... THEY TALK ABOUT ...

~ DIALOGUE FOR ORGAN ~

ON A POEM BY NAOMI SHIHAB NYE

MUSIC BY:
JORDAN ALEXANDER KEY

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~ DIALOGUE FOR ORGAN ~

ON A POEM BY NAOMI SHIHAB NYE

Solo Organ

for
The Riverwalk International
Organ Composition Competition

MUSIC BY:
JORDAN ALEXANDER KEY

Duration ca. 6.5 minutes

The Way They Talk About Art

You'd think it was a giant
with a vague face

a face you recognize
but can't really describe

everyone has seen it
at one time or another
vanishing into the hills
mysterious Bigfoot

leaving footprints
so infatuating
they spend millions of dollars
to lure him out

while all the art I've ever known
is very small
lives in miniature caves in the hillside
and comes out for crumbs.

~*Naomi Shihab Nye*

REGISTRATION SUGGESTIONS:

Though this piece is written for a very particular instrument, given I wish the work would be potentially performed on any organ, there are no particular registrations suggested. However, I will give some general suggestions, which may or may not be taken into consideration. Ultimately, I trust the taste and orchestration capabilities of the organist. All expression markings (discrete and dynamic markings) are suggestions, which can be altered according to the capabilities of the instruments and considered taste of the organist in accordance with the style and character of the piece. Below are some general suggestions.

Suggestions:

1. General comments applicable to any organ:
    a. All staccato marks need to be taken into consideration with the instrument and space. The staccato should not sound too short as to sound foreshortened or awkwardly terse. There should simply be a sense of detaché playing on repeated notes or where there are staccato markings. Where there are slurs, one should play less detaché and more legato. Naturally, the shortness of the staccatos and the degree of attachment in the slurs will vary depending on spatial reverberance.
    b. Where there are tenuto markings, the note should be ever so slightly stretched. It should not feel artificial, but like a slight and natural rubato.
2. If on simple organs:
    a. The work is not intimate, but bombastic. Thus, if changes in registration are not available, I suggest a bright and somewhat loud character throughout.
3. If on more complex organs:
    a. The work is not intimate, but bombastic and somewhat quirky. However, the piece has moments where there can be a dynamic pull-back for dramatic effect. If the organist sees fit, there are many possibilities for registration change (and use of swell/crescendo pedal) to allow for dramatic shifts and effects. I fully encourage the organist to explore these possibilities if the instrument allows.
    b. The piece should be played on multiple manuals (and perhaps memory settings) with various sounds if the organist and instrument can facilitate this. I can and did imagine various instrumental choirs between the left and right hands (sometimes one with a solo reed and one on something like accompanimental flutes and/or principles). Thus, look for opportunities for soloistic, echo, and general orchestration changes. In my own organ playing, I try to be as colorful as my skills allow. I would be thrilled to hear this work with many, vibrant, colorful, and dramatic changes in timbre as we also shift dynamically through tonal spaces.
        i. To such ends, if there is a rank that is out of tune or generally gruff, such a rank would be ideal and should be included!
        ii. Use as many odd sounding reeds in their uncomfortable registers as possible (e.g., Dulzan or Contrabassoon in extreme low/high range)
        iii. There are times where I suggest playing with only ranksthat are high mixture or mutations that have unclear pitch distinction. The notated pitches in the score then become a percussive color effect rather than the pitches as notated. If such mixture and mutations are not available, I suggest using a light and high pitches flute rank.
        iv. Even specialized stops like the Zymbelsten are not sacrilegious. Be creative but use good taste always!

... they talk about ...

on a poem by

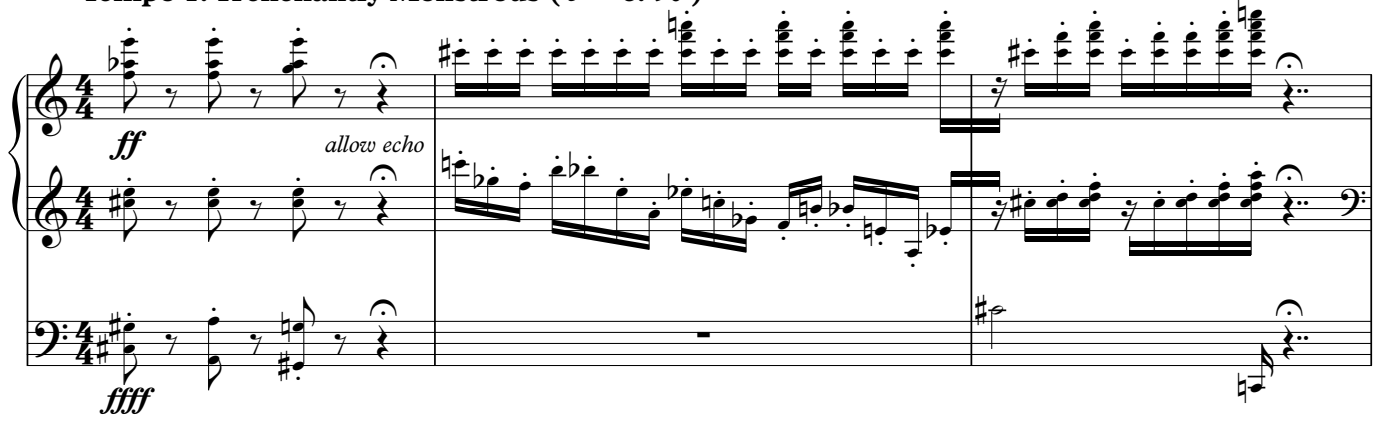
- Naomi Shihab Nye -

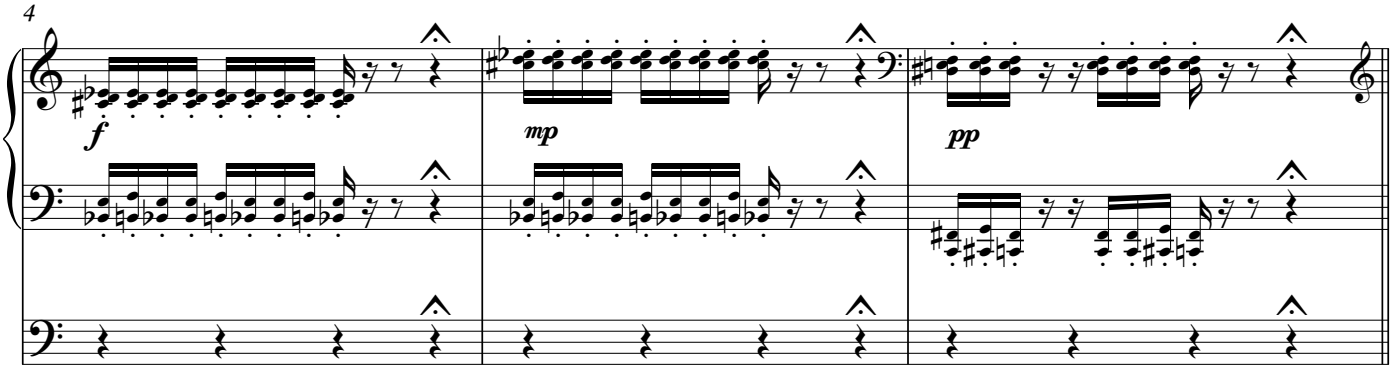
for the

Riverwalk International Organ Composition Competition

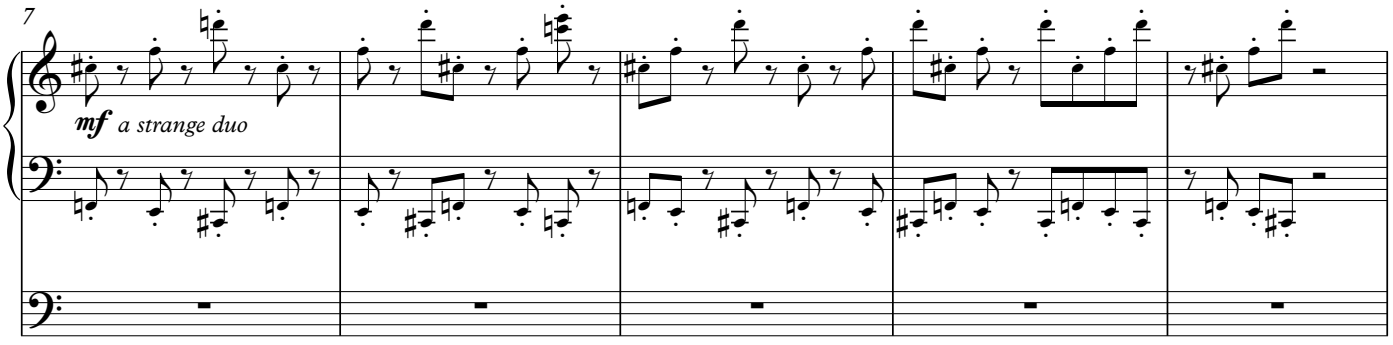
Jordan Alexander Key
November 2021

Tempo 1: Trenchantly Monstrous (♩ = c. 90)





Tempo 2: Mechanical and Furtive (♩ = c. 120)



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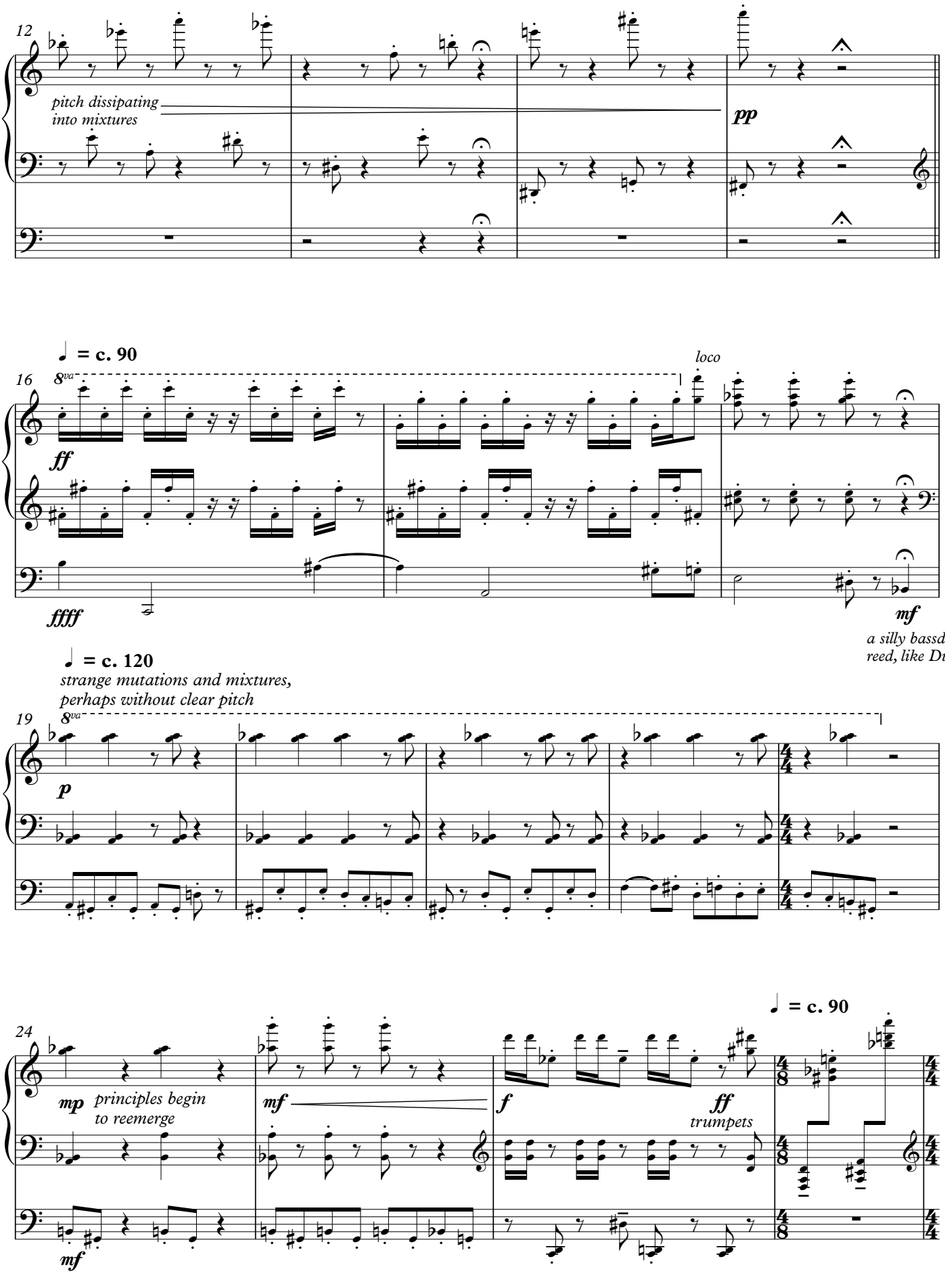
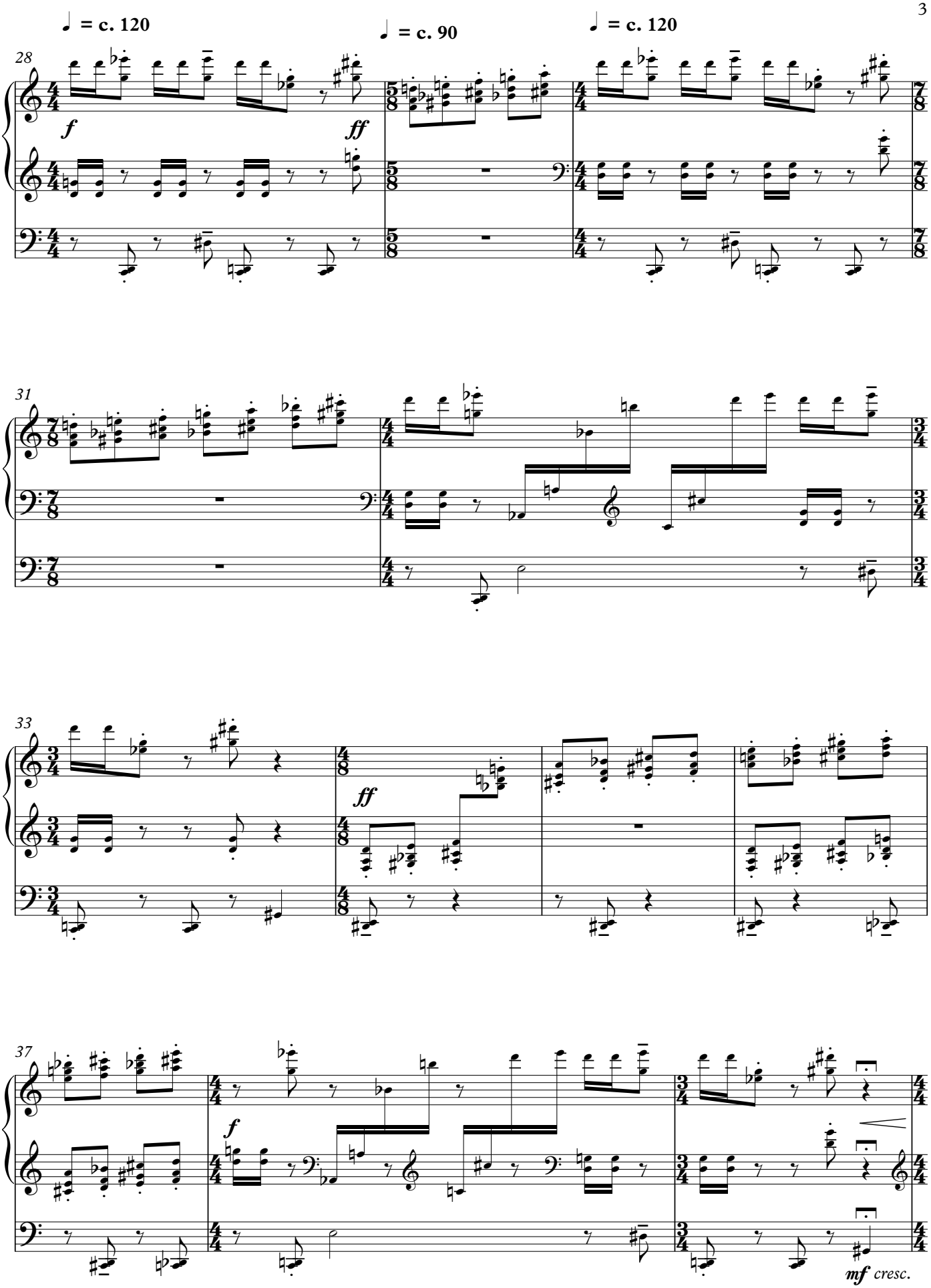
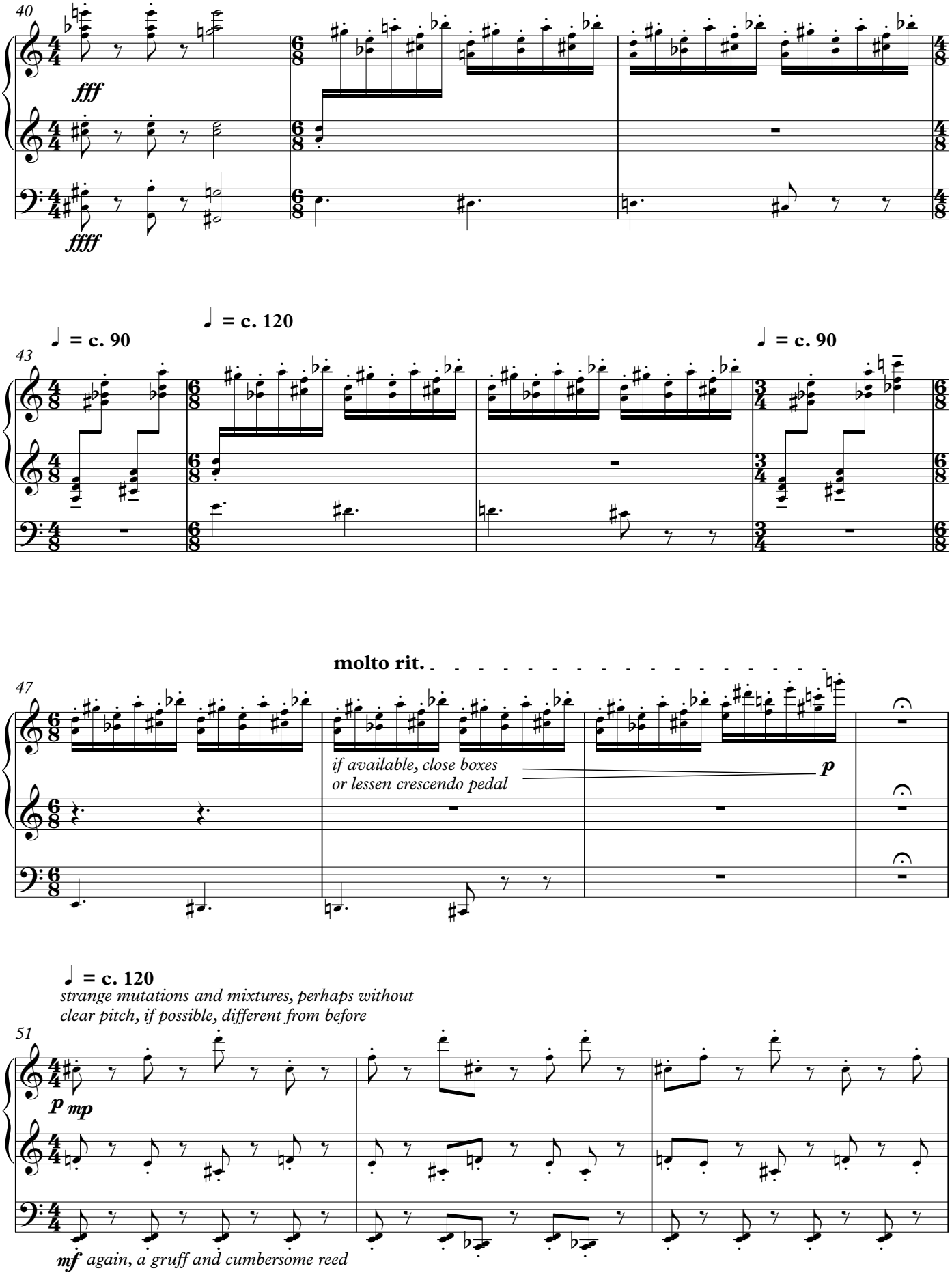
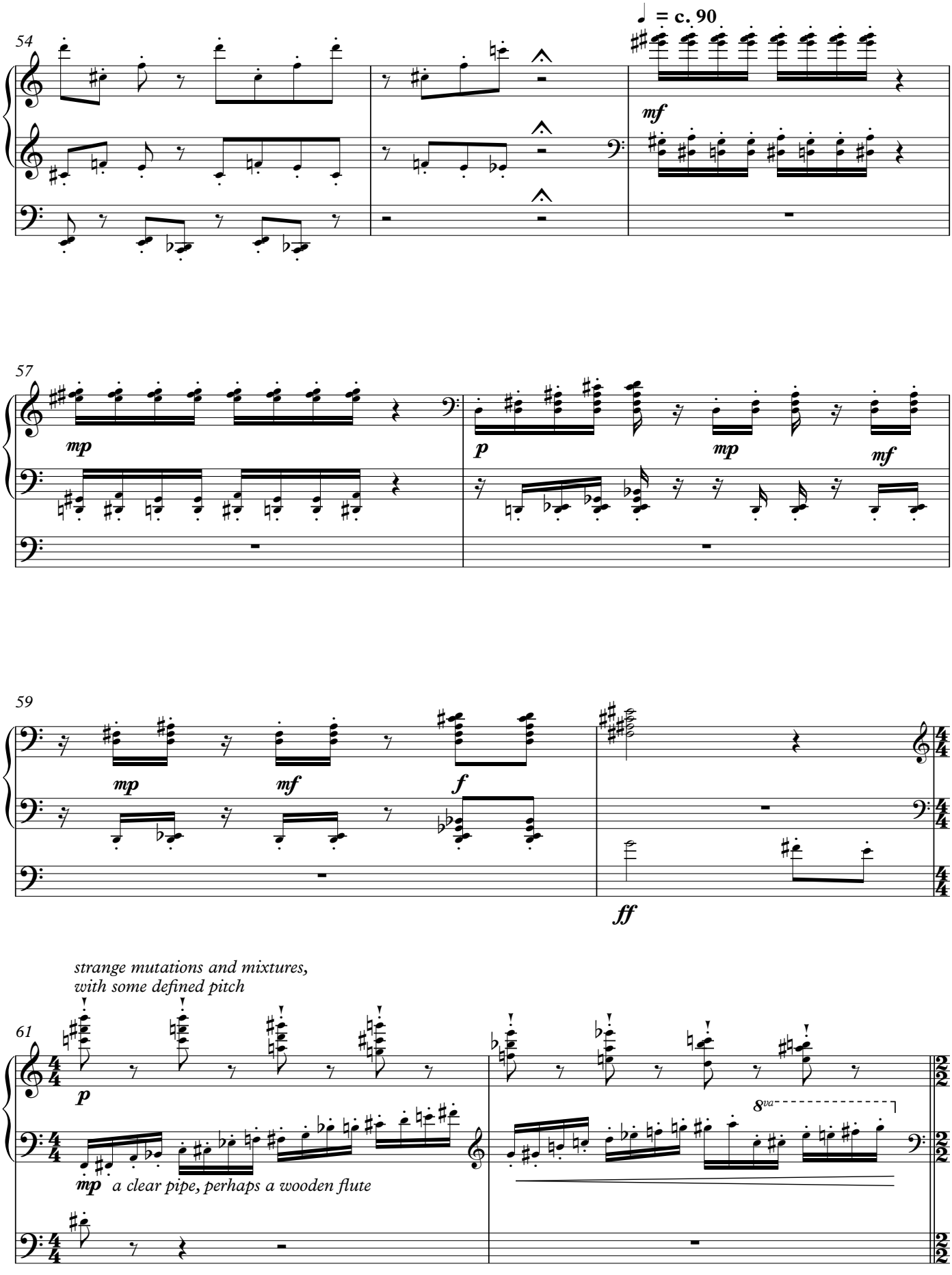
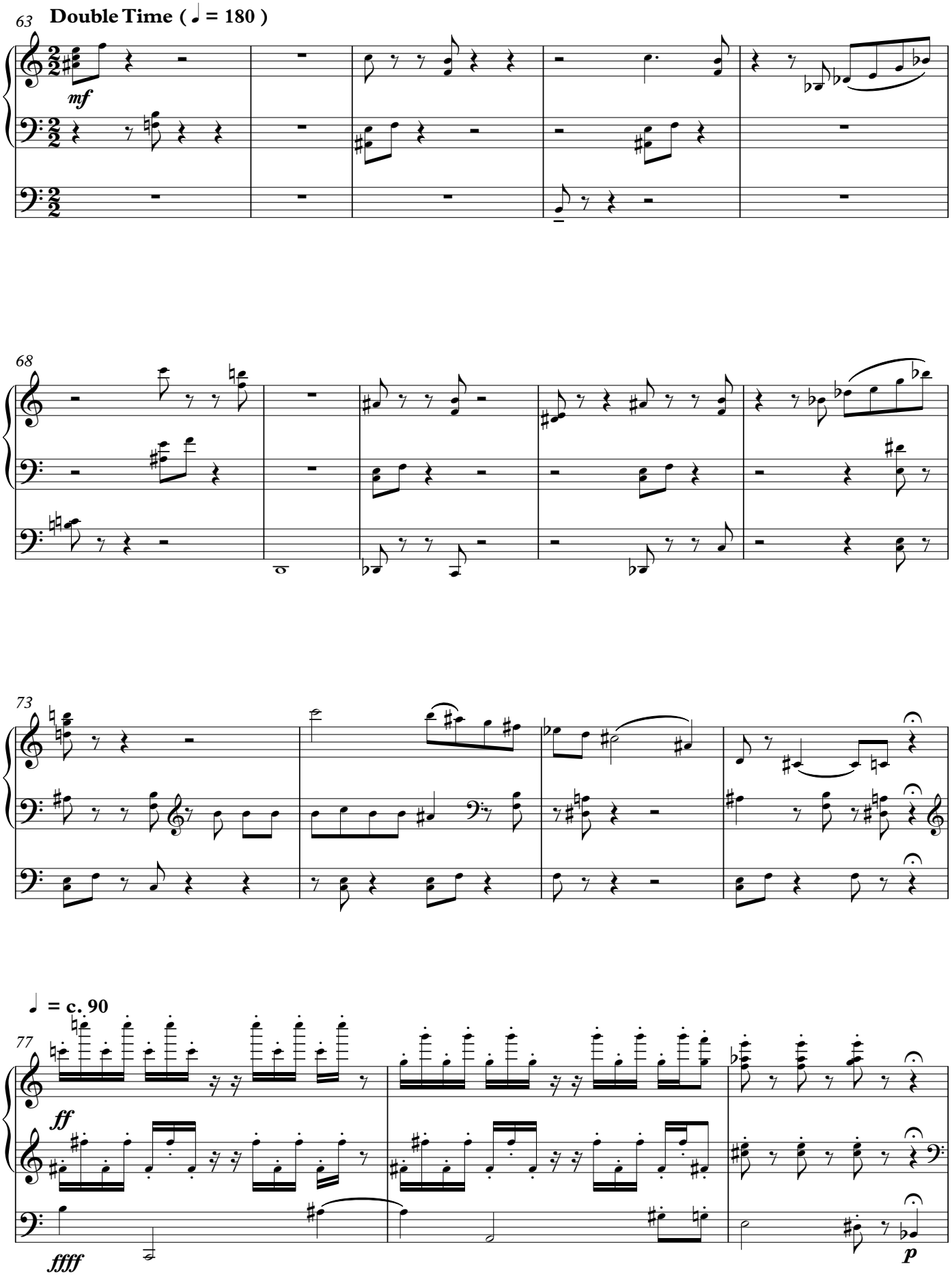
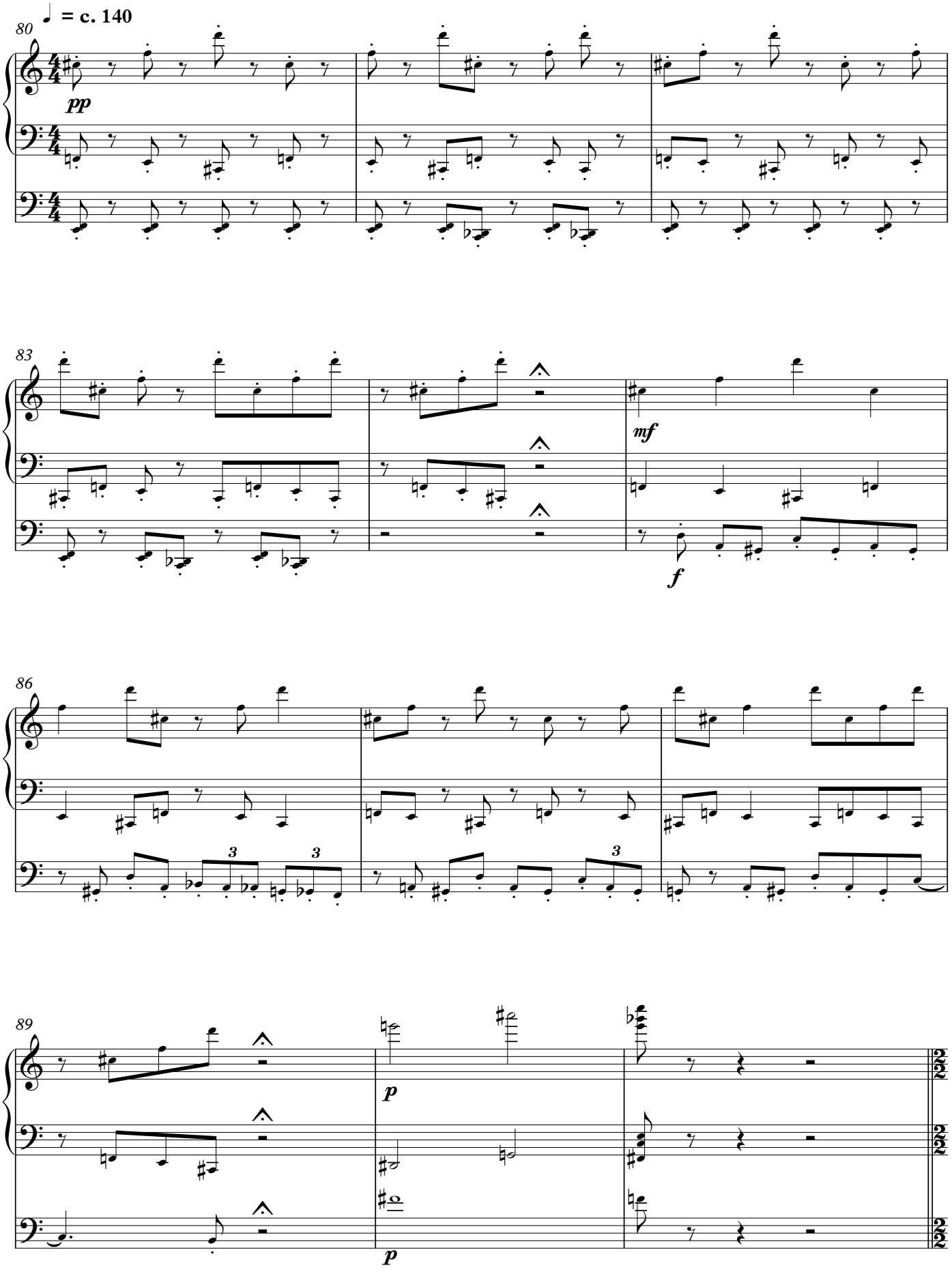

12
pitch dissipating into mixtures
pp
♩ = c. 90
16
8va
loco
ff
ffff
mf
a silly bassdouble reed, like Dulzan
♩ = c. 120
strange mutations and mixtures, perhaps without clear pitch
19
8va
p
24
mp
principles begin to reemerge
mf
f
ff
trumpets
♩ = c. 90

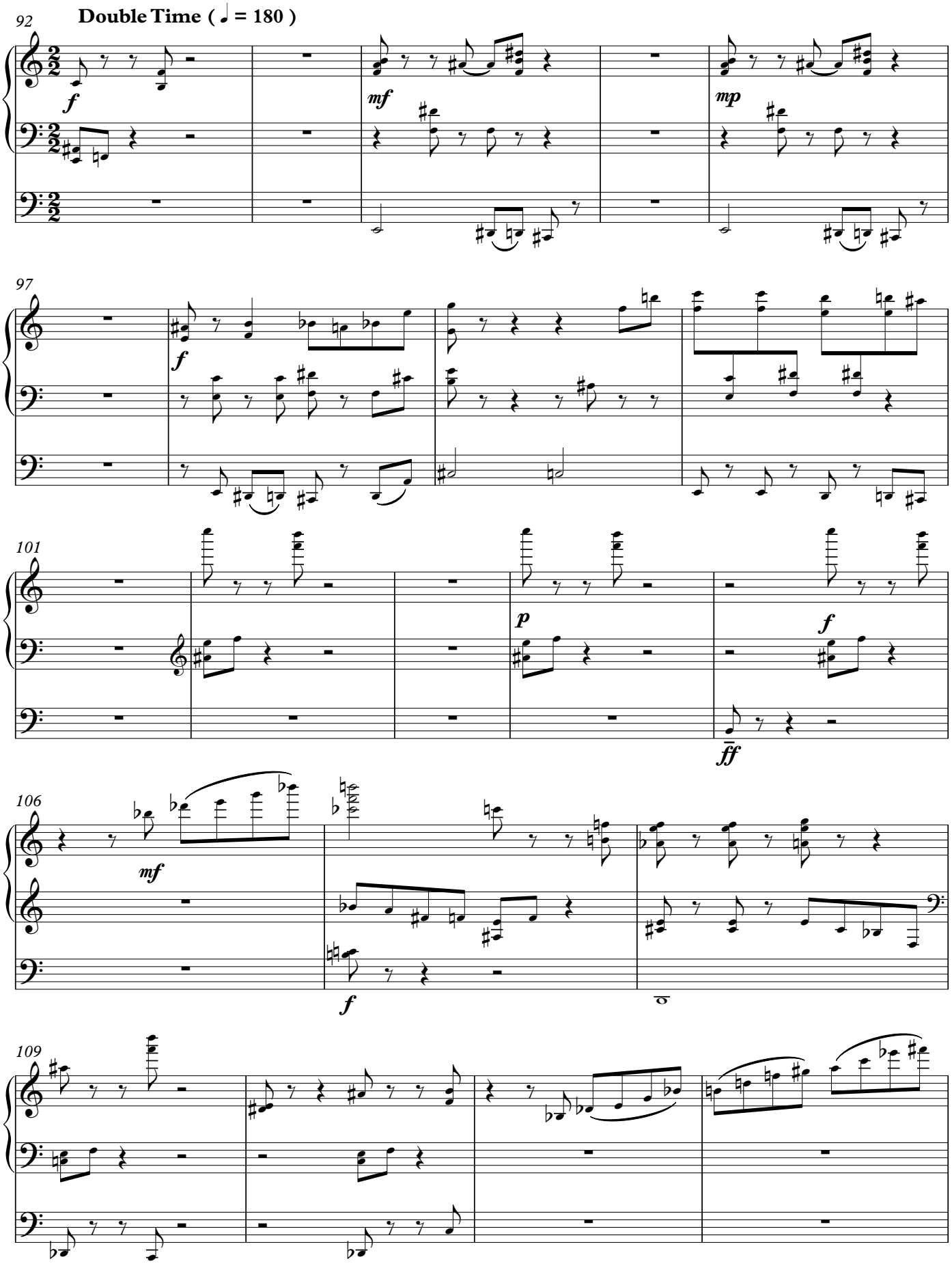

♩ = c. 120
♩ = c. 90
♩ = c. 120
28
f
ff
31
33
ff
37
f
mf cresc.

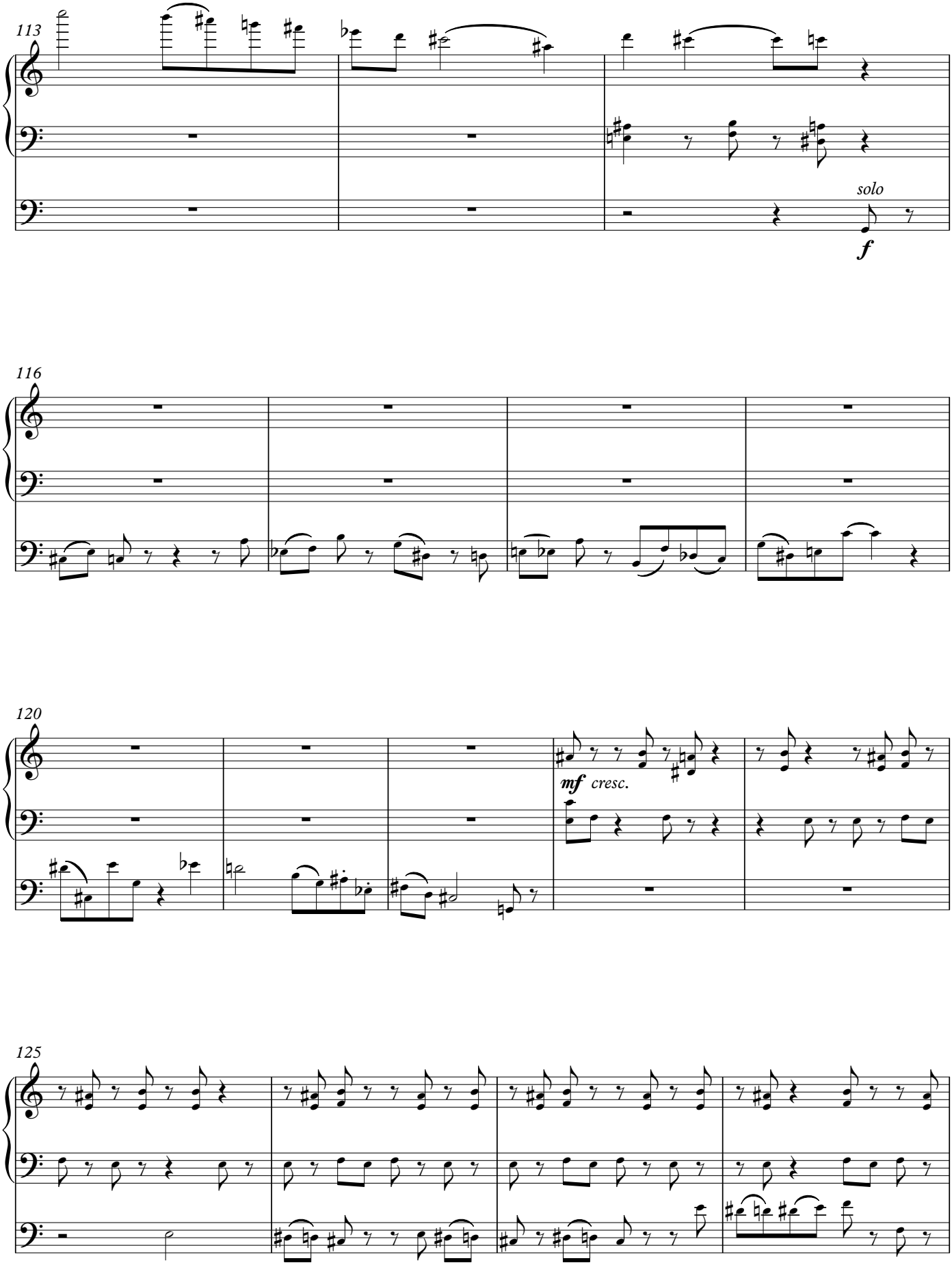

40
fff
ffff
♩ = c. 90
♩ = c. 120
43
♩ = c. 90
molto rit.
47
if available, close boxes
or lessen crescendo pedal
p
♩ = c. 120
strange mutations and mixtures, perhaps without
clear pitch, if possible, different from before
51
p mp
mf again, a gruff and cumbersome reed

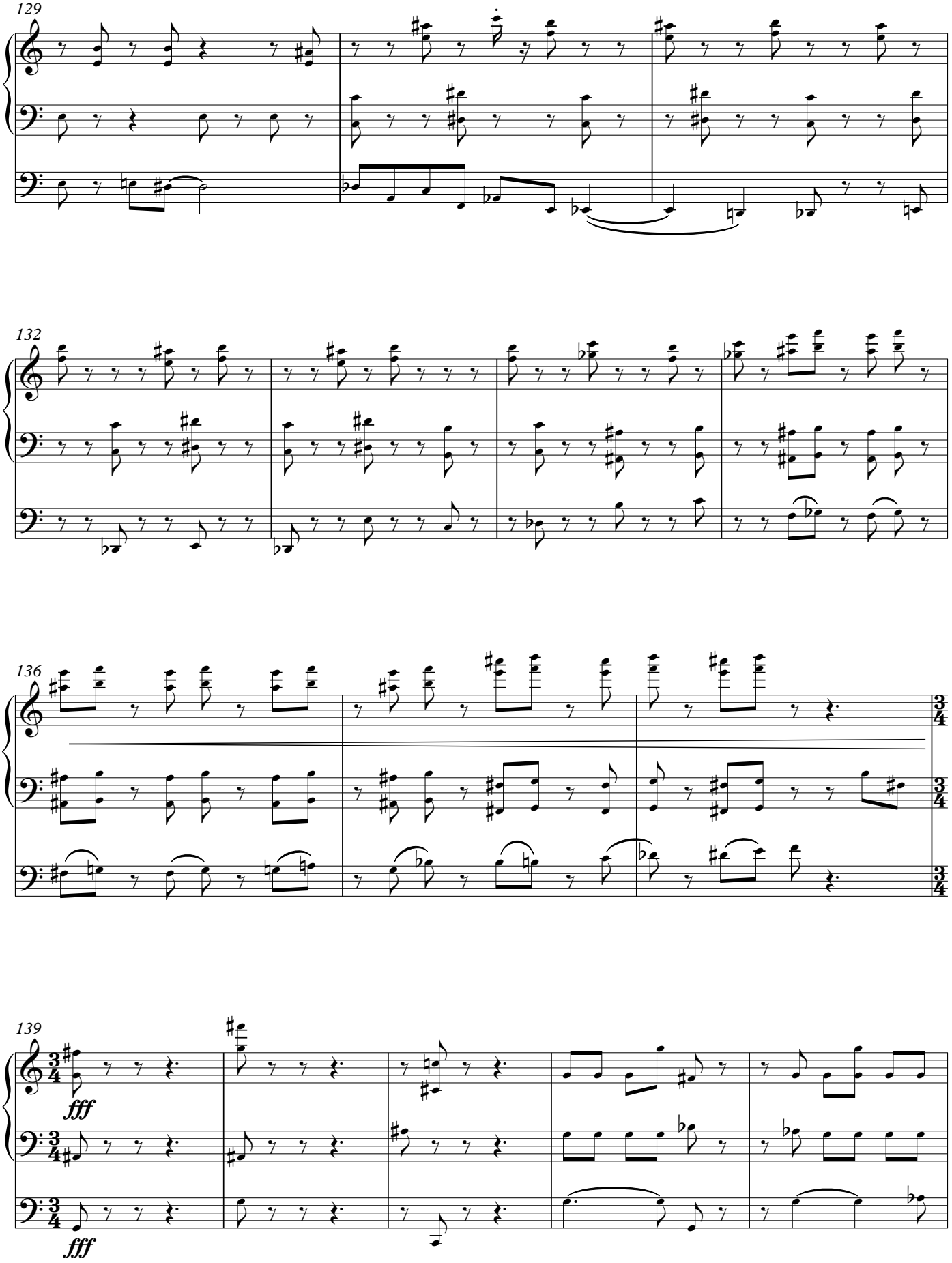

54
♩ = c. 90
mf
57
mp
p
mp
mf
59
mp
mf
f
ff
strange mutations and mixtures,
with some defined pitch
61
p
8va
mp a clear pipe, perhaps a wooden flute

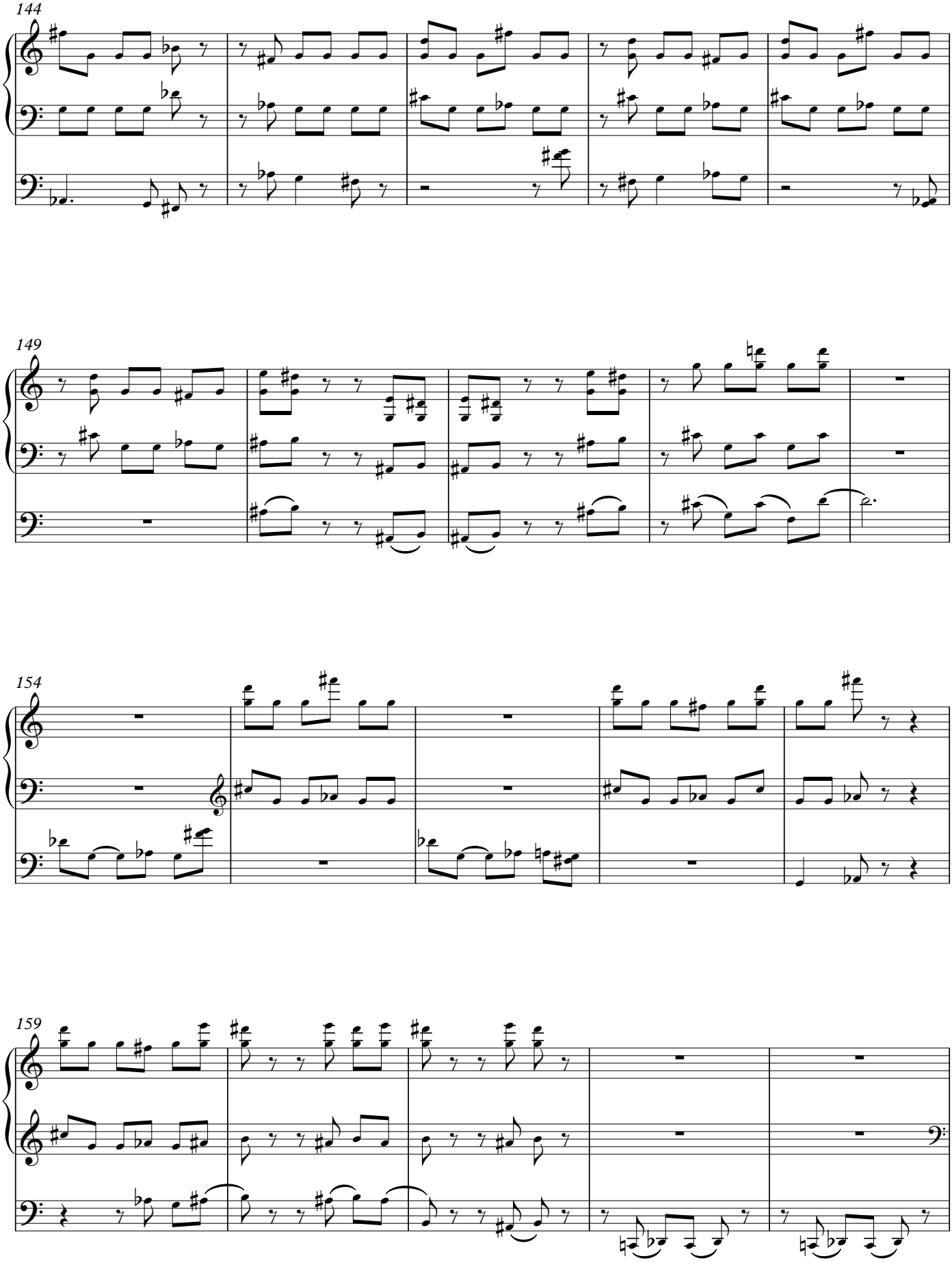

63
Double Time (♩ = 180)
mf
68
73
♩ = c. 90
77
ff
ffff
p

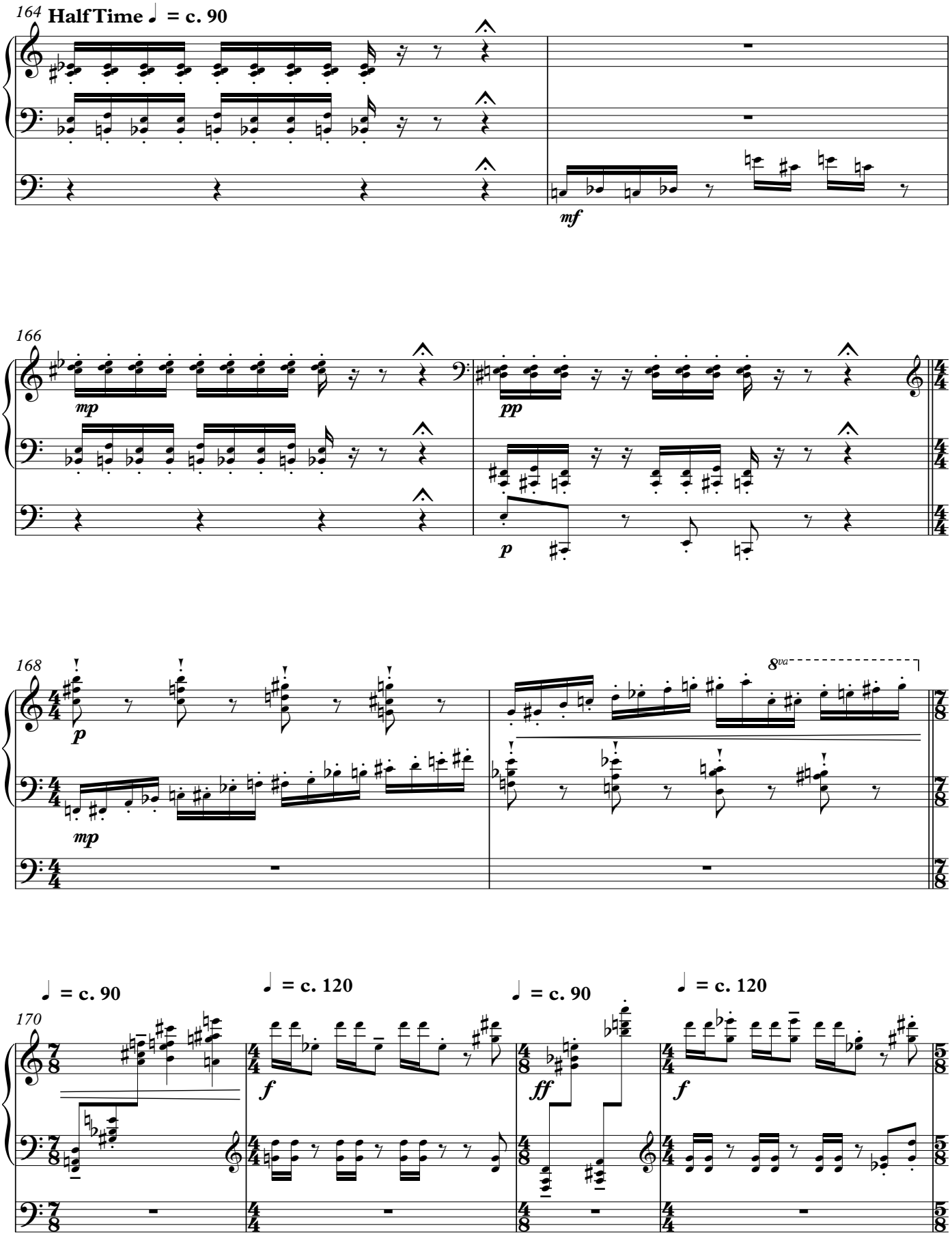

♩ = c. 140
80
pp
83
mf
f
86
3
3
3
89
p
p

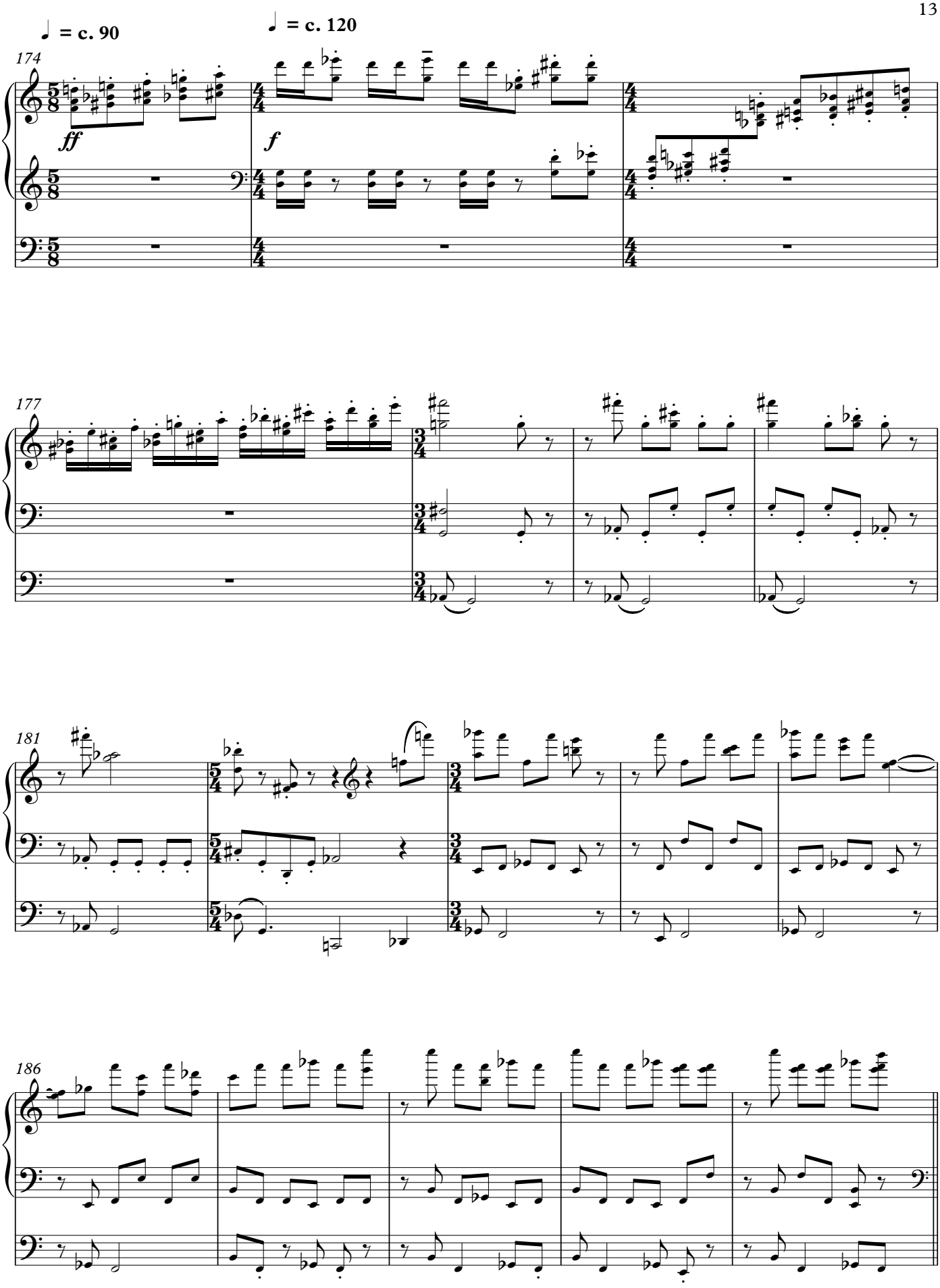

92
Double Time (♩ = 180)
f
mf
mp
97
f
101
p
f
ff
106
mf
f
109

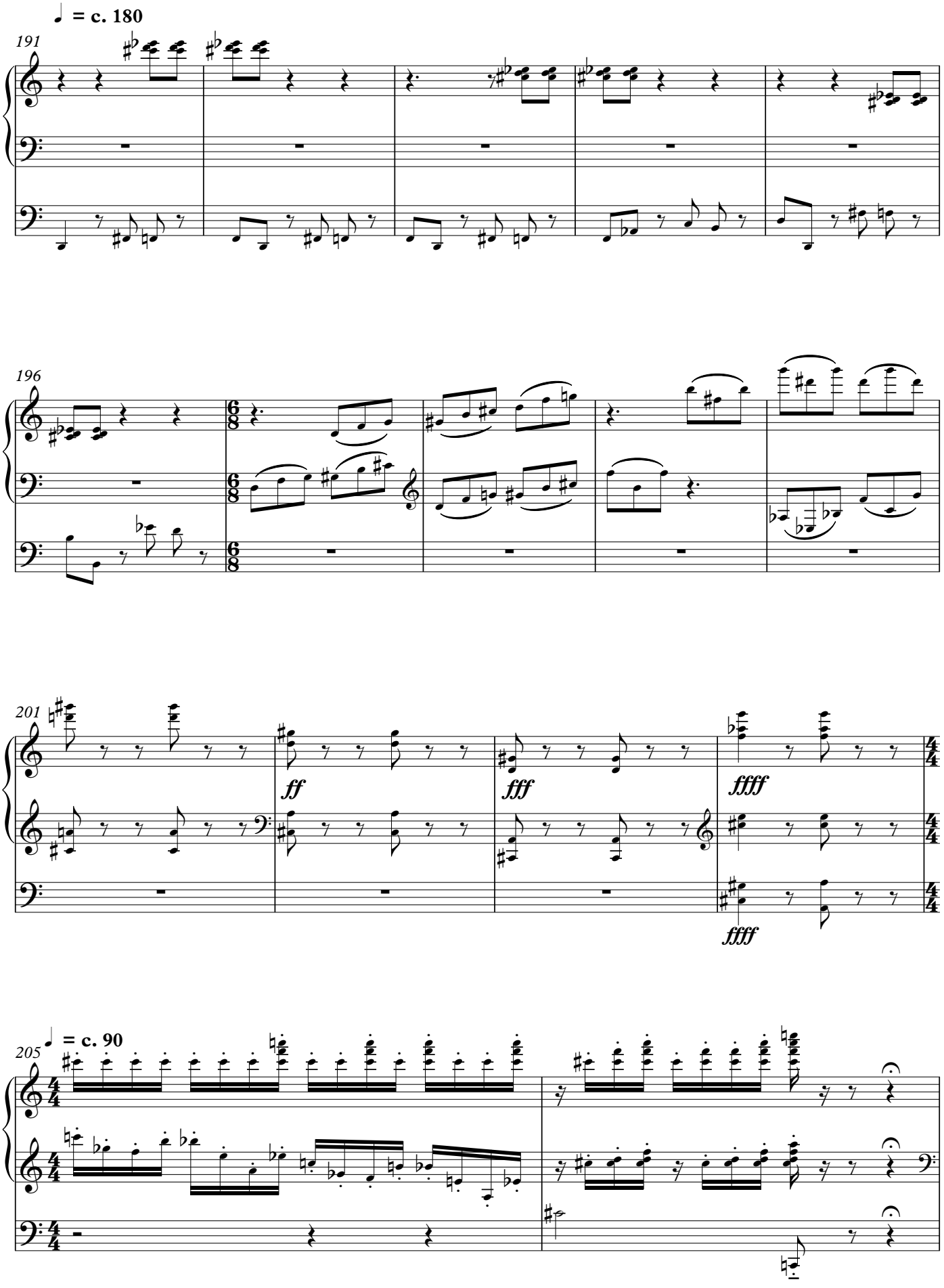

113
solo
f
116
120
mf cresc.
125

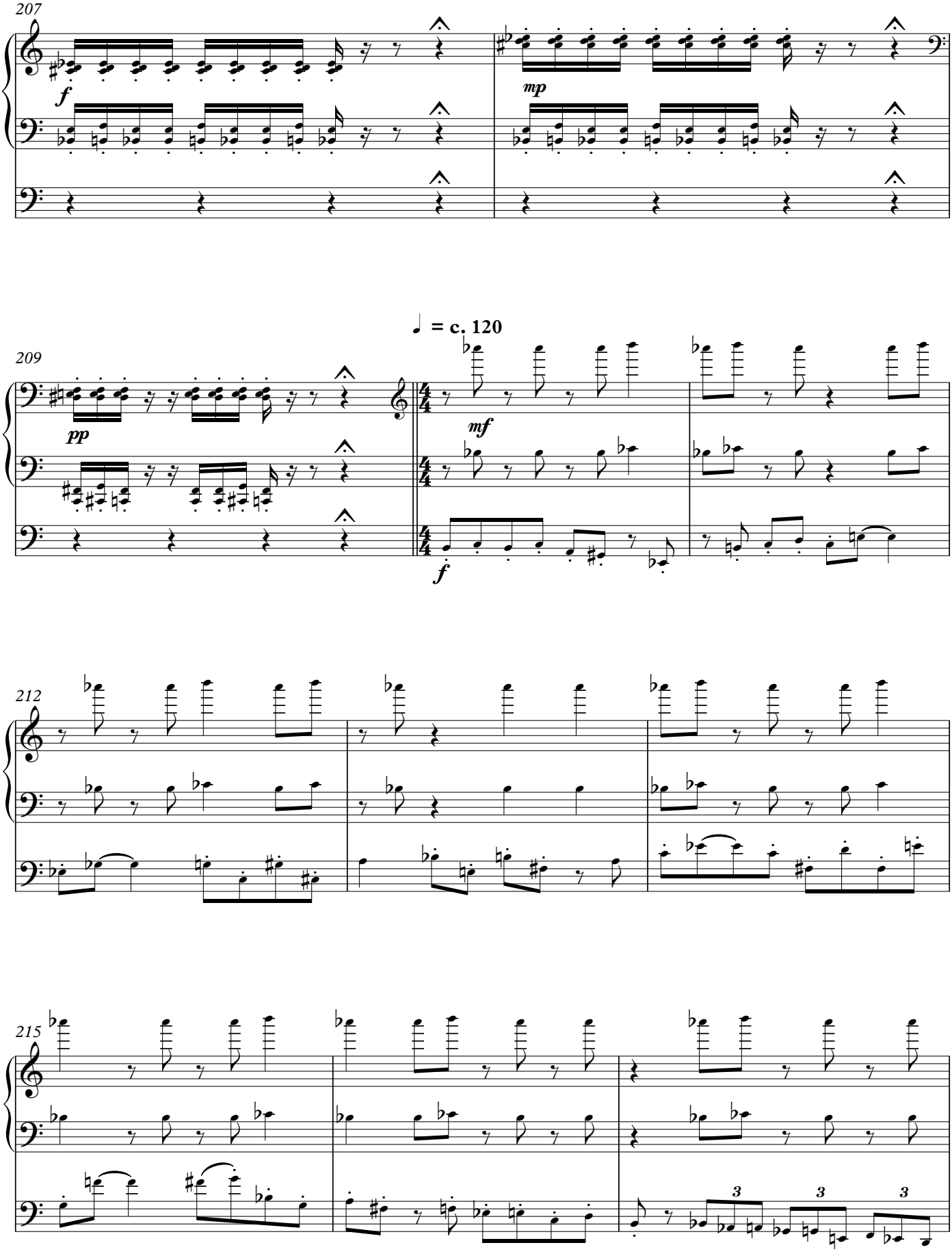

129
132
136
139
fff
fff

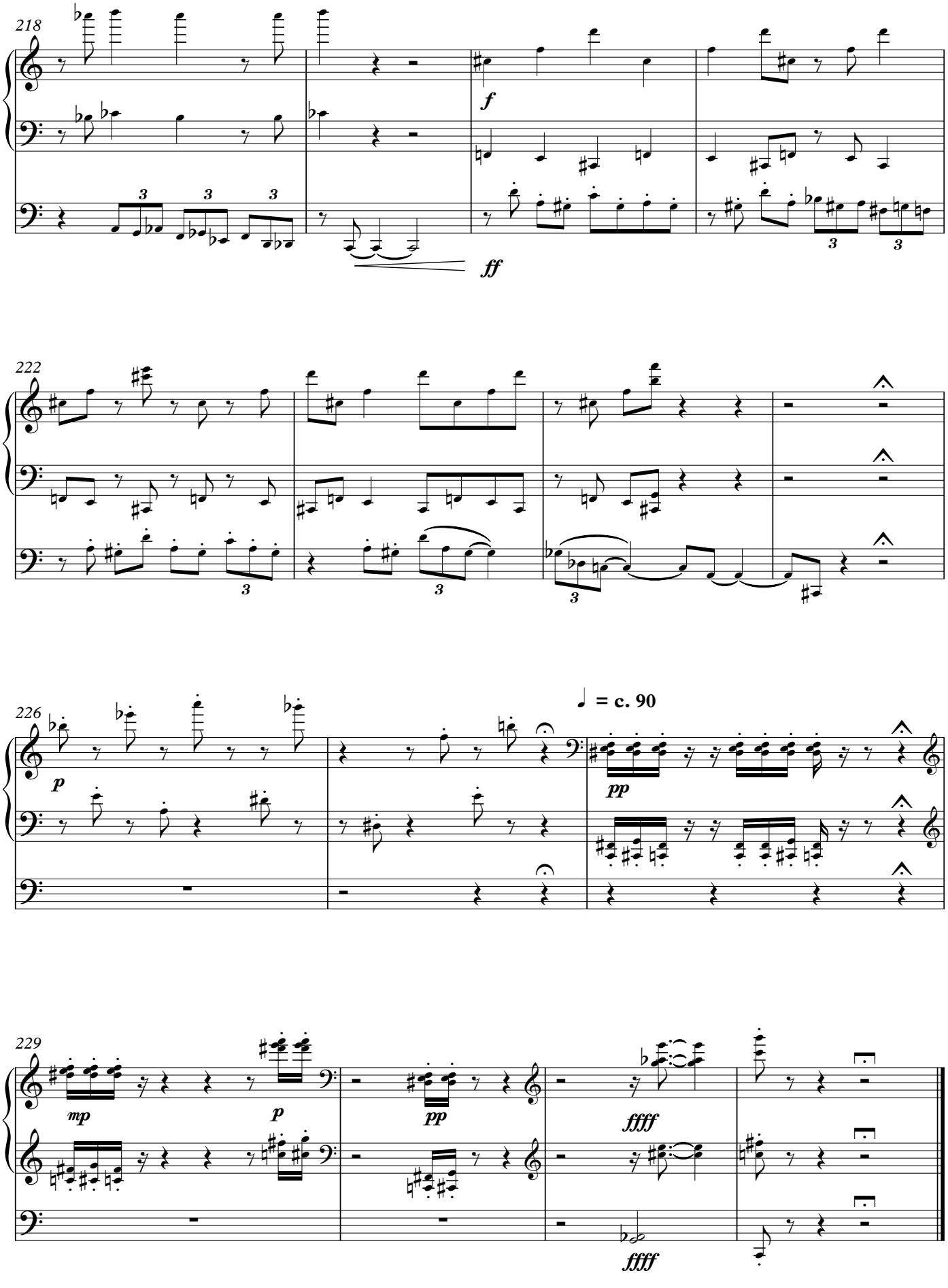

144
149
154
159


164
Half Time ♩ = c. 90
mf
166
mp
pp
p
168
p
mp
8va
♩ = c. 90
170
♩ = c. 120
f
♩ = c. 90
ff
♩ = c. 120
f


♩ = c. 90
♩ = c. 120
174
ff
f
177
181
186


♩ = c. 180
191
196
201
ff
fff
ffff
ffff
♩ = c. 90
205


207
f
mp
♩ = c. 120
209
pp
mf
f
212
215
3
3
3


218
f
ff
222
226
♩ = c. 90
p
pp
229
mp
p
pp
ffff
ffff