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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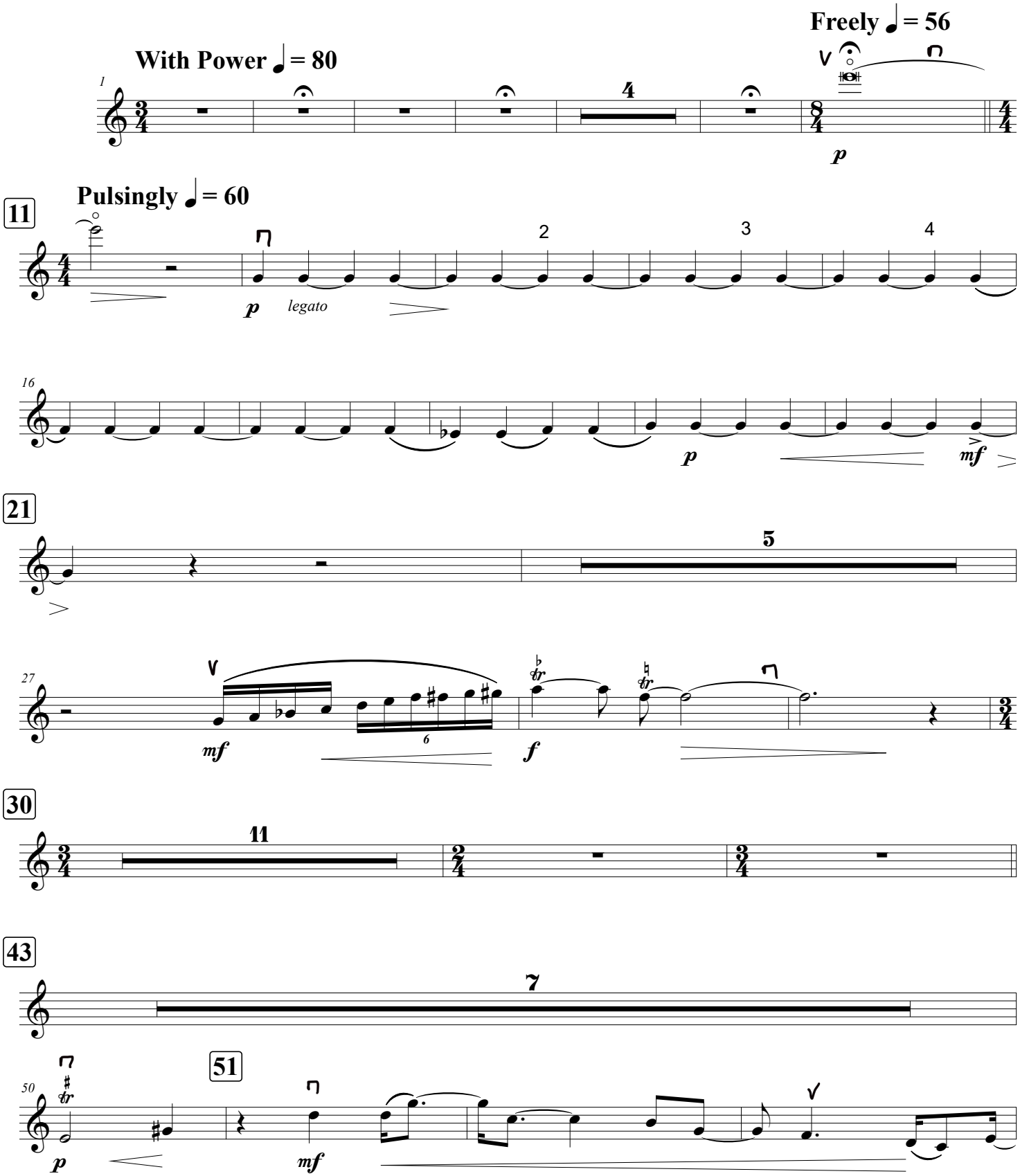
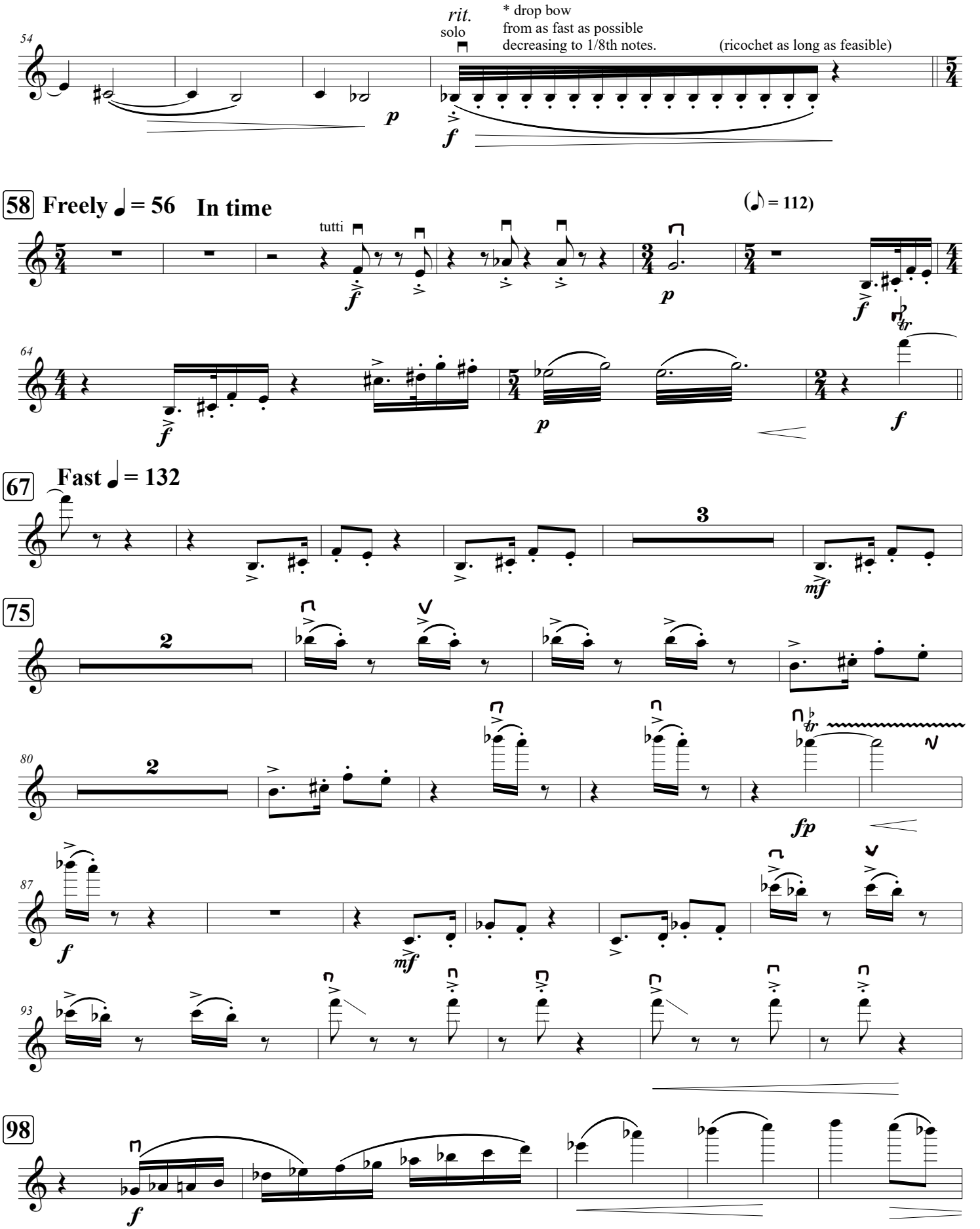
Ballet for Cello and Orchestra

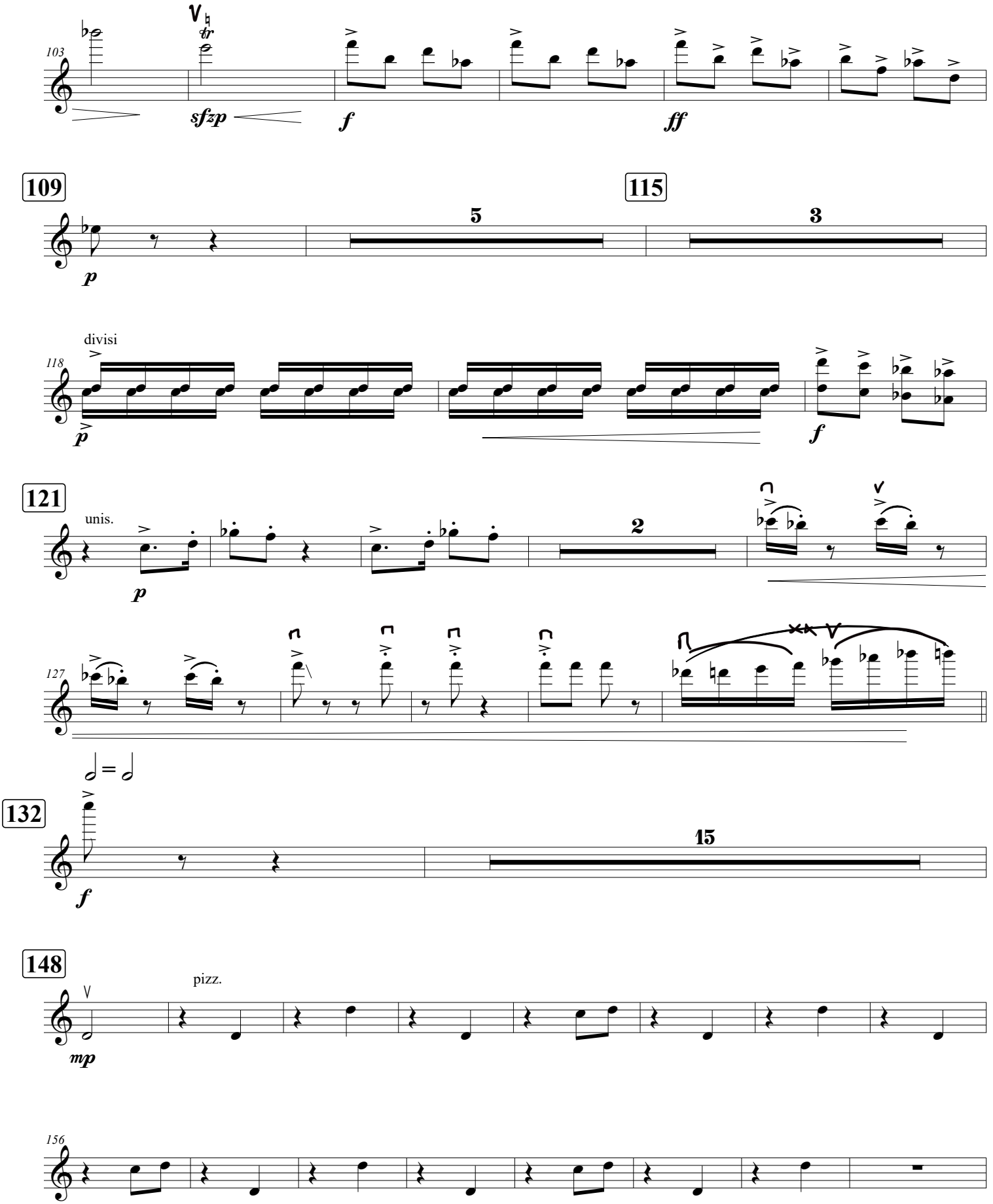
I. Walking

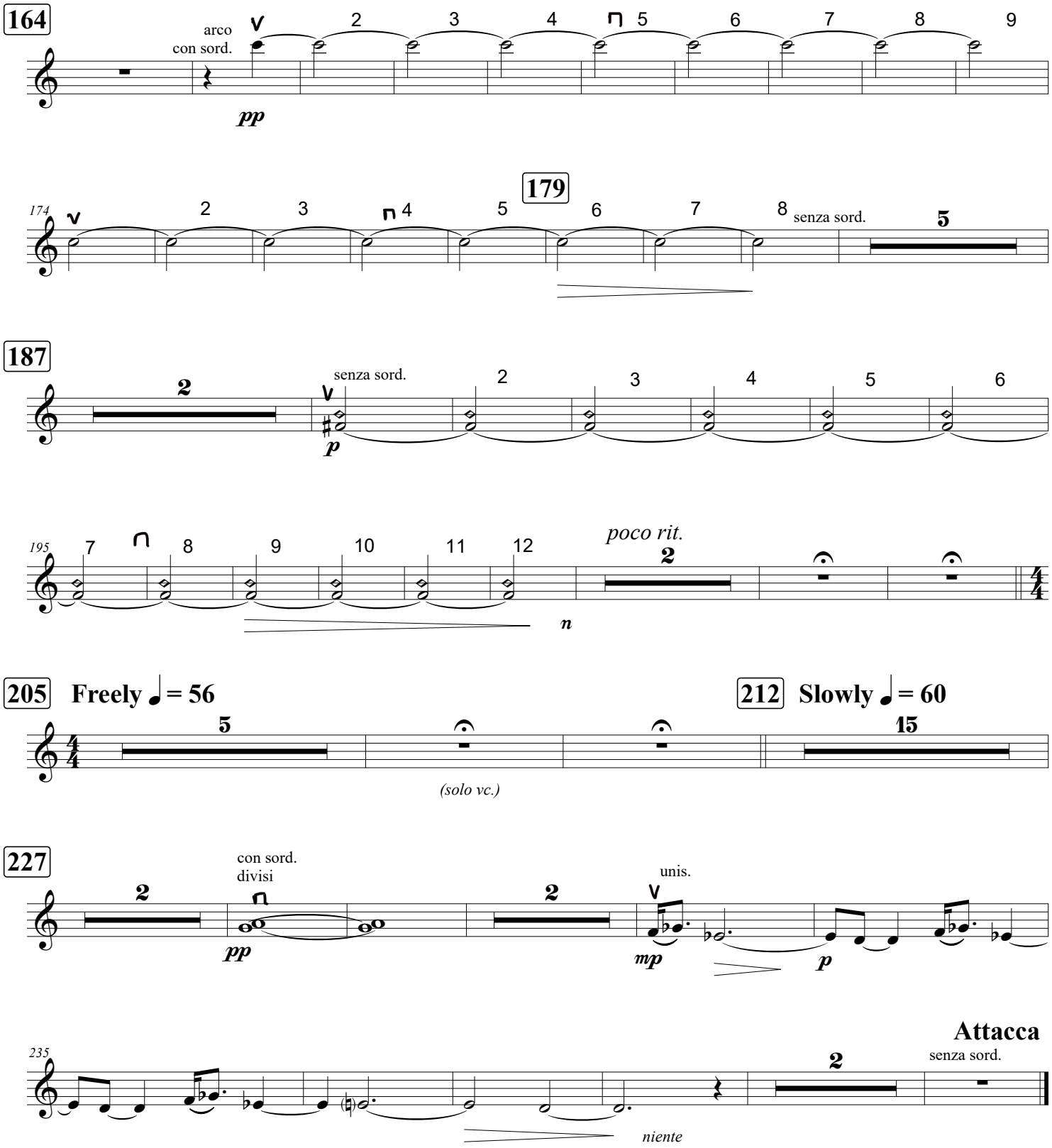
Violin I

Rebecca Burkhardt (2025)



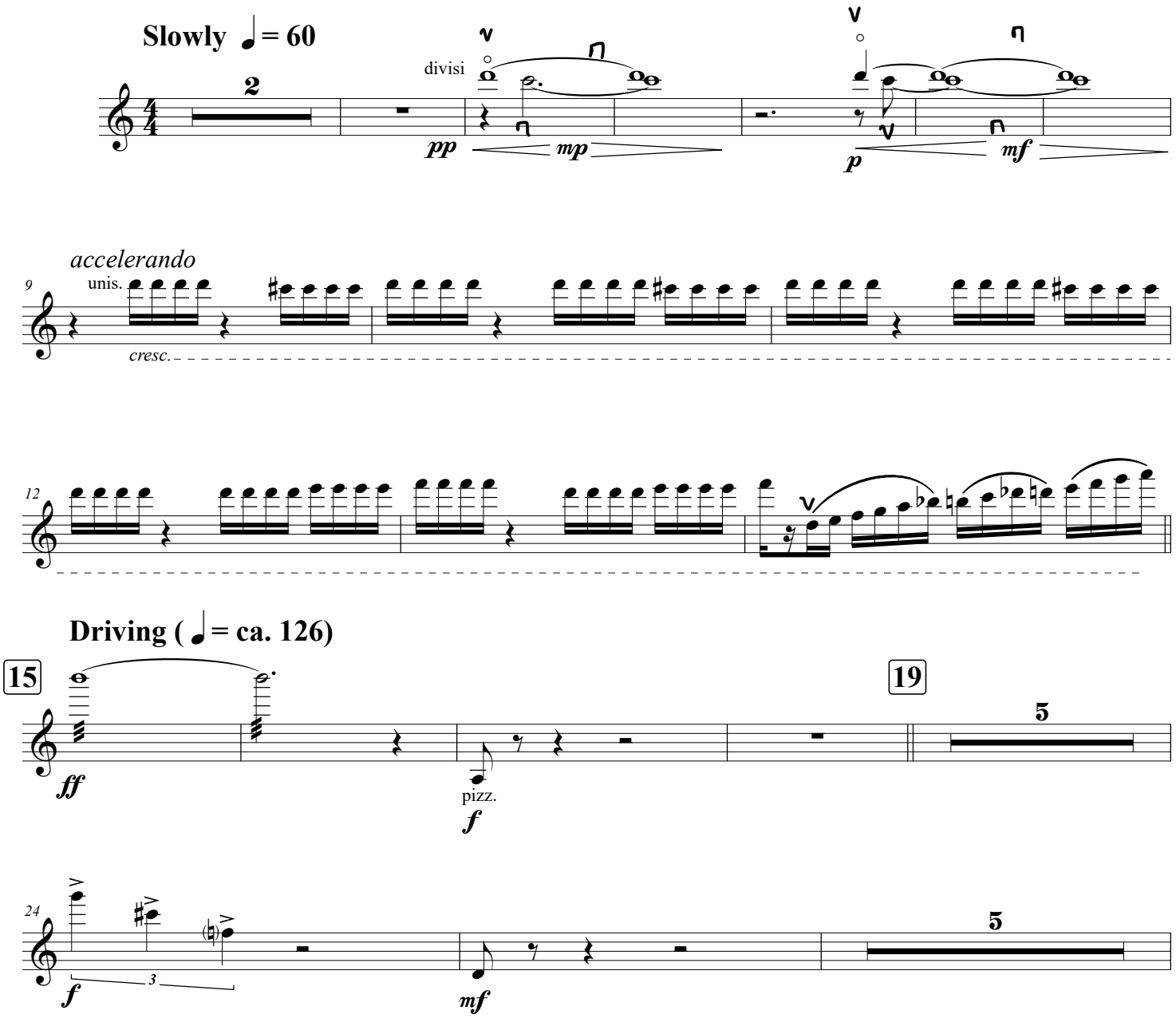

54
rit.
solo
* drop bow
from as fast as possible
decreasing to 1/8th notes.
(ricochet as long as feasible)
p
f
58
Freely ♩ = 56
In time
(𝅗𝅥 = 112)
tutti
f
p
64
f
p
f
67
Fast ♩ = 132
3
mf
75
2
80
2
fp
87
f
mf
93
98
f

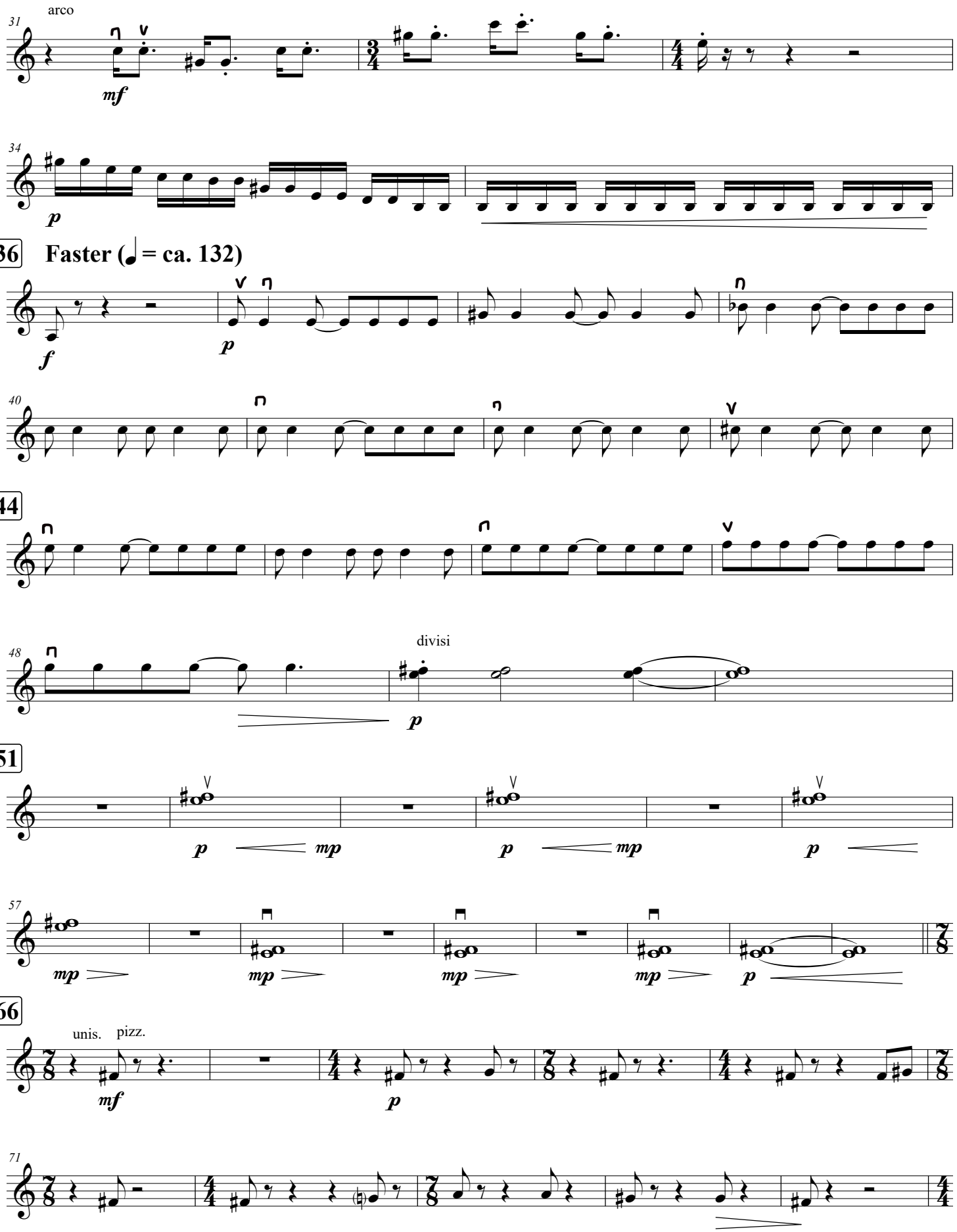

103
tr
sfzp
f
ff
109
5
p
115
3
divisi
118
p
f
121
unis.
p
2
127
132
15
f
148
pizz.
mp
156

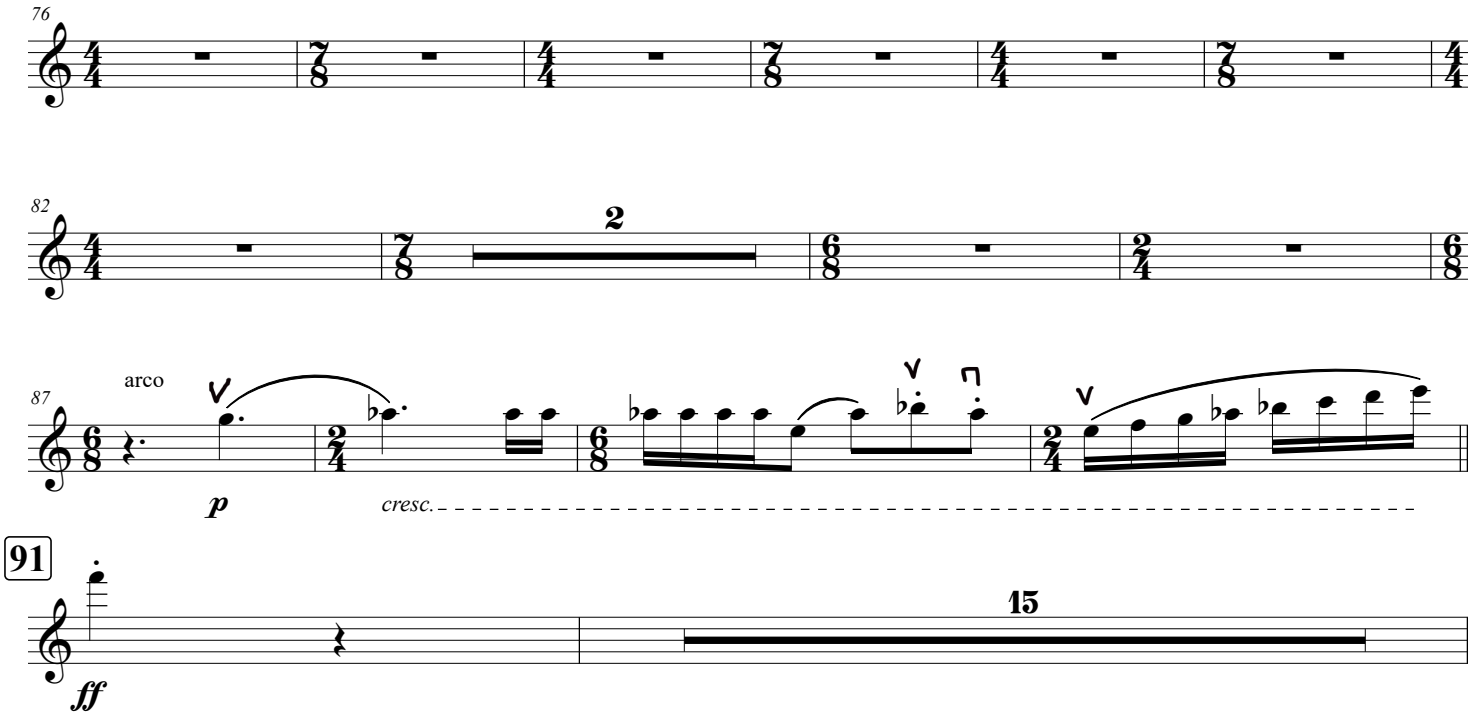

164
arco
con sord.
pp
174
179
senza sord.
187
senza sord.
p
195
poco rit.
n
205
Freely ♩ = 56
(solo vc.)
212
Slowly ♩ = 60
227
con sord.
divisi
pp
unis.
mp
p
235
Attacca
senza sord.
niente

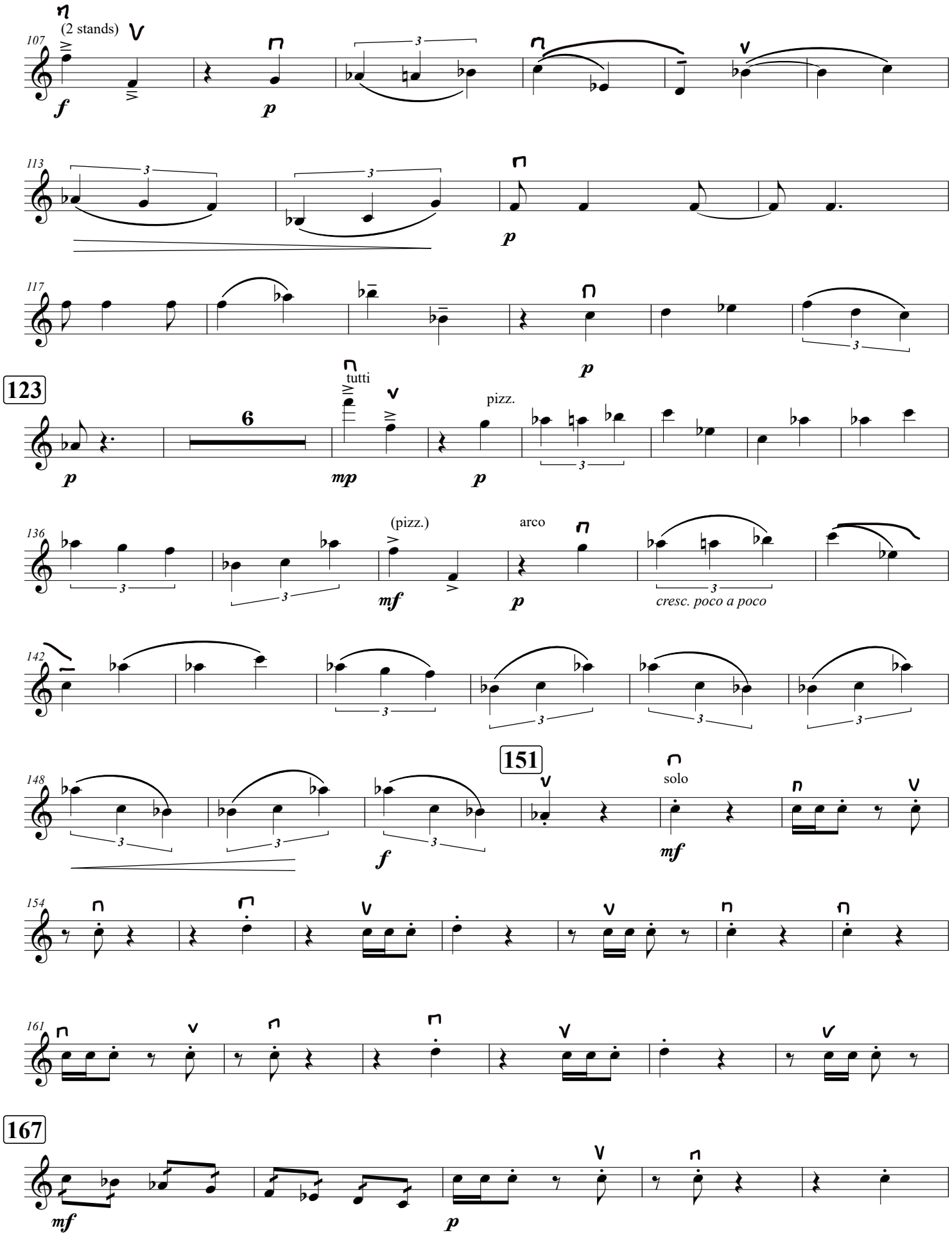
Violin I

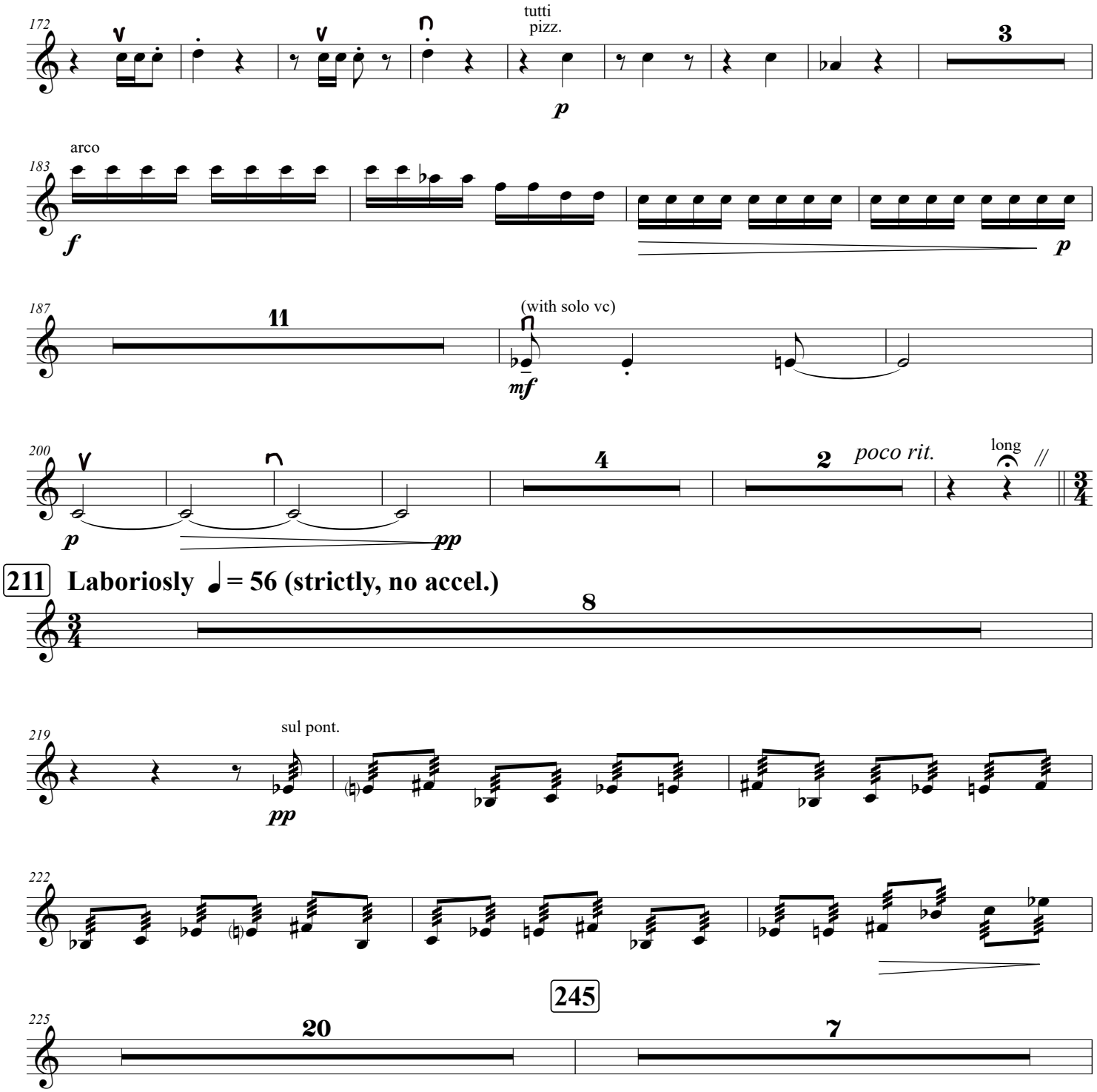
II. Working

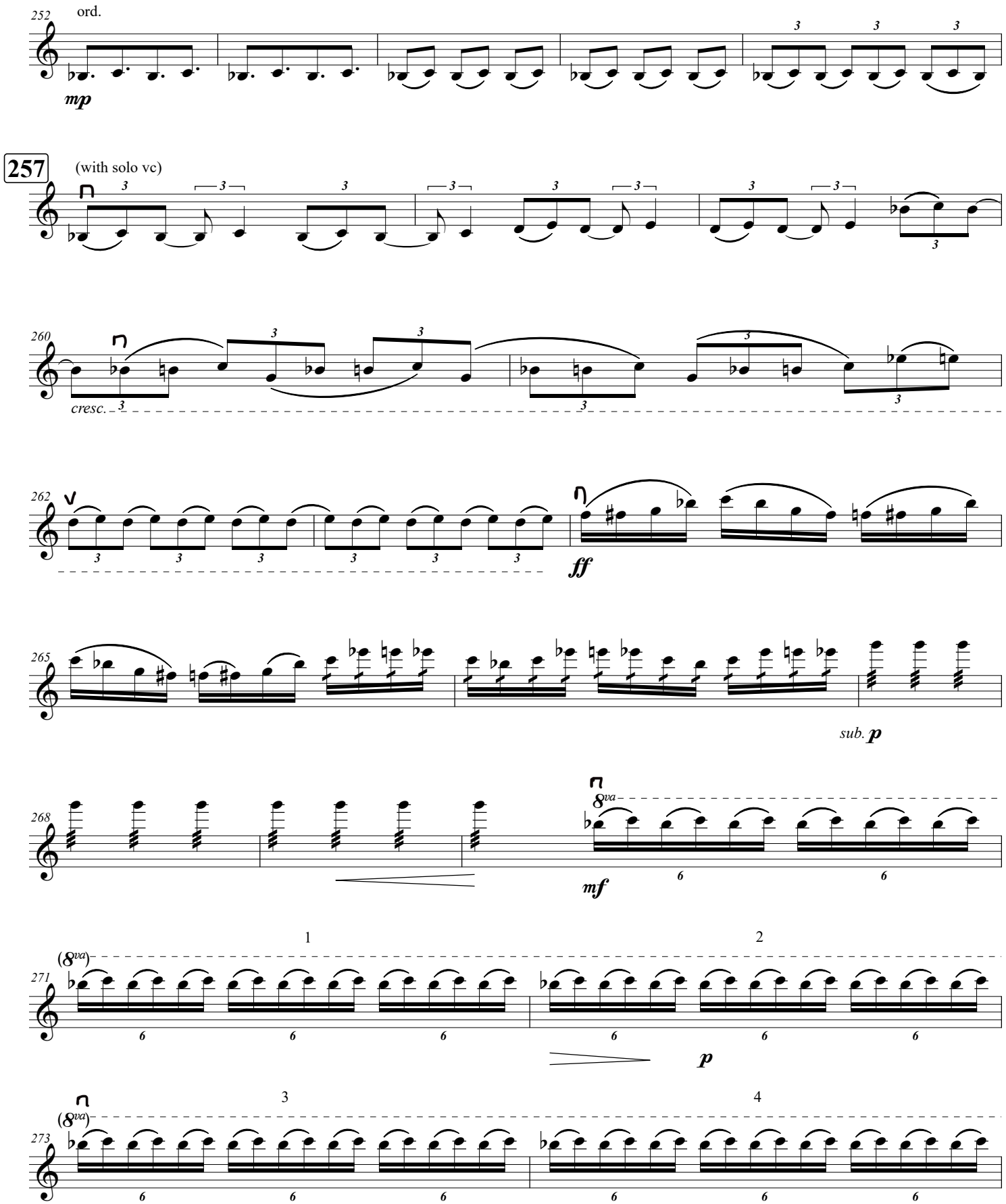


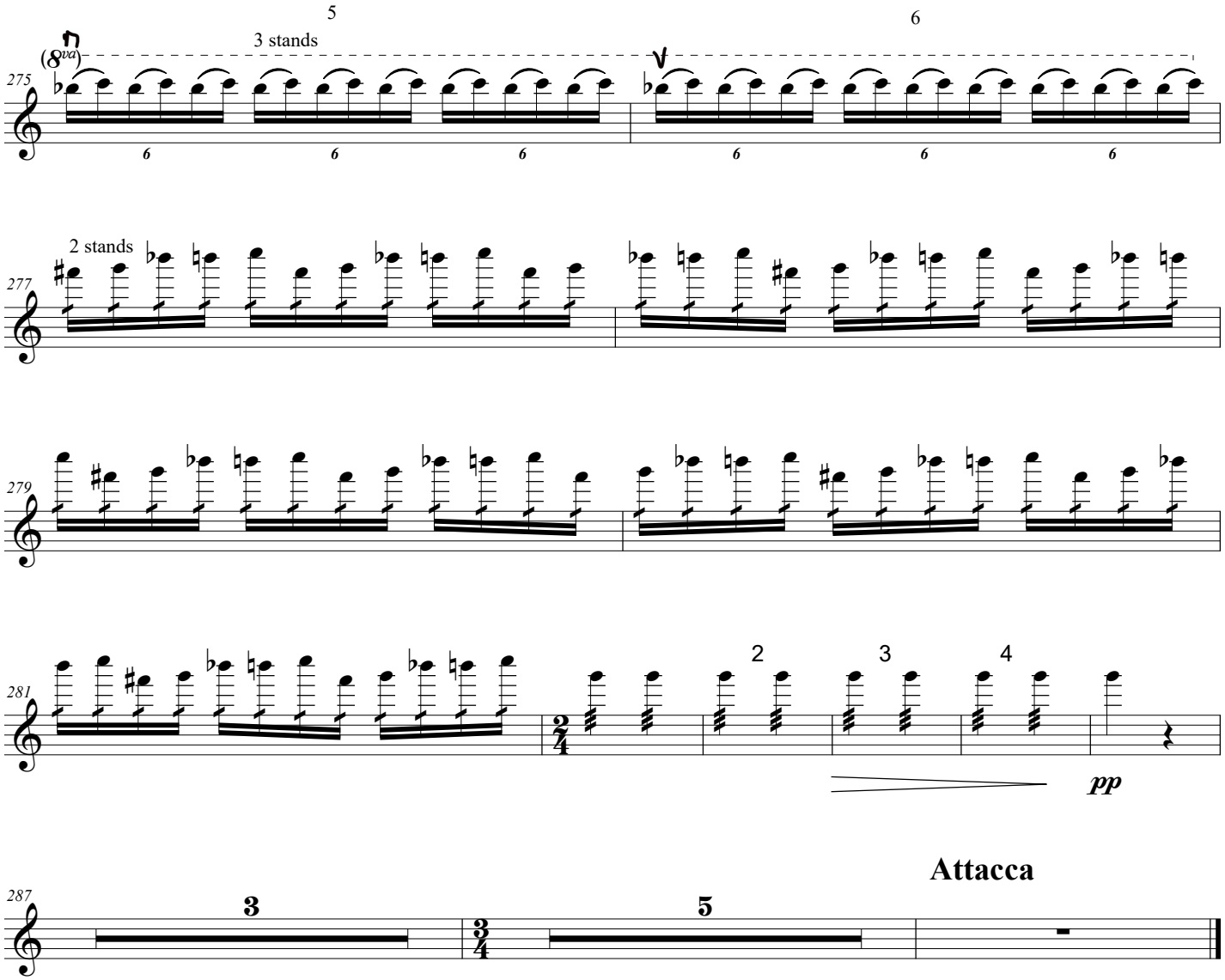

31
arco
mf
34
p
36
Faster (♩ = ca. 132)
f
p
40
44
48
divisi
p
51
p
mp
p
mp
p
57
mp
mp
mp
mp
p
66
unis.
pizz.
mf
p
71


76
82
2
87
arco
p
cresc.
91
15
ff


107
(2 stands)
f
p
113
p
117
p
123
p
6
tutti
mp
pizz.
p
136
(pizz.)
mf
arco
p
cresc. poco a poco
142
148
f
151
solo
mf
154
161
167
mf
p

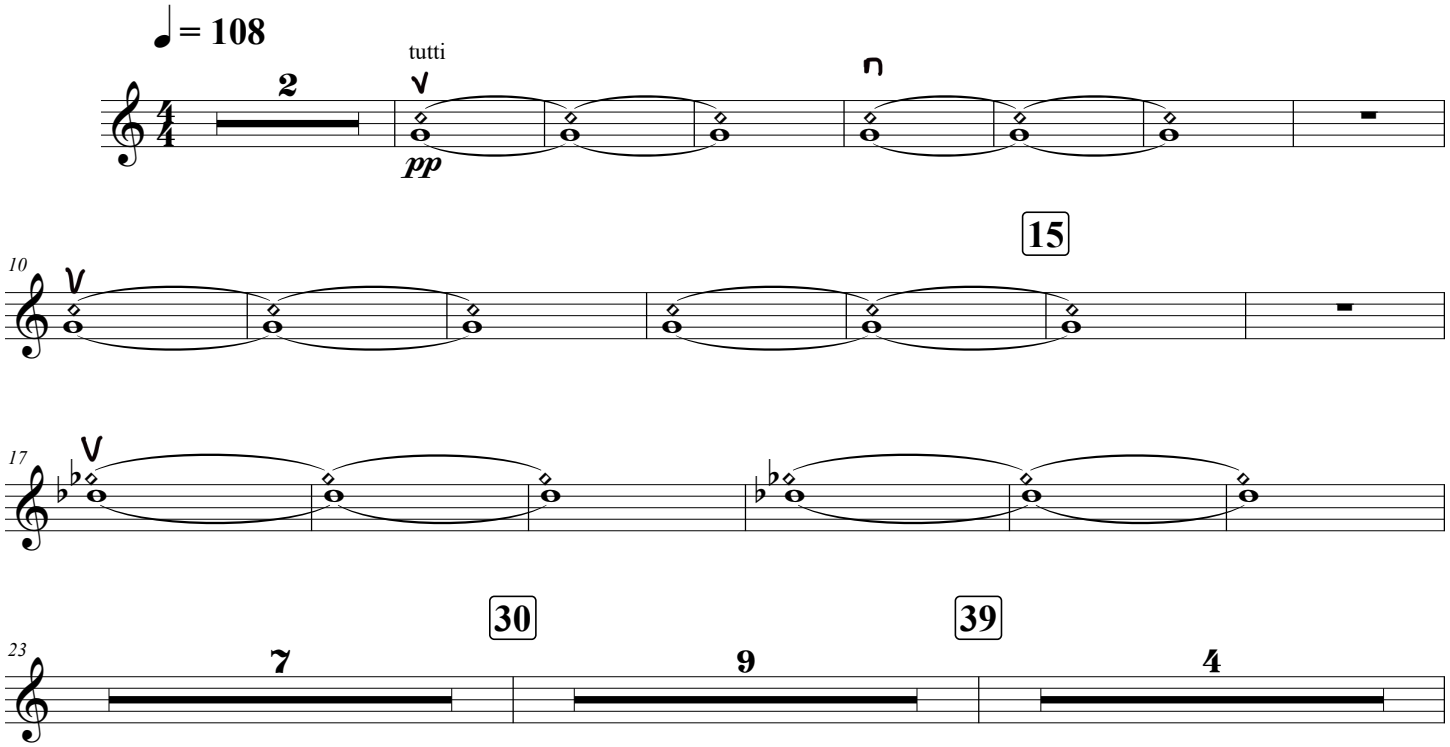

172
tutti
pizz.
p
3
183
arco
f
p
187
11
(with solo vc)
mf
200
p
pp
4
2
poco rit.
long
211
Laboriosly ♩ = 56 (strictly, no accel.)
8
219
sul pont.
pp
222
245
225
20
7

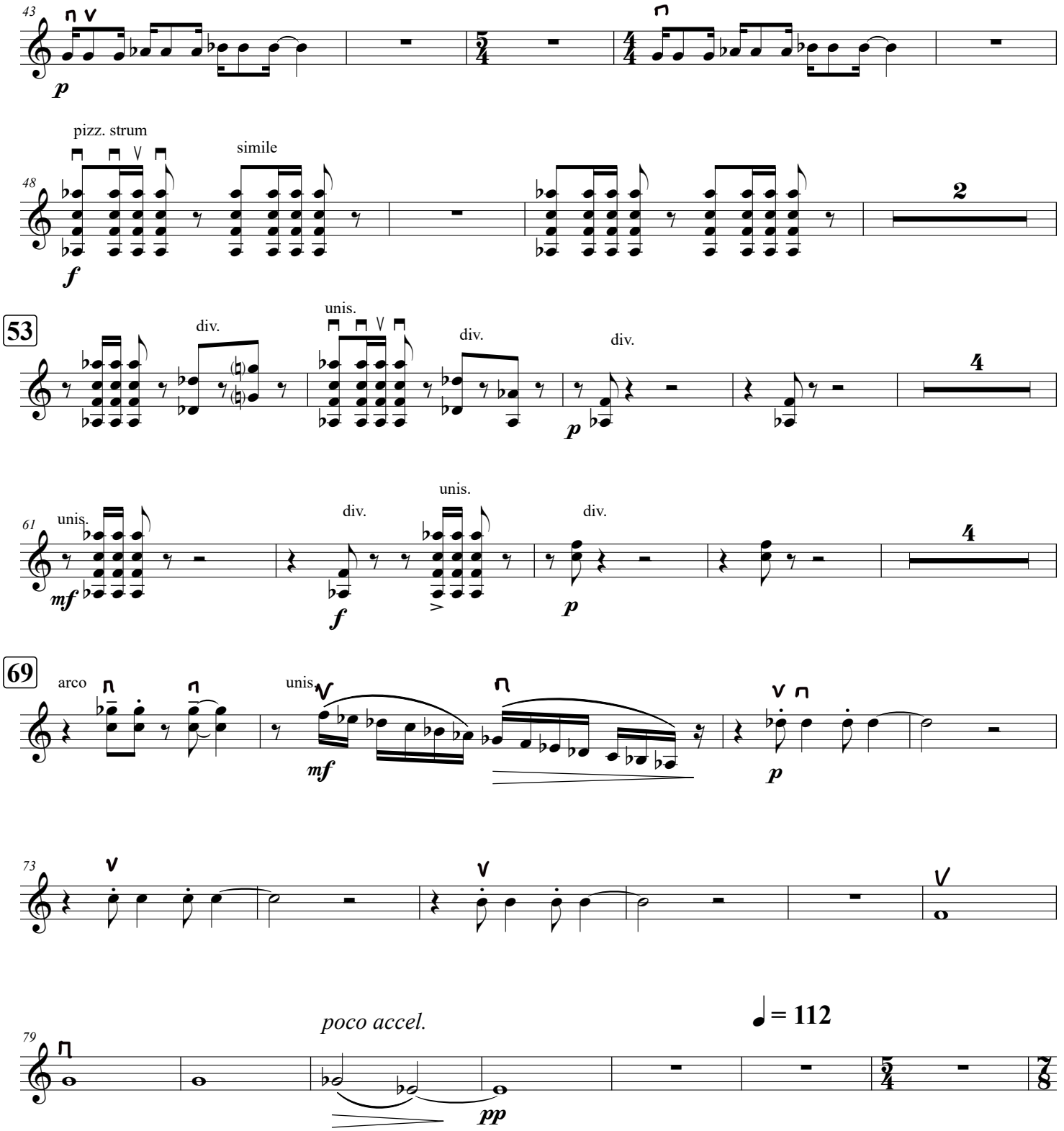

252
ord.
mp
257
(with solo vc)
260
cresc.
262
ff
265
sub. p
268
8va
mf
1
2
(8va)
271
p
3
4
(8va)
273

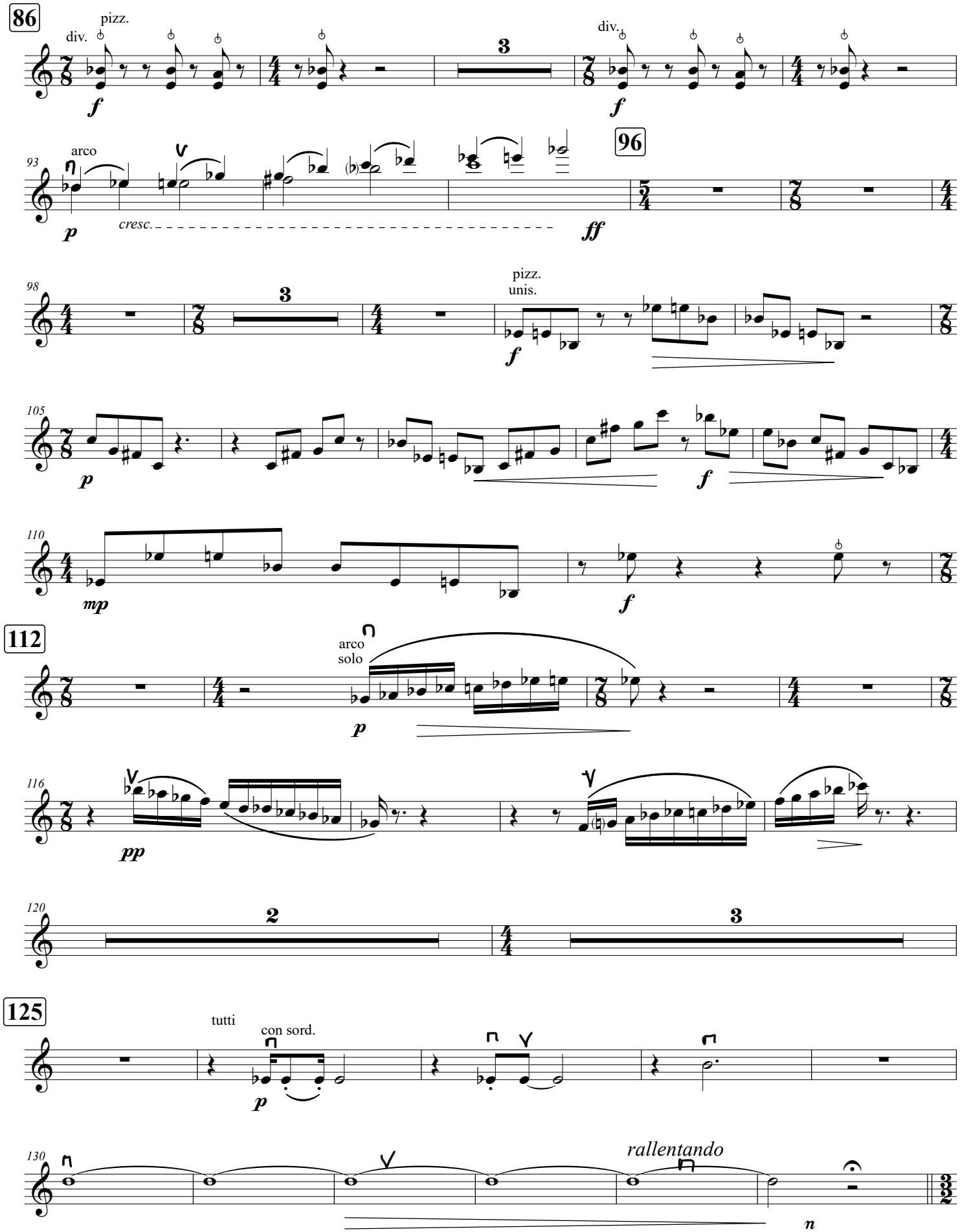

5
6
3 stands
(8va)
275
2 stands
277
279
281
2
3
4
pp
287
3
5
Attacca

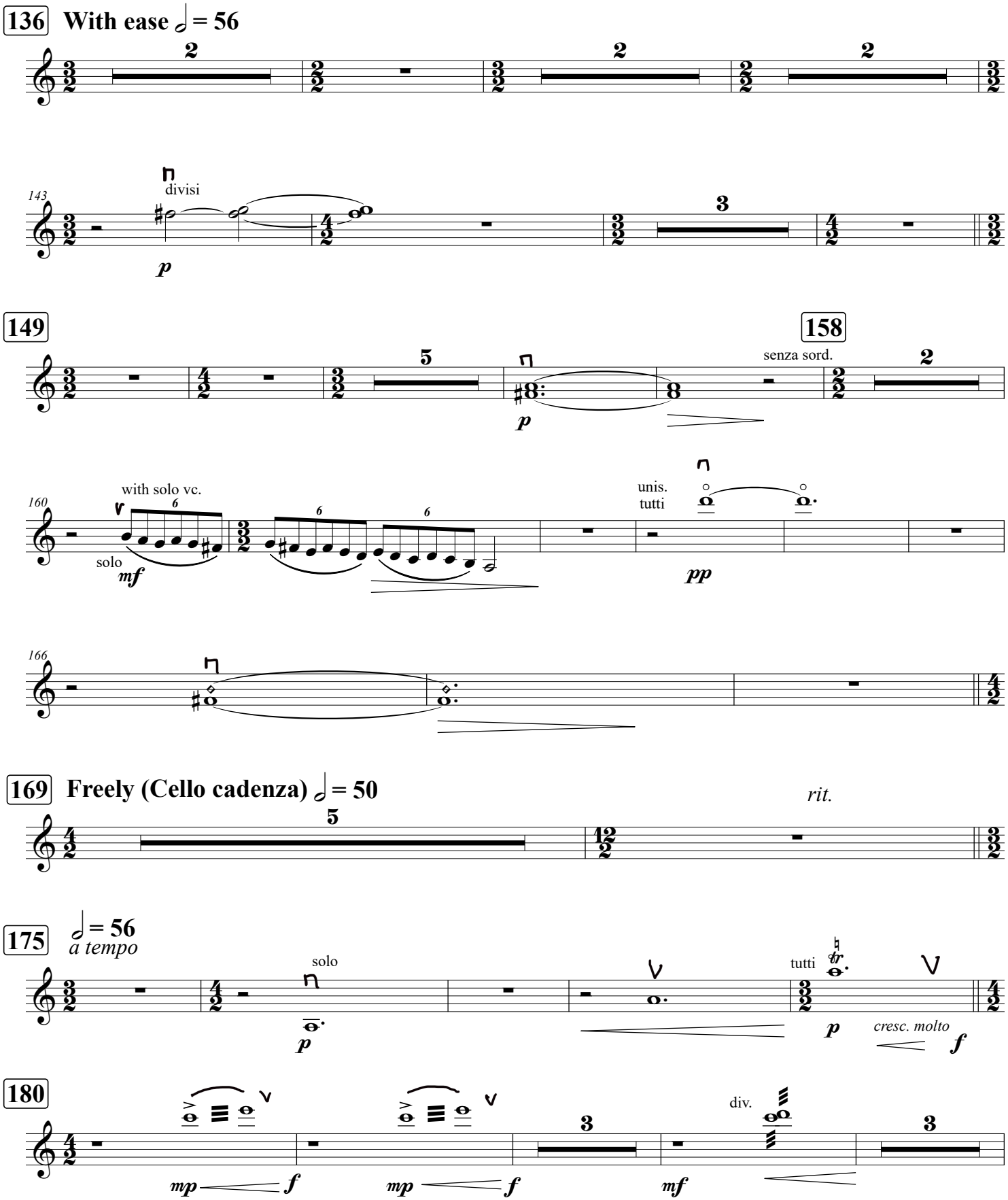
Violin I

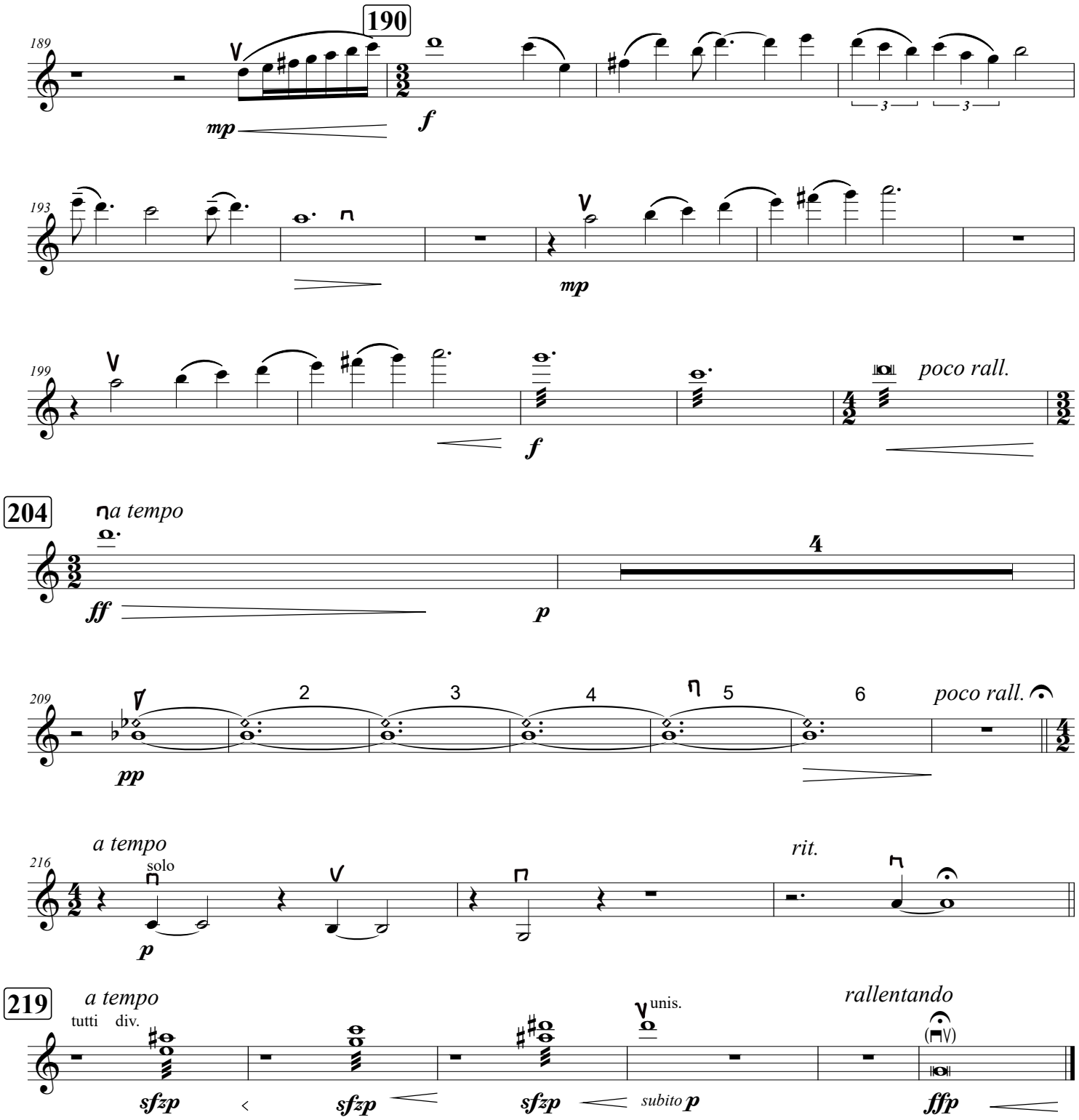
III. Wondering




43
p
pizz. strum
simile
48
f
2
53
div.
unis.
div.
div.
p
4
61
unis.
mf
div.
f
unis.
div.
p
4
69
arco
unis.
mf
p
73
poco accel.
pp
= 112
79


86
div.
pizz.
f
3
div.
f
93
arco
p
cresc.
ff
96
98
3
pizz.
unis.
f
105
p
f
110
mp
f
112
arco
solo
p
116
pp
120
2
3
125
tutti
con sord.
p
130
rallentando
n


136
With ease 𝅗𝅥 = 56
143
divisi
p
149
158
senza sord.
160
with solo vc.
solo
mf
unis.
tutti
pp
166
169
Freely (Cello cadenza) 𝅗𝅥 = 50
rit.
175
𝅗𝅥 = 56
a tempo
solo
p
tutti
tr
p
cresc. molto
f
180
mp
f
mp
f
mf
div.


189
190
mp
f
193
mp
199
f
poco rall.
204
a tempo
ff
p
4
209
pp
2
3
4
5
6
poco rall.
216
a tempo
solo
p
rit.
219
a tempo
tutti
div.
sfzp
sfzp
sfzp
unis.
subito p
rallentando
ffp