A Quartet of Daydreams

For String Quartet

Ian Percy

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ca. 13-14 minutes

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This single movement, approximately 13-14 minutes in length, was composed within material coloured by natural resonance theories and elements of the harmonic and sub-harmonic series. Initial work evolved from the planning for two entirely different pieces:

Melancholy Daydreams for solo piano: A set of four movements subtitled: What, Where, Why and When. These generic questions (or daydreams) offer a variety of connotations. They can be perceived as interrogations or exclamations, passive or aggressive. This ambiguous extra-musical influence captured my imagination, inspiring me to conceive a meta-formula from which multiple pieces evolved.

Natural Resonance for string quartet: A single movement dealing with the acoustic phenomenon of resonating natural resonance. Natural resonance seems to describe the timbral characteristics of a string quartet quite accurately. It implies an organic phenomenon: acoustic vibration. It is as old as nature and is often discussed in relation to space and time, even the origins of the universe itself.

In literal terms, natural resonance refers to the additional sympathetic tones produced when sustained resonances vibrate against each other. These heterodyning frequencies can be produced above the pitches as combination tones (sum of the two frequencies), or as difference tones (the difference between the two).

Having allowed the idiomatic properties of the instrument to shape heterodyning frequencies, harmonics and multiphonics within previous works, this quartet adopts a more considered and reproducible approach to the phenomenon of natural resonance as a compositional resource.

The pitch of D is treated as a 'primary thought' from the moment it opens the piece and all material is generated from and around it.

The meta-formula for this quartet can be subdivided into four forms:

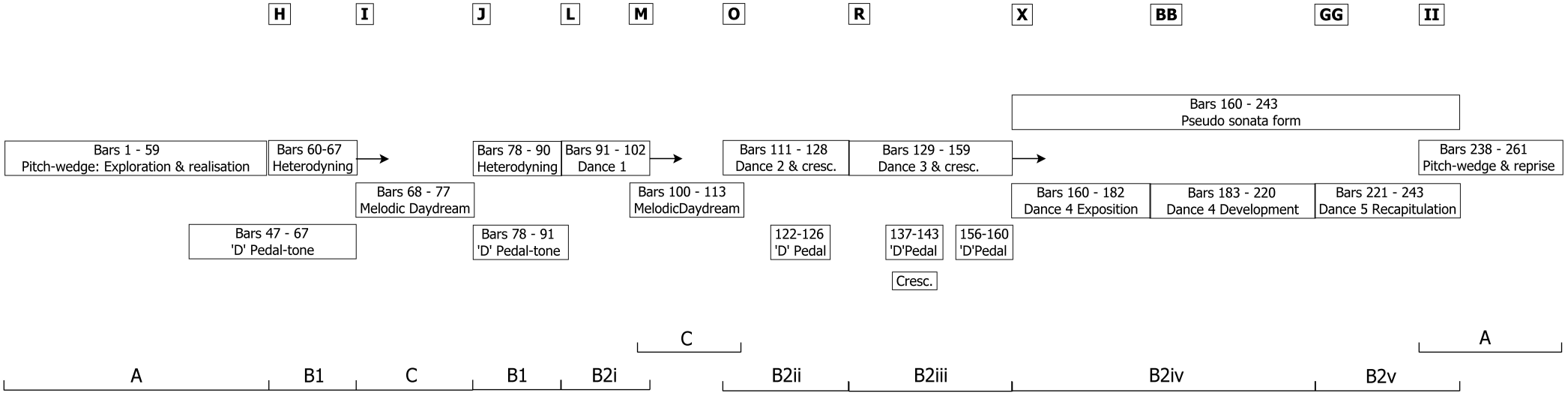
i] Chromatic pitch wedge around D
ii] Modal cells
iii] Whole-tone scales and chords
iv] Heterodyning frequencies relative to the pitch of D

Although a complex movement at first glance, it can be subdivided into a handful of compositional units:

1] Exploration of pitch wedge
2] Ostinato/Pedal tone
3] Motivic gestures and natural resonance material
4] Dance adaptations (mini sonata form)
5] Melodic daydreams (transitional lyrical interludes)

As a guiding extra-musical influence, I considered the definition of a daydream as 'a fantasy indulged in while one is awake' and through analogy and metaphor, allowed this to influence the character, atmosphere, pacing, texture, rhythm and interaction of the writing as I aimed to compose an acoustic interpretation of the natural thought process: A collection of daydreams...

Quartet of Daydreams Form



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♩ = 69 **As if drifting into the subconscious...** **poco rit.** [♪ = 69]

Vln.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.

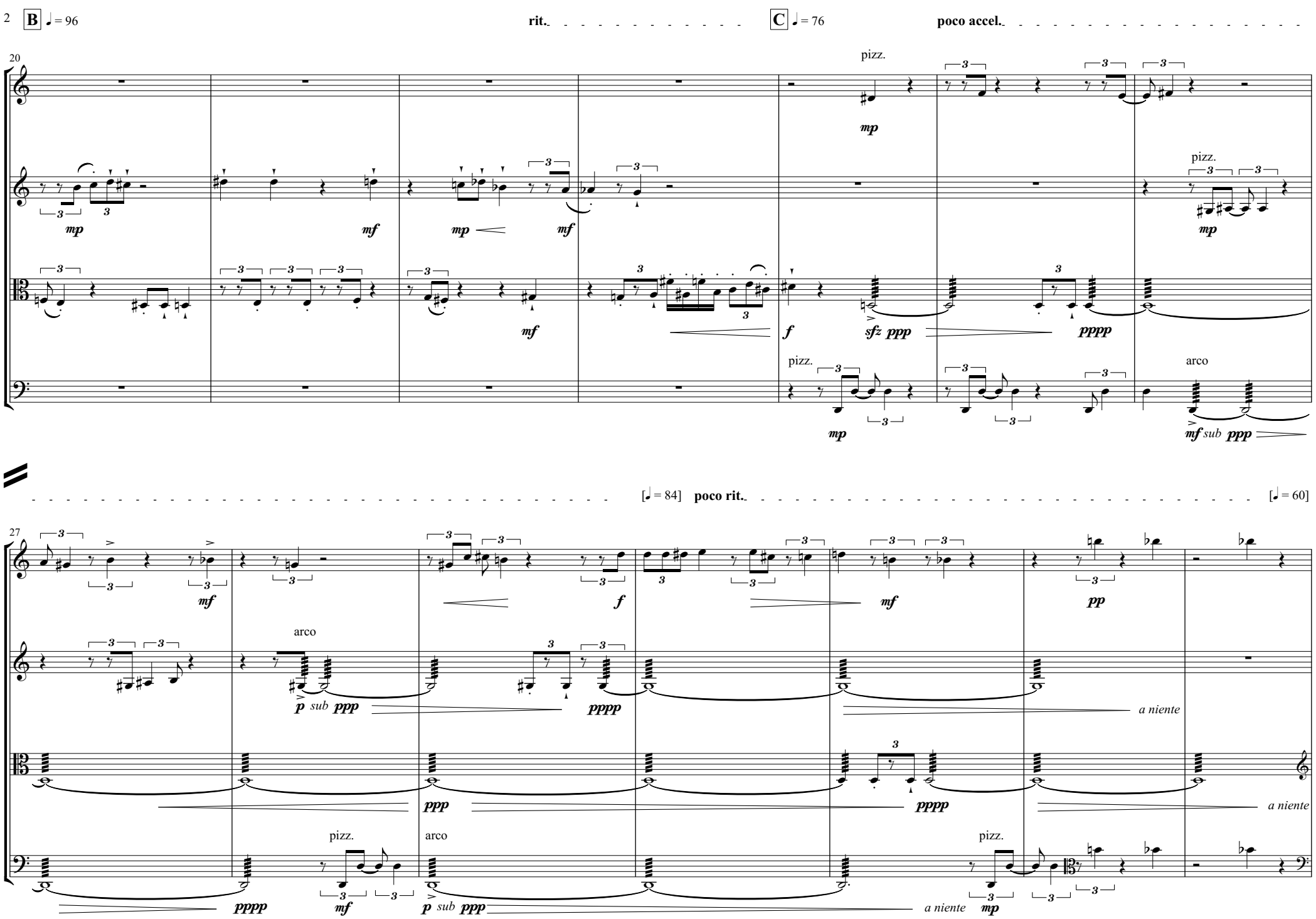
pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz. arco

A ♩ = 96 **A discreet beginning: Two musical thoughts emerge in conversation...** **poco rit.** [♩ = 60]

11

a niente

arco


B ♩ = 96
rit.
C ♩ = 76
poco accel.
20
pizz.
mp
mf
mp
mf
mf
f
sfz ppp
pppp
pizz.
mp
arco
mf sub ppp
[♩ = 84]
poco rit.
[♩ = 60]
27
mf
f
mf
pp
arco
p sub ppp
pppp
a niente
ppp
pppp
a niente
pizz.
arco
pizz.
pppp
mf
p sub ppp
a niente
mp

D ♩ = 96 **A communal debate within one mind...**

poco rit.

34

arco

pizz.

flageolet tone

flageolet tones

[♩ = 60] **E** ♩ = 92 **Agreeing to disagree...**

poco rit.

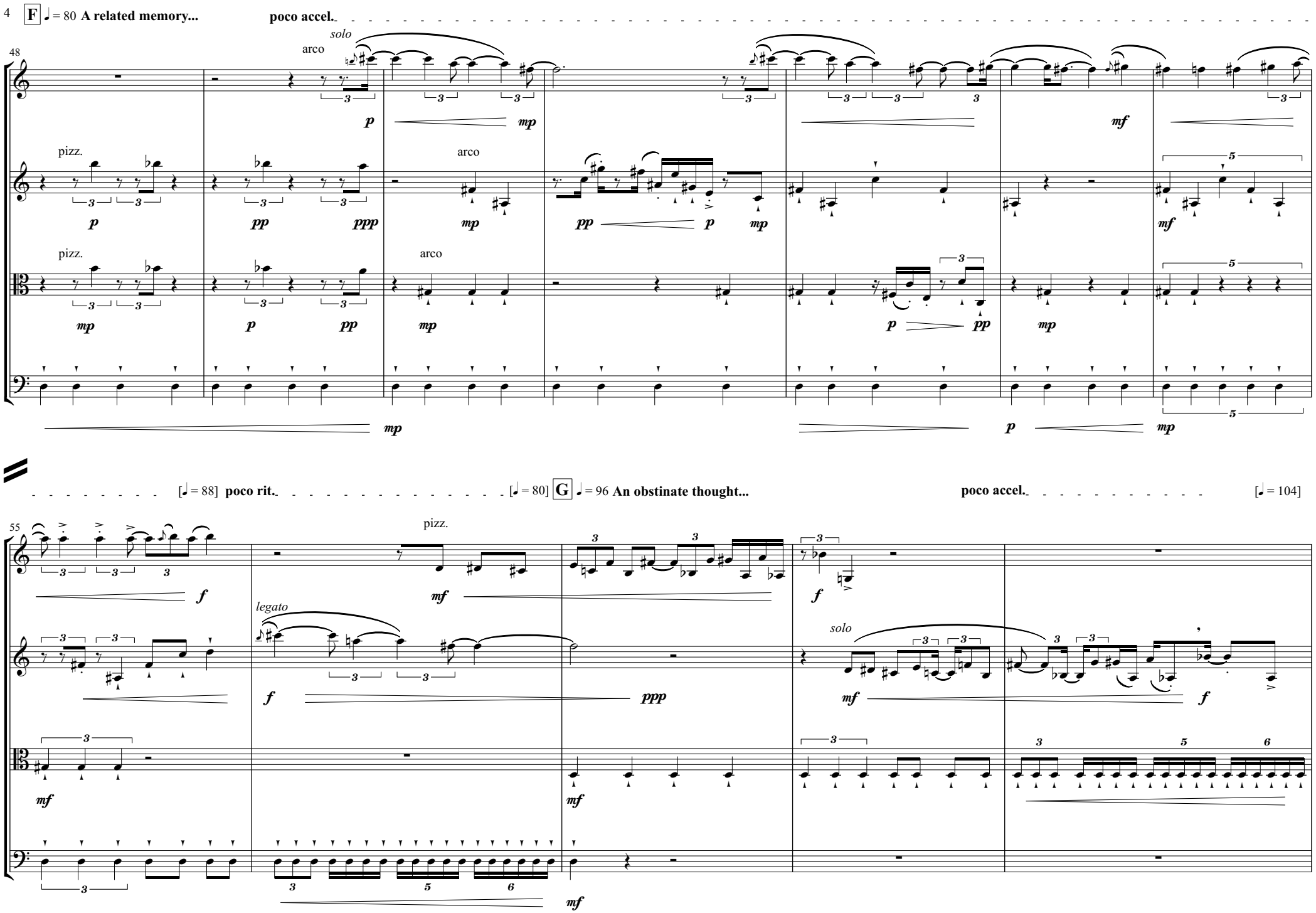
41

pizz.

arco

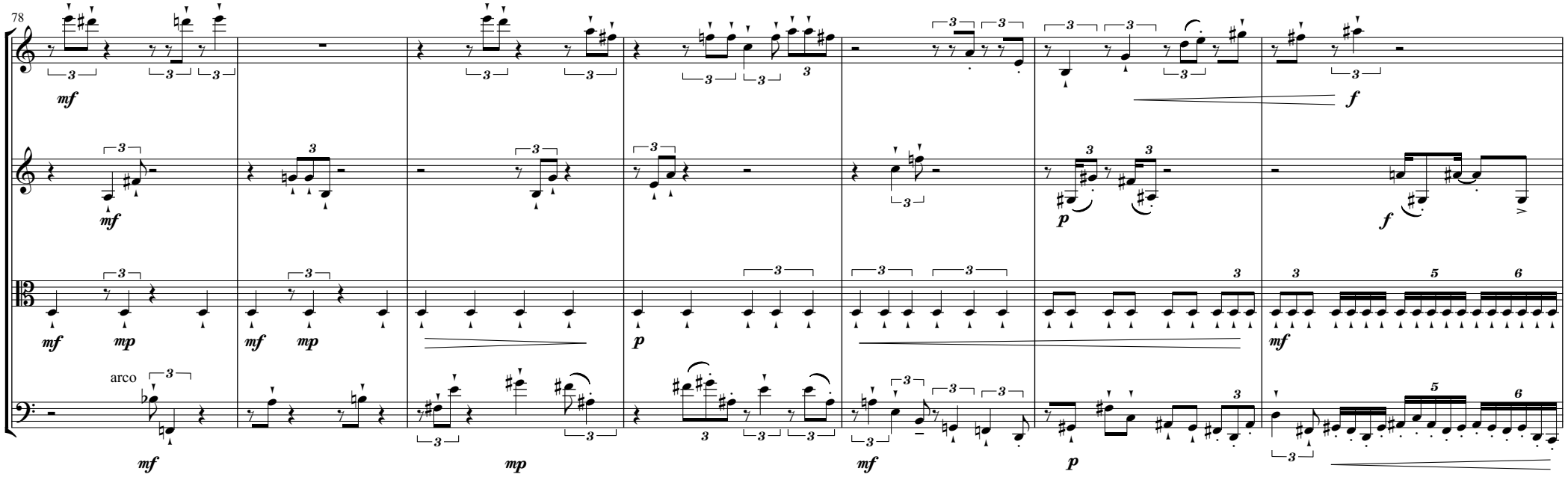
a niente

arco

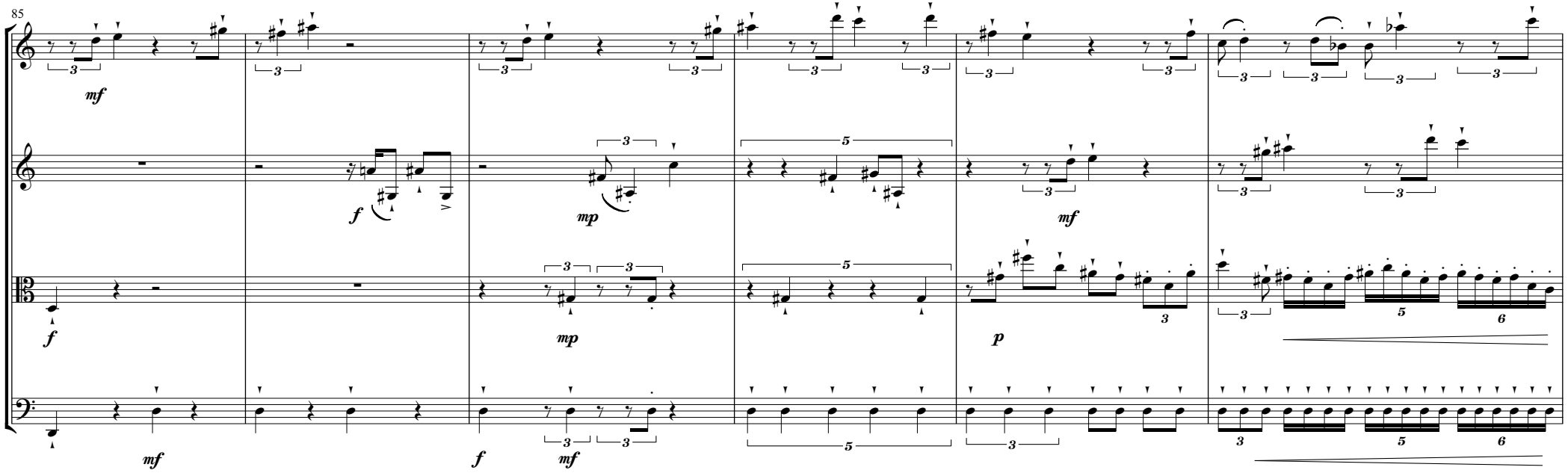

F ♩ = 80 A related memory...
poco accel.
48
solo
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
[♩ = 88] poco rit.
[♩ = 80] G ♩ = 96 An obstinate thought...
poco accel.
[♩ = 104]
55
pizz.
legato
solo

H ♩ = 96 A persistent thread...
rit.
60
arco
8va
legato
vib.
pizz.
arco
I ♩ = 60 A melancholy daydream...
poco rit.
[♩ = 52]
68
flageolet tone
solo
legato
a niente
flageolet tone
a niente
a niente
a niente
solo
pizz.

J ♩ = 96 **A recurring theme: A nagging concern...** **poco accel.** [♩ = 104] **poco rit.**



K ♩ = 92 **Resistance is futile: A persistent thought must be addressed...** **poco accel.** [♩ = 100] **poco rit.**



L ♩ = 92 **Reason & resolution...** **poco accel.** [♩ = 96] **poco rit.** [♩ = 92]

91

pizz. arco

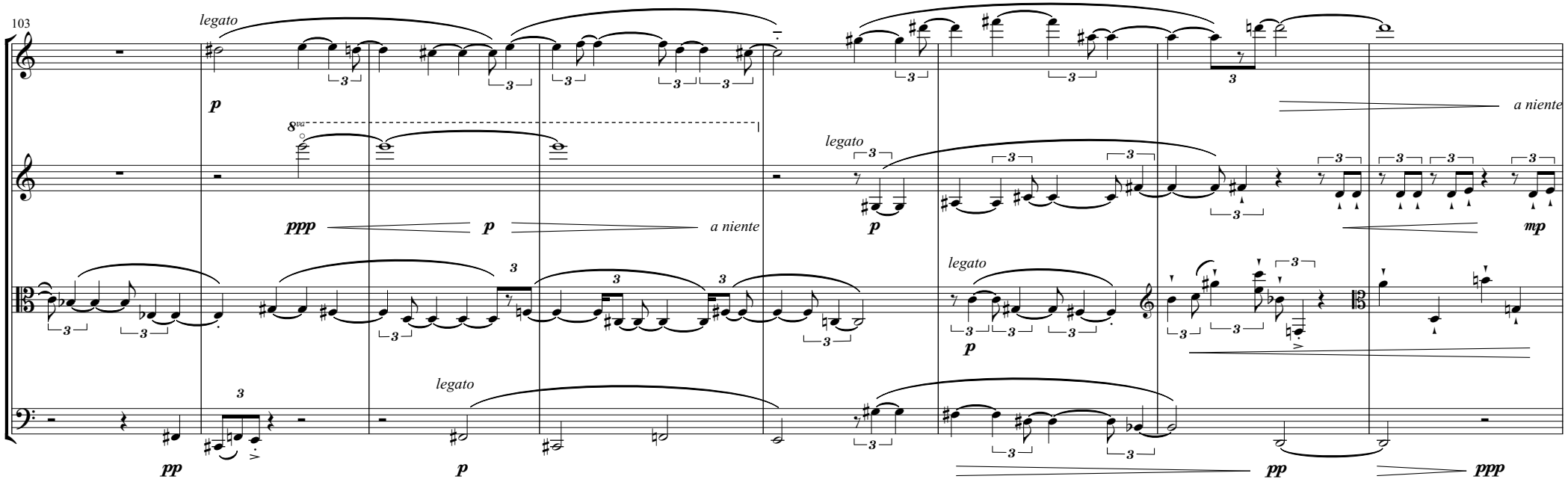
poco rit.

M ♩ = 84 **A subconscious transition...** **poco rit.**

97

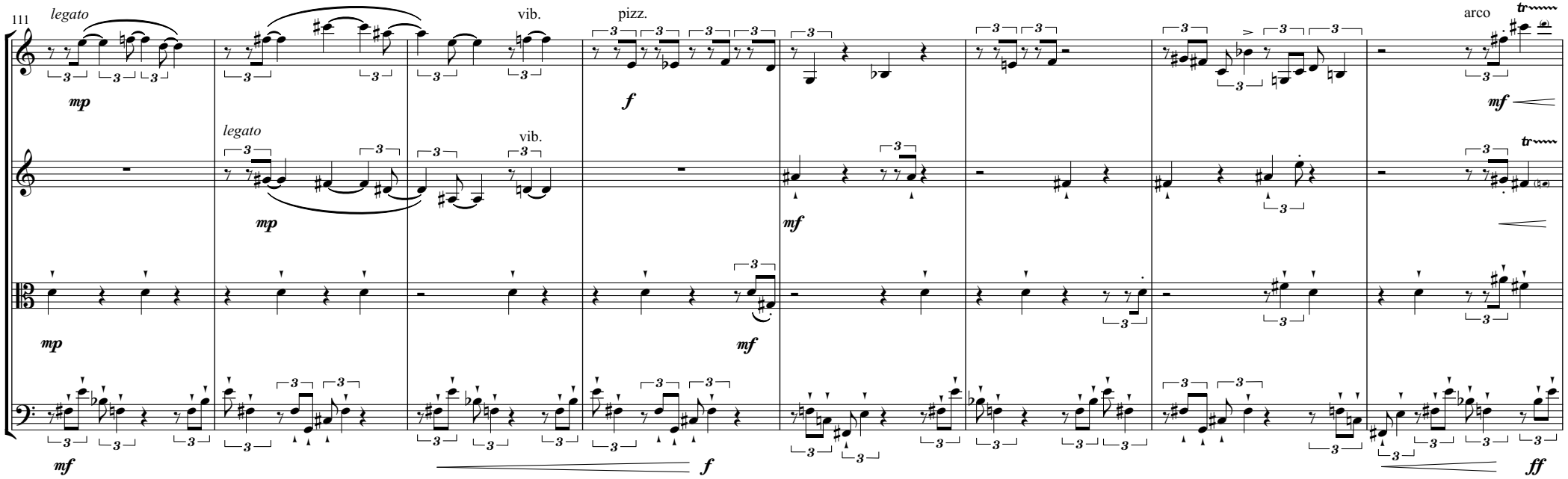
lyrical *legato* *legato* vib. vib. *solo*

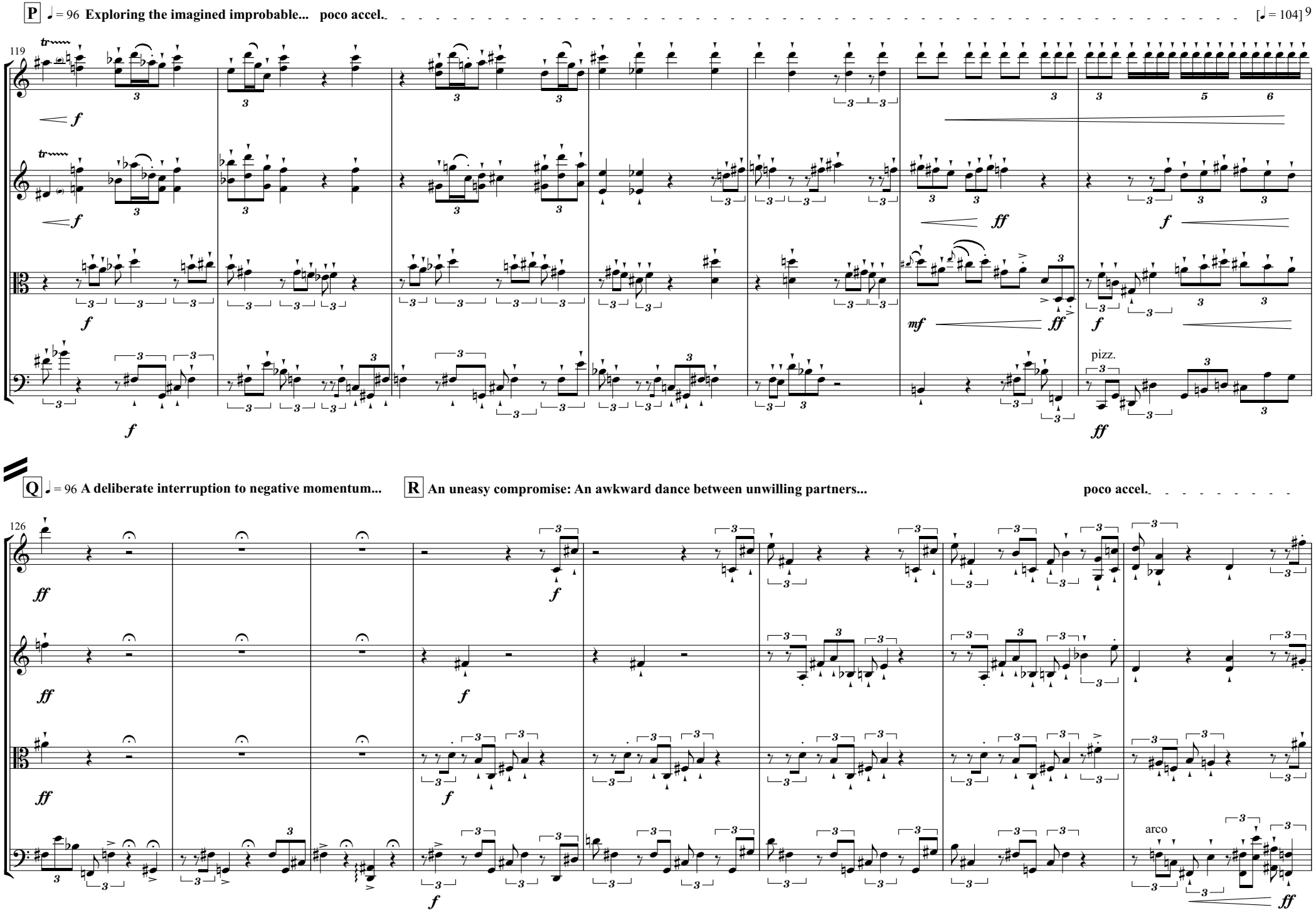
8 **N** ♩ = 69 **A sentimental recollection...** **poco rit.** [♩ = 56] **accel.**



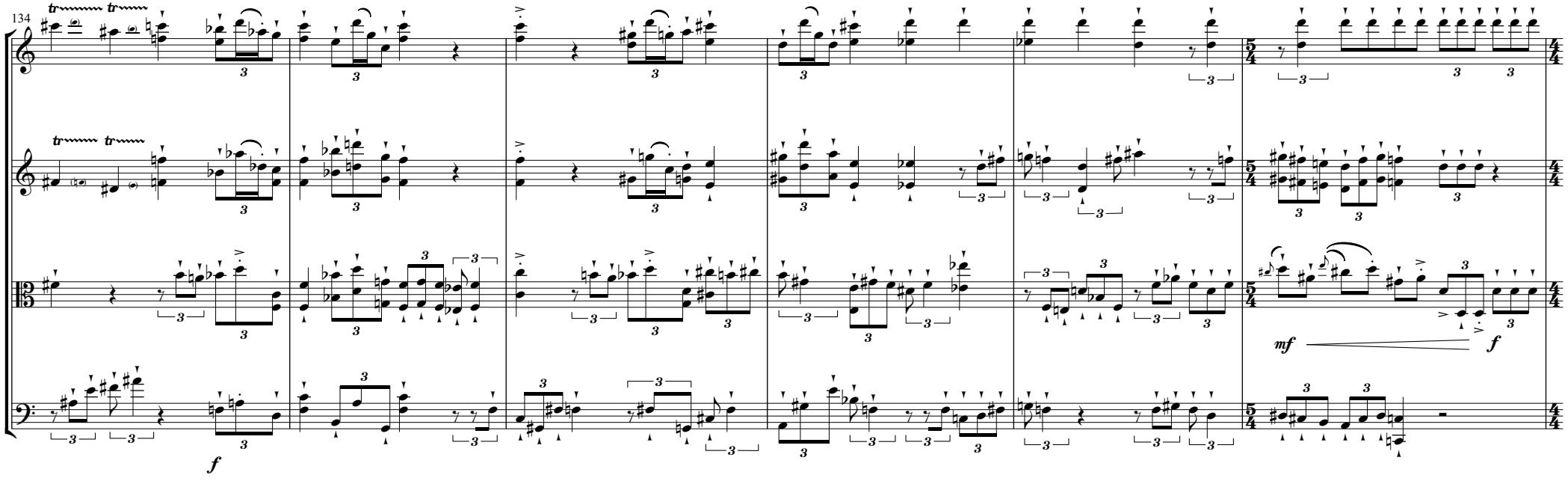
All things considered: A dark possibility emerges...

O ♩ = 84 **poco rit.** [♩ = 72] ♩ = 84 **poco accel.**

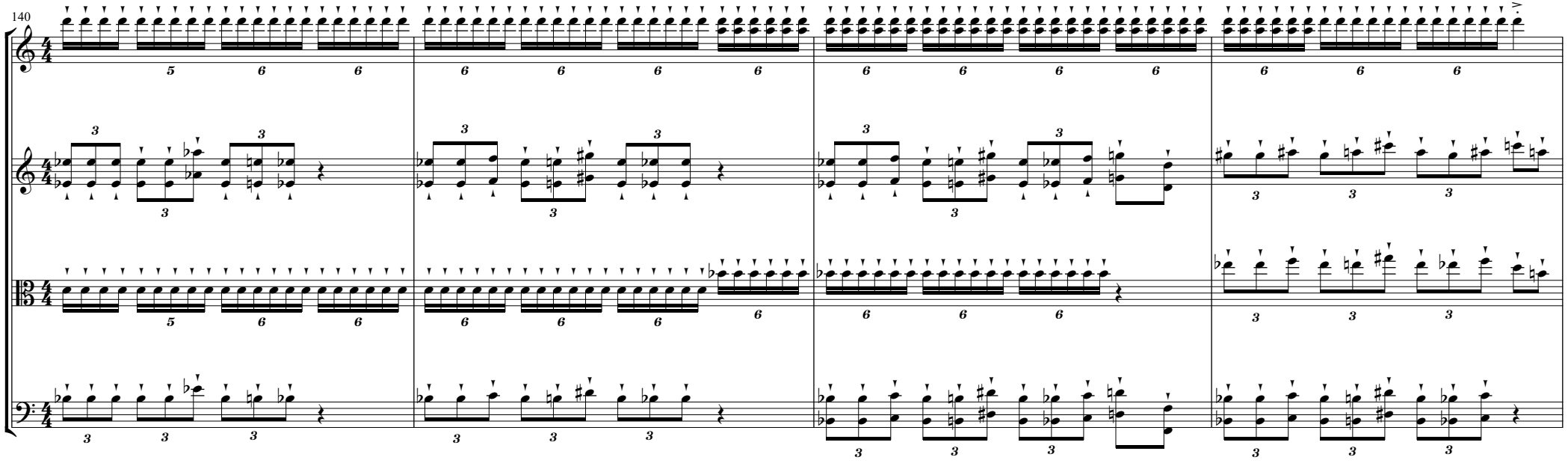



P ♩ = 96 Exploring the imagined improbable... poco accel.
[♩ = 104]
119
pizz.
Q ♩ = 96 A deliberate interruption to negative momentum...
R An uneasy compromise: An awkward dance between unwilling partners...
poco accel.
126
arco

10 **S** ♩ = 100 **With determination & aggression...** **poco accel.** [♩ = 108]

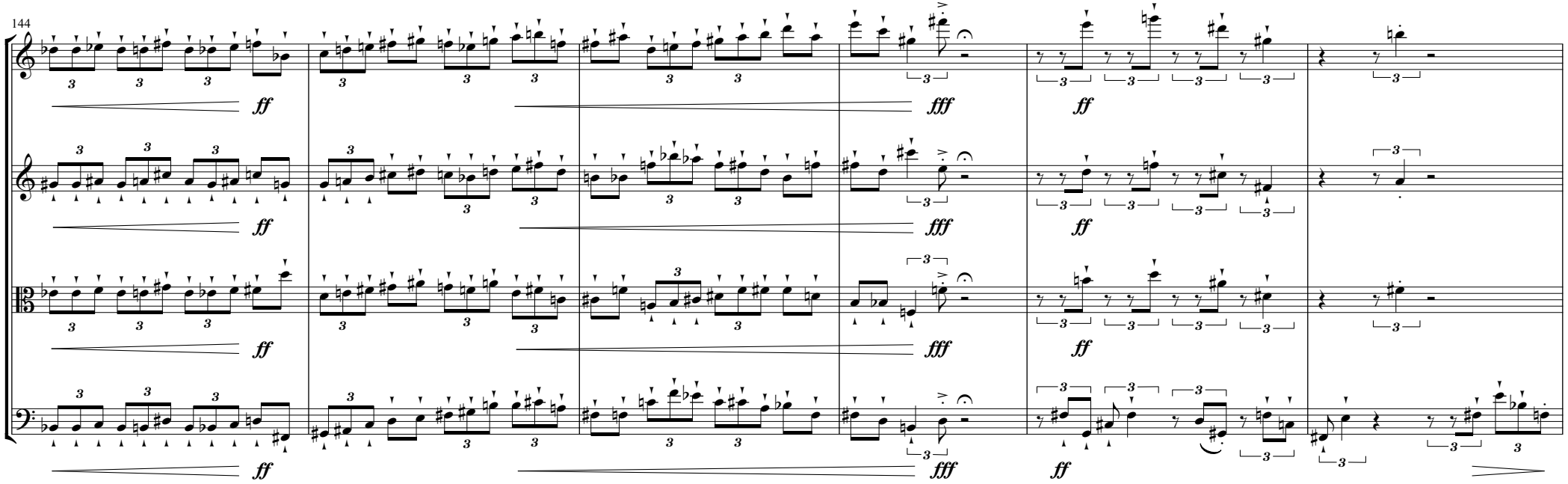


T ♩ = 100 **A dark daydream...** **poco accel.**



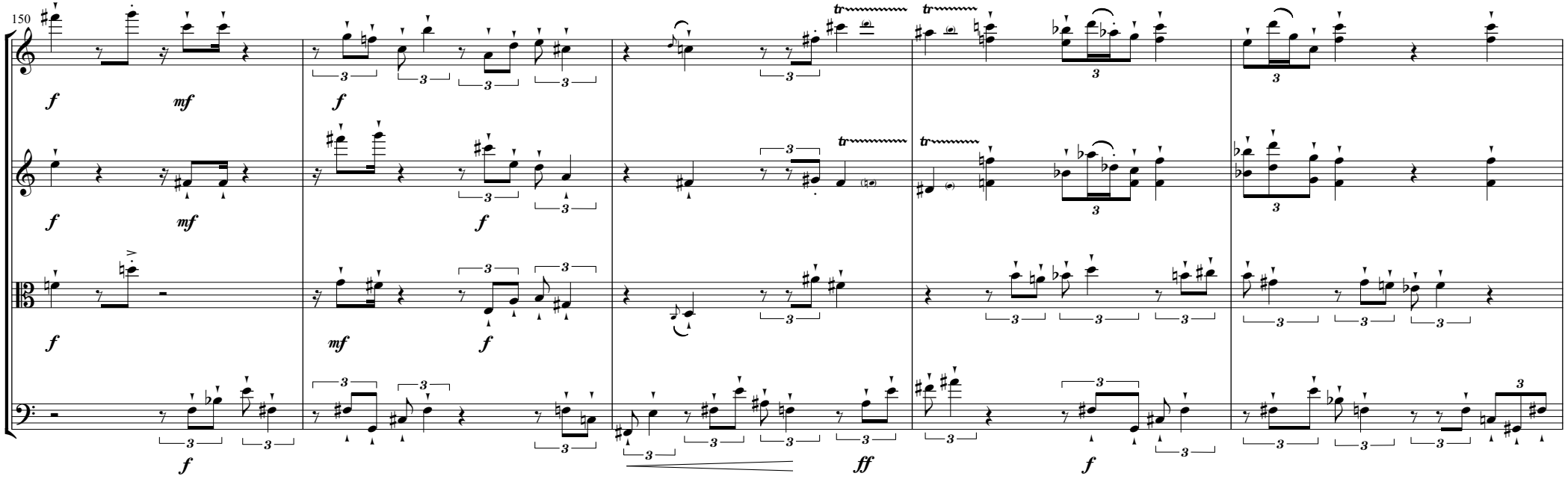
U ♩ = 104 **poco accel.** [♩ = 112] V ♩ = 96 **poco rit.** [♩ = 92]

144



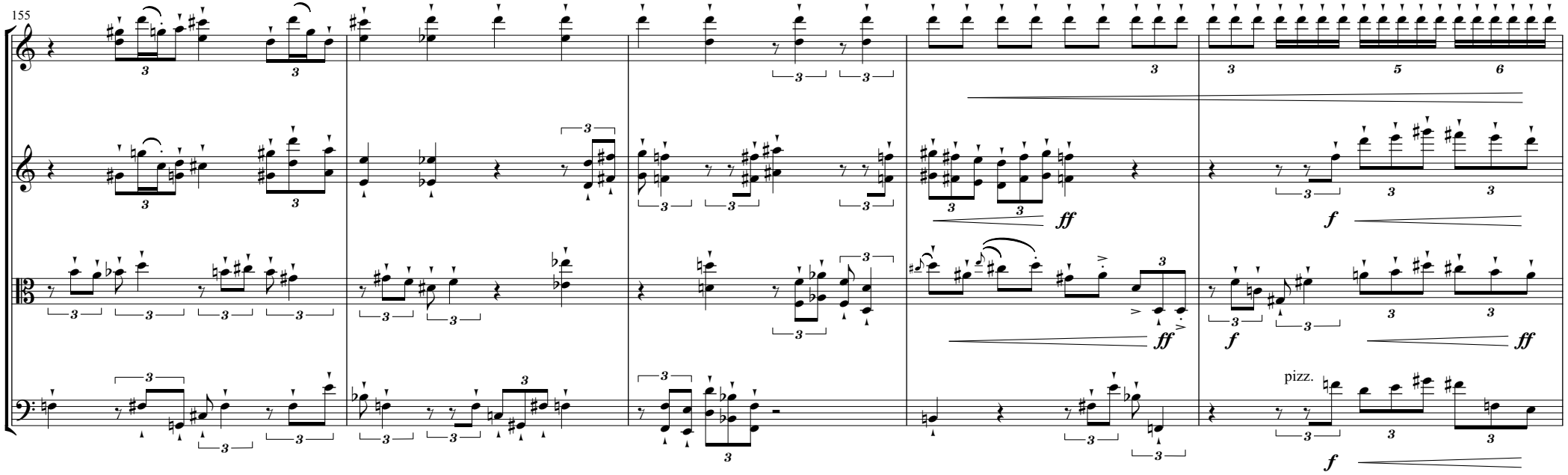
poco accel. ♩ = 96 **poco accel.** W ♩ = 100 **A final release of negative thought...**

150



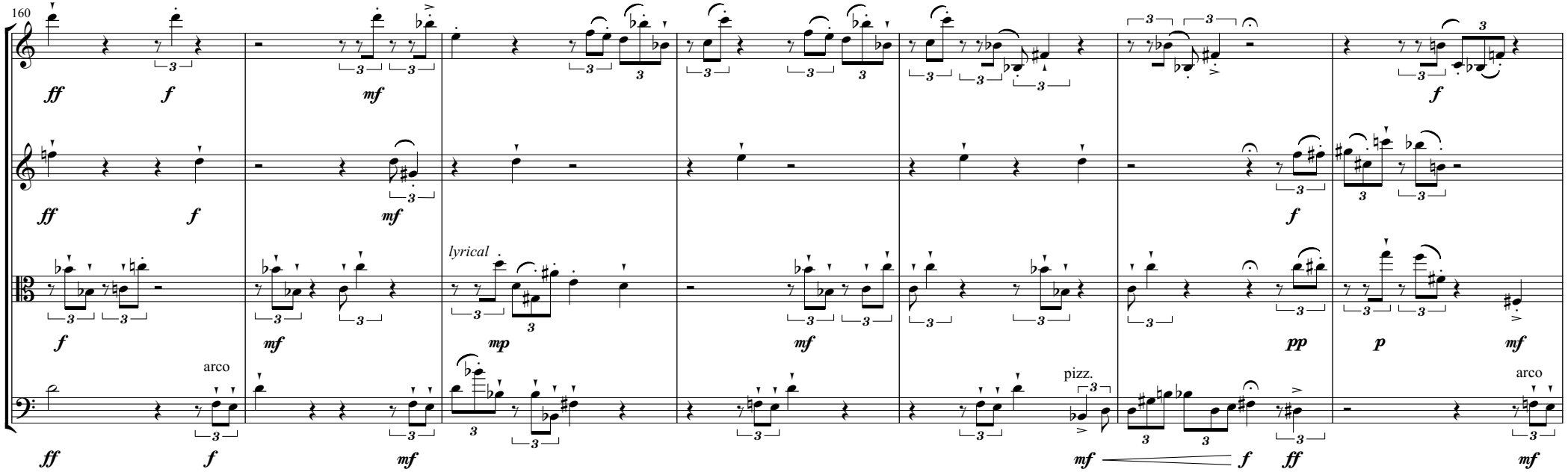
poco accel. [♩ = 104] poco rit.

155



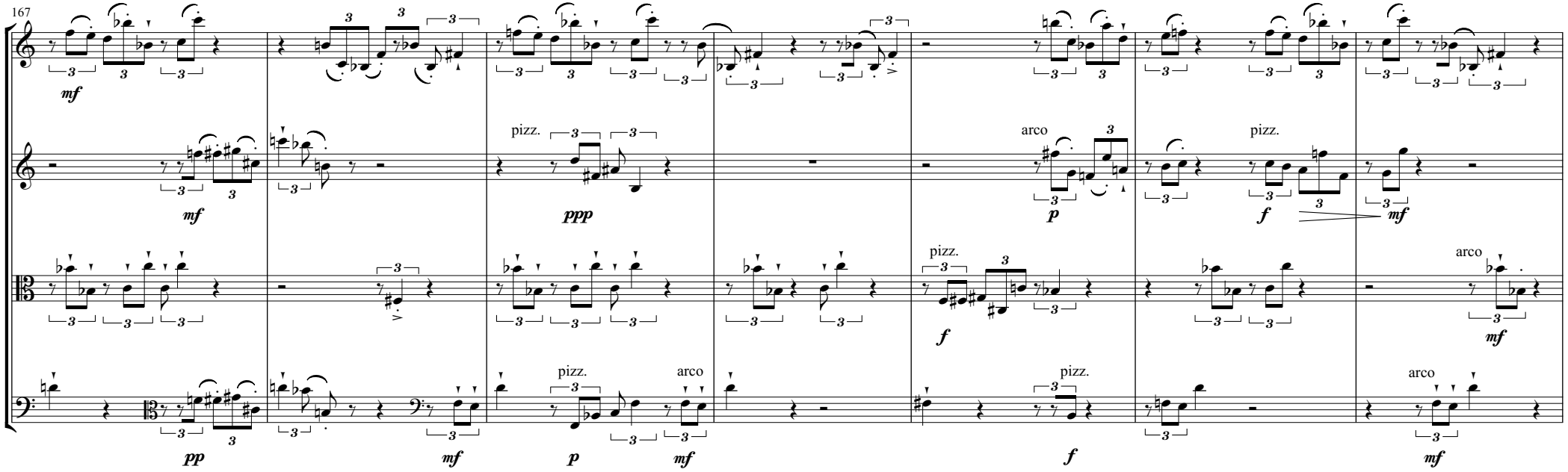
X ♩ = 96 With renewed optimism... poco rit. [♩ = 92] ♩ = 96 poco rit. [♩ = 92] Y ♩ = 96 With positive energy...

160



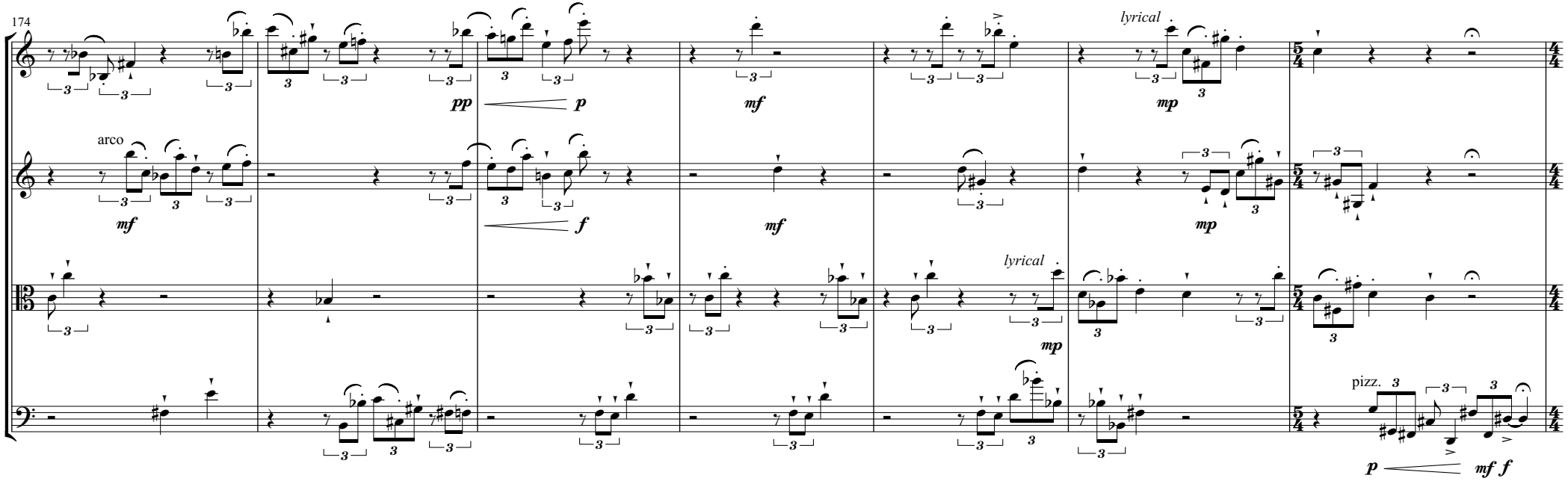
poco rit. [♩ = 88] Z ♩ = 96 poco rit. [♩ = 88]

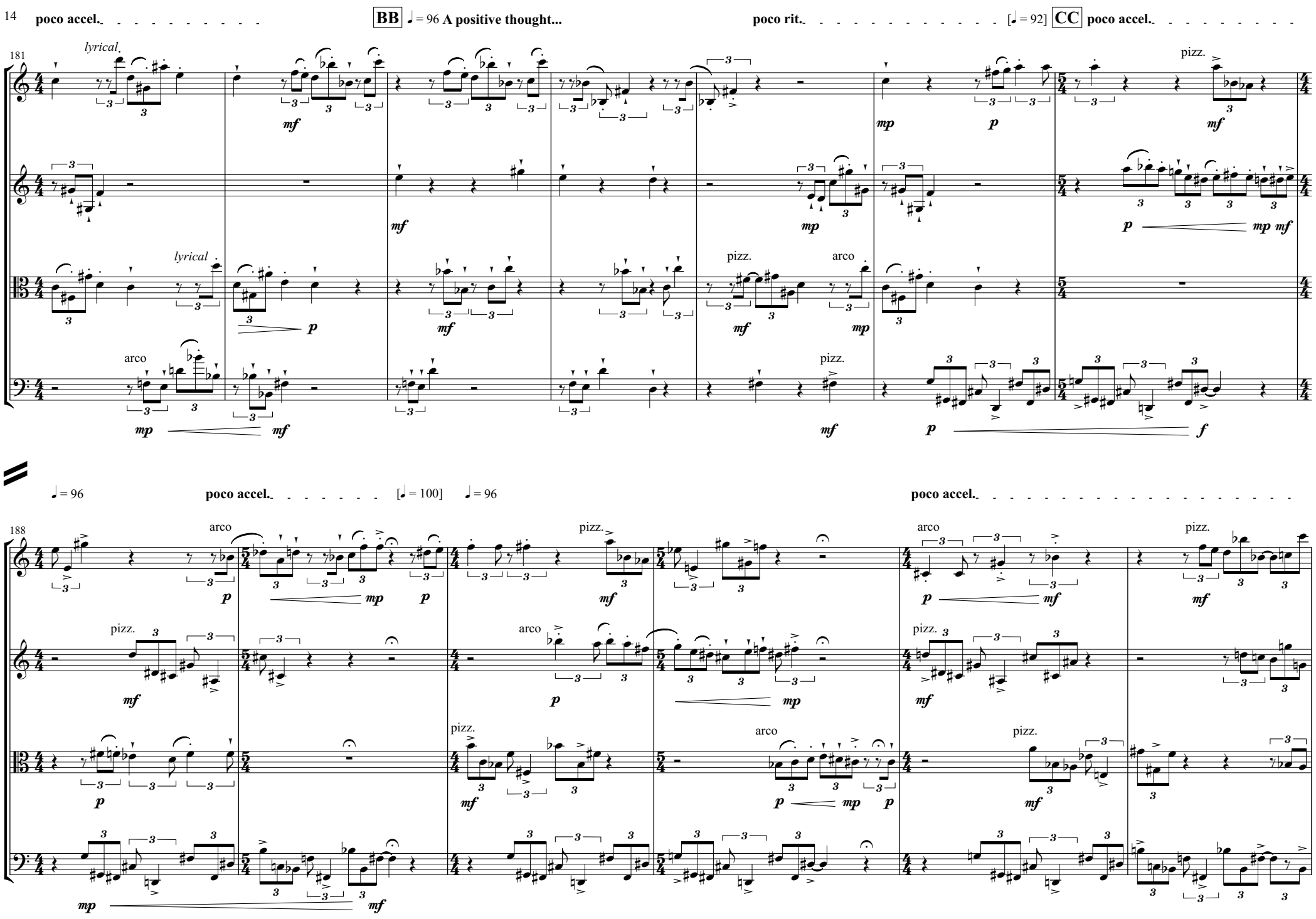
167



poco accel. AA ♩ = 96 Repetition & consideration... poco rit. [♩ = 88]

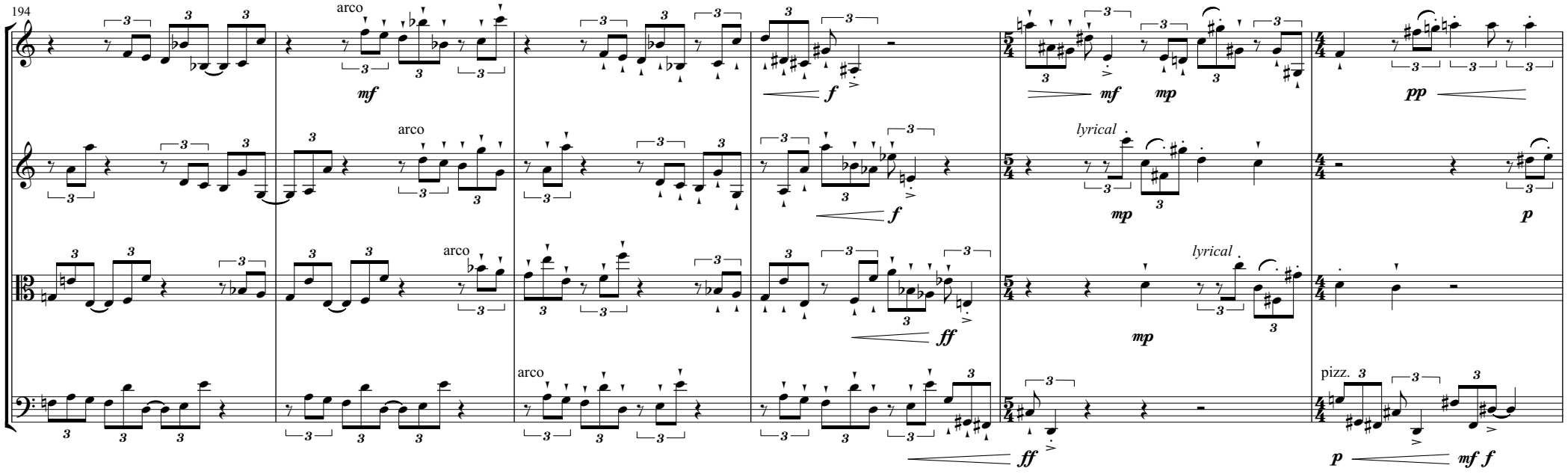
174




poco accel.
BB ♩ = 96 A positive thought...
poco rit.
[♩ = 92] CC poco accel.
181
lyrical
pizz.
arco
♩ = 96
poco accel.
[♩ = 100]
♩ = 96
poco accel.
188

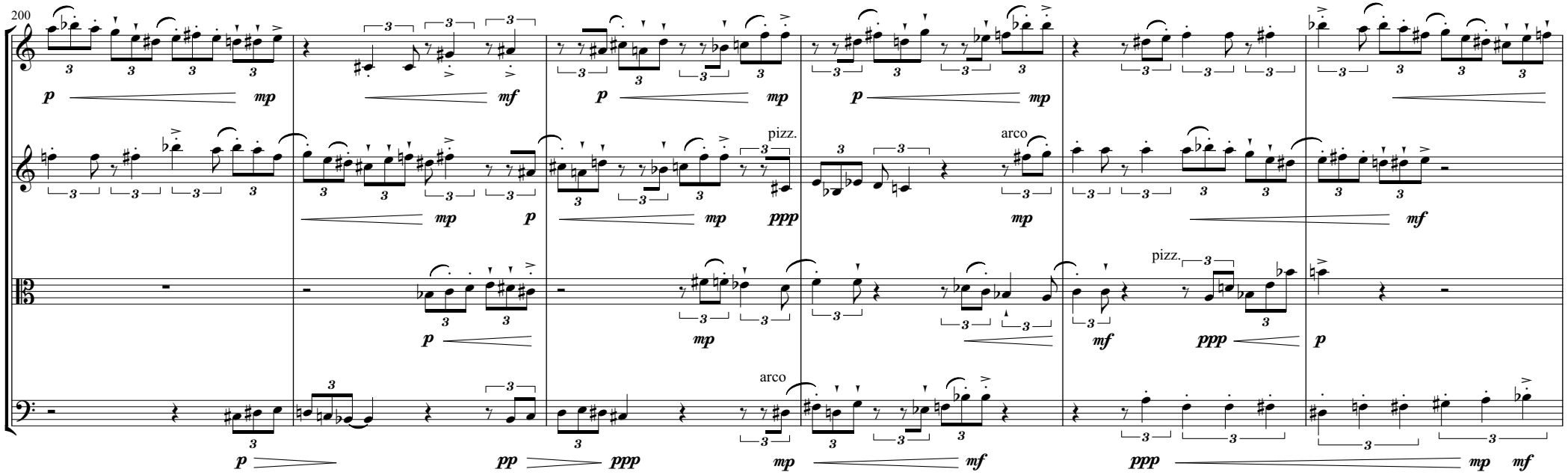
DD ♩ = 104 **A brief wave of positive energy...** **poco rit.** ♩ = 96 **poco rit.**

194



EE ♩ = 88 **A loss of concentration...** **poco accel.** [♩ = 92]

200



rit. [♩ = 76] poco rit. [♩ = 60] accel. ♩ = 88 poco rit.

206

lyrical

arco

FF ♩ = 84 A moment of clarity... rit. [♩ = 60] ♩ = 84 poco accel. [♩ = 92] rit. [♩ = 76] ♩ = 92 poco accel.

213

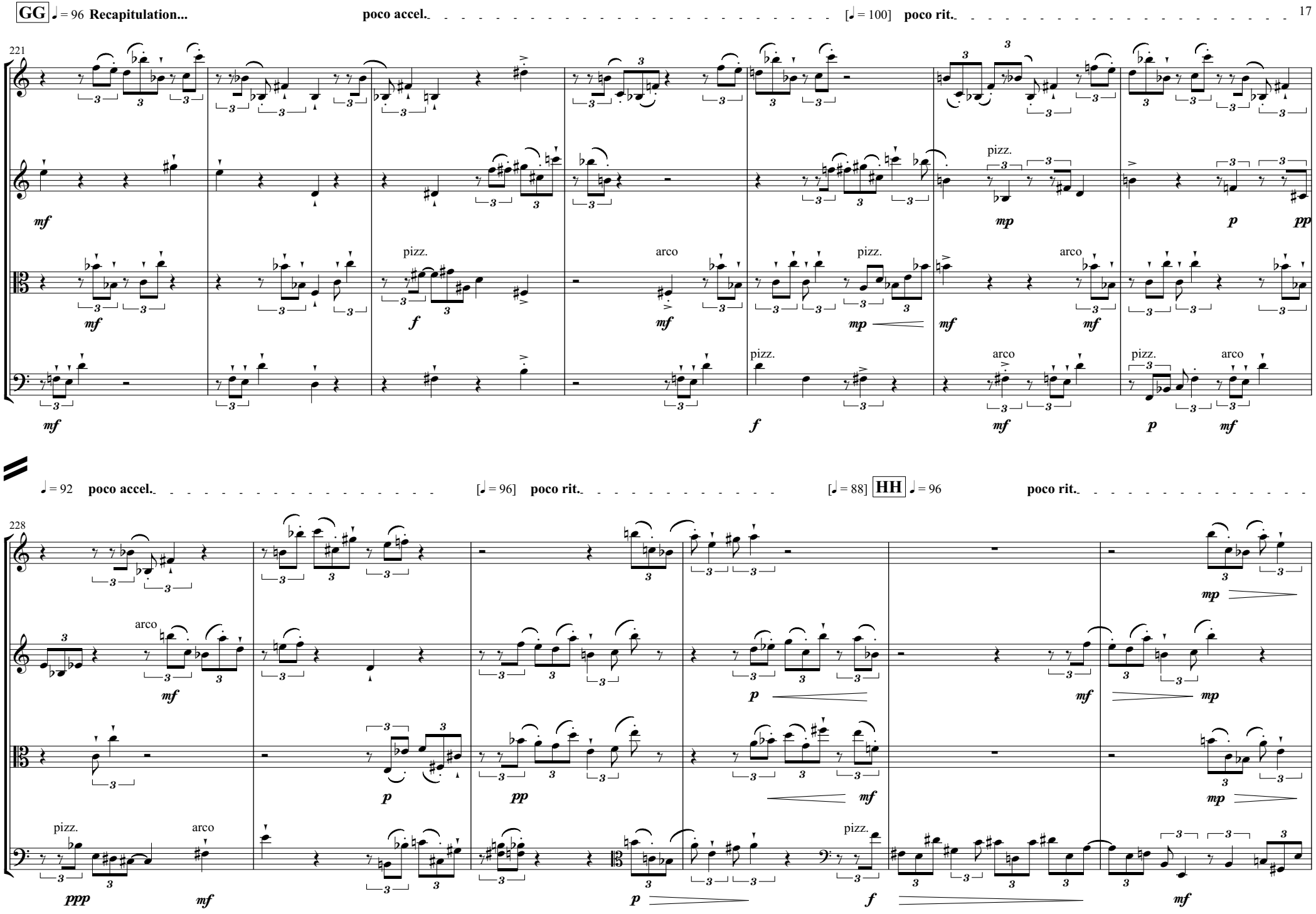
lyrical

lyrical

lyrical

pizz.

arco


GG ♩ = 96 Recapitulation...
poco accel.
[♩ = 100] poco rit.
221
pizz.
arco
♩ = 92 poco accel.
[♩ = 96] poco rit.
[♩ = 88] HH ♩ = 96
poco rit.
228

[♩ = 84] **poco rit.** [♩ = 76] **accel.** **II** ♩ = 92 **poco rit.** [♩ = 76]

234

p *pp* *ppp* *mp*

JJ ♩ = 88 **One final consideration...** **poco rit.** [♩ = 66]

241

mp *mf* pizz. *mf* *mp*

KK ♩ = 96 **Reprise...**

rit. [♩ = 72] **LL** ♩ = 92

248

arco

mp *mf* *mp* *mf* *mf* *mp* *mf* *f*

poco rit. [♩ = 46]

255

mf *f* *mf* *p* *pp* *ppp*

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