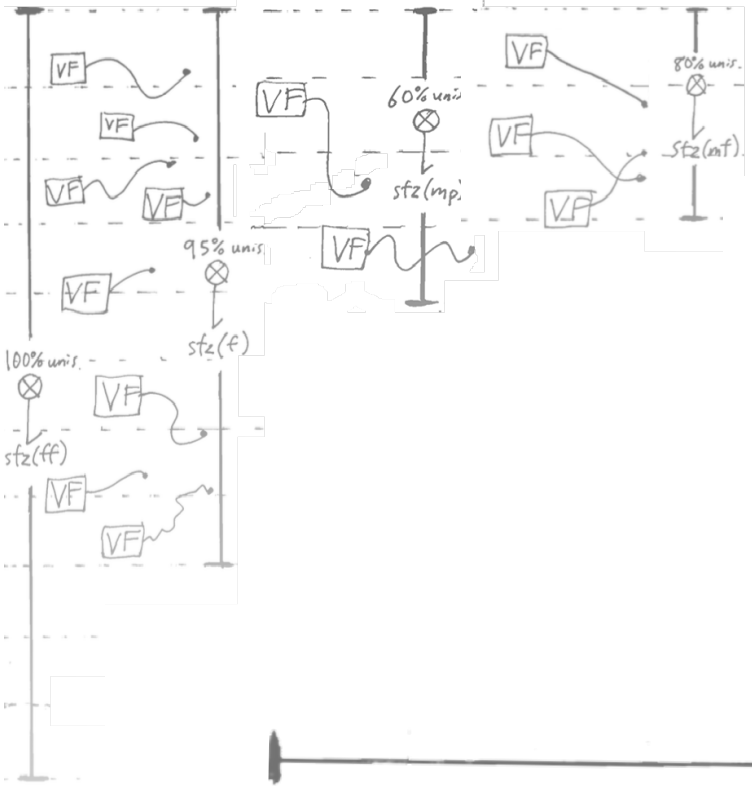
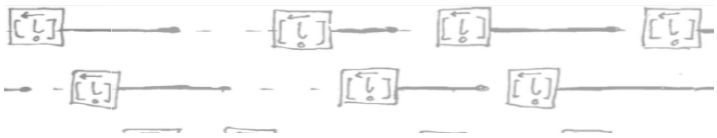




FULL SCORE

Intimate Expanse

for String Quartet

by Marc Evanstein

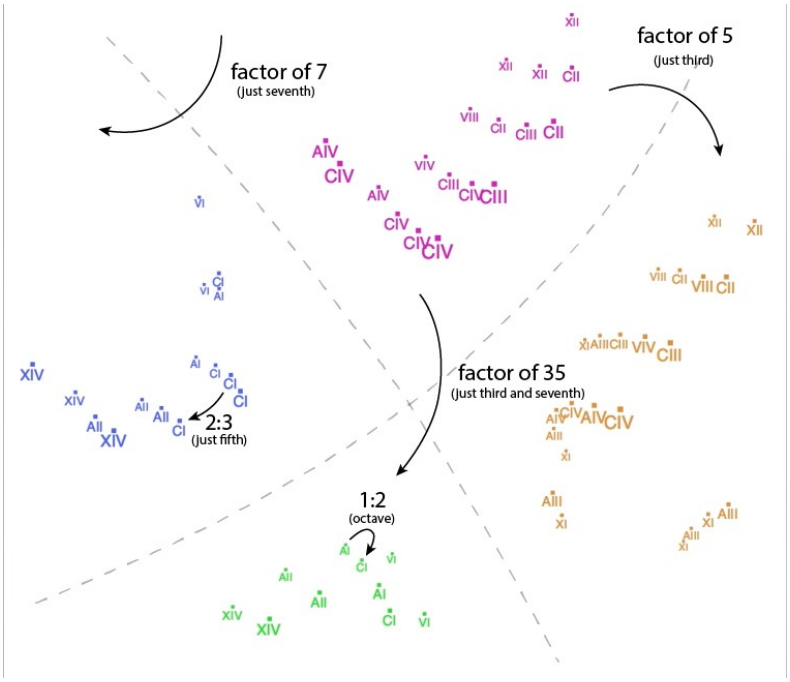
Whiskers and Paws Publishing

Background

Intimate Expanse, originally written for the LA-based Formalist Quartet, began as an idea for a string quartet and live electronics. I planned to have both the quartet and the electronics surround the audience, with the speakers placed at four corners of a square and the quartet at the midpoints of the sides. The electronic part was to consist of hundreds of tiny sound-producing creatures that would recoil in response to loud gestures by members of the quartet, bouncing around the space. I spent months designing and building this system, at which point I realized that the deadline was approaching and I still had no idea what the quartet itself would be playing.

So, with a healthy degree of deadline-induced panic, I started by constructing an interesting *scordatura*, or retuning of the quartet's strings. The goal was to increase the availability of microtonal intervals such as just thirds and just sevenths; with this tuning, these intervals were possible using open strings and natural harmonics, and the instruments resonated in a new way.

Having devised this tuning, I wrote a computer program to explore the newly available harmonic relationships. Taking significant inspiration from composer Clarence Barlow, I used a process called multi-dimensional scaling to create an interactive map of the space:



In this annotated screenshot from the program, each dot represents a pitch easily playable by one of the members of the quartet. The distance between any

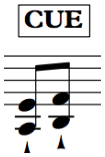
two dots is based on how harmonically distant their respective pitches are, i.e. how complicated the frequency ratio between them is. The overlaid annotations show how the pitches are separated into four distinct groups, based on the relatively more complicated intervals of the just third (a ratio of 5:4) and a just seventh (a ratio of 7:4).

Using this program, I searched out interesting sonorities by ear and assembled them into a cyclic chord progression. Having done this, I returned to paper and pencil, orchestrating these chords into a variety of quartet textures. Finally, I built transitions between these textures and joined them together into the score that you see before you. The result is a piece driven by the harmonic language of a foreign land, one that I still don't fully understand, but for which I at least had a map.

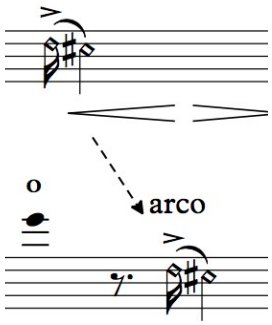
Interestingly, after all of this, I ran out of time to go back and incorporate the electronics. Ultimately, the only remnant of the electronics in the final work was in the positioning of the quartet around the audience, and the sense of musical gestures being passed back and forth across an expanse.

Performance Notes

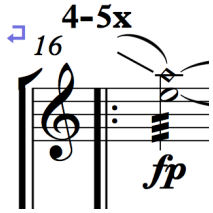
This “X” in place of a time signature indicates an unmetered passage. Timing in such a passage is roughly proportional to horizontal placement, but not strictly. Sometimes metered and unmetered parts occur simultaneously.



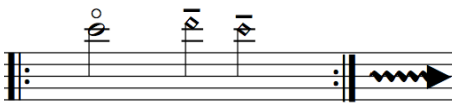
In freely looping and/or proportional passages, one part is sometimes given musical material that acts as a cue for a change of state in the other parts.



Dashed arrows are used to indicate desired ordering or trading of material in a passage that is otherwise rhythmically free.



Repeats are often accompanied by a specific number of times that the passage should be repeated, written above the start of the repeat. When not specified, the passage is repeated only once.

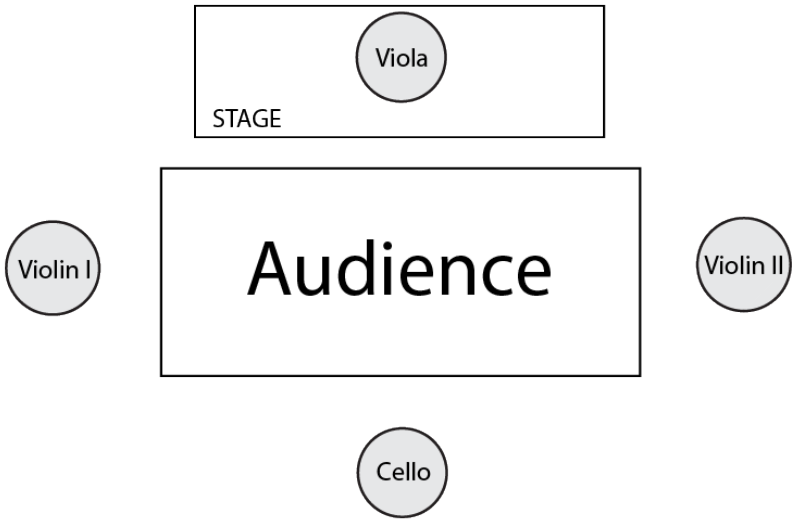


This indicates that the given material should be looped for the duration of the wiggling arrow. Several passages connected in this way represent a gradual transformation.

(2:42) Approximate timings are given at the start and end of each system to give a sense of the duration of unmetered passages.

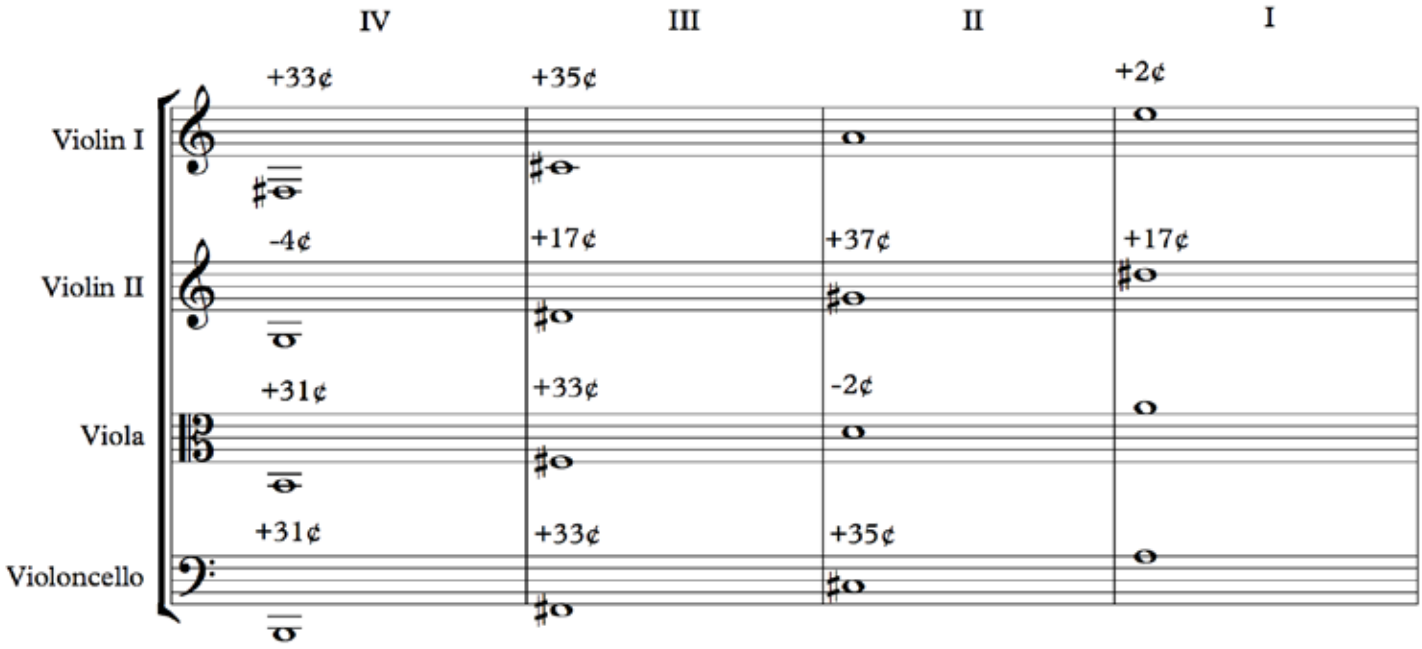
Seating

Ideally the ensemble is seated surrounding the audience in the following configuration:



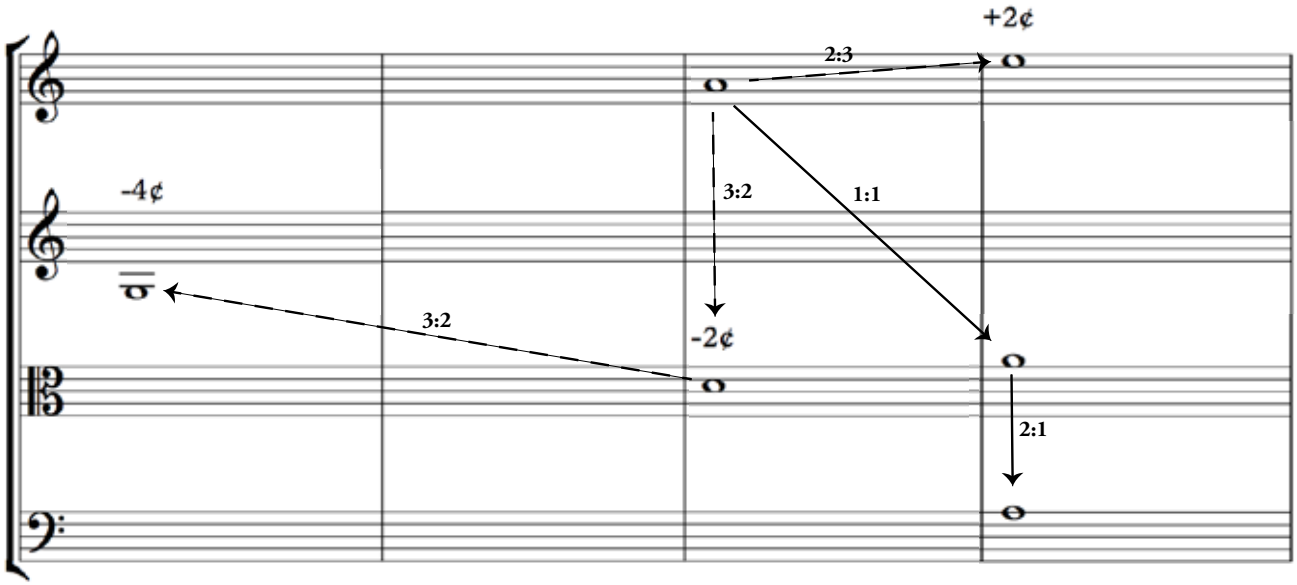
Scordatura

The following scordatura is to be used throughout:

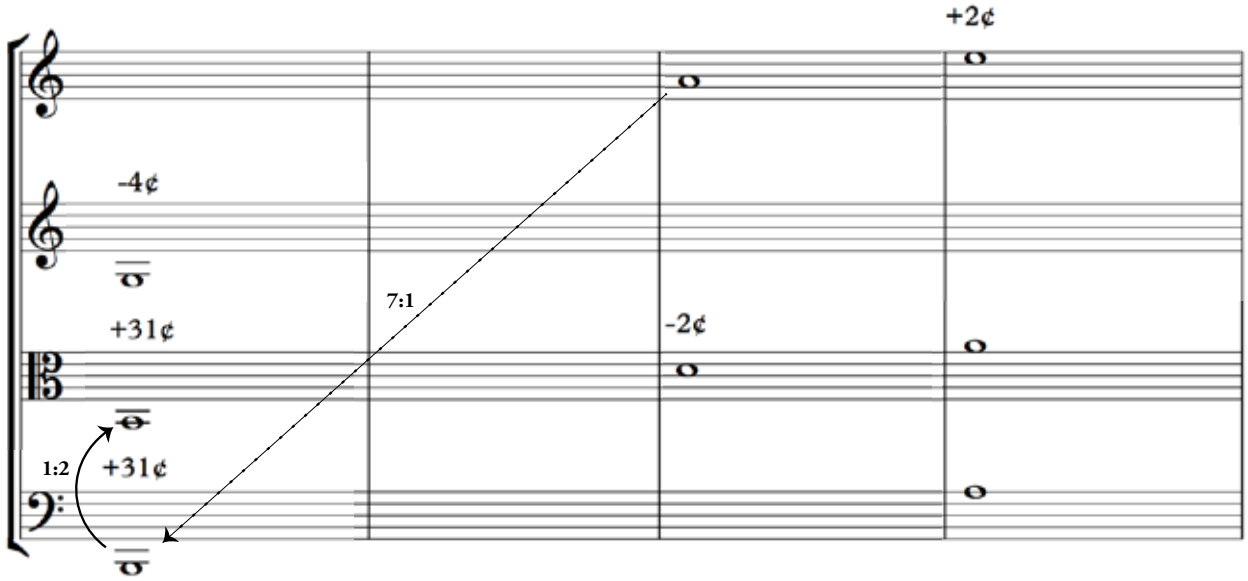


The purpose of the scordatura is to place just sevenths and thirds easily at the players' disposal, especially as open strings and natural harmonics. The following sequence shows how one might tune the strings by ear, and should help to clarify the intervallic relationships involved:

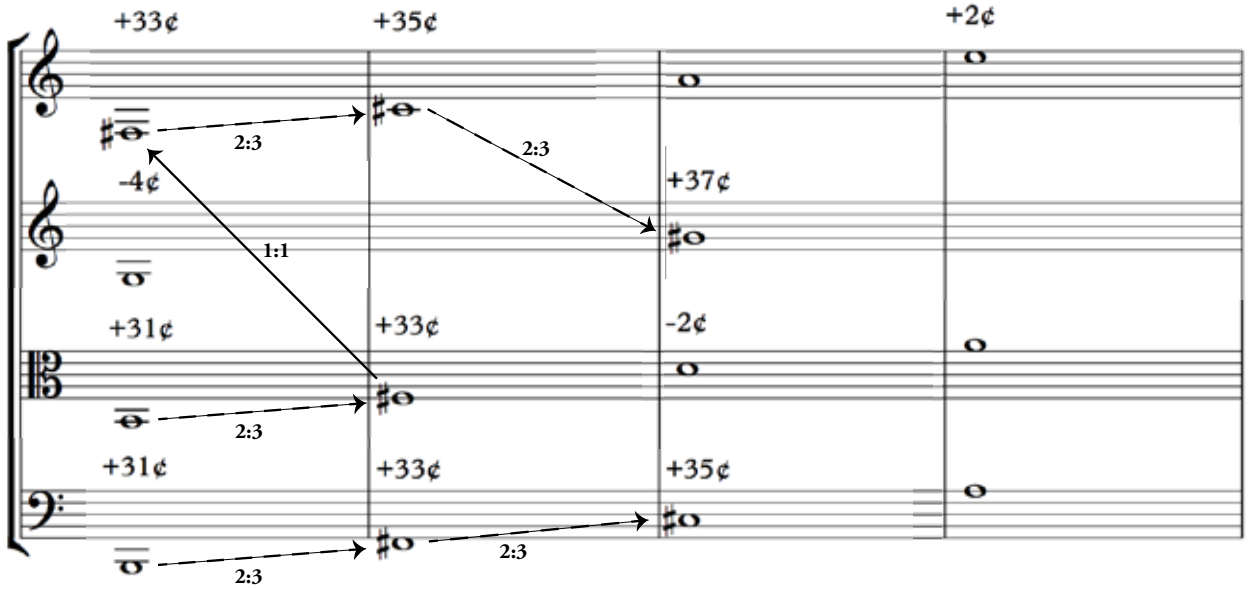
Step 1



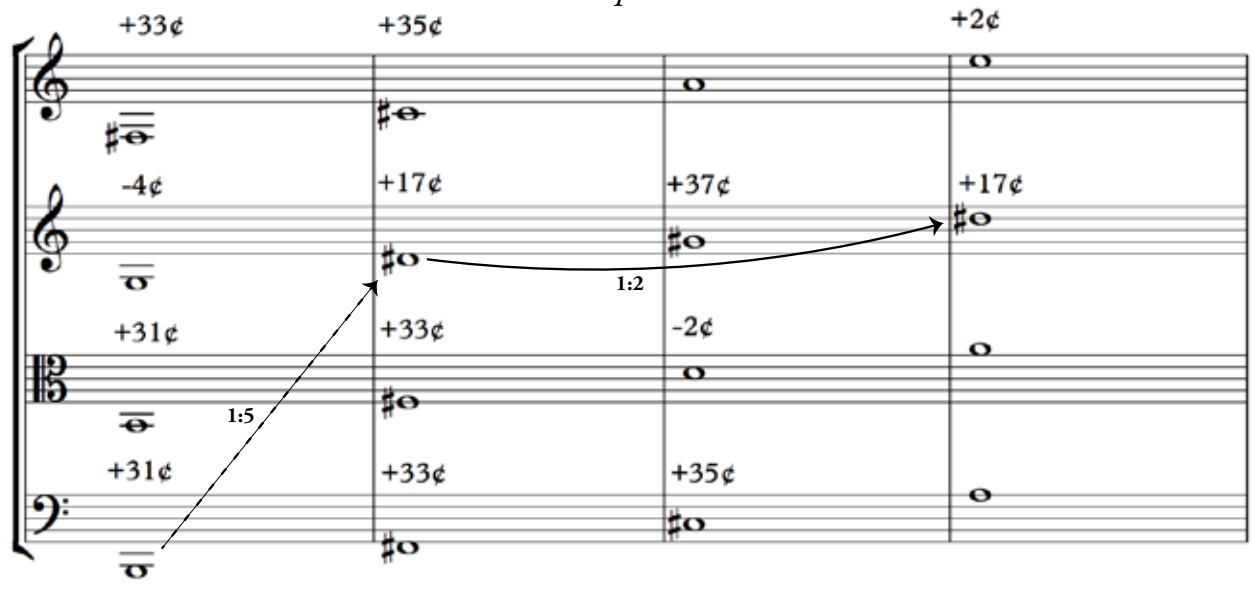
Step 2



Step 3



Step 4



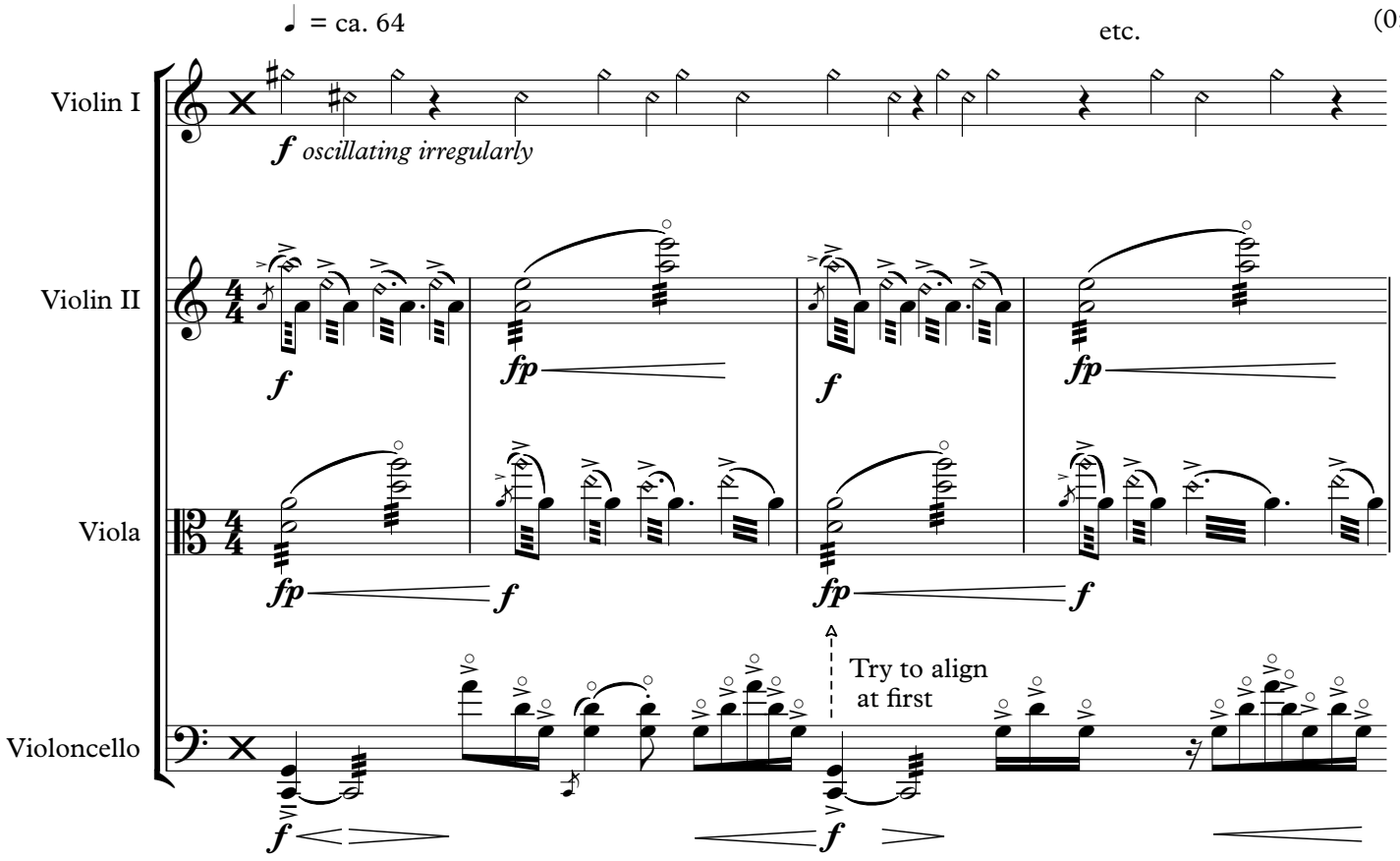
Intimate Expanse

Marc Evanstein

Shimmering with Energy

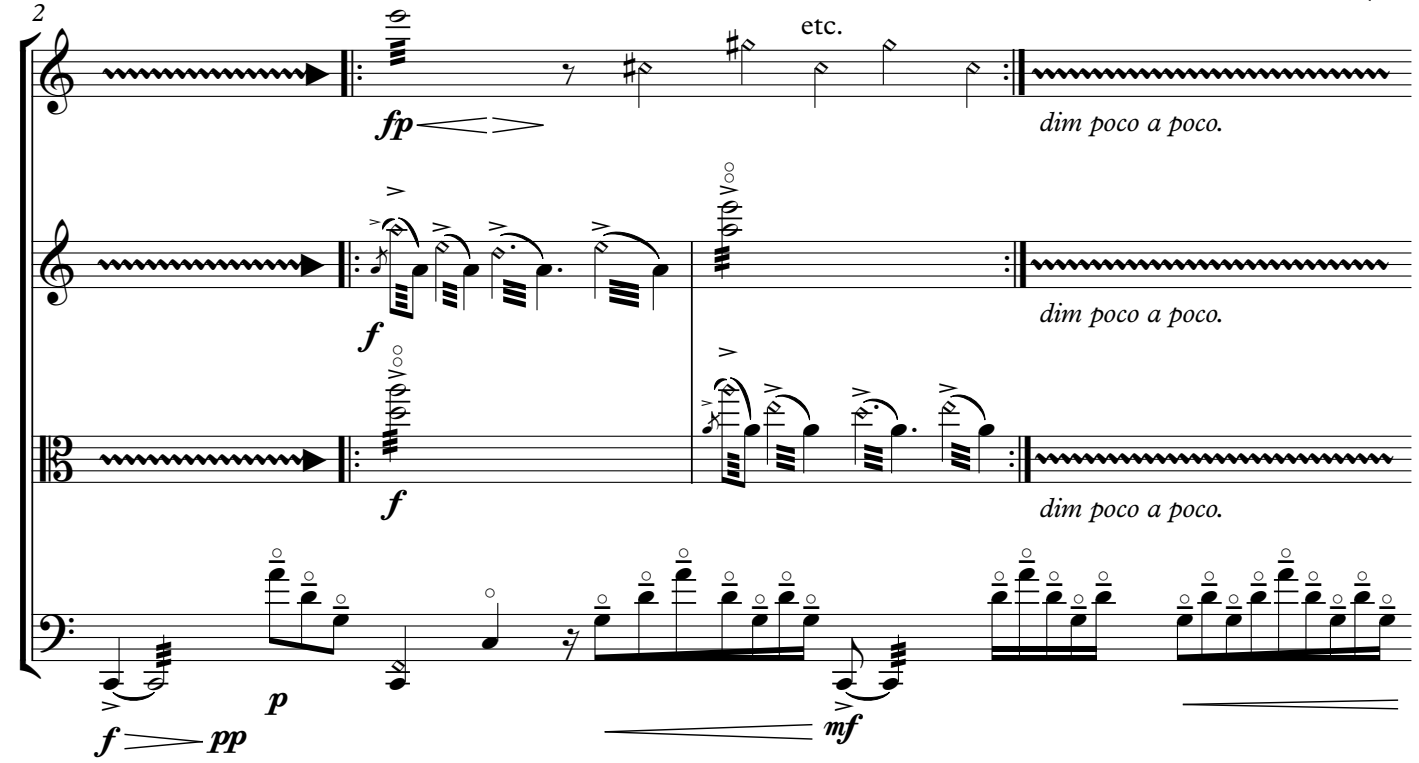
♩ = ca. 64

(0:15)



(0:15)

(0:30)



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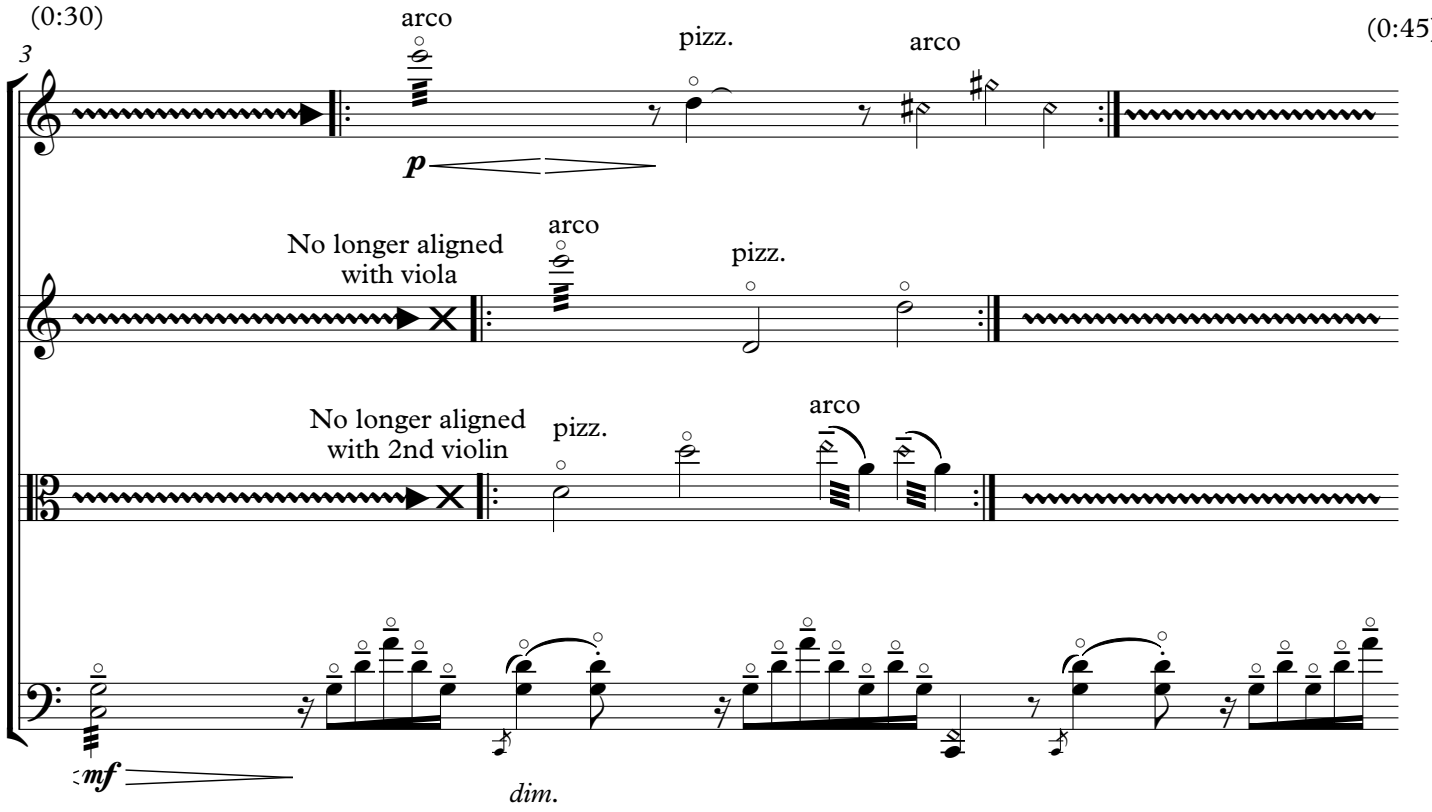
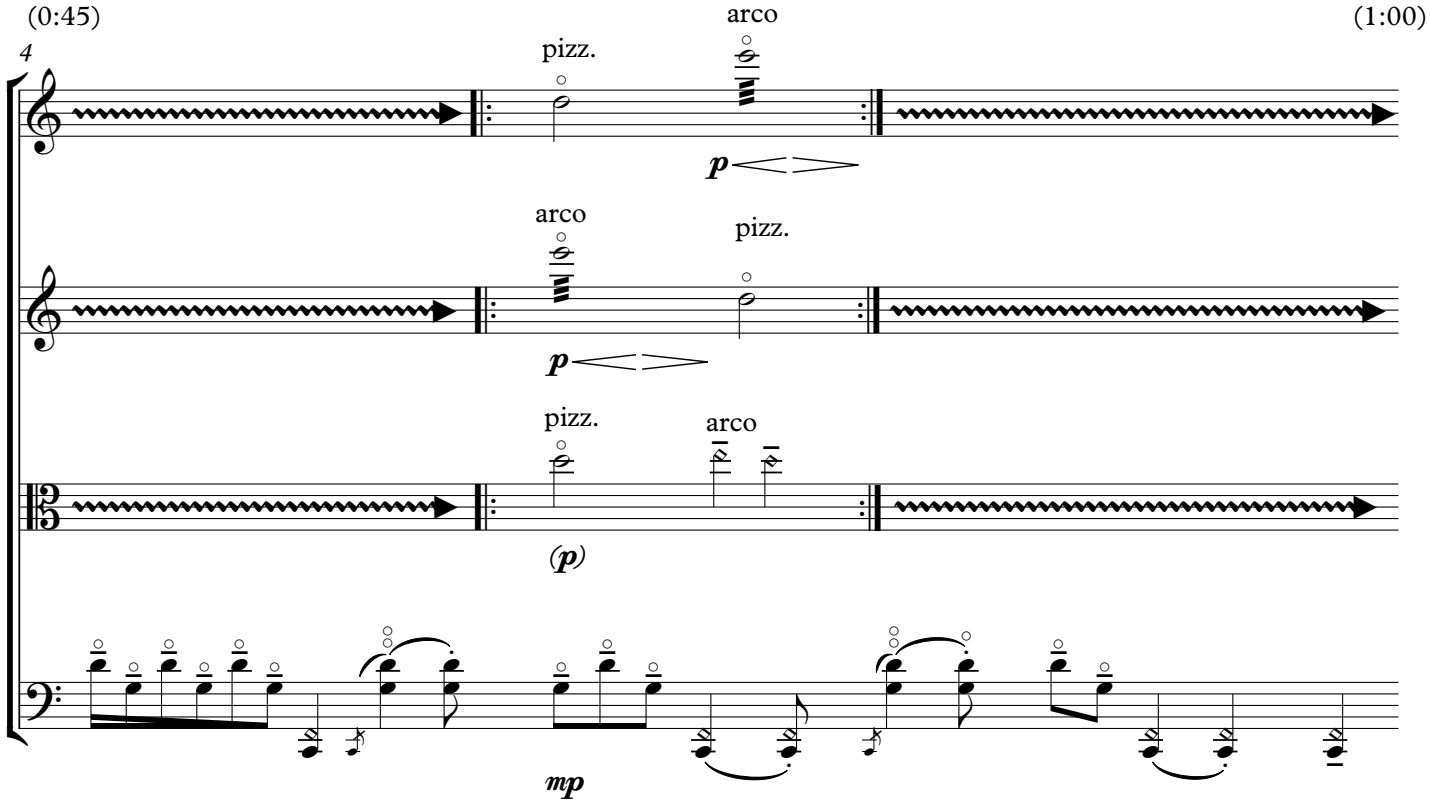
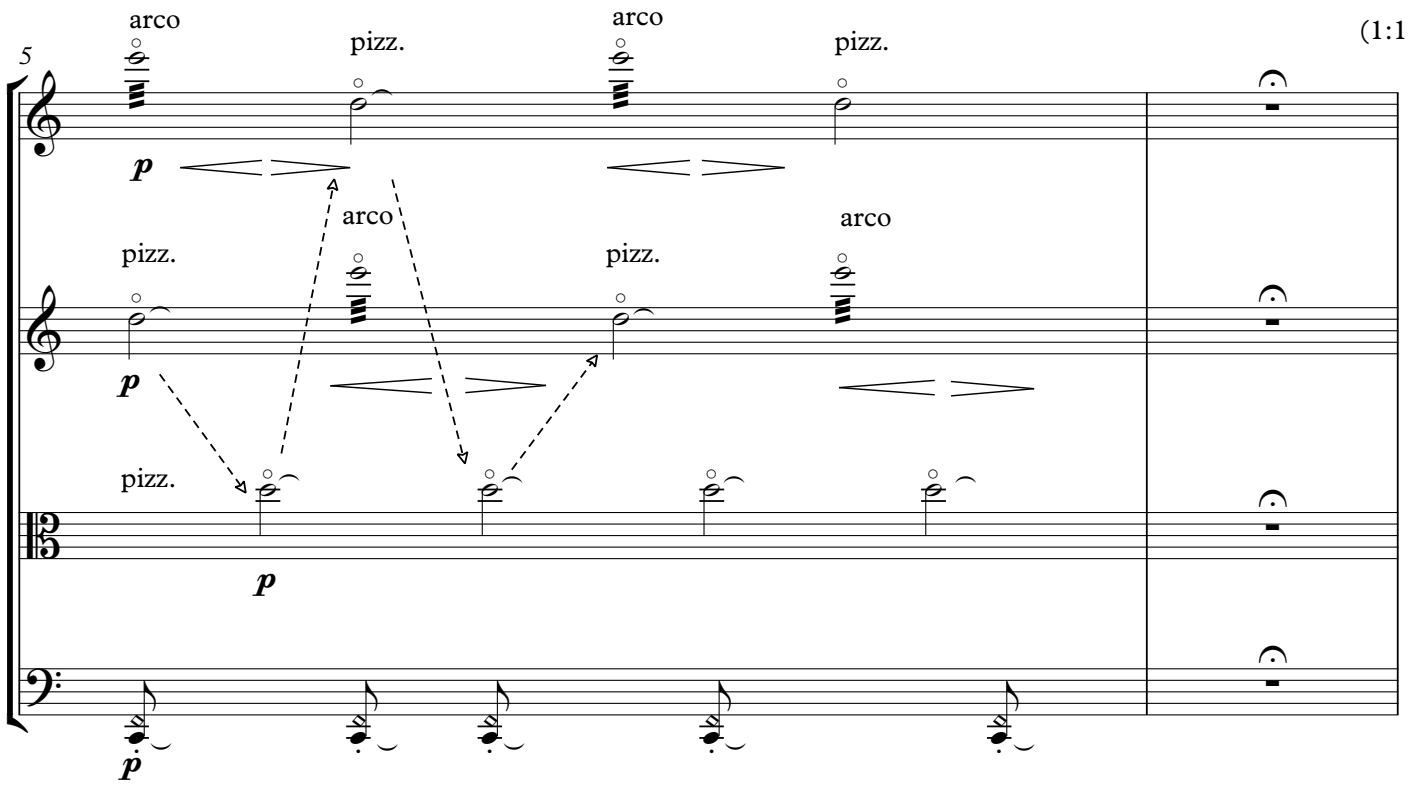
…the energy dissipates…





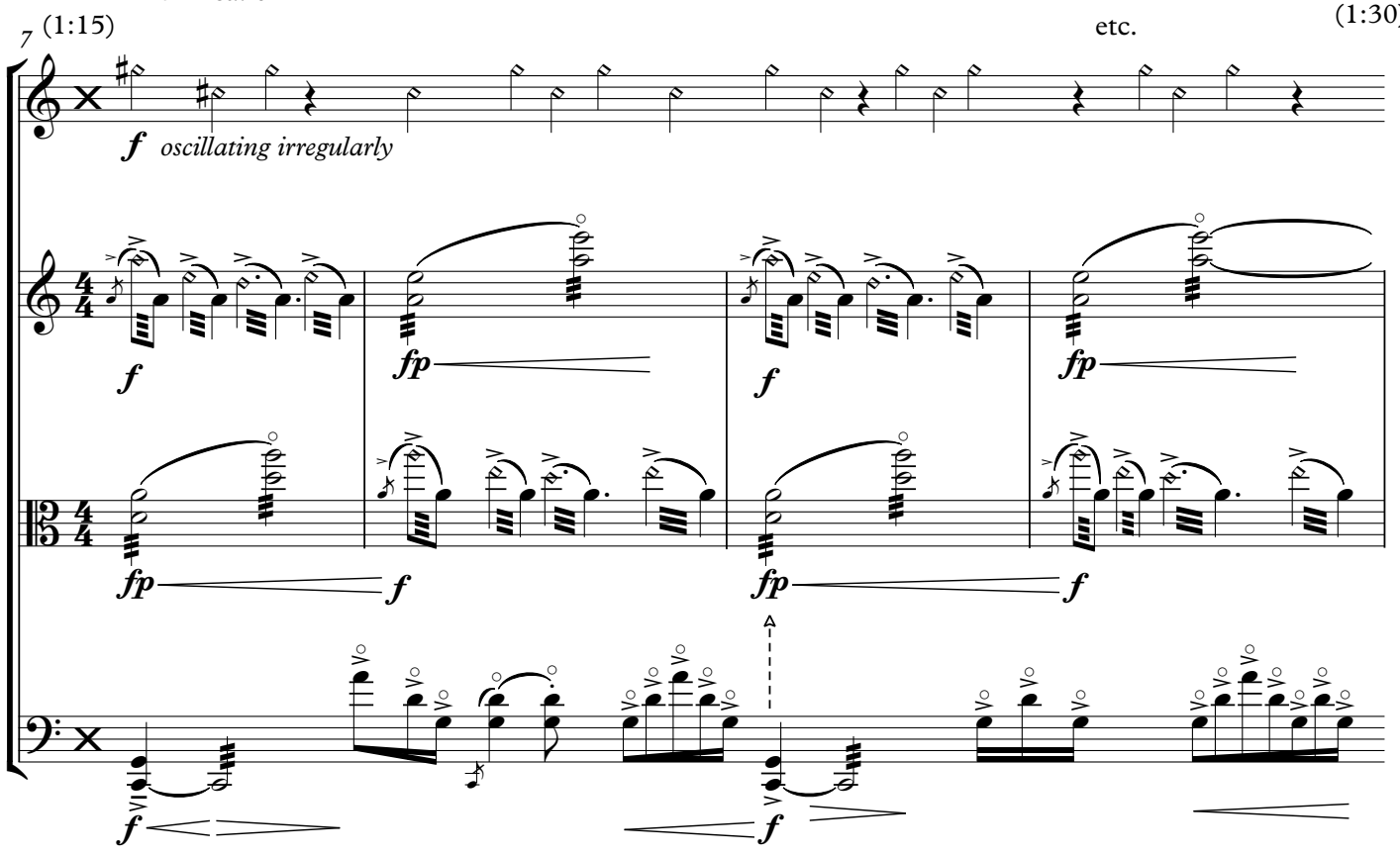
(1:15)



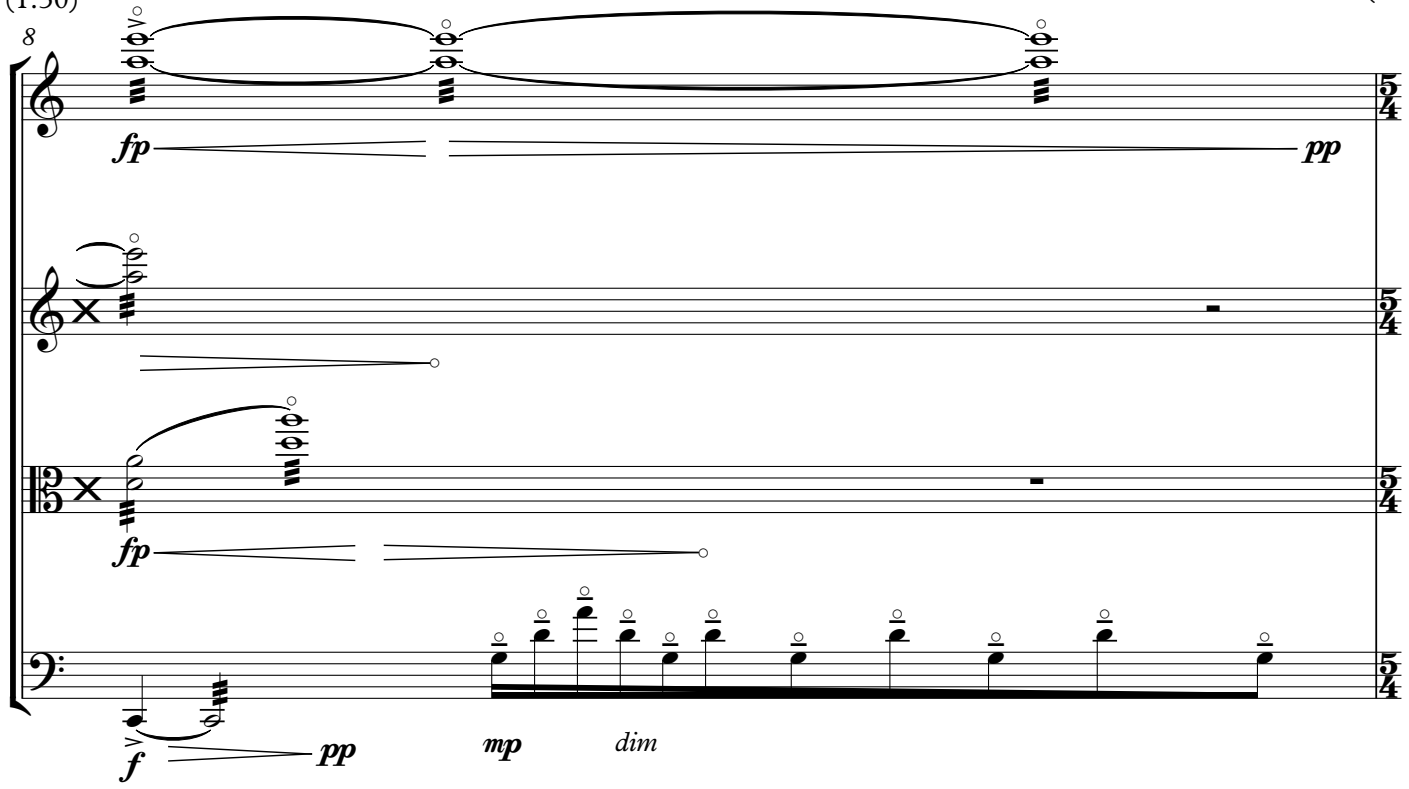
B **Shimmering with Energy**

♩ = ca. 64

(1:30)

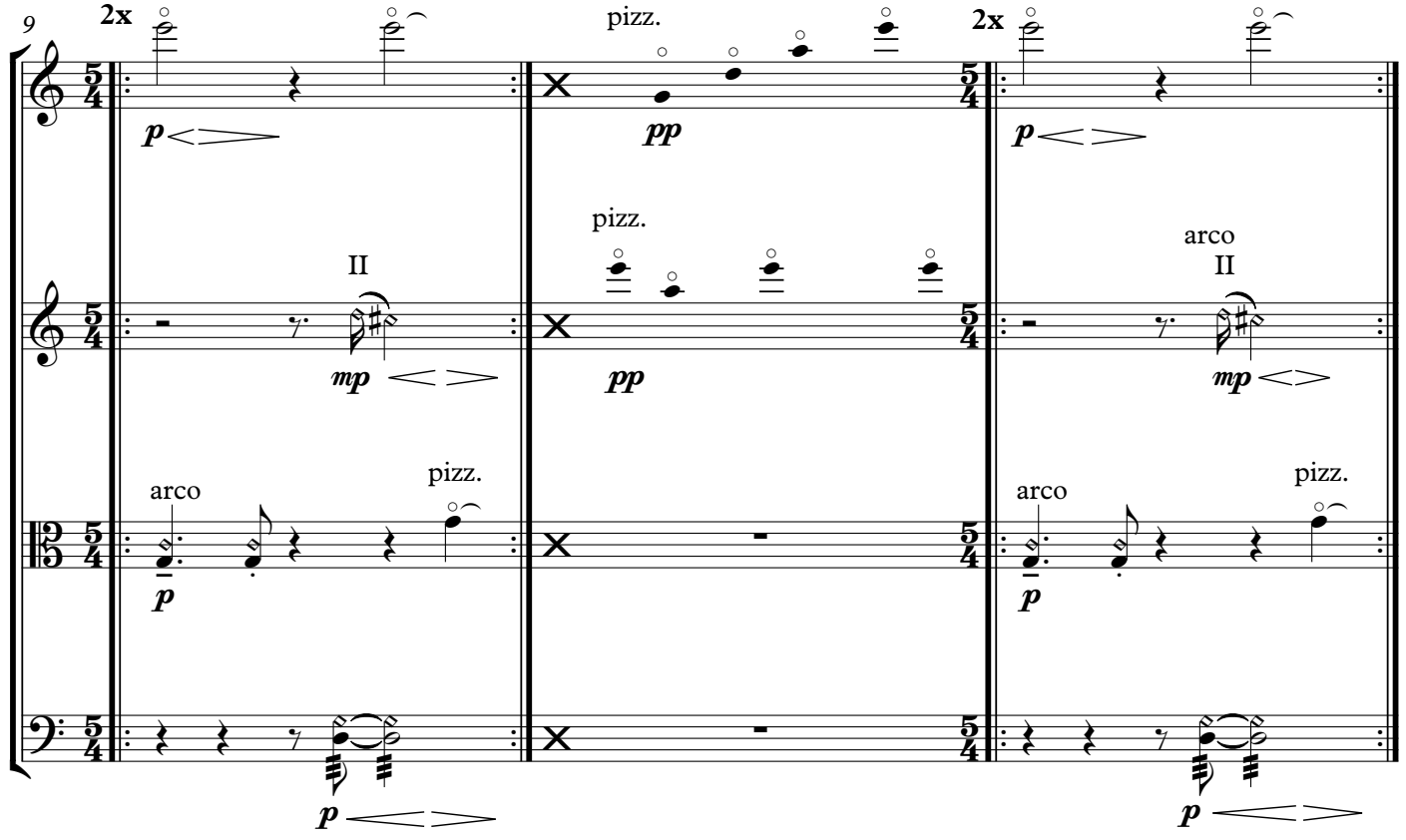


(1:30) (1:40)



C

(1:40) ♩ = ca. 64 (ca. 4") ♩ = ca. 64 (2:04)



D

(2:04)

12

pizz.

pp

pizz.

pp

arco

pizz.

pizz.

(2:16)

13

arco

pizz.

(2:28)

arco

pizz.

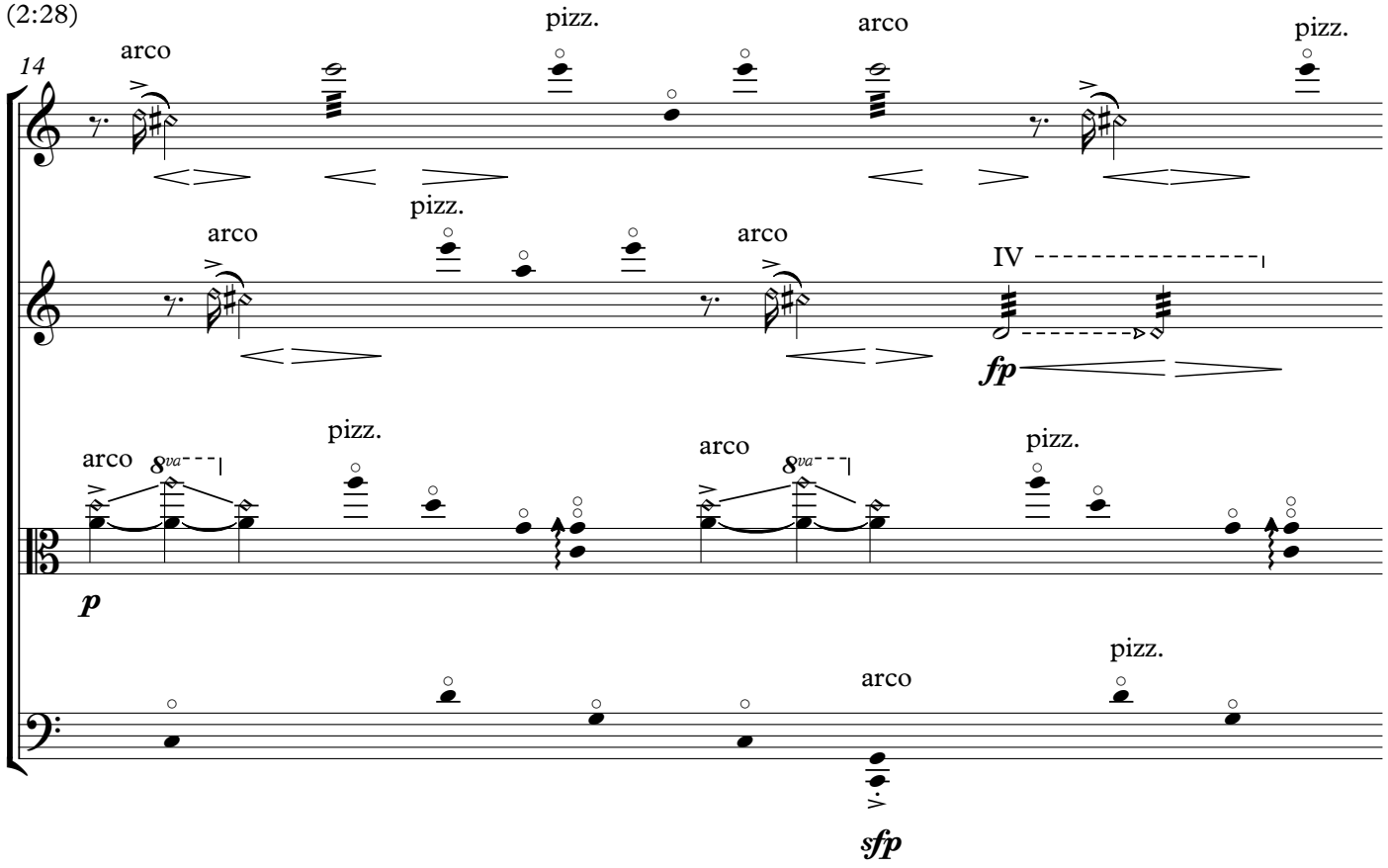
arco

pizz.

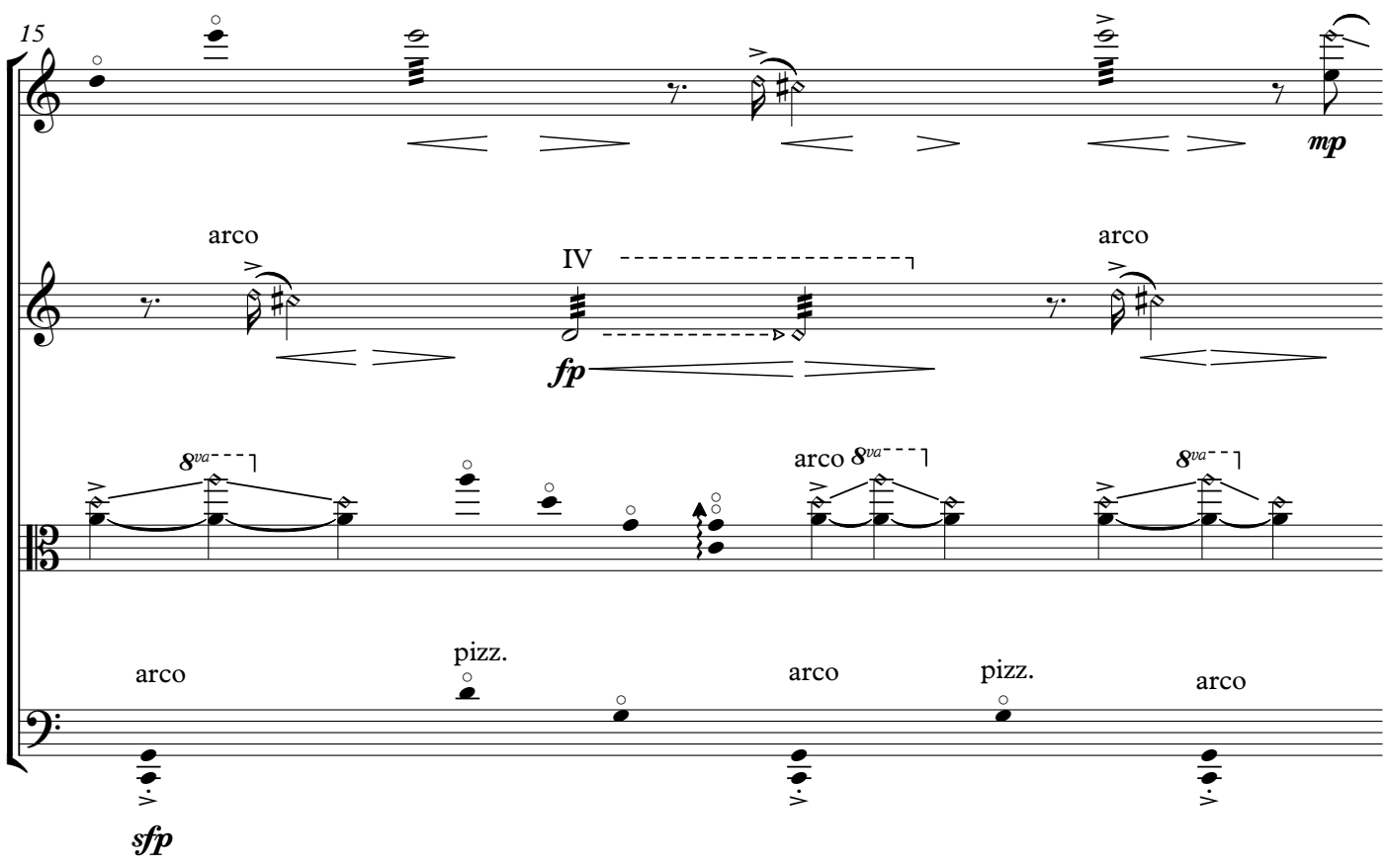
pizz.

p

(2:28) (2:42)



(2:42) (2:55)



E

(2:55)

16

accelerando

4-5x

fp *fp*

IV

fp

arco

8va

fp

sfp

4-5x

(uncoordinated)

(3:30)

accent bow changes; dynamics swell and receed

mf *p* *mf*

alternate irregularly between these gestures

pizz. arco pizz. arco

f *mf* *f* *mf* *mf*

fp

CUE

arco

fp *f* *fp*

(3:30)

19

4-5x

(uncoordinated)

sfp *sfp* 6

alternate irregularly between these gestures

fp *mf* *mf* *fp*

vary length of gesture and gap between gestures

fp *f*

arco

fp *f* *fp*

CUE

(♩ = 72)

(3:48)

3 3

tr tr tr tr tr tr

8

F

(3:48) ♩ = 72

(3:57)

21

arco

fp *f*

Repeat and accel.

like a really crazy bird

f

arco

fp *f*

Repeat and accel.

arco

fp *f*

Repeat and accel.

(3:57)

(reaching ♩ = ca. 140)

(4:05)

22

STOP

rit.

molto

STOP

STOP

G **Shimmering with Energy**

(4:05)

♩ = ca. 64

etc.

(4:20)

23

f *oscillating irregularly*

f *fp* *f* *fp*

fp *f* *fp* *f*

f *f*

(4:20)

(4:30)

24

fp *pp*

fp

f *pp* *mp* *dim.*

As if Calling Across a Lake

(4:30)

25

(4:48)

8va

p

arco

H **Incredibly Delicate**

(4:48) ♩ = ca. 58

26

pp

pizz.

arco

(I)

A Little Faster

♩ = ca. 76

(5:03)

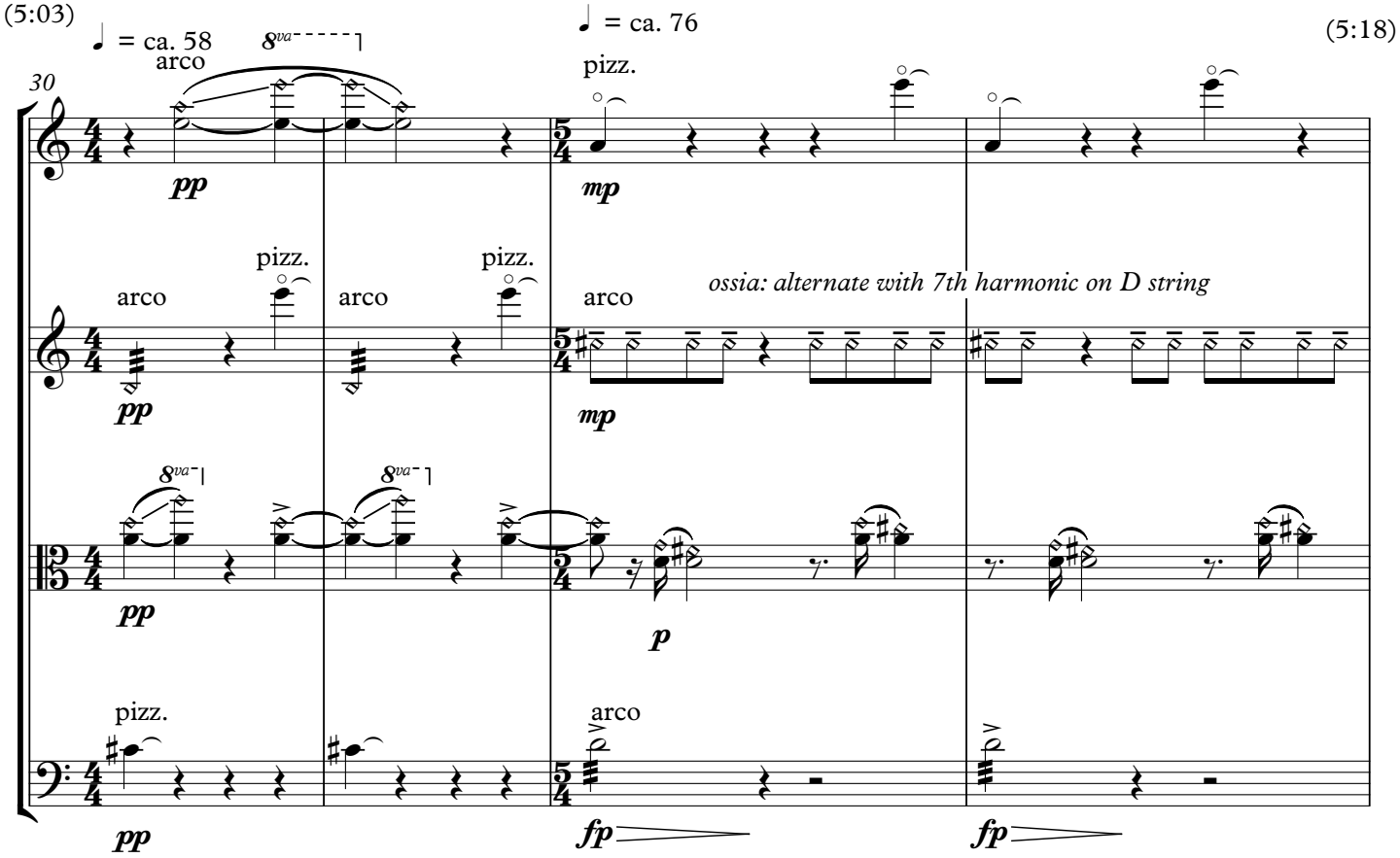
mp

p

fp

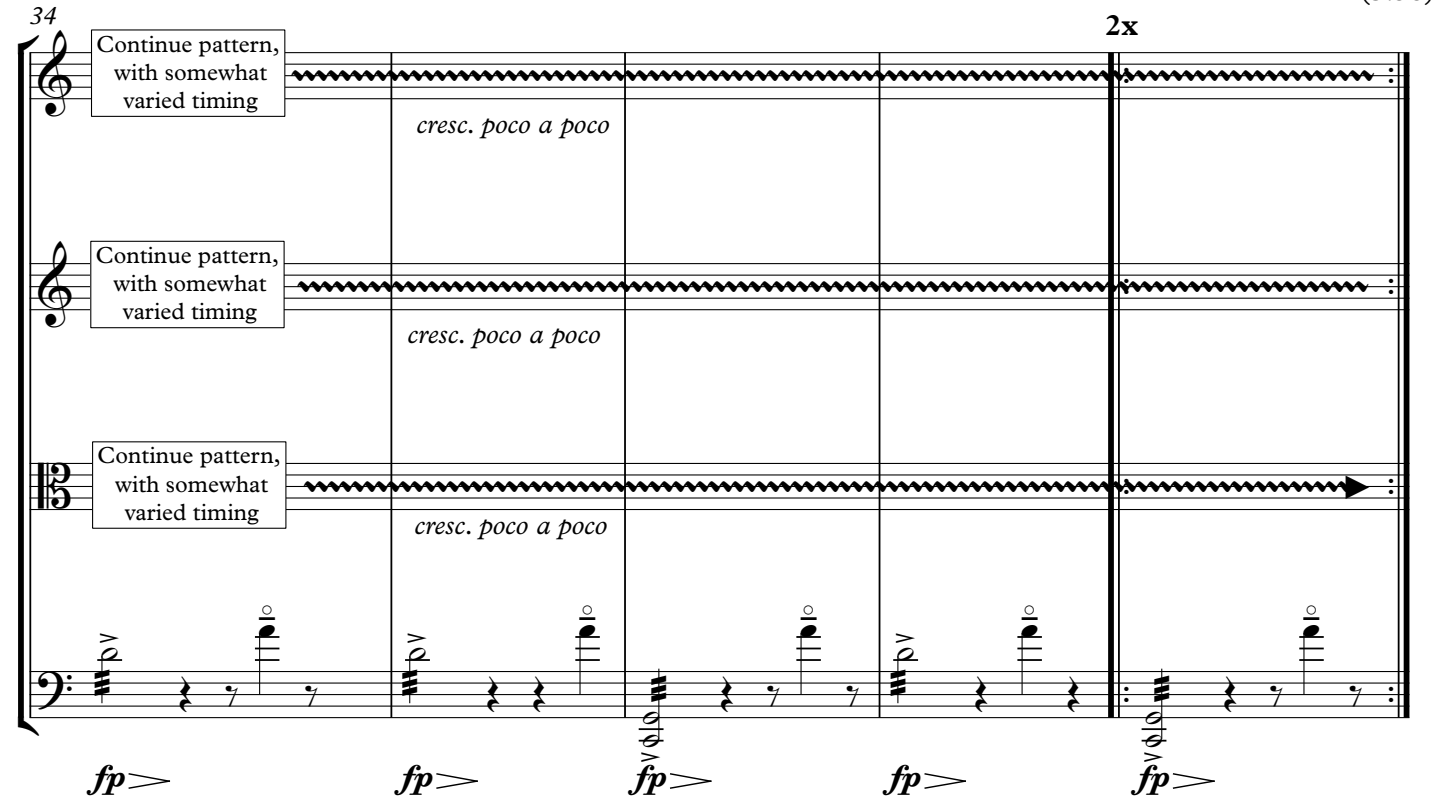
(5:03)

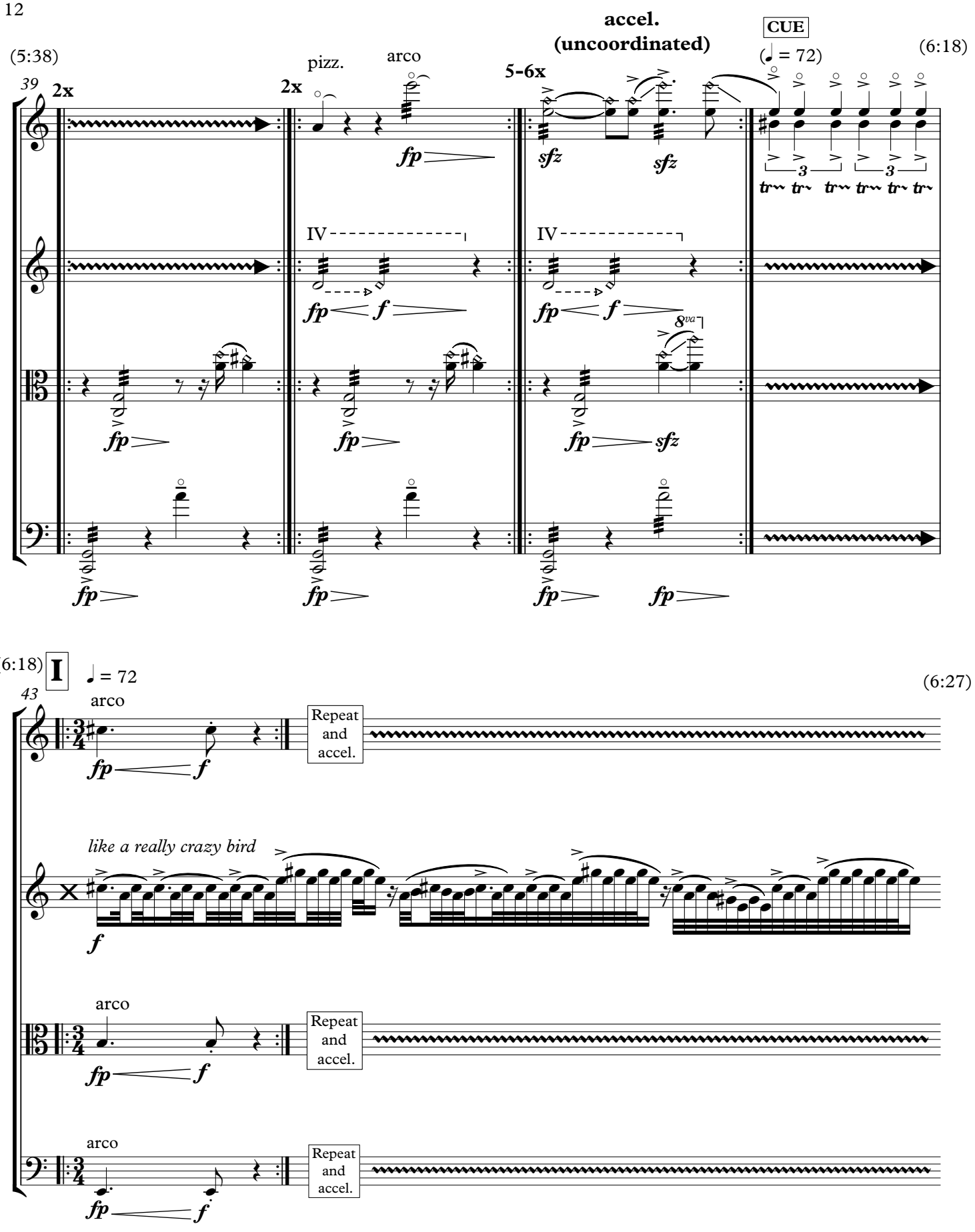
(5:18)



(5:18)

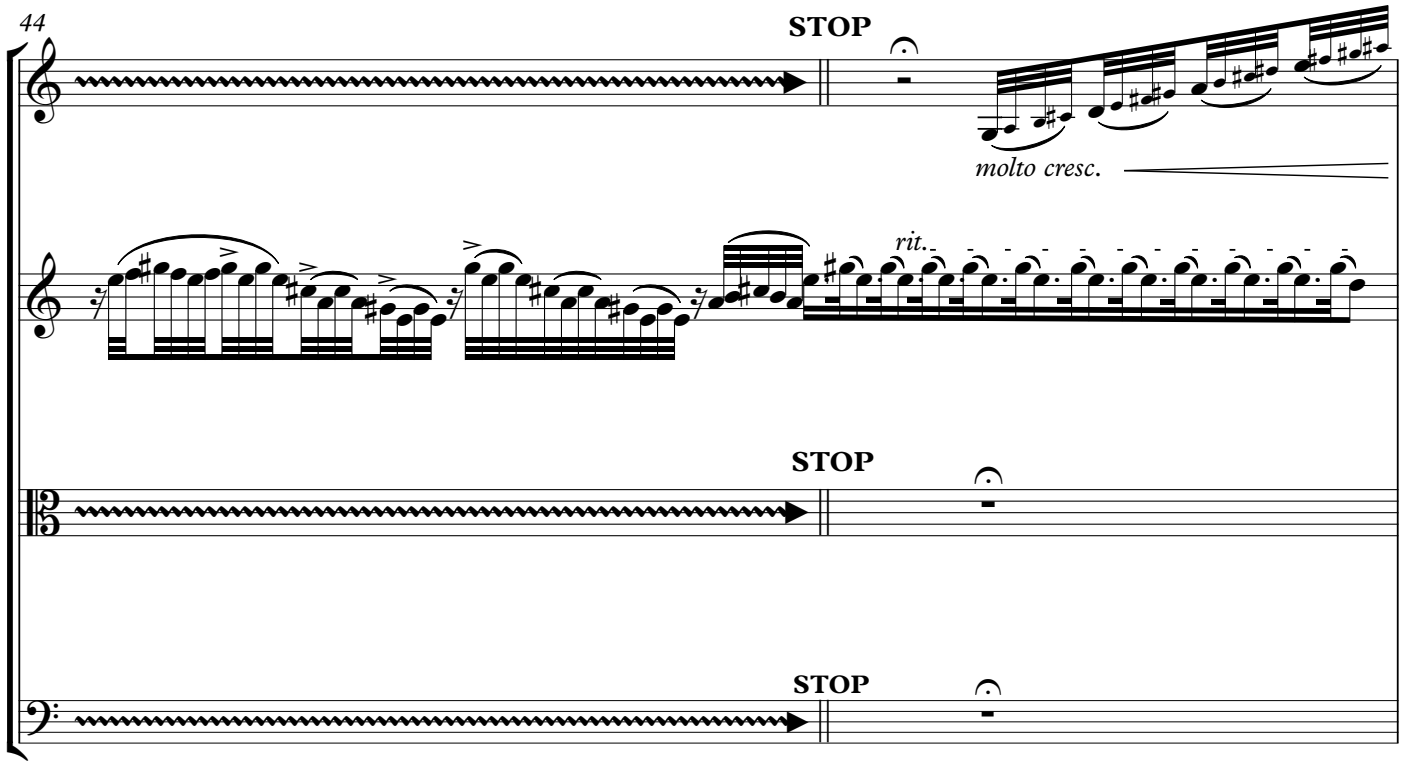
(5:38)




(5:38)
39
2x
2x
pizz.
arco
5-6x
accel.
(uncoordinated)
CUE
(♩ = 72)
(6:18)
IV
IV
8va
(6:18)
I
♩ = 72
43
arco
Repeat and accel.
(6:27)
like a really crazy bird
arco
Repeat and accel.
arco
Repeat and accel.

(6:27)

(6:34)

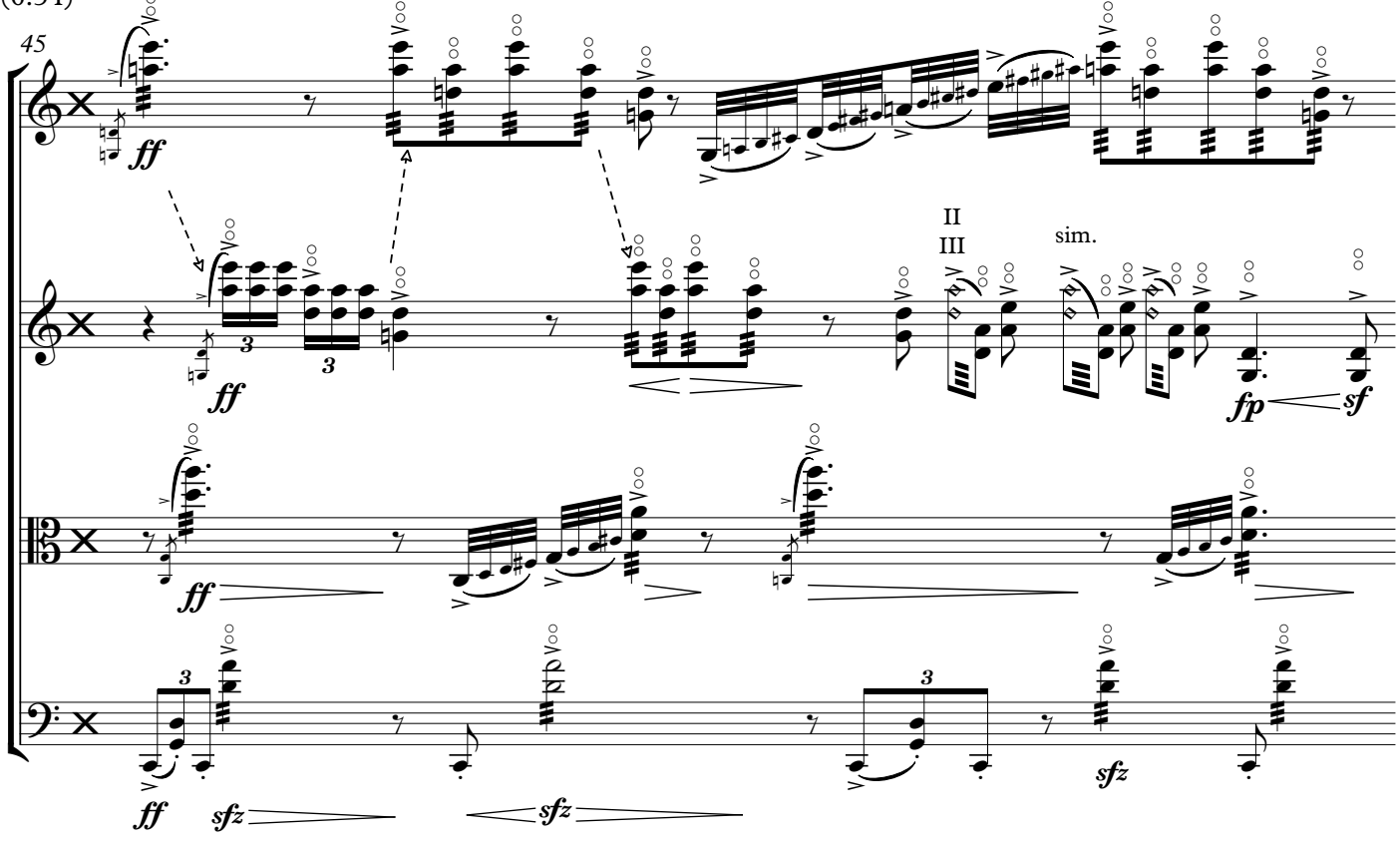


J Chaotic, Ricocheting

(6:34)

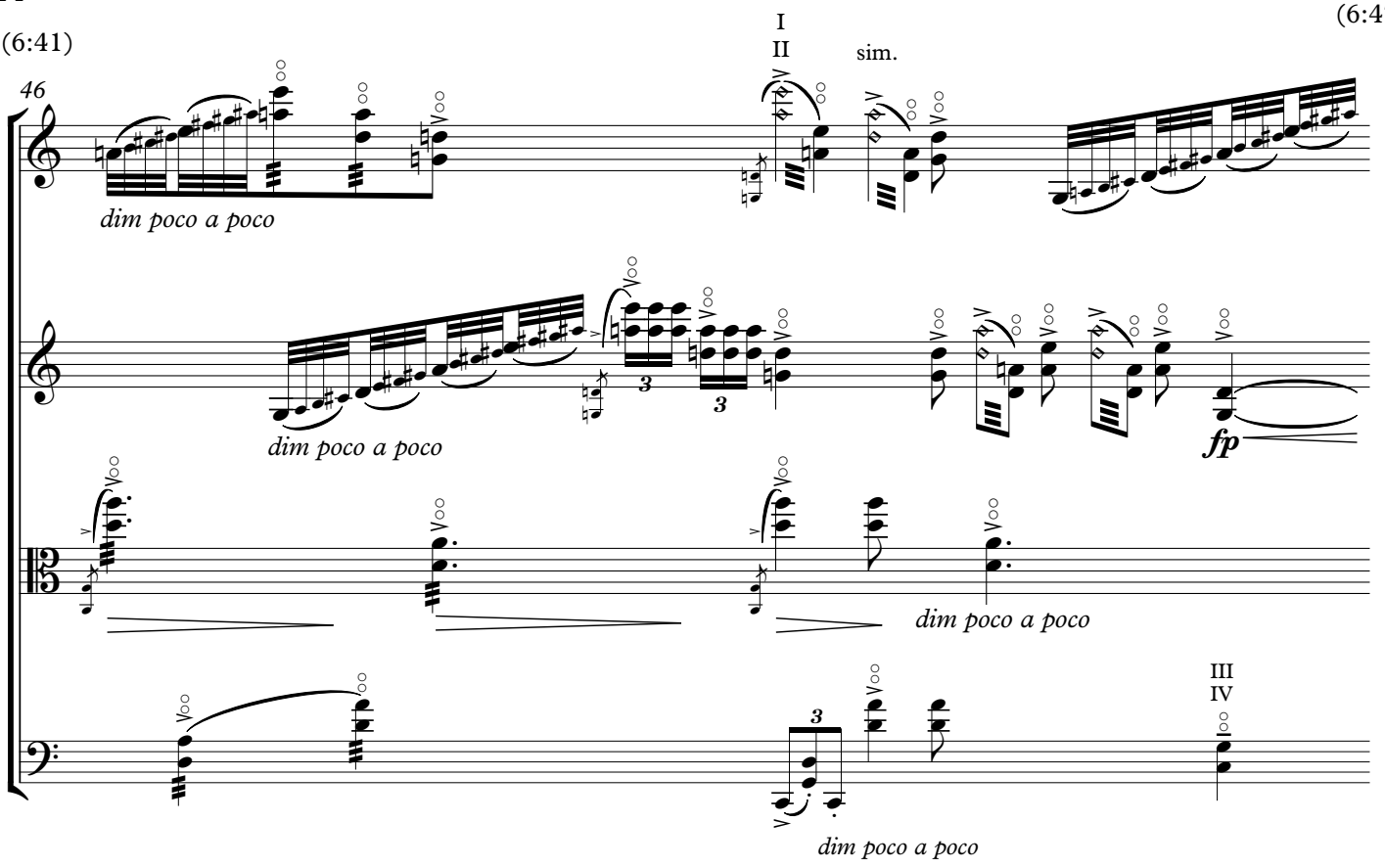
1st and 2nd violin trade off at first, and then diverge

(6:41)



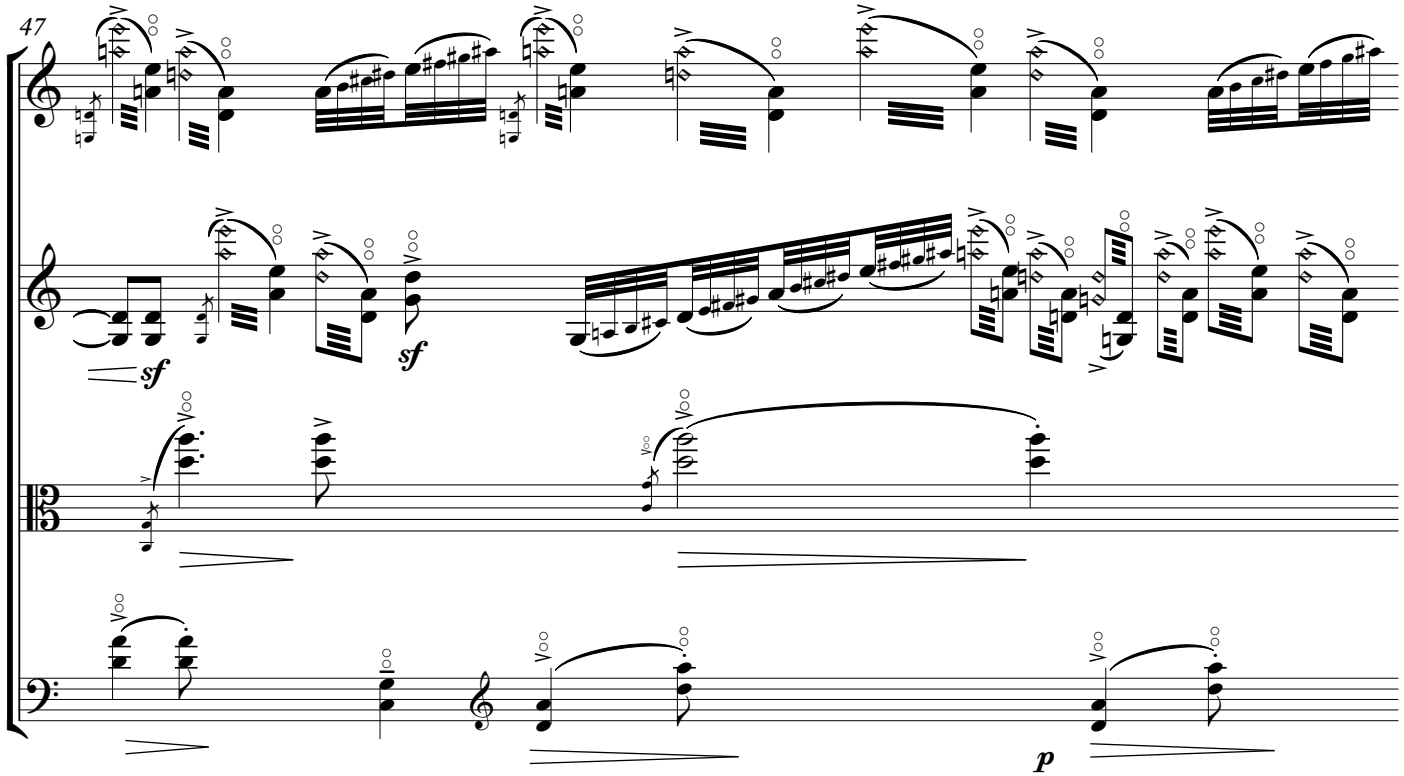
(6:41)

(6:47)



(6:47) **…becoming gentler, sparser…**

(6:54)



(6:54)

(7:02)

48

sf

fp

fp

p

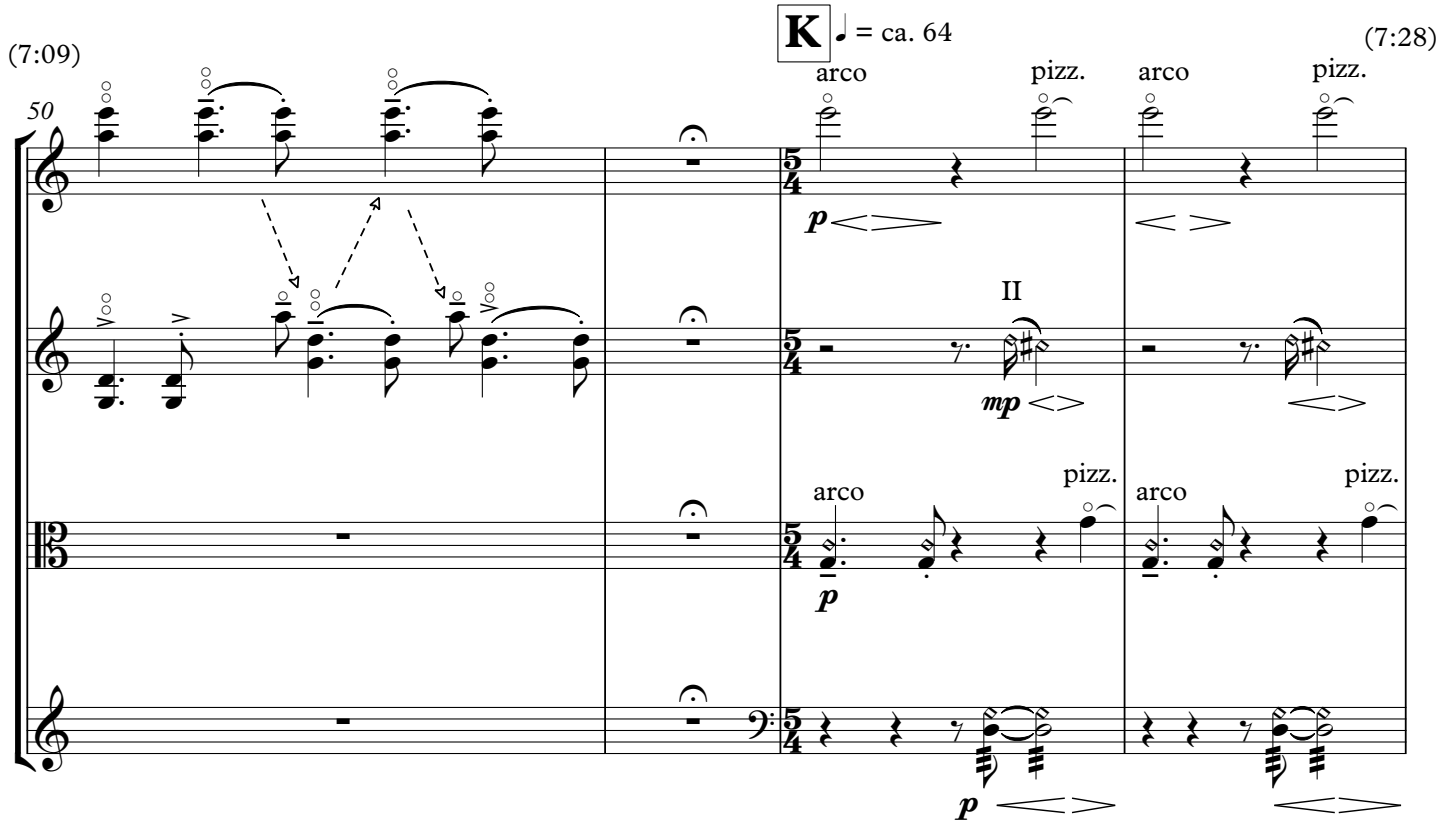
(7:02)

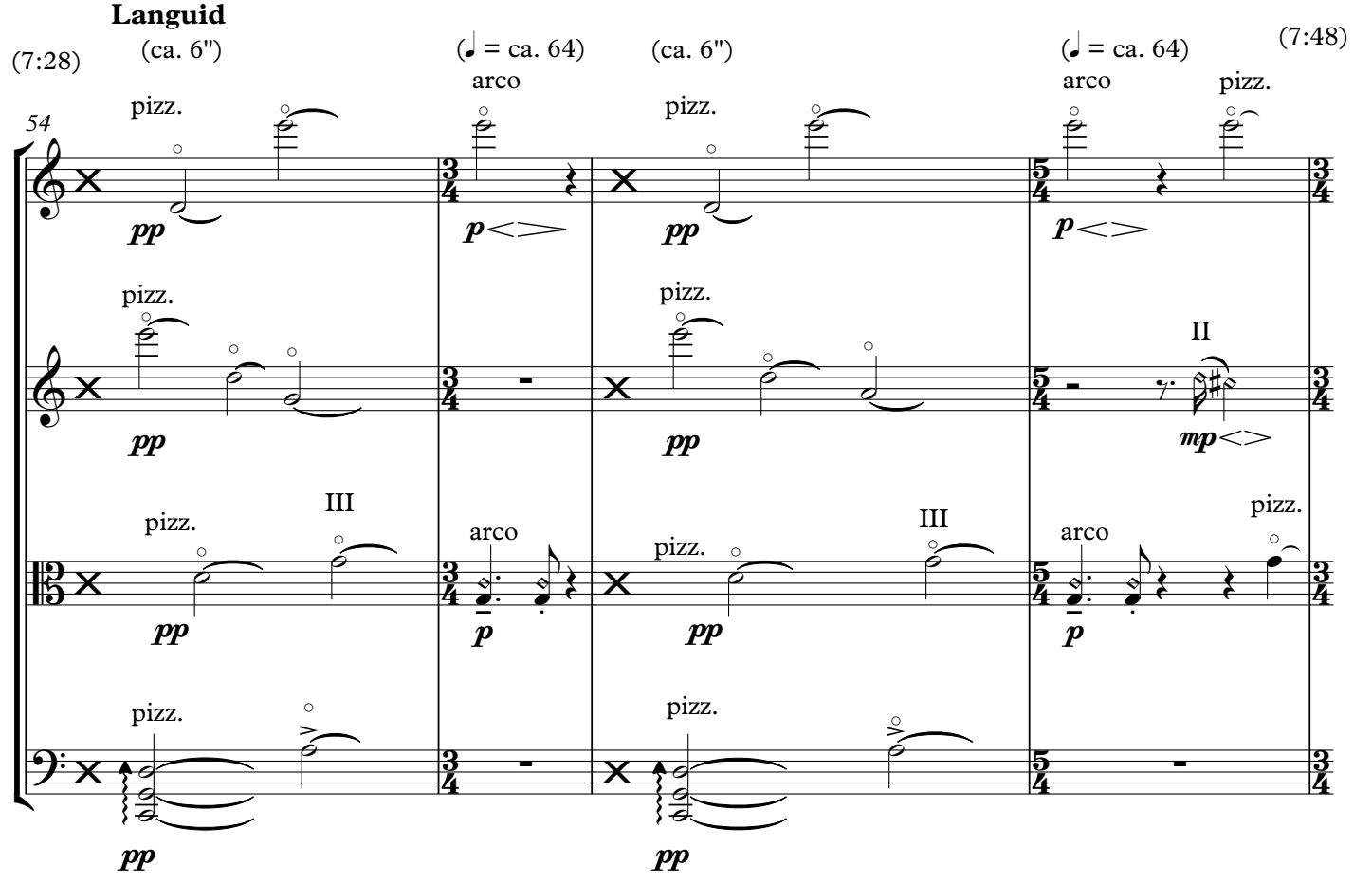
(7:09)

49

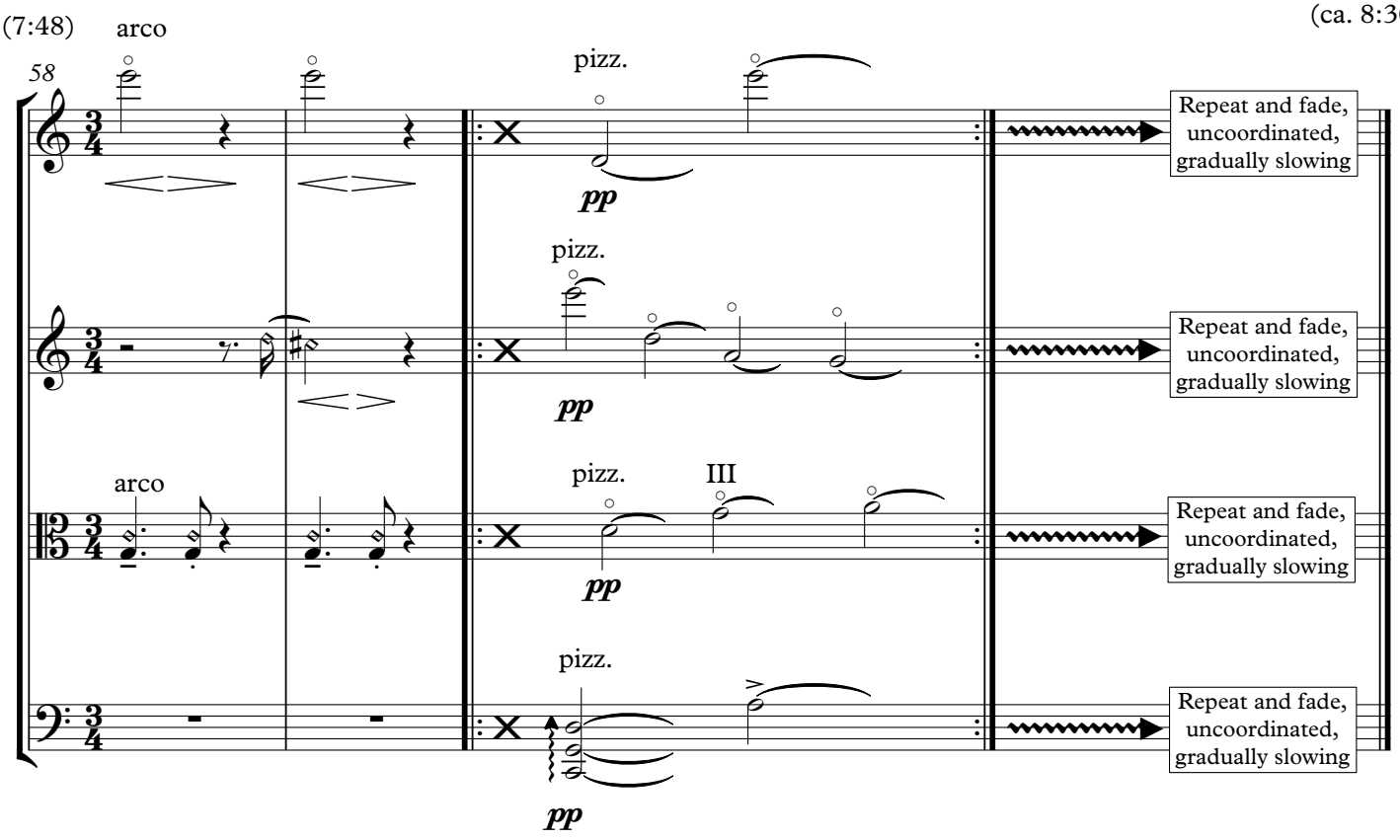
p

p


(7:09)
K
♩ = ca. 64
(7:28)
50
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
II
pizz.
pizz.
arco
arco


Languid
(7:28)
(ca. 6")
(♩ = ca. 64)
(ca. 6")
(♩ = ca. 64)
(7:48)
54
pizz.
arco
pizz.
pizz.
II
III
pizz.
arco
III
arco
pizz.
pizz.
pizz.

(7:48) (ca. 8:30)


arco
58
pizz.
pp
Repeat and fade, uncoordinated, gradually slowing
pizz.
pp
Repeat and fade, uncoordinated, gradually slowing
arco
pizz.
III
pp
Repeat and fade, uncoordinated, gradually slowing
pizz.
pp
Repeat and fade, uncoordinated, gradually slowing