Michel Gonneville

Browsing Agon

for 10 instrumentalists and 1 conductor

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Browsing Agon

The starting idea was to write a series of miniatures, quickly, for the whole group of 10 musicians of Aventa's workshop.
And the next step was (through their conductor William Linwood) to ask each musician of the ensemble to send me by email one single idea.

And this is what I got :

Krakatoa (from Miranda Wong, piano)
Zéphyr, or Amnesia (from Darnell Linwood, horn)
Bisbigliando (from Darren Buhr, contrabass)
Sushi (from Masako Hockey, percussion)
Flamenco (from AK Coope, clarinet)
Newt (from Mark McGregor, flute)
Hocketus with some Klangfarben (from Al Money, cello)
Hot sandy beach, with sporadic raindrops (from Micah Kohut, alto)
Multiphonics (from Russel Bajes, oboe)
Shoes, Turkey - the country - and Wine (from Muege Buyukcelem, violin)
and
Agon (from William Linwood himself)

I couldn't get over the idea of making a one movement piece out of all this, instead of a series of short pieces separated by silence.
But how do you make a whole out of such disparateness ? Well, the idea was there, with Bill's suggestion that Agon become the "overall theme".

Agon : not only the greek God of wrestling, match and competition, a characteristic expressed here by the idea of centering each miniature on the instrument of the person who proposed its thematic idea, and sometimes also by some sort of musical opposition (of ideas, of instrumental subgroups). But *Agon* is also this fantastic ballet by Stravinsky for Balanchine, a turning point in Stravinsky's production, started in 1954 but finished three years years later, as the composer had jumped into his last period inspired by Webern's serialism. Despite the shift of technique, a undeniable sense of coherence can be perceived in that work. In 1971 (the year of Stravinsky's death), Henri Pousseur and André Boucourechliev have written important articles showing the profound unity of Stravinsky's output, the first on the harmonic level in *Agon,* the second on the stylistic level for the whole corpus of his works.

Well... a kind of historical validation of eclecticism was there..., with an inspiring model !

So each one of Aventa's miniatures became for me a pleasurable exploration of some of the numerous resources present in *Agon,* from melodic contour to harmonic or formal ideas, etc, etc, guided by the (sometimes extra-musical) thematic proposals from the musicians.
For some, you would recognize the source, for others not. But each should stand alone, as a little expressive moment.
As for the unity of it all, it became a secondary matter for me, and the browsing gesture itself left its trace through a kind of pointilistic refrain between each miniature, like if we were quickly jumping from one channel or web page to the other before finally stopping on one.
(Of course, one may think of a 2008 adaptation of the *Promenade,* from Mussorgsky's *Pictures of an exhibition*...)

All oppositions and browsings resolved, the piece finishes like it started...

Dedicated to Aventa and its conductor and founder, William Linwood.

Michel Gonneville

Instrumentation

Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in Bb

French Horn in F

Percussion (1 instrumentalist)

Piano

Violin
Alto
Cello
Contrabass

Percussion instruments

Glockenspiel
Xylophone
Marimba
7 Crotales (may be replaced by Glockenspiel)
1 high Bongo
1 low Tom-tom
1 large Timpani (low F and F#)
1 low Bass Drum
1 large Cymbal
1 large Tam-tam
Table Castanets
Sandpaper blocks
1 high Wood-Block

The score is written as it sounds (in C), with the sole following exceptions :
Xylophone (sounds an octave higher than written),
Glockenspiel and Crotales (sound two octaves higher than written)

Accidentals at a given octave apply for the whole measure.

Duration : approx. 15 minutes.

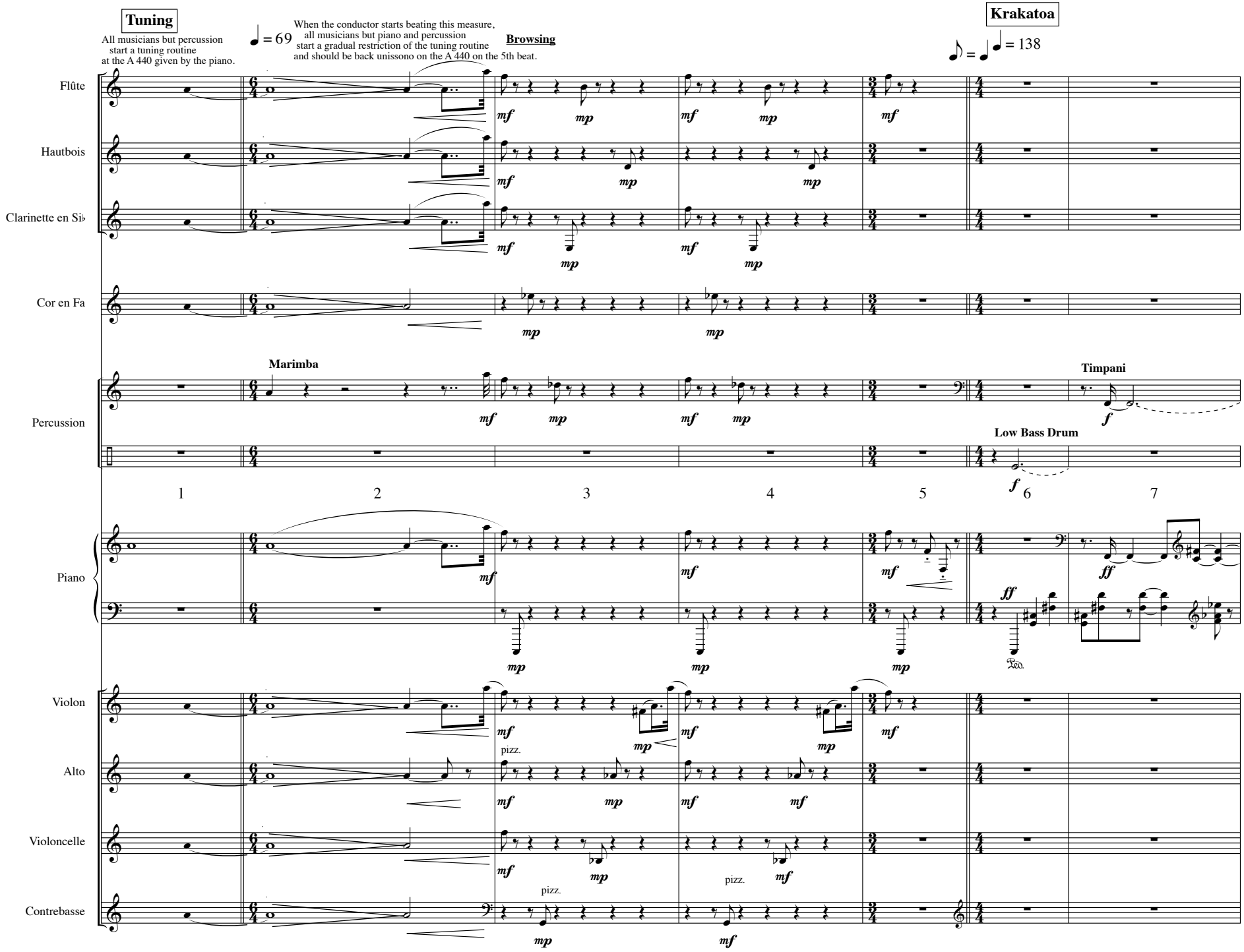
Notation for microtonal inflexions

↓4 = approx. one quarter tone lower (–49 cents, like a 11th harmonic)
↑5 = approx. one fifth of a tone higher (+40 cents, like a 13th harmonic)
↓6 = approx. one sixth of a tone lower (–31 cents, like a 7th harmonic)

For accuracy, a tuning rehearsal could be held, using as examples the corresponding naturals harmonics of the empty strings of the Cello or Contrabass or by blocked harmonics in the strings of the piano.

Browsing Agon

Michel Gonneville



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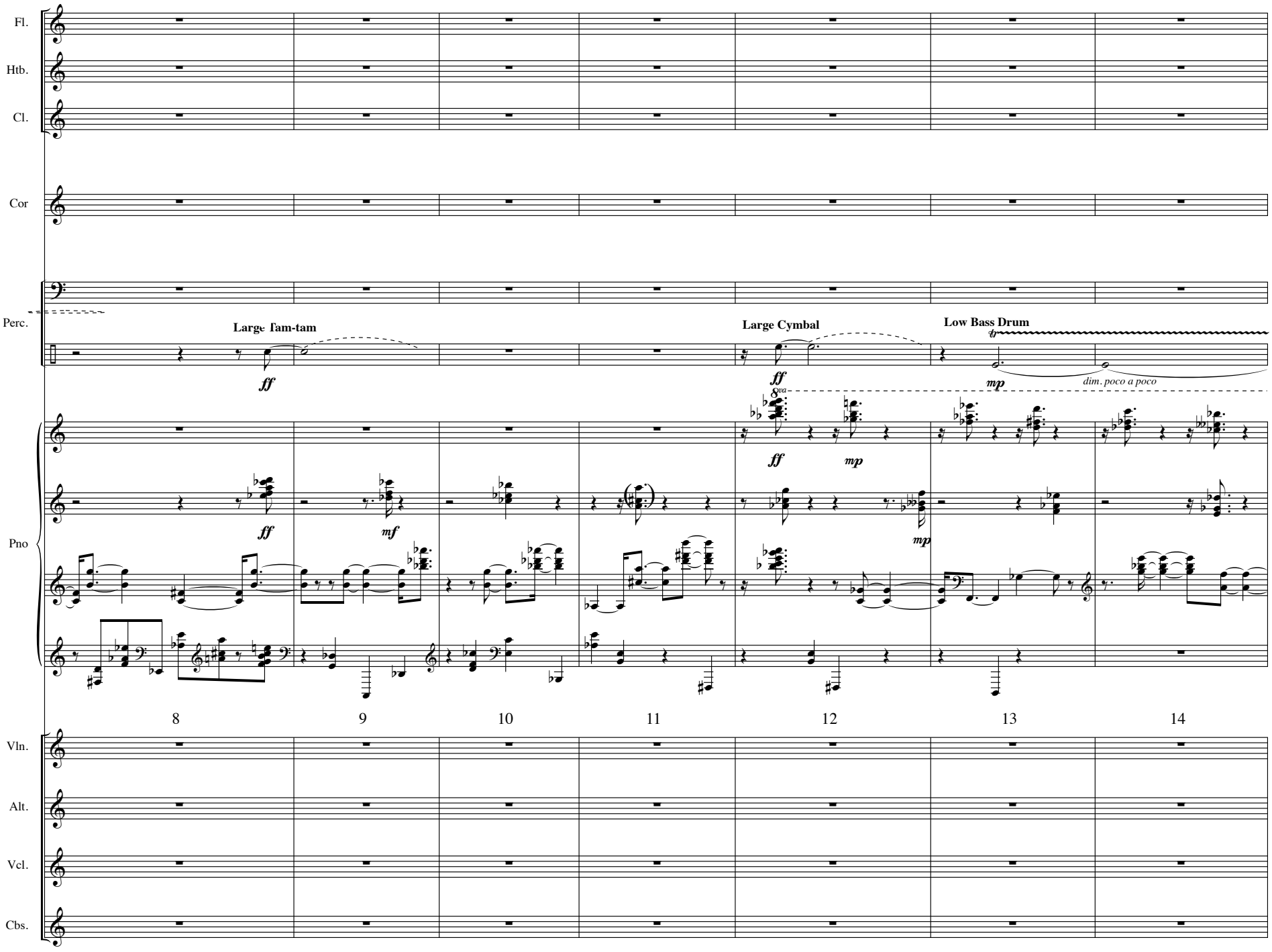
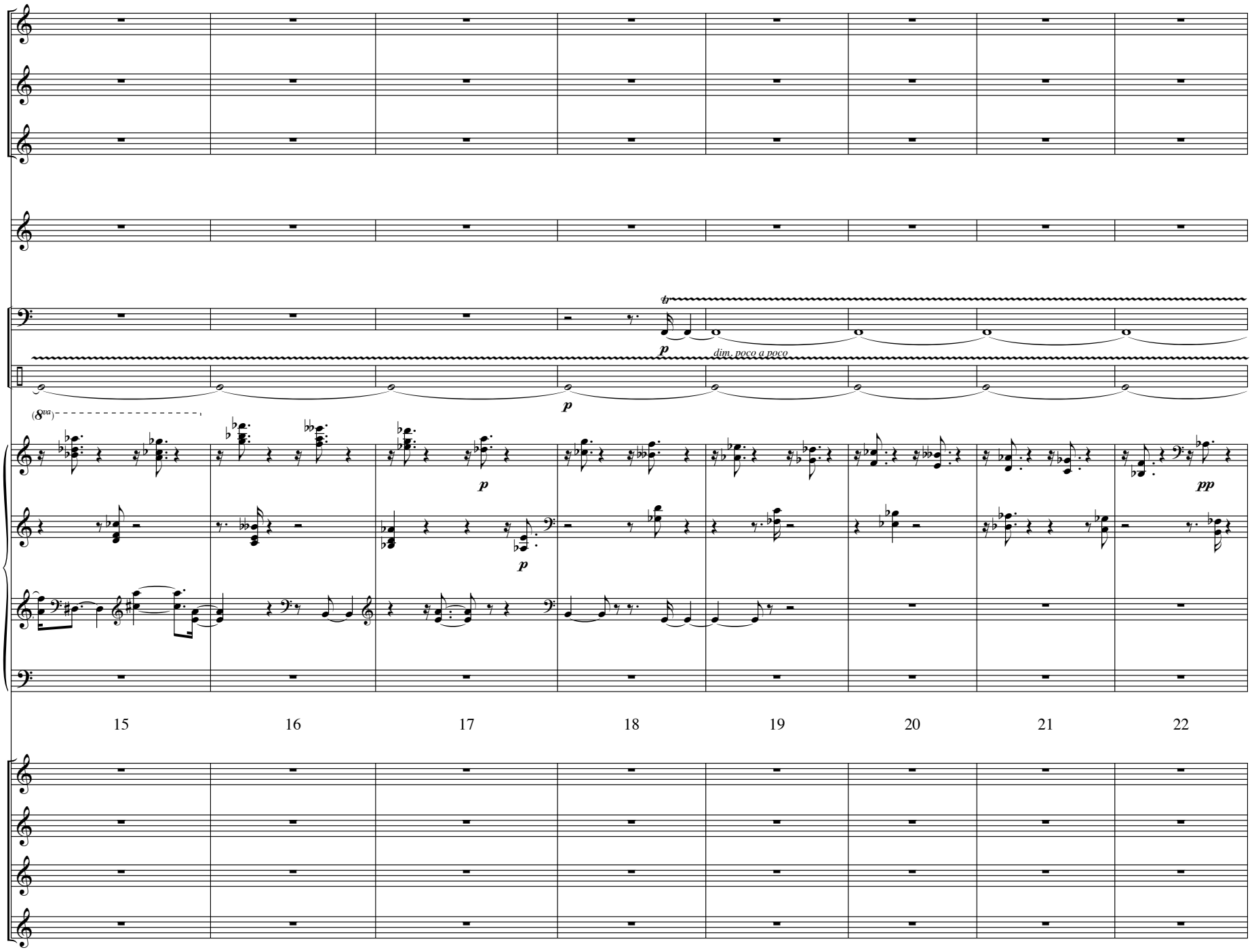
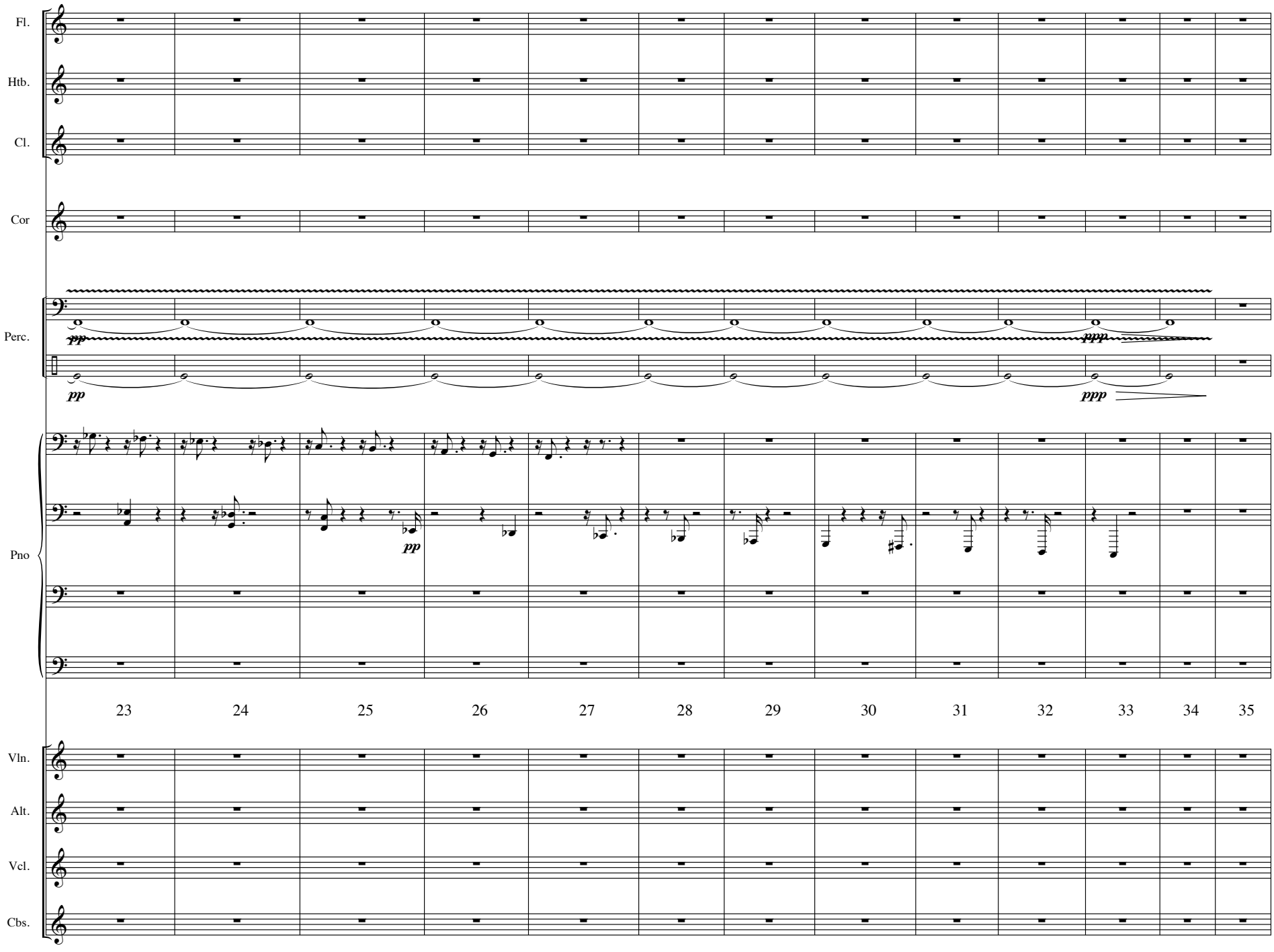

Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
Large Tam-tam
Large Cymbal
Low Bass Drum
dim. poco a poco
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
8
9
10
11
12
13
14

Browsing Agon




Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
pp
ppp
pp
ppp
Pno
pp
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.

Browsing

♩ = ♪ ♩ = 69 **Ral.** ♩ = 42

Zéphyr (Amnesia)

♪ = ♩ ♩ = 84

Fl.

Htb.

Cl.

Cor

Perc.

Pno

Vln.

Alt.

Vcl.

Cbs.

tongue ram
(pizz with embouchure
covered by mouth)

spoken

Un-a-ble

to re-mem-ber.

breath sound with note

breath

sung in the instrument
or played *con sordino*

played normally
(*senza sordino*)

T1 T12 T1 T13
↑5 0 ↓6

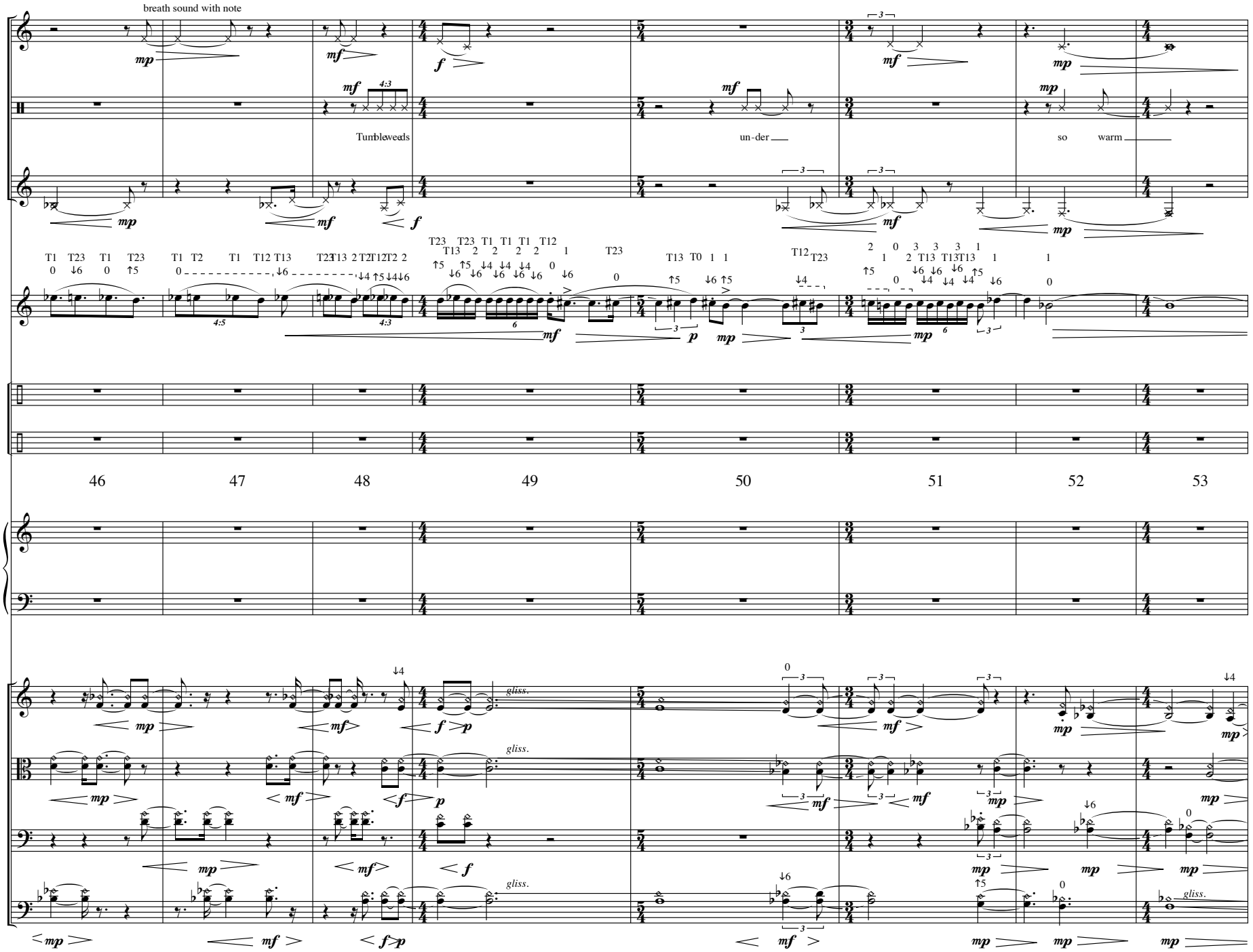
Mar.

Sandpaper blocks

pizz.

arco

36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45


breath sound with note
Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
Tumbleweeds
un-der
so warm
gliss.
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53

Browsing Agon

Browsing

Accel. -

♩ = 168

Bisbigliando

a = alternative fingering

Fl.

Htb.

a win - d

Cl.

Cor

Marimba

Crotales

(sounds 15ma)

Perc.

54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66

Pno

+ = play note on keyboard with r.h.
while damping the string near the bridge with l.h.

Vln.

pizz.

Alt.

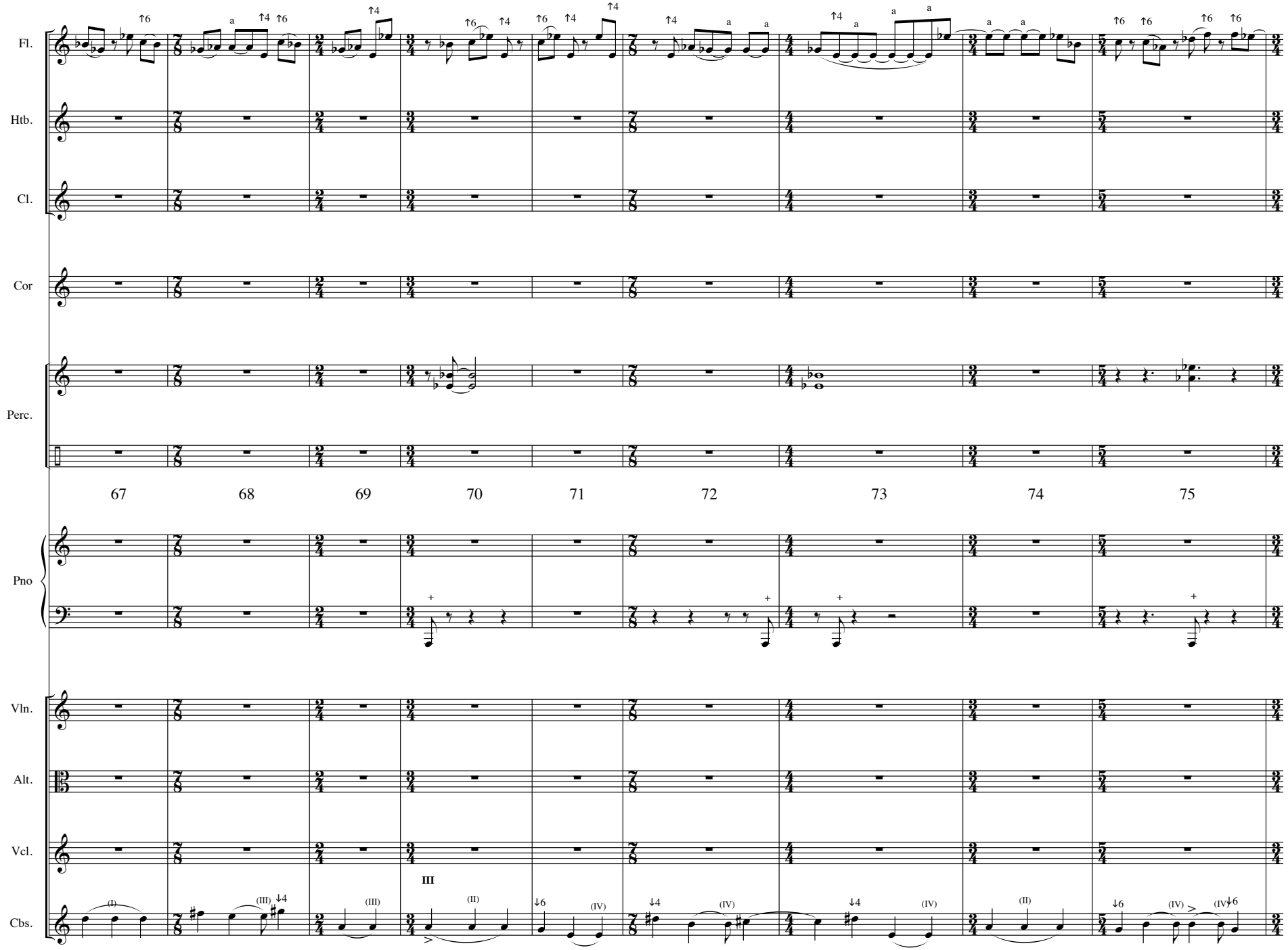
Vcl.

natural harmonics --->

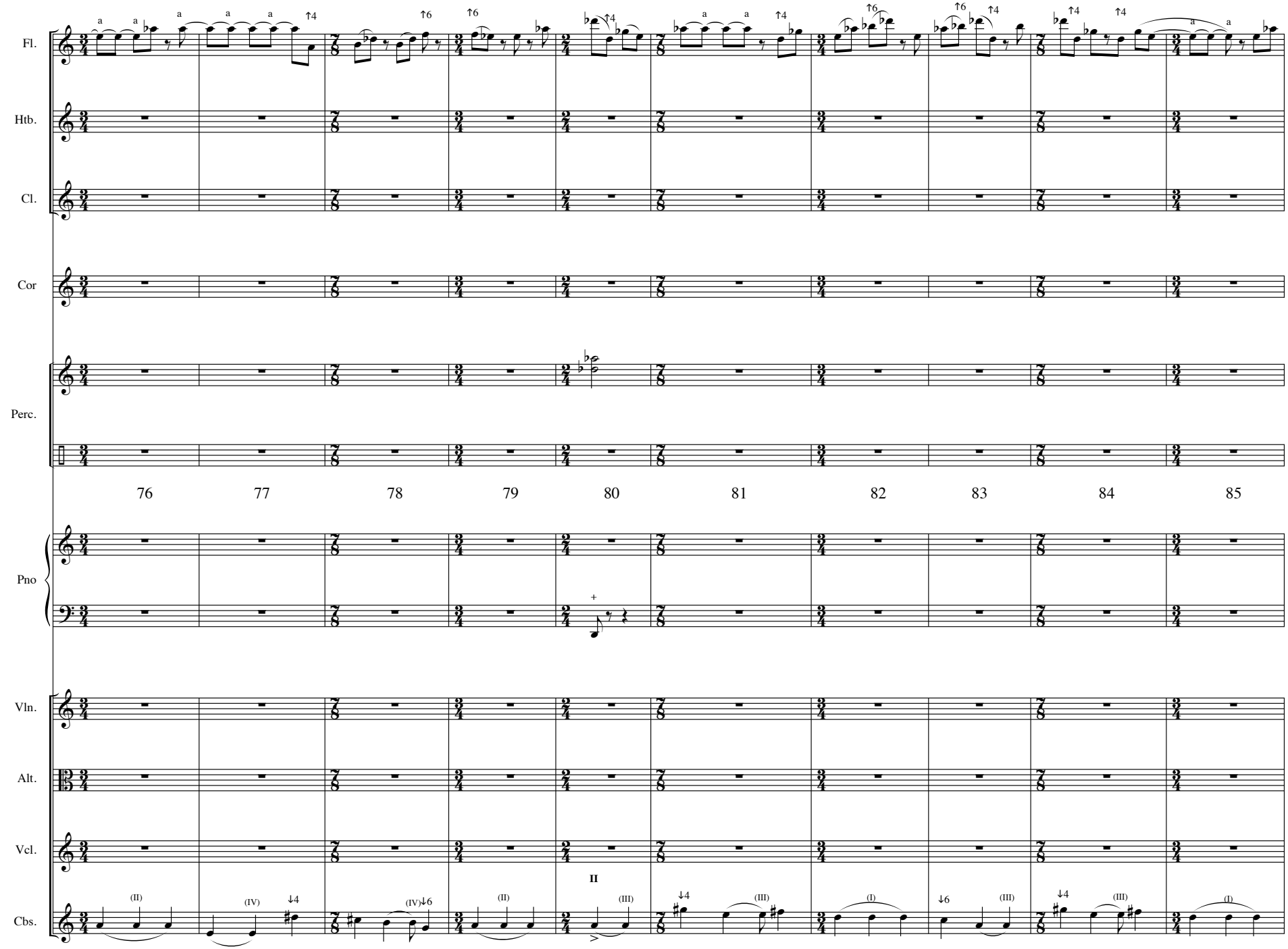
Cbs.

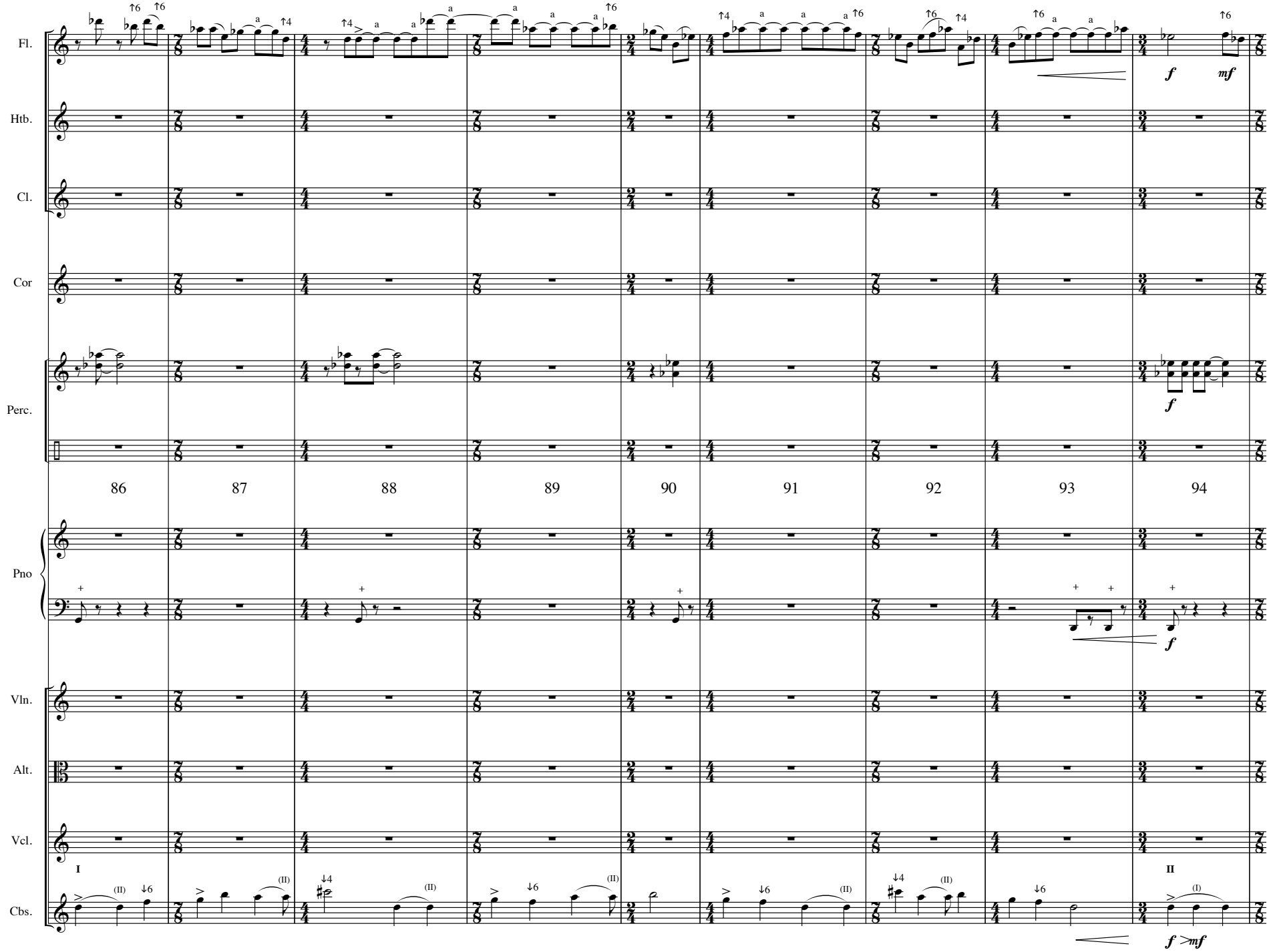
pizz.

arco

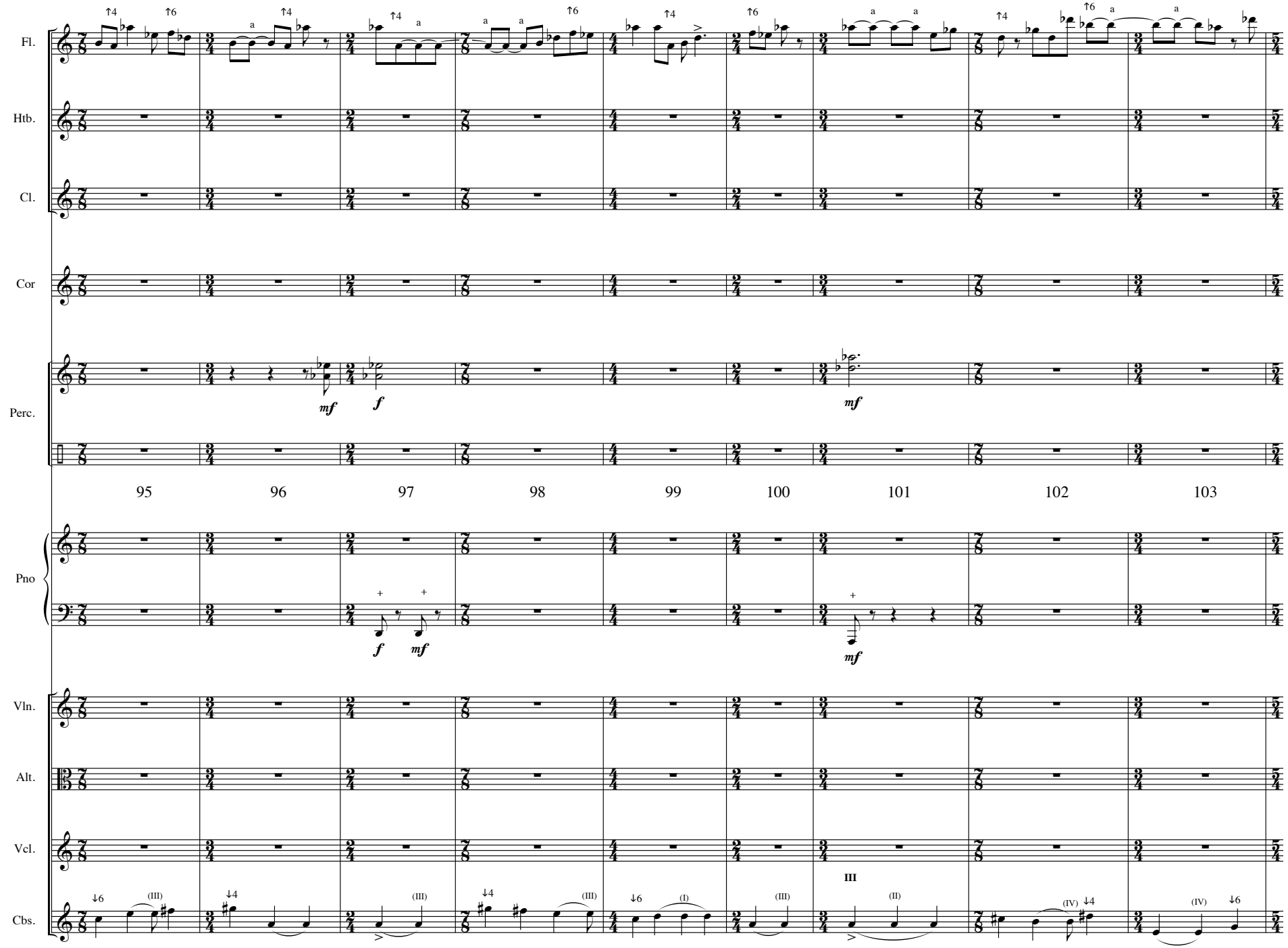

Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
III

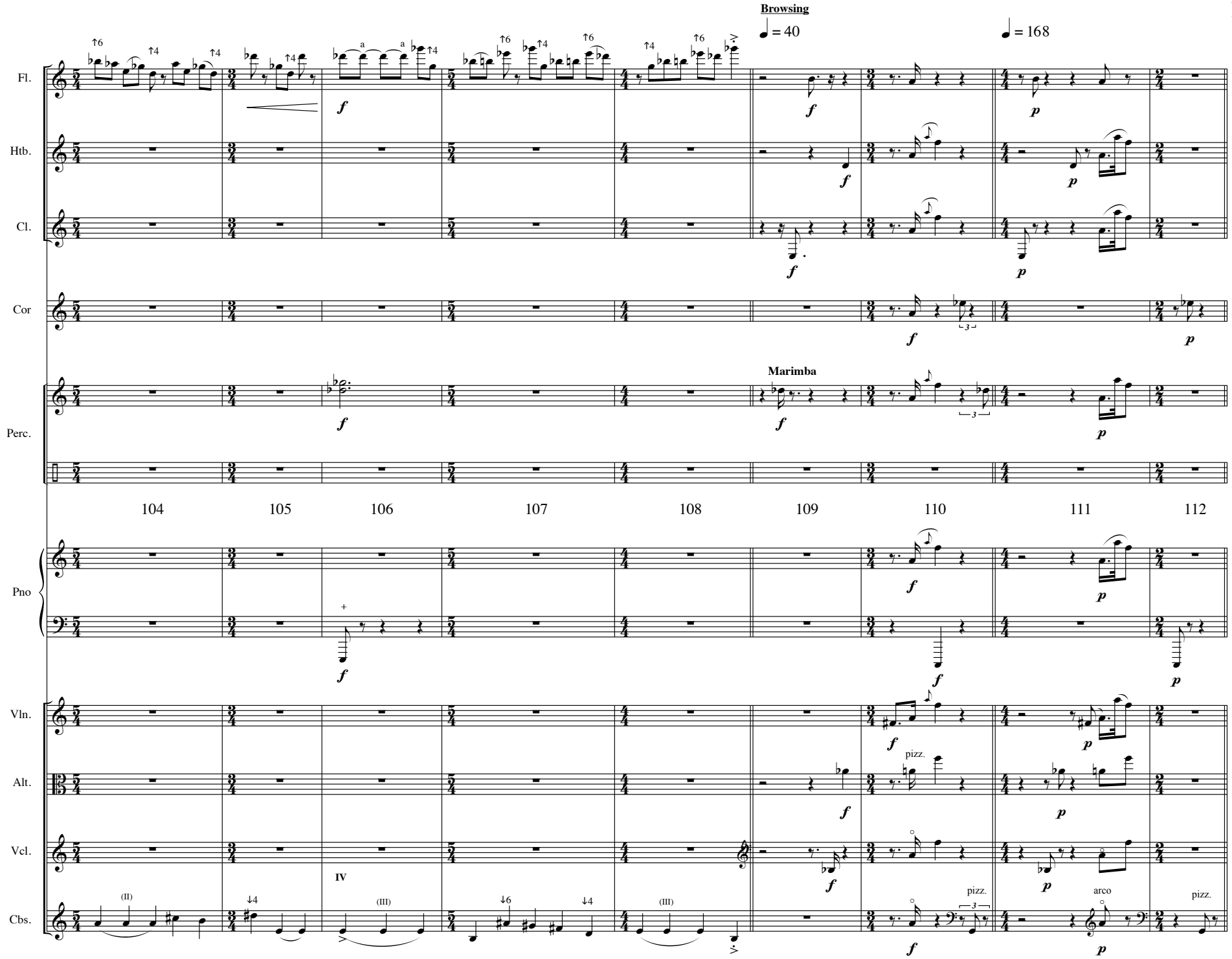
Browsing Agon




Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
I
II
f
mf
f
f
f
f >mf

Browsing Agon

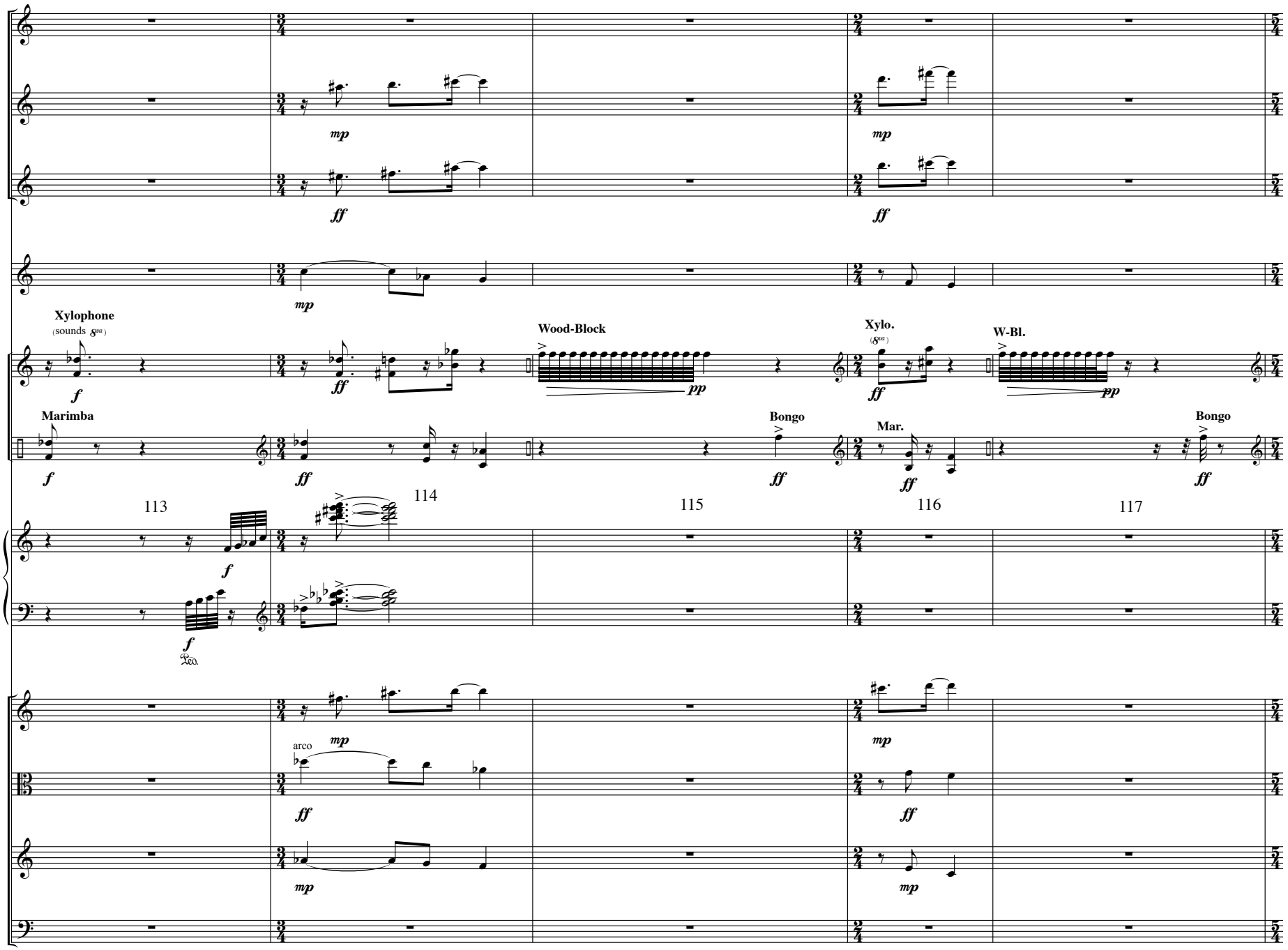


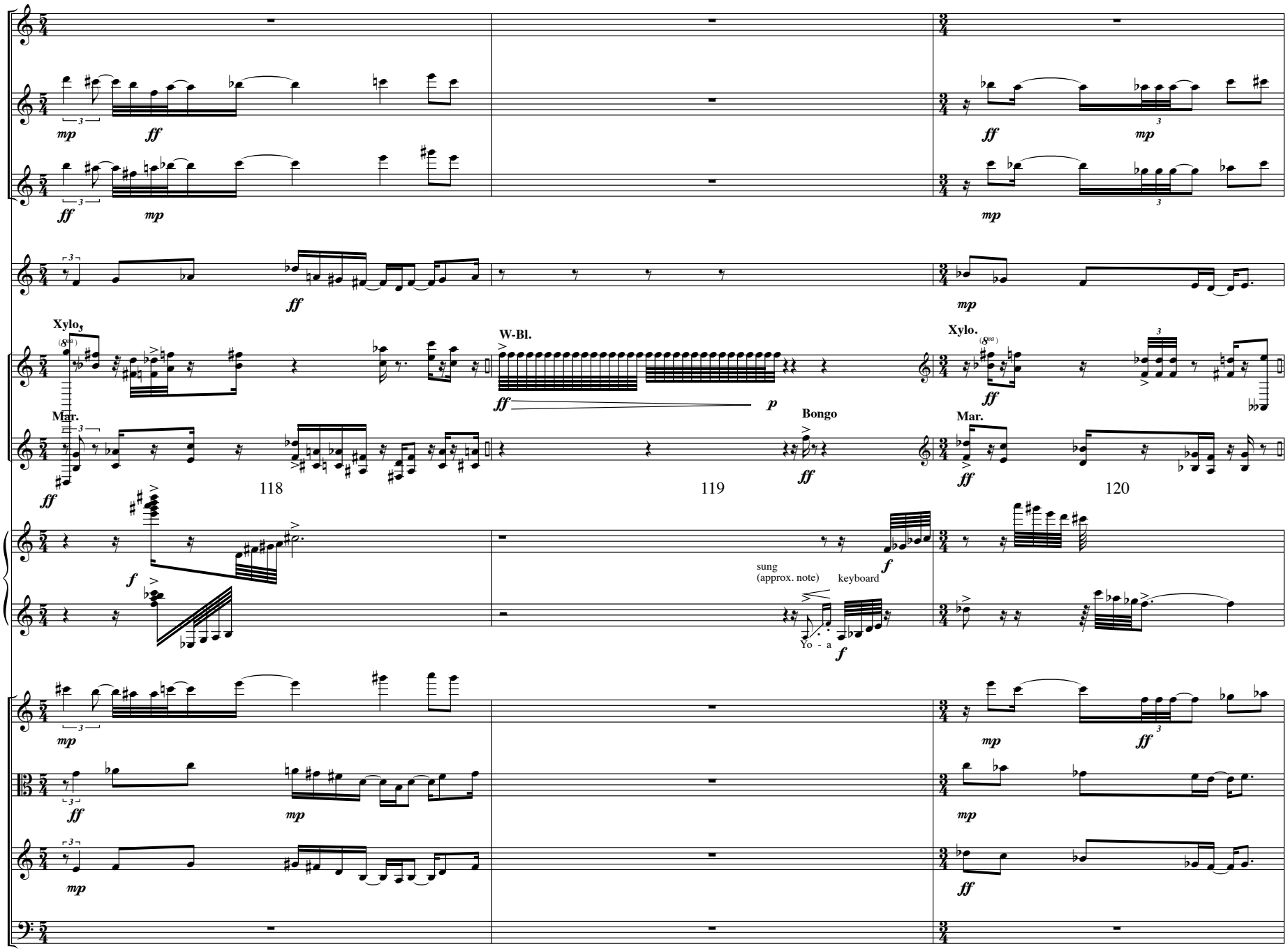

Browsing
♩ = 40
♩ = 168
Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Marimba
Perc.
104
105
106
107
108
109
110
111
112
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
IV
pizz.
arco

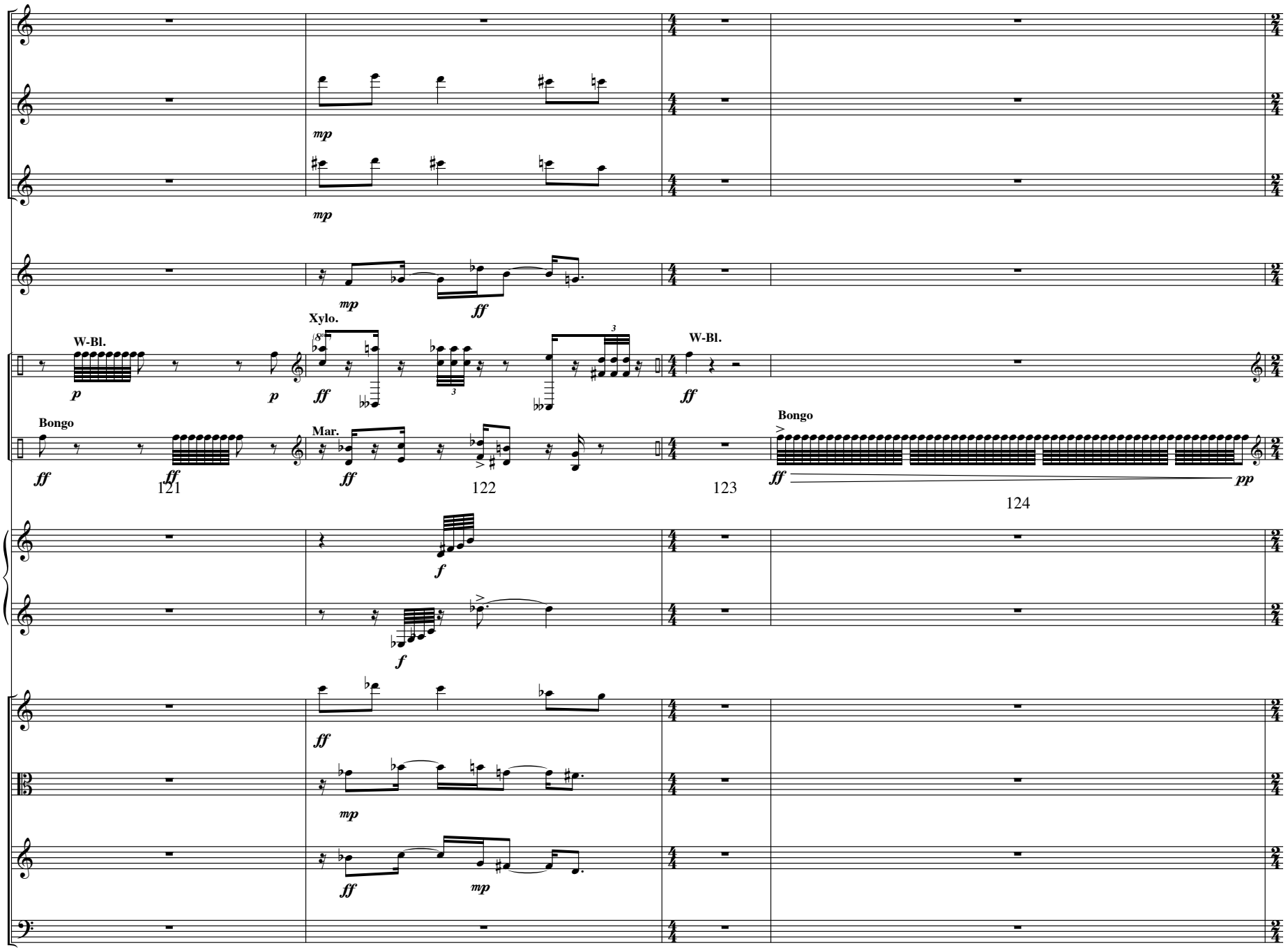
Browsing Agon

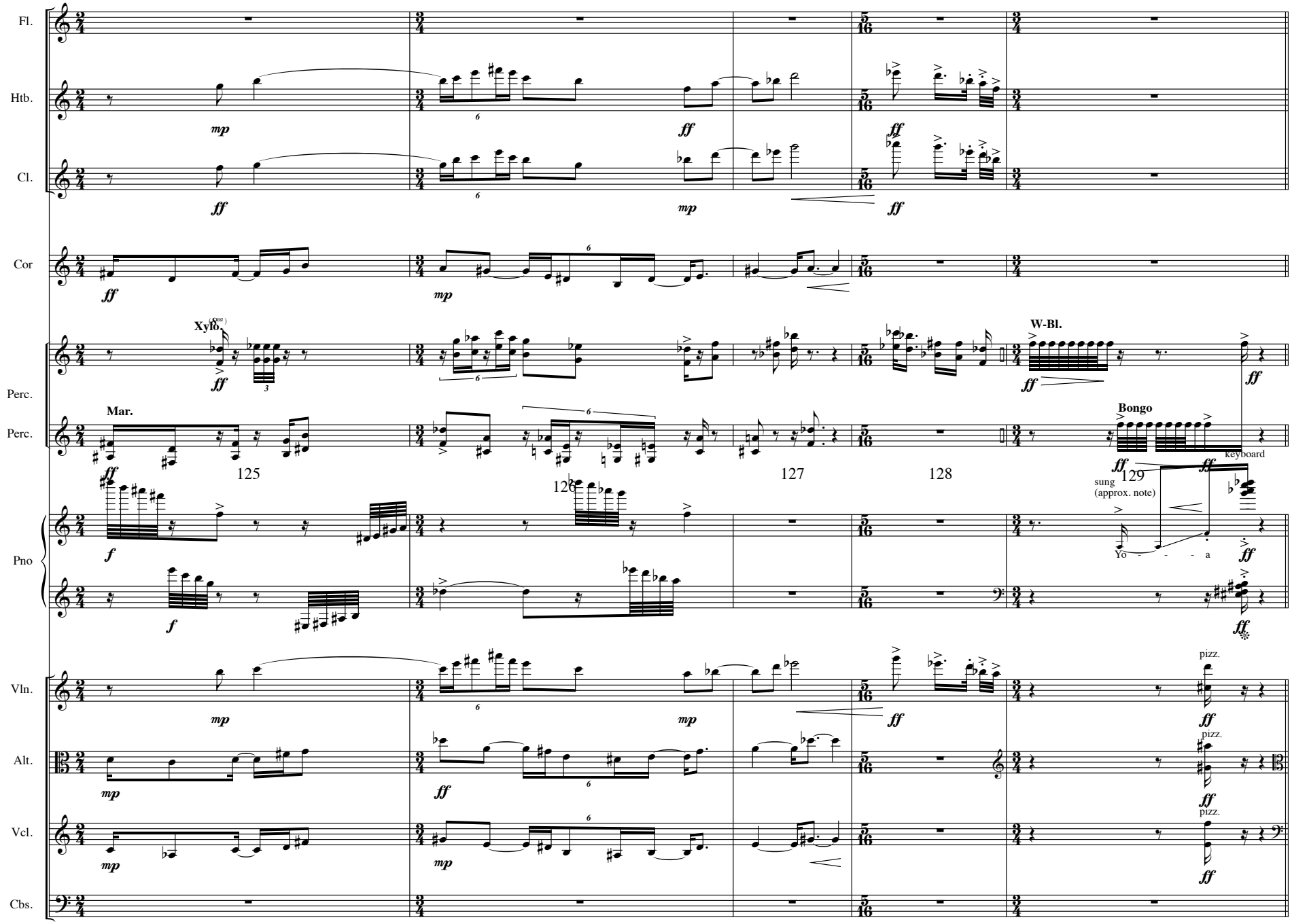
Sushi

♩ = 40




Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Xylo.
W-Bl.
Xylo.
Perc.
Mar.
Perc.
Bongo
Mar.
118
119
120
Pno
sung
(approx. note)
keyboard
Yo - a
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.


Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
mp
mp
mp
ff
W-Bl.
Xylo.
W-Bl.
p
p
ff
ff
Bongo
Mar.
Bongo
ff
ff
ff
ff
pp
121
122
123
124
f
f
ff
mp
ff
mp


Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Xylo.
(one)
W-Bl.
Perc.
Mar.
Perc.
Bongo
keyboard
125
126
127
128
129
sung
(approx. note)
Yo - - - a
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
pizz.
pizz.
pizz.

Browsing Agon

Browsing

♩ = 80 **Accel.** ♩ = 92 ♩ = 92 (♪=184)

Flamenco

Fl.

Htb.

Cl.

Cor

Perc.

Castanets

Palms

Marimba

Pno

Vln.

Alt.

Vcl.

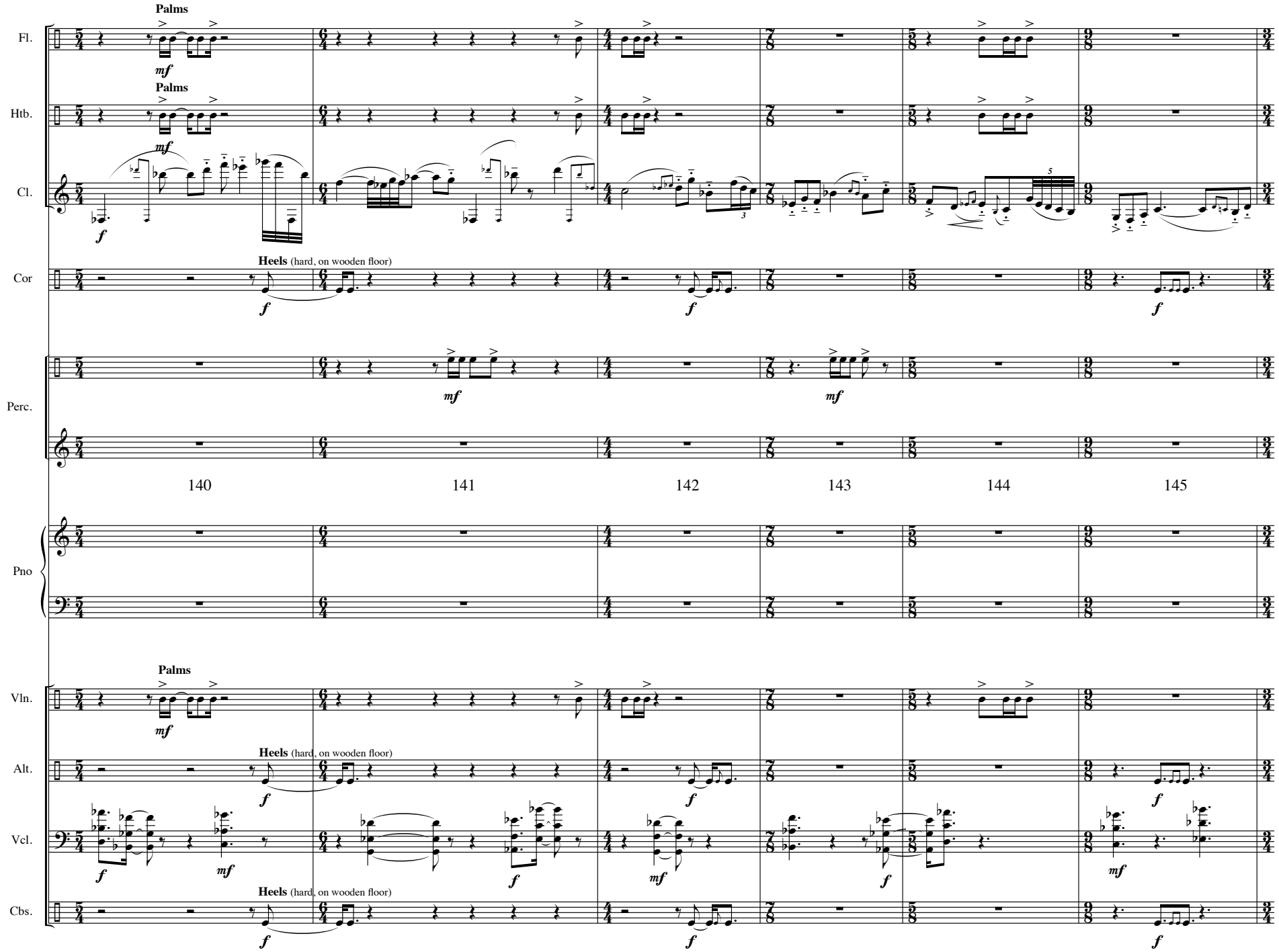
Cbs.

arco

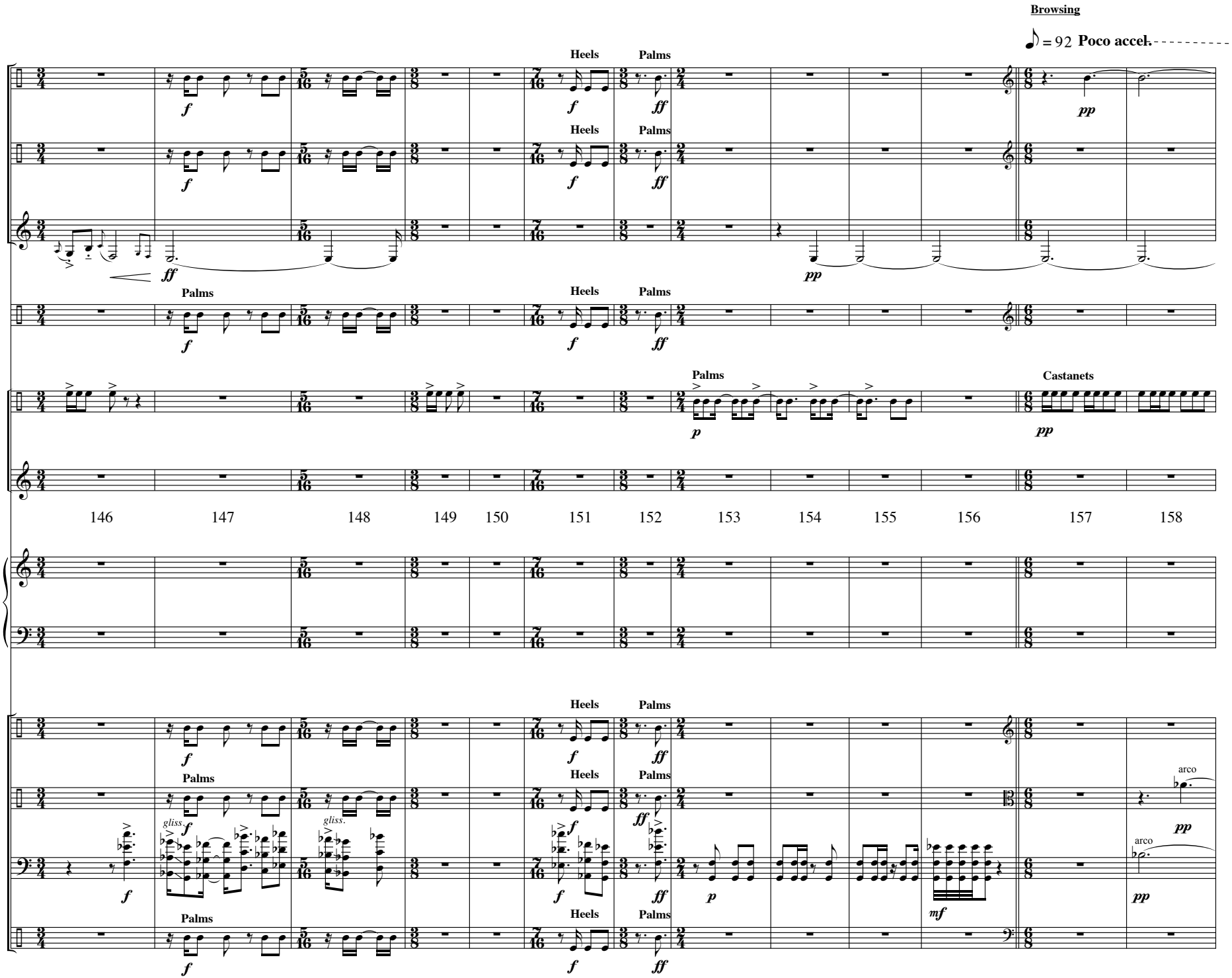
pizz.

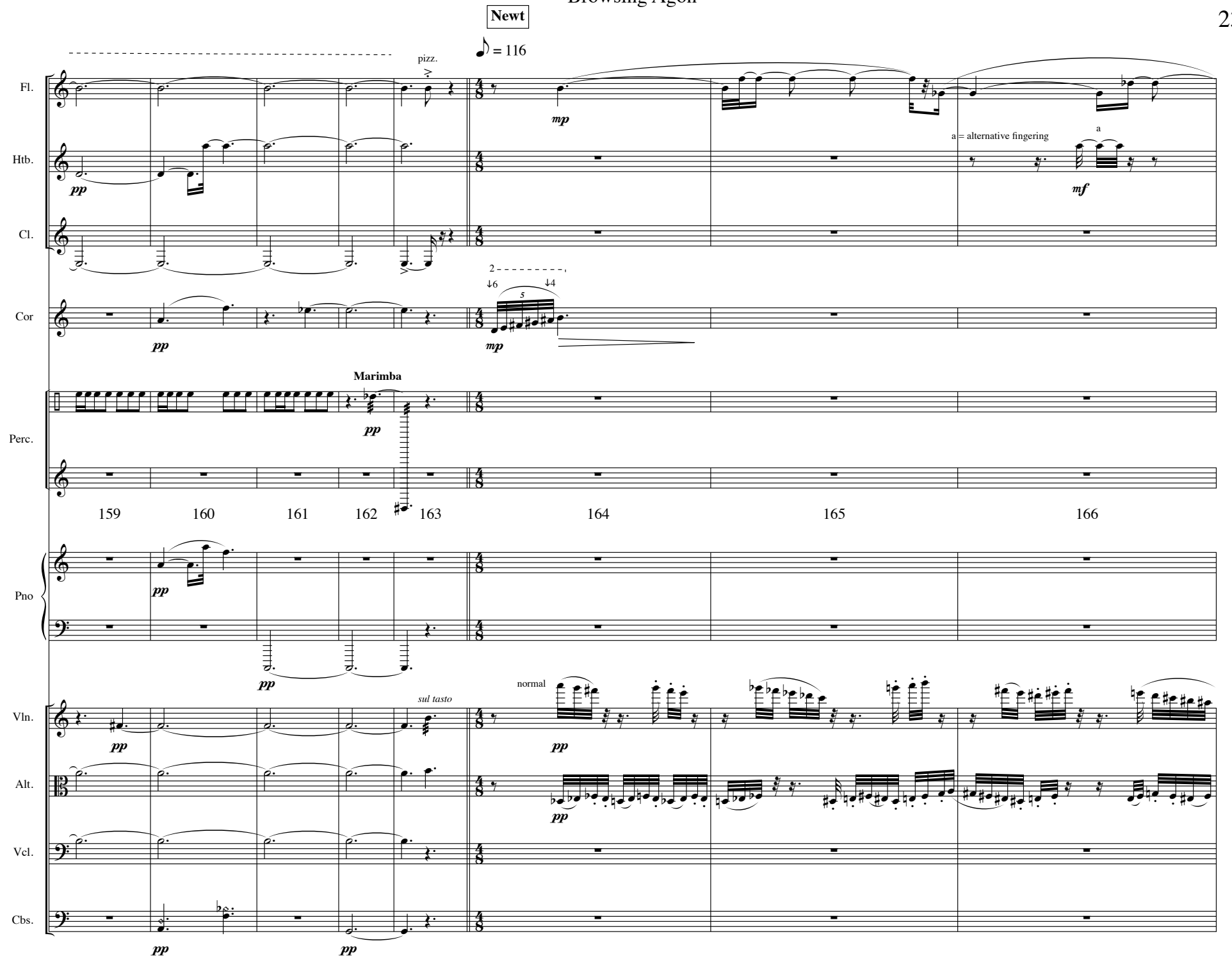
gliss.

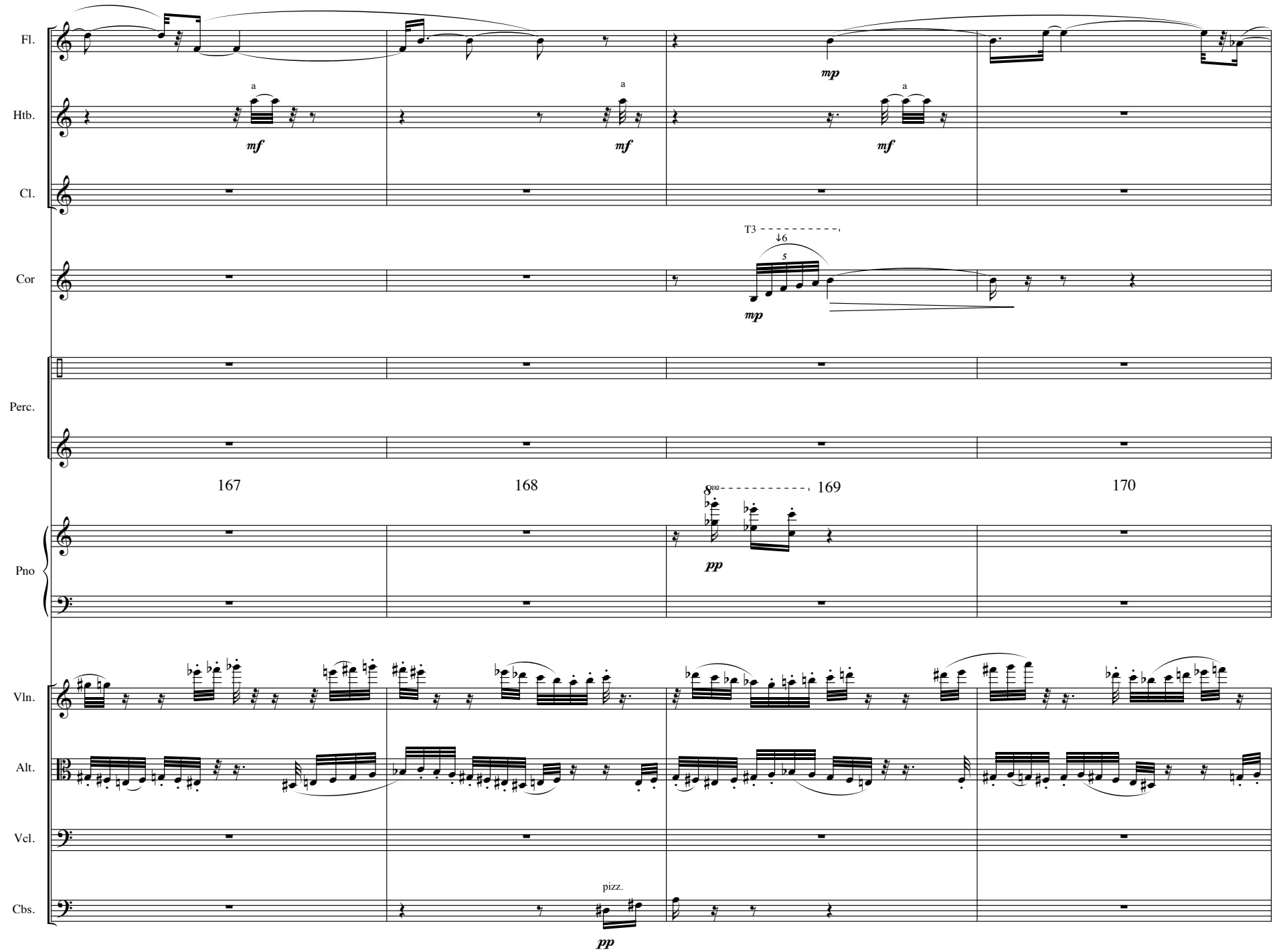
130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139

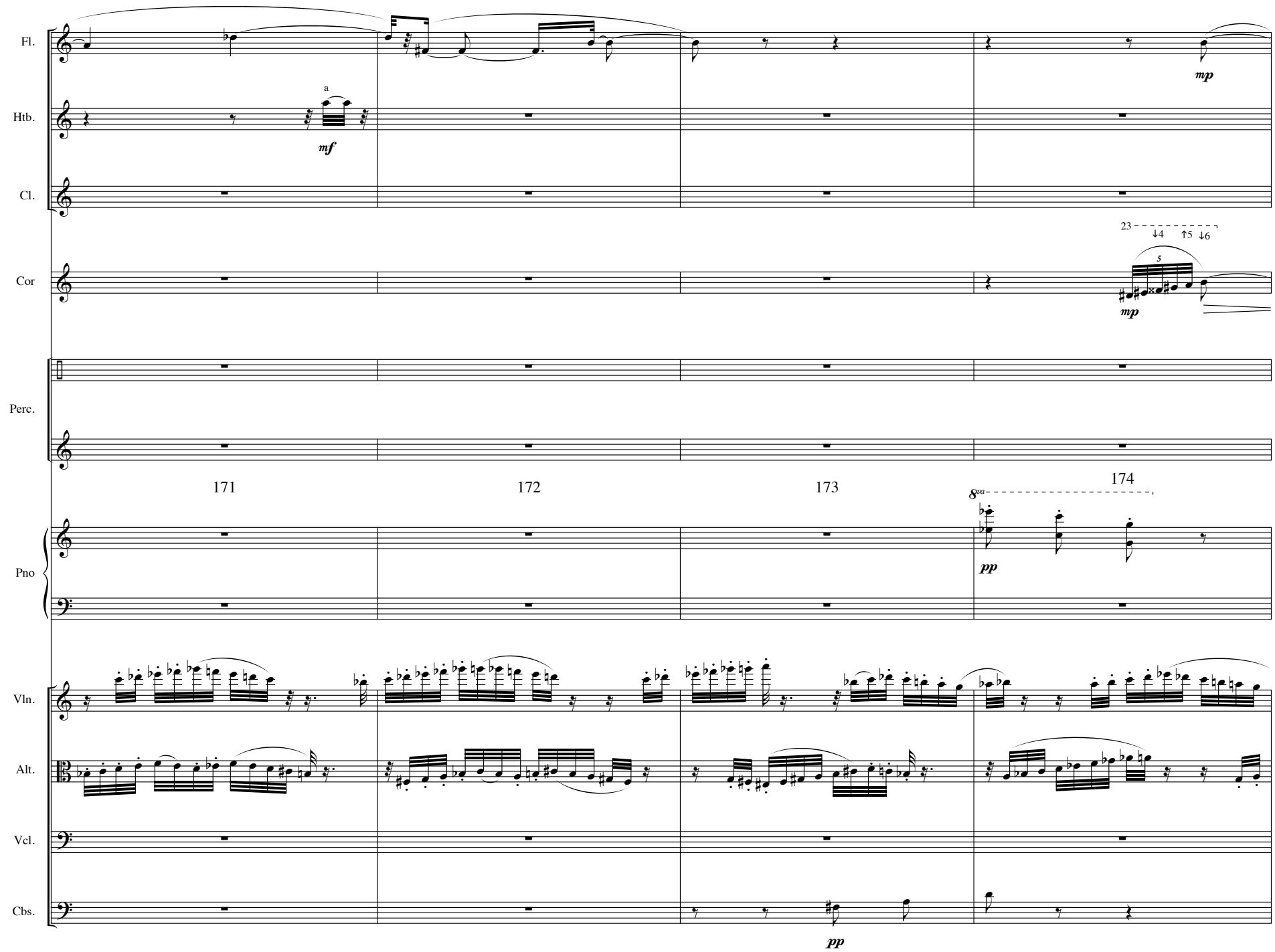

Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
Palms
Heels (hard, on wooden floor)
140
141
142
143
144
145

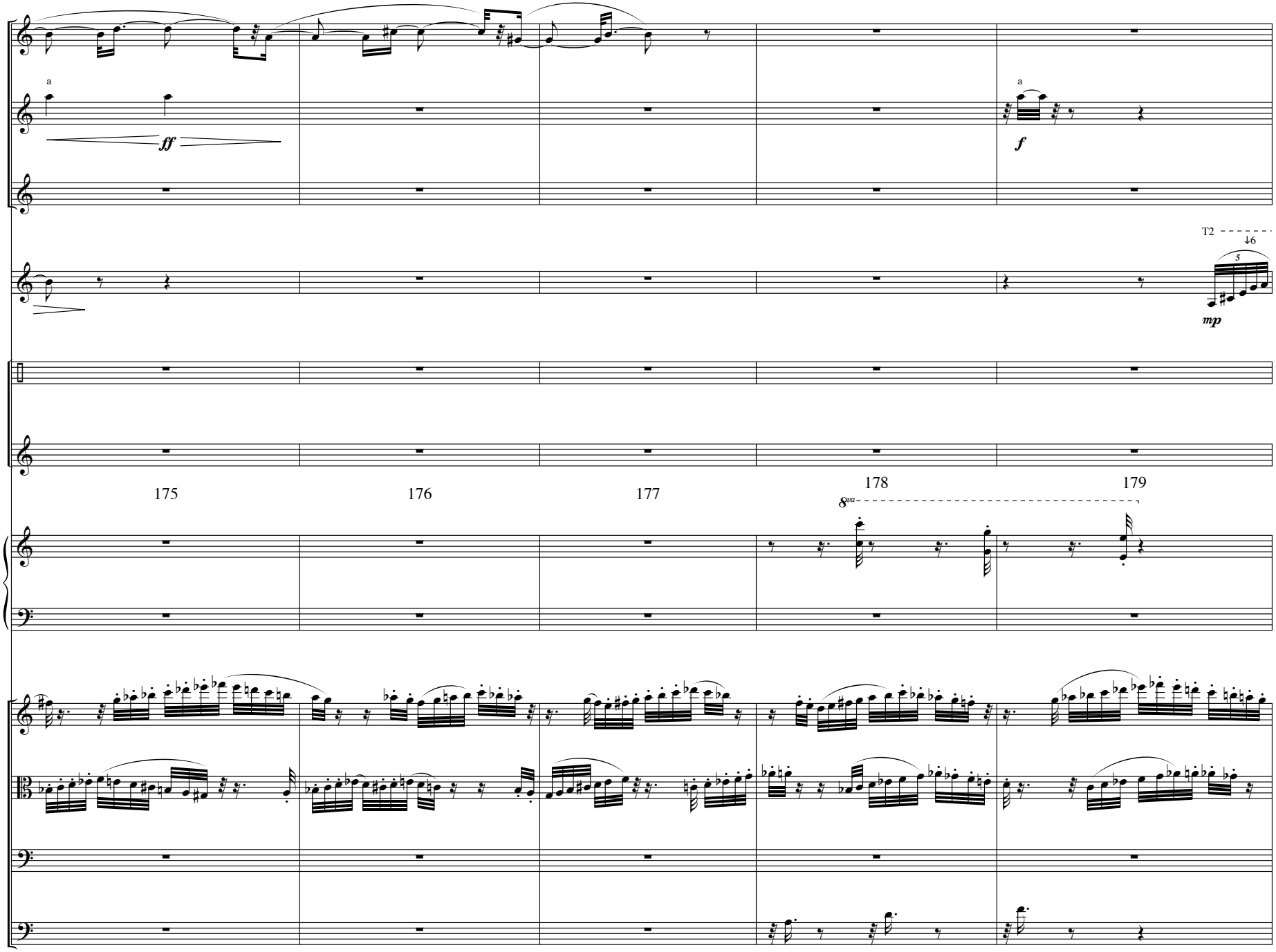
Browsing Agon

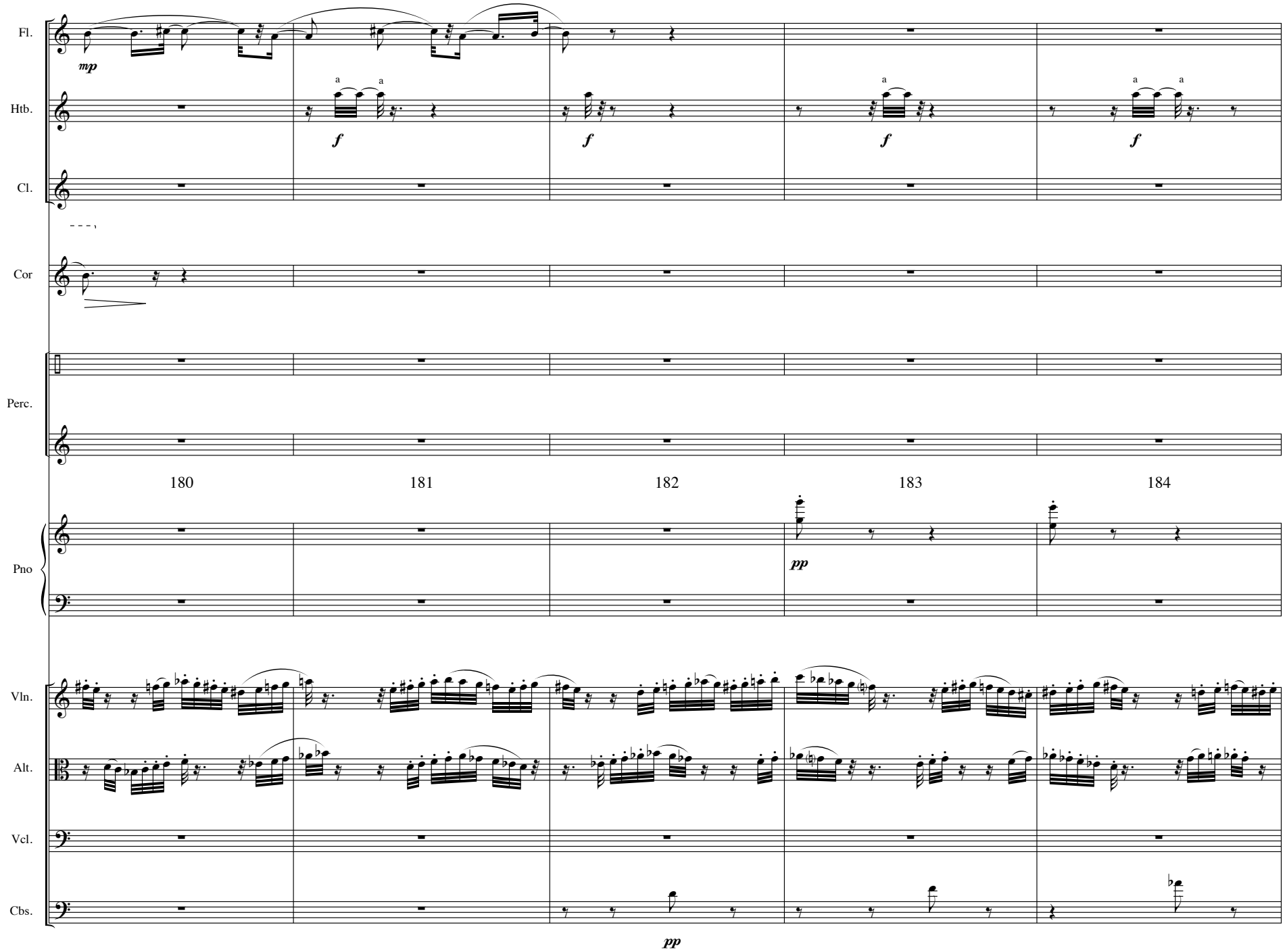



Newt
♪ = 116
pizz.
mp
a = alternative fingering
a
mf
Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
pp
mp
Marimba
Perc.
159
160
161
162
163
164
165
166
Pno
normal
sul tasto
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.

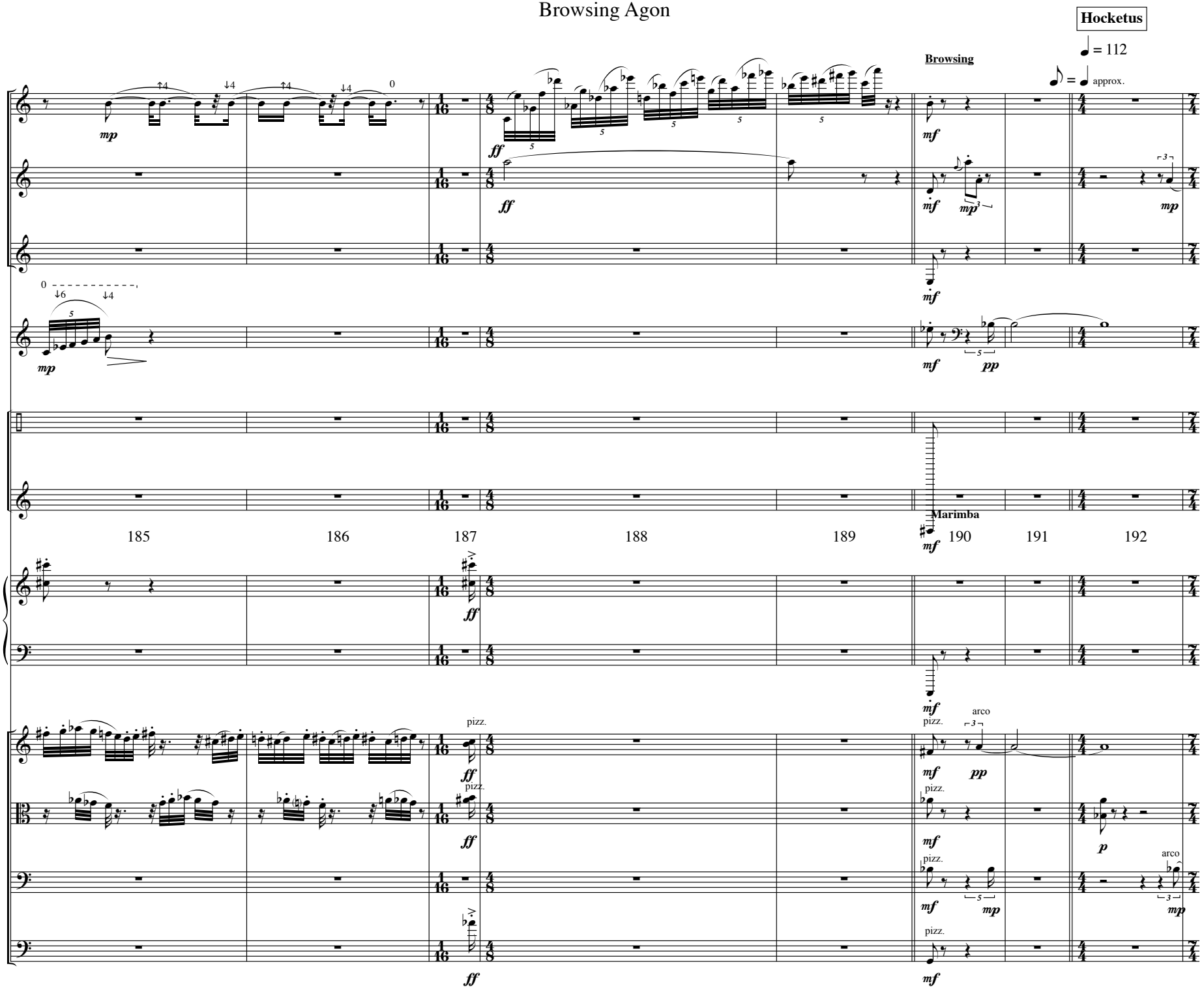

Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
a
mf
mp
T3
↓6
5
pp
8va
pizz.
167
168
169
170

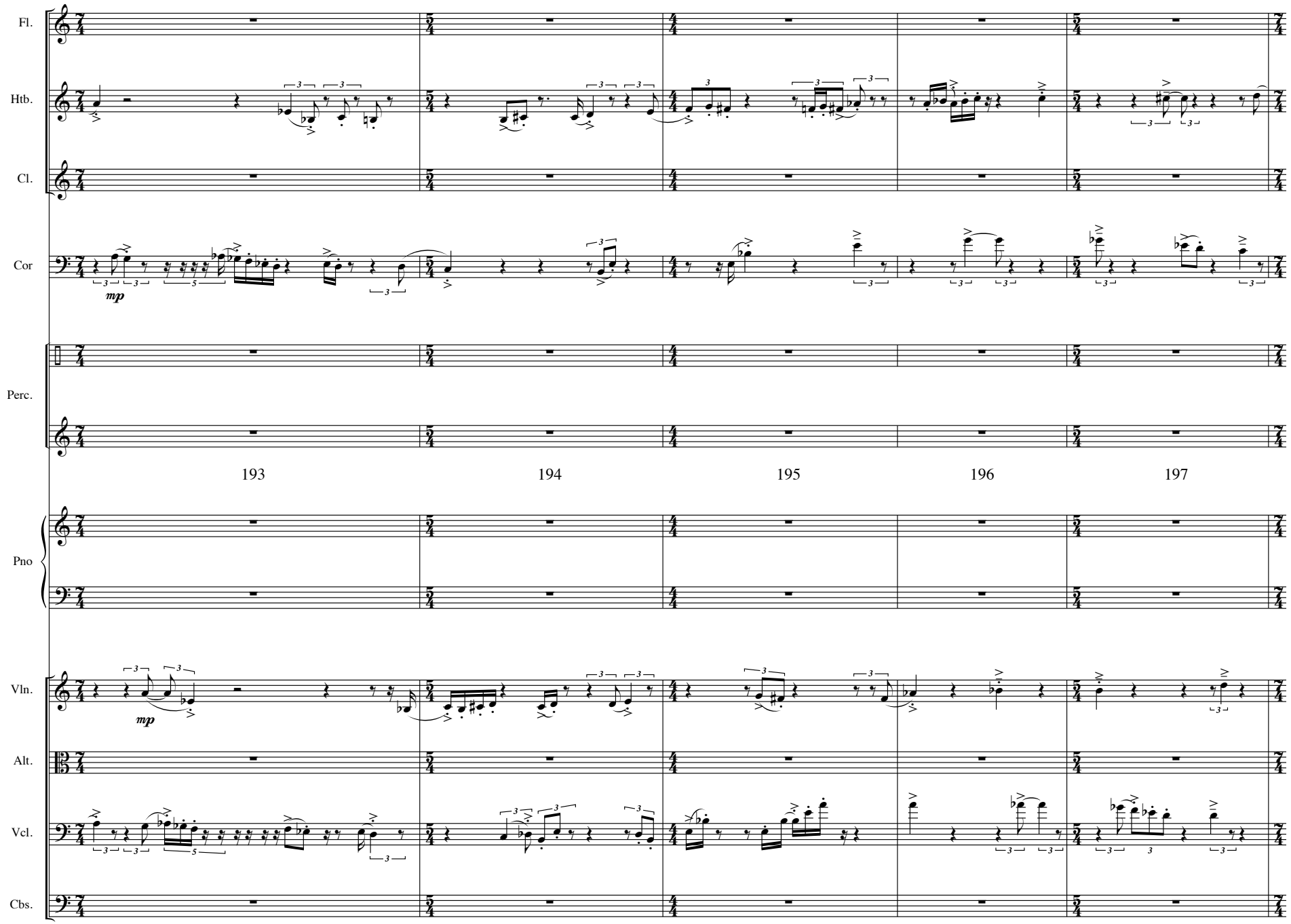

Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
a
mf
mp
23
↓4
↑5
↓6
5
mp
171
172
173
174
8va
pp
pp

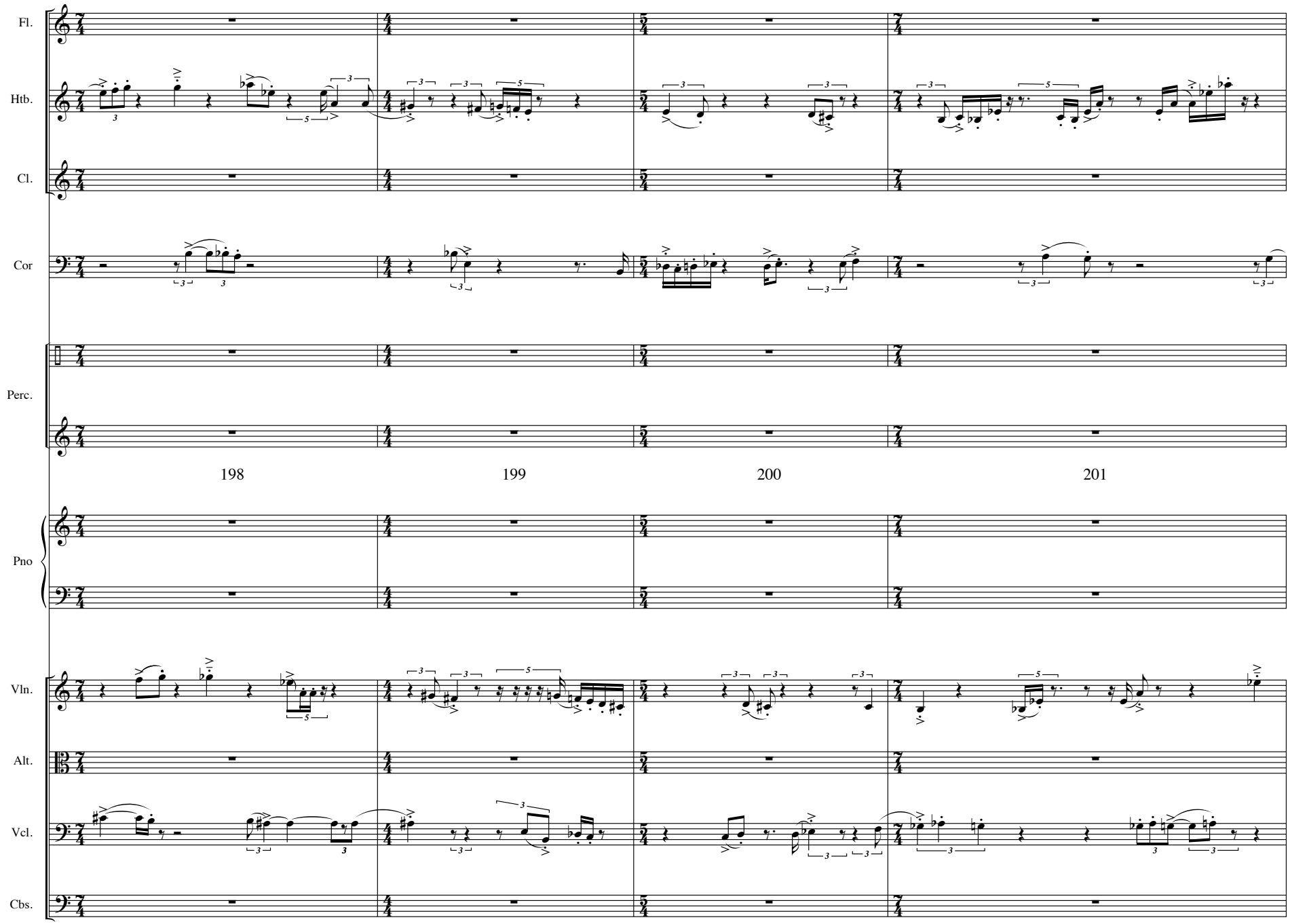

Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
a
ff
a
f
T2
↓6
5
mp
175
176
177
178
179
8va


Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
mp
f
pp
180
181
182
183
184

Browsing Agon




Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
mp
Perc.
193
194
195
196
197
Pno
Vln.
mp
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.


Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
198
199
200
201
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.

Browsing

♩ = 56

Hot sandy beach (with sporadic raindrops)

Fl.

Htb.

Cl.

Cor

Perc.

Glockenspiel
(sounds 15ma)

Marimba

Pno

Vln.

Alt.

Vcl.

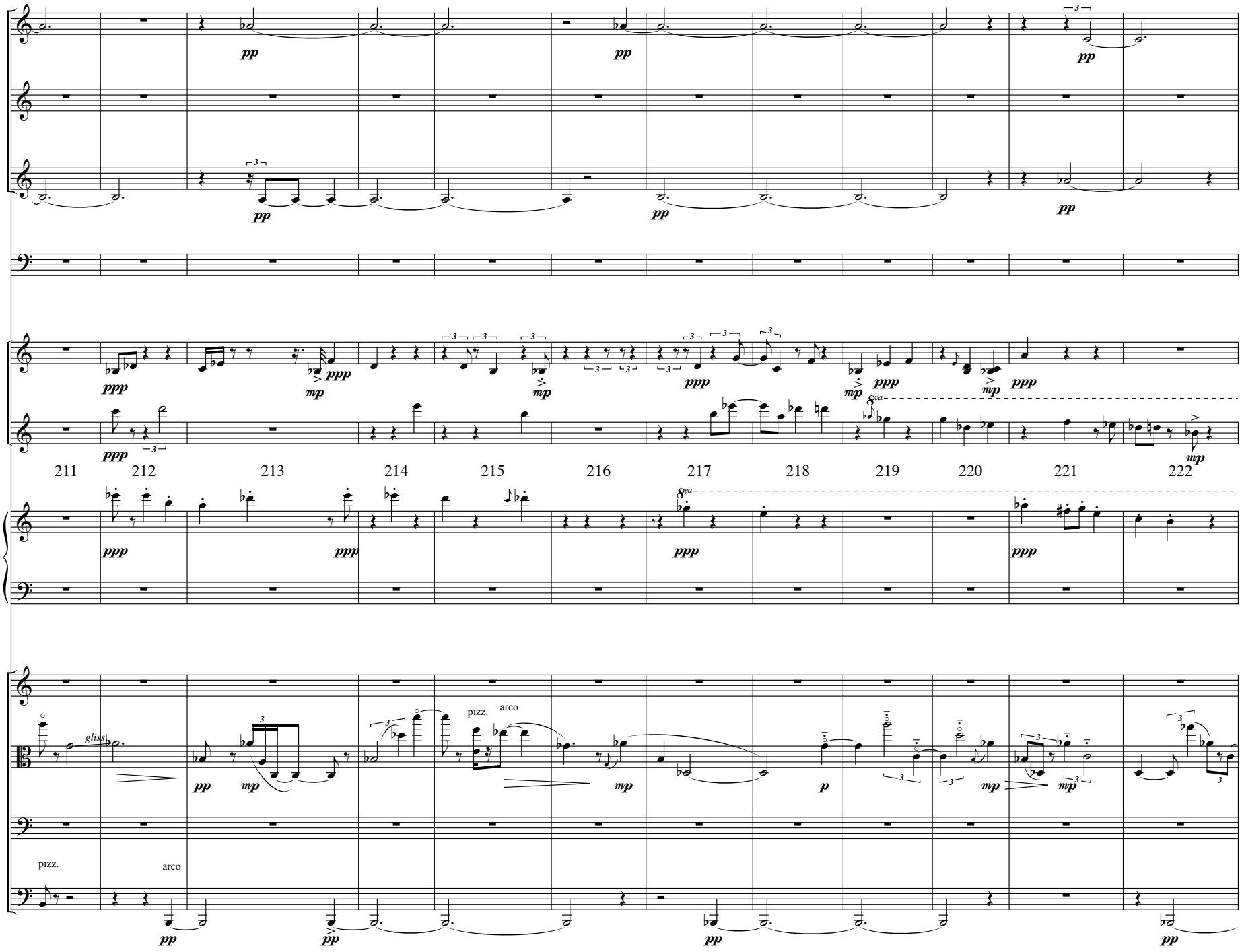
Cbs.

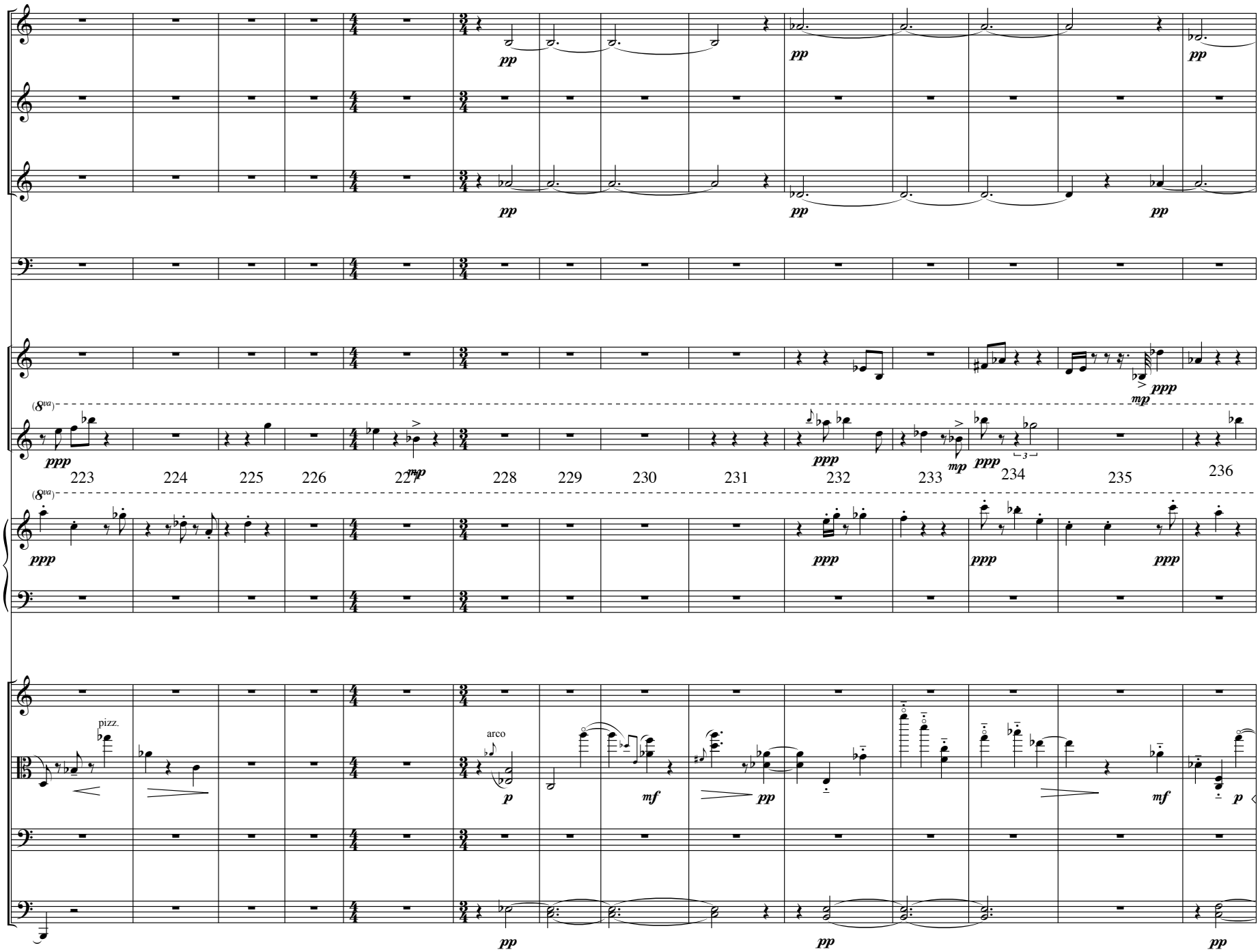
arco

gliss.

pizz.

202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210

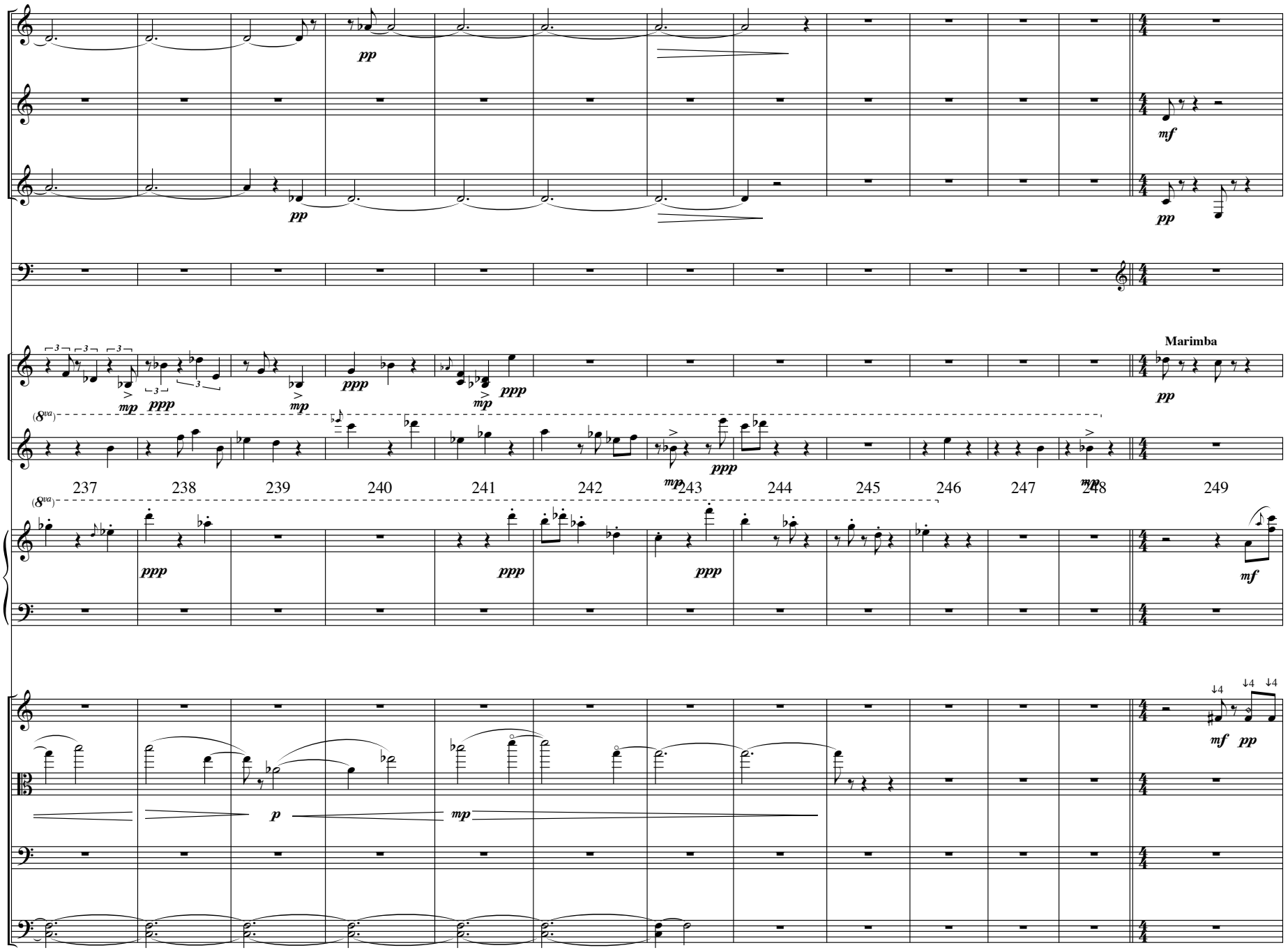

Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
Perc.
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
211
212
213
214
215
216
217
218
219
220
221
222
gliss.
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco


Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
Perc.
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
pizz.
arco
223
224
225
226
227
228
229
230
231
232
233
234
235
236

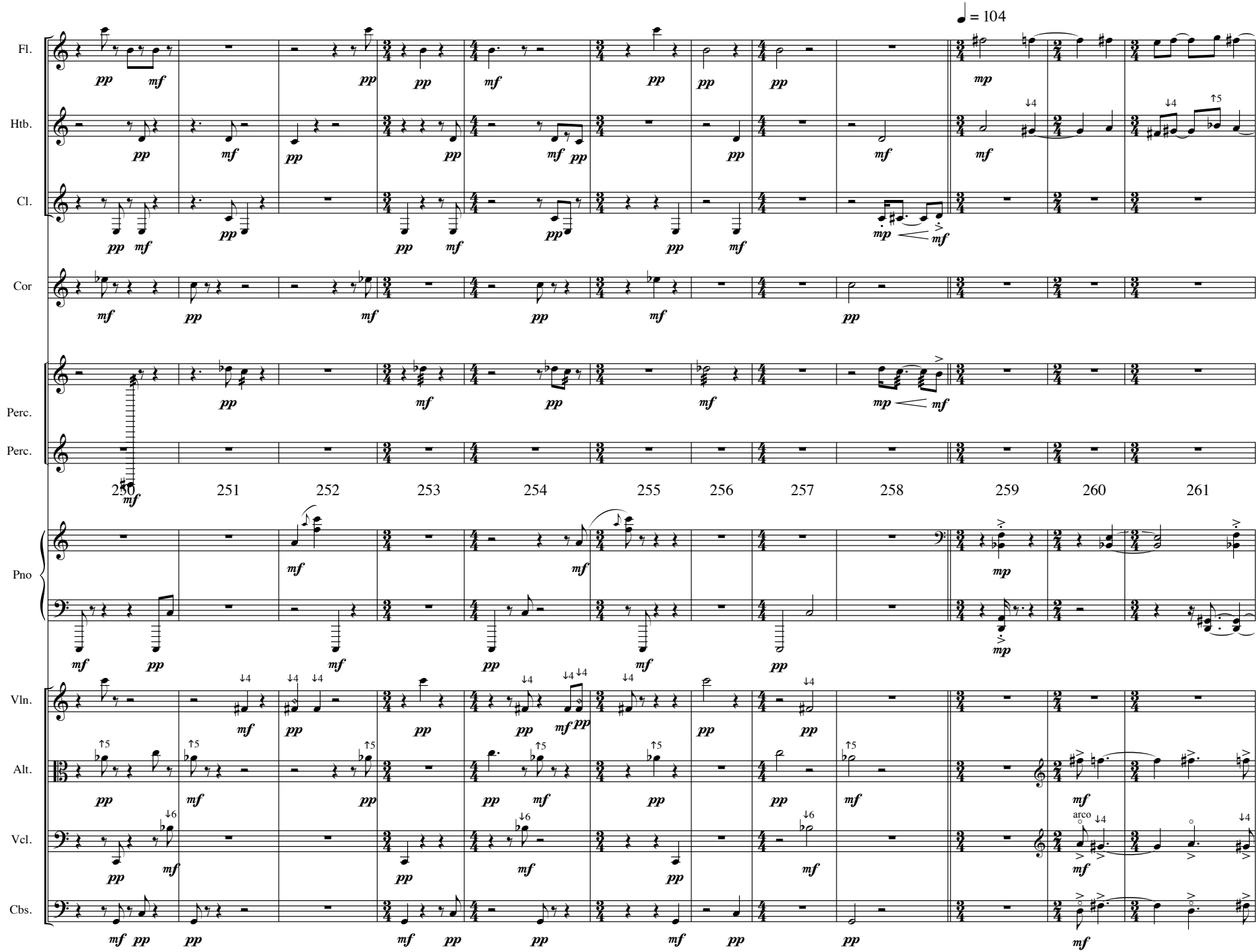
Browsing Agon

Browsing

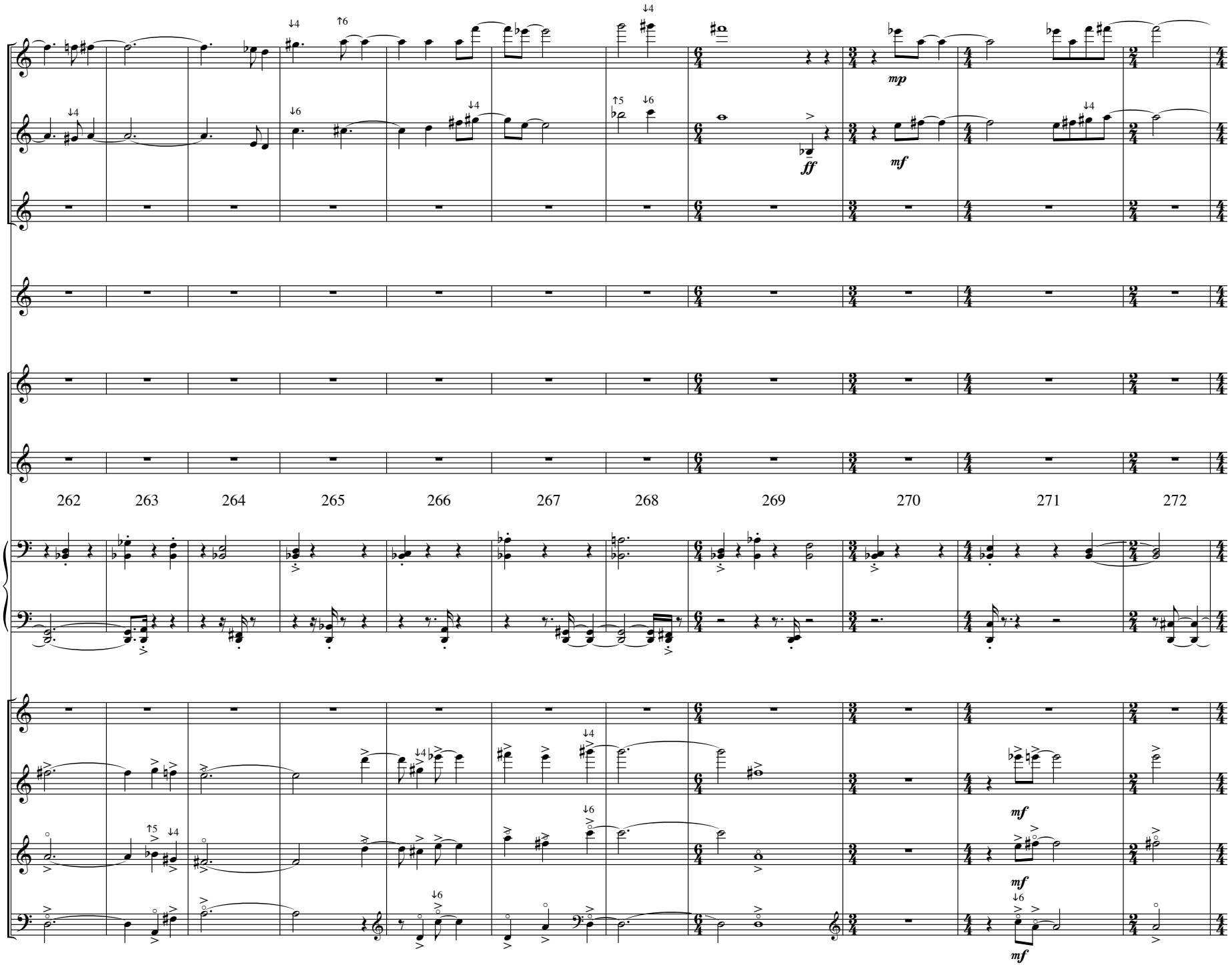
Un poco meno (♩ = 52)

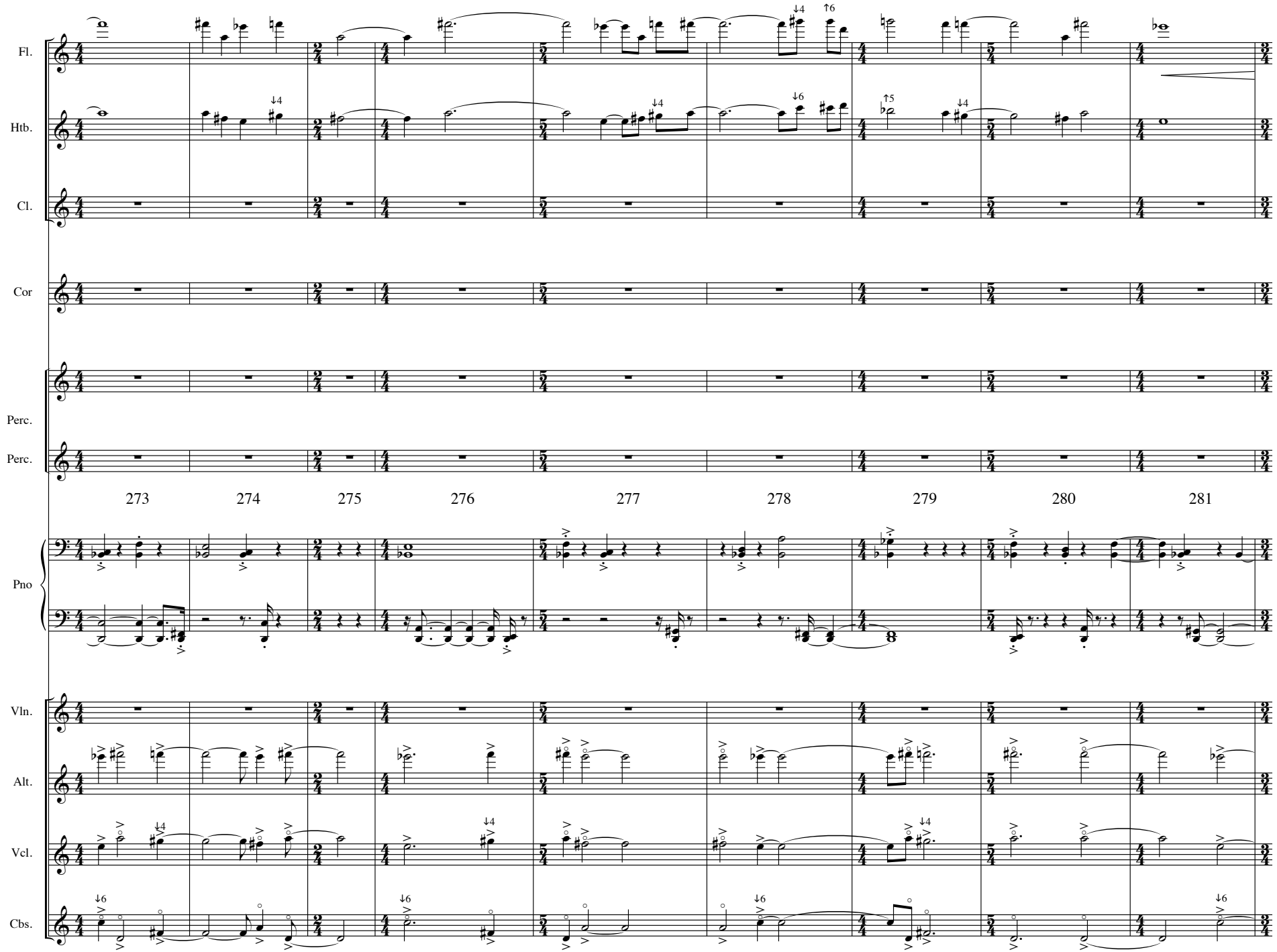


Multiphonics

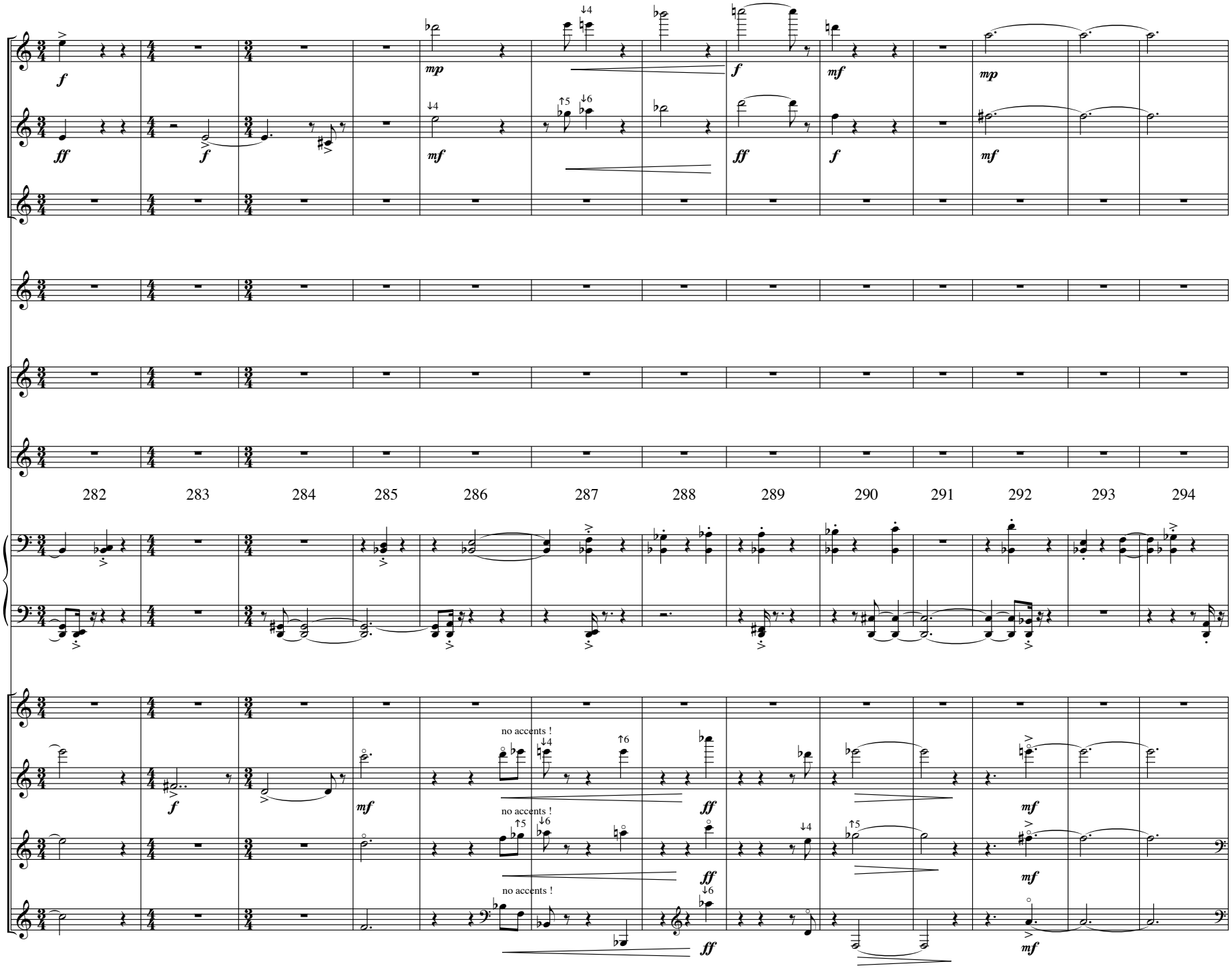


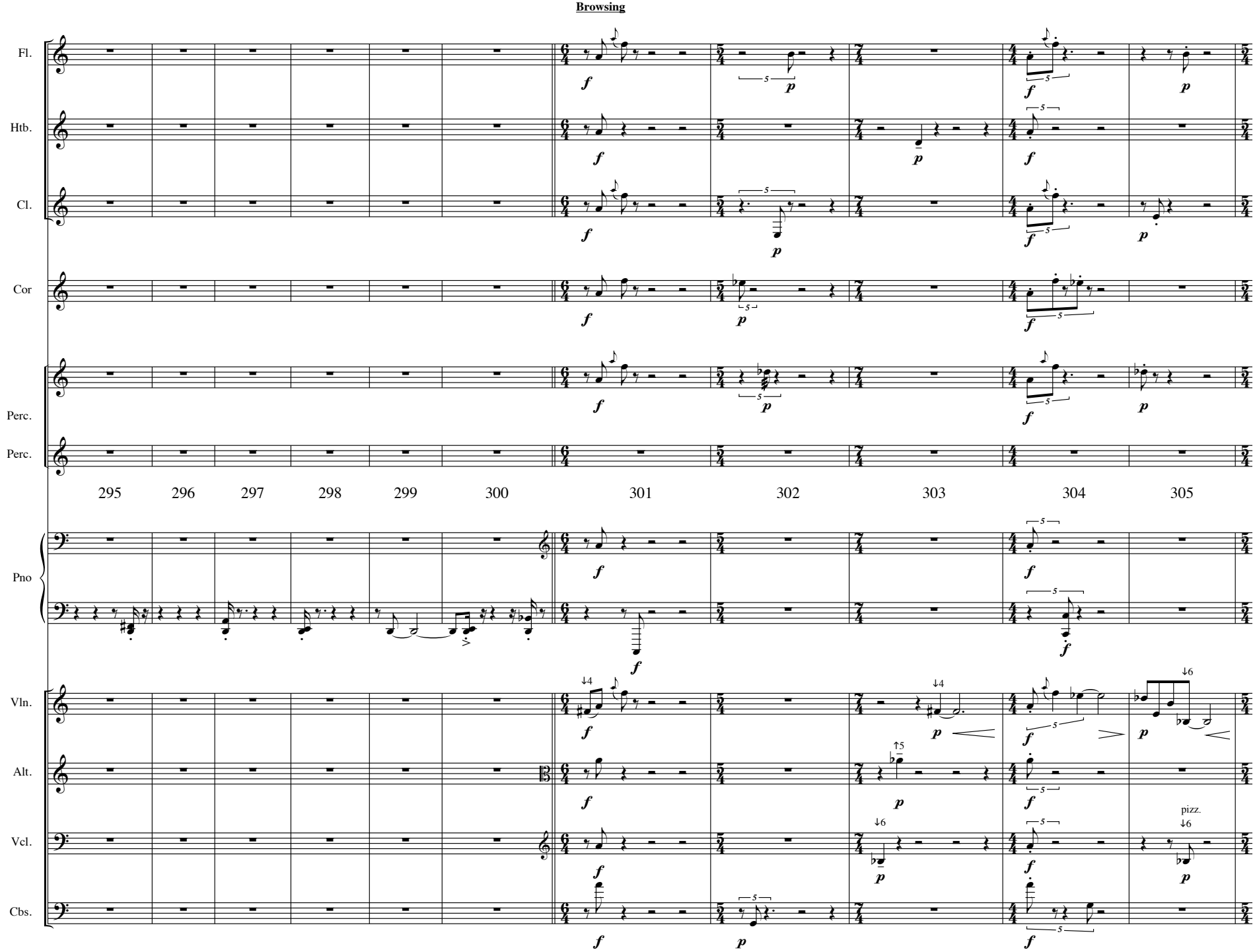
Browsing Agon




Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
Perc.
273
274
275
276
277
278
279
280
281
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.

Browsing Agon




Browsing
Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
Perc.
295
296
297
298
299
300
301
302
303
304
305
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
pizz.

Browsing Agon

Turkey, shoes, wine...

de 5:4 = ♩ = 126

Fl.

Htb.

Cl.

Mouth on the mouthpiece :
▲ = a short aspired "t"
▽ = "smack" tone (like a short kiss)
ø = percussion with nail or a wooden marble on the bell (click)

Cor

Perc.

Perc.

306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316

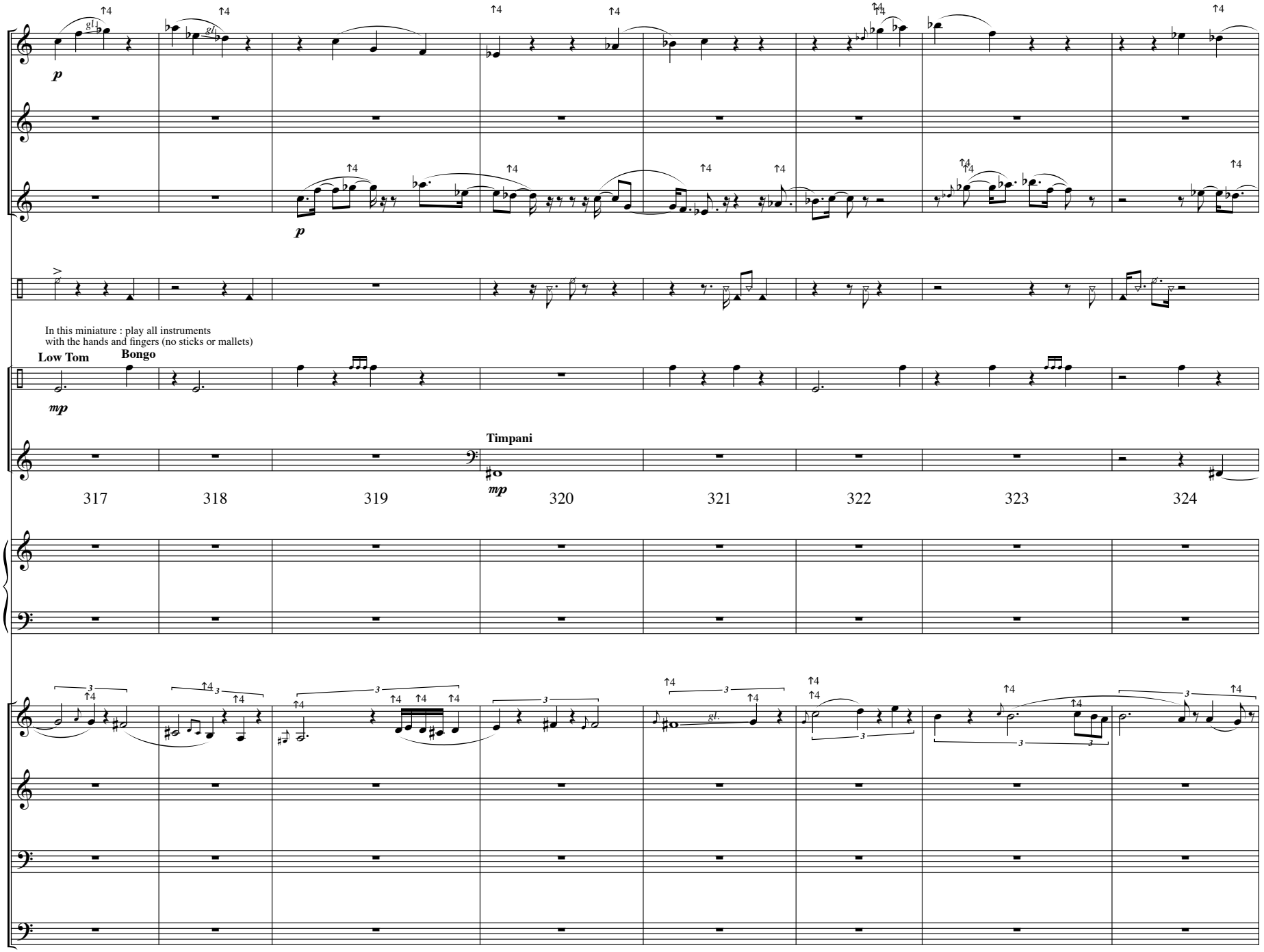
Pno

Vln.

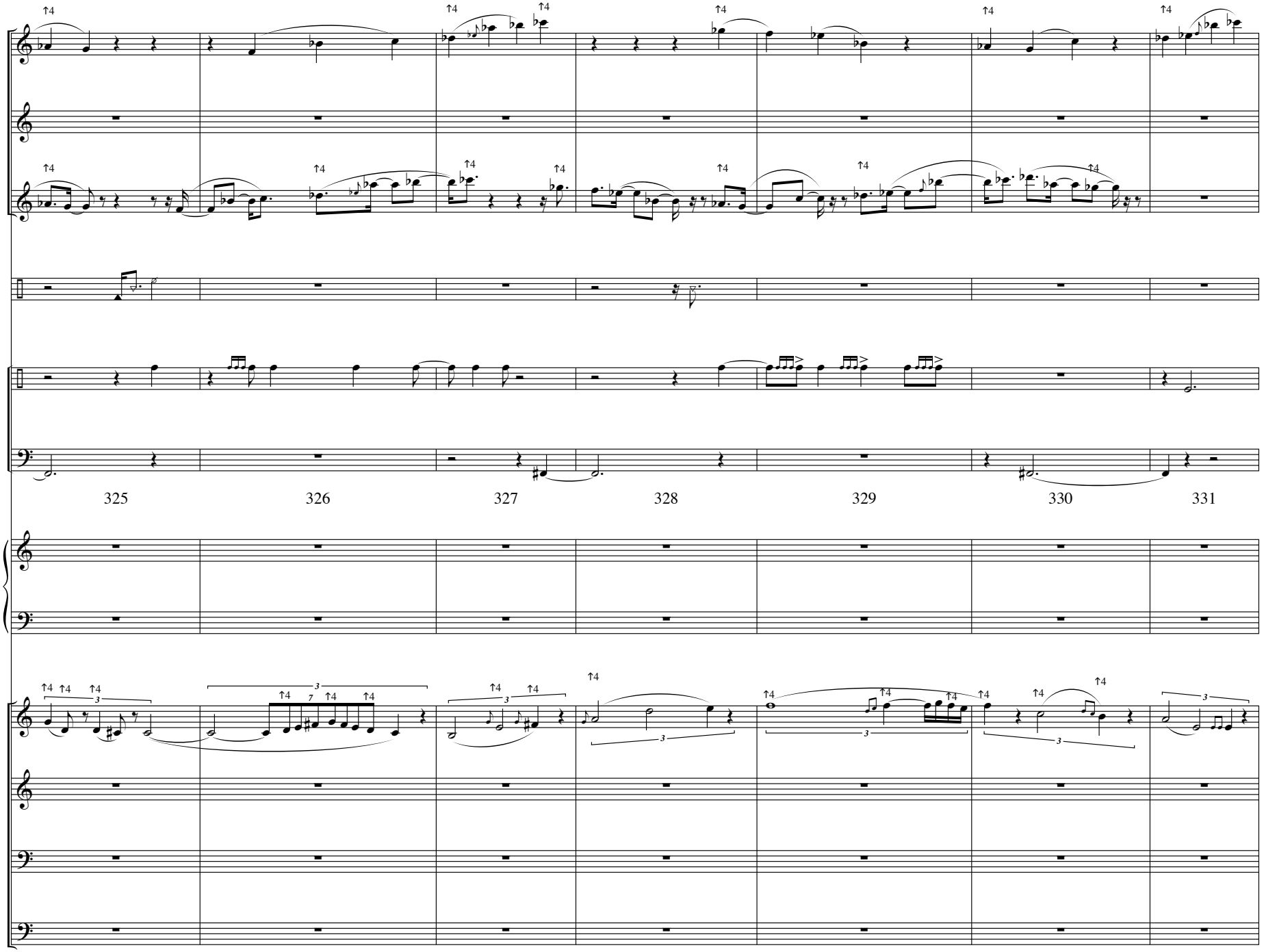
Alt.

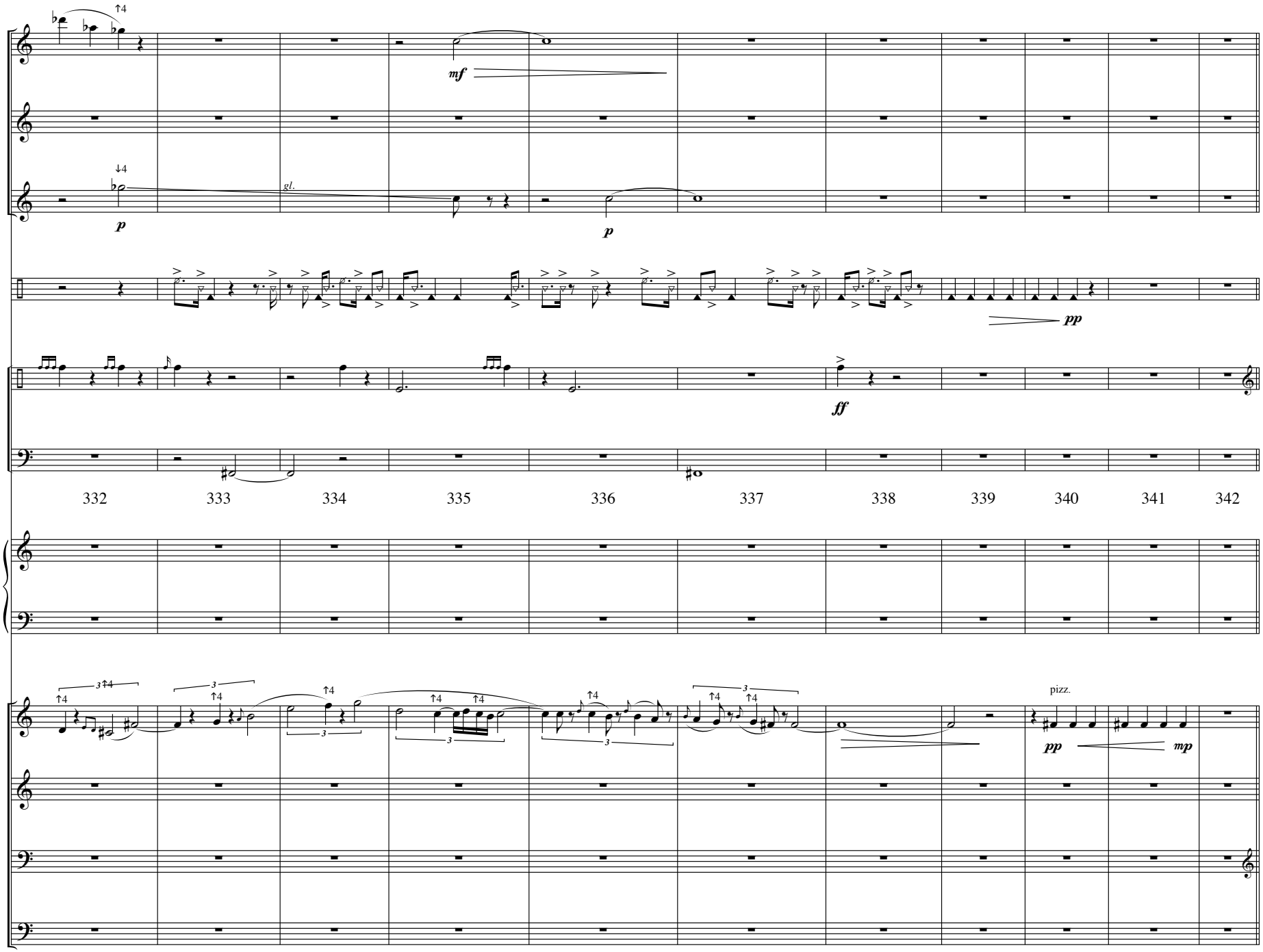
Vcl.

Cbs.

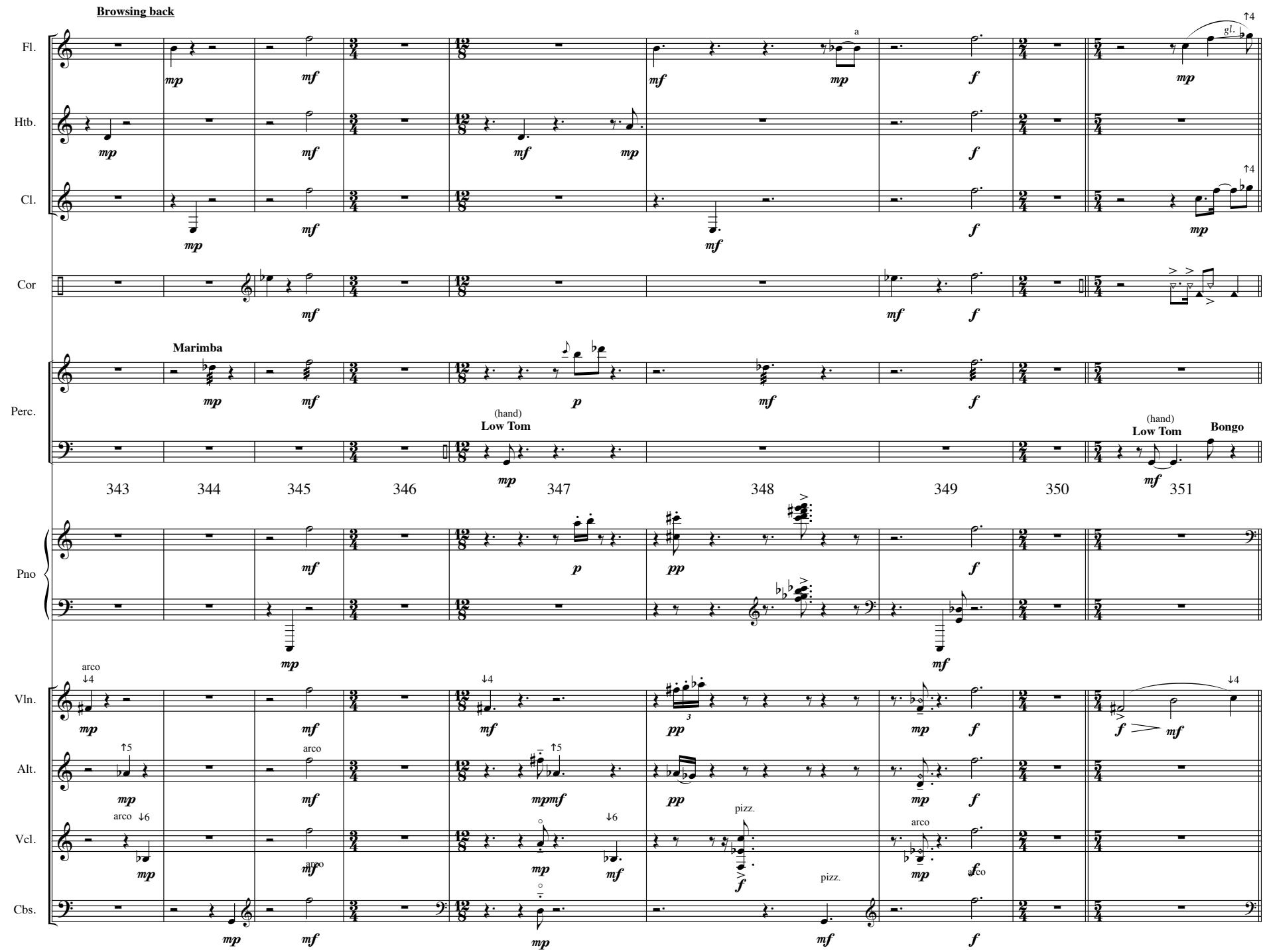

Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
In this miniature : play all instruments
with the hands and fingers (no sticks or mallets)
Low Tom
Bongo
Perc.
Perc.
Timpani
317
318
319
320
321
322
323
324
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.

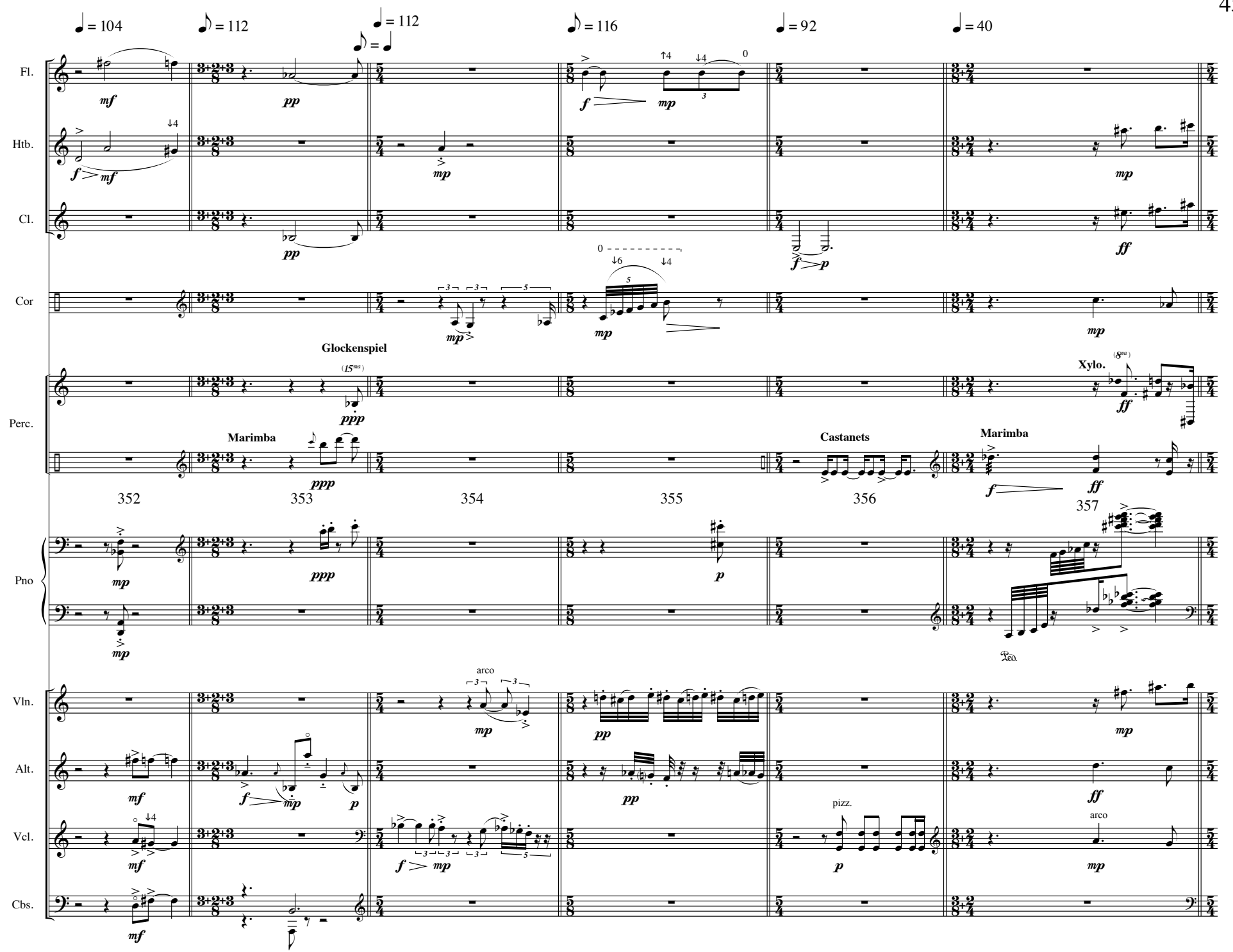
Browsing Agon



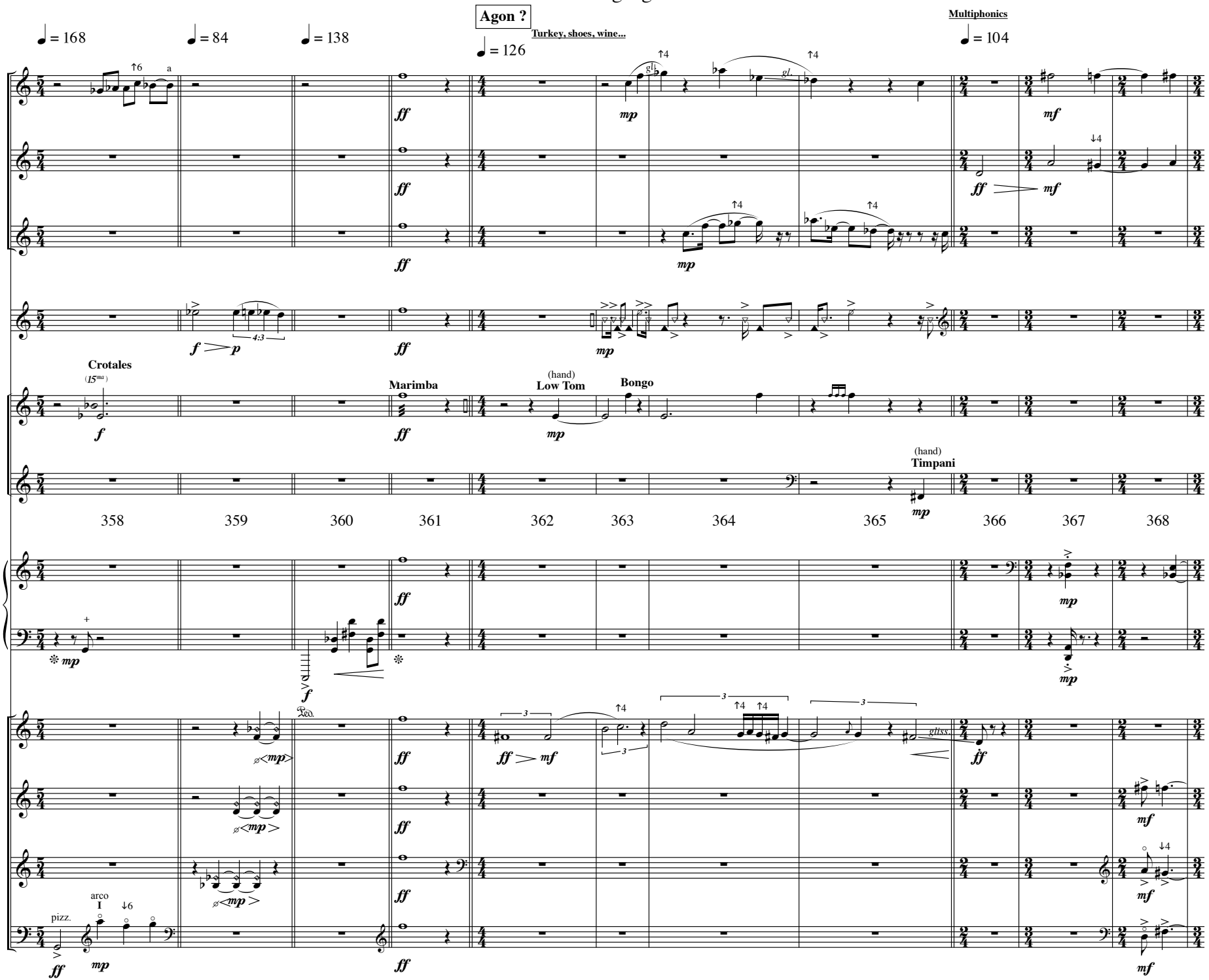

Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
Perc.
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
mf
p
p
gl.
pp
ff
pizz.
pp
mp
332
333
334
335
336
337
338
339
340
341
342

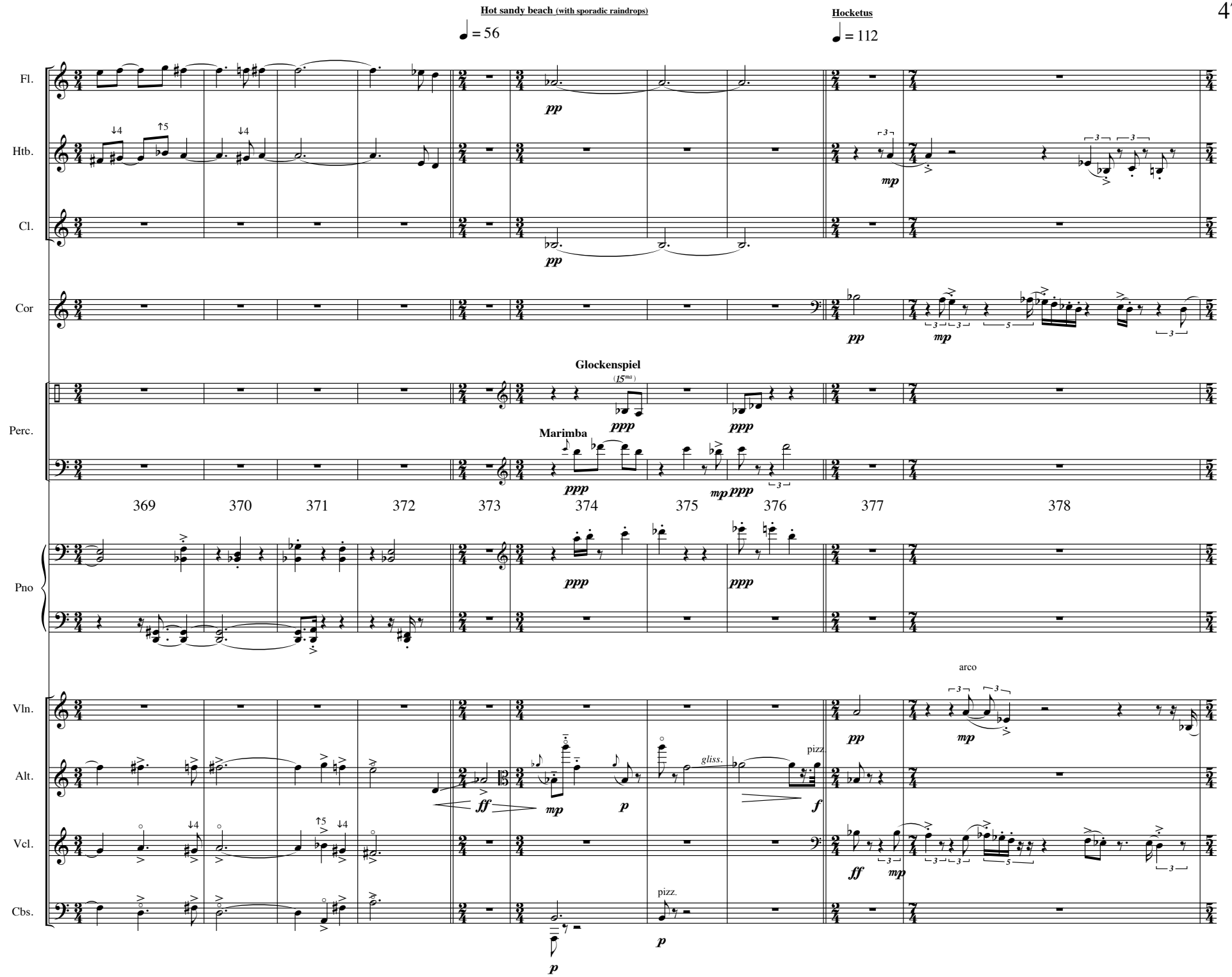
Browsing Agon




♩ = 104
♪ = 112
♩ = 112
♪ = ♩
♪ = 116
♩ = 92
♩ = 40
Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Glockenspiel
Xylo.
Perc.
Marimba
Castanets
Marimba
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
arco
pizz.
arco
352
353
354
355
356
357

Browsing Agon

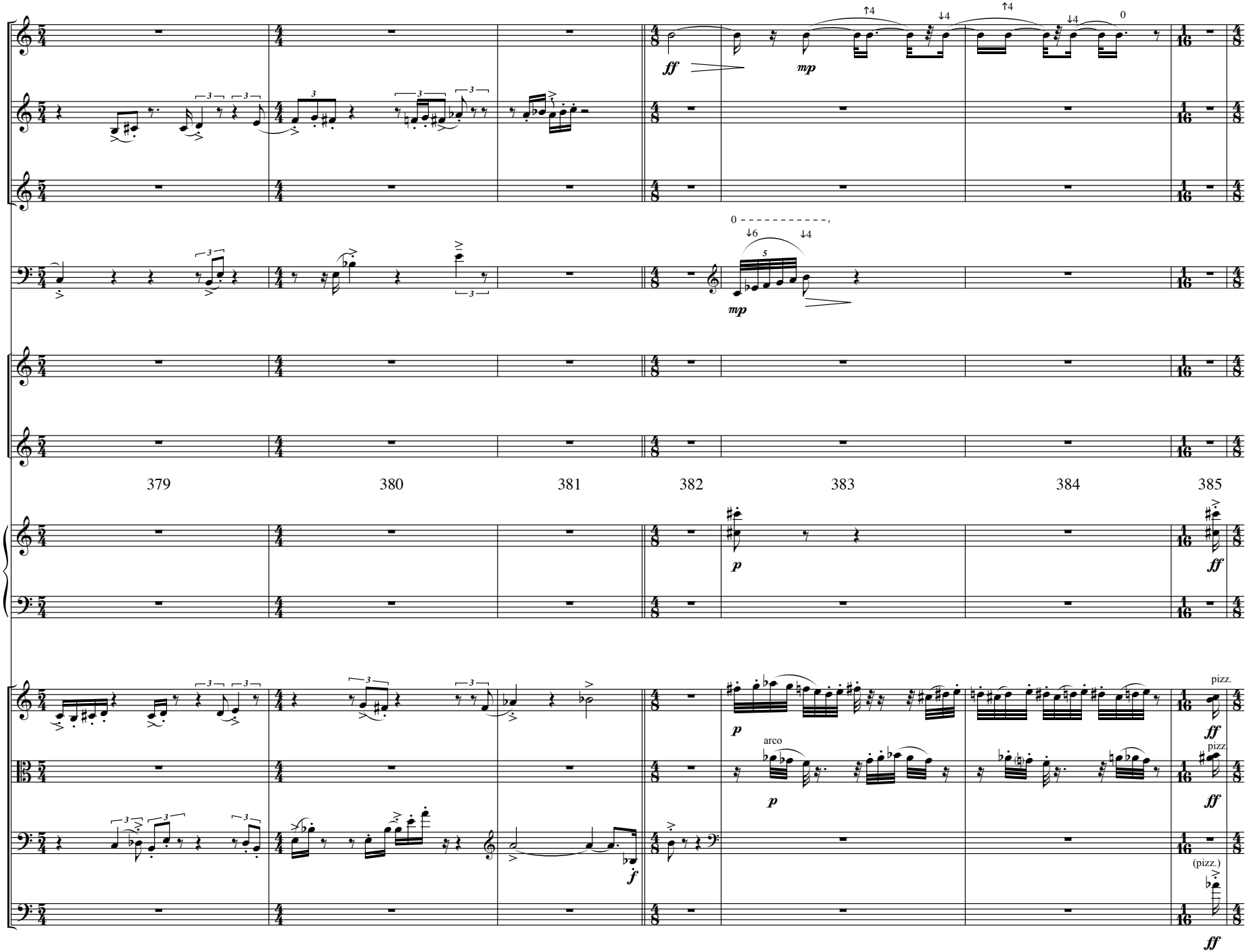


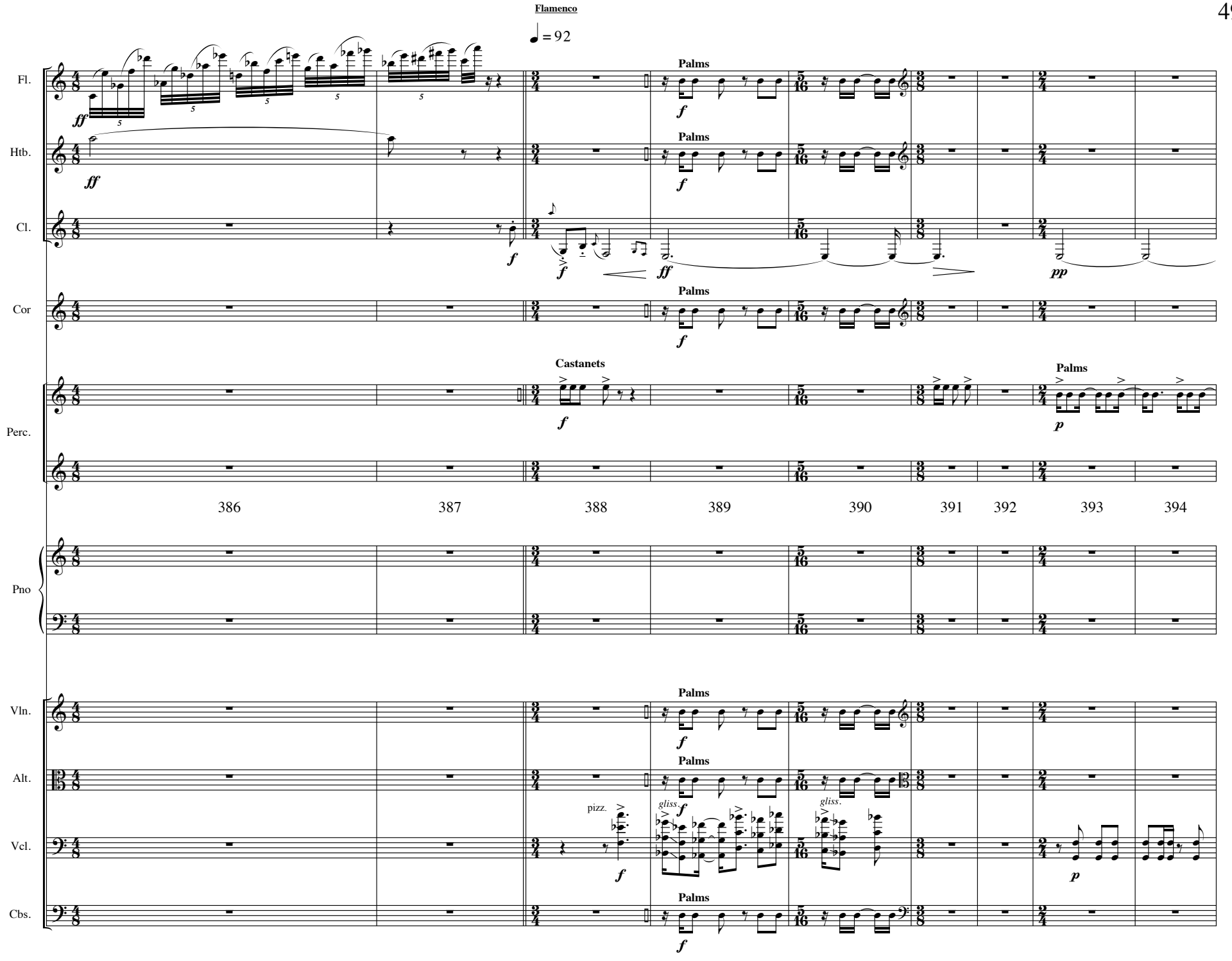

Hot sandy beach (with sporadic raindrops)
♩ = 56
Hocketus
♩ = 112
Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Glockenspiel
(15ma)
Perc.
Marimba
369
370
371
372
373
374
375
376
377
378
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
arco
gliss.
pizz.

Browsing Agon

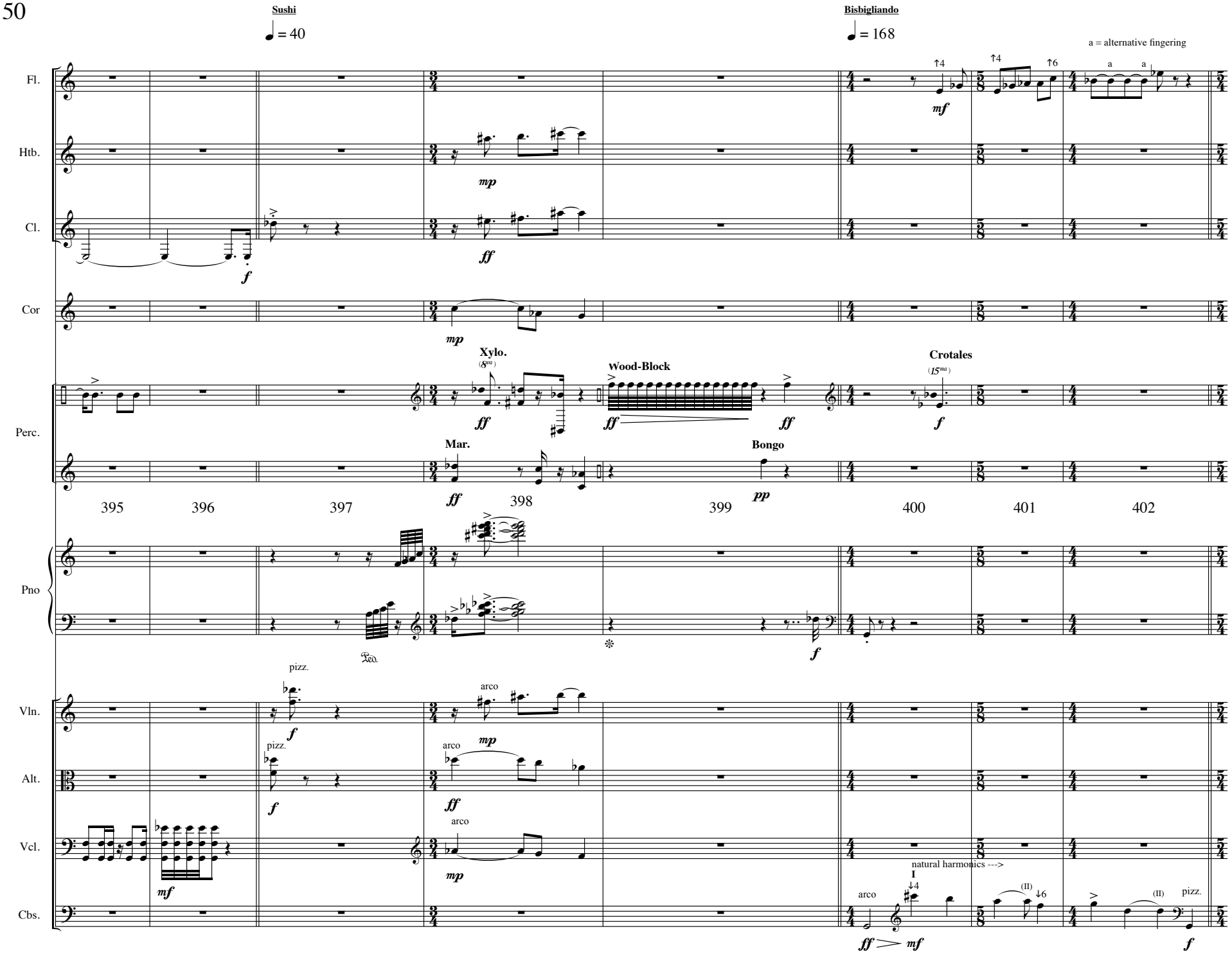
Newt

♪ = 116



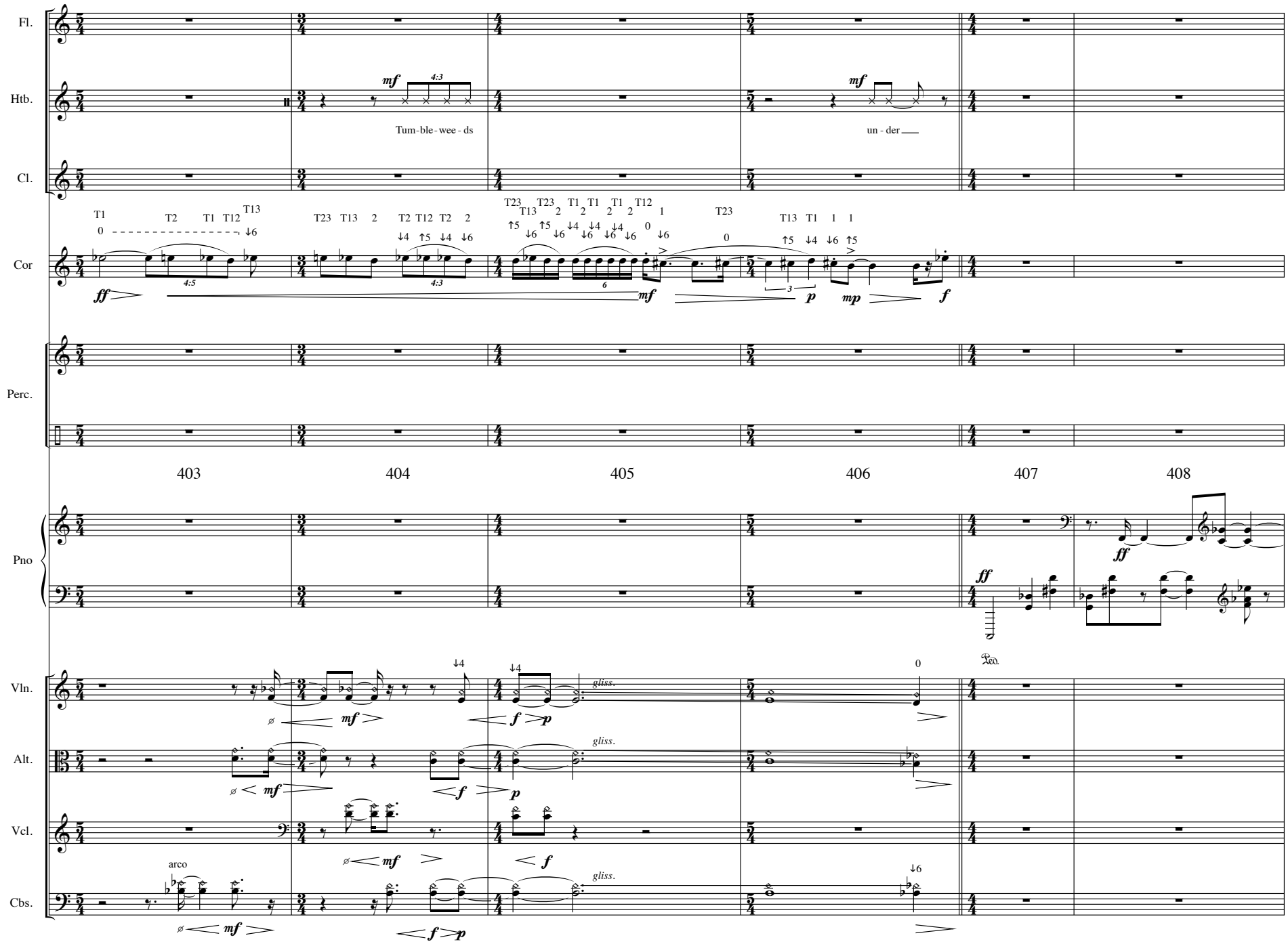

Flamenco
♩ = 92
Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Perc.
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
Palms
Castanets
pizz.
gliss.
386
387
388
389
390
391
392
393
394

Browsing Agon



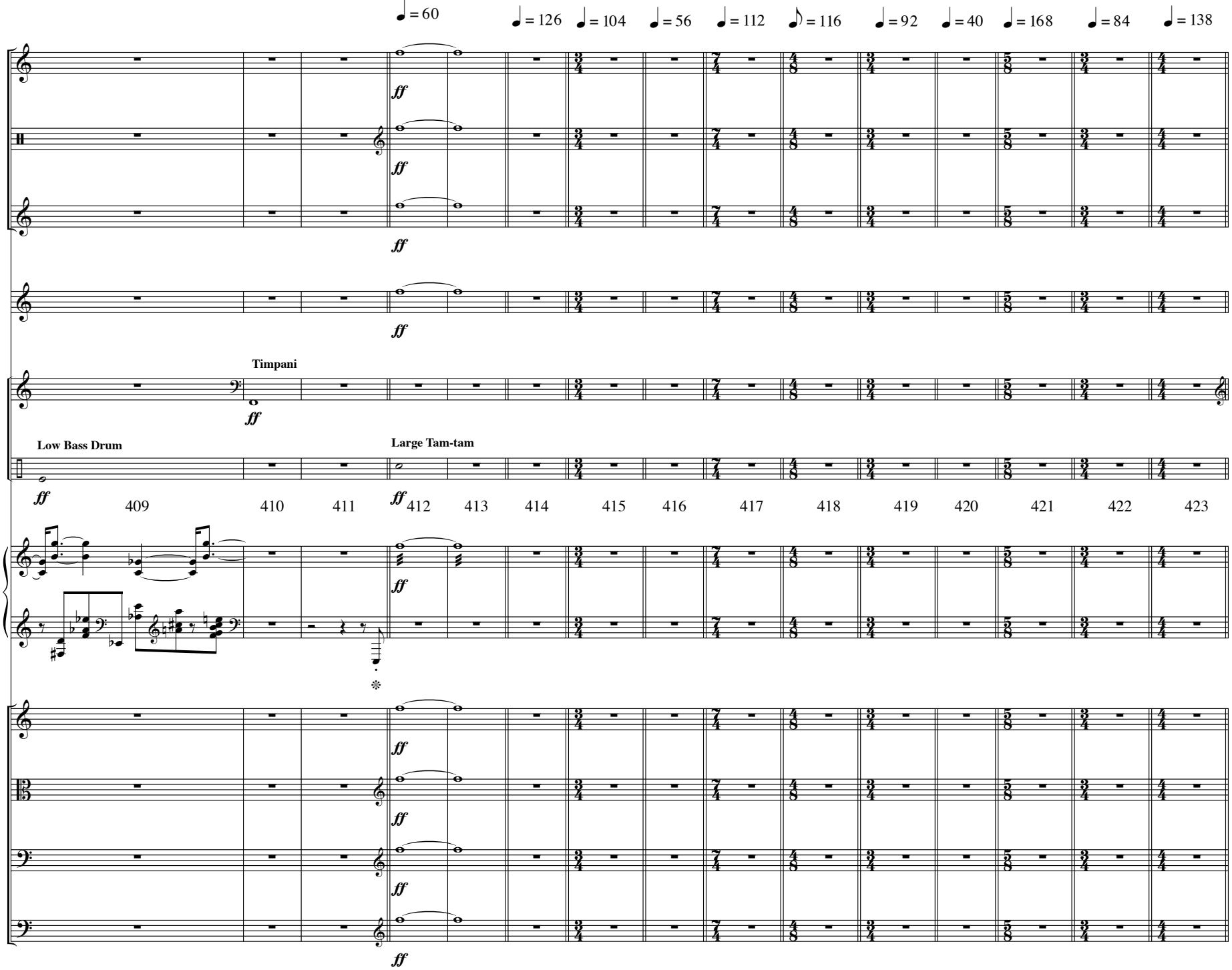
Zéphyr (Amnesia)

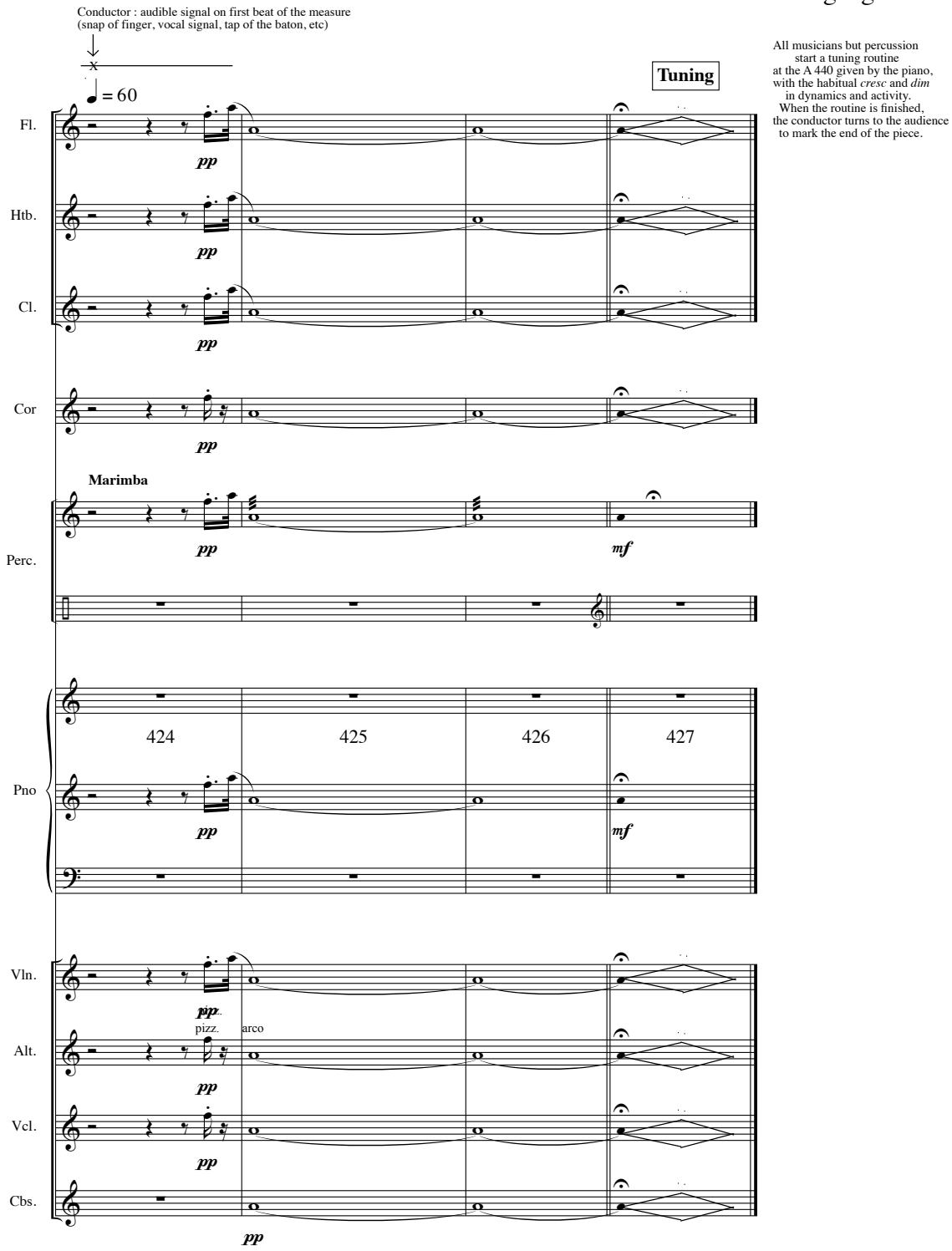
♩ = 84



Browsing Agon

Solo for conductor. During this solo, all instrumentalists must close their eyes. Each one must play, at the threshold of audibility, one short but evocative excerpt of his or her solo. All open back their eyes at the audible signal of the conductor (1st beat of measure 424)




Conductor : audible signal on first beat of the measure
(snap of finger, vocal signal, tap of the baton, etc)
x
♩ = 60
Tuning
All musicians but percussion
start a tuning routine
at the A 440 given by the piano,
with the habitual cresc and dim
in dynamics and activity.
When the routine is finished,
the conductor turns to the audience
to mark the end of the piece.
Fl.
Htb.
Cl.
Cor
Marimba
Perc.
Pno
Vln.
Alt.
Vcl.
Cbs.
pp
mf
pizz.
arco
424
425
426
427