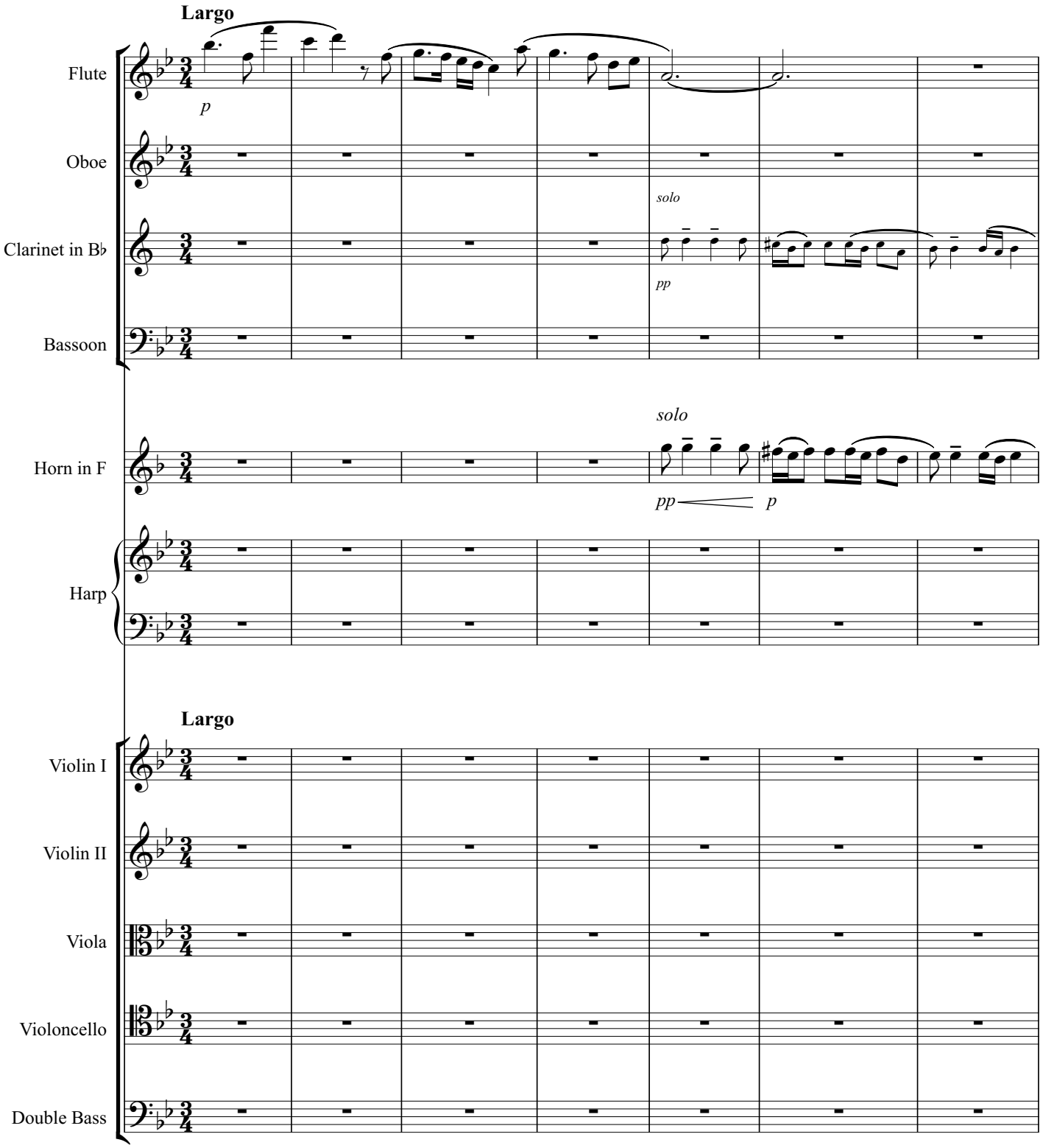
Song of Songs

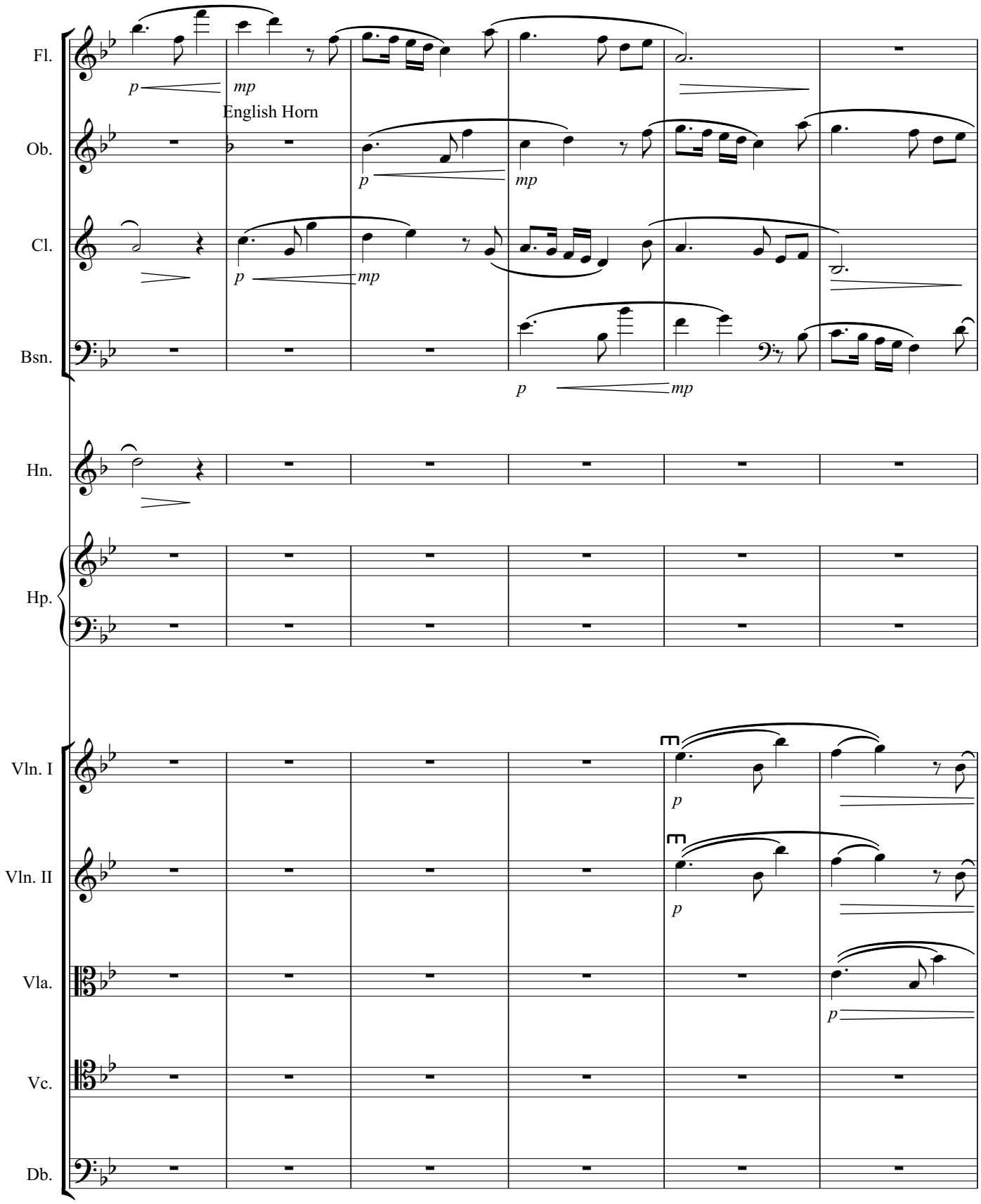
The Song of Songs contains everything in a romantic story from the dawn of civilization to today's romantic comedies and dramas. It has the community, nature's commentary, and of course, the man and the woman. This "incidental" music sets the story of love, union, unrequited love and social commentary into the 1950s, with the radio representing the social commentary, the chorus and the setting, a flute theme representing conscience and inner desire, and two themes that represent the wistfulness of a lonely woman and the entrance of an equally lonely man.

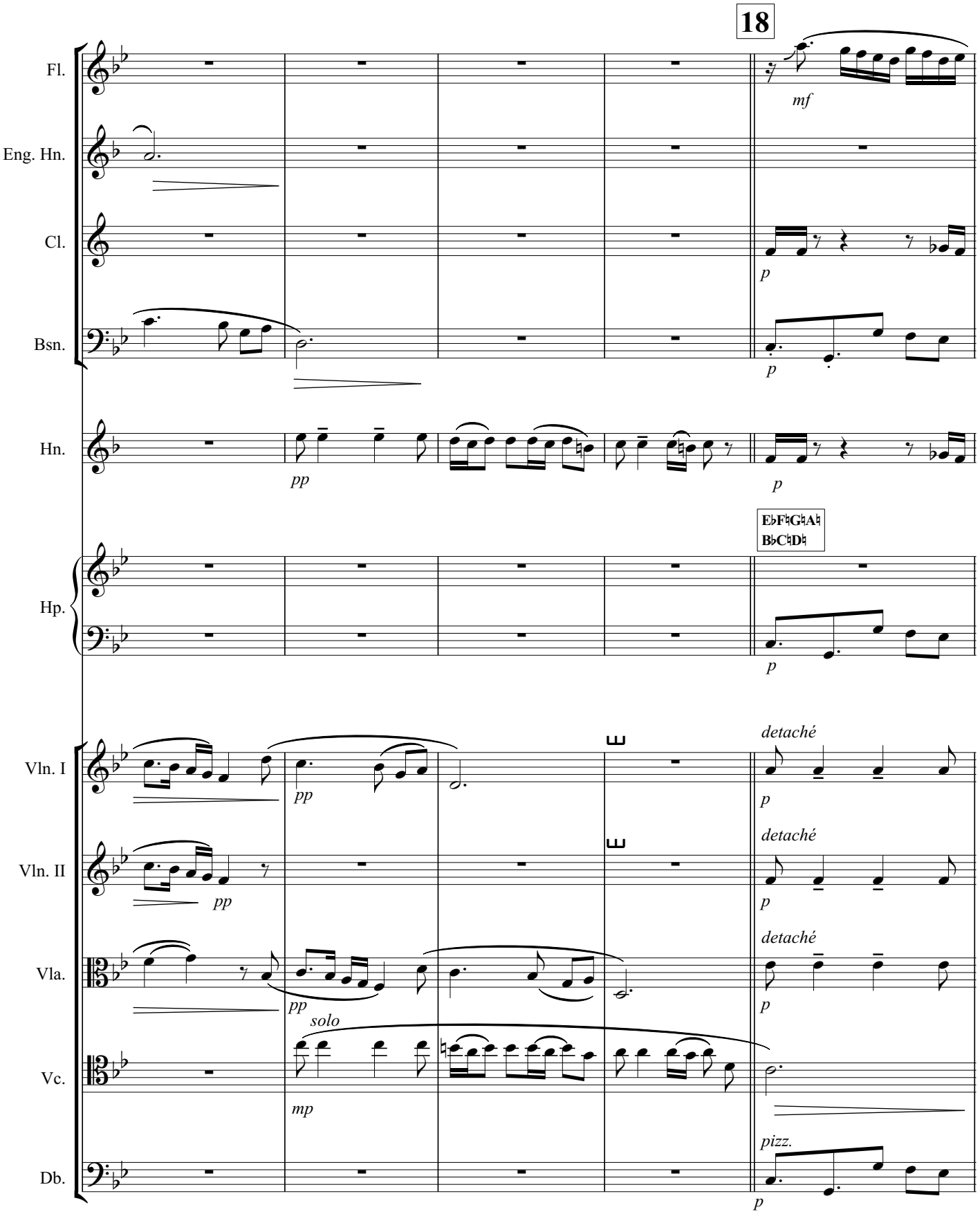
I wavered from obvious leitmotifs (as fun as they are) to impressions by texture, from clear dance meters to nebulous impressions. The instrumentation helped define where in the spectrum the style lay. As a result, one may notice elements ranging from a Romantic Adagio to a Schuller/Bernstein/Bop swing. Still, some specific things are worth noting, should personal interpretation not be enough. I began with a clear theme, romantic, but also not conforming to a singable phrase. As I worked with it, I played with the accompaniment and tried to give it a little more color and lo and behold, a clear motif developed into its own theme. More, both themes put together was perfect to symbolize some sort of relationship between the woman and the man: both somewhat poignant, lonely and hopeful. I set the story into the 50s and 60s and the "radio" motifs at the end helps set that: some clear Miles' and Charlie's bop, with harmonic impressions ranging from Satie and Gershwin to pianists Brubeck and Evans. The radio themes and rhythms (like the friends' commentaries) interject at points in the relationship: juxtaposed, but not unwelcome, and with their own humor and comfort to us and to the characters. Finally, the recurring element in the poem about things "running together". This is clear at the very beginning when the main (woman/love) theme is first presented in the flute, accompanied by the second motif (man) and proceeds to a sort of fantasy section, beginning with a fugue and breaking up into further polyphonic development, until the strings' voicings and clusters (not unlike the bop voicings later in the piece) lose linear definition and become a meandering harmonic texture. While the instruments and motifs somewhat represent the characters and events, I had no compunction to reassign them, vary them or dissect them as needed. Therefore, although the love motif is its own, it is introduced by the flute as if reminding her in the back of her mind that love can happen and later it is superimposed over the man's motif as an equal reminder that respects no gender.

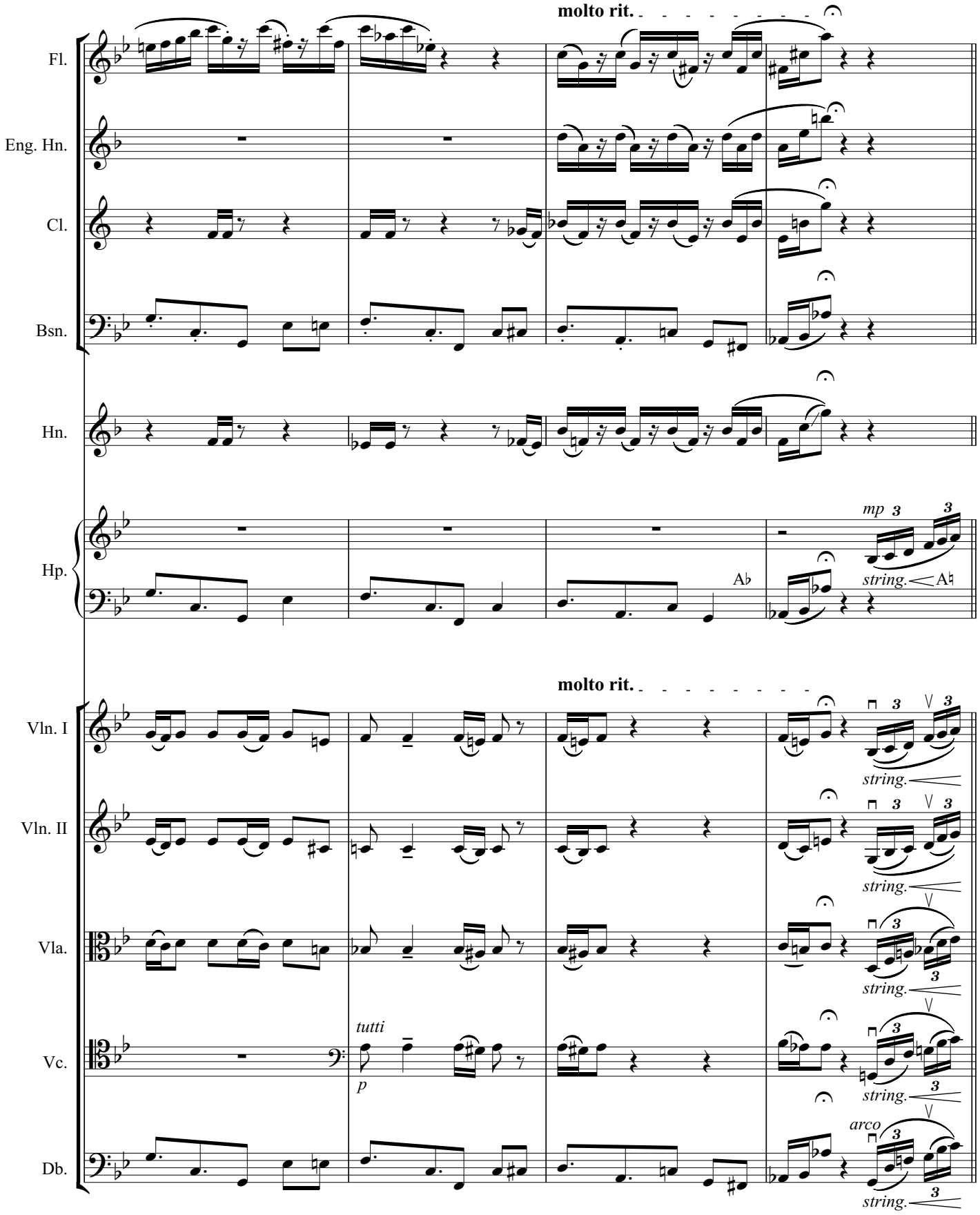
Conductor's Note: One of the greatest difficulties of Bernstein and Schuller was the impossibility of transcribing "swing" rhythms accurately for the more exacting symphony player. What I have written should suffice for most of the feel (the alto flute solo at 153 is the only overtly swinging line and the bass implies a swing feel in its part). The actual feel is somewhere between triplet and dotted-quarter/sixteenth, leaning toward the latter in slower tempos; the former, the faster. If necessary, players can limit the feel to interpret eighth notes as triplet: quarter-eighth. The tempos provided should allow this to approximate the feel in all tempos. The brunt is on the winds: strings have much more leeway to play as-is in the parts I've written.

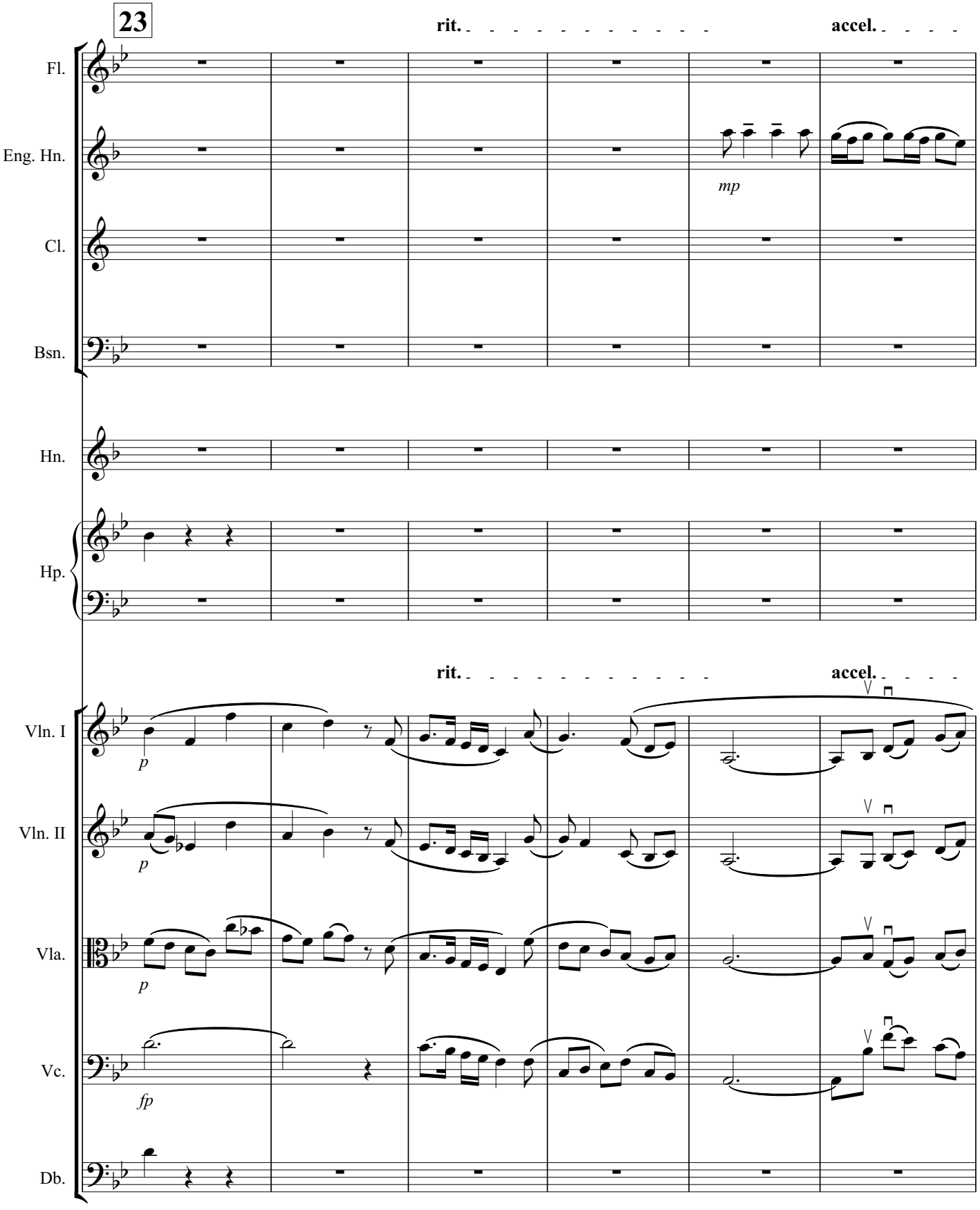
Song of Songs

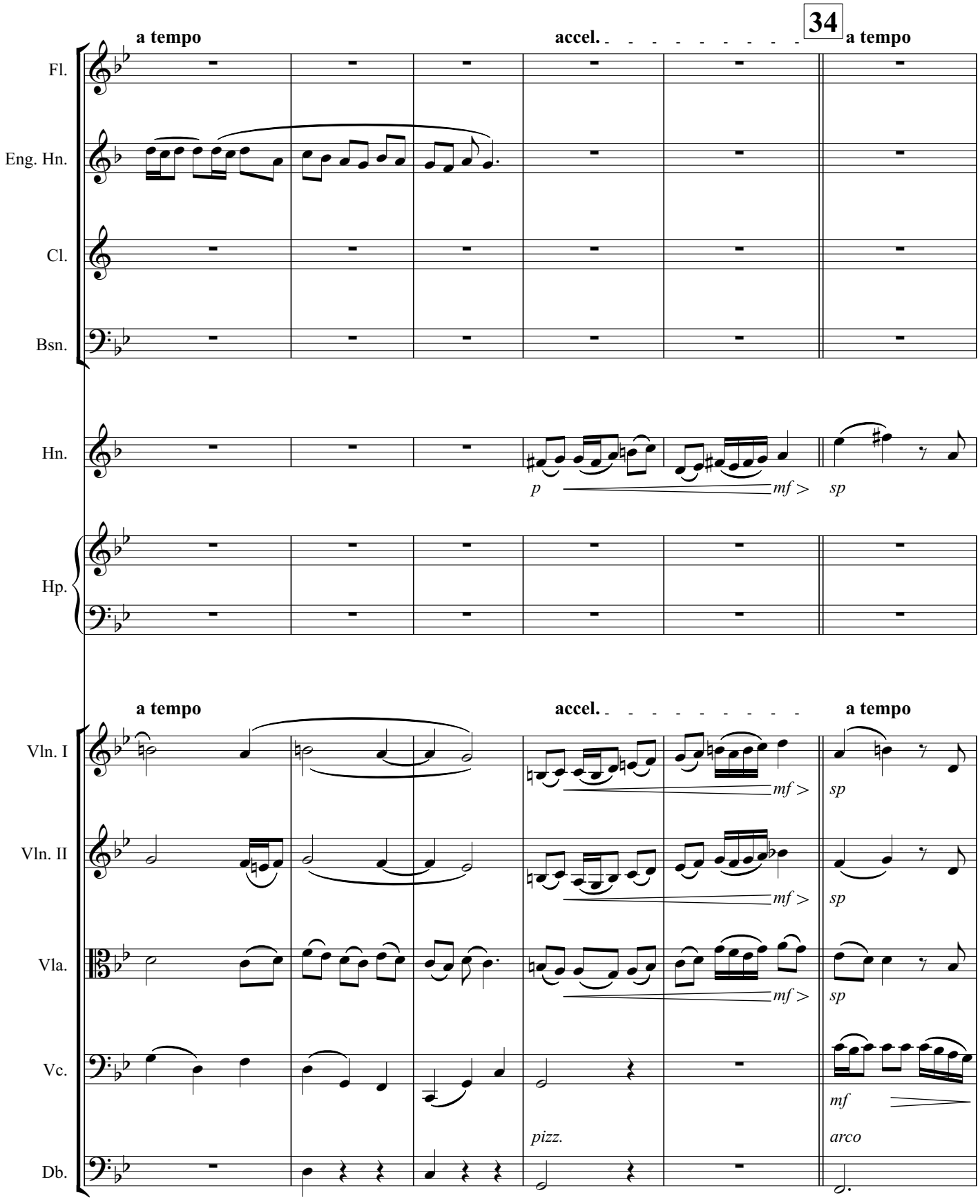


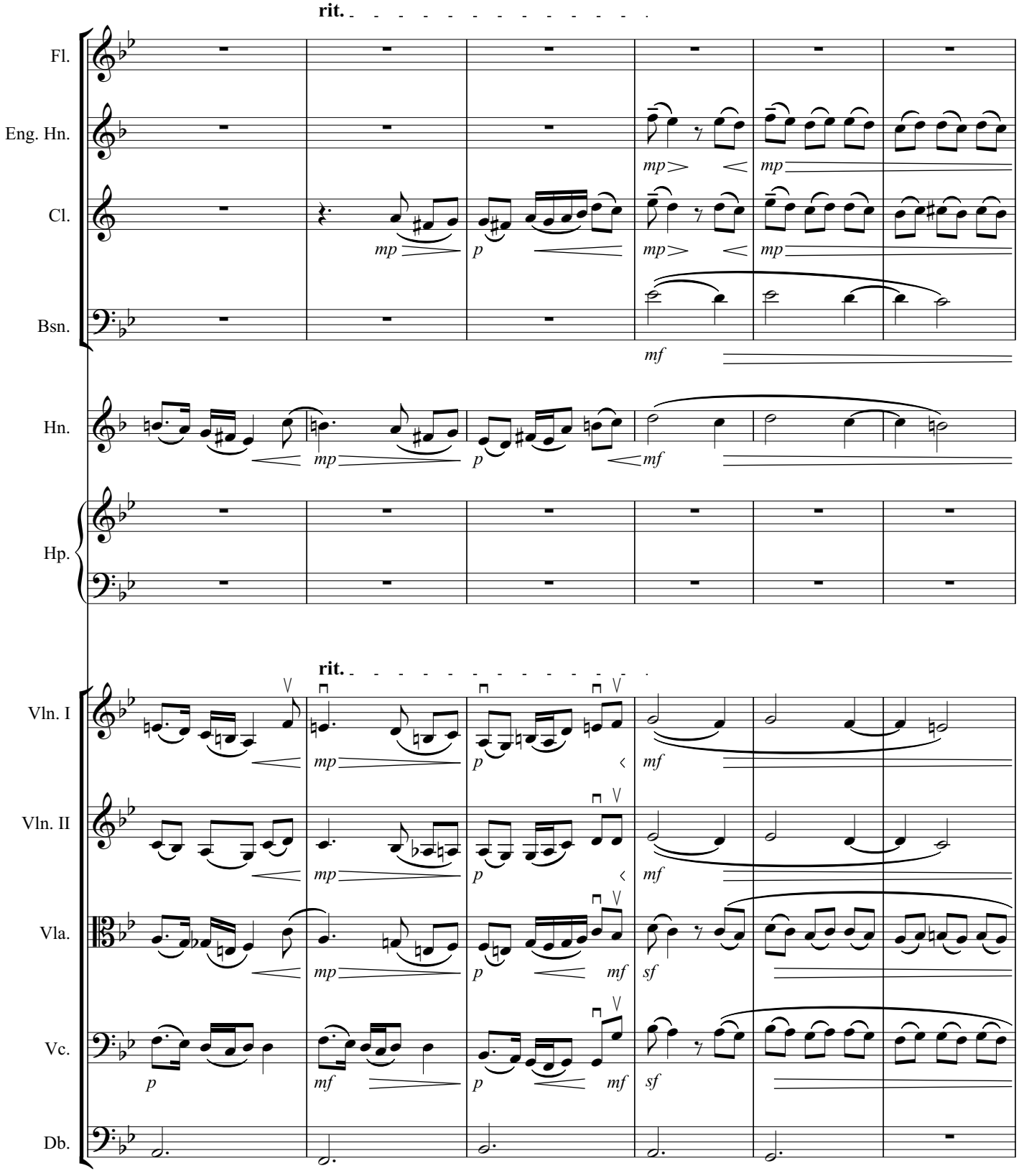

Fl.
Ob.
English Horn
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
p
mp

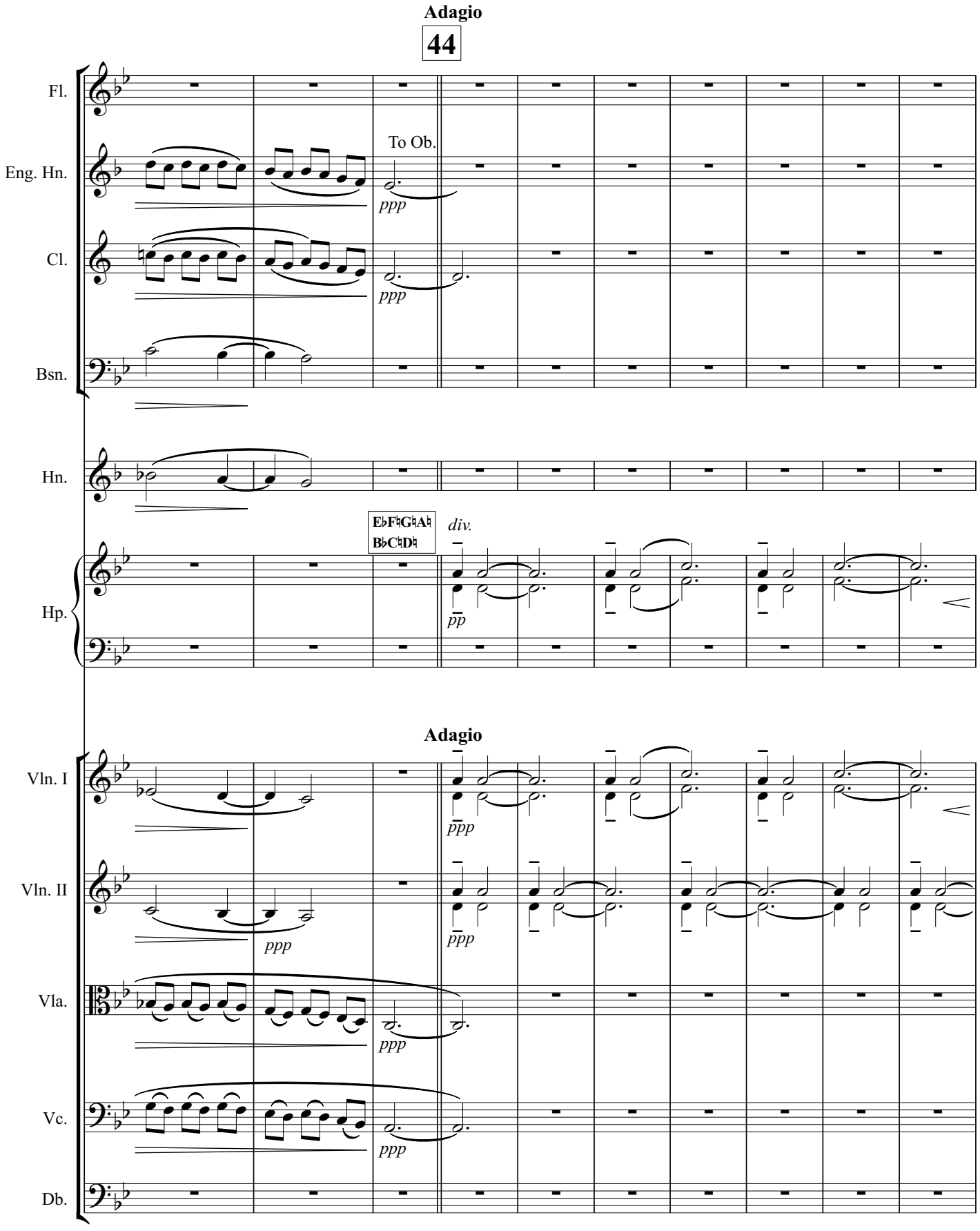

18
Fl.
mf
Eng. Hn.
Cl.
p
Bsn.
p
Hn.
pp
p
E♭F♮G♮A♮
B♭C♮D♮
Hp.
p
E
detaché
Vln. I
pp
p
Vln. II
detaché
pp
p
Vla.
detaché
pp
p
solo
Vc.
mp
pizz.
Db.
p

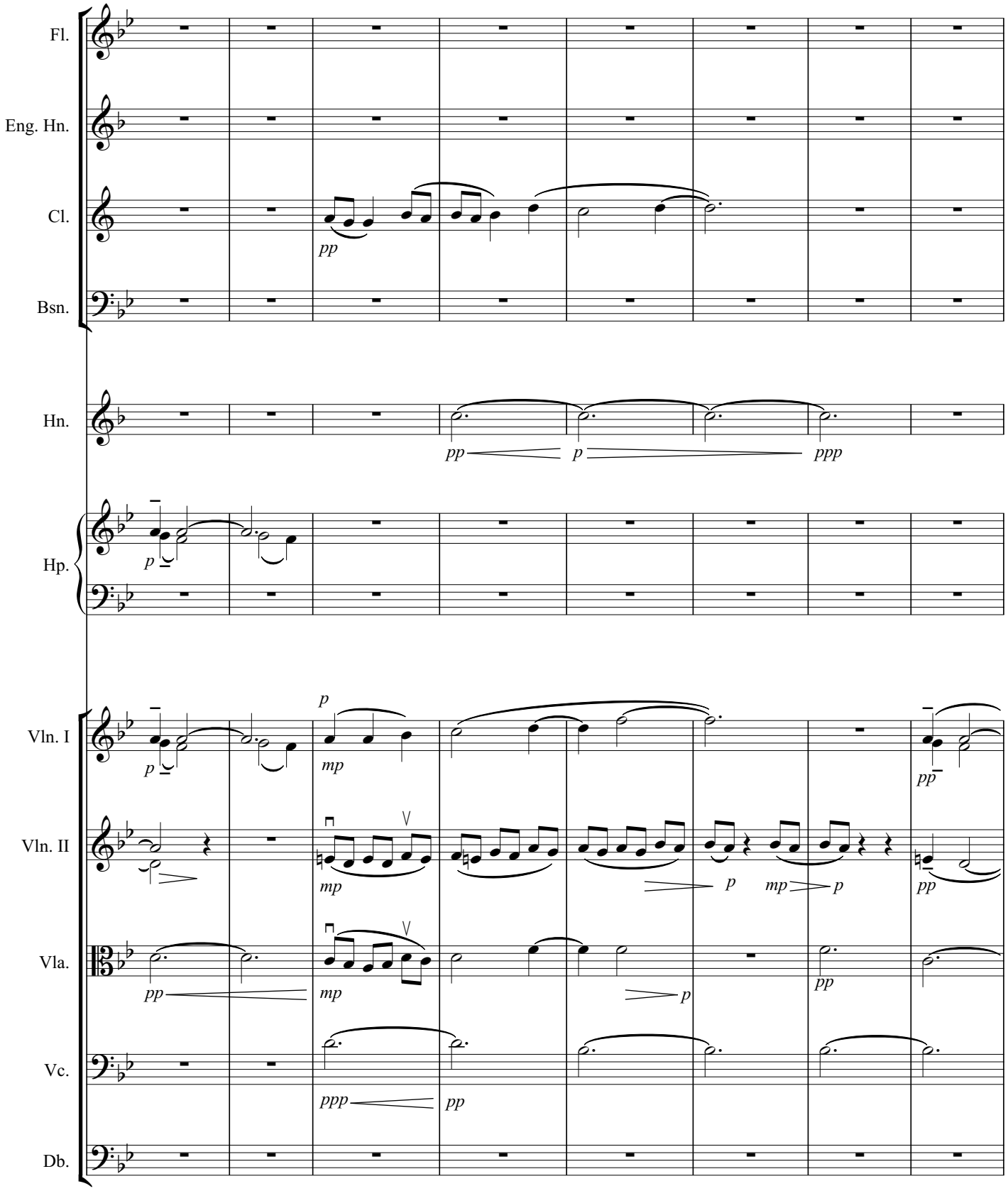

molto rit.
Fl.
Eng. Hn.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
mp
string.
A♭
A♮
molto rit.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
tutti
p
arco
string.

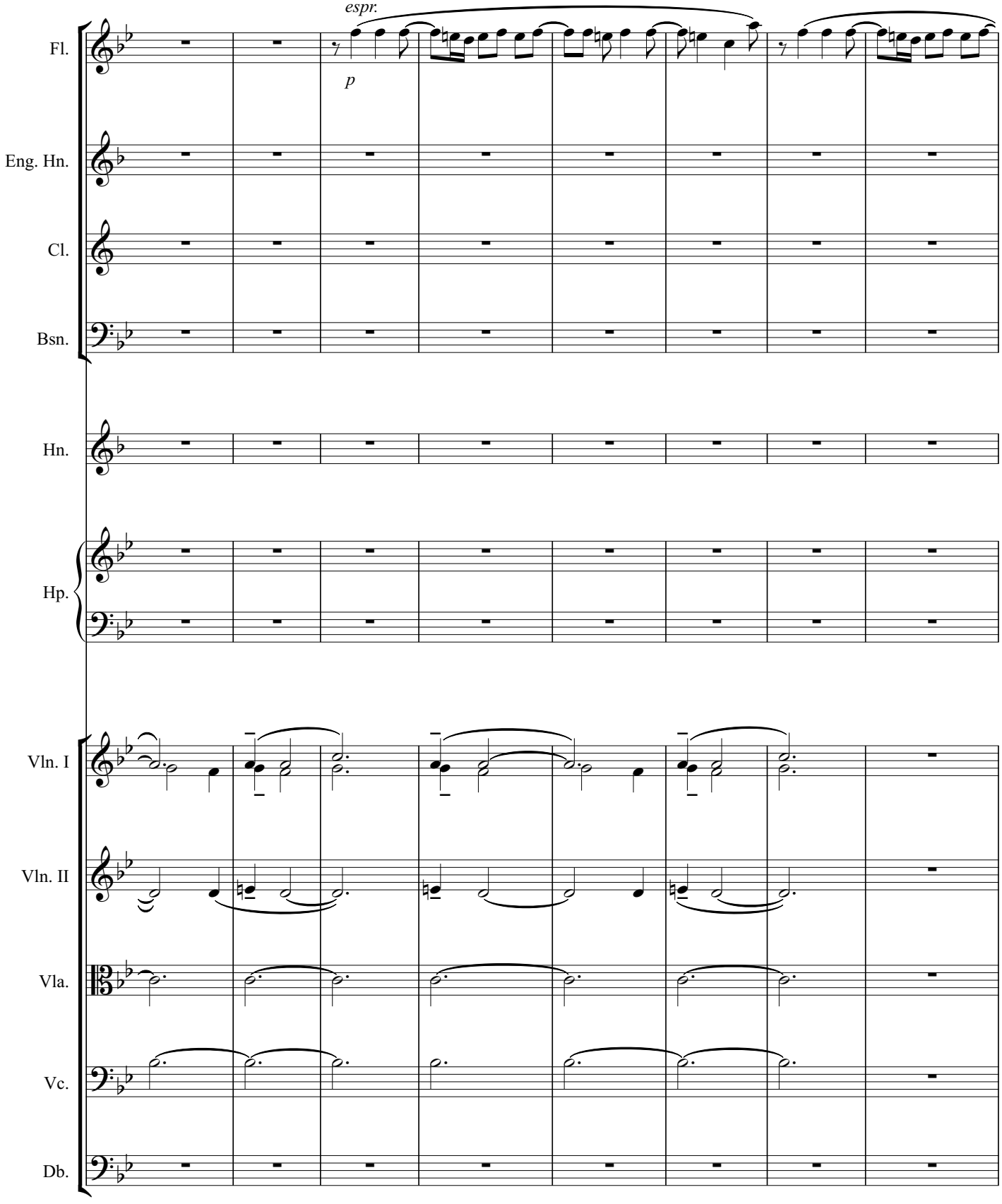

23
rit.
accel.
Fl.
Eng. Hn.
mp
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
rit.
accel.
Vln. I
p
Vln. II
p
Vla.
p
Vc.
fp
Db.

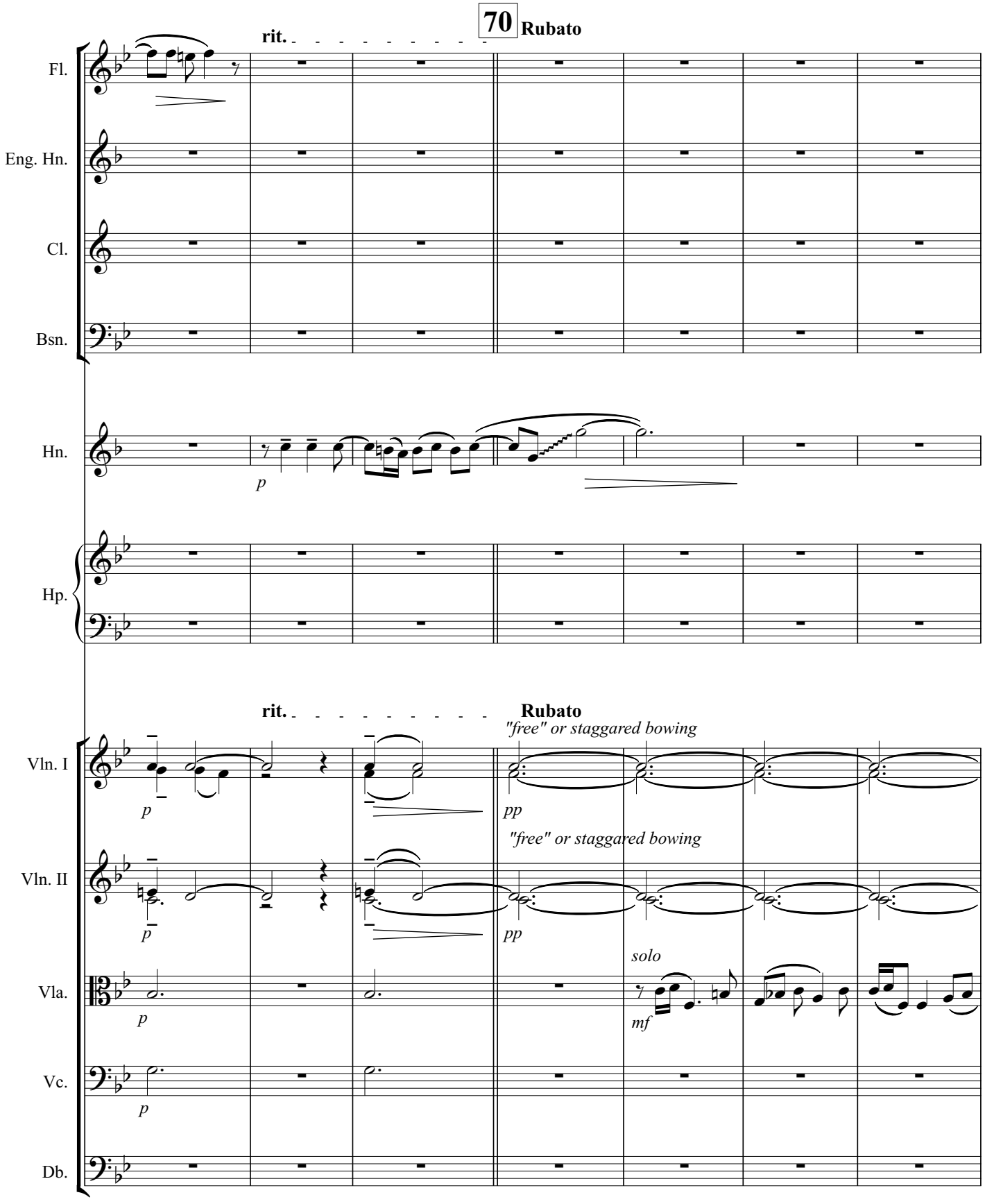

34
a tempo
accel.
a tempo
Fl.
Eng. Hn.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
p
mf >
sp
Hp.
a tempo
accel.
a tempo
Vln. I
mf >
sp
Vln. II
mf >
sp
Vla.
mf >
sp
Vc.
mf
pizz.
arco
Db.

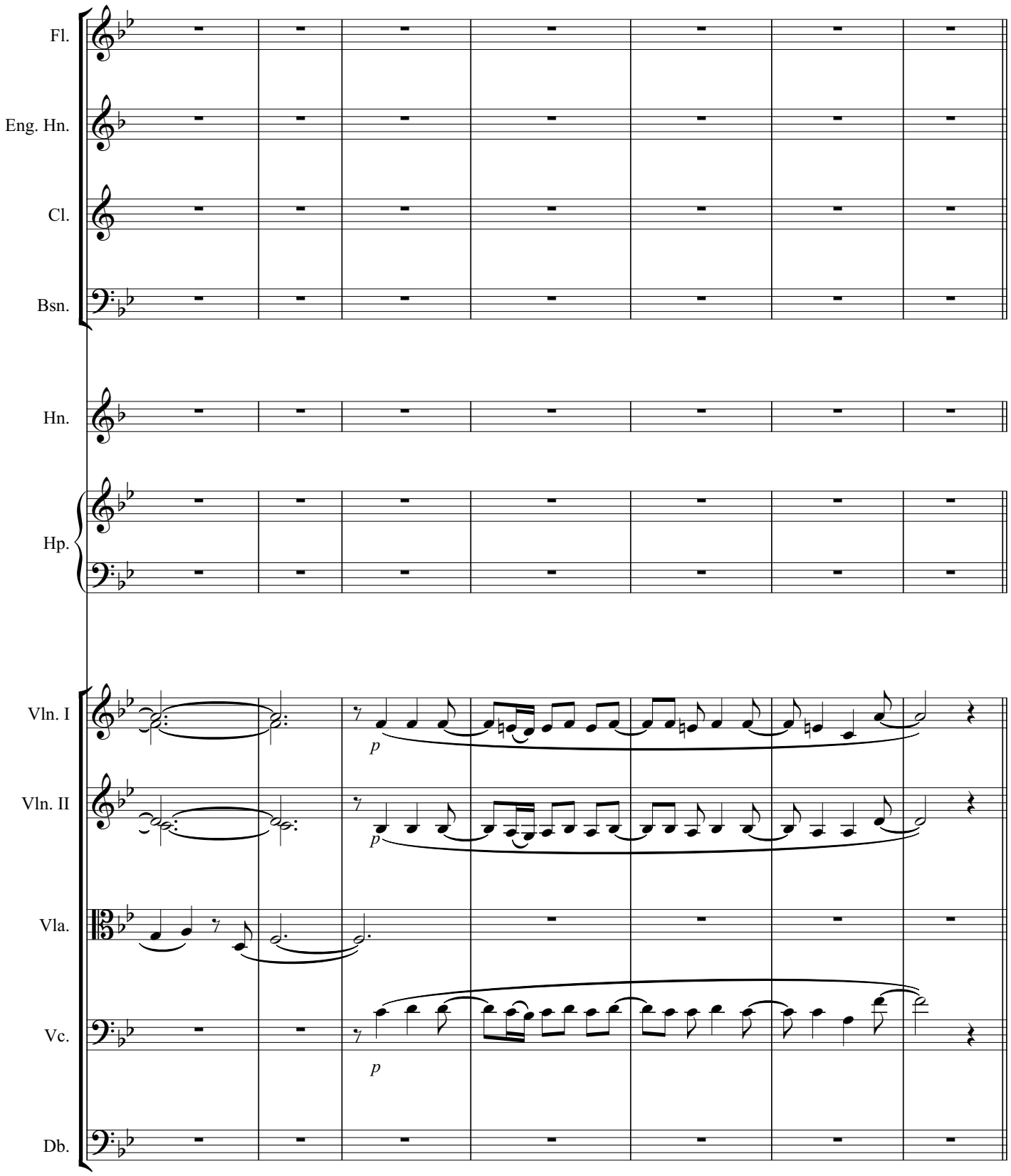

rit.
Fl.
Eng. Hn.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
rit.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
mp
p
mf
sf

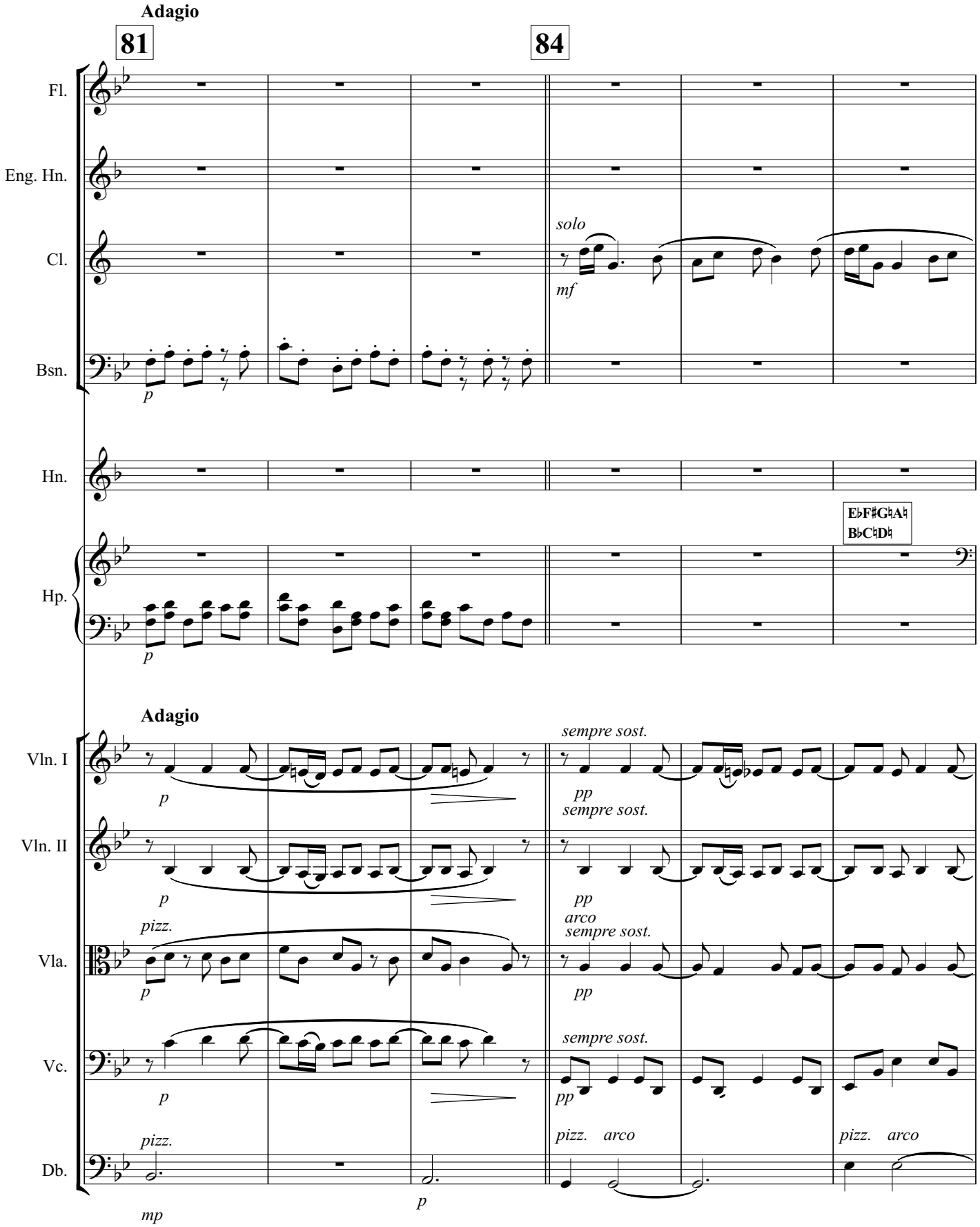

Adagio
44
Fl.
Eng. Hn.
To Ob.
ppp
Cl.
ppp
Bsn.
Hn.
E♭F♮G♮A♮
B♭C♮D♮
div.
Hp.
pp
Adagio
Vln. I
ppp
Vln. II
ppp
ppp
Vla.
ppp
Vc.
ppp
Db.

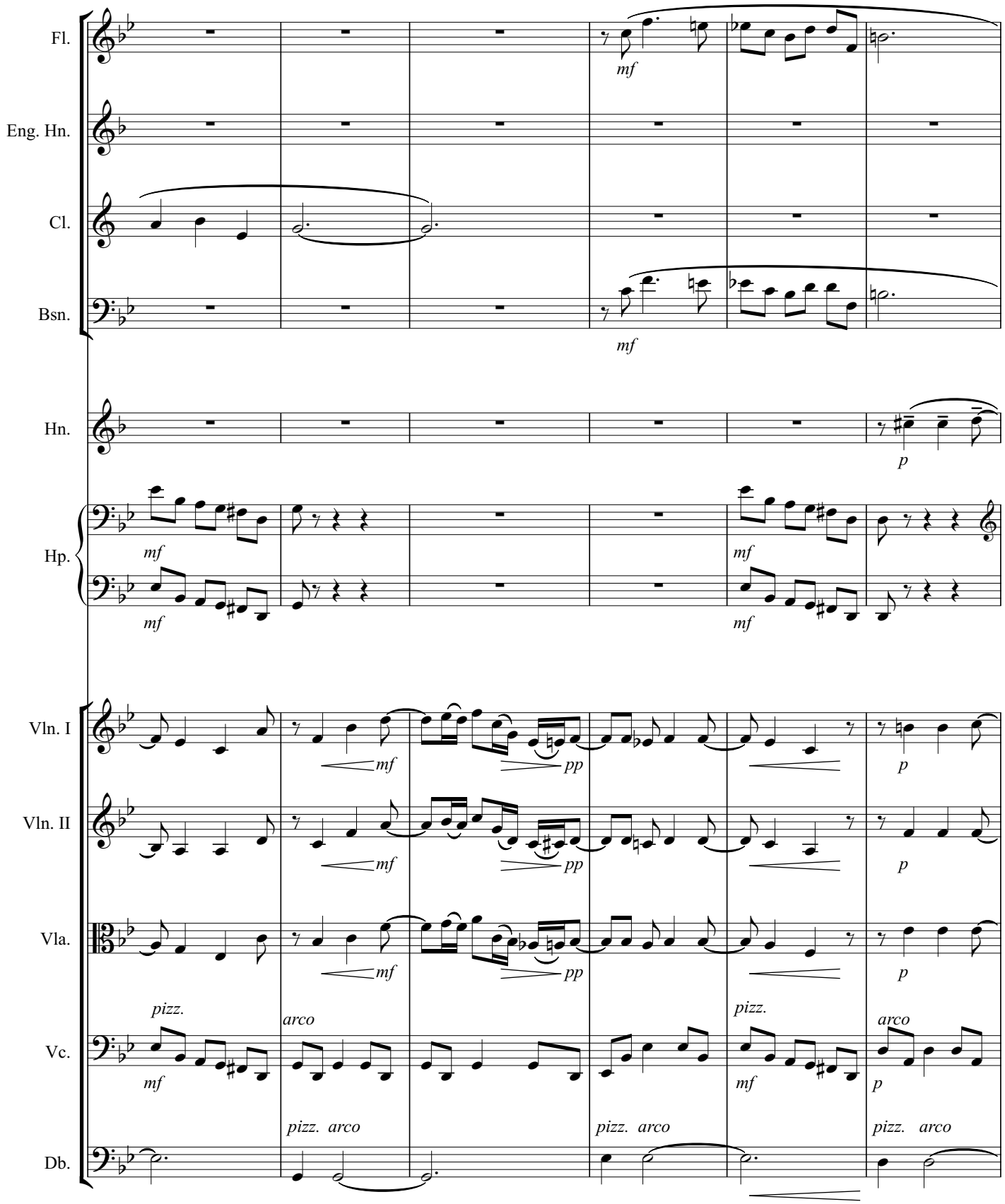

Fl.
Eng. Hn.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
pp
pp
p
ppp
p
p
mp
pp
mp
p
mp
p
pp
pp
mp
p
pp
ppp
pp

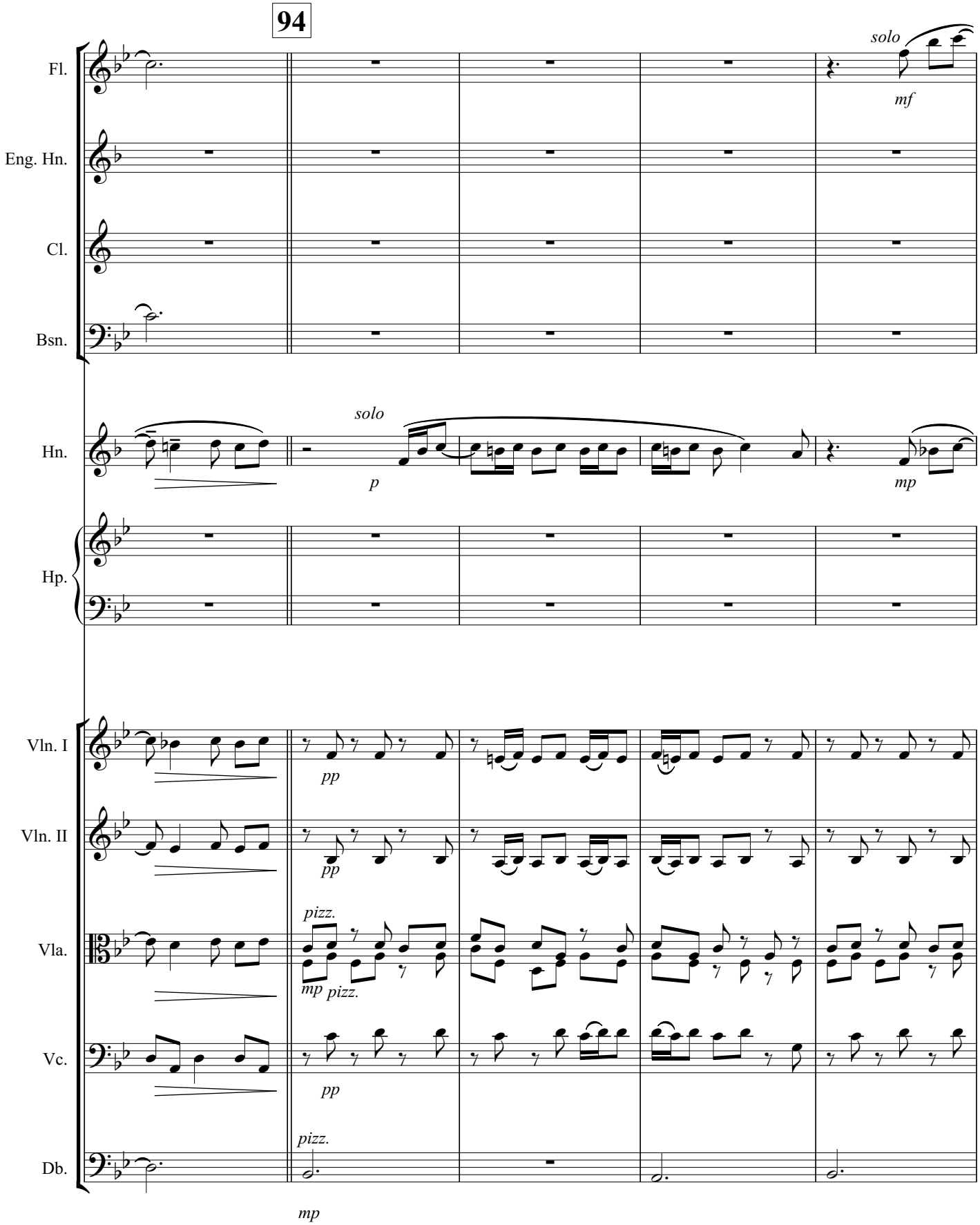

espr.
p
Fl.
Eng. Hn.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

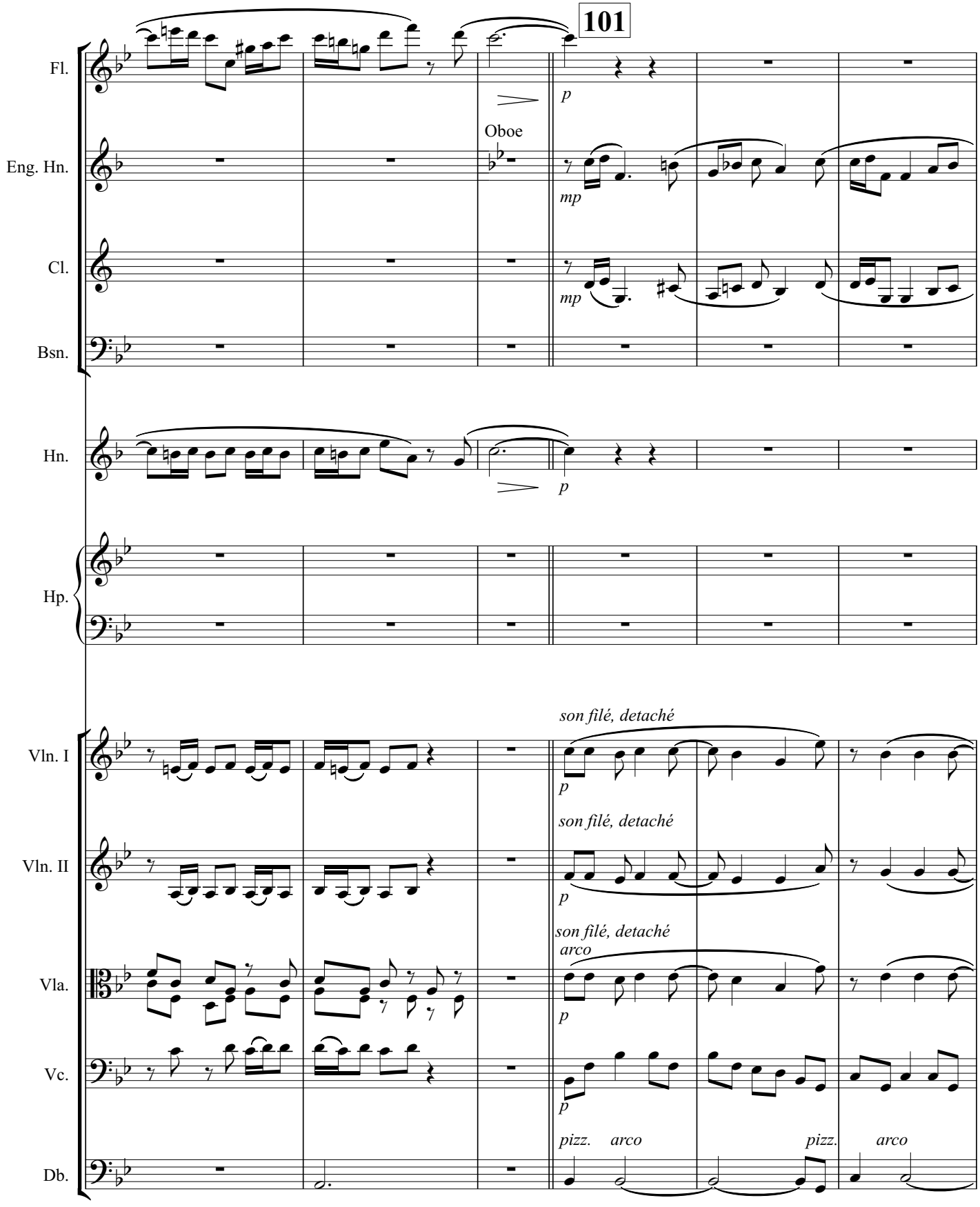

70
Rubato
rit.
Fl.
Eng. Hn.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
p
Hp.
rit.
Rubato
"free" or staggared bowing
Vln. I
p
pp
"free" or staggared bowing
Vln. II
p
pp
solo
Vla.
p
mf
Vc.
p
Db.

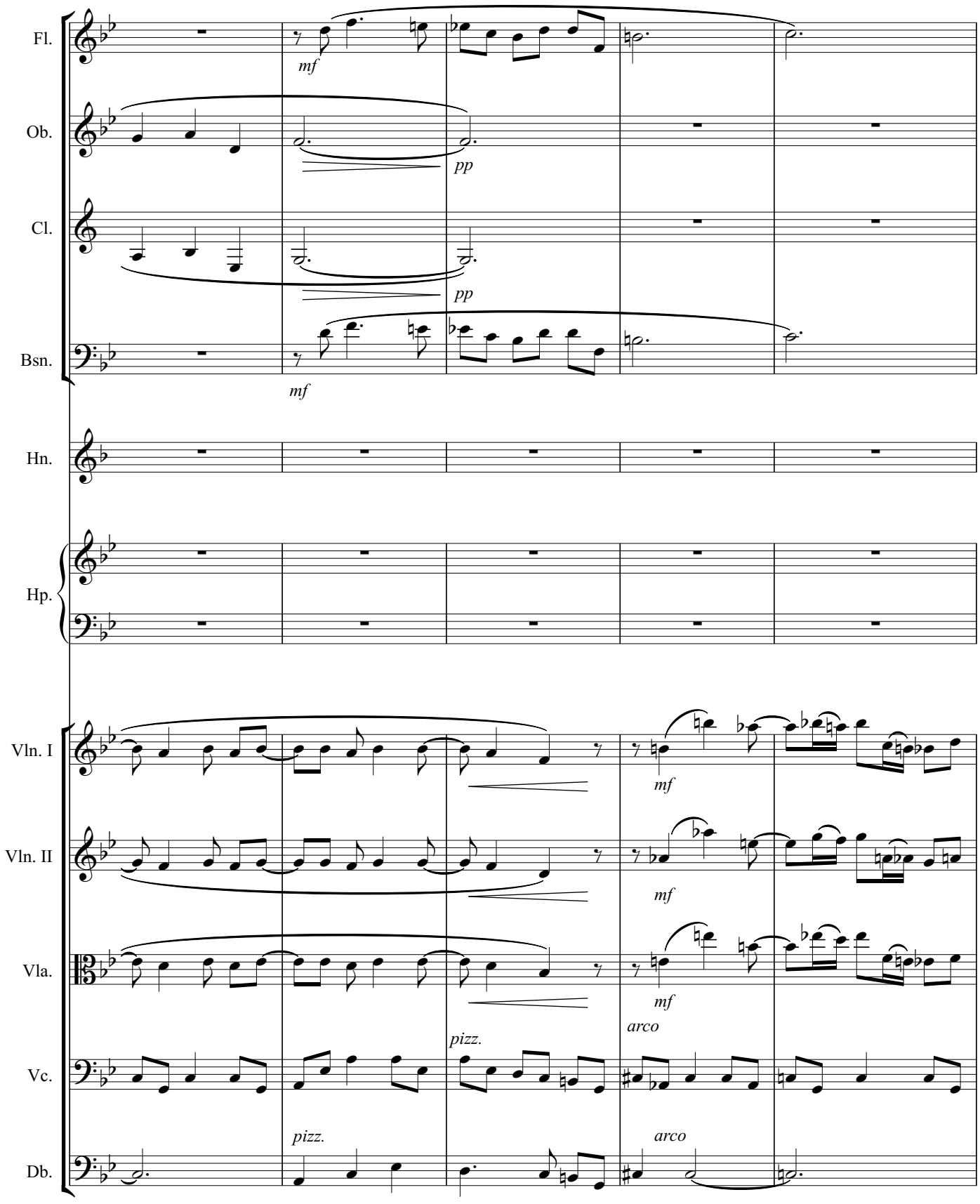

Fl.
Eng. Hn.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
p
p
p

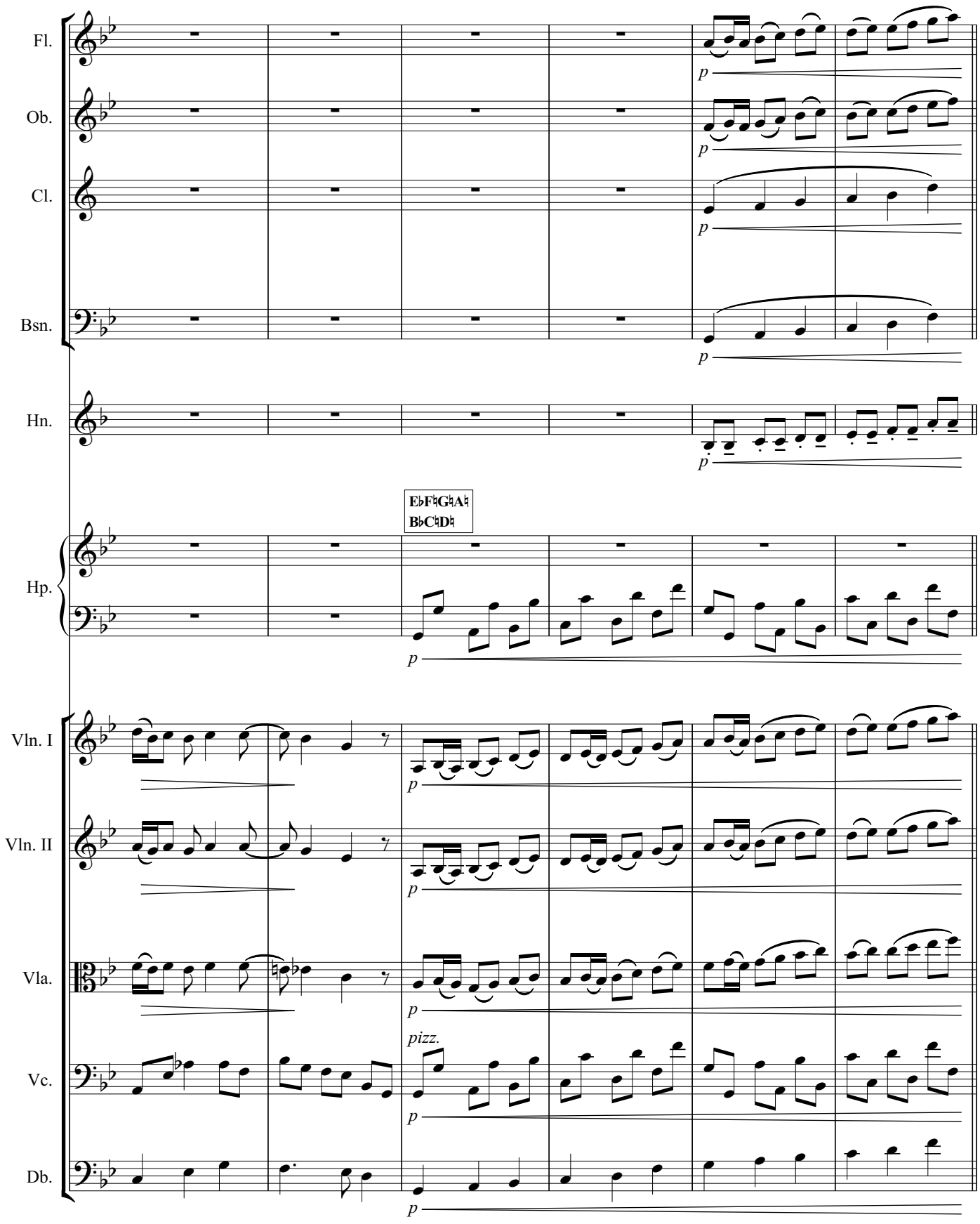

Adagio
81
84
Fl.
Eng. Hn.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
solo
mf
p
E♭F♯G♮A♮
B♭C♮D♮
sempre sost.
pp
arco
pizz.
mp

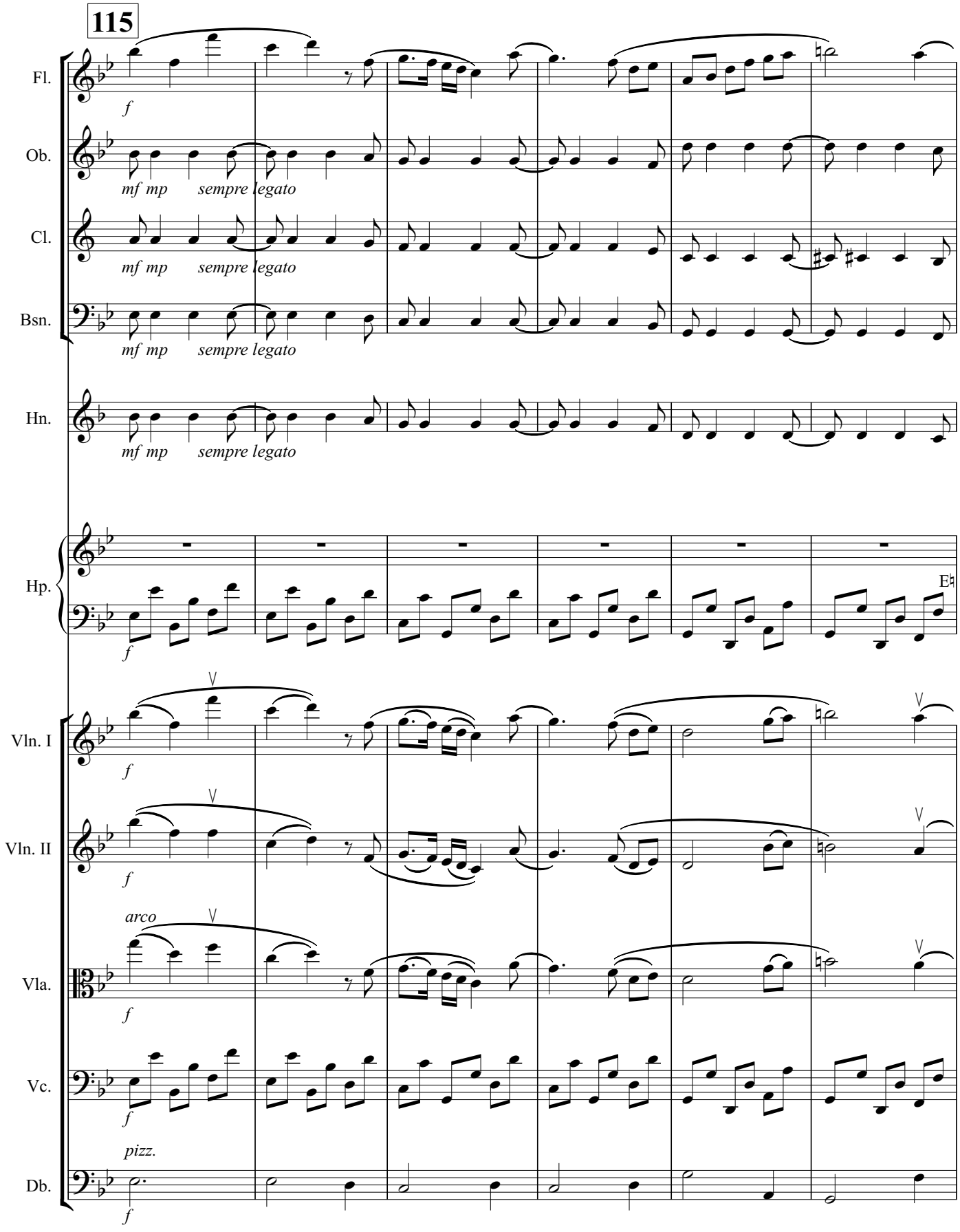

Fl.
Eng. Hn.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
mf
p
pp
pizz.
arco
pizz. arco

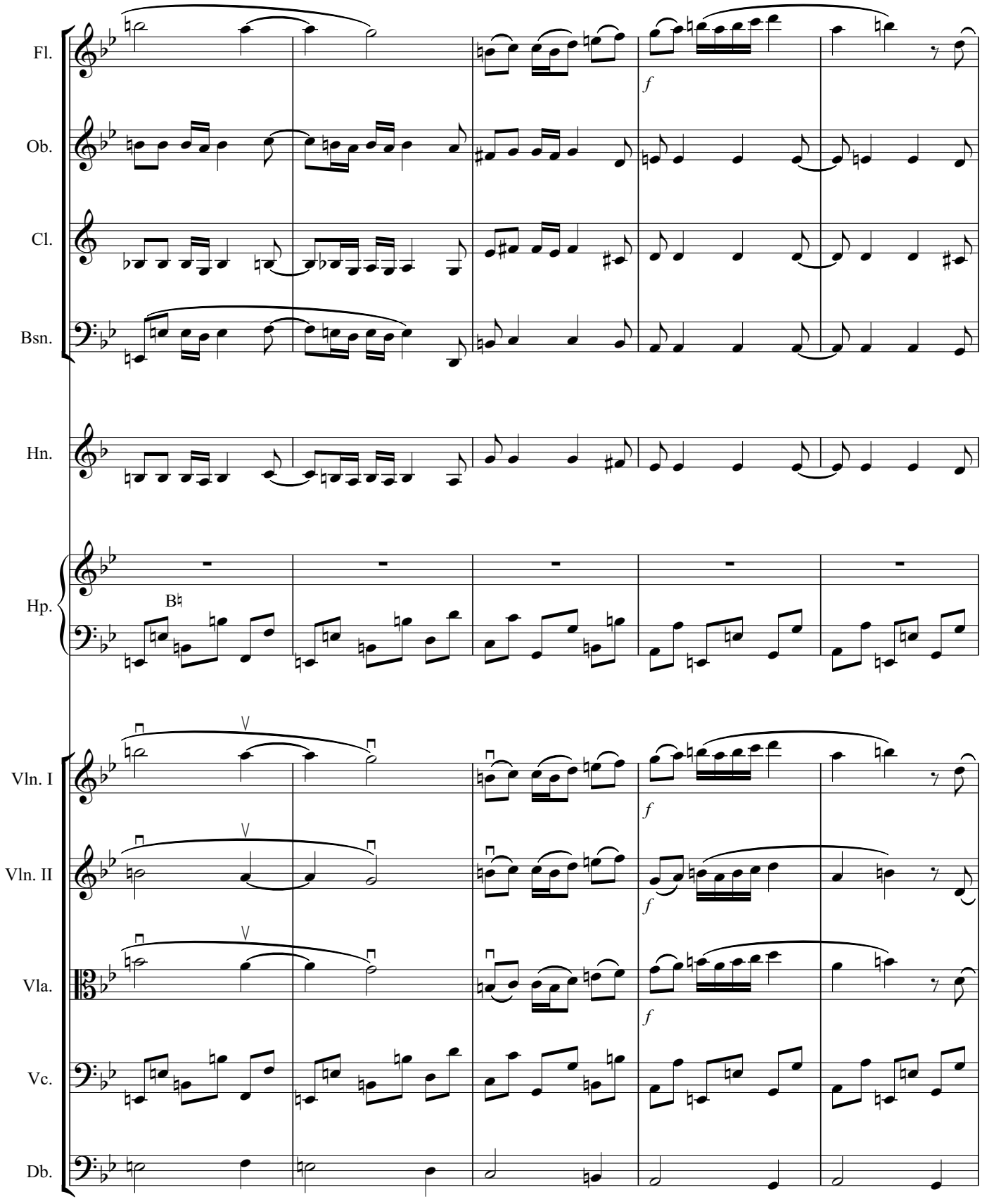

94
Fl.
Eng. Hn.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
solo
mf
solo
p
mp
pp
pp
pizz.
mp
pizz.
pp
pizz.
mp

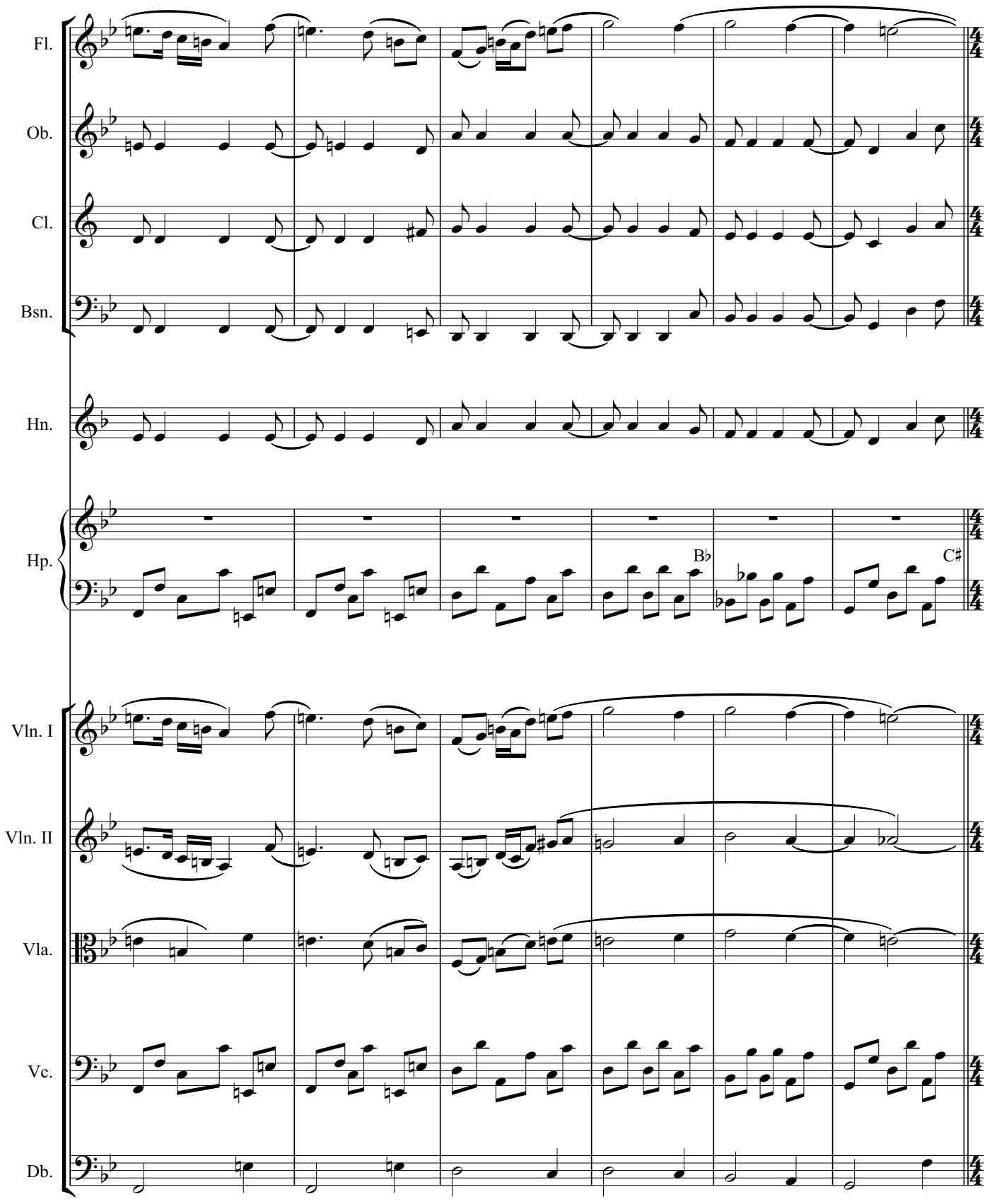

101
Fl.
Oboe
Eng. Hn.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
p
mp
son filé, detaché
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco

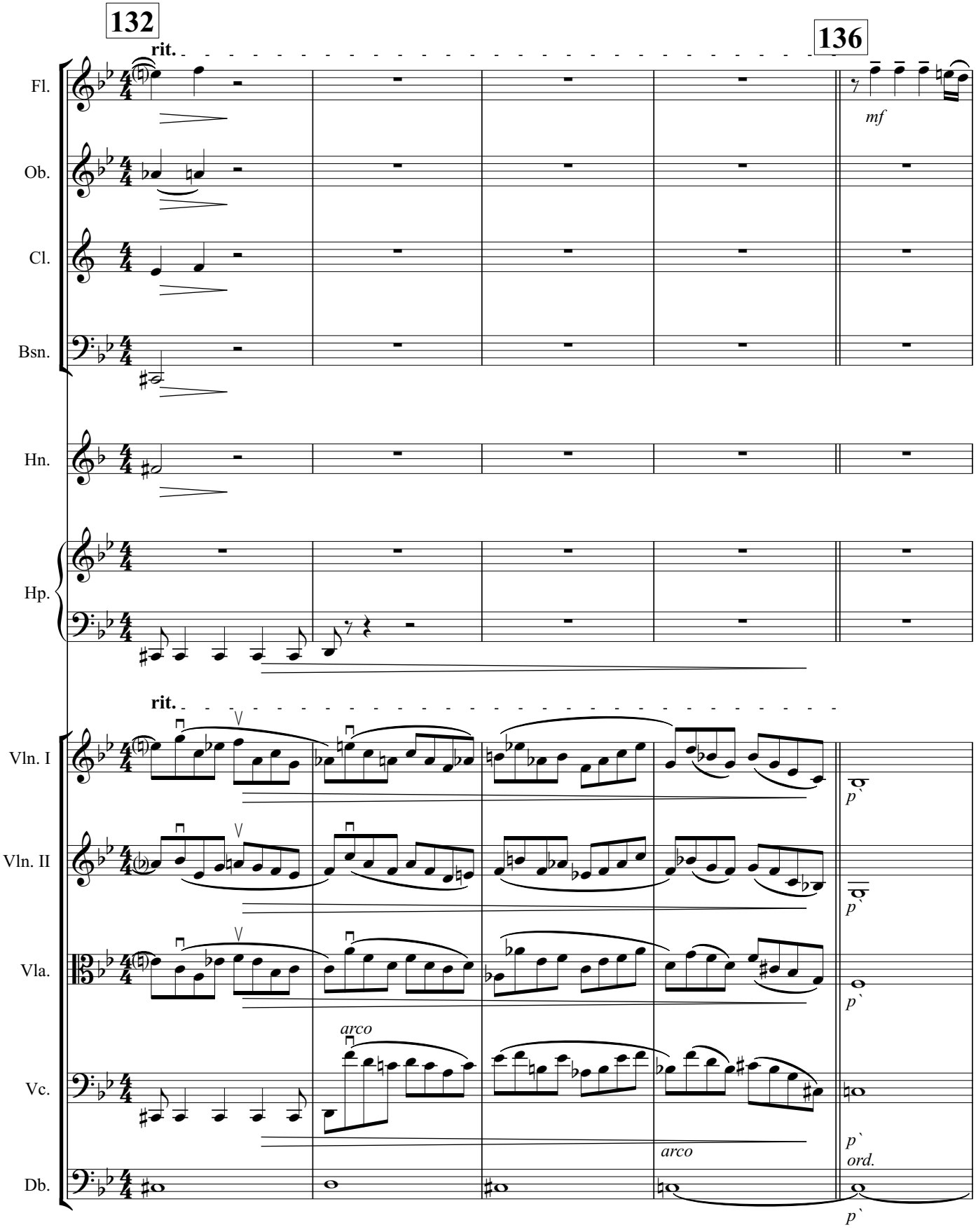

Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
mf
pp
pizz.
arco

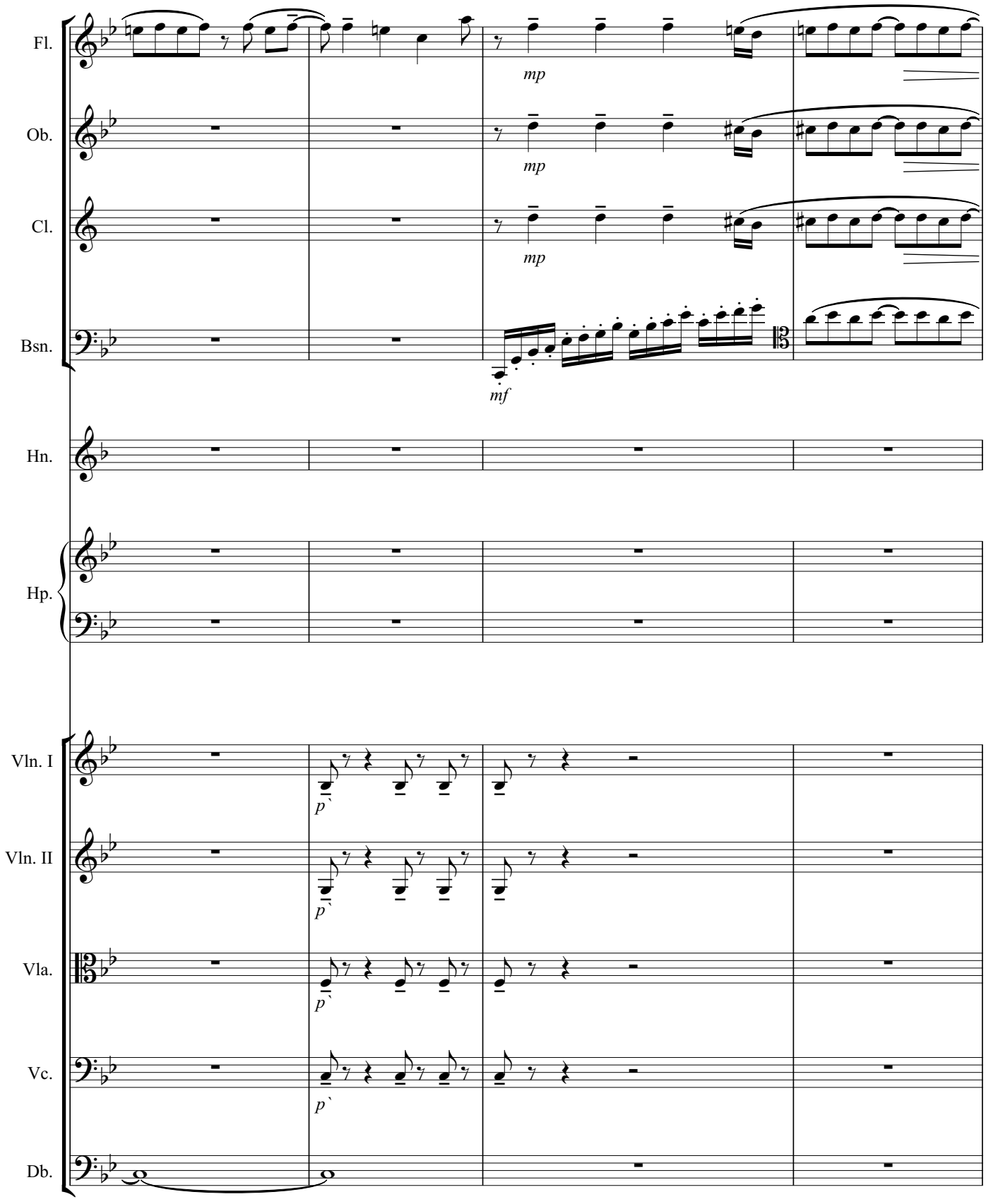

Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
E♭F♮G♮A♮
B♭C♮D♮
p
pizz.

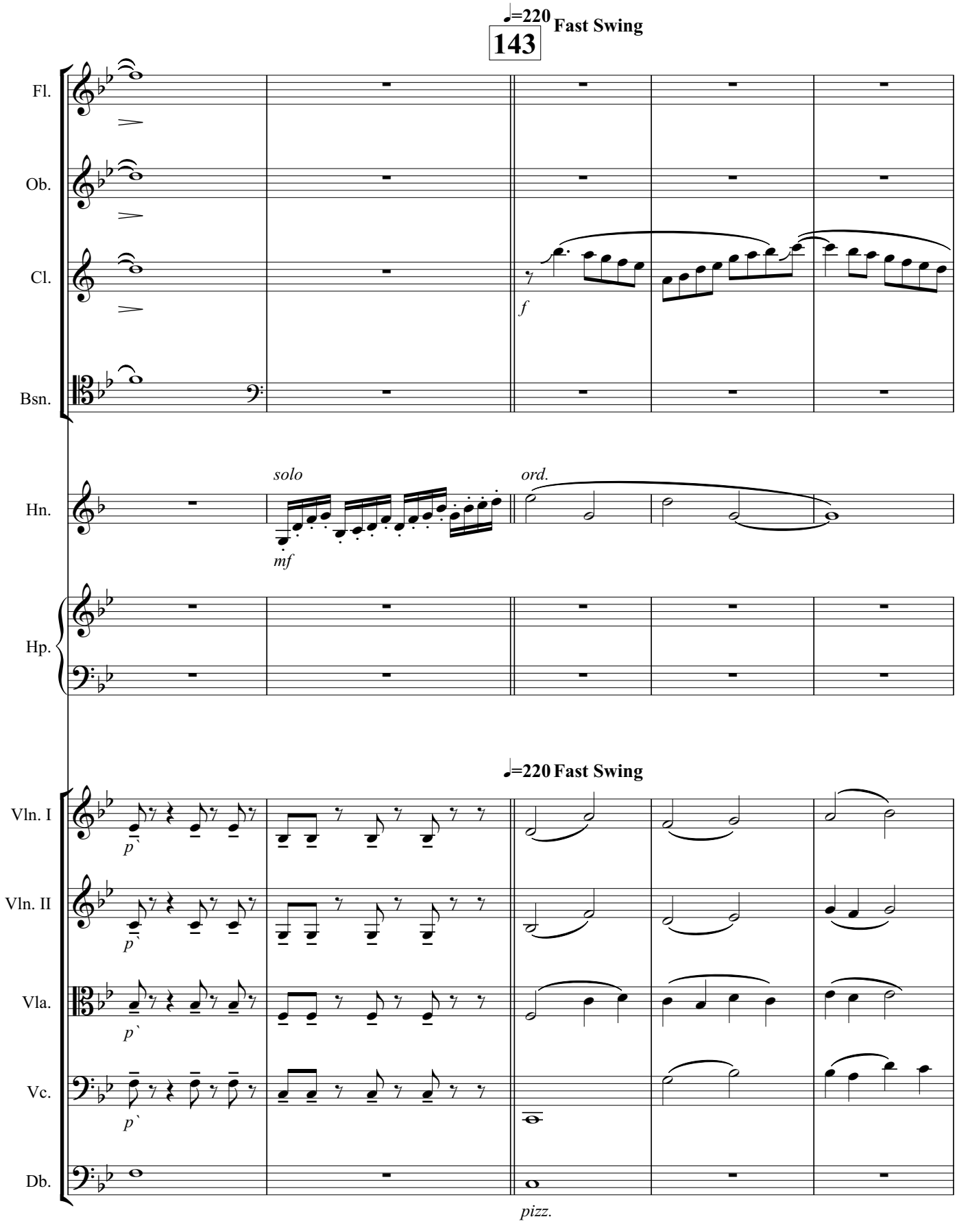

115
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
f
mf mp sempre legato
arco
pizz.

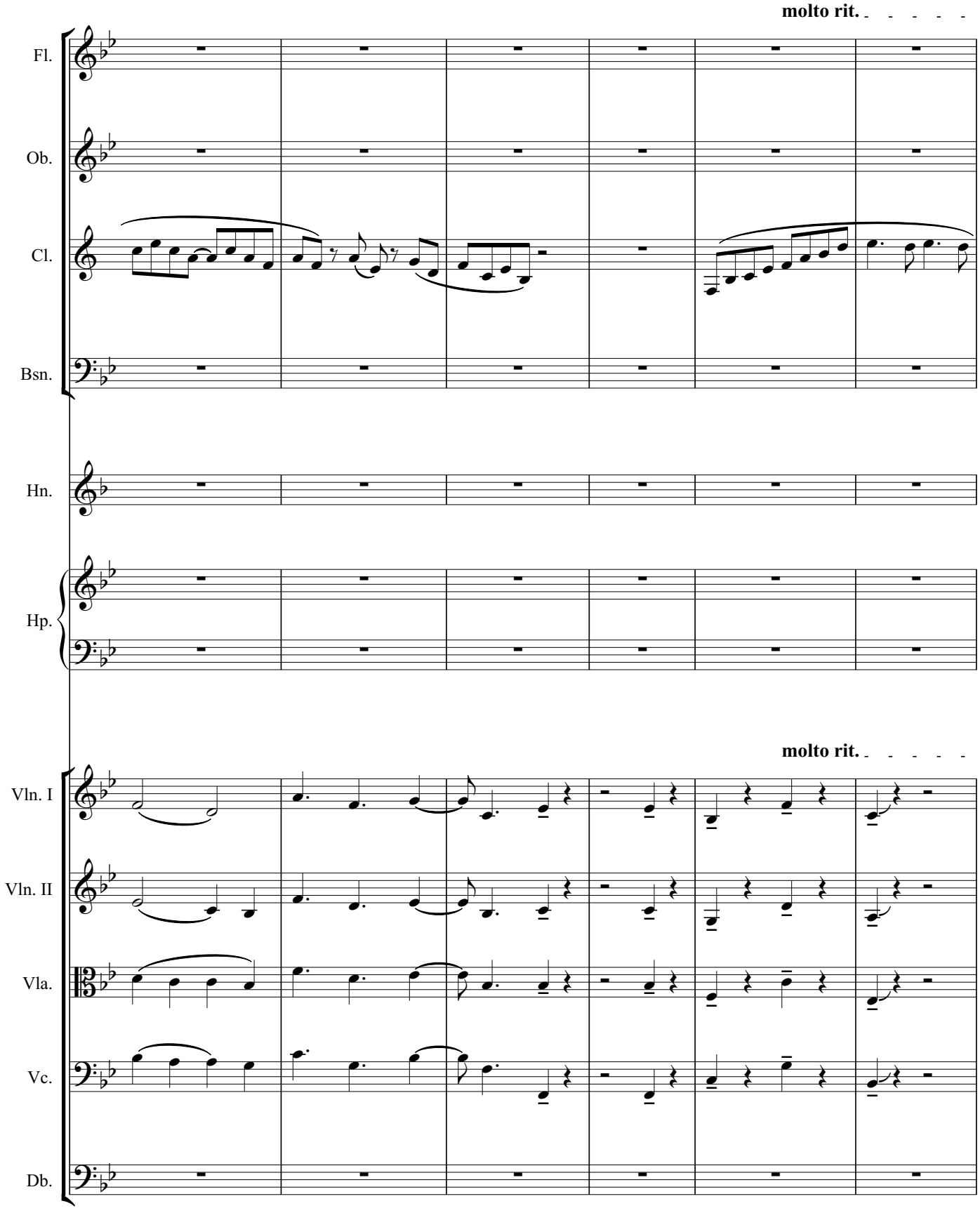

Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
B♮
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
f
f
f
f

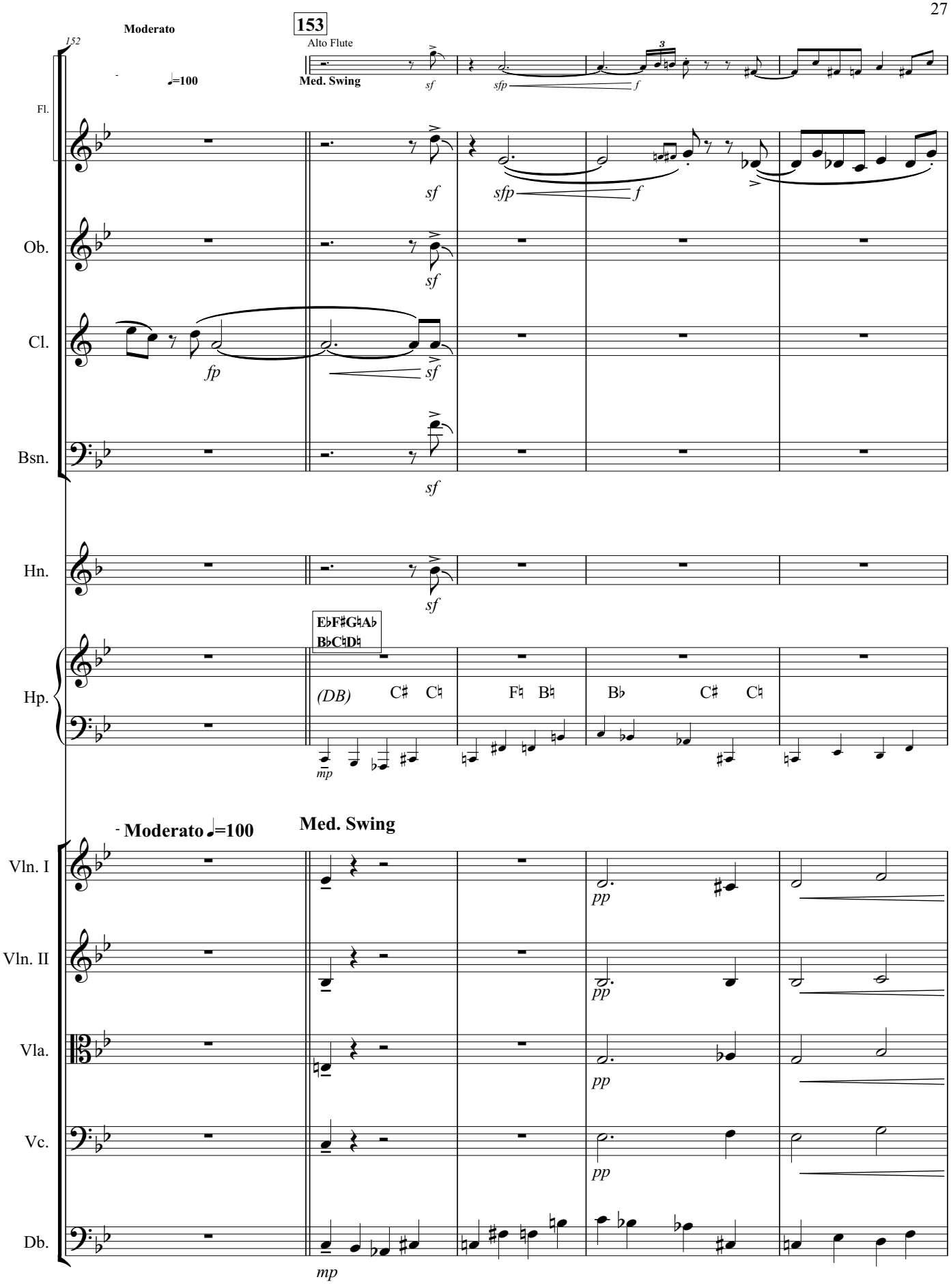

Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
B♭
C♯
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

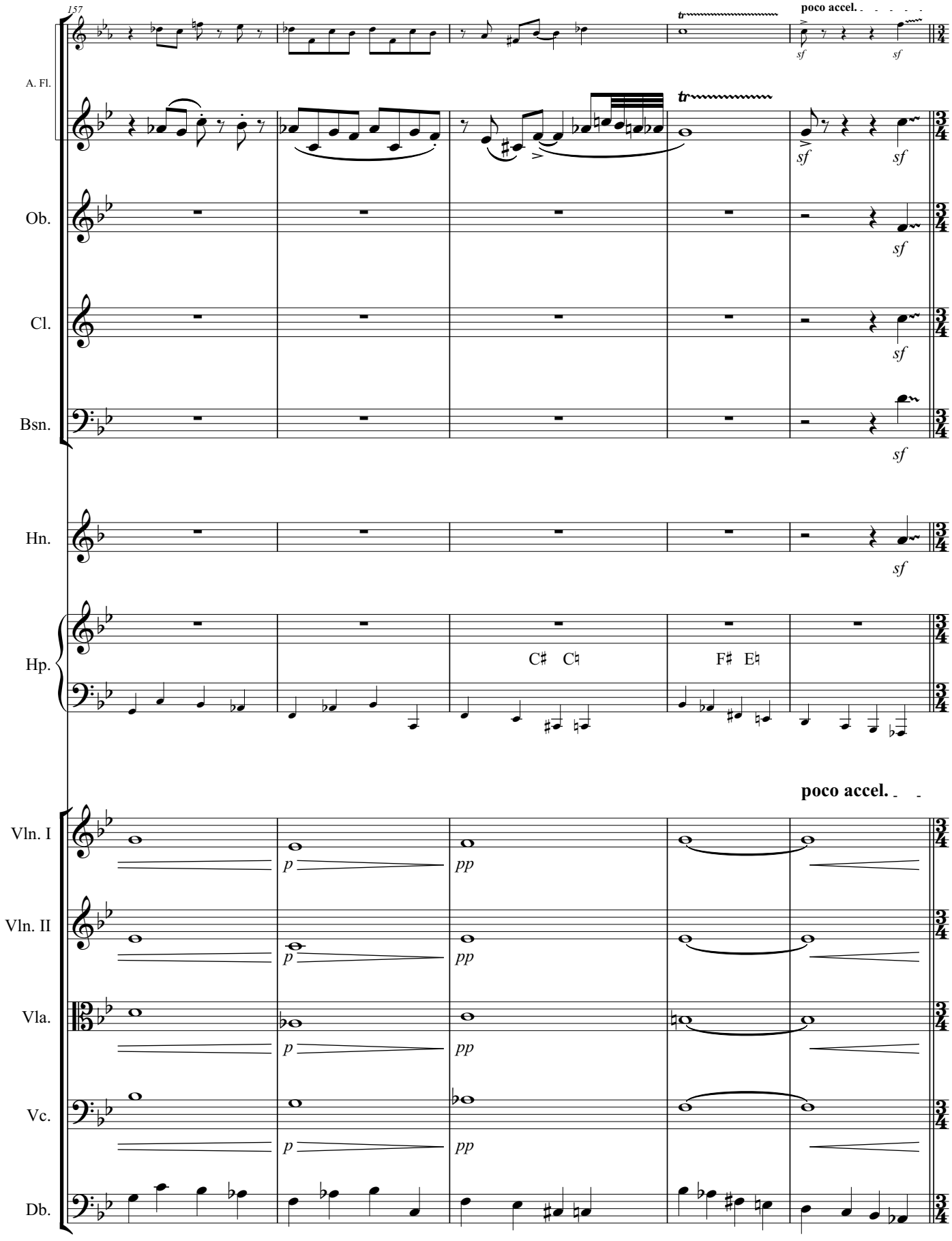

132
136
rit.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
mf
rit.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
p`
arco
arco
ord.

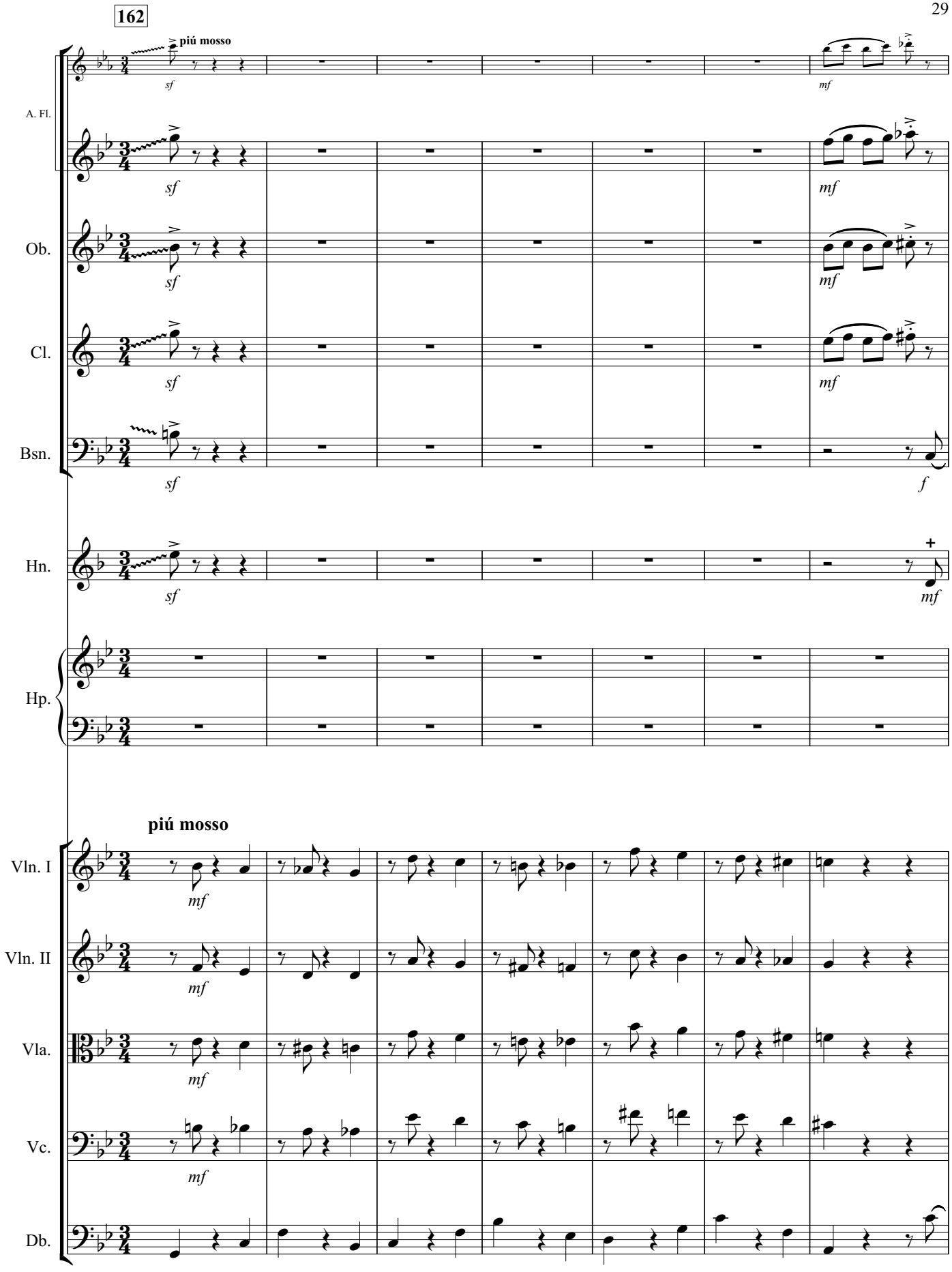

Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
mp
mp
mp
mf
p`
p`
p`
p`

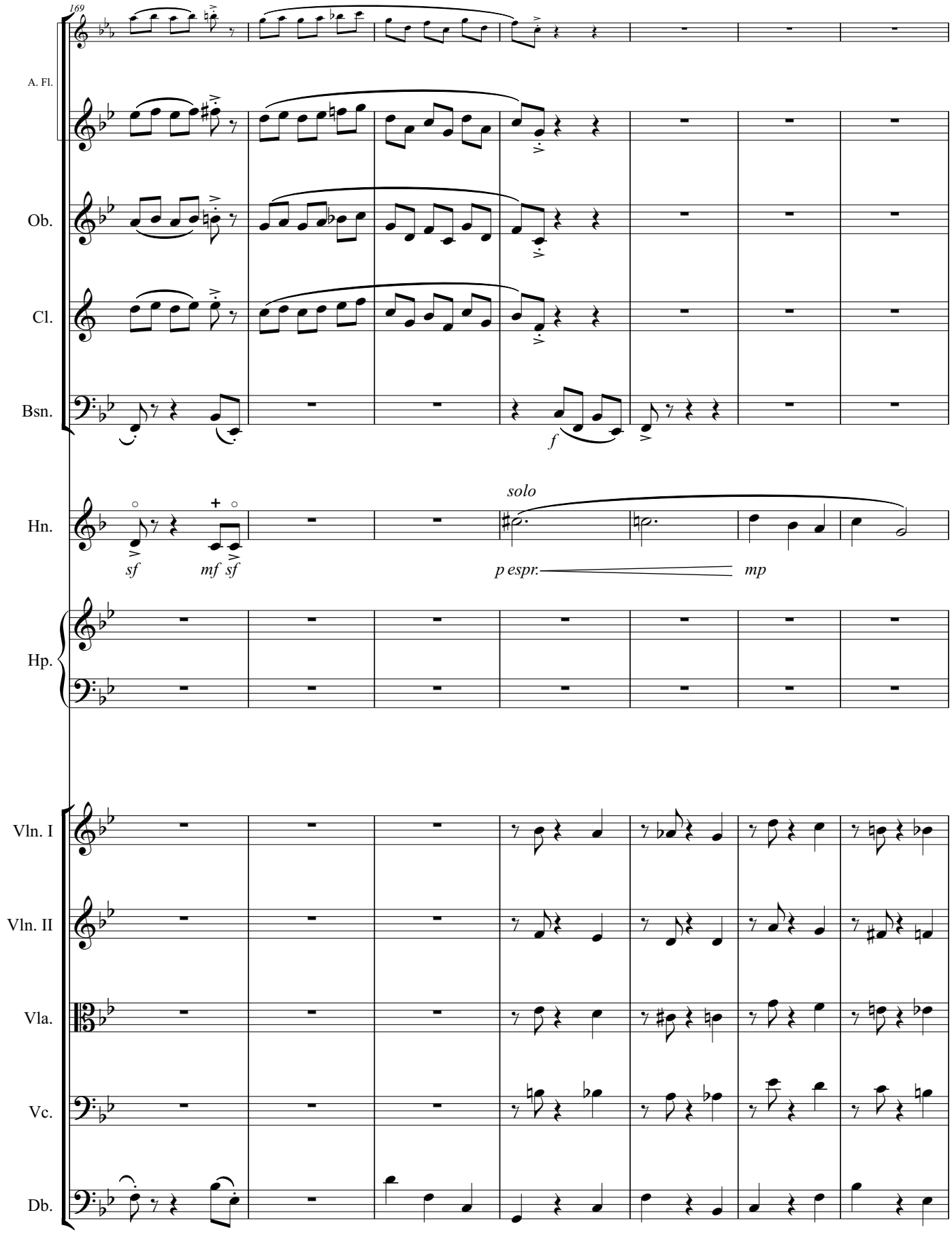

♩=220 Fast Swing
143
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
f
solo
mf
ord.
Hn.
Hp.
♩=220 Fast Swing
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
p`
pizz.

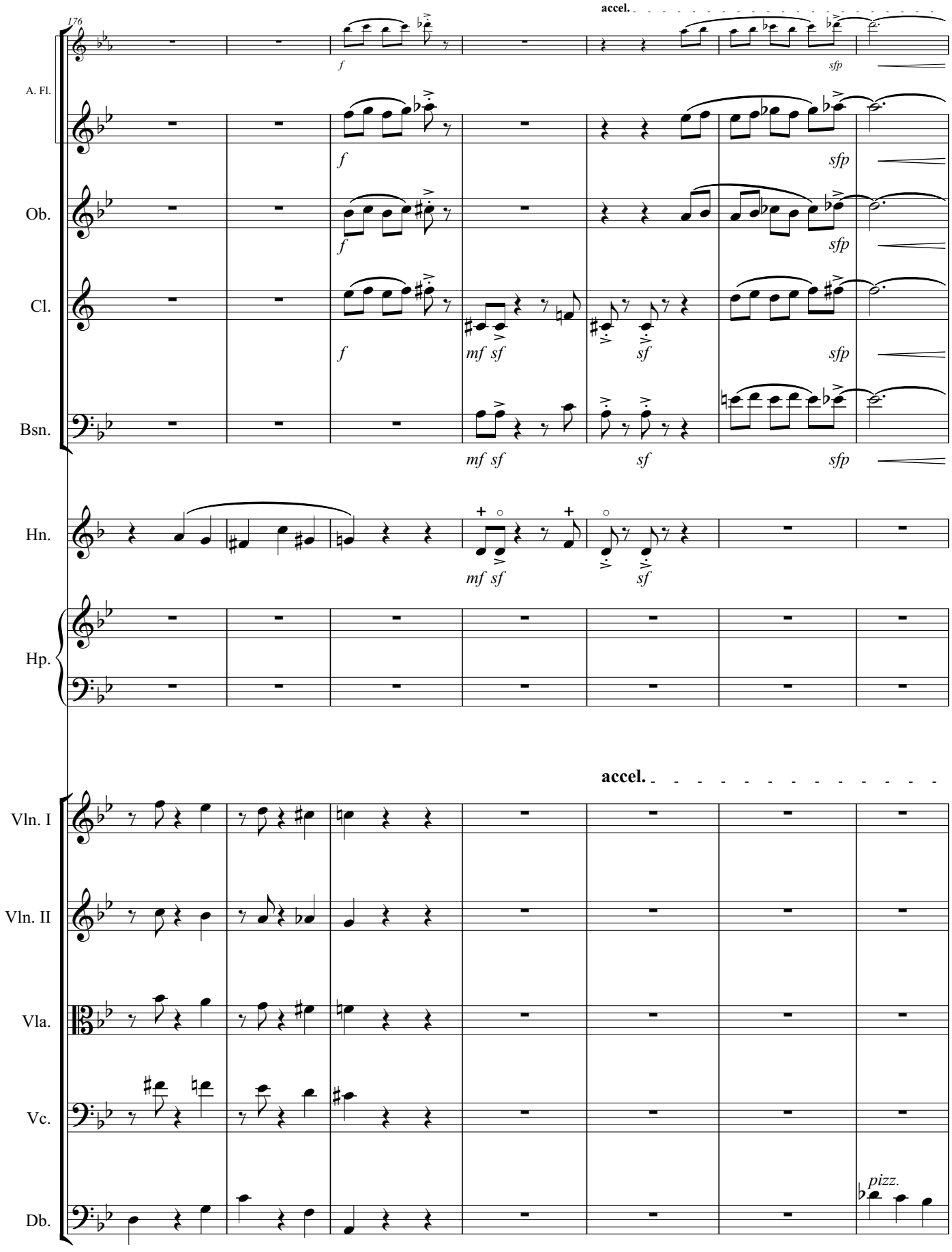

molto rit.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
molto rit.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

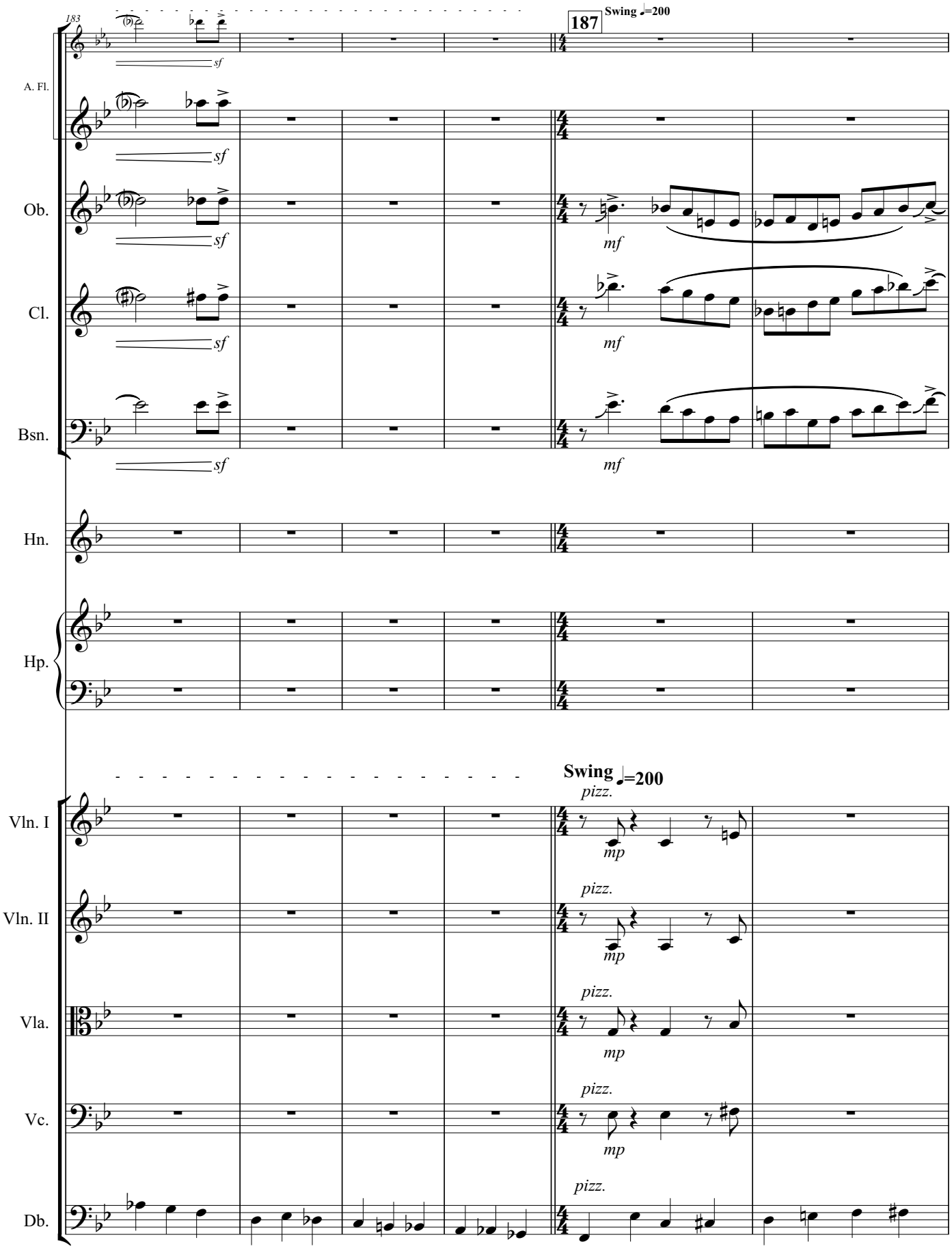

152
Moderato
♩=100
153
Alto Flute
Med. Swing
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
E♭F♯G♮A♭
B♭C♮D♮
(DB)
C♯ C♮
F♮ B♮
B♭
C♯ C♮
Moderato ♩=100
Med. Swing
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
sf
sfp
f
fp
mp
pp

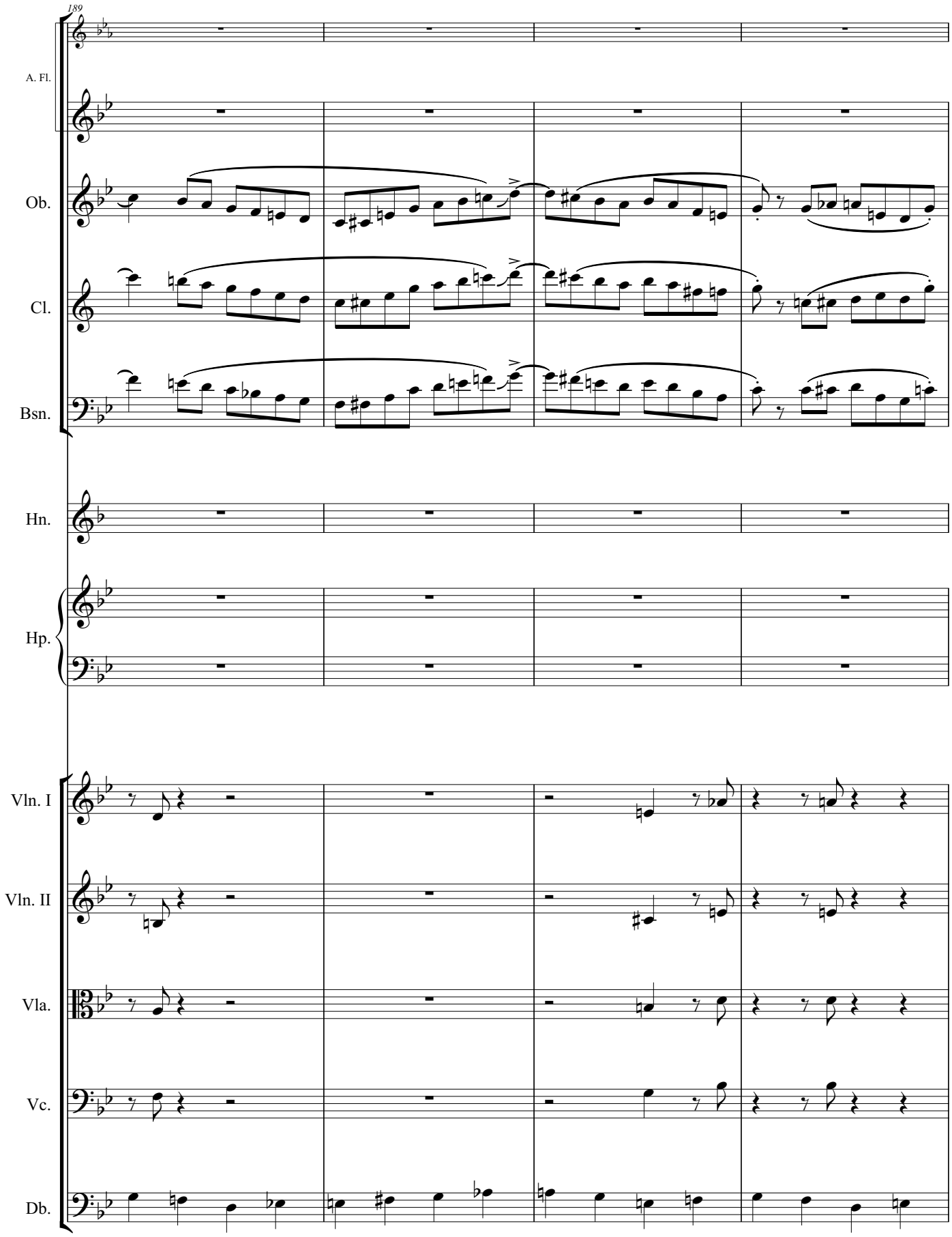

157
poco accel.
A. Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
C♯ C♮
F♯ E♮
poco accel.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
sf
p
pp

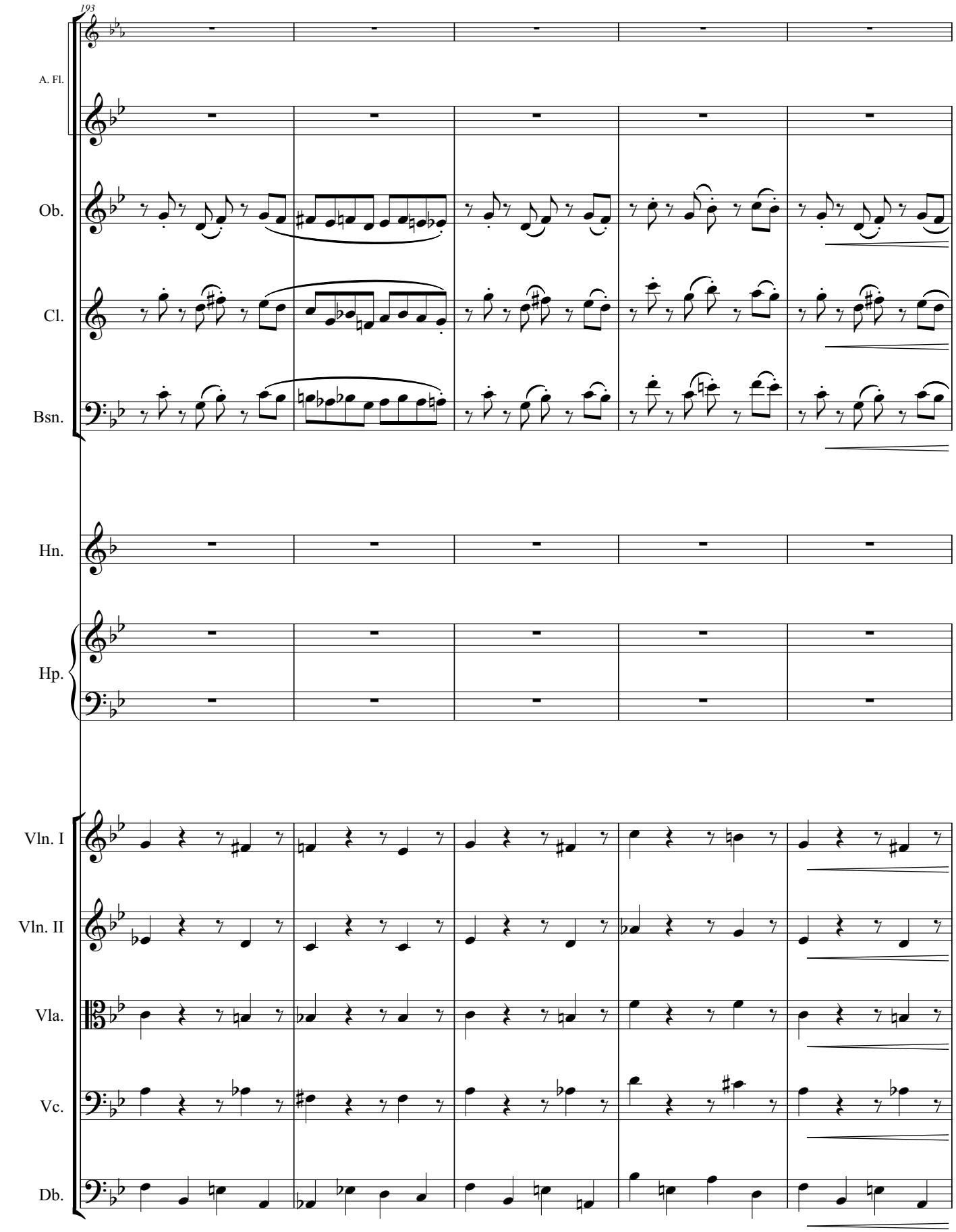

162
piú mosso
A. Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
sf
mf
f
piú mosso

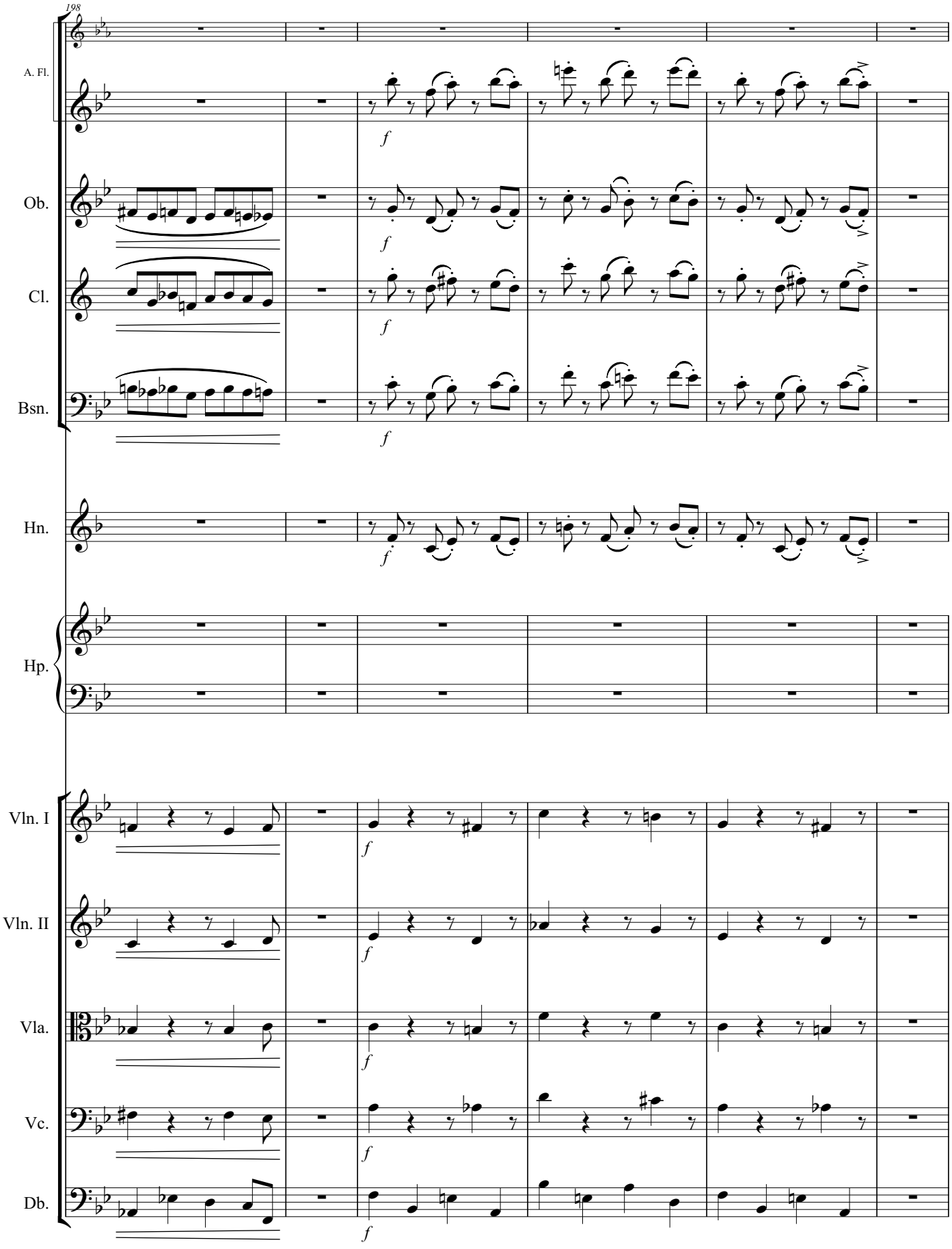

169
A. Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
f
Hn.
solo
sf
mf sf
p espr.
mp
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

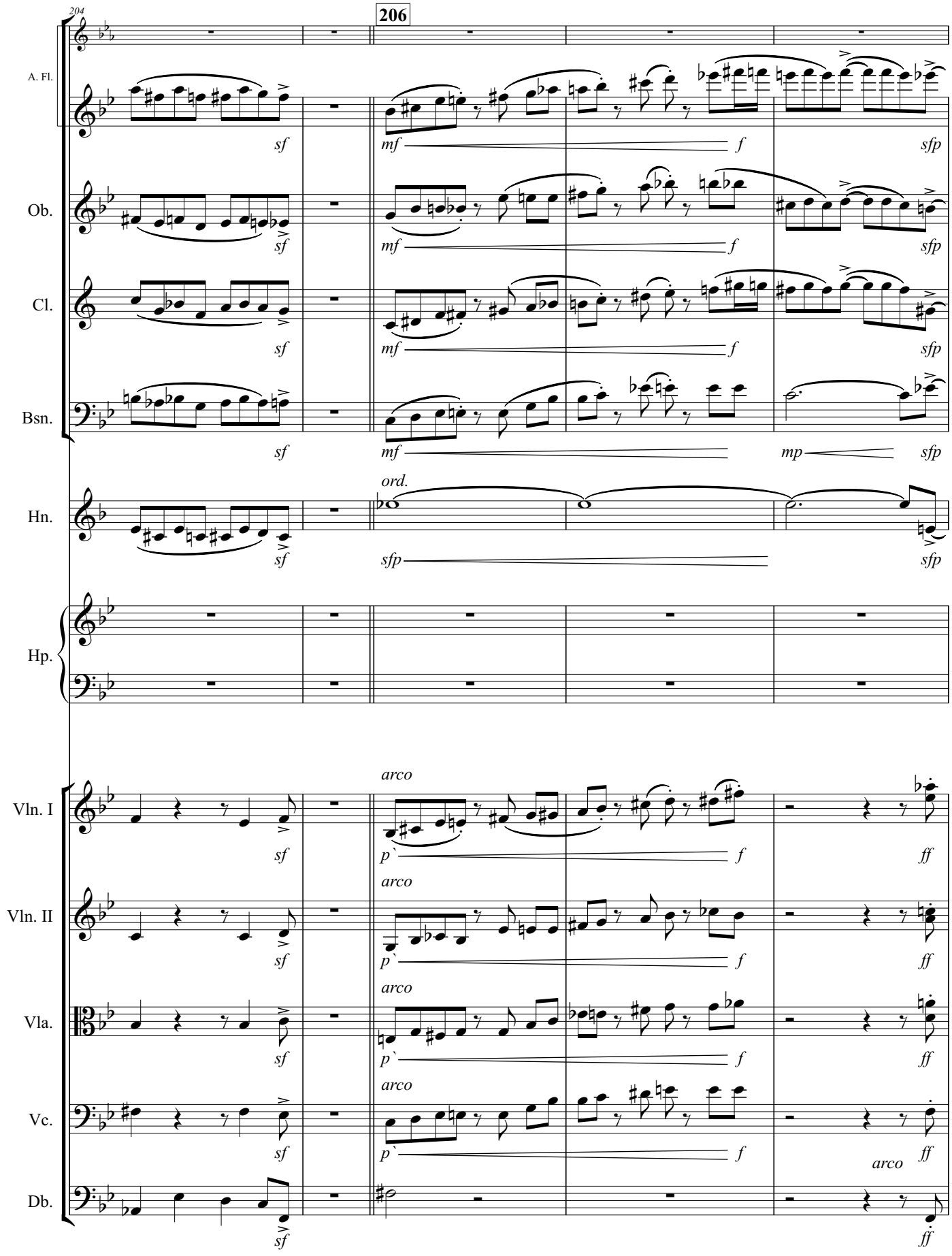

176
accel.
A. Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
accel.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
pizz.

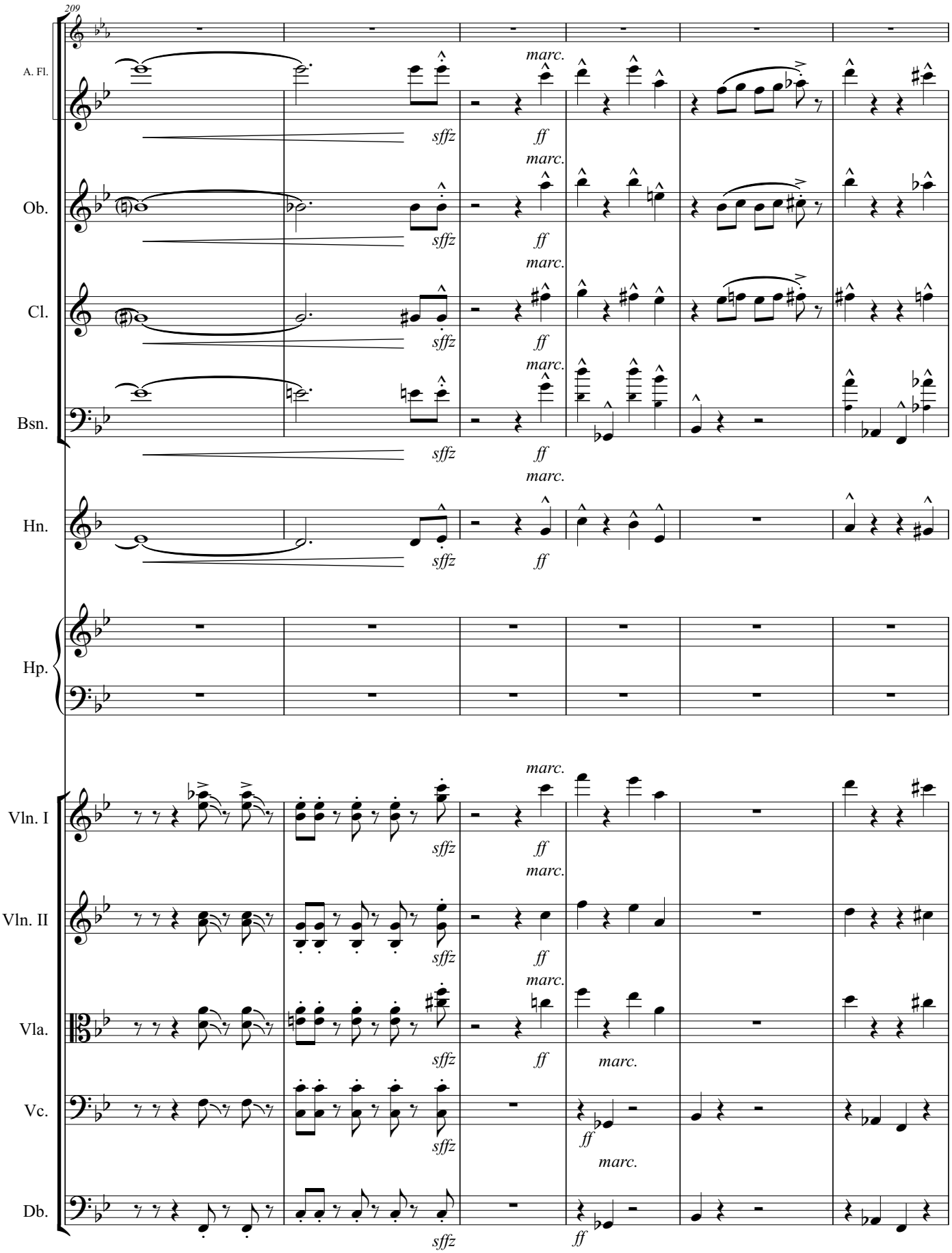

183
187
Swing ♩=200
A. Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
sf
mf
mp
pizz.

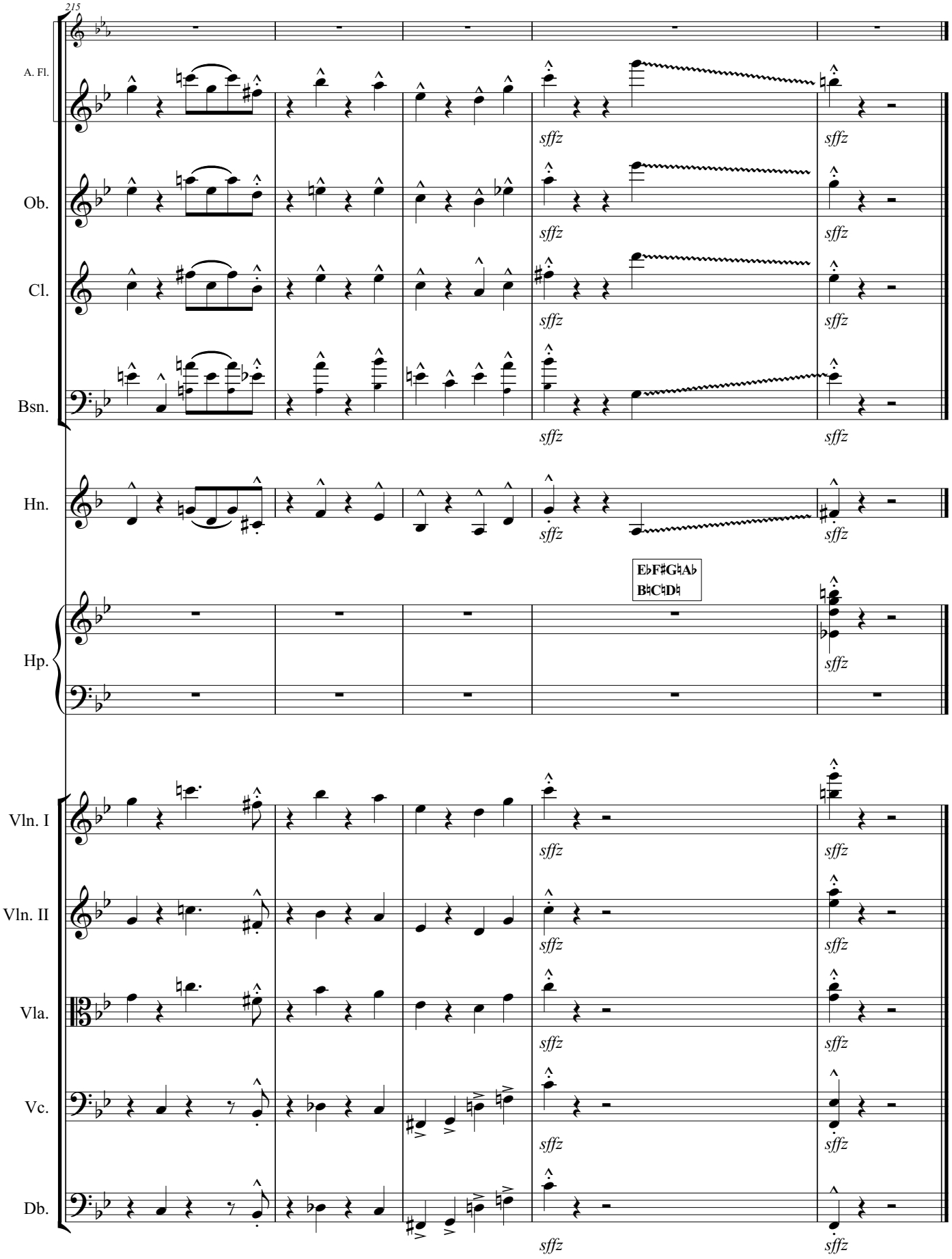

189
A. Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.


193
A. Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.


198
A. Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
f


204
206
A. Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
sf
mf
f
sfp
mp
ord.
arco
p
ff


209
A. Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
sffz
ff
marc.


215
A. Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
sffz
E♭F♯G♮A♭
B♮C♮D♮