A Peal of Bells (op. 47)

This *adagio for strings, tubular bells and celesta* is a musical representation of bells pealing in a rugged landscape with vast snow-capped mountain peaks in the not-too-far distance. The tolling of the bells is sometimes soft and indistinct, at other times overwhelming and awe-inspiring. The bells both mourn and celebrate. They are sometimes heard on full-chorded bowed strings, at other times on lightly plucked strings. Soft, delicate bell-like tones are heard on celesta, while later, great booming fate-filled funereal bells ring out on the full orchestra with the help of tubular bells.

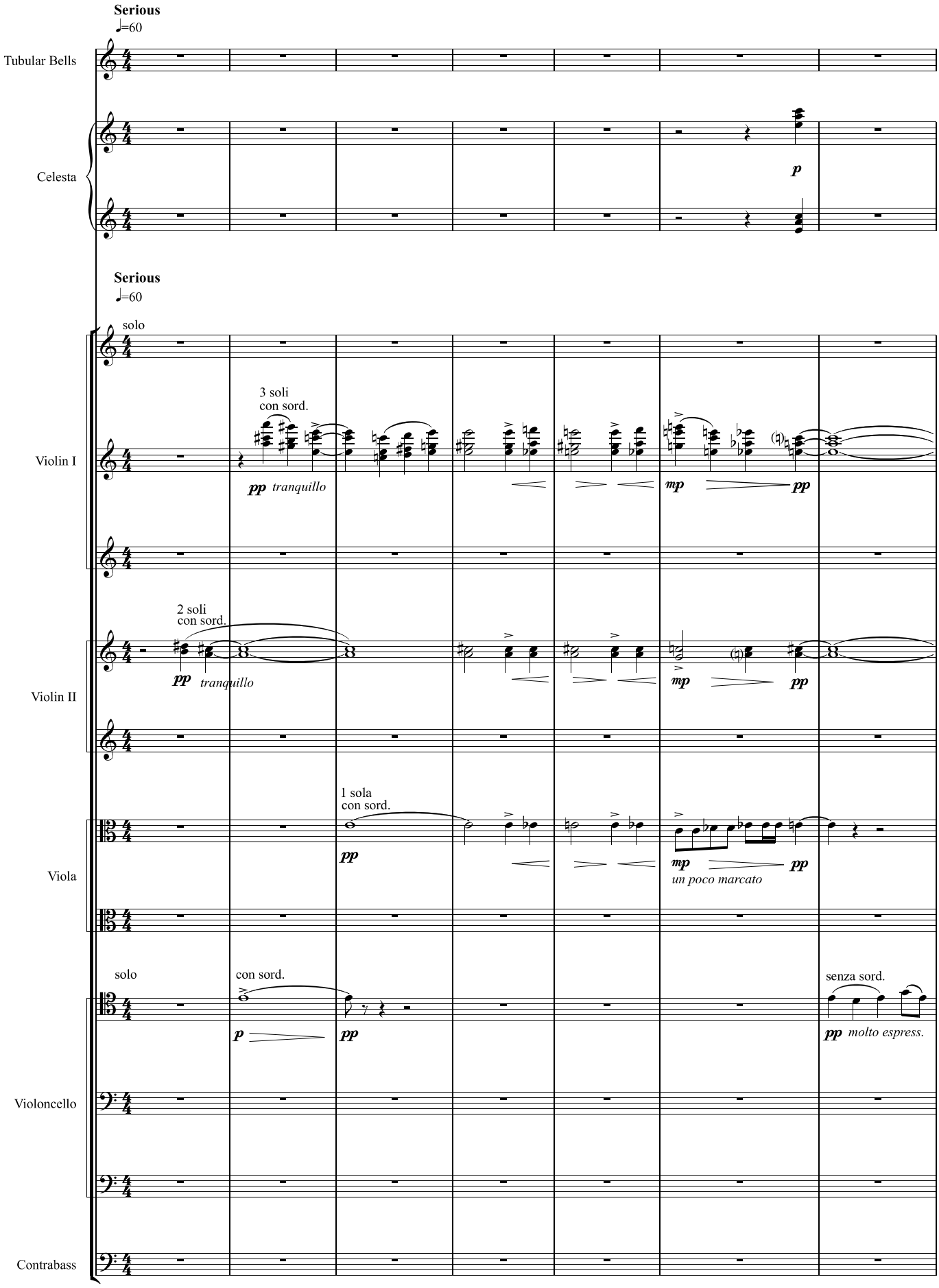
The work is in a personalized sonata-rondo form that sees a growth and transformation of its ideas in the course of twelve slow minutes. The tonality, although wide-ranging, is unified. The thematic material consists of three ideas: a theme stated at the beginning on a small group of muted strings, a poignant idea on solo cello that expands and returns in various guises, and a lyrical theme stated initially on two high solo violins. The ever-present high solo cello is given the role of a voice intoning, and is sometimes sorrow-filled, at other times assertive. Two major climaxes are reached in the course of A Peal of Bells, as great mountains and church steeples loom towards the listener, and then overwhelm. The work's coda sees the recall of the opening theme, this time on full orchestra in widely spaced, bell-like chords, heard as if from afar.

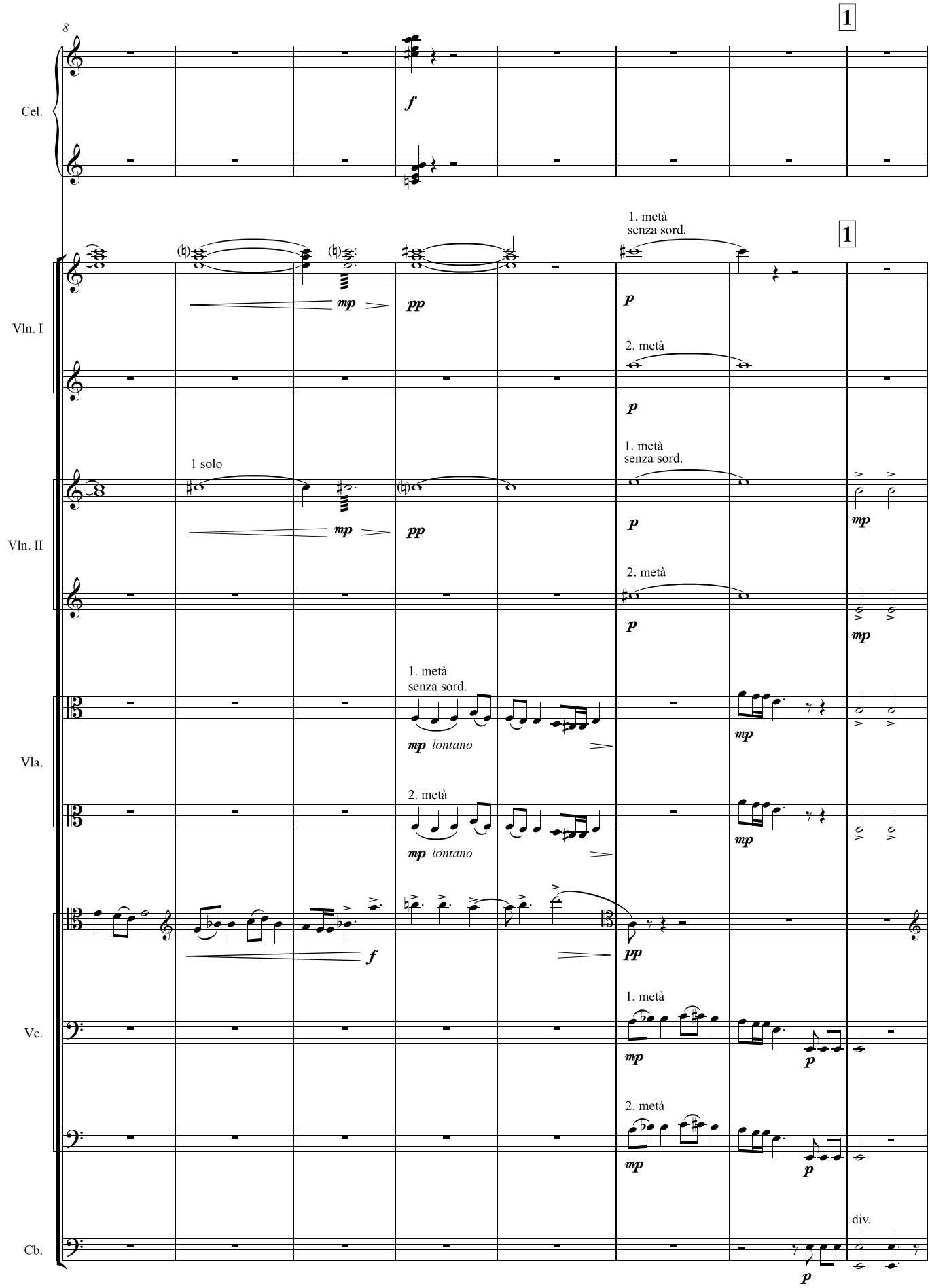
A PEAL OF BELLS

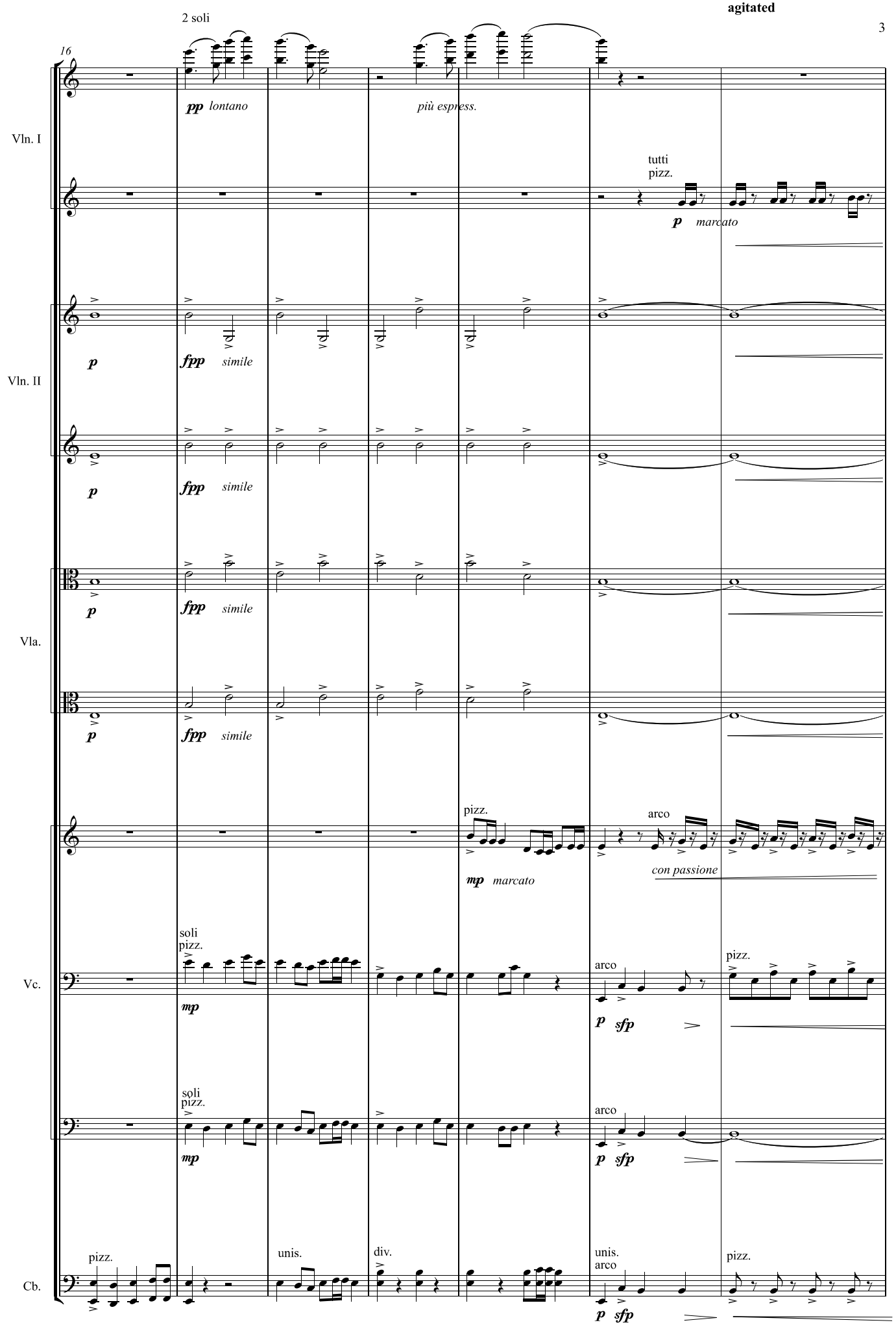
for Strings, Tubular Bells and Celesta

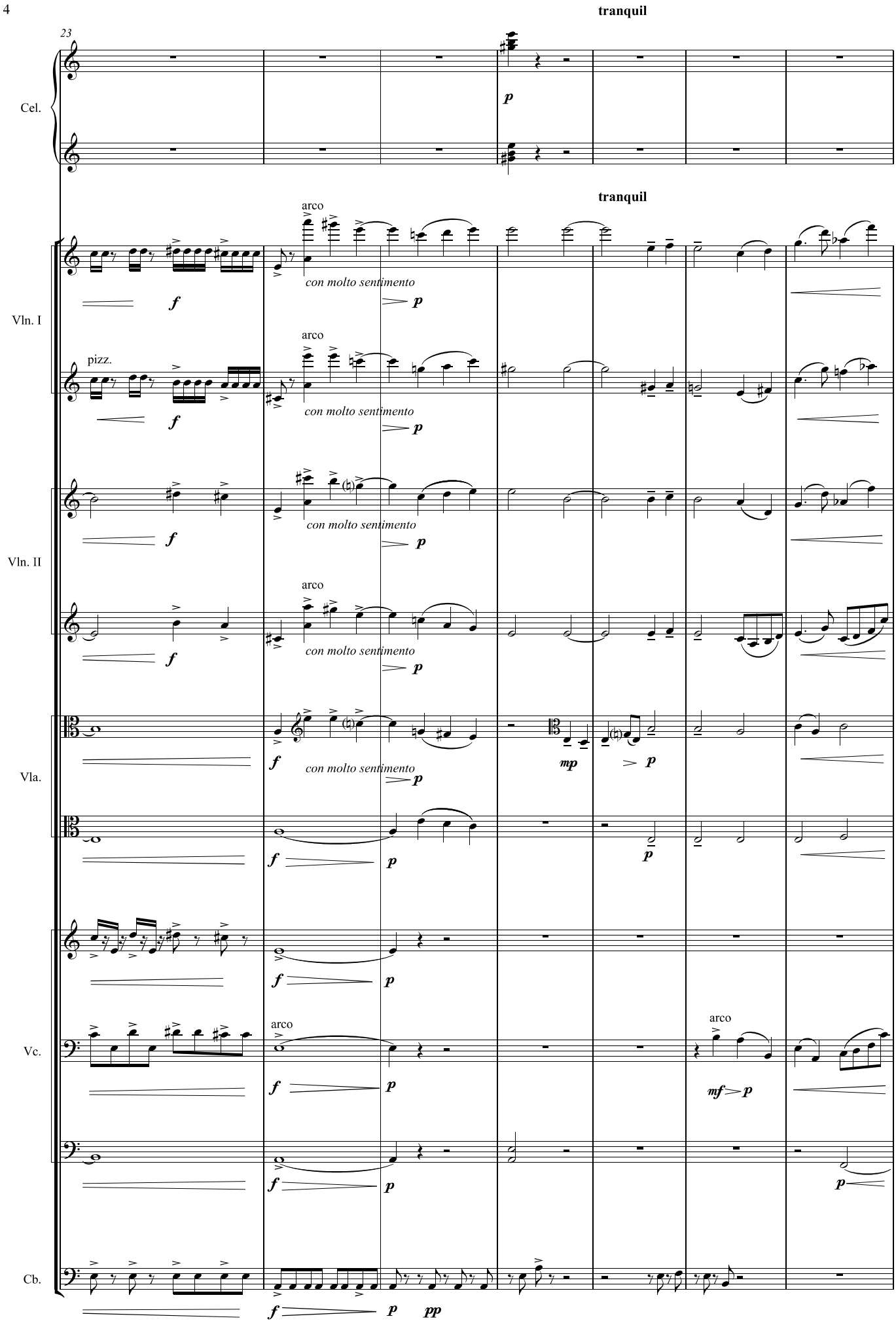
Opus 47

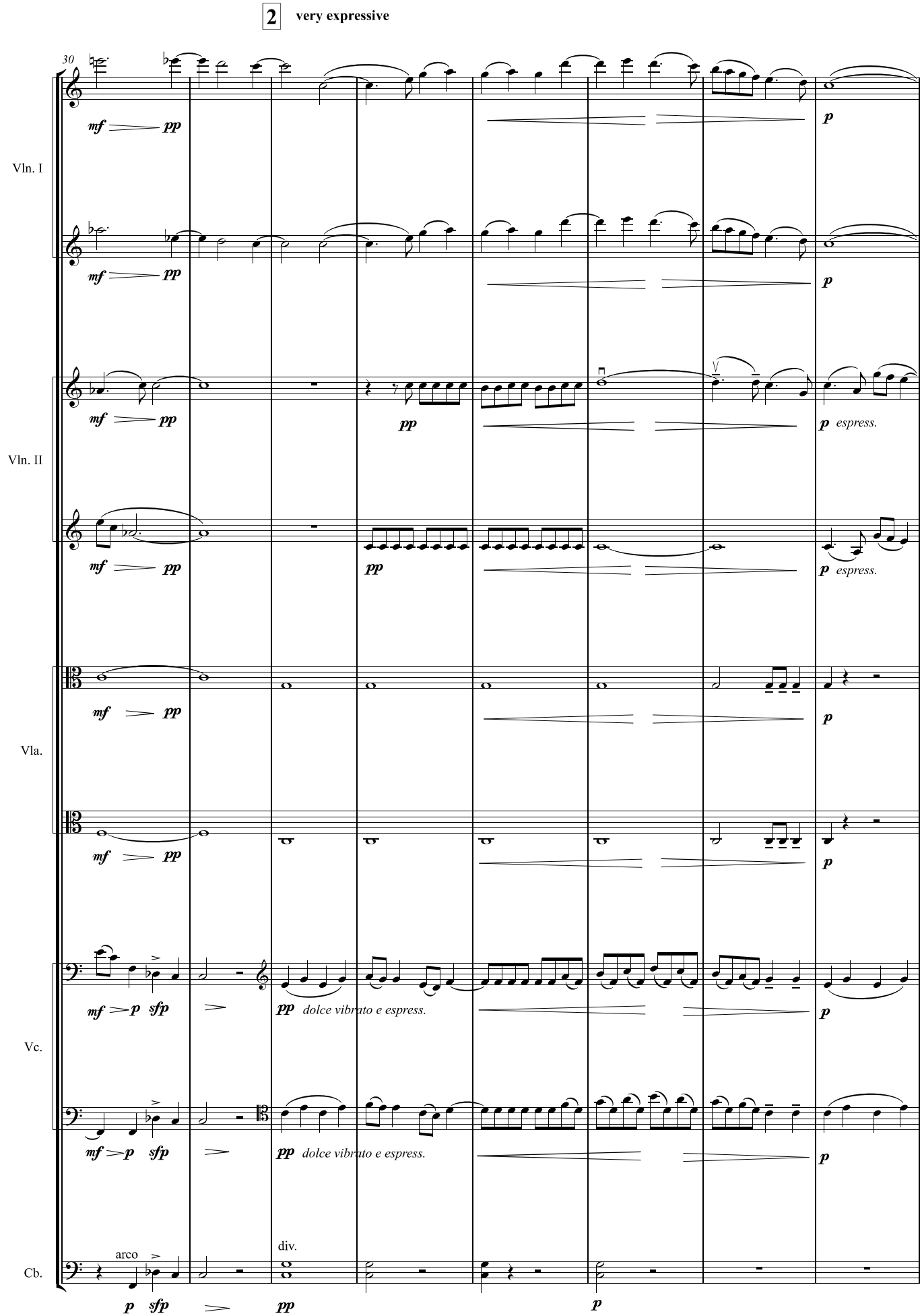
JOHN SIMON

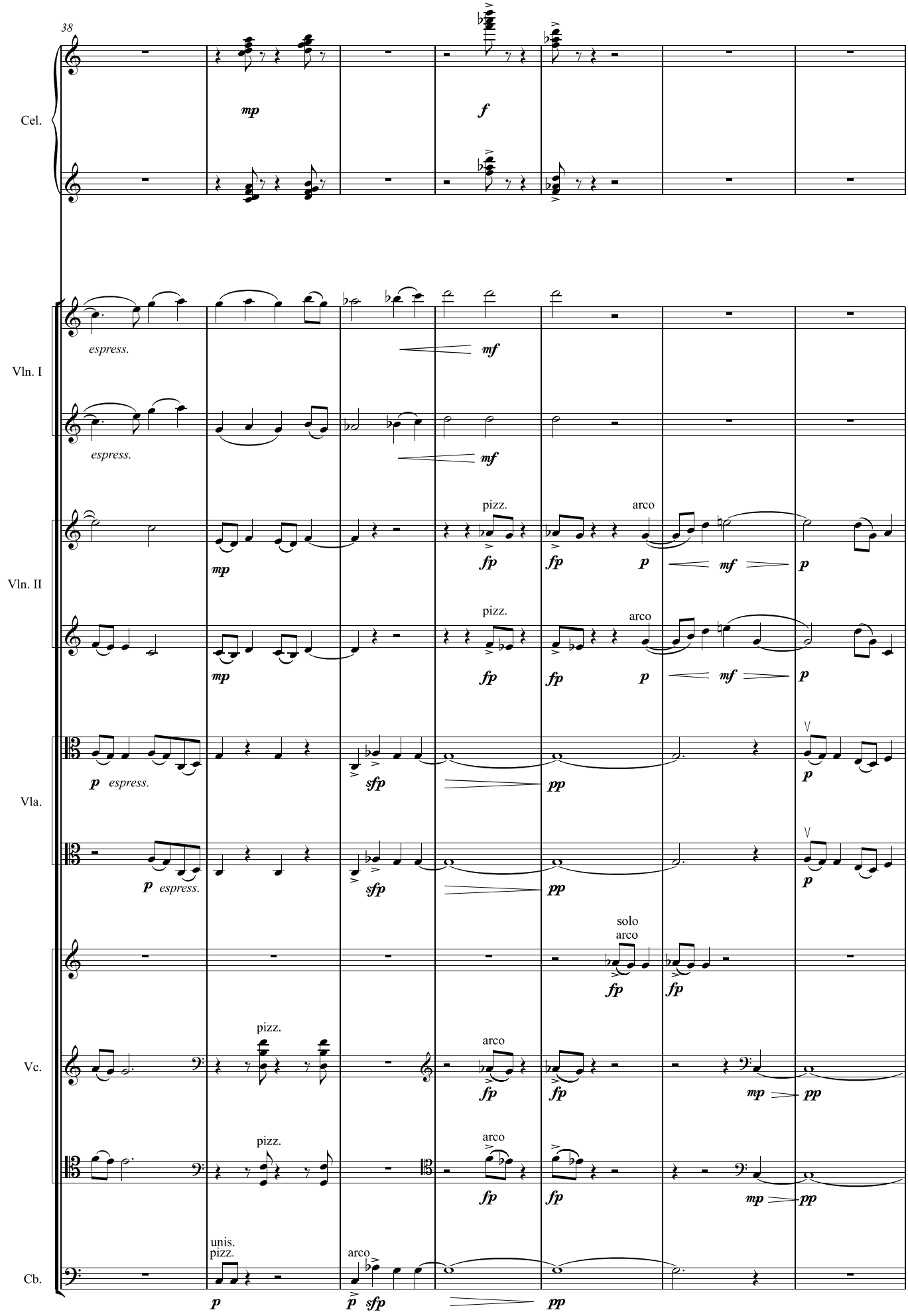


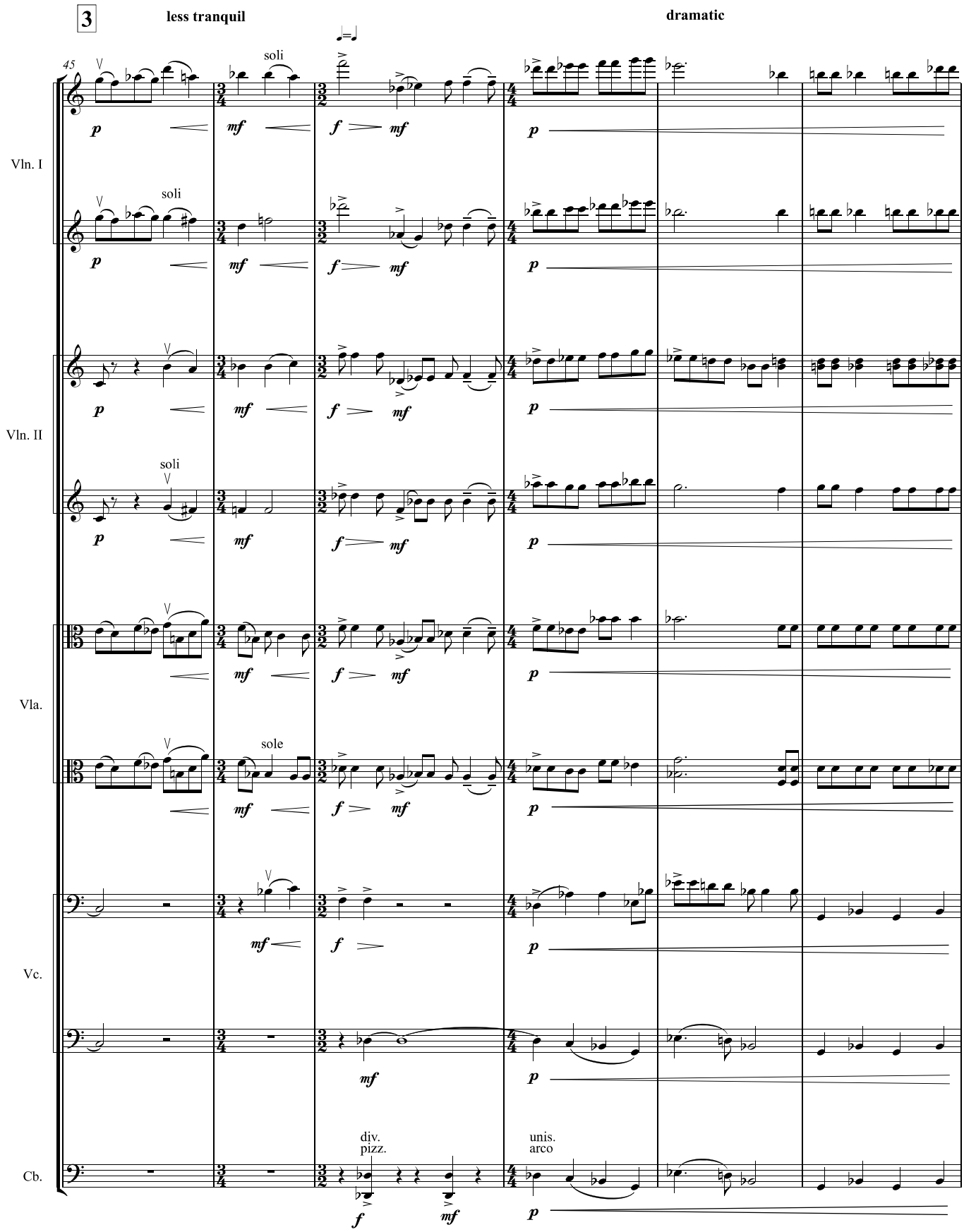

8
1
Cel.
f
Vln. I
mp
pp
1. metà
senza sord.
p
2. metà
1
Vln. II
1 solo
Vla.
lontano
Vc.
Cb.
div.

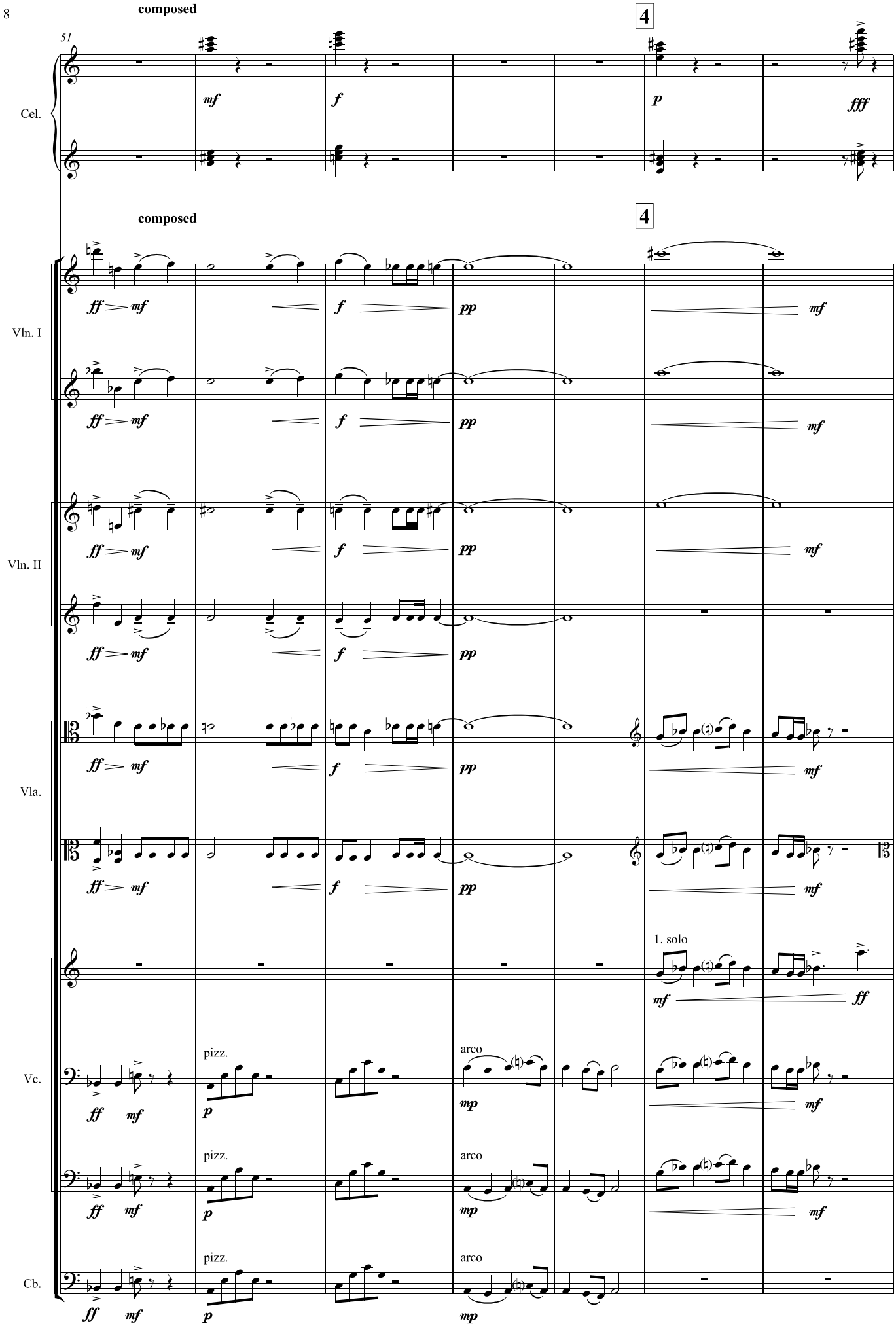

16
2 soli
pp lontano
più espress.
tutti
pizz.
p marcato
Vln. I
p
fpp simile
Vln. II
p
fpp simile
Vla.
p
fpp simile
pizz.
arco
mp marcato
con passione
soli
pizz.
mp
arco
p sfp
pizz.
Vc.
soli
pizz.
mp
arco
p sfp
pizz.
unis.
div.
unis.
arco
p sfp
pizz.
Cb.

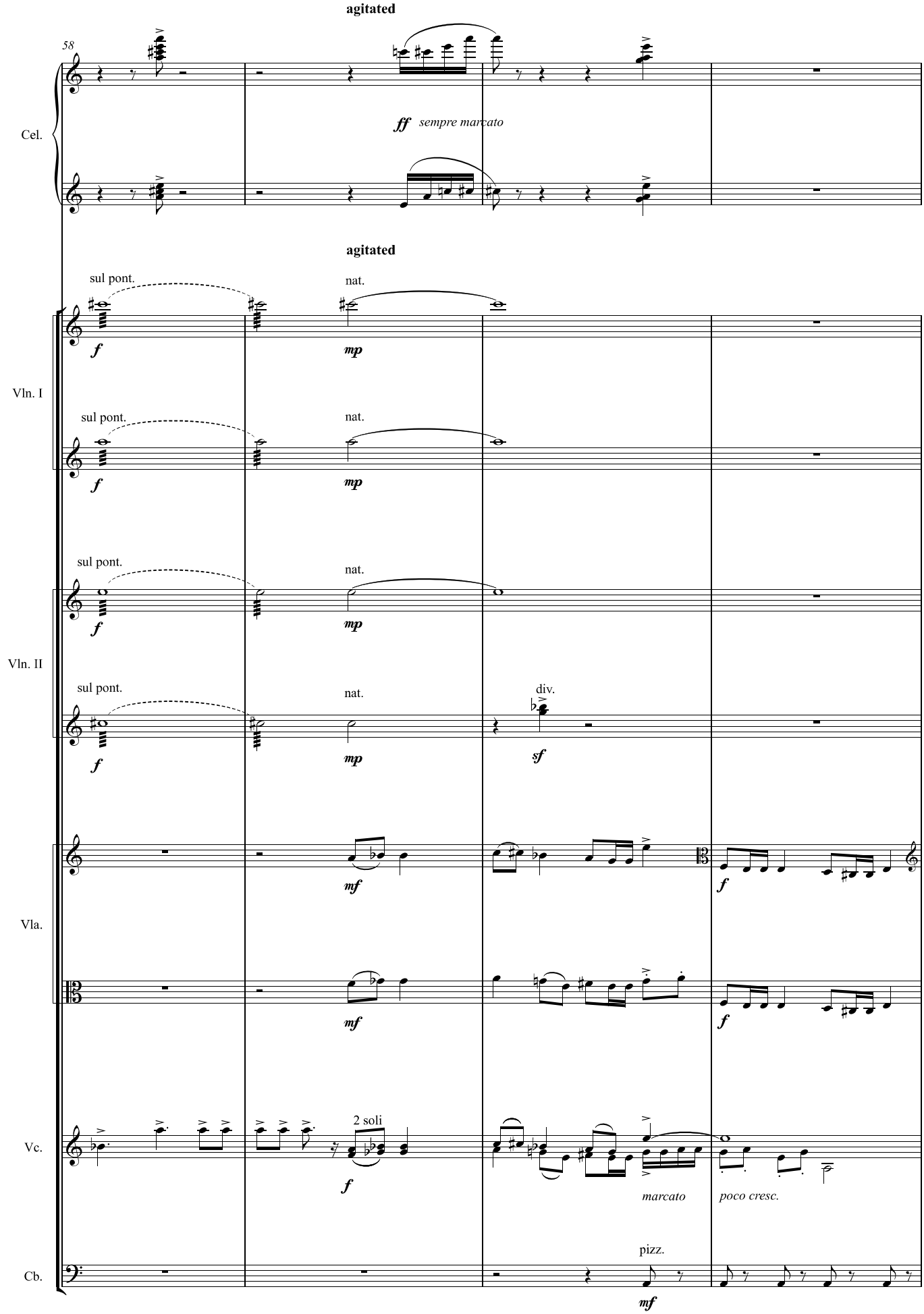

tranquil
23
Cel.
p
tranquil
arco
con molto sentimento
Vln. I
pizz.
arco
con molto sentimento
Vln. II
arco
con molto sentimento
Vla.
con molto sentimento
mp
Vc.
arco
arco
Cb.
pp

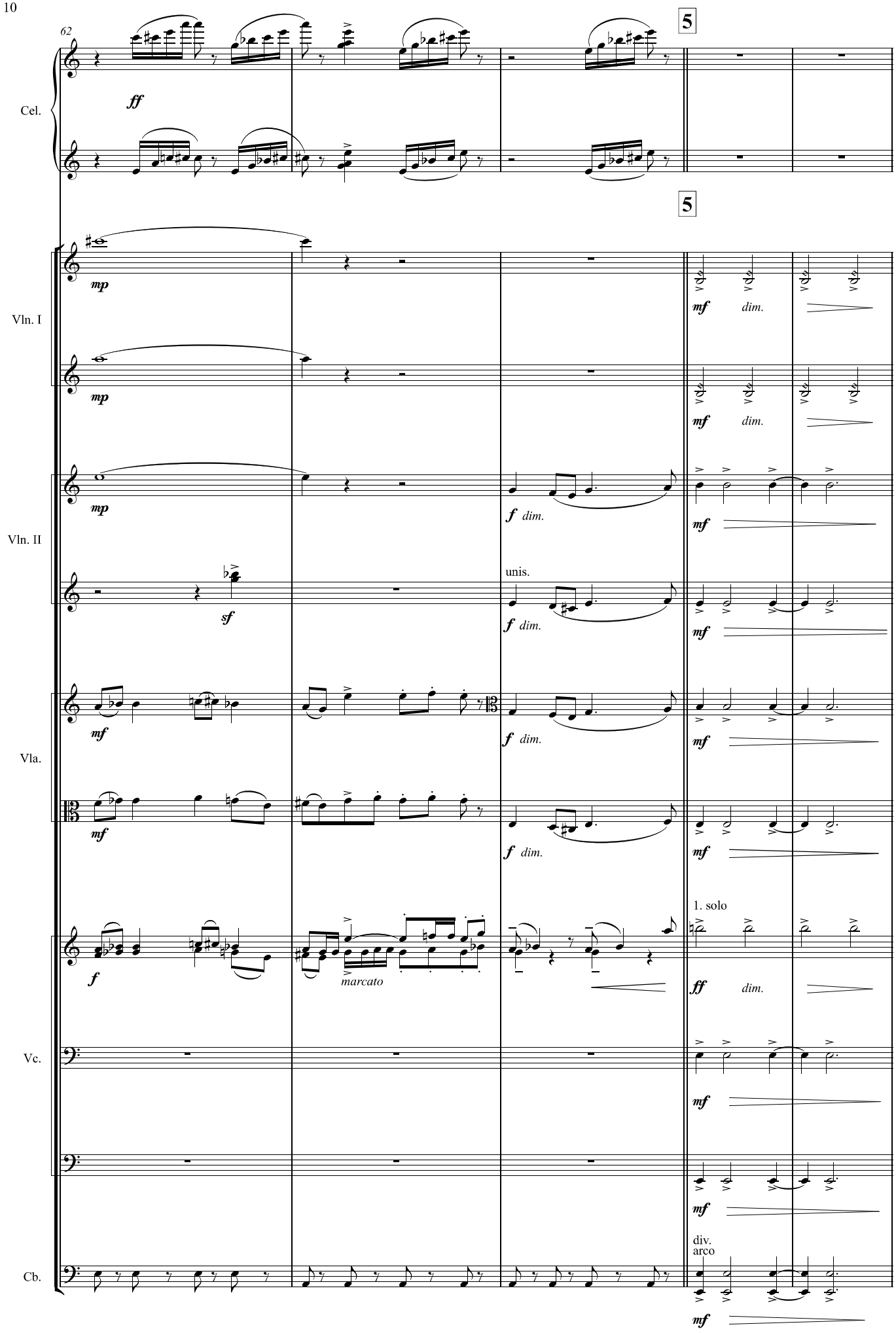

2
very expressive
30
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
mf pp
p
pp
p espress.
mf p sfp
pp dolce vibrato e espress.
arco
div.

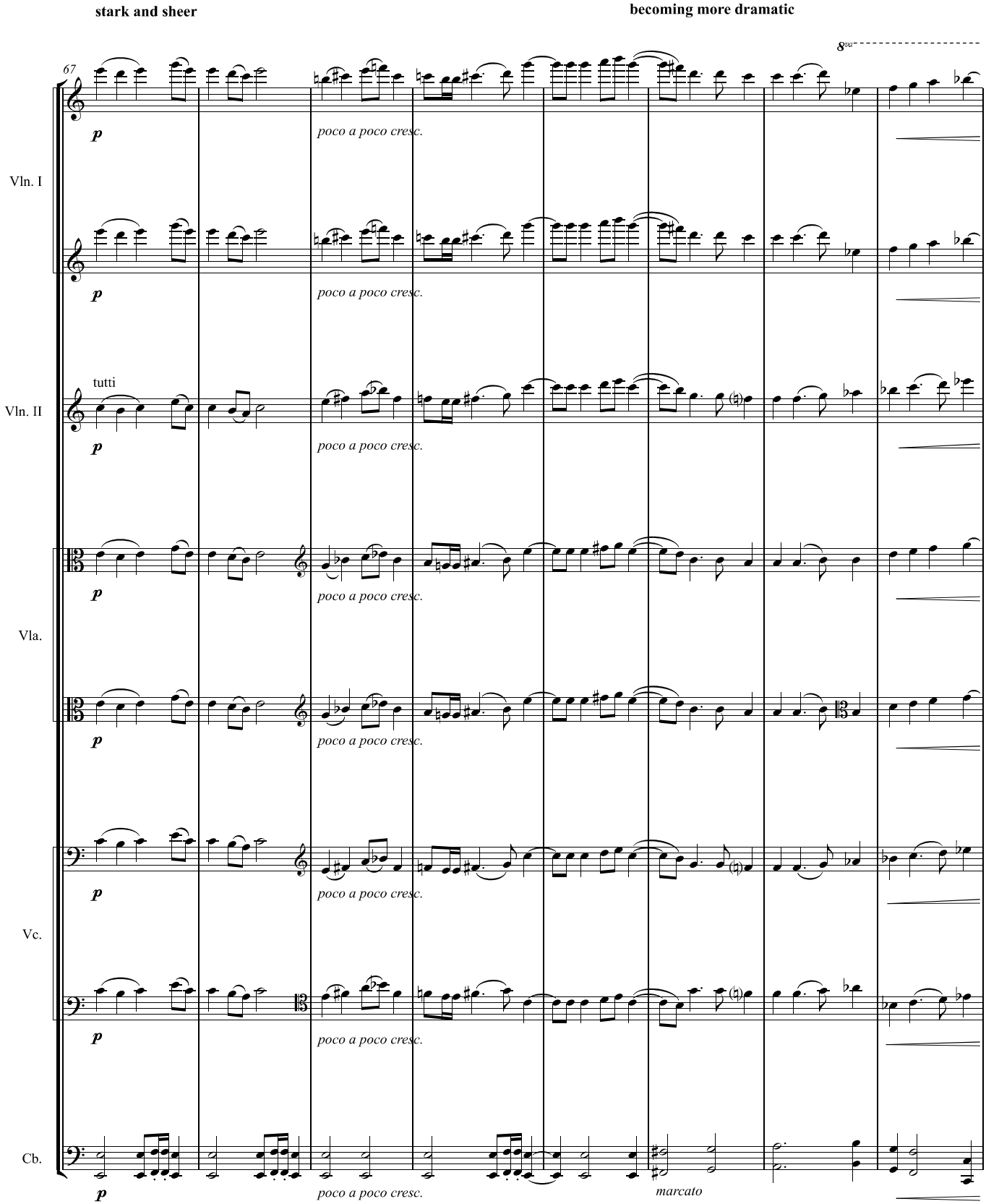

38
Cel.
mp
f
Vln. I
espress.
mf
Vln. II
pizz.
arco
fp
p
mf
Vla.
espress.
sfp
pp
solo
arco
Vc.
Cb.
unis.
pizz.

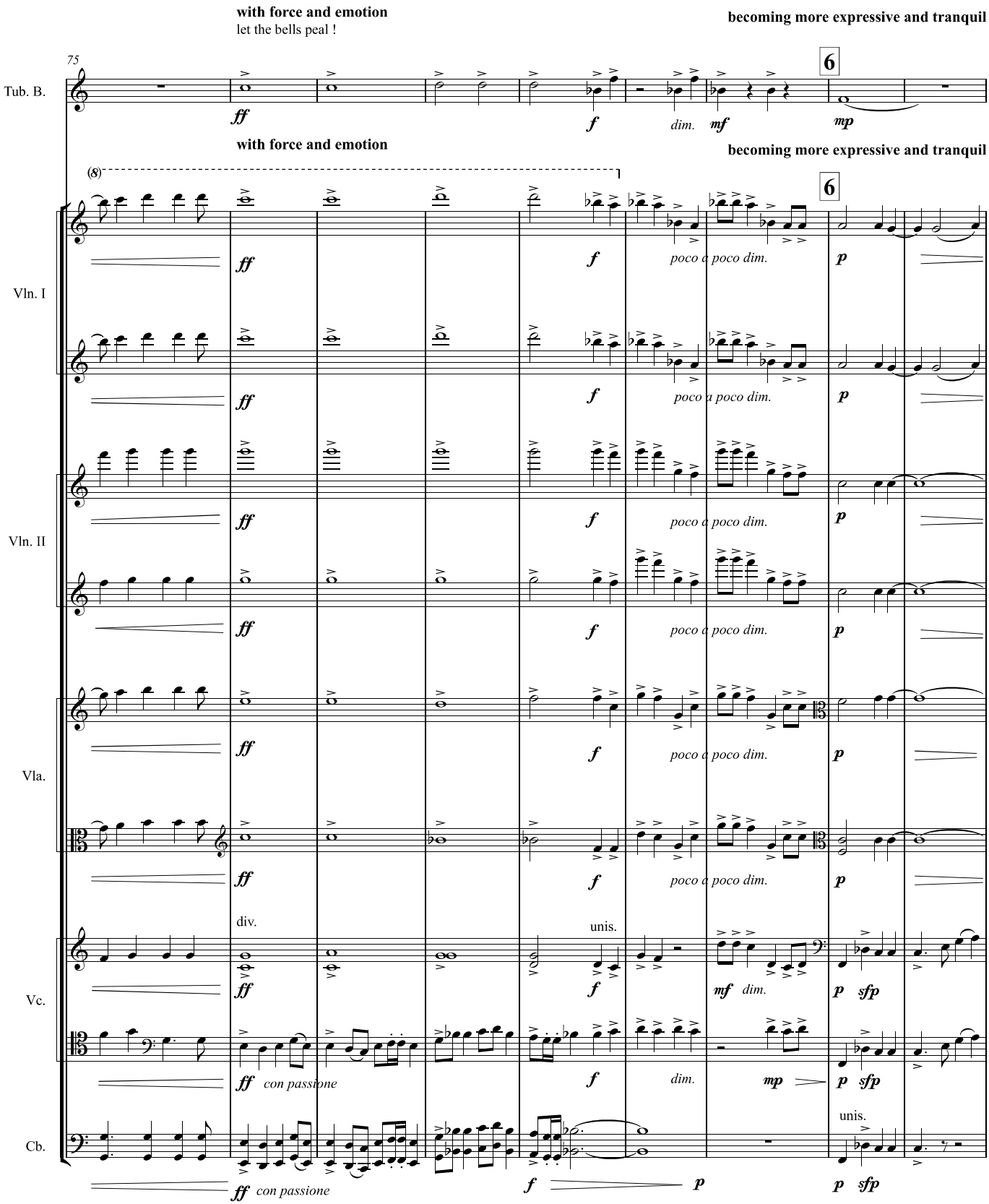

3
less tranquil
dramatic
45
soli
Vln. I
soli
Vln. II
soli
Vla.
sole
Vc.
div.
pizz.
unis.
arco
Cb.

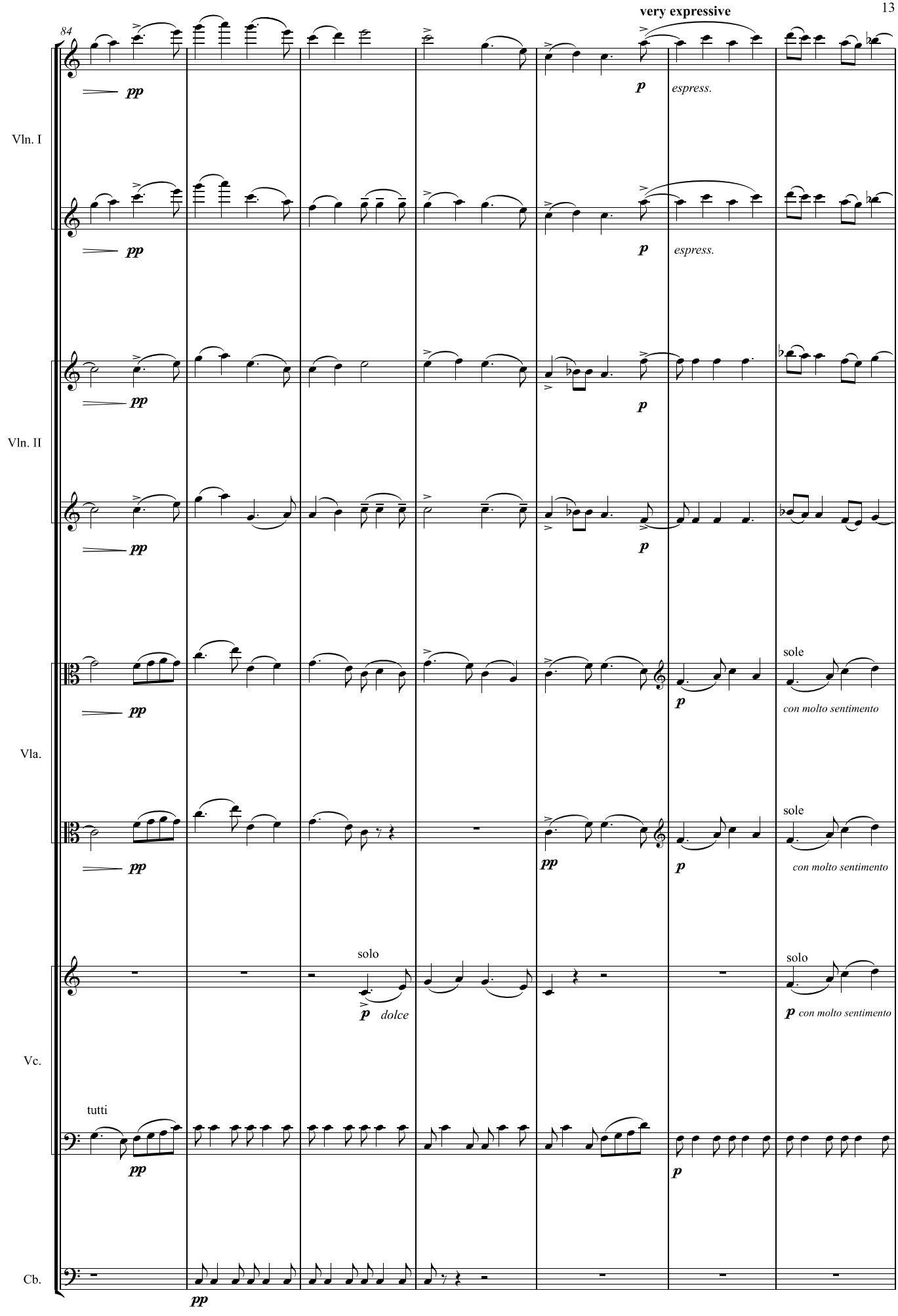

composed
4
51
Cel.
mf
f
p
fff
composed
4
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
ff
mf
pp
1. solo
Vc.
Cb.
pizz.
arco
mp

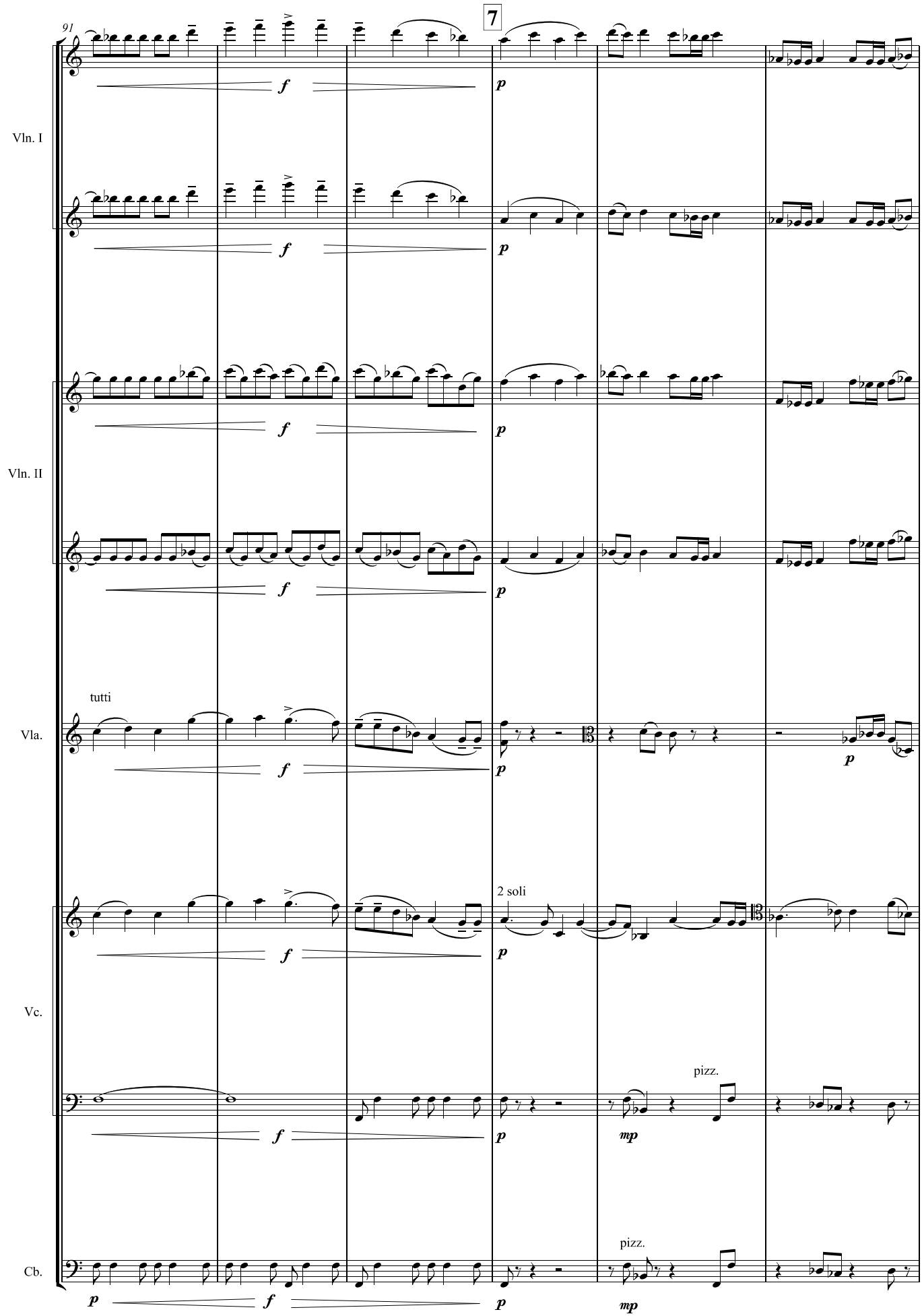

agitated
58
Cel.
ff sempre marcato
agitated
Vln. I
sul pont.
f
nat.
mp
Vln. II
sul pont.
f
nat.
mp
Vla.
sul pont.
f
nat.
mp
div.
sf
mf
f
Vc.
2 soli
f
marcato
poco cresc.
Cb.
pizz.
mf

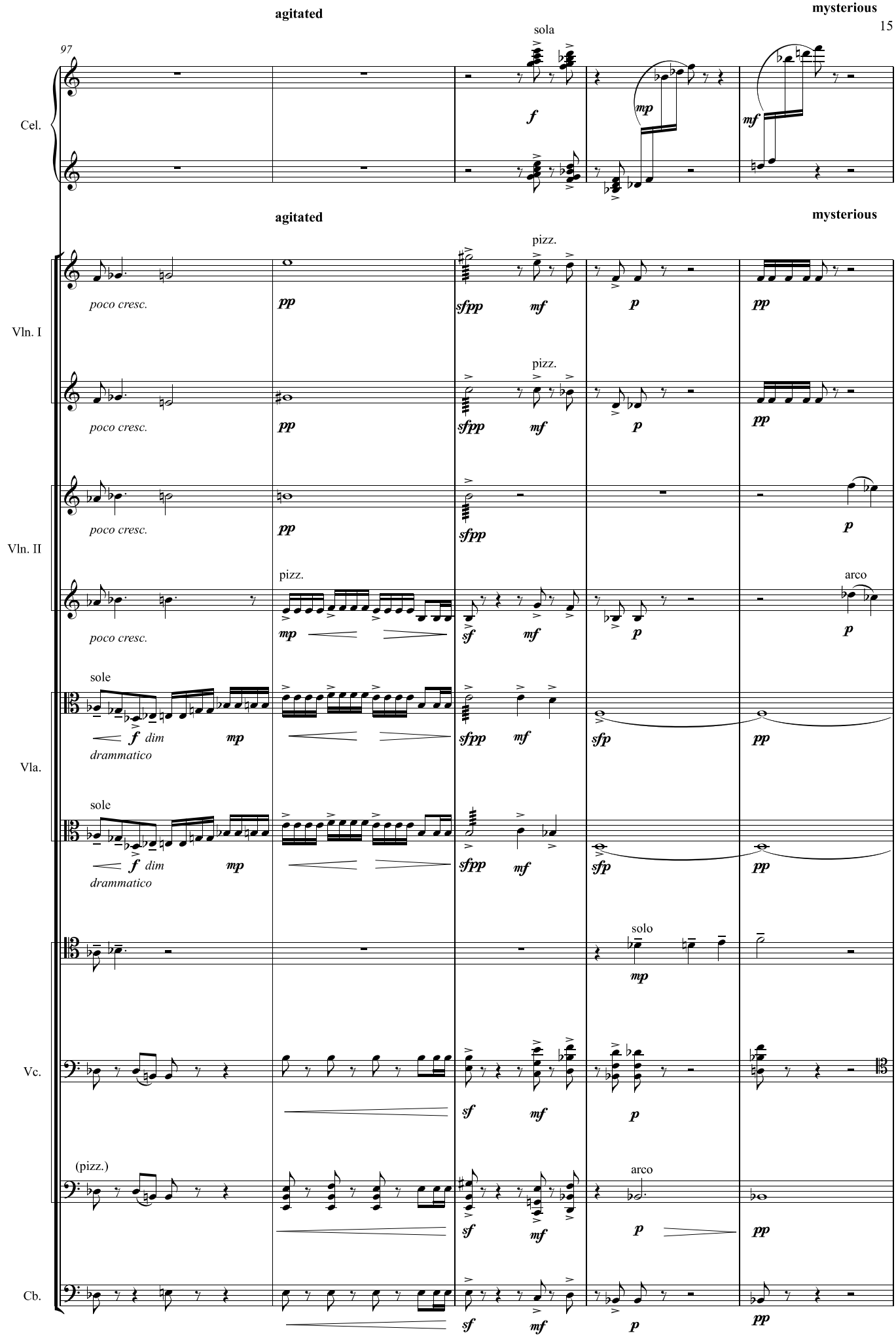

62
5
Cel.
ff
5
Vln. I
mp
mf
dim.
Vln. II
mp
f dim.
mf
sf
unis.
f dim.
mf
Vla.
mf
f dim.
mf
mf
f dim.
mf
f
marcato
1. solo
ff
dim.
Vc.
mf
mf
Cb.
div.
arco
mf

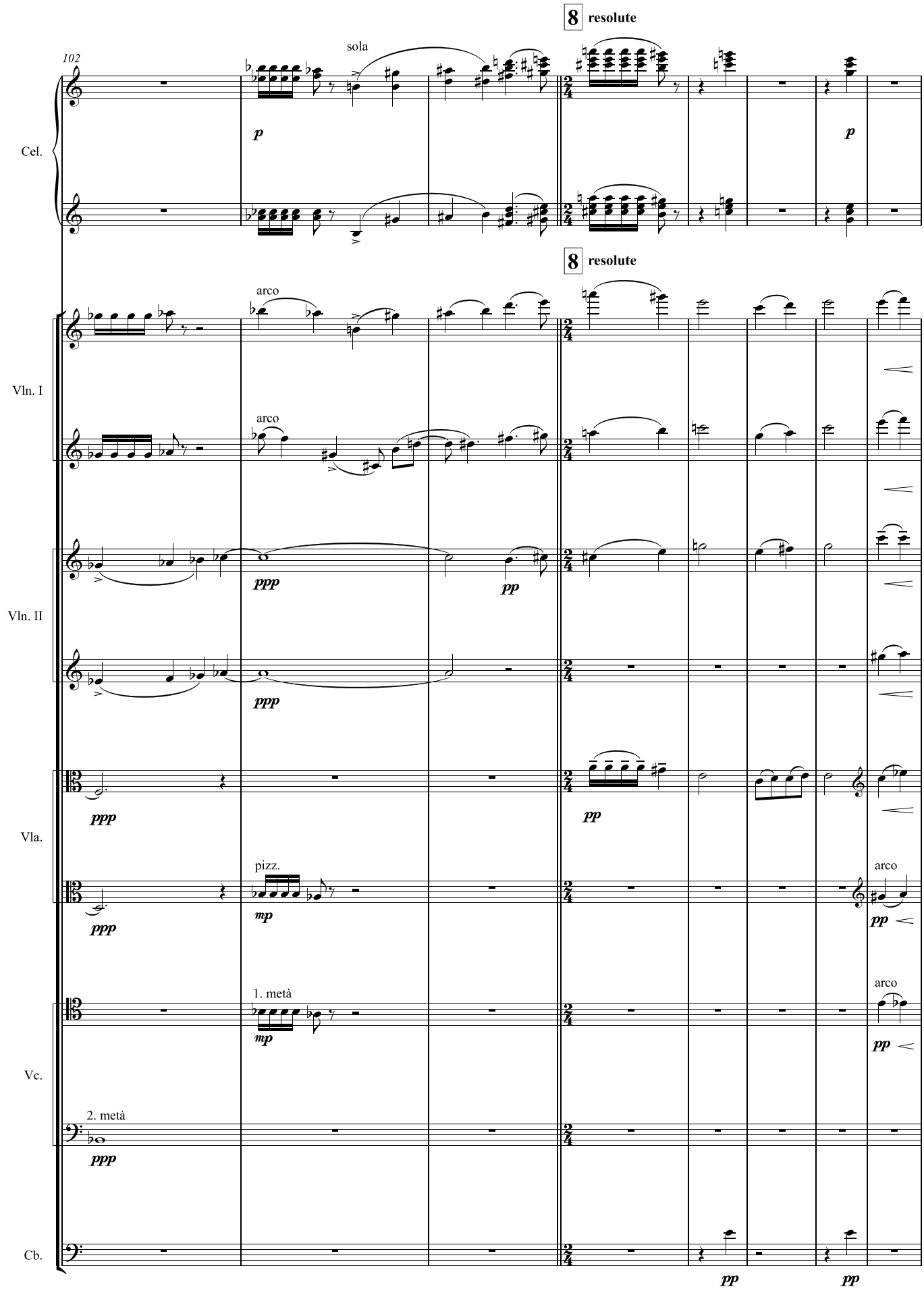

stark and sheer
becoming more dramatic
67
8va
Vln. I
Vln. II
tutti
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
p
poco a poco cresc.
marcato

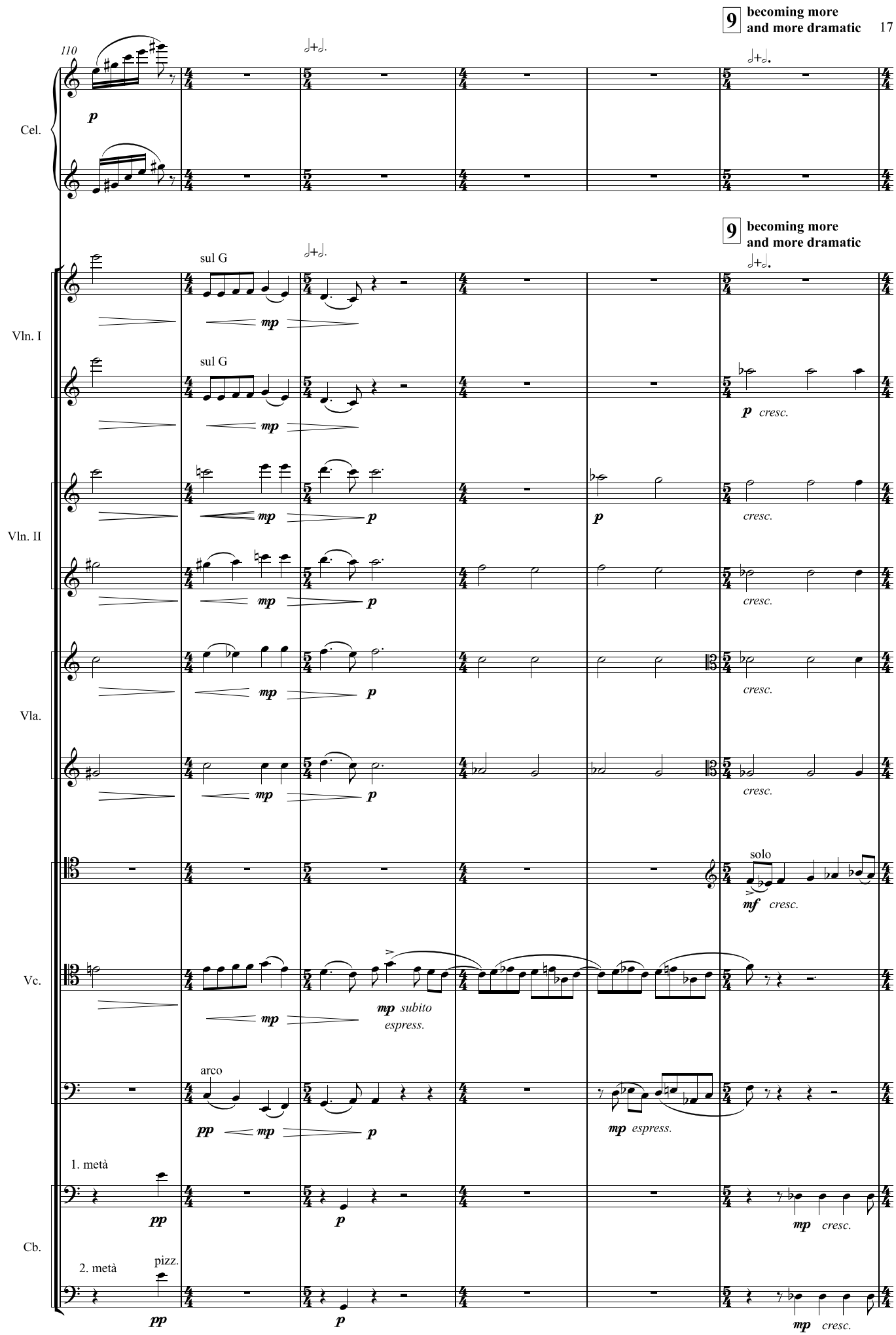

with force and emotion
let the bells peal !
becoming more expressive and tranquil
75
Tub. B.
6
ff
f
dim.
mf
mp
with force and emotion
becoming more expressive and tranquil
(8)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
poco a poco dim.
div.
unis.
con passione
sfp

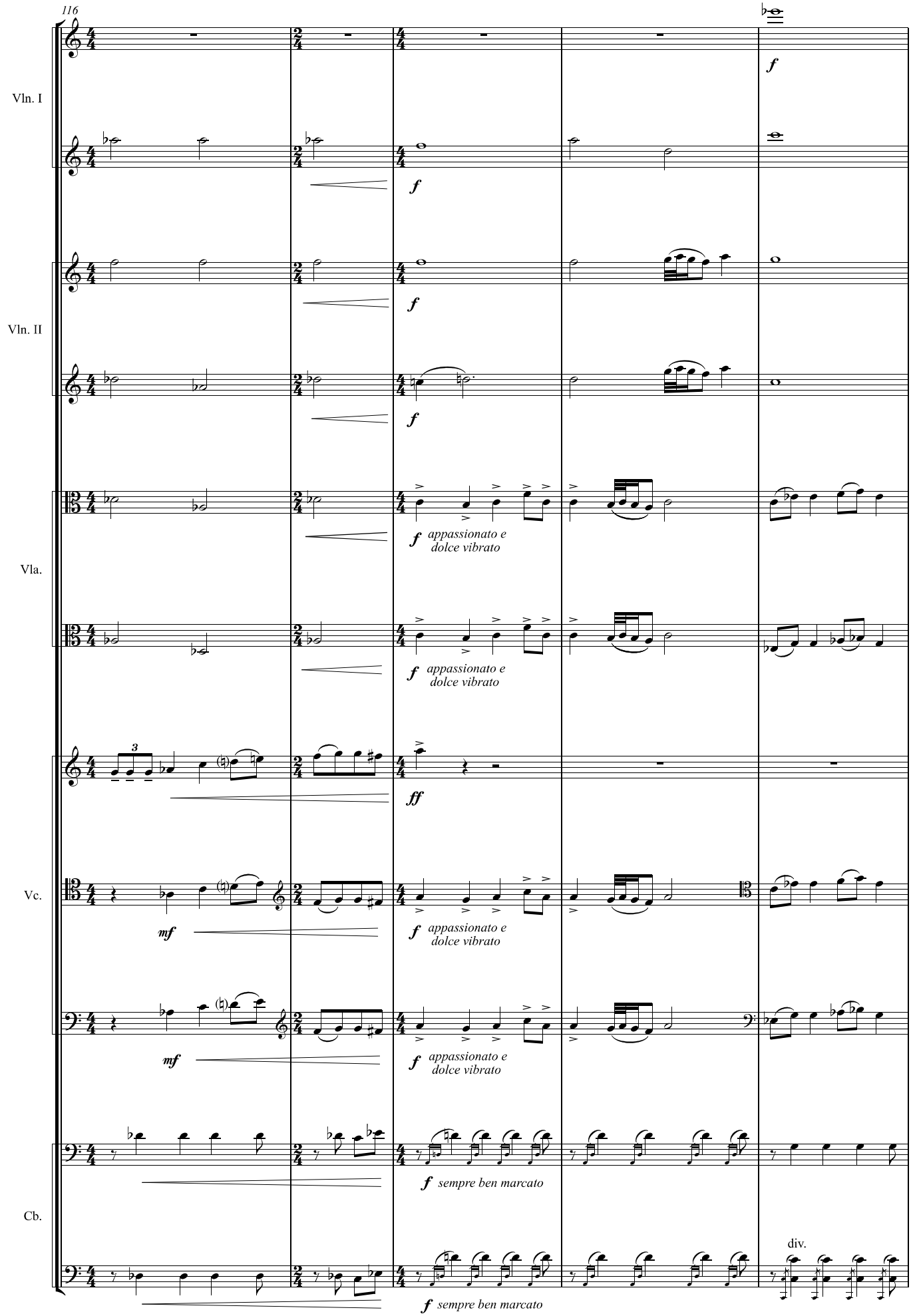

84
very expressive
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
pp
p
espress.
sole
con molto sentimento
solo
dolce
tutti


91
7
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
tutti
2 soli
pizz.
pizz.
f
p
mp


agitated
mysterious
97
sola
Cel.
agitated
mysterious
pizz.
Vln. I
poco cresc.
pp
sfpp
mf
p
pp
pizz.
Vln. II
arco
sole
f dim
mp
drammatico
Vla.
solo
Vc.
(pizz.)
Cb.
sf
sfp


8 resolute
102
sola
Cel.
p
p
8 resolute
arco
Vln. I
arco
Vln. II
ppp
pp
ppp
Vla.
pp
ppp
pizz.
mp
arco
pp
ppp
1. metà
mp
arco
pp
Vc.
2. metà
ppp
Cb.
pp
pp


9 becoming more and more dramatic
110
Cel.
p
Vln. I
sul G
mp
p cresc.
Vln. II
cresc.
Vla.
solo
mf cresc.
Vc.
mp subito espress.
arco
pp
mp espress.
Cb.
1. metà
2. metà
pizz.


116
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
f
appassionato e dolce vibrato
ff
mf
sempre ben marcato
div.

121

Tub. B.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

10 **dramatic but expressive**

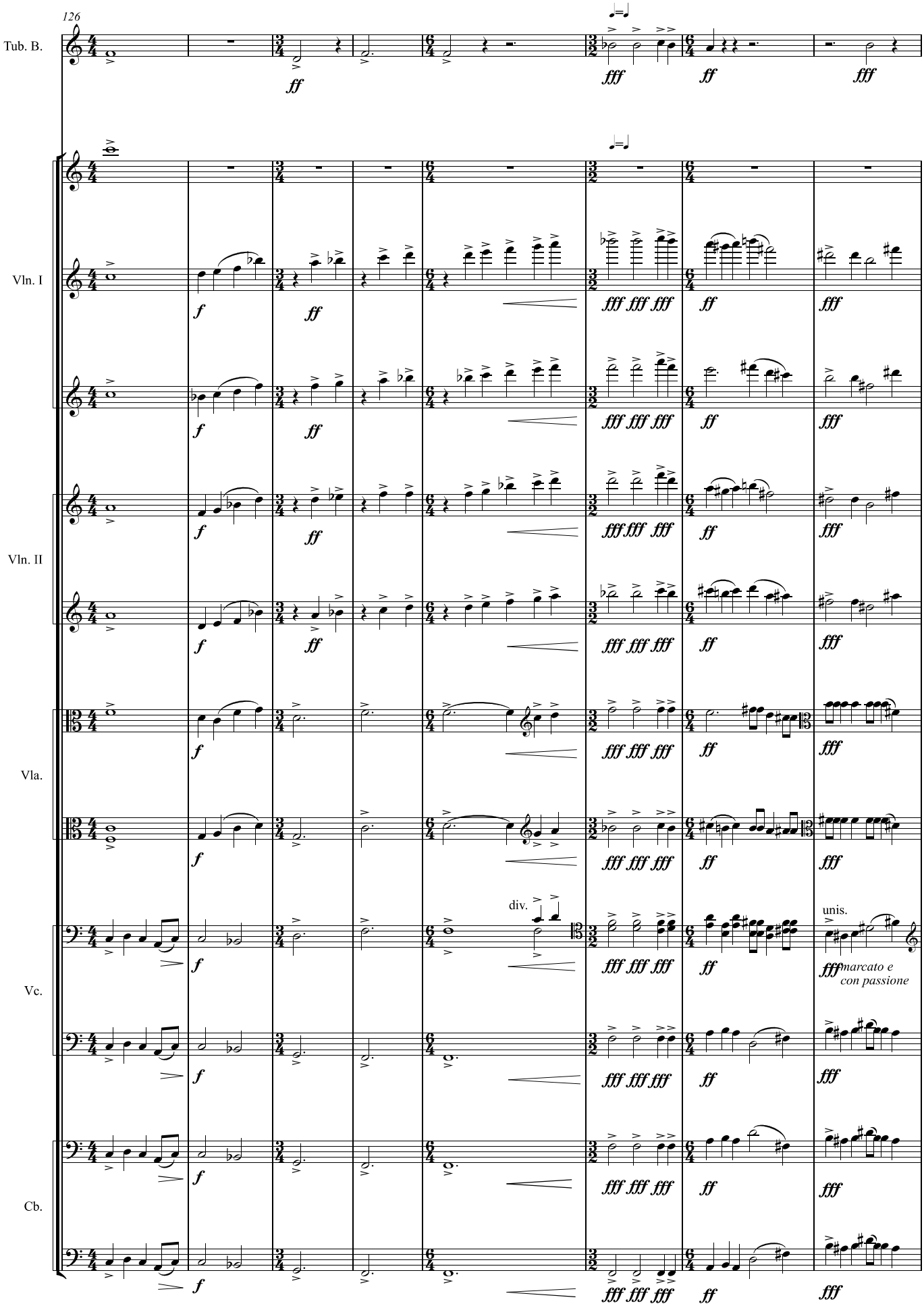
solo

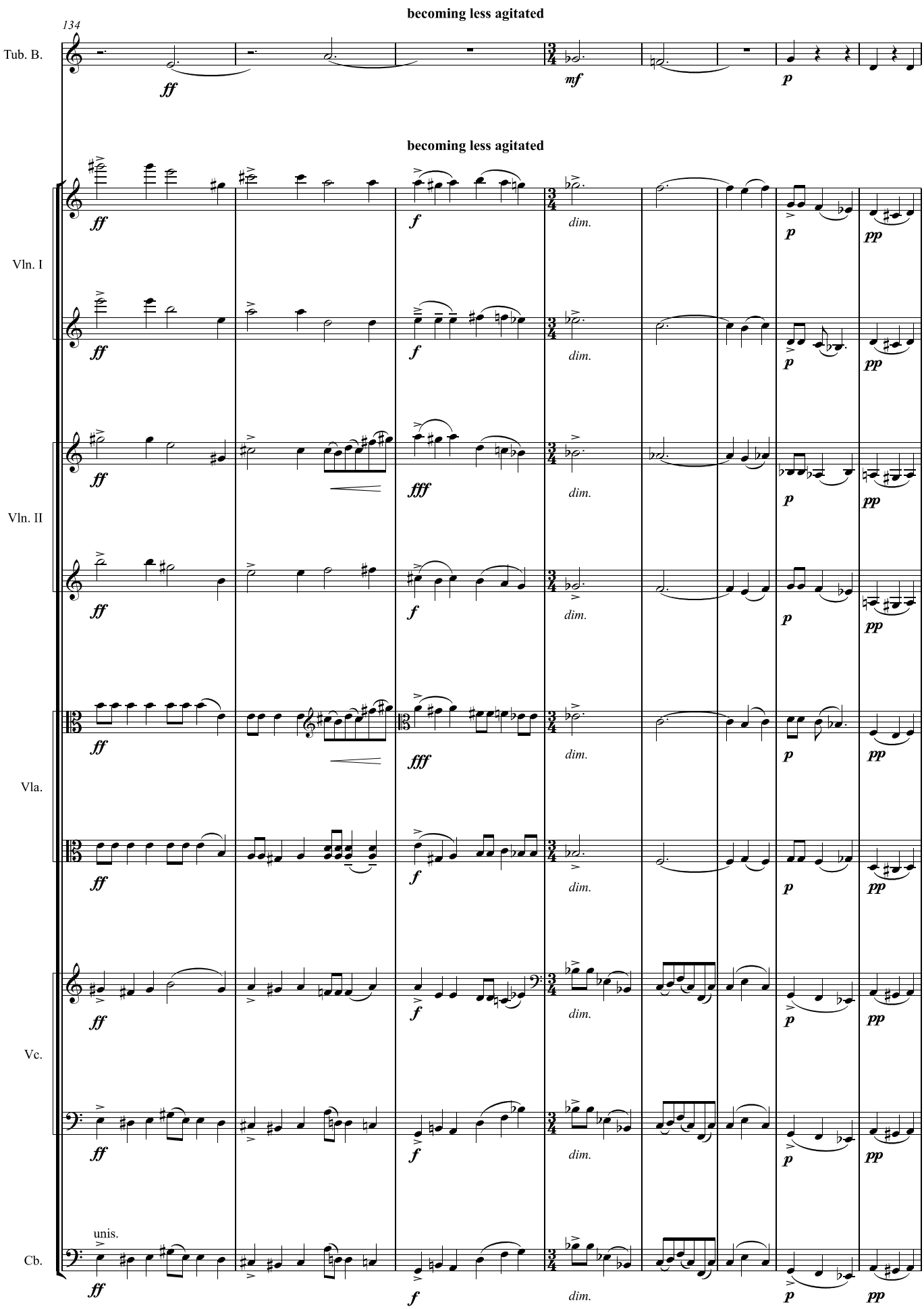
div.

unis.

arco

ff


126
Tub. B.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
div.
unis.
marcato e
con passione


becoming less agitated
134
Tub. B.
ff
mf
p
becoming less agitated
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
unis.
ff
f
fff
dim.
p
pp

142

11 very expressive

Tub. B.

11 very expressive

solo

2 soli

Vln. I

Vln. II

unis.

Vla.

solo

Vc.

pizz.

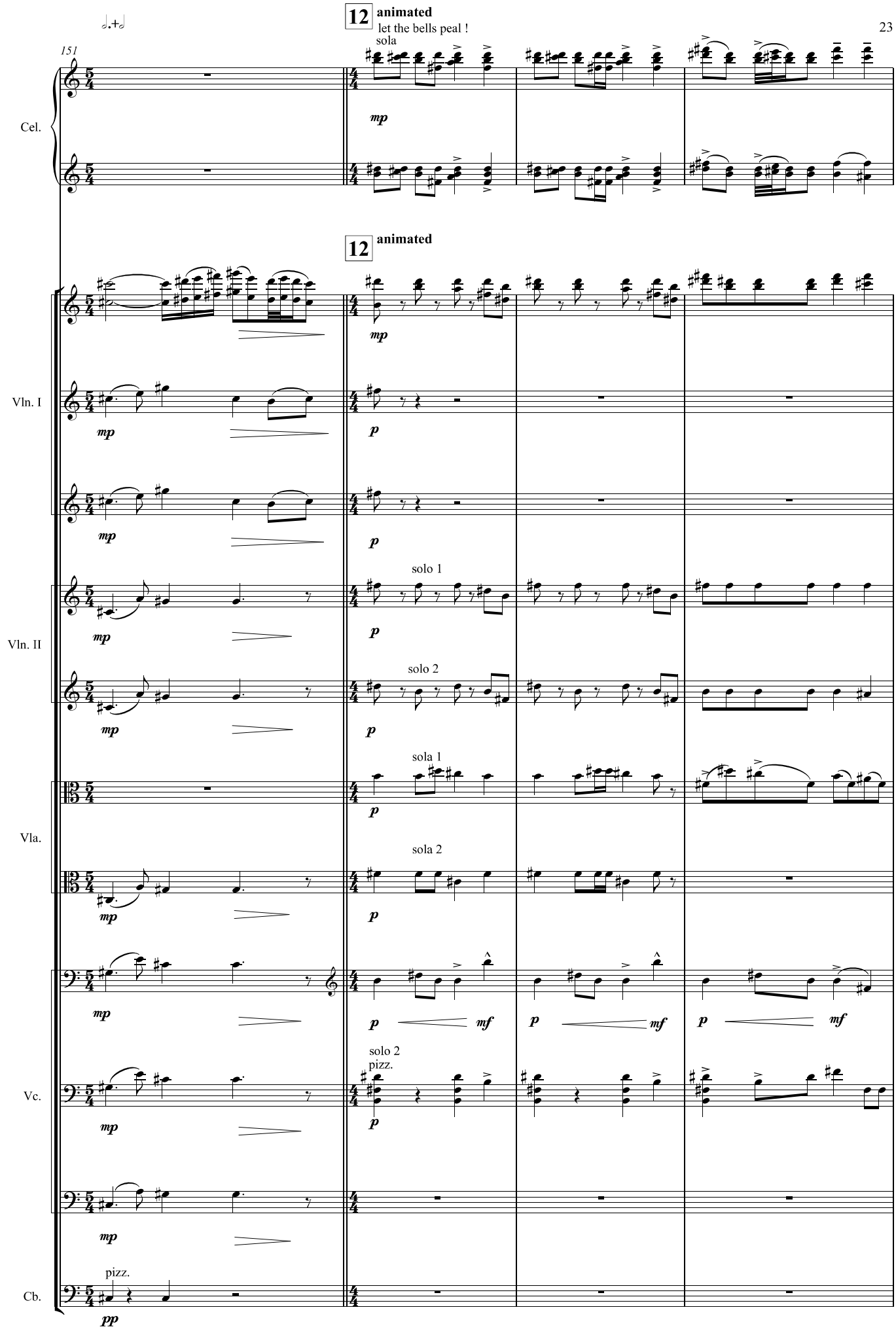
arco

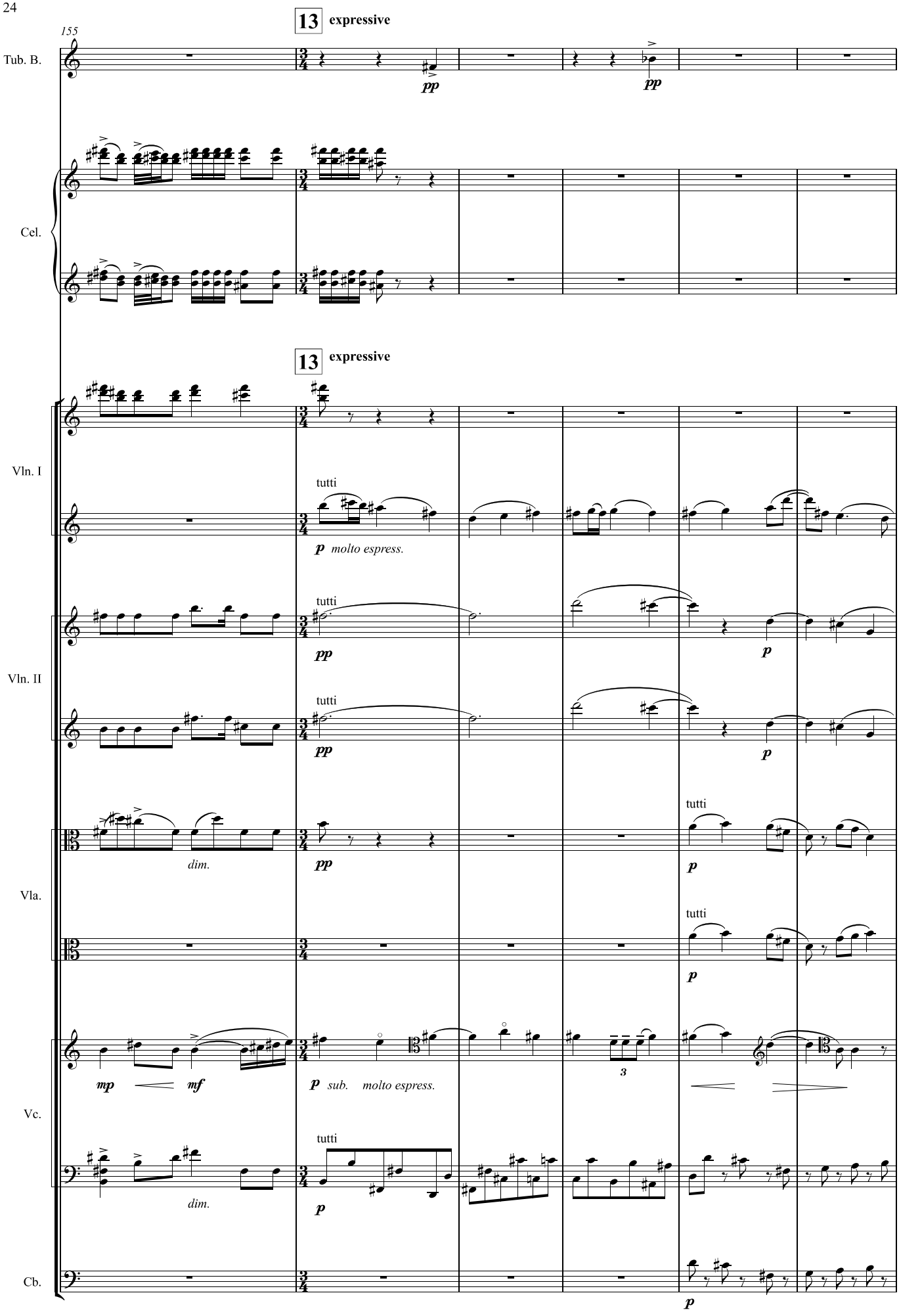
Cb.

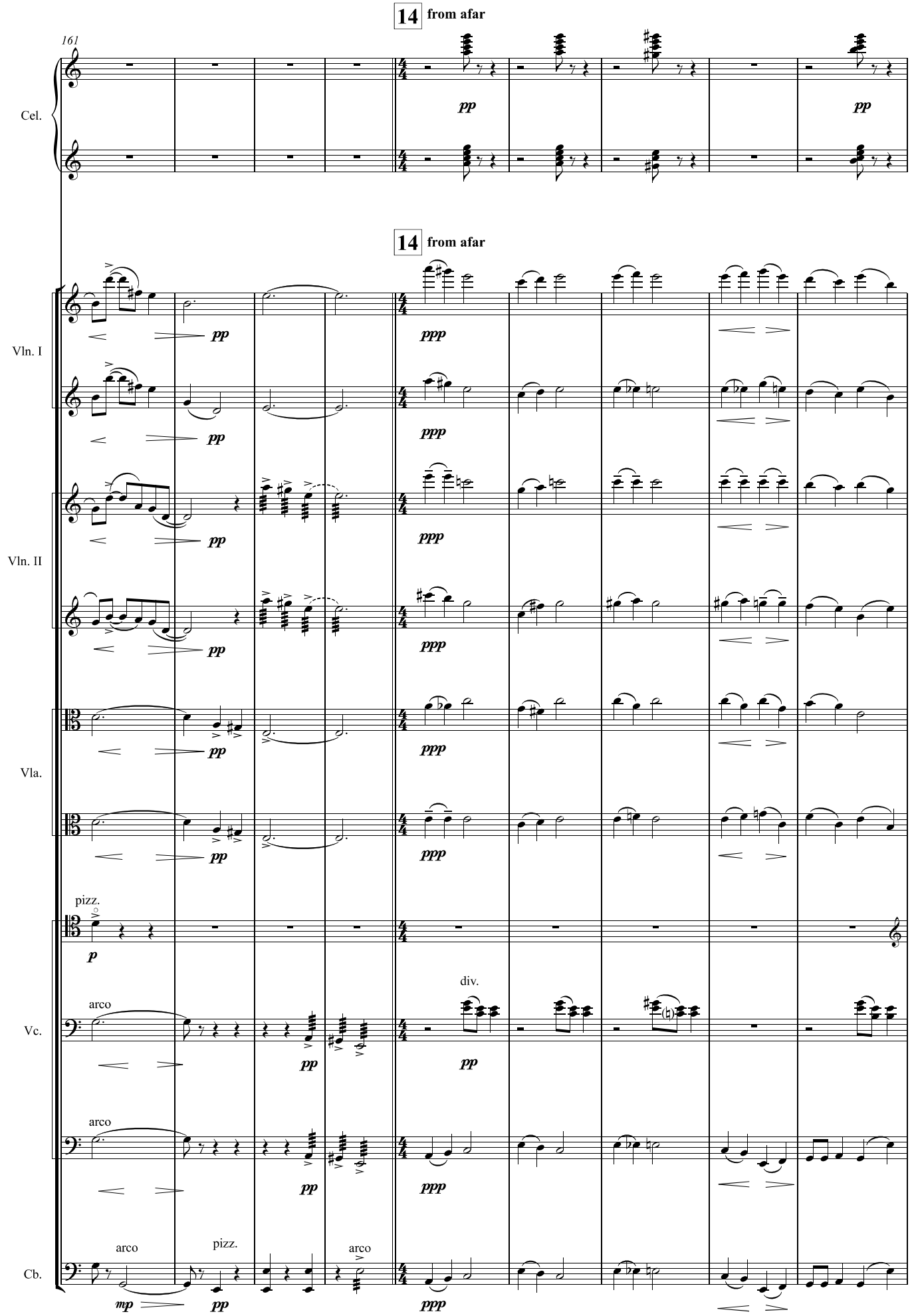
f *p* *mp* *dolce* *mf* *mp* *tragico*

p *espress.* *cresc.* *dim.* *mp* *mf* *p*

pp


151
12 animated
let the bells peal !
sola
12 animated
Cel.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
solo 1
solo 2
sola 1
sola 2
pizz.
pizz.


155
13 expressive
Tub. B.
pp
pp
Cel.
13 expressive
Vln. I
tutti
p molto espress.
Vln. II
tutti
pp
p
tutti
pp
p
Vla.
dim.
pp
tutti
p
tutti
p
Vc.
mp
mf
p sub. molto espress.
3
tutti
p
dim.
Cb.
p


14 from afar
161
Cel.
pp
pp
14 from afar
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
pp
ppp
pizz.
p
arco
div.
arco
pizz.
arco
mp
pp
ppp

less tranquil, but with expression until the end

170

Tub. B.

Cel.

less tranquil, but with expression until the end

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

solo

sul pont.

nat.

unis.

solo arco

pizz.

arco

espress. e con vibrato

molto espress.

marcato

con molto sentimento

11'40"

Composition Completed in Withington, Manchester.