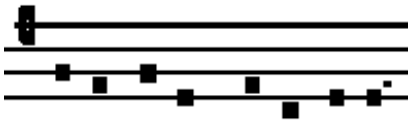
The Vision of Cataclysm

"Precession of the Equinox"

String Quartet for
The Cosmic Consummation



~ Jordan Alexander Key ~

2014-2015

~ The Vision of Cataclysm ~

"Precession of the Equinox"

~ Movements ~

Precession of the Equinox: "Progression to Cosmic Consummation"
The Vision of Cataclysm: "The Song of the Sybil"
De Regressu ad Deorum: "The Final Consummation"
Ekpyrosis: "The Great Conflagration"

~ Jordan Alexander Key ~

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Program Notes:

Astrology, as it is known today, was developed between the fourth and first centuries BCE in the Mediterranean Basin. At this time, the beginning of the year was marked by the Spring Equinox (approximately the 20th of March) when the Sun rose in the constellation Aries. Around 125 BCE, however, following many centuries of previous observations, the Greek astrologer, Hipparchus, noticed that the Sun was not rising in exactly the same position in the sky every few years, and over long periods of time, its position on the morning of the Spring Equinox changed significantly. He discovered that the Sun gradually moved in relation to the Zodiac. This motion would later be called the precession of the equinox.

This precession is caused in part by the tilt of the Earth, spinning on an axis slanted at about 23 degrees in relation to its orbit. Many know that this slant accounts for the change of seasons throughout Earth's revolution. However, because Earth is not a perfect sphere, it also wobbles slightly as it spins on its axis. It is also this wobble that causes the Zodiac to move slightly backwards in the sky each year. That movement is hardly noticeable, however, being only one degree every 71 years. This movement is slight from year to year, but consequently, over many centuries, precession can make a significant difference. It takes approximately 2,150 years for the Spring Equinox to move from one zodiac sign to another and approximately 25,800 years for the wobble to make that point return to its previously held position in the Zodiac. This complete cycle, taking almost 26 thousand years, is called the Great Year.

The Vision of Cataclysm is about the Ancient Grecian belief in the periodic destruction of the cosmos by a great conflagration every "Great Year." The cosmos is then recreated, only to be destroyed again at the end of another new cycle. The Ancient Stoics believed that this Great Year (the complete cycle of the equinox through all zodiac signs) would end with the complete destruction of the cosmos in a conflagration or great cataclysmic fire, to then be recreated in a primordial state. The movements of this piece follow the progression of this Cosmic Consummation, called Ekpyrosis by the Greeks, from the final "Precession of the Equinox", to the "Vision of Cataclysm" portrayed in the ancient Greek poem *The Song of the Sybil*, then "De Regressu ad Deorum" (The Return of the Gods) to destroy the universe, and ending with the destruction of the universe in the Ekpyrosis or "The Great Conflagration."

The Vision of Cataclysm

Jordan A. Key: Text inspired by *The Song of the Sybil*

A Great Fire from the heavens will descend;
Even the seas, rivers, and streams will burn.
All will burn in the reign of fire, none to be spared from doom.
Fish, birds, trees, rocks, all will scream loud in horror.

The Sun will lose its lightness, becoming dark and veiled,
The moon will give no light as the stars plummet from their thrones in heaven
Man, woman, and child will wail, none to be spared from doom.
The whole world will be sorrow on that day of the Final Consummation.

Full Score

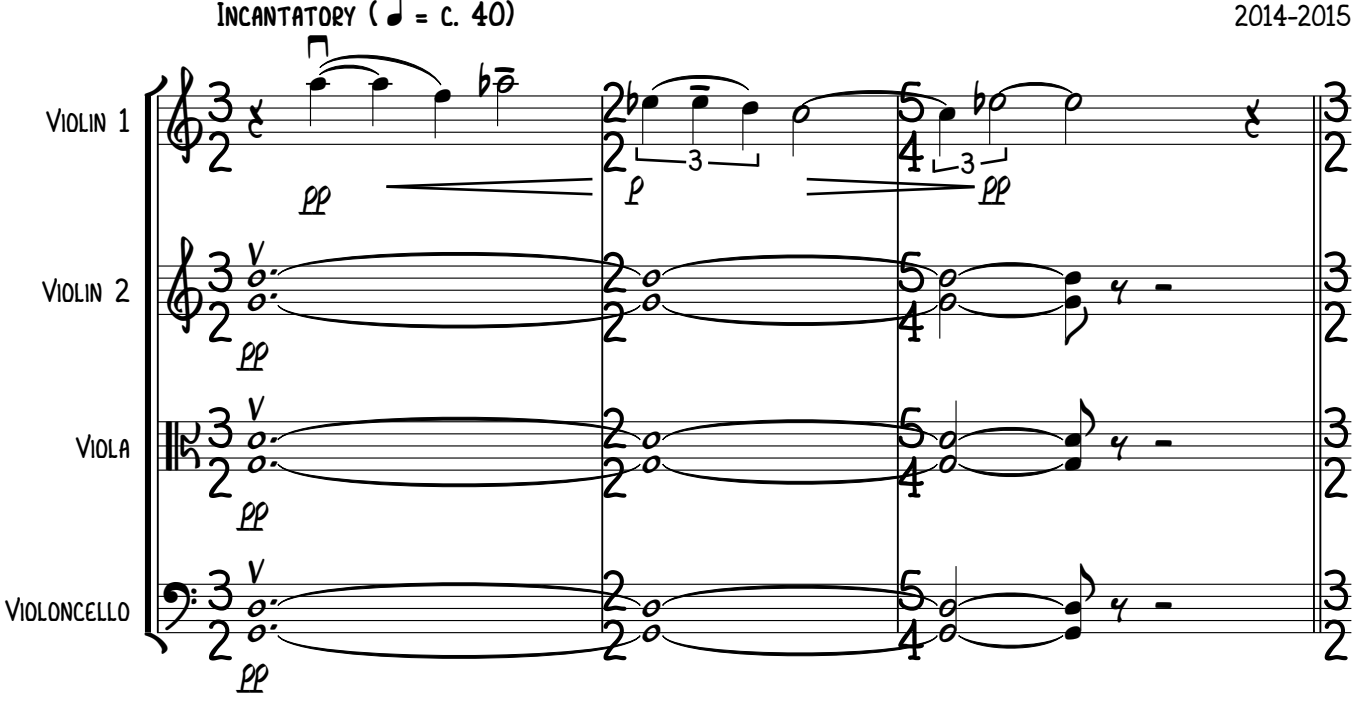
THE VISION OF CATACLYSM

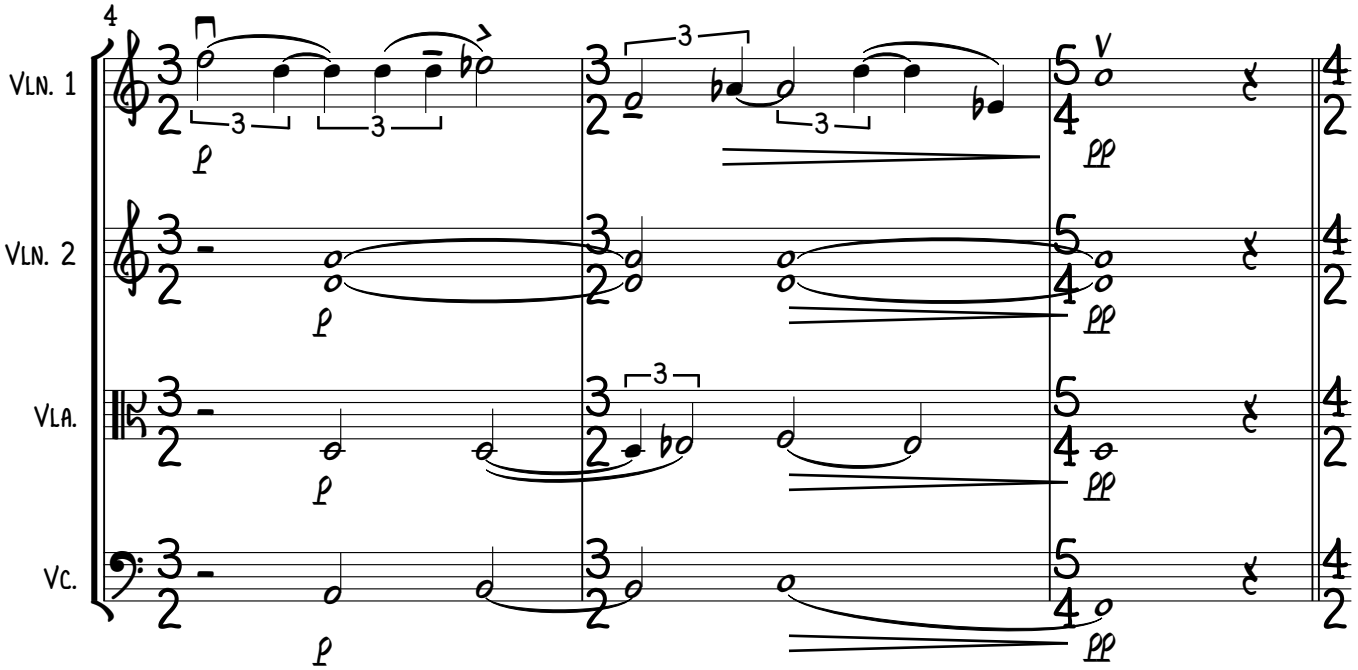
I. PRECESSION OF THE EQUINOX

"PROGRESSION TO COSMIC CONSUMMATION"

Jordan Alexander Key

2014-2015





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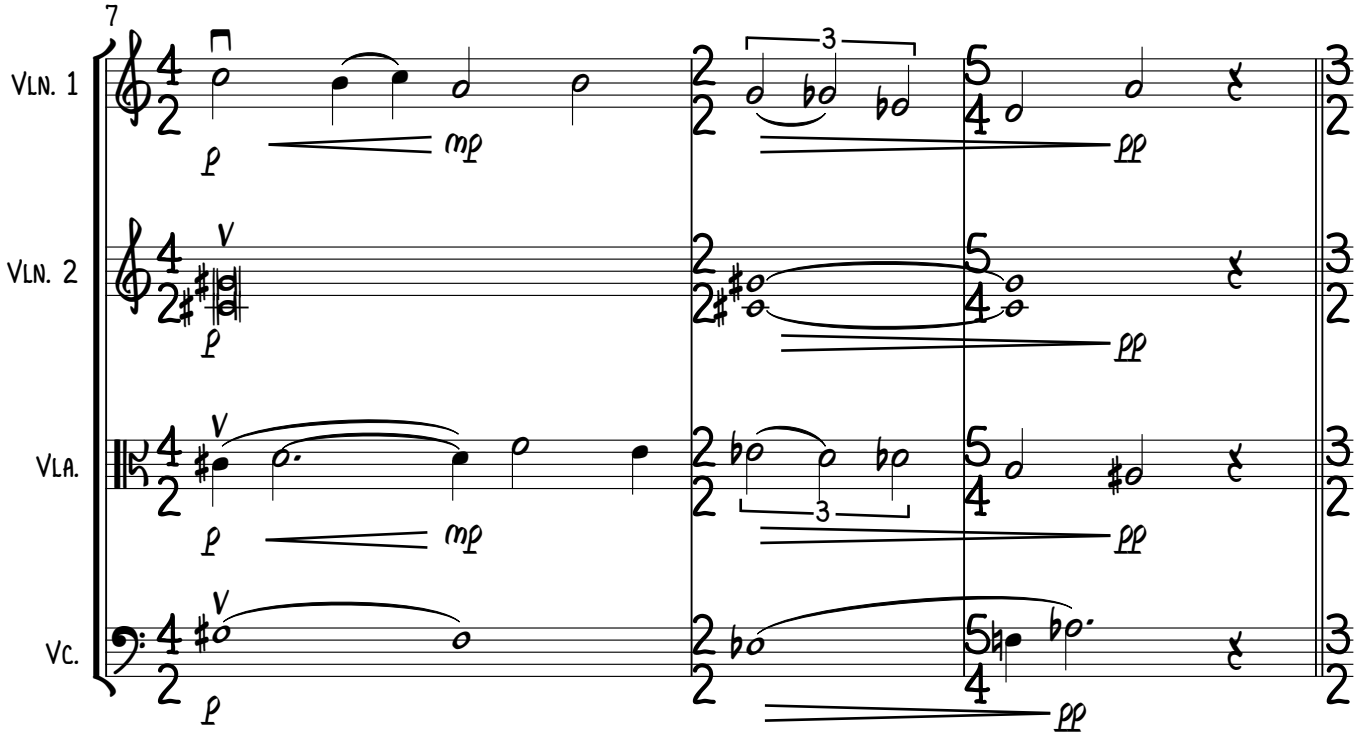
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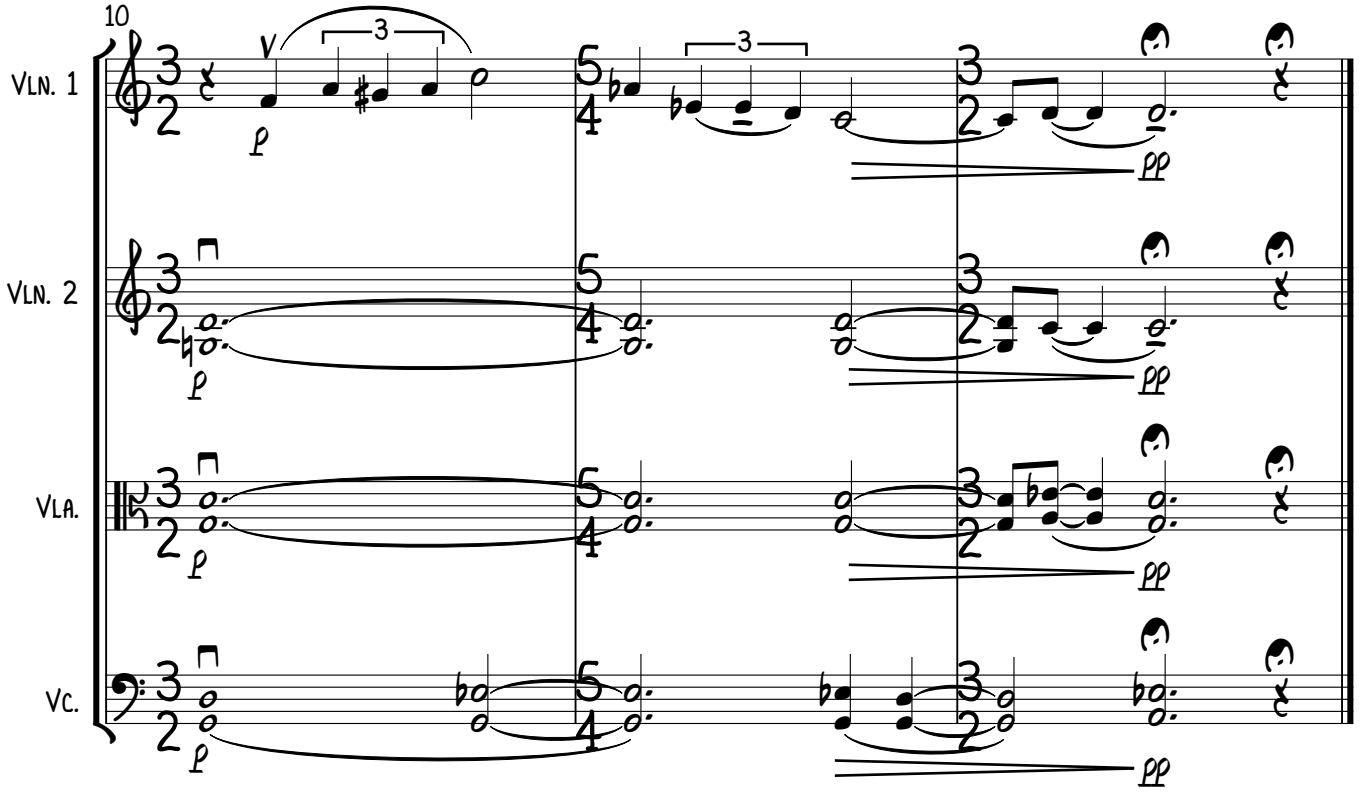
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
p
mp
3
pp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Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
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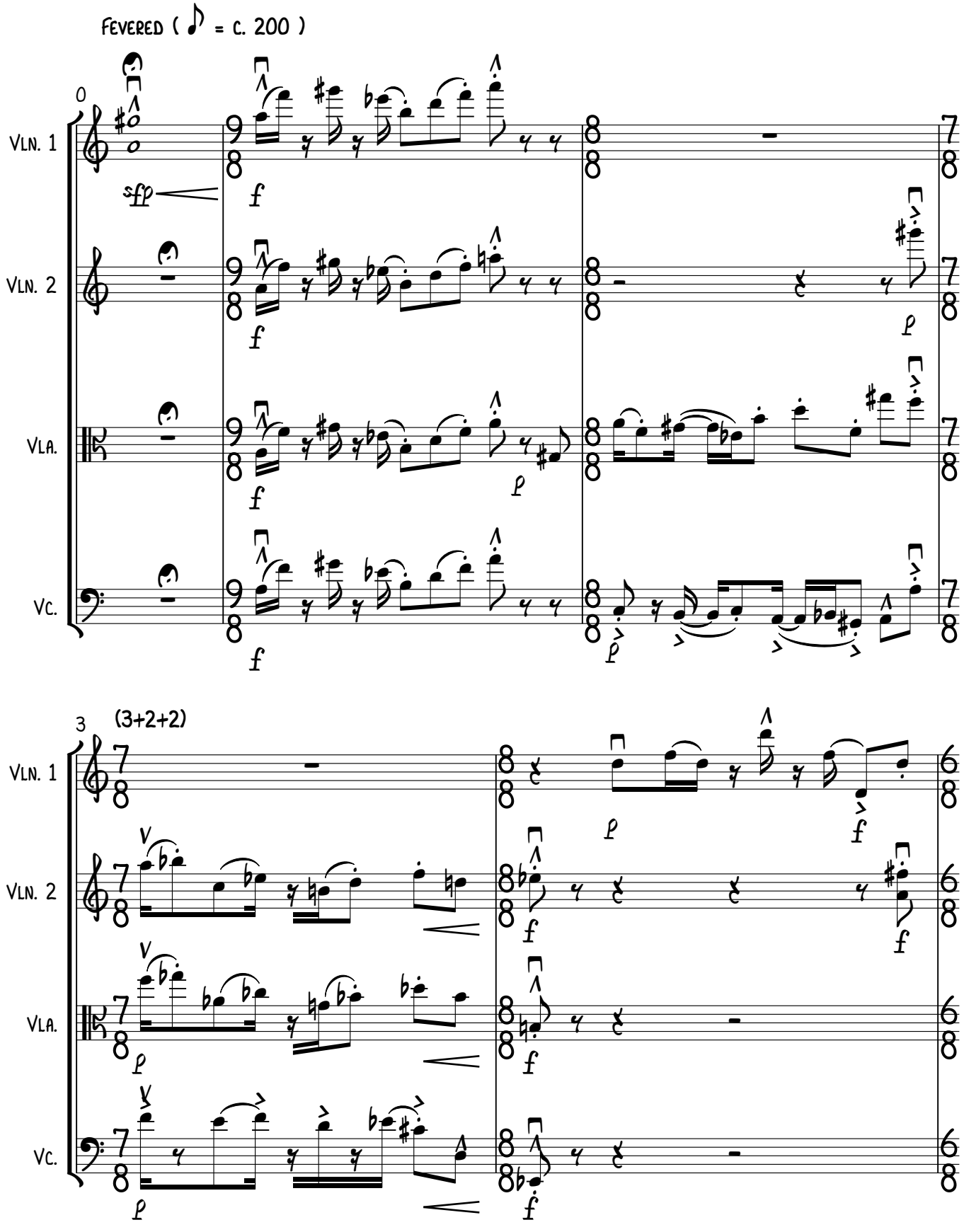
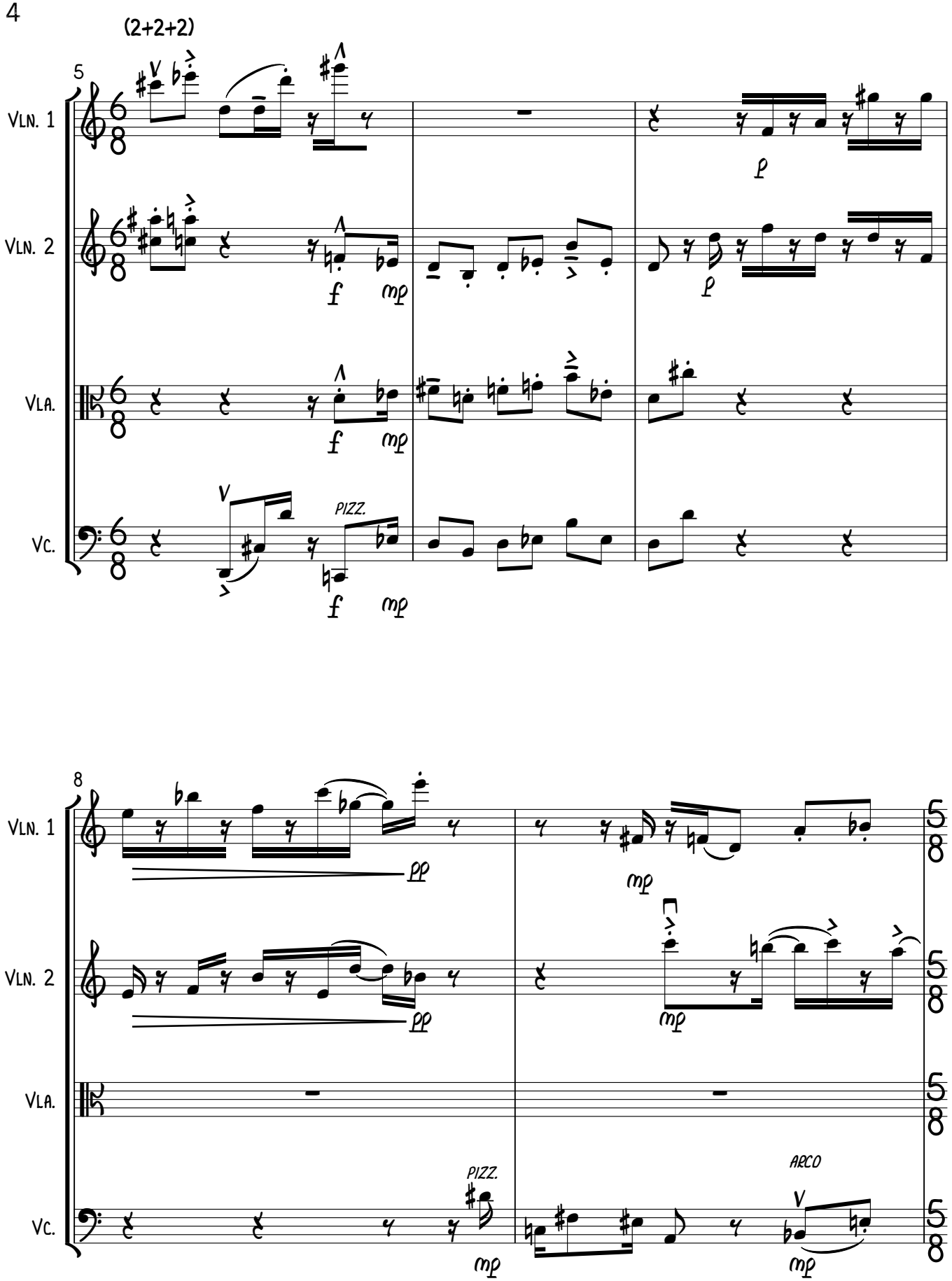
3
pp

II. VISION OF CATACLYSM

"THE SONG OF THE SYBIL"

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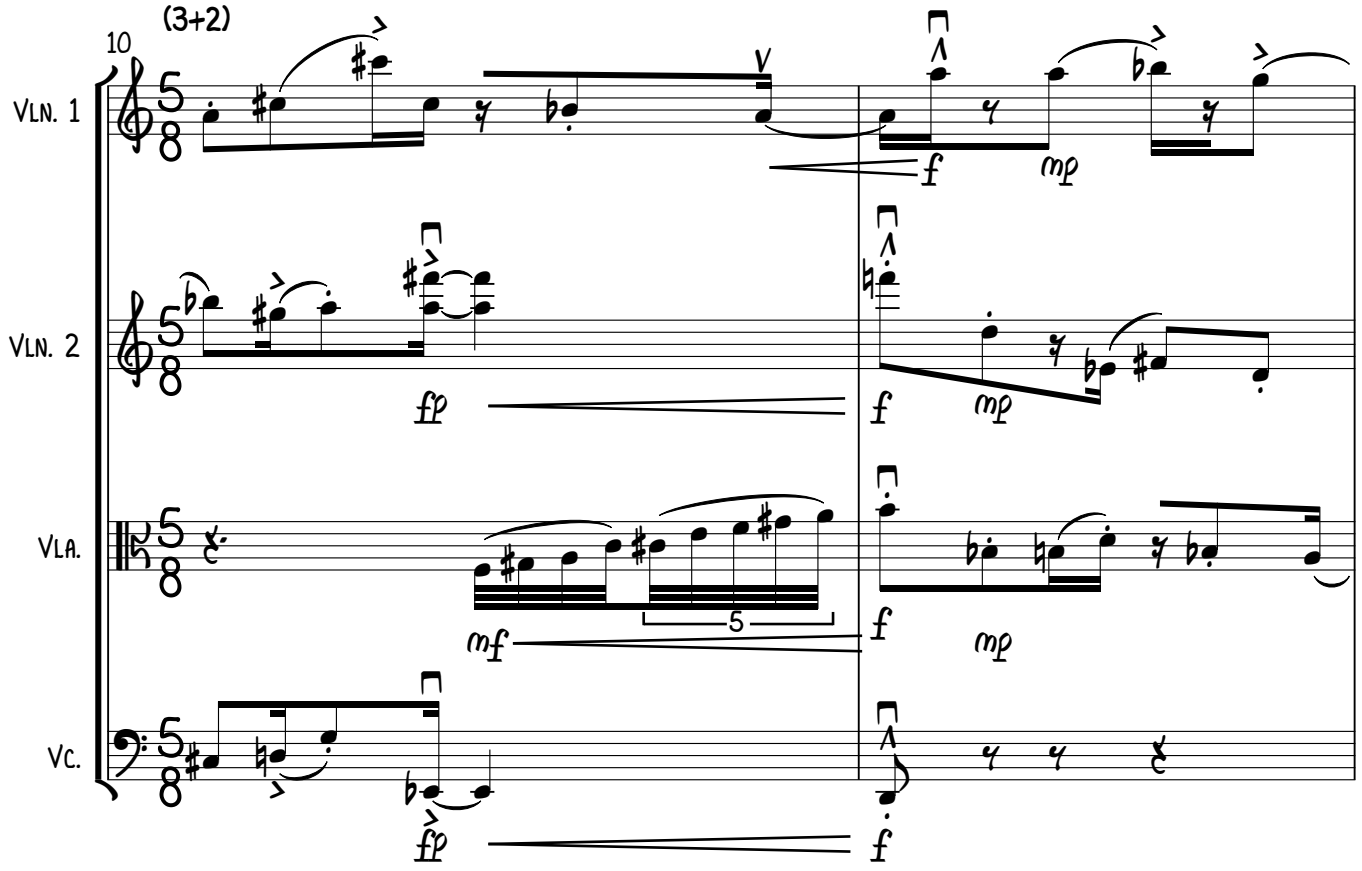
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
PIZZ.
8
PIZZ.
ARCO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Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
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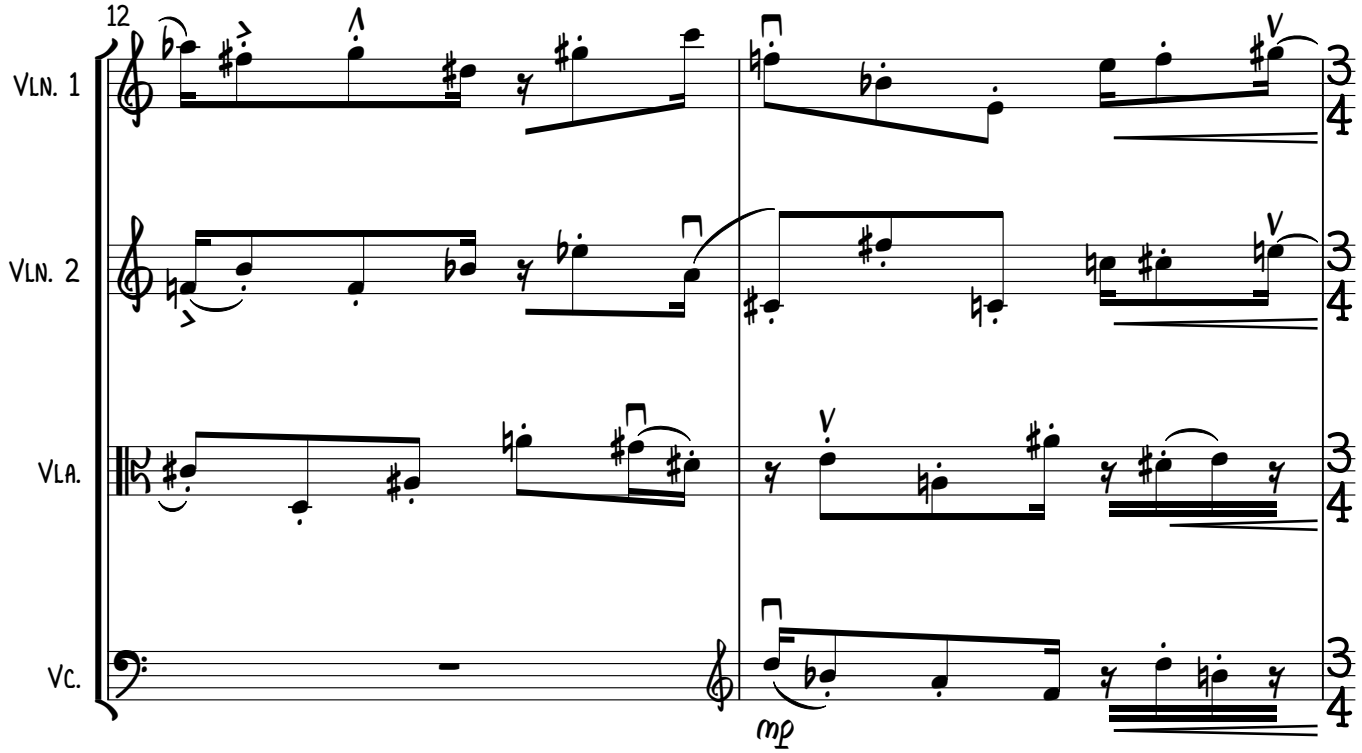
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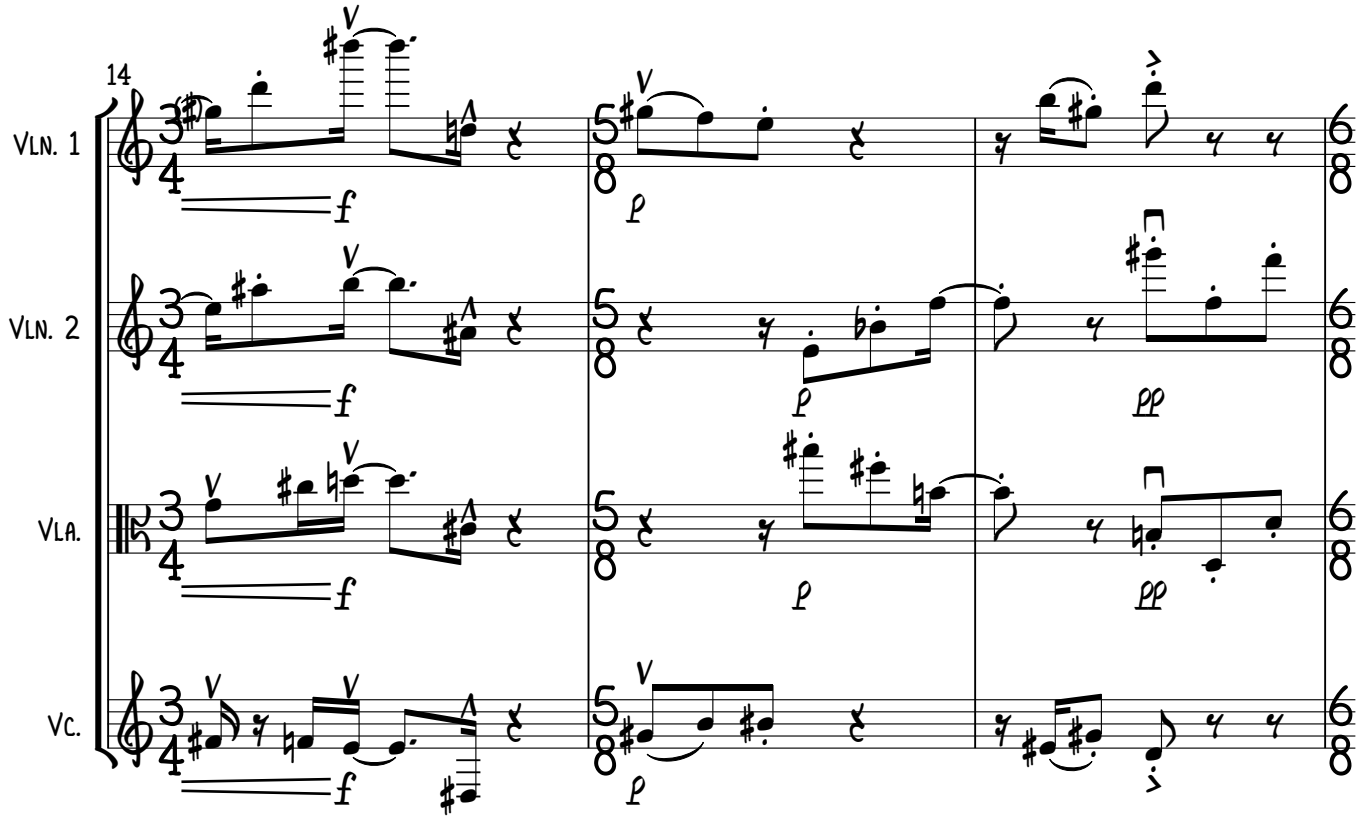
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.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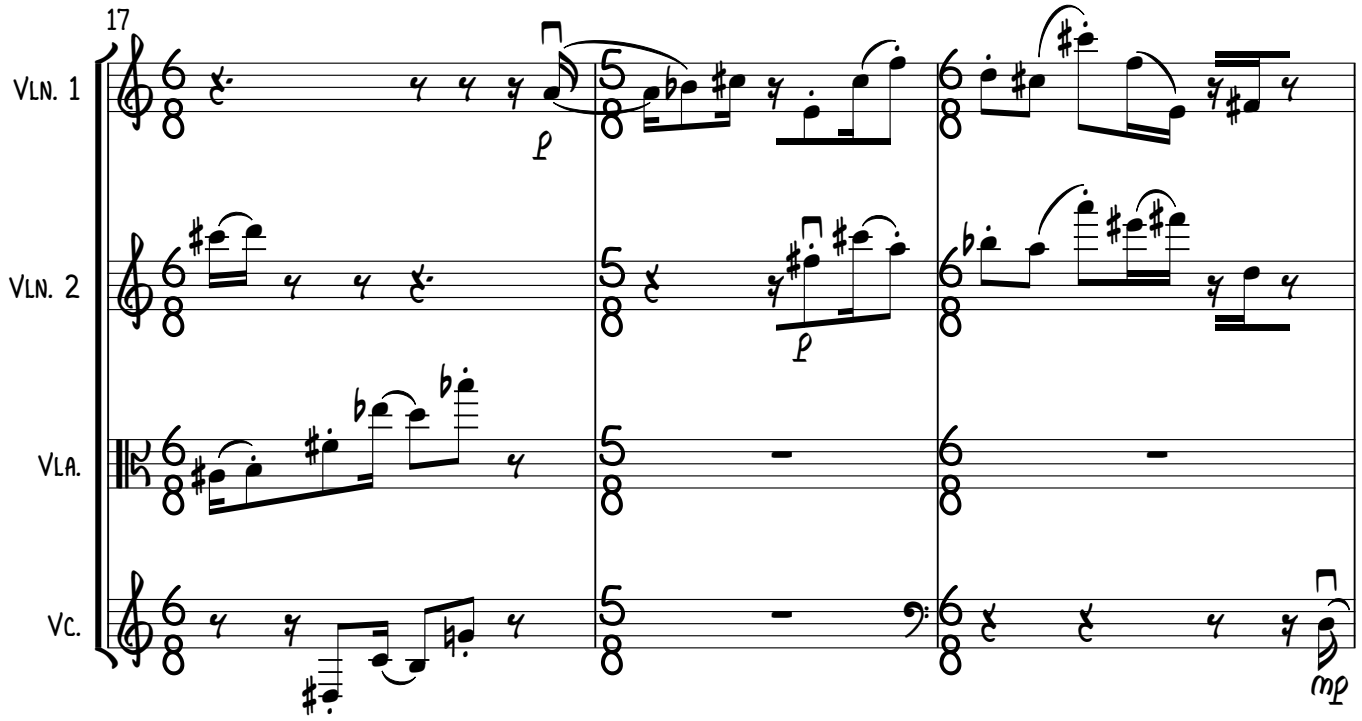
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
f
p
pp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Vla.
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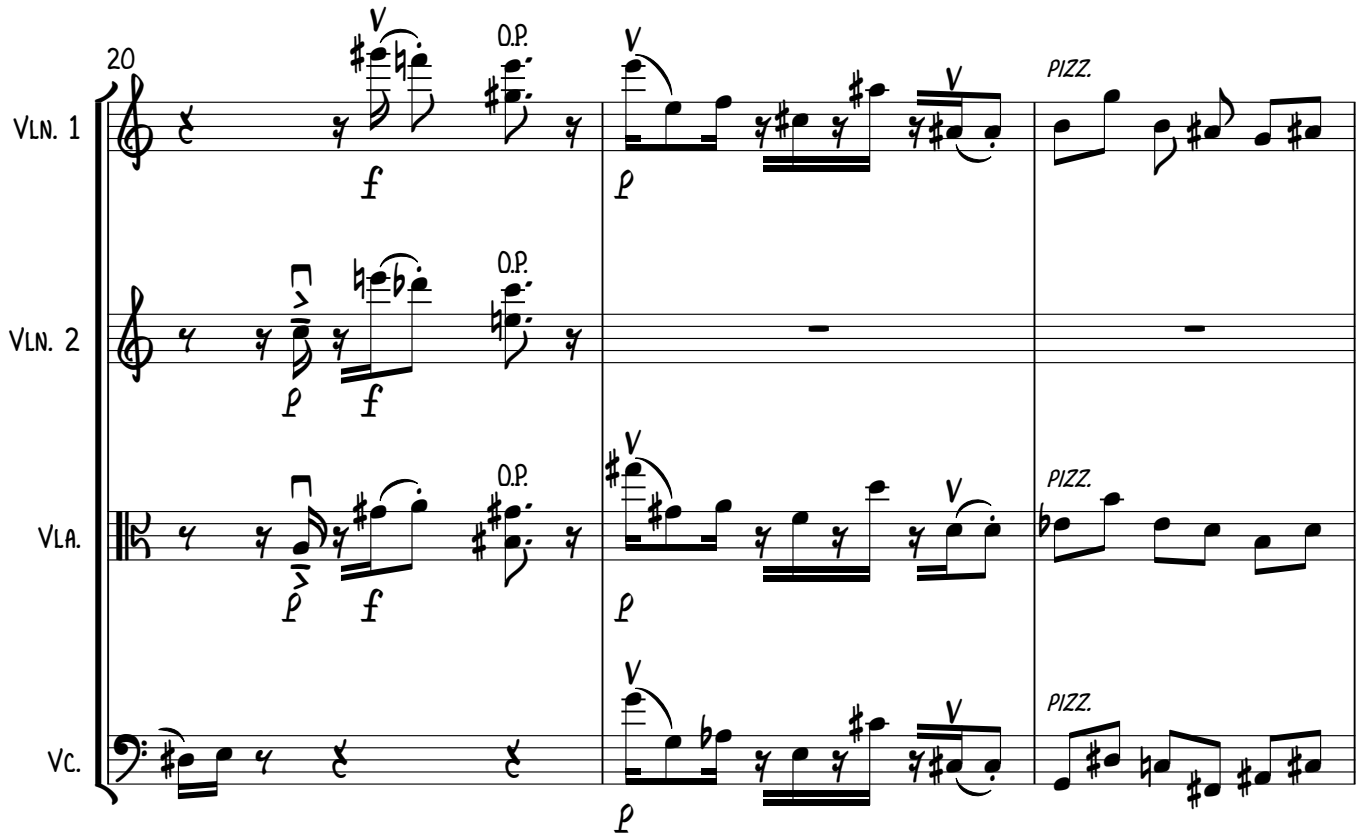
p
mp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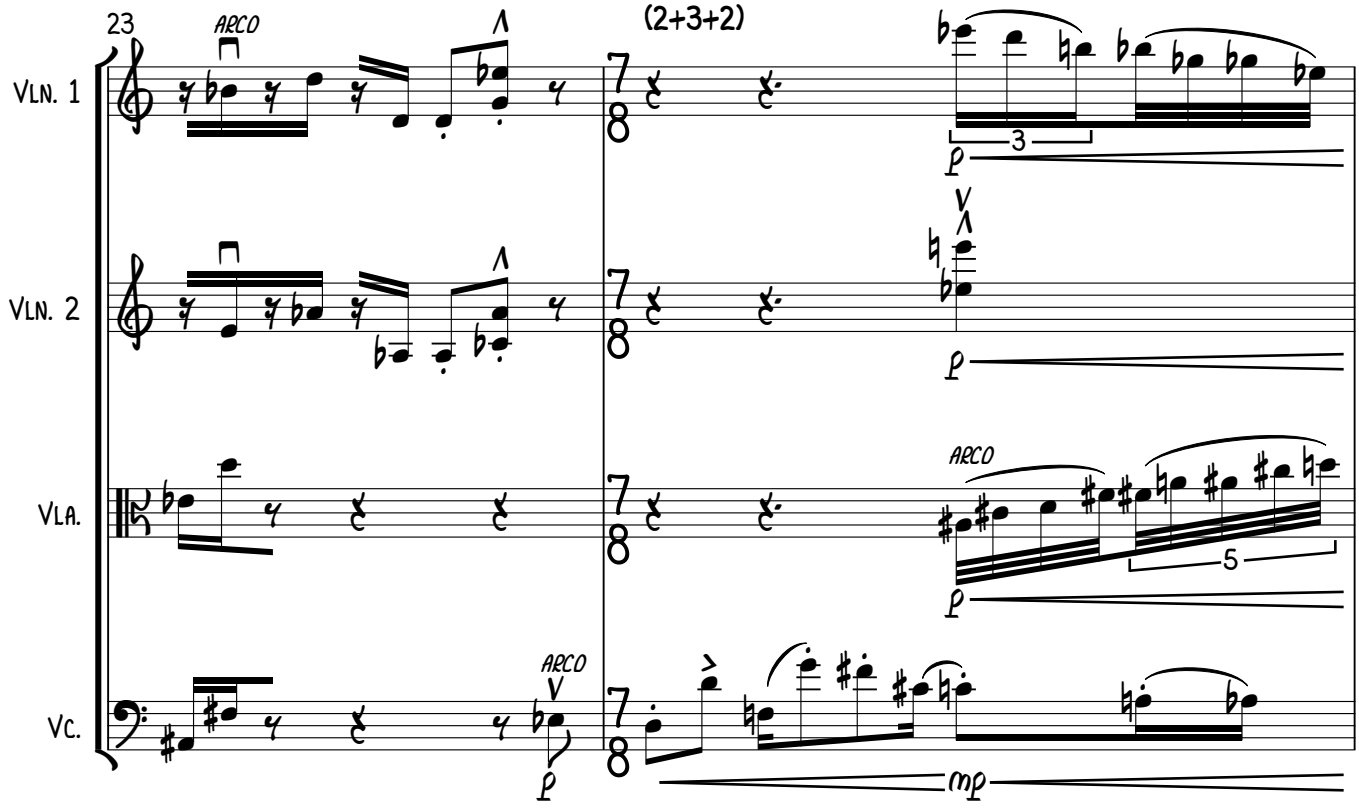
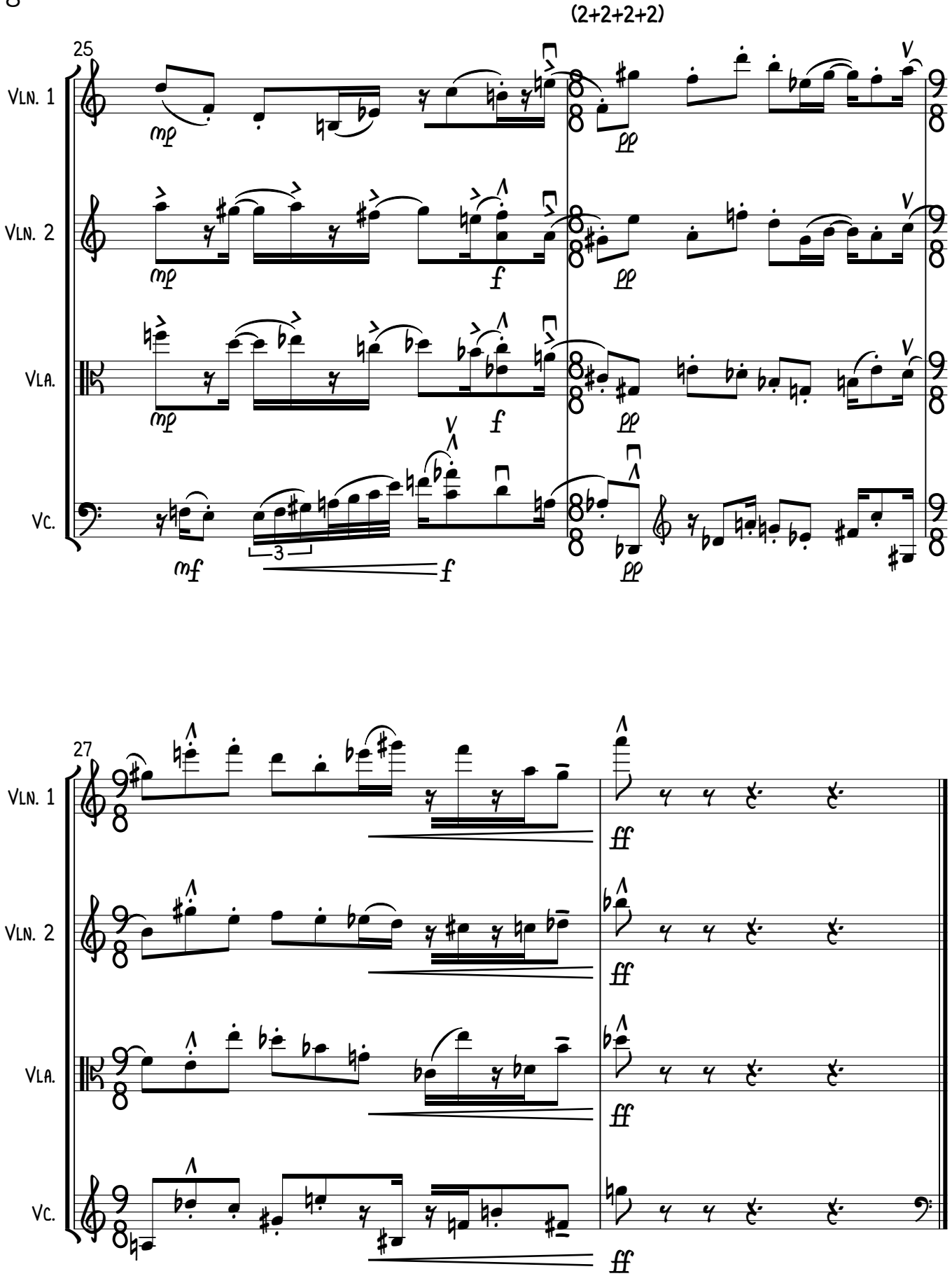
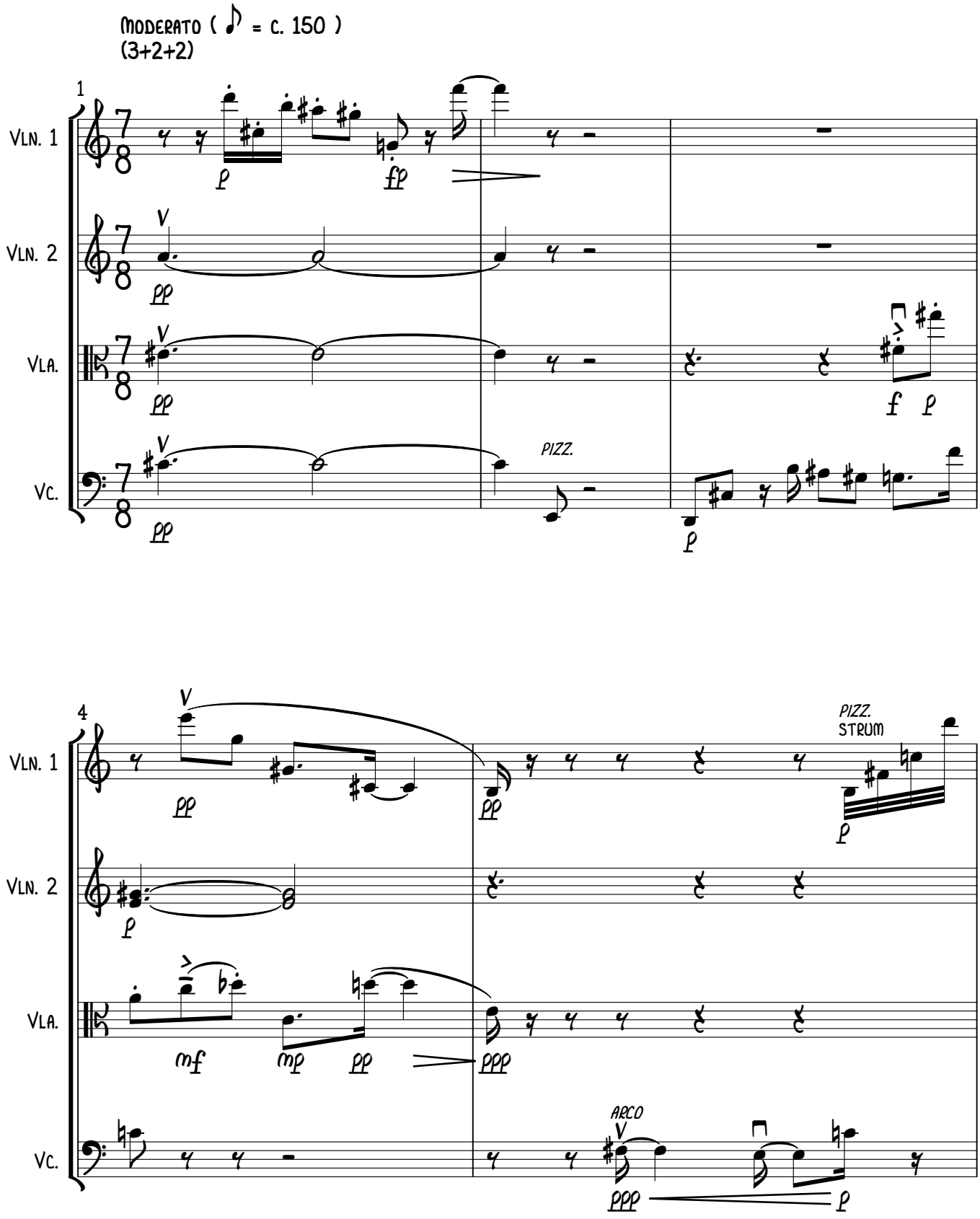
Vla.
Vc.
O.P.
PIZZ.

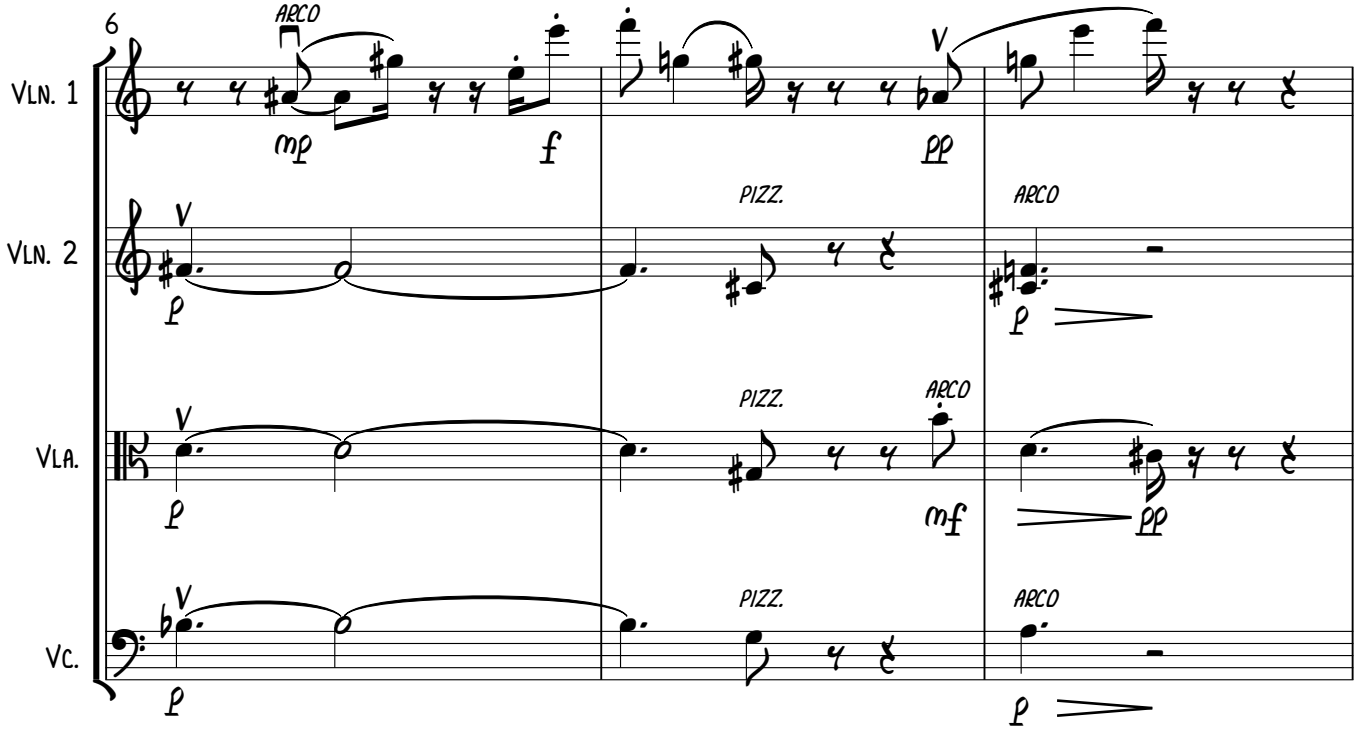

23
ARCO
(2+3+2)
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
3
5
mp


(2+2+2+2)
25
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
mp
mp
mp
mf
f
f
f
pp
pp
pp
pp
3
27
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
ff
ff
ff
ff

III. DE REGRESSU AD DEORUM

"THE FINAL COMSUMMATION"




6
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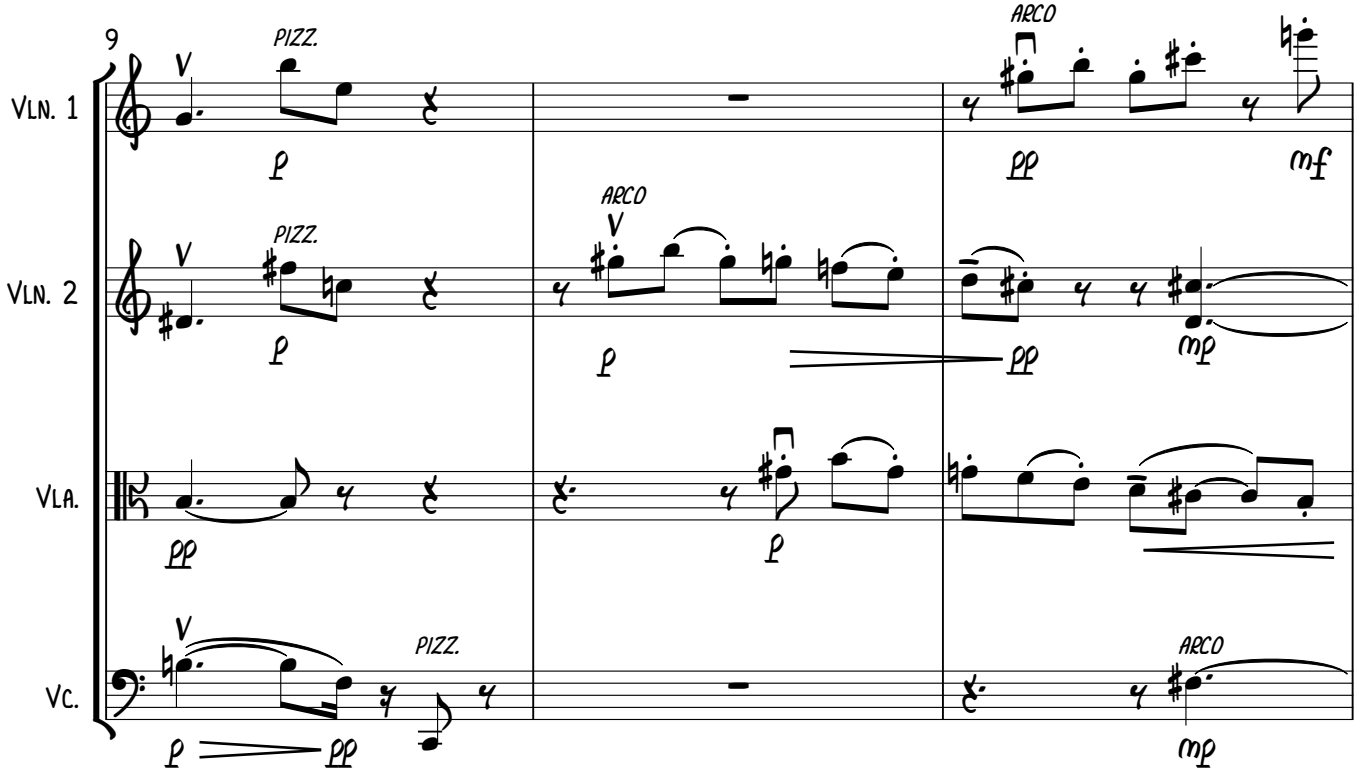
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
ARCO
PIZZ.
ARCO
PIZZ.
ARCO
PIZZ.
ARCO


9
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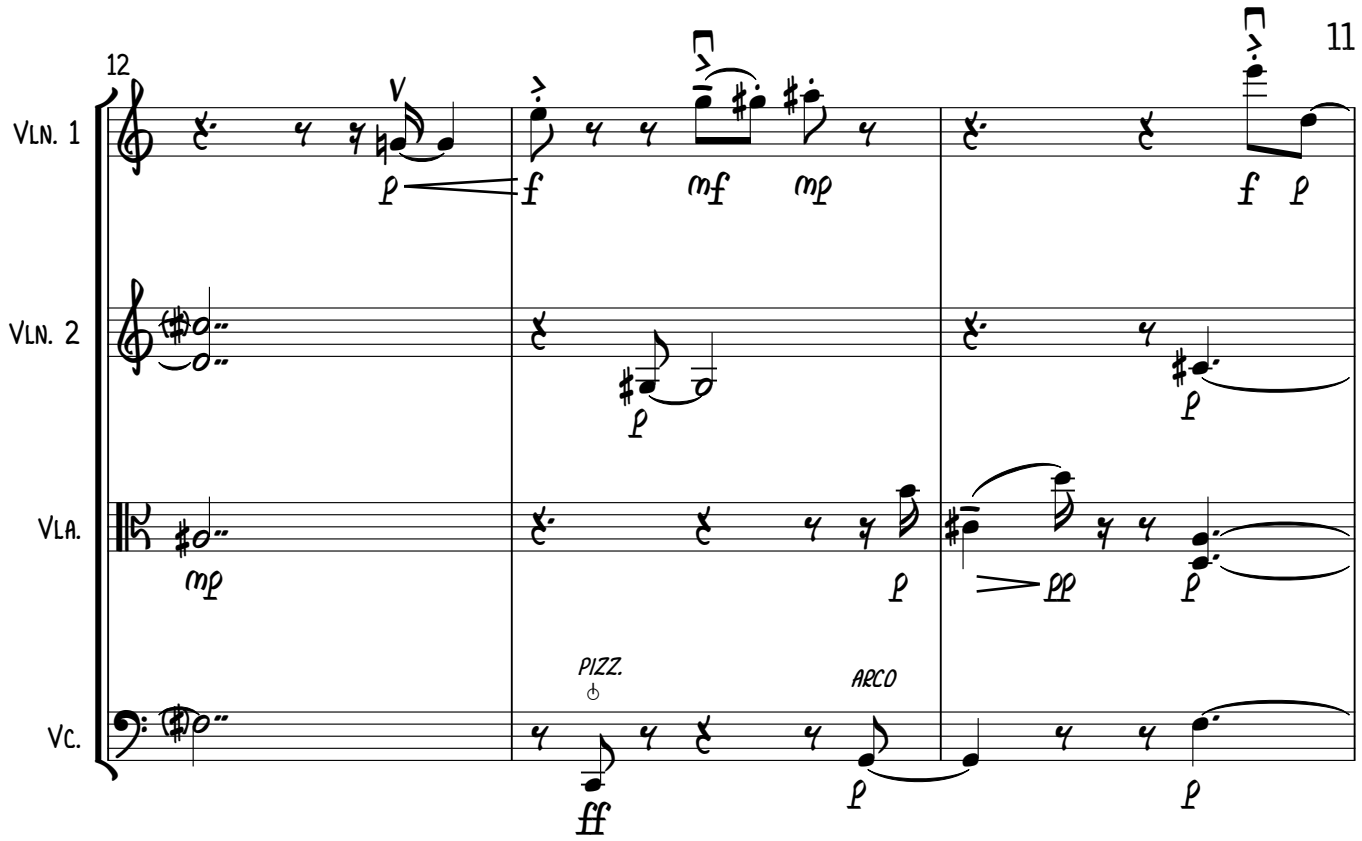
ARCO
PIZZ.
ARCO
PIZZ.
ARCO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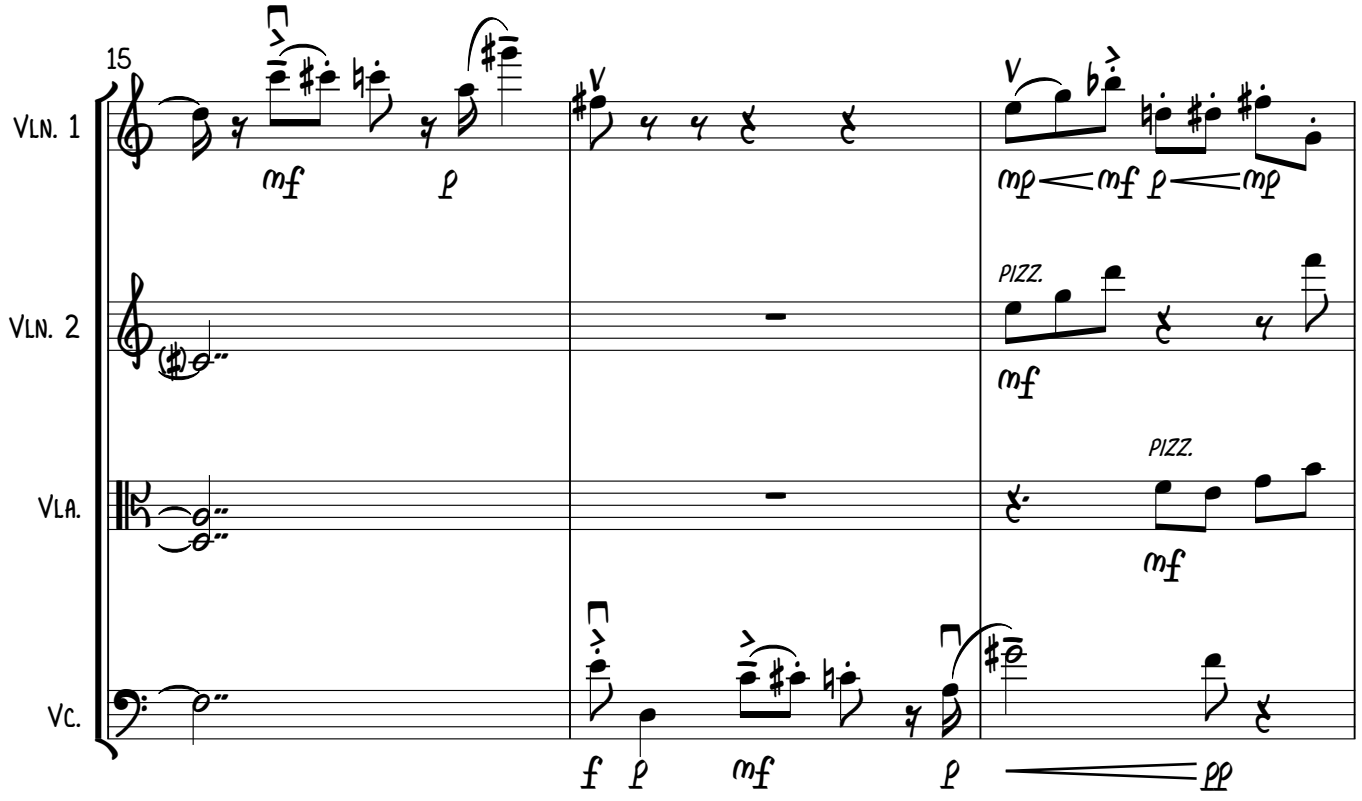
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
PIZZ.
ARCO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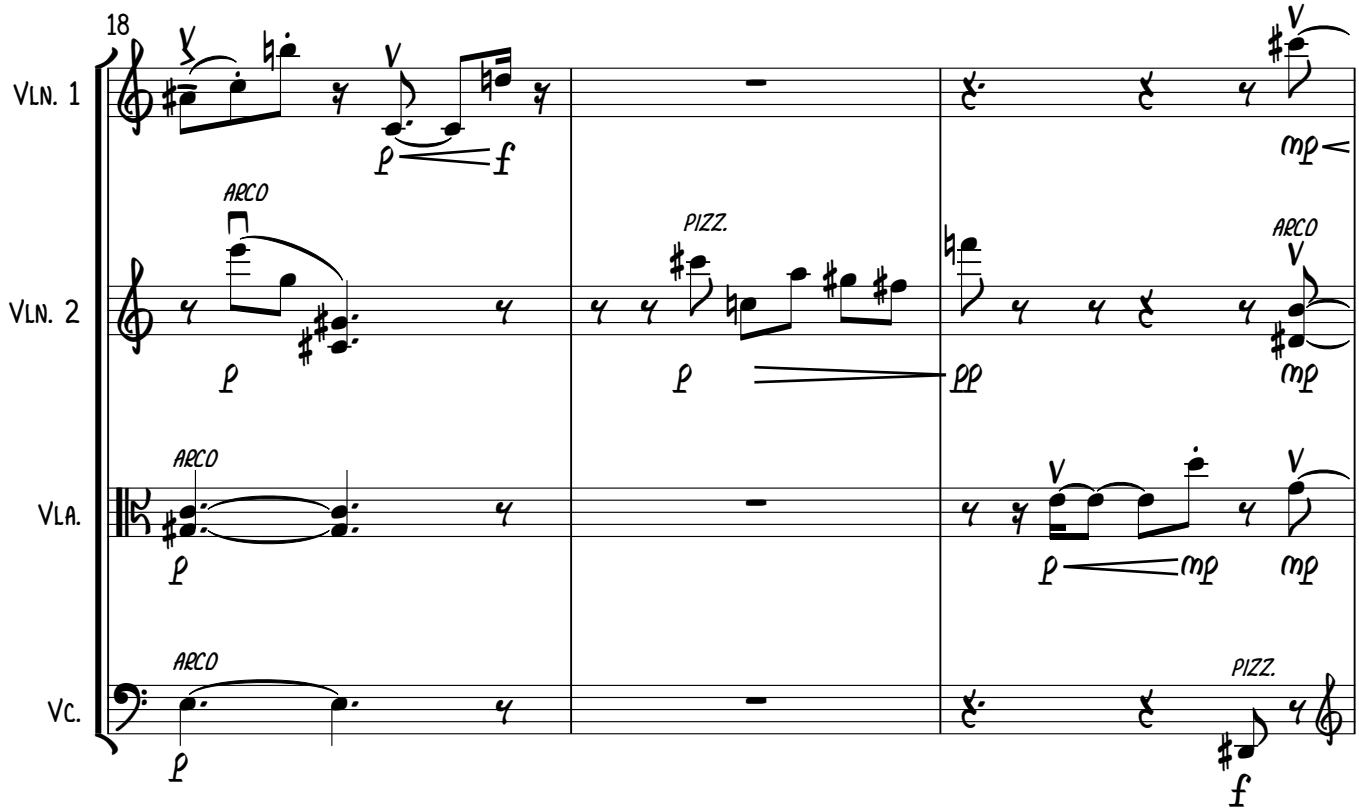
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
PIZZ.
PIZZ.


18
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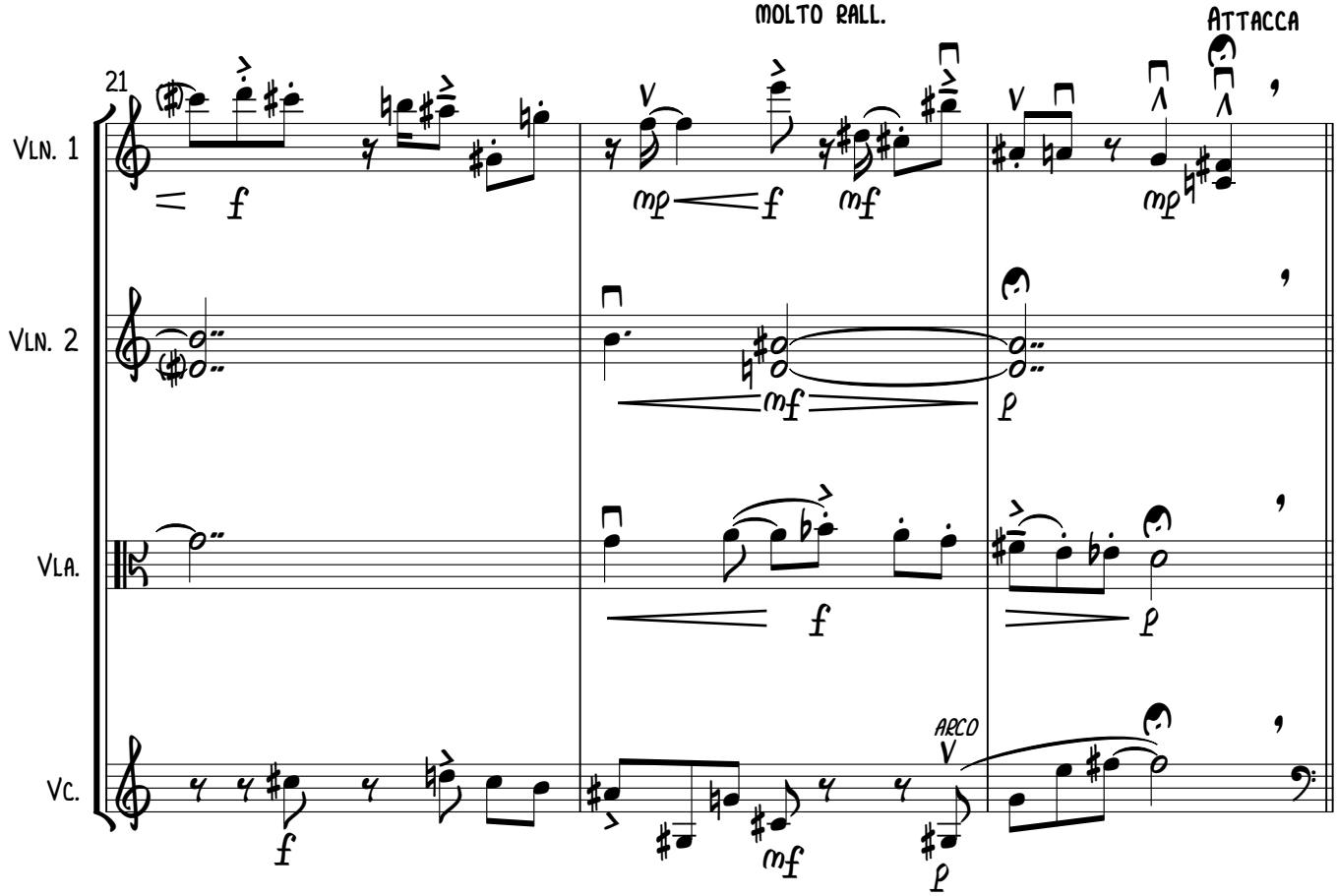
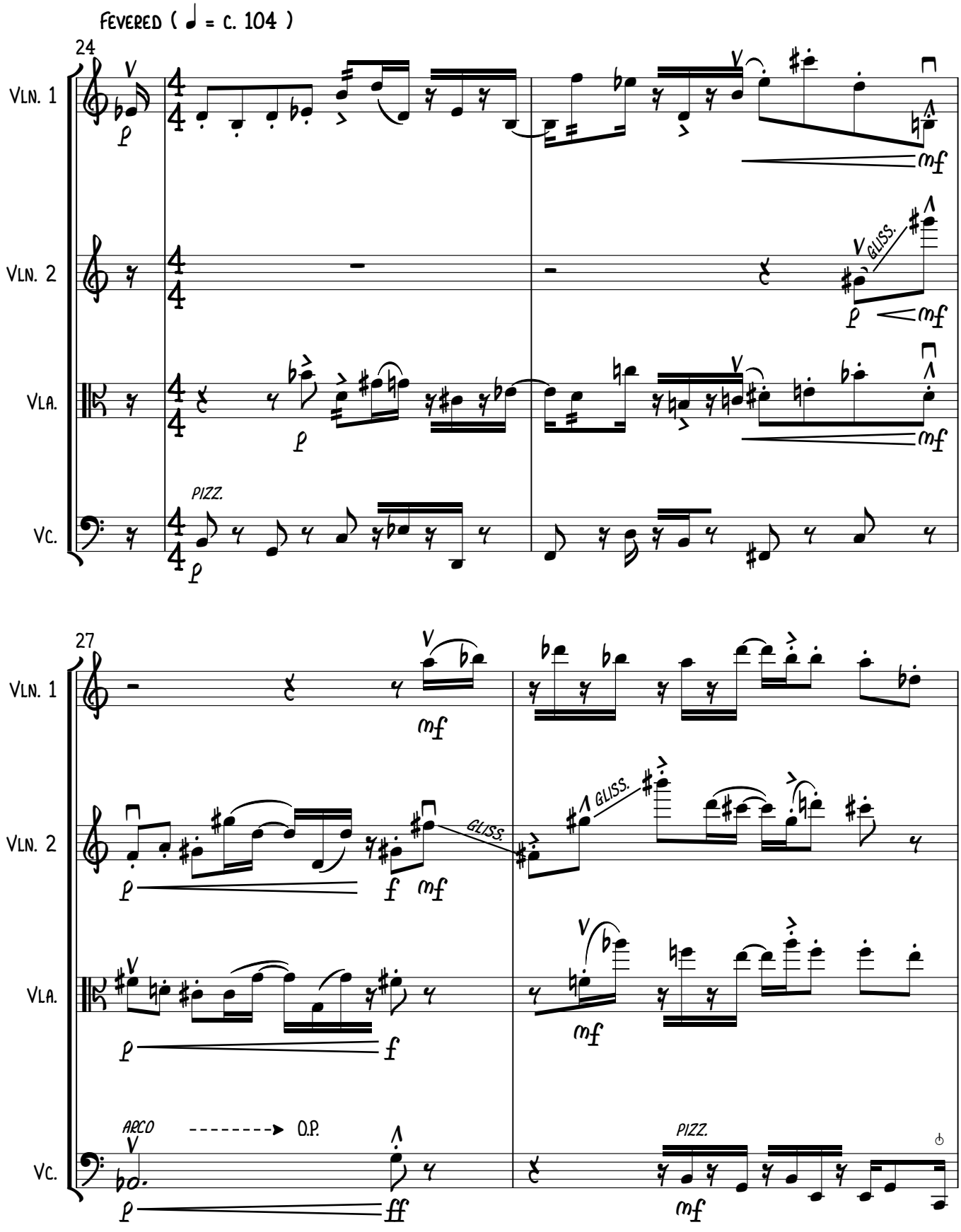
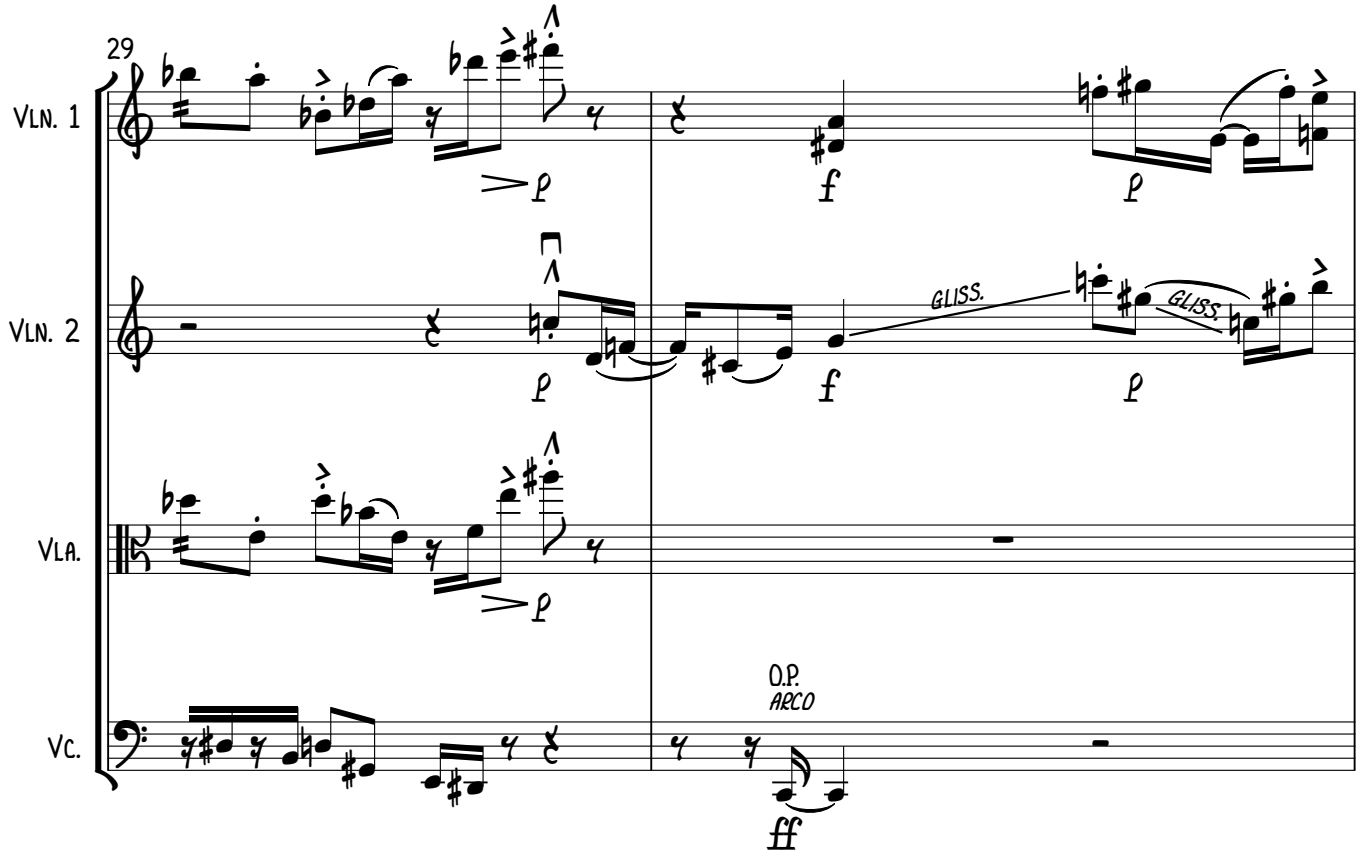
PIZZ.
ARCO
ARCO
PIZZ.


MOLTO RALL.
ATTACCA
21
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
ARCO

IV. EKPYROSIS

"THE GREAT CONFLAGRATION"




29
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Vla.
Vc.
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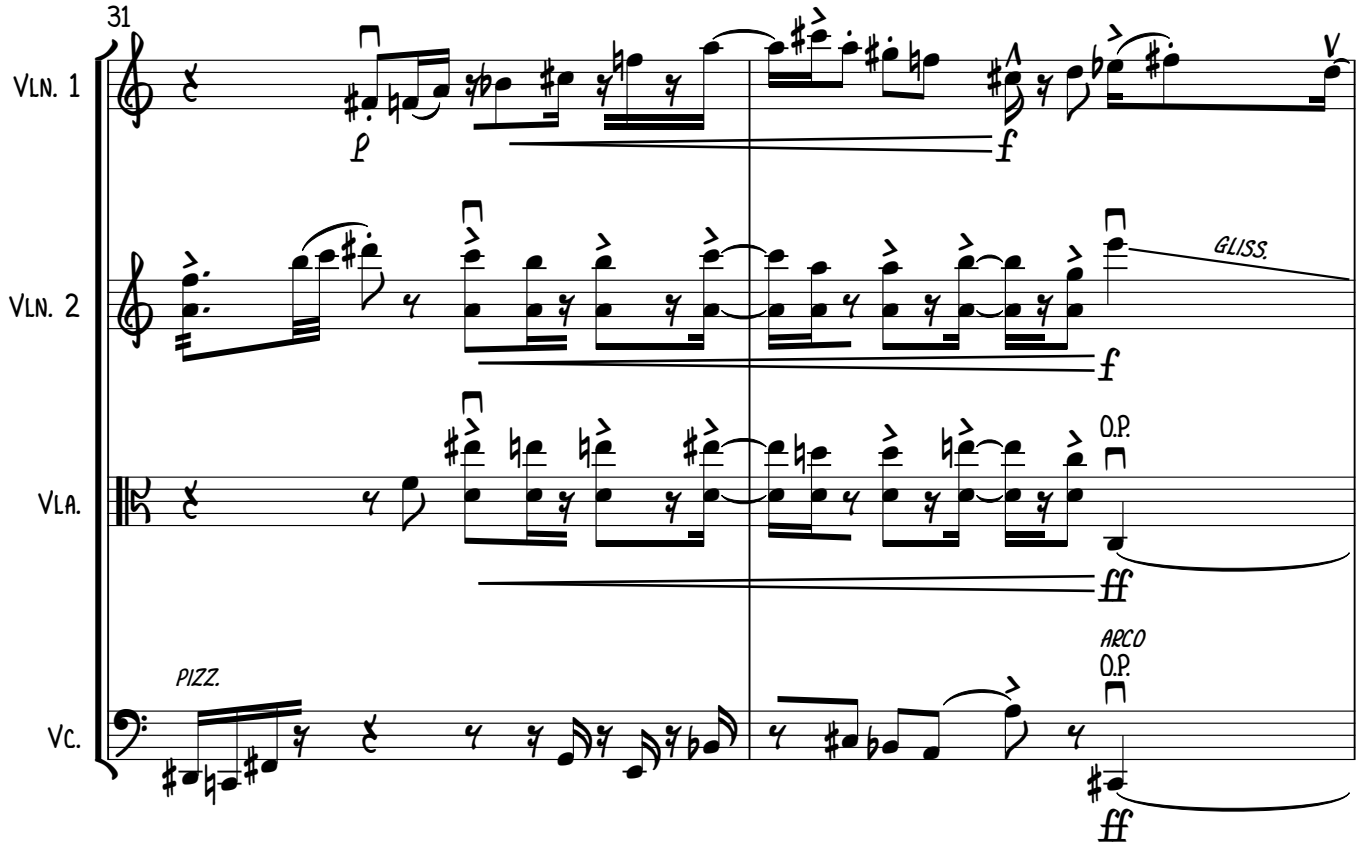
GLISS.
O.P.
ARCO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Vc.
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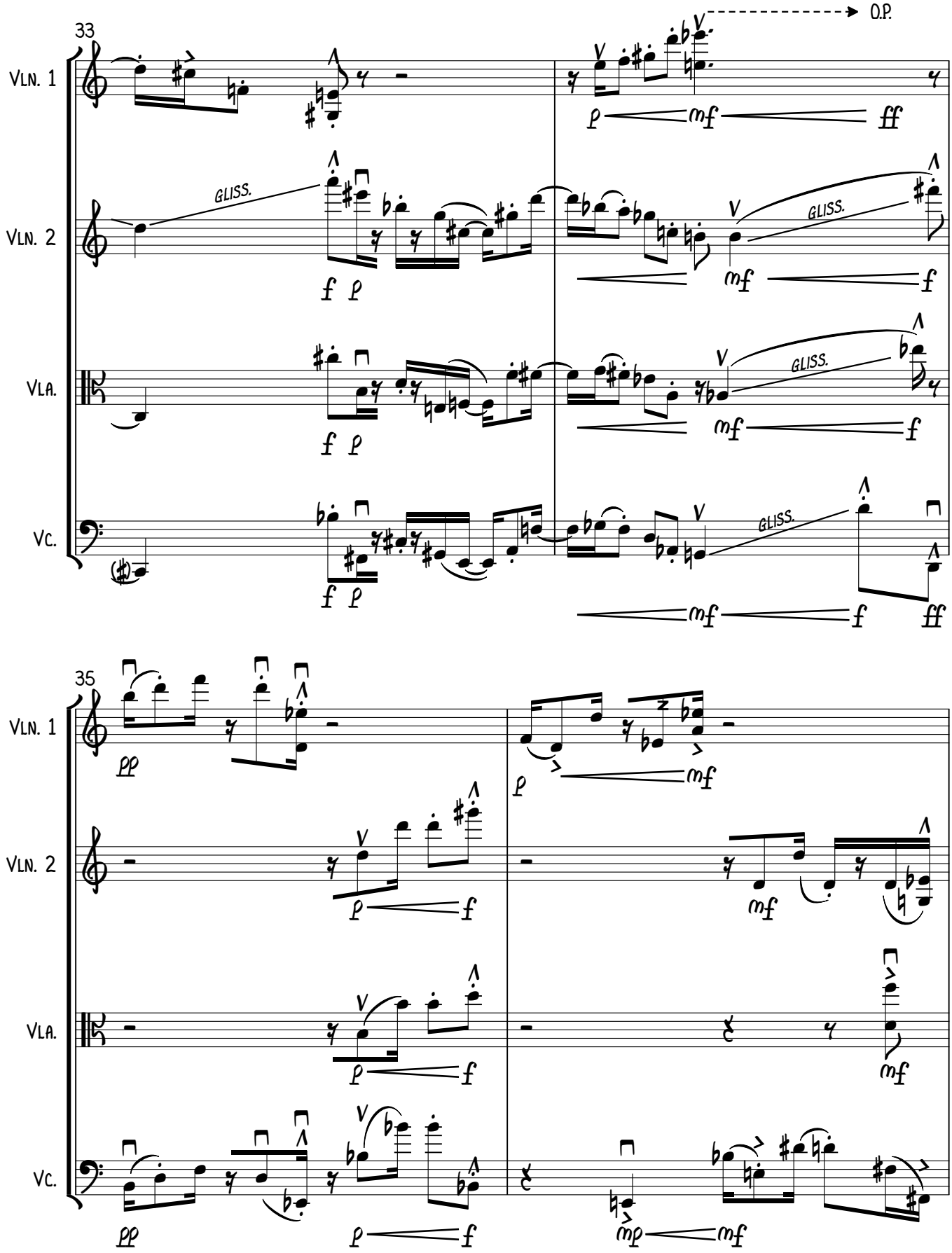
O.P.
PIZZ.
ARCO
O.P.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GLISS.
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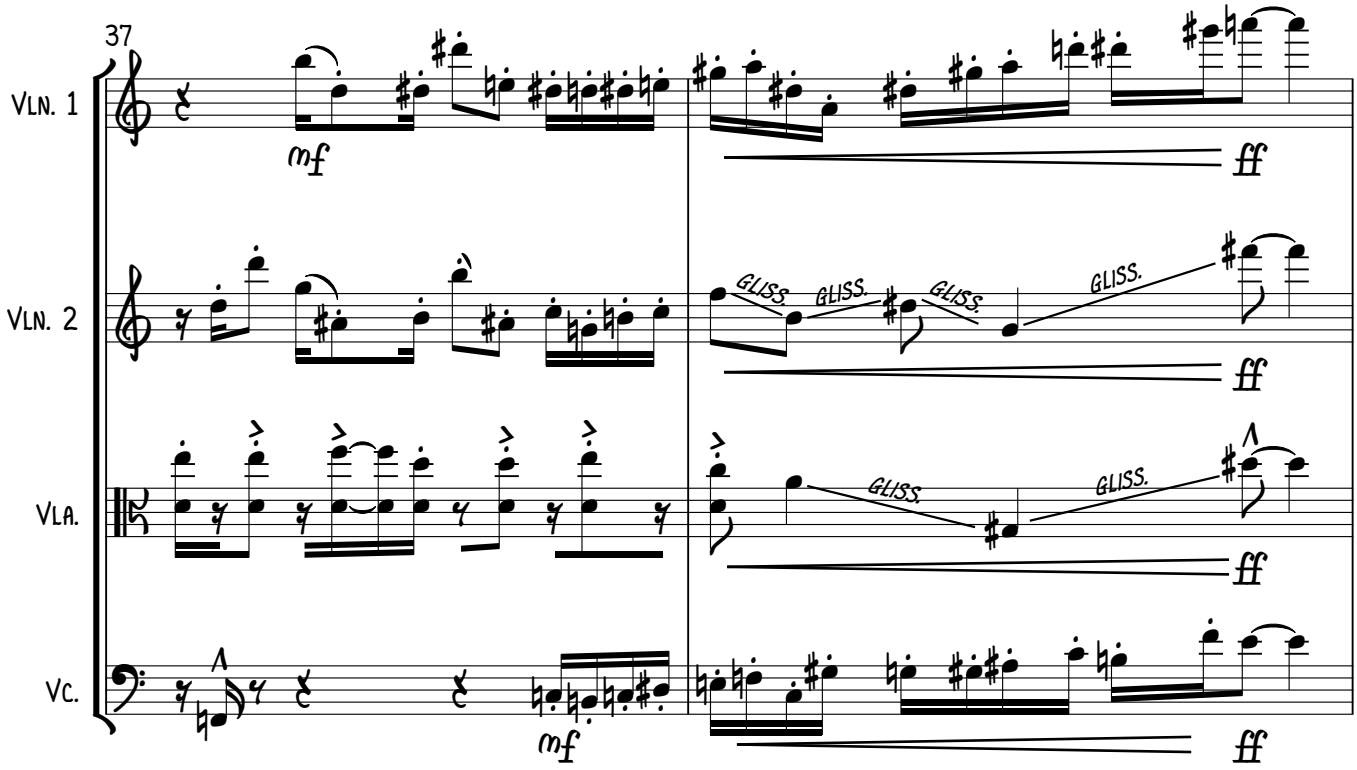
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.


37
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
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Vc.
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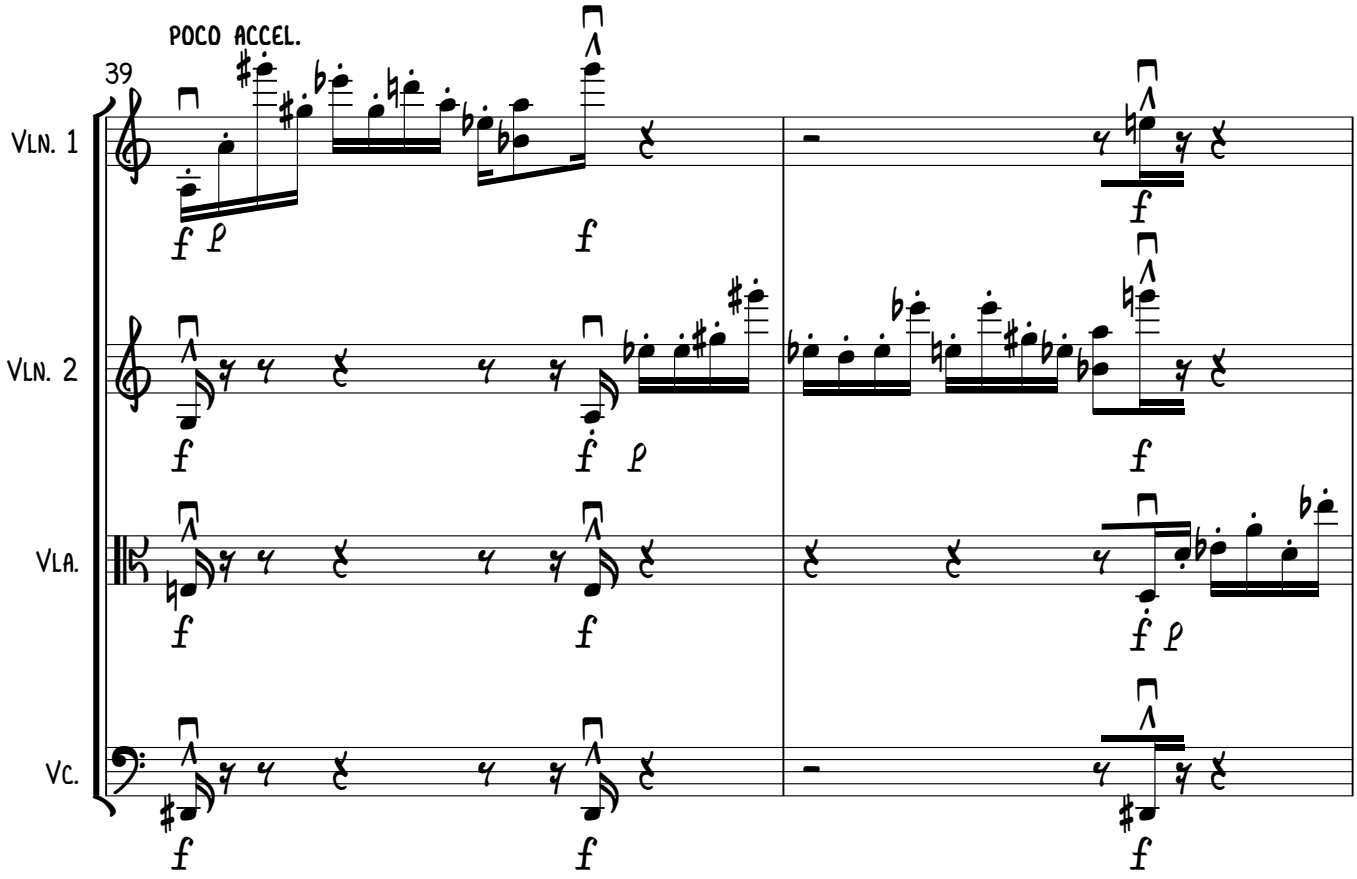
GLISS.
GLISS.
GLISS.
GLISS.
GLISS.
mf
ff


POCO ACCEL.
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Vln. 1
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Vla.
Vc.
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f
f
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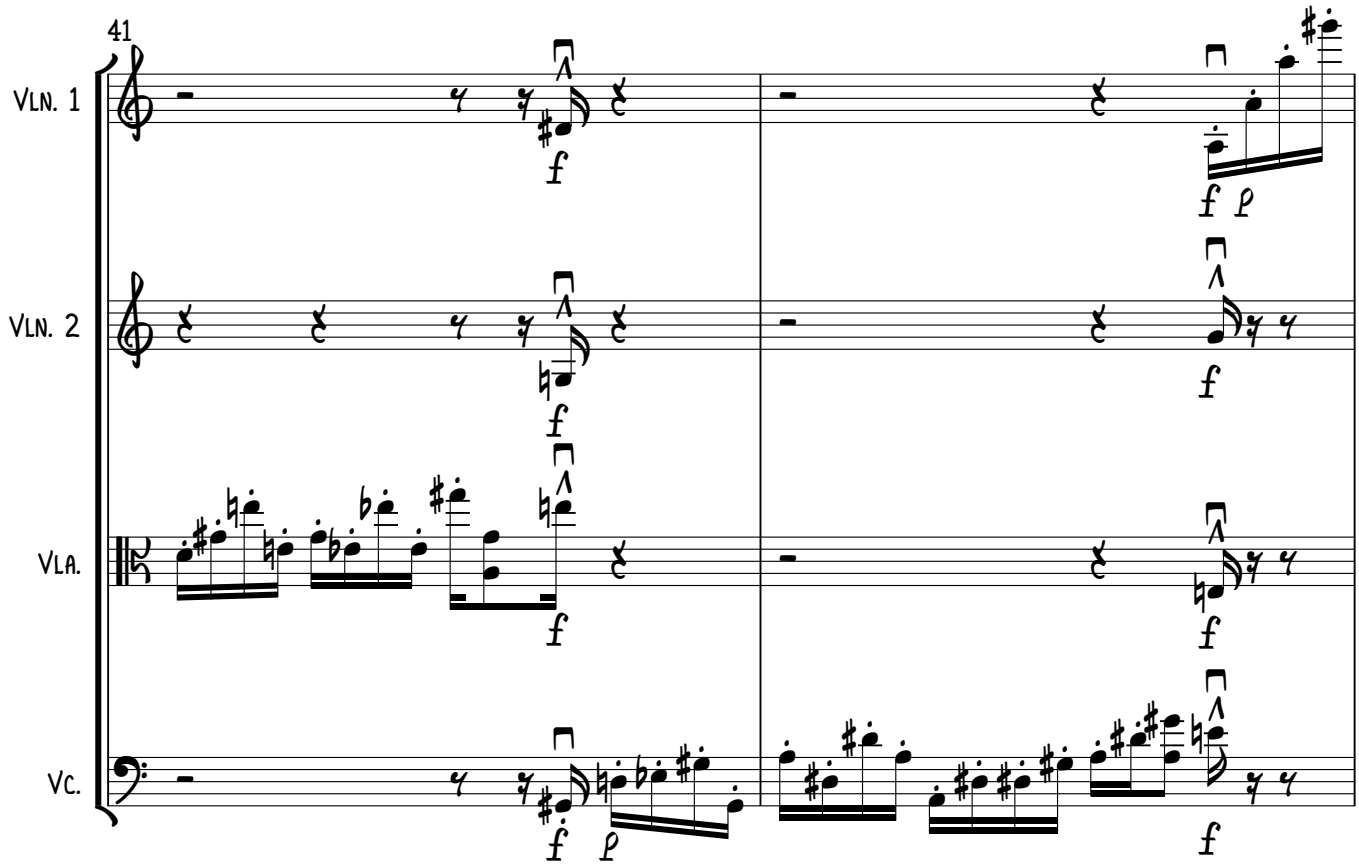
f
f
f
f
f
f
f
f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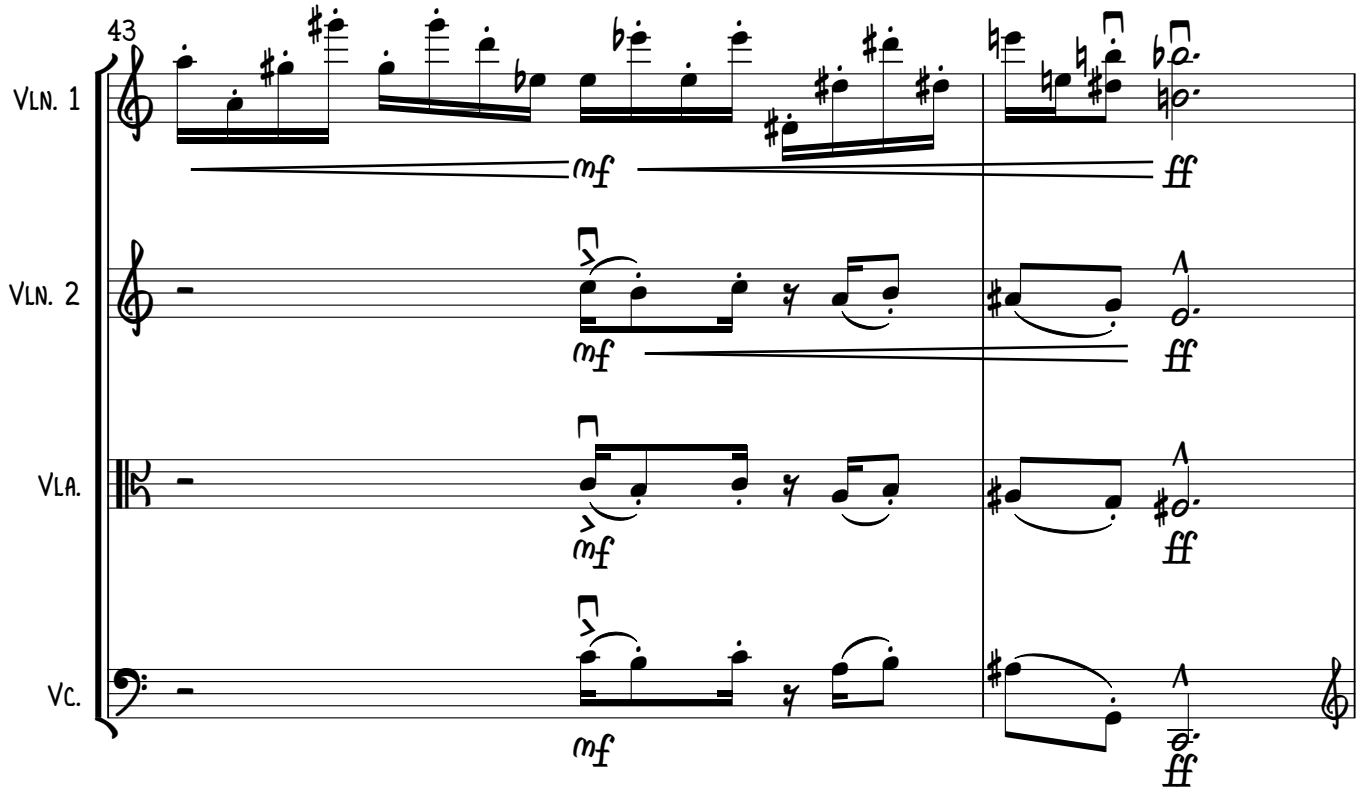
Vc.
f
p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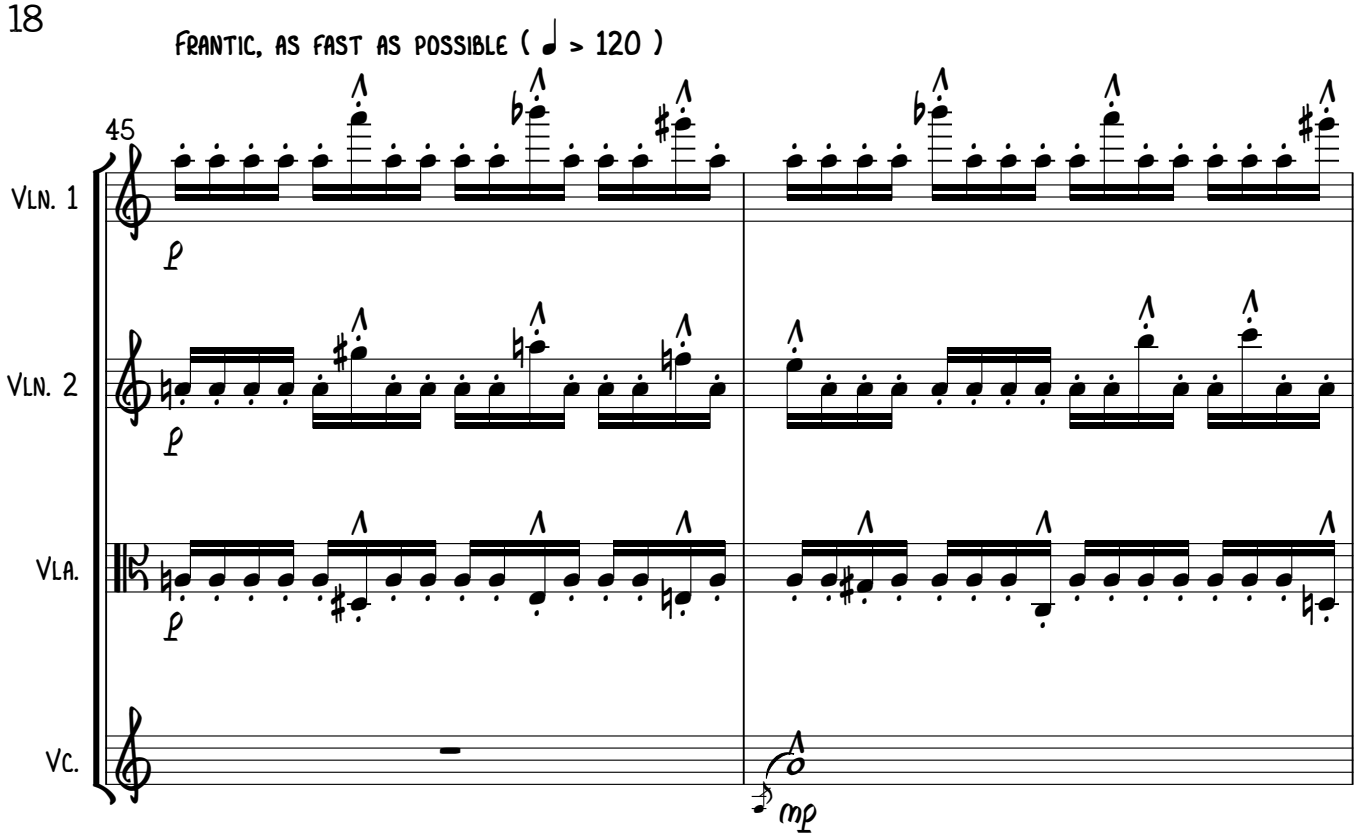
FRANTIC, AS FAST AS POSSIBLE (♩ > 120)
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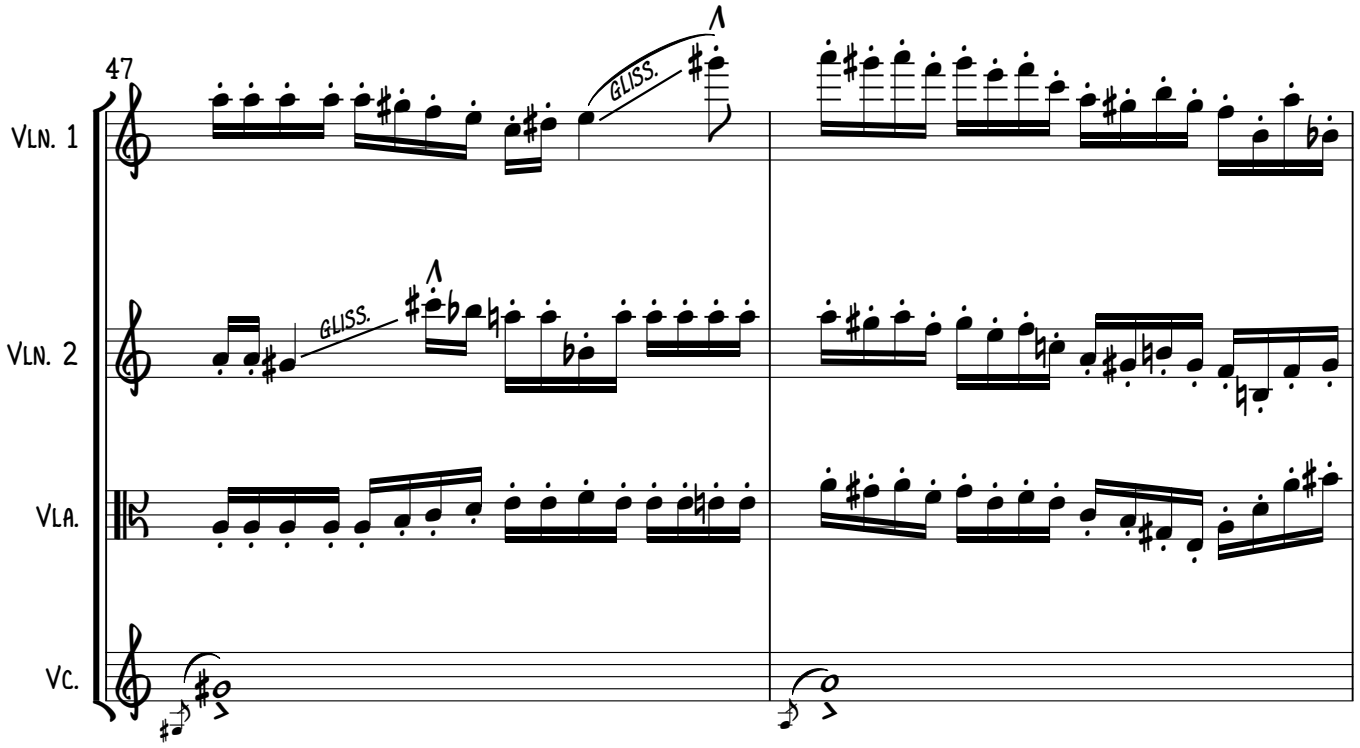
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
p
mp


47
Vln. 1
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Vla.
Vc.
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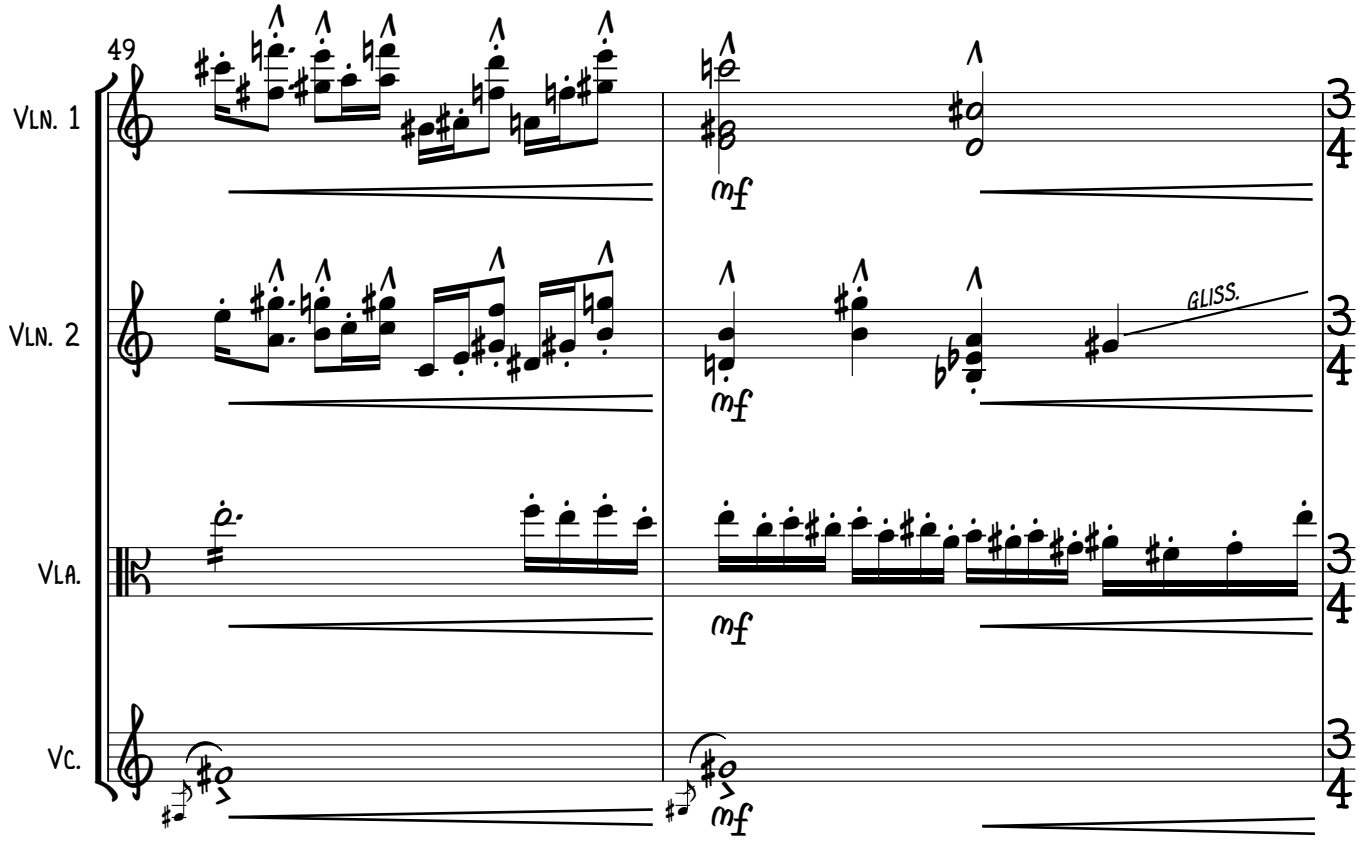
GLISS.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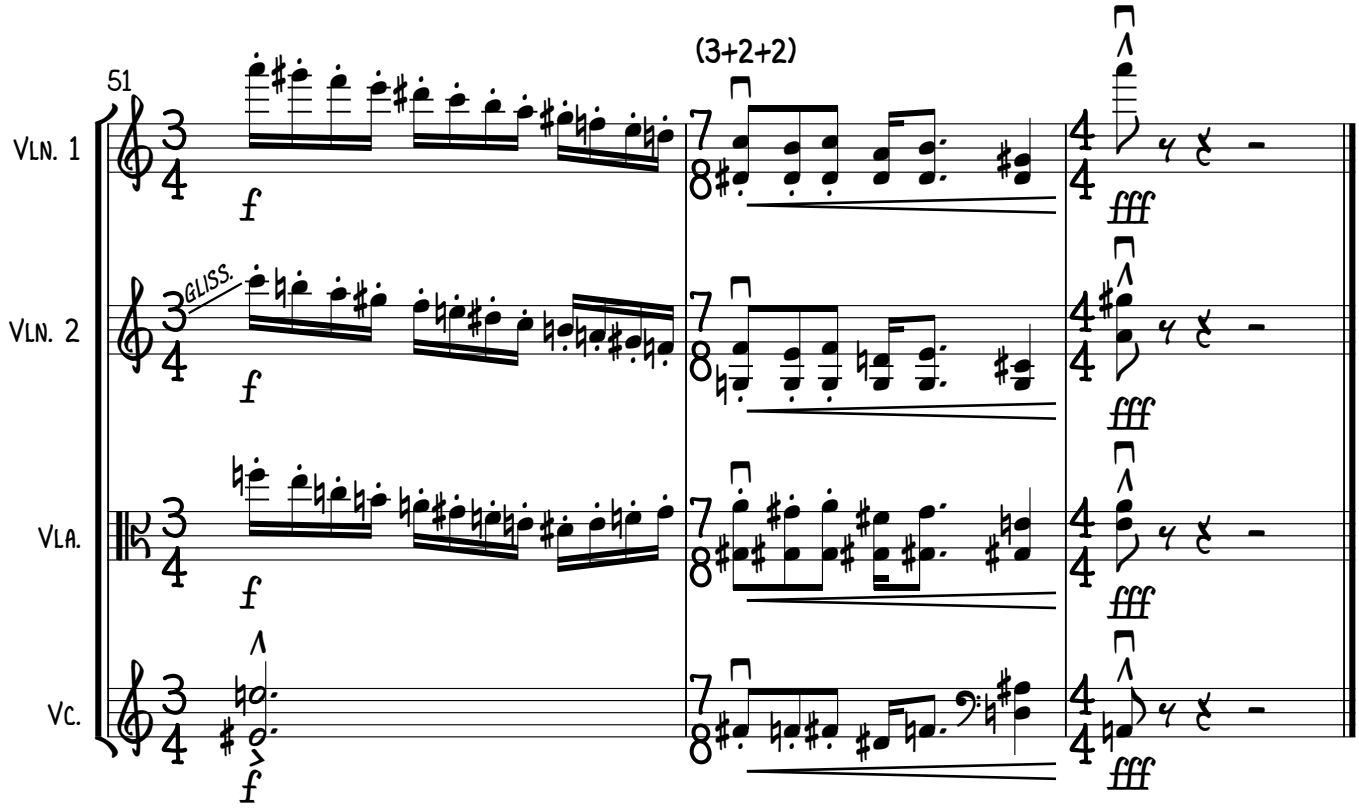
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
mf
GLISS.


51
(3+2+2)
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
f
GLISS.
fff