Music for the Birds

harp (or piano) and clarinet (Bb, A, and Eb)

I The Providing Coast
II The Sandpiper's Delight
III The Great Egret
IV Water Ballet on Mustang Island:
    The Greater Yellowlegs
    Pelicans on Patrol
    The Blue Heron
    The Seagulls
    Pelicans on Patrol
V Music for the Birds

Commissioned by
The Austin Chamber Ensemble

Dedicated to
Dr. and Mrs. George J. Merriman, Jr.

Composed by
J. Todd Frazier

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Program Notes

Music for the Birds, for harp or piano and clarinet, was inspired by the Texas Gulf Coast and its indigenous water fowl. These musical character sketches offer interpretations from the peculiar and comical to the mystical and majestic qualities of Gulf Coast birds and their habitat. My interest in birds goes back to the childhood car trips I took with my grandparents from Houston to Corpus Christi to visit my great grandparents, George J. and Gem Merriman. One of the things we would do in the car was look for birds, especially Cranes and Herons, and we would often stop and get out at our favorite sighting spots for a better look. Through these memorable experiences I came to embrace and respect the fascinating and colorful world of the Texas Coast and felt that the many unique sights, sounds and colors I experienced would translate wonderfully into a musical response. Music for the Birds was commissioned by the Austin Chamber Ensemble and is dedicated to my grandparents, Dr. and Mrs. George J. Merriman, Jr. This work is intended to be used for both concert performances and environmental education and outreach programs.

Descriptions of Individual Movements:

The Providing Coast is an impression of the soothing coastline in early morning.

The Sandpiper's Delight is about a handsome, nervous, and sometimes perplexed Sandpiper searching for a meal.

The Great Egret is a reverent tribute to this thoughtful and majestic bird. When I began writing this movement a storm had recently left Houston. Displaced by the storm, a Great Egret landed in my backyard! The bird was majestic and magical and time seemed to stand still as I watched it in the late hours of the night. The Egret studied its surroundings and gracefully toured the yard. I was struck by its large size, as I was very close to it. I knew that no one would believe this story, so after I admired the bird for a while I searched the house for a camera, but when I returned, the bird had vanished into the night. Needless to say, this event made a strong and stirring impression on me and inspired this movement. The Great Egret's dramatic departure is represented by the final measures of the harp.

Water Ballet on Mustang Island is a series of miniatures or "snapshots" inspired by the birds on Mustang Island. I only stood on the island for about fifteen minutes, but tried to be acutely aware of my surroundings. I soon realized I was the audience for a delightful island ballet. It was a lively performance in which the Gulls endlessly searched for food, squabbling amongst themselves, while the Pelicans passed overhead, patrolling the coast and ignoring their hungry friends. The Pelicans and Gulls provided a colorful chorus to the main dancers, the Blue Heron and gentle Greater Yellowlegs. The Heron, preferring to be admired at a distance, made the greatest impression on me and provided the inspiration for the reverent centerpiece of this movement.

Music for the Birds is a concluding response that fully explores the breadth of emotions associated with this meaningful and personal composition project.

For More Information: todd@jtoddfrazier.com

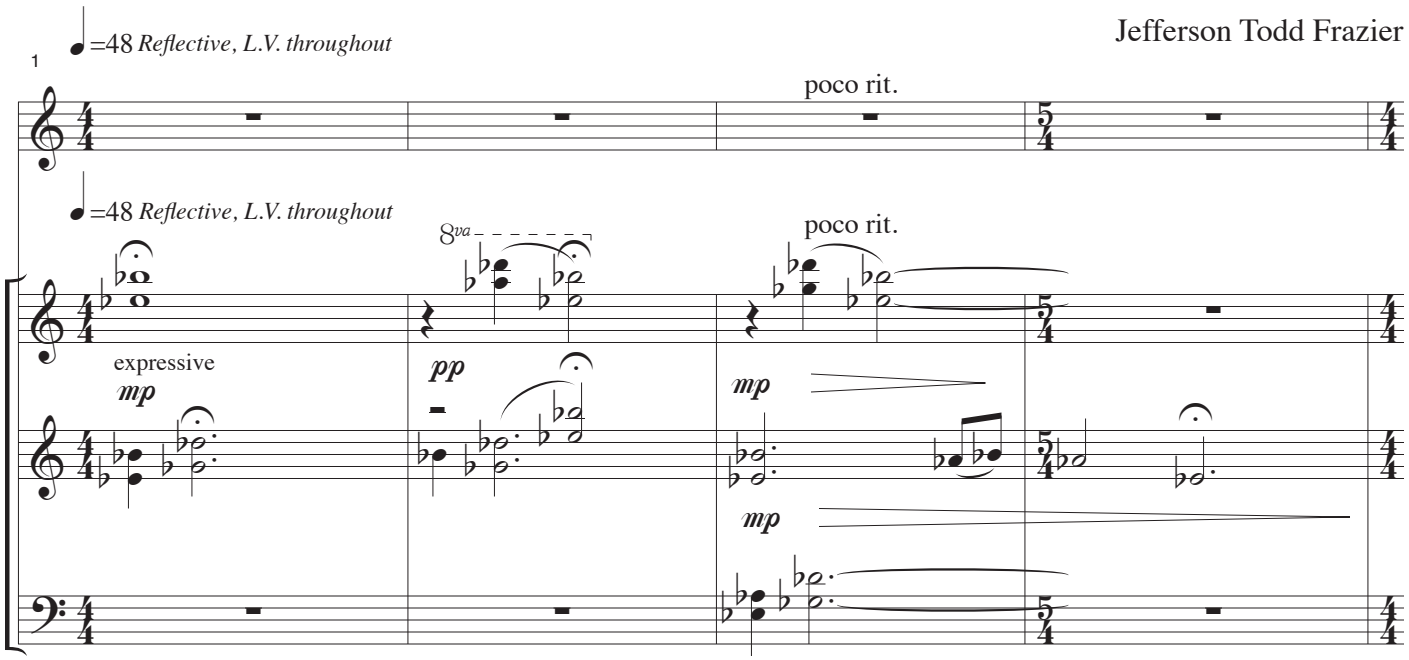
Music for the Birds

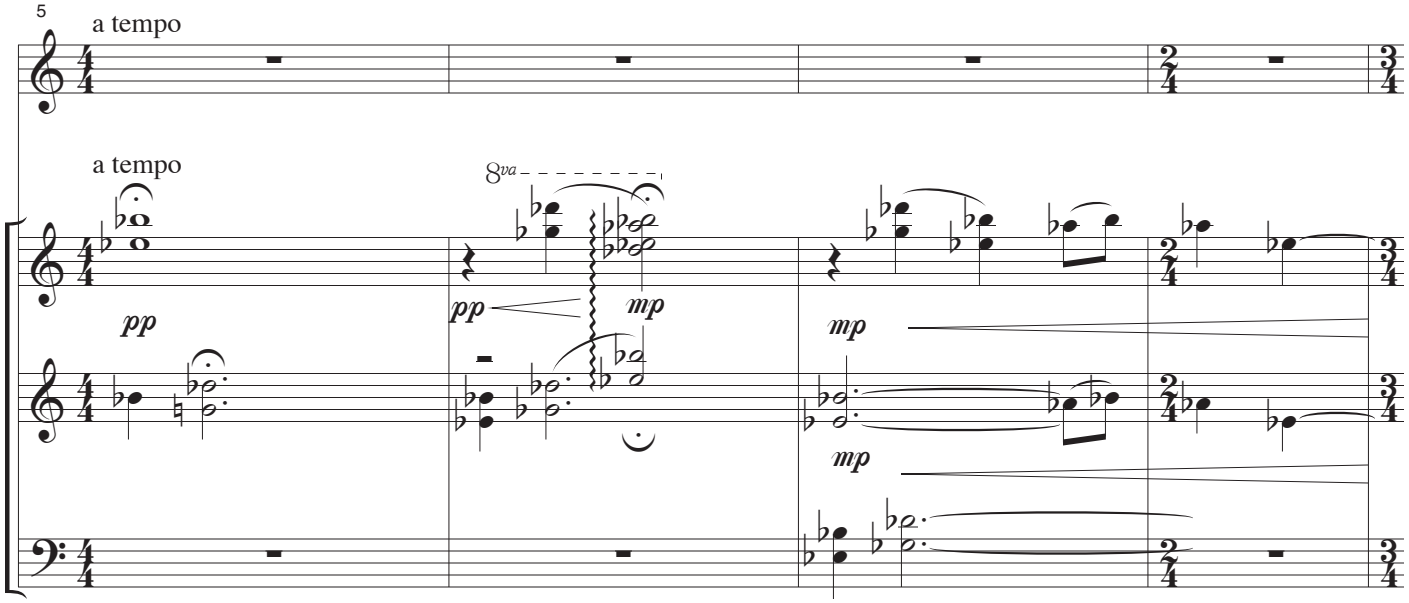
for harp (or piano) and clarinet (Bb, Eb, A)

The Providing Coast

Harp *(or Piano)* and Clarinet in Bb

Jefferson Todd Frazier





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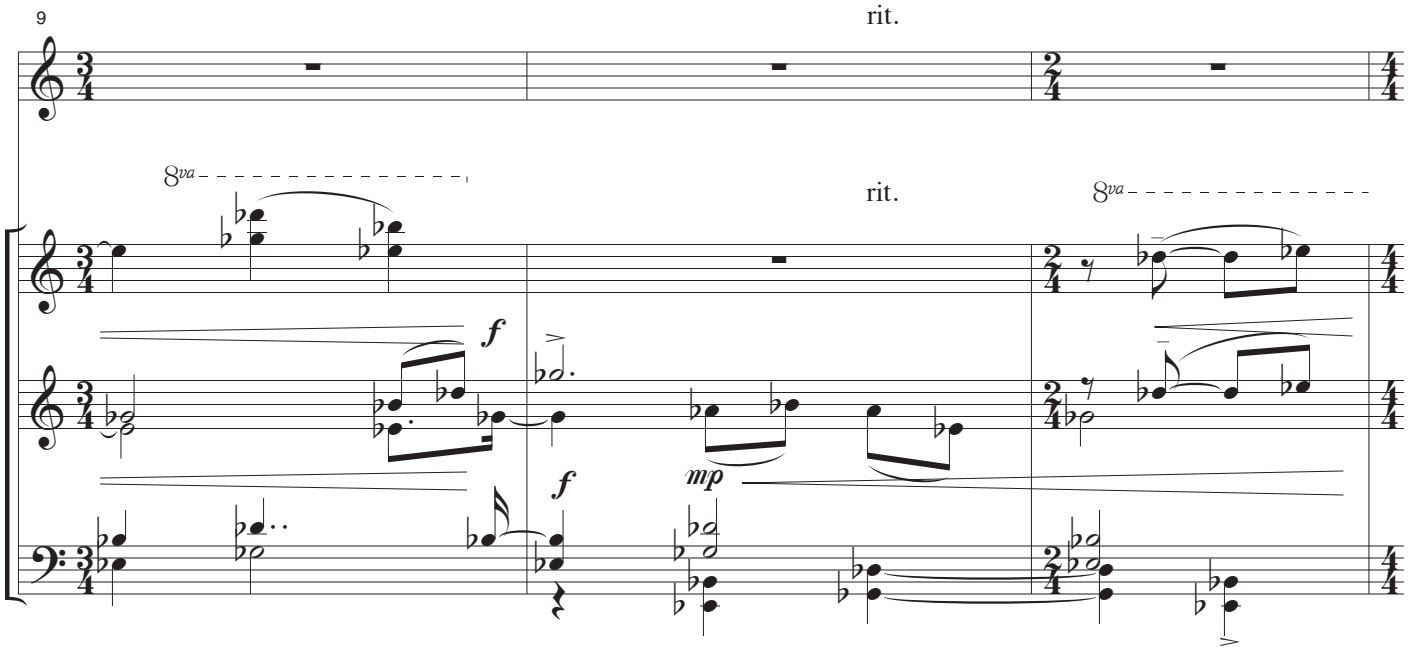
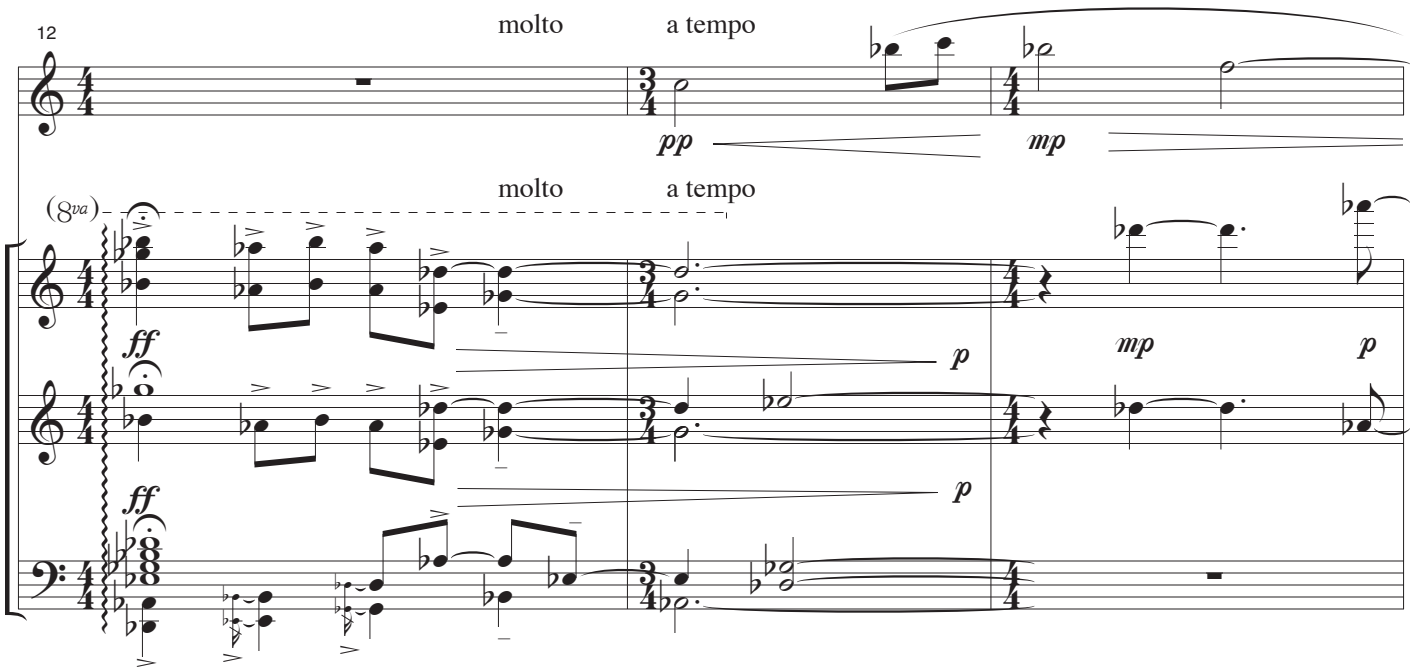
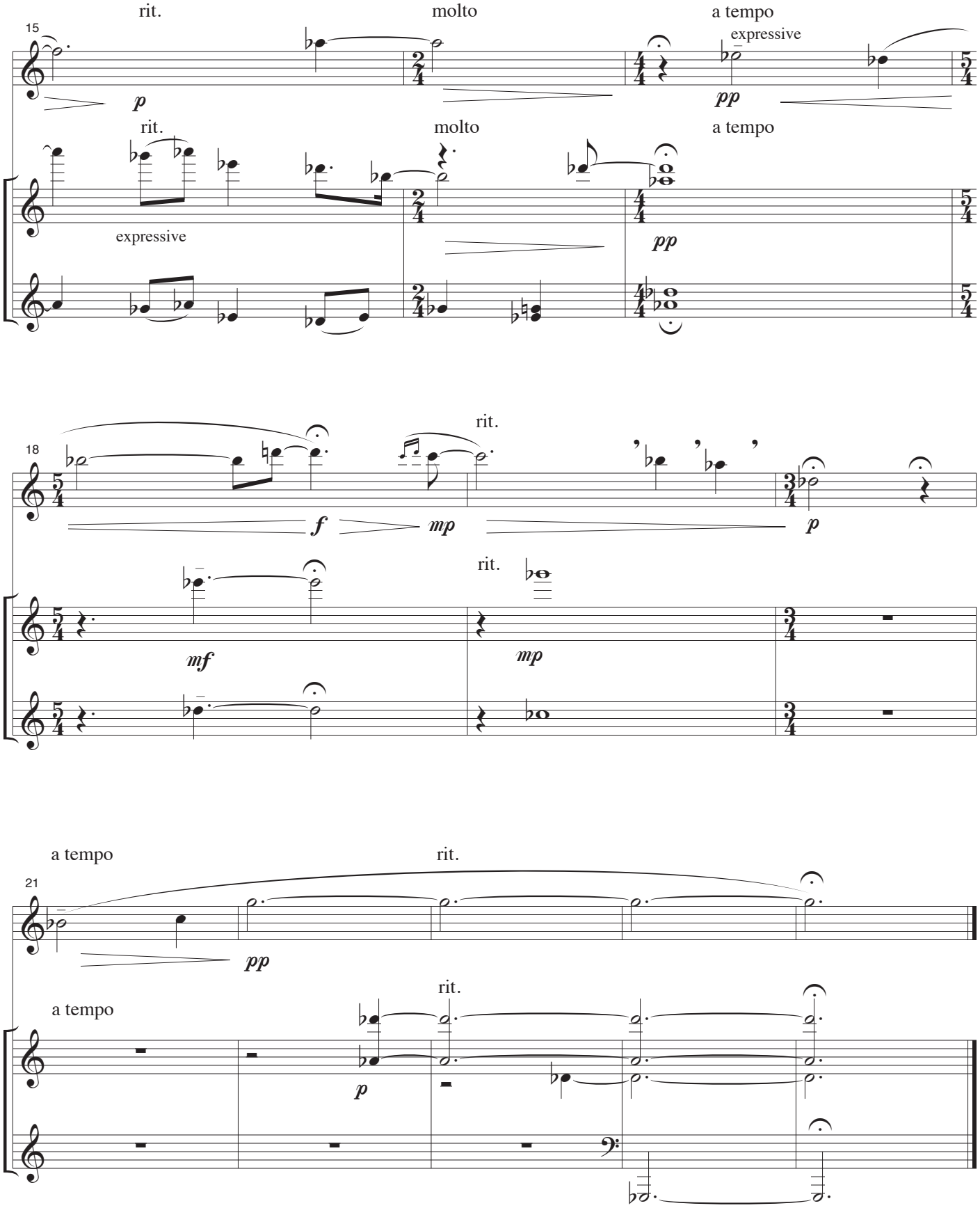
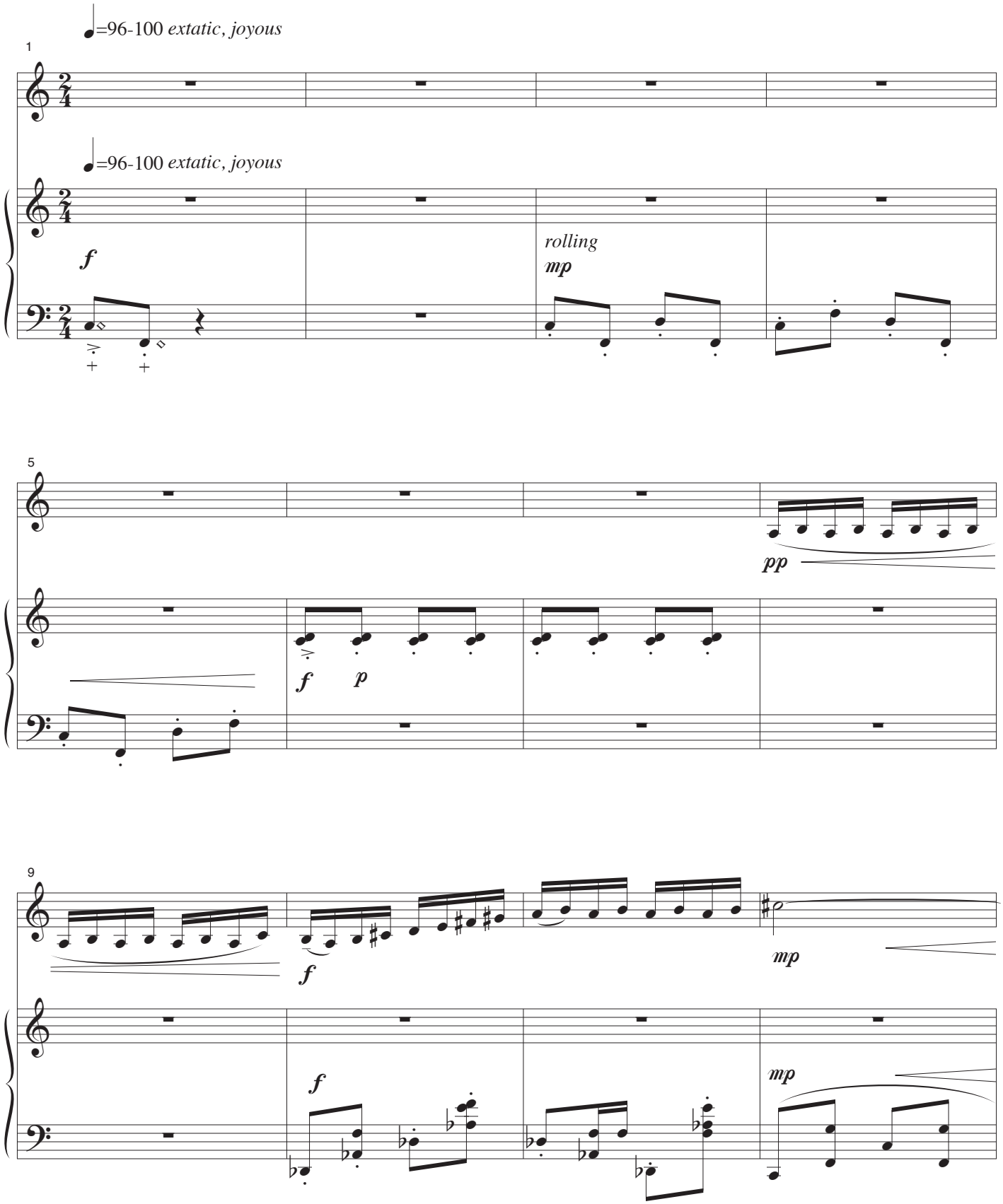

9
rit.
8va
rit.
8va
f
f
mp

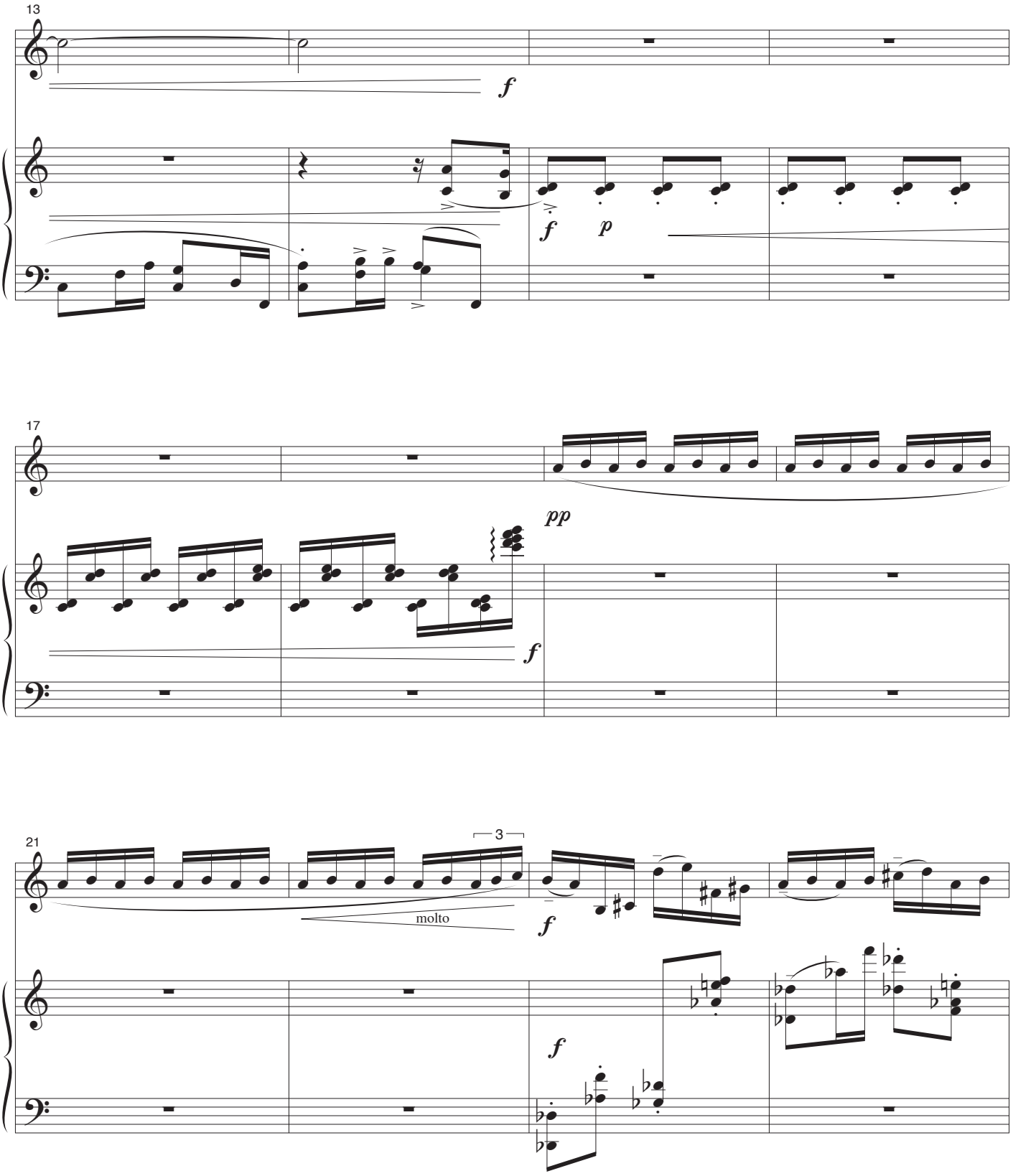

12
molto
a tempo
pp
mp
molto
a tempo
(8va)
ff
ff
p
p
mp
p

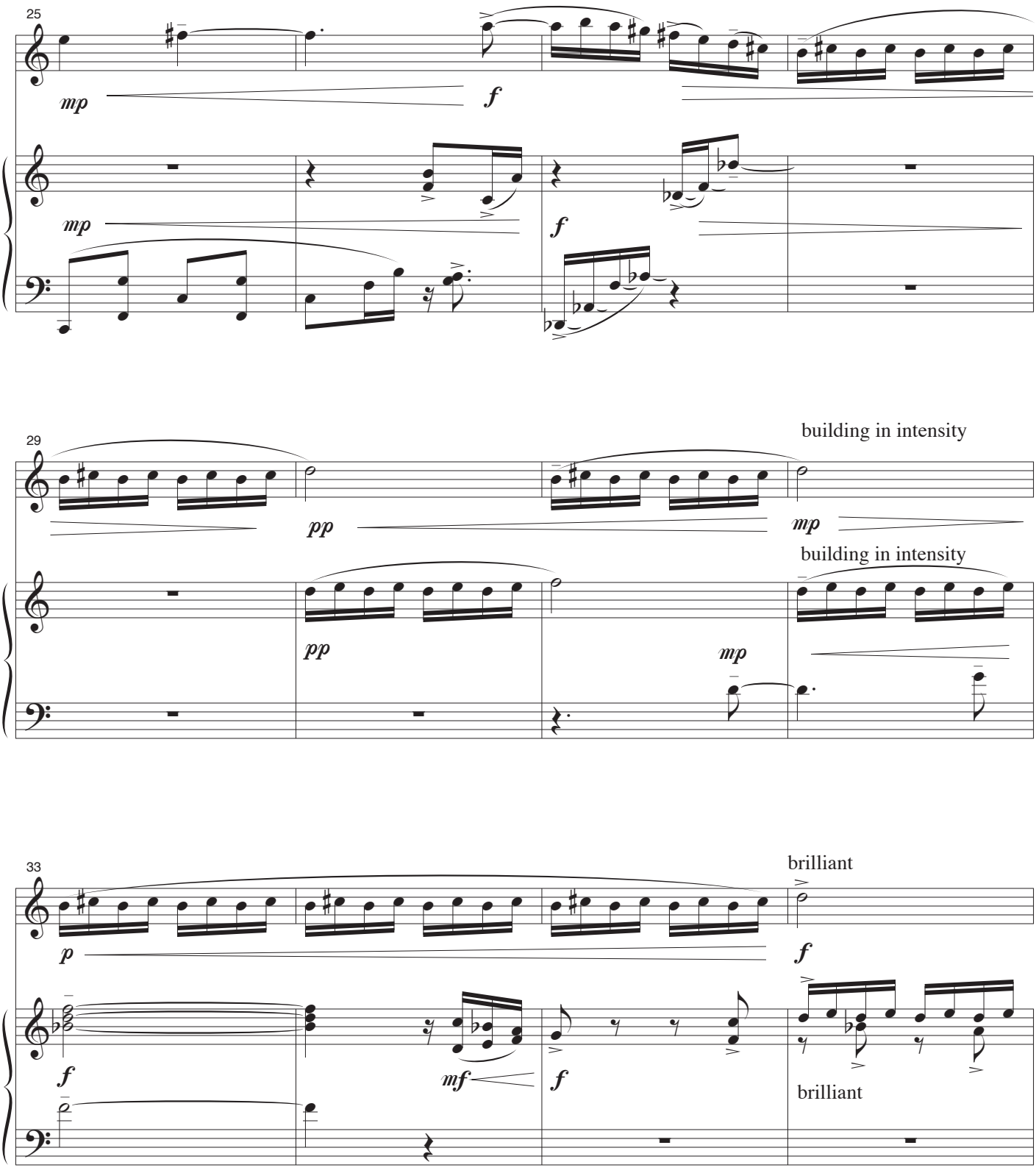

15
rit.
molto
a tempo
expressive
p
pp
rit.
molto
a tempo
expressive
pp
18
rit.
f
mp
p
rit.
mf
mp
21
a tempo
rit.
pp
rit.
a tempo
p

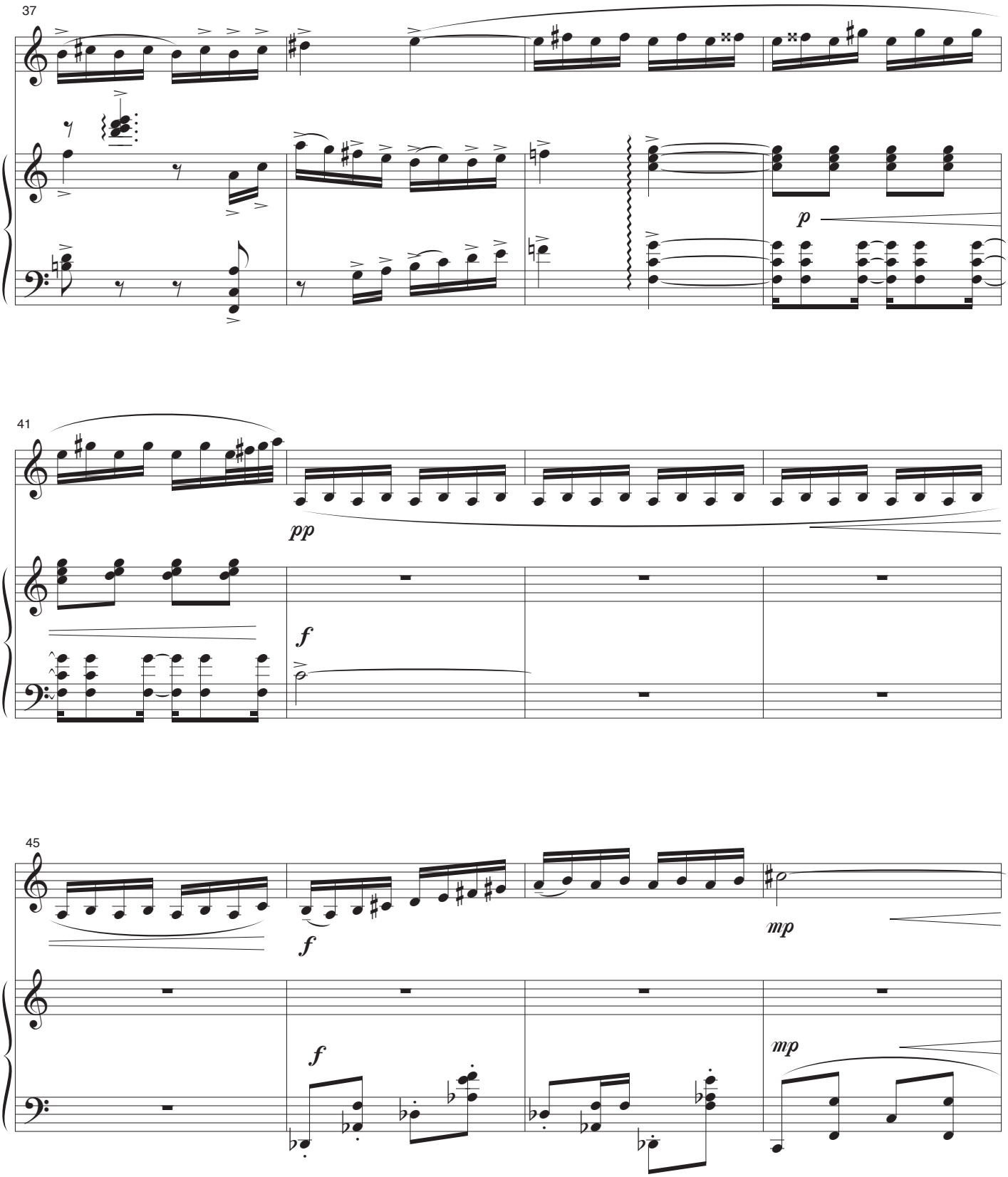
The Sand Pipers Delight

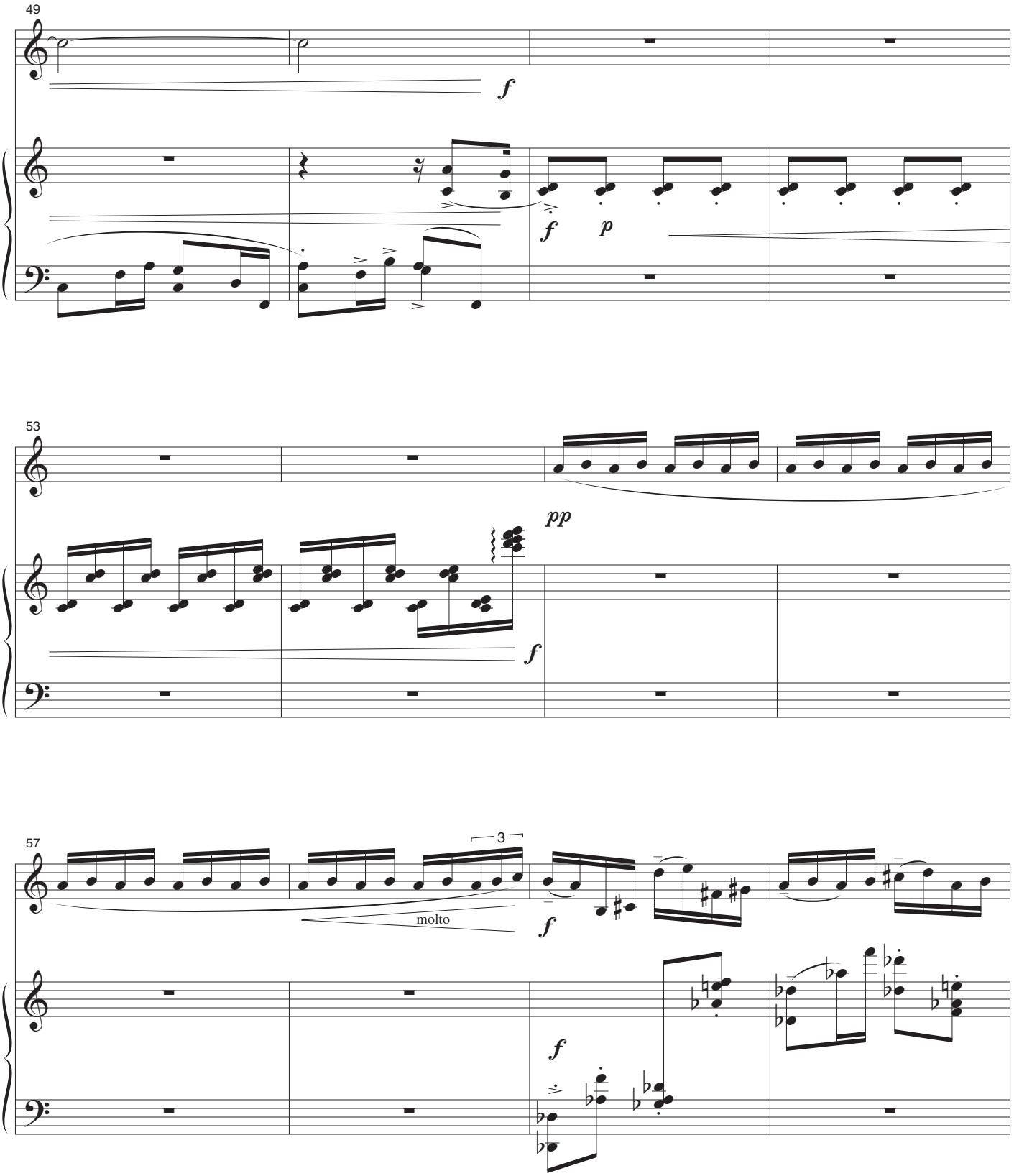
Harp and Clarinet in Eb

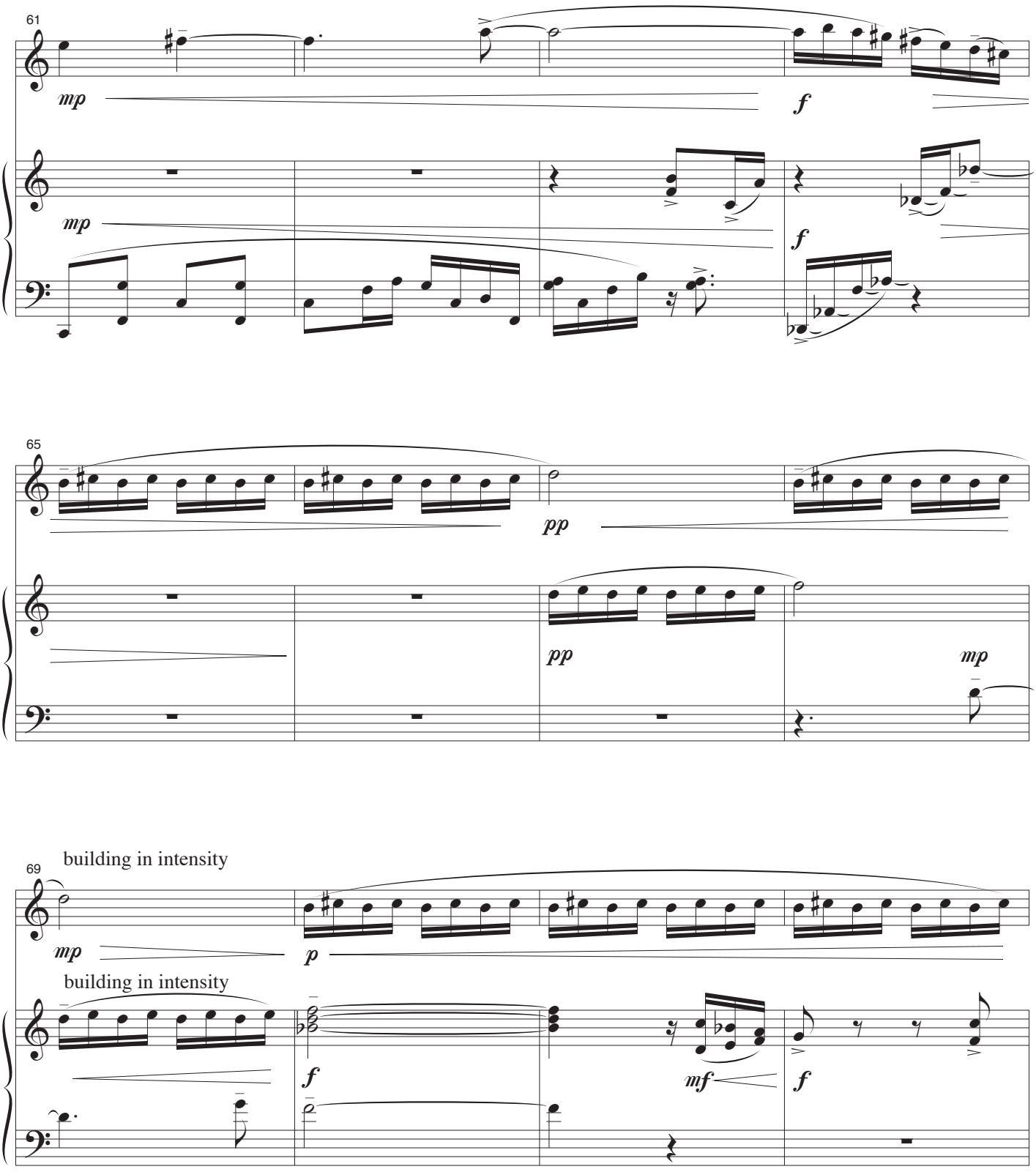


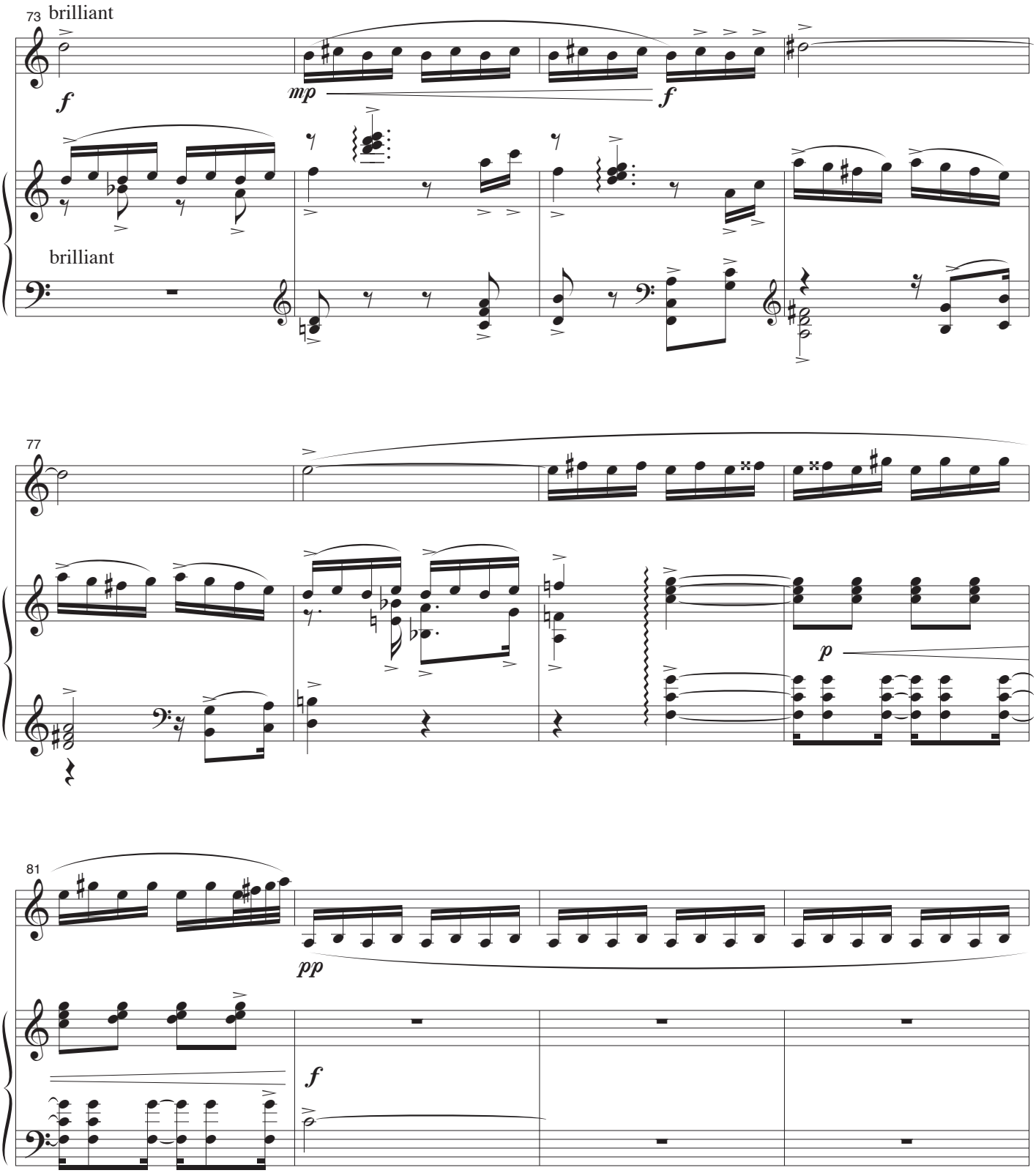

13
f
f
p
17
pp
f
21
3
molto
f
f

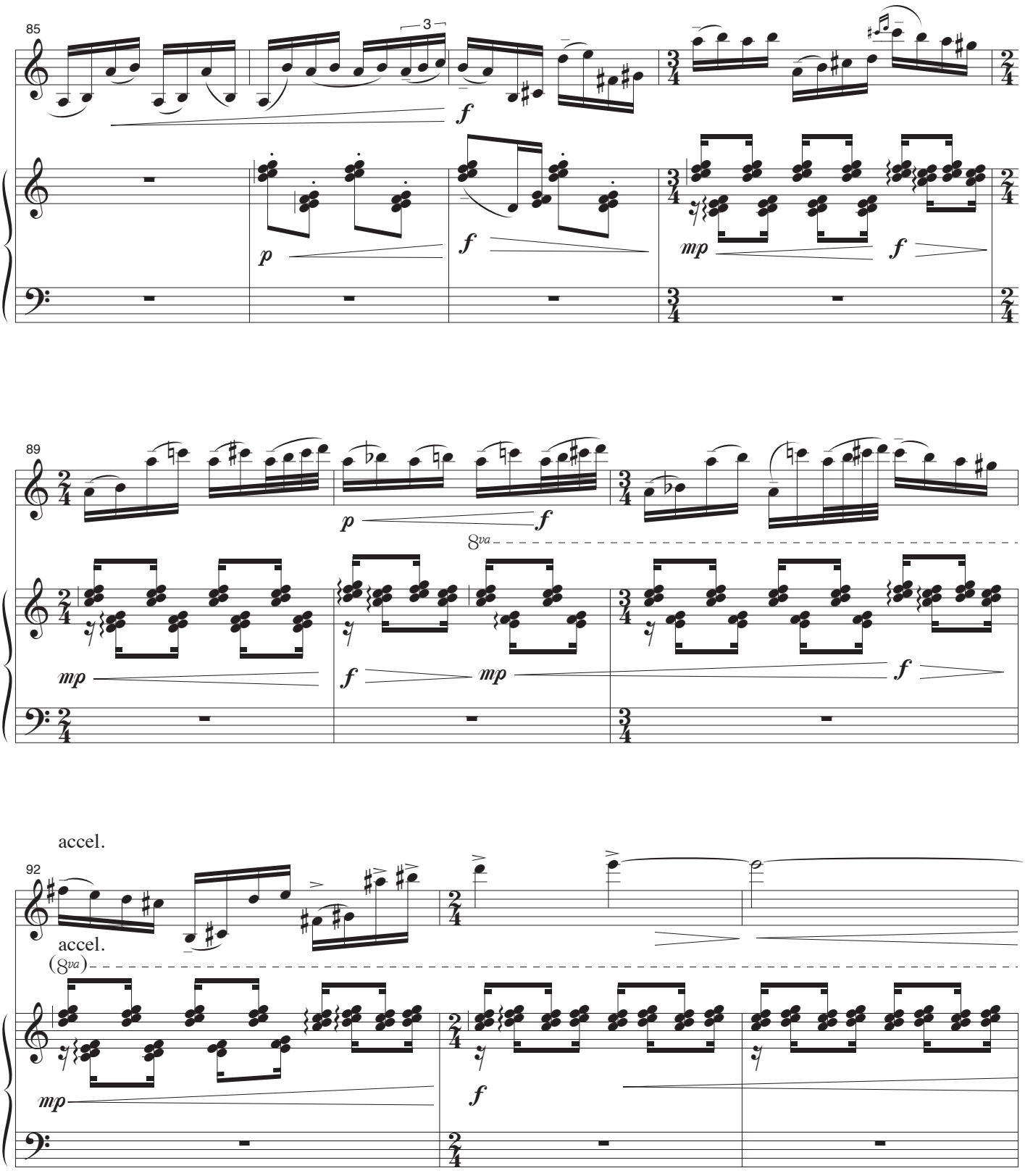

25
mp
f
mp
f
29
building in intensity
pp
mp
building in intensity
pp
mp
33
brilliant
p
f
f
mf
f
brilliant

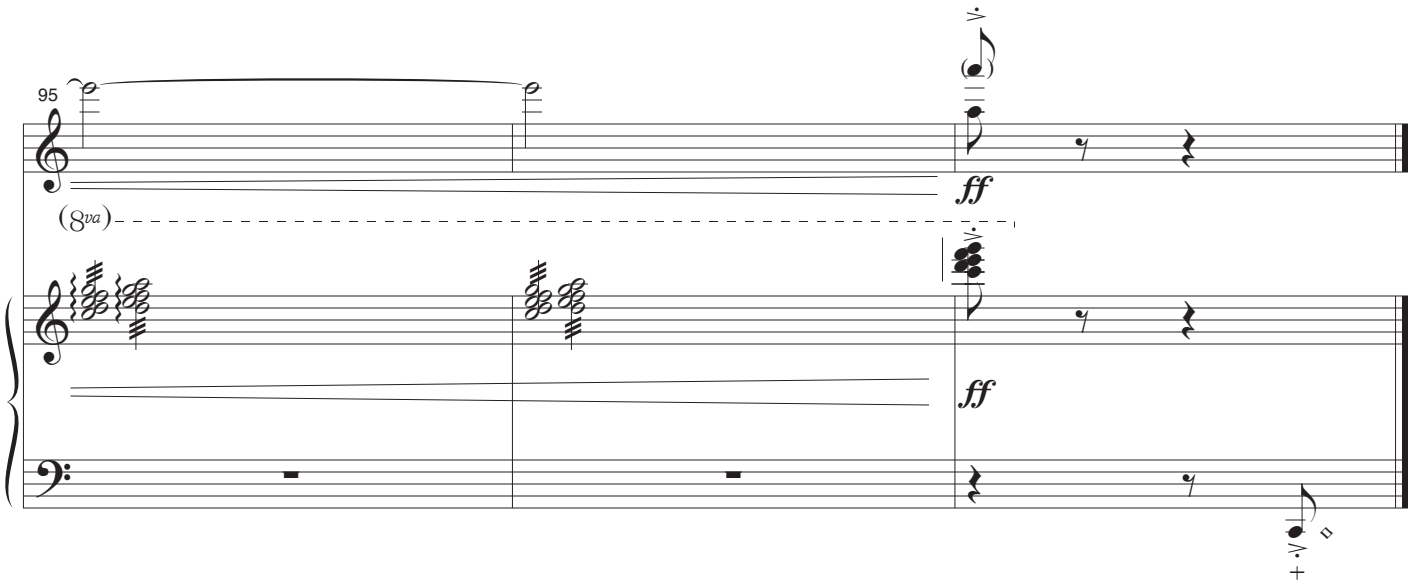

37
p
41
pp
f
45
f
mp
f
mp


49
f
f
p
53
pp
f
57
3
molto
f
f


61
mp
mp
f
f
65
pp
pp
mp
69
building in intensity
mp
p
building in intensity
f
mf
f

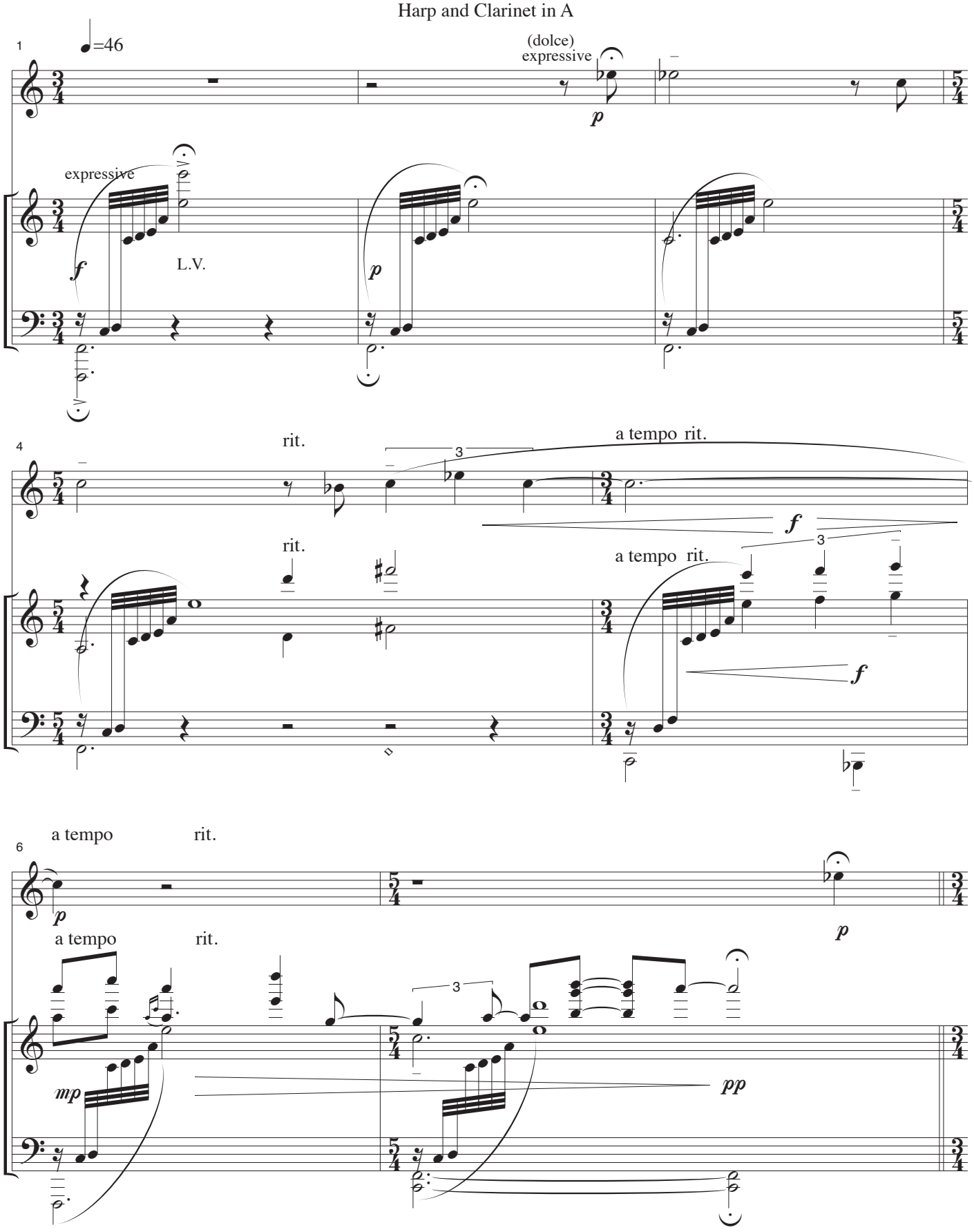

73
brilliant
f
mp
f
brilliant
77
p
81
pp
f

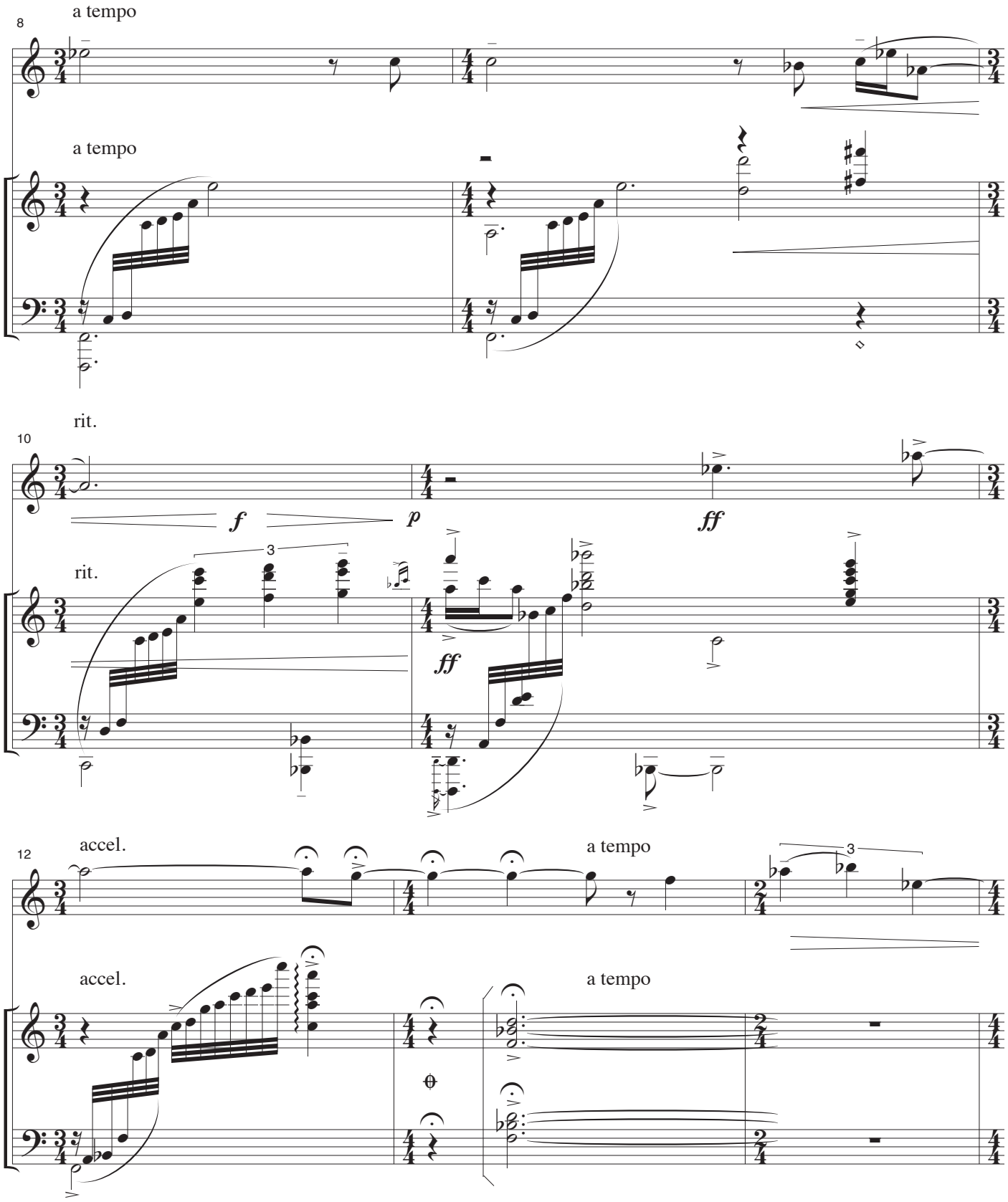

85
3
f
p
f
mp
f
89
p
f
8va
mp
f
mp
f
accel.
92
accel.
(8va)
mp
f

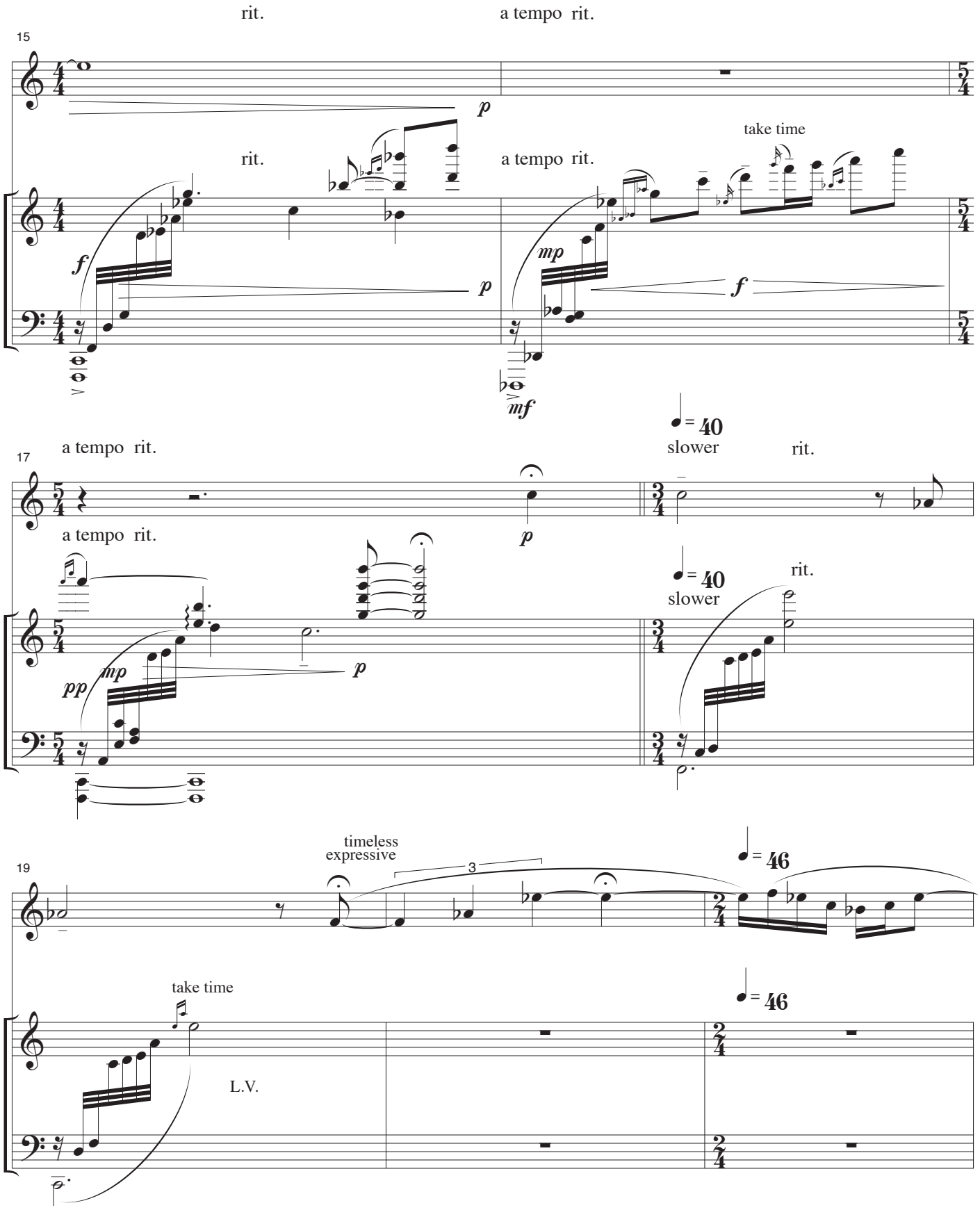

95
(8va)
ff
ff

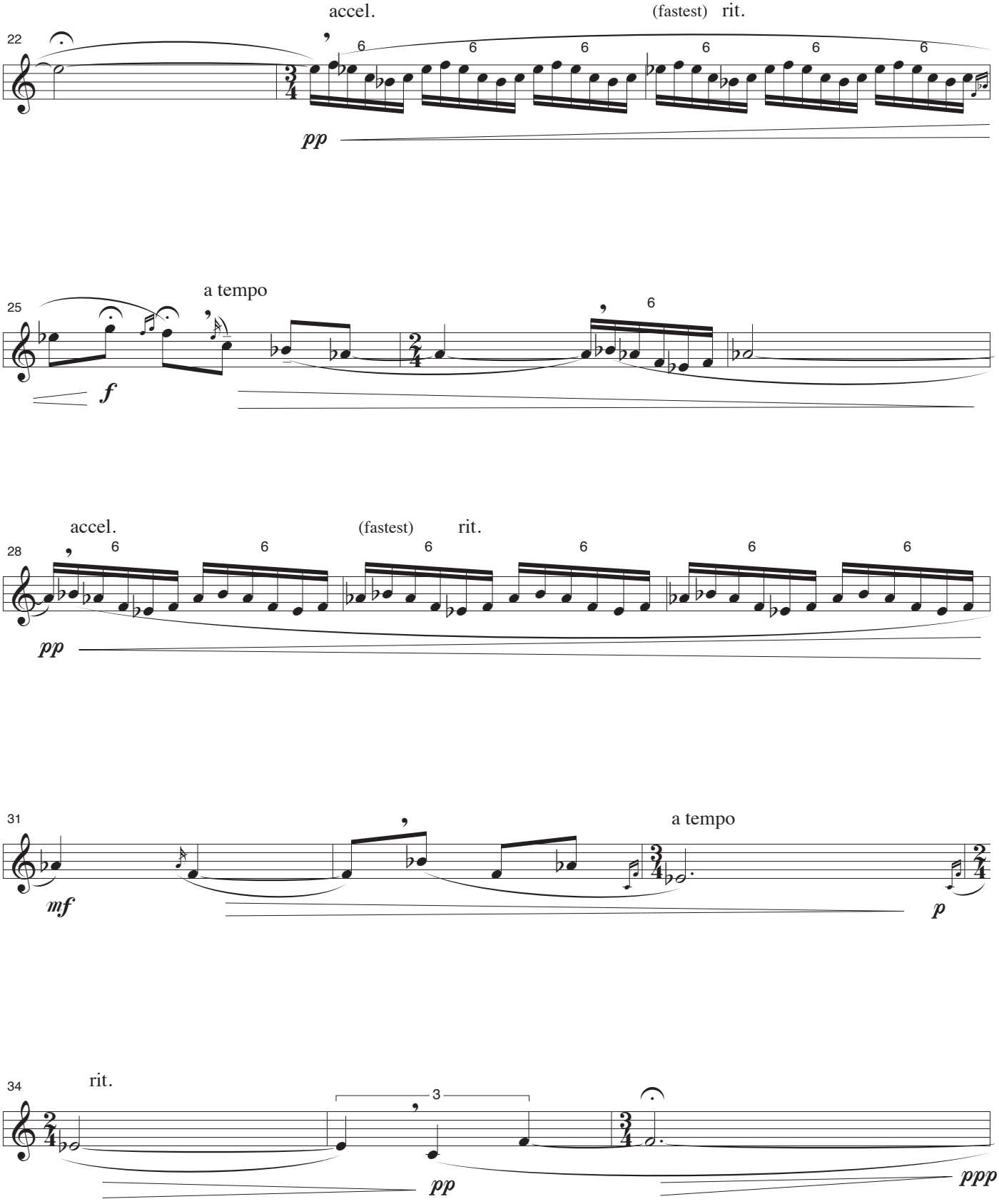
The Great Egret

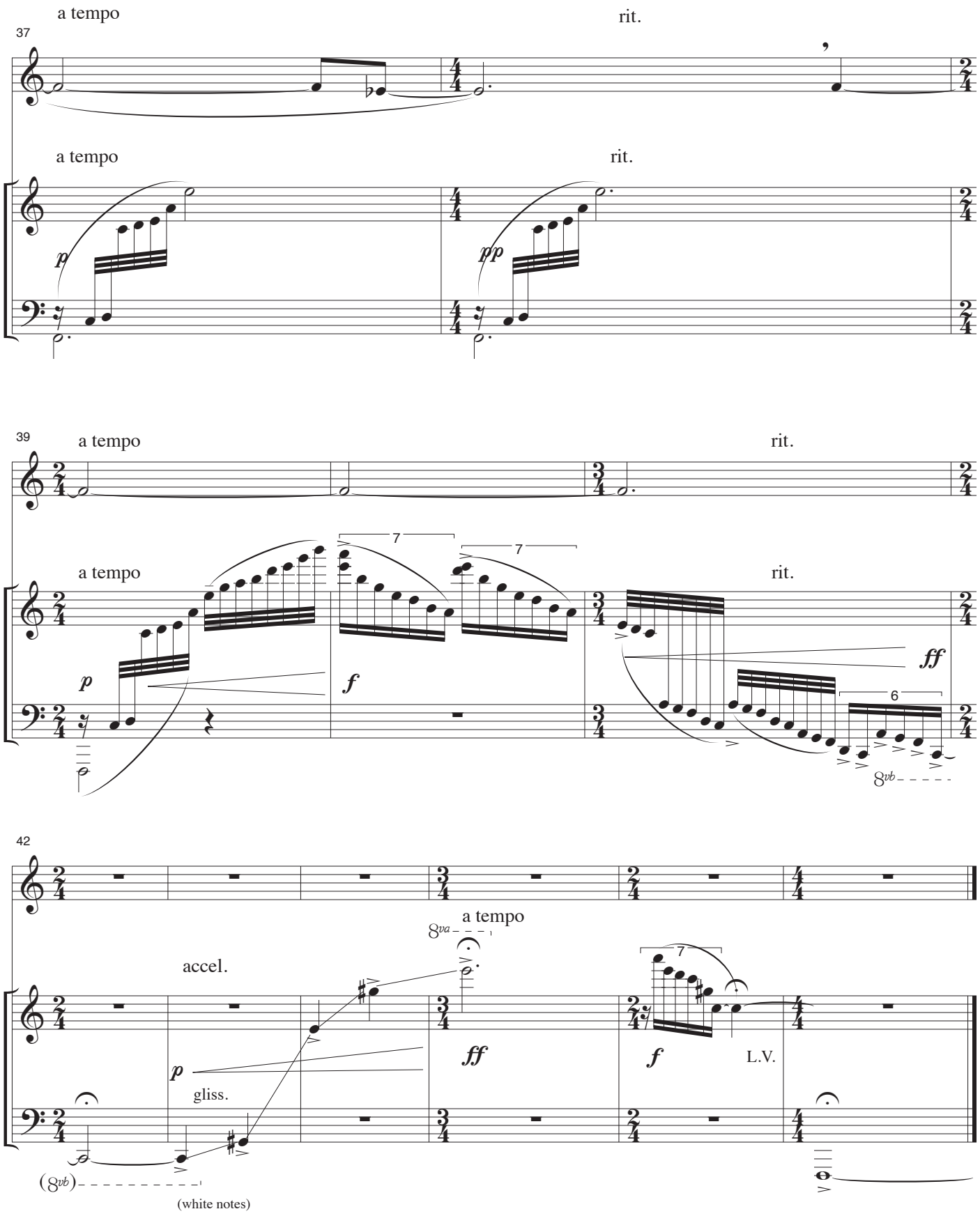
Harp and Clarinet in A




8
a tempo
a tempo
10
rit.
f
p
ff
rit.
3
ff
12
accel.
a tempo
3
accel.
a tempo


rit.
a tempo rit.
15
p
rit.
take time
a tempo rit.
f
p
mp
f
mf
a tempo rit.
17
= 40
slower
rit.
a tempo rit.
p
pp
mp
p
= 40
slower
rit.
19
timeless
expressive
3
= 46
take time
= 46
L.V.

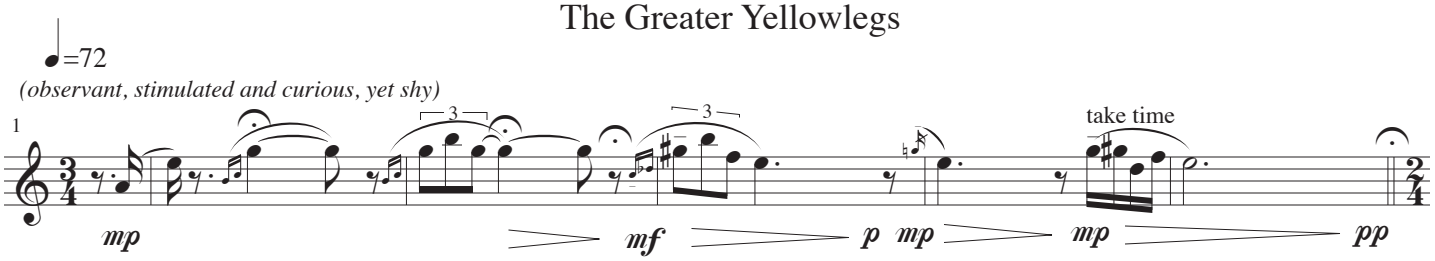

accel.
(fastest) rit.
22
pp
a tempo
25
f
accel.
(fastest)
rit.
28
pp
31
mf
a tempo
p
34
rit.
3
pp
ppp


37
a tempo
rit.
a tempo
rit.
p
pp
39
a tempo
rit.
a tempo
rit.
7
7
6
p
f
ff
8vb
42
a tempo
8va
accel.
p
gliss.
ff
f
L.V.
7
(8vb)
(white notes)

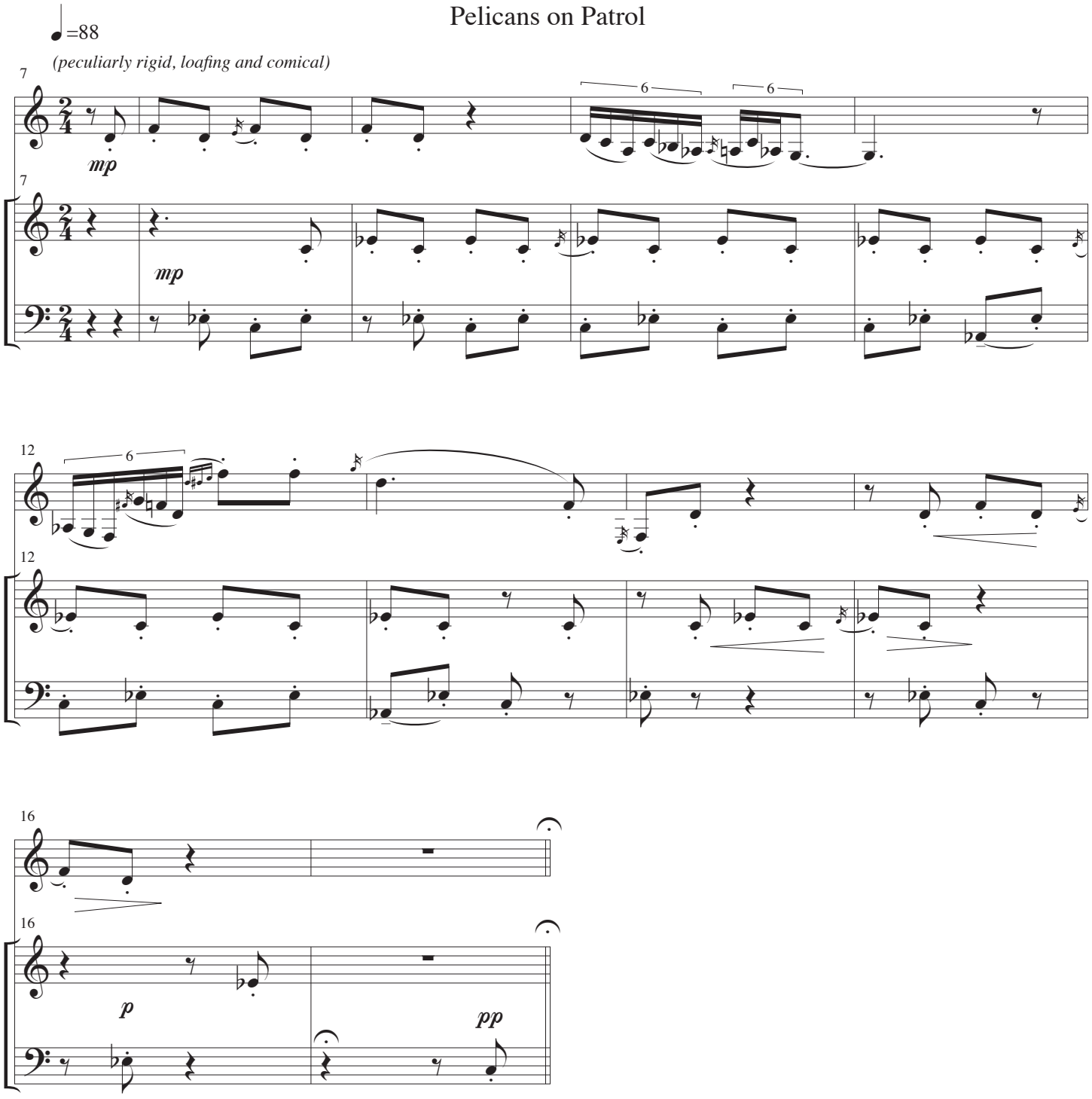
Water Ballet on Mustang Island

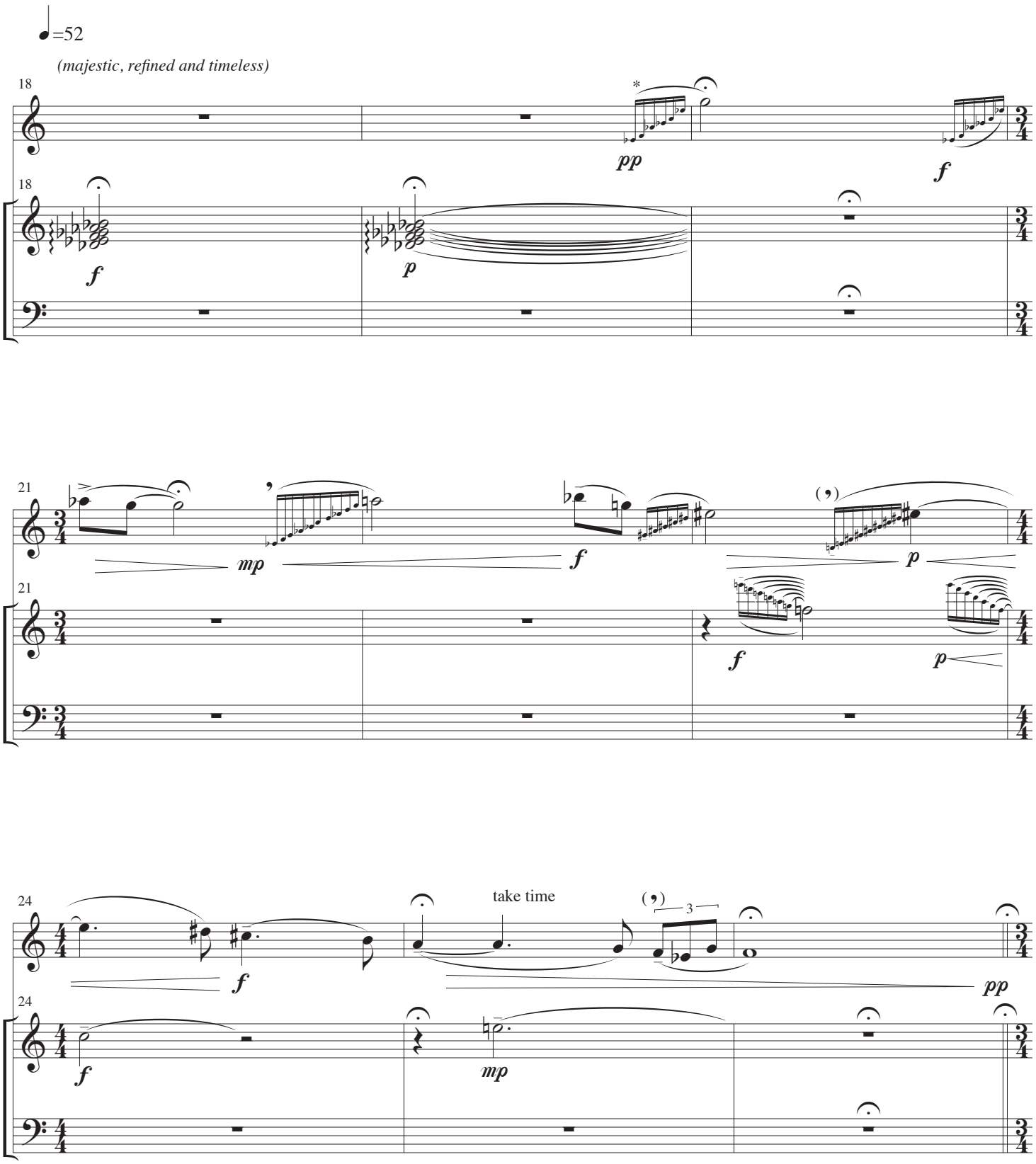
Harp and Clarinet in Bb

The Greater Yellowlegs



Pelicans on Patrol





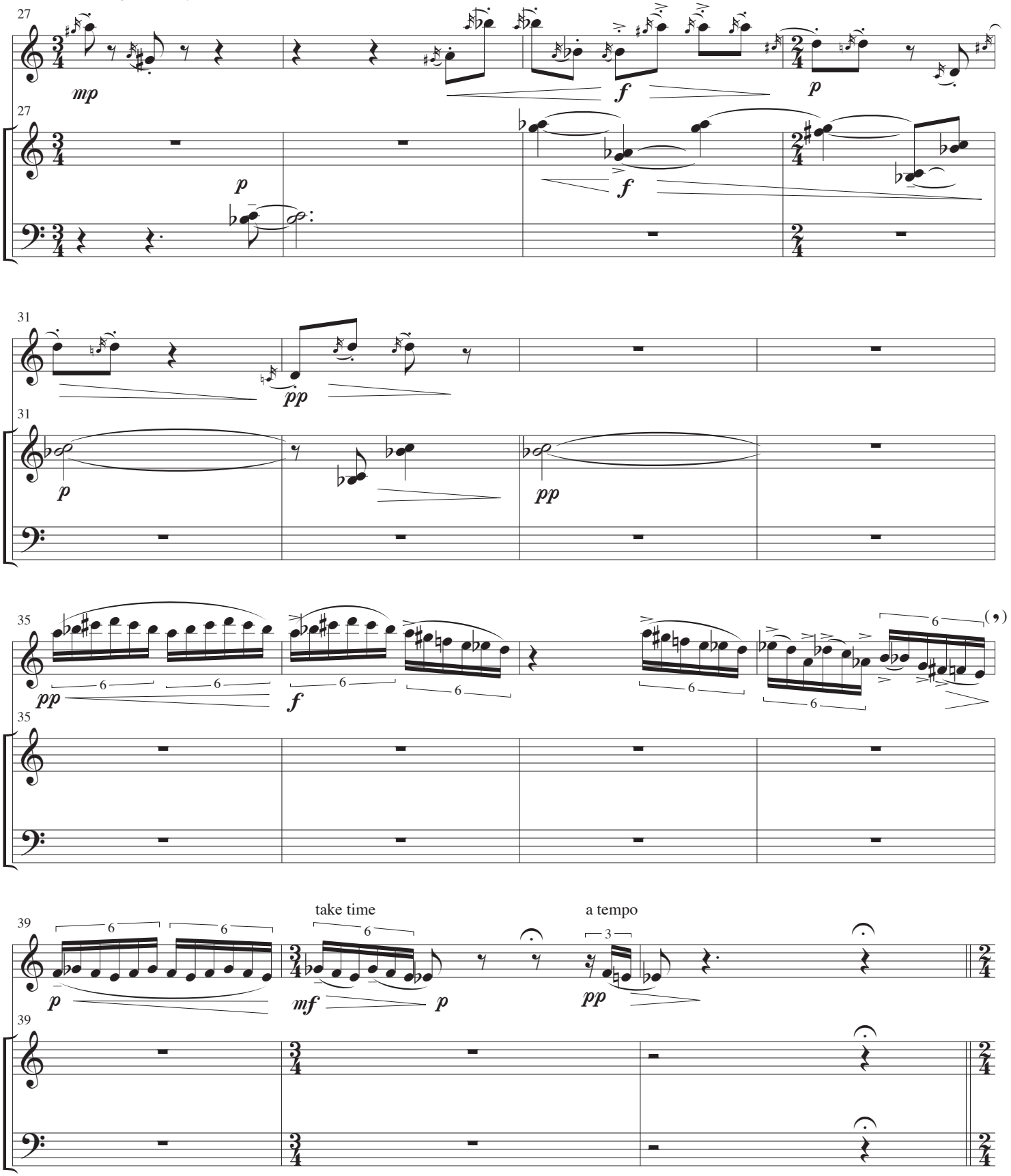
* take time with grace notes, as part of the melodic line

The Seagulls

and a squable for food

♩=92

(skwalking musically)

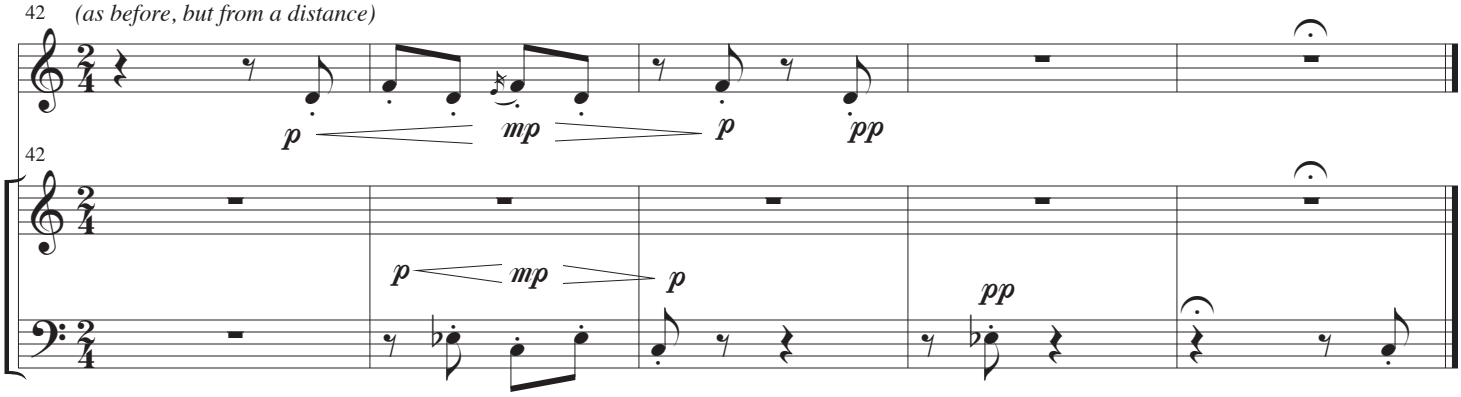


Pelicans on Patrol

now a distant presence

♩=88

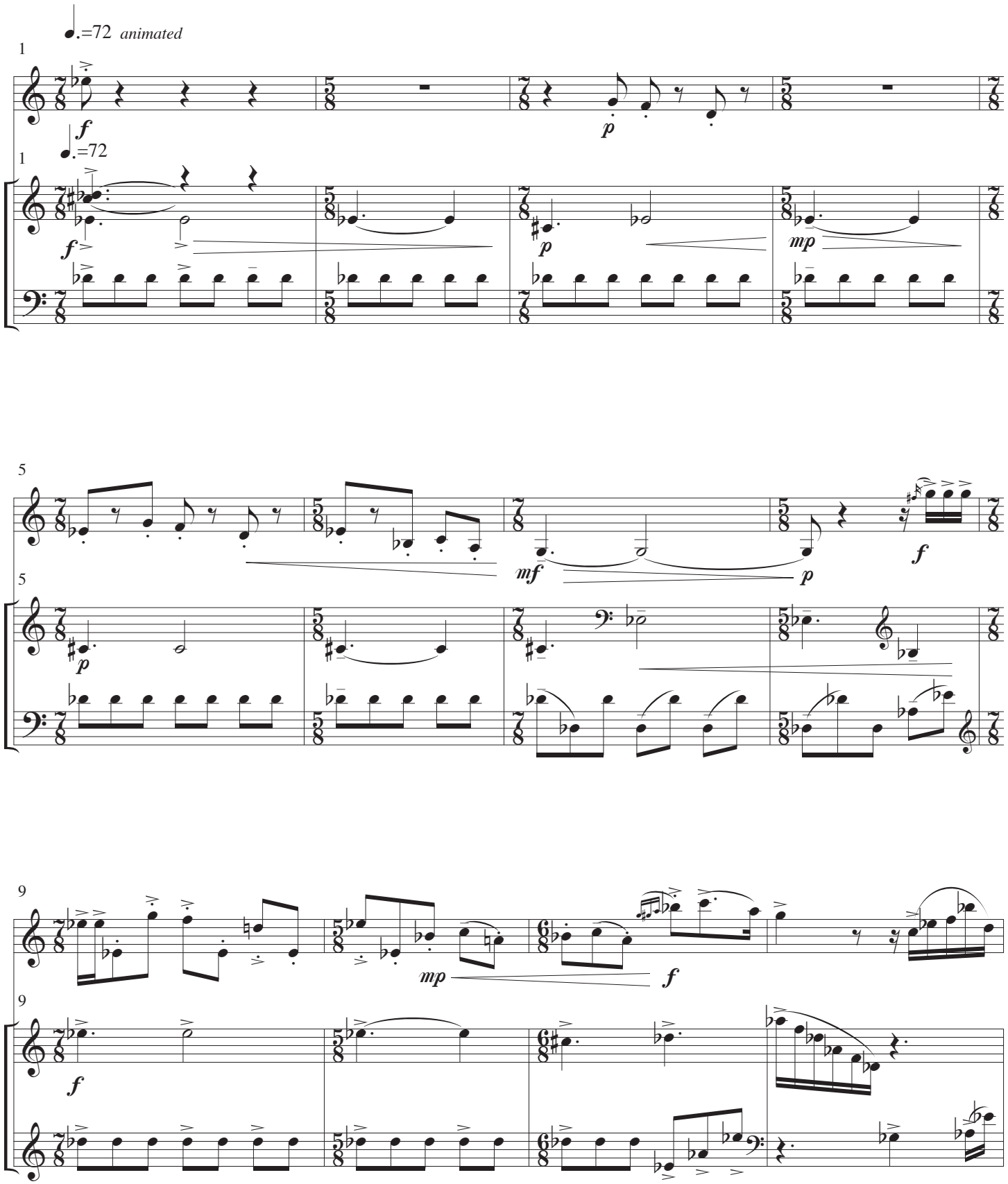
42 *(as before, but from a distance)*

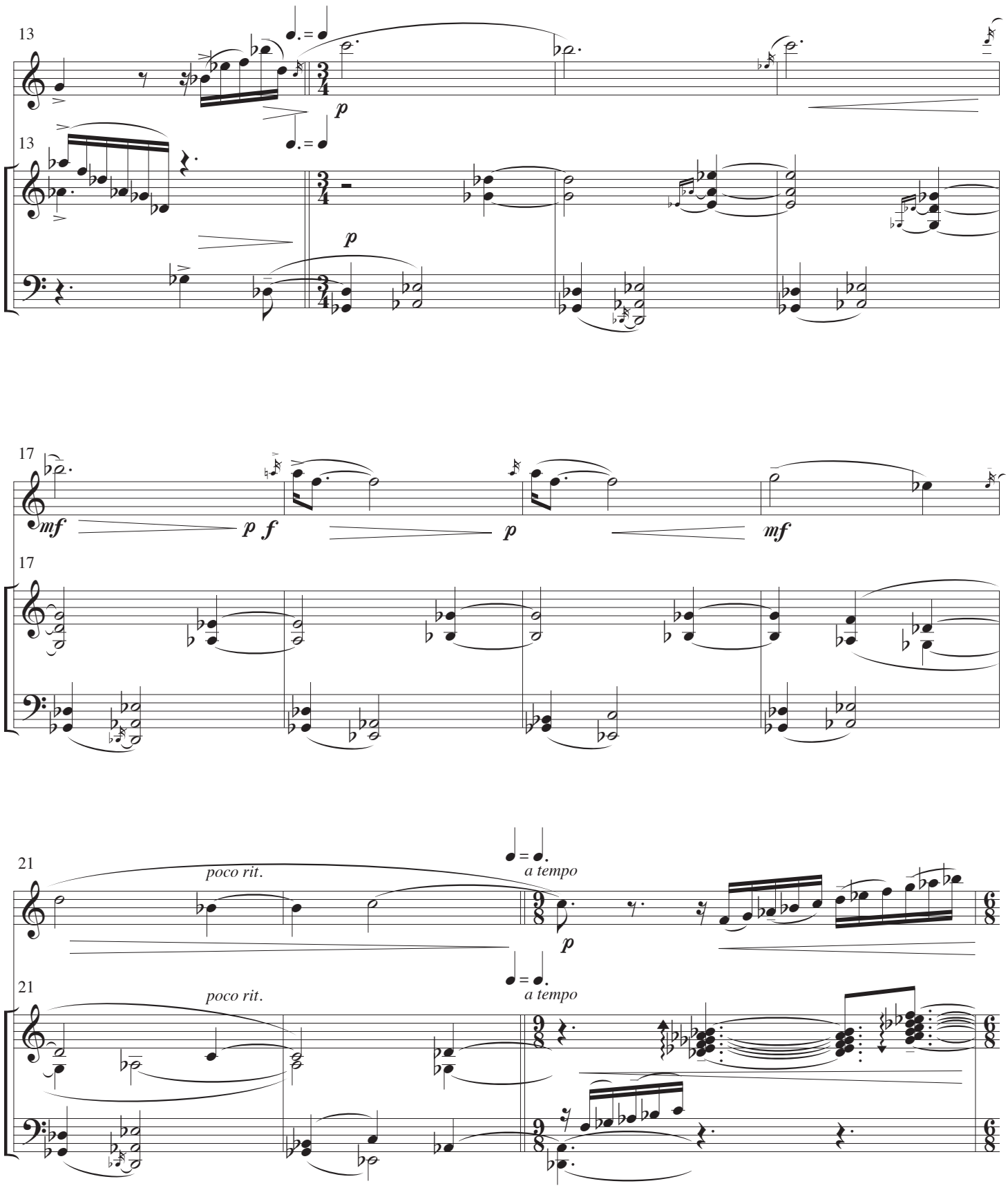


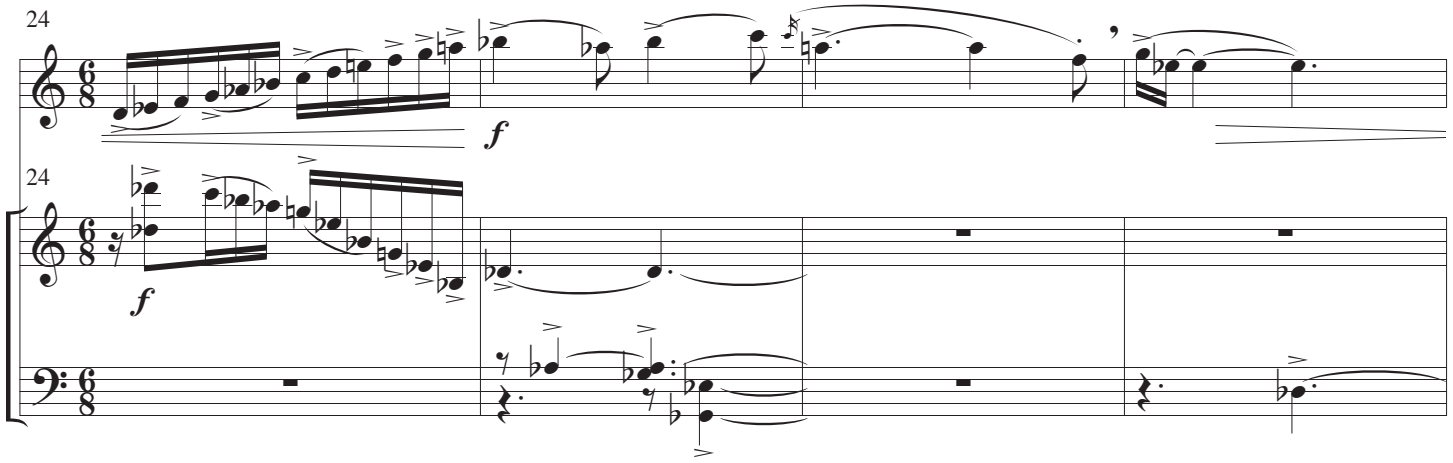
42

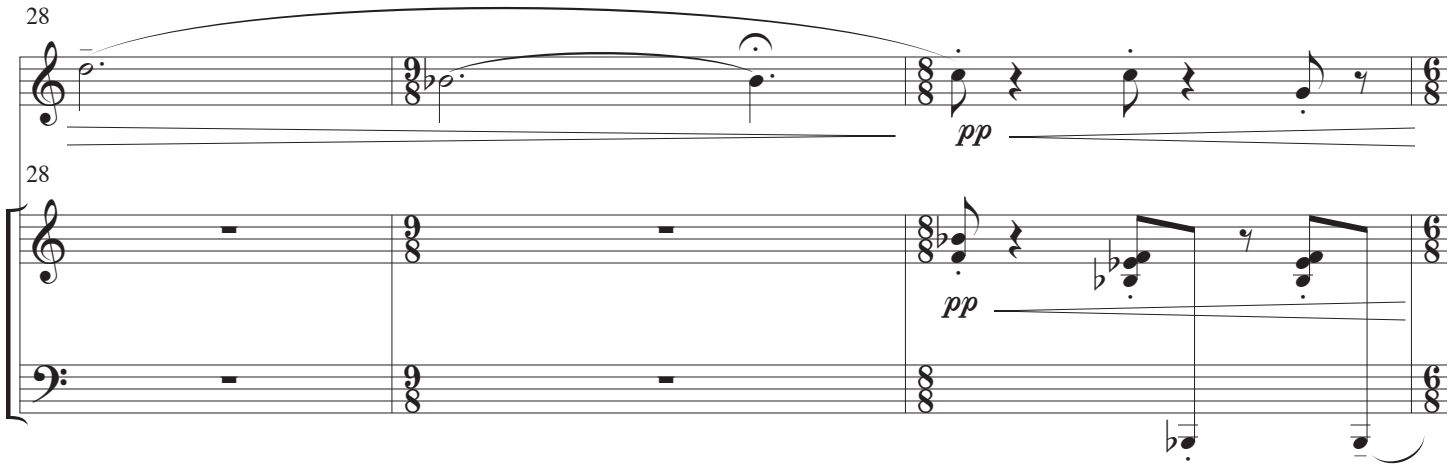
Music for the Birds

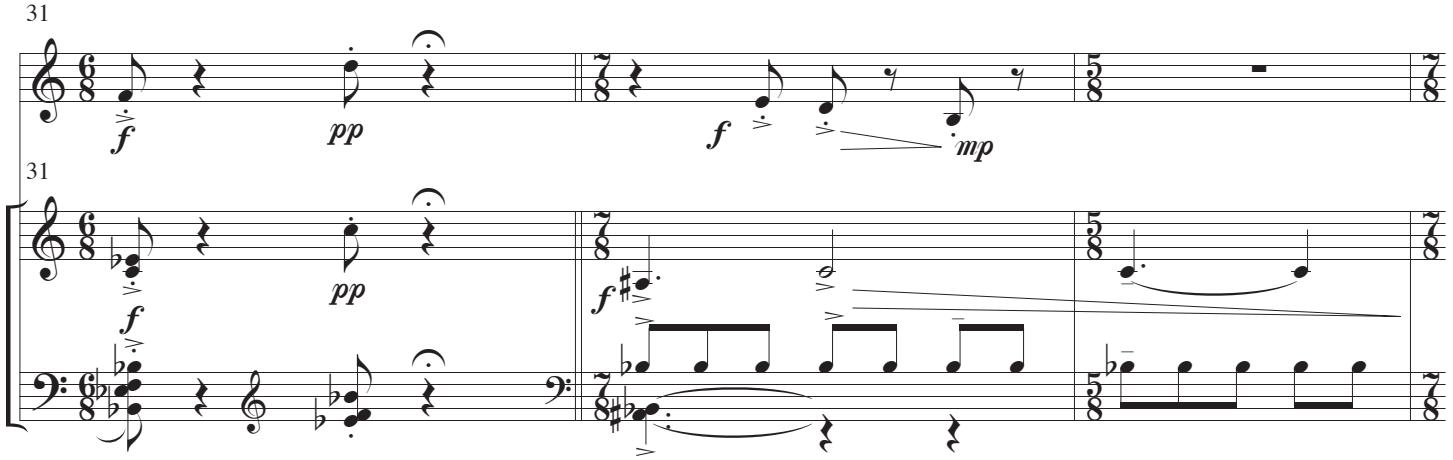
Harp *(or Piano)* and Clarinet in Bb

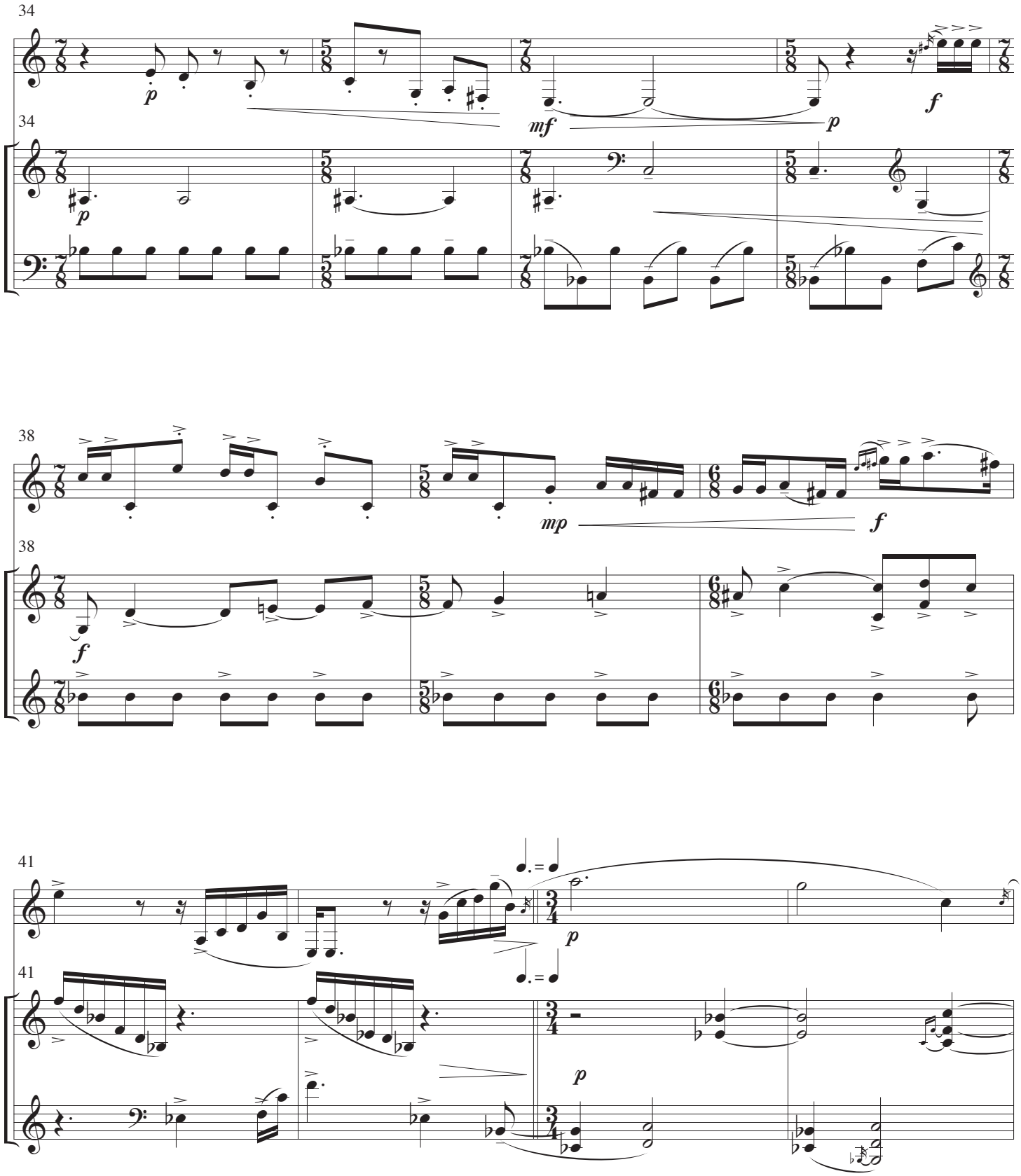


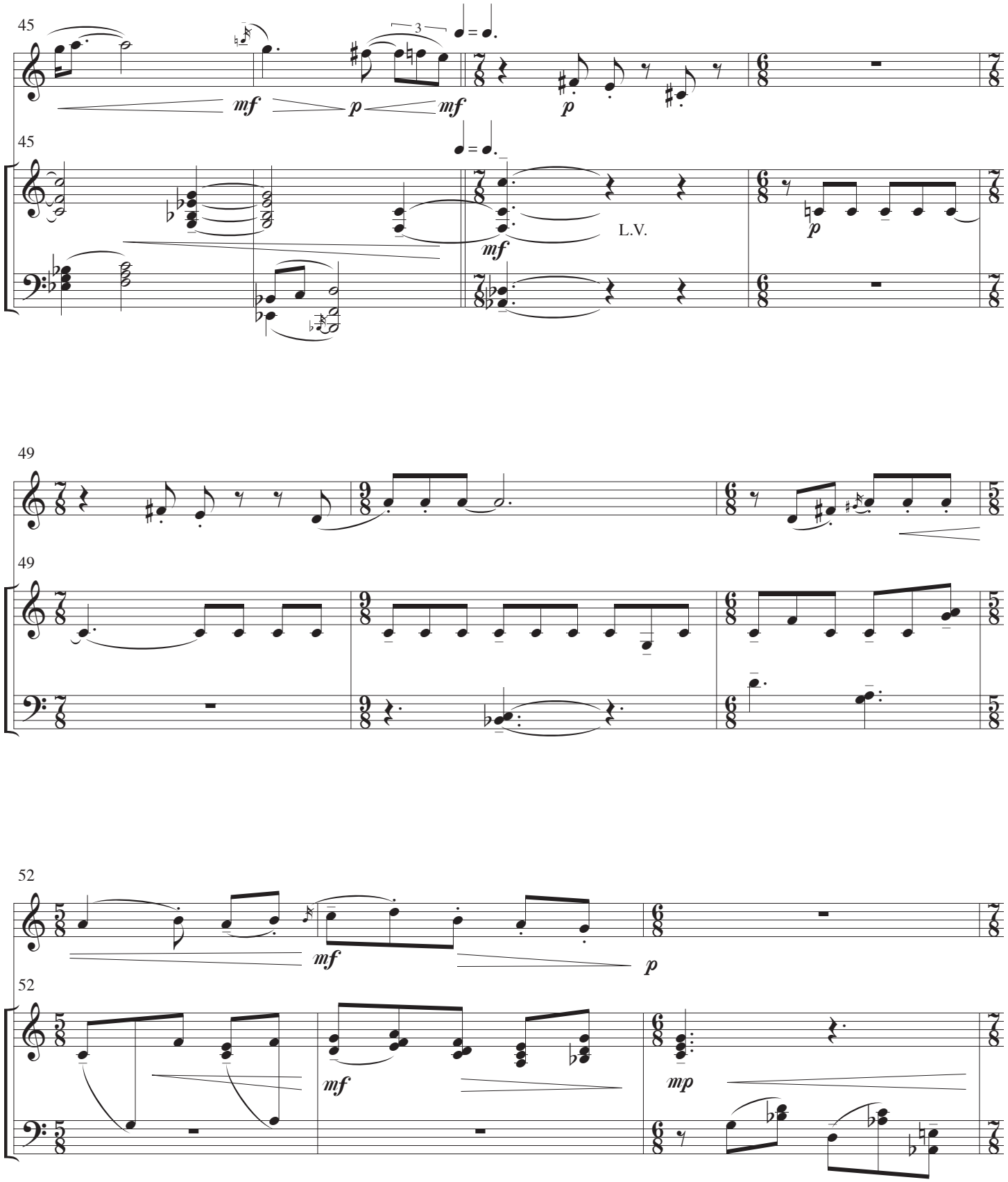

13
p
13
p
17
mf
p f
p
mf
17
21
poco rit.
a tempo
p
21
poco rit.
a tempo

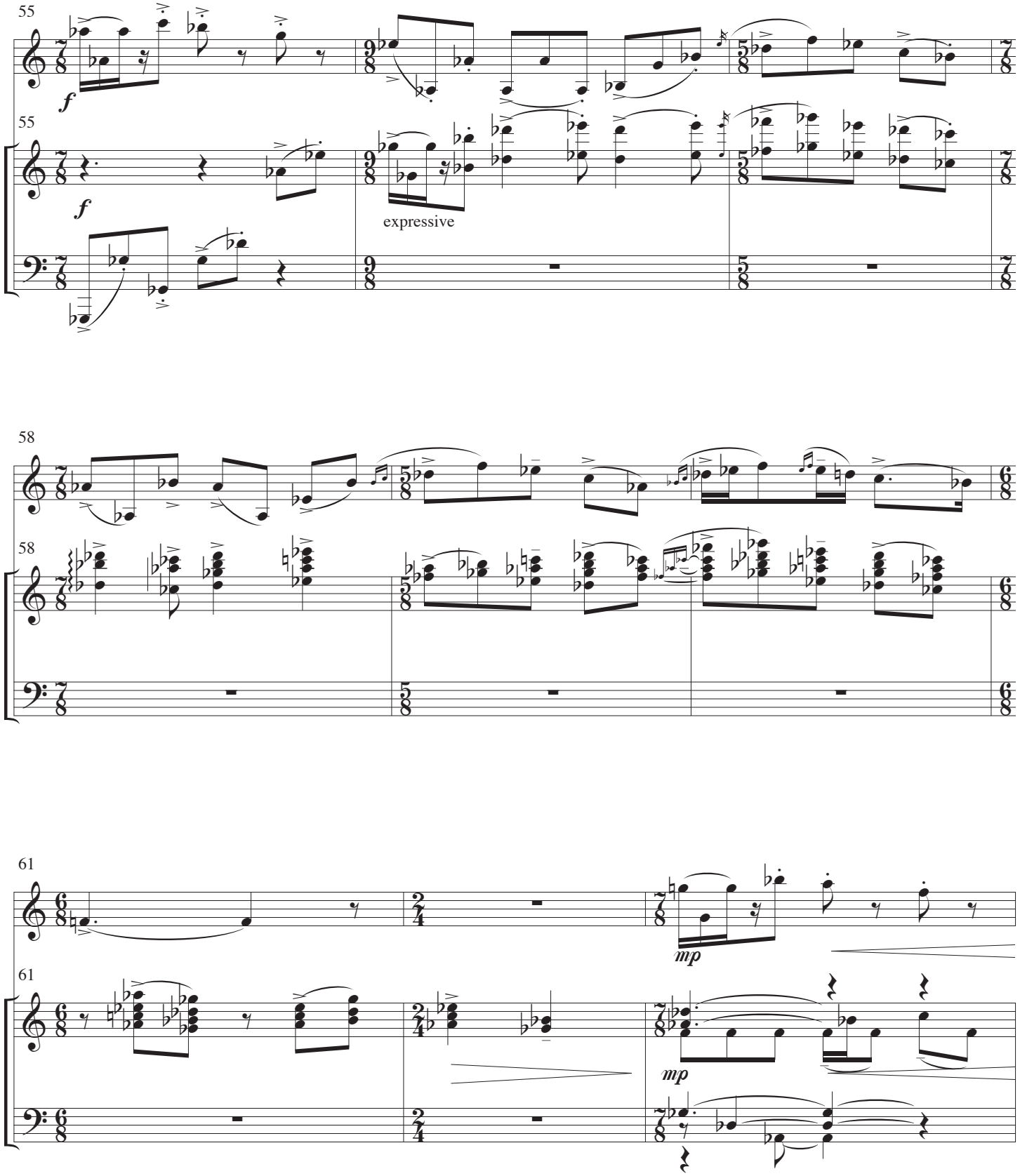

24
f
24
f

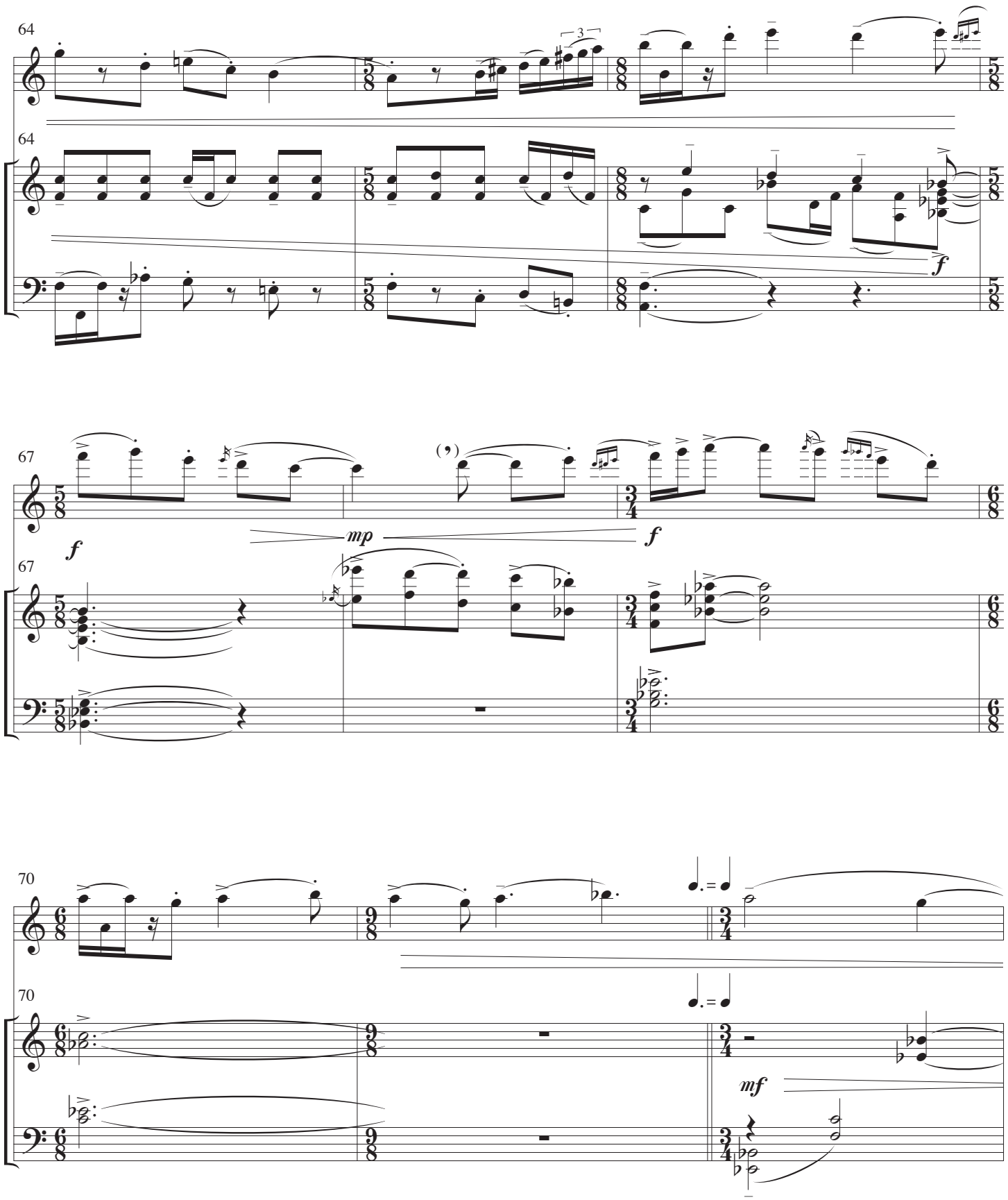

28
pp
28
pp

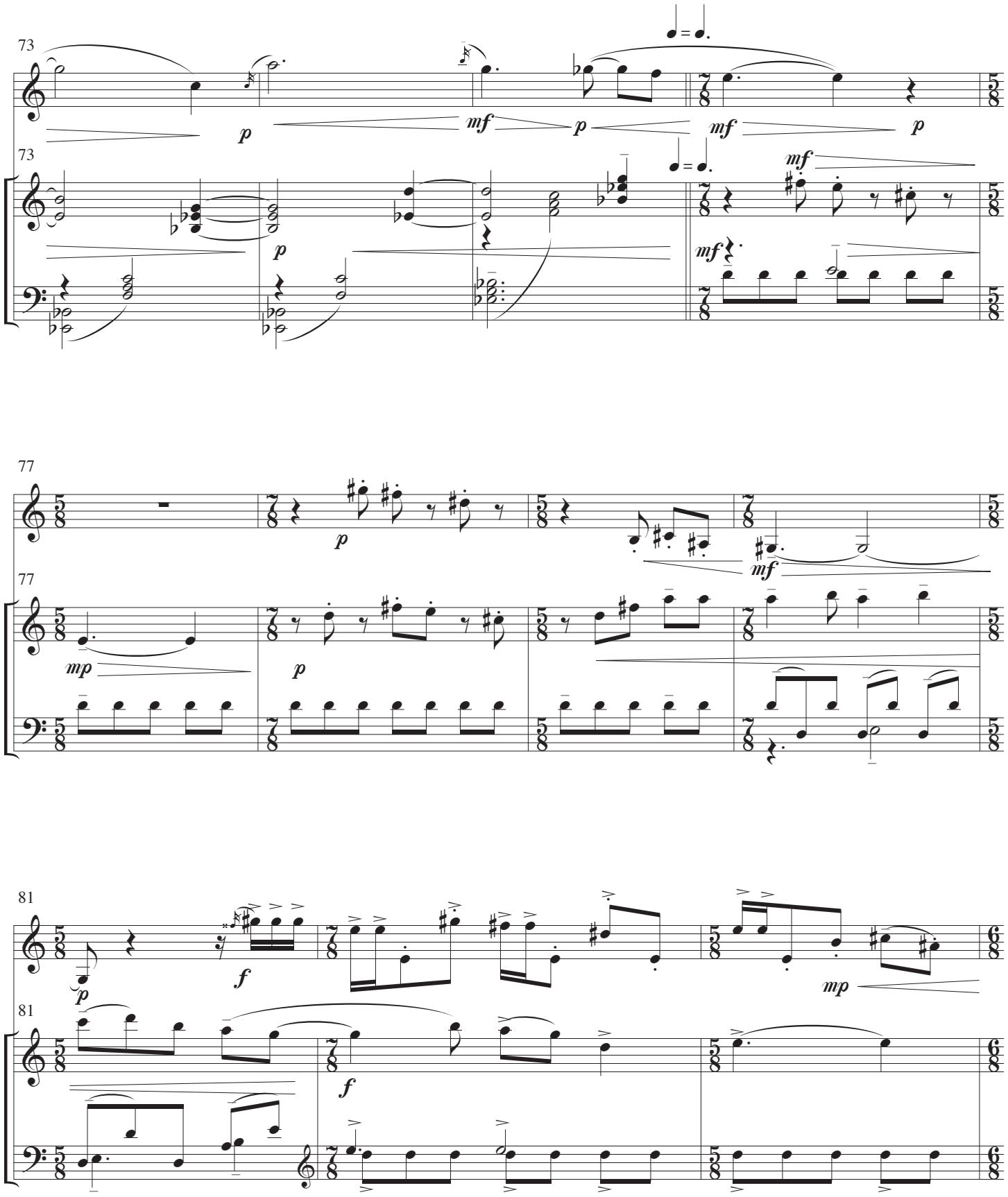

31
f
pp
f
mp
31
f
pp
f

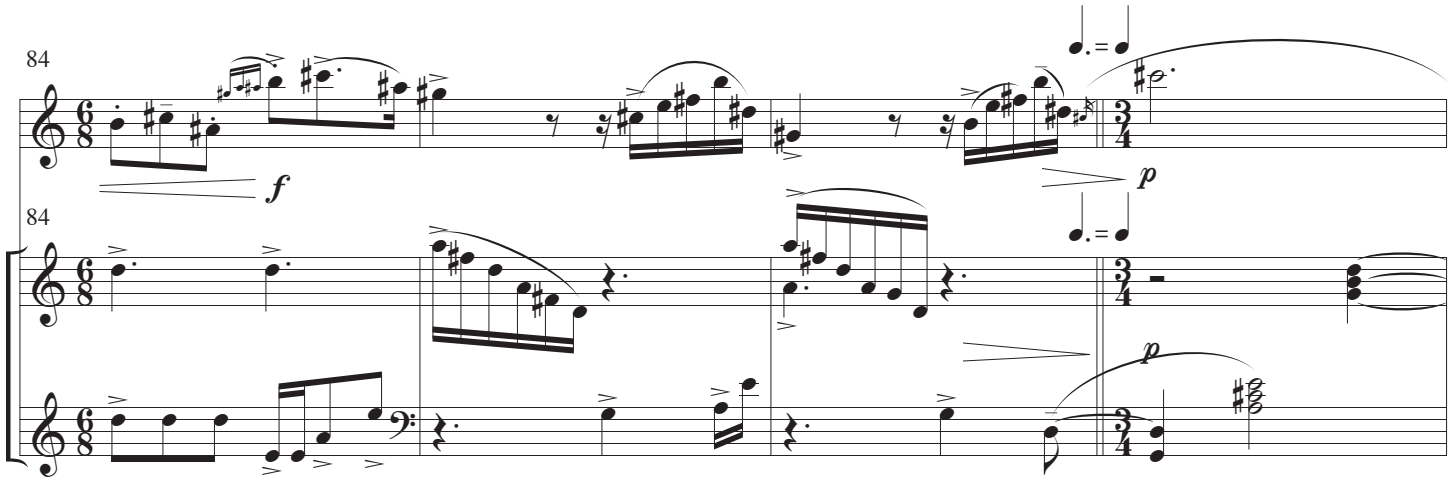

34
p
mf
p
f
34
p
38
mp
f
38
f
41
p
41
p

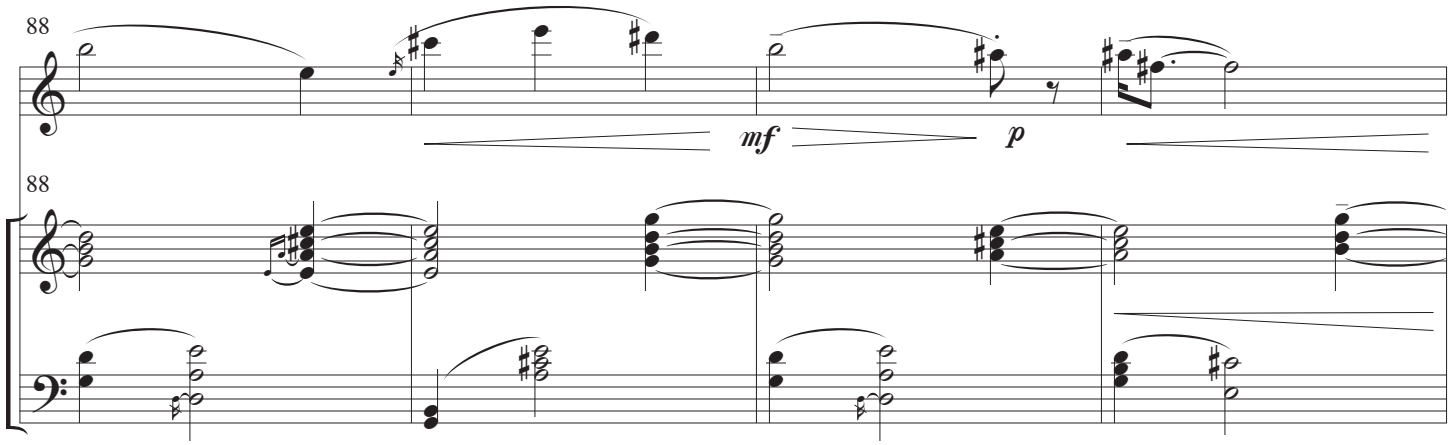

45
mf
p
mf
p
45
mf
L.V.
p
49
49
52
mf
p
52
mf
mp

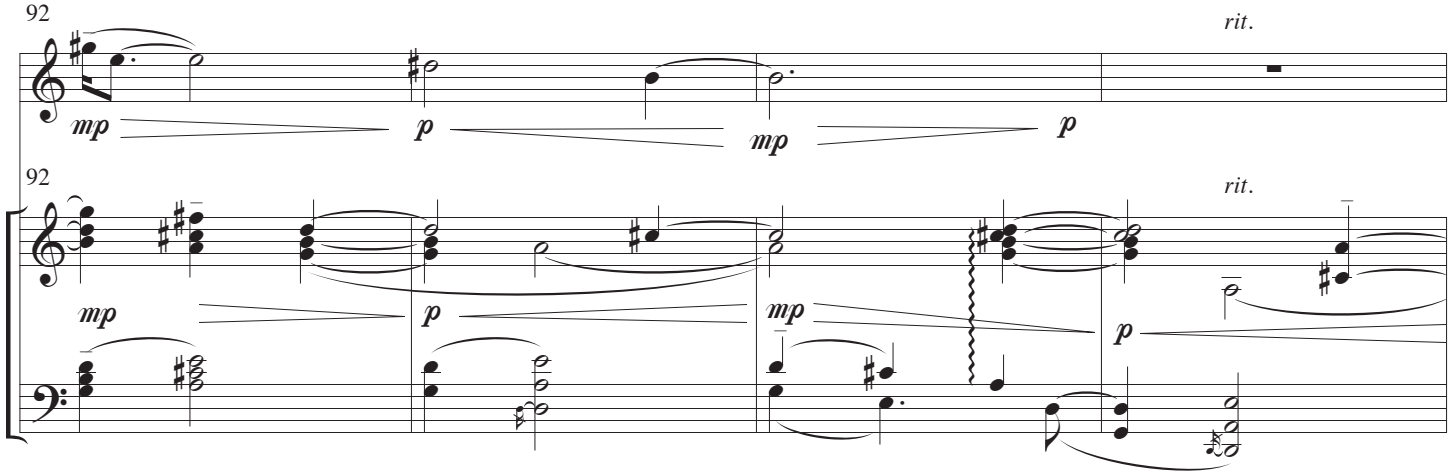

55
f
55
f
expressive
58
58
61
mp
61
mp

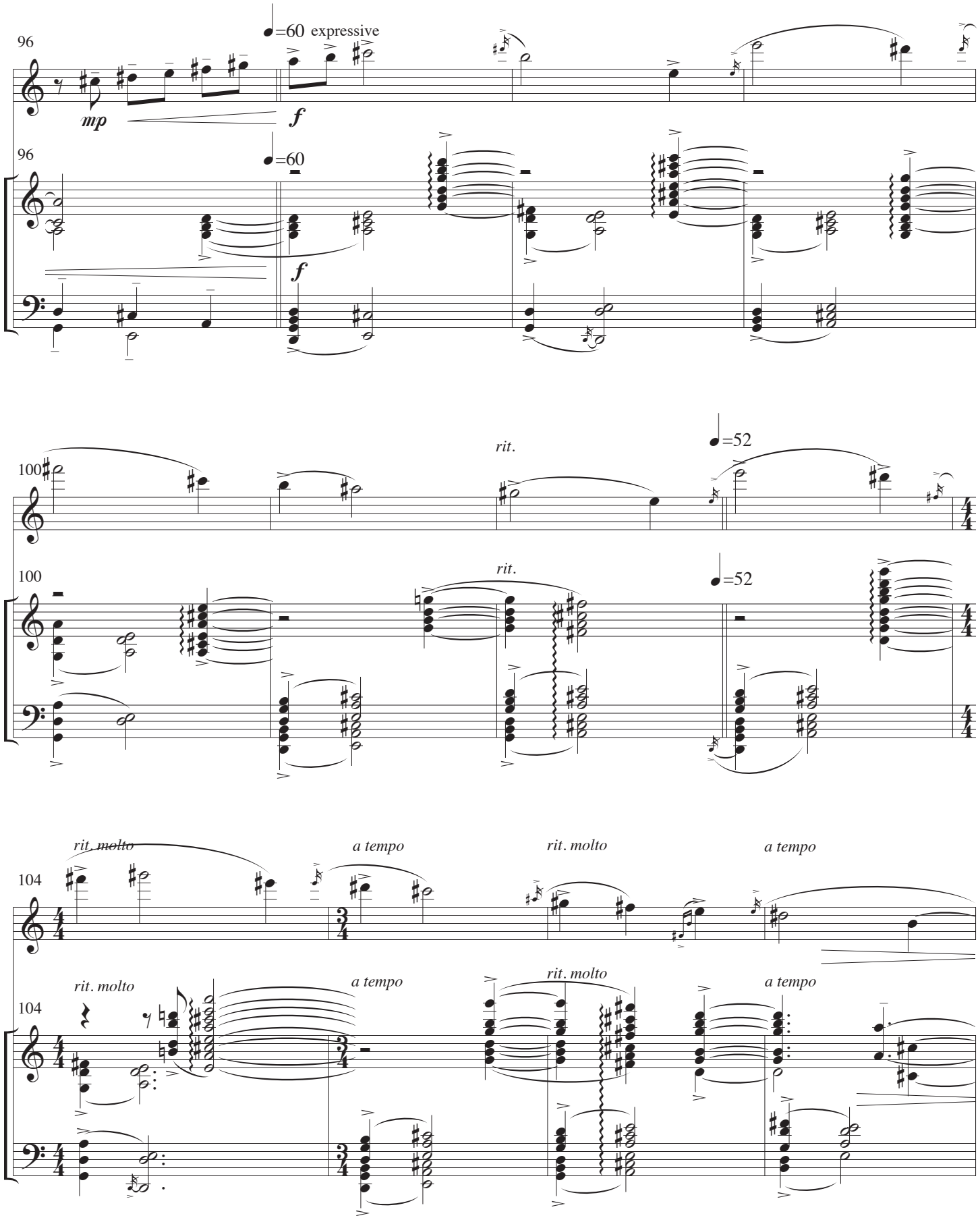

64
3
64
f
67
f
mp
f
67
70
70
mf

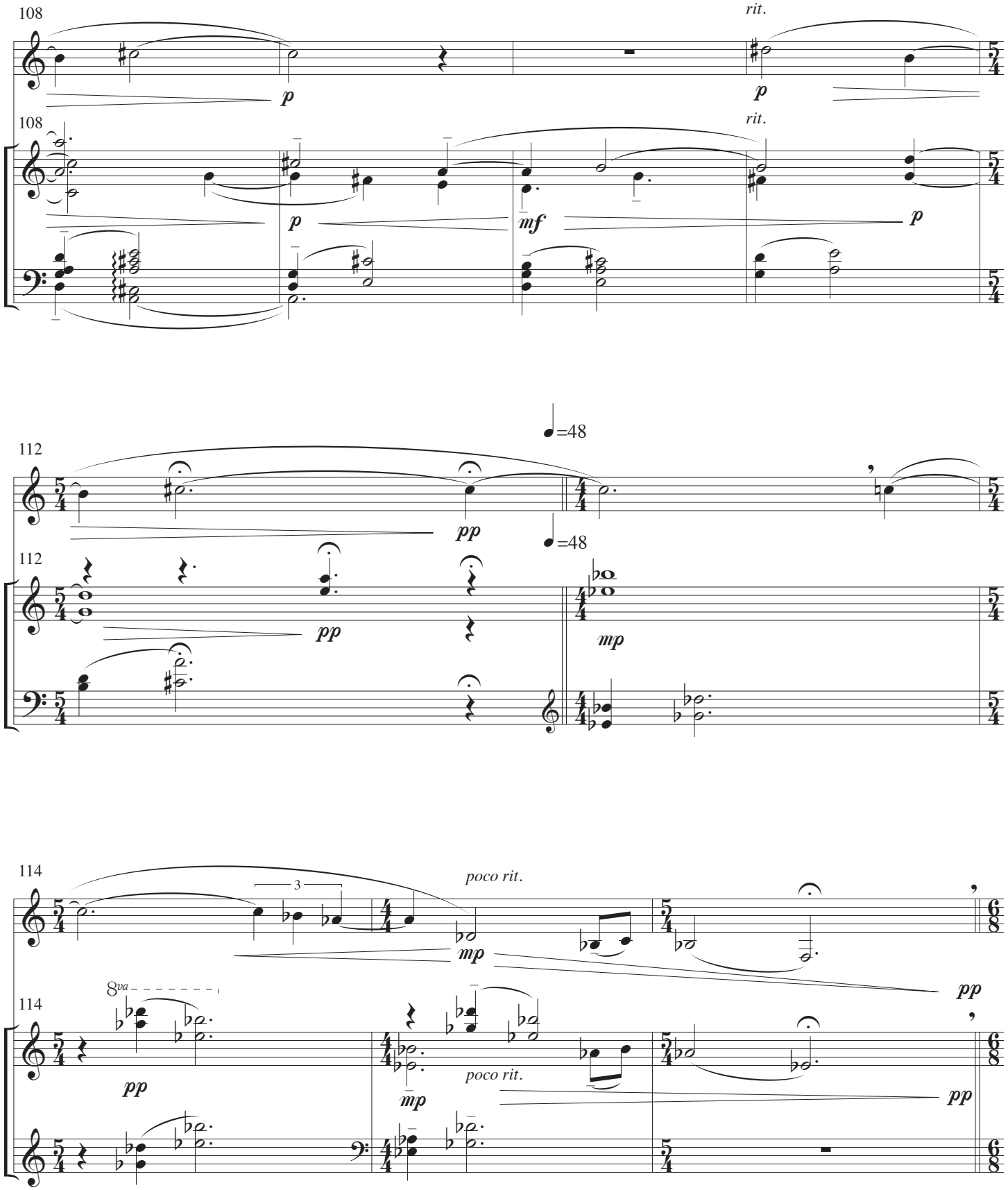

73
p
mf
p
mf
p
73
mf
p
mf
77
p
mf
77
mp
p
81
p
f
mp
81
f

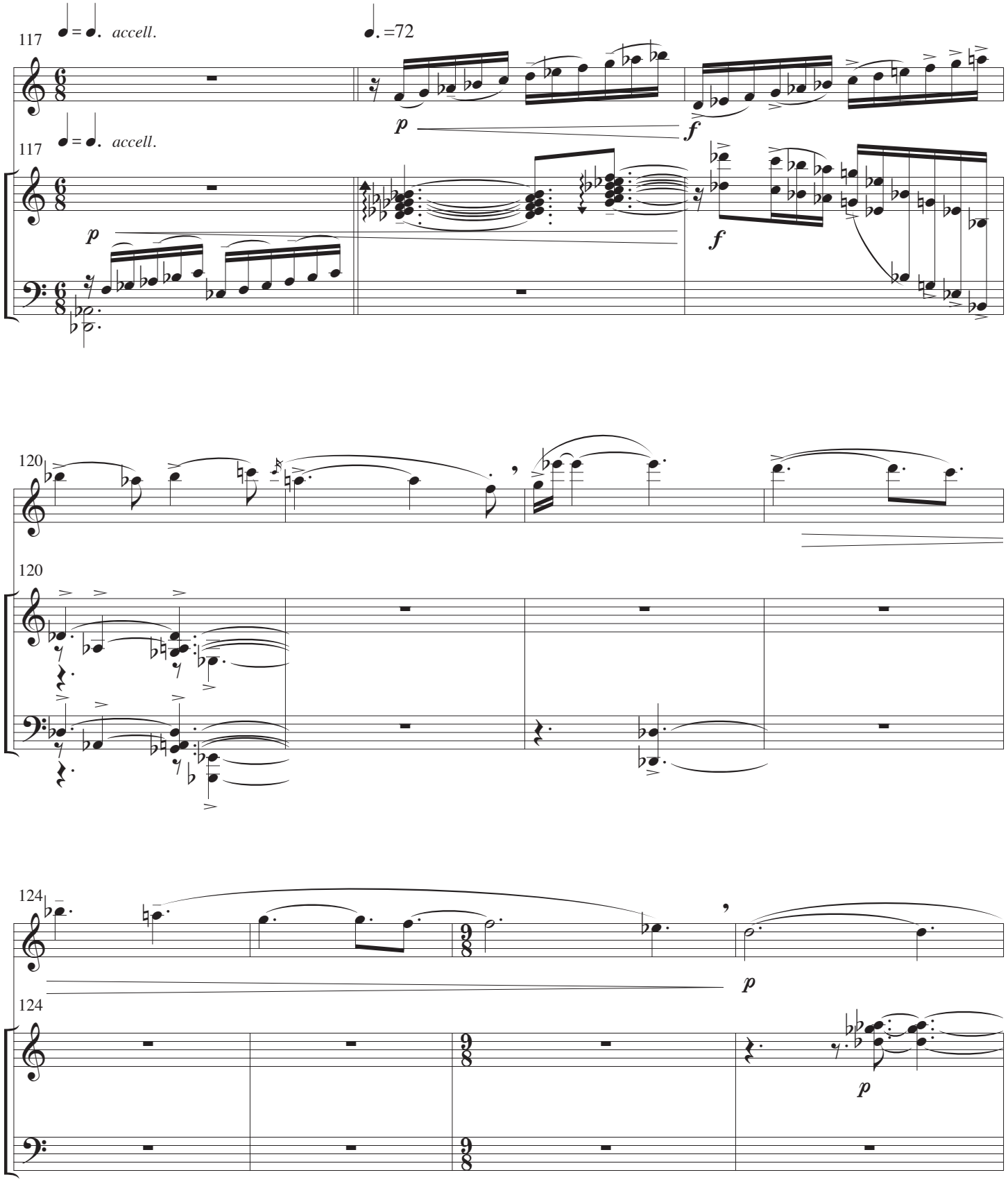

84
f
p
84
p

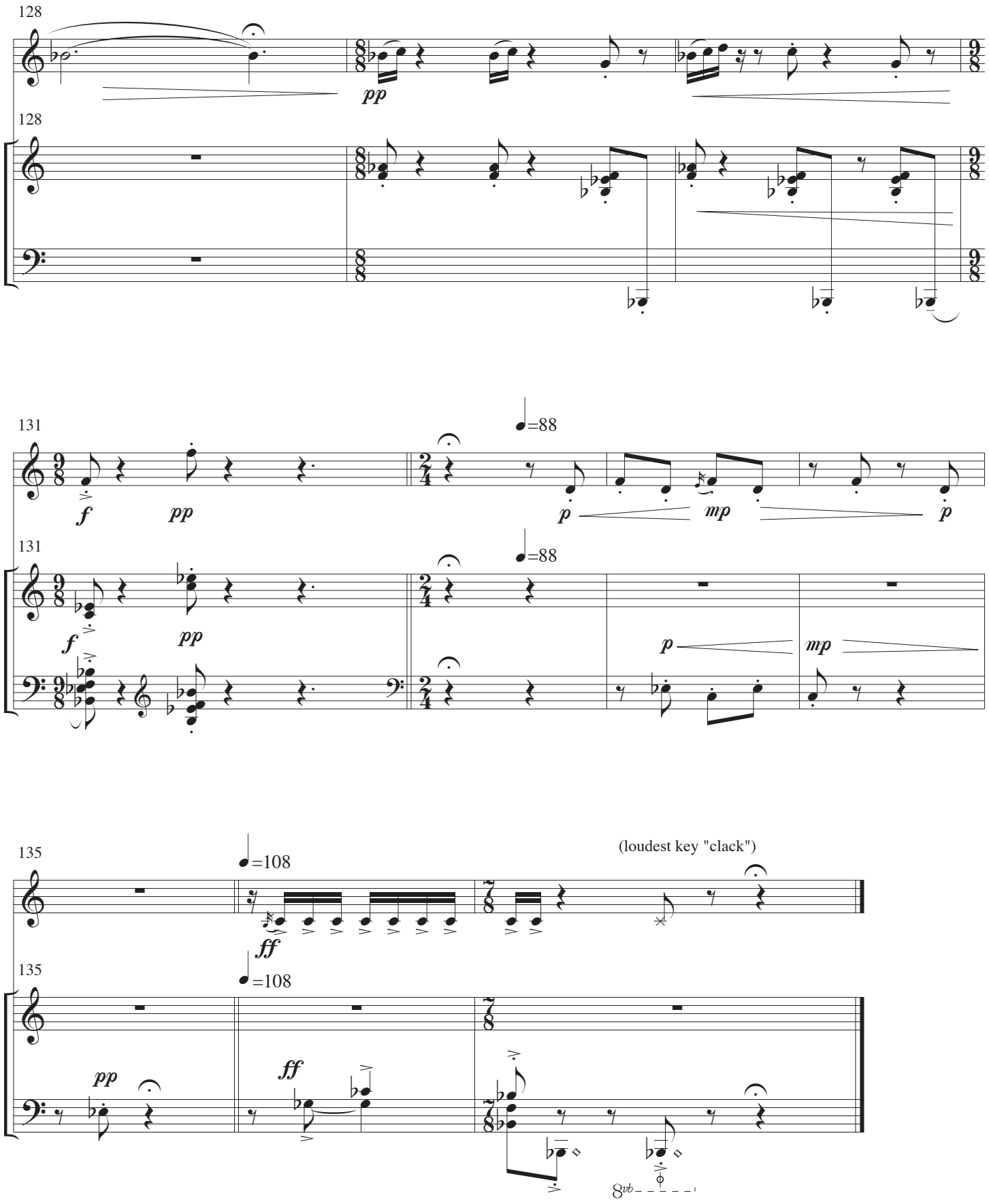

88
mf
p
88


92
mp
p
mp
p
rit.
92
mp
p
mp
p
rit.


96
♩=60 expressive
mp
f
96
♩=60
f
100
rit.
♩=52
100
rit.
♩=52
104
rit. molto
a tempo
rit. molto
a tempo
104
rit. molto
a tempo
rit. molto
a tempo


108
rit.
p
p
108
rit.
p
mf
p
112
=48
pp
=48
112
pp
mp
114
poco rit.
3
mp
pp
8va
114
pp
mp
poco rit.
pp


117
accell.
=72
p
f
117
accell.
p
f
120
120
124
p
124
p


128
pp
128
131
f
pp
=88
p
mp
p
131
f
pp
=88
p
mp
135
=108
(loudest key "clack")
ff
135
=108
pp
ff
8vb