Ellen at Scattergood

for String Quartet

James K. Wright

I – Introduzione, fugato e dolce cantabile

II – Molto sostenuto e expressivo

III – Scherzo-tarantella

IV – Adagio e rondo ballabile

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STRING PARTS

Violin I 37

Violin II 46

Viola 55

Cello 64

PREFACE TO THE SCORE

Lac Scattergood lies in the Outaouais region of southwestern Québec. Named after the British Scattergood family that first settled there in the nineteenth century, it is situated close to Lac McGregor and the nearby town of Val-des-Monts, less than a one-hour drive across the Ottawa River from the city of Ottawa, Canada's national capital.

In 2019, together with my partner Allyson Rogers, I visited Carleton University professors David and Ellen Cray at the cottage they had purchased on Lac Scattergood in 1997. The bond between David and Ellen, and their love of this peaceful place, surrounded by the rugged natural beauty of the McGregor Highlands region, shone through during our visit.

While “Ellen at Scattergood” is ultimately programmatic in inspiration, it is otherwise largely “absolute music” in the traditional sense. The majority of its basic thematic ideas and their development are therefore purely musical in nature, without extra-musical associations. However the emotional character, texture, tempi, and rhythmic animation of each movement are inspired by Lac Scattergood and my understanding of the many moods and textures of David and Ellen’s life at their cottage. I have always been an unrepentant melodist, and the quartet’s themes came to me quite spontaneously, with the inspiration of Lac Scattergood in mind.

As I have held a lifelong love and fascination with the close relationship between music, movement and dance, it is my hope that the quartet (and/or its arrangement for String Orchestra) may inspire a choreographic setting at some point. Perhaps some of the descriptors listeners have assigned to the quartet’s various moods – including “joy,” “romance,” “playfulness,” “celebration,” “energy,” “vigour,” “drama,” “transcendence,” “nostalgia,” “serenity,” “peace” and “tranquility” – might be suggestive of choreographic interpretation.

A few motivic features of the quartet may be of interest to performers and listeners. The fugato of the opening movement features a subject and countersubject that were conceived as Ellen and David in conversation. And at the end of the fugato section there is a momentary stylistic tip of the hat to Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1826), whose 250th anniversary is being celebrated internationally in 2020. In the Rondo finale, the opening motives of both the Canadian and American national anthems can be heard subtly – admittedly scarcely audibly – intertwining in the Rondo's second theme. While David and Ellen would pursue their careers and raise their family in Canada, they were both born and educated in the U.S.A.

The premiere performance of the quartet was to have been given during the summer of 2020 by the extraordinary Andara Quartet of Montreal, until the global pandemic of 2020 radically altered the lives of performing musicians around the world. The quartet's members – Marie-Claire Vaillancourt (violon), Jeanne Côté (violon), Vincent Delorme (alto), and Dominique Beauséjour-Ostiguy (violoncelle) – have been nonetheless the most supportive collaborators a composer could ever hope to encounter. Working with the expert Venezuelan-Canadian recording engineer Veronica Galacia, the Andara Quartet recorded the work in late-July, 2020, in Montreal.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

James Wright is a Full Professor of Music at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. A McGill University Governor General's Gold Medal recipient, Dr. Wright studied music theory and composition with Barrie Cabena, Owen Underhill, Bengt Hambreaus, Donald Patriquin, Brian Cherney and Kelsey Jones, and has taught composition, music history, music perception, and post-tonal music theory and analysis at McGill University, the University of Ottawa, and Carleton University. His scholarly contributions include two award-winning books on the life and work of Arnold Schoenberg, and ***They Shot, He Scored*** (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019), a monograph on the life and work of Eldon Rathburn, the prolific Canadian composer who wrote more than 250 film scores during a long and distinguished career as a staff composer with the National Film Board of Canada. James Wright is also widely known as a composer whose works have been commissioned, performed and recorded by artists and ensembles from around the globe. His art song cycle, ***Letters to the Immortal Beloved,*** for piano trio and mezzo-soprano (or baritone) – settings of excerpts from Beethoven's passionate letters of 1812, to a woman whose identity has been cloaked in mystery – has been performed on five continents, with notable performances in Brazil, Portugal, China, Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, and the USA. Two critically acclaimed recordings of the work have been released by the Juno Award-winning Gryphon Trio: on the Naxos label in 2015 with mezzo-soprano Julie Nesrallah, and on the Analekta label in 2019 with baritone David John Pike. His art song "***Quilled Sonnet,***" which sets a text by Saskatchewan poet Michael Berzensky, was published by the Frederick Harris Music Co. in the 2019 Royal Conservatory of Music vocal repertoire series, level 8. In 2019, James Wright was named University of Toronto Louis Applebaum Distinguished Visiting Professor of Composition for the 2019-20 academic year. Dr. Wright's music is published by Warner-Chappell Music (Miami),Da Capo Music (Manchester, UK), Leslie Music (Oakville), Songwright Music (Ottawa), Rhythmic Trident Music (Vancouver), Fairbank Music (Victoria), Cypress Music (Vancouver), and the Frederick Harris Music Co. (Toronto). His publications are listed at https://jkennethwright.com/.

Commissioned by David Cray as a gift for his wife, Ellen,
and as a reflection of their time together on Lac Scattergood

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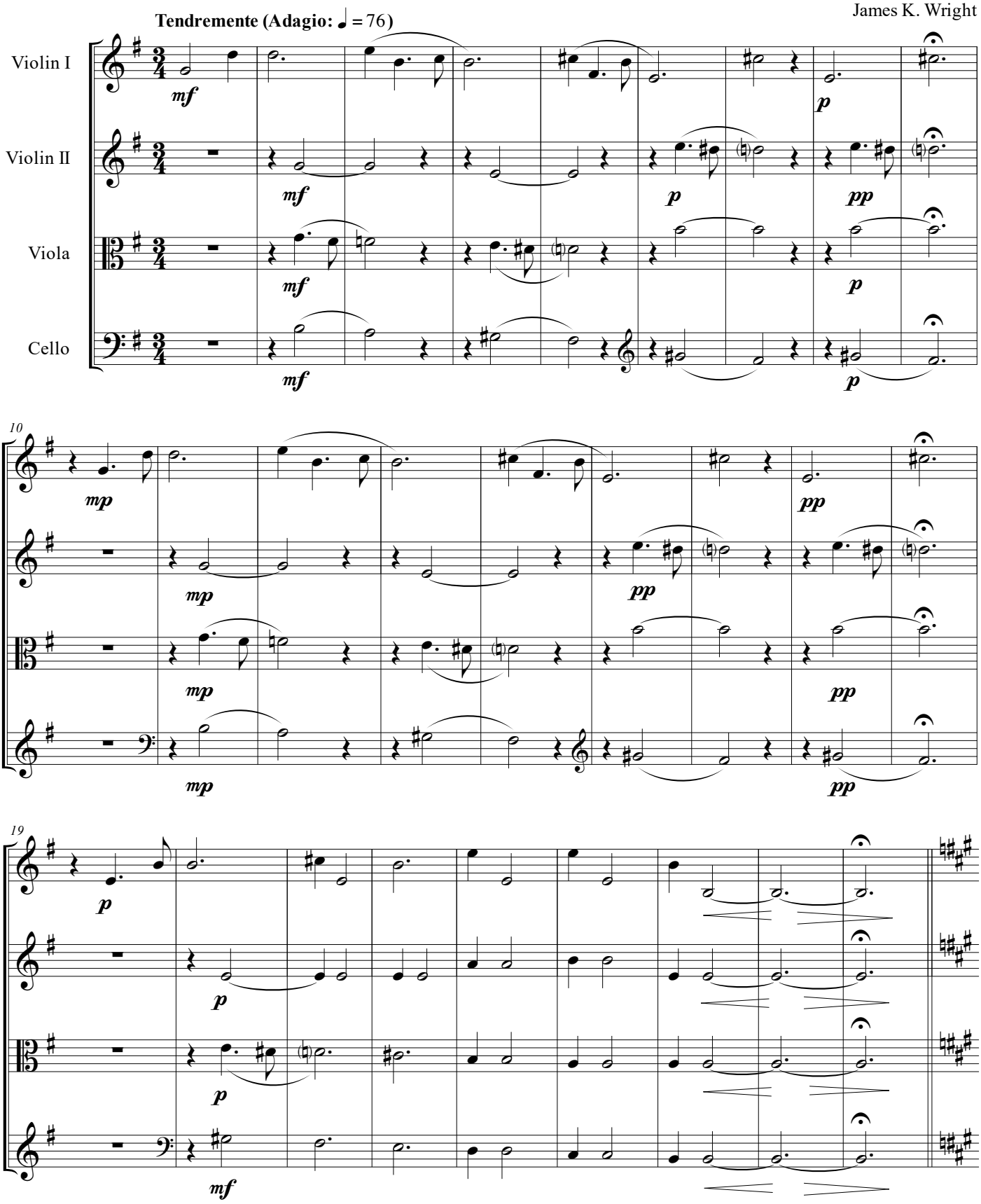
Ellen at Scattergood

I. Introduzione, fugato e dolce cantabile

James K. Wright



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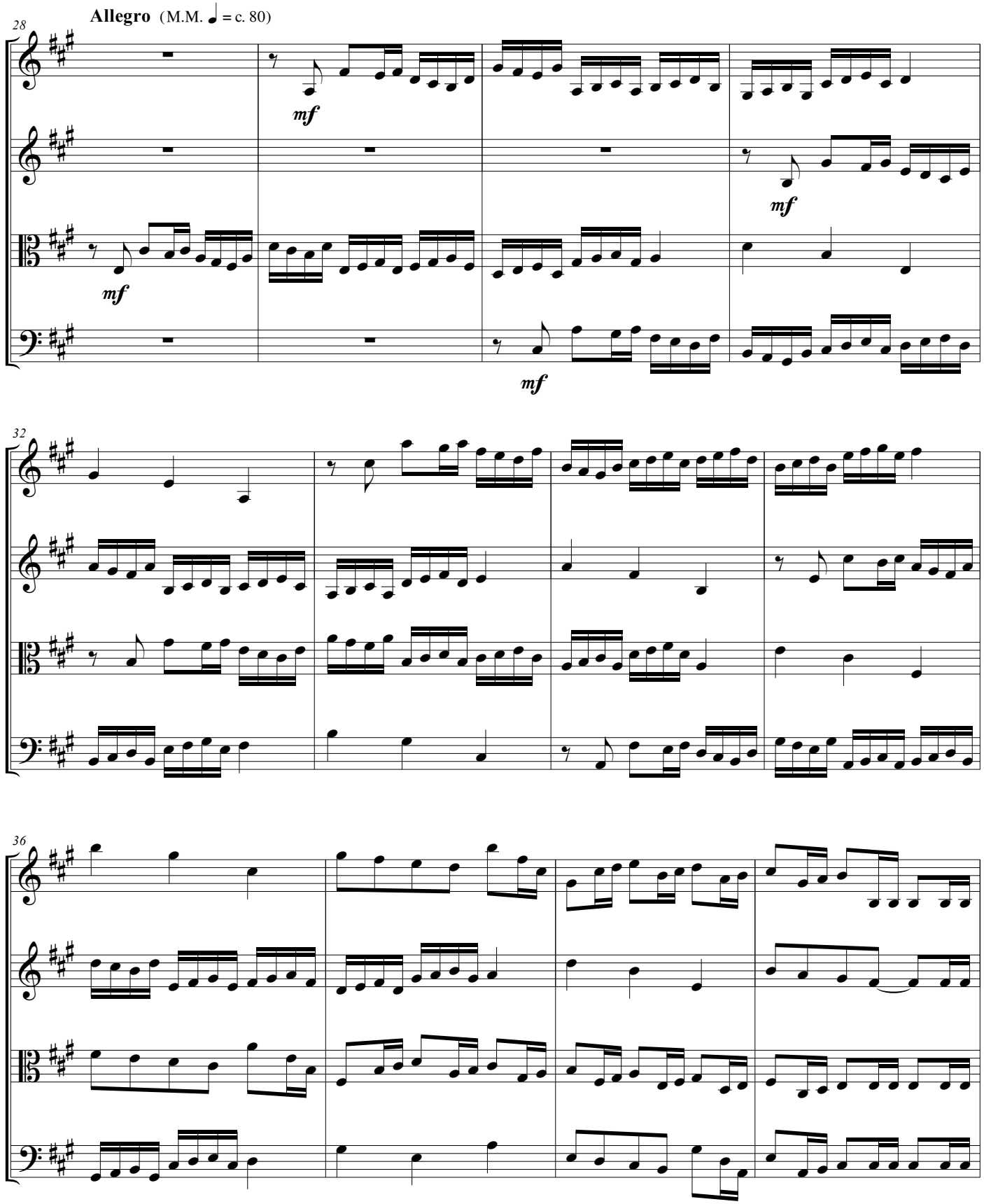
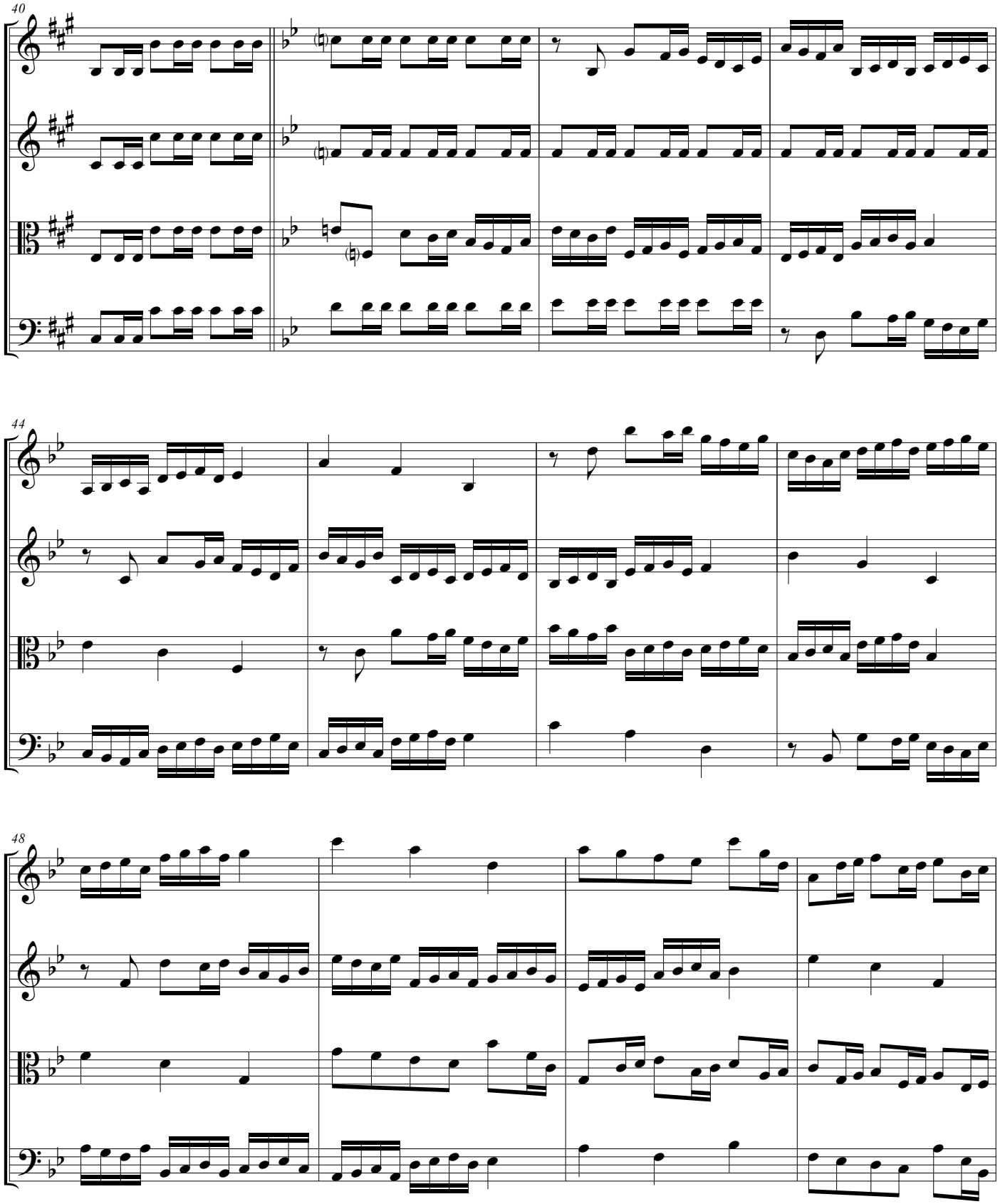
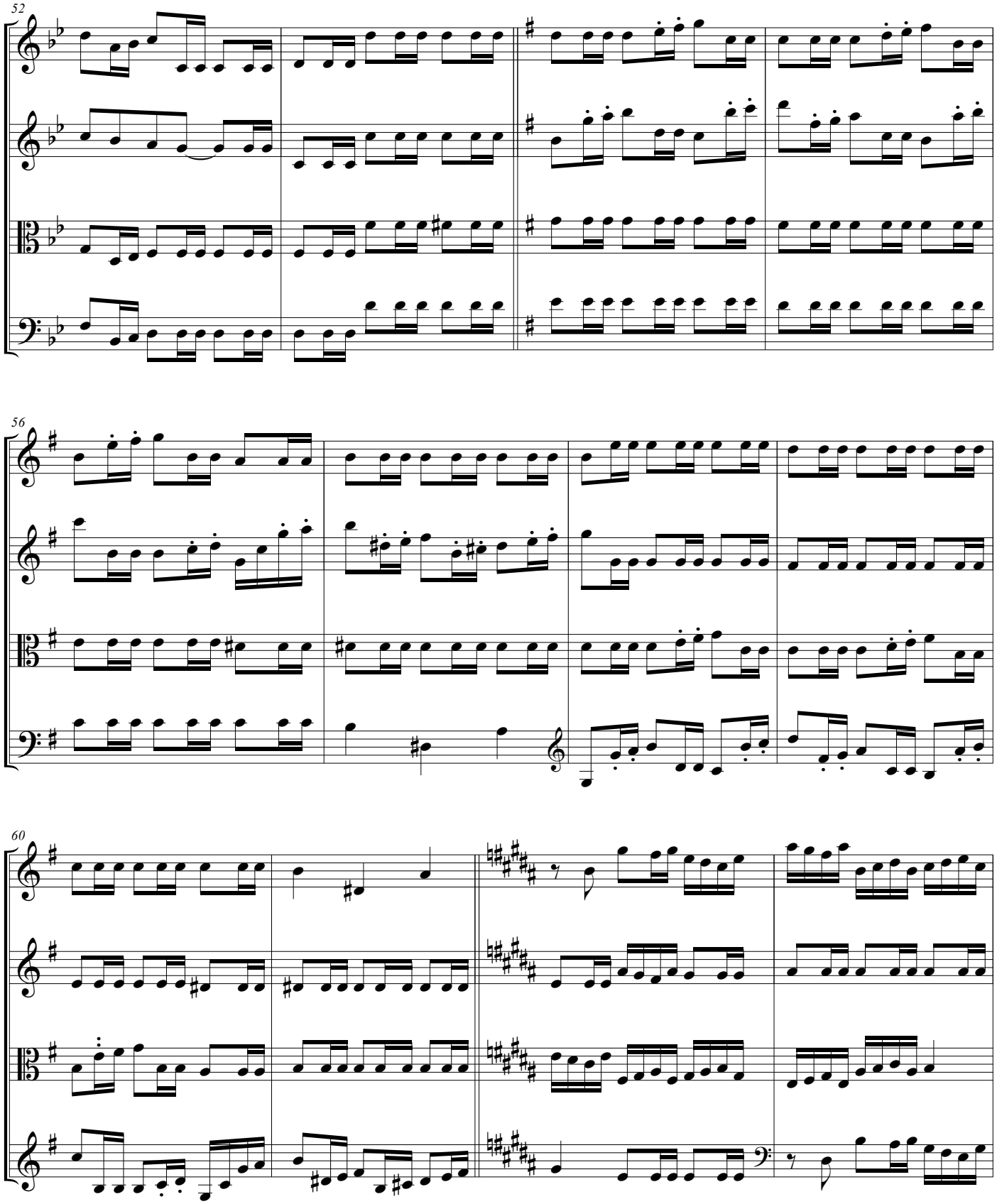
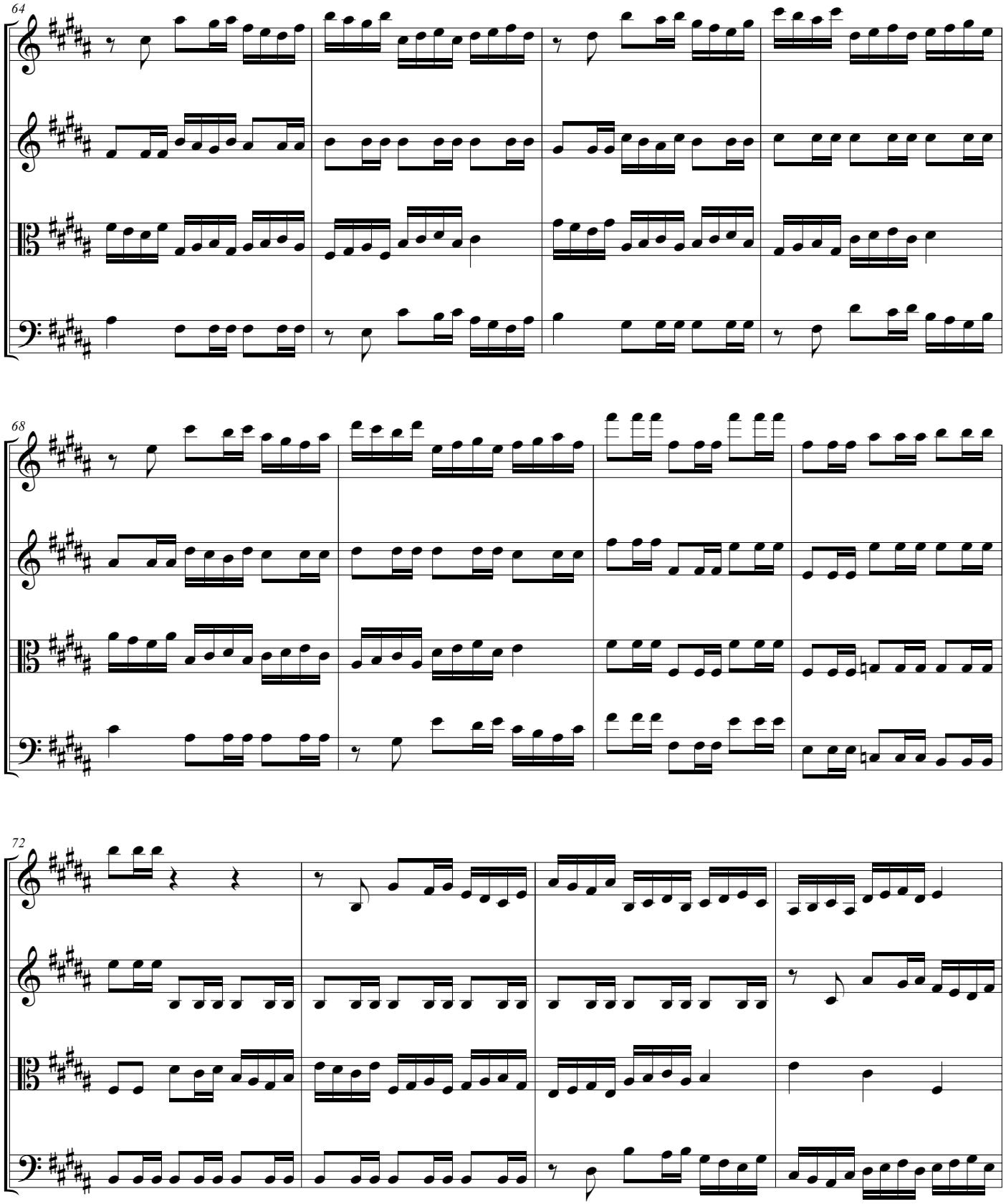
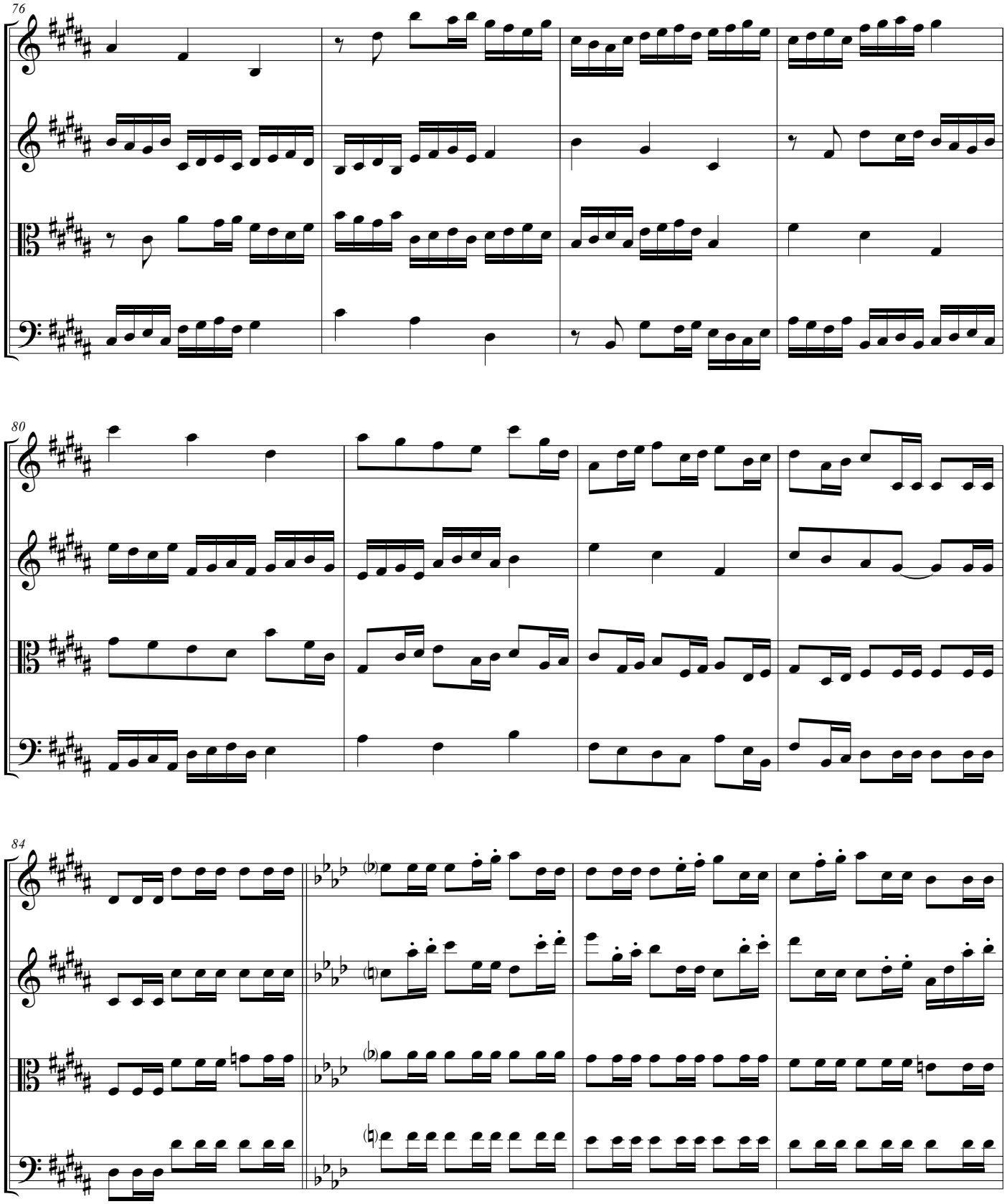
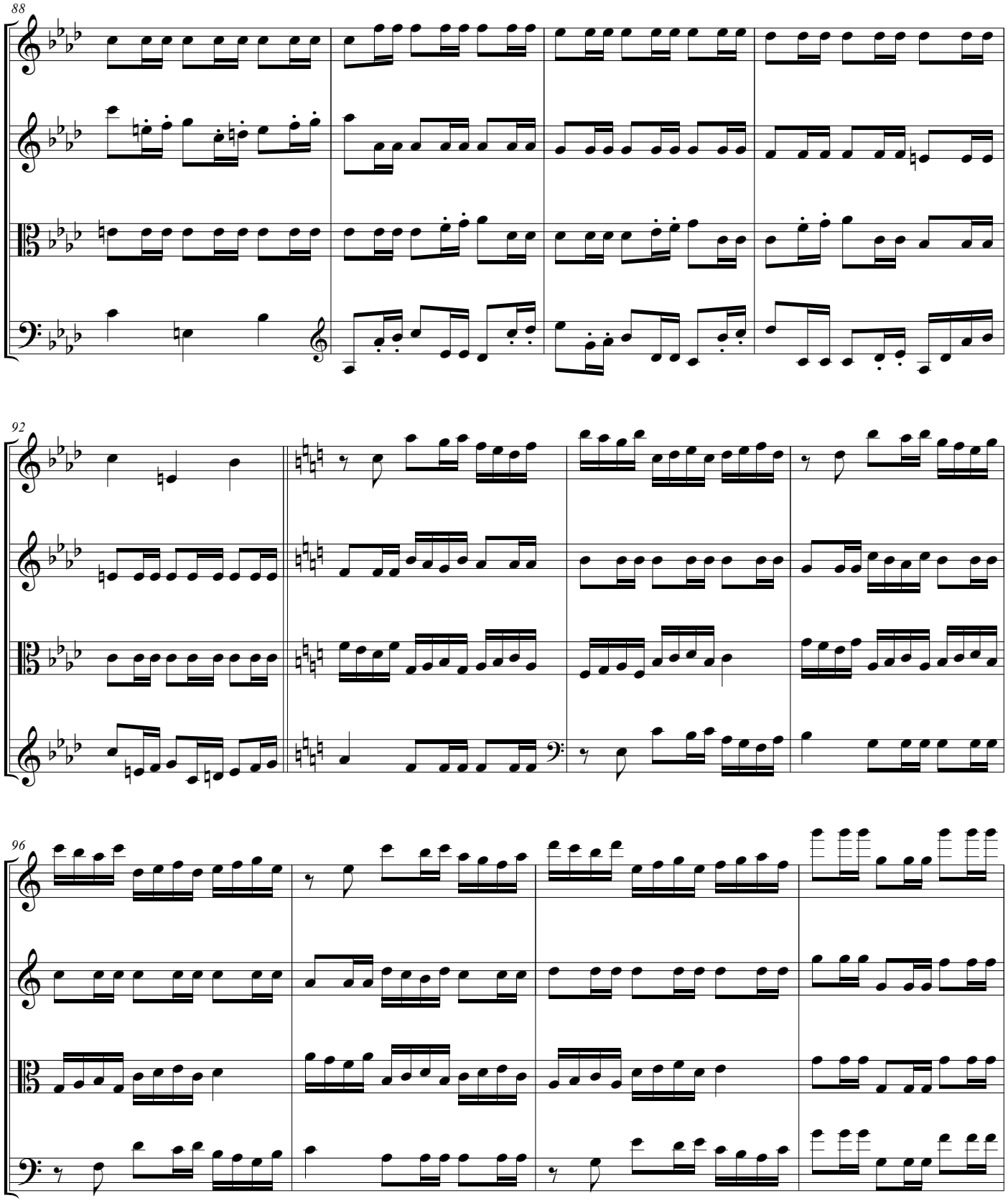

Allegro (M.M. ♩ = c. 80)
28
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
32
36

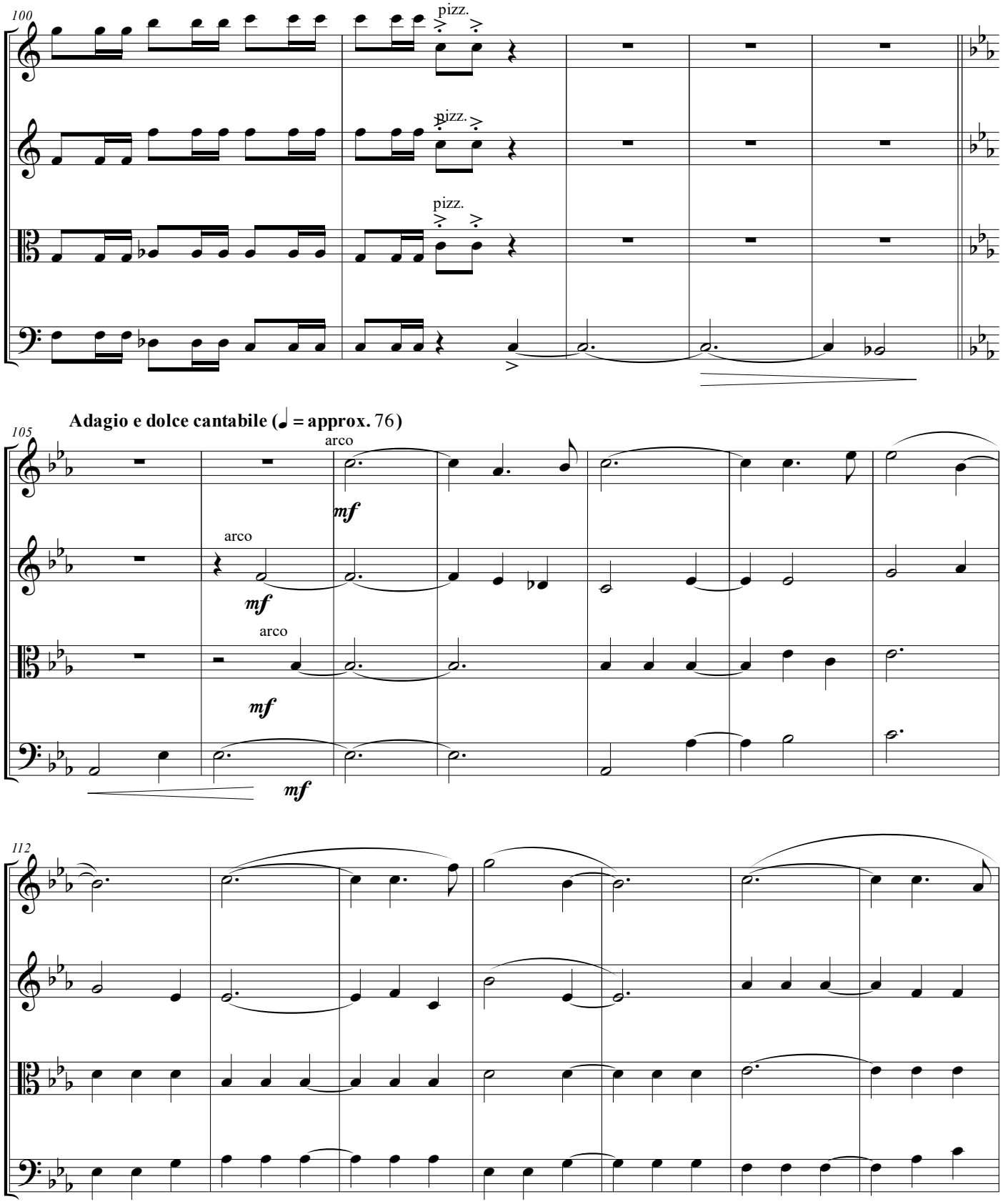

40
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
44
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
48
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

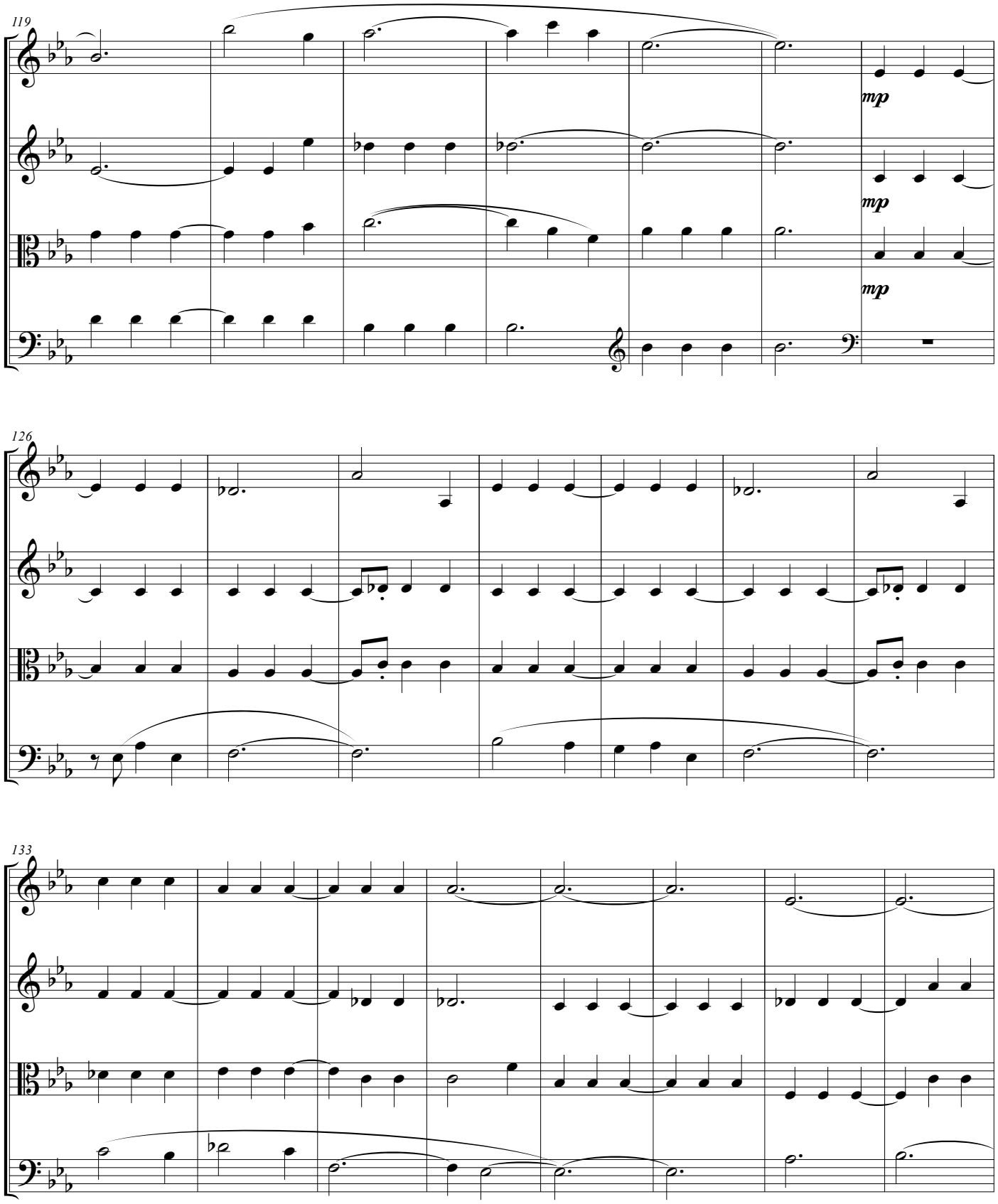

52
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
56
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
60
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

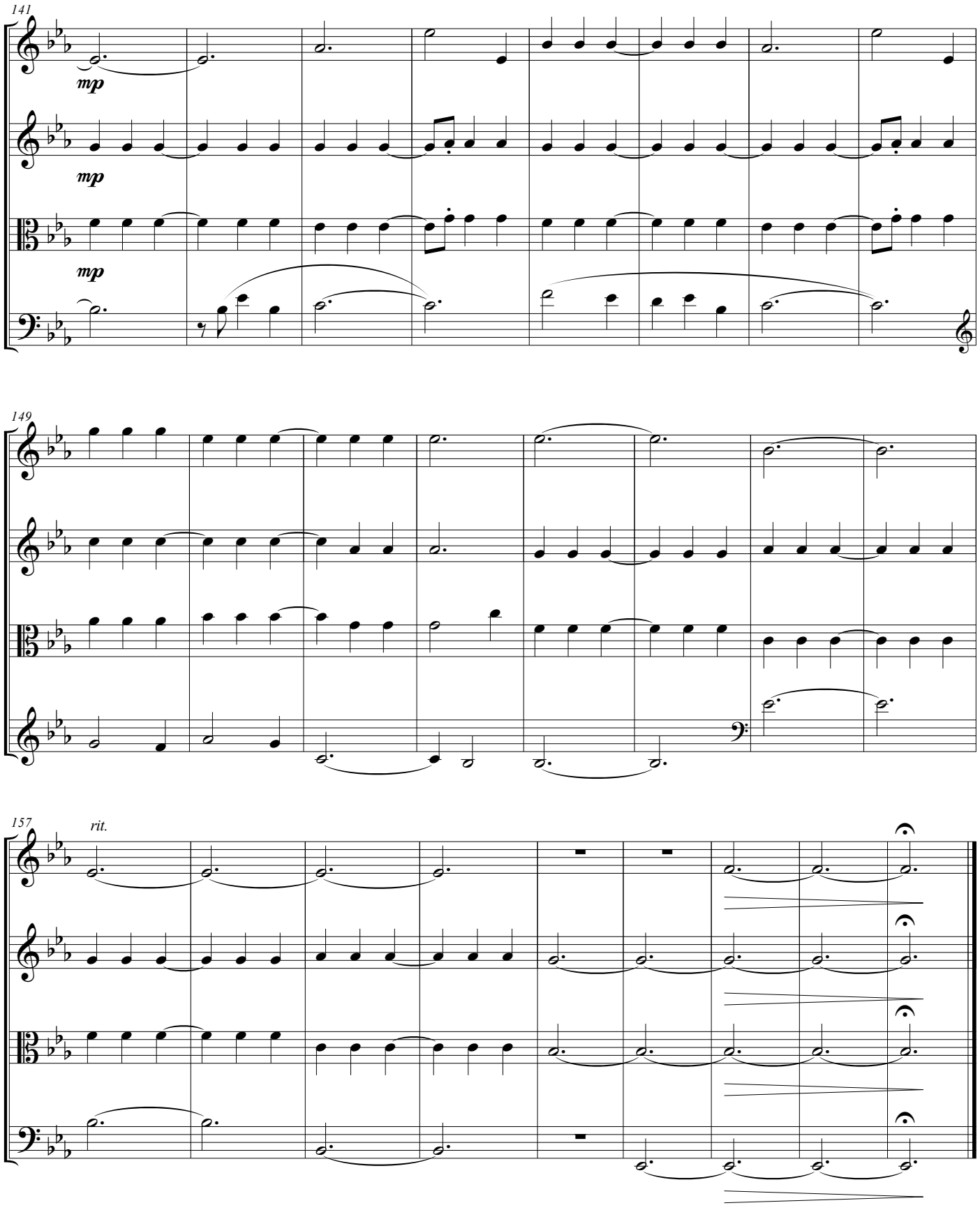

64
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
68
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
72
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


76
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
80
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
84
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


88
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
92
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
96
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


100
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz.
pizz.
pizz.
105
Adagio e dolce cantabile (♩ = approx. 76)
arco
mf
arco
mf
arco
mf
mf
112


119
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
mp
mp
126
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
133
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


141
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
mp
mp
149
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
157
rit.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

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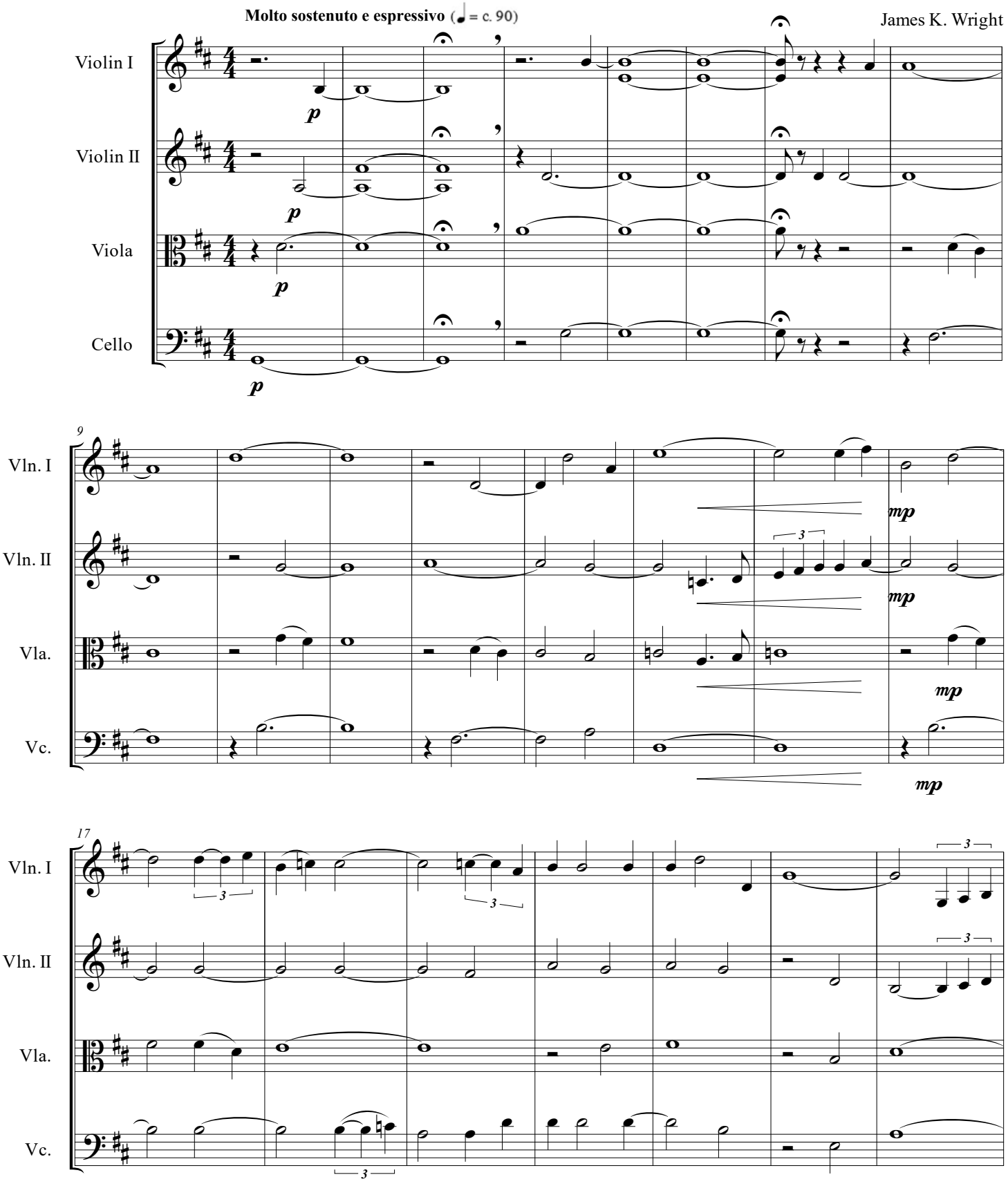
II. Molto sostenuto e espressivo



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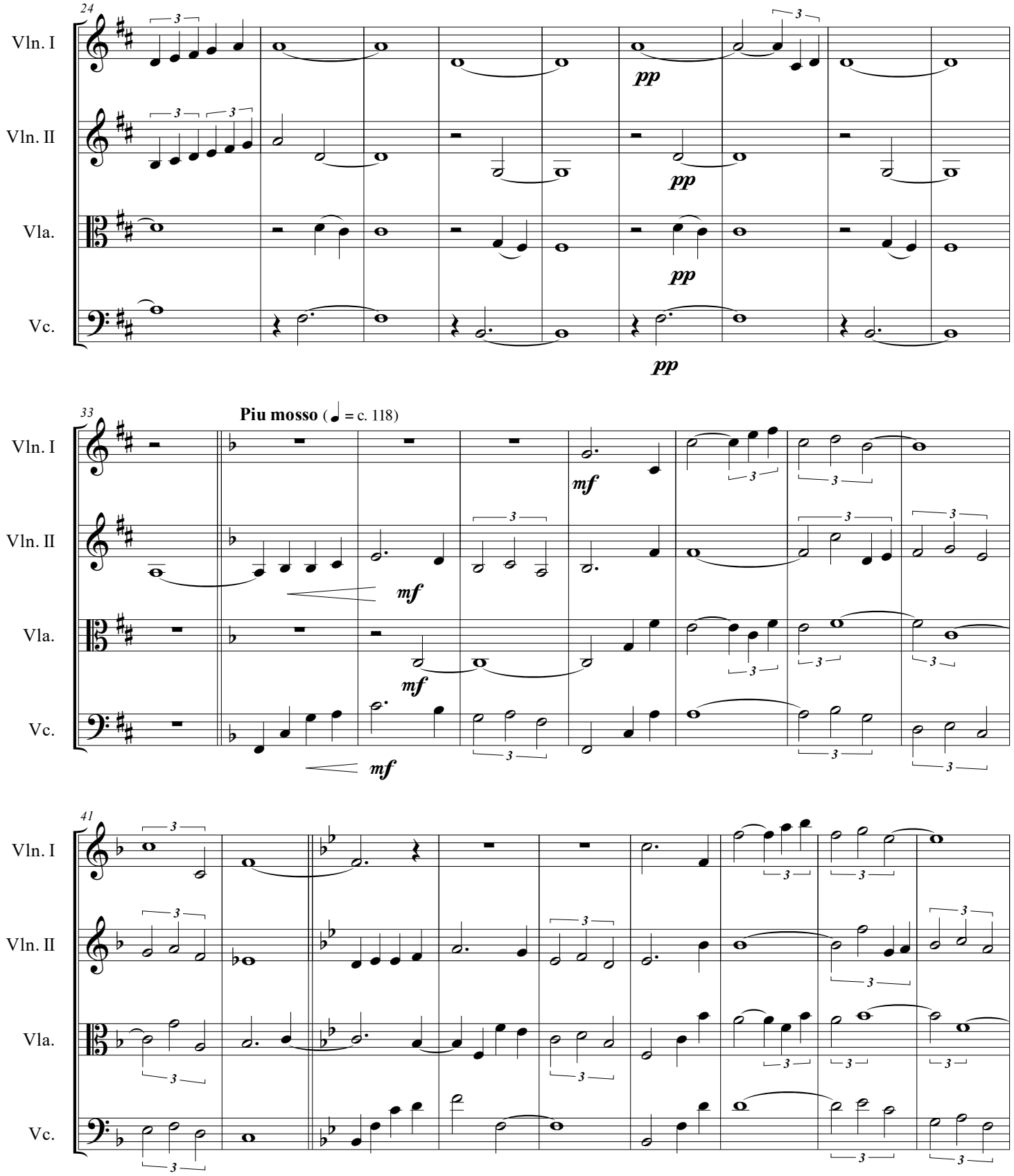
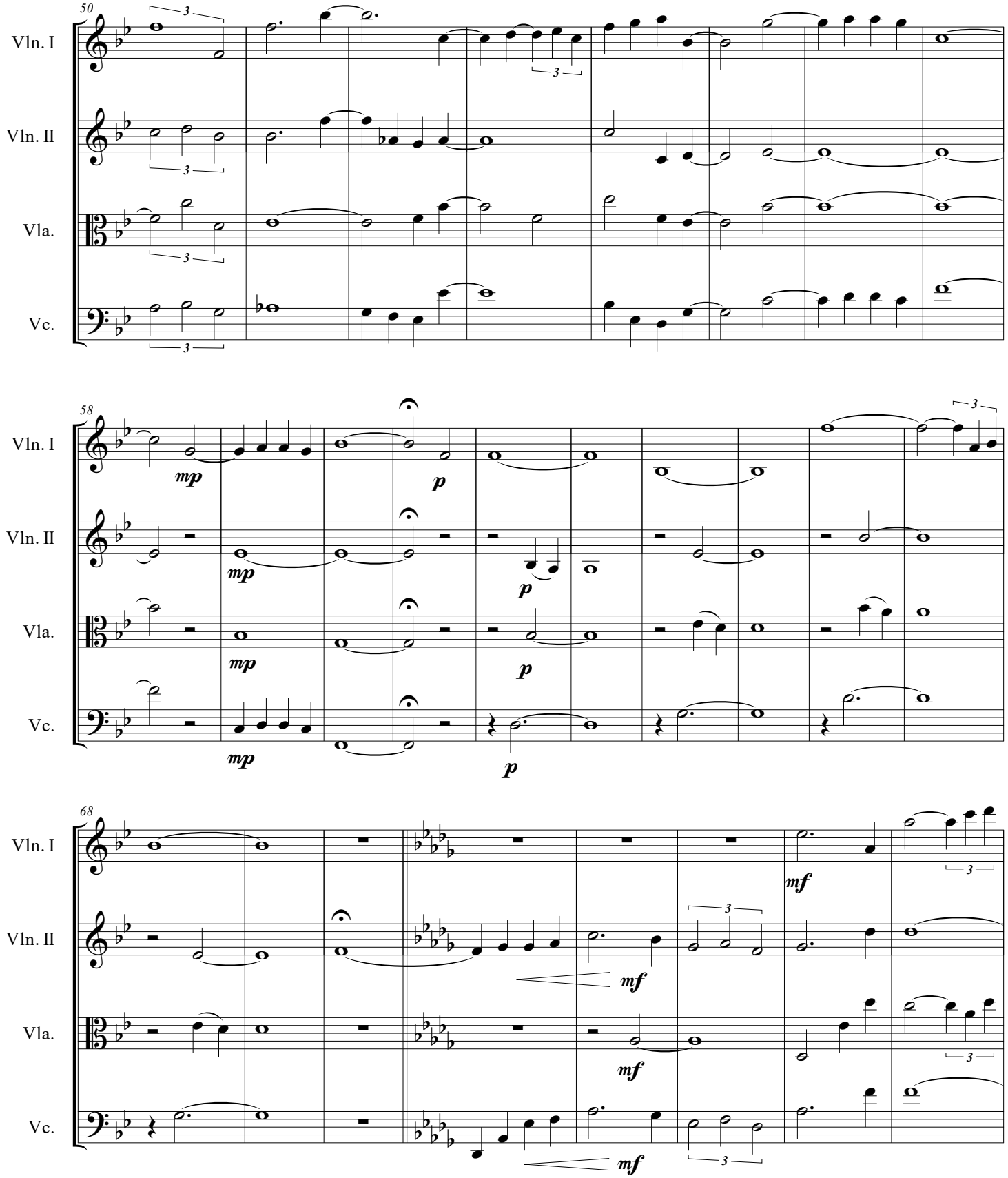
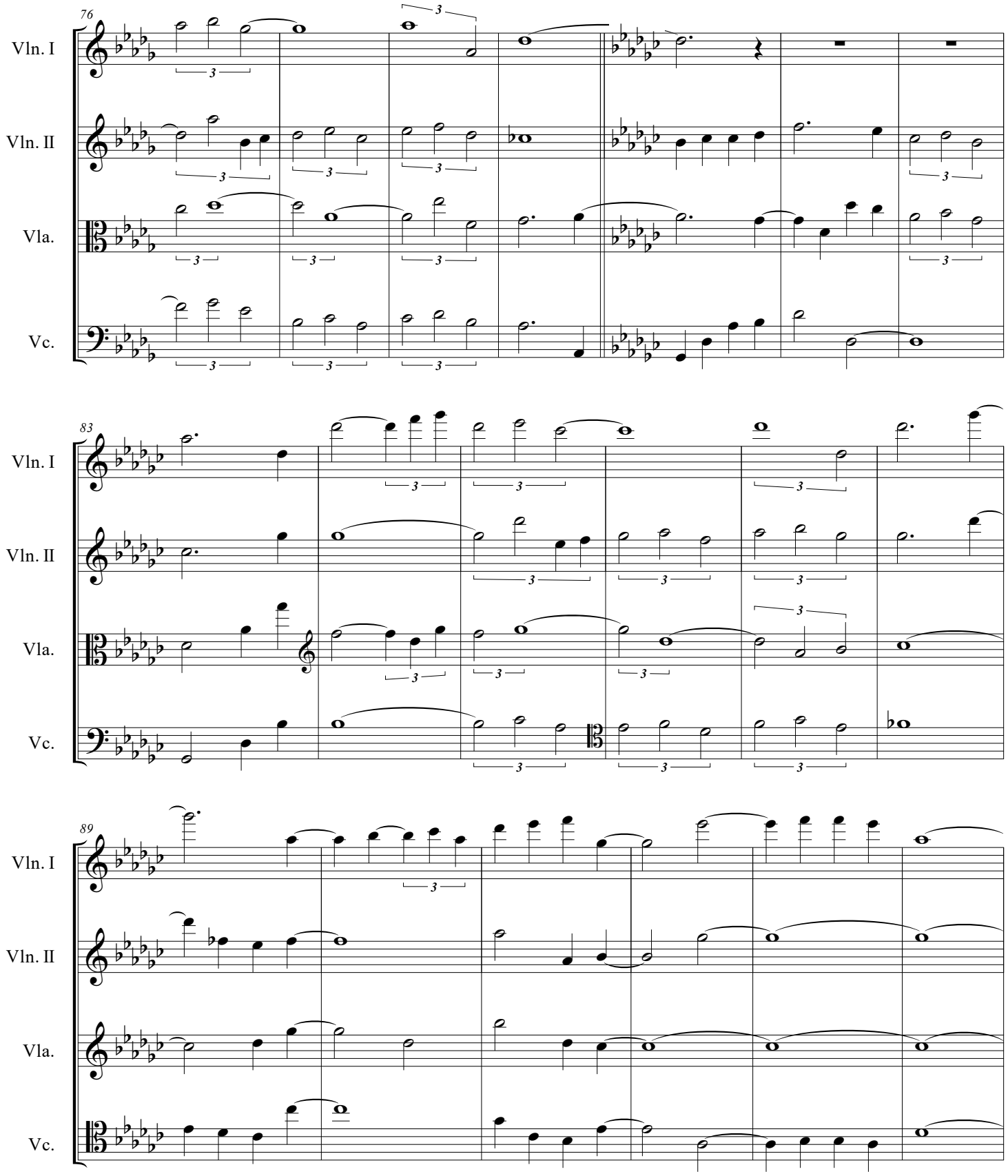
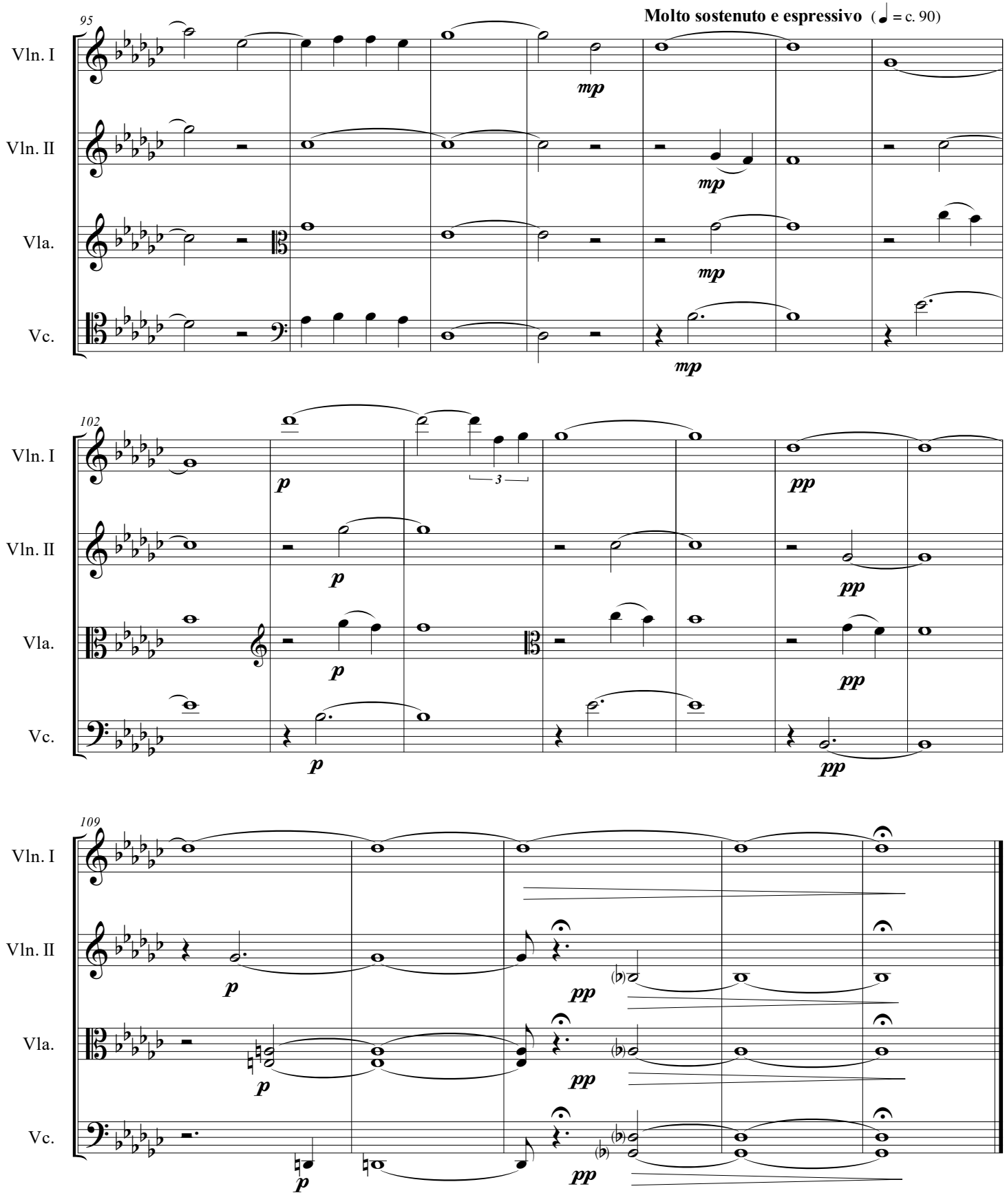

24
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pp
33
Piu mosso (= c. 118)
mf
41


50
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
3
58
mp
p
68
mf


76
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
83
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
89
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


95
Molto sostenuto e espressivo (♩ = c. 90)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
102
p
3
pp
109

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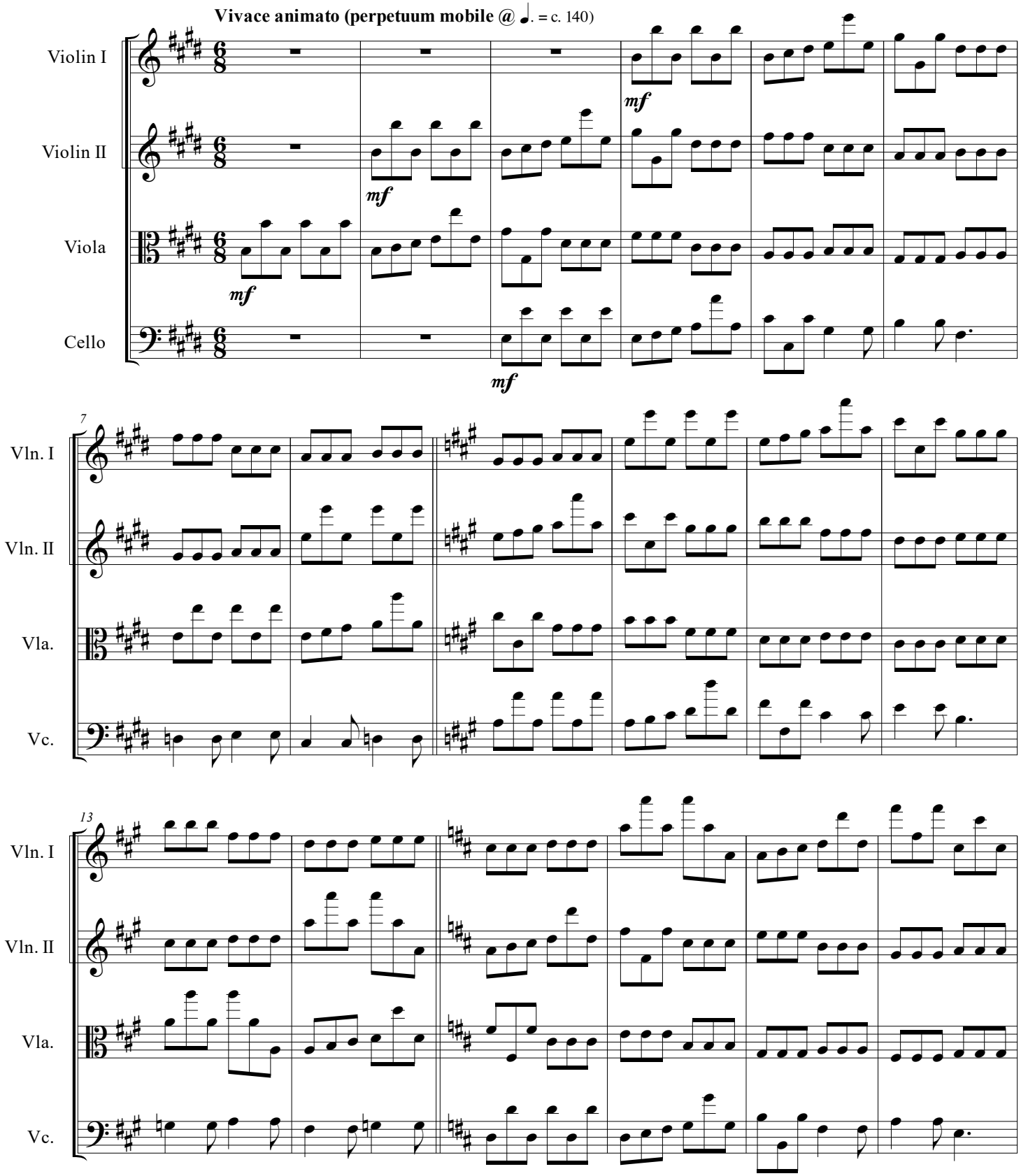
III. Scherzo-Tarantella

James K. Wright



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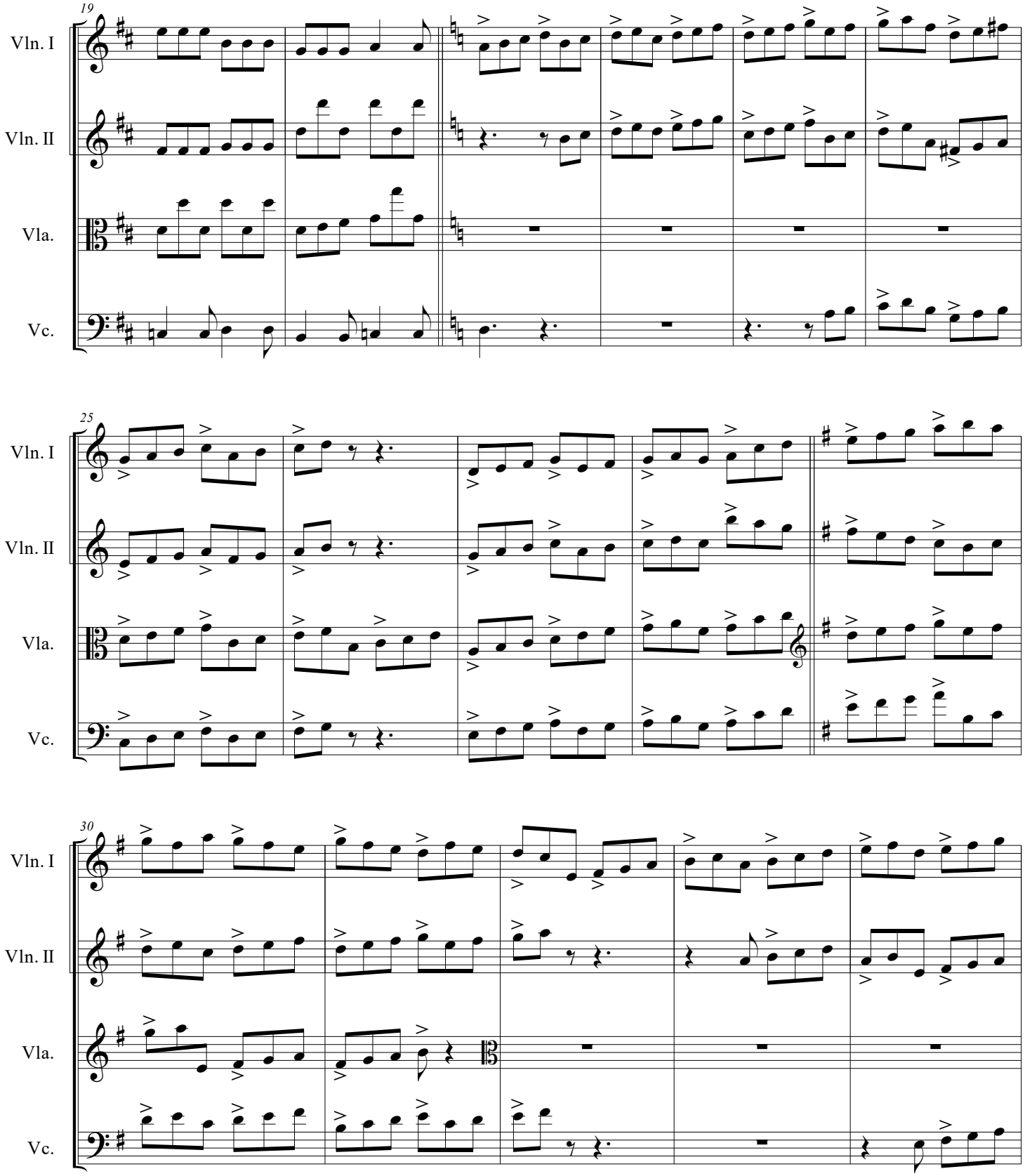
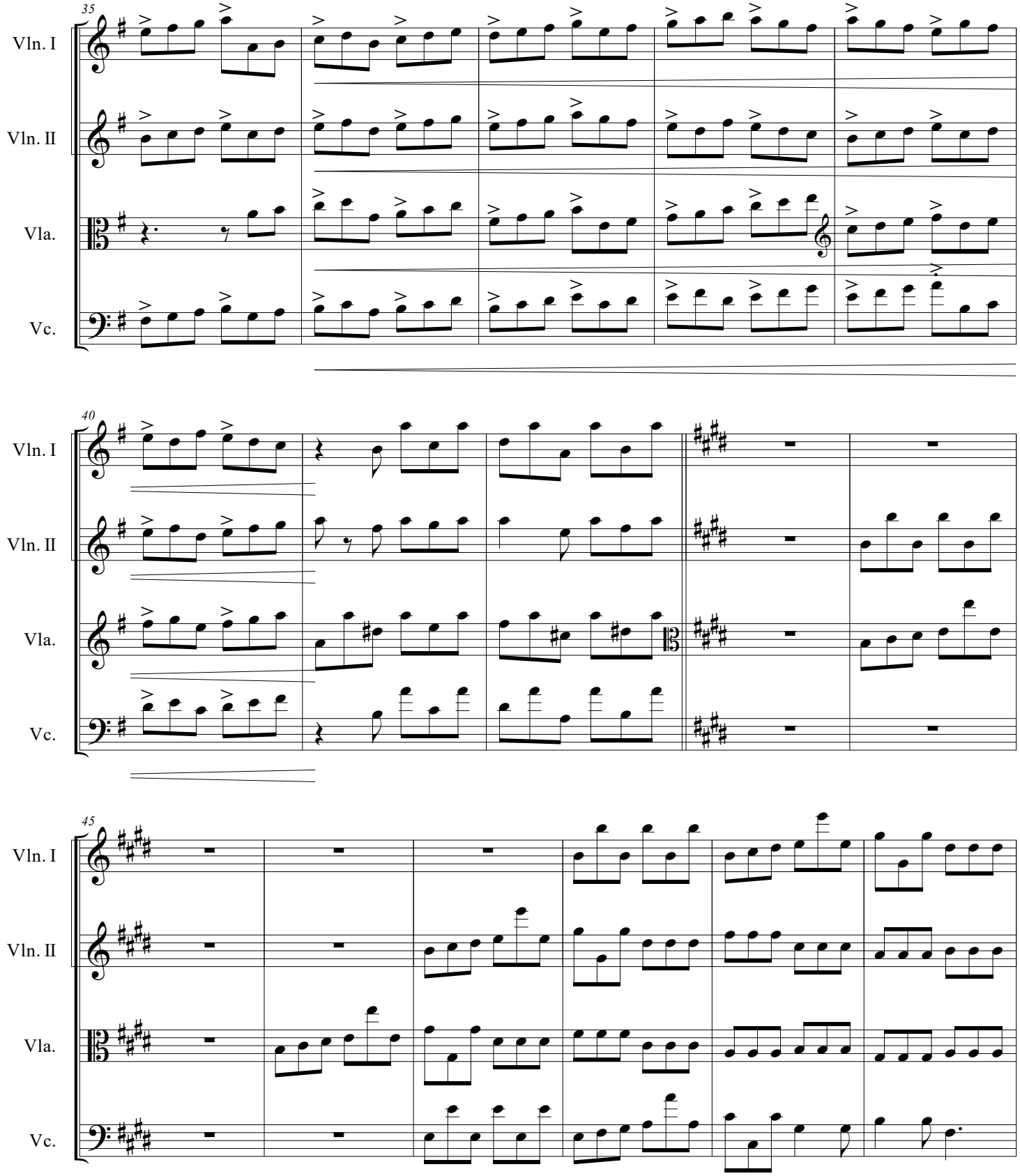
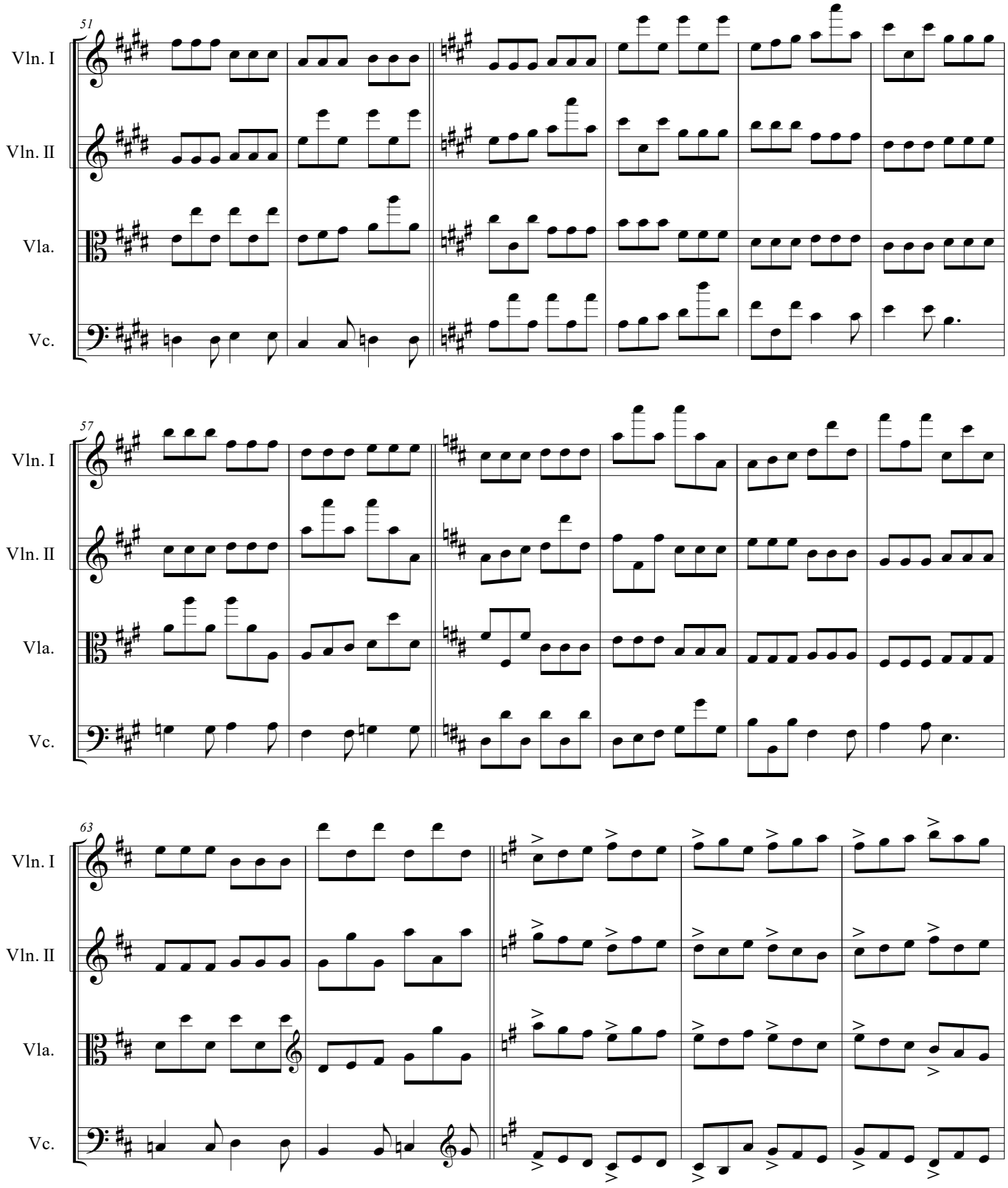
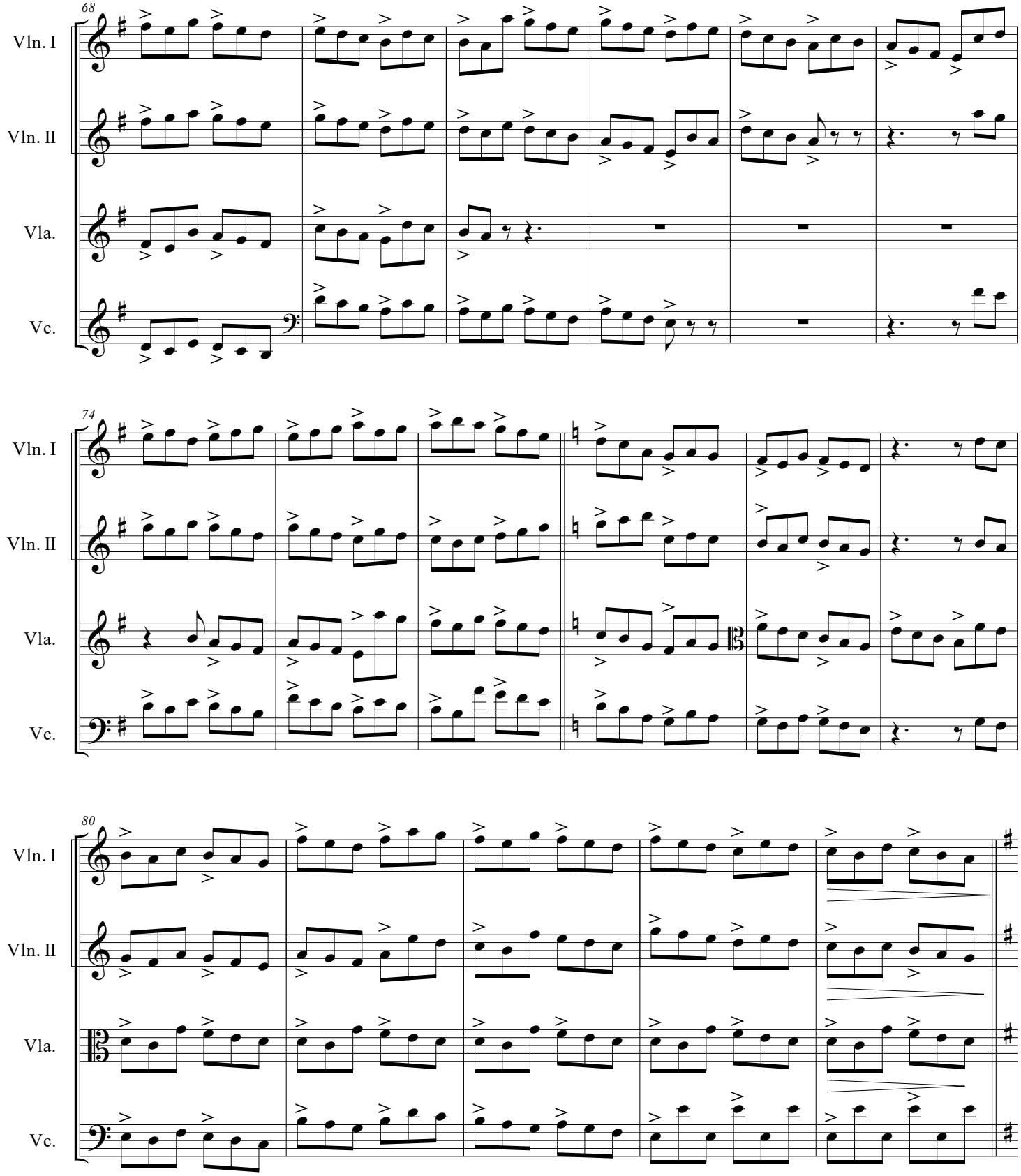
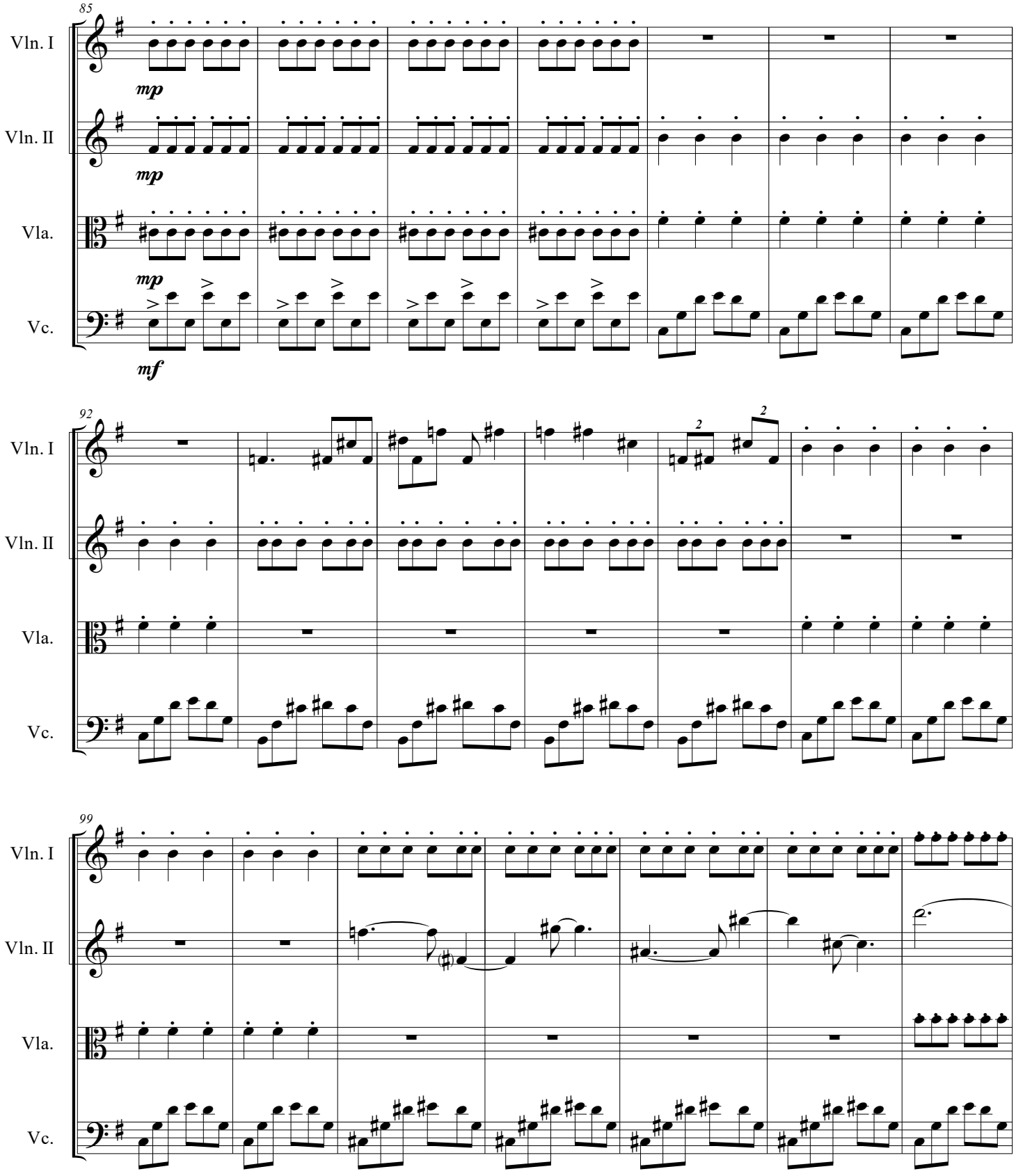
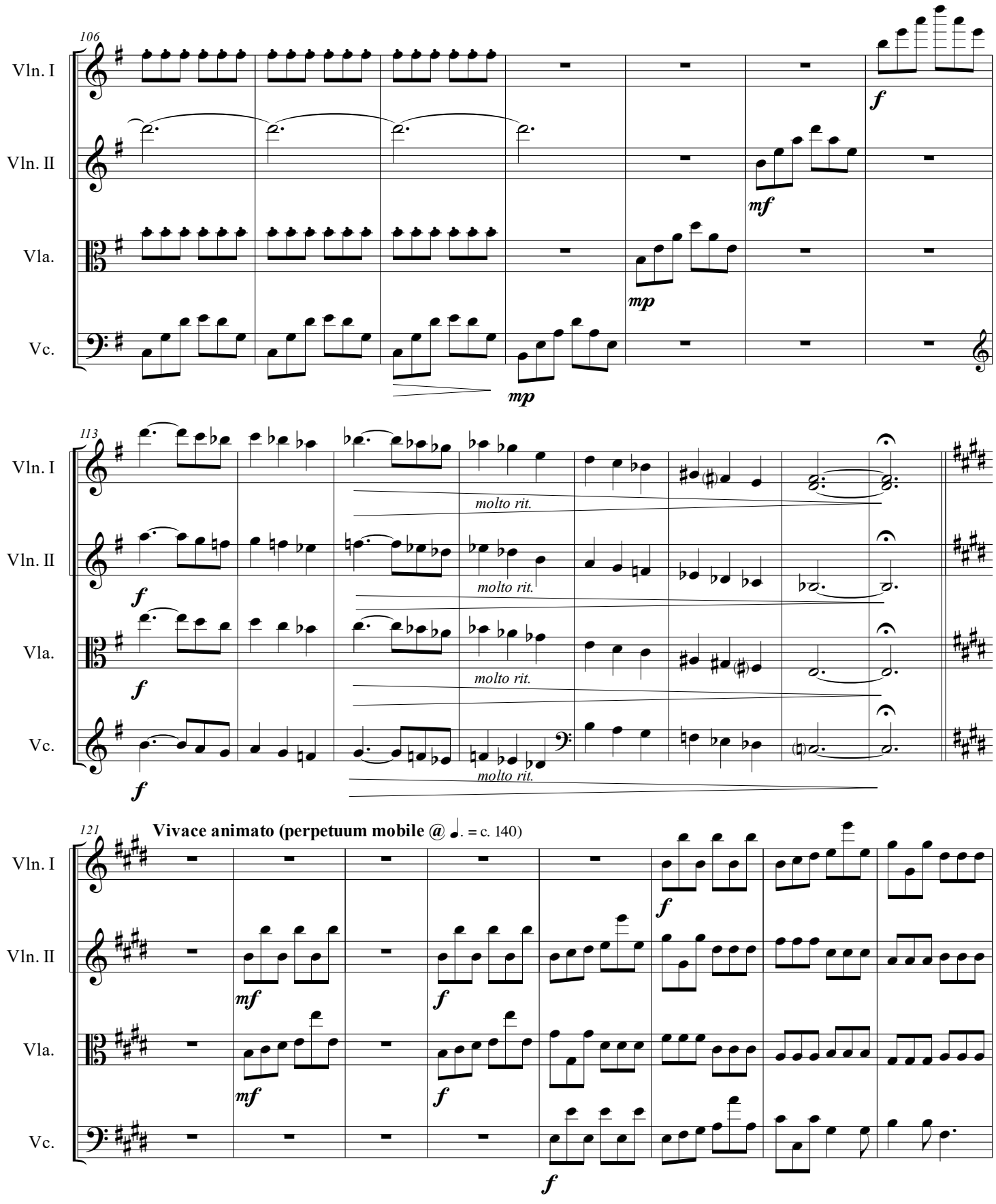

19
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
25
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
30
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

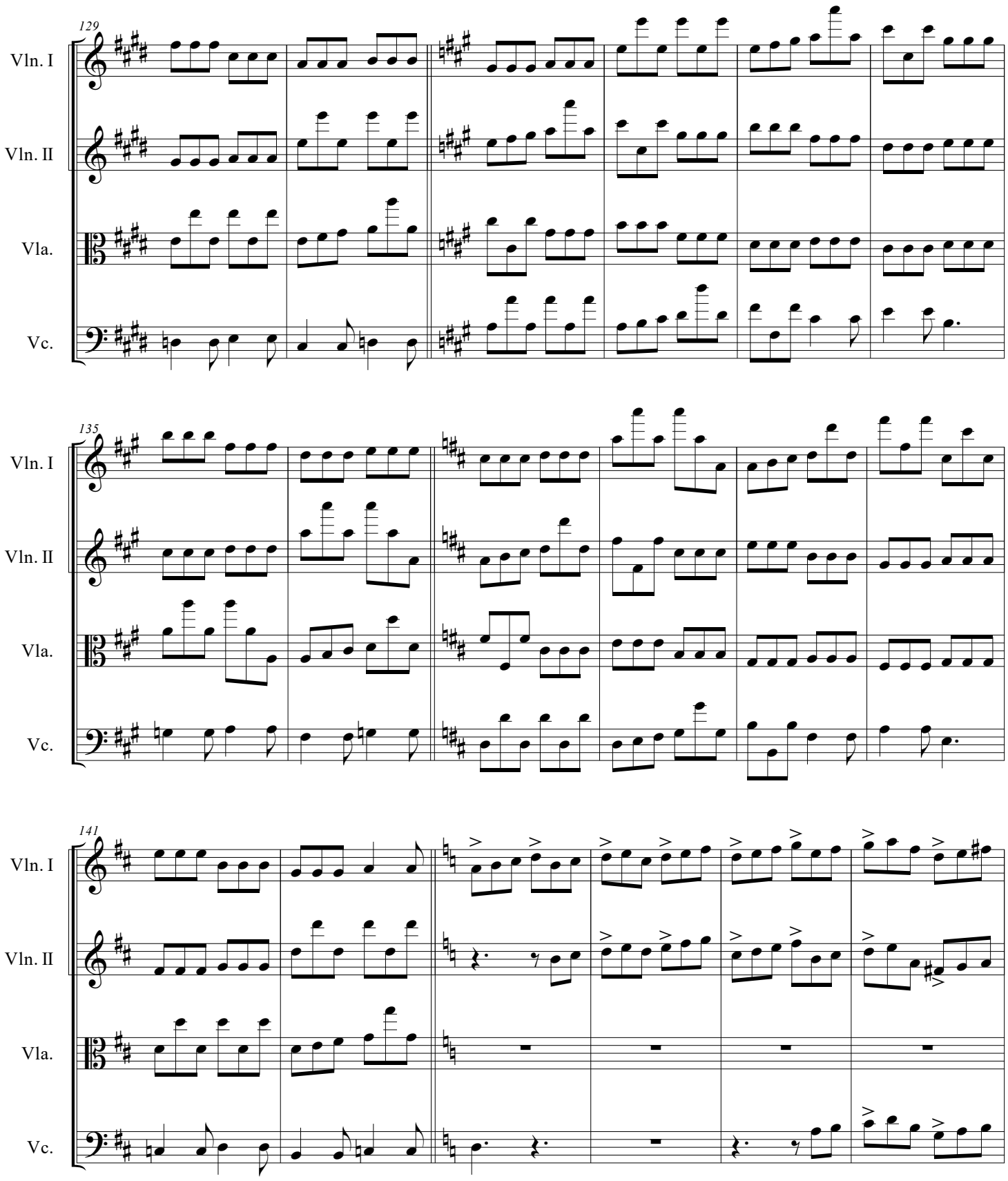

35
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
40
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
45
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

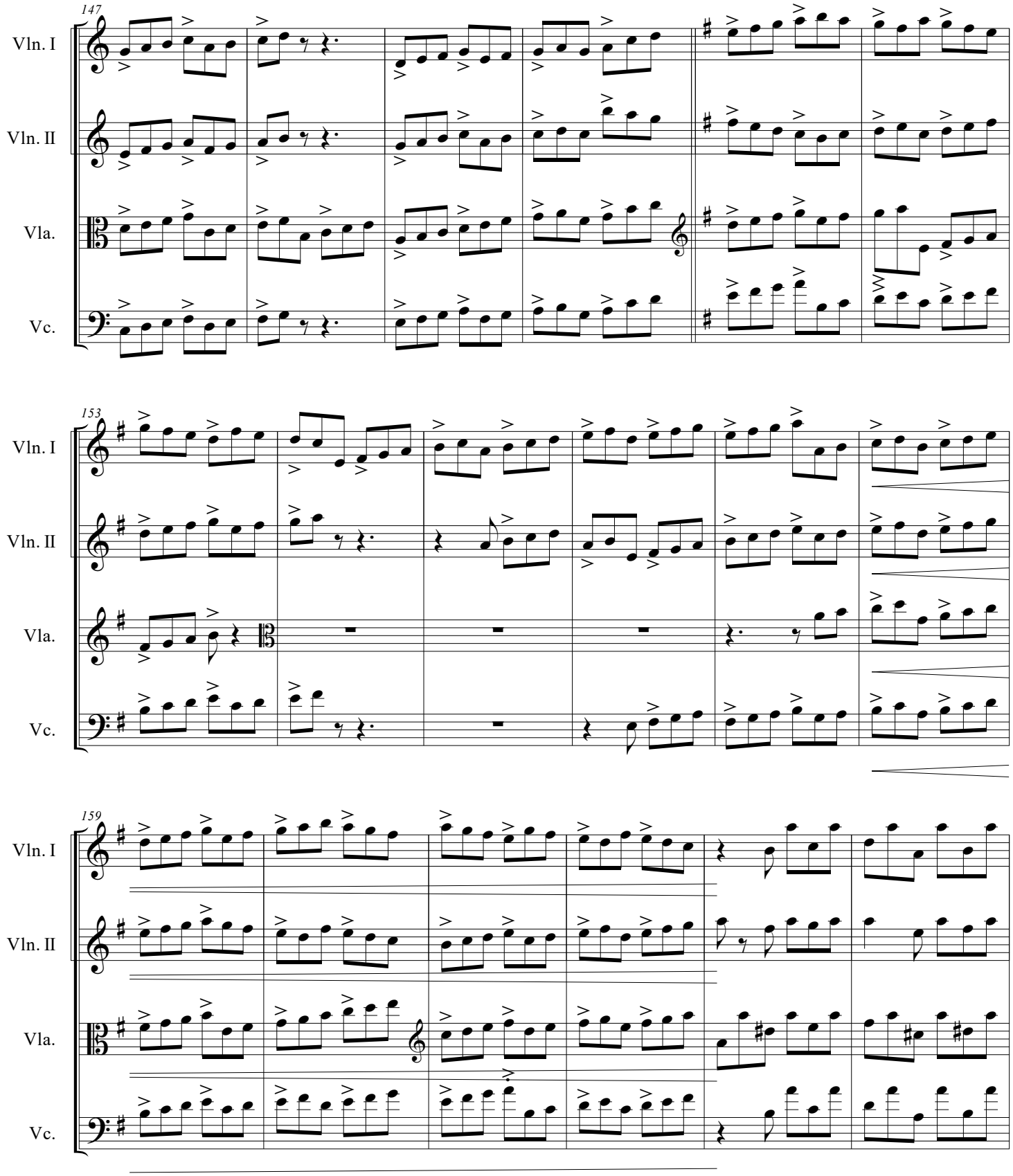

51
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
57
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
63
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

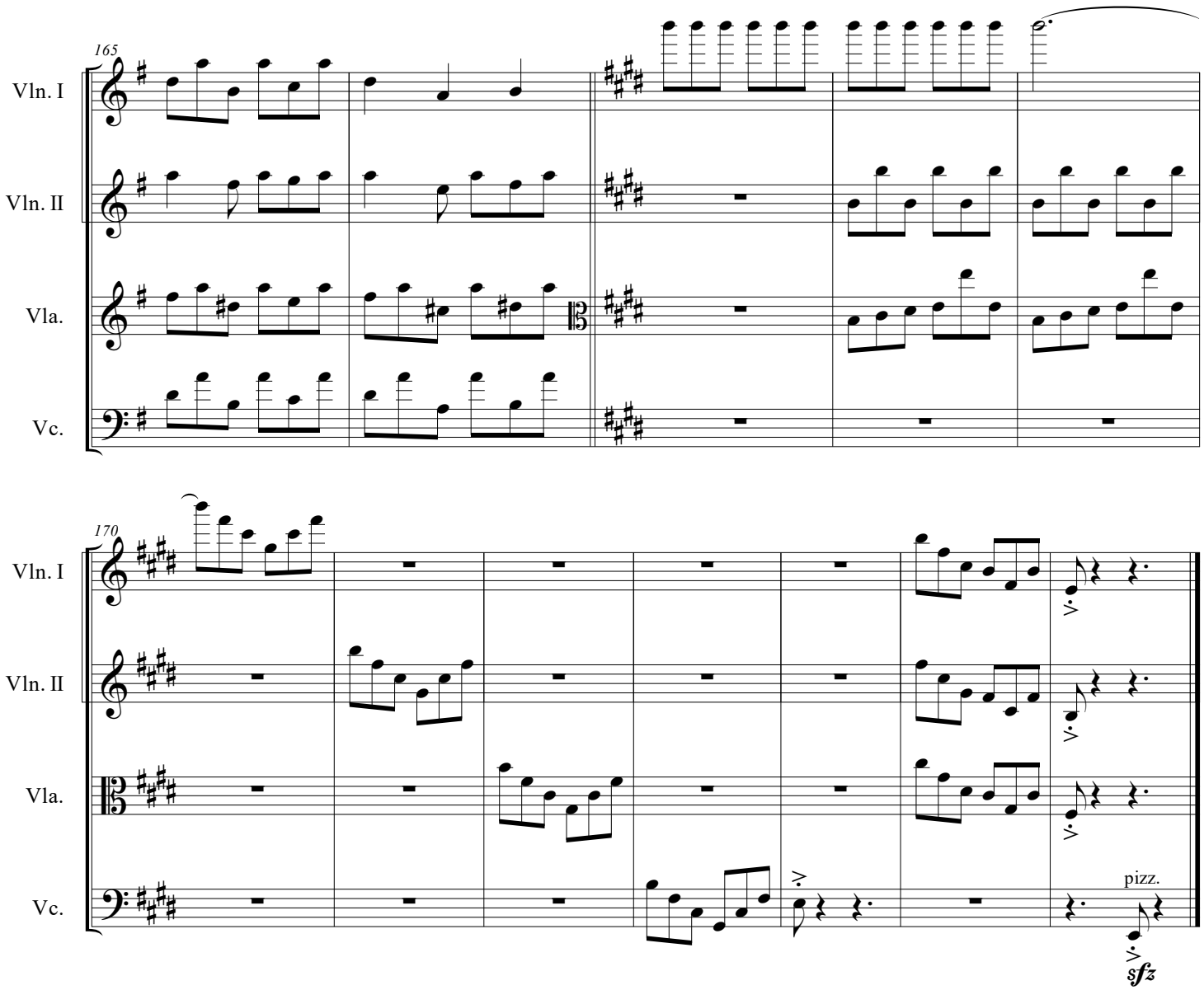

68
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
74
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
80
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


85
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
mp
mp
mf
92
2
2
99


106
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
f
mf
mp
mp
113
molto rit.
121
Vivace animato (perpetuum mobile @ ♩. = c. 140)


129
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
135
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
141
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


147
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
153
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
159
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


165
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
170
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz.
sfz

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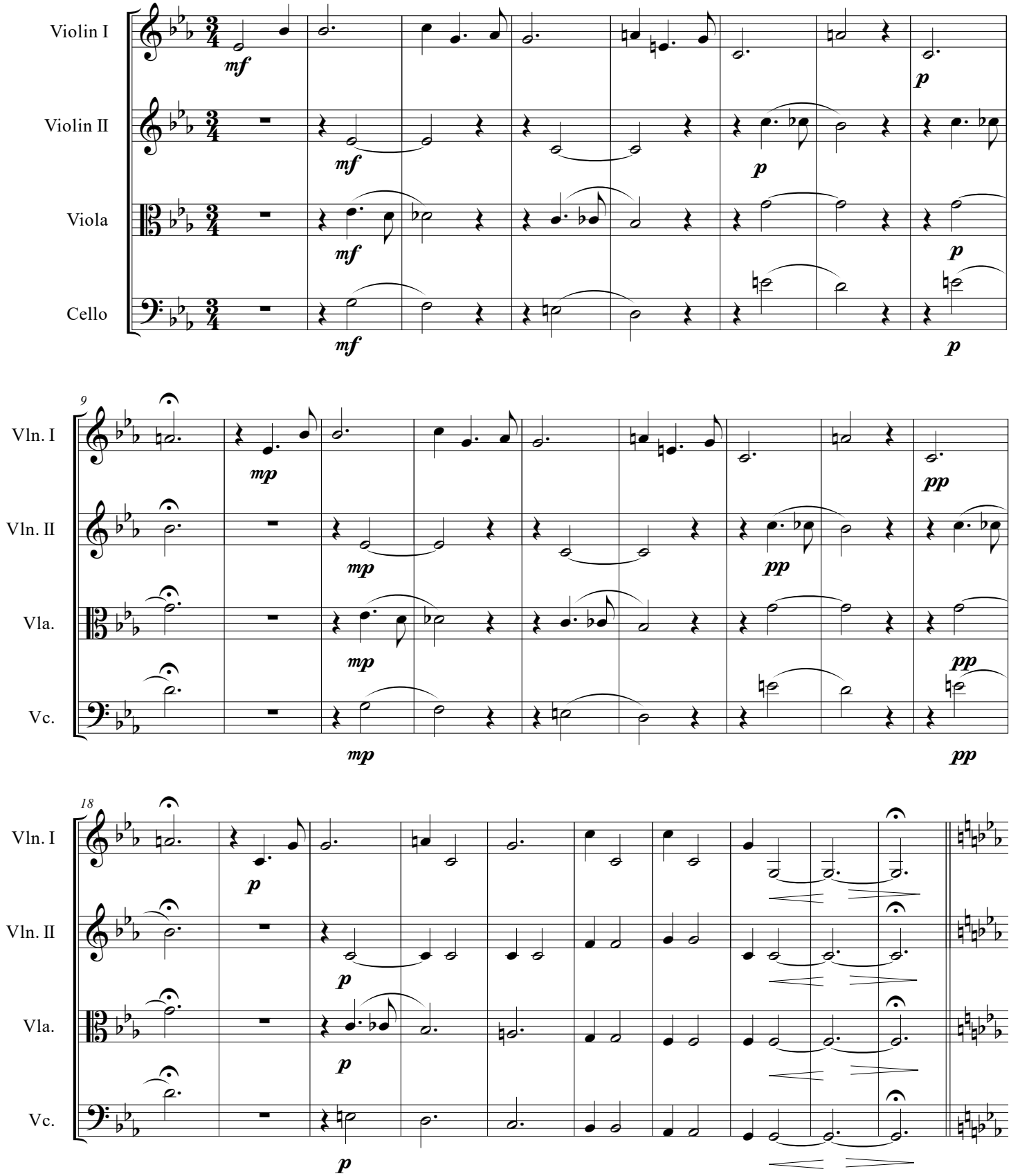
IV. Adagio e rondo ballabile

James K. Wright

Tendremente (Adagio: ♩ = 76)



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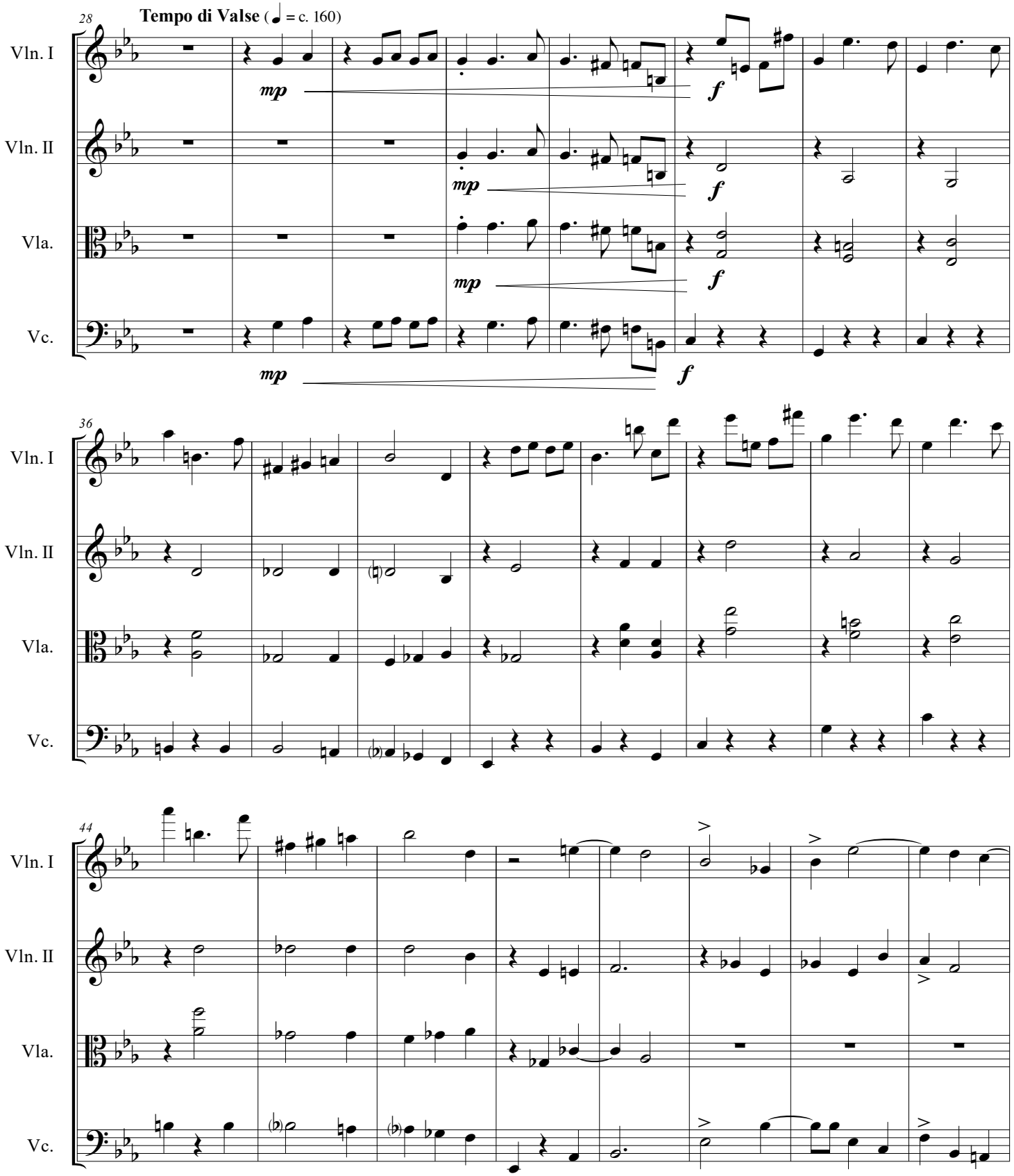
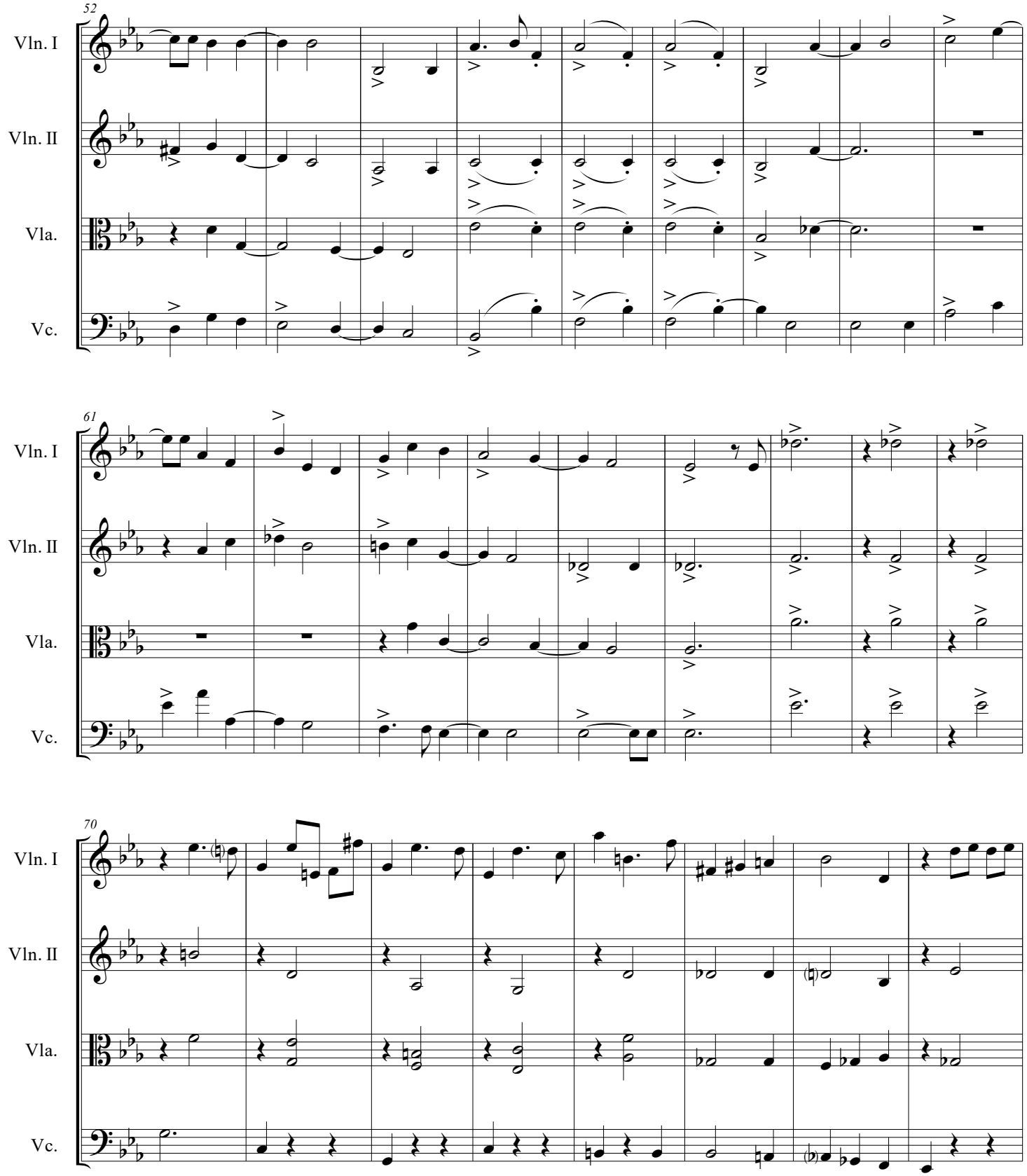
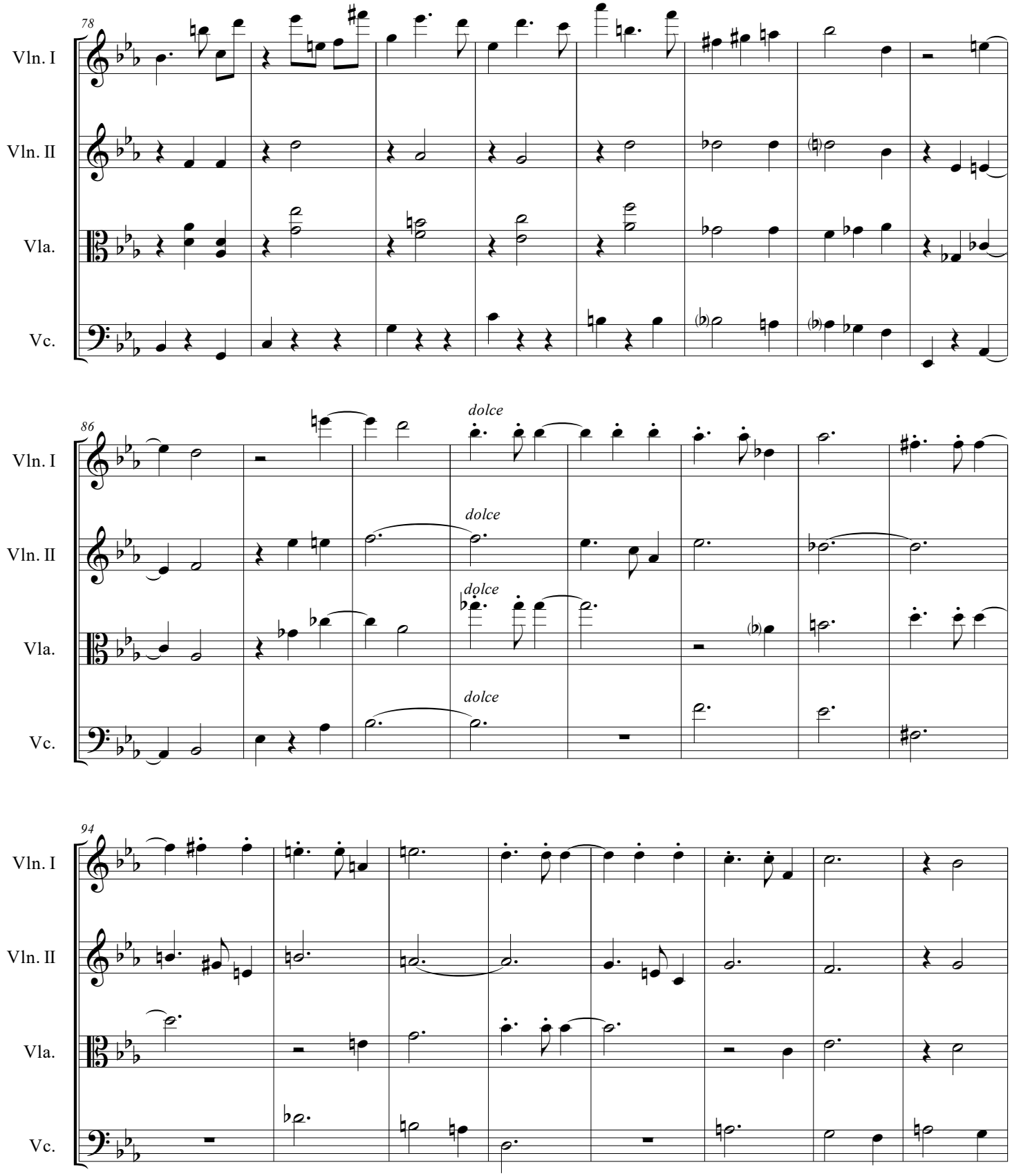
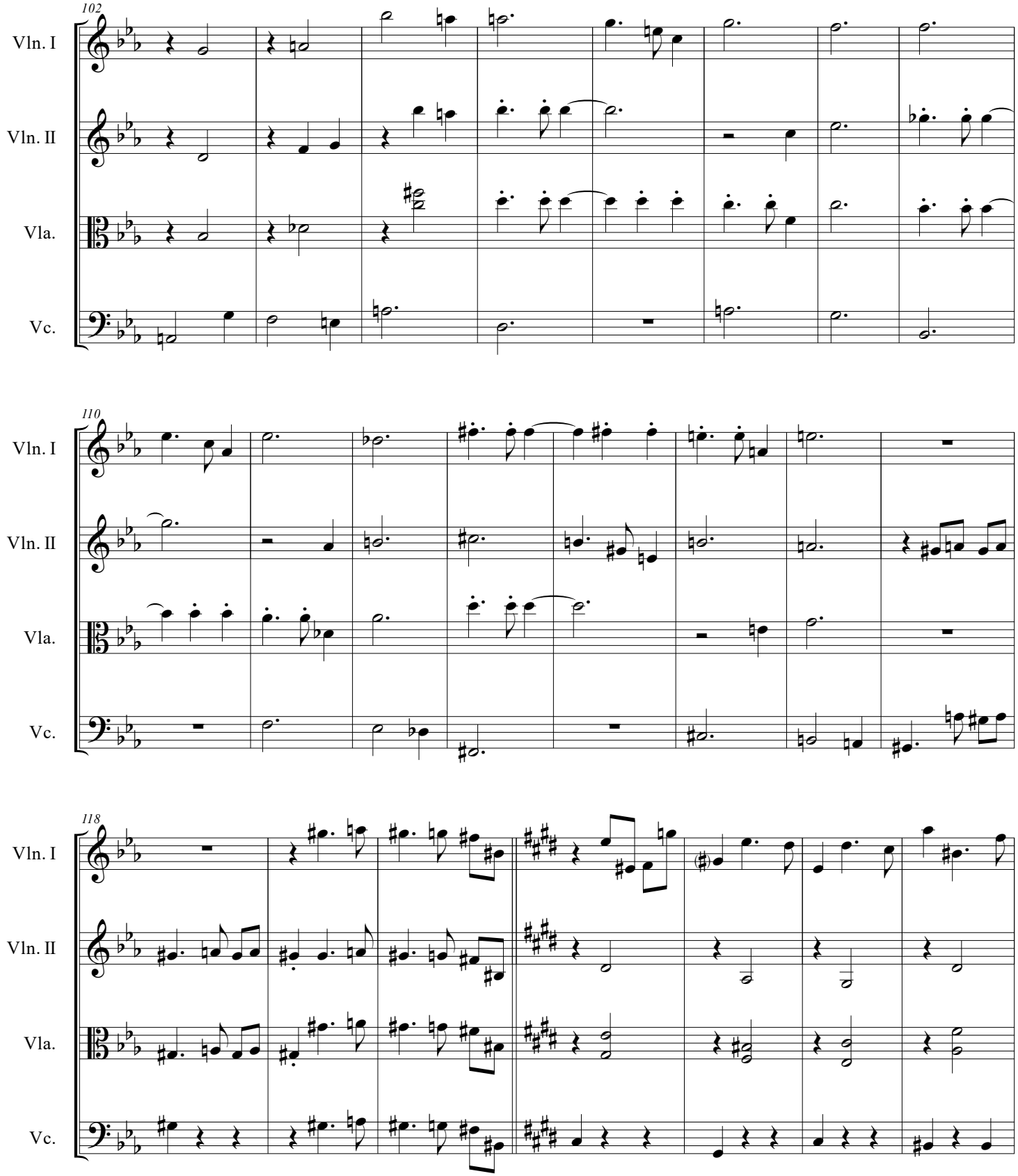
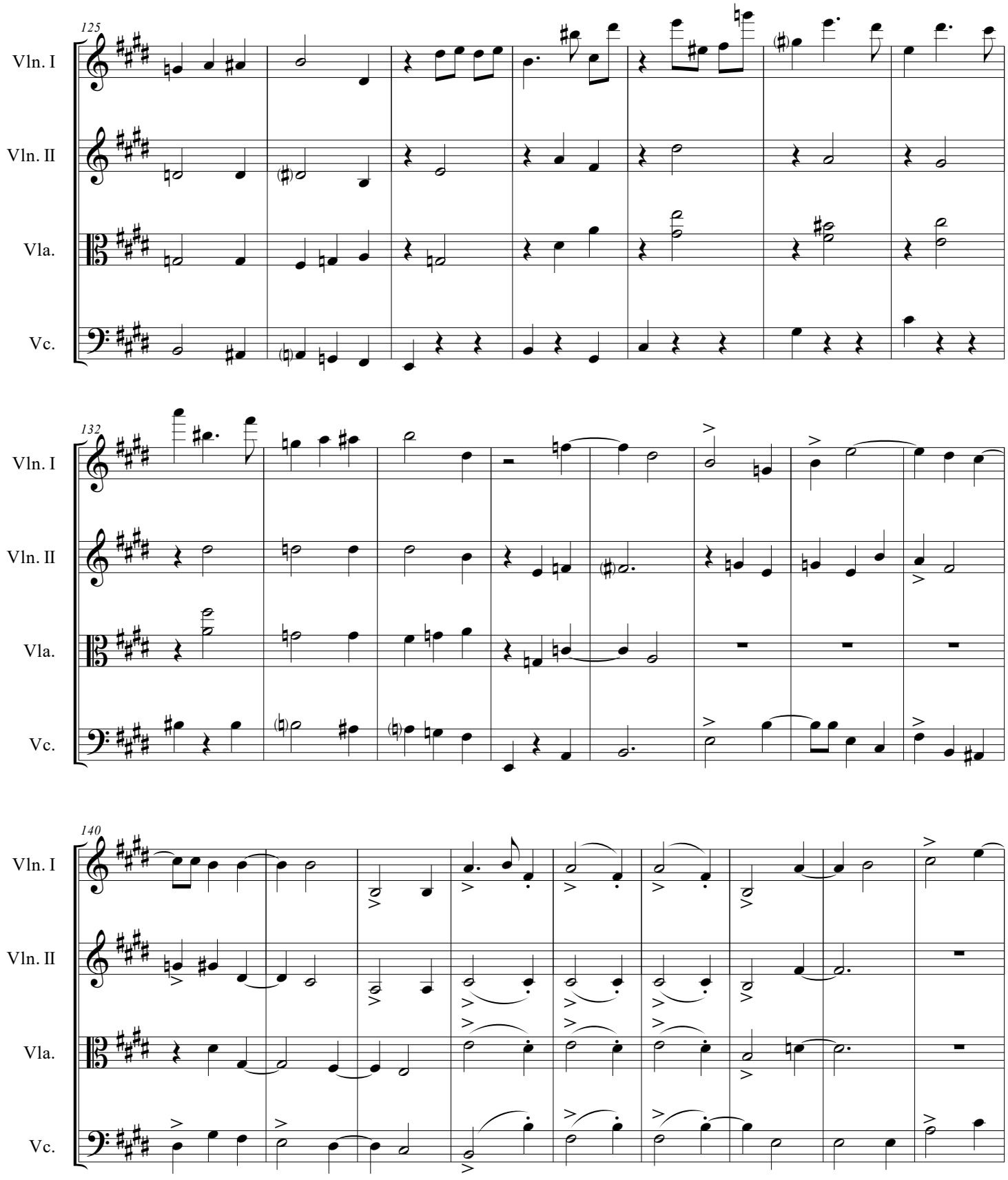
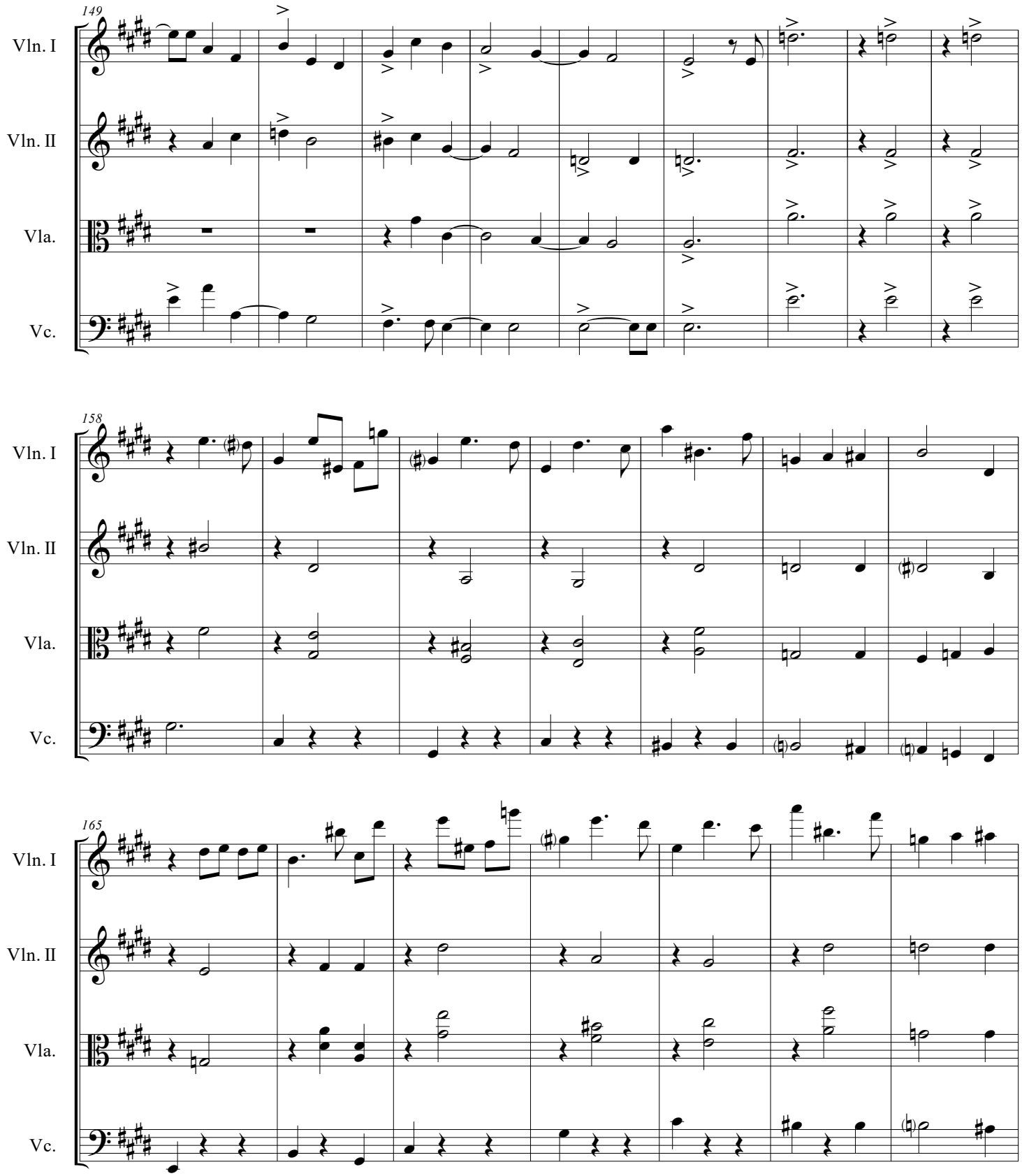

28
Tempo di Valse (= c. 160)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
f
36
44

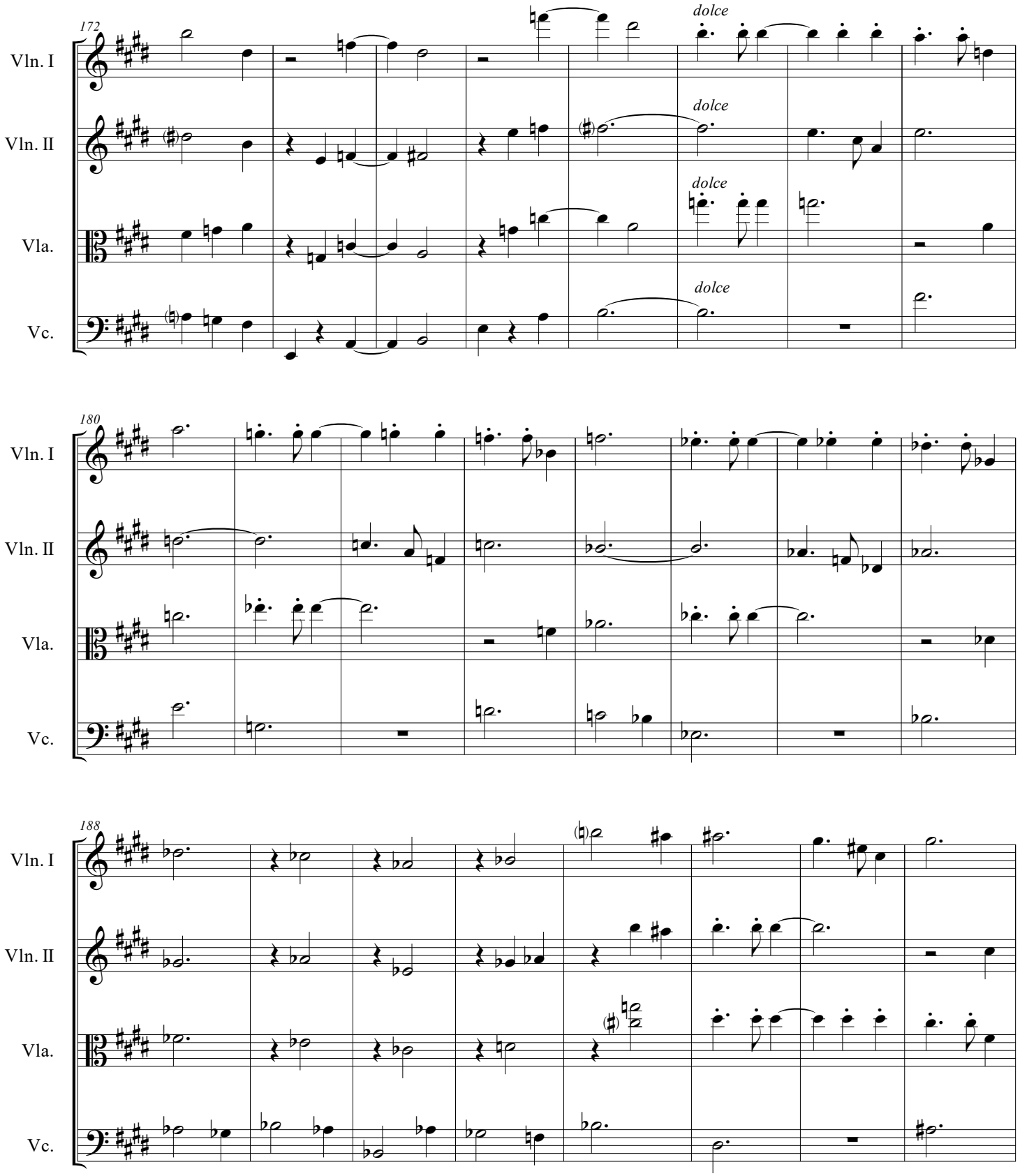

52
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
61
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
70
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

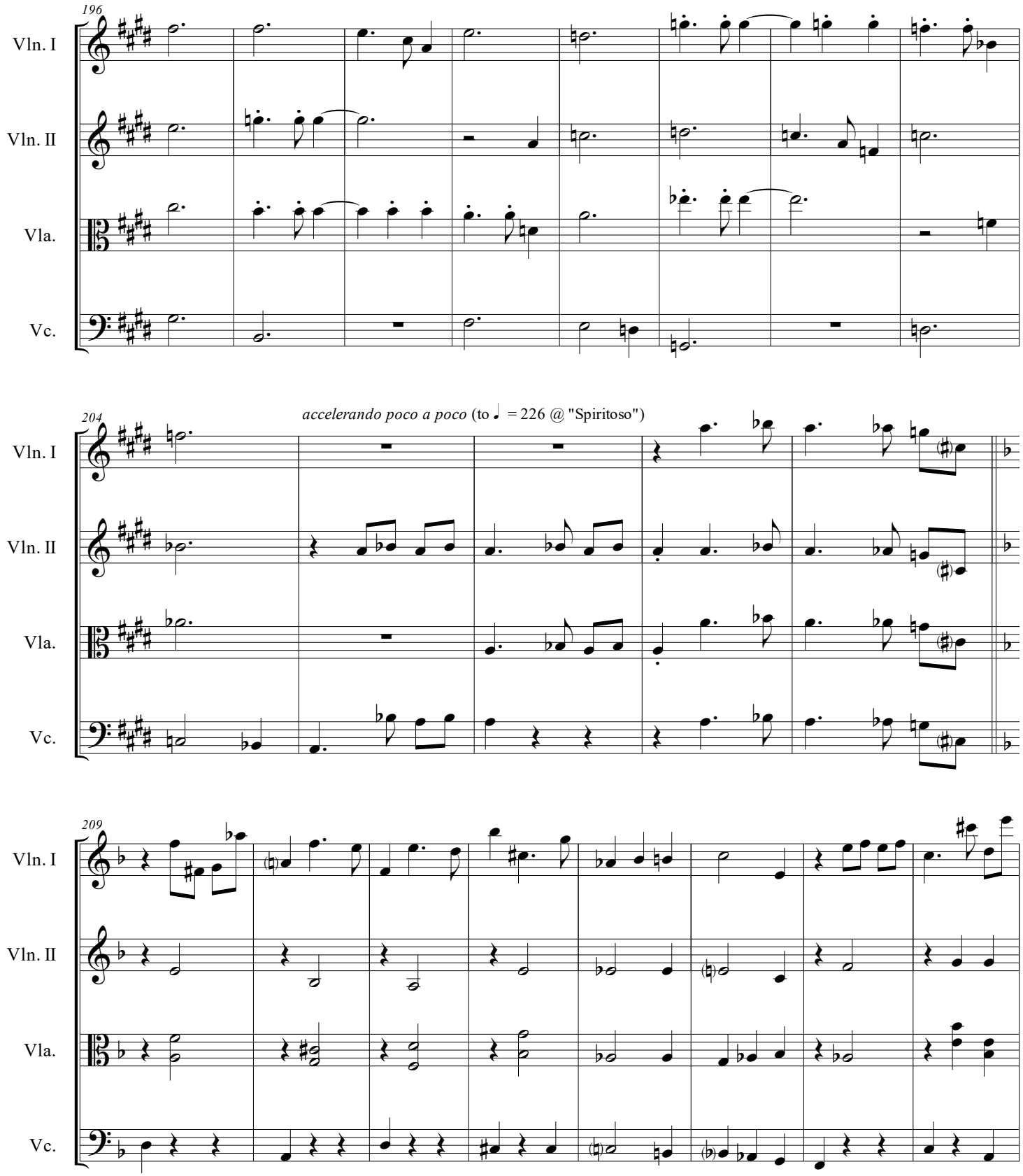

78
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
86
dolce
dolce
dolce
dolce
94

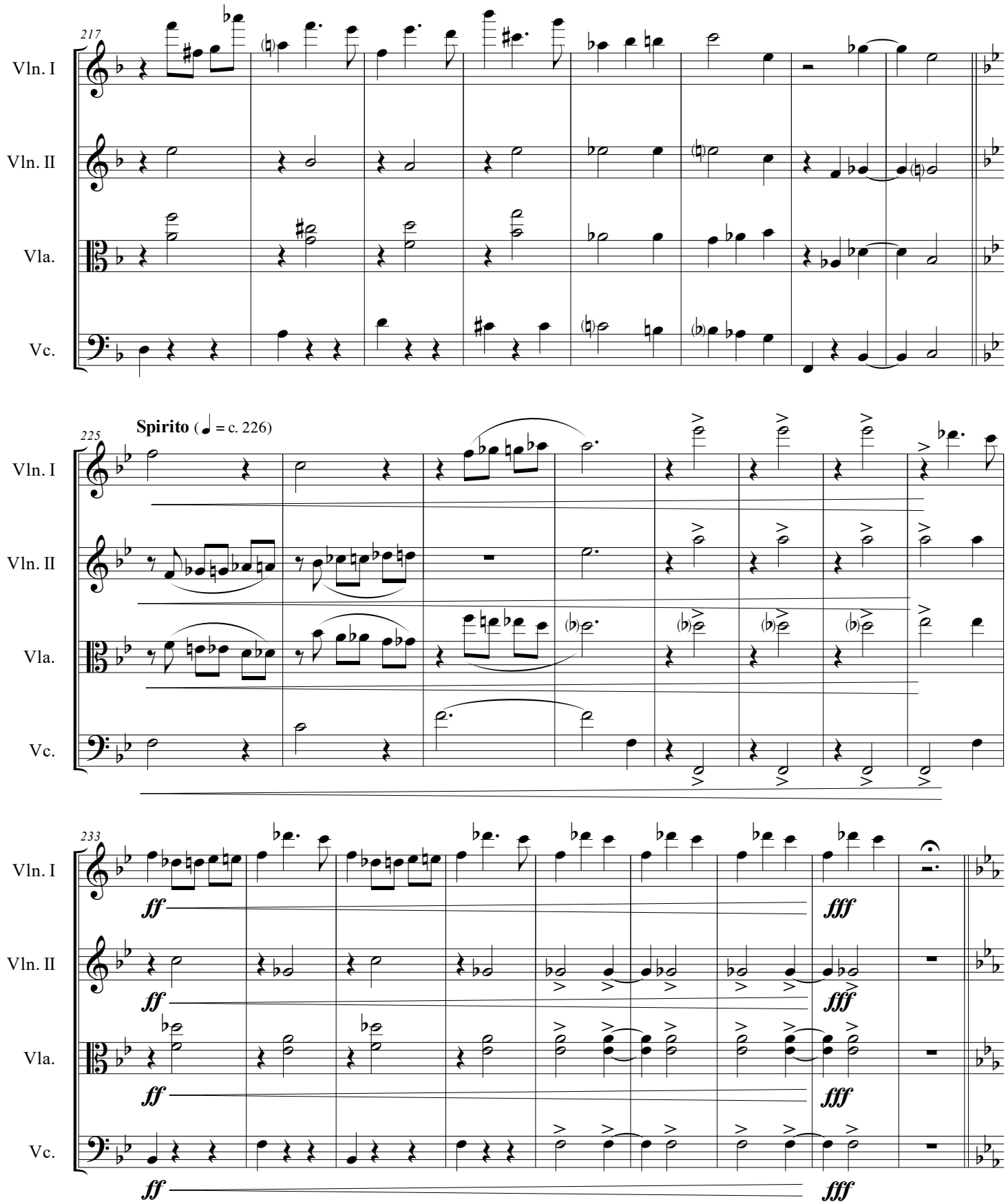

102
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
110
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
118
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

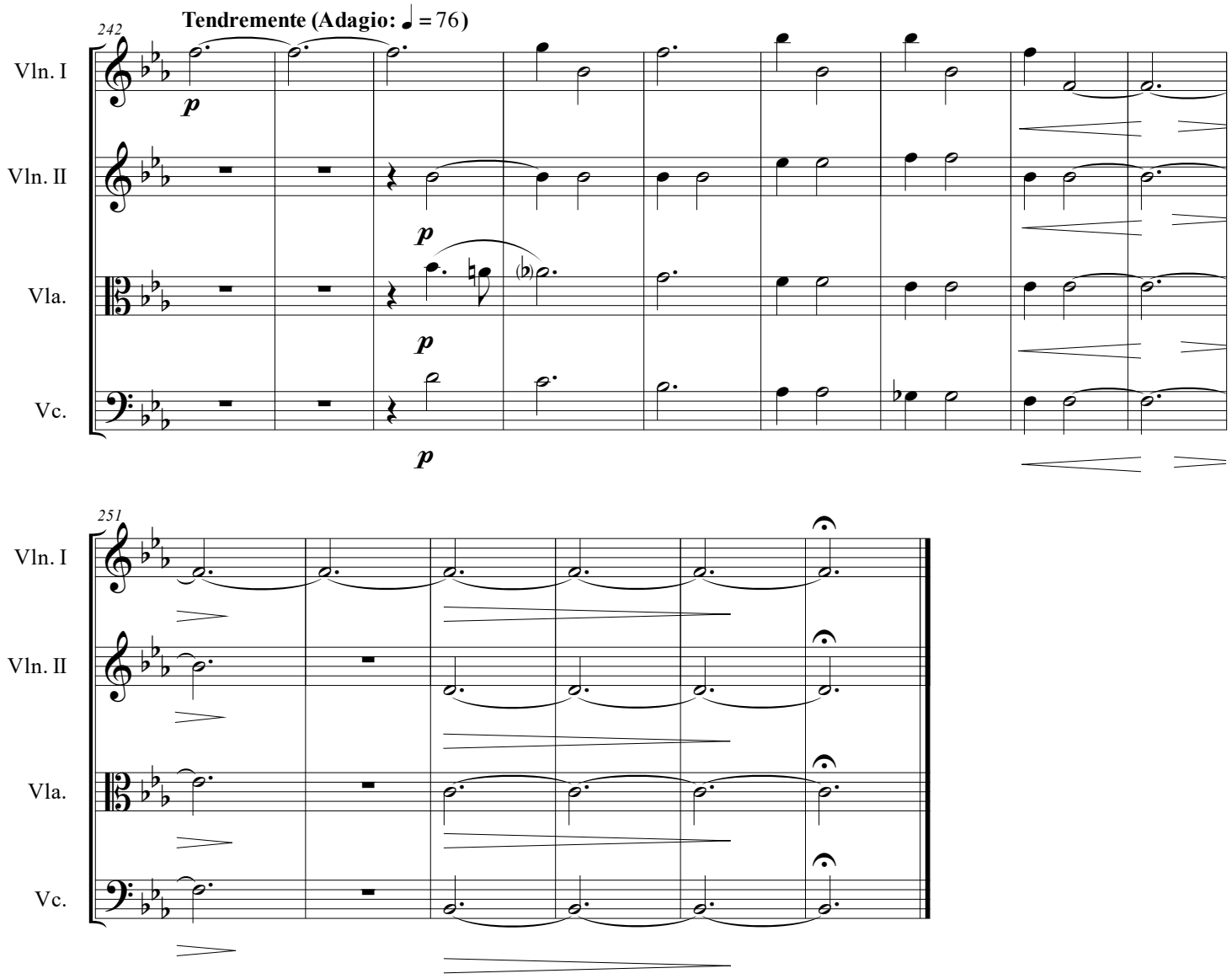

125
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
132
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
140
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


149
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
158
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
165
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


172
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
dolce
dolce
dolce
dolce
180
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
188
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


196
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
204
accelerando poco a poco (to ♩ = 226 @ "Spiritoso")
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
209
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.


217
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
225
Spirito (♩ = c. 226)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
233
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ff
fff


242
Tendremente (Adagio: ♩ = 76)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
251
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

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