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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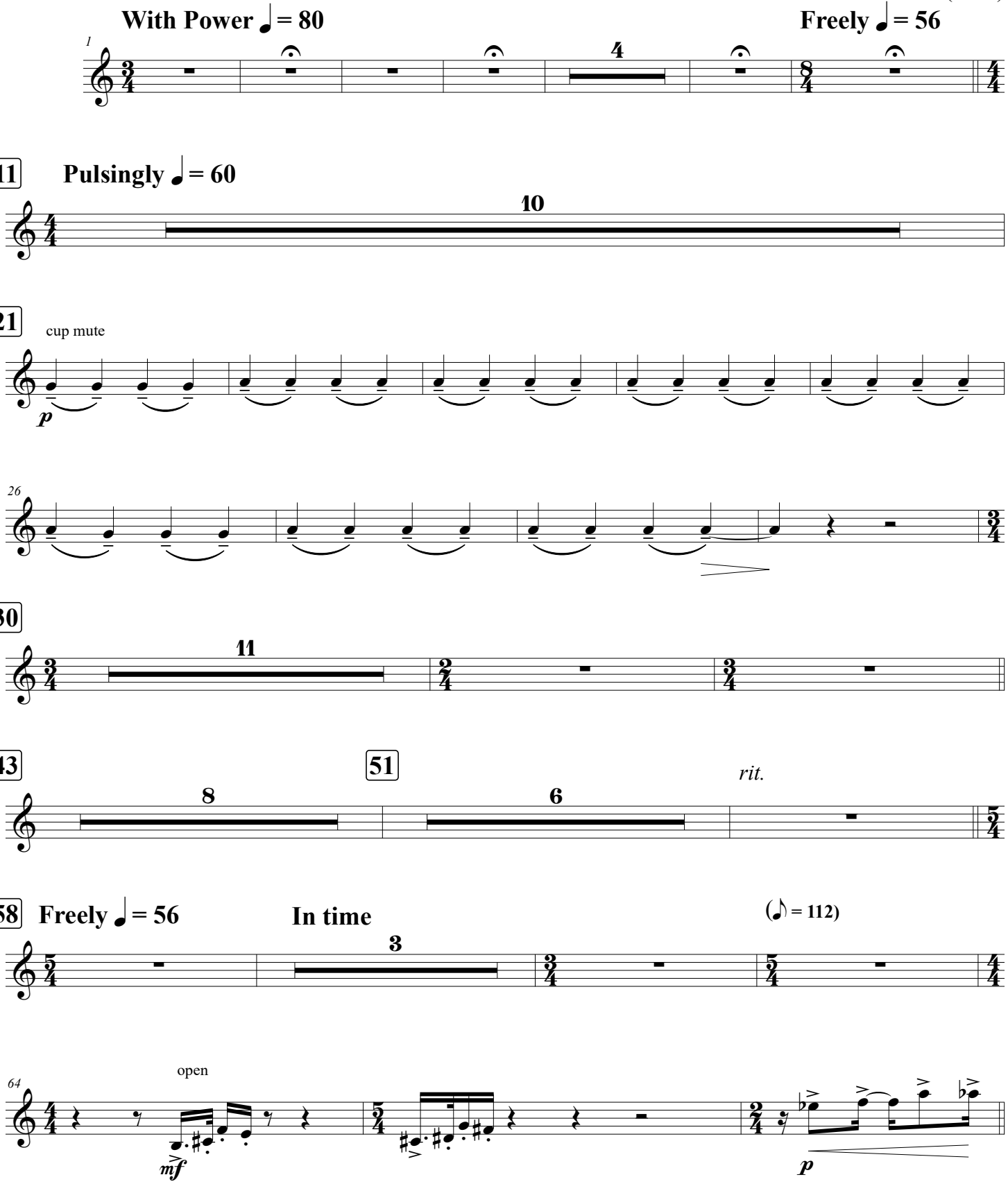
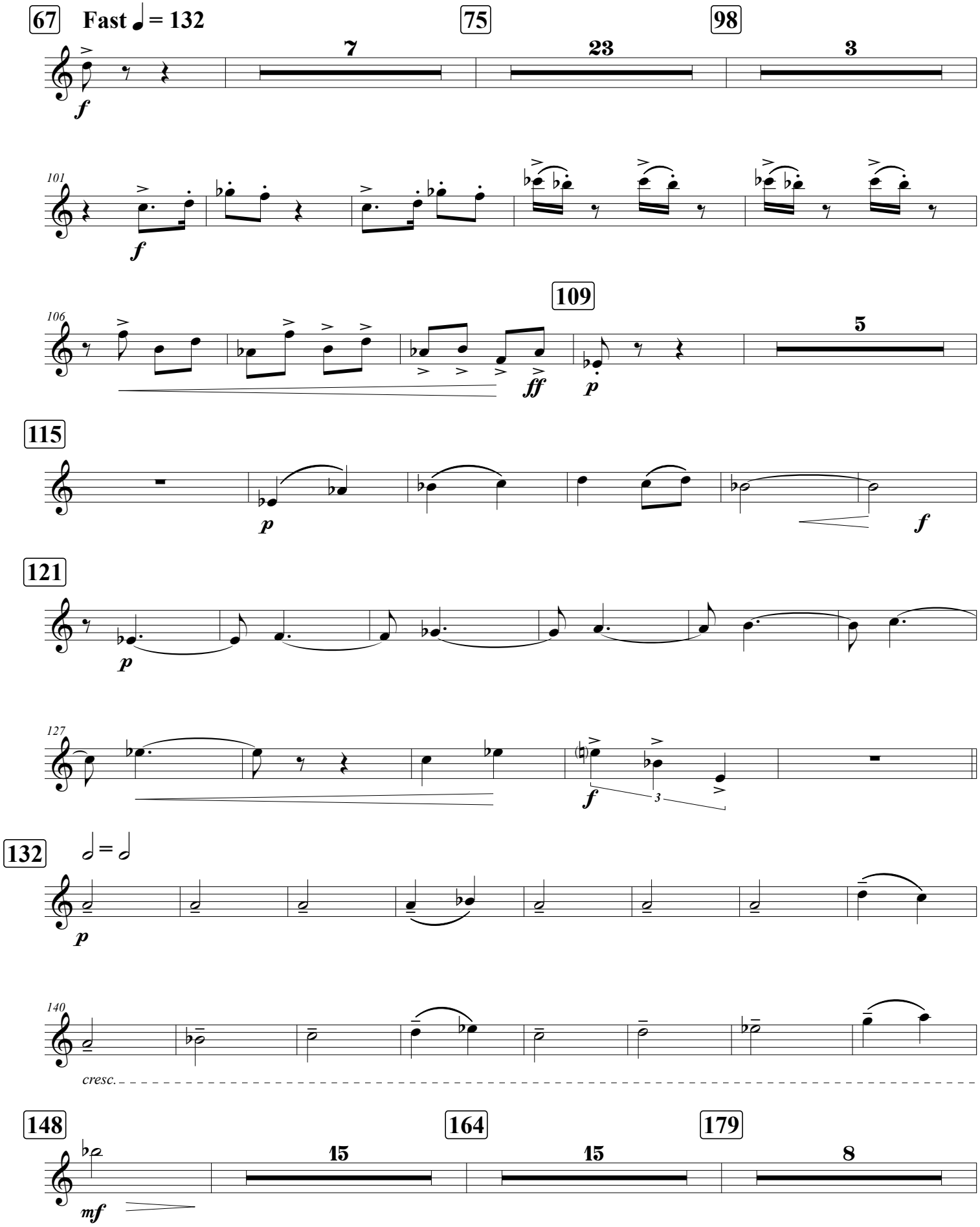
Ballet for Cello and Orchestra

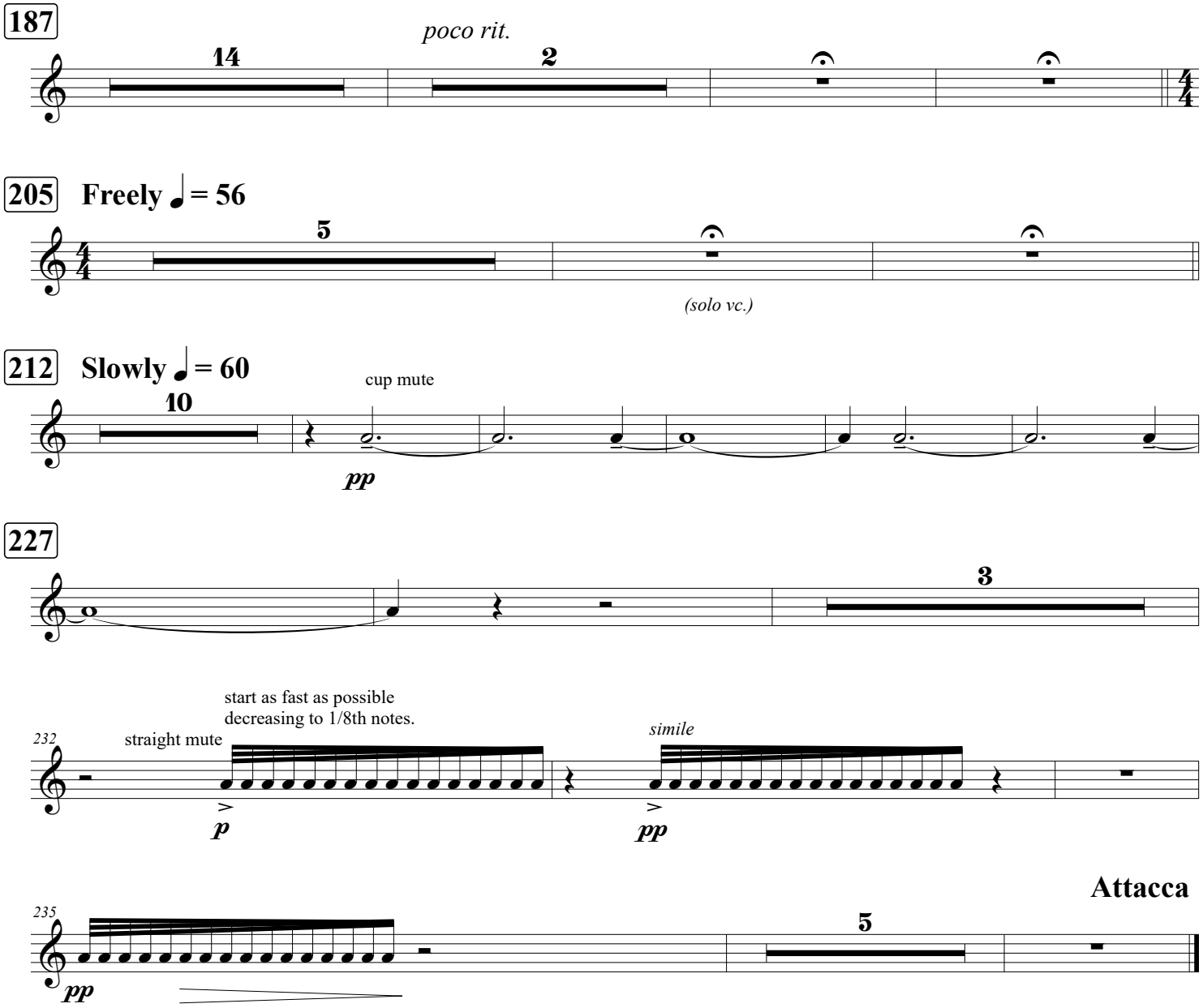
I. Walking

Trumpet in C 1

Rebecca Burkhardt (2025)

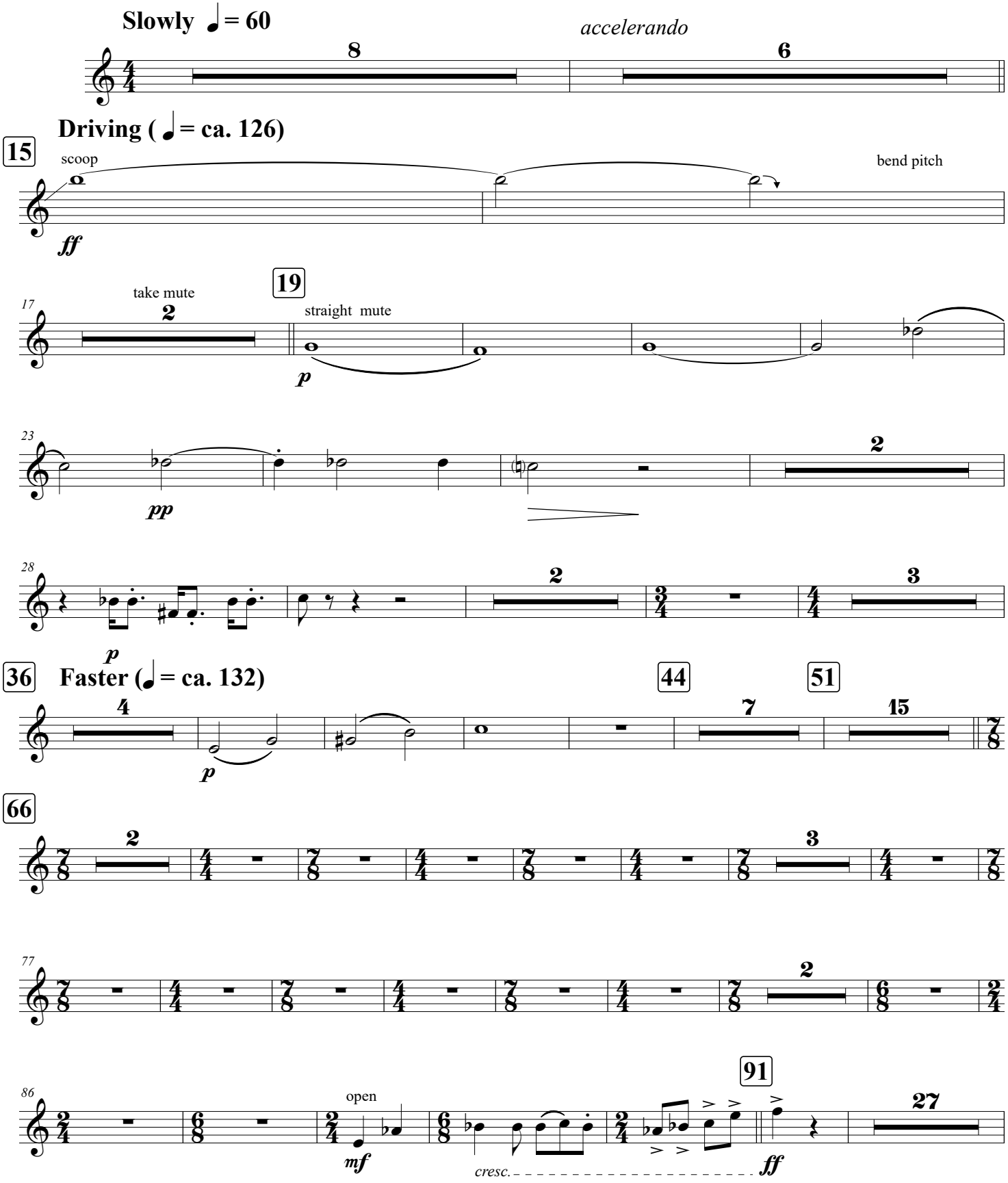


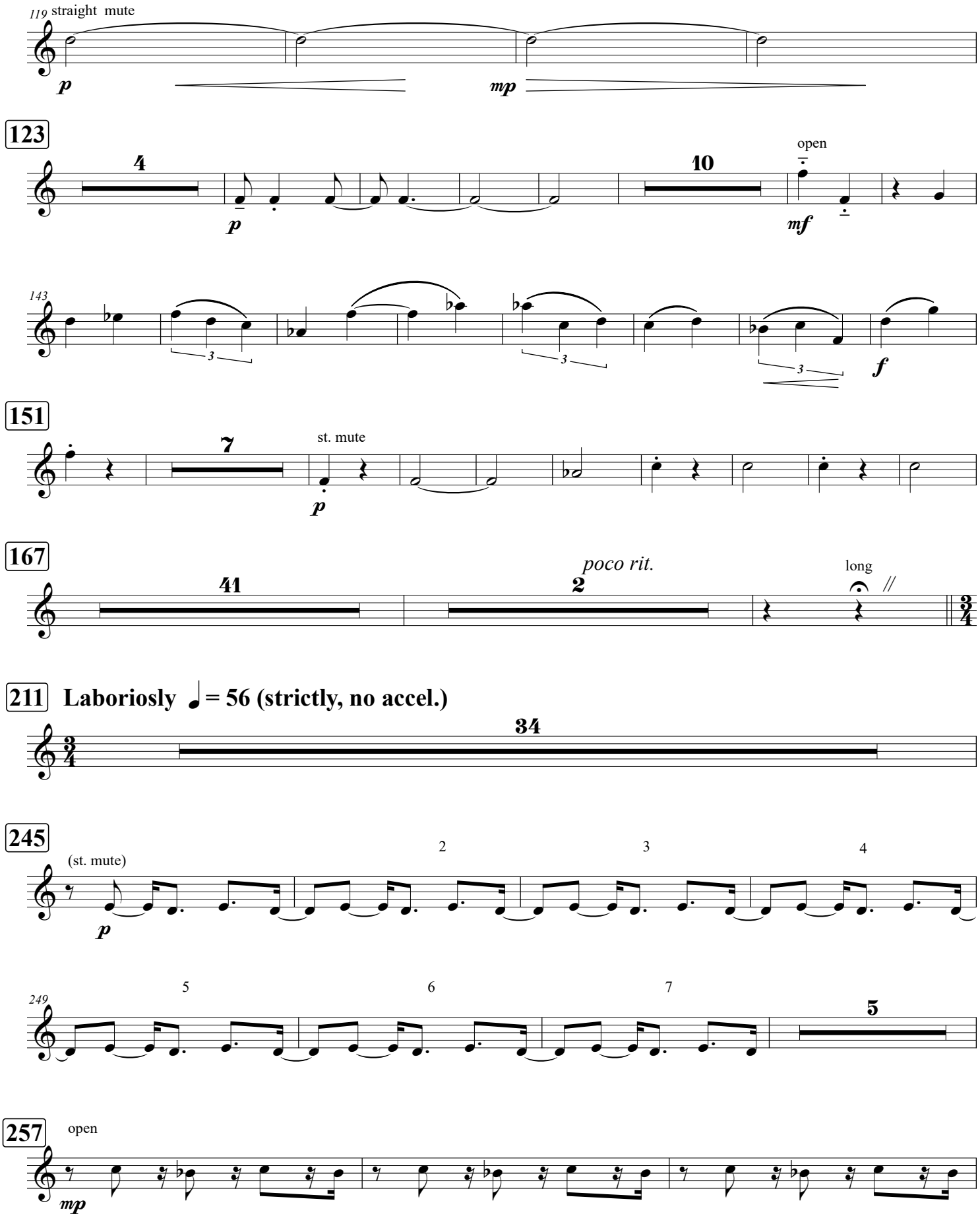

67
Fast ♩ = 132
f
7
75
23
98
3
101
f
106
109
ff
p
5
115
p
f
121
p
127
f
3
132
♩ = ♩
p
140
cresc.
148
mf
15
164
15
179
8

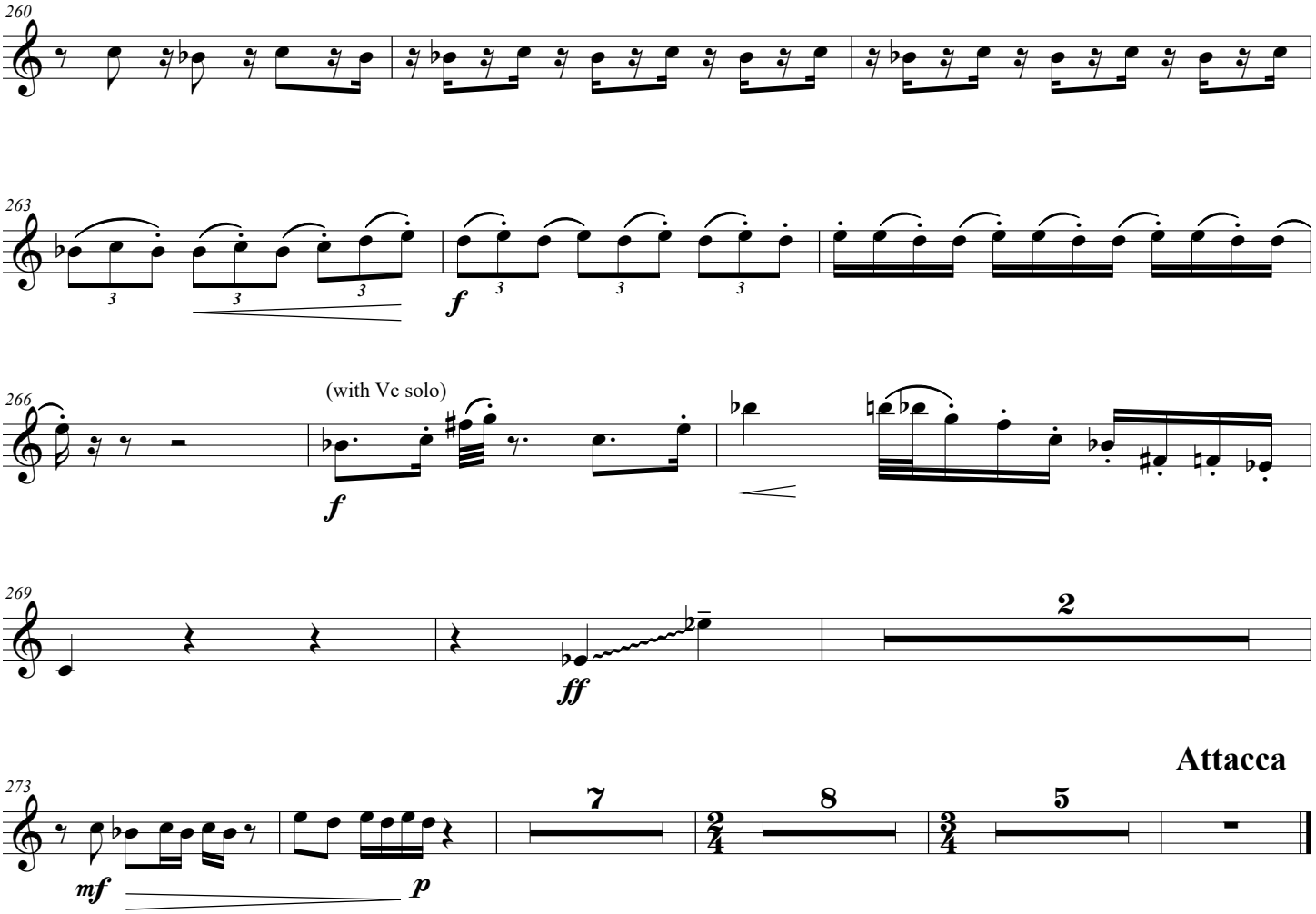

187
poco rit.
14
2
205
Freely ♩ = 56
5
(solo vc.)
212
Slowly ♩ = 60
10
cup mute
pp
227
3
232
straight mute
start as fast as possible
decreasing to 1/8th notes.
p
simile
pp
235
pp
5
Attacca

Trumpet in C 1

II. Working

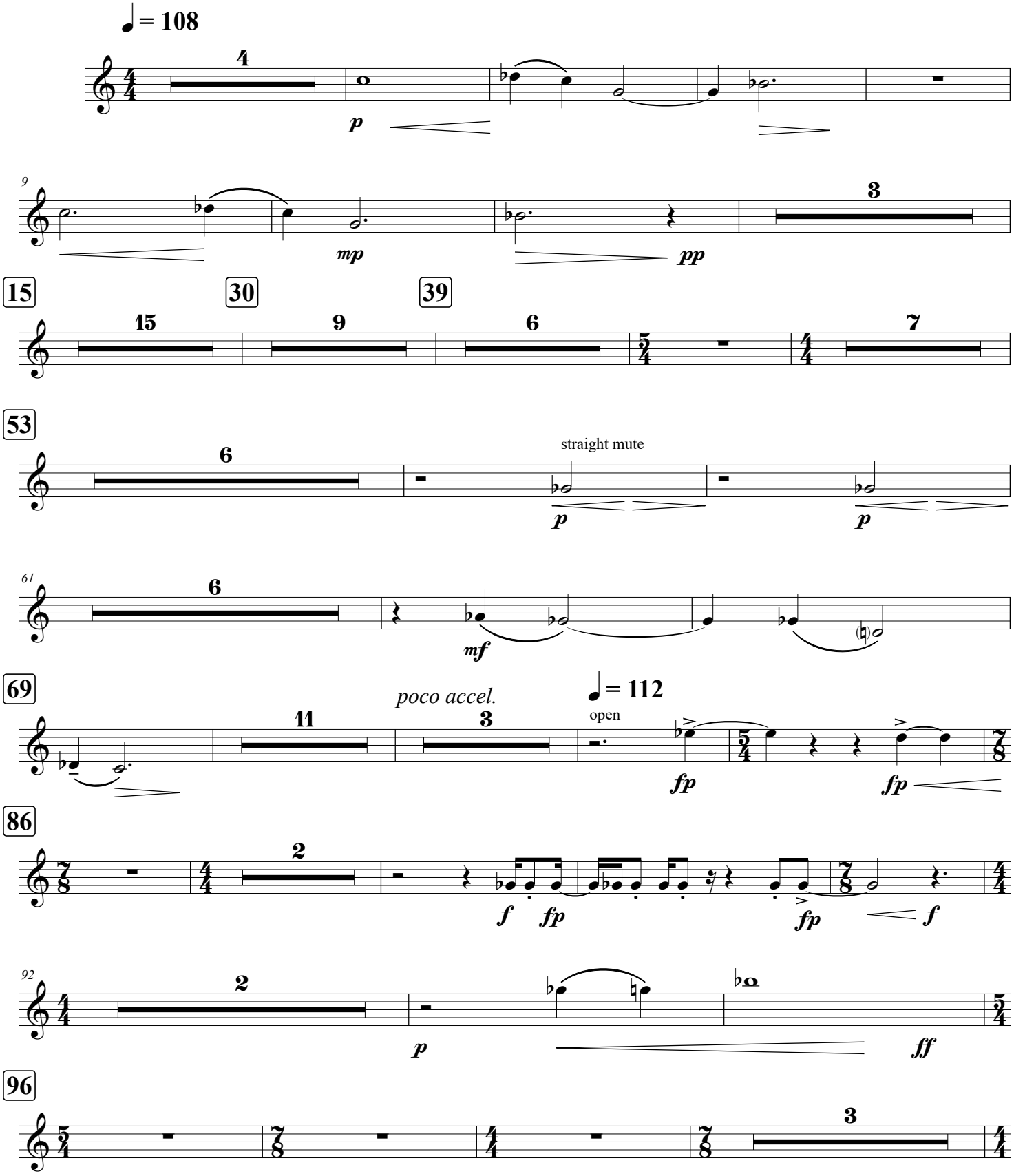


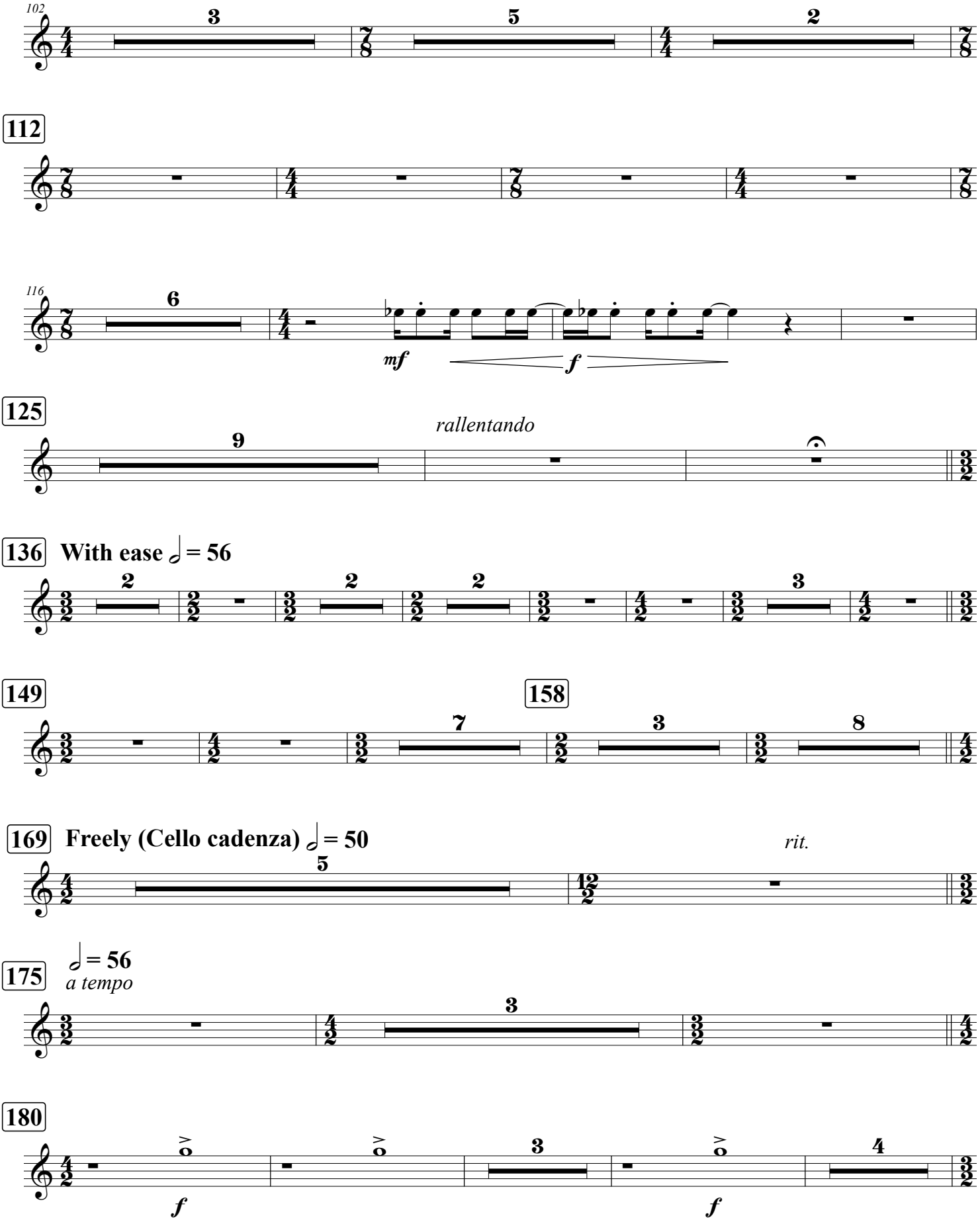

119
straight mute
p
mp
123
4
p
10
open
mf
143
3
3
3
f
151
7
st. mute
p
167
41
poco rit.
2
long
211
Laboriosly ♩= 56 (strictly, no accel.)
34
245
(st. mute)
p
2
3
4
249
5
6
7
5
257
open
mp

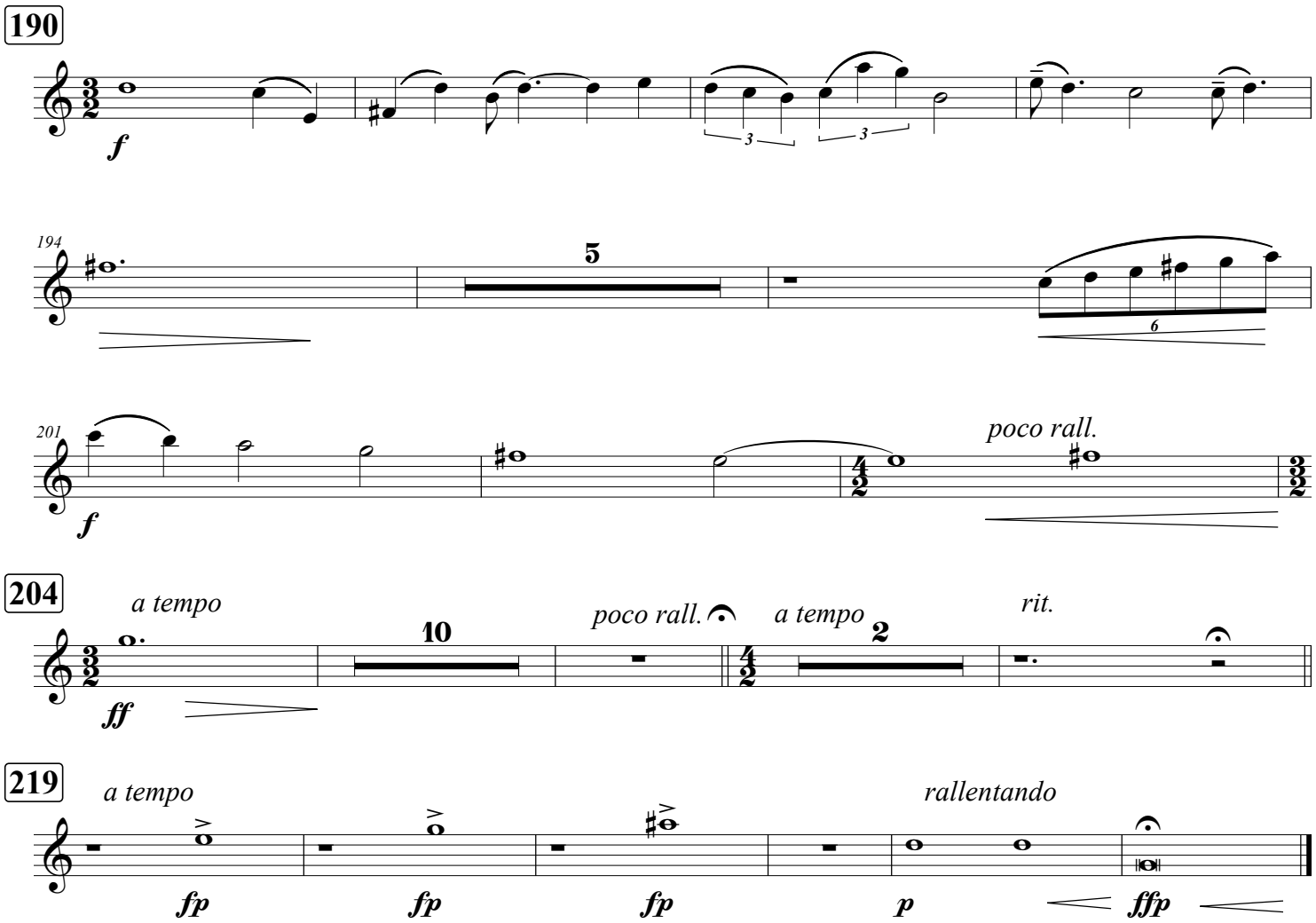

260
263
f
266
(with Vc solo)
f
269
ff
2
Attacca
273
mf
p
7
8
5

Trumpet in C 1

III. Wondering




102
3
5
2
112
116
6
mf
f
125
9
rallentando
136
With ease 𝅗𝅥 = 56
2
2
2
3
149
7
158
3
8
169
Freely (Cello cadenza) 𝅗𝅥 = 50
5
rit.
175
𝅗𝅥 = 56
a tempo
3
180
3
4
f
f


190
f
194
5
6
201
f
poco rall.
204
a tempo
ff
10
poco rall.
a tempo
2
rit.
219
a tempo
fp
fp
fp
p
rallentando
ffp