Full Score

W. Jay Sydeman

For Strings

for String Orchestra

(c. 1996-97)

Arts Aeternum

Perhaps we all dream about writing our personal *Adagio for Strings*, especially when we are associated mainly with a very abstract sort of music. So this is my attempt, in 1996 – heartfelt, simple and beautiful, also somewhat somber. At one point I thought of retitling it *For the Fallen*, referring to Iraq, but that was after the fact so actually not quite honest. I hope that string orchestras might find it rewarding to add this to their repertoire. Technically speaking, most of the material of the piece derives from the first three repeated notes.

In 1997, I added a second movement to the original *For Strings* with a very different intention. This piece is gay, even dance-like in its opening phrases. Again, the material in the first bar generates much of what follows. Mid-piece it becomes quite playful then evolving to a rush of 16^{th}-notes reminiscent of the opening bar, all contrapuntally treated, which devolves to a somewhat abrupt ending!

– W. Jay Sydeman, January 2013

W. Jay Sydeman's life mirrors the breadth and variety of his music. Born in New York in 1928 and educated at Manhattan's Mannes School of Music, he quickly became one of the most sought-after and honored composers of his generation, receiving commissions from such prestigious groups as the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Tanglewood Music Center, and the Boston Symphony, which premiered his orchestral work in memory of John F. Kennedy in 1966. "Sydeman uses a whole battery of far out techniques," wrote the *New York Times*, "but he has an uncanny ability to throw in the whole avant-garde machinery as if it were the simplest, most normal way of making music in the world ... More than many of his colleagues, he seems to know what will sound well, and he works for some remarkably attractive, pure textures. His sounds seem to grow from a physical sense of exactly what material is right."

In 1970, after a heady period that included awards from the National institute of Arts and Letters, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Library of Congress, Sydeman left New York – and composition – to begin a journey of personal and artistic exploration.

"Around 1980," he has written, "I returned to composition – at first a large number of choral works which reconnected me to the source of all music – the human voice. Out of this new lyric impulse have evolved all of my works since that time – more romantic, more accessible. I create music for the musician."

– Howard Hersh,
Artistic Director of "Music Now"

Sydeman is part of a composers' group in Nevada City annually producing the "Wet Ink Festival of New Music." He now lives in Mendocino and hosts a bi-weekly program on KZYX, "The Mind of a Composer," 10 am to noon on Mondays, introducing and commenting on contemporary music.

Duration: I. Allegro espressivo, molto rubato – circa 3:30
II. Molto allegro – circa 2:45

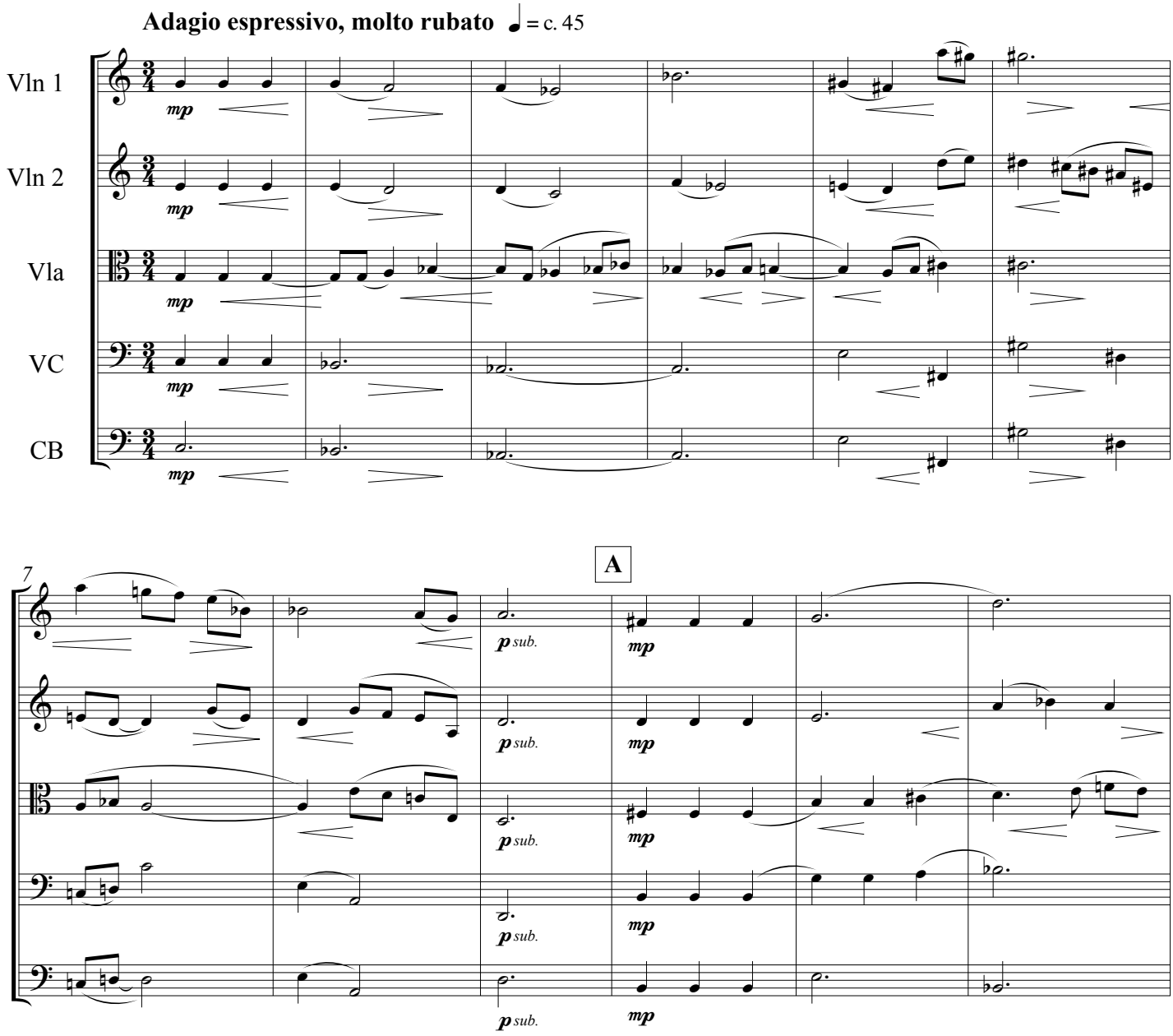
To contact the composer:
Jeanne Duncan, Sydeman Archive Publications
707-962-0394
www.williamjaysydeman.com

Edited and engraved by Rick Shinozaki (Albany, CA), consulting with the composer.

For Strings
for String Orchestra

W. Jay Sydeman
(c. 1996-97)

I.



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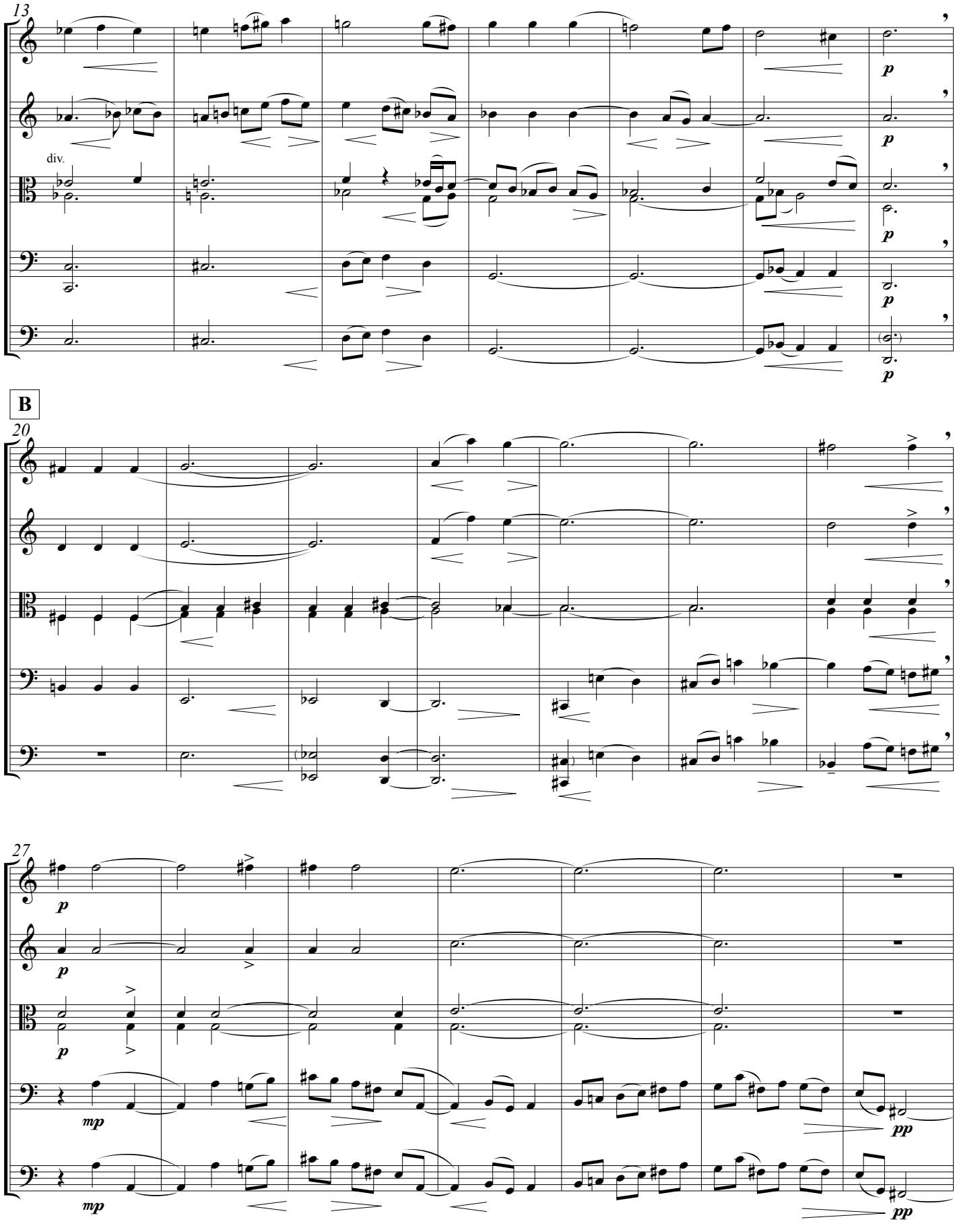
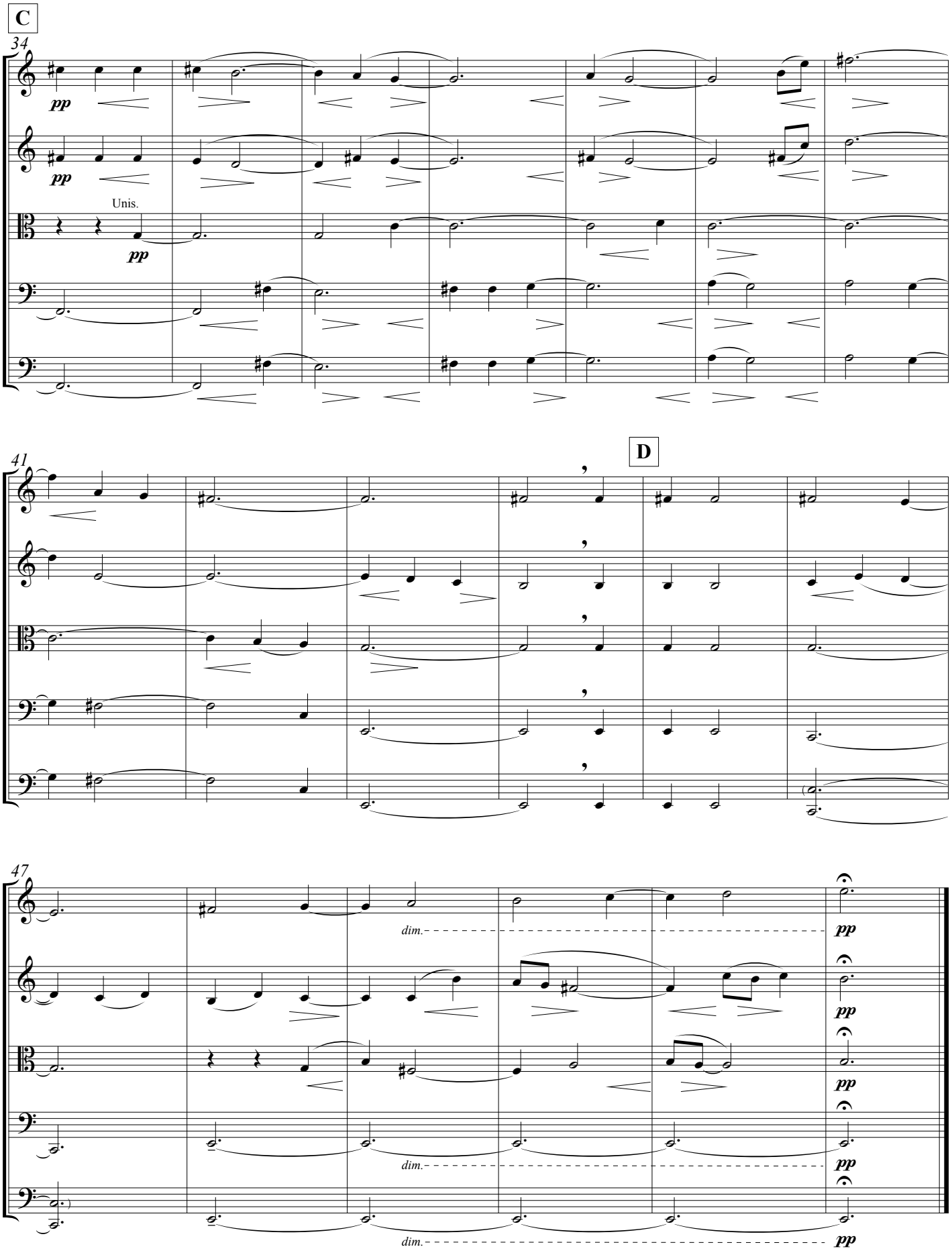
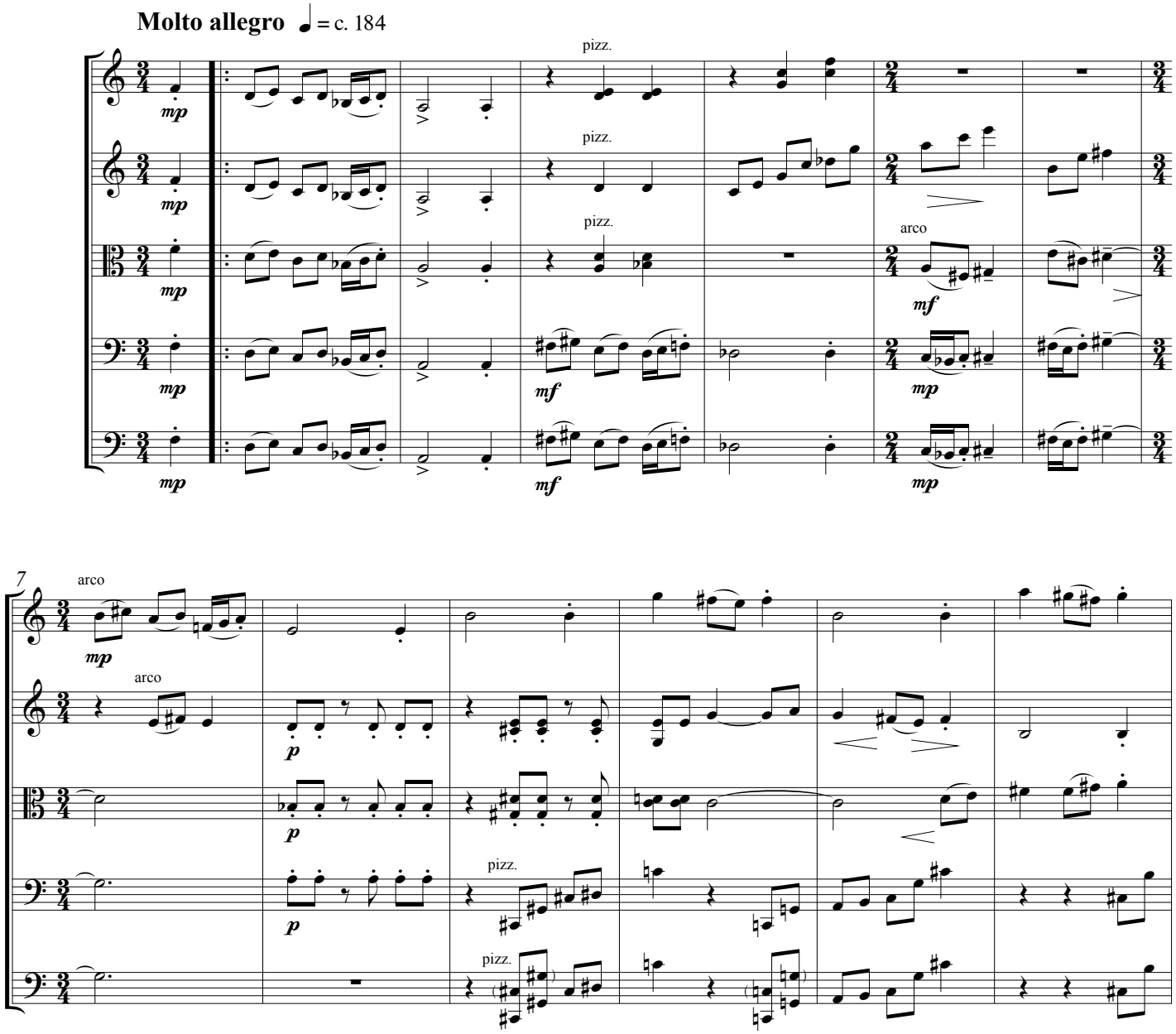
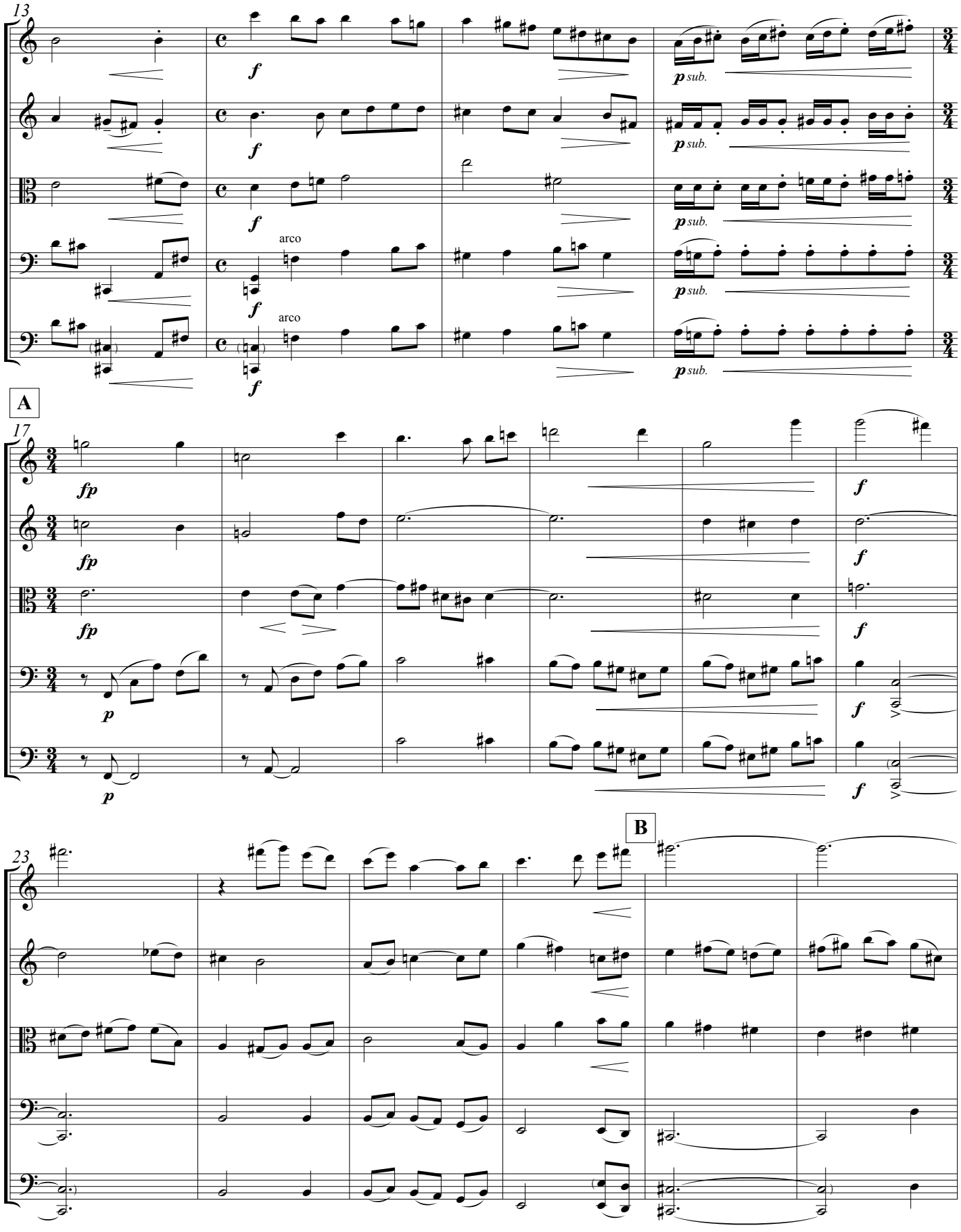
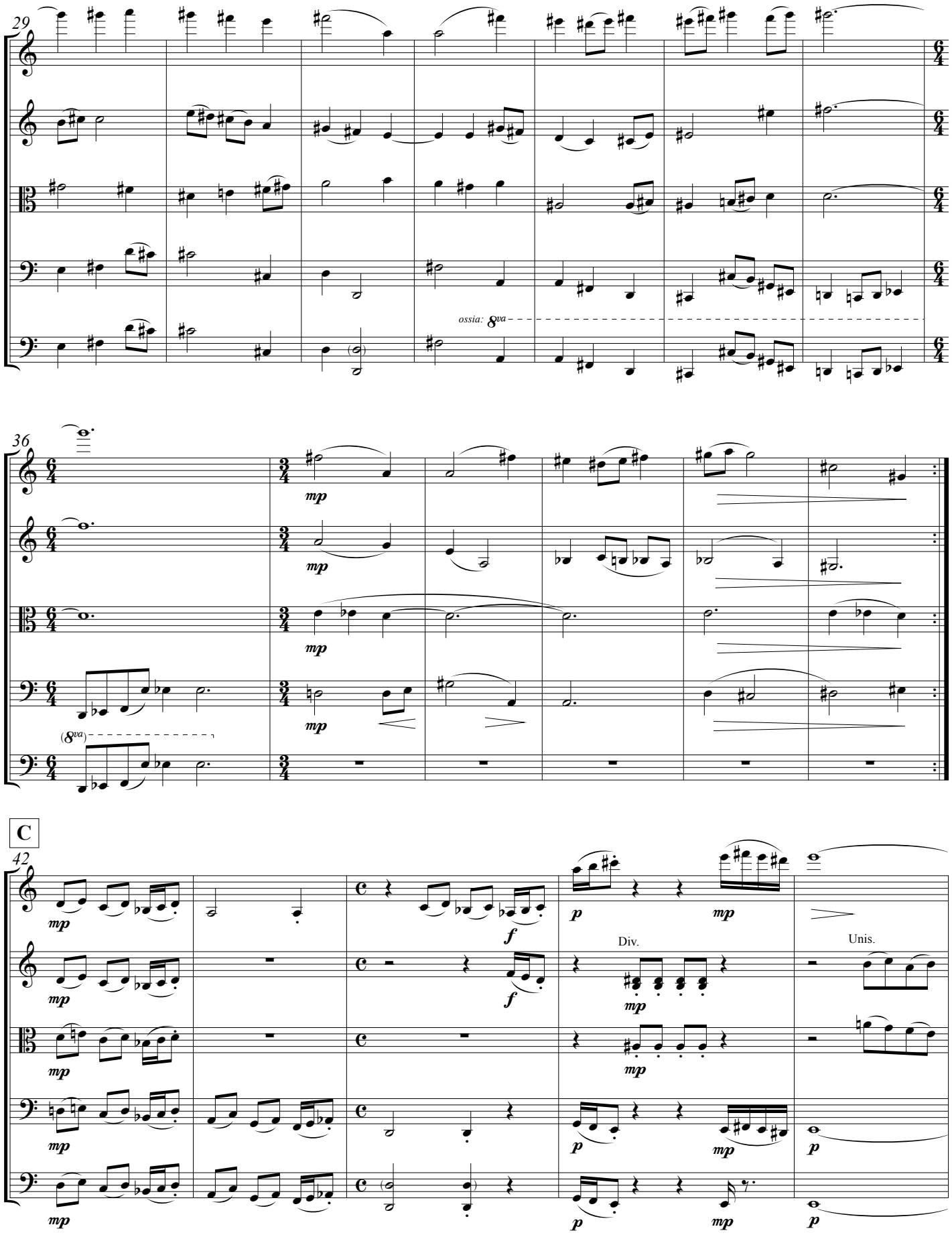

13
div.
p
B
20
27
mp
pp

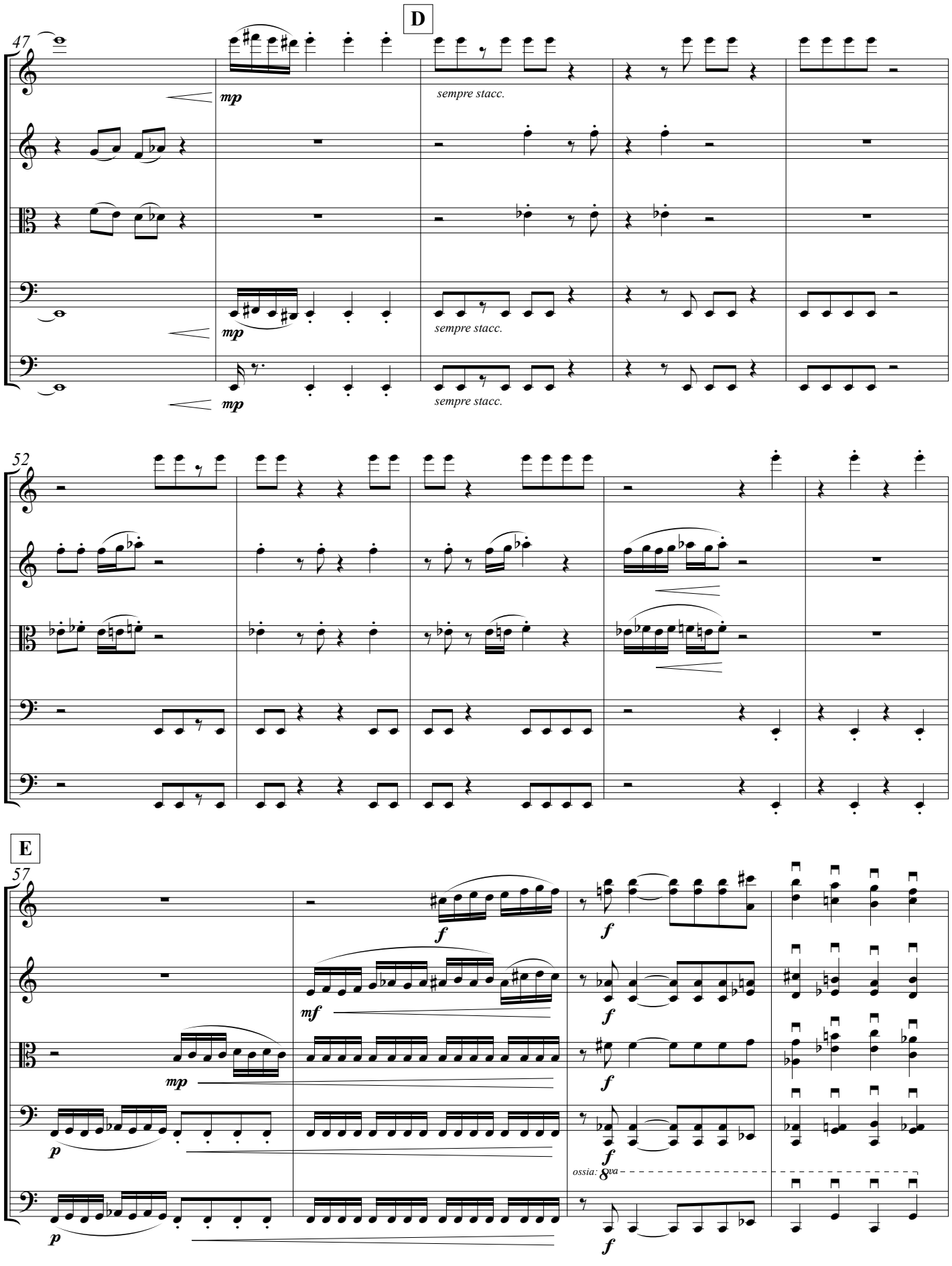

C
34
pp
pp
Unis.
pp
D
41
47
dim.
pp
dim.
pp
dim.
pp

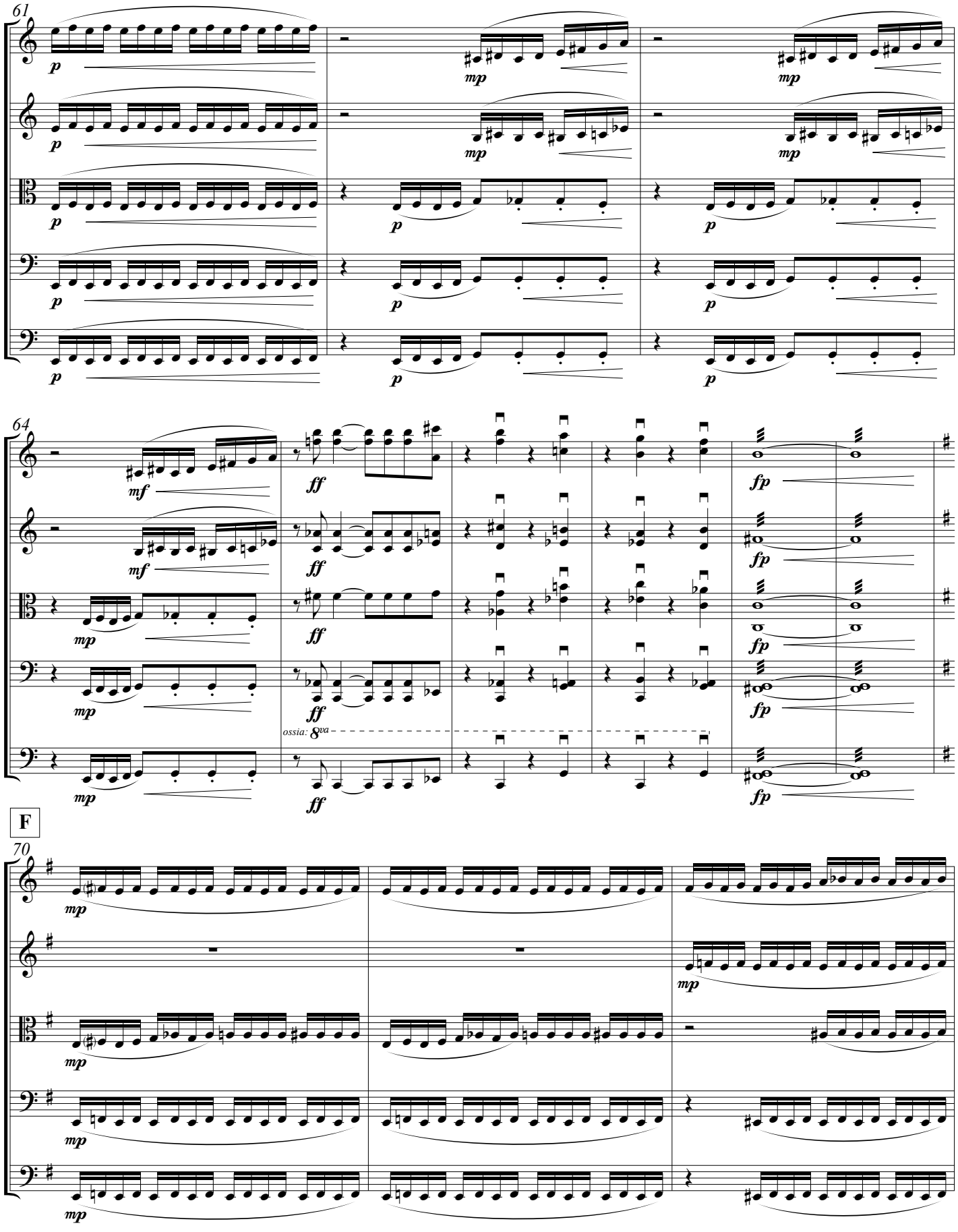
II.

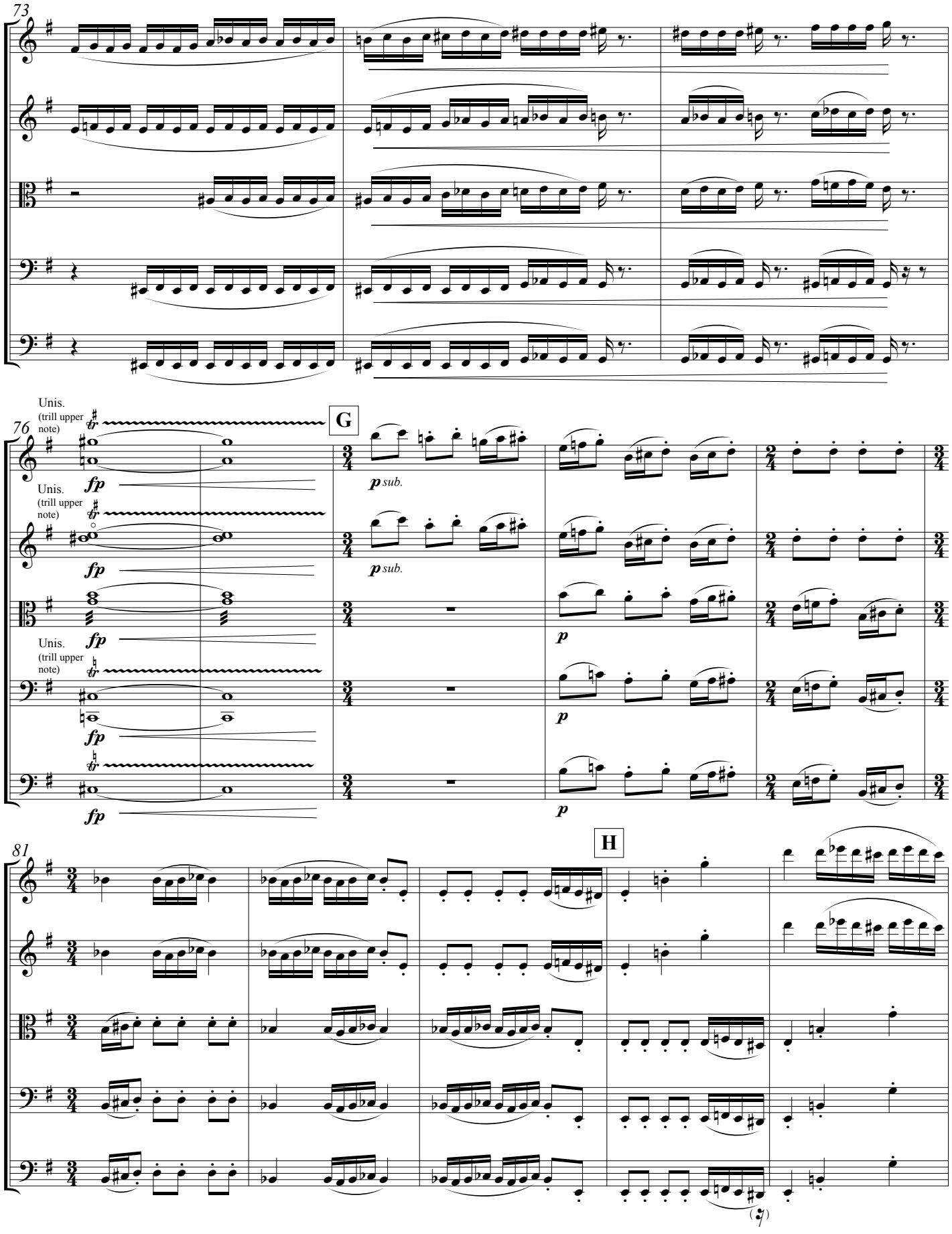


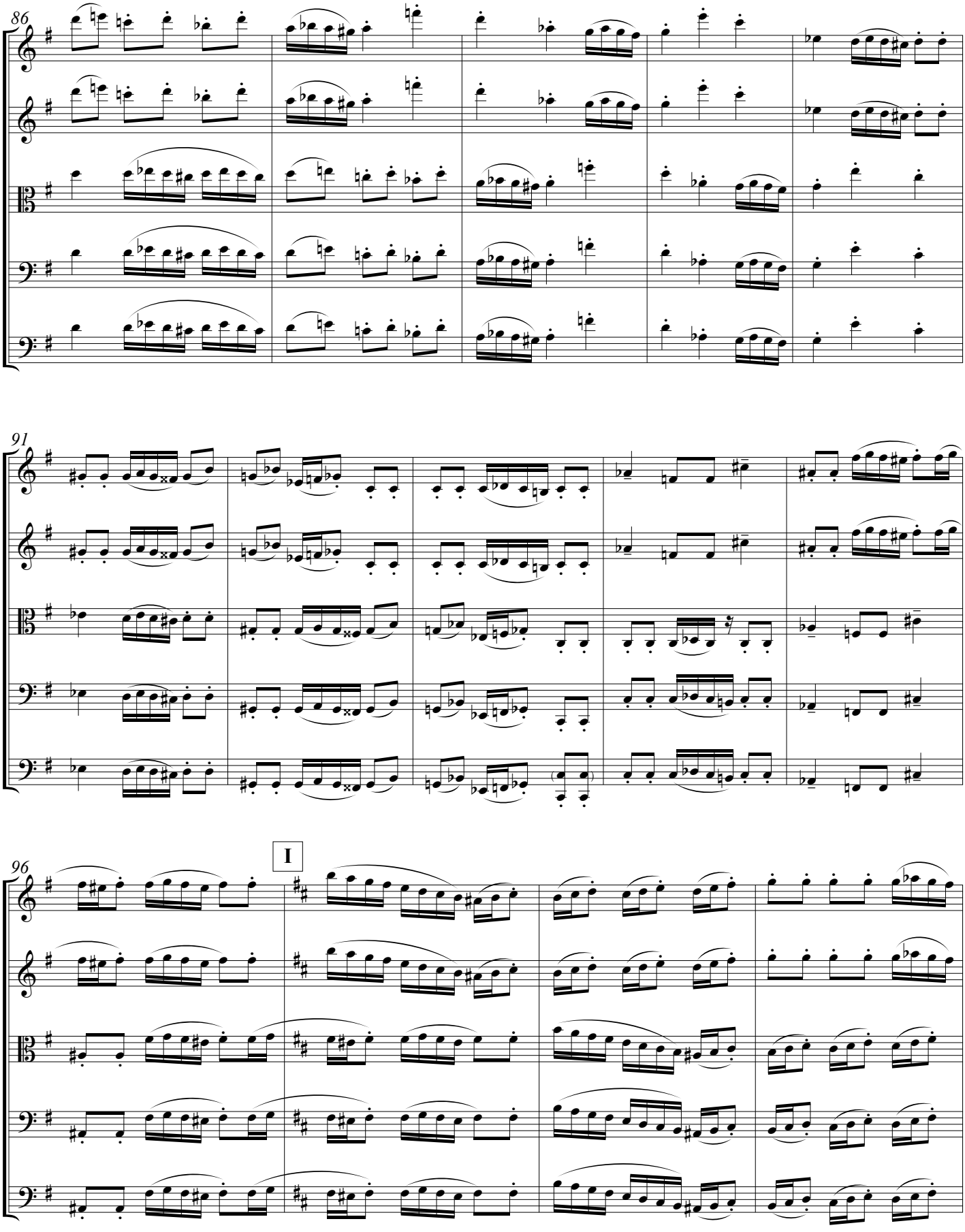

13
f
p sub.
arco
A
17
fp
p
B
23

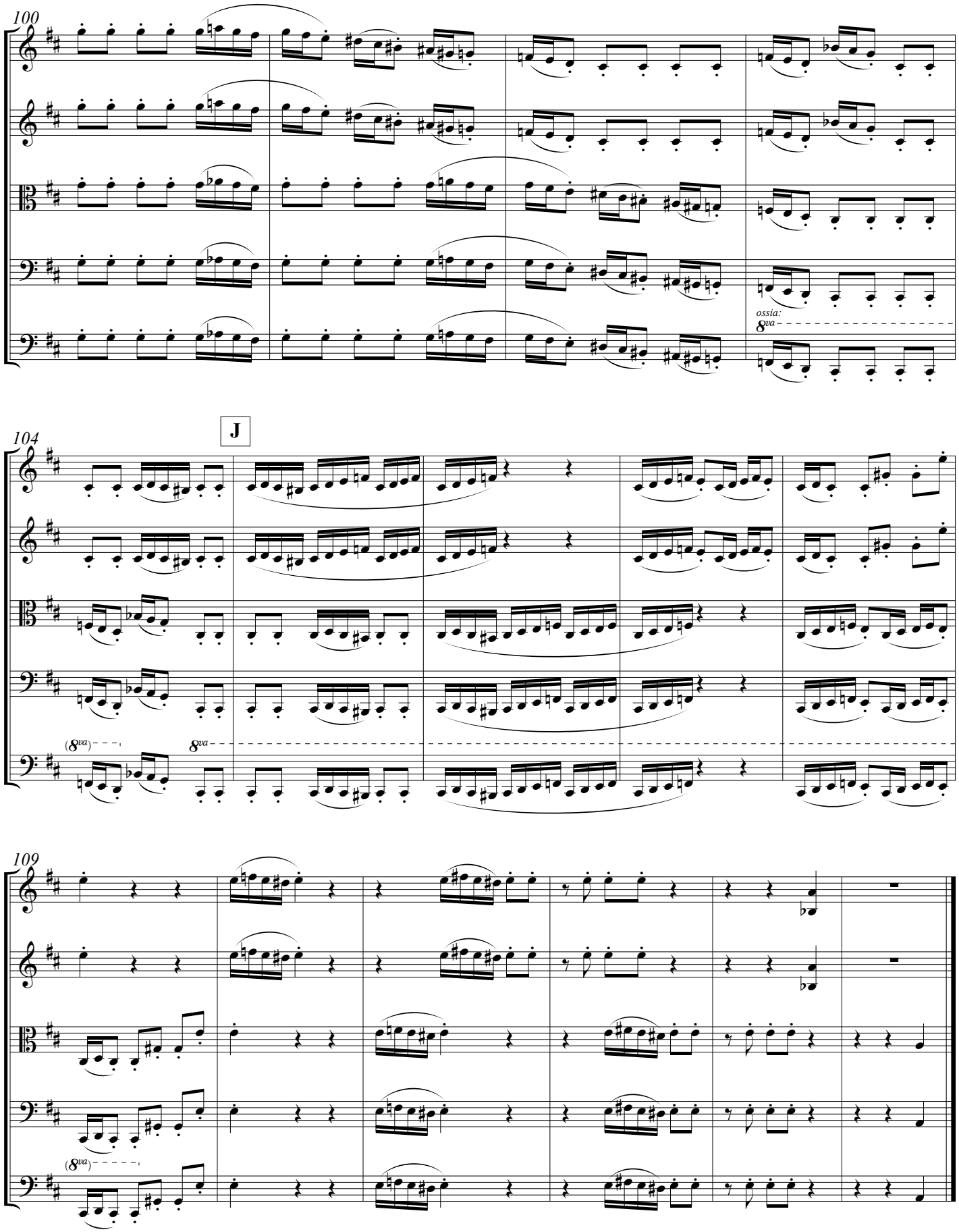

29
ossia: 8va
36
mp
(8va)
C
42
mp
f
p
Div.
Unis.


D
47
mp
sempre stacc.
mp
sempre stacc.
mp
sempre stacc.
52
E
57
f
f
mf
f
mp
f
p
ossia: 8va
p
f


61
64
ossia: 8va
F
70


73
76
Unis.
(trill upper note)
fp
G
p sub.
p
81
H


86
91
96
I


100
ossia:
8va
104
J
(8va)
8va
109
(8va)