Continuoso Cycles and Continuum

(Three inflections of the past)

For string orchestra and harpsichord

Ian Percy

2015

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I. … And then they noticed the light …

Duration: ca. 5 minutes

Composed for *Gli Archi del Cherubino*

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This is a three-movement work conceived within a quasi-sinfonia form (fast-slow-fast) exploring the concept of pseudo-modulation within tonal stasis.

It was a delight when *Gli Archi del Cherubino* agreed to perform a new piece composed specifically for them at the Liverpool Hope *Cornerstone Arts Festival 2015*. Along with my friend and colleague (violinist-musicologist) Dr Alberto Sanna, I was involved in a recording project with the orchestra during the scorching summer of 2015 in L'Aquila, Italy and had thoroughly enjoyed the visit, their company and the musical memories I retained.

Respectful of the repertoire usually performed by the ensemble, this piece was composed upon a sequence of consonant chords, which expand at each iteration to introduce the first six pitches of the cycle of fourths: C-F-Bb-Eb-Ab-Db. Although the score was realised entirely in Ab, the expanding harmony within the first movement creates pseudo-modulation through the keys of F, Bb, Eb and Ab, whilst blurring the sense of 'home tonic' and producing notation devoid of accidentals.

Building chords upon the whole-tone and perfect-fourth intervals (instead of the largely triadic harmony the ensemble are used to) shaped modal and consonant phrases sympathetic to their usual repertoire, whilst producing original music that is clearly a product of the twenty-first century. The resolution to (and prominence of) the home-tone heard in the final stages of the first movement caused initial concern for the composer, but seemed appropriate within the context of the subtitle for the work: *Three inflections of the past*.

Once composed, the score was transposed up a semi-tone in order to take advantage of the open strings of the instruments and the increased acoustic resonance that brings from the orchestra. Writing the score in A also eliminated the need to retune the harpsichord before each performance. Scores and parts are available in both keys.

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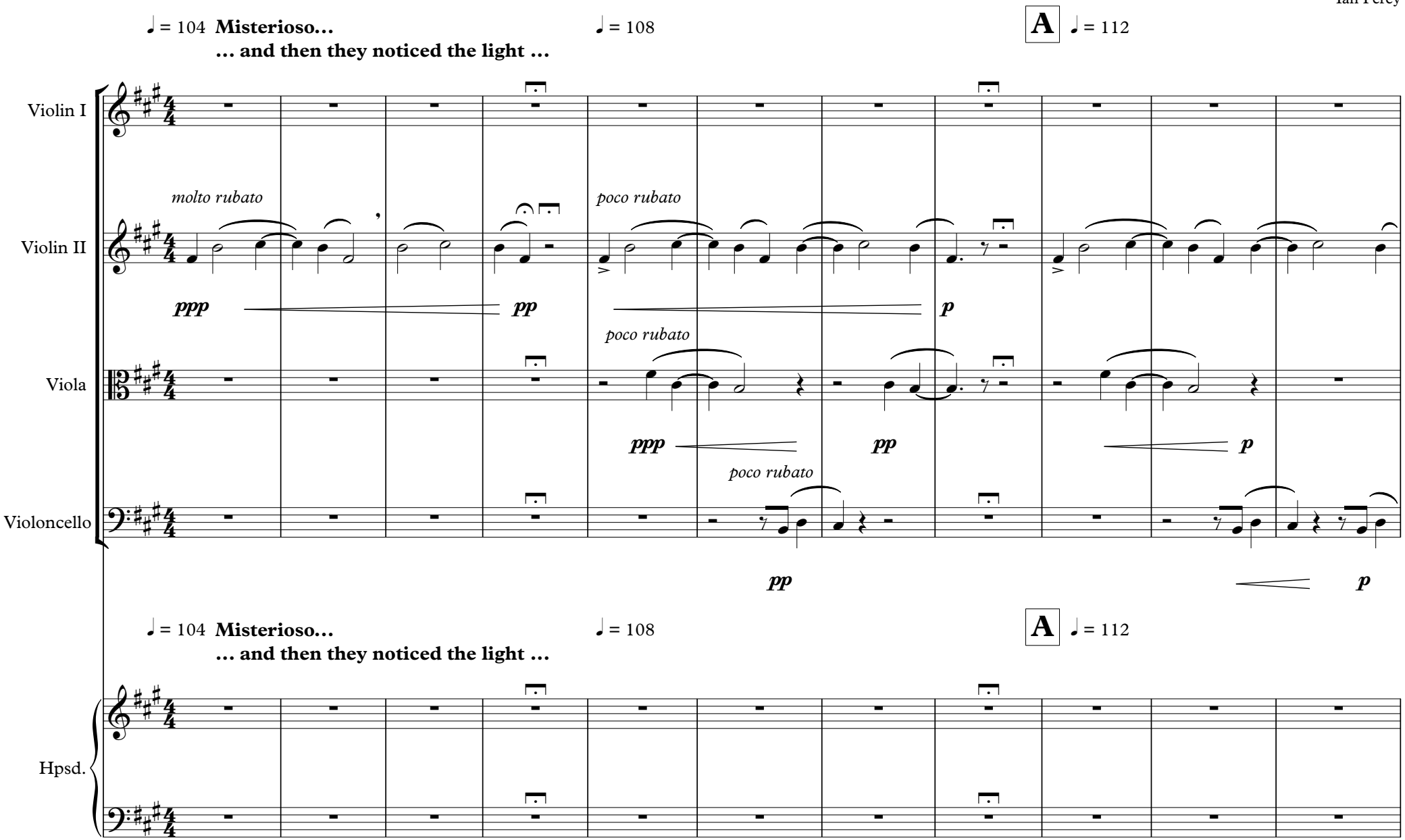


B **…With increasing intensity …**

12

poco rubato

pp *p* *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp*

B **…With increasing intensity …**

embellish, expand, reduce and extemporise ad. lib.

C **… In cycles of momentum and release …** **poco accel.**

22

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

mf *p* *mp* *p*

mf *f* *mp*

C **… In cycles of momentum and release …** **poco accel.**

D ♩ = 116 **… and the light grew stronger …** **poco accel.** ♩ = 120

31

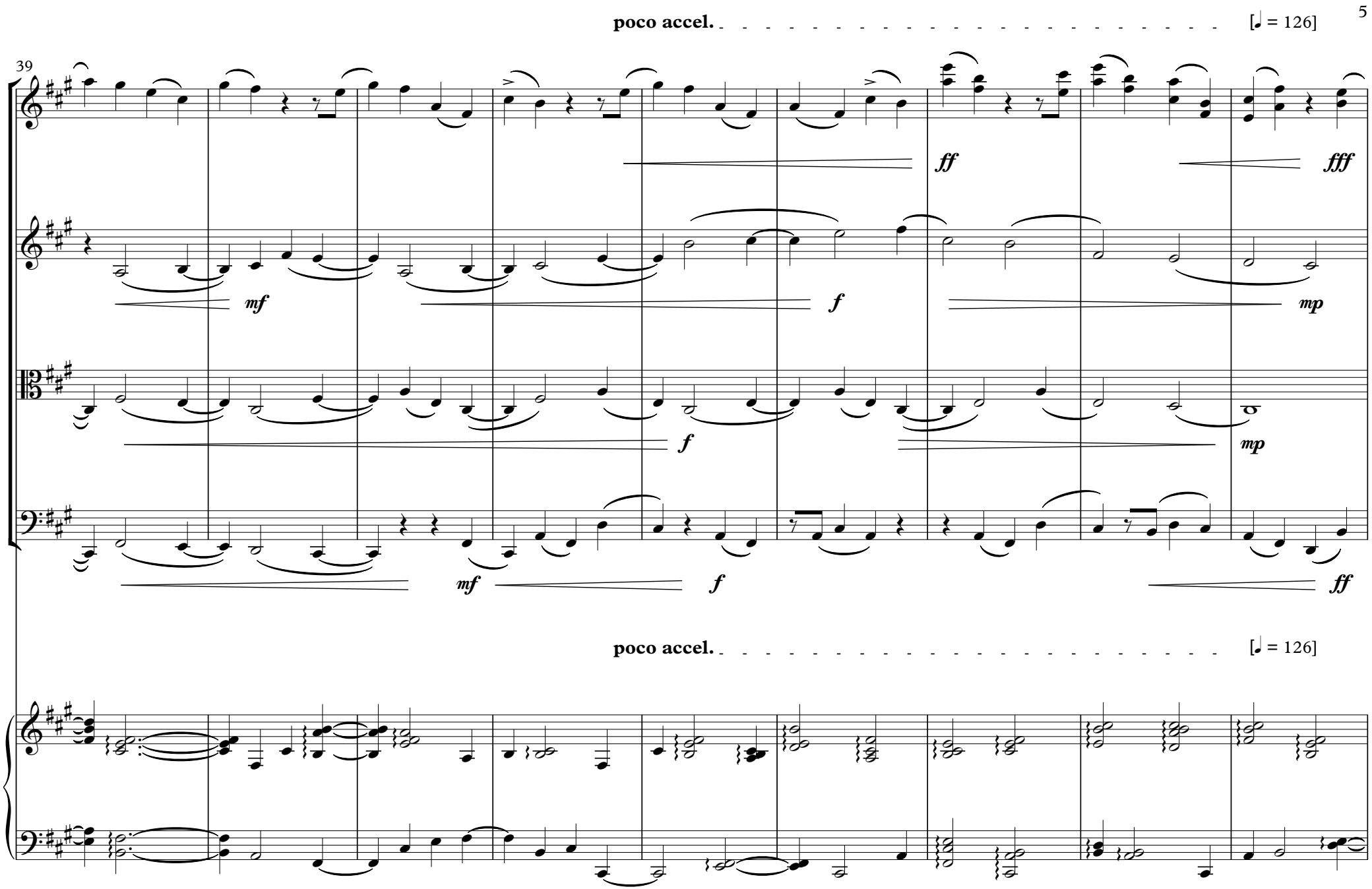
mf *f* *ff* *f*

mf *f* *p*

mp *mf* *p*

mf *mp*

D ♩ = 116 **… and the light grew stronger …** **poco accel.** ♩ = 120


poco accel.
[♩ = 126]
39
ff
fff
mf
f
mp
f
mp
mf
f
ff
poco accel.
[♩ = 126]

E ♩ = 112 **… A temporary release of tension …**

F **… With increasing anxiety …**

48

mp *mf* *f*

mp *mf* *f*

mp *mf* *f* *mf*

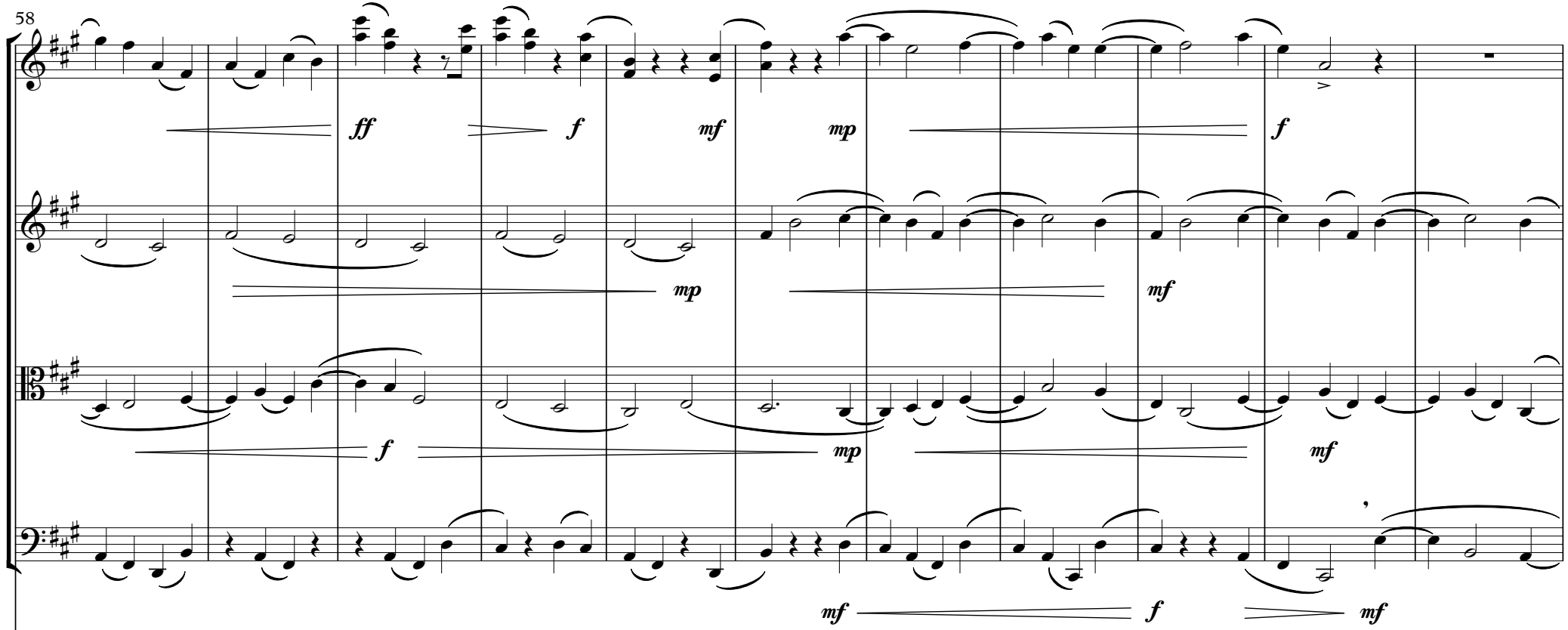
mp *mf* *f*

E ♩ = 112 **… A temporary release of tension …**

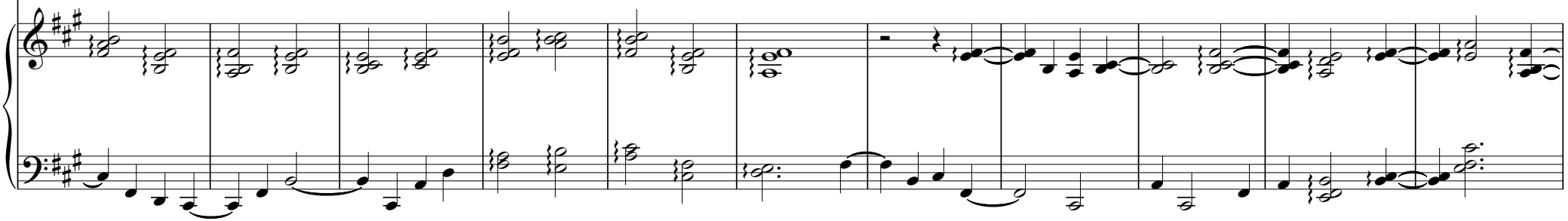
F **… With increasing anxiety …**

poco accel. [♩. = 120] **G** ♩ = 112 **… Sometimes we just have to 'let it go' (and go with it) …**

58



poco accel. [♩. = 120] **G** ♩ = 112 **… Sometimes we just have to 'let it go' (and go with it) …**



H **… In consonant counterpoint and confident continuum …** **poco accel.**

69

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

f *mf* *f*

H **… In consonant counterpoint and confident continuum …** **poco accel.**

♩ = 116

I **… Chorus and continuum …**

81

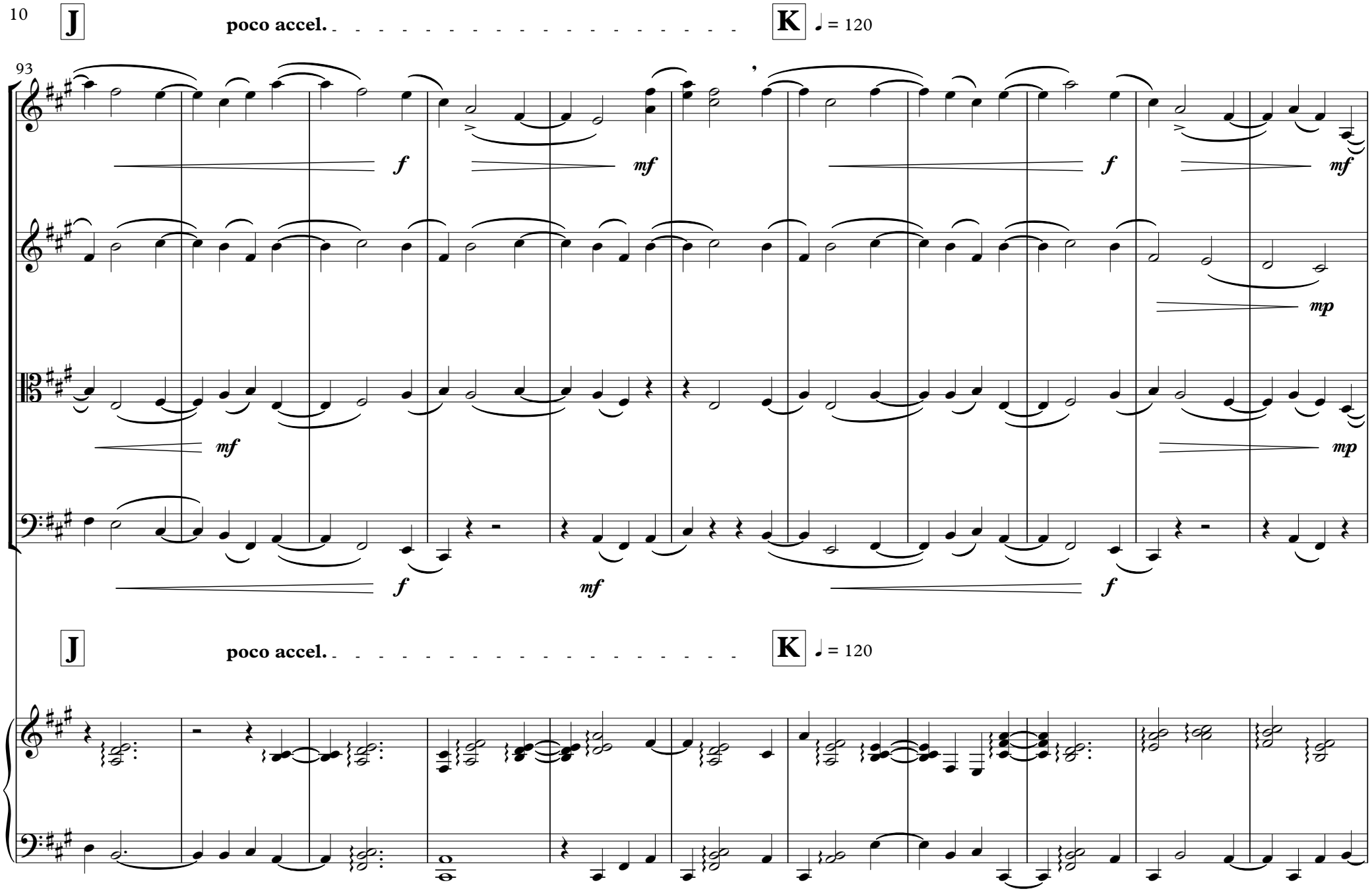
f *mf* *f* *mf*

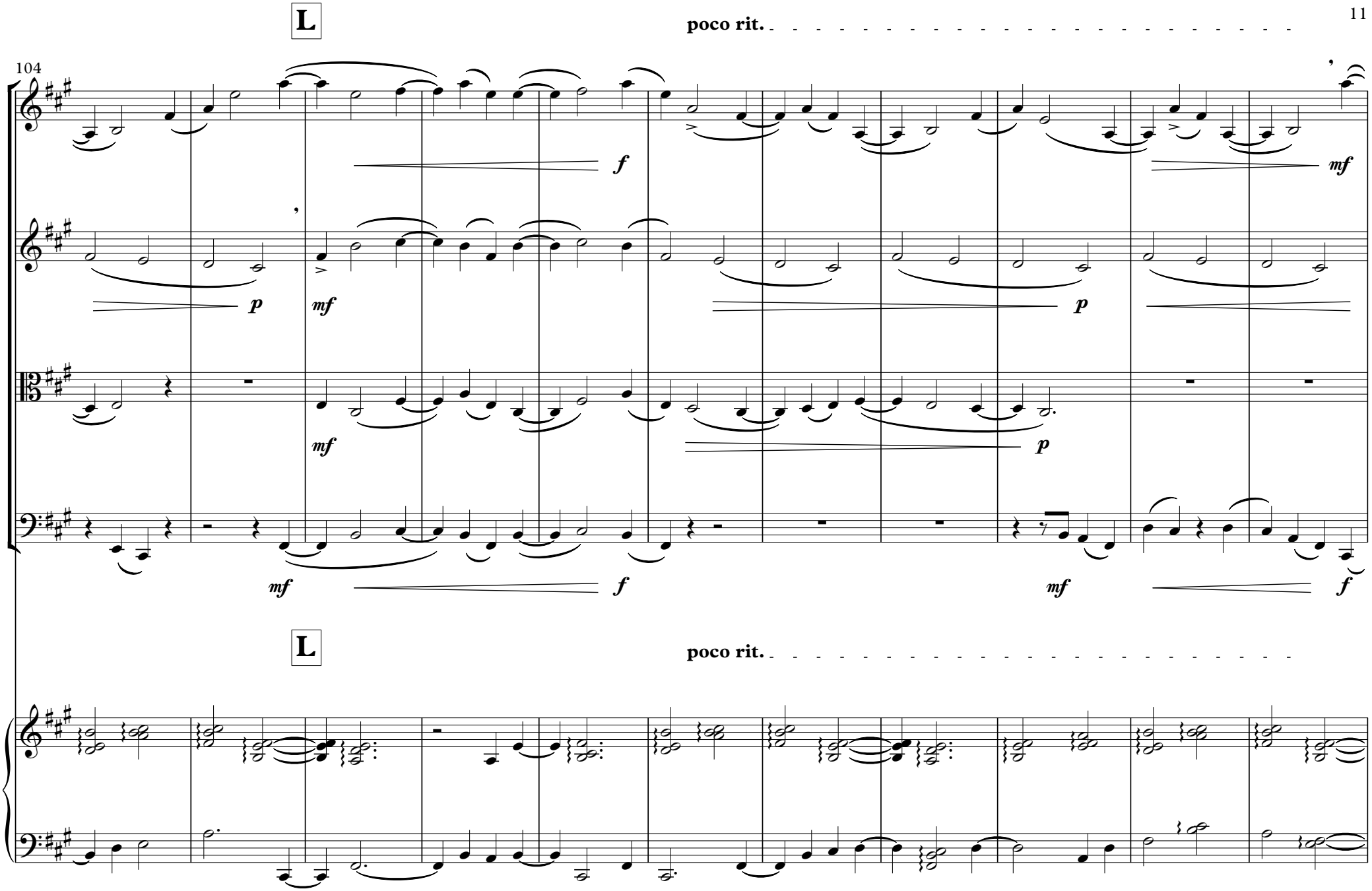
f *mf* *mp*

ff *mf* *f* *mf*

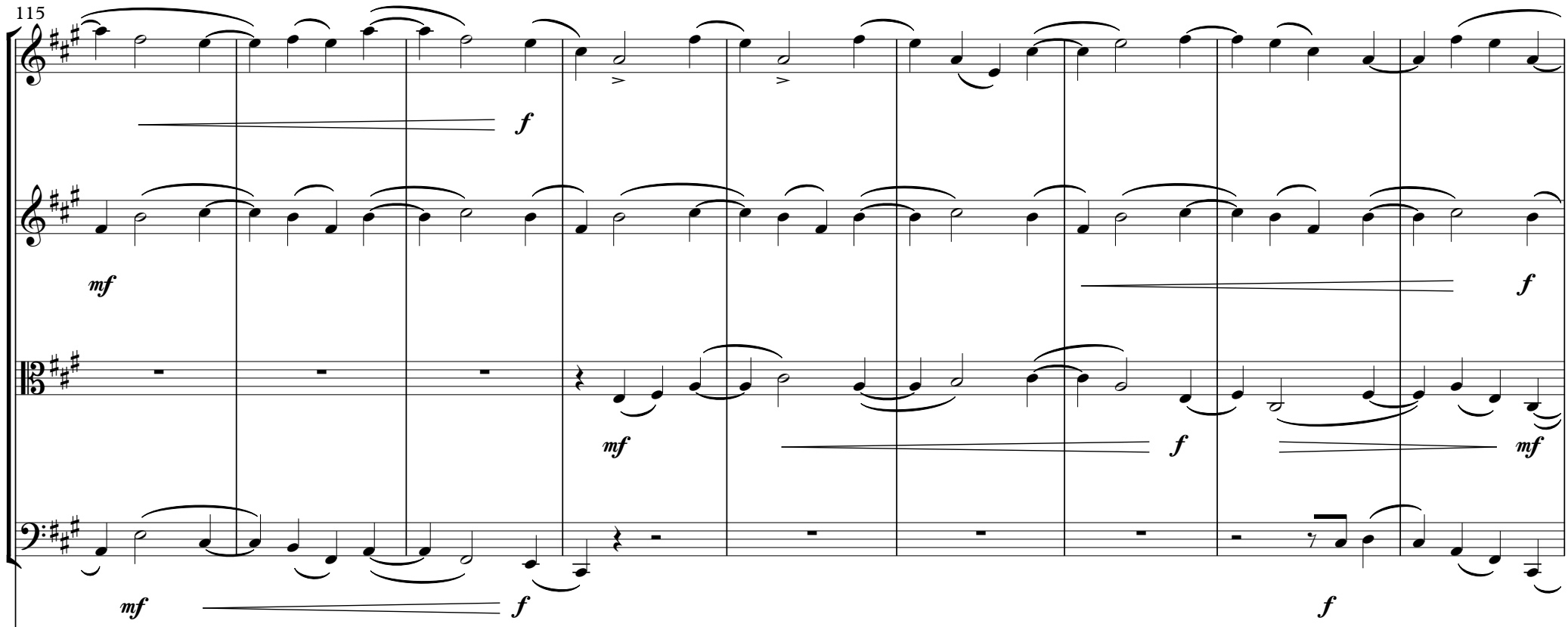
♩ = 116

I **… Chorus and continuum …**

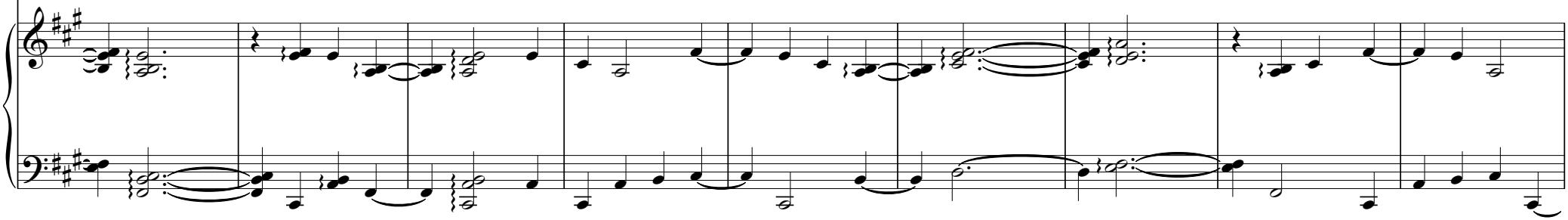

J
poco accel.
K
♩ = 120
93
f
mf
f
mf
mf
mp
mp
f
mf
f
J
poco accel.
K
♩ = 120


L
poco rit.
104
f
mf
p
mf
p
mf
mf
f
mf
f
L
poco rit.

M ♩ = 116 **… Searching for an exit …**



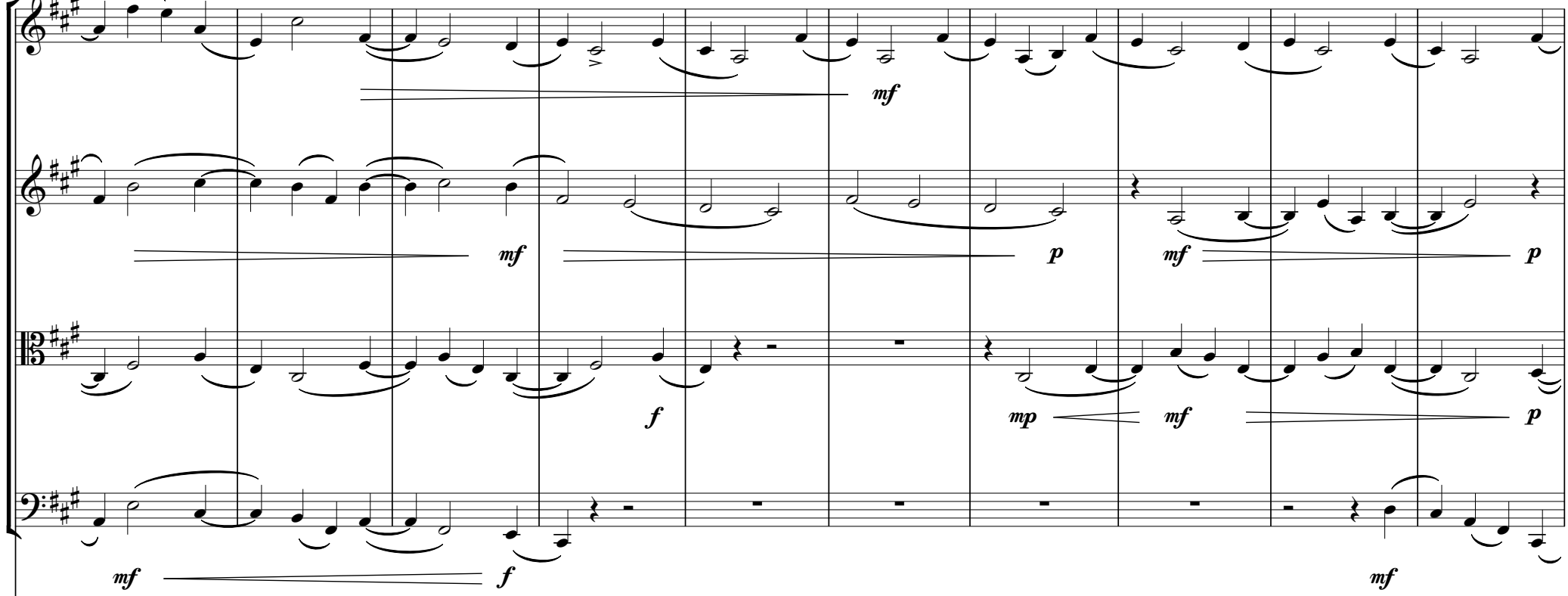
M ♩ = 116 **… Searching for an exit …**



poco rit. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

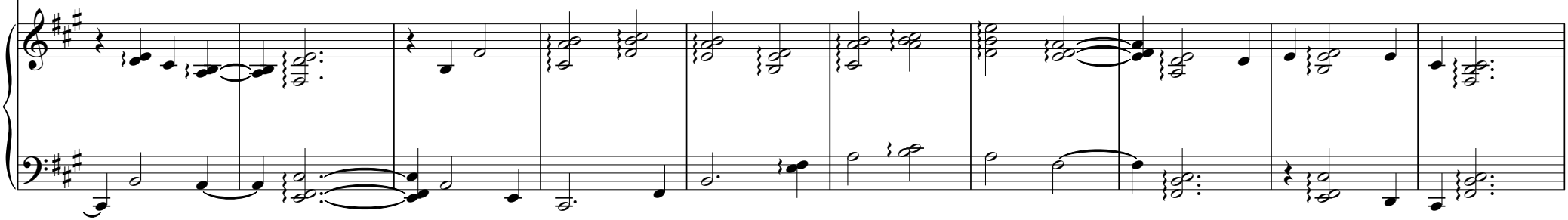
N ♩ = 112 **... An opening emerges ...**
(a closing appears) ...

124



poco rit. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

N ♩ = 112 **... An opening emerges ...**
(a closing appears) ...



134

O **poco rit.** ♩ = 96

p pp ppp

p pp pp ppp

pizz. *molto rubato*

pp p pp

p mp p pp ppp

O **poco rit.** ♩ = 96

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