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Mouthpiece: For Chamber Ensemble and Electronics [music]

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Rachael Smith

mouthpiece

for Chamber ensemble and Electronics

(2016)

717-713-9697
smithrac4@gmail.com

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smithrac4@gmail.com

mouthpiece

Rachael Smith

Winner of the Weiss Prize in the Creative Arts

Composed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Music with Composition Emphasis

Dickinson College
Carlisle, Pennsylvania

Professor Robert Pound, Advisor

8-9 April, 2016

mouthpiece

for Chamber ensemble and Electronics
(2016)

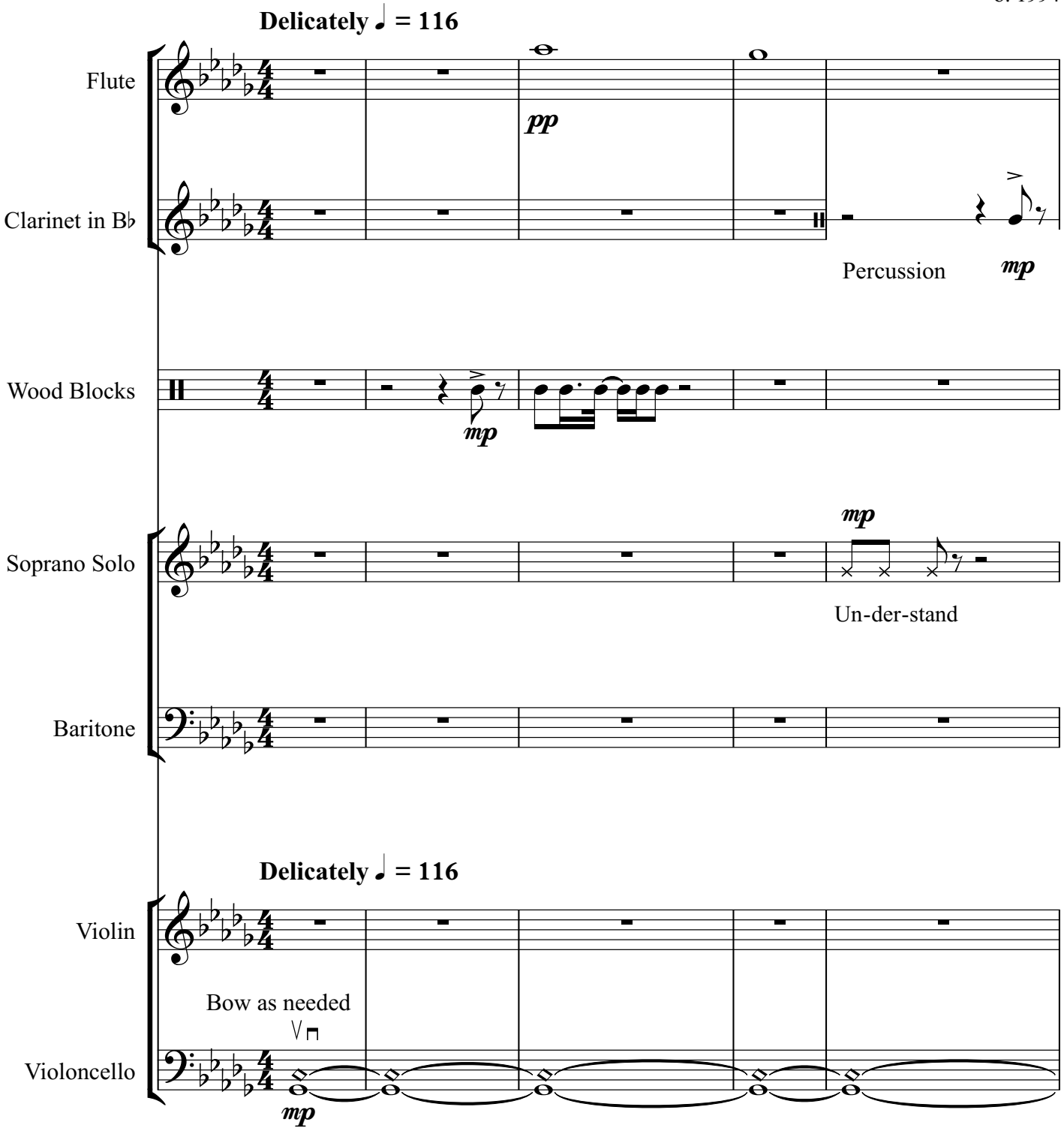
Violin
Cello
Soprano
Baritone
Flute and percussion
Clarinet and percussion
Woodblock and Marimba
Electronics

Movement		Duration
I.	Observation and Response (prelude)*	0:43
II.	Conversation I*	0:26
III.	Peace	6:00
IV.	Conversation II*	0:30
V.	Identity	5:30
VI.	Questioning*	4:08
VII.	Observation and Response (postlude)*	1:43

*These electronic movements are available as mp3 files by request, or at https://soundcloud.com/magmahorrendous. The prelude and postlude are drawn from the same conversation fragment about the concepts of observing and responding. "Questioning" is made entirely from two sound fragments, which highlight moments of confusion and contemplation. Conversations I and II contain the material for "Peace" and "Identity," respectively.

Peace

Rachael Smith
b. 1994



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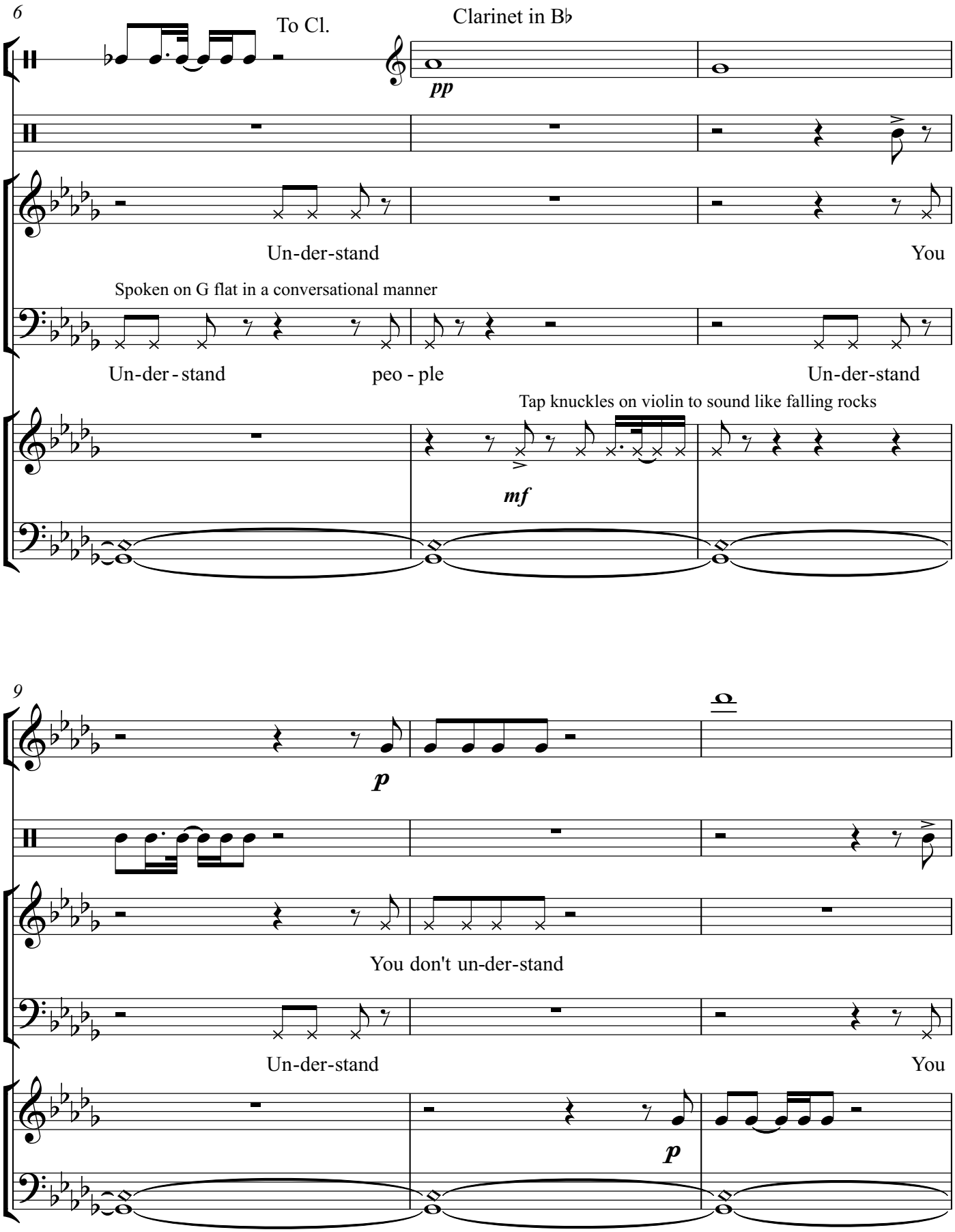
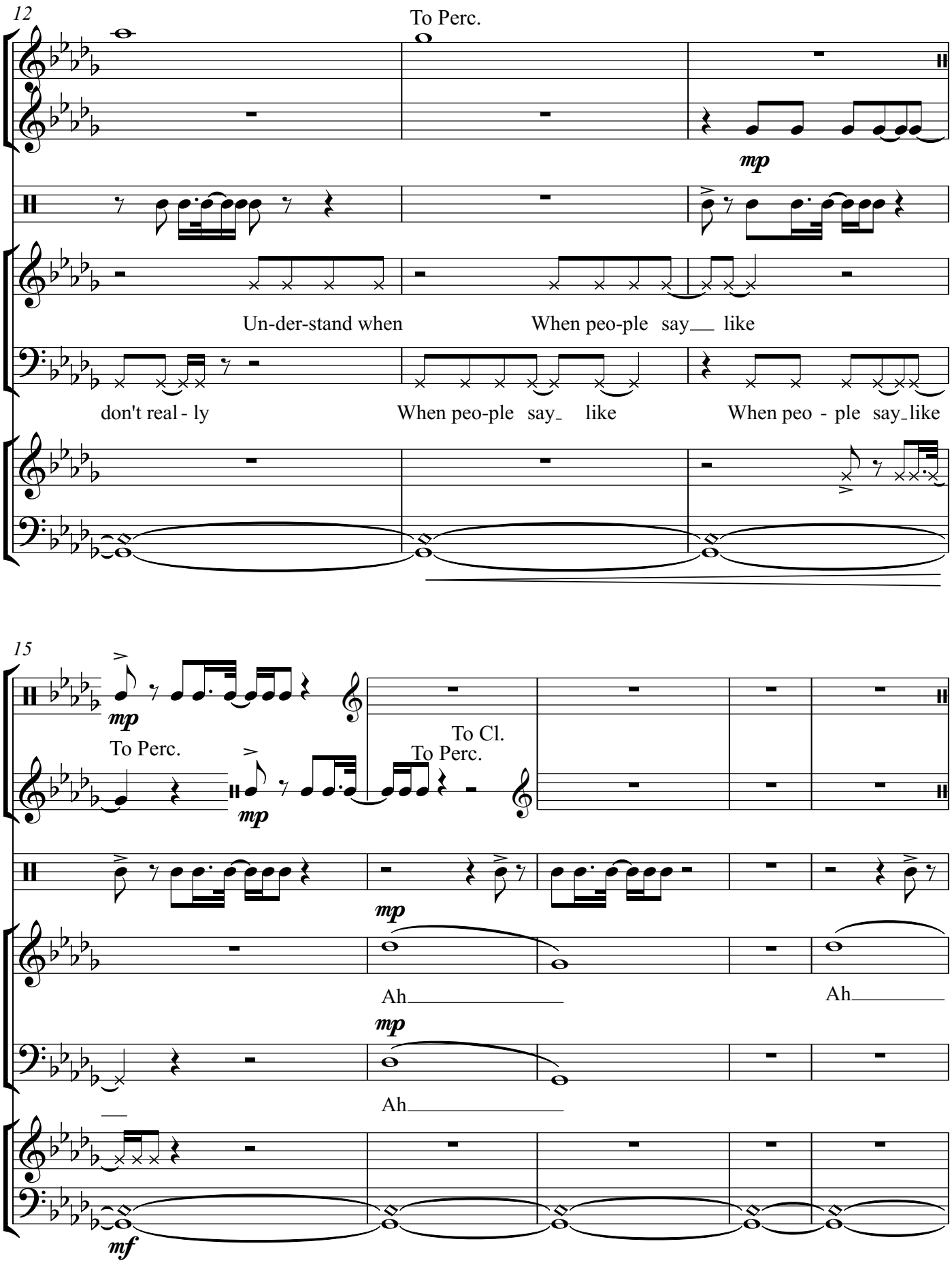
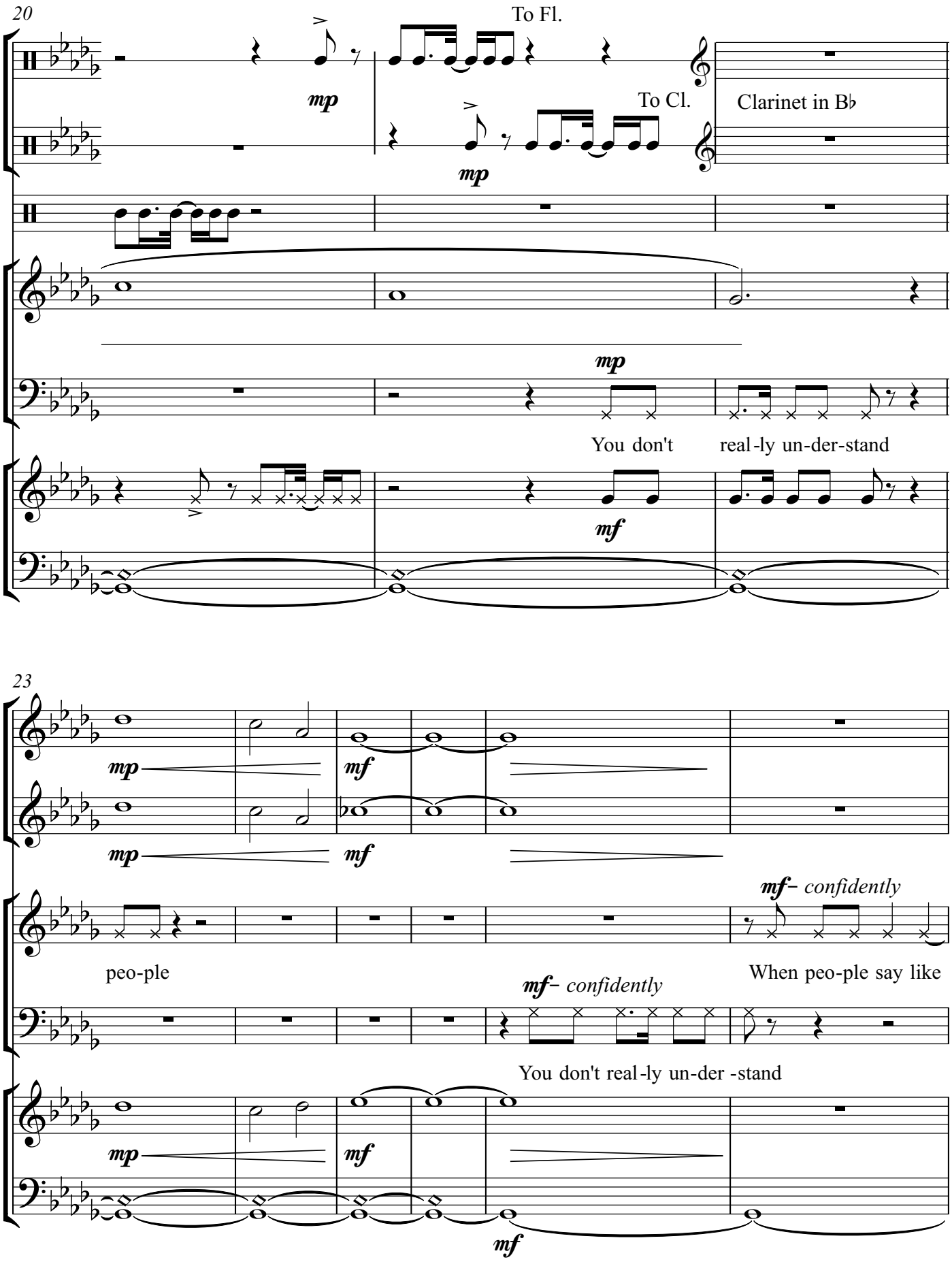
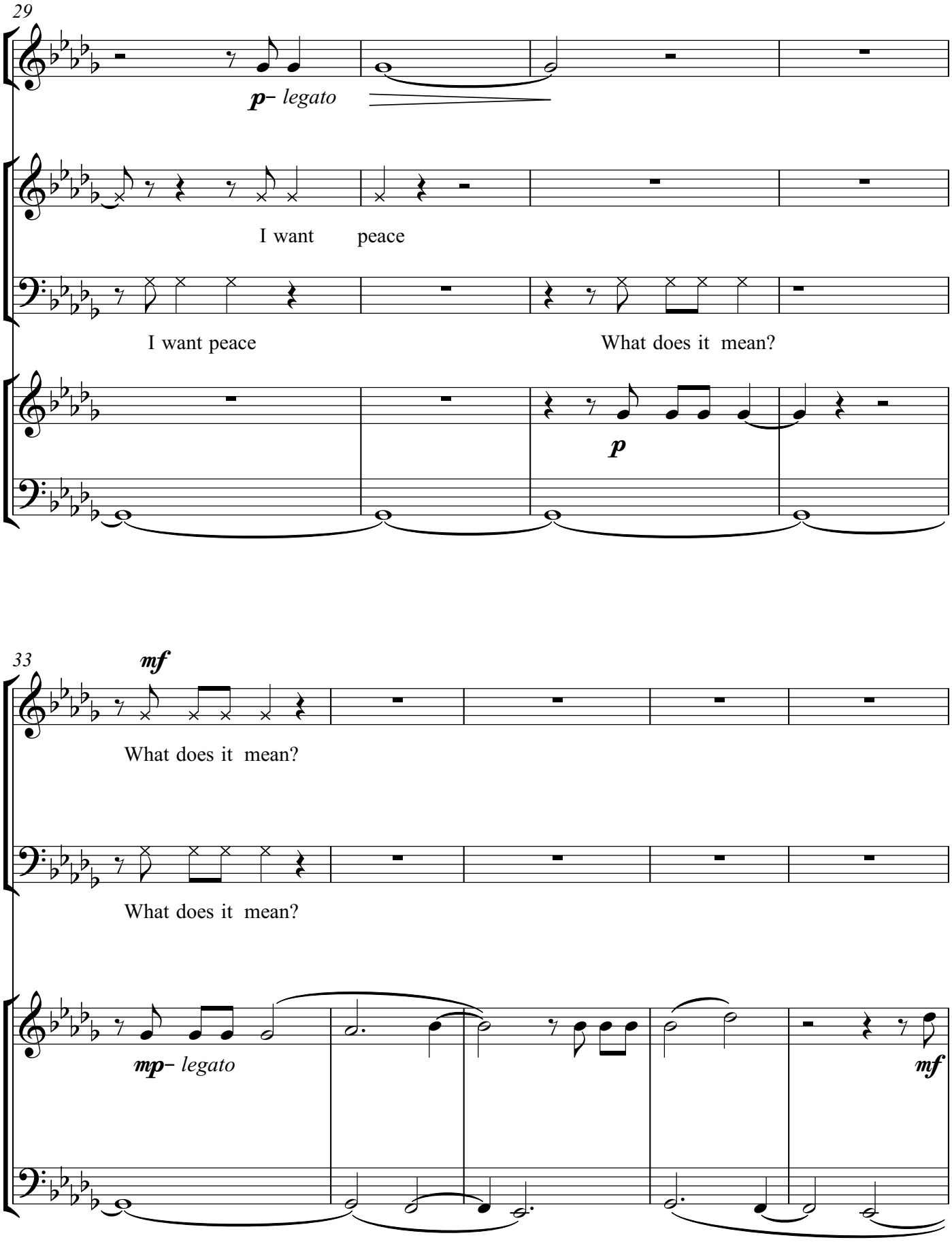
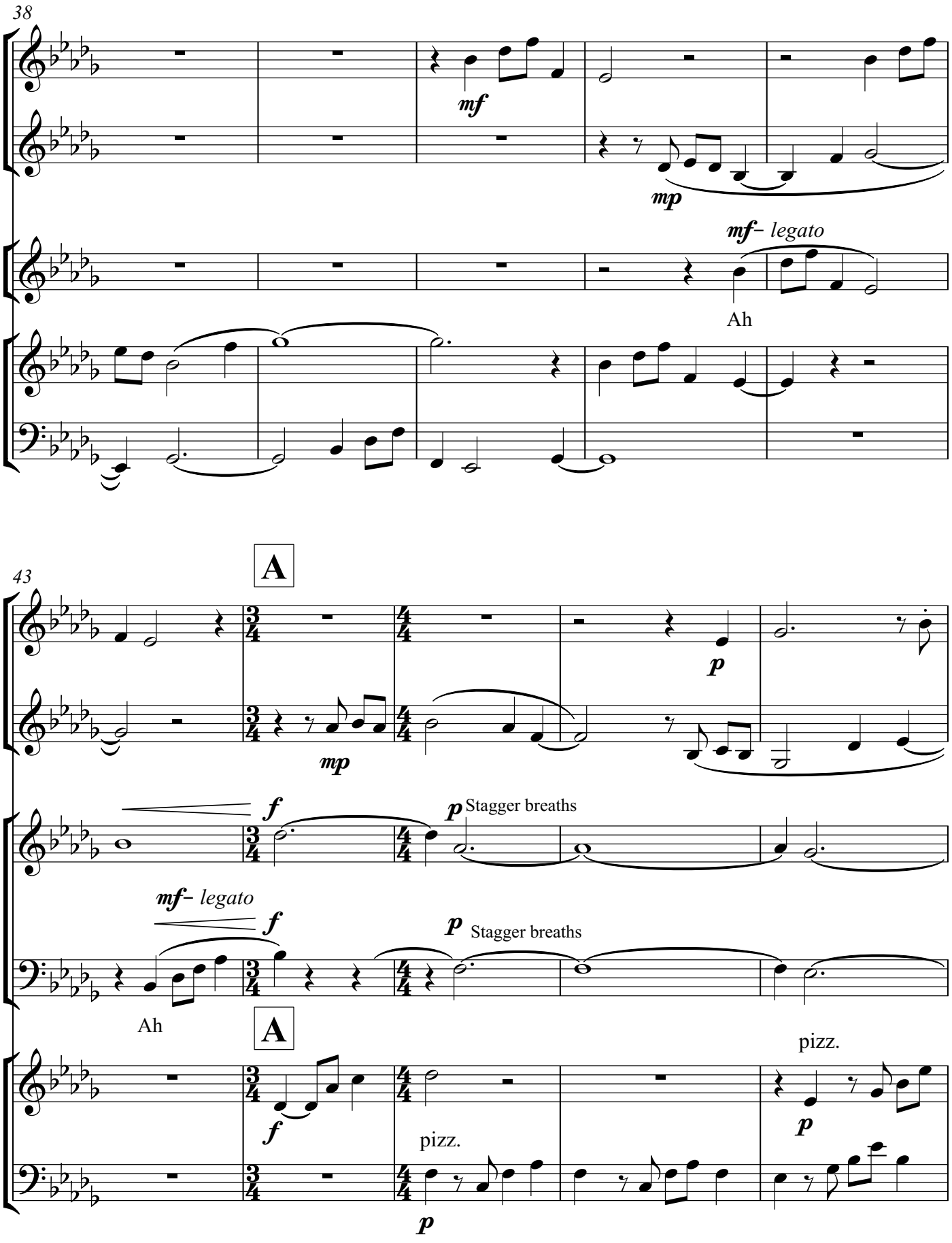
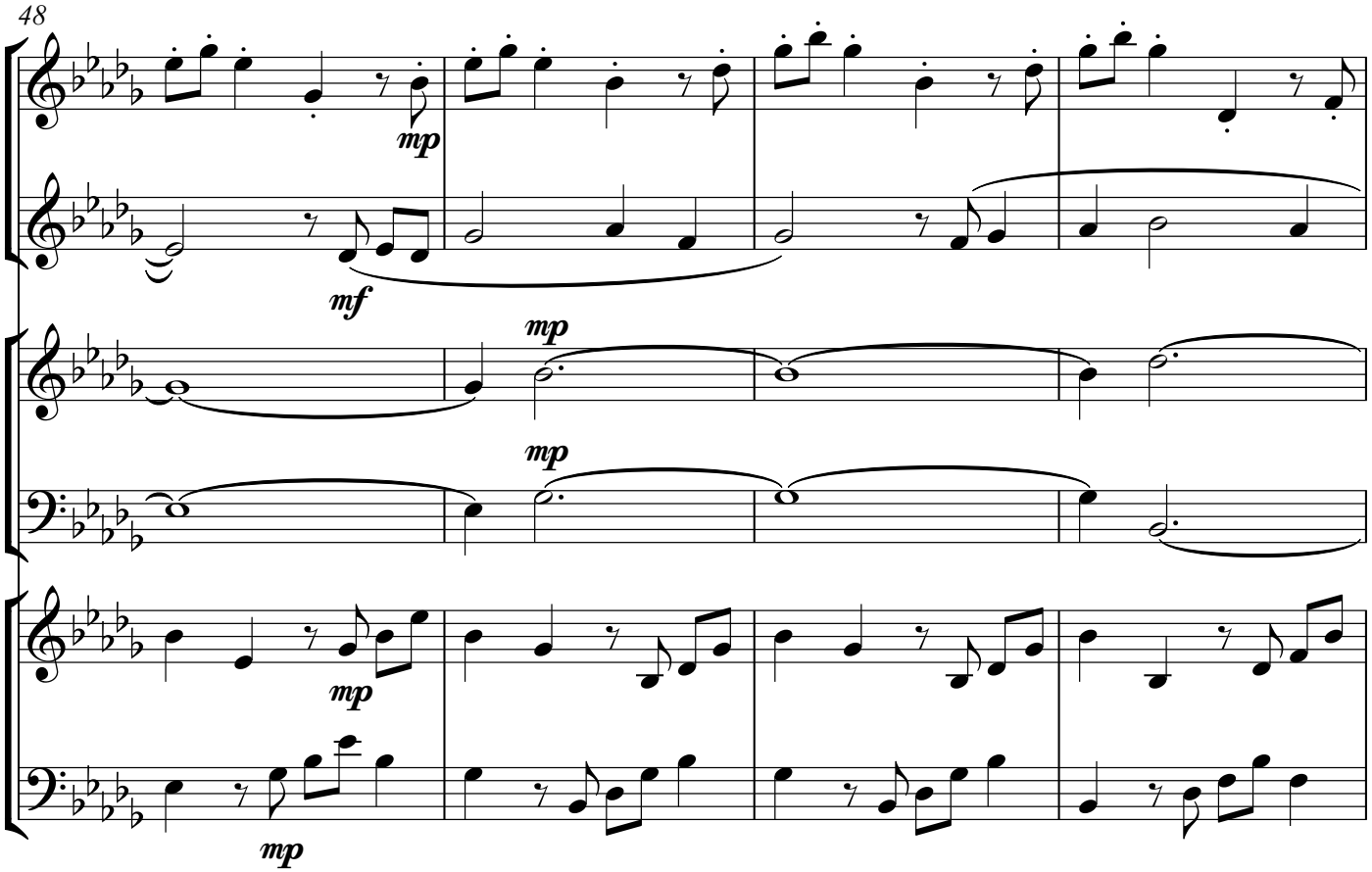

6
To Cl.
Clarinet in B♭
pp
Un-der-stand
You
Spoken on G flat in a conversational manner
Un-der - stand
peo - ple
Un-der-stand
Tap knuckles on violin to sound like falling rocks
mf
9
p
You don't un-der-stand
Un-der-stand
You
p

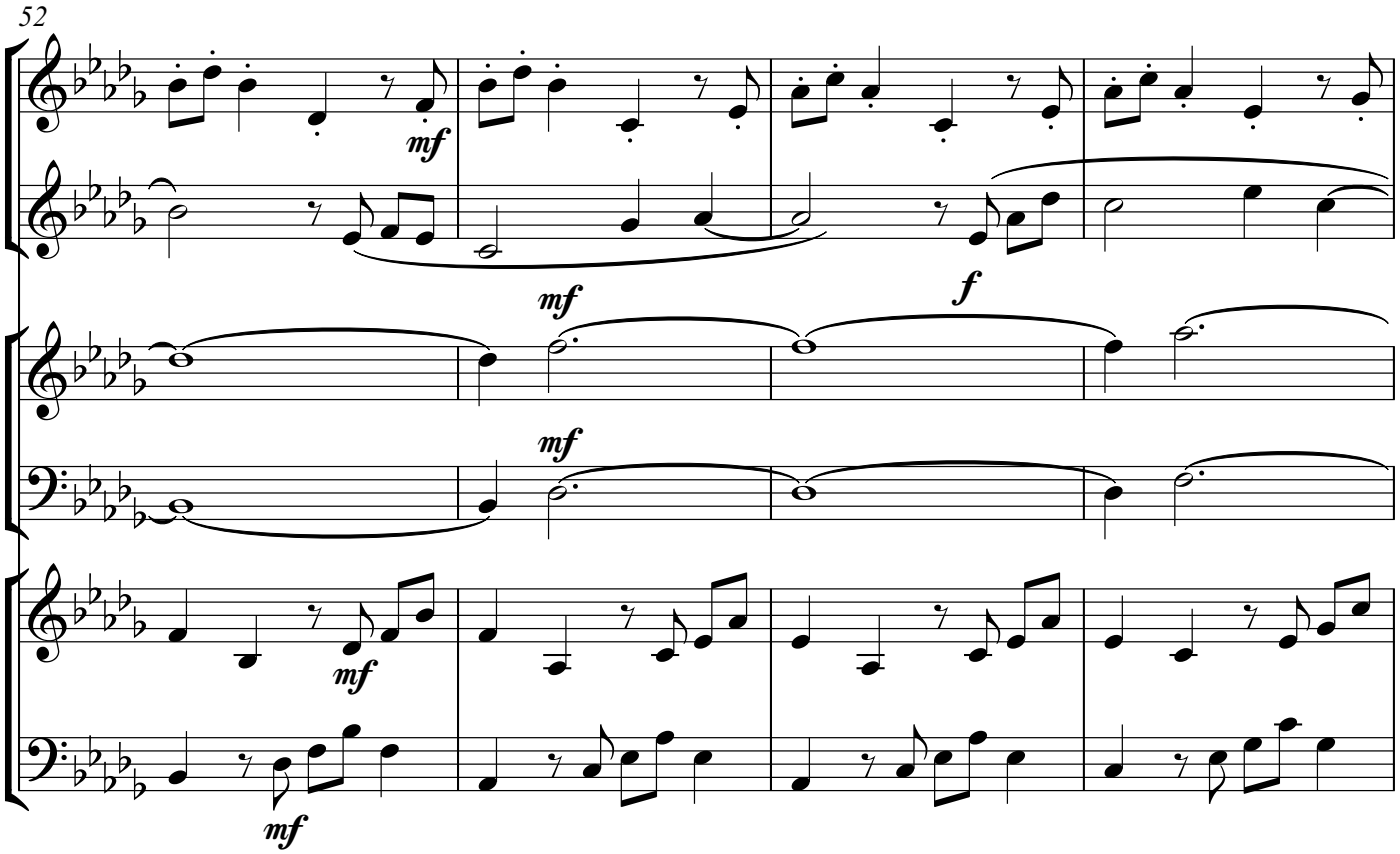

12
To Perc.
mp
Un-der-stand when
When peo-ple say__ like
don't real - ly
When peo-ple say_ like
When peo - ple say_like
15
mp
To Perc.
mp
To Cl.
To Perc.
mp
Ah_____
Ah_____
mp
Ah_____
mf

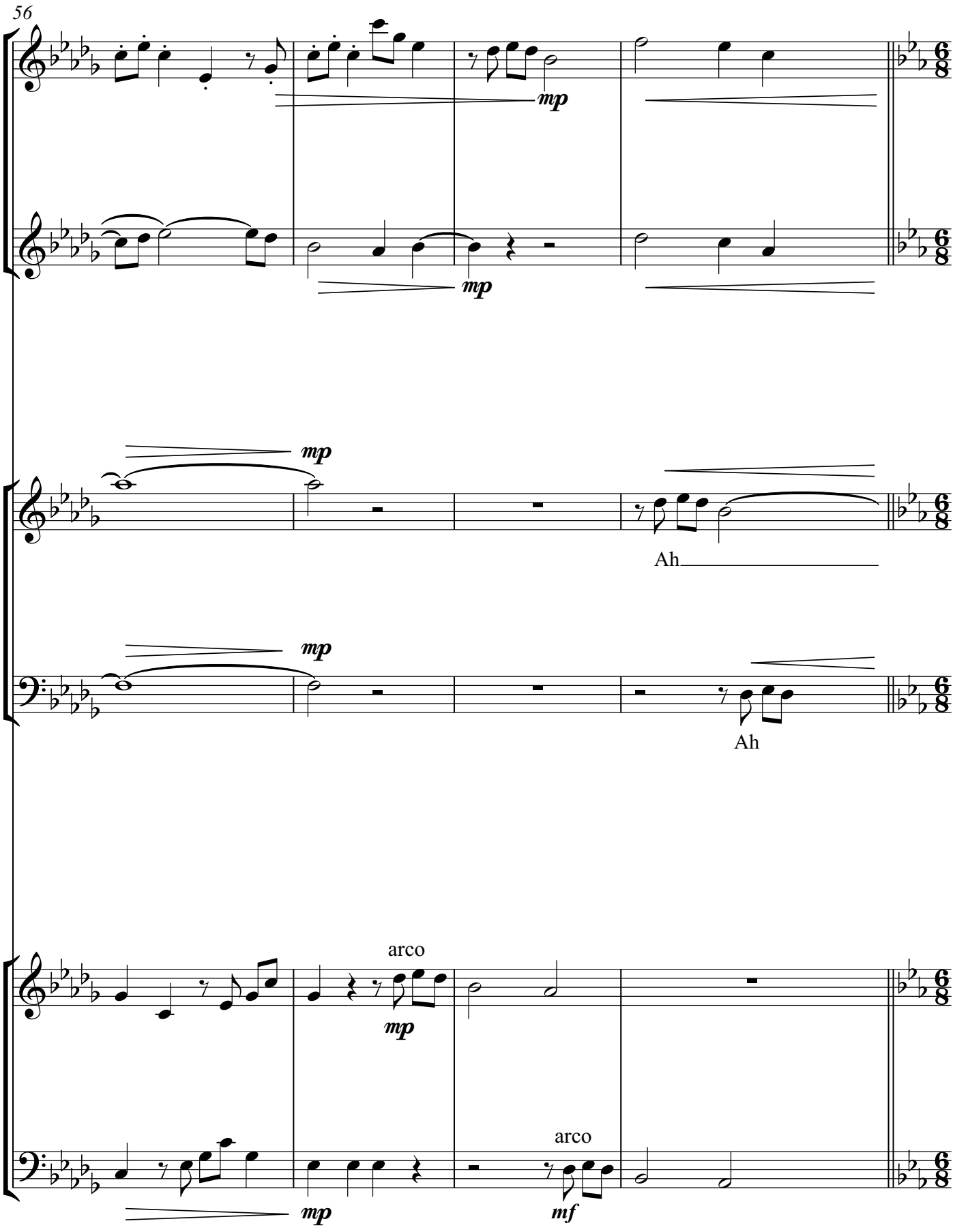

20
To Fl.
To Cl.
Clarinet in B♭
mp
mf
You don't real-ly un-der-stand
23
peo-ple
mf– confidently
When peo-ple say like
You don't real-ly un-der -stand

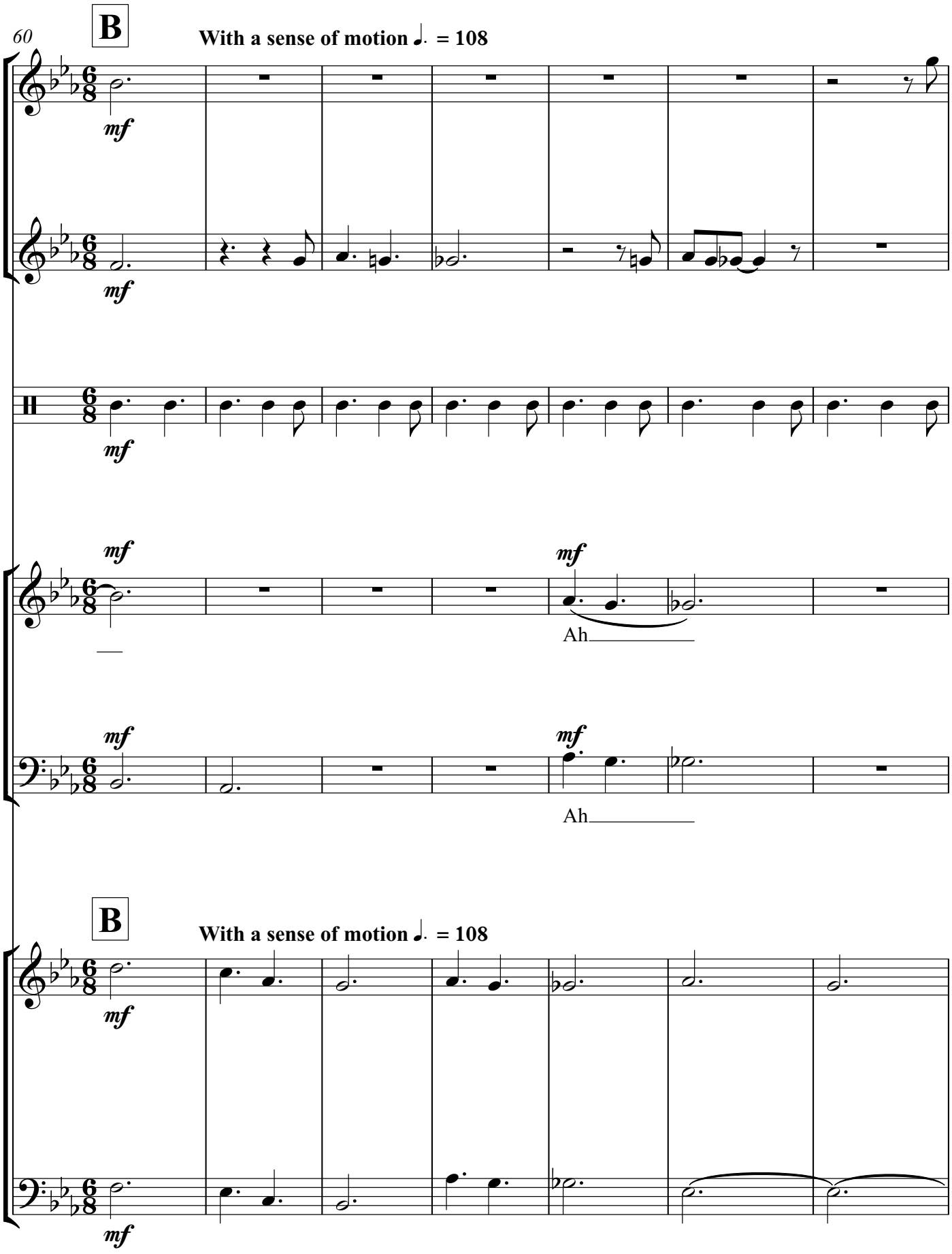

29
p– legato
I want peace
I want peace
What does it mean?
p
33
mf
What does it mean?
What does it mean?
mp– legato
mf

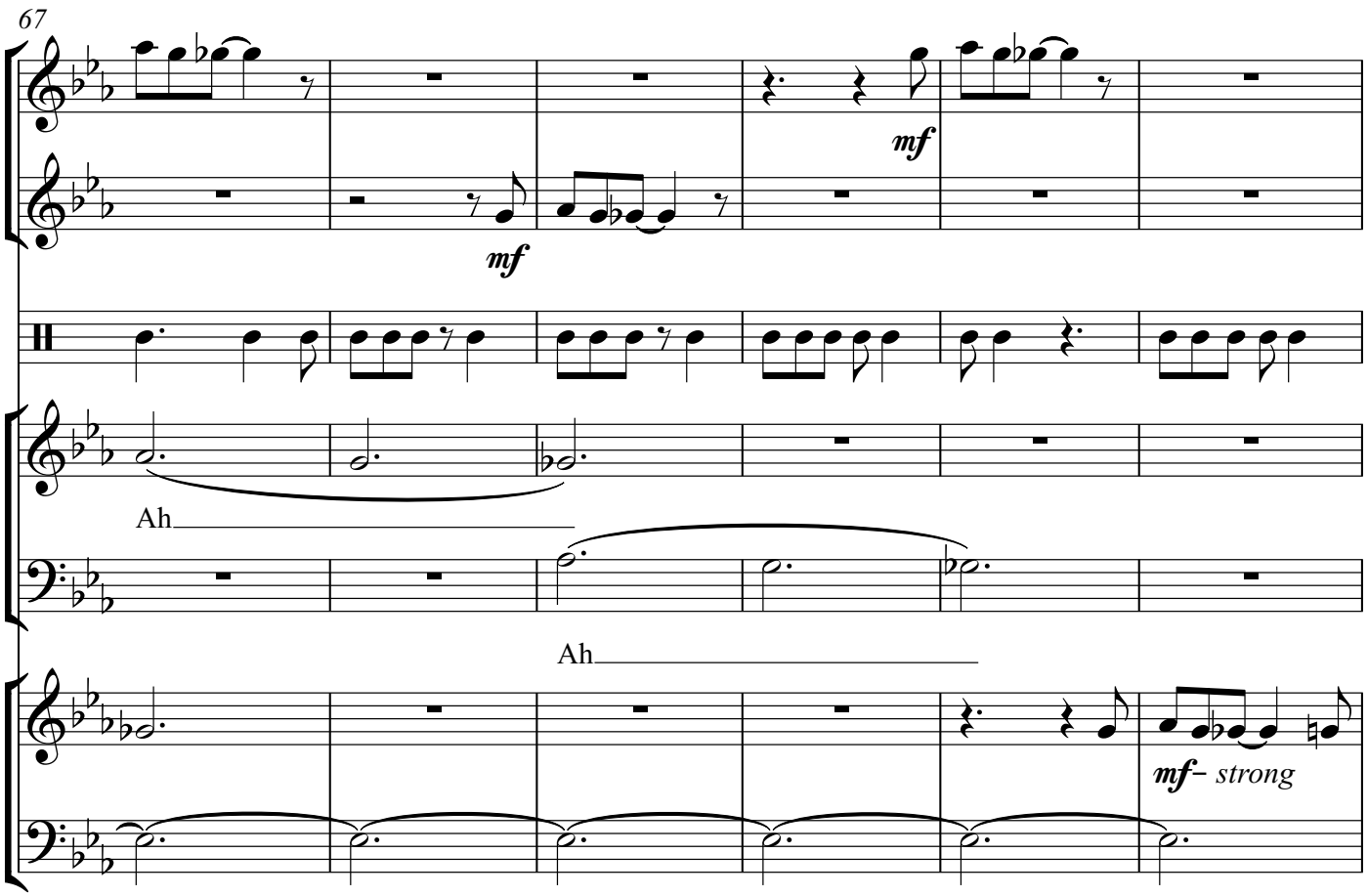

38
mf
mp
mf– legato
Ah
43
A
p
mp
f
p Stagger breaths
mf– legato
f
p Stagger breaths
Ah
A
pizz.
f
pizz.
p
p

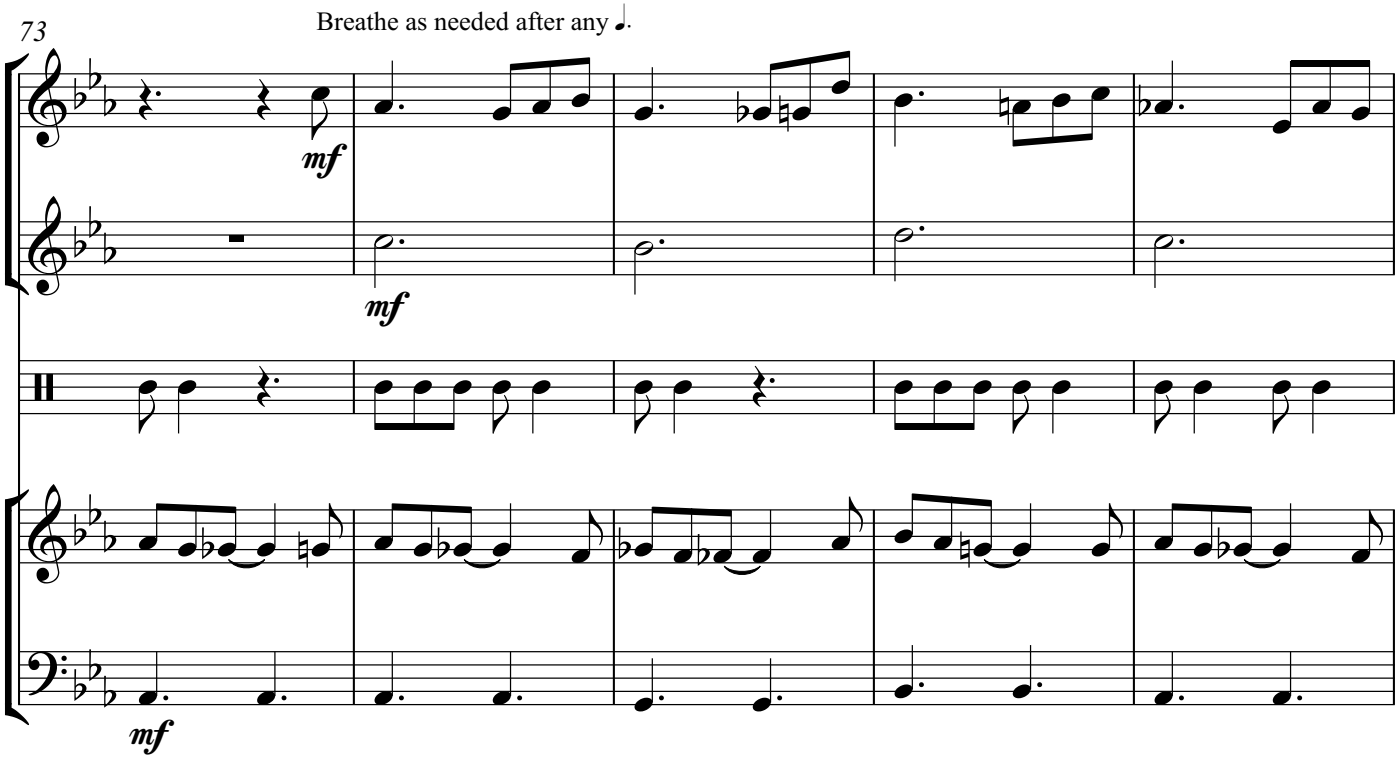

48
mp
mf
mp
mp
mp
mp

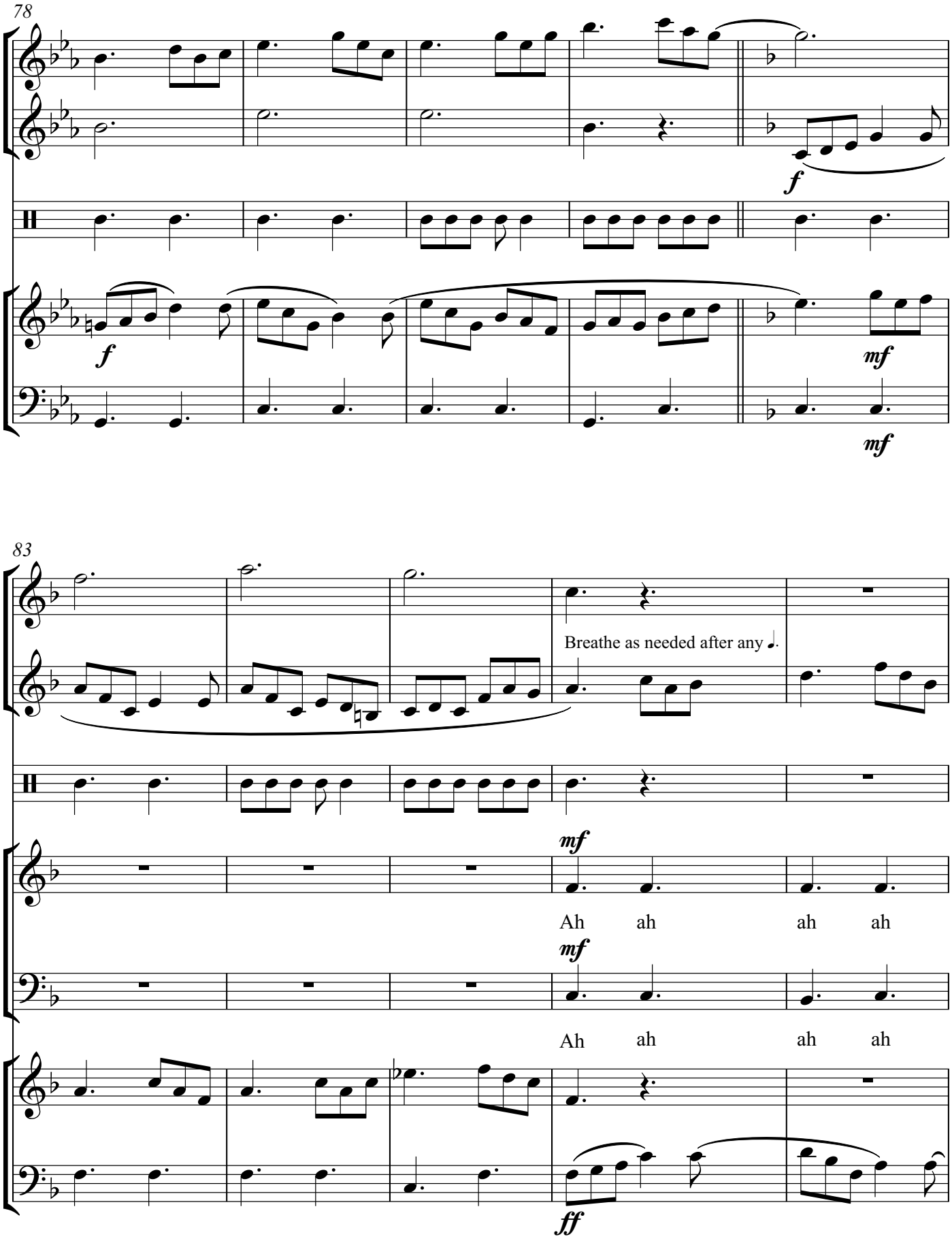

52
mf
mf
f
mf
mf
mf

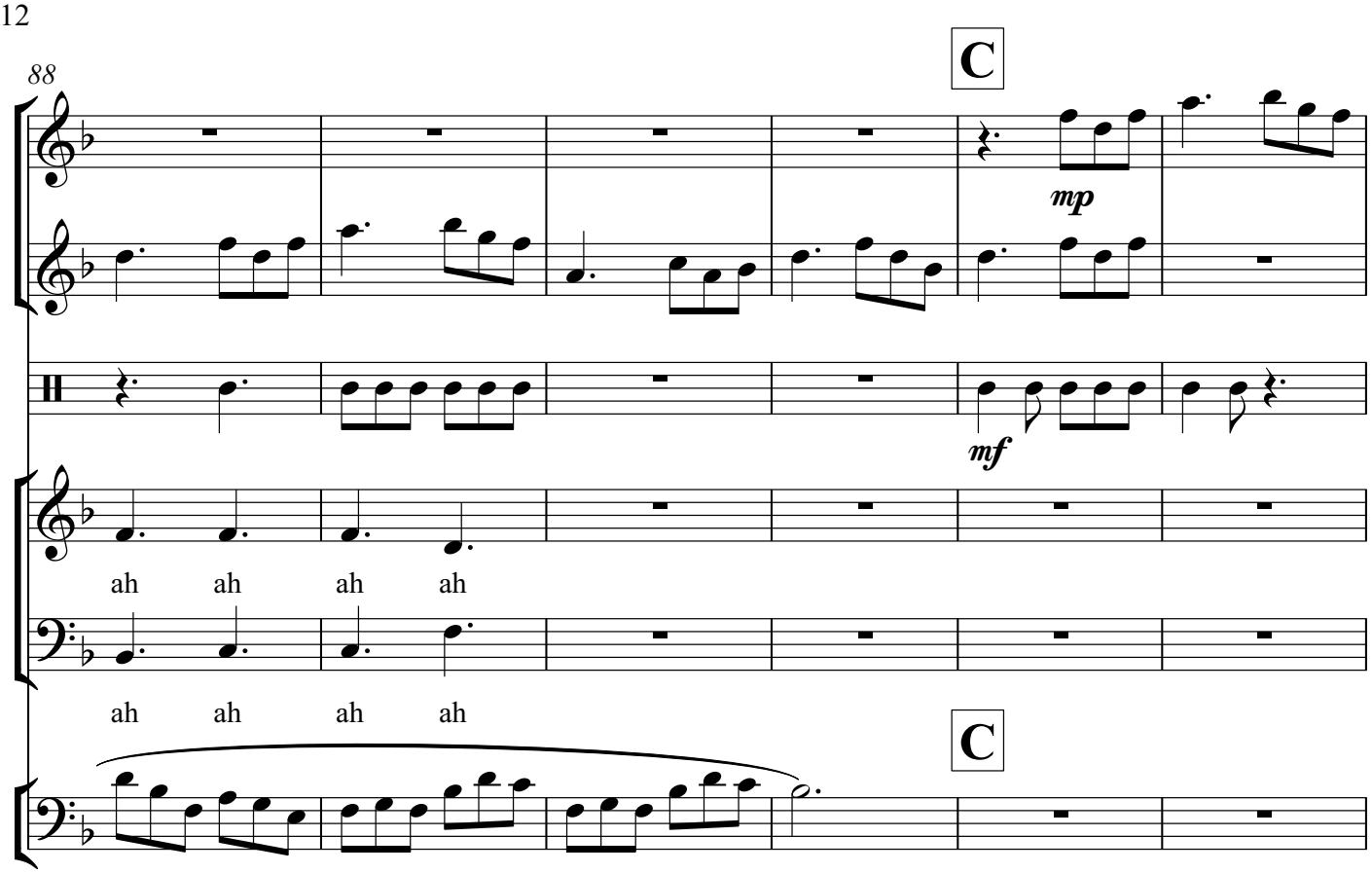

56
mp
mp
mp
Ah
mp
Ah
arco
mp
arco
mp
mf

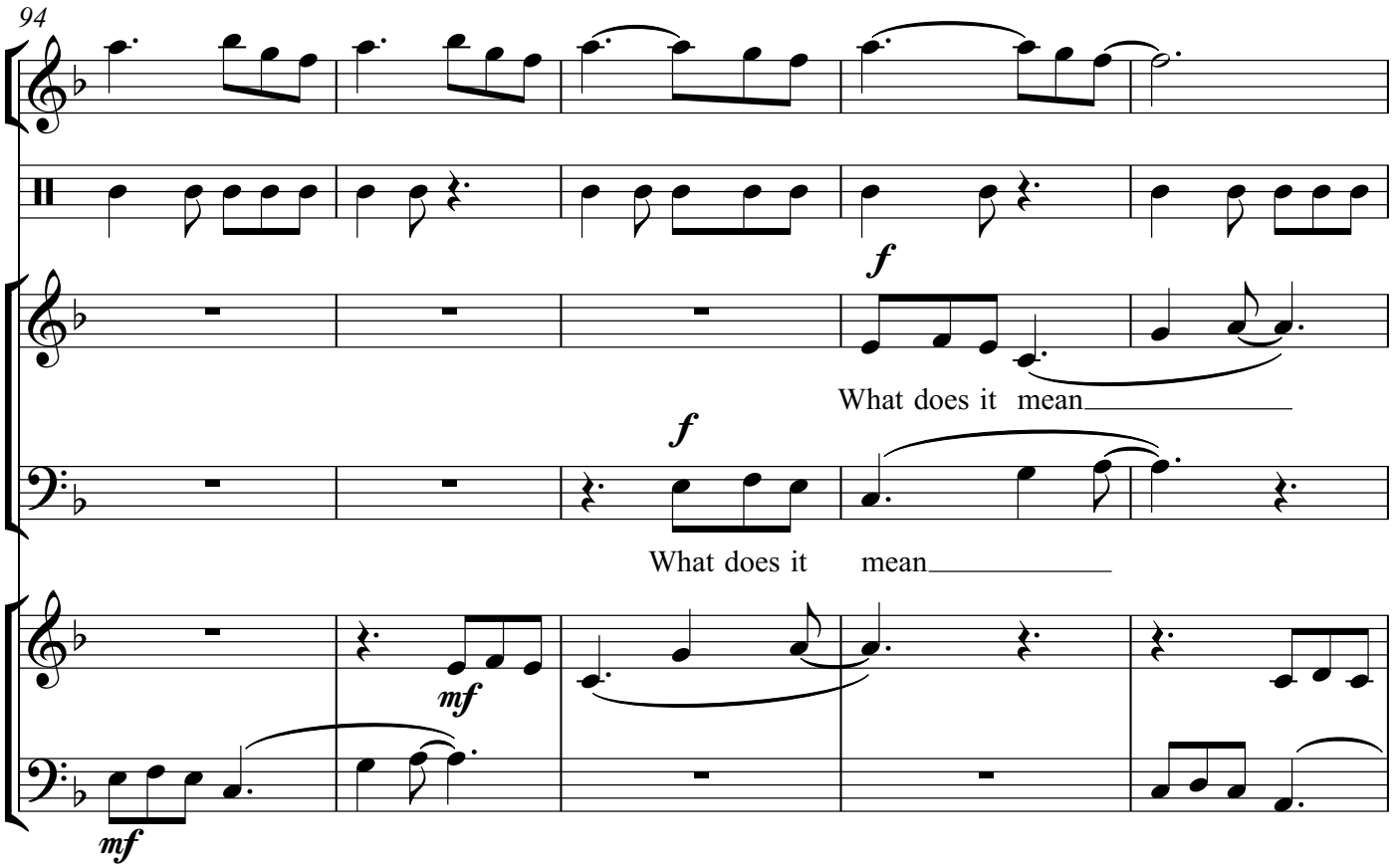

60
B
With a sense of motion ♩. = 108
mf
mf
mf
mf
mf
mf
Ah
mf
Ah
B
With a sense of motion ♩. = 108
mf
mf

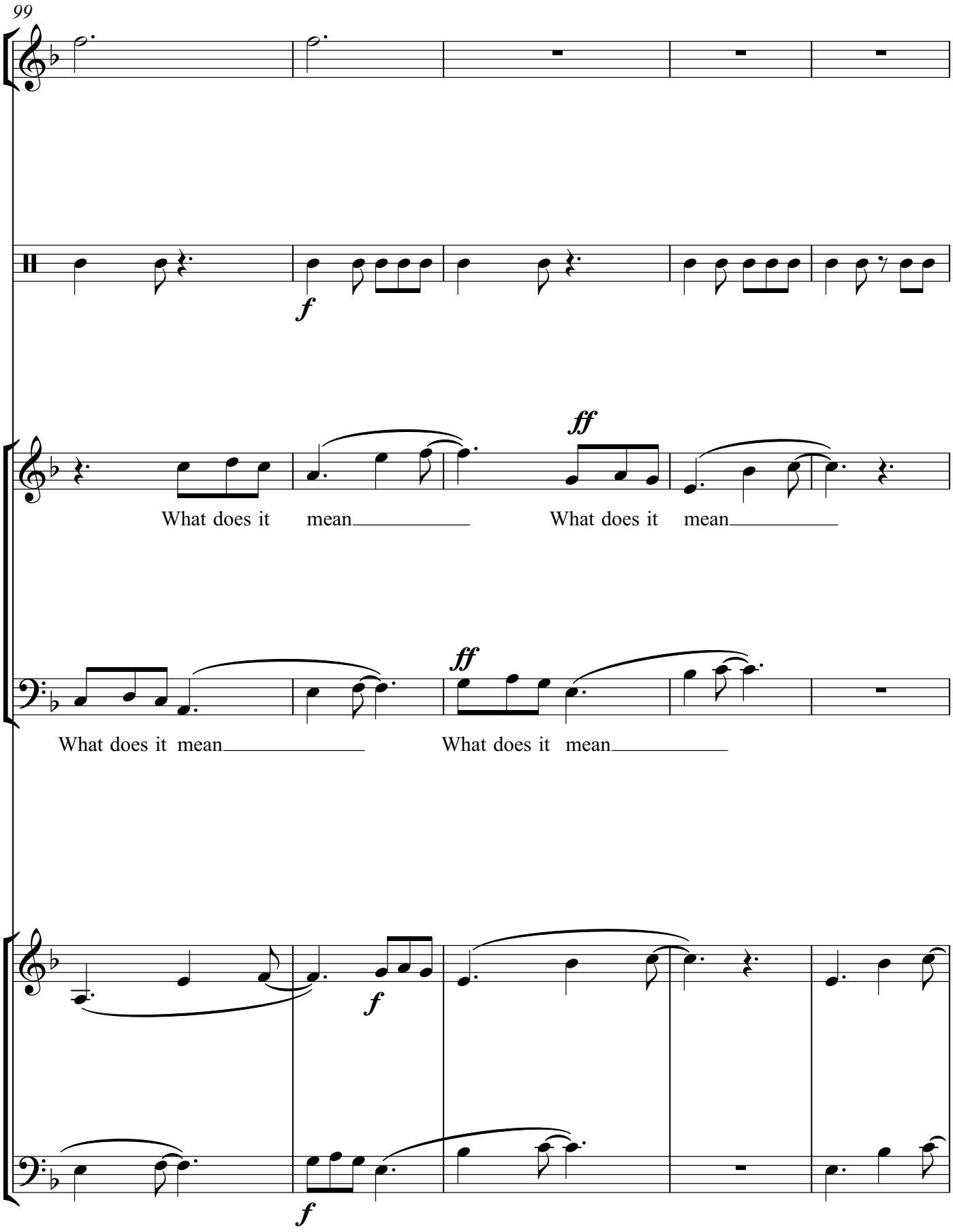

67
mf
mf
Ah
Ah
mf– strong

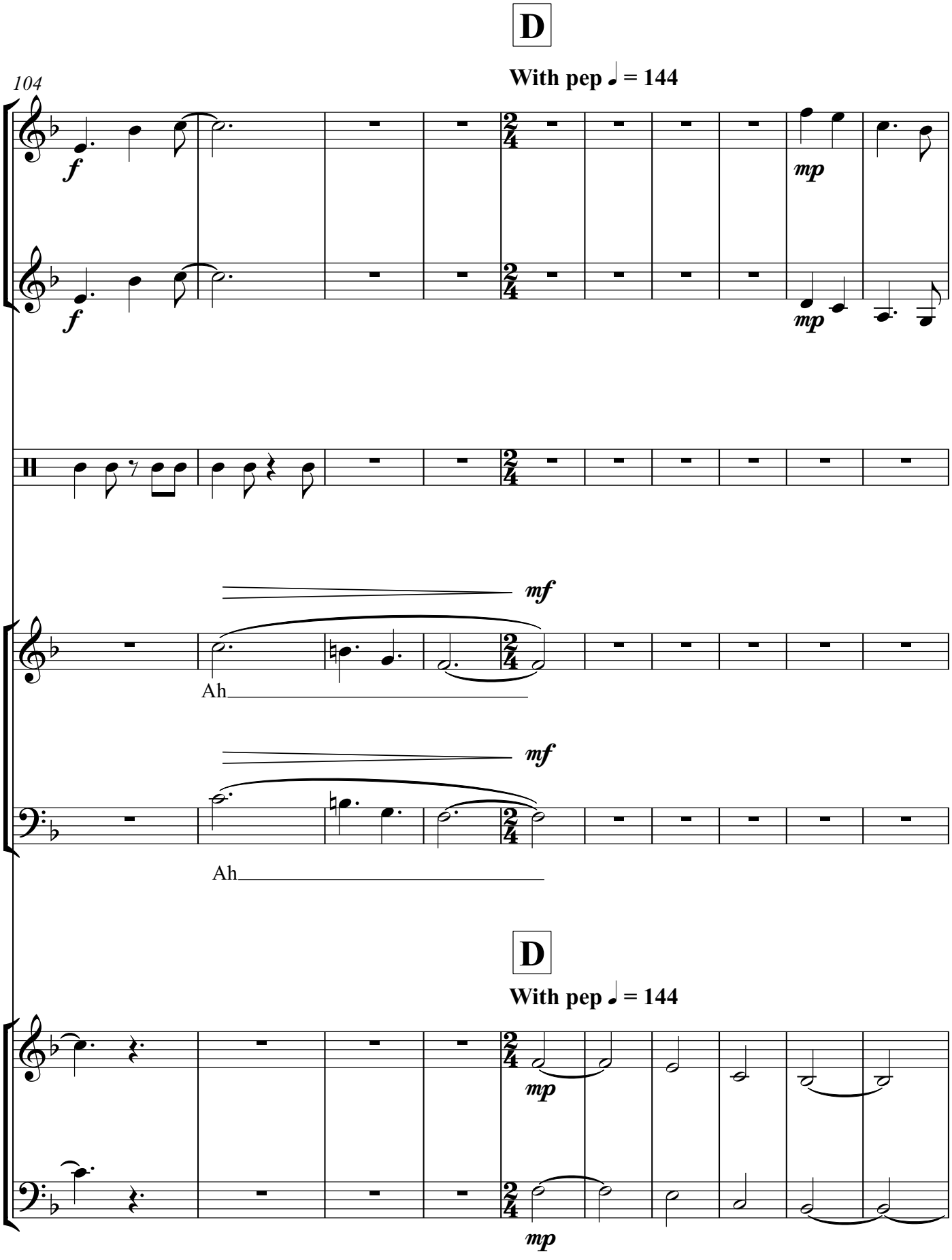

73
Breathe as needed after any
mf
mf
mf

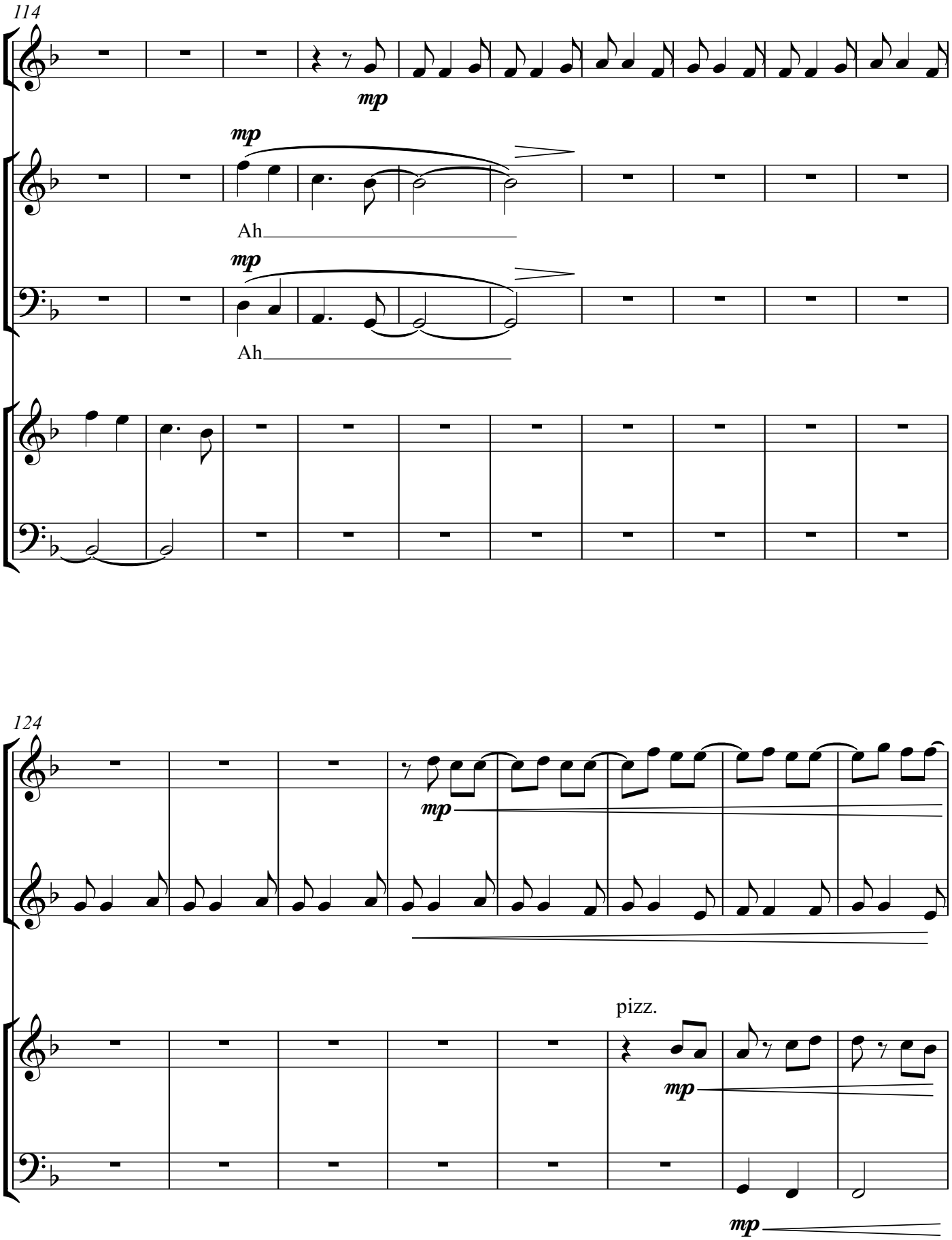

78
f
f
mf
mf
83
Breathe as needed after any ♩.
mf
Ah ah ah ah
mf
Ah ah ah ah
ff

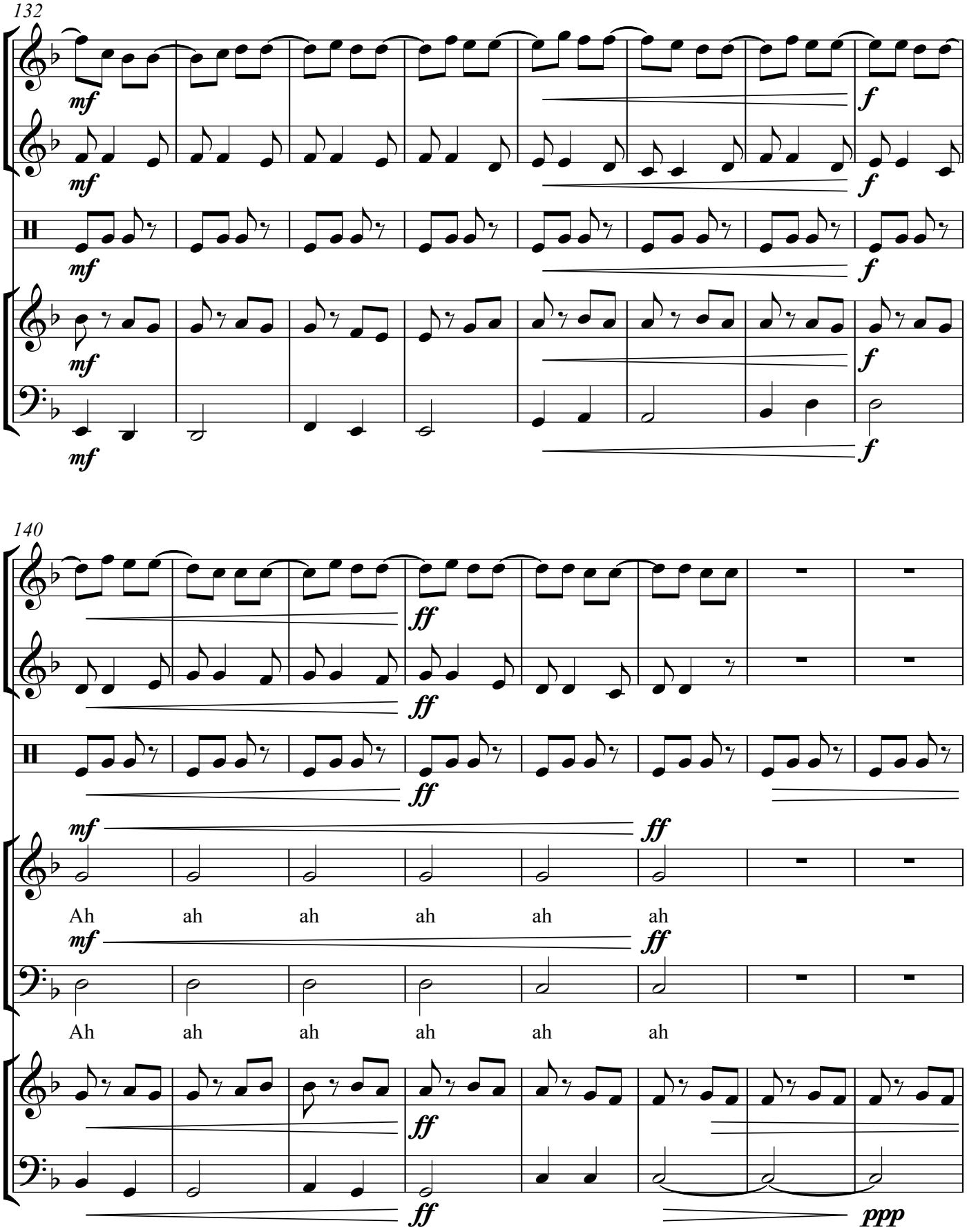

88
C
mp
mf
ah ah ah ah
ah ah ah ah
C

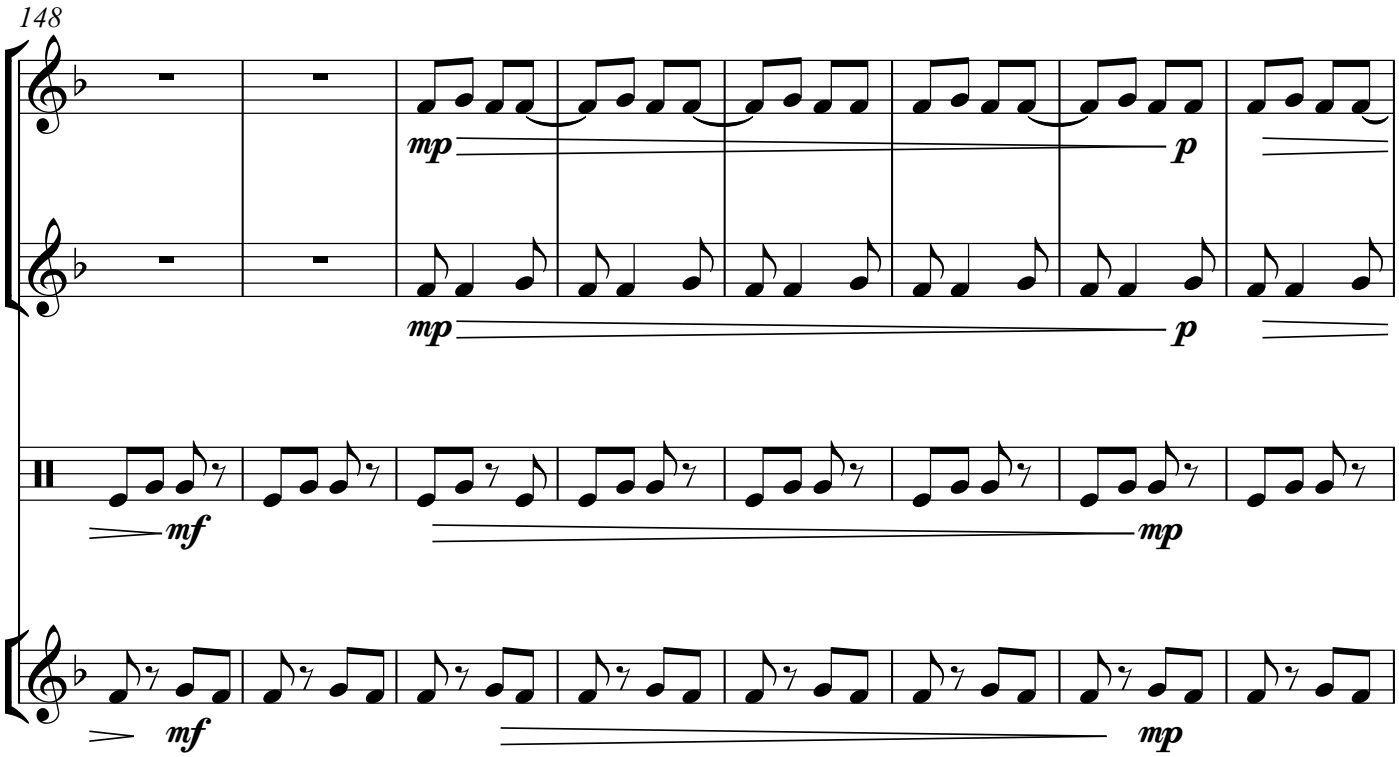

94
f
What does it mean
f
What does it mean
mf
mf

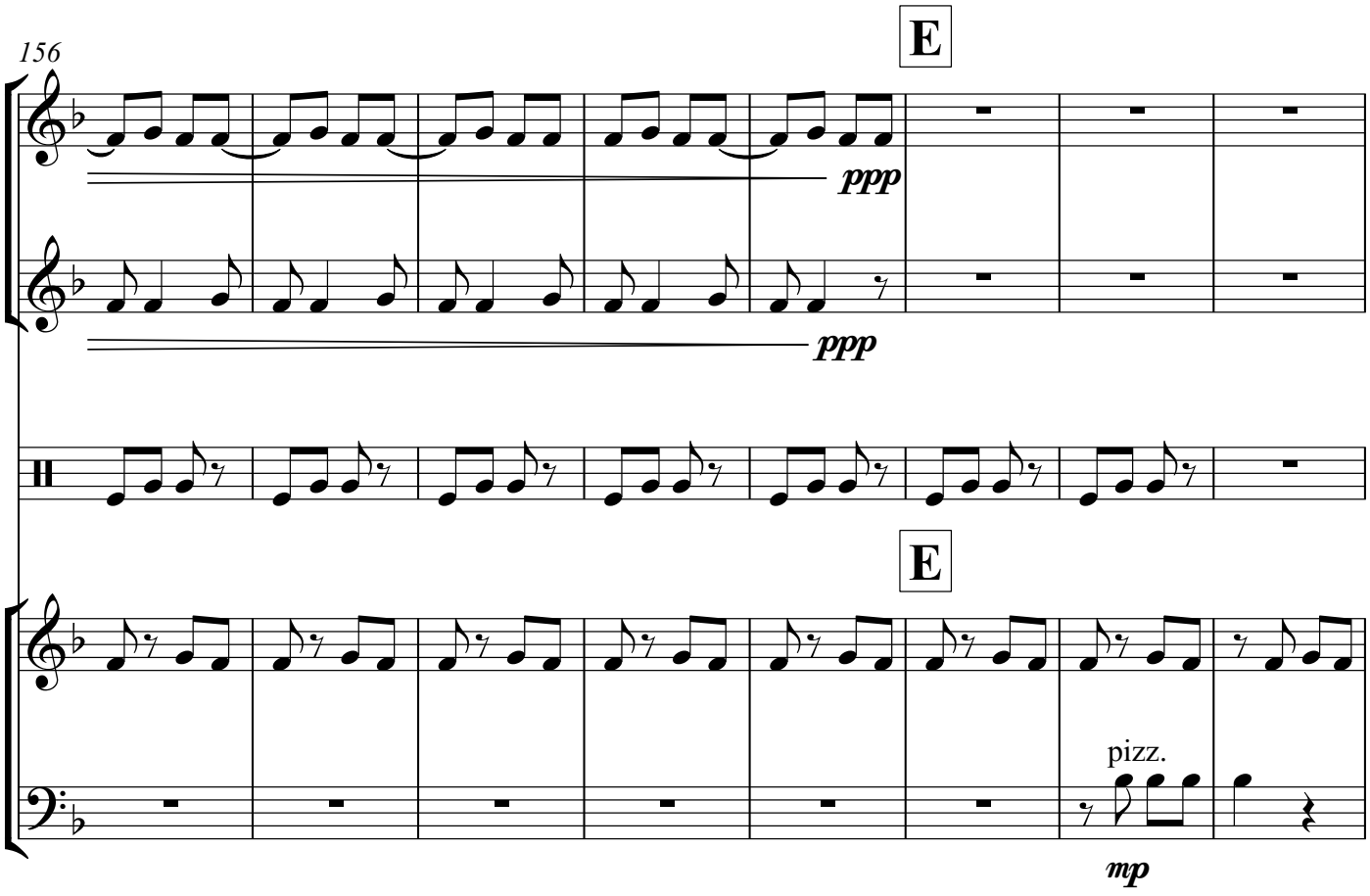

99
f
ff
What does it mean
What does it mean
ff
What does it mean
What does it mean
f
f

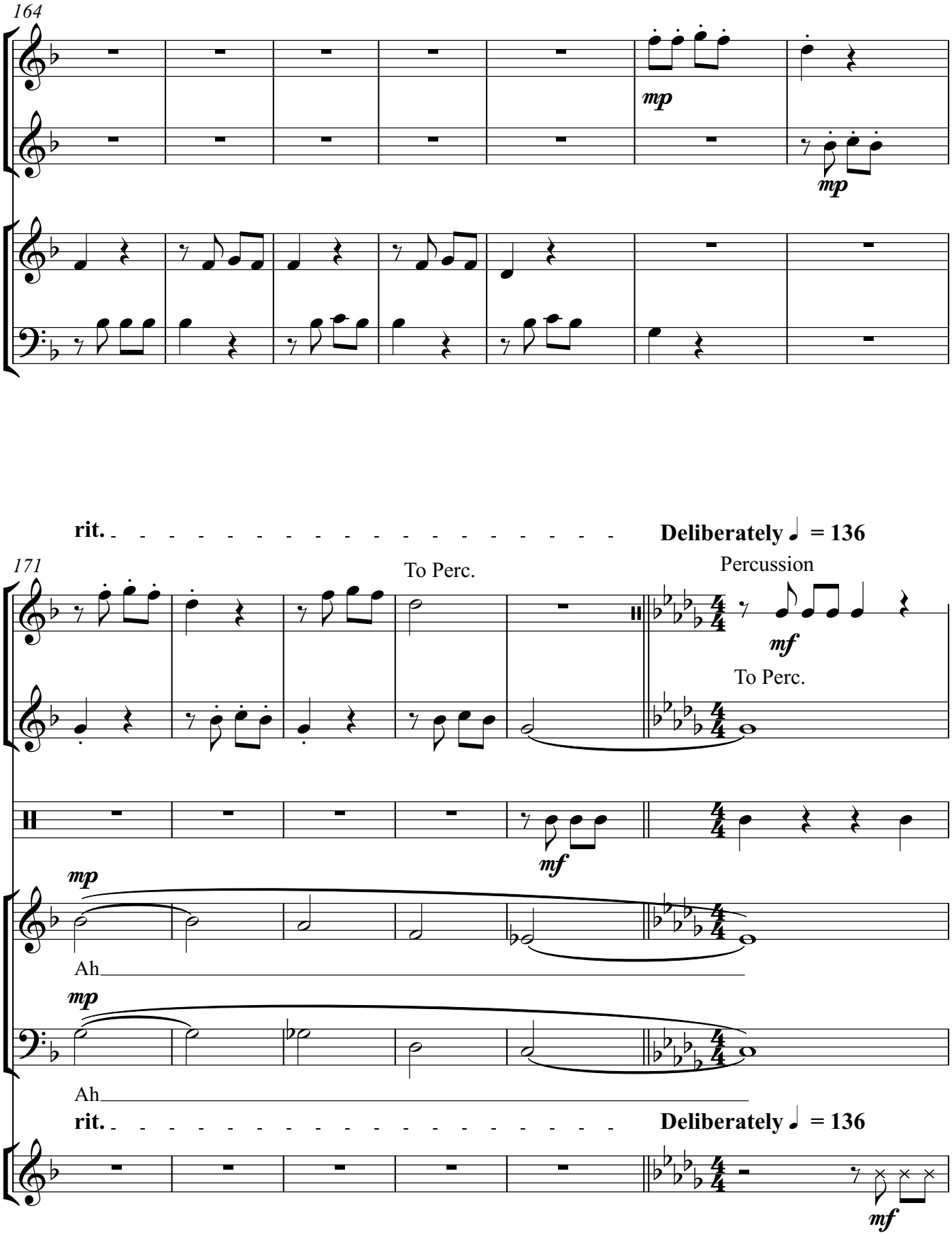

D
With pep ♩ = 144
104
f
f
mp
mp
mf
Ah
mf
Ah
D
With pep ♩ = 144
mp
mp


114
mp
mp
Ah
mp
Ah
124
mp
pizz.
mp
mp

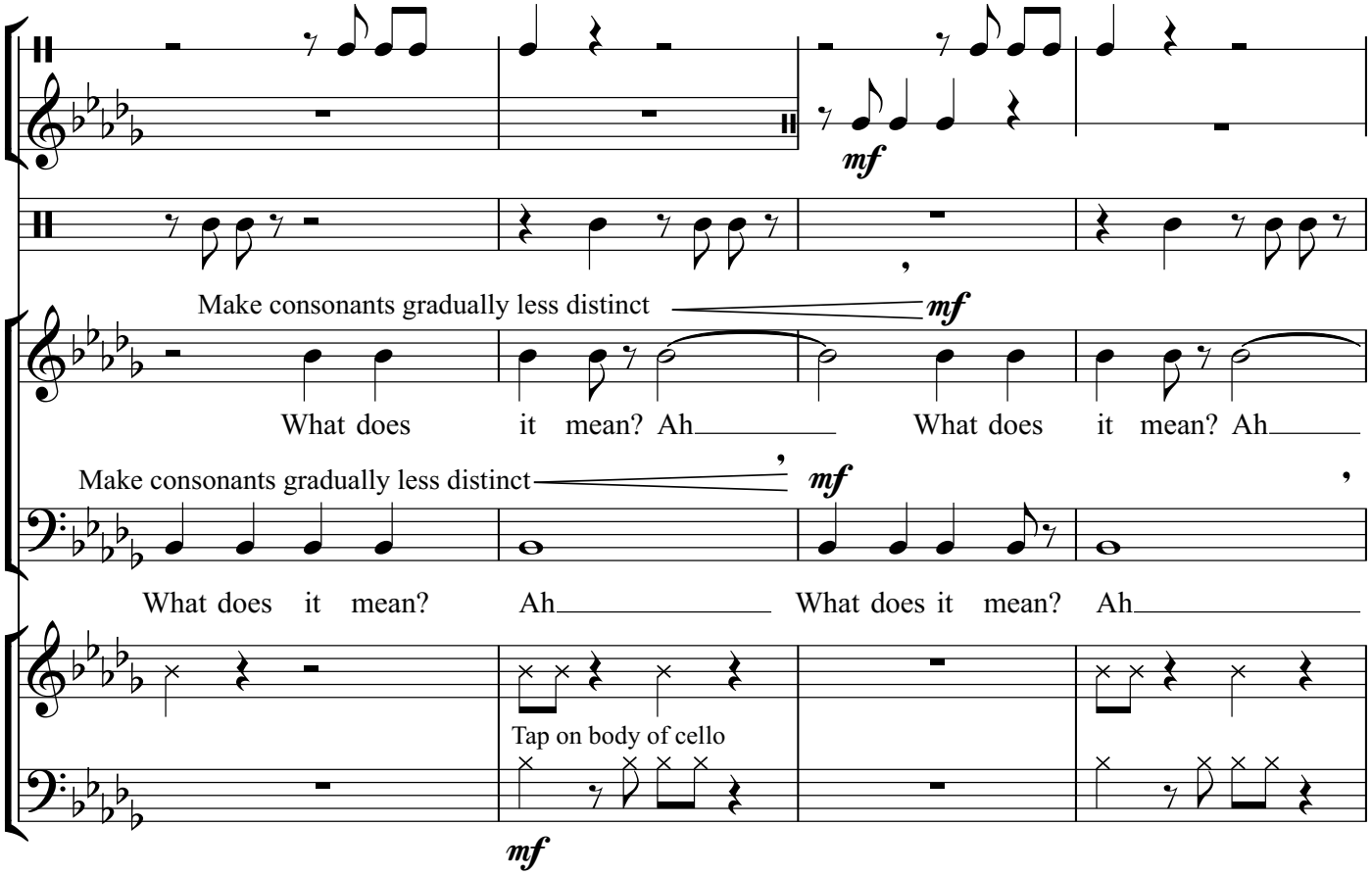

132
mf
f
140
ff
Ah ah ah ah ah ah
Ah ah ah ah ah ah
ppp


148
mp
p
mp
p
mf
mp
mf
mp

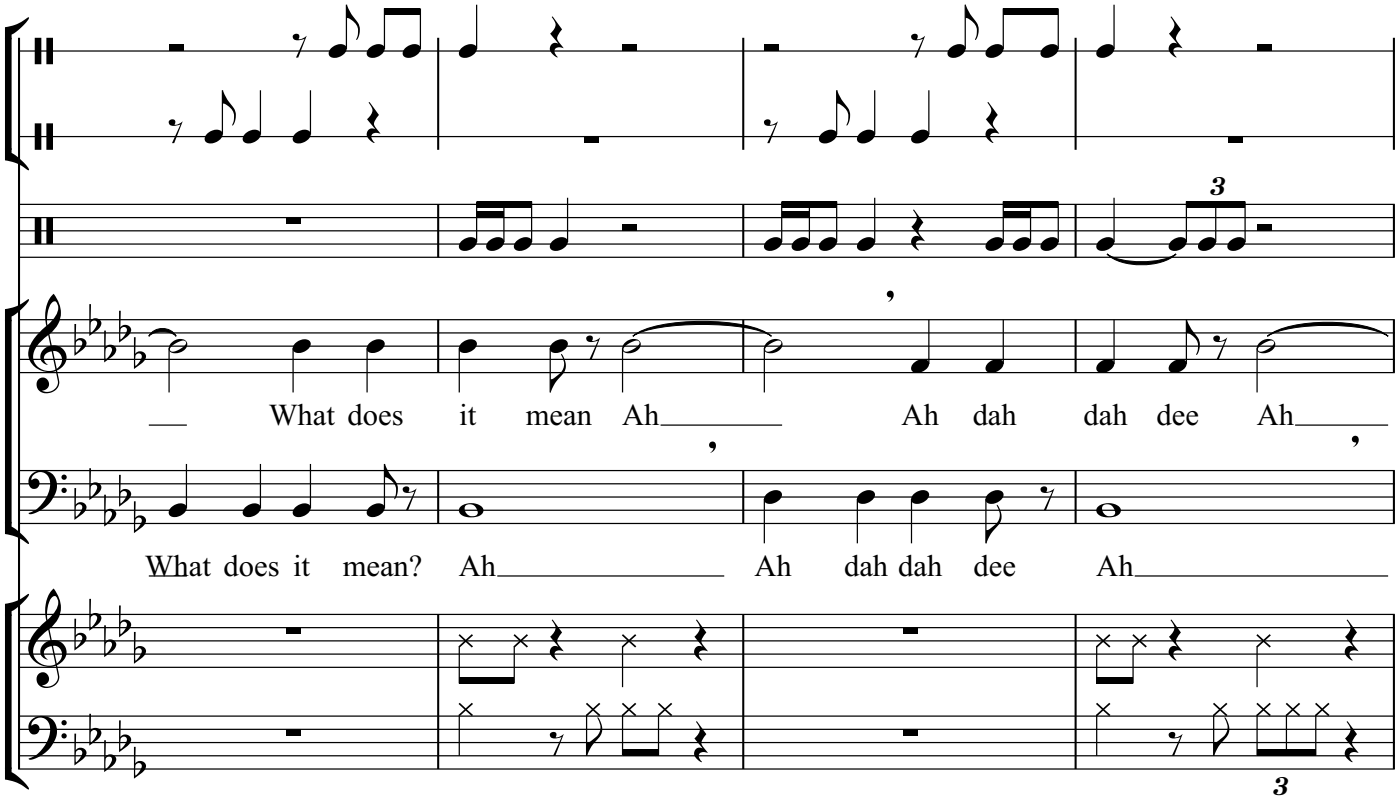

156
E
ppp
ppp
E
pizz.
mp

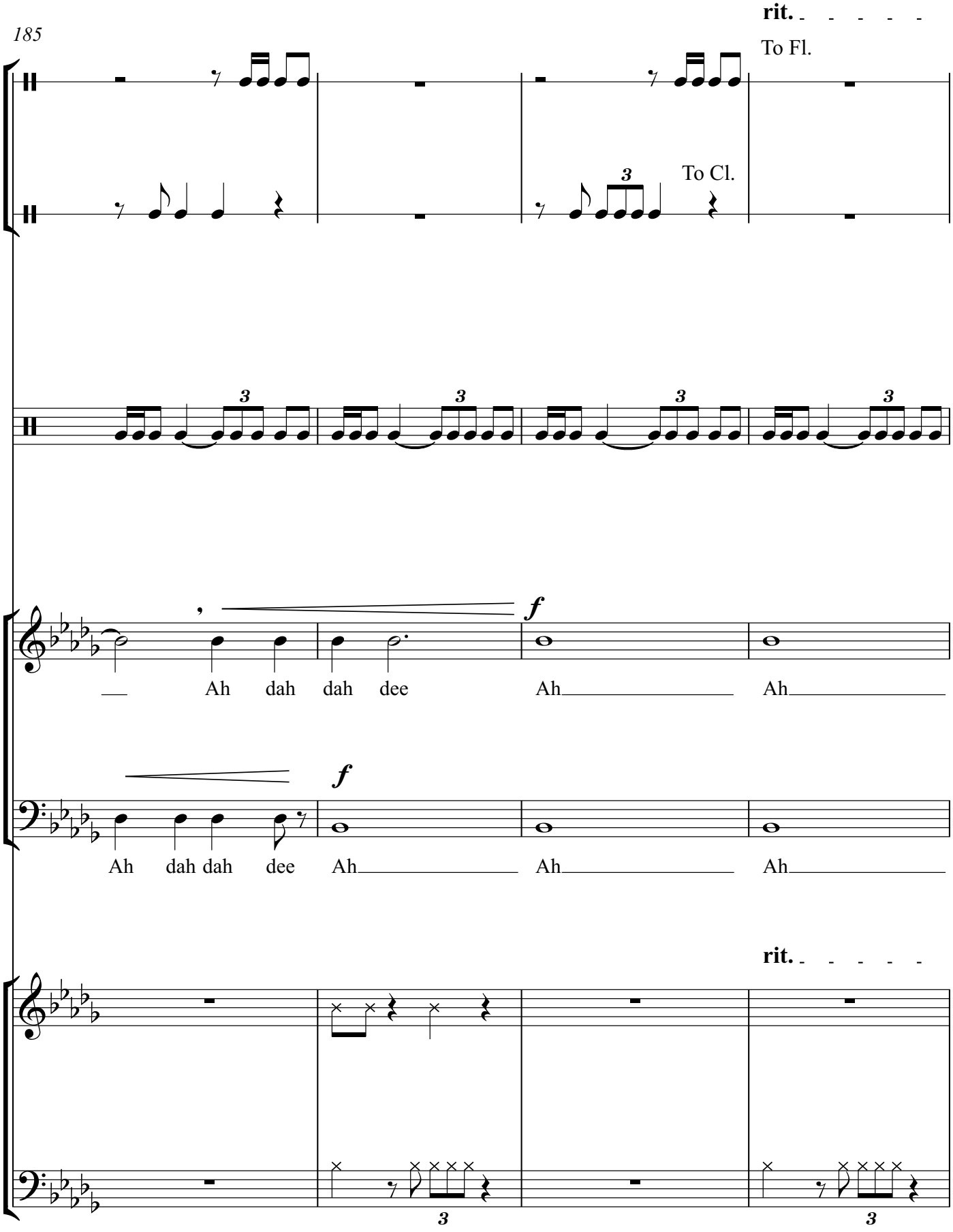

164
mp
mp
rit.
Deliberately ♩ = 136
171
To Perc.
Percussion
mf
To Perc.
mf
mp
Ah
mp
Ah
rit.
Deliberately ♩ = 136
mf

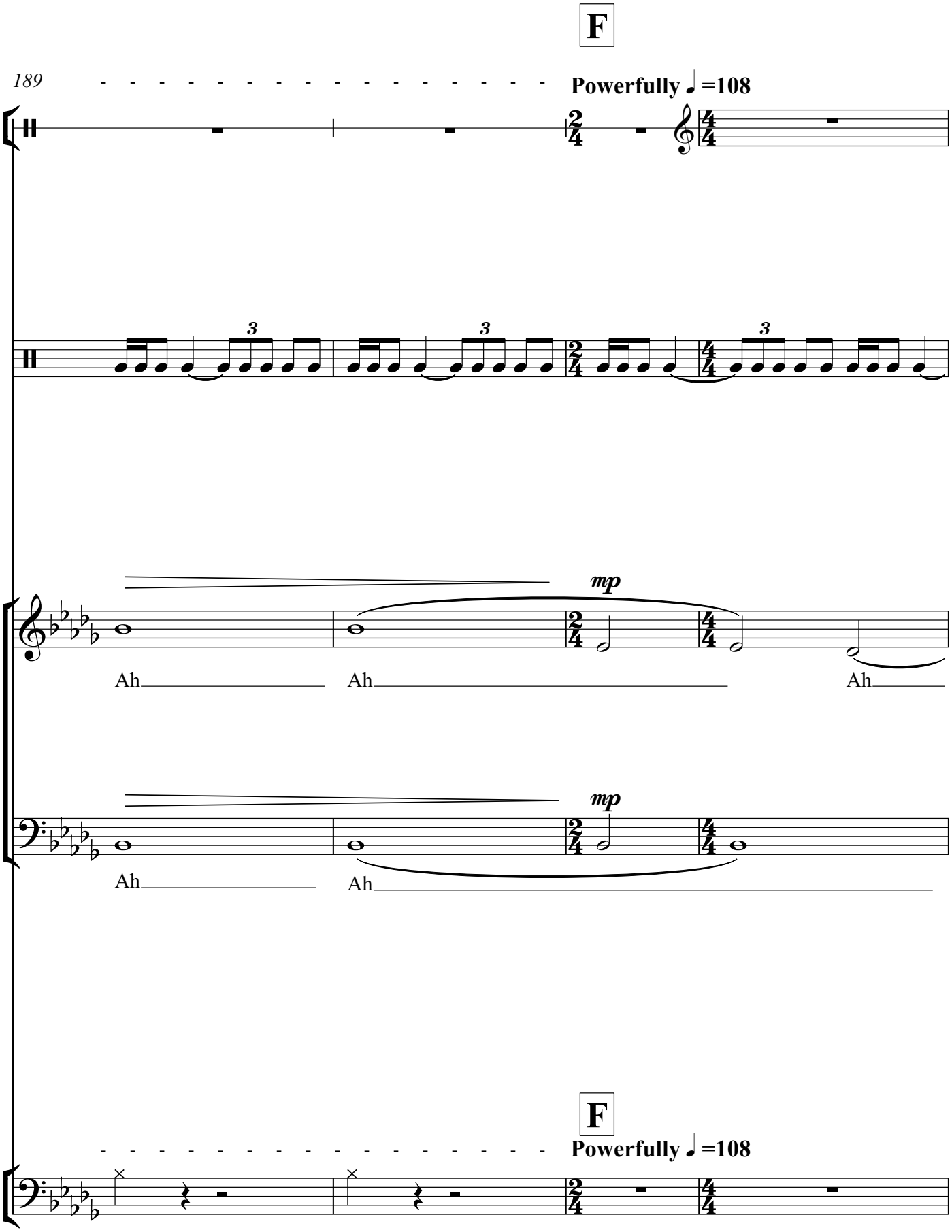
177

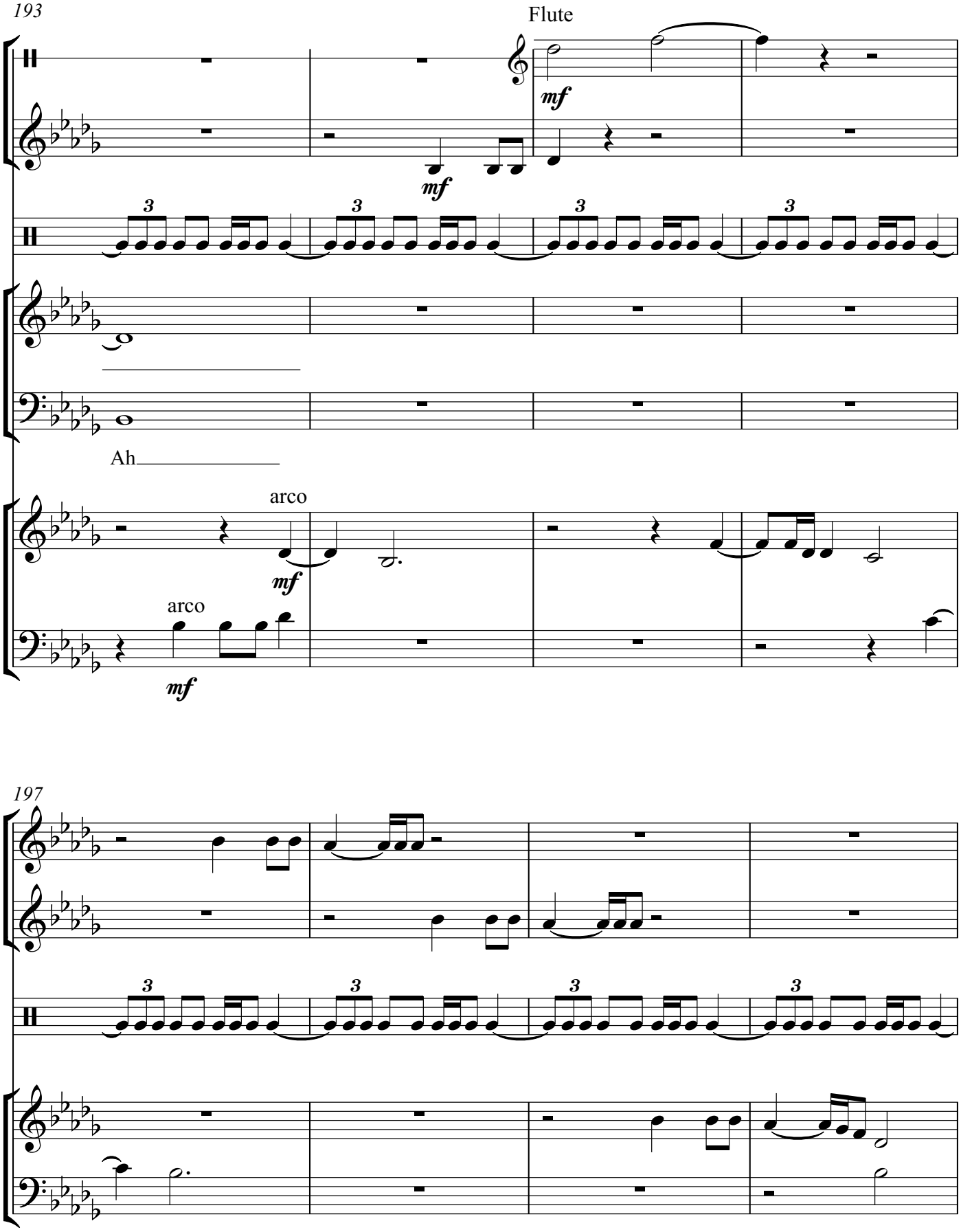

mf
Make consonants gradually less distinct
mf
What does it mean? Ah
What does it mean? Ah
Make consonants gradually less distinct
mf
What does it mean? Ah
What does it mean? Ah
Tap on body of cello
mf

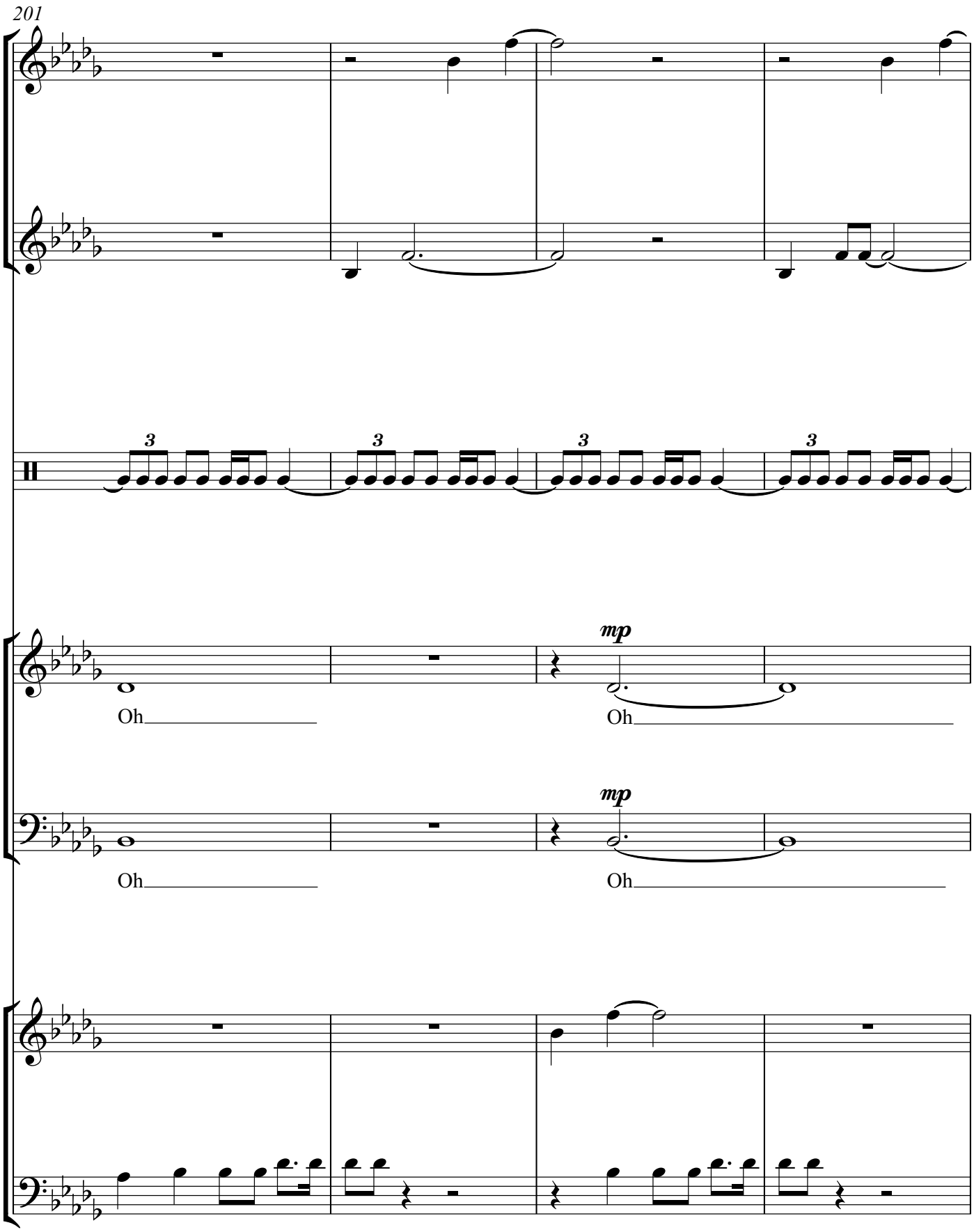
181

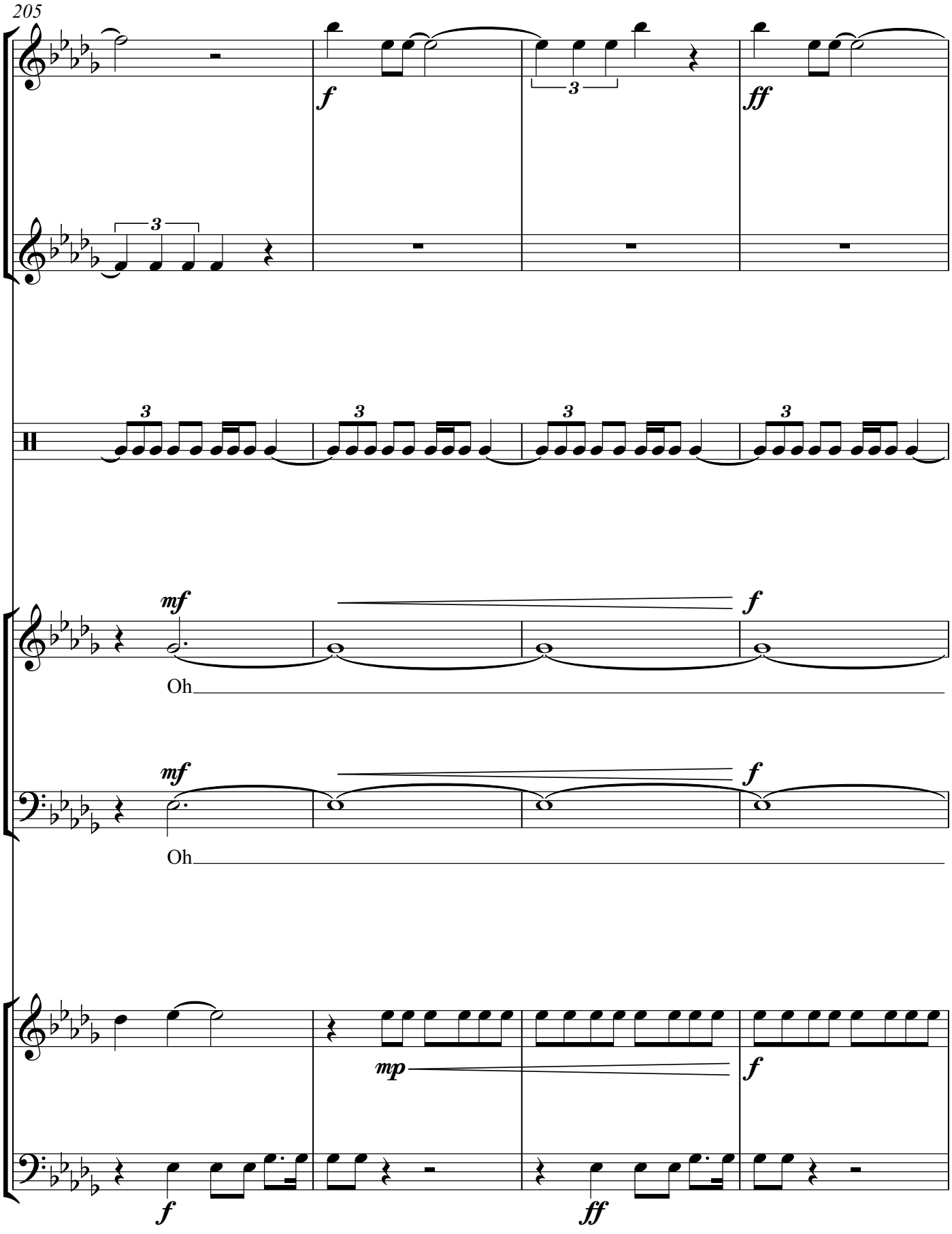

3
What does it mean Ah
Ah dah dah dee Ah
What does it mean? Ah
Ah dah dah dee Ah
3

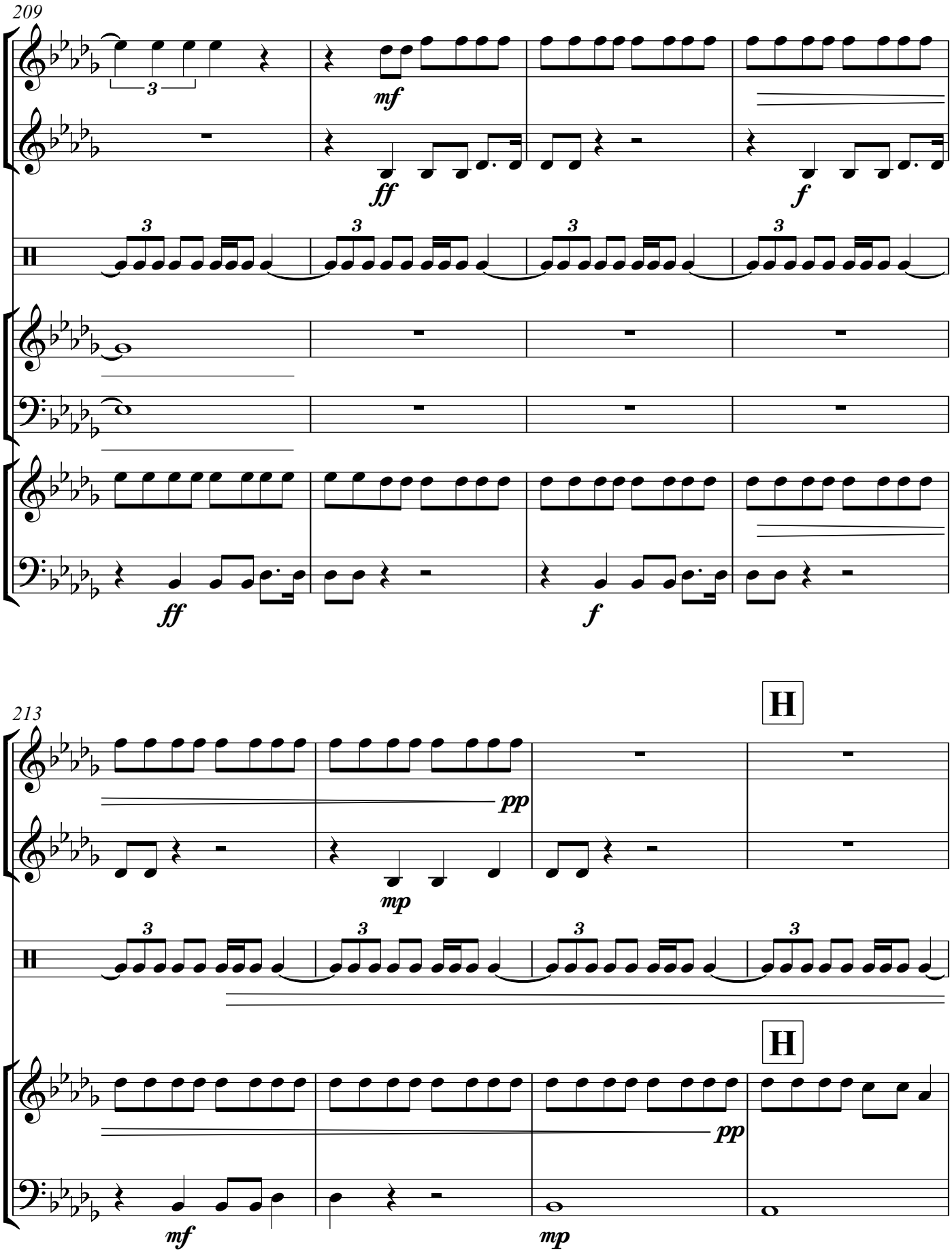

185
rit.
To Fl.
To Cl.
3
f
Ah dah dah dee Ah Ah
Ah dah dah dee Ah Ah Ah
rit.

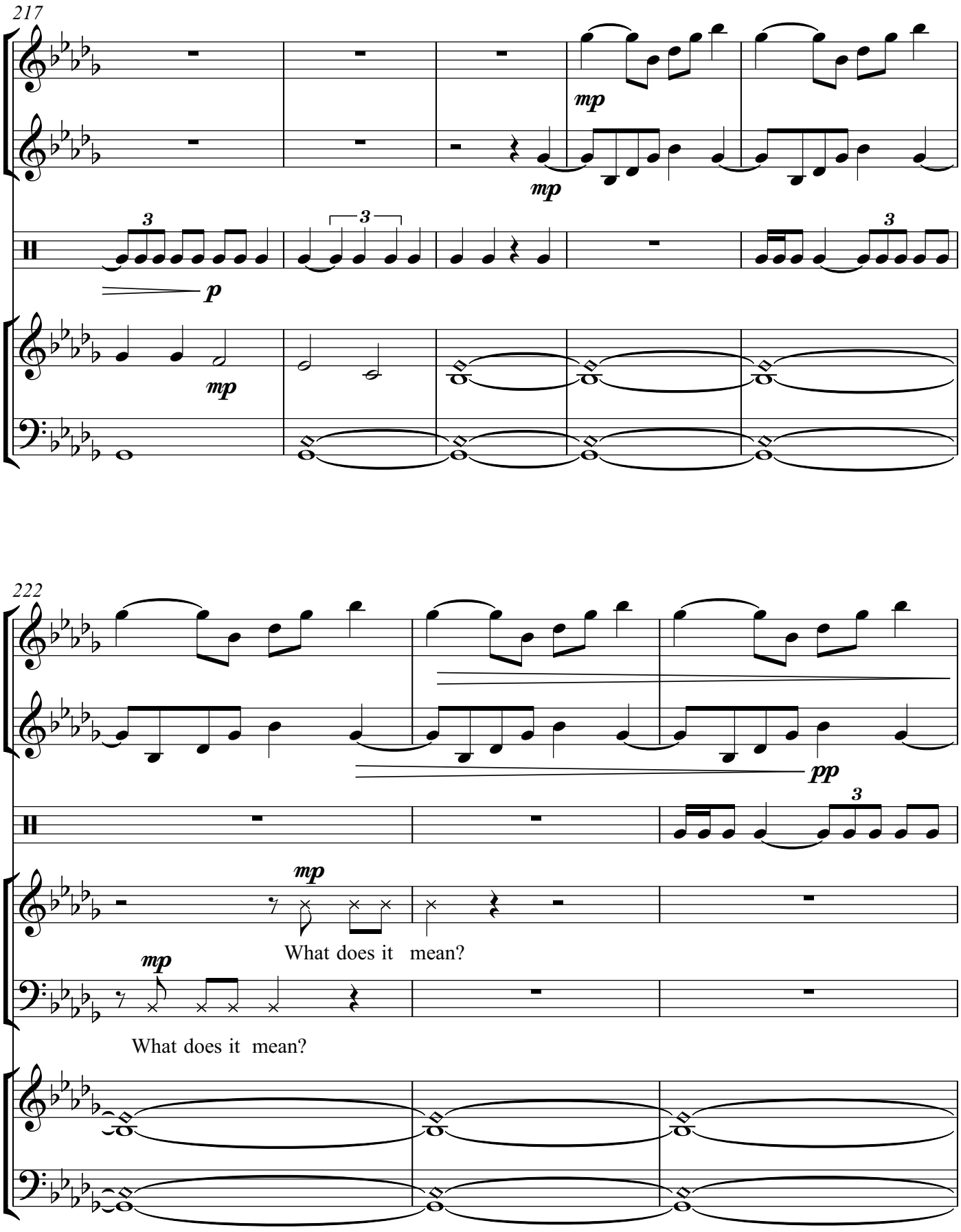

F
189
Powerfully ♩=108
3
3
3
mp
Ah
Ah
Ah
mp
Ah
Ah
F
Powerfully ♩=108

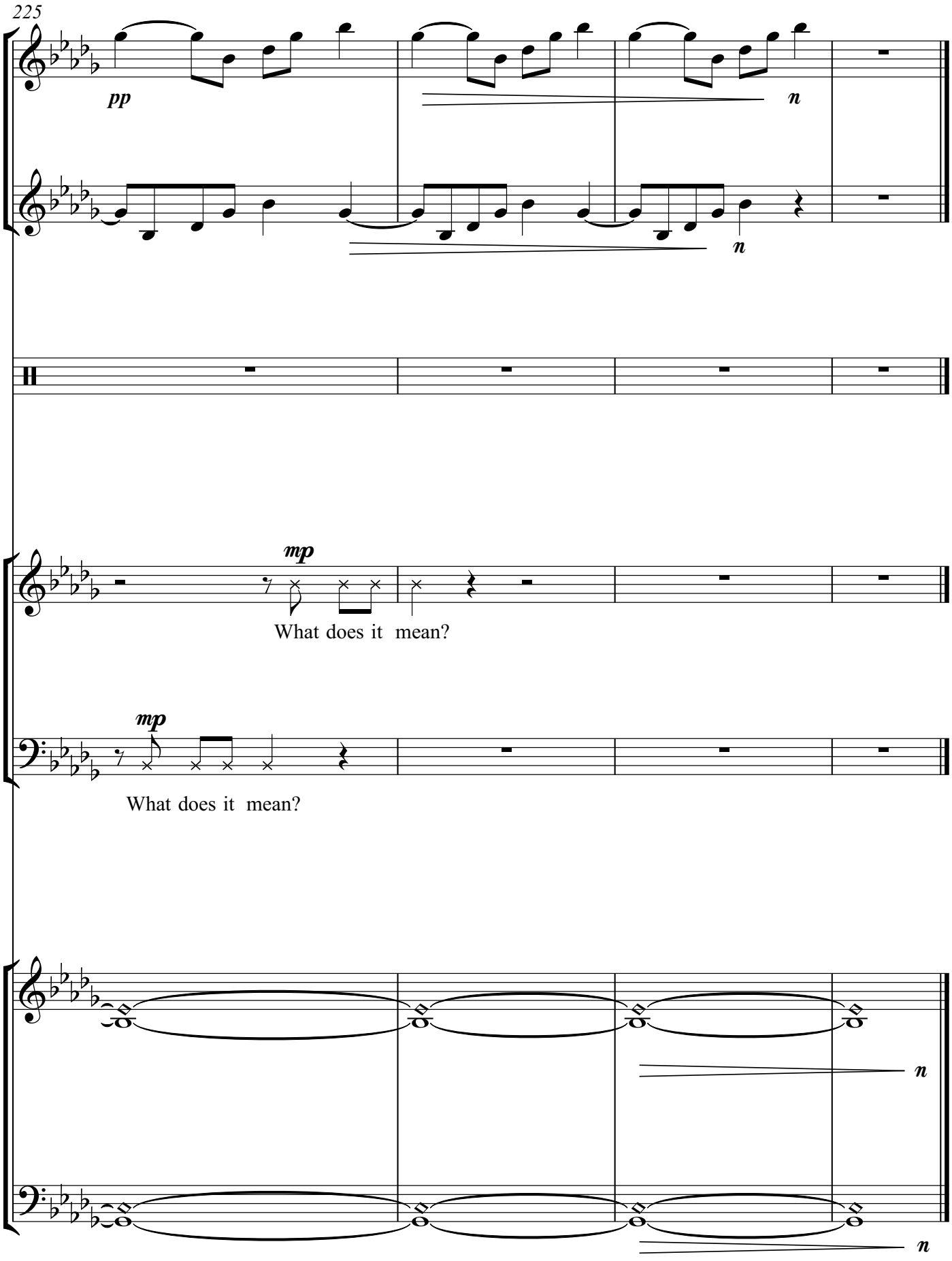

193
Flute
mf
mf
3
3
3
3
Ah
arco
mf
arco
mf
197
3
3
3
3


201
3
3
3
3
mp
Oh
Oh
mp
Oh
Oh


205
f
3
ff
3
3
3
3
3
mf
f
Oh
mf
f
Oh
mp
f
f
ff

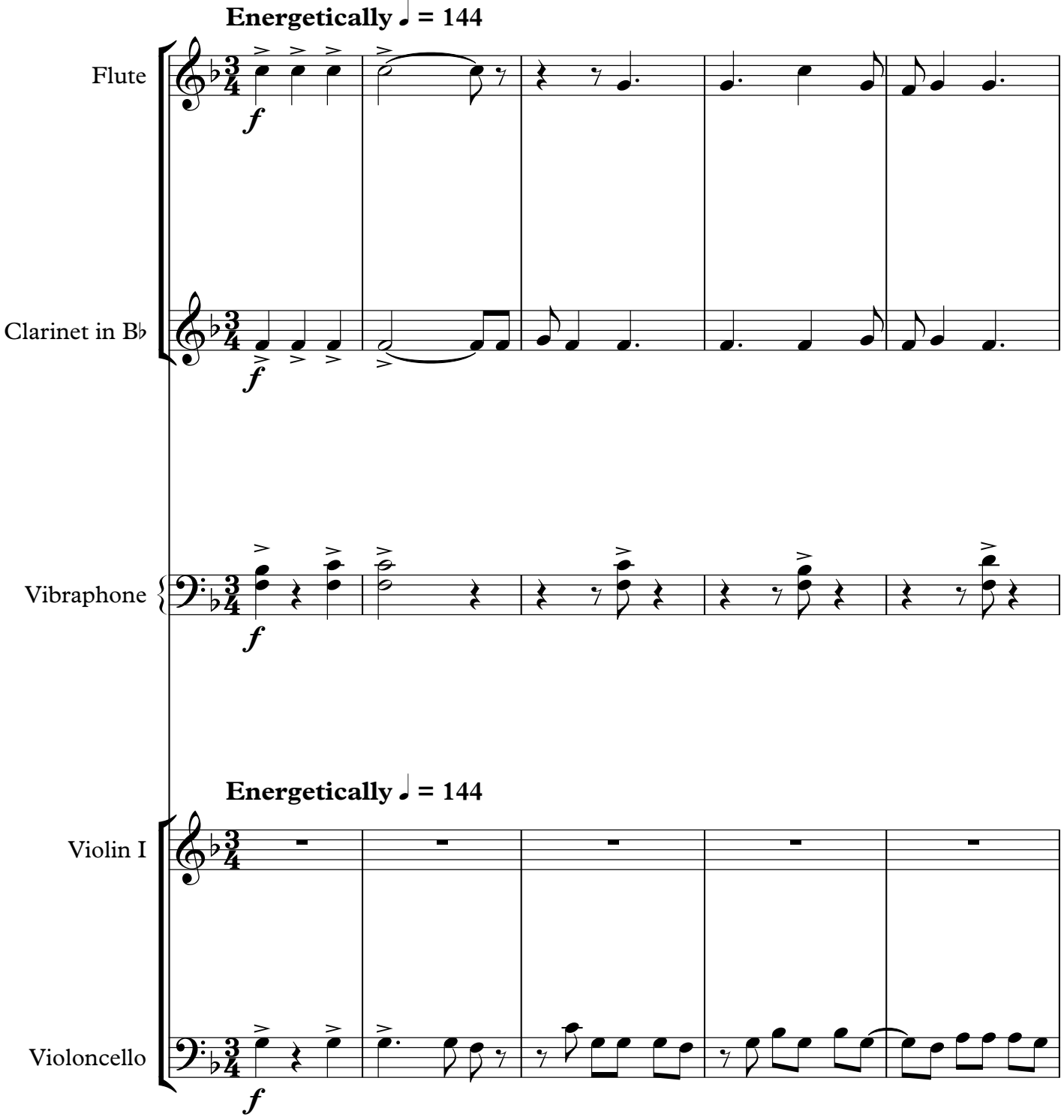

209
mf
ff
f
ff
f
213
H
pp
mp
H
pp
mf
mp


217
mp
mp
3
3
3
p
mp
222
pp
3
mp
What does it mean?
mp
What does it mean?


225
pp
n
n
mp
What does it mean?
mp
What does it mean?
n
n

Identity

Rachael Smith
b. 1994



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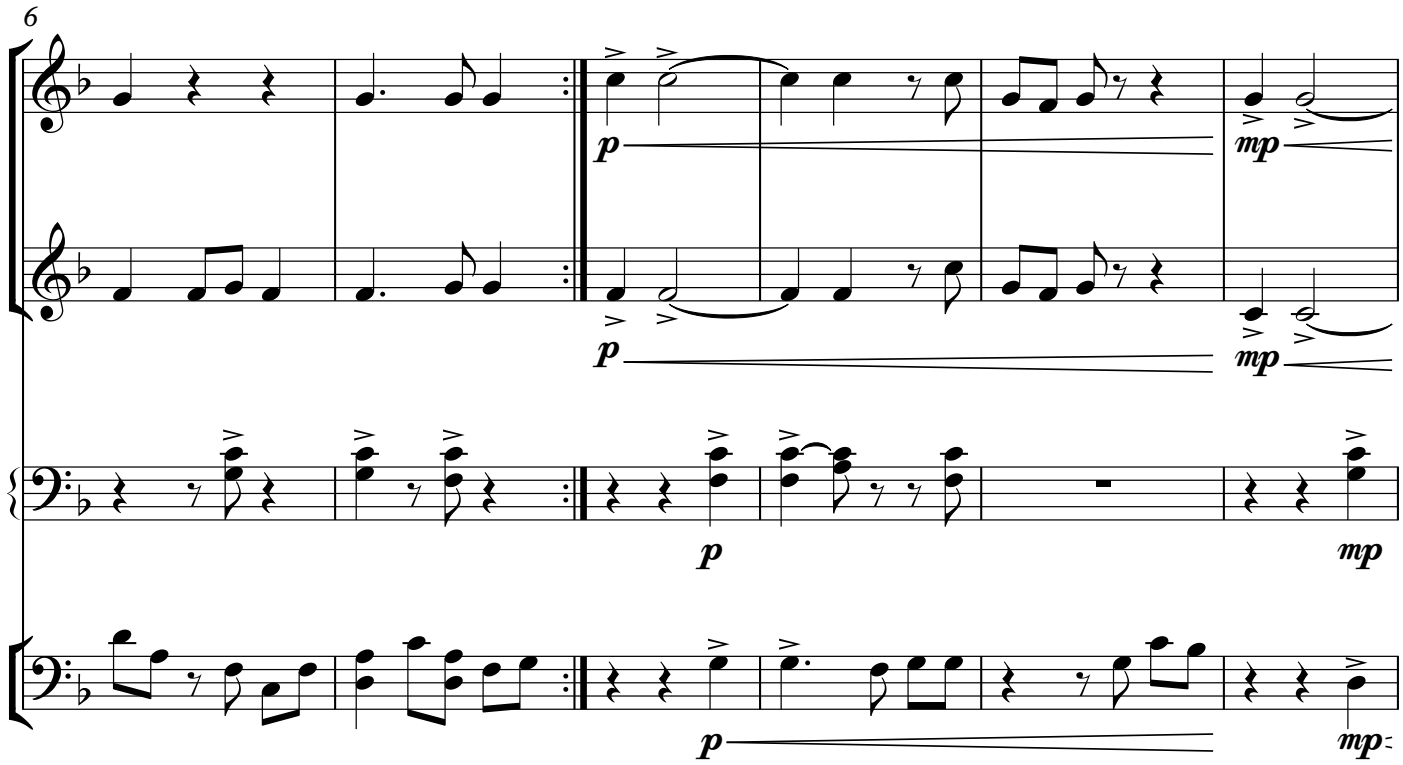
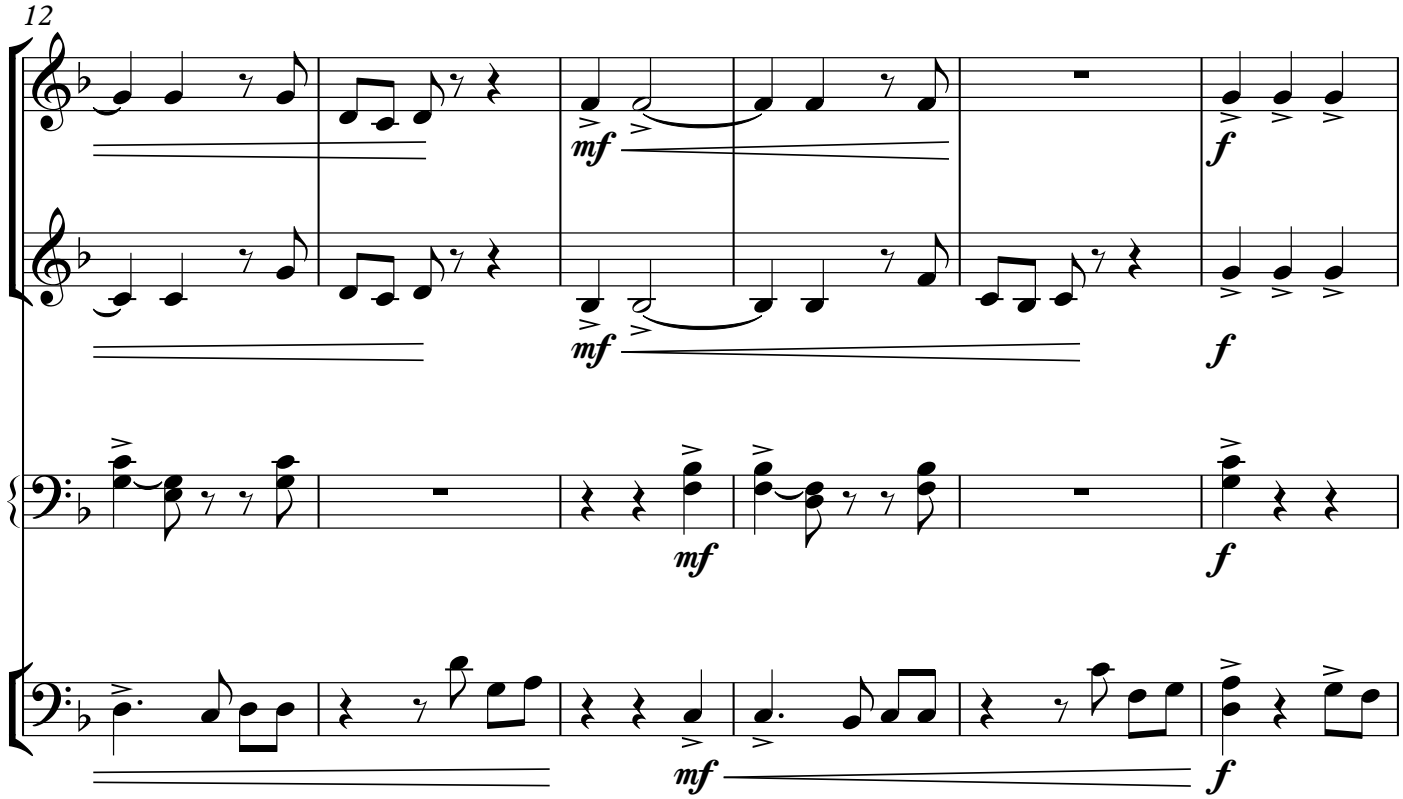
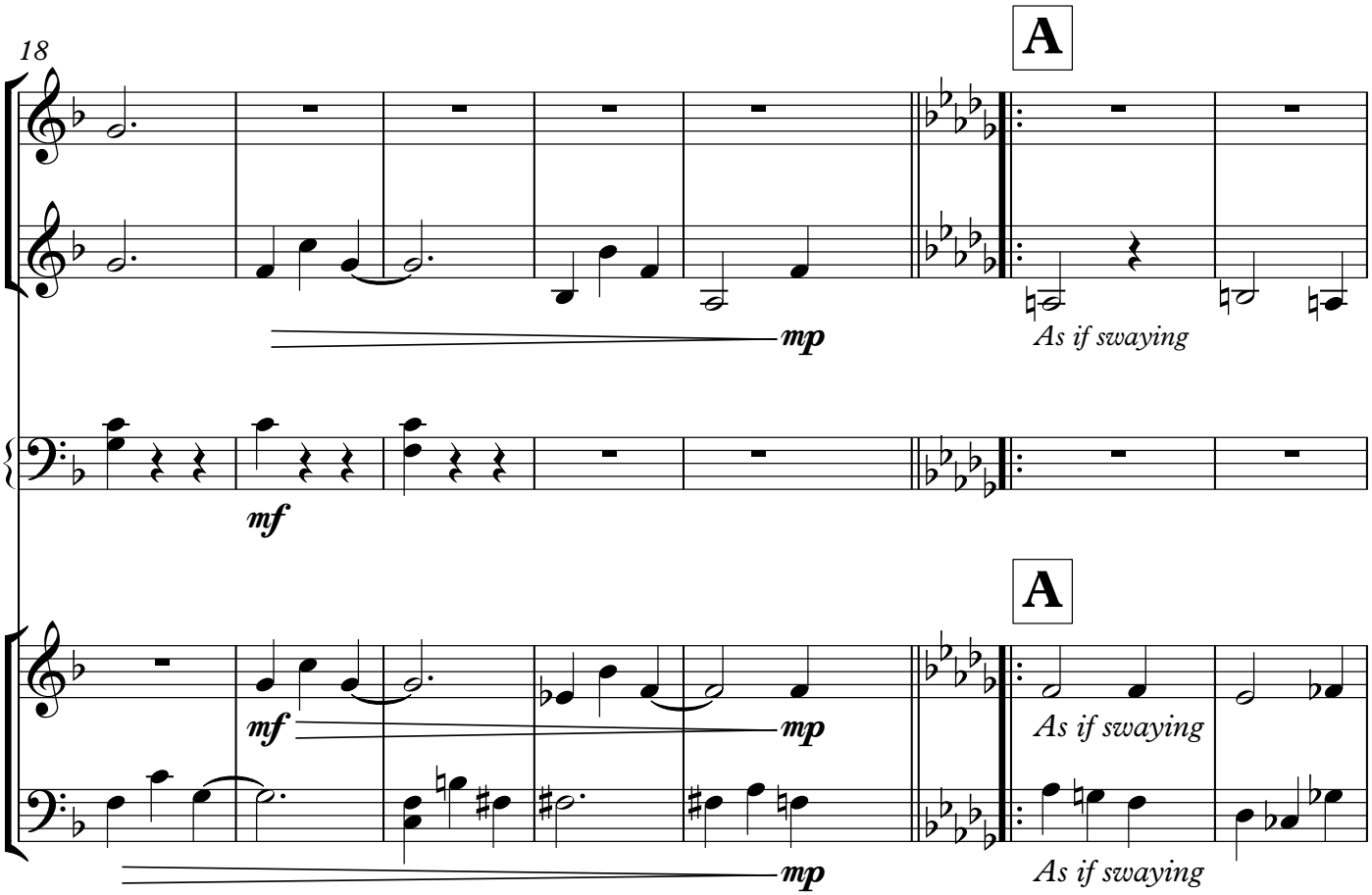
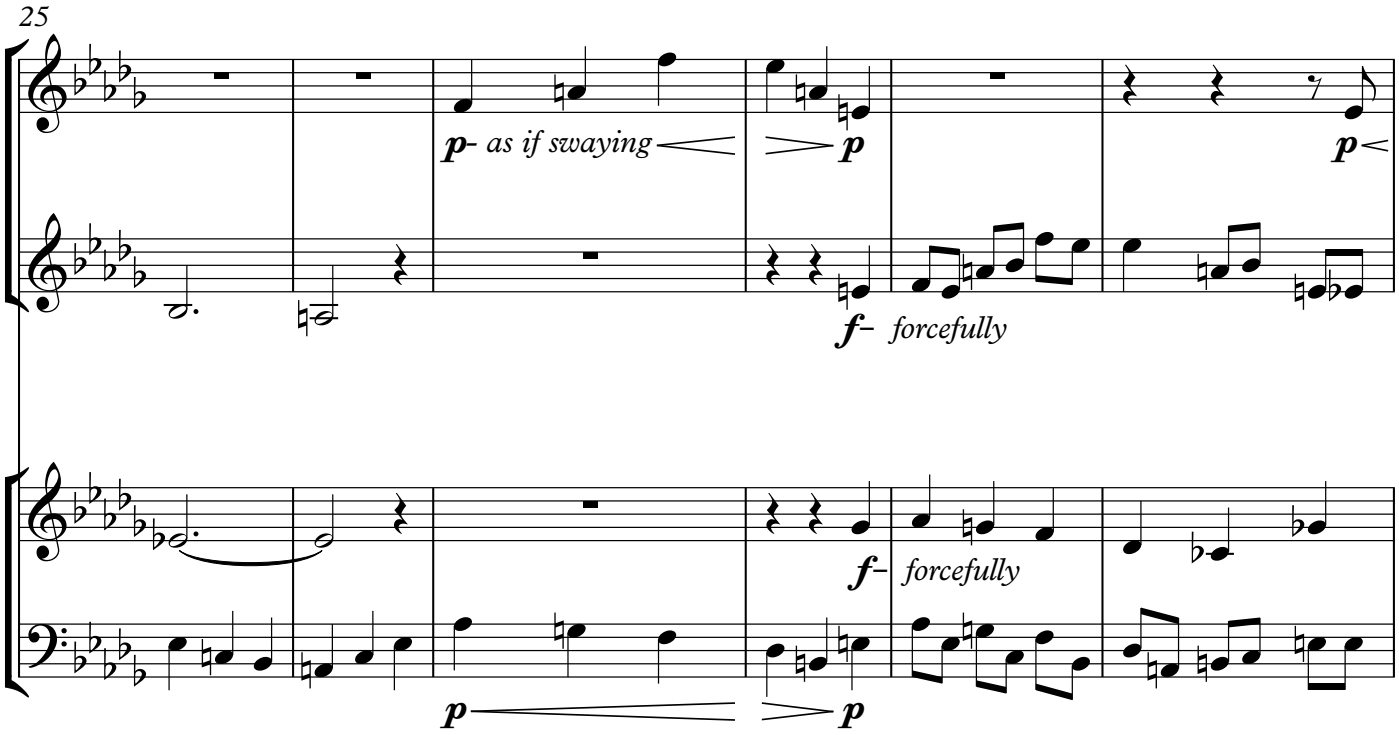
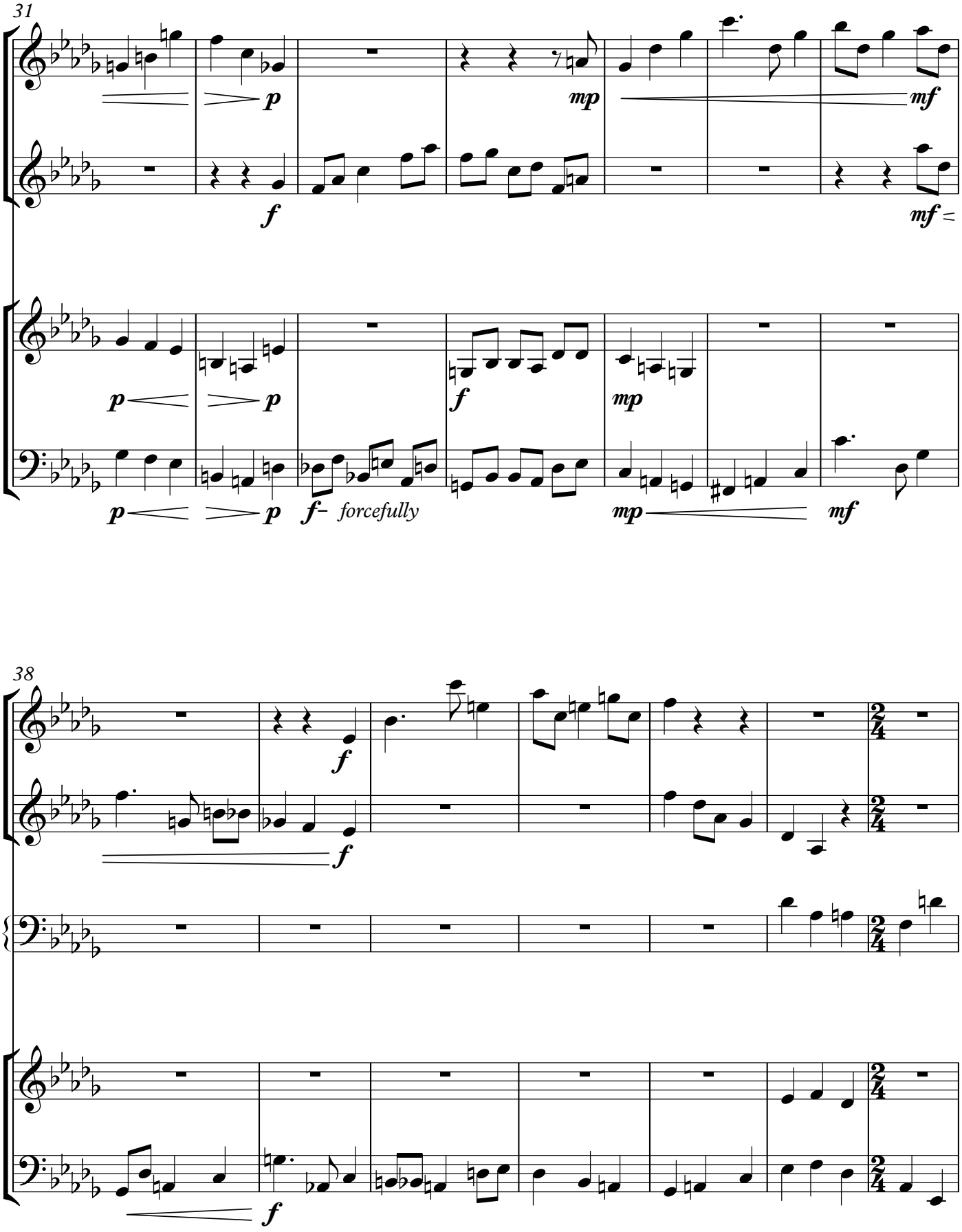
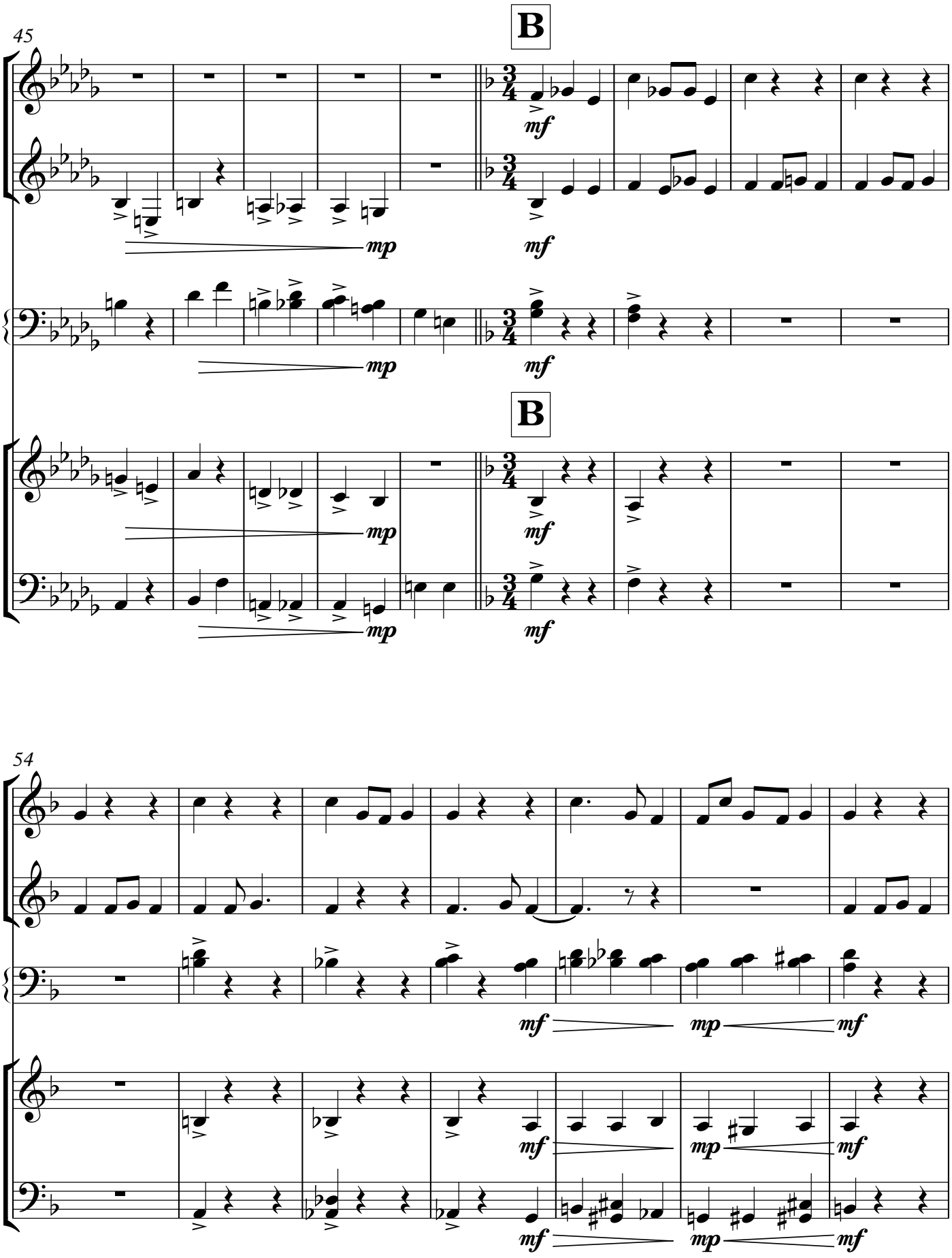

6
p
mp
p
mp
p
mp
p
mp

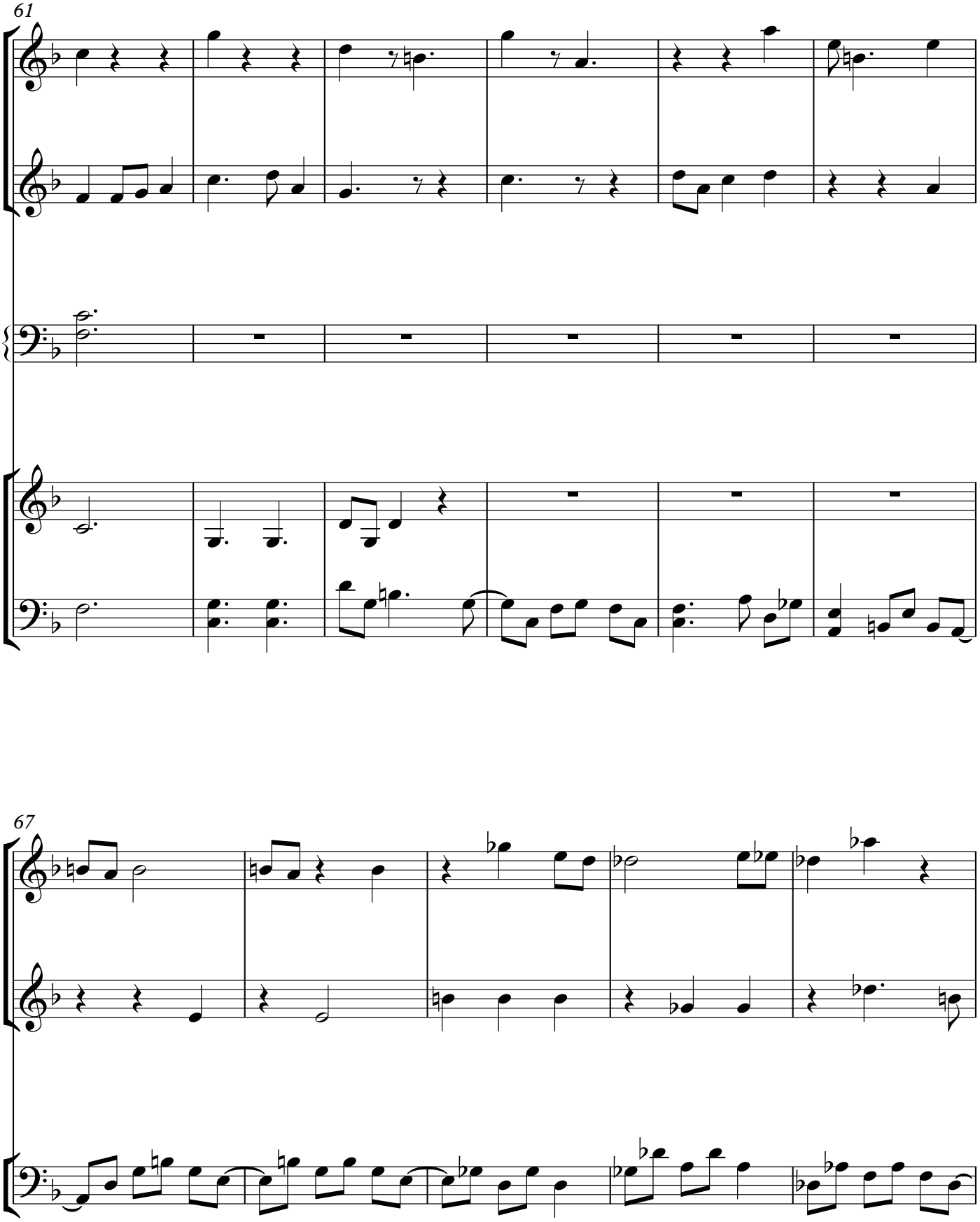

12
mf
f
mf
f
mf
f
mf
f

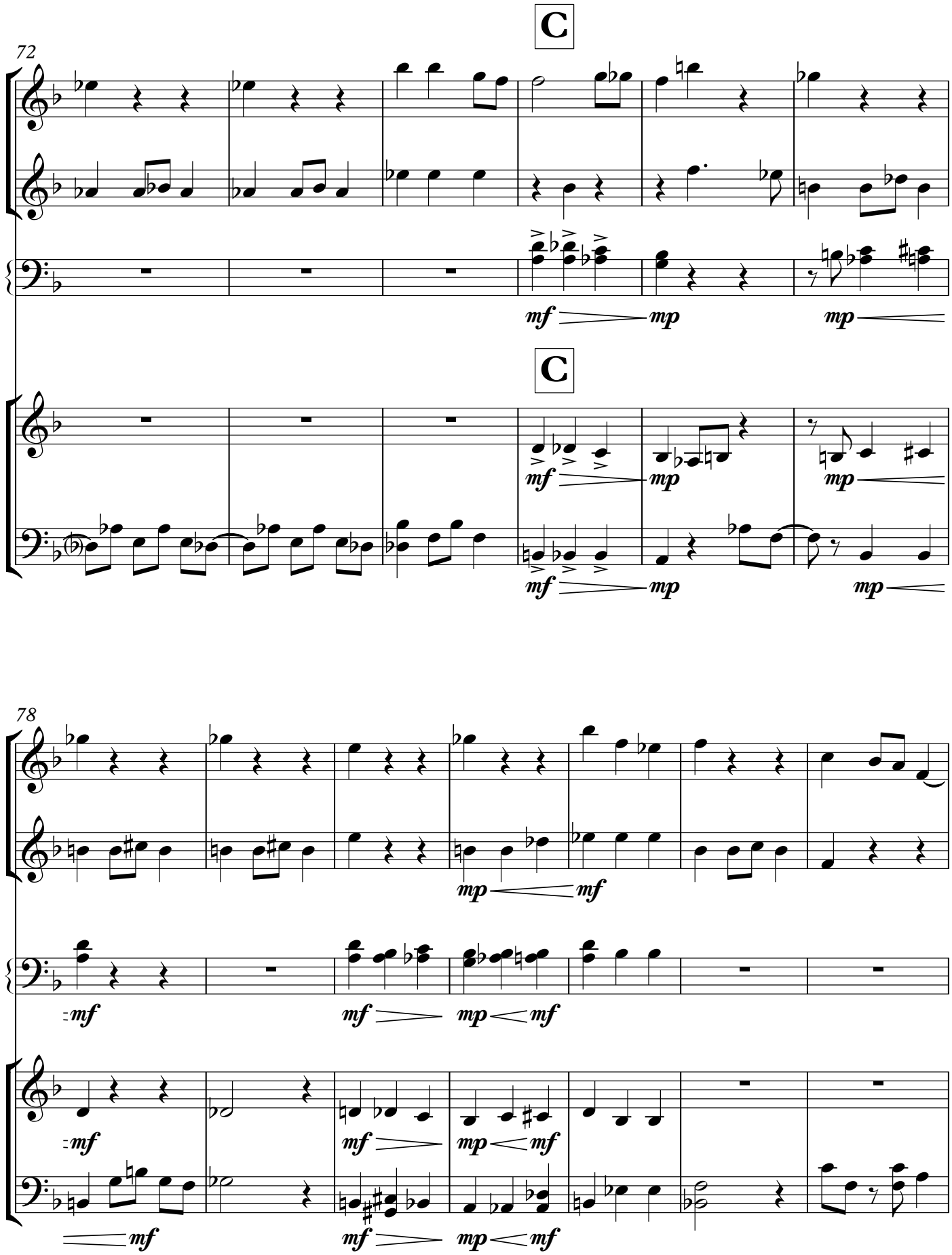

18
A
mp
As if swaying
mf
A
mf
mp
As if swaying
mp
As if swaying


25
p- as if swaying
p
p
f- forcefully
f- forcefully
p
p


31
p
f
mp
mf
mf =
p
p
f
mp
p
p
f–
forcefully
mp
mf
38
f
f
f


45
B
mp
mf
B
mp
mf
54
mf
mp
mf
mf
mp
mf


61
67


C
72
mf
mp
mp
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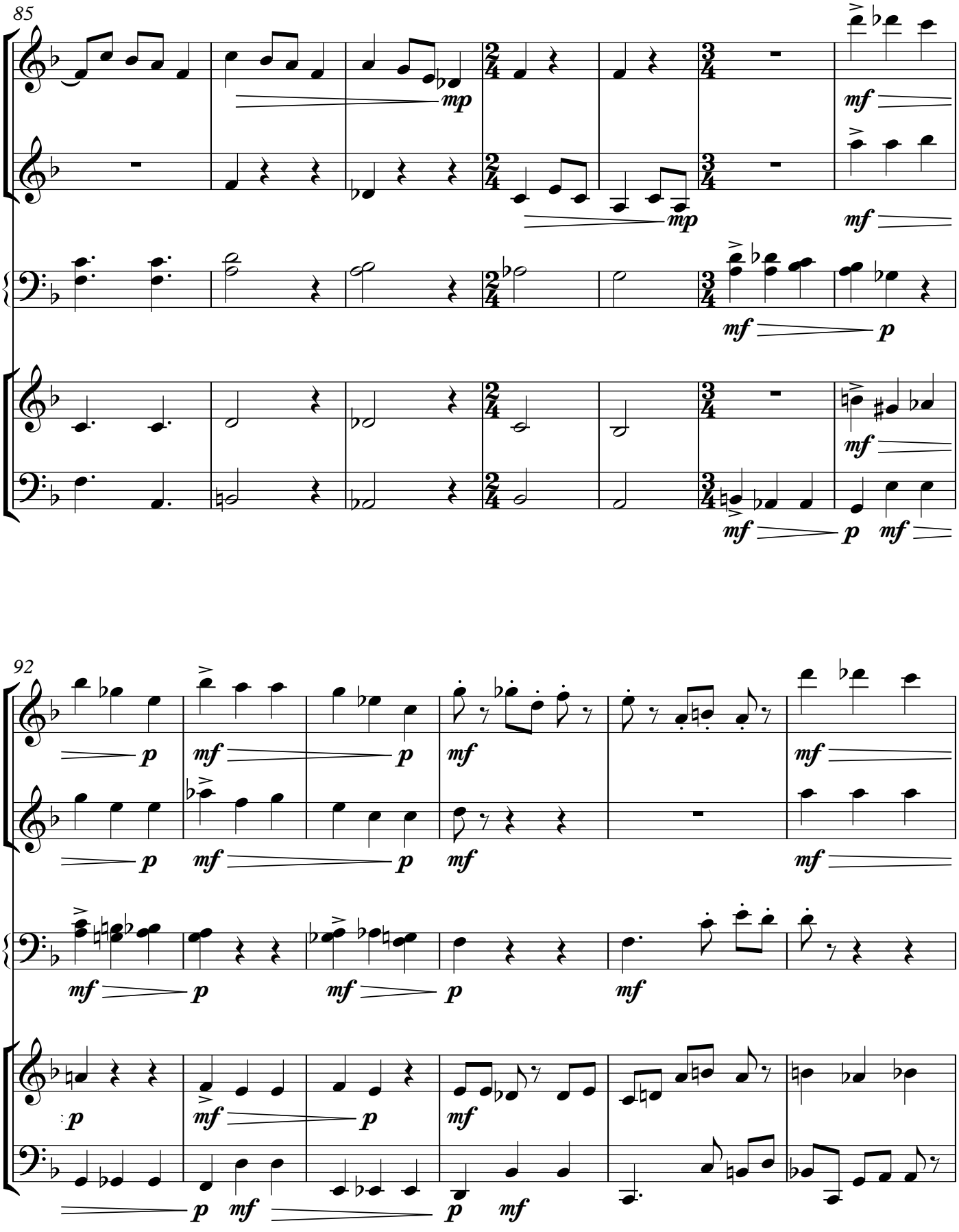
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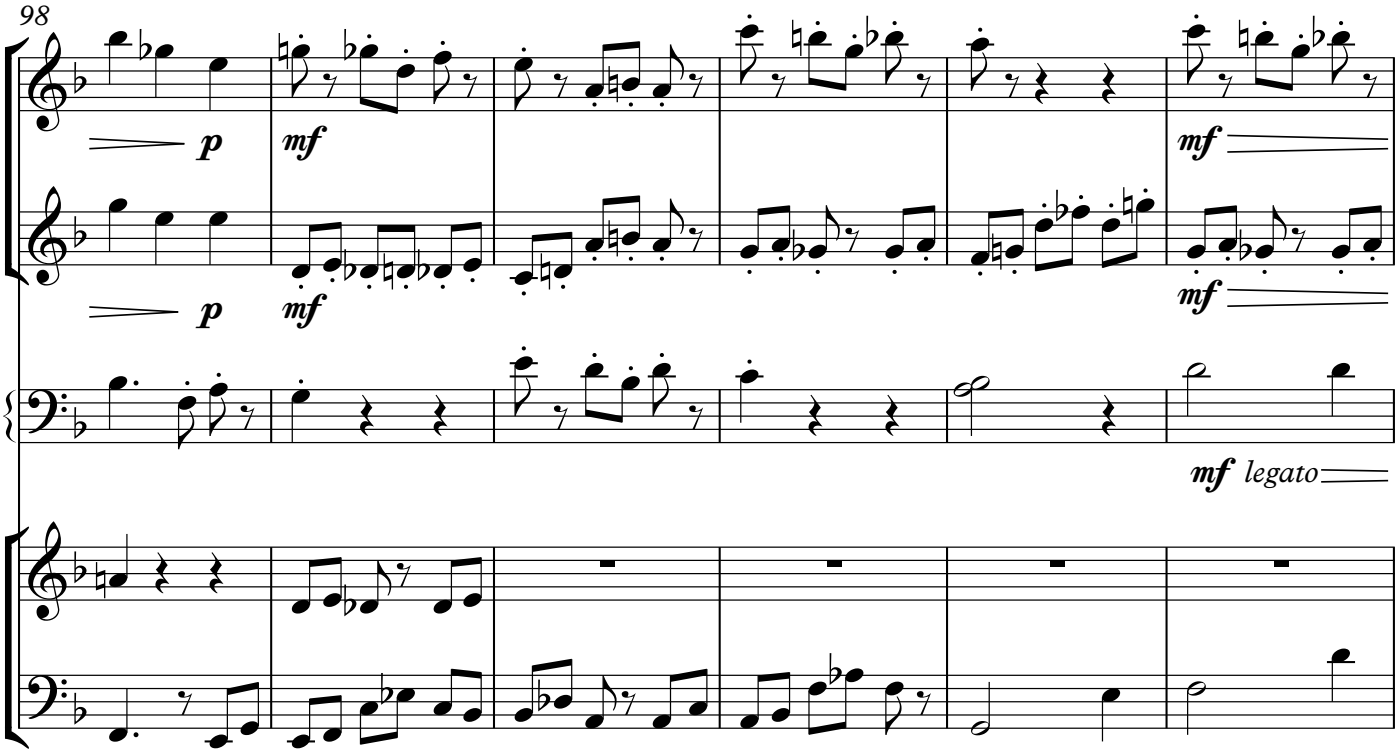
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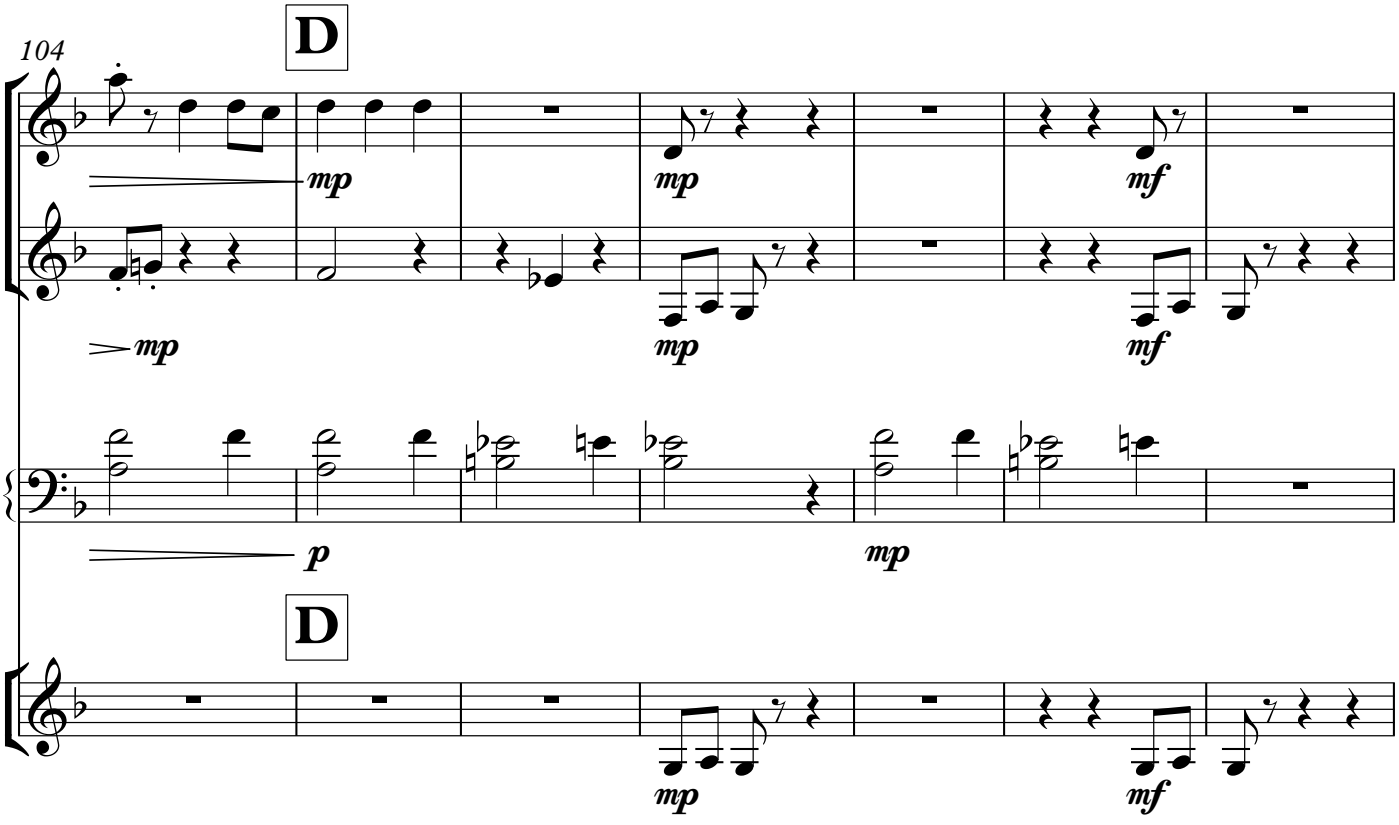
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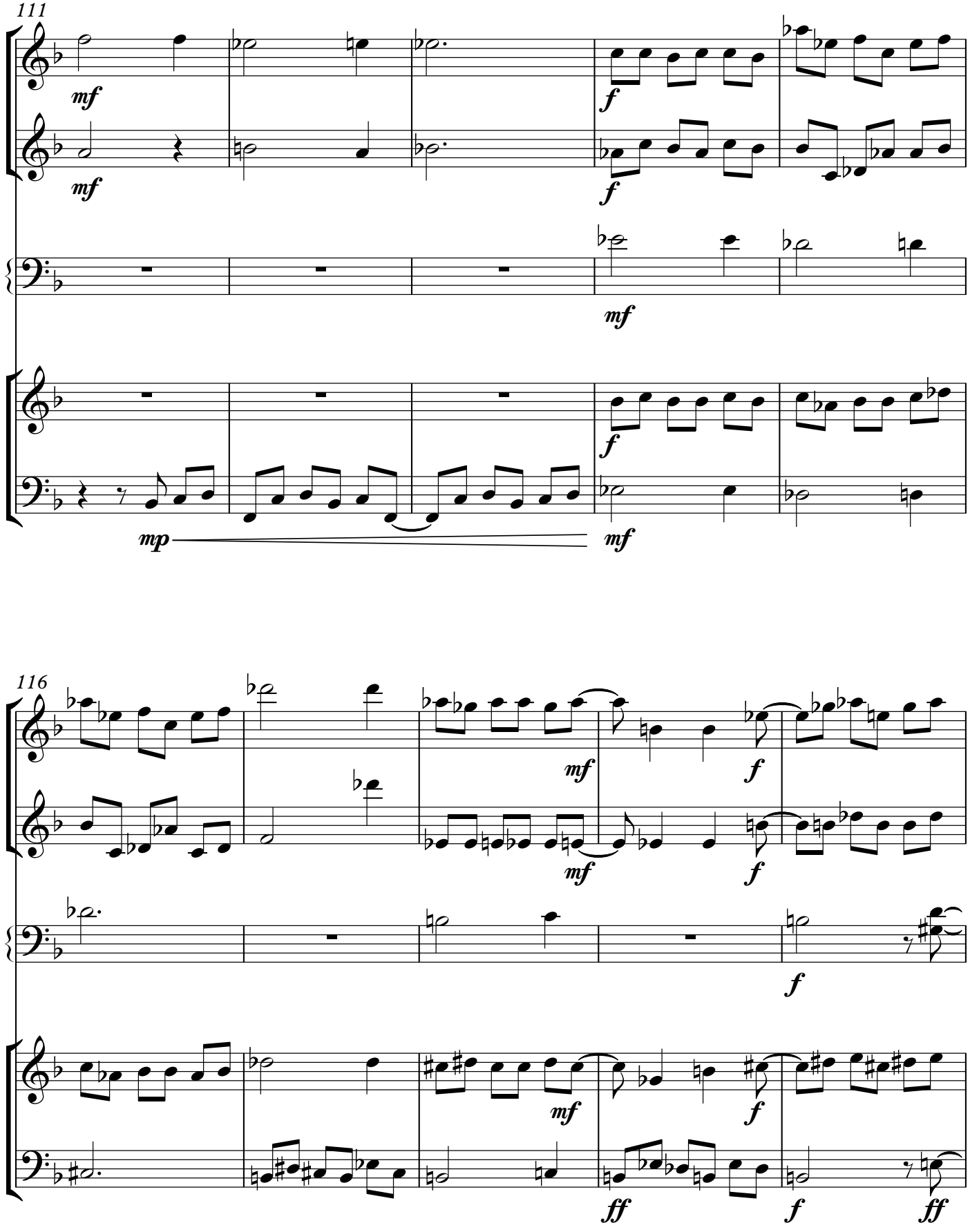
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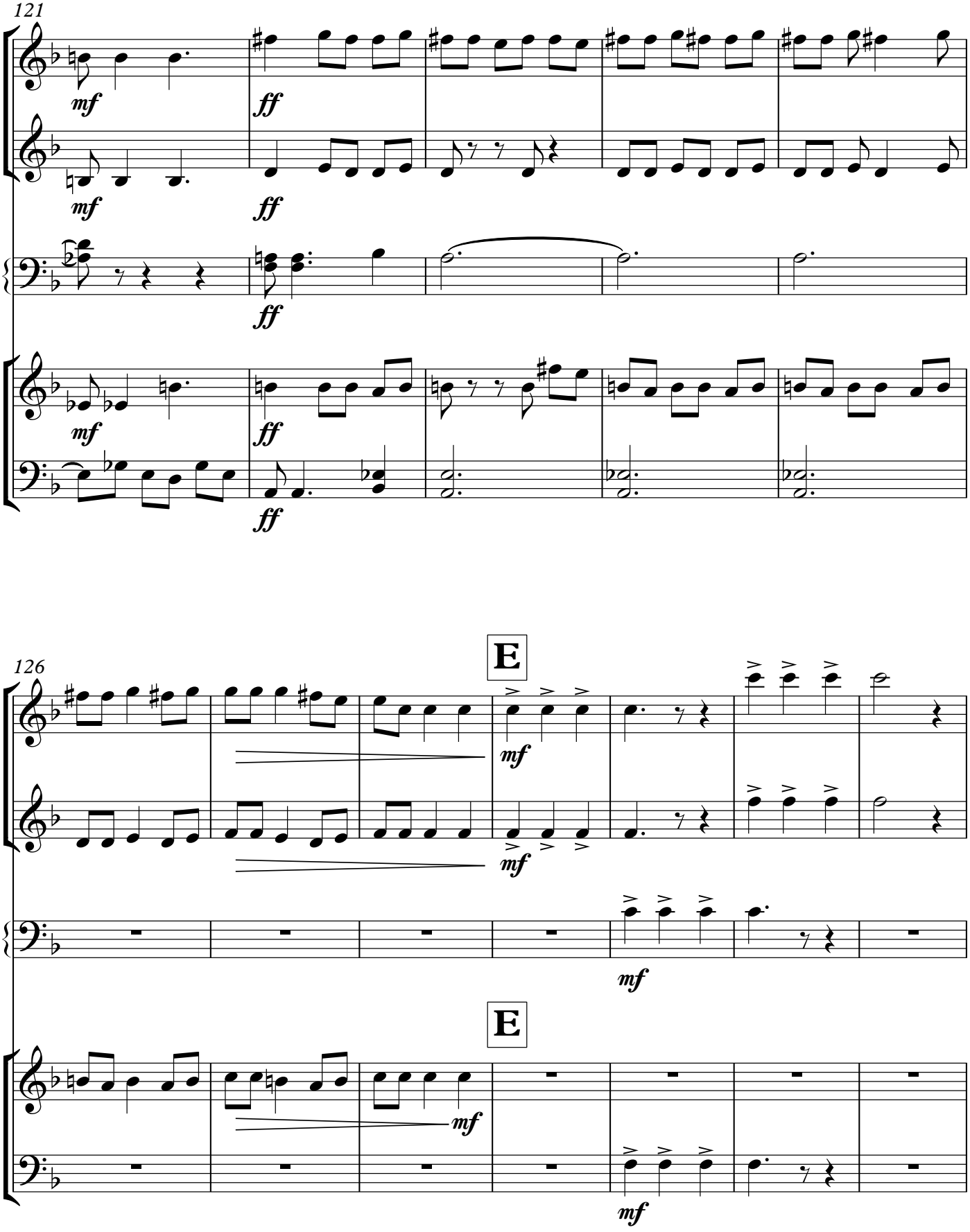
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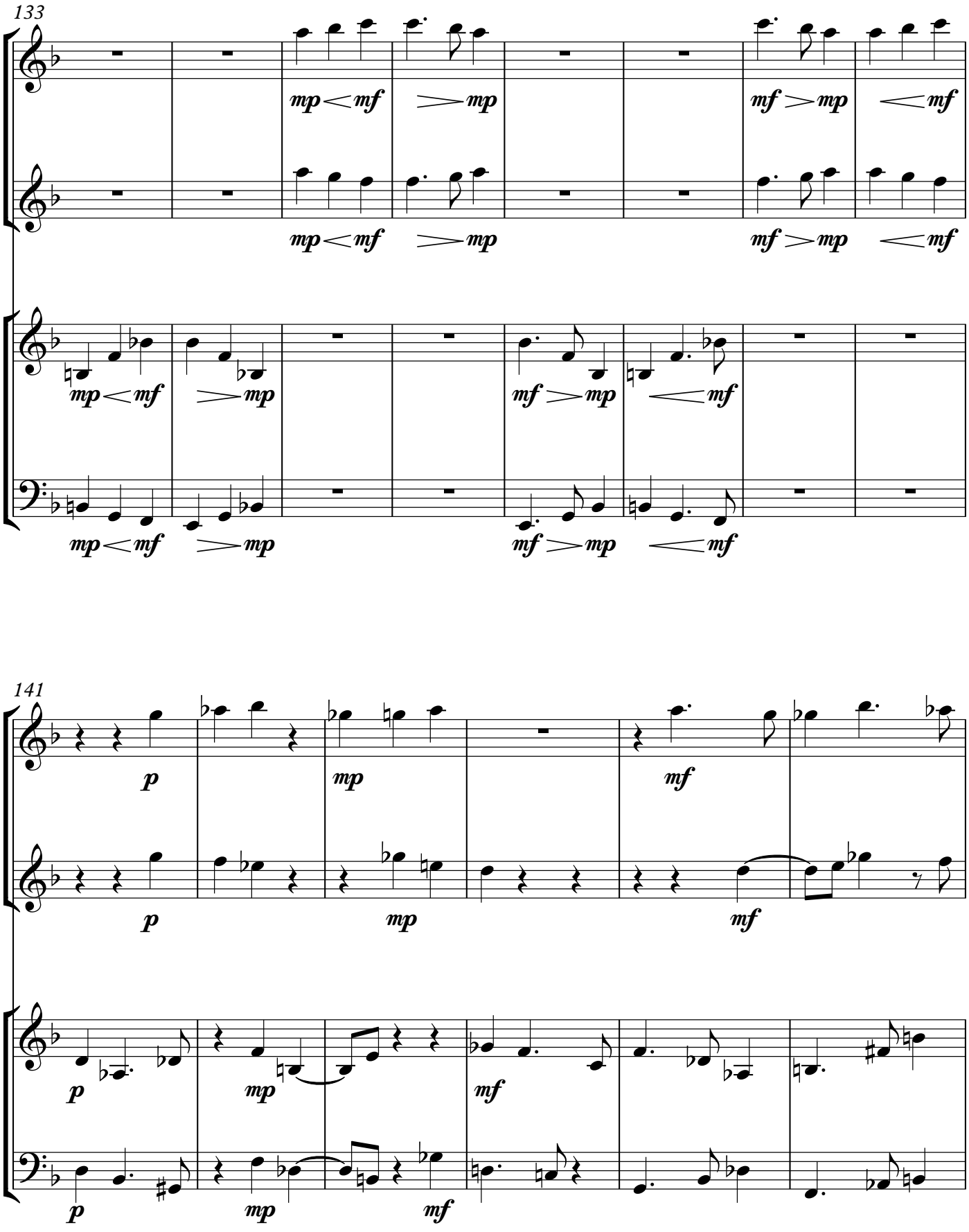
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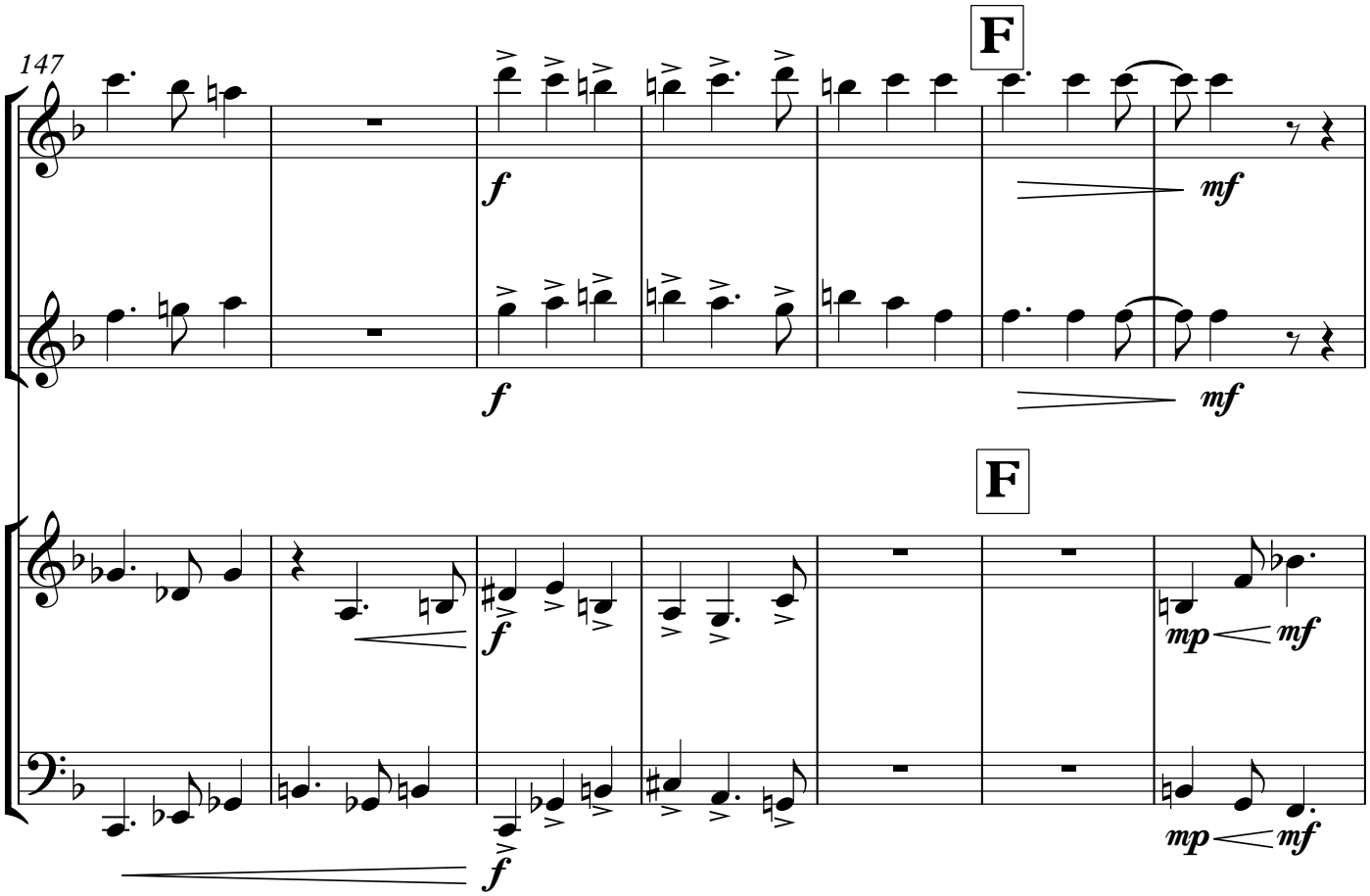
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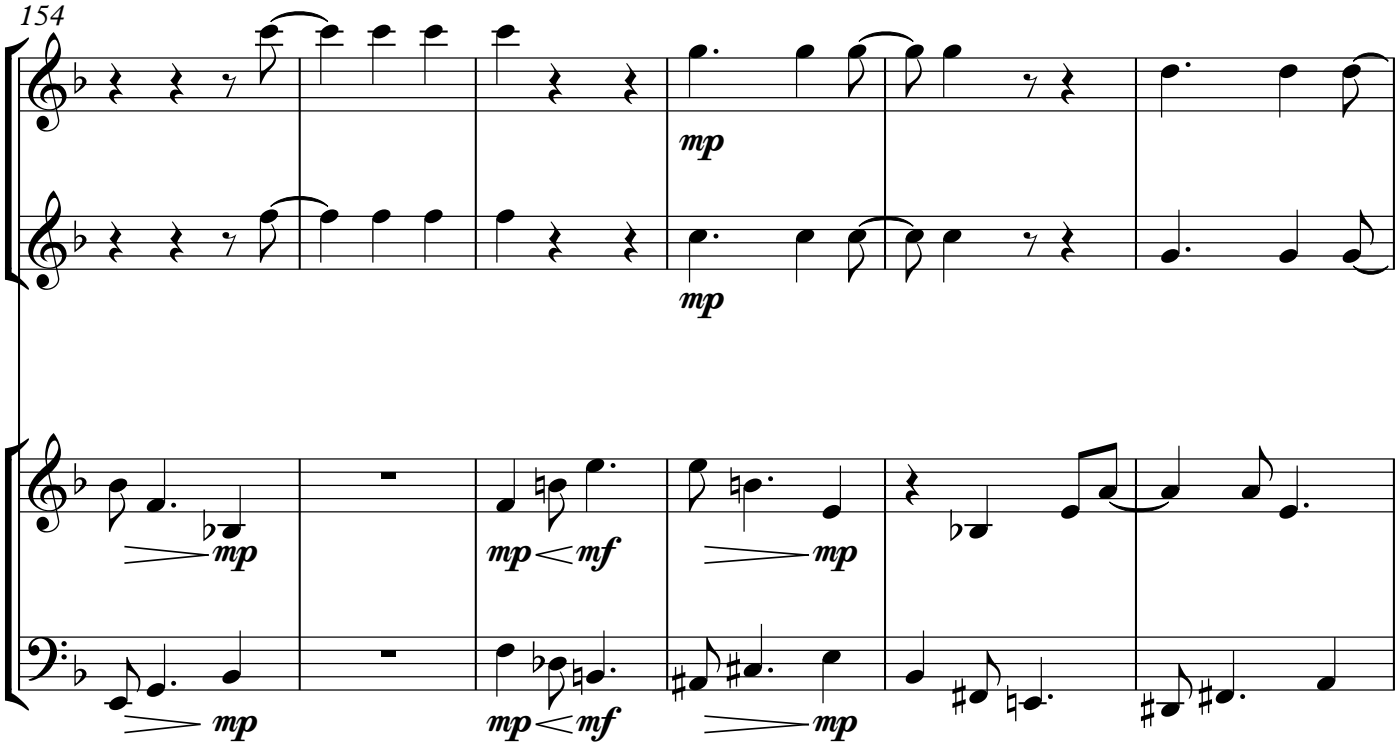
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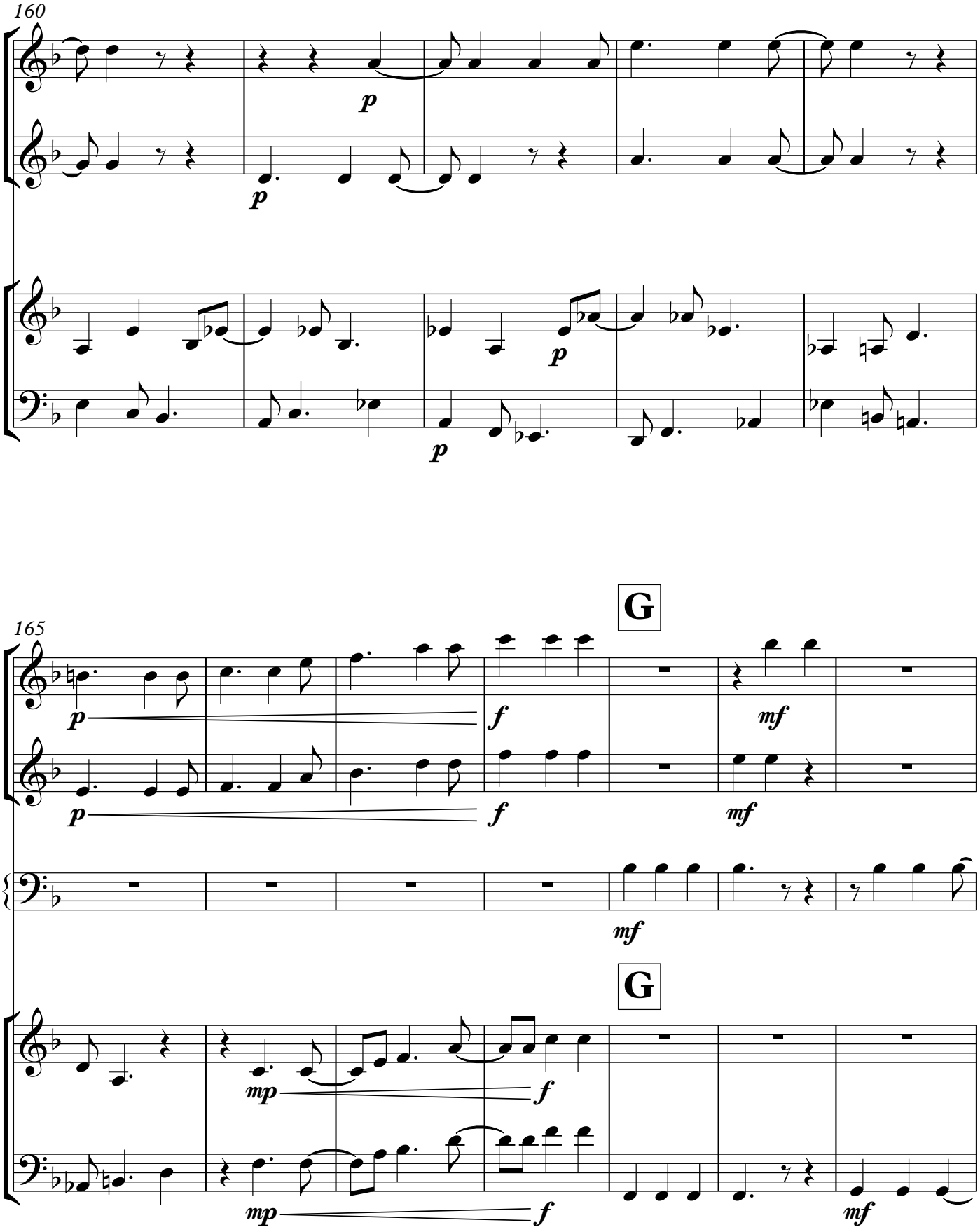
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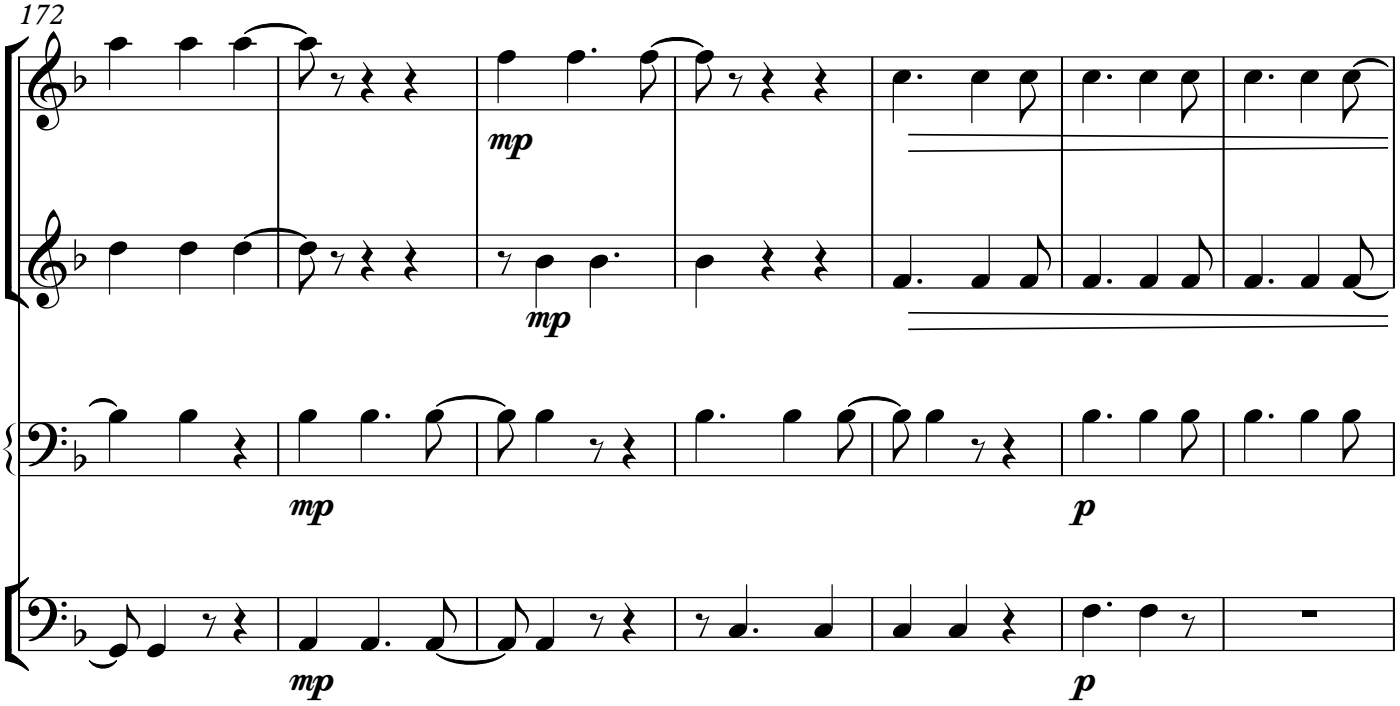
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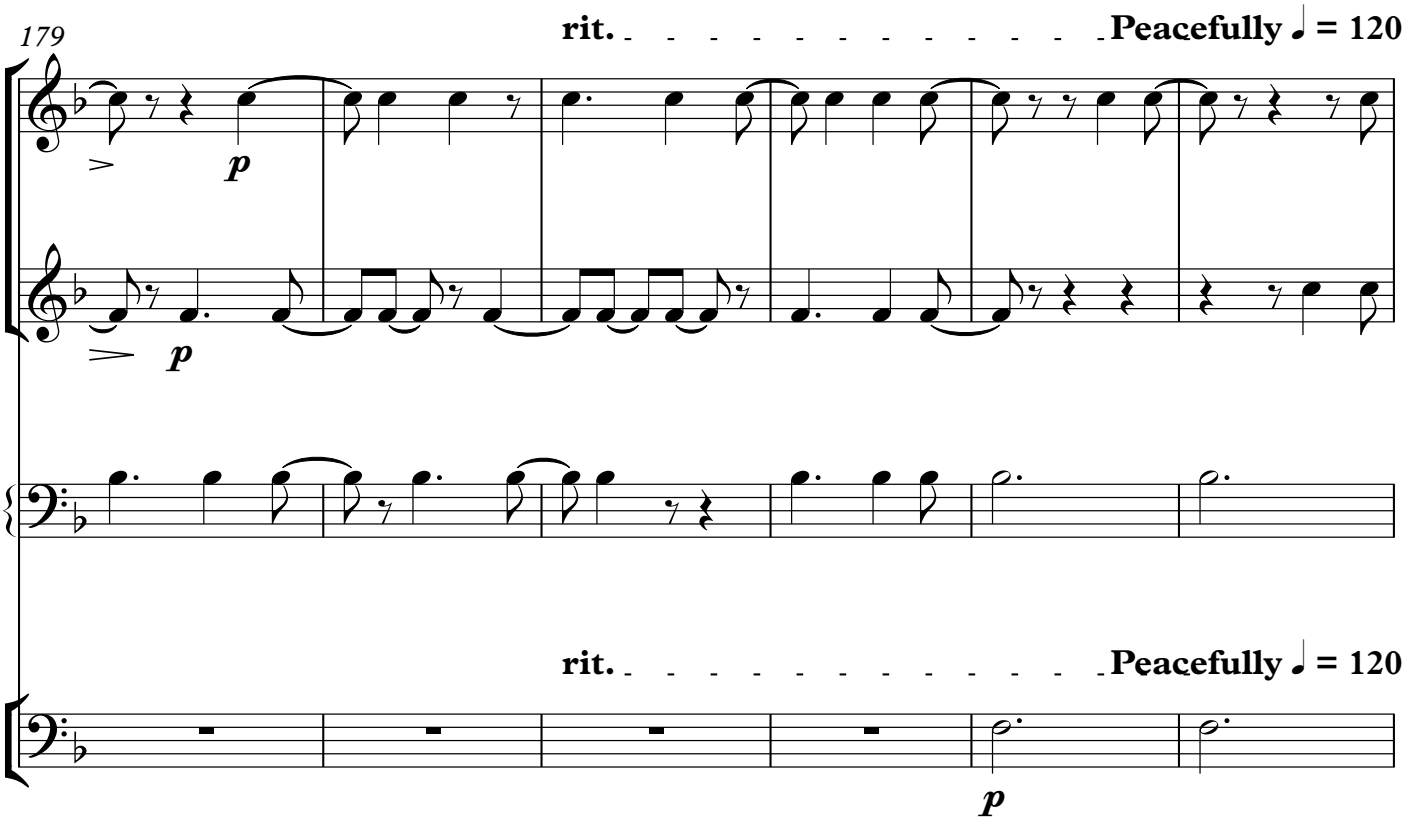
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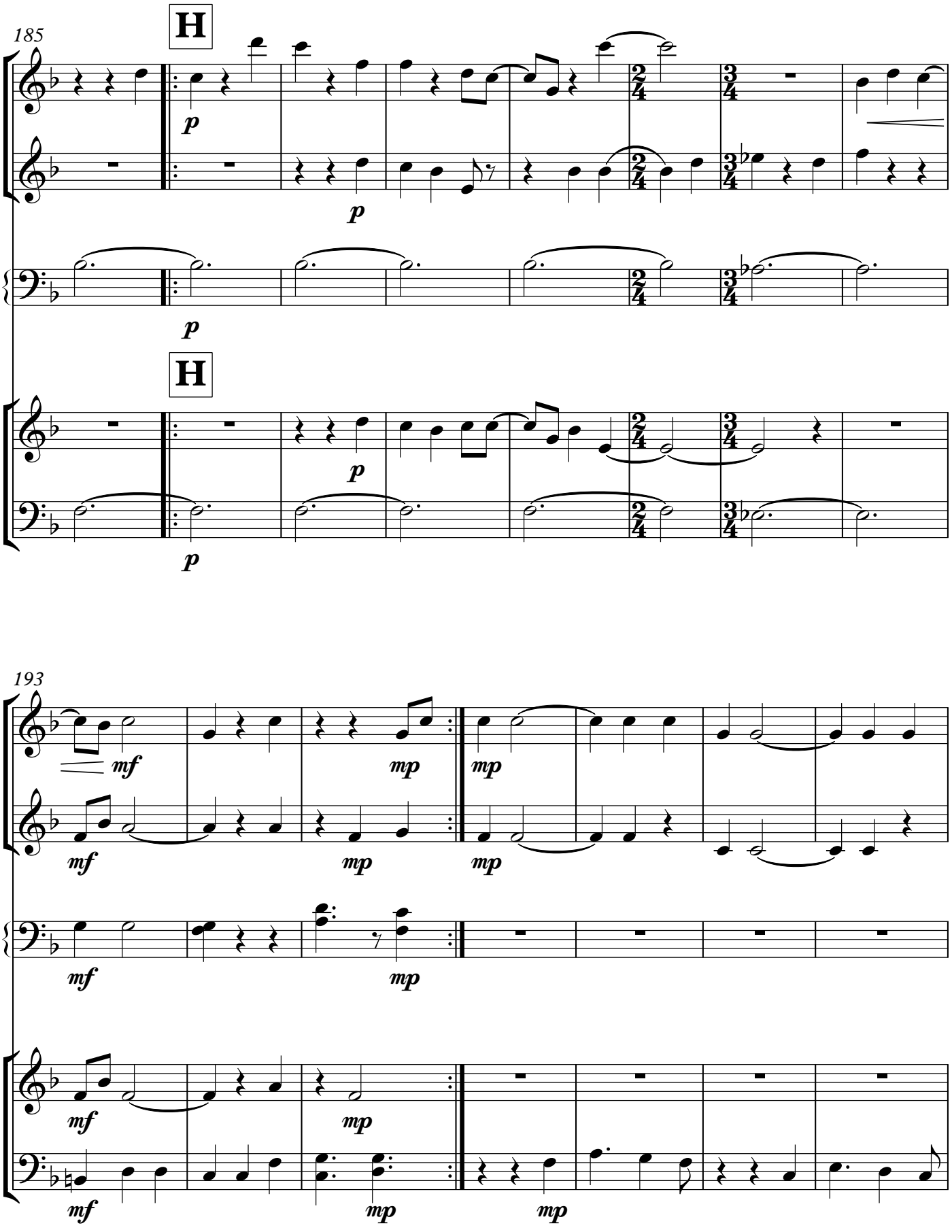
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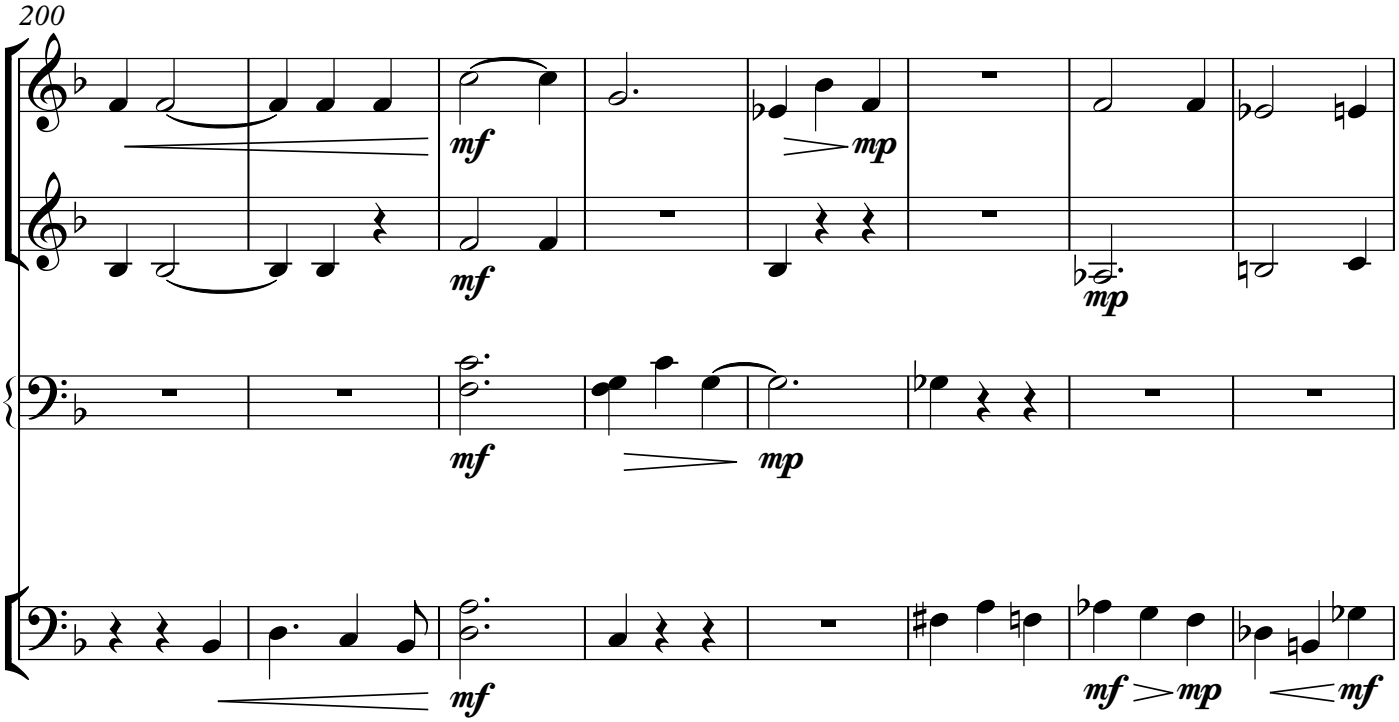
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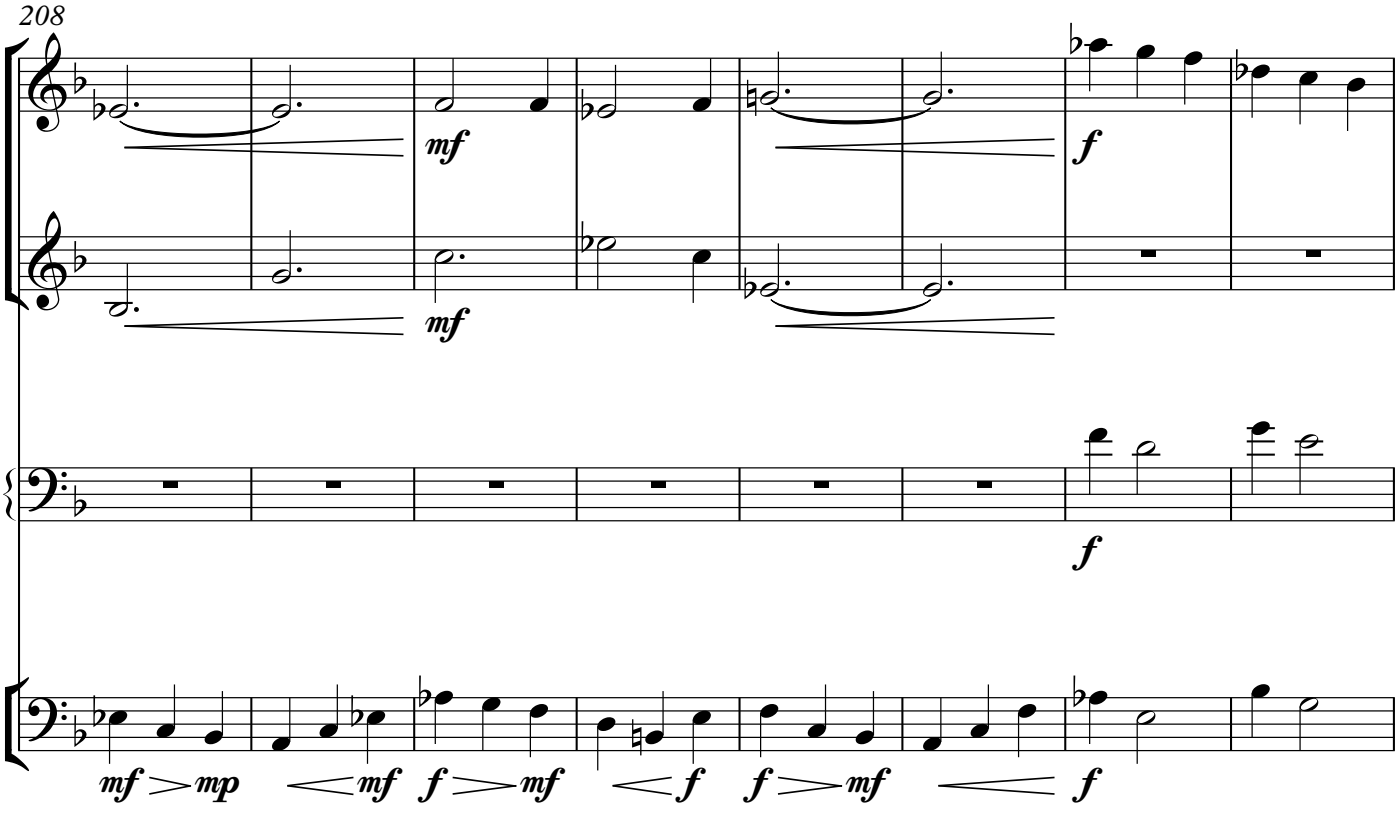
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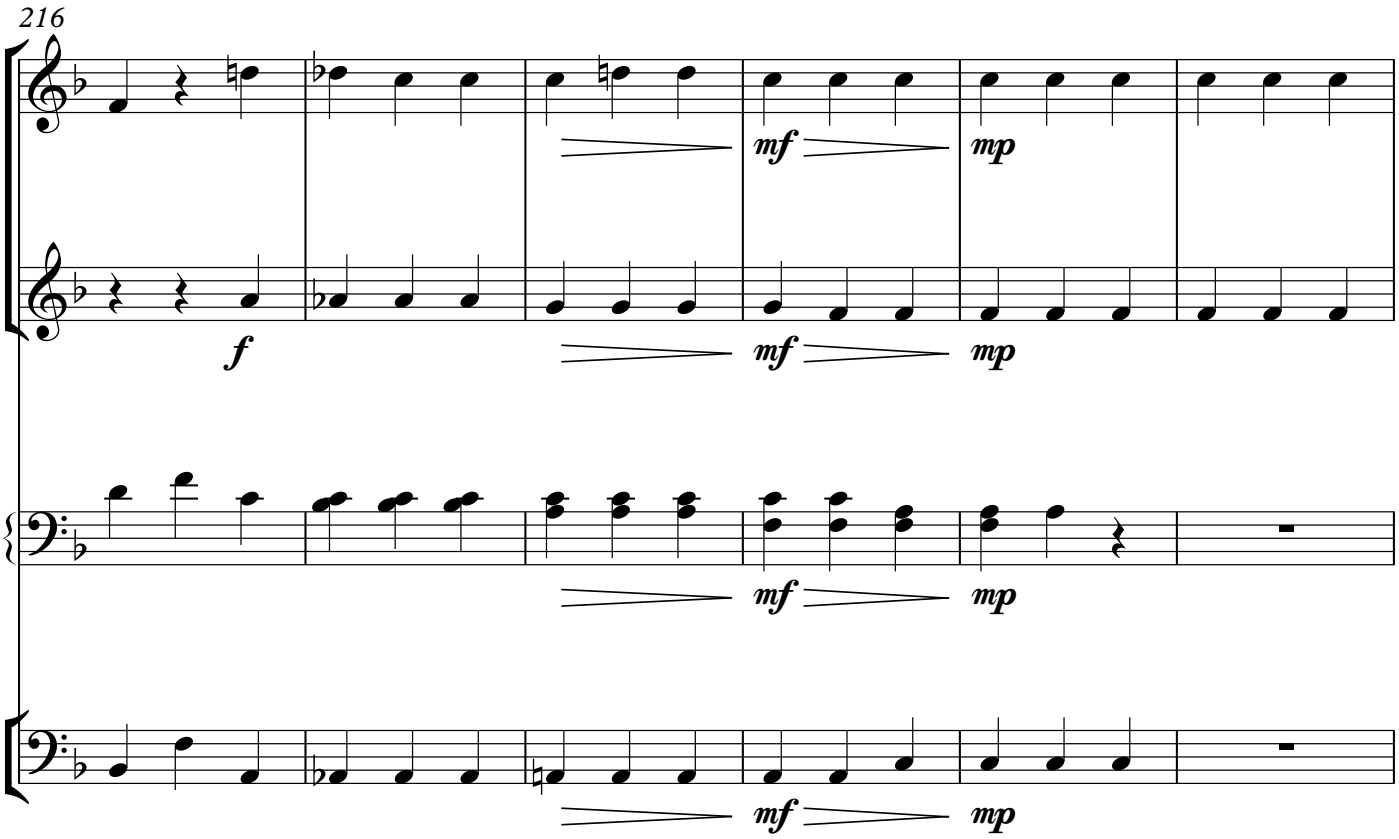
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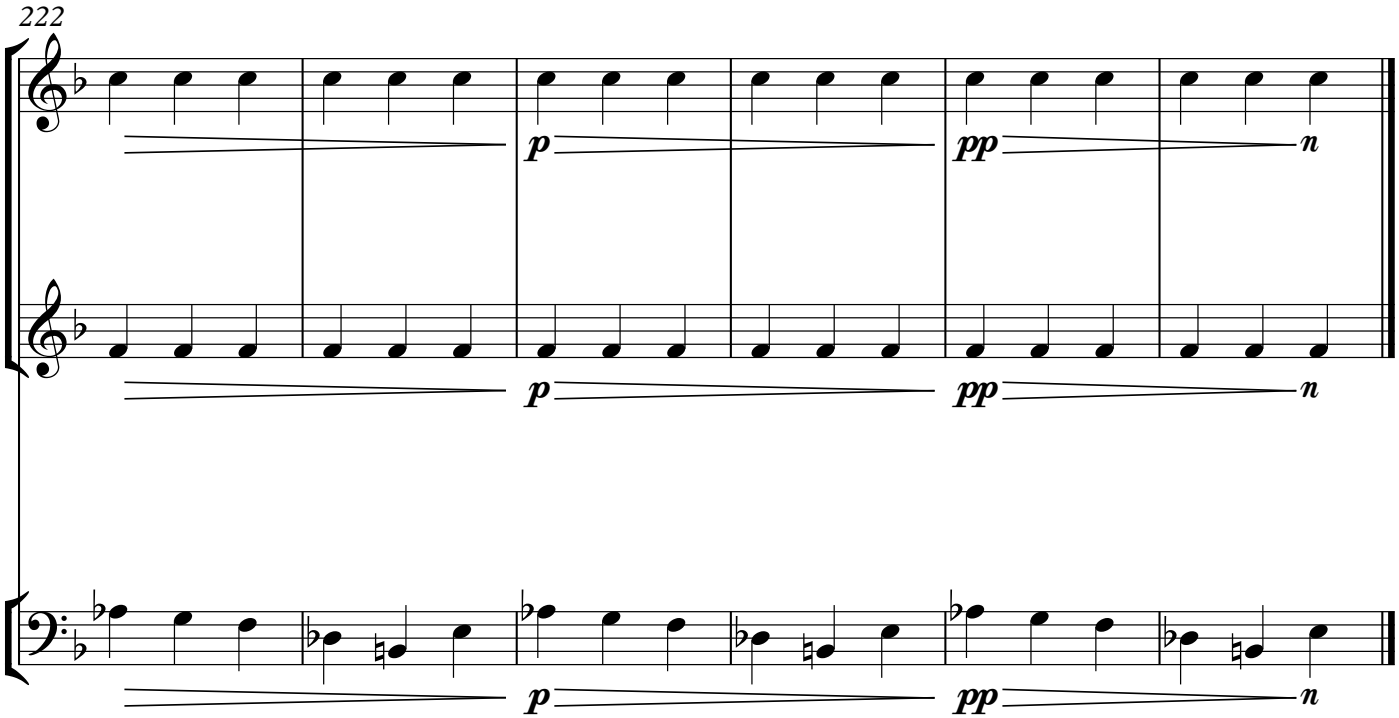
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Rachael Smith

Smith received a BA in Music Composition and Spanish at Dickinson College. On campus, she directed the Liturgical Ministry Choir and was a member of the College Choir, Improvisation and Collaboration Ensemble, and Infernos A Cappella group. She is the founder and former president of Composed: Student Songwriting Workshop, a community outreach program connecting young students to music-making opportunities. She served as the Music Major Committee President, as well as a Music Theory Teaching Assistant. Rachael currently works as the Festival Outreach Coordinator for the Vail Jazz Foundation in Vail, CO.

mouthpiece – the work

mouthpiece is a music and dance collaboration that explores the ways in which individual thought shapes shared reality. The music consists of two acoustic movements, one electronic movement, an electronic prelude and postlude, in addition to conversation fragments that weave the piece together conceptually.

mouthpiece – the music

The music for mouthpiece is constructed entirely from conversational fragments that highlight key themes such as identity, questioning, disagreement, and understanding. In the two acoustic movements, the motives are speech patterns transcribed and developed for instruments. The electronic movements are the result of direct manipulation of the collaborators' recorded voices. Throughout the piece, the differences in perspective are shown by highlighting the distinct qualities in each collaborator's voice and ideas while they speak on identical concepts.

The first acoustic movement explores the circular process of searching for a single meaning of a concept with a multitude of significance. In other words, trying to answer the question "What does it mean?" when related to a broad concept such as "peace." This is conveyed musically by asking: "What does it sound like?" and arranging key words and phrases from the conversational excerpt as musical motives that seek different possibilities of what "peace" may mean.

When our perspectives differ from someone else's, there is bound to be disagreement and possibly conflict. The second acoustic movement examines the ways in which these conflicts can play out, portrayed by Putri speaking about conflicts within her transnational identity. Contrasting motives derived from her speech are arranged into a modified sonata form, which juxtaposes both themes in multiple unique ways.

Part of the process of understanding another perspective is questioning both that perspective and one's own perspective, which can often leave one lost for words. The central electronic movement is made from two specific moments in which Putri and Smith search for what to say. These phrases are sonically manipulated and arranged in a progression, which agrees with the questioning process. The section is presented like a mirror: the second half reflects a contorted version of the first half to capture the questioning process, in which one achieves a greater depth in understanding but loses the regularity of thinking in allowing other's thoughts into one's mind.

The electronic prelude and postlude are drawn from the same sound fragment, which explores the process of observing and responding. Additional sound fragments weave together these movements, resulting in a cohesive whole. Each individual experience of this work is unique from others.

One piece, two perspectives

mouthpiece was premiered in two radically different spaces which conveyed two unique experiences in viewing the work. A theatre setting allowed a physical distance between the audience and the stage, creating a divide between the viewers and the content. In a second performance in an art studio, the content became performance art enveloping the audience and allowing them to dive into the behind-the-scenes process of constructing the work.

The art studio performance put the pre- and post- production work in the forefront. Music sketches lined the gallery walls. Musicians both played their individual parts apart from the whole, and improvised in response to the dancers using mouthpiece motivic material.

The following is an outline of the performance art schedule used in the gallery setting. Performers may choose to follow this schedule as specifically or freely as they choose.

Performance Art schedule (minutes)

0-15	Improvisation
15-30	Identity deconstructed*
30-45	Improvisation
45-60	Peace deconstructed**
60-75	Improvisation
75-90	Exercise subtext***
90-105	Improvisation
105-120	Witness****

All "Improvisation" segments consist of dancers and musicians observing and responding to each other simultaneously. Both musicians and dancers perform in groups ranging from solo-tutti. The director may choose whether or not to create a schedule for musician groupings. Musicians should begin the improvisatory sessions based in motivic material from mouthpiece, and may expand this to original material if the improvisation leads there.

*Cello and flute play chronologically through the score. A few minutes in, clarinet and violin start at the beginning of the movement and play their parts overlapped with the cello and flute. Percussion enters a few minutes after the clarinet and violin. When each instrument finishes playing through their part. The instruments improvise with each other using the "Identity" motives.

**Baritone, Soprano and cello play and sing chronologically through the score. A few minutes in, flute, clarinet and violin start at the beginning of the movement and play their parts overlapped with the cello and flute. Percussion enters a few minutes after the clarinet and violin. When each instrument finishes playing through their part. The instruments improvise with each other using the "Peace" motives.

***In this exercise, dancers perform a series of movements, and musicians improvise along with them based on the interpreted subtext of the movements. Musicians used both motives from mouthpiece as well as original material.

****In this exercise, each dancer performs a 15-30 second series of movements, followed by a 15-30 second musical interpretation of those movements. Musicians used both motives from mouthpiece as well as original material.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Robert Pound for the consistent and insightful guidance as I have worked through this project, and Dr. David Smooke for helping spark my creative process. I would also like to acknowledge Stacy Rohrer, Shelby Bischoff and the Music Department for their expert coordination and support. I am grateful for my musicians, who brought this work to life through their dedication, and the tech and crew who have worked to enhance the performance. Lastly I extend my love and gratitude to my family and friends, who have supported me throughout the long and at times tiring process.