Modney

EVERYTHING AROUND IT MOVES

string quartet and piano

for Gabriela Diaz, Kyle Armbrust, Mariel Roberts, and Cory Smythe

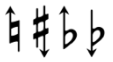
Premiere Recording:
Modney: *Ascending Primes*
Pyroclastic Records
May 3, 2024

First Performance:
December 9, 2022
Presented by International Contemporary Ensemble
Target Margin Theater, Brooklyn, NY
Modney & Gabriela Diaz, violins; Kyle Armbrust, viola; Mariel Roberts, cello; Cory Smythe, piano

Performance Notes

Pitch Notation:

Helmholtz-Ellis notation is employed throughout the score to indicate just intonation pitch relationships. Whole number ratios are indicated above the first instance of each sonority.

 Raise/lower by syntonic comma (approx. 1/8 tone)

Lower by septimal comma (approx. 1/6 tone)

Raise/lower by undecimal comma (approx. 1/4 tone)

Form and Improvisation:

While the majority of *Everything Around It Moves* is notated, improvisation is integral to the aesthetic approach and ethos of the piece, and there are several improvised sections. The pianist should be comfortable improvising over changes, which are indicated using chord symbols in the score. The string players should be comfortable with free improvisation and improvising rich textures that incorporate various bow techniques and complex timbres. Much of the notated material for the string quartet is derived from the composer's work as a solo violin improviser.

Sections B and B1 of the piece are modular, with different groupings playing different score pages that are not precisely coordinated with one another.

An overview of the form of the piece follows below:

Part I

A — Quintet, fully notated

B — Violins play fully notated duet, while viola, cello and piano improvise based on violin material.

B1 — Viola, cello, and piano move on to B1 while violins continue playing section B. Viola and cello play notated material while the pianist improvises over the chord progression. Once violins conclude section B, they move to coordinated "rips", leaving 2-3 seconds between each rip. The full ensemble joins the rips after concluding section B1.

C — Quintet, fully notated until m. 53, when piano begins soloing over the strings chord progression. This transitions into a group improvisation, accompanied by a "ROLI Interlude" performed by the pianist. Part I concludes with the full ensemble moving to an improvised noise texture. Once this texture crescendos to fully saturated cacophony, hard cut to silence.

Part II

D — Viola solo, accompanied by notated and improvised textures which are indicated in the score.

E — Quintet, fully notated.

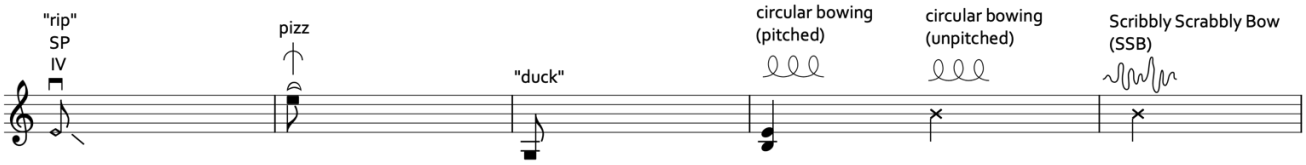
F — Song. Quintet, fully notated.

G — Quintet, fully notated.

Note regarding measure numbers: Because of the modularity of sections A through C, measure numbering in Part I restarts with each section. Measure numbers run continuously through Part II.

Strings:

Timbral Techniques:



"Rip" — RH: aggressive bowstroke near the bridge. LH: lightly touch the indicated place on the string with multiple fingers and gliss rapidly downward. This technique is only used at a loud dynamic, and should produce an aggressive, overtone-rich sound.

Thumbnail pizzicato behind bridge — The resultant sound should be strident and aggressive.

"Duck" — Overpressure behind bridge, on the winding of the string.

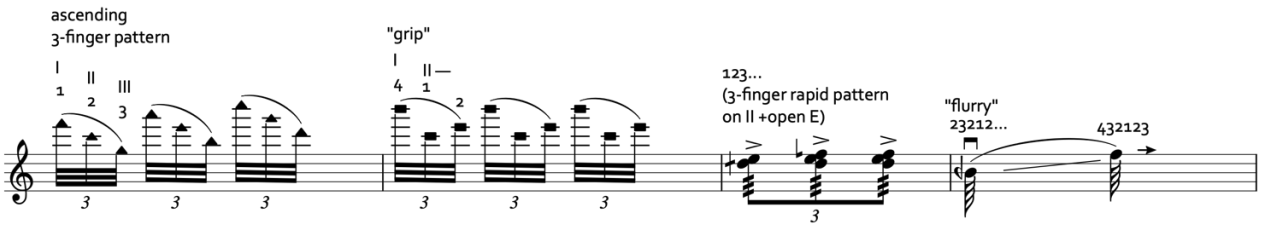
Circular Bowing — A rapid circular movement of the bow with light pressure producing a fluttering sound. For the unpitched version, lightly dampen the strings with the left hand.

"Scribbly Scrabbly Bow" (SSB) — Move the bow rapidly along multiple axes with irregular speed and pressure. This is like a noise/overtone improvisation over the indicated duration.

Bow position is indicated using the following abbreviations:

MSP — *molto sul ponticello*
SP — *sul ponticello*
ORD — *ordinario*
ST — *sul tasto*
MST — *molto sul tasto*

Finger Patterns:



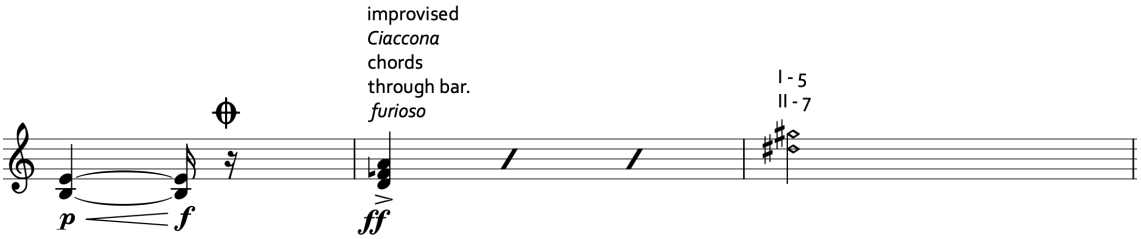
Ascending 3-finger pattern — Place the indicated fingers in the extreme high register and move the left hand upward with each rhythmic grouping.

"Grip" — Place the indicated fingers in a spread configuration on the indicated strings. The specific placement and resultant pitches are improvised. Once the hand position is placed, it should remain the same throughout the figure.

"123..." — rapid 3-finger figuration on the A string + open E. This should sound frenetic, with the fingers and bow moving as rapidly as possible.

"Flurry" — Move the left hand fingers as rapidly as possible. Begin in half-position, with the second finger on the indicated pitch. Glissando to second position with rapid improvised finger movement. The fingerings indicated in the score are given as an example.

Other String Techniques:



Dampening symbol — Abruptly dampen the resonance of the strings with the left hand while whipping the bow off the string.

Improvised *Ciaccona* chords — The opening sonority of the Bach *Ciaccona*, tuned as a septimal minor triad. Repeat this chord aggressively in irregular improvised fashion.

Harmonics notation — The string number and partial number are given for natural harmonics. For example, "II – 7" means "second string, seventh partial".

Piano:

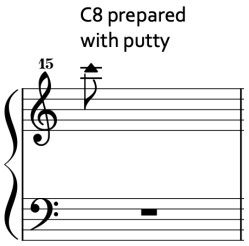
Piano Staff Arrangement:

The piano part is performed on a setup devised by Cory Smythe, and is notated on three staves. The bottom two staves represent the piano. The top staff represents the two auxiliary MIDI controller keyboards, indicated by "QT" (Quarter Tone) and "ROLI" (ROLI Seaboard Block). The auxiliary keyboards produce tone through a software patch which is routed to transducer speakers placed on the soundboard of the piano.

The QT keyboard produces Equal Tempered quarter tones. The sounding pitch is one quarter tone higher than the notated pitch.

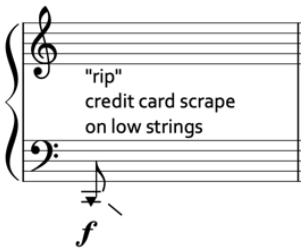
The ROLI operates along a continuous pitch spectrum, and is notated at sounding pitch with Helmholtz-Ellis notation.

Piano Preparation:



Putty should be securely affixed to the highest note of the piano (C8), which will produce a percussive tapping sound when the key is struck.

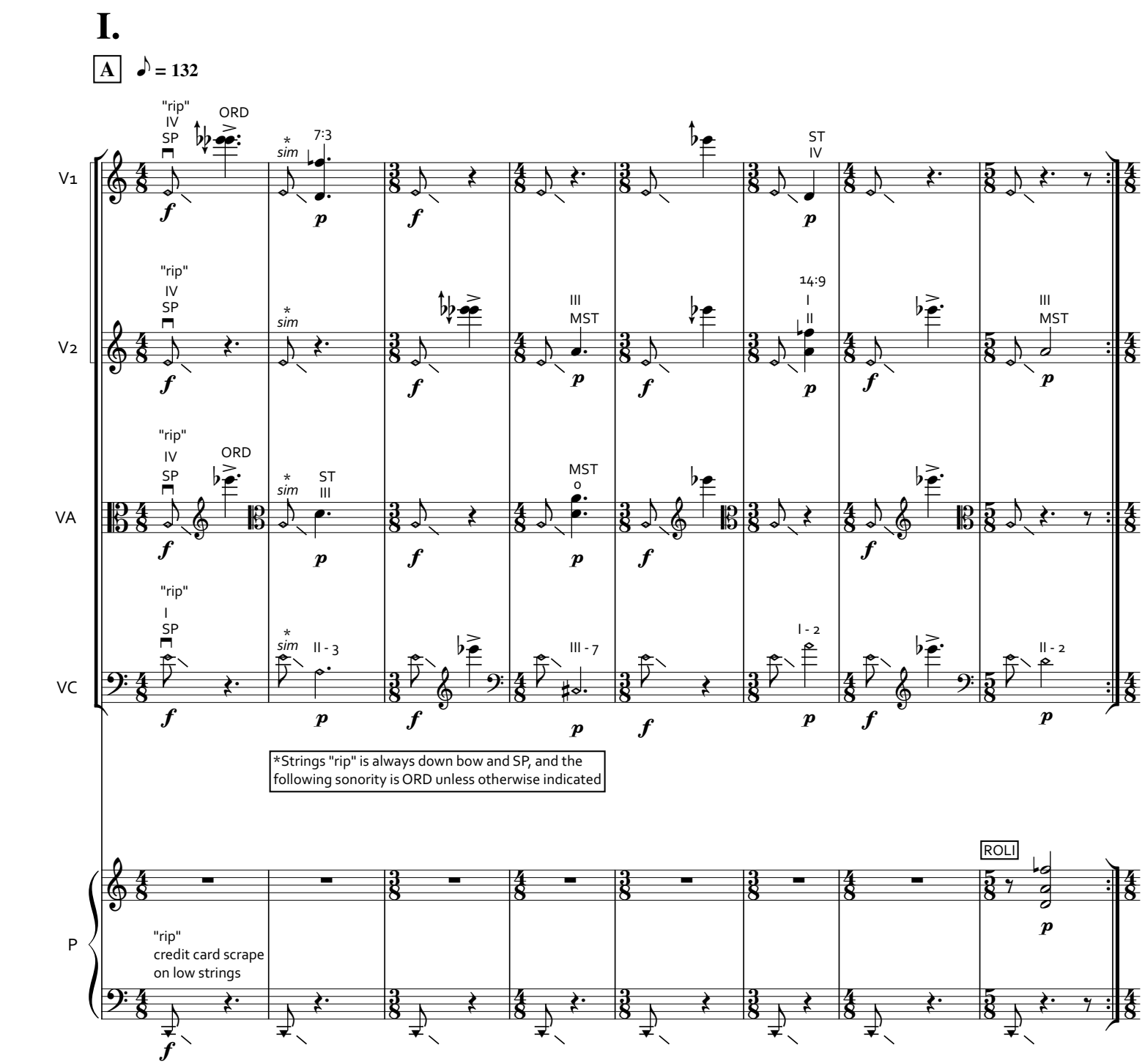
Inside Piano Techniques:

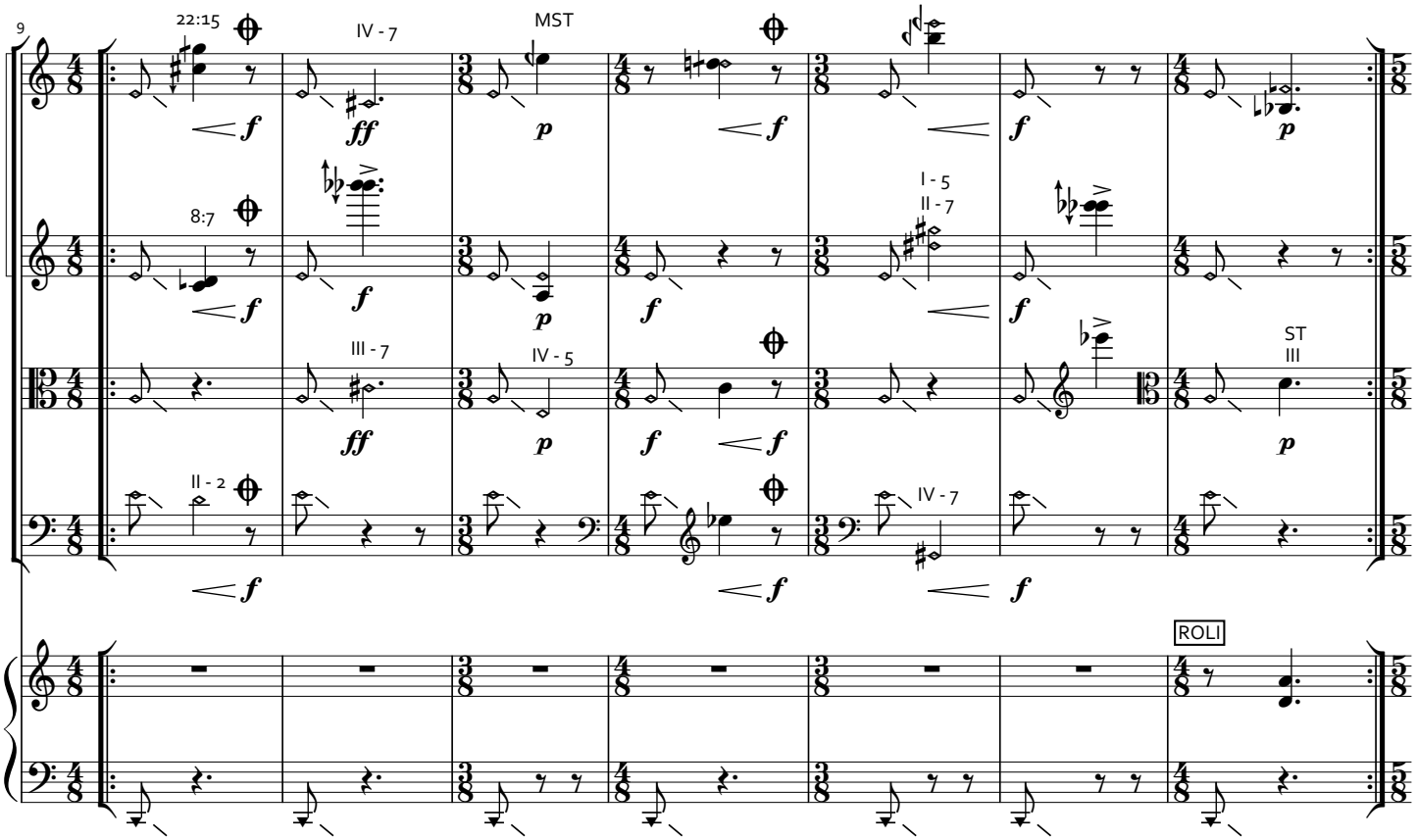


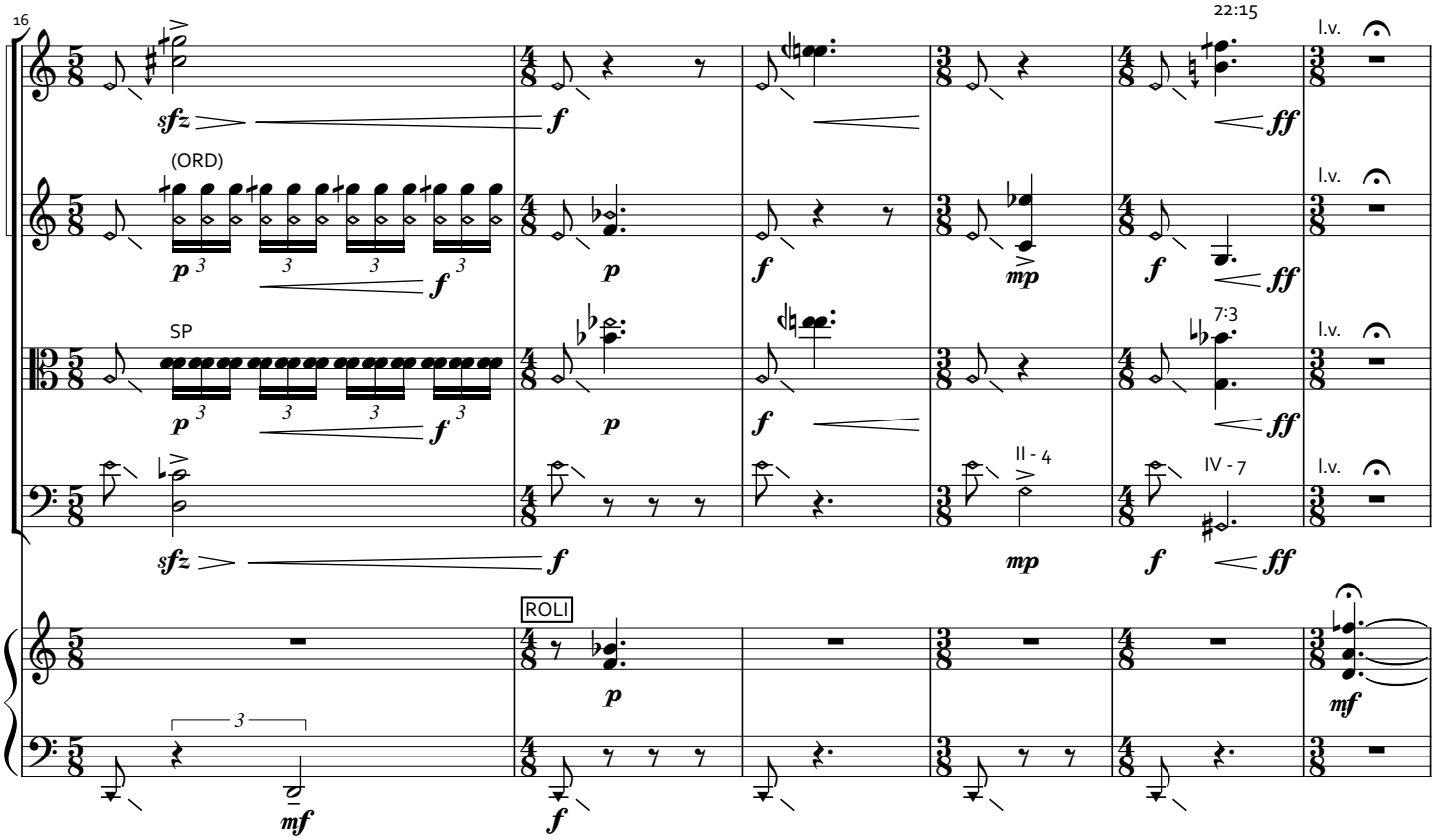
"Rip" — Scrape a credit card along the lowest strings. This technique is only used at a loud dynamic, and should produce a rough, aggressive sound. It should match the character of the strings "rip" technique.

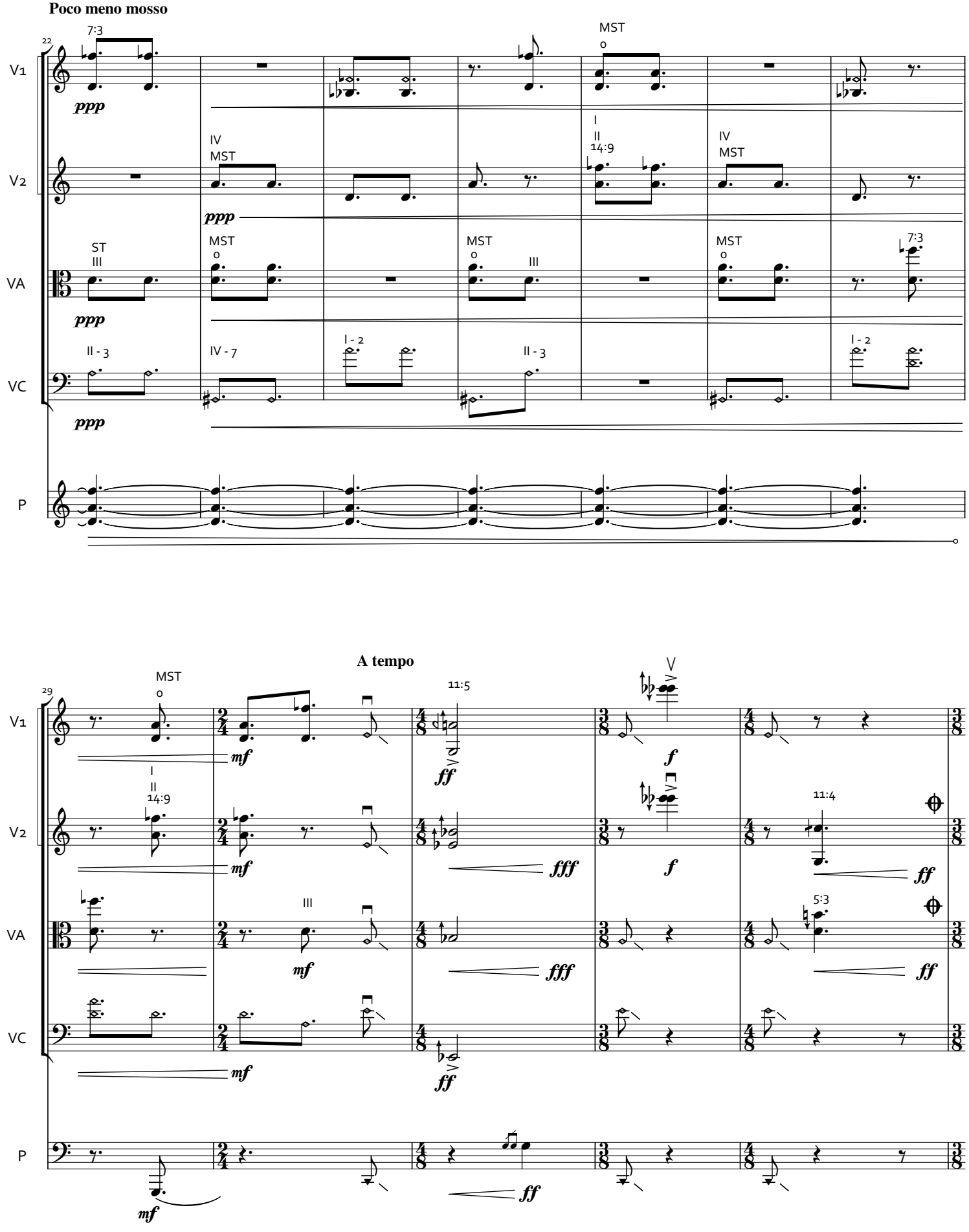
EVERYTHING AROUND IT MOVES

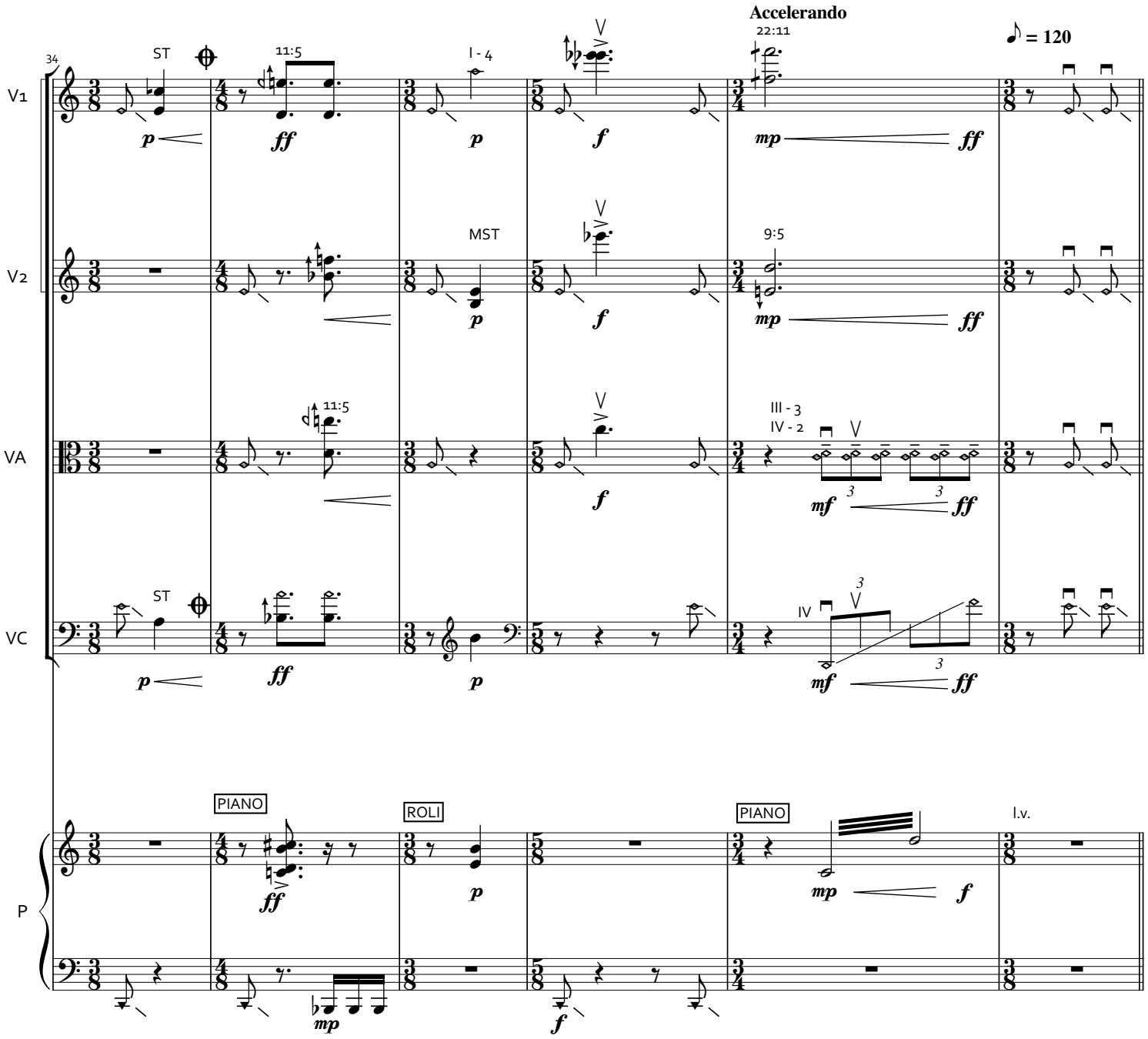
Modney

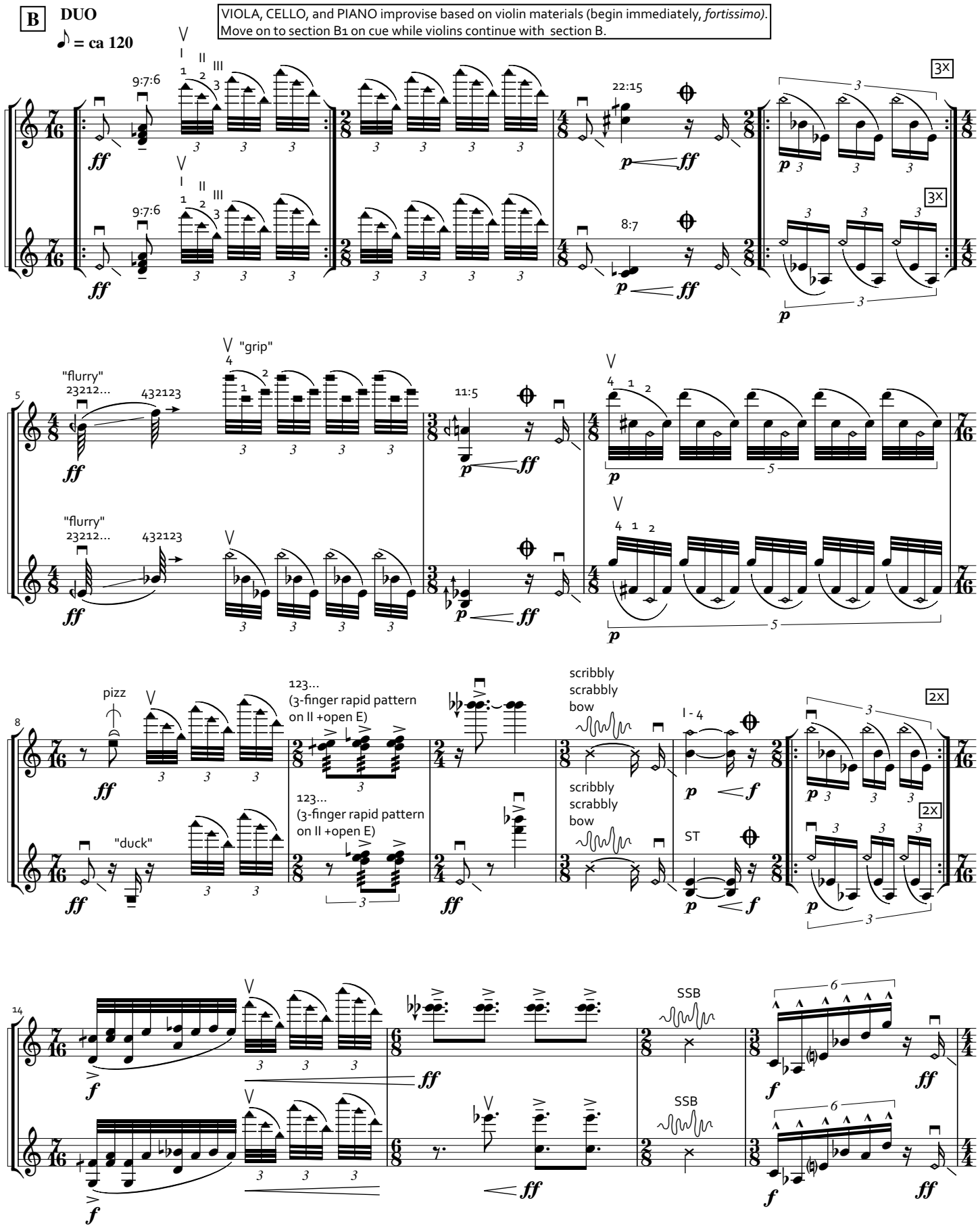


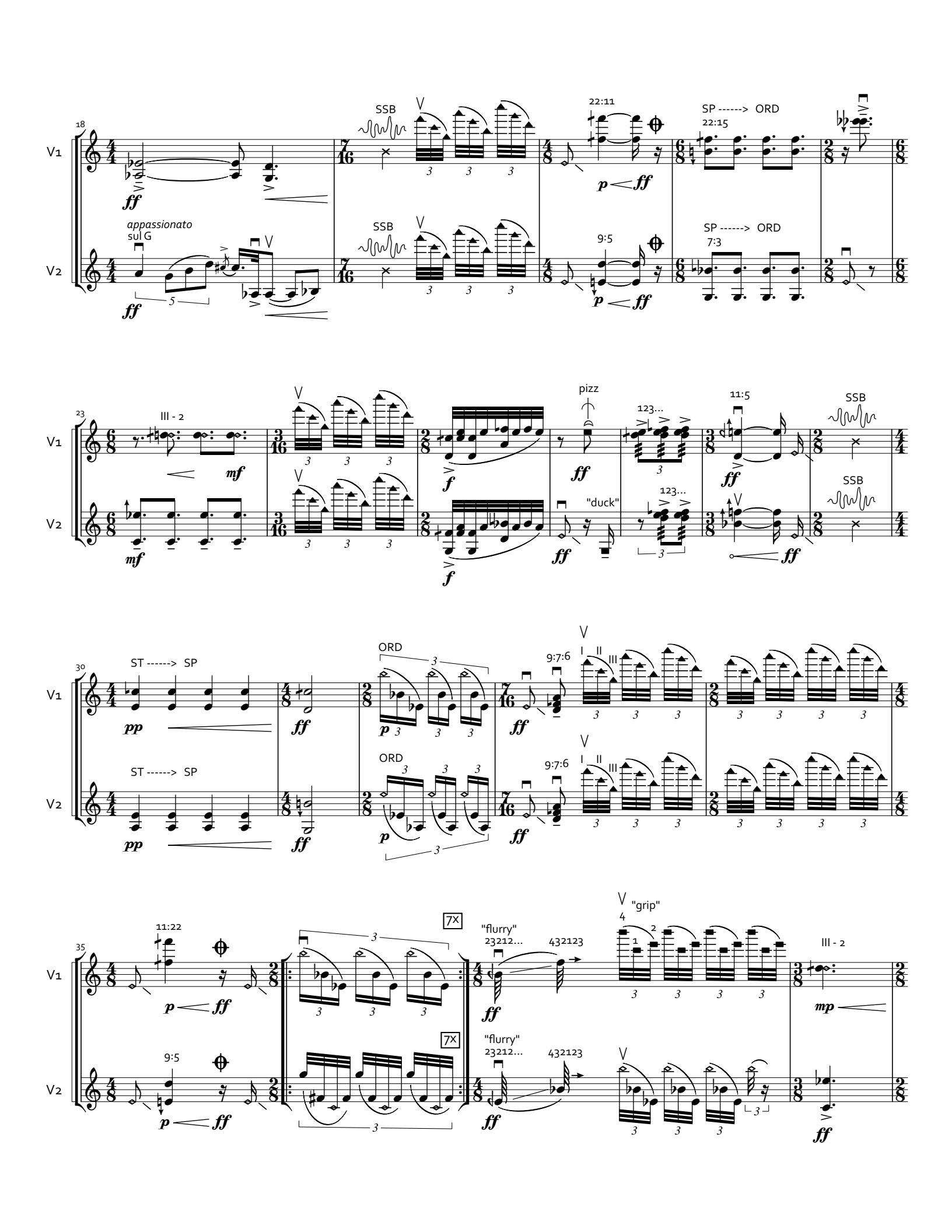

9
V1
V2
VA
VC
P
22:15
IV - 7
MST
8:7
I - 5
II - 7
III - 7
IV - 5
ST
III
II - 2
IV - 7
ROLI

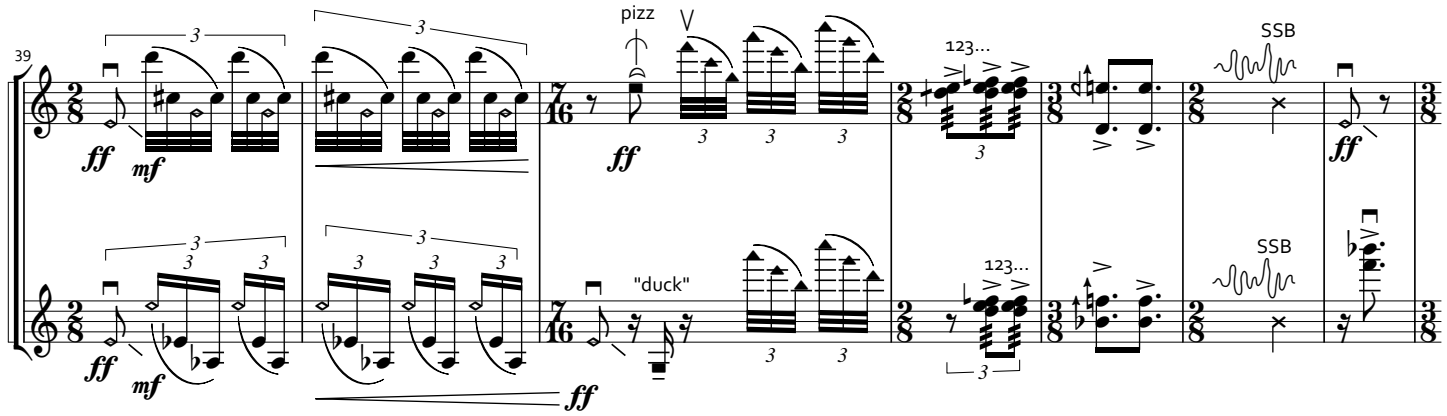

16
V1
V2
VA
VC
P
22:15
l.v.
(ORD)
SP
7:3
II - 4
IV - 7
ROLI

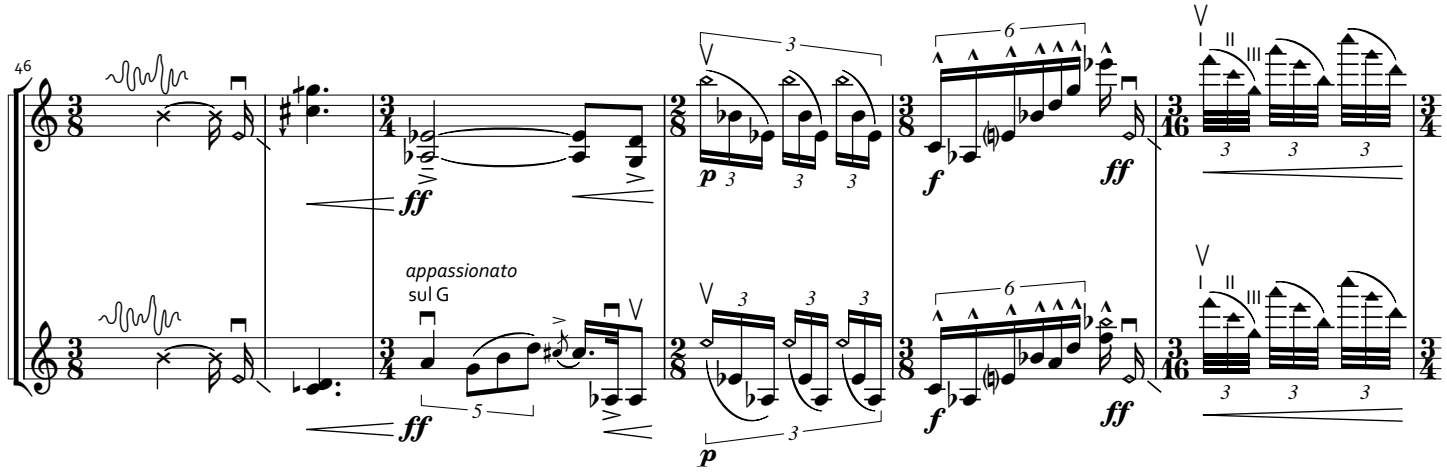

Poco meno mosso
22
V1
V2
VA
VC
P
7:3
MST
o
ppp
IV
MST
I
II
14:9
ST
III
III
II - 3
IV - 7
I - 2
A tempo
29
mf
ff
fff
f
11:5
11:4
5:3
V

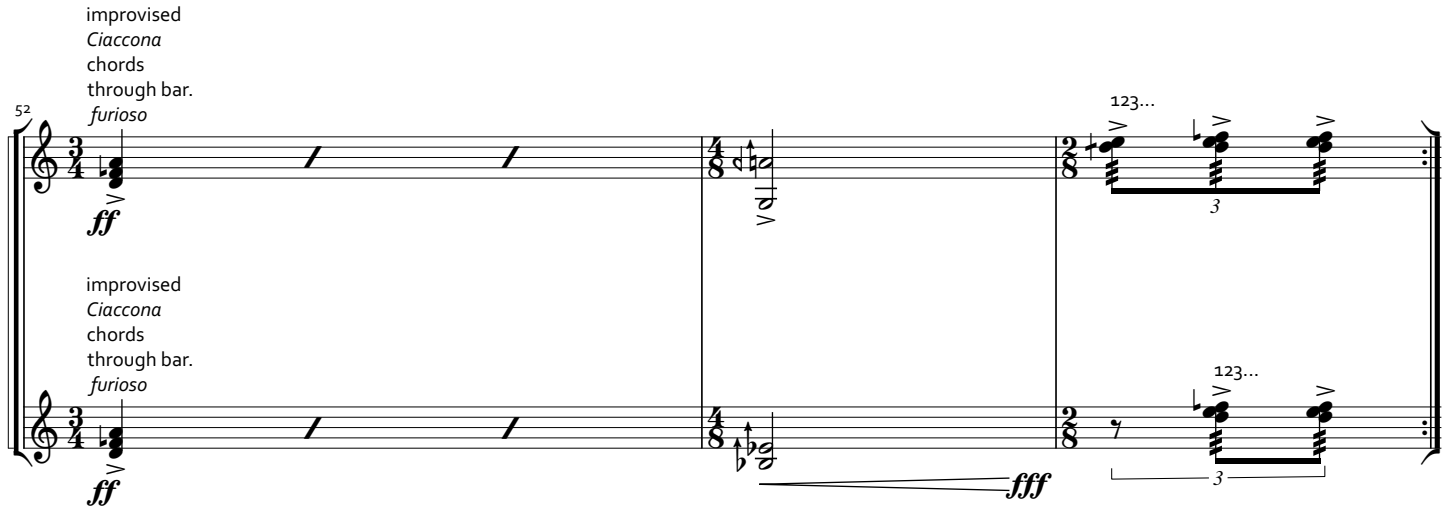

Accelerando
♪ = 120
34
V1
V2
VA
VC
P
ST
MST
11:5
I - 4
22:11
9:5
III - 3
IV - 2
IV
PIANO
ROLI
l.v.


B
DUO
♪ = ca 120
VIOLA, CELLO, and PIANO improvise based on violin materials (begin immediately, *fortissimo).*
Move on to section B1 on cue while violins continue with section B.
V1
V2
9:7:6
22:15
8:7
3X
"flurry"
23212...
432123
"grip"
11:5
5
"duck"
pizz
123...
(3-finger rapid pattern
on II +open E)
scribbly
scrabbly
bow
I - 4
ST
2X
8
14
SSB


18
V1
V2
SSB
22:11
SP ------> ORD
22:15
appassionato
sul G
9:5
7:3
23
III - 2
pizz
123...
11:5
"duck"
30
ST ------> SP
ORD
9:7:6
35
11:22
7X
"flurry"
23212...
432123
"grip"
III - 2



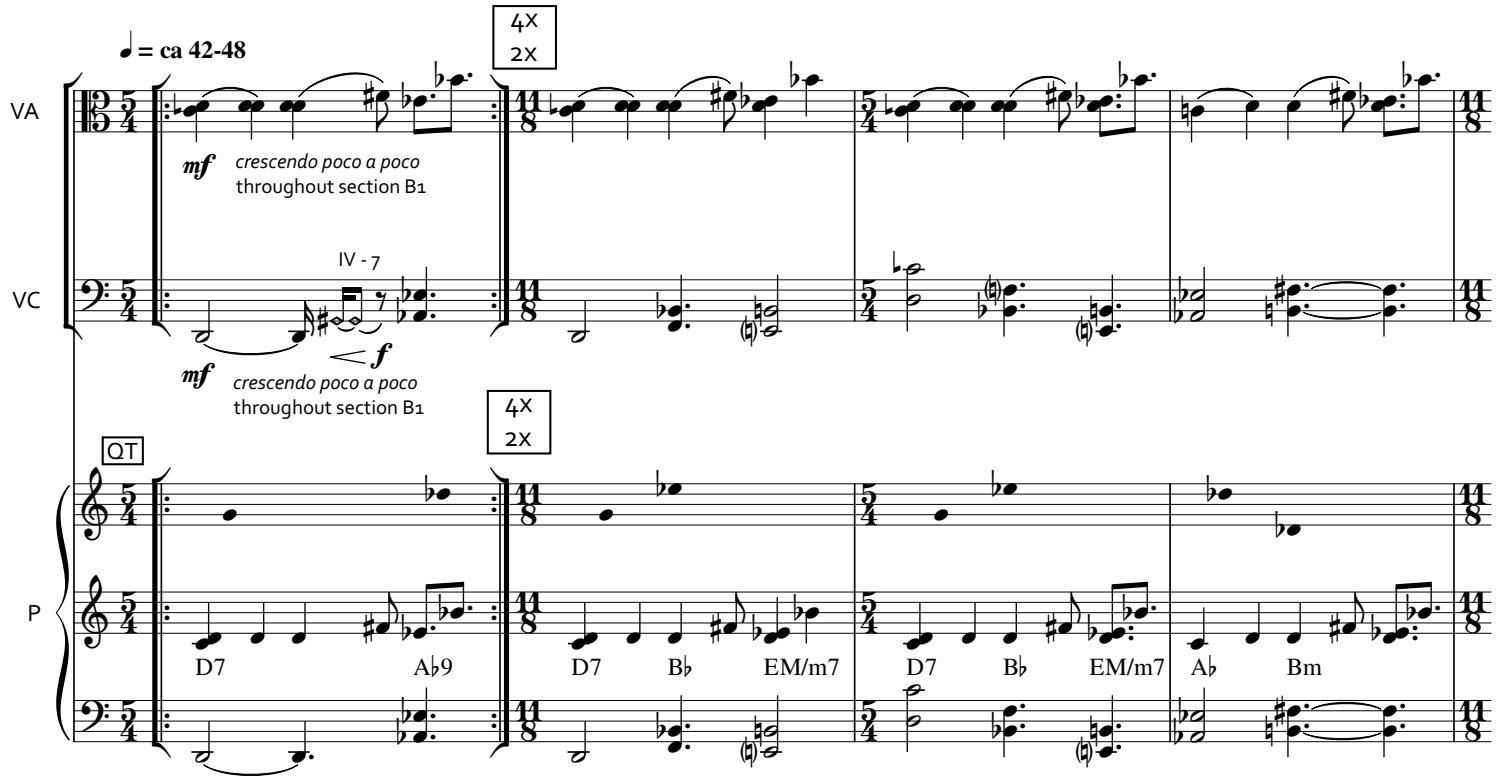


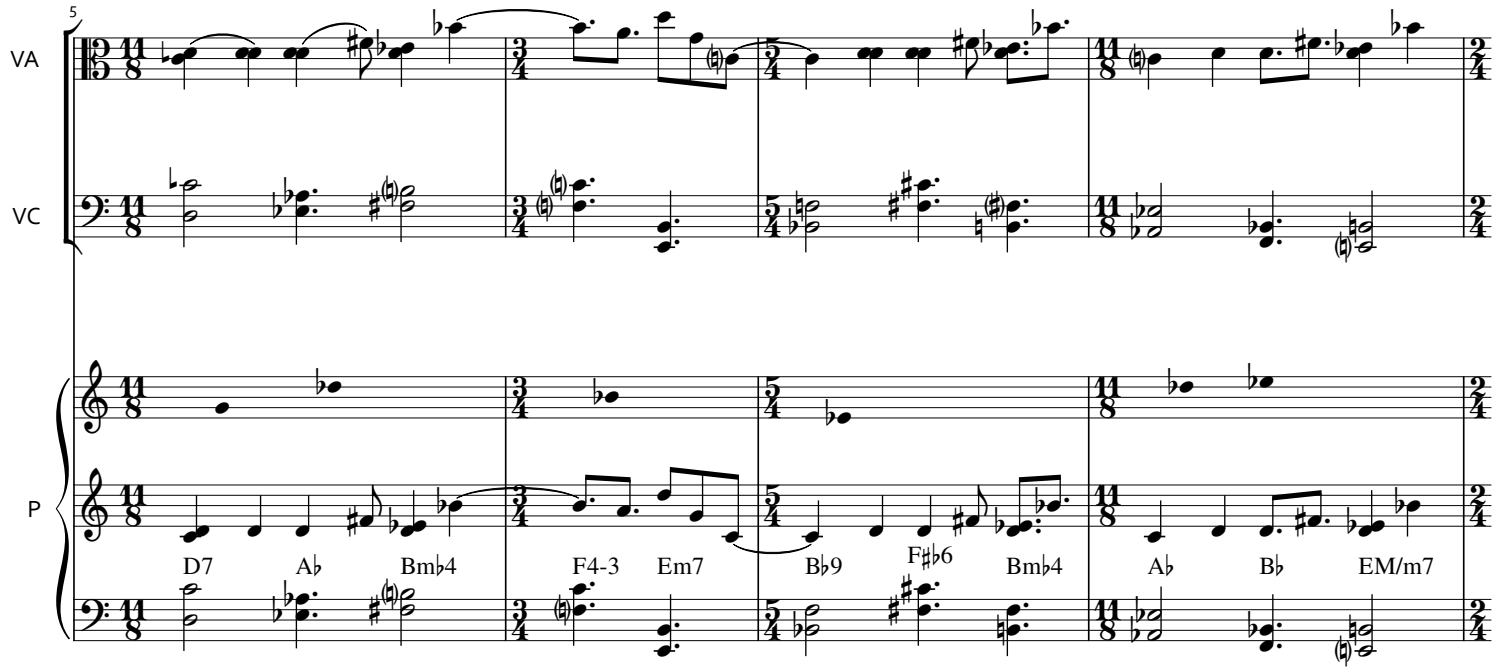


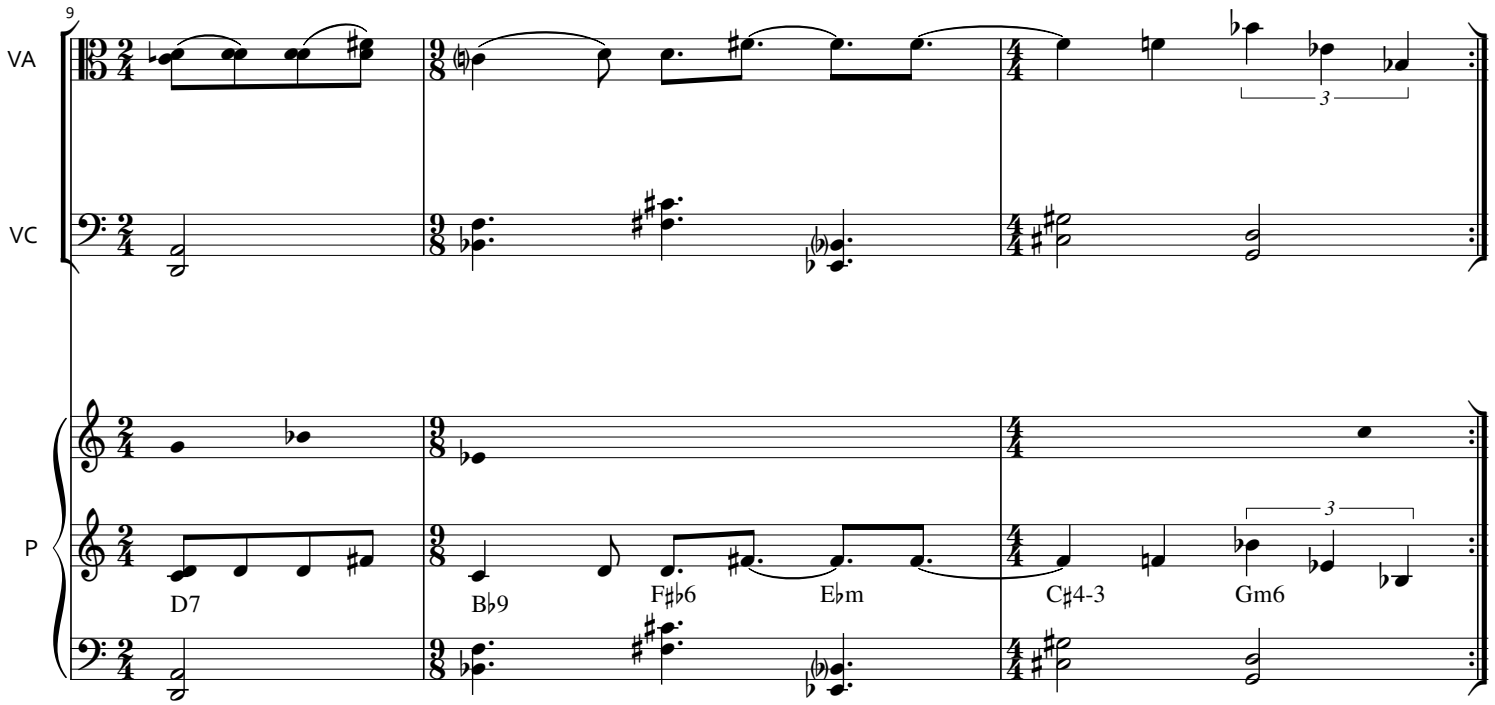
VIOLINS: Once viola, cello, and piano have established section B1, dissolve into a brief improvisation on section B material and then drop out. Rejoin with the "rips" described at the end of section B1.

B1 **TRIO**

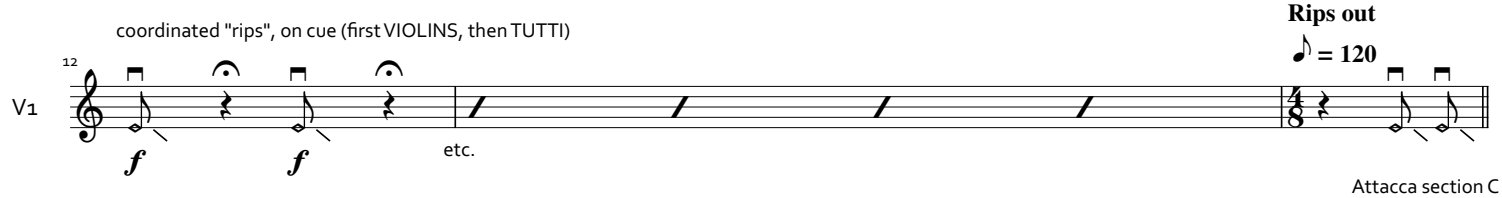
VIOLA and CELLO enter while PIANO is still improvising and violins continue with section B.
This entire form will be played twice. Sometime during the first cycle, PIANO begins soloing over the changes.
VIOLINS rejoin with coordinated "rips" at the end of section B1.



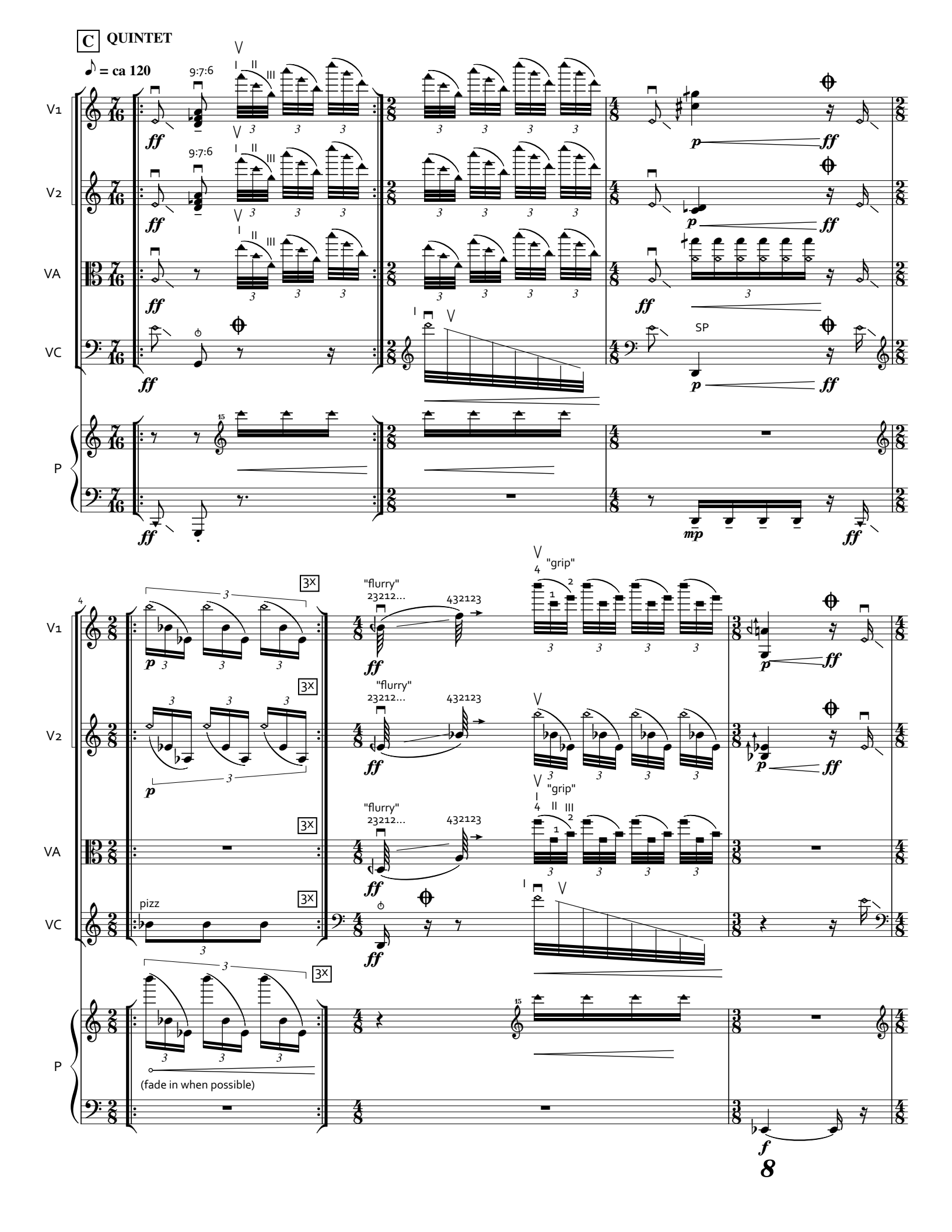


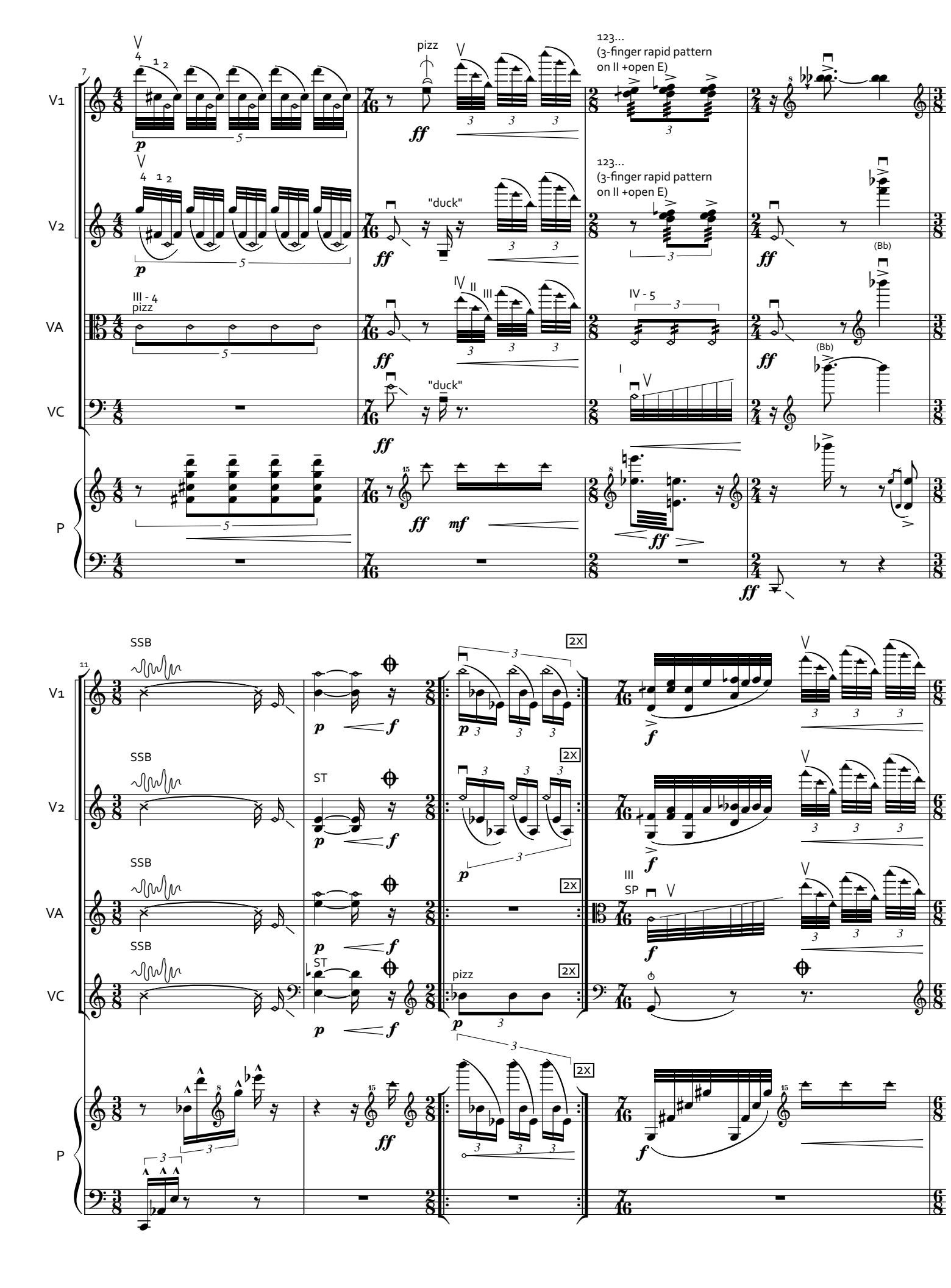


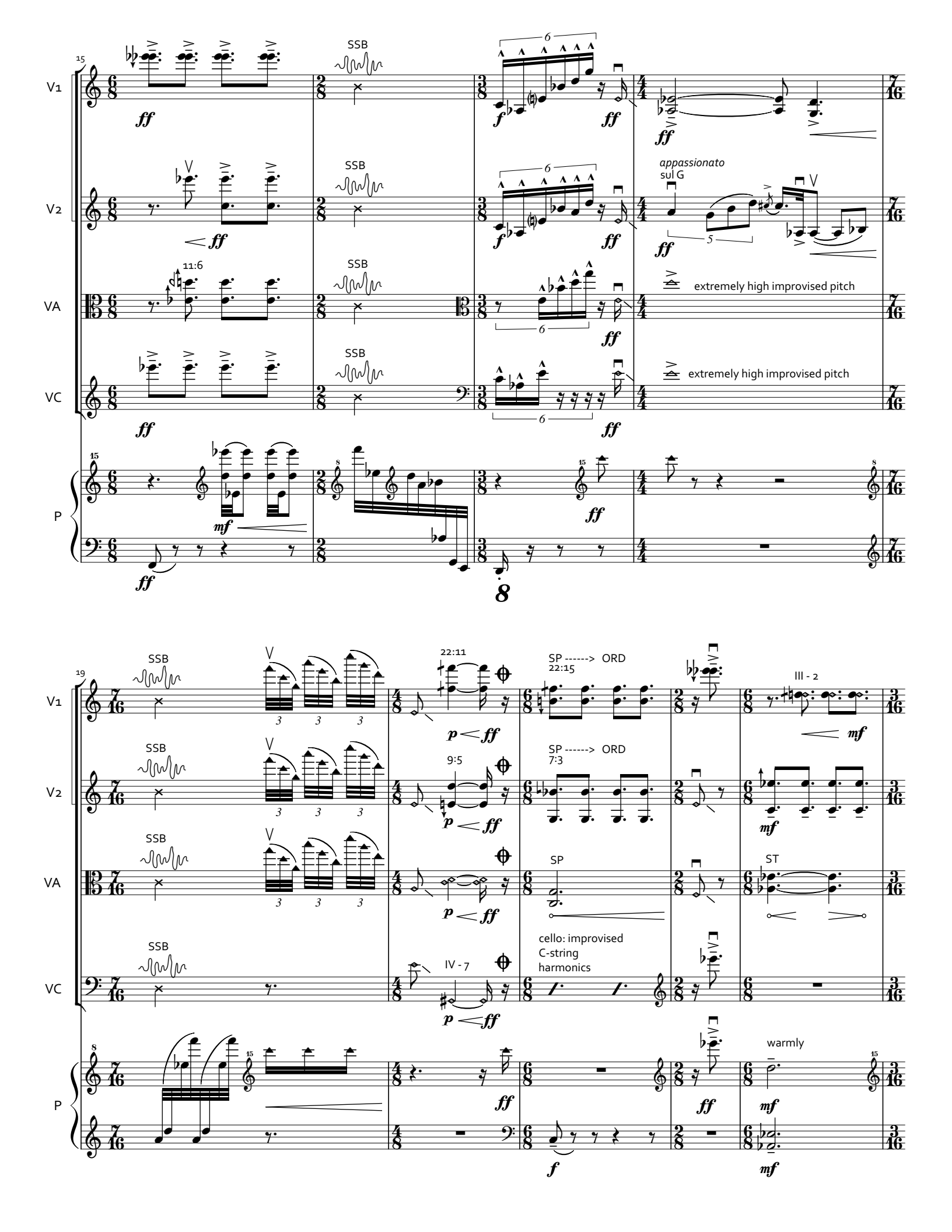
TO END SECTION B1: VIOLINS begin coordinated "rips" near end of second cycle.
Once piano solo is done, VIOLA, CELLO, and PIANO join violins on coordinated rips.

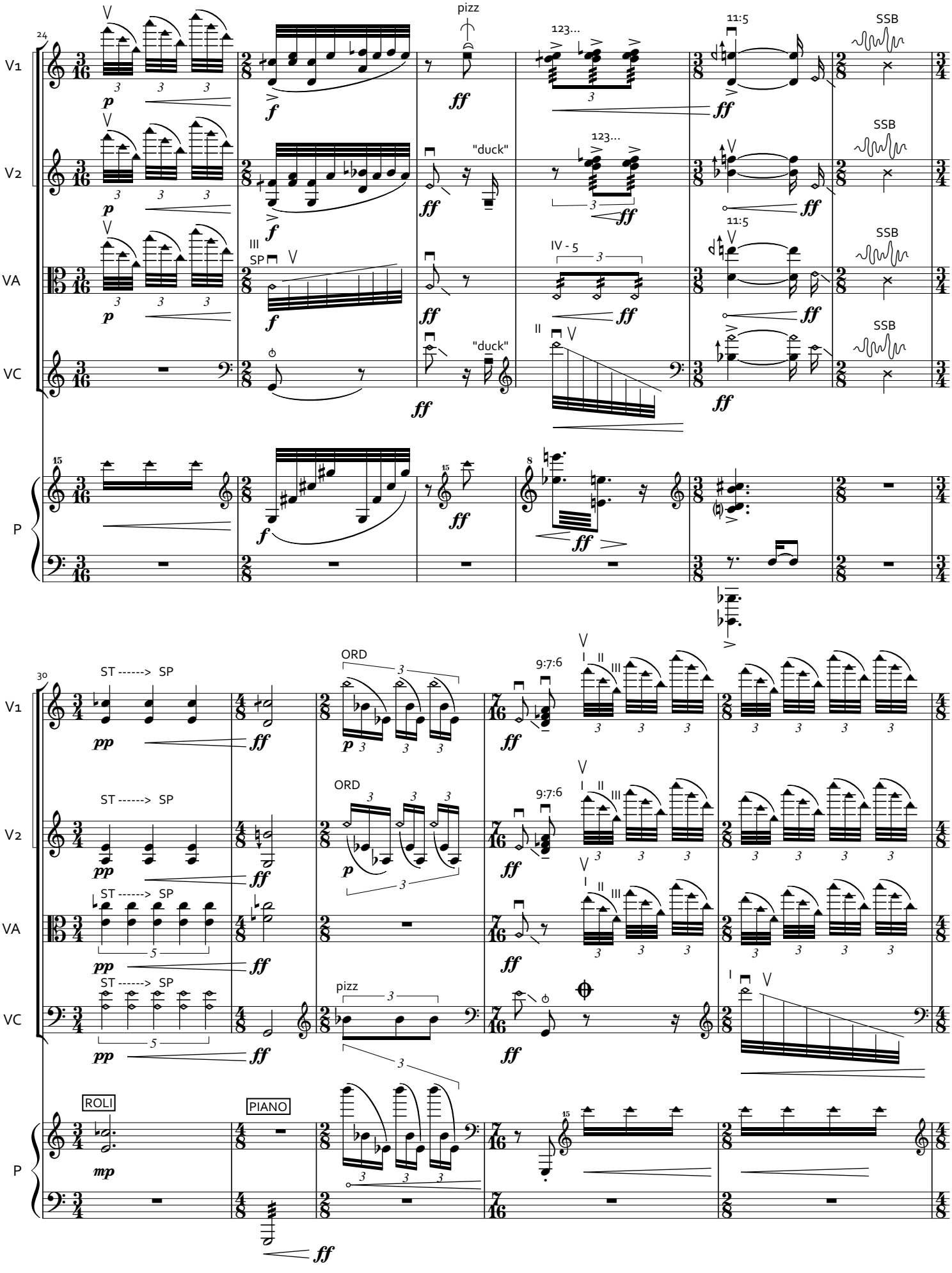


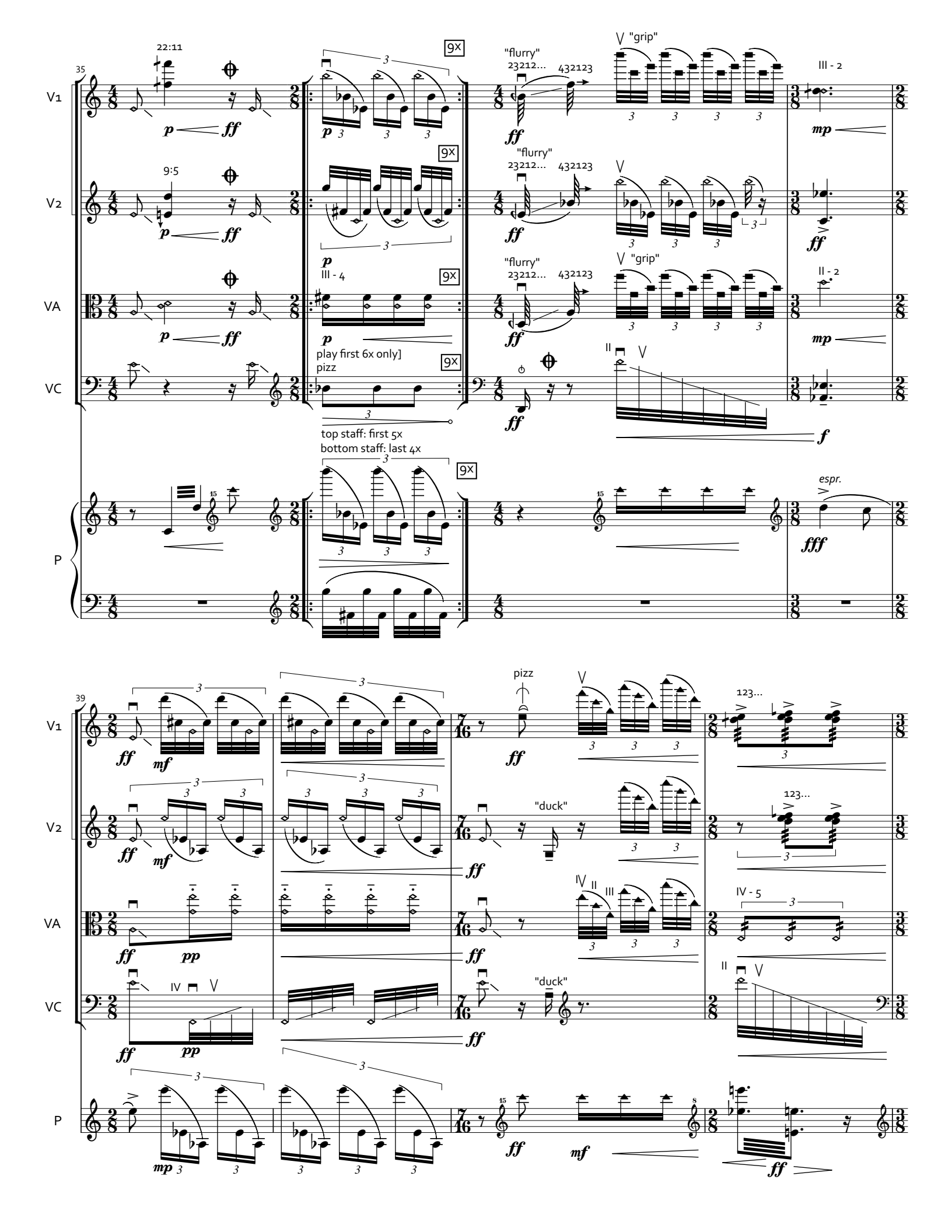
Attacca section C
"Quintet"

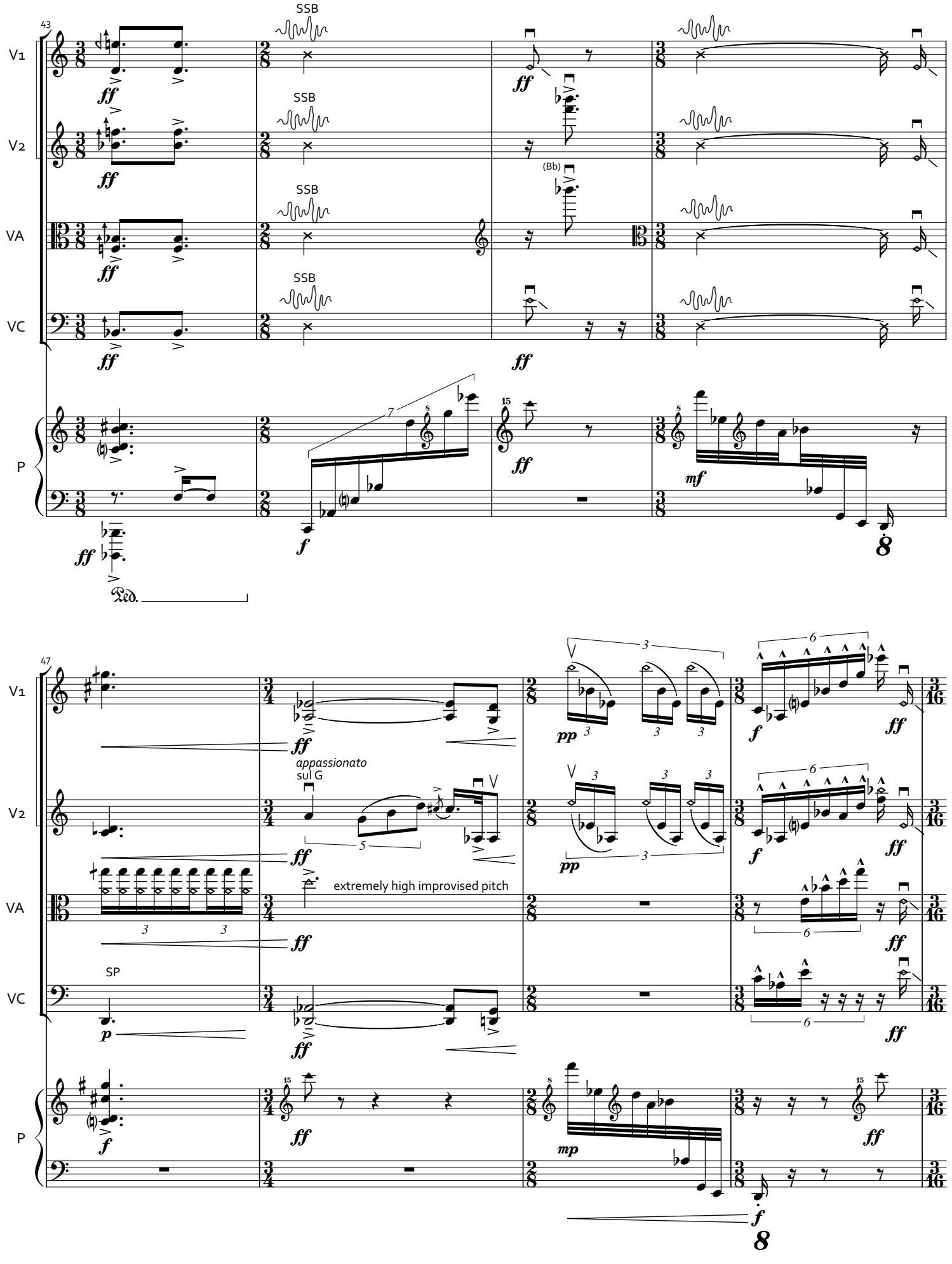

C QUINTET
♪ = ca 120
9:7:6
V1
V2
VA
VC
P
SP
"flurry"
23212...
432123
"grip"
3X
pizz
(fade in when possible)
8

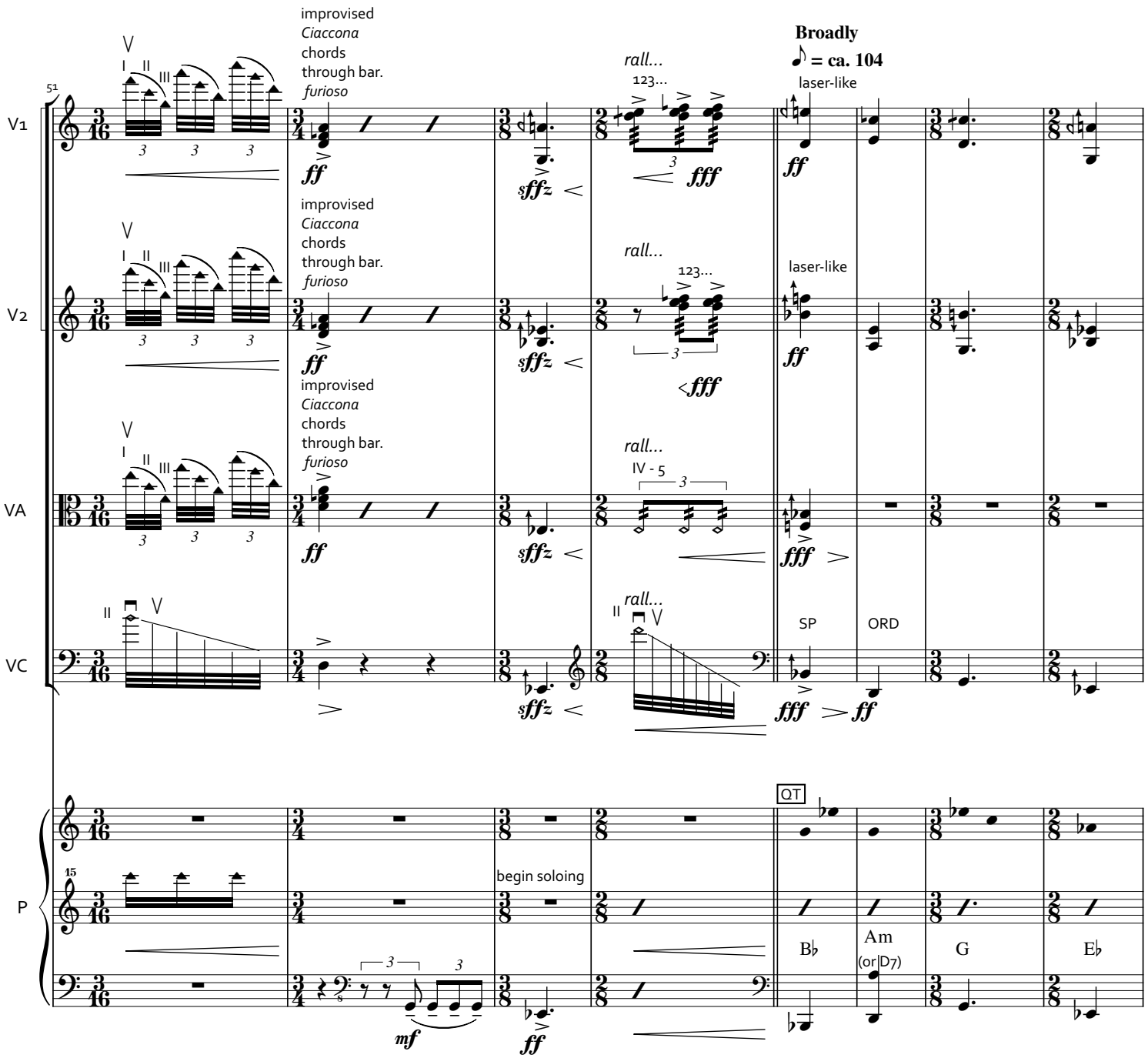

7
V1
V2
VA
VC
P
pizz
"duck"
123...
(3-finger rapid pattern
on II +open E)
III - 4
pizz
IV - 5
(Bb)
11
SSB
ST
2X
III
SP

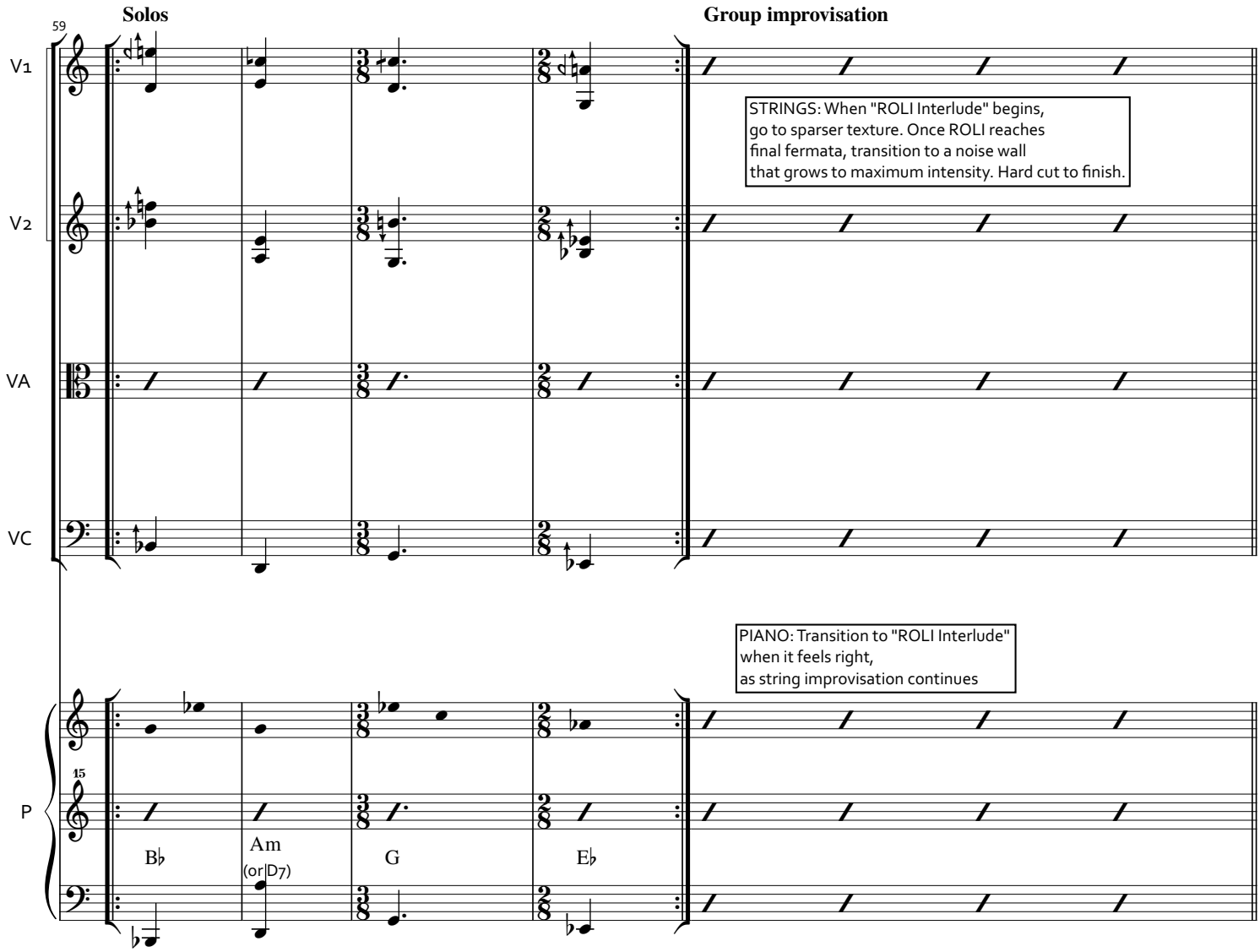

15
V1
V2
VA
VC
P
SSB
11:6
appassionato
sul G
extremely high improvised pitch
19
22:11
SP ------> ORD
22:15
9:5
SP ------> ORD
7:3
III - 2
IV - 7
SP
ST
cello: improvised
C-string
harmonics
warmly


24
V1
V2
VA
VC
P
pizz
123...
11:5
SSB
"duck"
III
SP
IV - 5
II
15
8
30
ST ------> SP
ORD
9:7:6
ROLI
PIANO


35
V1
V2
VA
VC
P
22:11
9:5
9x
"flurry"
23212...
432123
"grip"
III - 2
II - 2
III - 4
play first 6x only]
pizz
top staff: first 5x
bottom staff: last 4x
espr.
39
"duck"
123...
IV - 5

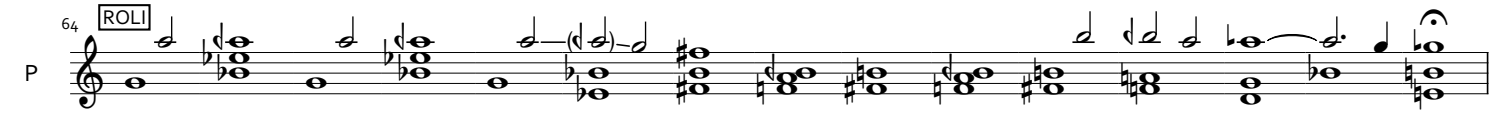

43
V1
V2
VA
VC
P
SSB
(Bb)
Ped.
47
appassionato
sul G
extremely high improvised pitch
SP

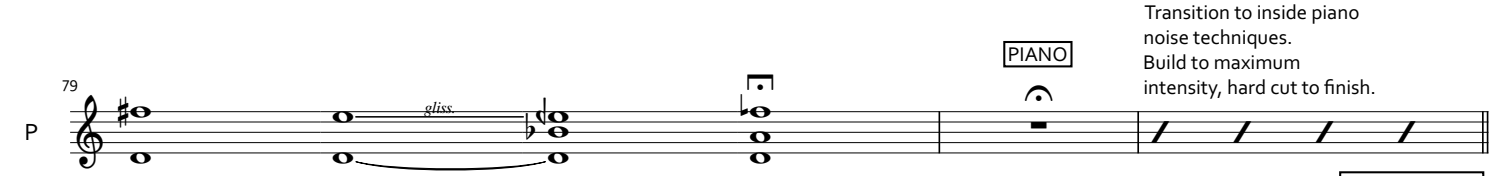

51
V1
V2
VA
VC
P
improvised
Ciaccona
chords
through bar.
furioso
rall...
123...
Broadly
♪ = ca. 104
laser-like
IV - 5
SP
ORD
QT
begin soloing
B♭
Am
(or D7)
G
E♭



ROLI INTERLUDE

Slowly, out of time, exploratory





ATTACCA
PART II

II.

D **SOLO**

Notes: Each measure like a breath (inhalation, exhalation).
Flexibility and soloistic expressive liberties are welcome throughout.

Flexible

♩ = 48-56

VA

III - 3

IV

p with warmth

connect to next measure with fluttery sounds, ad lib

6

Flowing

𝅗𝅥 = ca. 40

III-5

molto rall.

espr.

III

Measured

♩ = ca. 48

MST

pp

p

mp

p sub.

pp

Tempo I - with a bit more motion

10

ORD

(G#)

mp

14

II III II IV - 7

II IV I III - 7

I IV 4 I IV

IV I 4 IV MST

bell-like, ringing harmonics (fast bow)

bell-like

warm, supportive, follow viola

P

mp

Ped. ---->

𝅗𝅥 = ca. 56-66, flowing

18

(MST)

ORD

rall., espr.

III

rall.

a tempo

poco rall.

a tempo

molto rall

pp

tremolo speed

fast ----------> slow

mf

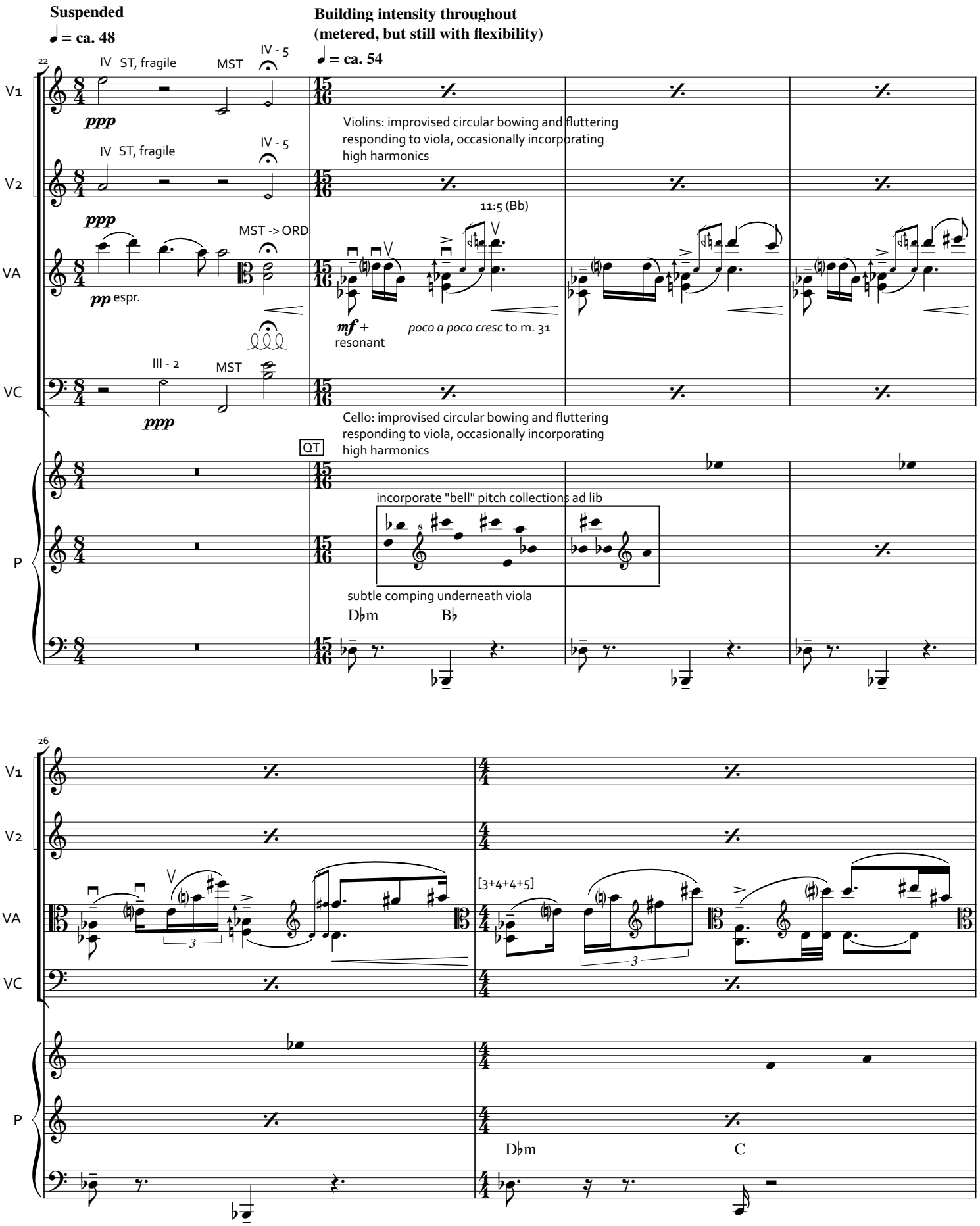
p sub.

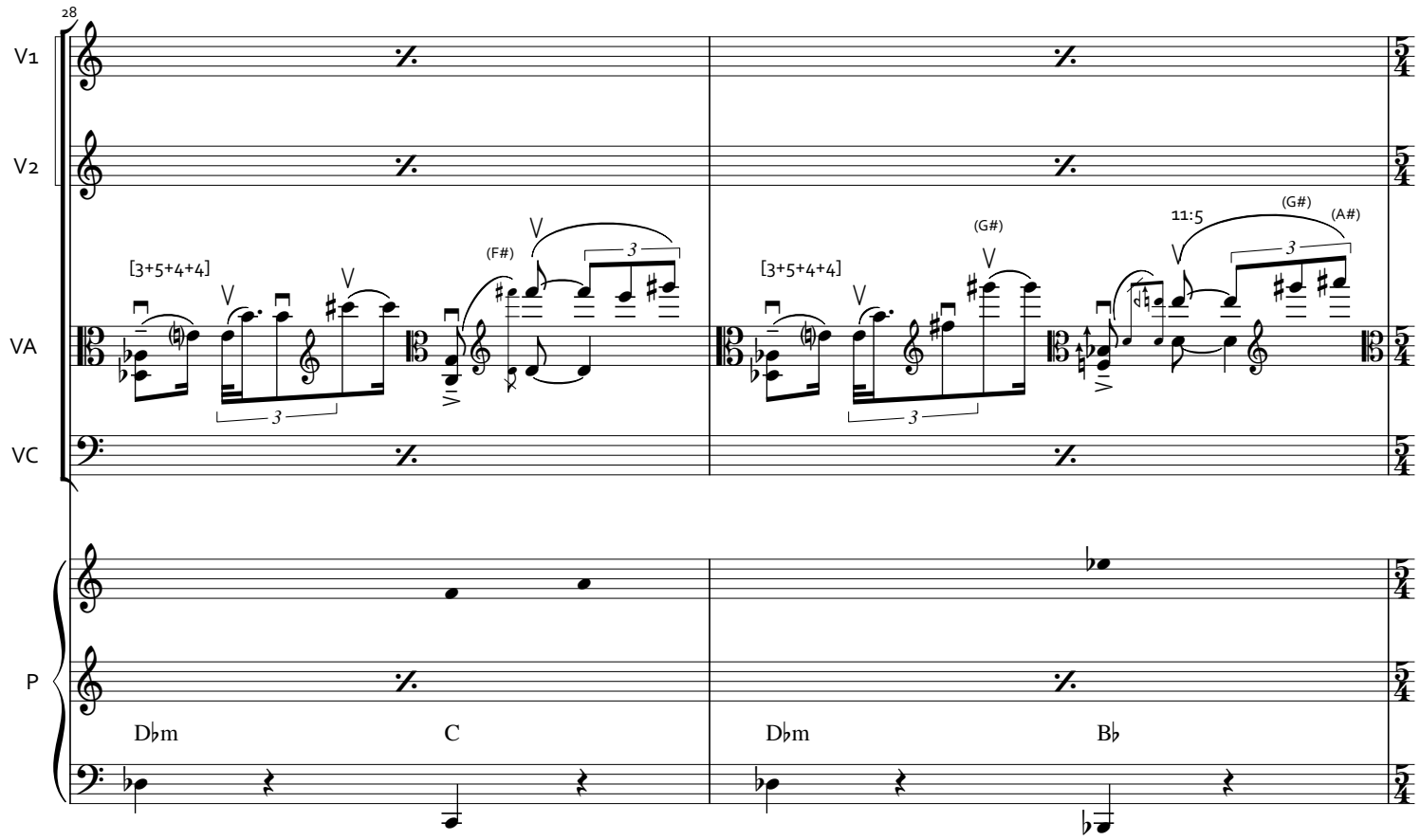
*linger here as if playing m. 9, and then flow into tempo on the E

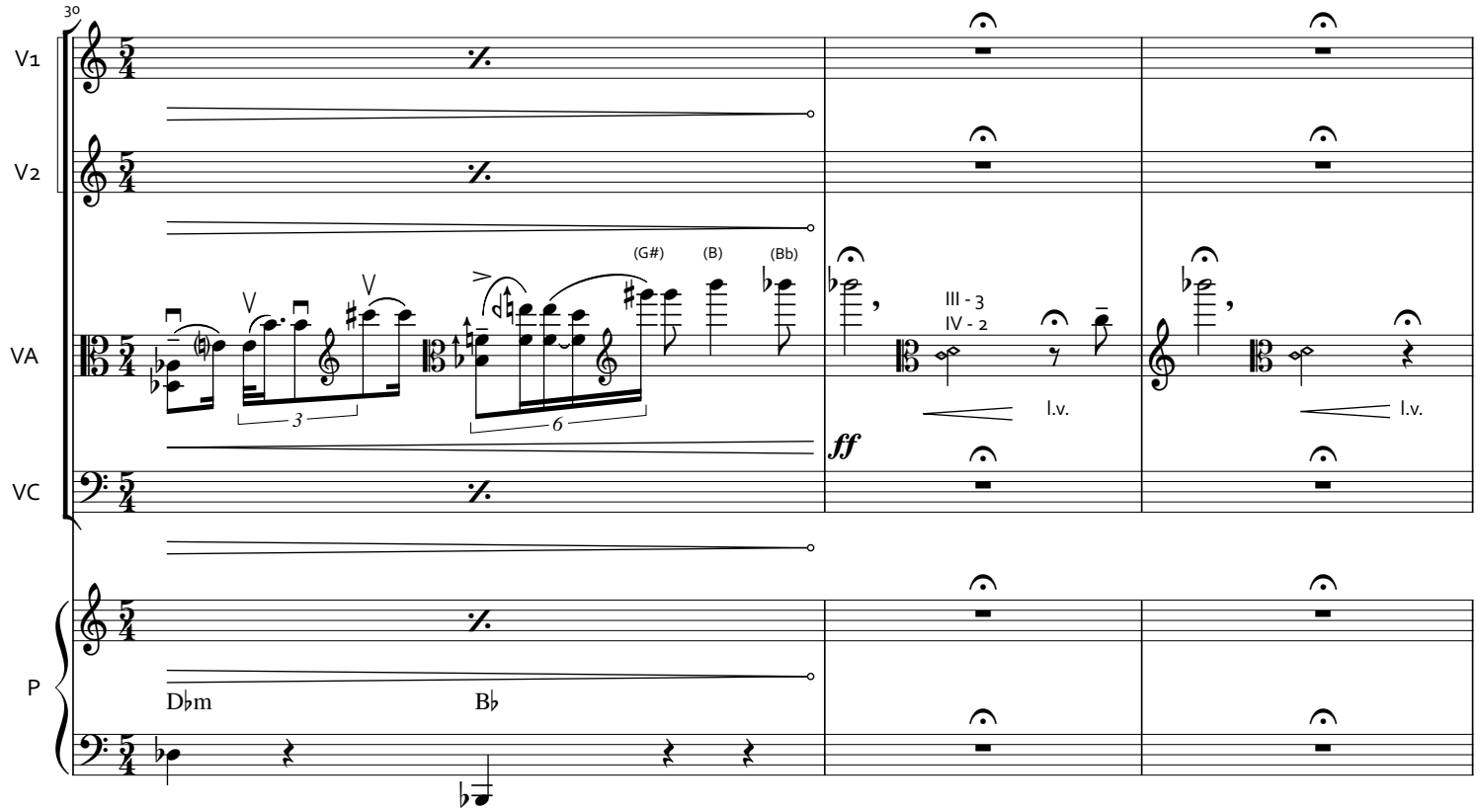
mp

mf

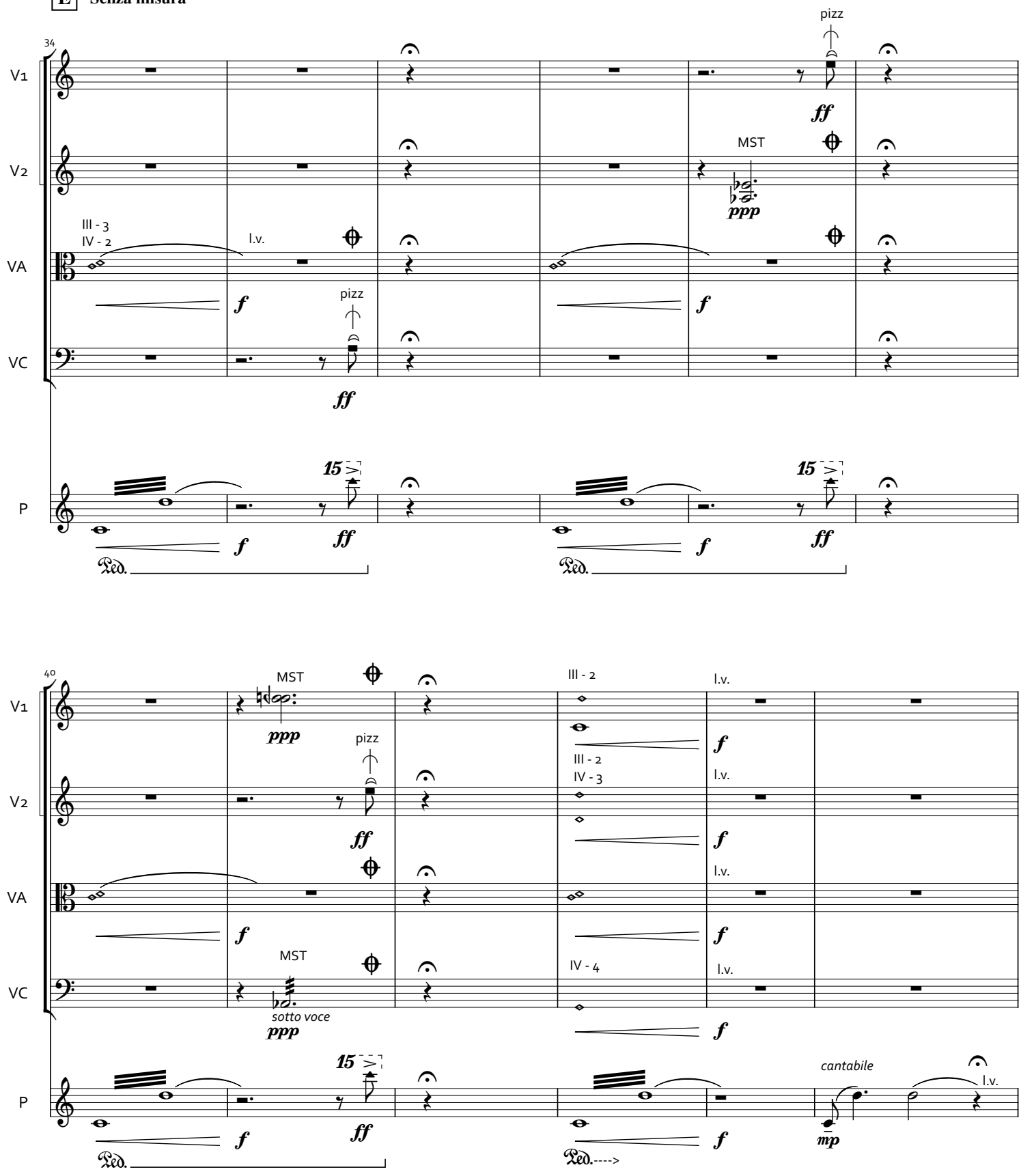
(l.v.)


Suspended
♩ = ca. 48
Building intensity throughout
(metered, but still with flexibility)
♩ = ca. 54
22
V1
V2
VA
VC
P
IV ST, fragile
MST
IV - 5
ppp
pp espr.
MST -> ORD
III - 2
Violins: improvised circular bowing and fluttering responding to viola, occasionally incorporating high harmonics
11:5 (Bb)
mf + resonant
poco a poco cresc to m. 31
Cello: improvised circular bowing and fluttering responding to viola, occasionally incorporating high harmonics
QT
incorporate "bell" pitch collections ad lib
subtle comping underneath viola
D♭m
B♭
26
[3+4+4+5]
D♭m
C


28
V1
V2
VA
VC
P
[3+5+4+4]
(F#)
[3+5+4+4]
(G#)
11:5
(G#)
(A#)
Dbm
C
Dbm
Bb


30
V1
V2
VA
VC
P
(G#)
(B)
(Bb)
III - 3
IV - 2
l.v.
l.v.
ff
Dbm
Bb

E **Senza misura**



F **SONG**

♩ = ca. 46

46 solo. introspective, flexible

P

mp with warmth

poco rit *a tempo*

p *poco cresc.*

3

8 (loco)

Violins: the slight overlap notated in m. 56 should continue throughout this section

Violins: the Ds in m. 62 are roughly the same pitch

56

V1

V2

P

11:6 11:5 11:6 5:2

mp with warmth

9:4 7:4 14:9 11:5

I II 4:3

mp with warmth

Piano: play 2x only

ppp *pp*

8

65

V1

V2

VA

P

11:6 11:5 11:6 5:2 11:6

mf *poco f*

9:4 7:4 14:9 11:5 9:4

I II 4:3

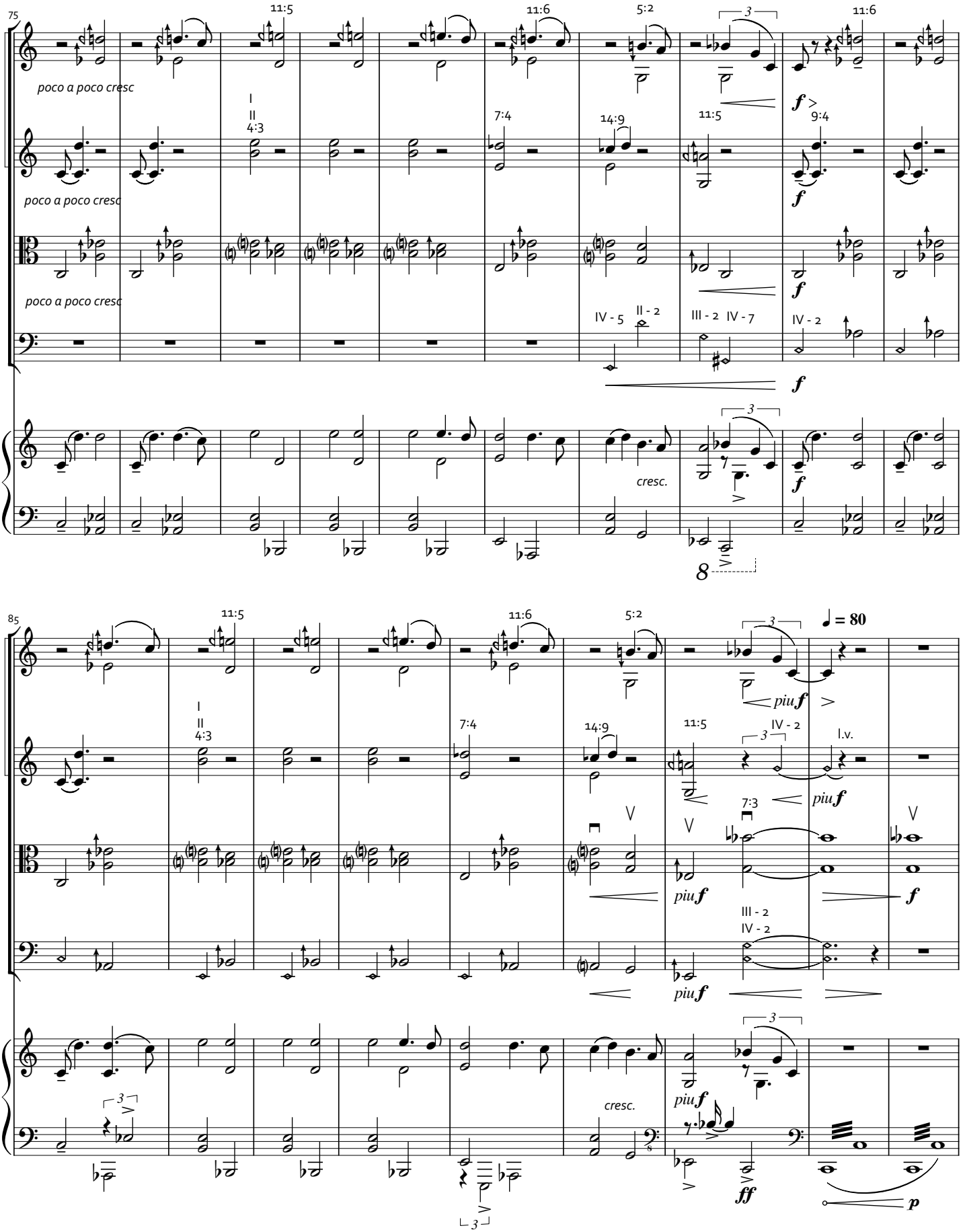
mf *poco f*

IV - 2

sim. *sim.* *poco f*

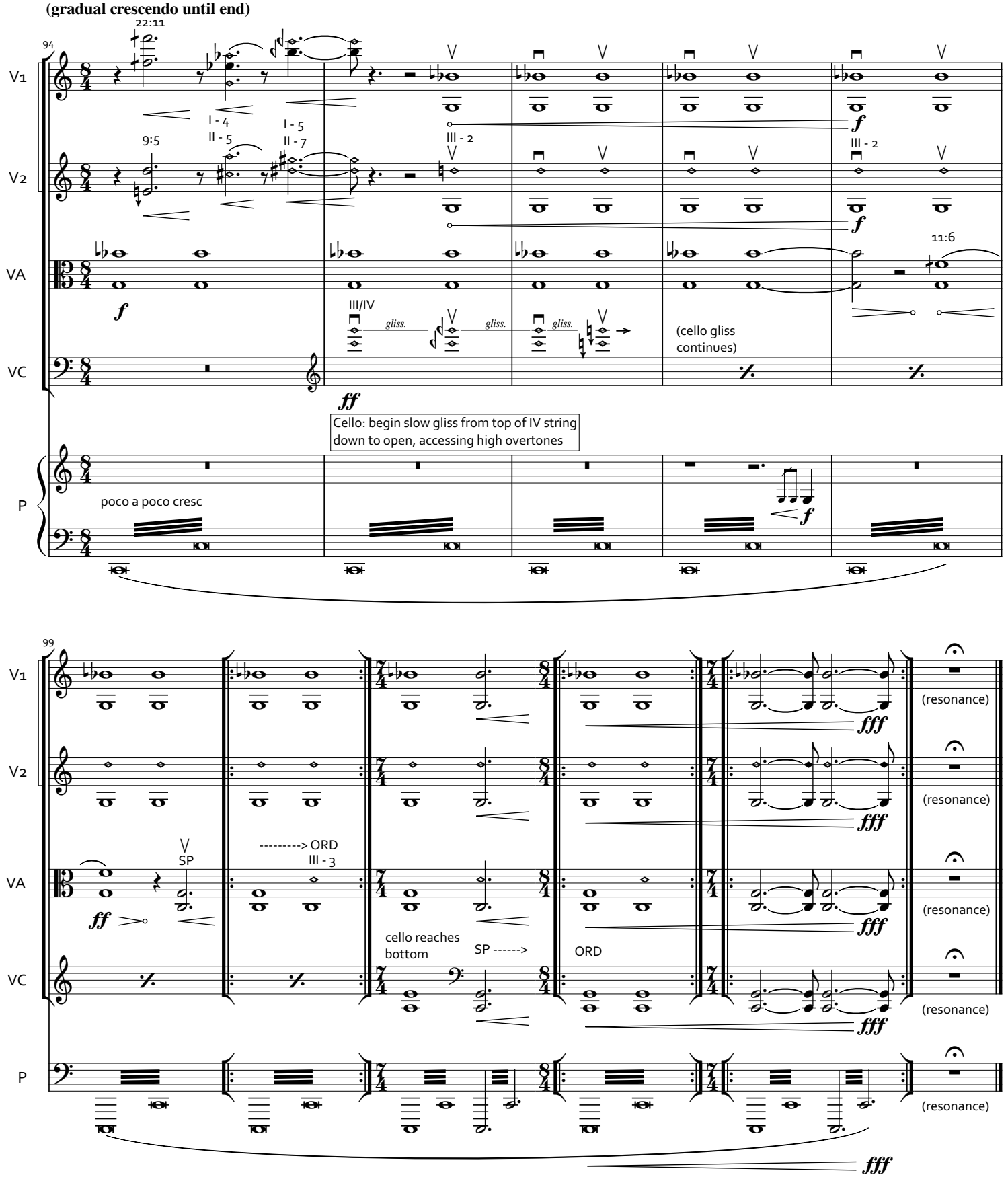
poco a poco cresc

8


75
V1
V2
VA
VC
P
poco a poco cresc
poco a poco cresc
poco a poco cresc
11:5
11:6
5:2
11:6
I
II
4:3
7:4
14:9
11:5
9:4
IV - 5
II - 2
III - 2
IV - 7
IV - 2
cresc.
85
♩ = 80
piu f
IV - 2
l.v.
7:3
III - 2
IV - 2
cresc.
ff
p

G

(gradual crescendo until end)



Millay Arts (Austerlitz, NY) —
Brooklyn, NY
Fall/Winter 2022