Seung Mu

for String Quartet

10' 30"

Sanggeun Choi

Description

Seung Mu is one of the most traditional dances in Korea, deeply rooted in Buddhist rituals and practices. Renowned for its unique and intricate costume, the dance typically features a long, flowing white robe and a white hood or a simple hairstyle, designed to accentuate the fluidity and grace of the dancer's movements.

The main characteristic of *Seung Mu* lies in its blend of slow, meditative movements with dynamic and energetic ones. The dance begins with calm, deliberate gestures and gradually progresses to faster, more vigorous movements, often including turning, spinning, and graceful arm motions. Typically performed as a solo dance, *Seung Mu* allows a dancer to show their individual skill, control, and emotional expression, emphasizing the personal and meditative aspects of the performance.

I reinterpreted the solo dance, which exhibits such visual and metaphysical characteristics, into a piece for the string quartet in contemporary musical idioms. The first violin begins in a quietly high register of the introduction, then repeatedly builds and releases rhythmic tension as the pitches gradually descend and textures become more complex. This solo violin's dancing movements symbolize the purest moments following human birth. After the violin's solo, other string instruments enter with sophisticated contrapuntal techniques, aiming to deepen the portrayal of humanity's longing for freedom in the face of societal oppression. In the middle section, percussive sound effects intensify the expression of this yearning for freedom. As the piece approaches the end, the use of pressure techniques amplifies this longing to its peak, and the woman dancer's movements gently echo the serene tune of the opening violin solo with a sense of arriving at a utopia, which is a result of enlightenment about the world and liberation from delusion.

Notation

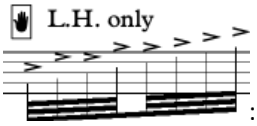
- : Increasing pressure on the strings

-

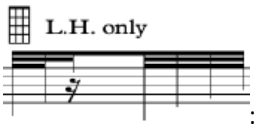
: Playing the bow close to the bridge, then returning to the normal range

- : Playing with a wide vibrato extensively

- : Tapping fingernails on wood for a percussive effect (close to F-hole)

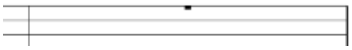
- 

: Striking the fingerboard loudly with the left hand's palm for a percussive effect

- 

: Playing random notes on the fingerboard with only fingering, according to the given rhythm (improvising random notes, but adjusting the pitches' height from the length of the stems)

- "P", "mp", "mf", "f", and "ff": Indicating a dynamic shift during percussive effects (relative volume)

-  : Three staff lines for improvising random notes of pizzicato and fingering sounds (varying the pitch range approximately according to the stems' heights)

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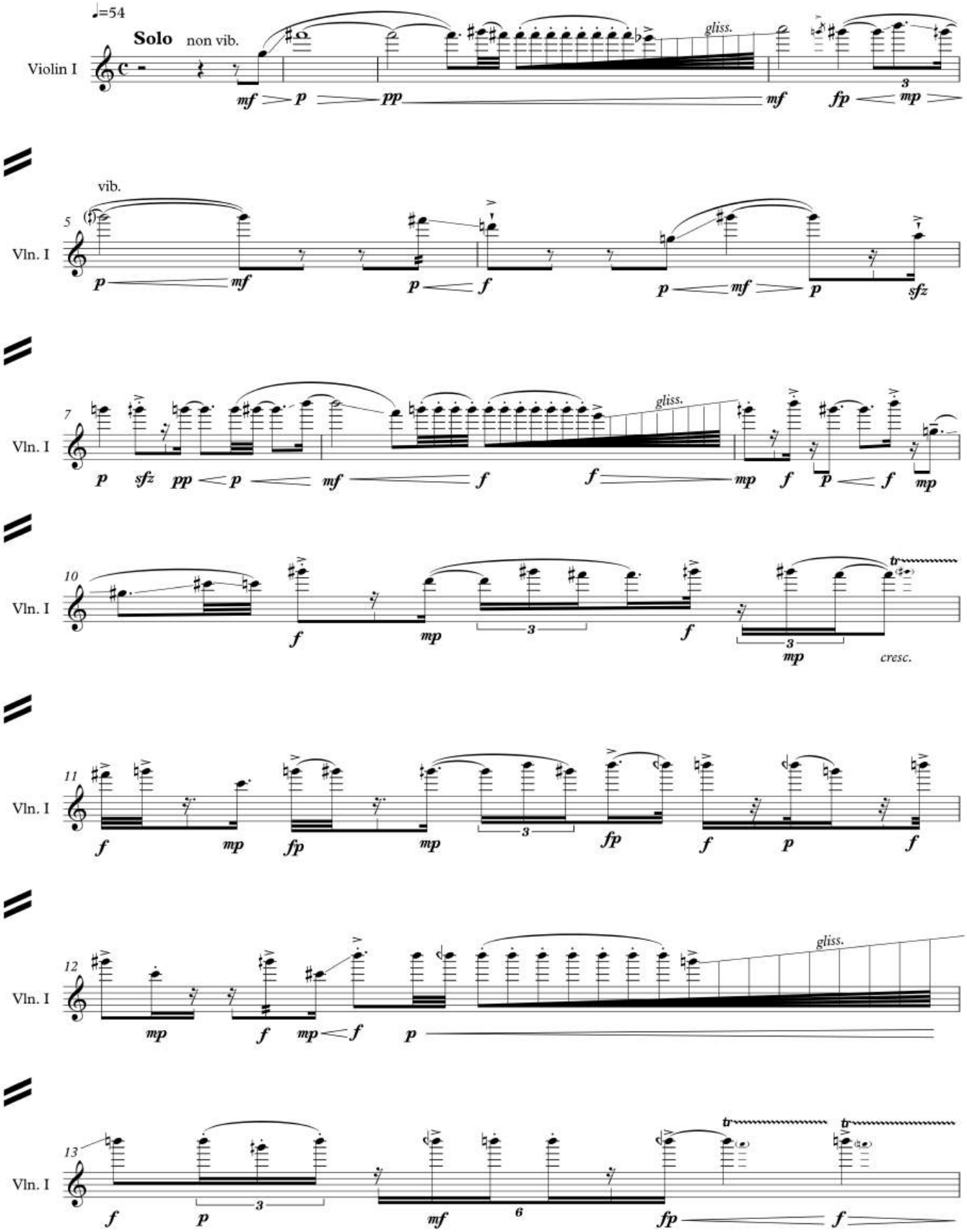
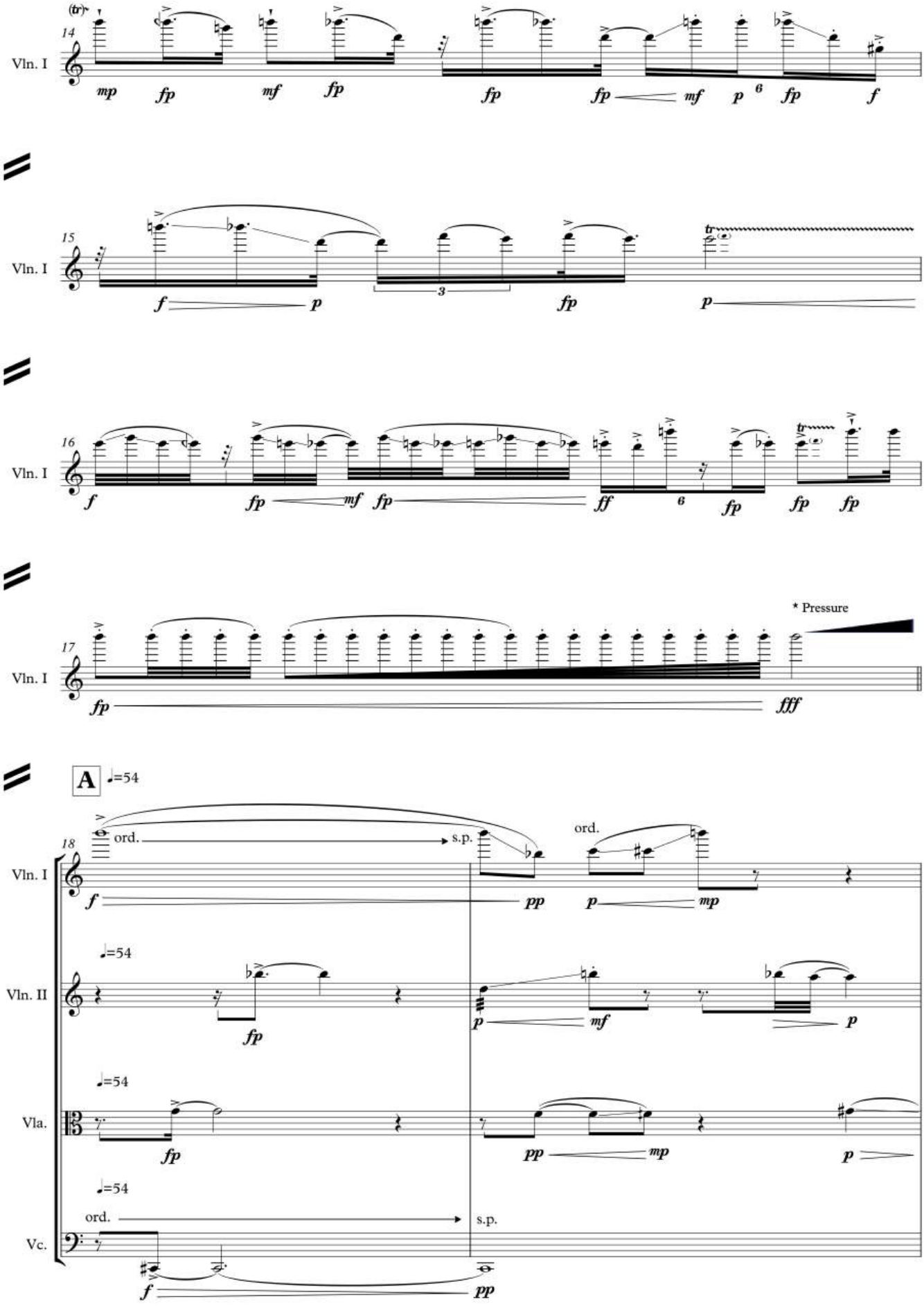
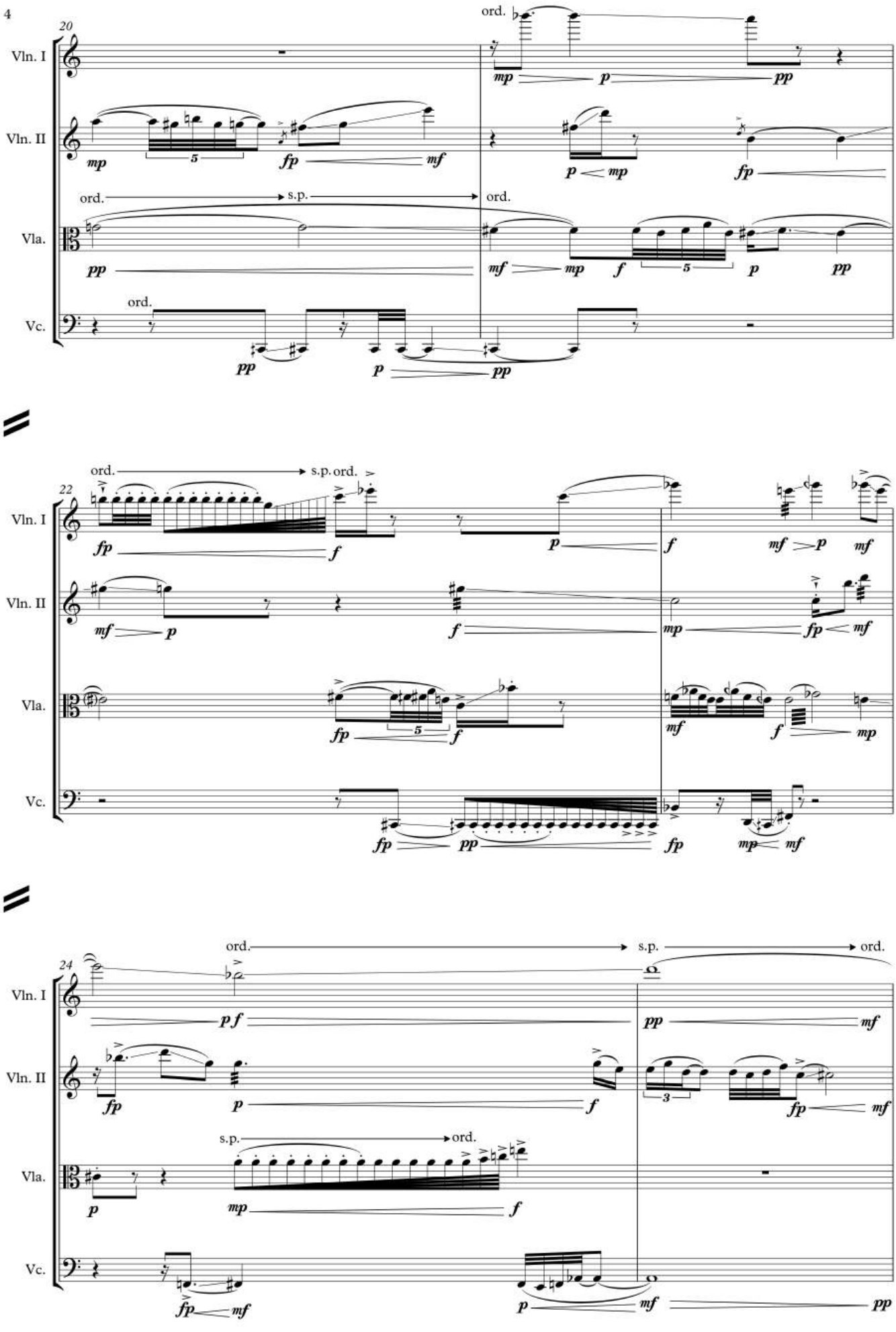
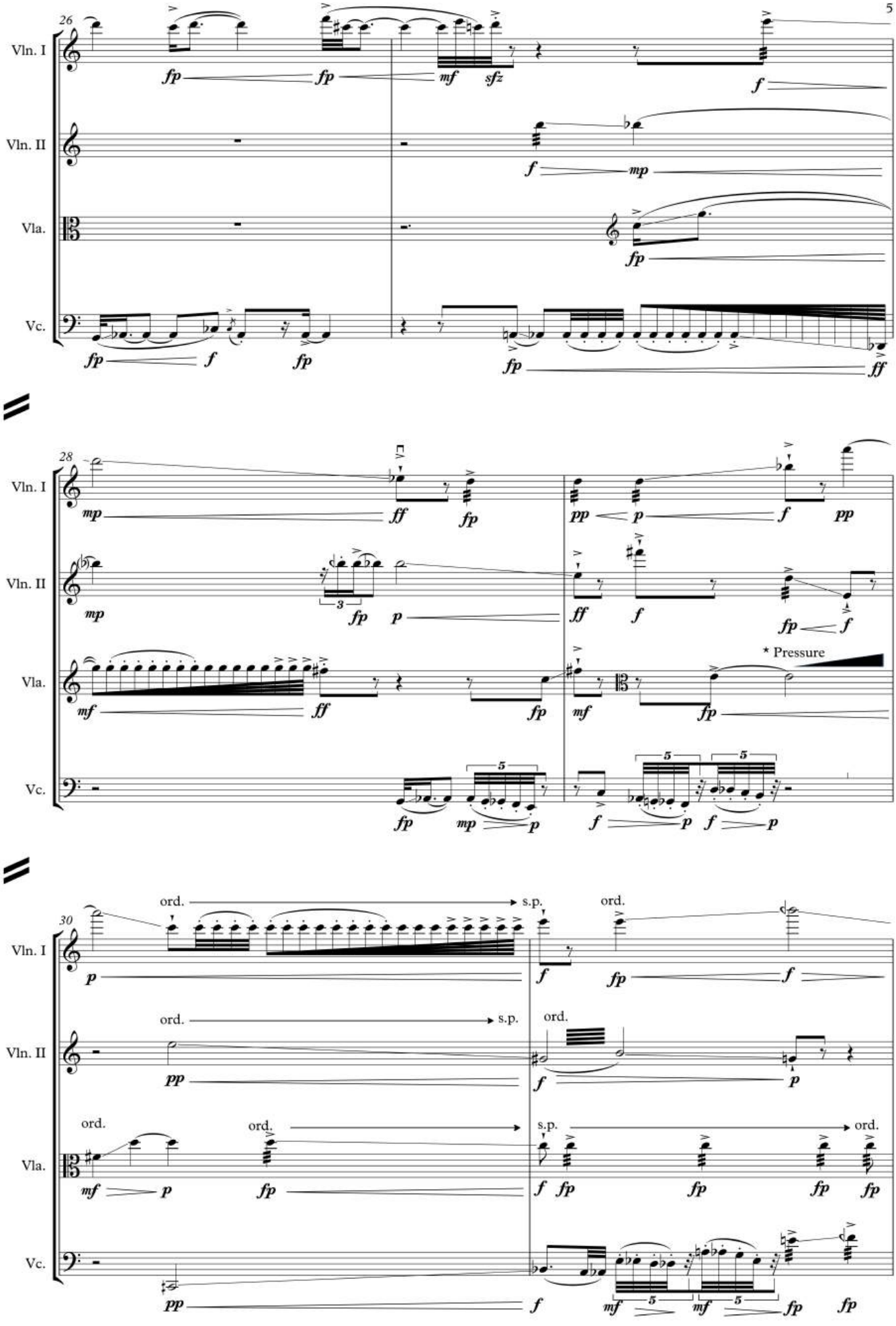
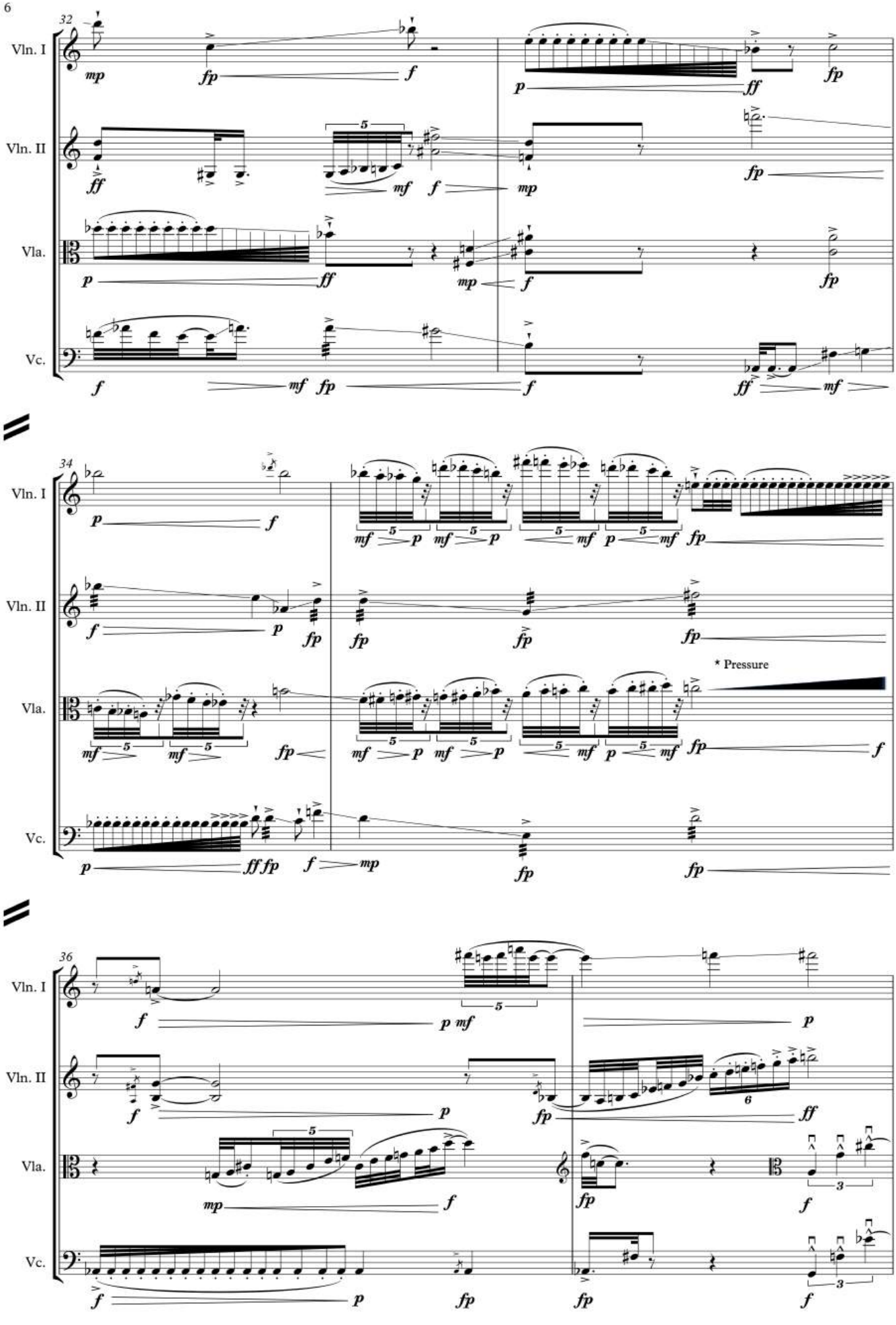
Sanggeun Choi

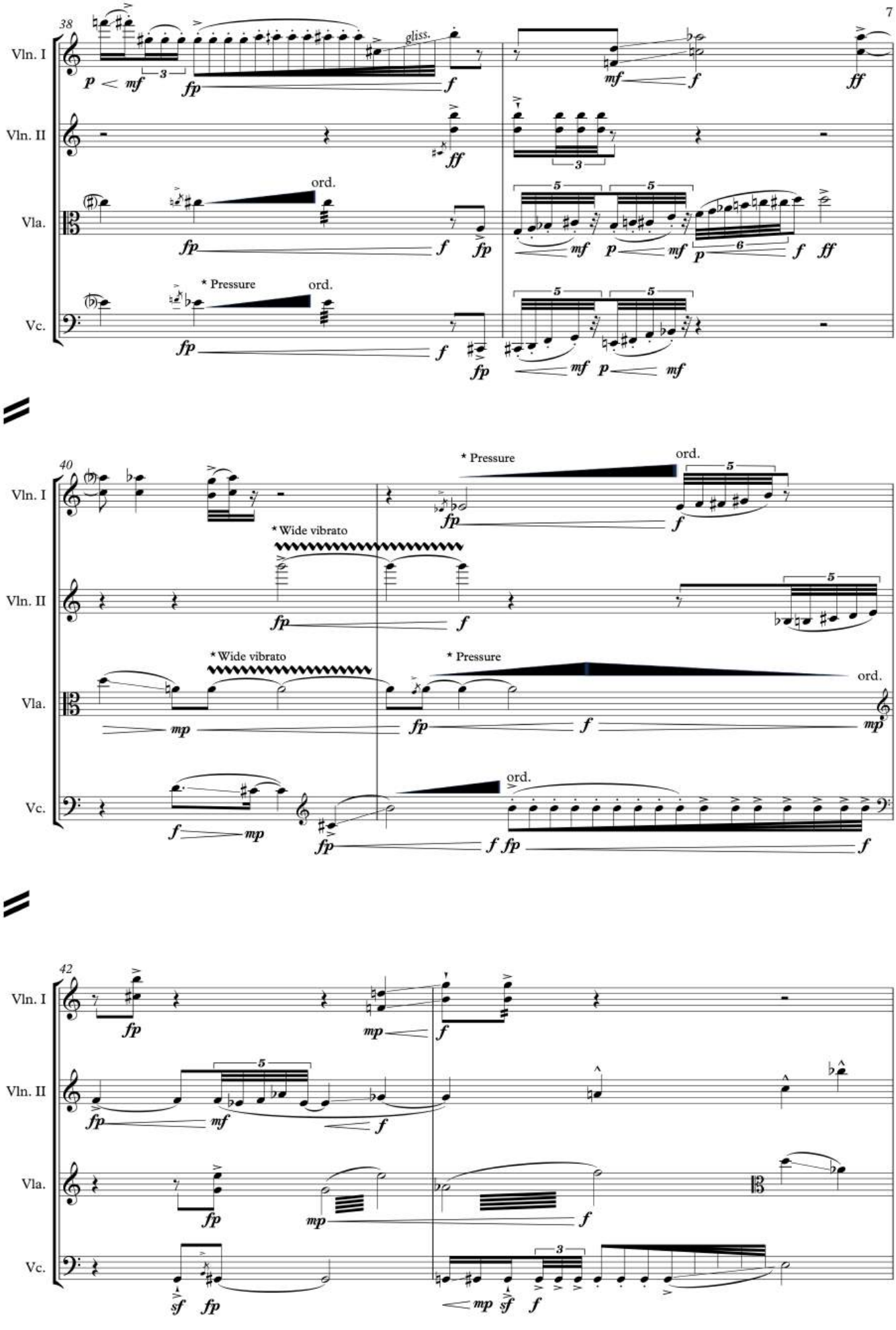


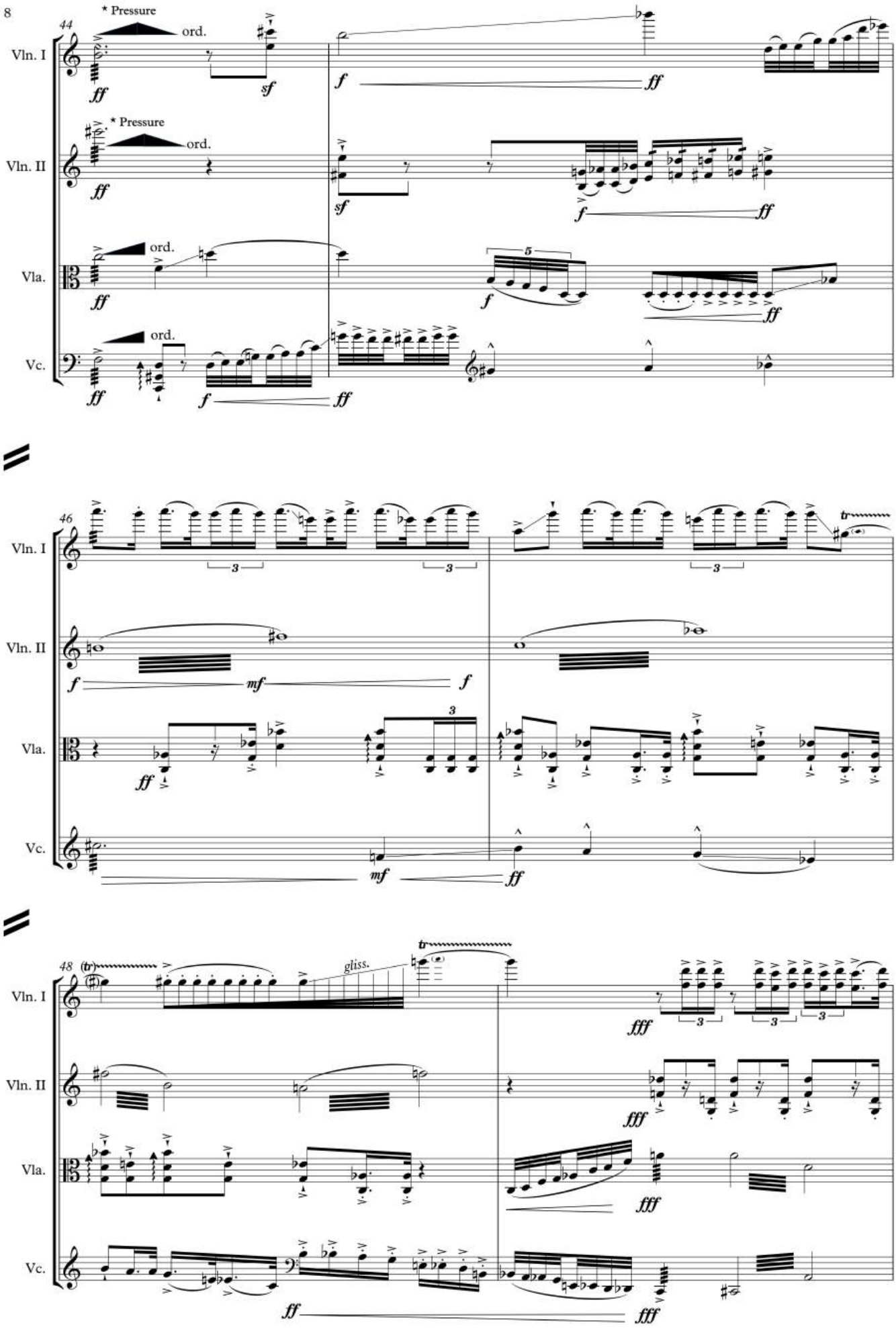

14
Vln. I
(tr)
mp fp mf fp fp fp mf p 6 fp f
15
Vln. I
f p 3 fp p
16
Vln. I
f fp mf fp ff 6 fp fp fp
17
Vln. I
* Pressure
fp fff
A
♩=54
18
Vln. I
ord. s.p. ord.
f pp p mp
Vln. II
♩=54
fp p mf p
Vla.
♩=54
fp pp mp p
Vc.
♩=54
ord. s.p.
f pp

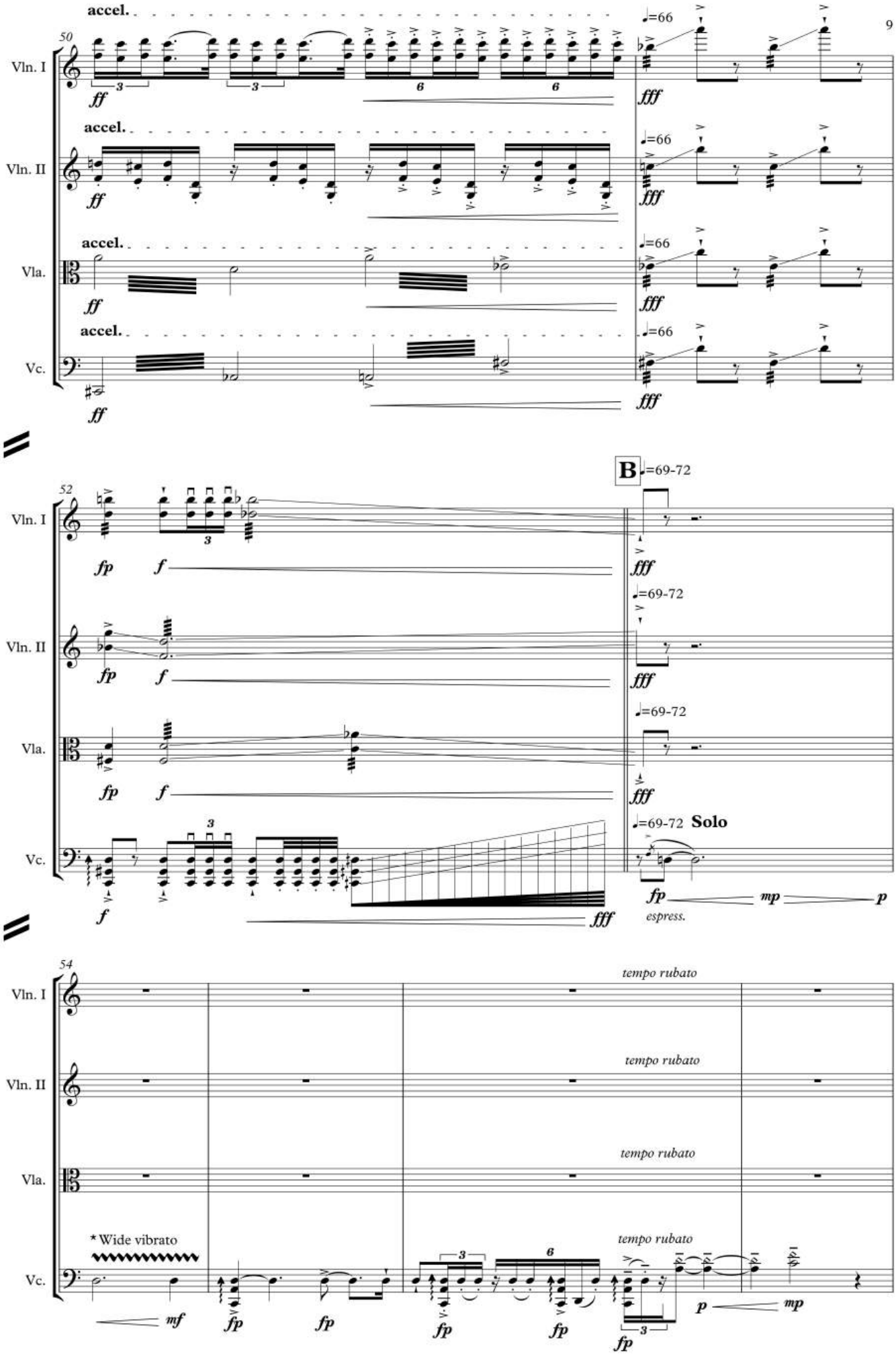

20
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ord.
s.p.
22
24

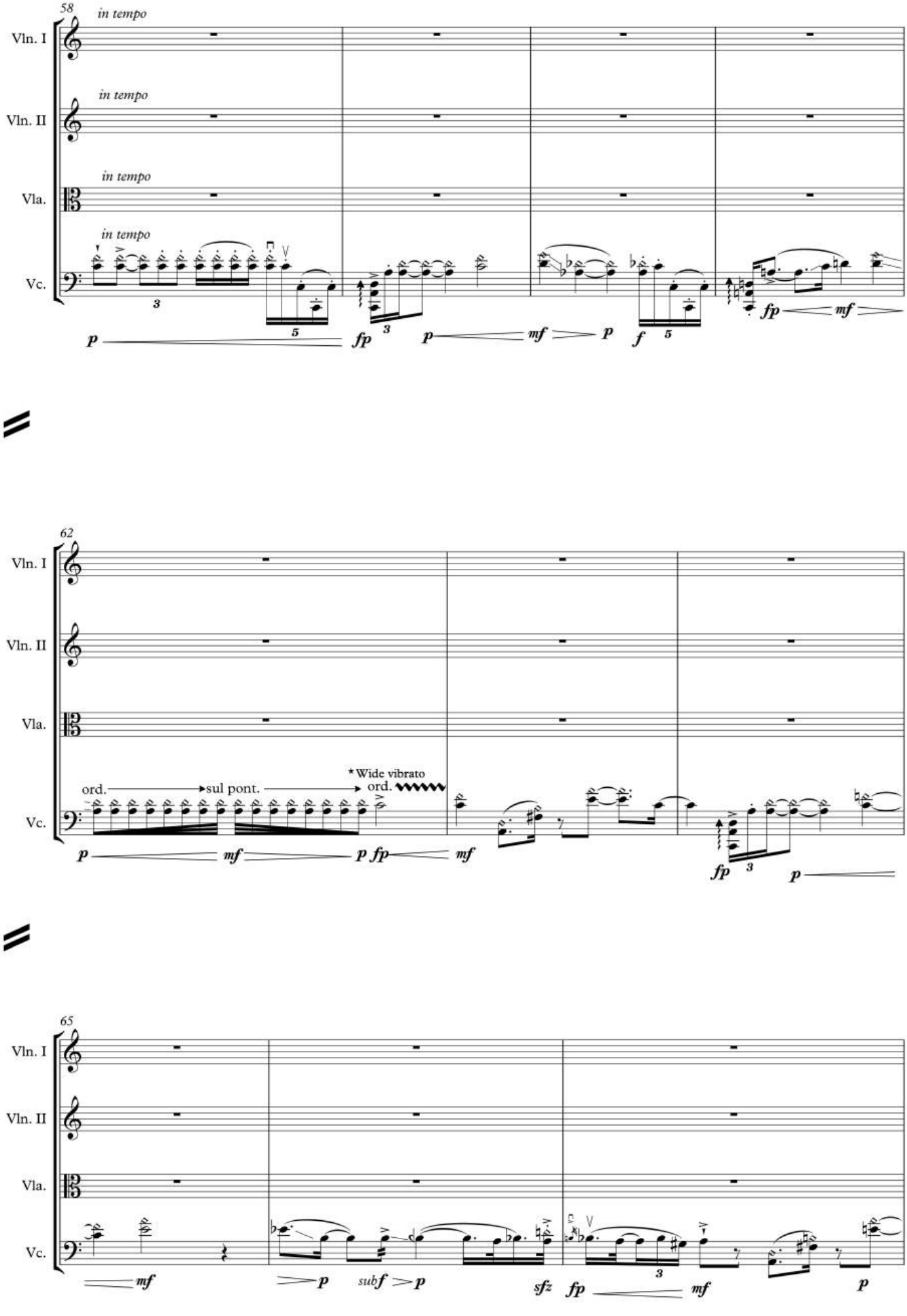

26
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
28
* Pressure
30
ord.
s.p.

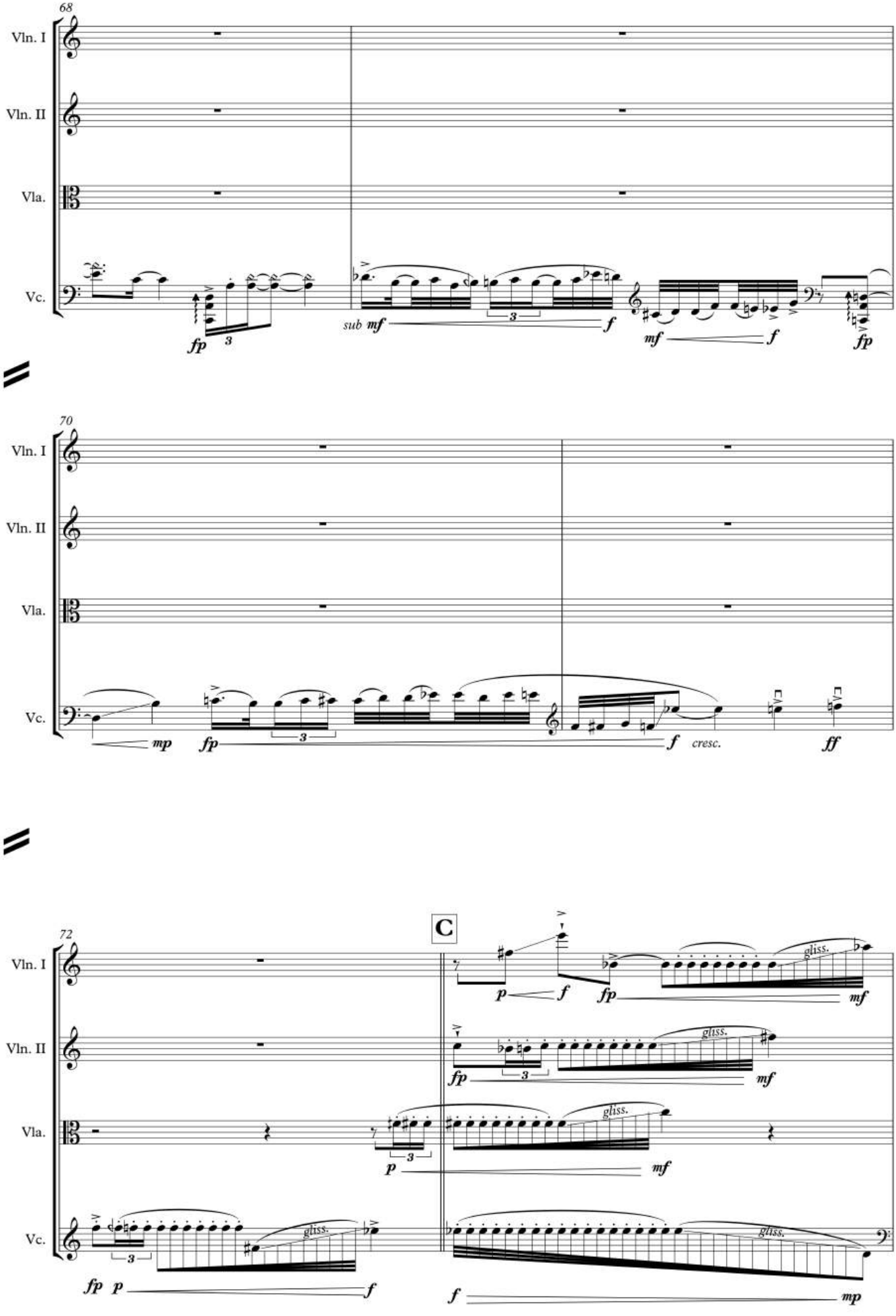

32
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
34
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
* Pressure
36
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

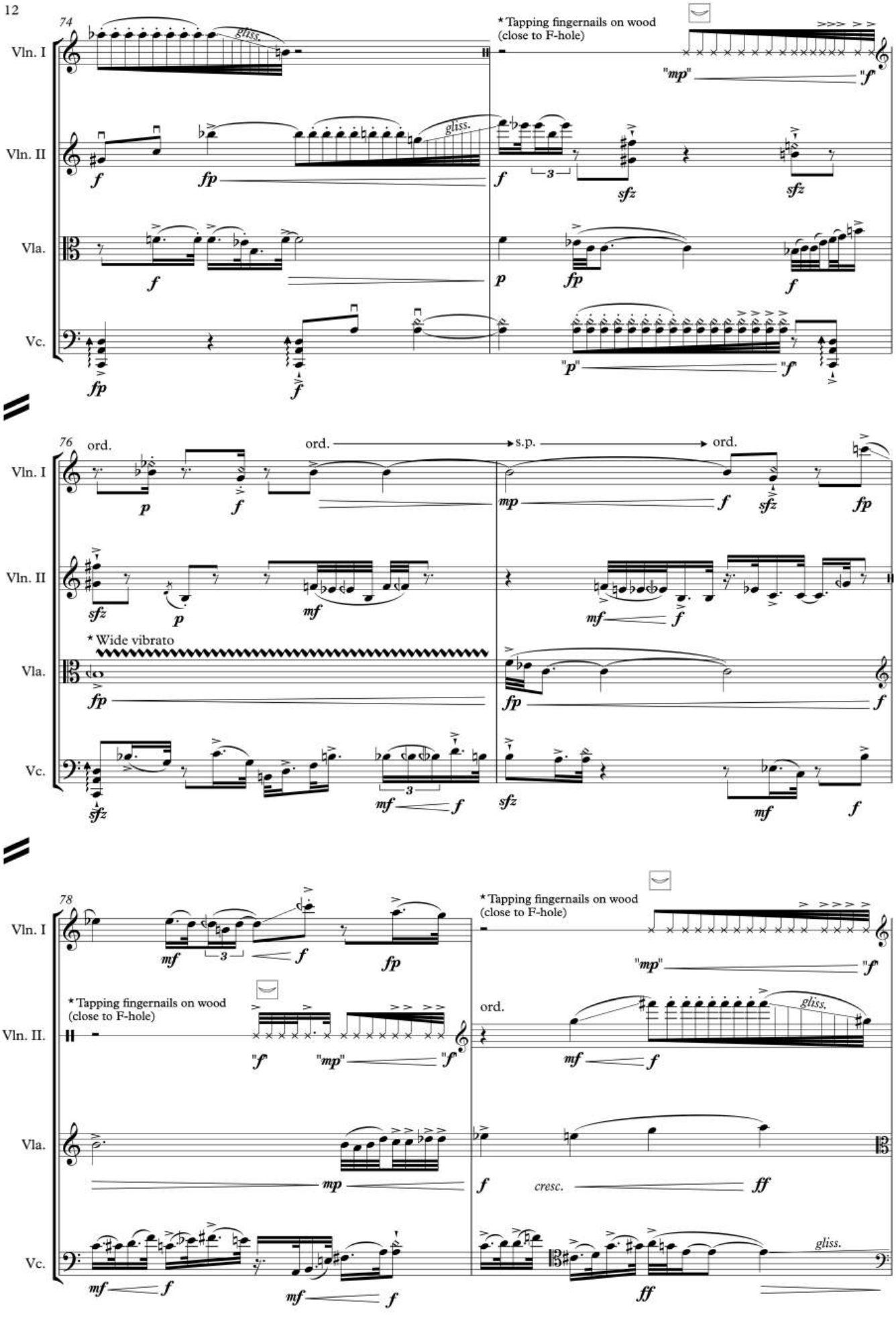

38
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
gliss.
ord.
* Pressure
ord.
40
* Pressure
ord.
* Wide vibrato
* Wide vibrato
* Pressure
ord.
ord.
42

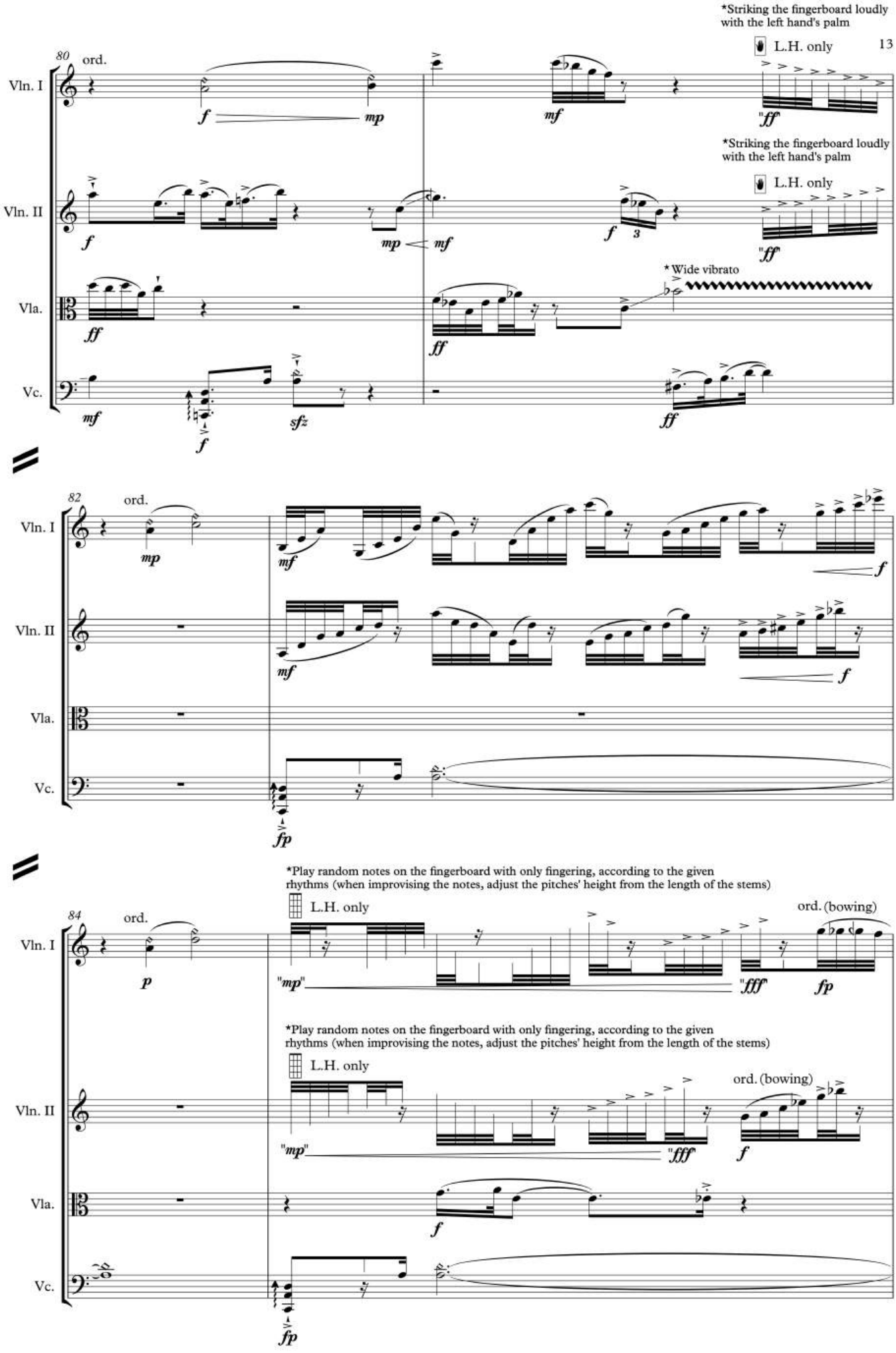

44
* Pressure
ord.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ff
sf
f
ff
5
46
tr
3
mf
48
(tr)
gliss.
fff

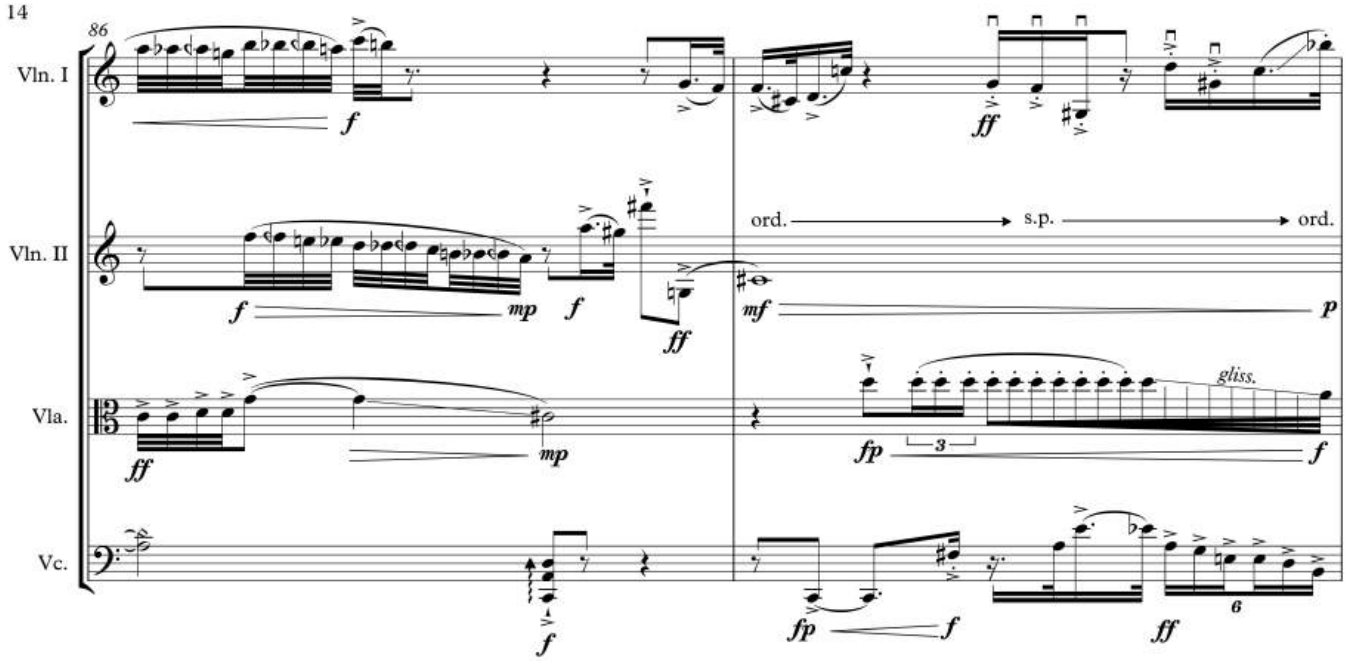

50
accel.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ff
fff
=66
52
B
=69-72
fp
f
Solo
mp
p
espress.
54
tempo rubato
* Wide vibrato
mf

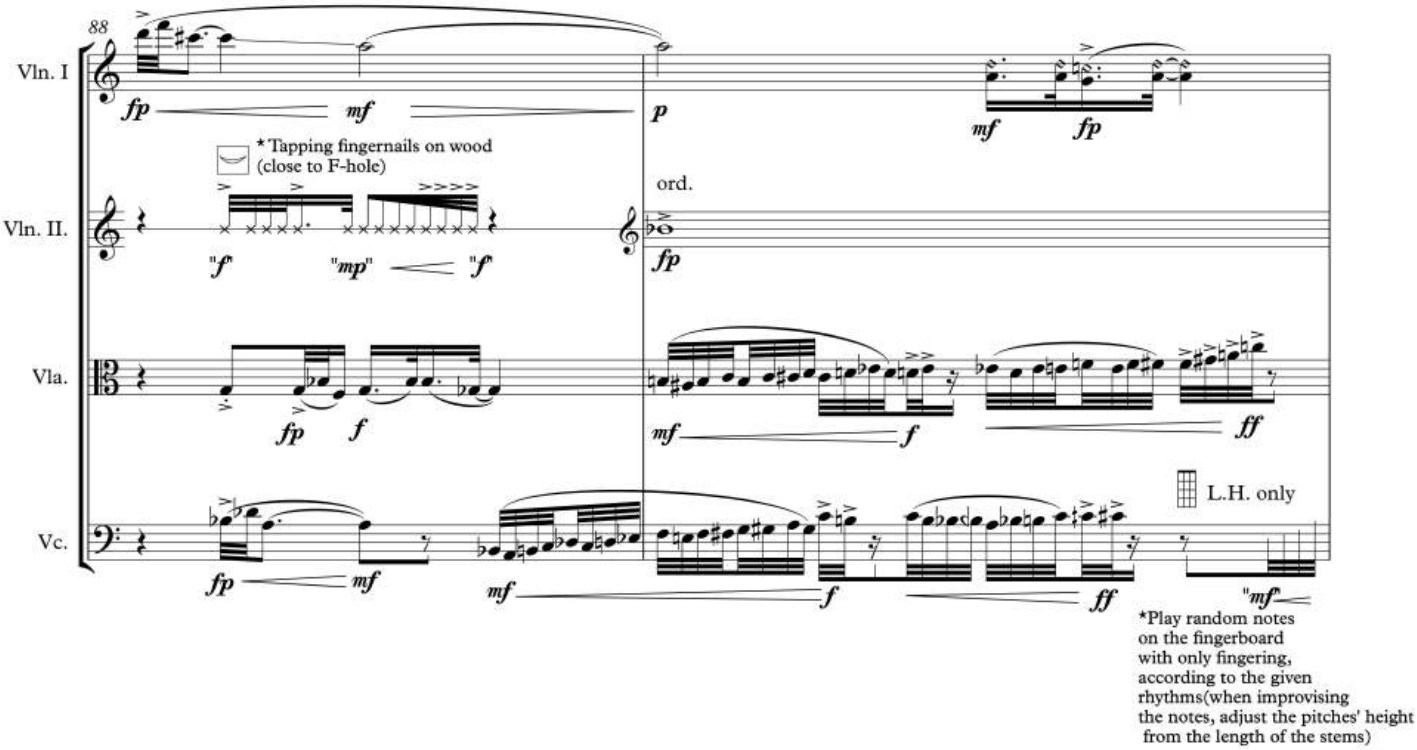

58
in tempo
Vln. I
in tempo
Vln. II
in tempo
Vla.
in tempo
Vc.
62
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ord.
sul pont.
*Wide vibrato
ord.
65
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

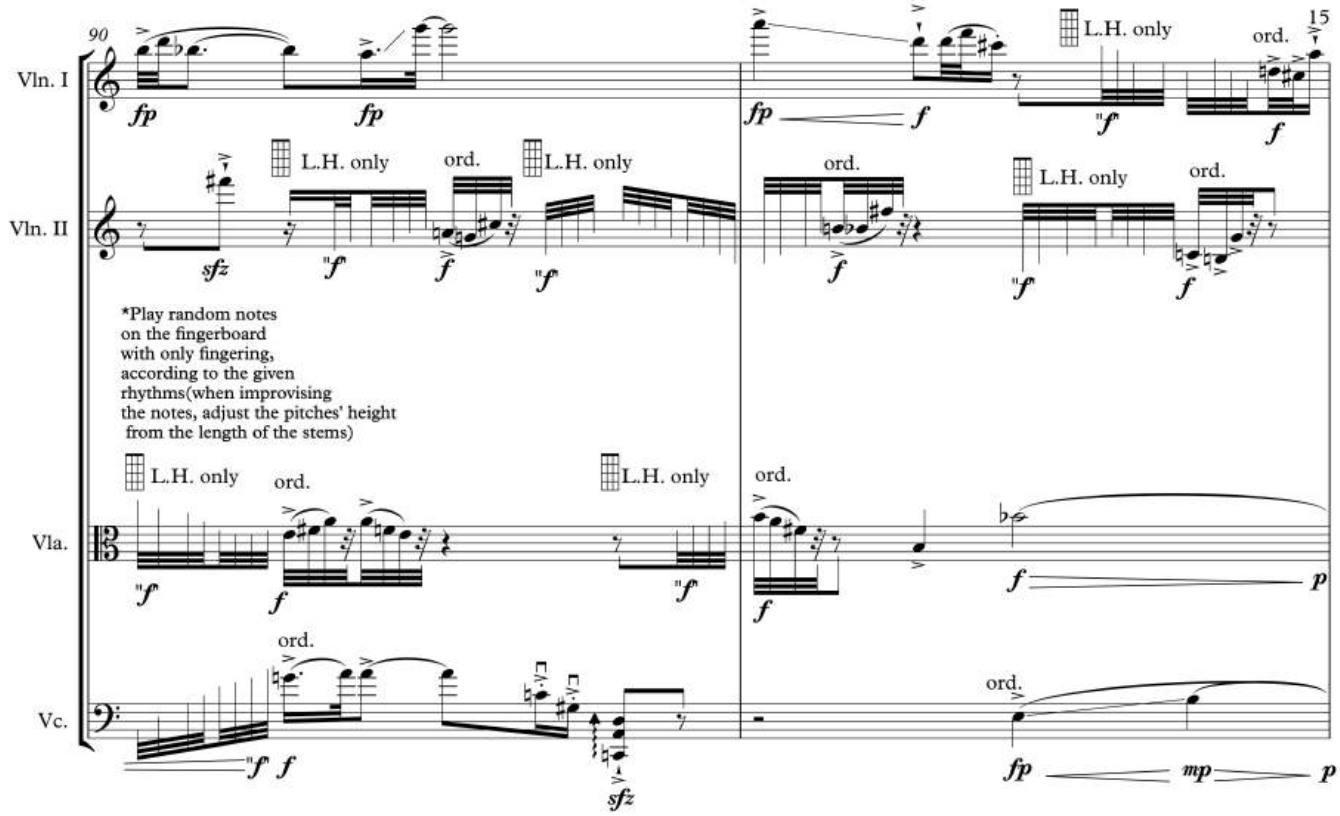

68
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
fp
3
sub mf
3
f
mf
f
fp
70
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
fp
3
f
cresc.
ff
72
C
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
f
fp
gliss.
mf
fp
3
gliss.
mf
p
3
gliss.
mf
fp
p
3
gliss.
f
f
gliss.
mp

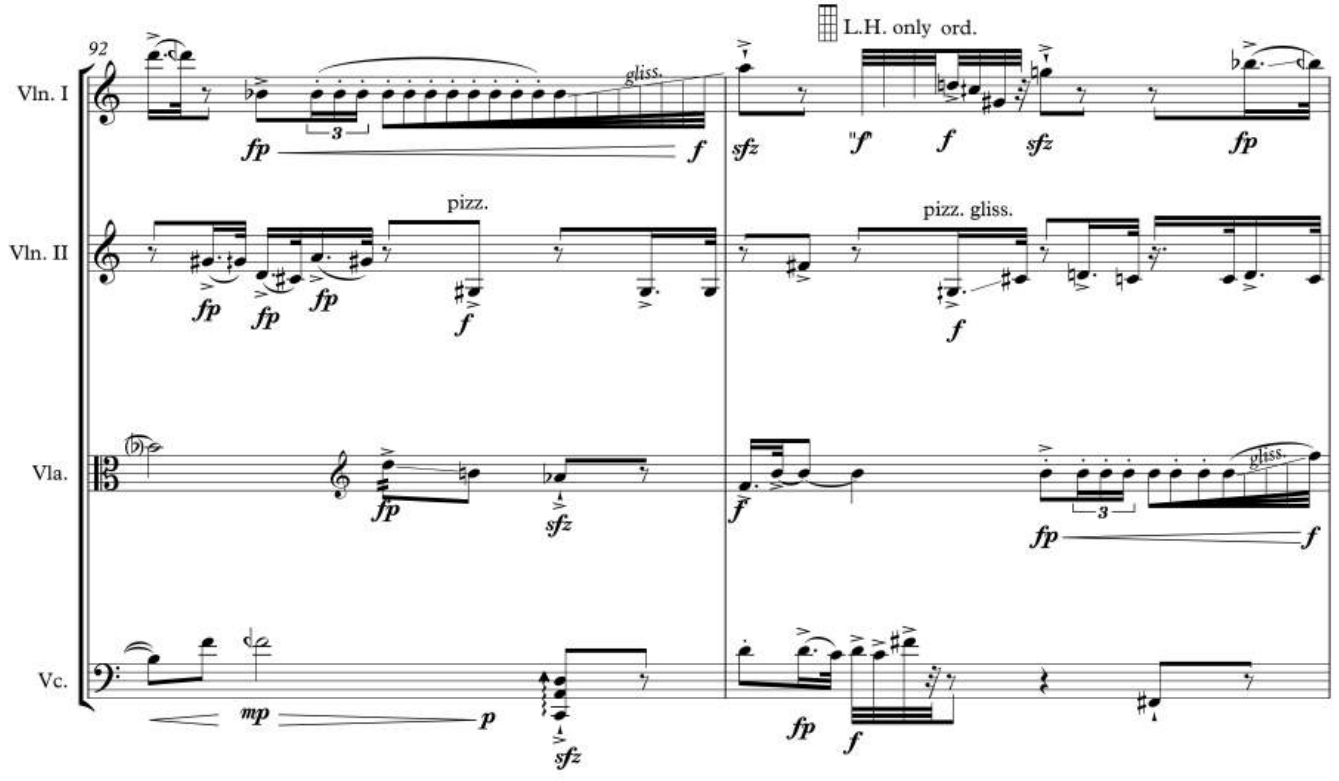

74
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
gliss.
* Tapping fingernails on wood
(close to F-hole)
"mp"
"f"
76
ord.
s.p.
* Wide vibrato
78
* Tapping fingernails on wood
(close to F-hole)
Vln. II.
cresc.
gliss.

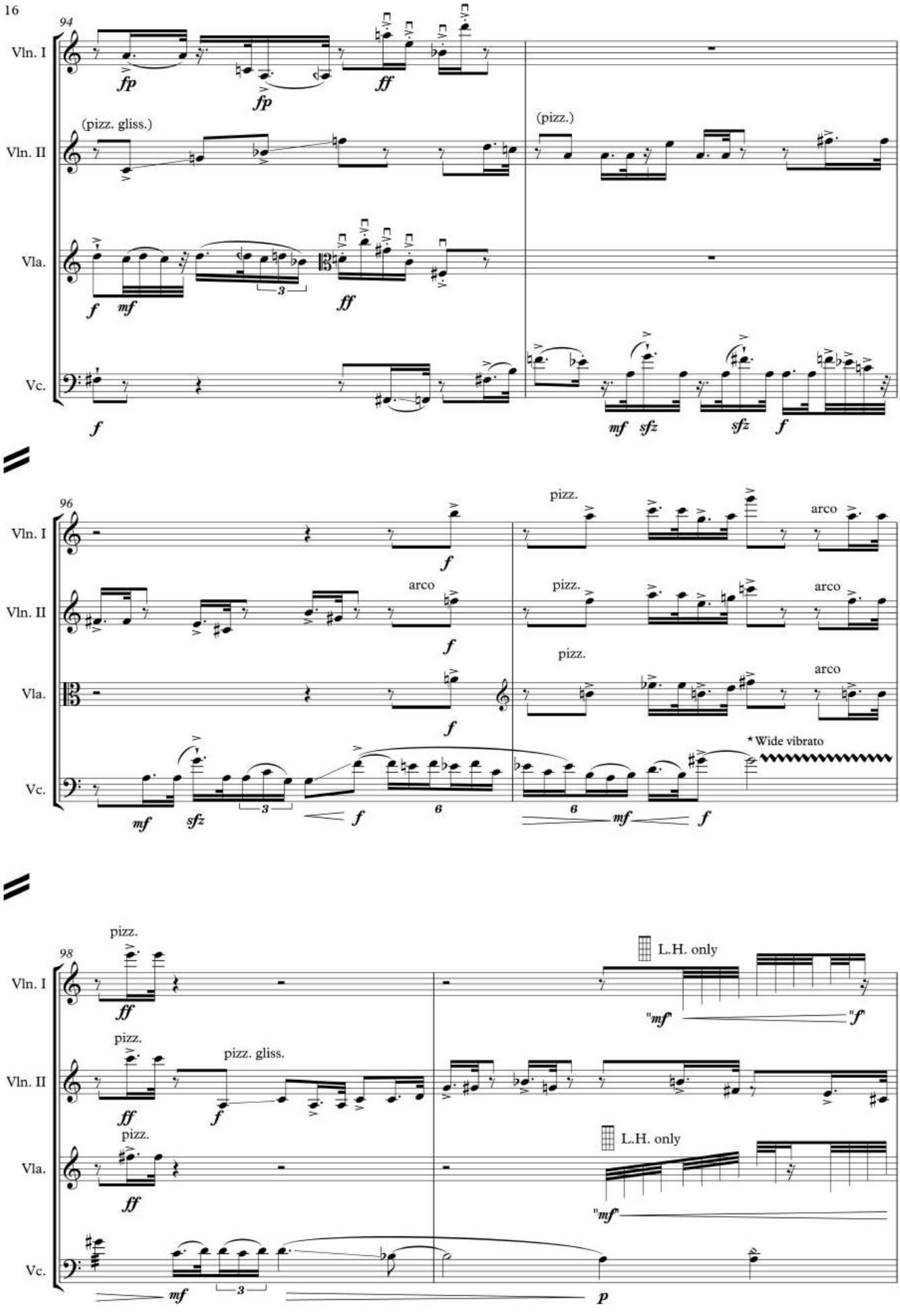

*Striking the fingerboard loudly with the left hand's palm
L.H. only
80
ord.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
*Striking the fingerboard loudly with the left hand's palm
L.H. only
* Wide vibrato
82
ord.
84
ord.
*Play random notes on the fingerboard with only fingering, according to the given rhythms (when improvising the notes, adjust the pitches' height from the length of the stems)
L.H. only
ord. (bowing)
*Play random notes on the fingerboard with only fingering, according to the given rhythms (when improvising the notes, adjust the pitches' height from the length of the stems)
L.H. only
ord. (bowing)

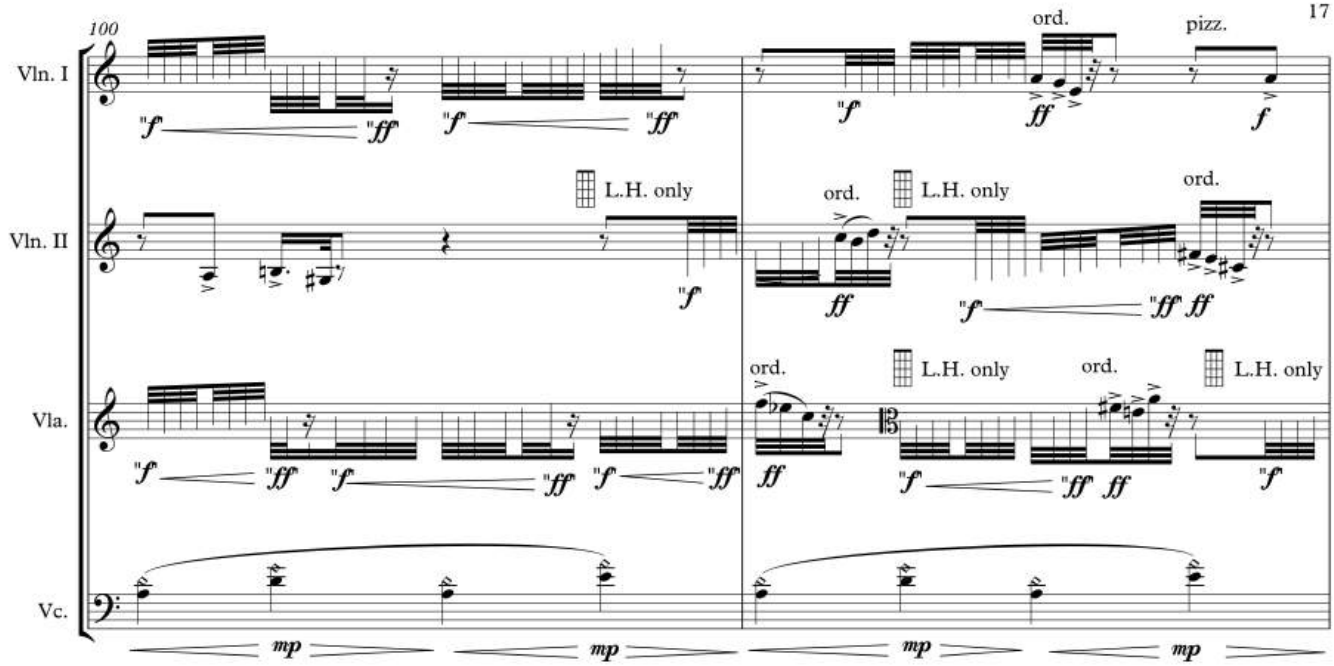

86
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ord.
s.p.
ord.
gliss.

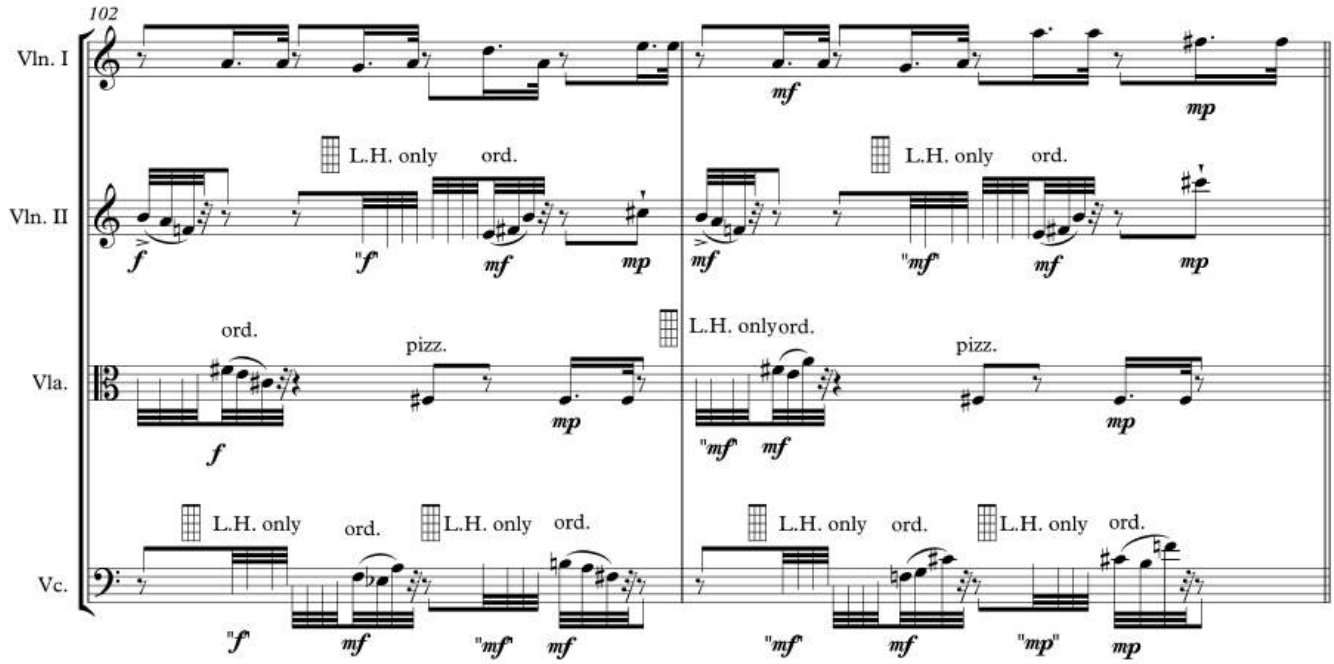

88
Vln. I
Vln. II.
Vla.
Vc.
*Tapping fingernails on wood
(close to F-hole)
ord.
L.H. only
*Play random notes
on the fingerboard
with only fingering,
according to the given
rhythms(when improvising
the notes, adjust the pitches' height
from the length of the stems)


90
15
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
L.H. only
ord.
*Play random notes
on the fingerboard
with only fingering,
according to the given
rhythms(when improvising
the notes, adjust the pitches' height
from the length of the stems)

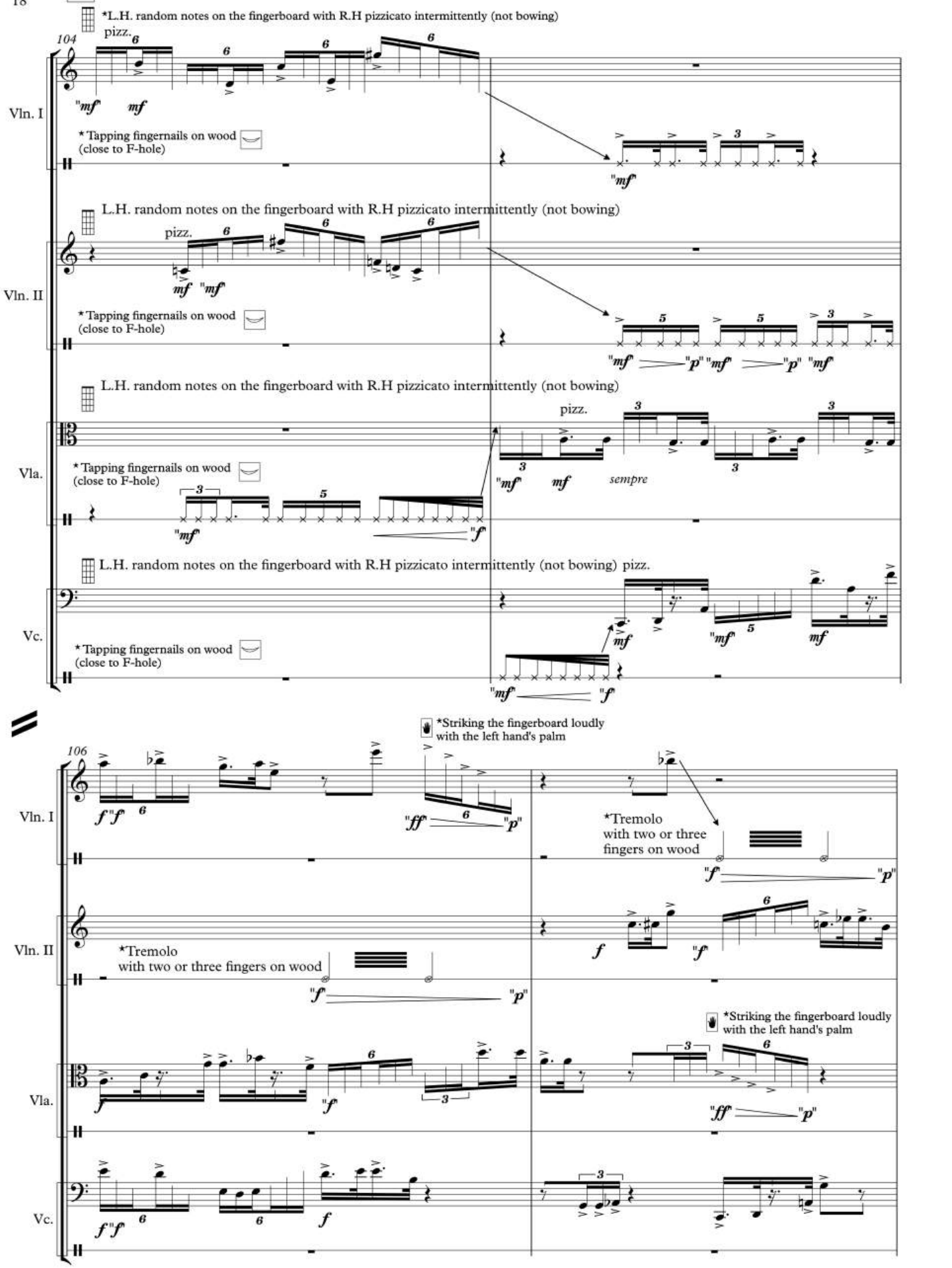

92
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
L.H. only ord.
gliss.
pizz.
pizz. gliss.

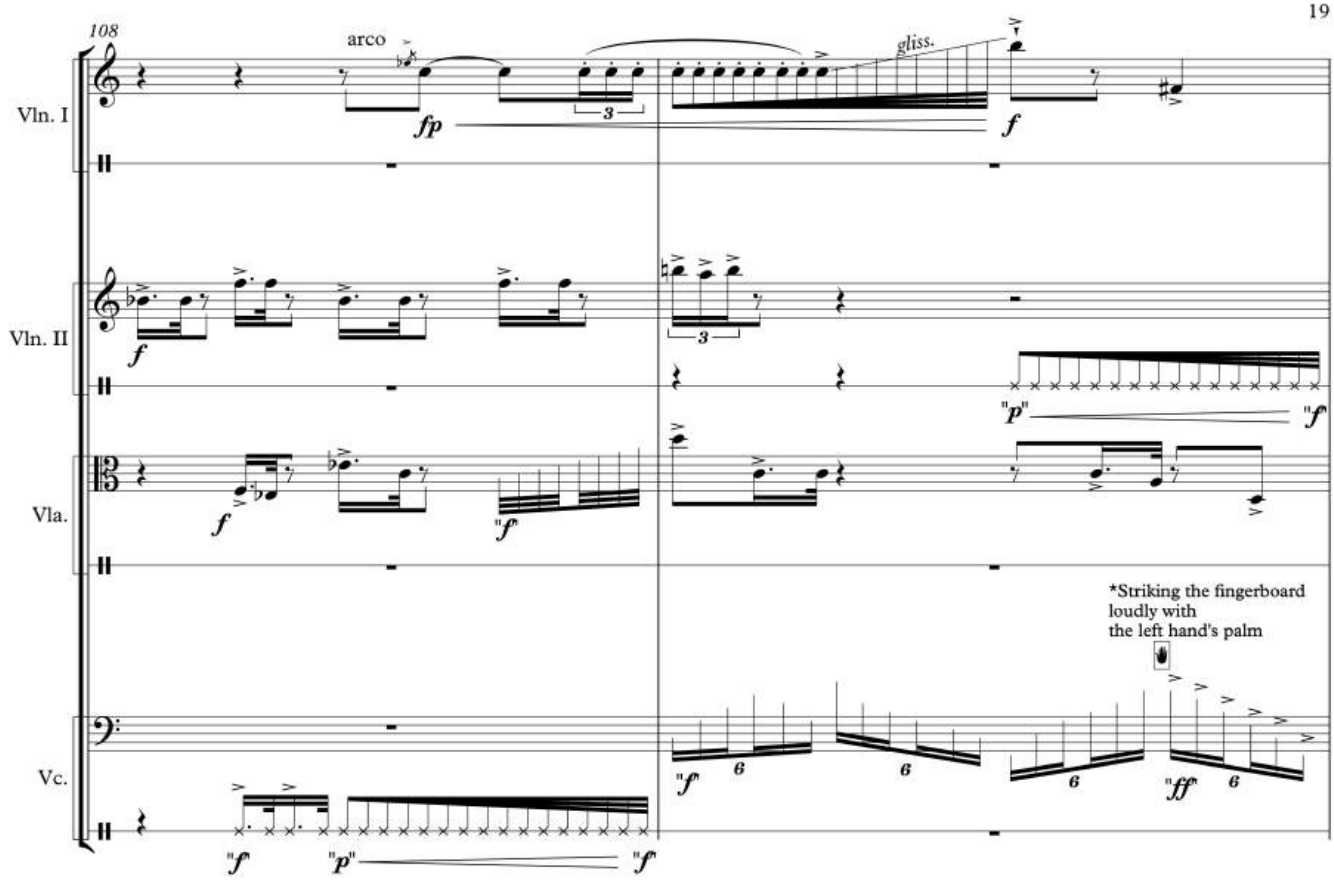

94
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
(pizz. gliss.)
(pizz.)
fp
ff
f
mf
sfz
96
pizz.
arco
* Wide vibrato
98
L.H. only
pizz. gliss.
p

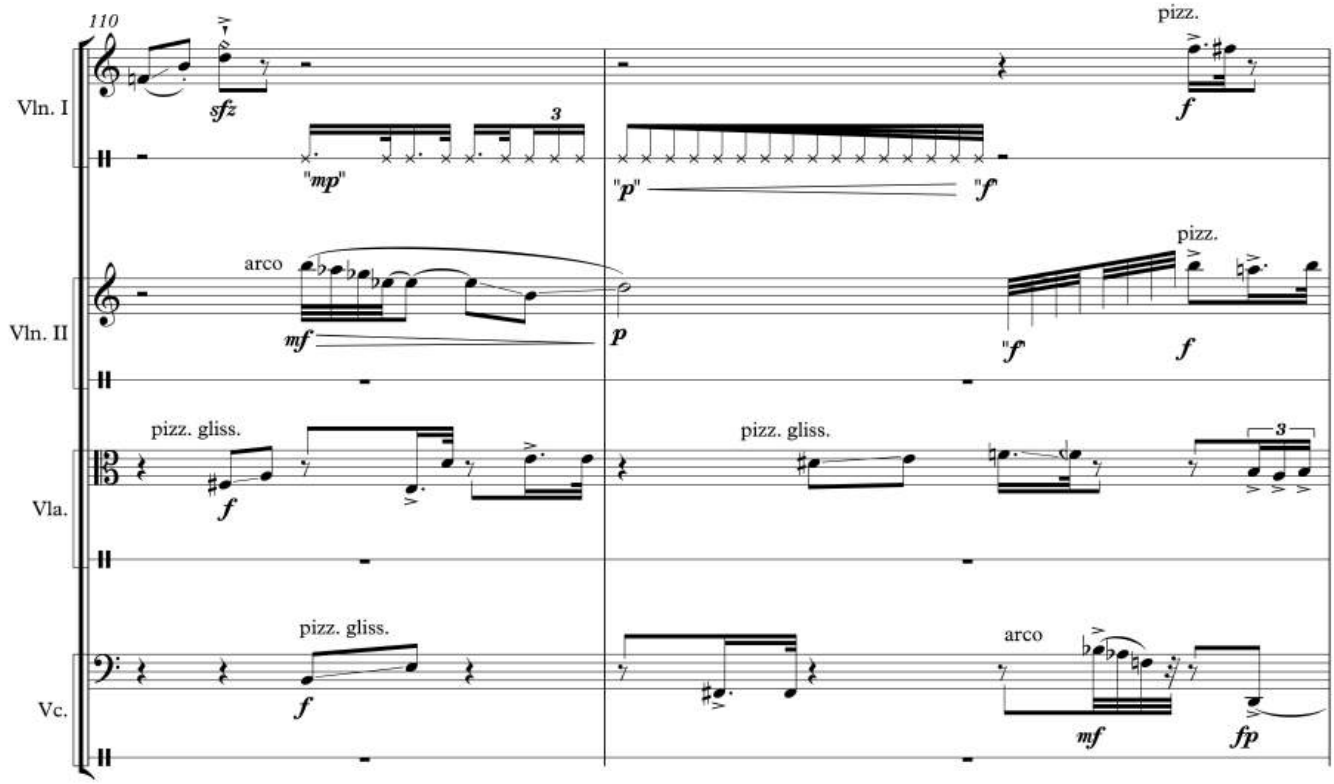

100
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ord.
pizz.
L.H. only

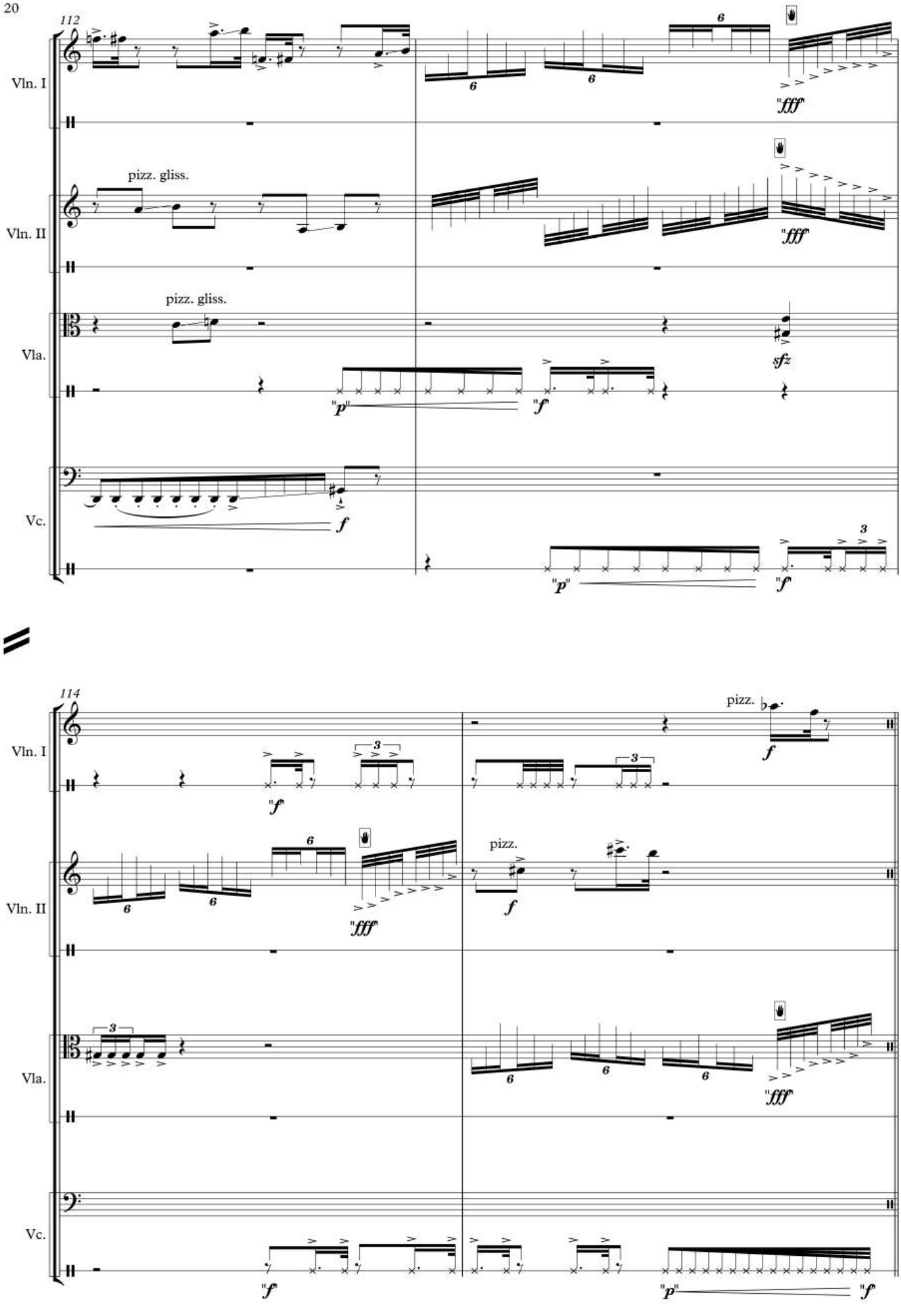

102
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
L.H. only
ord.
pizz.

D **Improvisation for mixture of pizzicato and random fingering notes on the fignerboard without bowing**

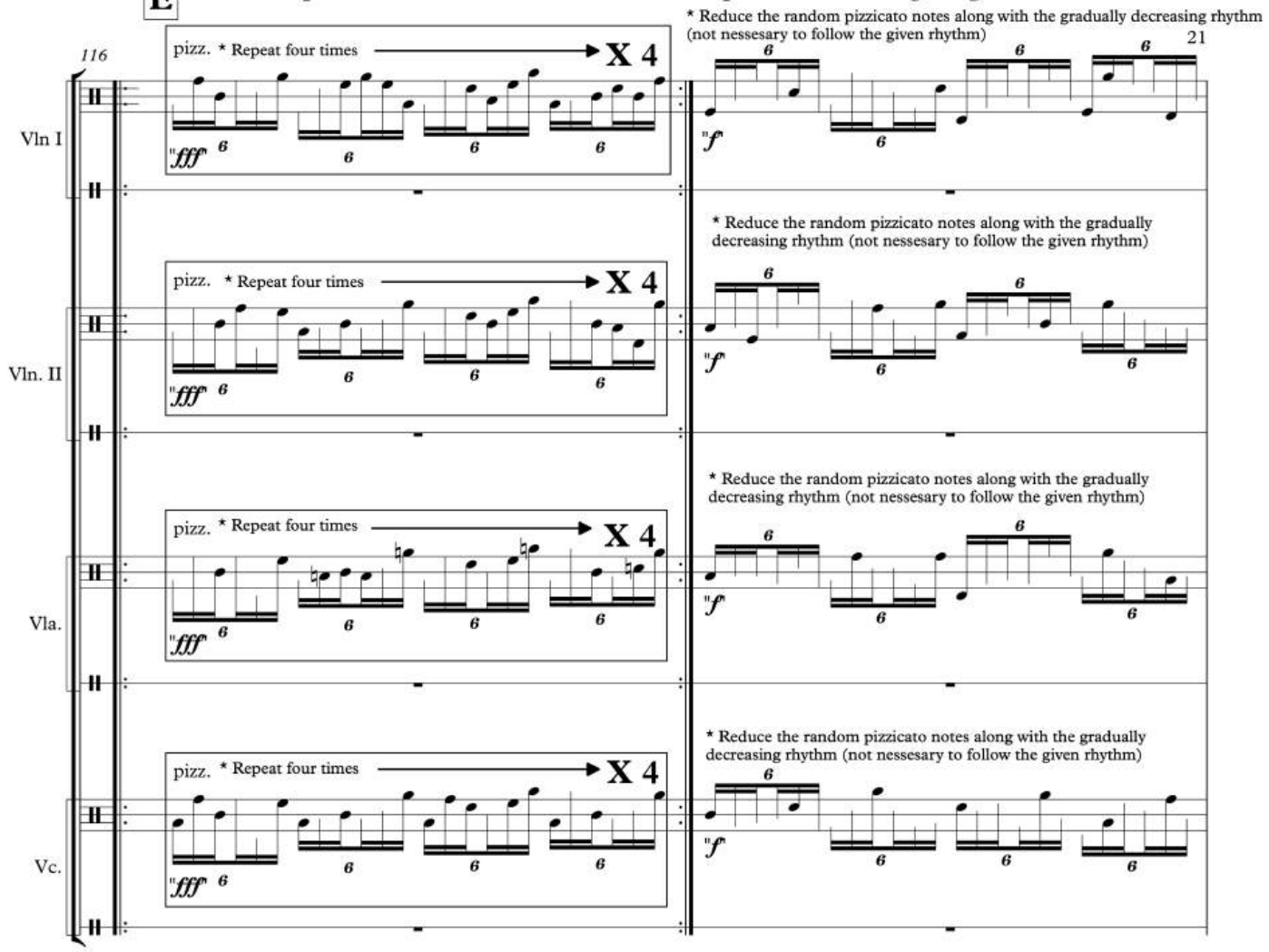


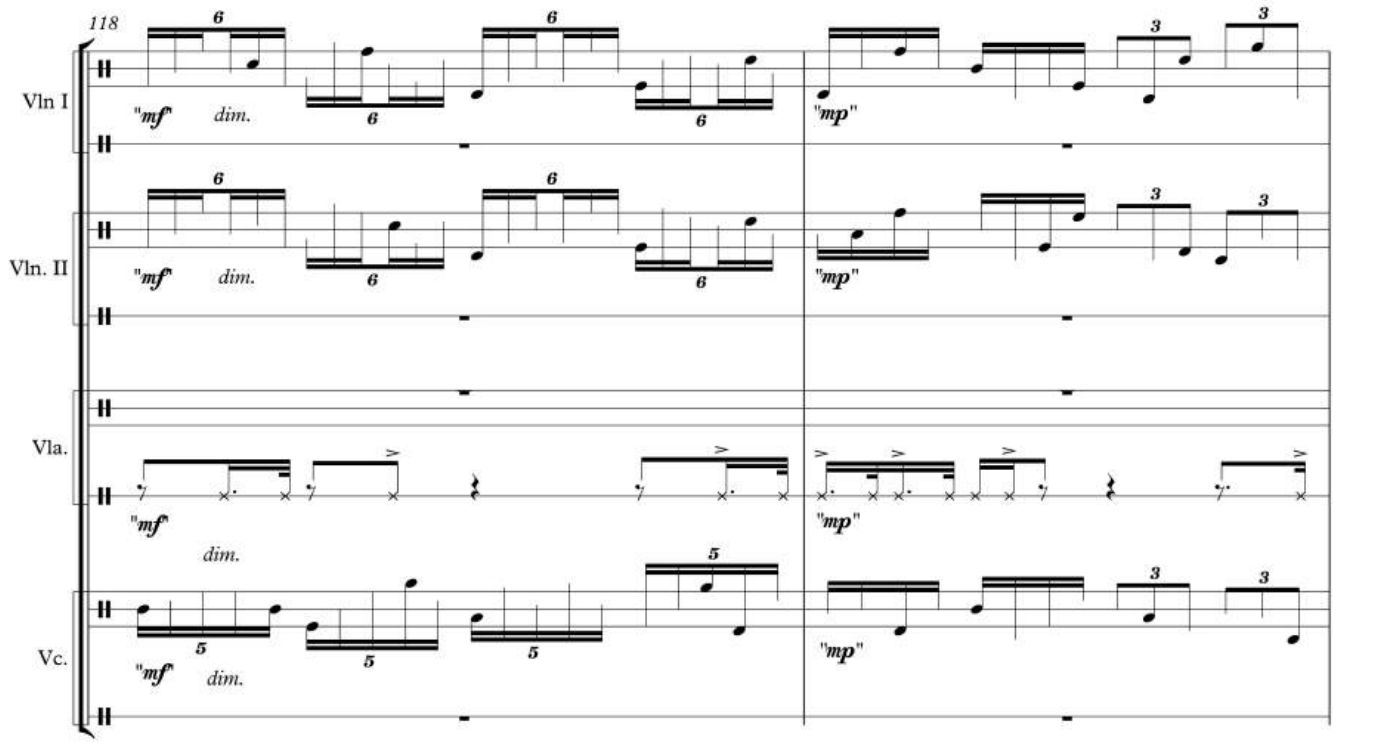

108
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
gliss.
fp
f
"p"
"ff"
*Striking the fingerboard loudly with the left hand's palm

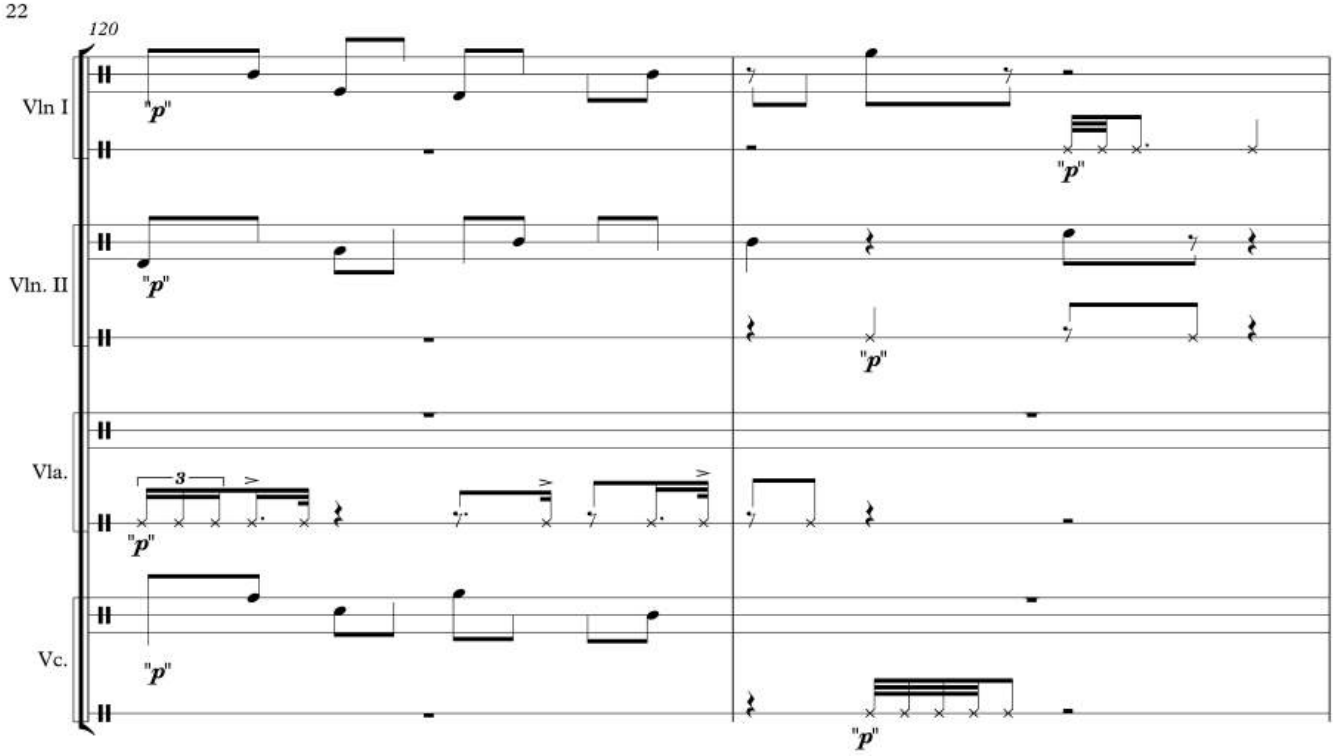

110
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
sfz
"mp"
"p"
pizz.
arco
mf
p
pizz. gliss.
fp

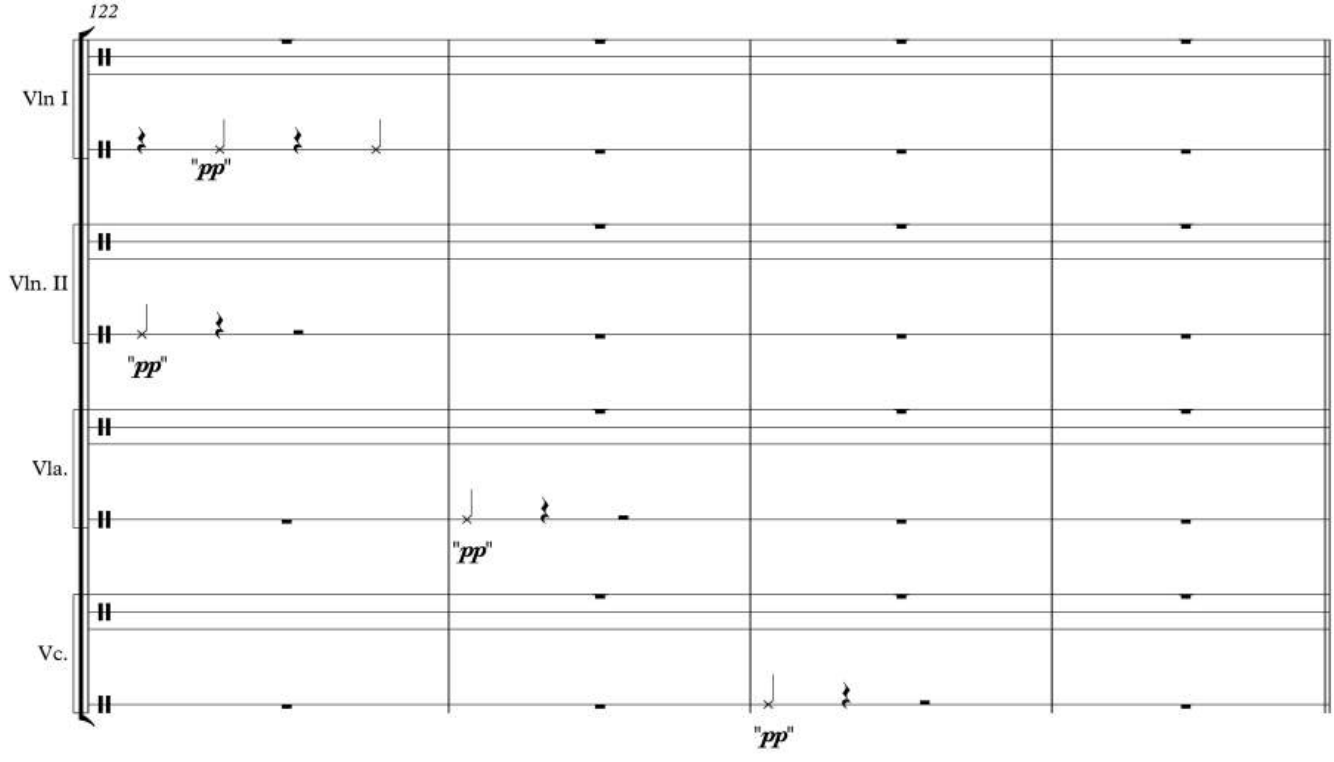

112
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz. gliss.
pizz. gliss.
"fff"
"fff"
sfz
"p"
"f"
"f"
"p"
"f"
114
pizz.
"f"
"fff"
pizz.
"fff"
"f"
"p"
"f"

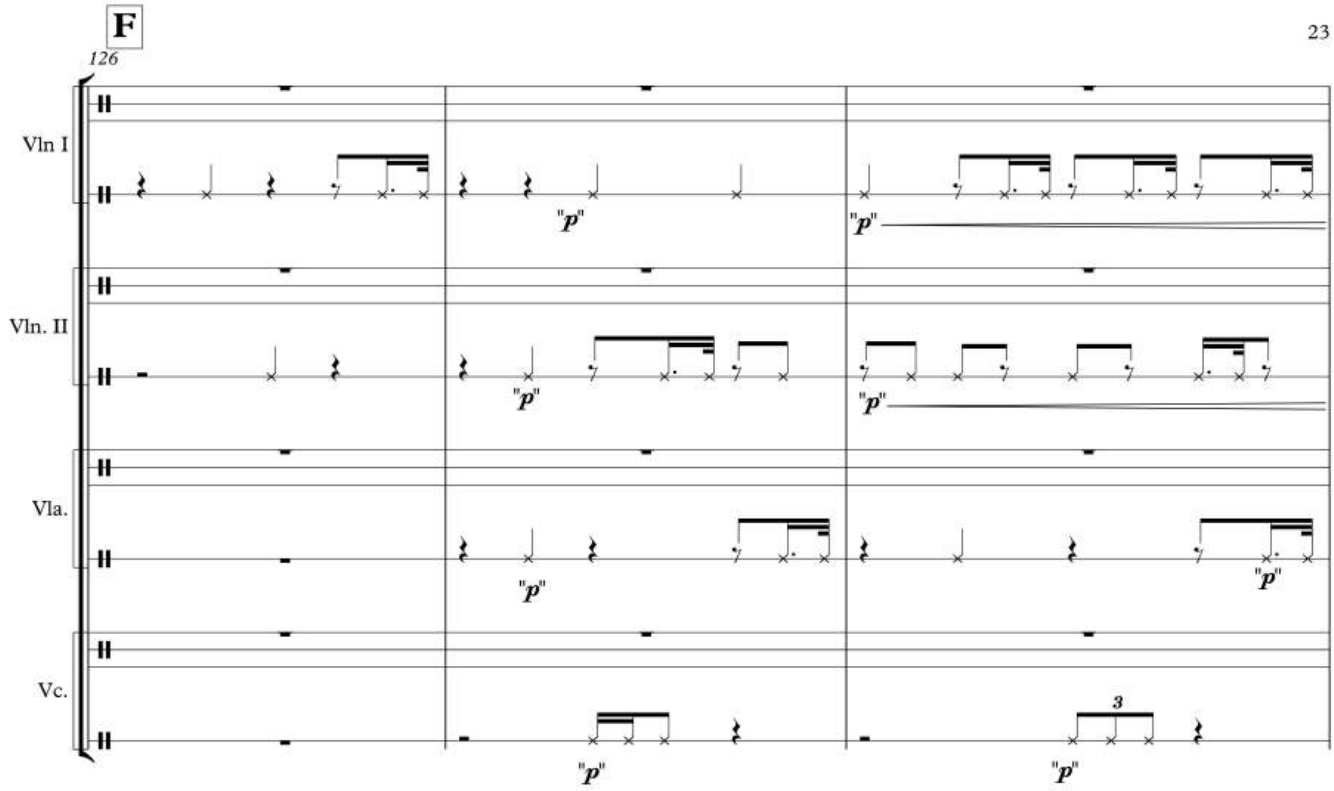
E *** More improvisation from random notes from pizzicato and fingering sound**

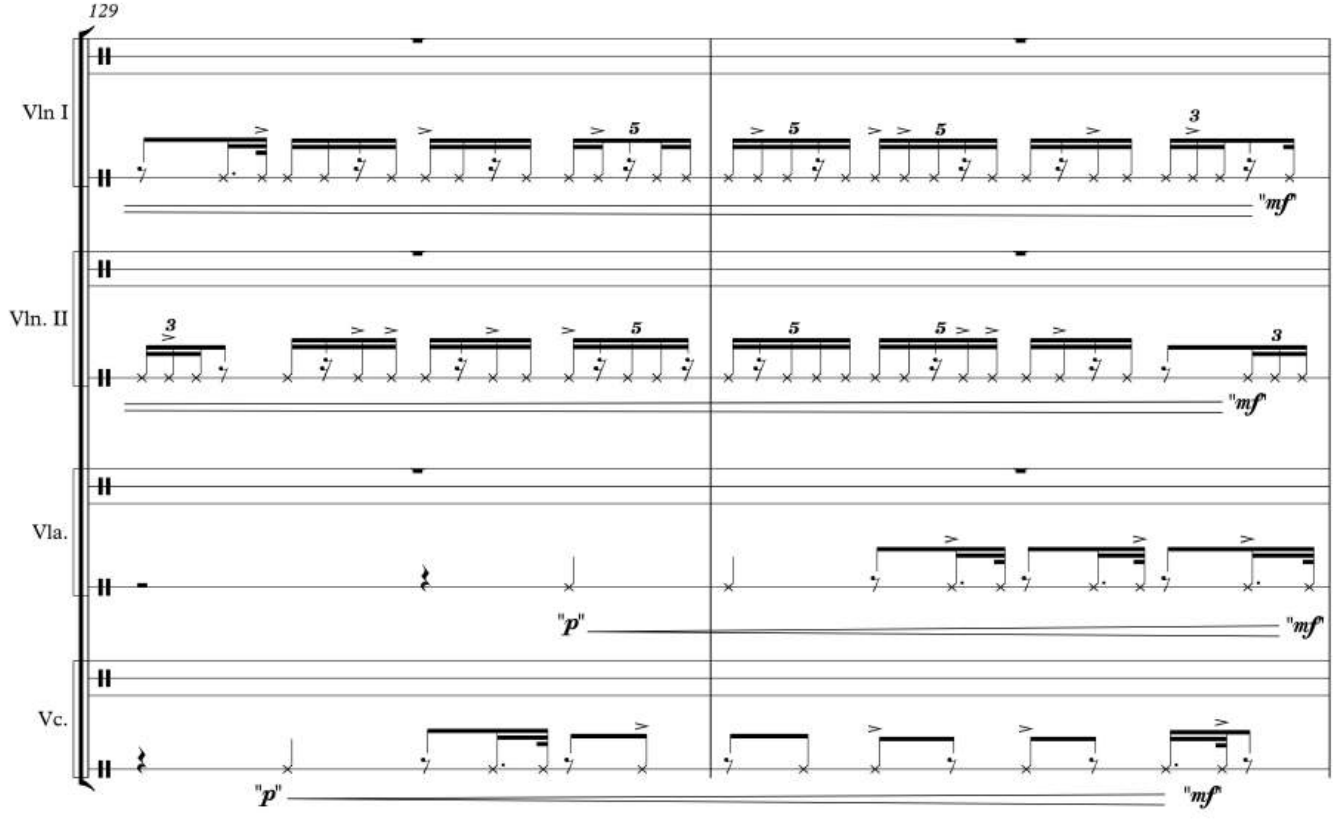


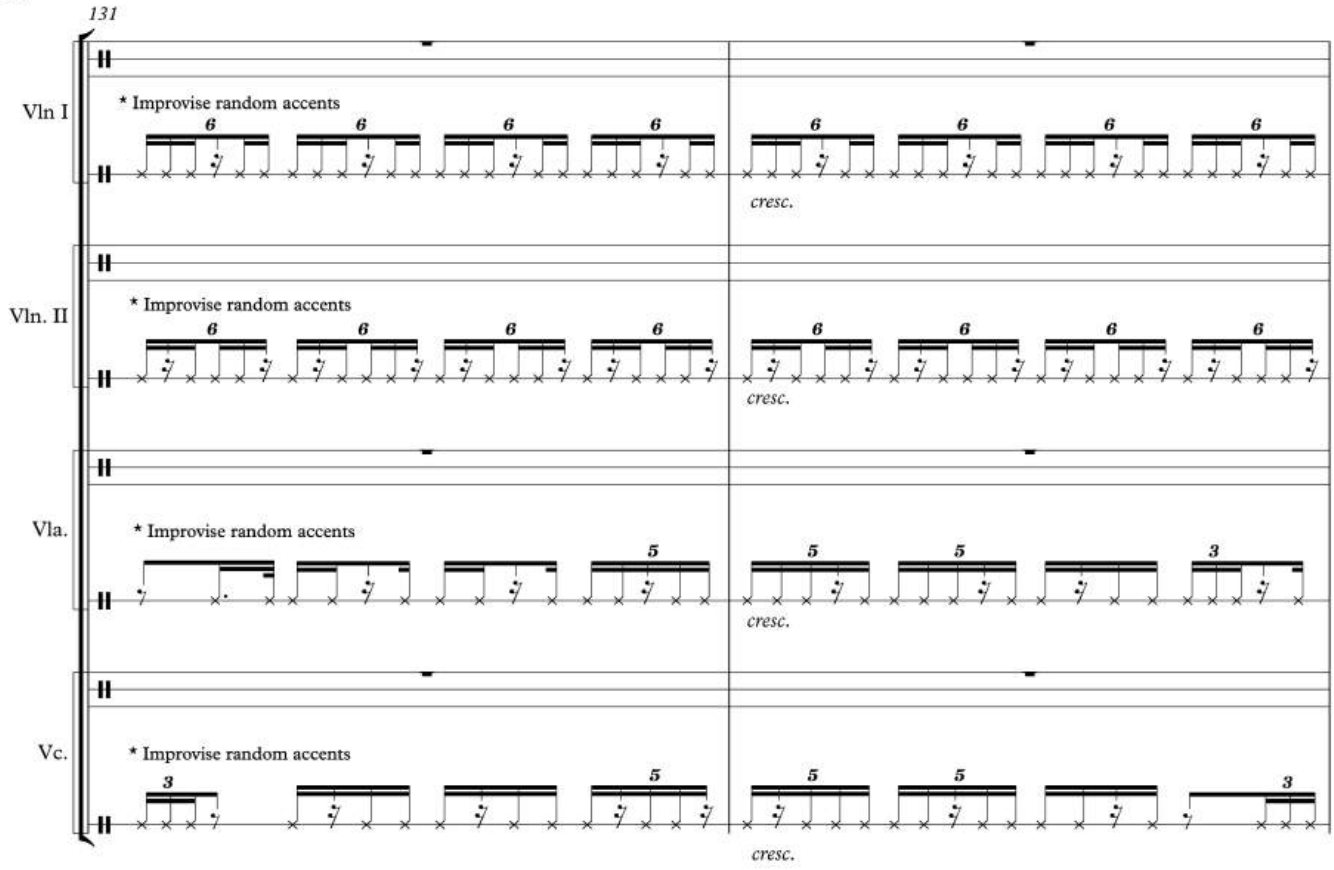


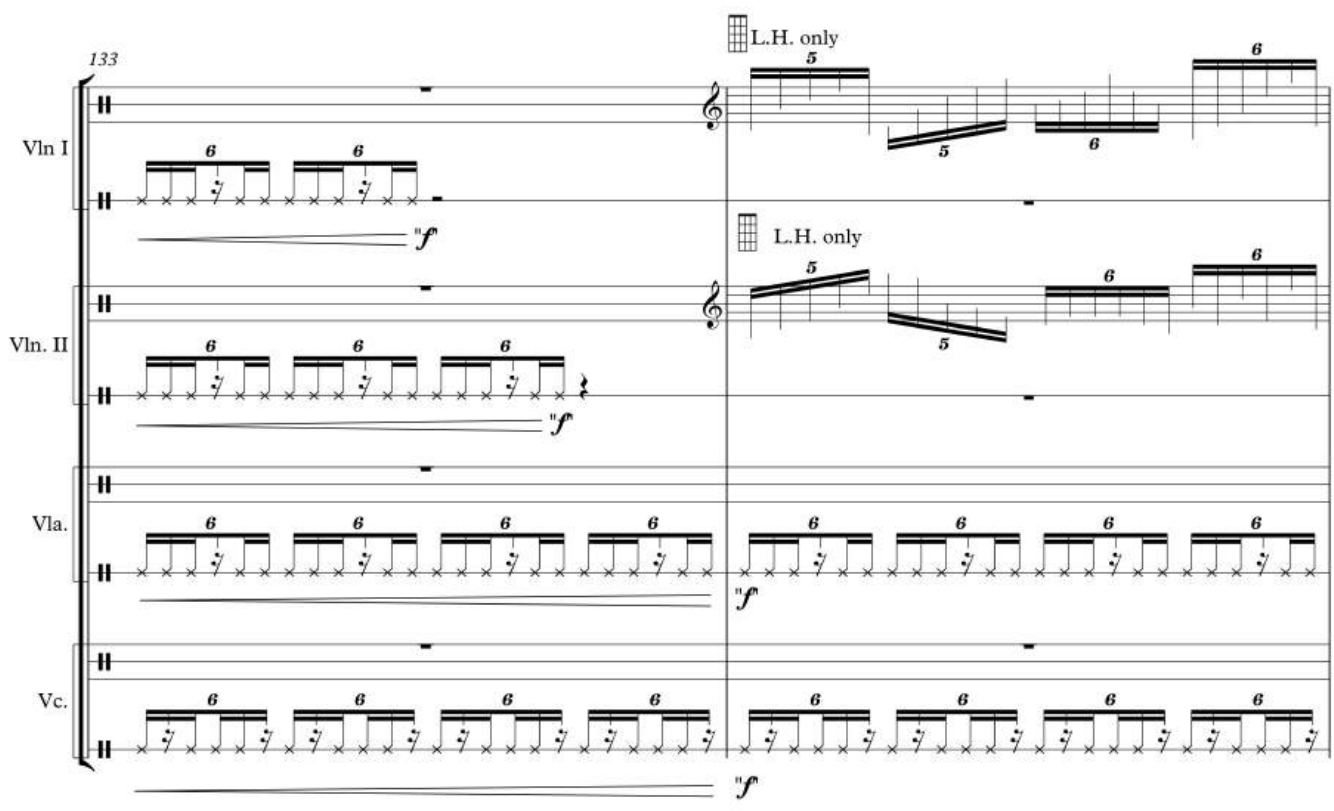

120
Vln I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
"p"
3

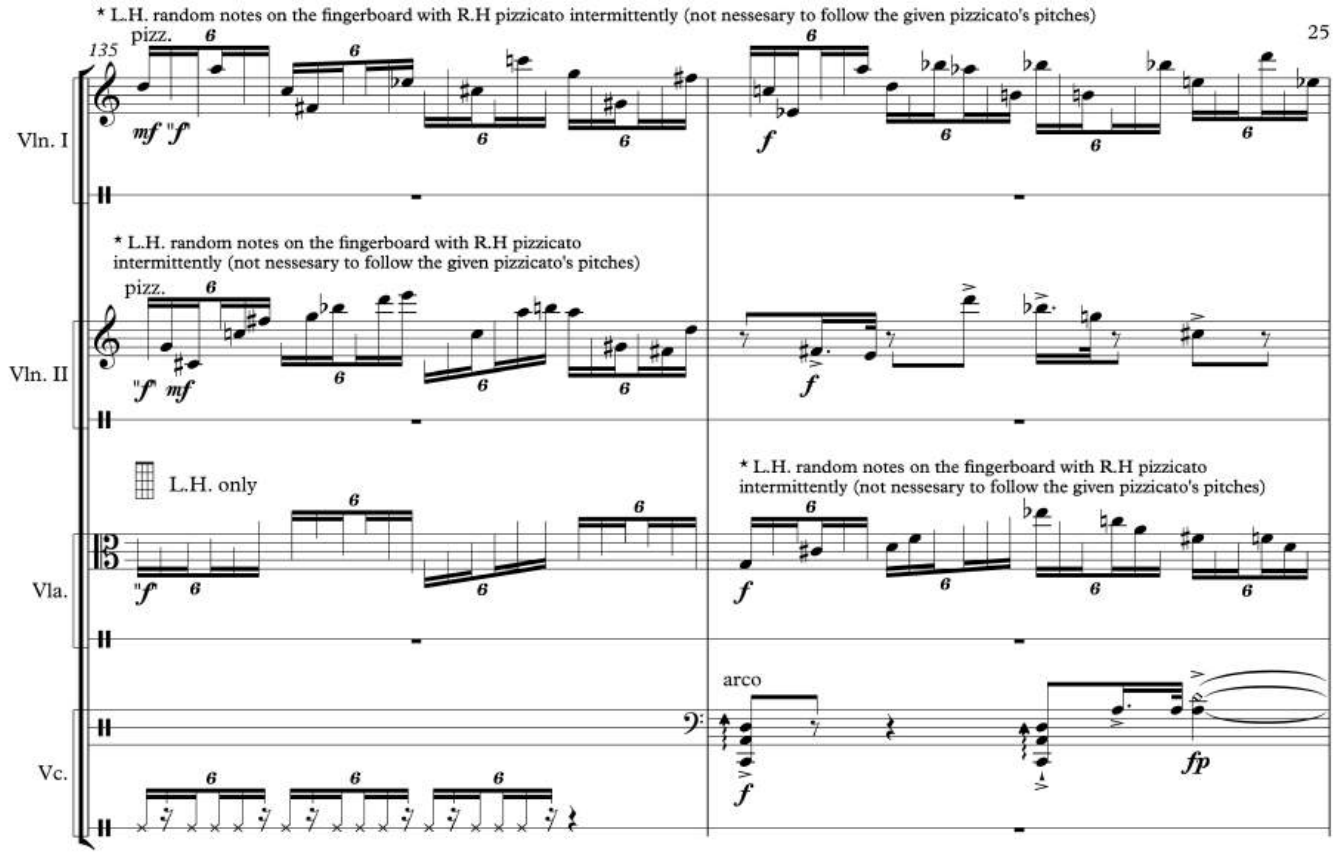

122
Vln I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
"pp"

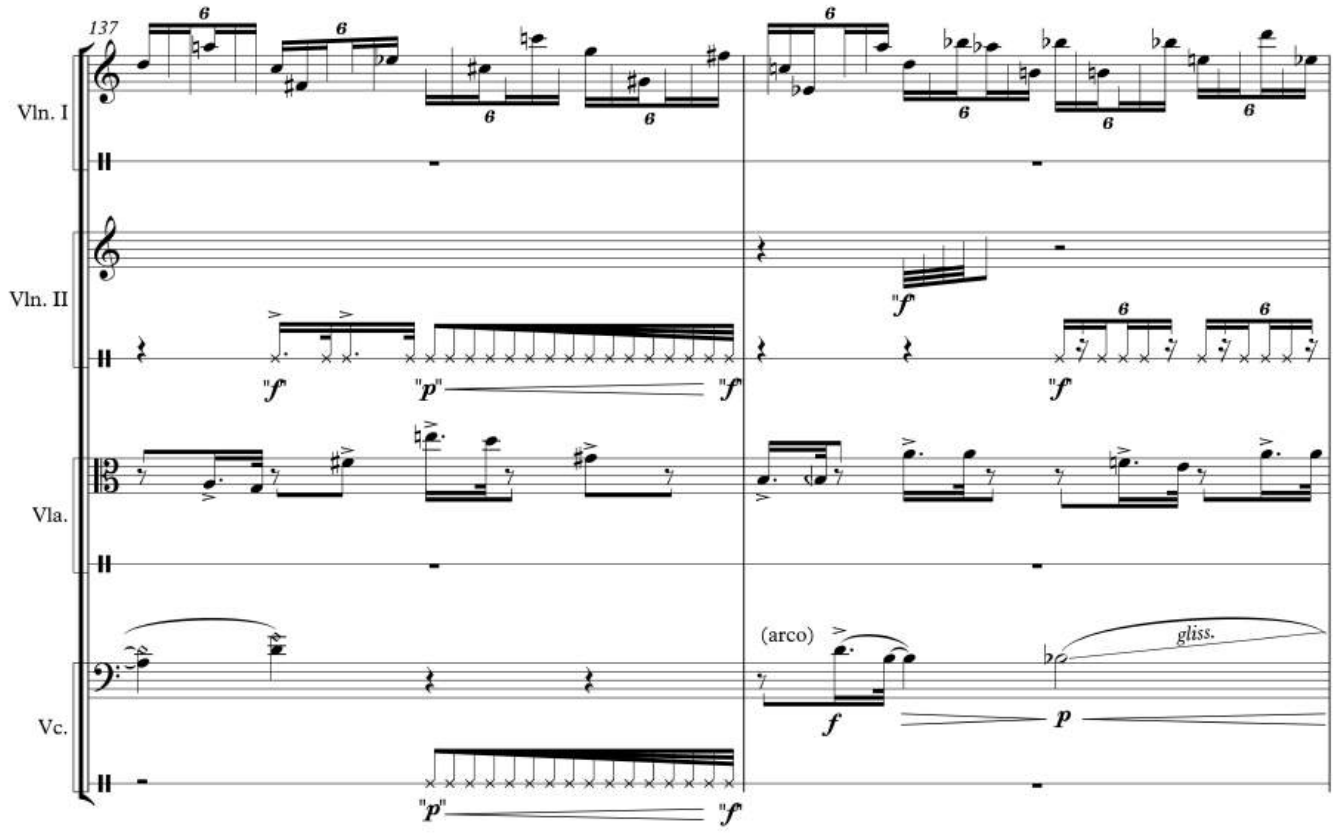

F
126
Vln I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
"p"
3

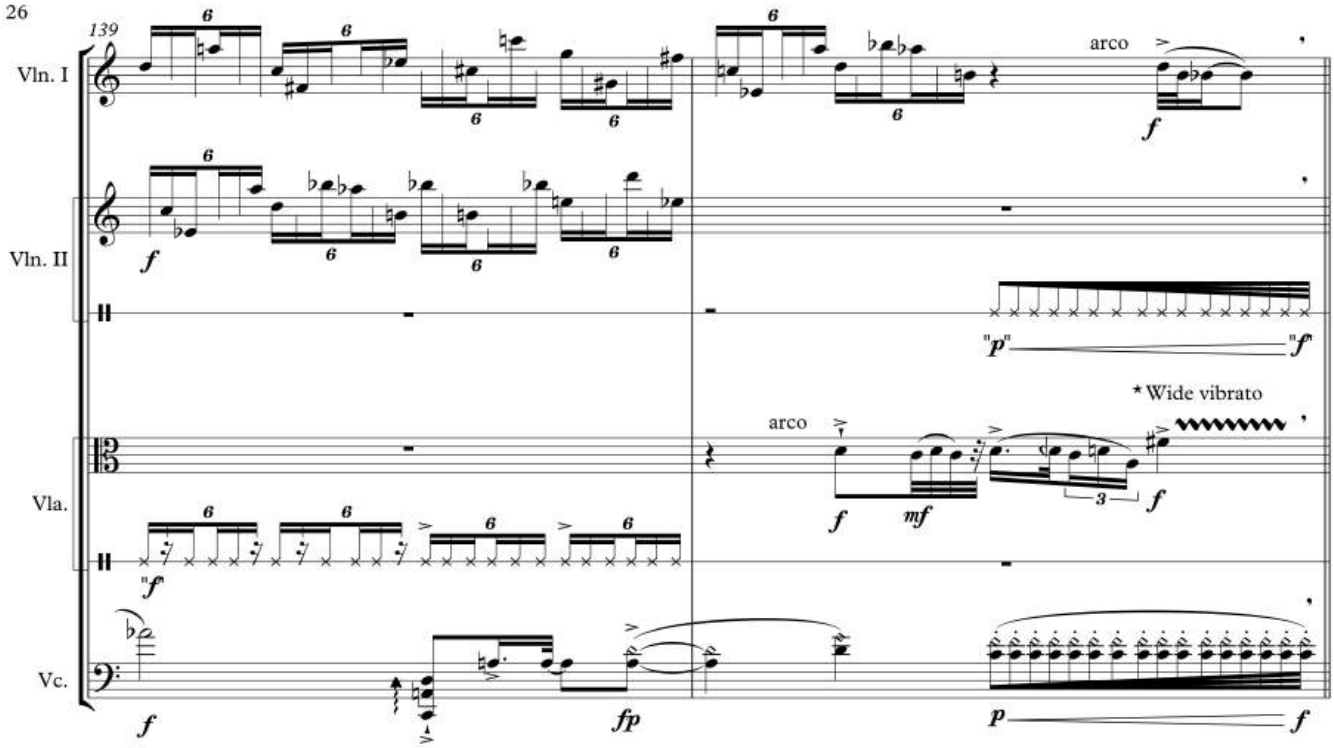

129
Vln I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
"p"
"mf"
3
5

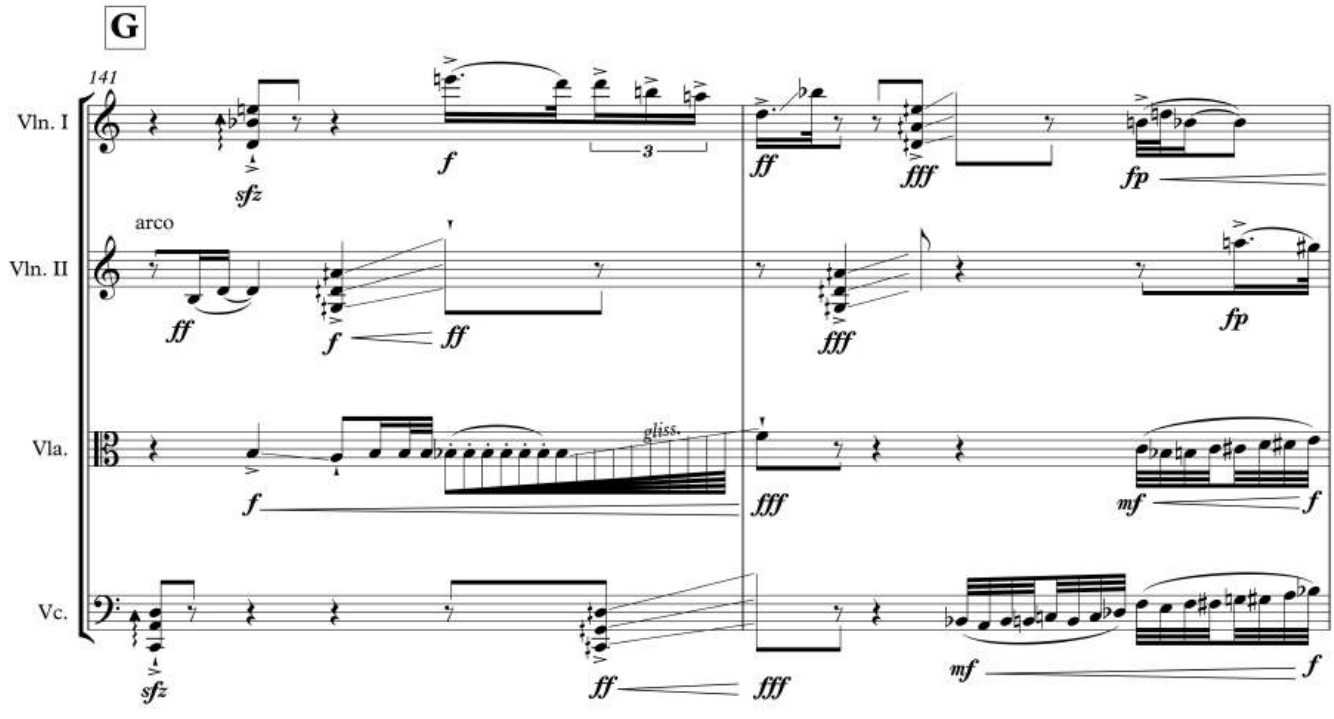

131
Vln I
* Improvise random accents
cresc.
Vln. II
* Improvise random accents
cresc.
Vla.
* Improvise random accents
cresc.
Vc.
* Improvise random accents
cresc.

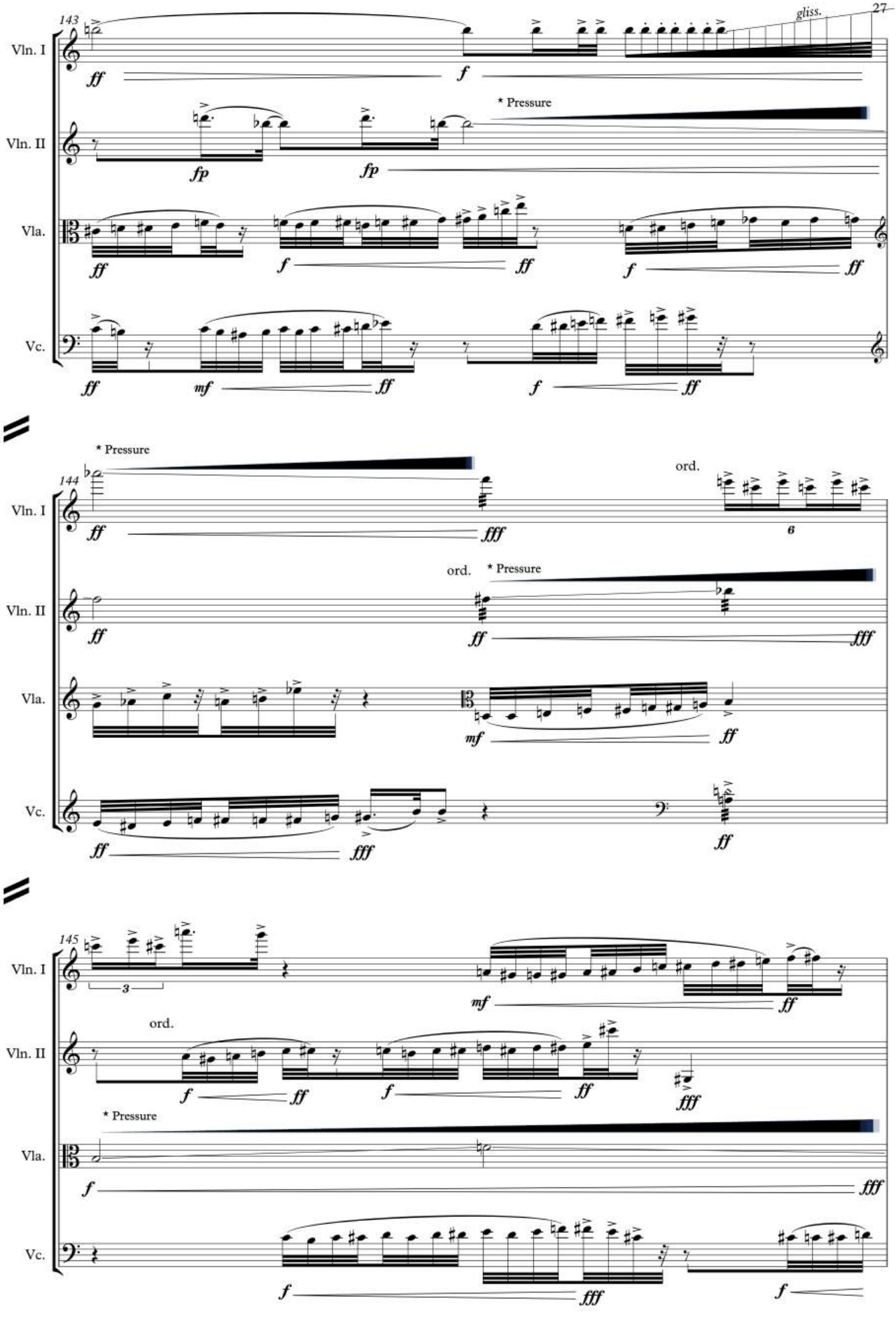

133
Vln I
L.H. only
L.H. only
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

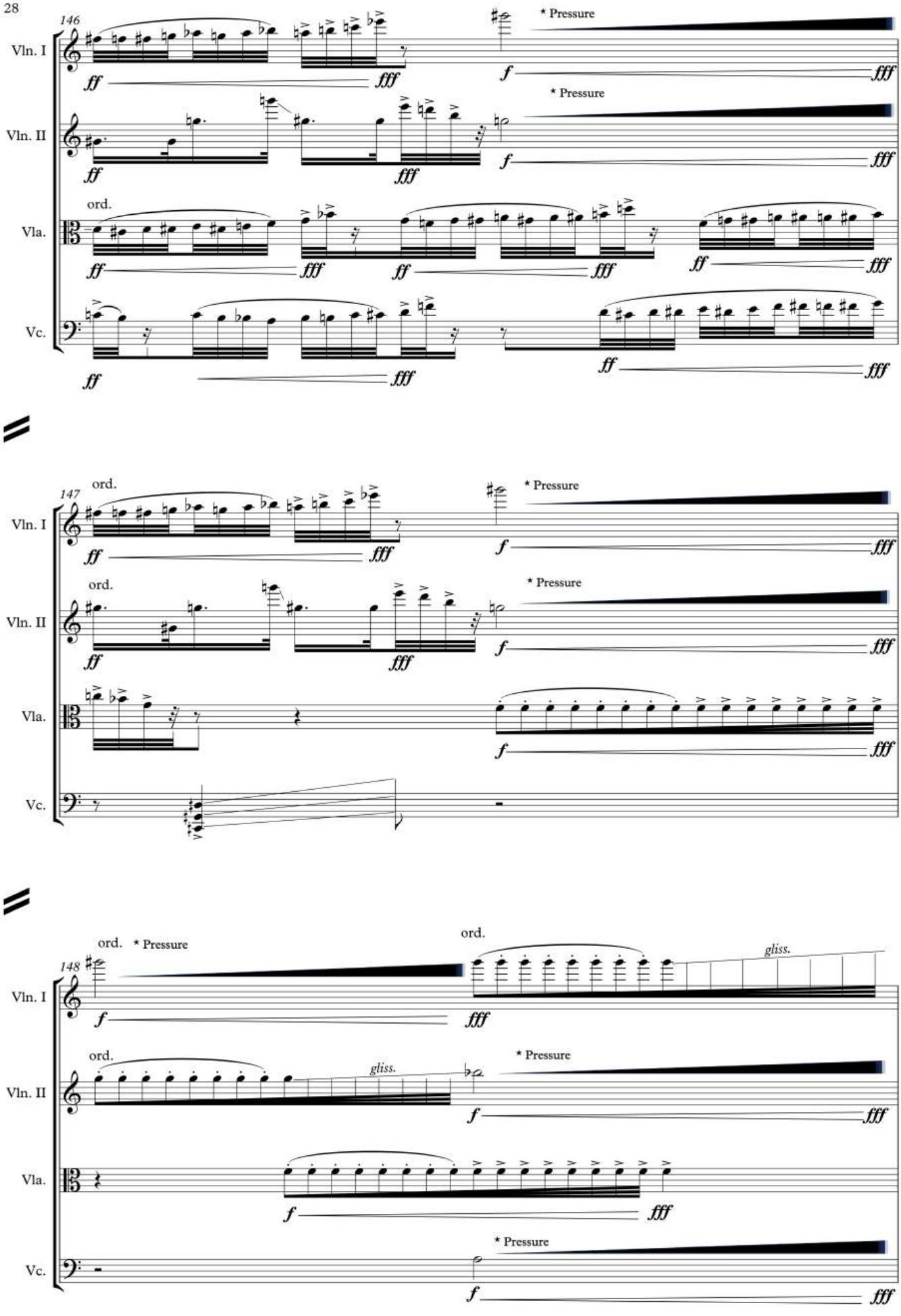

* L.H. random notes on the fingerboard with R.H pizzicato intermittently (not nessesary to follow the given pizzicato's pitches)
135
pizz.
Vln. I
* L.H. random notes on the fingerboard with R.H pizzicato intermittently (not nessesary to follow the given pizzicato's pitches)
pizz.
Vln. II
L.H. only
Vla.
* L.H. random notes on the fingerboard with R.H pizzicato intermittently (not nessesary to follow the given pizzicato's pitches)
arco
Vc.

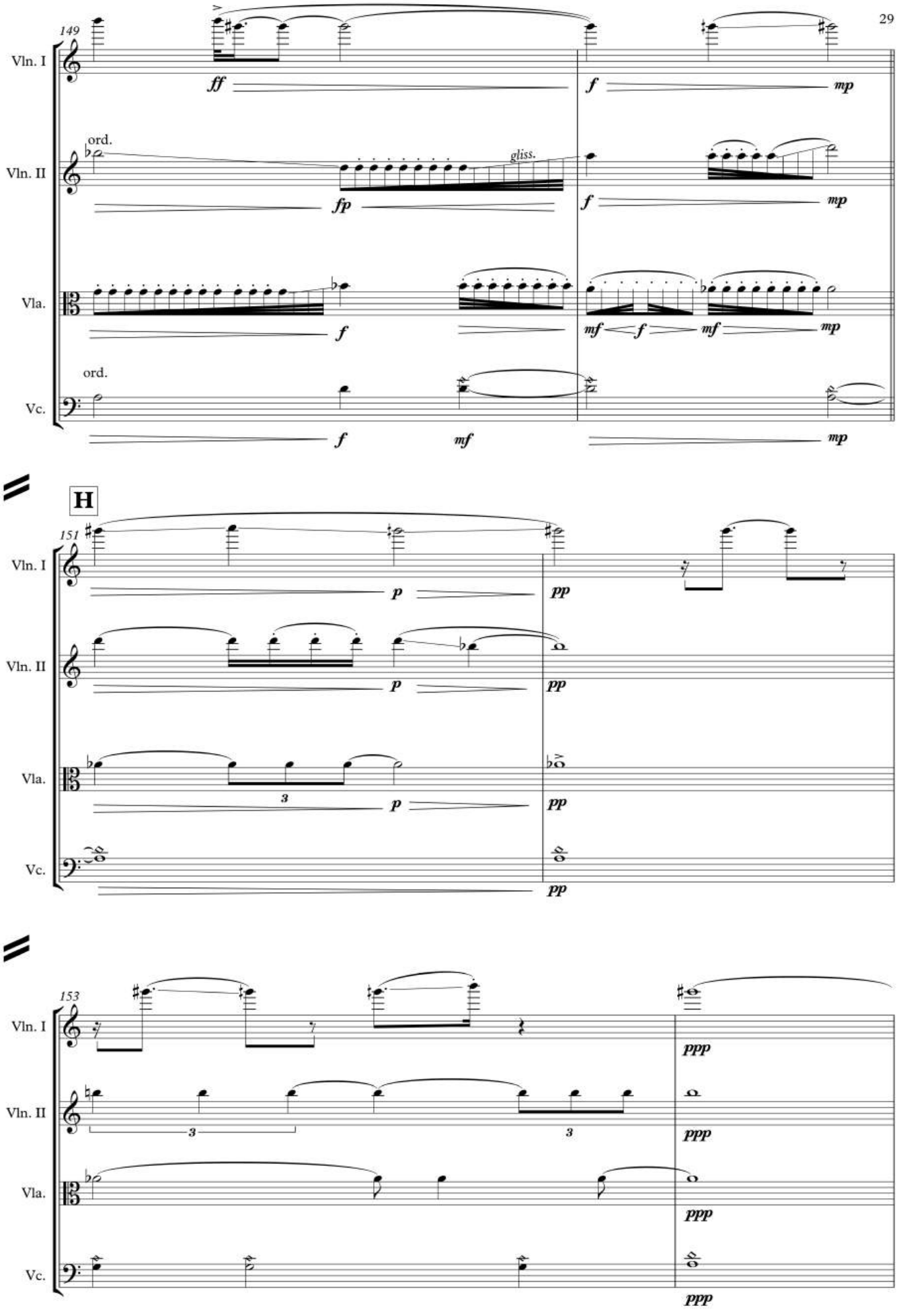

137
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
(arco)
gliss.
Vc.

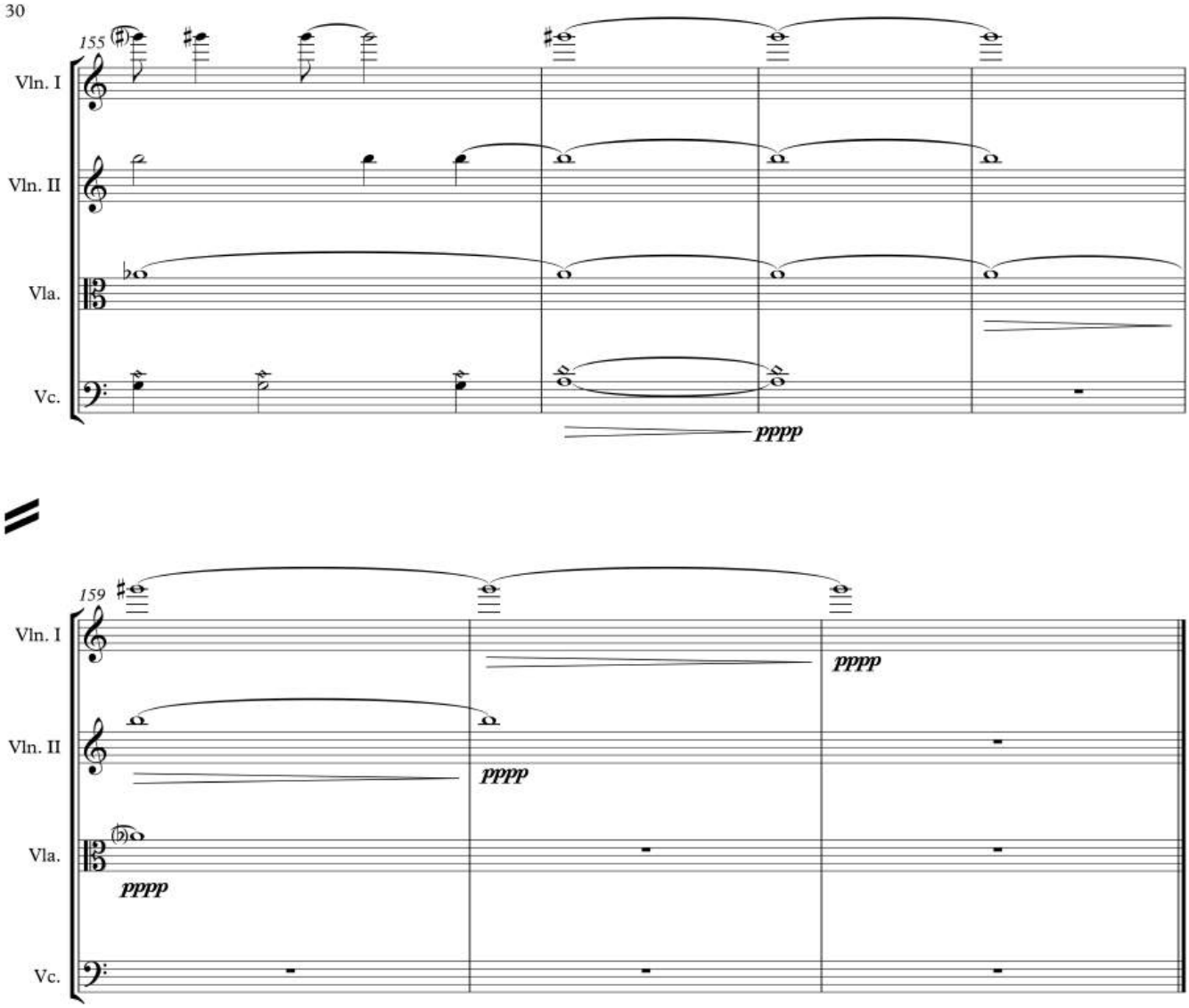

139
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
"p"
"f"
* Wide vibrato
gliss.


G
141
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
gliss.


143
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
gliss.
* Pressure
144
ord.
145
3


146
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ord.
* Pressure
147
148
gliss.


149
Vln. I
ff
f
mp
ord.
Vln. II
gliss.
fp
f
mp
Vla.
f
mf
f
mf
mp
ord.
Vc.
f
mf
mp
H
151
Vln. I
p
pp
Vln. II
p
pp
Vla.
3
p
pp
Vc.
pp
153
Vln. I
ppp
Vln. II
3
3
ppp
Vla.
ppp
Vc.
ppp


155
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pppp
159
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pppp
pppp
pppp