BICINIA

~ THREE PIECES ON RHYTHMIC PROPORTIONS ~

FOR B-FLAT CLARINET DUET

JORDAN ALEXANDER KEY

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~ BICINIA ~

FOR
CLARINET IN B-FLAT DUET

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Bicinia (plural of Bicinium) is an invented word, reminiscent of Latin, from the early 16th century. Historically, bicinia were two-part compositions from the late Renaissance and Baroque designed for teaching both singing and counterpoint. Throughout the 16th century, numerous volumes of bicinia were published throughout Germany, the Low Countries, Poland, and Italy. In modern usage, a bicinium can refer to any composition from the Renaissance for two voices; consequently, stand-alone duets (not part of larger works like Masses) from the 15th century are also now frequently referred to as bicinia. Not until the term "invention" arose in the mid-Baroque with the first compositions of this type by Francesco Antonio Bonporti and came into full usage with the popularization of the 15 *Inventions* by Johann Sebastian Bach did the term "bicinia" fall out of use for two-voiced compositions. However, by the late 18th century, both "Bicinium" and "invention" were mostly abandoned as genres, and most people returned to the common appellation "duet" or "duo" for compositions for two monophonic instruments.

Given the historical connotations of this word, ***Bicinia*** is referring directly to duets from the 15th and 16th century. However, this work, being "three pieces on rhythmic proportions," does not suggest a pedagogical piece for counterpoint. Rather, this piece pays homage to the little known sub-genre of mensural bicinia, which attempted to teach the nuances of advanced mensural techniques to composers and performers. There are very few extant examples of these pieces and fewer still have made it into the "canon" of Renaissance music despite their mathematical complexity and virtuosic understanding of counterpoint and mensuration. They are unrivaled in rhythmic technique until the music of Henry Cowell and Conlon Nancarrow in the early and mid 20th century. The largest collection of such pieces come from the Baldwin Commonplace Book from England in the late 16th century, wherein there is a whole section dedicated to complex mensural bicinia, avant-garde for their time. The most virtuosic pieces from this collection include those by John Baldwin and his colleague in the Royal Chapel, Nathaniel Giles. Composers from the continent also wrote a few such pieces in the late 15th and early 16th century: Alexander Agricola, Jacob Obrecht, Johannes Tinctoris, and Johannes Stockem to name a few.

Given this historical connection, ***Bicinia*** can be understood as a convolution - in the mathematical and aesthetic sense - of Renaissance idioms and modern aesthetics, demonstrating the rhythmic capabilities, quirks, and limitations of our present system of musical notation. ***Bicinia*** filters a music from half a millennium ago through the sieve centuries of musical development, hopefully offering us something worthy of the 21st century.

Transposing, Tempo Score

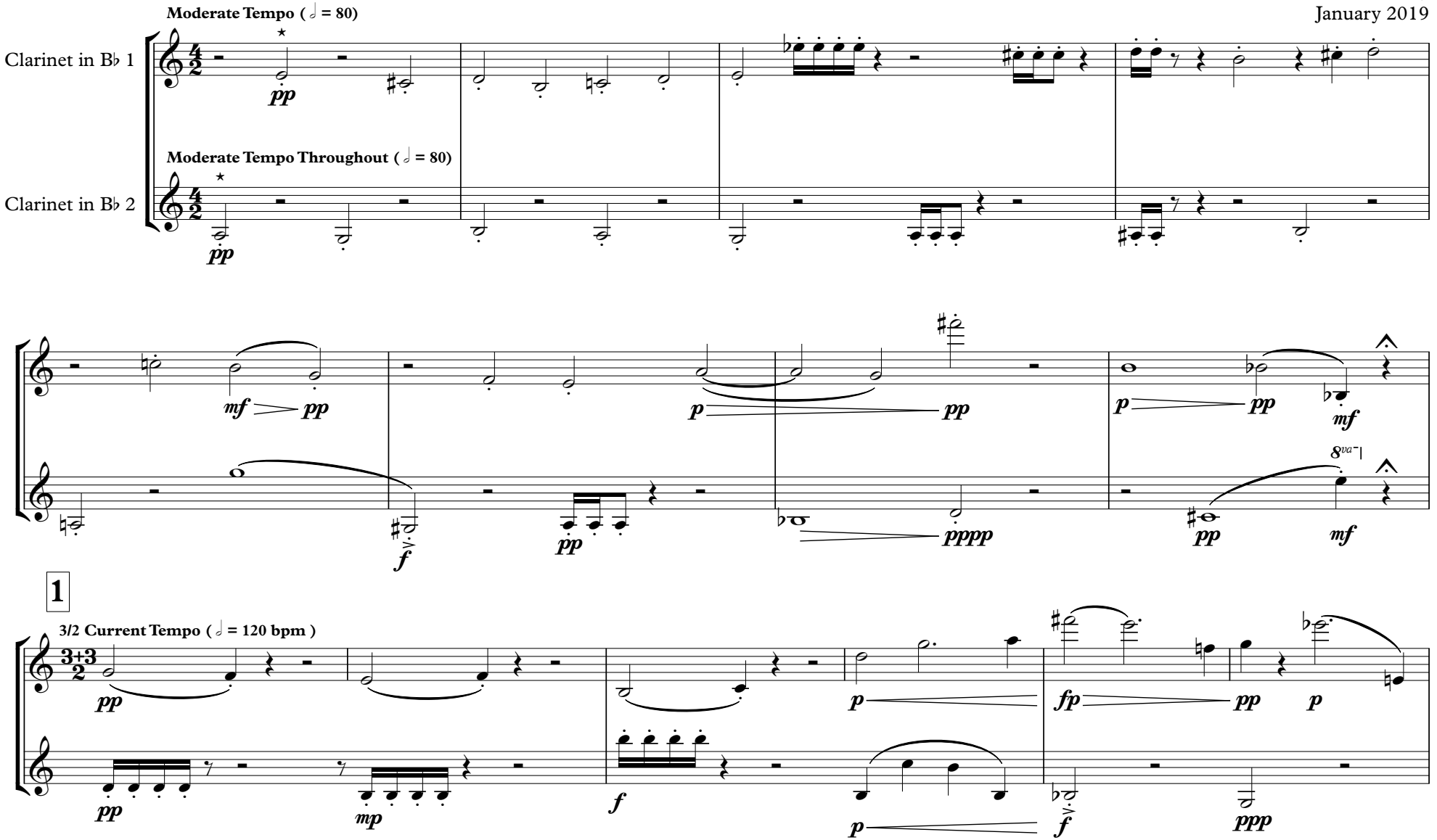
- Bicinia -

Three Pieces on Rhythmic Proportions

*All **staccato markings** on note values larger than an 8th-note should be played as short as a staccato 8th-note, regardless of the shown note duration. The shown note duration is only for rhythmic notational clarity, avoiding excessive rests, in cases with staccato markings. Staccato marking smaller than an 8th-note should be as short as possible.

Tenuto markings simply operate as curtesy indicators that a staccato mark is not intended and the note should have full value. These appear in passages with many consecutive staccato markings.

Jordan Alexander Key
January 2019



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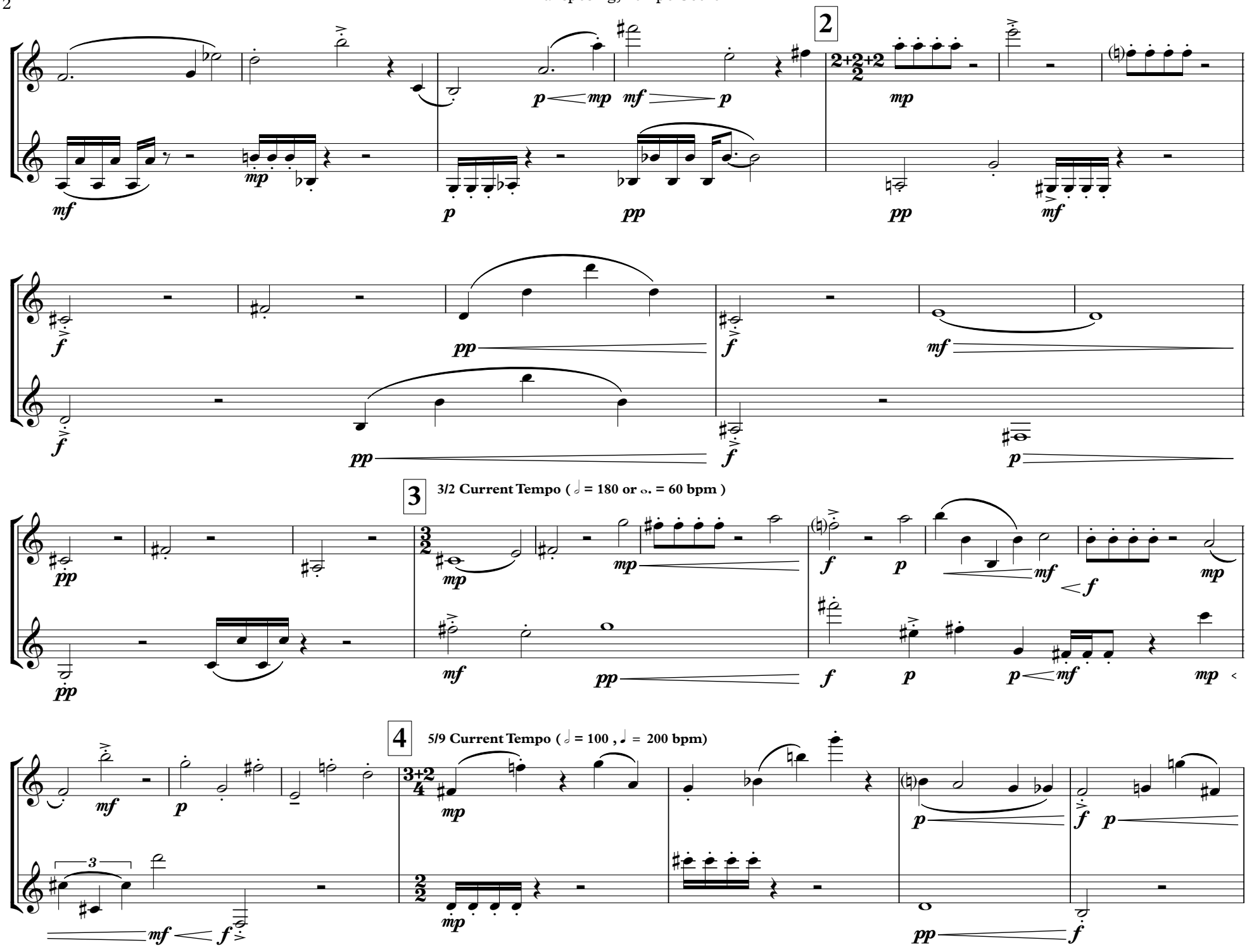
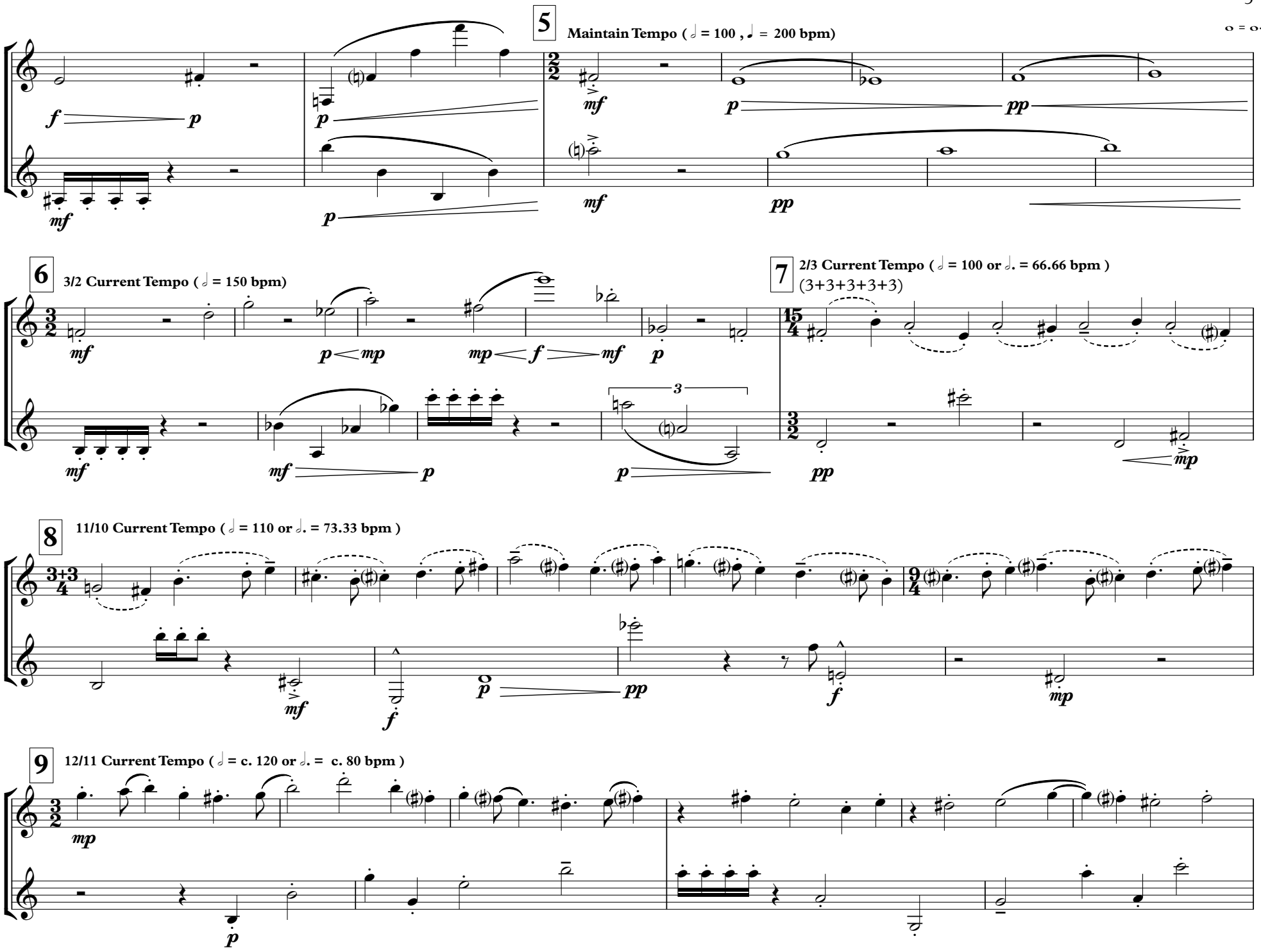
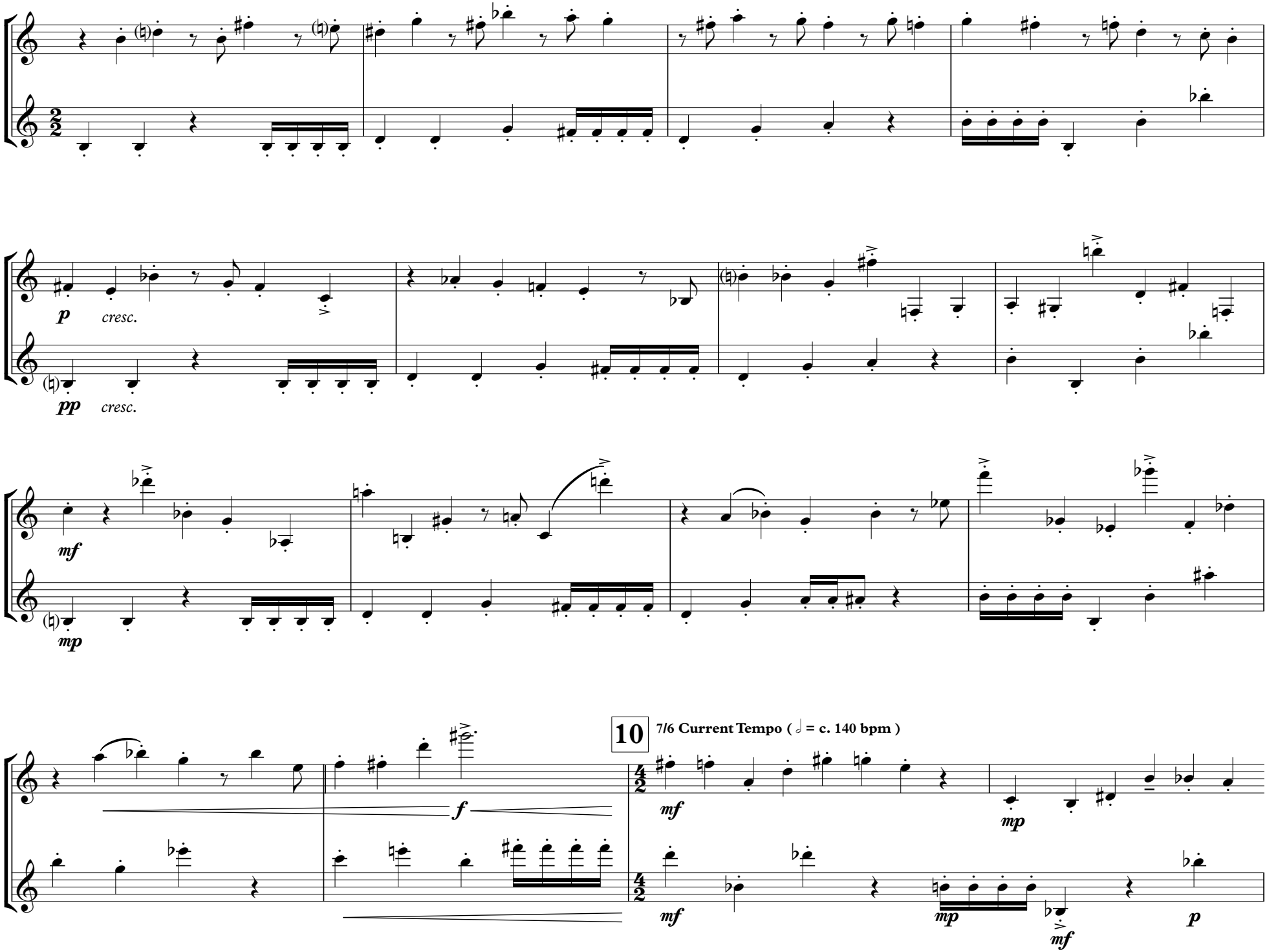
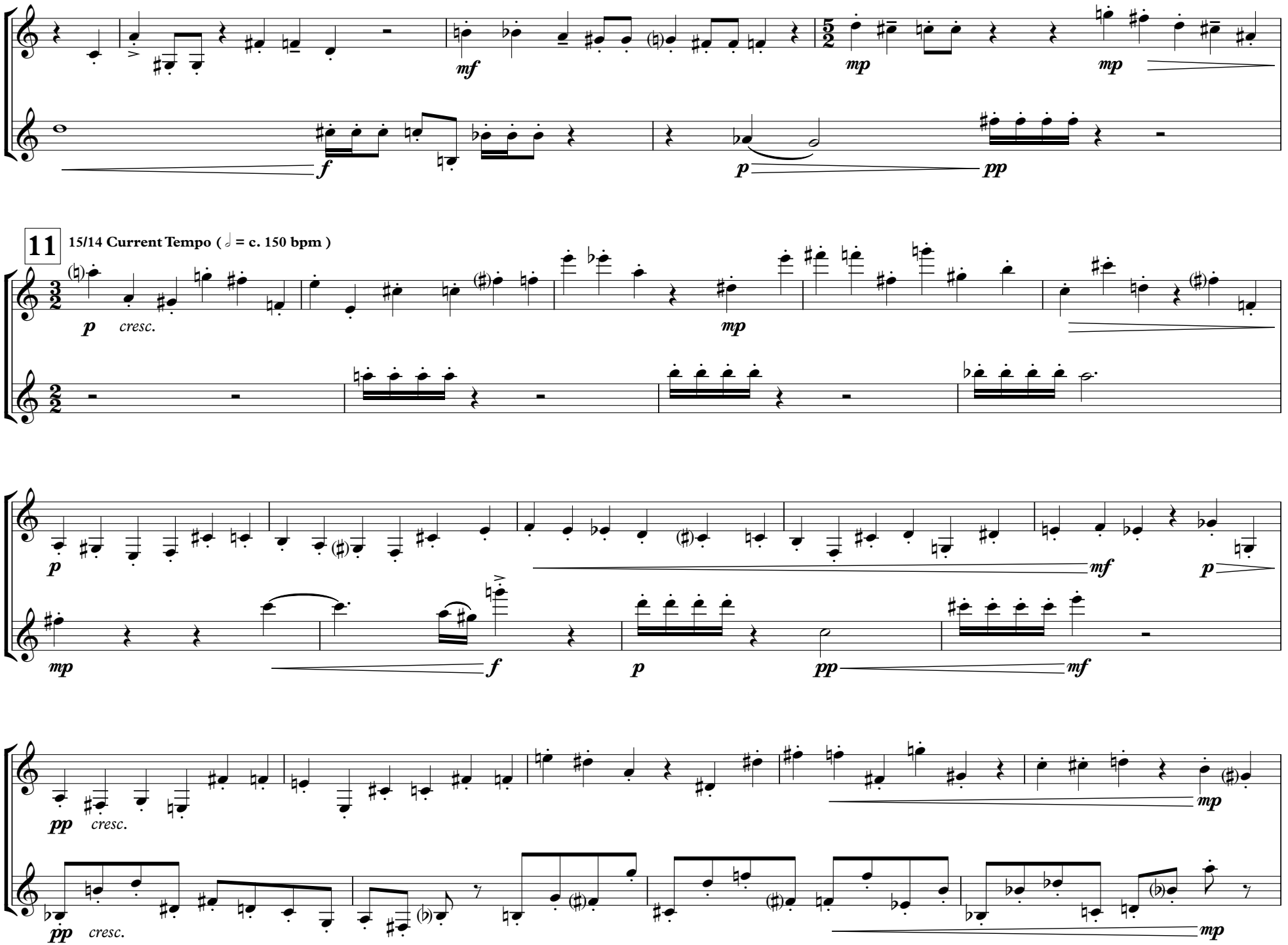
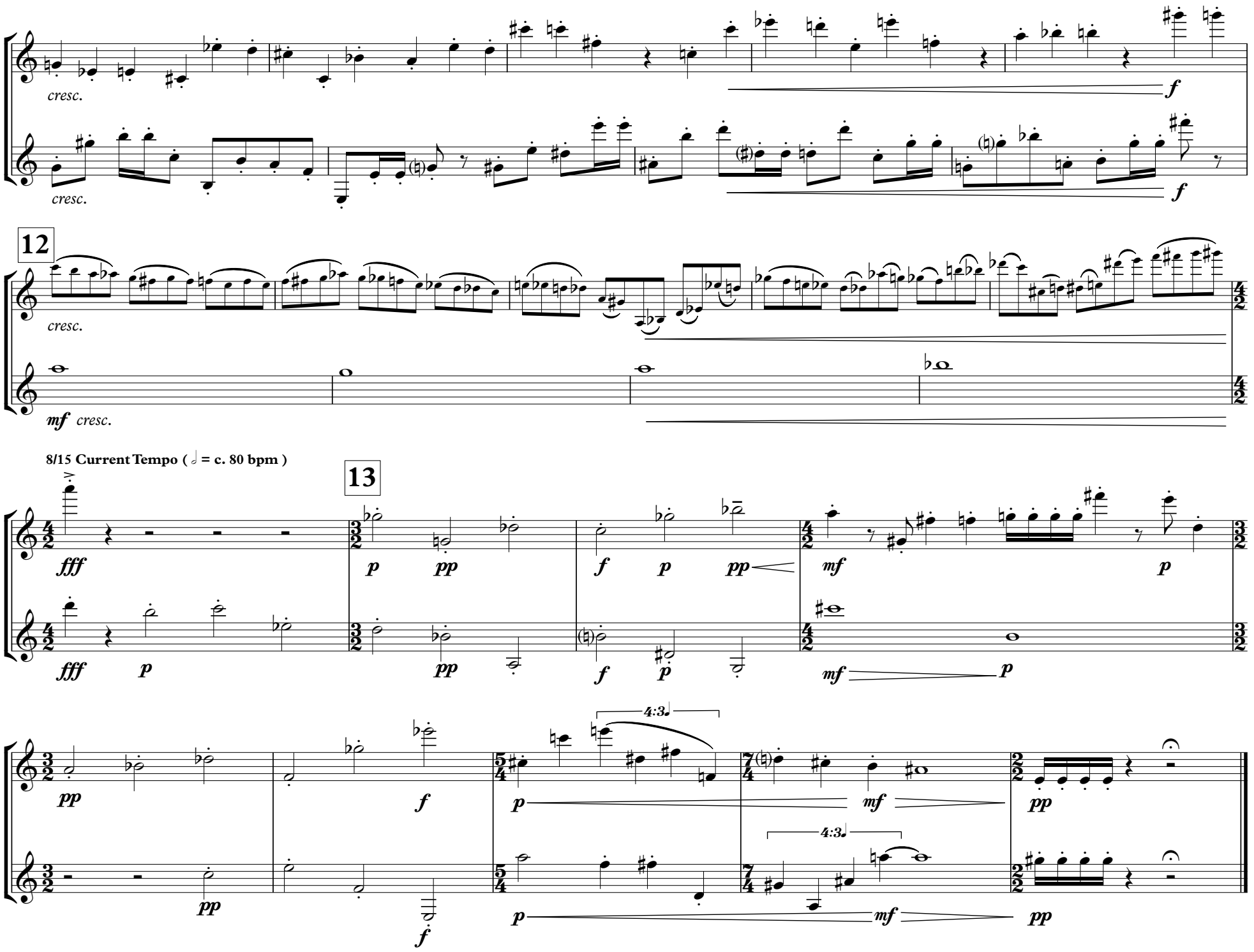

2
3
3/2 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = 180 or 𝅗𝅥. = 60 bpm)
4
5/9 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = 100 , ♩ = 200 bpm)

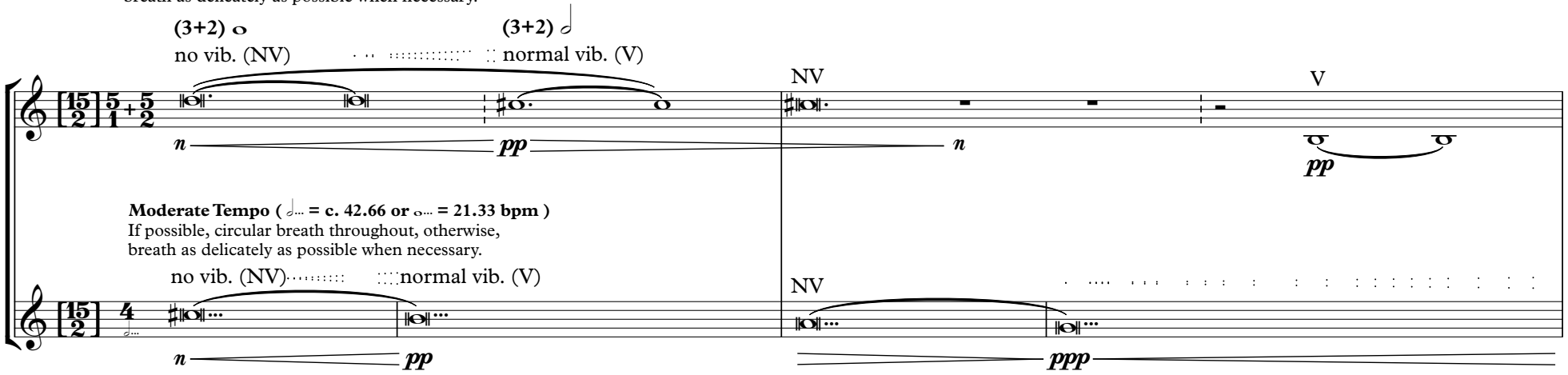

5
Maintain Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = 100 , ♩ = 200 bpm)
6
3/2 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = 150 bpm)
7
2/3 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = 100 or 𝅗𝅥. = 66.66 bpm)
(3+3+3+3+3)
8
11/10 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = 110 or 𝅗𝅥. = 73.33 bpm)
9
12/11 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = c. 120 or 𝅗𝅥. = c. 80 bpm)


p
cresc.
pp
cresc.
mf
mp
f
10
7/6 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = c. 140 bpm)
mf
mp
mf
mp
mf
p

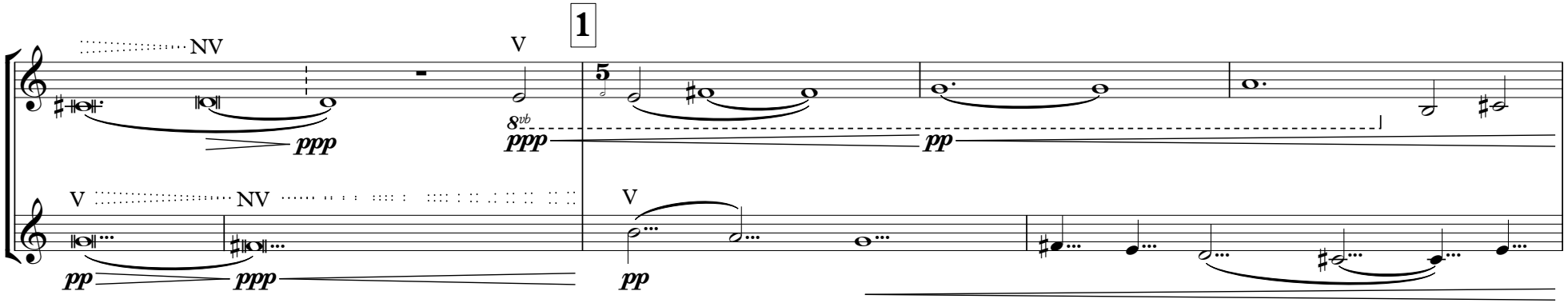

11
15/14 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = c. 150 bpm)
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.

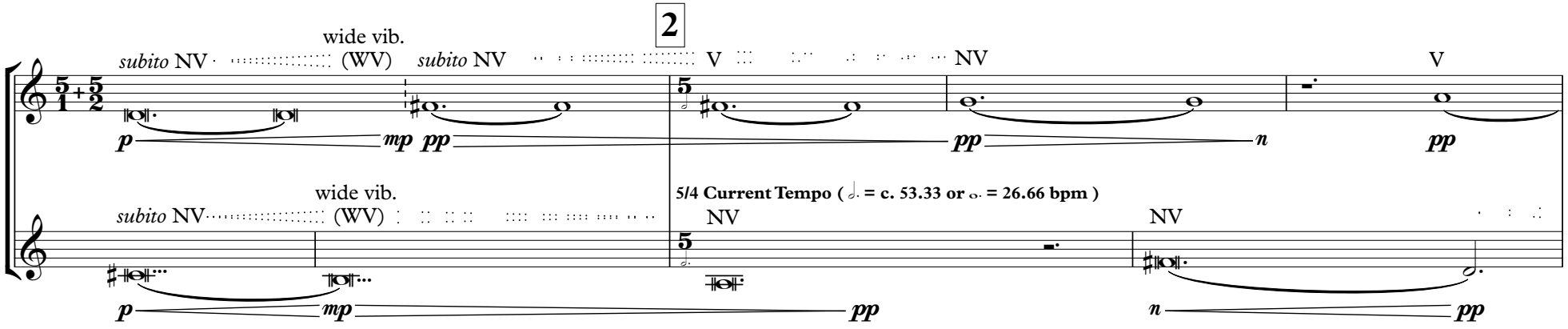

cresc.
f
12
mf cresc.
8/15 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = c. 80 bpm)
13
fff
p
pp
f
mf
4:3
4:3

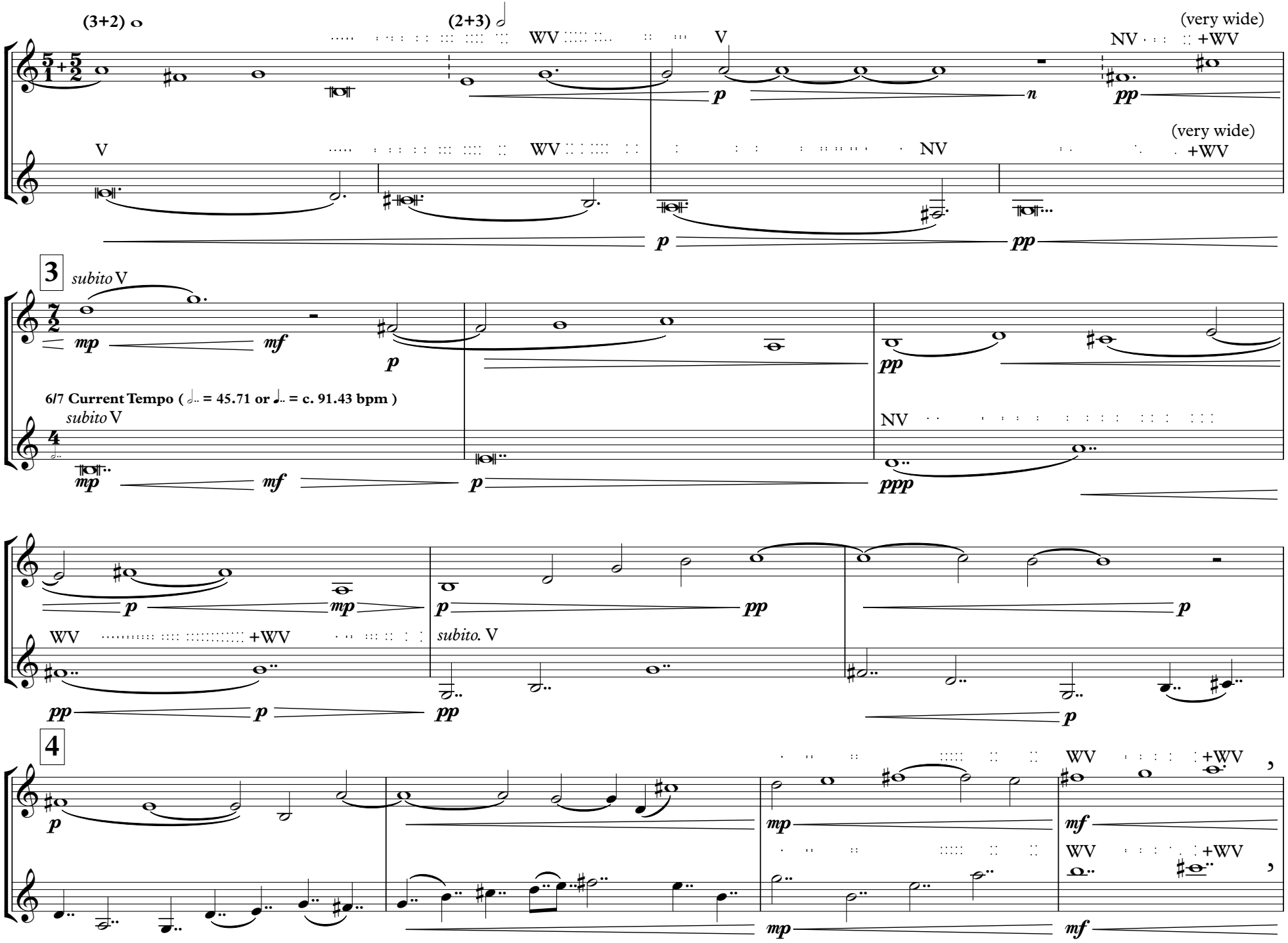
Moderate Tempo Throughout (𝅗𝅥 = c. 80 or 𝅝 = 40 bpm)
If possible, circular breath throughout, otherwise,
breath as delicately as possible when necessary.

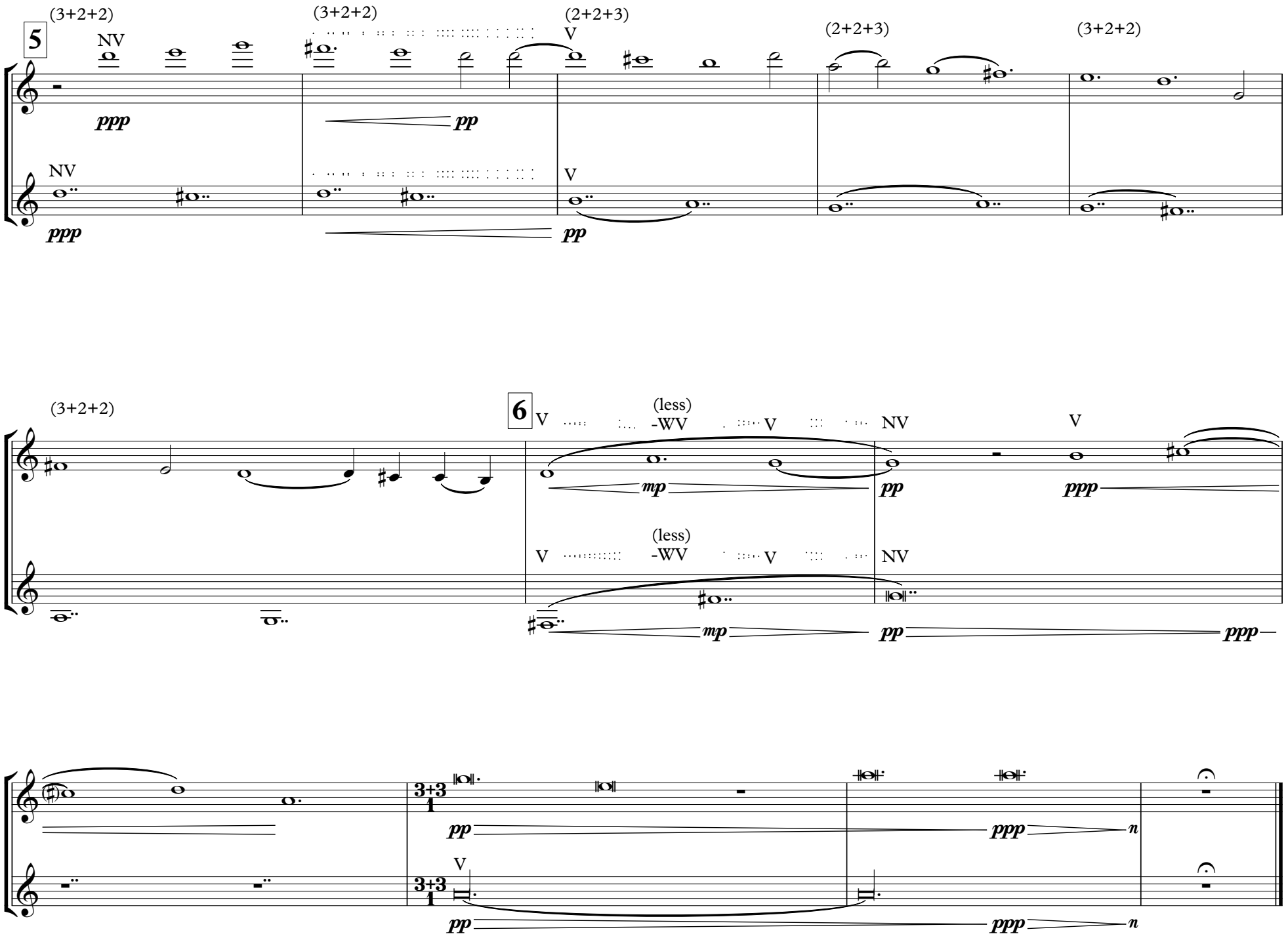


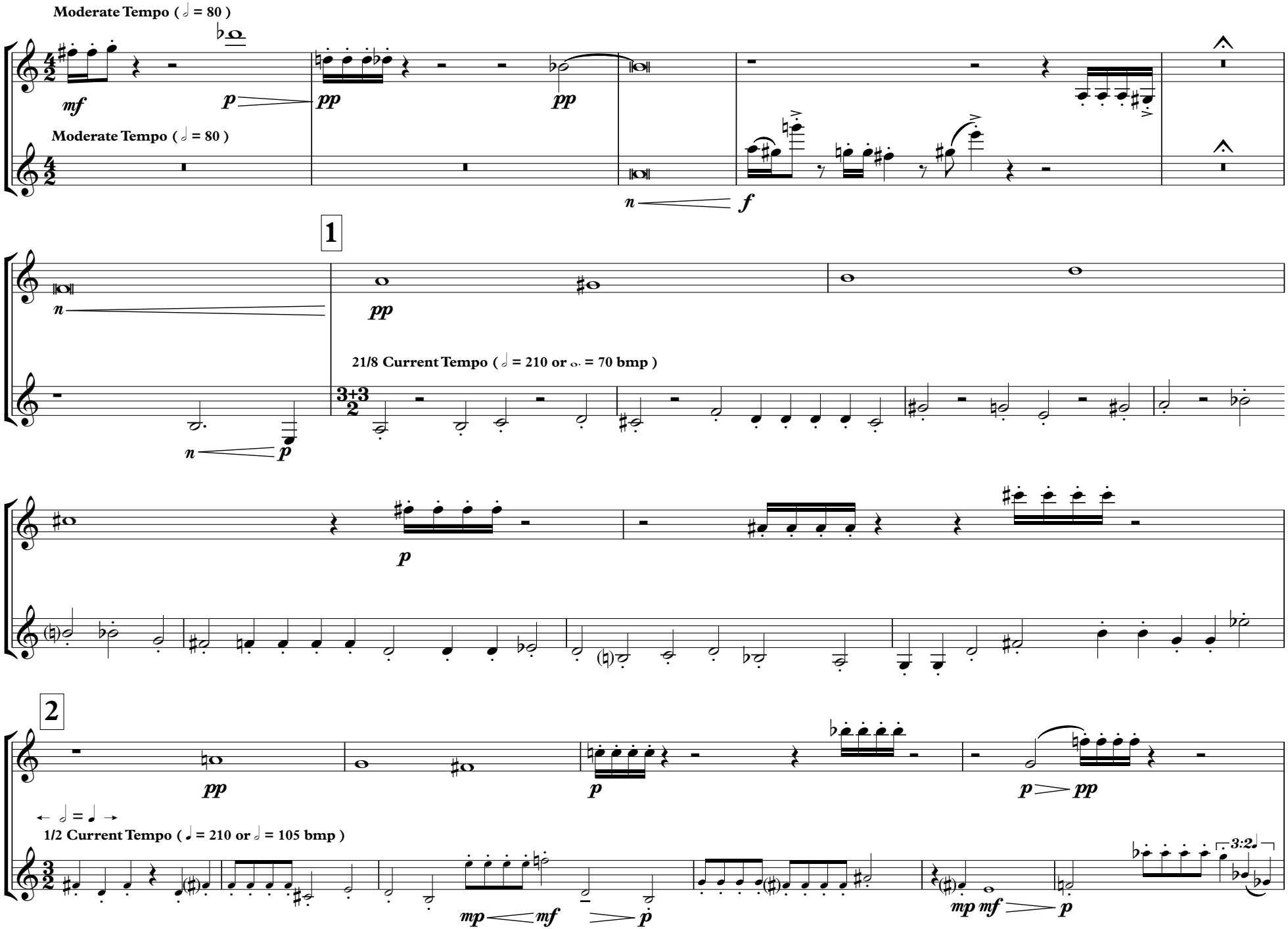
Moderate Tempo (𝅗𝅥... = c. 42.66 or 𝅝... = 21.33 bpm)
If possible, circular breath throughout, otherwise,
breath as delicately as possible when necessary.

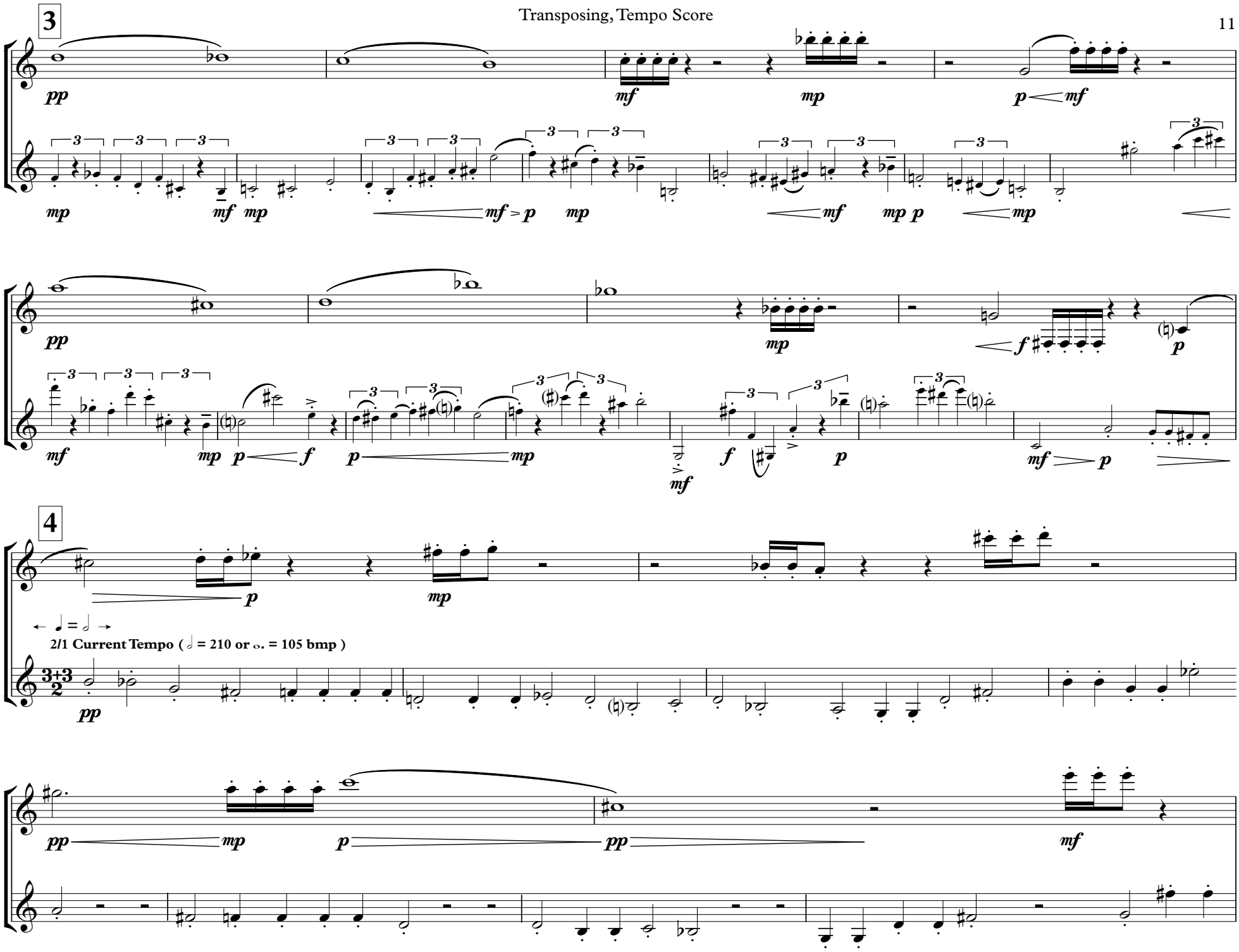


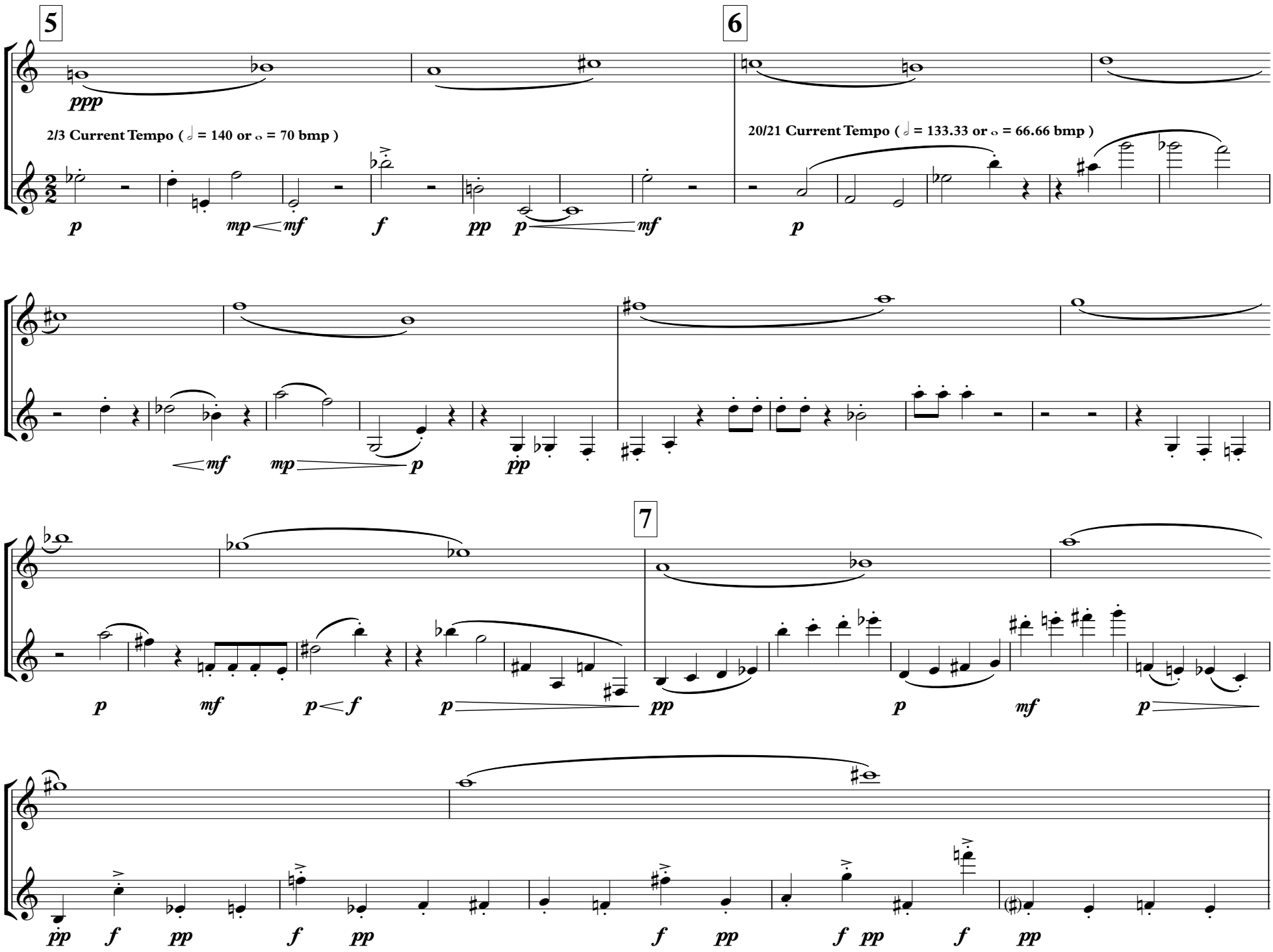


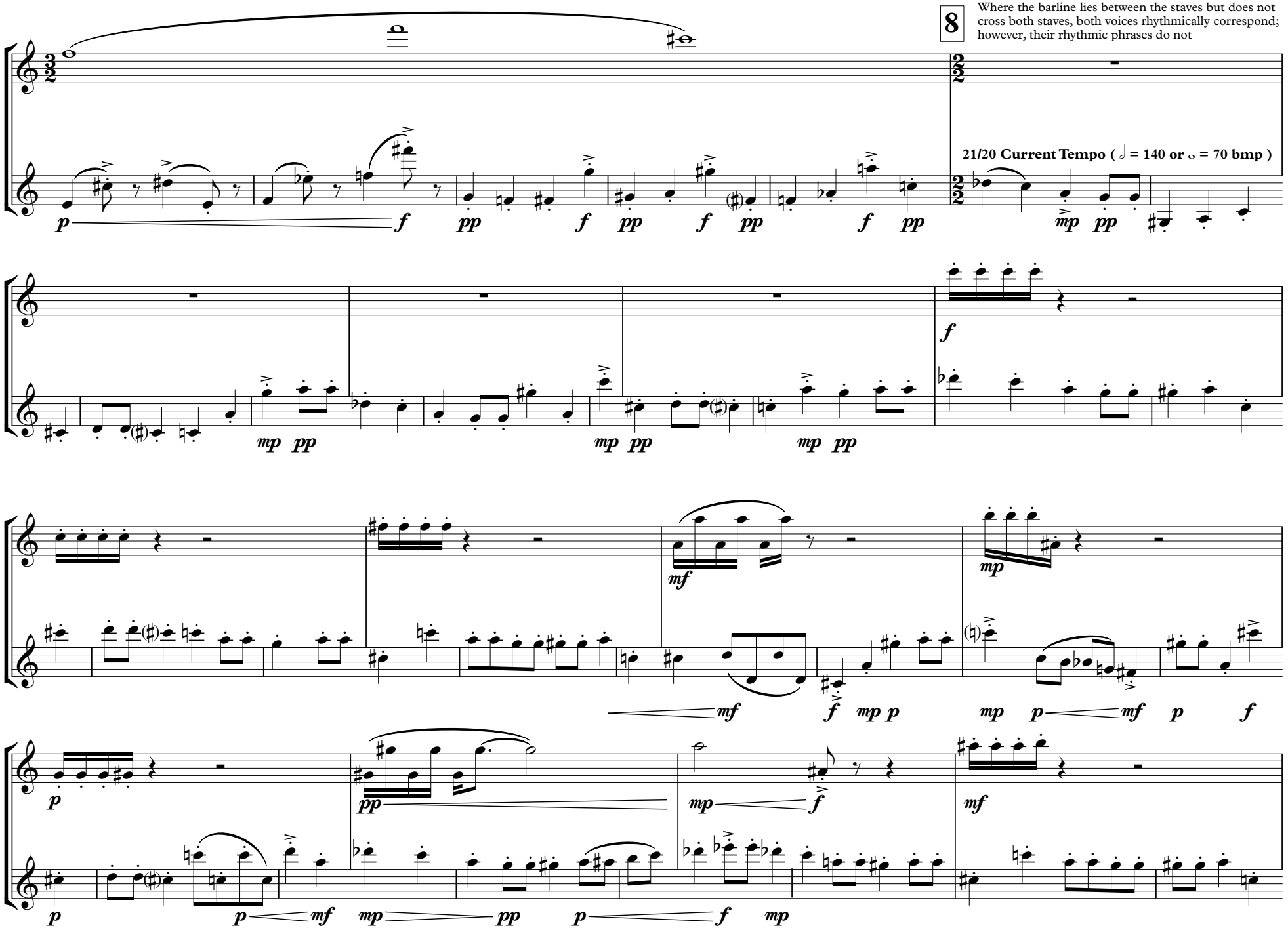

(3+2)
(2+3)
WV
V
(very wide)
NV
+WV
p
n
pp
V
WV
NV
(very wide)
+WV
p
pp
3
subito V
mp
mf
p
pp
6/7 Current Tempo (= 45.71 or = c. 91.43 bpm)
subito V
NV
mp
mf
p
ppp
p
mp
p
pp
p
WV
+WV
subito. V
pp
p
pp
p
4
p
WV
+WV
mp
mf
WV
+WV
mp
mf

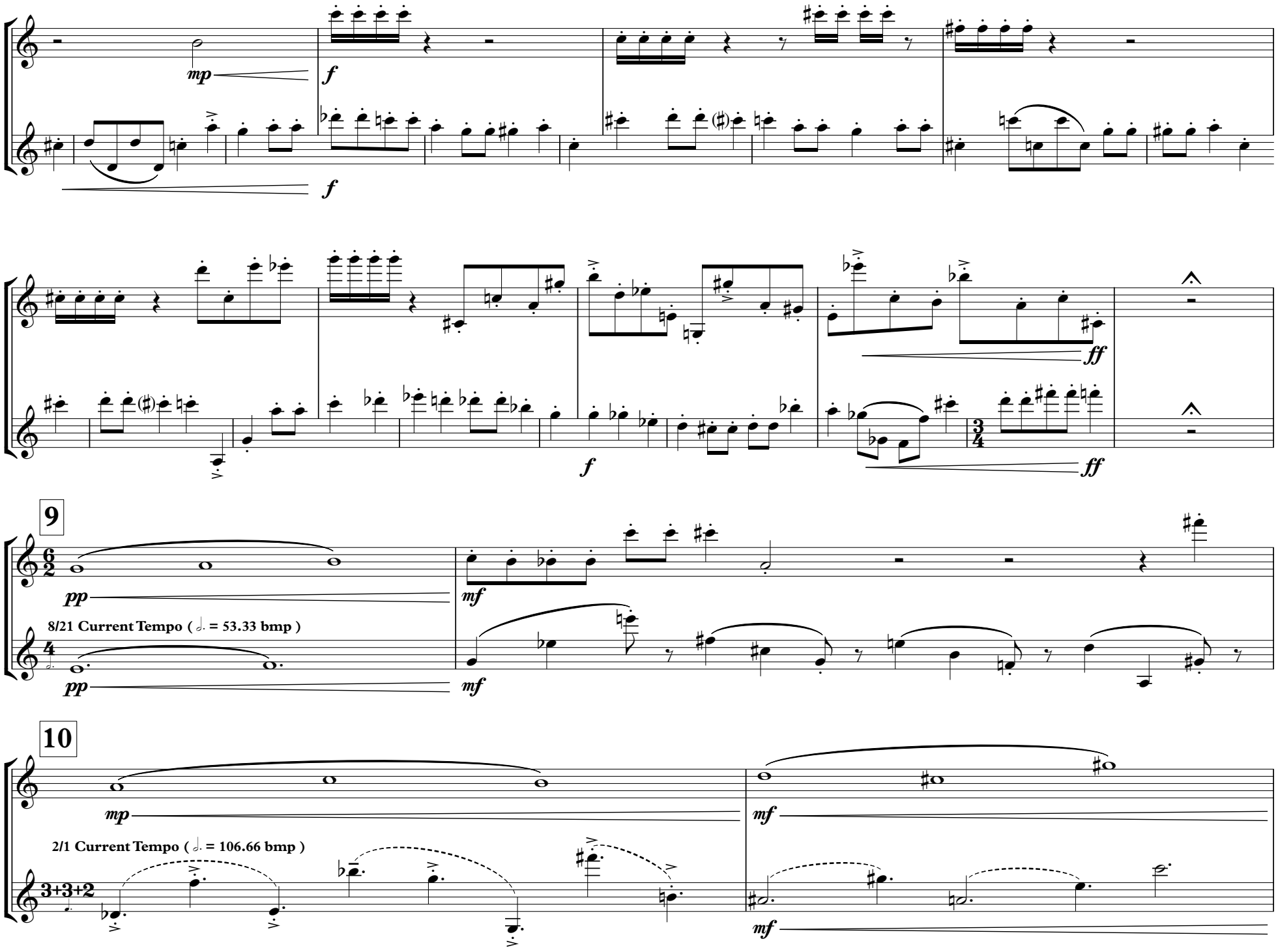

5
(3+2+2)
NV
ppp
(3+2+2)
pp
(2+2+3)
V
(2+2+3)
(3+2+2)
NV
ppp
V
pp
6
(3+2+2)
V
(less)
-WV
V
NV
V
mp
pp
ppp
(less)
V
-WV
V
NV
mp
pp
ppp
3+3
1
pp
ppp
n
V
3+3
1
pp
ppp
n

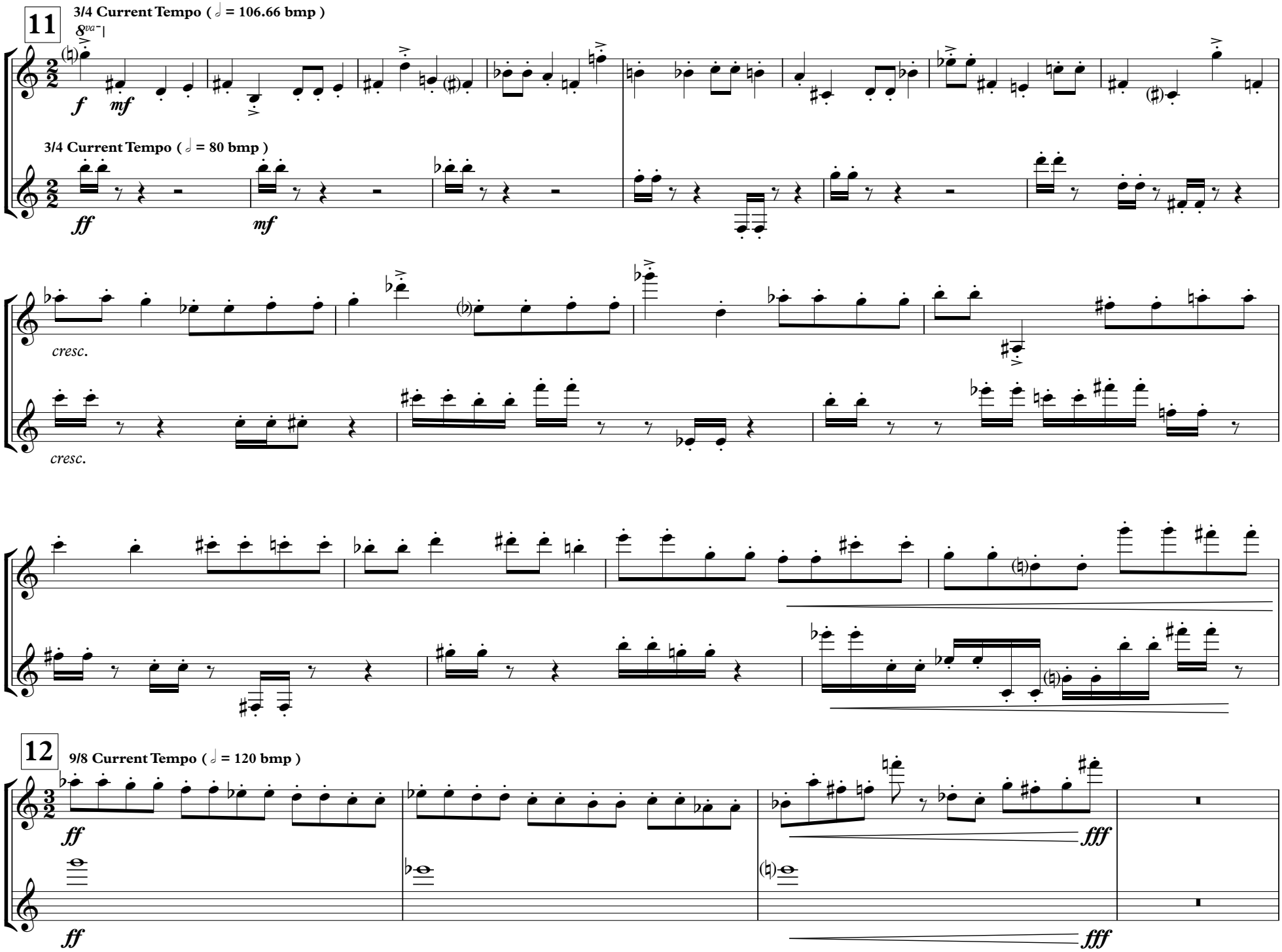

Moderate Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = 80)
mf
p
pp
pp
Moderate Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = 80)
n
f
1
n
pp
21/8 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = 210 or 𝅘𝅥𝅮. = 70 bmp)
n
p
p
2
pp
p
p
pp
← 𝅗𝅥 = ♩ →
1/2 Current Tempo (♩ = 210 or 𝅗𝅥 = 105 bmp)
mp
mf
p
mp
mf
p
3:2


3
4
2/1 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = 210 or 𝅗𝅥. = 105 bmp)

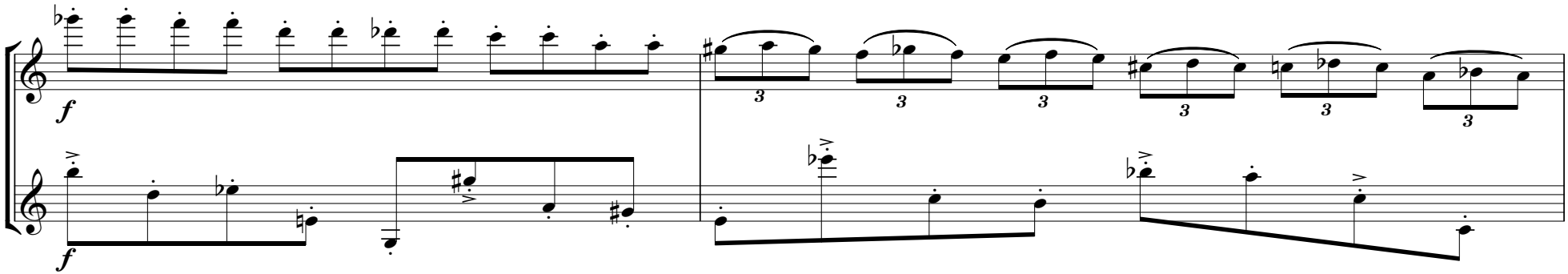

5
6
ppp
2/3 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = 140 or 𝅝 = 70 bmp)
20/21 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = 133.33 or 𝅝 = 66.66 bmp)
p mp mf f pp p mf
p
mf mp p pp
7
p mf p f p pp p mf p
pp f pp f pp f pp f pp f pp


8
Where the barline lies between the staves but does not cross both staves, both voices rhythmically correspond; however, their rhythmic phrases do not
21/20 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = 140 or 𝅝 = 70 bmp)

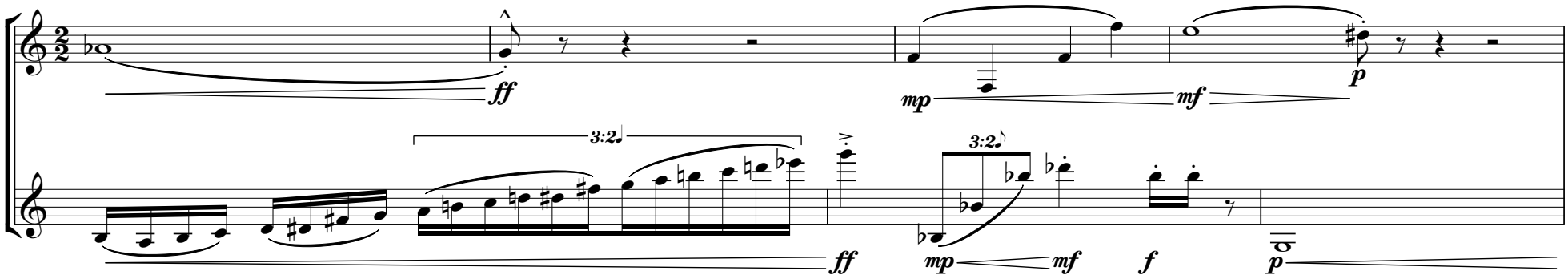

mp
f
f
f
ff
ff
9
pp
pp
8/21 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥. = 53.33 bmp)
mf
mf
10
mp
2/1 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥. = 106.66 bmp)
3+3+2
mf
mf

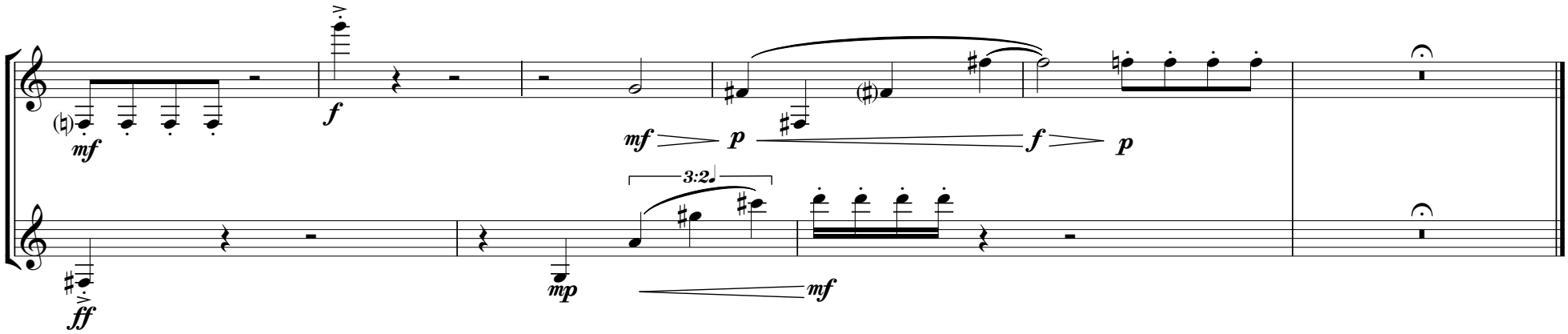

11
3/4 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = 106.66 bmp)
8va
f
mf
3/4 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = 80 bmp)
ff
mf
cresc.
cresc.
12
9/8 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = 120 bmp)
ff
fff
ff
fff

13



10/9 Current Tempo (𝅗𝅥 = 133.33 bmp)





*All **staccato markings** on note values larger than an 8th-note should be played as short as a staccato 8th-note, regardless of the shown note duration. The shown note duration is only for rhythmic notational clarity, avoiding excessive rests, in cases with staccato markings. Staccato marking smaller than an 8th-note should be as short as possible.

Tenuto markings simply operate as curtesy indicators that a staccato mark is not intended and the note should have full value. These appear in passages with many consecutive staccato markings.

- Bicinia -

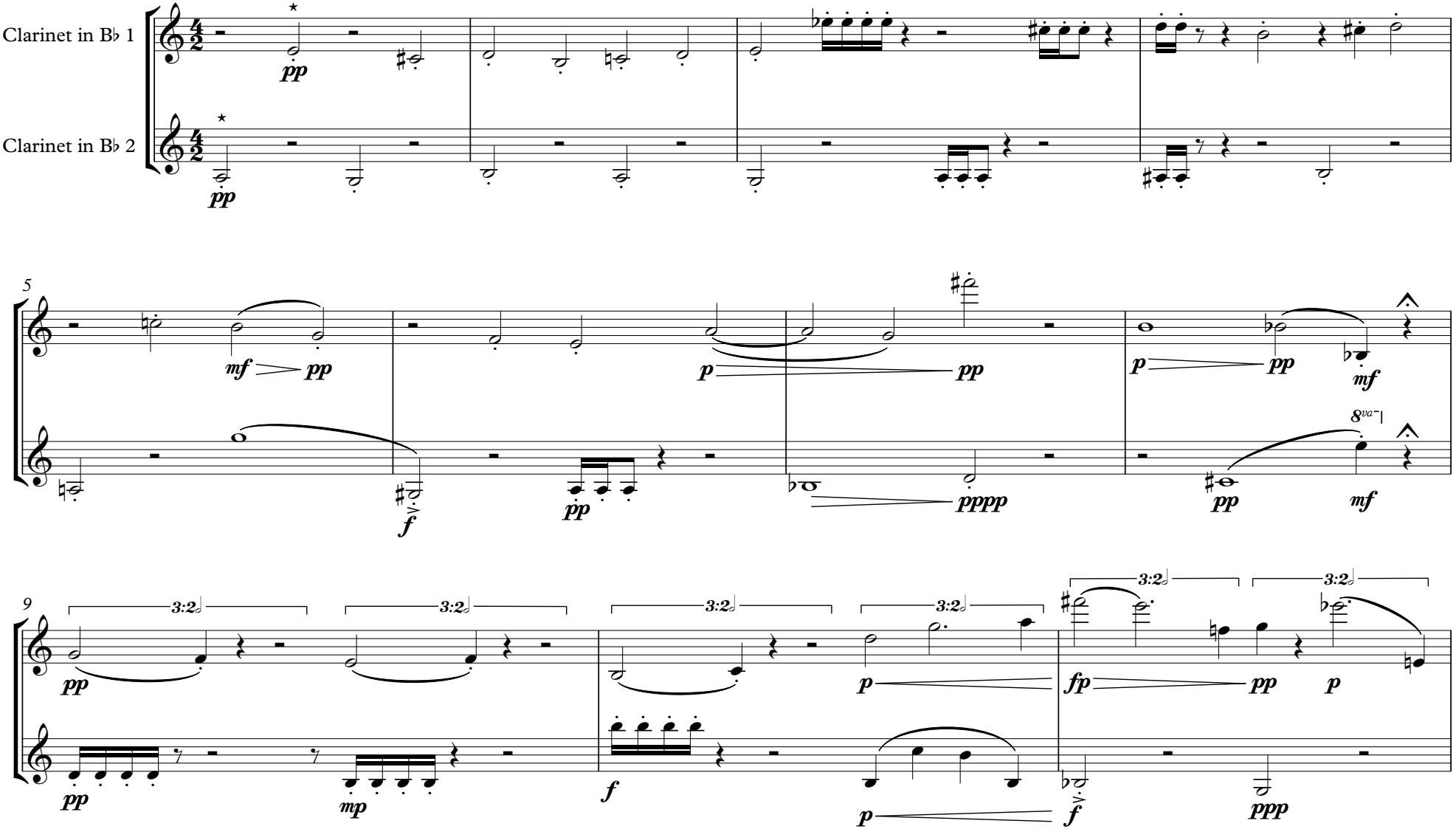
Three Pieces on Rhythmic Proportions

Jordan Alexander Key
January 2019

Moderate Tempo Throughout (𝅗𝅥 = 80)

Clarinet in B♭ 1

Clarinet in B♭ 2



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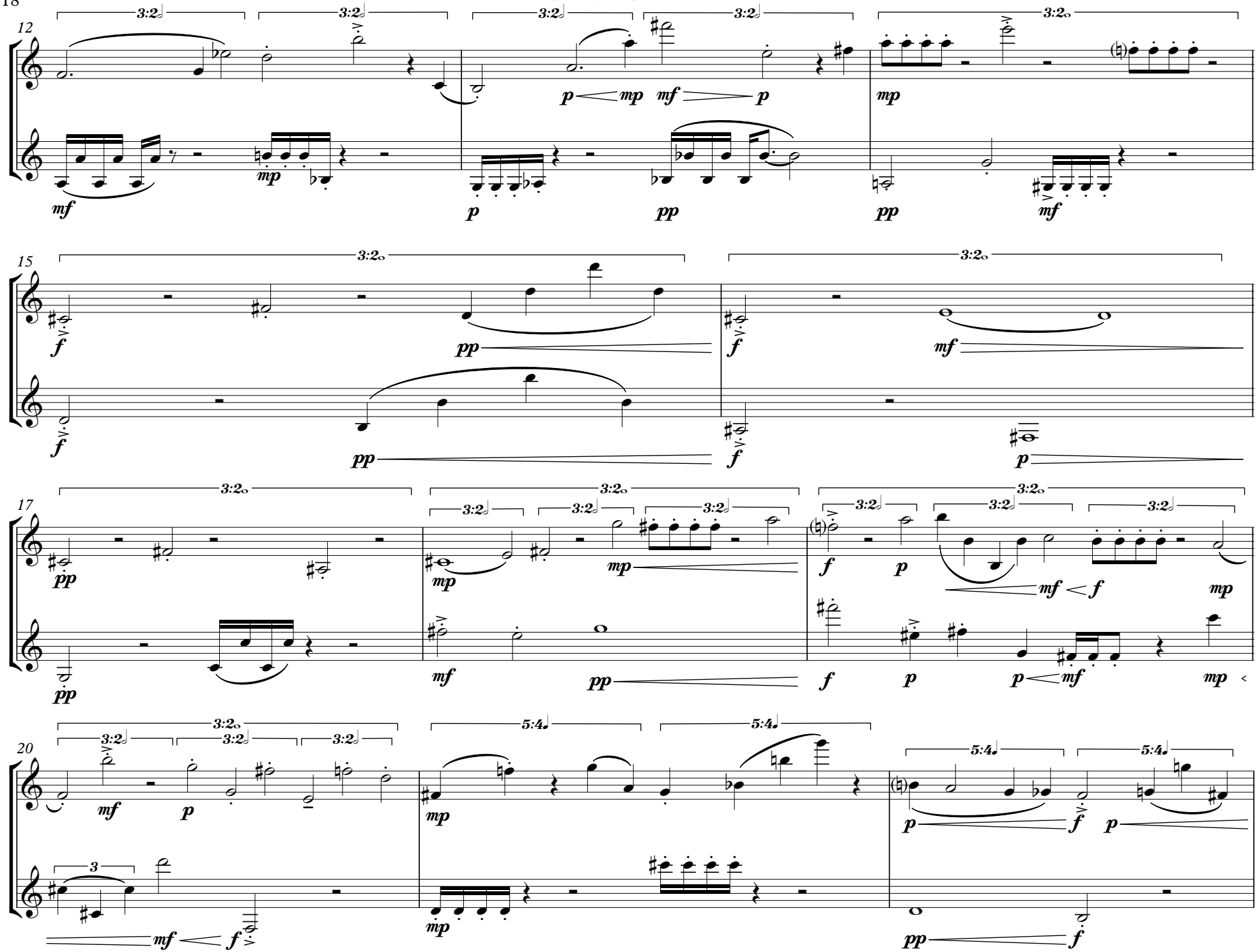
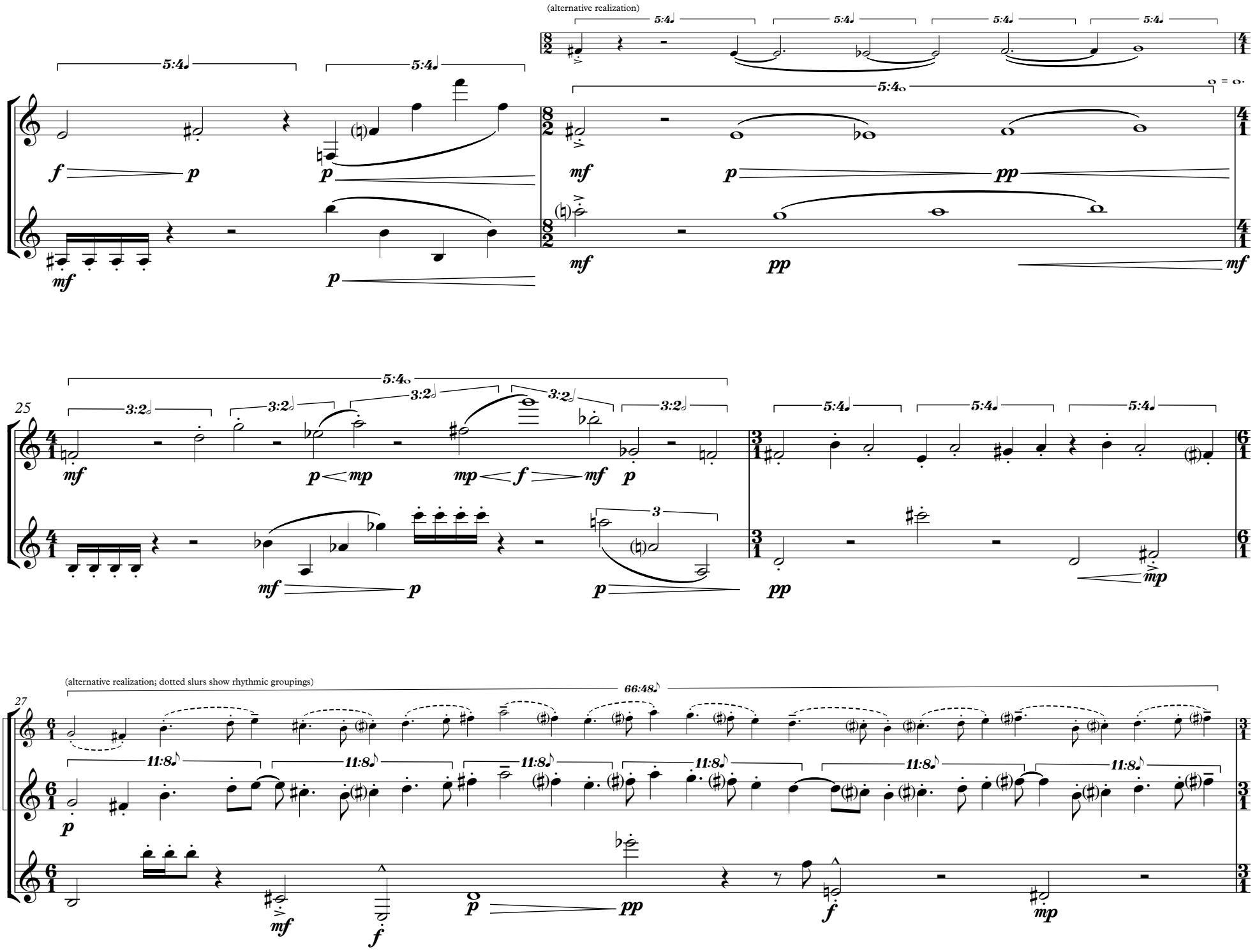
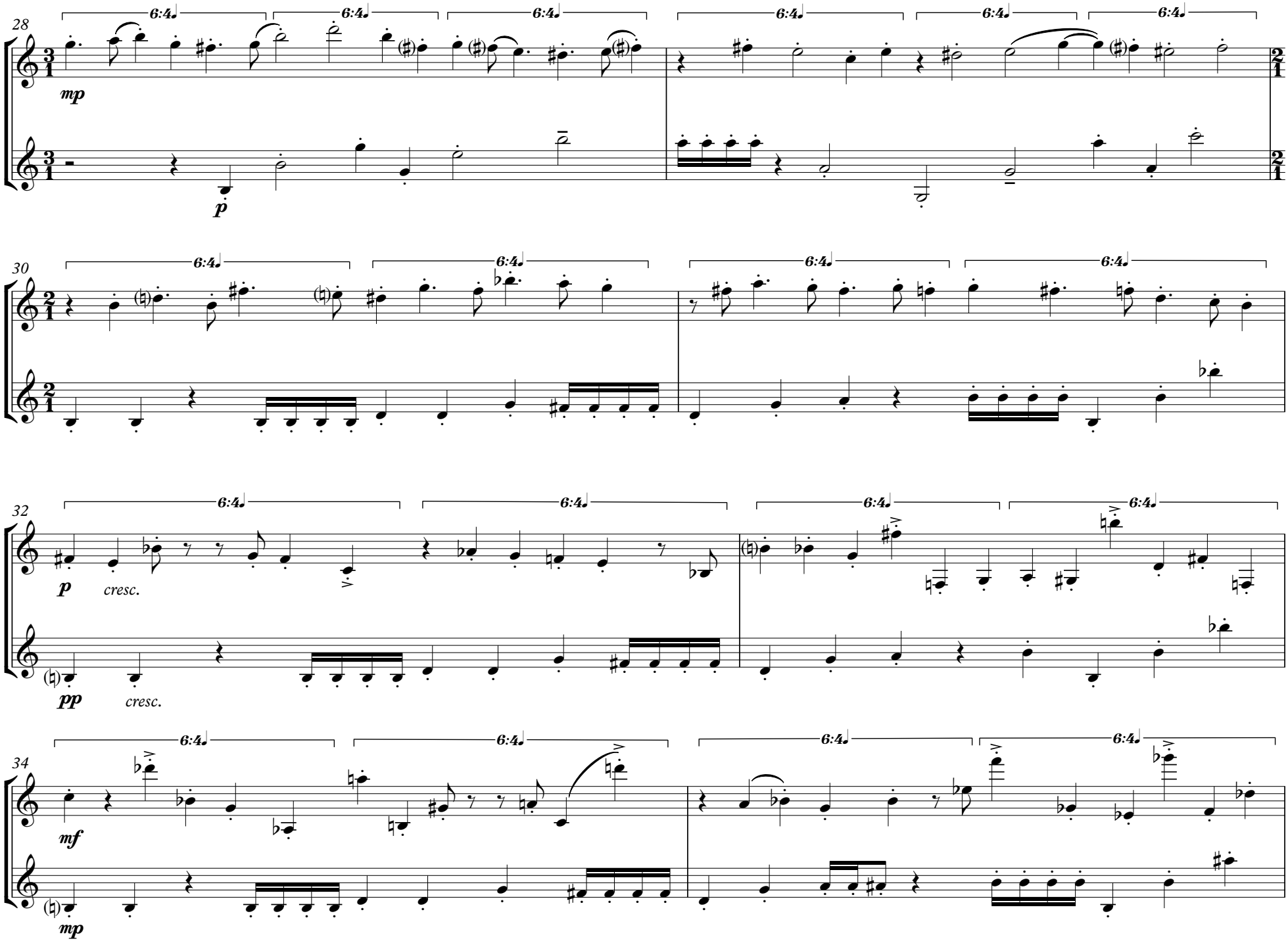
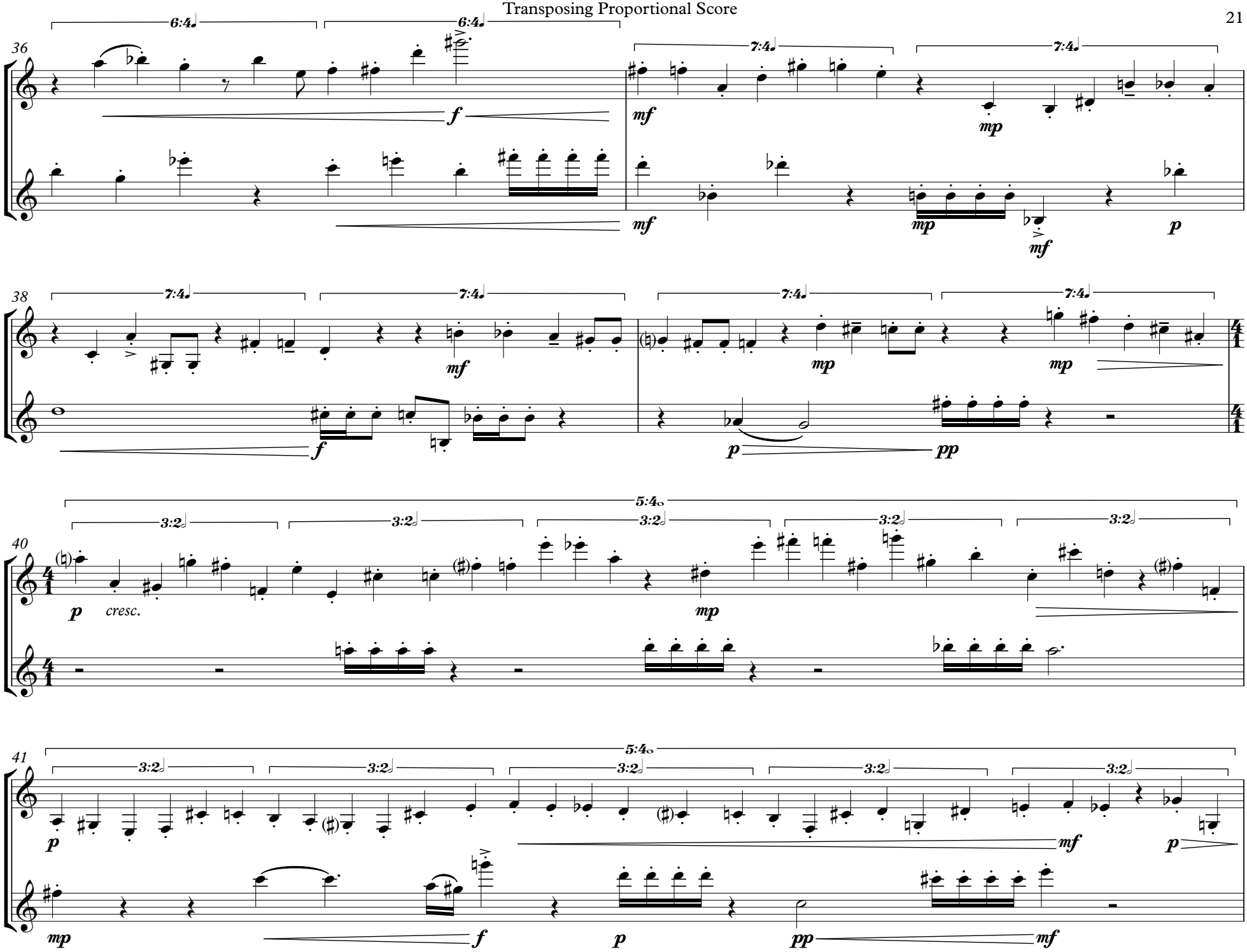
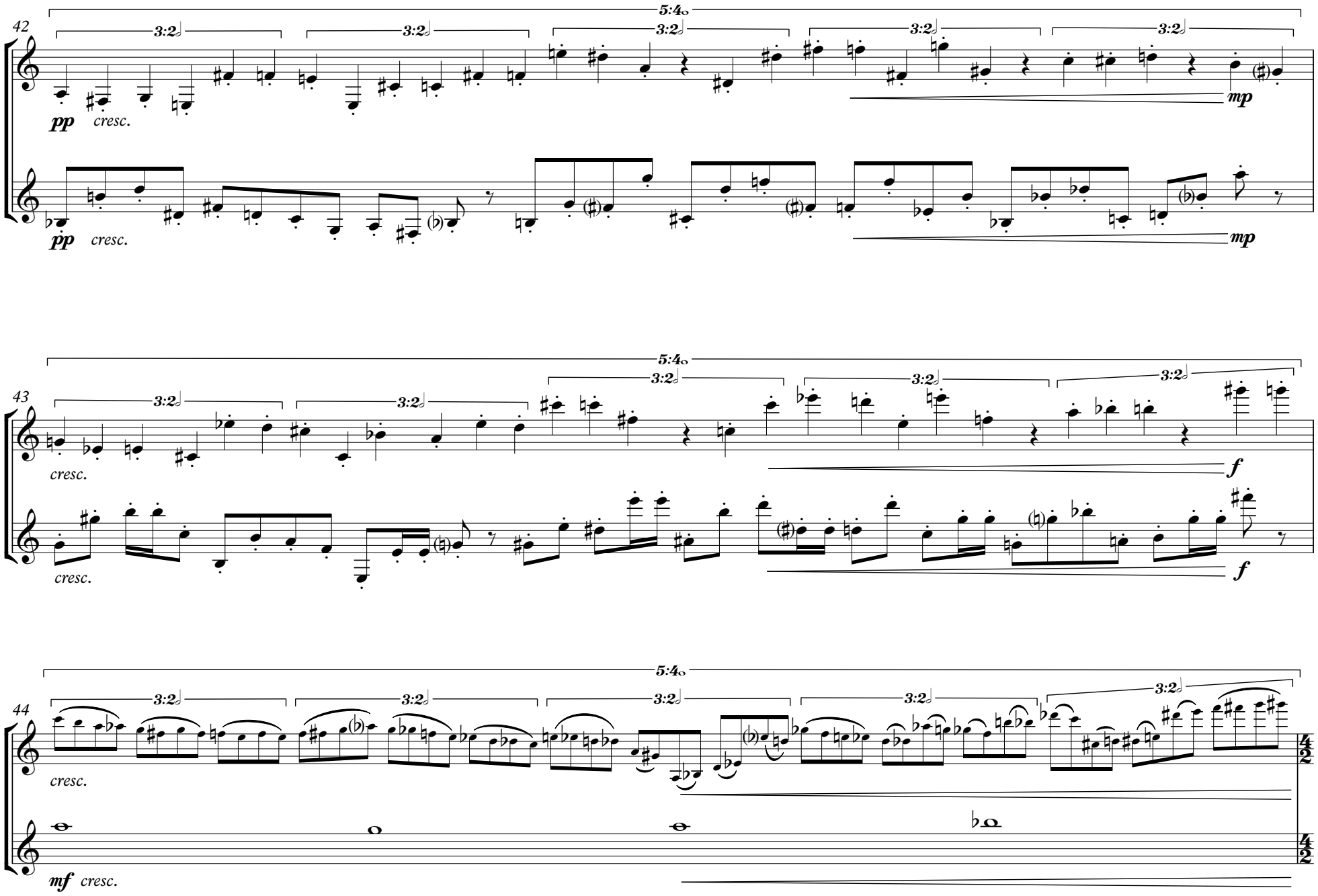
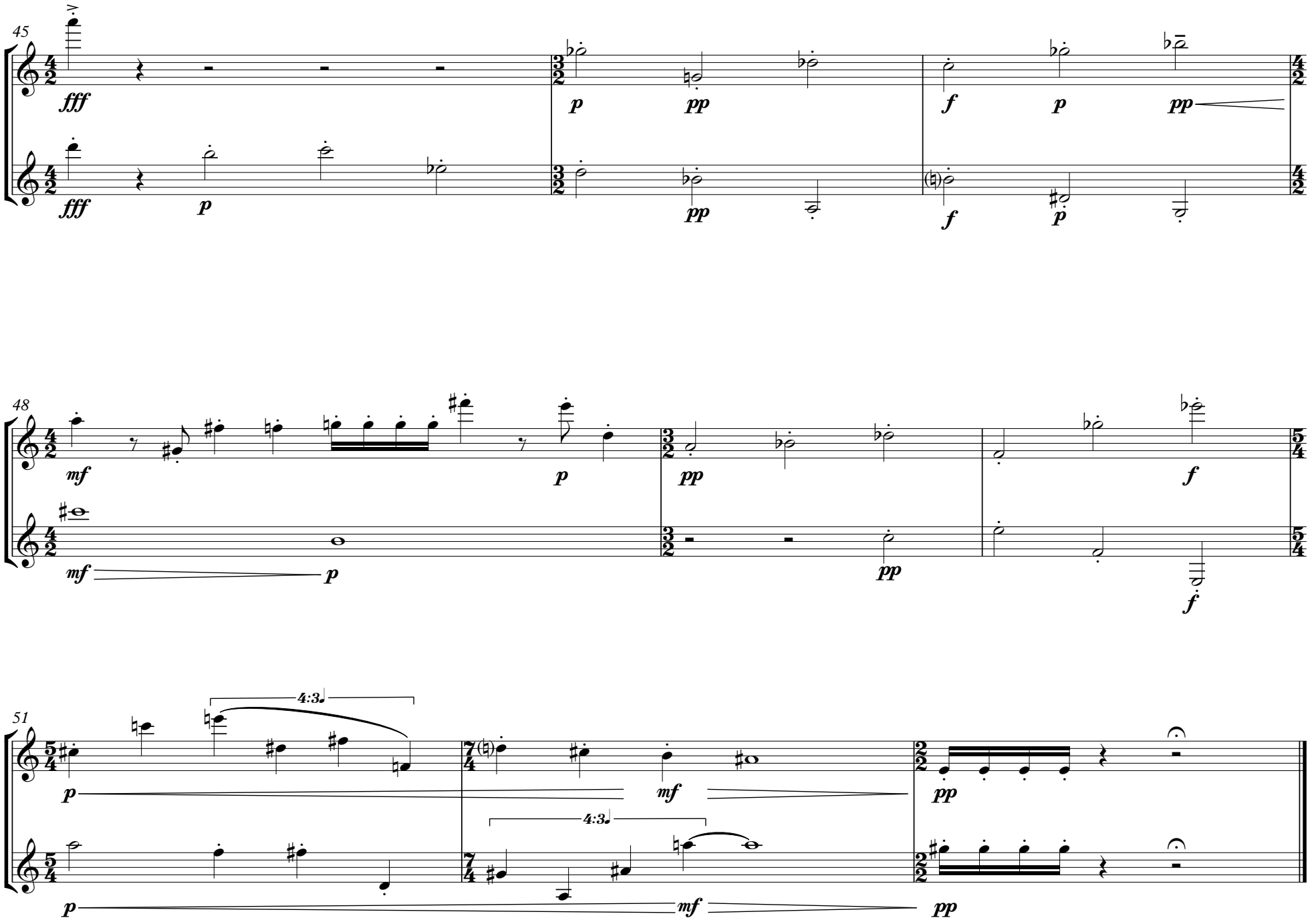

12
3:2
3:2
3:2
3:2
3:2
mf
mp
p
pp
mp
mf
15
3:2
3:2
f
pp
f
mf
f
p
17
3:2
3:2
3:2
3:2
3:2
3:2
pp
mp
mp
mf
pp
f
p
mf
f
p
mf
mp
20
3:2
3:2
3:2
5:4
5:4
5:4
5:4
3
mf
p
mp
p
f
p
mf
f
mp
pp
f


(alternative realization)
5:4
5:4
5:4
5:4
5:4
5:4
f
p
mf
p
mf
p
pp
mf
pp
mf
25
5:4
3:2
3:2
3:2
3:2
mf
p
mp
mp
f
mf
p
3
p
mf
p
pp
5:4
5:4
5:4
mp
27
(alternative realization; dotted slurs show rhythmic groupings)
66:48
11:8
11:8
11:8
11:8
11:8
11:8
p
mf
f
p
pp
f
mp

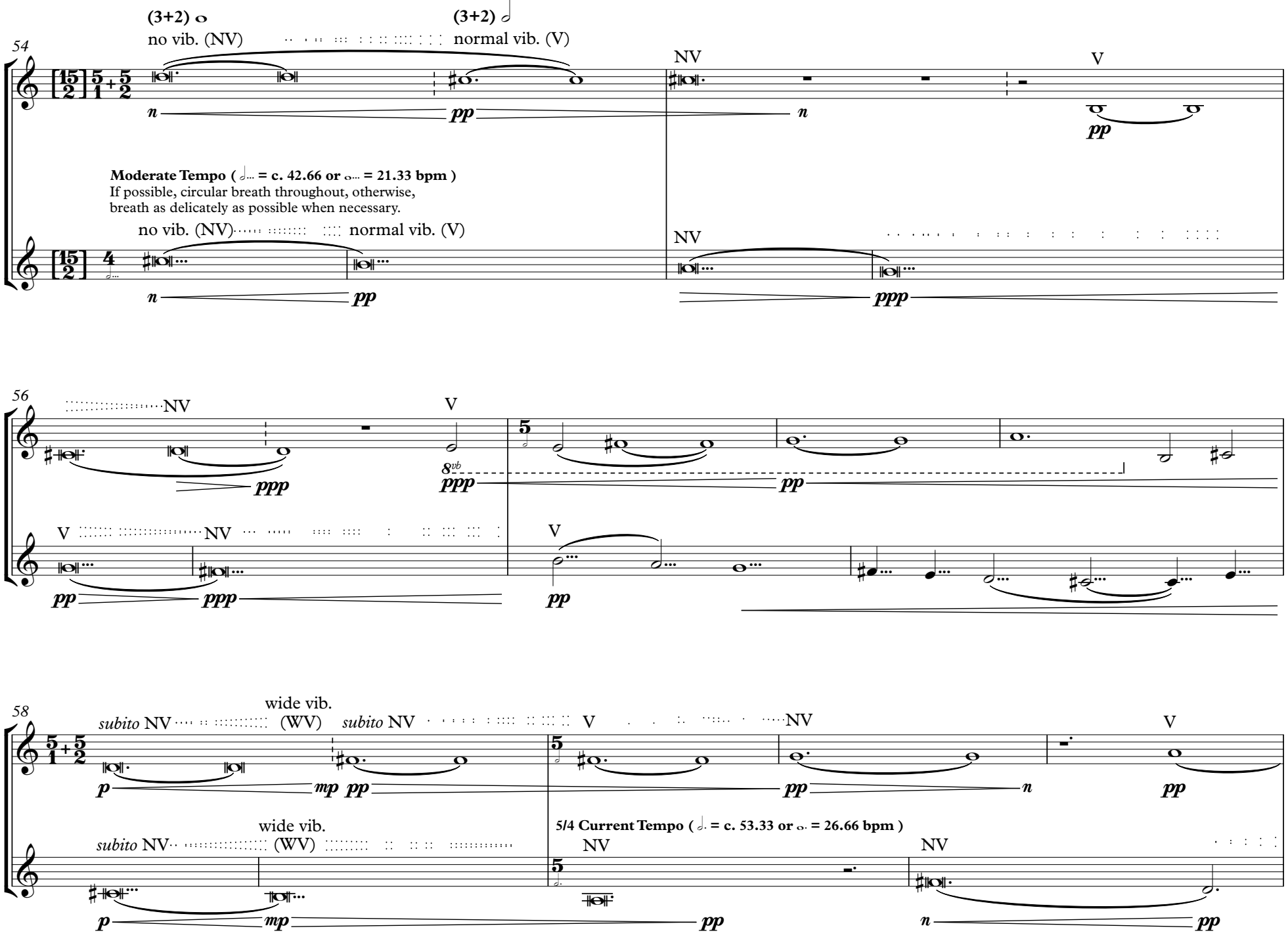

28
6:4
6:4
6:4
6:4
6:4
6:4
mp
p
30
6:4
6:4
6:4
6:4
32
6:4
6:4
6:4
6:4
p
cresc.
pp
cresc.
34
6:4
6:4
6:4
6:4
mf
mp

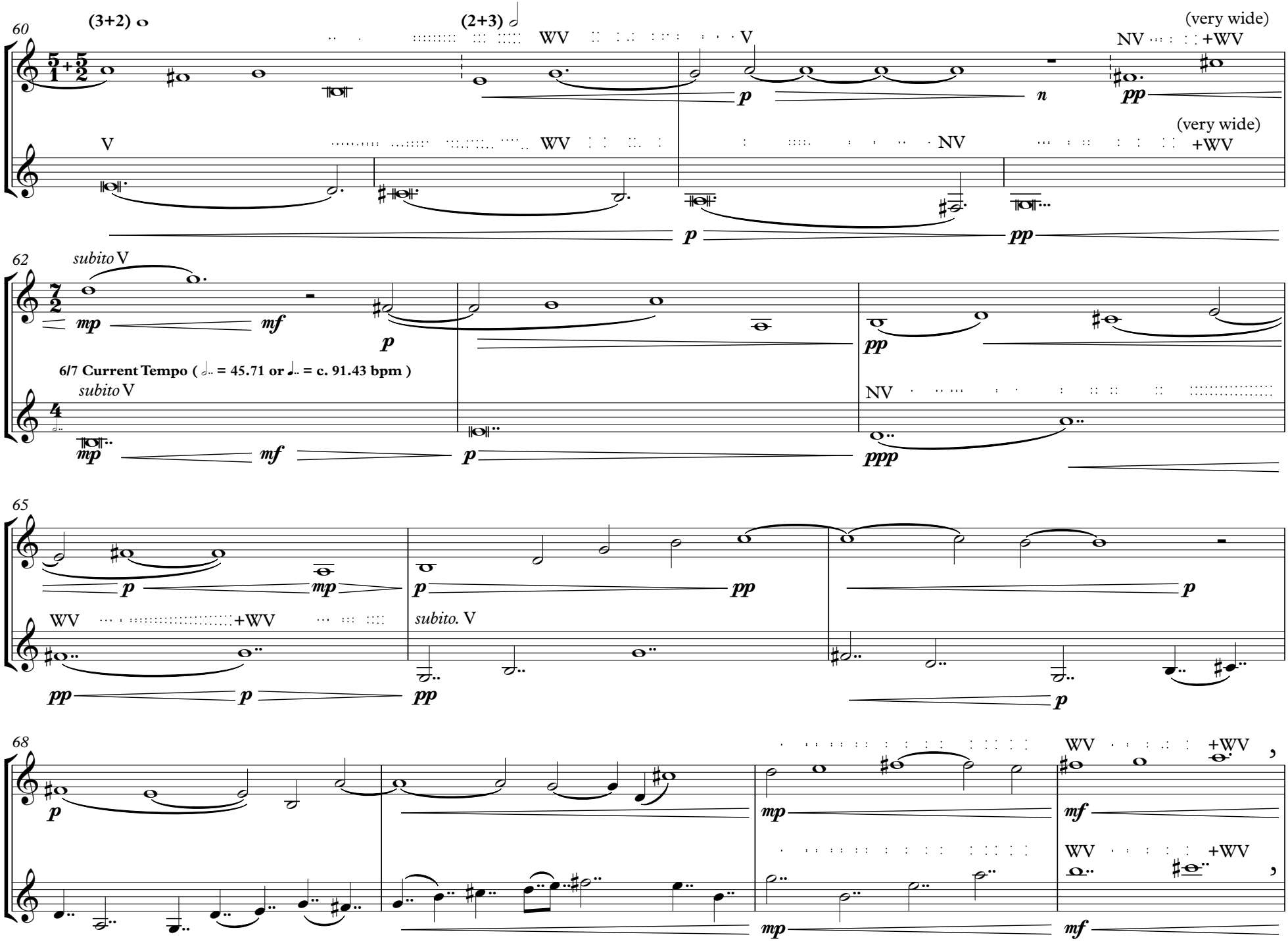

36
6:4
6:4
7:4
7:4
f
mf
mf
mp
mp
mf
p
38
7:4
7:4
7:4
7:4
mf
mp
mp
f
p
pp
40
5:4o
3:2
3:2
3:2
3:2
3:2
p
cresc.
mp
41
5:4o
3:2
3:2
3:2
3:2
3:2
p
mf
p
mp
f
p
pp
mf

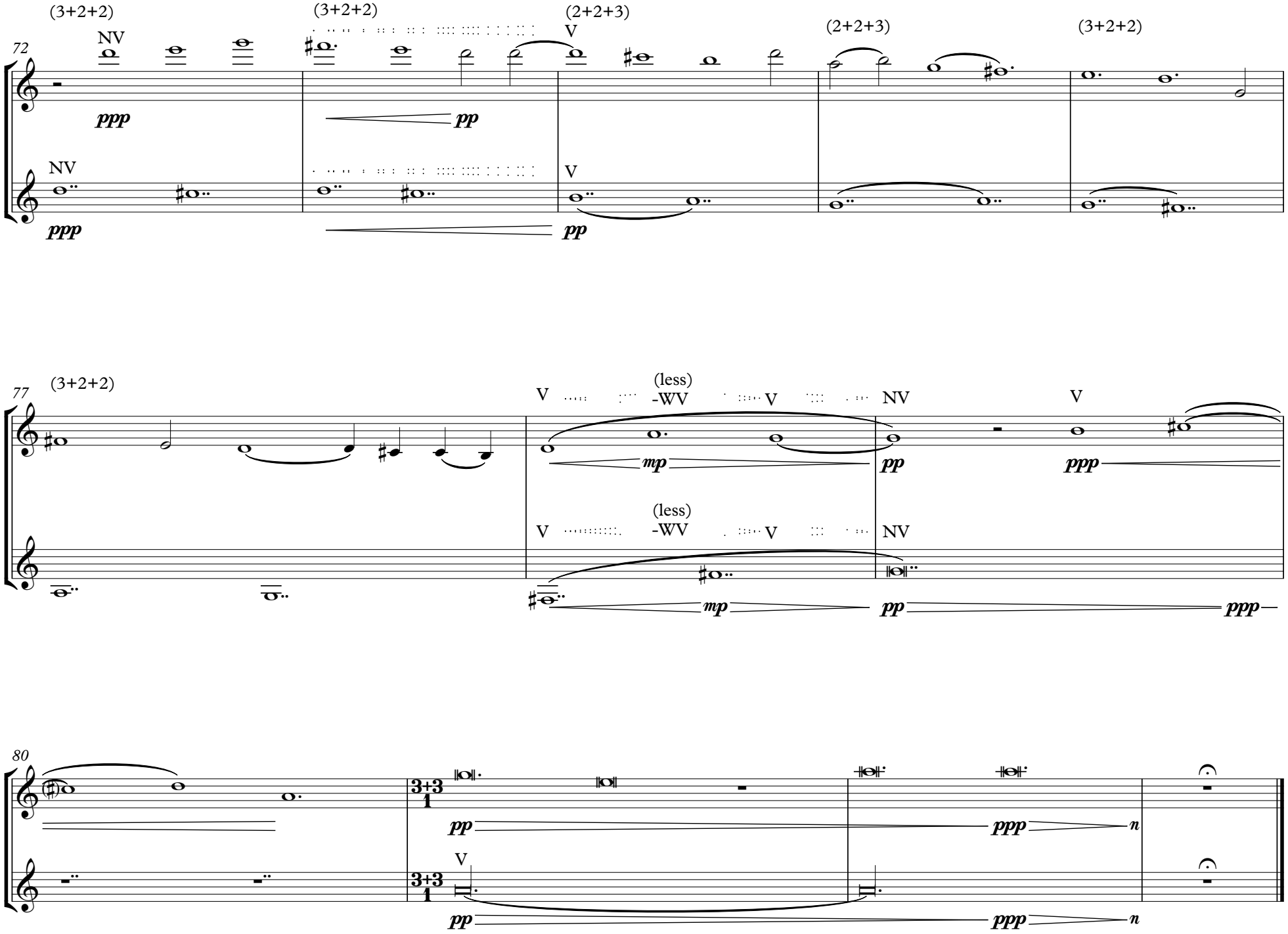

42
5:4
3:2
3:2
3:2
3:2
3:2
pp cresc.
pp cresc.
mp
mp
43
5:4
3:2
3:2
3:2
3:2
3:2
cresc.
cresc.
f
f
44
5:4
3:2
3:2
3:2
3:2
3:2
cresc.
mf cresc.

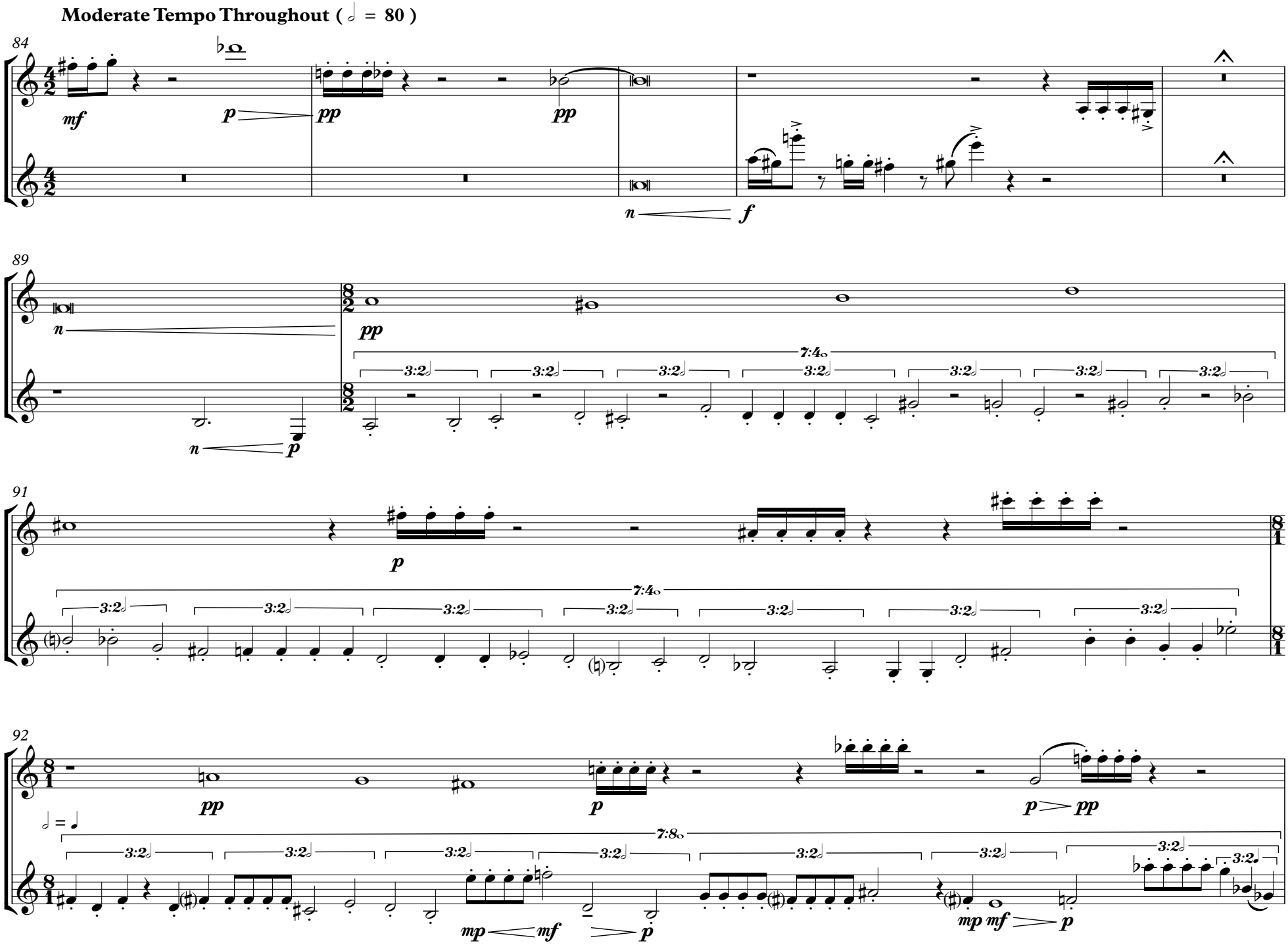

45
fff
p
pp
f
48
mf
51
4:3
4:3

Moderate Tempo Throughout (𝅗𝅥 = c. 80 or 𝅝 = 40 bpm)
If possible, circular breath throughout, otherwise,
breath as delicately as possible when necessary.

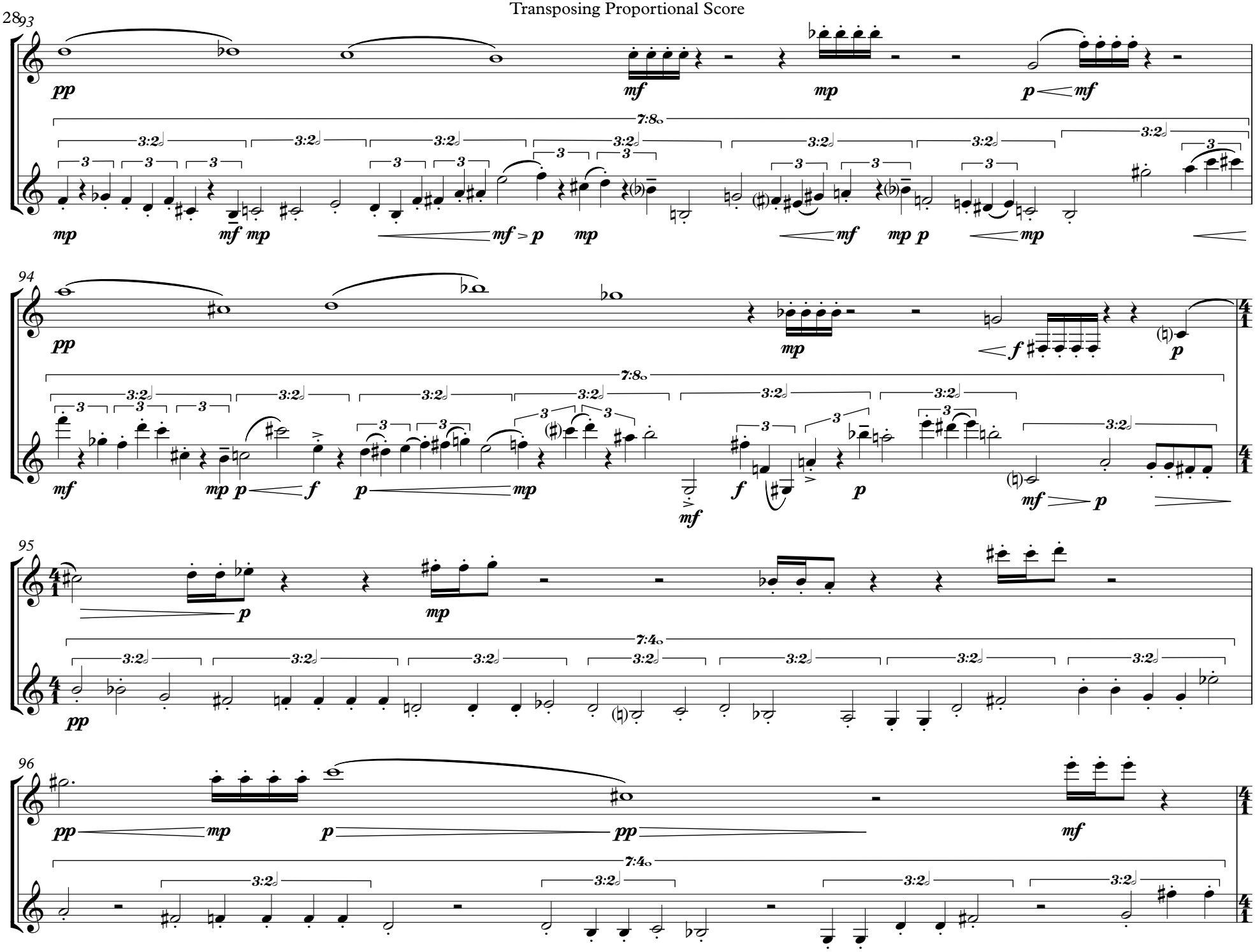


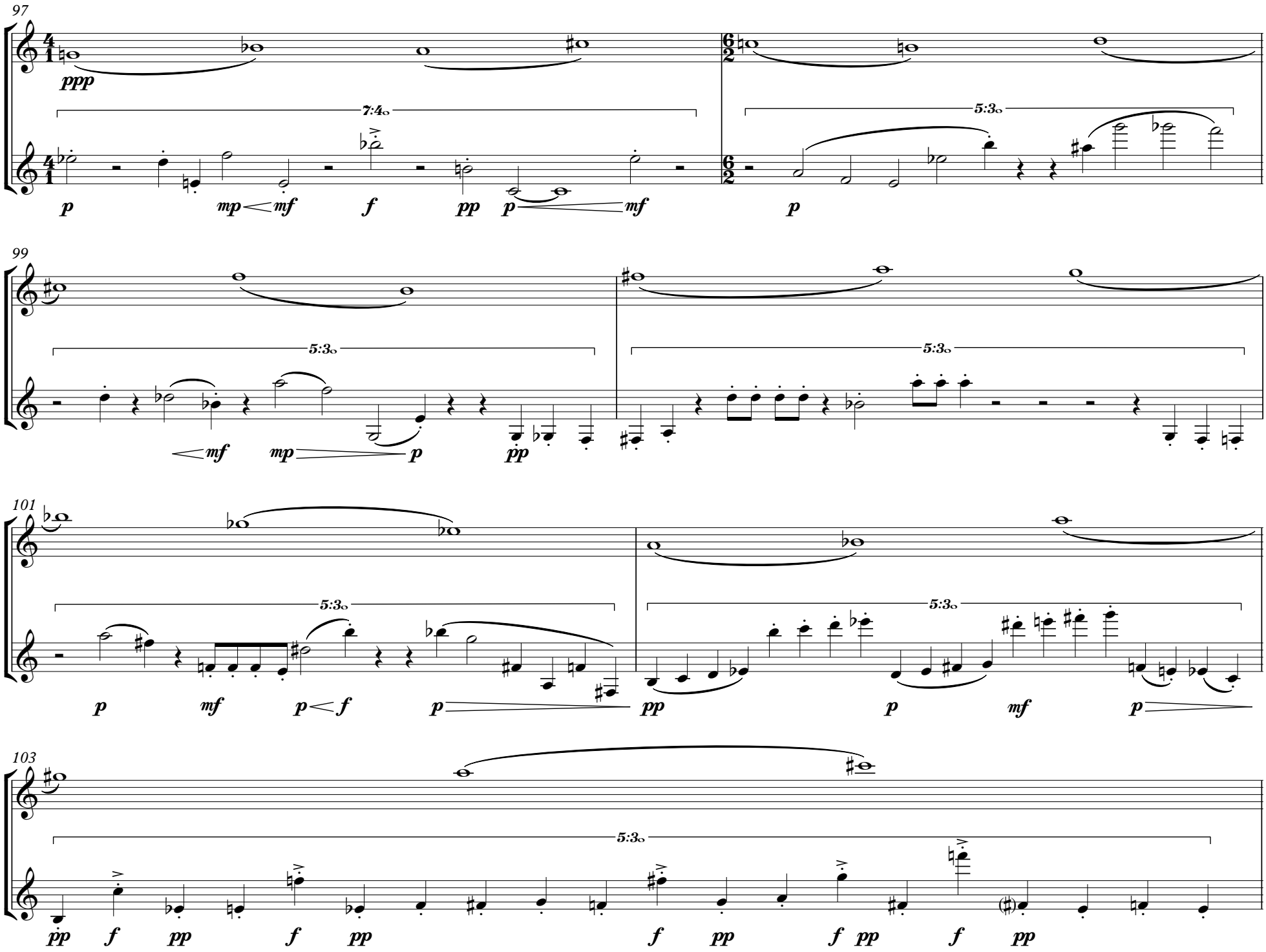

60
(3+2)
(2+3)
WV
V
(very wide)
NV
+WV
p
n
pp
V
WV
NV
(very wide)
+WV
p
pp
62
subito V
mp
mf
p
pp
6/7 Current Tempo (= 45.71 or = c. 91.43 bpm)
subito V
NV
mp
mf
p
ppp
65
p
mp
p
pp
p
WV
+WV
subito. V
pp
p
pp
p
68
p
mp
mf
WV
+WV
WV
+WV
mp
mf

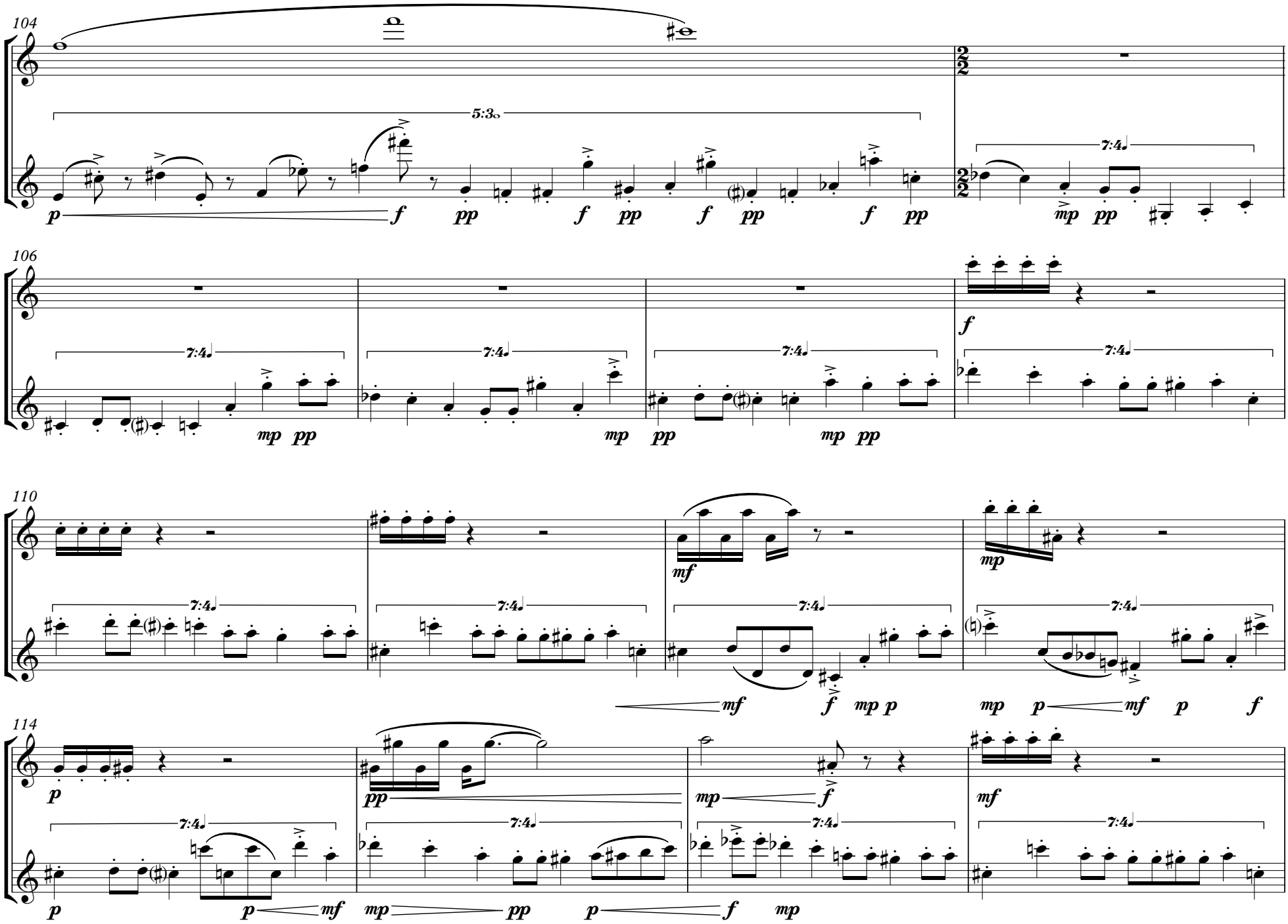

72
(3+2+2)
NV
ppp
NV
ppp
(3+2+2)
pp
(2+2+3)
V
V
pp
(2+2+3)
(3+2+2)
77
(3+2+2)
V
(less)
-WV
V
mp
pp
NV
V
ppp
(less)
V
-WV
V
NV
mp
pp
ppp
80
3+3
1
pp
ppp
n
V
3+3
1
pp
ppp
n

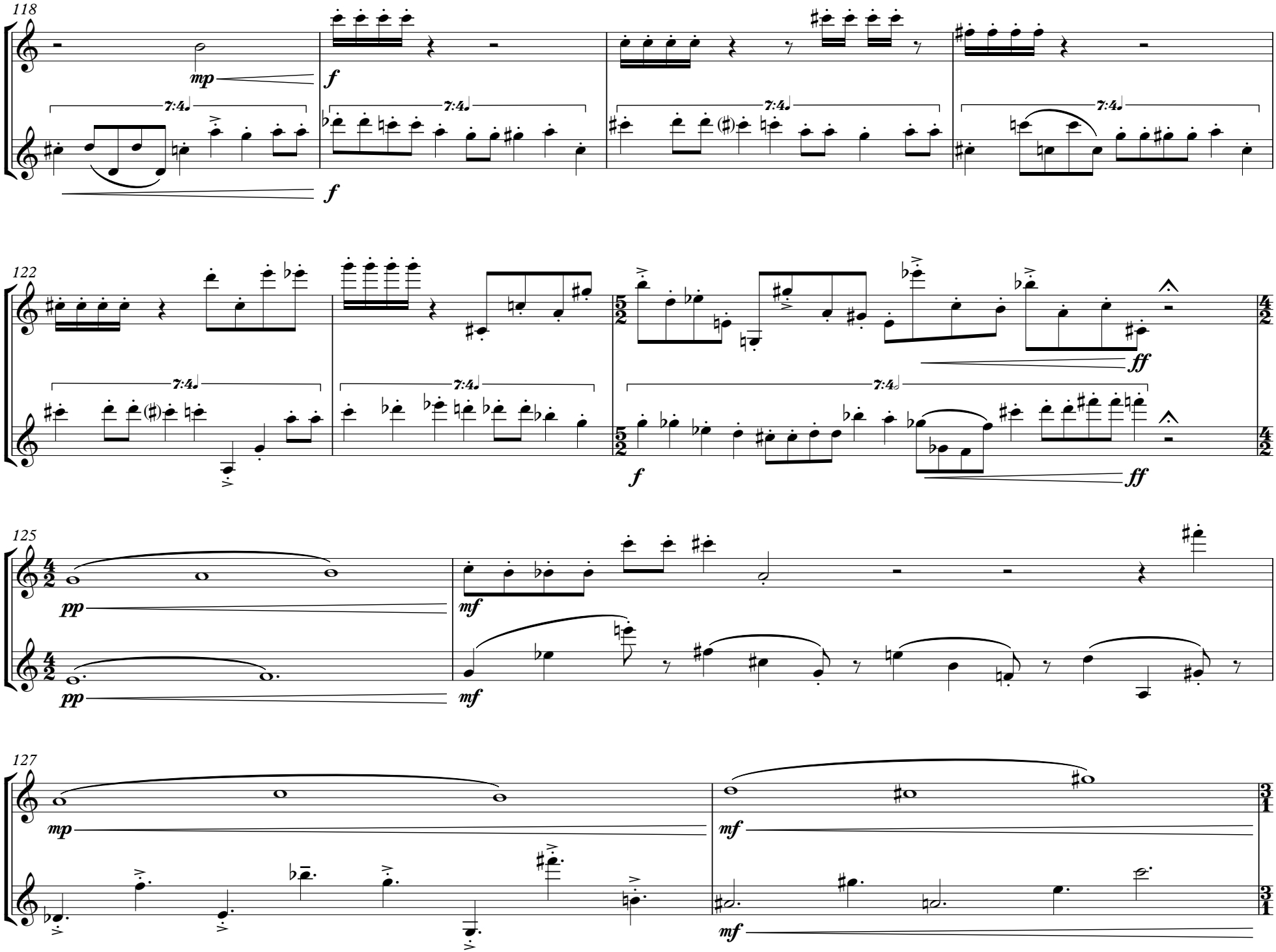

Moderate Tempo Throughout (♩ = 80)
84
89
91
92
7:4
3:2
7:8
mf
p
pp
f
mp
mf

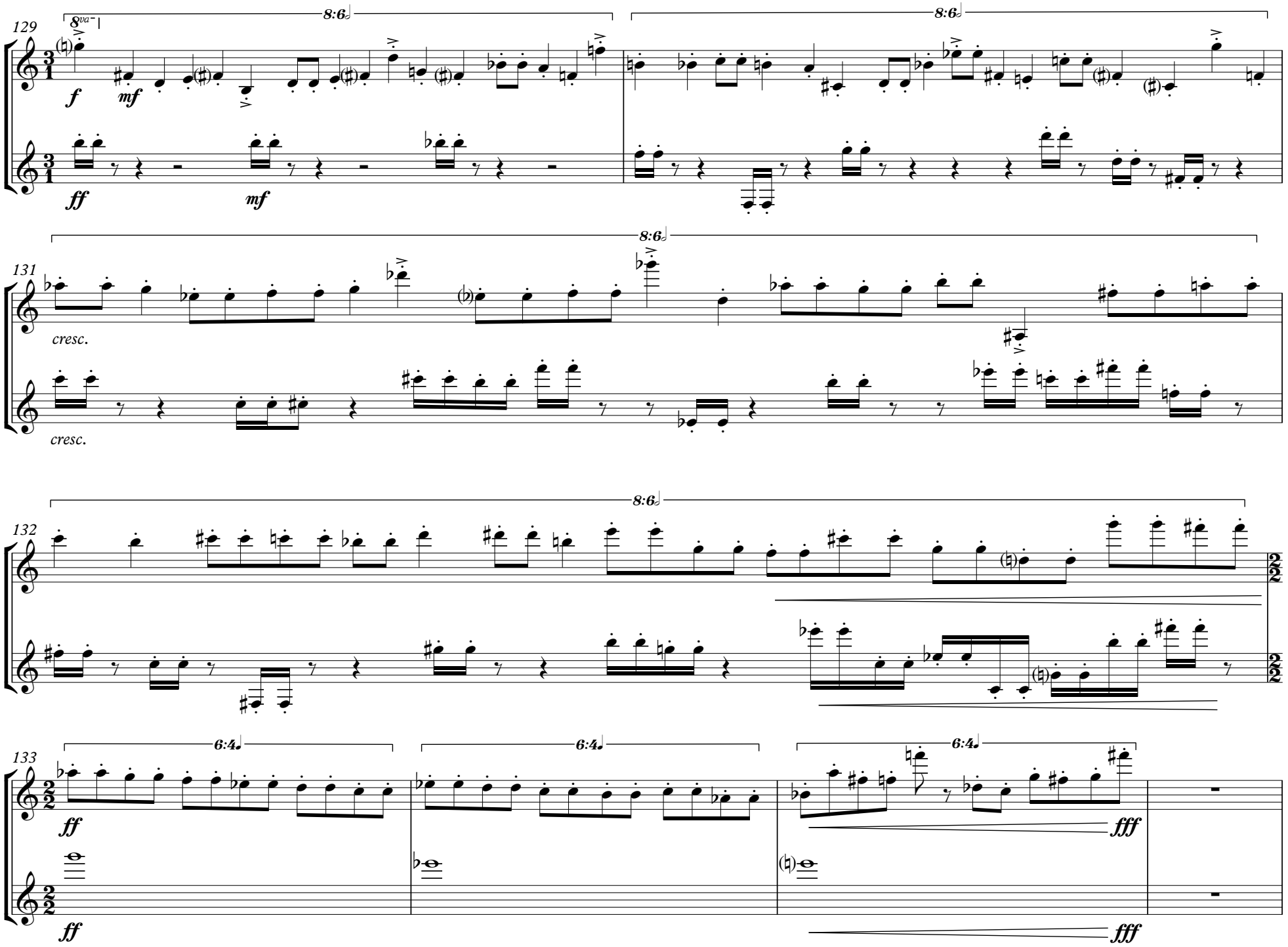
Transposing Proportional Score

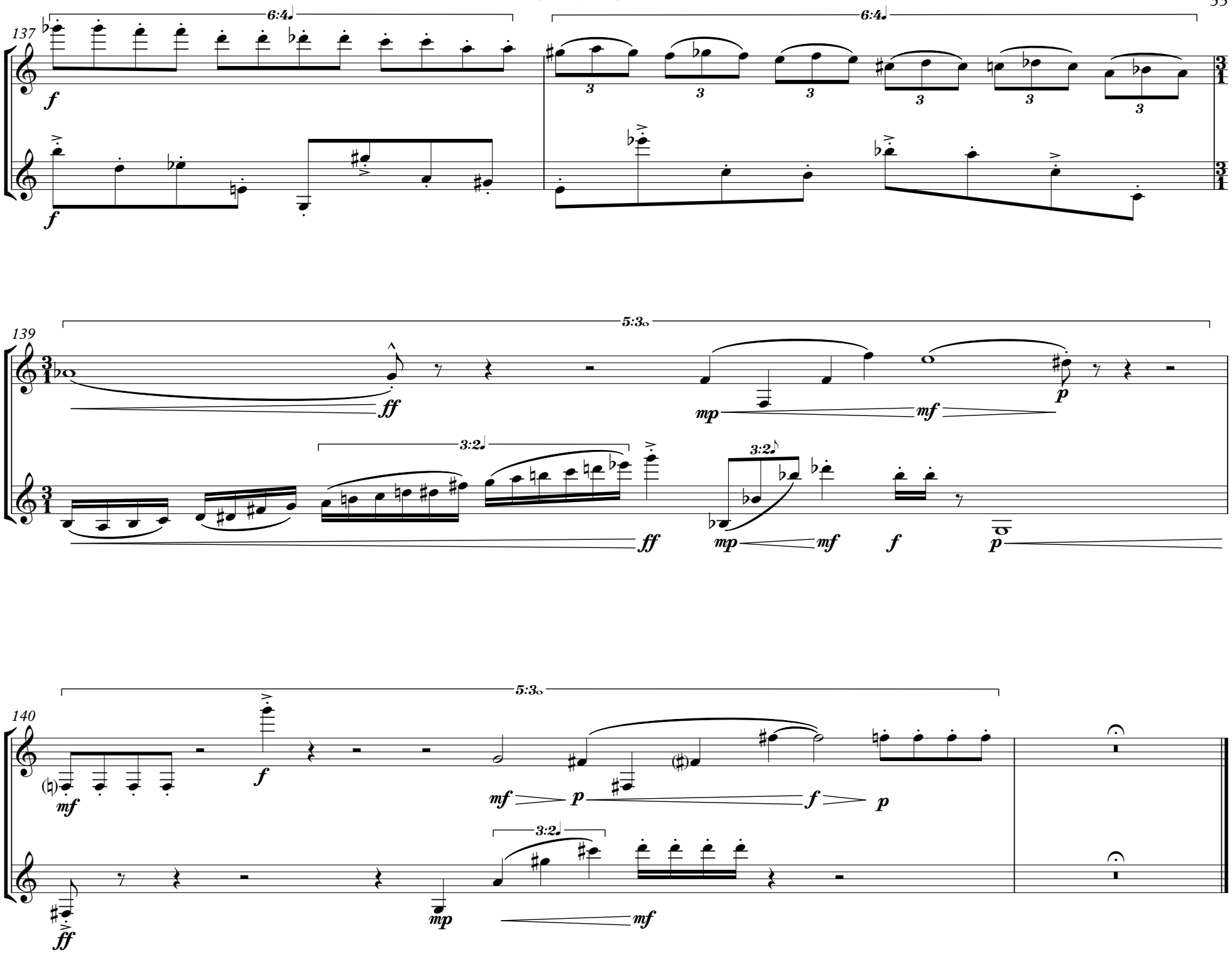



97
7:4
5:3
99
5:3
5:3
101
5:3
5:3
103
5:3


104
5:3
7:4
106
110
114


118
mp
f
7:4
f
122
7:4
7:4
7:4
ff
f
ff
125
pp
mf
pp
mf
127
mp
mf
mf


129
8va
8:6
f
mf
ff
mf
131
cresc.
cresc.
132
133
6:4
ff
fff


137
6:4
6:4
f
f
139
5:3
ff
mp
mf
p
3:2
3:2
ff
mp
mf
f
p
140
5:3
mf
f
mf
p
f
p
3:2
ff
mp
mf