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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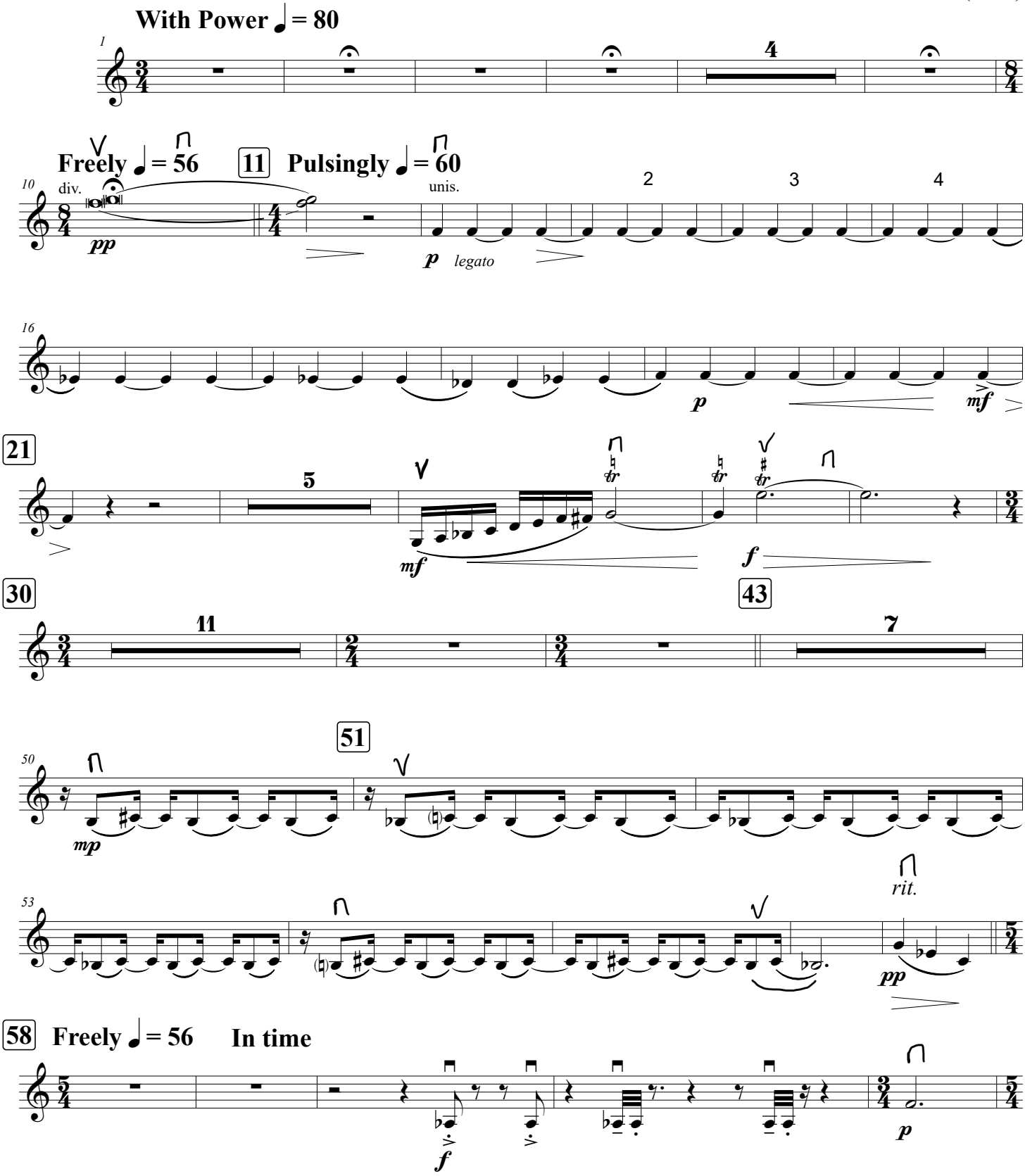
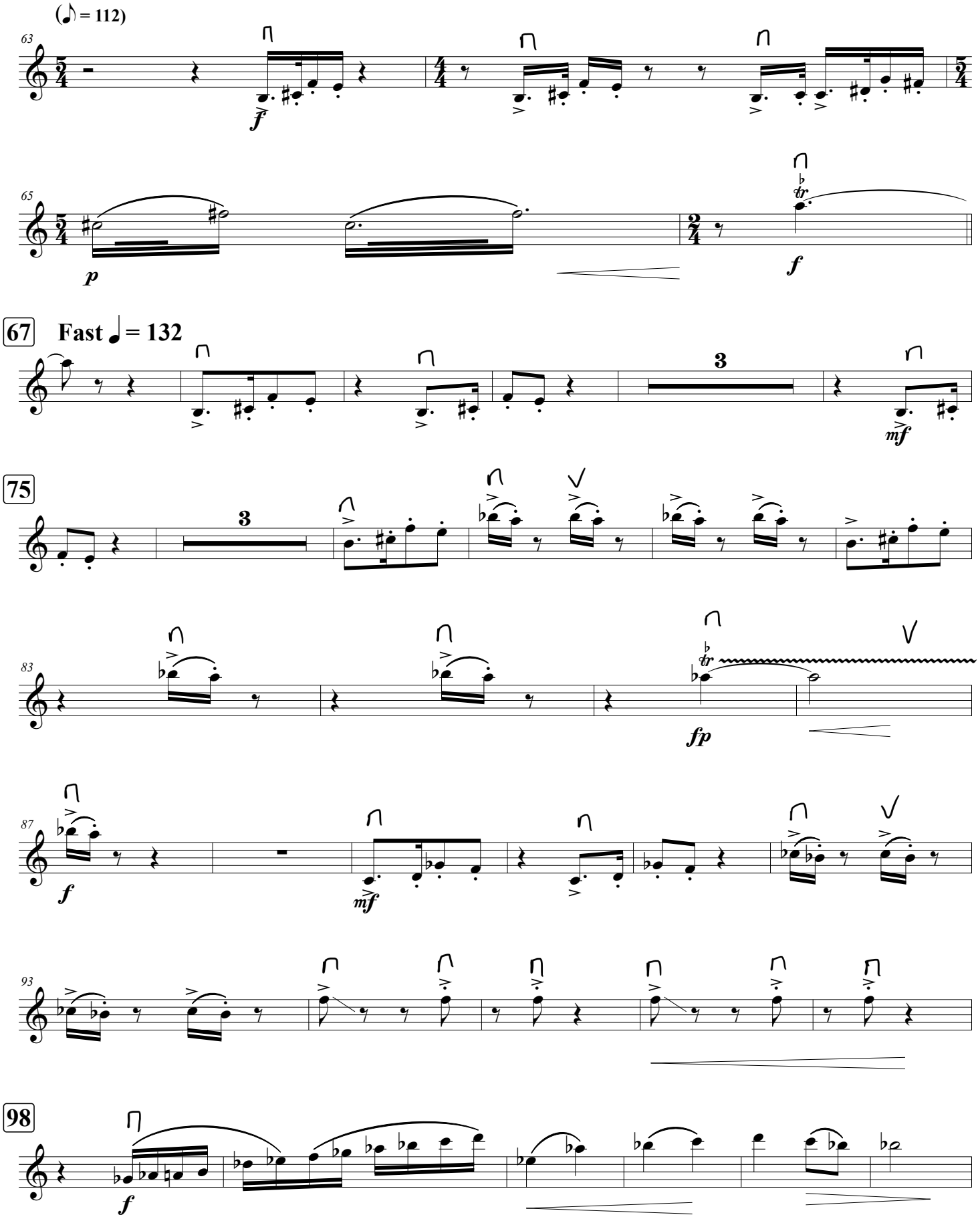
Ballet for Cello and Orchestra

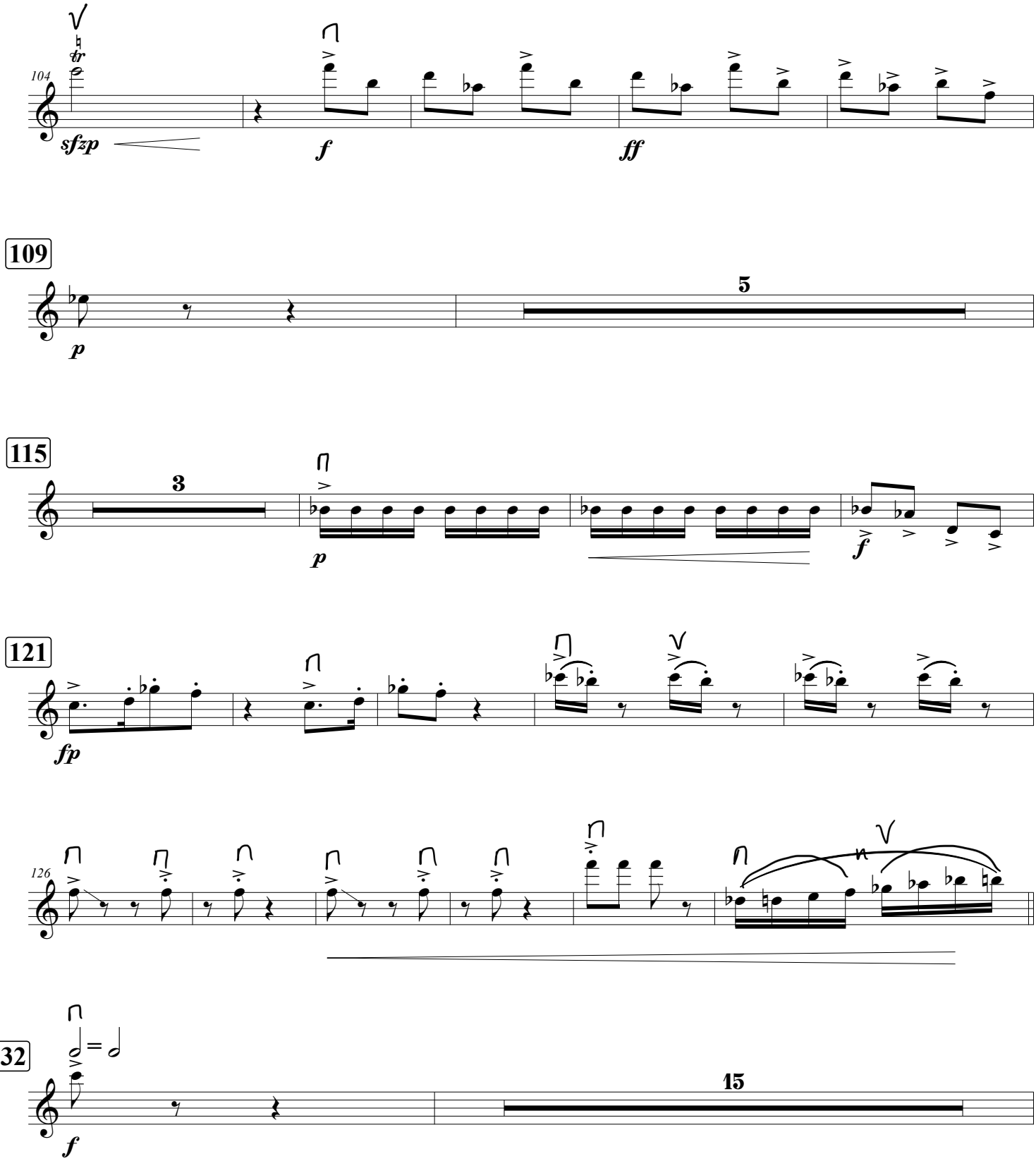
I. Walking

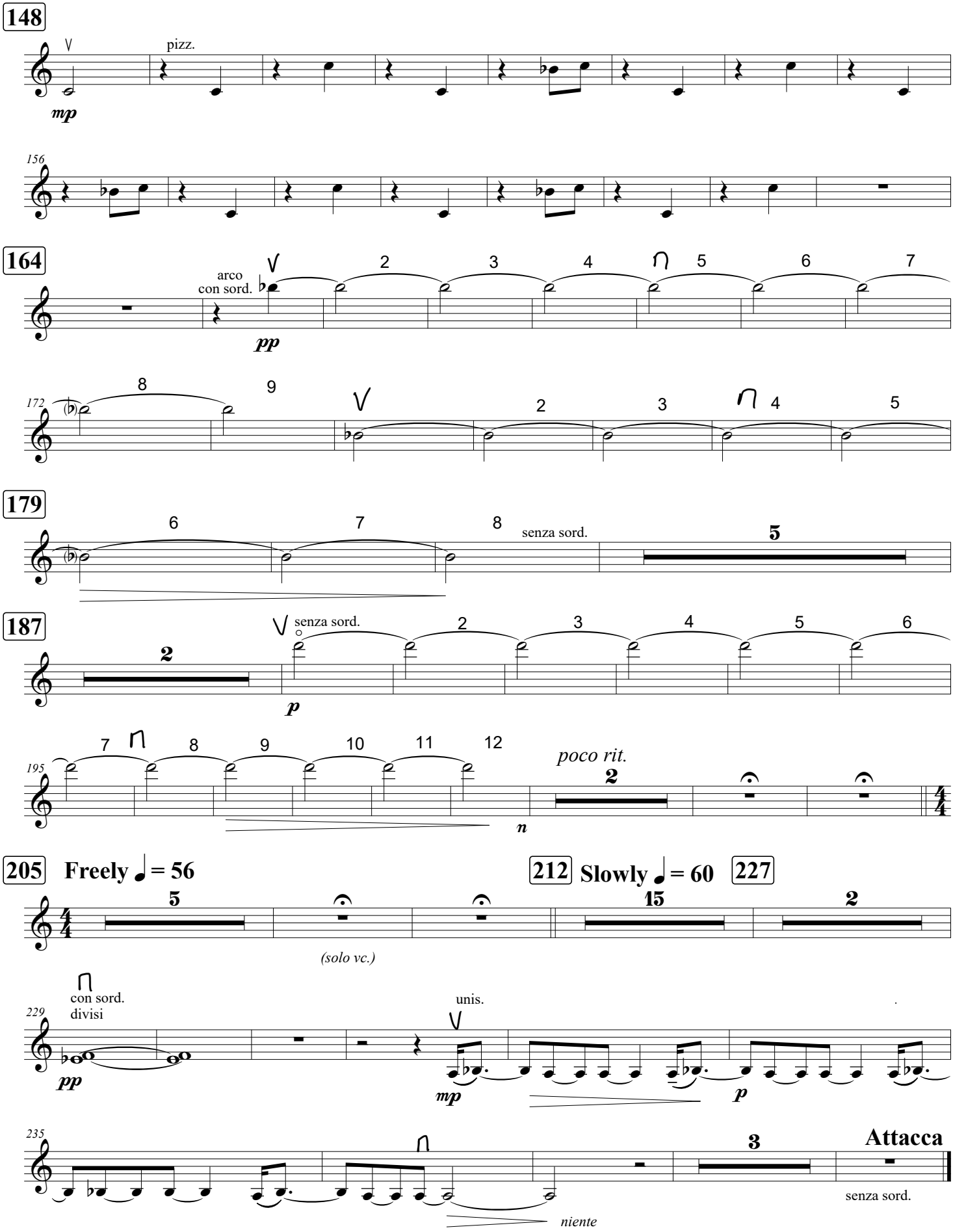
Violin II

Rebecca Burkhardt (2025)

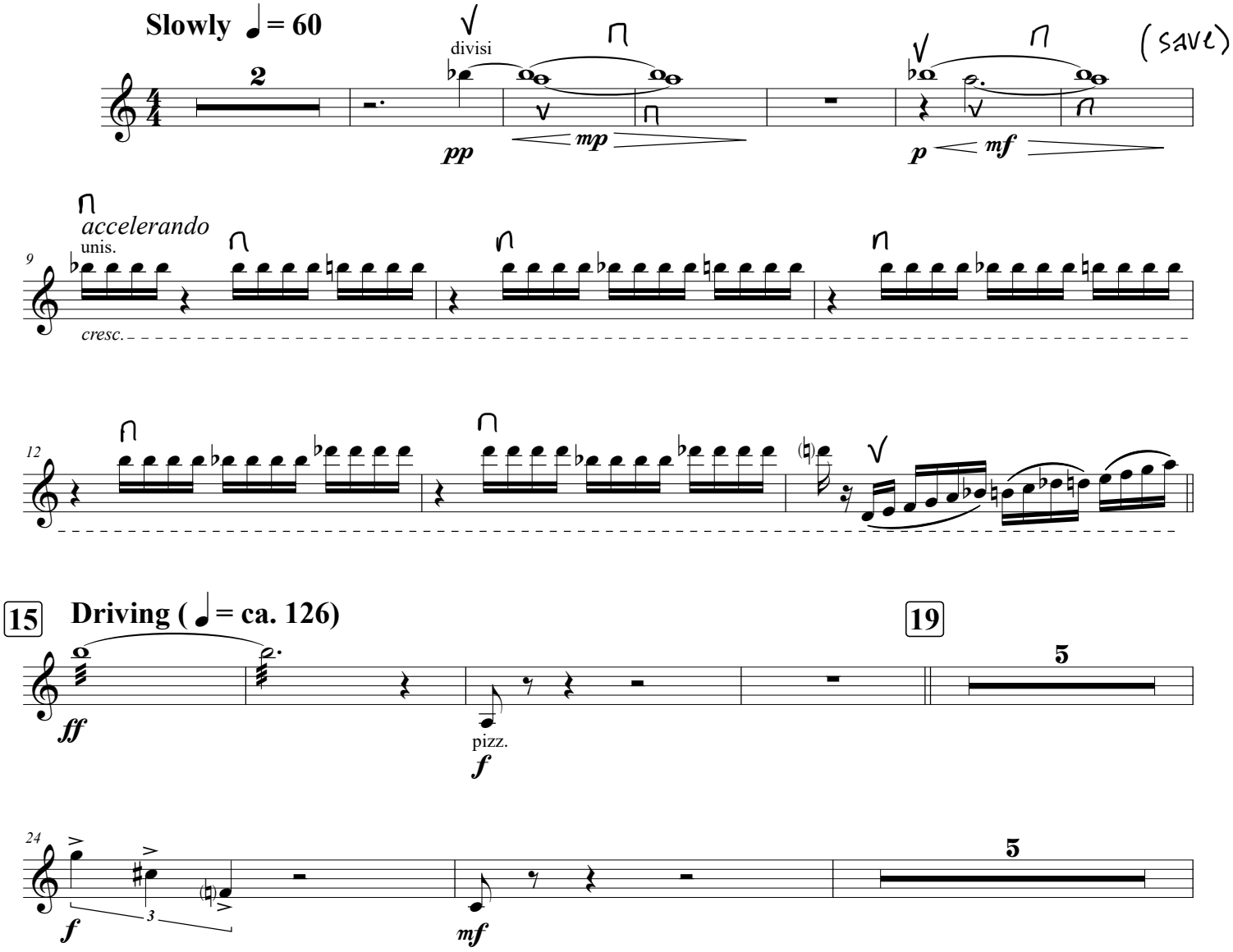


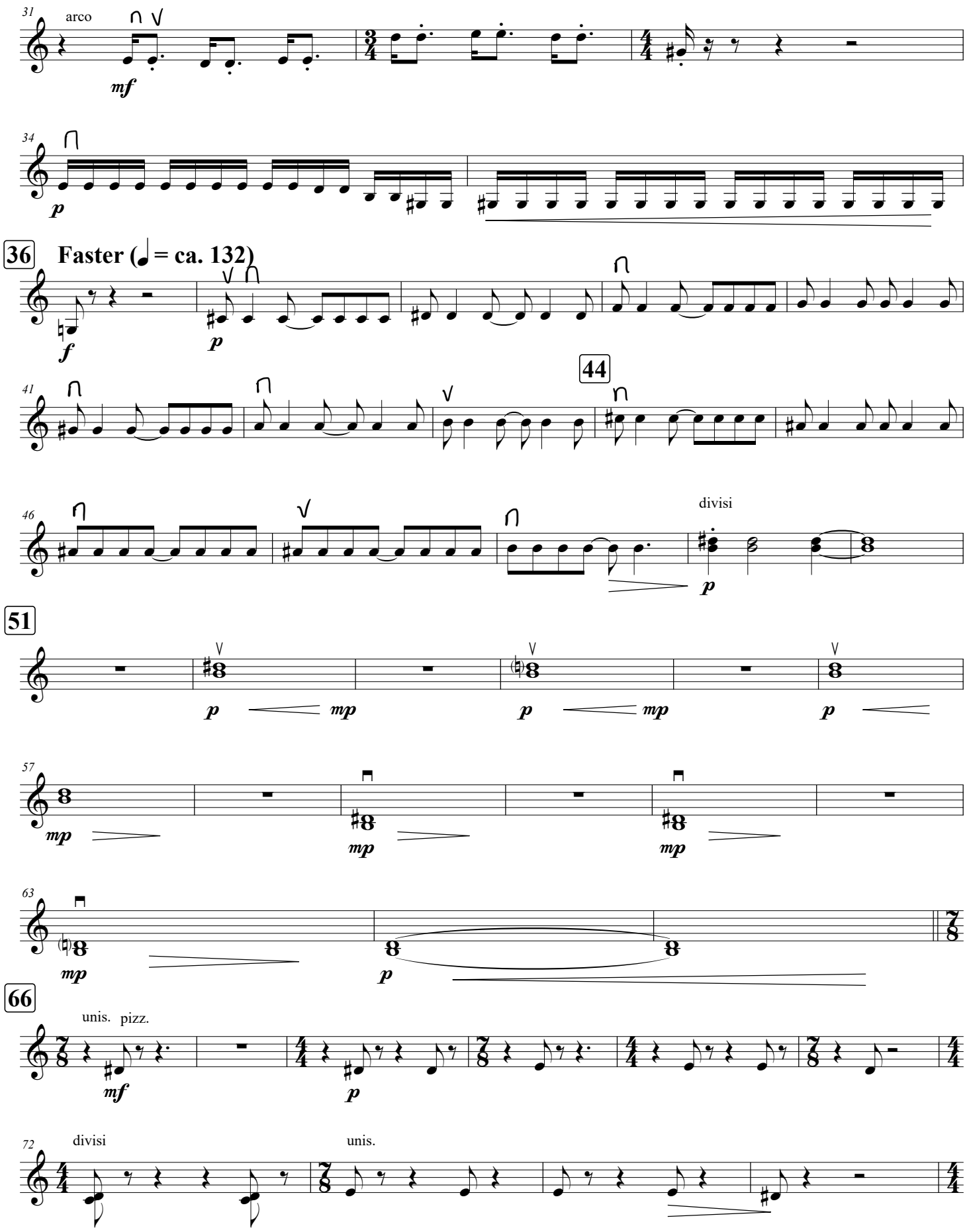

(♪ = 112)
63
f
65
p
f
67
Fast ♩ = 132
3
mf
75
3
83
fp
87
f
mf
93
98
f

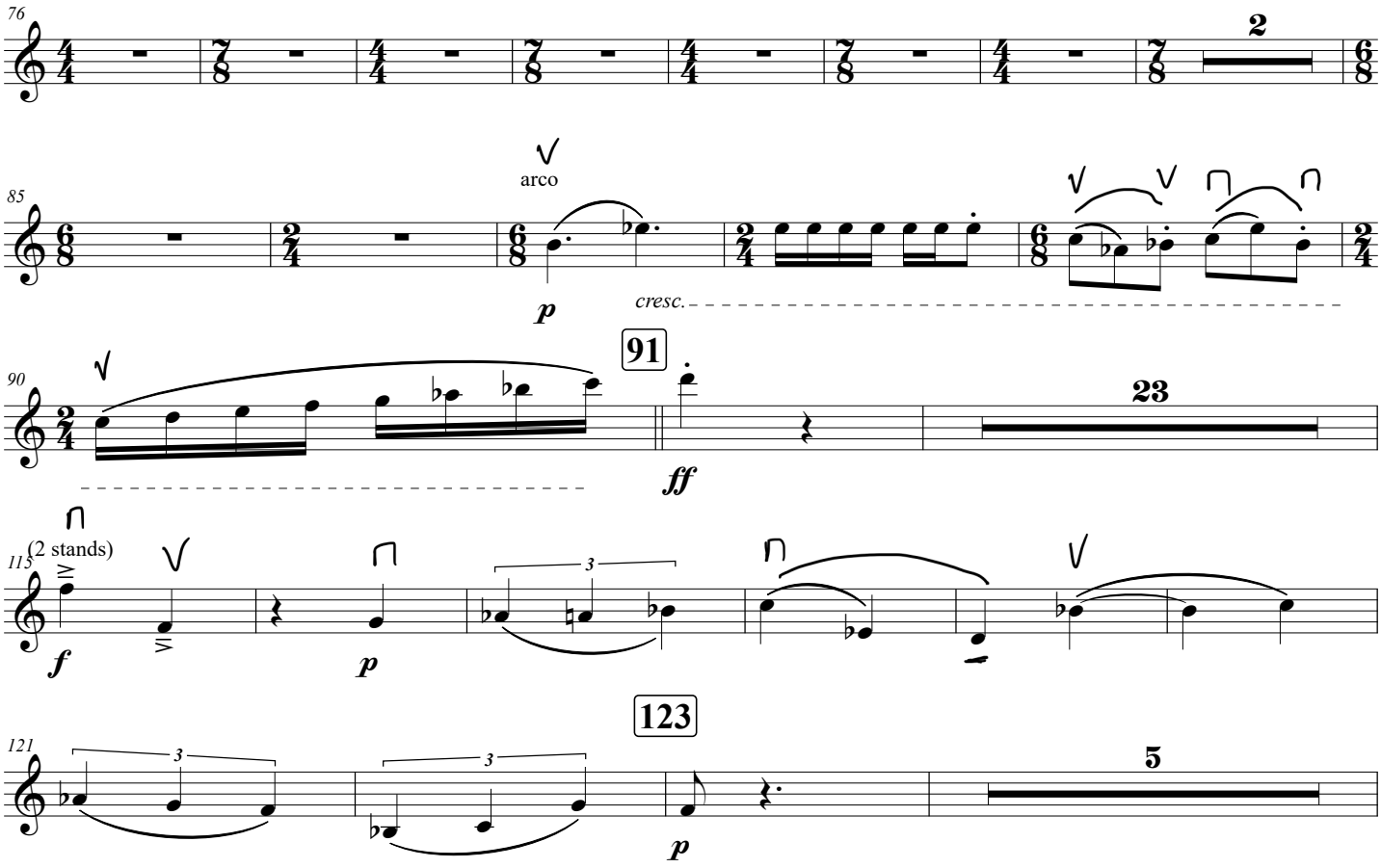

104
sfzp
f
ff
109
p
5
115
3
p
f
121
fp
126
132
f
15

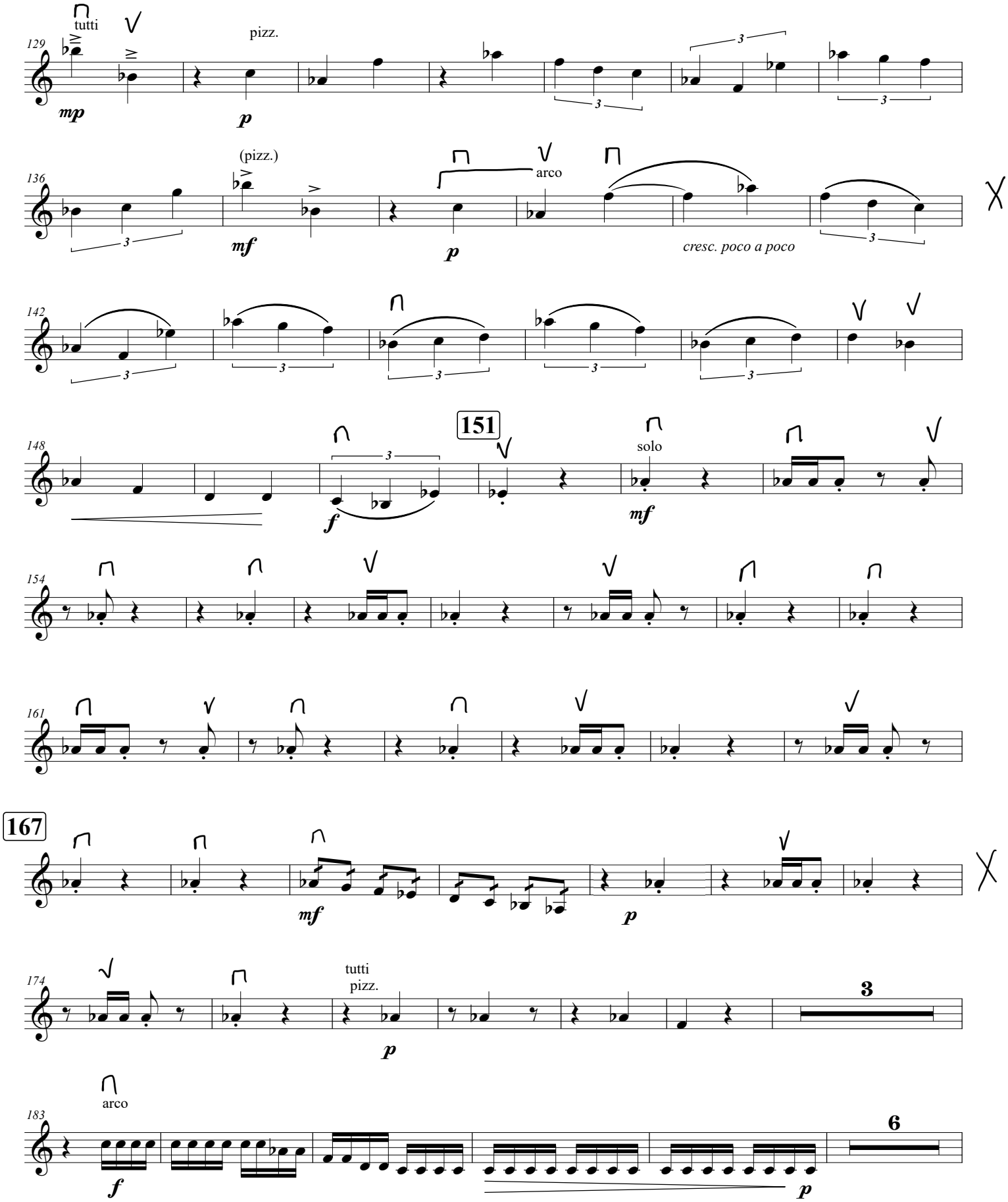

148
pizz.
mp
156
164
arco
con sord.
pp
172
179
senza sord.
187
senza sord.
p
195
poco rit.
n
205
Freely ♩ = 56
(solo vc.)
212
Slowly ♩ = 60
227
229
con sord.
divisi
pp
unis.
mp
p
235
niente
Attacca
senza sord.

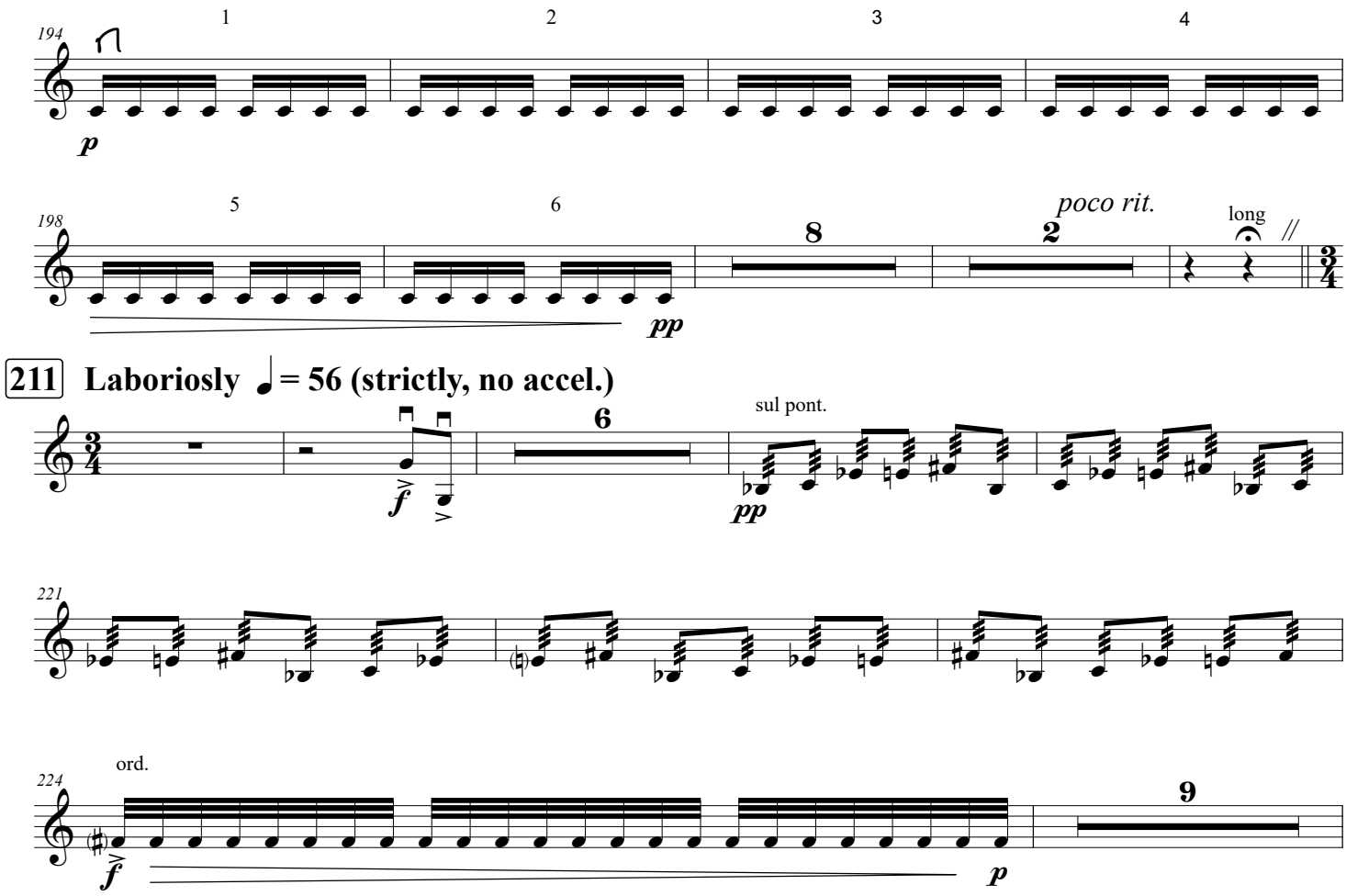
II. Working

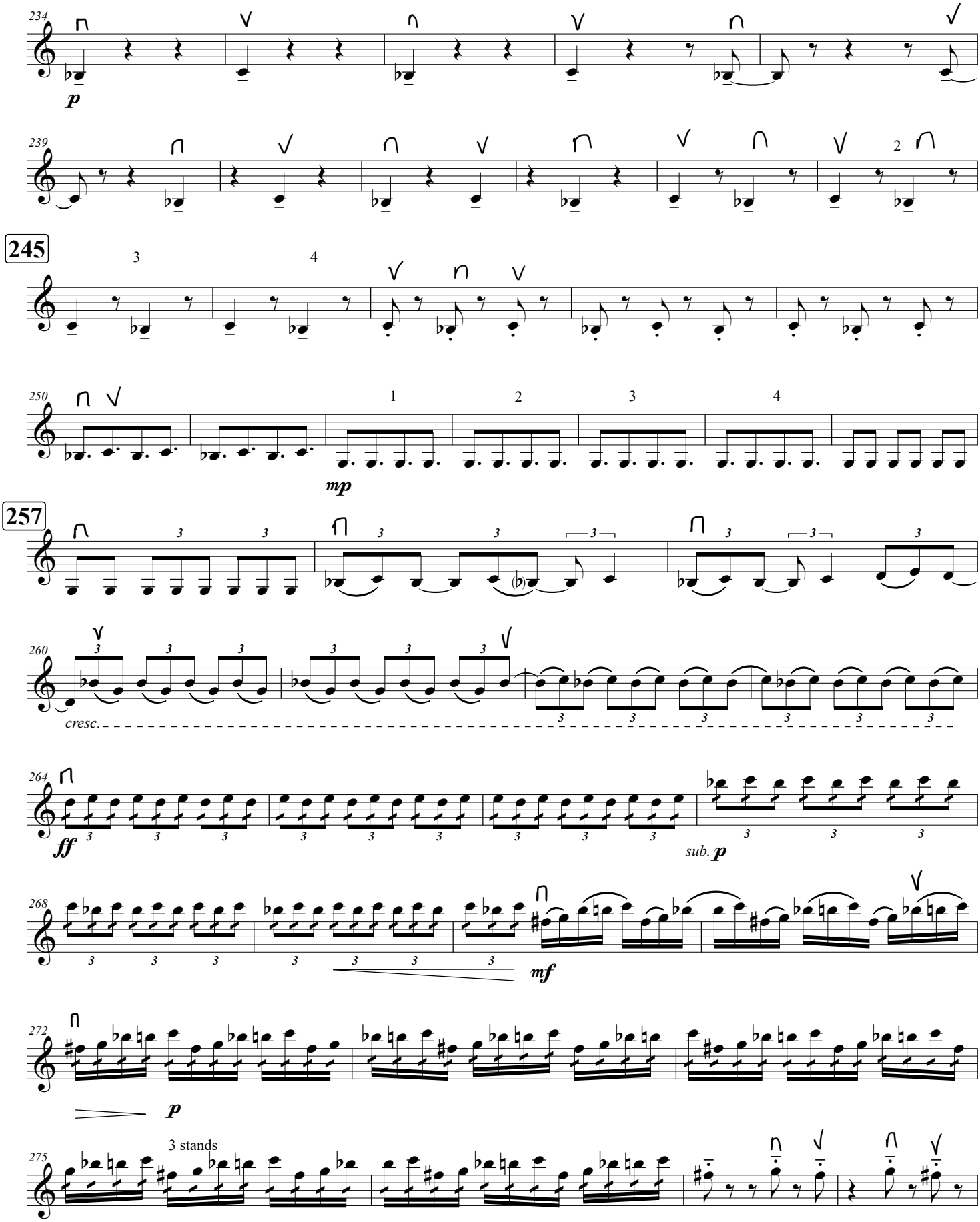

Slowly ♩ = 60
divisi
(save)
pp
mp
p
mf
accelerando
unis.
cresc.
15
Driving (♩ = ca. 126)
ff
pizz.
f
19
mf

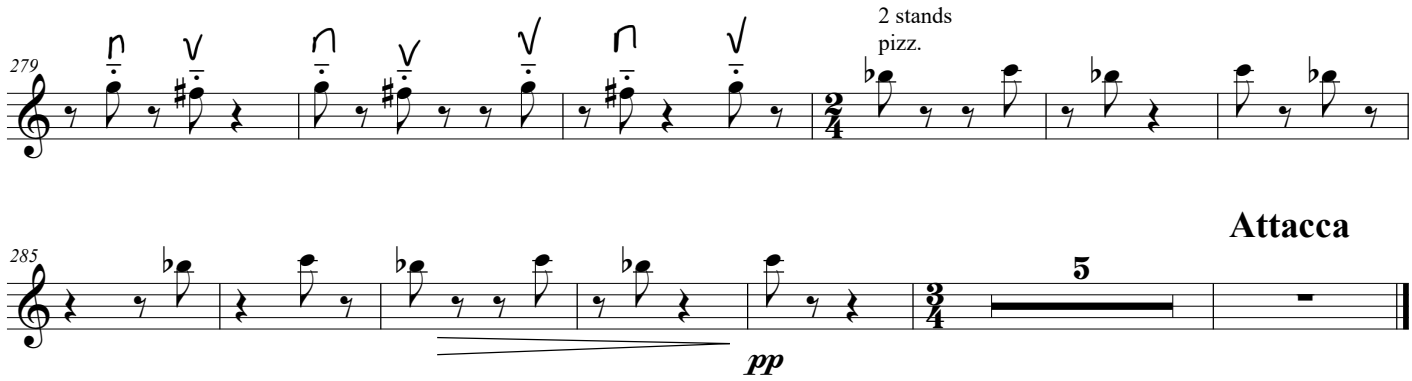

31
arco
mf
34
p
36
Faster (♩ = ca. 132)
f
p
41
44
46
divisi
p
51
p
mp
p
mp
p
57
mp
mp
mp
63
mp
p
66
unis.
pizz.
mf
p
72
divisi
unis.


76
2
85
arco
p
cresc.
90
91
ff
23
113
(2 stands)
f
p
3
121
123
p
5


129
tutti
mp
pizz.
p
136
(pizz.)
mf
arco
p
cresc. poco a poco
142
148
f
151
solo
mf
154
161
167
mf
p
174
tutti
pizz.
p
3
183
arco
f
6
p

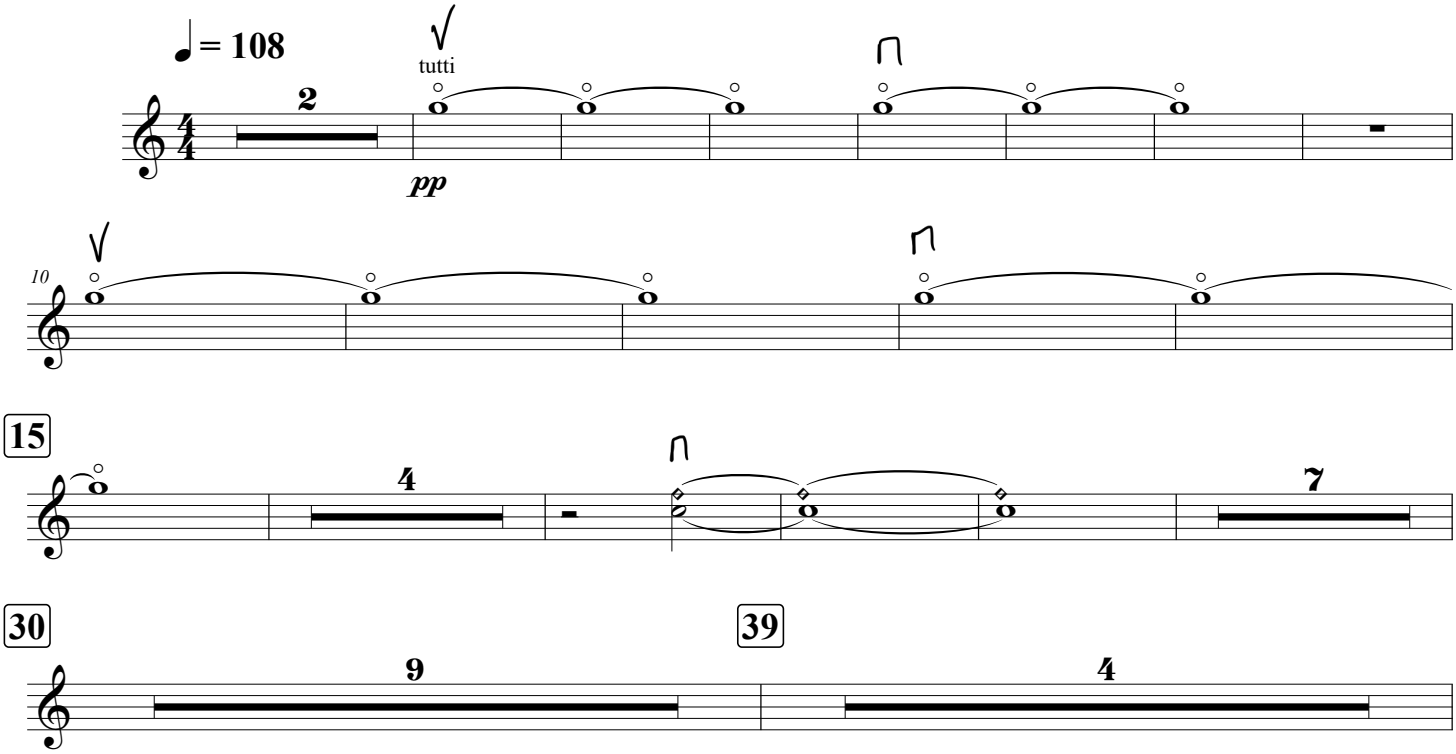

194
1
2
3
4
p
198
5
6
8
2
poco rit.
long
pp
211
Laboriously ♩ = 56 (strictly, no accel.)
6
sul pont.
f
pp
221
224
ord.
f
9
p

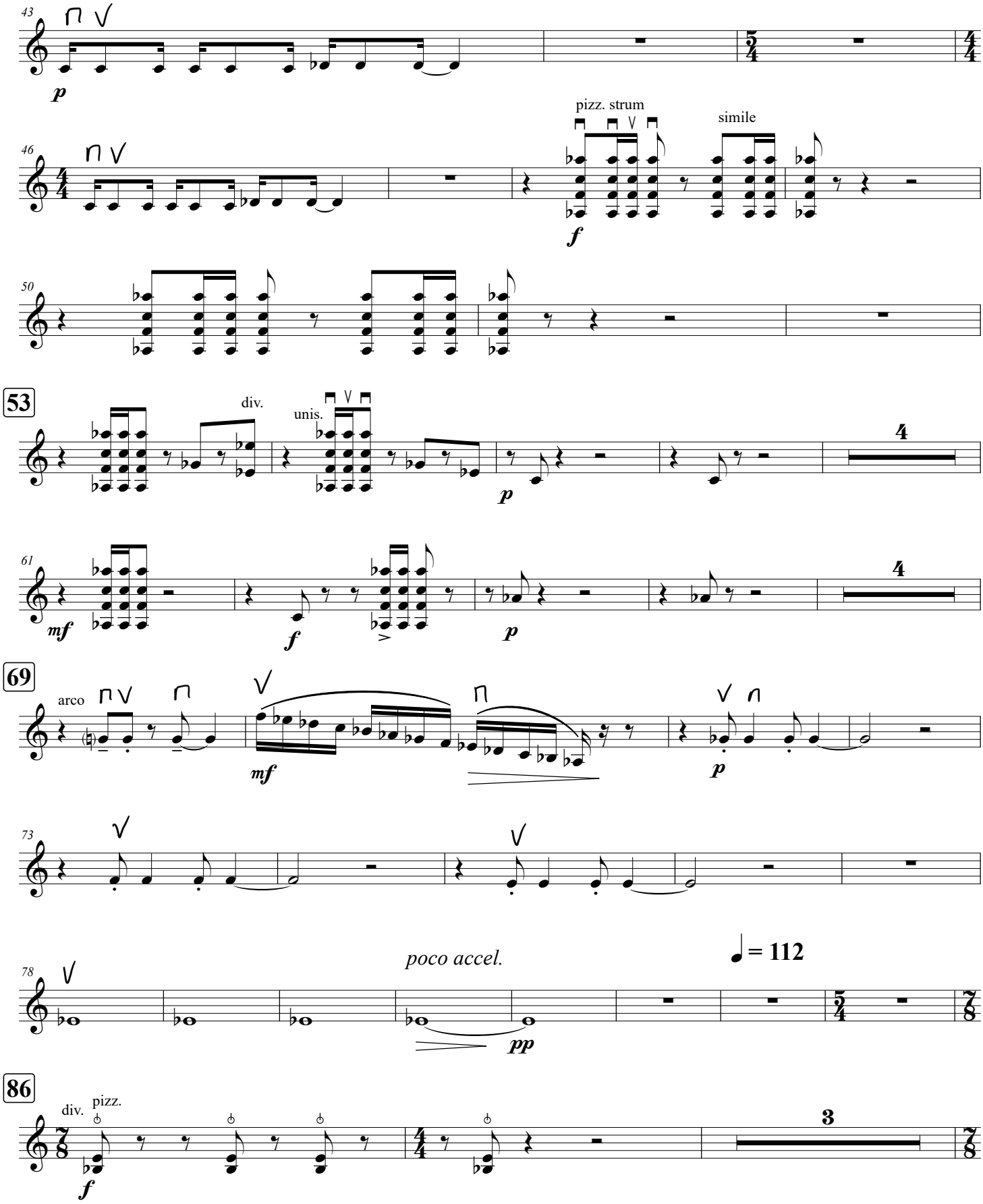

234
p
239
245
250
mp
257
260
cresc.
264
ff
sub. p
268
mf
272
p
275
3 stands

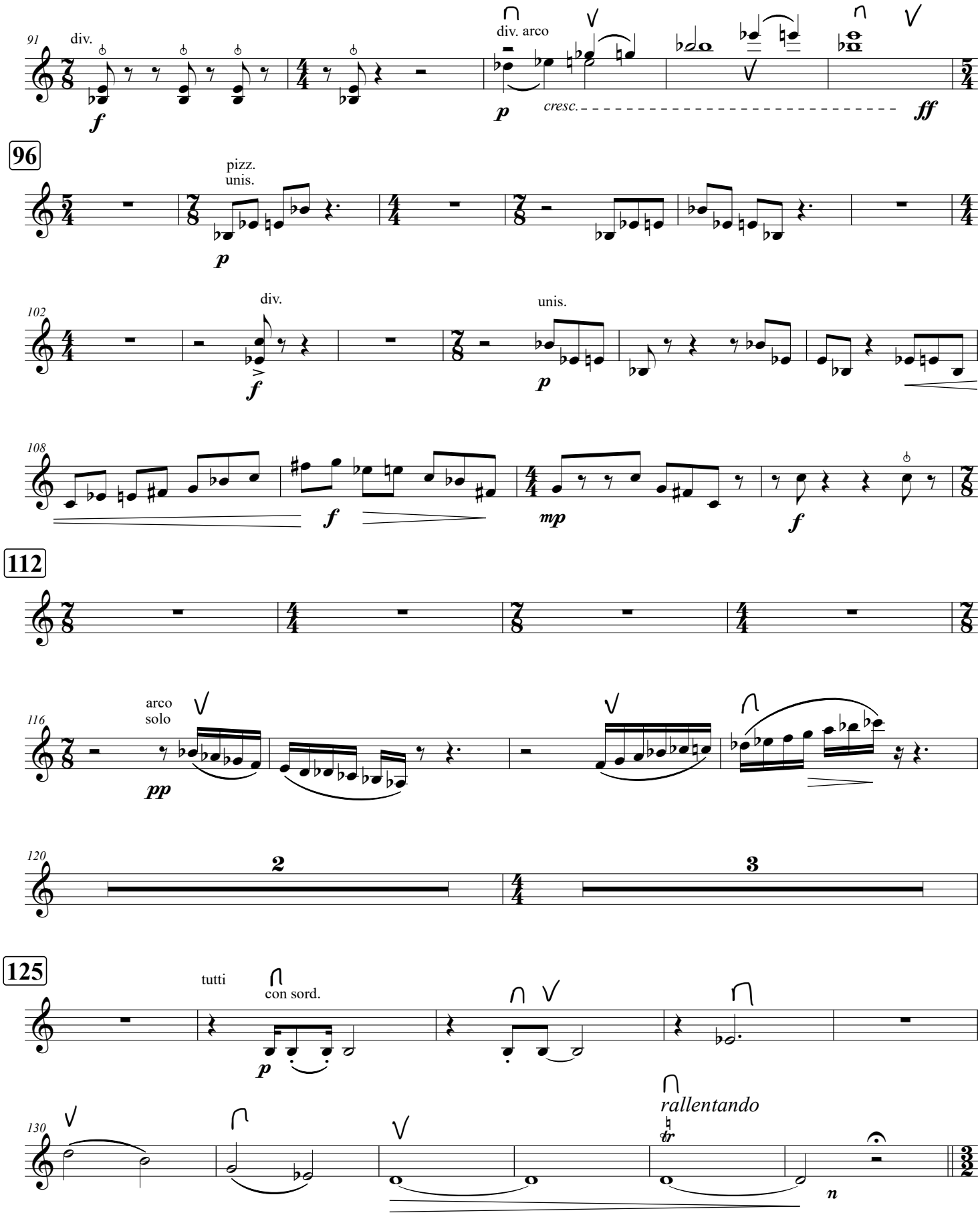

279
2 stands
pizz.
285
5
Attacca
pp

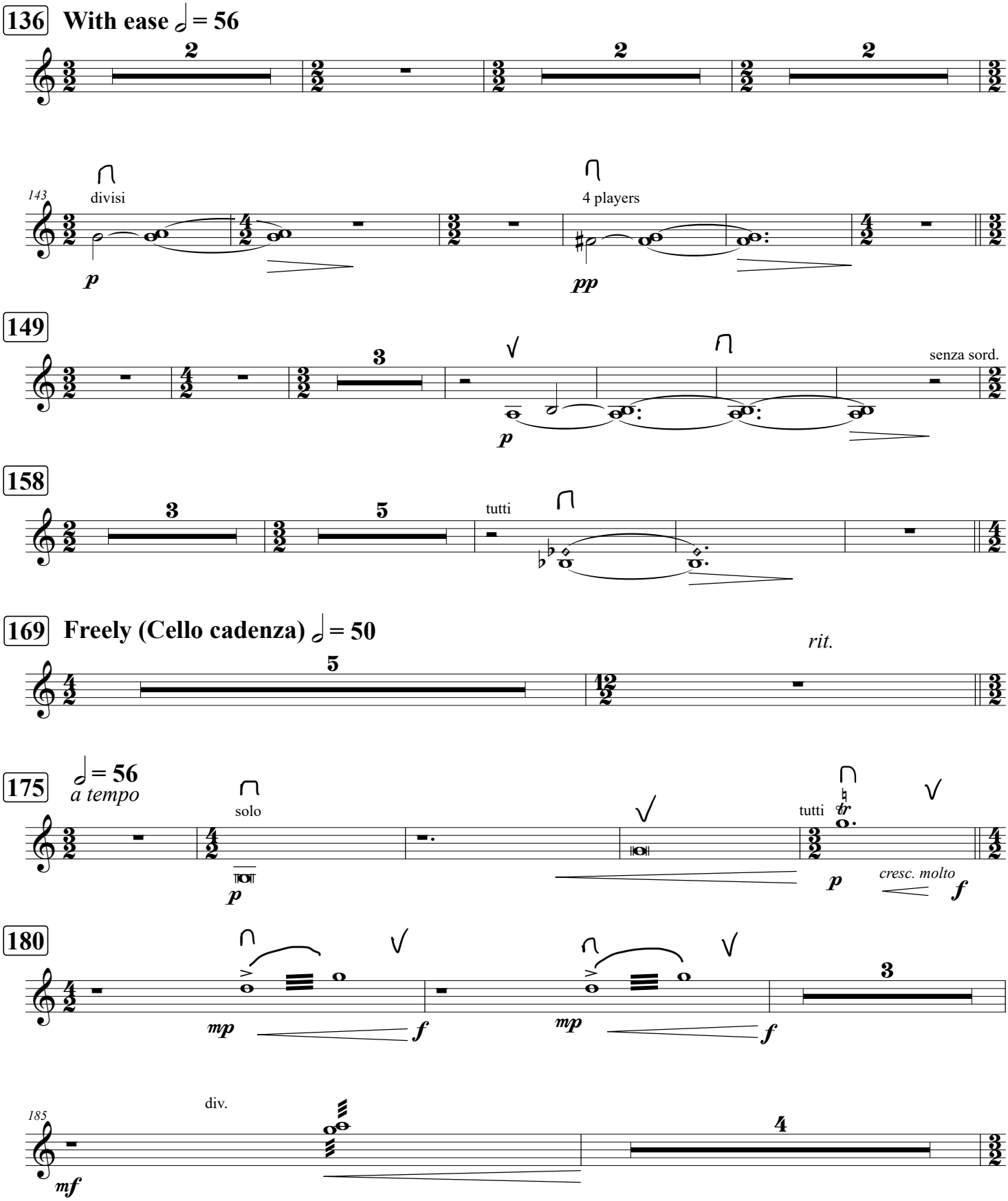
Violin II

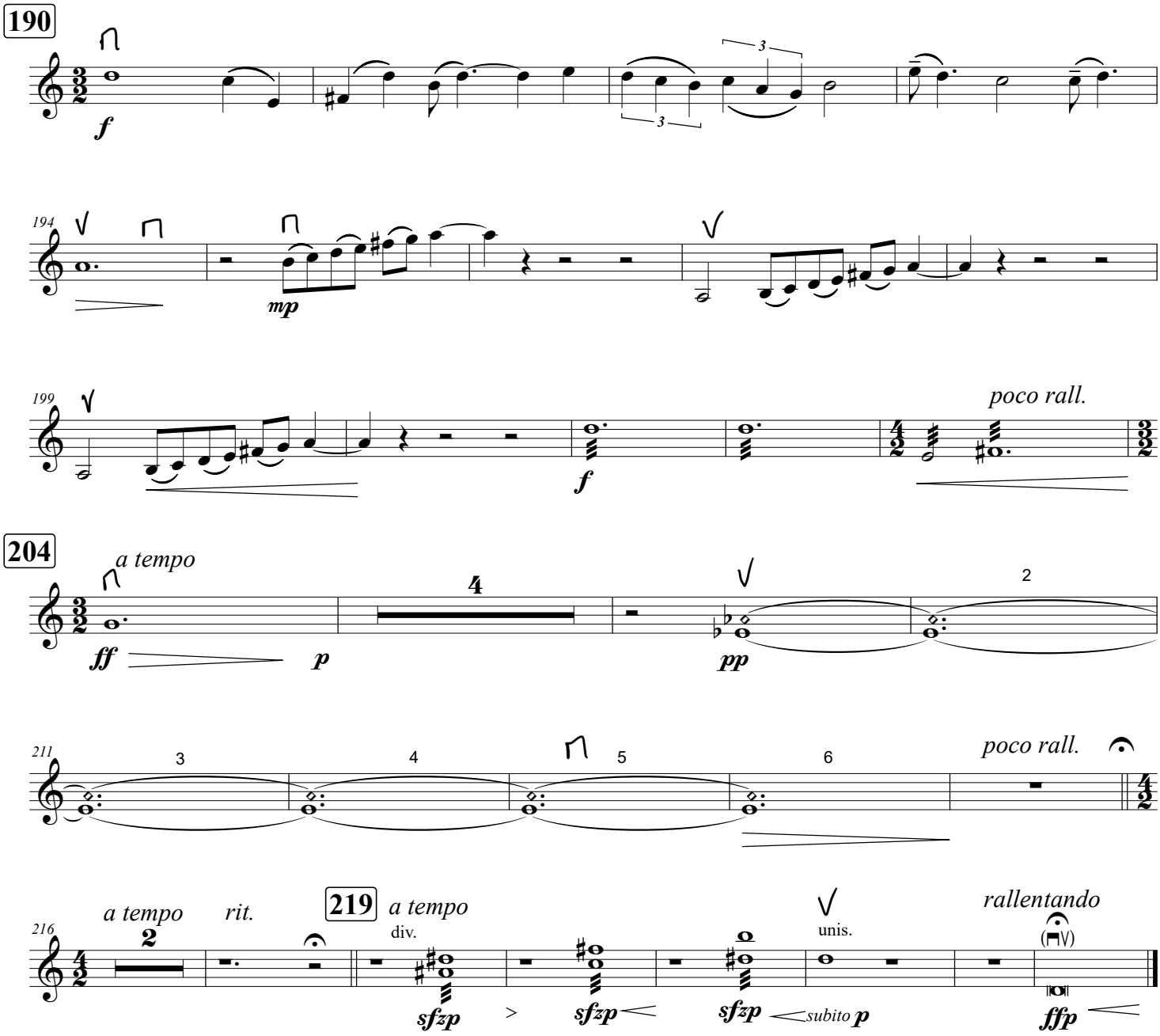
III. Wondering




43
p
46
pizz. strum
simile
f
50
53
div.
unis.
p
4
61
mf
f
p
4
69
arco
mf
p
73
78
poco accel.
= 112
pp
86
div.
pizz.
f
3


91
div.
f
div. arco
p
cresc.
ff
96
pizz.
unis.
p
102
div.
f
unis.
p
108
f
mp
f
112
116
arco
solo
pp
120
2
3
125
tutti
con sord.
p
130
rallentando
tr
n


136
With ease 𝅗𝅥 = 56
2
2
2
143
divisi
p
4 players
pp
149
3
p
senza sord.
158
3
5
tutti
169
Freely (Cello cadenza) 𝅗𝅥 = 50
5
rit.
175
𝅗𝅥 = 56
a tempo
solo
p
tutti
p
cresc. molto
f
180
mp
f
mp
f
3
185
div.
mf
4


190
f
194
mp
199
f
poco rall.
204
a tempo
ff
p
pp
211
poco rall.
216
a tempo
rit.
219
a tempo
div.
sfzp
sfzp
sfzp
unis.
subito p
rallentando
ffp