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FIREFLY ELEGY (2017)

FOR CLARINET, VIOLIN, VIOLA, CELLO AND HARP

Gilad Cohen (1980-)

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www.giladcohen.com

Winner of the Penn State University 2020 International Call for Scores

Short biography:

Gilad Cohen is an active composer, performer, and theorist in various genres including concert music, rock, and music for theater. Recent engagements include commissions by Barlow Endowment for Music Composition, Concert Artists Guild, Parlance Chamber Concerts, and Tre Voci (Kim Kashkashian, Marina Piccinini and Sivan Magen); performances by violist Paul Neubauer, pianists Anne-Marie McDermott and Spencer Myer, Lysander Piano Trio (Itamar Zorman, Liza Stepanova and Michael Katz), Israeli Chamber Project, and principal players of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Budapest Festival Orchestra; and releases on Albany Records, Naxos/Delos and Navona Records. Notable awards include the 2016 Barlow Prize, the Israeli Prime Minister Award for Composers, and top prizes in international competitions in the US, Europe, Asia and the Middle-East. Gilad performs regularly with various ensembles around the US, playing piano, bass guitar and guitar. An Associate Professor of Music at Ramapo College of New Jersey, Gilad holds a Ph.D. in composition from Princeton University. His research about the music of Pink Floyd has resulted in publications in academic journals, lectures in the US and Israel, and the first-ever academic conference devoted to the band that Gilad produced in 2014 at Princeton University together with composer Dave Molk.

Abstract:

Firefly Elegy uses a 12-note melodic theme, which through the course of the piece undergoes a series of transformations - mirroring the metamorphosis that takes place over a firefly's brief life span. The piece comprises four sections that reflect the four life stages of the firefly. During the motionless egg stage, some types of fireflies glow dimly; the opening section of the piece (following a short fanfare of flashing-light) is likewise static and calm, while at the same time features an internal motion hinting at subdued energy. The following groovy section is at times aggressive, not unlike the firefly during its larva stage, when it is hunting and digesting insects using special enzymes. The firefly hibernates through the pupa stage - reflected in the third section of the piece by seemingly everlasting sustained chords in the strings. Like a flash of light, each new phrase begins with an ascending scale, while the harp provides groups of repeated notes, recalling the synchronized flashes that are found in groups of tropical fireflies. Firefly Elegy ends with an elegy in which the now mature firefly looks back at its life. It has gone through such an extensive journey but only long enough to mate and lay eggs, sometimes without feeding during its adult stage. In the summertime, I often watch the firefly in his lonely flutter, flashing about and looking for a mate so he can complete the sole purpose of his short life before dying away. He must sometimes look back and wonder: was it all worth it?

Full Score

Gilad Cohen

Firefly Elegy

for clarinet, violin, viola, cello and harp

(2017)

Commissioned for the Israeli Chamber Project
by the Adele and John Gray Endowment Fund

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Full Score

Gilad Cohen

Firefly Elegy

for clarinet, violin, viola, cello and harp

Program notes:

Firefly Elegy uses a 12-note melodic theme, which through the course of the piece undergoes a series of transformations - mirroring the metamorphosis that takes place over a firefly's brief life span. The piece comprises four sections that reflect the four life stages of the firefly.
During the motionless egg stage, some types of fireflies glow dimly; the opening section of the piece (following a short fanfare of flashing-light) is likewise static and calm, while at the same time features an internal motion hinting at subdued energy. The following groovy section is at times aggressive, not unlike the firefly during its larva stage, when it is hunting and digesting insects using special enzymes.
The firefly hibernates through the pupa stage - reflected in the third section of the piece by seemingly everlasting sustained chords in the strings. Like a flash of light, each new phrase begins with an ascending scale, while the harp provides groups of repeated notes, recalling the synchronized flashes that are found in groups of tropical fireflies.
Firefly Elegy ends with an elegy in which the now mature firefly looks back at its life. It has gone through such an extensive journey but only long enough to mate and lay eggs, sometimes without feeding during its adult stage.
In the summertime, I often watch the firefly in his lonely flutter, flashing about and looking for a mate so he can complete the sole purpose of his short life before dying away. He must sometimes look back and wonder: was it all worth it?

Performance notes:

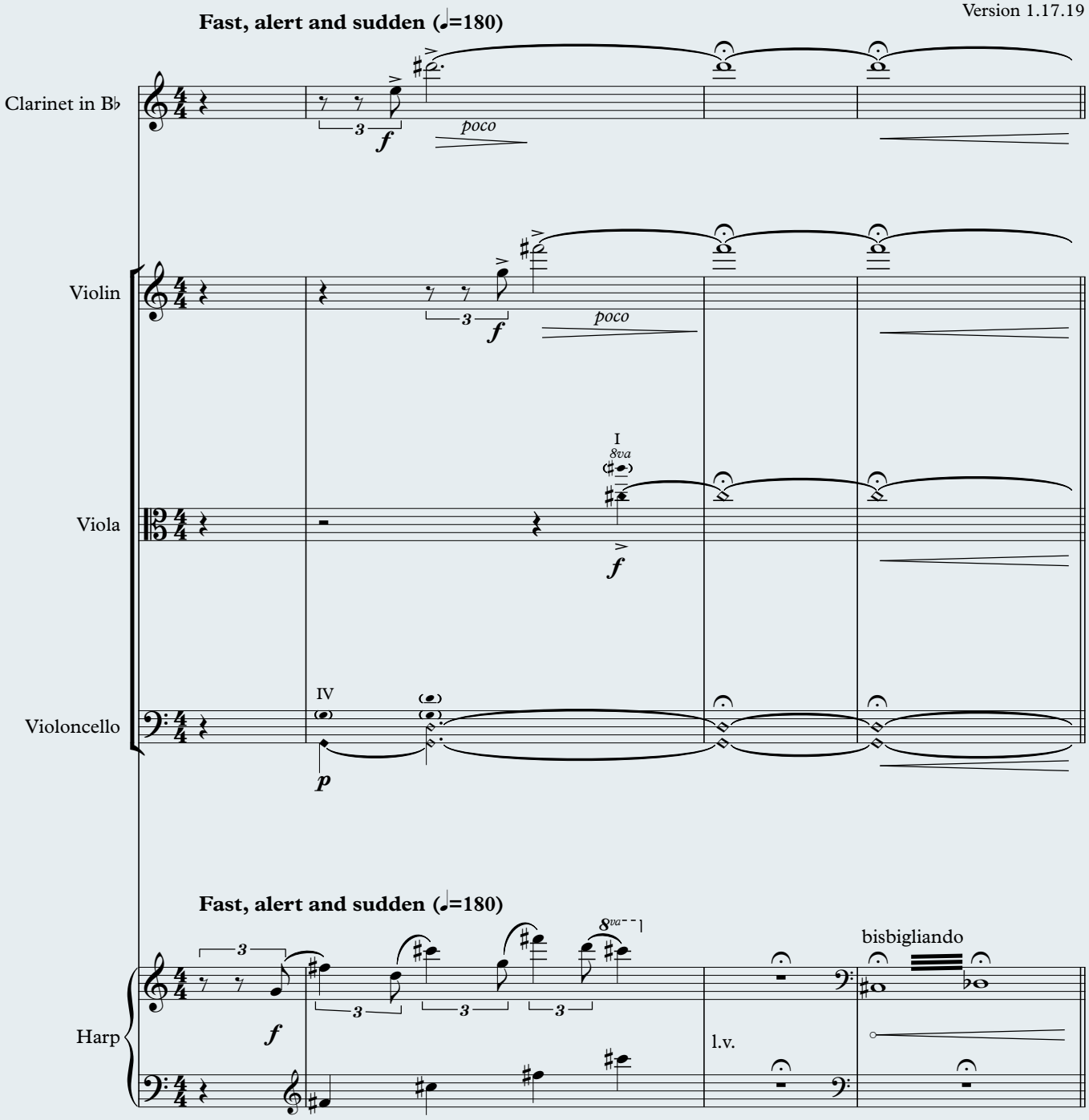
* For the viola, guitar pick is recommended for mm. 196-213.
* For the harp, harmonics are written where they are produced, sounding an octave higher.

Firefly Elegy

for clarinet, violin, viola, cello and harp

Commissioned for the Israeli Chamber Project
by the Adele and John Gray Endowment Fund

Gilad Cohen 2017
Version 1.17.19



Harmonics are written where they are produced, sounding an ovtave higher.

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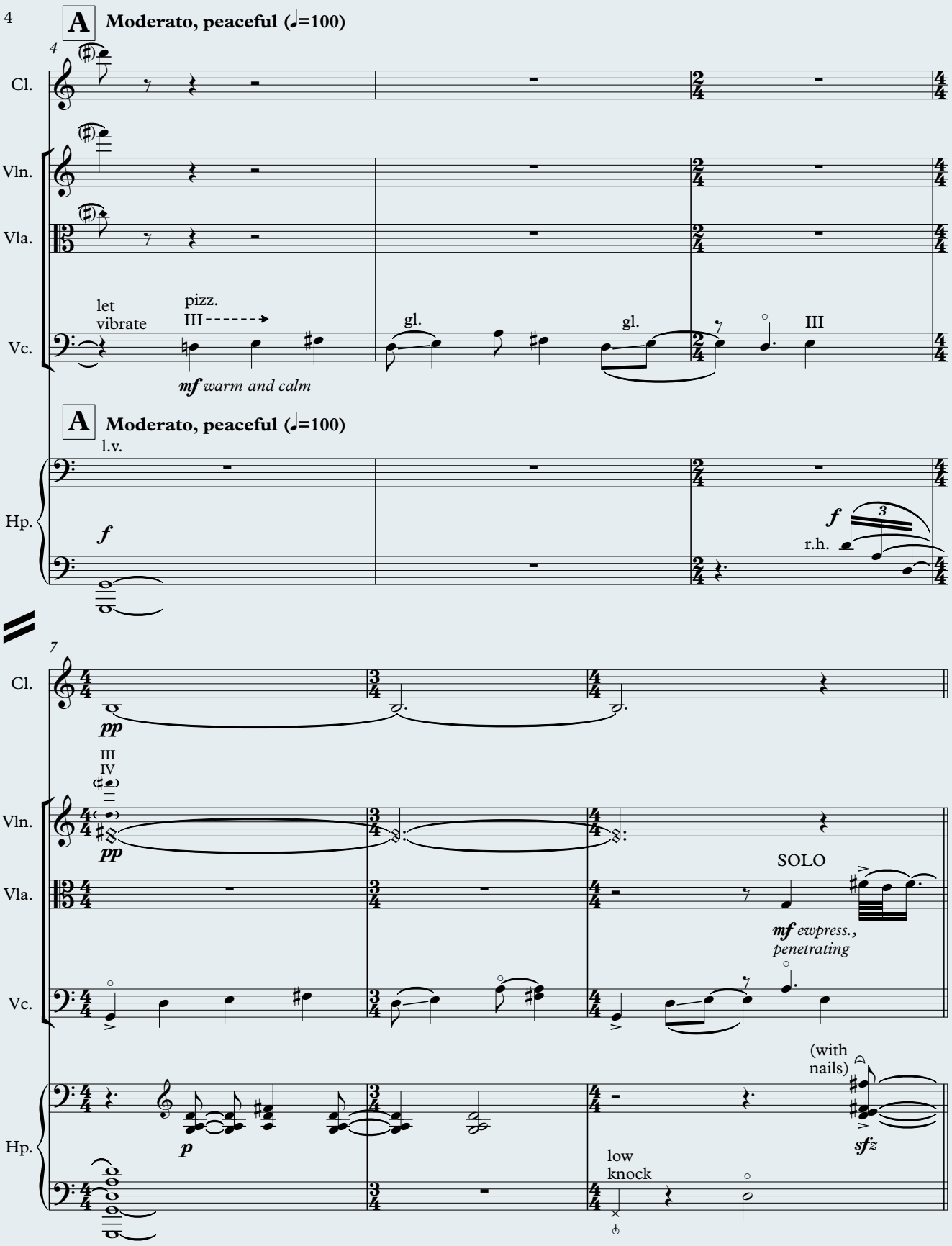
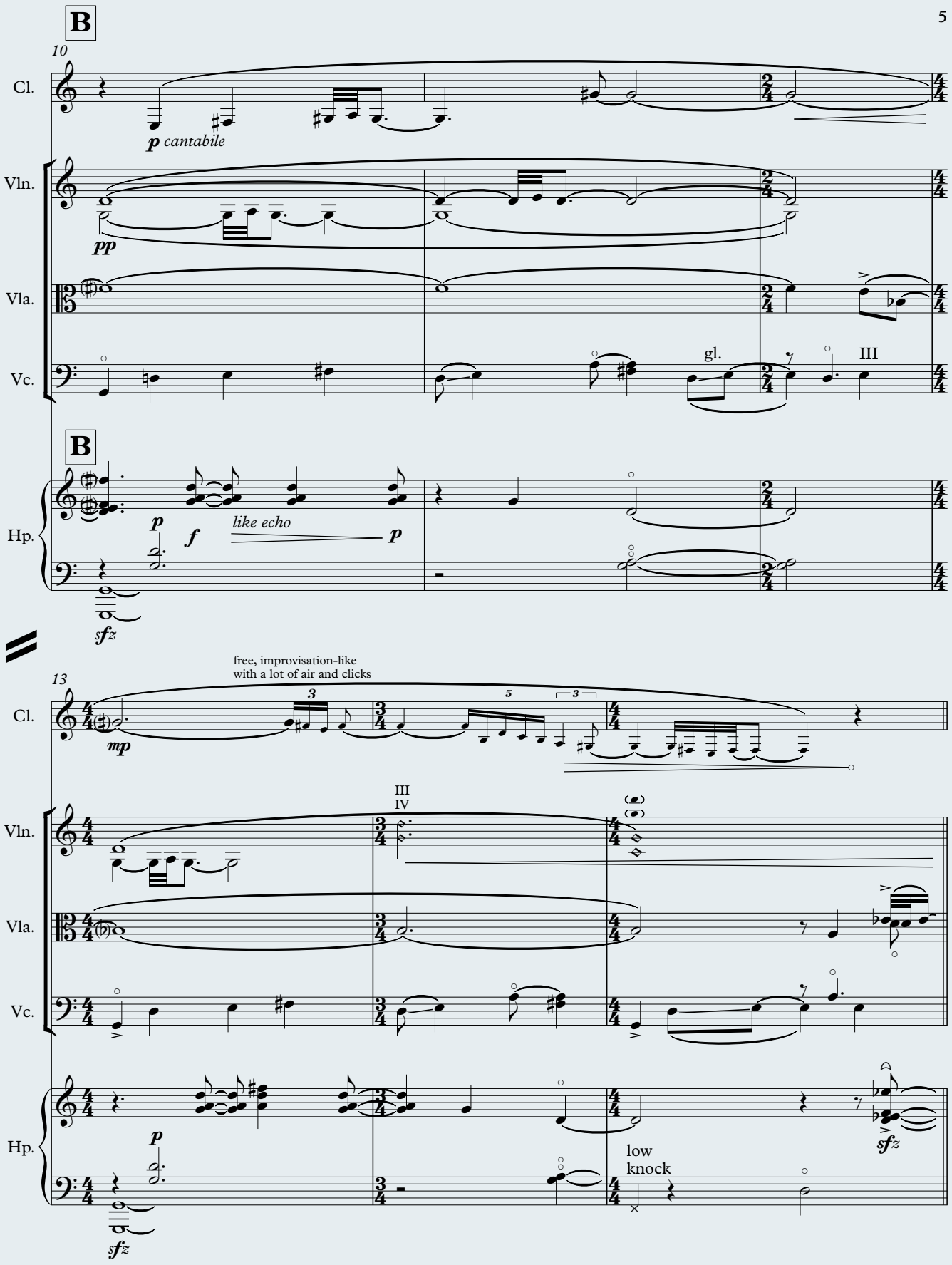
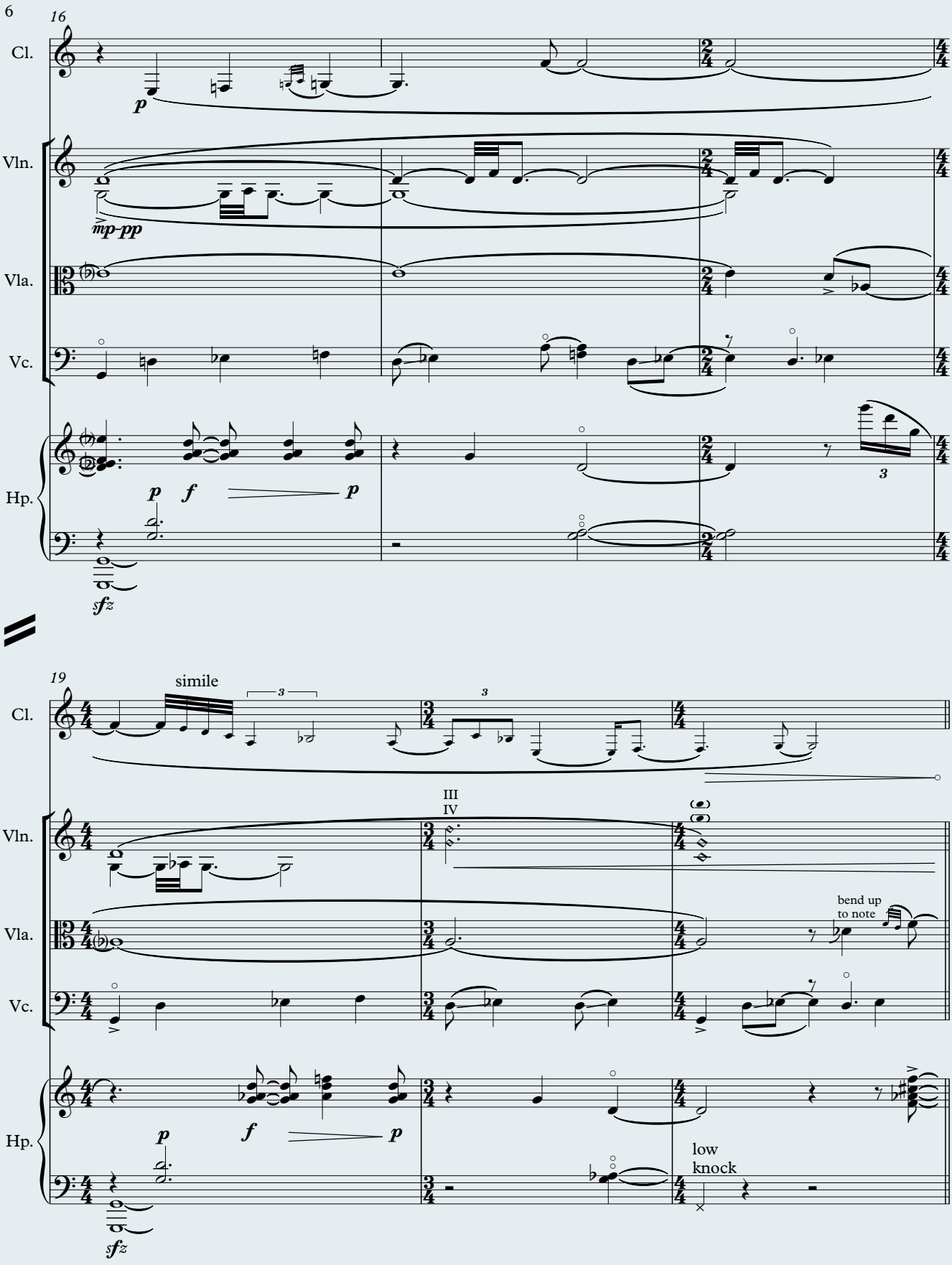
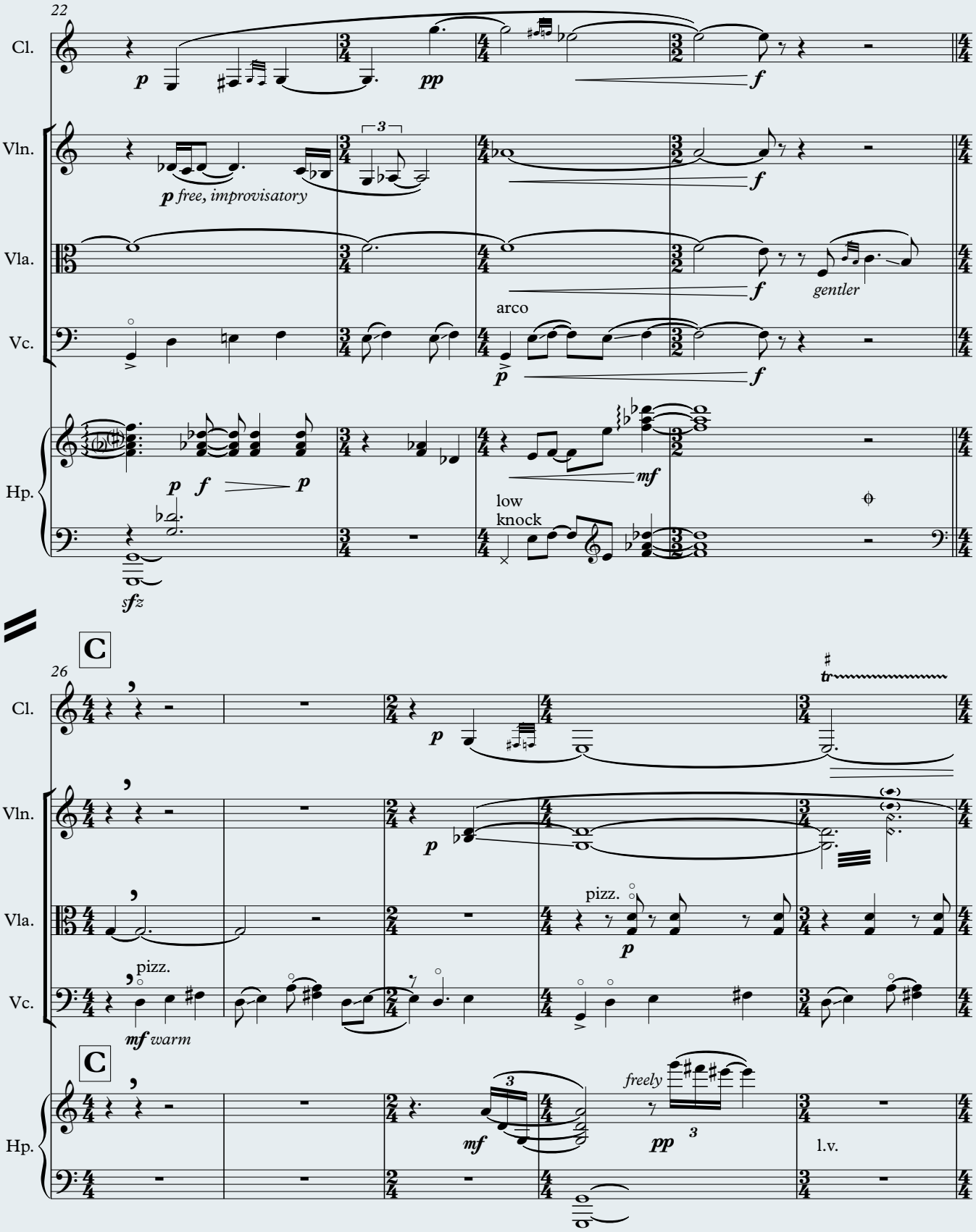
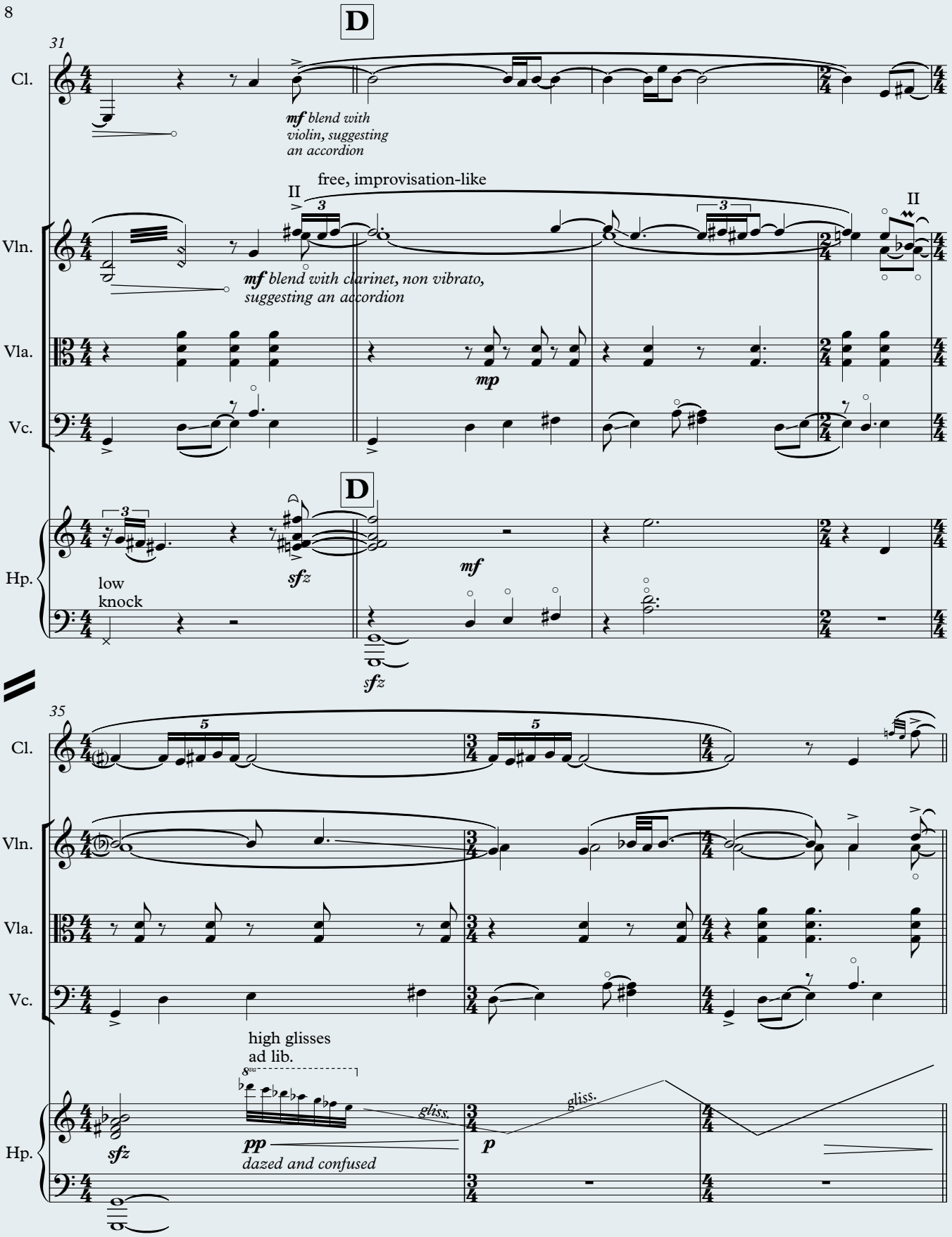
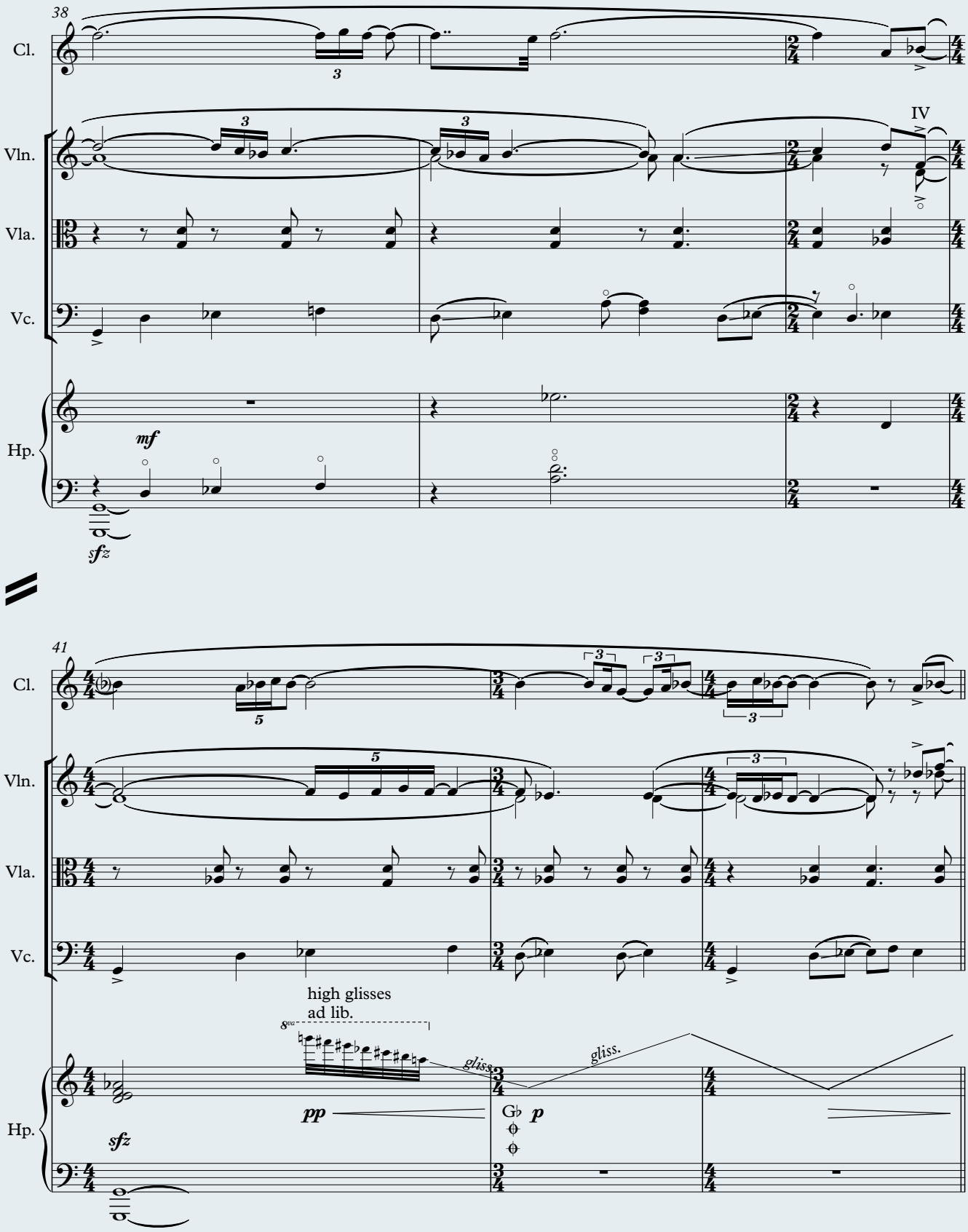

4
A
Moderato, peaceful (♩=100)
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
let vibrate
pizz.
III
gl.
gl.
III
mf warm and calm
A
Moderato, peaceful (♩=100)
l.v.
Hp.
f
f
r.h.
7
Cl.
pp
III
IV
Vln.
pp
Vla.
SOLO
mf ewpress., penetrating
Vc.
(with nails)
Hp.
p
sfz
low knock

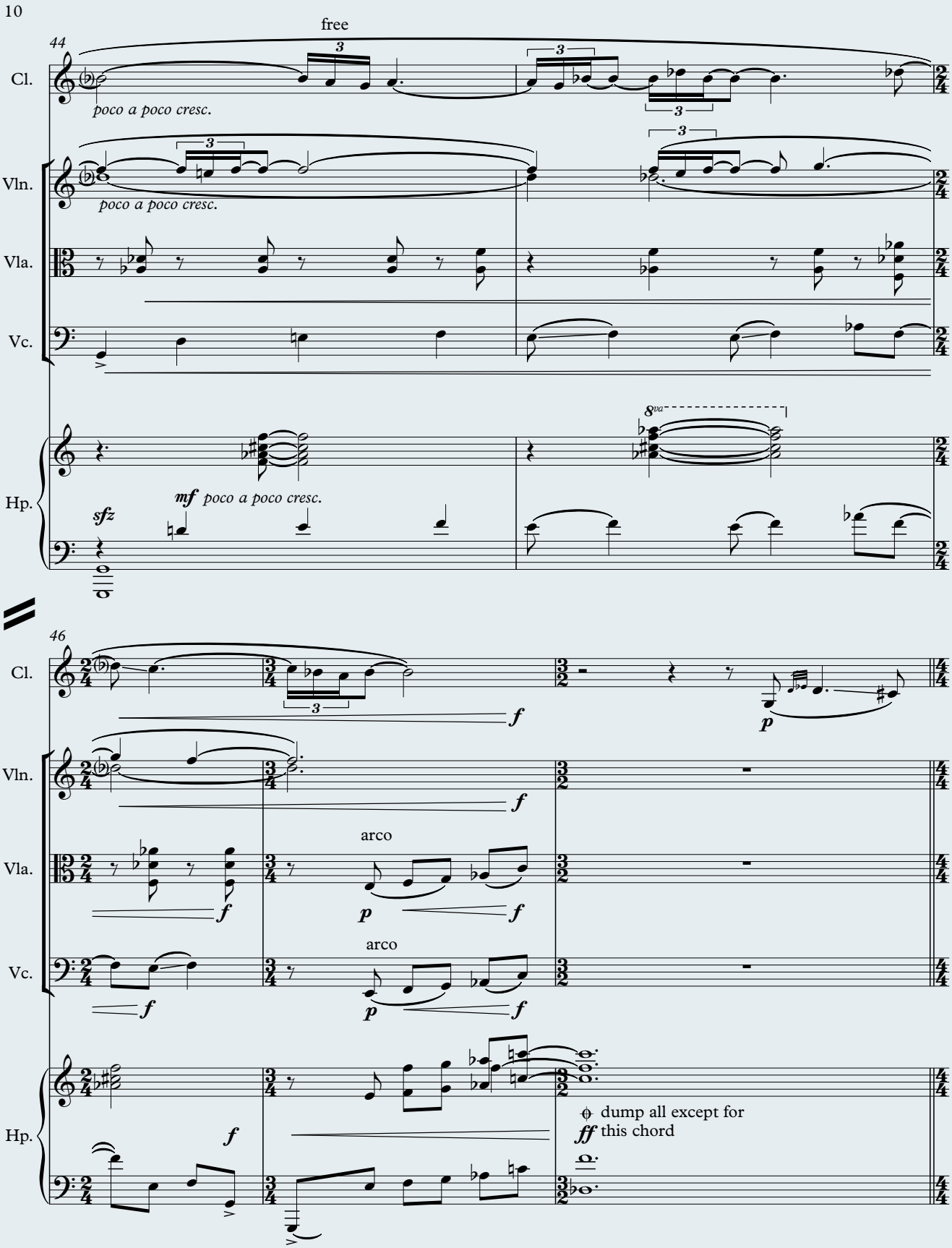

B
10
Cl.
p cantabile
Vln.
pp
Vla.
Vc.
gl.
III
B
Hp.
p
f
like echo
p
sfz
free, improvisation-like
with a lot of air and clicks
13
Cl.
mp
3
5
3
III
IV
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
p
sfz
low
knock
sfz

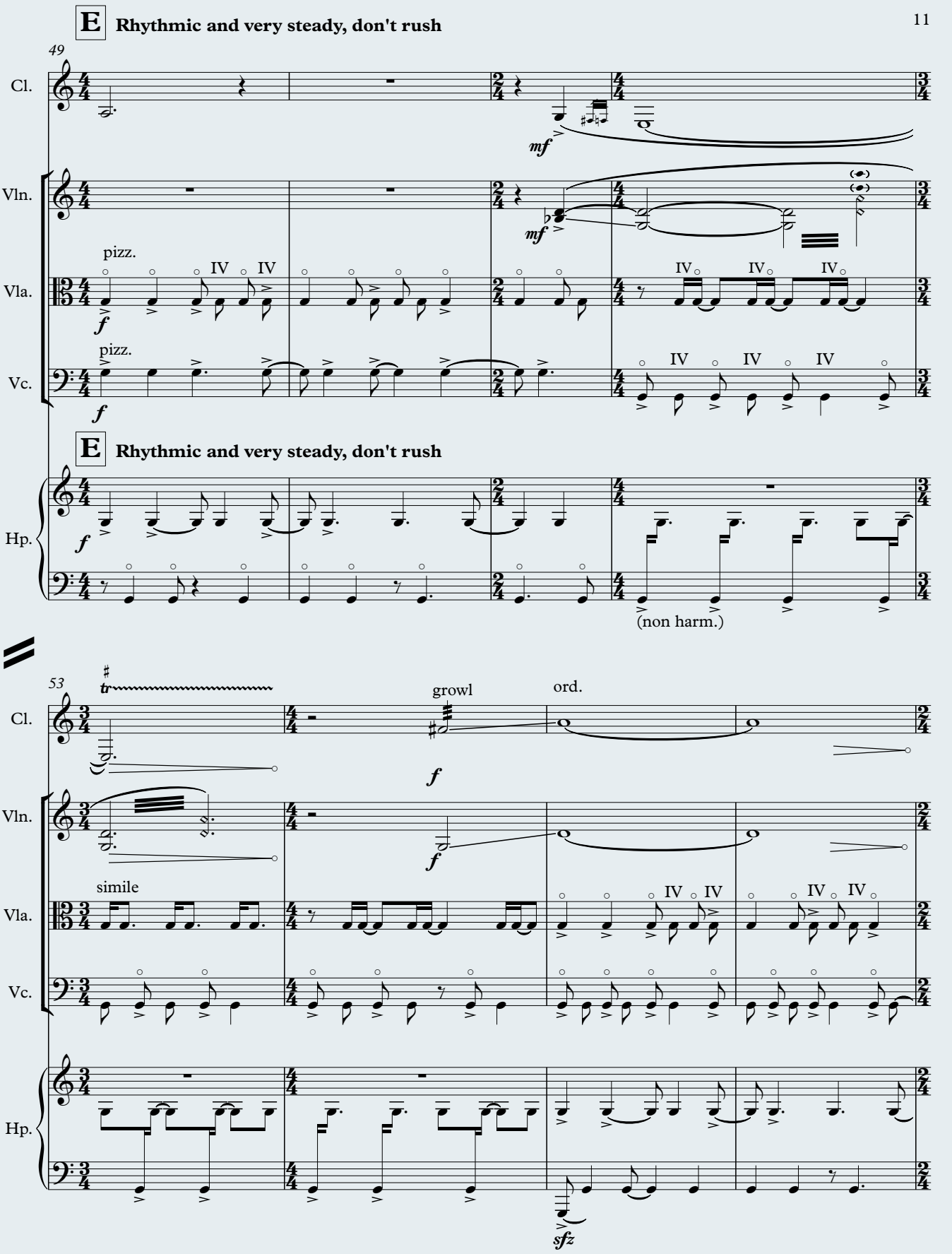

6
16
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
p
mp-pp
p f p
3
sfz
19
simile
3
3
III
IV
bend up
to note
p f p
low
knock
sfz


22
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
p
pp
f
p free, improvisatory
3
gentler
arco
mf
low
knock
sfz
C
26
tr
pizz.
mf warm
freely
l.v.

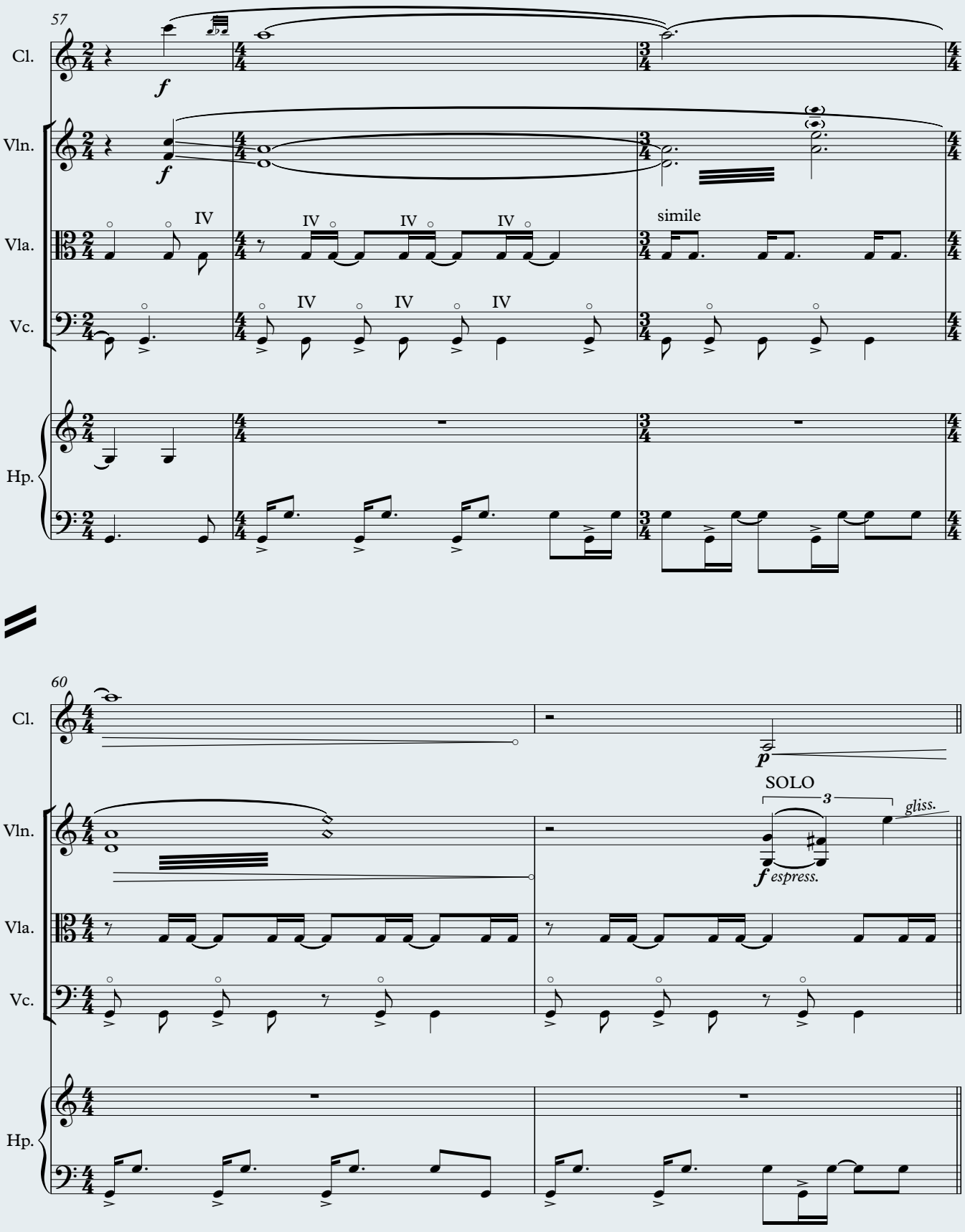

8
D
31
Cl.
mf blend with violin, suggesting an accordion
II
free, improvisation-like
II
Vln.
mf blend with clarinet, non vibrato, suggesting an accordion
Vla.
mp
Vc.
D
Hp.
low knock
sfz
mf
sfz
35
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
high glisses ad lib.
Hp.
sfz
pp
dazed and confused
gliss.
p
gliss.

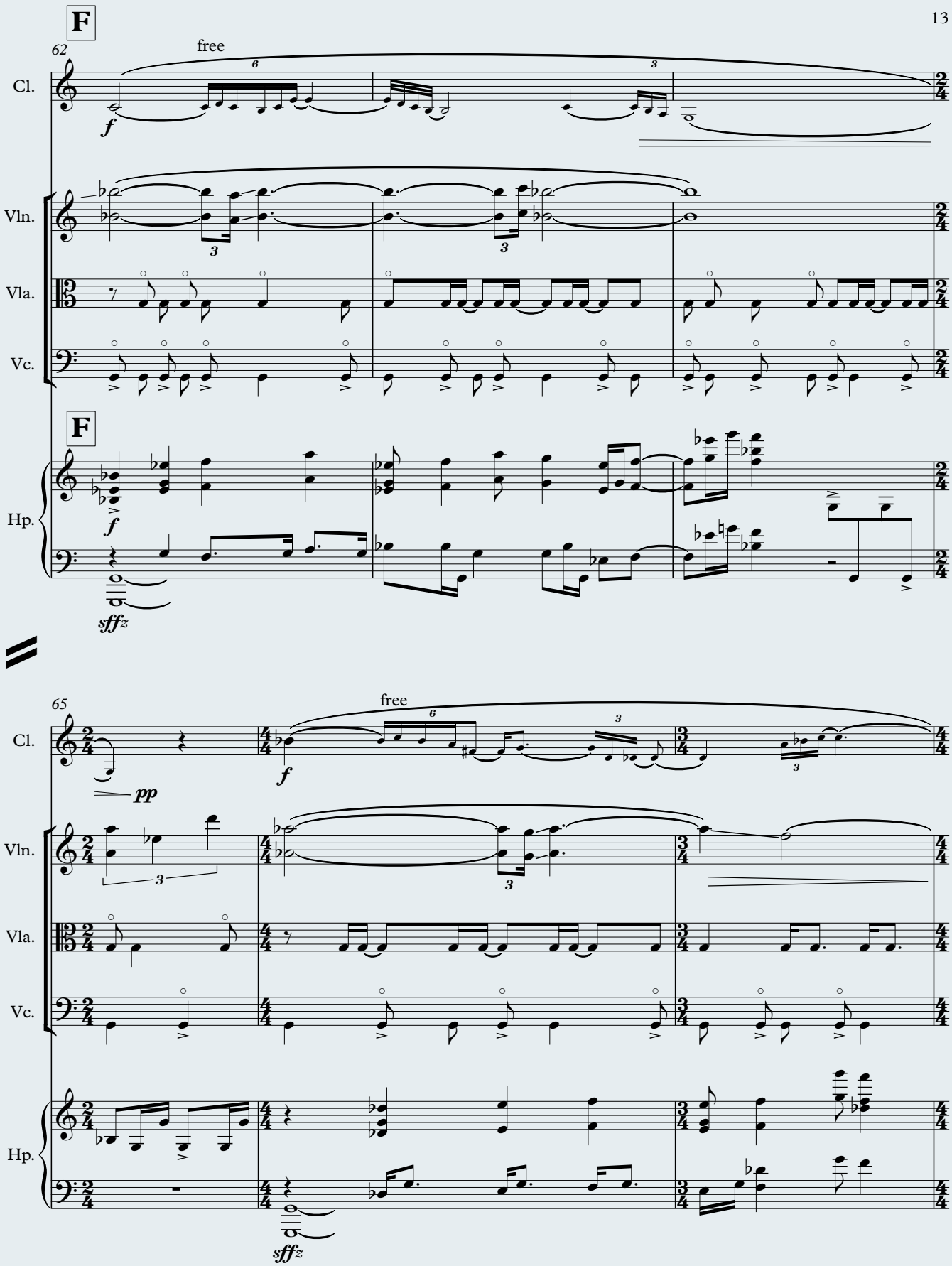

38
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
IV
mf
sfz
41
high glisses
ad lib.
gliss.
gliss.
pp
sfz
G♭
p


10
free
44
Cl.
poco a poco cresc.
Vln.
poco a poco cresc.
Vla.
Vc.
8va
Hp.
sfz
mf poco a poco cresc.
46
Cl.
f
p
Vln.
f
Vla.
arco
p
f
Vc.
arco
p
f
Hp.
f
dump all except for
ff this chord

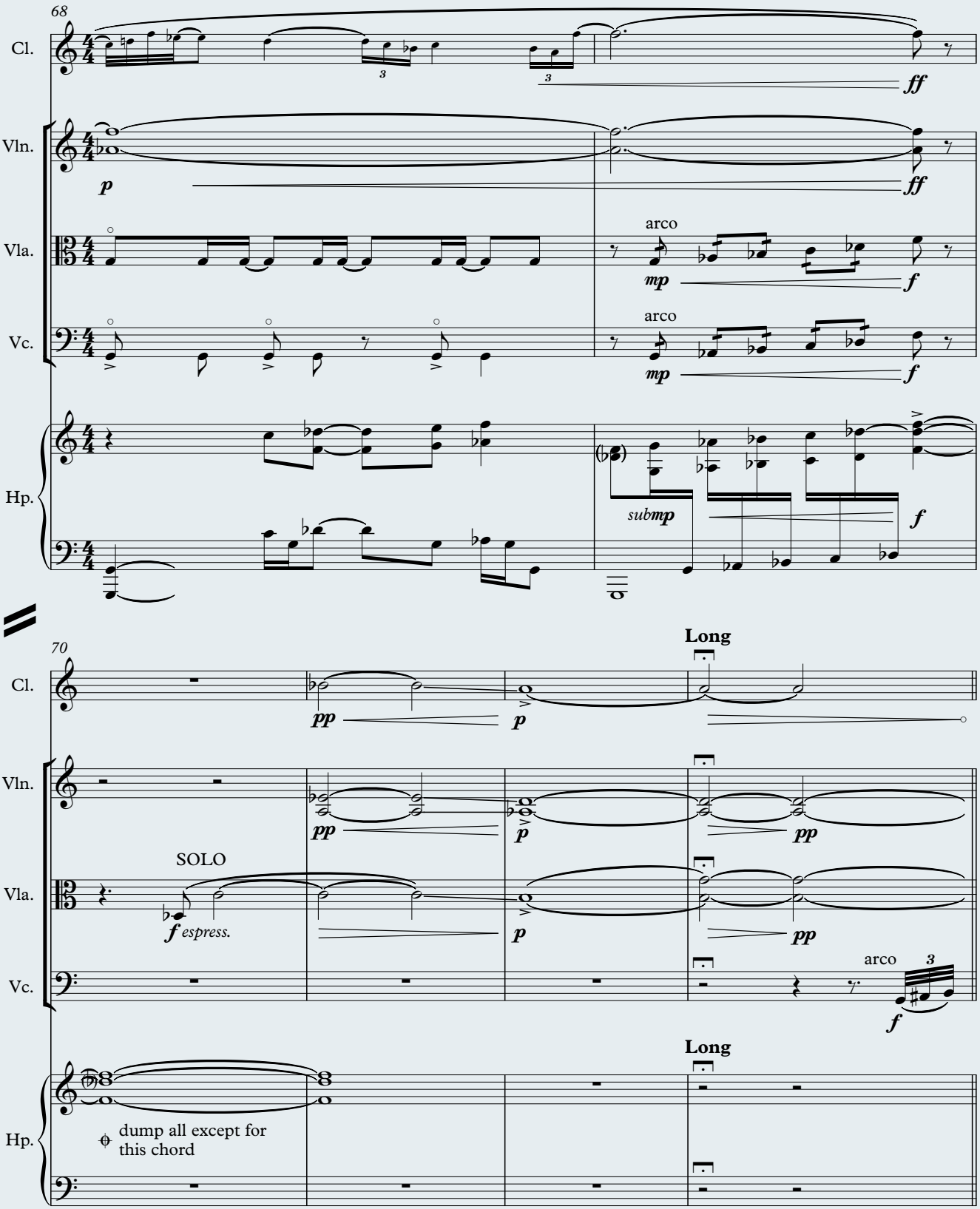

E Rhythmic and very steady, don't rush
11
49
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
mf
pizz.
IV
f
(non harm.)
53
tr
growl
ord.
simile
sfz

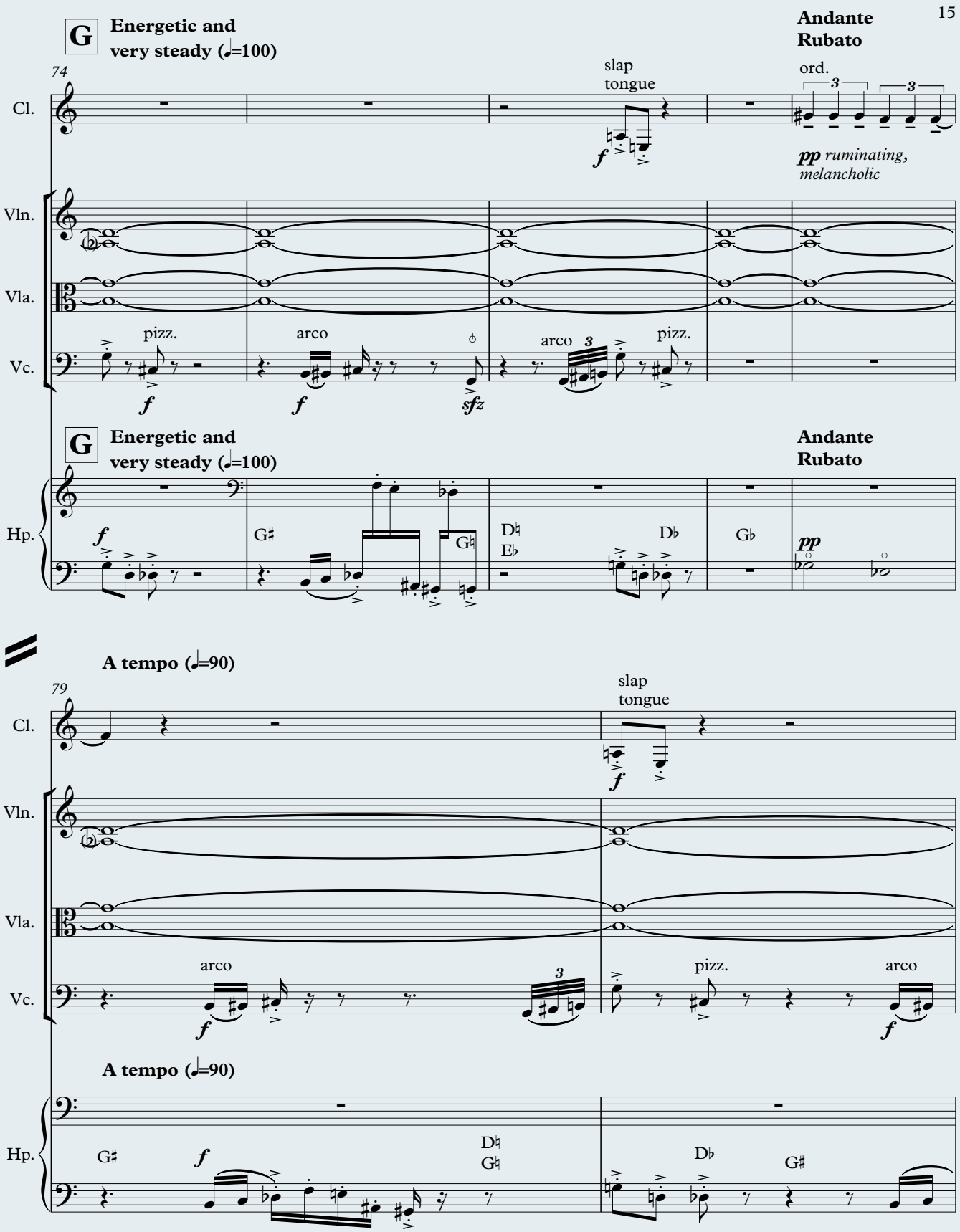
12



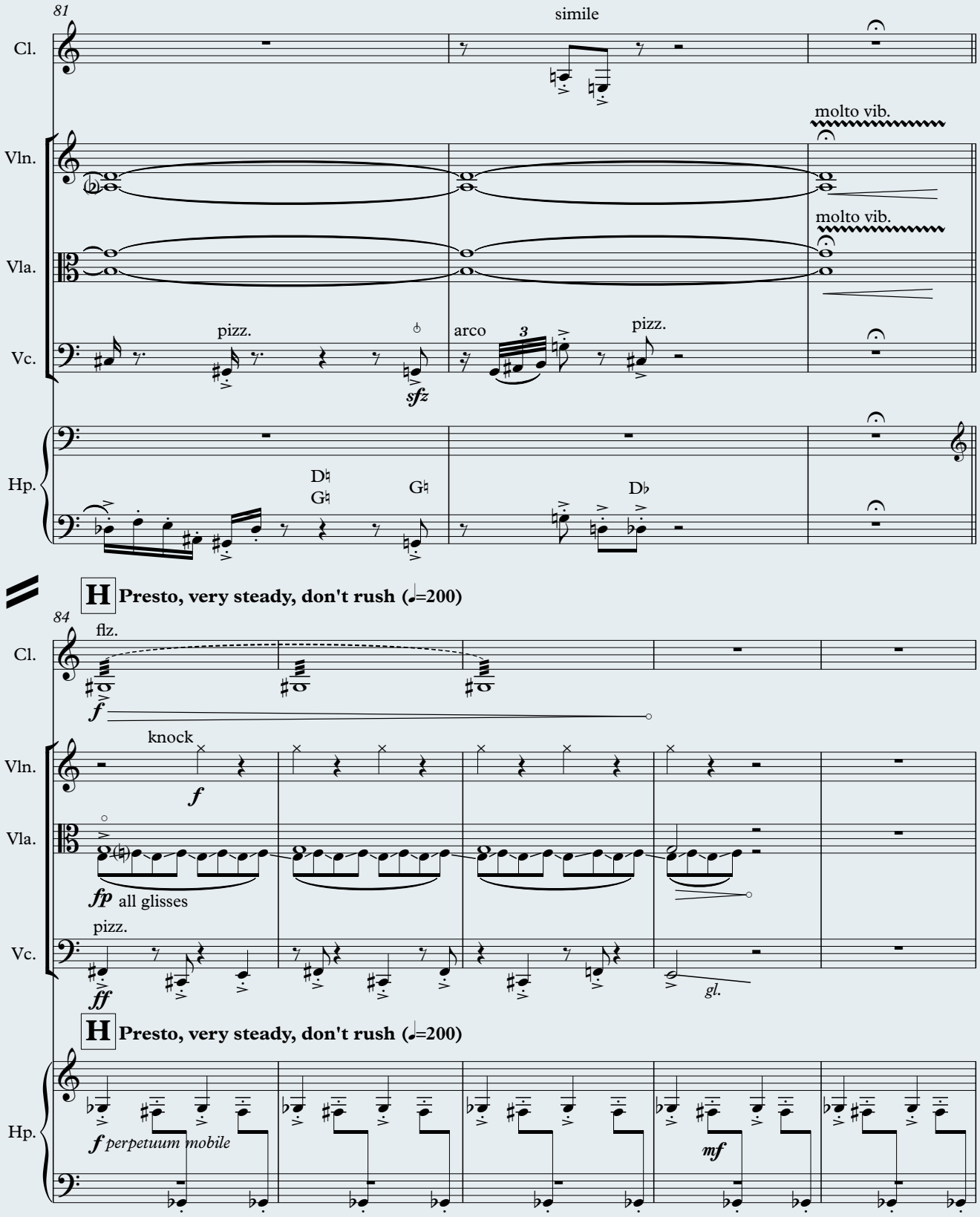

F
62
free
Cl.
f
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
F
Hp.
f
sffz
65
free
Cl.
pp
f
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
sffz

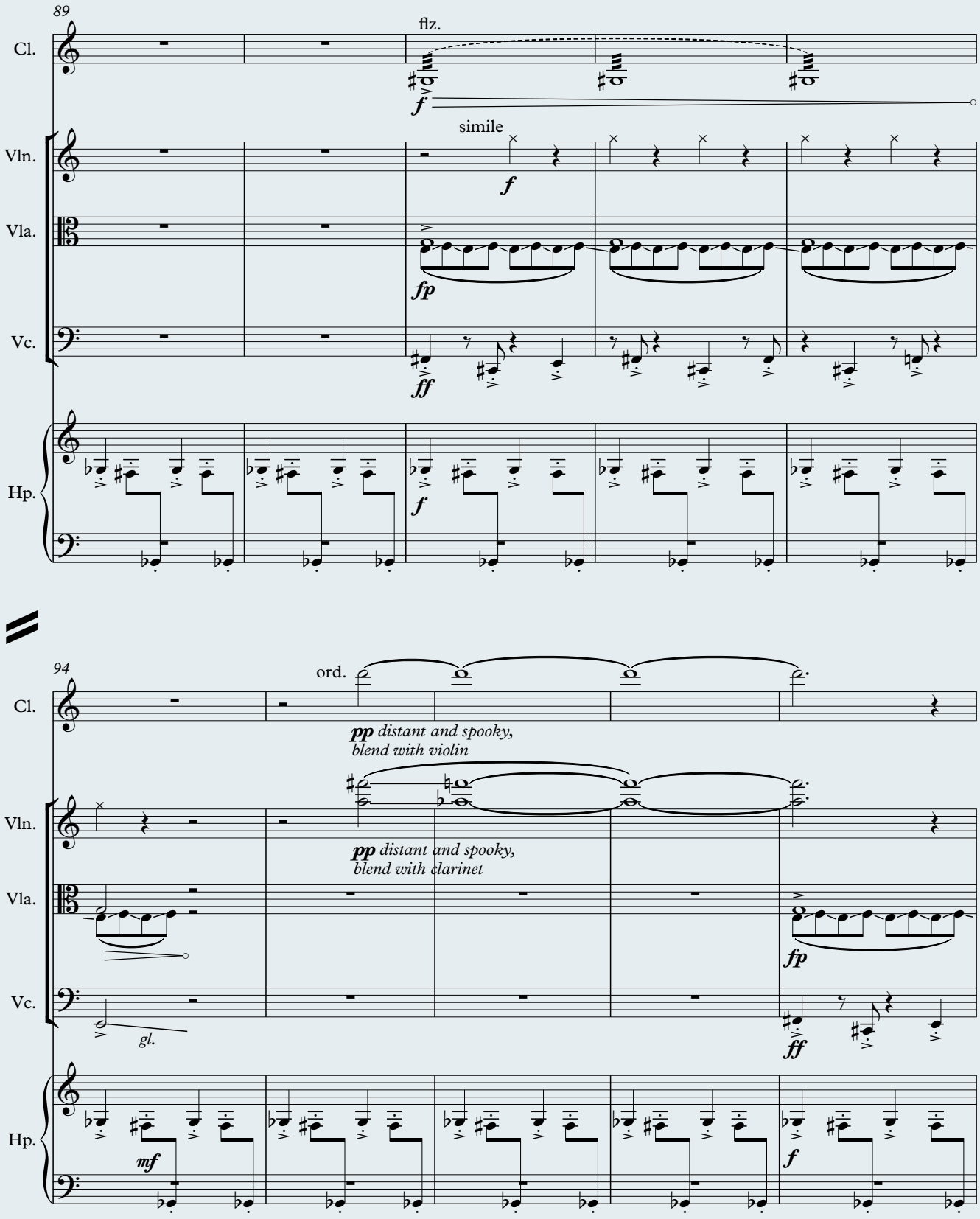
14


68
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
ff
p
arco
mp
f
submp
70
Long
pp
SOLO
espress.
dump all except for
this chord

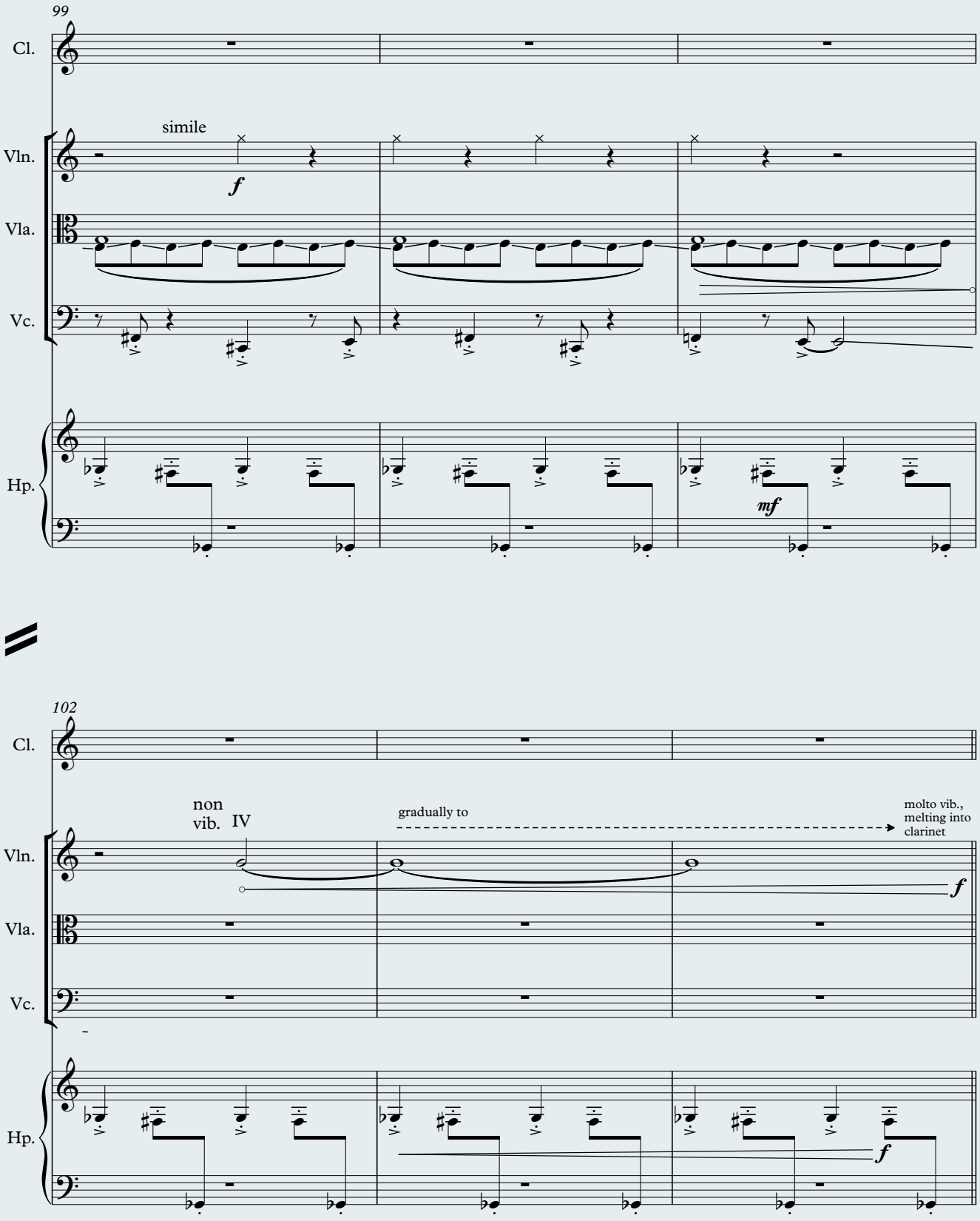

15
G
Energetic and very steady (♩=100)
74
Andante Rubato
slap tongue
ord.
pp ruminating, melancholic
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
pizz.
arco
arco
pizz.
Hp.
A tempo (♩=90)
79
arco
pizz.
arco

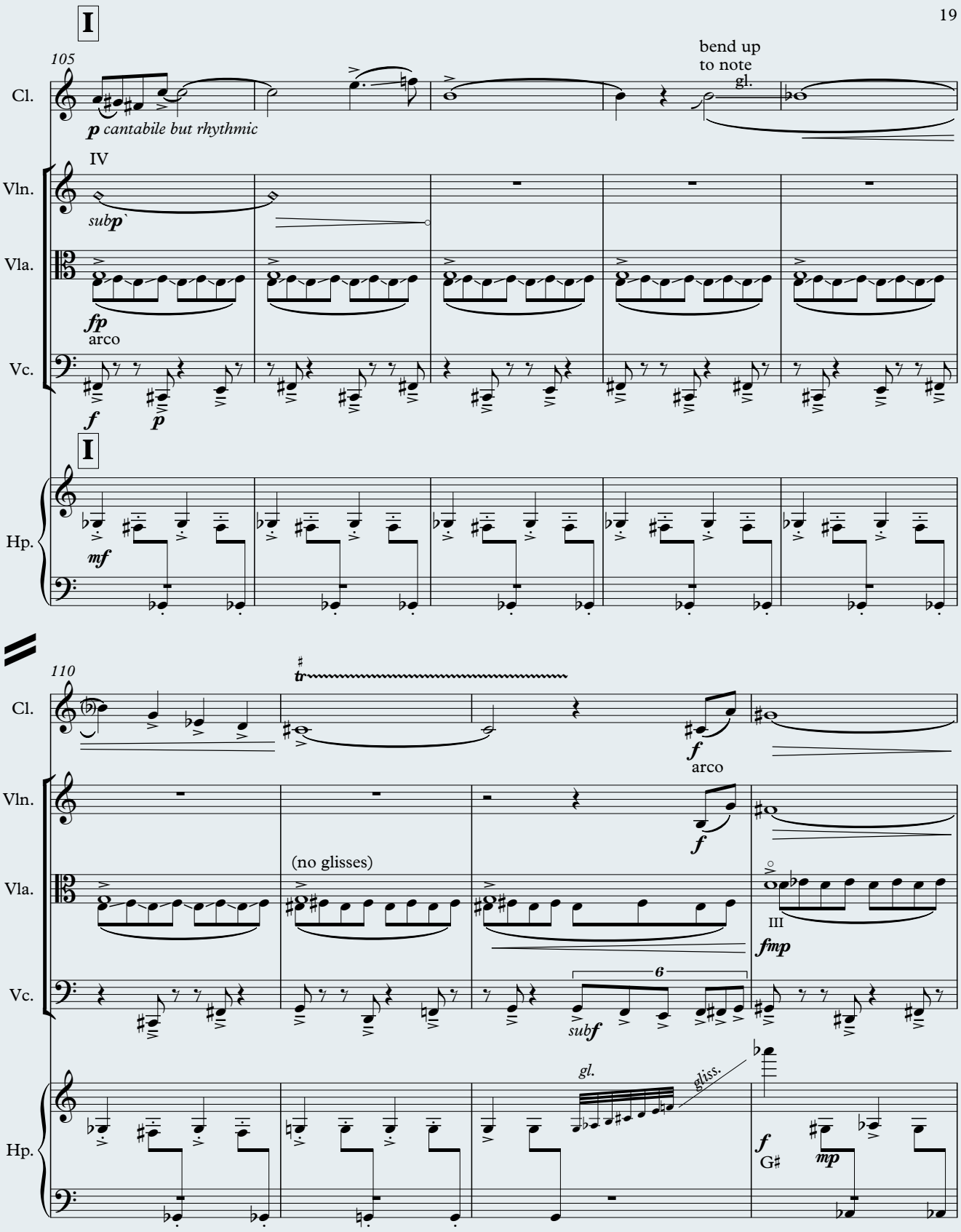
16


81
simile
Cl.
molto vib.
Vln.
molto vib.
Vla.
pizz.
arco
pizz.
Vc.
sfz
Hp.
D♮
G♮
G♮
D♭
H Presto, very steady, don't rush (♩=200)
84
flz.
Cl.
f
knock
Vln.
f
Vla.
fp all glisses
pizz.
Vc.
ff
gl.
H Presto, very steady, don't rush (♩=200)
Hp.
f perpetuum mobile
mf

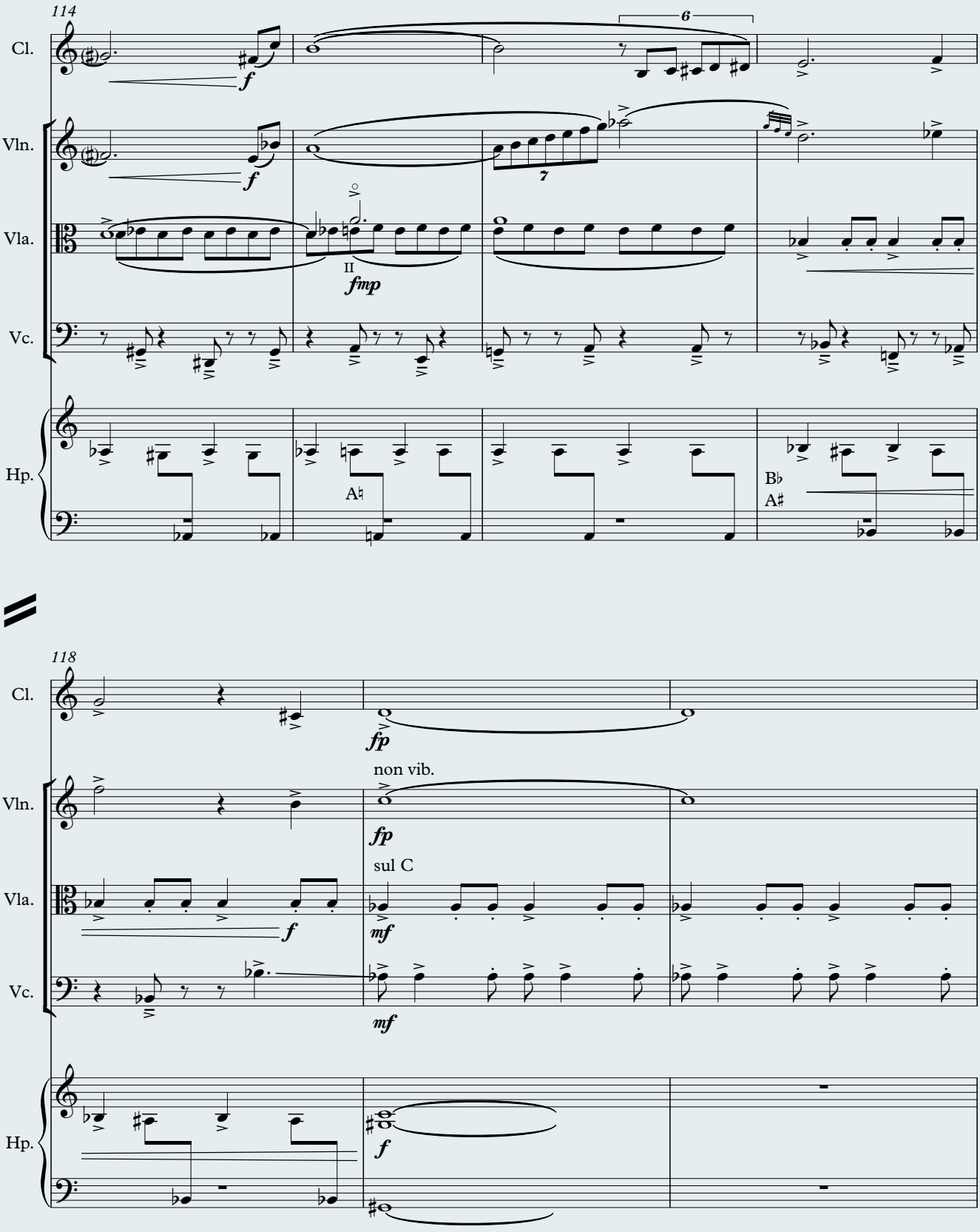

89
Cl.
flz.
f
Vln.
simile
f
Vla.
fp
Vc.
ff
Hp.
f
94
Cl.
ord.
pp distant and spooky,
blend with violin
Vln.
pp distant and spooky,
blend with clarinet
Vla.
fp
Vc.
gl.
ff
Hp.
mf
f

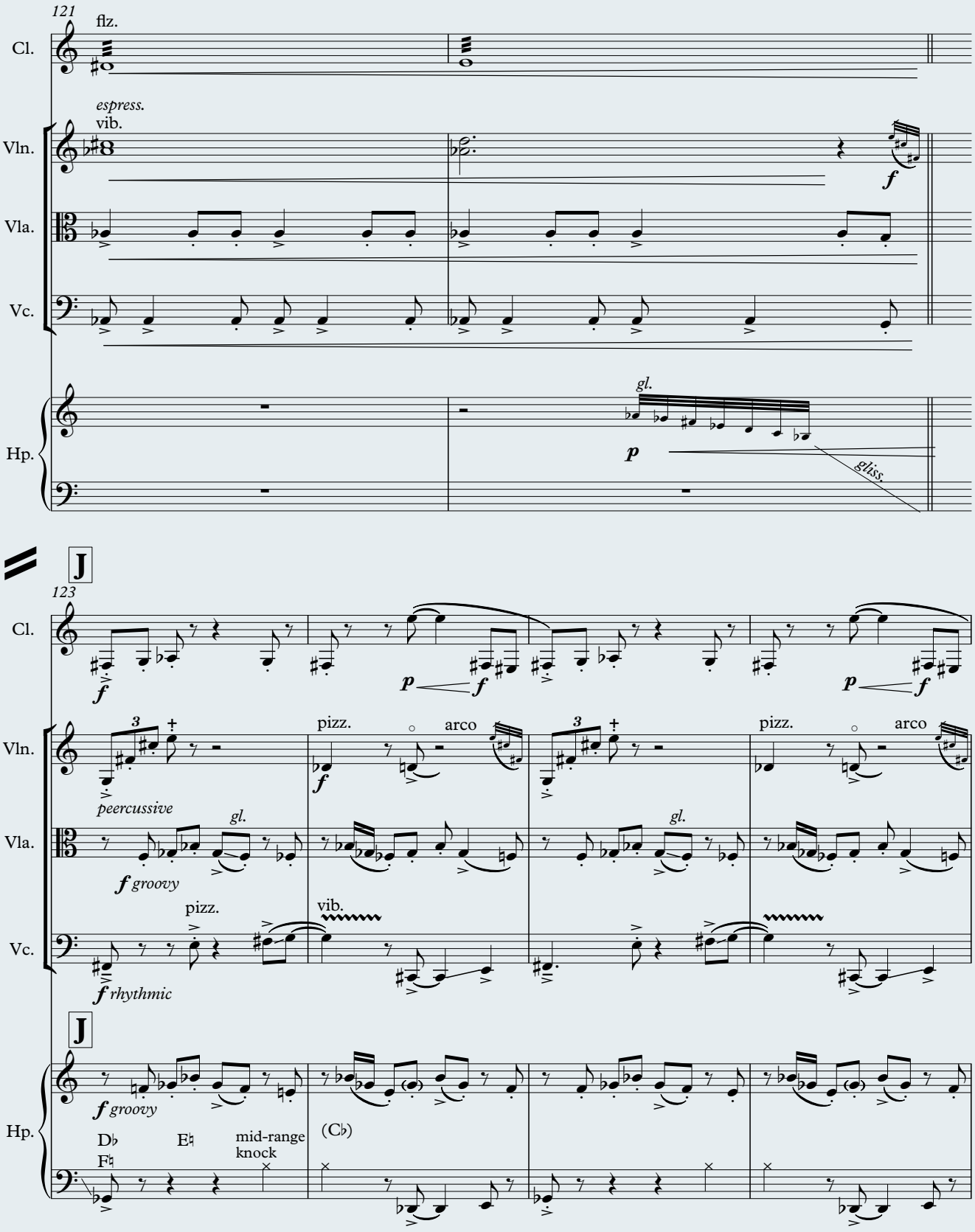
18

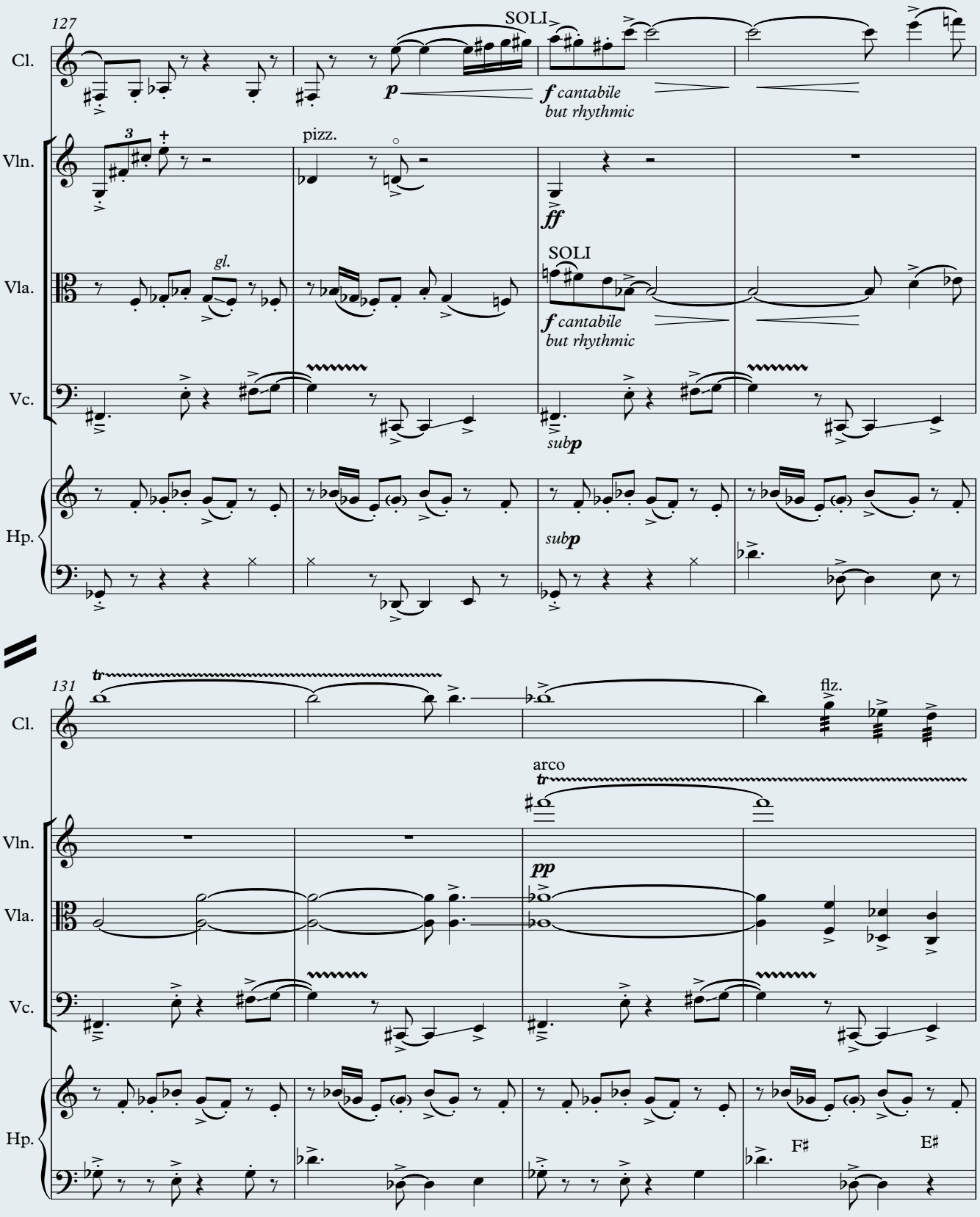

99
Cl.
simile
Vln.
f
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
mf
102
Cl.
non
vib. IV
gradually to
molto vib.,
melting into
clarinet
Vln.
f
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
f

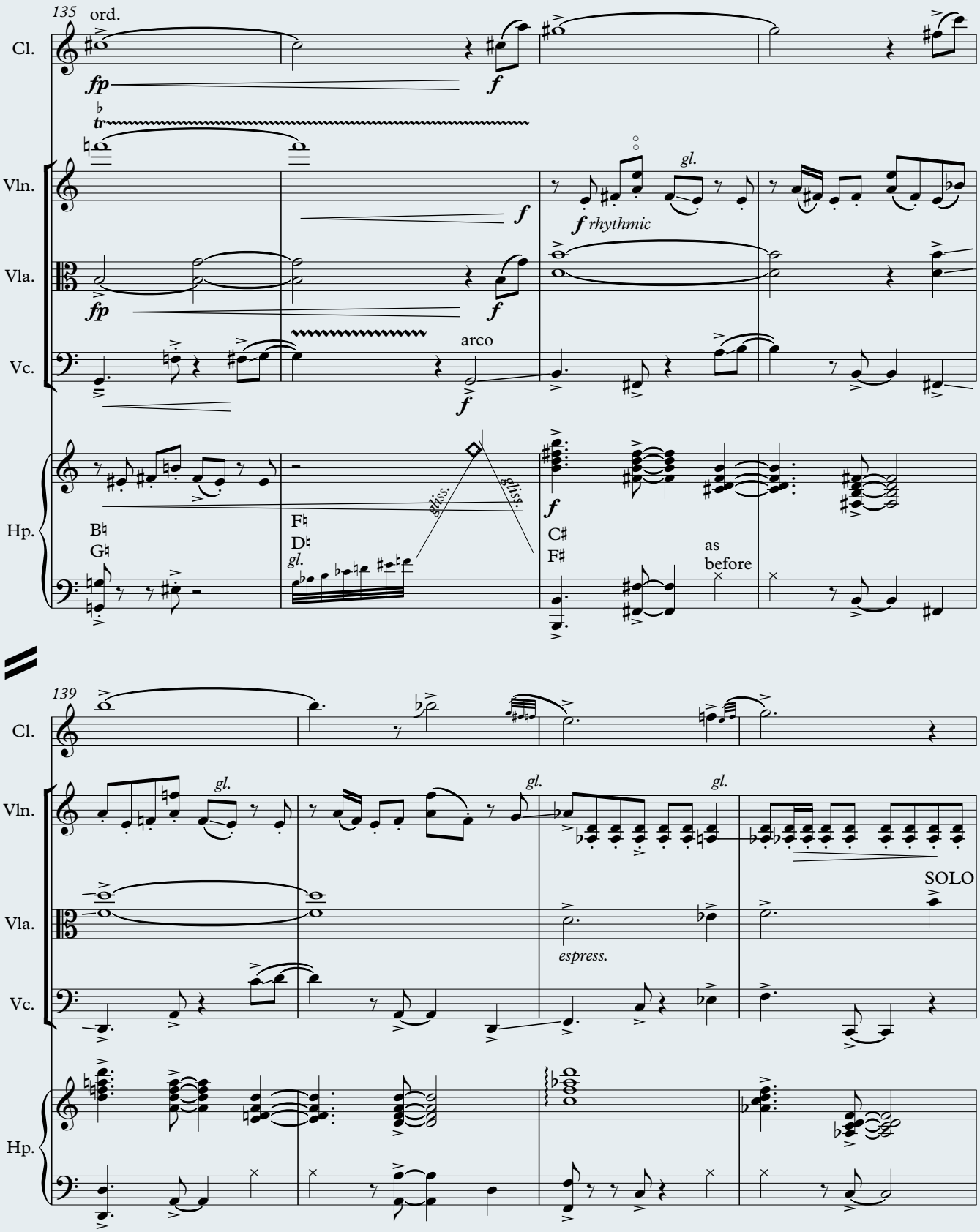

I
105
Cl.
bend up to note
gl.
p cantabile but rhythmic
IV
Vln.
subp`
Vla.
fp
arco
Vc.
f
p
I
Hp.
mf
110
Cl.
tr
f
arco
Vln.
f
Vla.
(no glisses)
III
fmp
Vc.
6
subf
Hp.
gl.
gliss.
f
G♯
mp

20

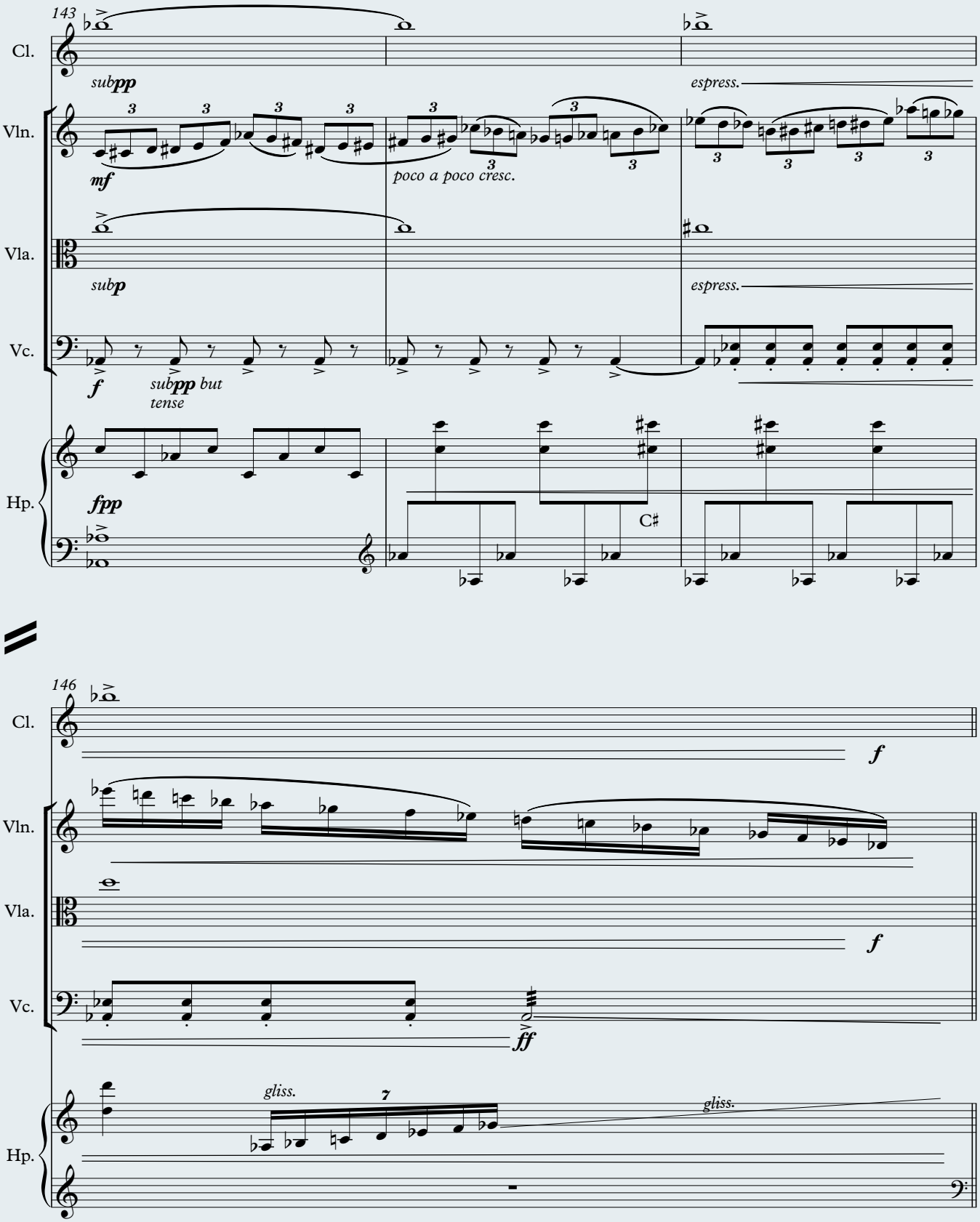


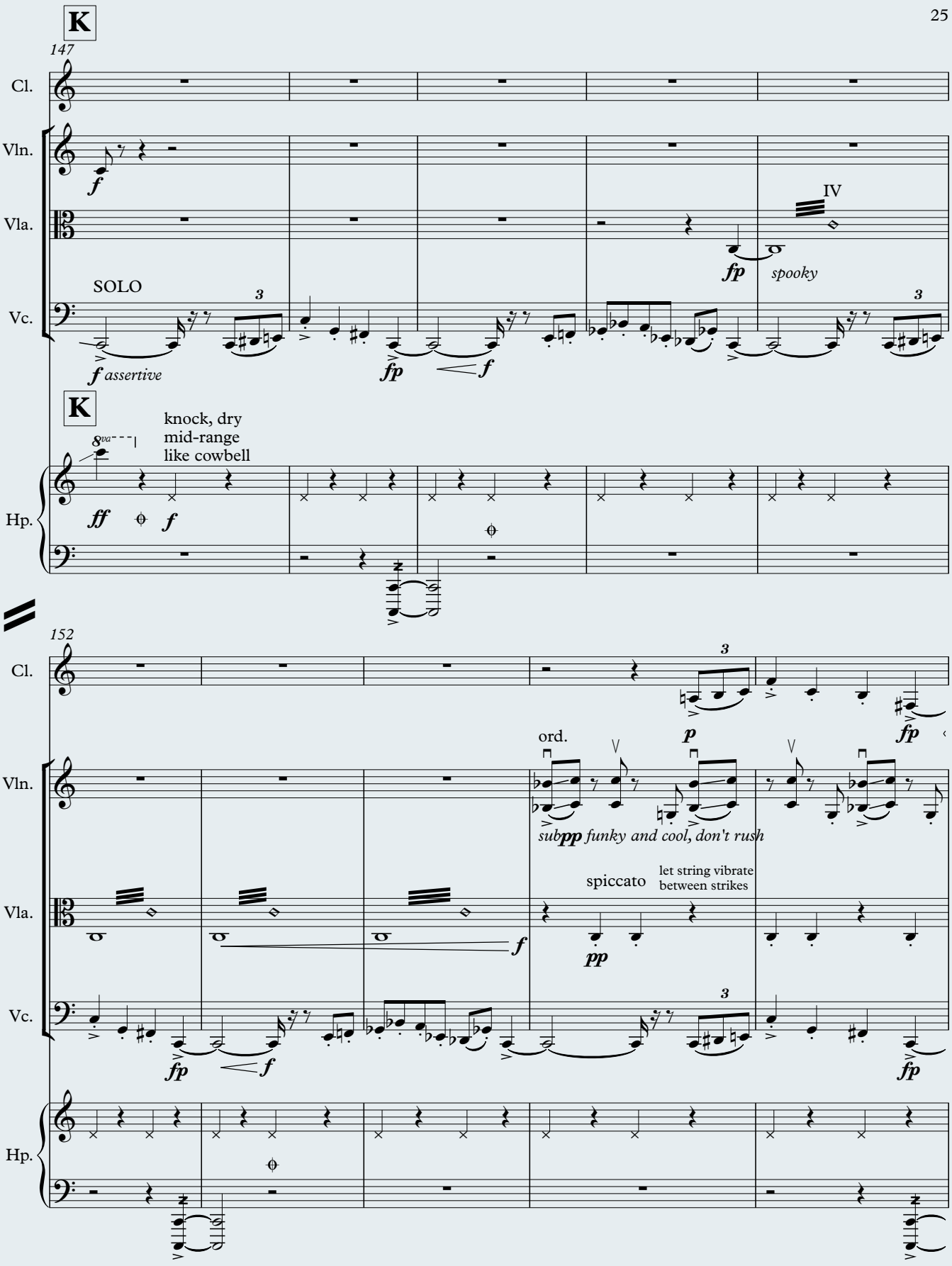

121
flz.
Cl.
espress.
vib.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
gl.
gliss.
J
123
Cl.
Vln.
pizz.
arco
peercussive
Vla.
gl.
groovy
Vc.
pizz.
vib.
rhythmic
J
Hp.
groovy
D♭
E♮
F♮
mid-range
knock
(C♭)

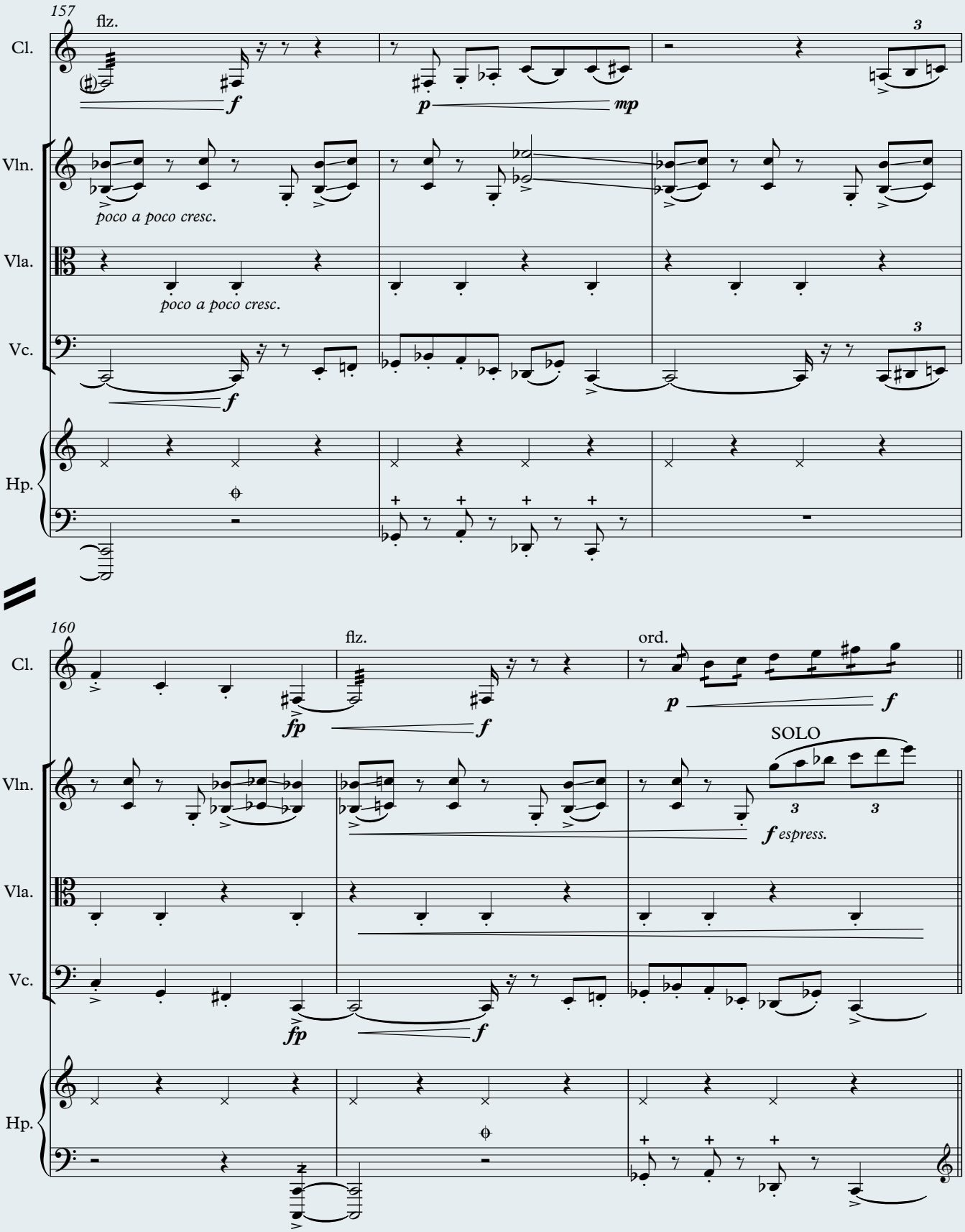

127
Cl.
SOLI
p
f cantabile
but rhythmic
Vln.
3
pizz.
ff
Vla.
gl.
SOLI
f cantabile
but rhythmic
Vc.
subp
Hp.
subp
131
tr
Cl.
flz.
arco
tr
Vln.
pp
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
F♯
E♯

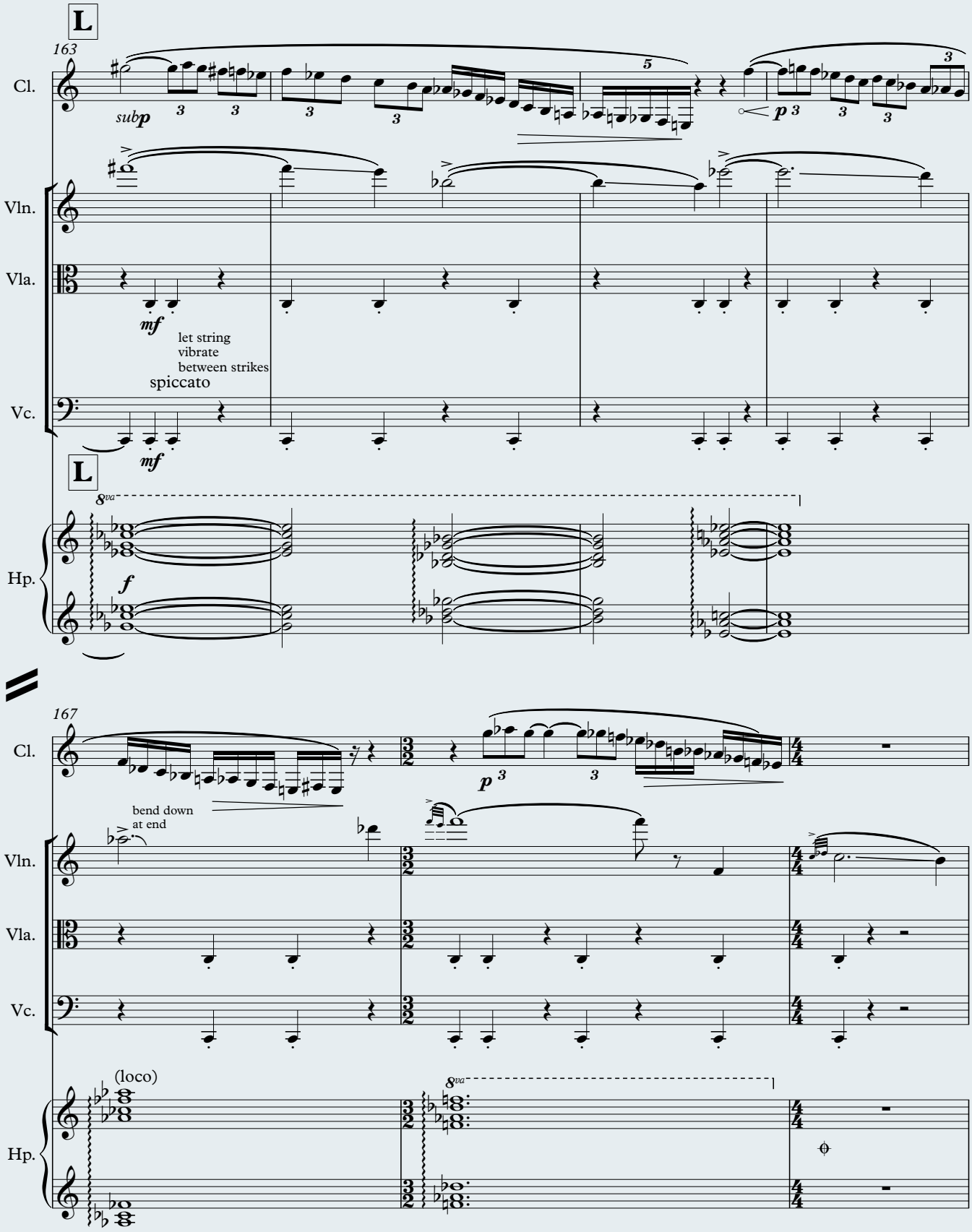

135
ord.
Cl.
fp
f
tr
Vln.
f
gl.
f rhythmic
Vla.
fp
f
Vc.
arco
f
Hp.
B♮
G♮
F♮
D♮
gl.
gliss.
gliss.
f
C♯
F♯
as
before
139
Cl.
Vln.
gl.
gl.
gl.
Vla.
SOLO
espress.
Vc.
Hp.

24

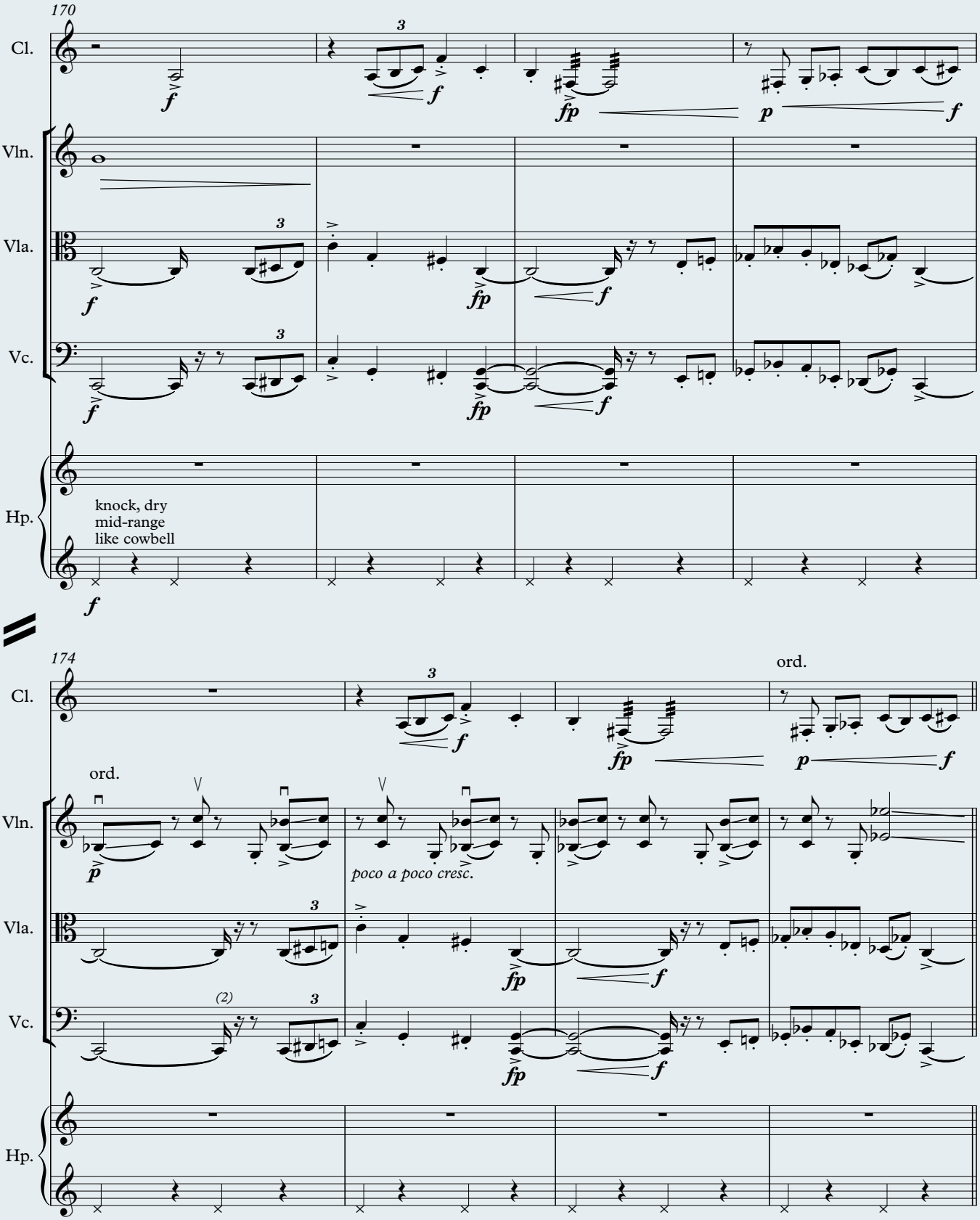

143
Cl.
subpp
espress.
Vln.
mf
poco a poco cresc.
Vla.
subp
espress.
Vc.
f
subpp but tense
Hp.
fpp
C♯
146
Cl.
f
Vln.
Vla.
f
Vc.
ff
Hp.
gliss.
gliss.

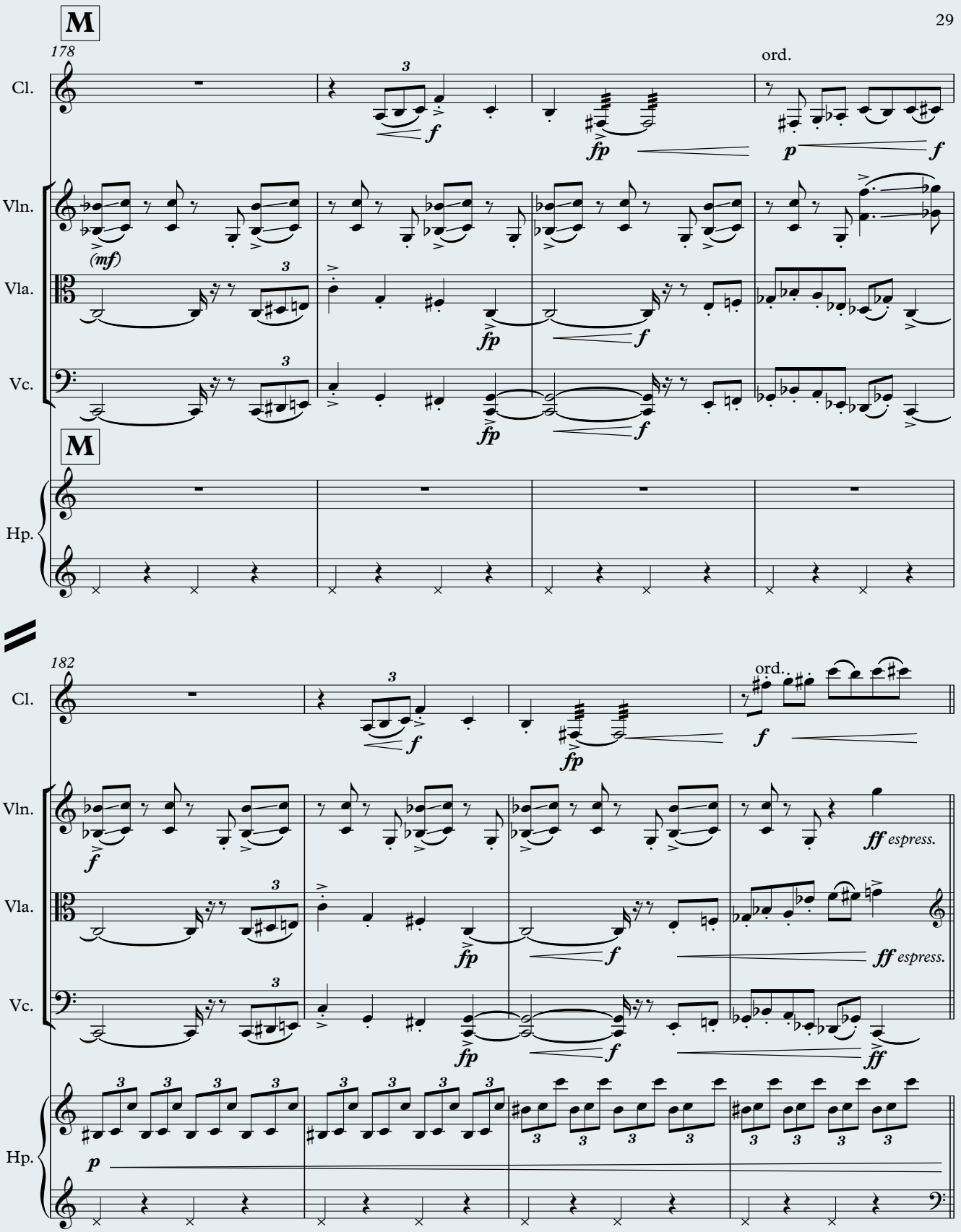

K
147
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
SOLO
f assertive
fp
f
IV
fp
spooky
K
knock, dry
mid-range
like cowbell
ff
f
152
p
fp
ord.
subpp funky and cool, don't rush
spiccato
let string vibrate
between strikes
pp
f

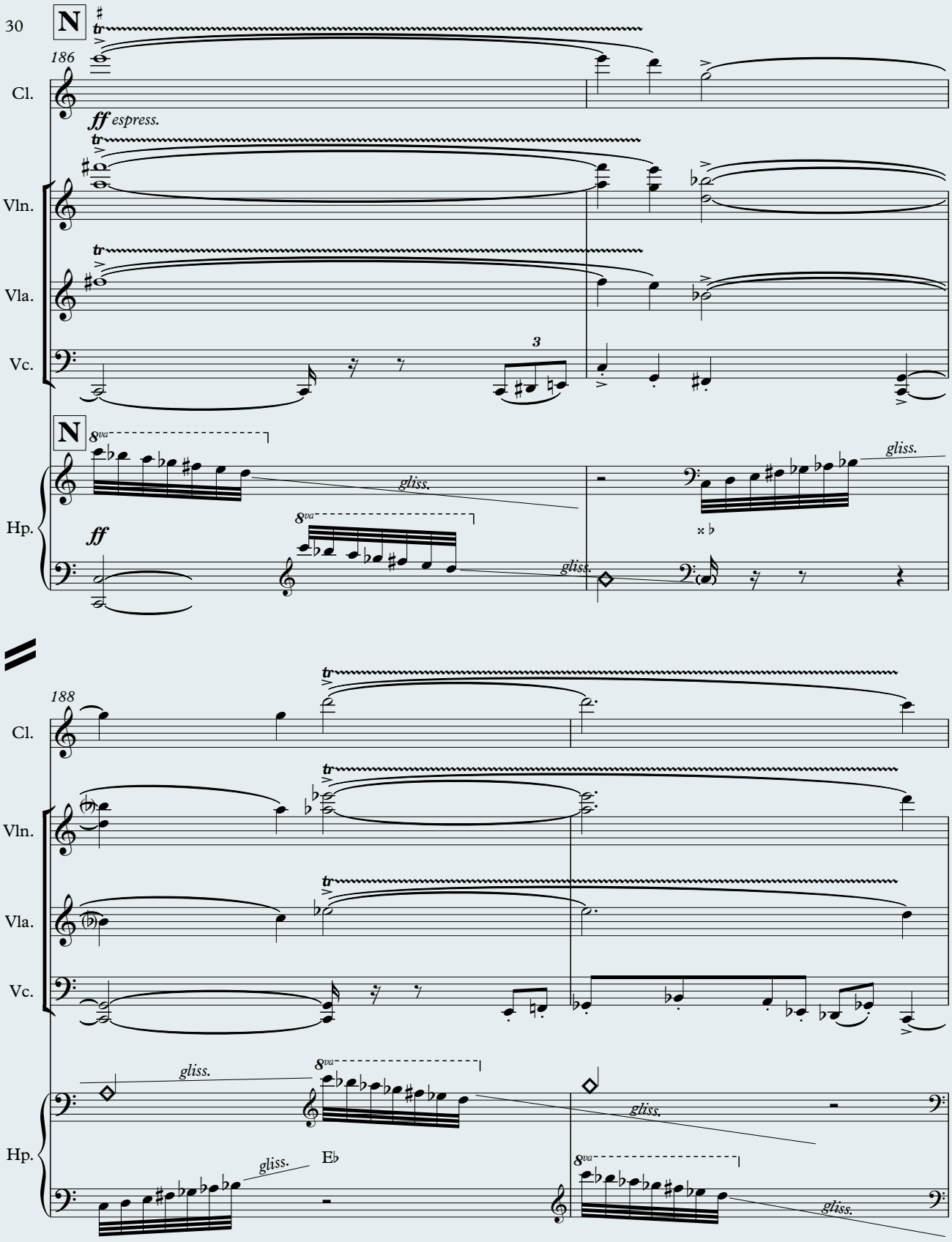

157
flz.
Cl.
Vln.
poco a poco cresc.
Vla.
poco a poco cresc.
Vc.
Hp.
160
flz.
ord.
SOLO
espress.

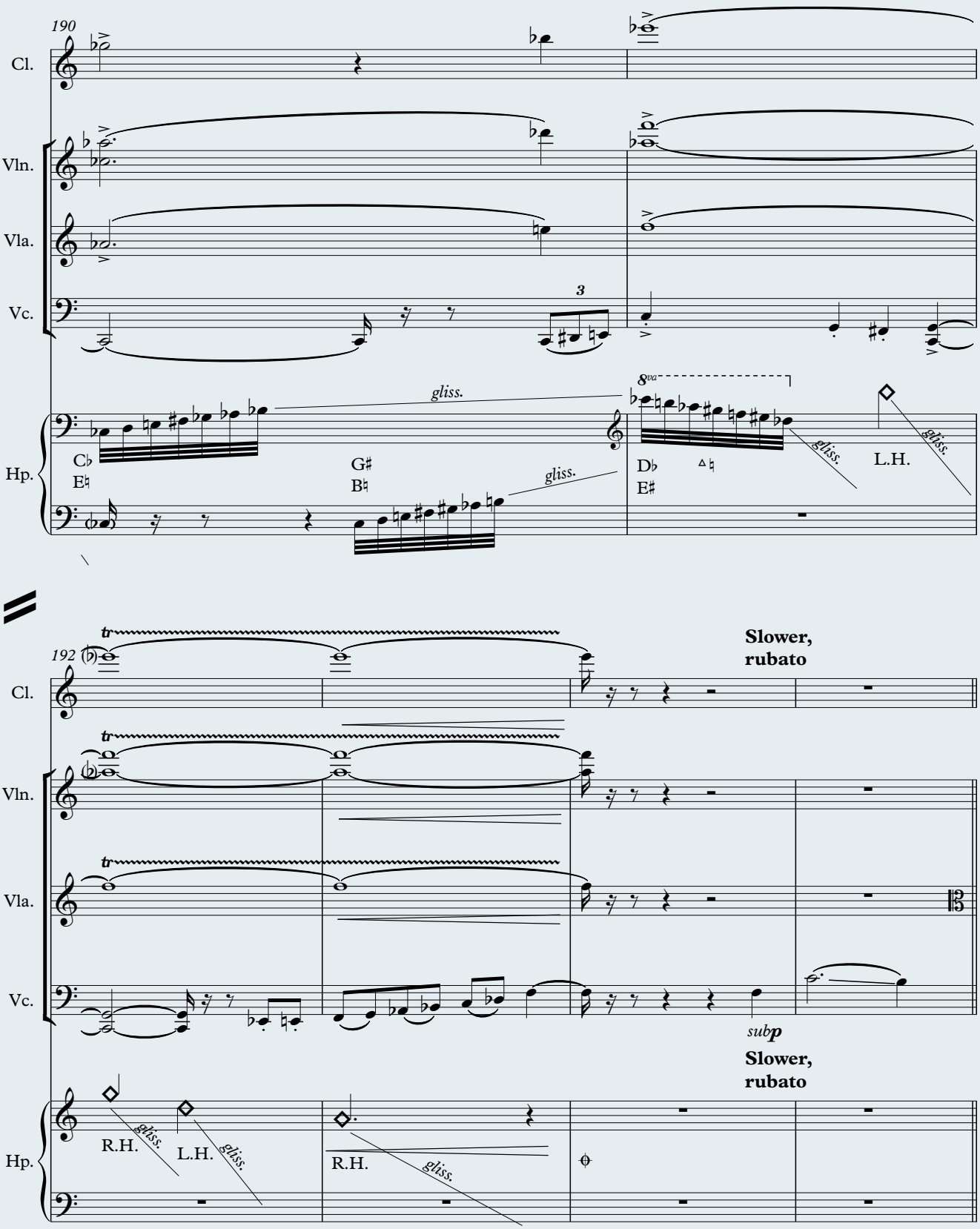

L
163
Cl.
subp
p
Vln.
Vla.
mf
let string
vibrate
between strikes
spiccato
Vc.
mf
L
8va
Hp.
f
167
Cl.
p
bend down
at end
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
(loco)
8va
Hp.

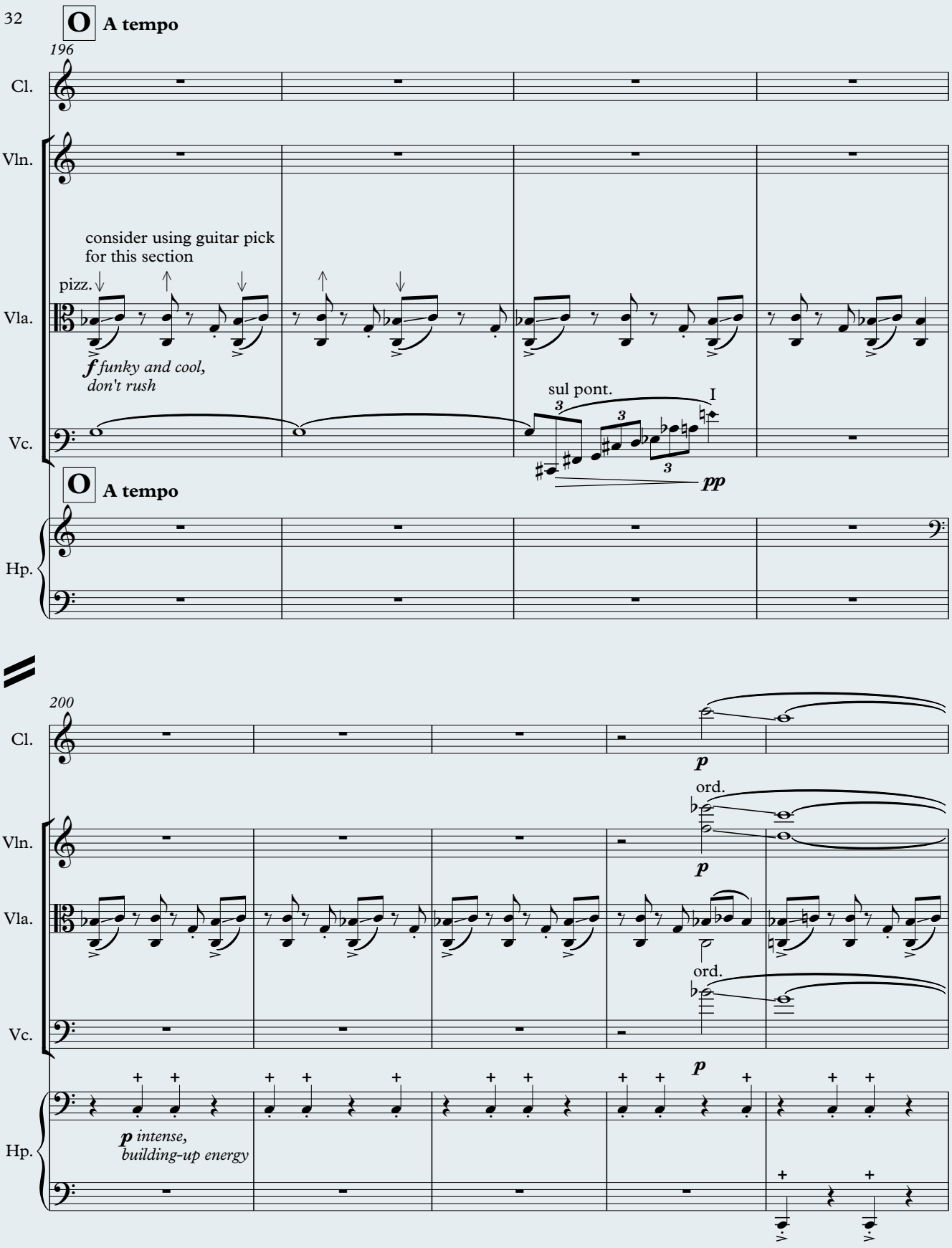
28

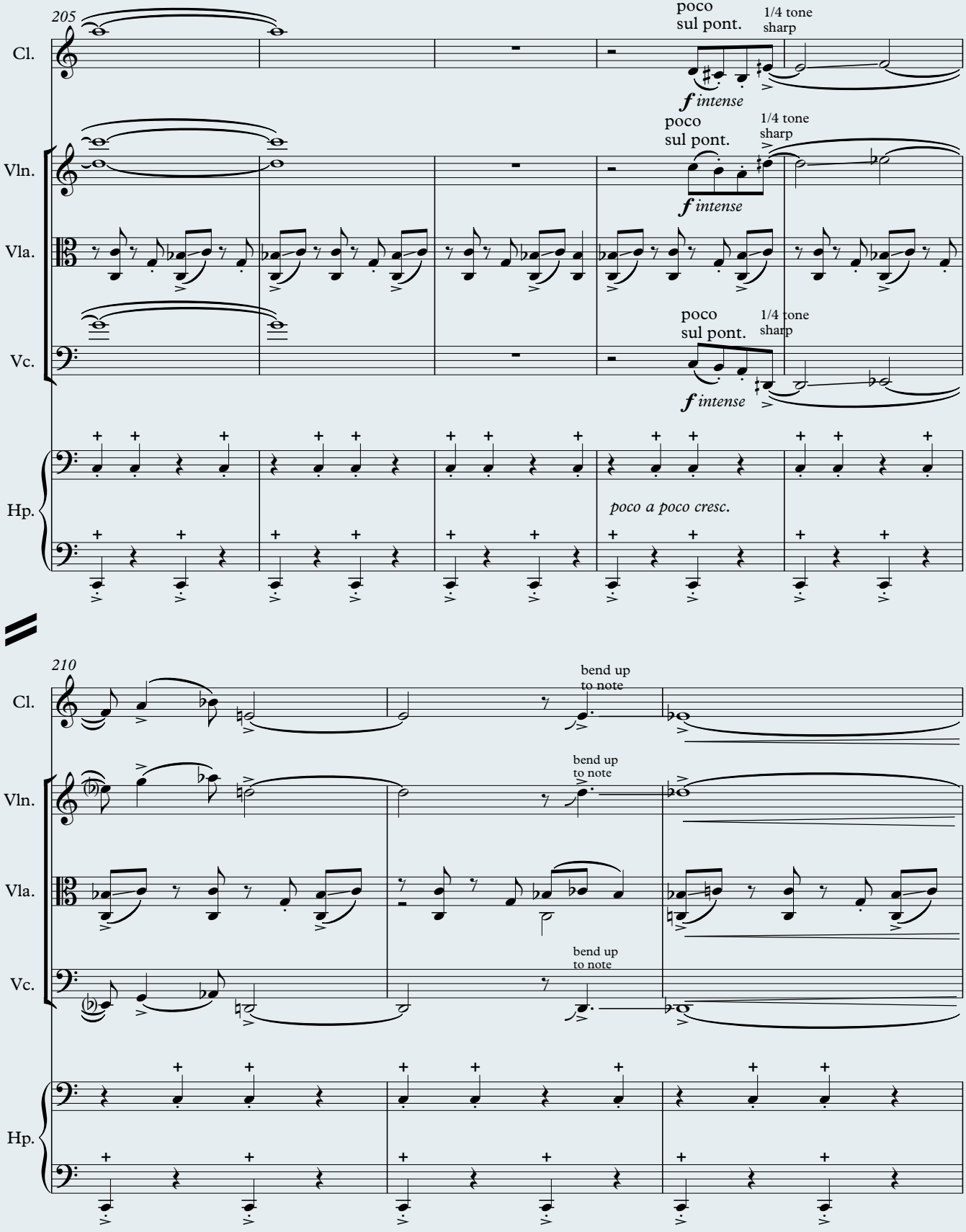

170
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
knock, dry
mid-range
like cowbell
174
ord.
ord.
poco a poco cresc.

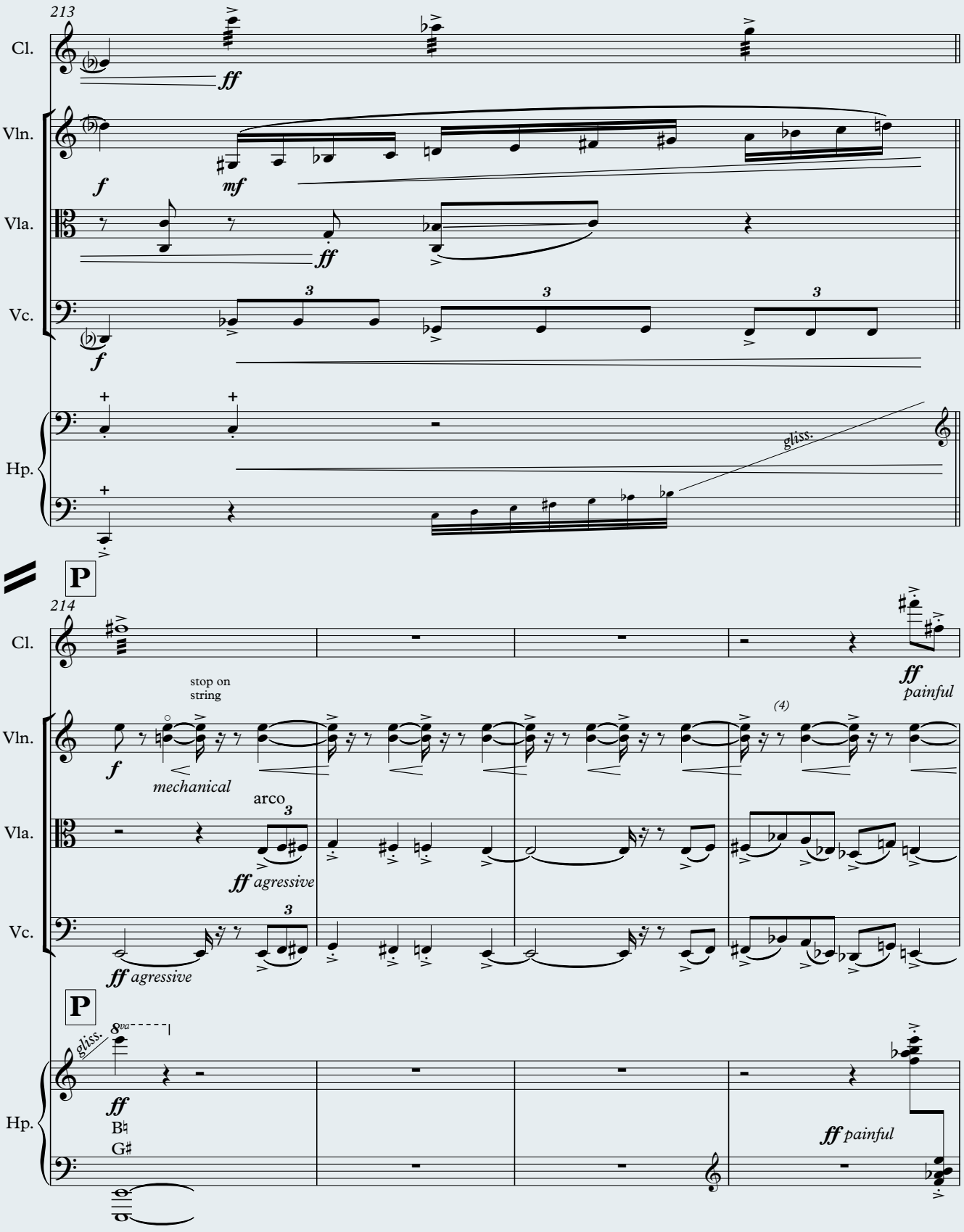

M
178
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
ord.
(mf)
f
fp
p
M
182
ord.
ff espress.

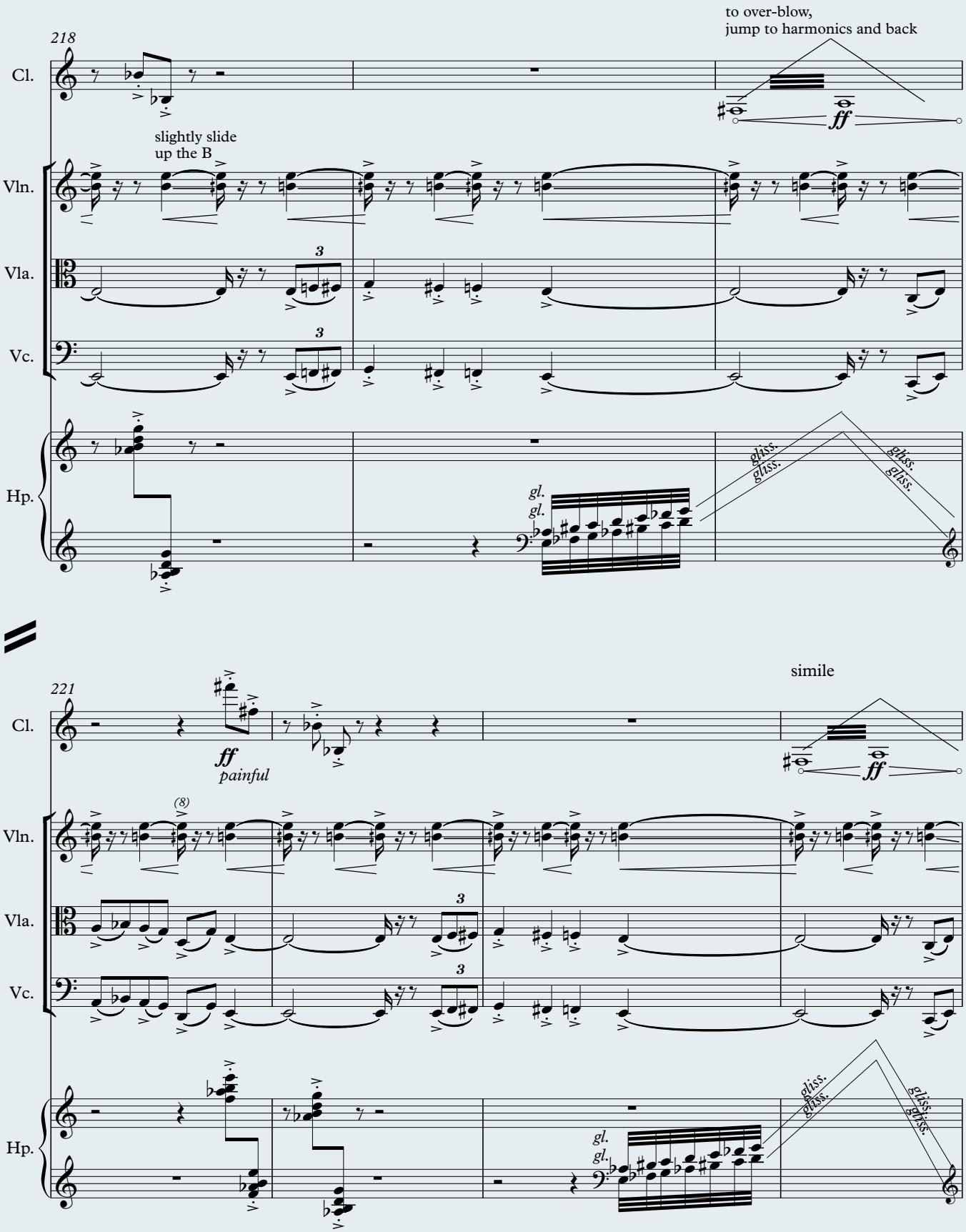

30
N
186
Cl.
ff espress.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
3
N
8va
gliss.
Hp.
ff
188
Eb

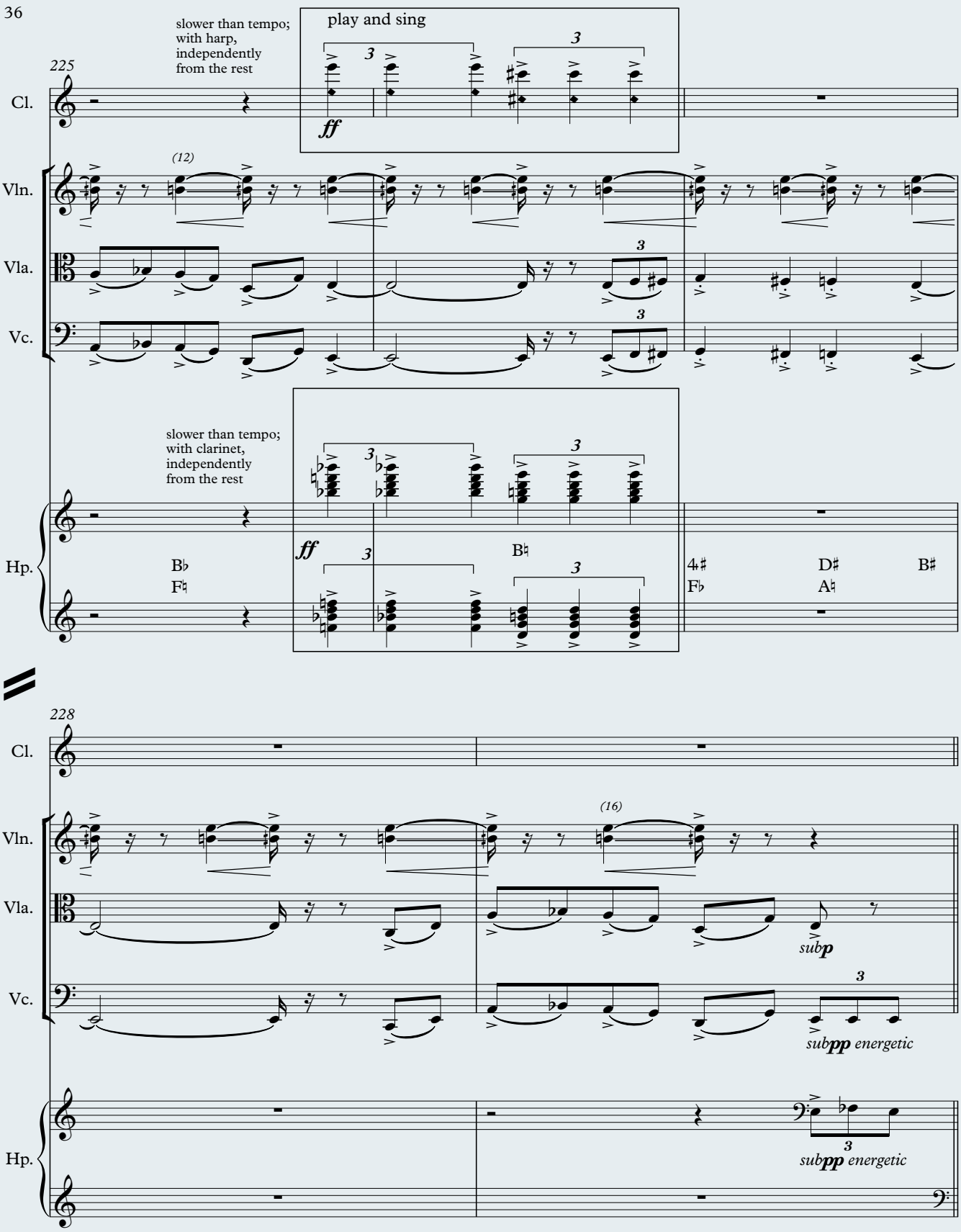

190
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
3
gliss.
8va
C♭
E♮
G♯
B♮
gliss.
D♭
E♯
gliss.
gliss.
L.H.
192
tr
Slower,
rubato
subp
Slower,
rubato
R.H.
gliss.
L.H.
gliss.
R.H.
gliss.

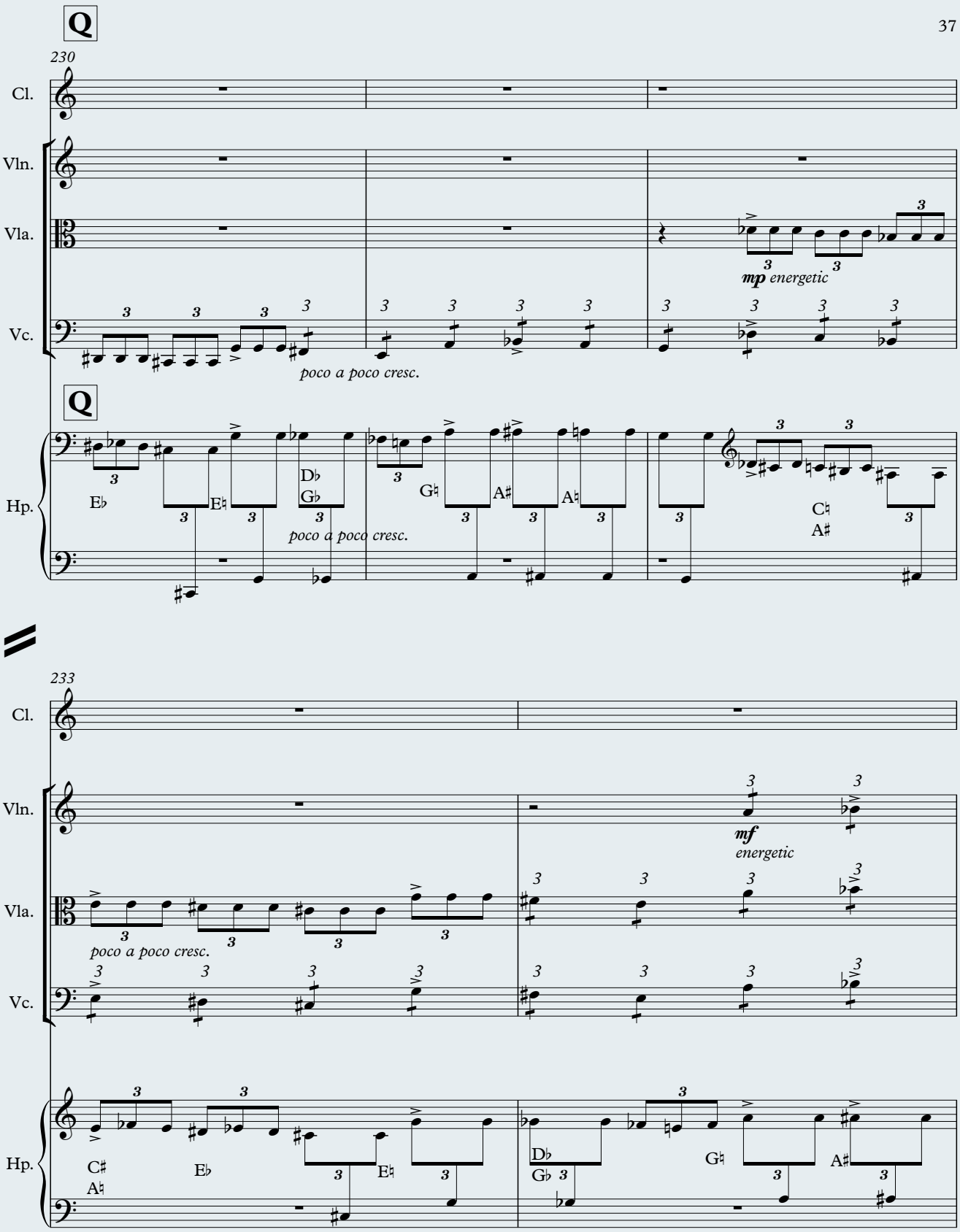

32
A tempo
196
Cl.
Vln.
consider using guitar pick
for this section
pizz.
Vla.
f funky and cool,
don't rush
sul pont.
I
Vc.
pp
A tempo
Hp.
200
Cl.
p
ord.
Vln.
p
Vla.
ord.
Vc.
p
Hp.
p intense,
building-up energy

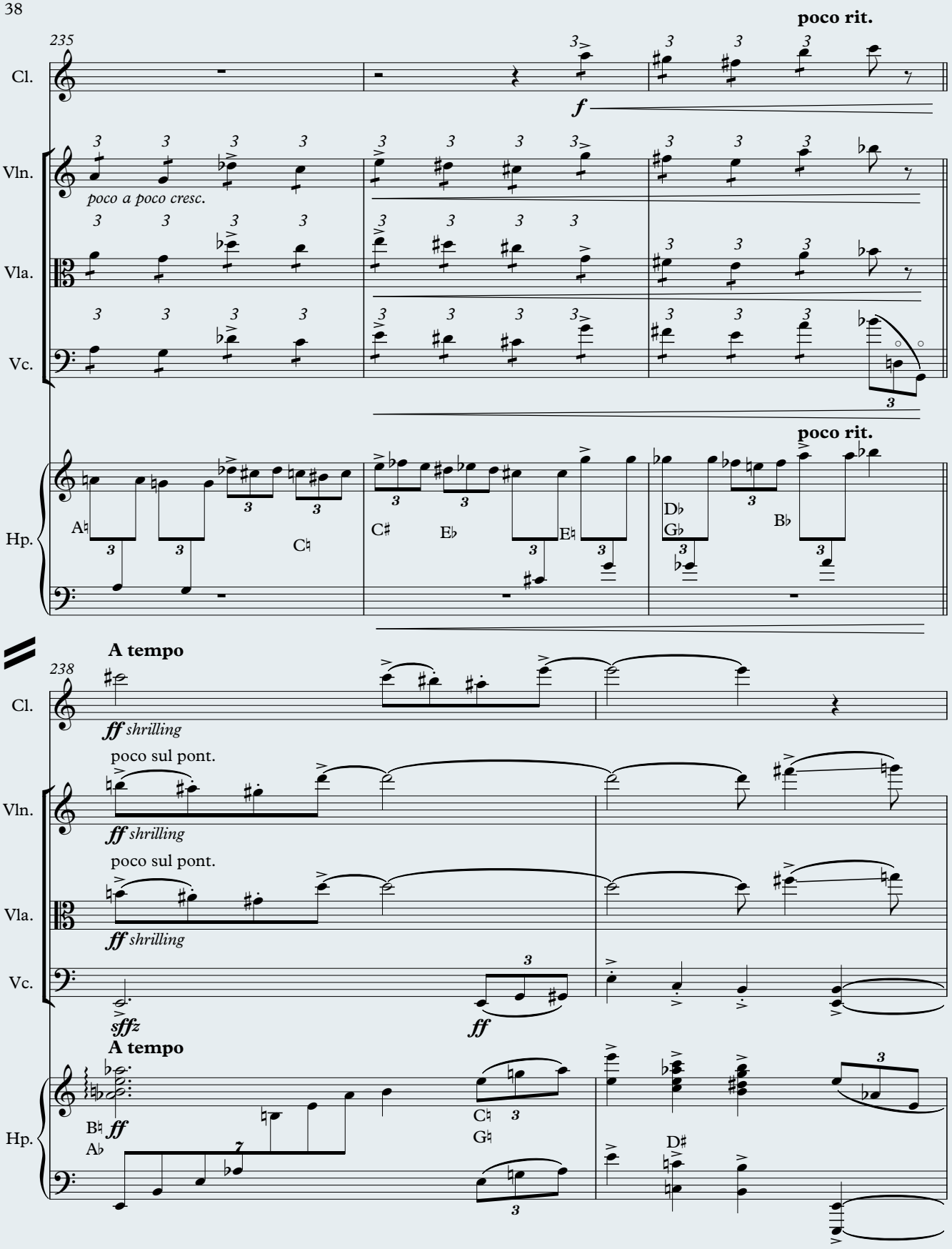

205
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
poco
sul pont.
1/4 tone
sharp
f intense
poco a poco cresc.
210
bend up
to note

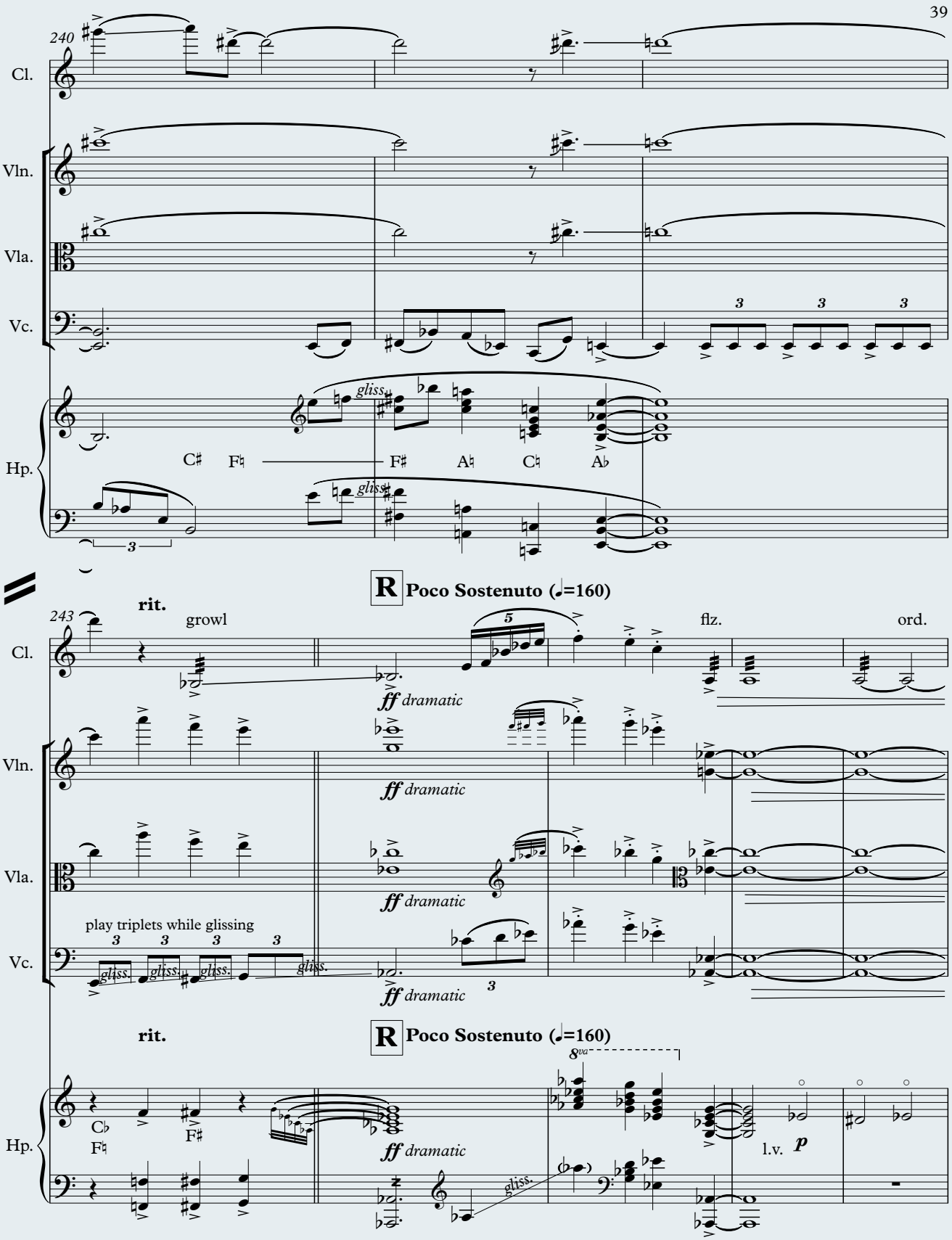

213
Cl.
ff
Vln.
f
mf
Vla.
ff
Vc.
3
f
Hp.
gliss.
P
214
Cl.
ff
painful
stop on
string
Vln.
f
mechanical
(4)
Vla.
arco
3
ff agressive
Vc.
3
ff agressive
P
gliss.
8va
ff
B♮
G♯
Hp.
ff painful


218
Cl.
to over-blow,
jump to harmonics and back
ff
slightly slide
up the B
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
3
Hp.
gl.
gl.
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.
221
simile
ff
painful
(8)
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
3
Hp.
gl.
gl.
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.

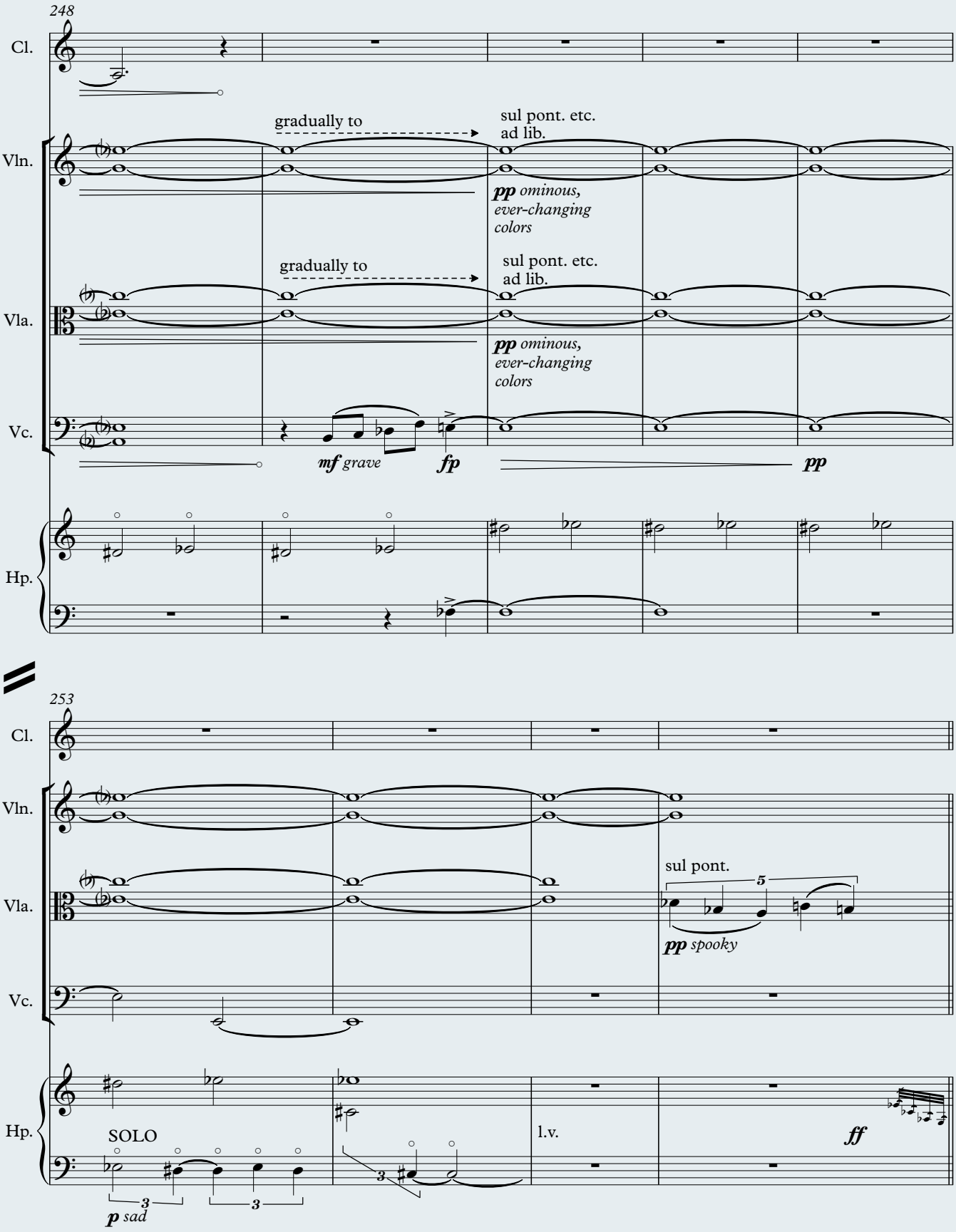

36
225
slower than tempo; with harp, independently from the rest
play and sing
ff
Cl.
(12)
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
slower than tempo; with clarinet, independently from the rest
Hp.
B♭
F♯
B♮
4♯
F♭
D♯
A♮
B♯
228
(16)
sub p
sub pp energetic

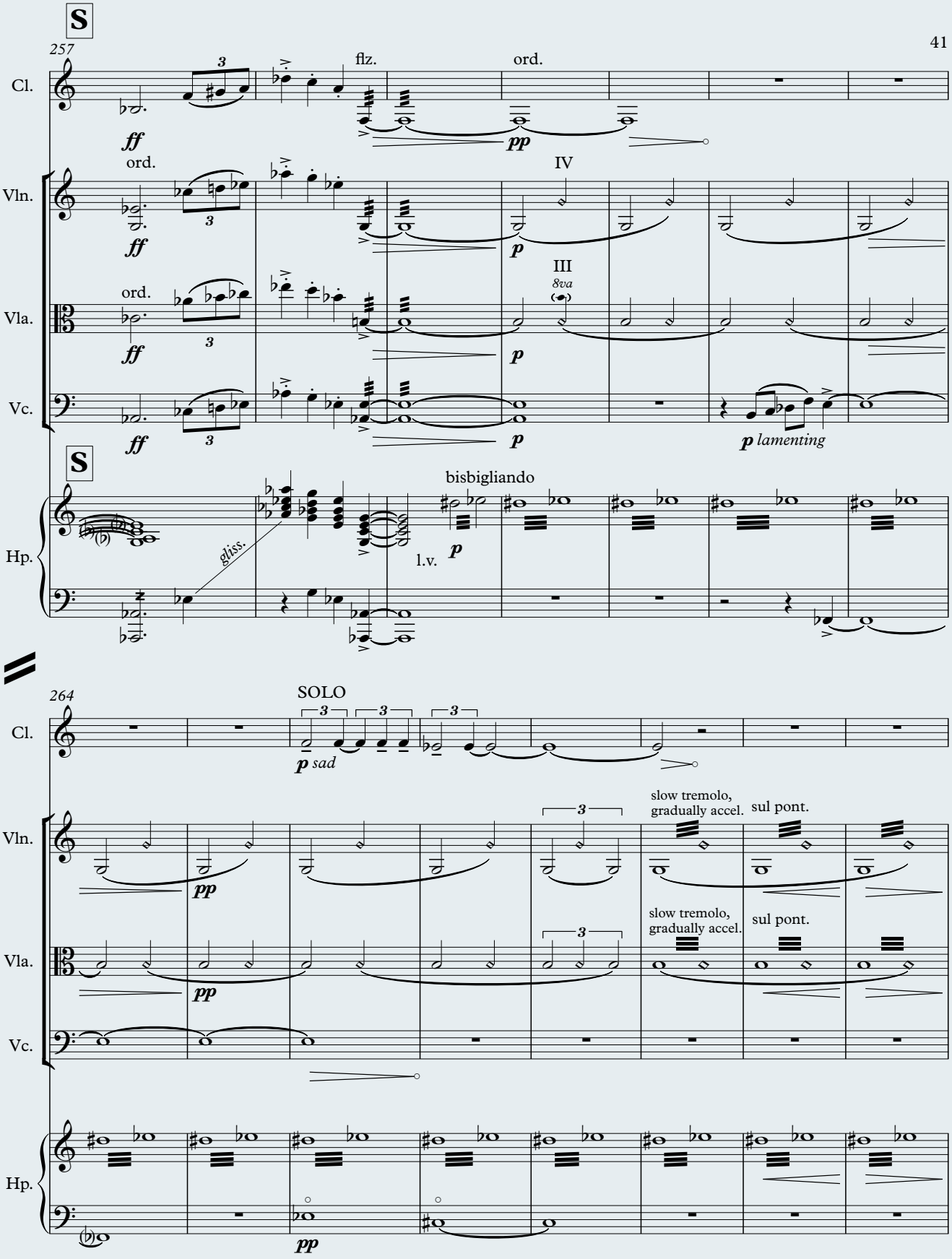

Q
230
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
mp energetic
poco a poco cresc.
Q
Eb
Eb
Db
Gb
poco a poco cresc.
G
A
A
C
A
233
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
mf
energetic
poco a poco cresc.
C
A
Eb
Eb
Db
Gb
G
A


38
235
poco rit.
Cl.
f
Vln.
poco a poco cresc.
Vla.
Vc.
poco rit.
Hp.
A♮
C♮
C♯
E♭
E♮
D♭
G♭
B♭
A tempo
238
ff shrilling
poco sul pont.
Vln.
ff shrilling
poco sul pont.
Vla.
ff shrilling
Vc.
sffz
ff
A tempo
Hp.
B♮
A♭
ff
C♮
G♮
D♯

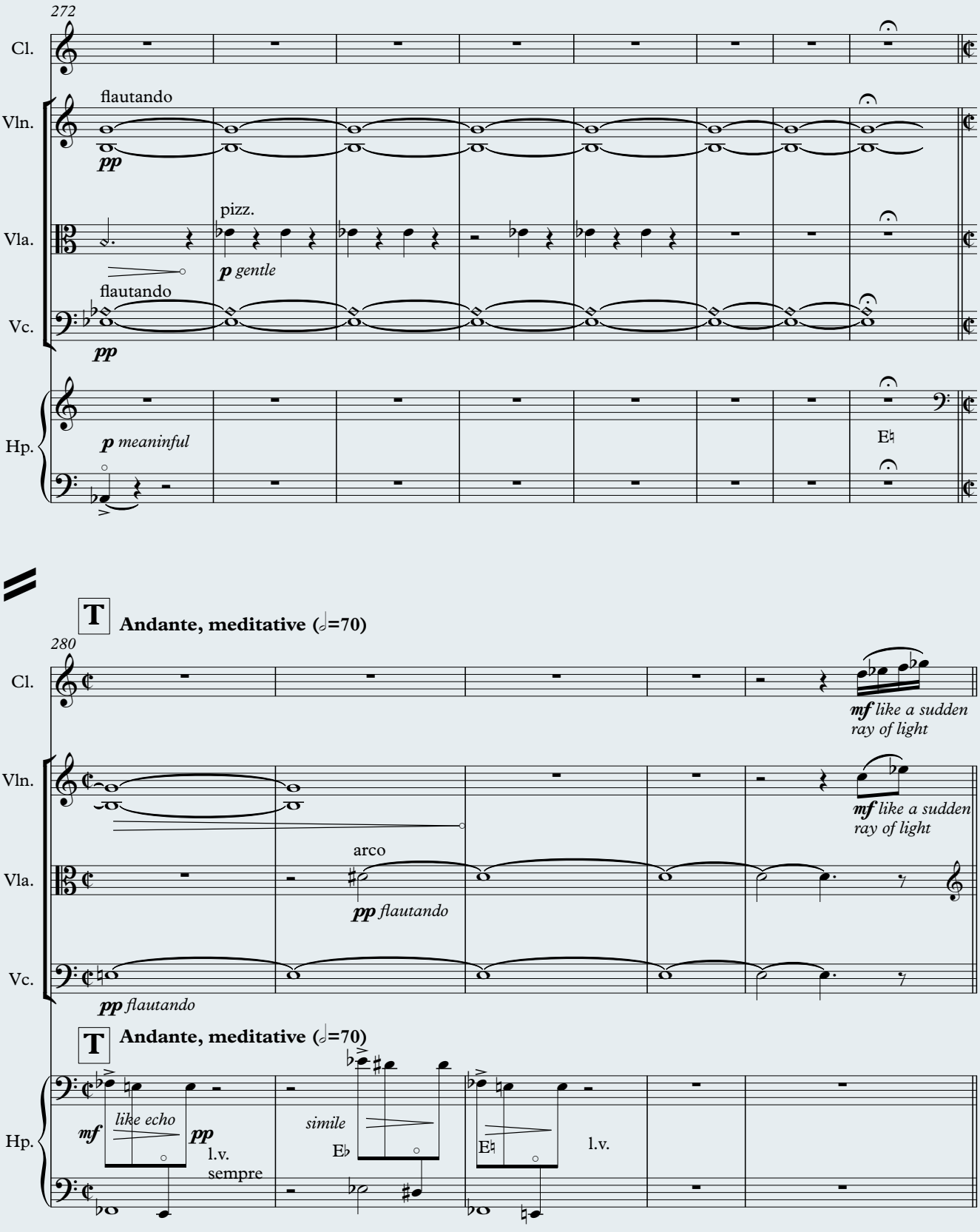

39
240
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
gliss.
C♯ F♮ F♯ A♮ C♮ A♭
R Poco Sostenuto (♩=160)
rit.
243
growl
flz.
ord.
ff dramatic
play triplets while glissing
l.v. p

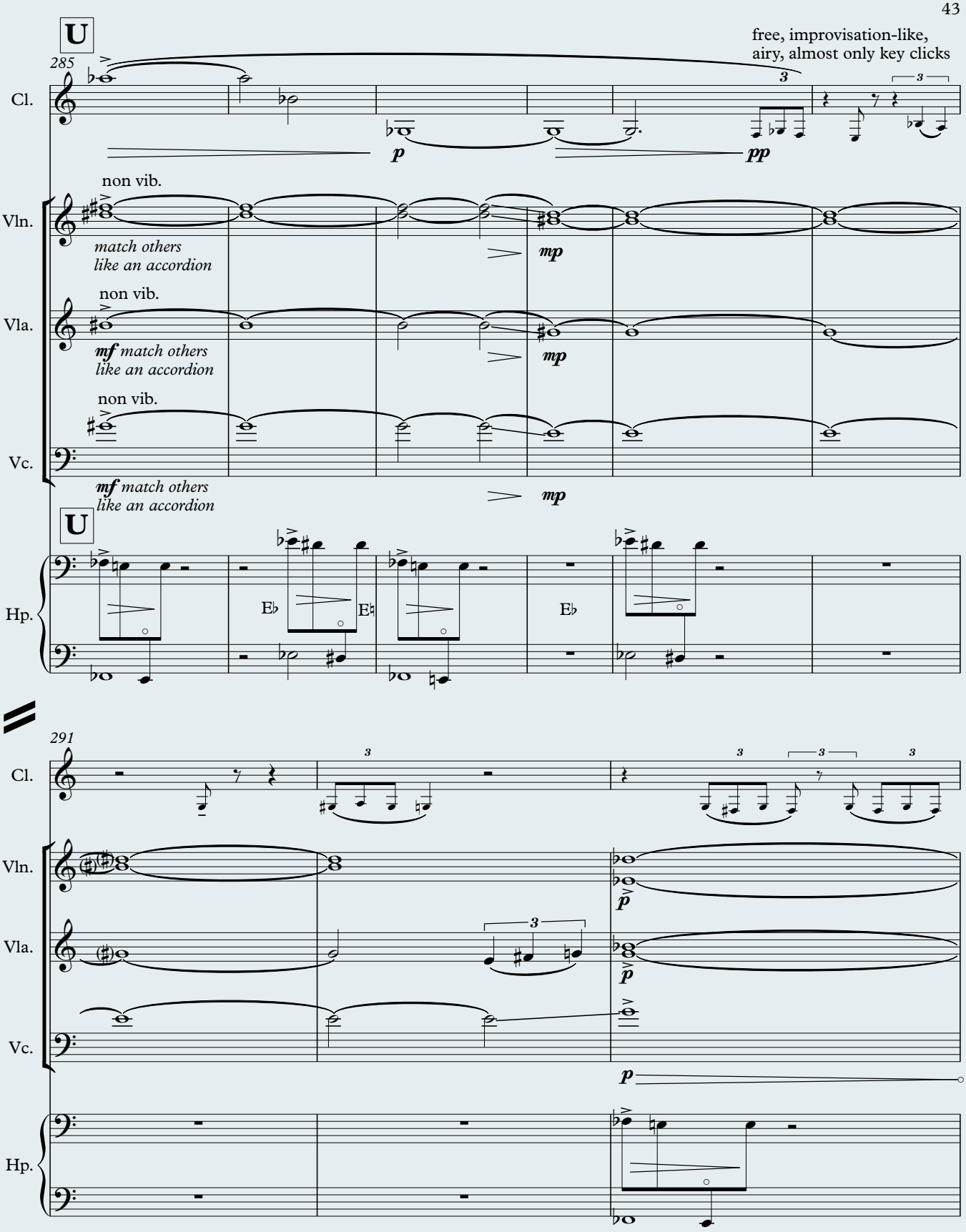
40

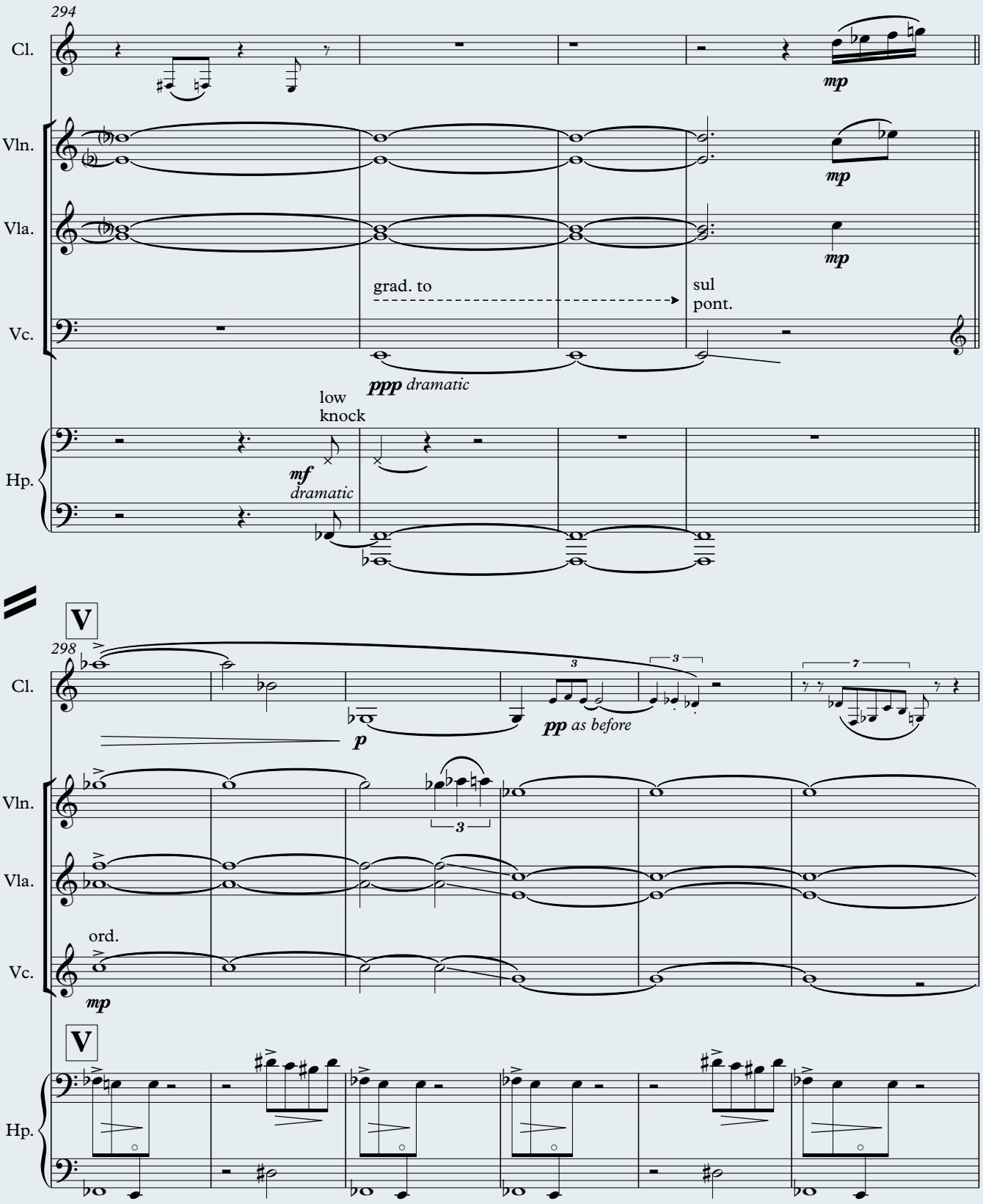

248
Cl.
Vln.
gradually to
sul pont. etc.
ad lib.
pp ominous,
ever-changing
colors
Vla.
gradually to
sul pont. etc.
ad lib.
pp ominous,
ever-changing
colors
Vc.
mf grave
fp
pp
Hp.
253
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
sul pont.
5
pp spooky
Vc.
Hp.
SOLO
l.v.
ff
3
3
3
p sad

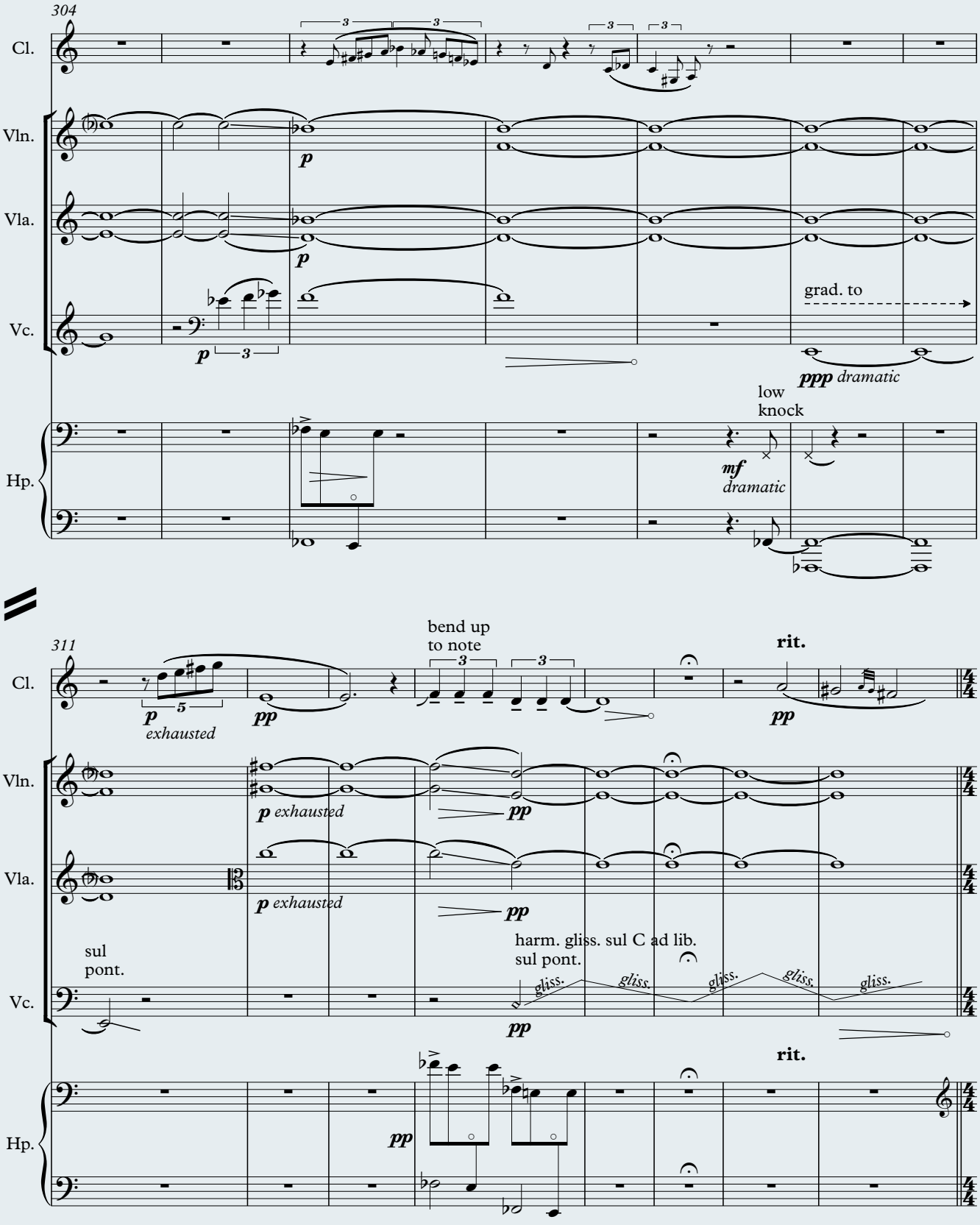

41
S
257
Cl.
flz.
ord.
ff
pp
Vln.
ord.
IV
p
Vla.
III
8va
Vc.
p lamenting
S
Hp.
bisbigliando
gliss.
l.v.
264
SOLO
p sad
slow tremolo, gradually accel.
sul pont.
pp

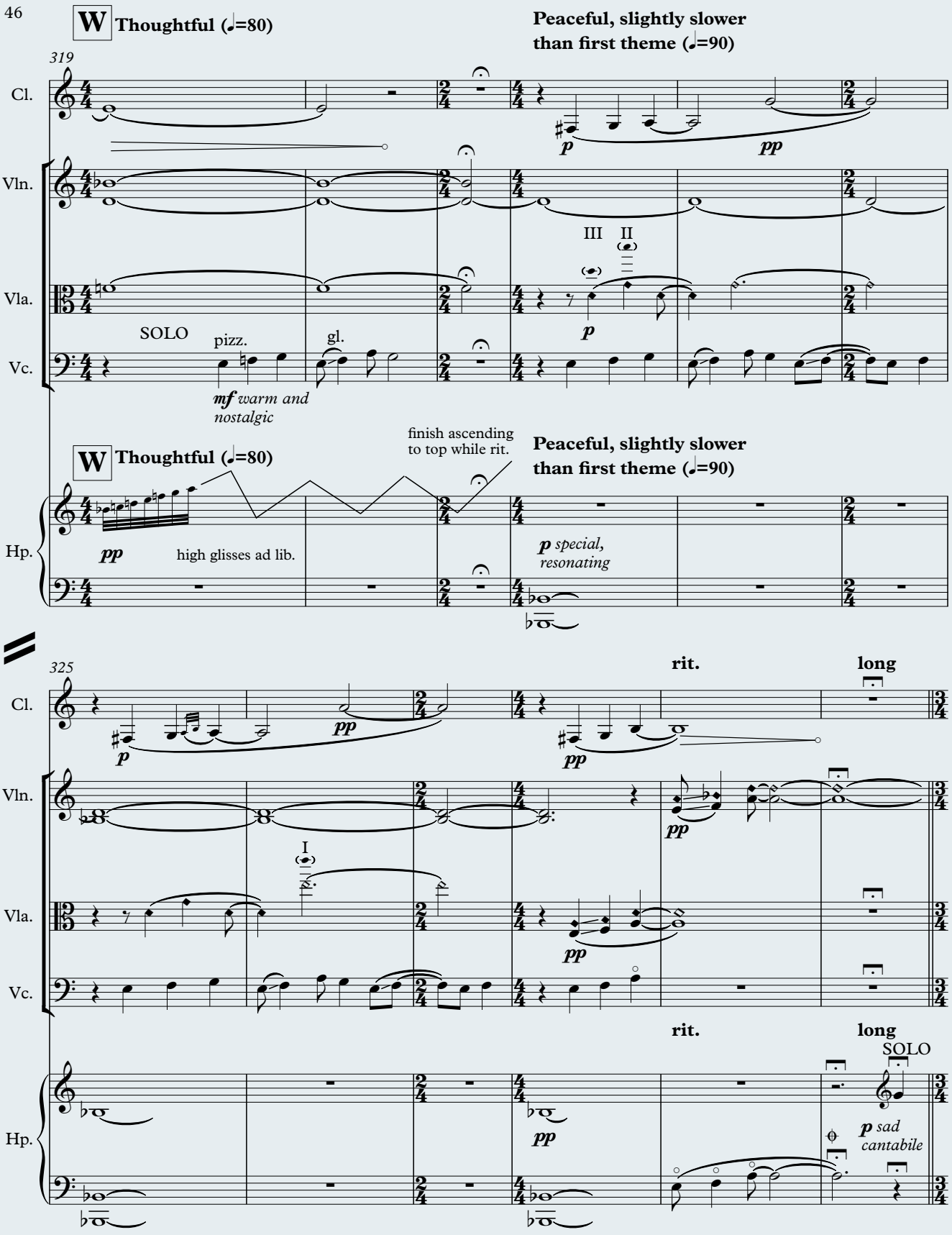
42

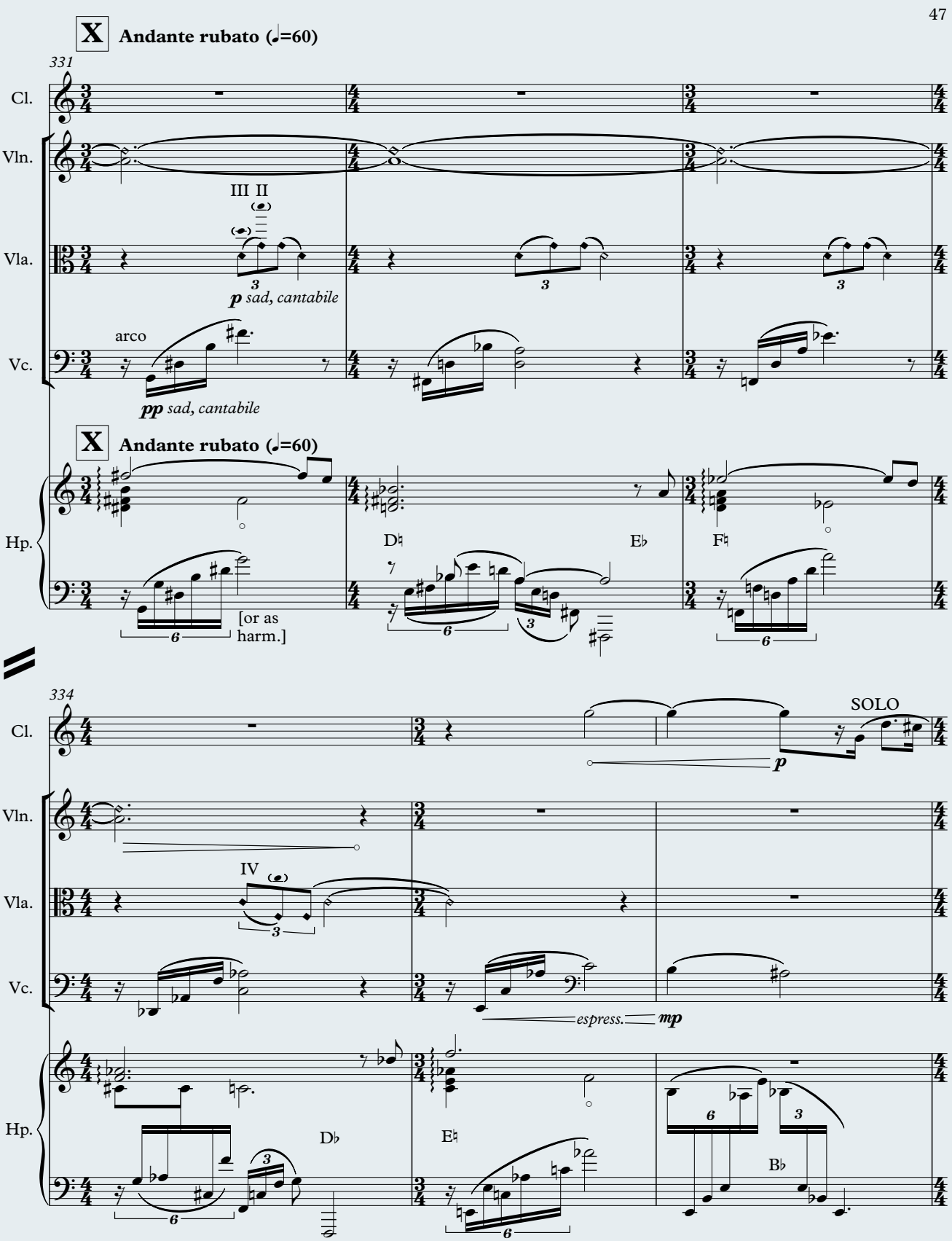

272
Cl.
Vln.
flautando
pp
Vla.
pizz.
p gentle
Vc.
flautando
pp
Hp.
p meaninful
E♮
T
Andante, meditative (𝅗𝅥=70)
280
Cl.
mf like a sudden ray of light
Vln.
mf like a sudden ray of light
Vla.
arco
pp flautando
Vc.
pp flautando
T
Andante, meditative (𝅗𝅥=70)
Hp.
mf
like echo
pp
l.v.
sempre
simile
E♭
E♮
l.v.


U
285
free, improvisation-like,
airy, almost only key clicks
Cl.
p
pp
non vib.
Vln.
match others
like an accordion
mp
non vib.
Vla.
mf match others
like an accordion
mp
non vib.
Vc.
mf match others
like an accordion
mp
U
Hp.
E♭
E♮
E♭
291
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.

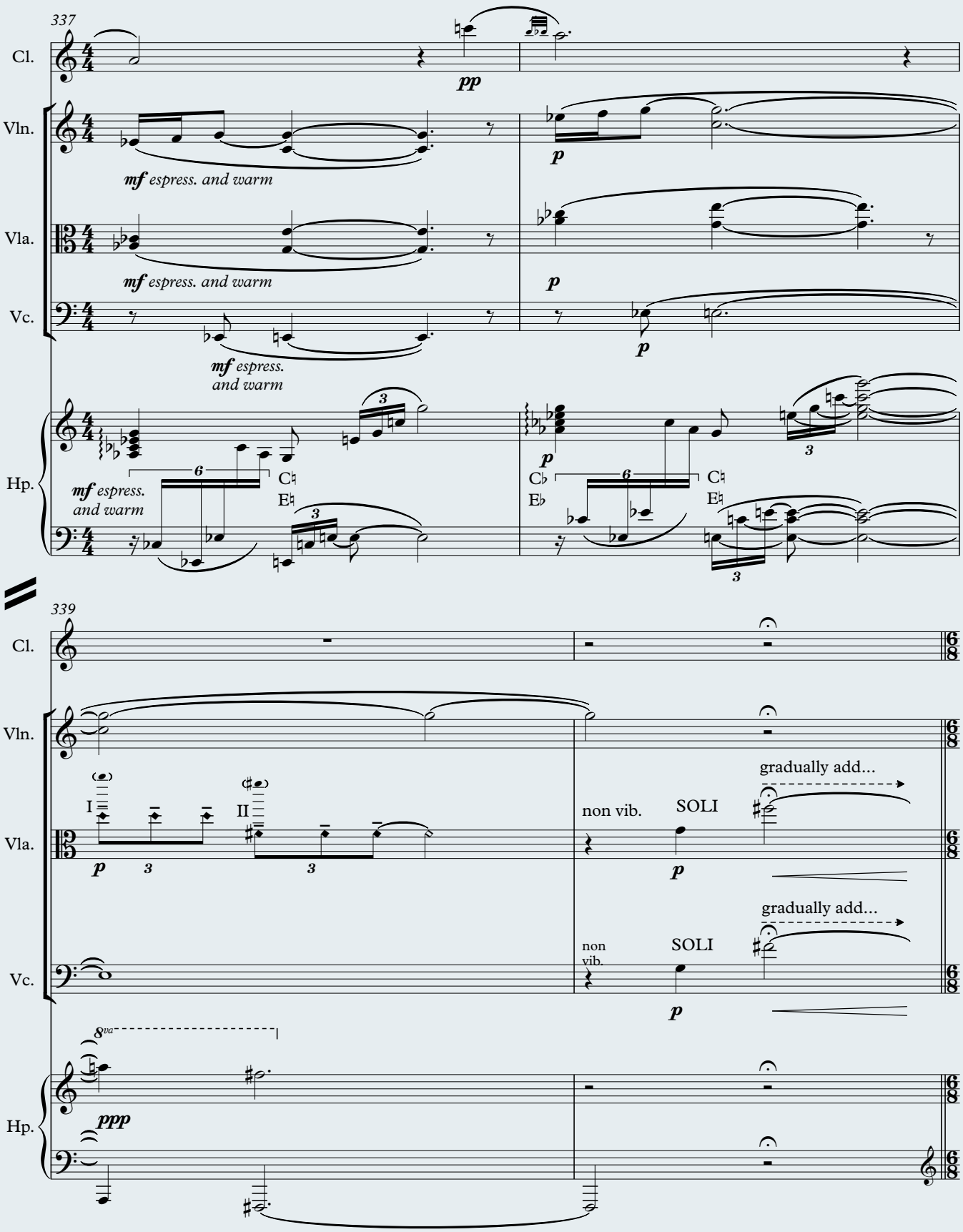

294
Cl.
mp
Vln.
mp
Vla.
mp
grad. to
sul
pont.
Vc.
ppp dramatic
low
knock
Hp.
mf
dramatic
V
298
Cl.
p
3
3
7
pp as before
Vln.
3
Vla.
ord.
Vc.
mp
V
Hp.

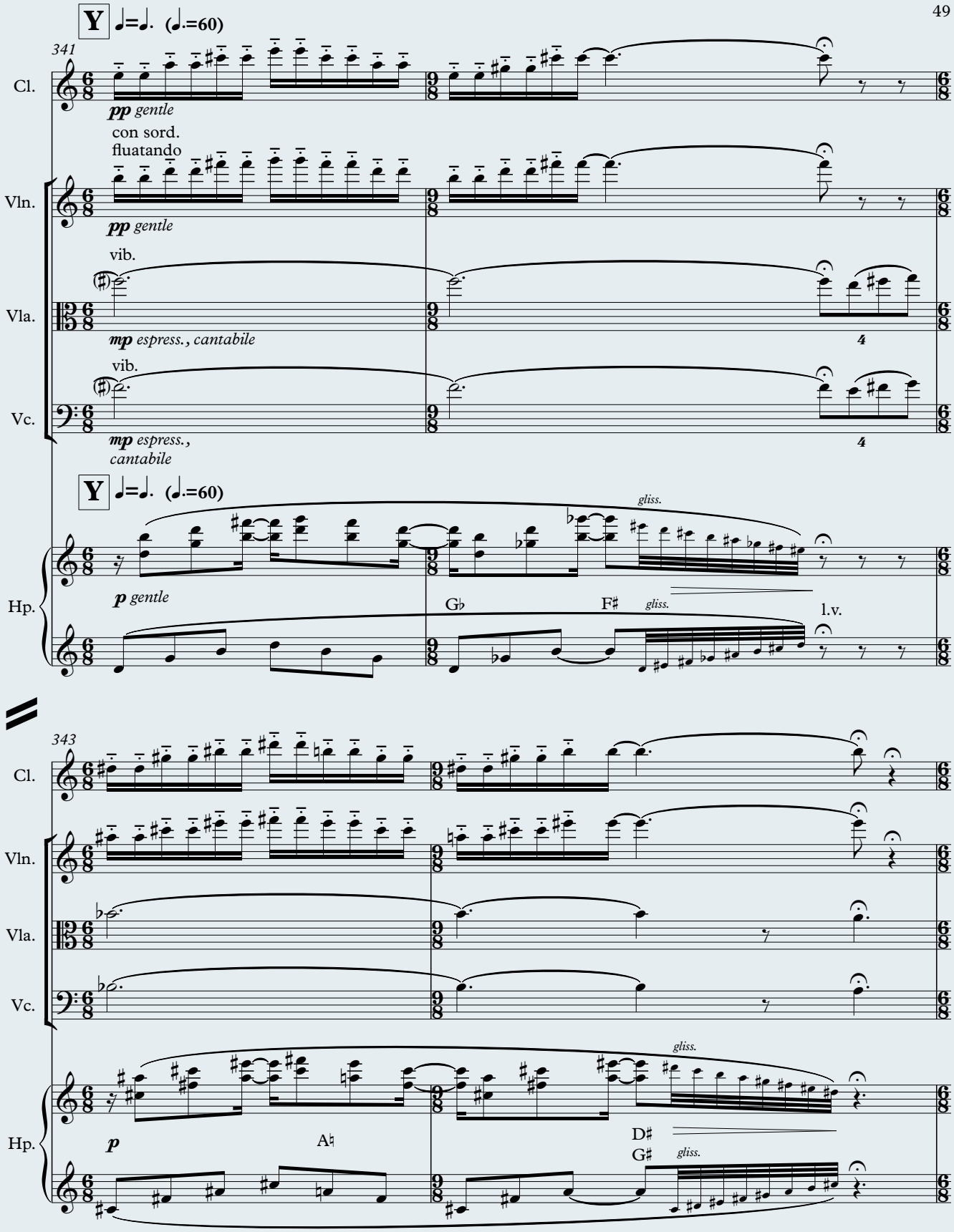

304
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
p
grad. to
ppp dramatic
low
knock
mf
dramatic
311
bend up
to note
rit.
p
exhausted
pp
sul
pont.
harm. gliss. sul C ad lib.
sul pont.
gliss.

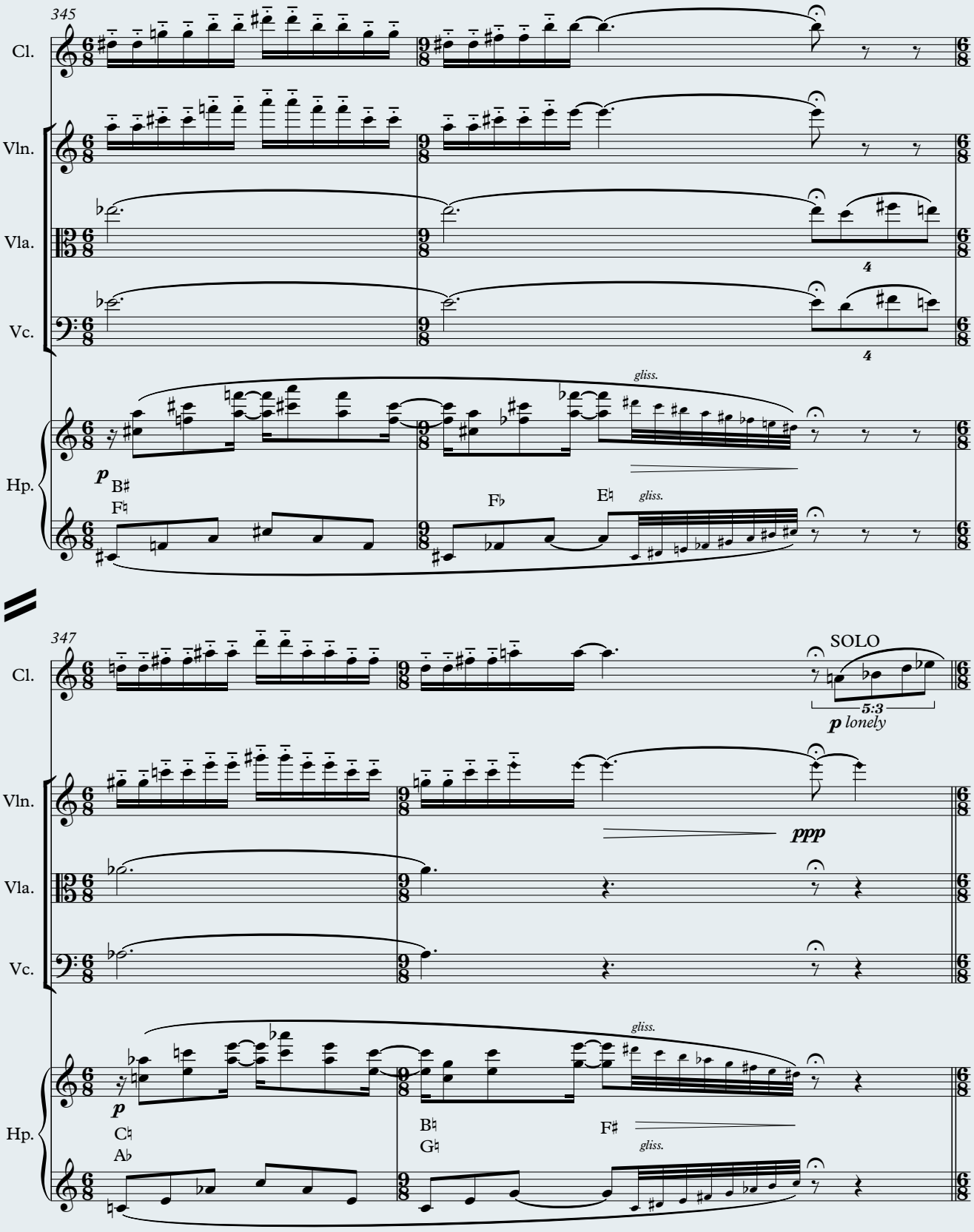

46
W Thoughtful (♩=80)
Peaceful, slightly slower than first theme (♩=90)
319
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
SOLO
pizz.
gl.
III II
mf warm and nostalgic
finish ascending to top while rit.
pp high glisses ad lib.
p special, resonating
325
rit.
long
I
SOLO
p sad cantabile

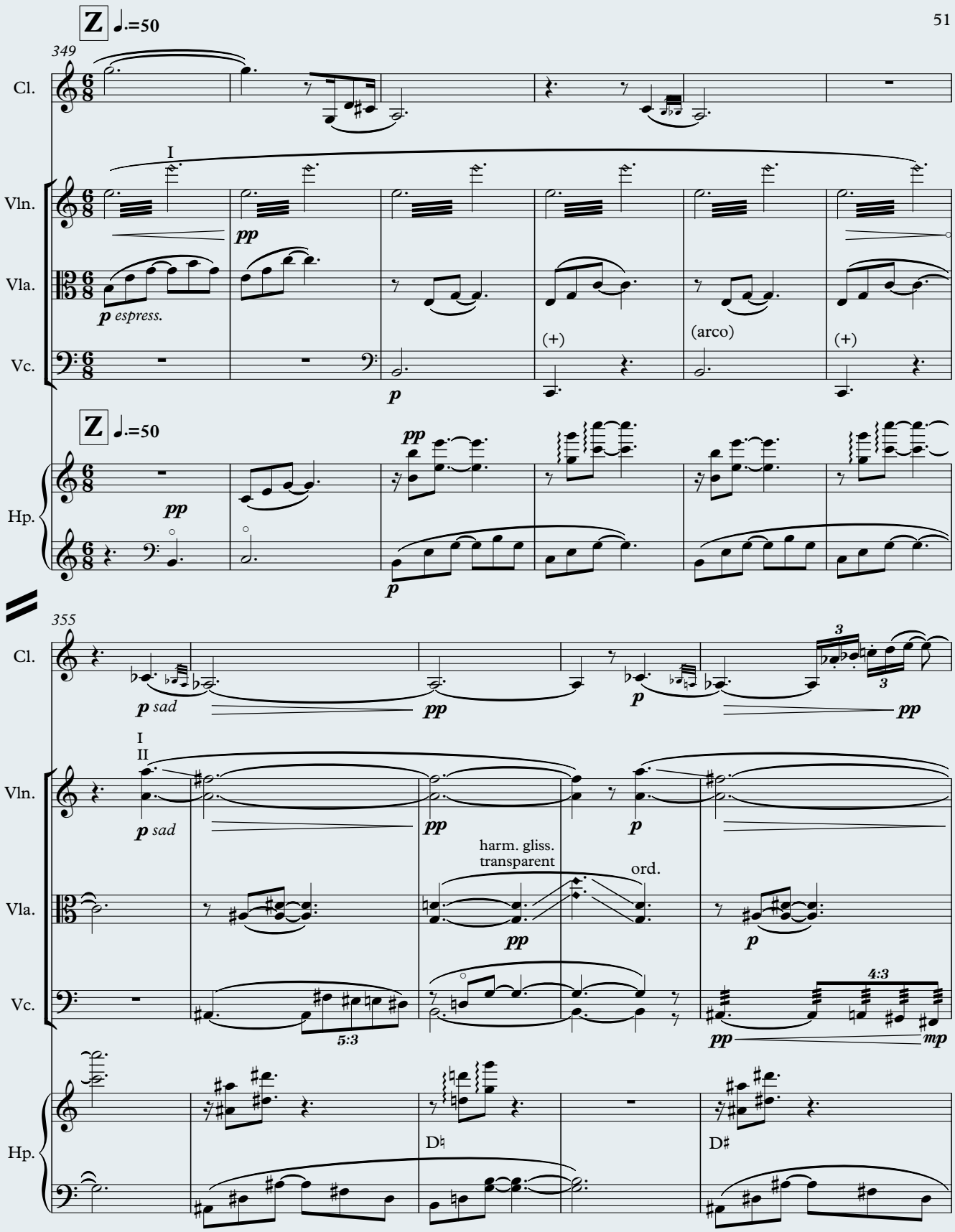

X Andante rubato (♩=60)
331
Cl.
Vln.
III II
Vla.
p sad, cantabile
arco
Vc.
pp sad, cantabile
X Andante rubato (♩=60)
Hp.
D♮
E♭
F♮
[or as harm.]
334
SOLO
p
IV
espress.
mp
D♭
E♮
B♭

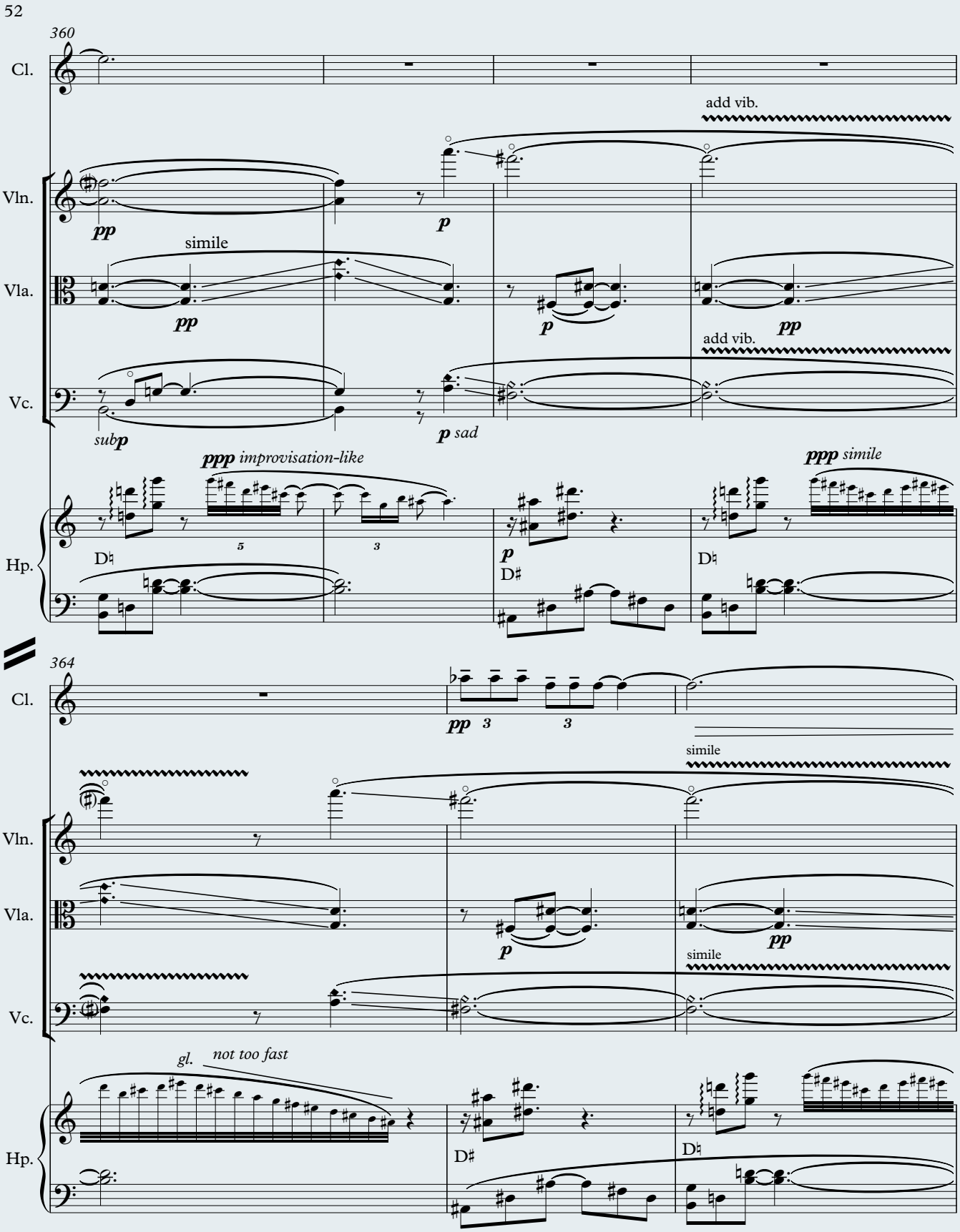
48

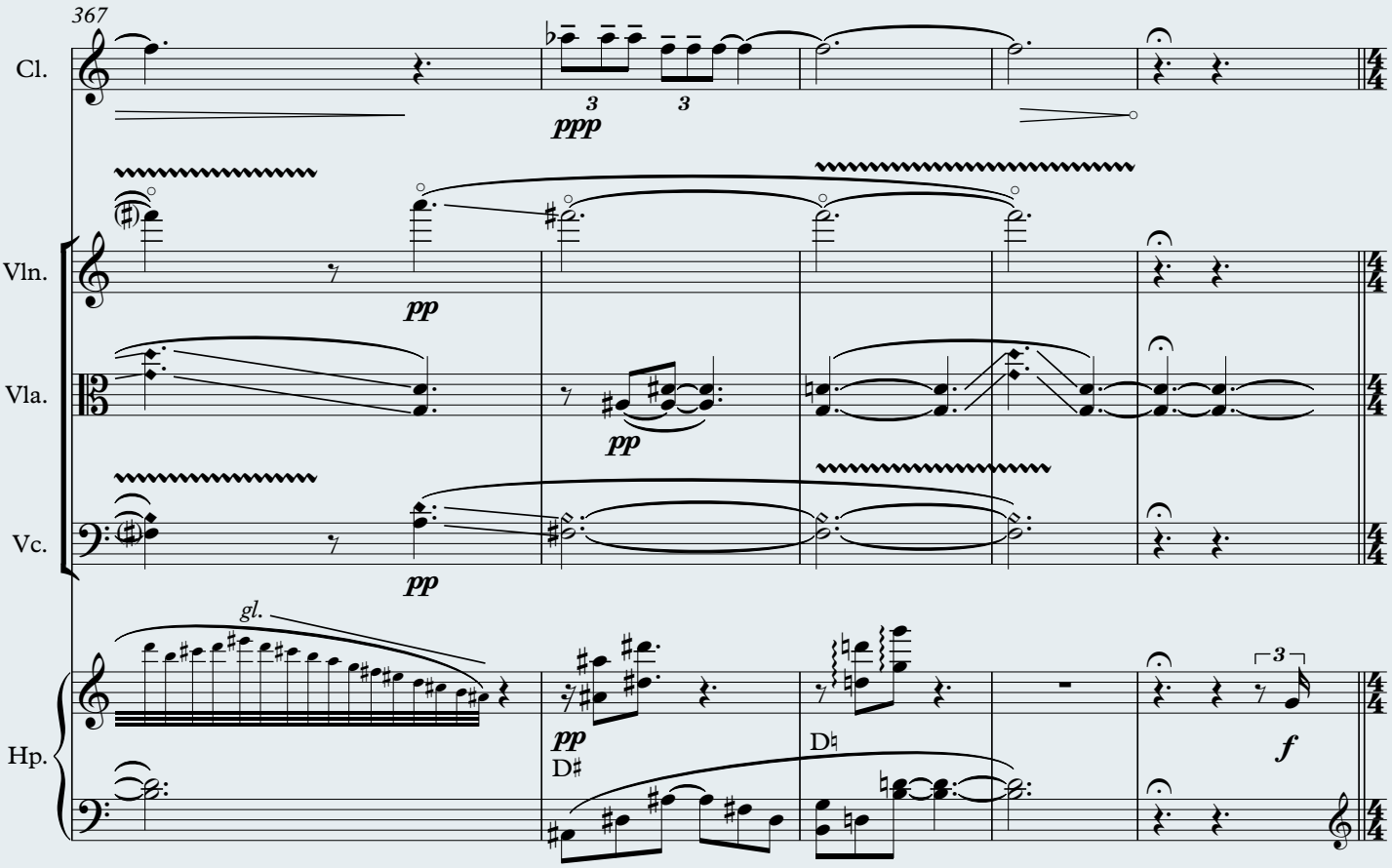

337
Cl.
pp
Vln.
mf espress. and warm
p
Vla.
mf espress. and warm
p
Vc.
mf espress. and warm
p
Hp.
mf espress. and warm
C♮ E♮
C♭ E♭
C♮ E♮
339
Cl.
Vln.
I
II
p
non vib.
SOLI
p
gradually add...
Vla.
gradually add...
Vc.
non vib.
SOLI
p
8va
ppp
Hp.


Y ♩=♩. (♩.=60)
341
Cl.
pp gentle
con sord.
fluatando
Vln.
pp gentle
vib.
Vla.
mp espress., cantabile
4
vib.
Vc.
mp espress., cantabile
4
Y ♩=♩. (♩.=60)
gliss.
Hp.
p gentle
G♭
F♯
gliss.
l.v.
343
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
gliss.
Hp.
p
A♮
D♯
G♯
gliss.

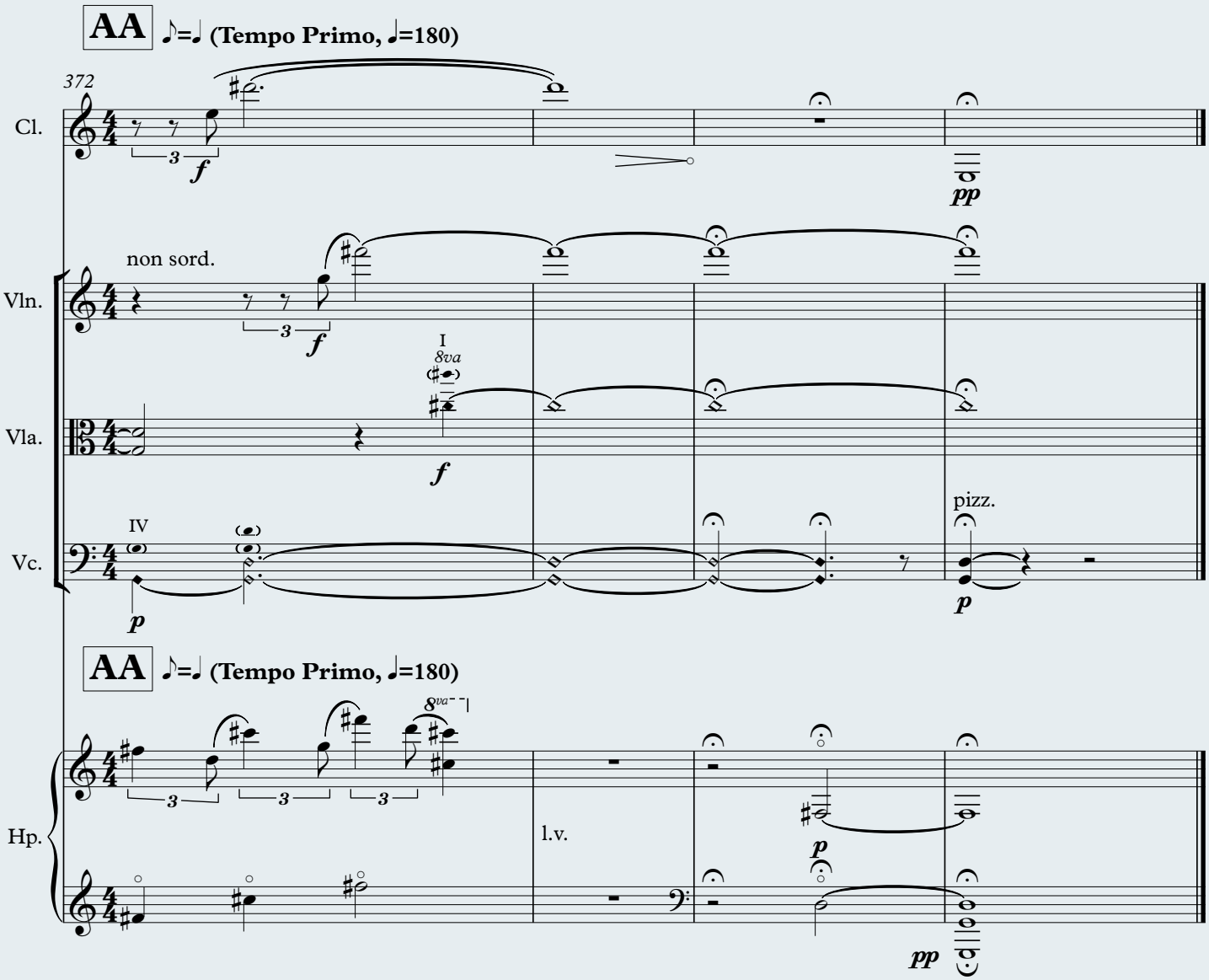

345
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
gliss.
p
B♯
F♮
F♭
E♮
gliss.
347
SOLO
5:3
p lonely
ppp
gliss.
p
C♮
A♭
B♮
G♮
F♯
gliss.


Z ♩.=50
349
Cl.
I
Vln.
pp
Vla.
p espress.
Vc.
(+)
(arco)
(+)
p
Z ♩.=50
Hp.
pp
355
p sad
3
I
II
harm. gliss.
transparent
ord.
5:3
4:3
mp
D♮
D♯


52
360
Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Hp.
add vib.
pp
p
simile
sub p
p sad
ppp improvisation-like
ppp simile
D♮
D♯
364
gl.
not too fast


367
Cl.
3
3
ppp
Vln.
pp
Vla.
pp
Vc.
pp
gl.
Hp.
pp
D♯
D♮
3
f

54



December 2017
Ridgewood, NJ, USA