Landscapes

For String Orchestra

Holden Mui

cover art by Sophie Mui

for my high school orchestra

INSTRUMENTATION

Violin (4), Violin II (4), Viola (3), Cello (3), Double Bass (2)

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Program Notes

Landscapes is a suite of three pieces for string orchestra. Each piece portrays a different landscape: "Prairie" depicts a Midwestern tallgrass prairie, "Rivulet" depicts a small stream flowing down a forested mountain, and "Tundra" depicts an alpine tundra landscape.

I. Prairie

I grew up in Lisle, a small suburb of Chicago. Lisle is known for its Morton Arboretum, a nature preserve that covers almost seven square kilometers. My parents would regularly take me and my siblings to the Arboretum, and one of my favorite places to explore was the tallgrass prairie. There were pathways mowed through the prairie, though the surrounding grass grew so high that it was sometimes impossible to see the nearby forests over the grass. The first movement of *Landscapes* is written to evoke both this feeling of intimacy inside the prairie and the feeling of vastness as viewed from above.

"Prairie" opens with a stream of moving eighth notes that represent the grass swaying in the wind. In the middle section, the listener is lifted out of the prairie and into the sky for a view from above. The soaring melody evokes a sense of awe at the grand, rolling meadows that stretch as far as the eye can see. The listener is then gently returned to the prairie for a final restatement of each theme.

II. Rivulet

The second movement, "Rivulet", is the shortest work in the suite. It was inspired by my family's annual hiking trips; many of our destinations, such as the Appalachian mountains or the glaciers of Iceland, had mountainous areas with small streams winding through lightly forested terrain. This movement captures a stream's journey from mountain top to river valley.

The construction of "Rivulet" was inspirated by the many facets of a stream's life. The parallel harmonies in "Rivulet" evoke the stream's fluidity. Melodies are traded mid-phrase between the different sections of the orchestra, representing the braided way in which the stream weaves through the rocks in the mountainside. The contrast between duple and triple meter gives a sense of instability and unpredictability. The stream finally reaches the valley floor during the closing *senza-vibrato* chord, where it meets the calm waters of the main branch of its parent river.

III. Tundra

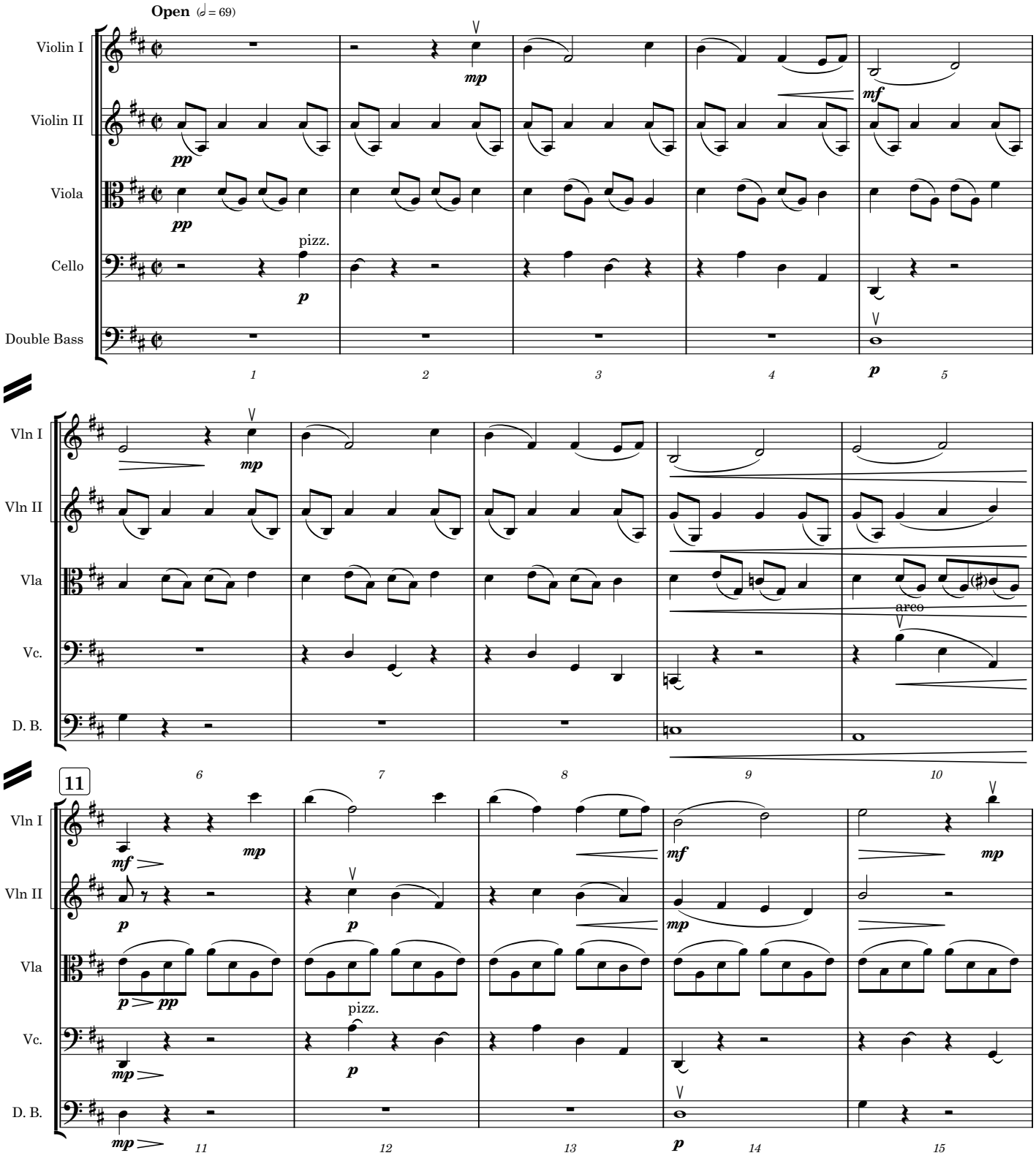
The final movement, "Tundra", opens with an unwavering violin drone depicting a snowy and barren landscape devoid of life. Mountains rise on the horizon, and although the scene is breathtakingly beautiful, a sense of aloneness develops as the music descends and fades away at the end of the first section.

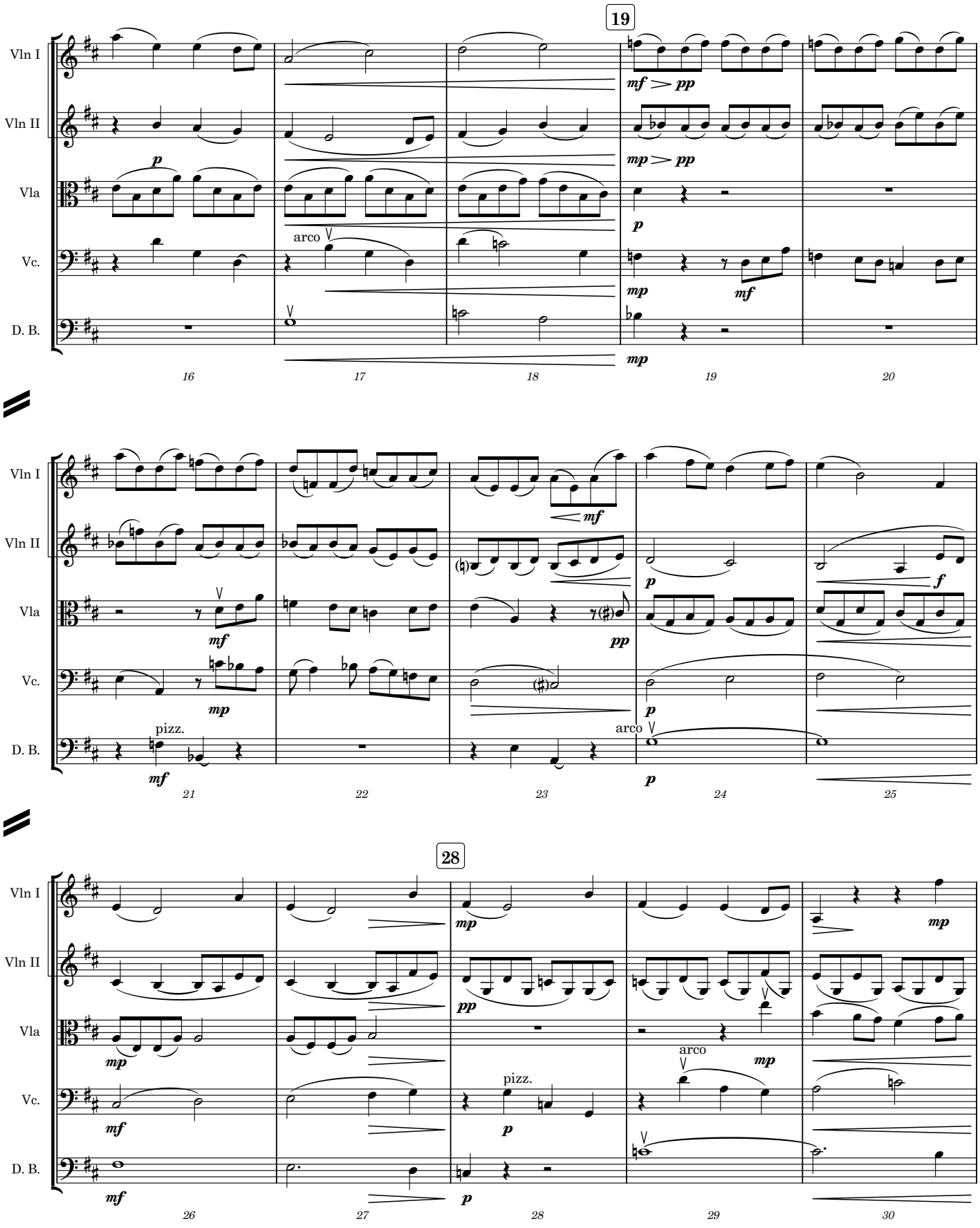
The middle section depicts the slow passing of the winter days, with silences broken only by the call of birds circling the sky and looking for food. Eventually, the music becomes more animated and the textures slowly turn to rapid, furious sixteenth notes, representing the clouds that bring rainfall at winter's end. When the clouds part, the sun reveals a beautiful, illuminated landscape teeming with life! Flowers bloom as the lower strings play a grandiose restatement of the opening theme.

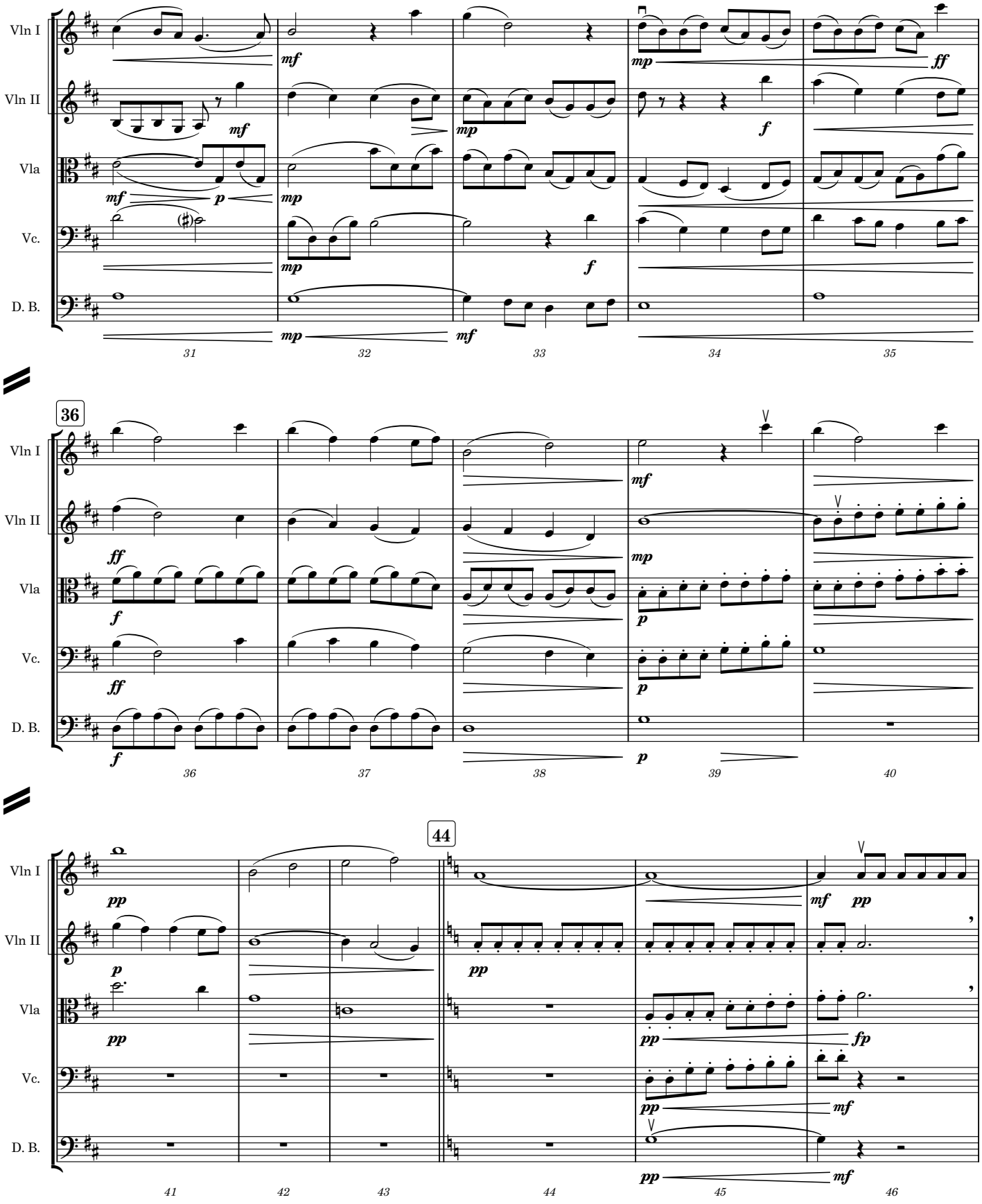
Alas, the tundra biome's six-week summer is brief. The fleeting major section dissolves, only to reveal the barren landscape that was once there before. The work concludes with a tremolo that envelops the entire orchestra, representing the blizzard that coats the terrain with a thick blanket of snow.

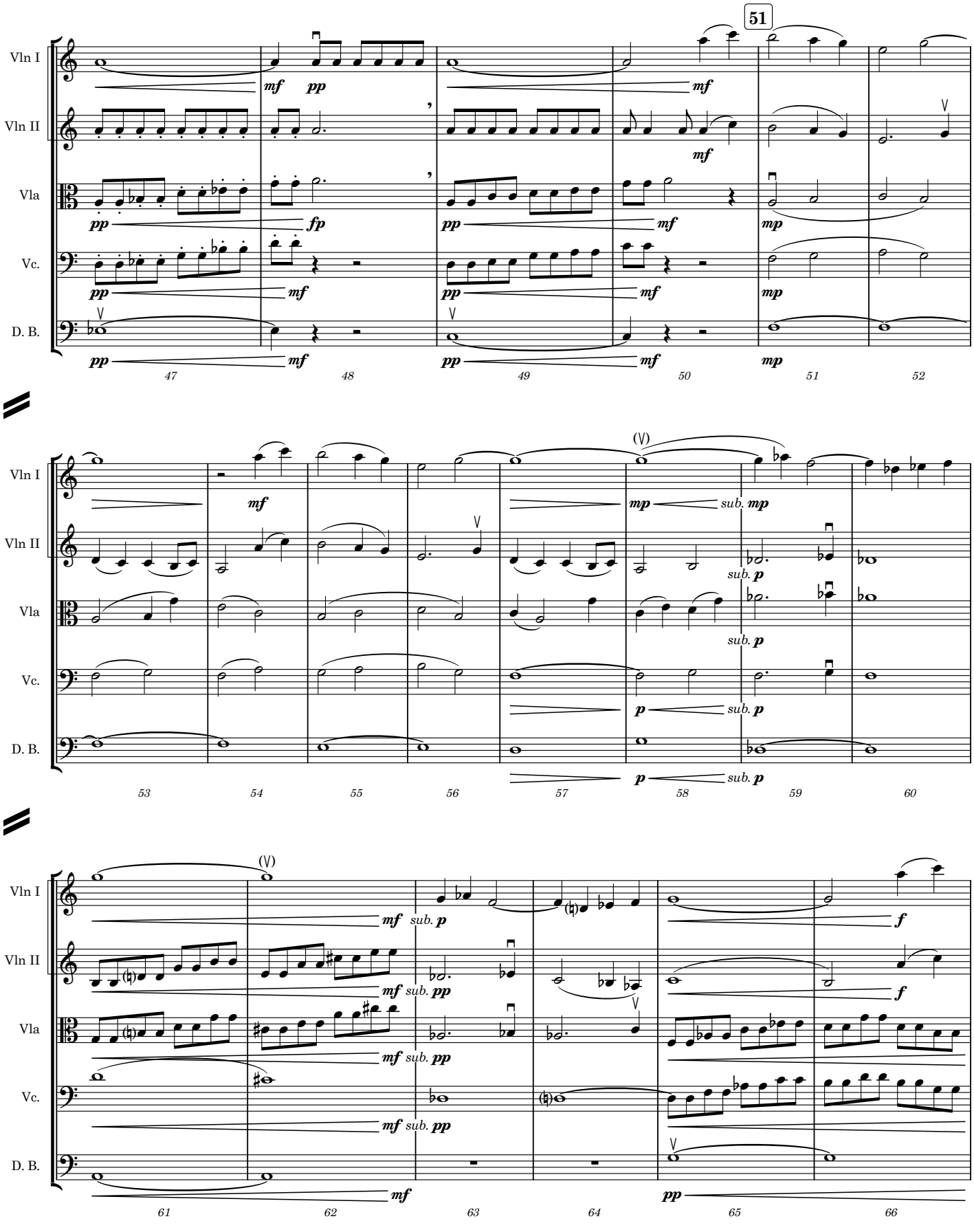
Landscapes

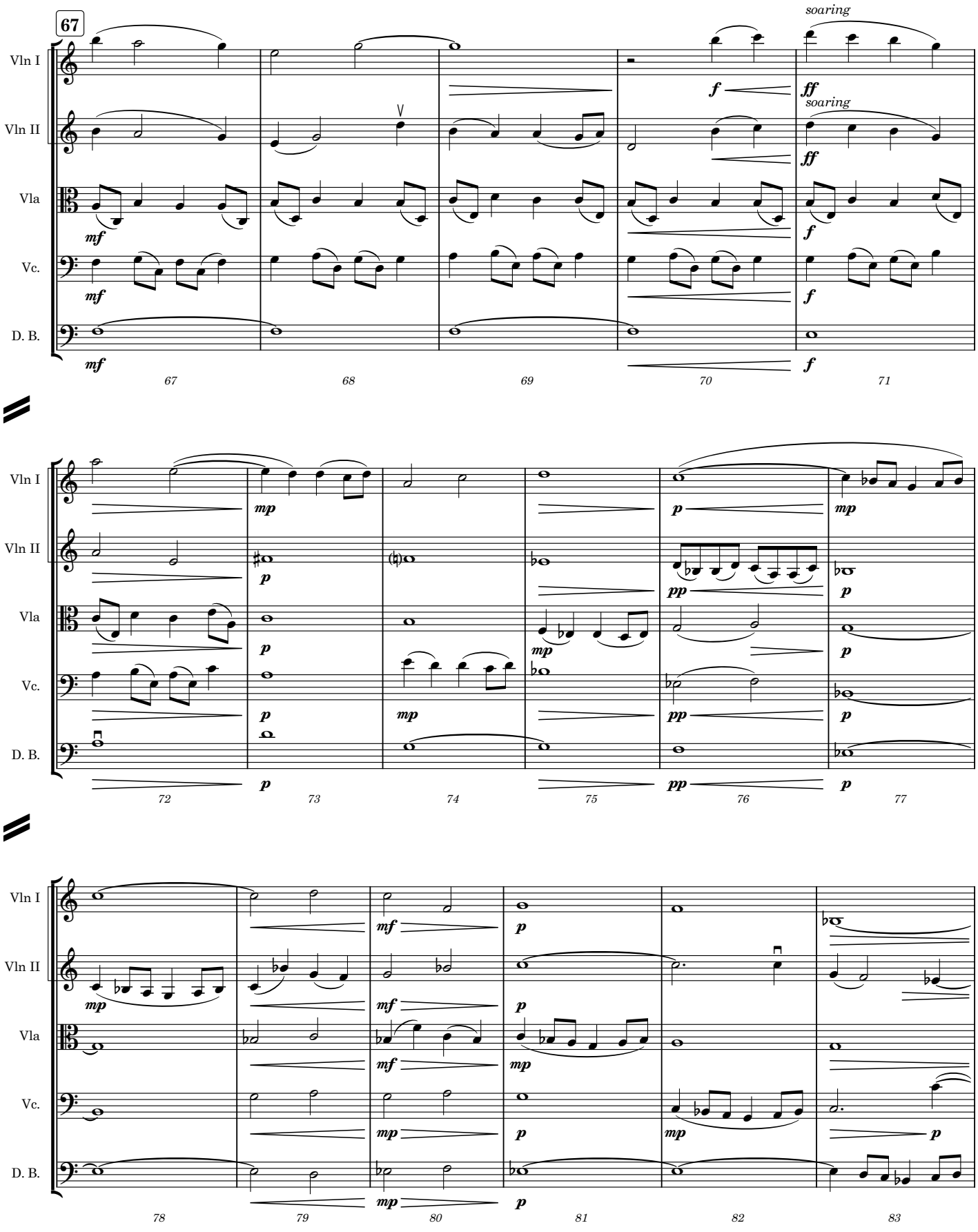
I. Prairie

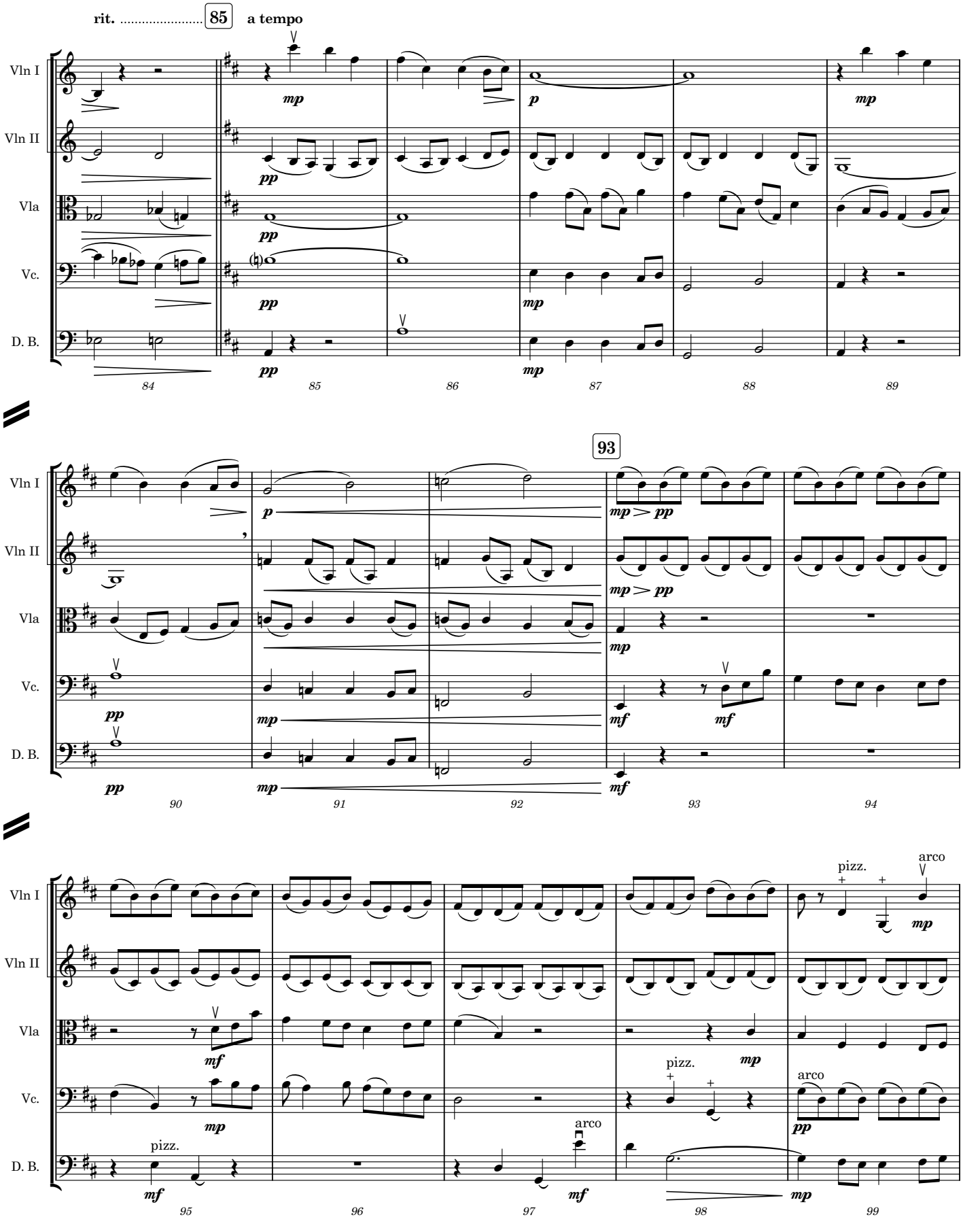


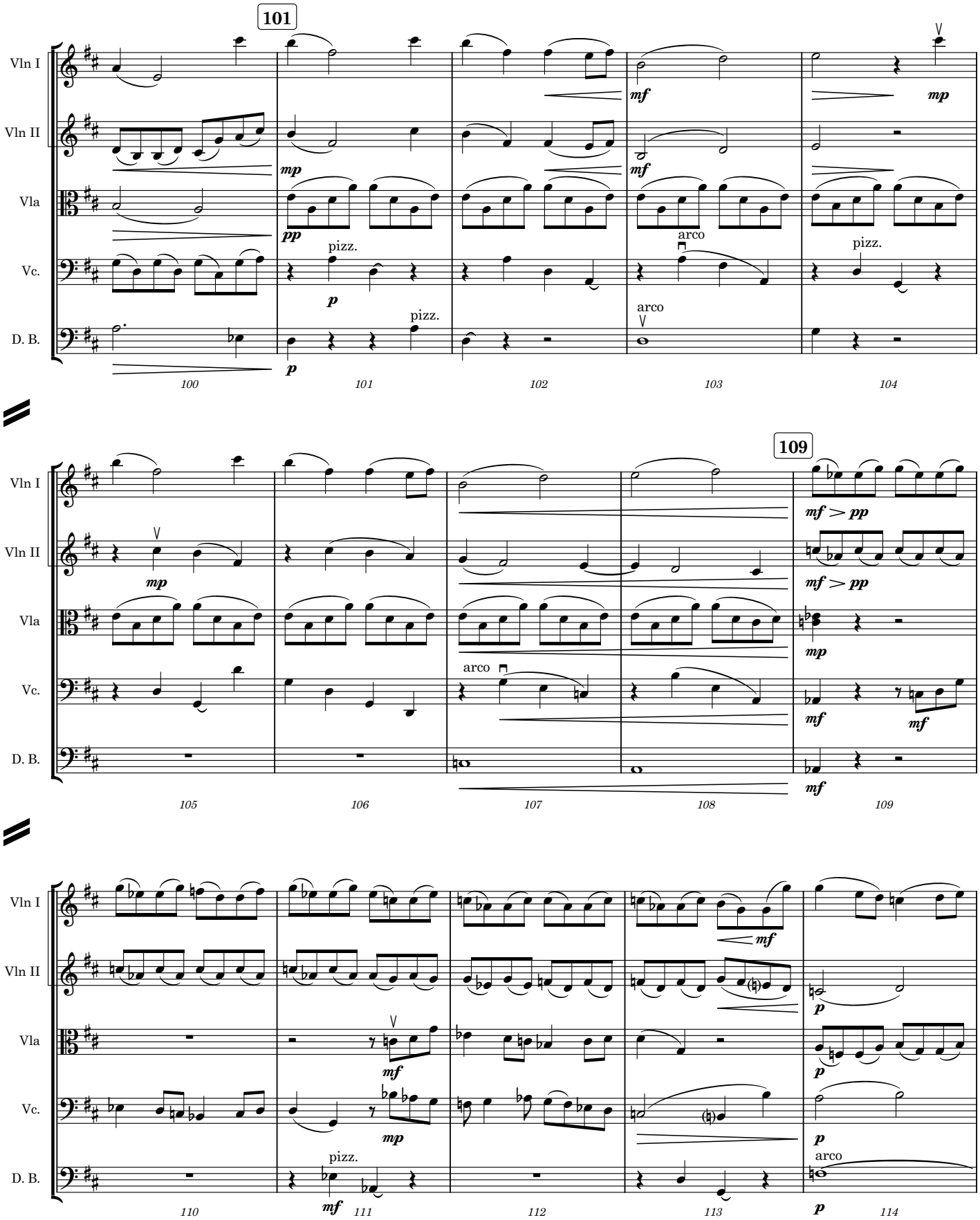

19
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
arco
pizz.
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30

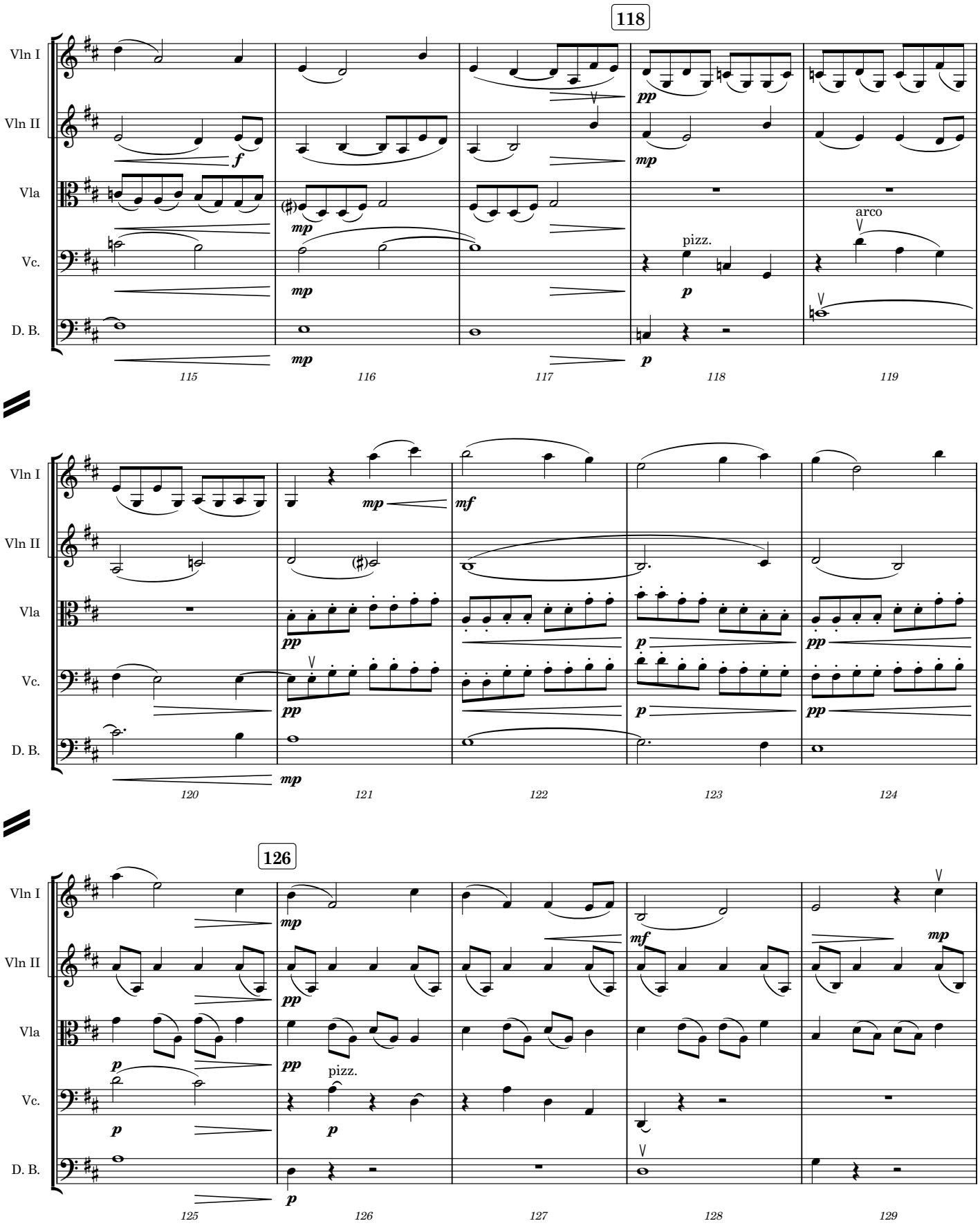

Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
44
41
42
43
44
45
46

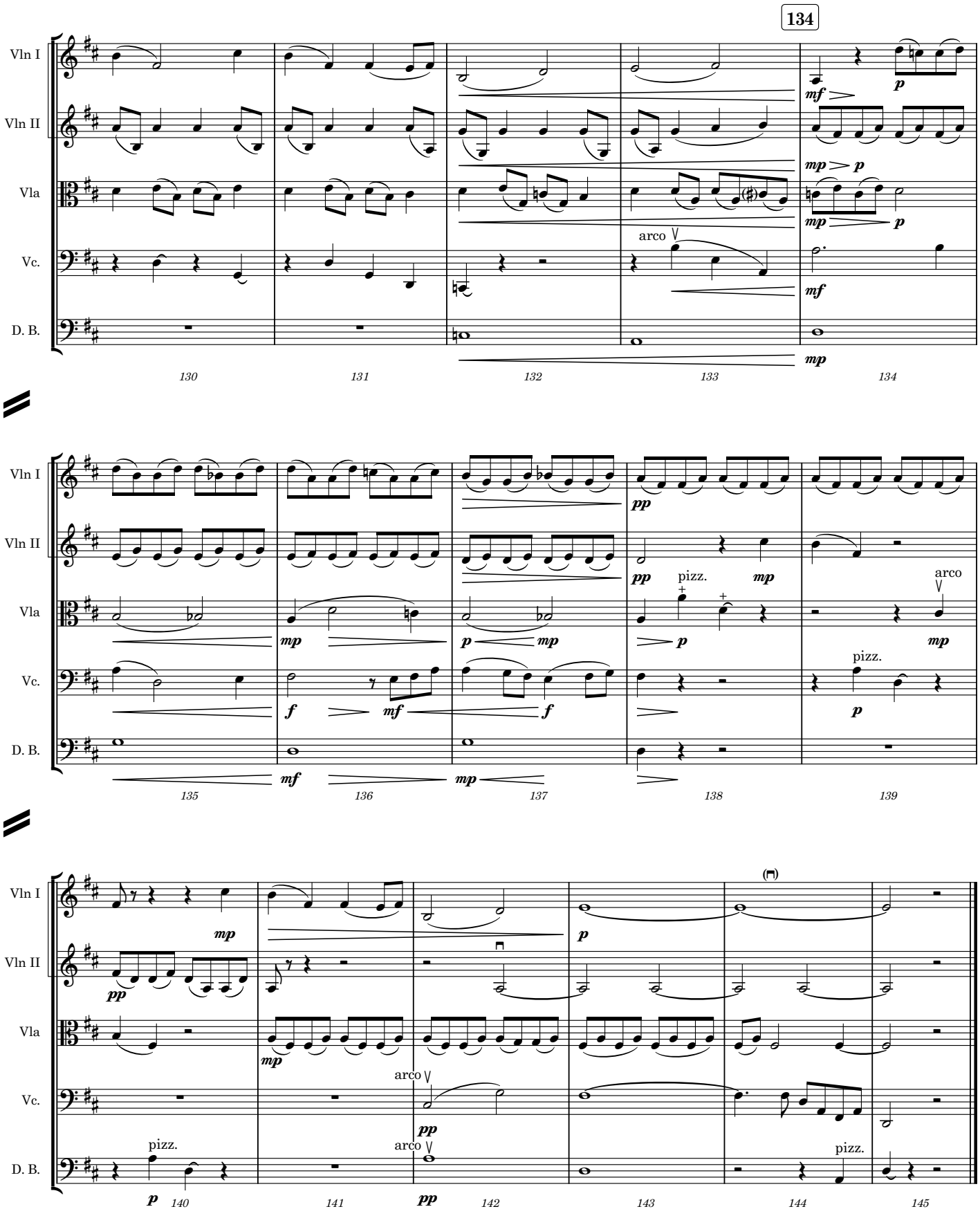

51
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
mf
pp
fp
mp
sub. mp
sub. p
p
f
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66


67
soaring
soaring
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83

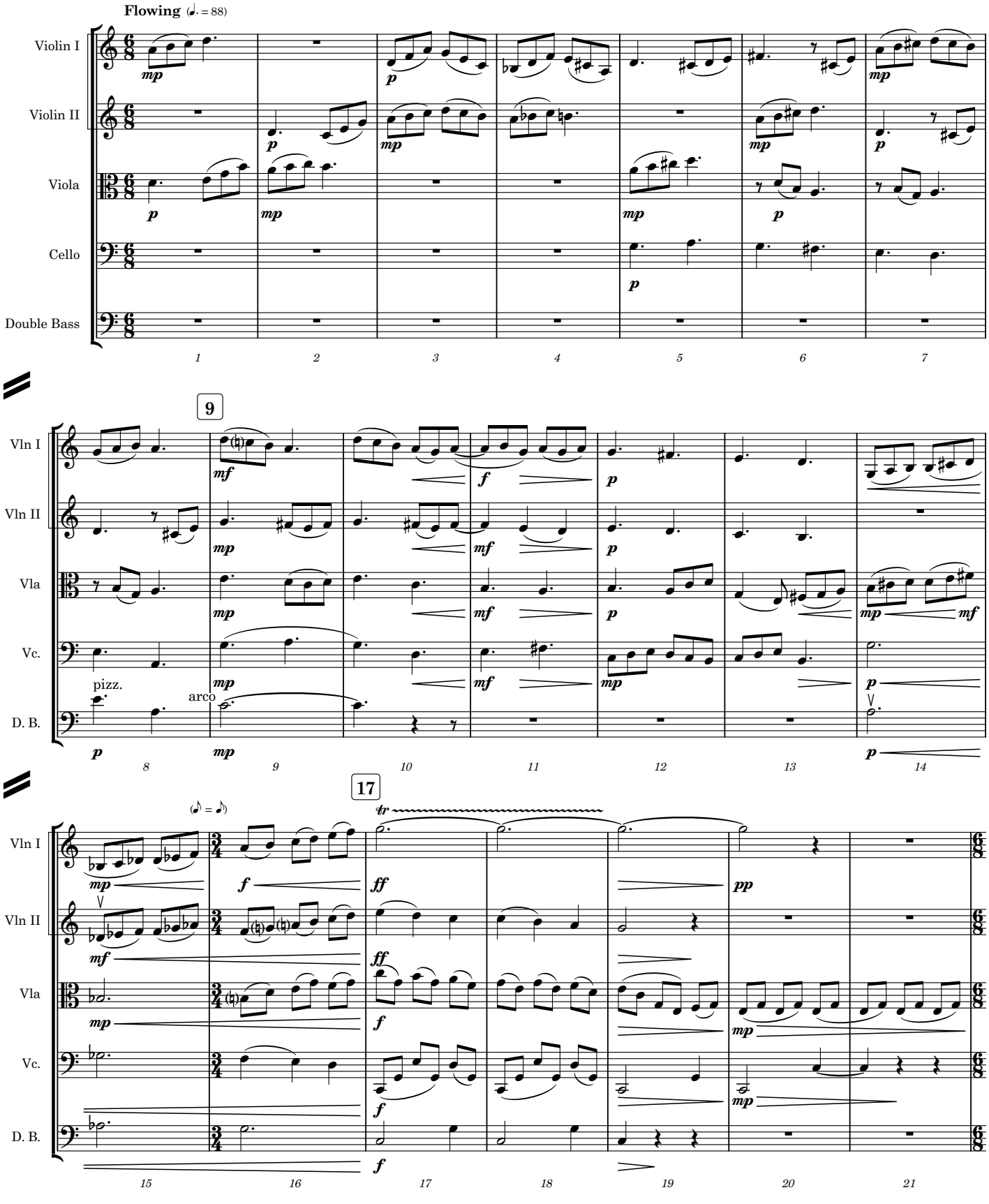

rit. ..... 85 a tempo
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
84
85
86
87
88
89
93
90
91
92
93
94
pizz.
arco
95
96
97
98
99

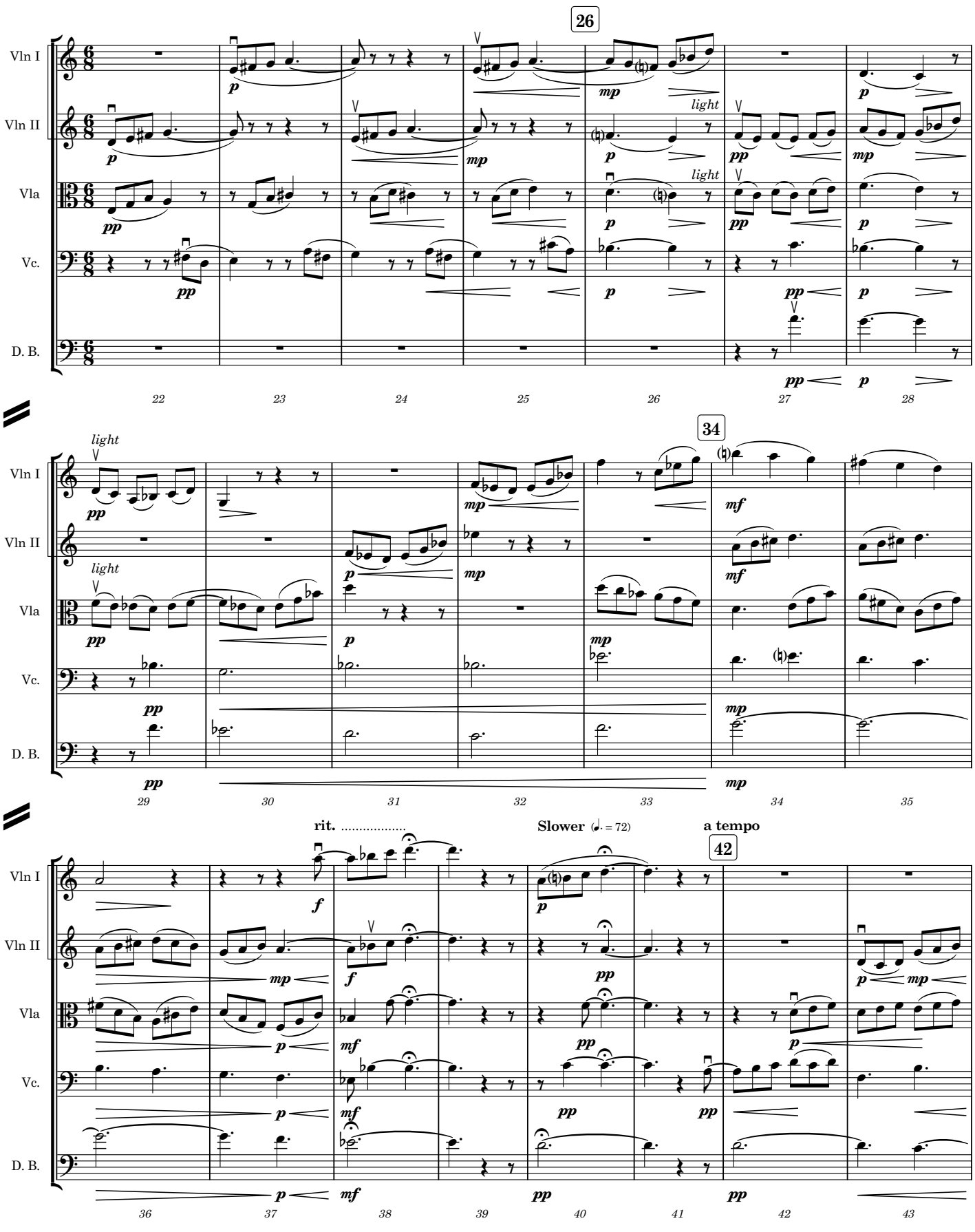

101
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
mp
mf
pp
p
pizz.
arco
100
101
102
103
104
109
mf > pp
105
106
107
108
109
110
111
112
113
114

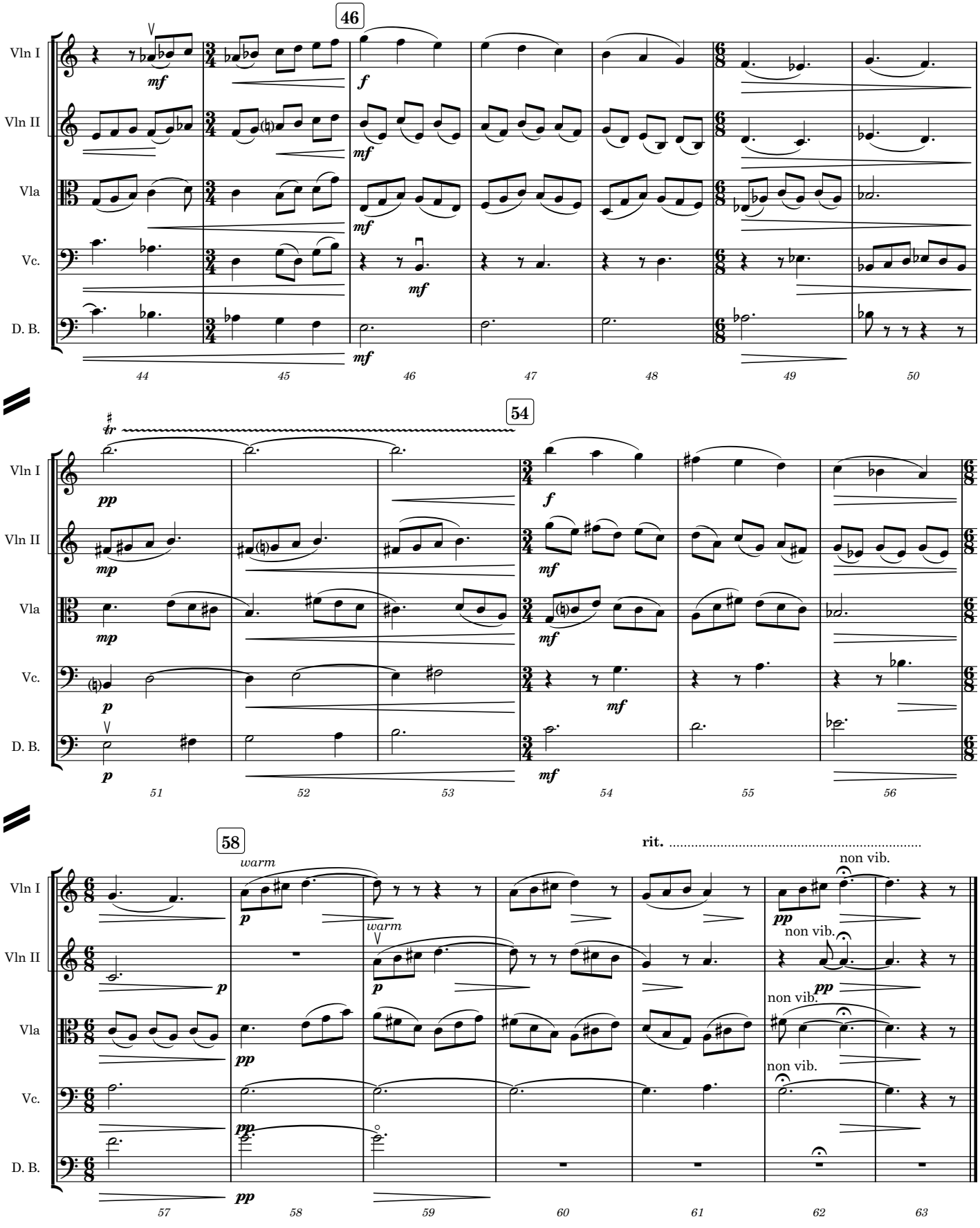

118
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
pizz.
arco
126
pizz.
115
116
117
118
119
120
121
122
123
124
125
126
127
128
129


134
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
arco
pizz.
130
131
132
133
134
135
136
137
138
139
140
141
142
143
144
145

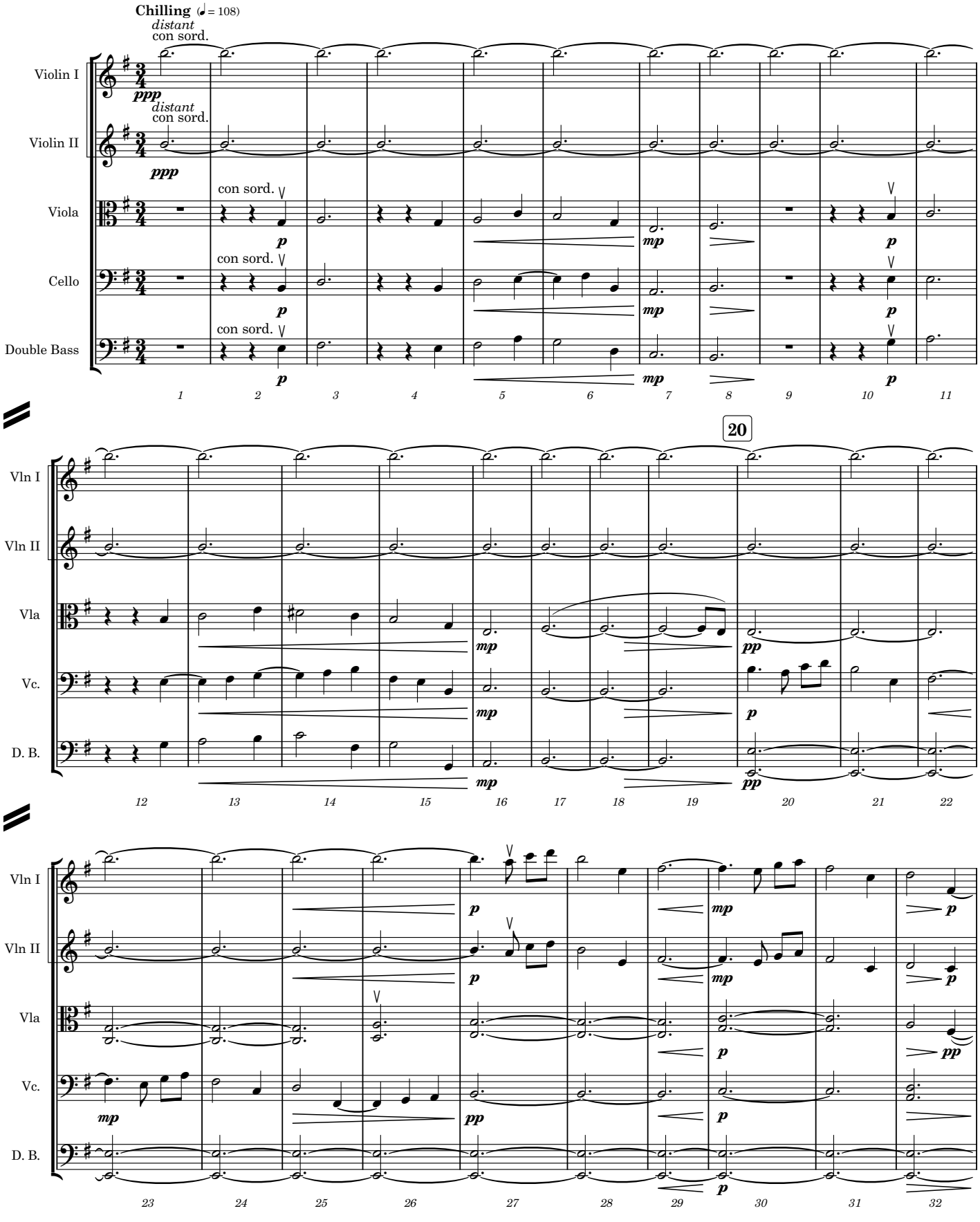
II. Rivulet

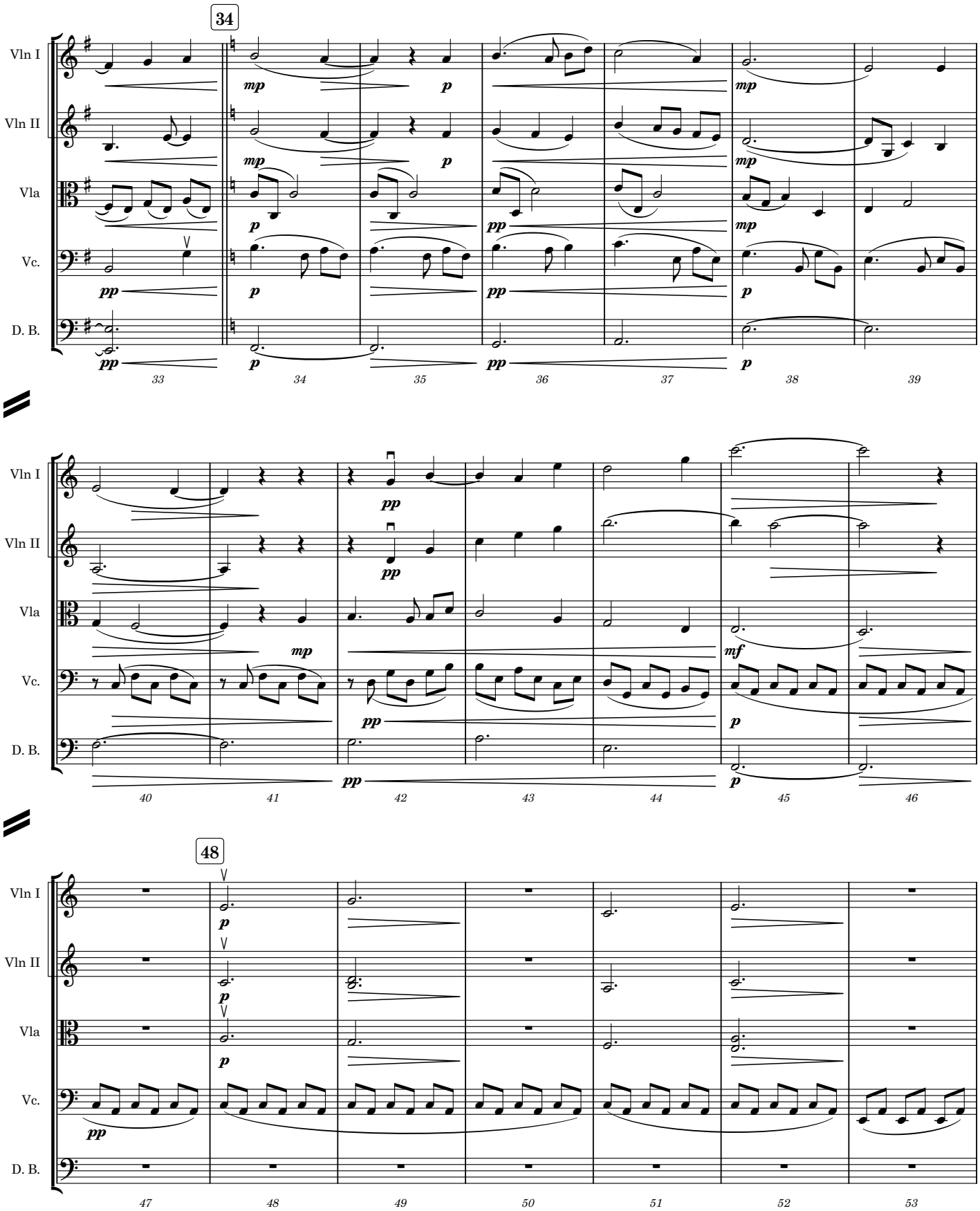

Flowing (♩. = 88)
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass
9
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
pizz.
arco
17
(♪ = ♪)
tr
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21

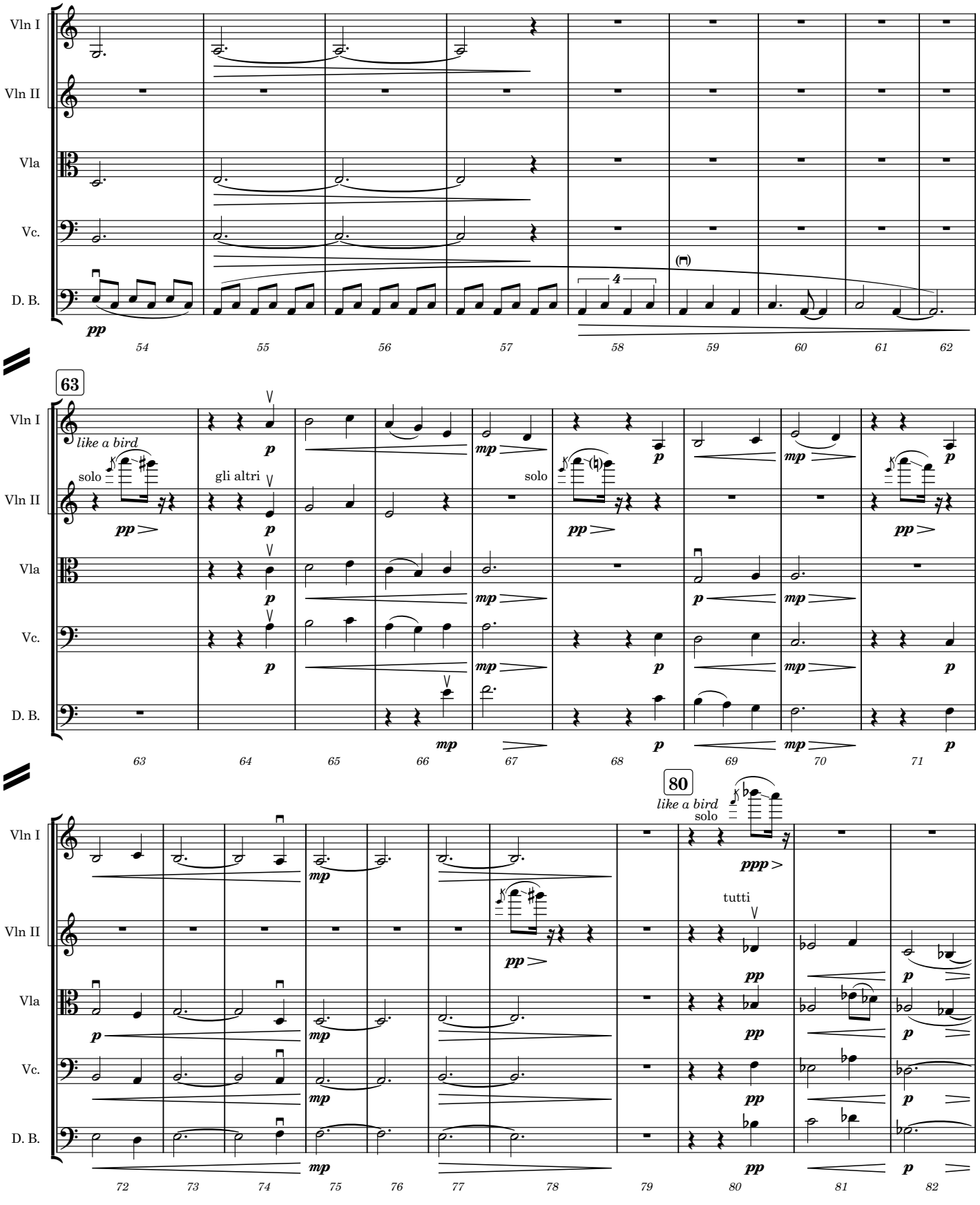

26
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
light
22 23 24 25 26 27 28
34
29 30 31 32 33 34 35
rit. .....
Slower (♩. = 72)
a tempo
42
36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43

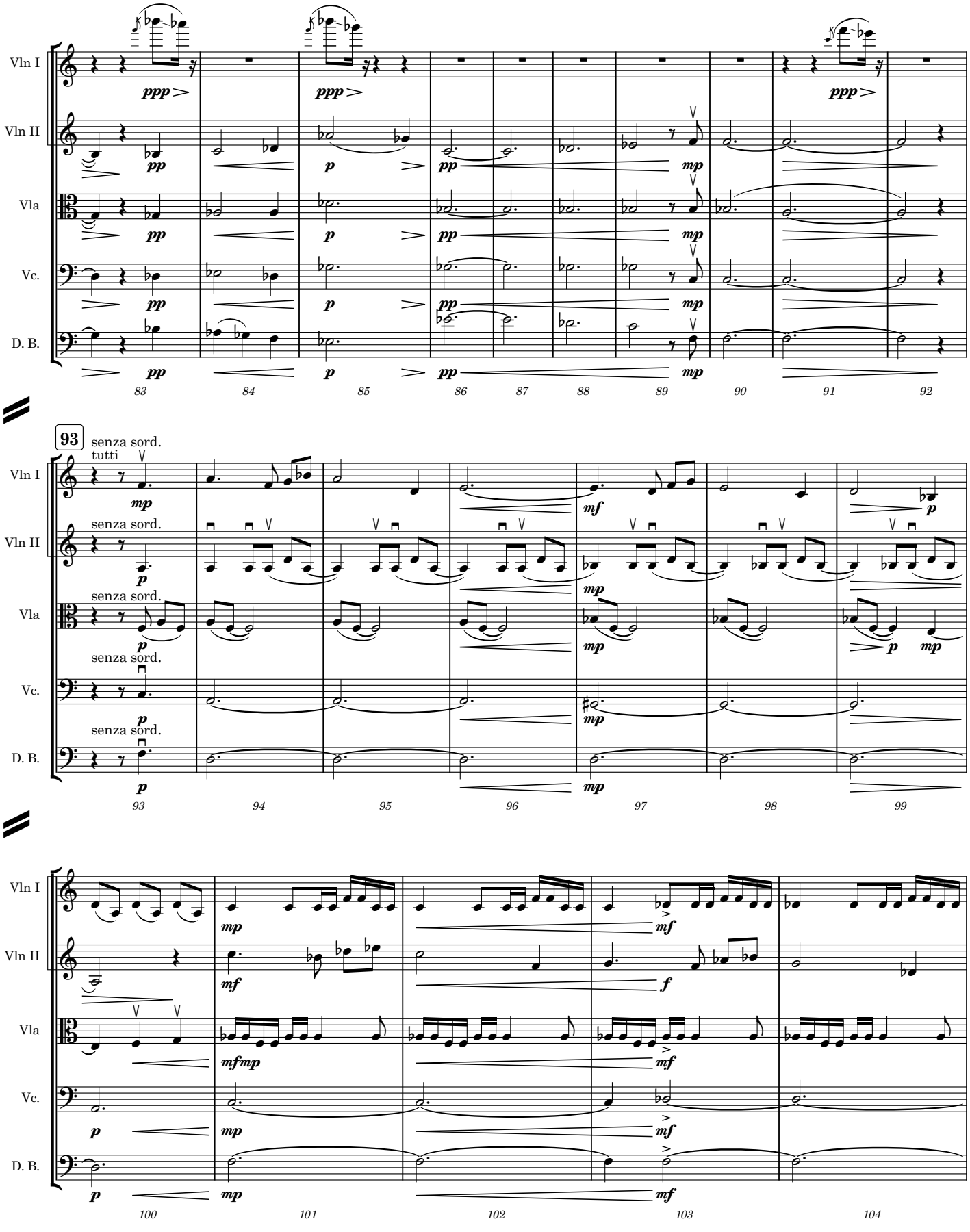

46
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
mf
f
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
54
tr
pp
mp
p
51
52
53
54
55
56
58
warm
rit.
non vib.
57
58
59
60
61
62
63

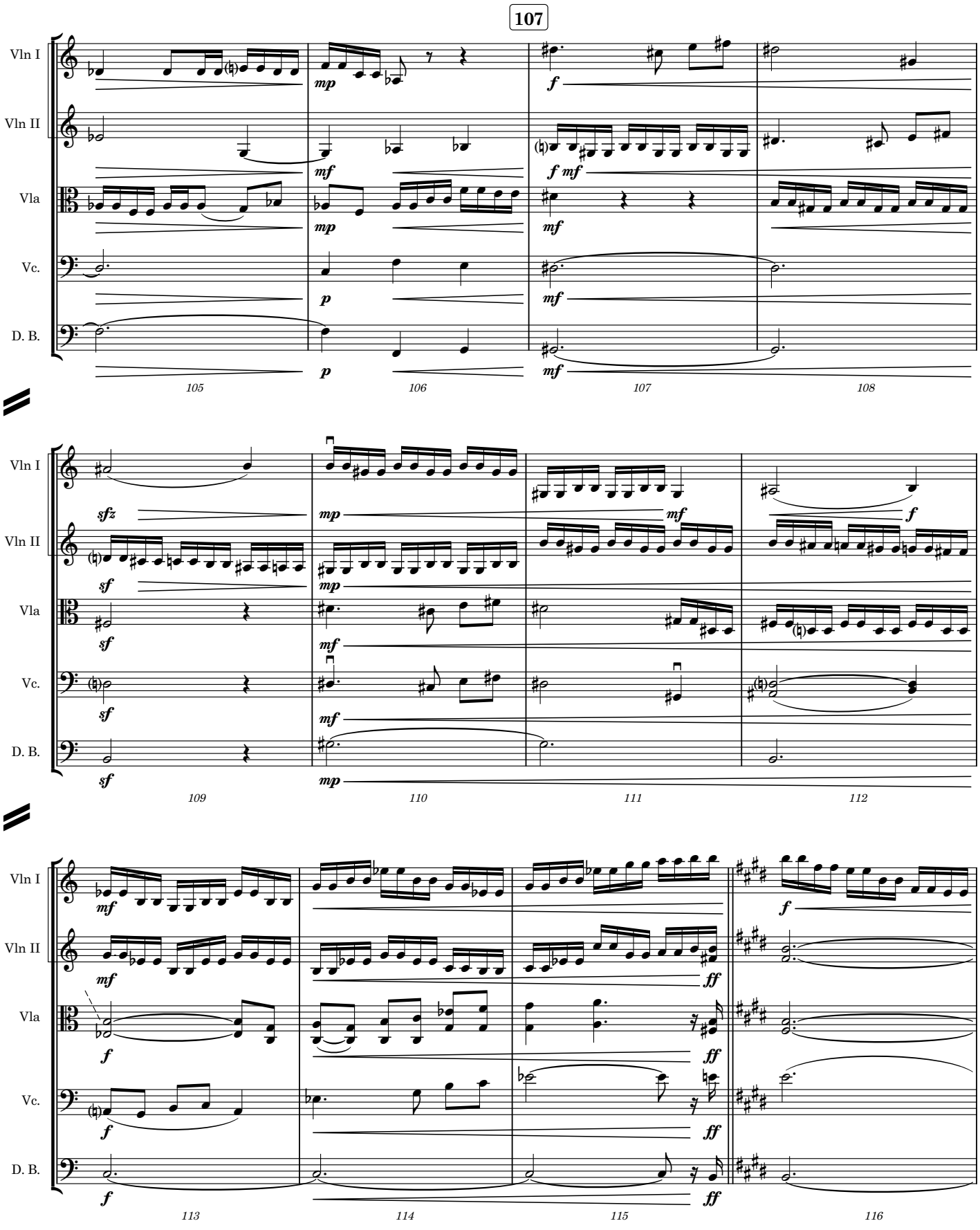
III. Tundra

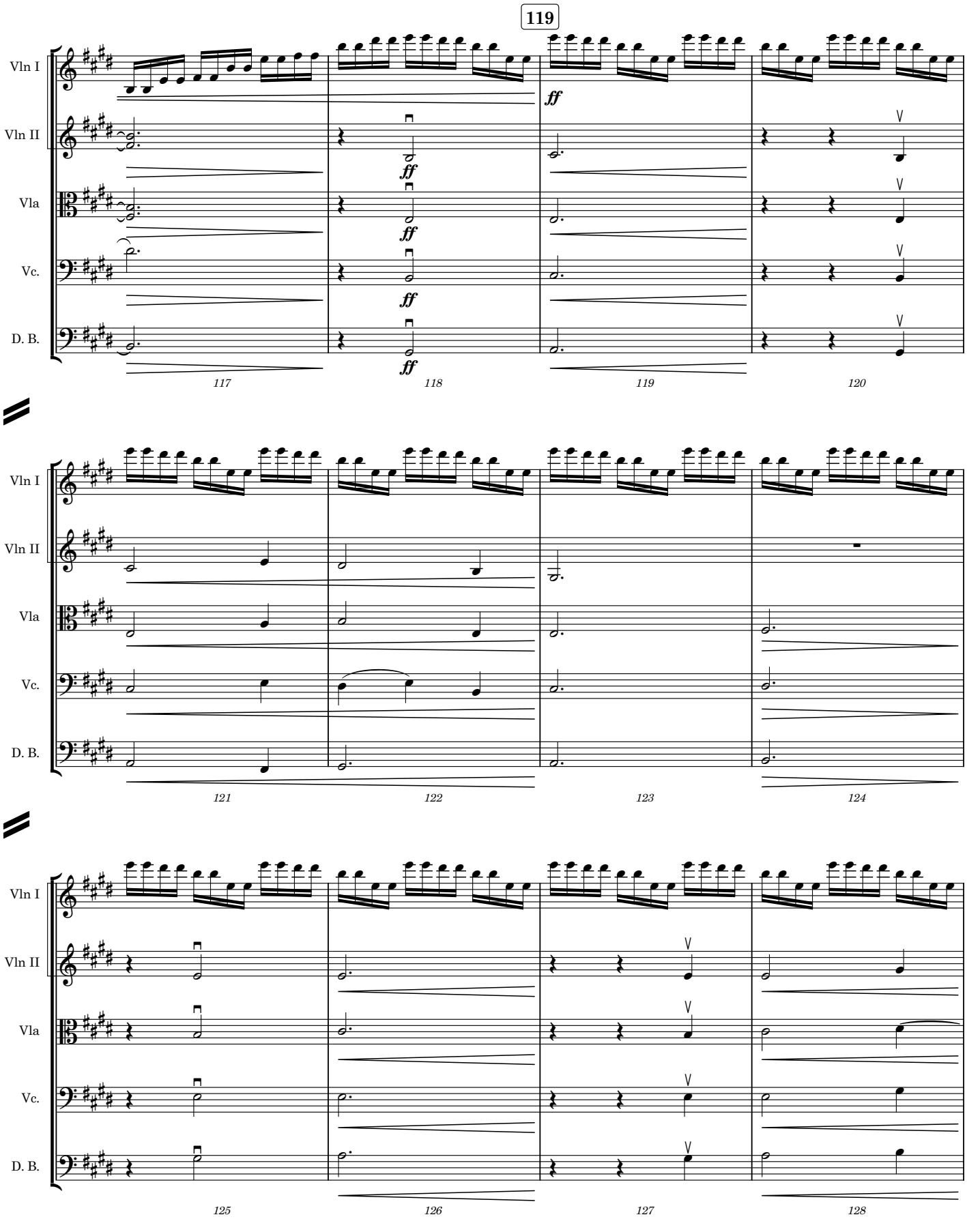

Chilling (♩= 108)
distant
con sord.
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass
ppp
p
mp
20
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
pp

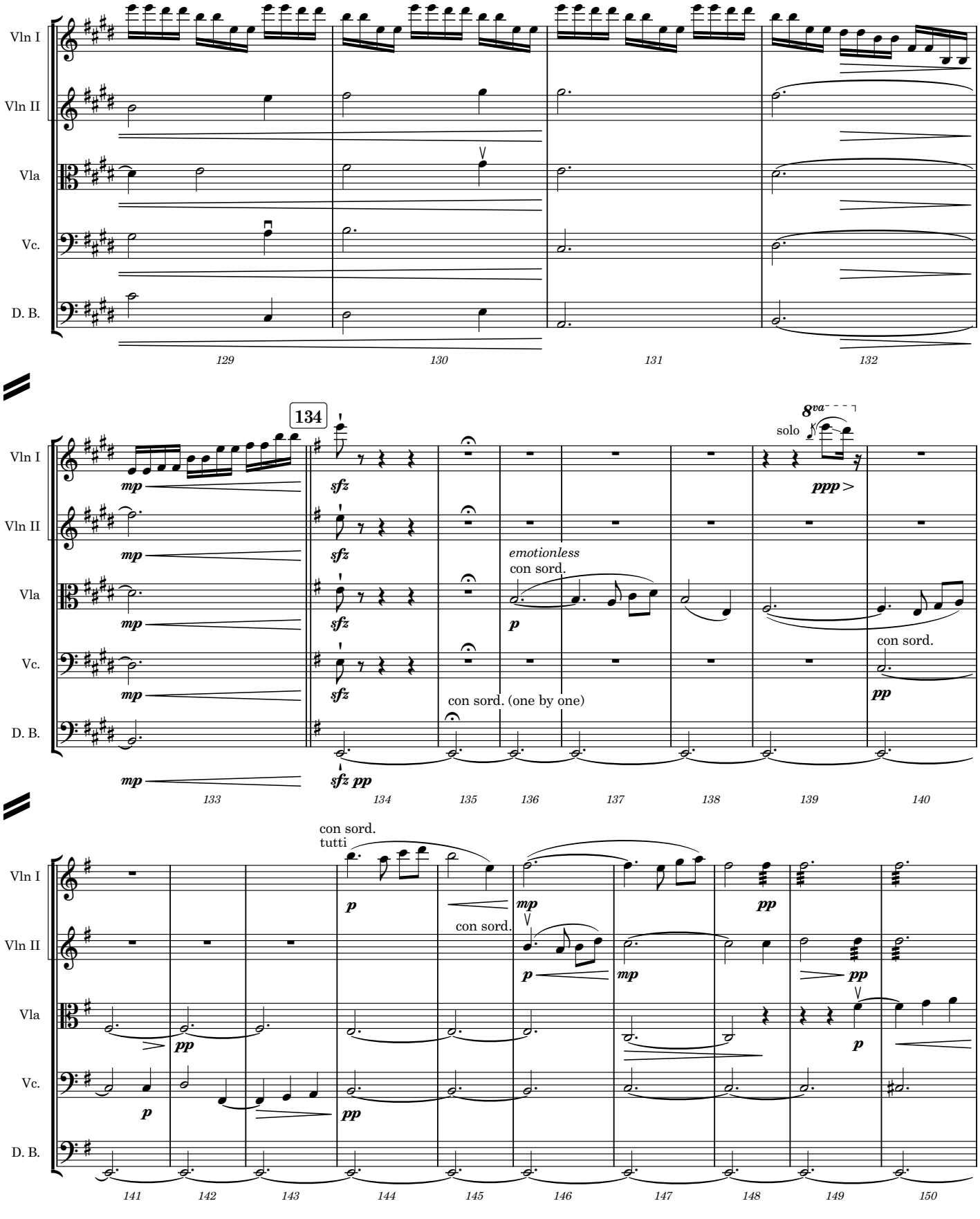

34
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
48
47
49
50
51
52
53

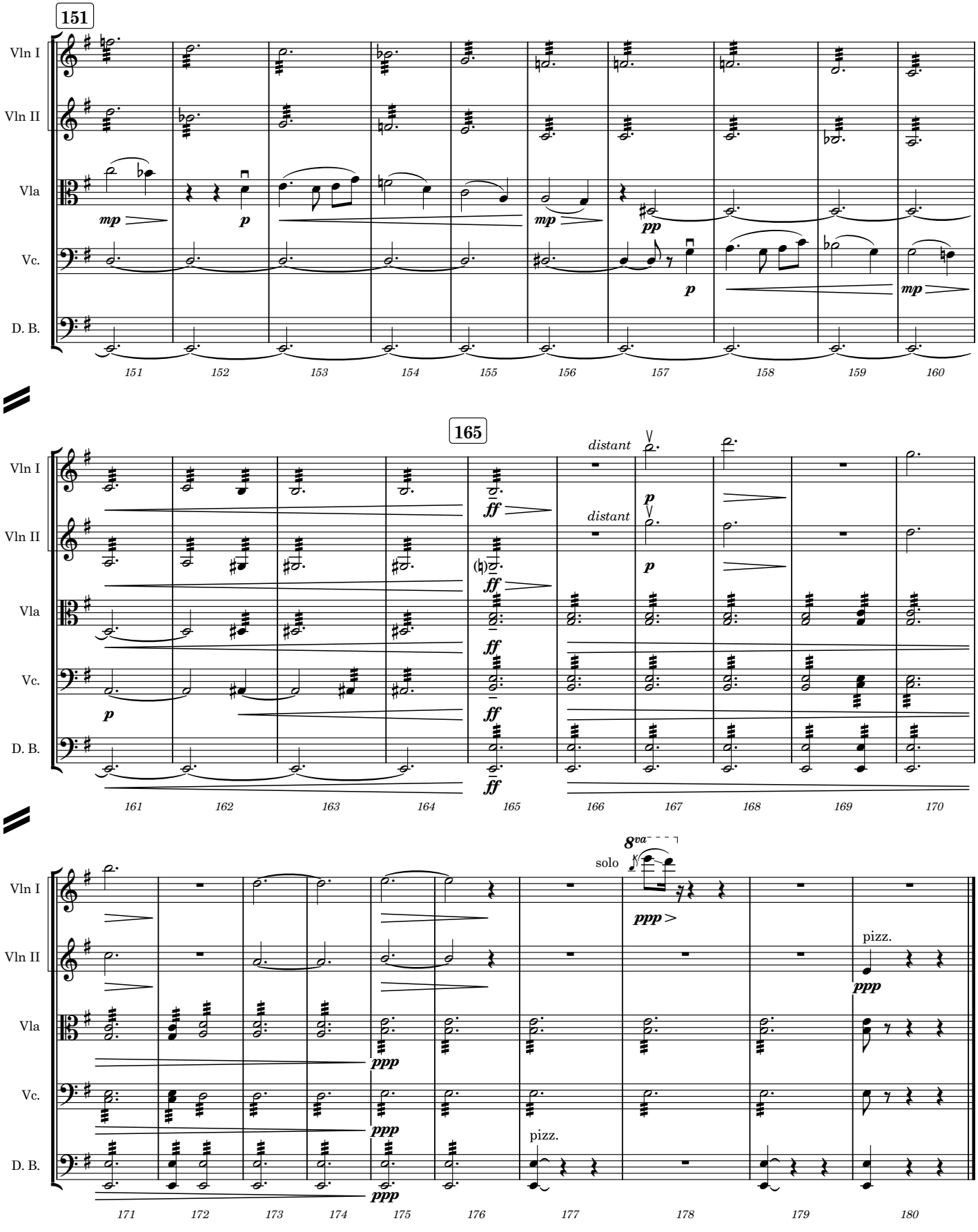

Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
pp
4
54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62
63
like a bird
solo
gli altri
solo
p
mp
pp
63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71
80
like a bird
solo
ppp
tutti
72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82


Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
ppp
pp
p
mp
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
senza sord.
tutti
mf
mfmp
f
94
95
96
97
98
99
100
101
102
103
104


107
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
105
106
107
108
109
110
111
112
113
114
115
116


119
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
ff
117
118
119
120
121
122
123
124
125
126
127
128

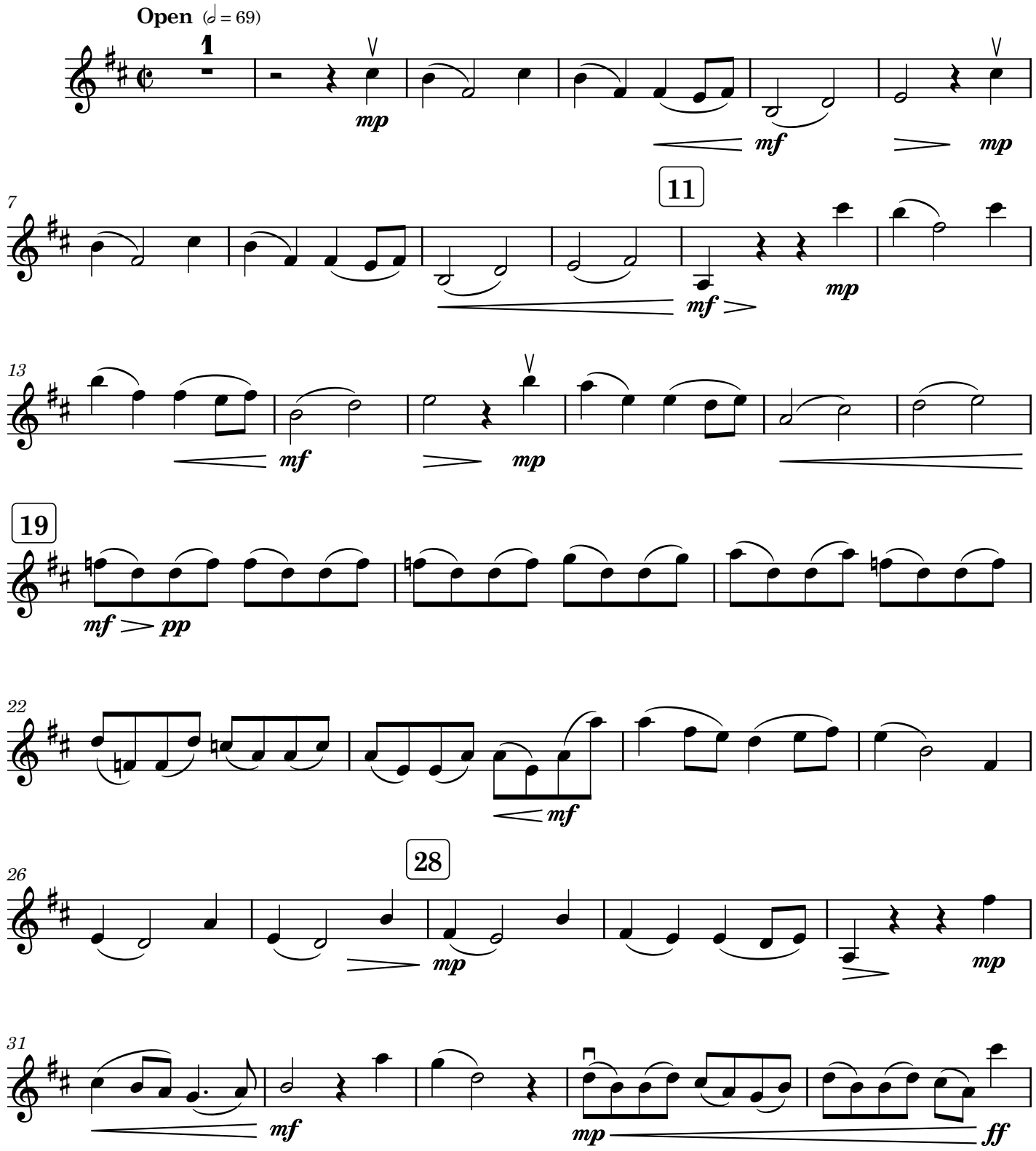

Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
129
130
131
132
134
mp
sfz
sfz pp
8va
solo
ppp >
emotionless
con sord.
p
con sord.
con sord. (one by one)
pp
133
134
135
136
137
138
139
140
con sord.
tutti
p
mp
con sord.
pp
141
142
143
144
145
146
147
148
149
150

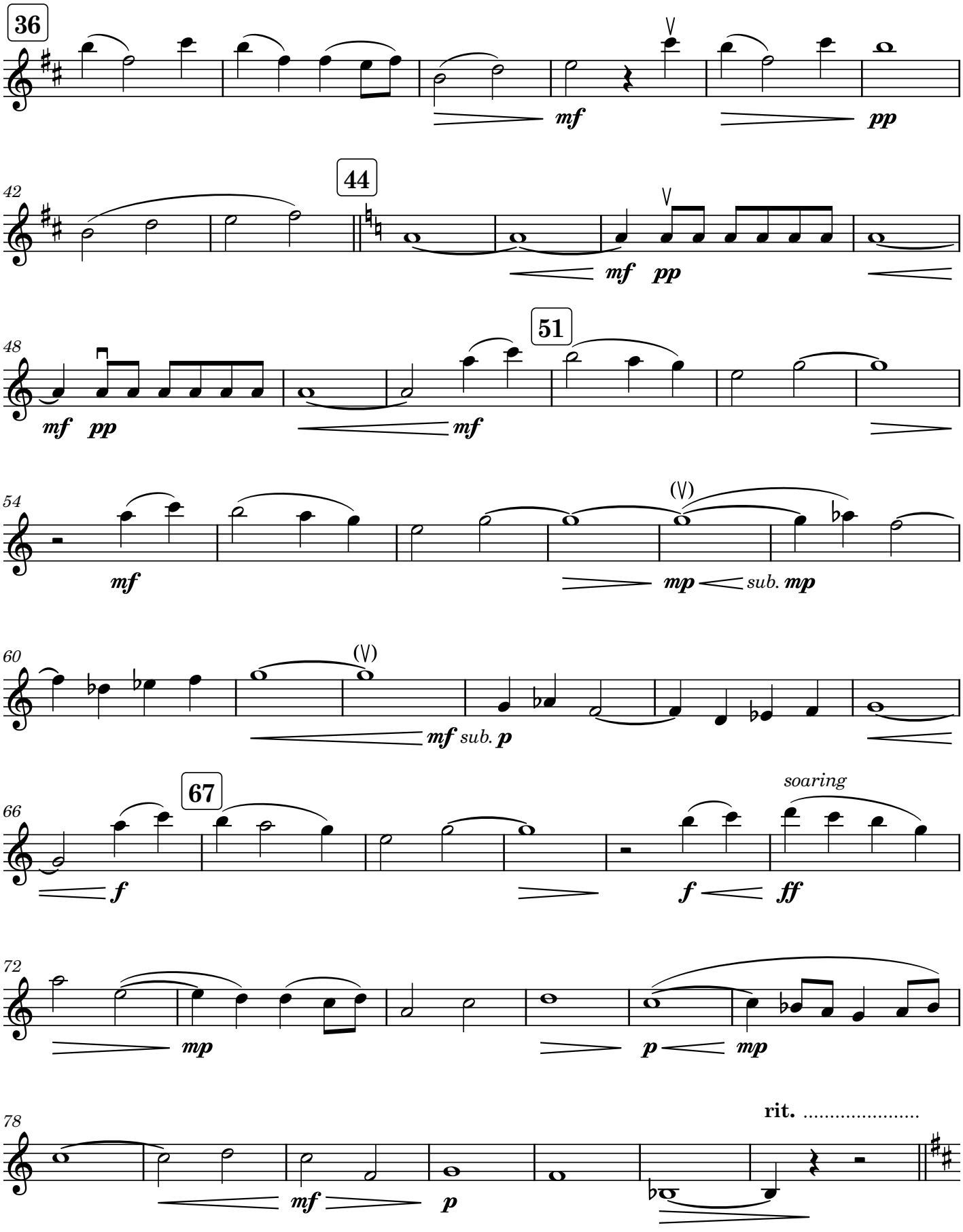

151
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
mp
p
mp
pp
p
mp
151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160
165
distant
distant
ff
p
p
ff
ff
ff
ff
161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170
8va
solo
ppp
pizz.
ppp
ppp
ppp
pizz.
171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180

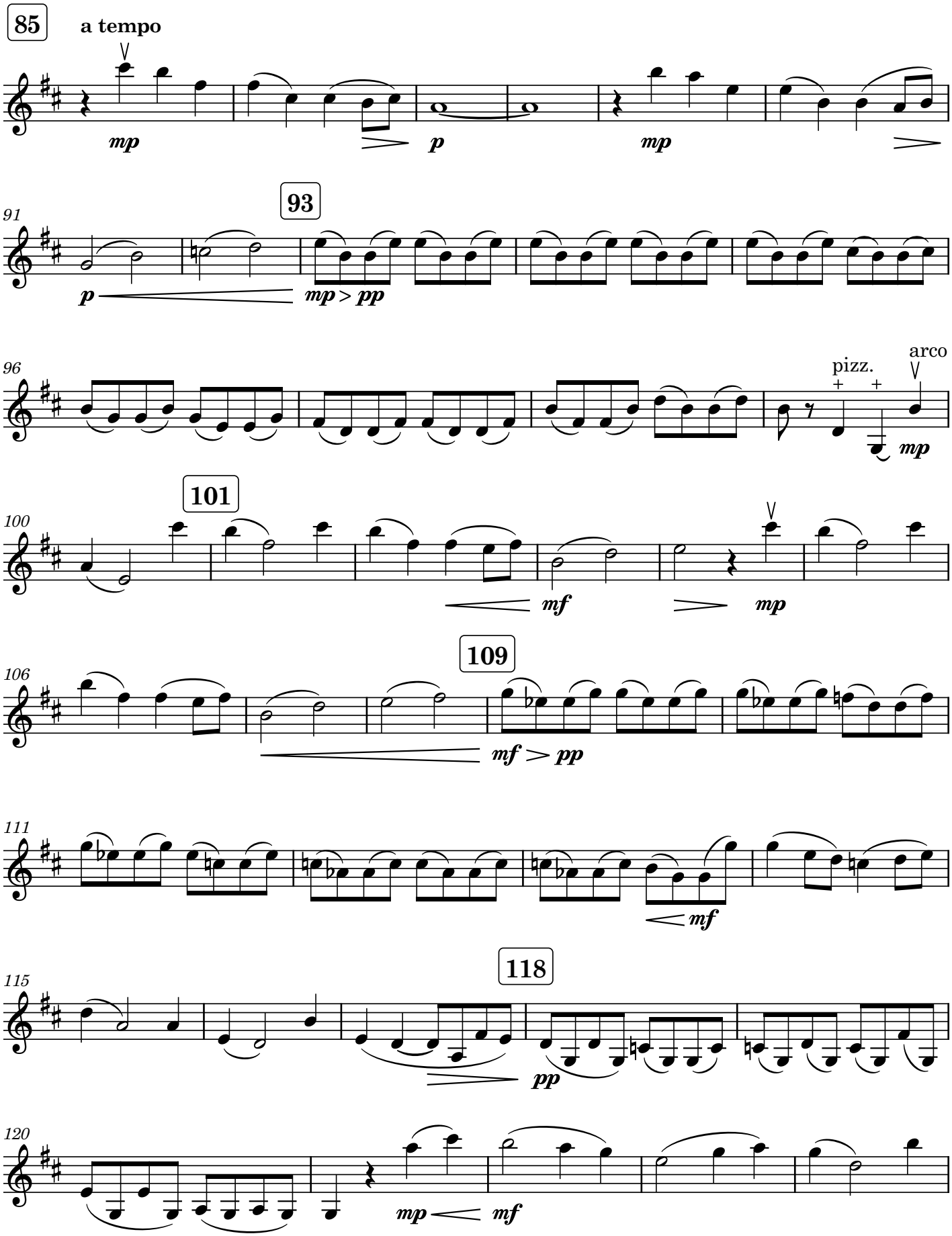
Violin I

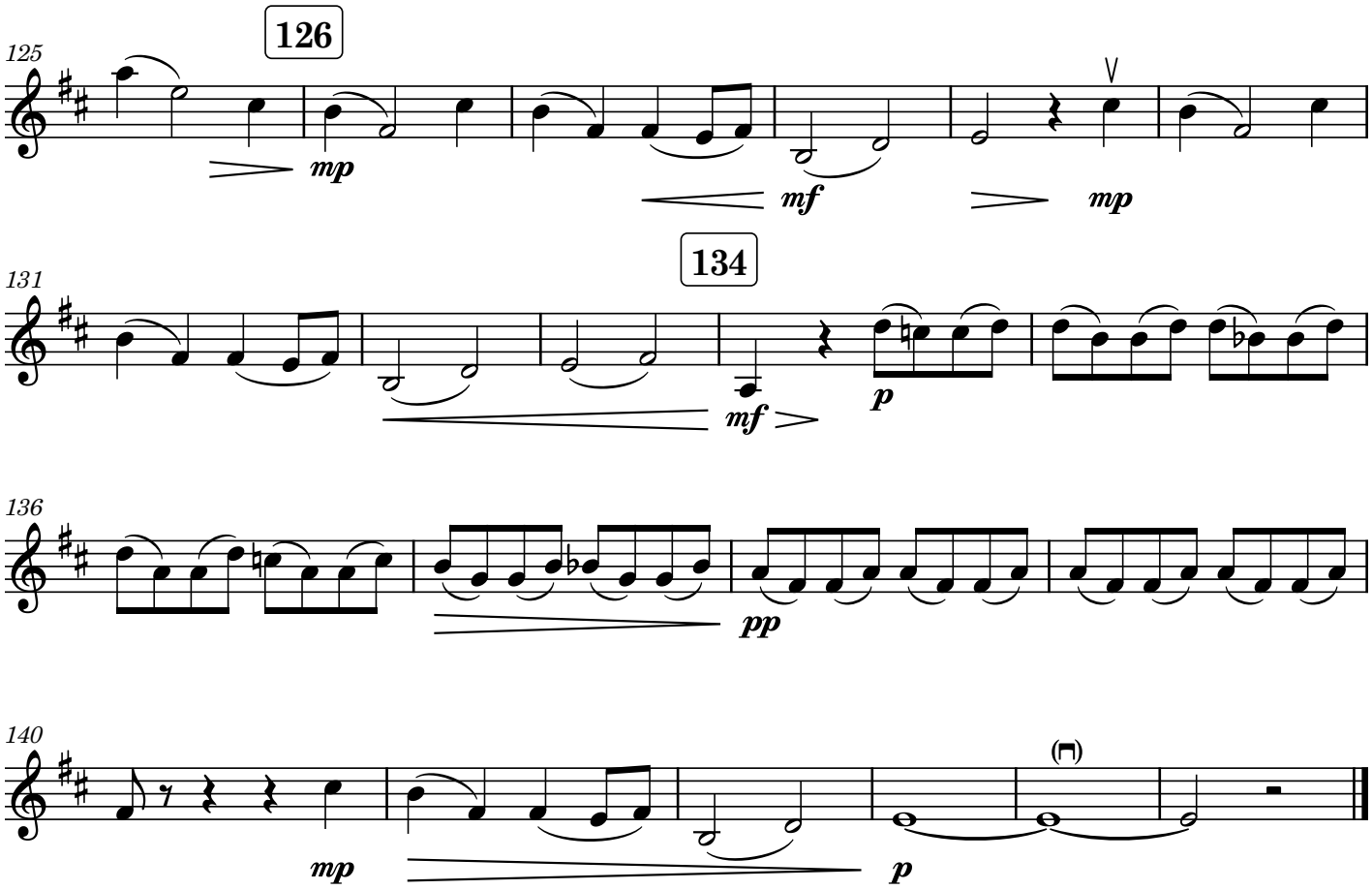
Landscapes

I. Prairie

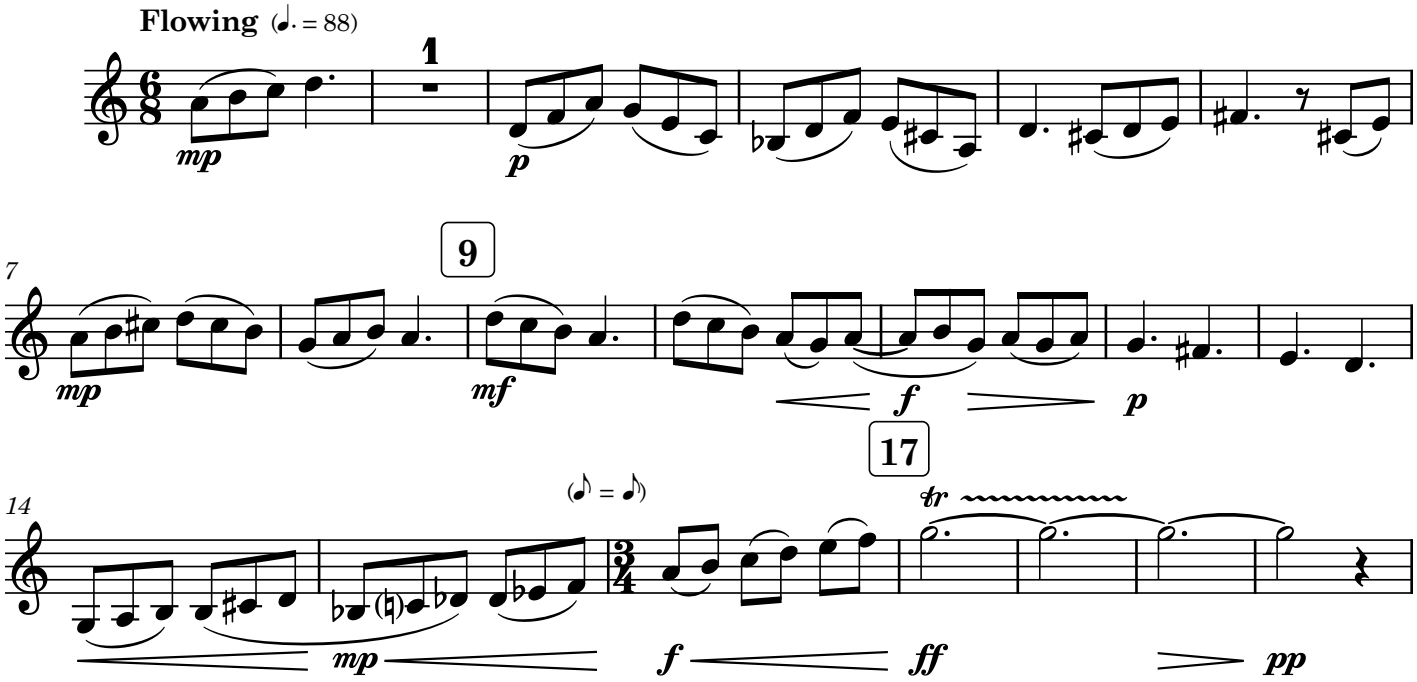


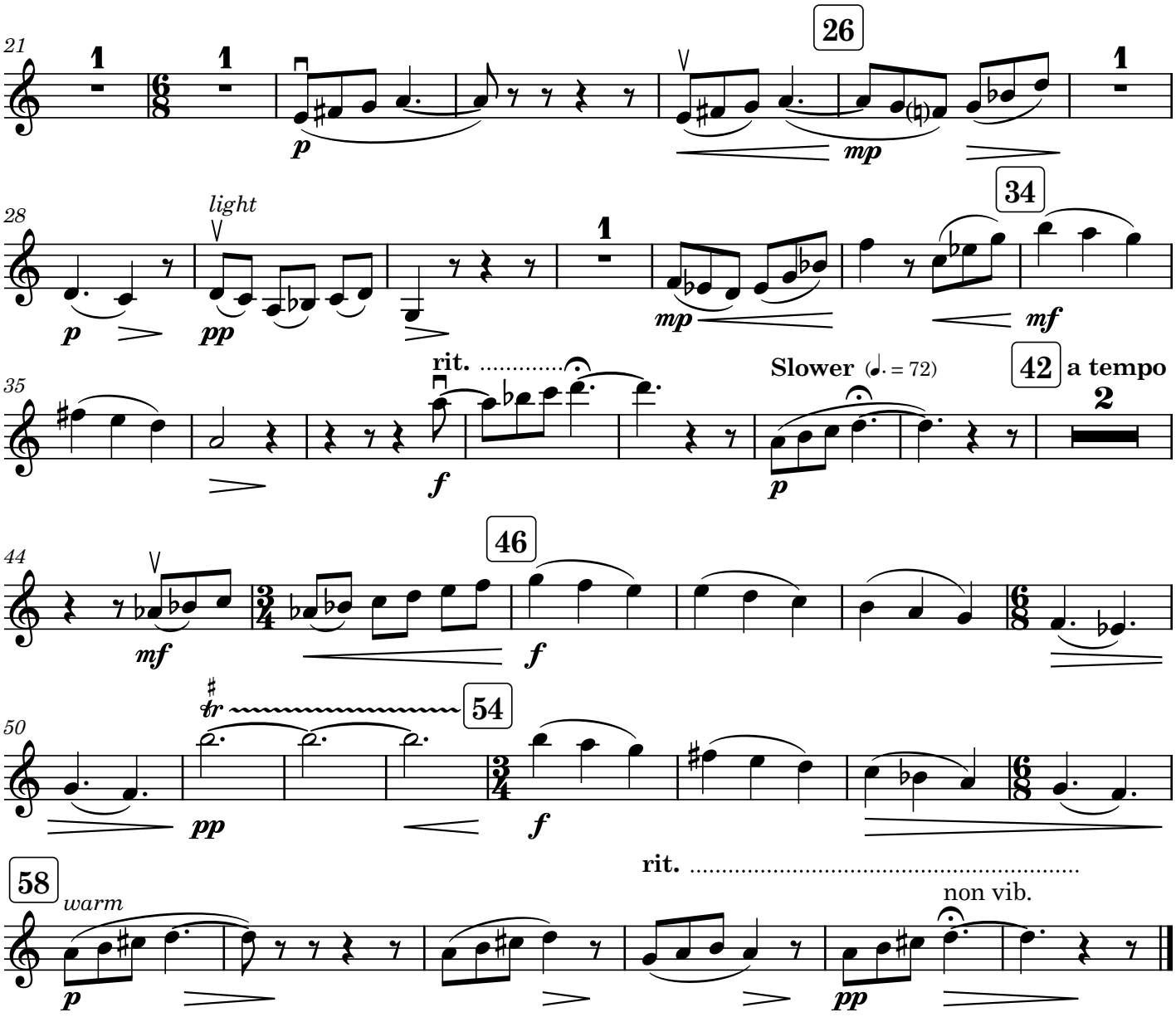

36
mf
pp
42
44
mf pp
48
mf pp
51
mf
54
mf
(V)
mp sub. mp
60
(V)
mf sub. p
66
67
f
soaring
f ff
72
mp
p mp
78
rit. .....
mf
p


85
a tempo
mp
p
mp
91
93
p
mp > pp
96
pizz.
arco
mp
100
101
mf
mp
106
109
mf > pp
111
mf
115
118
pp
120
mp
mf

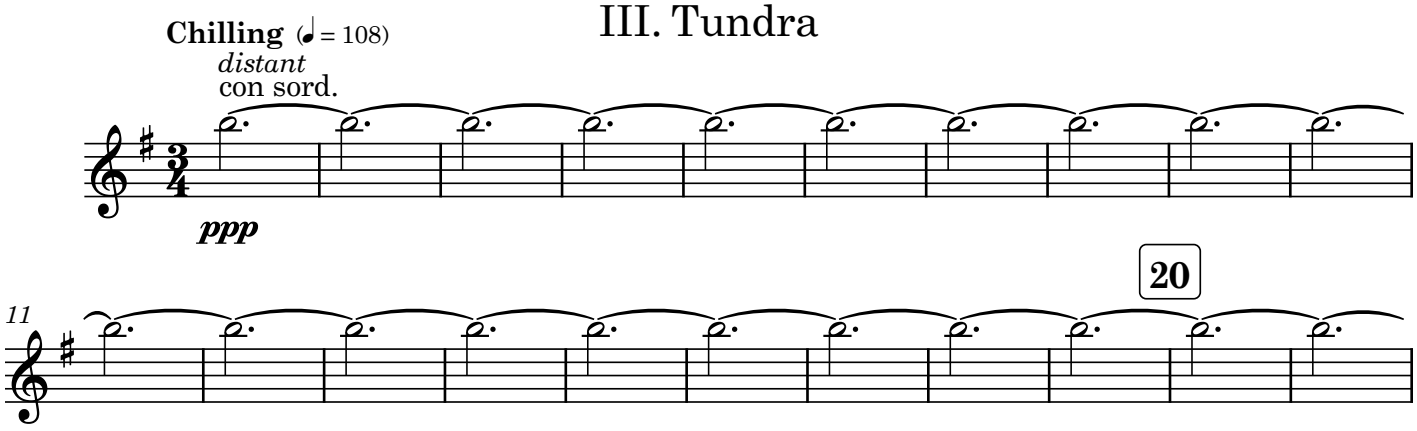

126
125
mp
mf
mp
134
131
mf
p
136
pp
140
mp
p

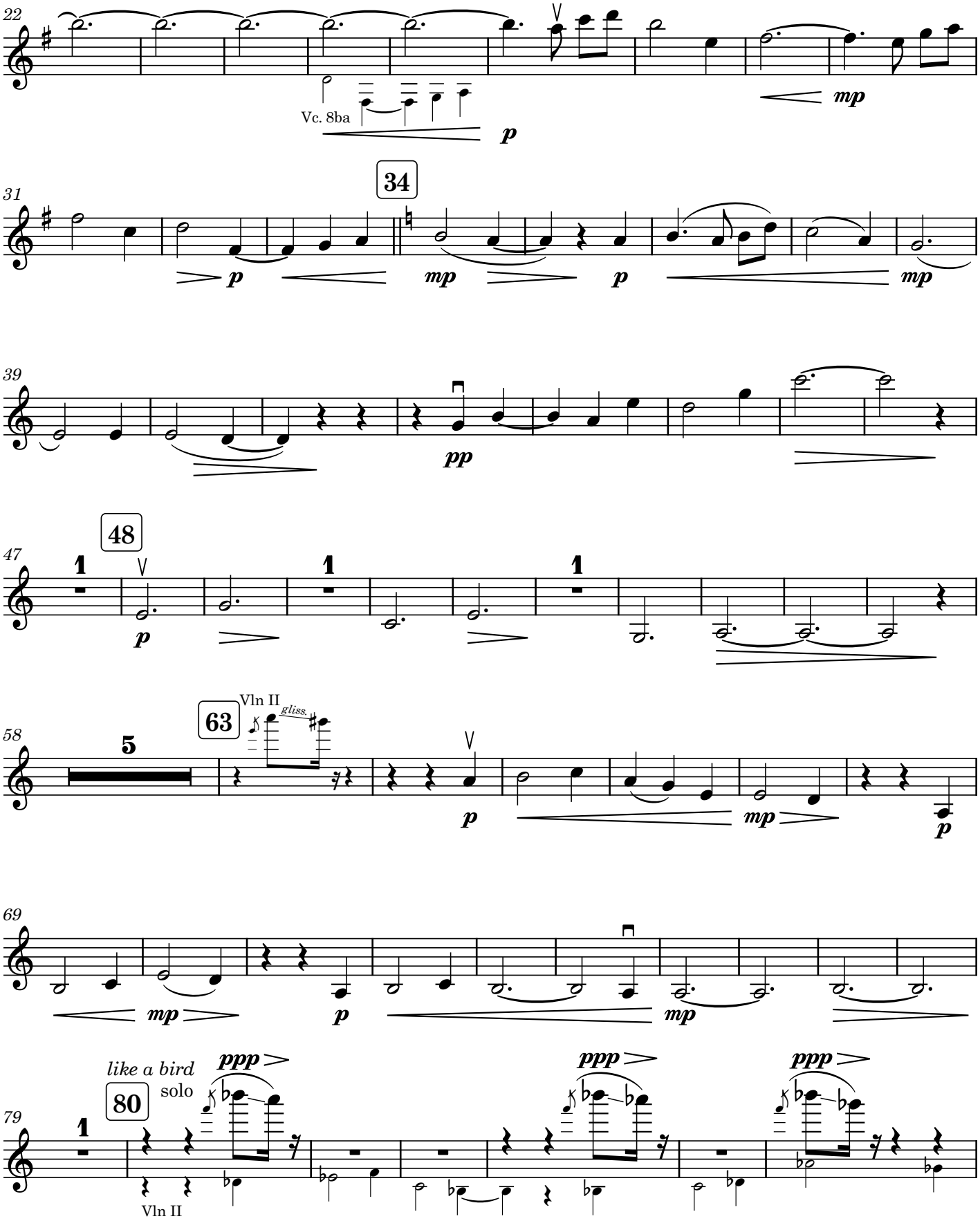
II. Rivulet

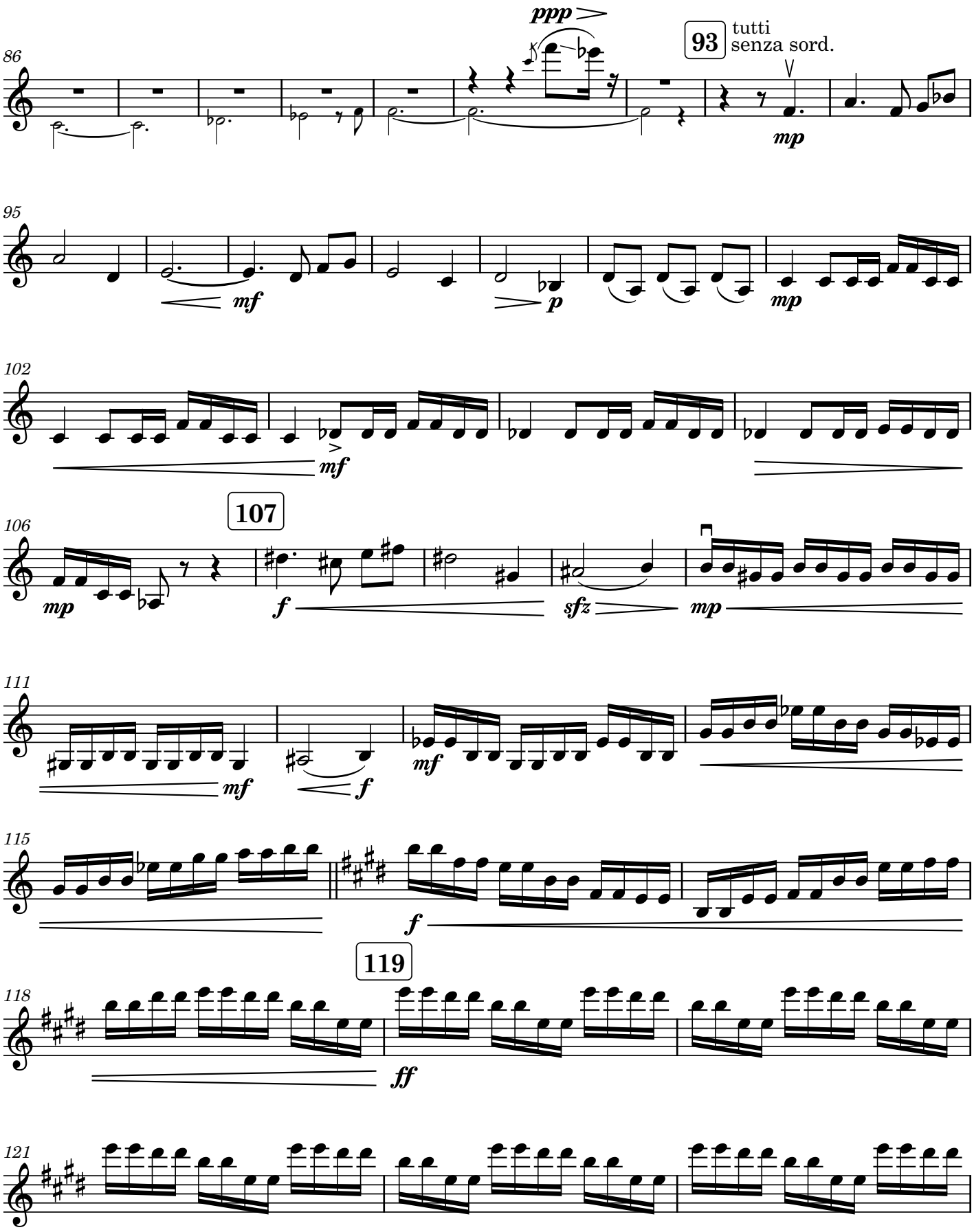

Flowing (♩. = 88)
1
mp
p
9
7
mp
mf
f
p
17
14
(♪ = ♪)
tr
mp
f
ff
pp

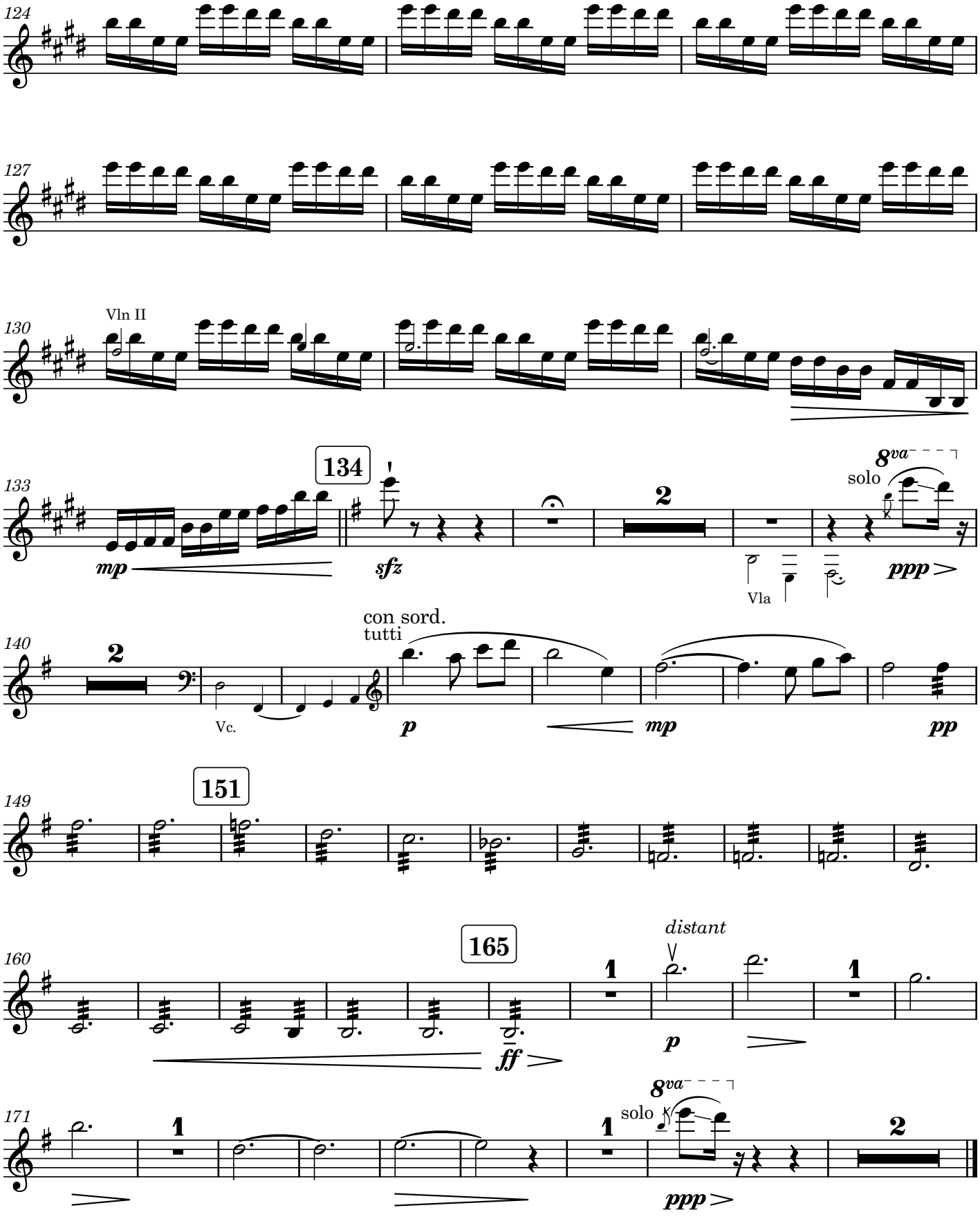

21
1
1
26
1
p
mp
28
light
34
p
pp
mp
mf
35
rit.
Slower (♩. = 72)
42
a tempo
2
f
p
44
46
mf
f
50
54
pp
f
58
rit.
warm
non vib.
p
pp

III. Tundra


Chilling (♩ = 108)
distant
con sord.
ppp
11
20


22
Vc. 8ba
p
mp
31
34
p
mp
p
mp
39
pp
47
48
1
p
1
1
58
63
Vln II
gliss.
5
p
mp
p
69
mp
p
mp
79
like a bird
solo
80
1
ppp
ppp
ppp
Vln II

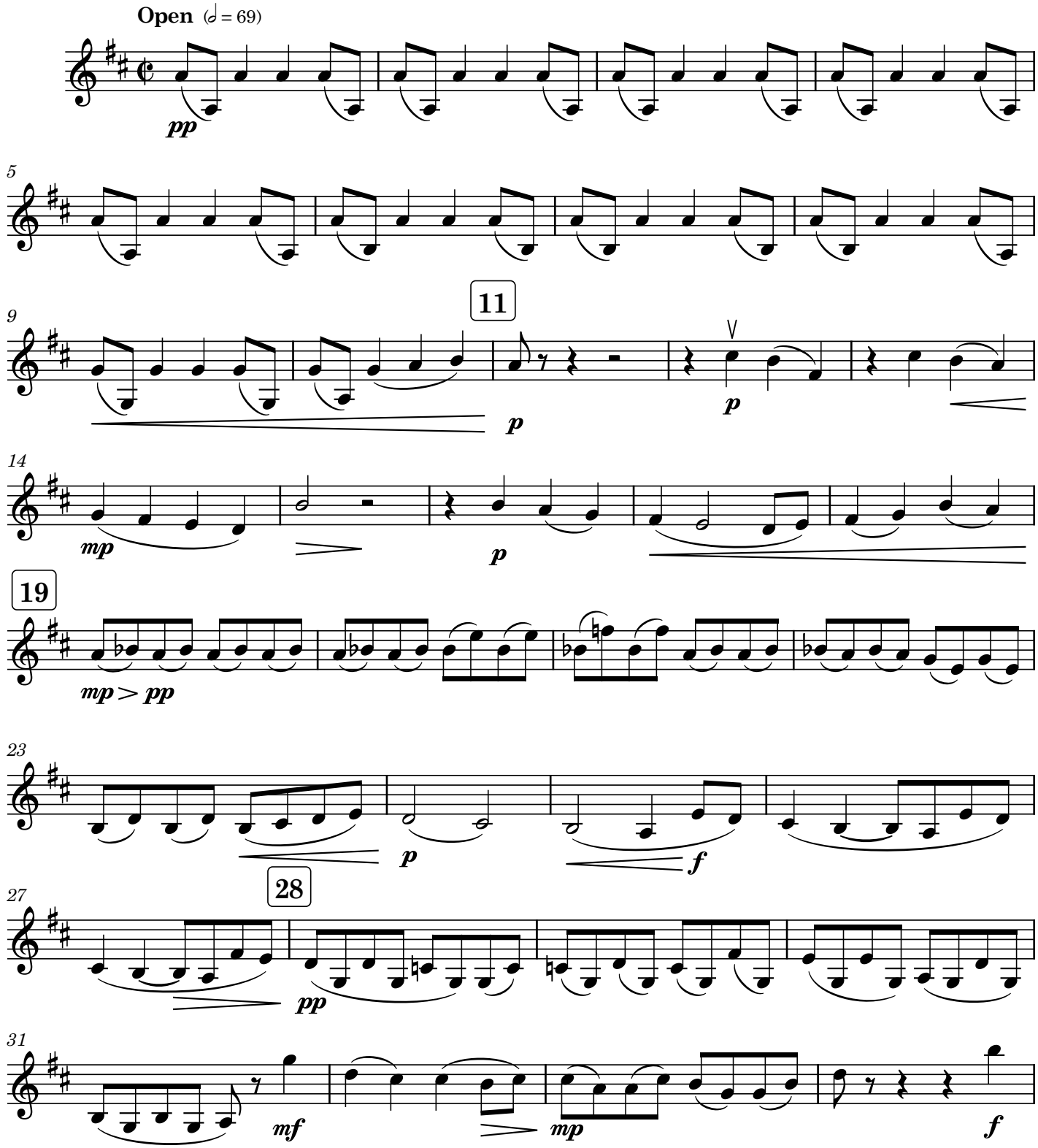

86
ppp
93
tutti
senza sord.
mp
95
mf
p
mp
102
mf
106
mp
107
f
sfz
mp
111
mf
f
mf
115
f
119
118
ff
121

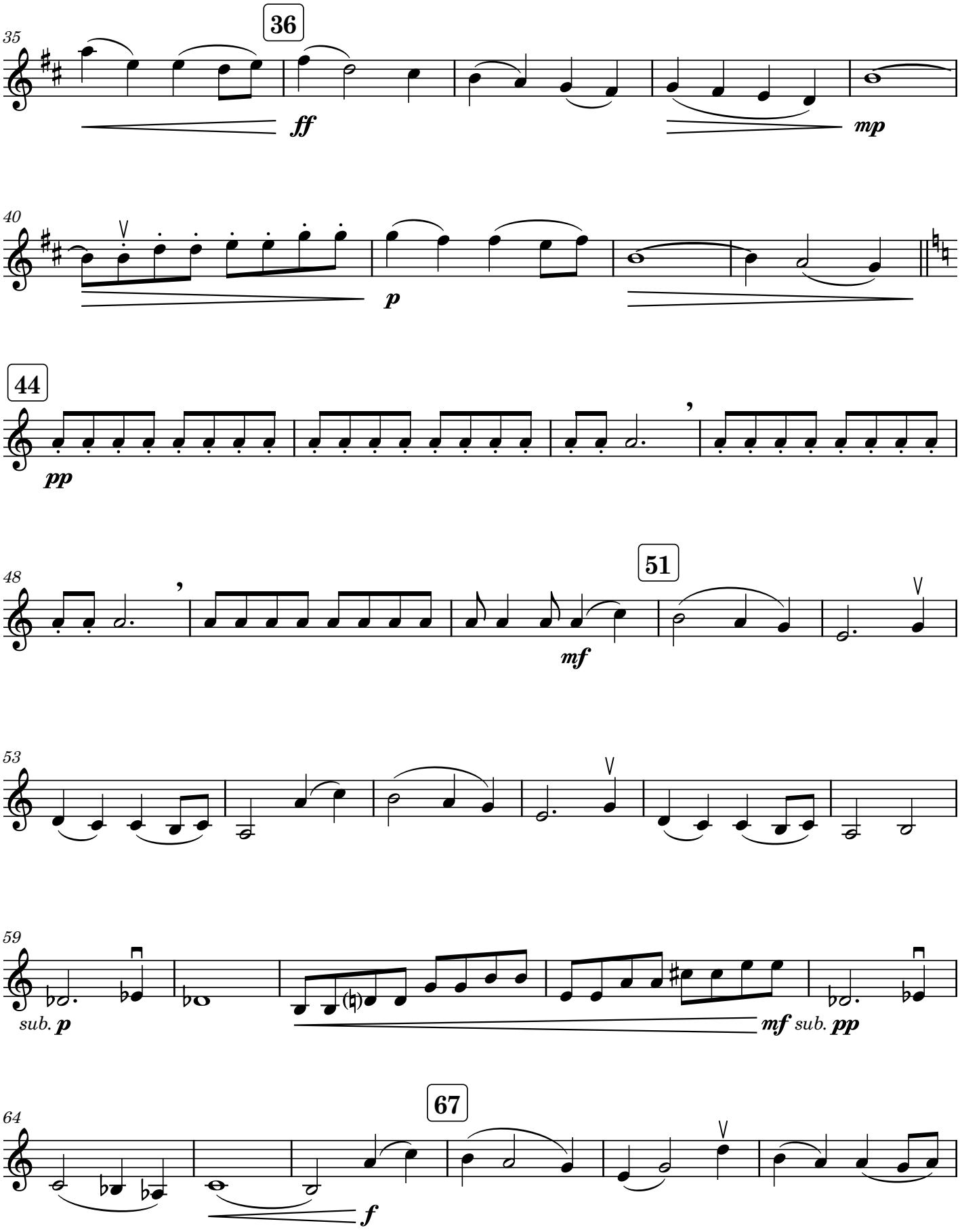

124
127
130
Vln II
133
134
mp
sfz
2
8va
solo
Vla
ppp
140
2
Vc.
con sord.
tutti
p
mp
pp
149
151
160
165
ff
1
distant
p
1
171
1
1
8va
solo
ppp
2

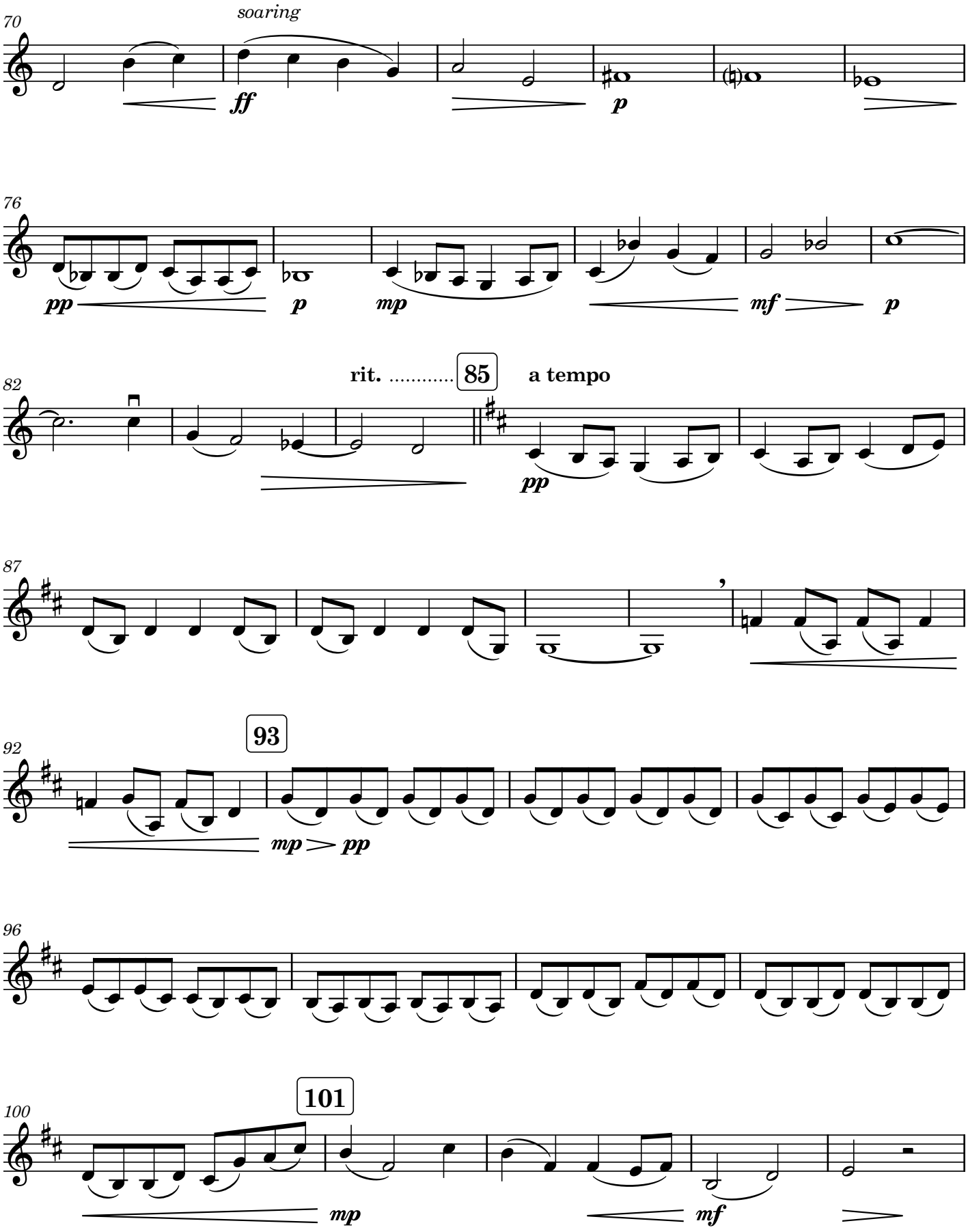
Violin II

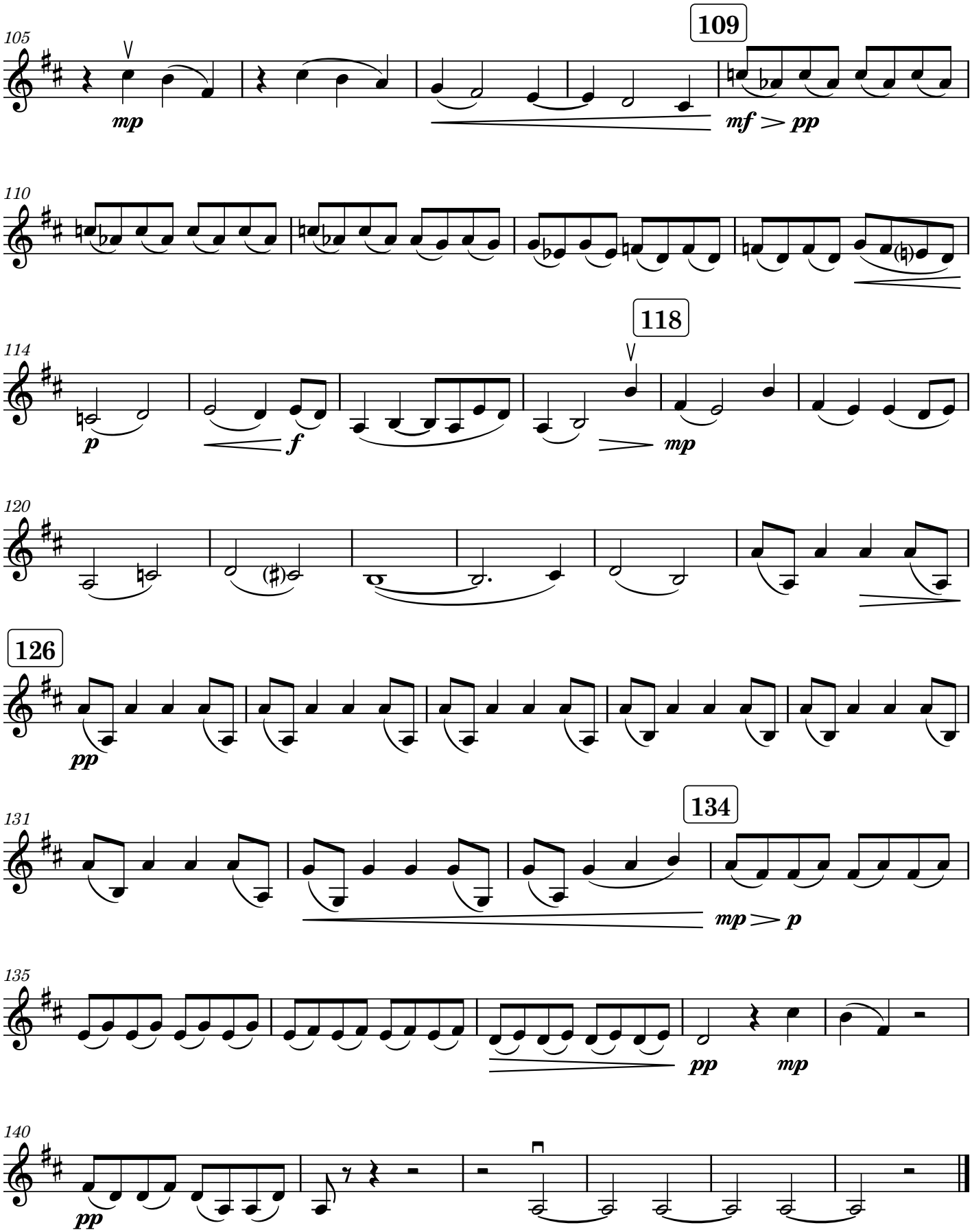
Landscapes

I. Prairie

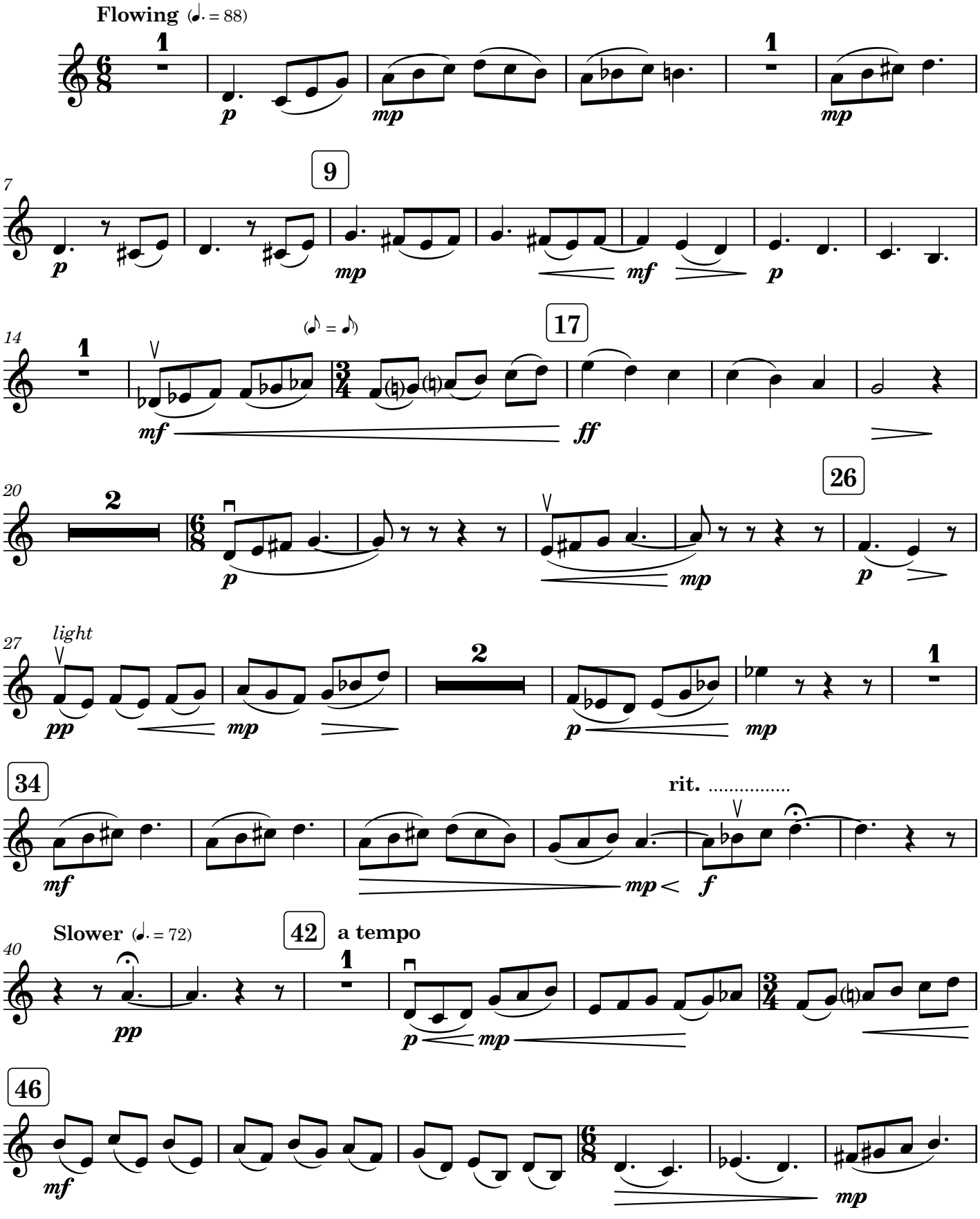


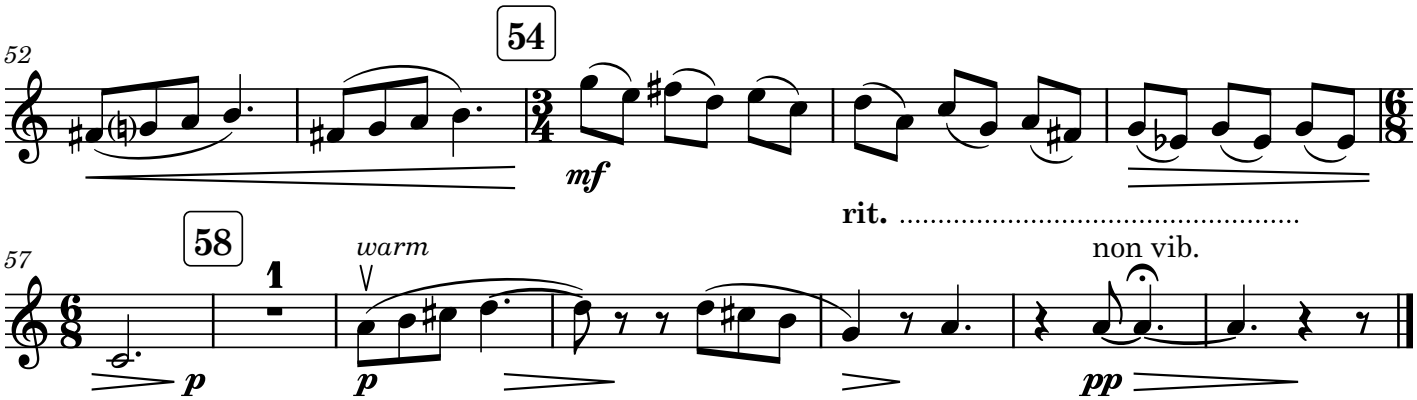

35
36
ff
mp
40
p
44
pp
48
51
mf
53
59
sub. p
mf sub. pp
64
67
f


70
soaring
ff
p
76
pp
p
mp
mf
p
82
rit. .....
85
a tempo
pp
87
92
93
mp > pp
96
100
101
mp
mf

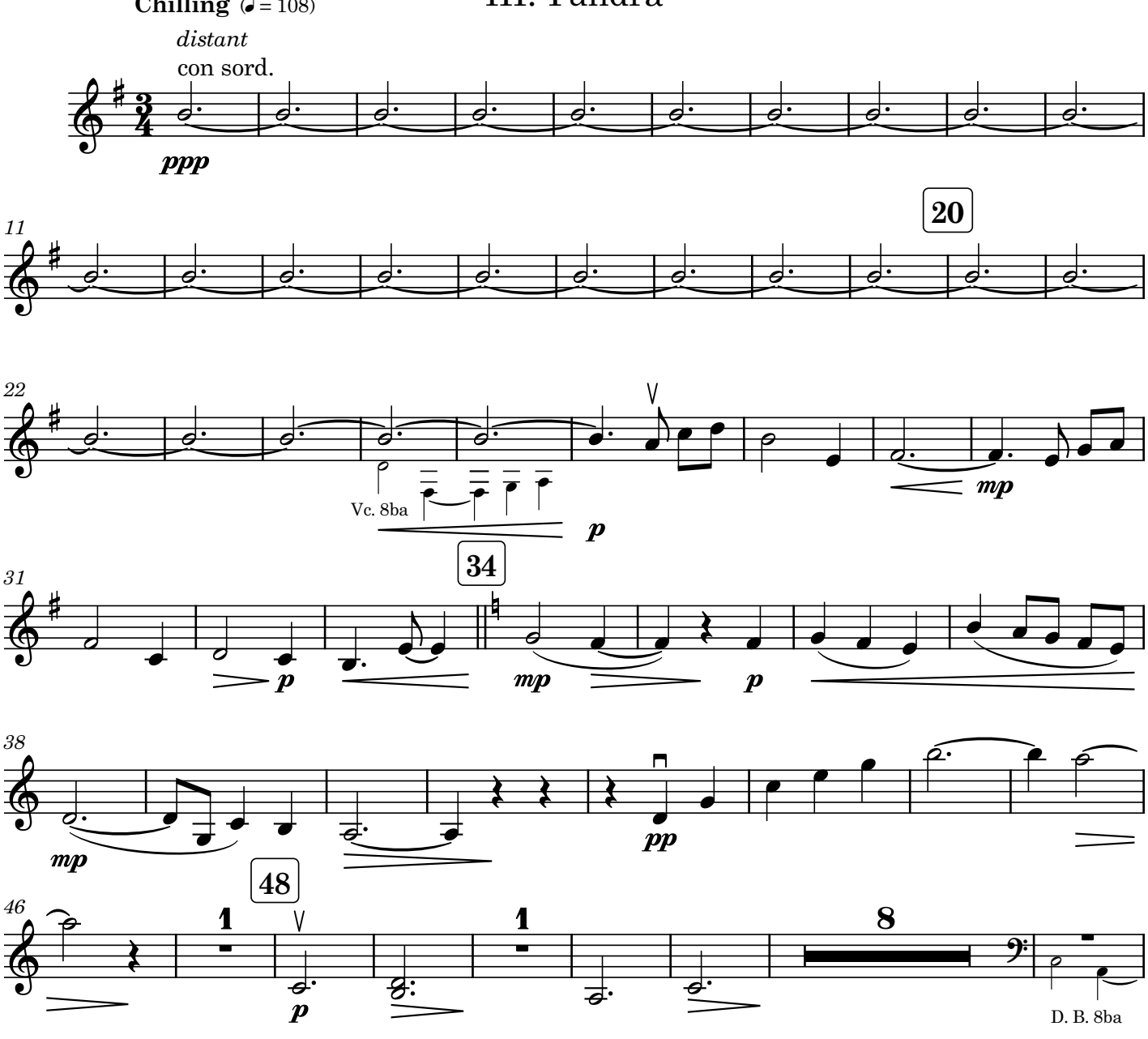

105
109
mp
mf > pp
110
114
118
p
f
mp
120
126
pp
131
134
mp > p
135
pp
mp
140
pp

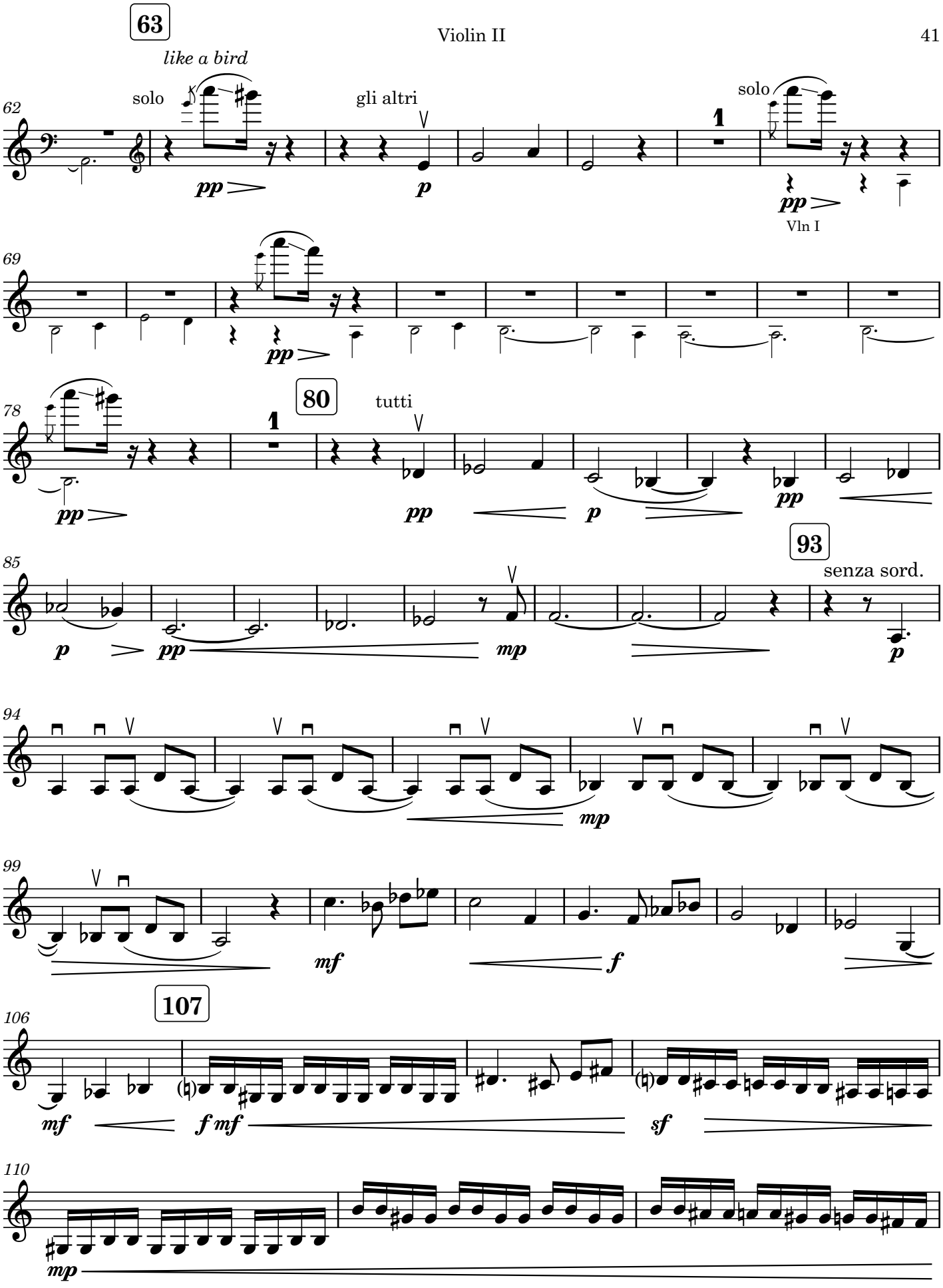
II. Rivulet

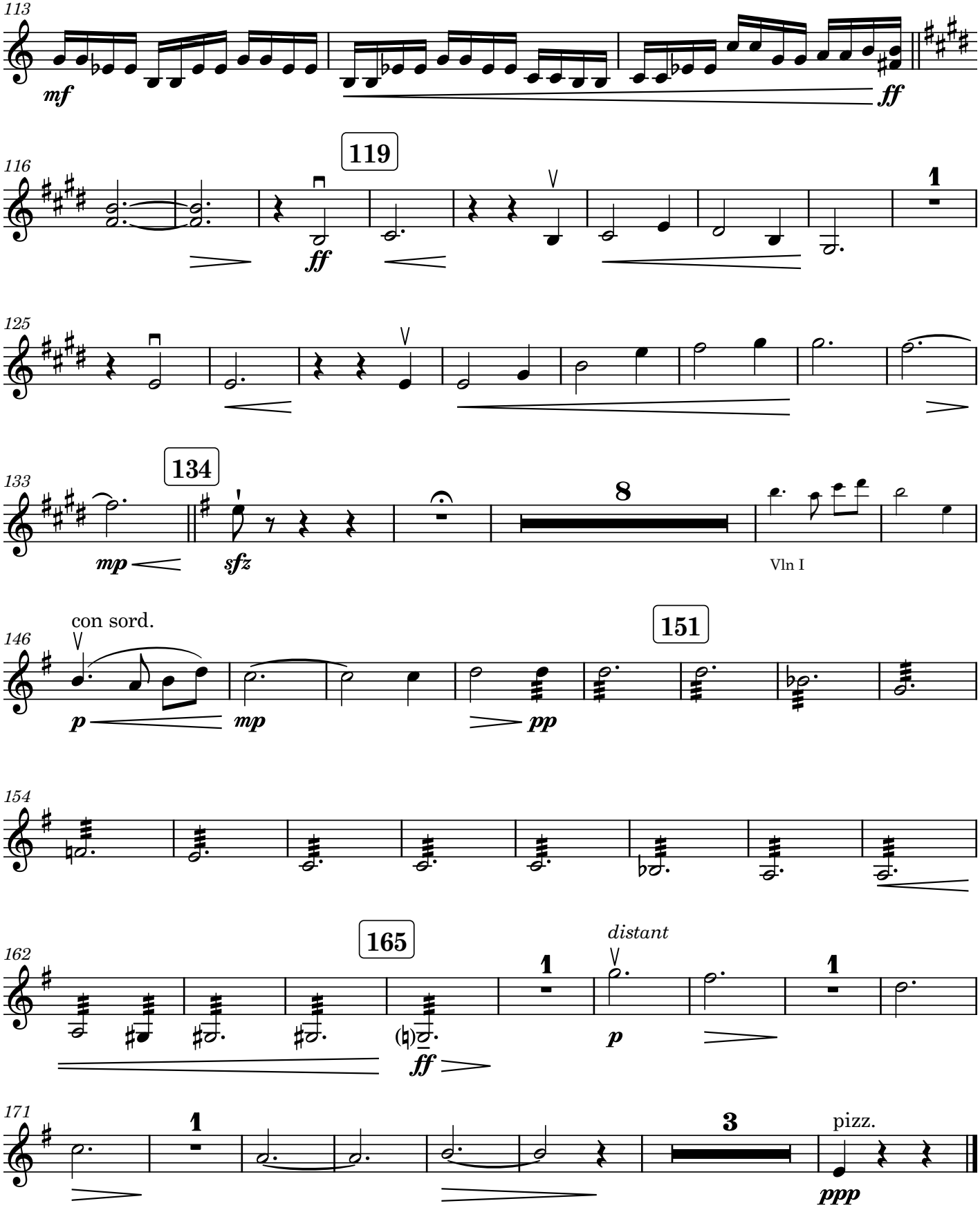

Flowing (♩. = 88)
1
p
mp
1
mp
7
9
p
mp
mf
p
14
1
(♪ = ♪)
17
mf
ff
20
2
26
p
mp
p
27
light
pp
mp
2
p
mp
1
34
rit. .....
mf
mp
f
40
Slower (♩. = 72)
42
a tempo
pp
1
p
mp
46
mf
mp


52
54
mf
rit.
57
58
1
warm
p
p
non vib.
pp

III. Tundra


Chilling (♩ = 108)
distant
con sord.
ppp
11
20
22
Vc. 8ba
p
mp
31
34
p
mp
p
38
mp
pp
46
48
1
1
8
p
D. B. 8ba

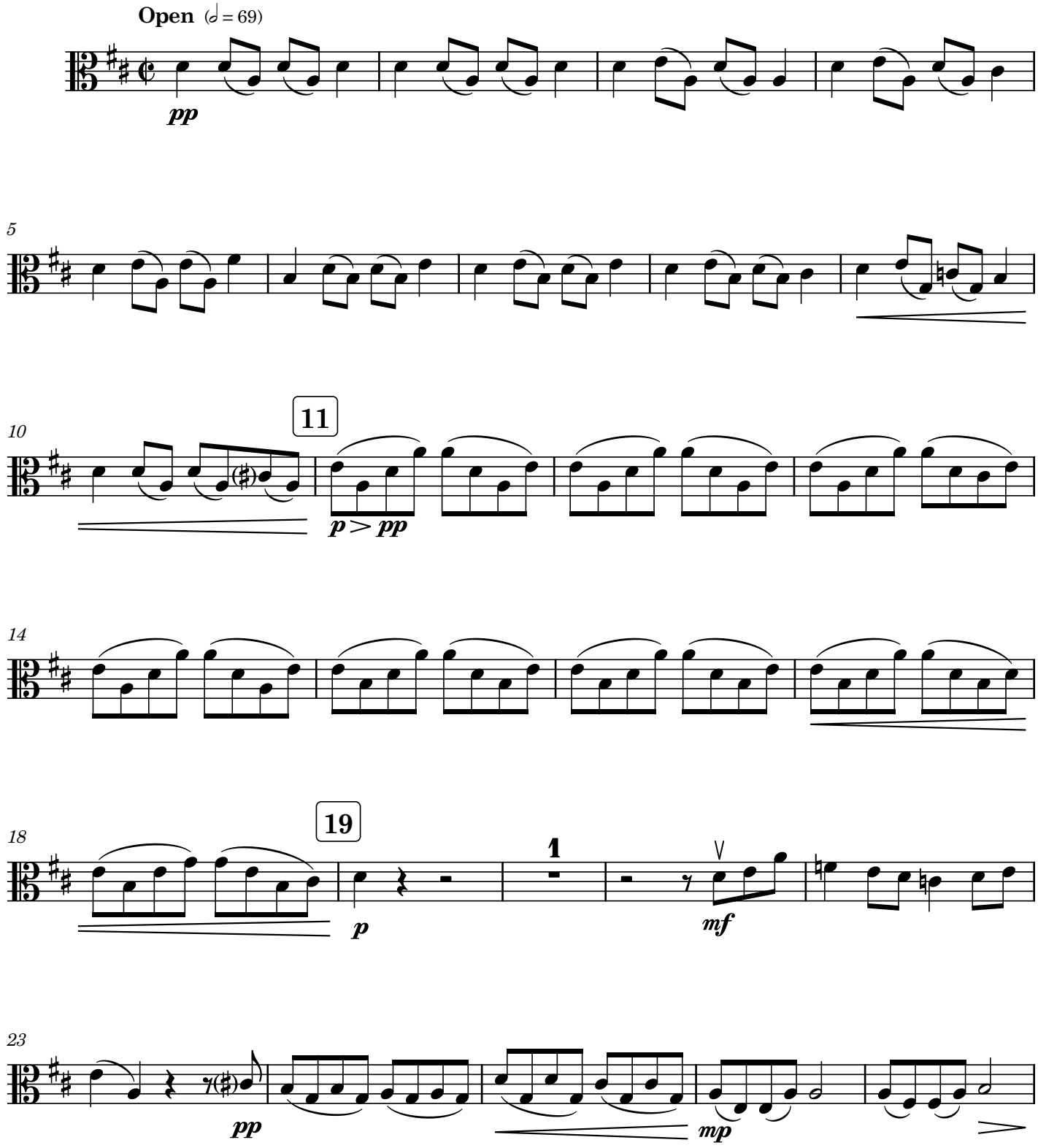

63
like a bird
62
solo
gli altri
solo
1
pp
p
pp
Vln I
69
pp
78
80
tutti
1
pp
pp
p
pp
85
93
senza sord.
p
pp
mp
p
94
mp
99
mf
f
106
107
mf
f mf
sf
110
mp

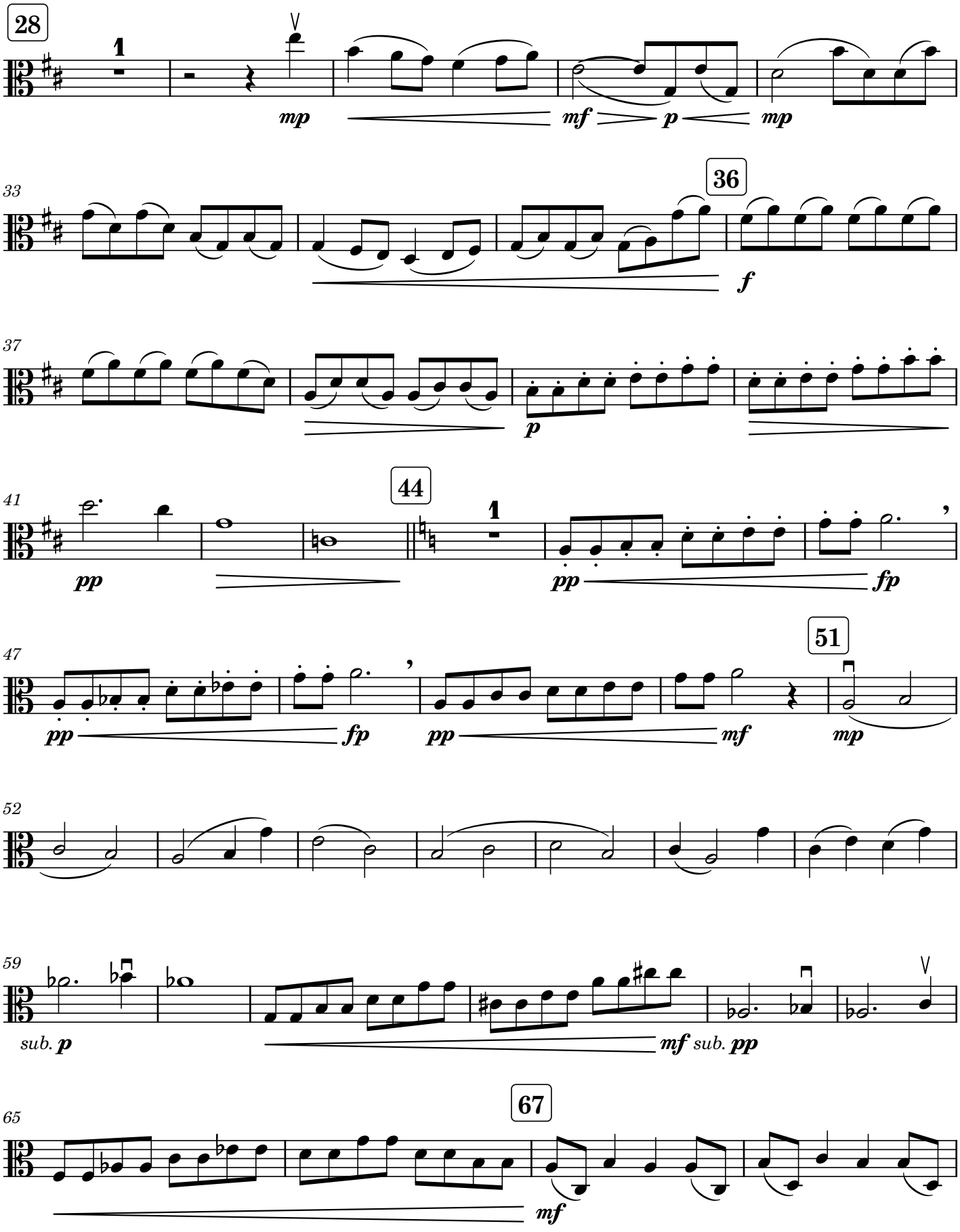

113
mf
ff
116
119
ff
1
125
133
134
mp
sfz
8
Vln I
146
con sord.
p
mp
pp
151
154
162
165
ff
1
distant
p
1
171
1
3
pizz.
ppp

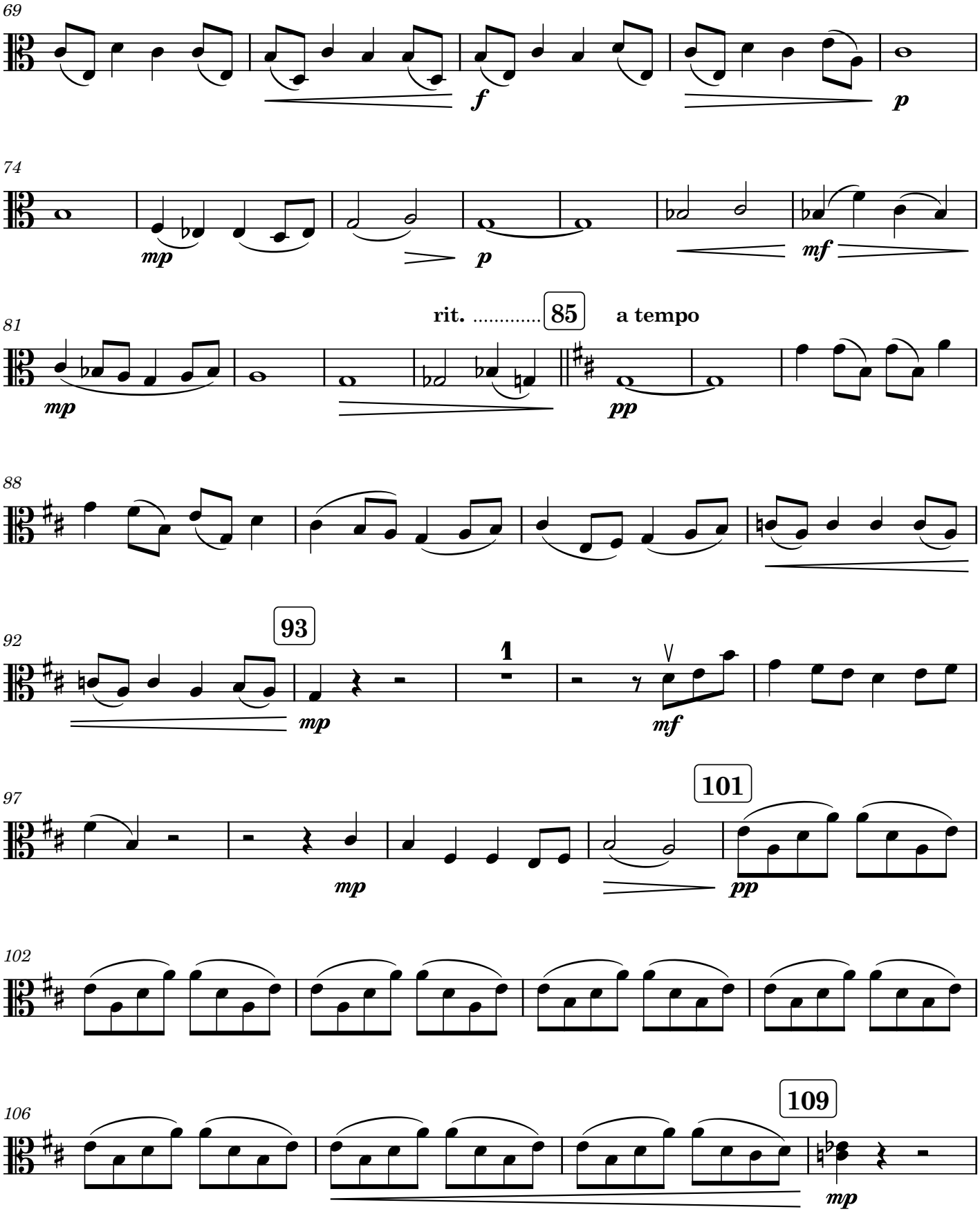
Viola

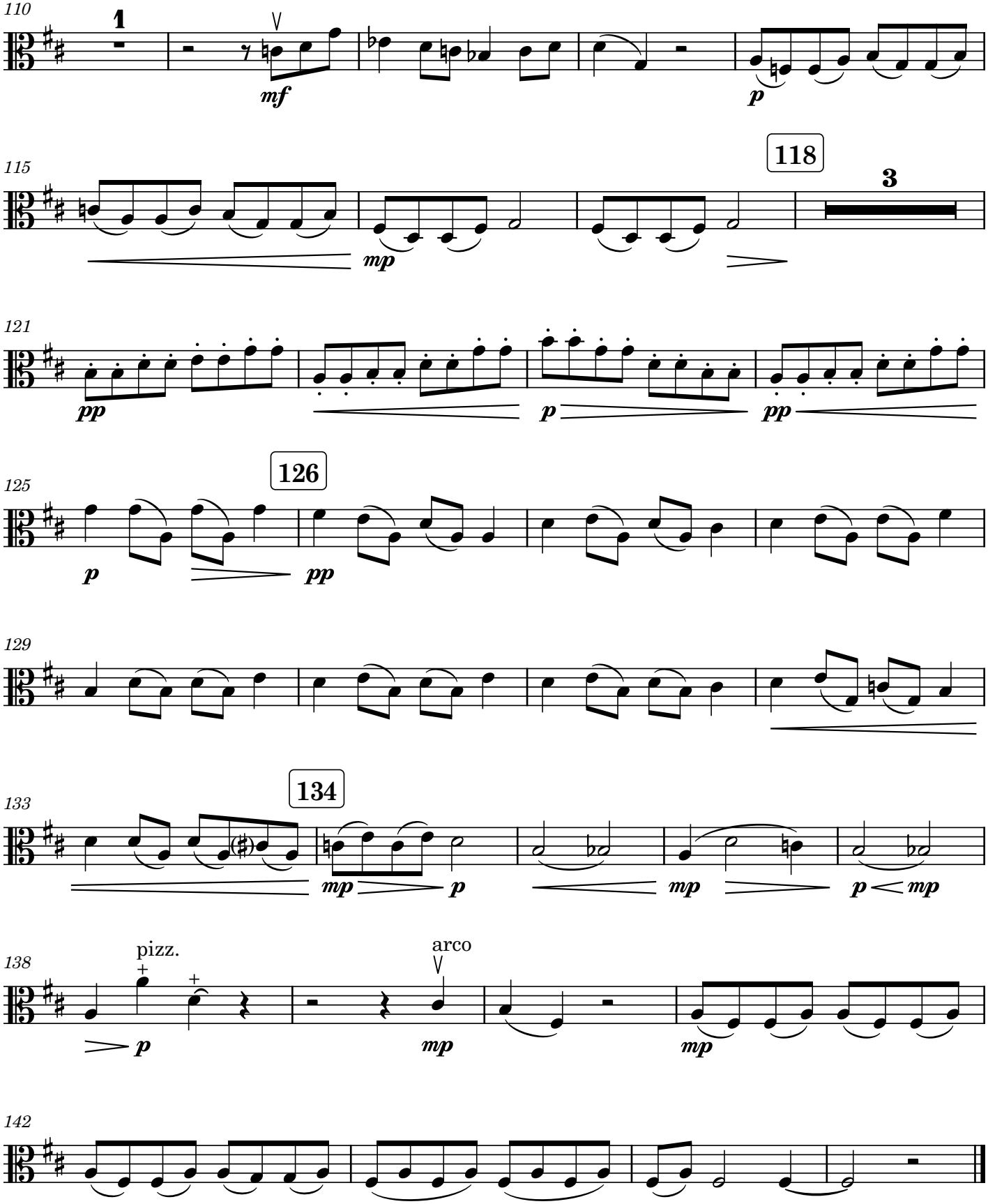
Landscapes

I. Prairie

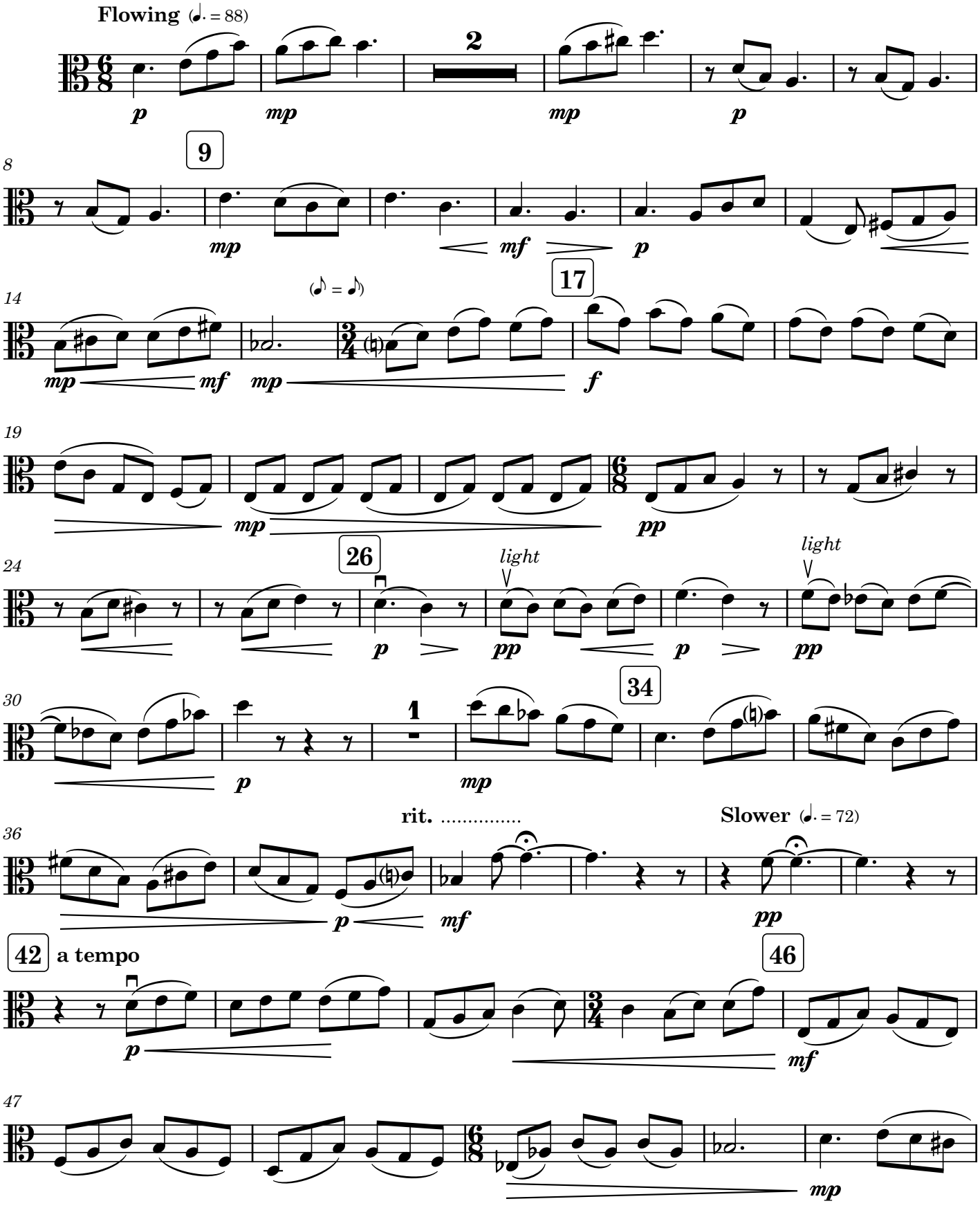


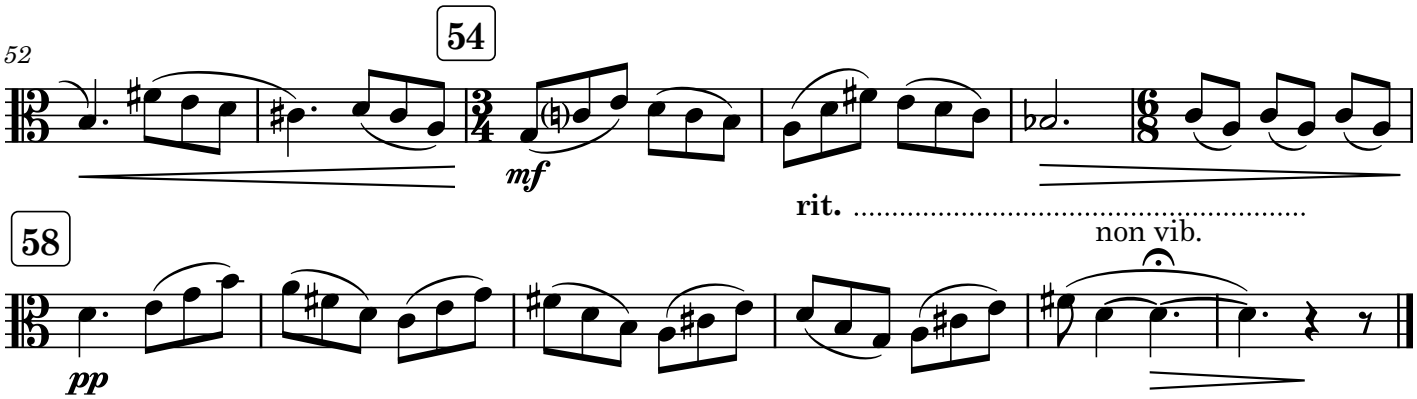

28
1
mp
mf
p
mp
33
36
f
37
p
41
44
1
pp
pp
fp
47
51
pp
fp
pp
mf
mp
52
59
sub. p
mf sub. pp
65
67
mf


69
f
p
74
mp
p
mf
81
rit. 85
a tempo
mp
pp
88
92
93
1
mp
mf
97
101
mp
pp
102
106
109
mp

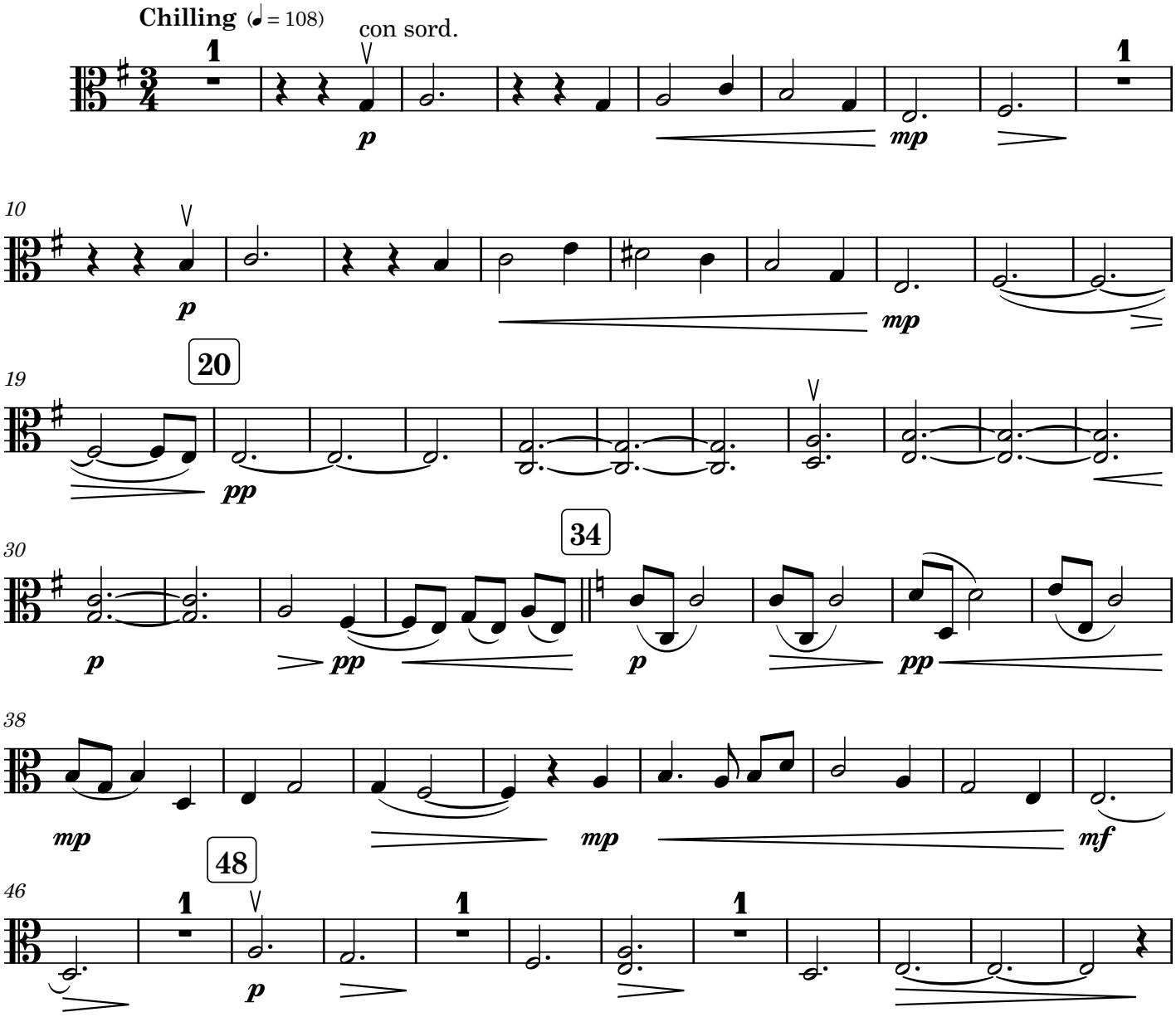

110
1
mf
p
115
118
3
mp
121
pp
p
pp
125
126
p
pp
129
133
134
mp
p
mp
p
mp
138
pizz.
arco
p
mp
mp
142

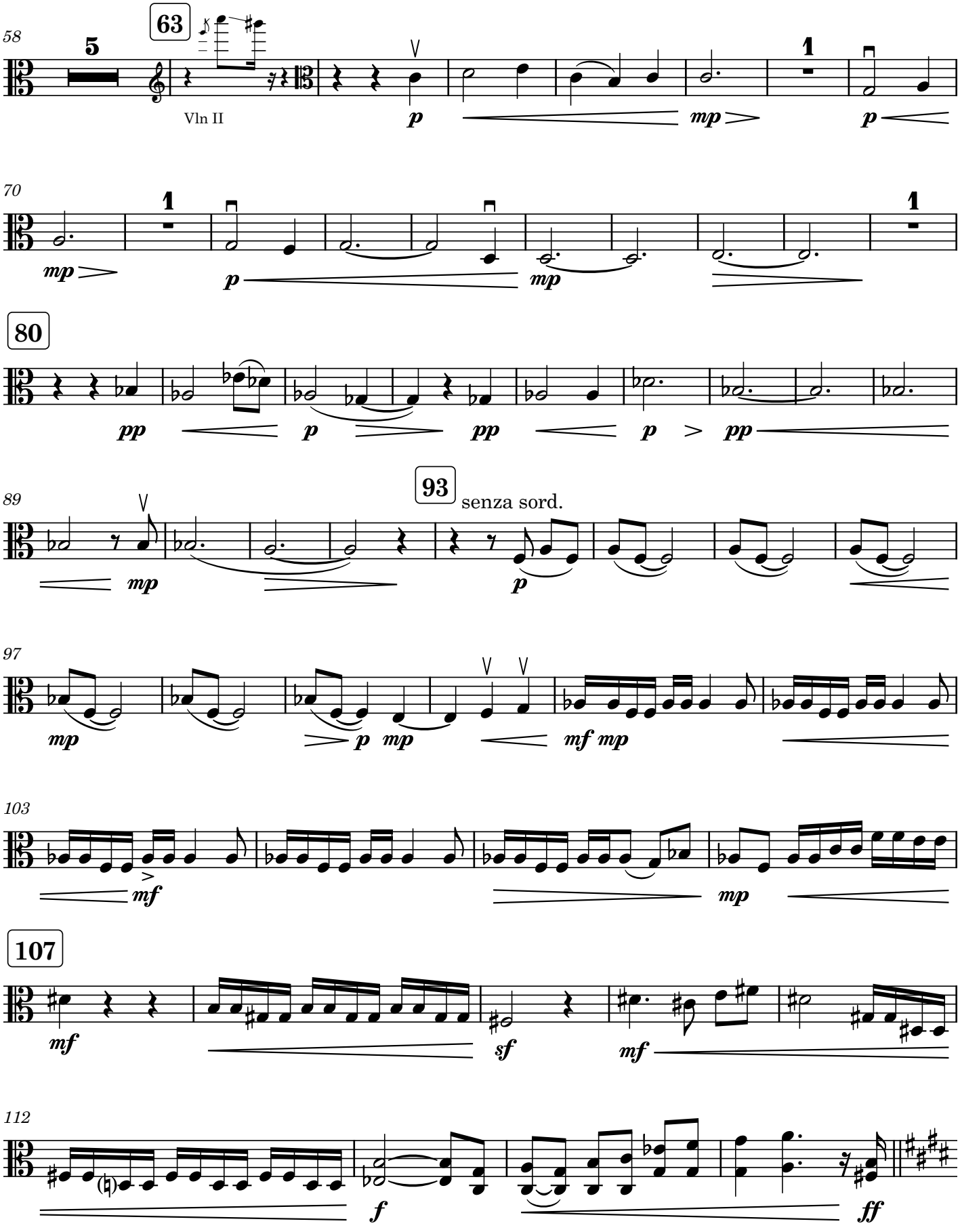
II. Rivulet

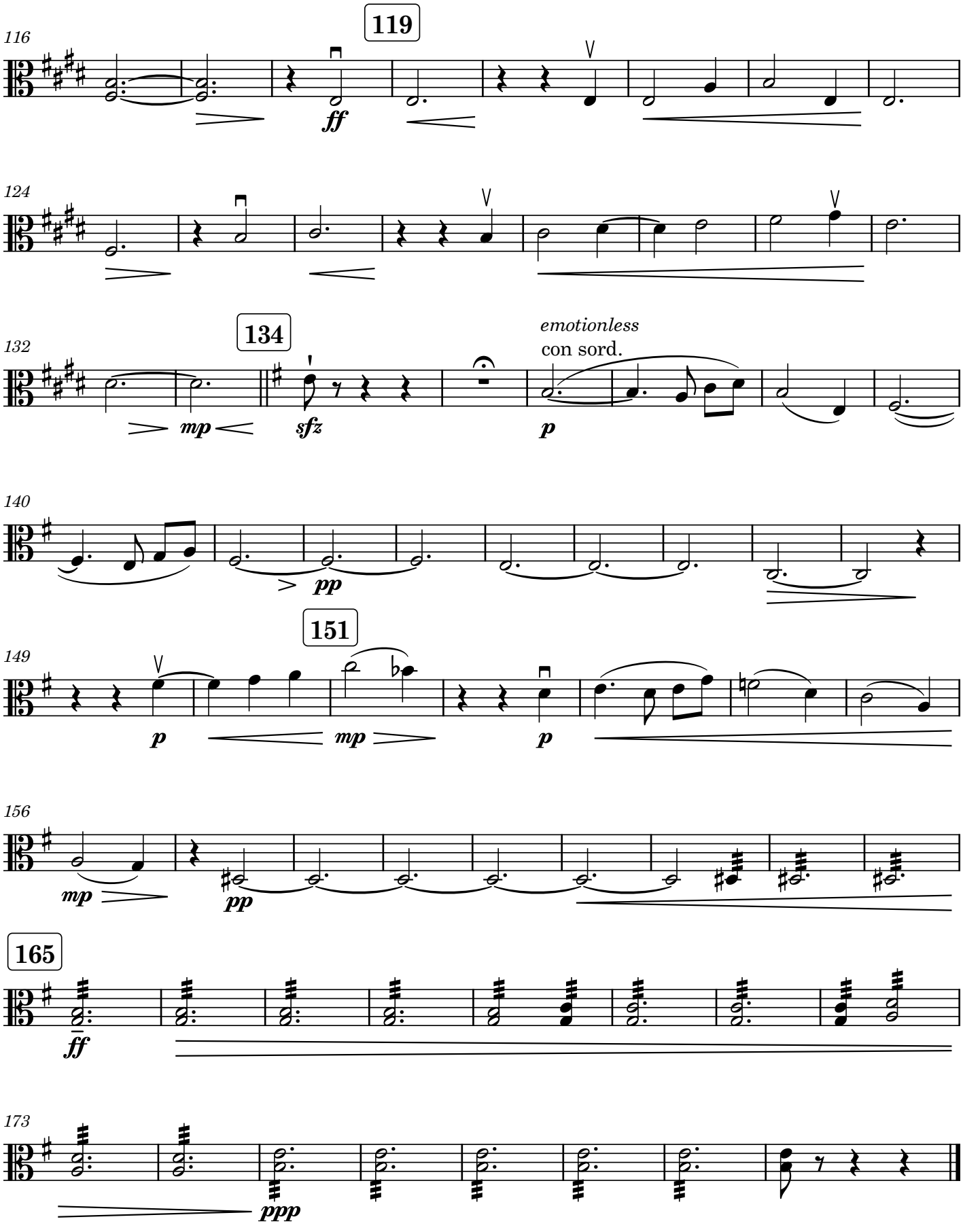

Flowing (♩. = 88)
p
mp
2
mp
p
8
9
mp
mf
p
14
(♪ = ♪)
17
mp
mf
mp
f
19
mp
pp
24
26
p
light
pp
p
light
pp
30
34
p
1
mp
36
rit. .....
Slower (♩. = 72)
p
mf
pp
42
a tempo
46
p
mf
47
mp


52
54
mf
rit.
58
non vib.
pp

III. Tundra


Chilling (♩ = 108)
con sord.
1
p
mp
10
20
pp
19
30
34
38
mf
46
48

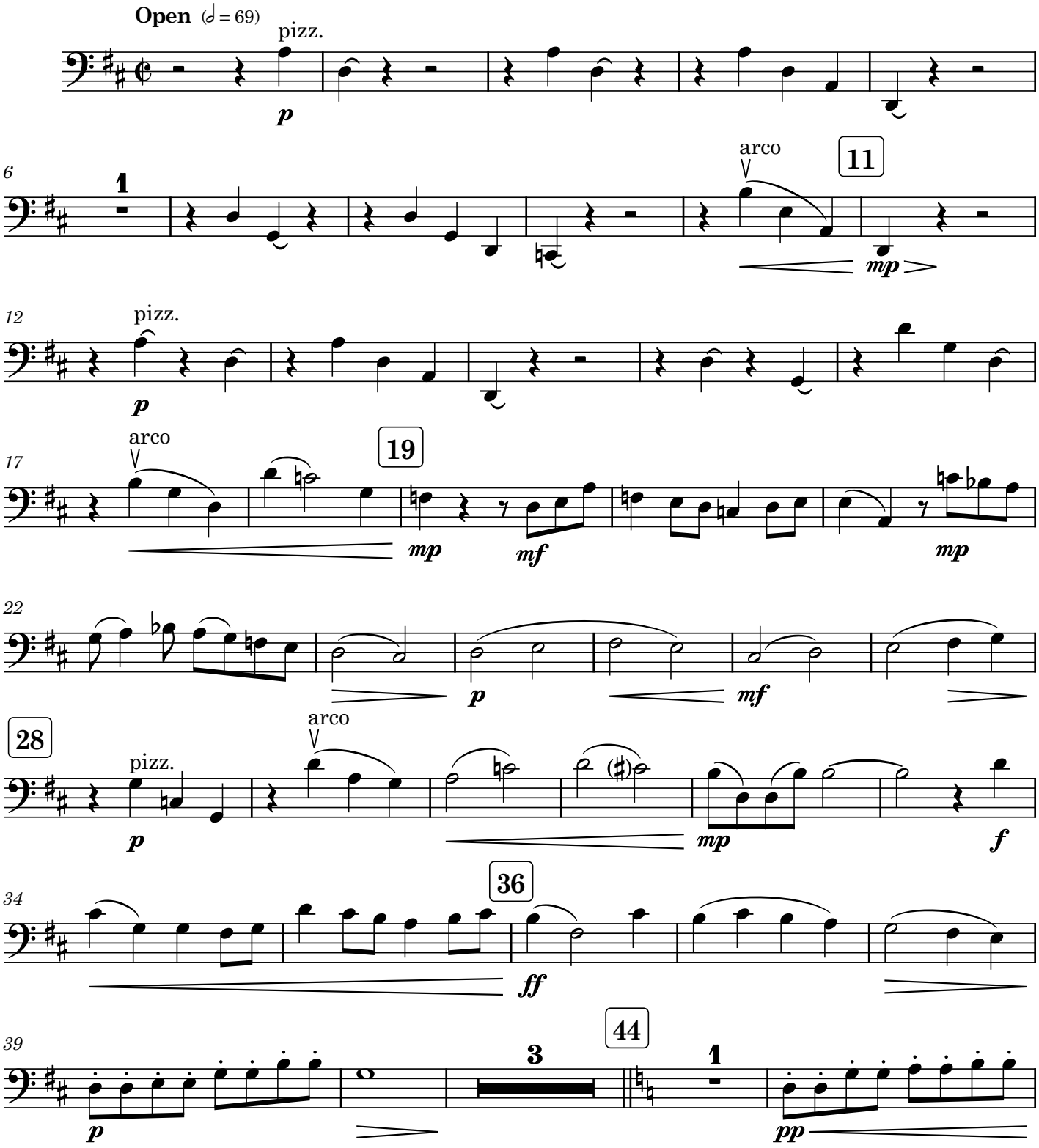

58
5
63
Vln II
p
mp
p
1
70
mp
p
mp
1
1
80
pp
p
pp
p
pp
89
mp
93
senza sord.
p
97
mp
p
mp
mf
mp
103
mf
mp
107
mf
sf
mf
112
f
ff

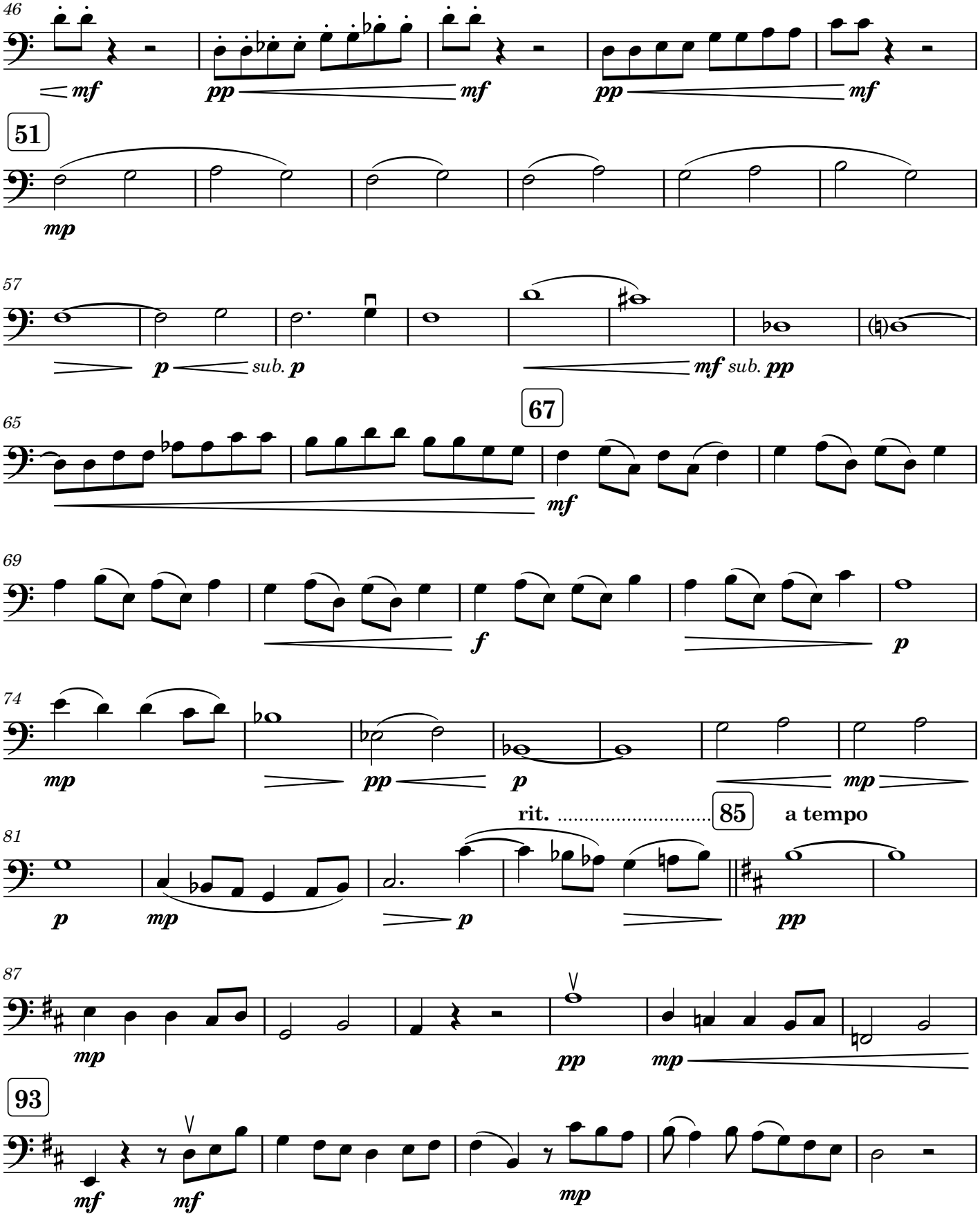

116
119
ff
124
132
134
mp
sfz
emotionless
con sord.
p
140
pp
149
151
p
mp
p
156
mp
pp
165
ff
173
ppp

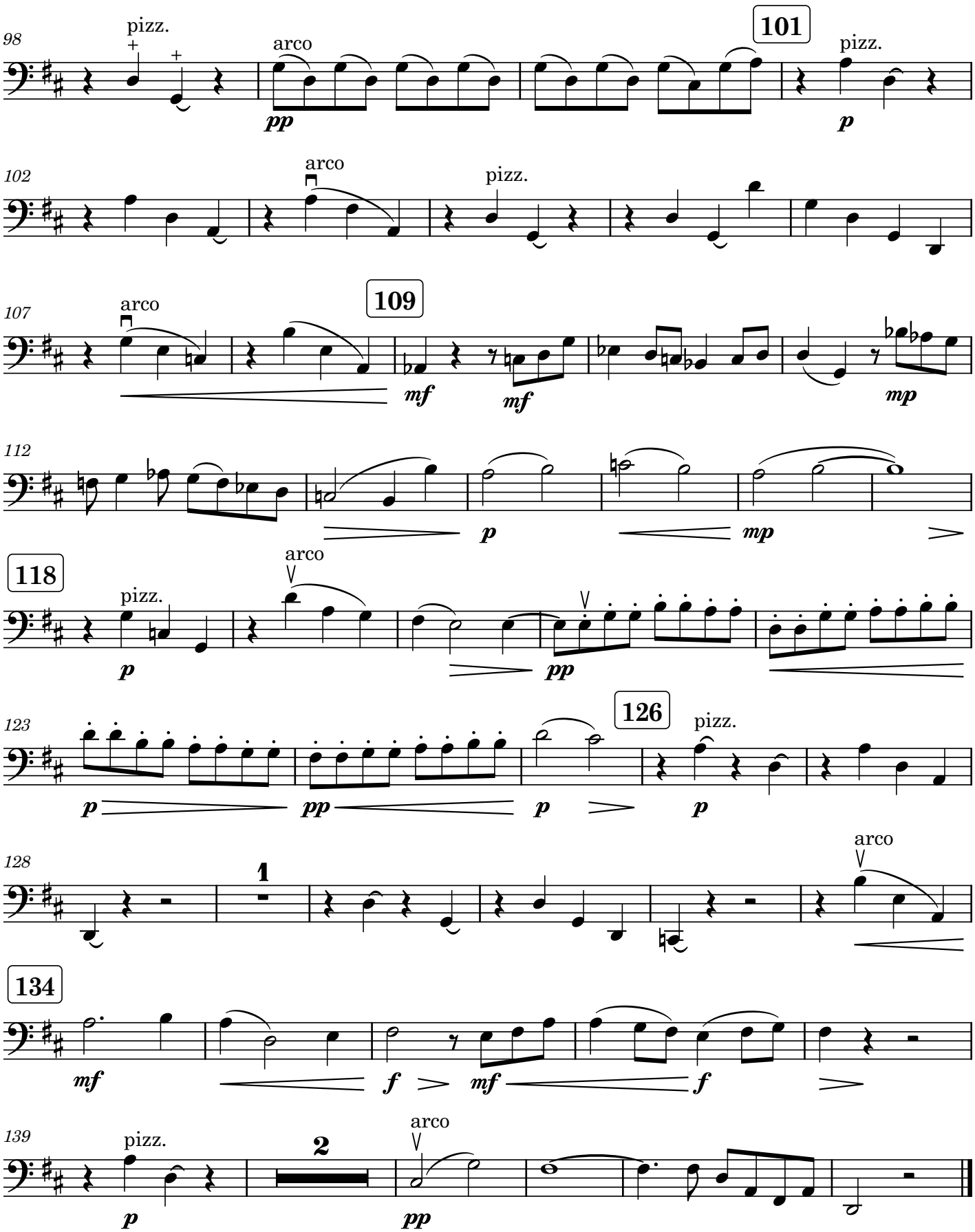
Cello

Landscapes

I. Prairie

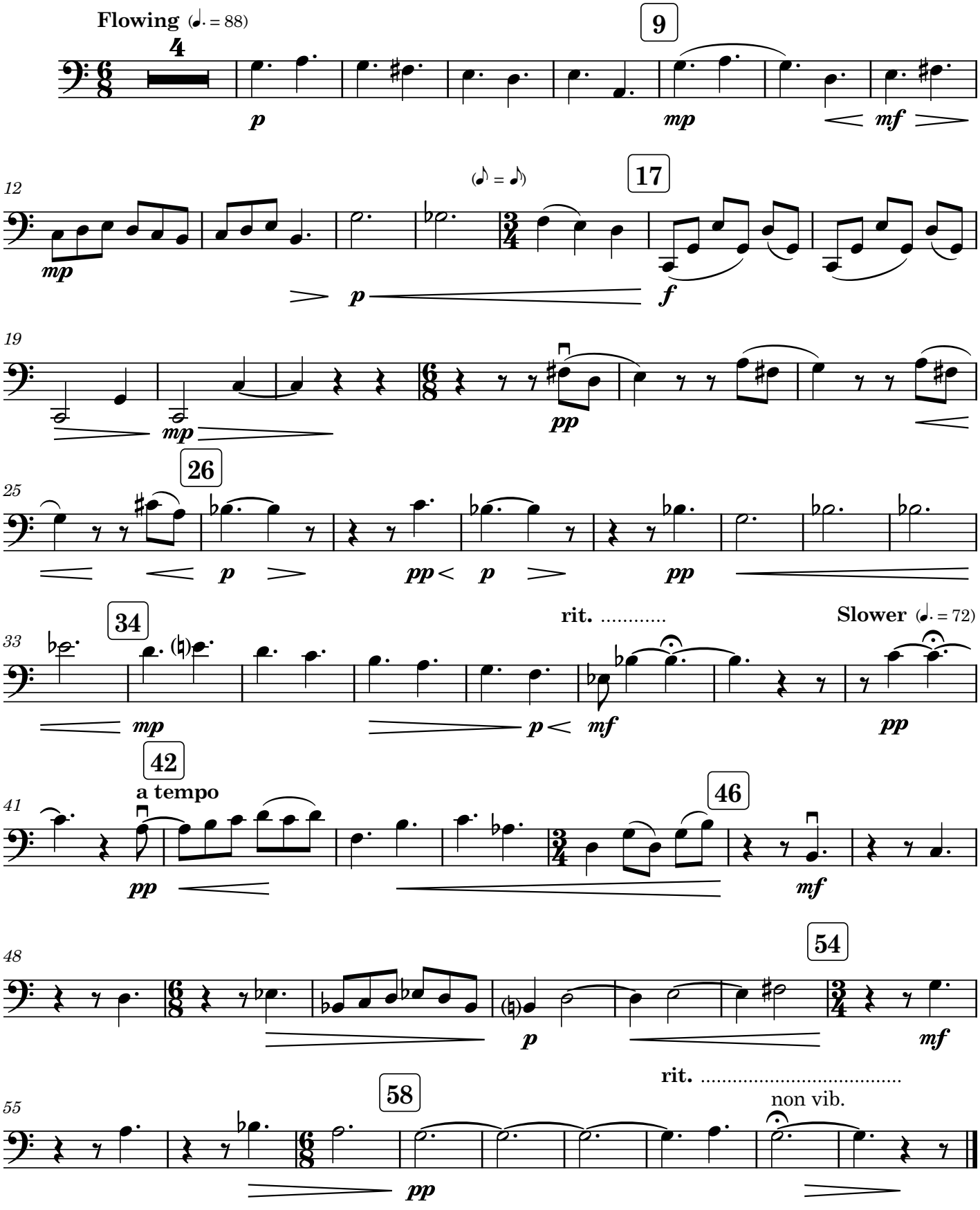



46
mf
pp
mf
pp
mf
51
mp
57
p
sub. p
mf sub. pp
65
67
mf
69
f
p
74
mp
pp
p
mp
rit.
85
a tempo
81
p
mp
p
pp
87
mp
pp
mp
93
mf
mf
mp


98
pizz.
arco
pp
101
pizz.
p
102
arco
pizz.
107
arco
mf
109
mf
mp
112
p
mp
118
pizz.
p
arco
pp
123
p
pp
p
126
pizz.
p
128
1
arco
134
mf
f
mf
f
139
pizz.
p
2
arco
pp

Cello

II. Rivulet

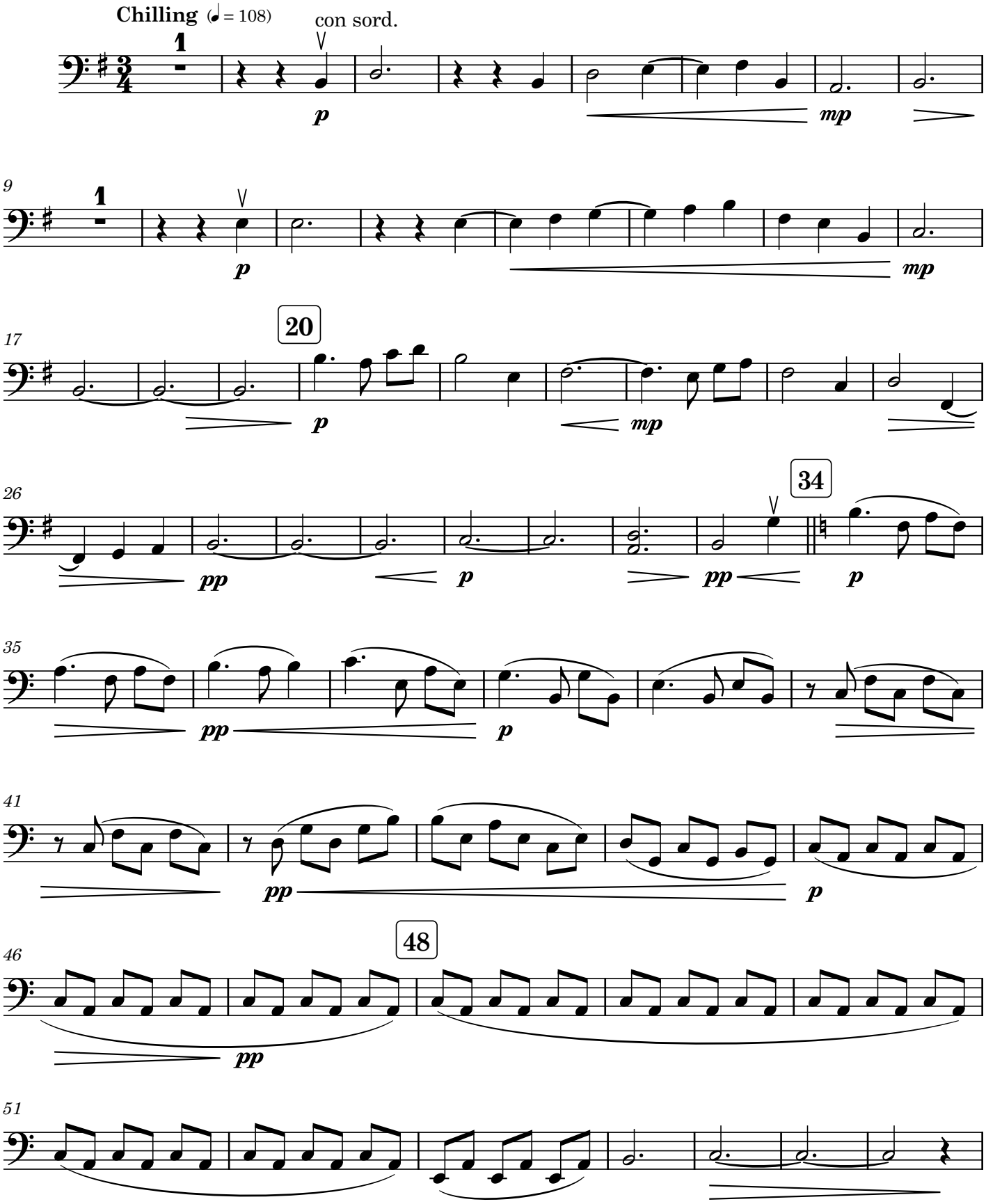


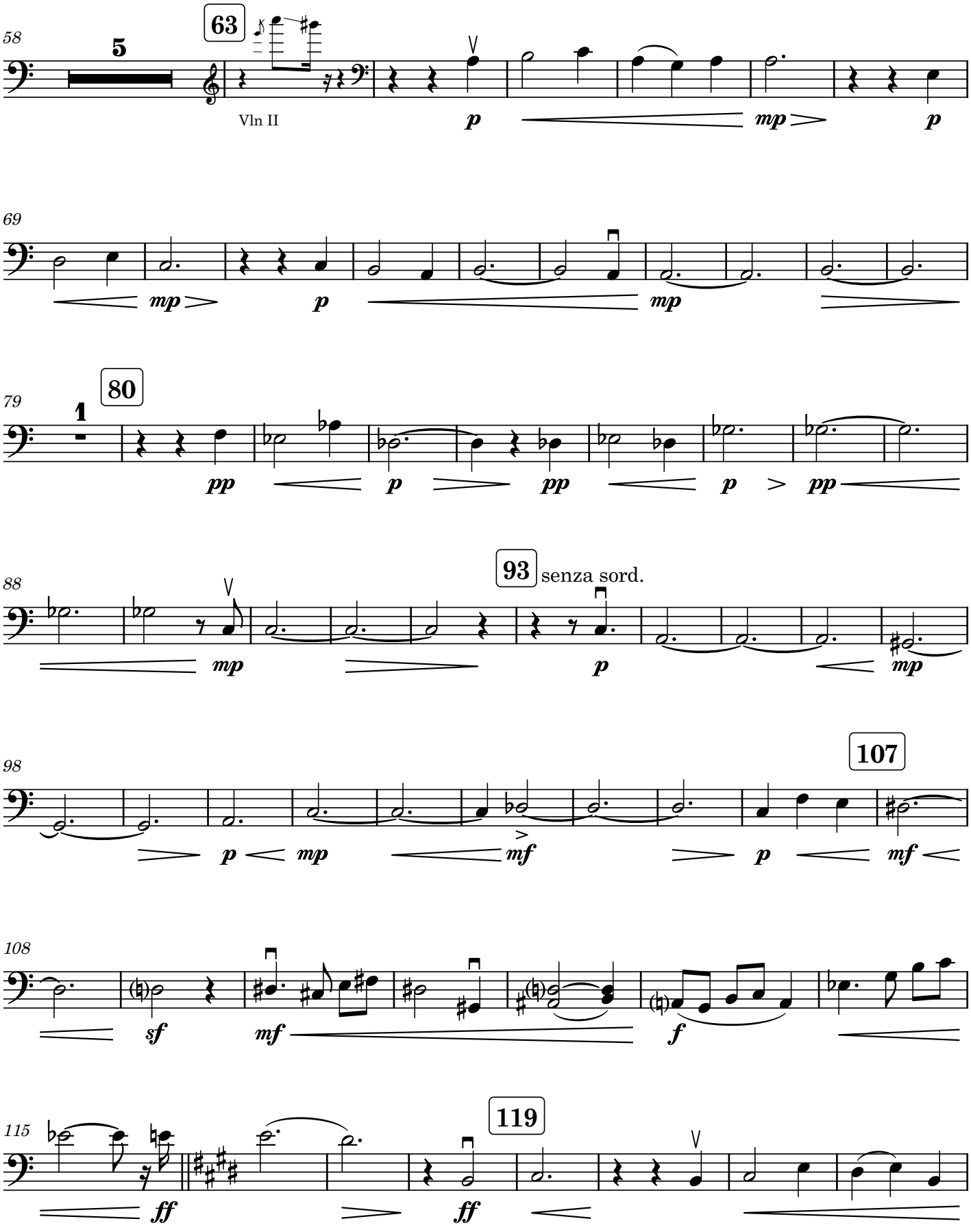
Cello

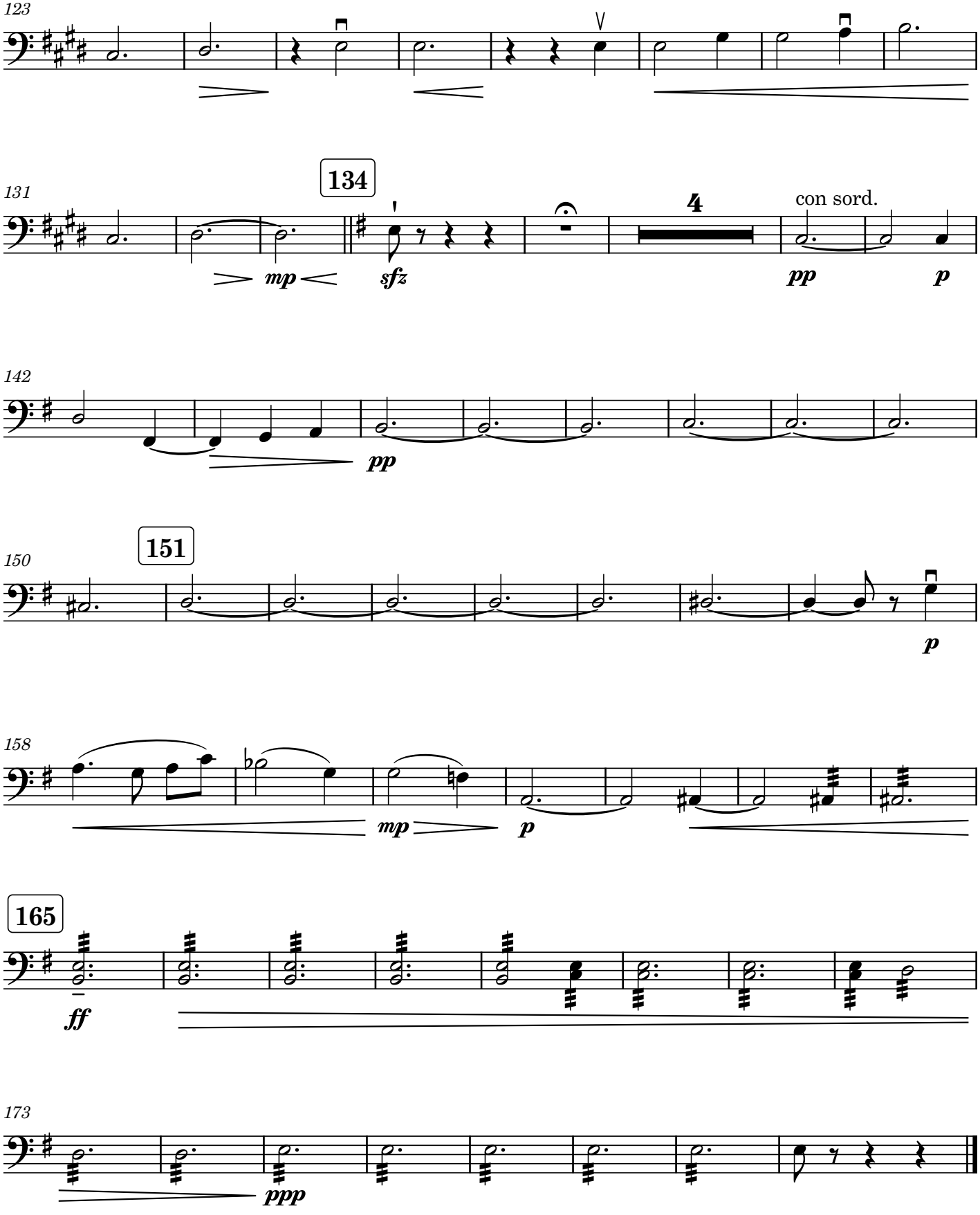
III. Tundra

Chilling (♩ = 108)

con sord.



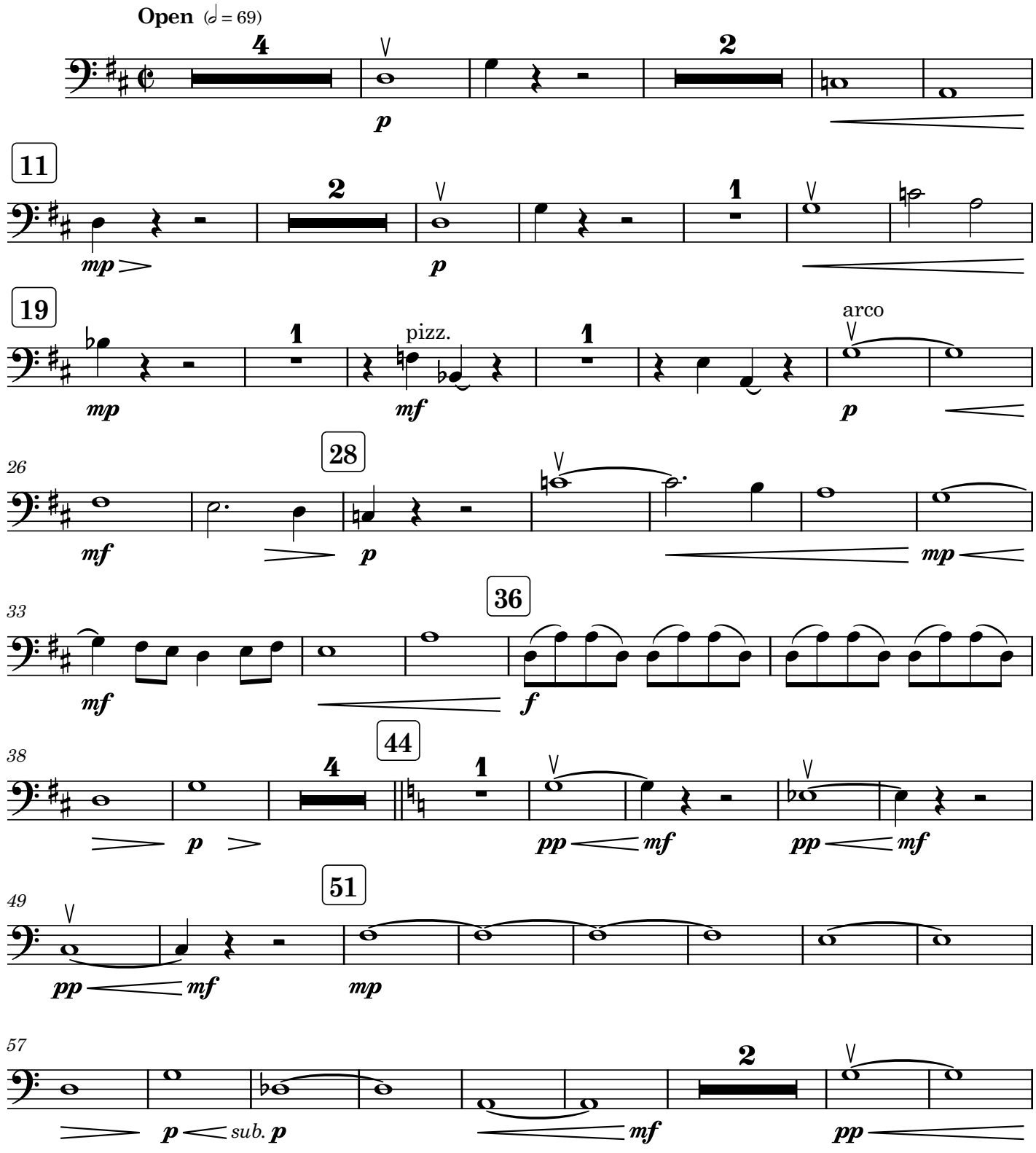

58
5
63
Vln II
p
mp
p
69
mp
p
mp
79
1
80
pp
p
pp
p
pp
88
93
senza sord.
mp
p
mp
98
107
p
mp
mf
p
mf
108
sf
mf
f
115
119
ff
ff

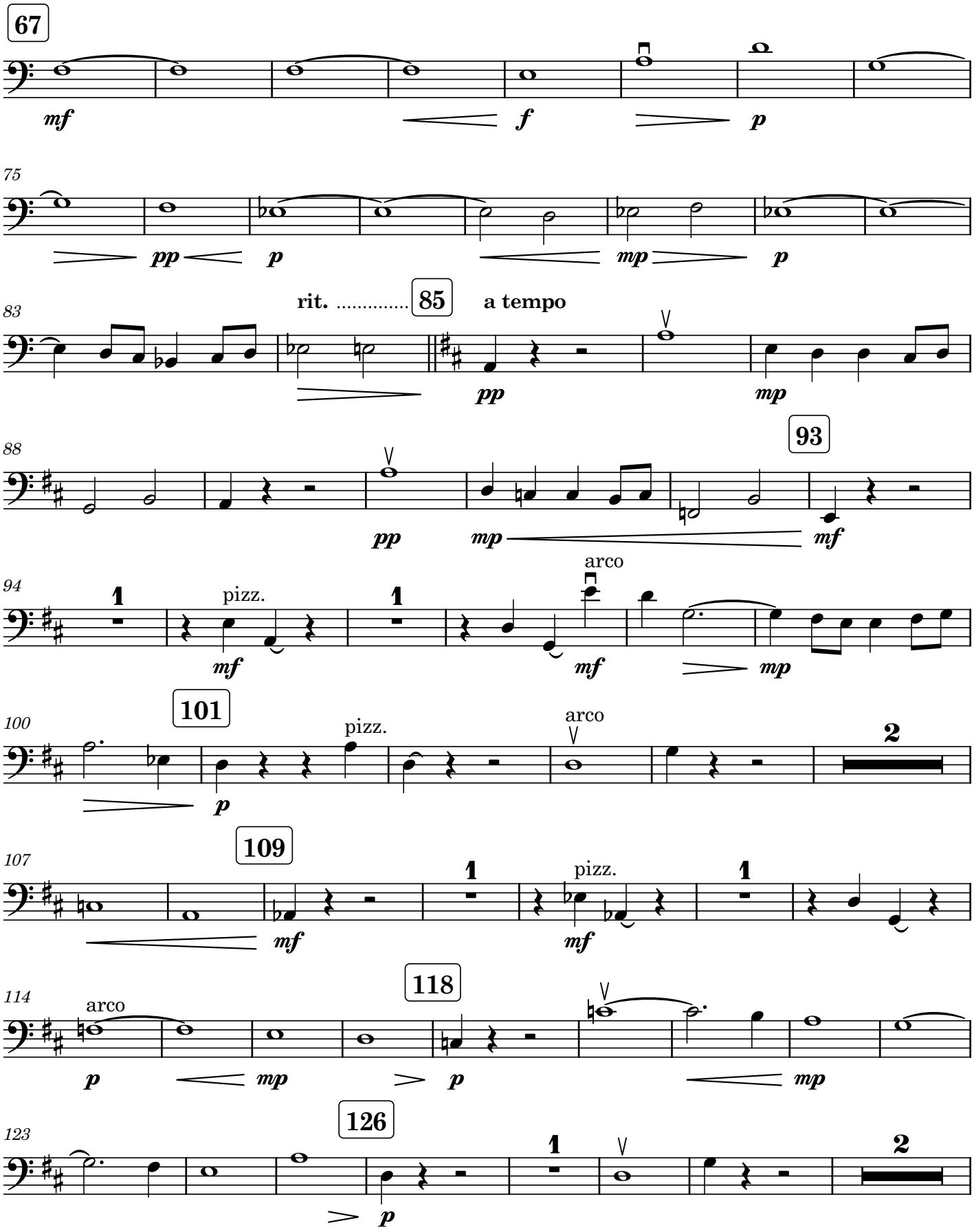

123
131
134
4
con sord.
mp
sfz
pp
p
142
pp
150
151
p
158
mp
p
165
ff
173
ppp

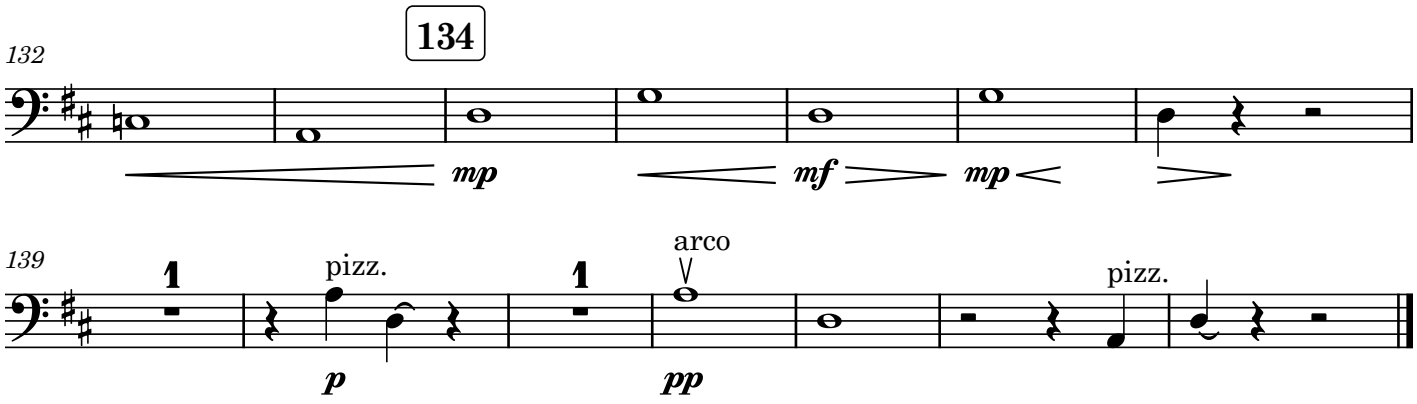
Double Bass

Landscapes

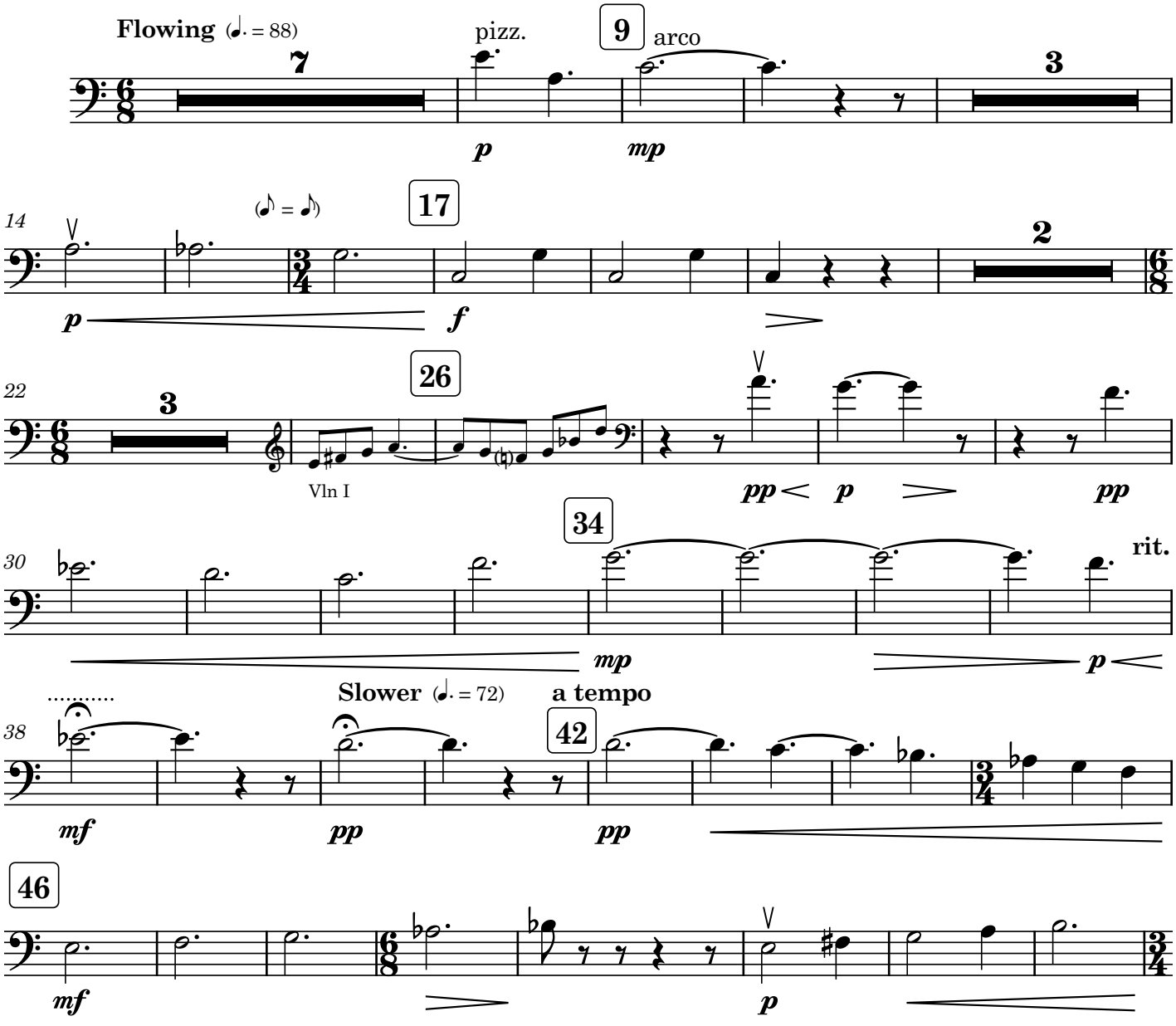
I. Prairie

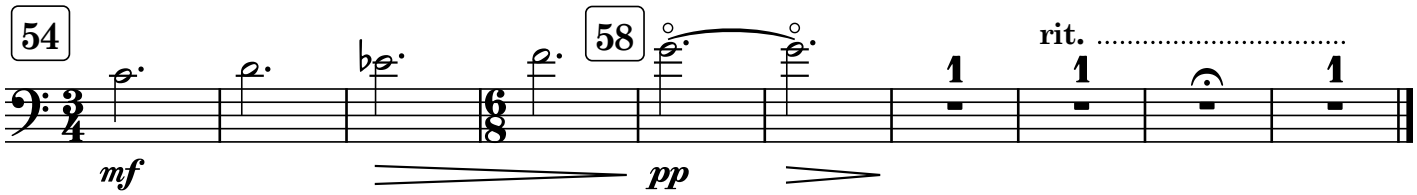



67
mf
f
p
75
pp
p
mp
p
83
rit. .....
85
a tempo
pp
mp
88
93
pp
mp
mf
94
1
pizz.
1
arco
mf
mf
mp
100
101
pizz.
arco
2
p
107
109
1
pizz.
1
mf
mf
114
118
arco
p
mp
p
mp
123
126
1
2
p

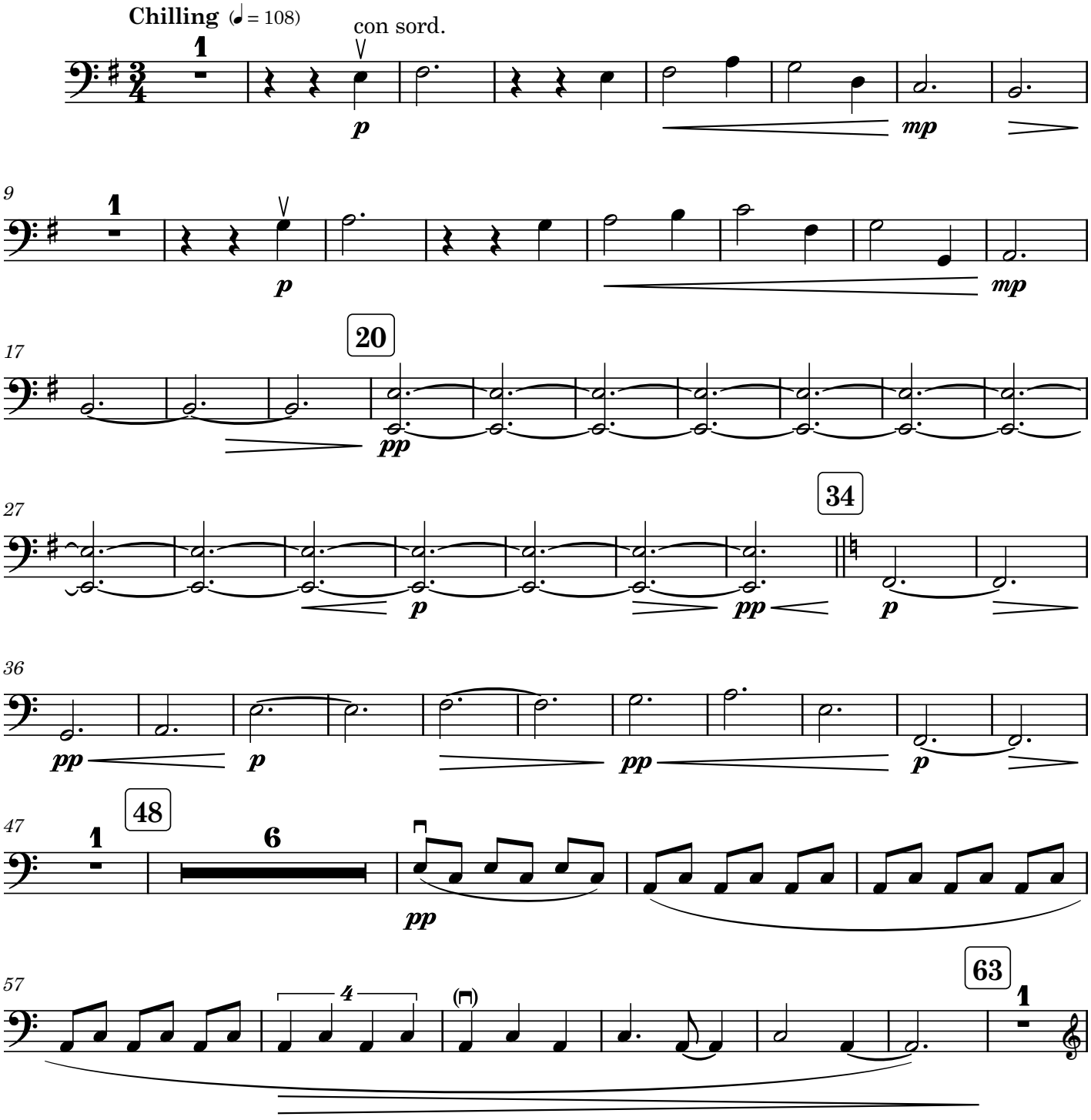

132
134
mp
mf
mp
139
1
pizz.
1
arco
pizz.
p
pp

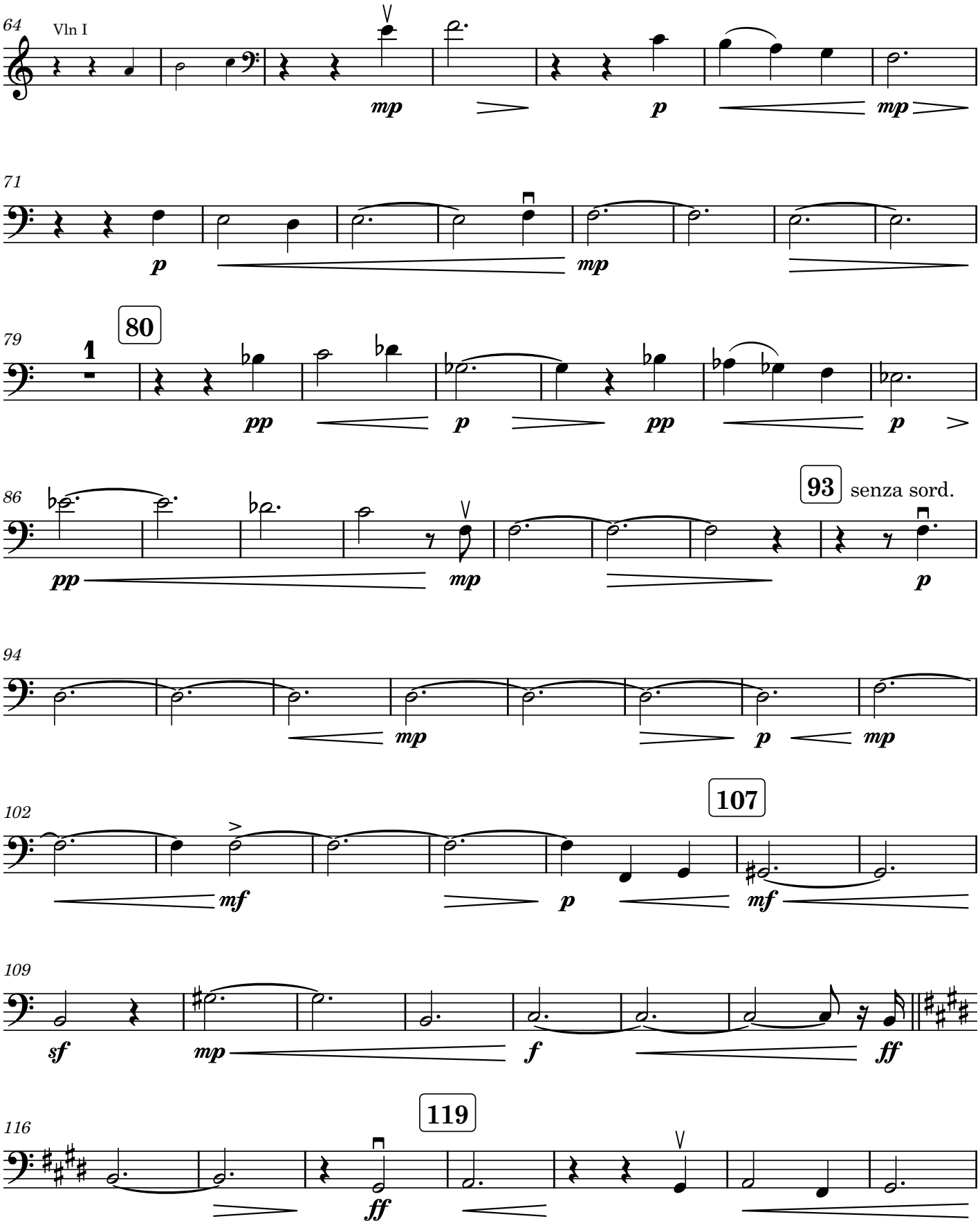
II. Rivulet

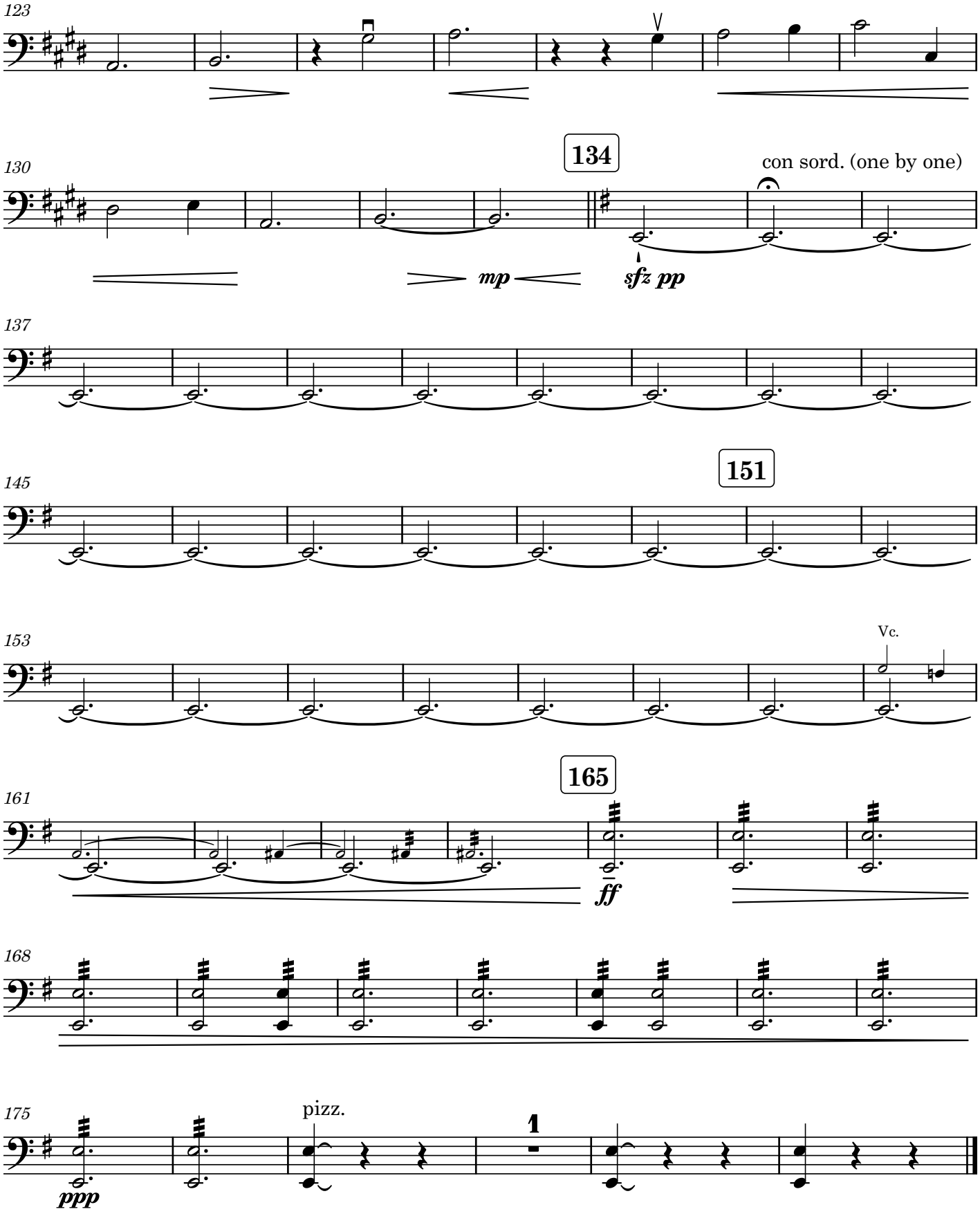

Flowing (♩. = 88)
7
pizz.
9
arco
3
p
mp
14
(♪ = ♪)
17
2
p
f
22
3
26
Vln I
pp
p
pp
30
34
rit.
mp
p
38
Slower (♩. = 72)
a tempo
42
mf
pp
pp
46
mf
p


54
58
rit.
mf
pp

III. Tundra


Chilling (♩ = 108)
con sord.
p
mp
9
20
17
pp
27
34
36
48
47
6
63
57
4


64
Vln I
mp
p
mp
71
p
mp
79
80
1
pp
p
pp
p
86
93
senza sord.
pp
mp
p
94
mp
p
mp
102
107
mf
p
mf
109
sf
mp
f
ff
116
119
ff


123
130
134
con sord. (one by one)
mp
sfz pp
137
145
151
153
Vc.
161
165
ff
168
175
pizz.
1
ppp