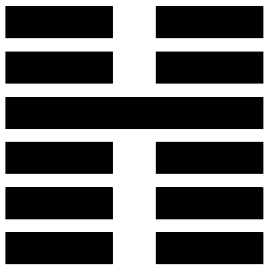
With Enthusiasm (Yu)

From Axioms



For sax quartet, keyboard, bass and percussion.

Keyboard

Nigel Morgan

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For sax quartet, keyboard, bass and percussion.

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About the Music

Axioms comes from an on-going collection of music for instruments titled *Instrumentarium Novum* that aspires to re-examine some of the conditions for music making in our time. *Instrumentarium* is a term used by the conductor and scholar Nickolaus Harnoncourt to describe the common-place collection of instruments and performance practice found in Baroque and early Classical music. Here there was an expectation that music would be enriched by all the instrumental variety and timbral variation the imagination of musicians could muster. Instrumentation and performance detail rarely dictated the nature of the music itself. Matters such as instrumental doubling, register placement, chord voicings, dynamics and articulation held a more speculative interpretation in the composer's mind.

Such a speculative approach has been celebrated in the composition of *Six Concertos* that take as their starting point the proportions and spirit of the concertos for mixed instrumental ensemble found in the music of Bach and Vivaldi. As in Vivaldi's celebrated op.8 concertos there is in play a contest between harmony (technique) and invention. This is amplified by the hexagram images attached to each concerto taken from the ancient book of divination, the *I Ching*. These images and their interpretation provide a kind of rhetorical *affekt,* giving a gentle measure of guidance to both performer and listener as to the overall character of the music.

Axioms reinvent the first three of the *Six Concertos* for the medium of a saxophone quartet with keyboard, double bass and percussion. Such a reinvention was implicit in the initial composition of the concerto sequence as a way of testing the effectiveness of musical argument against the play of instrumental timbre found in the three companion versions: for orchestra, for chamber orchestra, and piano duo.

Guide to performance

The three **Axioms** (*With Enthusiasm, Making Progress, Being Receptive*) are scored to allow for a satisfactory performance by sax quartet alone, or sax ensemble with any combination of the four continuo parts originally devised for the orchestral versions of these scores.

The *ossia* sections for sax quartet are shown in a small font size. These have two purposes: to enable a sax quartet-only version of the score; to provide optional new material (not present in the orchestral version), which may be played alongside the continuo parts or not as the players see fit.

All markings for tempo, dynamics, expression and articulations are considered starting points on the performers' journey towards bringing emphasis, clarity and meaning to the musical argument presented here.

As in the other versions of the *Six Concertos* players may explore placing phrases in higher or lower octaves, and indeed make other parallel intervals transpositions, to create different effects and emphasis.

The aesthetic of the open-form surrounds the *poesis* of **Axioms**. By applying repeats to selected sections and phrases new and different scoring and dynamic schemes can be introduced as well as opportunities for improvisation. Indeed sections of those score can be wholly reordered. To find out more about how this music can be extended and customised to an ensemble, performers are recommended to study the on-line guide *Six Concertos: A Guide for Musicians and Directors* at http://www.nigel-morgan.co.uk/files/ SixConcertos

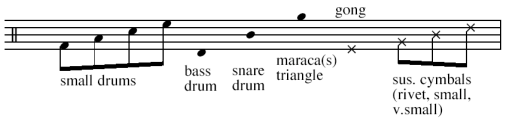
Scoring and instrumentation

The continuo part is split up into four lines: Keyboard, bass, tuned and untuned percussion. This continuo format was developed by musicians from the BBC National Orchestra of Wales for the composer's BBC commissions *Conversations in Colour* and *Schizophonia*. These multi-location compositions require three ensembles of singers and instrumentalists to perform together from different locations over high-speed audio networks.

The keyboard part is imagined for an electric piano where there is a definite timbral edge to *forte*, with *piano* having a darker, gentler hue. An additional sampling keyboard might be used to further broaden the spectrum of timbre. A foot volume pedal is advised to enable chords to be struck silently and faded in.

The keyboard score is presented with the vibraphone / guitar part to enable the maximum flexibility in the organisation of the continuo ensemble.

The percussion parts may be treated very freely with both parts 'orchestrated' between two players. Ideally, a variety of tuned percussion should be used – vibraphone, marimba etc. When only a single acoustic instrument is available it should be a vibraphone. The untuned part calls for a collection of standard orchestral percussion but may be extended to include more exotic sounds (including samples and electronic sounds) as appropriate to the performers. Although designed for two players the percussion parts may be re-arranged for a single (virtuoso) player. In the BBCNOW continuo group percussionist Chris Stock uses a MalletKAT for playing both sampled tuned and untuned percussion sounds.



The bass instrument may be an acoustic double bass (amplified if necessary) or fretless electric bass. Electric guitar may be added to the ensemble and a part is available as required.

The continuo group should be adventurous and colourful, not only in its choice of instrumentation but with the treatment of the written part.. Performers are encouraged to go beyond the written notes in exploring radical interactions and textures against the music and sound of the sax quartet.

This music is designed for a self-directed ensemble.

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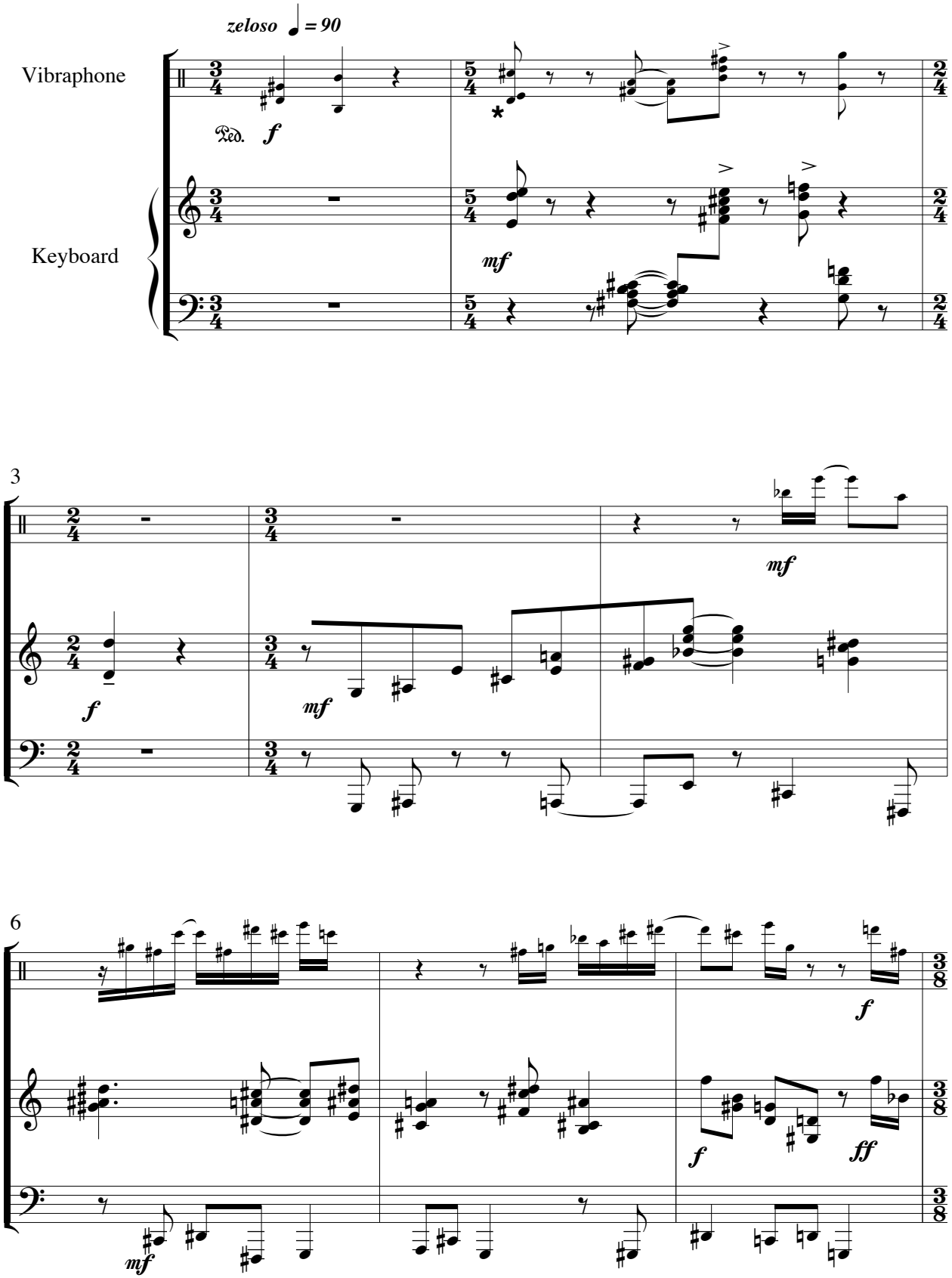
With Enthusiasm (Yu)
I



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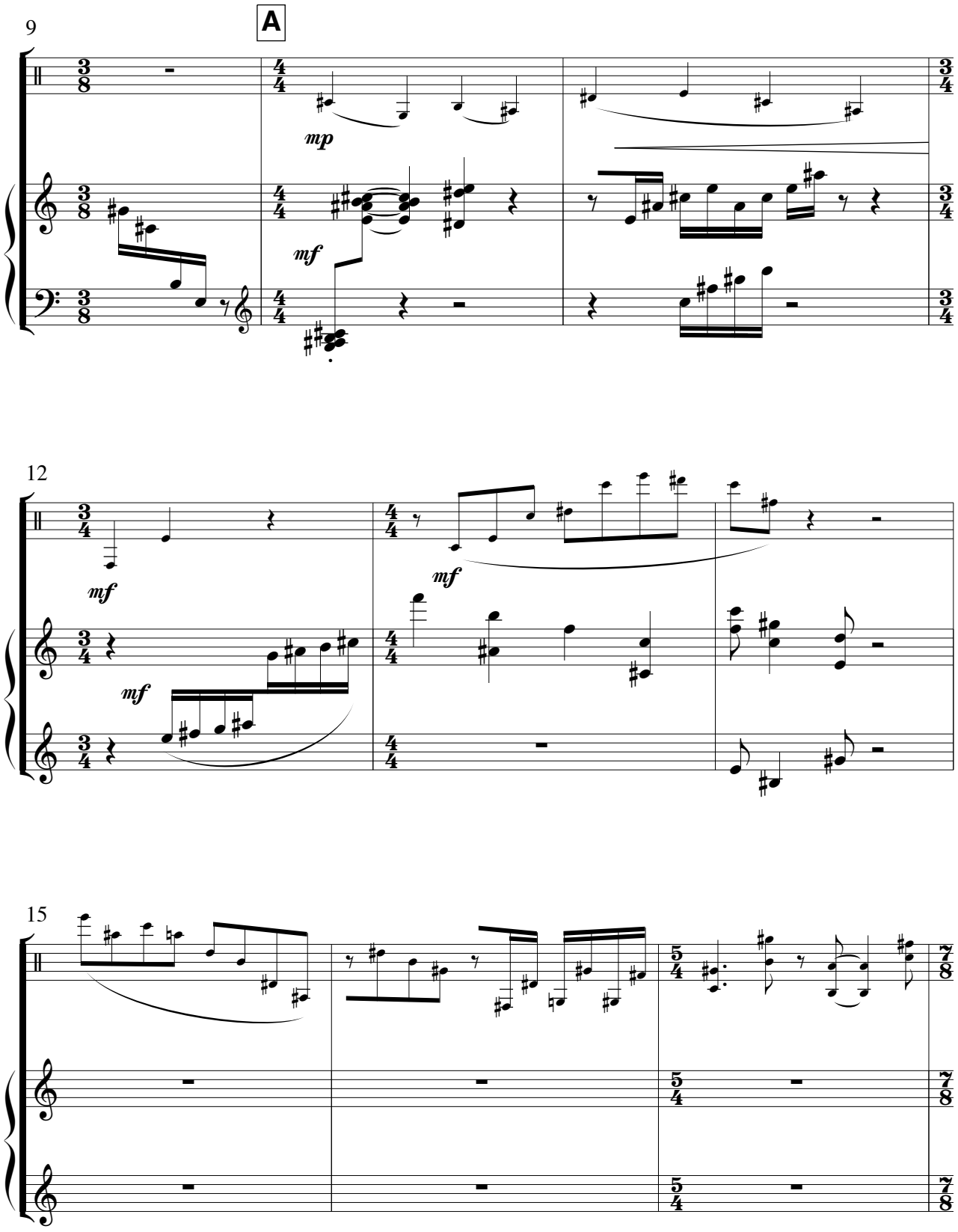
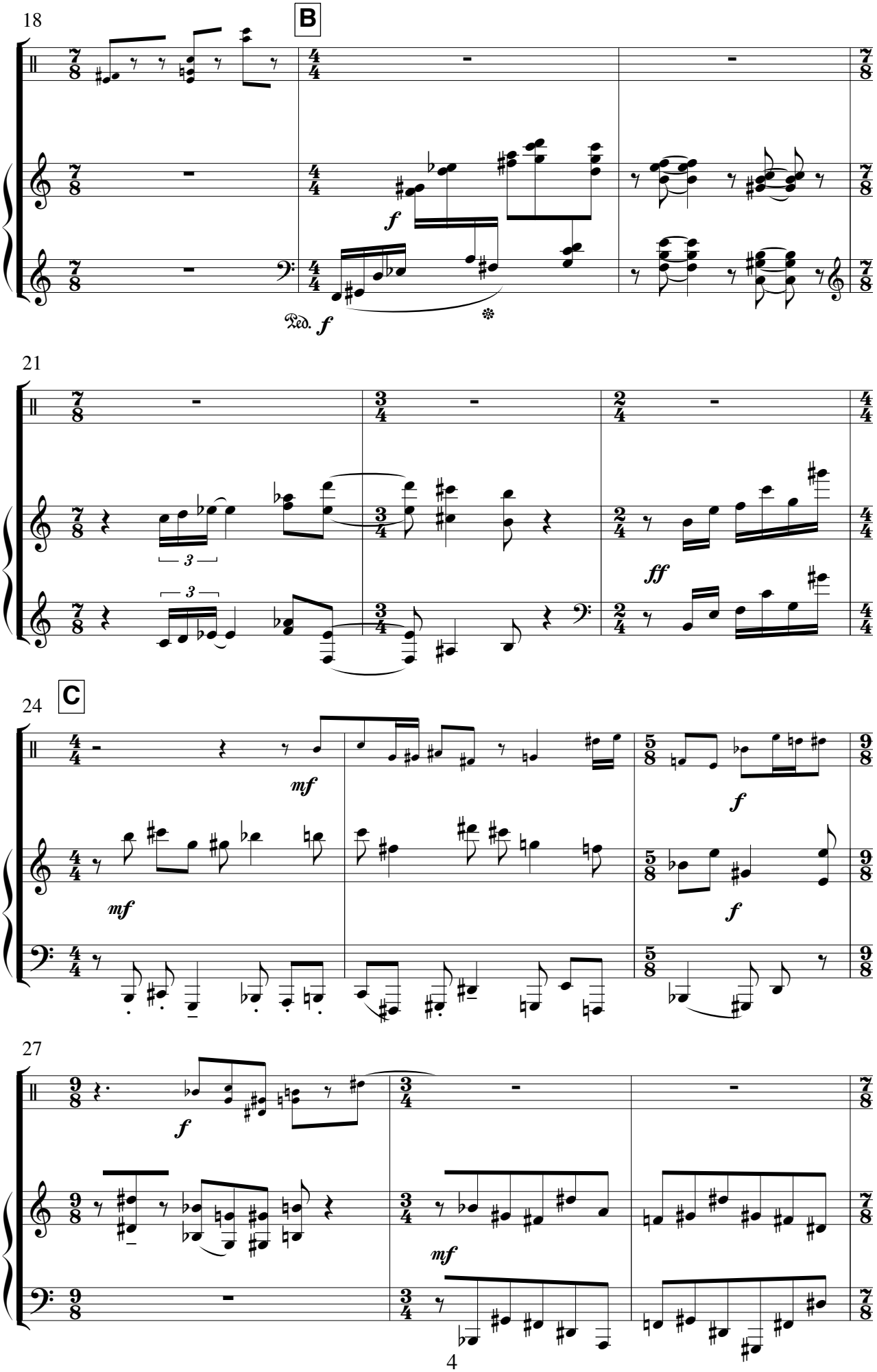
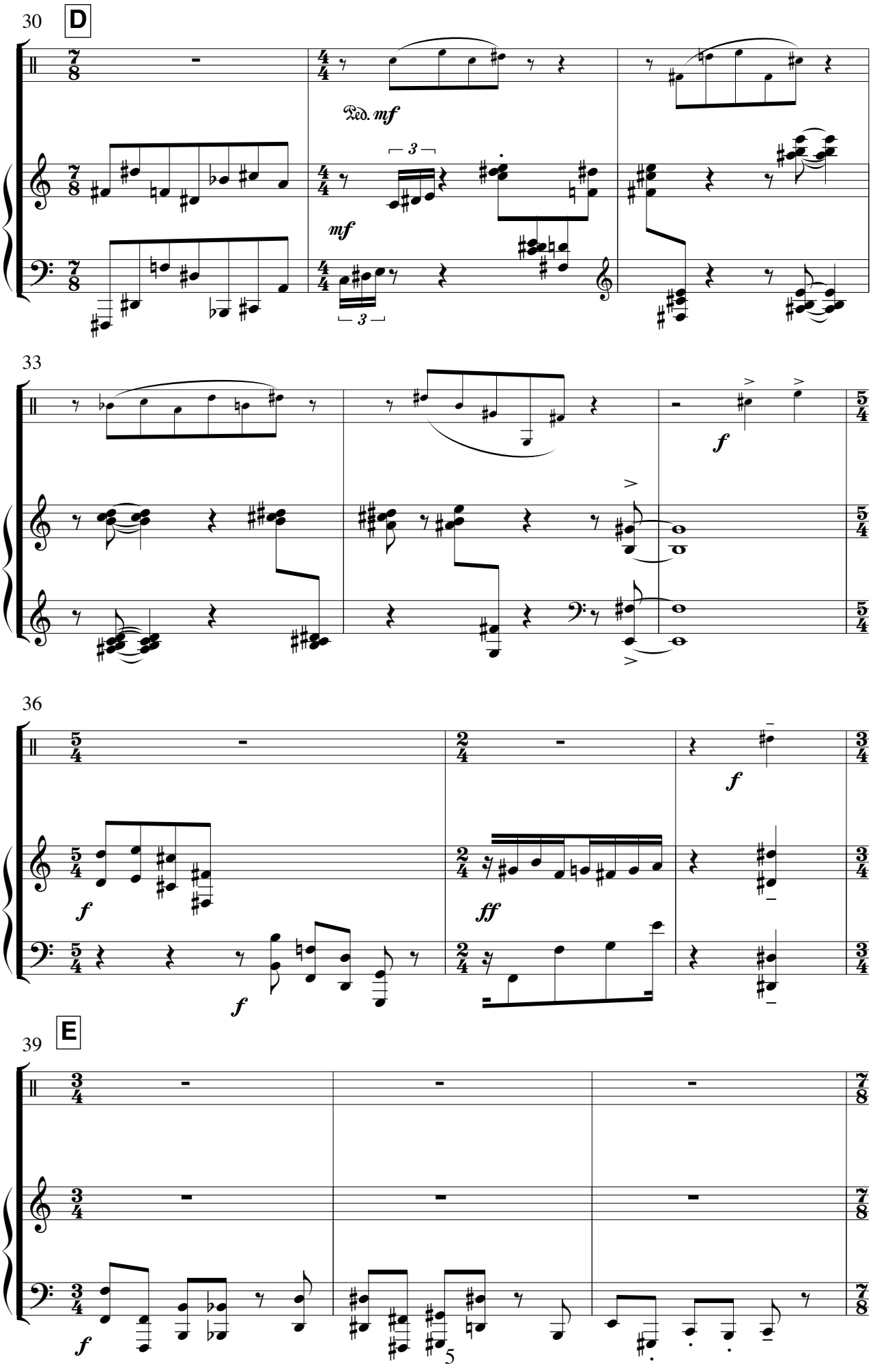
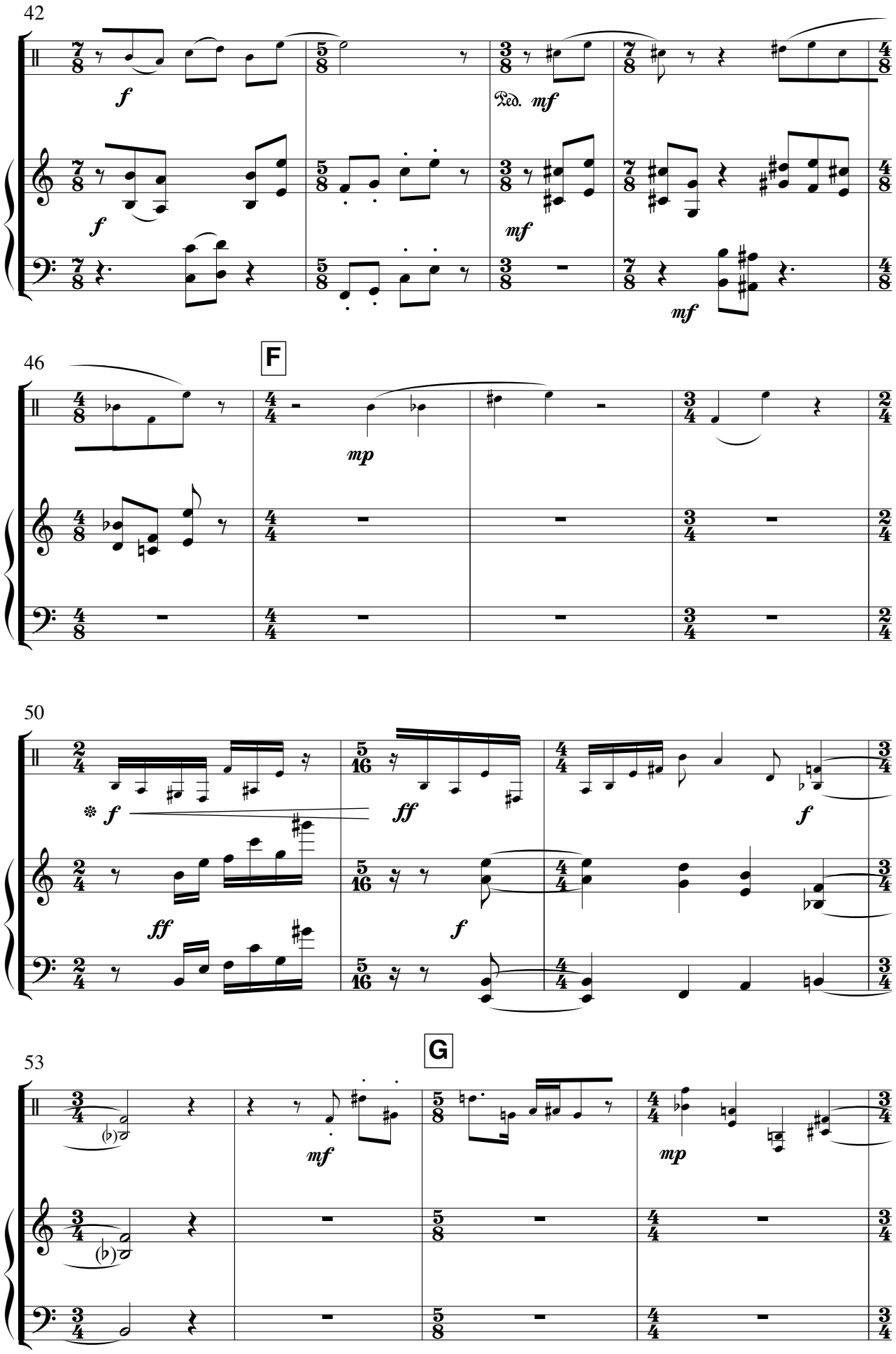
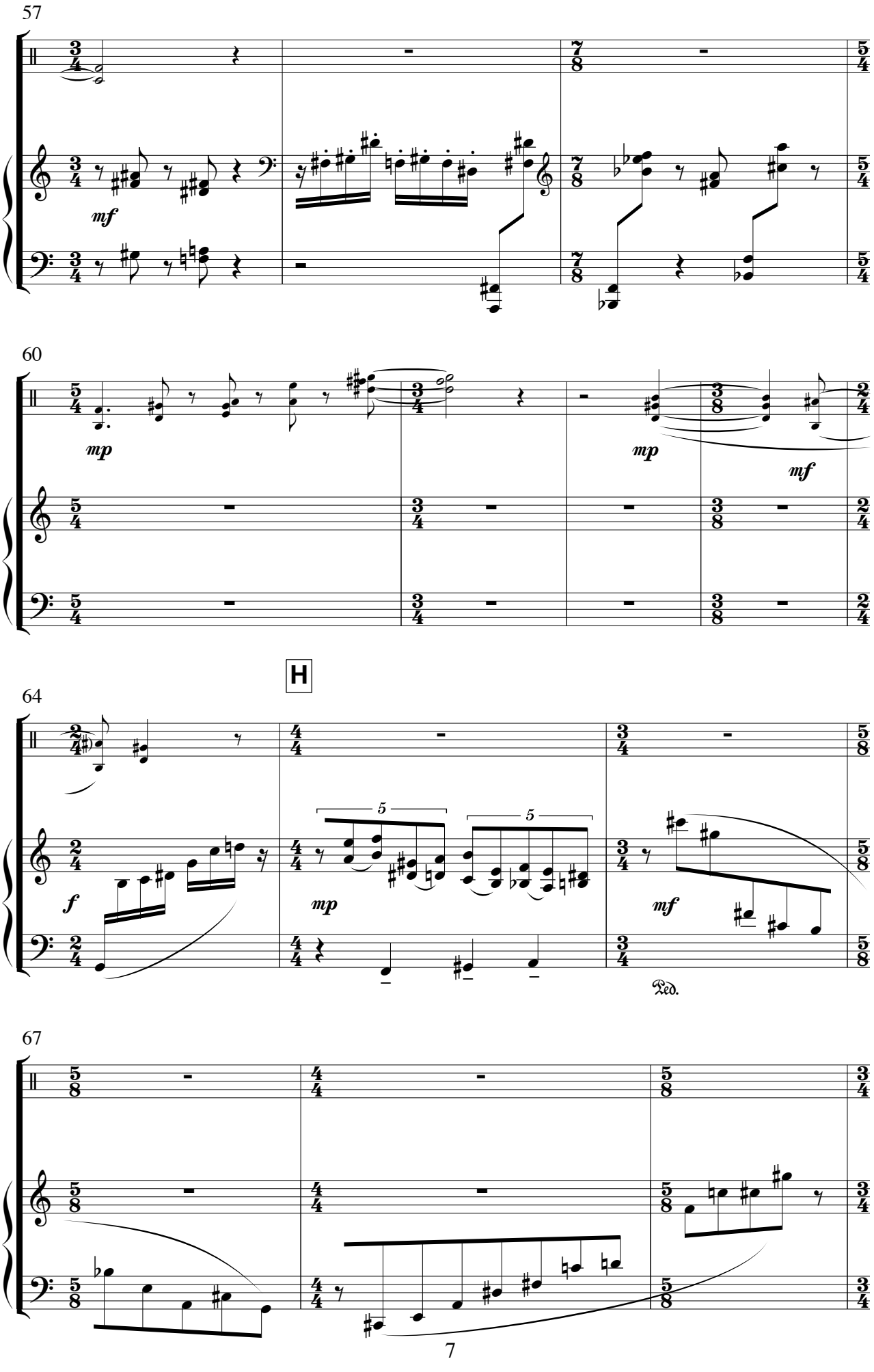
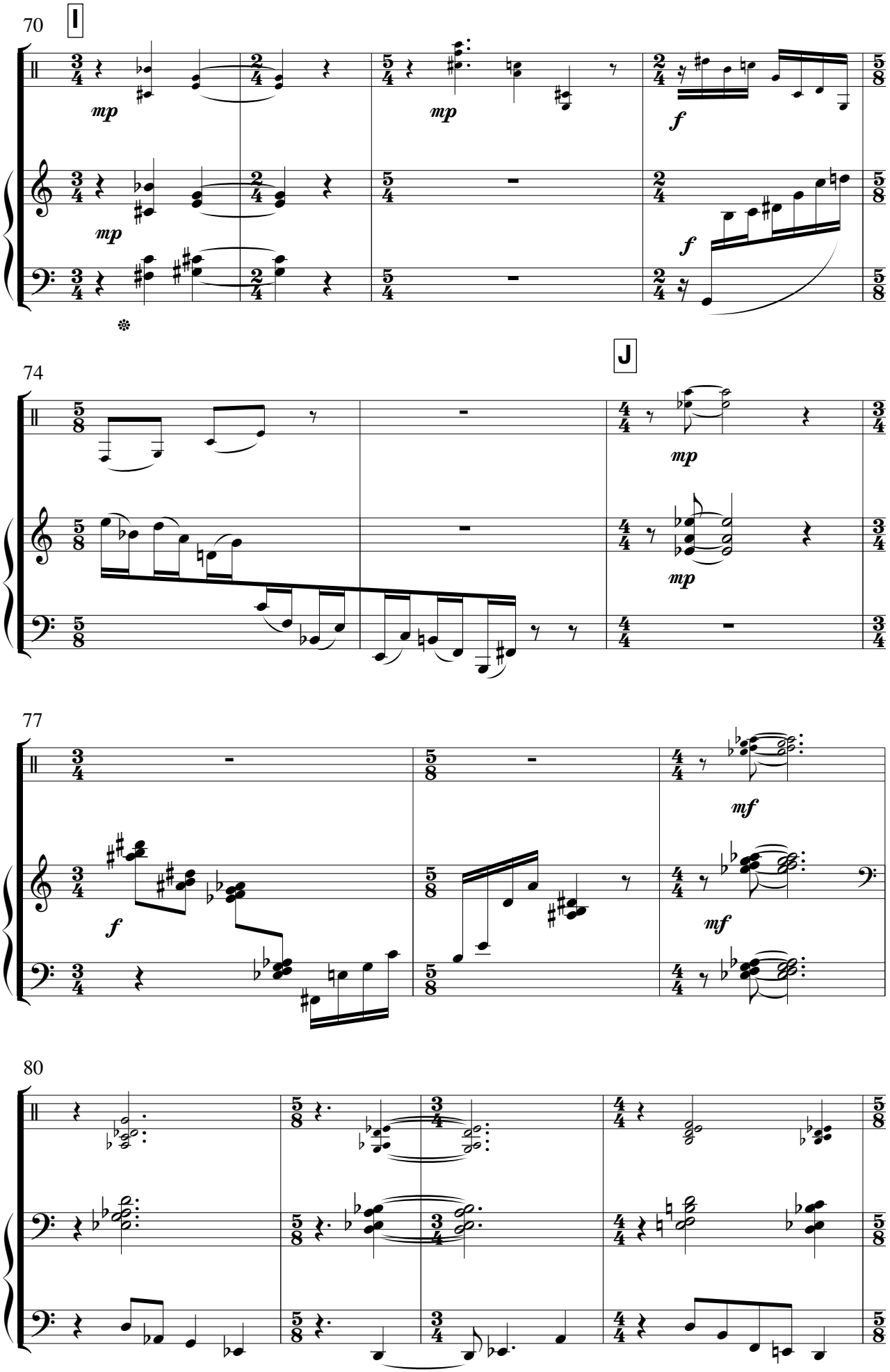

9
A
mp
mf
12
mf
mf
mf
15


18
B
f
Ped. f
21
3
3
ff
24
C
mf
mf
f
f
27
f
mf

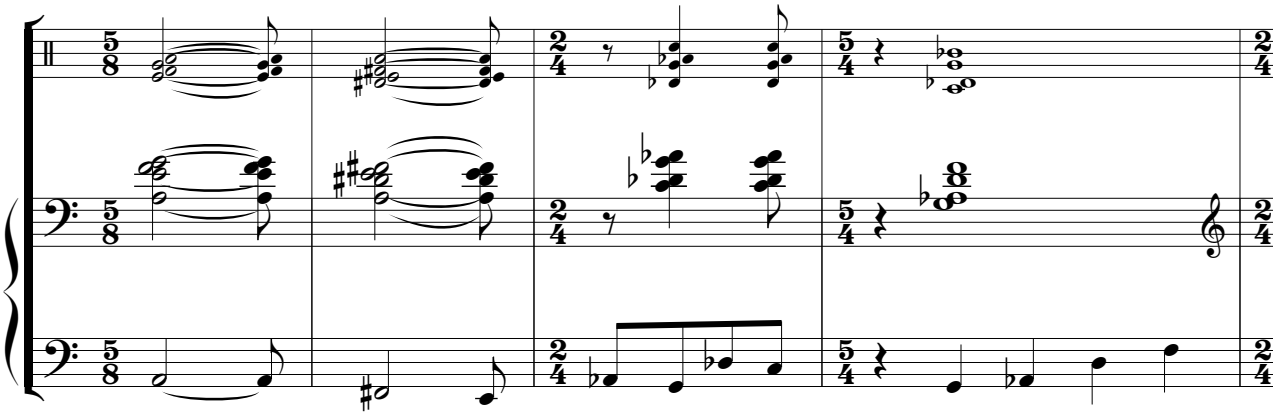

30
D
Ped. mf
mf
3
3
33
f
36
f
f
ff
39
E
f


42
f
f
Ped. mf
mf
mf
46
F
mp
50
f
ff
ff
f
f
53
G
mf
mp

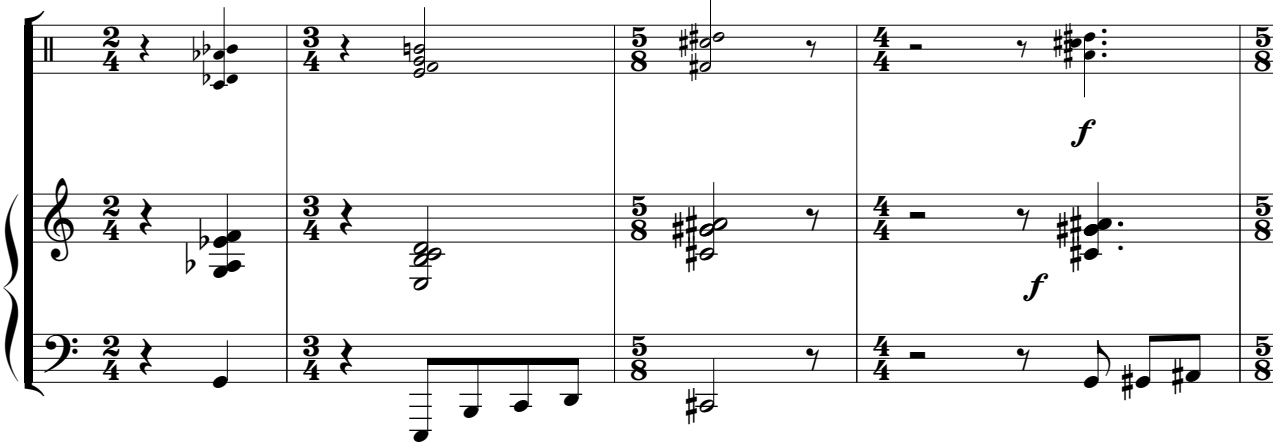

57
mf
60
mp
mp
mf
H
64
f
mp
5
5
mf
Ped.
67


70
I
mp
mp
f
mp
f
74
J
mp
mp
77
f
mf
mf
80

84



88 **K**



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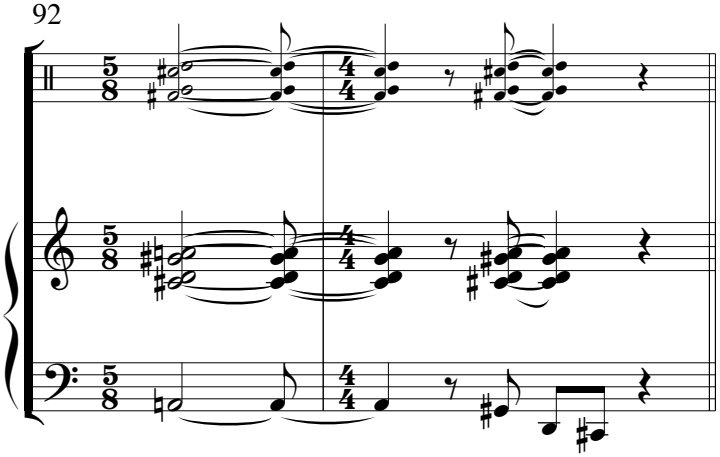
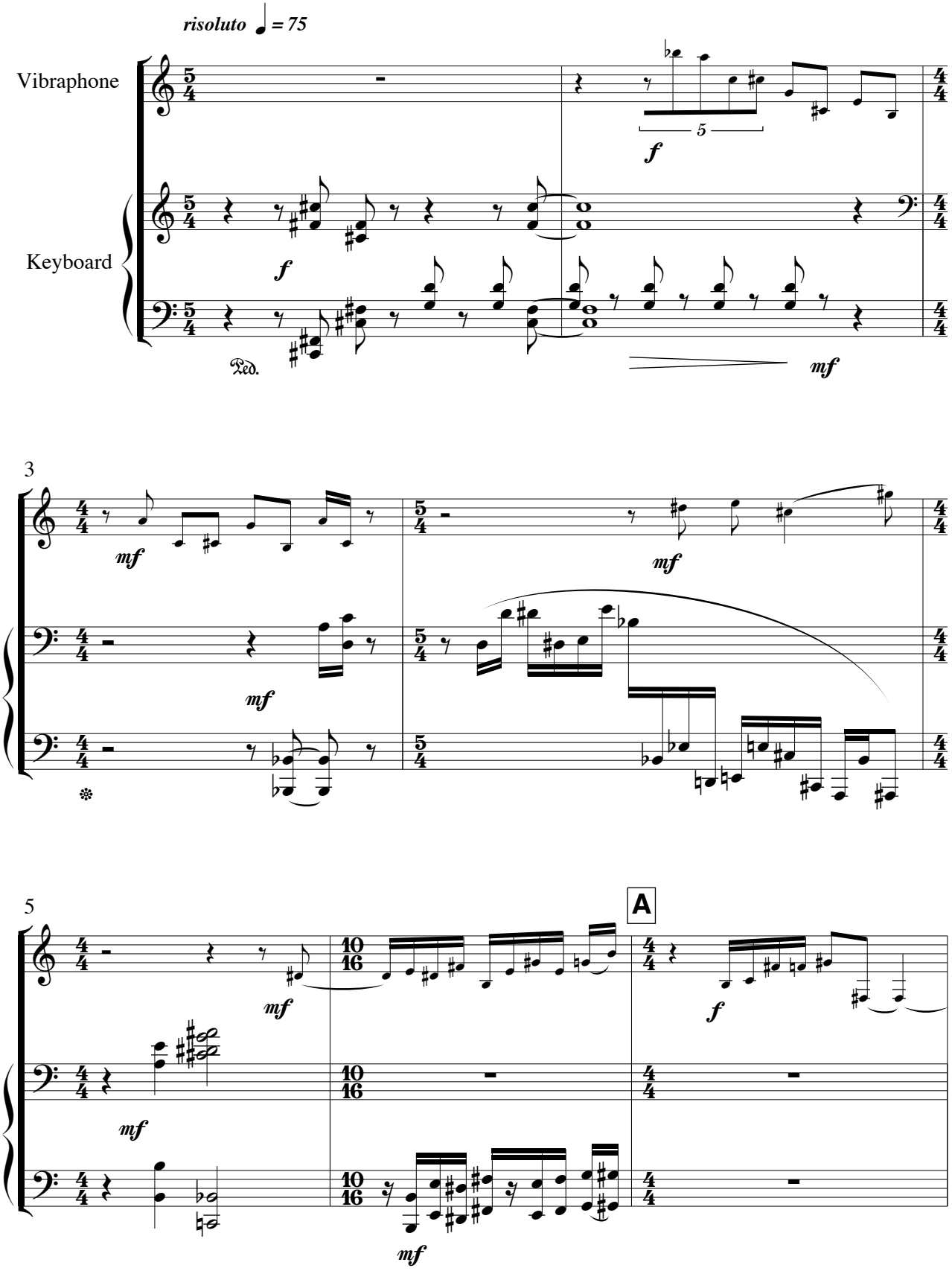
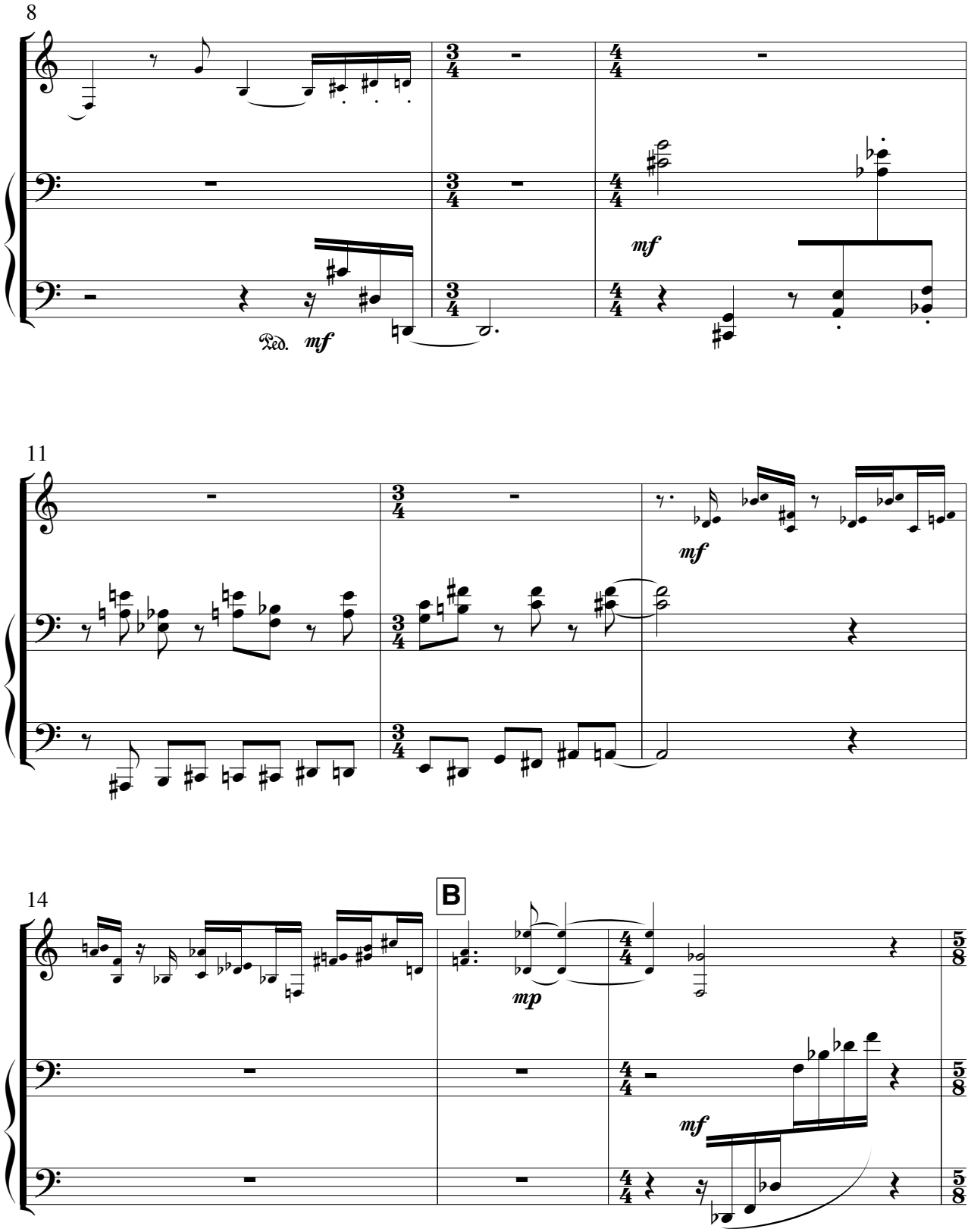
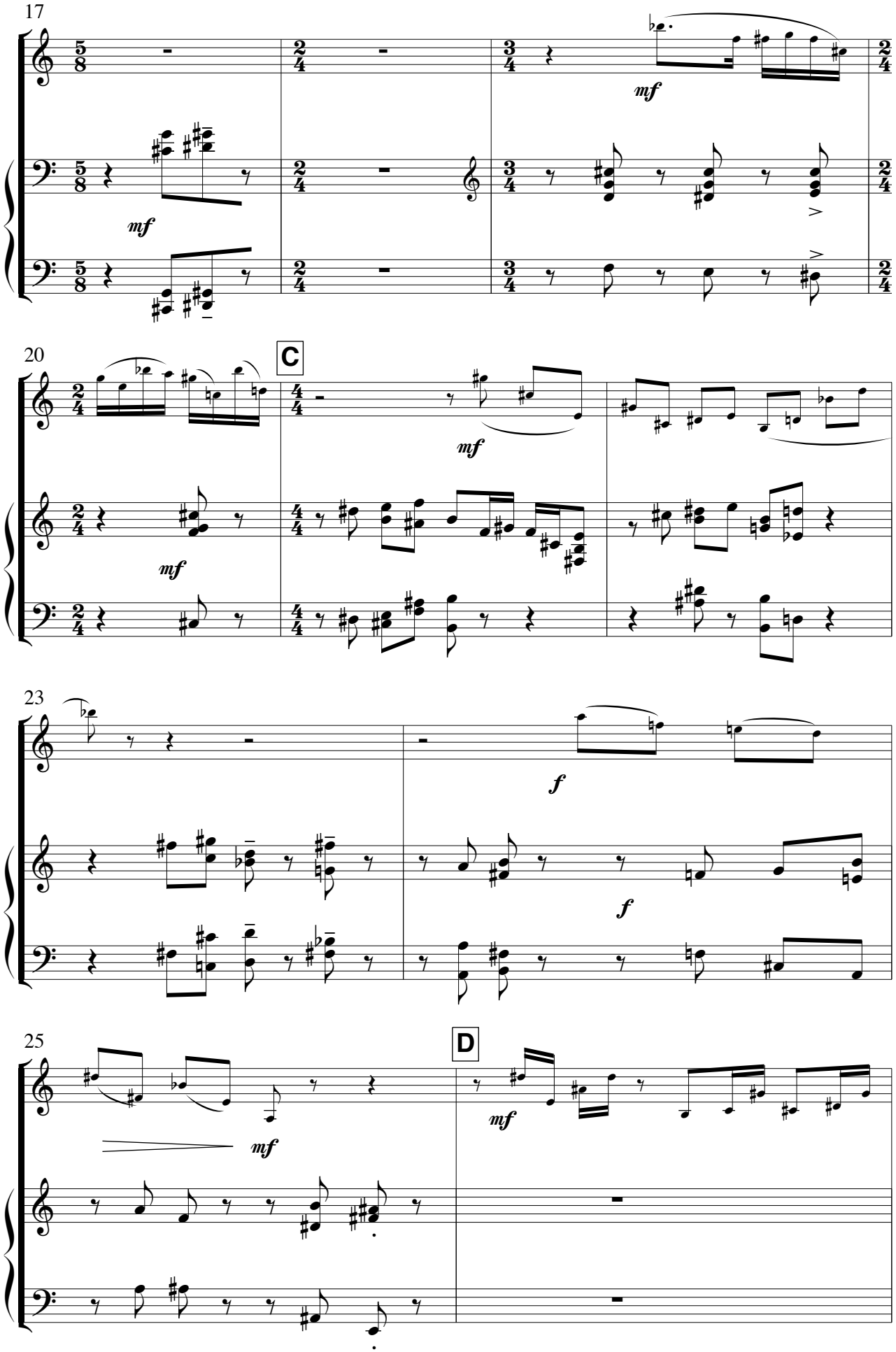
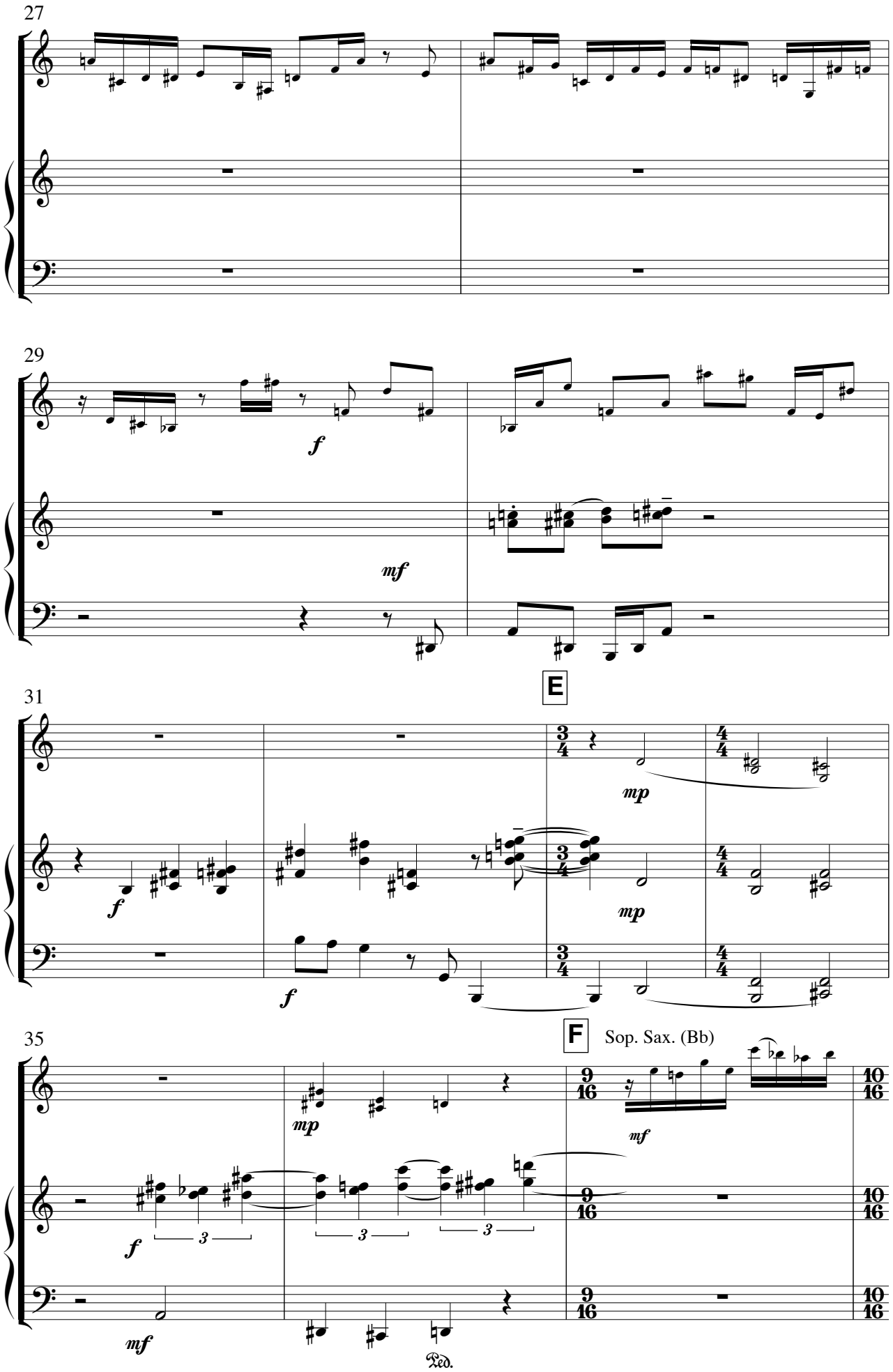


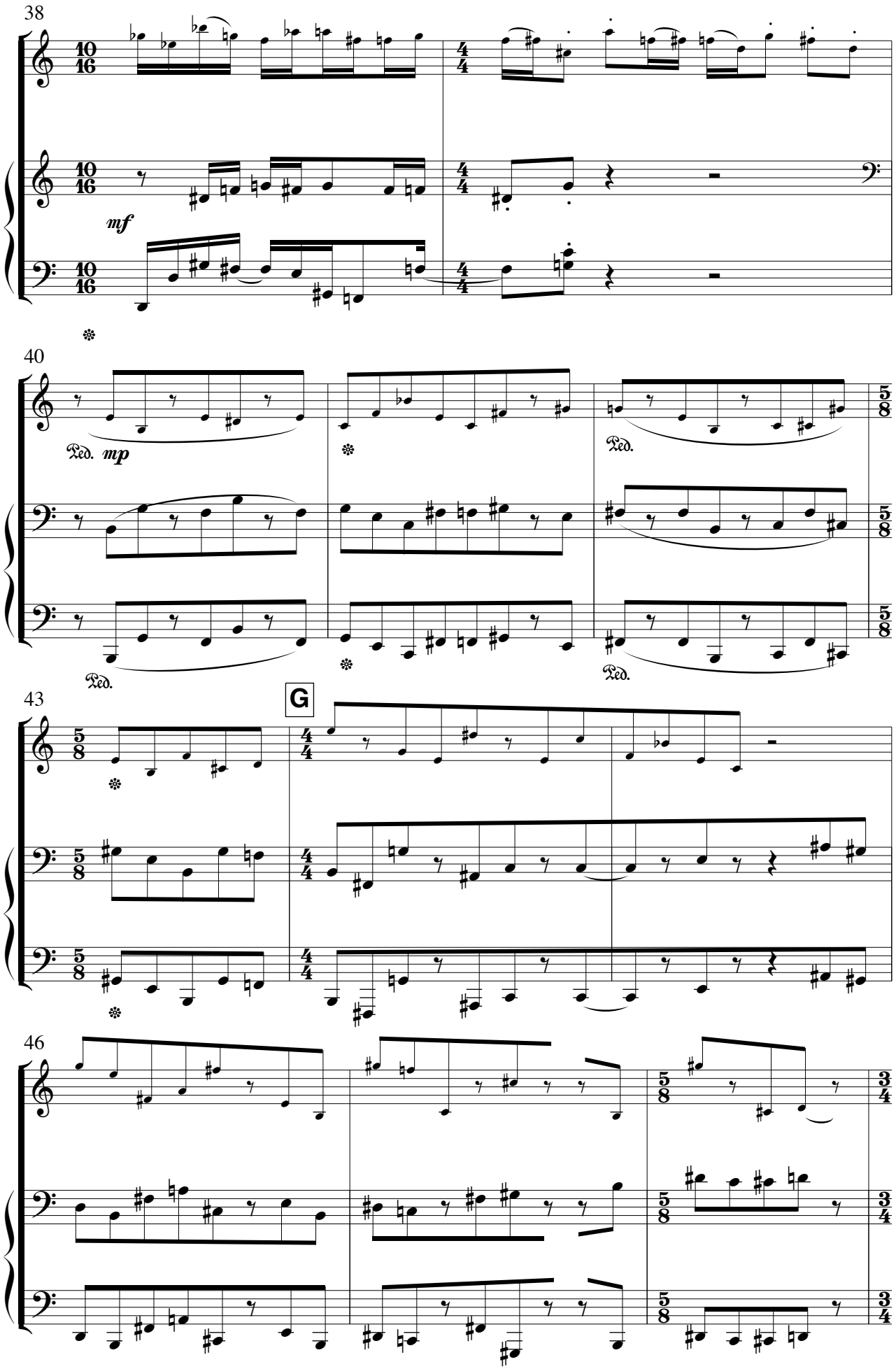
II

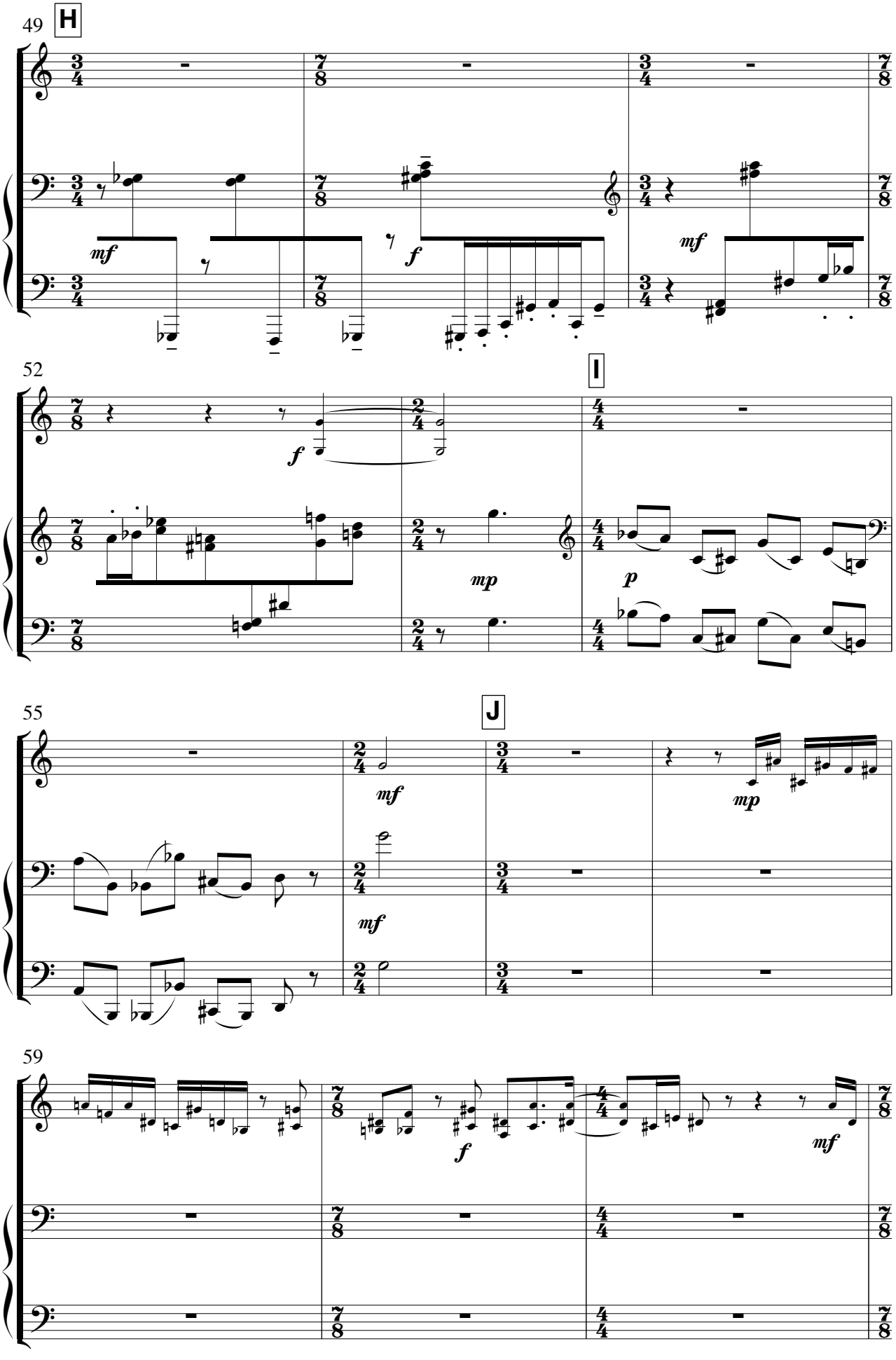

risoluto ♩ = 75
Vibraphone
Keyboard
5
f
f
mf
Ped.
3
mf
mf
mf
5
A
mf
f
mf
mf

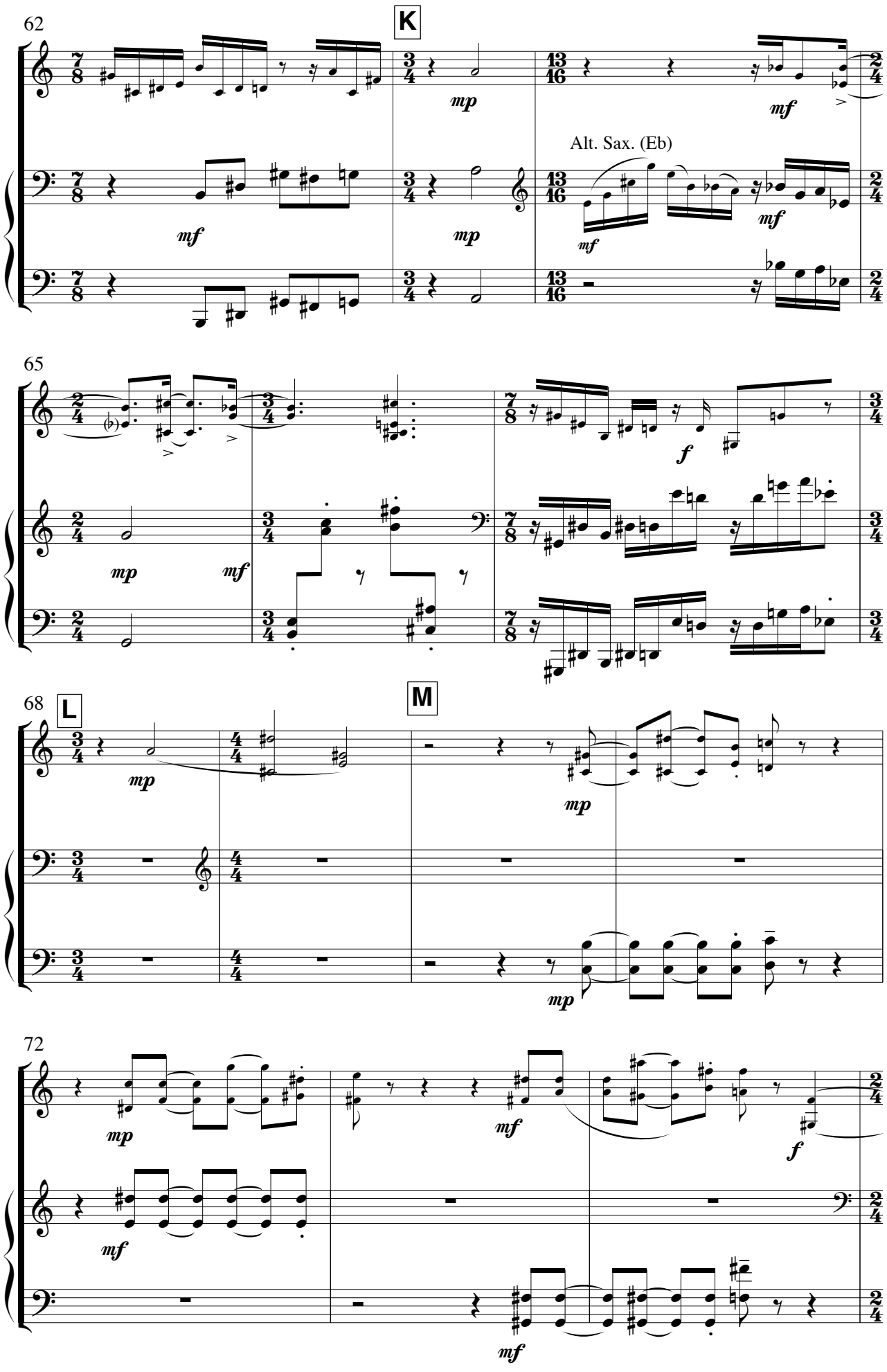

8
Ped.
mf
mf
11
mf
14
B
mp
mf

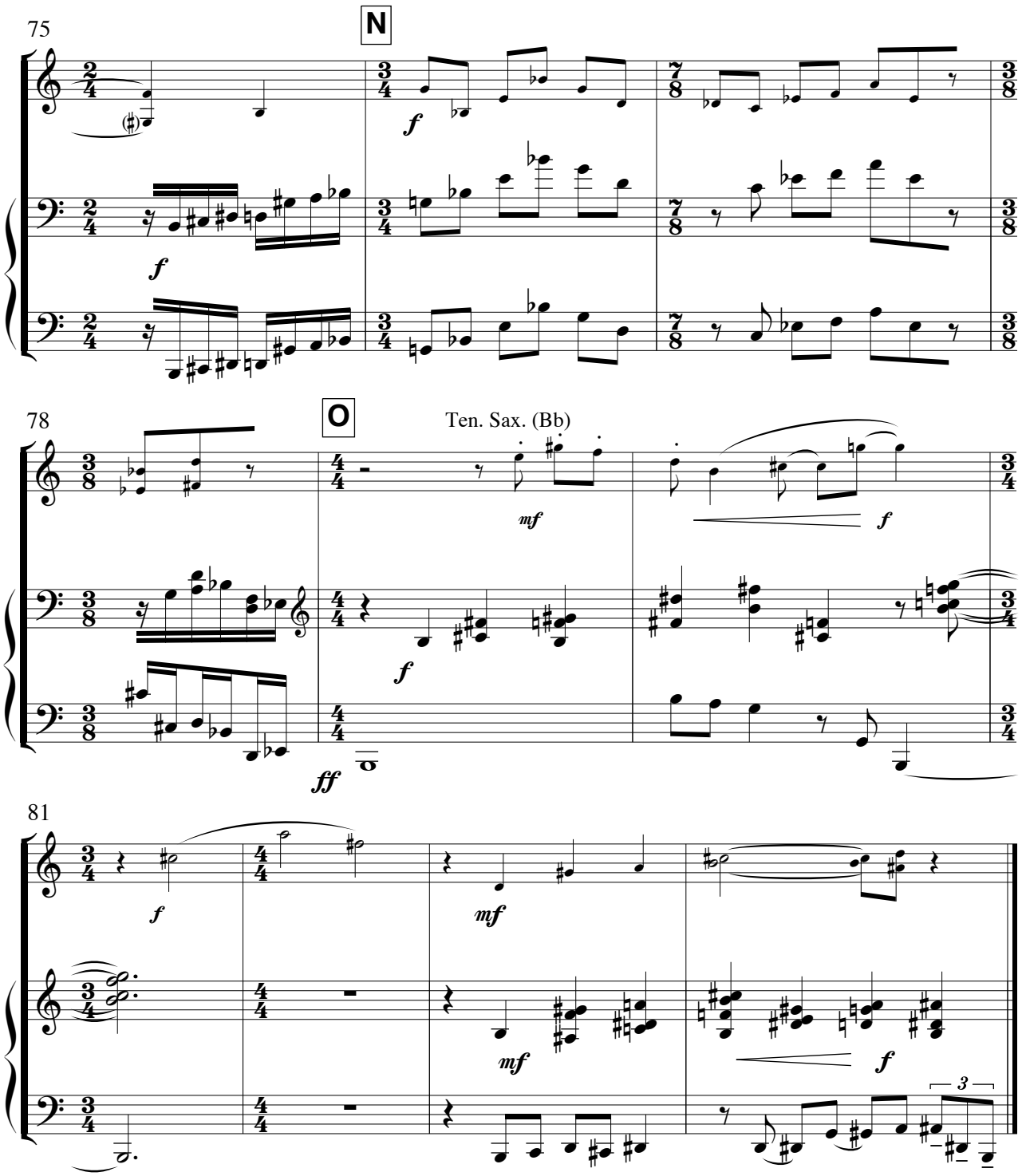

17
mf
mf
20
C
mf
mf
23
f
f
25
D
mf
mf


27
29
f
mf
E
31
mp
f
mp
f
F
Sop. Sax. (Bb)
35
mp
mf
f
3
3
3
mf
Ped.

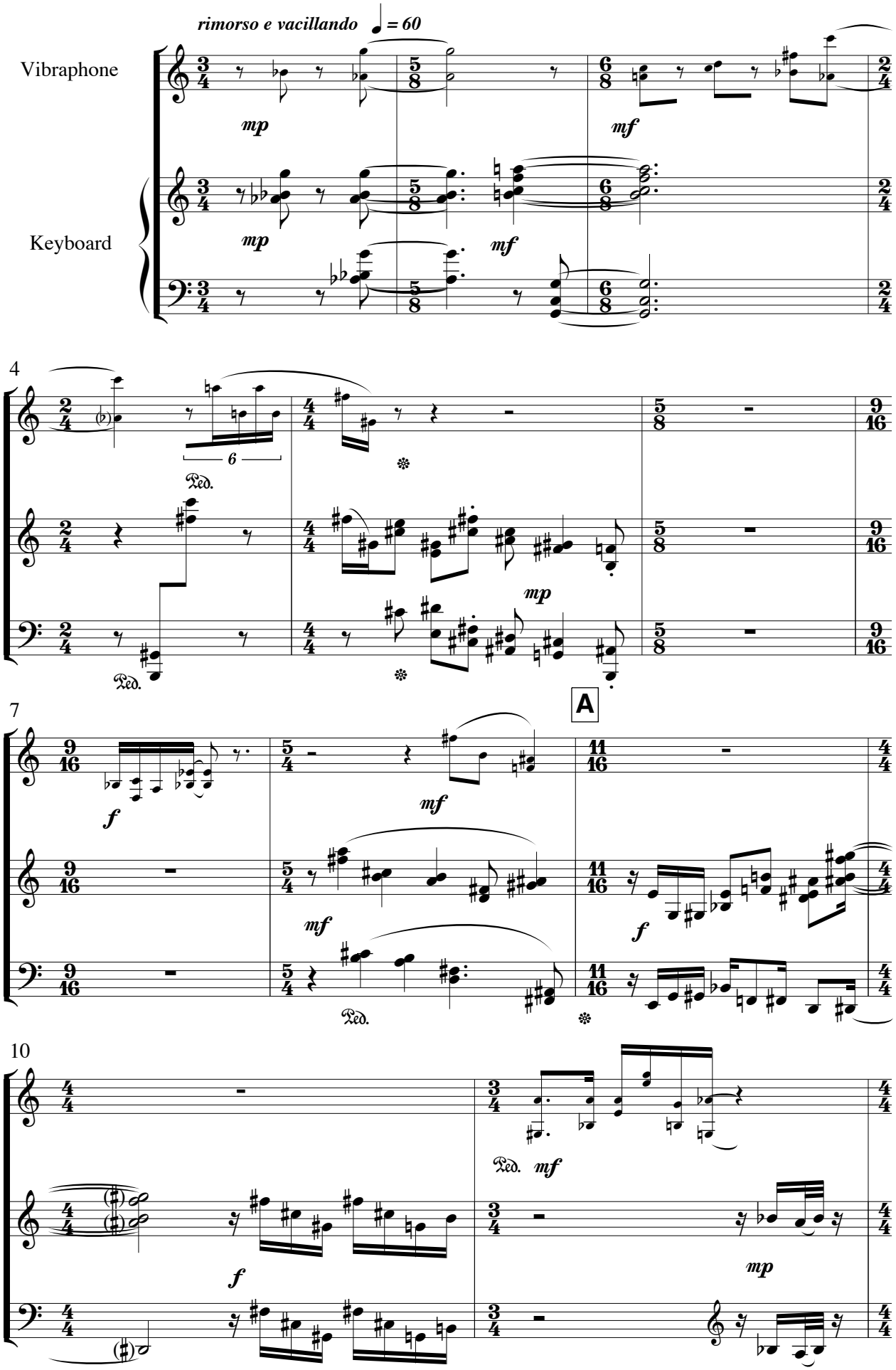

38
mf
40
Ped.
mp
Ped.
Ped.
43
G
46

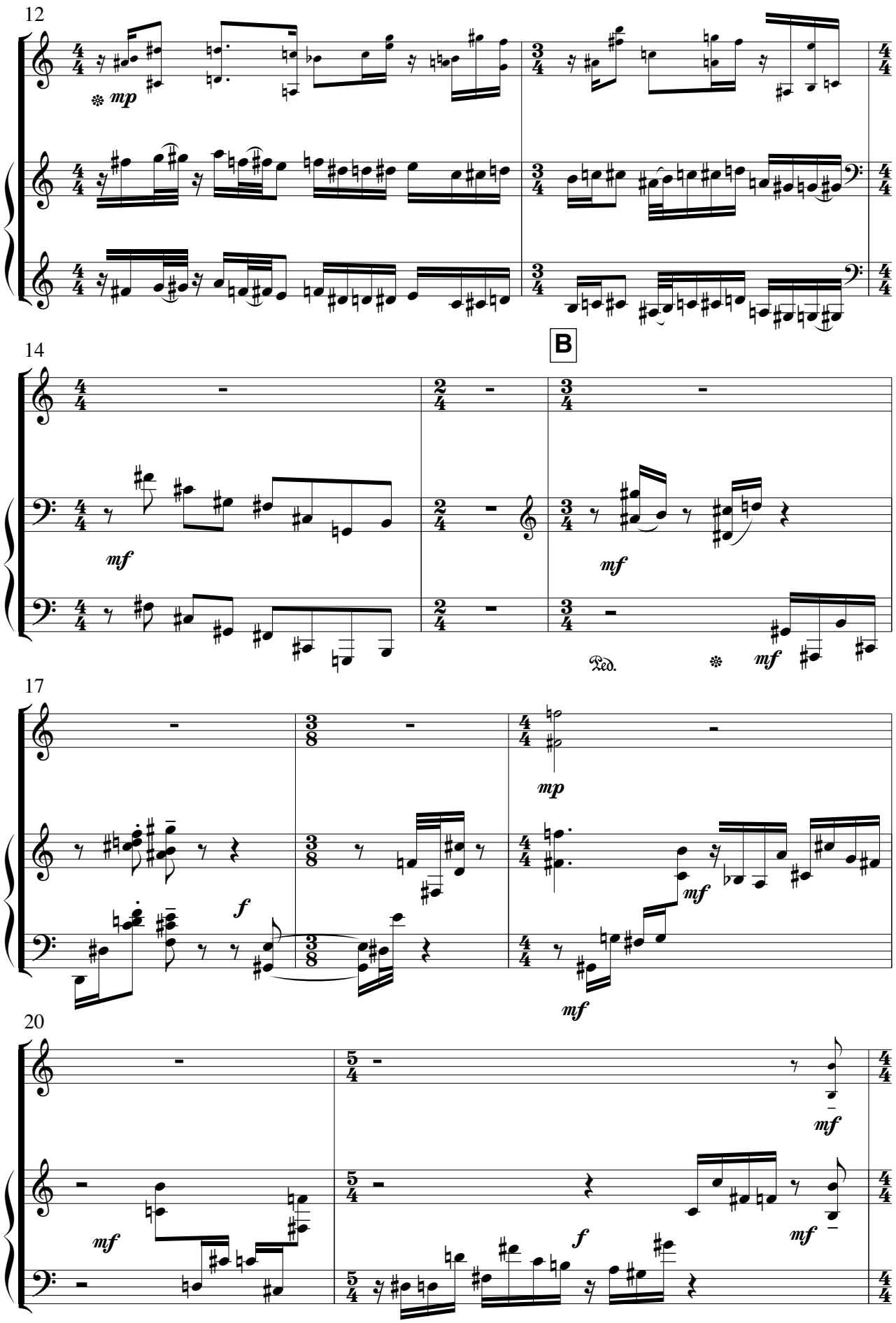

49
H
mf
f
mf
52
I
f
mp
p
55
J
mf
mf
mp
59
f
mf

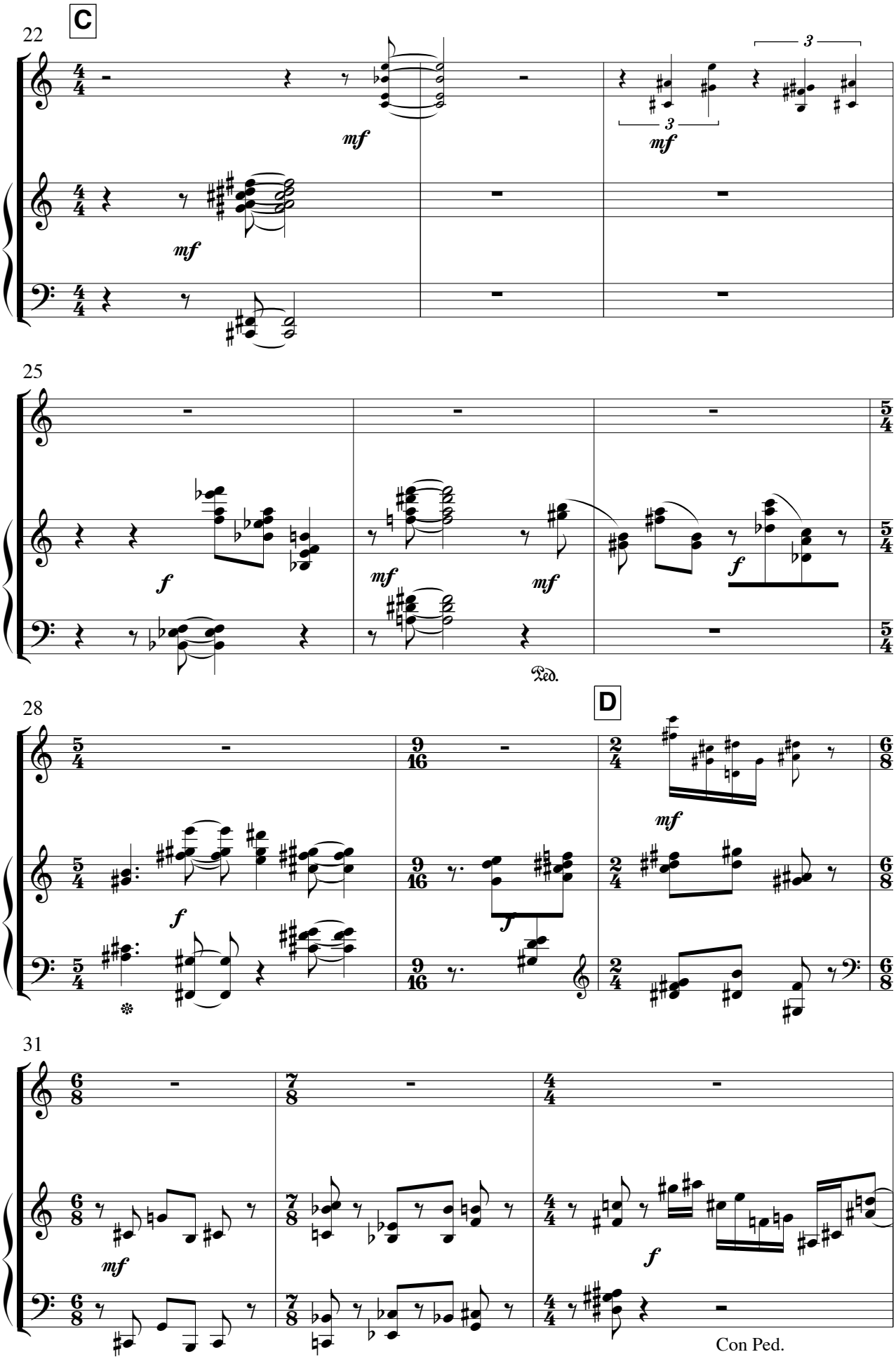

62
K
Alt. Sax. (Eb)
65
68
L
M
72

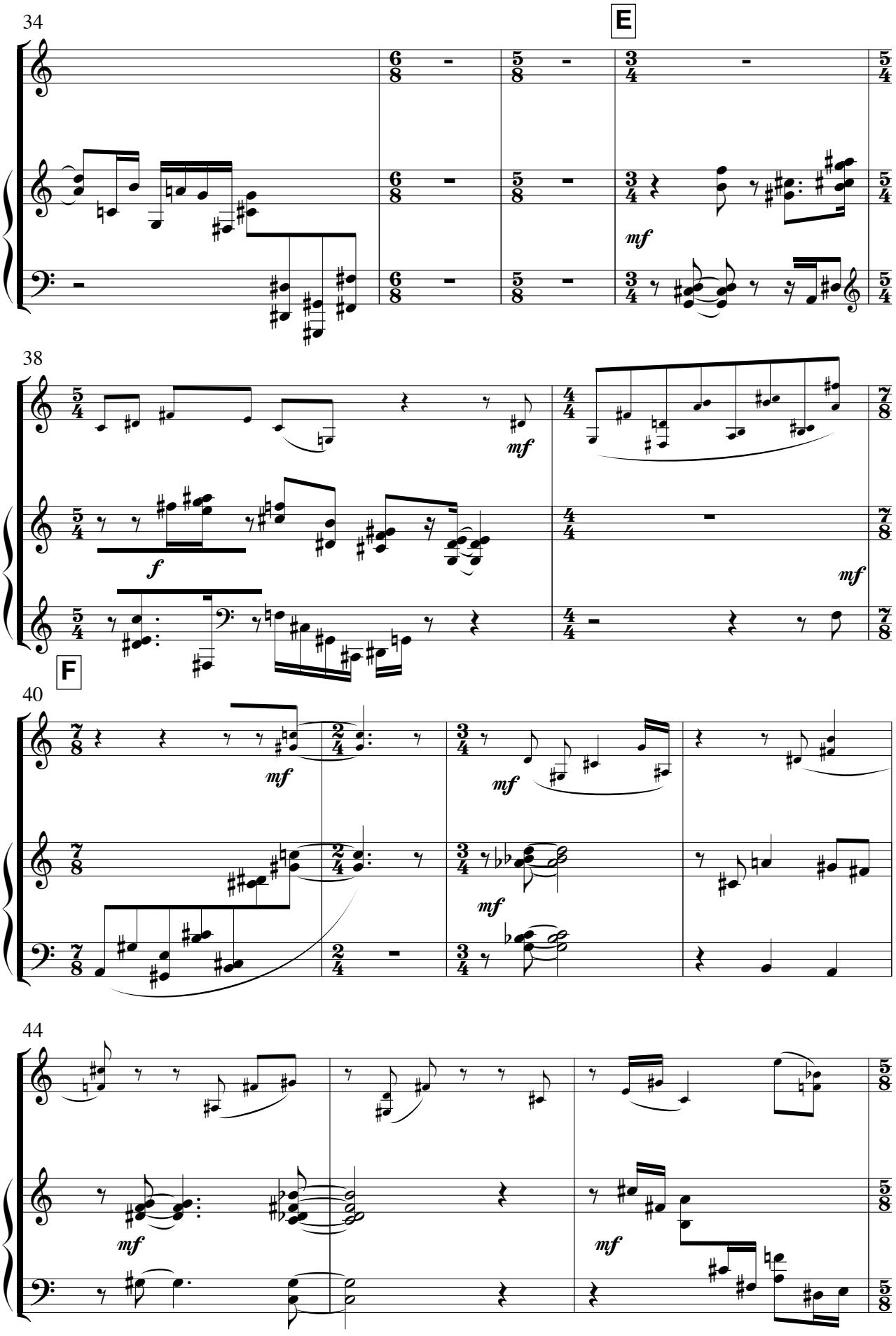

75
N
78
O
Ten. Sax. (Bb)
81

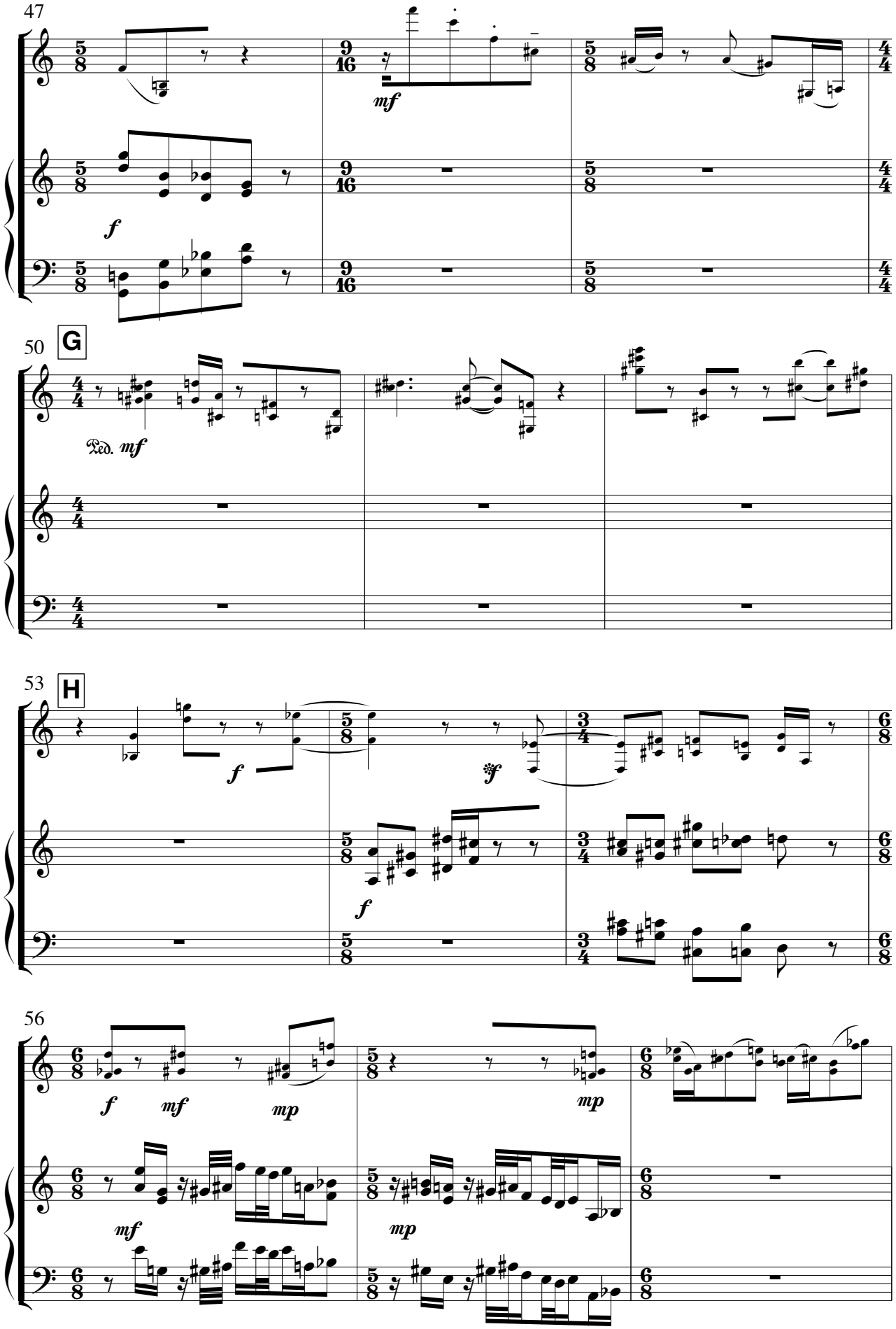
III

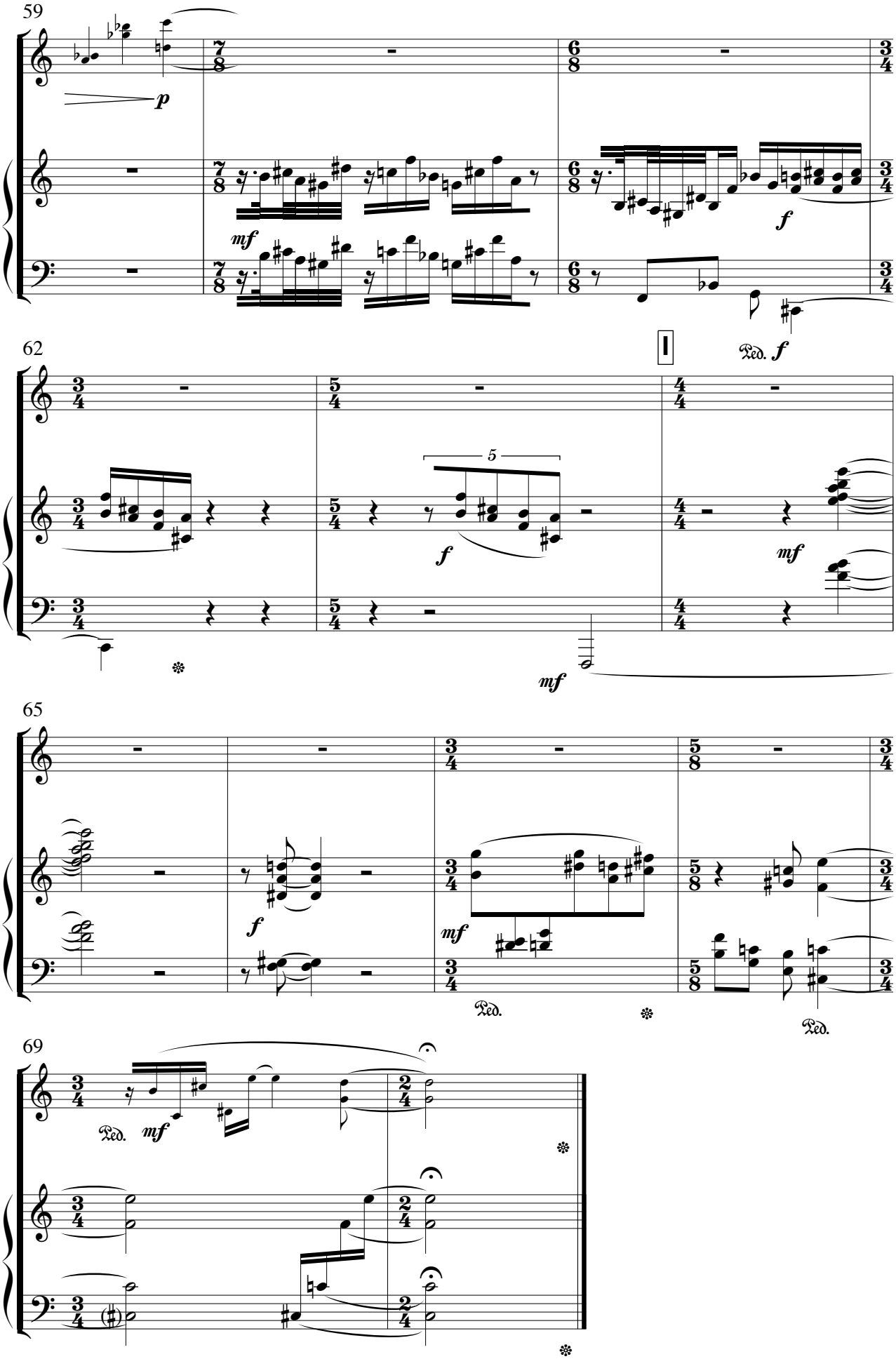

rimorso e vacillando
♩ = 60
Vibraphone
Keyboard
mp
mf
4
6
Ped.
A
7
f
mf
10


12
mp
14
B
mf
Ped.
17
mp
f
mf
20
mf
f


C
22
mf
mf
3
3
mf
25
f
mf
mf
f
Ped.
D
28
f
mf
f
31
mf
f
Con Ped.


34
E
mf
38
mf
f
mf
F
40
mf
mf
mf
44
mf
mf


47
mf
f
50
G
Ped. mf
53
H
f
f
f
56
f
mf
mp
mp
mf
mp


59
p
mf
f
Ped. f
62
I
5
f
mf
mf
65
f
mf
Ped.
Ped.
69
Ped.
mf