Quatuor des Timbres

For an ensemble of mixed timbres

Version for soprano sax in Bb, bass trombone, tuned percussion and violoncello

Soprano Saxophone in Bb

Nigel Morgan

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Quatuor des Timbres

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Nigel Morgan

About the piece

Quatour des Timbres (A Quartet of Timbres) was written between 20May and 17 June 2002. In this short period a number of major technical innovations developed which have laid the foundations for the series of orchestral music *Instrumentarium Novum* begun in 2003. The objective of *Quatour des Timbres* was investigate different and formal ways an ensemble of instruments of differing timbre might interact with one another within particular musical situations.

The music looks backwards to devices from the Renaissance (vocal and instrumental setting of a Psalm text) and Baroque (chorales); performance instructions are kept to a minimum, and any that are present should be considered as a guide, no more.

The music looks forward in unique 'playful' open-form structures that develop from algorithmic computation modeling the activity and density of sound within an ensemble of instruments across time.

In the 2nd and 3rd movements two contemporary models are acknowledged: Milton Babbitt's graphic notation applied to the initial structuring of his early *Composition for Four Instrument*s; Morton Feldman's score of *IXION* in which graphic structuring of activity is extended to include the density of sound attacks.

The quartet is devised to be played by an ensemble of diverse or mixed timbres. In this published version an ensemble of soprano sax in Bb, bass trombone, violoncello and tuned percussion is imagined. There exists a parallel version for flute, tenor saxophone in Bb, double bass and synthesiser realised for members of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. For professional ensembles the composer is willing to undertake re-orchestrations or provide the basic data files to enable performers toun dertake orchestrations themselves. More than four instruments maybe scored. A reference version is available to audition on the composer's website: www.nigel-morgan.co.uk

In the rehearsals for the initial performances of this work musicians from the BBCNOW, although at first reluctant to devise their own dynamic schemes, articulations and tempos, brought to the work a wealth of ideas and invention: the flautist adopted oriental inflections (as well as using piccolo and alto flute), the sax player employed jazz timbres and ornaments, the bassist brought into play many rich timbral colours, and the keyboard player made extensive use of different voices, modulation and pitch bend. The music is published in a performance score with appropriate transpositions. A set of individual parts is also available.

Four Necessary Chorales
- each instrument leads a short chorale.

Giuco delle Coppe (The Game of Pairs)
- the title comes from the second movement of Bartok's *Concerto for Orchestra*. The music has been so structured (prior to the composition of pitches and rhythms) to allow only two instruments to play together at any one time.

Jeux Diurnes (Afternoon Games)
- this music focuses on unique tonalities derived from fractal data, the play of rhythm and elaborate counterpoint.

In Finem Psalmus David (To the end, a Psalm of David)
- this is a setting of Psalm 19 in the manner of a Renaissance composition where it was quite usual for a liturgical vocal setting to be played by or with an ensemble of instruments. A vocal version of this movement is available for four solo singers (SATB). It has already received performances in a variety of different vocal and instrumental combinations.

Performance Information

In the *Four Necessary Chorales* a marimba with an extension to low C is indicated. If this instrument is not available the player should follow the instructions to play an octave higher when necessary.

As with the change from marimba to vibraphone in the final movement, the trombonist might consider changing to tenor trombone for the fourth movement.

Performers are invited to experiment with placing whole phrases into different registers - an octave higher or lower than written.

Four Necessary Chorales

Chorale 1 ♩ = 40 ***semplice***

Bass Tbn.

Ensemble

solo

Soprano Sax in Bb

5

(Bass Tbn.)

Ens.

Sop.Sax.

Chorale 2

8

Bass Tbn. (solo)

Ens.

Sop.Sax.

10

(Bass Tbn.)

Ens.

Sop.Sax.

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Chorale 3
Marimba (solo)

13

Ens.

sim.

Sop.Sax.

14

(Marimba)

Ens.

sim.

Sop.Sax.

16

Ens.

Sop.Sax.

Chorale 4
Vc. (solo)

17

Ens.

Sop.Sax.

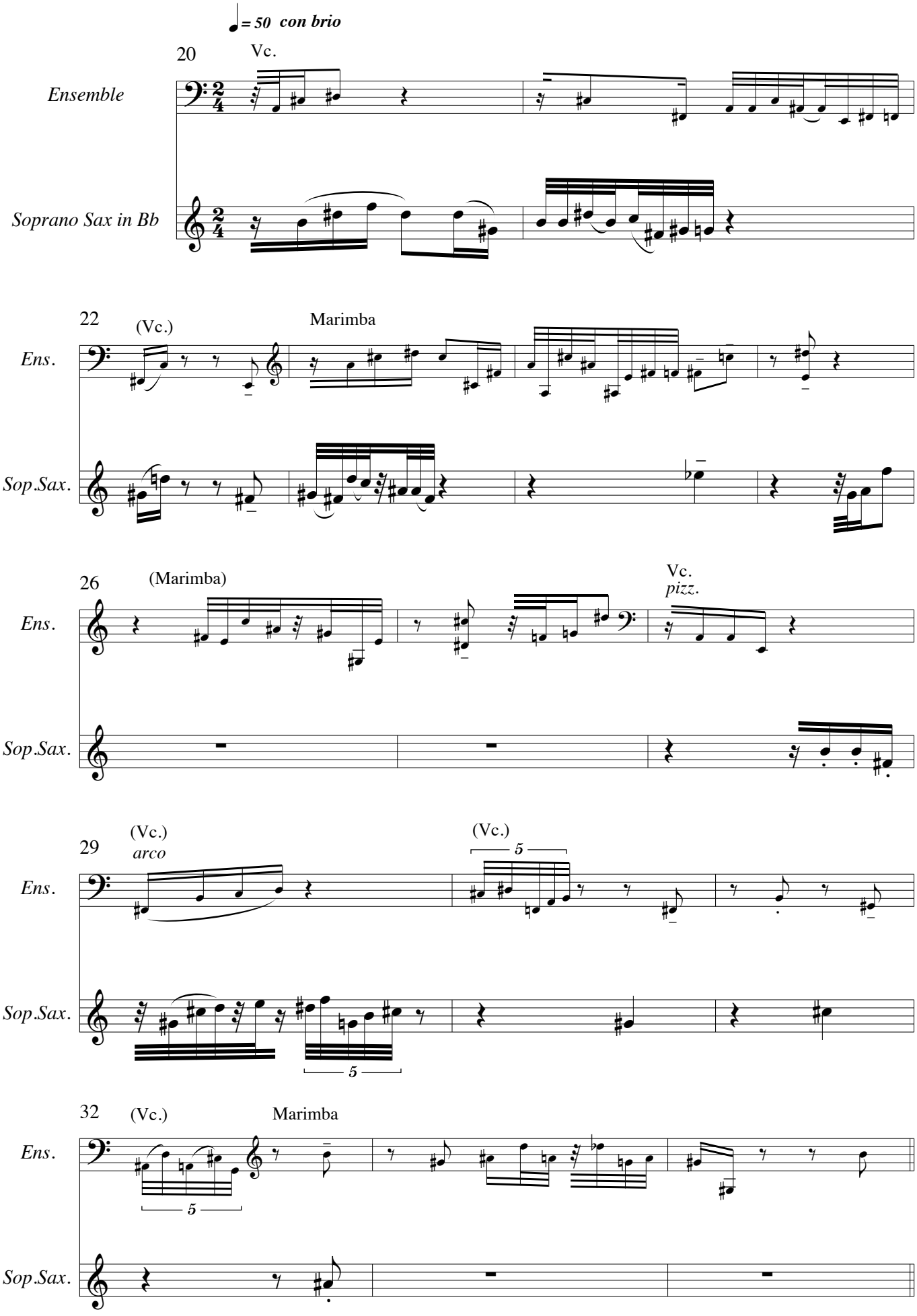
18

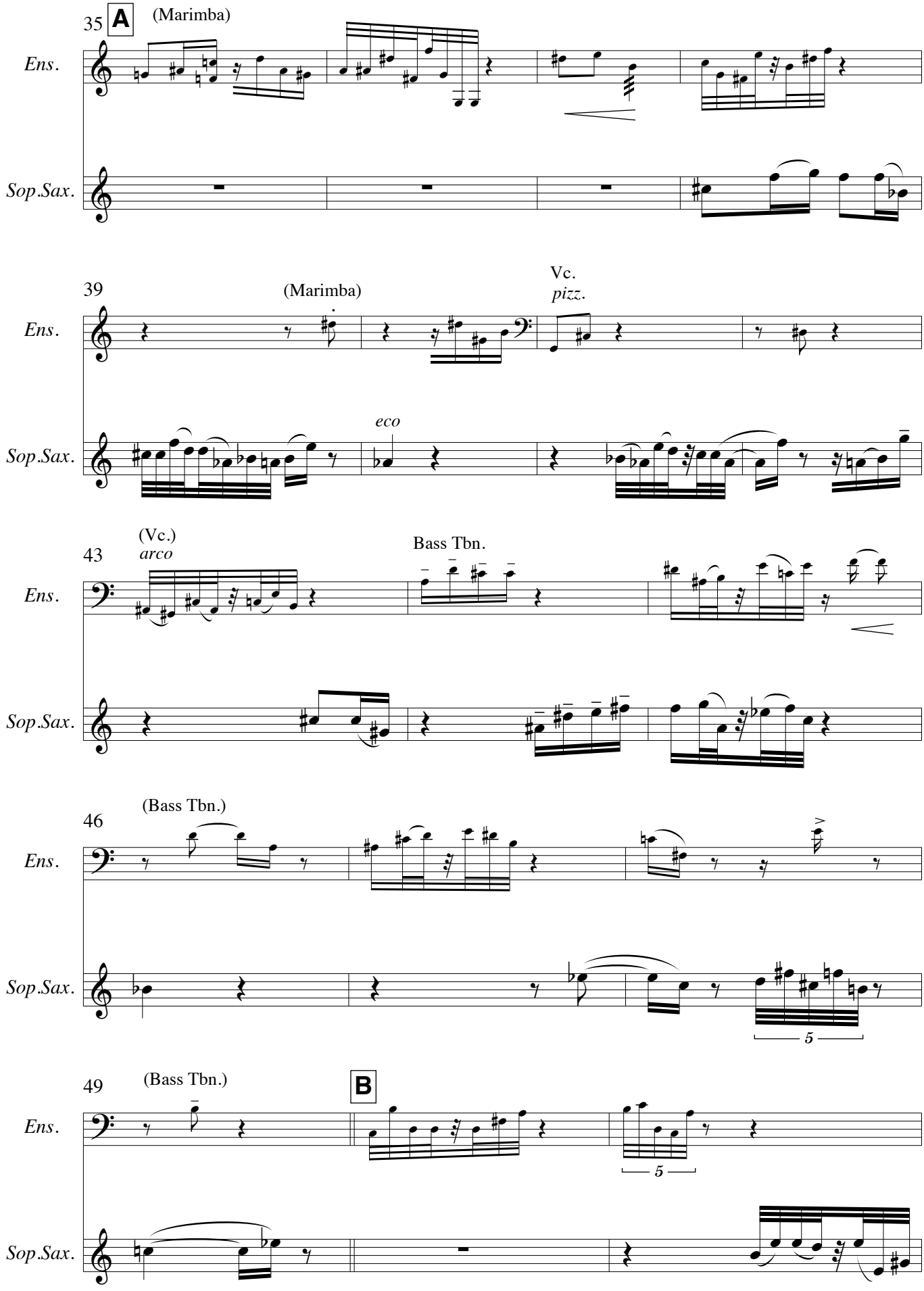
(Vc.)

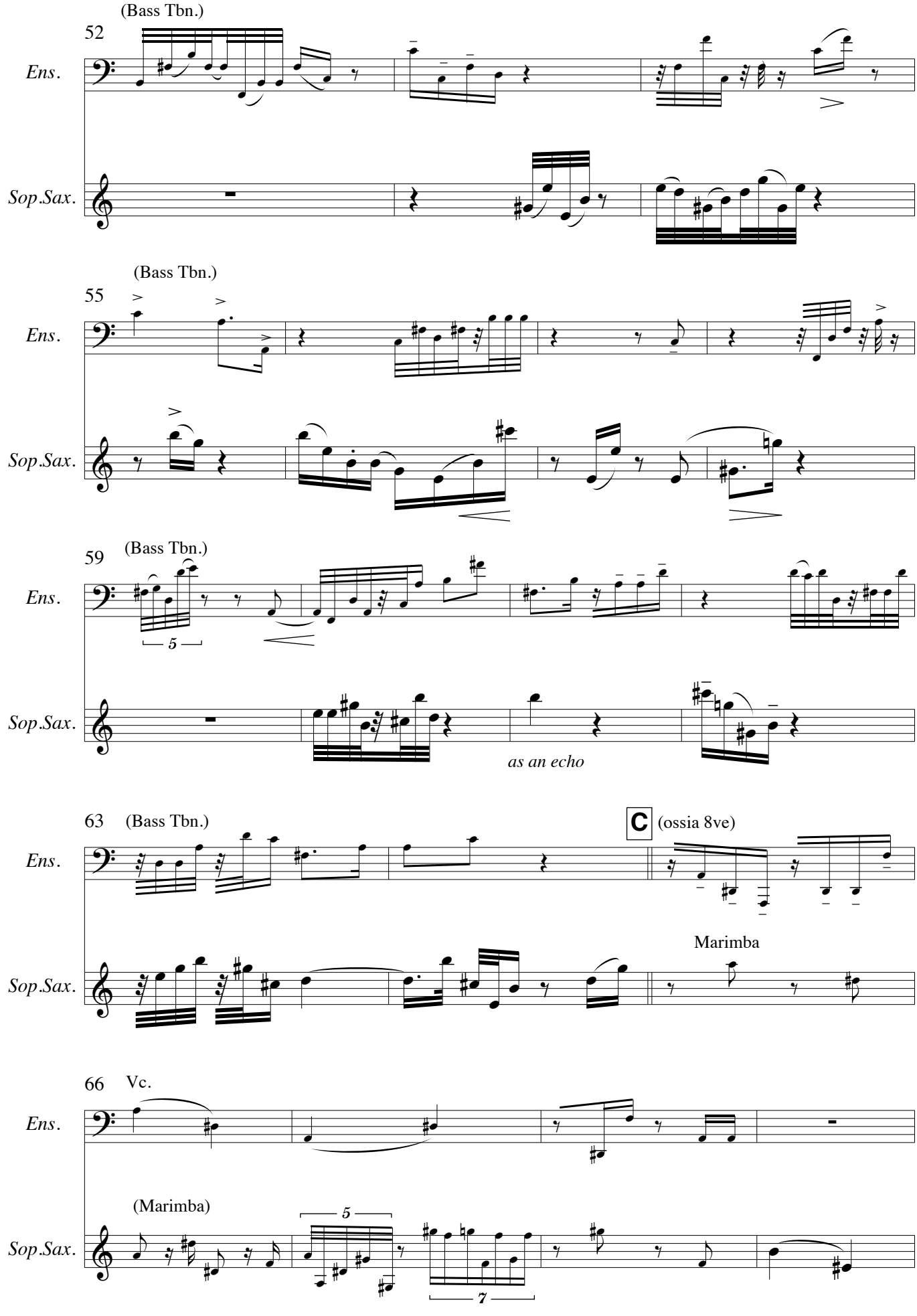
Ens.

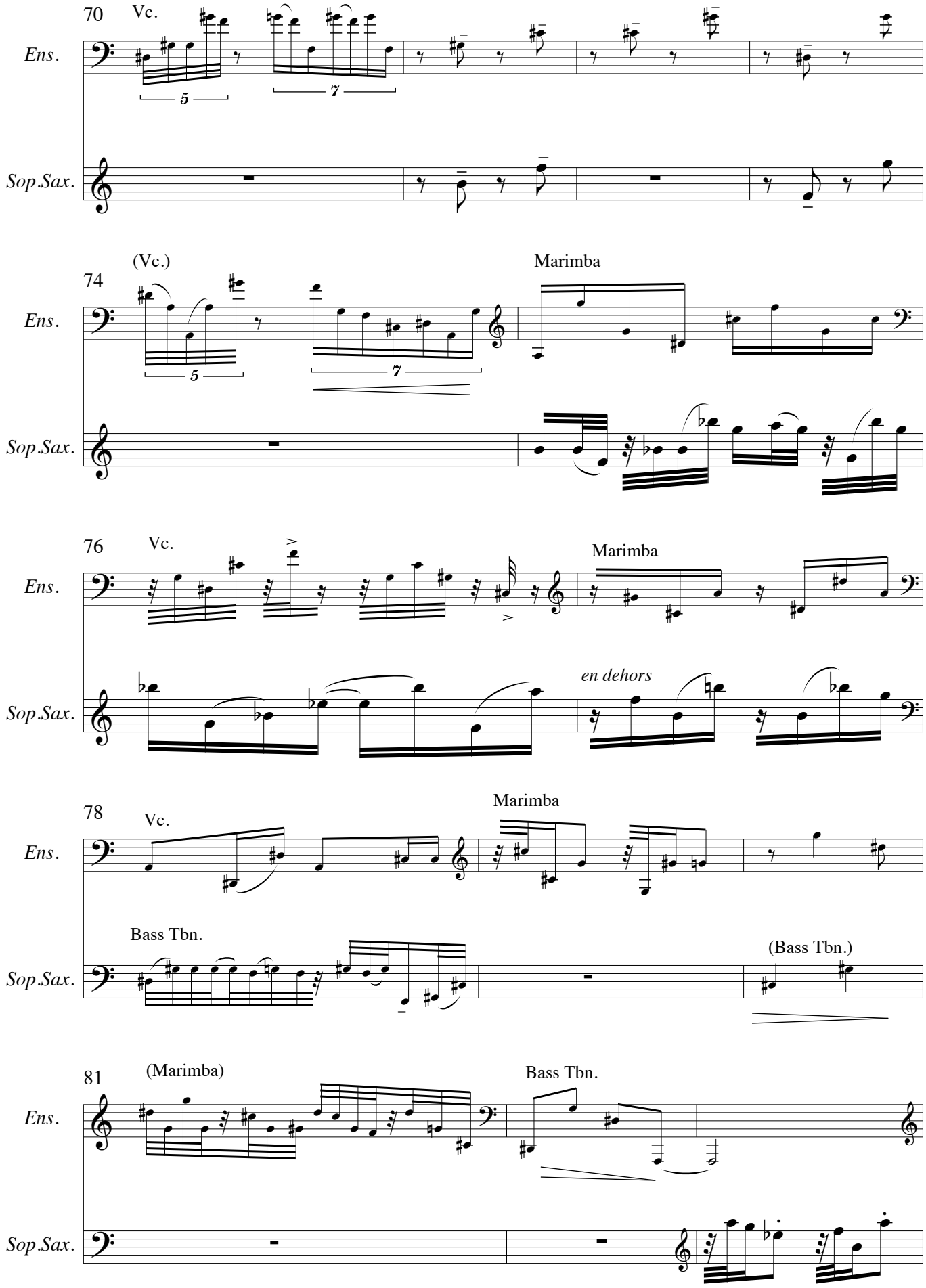
Sop.Sax.

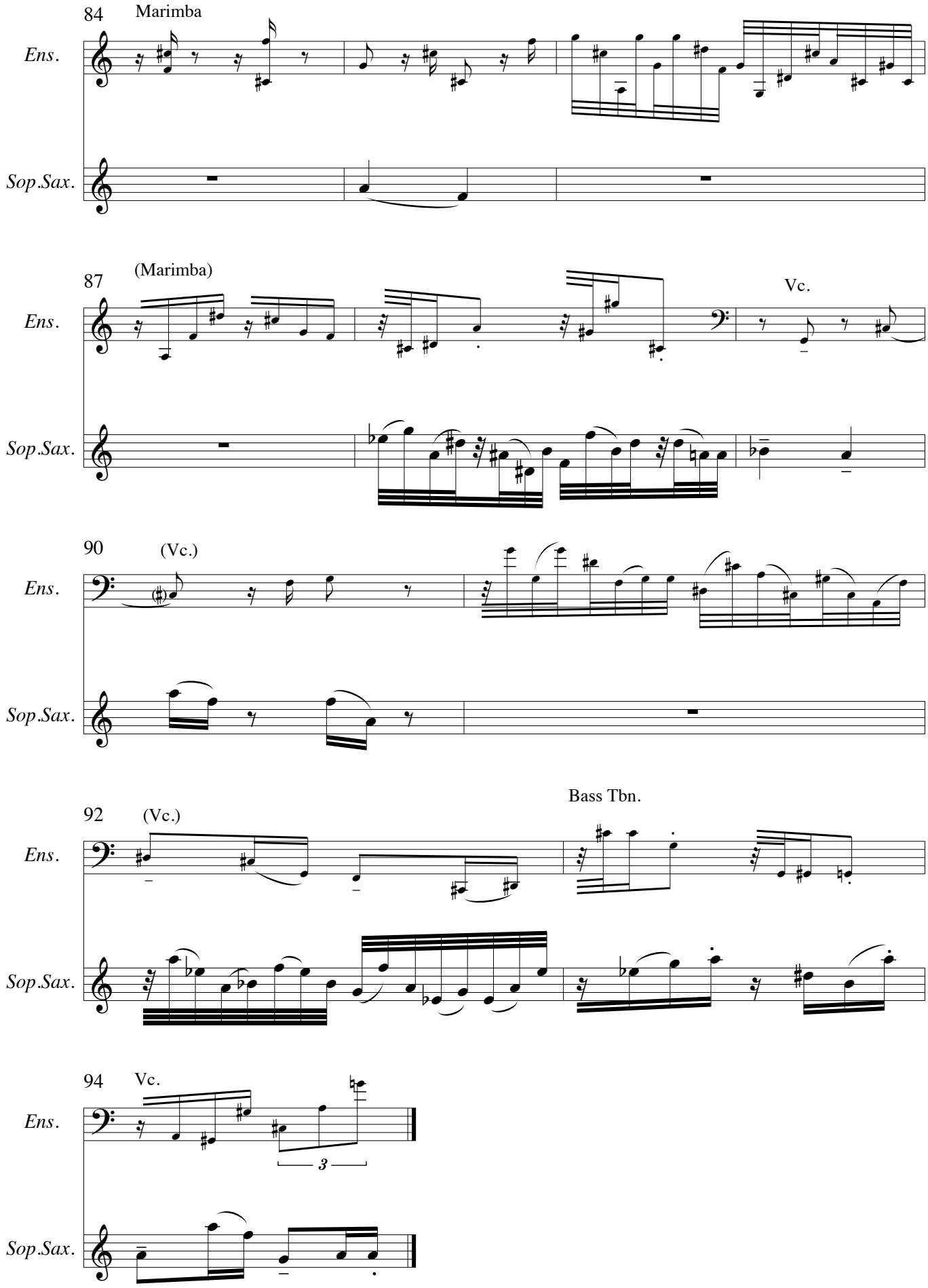
Guico Delle Coppe



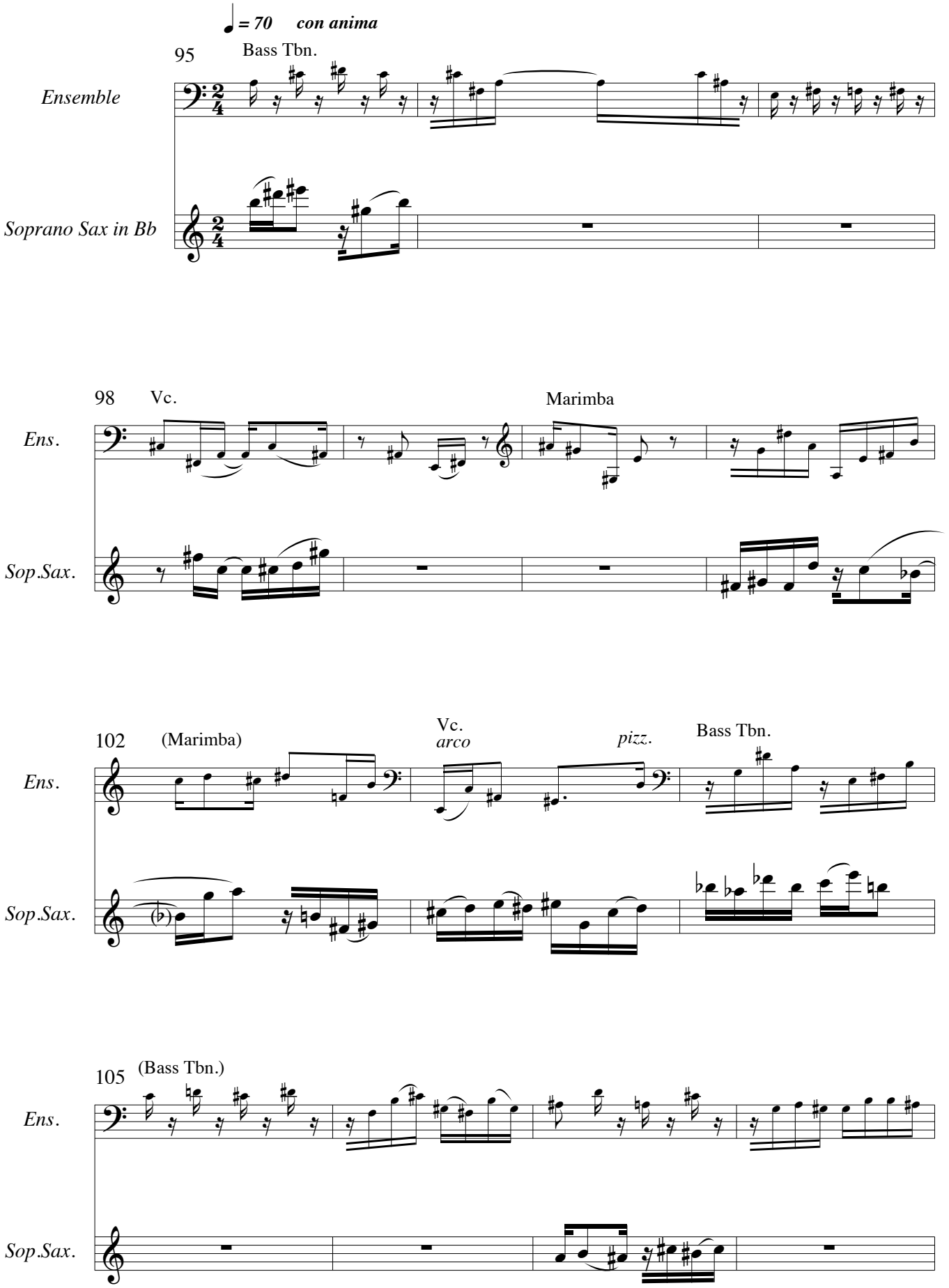

35
A
(Marimba)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
39
(Marimba)
Vc.
pizz.
eco
43
(Vc.)
arco
Bass Tbn.
46
(Bass Tbn.)
5
49
(Bass Tbn.)
B
5

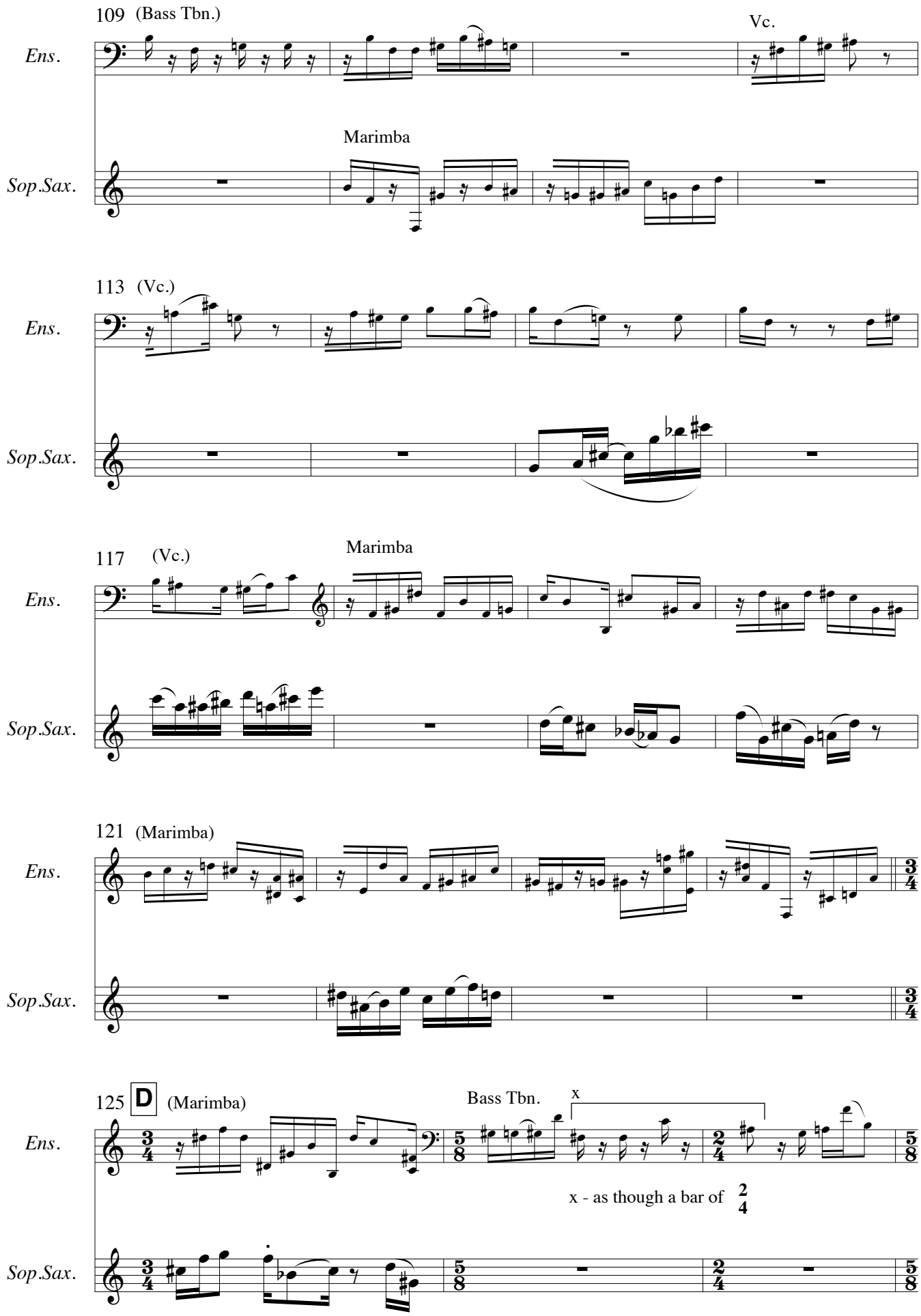

(Bass Tbn.)
52
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
(Bass Tbn.)
55
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
(Bass Tbn.)
59
Ens.
5
Sop.Sax.
as an echo
63
(Bass Tbn.)
C
(ossia 8ve)
Ens.
Marimba
Sop.Sax.
66
Vc.
Ens.
(Marimba)
5
Sop.Sax.
7

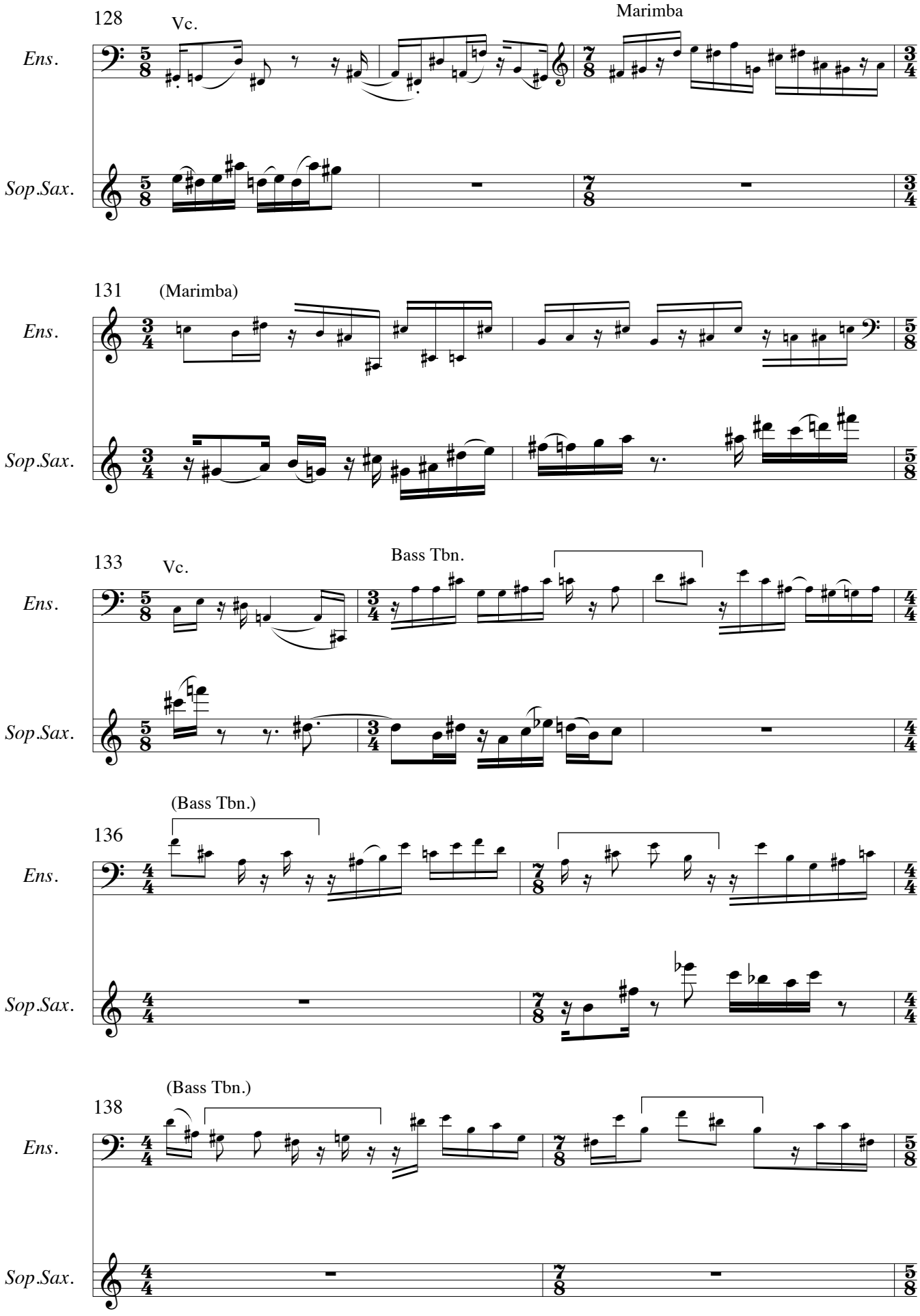

70
Vc.
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
74
(Vc.)
Marimba
76
Vc.
Marimba
en dehors
78
Vc.
Marimba
Bass Tbn.
(Bass Tbn.)
81
(Marimba)
Bass Tbn.

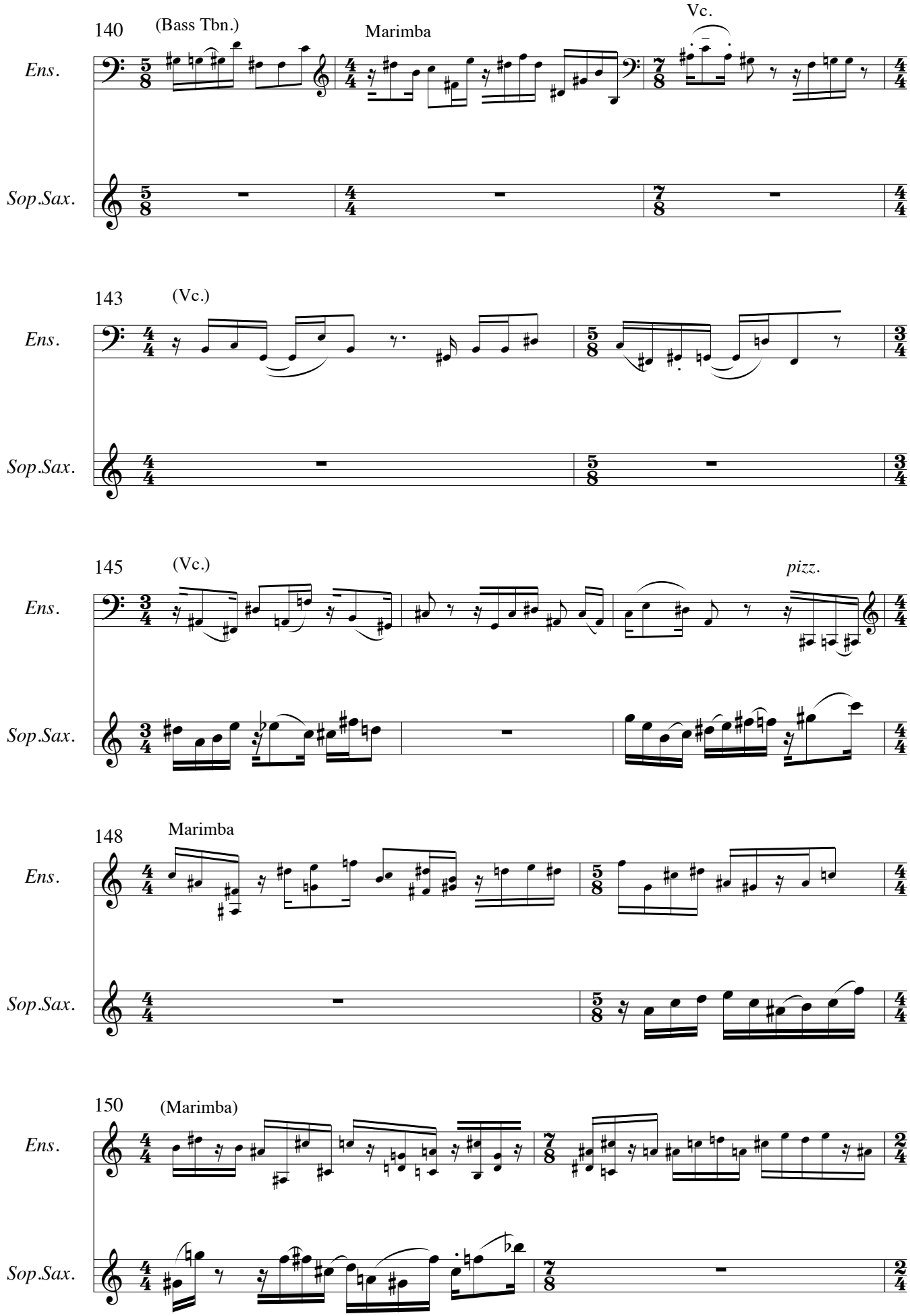

84
Marimba
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
87
(Marimba)
Vc.
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
90
(Vc.)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
92
(Vc.)
Bass Tbn.
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
94
Vc.
3
Ens.
Sop.Sax.

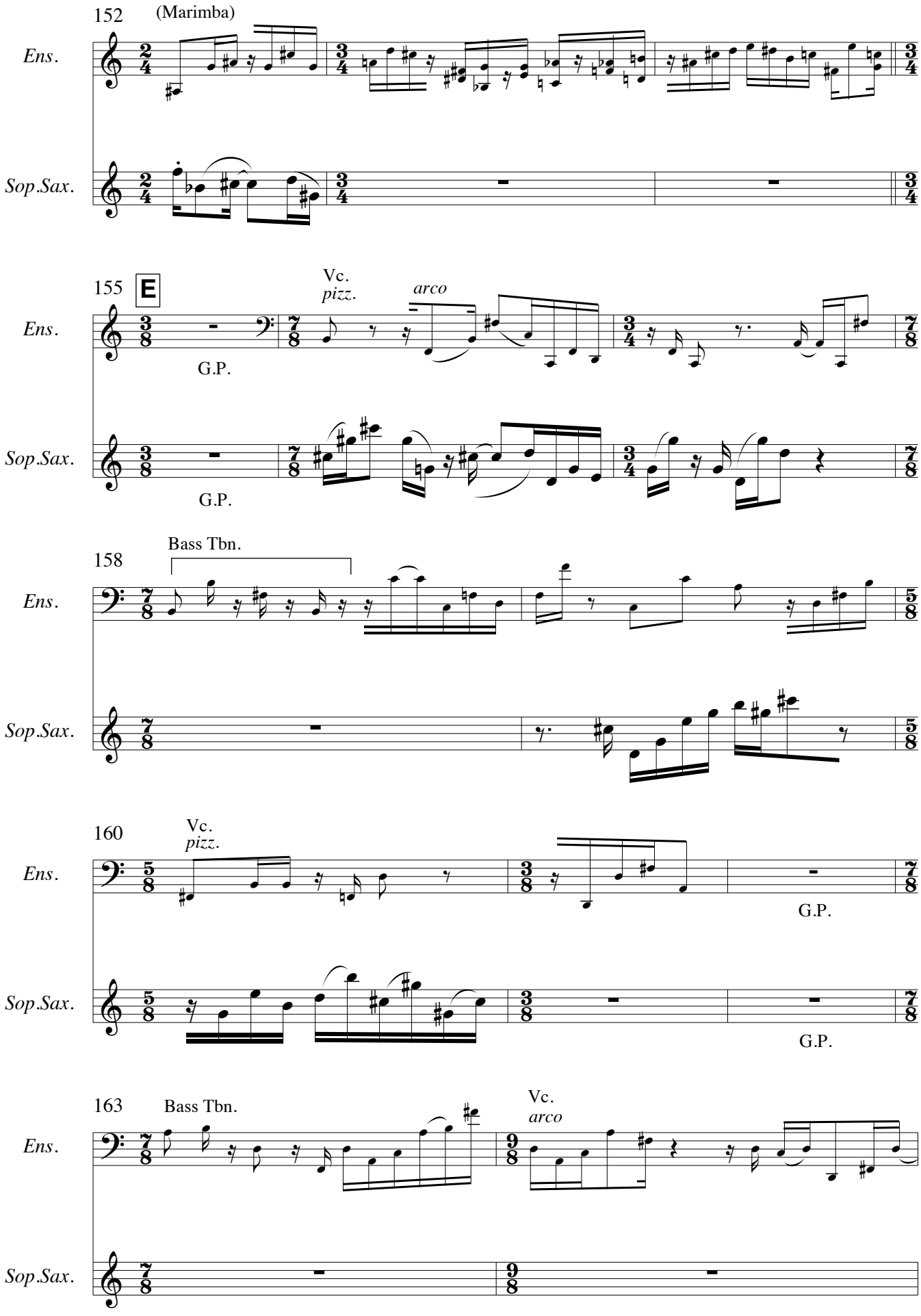
Jeux Diurnes

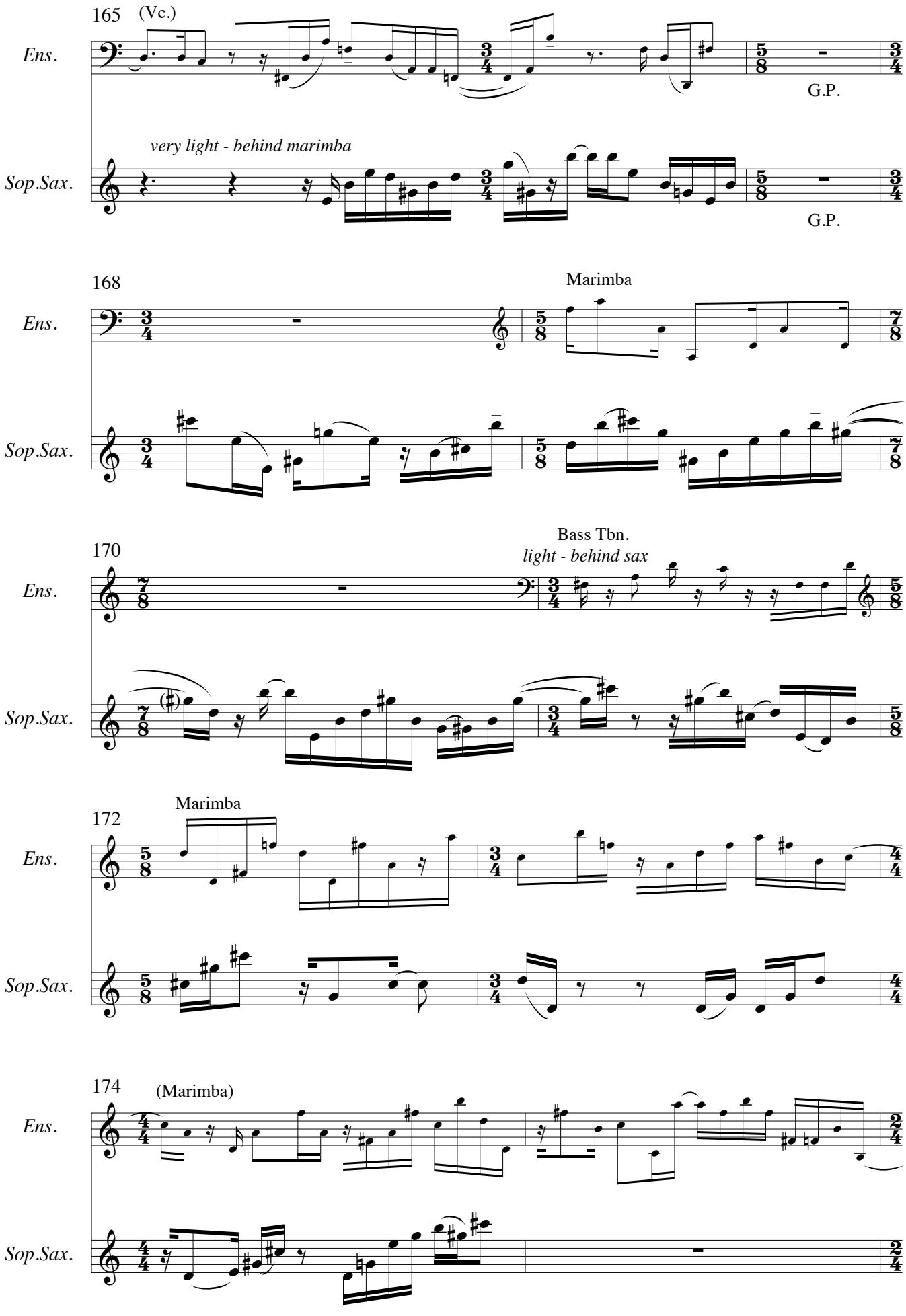


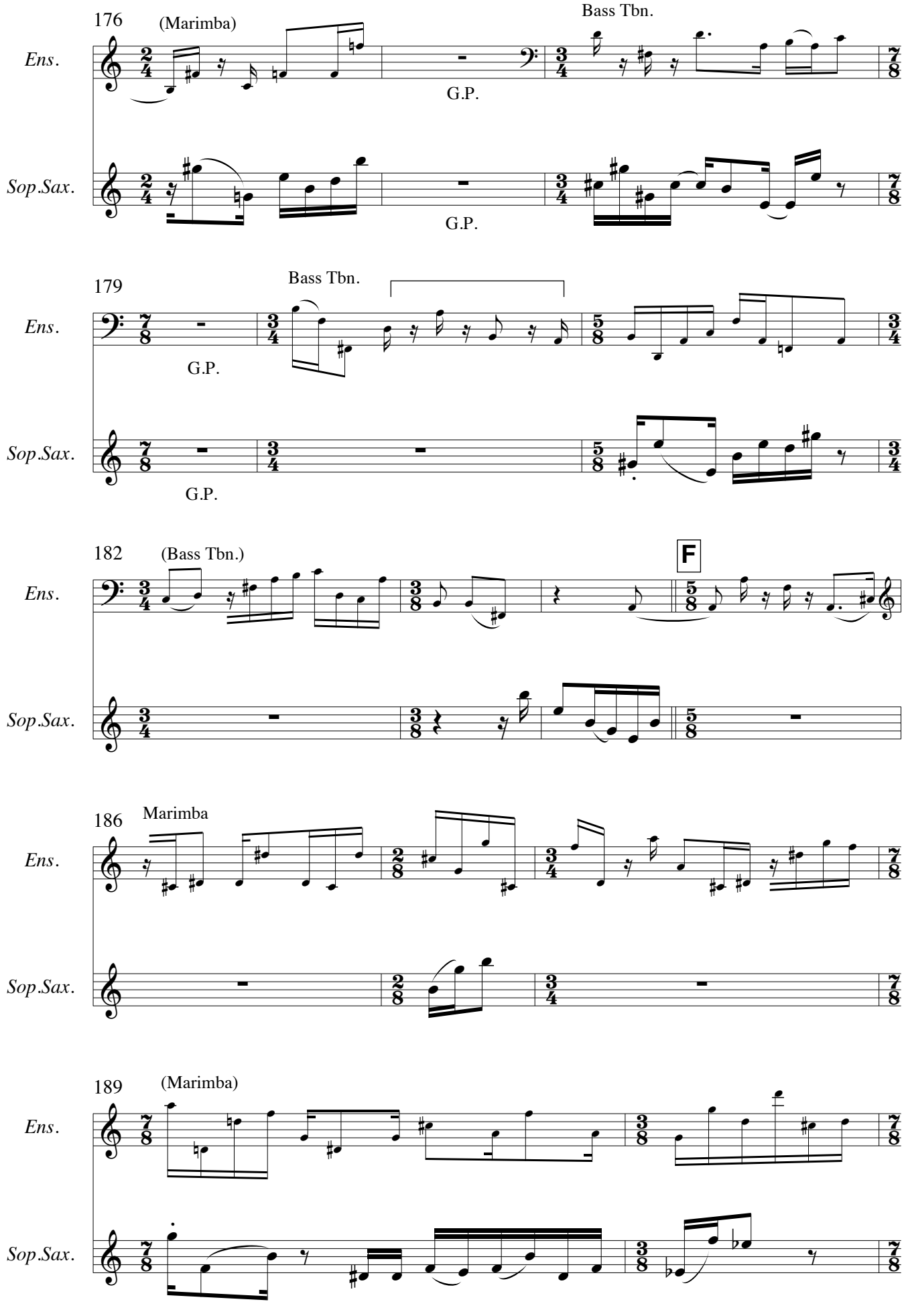

109 (Bass Tbn.)
Vc.
Ens.
Marimba
Sop.Sax.
113 (Vc.)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
117 (Vc.)
Marimba
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
121 (Marimba)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
125 D (Marimba)
Bass Tbn.
x
Ens.
x - as though a bar of 2/4
Sop.Sax.

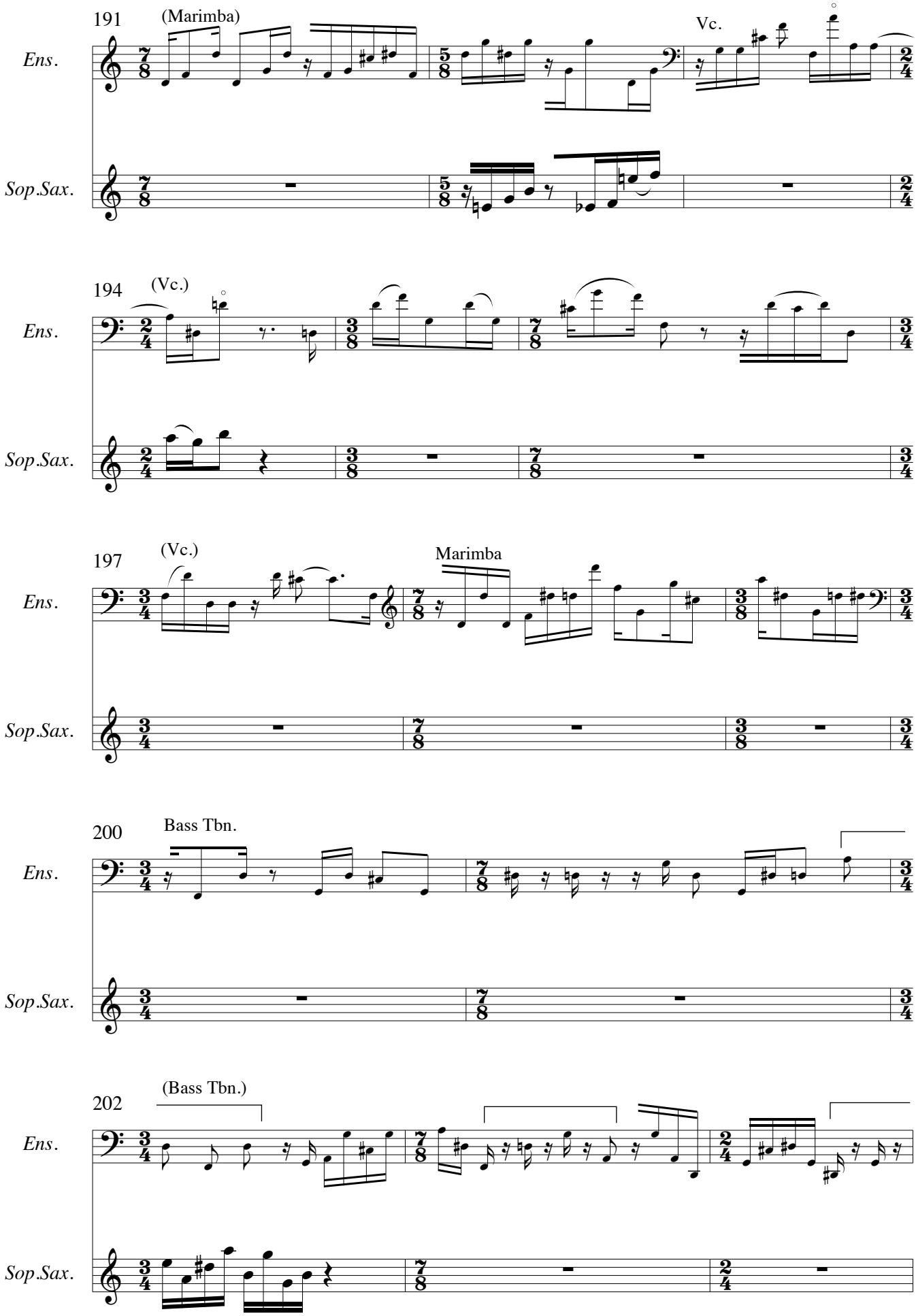

128
Vc.
Marimba
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
131
(Marimba)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
133
Vc.
Bass Tbn.
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
(Bass Tbn.)
136
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
(Bass Tbn.)
138
Ens.
Sop.Sax.

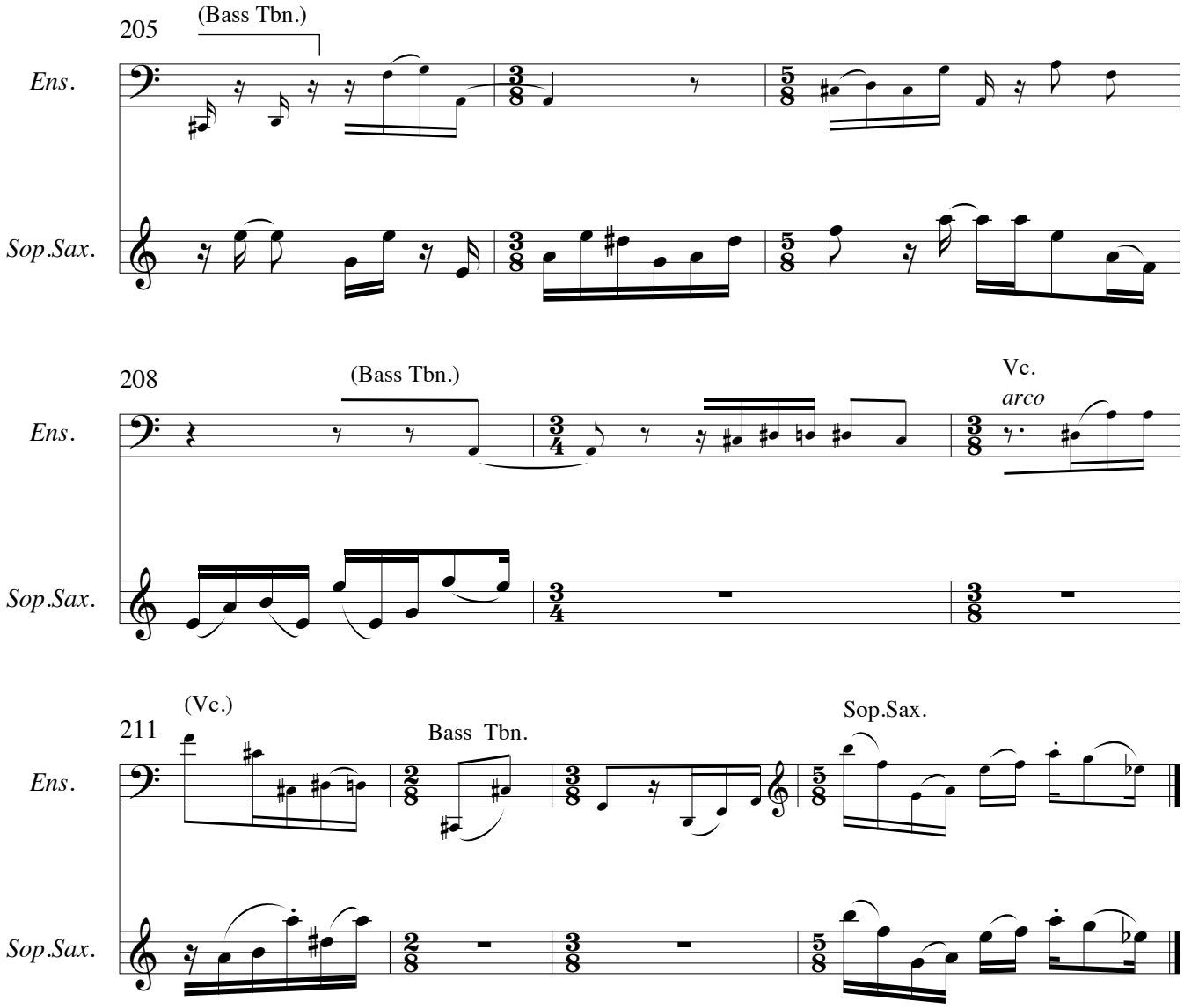

140
(Bass Tbn.)
Marimba
Vc.
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
143
(Vc.)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
145
(Vc.)
pizz.
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
148
Marimba
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
150
(Marimba)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.


152
(Marimba)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
155
E
Vc.
pizz.
arco
G.P.
158
Bass Tbn.
160
163
Vc.
arco


165
(Vc.)
Ens.
G.P.
very light - behind marimba
Sop.Sax.
G.P.
168
Marimba
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
170
Bass Tbn.
light - behind sax
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
172
Marimba
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
174
(Marimba)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.


176
(Marimba)
Bass Tbn.
Ens.
G.P.
Sop.Sax.
G.P.
179
Bass Tbn.
Ens.
G.P.
Sop.Sax.
G.P.
182
(Bass Tbn.)
F
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
186
Marimba
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
189
(Marimba)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.


191
(Marimba)
Vc.
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
194
(Vc.)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
197
(Vc.)
Marimba
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
200
Bass Tbn.
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
202
(Bass Tbn.)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.


205
(Bass Tbn.)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
208
(Bass Tbn.)
Vc.
arco
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
211
(Vc.)
Bass Tbn.
Sop.Sax.
Ens.
Sop.Sax.

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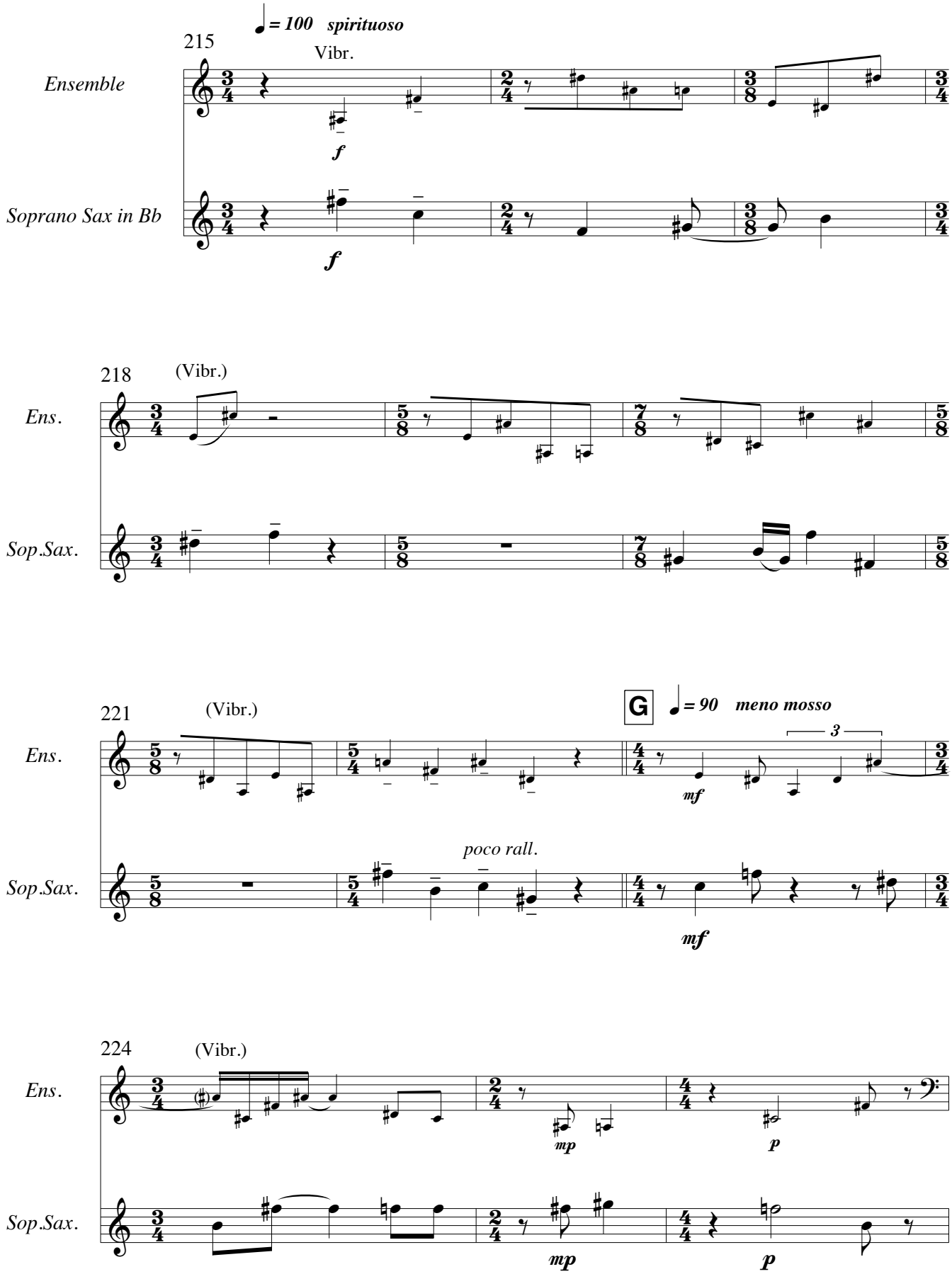
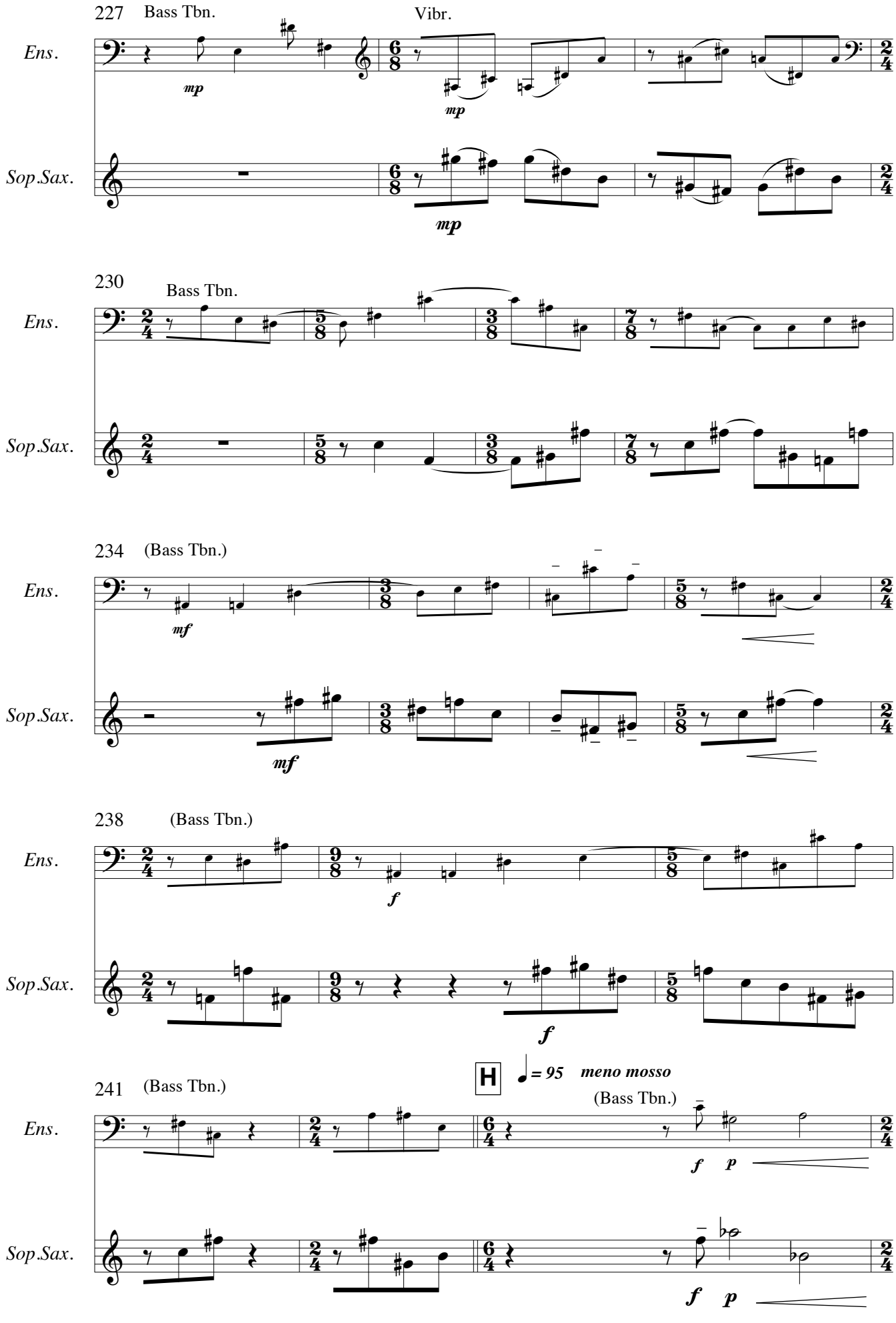
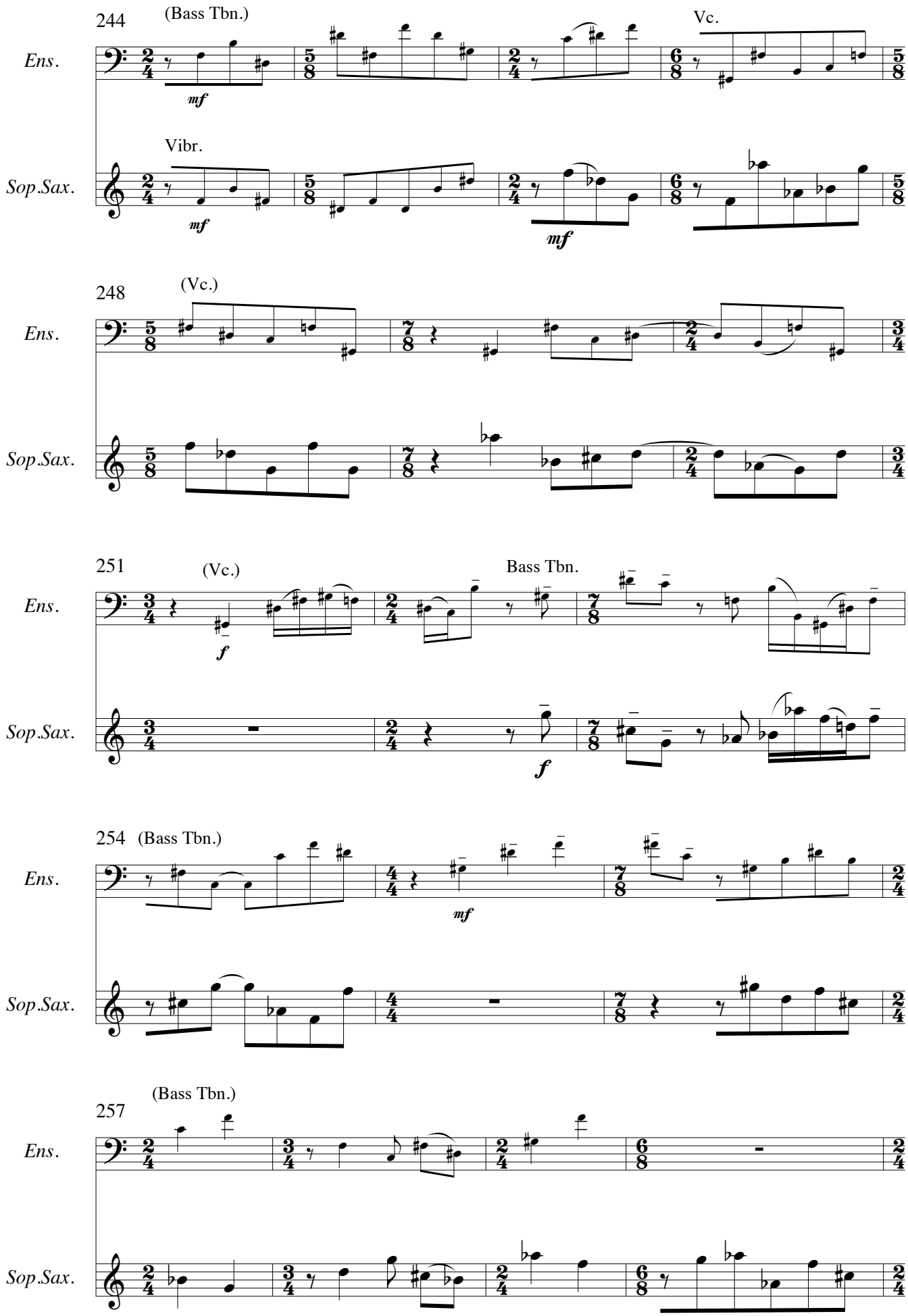
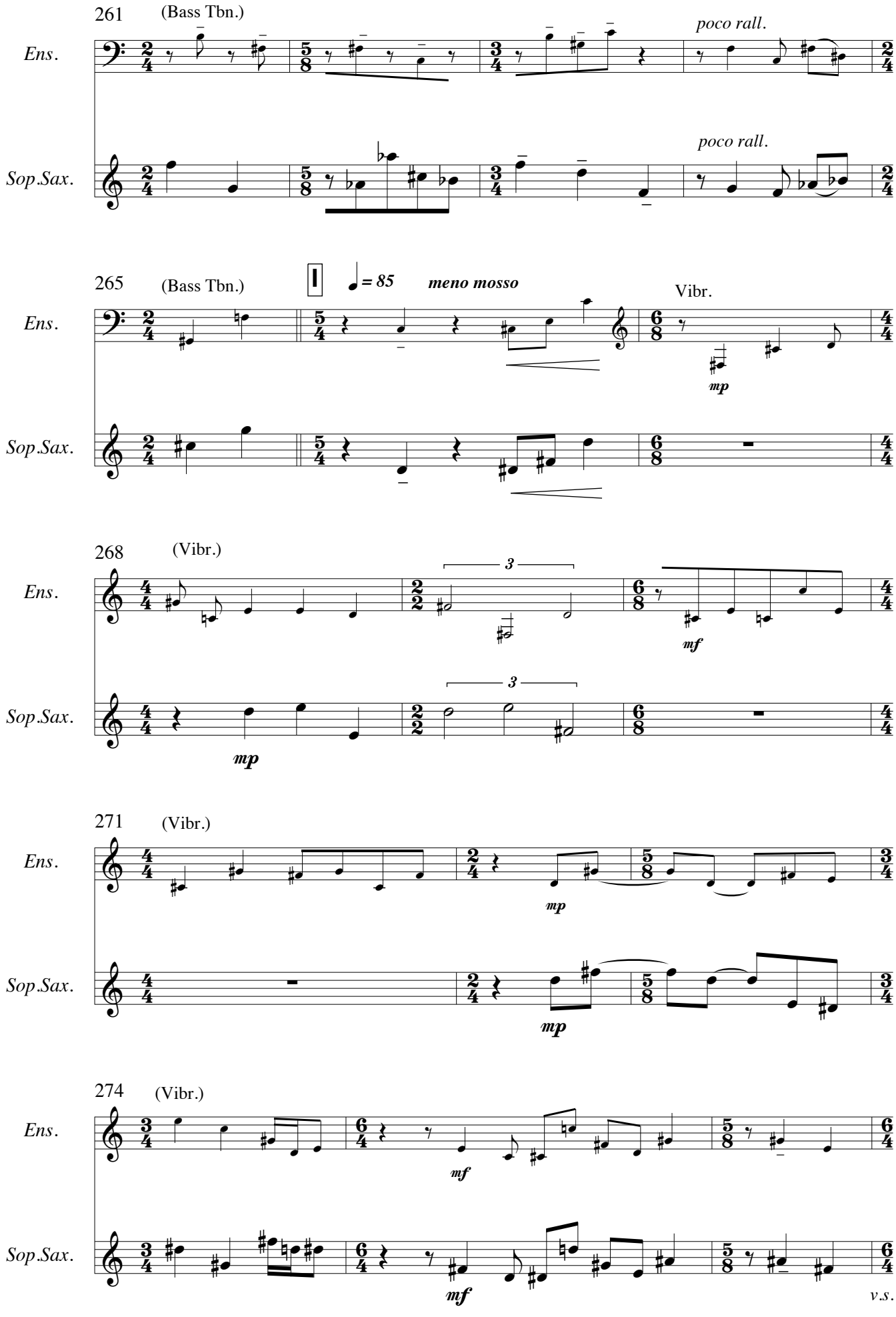
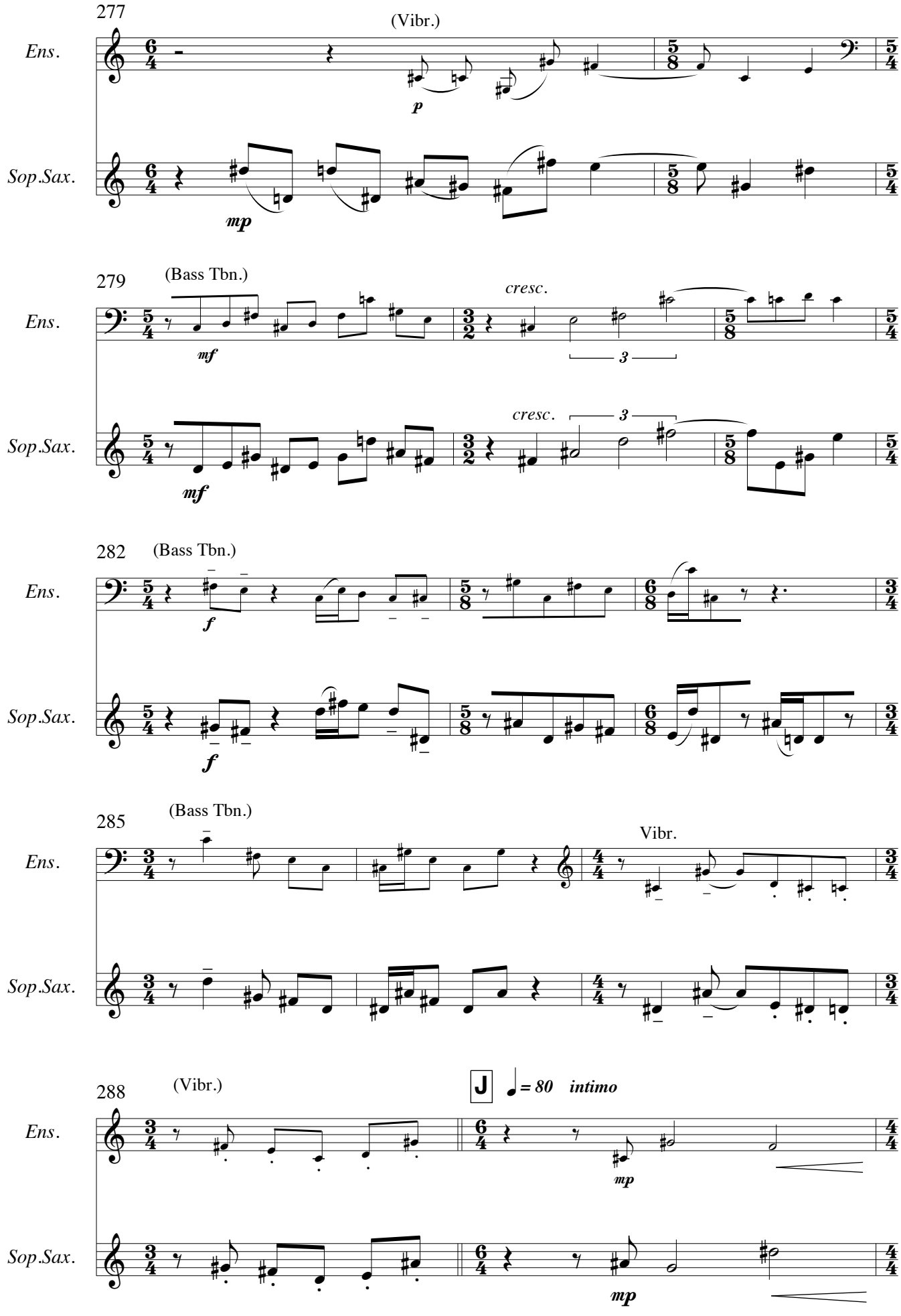
In Finem Psalmus David

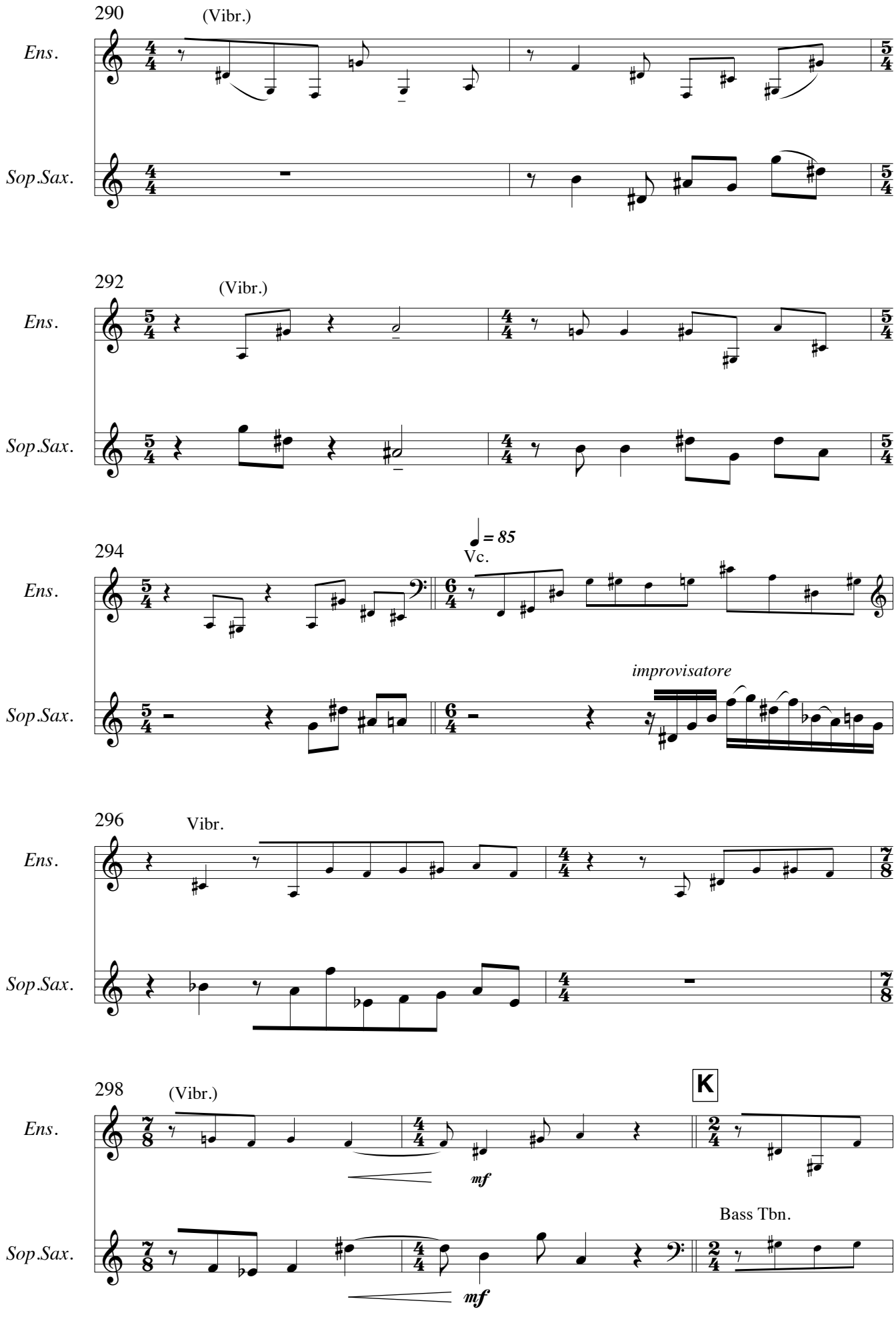


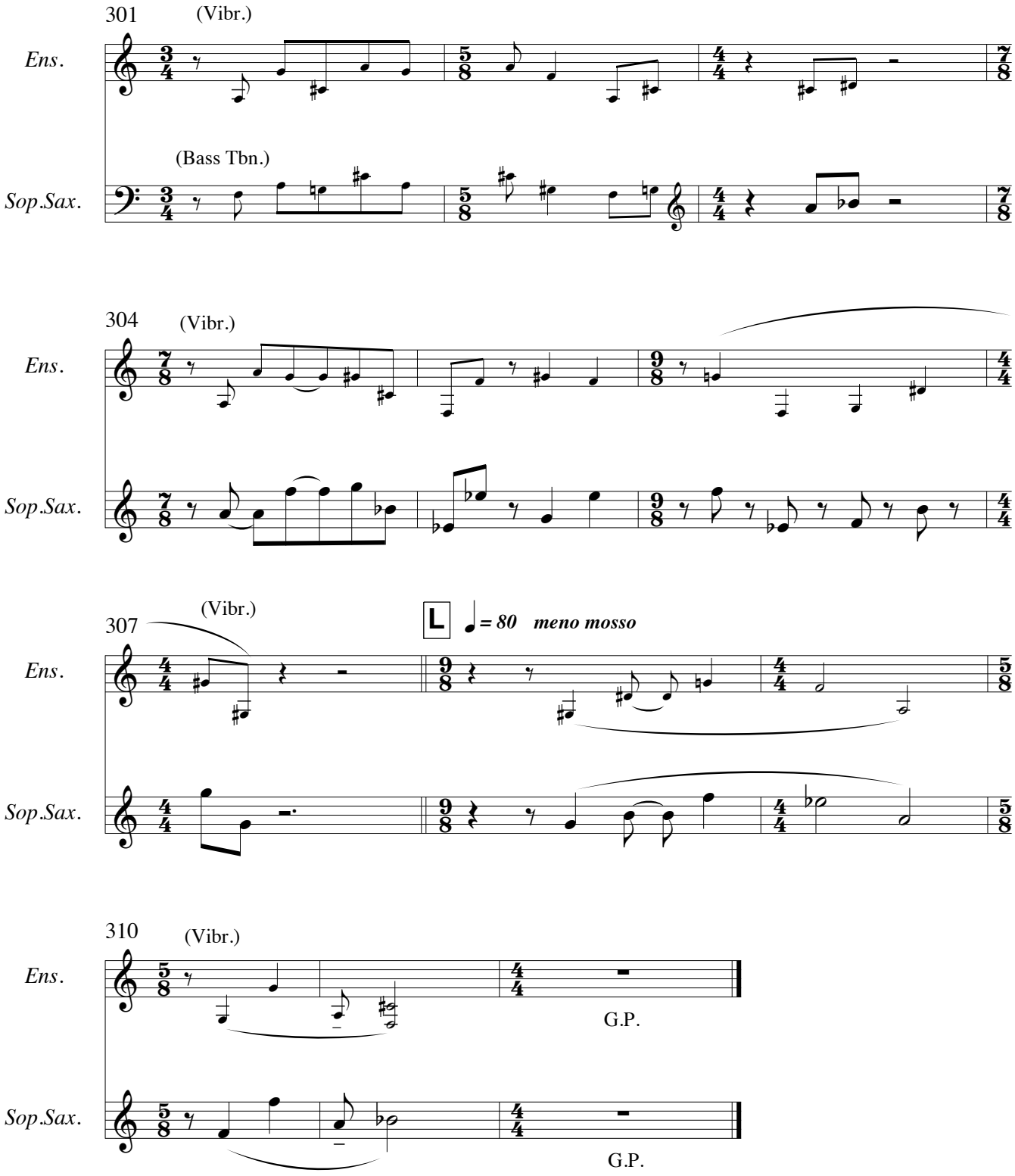

227
Bass Tbn.
Vibr.
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
mp
230
Bass Tbn.
234
(Bass Tbn.)
mf
238
(Bass Tbn.)
f
H
= 95
meno mosso
241
(Bass Tbn.)
p


244
(Bass Tbn.)
Vc.
Ens.
mf
Vibr.
Sop.Sax.
mf
mf
248
(Vc.)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
251
(Vc.)
Bass Tbn.
Ens.
f
Sop.Sax.
f
254
(Bass Tbn.)
Ens.
mf
Sop.Sax.
257
(Bass Tbn.)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.


261
(Bass Tbn.)
poco rall.
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
poco rall.
265
(Bass Tbn.)
I
♩ = 85
meno mosso
Vibr.
Ens.
mp
Sop.Sax.
268
(Vibr.)
3
Ens.
mf
3
Sop.Sax.
mp
271
(Vibr.)
Ens.
mp
Sop.Sax.
mp
274
(Vibr.)
Ens.
mf
Sop.Sax.
mf
v.s.


277
(Vibr.)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
p
mp
279
(Bass Tbn.)
cresc.
mf
3
282
(Bass Tbn.)
f
285
(Bass Tbn.)
Vibr.
288
(Vibr.)
J
= 80 intimo


290
(Vibr.)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
292
(Vibr.)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
294
♩ = 85
Vc.
Ens.
improvisatore
Sop.Sax.
296
Vibr.
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
298
(Vibr.)
K
Ens.
mf
Bass Tbn.
Sop.Sax.
mf


301
(Vibr.)
Ens.
(Bass Tbn.)
Sop.Sax.
304
(Vibr.)
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
307
(Vibr.)
L
= 80 meno mosso
Ens.
Sop.Sax.
310
(Vibr.)
Ens.
G.P.
Sop.Sax.
G.P.