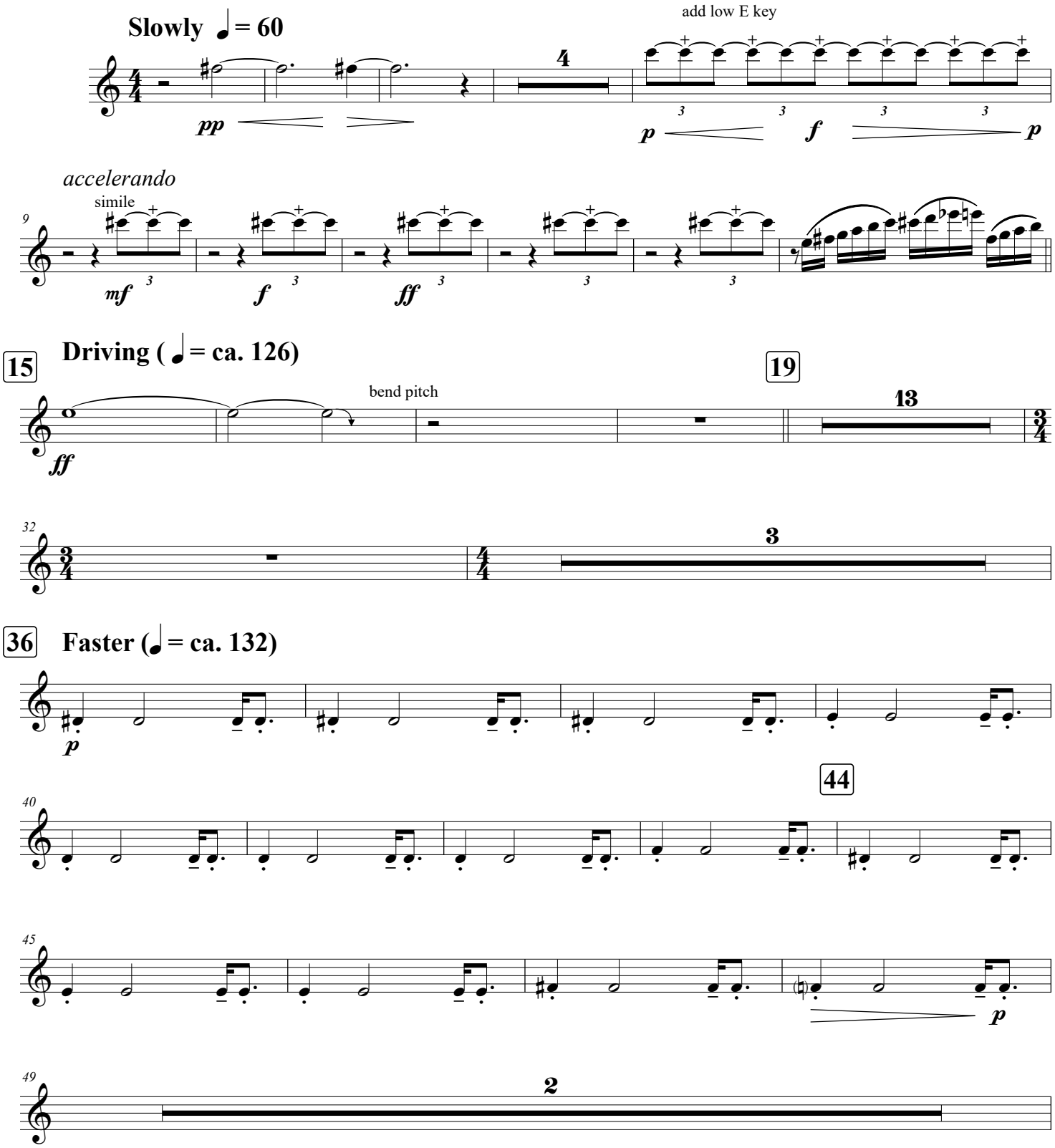


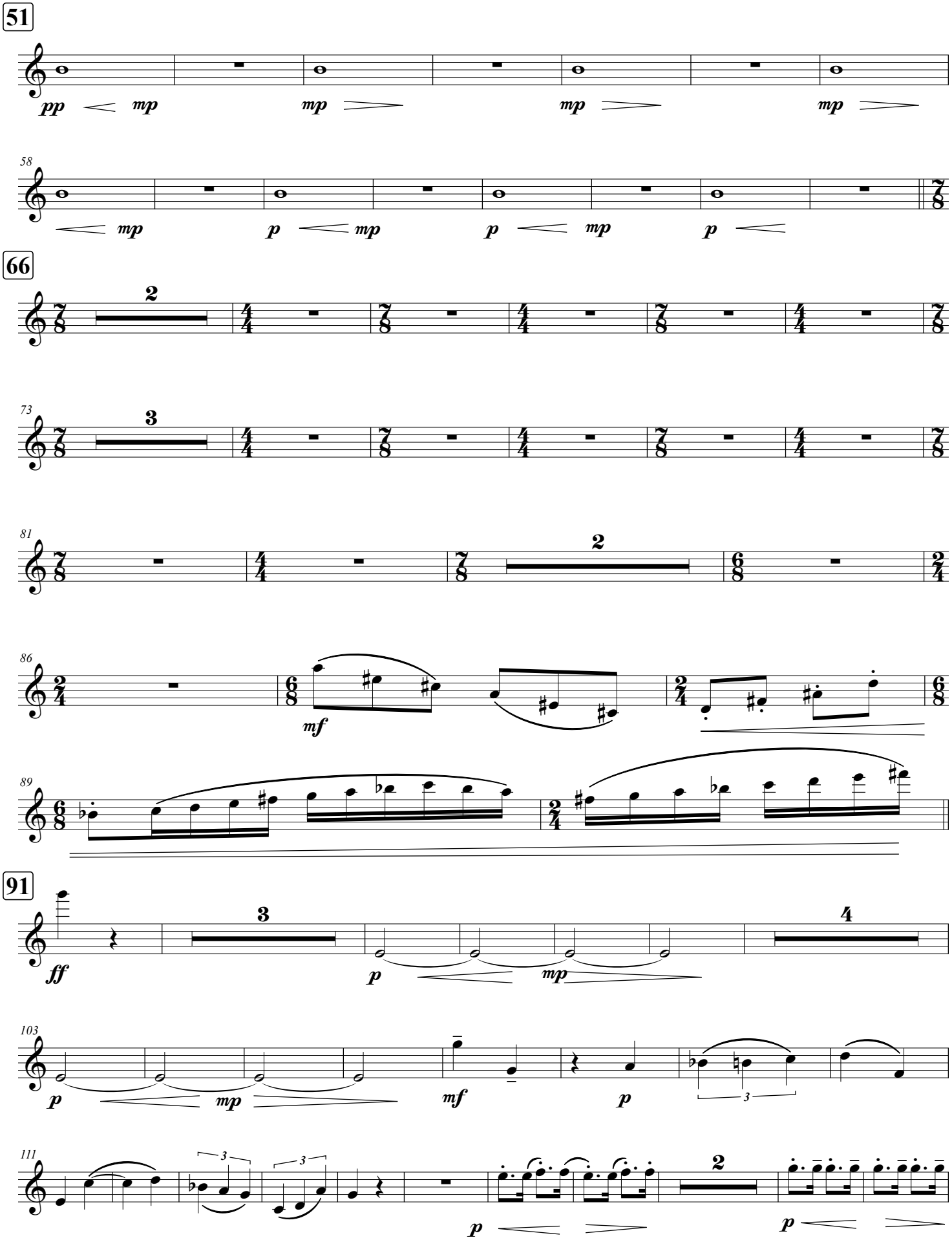

58
Freely ♩ = 56
In time
fz
p
fz
p
fz
p
(♪ = 112)
63
p
67
Fast ♩ = 132
f
7
75
23
98
2
f
104
f
ff
109
p
fp
115
fp
3
121
p
129
132
♩ = ♩
f
15

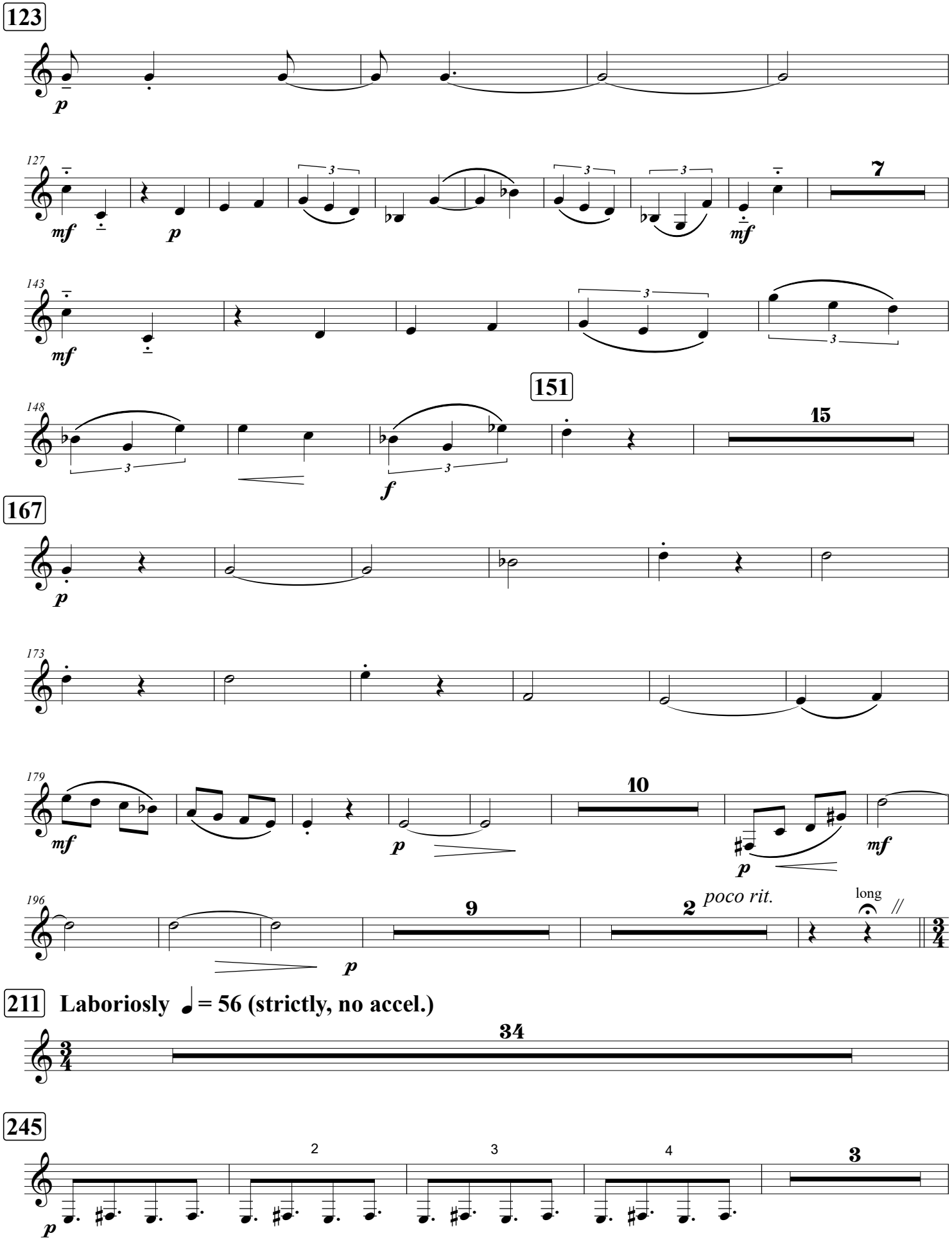

148
16
164
15
179
pp
187
9
poco rit.
2
205
Freely ♩ = 56
pp
(solo vc.)
212
Slowly ♩ = 60
pp
221
mp
mf
227
Attacca
12
p

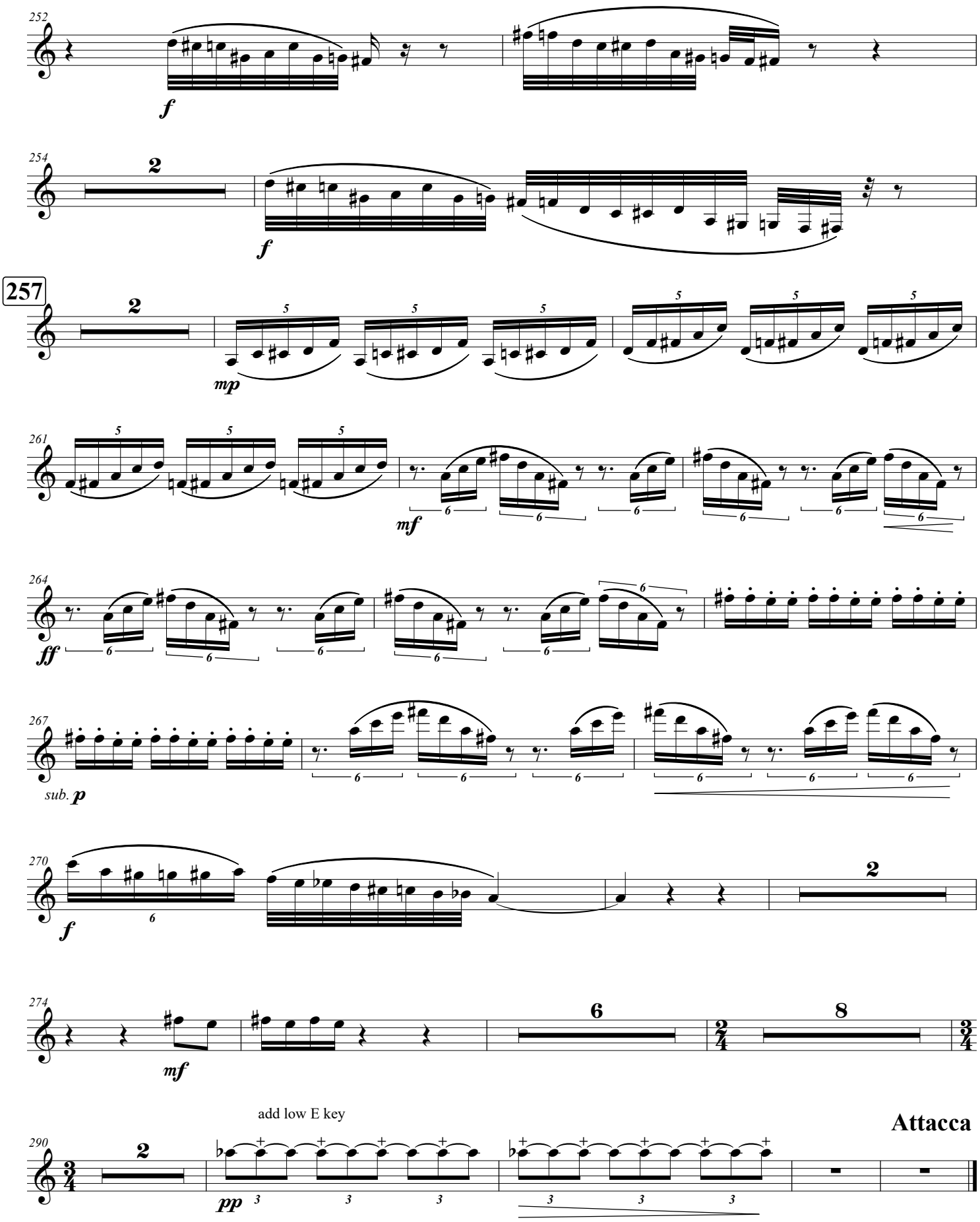
Clarinet in B♭ 1

II. Working



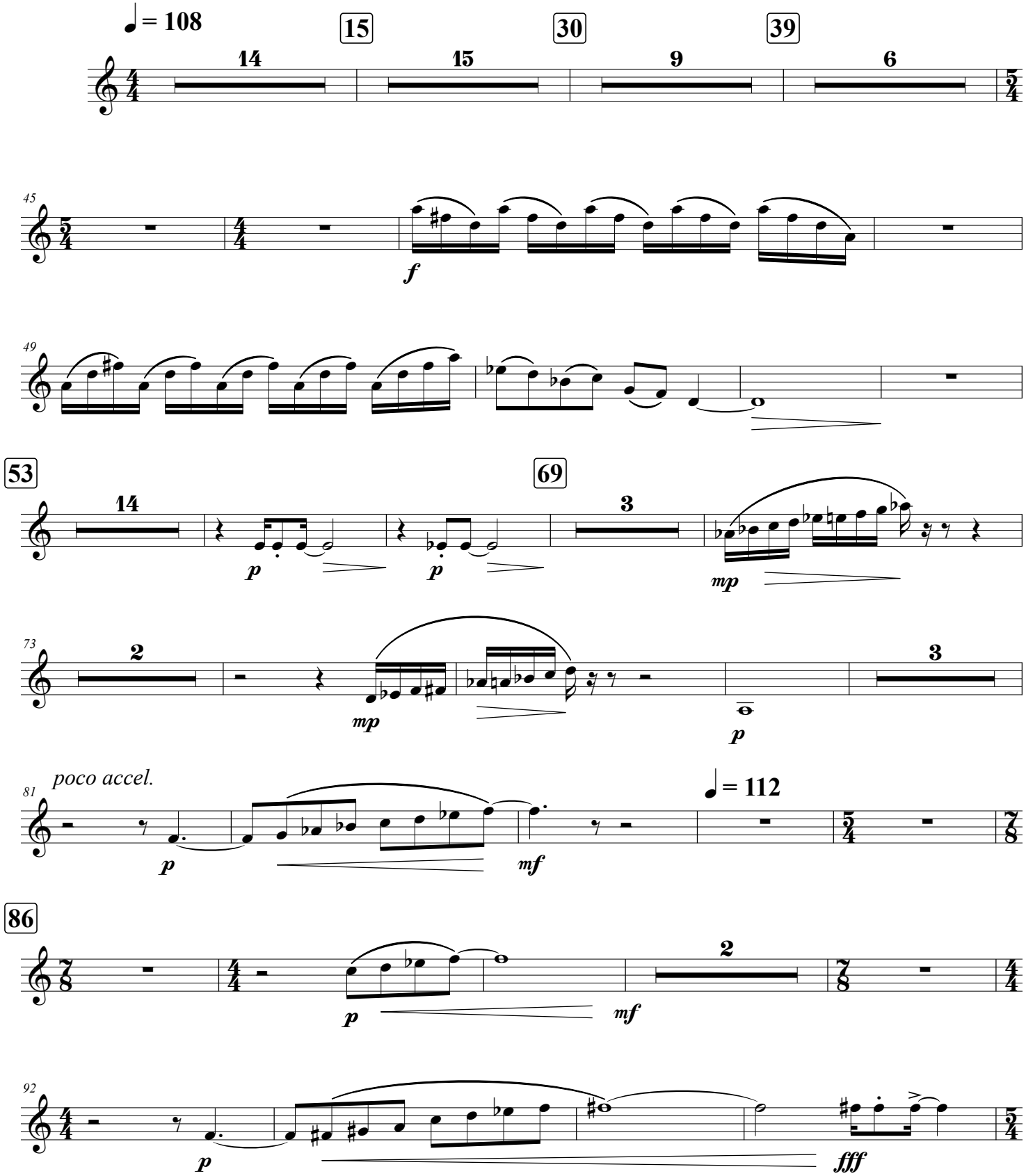

51
pp
mp
mp
mp
mp
58
mp
p
mp
p
mp
p
66
2
73
3
81
2
86
mf
89
91
ff
3
p
mp
4
103
p
mp
mf
p
3
111
3
3
p
2
p

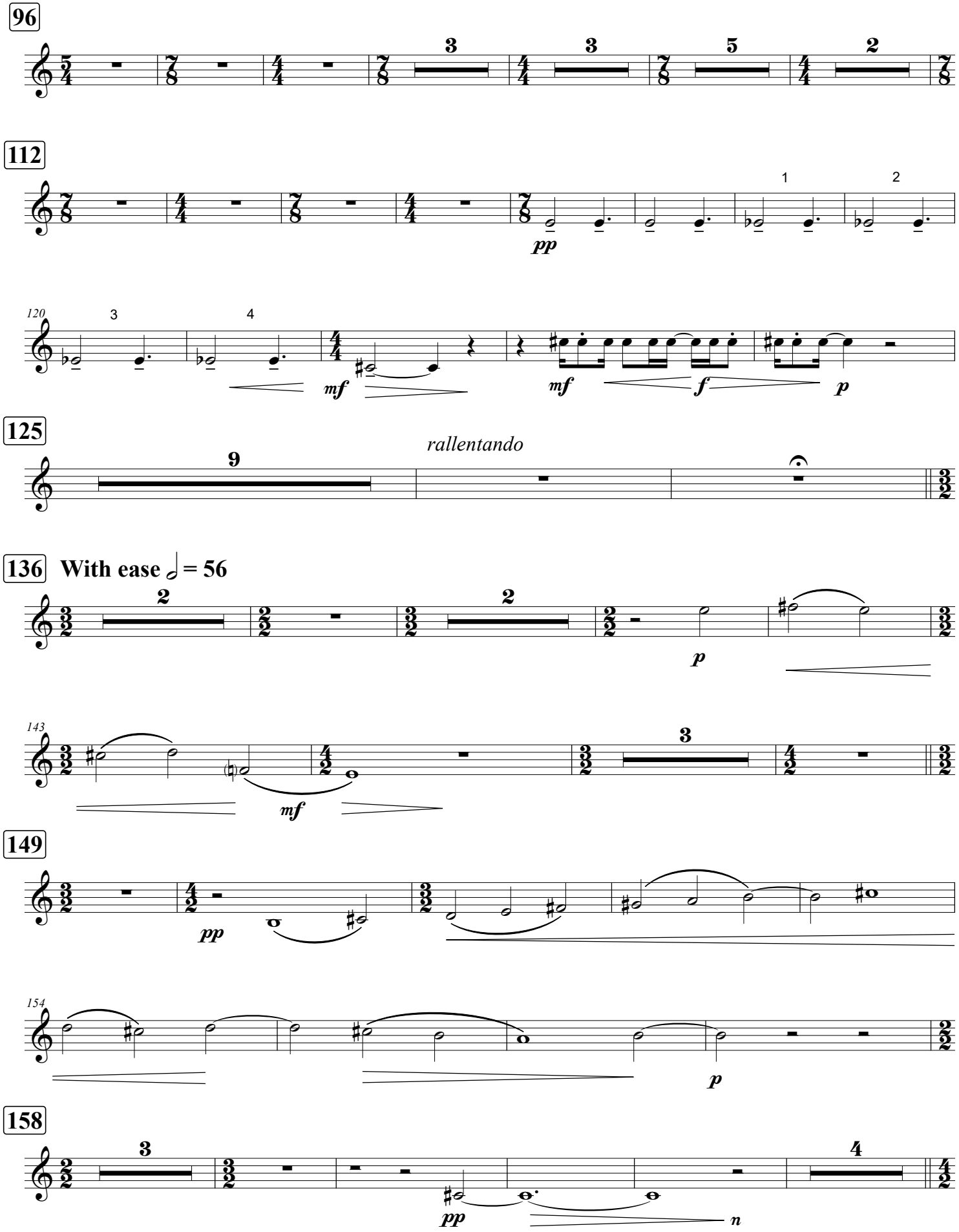

123
p
127
mf
p
7
mf
143
mf
151
148
15
f
167
p
173
179
mf
p
10
p
mf
196
9
2
poco rit.
long
p
211
Laboriosly ♩= 56 (strictly, no accel.)
34
245
p
2
3
4
3

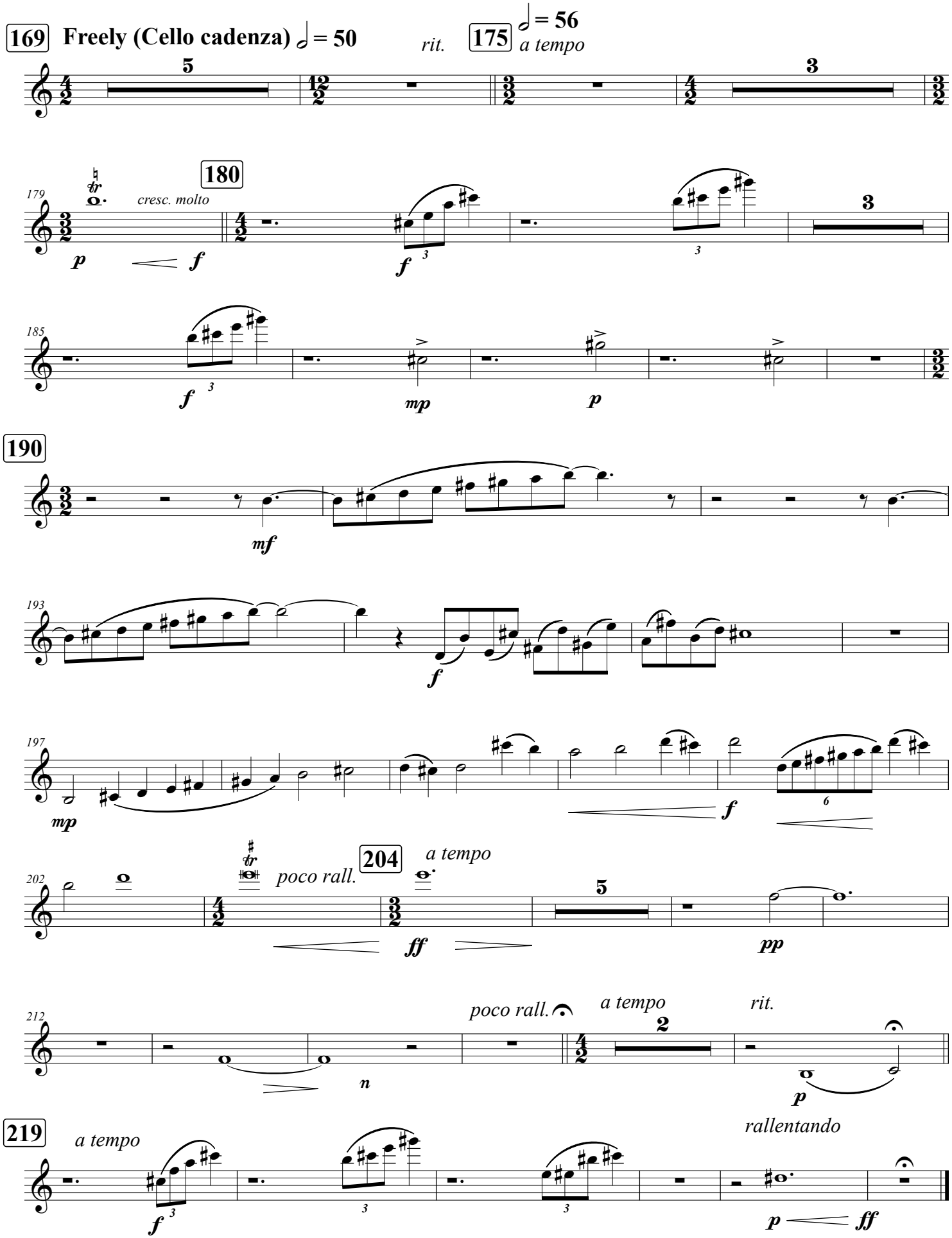

252
f
254
2
f
257
2
mp
261
mf
264
ff
267
sub. p
270
f
2
274
mf
6
8
add low E key
290
2
pp
Attacca

Clarinet in B♭ 1

III. Wondering




96
112
pp
1
2
120
3
4
mf
mf
f
p
125
rallentando
136
With ease ♩ = 56
p
143
mf
149
pp
154
p
158
pp
n


169
Freely (Cello cadenza) 𝅗𝅥 = 50
rit.
175
𝅗𝅥 = 56
a tempo
5
3
179
cresc. molto
180
p
f
f
3
3
185
f
3
mp
p
190
mf
193
f
197
mp
f
6
202
poco rall.
204
a tempo
ff
5
pp
212
poco rall.
a tempo
rit.
2
n
p
219
a tempo
f
3
3
3
rallentando
p
ff