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Road Not Taken

Concerto for Bass Trombone and Trombone Ensemble - piano reduction done by the composer May 6, 2011

by James M. Stephenson

Three Movements:

I. Two Roads
II. Diverged
III. All the Difference

Duration: Approx. 16 minutes.
Scored for Solo Bass Trombone and 11-player Trombone Ensemble:

1 Alto/Tenor Trombone
7 Tenor Trombones
3 Bass Trombones

Program Notes:

The title for 'Road Less Taken' was arrived upon after completion of the score, and in a rather 'wandering' manner.

Much of the piece is based on off-beats, set in many different forms; therefore my working title was always "Off the beaten path". This title didn't really hold much water for me, and after a bit of stretching and re-working, I arrived at the current title, based obviously on Robert Frost's famous poem. The more I thought about it, the more connections I began to realize between my musical life, this piece, and the title.

First of all, in my own life, I have chosen the less traveled path. Having been comfortably situated in two steady performing jobs for almost 20 years, my wife and I decided to quit, move to a completely different location, and follow my new-found passion for composing. One might argue also that composing a bass trombone concerto, in and of itself, is a 'road less taken'. It is not the most common choice for a concerto. Lastly, it was my goal to allow for the solo bass trombone to be featured in a manner inconsistent with the often misguided preconceptions: at the request of the dedicatee and co-commissioner, Matthew Guilford, the instrument is presented lyrically, and the upper range is displayed equally, if not more than, the lower.

More technically speaking, the movements themselves are pretty standard in form, with themes, ideas and harmonies recurring and developed throughout the piece to form a consistent whole. An interesting device only used in the slow movement is the introduction of a separate trio of players, who interrupt occasionally with their off-kilter fragments, almost a skipping old record-player. The last movement is quite virtuosic, calling for much endurance, agility and extended range from the soloist.

It is with much gratitude that I dedicate this score to the co-commissioners: the Washington Trombone Ensemble (Sam Woodhead) and Matthew Guilford, the latter of whom I am delighted to reconnect with after our paths again converge more than 20 years after our shared college years at the New England Conservatory.

Jim Stephenson, February 1, 2010

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Commissioned by Matthew Guilford and the Washington Trombone Ensemble

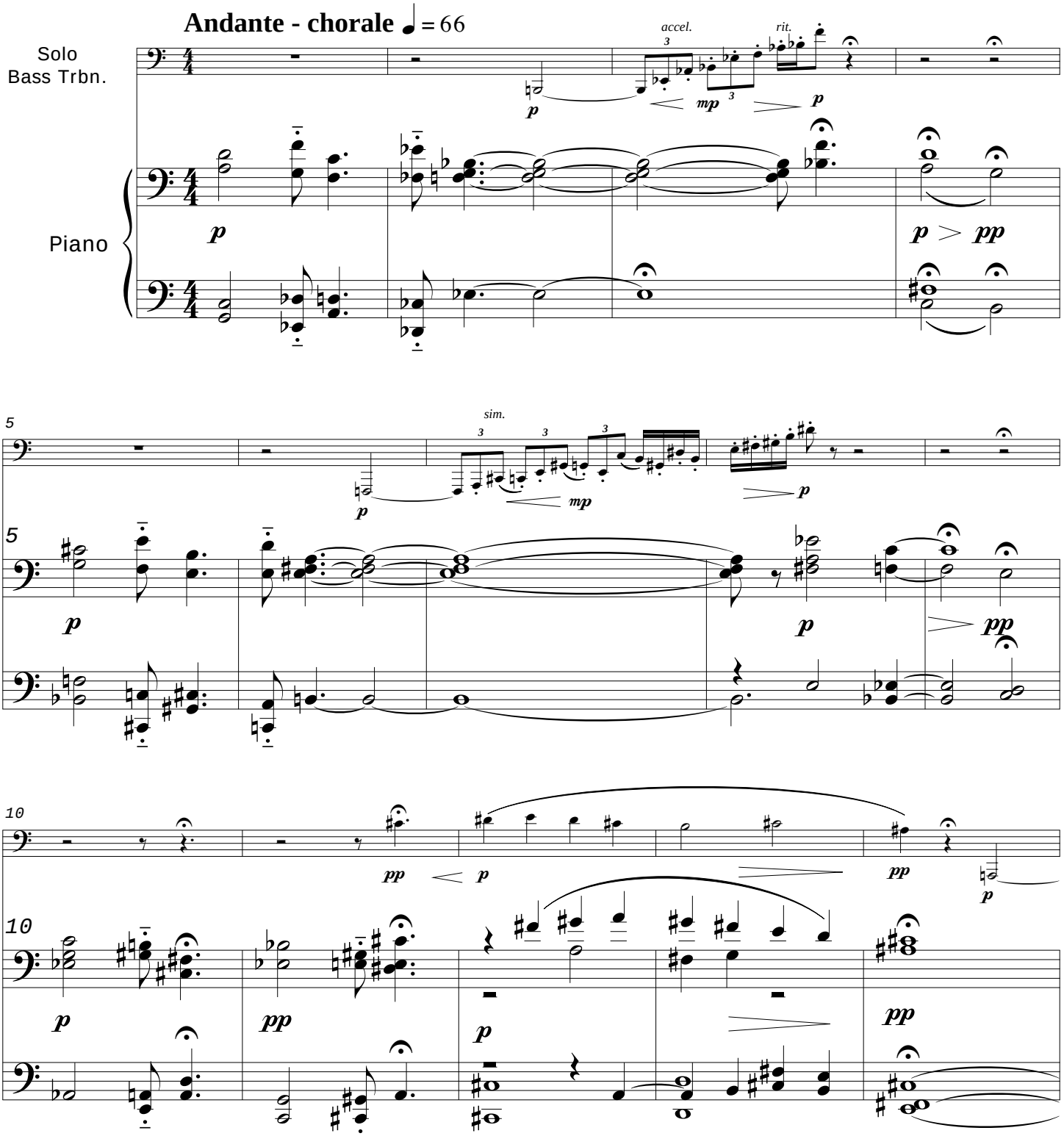
Piano Reduction

ROAD NOT TAKEN

Concerto for Bass Trombone
and Trombone Ensemble

James M. Stephenson

I. Two Roads



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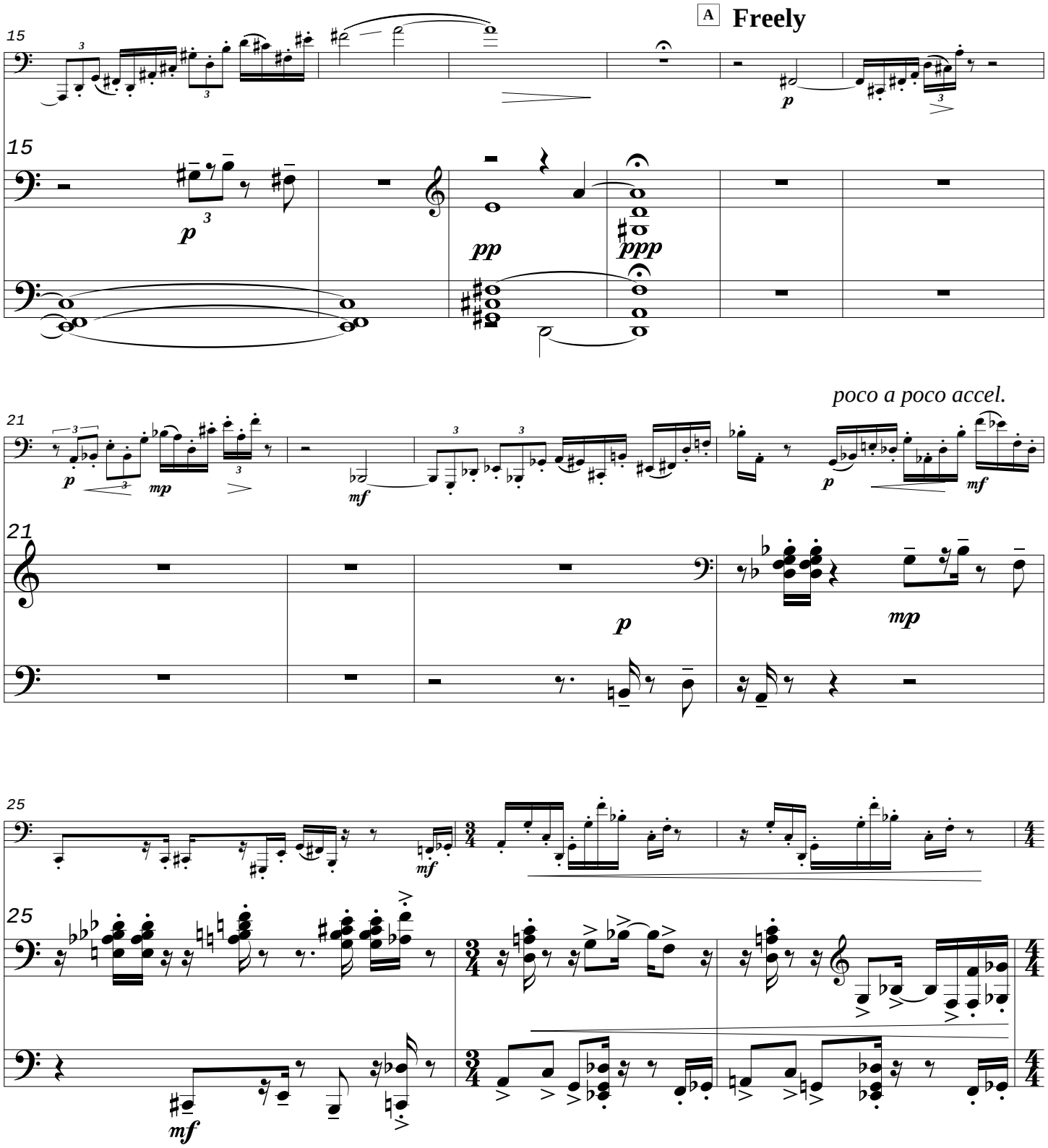
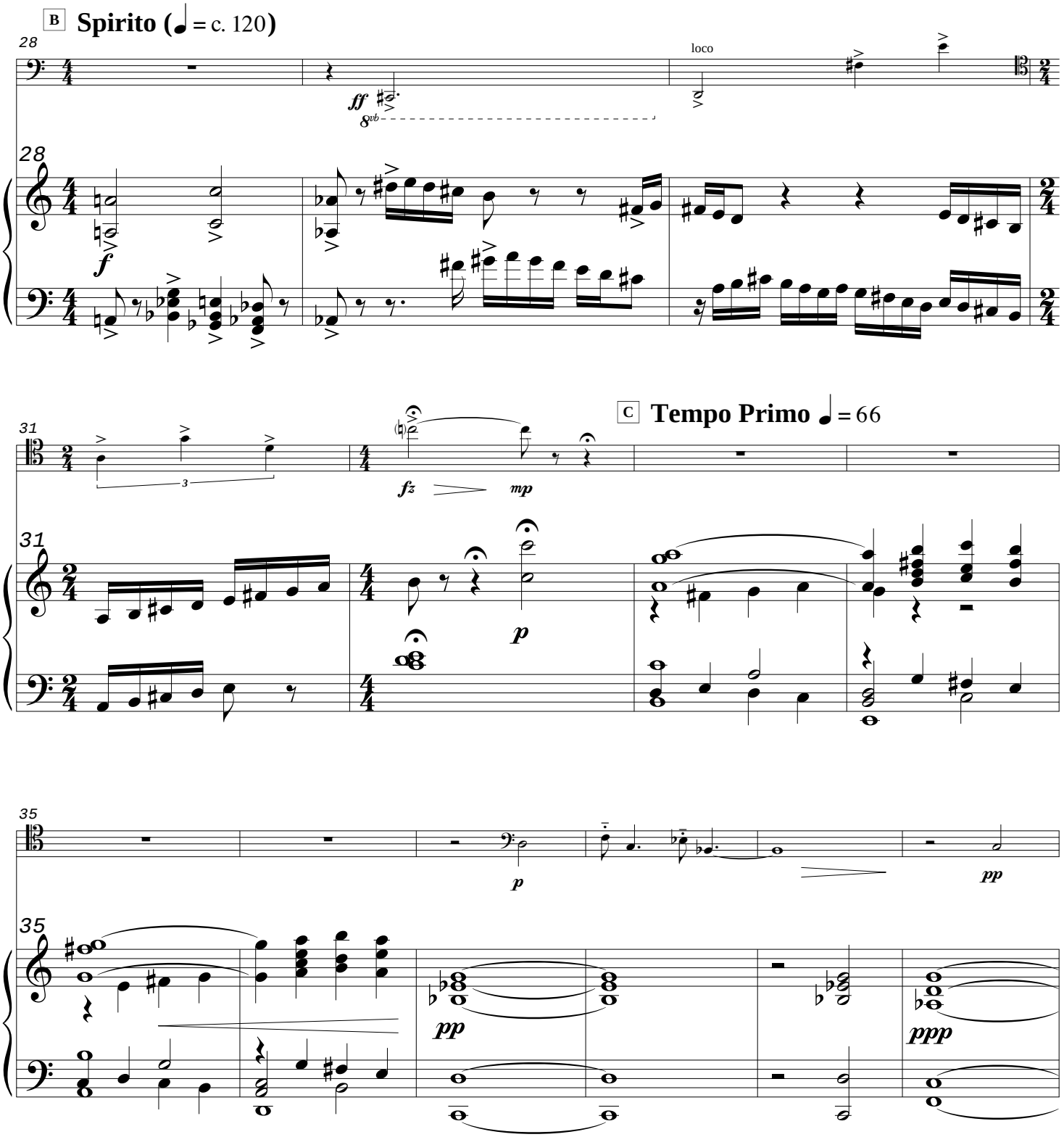
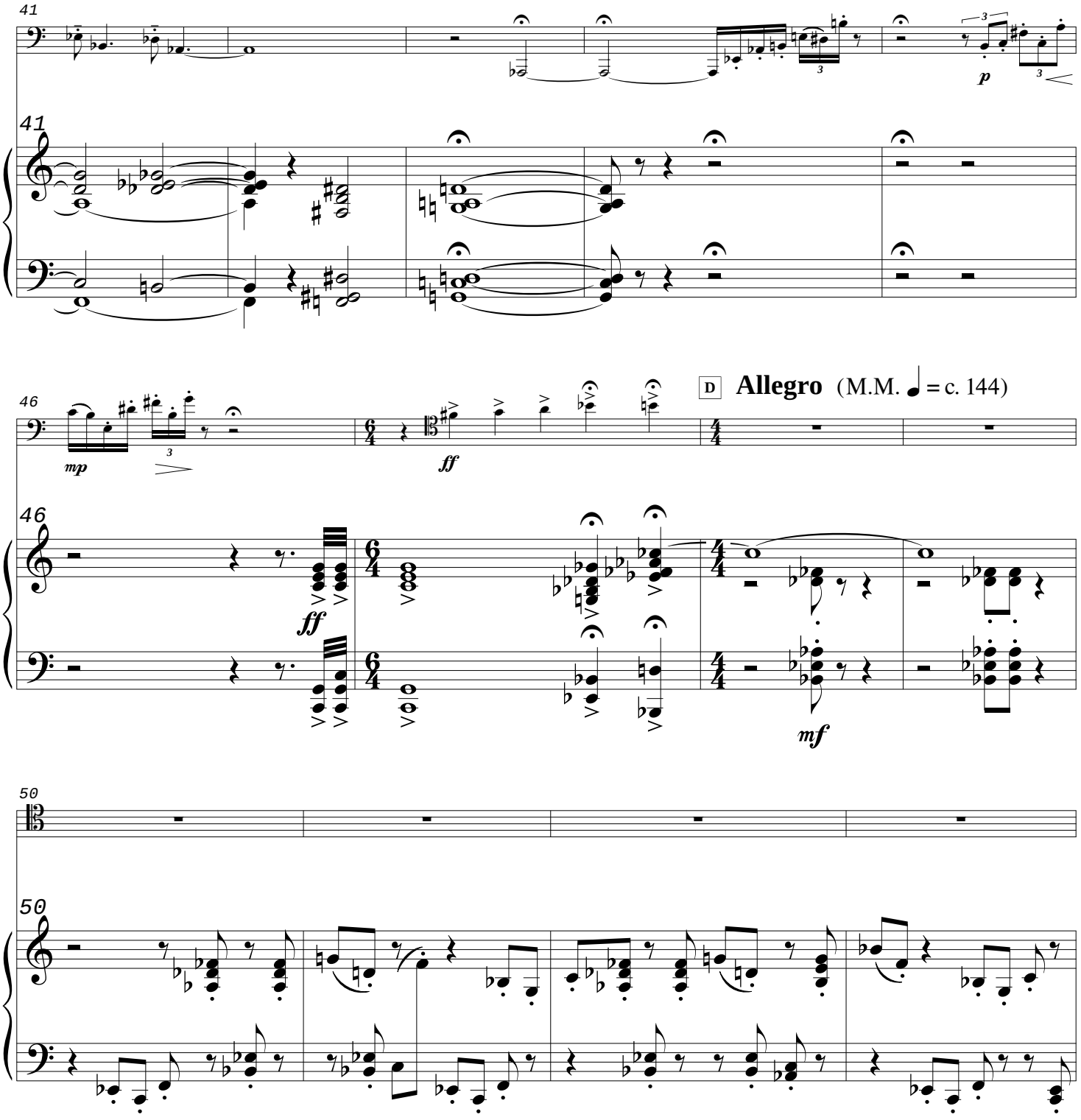
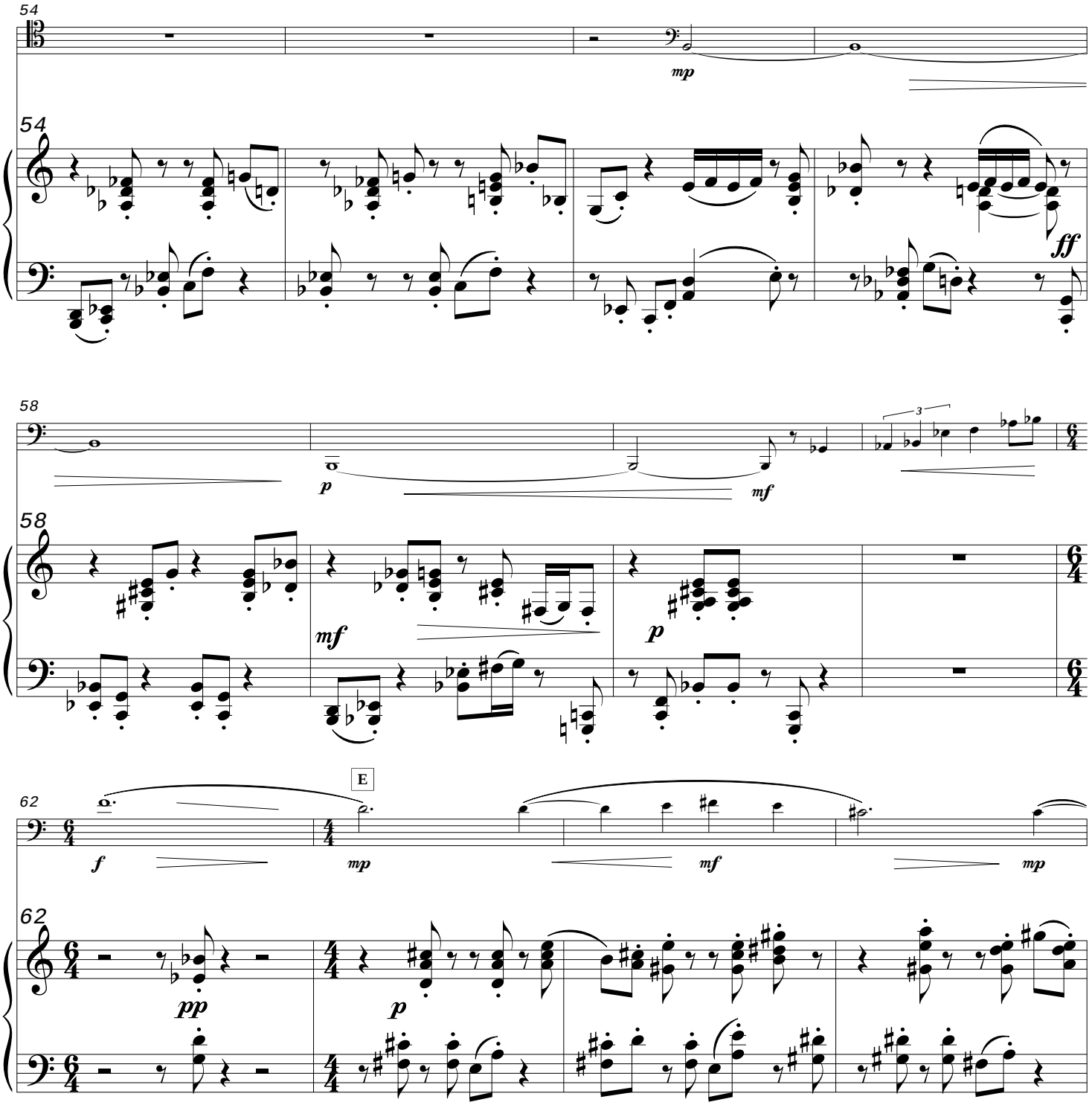
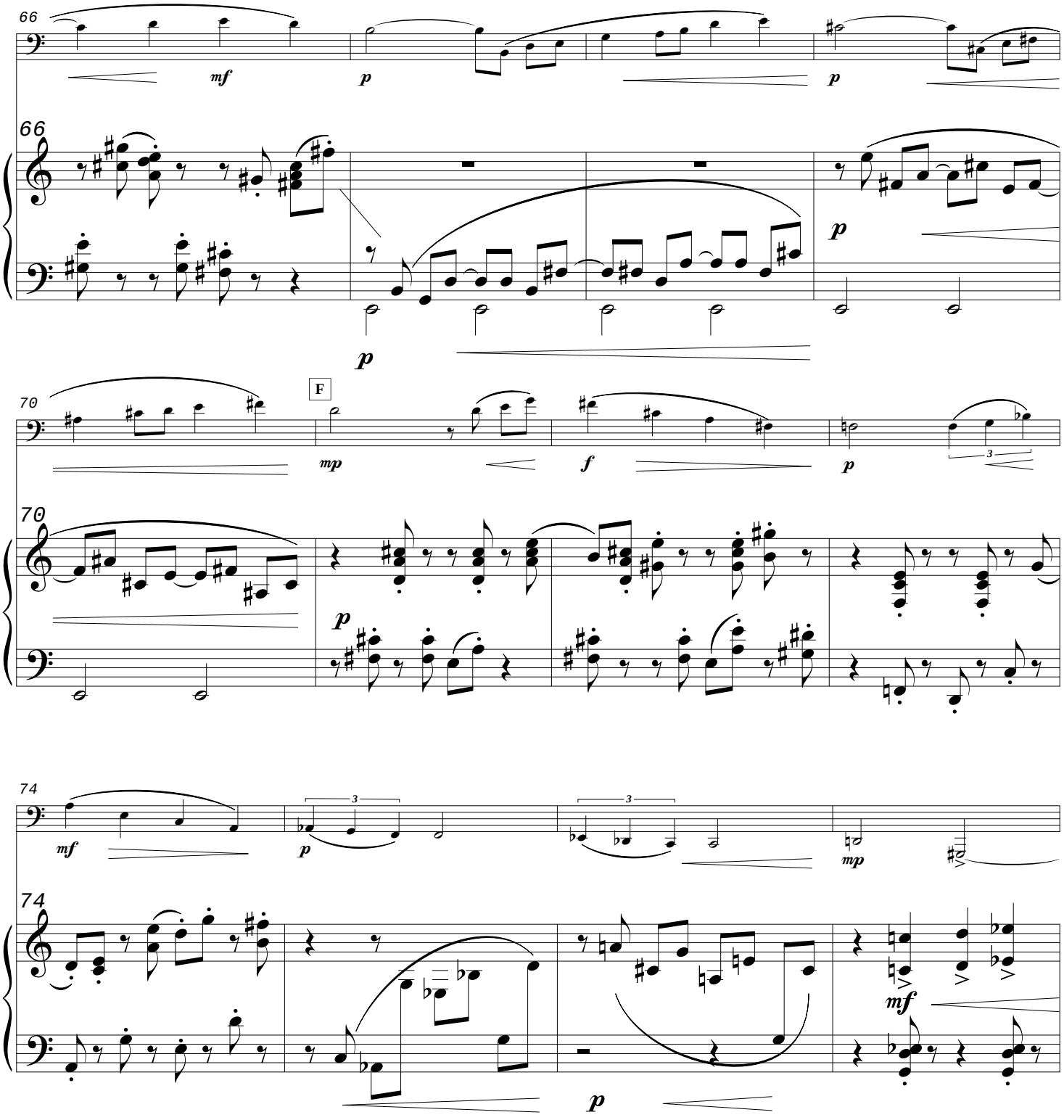
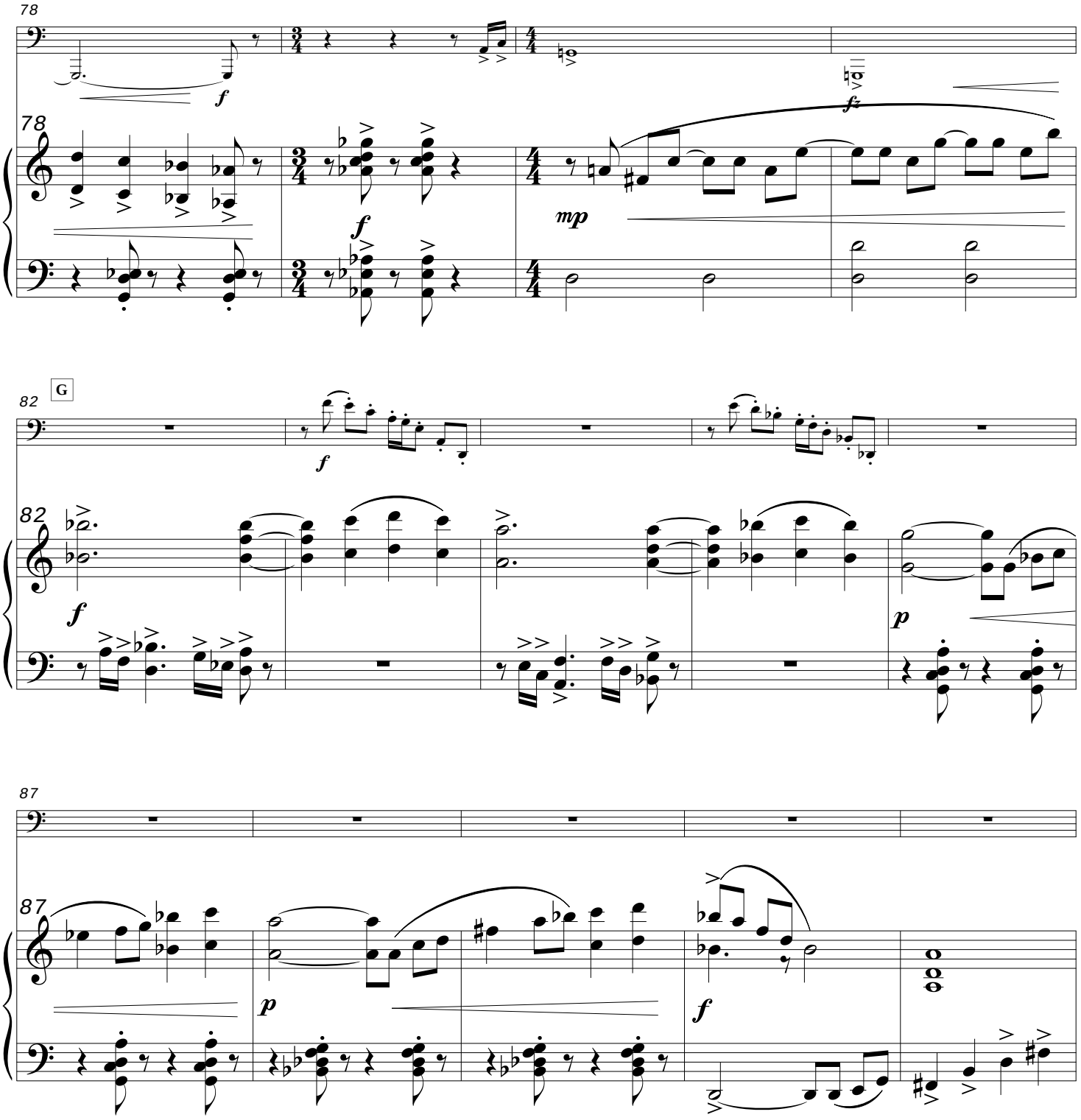

A
Freely
15
15
p
pp
ppp
poco a poco accel.
21
21
mp
mf
p
mp
25
25
mf
mf

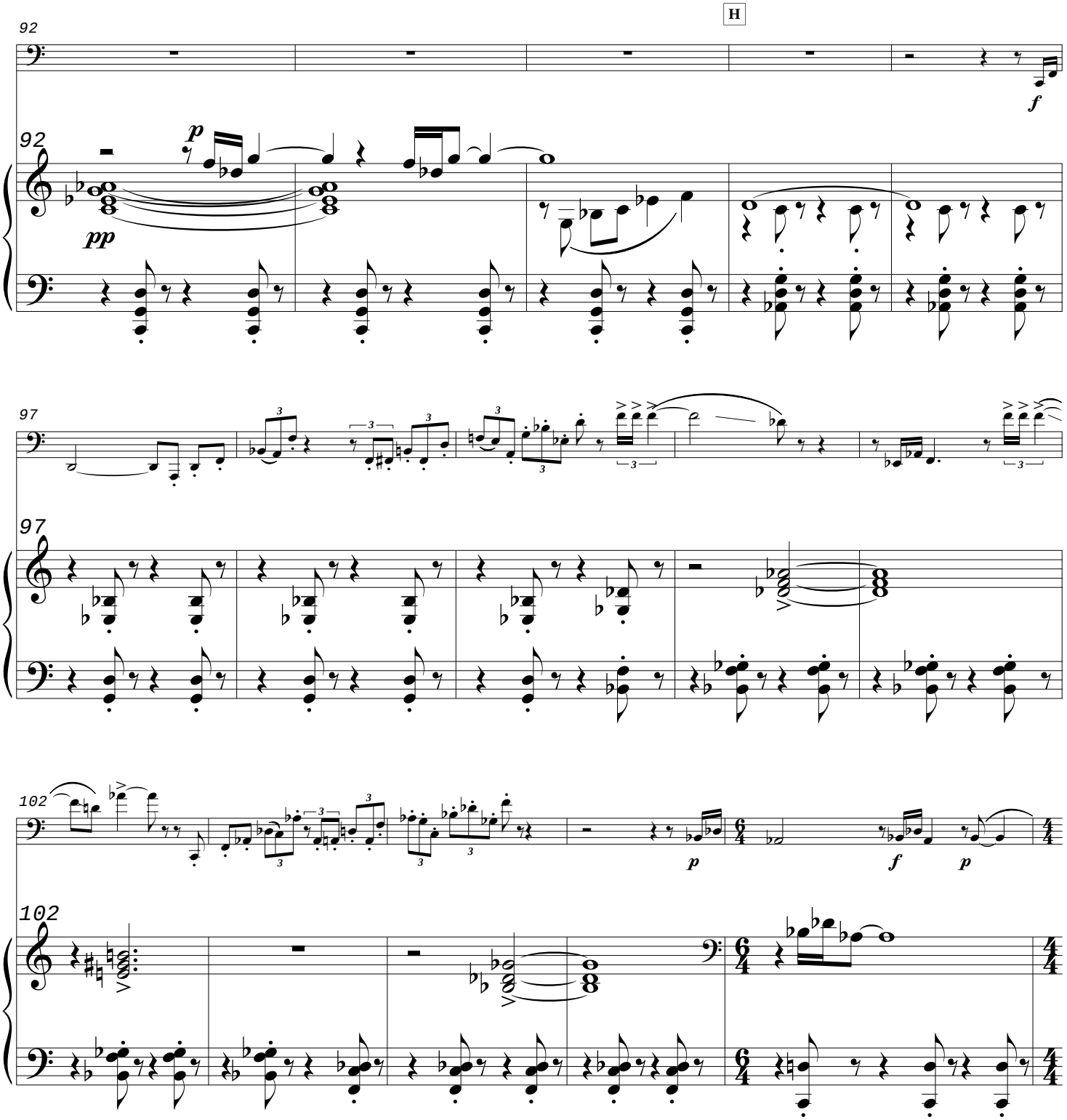

B
Spirito (♩ = c. 120)
28
loco
ff
8vb
f
C
Tempo Primo ♩ = 66
31
fz
mp
p
35
p
pp
pp
ppp

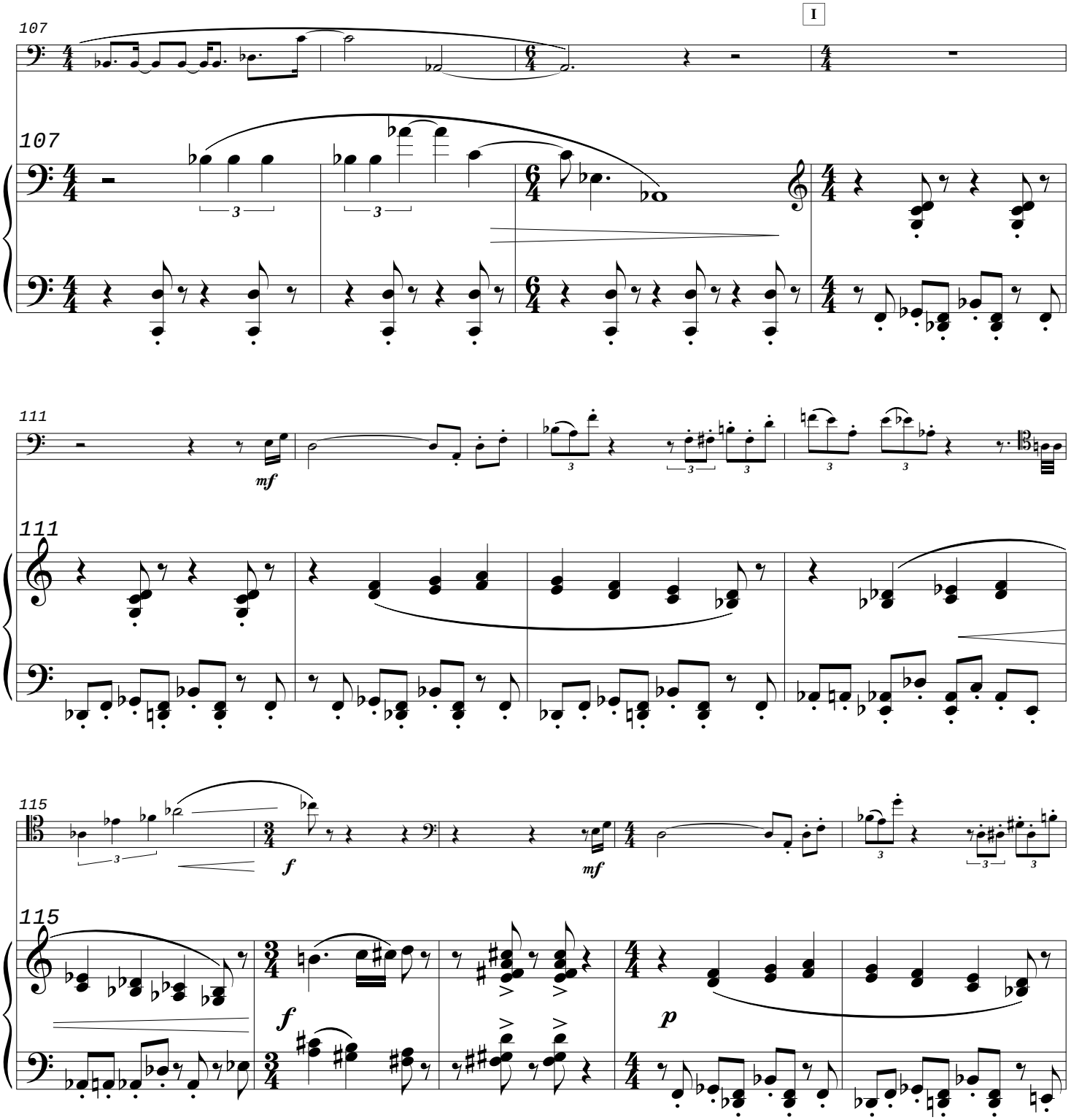

41
p
41
46
mp
ff
D
Allegro (M.M. ♩ = c. 144)
46
ff
mf
50
50

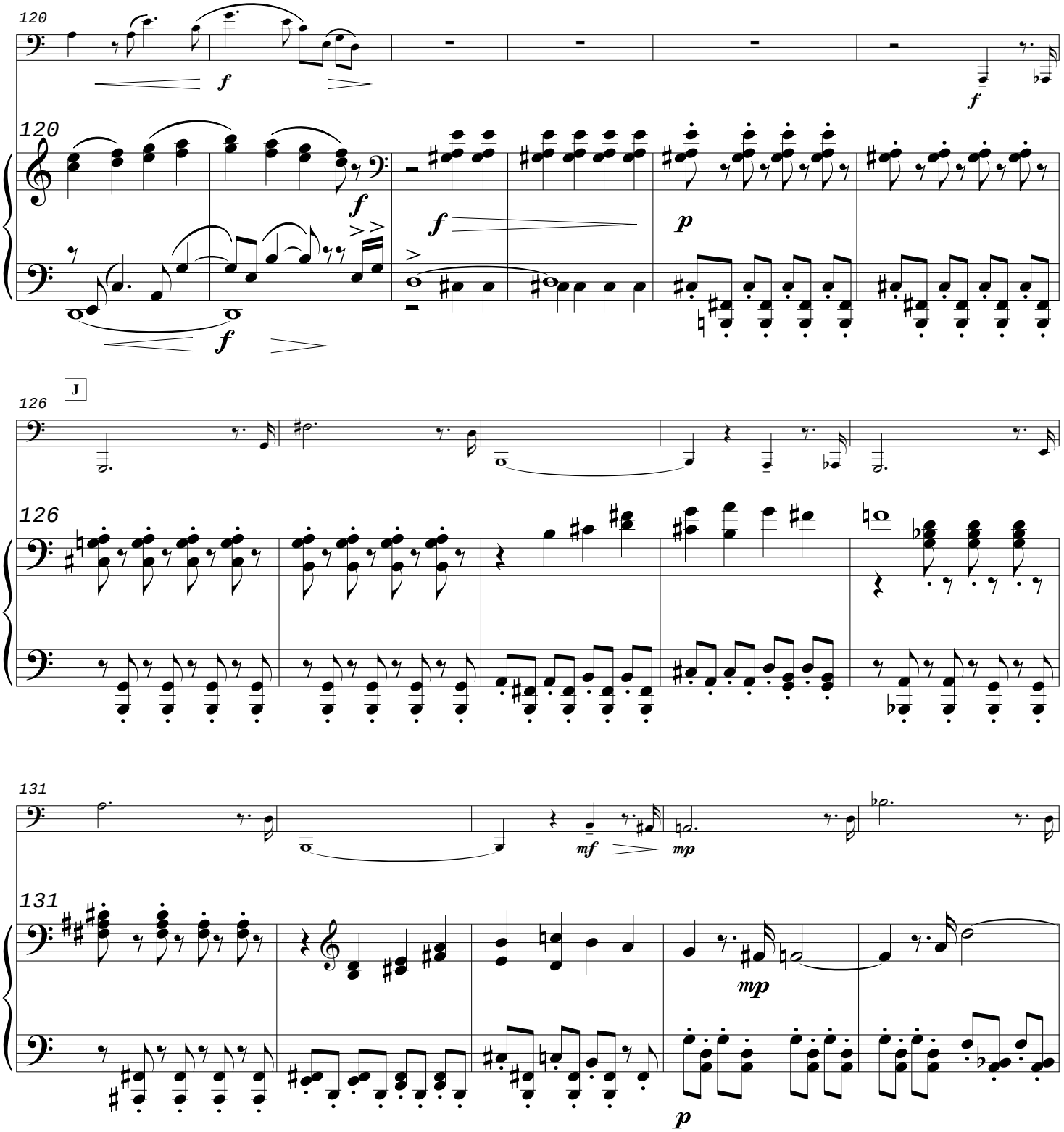

54
mp
54
ff
58
p
mf
58
mf
p
62
E
f
mp
mf
mp
62
pp
p

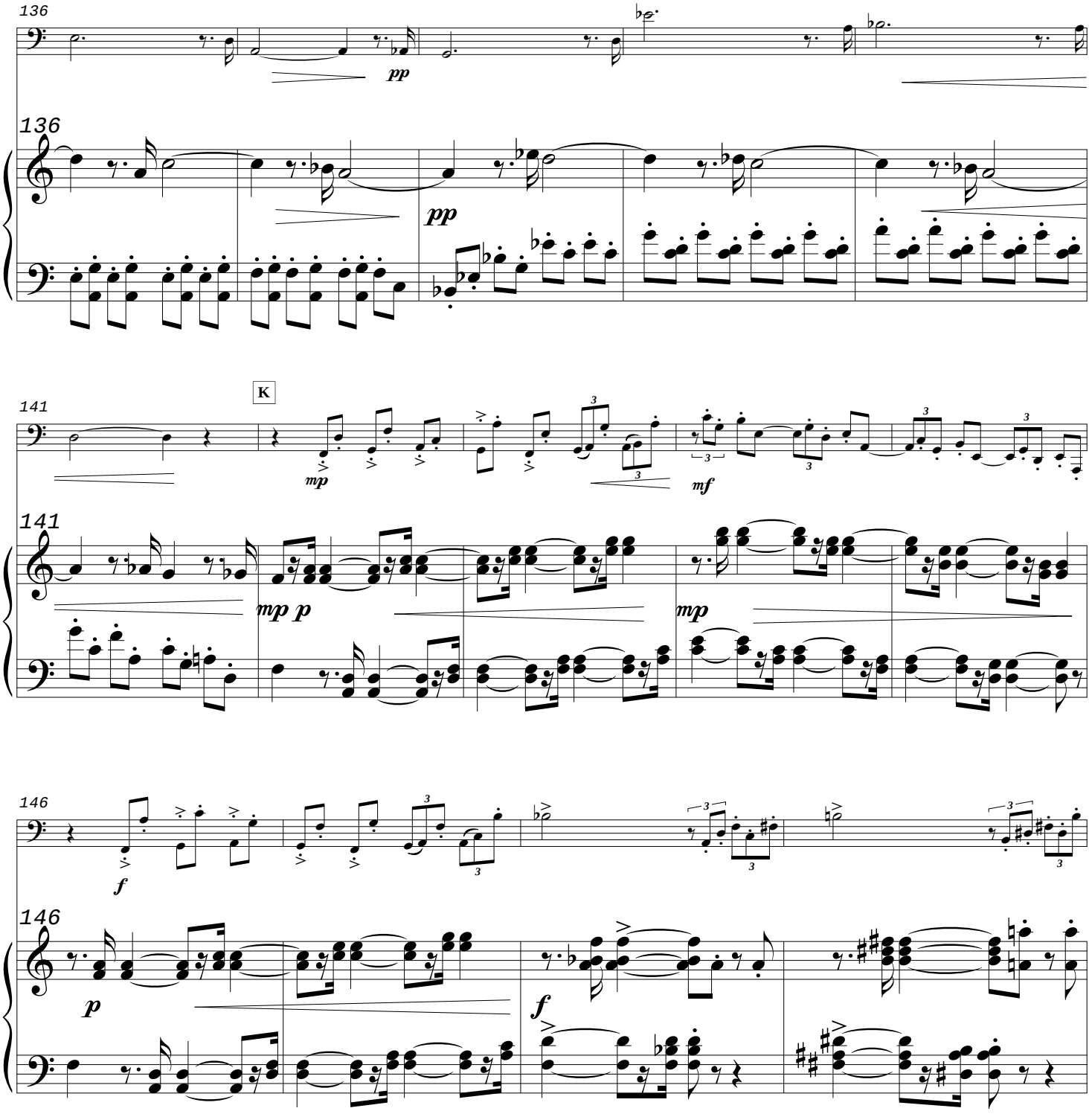

66
mf
p
p
66
p
p
70
F
mp
f
p
3
70
p
74
mf
p
3
3
mp
74
mf
p

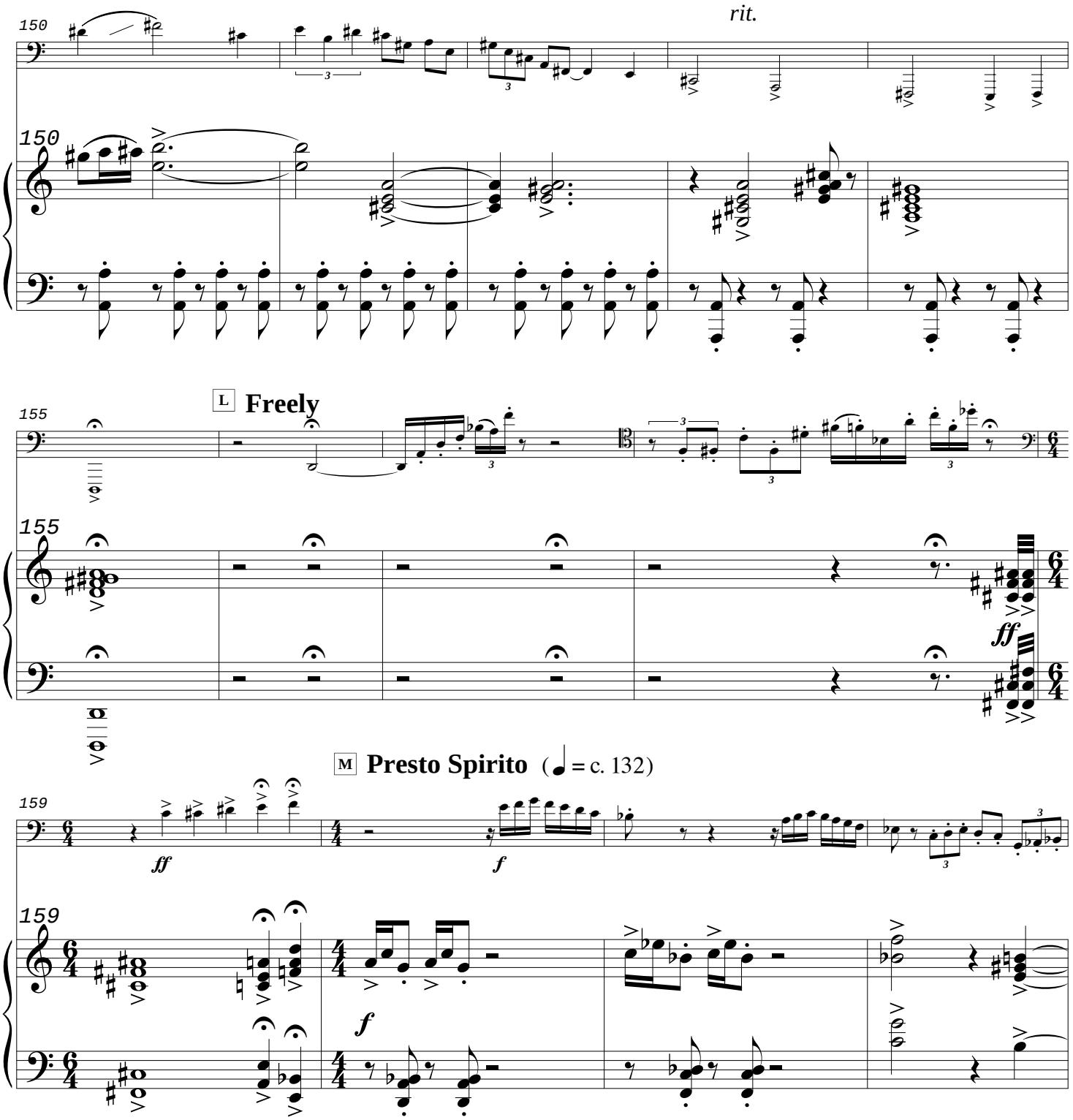

78
f
78
f
mp
fz
82
G
f
82
f
p
87
87
p
f

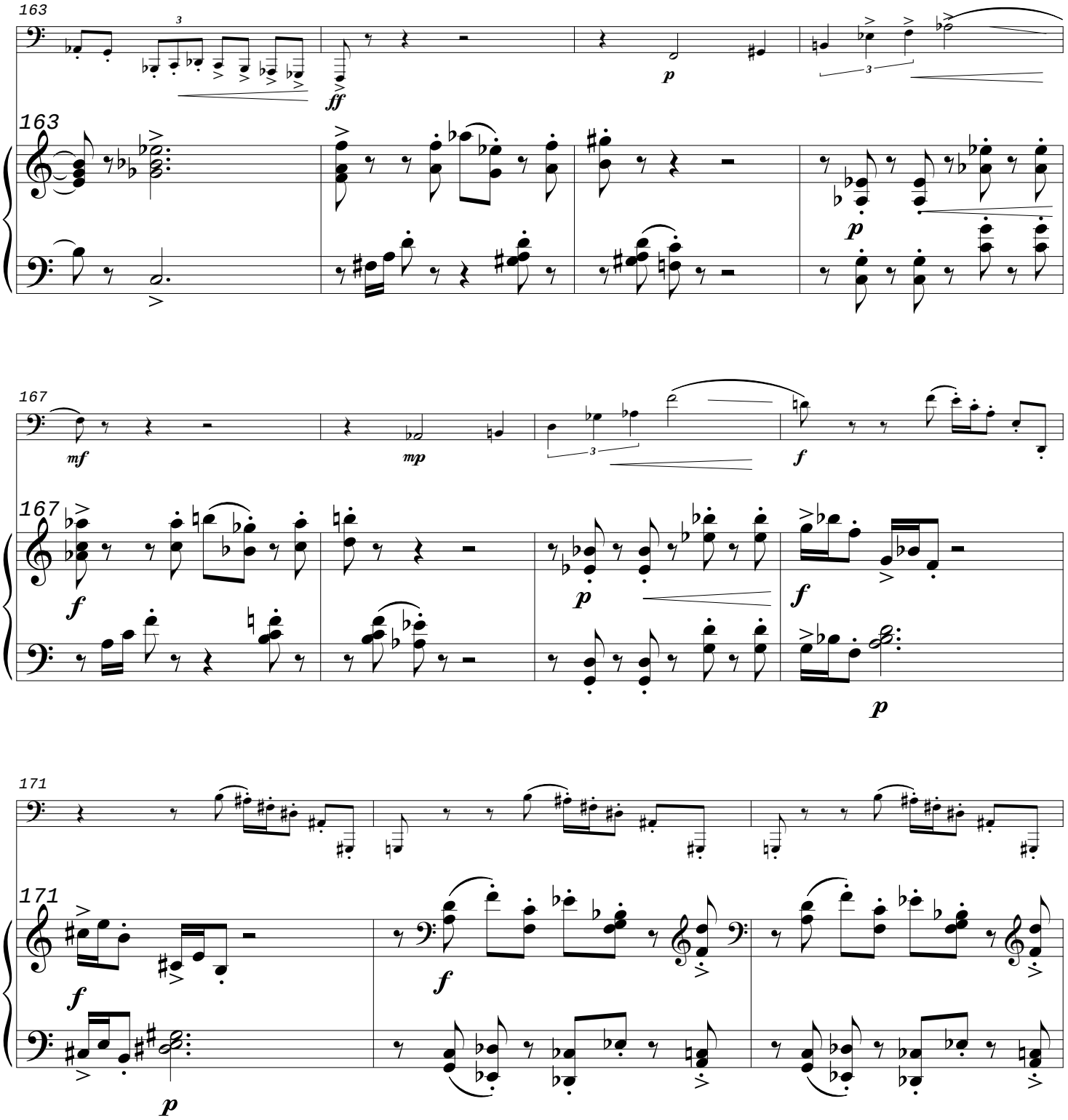

92
H
92
p
pp
f
97
97
102
102
p
f
p

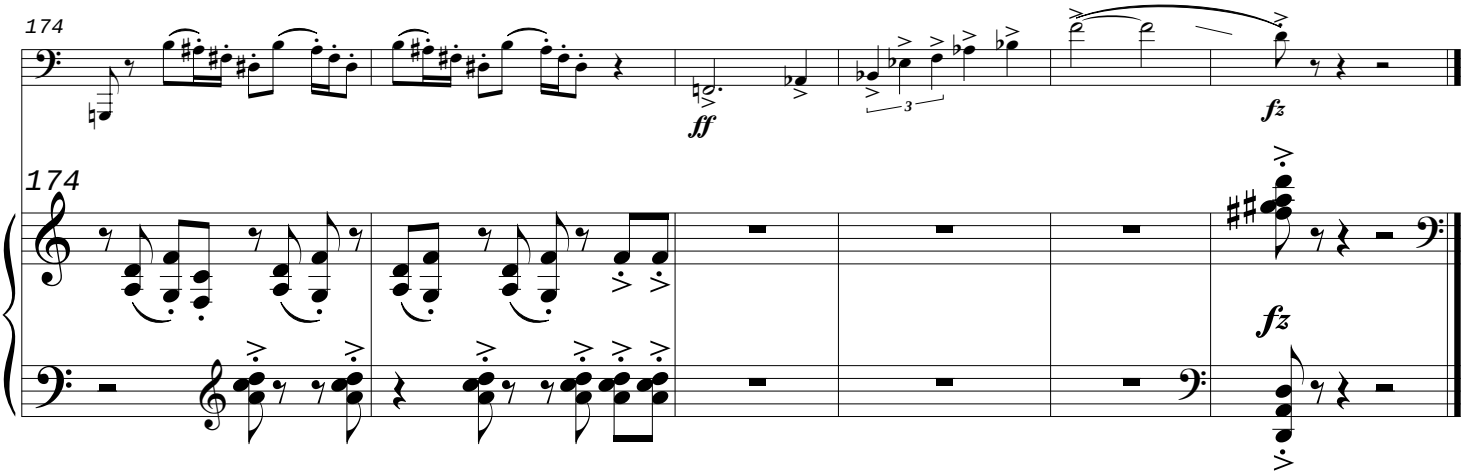

I
107
107
111
111
115
115
mf
f
mf
f
p


120
f
f
120
f
f
p
J
126
126
131
mf
mp
131
mp
p

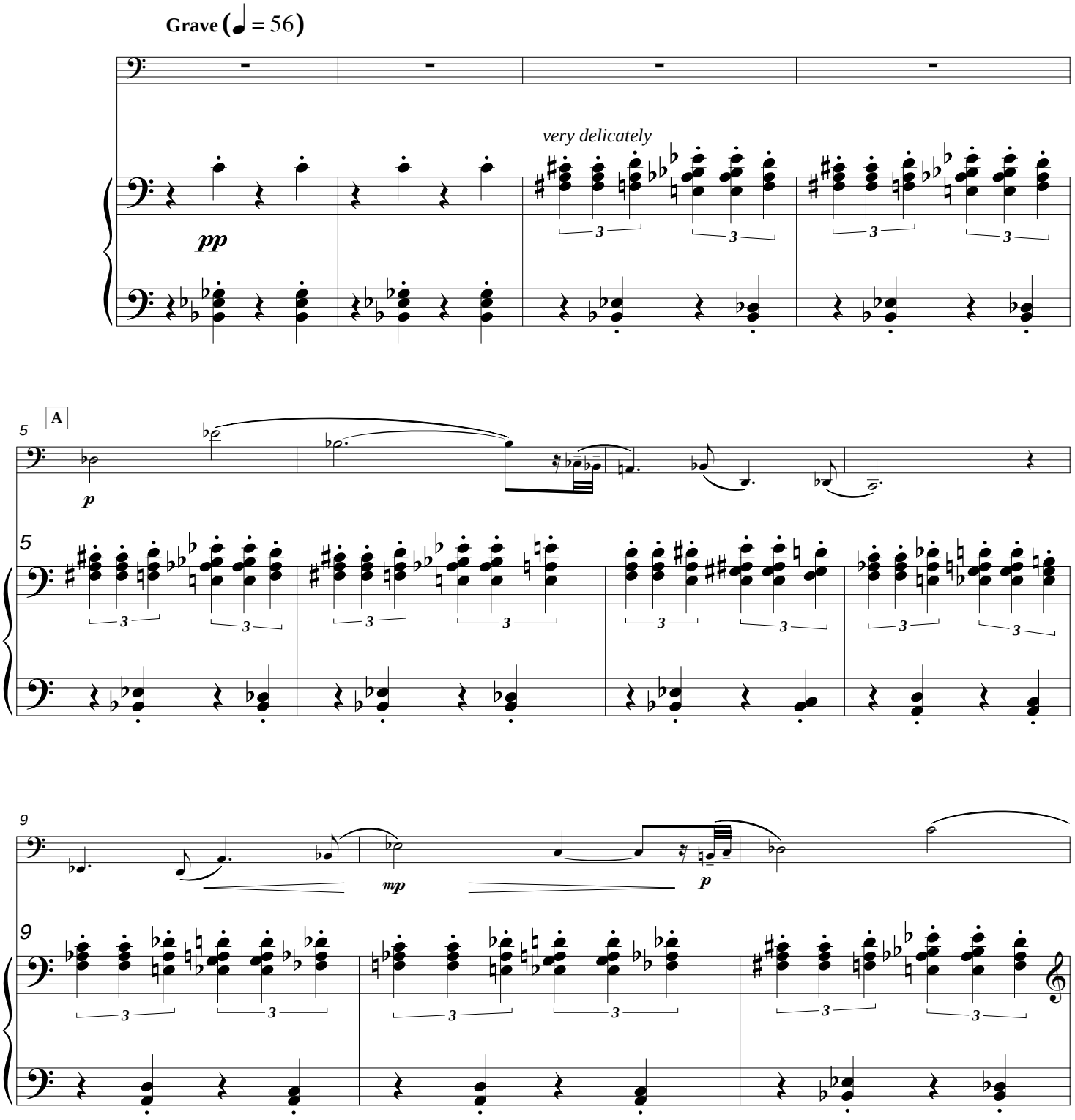

136
pp
136
pp
141
K
mp
mf
141
mp p
mp
146
f
146
p
f

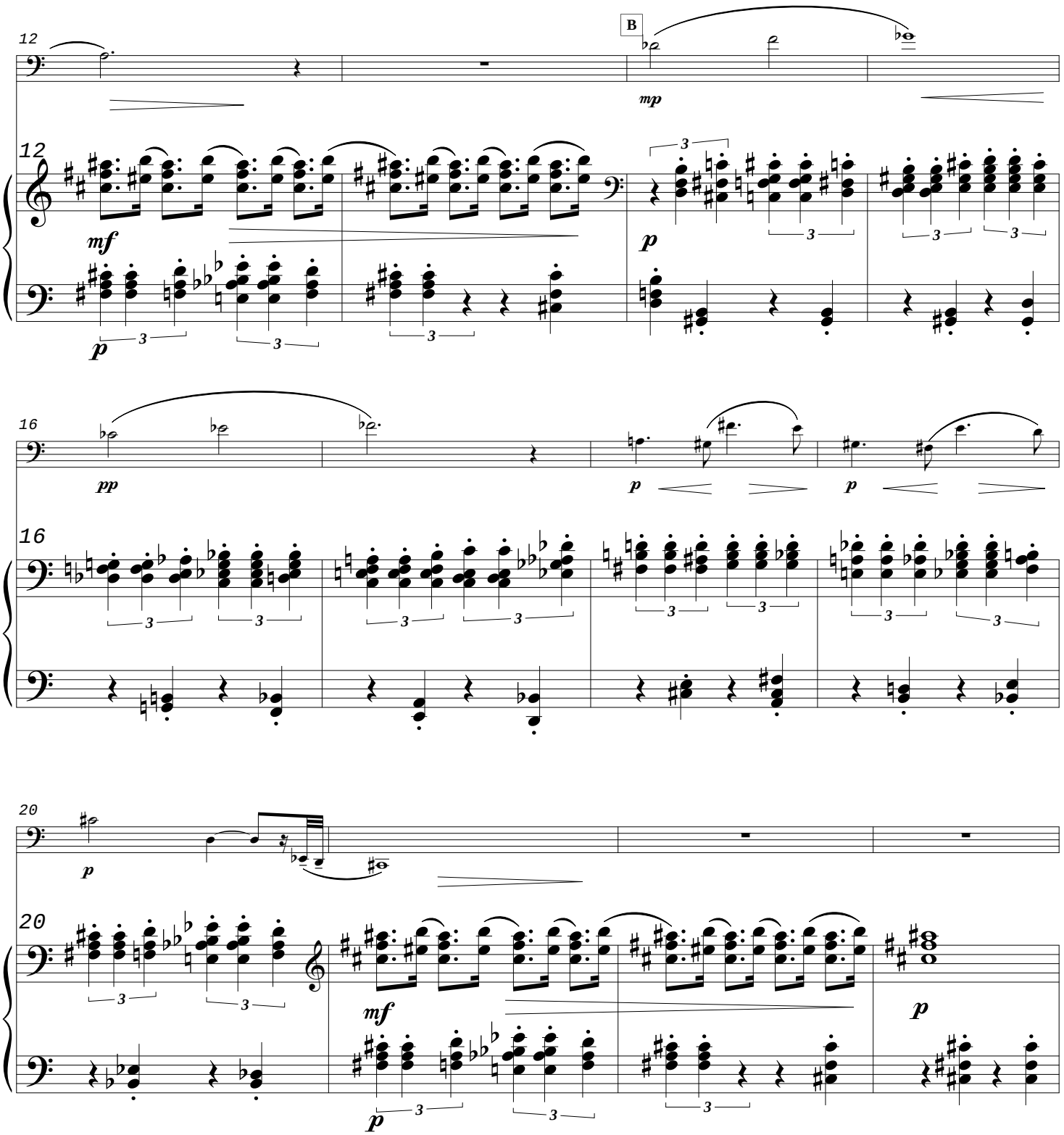

150
rit.
150
155
L
Freely
155
ff
M
Presto Spirito
(= c. 132)
159
ff
f
159
f

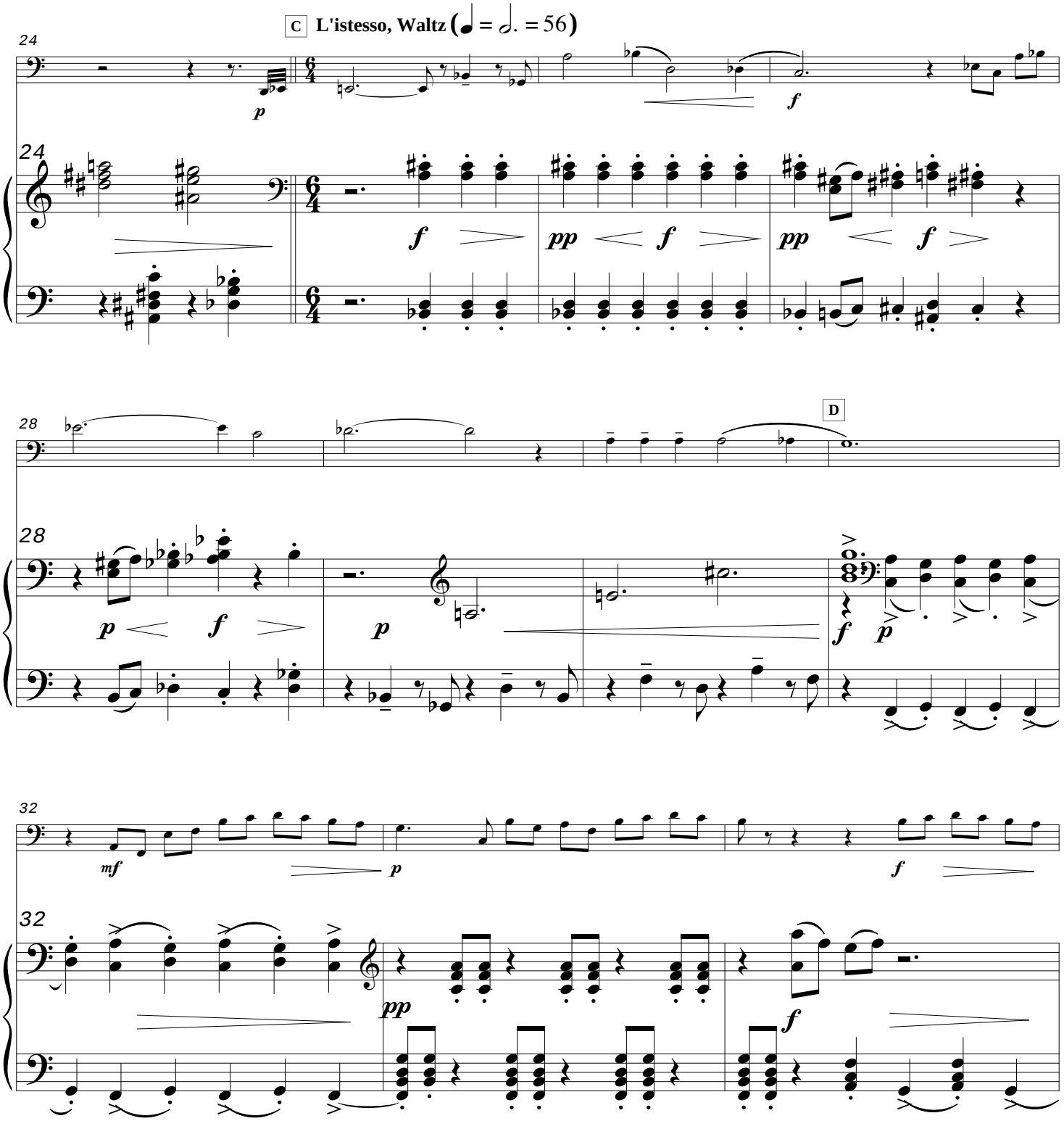

163
ff
p
163
p
167
mf
mp
f
167
f
p
f
p
171
171
f
f
p

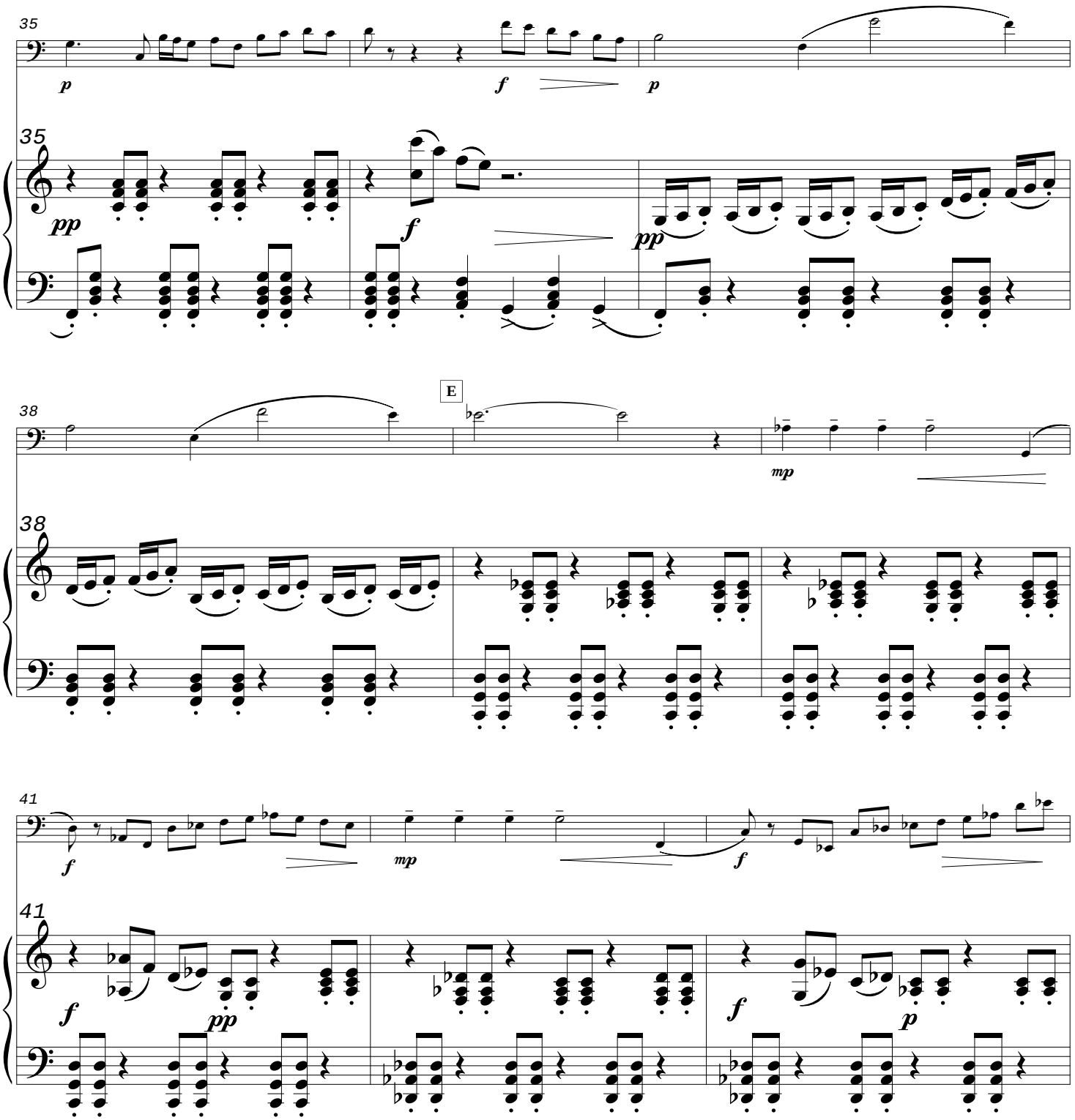

174
ff
fz
174
fz

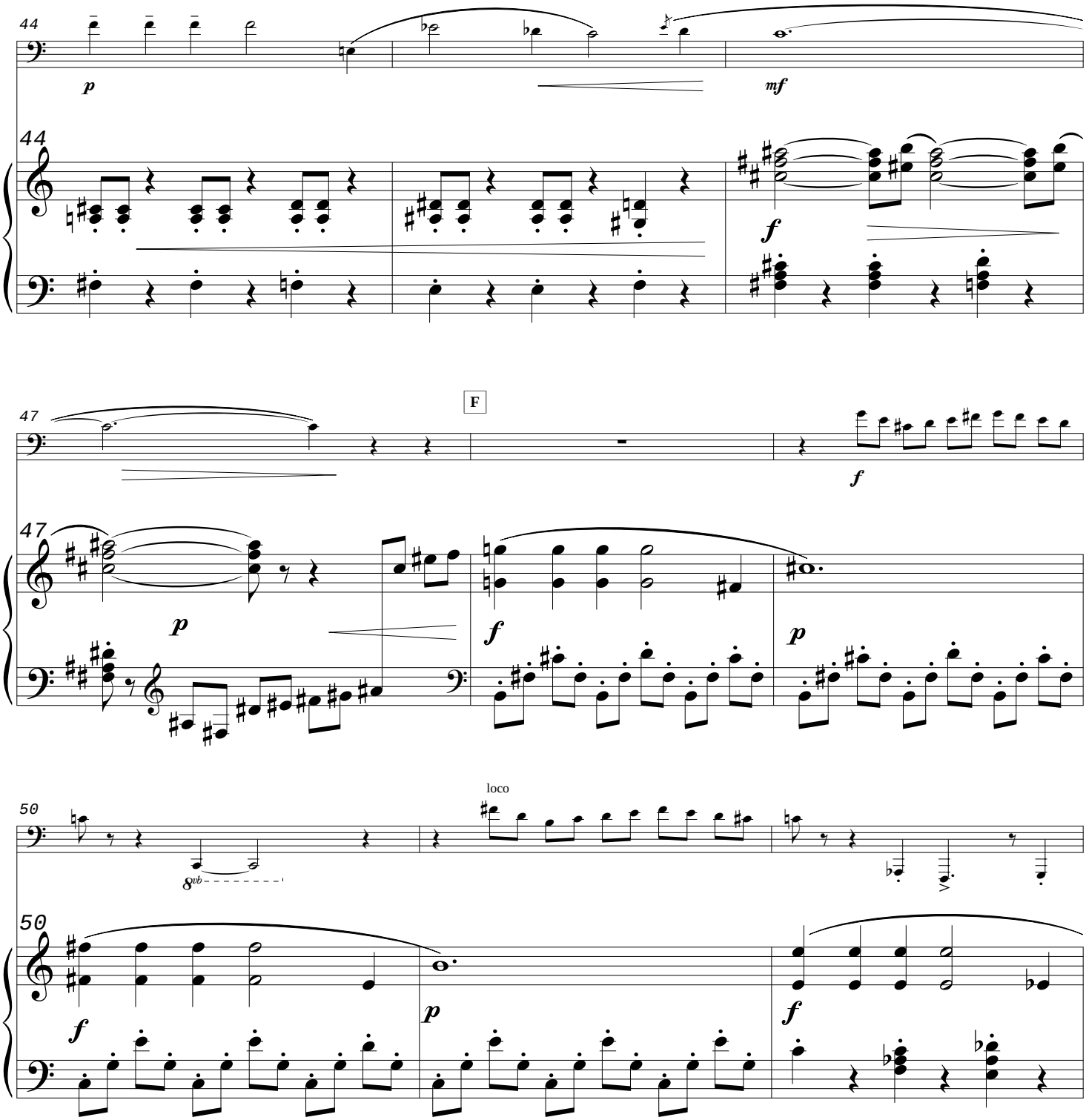
II. Diverged

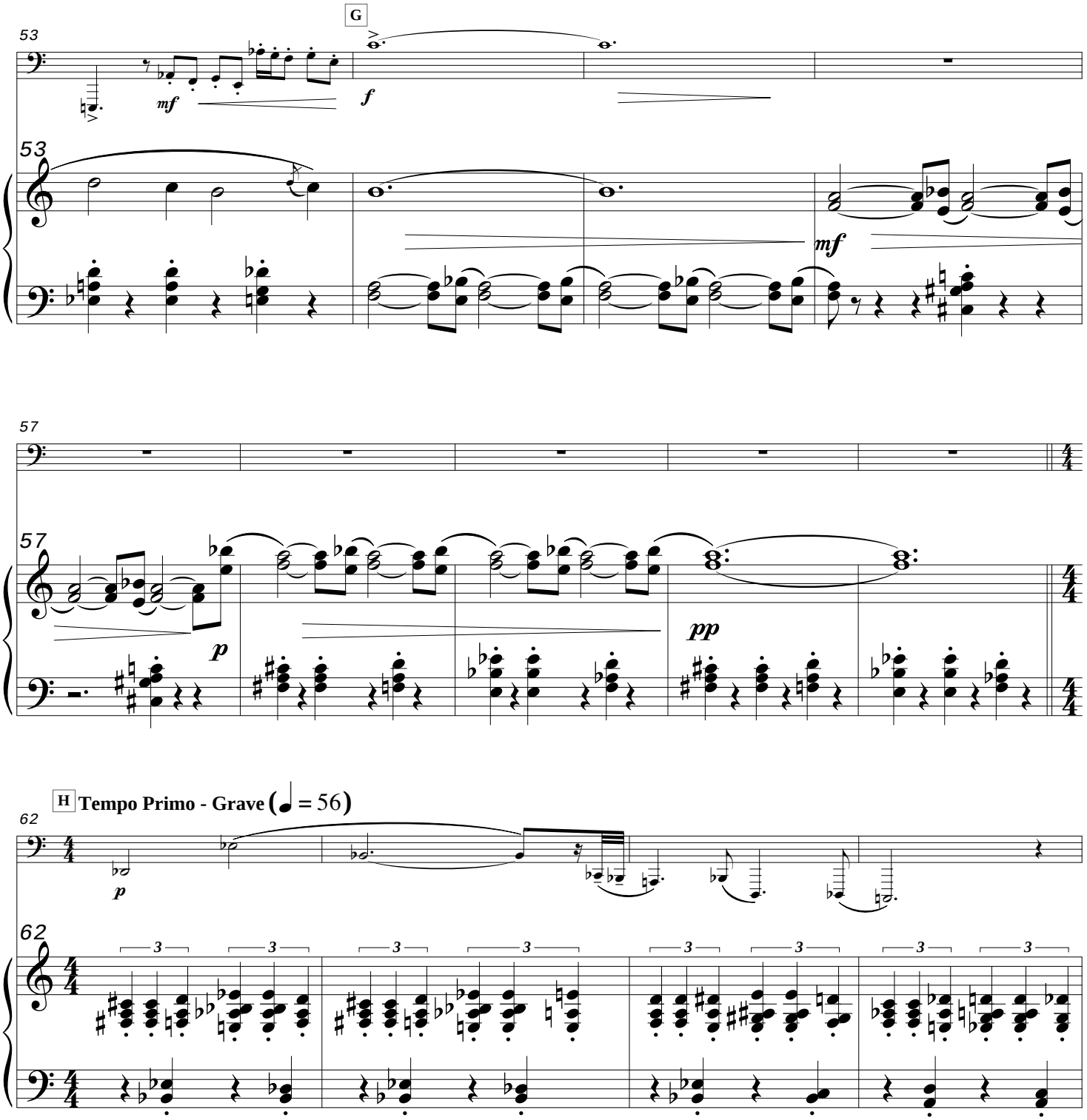


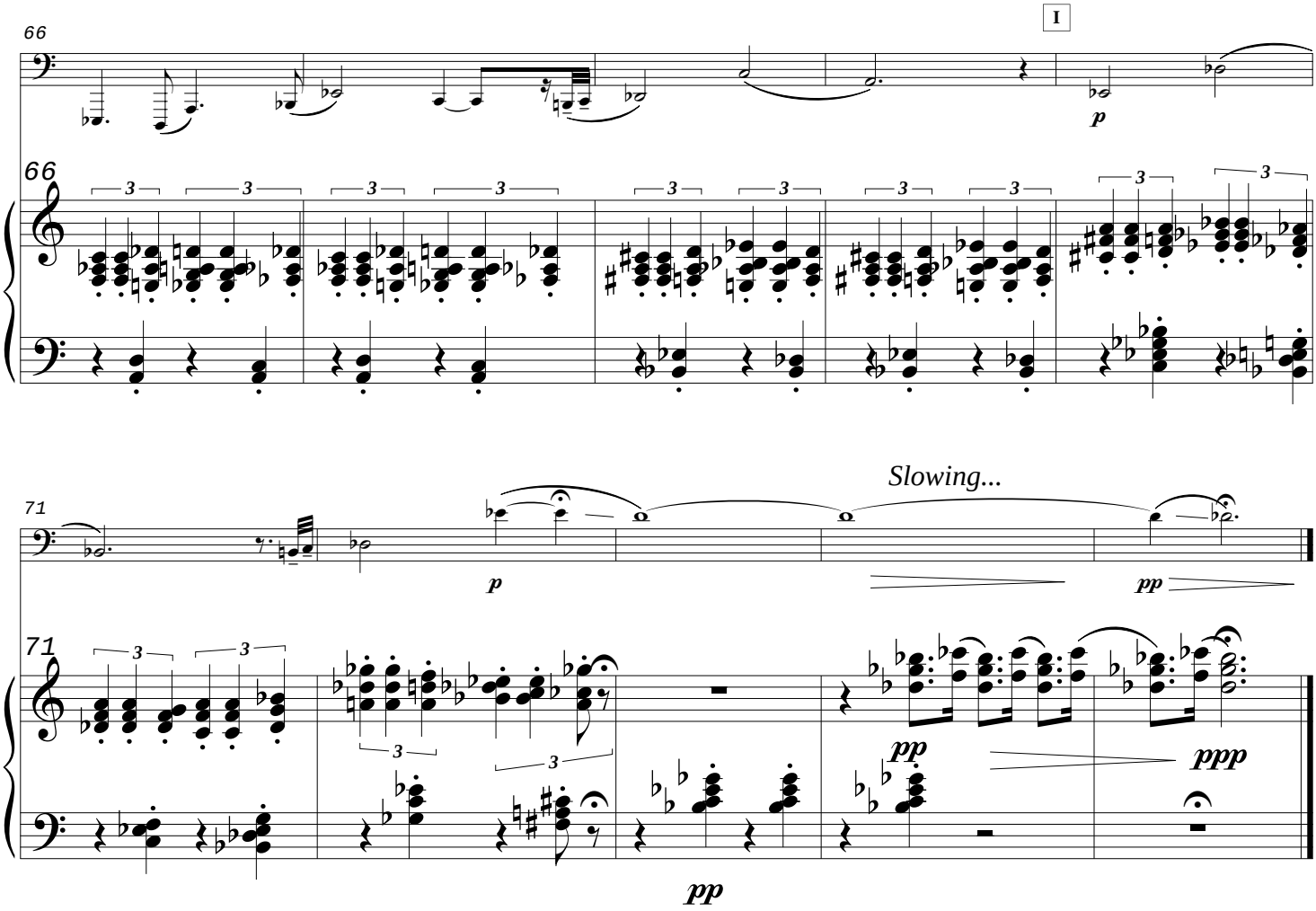

12
B
mp
12
mf
p
3
16
pp
p
16
20
p
20
mf
p


C
L'istesso, Waltz (♩ = 𝅗𝅥. = 56)
24
24
D
28
28
32
32


35
p
f
p
35
pp
f
pp
38
E
mp
38
41
f
mp
f
41
f
pp
f
p

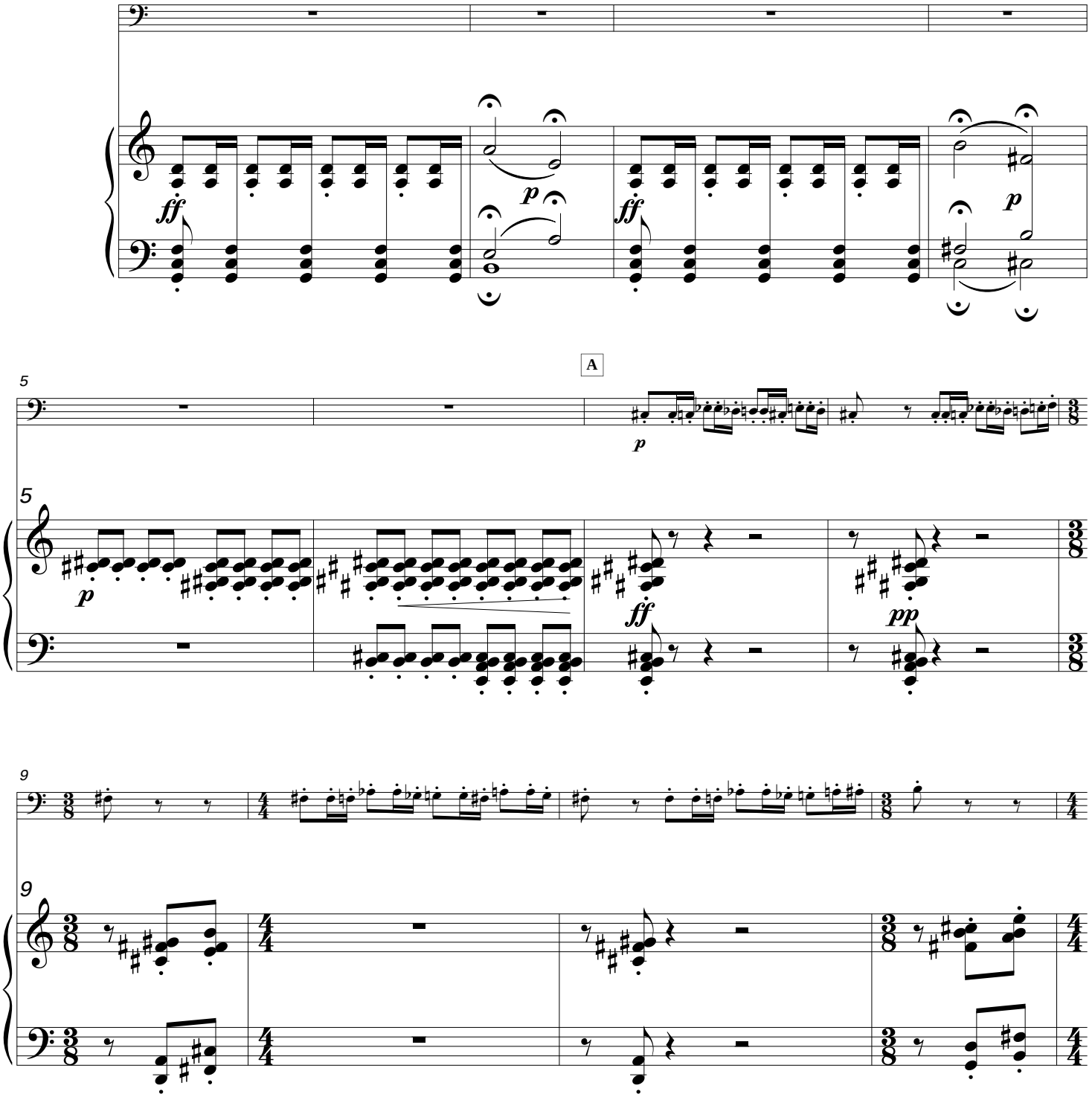

44
p
mf
44
f
47
F
f
47
p
f
p
50
loco
8vb
50
f
p
f

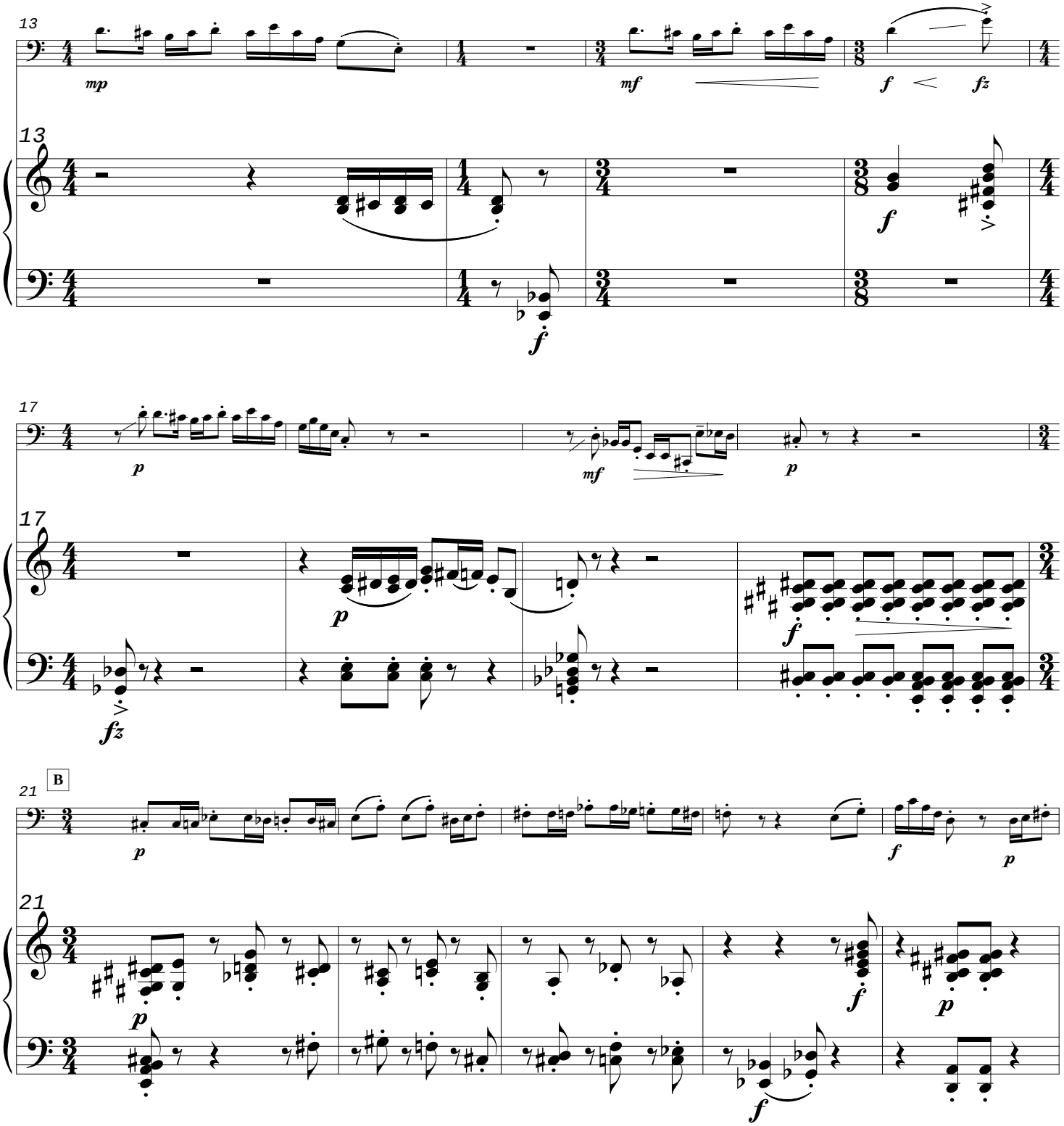

G
53
mf
f
53
mf
57
p
pp
57
H Tempo Primo - Grave (♩ = 56)
62
p
62
3

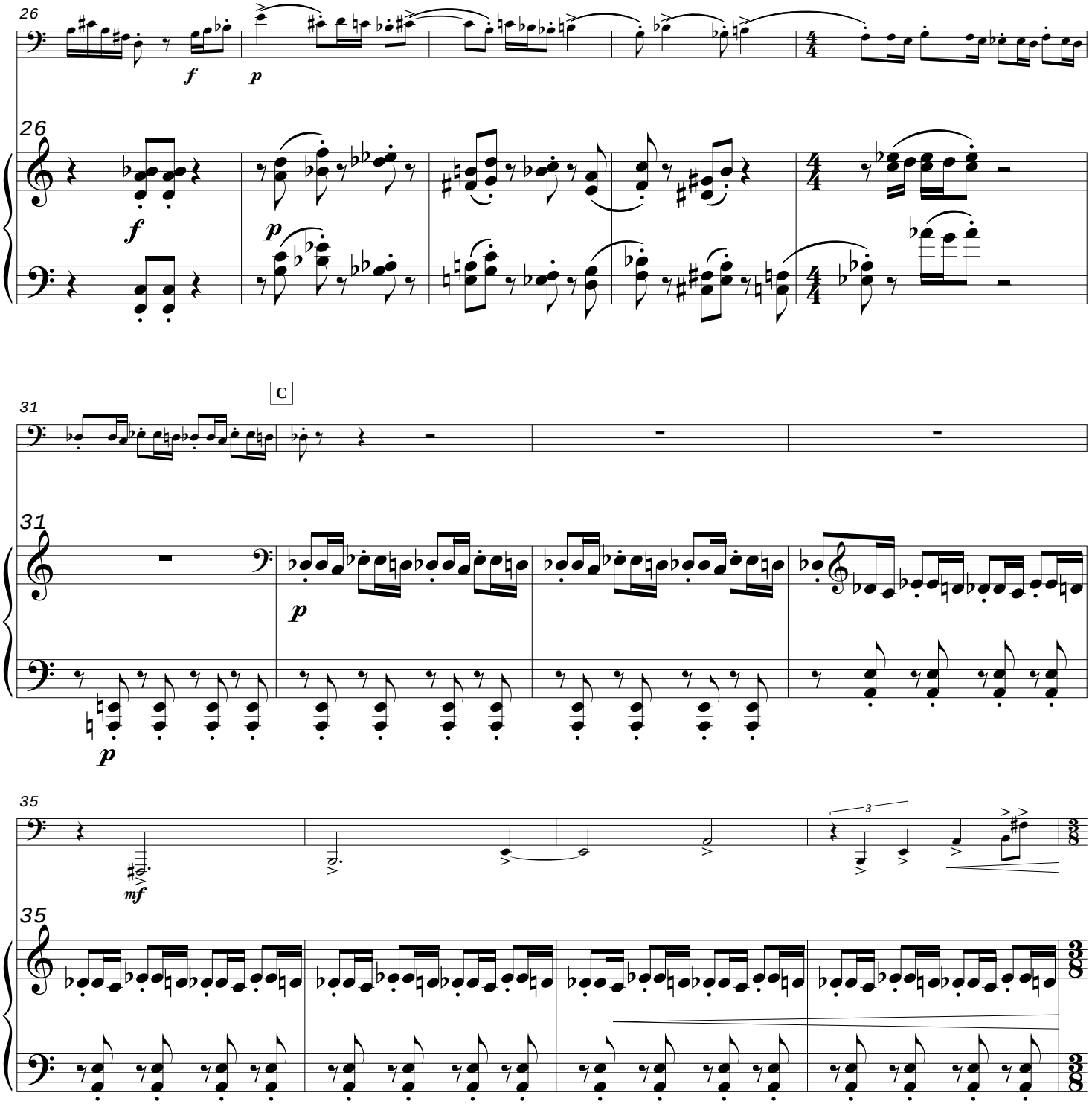

66
I
p
66
71
Slowing...
p
pp
71
pp
ppp
pp

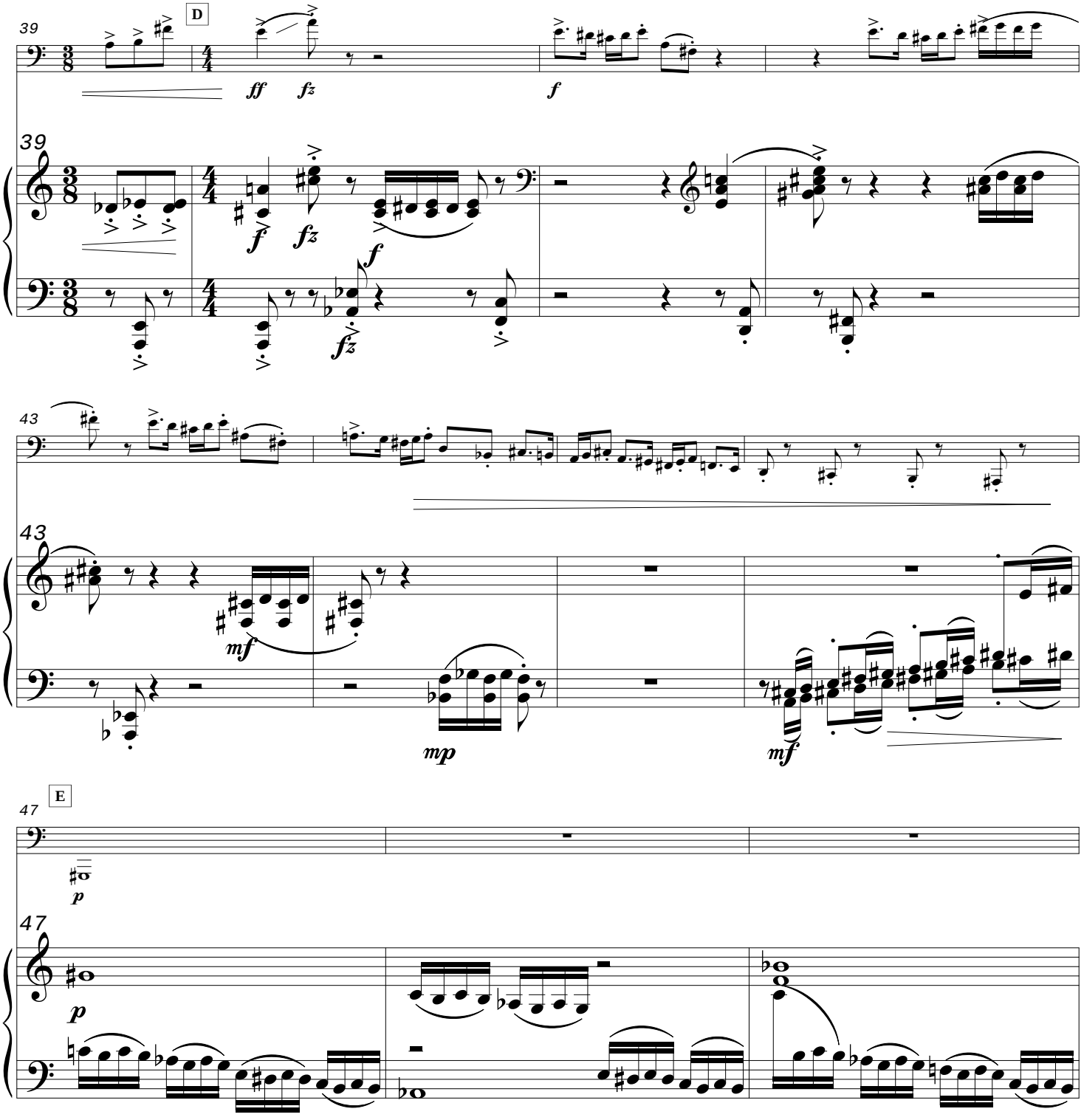
III. All the Difference

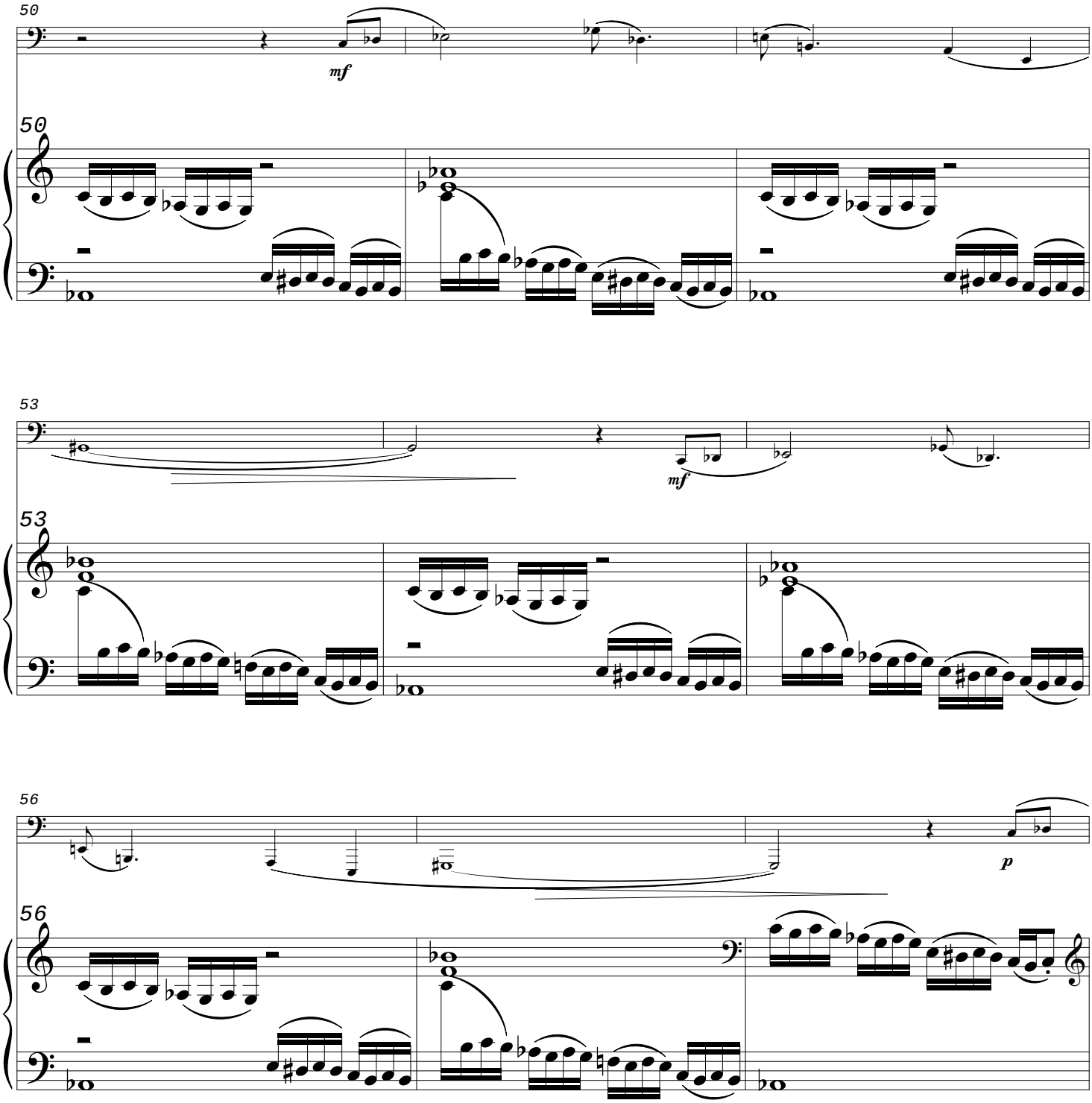
Presto giusto (♩ = c.. 144)

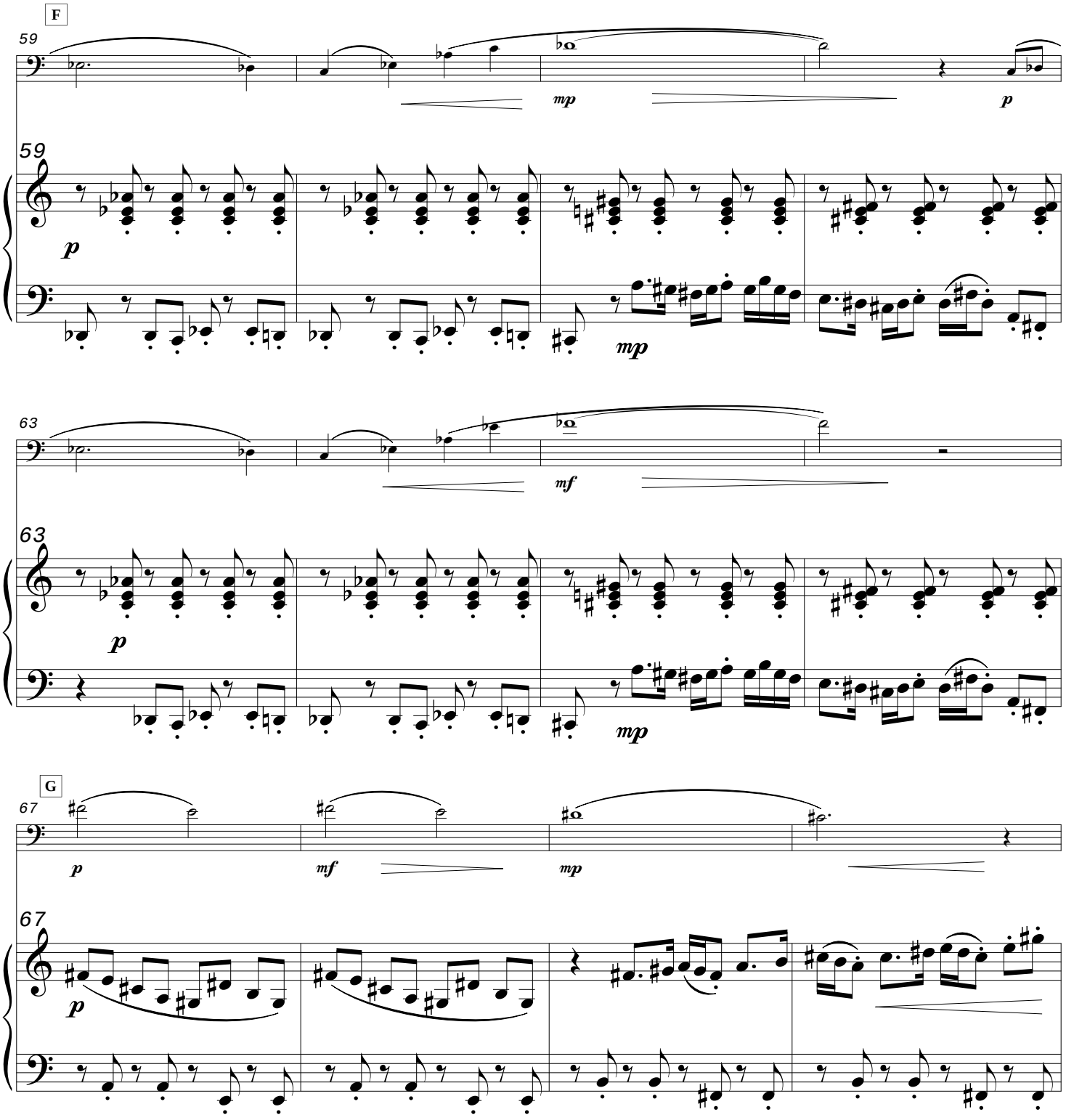


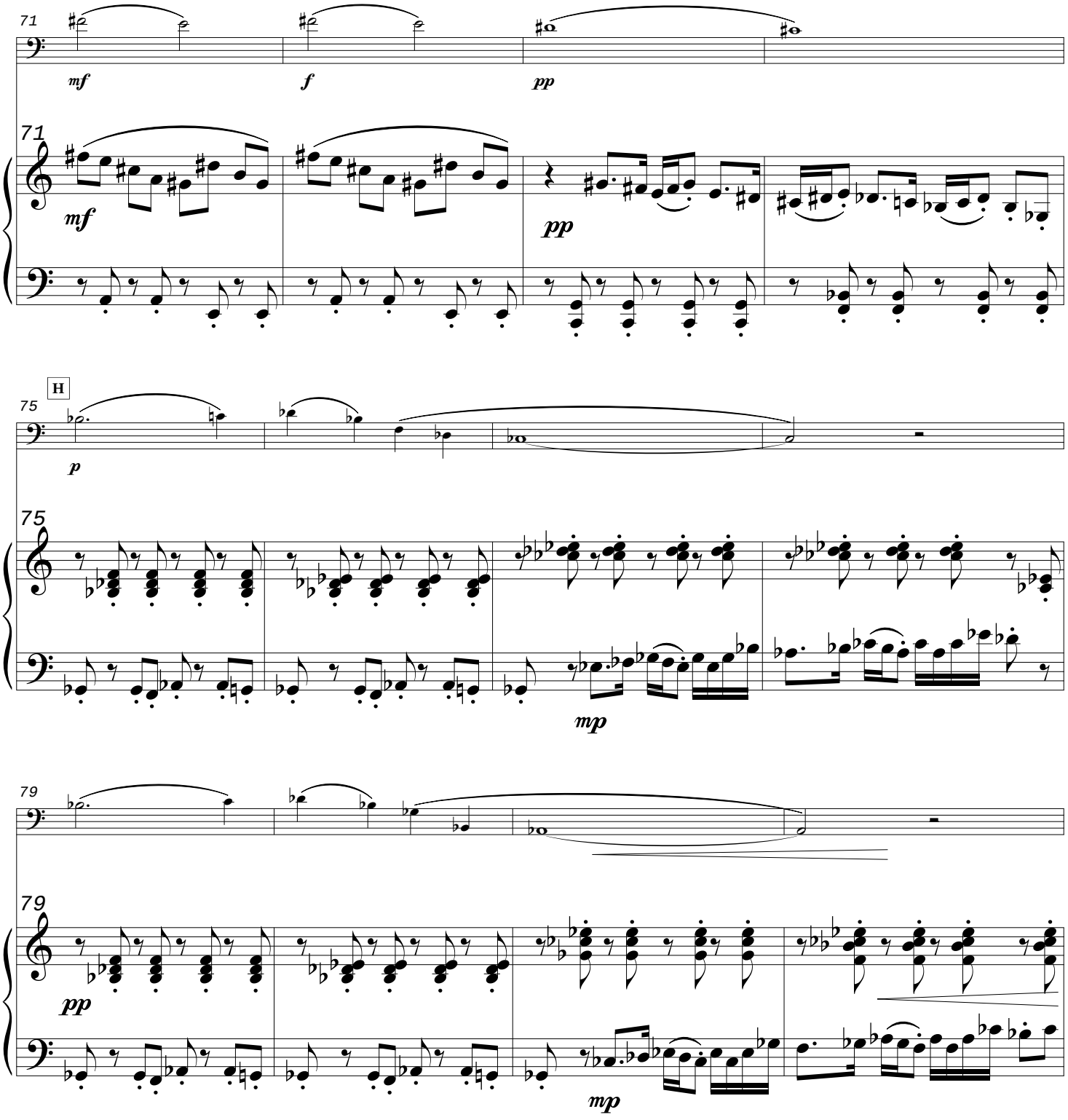

13
mp
mf
f
fz
13
f
f
17
p
mf
p
17
p
f
fz
B
21
p
f
p
21
p
f
p
f

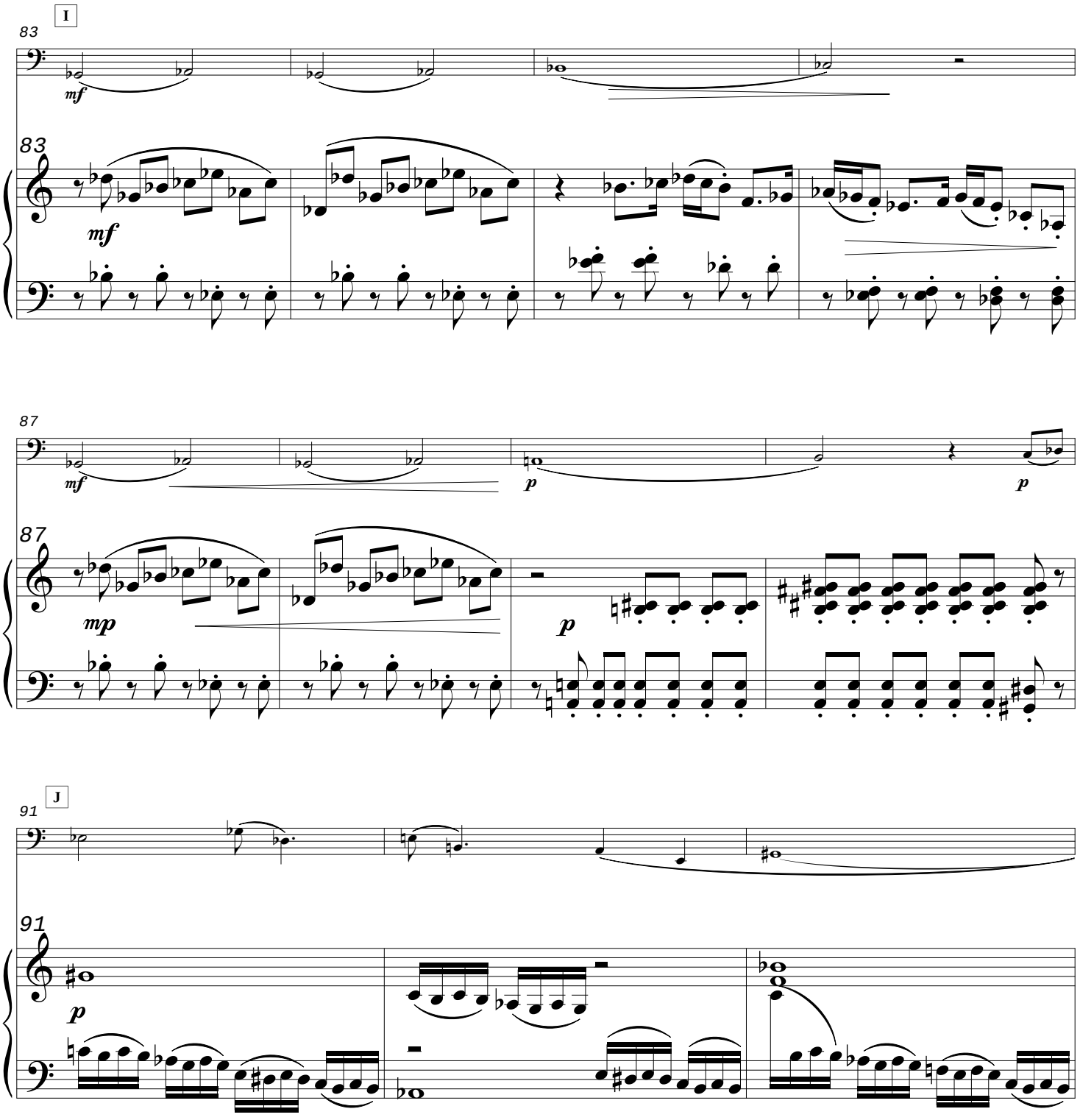

26
f
p
26
f
p
C
31
p
31
p
35
mf
35

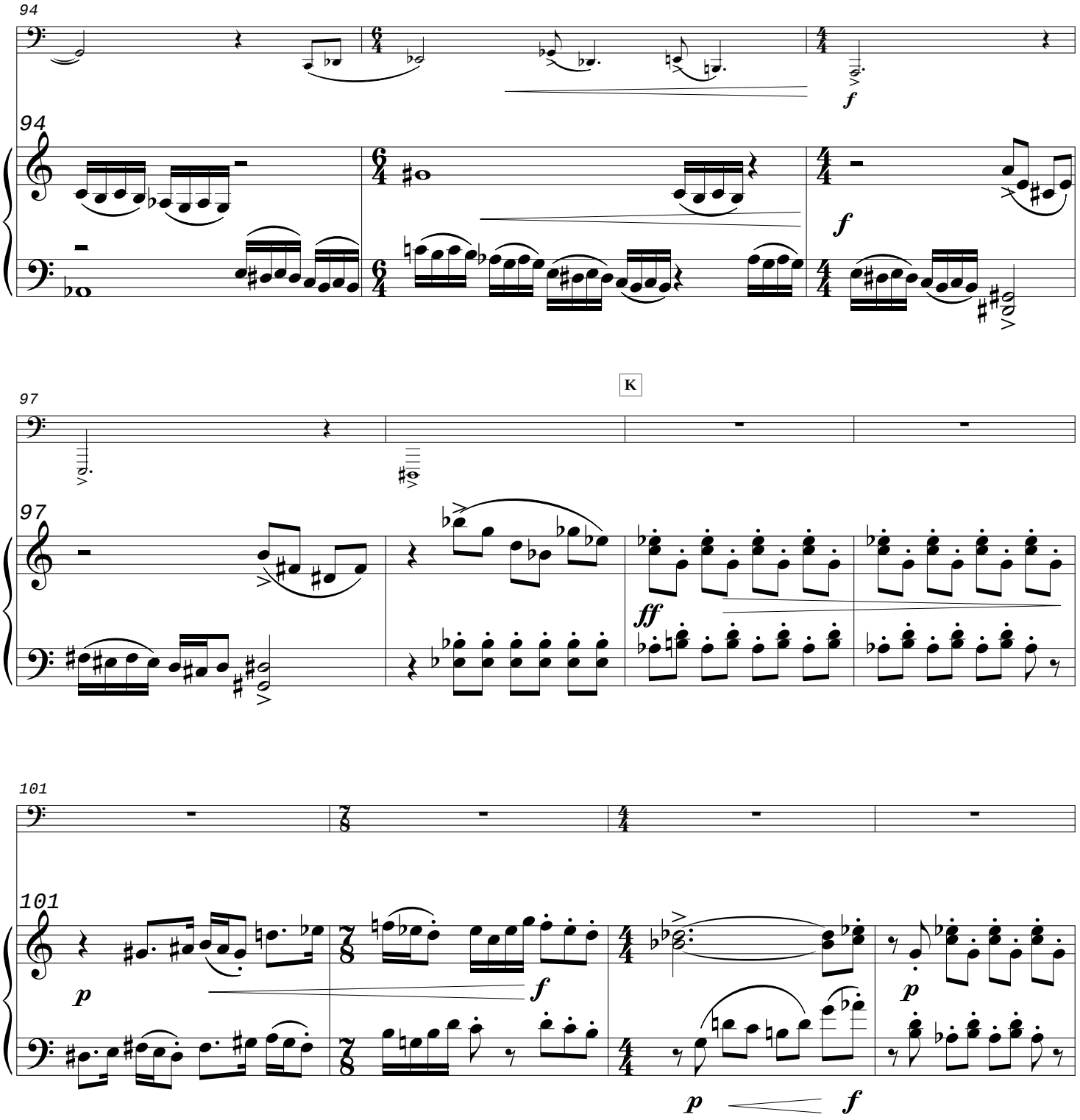

39
D
ff
fz
f
39
f
fz
f
fz
43
mf
mp
mf
47
E
p
47
p

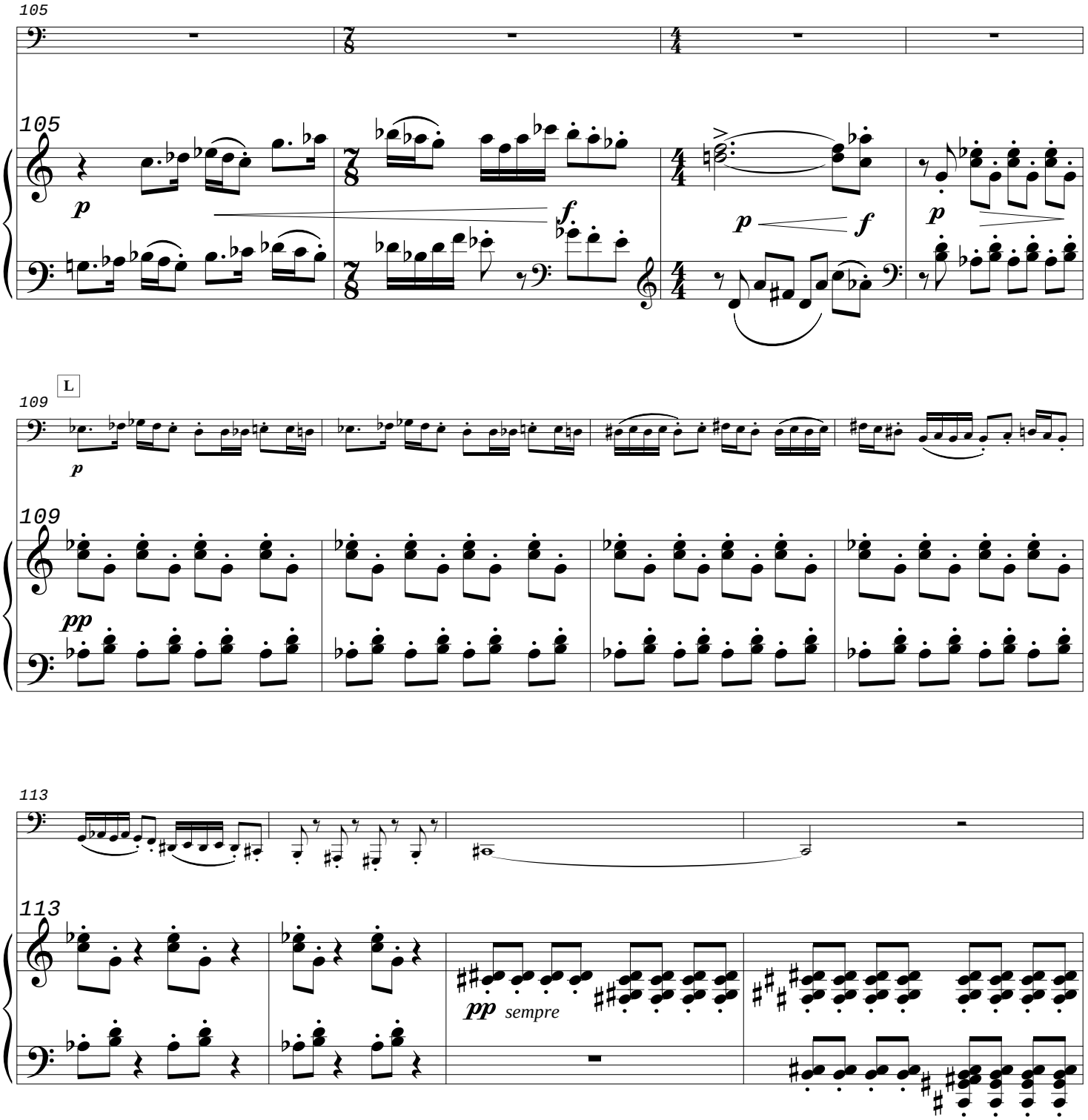

50
mf
50
53
mf
53
56
p
56

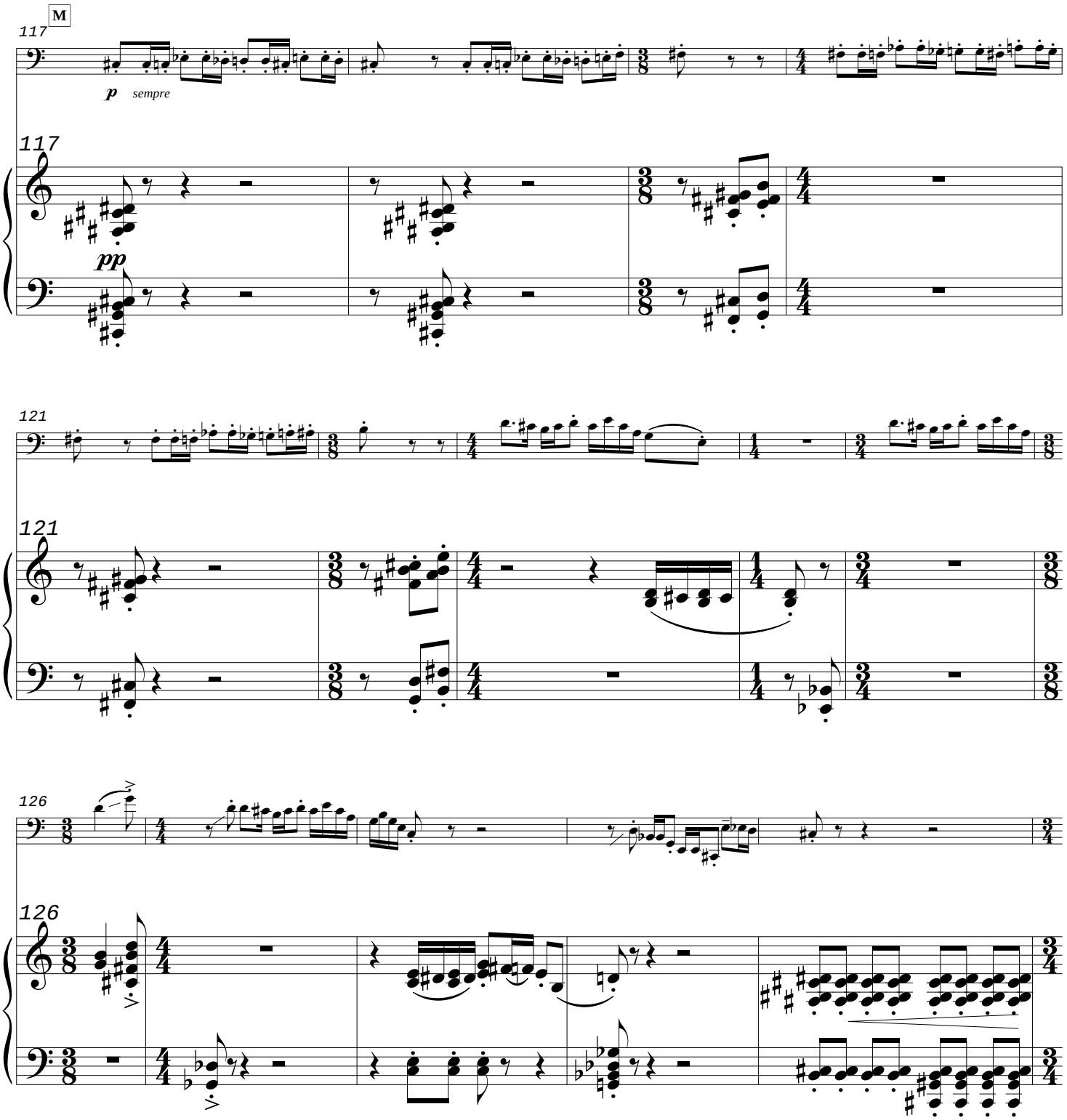

F
59
mp
p
59
p
mp
63
mf
63
p
mp
G
67
p
mf
mp
67
p

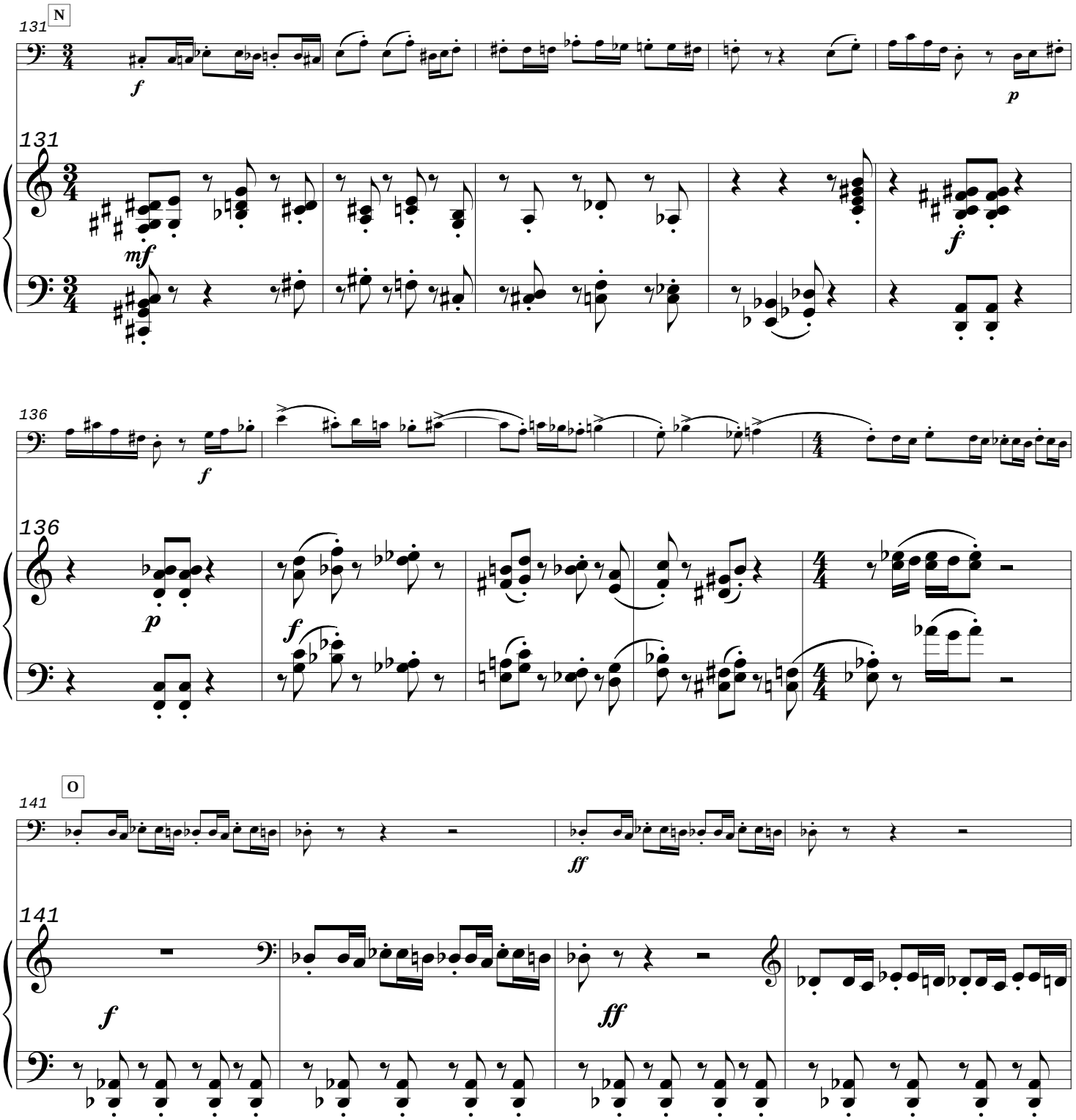

71
mf
f
pp
71
mf
pp
H
75
p
75
mp
79
79
pp
mp

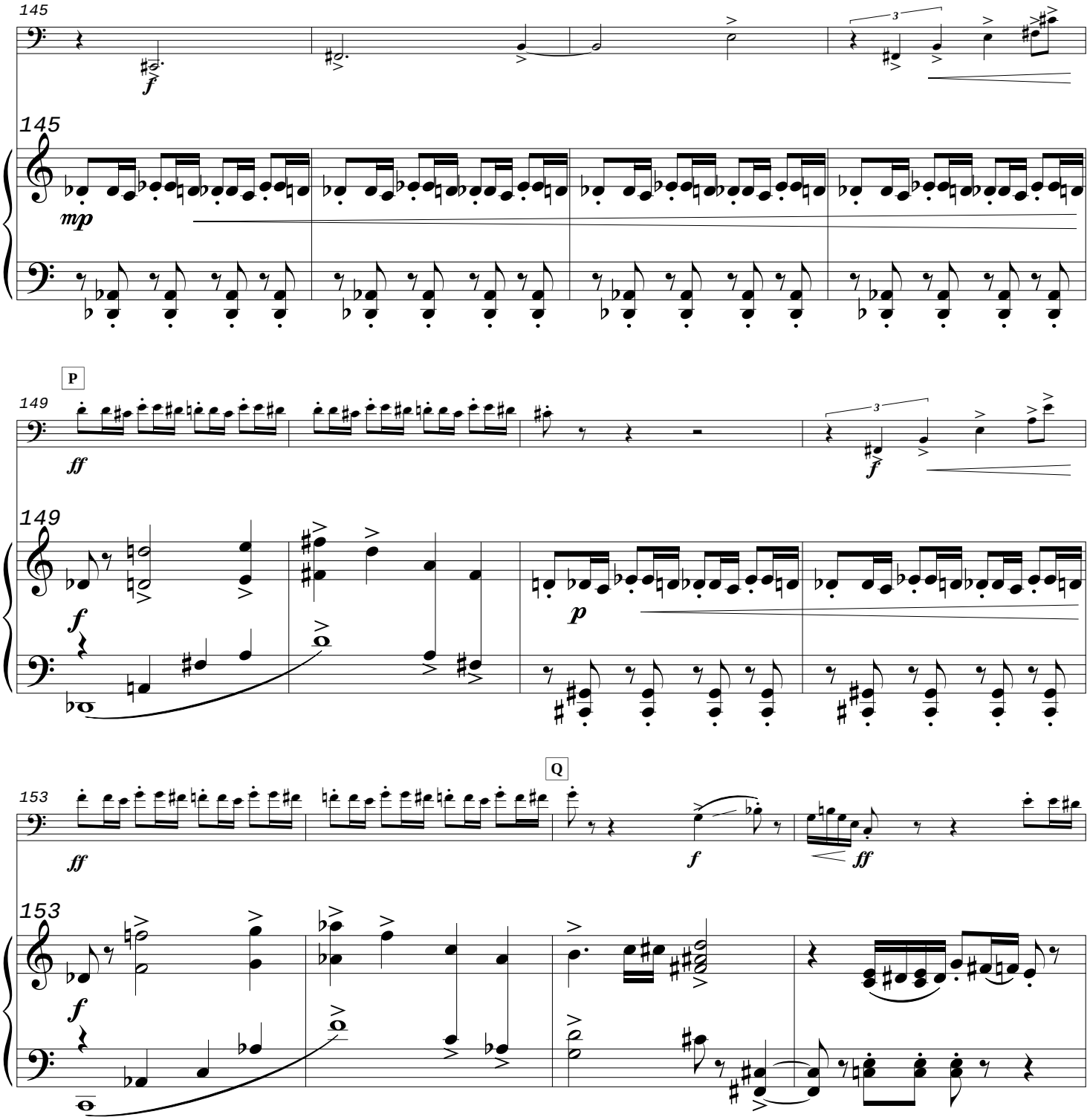

I
83
mf
83
mf
87
mf
p
p
87
mp
p
J
91
p
91
p

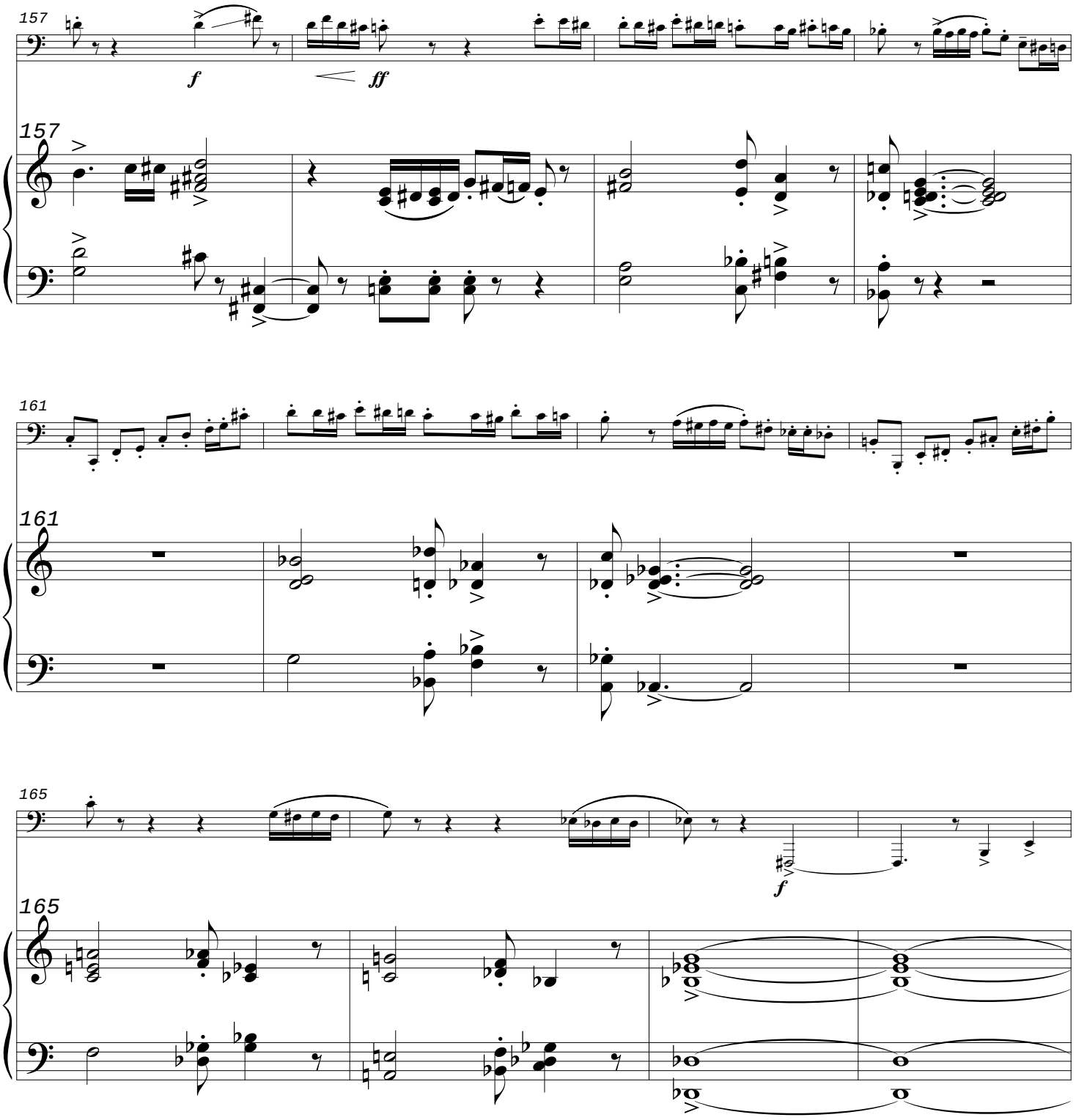

94
94
f
f
K
97
97
ff
101
101
p
f
p
p
f

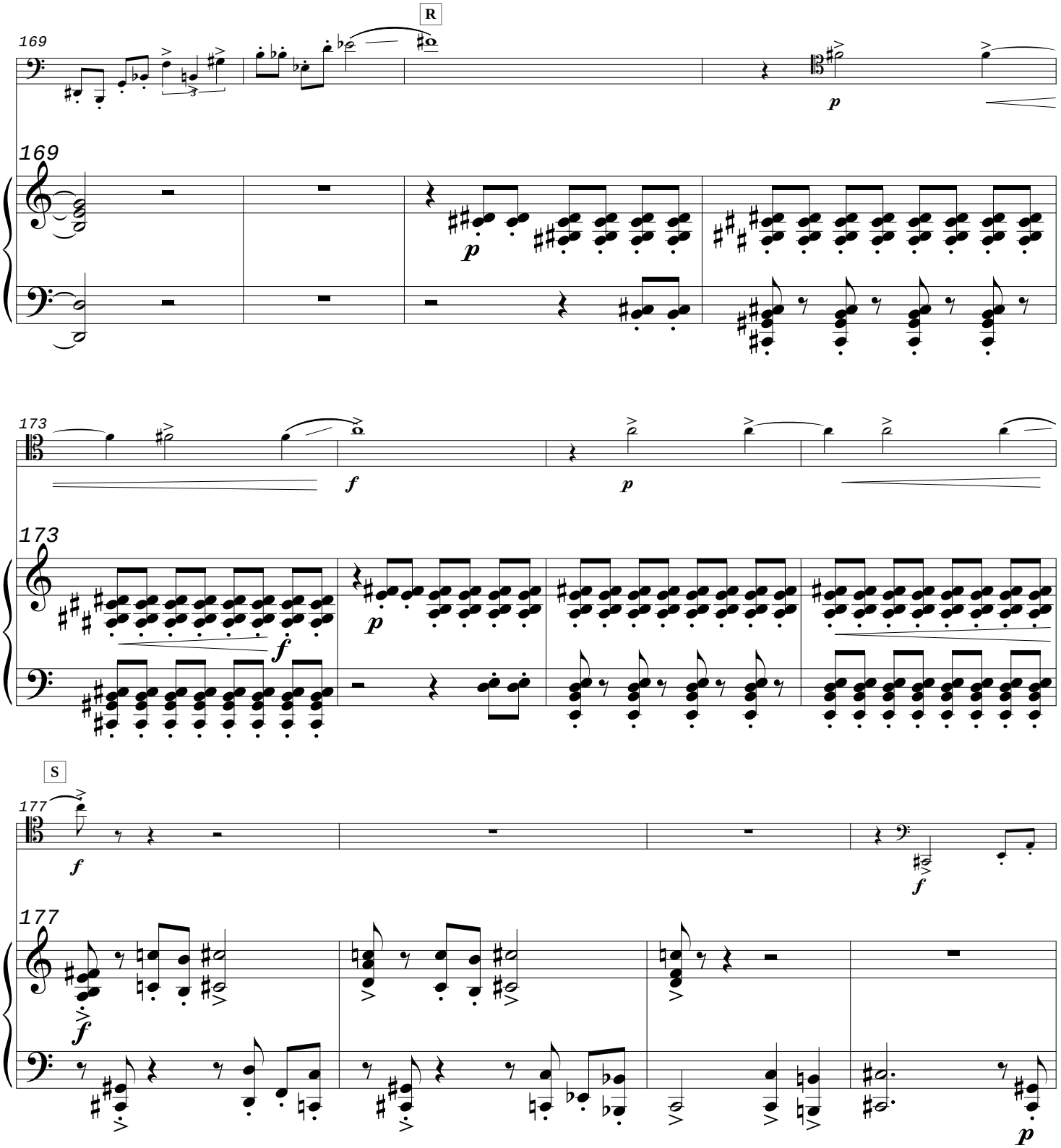

105
105
p
f
p
f
p
109
L
109
p
pp
113
113
pp
sempre

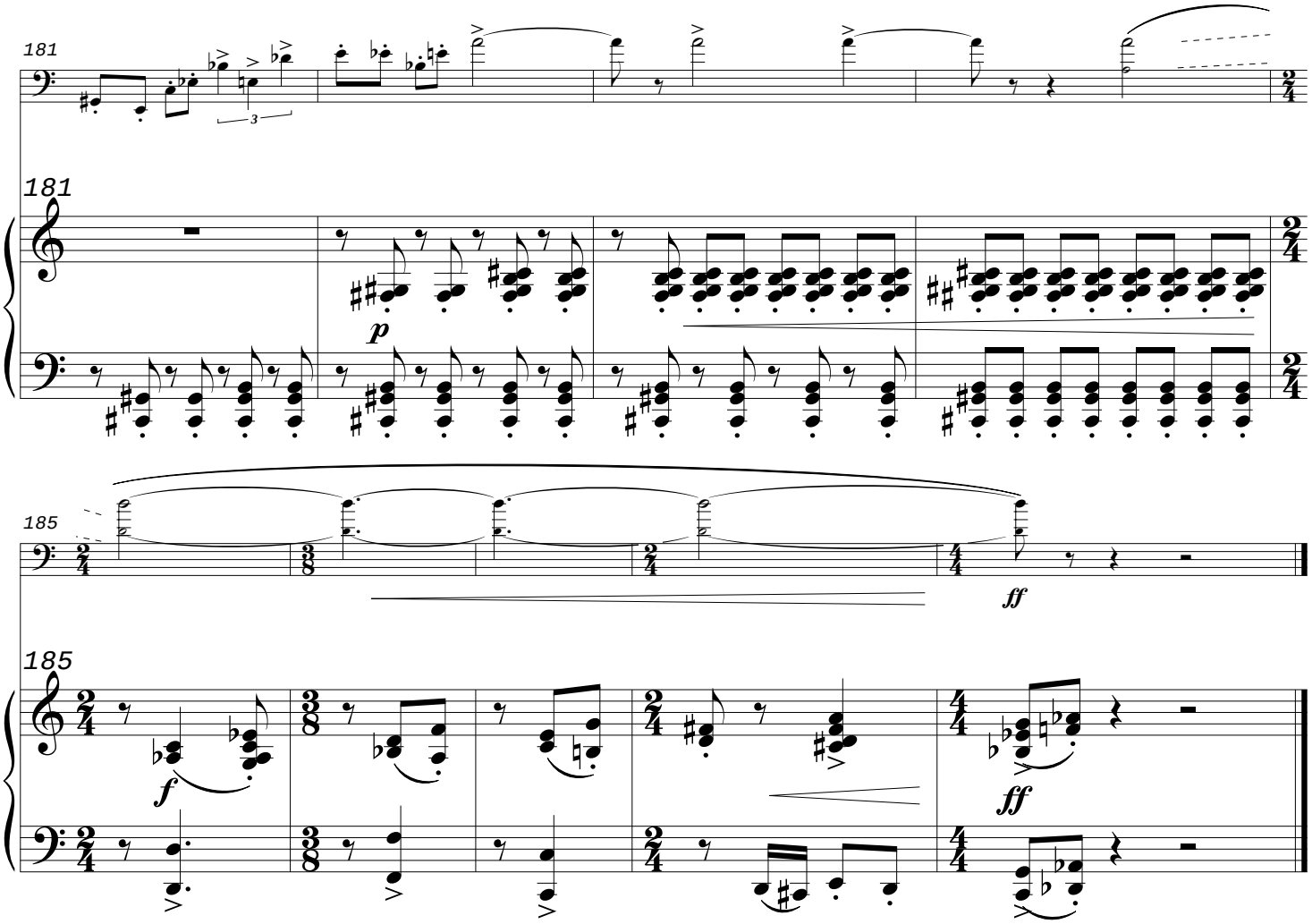

M
117
p sempre
117
pp
121
121
126
126


N
131
f
p
131
mf
f
136
f
136
p
f
O
141
ff
141
f
ff


145
145
mp
P
149
149
ff
f
p
Q
153
153
ff
f
ff


157
f
ff
157
161
161
165
f
165


R
169
169
p
173
173
f
p
S
177
177
f
p


181
3
181
p
185
ff
185
f
ff