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

Percussion:

Timpani (5)/small triangle, tam tam*, sand blocks

Percussion 1

4 tom toms (H, MH, ML, L)*, snare drum, basket shakers (2)*, suspended cymbal, crash cymbals, Hi-hat, large triangle, concert bass drum*, chimes, crotales*

Percussion 2

concert bass drum*, small bass drum (lay flat), suspended cymbal, sizzle cymbal, crotales* (bowed), sleighbells, tambourine (double row preferred), snare drum, brake drum*, 4 tom toms (H, MH, ML, L)*, tam tam*

Percussion 3

whip, sleighbells, basket shakers (2)*, brake drum*
2 suspended cymbals (sm/med), claves, guiro, glockenspiel, marimba, xylophone

***Shared instruments**

© 2025

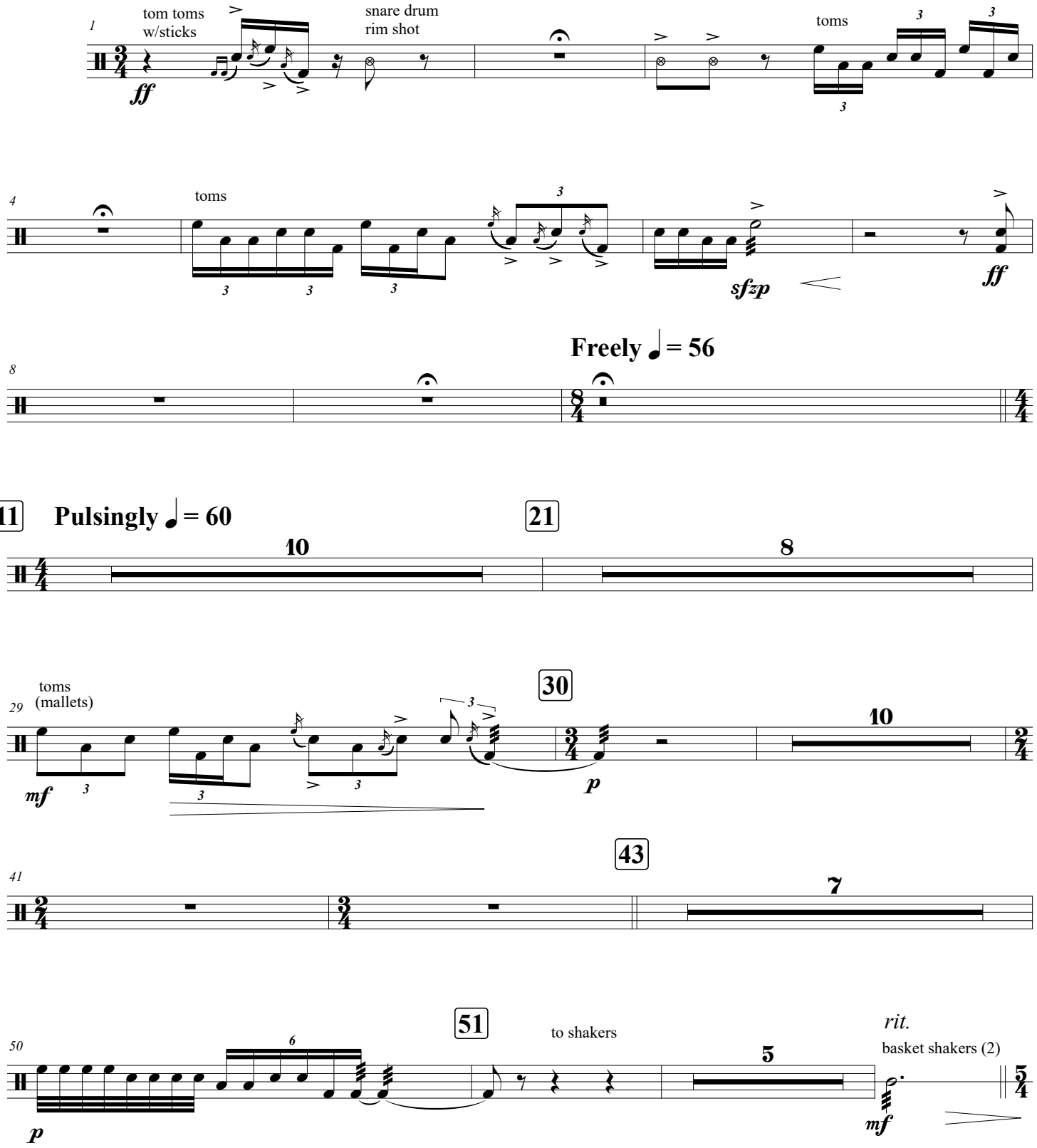
Percussion 1 (4 toms, SD, basket shakers (2), sus cym)

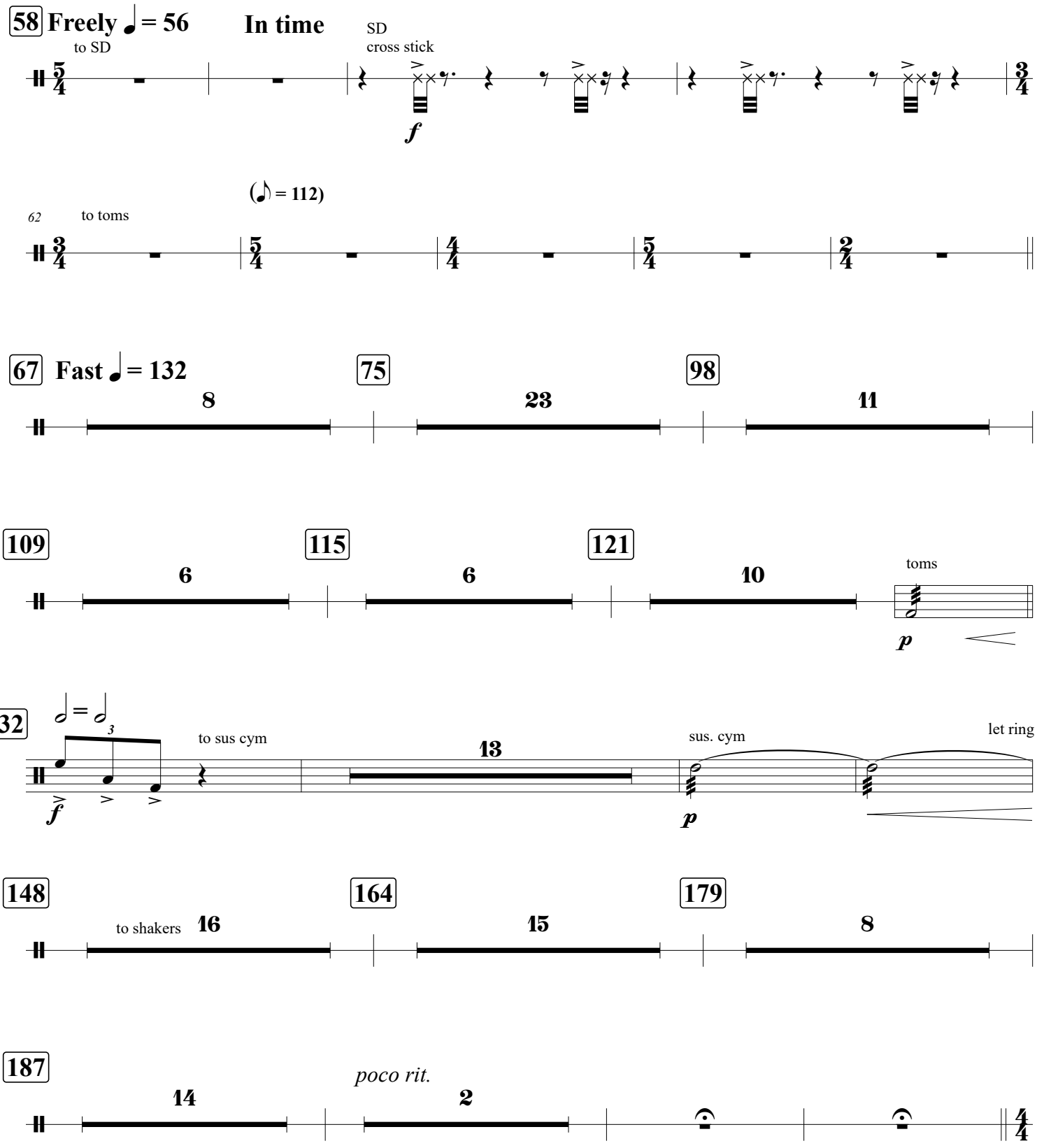
Ballet for Cello and Orchestra

I. Walking

Rebecca Burkhardt (2025)

With Power ♩ = 80




58
Freely ♩= 56
In time
to SD
SD
cross stick
f
(♪= 112)
62
to toms
67
Fast ♩= 132
8
75
23
98
11
109
6
115
6
121
10
toms
p
132
to sus cym
13
sus. cym
let ring
f
p
148
to shakers
16
164
15
179
8
187
poco rit.
14
2

205 **Freely** ♩ = 56

5

(solo vc.)

212 **Slowly** ♩ = 60

15

227

9

shakers

236

mf

239

Attacca

Percussion 1

2 basket shakers, 4 toms,
sus cym, snare drum,
Hi-hat, Lg Triangle,
Bass Drum, Chimes,
Crotales

II. Working

Slowly ♩ = 60

shakers (2)

mf

to SD/toms

3

7

snare drum

p

mid tom

accelerando

9

high tom

3

low tom

12

15 Driving (♩ = ca. 126)

R. S.

f

f

to triangle

19

13

3

36 Faster (♩ = ca. 132)

44

51

8

7

15

66 Large Triangle (muted)

mf

p

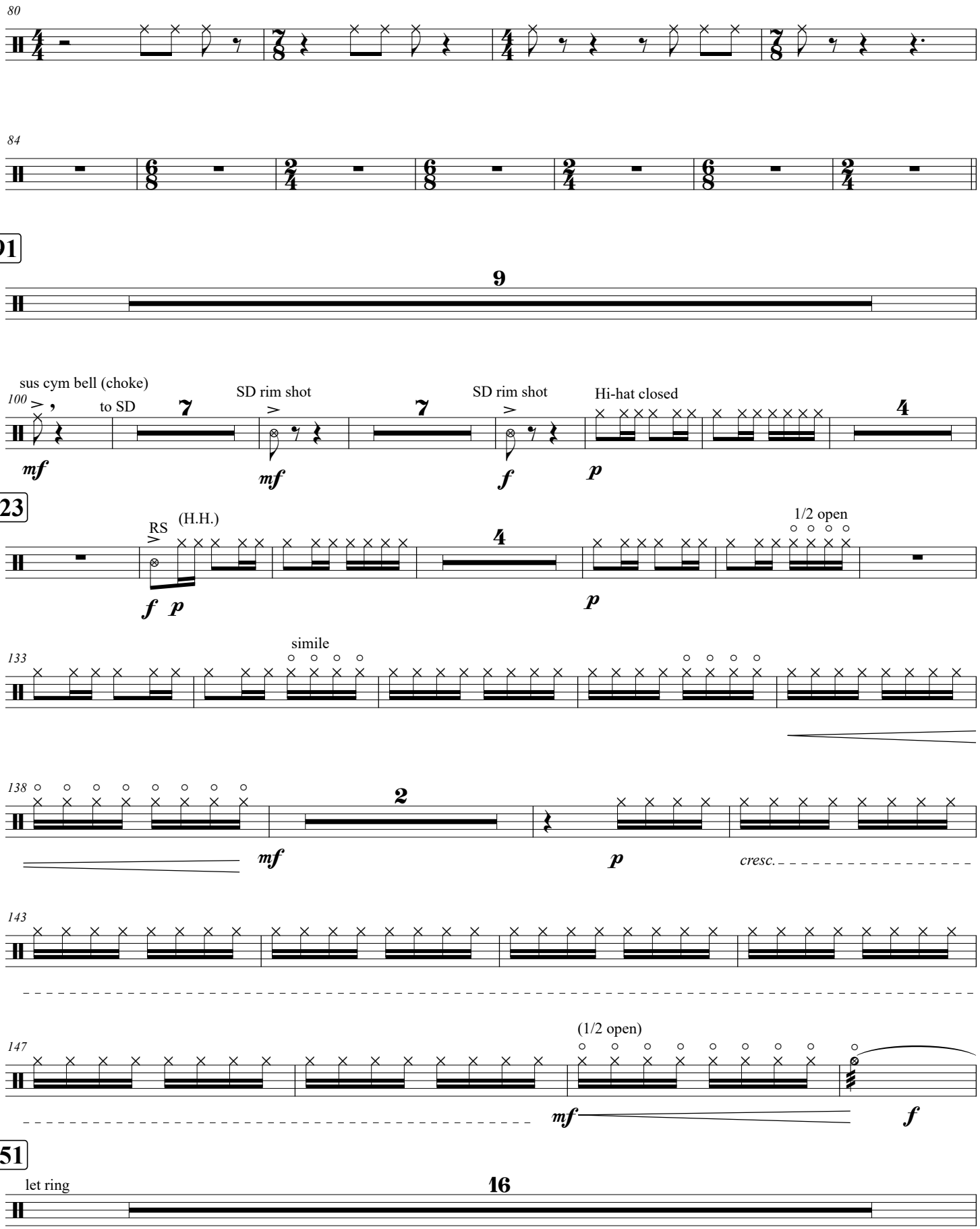
71

to sus. cym.

76 sus cym bell (choke)

p

simile


80
84
91
9
sus cym bell (choke)
100
to SD
SD rim shot
SD rim shot
Hi-hat closed
mf
mf
f
p
123
RS
(H.H.)
1/2 open
f p
p
133
simile
138
2
mf
p
cresc.
143
147
(1/2 open)
mf
f
151
let ring
16

167

36

(HH closed)

203

to BD

2

mf *pp*

208

poco rit.

2

long

//

211 Laboriosly ♩= 56 (strictly, no accel.)

Bass Drum

f

216

to chimes

15

chimes

234 (choked/damper up)

p

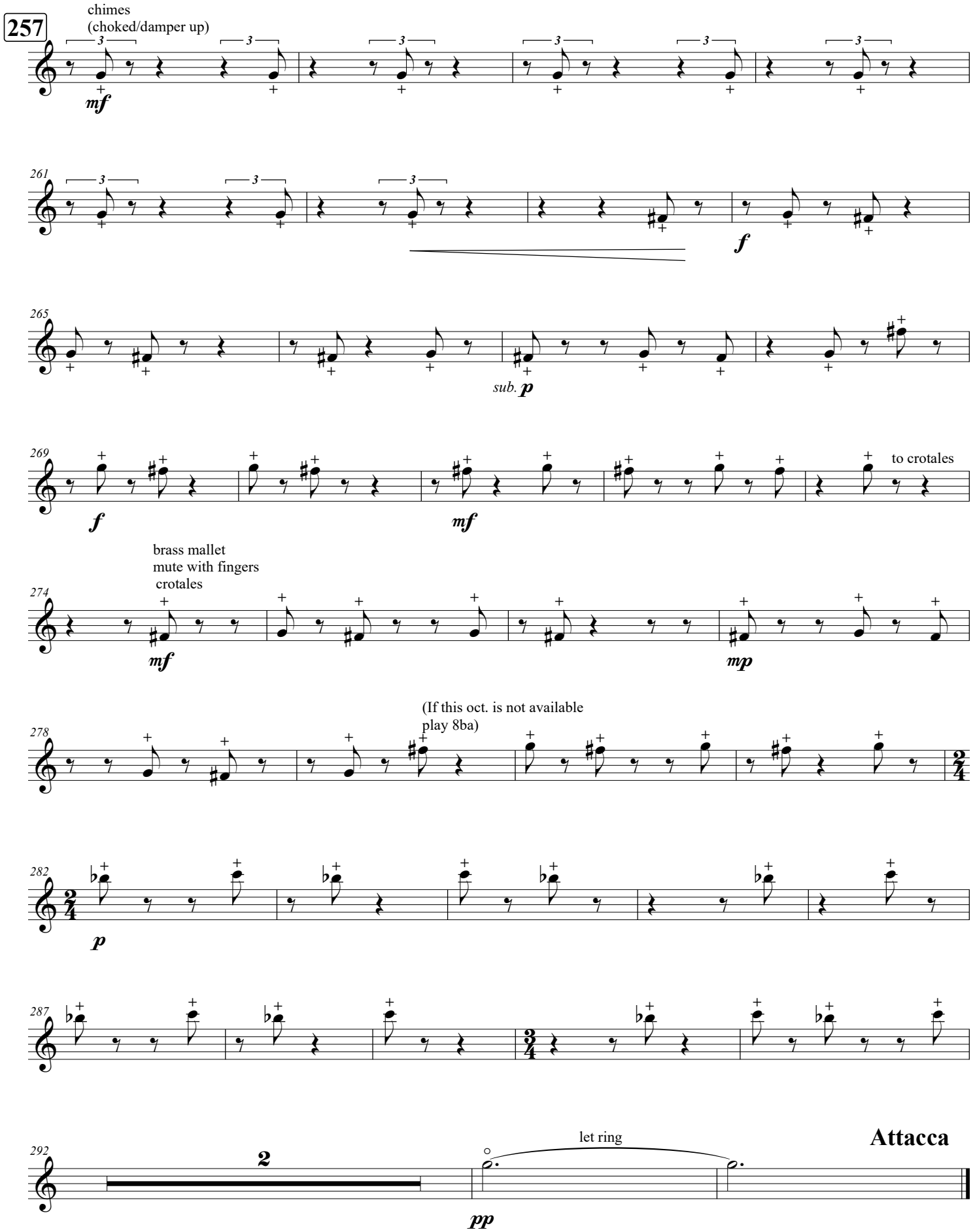
238

242

245

3 3 3

10


257
chimes
(choked/damper up)
mf
261
f
265
sub. p
269
f
mf
to crotales
brass mallet
mute with fingers
crotales
274
mf
mp
(If this oct. is not available
play 8ba)
278
282
p
287
292
2
let ring
pp
Attacca

Percussion 1

Snare Drum
Sus Cymbal
Crash Cymbals

III. Wondering

♩ = 108

3

S.D.

to sus. cym.

p *p* *p*

9

sus cym
with sticks

S.D.

to sus. cym.

3

mf *p*

15

2

sus cym
with sticks

3

mf

3 3 3 3

22

sus cym
(yarn)

to SD

3

S.D.

p *p*

30

snares off

5

snares off

f *p*

39

4

46

2

mf *mf*

53

69

poco accel.

51

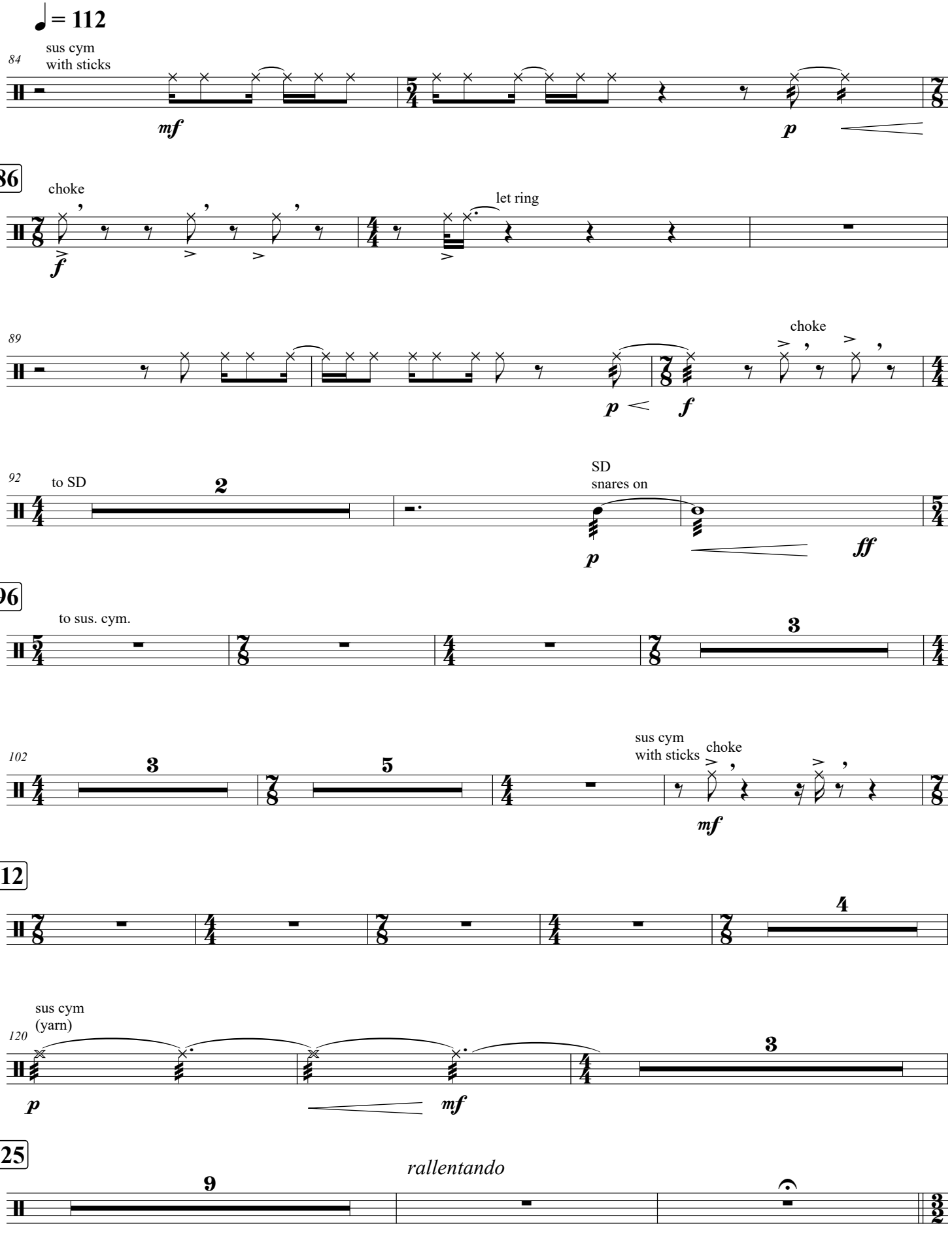
to sus. cym.

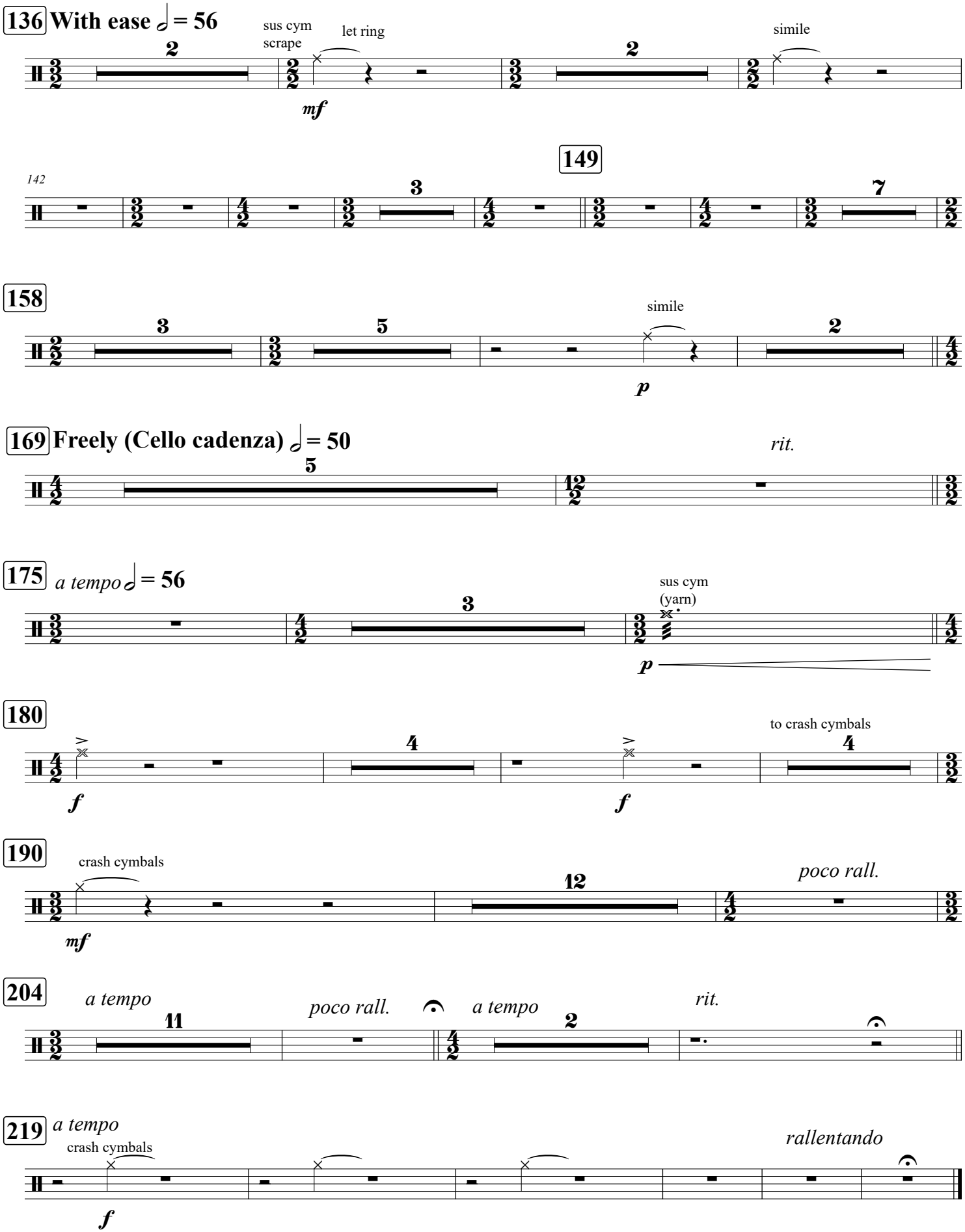
2

16

12

3


♩= 112
84
sus cym
with sticks
mf
p
86
choke
f
let ring
89
choke
p
f
92
to SD
2
SD
snares on
p
ff
96
to sus. cym.
3
102
3
5
sus cym
with sticks
choke
mf
112
4
120
sus cym
(yarn)
p
mf
3
125
rallentando
9


136 With ease 𝅗𝅥 = 56
sus cym
scrape
let ring
simile
mf
142
149
158
simile
p
169 Freely (Cello cadenza) 𝅗𝅥 = 50
rit.
175 a tempo 𝅗𝅥 = 56
sus cym
(yarn)
p
180
to crash cymbals
f
f
190
crash cymbals
poco rall.
mf
204
a tempo
poco rall.
a tempo
rit.
219 a tempo
crash cymbals
rallentando
f