Stephen F. Austin State University
SFA ScholarWorks

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

8-2022

Listen to the River: Dolores, Ophelia, and Female Resistance in Opera

Daniel Aaron Barnidge
Stephen F Austin State University, elramirezdani@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/etds

Part of the Composition Commons, Latina/o Studies Commons, Musicology Commons, Music Theory Commons, Other Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons, and the Women's Studies Commons
Tell us how this article helped you.

Repository Citation

Barnidge, Daniel Aaron, "Listen to the River: Dolores, Ophelia, and Female Resistance in Opera" (2022). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 457.
https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/etds/457

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by SFA ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of SFA ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact cdsscholarworks@sfasu.edu.

Listen to the River: Dolores, Ophelia, and Female Resistance in Opera

Creative Commons License

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License.

This thesis is available at SFA ScholarWorks: https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/etds/457

Listen to the River:

Dolores, Ophelia, and Female Resistance in Opera

by

Daniel Aaron Barnidge

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

Stephen F. Austin State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Music

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

August 2022

Listen to the River:

Dolores, Ophelia, and Female Resistance in Opera

by

Daniel Aaron Barnidge, B.F.A

APPROVED:

Dr. Stephen Lias, Thesis Director

Dr. Scott LaGraff, Committee Member

Dr. Jamie Weaver, Committee Member

Dr. Juan Urena, Committee Member

Freddie Avant, Ph.D
Interim Dean of Research and Graduate Studies

.

ABSTRACT

The Mexican folktale that my opera, *The Tragedy of La Llorona*, draws inspiration from plays on many of the same tropes historically found in female characters in opera including madness, sexuality, and lack of agency. This led to research into the portrayal of women in opera as part of my pre-compositional process and my central claim that *the music of female characters demonstrates resistance to the abuse they have historically received in opera plots*. This is demonstrated through a brief historical overview including the scholarly work of musicologists such as Susan McClary. The primary justification, however, is direct musical analysis of excerpts from three operas with prominent female characters (Desdemona, Sieglinde/Brünnhilde, Mélisande) influential to the development of my opera. The ultimate goal is to give an intimate understanding of my opera by surveying important musical and literary themes and influences before presenting the work as it stands.

.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Stephen Lias for his expert guidance and thoughtful advice throughout this process. I am by far a better musician for knowing him. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my committee members who took such sincere care in their recommendations. Additionally, I am forever indebted to Robert Sadin without whom this ambitious project would not be possible. In particular was his invaluable insight into the opera repertoire.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family for their undying support. Of special note is my Grandmother, Antonia Ramirez, for whom my opera is dedicated to and who originally told me the folktale of *La Llorona* it is based on.

.

Contents

Chapter 1 – Introduction.....1

Chapter 2 – The Development of Dolores/La Llorona 9

‘Let in, only to be let out’.....9

The Language of Water and Flowers 14

Landscape of Women in Opera.....18

Madness 23

Chapter 3 – Examples from the Repertoire.....26

Desdemona’s Willow Song.....26

Introduction to Analysis 28

Symphonic Introduction 30

Salce theme 36

Willow Song Begins.....38

Desdemona and Dolores 50

Mélisande’s Silence in Pelléas et Mélisande 51

Introducing Mélisande’s Silence 53

The Forest 58

Birdsong and Gender Role Reversal.....61

Scène de cheveux.....65

Act V and 'La vérité’ 75

Influence on The Tragedy of La Llorona 83

Sieglinde and Brünnhilde “O hehrstes Wunder!” 84

Connection to The Tragedy of La Llorona.....92

Chapter 4 – The Tragedy of La Llorona 97
Introduction 97
Relevant Harmonic/Melodic Structures 99
'Texture' sets 99
Dolores and Llorona sets 100
'Power and Control' sets 102
'River' Theme 103
Background of the Opera 104
Why an opera? 104
Two-opera arc 105
Summary of Influence from the Repertoire 106
'Conversation with History' 110
Dolores and Salome 110
'Old World' and 'New World' 117
Time and Identity 120
Time and Identity in 'The Tragedy of La Llorona' 120
Identity Crisis of Mexican-Americans 123
Mexican-Americans and Diversity in Contemporary Opera 126

Chapter 5 – Conclusion 128

Bibliography 132

Chapter 6 – The Tragedy of La Llorona (Full Opera) 137
Synopsis and Characters 138
Scene Breakdown 139
The Tragedy of La Llorona (title pages) 147
Prelude 150

Act I 171
Introduction to Dolores 171
Amani 180
Amani & Dolores (duet) 197
Francisco & Dolores (duet) 224
Ignacio, Francisco, Dolores, Amani (quartet) 251
"Bouchard Approaches" Francisco, Dolores, Amani (trio & choir) 270
"*Ignacio tempts Dolores" (dialogue)* 310
"*Ignacio tempts Dolores" UNFINISHED (choir)* 313
"*Dolores and Ignacio Dance/Catrina's Dance" (instrumental)* 320
Act II (description of narration) 355
Prelude "Piedra de Sol" (instrumental with narration) 356
Townsfolk (choir) 371
Dolores meets Isabelle (duet) 371
Dolores & Isabelle (love duet) 409
(WIP description of final scenes) 429
Dolores "La Llorona's Lullaby" 432

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.

– T.S. Eliot *Burnt Norton, Four Quartets*

Art is a conversation with history. While reading this thesis it is important to keep in mind that I am first and foremost, a composer. One who is taken with history and who sees their work as engaging in that conversation with the past. More than just representing the age I live in, my work is a consequence of history. My compositions are as much expressions of self as they are commentaries on history and, from a certain point of view, can be thought of as a research paper in its own way. However, unlike historians who make arguments about how the past was experienced, my compositions demonstrate how we experience the past. This is particularly true of my opera, *The Tragedy of La Llorona*, which is the focal point of this thesis. The following chapters revolve around my opera and are meant to give the reader a more intimate understanding of the opera and how it came about.

Therefore, my research into the history of the portrayal of female characters in opera must be seen through the lens of a composer writing an opera centered around a female protagonist (Dolores) in a story (La Llorona) that plays on familiar, even

destructive, tropes of women. It is essential to remember that, while the subject of music history is endlessly fascinating to me, my research is motivated by an attempt to garner a greater understanding my own musical voice and compositional process. It is a learning experience based in research but with targets in mind that will aid me in creating music – like a treasure hunter spelunking for precious artifacts. In this case, it is an attempt to gather material and knowledge that will aid in the development of the characters and story I am trying to tell.

To create is to engage in and add a voice to the volumes of thoughts and ideas expressed throughout history. But the past is never truly behind us, but ever present. In *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings*, Benjamin Britten expresses this notion in his setting of Lord Tennyson's poem *Nocturne*. Britten paints a picture of how the echoes of the past "…roll from to soul" with each refrain echoing the previous with subtle alterations. Britten's setting alludes to what the T.S. Eliot quote expresses; that the past flows into the river of lived time and is ever present.

One reason why this quote from *Burnt Norton* resonates so deeply with me is that it encapsulates the art of music so well. To create, especially music, is to experience being in time past, present, and future simultaneously. We project our ideas into the future and as soon as a note is played it fades into the river of memory. Music is constantly melding past, present, and future. This concept deeply informs my work in general and my opera (*The Tragedy of La Llorona*) in particular. The theme of the river is such a

powerful presence in my opera, and not just because of the role it plays in the traditional folktale that the opera is based on, but because of its metaphor for lived time and how it embodies the experience of music.

When I am writing about the past, I am trying to examine the past as present and look into how we interact with, and are affected by, the groundwork laid by our past colleagues. The end result are my compositions. Art forms never die, they simply evolve and fade into other expressions. We are all children of somebody. To deny this is to write in darkness. This is another way of saying that to understand the present and create a future, the past must be illuminated.

When I write music, it is an expression of my experience, which includes my engagement with history and how it has shaped me (often times unknowingly). A careful hearing of my opera will illuminate a through line to the past with aspirations of the future. This is, perhaps, why my thesis may differ from traditional composition theses in that, while my aim is a discussion of my opera, my methods include intensive historical research as a means of illumination and discovery in the process of creation.

I do not wish to imply that my research is haphazard or less than rigorous. Only to remind the reader that the best way to understand the material in this paper is to always relate it to my opera (most often directly relating to my protagonist Dolores). Every word I have written first began as a question posed by my opera. These questions included wrestling with the social and existential concepts of my underlying philosophical themes

of power/control and time/identity. While I juggled these abstract concepts, the more pressing question was the portrayal of women in opera. In reading this paper, I do hope that it will inspire the reader to think more deeply about some of the points raised involving the portrayal of female characters in opera as they often extend beyond the opera hall. Many paths have been left uncharted in this paper that deserve more thoughtful consideration and if, by reading this, it motivates a more thorough historical investigation into these uncharted paths, then all the better.

However, my primary goal is to better acquaint the reader with my opera, particularly my main character Dolores who very much IS the opera with other characters serving as devices for her own development. I have tried to accomplish this by laying out essential themes (literary and musical), source material, and background research that served as the soil from which the opera sprang. Perhaps most crucial to this is posing the central question of this opera and thesis: *How to demonstrate female resistance to being cast aside and abused in opera plots?*

This is the main challenge I have faced in writing this opera. The story I have chosen, the Mexican folktale *La Llorona*, uses many of the same tropes of female madness, sexuality, and lack of agency found in many opera plots. Furthermore, I am a man writing an opera about a woman who is discarded and falls into madness, a very familiar trope in opera. Addressing the portrayal of female characters in opera and

feminine resistance to being abused in plots was the most pressing issue in the development of *The Tragedy of La Llorona*.

Like previously mentioned, however, my general goal is to acquaint the reader with a more intimate understanding of the opera and where it came from. As the composer and librettist this means discussing both the music and the literary aspects of the opera. In that regard, chapter two begins by laying the groundwork that formed the initial thoughts on the narrative ideas, themes, and structures of my opera.

The chapter is divided into four parts with the first part ('Let in, only to be let out') focusing on Simon Critchley and Jamieson Webster's book *Stay, Illusion! The Hamlet Doctrine* which discusses Ophelia (who like La Llorona, drowns after suffering at the hands of men) and which served as an integral part of the initial thoughts of my opera. The second part ('The Language of Flowers') briefly touches upon the central over-arching themes of power/control and time/identity and the central metaphors of the river and flowers.

Parts three and four ('Landscape of Women in Opera' & 'Madness') of chapter two addresses the historical backdrop of female characters against which my opera, and my main character Dolores, is written. The purpose of these two sections is to familiarize the reader with well-established tropes and themes found in female characters in opera with part four focusing exclusively on that of 'feminine madness.' As it relates to my

opera and my character Dolores, it is important to familiarize oneself with these ideas in order to better understand how my own story, and characters, acknowledge and deviate from these well-established practices. The study of history illuminates what is hidden in the present. My research into the history of specific themes in opera allowed me to write my work with a clearer and more precise vision.

From the standpoint of a librettist, researching the portrayal of female characters in opera was crucial in recognizing established tropes found in storytelling to this day and uncovering important challenges and questions the subject material of my opera raised. However, it was as a composer that I found answers. Chapter three uses three excerpts that were influential in the development of my opera to show how the music of female characters demonstrates resistance to the abuse they receive in opera plots. It is in music that female characters claim agency over their state of being. These three examples (Desdemona, Sieglinde/Brünnhilde, and Mélisande) gave me historical guidance on ways to circumvent the kind of historically ingrained tropes discussed in most of chapter two, including the discussion on Ophelia and the historical background of female characters in opera, specifically the portrayal of 'feminine madness.'

The analysis of the three excerpts is a formalization of the compositional research done as a part of the process of writing my opera. In fact, this is true of the entire thesis. Many (if not all) aspects of this paper had already been or would eventually be included in my compositional notes. When I am stuck in a passage and I cannot find how to

resolve a creative problem, the first thing I do is look to my historical colleagues for guidance. The qualifying difference with this thesis is the added rigor and discipline that is required. This added level of scrutiny has only served to make me a better composer and it is a process that will accompany my work from here on.

I want to make clear to the reader that, in making the statement that these examples demonstrate 'feminine resistance,' I am not making any claims toward authorial intent. It is neither my concern nor interest whether Verdi or Debussy were trying to convey the things I have ascribed to the music. My relationship with the music and characters from these excerpts is not as artifacts, but as a living, creative thing that exists in the present. My interpretations of these excerpts are based in authentic reactions and thoughts I had during the pre-compositional stages of my opera. It is true that the initial purpose of my look into these and other operas, were as tools to guide me in my own opera. However, it is important to remember that my ideas are derived from the source material itself – the music. As a composer, the music these composers wrote is all the authorial intent I am interested in.

Finally, after spending the previous chapters addressing the historical backdrop, influence, and analysis of excerpts from the repertoire that informed my opera, chapter four discusses the opera directly. It examines the details of the musical and narrative structures as well as themes of cultural identity that underscore the entire opera. This all serves as a preamble to my opera in chapter six.

The Tragedy of La Llorona is currently a work in progress, but the research done in preparation for writing the opera has had a lasting contribution to my opera and compositional process in general. This thesis represents a fully dimensional look into the development and process behind my opera. But it is also an example of the pressing importance of engaging with history in a way that extends beyond the collection of dates and facts. Ideas are as present now as they were when they formed. In much the same way that Britten's echoes of the past "…roll from soul to soul"[1], with each reverberation slightly differing from the other, my 'echo' image is of time existing simultaneously with the past, present, and future interacting and informing one another. More than ever, I feel strongly that works of art preserve the lived history of ourselves as well as our predecessors. My opera, and this accompanying document, attempts to do just this.

---

1. *Nocturne* from *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings*.

Chapter 2 – The Development of Dolores/La Llorona

‘Let in, only to be let out’[2]

The following section explores the character Ophelia through the secondary text *Stay, Illusion! The Hamlet Doctrine*[3] as a figure that was influential to the initial thoughts on my main character Dolores and the portrayal of women in drama. It also influenced and motivated my primary assertion that regardless of their treatment in libretti, it is through music that female characters can demonstrate resistance to the abuse they receive in opera plots. The purpose of this look into the influence of Ophelia on my thinking is to contextualize all further developments and give the reader an understanding of the initial thoughts that would form my approach to the portrayal of women in my opera.

While developing the character Dolores/La Llorona, the lead character of my opera *The Tragedy of La Llorona*, I studied several primary and secondary texts on plays and operas, particularly those dealing with prominent female characters. The fact that female characters are frequently without agency in opera plots is well known. But the

---

2. (From *The Tragedy of La Llorona*, paraphrase of Ophelia’s ‘mad’ song “Let in the maid that out a maid, Never departed more.”) William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1992, 4.5.52-53.

3. Simon Critchley and Jamieson Webster, *Stay, Illusion: The Hamlet Doctrine*, New York: Pantheon Books, 2013.

impact of encountering the often-violent way women are acted upon lingers heavy when one is immersed in the repertoire with the goal of writing an original work. What I encountered, however, was that it was in the music that these characters could find their voice of resistance. Because even the most brutal treatment of women in opera plots cannot keep the listener from being mesmerized by what are often the high points of an opera. Music gives female characters a semblance of agency.

Using music as a source of feminine autonomy was a central consideration when creating *The Tragedy of La Llorona*. Chapter three will examine three specific excerpts from the repertoire that were influential in this regard.[4] But in order to have an understanding of the context of these excerpts it is vital to briefly outline core themes and texts integral to the development of my opera and its main character, Dolores. This includes examining symbolism in the *The Tragedy of La Llorona* as well as outlining the historical and scholarly landscape that contextualizes the opera. This chapter attempts to do just that.

One of the primary texts that was paramount to my initial thoughts on the opera was Simon Critchley and Jamieson Webster's book *Stay, Illusion! The Hamlet Doctrine*. Among other topics, it examines Ophelia in depth. The similarities between Ophelia and the traditional folktale of La Llorona are striking. Both begin representing innocence,

---

4. Desdemona's "Willow Song" from *Otello*, Sieglinde and Brünhilde's "O hehrstes Wunder!" from *Die Walküre*, and Mélisande from *Pelléas et Mélisande*.

youth, and beauty; both are used sexually and discarded by prominent men; both eventually go mad and drown themselves.

Ophelia is tossed around by most of the play's prominent characters and even used as bait by her own father. She is overlooked and is without volition. Not until her 'mad' song does her voice spill over into the riverbed of her death. In a play full of deceit and conniving, it is significant that it is through song that Ophelia bares the naked truths of the play as well as the truth of female sexuality and the position of women.[5]

> By Gis and by Saint Charity,
> Alack and fie for shame!
> Young men will do't, if they come to't:
> By Cock, they are to blame.
> Quoth she, Before you tumbled me,
> You promised me to wed.
> He answers
> So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
> An thou hadst not come to my bed.[6]

Perhaps she truly has lost touch with reality, but nowhere in the play do we get such an honest, scathing, and public rebuke of the lies and deception of the characters as we do with Ophelia's song.

Like so many female characters in opera that are without agency, Ophelia is acted upon. While Ophelia's song is alluded to and not composed, it is nonetheless revealing that Shakespeare used the idea of music to lay bare the 'dirty secrets' of the play.

---

5. *Stay, Illusion: The Hamlet Doctrine*, 147.

6. *Hamlet*, 4.5.56-64.

Frequently, when Shakespeare wants to express more profound commentary and reveal intense emotions he uses song. While the use of song was common in Elizabethan plays, it is Shakespeare's unorthodox use of them in his tragedies that is unique. These are moments of heightened speech used to encapsulate pivotal ideas as well as express sometimes controversial social commentary. It is illuminating that song is used, often but not always, by characters viewed as foolish or 'mad'. The previous excerpt from *Hamlet* is a good example. In it, 'mad' Ophelia lets go of all 'lady-like' restraint and lets loose how women are used sexually and discarded by men.

King Lear, *Twelfth Night*, and *Othello* are other notable examples. In *Othello*, Shakespeare uses Desdemona's "Willow Song" to give Desdemona a moment of self-reflection. In his opera, *Otello*, Verdi expands on this scene to create a moment of tremendous emotion. In all these examples, these characters 'sing' words they could not speak. The resulting consequence is that Shakespeare uses these moments to give the characters depth which grants them power that has been otherwise denied to them. Shakespeare's use of music directly relates to the central observation of this paper that, from an audience perspective, the music of female characters in opera can demonstrate a resistance to the ways in which they are abused in plots. It is through the initial examination of Ophelia that this idea began to take root.

For the reasons discussed, the connection between Ophelia in particular and female characters in opera seem both clear and strong. Both are acted upon with little

agency of their own. Both go through what French philosopher Catherine Clément called when commenting on opera, the 'ritual sacrifice of women'.[7] These observations further illuminated the need to more deeply study how female characters are portrayed both in terms of plot as well as expressed musically in the repertoire.

The character Ophelia played an immense role in developing not only Dolores/La Llorona, but the opera as a whole. This influence was twofold. First, it was to encourage me to study the portrayal of female characters in opera through the lens of critical theory as I did with Ophelia. Second, and more directly, it was to avoid having my character Dolores/La Llorona be an Ophelia — let in (to the play/opera), only to be let out.

---

7. Joseph Kerman, "Verdi and the Undoing of Women", *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 18 (2006): 21.

The Language of Water and Flowers

Since I am both the composer and librettist, in order to have a better understanding of the opera it is necessary to acquaint the reader with important narrative themes and metaphors. The previous section established the beginnings of my research and thoughts on the portrayal of women in drama as an important step in forming my own ideas. This section introduces the philosophical underpinnings of the opera. First, by introducing the integral themes of power/control and time/identity. Secondly, by introducing the two most important metaphors in the opera – flowers and the river. These abstract concepts and metaphors flow through the entire opera and work in tandem along with the portrayal of women. A brief introduction to them is necessary to familiarizing oneself with my opera.

Imagine two coins, each representing an overarching theme of this opera. Power and Control would be two sides of one coin with Time and Identity being two sides of the other. Both affect the other and are represented in what is the most prevalent and important metaphor in the opera — the river. Of course, there is the direct role the river plays in the folktale of La Llorona. After being discarded by her love, La Llorona goes to the river to drown herself and her children. She is then doomed to wander, wailing in search of her children as she takes unsuspecting victims to their watery grave.

The opera, however, does not focus so much on this, although there are several references to this watery fate. The main use of the river is as a metaphor representing the two thematic 'coins' of the opera — Power/Control and Time/Identity. The first is the idea of the river as a source of great power and the need to learn the limits of control in order to flow with the river. Early in the opera, the Priestess warns Dolores of the dangers of power and control and how they will drown you if not careful. Too much control and the river's power escapes you; not enough then its power can overwhelm you.[8]

The idea of Time/Identity is represented by the symbolism of the river as a journey through life that is in a constant state of becoming. The symbolic use of the river representing the ontological idea of 'becoming' has a connection with Hamlet's 'To be, or not to be' soliloquy but was actually inspired by the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus.[9] He is perhaps best known for his quote "You could not step twice into the same river; for other waters are ever flowing on to you." The Priestess's advice to

---

8. While not strictly based on the Los Angeles River, there is a general nod to how the river dried up after creating a complex concrete channelization system. This represents the dangers of exerting too much control over the environment rather than working with the natural surroundings.

9. Luciano Berio's author's note to Sinfonia was another inspiration "…the image which comes most spontaneously to my mind is that of a river flowing through a constantly changing landscape…"

Dolores of 'listen to the River' serves as a guiding principle to light her path. In her duet with Dolores she sings, "Sabemos lo que somos, per no lo que podemos ser en devenir."[10]

Dolores is seduced by these titanic forces and, at times, even sings of wanting to be overwhelmed by them. When she does, she uses the imagery of the river washing over her. Dolores's journey begins with her searching and yearning for more. Cosmic, even supernatural forces threaten to tear her apart as her inner turmoil is not reflected in the outer world. She is seduced by power and control and tries to bend the world to herself, but it escapes her. She relinquishes all control to the supernatural entity La Llorona in return for pure power. She becomes unrooted and loses contact with herself and the surface through death and disfigured transfiguration. Her journey begins with searching and yearning and ends with being lost and wandering.

◆

After the river, flowers are the second most important metaphor and play an important role with Dolores. First, there is the clear connection with Ophelia's 'mad song' as well as the symbolism of flowers during Shakespeare's time. Additionally, flowers have also long been popularly associated with femininity and romantic love. In her duet with Francisco as well as with Isabelle, Dolores admires the flowers in her garden and, like Ophelia, the flowers she sings of have metaphorical significance.

---

10. "We know what we are, but not what we can be in becoming"

In the vital duet between Dolores and her spiritual leader, the Priestess, she is compared to a moonflower that blossoms at night but retracts under the brightness of the sun. This reflects Dolores's desire to blossom but, as she puts it, "why do I wilt when seen?" Dolores, however, is advised by the Priestess to be wary of the example of flowers and follow that of leaves which change with the seasons.

> Es mejor ser una hoja
> cuya belleza (se) transforma,
> que una flor disimulada.[11]

The Priestess warns Dolores of the path of shattered innocence and decomposing memory/time by referencing both daisies, associated with innocence, and rosemary, associated with both remembrance and funerals. In the duet between her and Francisco she foreshadows her own death by mentioning Adelfa, the poisonous flower she will eventually consume. As far as the connection between romantic love and flowers, Dolores says, as if warning the audience directly, "El amor huele a muerte" (*love smells of death*).[12]

---

11. Daniel Aaron Ramirez, "Act I, scene 1" in *The Tragedy of La Llorona*, 2020: 58-59. Translation of the Priestess's words: "It is better to be a leaf whose beauty transforms, than a dissimulating flower".

12. Georges Bataille, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings*, 1927-1935, trans. Allan Stoekl, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985, 12-13, quoted in Simon Critchley and Jamieson Webster, *Stay, Illusion: The Hamlet Doctrine*, New York: Pantheon Books, (2013): 149-150.

Landscape of Women in Opera

The choices I have made in my opera in regards to the portrayal of feminine sexuality, madness, and overall agency are directly related to the historical portrayal of female characters in opera. This is why it is vital to have an understanding of the historical framework of the portrayal of women in opera. Only by understanding this will the challenges that my story presented have any deep meaning. Furthermore, the impact of the three examples in chapter three will only have significance with an understanding of the environment from which they were written. This section lays out that historical groundwork with research that was critical in forming my own approach to telling the story of La Llorona.

The observation that female characters are often horribly and slowly abused in opera plots is by no means a novel one. But this observation becomes critically important to investigate in the context of *The Tragedy of La Llorona*. That context being me, a man, writing an opera centered around a female protagonist (Dolores) who goes 'mad' after being 'ritually sacrificed' by a male character (Ignacio) in a prominent position in order to further his career. Additionally, the traditional telling of the La Llorona plays into tropes of the jilted woman and 'female madness' that I found unsatisfying for the story I wished to tell. The way the character of Dolores/La Llorona is written, therefore,

acknowledges yet avoids common tropes on women like that of 'female madness' found in operas such as *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Three questions seem important to address. First, what are some of the common tropes in the repertoire as it relates to my opera? Second, what are some of the ways these tropes are expressed insofar as it relates to the development of *The Tragedy of La Llorona*. Lastly, is there a common thread between the majority of female characters in the repertoire?

One common trope, and the most influential in *La Llorona*, is that of female sacrifice. This is evident throughout the repertoire in multiple variations. For example, in *The Flying Dutchman*, Senta's self-sacrifice redeems the Dutchman and reflects her faithful love. On the other hand, in *Luisa Miller*, Luisa sacrifices herself to save her father by agreeing to accept the false charges of unfaithfulness. In *Lucia di Lammermoor* Lucia's hand in marriage, and essentially her body, are traded to save her brother from financial ruin.[13] Violetta in *La Traviata* chooses to end the only true love she had to spare her lover's family's bourgeois sensibilities the shame of being associated with a courtesan.

Class differences are an important theme in late 18th- and 19th-century operas like *La Traviata*. This theme, while not focused exclusively on women, is still important to the development of the relationship between the characters Dolores and Ignacio. One

13. Contrast this with Dolores willingly marrying Ignacio for her own social mobility in order to achieve her goals. Dolores and Ignacio's marriage of convenience is mutually beneficial and they go into their agreement with eyes wide open.

can find many examples in the repertoire of Ignacio's eventual favoring of the aristocratic Spaniard Isabelle to the peasant mestiza Dolores. For example, in *Luisa Miller* Count Walter is incensed at his son's love for the commoner Luisa and connives to end the relationship in favor of the Duchess Federica.

More specifically to Dolores, however, particularly in terms of sub-text is how in *La Traviata*, Germont pleads with Violetta to break off her relationship with his son Alfredo in order to save the family's reputation and his daughter's now-precarious engagement. Here we see the clash of the sensibilities of social classes and the issue of feminine sexuality and independence. In the end Violetta, like Dolores, cannot escape her time or identity.

Another frequented trope that has already been touched upon in the previous examples, and often the catalyst for the sacrifice of women, is that of female sexuality. This could be the sexual excess and seductions of Carmen, Salome, or Lulu — objects of desire who pay a horrible price for so openly expressing their sexuality. While Dolores does not fit this mold of the *femme fatale*, she is an object of desire who several characters attempt either to tame, control, use, deceive, or discard. Francisco tries to contain and possess Dolores by idolizing her. Ignacio seemingly gives Dolores a platform only to 'disappear her' as if she never existed once his use for her is over. And Isabelle most cruelly gives Dolores hope of love only to betray her. While Isabelle does regret her

deception, the damage is done, and Dolores ends up feeling foolish for believing there was a place for them to exist in this world.

One of the most serious transgressions in the repertoire, however, is sexual betrayal and, as Desdemona demonstrates in *Otello*, even the hint or perception of sexual betrayal can doom a woman. She is falsely accused of infidelity and has a foreboding of her imminent death. Yet despite her innocence, she seemingly resigns herself to her fate. This charge of unfaithfulness is what Ignacio uses to blackmail Dolores. When Dolores calls his bluff, Ignacio exposes her relationship with Isabelle as well as Isabelle's collusion.

Perceived sexual betrayal, the excessive expression of sexuality, or even differences in class structure as they pertain to women are the cause of the demise or self-sacrifice, even if noble, of many female characters in the repertoire. Dolores, however, is unmatched in ability and imagination and only lacks the stage to display her talents and pursue her ambitions. It is the inability to express herself that ultimately precipitates her fall. Or rather, it is realizing that no platform exists for her expression, sexual or otherwise.

In contrast to many of the characters discussed, Dolores does not engage in the kind of self-sacrifice of a Violetta, Senta, or Luisa. She likewise does not allow anyone to take her fate from her like Carmen, Salome, or Lulu. Nor does she resign herself to the peaceful acceptance of being discarded like Desdemona. One could make the connection

with Lucia, who is forced into a situation that robs her of agency and spirals her into madness and murder. Only with Dolores, it is not madness, but calculated rage and a deliberate decision to take control and punish the society that has denied her existence even if it means the loss of her own soul. In essence, Dolores sacrifices herself not for others, but for herself.

It is important in contextualizing *La Llorona* to acknowledge the common themes of female characters in the repertoire. Particularly female sacrifice but also female sexuality and class structure as related to women. That said, it is perhaps more essential to point out a common thread that unites the vast majority of female characters. That is that they are acted upon, often cruelly, with little agency of their own before being sacrificed, at times quite viciously.

Music, however, is a medium that throws a wrench into the portrayal of women as helpless victims that are acted upon. Moments of peak tragedy that represent the pinnacle of abuse of female characters are also moments that represent the pinnacle of an opera, or as Susan McClary puts it, "the glory of the composition".[14] In the case of Ophelia, one could easily imagine a composer making her song the high point of *Hamlet* and not the famous "To be, or not to be" soliloquy.

---

14. Susan McClary, "Excess and Frame," in *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (2002): 81.

Madness

While it it is true this opera tries to avoid this particular trope of the 'madwoman,' it would be a mistake to not briefly touch upon this subject if for no other reason than to demonstrate the contrast between the standard repertoire and this opera. The headline of the traditional folktale of La Llorona could easily be, "Jilted Woman Goes Mad!" To not give a general background of the scholarly literature on the subject would be to ignore how this opera approaches a key plot point, particularly for those familiar with the story.

The trope of the madwoman is one of the most recycled dramatic subjects in opera. During the course of writing *The Tragedy of La Llorona*, the focus on madness, became less and less relevant to the point where it almost completely disappeared. In this opera, as opposed to the traditional folktale, Dolores's transformation into La Llorona is less a result of a fall into madness and despair but more of an invocation of the ghostly spirit born out of rage to exact, what she sings as, her 'immortal revenge.'

McClary, citing Elaine Showalter's *The Female Malady*, explains how madness, particularly in the 19th century, came to be thought of as a "peculiar female malady – usually as a manifestation of excess feminine sexuality." Furthermore, she demonstrates the growing symbiotic relationship between the burgeoning 'science' of psychiatry and

art in bourgeois society.[15] That is, the more science instructed society that madness was the result of sexual excess the more artists reflected this in paintings such as Pierre Andre Brouillet's *A Clinical Lesson at the Salpêtrière* (fig. 1).

Fig. 1 – *A Clinical Lesson at the Salpêtrière* by Pierre Andre Brouillet

Scholars such as Joan Busfield, however, have pushed back against the idea presented by Showalter and others that madness was considered exclusively or even primarily as feminine in the 19th century.[16] Busfield, however, does recognize and gives credence to the idea of the 'female malady', only not to the extent as others. What is plain to observe is that in the world of opera, the representation of madness was almost

---

15. McClary, "Excess and Frame," 80-86.

16. Joan Busfield, "The Female Malady? Men, Women, and Madness in Nineteenth Century Britain," *Sociology* 28, no. 1 (1994): 259–77. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42855327.

exclusively at the expense of women. At the very least, it can be agreed that the most successful operas within the 'mad scene' genre are those sung by a female character. A sample of some of the most well-known examples demonstrates this: Elettra in *Idomoneo*, Elvira in *I Puritani*, Anna in *Anna Bolena*, Anina in *La* Sonnambula, Strauss's *Salome* and *Elektra*, and of course the most lauded of mad scenes Lucia in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

This brief overview of the scholarly literature on the subject is not meant to lead into an in-depth discussion of female madness but to demonstrate the environment from which *The Tragedy of La Llorona* tries to steer clear from. It was imperative to acknowledge the tradition from which my opera springs because, as the librettist and composer, there is the need to be self-aware of any unwanted tropes I may fall into. Chapter two will look at three very different examples that feature prominent female characters that were also influential to the *The Tragedy of La Llorona*. Desdemona from *Otello* represents female self-awareness and will focus on a specific aria. Mélisande from *Pelléas et Mélisande* represents an expression of trauma and the power of hidden truth. It will be a more general overview of the musical setting of her character. And finally, Sieglinde from *Die Walküre* represents the triumphant renewing of the world by looking at how one single moment can impact the portrayal of a female character through the course of an opera. These selections reflect how this opera, as many others, engages in a metaphorical conversation with history.

Chapter 3 – Examples from the Repertoire

Desdemona's Willow Song

The following three examples from the repertoire serve to demonstrate, in different ways, how the music of female characters gives them an agency and power otherwise not represented in the libretto. They also highlight shared character traits and musical expressions that were influential to *The Tragedy of La Llorona*, specifically the character Dolores. The first of these examples is Desdemona's 'Willow Song' from Act IV of Verdi's *Otello*. In order to understand the significance of this aria within the context of the opera it is necessary to establish the ways in which Desdemona is characterized and acted upon in the libretto. Only then will the depth of feeling expressed in this aria be fully illuminated.

Desdemona is a brave and fiercely independent woman. She is the daughter of a prominent Senator, she stands her ground and marries the moor Otello in the face of a deeply racist and xenophobic Venetian society. She is practically disowned by her father only to be accused of infidelity and killed by the man she sacrificed so much for. In this light it can be easy to view Desdemona as a helpless, even two-dimensional, victim who is simply young and naïve. This is particularly true in the original play. Verdi's opera,

however, is interesting in how it portrays Desdemona as more than a victim, but as a deeply human character. This is why Desdemona's 'Willow Song' is such an intriguing model for how to represent a sense of loneliness, inner turmoil, and self-awareness of one's fate.

It is difficult to think of a more clear example of a female character being acted upon. While we do get glimpses into Desdemona's character, she clearly used as a plot device. One could point to her love duet with Otello as an example of filling out Desdemona's character, but this duet has more to do with the deep bonds of love between her and Otello as opposed to giving individual depth to her as a separate individual. In this regard, Desdemona and Otello share a quality of being seen through the eyes of others and not as fully fledged characters, except of course, in the love duet which remains one of the most beautiful and sincere passages of love in the repertoire.

> Ed io t'amavo per le tue sventure e tu m'amavi per la mia pietà.
>
> I loved you for your misfortunes, you loved me for my pity.

An example of Desdemona's two-dimensional representation is how in Act I Cassio elevates her on a pedestal as an example of the ideal of the virtuous woman as he describes her purity. She is an observed object. Then, in Act II Jago speaks of Desdemona's sexual nature in order to stir up images in Otello's mind of the duplicitous nature of women. So convincing is Jago's manipulation that Otello goes so far to call her a "common courtesan" (essentially a prostitute) in Act III:

Che? non sei forse una vil cortigiana?	What? Are you not a common courtesan?

And then again a moment later:

Vi credea (perdonate se il mio pensiero è fello) quella vil cortigian che è la sposa d'Otello.	I took you (forgive me if my thought displeases you) for that common courtesan that married with Othello.

So she is a saint on one hand and a manipulative whore on the other.

However, Desdemona is neither saint nor duplicitous sexual creature but, rather, deeply human. She is independent, courageous, determined, and fiercely loyal. All traits which could be used to describe Otello. However, with Desdemona they are used to play on Otello's insecurities. The 'willow song' aria expresses that, despite being acted upon throughout the opera, Desdemona is a multi-dimensional character and not just a victim.

Introduction to Analysis

This is one of the most sophisticated examples of capturing the nuanced feelings of a woman in despair. The form, orchestration, harmonic language and most importantly, the emotional structure of the piece expertly reflects Desdemona's internal drama and the true tragedy of the situation. Verdi's presentation of Desdemona's strife is so real the veil of theatre is temporarily lifted.

Verdi captures the emptiness of grief and Desdemona's growing despair by juxtaposing contrasting section using the techniques of phrase repetition, interruption,

and fragmentation; sophisticated orchestration and agitation of accompaniment. The orchestration and harmony goes from the simplicity of a folk song (for that is what Desdemona is remembering) to more sophisticated sounds that capture the intricacies of human emotion. It is an expression of deep sorrow and a heartbreaking self-awareness of how alone she is. With this piece we see Desdemona through her own experience and not through the eyes of others.

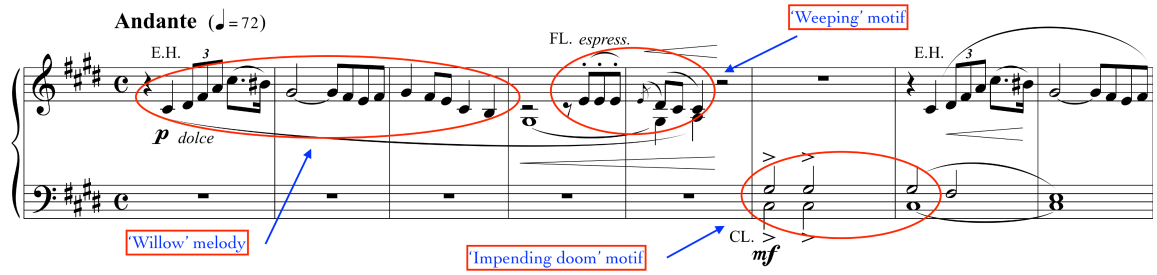
All day Desdemona has been unable to stop thinking of the 'willow' song her mother sang to her as a child. It is about Barbara, a young and unfortunate handmaiden who loves her man deeply despite his scorn for her. Desdemona uses the song as a way to express her own sorrow. In a state of reminiscence, she drifts in and out of memory. One moment singing broken fragments of the song and the next expressing her grief by way of commenting on poor Barbara's story all while also doing the mundane actions of preparing for bed.

The power of this aria is derived from how Verdi uses the aforementioned techniques to create a dramatic arc that builds on each section. This creates an emotional structure that elevates this aria from a beautiful song to a revealing character study. For this reason it is beneficial to identify key musical phrases and how they are used to create this structure. For the most part, it will be necessary to follow the piece chronologically while attempting to avoid the pedantic description of music through prose.

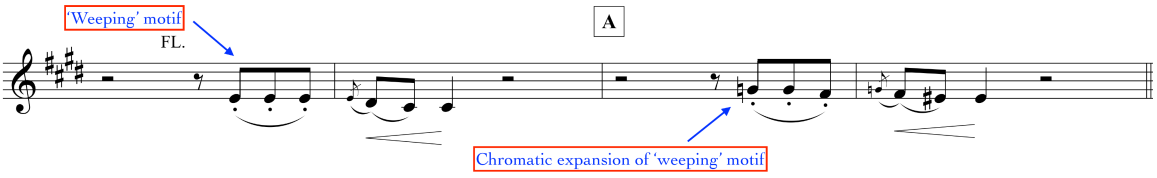
Symphonic Introduction

The piece begins with an extended symphonic introduction. Verdi uses that loneliest of instruments, the English horn, to represent Desdemona's melancholy and solitude with the plaintive 'willow' melody (ex. 1). It is answered by descending 'weeping' flutes before insistent clarinets end the passage with repeating notes as if representing the 'impending doom' of fate. After these opening six bars the 'willow' melody returns and is answered by a chromatic expansion of the 'weeping' motif which foreshadows an even more developed chromatic and lyrical expansion to come (ex. 2).

Ex. 1 – 'willow' melody, 'weeping' response, and 'impending doom' motif (m. 1-8)

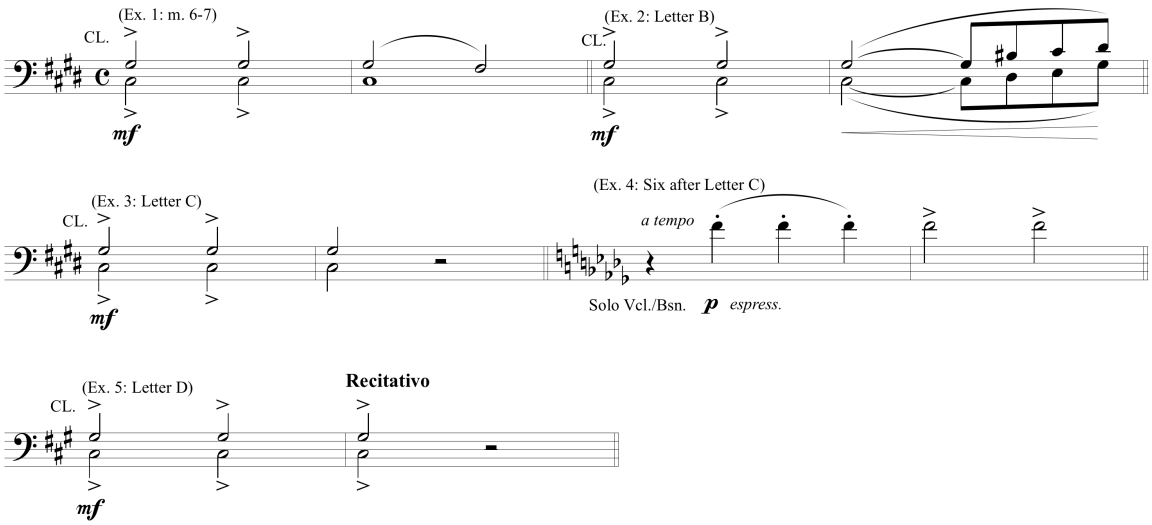


Ex. 2 – Initial chromatic expansion of 'weeping' sound (m. 10-13)



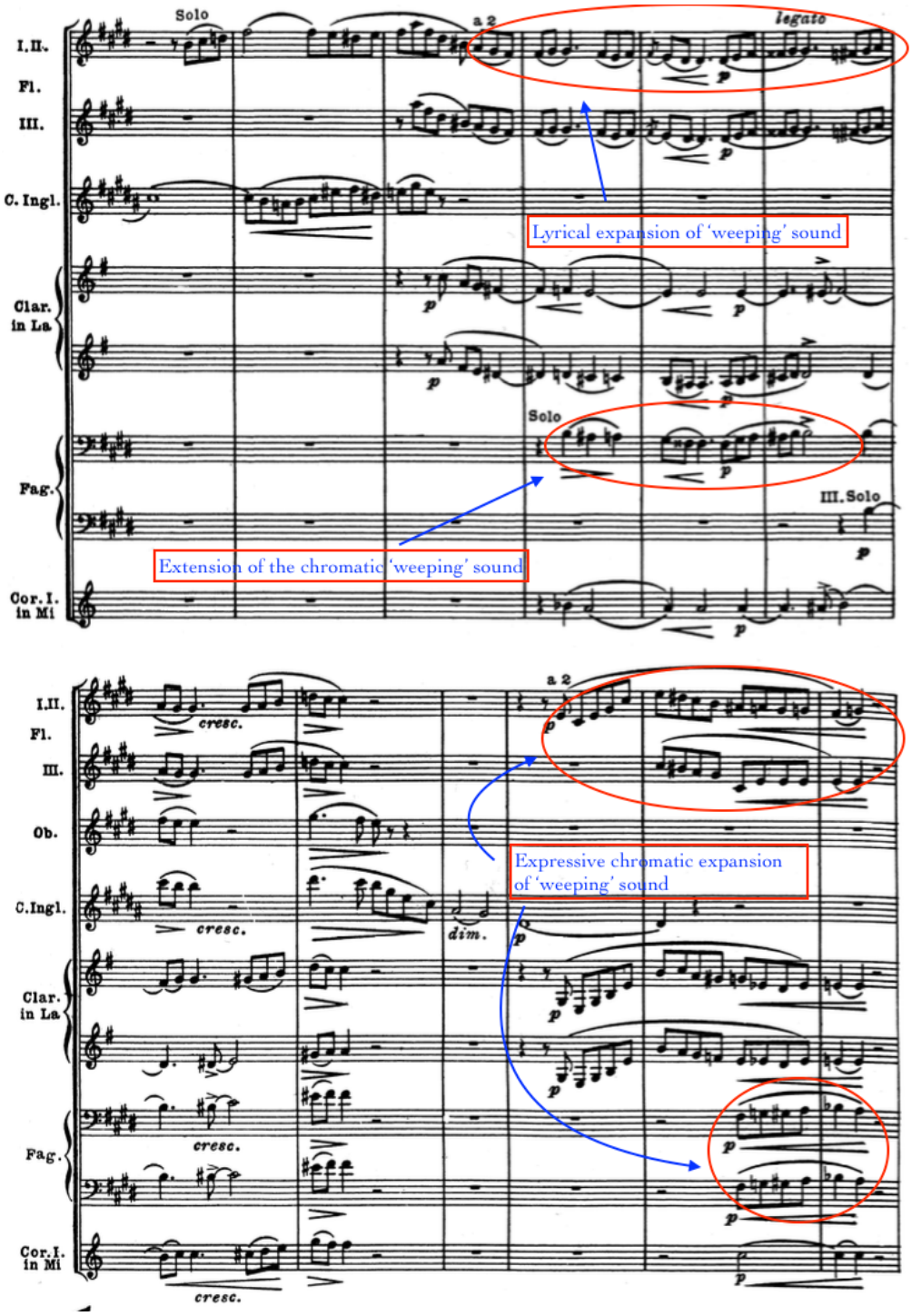
The “impending doom” motif at the beginning is important as it serves to establish a pattern of resetting or interrupting the music. It occurs no less than five times in the introduction of the piece before the ‘willow’ song portion of the aria properly begins (ex. 3). Other devices and motives are used to interrupt or reset the music after the introduction, but this motif occurs crucially once more just before the heartbreaking climax of the piece, as if fate is calling once more before the end. This is an early example of how Verdi uses the repetition of a theme/motive to reset the music to create dramatic form. In other words, no matter the chromatic or lyrical attempts to escape (‘willow’ melody; expansion of ‘weeping’ theme), Desdemona is trapped and returns to this place of resignation as the music continually resets in a way that this ‘impending doom’ motif has established.

Ex. 3 – Five examples of “impending doom” theme in the introduction.



The introduction continues, expanding the ‘weeping’ flute motif by lyrically extending it and adding instruments in an interplay of counterpoint that becomes increasingly chromatic and expressive (ex. 4).

Ex. 4 – Expansion of initial ‘weeping’ flute motif (Two bars after Letter A to Letter B)



This appropriately captures the imagery of the weeping willow and the melancholy they are known for. Verdi treats phrases (like the opening phrase) as fragments that are transformed and/or juxtaposed in ways that become increasingly intense. It's as if these themes are emotional *objet d'arts* floating through Desdemona's head, becoming more insistent and agitated until she overflows with emotion at the climax.

Desdemona joins the introduction and quickly arrives at an arioso passage. This is the first vocal expression of pathos as she asks to be buried in her wedding sheets should she die. This culminates in the expressive line, "Son mesta tanto, tanto."[17] This is important for two reasons. The first is that this expressive passage is brief and quickly falls into quietness.[18] This fits the emotional structure Verdi is building which relies on juxtaposing passages of alternating emotion. The second, and more interesting, is how Verdi scores this brief passage.

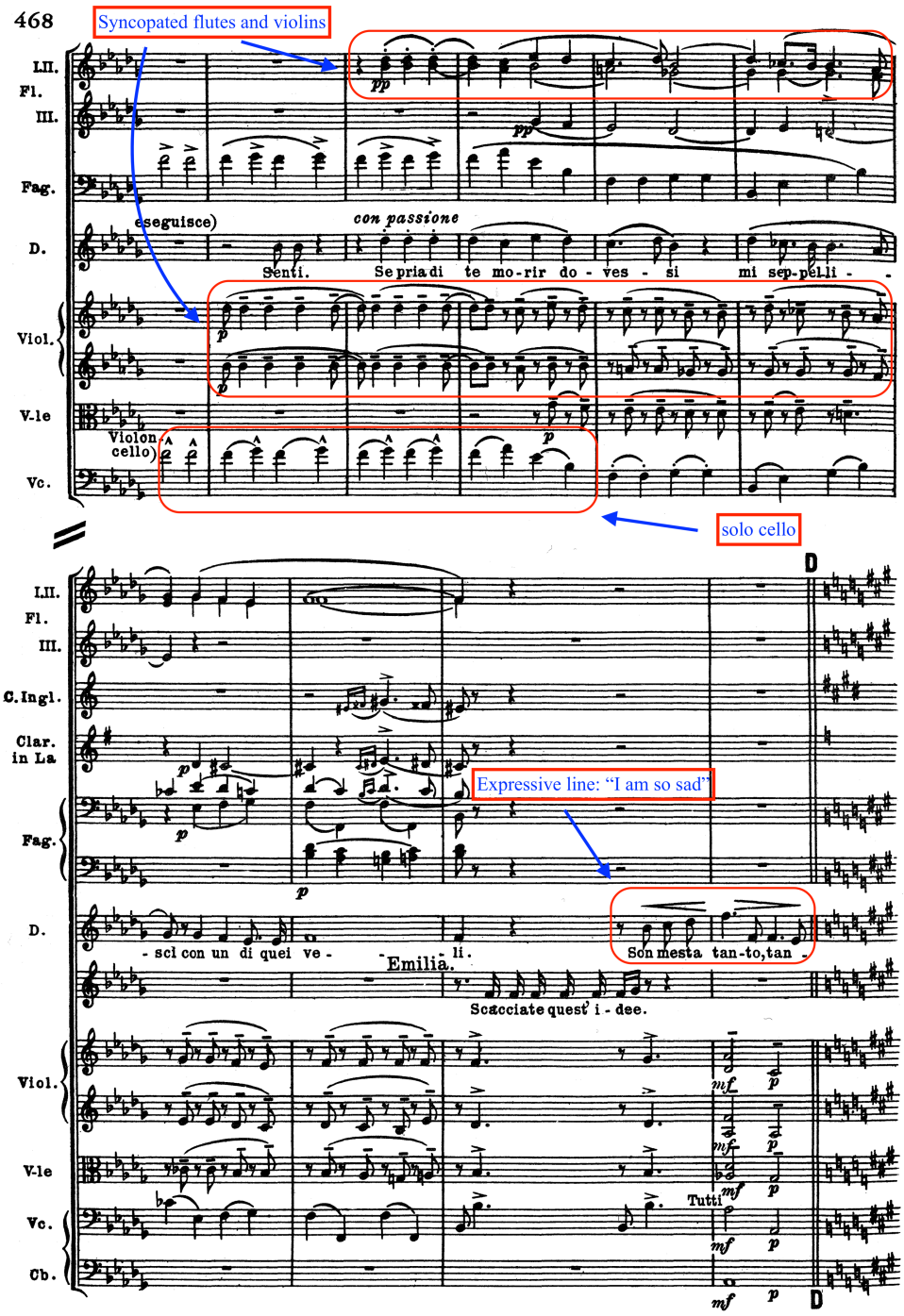
The intimate choice of beginning with solo cello is revealing. Verdi often uses solo cello, however, when he does it is almost always in broad melodic passages, as in Act IV of *Don Carlos*, and not supporting the voice as it is here. Desdemona's emotions are intimate and not performative. The delicate nature of her feelings can also be heard in the syncopated quiver between violins and flutes adds to this texture (ex. 5).

---

17. "I am so sad"

18. The contrast of pathos and quietness is heightened by the score indication directly following the expressive passage for Desdemona to sit mechanically in front of her mirror ("sedendo macchinalmente davanti allo specchio").

Ex. 5 – Example of intimate chamber like orchestration (measure 43 - Letter D)



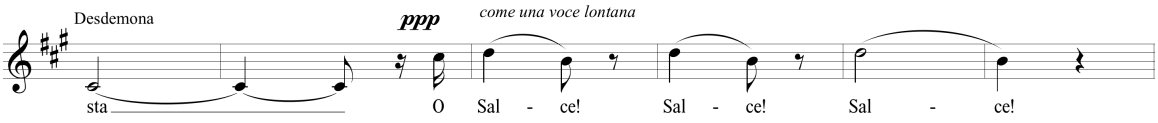
The intimate chamber-like orchestration permits Desdemona to express her deep and reflective emotions. This tone and quality of orchestral color is generally maintained throughout the piece until the climax, which is why Desdemona's dramatic farewell to Emilia, supported by full orchestra, lands so powerfully.

Salce theme

Thus far, three important musical characters have been identified including the 'willow' melody, 'weeping' theme, and 'impending doom' theme. Verdi has introduced techniques such as chromatic and lyrical expansion; phrase fragmentation, repetition and interruption; and has established an intimate orchestration style to create a refined emotional environment of gradations. Already, before the aria has properly begun, Desdemona has more depth of character than what is represented in the libretto. However, perhaps the most memorable thematic fragment is the 'salce' motive.

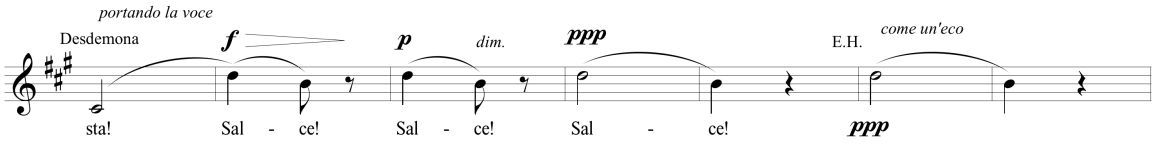
After the introduction Desdemona sings the line four times, each one nakedly exposed without accompaniment. Verdi varies the repetition of his motive, as he does frequently in this piece, to highlight qualities such as expressive defiance, loneliness, and distance. The first time, 'salce' is sung pensively and distant. (Ex. 6).

Ex. 6 – First sung *salce* motive sung like a distant memory.



The second *salce*, however, is preceded by two bars of the slightest agitation in the orchestra that leads to an expressive leap of a ninth at *forte* only to diminuendo. This statement is full of pathos, even defiance, only to fade into resignation. Desdemona's resignation is heightened by the echoing of the English horn which sounds as distant as her memory of Barbara's willow song (ex. 7).

Ex. 7 – Second sung *salce* motive showing emotion before becoming more distant.



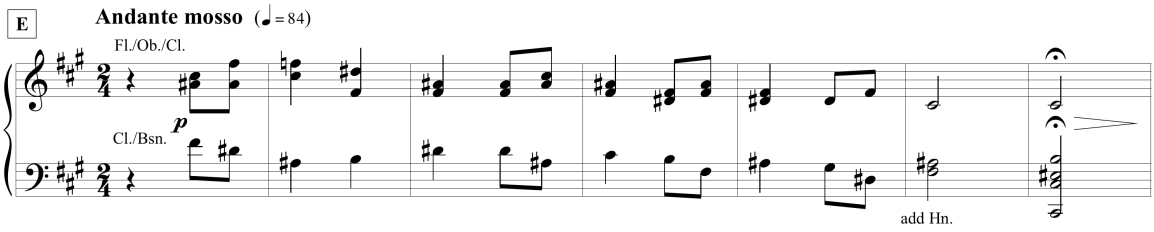
The third statement of 'salce' is similar the second, only intensified, while the final statement reverts back to the delicateness of the first. Beyond the dramatic variation of the versions, what is important to the emotional structure of the aria is that Verdi uses this line just how he has used other thematic fragments such as the 'impending doom' theme. That is, he uses it to interrupt the flow of emotion. Once again, no matter how the music changes key or flows with expressive lines, Desdemona always returns to this

place of loneliness. This gives Desdemona's character such incredible depth and self-awareness that a reading of the libretto would not fully express. The music shows resistance to having the character unceremoniously tossed aside in the plot.

Willow Song Begins

The song begins in earnest with a seven-bar woodwind phrase in F# major, labeled here as the 'memories of happier days' phrase (ex. 8). The sing-song quality of this phrase as well as the major key (in an aria largely in minor) marks this as the most contrasting phrase in the piece. As the aria progresses, this section continues the established stop-start pattern by being another touchstone that 'resets' the music.

Ex. 8 – 'Memories of happier days' phrase

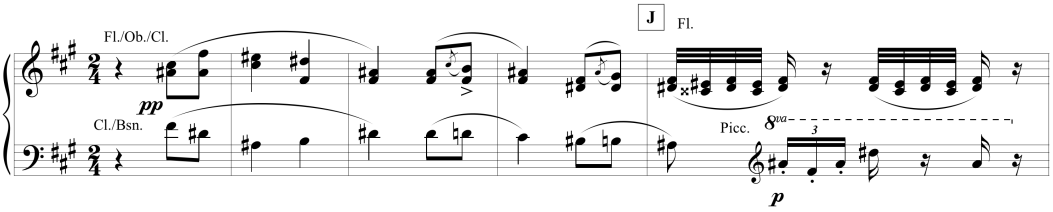


This phrase, repeated five times, acts as a launching pad into each of Desdemona's variations of the song. While the second statement mirrors the first, compare how Verdi develops the remaining three versions to match the growing agitation and emotion of the song. The final version extends the phrase with sustained chords to provide the tension over which Desdemona sings her initial farewell to Emilia (ex. 9.1 -

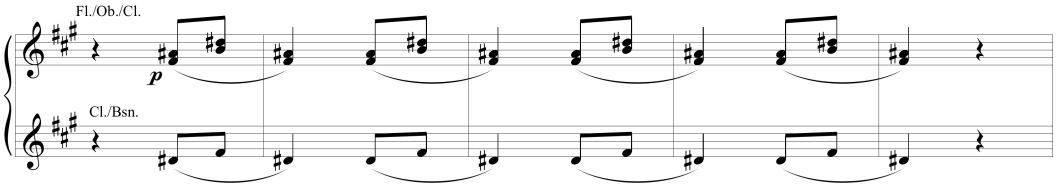
9.3). Contrasts like these are important as they highlight Desdemona's growing anxiety. Otherwise the song would be a straightforward rush to a climax. This is another example of how the aria expands the depth of the character.

Variations of 'Memories of Happier Days' theme

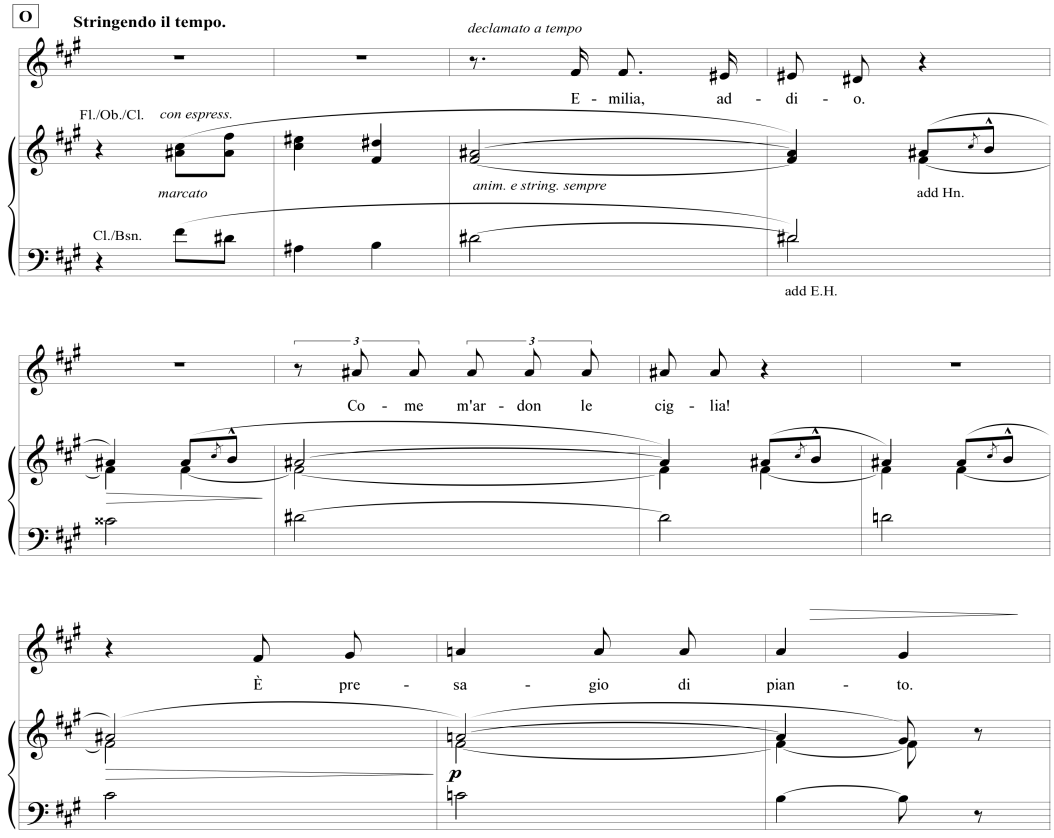
Ex. 9.1 – Truncated phrase with altered ending (3rd variation)



Ex. 9.2 – Repeated fragmented phrase (4th variation)



Ex. 9.3 – Extended and altered phrase with recitative (5th variation)

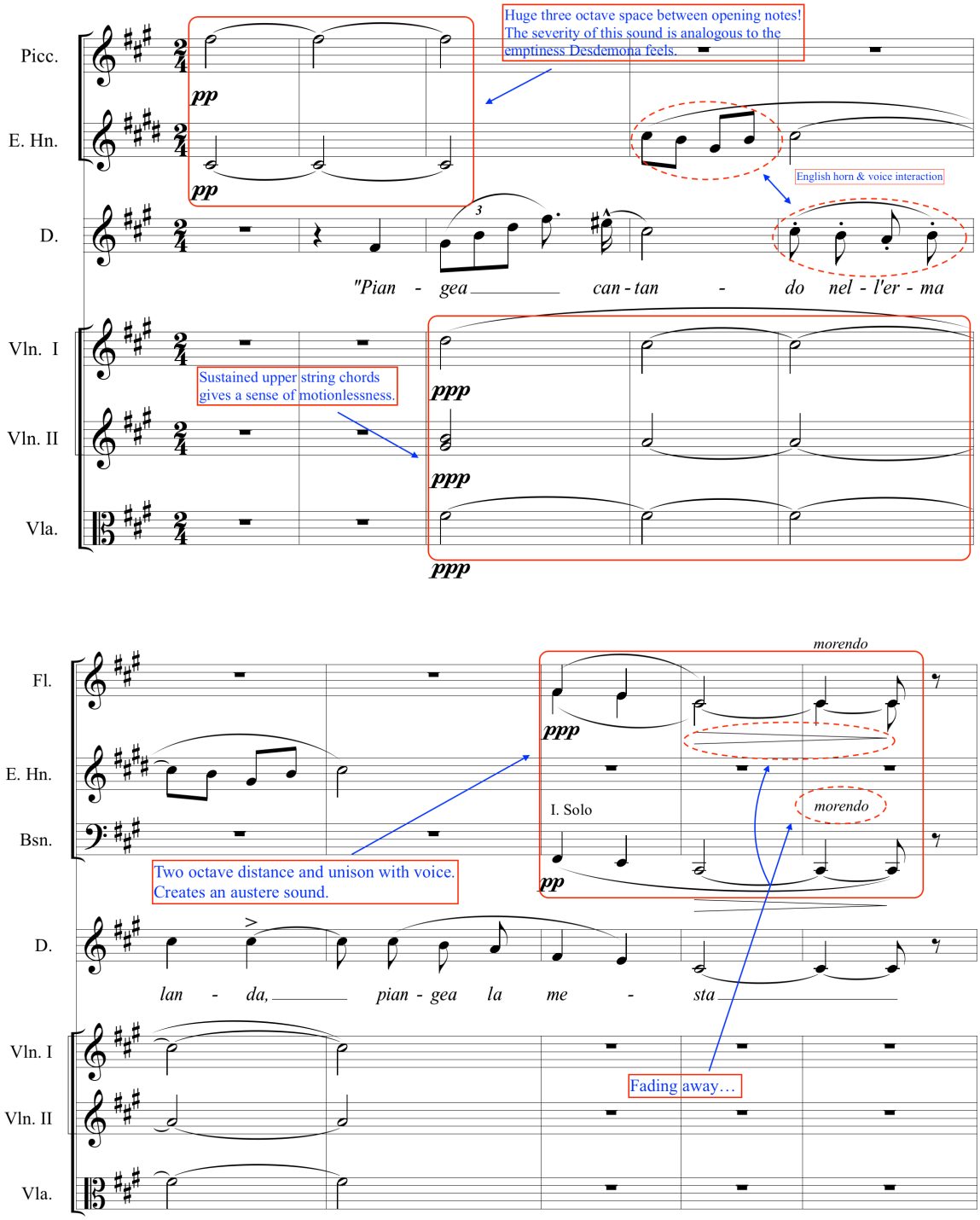


Each of these ‘memories of happier days’ phrases is followed by different versions of Desdemona recollecting the willow song. No two versions of Desdemona’s vocal line, let alone the accompaniment, are alike. In a manner similar to what Verdi has done with other phrases, he divides Desdemona’s initial line into fragments. These fragments are at times placed in a different order, transposed, further truncated, repeated, and alluded to. There are brief interruptions of new material but almost entirely in the form of recitative as Desdemona speaks with Emilia as she prepares for bed. This all gives the quality of the imperfection of memory to her singing, as if she really is musing pensively, recollecting the song to give voice to her despair.[19]

Just as the vocal line is never static, neither is the accompaniment. While Desdemona’s music goes through variation, it is the accompaniment that paints the emotional subtext of her words. Since the first two vocal phrases begin similarly, they are ideal examples to highlight the way Verdi uses the orchestra to gradually build tension. The song starts simply with sparse and transparent orchestration that sounds severe in its nakedness (ex. 10.1). Compare this with the second time Desdemona sings this phrase. The orchestra is rhythmically and chromatically agitated (ex. 10.2). Verdi continues using the orchestra in this way to build tension with interruptions from themes such as the ‘salce’ theme and recitative that returns the music to a place of loneliness.

19. In the score the words to the ‘willow song’ are italicized with unitalicized words being recitative. Until the climax, Desdemona’s brief emotional line “Povera Barbara!” is an exception to unitalicized words being recitative.

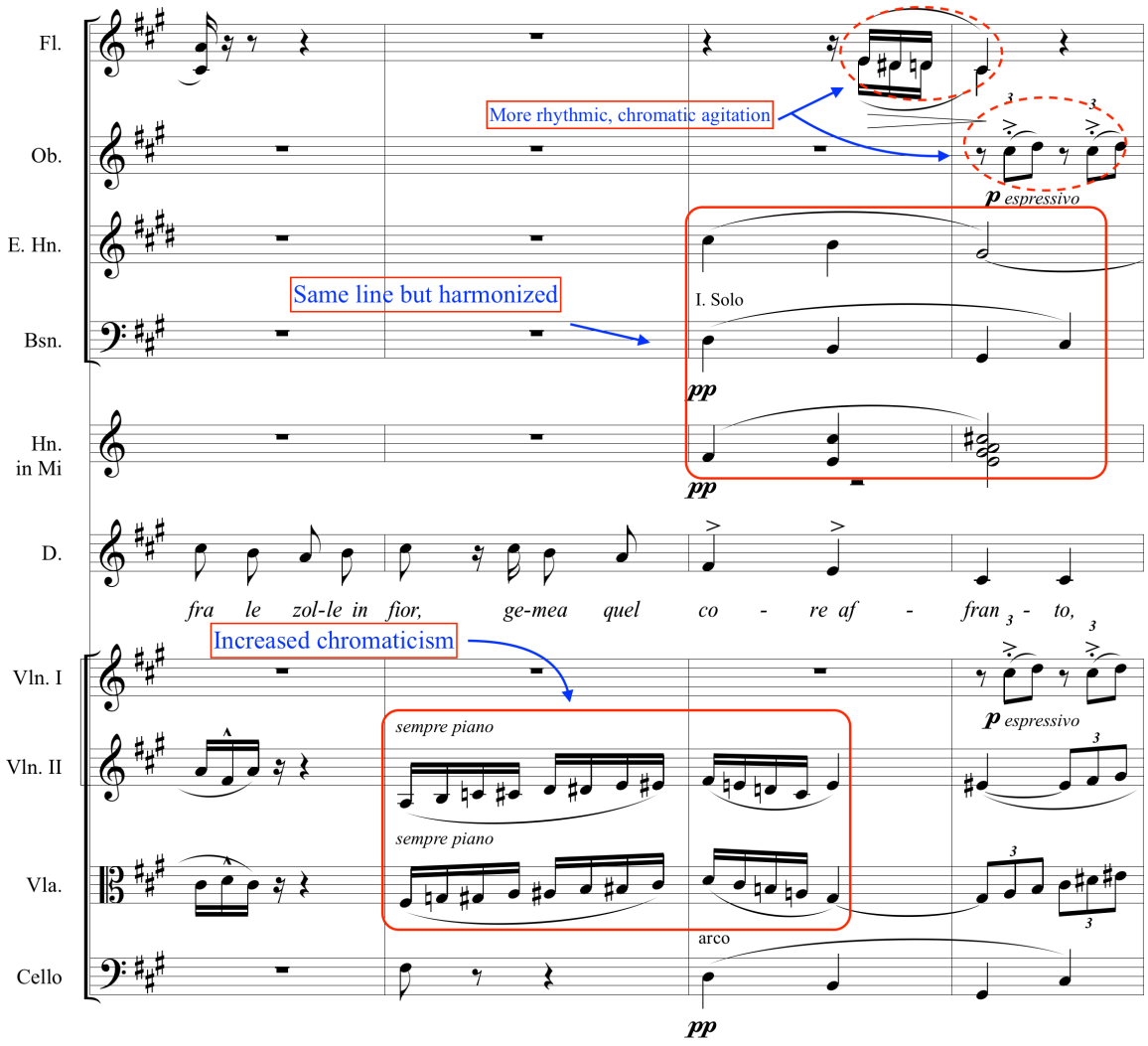
Ex. 10.1 – First sung willow melody: Sparse orchestration and sustained upper strings



Ex. 10.2 – Second sung willow melody: Increased rhythmic and chromatic agitation[20]

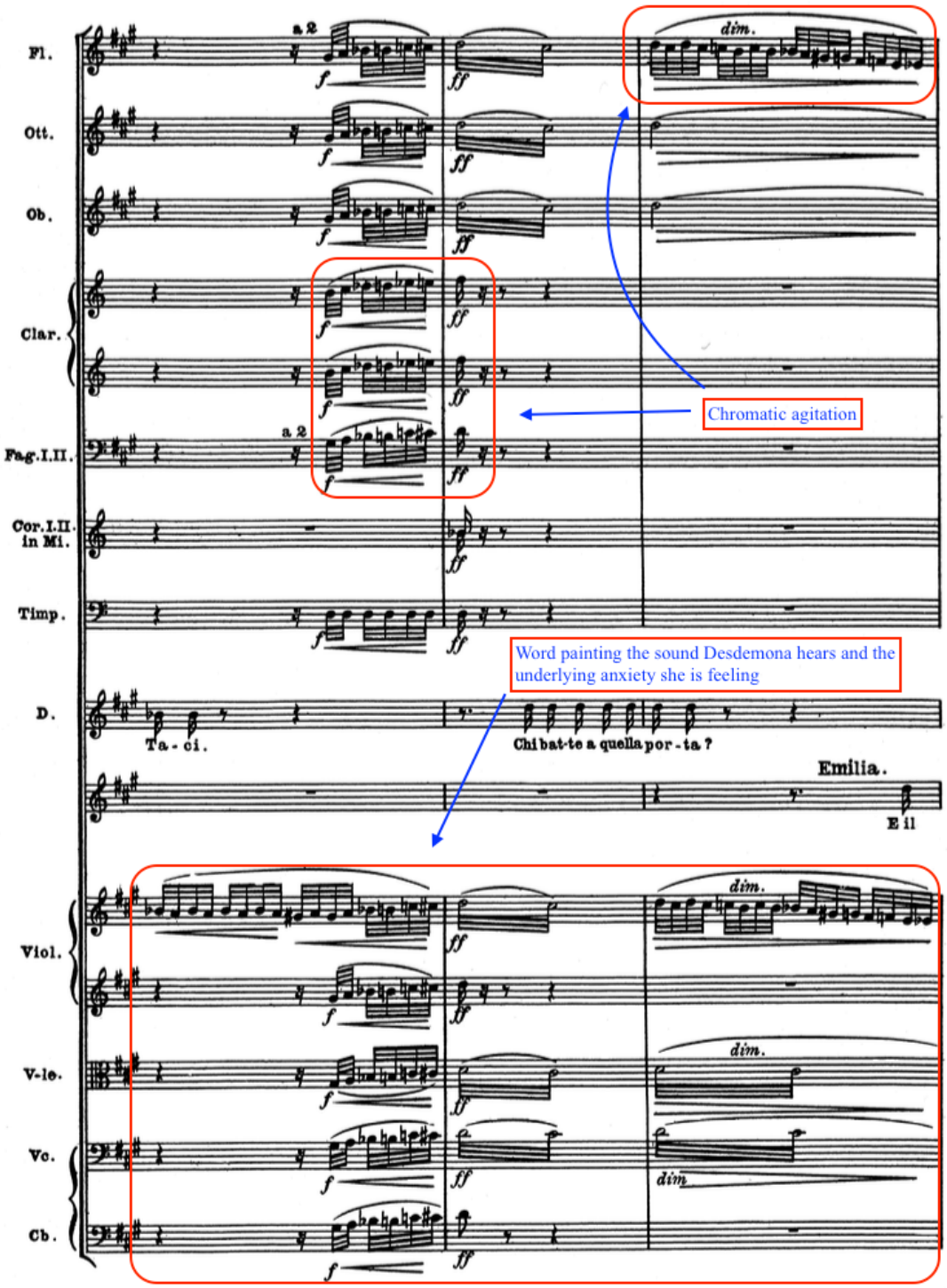
20. Despite the increased activity, the orchestration remains subtle and delicate. Even when the music becomes more agitated, Verdi still chooses nuanced orchestration to reflect Desdemona's fragile state until it eventually becomes too much for her.

(Ex. 10.2 cont'd…)



An exception to the muted quality of Desdemona's recitative, and another example of orchestral painting, is when Desdemona is startled by a sound and asks nervously who is at the door. Emilia replies that it was the wind. But a look at the music shows just just how neurotic Desdemona is at this moment (ex. 11).

Ex. 11 – Orchestral subtext reflecting Desdemona's sudden fright and anxiety

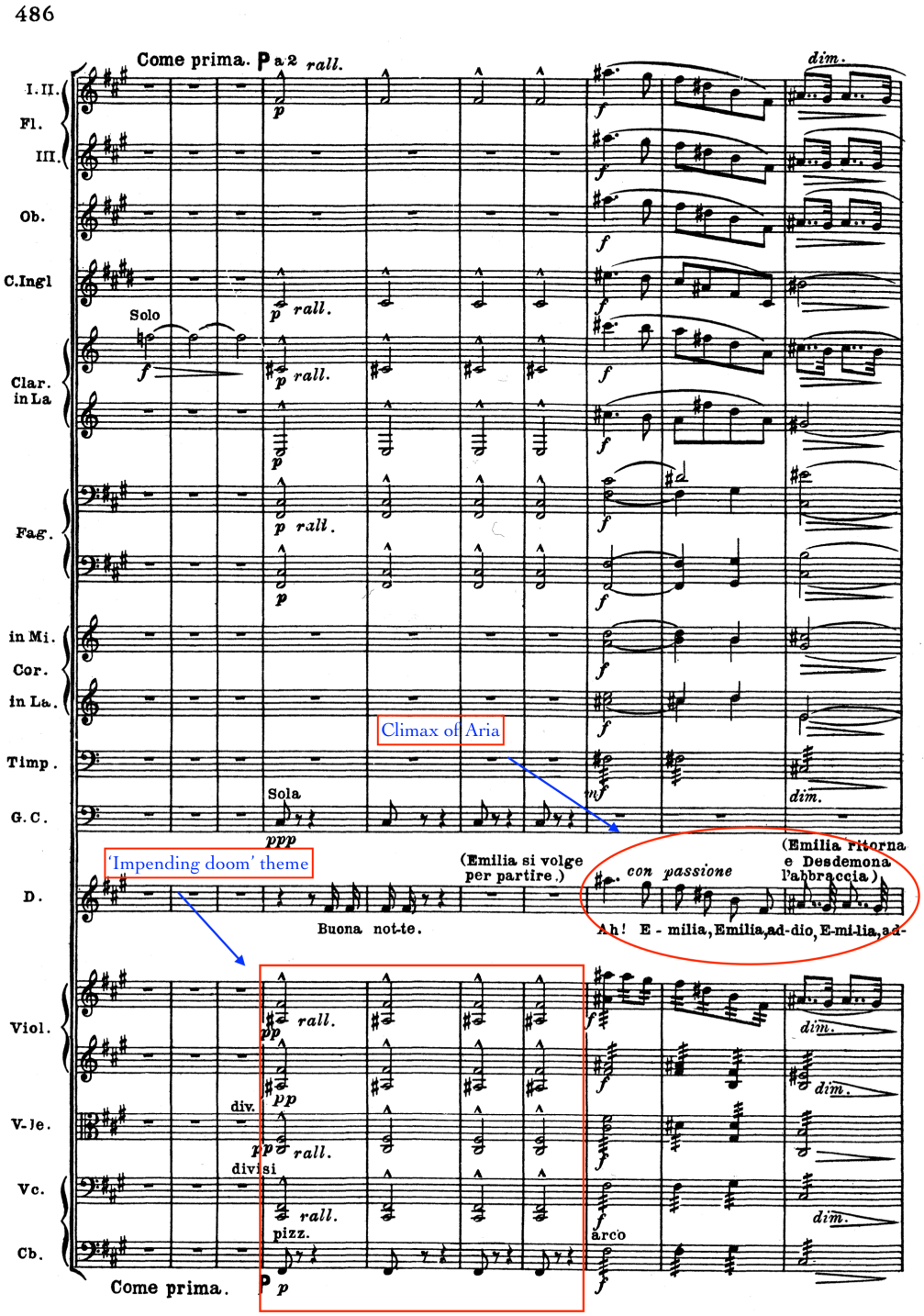


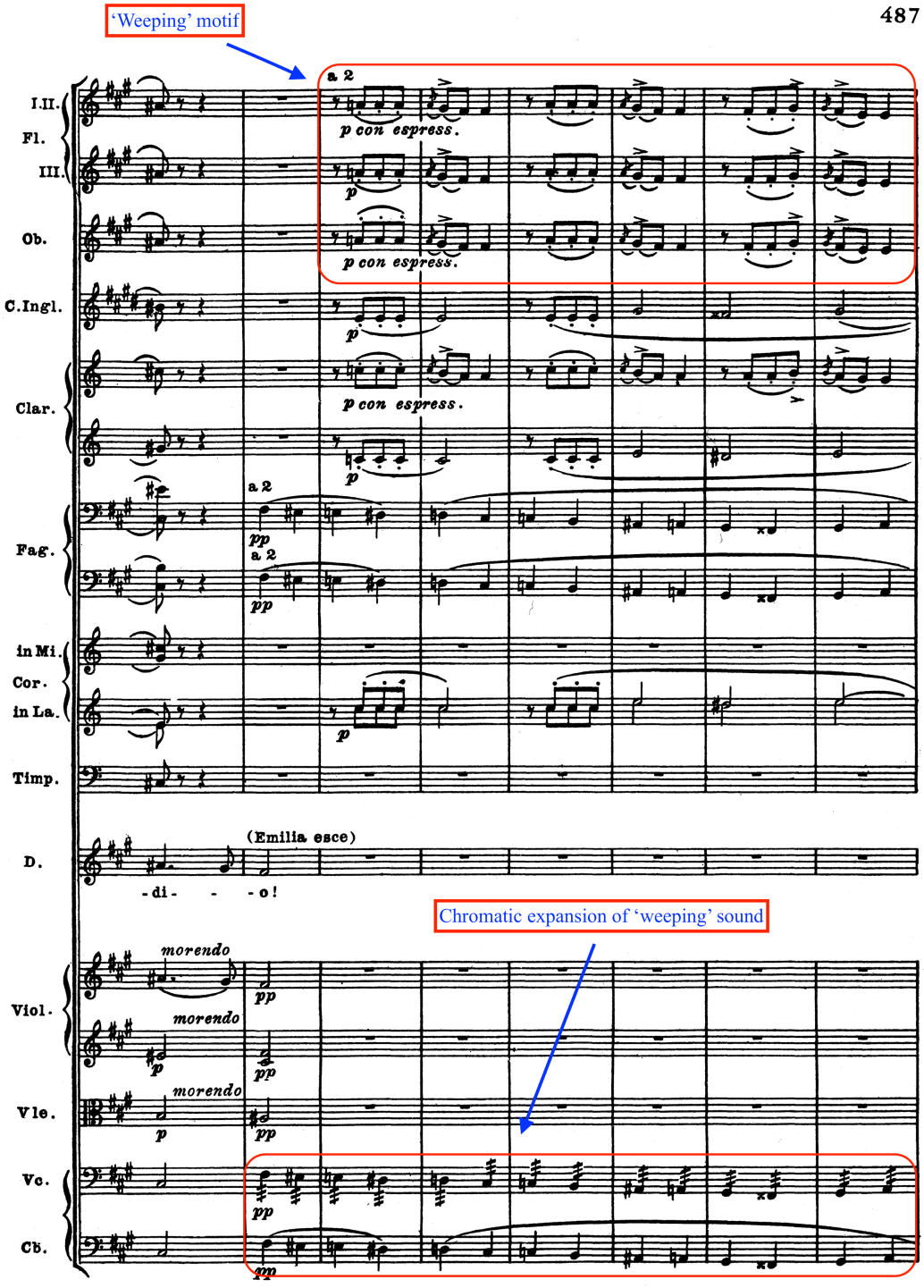
This brings the aria to its climax and a key example of how music can demonstrate resistance to women being acted upon in opera plots. On a large and small scale, Verdi has vacillated between agitation, resignation, and bursts of emotion. He has done this by employing fragmentation, repetition, and displacement among other discussed techniques to key musical phrases ('salce' theme, 'impending doom' theme, etc.) and Desdemona's vocal lines. Additionally, the orchestration has been consistently subtle to reflect the depth of Desdemona's feeling while the vocal accompaniment has provided the subtext.

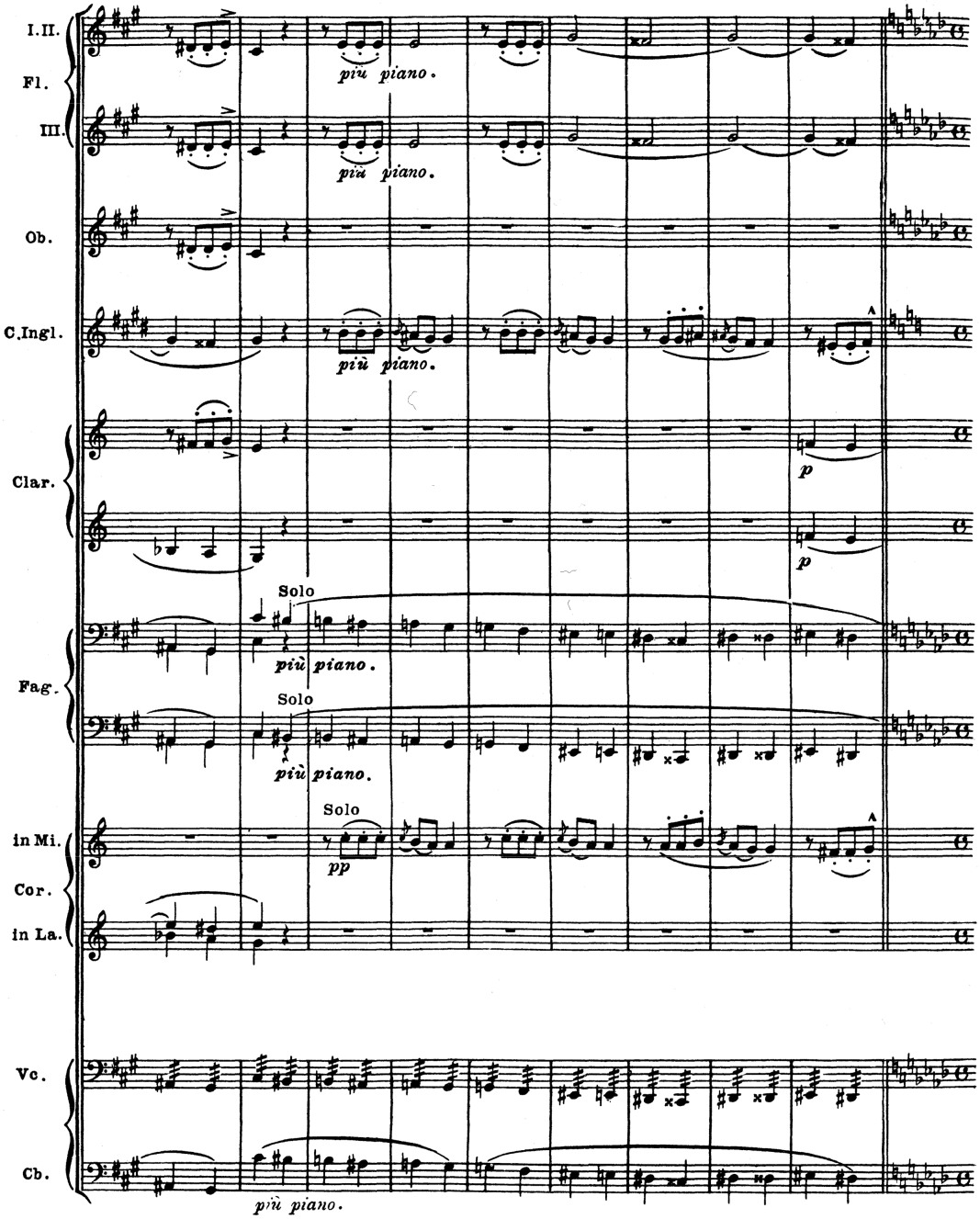
This has been done to create an emotional structure that builds to a high point that must spill over. As the piece has progressed, Desdemona has become increasingly neurotic and fearful. She does not want to die. This culminates in the heartbreaking climax when she exclaims "Ah! Emilia, Emilia, addio, Emilia, addio!".

This is not 'have a good evening Emilia, I'll see you in the morning'. She is saying her farewell as she expects death may be imminent. In the score there is even the indication *con passione*, followed by instruction for Emilia to embrace Desdemona at this moment before a diminuendo and the apt expression *morendo*. They both know something horrible may happen. The 'weeping' motif then returns to bring the aria to a close as the orchestra quietly fades in a chromatic descent before beginning the Ave Maria prayer (ex. 12).

Ex. 12 – Climax of the aria




'Weeping' motif
487
I.II. Fl.
III.
Ob.
C.Ingl.
Clar.
Fag.
in Mi.
Cor.
in La.
Timp.
D.
Viol.
Vle.
Vc.
Cb.
a 2
p con espress.
p
pp
(Emilia esce)
-di- - -o!
morendo
Chromatic expansion of 'weeping' sound


I.II.
Fl.
III.
Ob.
C.Ingl.
Clar.
Fag.
in Mi.
Cor.
in La.
Vc.
Cb.
più piano.
Solo
p
pp

There is no way any listener could doubt Desdemona's self-awareness and depth of emotion after hearing this or think of her only as someone acted upon. In the end the pillow that smothers her is an extension of her suffocation by a society unable to accept her, or the love she shared with Otello.

Desdemona and Dolores

Finally, what are the connections between Desdemona and Dolores? There is, of course, the surface level connection of both Dolores and Desdemona being accused of infidelity, however, that is common enough in opera. The more consequential connection is how both characters strive to live a self-determined life in the face of a society that rejects them. And although Dolores and Desdemona come from opposite backgrounds and marry for different reasons, they share traits of courage, independence, and strength of will. While Desdemona marries for love and Dolores marries to improve her situation, they both become alienated from their community and betrayed by the very thing they gave everything for. Love for Desdemona and social mobility for Dolores.

Both characters are eventually undone by their idealistic and perhaps even naïve beliefs. With Desdemona, it is her faith in the bonds of love between her and Otello. With Dolores, it is her faith in meritocracy and her ability to outmaneuver Ignacio and those in his circle. Just as Verdi's aria demonstrates, no matter what either one does, they cannot escape the time or identity that is forced upon them or the fate that awaits them.

Mélisande's Silence in *Pelléas et Mélisande*[21]

This example comes from Claude Debussy's 1903 opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*, an adaptation of the 1892 symbolist play written by Maurice Maeterlinck. It is the most influential work in relation to my opera thus will be the most extensively examined example of how a female character resists being acted upon in opera. In it, Mélisande is, at first glance, a most glaring example of women used as plot device or pivot for the development of male characters. She is notoriously described as a 'non-character' and empty of significance. However, taking a cue from the symbolist practice of trying to express the ineffable,[22] Debussy cleverly uses silence and stark juxtaposition of musical material between characters to reveal that it is Mélisande who contains within her the concealed truth of the opera.

Elusiveness, paradox, aesthetic beauty, ambiguity of truth, silence, and the expression of an inexpressible reality all describe the symbolist movement but could also

---

21. While the interpretation of the opera is my own, much is owed to Katherine Bergeron's insightful lecture – Katherine Bergeron, "'Secrets and Lies' or the Truth about Pelléas," Lecture, Gresham College, Barnard's Inn Hall, London, England. April 12, 2012. https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/part-six-secrets-and-lies-or-the-truth-about-pellas (accessed June 12, 2020).

22. Jean Moréas, "The Symbolist Manifesto," *Mutable Sound*, Translated by C. Liszt. www.mutablesound.com/home/?p=2165 (accessed June 13, 2020).

be a character breakdown for Mélisande and the way she is represented in the music. Her music, or lack thereof, gives her a level of significance difficult to locate in the libretto alone. Like Ophelia, Mélisande is "let in, only to be let out." But, as the music reveals, it is through Mélisande's tragedy and her striking contrast with the other characters that the opera acquires its deep meaning. This has the affect of elevating Mélisande from mere plot device to principal character.

In making this case, rather than a detailed exploration of a specific aria, as with Desdemona's "Willow Song," a compare and contrast of the portrayal of characters in several key moments, including the famous *scène de cheveux*, is more effective in demonstrating Mélisande's importance. This is fitting as in the case of Desdemona, it is a moment that elevates her as a character, whereas with Mélisande, it is the consistent juxtaposition between her and other characters that elevates her, despite, and in many ways because of, her limited vocal expressions, as the primary voice of the opera. The emphasis will be how Debussy's use of silence and sparse orchestration for Mélisande's music cleverly contrasts her with her surroundings and presents a model of symbolist truth. Act V is the culmination of this contrast as it flips the role of silence from Mélisande to Golaud. Golaud goes mad and until the very end he continues to try to control Mélisande by demanding the 'truth' from her. But, with her silent power, she simply and quietly fades away.

Introducing Mélisande's Silence

The opera, as in the play, is full of incongruities. The imaginary kingdom of Allemonde has an otherworldly air to it yet the characters from this world are mired in either provincial banality (as with Golaud) or indulgent romantic tropes (as with Pelléas). Mélisande is, as we shall see, a stranger to this land and is looked at as an exotic, mysterious creature…like a strange bird to be enjoyed in a gilded cage. Yet Debussy often portrays her as the most *realismo* character there is. Her music is often muted and her words are free from the metaphorical flourishes of Pelléas and the uninspired bluntness of Golaud. Her responses to Pelléas's magniloquent declarations of love and Golaud's mundanity and harsh interrogations are direct and terse. "Oui". "Non". "Je suis malade ici". "Ce n'est pas cela". "Je ne suis pas heureuse."

It is precisely this kind directness and unwillingness to assimilate to the Golaud's practicality and Pelléas's flourishes that makes Mélisande seem elusive, even blasé. Both Pelléas and Golaud stake their claim towards truth but are unhearing and unseeing of Mélisande's truth (and that of the Forest). The hidden truth she encapsulates remains beyond their grasp.

In fact, Mélisande's equivocation has been described as equally beyond the grasp of many opera enthusiasts and critics. But what is clear is that Debussy's bold choices for Mélisande create a striking contrast to the other characters as well as to nearly every other soprano role in opera. One could imagine audiences accustomed to Verdi and

Wagner to expect the soprano, Mélisande, to have multiple occasions to show her quality. Especially in an opera where she comprises half the title. It would have been a shock to many audiences to hear largely unadorned music for Mélisande. However, this quote from C. Henry Phillip's article *The Symbolists and Debussy* sheds light on Debussy's unique treatment of Mélisande and why it is significant.

> The poets strove to make their verse into music, while Debussy sought to 'literise' his work. The verse of Verlaine and Mallarmé is always sheer beautiful sound; and it could thus better express the charm of music alone...Debussy yields his finest joys to those who know the literary aspirations of his age.[23]

In other words, unlike poetry, music begins as metaphor. Thus it is essential, in order to distinguish Mélisande, to contrast her to the conventions of opera by making her music closer to prose. Hence the reliance on juxtaposition in the opera to illuminate the drama of the play. Mélisande's central importance to the opera is clear precisely because of this stark juxtaposition. A juxtaposition formed against the other characters as well as the conventions of opera. In the context of the artifice of opera, Mélisande's *realismo* portrayal becomes increasingly important to understanding the opera.

The opera begins in the forest – imagery favored by the Symbolist poets. Traditionally, the forest represents being lost in a potentially dangerous, 'other worldly' environment, often connected with the unknown terrain of the unconscious. The

---

23. C. Henry Phillips, "The Symbolists and Debussy," *Music & Letters* 13, no. 3 (1932): 298-311. www.jstor.org/stable/726316 (accessed June 22, 2020).

Symbolists, however, embraced the imagery as, in the words of Charles Baudelaire, a 'forest of symbols' that correspond with each other and those walking through it; representing the Ideal and a version of truth unable to be fully possessed.[24] For the Symbolists, truth is elusive and exists in the interaction between subject and object – the question becomes whom is watching whom. It is therefore no coincidence that Mélisande is first found in the forest. Throughout the opera, Mélisande evades being pinned down by prosaic notions of truth. Music is essentially mysterious, and in this way, like the forest, Mélisande embodies the spirit of music.

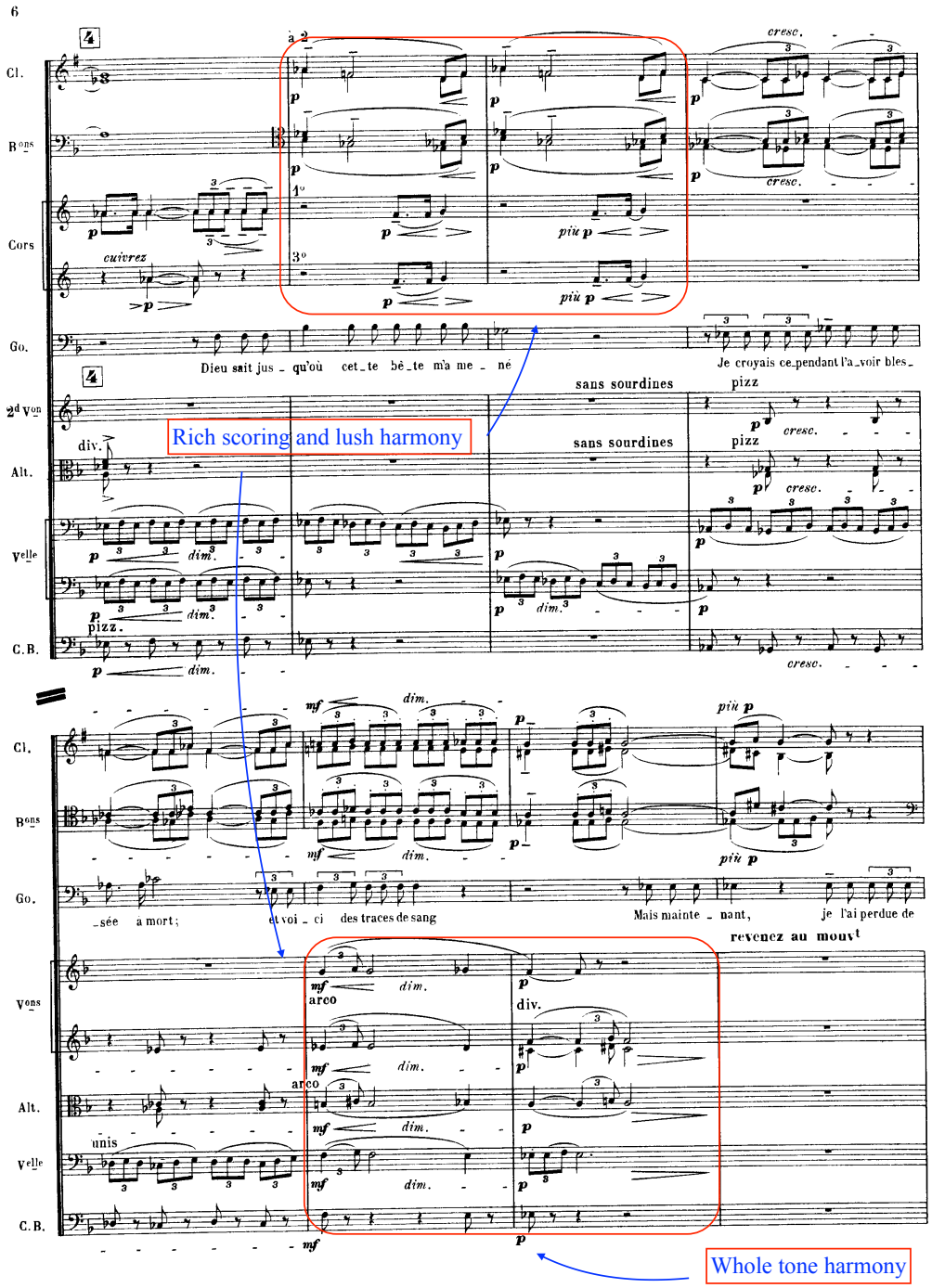
When we find Mélisande, she is weeping by a fountain in tattered clothes. She has been hurt.[25] The first words out of her mouth, "Ne me touchez pas! Ne me touchez pas!" ("Don't touch me! Don't touch me!"), sums up her relationship with Golaud. One would imagine such a dramatic entrance would be scored equally dramatically, but this is not the case. From the very beginning, Debussy makes choices that set the stage for the rest of the opera. Golaud is the first character introduced as he wanders, lost in the forest. His extended introduction is fully orchestrated with rich harmony. Juxtaposed against this is the emptiness, silence, and brevity of Mélisande's entrance (ex. 13.1 - 13.2).

---

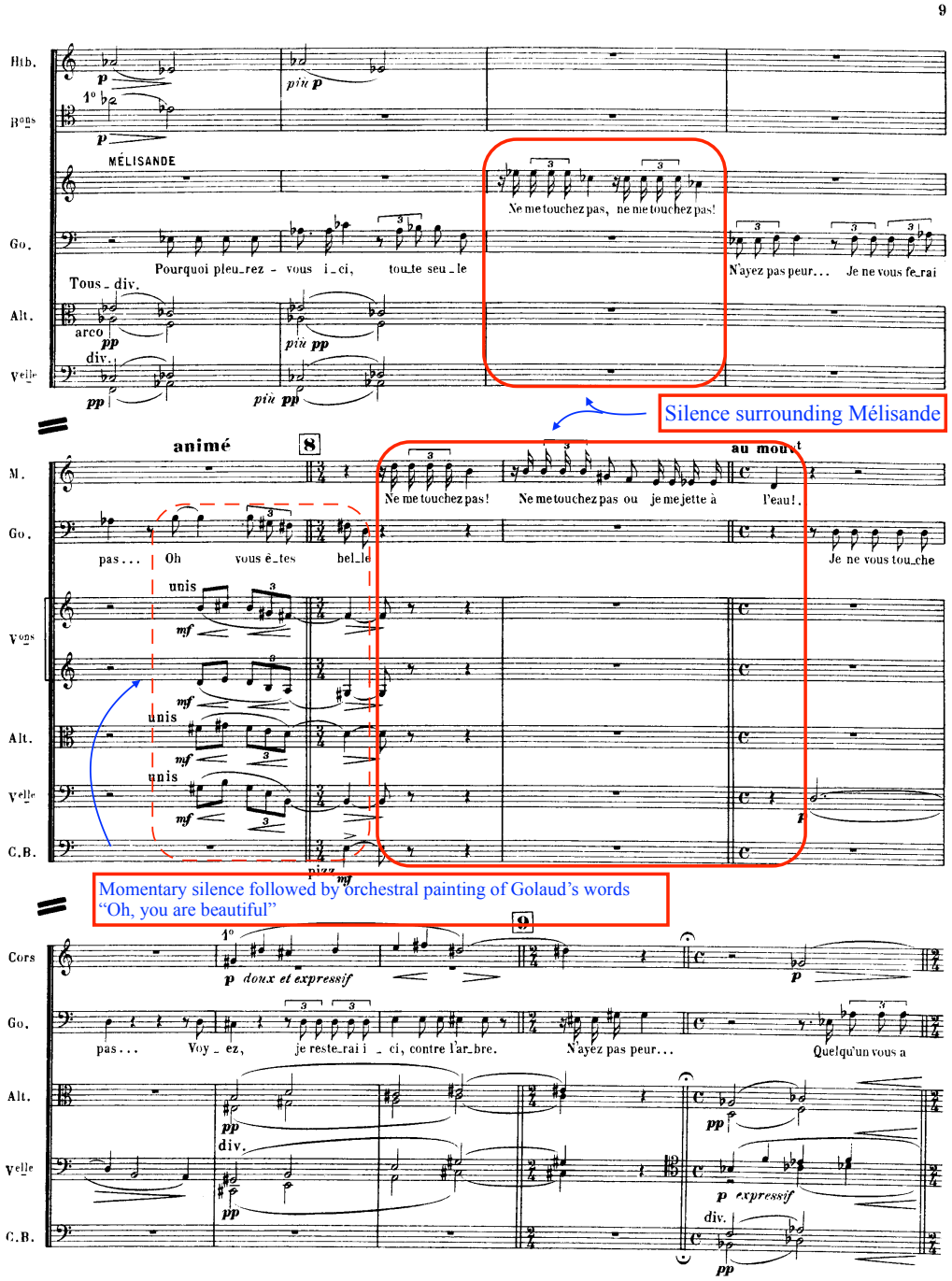
24. Charles Baudelaire, *"Complete Poems: Charles Baudelaire,"* Carcanet Press Ltd., (2007): 18-19. ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/sfasu-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1222238 (accessed June 26, 2020).

25. While not in the opera, it is noteworthy to mention that in the play it is strongly hinted that, through a cyclical time loop that wraps the beginning to the end, it was Golaud that harmed her.

Ex. 13.1 – Golaud's entrance. Fully orchestrated with rich harmony.



Ex. 13.2 – Mélisande's first words surrounded by silence.



While Mélisande is not the only one for whom silence exists, it is the consistent contrast to those around her that highlights her 'otherness' as well as cementing her elusive, paradoxical authenticity by contradicting expectation. In other words, it is Mélisande's silences that speak loudest.

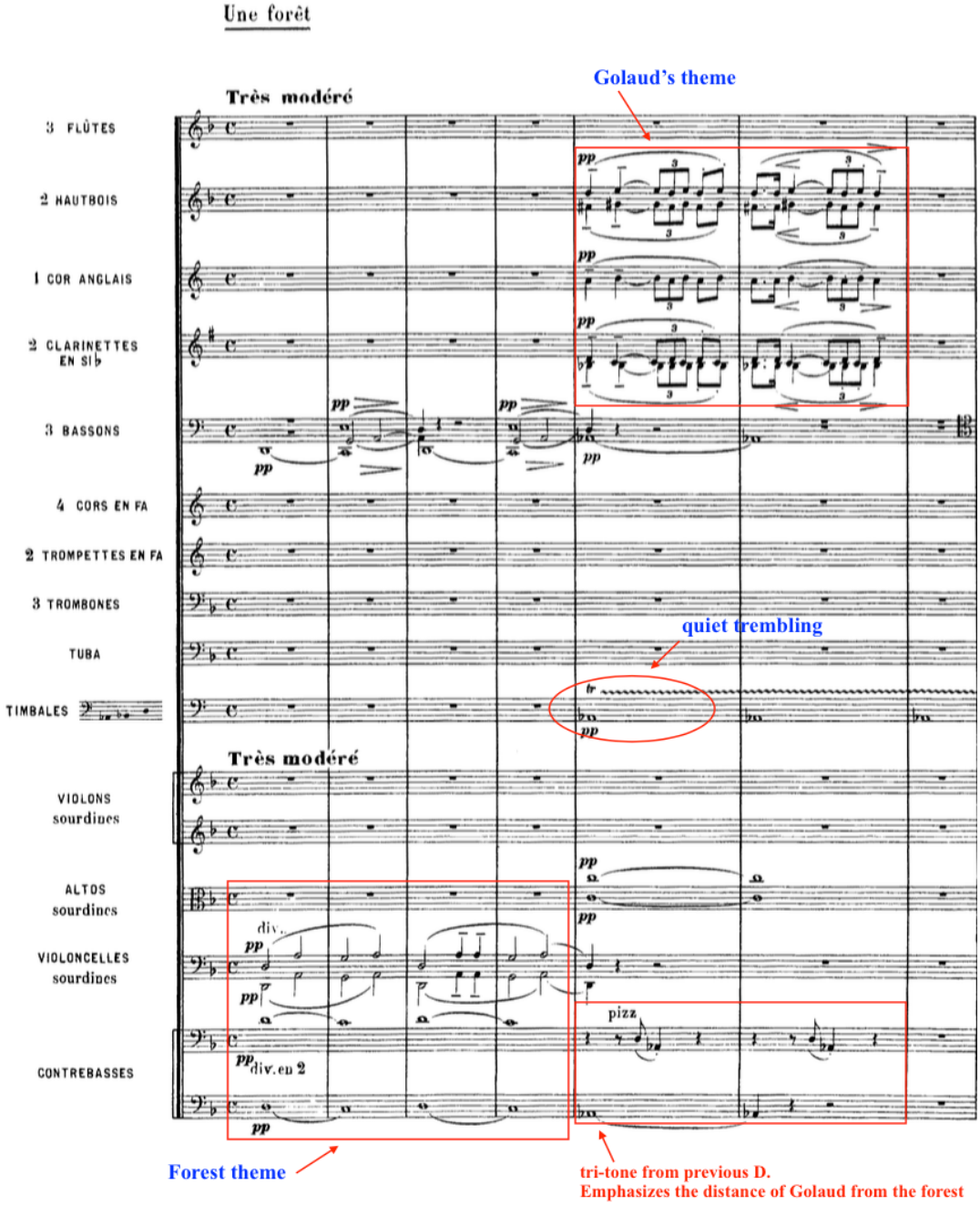
The Forest

The opening chords of the opera move slowly in open parallel harmony, reminiscent of a music from a bygone age. This is the music of the forest. Debussy orchestrates these harmonies in the lower strings and low bassoons giving it a mysterious, even ancient sound. All of this serves to create static motion that suggests the timelessness of the ancient forest that is embodied by, or at least accepted by, Mélisande. Like the forest, Mélisande has no distinct personality outside of the descriptions of her beauty. But it may seem contradictory to say that these qualities are what elevate her character, but it aligns with the Symbolist pursuit of the ineffable Ideal. For the Symbolists, it is the desire to control things that is mistaken. In the end, Mélisande accepts the mystery of the forest, submits to it and does not try to control.

Golaud's theme then abruptly breaks the spell of the forest with untethered whole-tone harmony. The rhythm is measured and neurotic unlike the serenity of the forest. Similarly, the chords are in tight, close-voiced harmony in the upper winds with an exposed Ab trill in the timpani quietly trembling. The contrabasses then alternate between

the D heard in the basses in the forest theme and the new Ab. In the context of tonal harmony and the circle of fifths, the tritone is the furthest distance two tonal centers could be from one another. By juxtaposing the Forest's D and Golaud's Ab, as well as the divergent contrast between the two themes, Debussy is clearly showing that while Golaud is in the forest, he could not be further away from the meaning it. Additionally, this foreshadows the relationship he will have with Mélisande and how very distant he will be from her (ex. 14) .

Ex. 14 – Forest & Golaud themes expressing divergent ‘truths’



In contrast to the timelessness of the forest, Golaud's frenetic theme sounds stuck in time, struggling but unable to move. Golaud is both in the forest and outside of it; unable to hear the ancient sounds of its harmony much how he and Pelléas will be unable to hear Mélisande. As the opera progresses, the musical setting of Mélisande reveals her connection to the 'truth' of the forest and her place of importance in the opera despite being acted upon from the very beginning. Even though Mélisande is first found in a horrible state, afraid and traumatized, she tells Golaud that she is happy to stay in the forest while Golaud's opening lines are "I shall never get out of this forest."[26] He is lost.

Birdsong and Gender Role Reversal

The second scene opens with Golaud having taken a passive, if not reluctant, Mélisande to his father's castle like a found trinket. Despite the noted age difference, he takes her as his wife; blind to Mélisande's disinclination and deaf to her discontent which grows as the opera progresses. Even King Arkel looks upon Golaud with disappointment, confusion, and pity at his son's odd choice of stealing away a young woman, a stranger crying by the water. This has echoes of Sieglinde's forced marriage to Hunding in Wagner's *Die Walküre*. Only where Sieglinde will find redemption and joy, Mélisande only finds a quiet disappearance. She is a trapped bird.

---

26. "Je ne pourrai plus sortir de cette forêt" https://opera-guide.ch/en/operas/pell%C3%A9as+et+m%C3%A9lisande/libretto/fr/ (accessed June 28, 2020).

The bird simile has an established history in opera and is often connected with coloratura arias. Pelléas makes use of this imagery in Act III, scene 1 when he compares Mélisande to a "bird not from here".[27] 'Alien birdsong', as Carolyn Abbate calls it, is an operatic cliché almost exclusively performed by women in a display physicality and brilliance.[28] "The Queen of the Night" aria from *Die zauberflöte* come to mind as does the "Bell Song" from *Lakmé*. These examples of characters are notably vocalized without words giving it the 'alien birdsong' quality Abbate refers to. They represent beautiful, sometimes frightening, exotic creatures to be enjoyed or feared but importantly, with nothing intelligible to say. They trill, entice, emit, and shriek like sirens; expressing extreme physicality and raw emotion. Moments like these are, at its most innocent, a chance for the audience to enjoy the prowess of a singer.

In short, traditionally men in opera are afforded the clarity of words beyond the emotional physicality of women. This further highlights the distance of Mélisande to traditional female characters. Debussy, avoids this cliché of non-verbalisms and has Mélisande sing in a natural way that stops just short of speech. Meanwhile, Golaud and Pelléas hear their own versions of Mélisande's music as a sensuous but unintelligible

---

27. "…comme un oiseau qui n'est pas d'ici?"

28. Carolyn Abbate, "Debussy's Phantom Sounds," In *In Search of Opera*, Oxford: Princeton University Press, (2001): 171-172.

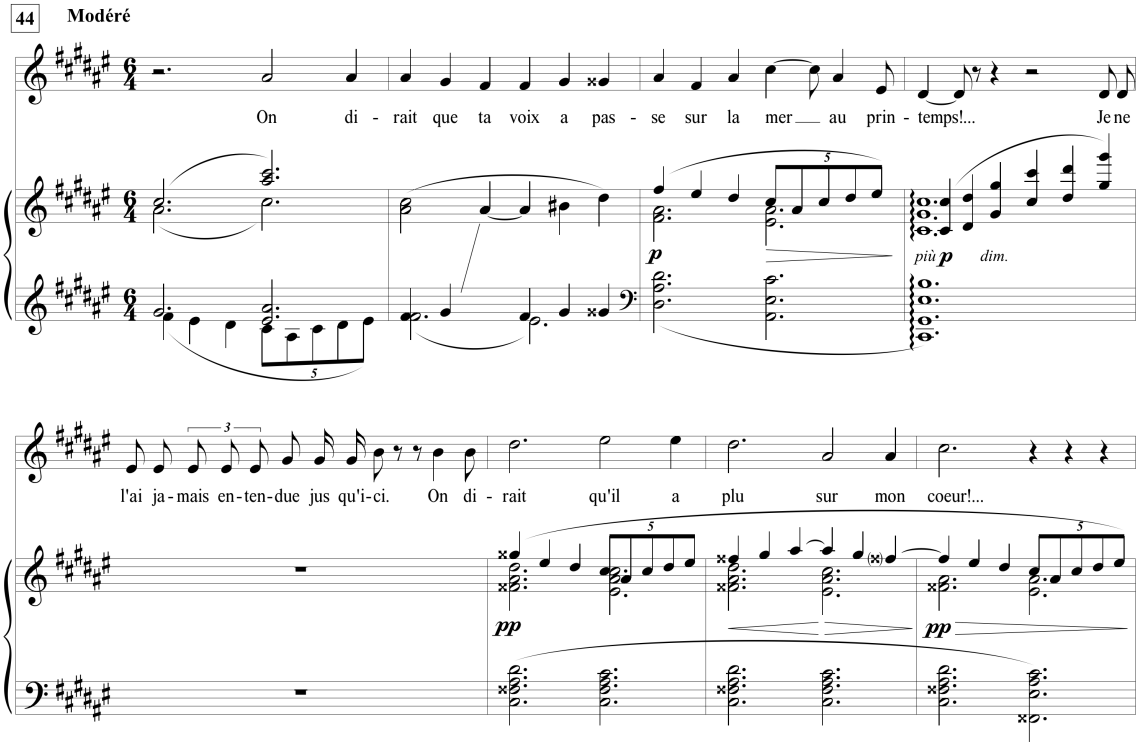
creature, underlining what an unheard object of desire Mélisande is. To them, she is a beautiful, fragile, childlike creature.

The way the men are contrasted with Mélisande is fascinating and amplifies her silences. In a case of gender role reversal, particularly for the time, it is the men who engage in the most romantic clichés. This is particularly true for Pelléas, for whom the most beautiful lyric lines are written. To be sure, it is unusual for a tenor to have romantic lines of lyric beauty. But, once again, it is the absence of such music for Mélisande that is striking. In the opening to the climactic love scene of Act IV scene 4, Pelléas is nervously preparing himself to declare his love for Mélisande. As he gradually builds in emotion he is met with short, understated responses from Mélisande right up to the point of their fragile and moving admission of love:

> Pelléas: "Je t'aime"
> Mélisande: "Je t'aime aussi" (quietly sung in the low range of the soprano)

Following this quiet climactic moment, Pelléas launches into a passage of incredible beauty and sweetness as he describes Mélisande's voice as coming "over the sea in spring." It is one of the most consistently 'operatic' sections in the entire work and could easily fit in any opera of the day (ex. 15).

Ex. 15 – *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Pelléas rhapsodizing over Mélisande's voice - Act IV, scene 4)



Most love duets would be expected to involve both characters voicing their love to each other. This includes everything from the expression of mature and tender love in *Otello* to passionate sexual desire in *Tristan und Isolde*. But contrary to this expectation, Mélisande is almost completely absent from this love duet. Instead, it is Pelléas who carries the music of a love scene. Yet despite Mélisande's conspicuous absence, he continues to sing of her exquisite voice even though Mélisande's music and words have none of the imagery or floridness to match Pelléas's description of her. Pelléas hears her the way he wants to, as a mysterious figure of intoxicating femininity. To him, and

Golaud, Mélisande may as well be Lakmé singing her "Bell Song" or Carmen's 'wild bird' of sensuality luring him like a siren. This further establishes Mélisande as an unheard object.

Throughout this scene, Pelléas may as well be singing to himself. There are times when he ponders questions like "why would she love me?" in such a way that one wonders whether or not Mélisande really needs to be there for this 'duet'. It is hard to understand why Mélisande has the reputation of being a slippery character that is hard to pin down as Debussy's choices for her are clear. The absence of music for Mélisande, such as that written for Pelléas, reverberates through the opera…her silences speak loudest. She is the center of the opera. To understand her is to understand the opera.

Scène de cheveux

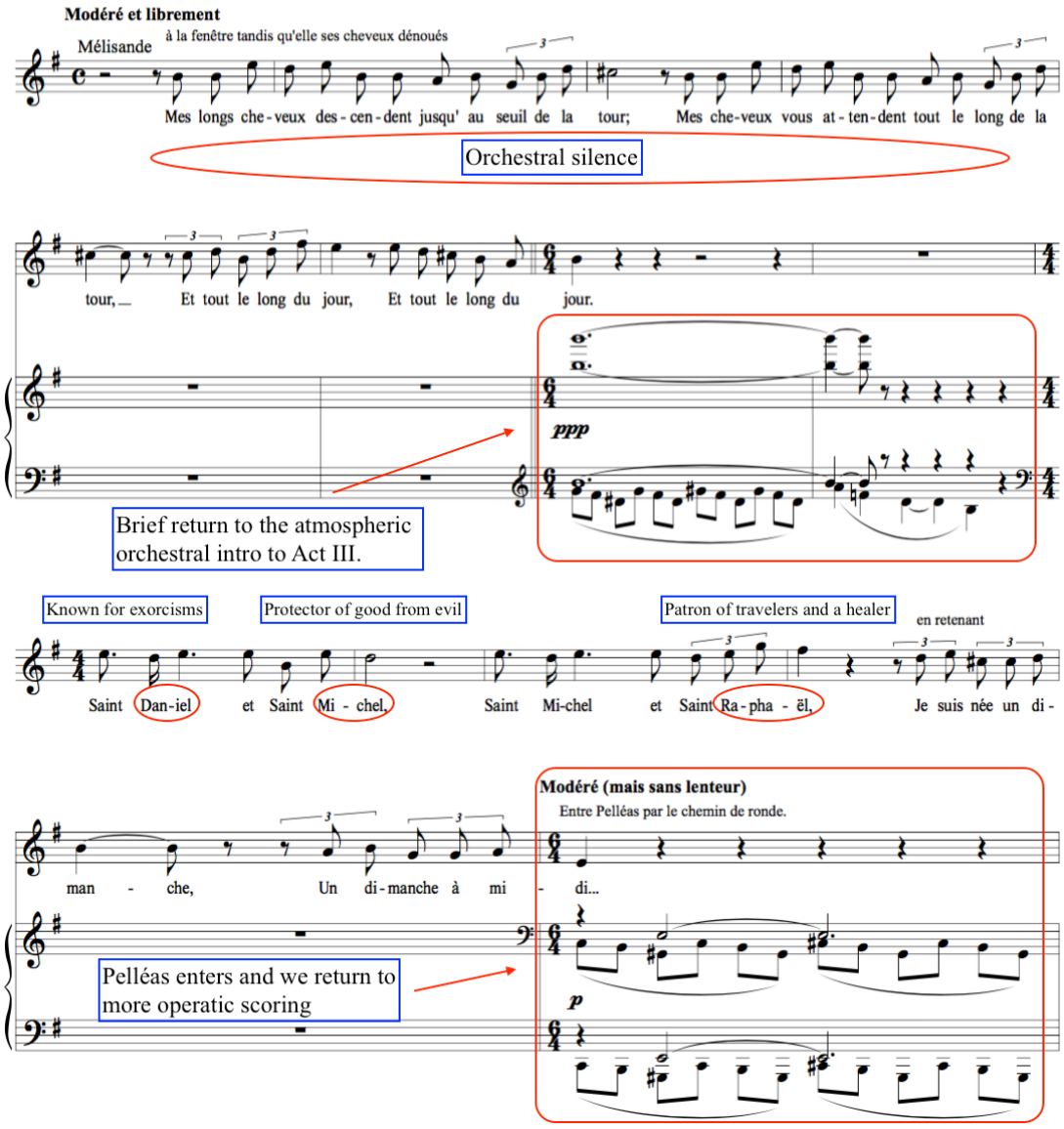
Another clear and striking example of Mélisande's importance by way of contrast is the famous *scène de cheveux* in Act III scene 1. Carolyn Abbate points out how in the opening to this scene, Mélisande is represented in a way that is "hyperrealistic beyond any operatic norm."[29] It's as if we are no longer viewing an opera but are voyeurs

29. Abbate, "Phantom Sounds," 172.

watching and listening to a young woman sing as she prepares for bed.[30] An orchestral introduction sets the mood before Mélisande sings completely unaccompanied, without any indulgent floritura. There is a short, quiet orchestral interruption to her song that punctuates how unsettling the silence has been before returning to Mélisande's a cappella song. This brief, *realismo* moment is an escape from the opera that further highlights Mélisande's status as an outsider by presenting her in this voyeuristic light. Even her words have an improvisatory quality that adds to this passages otherworldly feeling. The fact that this passage is one of the most extended ones for Mélisande and is *a cappella* only adds to the significance of the silence and mystery surrounding her (ex. 16).

30. The comparison to the "Sailor's song" in *Tristan und Isolde* is interesting and worth further inquiry, as are many moments between Debussy's and Wagner's opera. However, the sailor is not a major character as Mélisande is. Further, Debussy's placement of the unaccompanied song gives it a quality that is more shocking and unsettling.

Ex. 16 – Mélisande's *a cappella* introduction to Act III



Compare this to Pelléas's entrance to the scene which from the outset behaves closer to what one would expect from an opera. His music is fully orchestrated with movement and lush chords. At this moment Pelléas is filled with desire, but when he

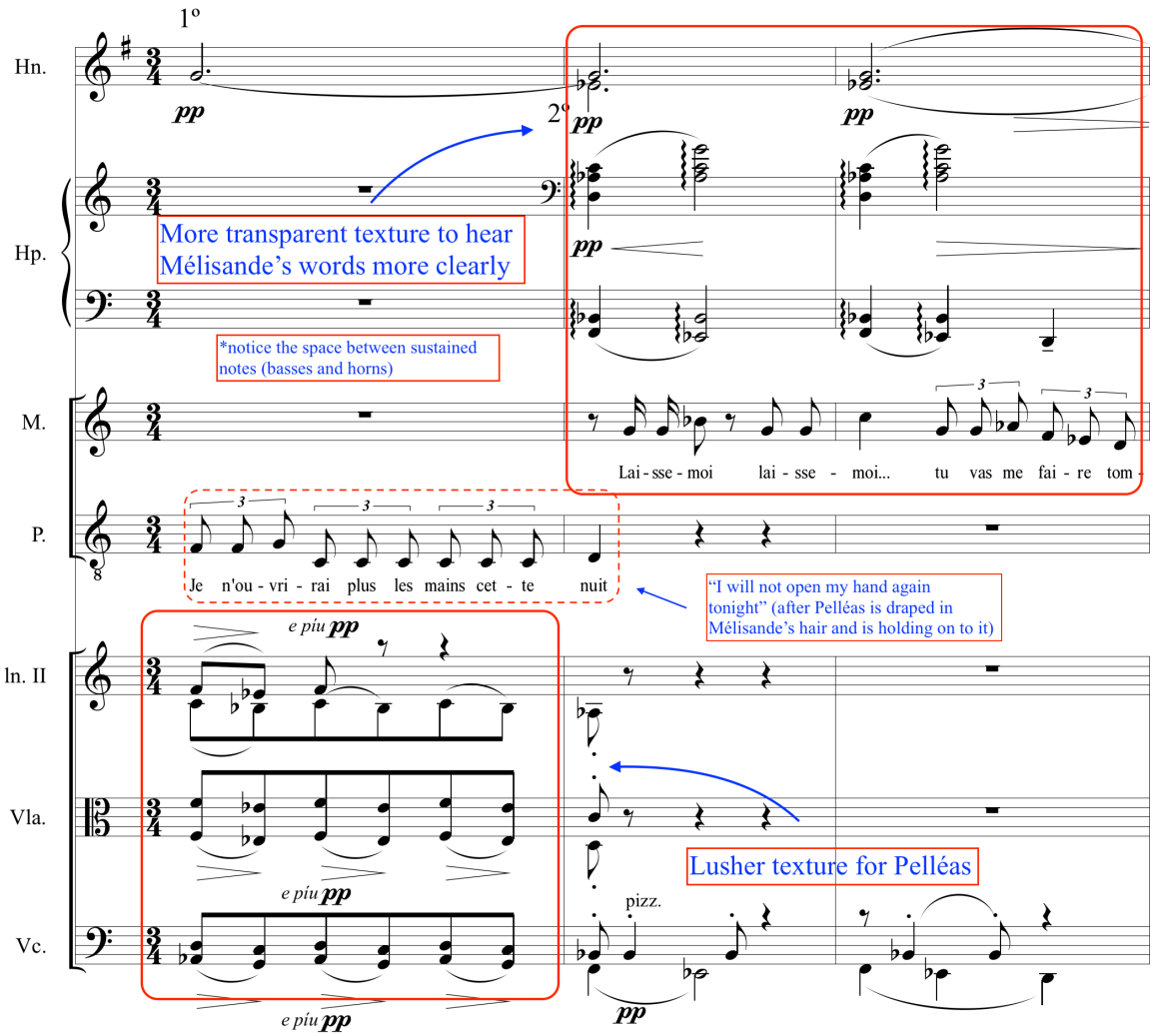
flirtatiously asks Mélisande “What are you doing there at the window, singing like a bird who is not from here?” her response has none of the metaphorical charm of Pelléas as she replies matter of factly “I’m arranging my hair for the night.”

As this scene progresses Pelléas sings longer, increasingly ornate passages, begging to see more of Mélisande until she is leaning so far out of her window that her hair falls and sensuously engulfs Pelléas. He poetically describes how he will bind her hair to the trees so that she will never escape his desirous caresses. The symbolism of hair, particularly in 19th century French poetry, evokes what Katherine Bergeron calls “the place where erotic energy is both released and tied back up” and makes this scene pregnant with meaning.[31] Pelléas’s erotic intoxication doesn’t allow him to hear Mélisande’s warnings that she may fall or that they may get caught. Mélisande, mirroring her opening lines to Golaud “Ne me touchez pas! Ne me touchez pas!”, tells Pelléas “Laissez-moi! Laissez-moi!” (“Let me go! Let me go!”) (Ex. 17).

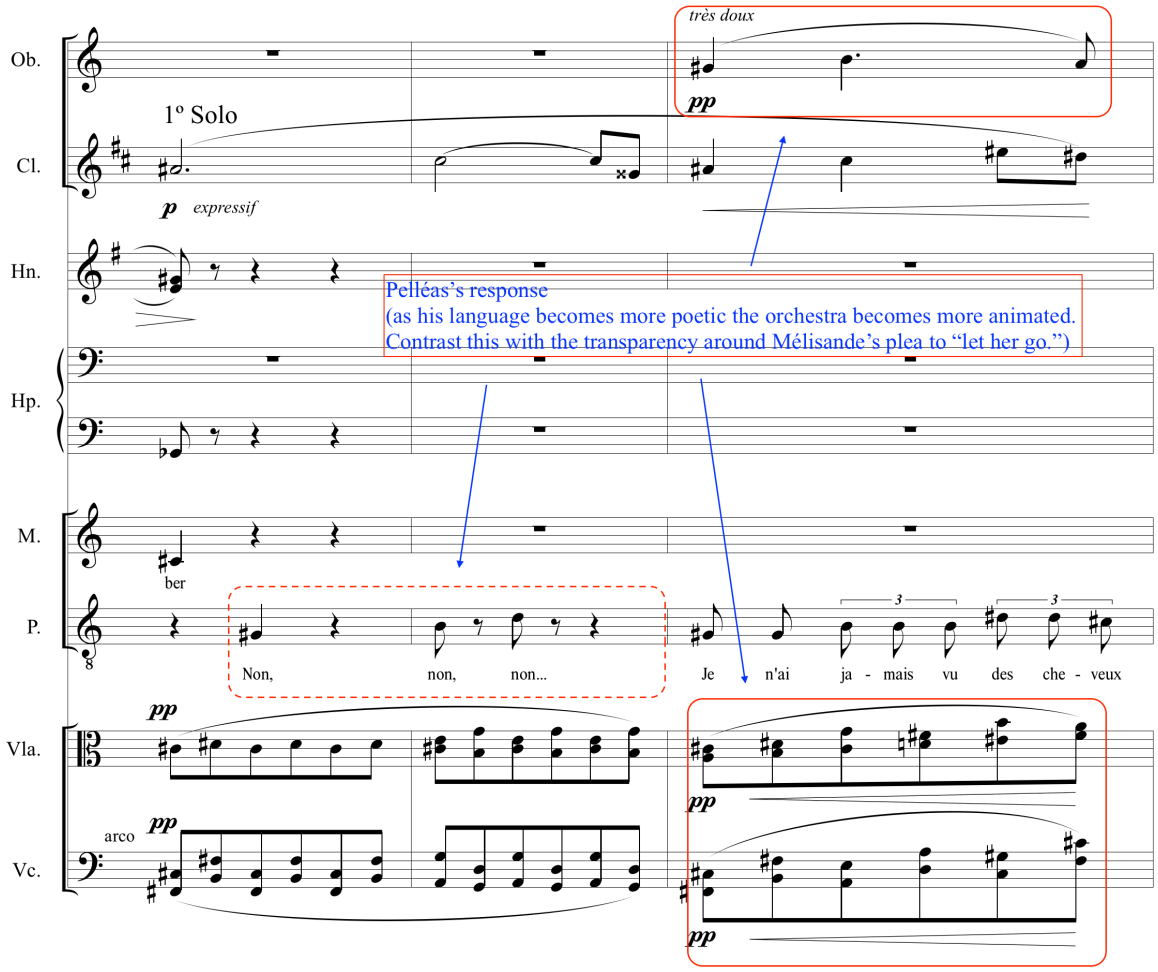
---

31. Katherine Bergeron, “Mélisande's Hair, Or the Trouble in Allemonde: A Postmodern Allegory at the Opéra-Comique,” In *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*, edited by Mary Ann Smart, Princeton: Princeton University Press, (2000): 171.

Ex. 17 – Mélisande's "Laissez-moi!" (Contrasted with Pelléas)

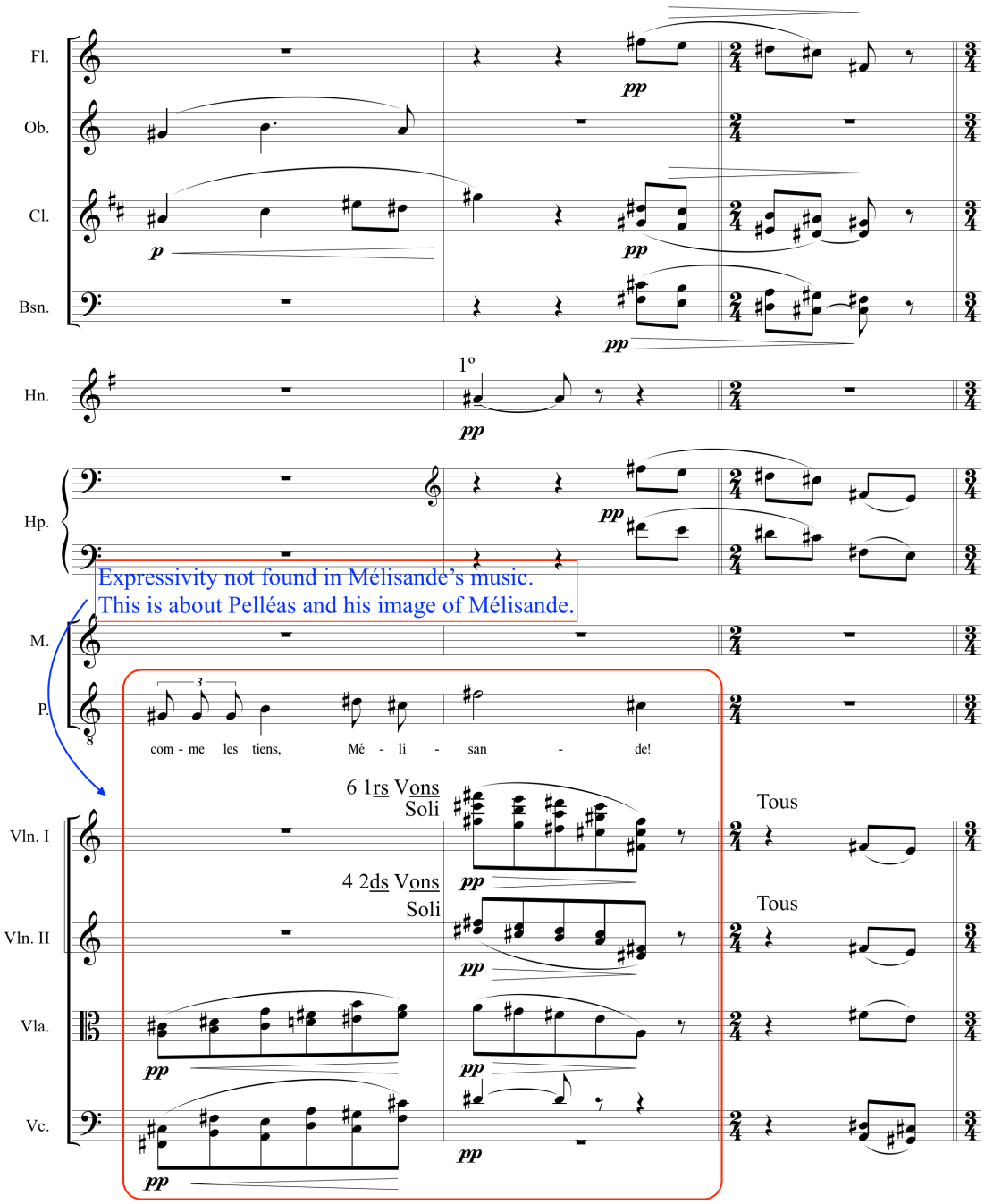


Ex. 17 cont'd…(Pelléas's unhearing response)



The transparency surrounding Mélisande (plucked sounds) contrasts conspicuously with Pelléas's lusher orchestration (sustained sounds).

Ex. 17 cont'd…(Pelléas's passionate imagery of Mélisande)



The second statement of “Laissez-moi!” is even more striking with its dissonant major second scored nakedly in the low register of the bassoons. Bergeron describes this as the “irritant of desire” that reminds us of the inherent “lack” found in desire.[32] But the transparent orchestration of a dissonance is also a reminder of how nakedly exposed Mélisande is. It is not that she is not attracted to Pelléas or even that she is not falling in love with him.[33] It is that her feelings are not taken into account at all. Mélisande “is imprisoned in a world (Allemonde) where only men have power and are free to love or brutalize”[34] (ex. 18).

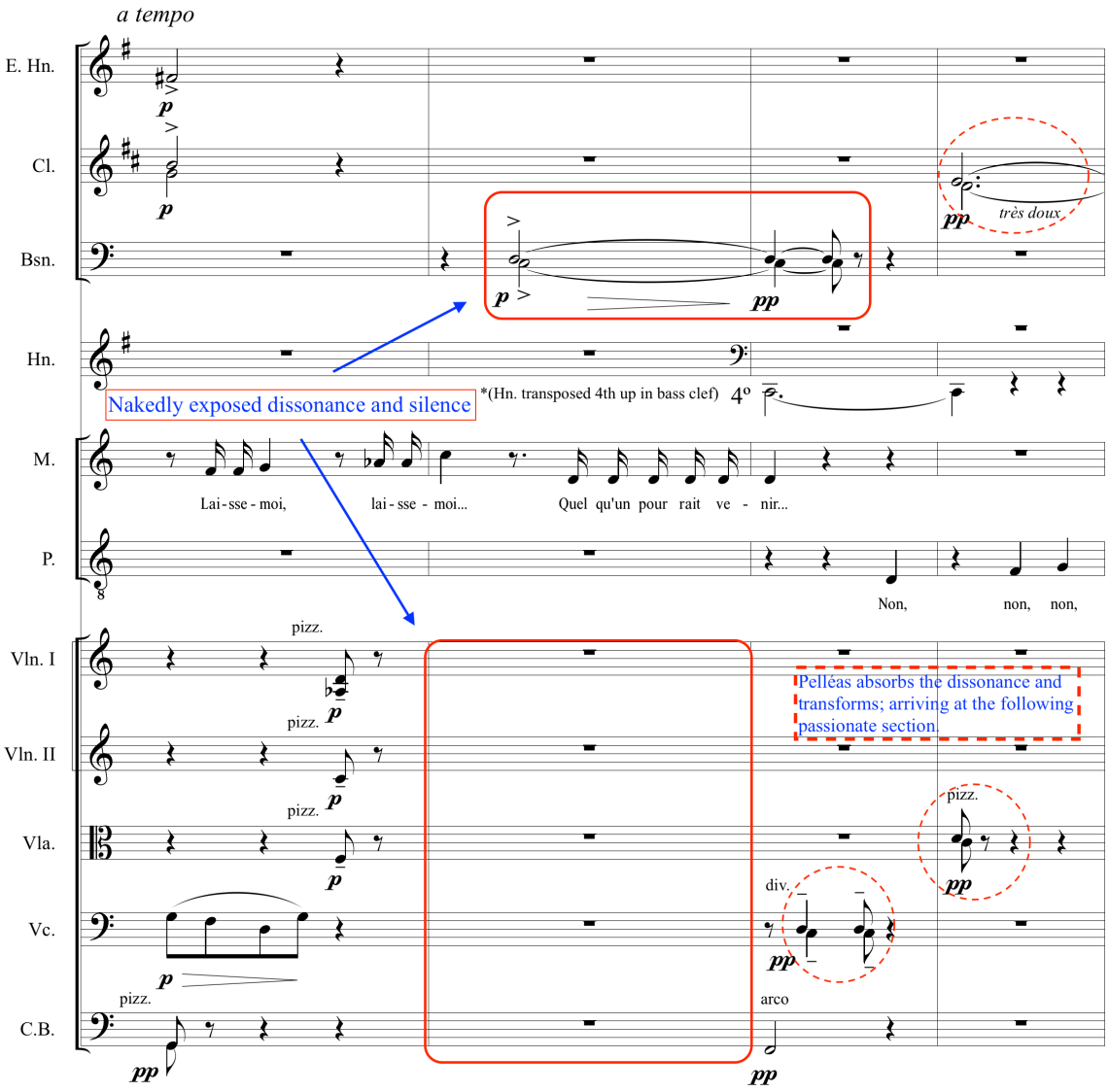
---

32. Bergeron, “Mélisande's Hair,” 180-184.

33. At the beginning of Mélisande’s a cappella song in Act III. “My long hair falls to the bottom of the tower, My hair waits for you the whole length of the tower”

34. Richard S. Parks, *The Music of Claude Debussy*, New Haven: Yale UP, (1989): 169.

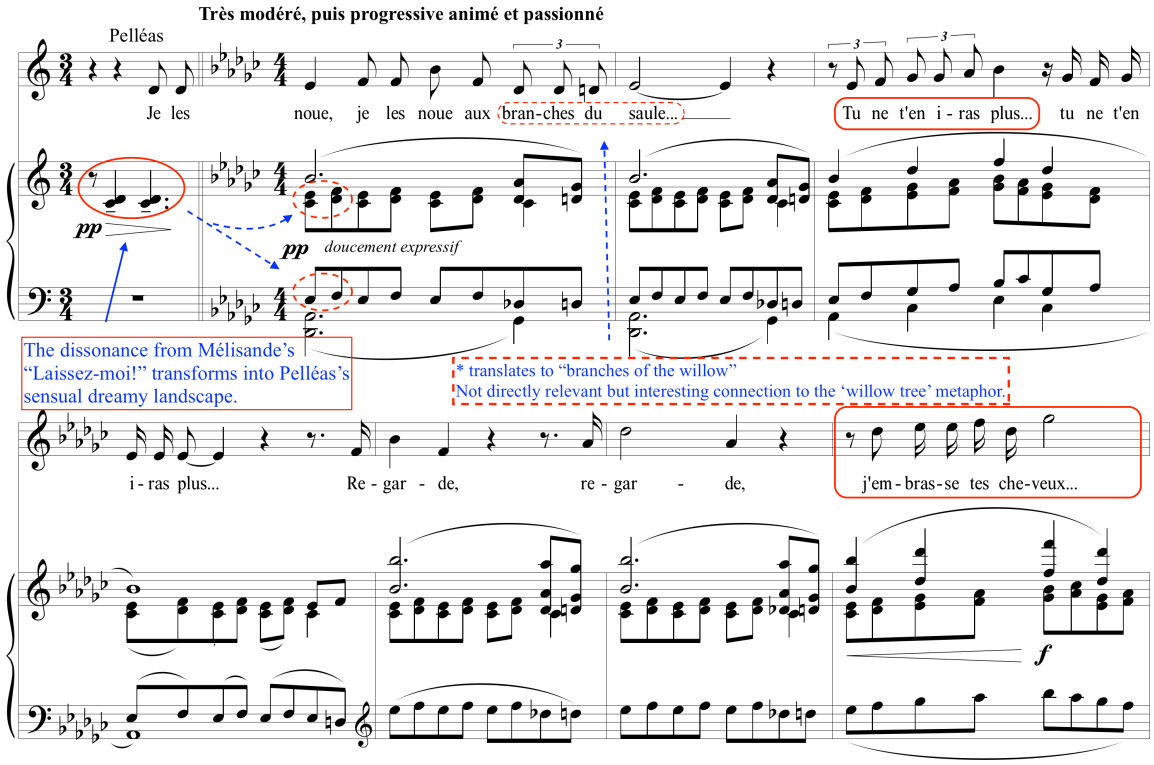
Ex. 18 – Nakedly exposed dissonance in second “Laissez-moi!”



Once again, Mélisande’s words are clear for us to hear; naked and without the artifice of her male counterparts — “Laissez-moi!” Mélisande tries to escape this world of control but, despite the clarity of her words and musical setting, Pelléas ignores her.

Instead, he absorbs this dissonance and with the orchestra, transforms it over eight bars until arriving at a passionate section where he can indulge in his own world of erotic fantasy and sensual pleasure (Ex. 19). Here he tells Mélisande "Tu ne t'en iras plus…tu ne t'en iras plus…" ("You won't go away! You won't go away!") before singing the titillatingly suggestive line "j'embrasse tes cheveux" ("I kiss your hair").

Ex. 19 – Pelléas's sensual and erotic song centered around Mélisande's hair



One would not be surprised to hear such sensuous music in Massenet but, as beautiful as it is, it is another reminder of Mélisande's place as an object. Instead of hearing Mélisande, Pelléas has chosen a self-indulgent dreamy landscape. Golaud too, is unhearing of Mélisande's desire to be 'let go' of. At the end of Act II Mélisande says that she is sick of being stuck in the castle and pleads with Golaud for two of them to leave. Golaud's dense prosaicness does not hear or understand and assumes someone has offended or hurt her or is perhaps ill.

Mélisande's third and final "Laissez-moi!" before being interrupted by Golaud is even more dramatic and striking in its dissonance and surrounding silences. These are but a few more examples of how Debussy's portrayal of Mélisande, with her short replies and sparse music that reveals little, allows her to be treated as a blank canvas on which the men can paint her how they wish. In the end, Mélisande is neither seen nor heard but is idealized, fetishized, observed as an object of desire both by Golaud and Pelléas.

Act V and 'La vérité'

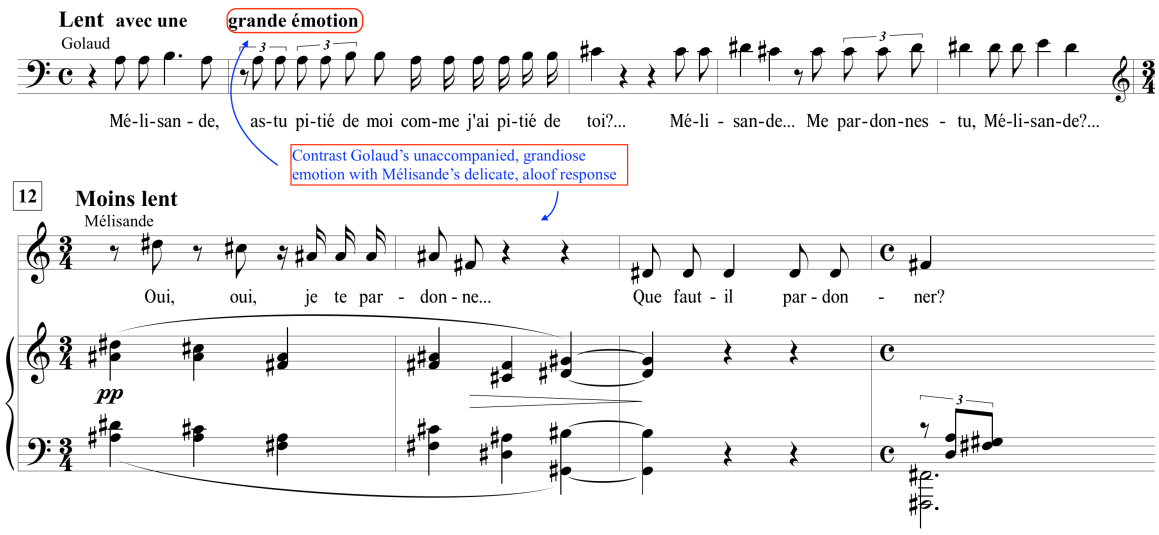
Mélisande's concealment of 'truth' uncovers deeper meanings and reveals the futility and arrogance of those that try to control events and use 'truth' as a weapon of power and control. This is made unsettlingly clear in Act V. It begins after Pelléas has been murdered in a jealous rage by his older half-brother Golaud at the end of Act IV. Mélisande is in a bedroom chamber, unwell and slowly fading. Normally the death of

Pelléas would be the end of the opera with the curtain closing on Mélisande's tears and Golaud's regret. It would be the perfect tragic ending that would leave opera audiences satisfied. However, what follows is a heartbreaking peek into a question I have often had when seeing operas such as *La Traviata* or *La Boheme*. What next? What follows the tragedy? Act V shows us in stark terms the damage caused by the men in the opera that look to control events.

Through the opera Mélisande has seemingly been robbed of all autonomy, trapped in a castle, lost in a strange land with various men looking to possess her. Both Pelléas and Golaud are fascinated by Mélisande's distant charm but unable to truly hear her. Instead, she is an eternal object of desire just outside their grasp.

Up until now when Mélisande sings, it is disarmingly empty of emotional thrusts and vocal acrobatics. The silence surrounding her is almost un-operatic. But by Act V, Golaud is the one who must deal with silence. However, much like how lost he was in the forest at the beginning of the opera, Golaud is out of place in the world of silences. In the revealing moment that mirrors Mélisande's unaccompanied song, Golaud begs Mélisande for forgiveness. But his music, and words, sound as if they belong in a different kind of opera (ex. 20). They are full of affected emotion and his expression of grief and guilt over the murder of his half-brother are covers for his true, self-interested aims.

Ex. 20 – Golaud's silence & affected emotion contrasted with Mélisande's aloofness.



Mélisande grants Golaud forgiveness and is accompanied by delicate orchestration for one of the first times. Only her response retains her sense of elusiveness and is aloof in a way that does not quench Golaud's jealousy. Golaud then begins his interrogation of Mélisande to reveal the 'truth' of her love for Pelléas, and whether her child is his or Pelléas's. He tries self-pity by saying he will soon die "Il faut dire la vérité à quel qu'un qui va mourir." He then tries intimidating Mélisande by saying she will soon die "Ne mens plus ainsi, au moment de mourir!" He asks if she loved Pelléas to which she replies unsatisfyingly "Mais oui…Où est-il?"

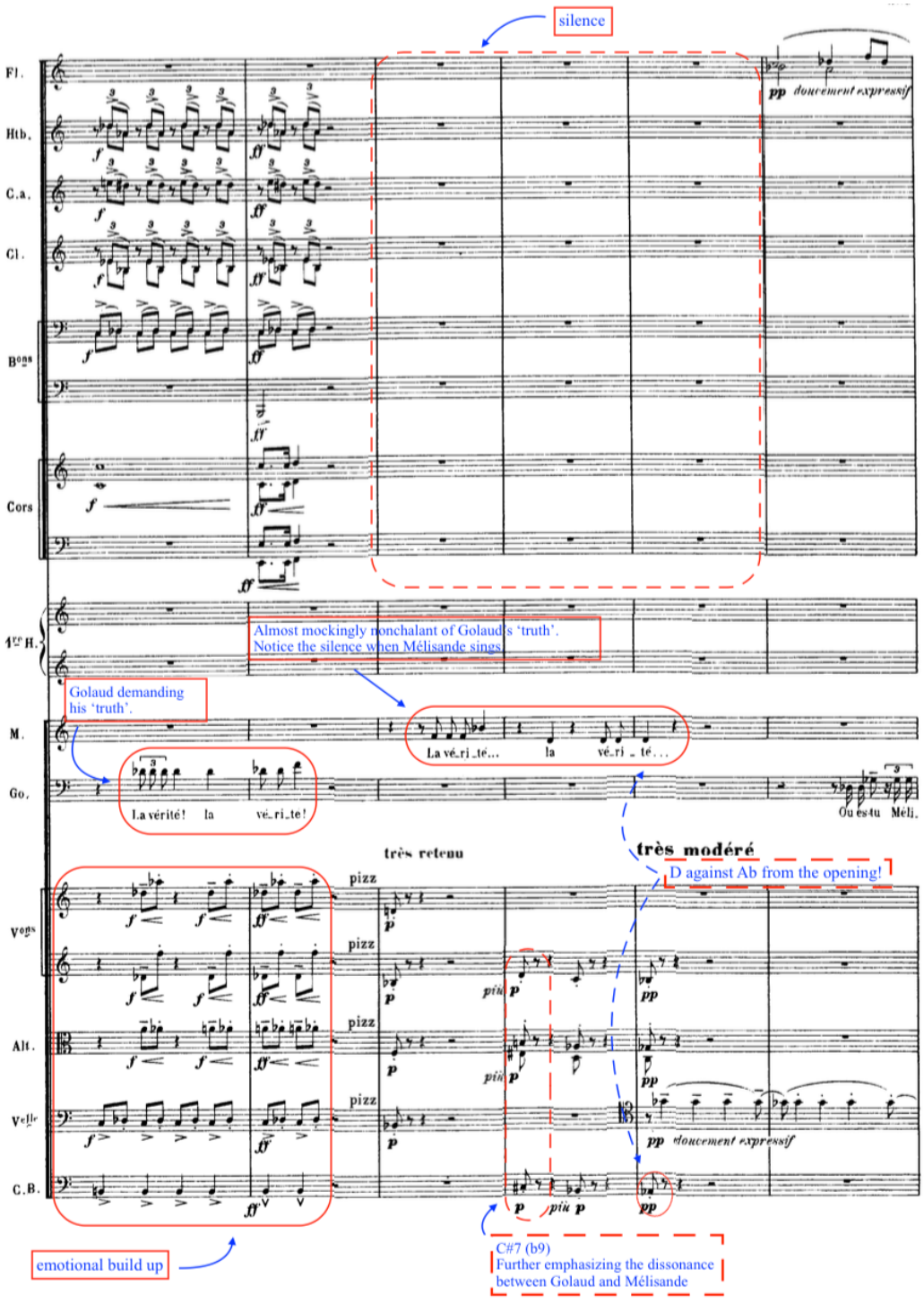
Eventually Golaud spirals further and further out of control and is near screaming at her to tell the 'truth'. Mélisande, on the other hand, continues to sing words of hazy meaning:

Je ne comprends pas non plus tout ce que je dis, voyez-vous…	Neither do I understand each thing that I say, do you see…
Je ne sais pas ce que je dis…	I do not know what I have said…
Je ne sais pas ce que je sais…	I do not know what I know…I
Je ne dis plus ce que je veux	say no longer what I would…

But now she is accompanied by orchestral music that colors her words and has thus far been missing. In contrast to Golaud's angry inquisition is Mélisande's peaceful, luminous, almost weightless music. She is returning to the 'truth' of the forest where we initially found her. Meanwhile, Golaud is going mad with his inability to see or hear Mélisande as she refuses to give up the one piece of power she has – her truth. It is not Golaud's truth, and that tears him apart. He is undone by Mélisande's silence and her unwillingness to relent.

Golaud demands conventional truth, yet he is unable to know what 'truth' is as he is blind and deaf to "la vérité". Truth is not something to know, but something to experience. This is what Mélisande accepts throughout the opera. She does not look to possess, but rather accepts her destiny without the hubris of control. For Golaud though, his truth is just that, his. Mélisande's response to Golaud's emotional "La vérité!" is a powerful summary of his conventional 'truth' of control and her 'truth' of experience as Mélisande echoes Golaud's words as if they were seashells found on a stroll by the water (ex. 21).

Ex. 21 – Mélisande's "La vérité" vs. Golaud's "La vérité"



In other words, Golaud fights fate and seeks to selfishly control events, but the more he does, the quicker they escape his grasp. Just how he was unable to control Mélisande or the events of the opera.

Those haunting first words to Golaud "Ne me touchez pas!" and her words to Pelléas "Laissez-moi!" go unheard. Unlike the pedestrian Golaud or the youthful Pelléas, Mélisande does not have the privilege of speaking literal truth or metaphorical truth. She is a woman who knows where she stands and needs to conceal in order to protect herself. Why does she lie to Golaud when confronted about her lost ring? Why make up the story of the cave? Why doesn't she say she lost the ring in the well? To be sure, she lies to protect Pelléas but she is also protecting herself. She knows her fate and that no one will lie to protect her. All she has is her secrets. She is an outsider and when, in a scene reminiscent of *Otello*, Golaud brutally insults Mélisande and drags her by the hair, no one comes to her aid. Like Desdemona, Mélisande knows the fate that most likely awaits her. Contrast this with Golaud who, even on Mélisande's deathbed, can only think of himself and his ego as he interrogates Mélisande. Mélisande is a character that is desired by men who wish to possess her. She cannot afford to let go of what little power she has.

One of the themes of the opera is how the male characters men cannot understand or communicate with this woman. She is an object of their desire but only elicit silence and clever evasion from Mélisande. Mélisande evades objective, deterministic truth. But

her silence is not true silence. It is more that the men in this opera cannot (or do not) hear.[35]

Mélisande is famously confounding to opera lovers and musicologists alike. Her lines are mostly composed of short, artless phrases. She is often heard alone or sparsely accompanied. There is nothing particularly remarkable about her dialogue or music yet she remains intriguing. For someone who speaks such direct phrases such as "Je ne suis pas heureuse" ("I am not happy") why does she seem as if she's concealing so much? Why does she lie? Oftentimes she lies needlessly. The fog of mystery clears when one remembers Mélisande is introduced to the opera as a severely traumatized woman in tattered clothes. When Golaud stumbles upon Mélisande he asks her who hurt her to which she replies "Everyone! Everyone!". By the end of the opera, that trauma has been multiplied. But Mélisande resists control and holds on to the power of her secrecy as she quietly submits to fate. This contrast to the other characters, especially Golaud, is what makes her the heroine and Golaud the tragic, even pathetic figure of the opera.

The final words of the opera express the truly heartbreaking tragedy of the opera. Tellingly, the ones that first recognize Mélisande's death are the servants. Silence surrounds the closing moments of the opera. The devastating fatalism of the last line ends

---

35. The one exception may be Arkël, but he too fails. Yniold is a child who similarly suffers from Golaud's terrorizing.

an opera that has taken us through the traumatization of a woman who quietly refuses to yield by men who wished to possess her for their own salvation.

ARKEL
No, no, don't go near her. Don't trouble her.
Say nothing more. You don't know what the soul is.

GOLAUD
It wasn't my fault! It wasn't my fault!

ARKEL
Careful ... careful. We must speak softly now. We mustn't worry her further.
The human soul is a very silent thing. It likes to take its leave of us alone.
It suffers so timidly. But the pity of it, Golaud, the sadness of everything one sees.
Oh! Oh!
(All the servants suddenly fall to their knees, at the back of the room.)
What is it?

DOCTOR
They are right.

ARKEL
I saw nothing. Are you sure?

DOCTOR
Yes, yes.

ARKEL
I heard nothing. So quickly, so quickly. She's gone without a word.
Don't stay here, Golaud. She needs silence now. Come, come. It's terrible, but it's not your fault.
She was such a quiet little thing, so timid and silent. She was a poor, mysterious little person like anyone.
She lies there like the elder sister to her own child. Come. The child mustn't stay here in this room.
It must live, now, in her place. It's the poor little one's turn.

Influence on *The Tragedy of La Llorona*

Debussy's opera was the initial inspiration in the development of *The Tragedy of La Llorona* and is filled with similar dichotomies and incongruities found in symbolist plays, literature, and in Debussy's music, not least of which is his sole opera. Dichotomies such as seen and unseen, heard and unheard, and subject versus object. These themes, especially being seen and unseen, find their way into *The Tragedy of La Llorona*. The characters themselves were an inspiration. One could find Pelléas in Francisco, Golaud in Ignacio, and Mélisande in Dolores/Isabelle. This is more the case in Act I of *The Tragedy of La Llorona* as the development of the characters diverge from there.

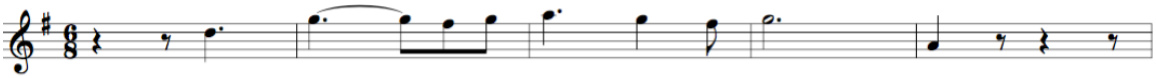
One of the themes of the Maeterlinck's play and subsequent opera is the role and dominance of fate in our lives and how, despite our vain attempts to control events, we are at the mercy of forces beyond our own. The use of the river metaphor in *The Tragedy of La Llorona* represents the force and flow of, if not fate, then a power beyond our own we must surrender to. Power and control are major themes in Debussy's opera and are major themes in my own. Additionally, there is something 'out of time' about Debussy's opera which is set in the fictional kingdom of Allemonde. This sense of timelessness and magical quality was very influential to my opera.

Sieglinde and Brünnhilde "O hehrstes Wunder!"

In contrast to the previous two examples, this passage demonstrates how singular moments can have a lasting and defining influence. When introduced to Sieglinde in Act I of *Die Wälkure*, she is trapped in a marriage not of her choosing. She sings of her 'defilement' and 'shame' of being kidnapped, beaten, and raped. Despite her introduction to the opera as a battered character, Sieglinde has one of the most astounding and important moments in all of Wagner's Ring cycle.

The music of "O hehrstes Wunder!," called the 'redemption through love' theme (ex. 22), is only heard twice. It first appears Act III of *Die Wälkure* when Sieglinde is informed that she is pregnant with Siegfried, the hero of the cycle, and then appears at the end of the entire cycle in *Götterdämmerung* when Brünnhilde, the heroine of the opera, redeems the world through her love for Siegfried. My main focus will be on Sieglinde's version ("O hehrstes Wunder!"), but I will refer to both. In many ways, this 'redemption through love' theme sums up the entirety of the cycle. This is one the most expansive examples of how the music of female characters shows resistance to being acted upon in opera plots. In this case, it does more than demonstrate individual resistance but represents the redemption of the entire world.

Ex. 22 – ‘Redemption through love’ theme. *Die Wälkure,* Act III, scene



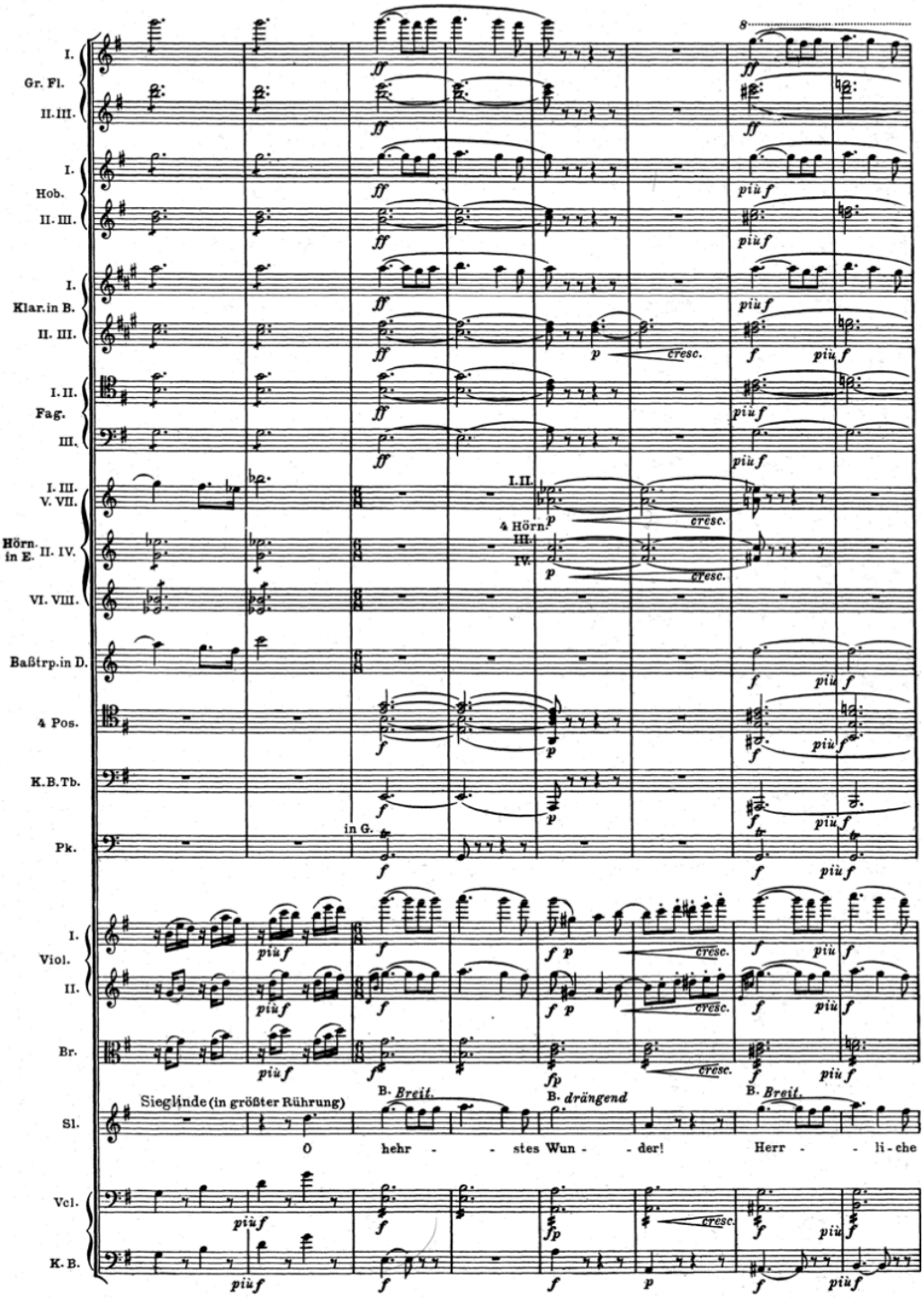
It is widely accepted that the vast majority of Wagner’s works are centered around the theme of redemption. It is therefore no surprise that this theme would play such an important role in the Ring cycle.

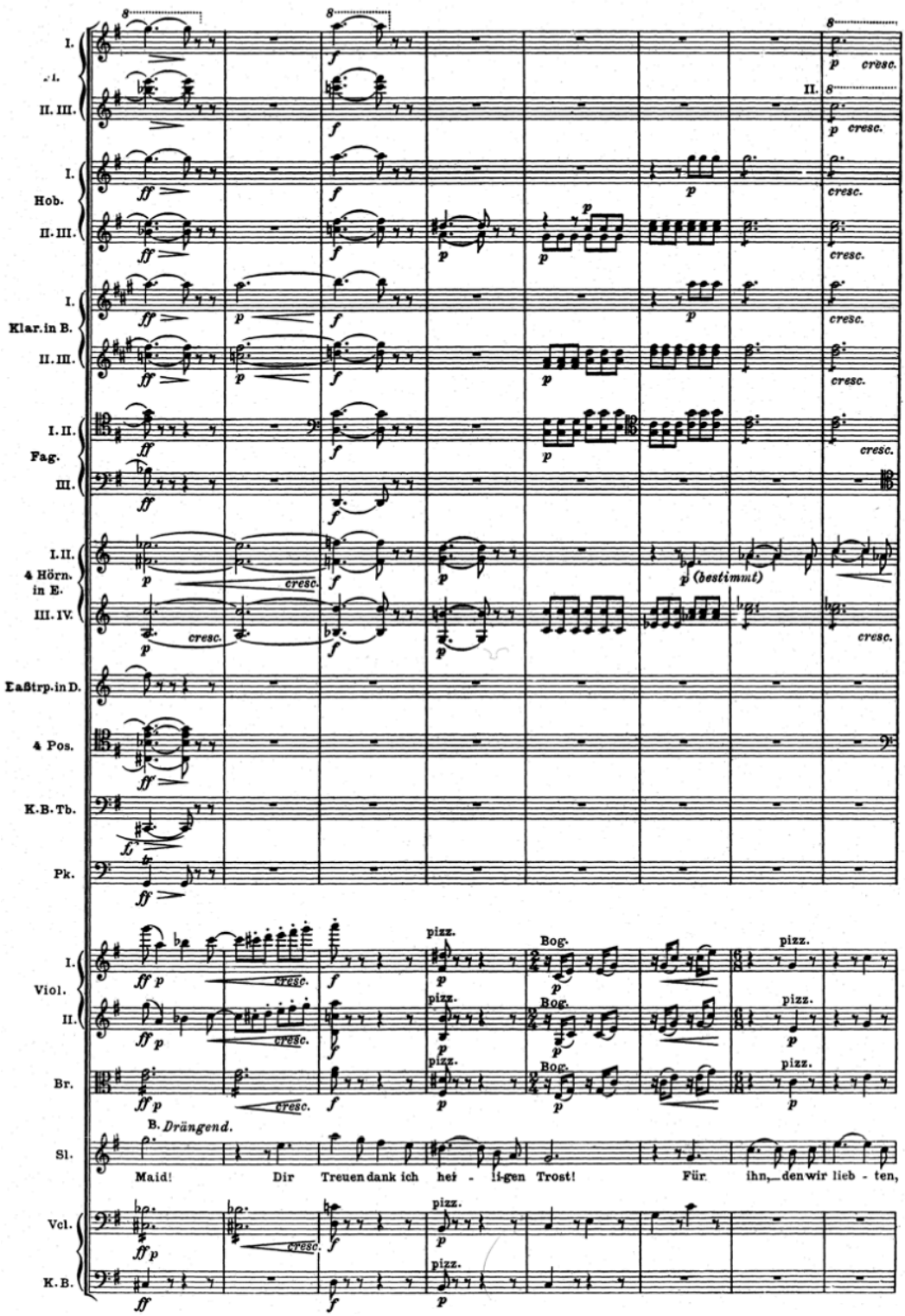
This example differs from the those of Desdemona and Mélisande in scope as well as thematic content. Both Desdemona and Mélisande are approaching death and expressing their sorrow, albeit in very different ways. Desdemona’s “Willow Song” is a reminiscence of a childhood story as a means of expressing her despair until she overflows with emotion. This aria fills out her character as more than a love-struck woman or as a pawn in a game of power between men. It forces the audience to look with horror upon the devastation that is about to occur. With Mélisande, it is the juxtaposition of her silence that speaks loudest. She begins the opera as a traumatized young woman who is seen as an object of desire, abused, and left with nothing. The emptiness surrounding the character is stark and unsettling but her silence is the source of her hidden power. This is especially so when set against the pomposity of Golaud.

Sieglinde, however, is begging for death to take her so that she may be reunited with her love, Siegmund. Her world has been unceasingly cruel up to this point until

Brünnhilde informs her that she is carrying her and Siegmund's child. At this moment Sieglinde is filled with an intense desire to live. This moment is the fulfillment of her destiny and is one of the most glorious passages in all of opera (ex. 23).

Ex. 23 – “O hehrhstes Wunder!”




I.
II. III.
Hob.
Klar. in B.
I. II.
Fag.
III.
4 Hörn. in E.
Baßtrp. in D.
4 Pos.
K.-B.-Tb.
Pk.
Viol.
Br.
Sl.
Vcl.
K. B.
cresc.
p (bestimmt)
pizz.
Bog.
B. Drängend.
Maid! Dir Treuen dank ich heil - li-gen Trost! Für ihn, den wir lieb - ten,

Wagner's female characters are complex and not always easy to categorize. For one, many of his female characters exhibit sexual desire openly and unapologetically which, for the time period, was quite progressive. As previously discussed in chapter one, the expression of sexuality was often punished in operas of the 19th century. In Act I, scene 3 of *Die Wälkure* she sings of her desire for Siegmund and is overcome with desire as she describes the glorious features of her beloved, "I tremble with the rapture of my delight!"

On the other hand, one could also find in the interaction between Wagner's male and female characters a kind of subservience of women to men. In her book, *Richard Wagner's Women*, German musicologist Eva Rieger argues this point with a specific emphasis on feminine sacrifice for male redemption. While Rieger does acknowledge the complexity of Wagner's female characters, she asserts that Wagner's music denigrates women by putting them in an elevated position in order to serve men by dying for them. In terms of the libretto, however, this point of subservience is challenged in *Die Wälkure* when Wotan is telling the Valkyrie about Brünnhilde's punishment for disobeying him. They shudder at the thought of having to be subservient to a man:

> A husband will gain all her womanly grace:
> the will of her master she now shall obey,
> by the hearth at home shall she spin,
> to all mockers a mark for scorn!

The Valkyrie cannot imagine a worse fate than being subservient to a man. This point could be challenged by arguing that while the independent Valkyrie loathe the idea of subservience to a man, they are subservient to Wotan, the patriarchal leader. However, the entire opera culminates in the destruction of Valhalla and Wotan's power and it is this theme that accompanies that moment.

Furthermore, even when Brünnhilde is punished by Wotan and becomes mortal, she still retains her warrior spirit. Far from being subservient, she is passionate in her love and devotion towards Siegfried but demands the same kind of love and devotion from him. The character of her music may soften at times when compared to the famous *Ride of the Valkyries*, but the strength and significance of it remains. She is no wilting flower and when confronted with Siegfried's apparent deception, she demands retribution and advises Hagen on how to kill Siegfried for his perceived betrayal. So while there may be uncomfortable moments in Wagner's portrayal of women, he has also written some of the most multi-dimensional female characters in the repertoire.

Still, the idea of female sacrifice persists. Catherine Clément too makes the point that it is the women who have to do the dying for the men. And it is true that Sieglinde is about to do the same, die for her lost love. However, she is not sacrificing herself for Sieglinde but rather joining him in death. If anything, it is Siegmund who dies for Sieglinde as he chooses death over a life in Valhalla without Sieglinde. This kind of mutual devotion between the two is why Brünnhilde's revelation to Sieglinde about her

unborn child it is so significant. Brünnhilde has not only given Sieglinde a path to continue her love for Siegmund through her child but, and this is critical, has thwarted Wotan's attempt to control events who ordered Sieglinde's death.

For Brünnhilde, the kind of love and devotion she witnessed between Sieglinde and Siegmund was alien to her and the emotion Sieglinde expresses in the "O hehrstes Wunder!" excerpt moves Brünnhilde so much that she defies her father Wotan and helps her escape. This was the moment that opened Brünnhilde to the idea of 'redemption through love' and was the moment that set her on the course to destroy Valhalla and redeem the world. Far from these two moments (Sieglinde's "O hehrstes Wunder!" and Brünnhilde's final scene) representing female sacrifice in the service of men, it is a case of two women defying the god Wotan. In the case of Sieglinde it is also the glorification of motherhood.

I would submit that, contrary to Dr. Rieger's assertions, the music demonstrates the elevation and glory of these characters, not their subservience. Sieglinde and Brünnhilde – two women forming the bookends of the cycle. Sieglinde brings life into the world and her love inspires Brünnhilde who eventually destroys the world of man made laws. The world is redeemed through women while the prideful and pompous grand plans of men crumble.

Connection to *The Tragedy of La Llorona*

It is precisely this complex balance of women being acted upon in the plots, showing autonomy of character, strength of will, and the use of musical symbolism in this passage that I found relevant for the development of the female characters in *The Tragedy of La Llorona*. In the traditional tale of La Llorona a young woman (often named Maria) becomes distraught at her husband's infidelity to the point of extreme anger. Her anger turns to self-pity so quickly as she can find no reason to live without her husband's affection. However, this example from Wagner avoids exactly this kind of characterization of the distraught woman.

Sieglinde and Brünnhilde demonstrate so much more strength and defiant independence even in the face of suffering. One could find similarities between Maria from the traditional telling of La Llorona and Sieglinde in how they both want to end their lives at the loss of their love. But Sieglinde is mourning the death of her love and not his betrayal. Whereas Maria feels discarded and as if she has nothing to live for. Furthermore, despite being brutalized by Hunding, Sieglinde immediately displays defiance. Even Fricka, who endures Wotan's infidelity, eventually manages to exact her own vengeance and holds Wotan to the fire of his own making. And, as noted before with Siegfried's perceived disloyalty, Brünnhilde demonstrates how a Valkyrie handles betrayal.

For whatever flaws they may have, Wagner's female characters are fiercely independent and heroic. Sieglinde and Brünnhilde, in their own ways, find freedom from the constricting laws of the patriarchal gods. By carefully placing and entrusting an important leitmotif to two strong female characters, Wagner emphasizes the redemptive quality of love. And it is to women that he entrusts this message that encapsulates the entire Ring cycle. Both Brünnhilde and Sieglinde, as characters, but more specifically in this excerpt, offer an example of how to show 'glorious transformation', heroism, and 'redemption' in the face of the corruptive forces of society.

In *The Tragedy of La Llorona*, this plays out in the key scene when Dolores is defeated and empty just like Sieglinde after Siegmund's death. The circumstances differ and the transformation is inverted, or perhaps more accurately, perverted. Sieglinde finds a reason to continue living while Dolores, closer to Brünnhilde at the end of *Götterdämmerung*, sees and accepts the corruption of the world and gives into transformation through death. Though with Brünnhilde, this transformation is clearly heroic while with Dolores it is not as clear. In either case, even if different in terms of drama, the tone of Dolores's transformation and redemption is meant to be similar to this excerpt as sung by Sieglinde, then later by Brünnhilde.

Another key difference from Dolores is that Brünnhilde is a fallen warrior daughter of a god that turns mortal only to offer hope by destroying the oppressive structures of society. Dolores, on the other hand, goes from mortal to giving into a

powerful and ancient supernatural entity that gives her new found power and purpose. In both cases the character brings about the destruction of old structures, albeit in very different ways.

With Sieglinde there is an even more striking difference to Dolores. As mentioned, “O hehrstes Wunder!” is not only about the love between man and woman but a celebration of the love found in motherhood. The aspect of motherhood in the excerpt has been the most challenging but important issue to come to terms with in relation to *The Tragedy of La Llorona*. There is, of course, the fact that Dolores commits maternal filicide before killing herself while Sieglinde stops herself from dying precisely because of the knowledge of her child.

This is the most difficult aspect of the tale that I have had to grapple with. This is another reason why I turned to this passage and these characters for inspiration. Like Wagner, I am a man attempting to write powerful female characters. This passage’s ability to portray a glorious moment of exaltation was an inspiration on how to portray Dolores. Dolores’s transformation into La Llorona is on paper a frightening and perhaps an even evil thing. But my aim is to convey the same sense of ecstatic purpose that Sieglinde found in this passage. Dolores has risen up and fallen down in the opera. It is in this moment that she finds purpose in ‘immortal revenge’. She, like how Brünnhilde burns Valhalla, sets fire to the world. Dolores’s desire for ‘immortal revenge’ consumes

her as if a wave of transcendent love in the form of vengeance washes over her. It could easily be Dolores singing Sieglinde's line:

> O radiant wonder!
> Glorious maid!
> Thou bring'st me, true one, holiest balm!

It is important to remember that the folktale La Llorona is meant to be a 'scary story' and that *The Tragedy of La Llorona* is my original take on the origin story of the ghost tale. The fulfillment of the 'redemption through love' idea, inspired by Sieglinde's excerpt, is mirrored in Dolores's transformation but will only be fulfilled in the eventual sequel to this opera, *Todas lloramos*.[36]

This leads to the idea of female sacrifice, discussed in chapter one and referenced many times by musicologists such as Eva Rieger in reference to Wagner. It is true that Sieglinde dies as soon as Siegfried is born and the glorification of love and motherhood is not followed through by Wagner. But when we hear the 'redemption through love' theme sung by Brünnhilde, we cannot help but recall Sieglinde. This large scale thinking forms an arc that connects Sieglinde to Brünnhilde and is a model for how to portray Dolores. That said, while the symbolic significance of this passage remains, the reality of Wagner's dismissal of Sieglinde once she delivers the hero Siegfried cannot be ignored.

---

36. *The Tragedy of La Llorona* is the first of a two-opera arc, serving as an origin story of Dolores/La Llorona. This is not essential to the understanding of this opera or thesis but may be useful in the discussion in chapter four.

On the other hand, Brünnhilde's 'sacrifice' is not done to save or redeem Siegfried. She orders the funeral pyre and chooses death not only to join Siegfried but to remake the world. She, like Dolores, faces the ugliness of society head on. This is not the self-sacrifice of a victim or subservient woman but one of heroism. For all the brutality that Sieglinde is put through and for all the humiliation Brünnhilde must endure, this passage still presents a more positive example of women in opera. It is an example of feminine heroism and was a tremendous influence to the *The Tragedy of La* Llorona. When we witness Dolores's betrayal, demise, and eventual transformation into La Llorona it is meant to be perceived as darkly heroic.

The 'redemption through love' theme is about how love breaks the bonds of servitude. Whether it is Brünnhilde the warrior or Sieglinde the mother, it is in large part through women that freedom is won. Sieglinde's child, born out of forbidden love, and Brünnhilde's self-immolation forged from love redeems the world. For all of the bluster and machinations of mostly men in the Ring, it is Sieglinde and Brünnhilde that represent the two most pivotal moments in the opera. Their death is not an end but a transformation in the name and spirit of devotion and love.

Chapter 4 – *The Tragedy of La Llorona*

Introduction

> "…dissonant music, having rushed to the extreme of dissonance as a reaction from romanticism, will yet find the great composer who will mould from a mixture of consonance and dissonance a great music which is not only dryly intellectual, as most dissonant music has been so far, but carrying also a deep simplicity — emotion, if we want to use the word — which will link it with the people as with the intellectuals."[37]

In the course of creating a work of this scope, a large number of decisions must necessarily be made before ever putting pencil to paper. This includes a complex pre-compositional plan that lays out the structure of the music, the story, and how the two will interact. Since I am both the composer and librettist, this preparatory work is doubled. Hundreds (if not thousands) of pages of research material were read in preparation of developing my own take on the folktale of La Llorona. During the course of writing any piece, let alone an opera, these carefully laid plans always undergo a number of changes. Part of composing is being open to new ideas that may alter the original path and character of the composition. This has been, and continues to be, the case with my opera. Writing this thesis and receiving insightful commentary has been a

---

37. Ruth Crawford Seeger, "Letter from Ruth Crawford to Vivian Fine," In *Music in the USA: A Documentary Companion*, editors Judith Tick and Paul E. Beaudoin, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2008): 452.

revelatory experience of learning where this opera began, where it is currently at, and where it is going.

In its current state *The Tragedy of La Llorona* is not complete and is still evolving. The first act is largely finished with the exception of interludes. The second act has many key pieces written but is less complete. This is not only due to the scope of the project but also the way in which my conception of the music and story has evolved while working with Dr. Lias and my committee. I am happy to admit that my initial aim at having a tightly controlled piece of pre-planned structures loosened to reflect an approach that is more natural to myself and to the story I am telling. This is particularly true of act two where I have not only changed my musical plans but the story as well.

In this spirit of the continued evolution of this opera, this chapter will focus on an overview of some of the larger themes, approaches, and historical influences to the storytelling of the opera. This includes a look at key motifs, musical structures, and stylistic choices.

Relevant Harmonic/Melodic Structures

‘Texture’ sets

‘Texture’ sets are structures that are used to create a harmonic fog or color in the background. The name ‘texture’ comes from how these sets are most characteristically used in conjunction with orchestral textures. The opening to act one typifies this use. ‘Texture’ sets are approached in a similar manner to modal jazz.[38] Like modal jazz harmony, the functionality of chords are removed and tonal centers are ambiguous. This creates opportunities for freer linear development as well as multiple chords and chord voicings. These sets, while associated with orchestral textures, can be stated linearly or as a singular chord in a *leitmotivic* manner, however, unlike other musical structures in the opera, they are not developed or used to generate material but stated plainly.

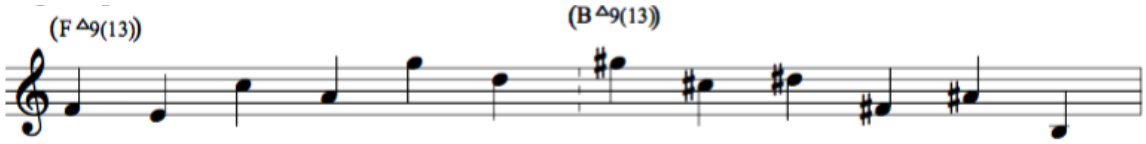
‘Old World’ texture set (after Alban Berg’s *Lyrische Suite*) – Hopeful, naïve, and youthful. The ‘diatonic’ sound reflects how the past is often looked upon with these feelings. The homage to Berg hints at the use of musical anagrams that are so associated with him. The set is heavily featured in the opening to Act I, scene 1. The symmetrical,

---

38. For a theoretical background of modal jazz, refer to George Russell’s 1953 book *Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization*.

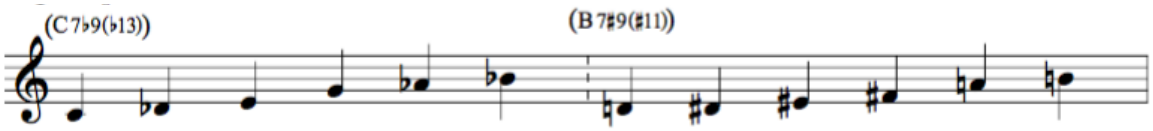
hexachordal construction and tritone relationship between hexachords relates to Ignacio's set.

Fig. 2 – 'Old World' texture set (after Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite*)



'New World' texture set – Mysterious, haunting, and magical. The unstable 'altered dominant' sound contrasts starkly with its counterpart. Its evocative quality evokes intrigue and the tonal instability of the set (while still being in the realm of tonality) represents the undetermined nature of the future. This set is heard extensively in the *Prelude*.

Fig. 3 – 'New World' texture set

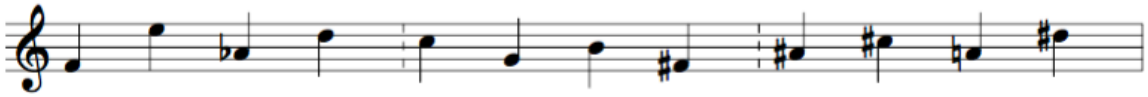


Dolores and Llorona sets

Dolores's 'Yearning' set – Used melodically and thematically. The set is approached in multiple ways (as set theory, tone-row, *leitmotif*, etc.) and undergoes many transformations. It is divided in any number of ways but the division into three segments

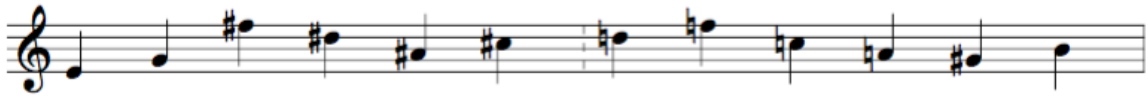
illuminates the core structure. The melodic nature of the set, and suggestive harmony, reflects Dolores's yearning. The last third of the set provides resolution to this 'yearning' quality. Dolores is not structurally tied to this set in terms of her musical development and the set is used as a frequent *leitmotif*, apart from its direct association with Dolores. The full row is never stated melodically until Isabelle's appearance where she completes Dolores's statement of the set. This represents a potential resolution of Dolores's angst and yearning.

Fig. 4 – Dolores's set (melodic in nature with a 'yearning' quality)



Llorona's 'Wandering' set – Derived from the Dolores 'yearning' set. However, the symmetrical cyclical construction reflects Llorona's 'wandering'. It is used atmospherically and harmonically rather than melodically to represent Llorona as a non-corporeal entity. The potential harmonic ordering of the hexachords into chords relates to the 'New World' texture set ($Eb^{7(b9/\#9)}/F^{6(\#9/\#11)}$).

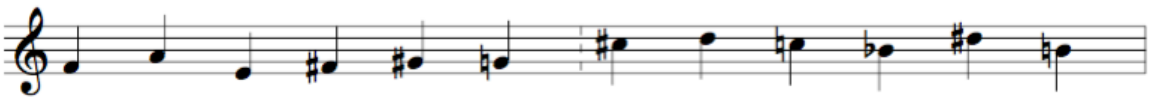
Fig. 5 – Llorona's 'wandering' set (symmetrical and cyclical to suggest 'wandering')



‘Power and Control’ sets

Ignacio’s ‘Power/Control’ set – Power and control are expressed through the hyper-ordered hexachordal combinatoriality of this set. The hexachordal relationship to the tritone, and close-knit construction reflect this. It designed to have a claustrophobic, neurotic, dizzying sound which represents how Ignacio is consumed by power and control in a vicious cycle.[39] Nearly all of Ignacio’s music, harmonic and melodic, is derived from this set.

Fig. 6 – Ignacio’s ‘Power/Control’ set (hexachordal combinatorial)



Francisco’s ‘generative’ set[40] – Derived from the primary hexachord of the ‘Power/Control’ set. Used primarily to generate chord progressions. The overlapping of key intervallic structures between the ‘Power/Control’ set demonstrates Francisco’s desire for power and control and envy of Ignacio. However, his path is undetermined, hence the

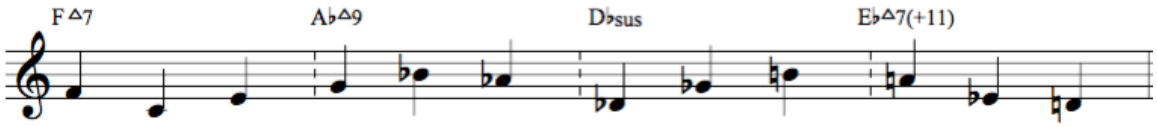
---

39. The structure of this set is inspired by a quote from *Pessimism: Philosophy, Ethic, Spirit* by Joshua Foa Dienstag. “…that time is a burden; that the course of history is in some sense ironic; that freedom and happiness are incompatible; that human existence is absurd.”

40. ‘Generative’ refers to multiple devices in music set-theory used to manipulate rows in order to create material. In this case, it is used primarily to generate chord progressions that are related to the set in varying levels of connectedness.

deviation from Ignacio's set in the second hexachord and the more flexible, open, and 'generative' nature of the set. Francisco's music is not necessarily restricted to this set.

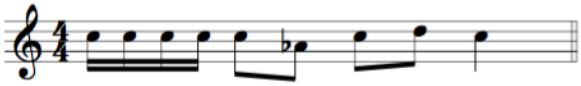
Fig. 7 – Francisco's 'generative' set (used primarily to generate material)



'River' Theme

River Theme – The river is almost a character itself in the folktale of La Llorona and is a central metaphor in my opera. The symbol of the river has many meanings and a deep history in storytelling. It is representative of many things including the power of nature, the path and source of life, and as a passageway into the primal. Additionally the river represents how one must choose to either flow with the power of the river or be overwhelmed by it. The river metaphor is also connected with time and identity in how rivers are in a constant state of becoming.[41]

Fig. 8 – River Theme (one of the primary *leitmotif's* in the opera)



41. Heraclitus's quote "You could not step twice into the same river; for other waters are ever flowing on to you" was an inspiration for the 'river theme's' conceptual use as connected with Time and Identity. Luciano Berio's authors note to Sinfonia was another inspiration for the musical use of themes and aesthetic styles. "…the image which comes most spontaneously to my mind is that of a river flowing through a constantly changing landscape…"

Background of the opera

Why an opera?

Storytelling is a human activity that we all engage in daily. Stories contextualize life, comfort us in times of grief, entertain us, and illuminate new ways of engaging with and understanding our world. A composer is a storyteller, but one whose language is close to pure metaphor. For the composer, the language of music can be both freeing and a burden when trying to tell a story. This may be why composers frequently turn to opera. Operas are the primary vehicle for telling stories in orchestral art music because they can be more specific and reach beyond the purely aesthetic. Composers are at the center of the concert music tradition and even more so when it comes to opera as everything emanates from the stories composers create.

As a composer I am compelled to create worlds in which people can find a fingerprint of themselves; of their pasts and futures wrapped in a present. A composer's ability to reflect the external and internal worlds in which they live — to give voice to a shared human experience — is more than an aim of mine but a responsibility. As Paul Rosenfeld wrote when discussing the American composer, what defines the composer is "...the ability to draw the substance of his art from out [of] the life that surges about

him."[42] This means being present in the moment as well as understanding the history and traditions that brought us to this point. This reflects my experience in music and approach to my opera.

Two-opera arc

As mentioned, this opera aims to engage in a conversation with the standard repertoire by sometimes rejecting convention, and at other times reflecting it. This results in musical and narrative approaches that overlap as much as they contradict one another. While not essential to this thesis or understanding of the opera, it would be clarifying to remind the reader that this opera is the first of a two-opera arc. Generally speaking, the first part of this two-opera arc, *The Tragedy of La Llorona*, is written in a more traditional way and is meant to have this 'conversation' with history. It is written for the stage and for an acoustic instrumentation.

The second part of this two-opera arc, *Todas lloramos*, is written for electro-acoustic instruments and is meant to be more experimental in its narrative and musical approach as well as the multiple platforms it embraces (film, graphic novel, interactive theatre, sound sculptures, etc.). This is relevant only to highlight the importance of the

---

42. Paul Rosenfeld, "Paul Rosenfeld's Manifesto for the American Composer," In *Music in the USA: A Documentary Companion*, editors Judith Tick and Paul E. Beaudoin, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2008): 338.

musical and narrative approach to *The Tragedy of La Llorona* as well as the need to engage the repertoire so intensely. Ultimately, *The Tragedy of La Llorona* should be an enjoyable and accessible work that can stand on its own. But hopefully, the approach to this opera will contrast with the eventual second installment of the story in such a way that a larger picture is formed of both works.

Summary of Influence from the Repertoire

With this context in mind, *The Tragedy of La Llorona* follows a linear narrative structure with a clear plot that has many of the ingredients of melodrama that defines so much of opera. There are pirates, supernatural entities, murder, political intrigue, revenge, betrayal, and of course the perennial partner of betrayal…a love story. The way the magical or spiritual elements of this opera are presented (more or less in a 'realistic' setting) has plenty of precedent in the repertoire including *Dido and Aeneas*, *Don Giovanni*, *Rigoletto*, and *Tristan und Isolde*. In this way, I am very much aiming to be cast in the light of the repertoire, even if only in narrative intent.

Musically, there are certainly moments that contain elements of Bel Canto and grand opera. Dolores's stand against Bouchard at the end of act one is an example of the scope of grand opera. Additionally, the influence of repertoire on my opera is not limited to the pieces covered in this paper but includes works such as *Thaïs*, *Lulu*, and Strauss's *Im abendrot*. Even the operas of Gian Carlo Menotti (which I had mostly neglected until

working on this opera) have been influential in pieces like Francisco and Dolores's duet in act one.

Unlike most operas, however, there is no recitative/aria structure to push the drama along. Neither is there the long line of Wagner or the understated conversational style of Debussy. There is a connection with Britten's *The Turning of the Screw* in how Britten uses 'theme and variation' of twelve-tone rows in his interludes to connect scenes. However, Britten's structure for his opera is more tightly constructed than my own. My use of a narrator is reminiscent of Stravinsky's opera-oratorio *Oedipus Rex*. The mixture of these various approaches to opera were all influential in the creation of *The Tragedy of La Llorona*.

In many ways, though, my opera resembles musicals or operettas in terms of how it is organized as a series of songs. In this regard it could be compared to *Candide*, *The Light in the Piazza* or any number of Sondheim musicals. Another connection to musicals is how act one begins with an "I want" song, a common device in musicals, that plays like a darker version of the opening song "Belle" from *Beauty and the Beast*. One of the defining characteristics of my opera is how it seamlessly flows between various traditions.

For example, while the opening "I want" song begins in a way that resembles musical theatre, it eventually develops into a duet, recalling the practices of opera. Then again, the harmonic language often veers away from classical structures, opting instead for contemporary jazz harmony which is more closely aligned with contemporary

musicals. Completing the heterogeneity of influences, I drew upon conceptual ideas of mid-century composers such as pitch multiplication, combinatoriality, Z-relations, extended techniques, and so on.

My choice of an instrumental chamber group that is reminiscent of a Broadway pit orchestra further reinforces this connection to musicals and operettas. This is doubly so when considering that I have included an embedded 'band' within the chamber group (similar to a *concertino*)[43] which is comprised of musicians that preferably have a background in improvisation (guitar, bass, world percussion). While there was the purposeful decision to engage the history of opera in *The Tragedy of La Llorona*, especially by addressing familiar tropes of female characters, the blurring of the lines of stylistic influence are less the result of pre-planned choices and more that of my own eclectic style.

Like many composers, I have a variety of musical interests and potential musical languages to draw upon. The specific decisions in musical approach I made for this opera reflect a language I feel deeply connected to, but one that is also well suited to serve the story and subtext of this opera. In fairness, many contemporary composers strive to achieve similar goals in their work. Composers such as Missy Mazzoli, Kaija Saariaho, and John Adams also use a musical language that is quite different from the repertoire.

---

43. Partly inspired by Elliott Carter's *Piano Concerto* and *Double Concerto for Harpsichord and Piano with Two Chamber Orchestras* and expressly used in my violin concerto *Octubre*.

They too draw from contemporary sources and also see their work as a part of the opera lineage. In my own way I am trying to contextualize the eclecticism of my personal language within the framework of the history of opera.

‘Conversation with History’

Dolores and Salome

The area where it was most important for me to engage in a conversation with history is in the dramatic and musical portrayal of female characters. Themes of female agency and the treatment of feminine sexuality, ‘madness’, and the portrayal of women as objects of desire figure most prominently. The examples of Desdemona, Mélisande, and Sieglinde/Brünnhilde have demonstrated the importance and influence of the portrayal of these themes to the development of my opera. However, there is one character in the repertoire that is impossible to not touch upon – that is Salome from Strauss’s *Salome*. While not a direct influence on my opera, there are sufficient overlapping qualities between Salome and Dolores to warrant a brief comparison.

For example, in Strauss’s *Salome*, Salome’s sexuality is initially received with enthusiastic desire, but eventually only with horror. Like Berg’s Lulu, Salome’s position as a *femme fatale* hinges on her sexual excess and is ultimately considered as a dangerous and irrational force that must be contained at all costs.[44] The height of Salome’s ‘grotesque’ expression of ecstasy is the final scene where her excesses have transformed

---

44. In the case of Lulu, she is not so much ‘contained’ as symbolically punished by being brutally murdered by Jack the Ripper.

her into a ‘mad’ and demented being. At first glance, Dolores’s transformation into *La Llorona* seemingly mirrors this terrifying scene. A brief and cursory look at Strauss’s general approach towards non-tonal devices in this last scene will demonstrate key differences between the common portrayal of feminine ‘excess’ in the repertoire and my portrayal of Dolores as well as demonstrate general musical principles in my opera.

In this last scene, Salome’s mental breakdown is musically represented by intense, side-slipping chromaticism that builds to the infamous chord that forms a defiled plagal cadence and ends disturbingly in C# major. Herod, at one time entranced by Salome’s charms, is horrified and orders his guards to violently kill Salome. The opera ends by washing away all of the chromatic disturbances with a series of repeated C minor chords (a common melodramatic ending to many operas) that reassures us that the opera has ended and there is nothing more to fear. Salome’s excess has been suppressed, diatonicism has returned, and we are safe from the unwieldy musical dangers of unchecked chromaticism.

The infamous chord, called "the most sickening chord in all opera,” has been thoroughly discussed, as has the entirety of *Salome*. But what is important is that the musical and dramatic portrayal of female sexuality and the ‘madwoman’ in opera could be said to be epitomized in Salome. Along with *Elektra*, it also represents the zenith of the diatonic-chromatic duality. As this relates to my opera, the similarities between how Salome and Dolores undergo transformations into beings that could be considered

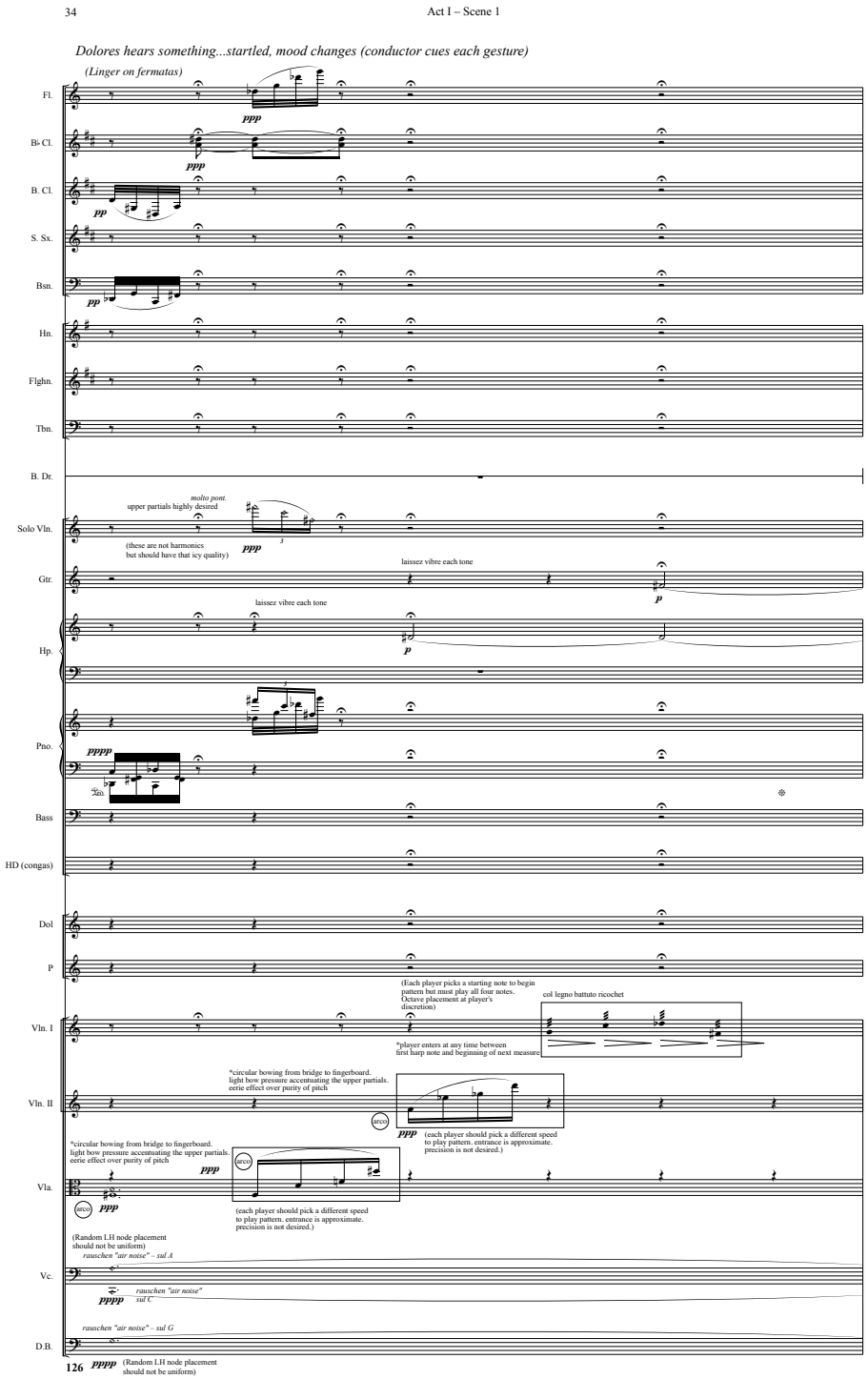
‘grotesque’ and dangerous form an ideal example of the ‘conversation’ with history that my opera aims to undertake.

Like many female protagonists in opera, both Salome and Dolores are objects of desire. And while they each use their own abilities to further their agenda, Salome fits the image of a *femme-fatale* whereas Dolores avoids this role. As noted in previous chapters, it was extremely important for me to avoid the traps and pitfalls of the portrayal of sexuality and ‘madness’ epitomized in *Salome*. In my opera, I have made distinct choices in the story and libretto to create separation from the repertoire. For example, I made it a point to give Dolores a strong narrative voice free of gendered binarisms while still being cognizant of those structures and the challenges it presents. That said, in a story like *La Llorona* there will naturally be themes that invite comparison to the traditional portrayal of feminine ‘excess’ as epitomized in *Salome*. A key and meaningful difference is how, despite much of my opera being tonal (in the modern sense), my use of non-tonal devices are framed in a way that diverges from the diatonic-chromatic duality of the repertoire.

In my opera, female sexuality is nothing to be suppressed or feared. Therefore, when moments arise in my opera that approach the daring sounds of *Salome*, it is not done as a representation of irrationality, feminine ‘excess’, or as something that must be contained. The sections in my opera that seemingly overlap with the traditional portrayal of feminine ‘excess’ are free from the gendered binarisms often found in opera.

To be sure, there are moments in *The Tragedy of La Llorona* that are meant to have an unsettling quality, but these moments are tied to the dramatic arc of the opera and not an expectation of any particular musical resolution. This is due to the use of multiple musical frameworks and the pervasive presence of extended tonality. The consistent use of extended tonality is particularly important as it provides the context for non-tonal moments and conservative tonality to be equally 'at home'. This achieves the effect of avoiding the expectations of any singular musical tradition and instead shifts the focus on the drama and character development. Many of these non-tonal moments are framed in such a way to give them an enchanting quality. The opening duet between Amani and Dolores embodies this. Dolores feels a "terrible presence" but one that is "…strangely, oddly familiar and so alluring." After a brief silence, this feeling is portrayed musically (ex. 24).

Ex. 24 – Example of non-tonal music in *The Tragedy of La Llorona*



The previous example's sound world could potentially have an undue disruptive quality, but because of my varied approach to sound and harmony, it is contextualized as one of many ways used to develop the characters and story. While Salome's non-tonal moments are clearly designed to shock and represent a dangerous or corruptive element to society, the same moments for Dolores are meant to be rather attractive and alluring and begs the narrative question as to whether or not Dolores should give in to this feeling and be, as she says, overwhelmed by it. This feeling in Dolores (and its musical portrayal) may indeed represent dangerous consequences to her and to society but it may also be necessary as it is certainly justified.

Furthermore, by contextualizing and including moments like the previous example so early in the opera and consistently throughout, the final transformation of Dolores into Llorona, which utilizes similar non-tonal devices devices as Salome, is framed as a natural musical development similar to the way a motif heard early in a symphonic work can blossom in the last movement. This blossoming of Dolores, terrifying as it may be, contrasts with characters like Lucia, Carmen, Salome, and Lulu who must be sacrificed for the good of rational order or punished for their 'excesses'.

The context of Dolores's development extends beyond my general approach towards the music and how it interacts with the repertoire. One of the most important ways Dolores is framed is how she is contrasts with the other characters in *The Tragedy of La Llorona* with the clearest example being the contrast between her and Ignacio. The

freedom of Dolores's musical expression is contrasted with the tightly controlled combinatorial tone-rows of Ignacio. His music represents the constraints and perhaps even 'irrationality' of hyper-ordered systems of control that, like a maze with no exit, circularly turn on themselves. Ignacio is unable to escape his narrow and neurotic world of 'power' and 'control' and, unlike Dolores, his melodic material is limited to the hexachords he is tied to. While Ignacio may enjoy the upper hand in society, he is caught in a web of tightly controlled, narrowly formed music that lacks the freedom, imagination, and creative intricacy of Dolores's music.

Dolores, however, is unencumbered by any such constrictions and her material flows freely between musical influences, guided only by whether the music adds to her development as a character. She is free from the gendered portrayal of Salome and the pre-determined structures of Ignacio. This freedom of musical expression is another way I avoid portraying Dolores's transformation as feminine madness.

Lastly, Dolores's sexuality is not fetishized as it is with Salome. Like in Salome, there is a dance of seduction, but it is a mutual one between Dolores and Ignacio, both of whom are motivated by their thirst for power rather than sexual desire. Each recognizes the gifts and utility the other has to offer. For Dolores it is access and the chance at self-realization. For Ignacio it is survival and the opportunity of consolidating more power. Their wordless dance is a pact made out of shared ambition, more akin to a business

partnership than a marriage. And while, like Salome, she is an object of desire, it is a position she rejects as obnoxious, unfair, and something to escape.

‘Old World’ and ‘New World’

In *The Tragedy of La Llorona*, each character has their own musical personality and approach. Yet each character exists against the backdrop of two textural ‘meta-harmonic’ areas that connects them. As identified in the beginning to this chapter, these two meta-harmonic areas are called ‘texture’ sets and are labeled the 'Old World’ and ‘New World’ sets. They are not used to generate new harmonic material but should be thought of as musical ‘set designs' or ‘screen savers’ that make occasional appearances, at times hovering in the background and at others intruding on events. They may not appear often but are symbolically significant.

The first one, labelled the ‘Old-World’ set, is modeled after Alban Berg’s tone-row from his *Lyrische suite*. It is the first thing heard after the prelude when the curtain raises. It represents the ‘innocence’ of an idyllic by gone world, imagined or not. The labeling of this chord references the term given to Europe (along with Africa and Asia) and points to Spain’s colonial presence in the Americas in setting of the opera. As well, it refers to the hidden love affair between Hanna Fuchs-Robettinals and Berg that the composer expressed in his *Lyrische suite* through the use of musical puzzles. This is

meant as a nod to the secret love affair between my characters Dolores and Isabelle and my own use of Bergian musical puzzles.

The other prominent 'texture' set is labeled the 'New World' set. It is first heard in the prelude and is the inverse of the idyllic sound and symmetrical structure of its counterpart. It has an evocative, mysterious quality and a feeling of untethered freedom. The construction of this set alludes to what are called 'altered chords' in jazz and invites the kind of freedom and vibrancy associated with jazz. Furthermore, my use of non-Western rhythmic textures, styles, and instruments heard in the *Prelude* are paired with the 'New World' set, offering another contrast with the more Western setting of the 'Old World' set.

The divergent approaches to these two meta-harmonic 'texture' sets are like magnetic poles. They represent the changing power dynamics and pull of history many people experienced during the time period in which the opera is set. The conflict between these two 'texture' sets are the backdrop against which the characters are developed. The tension inherent in Dolores's mixed identity, encapsulated by her *Los Pobladores* lineage, and the rush from competing powers to claim Alta California is the fertile ground from which the drama of the opera springs. These inherent tensions persist to this day in the Borderlands in the form of identity crises and imposter syndrome. Dolores's feeling of being caught between identities formed and enforced by entities beyond our control is a central aspect of her journey.

While the focus of the opera is on dramatic and musical character development, the persistent presence of the 'texture' sets is meant to remind us that even though the characters may have rich inner worlds that grow and develop, they are stories set against the backdrop of a cold and uncaring history. Essentially, no matter what the characters undergo, they cannot escape the tensions of the time and place in which they find themselves. That is, until Dolores's transformation into Llorona which ends the opera with unanswered questions. Who truly is the monster – Llorona or the society that invoked her? Did Dolores stray off the path or embrace her power when confronted with injustice and cruelty? Is Llorona a savior who will remake the world apropos Brünnhilde, a spirit of grotesque and horrible terror *à la* Salome, or something altogether different?

Time and Identity

Time and Identity in *The Tragedy of La Llorona*

The issue of identity has fascinated me for a long while and has generated the most lasting questions that have shaped my music. It is a central issue in modern society but also a touchstone of the human experience in general. German-American psychologist Erik Erikson describes identity as a "fundamental organizing principal which develops constantly throughout the lifespan." Key to shaping both societal and personal identity, are our conceptions of time. By that, I mean both historical time (when and where we exist) as well as philosophical or experienced time (personal, spiritual). Political, religious, and other societal structures influence (and are influenced) by how we conceive of time, and music is no exception.

When it comes to music, time is everything. Music is a form of expression that deals almost exclusively with the concept of time. This is because in many ways, the manipulation of time is the experience of music. There is rhythmic time (tempo, pulse, patterns), harmonic rhythm, melody, and phrase structure. But more profound is how time is manipulated on a large scale to effect our internal sense of experiencing time. One needs only to turn to the drama of sonata-allegro form found in a Mozart symphony. This is a conception of time that undergoes a dramatic journey like that of a Greek tragedy or

Shakespearean play by developing motifs and balancing the emotional content of large sections of music. Compare this to the cyclical time structures of gamelan and Indian classical music or the isorhythmic motets of Machaut. These different approaches to time have deep meaning beyond the joy of music. They inform the identity of a piece of music and the culture it springs from. For example, Beethoven's innovations to sonata-allegro form are clearly musical revelations from a singular genius but they also reflect the massive changes occurring in society. To put it differently, an individual's identity forms a symbiotic relationship to the invisible force of a society's identity. One cannot exist without the other.

Today, with the availability and spread of numerous musical identities from around the world, it is even more imperative to begin a composition with a clear idea of the stylistic identity of a piece. It is equally important to diligently track how that identity evolves through the process of composing. This is particularly true of composers such as myself who have a diverse musical palette. Even composers of aleatoric music begin with initial decisions that have far reaching consequences. These decisions, often made unconsciously, determine how musical elements (harmony, melody, texture, etc.) will be treated and unlock sets of tools and techniques to be used.

When beginning this opera, I knew that the concepts of 'time' and 'identity' would be of central importance to the underlying current of the opera. Further, with 'time' and 'identity' naturally come 'power' and 'control'. Because what is the formation of concepts of time and identity other than our attempt to exert power and control over our

inner and outer environment in order to find our place win the world? The way we conceive of time and identity determines much of how we are able to see and be seen.

Some of the practical ways these concepts manifest themselves in *The Tragedy of La Llorona* have already been discussed including decisions on narrative structures, instrumentation, metaphorical devices such as 'the river', and the various musical structures for each character. Some of my stylistic choices acknowledge the reality of our globally connected world by incorporating flamenco cantes, contemporary jazz, and Bel Canto influenced arias, to name a few, with the narrative structures of opera. However, as the music and plot begin to develop, these philosophical thoughts, while always in the figurative subconscious of the piece, gradually drift out of focus as themes and subjects become more tangible and the work becomes more pragmatic.

But by having to clarify and defend my ideas in this thesis, I have had the gratifying and surprising experience of uncovering deep meanings and structures about which I was initially unaware. The subject of women in opera was always at the forefront as it is impossible to avoid. After all, I am a male composer writing the music and libretto to an opera that centers around a woman in a story that plays on familiar tropes of female madness and excess that have all too often been abused in opera plots.

Through the process of analysis and conversation, however, I discovered themes that were driving the story from the very beginning. The most important of these being the concept of an identity crisis. This is particularly true of my character Dolores who begins the opera with the existential line "Where am I?" Her feelings of yearning, of not

belonging, and her intuitive sense of a presence that is, as she says, "strange but oddly familiar," and how she feels "…like a stranger in her own body" are all reflective of a her going through a crisis of identity.

To frame this in musical terms, in the opera there are numerous musical styles and languages employed. Unlike pieces like *Pulcinella* or *Oedipus Rex* that self-consciously utilize historic and popular forms, the stylistic eclecticism of *The Tragedy of La Llorona* (with the exception of the *Missa* in act one) is derived from the organic integration of music I have worked on throughout my career. It is also reflective of the reality of many professional composers and musicians that have to navigate multiple musical traditions as a means of practical survival. To be sure, for many this is not the case, but for others it is a constant struggle to assert an authentic voice in a world of fractured identity. Added to this contemporary musical phenomenon is the cultural identity crisis that I, and many other Mexican-American artists, find ourselves in.

Identity Crisis of Mexican-Americans

Working through the character Dolores, studying the history of the portrayal of female characters, and having to analyze my own work uncovered the primacy of crises of identity in my opera, particularly as it relates to women and Mexican-Americans. This led me to more closely look at the work of authors such as Américo Paredes, Sandra Cisneros, and Stephanie Elizondo Gries whose works explore how many Mexican-

Americans, especially in the Borderlands, are caught in between identities, and experience imposter syndrome as their heritage is either questioned, caricatured, or dismissed as inauthentic. Additionally, scholars Evelyn Stevens, Dr. Gloria González-López, Rocío Rivadeneyra, and Dr. Alicia Gaspar de Albahave have pioneered work on issues concerning Mexican-Americans and Latina/o culture – particularly gender roles and self-identity. Their work has been illuminating to the development of my story and has caused me to re-evaluate the direction of act two.

As mentioned, many of the issues concerning identity crises were already deeply present. The choice of story, characters, and the setting of the opera near modern-day Los Angeles shortly after the Mexican War of Independence immediately establishes identity as a key issue. The backdrop for the opera touches on the complicated colonial origins of the conflicts of identity faced and addresses how Mexican-Americans have lived in historically fluid regions, land which has changed hands legally, but socially, and culturally has evolved in its own right.

A clear example of this is the chant sung by the townsfolk in preparation for Bouchard's landing. They simultaneously pray to the indigenous Nahuatl title *Tonantzin*,

the Spanish Catholic title *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*,[45] and *Nuestra Señora de la Santa Muerte* (the Goddess of Death). *Santa Muerte's* Aztec origins has undergone many transformations and has developed into a contemporary religious movement of its own. However, in regards to my opera, she represents the spiritual veneration of death that, despite Spanish Catholic attempts to eradicate, endured as an integral part of Mexican culture. José Posada's secular version of *Santa Muerte*, *La Calavera Catrina*, also plays an important role in *The Tragedy of La Llorona*.

Additionally, the principle protagonist in my opera, Dolores, is a descendant of the diverse *Los Pobladores* (multi-racial founders of Los Angeles). They are a group that encapsulates the complex mixture of elements that formed identities that persist to this day and represent the independence and diversity of the Borderlands. Dolores's development as a character also addresses identity in a number of ways, including the negative cognitive-emotional issues surrounding "machismo" and "marianismo" culture, particularly in the LGBTQ+ community. This is seen in her relationship to Francisco and Ignacio as well as the love story between her and Isabelle. Once again, these were all choices that developed naturally as I explored the nature of the characters I was writing,

---

45. Apocryphal accounts of a Marian apparitions in the early 16th century are said to have occurred at the hill of *Tepeyac*, near or on the site of a temple to *Tonantzin* destroyed by Spanish priests. The *Basilica of Guadalupe* was built near that location. This connection is often used to point to a syncretism between colonial and indigenous cultures.

but through analysis and reflection were revealed as deeper structures and integral concepts that drove many of the dramatic and musical choices I made.

Mexican-Americans and Diversity in Contemporary Opera

The opera world has been gradually expanding its doors to include a wider variety of stories and musical approaches. The collaborative opera, *Cuatro Corridos*, addresses human trafficking while *The Grey Land* by Joseph C. Phillips[46] explores long standing struggles surrounding police shootings of Black Americans. Most recently, Terrence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up In My Bones*, based on Charles M. Blow's memoir, painstakingly captures the author's coming of age story in a deeply segregated Louisiana. Gabriela Lena Frank's upcoming *The Last Dream of Frida and Diego* and Gabriela Ortiz's *Únicamente la verdadare* are shining examples of operas by Latina/o composers.

Few, however, speak to the unique Mexican-American Borderland experience. Most notable is the 2018 operatic adaptation of Rudolf Anaya's 1972 novel *Bless Me, Ultima,* but this is one of very few examples. I hope *The Tragedy of La Llorona* will add to the conversation and representation of the issues of identity faced by Mexican-Americans, particularly in "art music". While this opera does not directly address the contemporary Borderland experience, it does raise many of the issues faced by Mexican-Americans including crises of identity tied to our complicated origin story, the feeling of

46. Also a graduate of Stephen F. Austin State University School of Music

being unseen, questions of authenticity, and an eclectic spiritual and cultural tapestry whose indigenous and colonial origins create an inherently conflicted state of being.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

The creation of any original work, let alone an opera, involves a process that requires all of ones abilities and knowledge acquired over the years. This is compounded by the fact that I am both the librettist and composer. This only underlines the importance of not only calling upon years of training and experience, but also the need to be open and humble to criticisms and new ideas.

This thesis is the result of such work. Throughout the course of this paper I have shared some of the key aspects of the 'behind the scenes' pre-compositional process of my opera *The Tragedy of La Llorona*. Ultimately, I hope that the reader has gained a more intimate understanding of the background and creative environment that this opera grew from. I also hope that by sharing selected themes, background research, and musical devices the reader will find themselves closer to the opera itself.

It is true, however, that this examination has been a cursory one. To share each aspect behind the opera would of course require more time than any person has and would yield results far less satisfying than what simply listening to the opera would produce. That is why I chose as the primary focus of this paper to address the portrayal of

women in opera and the familiar tropes that are attached to many female characters throughout the repertoire, most notably those surrounding sexuality and madness.

The question of how to demonstrate resistance to the harmful tropes surrounding female characters in opera was of such importance because of how prevalent these tropes were in the folk ghost story I had chosen to use as a jumping off point for my opera. Furthermore, being a man writing a female character in a genre that does not have the best track record when it comes to the portrayal of women reinforced the pressing need to address this issue in my own work. This meant intense research into the history of how women have been portrayed in opera in order to avoid unwittingly falling into patterns that I wished to avoid.

I hope that my conclusions and analyses have been, if not always wholly original, then at least thought-provoking commentary on the subject of the portrayal of women in opera. Particularly how the music of female characters can at times soar so high that it overcomes the attempts in libretti to silence them. This is particularly true of the excerpts and examples in chapter three.

While the question of the portrayal of women in opera was of central and practical importance when developing the opera (specifically the character Dolores), the establishment of two important themes that underscore the entire opera – power/control and time/identity – preceded all other inquiries. In fact, it was my meditations on the role that time/identity and power/control play in shaping ourselves as individuals and as a

society that first led to my initial thoughts on what would be the philosophical point of view that would bind my opera together. My research into Ophelia and the portrayal of women in opera served to further highlight the importance of how power/control (or lack thereof) and time/identity on shape us, and solidified the structural importance of these themes in the story I wished to tell. In addition to giving the reader insight into the process behind writing my opera, I hope to have imparted the importance the role these two overarching, defining concepts play in my opera.

Each point made in this thesis, and in my opera, stemmed from sincere reactions to questions. How could so many of these female characters that are robbed of agency and abused in the plots have music of such beauty, dignity, and powerful self-awareness? If they are so clearly dispensable in the plots, then why do they frequently have the best music? What is the relationship between 'time' and 'identity'? How do power/control affect and interact with concepts of time/identity? How do we even conceive of 'time' and 'identity'? In the end, while this paper may give insight into how I approached these questions, it is in my opera where I truly engaged with these and other concepts.

The discussion of the interplay between power/control and time/identity and how it shapes cultures, societies, and individuals deserves a thesis of its own by a trained philosopher. So too does the discussion of female characters in opera deserve a more in-depth look. Fortunately, there is a plethora of material on both subjects. And like my commentary on women in opera, I also hope that my musings on the more philosophical

topics are interesting and informs the reader of the underpinnings of my opera. I am a composer, however, and it is through music that I am best equipped to express myself and my ideas in a more original way. In this case, it is through my opera, *The Tragedy of La Llorona,* where my concepts of power/control and time/identity as well as my answer to the portrayal of women in opera is illuminated.

Bibliography

Abbate, Carolyn. “Debussy’s Phantom Sounds." *In Search of Opera*, 145-84. Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001. doi:10.2307/.ctt1287k8t.7 (accessed June 10, 2020).

Abbate, Carolyn. “Opera: or, the Envoicing of Women.” *Musicology and Difference.* 225-258.

Abbate, Carolyn. *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative In the Nineteenth Century*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991. (https://hdl-handle-net.steenproxy.sfasu.edu/2027/heb.06245. EPUB).

Antokoletz, Elliott. "Musical Symbolism in Bartók's Bluebeard: Trauma, Gender, and the Unfolding of the Unconscious." *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 47, no. 3 (2006): 279-291. https://search-proquest-com.steenproxy.sfasu.edu/ docview/236471358?accountid=6444 (accessed June 19, 2020).

Ashby, Arved. "The Lyric Suite and Berg's Twelve-Tone Duality." *The Journal of Musicology* 25, no. 2 (2008): 183-210. (accessed March 3, 2020).

Attali, Jacques. “Noise: the Political Economy of Music”. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, (1985).

Castañeda, Antonia I. "Engendering the History of Alta California, 1769-1848: Gender, Sexuality, and the Family." *California History* 76, no. 2/3 (1997): 230-59.

Bakogianni, Anastasia. “An eighteenth-century jealous woman and a twentieth-century hysterical diva: the case of Mozart’s Idomeneo (1781) and Strauss’ Elektra (1909).” *New Voices in Classical Reception Studies, no. 2* (2007): 1–32.

Barrett, William. *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, (1962).

Begam, Richard, and Matthew Wilson Smith, eds. *Modernism and Opera*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, (2016).

Bergeron, Katherine. “Mélisande's Hair, Or the Trouble in Allemonde: A Postmodern Allegory at the Opéra-Comique.” *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*, edited by Mary Ann Smart, 160-185. Princeton: Princeton University Press, (2000). https://search-proquest-com.steenproxy.sfasu.edu/docview/1703520092?accountid=6444 (accessed June 7, 2020).

Bergeron, Katherine. “‘Secrets and Lies’ or the Truth about Pelléas.” Lecture, Gresham College, Barnard’s Inn Hall, London, England. April 12, 2012. https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/part-six-secrets-and-lies-or-the-truth-about-pellas (accessed June 12, 2020).

Bernstein, Jane A. "'Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered': Lady Macbeth, Sleepwalking, and the Demonic in Verdi's Scottish Opera." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14, no. 1/2 (2002): 31-46. www.jstor.org/stable/3878281. (accessed February 17, 2021).

Bishop, Elizabeth. “At the Fishhouses.” Poems. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, (2015): pp. 62-64.

Brown, Jennifer Lea. “Debussy and Symbolism: A Comparative Study of the Aesthetics of Claude Debussy and Three French Symbolist Poets with an Analysis of Debussy’s Symbolist Techniques in *Pelléas et Mélilsande*.” DMA diss., Stanford University, (1992). In ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, https://search-proquest-com.steenproxy.sfasu.edu/docview/304026707?accountid=6444 (accessed June 10, 2020).

Busfield, Joan. “The Female Malady? Men, Women, and Madness in Nineteenth Century Britain.” *Sociology* 28, no. 1 (1994): 259–77. www.jstor.org/stable/42855327.

Code, David Jonathan. “A Song Not Purely His Own: Modernism and the Pastoral Mode in Mallarmé, Debussy and Matisse.” PhD diss., University of California, Berkley, (1999).

Code, David Jonathan. “Hearing Debussy Reading Mallarmé: Music Après Wagner in the *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune*.” *Journal of the American Musicological*

Society 54, no. 3 (2001): 493-554. doi:10.1525/jams.2001.54.3.493 (accessed June 12, 2020).

Critchley, Simon, and Jamieson Webster. *Stay, Illusion: The Hamlet Doctrine*. New York: Pantheon Books (2013).

Dauster, Frank. *The Double Strand: Five Contemporary Mexican Poets*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky (2014). ProQuest Ebook Central. (accessed June 10, 2020).

Debussy, Claude Achille. *Prélude a l'après-midi d'un faune.* Paris: E. Fromont, (1895).

— . *Nuages*. Paris: E. Fromont, (1900).

— . *Pelléas et Mélisande.* Paris: E. Fromont, (1904).

Duggan, Anne E. "Women and Absolutism in French Opera and Fairy Tale." The French Review 78, no. 2 (2004): 302-15. www.jstor.org/stable/25479770. (accessed February 17, 2021).

Erikson, Erik H. *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., (1968).

Everett, Yayoi Uno. *Reconfiguring Myth and Narrative in Contemporary Opera: Osvaldo Golijov, Kaija Saariaho, John Adams, and Tan Dun*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press (2015). ProQuest Ebook Central.(accessed June 20, 2020).

Gonzalez S., Silvia. *La Llorona Llora: A Play in One Act*. Woodstock, Ill: Dramatic Pub (1996).

Groos, Arthur, and Roger Parker. *Reading Opera*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press (1988).

Halliwell, M. "Narrative Elements in Opera." Paper presented at the International Conference, Graz, Austria, May 1997.

Kerman, Joseph. "Verdi and the Undoing of Women." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18, no. 1 (2006): 21-31. www.jstor.org/stable/3878271. (accessed February 17, 2021).

Kramer, Lawrence. "Fin-de-siècle Fantasies: "Elektra", Degeneration and Sexual Science." Cambridge Opera Journal 5, no. 2 (1993): 141-65. http://www.jstor.org/stable/823800. (accessed March 4, 2021).

Levin, Carole, and Patricia Ann Sullivan. *Political Rhetoric, Power, and Renaissance Women*. Albany: State University of New York Press, (1995).

Mallarmé, Stephane. *Collected Poems of Mallarmé: A Bilingual Edition*. University of California Press, (2011). ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/sfasu- ebooks/detail.action?docID=763984 (accessed June 25, 2020).

McClary, Susan. *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (2002). https://hdl-handle.net.steenproxy.sfasu.edu/2027/heb.06265. EPUB.

McClary, Susan. "Paradigm Dissonances: Music Theory, Cultural Studies, Feminist Criticism." *Perspectives of New Music* 32, no. 1 (1994): 68-85. doi: 10.2307/833152.(accessed February 19, 2021).

McCormack, Brian T. "Conjugal Violence, Sex, Sin, and Murder in the Mission Communities of Alta California." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 16, no. 3 (September 2007): 391– 415.

McVicker, Mary F.. *Women Composers of Classical Music: 369 Biographies from 1550 into the 20th Century*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Incorporated Publishers, 2011. ProQuest Ebook Central. (accessed February 20, 2021).

Melero, Pilar. *Mythological Constructs of Mexican Femininity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US (2015).

Moréas, Jean. "The Symbolist Manifesto." *Mutable Sound*. Translated by C. Liszt. www.mutablesound.com/home/?p=2165 (accessed June 13, 2020).

Parks, Richard S. *The Music of Claude Debussy*. New Haven: Yale UP, (1989).

Pendle, Karin, and Boyd, Melinda. *Women in Music : A Research and Information Guide*. Florence: Taylor & Francis Group (2010).

Phillips, C. Henry. "The Symbolists and Debussy." *Music & Letters* 13, no. 3 (1932): 298-311. www.jstor.org/stable/726316 (accessed June 22, 2020).

Pipher, Mary Bray. *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*. New York: Putnam (1994).

Rieger, Eva, and Chris Walton. *Richard Wagner's Women*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, (2011).

Rosenfeld, Paul. “Paul Rosenfeld’s Manifesto for the American Composer.” In *Music in the USA: A Documentary Companion*, editors Judith Tick and Paul E. Beaudoin, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2008): 338.

Seeger, Ruth Crawford. “Letter from Ruth Crawford to Vivian Fine.” In *Music in the USA: A Documentary Companion*, editors Judith Tick and Paul E. Beaudoin, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2008): 452.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet.* Ware: Wordsworth Editions (1992).

Showalter, Elaine. *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and Culture in England, 1830-1980*. New York: Pantheon Books (1985).

Smalley, Jack. *Composing Music for Film*. United States: JPS Publishing (2005).

Smart, Mary Ann. "The Silencing of Lucia." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 4, no. 2 (1992): 119-41. www.jstor.org/stable/823740. (accessed March 3, 2021).

Wagner, Richard, et al. *The Opera Libretto Library: the Authentic Texts of the German, French, and Italian Operas with Music of the Principal Airs, with the Complete English and German, French, or Italian Parallel Texts.* New York: Avenal Books (1980).

Walley, Harold R. “Shakespeare’s Conception of Hamlet.” *PMLA* 48, no. 3 (1933): 777–98. www.jstor.org/stable/458341. (accessed June 15, 2020).

Chapter 6 – *The Tragedy of La Llorona*

Full Opera

music, story, and libretto

by

Daniel Aaron Ramirez

The Tragedy of La Llorona

Synopsis

The Tragedy of La Llorona (The Weeping Woman) is a two-act opera based on the Mexican ghost story of a woman condemned to wander, wailing into the night in search of her lost children; dragging unsuspecting people to their watery grave.

Set in 19th-century Alta California, the opera tells the story of Dolores – a young woman who yearns for more to her life and fears being overlooked due to her gender and class as well as the time and place into which she was born. The coming threat of the pirate Hipólito Bouchard gives Dolores the chance to prove herself.

While trying to find her identity and realize her prodigious talents, however, Dolores falls prey to the temptations of power and control which eventually drive her mad and warp her into the ghostly spirit.

The Tragedy of La Llorona uses the Mexican legend as a jumping-off point to explore themes of power and control, as well as time and identity against a backdrop of mystery and desire.

Characters

Dolores – Young woman, orphaned descendant of *Los pobladores* (mezzo-soprano)
Amani– Franciscan monk and spiritual figure to Dolores (contralto)
Francisco – Dolores's childhood best friend (baritone)
Ignacio – Spanish Governor of Alta California (tenor)
Isabelle – Distant cousin of Ignacio (soprano)
Abuelita – Narrator (played by Amani)

Townsfolk, dancers, soldiers

Place: Puebla de la Reina de los Ángeles, Alta California (near modern day Los Angeles)
Time: 1818 – 1824 (during the Mexican War of Independence)

Scene Breakdown

Prelude
Curtain rises near the end to show the abuelita preparing to tell the tale of La Llorona.

Abuelita Introduction
Abuelita walks on stage and sits down. She begins telling the story of La Llorona as if telling a fable to children before bed.

Act I
Scene 1: Pueblo de los Ángeles. 1818. Town square outside the Church. Townsfolk come and go but Dolores is lost in her own thoughts on the edge of the square. Amani watches on Dolores from the Church.

Scene 1 – Dolores

Dolores sings of feeling there is more to her life than what her time and circumstance dictates. Dolores's innocence contrasts with her singing of a life of unfulfilled dreams. The townsfolk then sing of the coming threat of the pirate Hipólito Bouchard who has been raiding the coast of Alta California and is feared to arrive at any moment.

Scene 1 continues… – Amani

Amani observes Dolores from a distance and sings of Dolores's kind, talented, but wandering soul full of angst and resentment. She recognizes Dolores's feelings of being trapped and her desire yet fear of being seen. Amani compares her to a moonflower that only comes out in the moonlight.

Interlude: A brief canon representing Dolores's yearning and wandering spirit.

Scene 1 continues… – Dolores and Amani

Dolores approaches Amani for council on her inner turmoil. Dolores feels trapped and wants to break free. Amani responds by consoling and encouraging Dolores to follow the example of the river and be in a constant state of 'becoming'. She tells Dolores to let go and flow in order to harness the power of the river.

Dolores responds by singing of a strange, but oddly familiar presence 'clawing at the side of her head to escape'. Dolores sings of wanting to give in to this presence and be overwhelmed by it. The scene ends with Amani re-iterating her advice while Dolores sings of the ominous presence she feels before passively agreeing with Amani.

> *Bouchard Interlude: The townsfolk once again sing of their anxiety and fear of the pirate Bouchard.*

Scene 2: Dolores's garden outside the Church. She is tending to her flowers while Francisco prepares to approach her. Duet.

Scene 2 – Francisco and Dolores

Dolores is lost in thought singing while she tends to her flowers. Francisco gathers to courage to approach Dolores and confess his love for his childhood friend. He sings of how nervous he is and why Dolores can't see that they were made for each other. Francisco finally gathers himself and sings a sweet song to Dolores clumsily trying to explain his feelings for her.

Dolores catches on and tries to gently steer the conversation away to spare his feelings and goes back to singing about her flowers. Francisco keeps trying to make his feelings clear, getting progressively agitated with himself as well as Dolores's attempts to divert the conversation. The duet ends with Dolores saying they're going to be late for Church service and a dejected Francisco following Dolores to Church.

Scene 2 continues… – Ignacio, Francisco, Dolores and Amani

While on their way to service the Governor, Ignacio, briefly interrupts the two as he boasts of how he is off to the capital of Monterey to stop Bouchard permanently. Francisco is jealous and agitated. Dolores tries to calm him but is annoyed at having to placate the egos of Ignacio and Francisco.

> *Abuelita Interlude*
> Abuelita continues the story and tells how the boastful Ignacio tried and failed to stop Bouchard or defend Monterey. Fear and panic has gripped the town as they wait for Bouchard to arrive.

Scene 3: Town square in front of the Church. A month or so has passed. Monterey has fallen. Bouchard approaches. Trio and choir.

There is a strange wind approaching. It brings fear and dread. Francisco exclaims 'Bouchard is coming!' and the townsfolk sing of being doomed. Francisco rashly and wildly starts to sing of the need to fight but only terrifies the townsfolk more with his frantic declarations. The townsfolk sing of wanting to run but Dolores sings of another option. She pleads with Francisco to stop frightening people and tries to calm the people down. Amani tells the town to listen to Dolores.

Dolores then gives a rousing speech singing of how they need not run nor fight. If they are clever and stay united they can outwit Bouchard and survive. Dolores explains that if they divide the whole town into patrol units with each returning unit changing uniforms it will appear as if they are far more fortified than they are. Bouchard, as Dolores says, is brutal but pragmatic. He will not fight a fight he cannot win easily. It is a dangerous plan but Dolores convinces them to stand together.

The townsfolk then sing a chant to Santa Muerte, Tonatzin, and the Lady of Guadalupe for protection.

Scene 4: Inside the Church one month later. Ignacio pulls Dolores aside to a corner of the Church while services begin. Missa music can be faintly heard in the background which gradually morphs into Fandango music. Dolores and Ignacio speak their dialogue during the mass but it gradually morphs into singing by the end of the Fandango. Duet.

Ignacio is impressed with Dolores's resolve, leadership, and creativity. He approaches her with a proposition to join him as a partner. Ignacio speaks of how all that exists is power. He talks about the irony of history and the illusion of progress and how borders come and go. Dolores dismisses Ignacio's declaration of time and identity being meaningless and how Ignacio uses words to categorize and control.

Ignacio then speaks of the deep ties Dolores has to the land as her family were one of the *Pobladores* who founded and developed Puebla de los Ángeles. Dolores sees through this tactic as well. She is well aware of his lascivious reputation.

Frustrated but not deterred, Ignacio tries again. This time with a dire warning of the inevitable arrival of many interested parties including the young country of the United States of America. Although Dolores does not trust Ignacio, she sees how he needs her to

cover for his Spanish heritage while she needs his wealth and access to break free from her life. She convinces herself that the only choice is to have someone who knows Californios to represent them and their interests. Ignacio ends by asking Dolores to dance with him thus sealing their agreement.

Scene 4 continues:
Catrina's Dance (instrumental) – A violinist dressed as Calavera Catrina takes the stage in the Church. The violinist plays an extended cadenza that leads into a dance between Dolores and Ignacio with the full orchestra. The dance tracks Dolores's hesitancy to go down this path before she makes her life altering decision to join Ignacio in an unholy marriage of ambition and self interest.

Act II – Prelude

> *Abuelita Continues Story/"Piedra de sol"*
> Abuelita describes the passage of time. Six years have passed. Mexico has won independence from Spain and has claimed Alta California. Dolores has two children with Ignacio and has solidified her place as an influential figure at the expense of the people she was supposed to stand for. Ignacio is still Governor and Dolores has been promised the position of official representative of Alta California to Mexico City. The lust for power and control are starting to consume Dolores. She is changing and the spirit of La Llorona looms.

Scene 1: 1824. Plaza in front of Dolores and Ignacio's mansion. Ignacio oversees from his balcony as the townsfolk are in the marketplace in the plaza. Dolores is in her private courtyard connected to the mansion. Amani and Francisco are searching for Dolores to convince her to change her ways. Choir and duets.

The townsfolk sing of dashed hopes and broken promises. They sing of how Dolores has turned cold and cruel. Meanwhile Amani mirrors her first song about Dolores. Only this time she doesn't sing of 'wandering' Dolores but of 'lost' Dolores.

Amani warns Dolores of the path that she is on. She sings of how Dolores's addiction to power and control will warp her soul. Amani reminds her of the river and how to flow with it's power. Dolores responds kindly but somewhat dismissively as she sings of controlling the river instead of flowing with it. Amani leaves saddened and gives one last

warning of the looming spirit of La Llorona only to accept that Dolores may be too far gone.

After Amani leaves, Francisco begs for a word with Dolores. He sings of how she has turned cold and distant. Francisco scolds Dolores for considering selling the land the Spanish missions took from the indigenous people to private rancheros. He lashes out at Dolores for the suppression and punishment of the Chumash revolt. He pleads with Dolores to come back to herself. Dolores gradually gets more annoyed and sings loudly that she is not giving the land back. Dolores mirrors Ignacio's speech about power (justice is power). Francisco, devastated, blames Ignacio and sings of how he's always drunk and doesn't love Dolores and is using her. Dolores, enraged at the insinuation that she is an unwitting pawn, humiliates Francisco. She sings of how he is merely a jealous boy that she would never be with. Dolores sings of how she's always known his feelings for her and tried sparing him pain out of pity but that now he is just pathetic.

Ignacio interrupts, briefly brushing off Francisco before telling Dolores that he wants her to meet someone. Ignacio introduces his cousin from Spain and tells Dolores that she'll be staying with them for the foreseeable future.

Scene 2: Courtyard of Dolores's home. Dolores and Isabelle are alone. Duet.

At first sight Dolores and Isabelle are enamored with each other. Dolores, however, recovers her wits and interrogates Isabelle. She is suspicious as to why a wealthy, beautiful Spanish woman would come to Alta California right after the Spanish defeat to Mexico. Isabelle sings of her desire to escape the gaze of those that wish to control her. Dolores is struck by Isabelle's honesty and compares Isabelle's beauty and predicament to California. Both Isabelle and California are looked at with covetous, controlling eyes wishing to possess them. Dolores asks Isabelle to take a walk.

Scene 3: Dolores's garden near her country adobe home. The lighting changes to represent moonlight as all is dark except Isabelle, Dolores, and her garden.

Time feels as if it has stopped. The two sing back and forth of how beautiful the garden is and how similar they are. Dolores wants to be seen and Isabelle wants to be 'unseen'. Dolores is no longer suspicious and the two let their guard down and sing of how they feel strange yet comfortable with each other as they slowly fall in love.

Abuelita Interlude/"Inner Turmoil" theme
Abuelita tells of how love and power can be very dangerous ingredients. She speaks of how pride can be blinding to even the most clever of people. Even the most talented cannot escape the path of misery we lay for ourselves when we give in to power and control. In the end, people are trapped in history and history is trapped in them.

Scene 4: Ball in Dolores's mansion a few months later. Ignacio is visibly drunk and wanders in and out of the festivities and Dolores's study where he is suspiciously plotting. Isabelle and Dolores exchange glances at the ball while Amani and Francisco make one more attempt to convince Dolores to not sell the land promised to them. Quartet.

Lively music is playing while the guests dance and enjoy food and wine. Dolores sings of how she has finally gotten everything she's desired – wealth, power, status, and perhaps even love. She is going to be sent to Mexico City as a representative and finally recognized on a global stage. She exchanges glances with Isabelle who sings of the beautiful lie of love ('el amore huele a muerte'). Francisco and Amani both plead with Dolores to stop being blind and see how she is losing herself. Dolores screams with a terrible voice not her own at both Francisco and Amani. Francisco is horrified but Amani recognizes the undeniably dark auditory impression of La Llorona and departs with a pitiful farewell to Dolores.

Scene 4 (cont'd): Dolores goes into her study to find Ignacio drunk but also with an odder than usual demeanor of smugness. Isabelle sees Dolores go into the study and she departs along with Amani. Only Francisco waits while the party continues. (Spoken and sung).

Dolores goes into the study to remind Ignacio to finish preparations for her trip to Mexico City. Ignacio begins to laugh. He tells her that she's not going. Annoyed, Dolores dismisses him as being drunk. Ignacio sings of how he doesn't need her anymore. The war is over and he has maintained his position of power thanks to her influence. Now he plans on a more 'suitable' partner in Isabelle and will send Dolores's children to Spain so as not to be reminded of his 'necessary mistake'. As for Dolores, Ignacio smirks and tells Dolores 'surely those peasants you betrayed will take you back in'.

Dolores is dismayed and argues that he can't just get rid of her and how she knows secrets that could destroy him. Ignacio counters with forged documents detailing Dolores's plan to sell land to prospectors from America and Spain and not just Mexican

rancheros. He adds on accusations of infidelity with Francisco. Dolores is flustered but counters by saying that no one would believe she was with Francisco. Ignacio sings of another potential partner, 'perhaps Isabelle'. He divulges that he put Isabelle up to gathering information but never thought he would be so lucky to have Dolores actually fall for her. This pushes Dolores over the edge with anger and embarrassment as she insults Ignacio. Ignacio goes to strike Dolores but she dodges and hits him instead. Ignacio, drunk and raging, grabs Dolores's letter opener but Dolores pulls a small gun on him. She knows it's over now. Her only option is to quickly grab her possessions and flee with her children.

Scene 4 (cont'd): Francisco hears noises and rushes to the study just as Dolores rushes out of the study and exits the party.

Francisco is taken aback by the fear and panic in Dolores as she leaves. He sees the disheveled Ignacio and assumes Ignacio has hit Dolores. He confronts Ignacio and angrily tells him to never lay a hand on her again. He sings about how Ignacio has poisoned his friend Dolores's soul and that he should leave her alone for good. Ignacio is dismissive of Francisco but Francisco confronts him again, only more forcibly, and blocks his exit. In a fit of drunken rashness Ignacio stabs Francisco with Dolores's letter opener killing him. Ignacio has an idea and quickly cleans up the mess.

Scene 5: Dolores's garden. Her country adobe home where her children are staying is in the distance. It is dark with only moonlight paving the way. Isabelle intercepts Dolores before she gets to the adobe home with a message. The river can be heard in the background.

Dolores is frantically rushing to get her children and leave. She'll plot her counterattack later but she knows that after standing up to Ignacio she has sealed her fate, at least temporarily. Isabelle, with a nervous but firm voice, tells Dolores that she has to listen to her. Dolores, however, spills out everything that transpired and tells Isabelle that Ignacio knows about them and she has to hurry and pack quickly if they are to leave together.

Isabelle's demeanor changes quickly as she tells Dolores to "stop acting like a child" and asks with shock and confusion "are you crazy?" Isabelle explains that they can't just leave together. Dolores confronts Isabelle asking if she had been conspired with Ignacio from the beginning. Isabelle admits her initial deceit but that it all changed once they met each other. What she felt was real, but she tells Dolores that they don't live in a dream world but rather in this time and in this place. Dolores, heartbroken and humiliated,

seethingly calls her a coward through tears in her eyes and pushes Isabelle out of her way. Isabelle shouts “Francisco is dead!”

There is a deafening silence before Isabelle tells Dolores that is why she came. It was to warn her that Ignacio has framed her and has called the authorities to arrest Dolores. Isabelle says that she will protect her children but that she must run (“Please go!”). Isabelle then exits with a look of shame and melancholic love.

Scene 5 (cont’d): Dolores is all alone.

Now when it is too late, Dolores realizes just how much she has lost. She is distraught and humiliated. Dolores has alienated those closest to her, lost her position of wealth and power, lost her love, will lose her children, is going to get arrested, and her childhood friend has been murdered by the man who facilitated much of this tragedy. She sings a brief a cappella song “Let the world wash away.” She is a broken person.

Scene 5 (cont’d): La Llorona’s Lullaby.

From silence comes Dolores’s resignation to death. She has lost her grip on reality and sings a lullaby to herself and her children as she prepares a tea mixed with the poisonous adelfa flower. In a severe state of disassociation, Dolores sees death as salvation for her and her children. She prepares a peaceful, watery rest in the river. The lullaby ends with “Goodnight.”

Dolores then hears the spirit of La Llorona singing of ‘Immortal Revenge’ and Dolores asks ‘the spirit’ to give her the power to take her revenge on Ignacio and all who try to cross her now and forever. Dolores then drinks the tea and walks into her home to give it to her children with the lights fading to black.

Scene 5 (cont’d): Ignacio, Isabelle, group of soldiers, and Amani go to find Dolores only to discover three floating bodies in the river. The music builds to a quick climax as we are left with the haunting, wailing, cry of La Llorona.

CURTAIN

The Tragedy of La Llorona

music and libretto by

Daniel Aaron Ramirez

©2020, Daniel Aaron Ramirez

The Tragedy of La Llorona

by Daniel Aaron Ramirez

Orchestra

Flute
Clarinet (Bb)
Bass Clarinet (Bb)
Soprano Sax
Bassoon

*

Horn (F)
Trumpet/Flugelhorn (Bb)
Trombone

*

Orch. percussion (2)

*

Vibraphone
Acoustic Guitar
Harp
Piano
Bass
Various Percussion (1)**
- Hand Drums, perc. toys, etc.

*

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Contrabass

**percussion part to be used as a guide. Improvisation highly encouraged. Choice of percussion instrument(s) at the discretion of the performer and composer. Conga drums used as default. Perc. key available with part.

The Tragedy of La Llorona

opera in two acts

••

The Tragedy of La Llorona (The Weeping Woman) is a two-act opera based on the Mexican ghost story of a woman condemned to wander, wailing into the night in search of her lost children; dragging unsuspecting people to their watery grave.

Set in 19th-century Alta Calilfornia, the opera tells the story of Dolores – a young woman who yearns for more to her life and fears being overlooked due to her gender and class as well as the time and place into which she was born. The coming threat of the pirate Hipólito Bouchard gives Dolores the chance to prove herself.

While trying to find her identity and realize her prodigious talents, however, Dolores falls prey to the temptations of power and control which eventually drive her mad and warp her into the ghostly spirit.

The Tragedy of La Llorona uses the Mexican legend as a jumping-off point to explore themes of power and control, as well as time and identity against a backdrop of mystery and desire.

Characters

Dolores – Young woman, orphaned descendant of *Los pobladores* (mezzo-soprano)
Amani – Parental figure and spiritual leader to Dolores (contralto/countertenor)
Francisco – Dolores's childhood best friend (baritone)
Ignacio – Spanish Governor of Alta California (tenor)
Isabelle – Distant cousin of Ignacio (soprano)
Abuelita – Narrator (played by Amani)

Townsfolk, dancers, soldiers

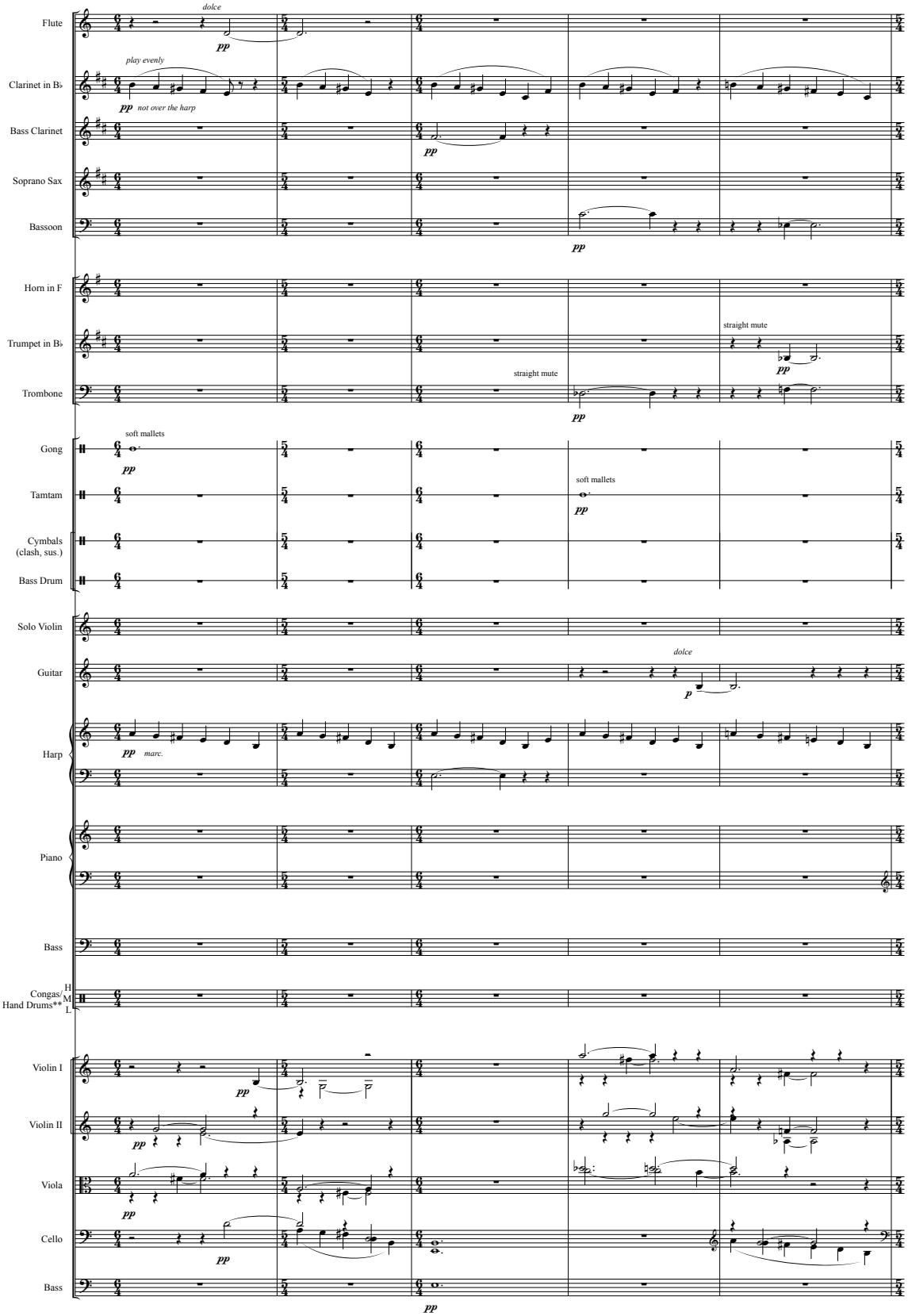
Place: Puebla de la Reina de los Ángeles, Alta California (near modern day Los Angeles)
Time: 1818 – 1824 (during the Mexican War of Independence)

The Tragedy of La Llorona

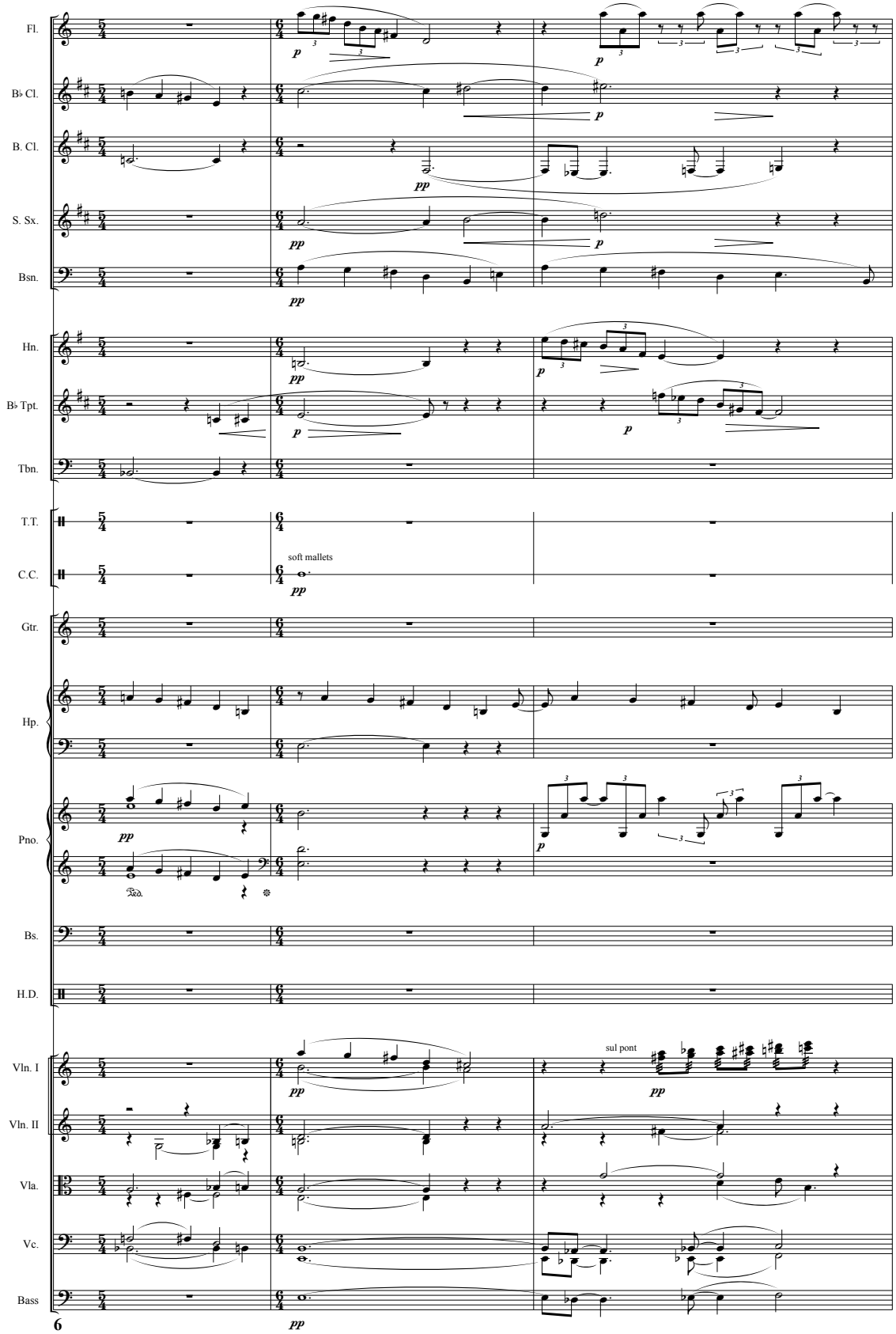
Act I – Prelude

music and libretto by
Daniel Aaron Ramirez

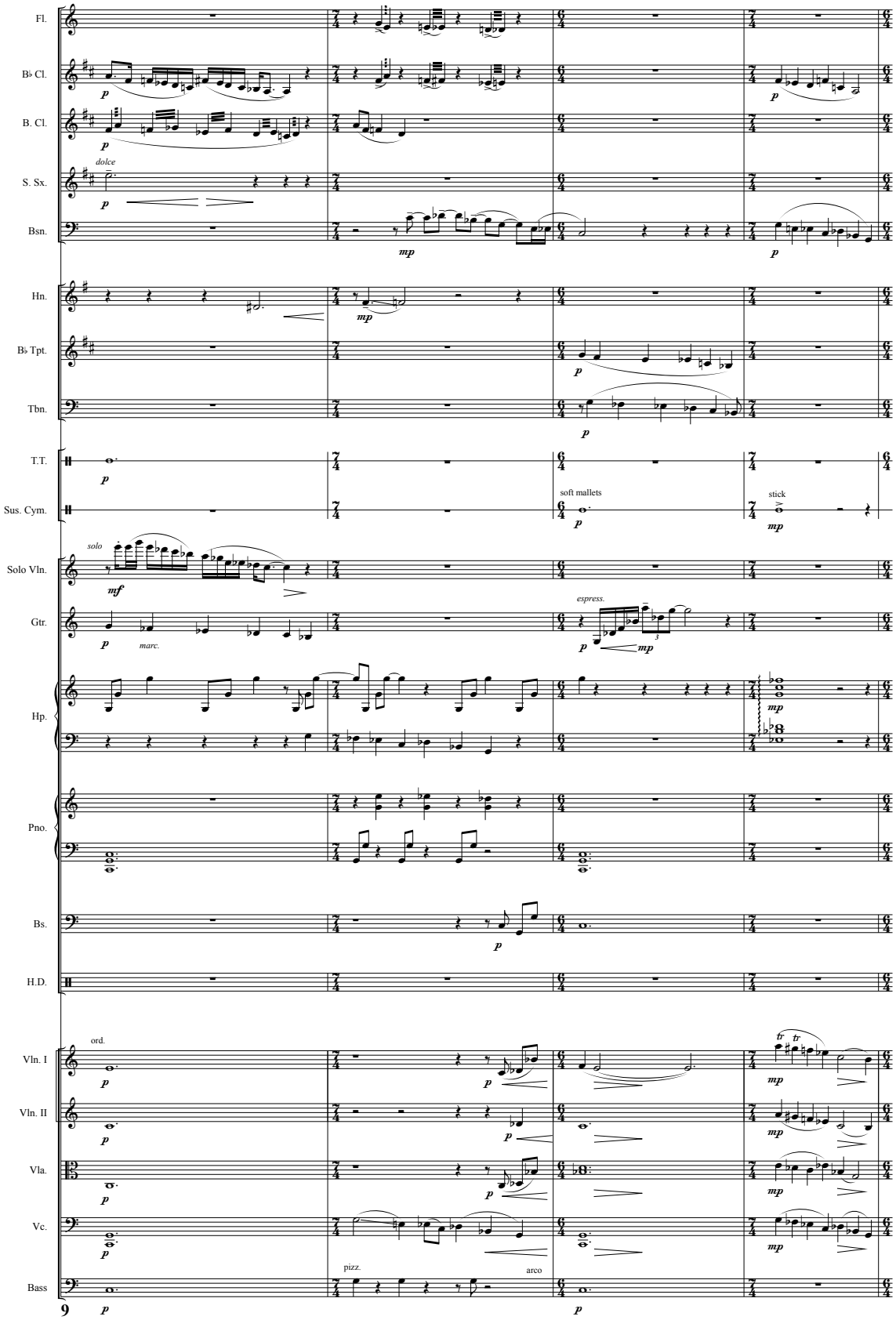
Lento and portent (♩ = 60)



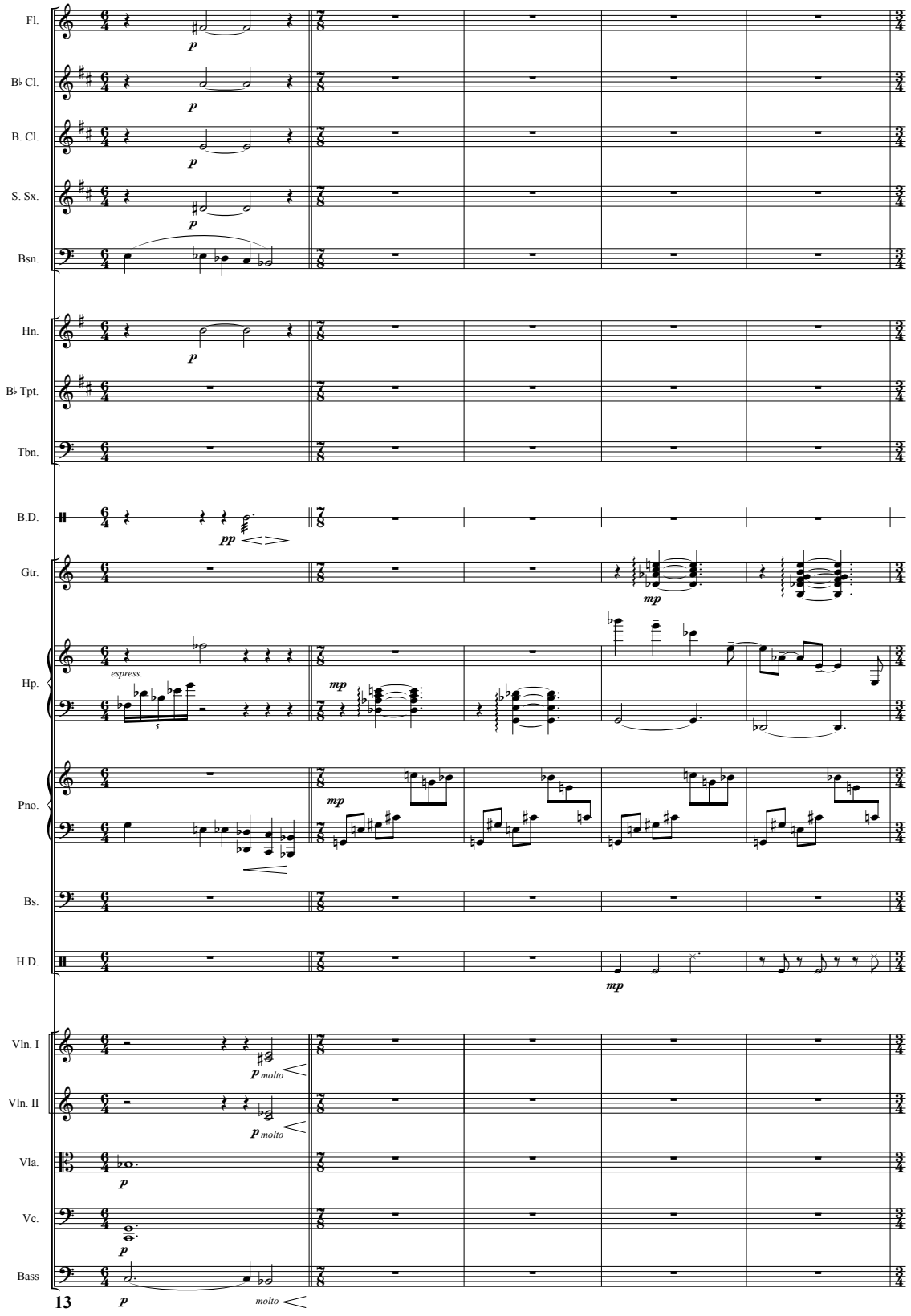
©2020, Daniel Aaron Ramirez

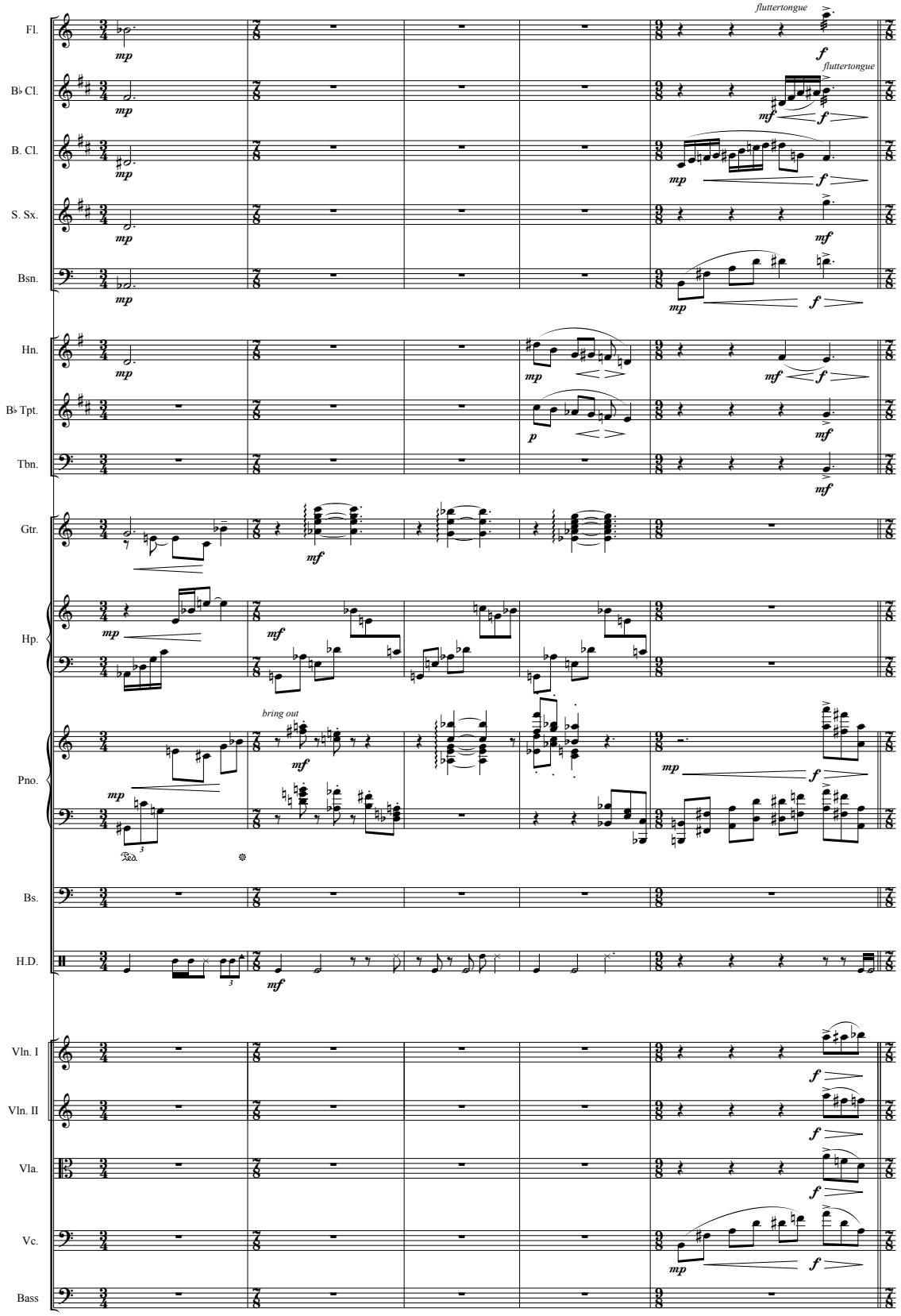

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
T.T.
C.C.
soft mallets
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
sul pont
6

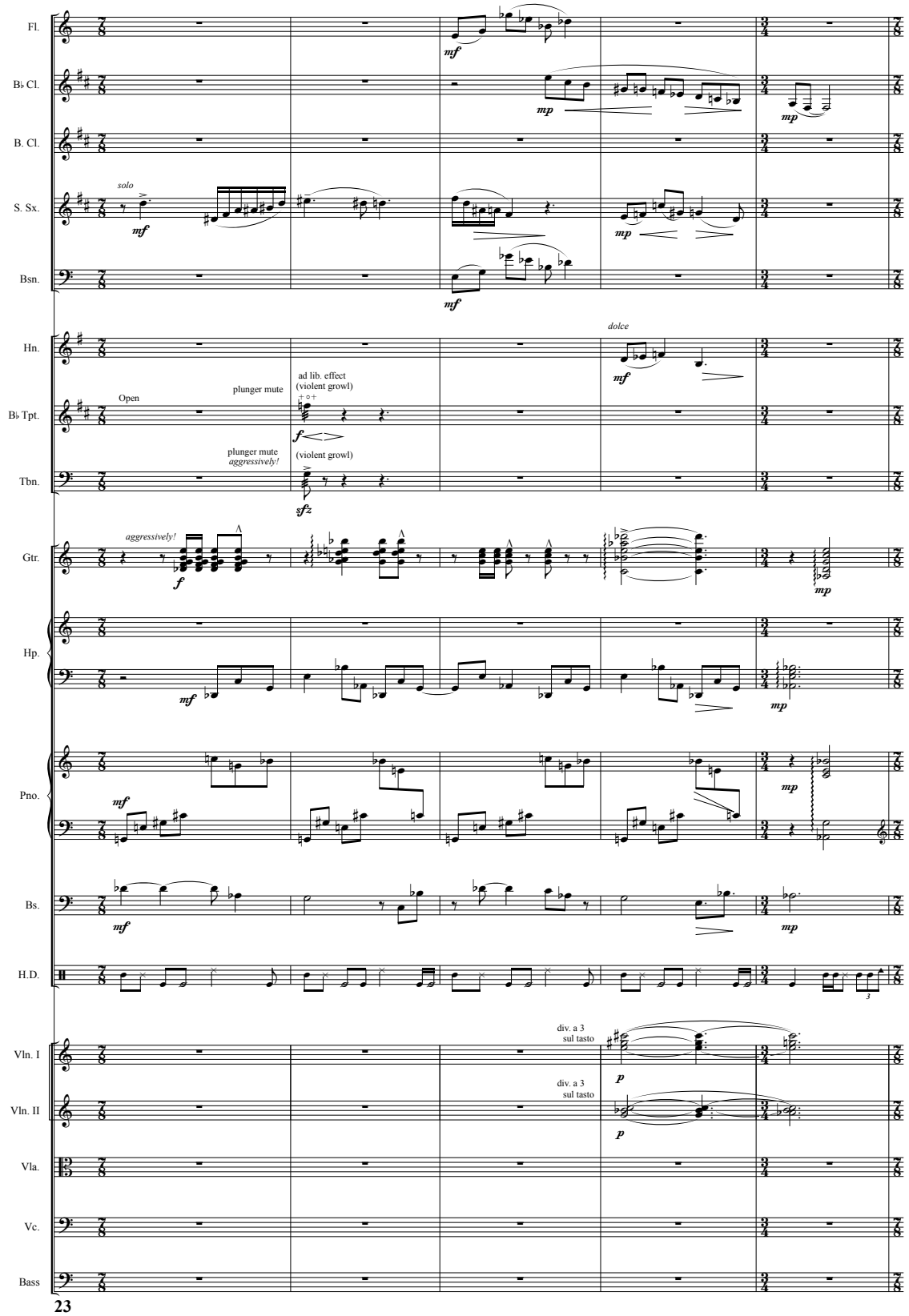
a little more pace

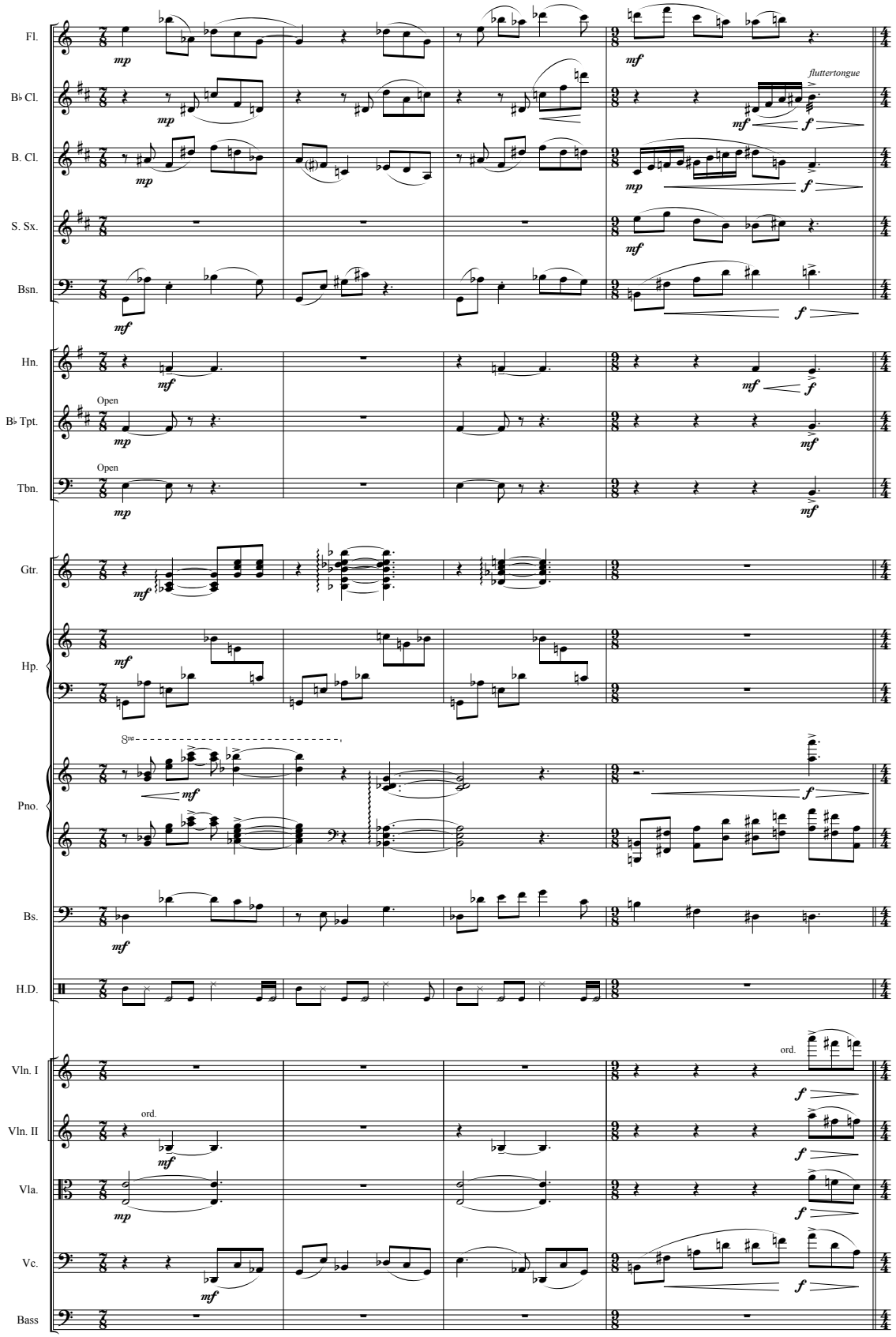


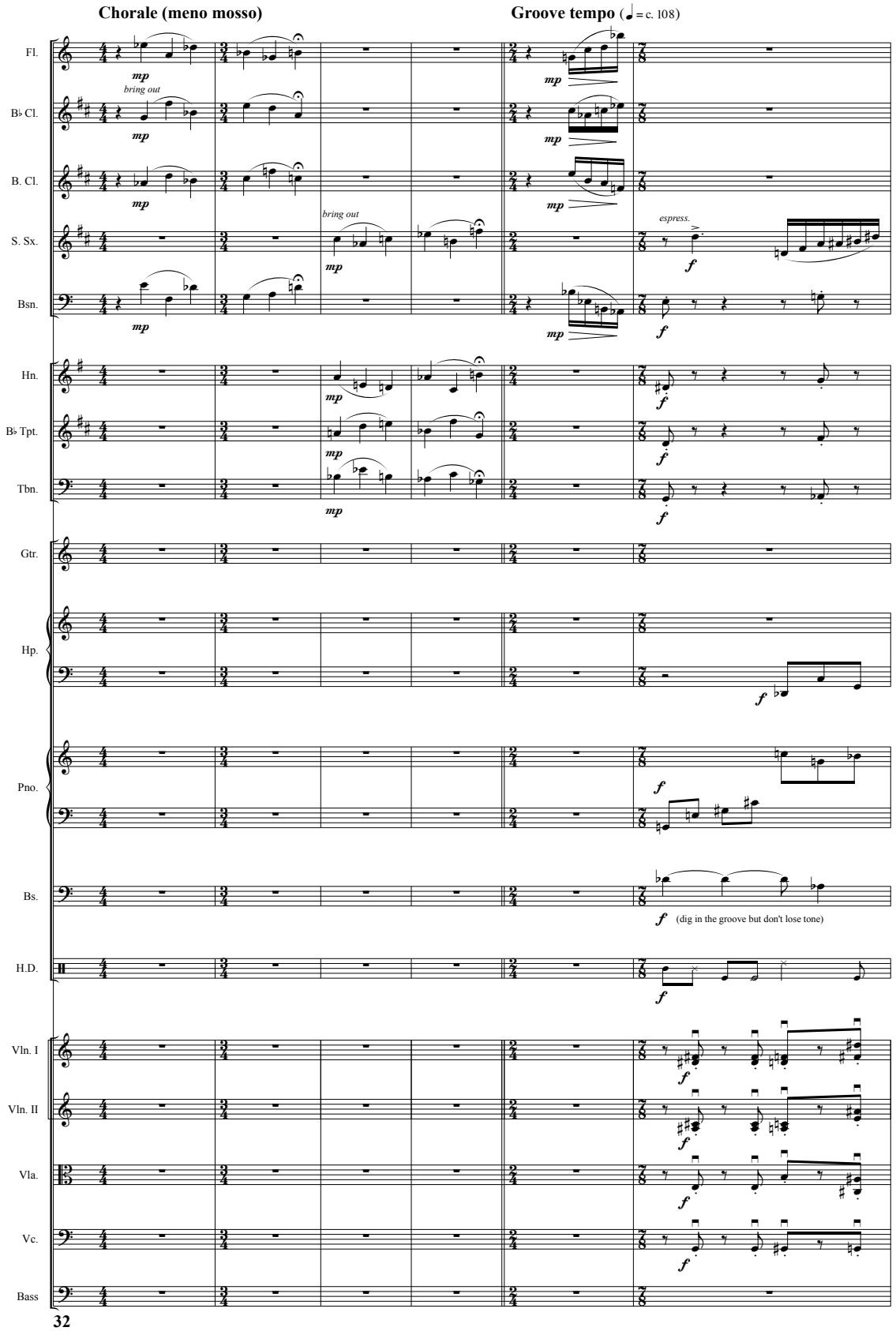
Moderato, underlying groove (♩ = c. 108)




Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
fluttertongue
fluttertongue
bring out
18

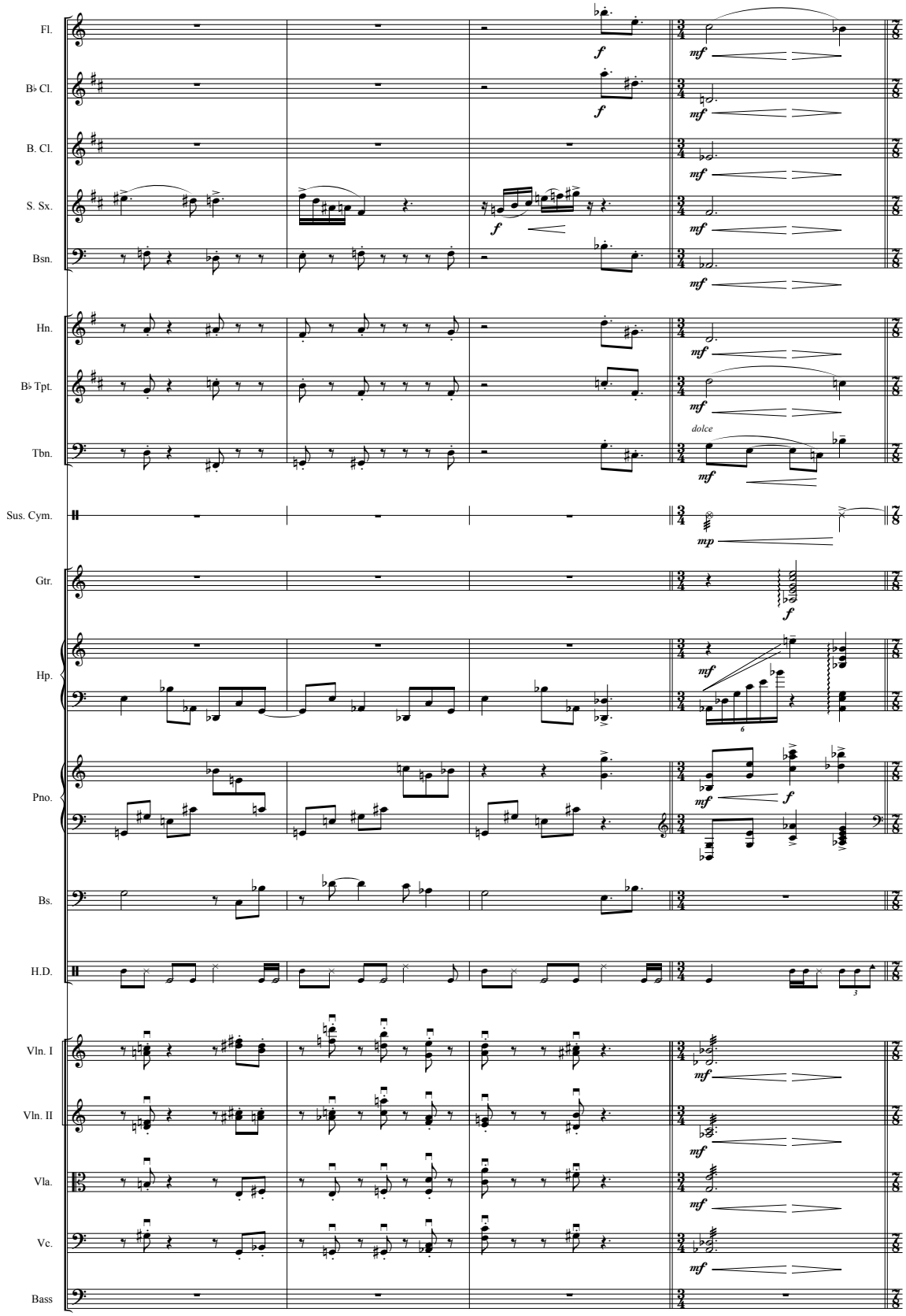

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
solo
mf
mp
dolce
Open
plunger mute
ad lib. effect
(violent growl)
f
plunger mute
aggressively!
(violent growl)
sfz
aggressively!
div. a 3
sul tasto
p
23

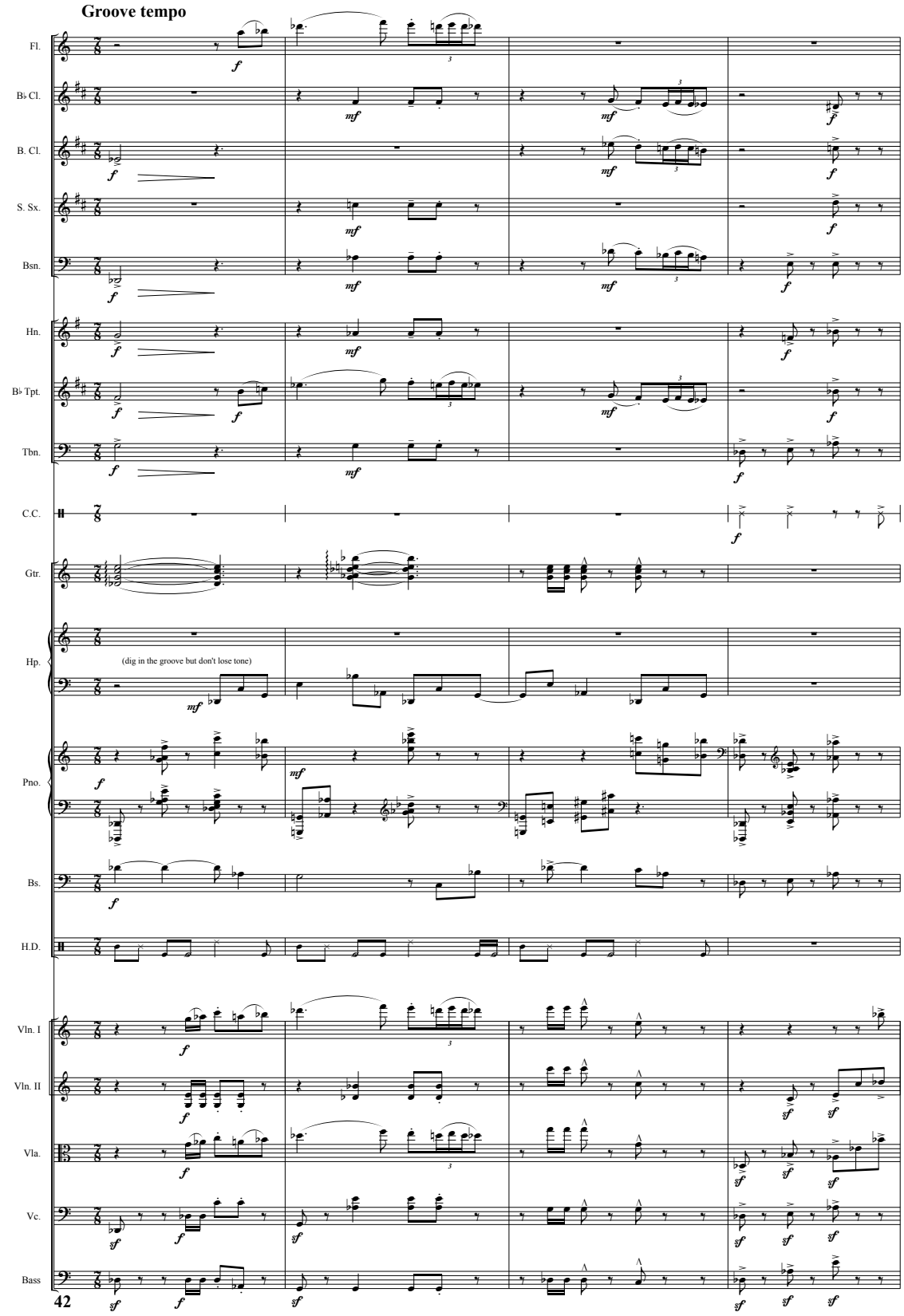

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
fluttertongue
Open
Open
8va
ord.
ord.
mp
mf
f

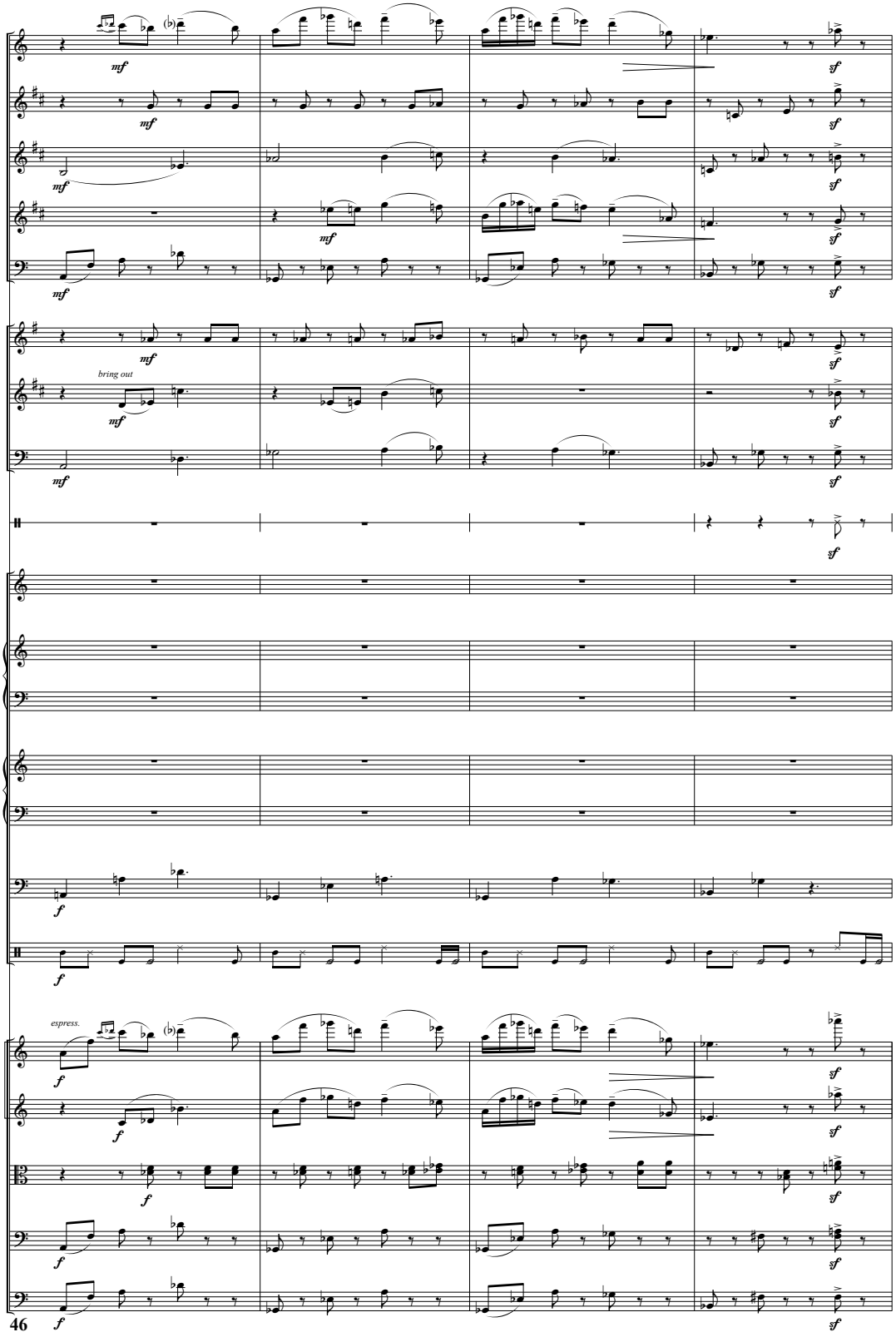

Chorale (meno mosso)
Groove tempo (♩ = c. 108)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
mp
bring out
espress.
f
(dig in the groove but don't lose tone)
32

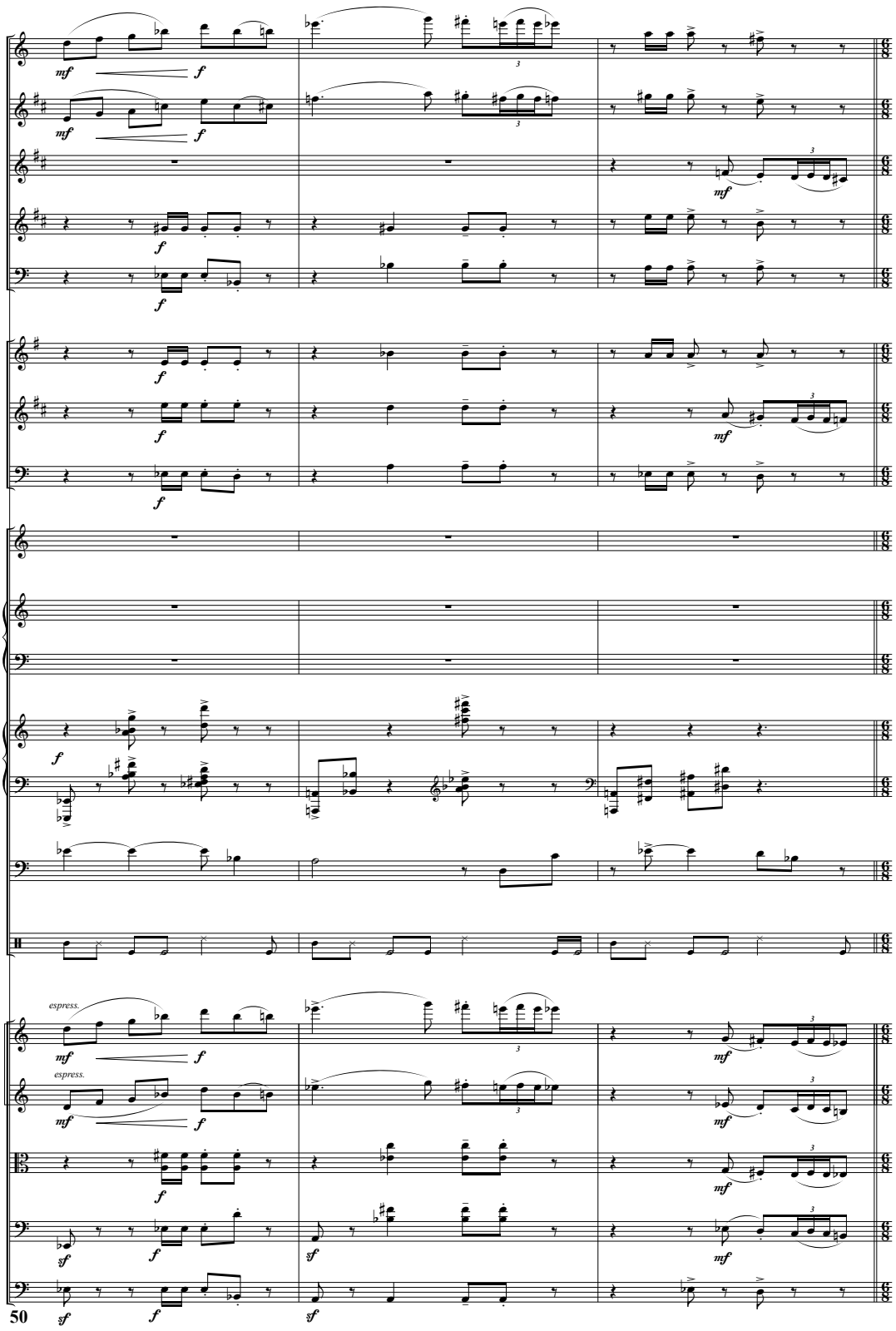
rit.

Suddenly slower (♩ = c. 80)

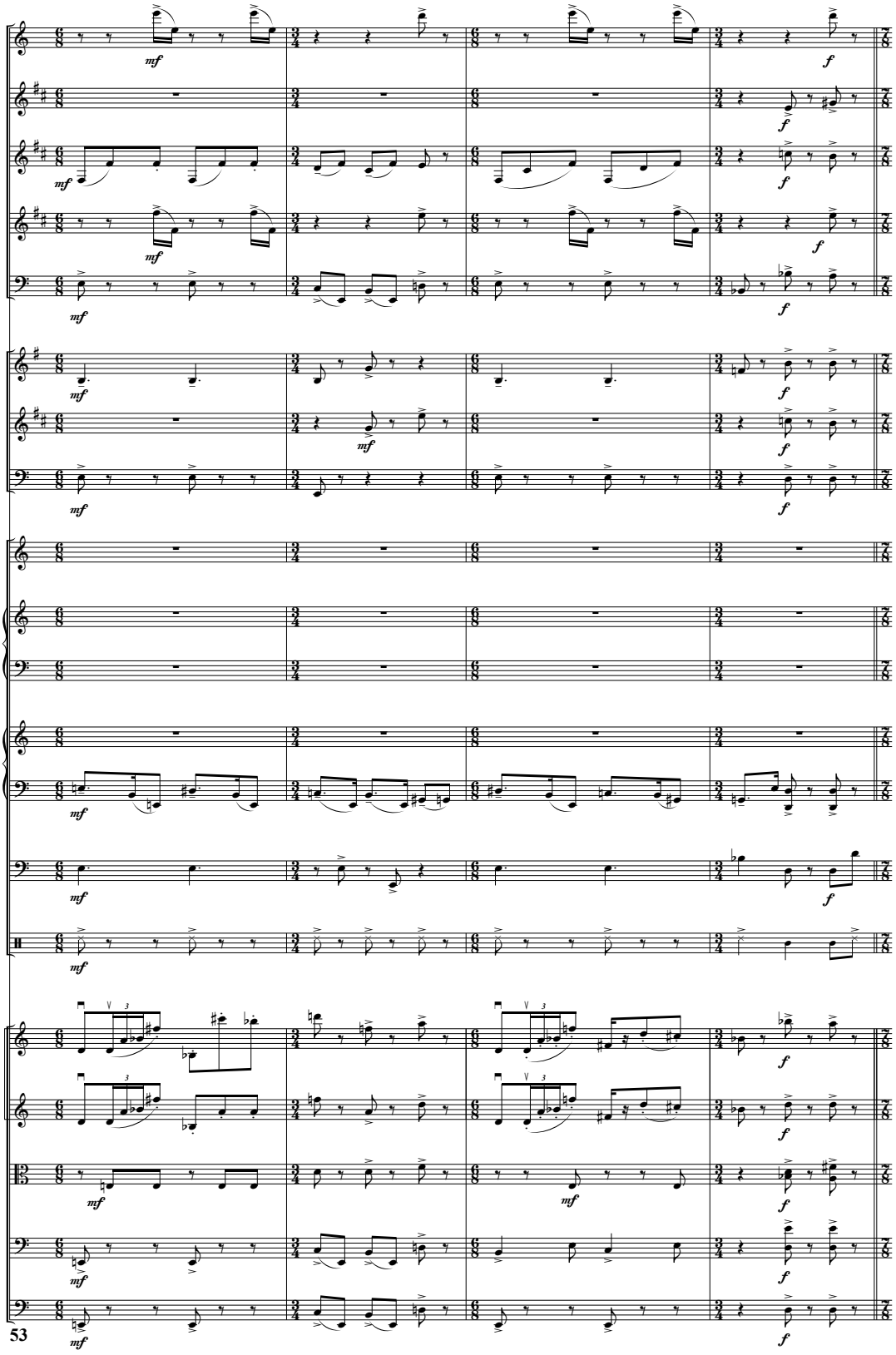


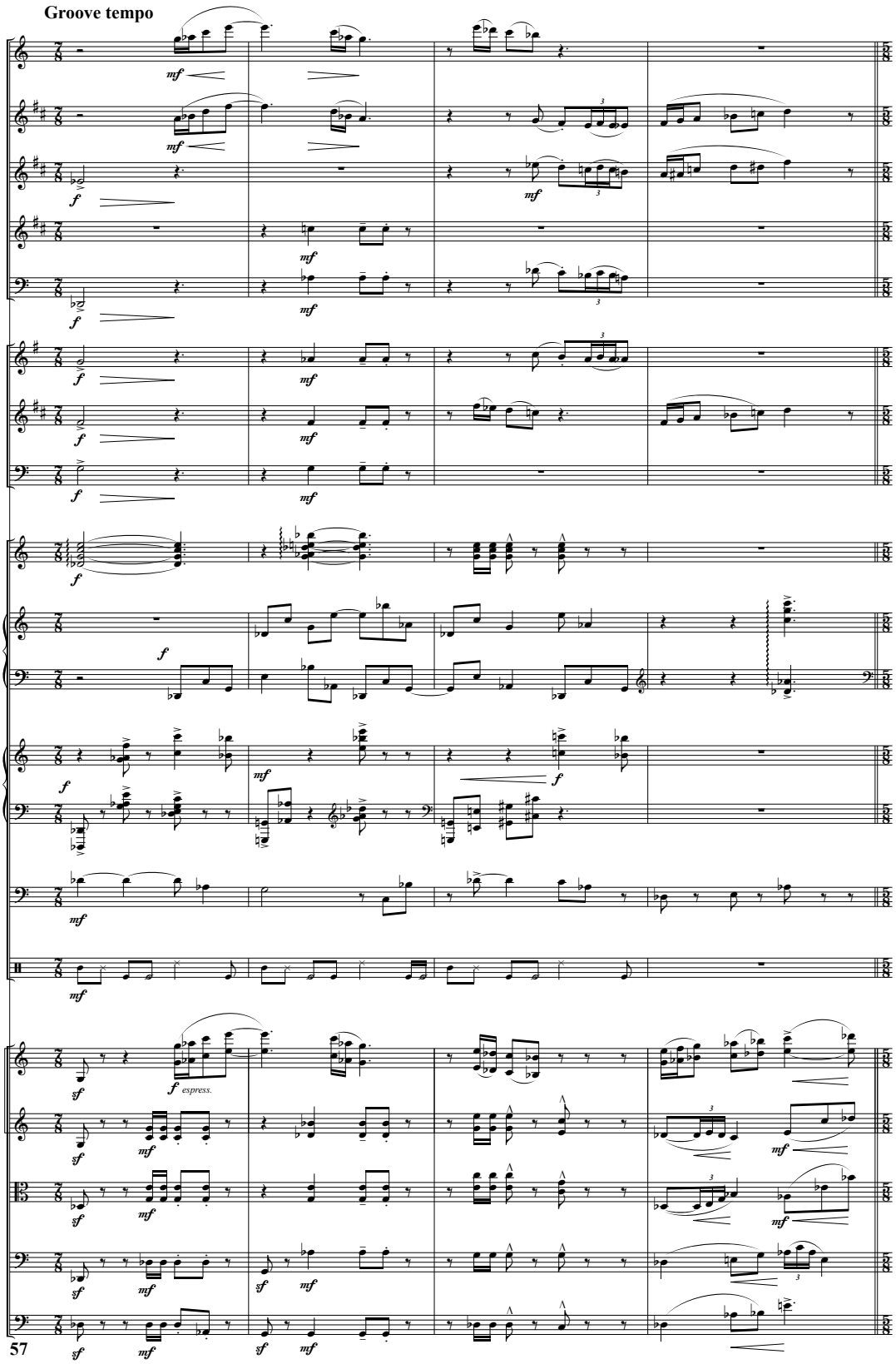

Groove tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
C.C.
Gtr.
Hp.
(dig in the groove but don't lose tone)
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
42

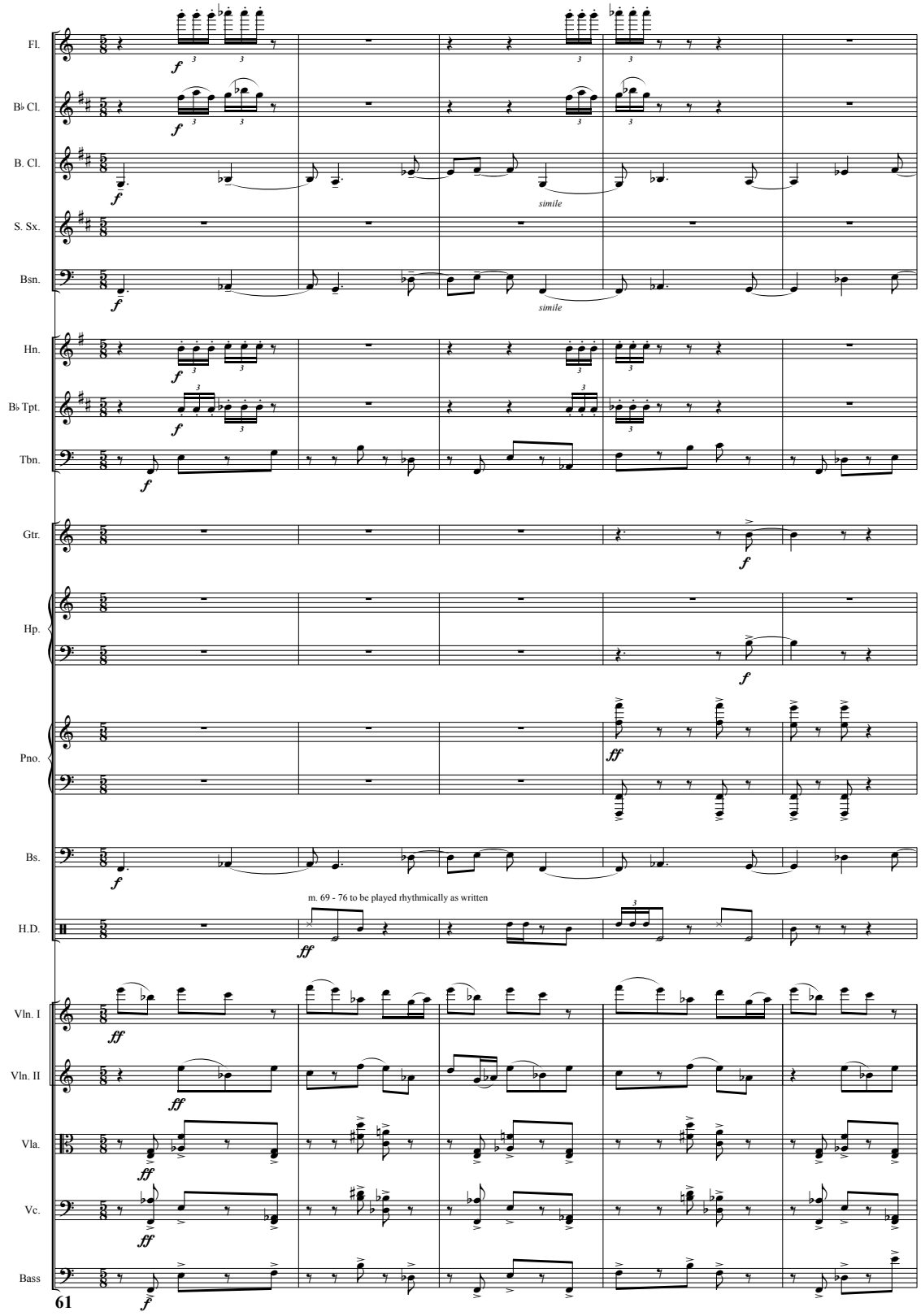

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
bring out
Tbn.
C.C.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
espress.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
mf
f
sf
46

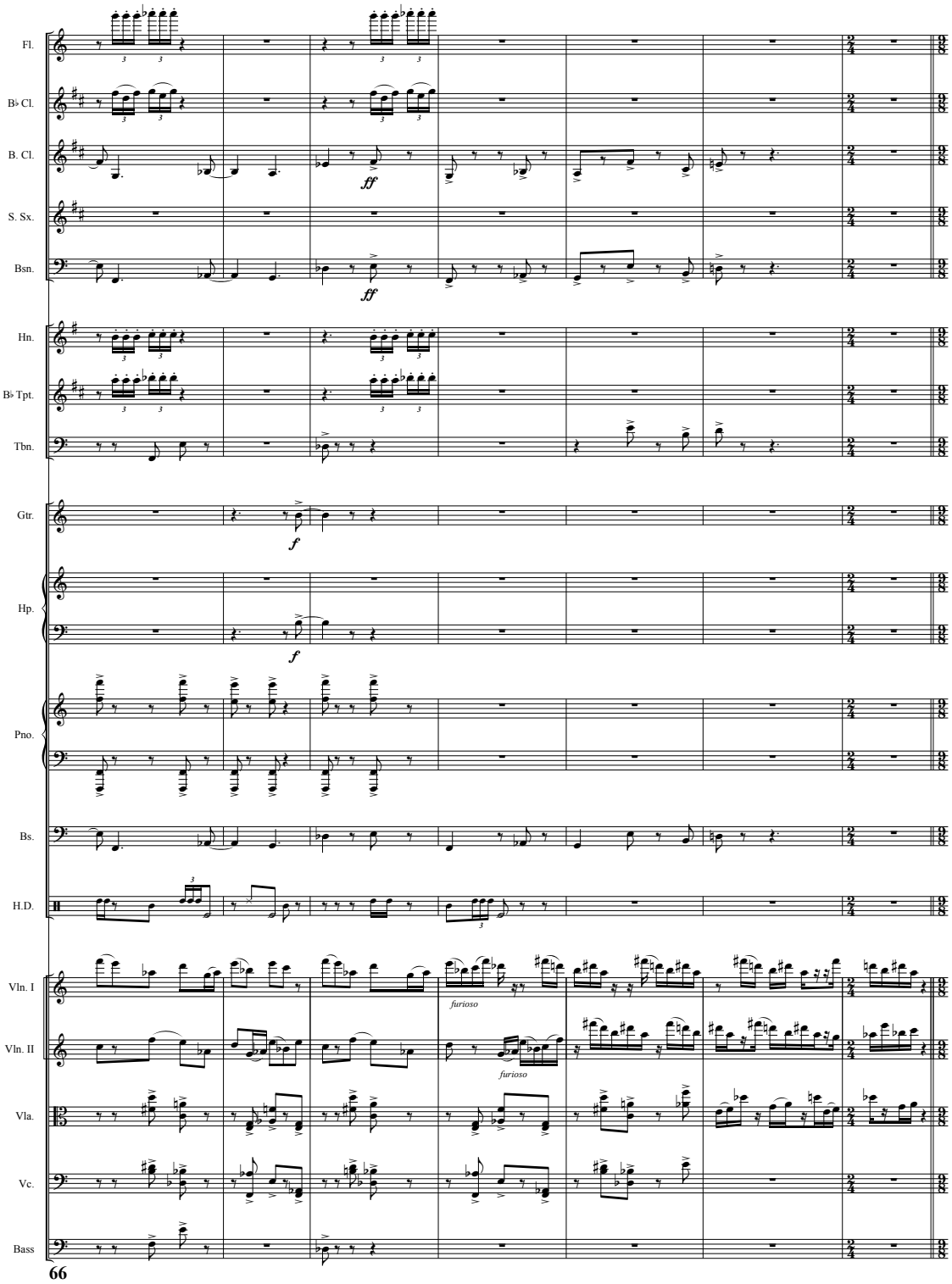

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
espress.
espress.
50

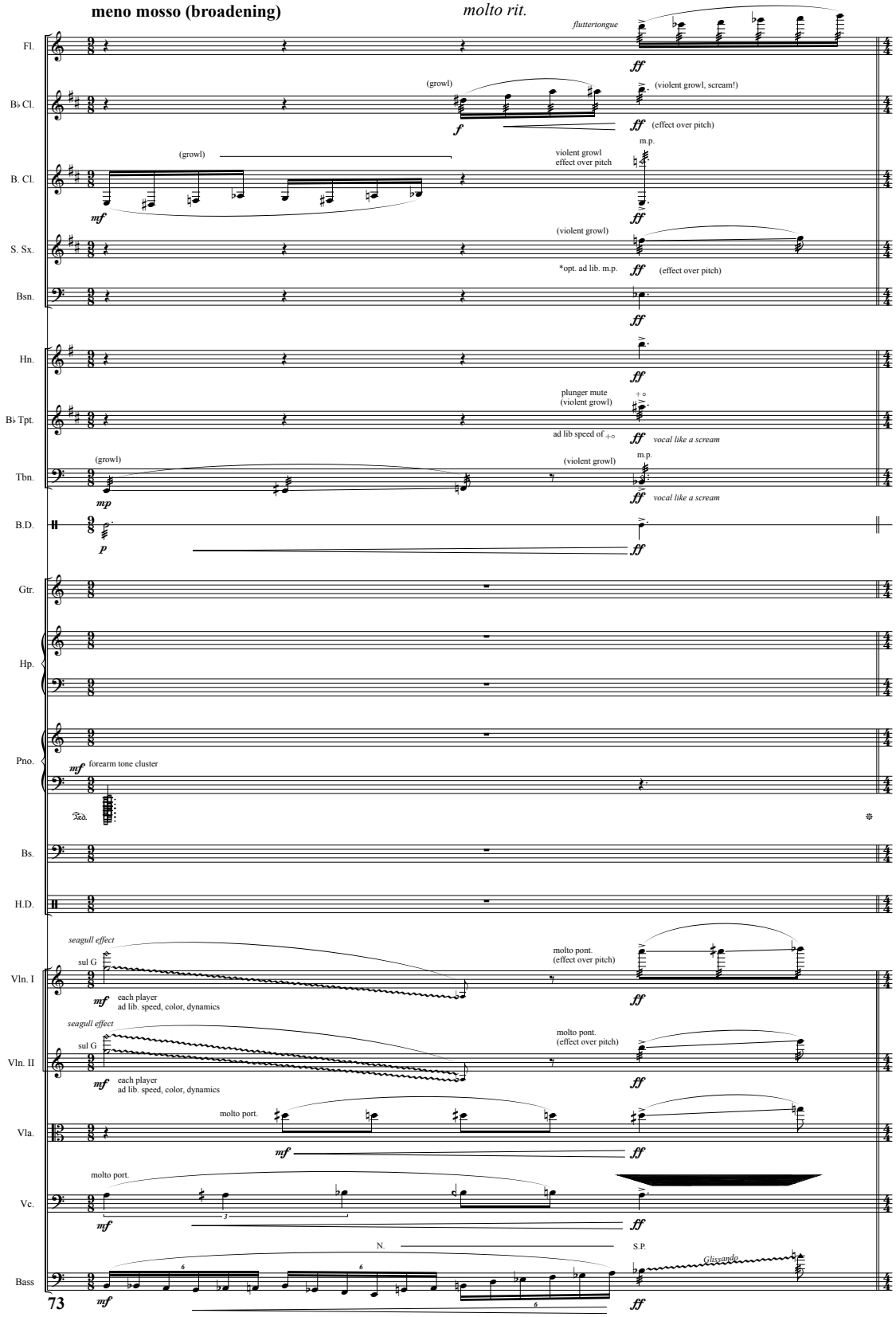
poco meno mosso

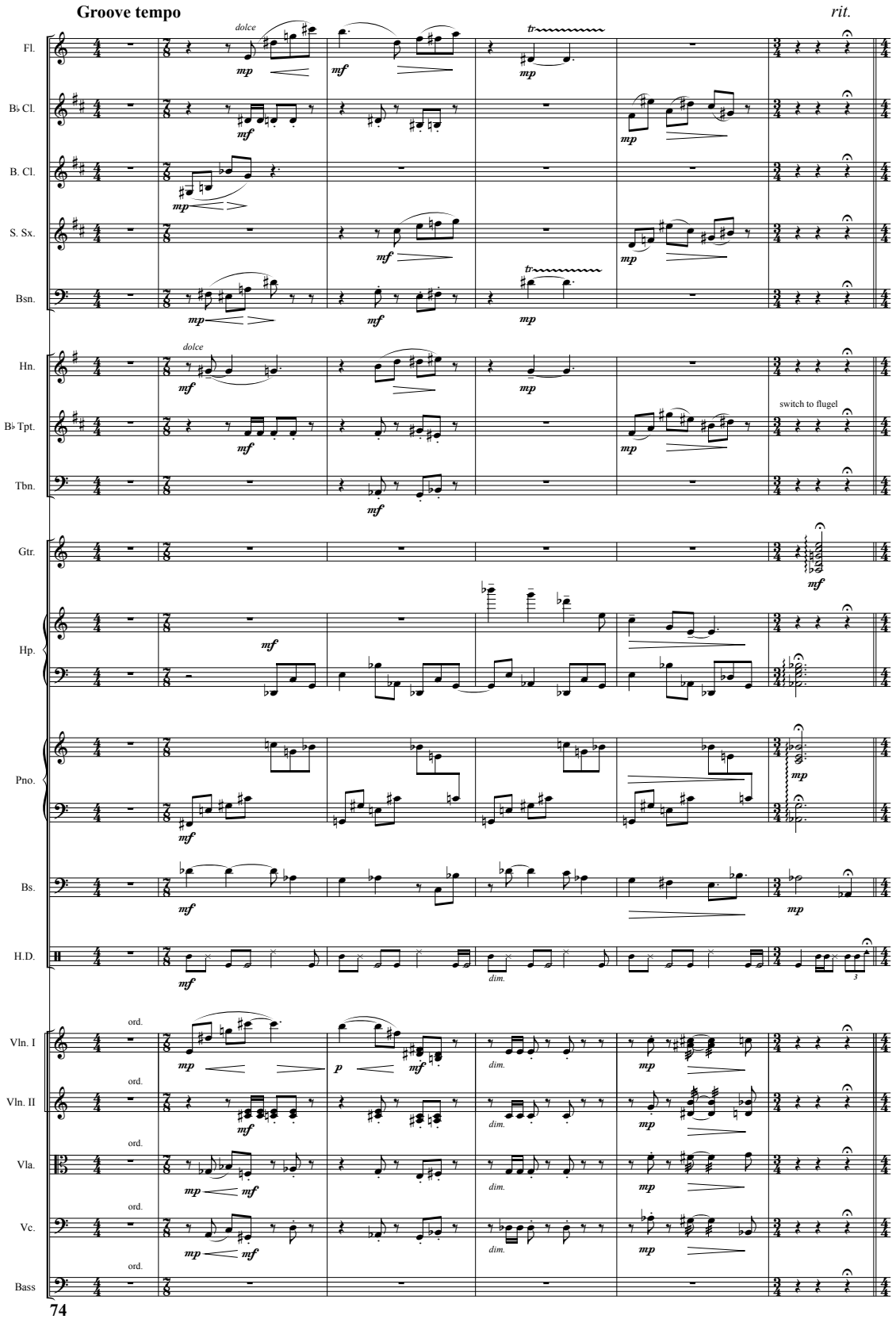


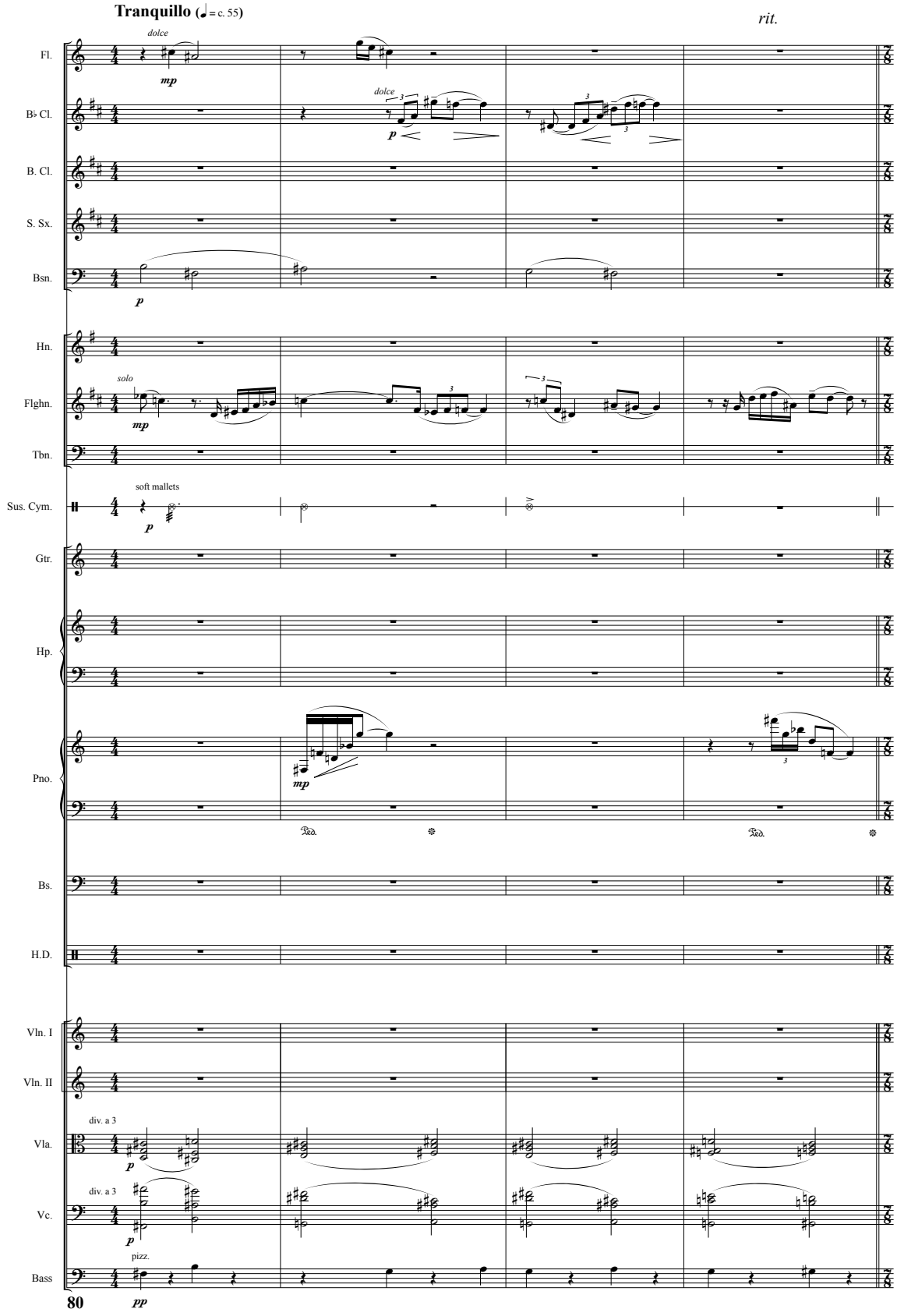

Groove tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
espress.
57

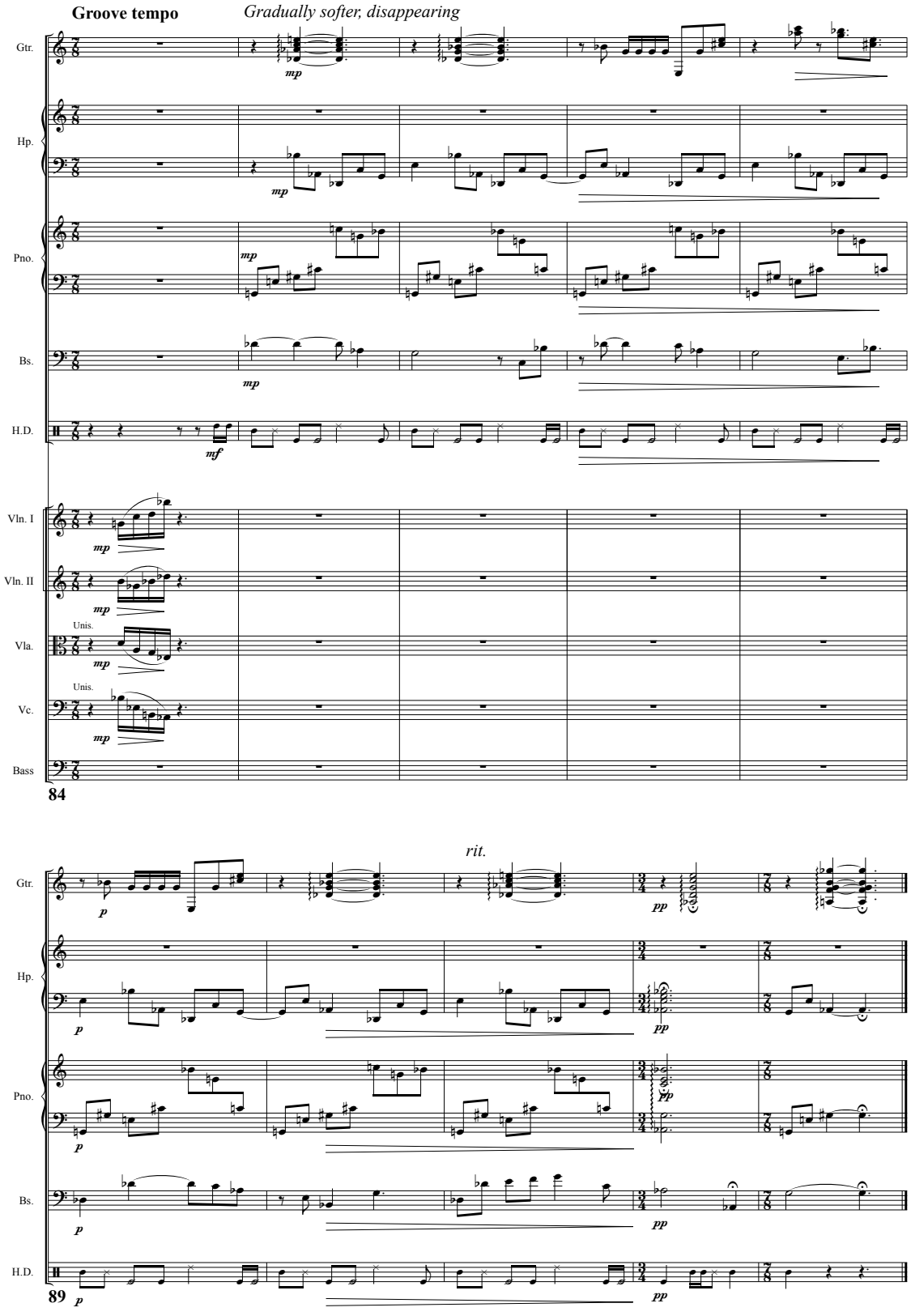

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
simile
simile
m. 69 - 76 to be played rhythmically as written
61


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
ff
ff
f
f
furioso
furioso
66


meno mosso (broadening)
molto rit.
Fl.
fluttertongue
B♭ Cl.
(growl)
(violent growl, scream!)
(effect over pitch)
B. Cl.
(growl)
violent growl
effect over pitch
m.p.
S. Sx.
(violent growl)
*opt. ad lib. m.p.
(effect over pitch)
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
plunger mute
(violent growl)
ad lib speed of
vocal like a scream
Tbn.
(growl)
(violent growl)
m.p.
vocal like a scream
B.D.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
forearm tone cluster
Bs.
H.D.
Vln. I
seagull effect
sul G
each player
ad lib. speed, color, dynamics
molto pont.
(effect over pitch)
Vln. II
seagull effect
sul G
each player
ad lib. speed, color, dynamics
molto pont.
(effect over pitch)
Vla.
molto port.
Vc.
molto port.
N.
S.P.
Glissando
Bass
73


Groove tempo
rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
switch to flugel
Tbn.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
dolce
ord.
74


Tranquillo (♩= c. 55)
rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Sus. Cym.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
dolce
mp
p
solo
soft mallets
div. a 3
pizz.
80
pp


Groove tempo
Gradually softer, disappearing
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
Unis.
Unis.
84
rit.
89

Work In Progress

Abuelita Introduction Before Scene 1
Abuelita walks on stage and sits down. She begins telling the story of La Llorona as if telling a fable to children before bed.

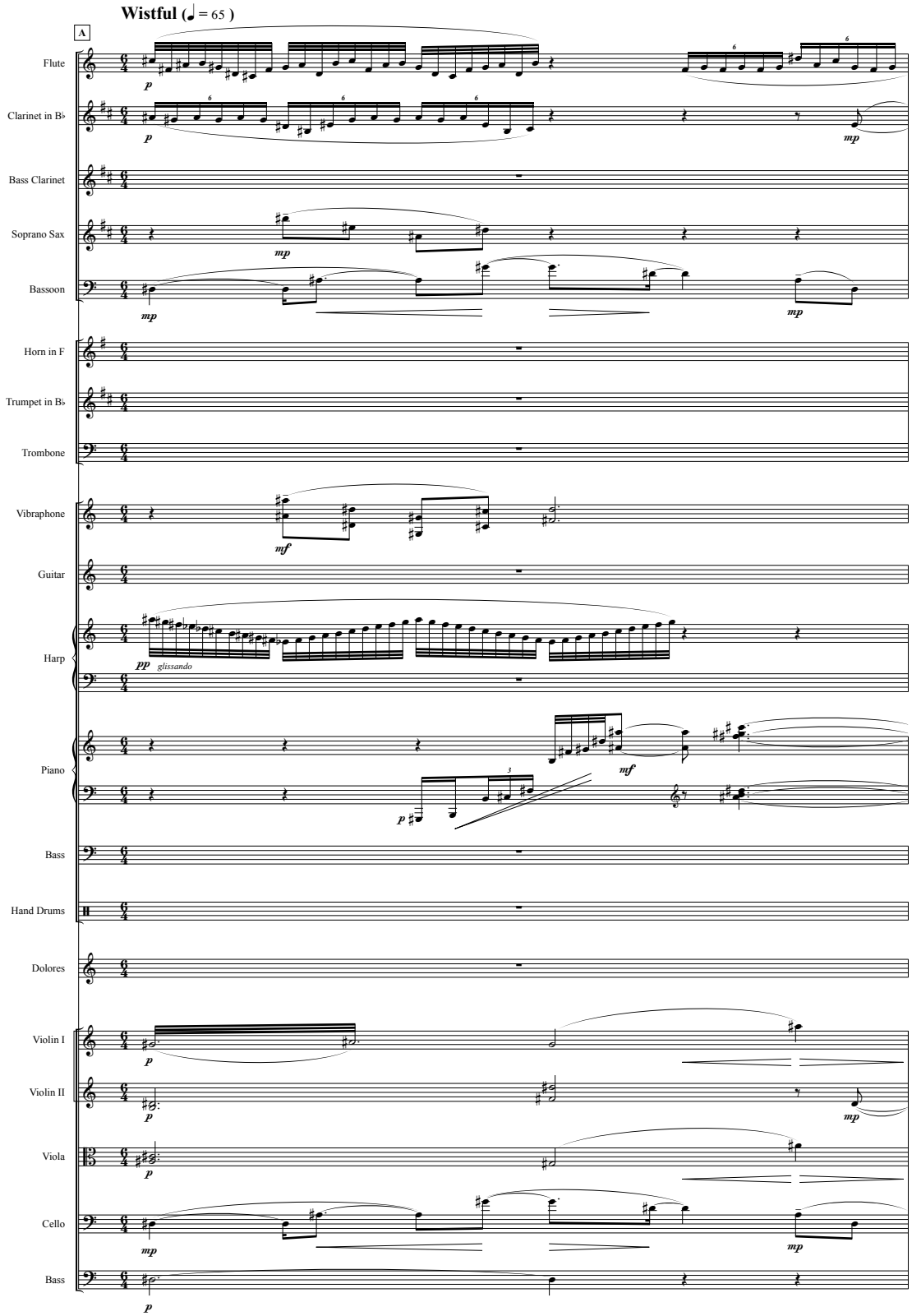
Atmospheric music (TBD).

Act I – Scene I

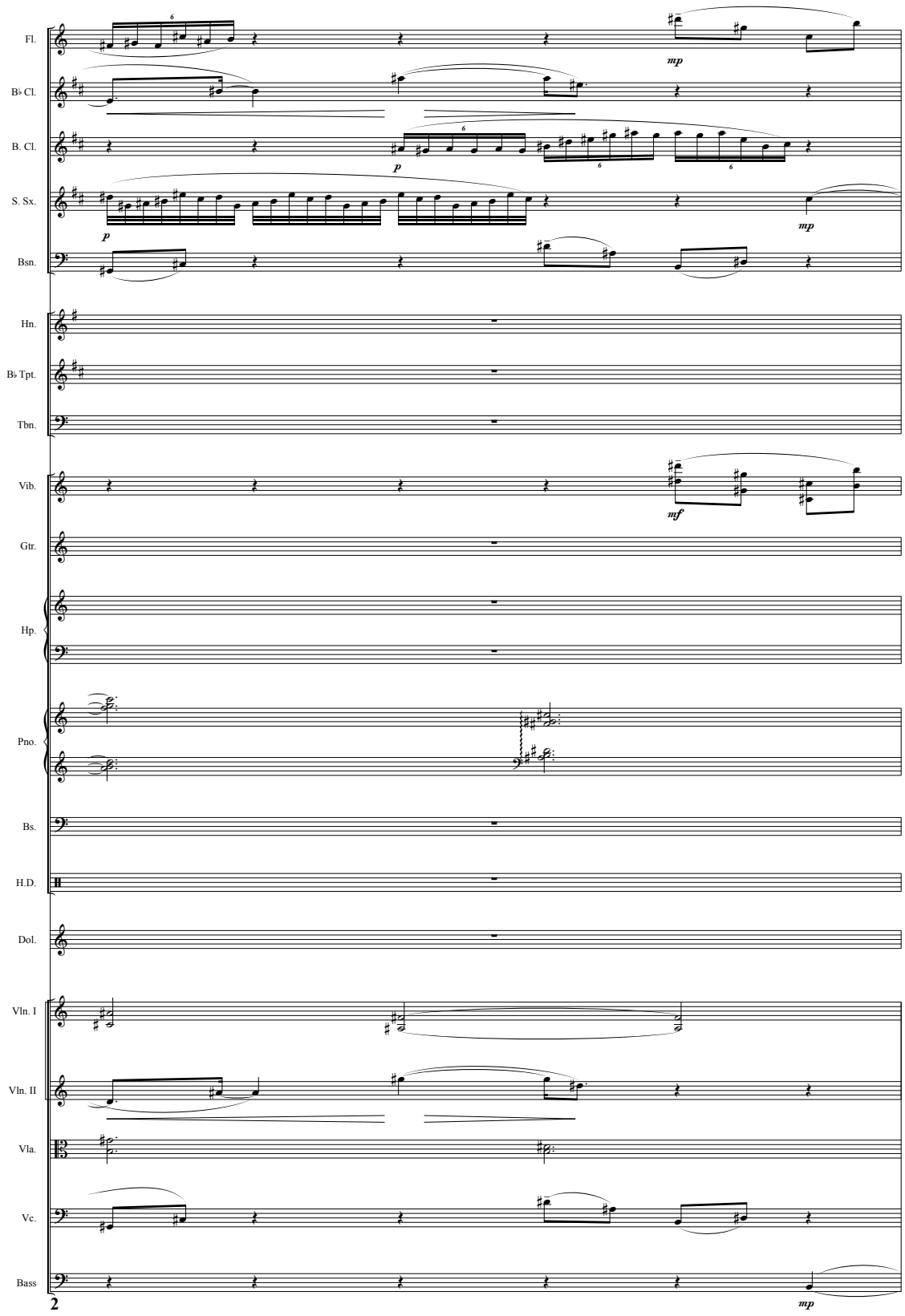
Dolores

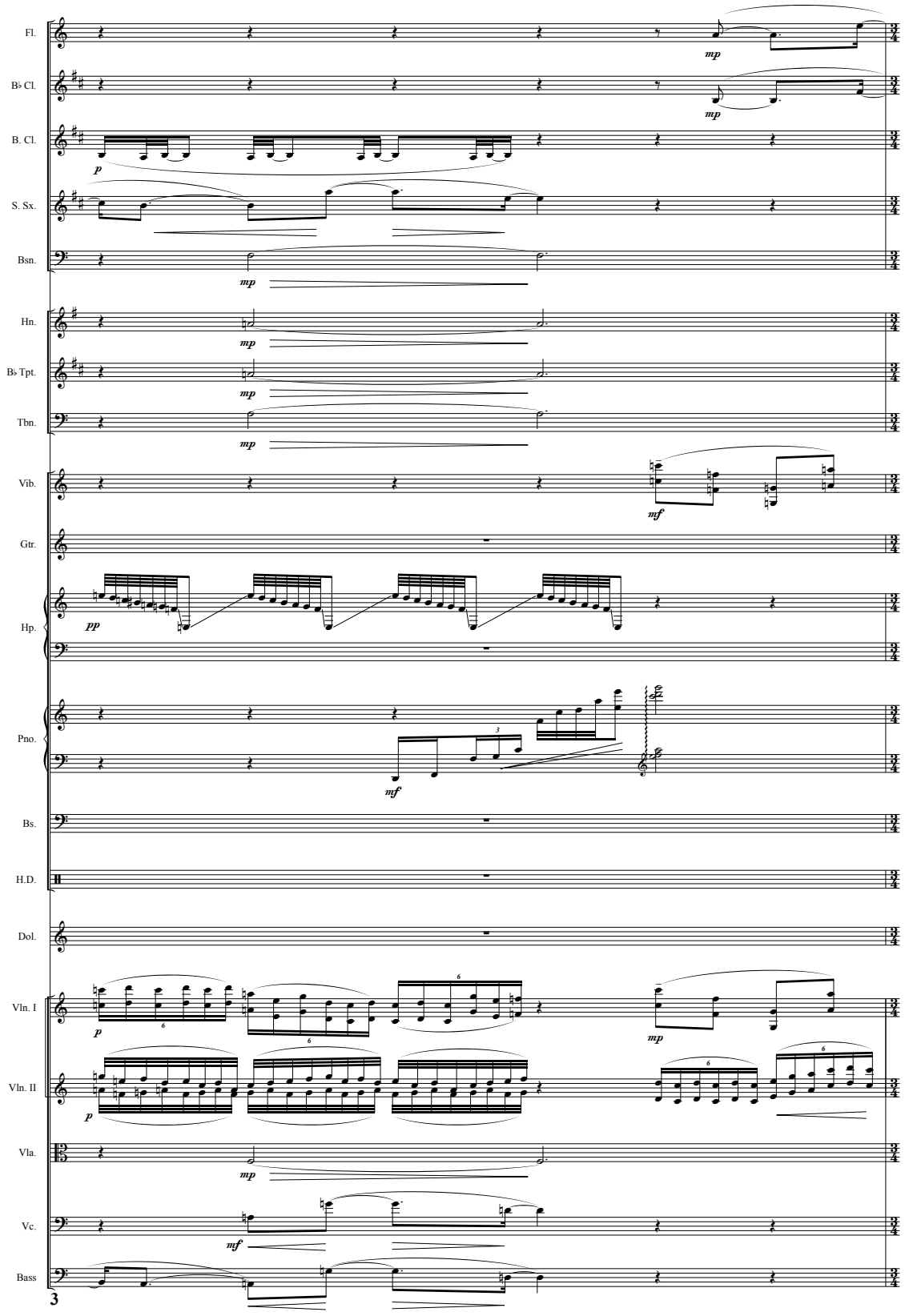
Daniel Aaron Ramirez

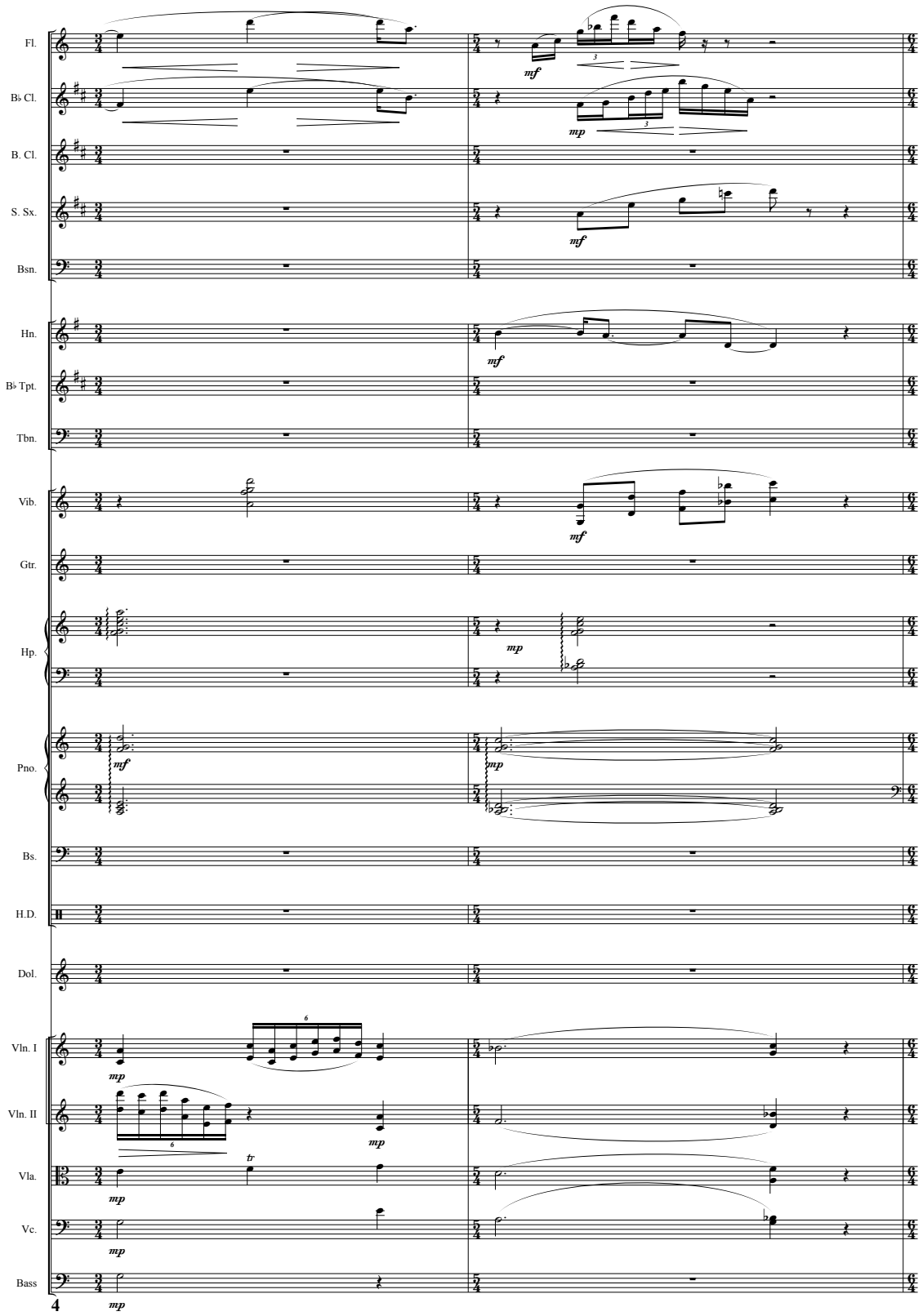
Scene 1: Pueblo de los Ángeles. 1818. Town square outside the Church. Townsfolk come and go but Dolores is lost in her own thoughts on the edge of the square. The Priestess watches on Dolores from the Church.

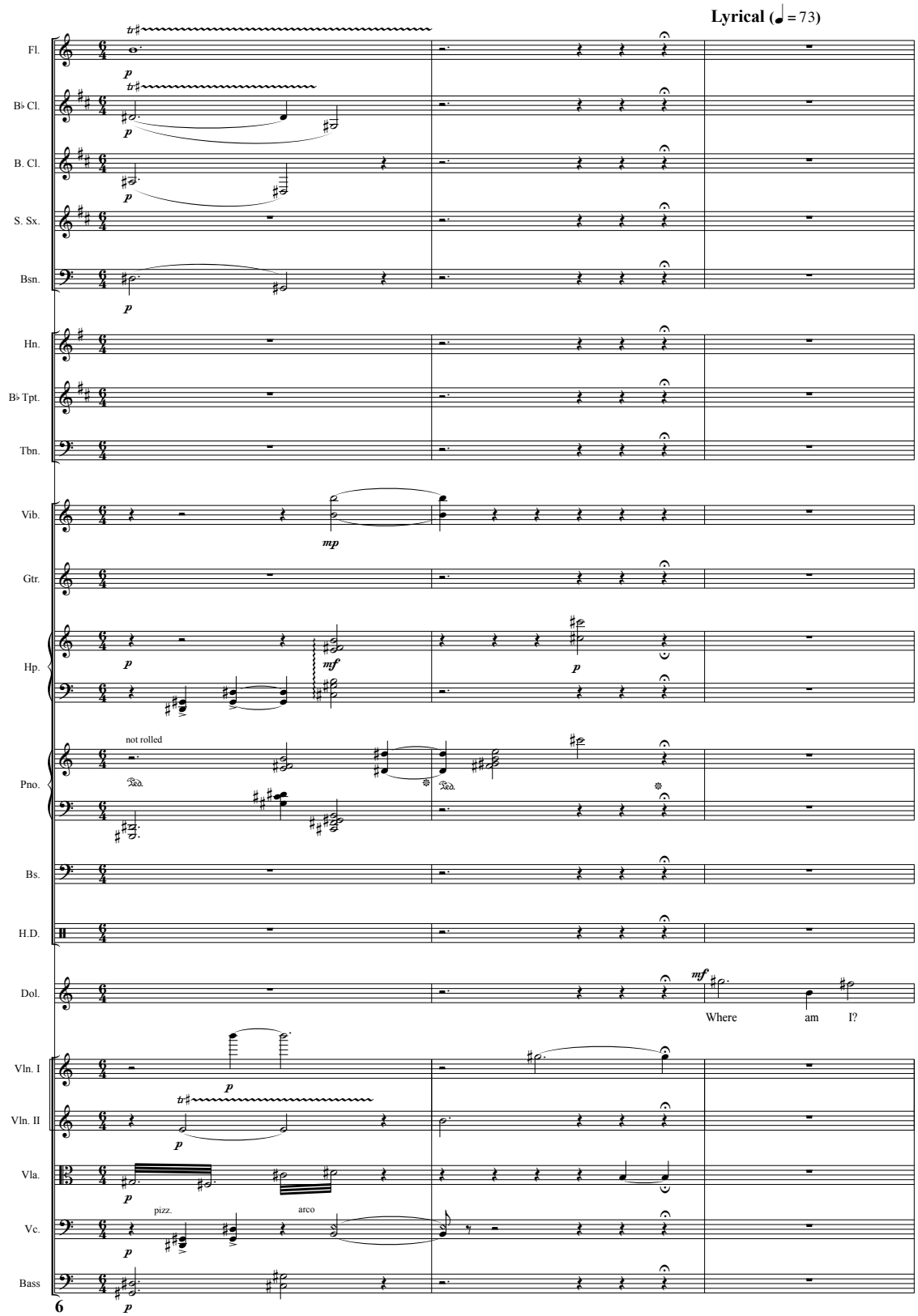


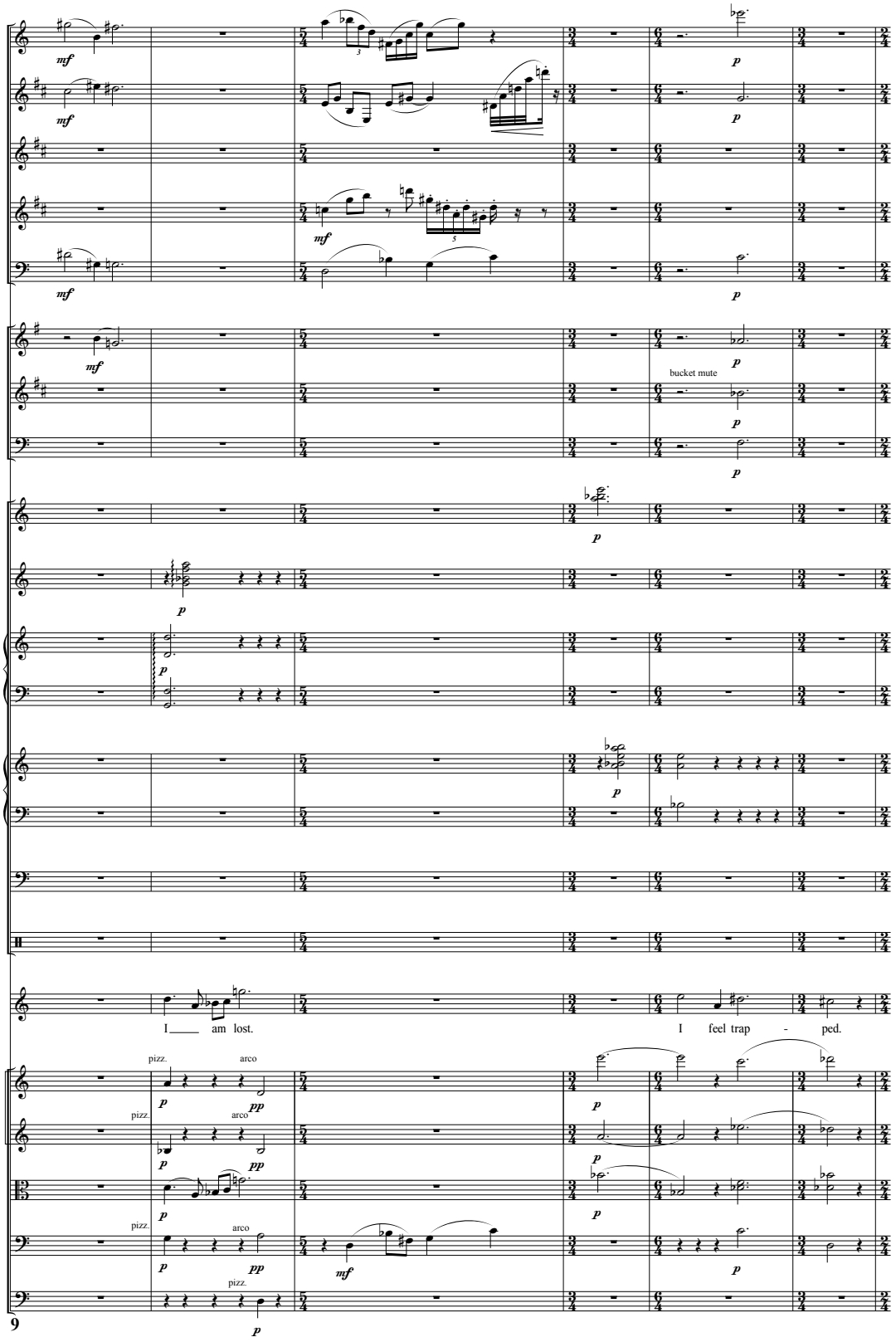
©2020, Daniel Aaron Ramirez


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Dol.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
mp
p
mf
2

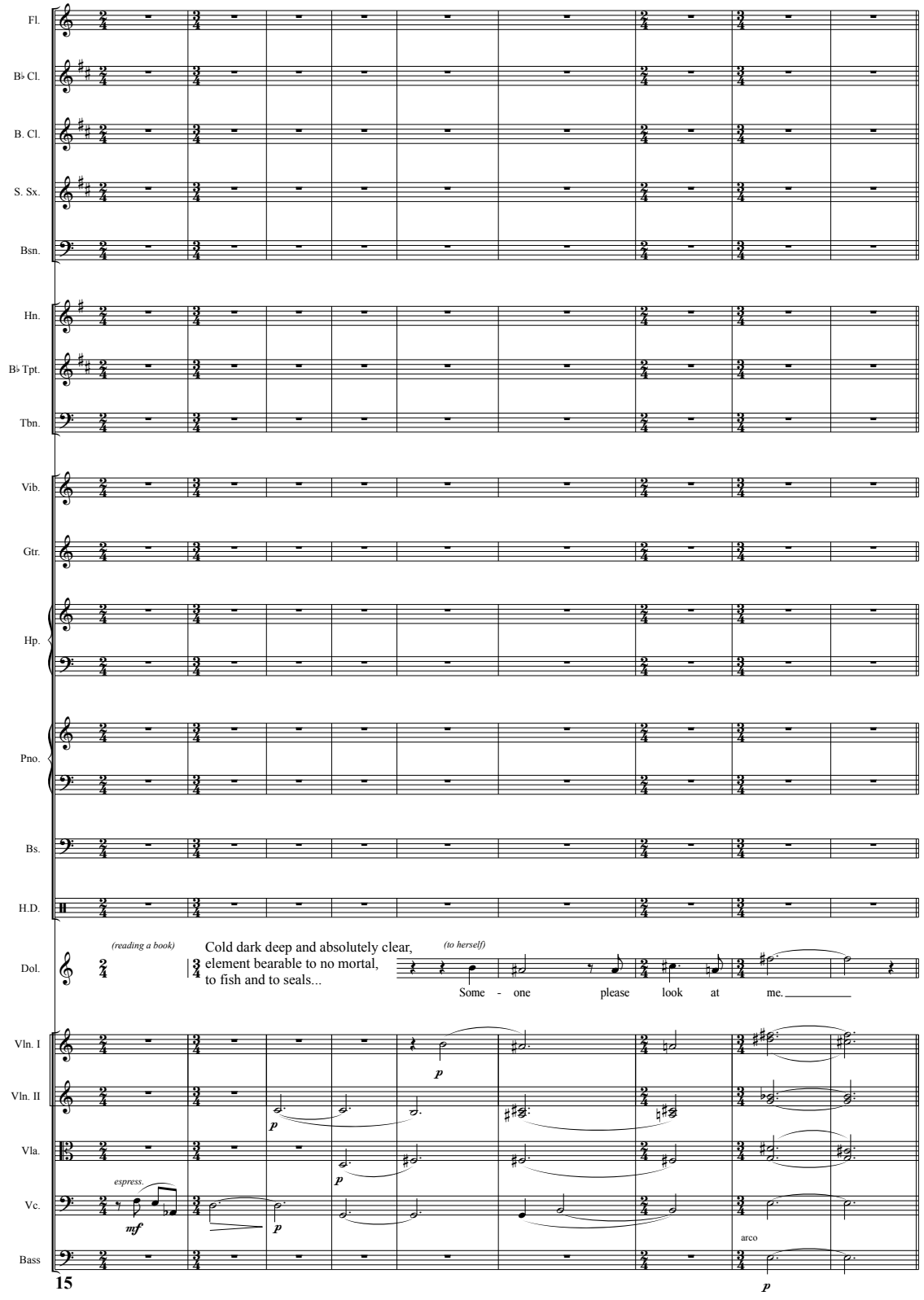

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Dol.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
mp
p
mf
pp
3
6
3

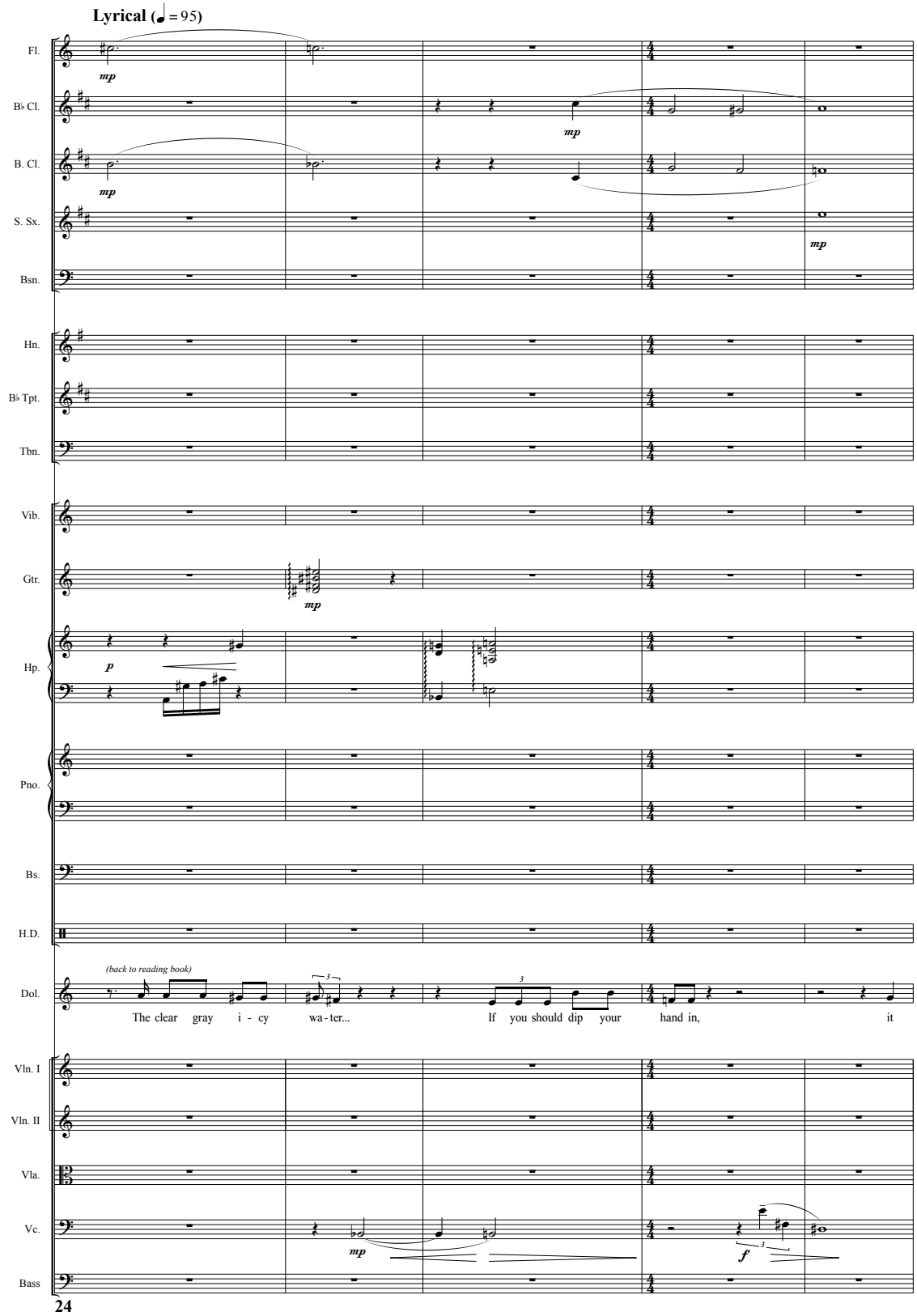

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Dol.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
mf
mp
tr
6
3
4

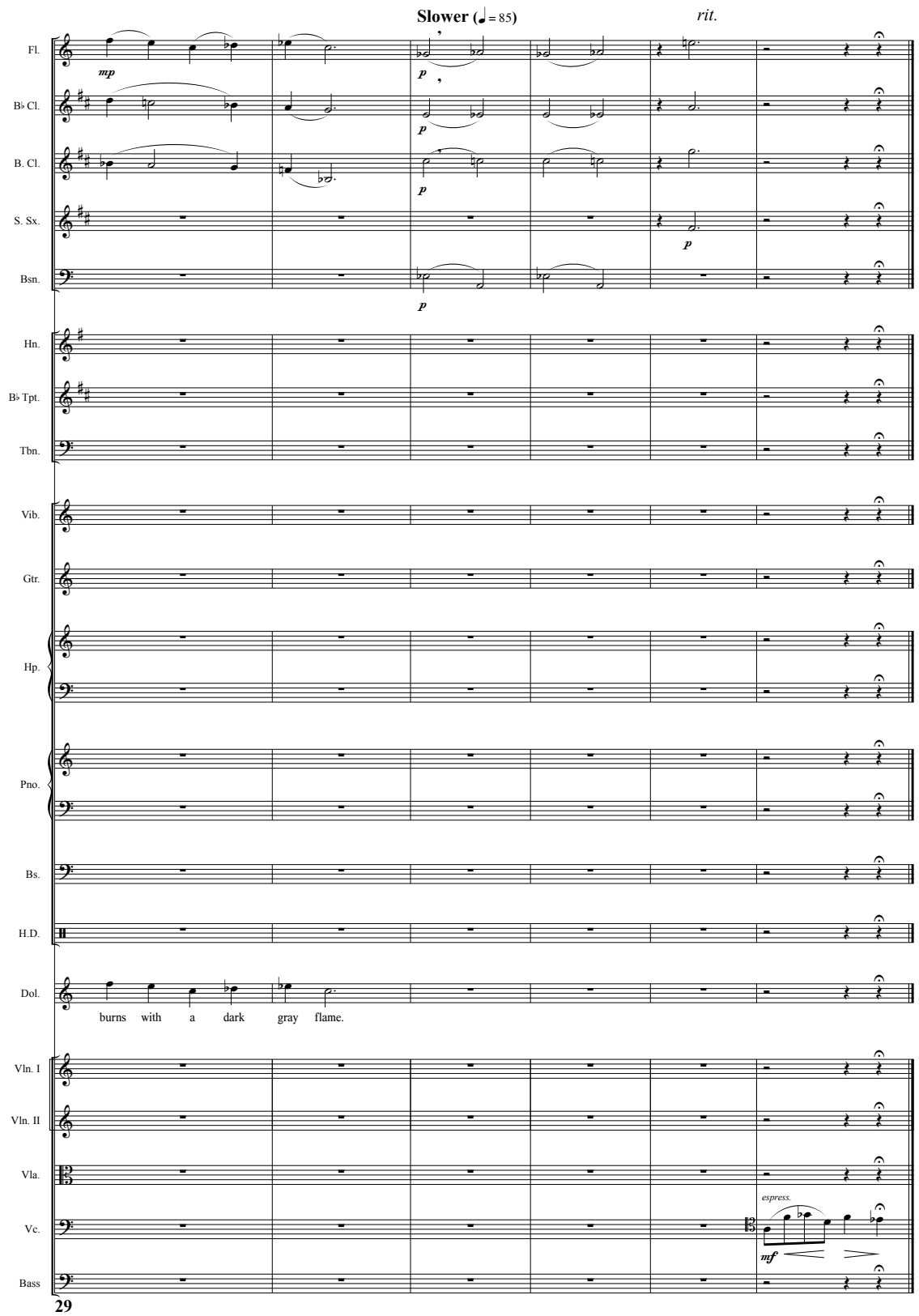

Lyrical (♩ = 73)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Dol.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
not rolled
pizz.
arco
Where am I?
6


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Dol.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
bucket mute
I___ am lost.
I feel trap - ped.
pizz.
arco
9

Adagio espressivo



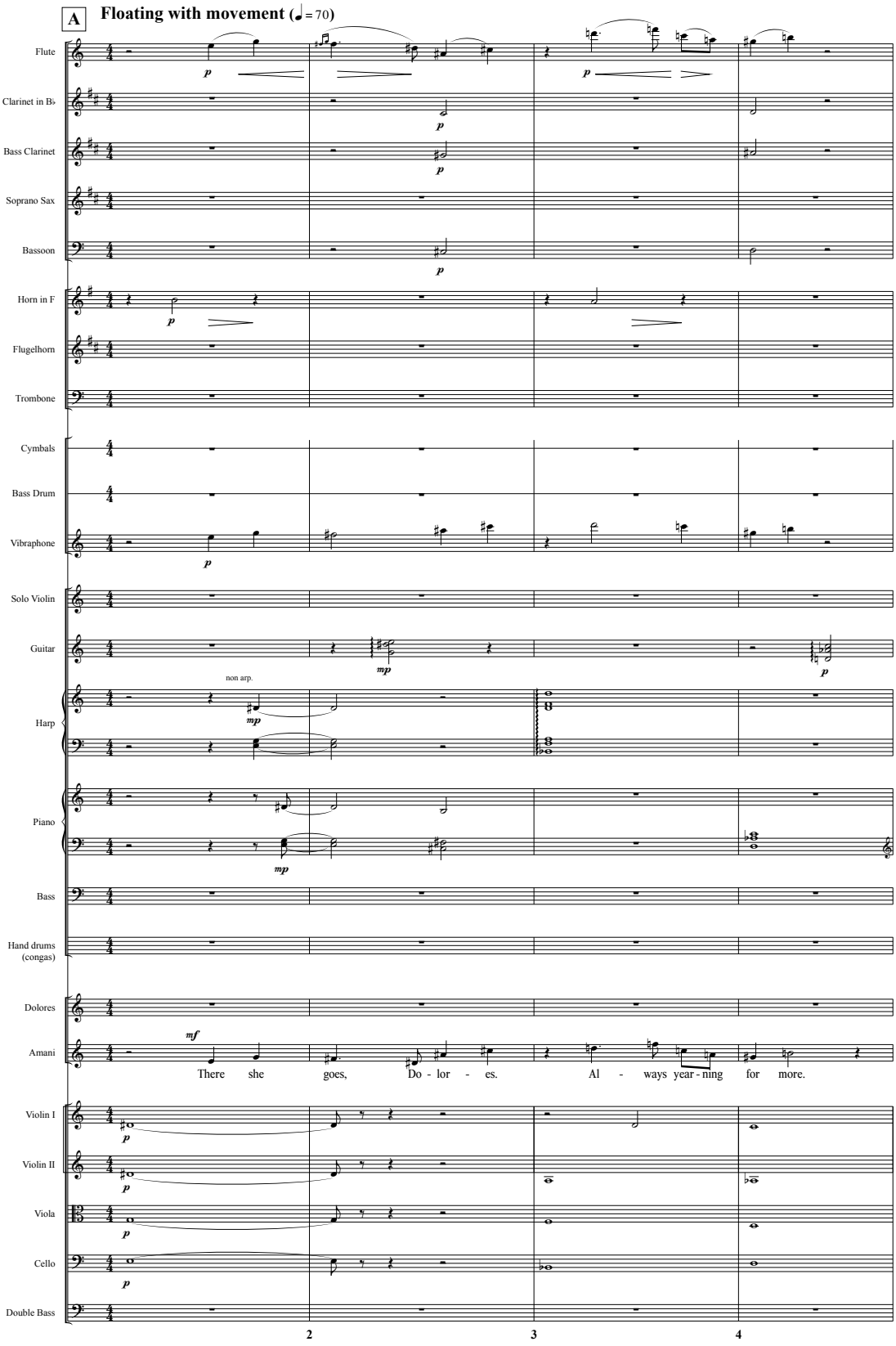

Lyrical (♩ = 95)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Dol.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
mp
p
f
(back to reading book)
The clear gray i - cy wa - ter... If you should dip your hand in, it
24


Slower (♩= 85)
rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bs.
H.D.
Dol.
burns with a dark gray flame.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
espress.
29

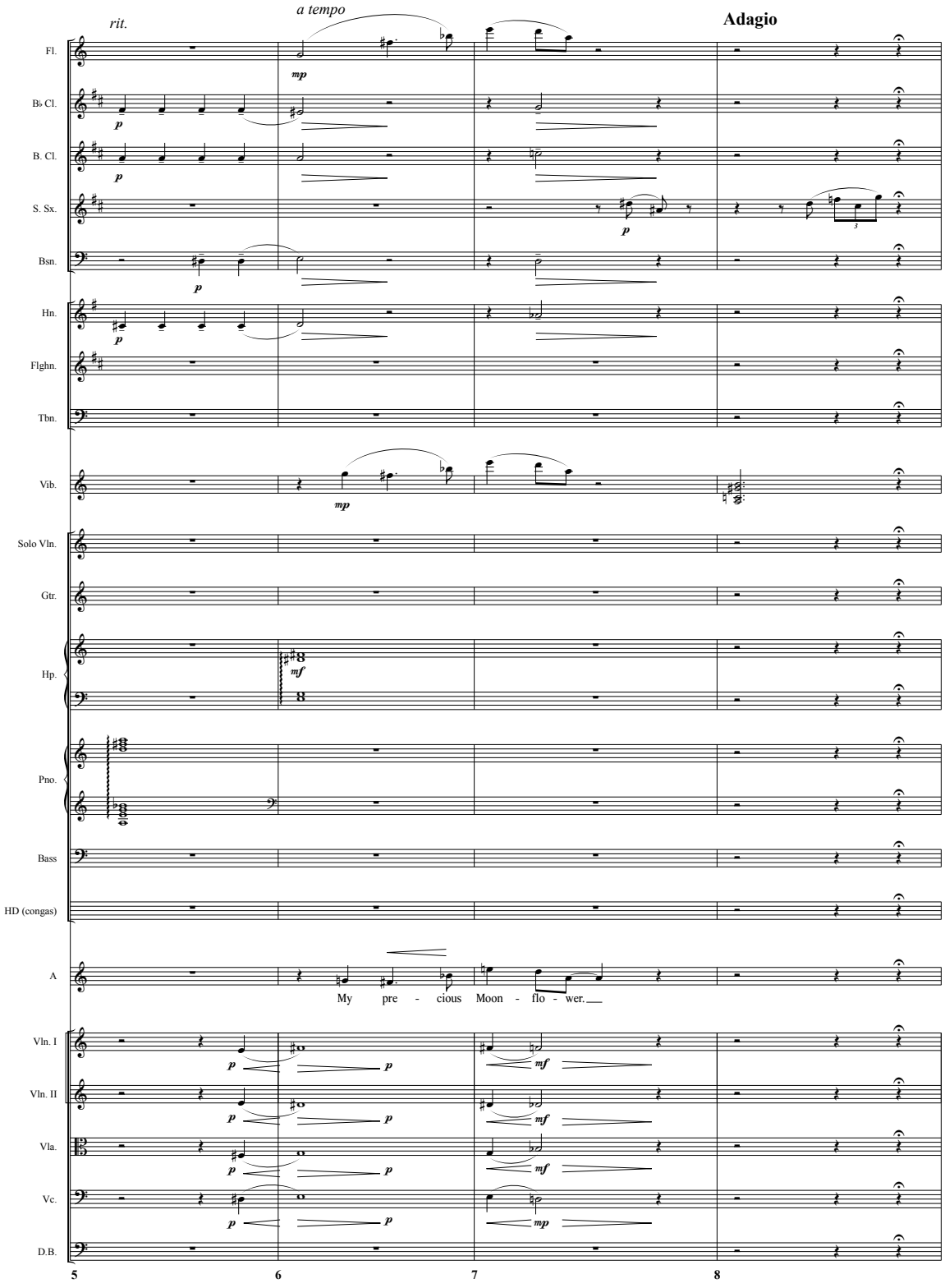
Act I – Scene 1

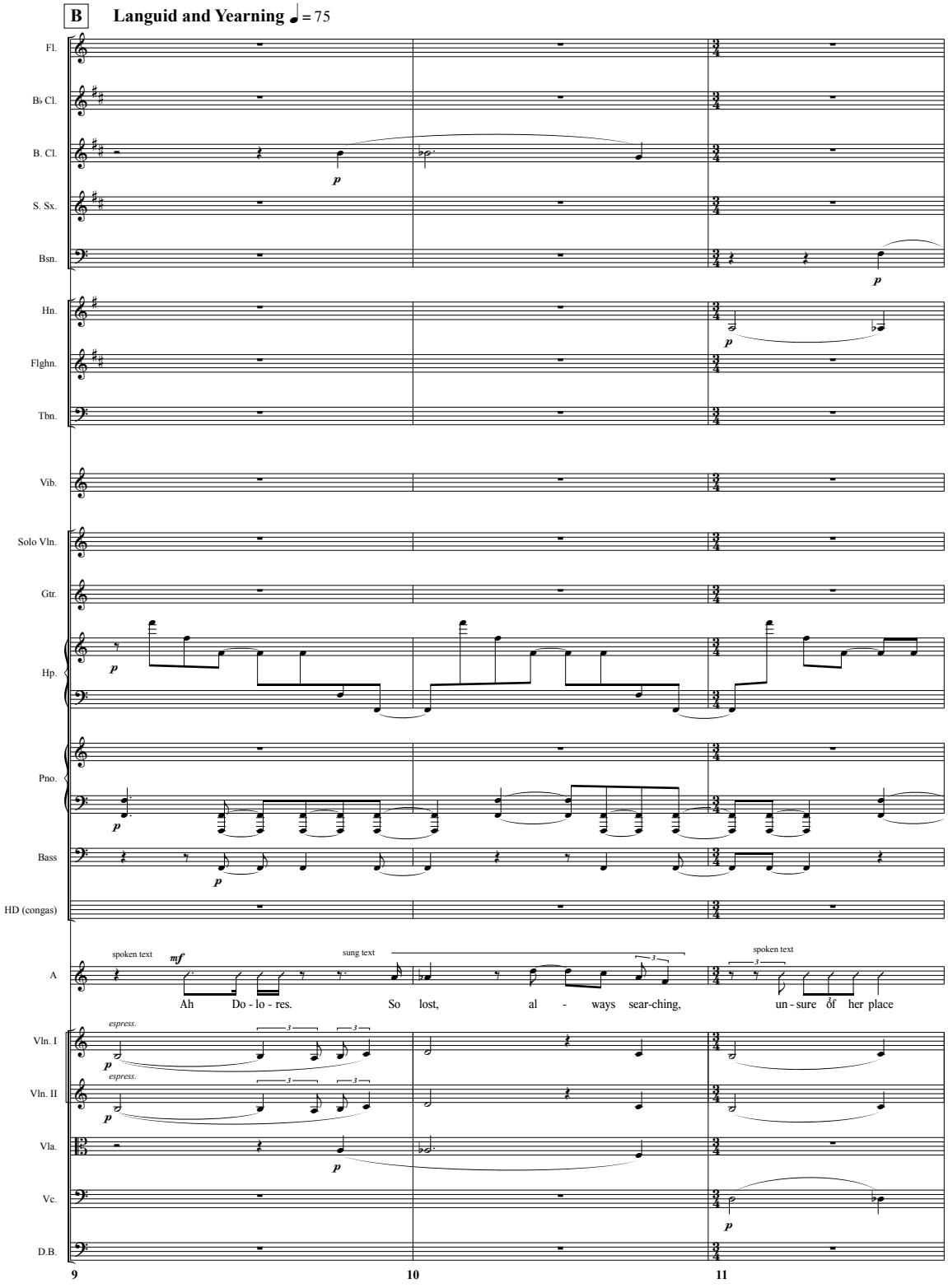
Amani

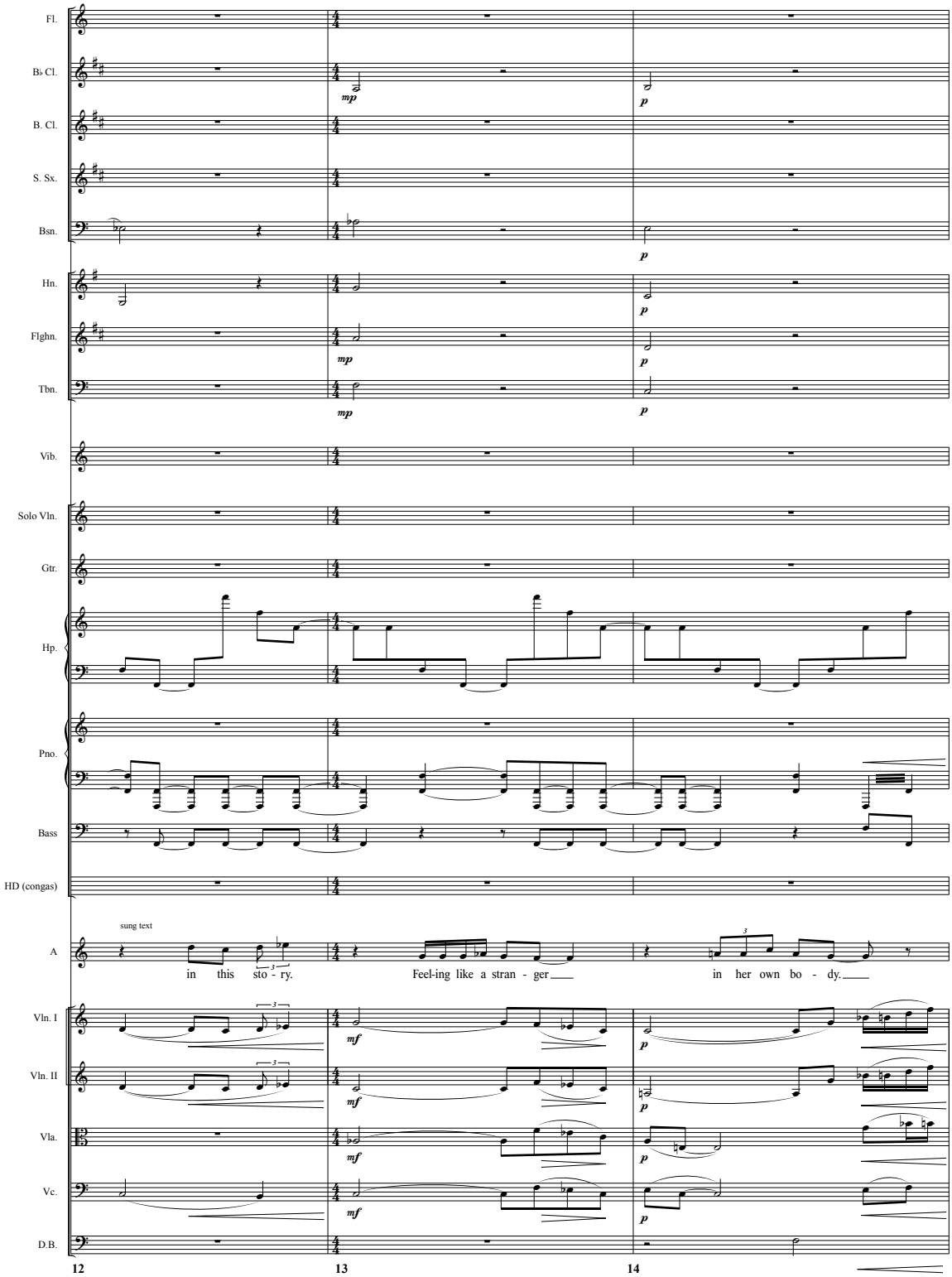
Daniel Aaron Ramirez

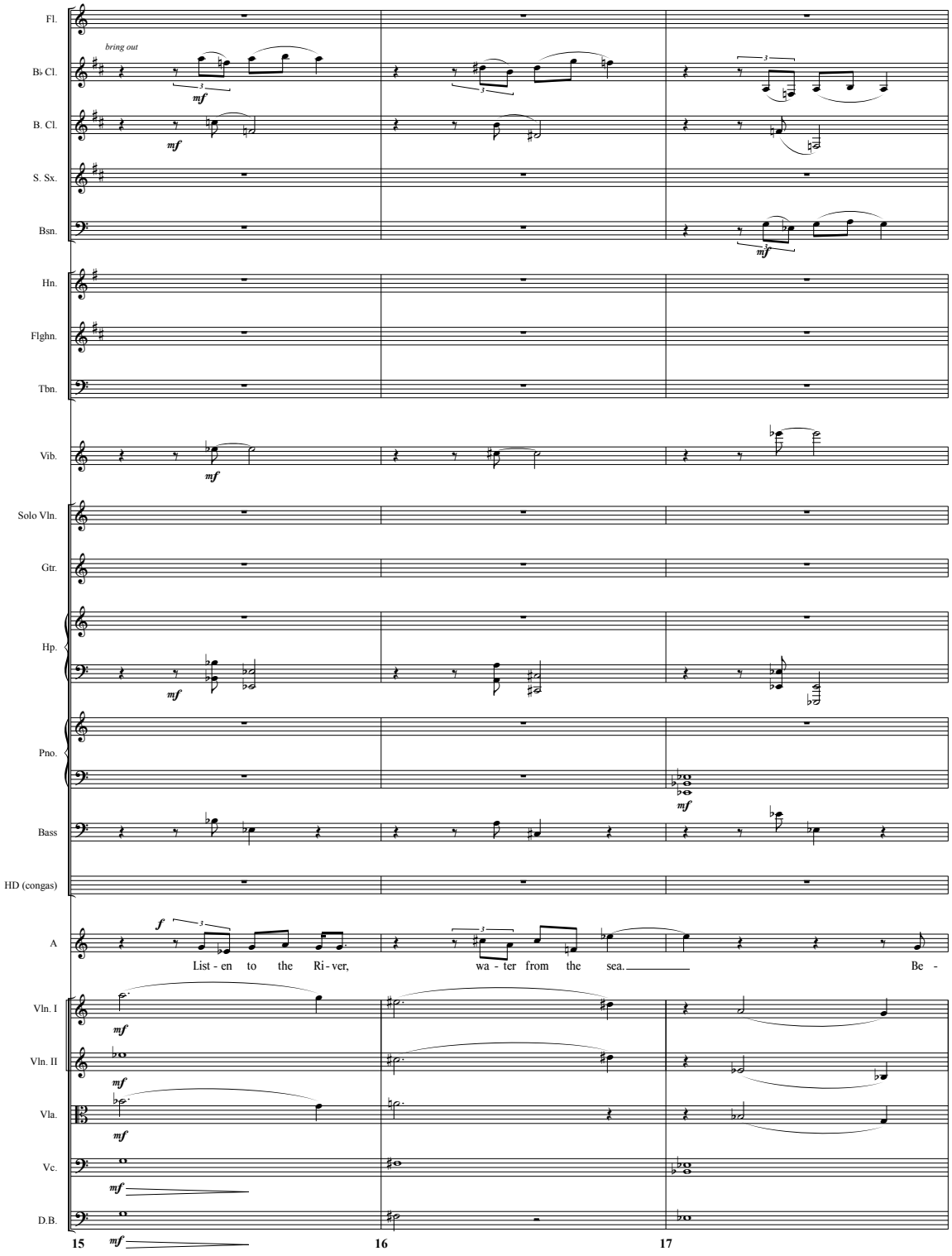


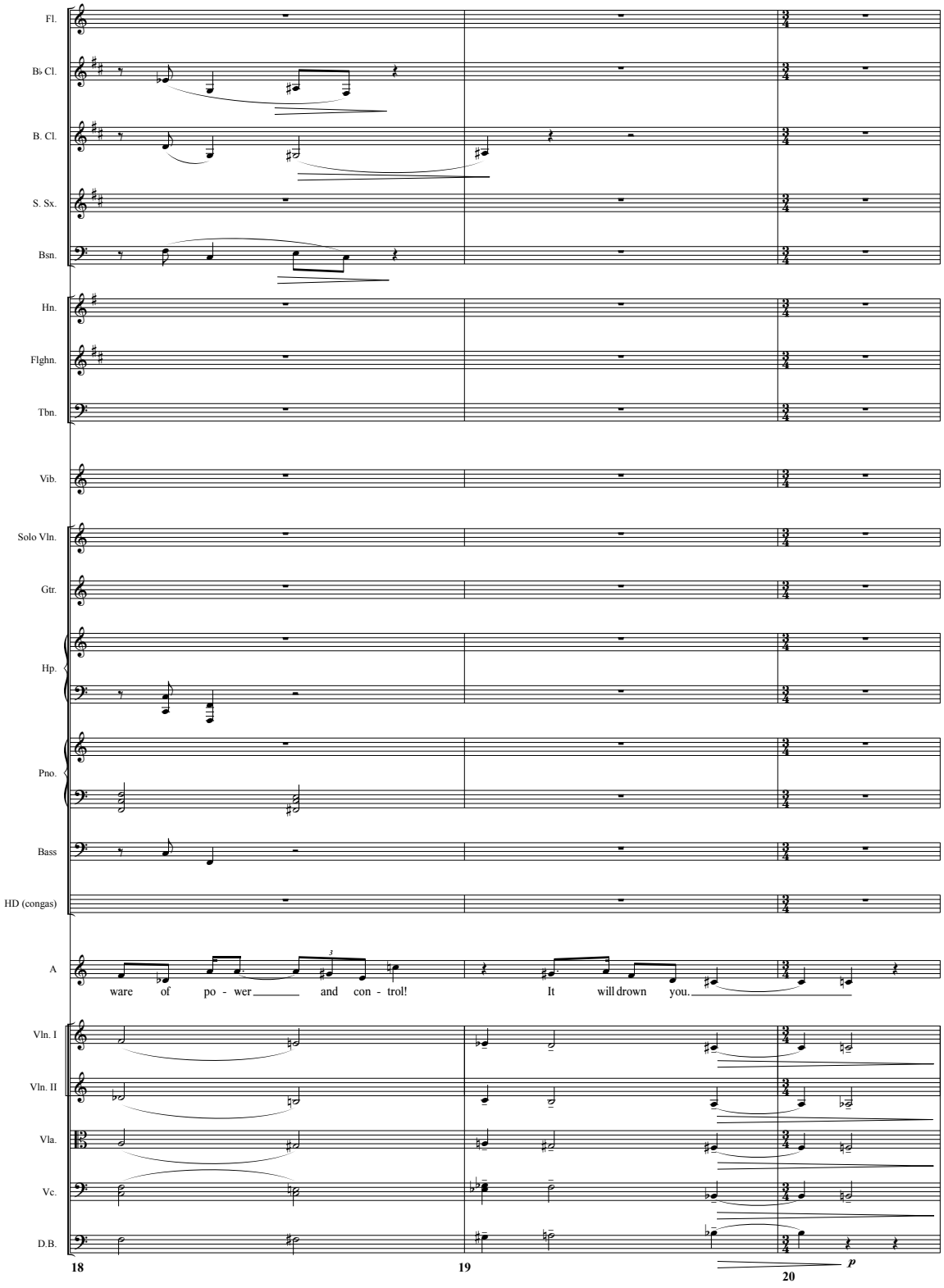
©2020, Daniel Aaron Ramirez

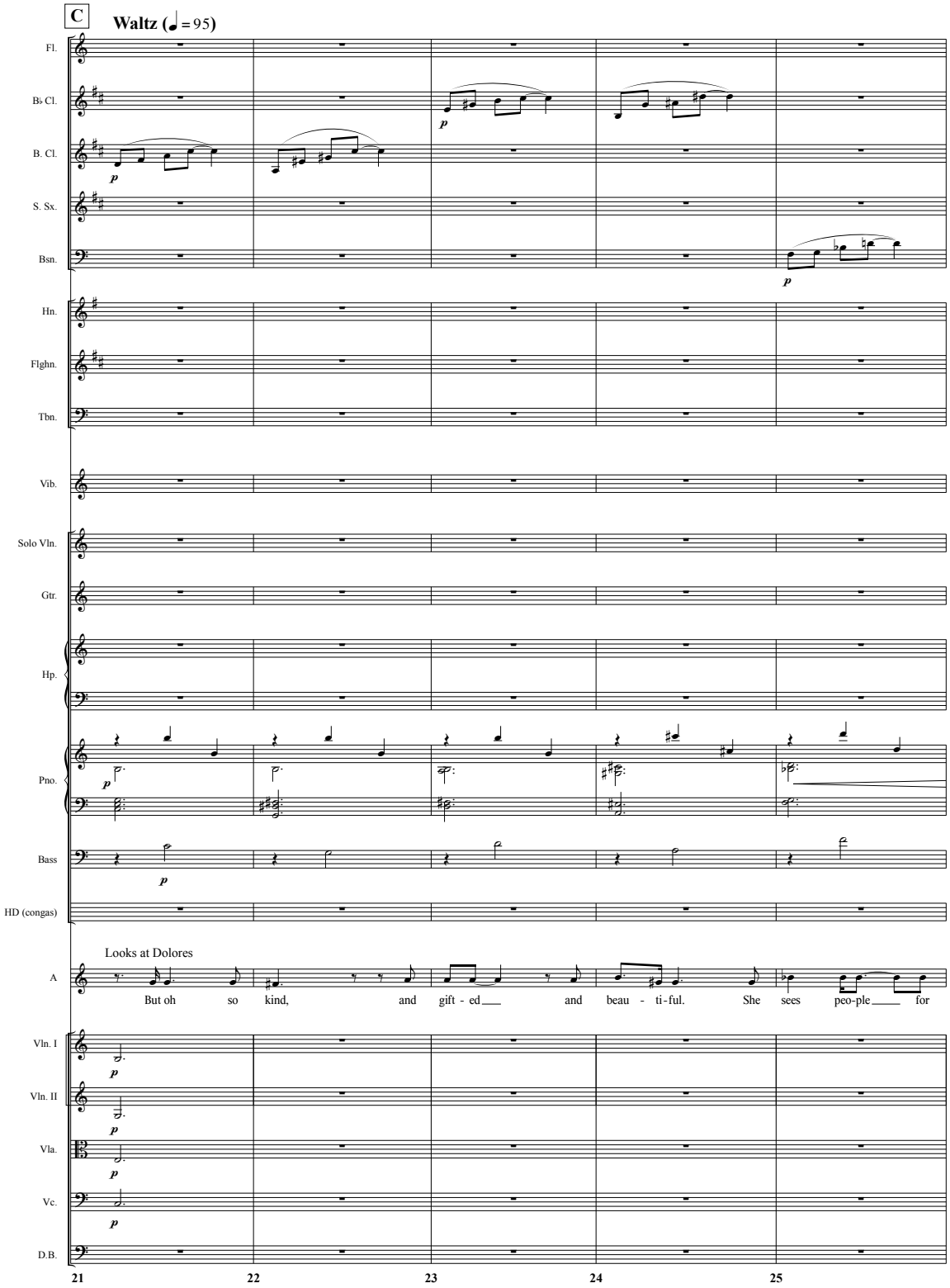

rit.
a tempo
Adagio
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
A
My pre - cious Moon - flo - wer.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
5
6
7
8

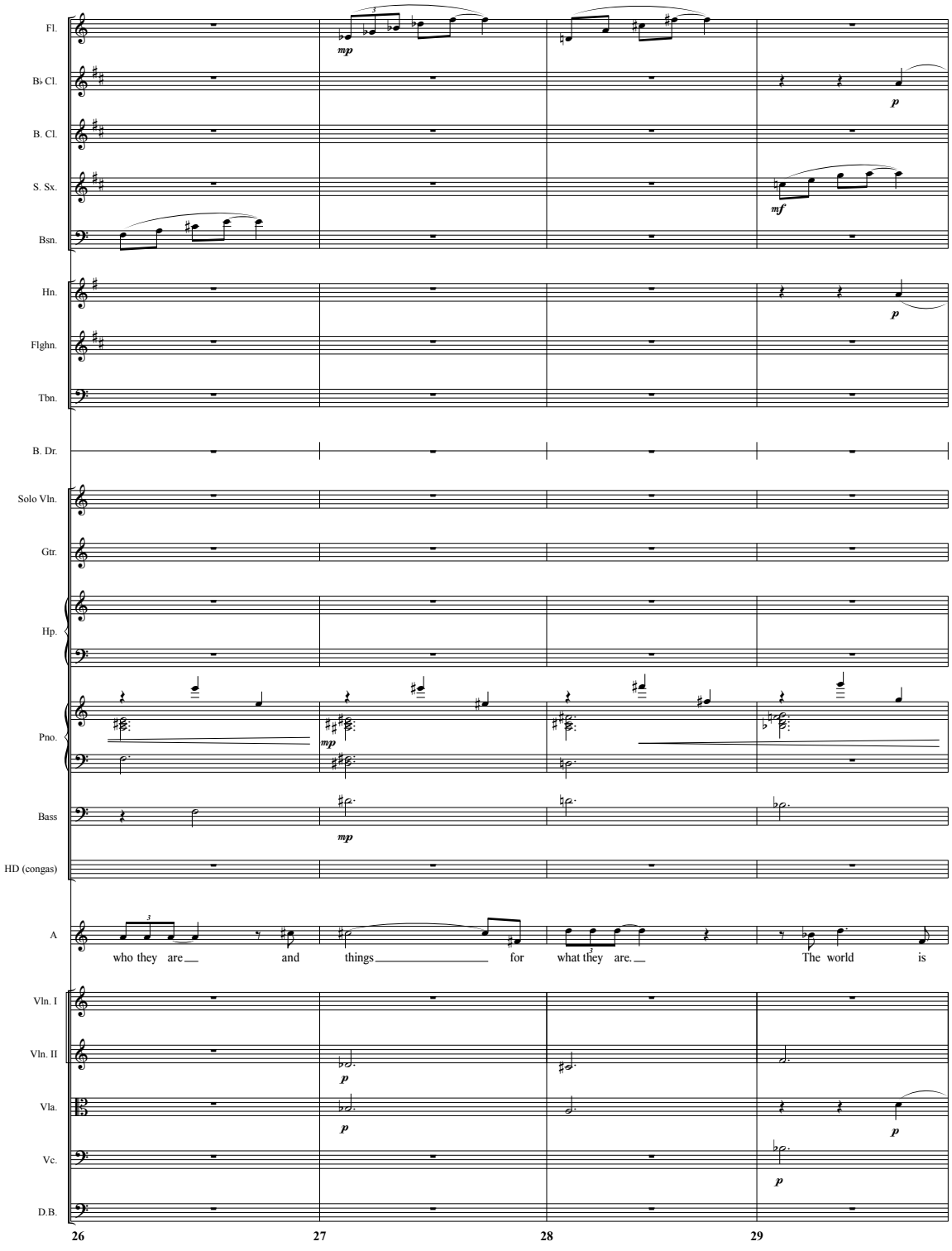

B
Languid and Yearning ♩ = 75
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
A
spoken text
mf
sung text
spoken text
Ah Do - lo - res. So lost, al - ways sear-ching, un - sure of her place
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
espress.
p
9
10
11

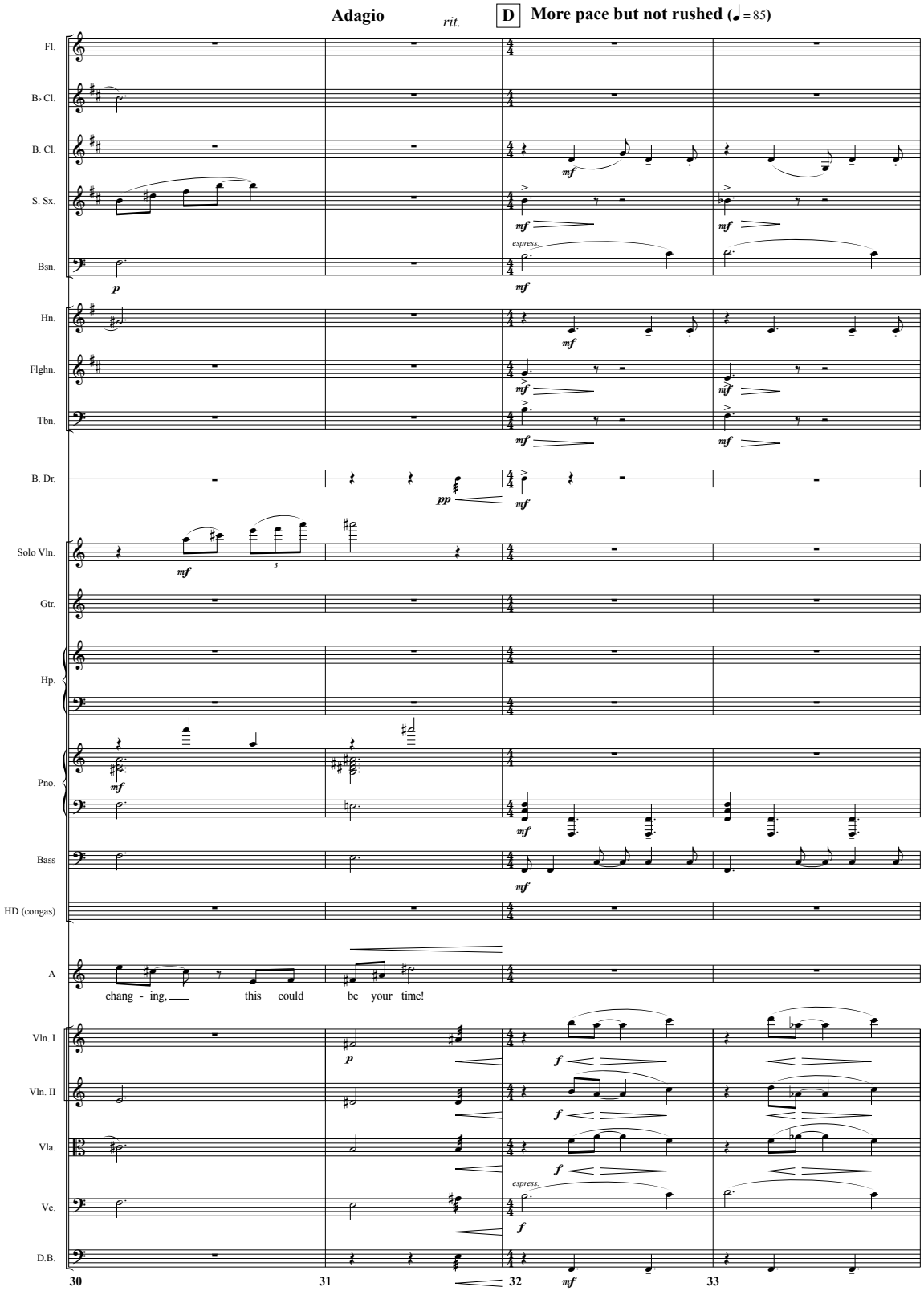

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
A
sung text
in this sto - ry.
Feel-ing like a stran - ger
in her own bo - dy.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mp
p
mf
12
13
14

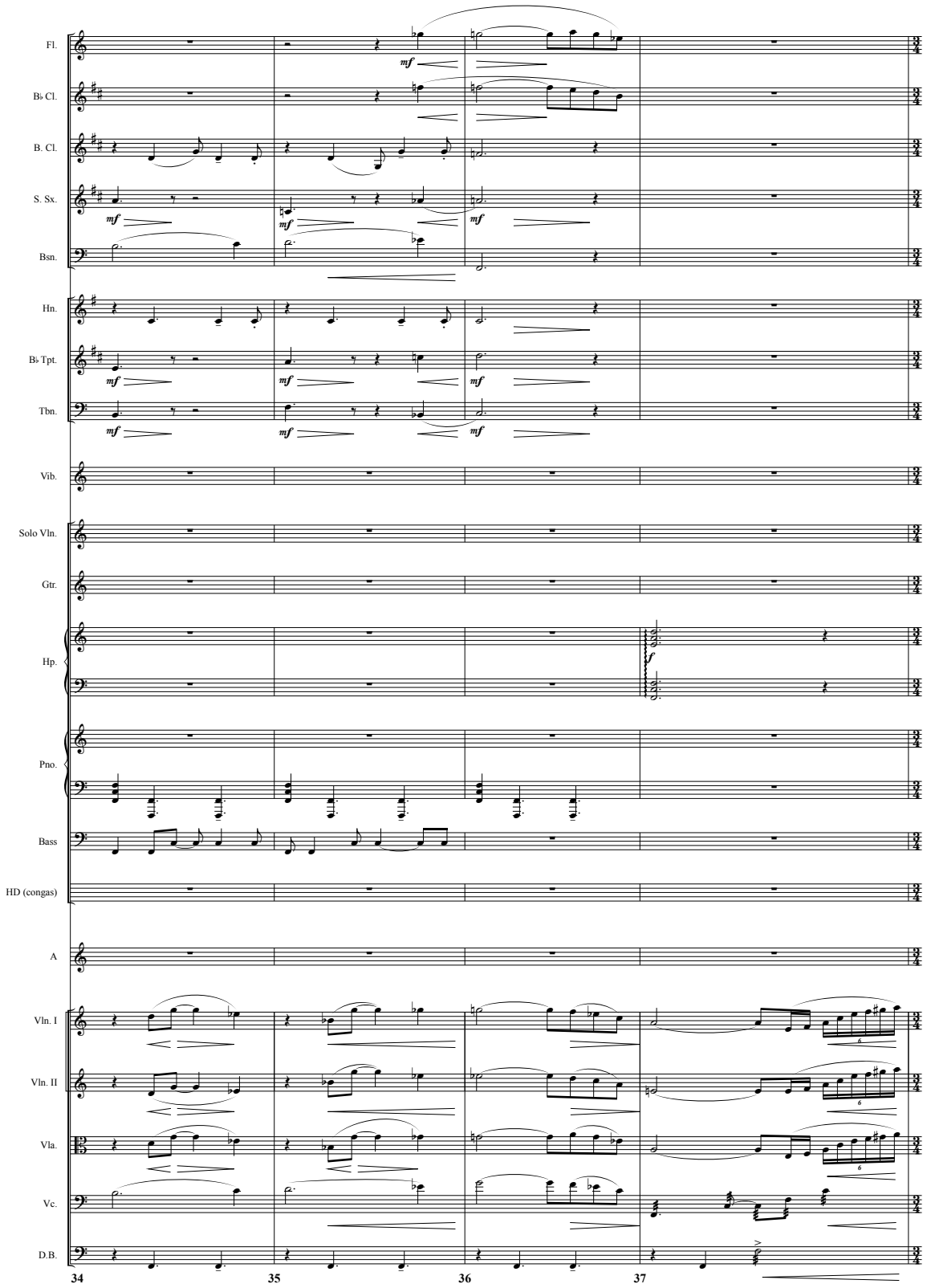

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
bring out
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
A
List - en to the Ri - ver, wa - ter from the sea. Be -
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
15
16
17


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
A
ware of po - wer and con - trol!
It will drown you.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
18
19
20
p


C
Waltz (♩ = 95)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Looks at Dolores
A
But oh so kind, and gift - ed and beau - ti - ful. She sees peo-ple for
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
21
22
23
24
25

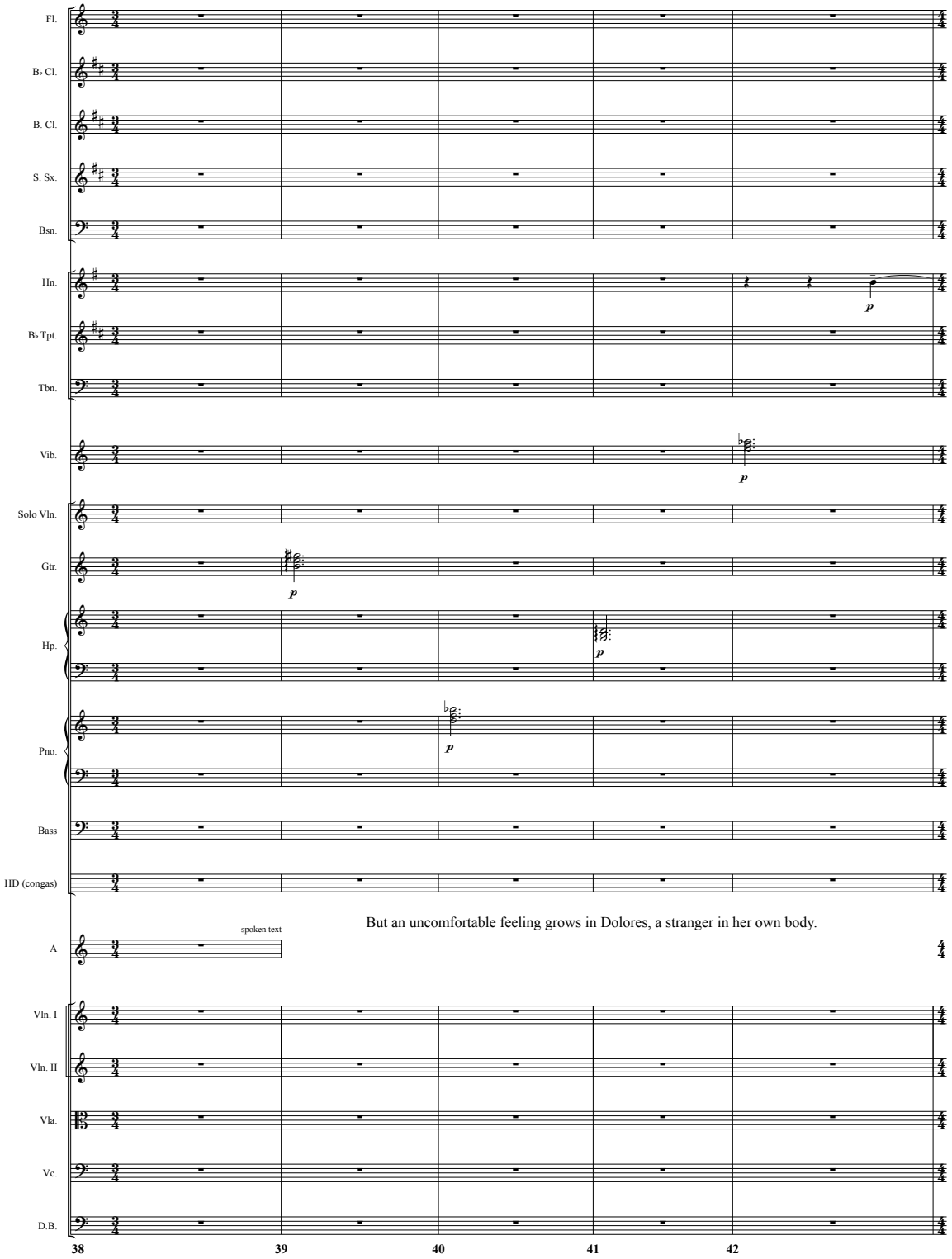

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
A
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mp
p
mf
who they are and things for what they are. The world is
26
27
28
29

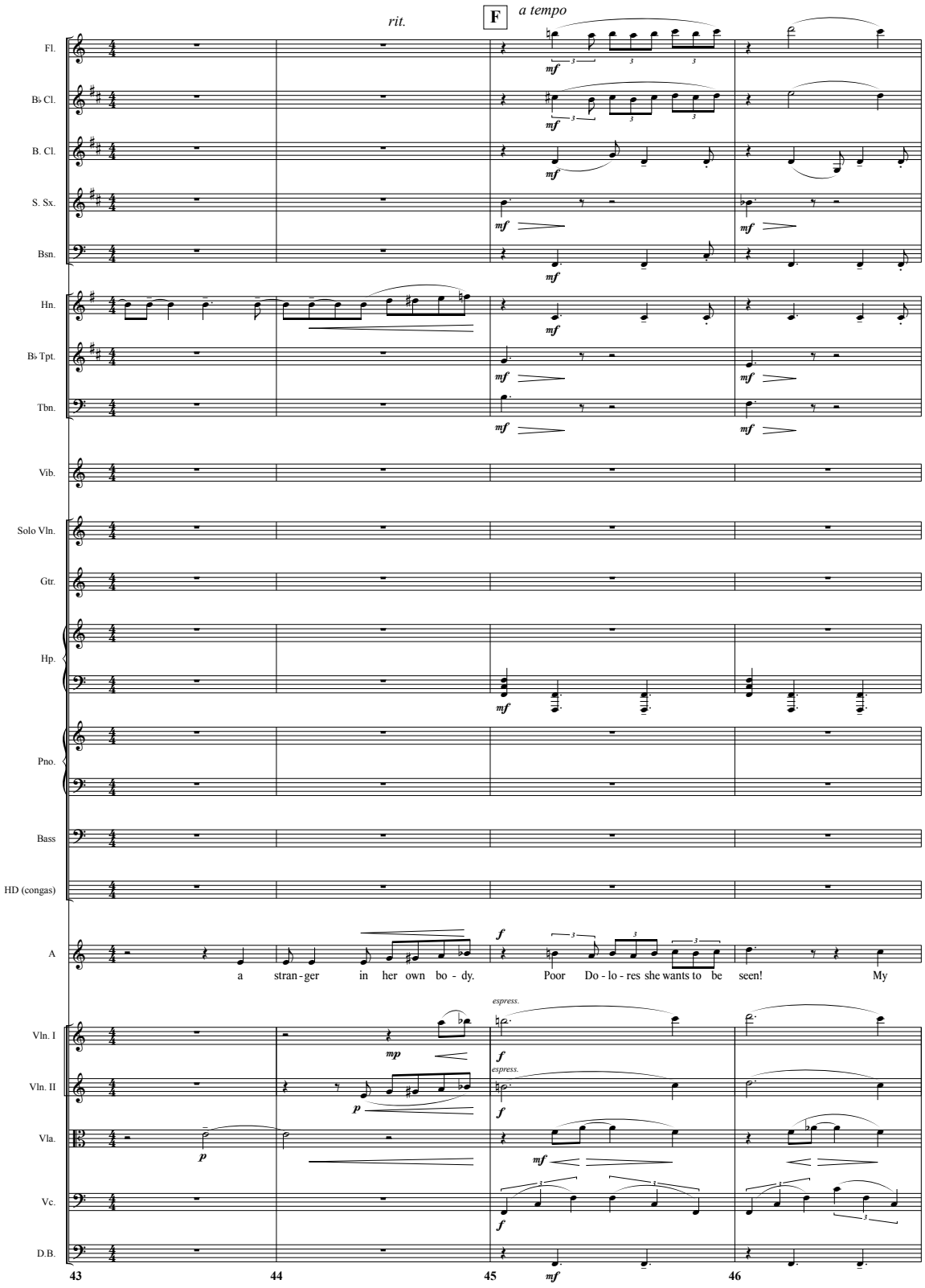

Adagio
rit.
D
More pace but not rushed (♩= 85)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
A
chang - ing, this could be your time!
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
espress.
30
31
32
33

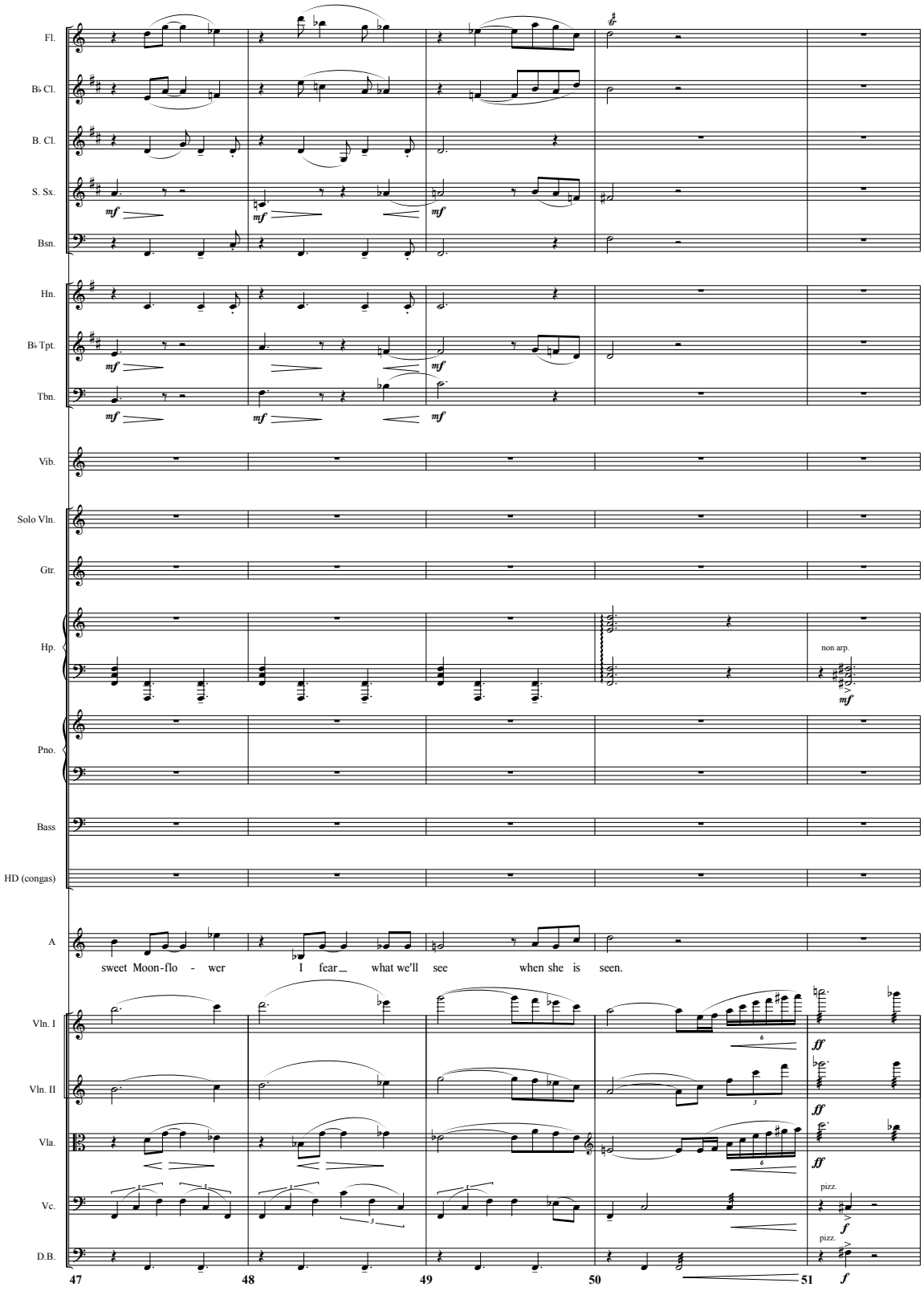

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
A
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
f
34
35
36
37

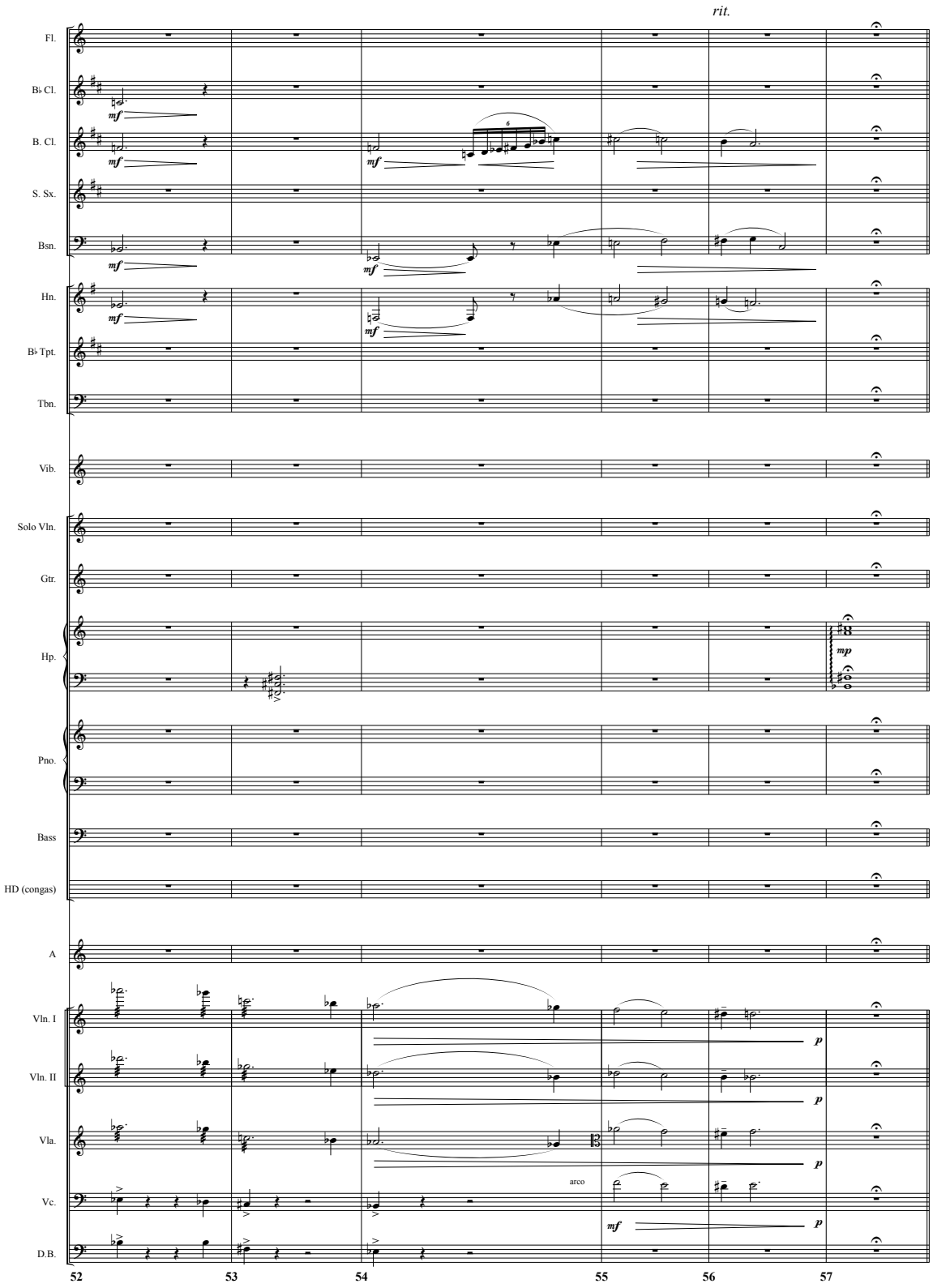
(Possibly incorporate sound design from Act II)

E **Slightly quicker** (♩ = 75)

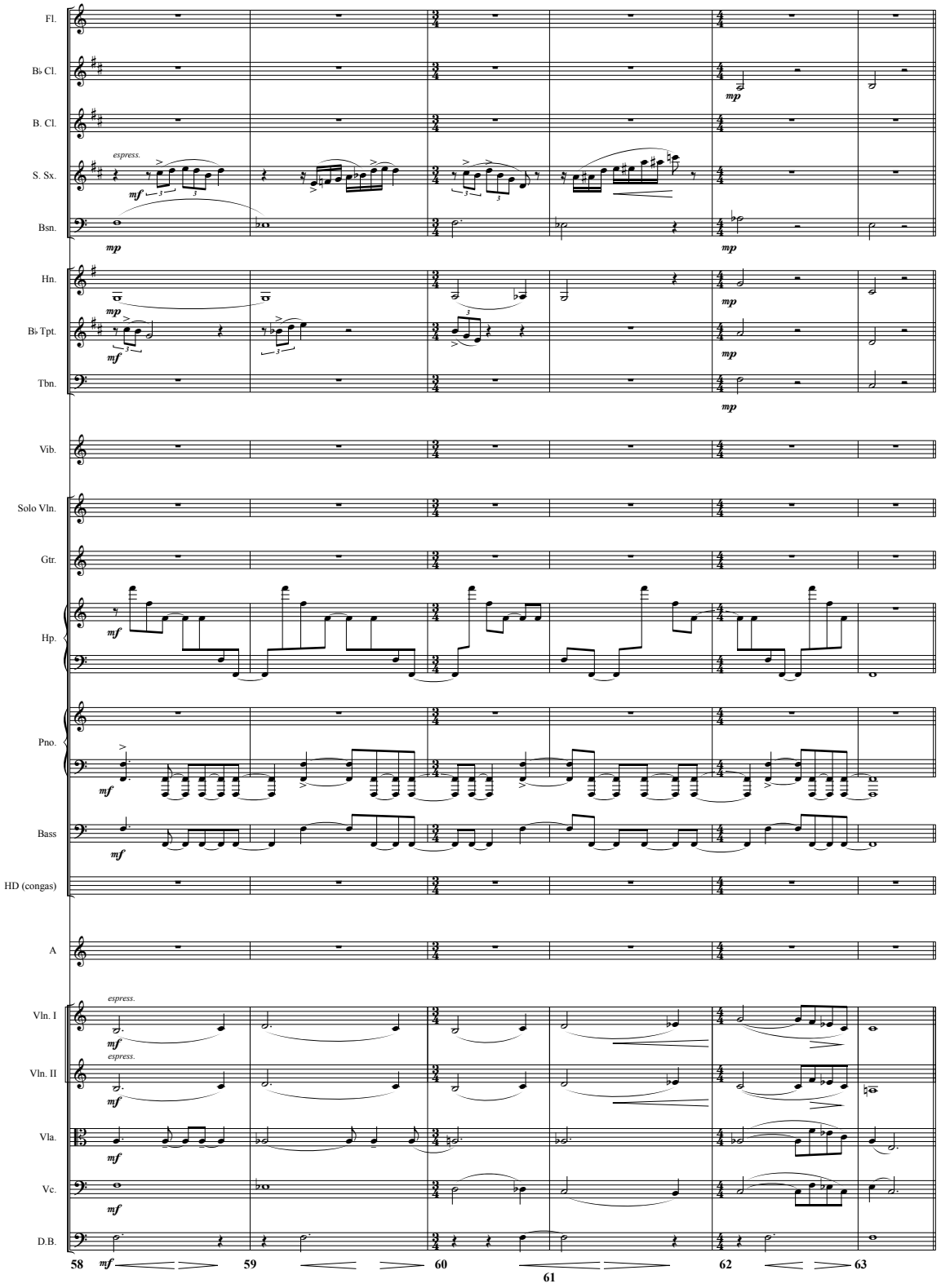



rit.
F
a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
A
a stran - ger in her own bo - dy. Poor Do - lo - res she wants to be seen! My
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
espress.
43
44
45
46

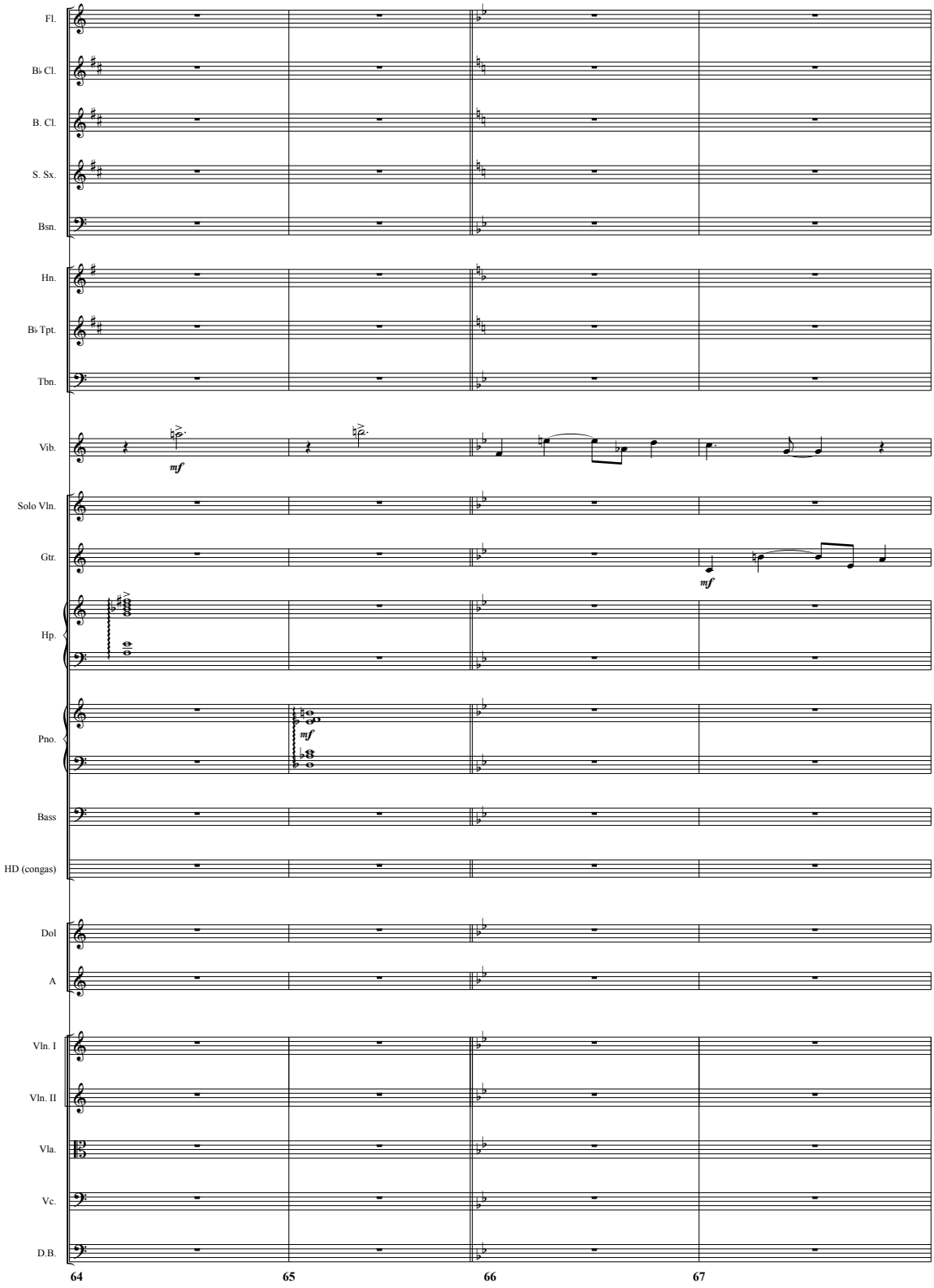

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
A
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
non arp.
sweet Moon-flo - wer I fear what we'll see when she is seen.
ff
pizz.
f
47
48
49
50
51

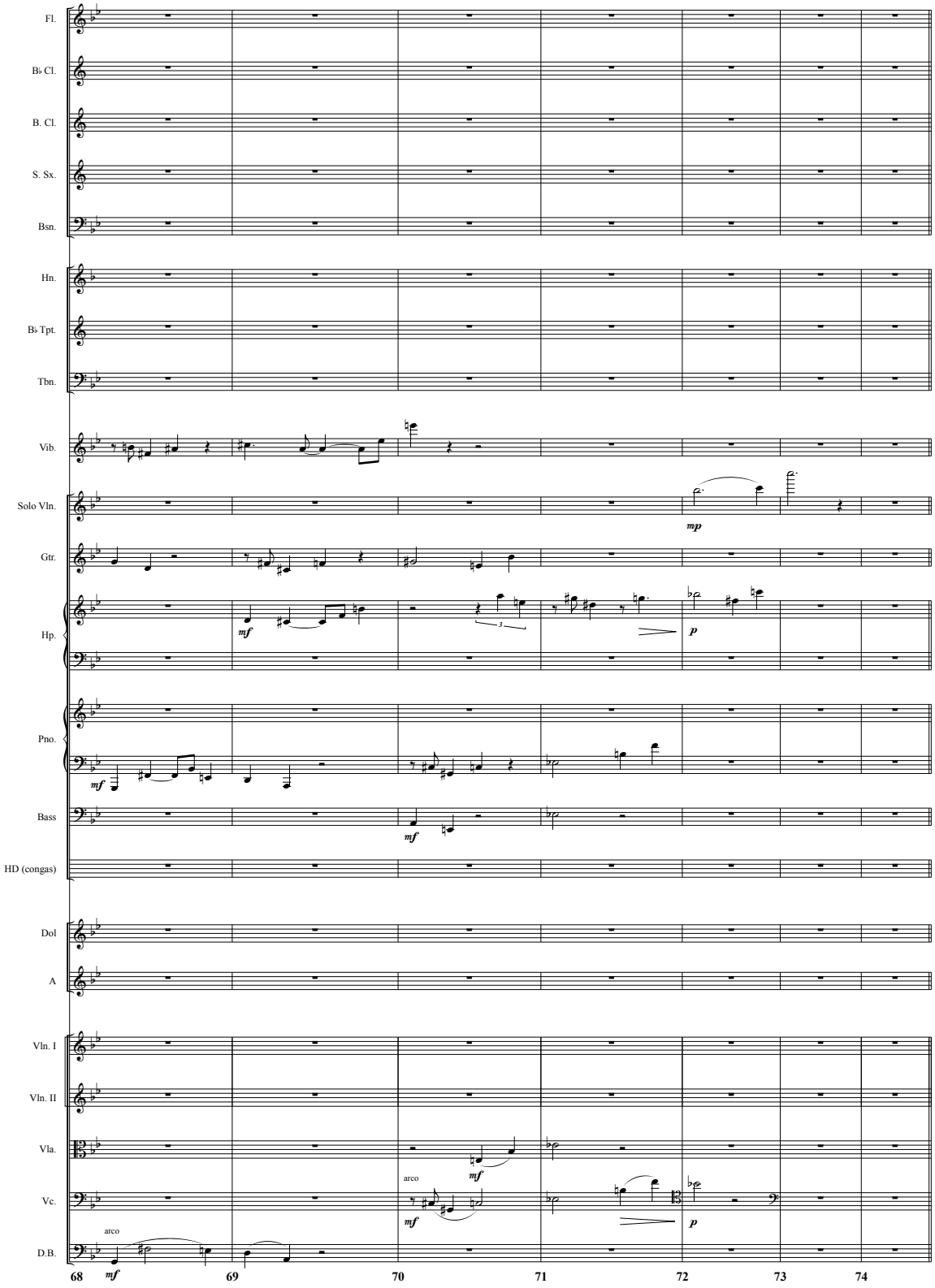

rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
A
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
mp
p
arco
52
53
54
55
56
57

G **Languid and Yearning** (♩ = 75)

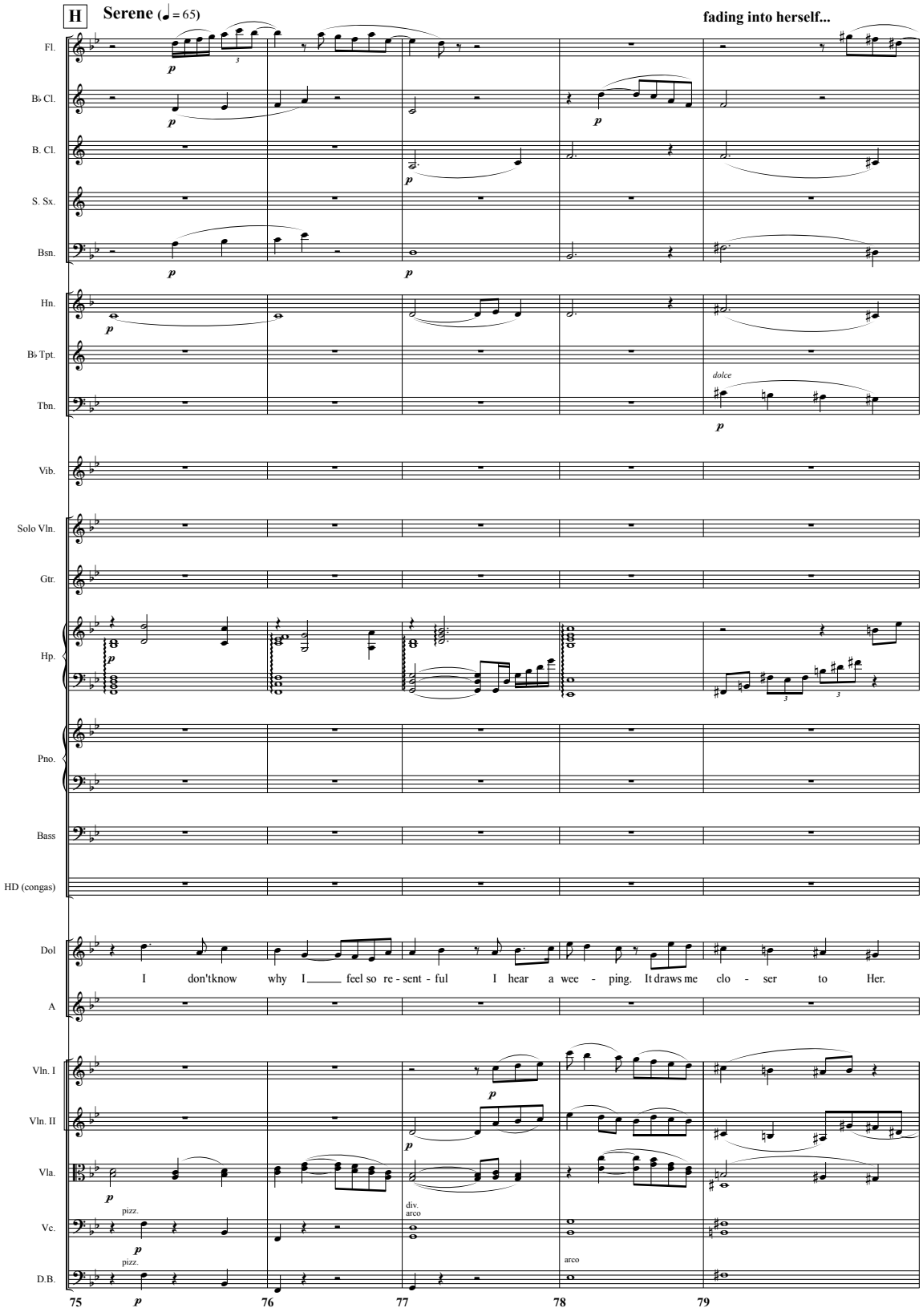


Dolores spotlight...*(on to Dolores/Priestess duet after short underscoring/transition)*

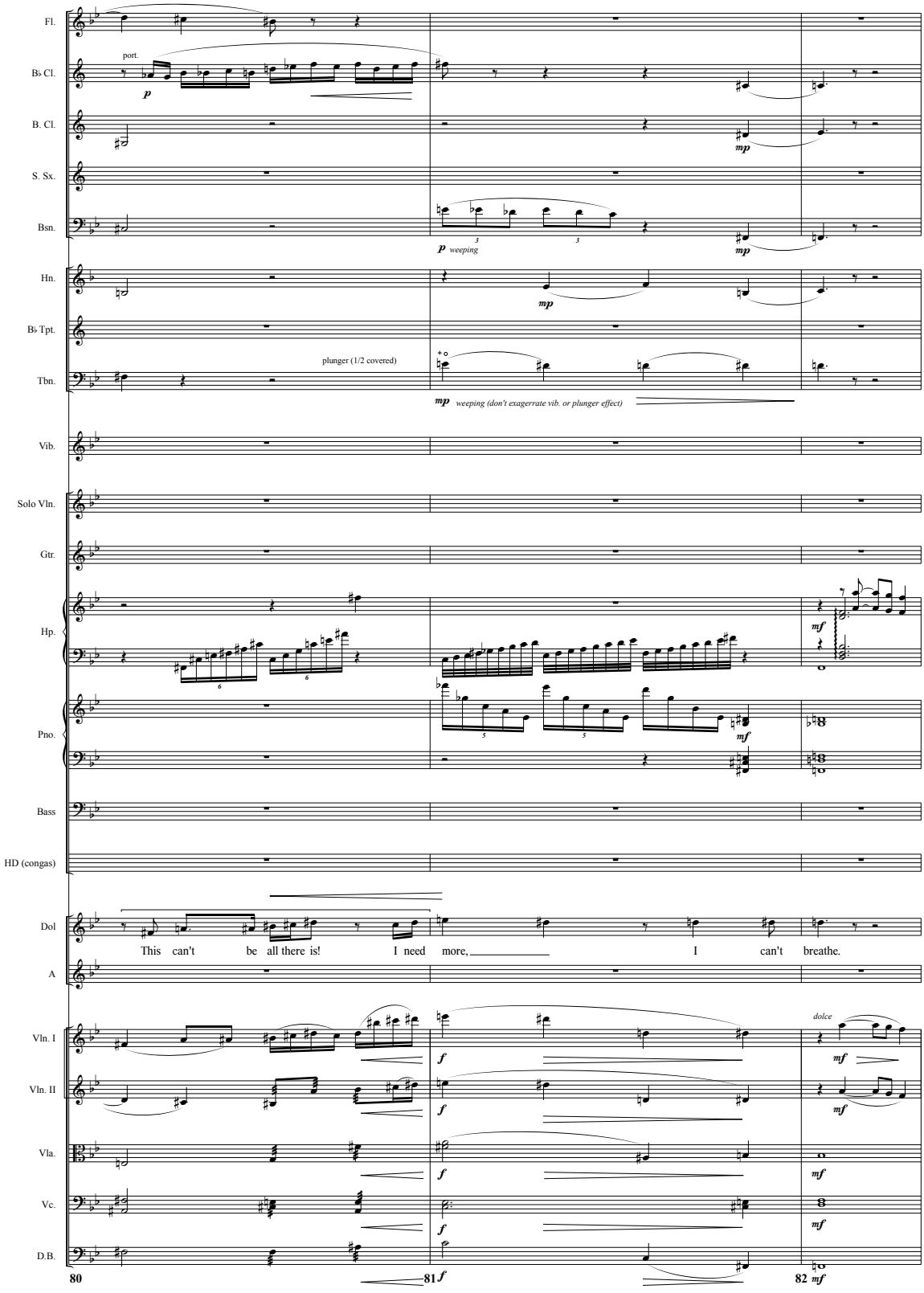


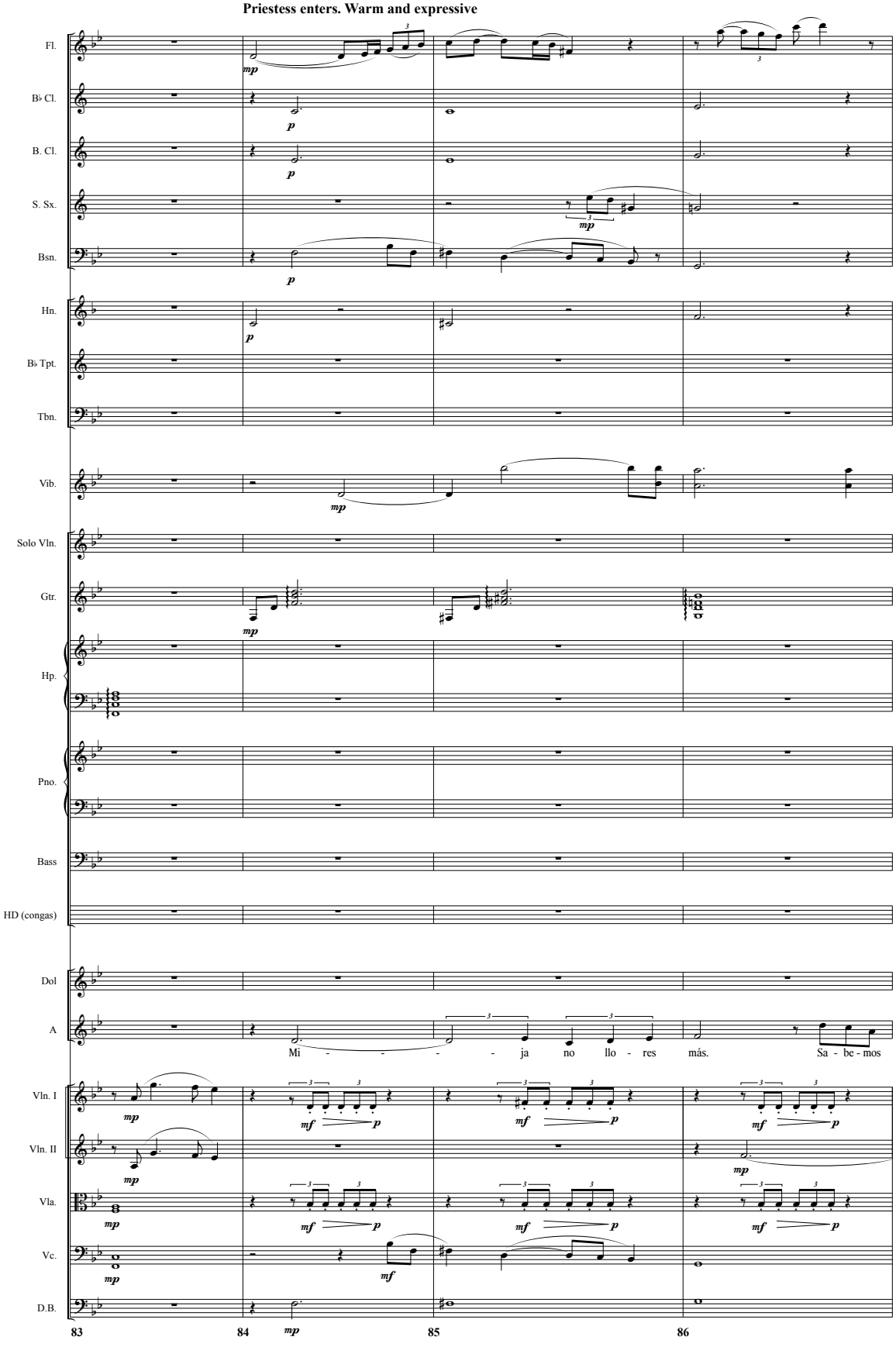

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
A
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mp
mf
p
arco
68
69
70
71
72
73
74

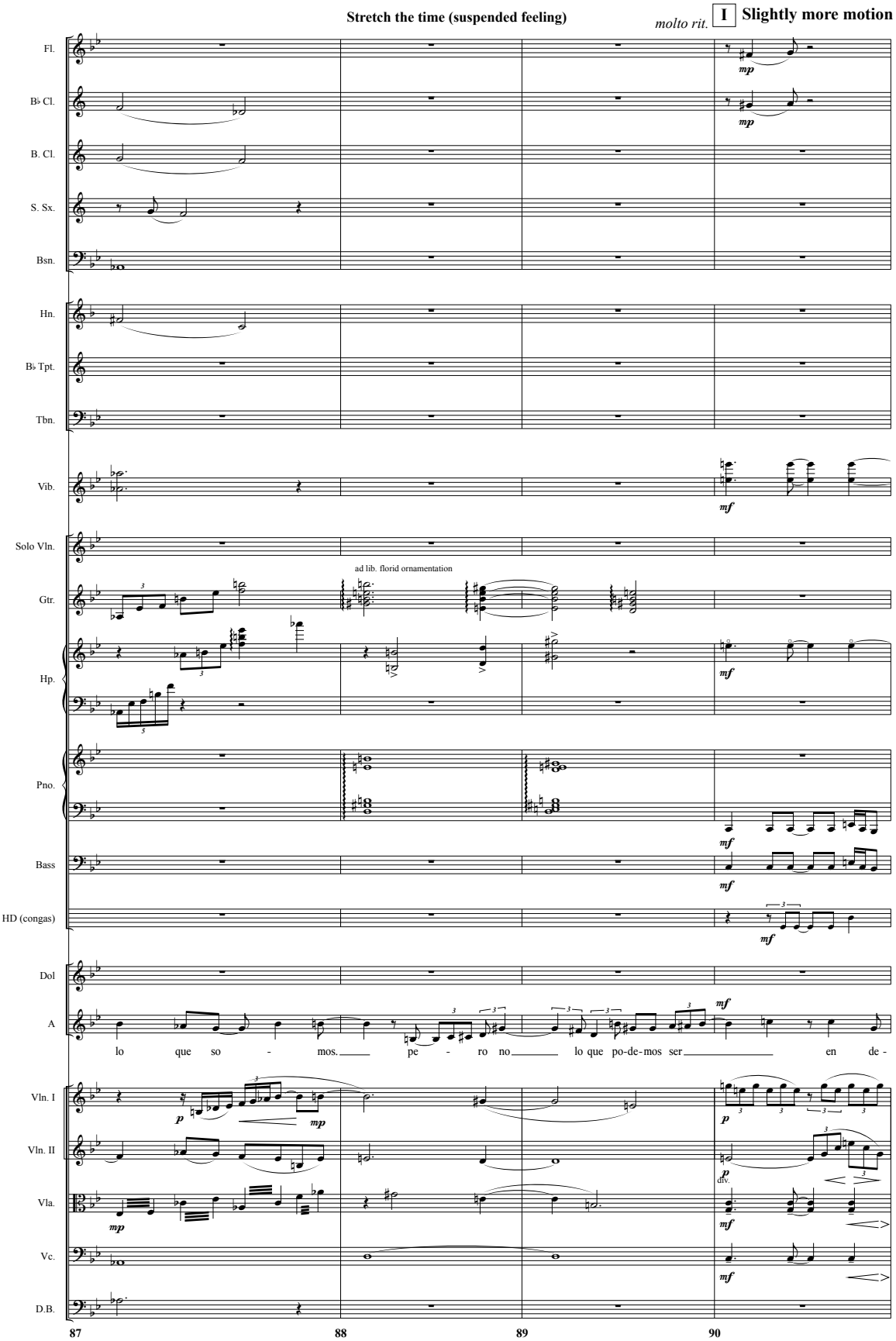
Priestess & Dolores

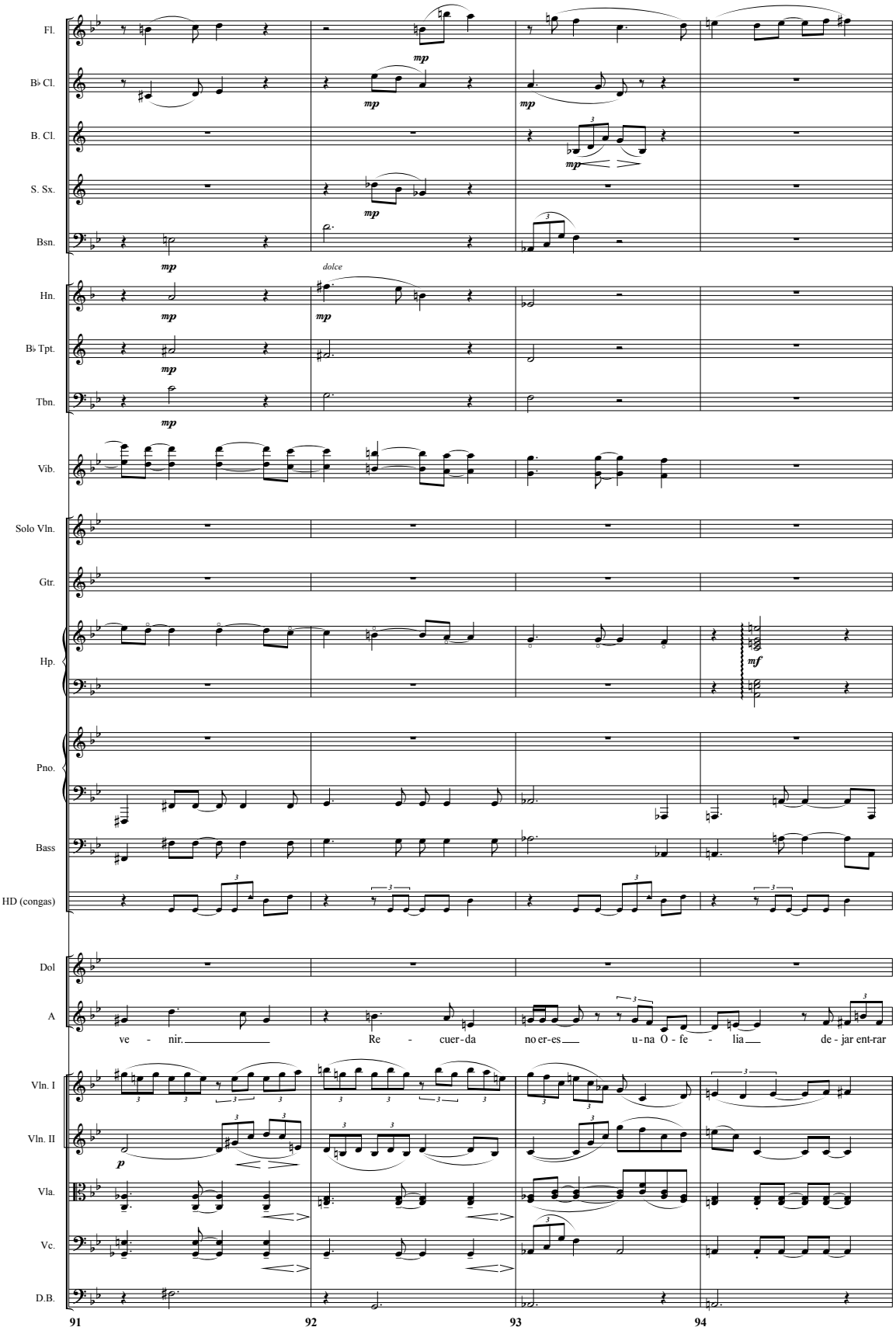


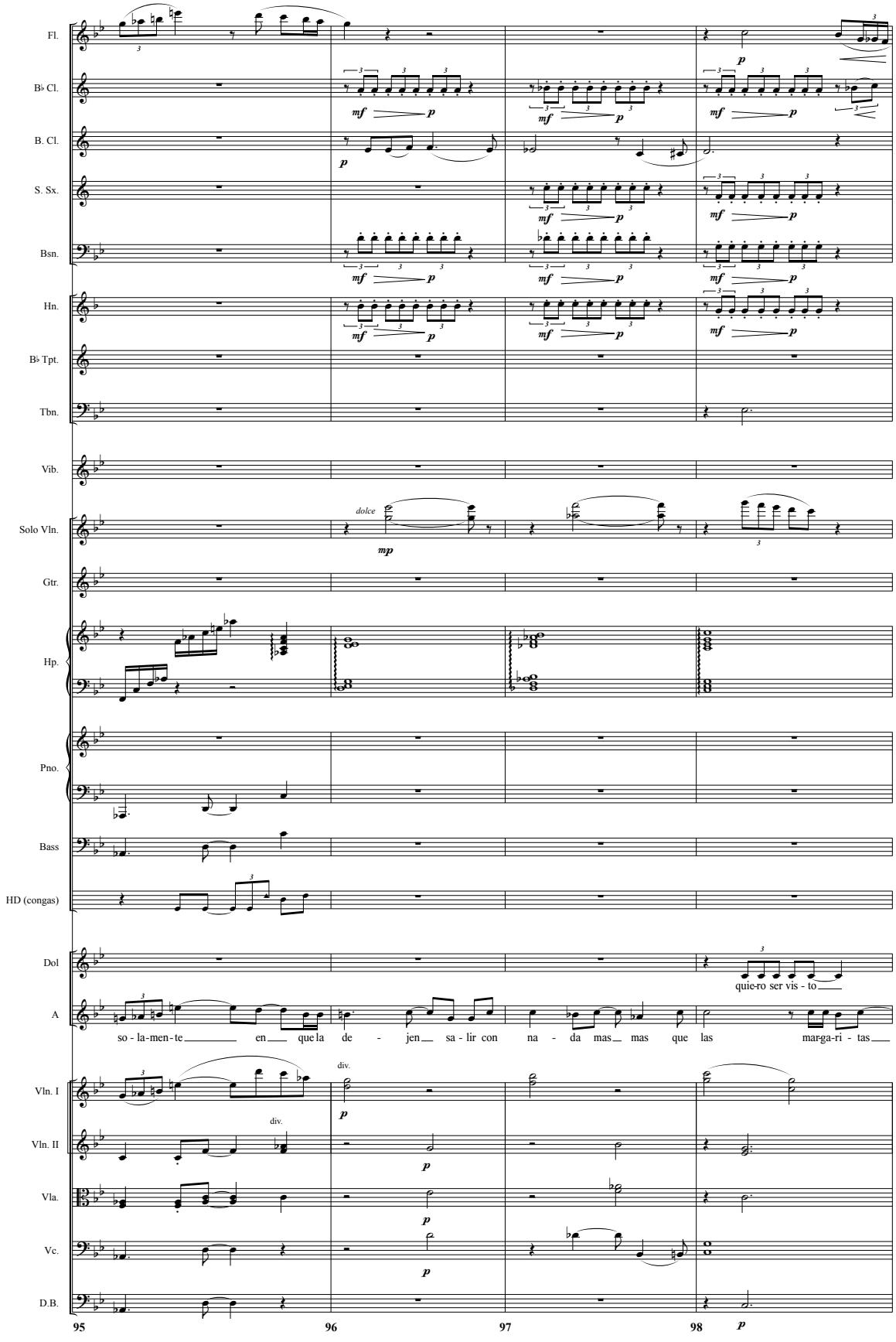
Don't slow down; agitated

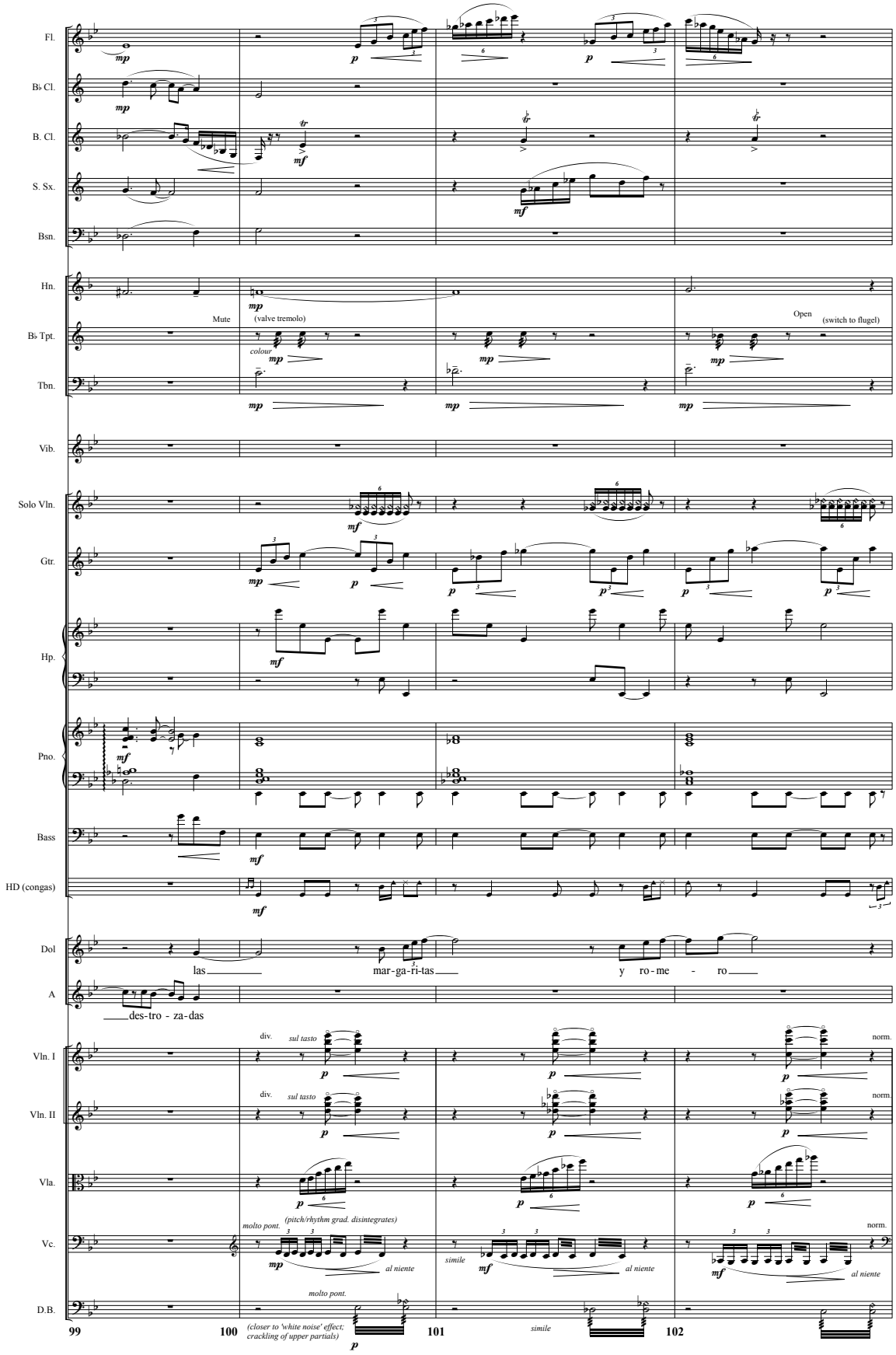


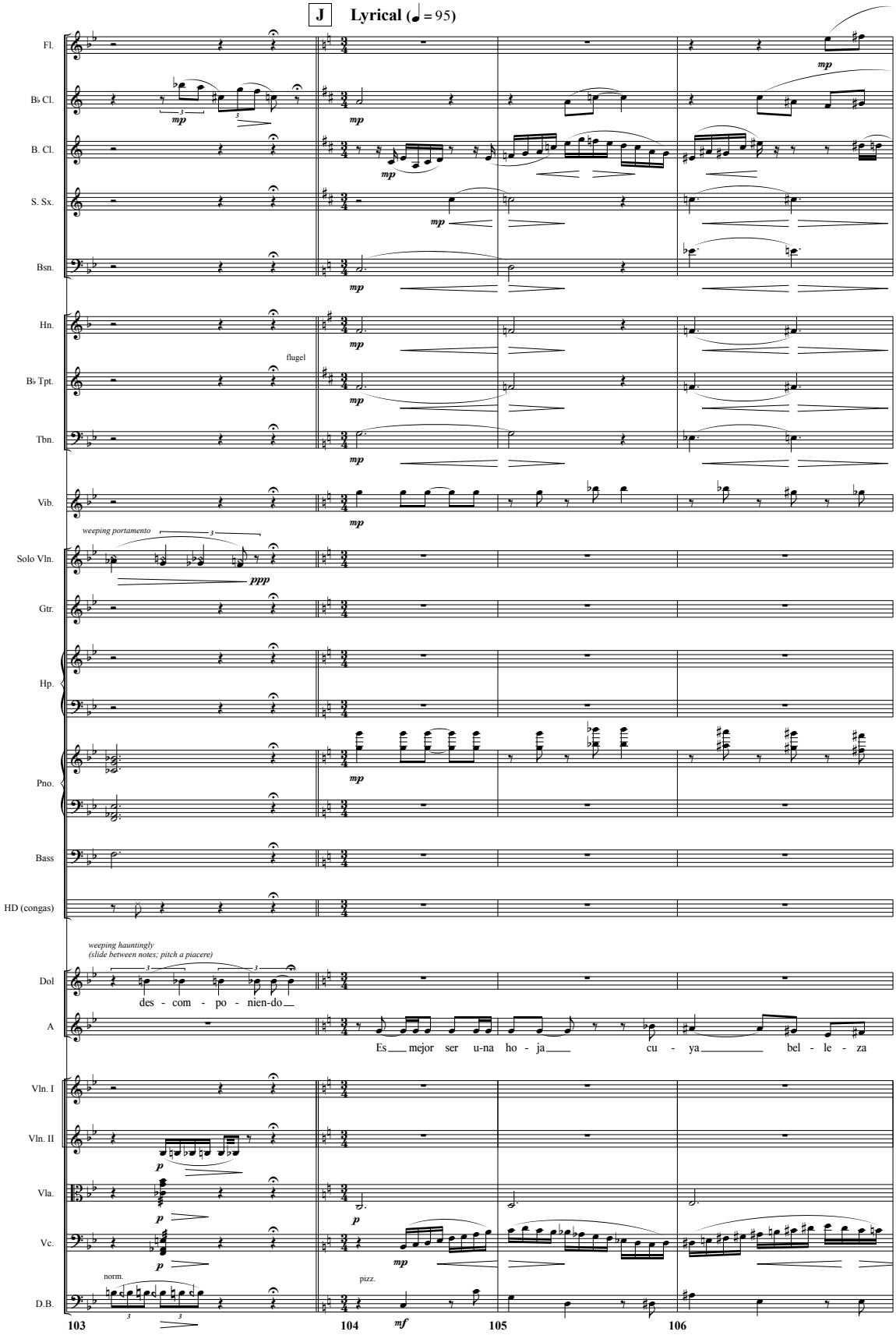

Priestess enters. Warm and expressive
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
A
Mi - - - - - ja no llo - res más. Sa - be - mos
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
83
84
85
86

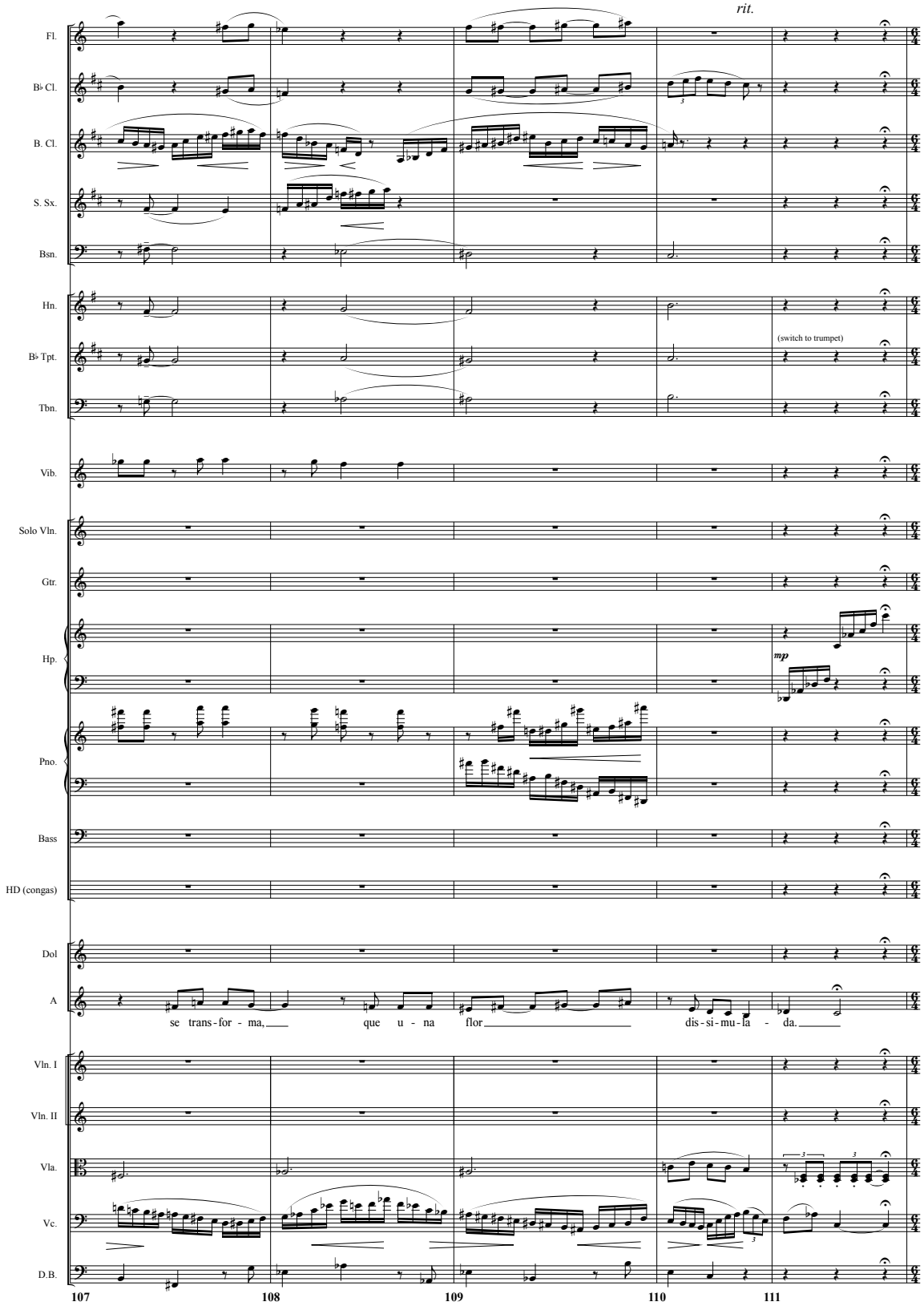

Stretch the time (suspended feeling)
molto rit.
I
Slightly more motion
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
ad lib. florid ornamentation
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
A
lo que so - mos. pe - ro no lo que po-de-mos ser en de -
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
div.
87
88
89
90

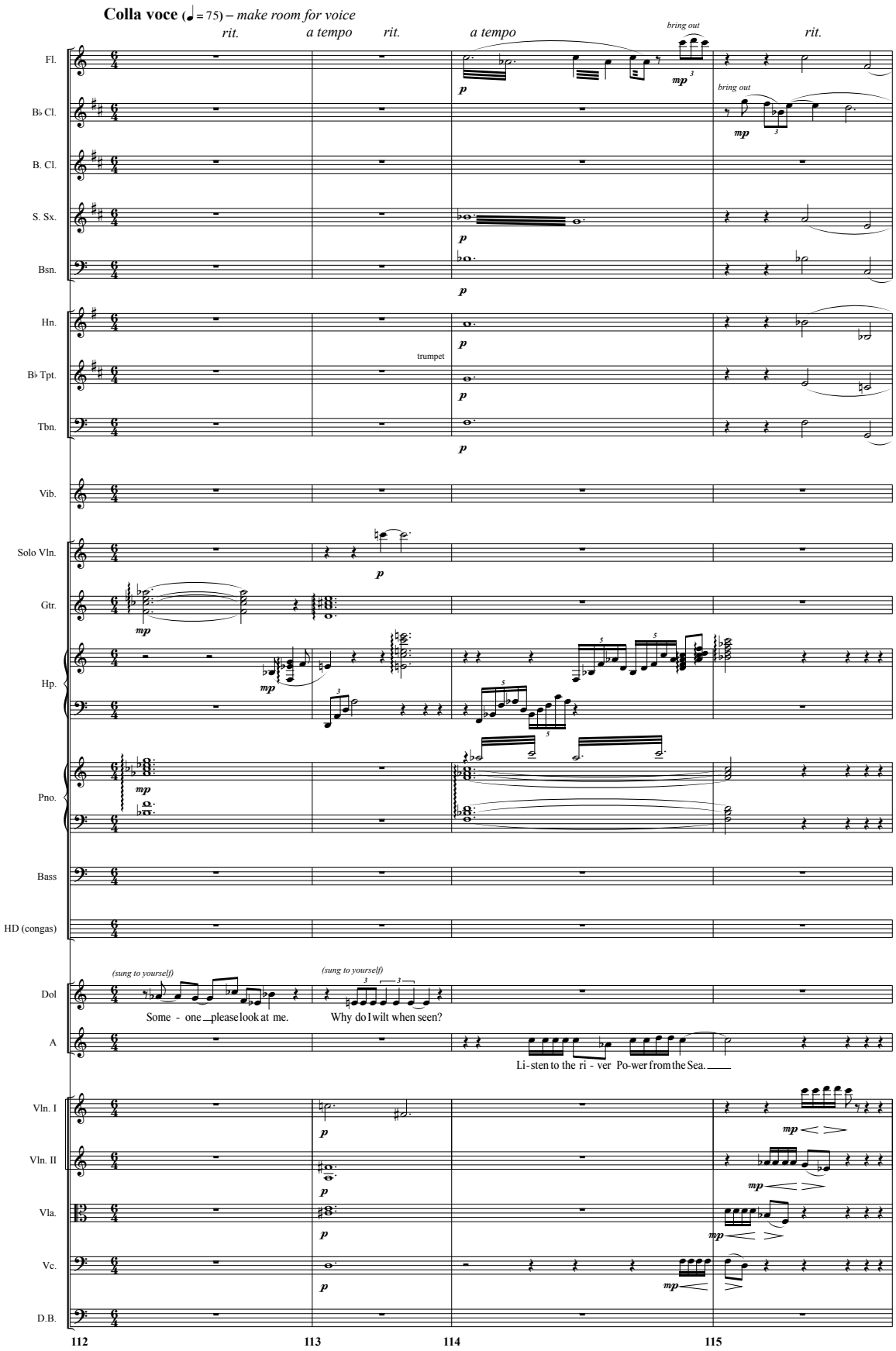

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
A
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mp
dolce
mf
p
ve - nir. Re - cuer-da no er-es u-na O - fe - lia de - jar ent-rar
91
92
93
94

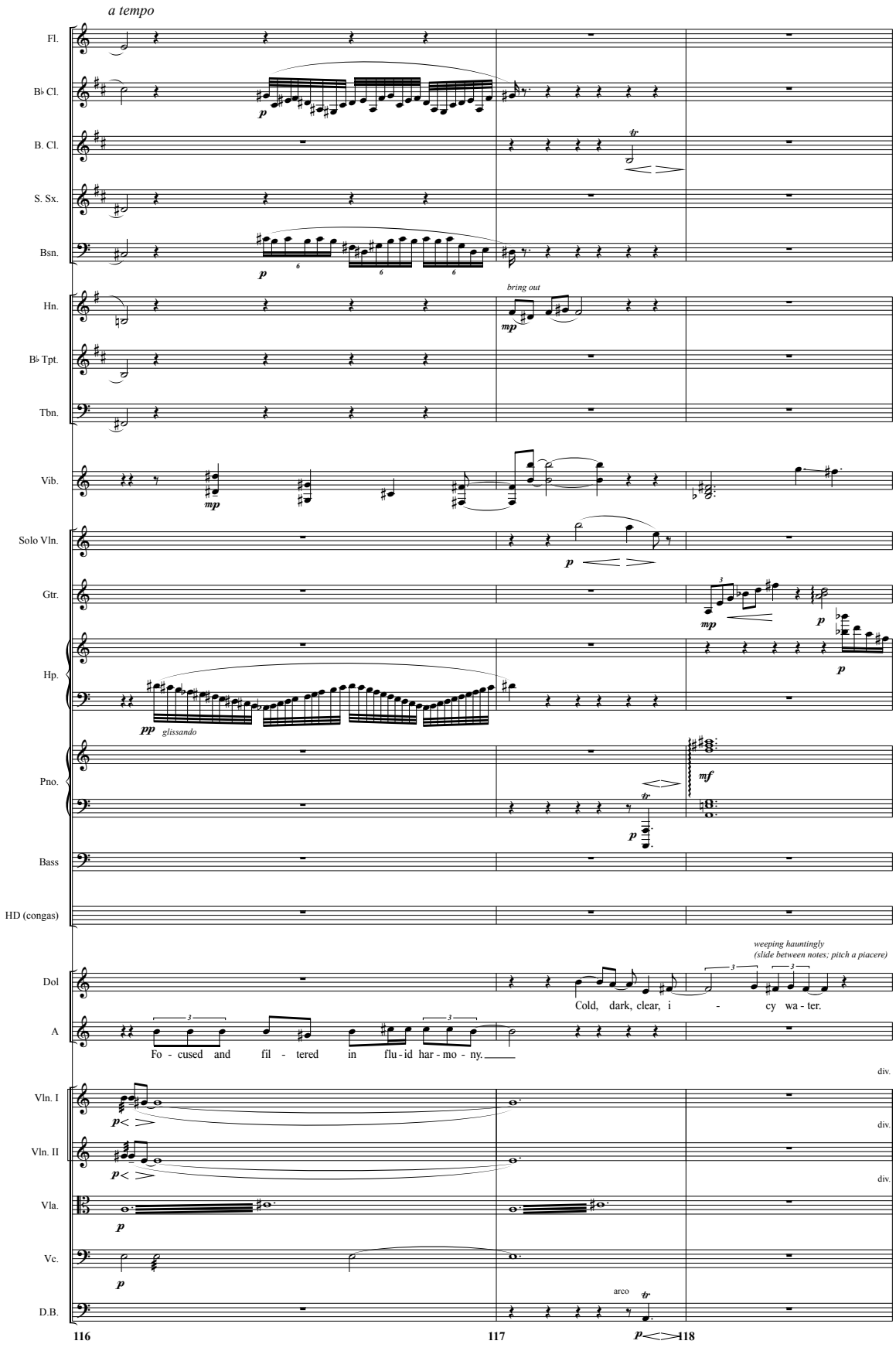

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
A
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
dolce
mp
mf
p
div.
quie-ro ser vis - to
so - la-men - te en que la de - jen sa - lir con na - da mas mas que las marga-ri - tas
95
96
97
98

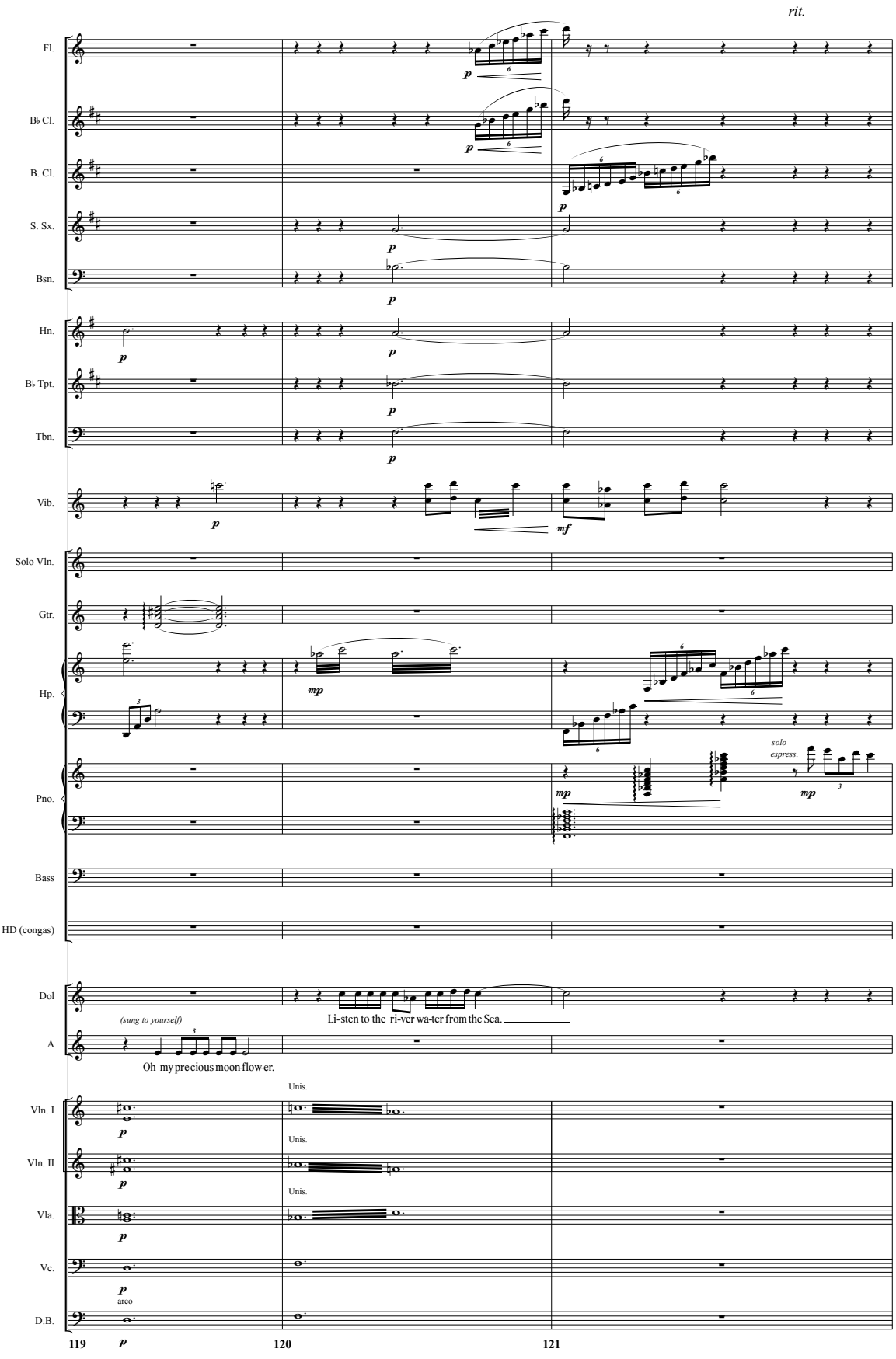

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Mute
(valve tremolo)
Open
(switch to flugel)
B♭ Tpt.
colour
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
las
mar-ga-ri-tas
y ro-me - ro
A
des-tro - za-das
Vln. I
Vln. II
div.
sul tasto
norm.
Vla.
(pitch/rhythm grad. disintegrates)
Vc.
molto pont.
al niente
simile
D.B.
(closer to 'white noise' effect; crackling of upper partials)
99
100
101
102

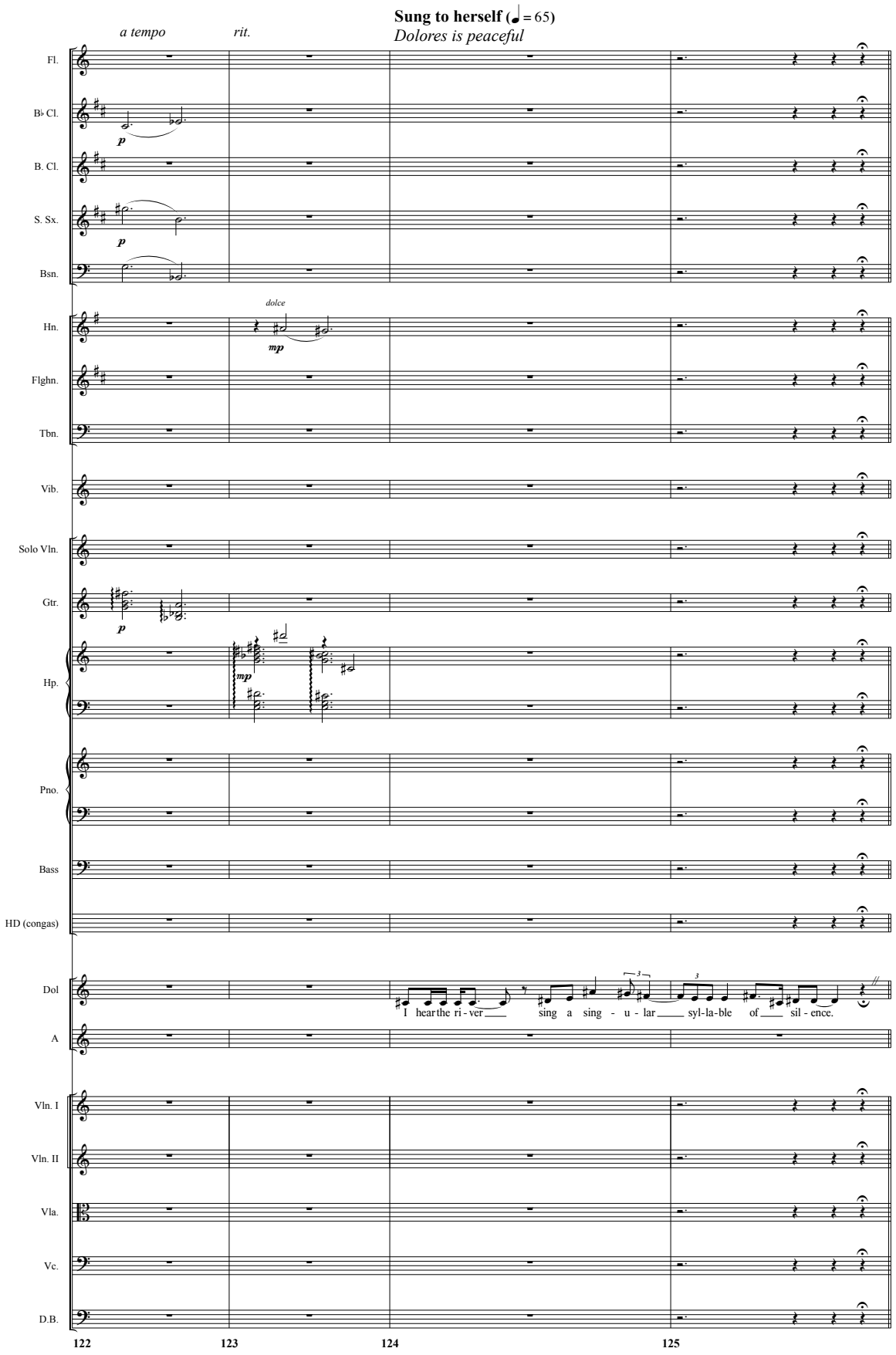

J
Lyrical (♩ = 95)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
flugel
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
weeping portamento
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
weeping hauntingly
(slide between notes; pitch a piacere)
Dol
des - com - po - nien-do
A
Es mejor ser u-na ho - ja cu - ya bel - le - za
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
norm.
pizz.
D.B.
103
104
105
106


rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
(switch to trumpet)
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
mp
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
A
se trans-for - ma, que u - na flor dis-si-mu-la - da.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
107
108
109
110
111

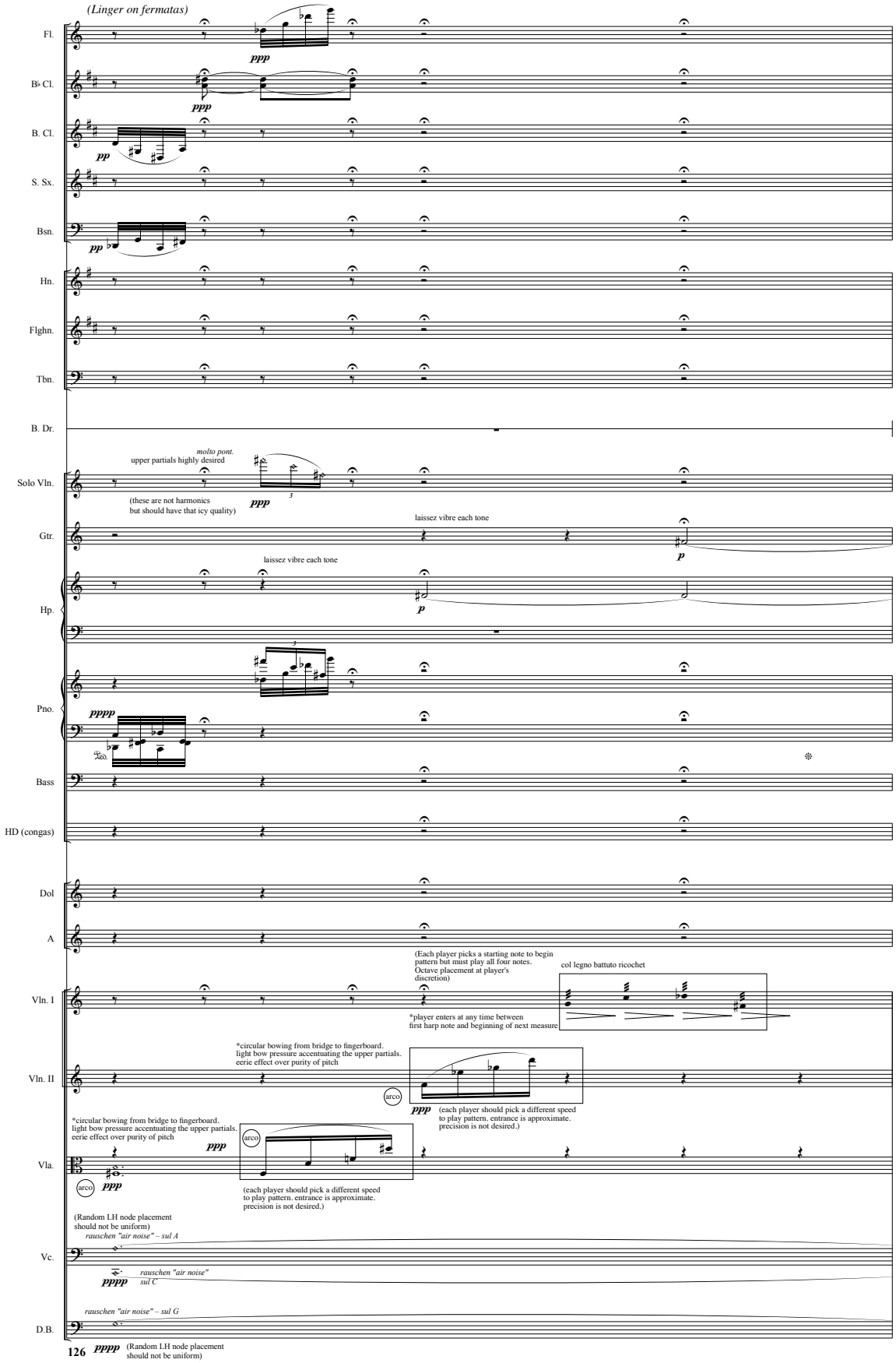

Colla voce (♩ = 75) – make room for voice
rit.
a tempo
rit.
a tempo
rit.
bring out
bring out
trumpet
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
A
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
(sung to yourself)
Some - one please look at me.
(sung to yourself)
Why do I wilt when seen?
Li - sten to the ri - ver Po-wer from the Sea.
112
113
114
115

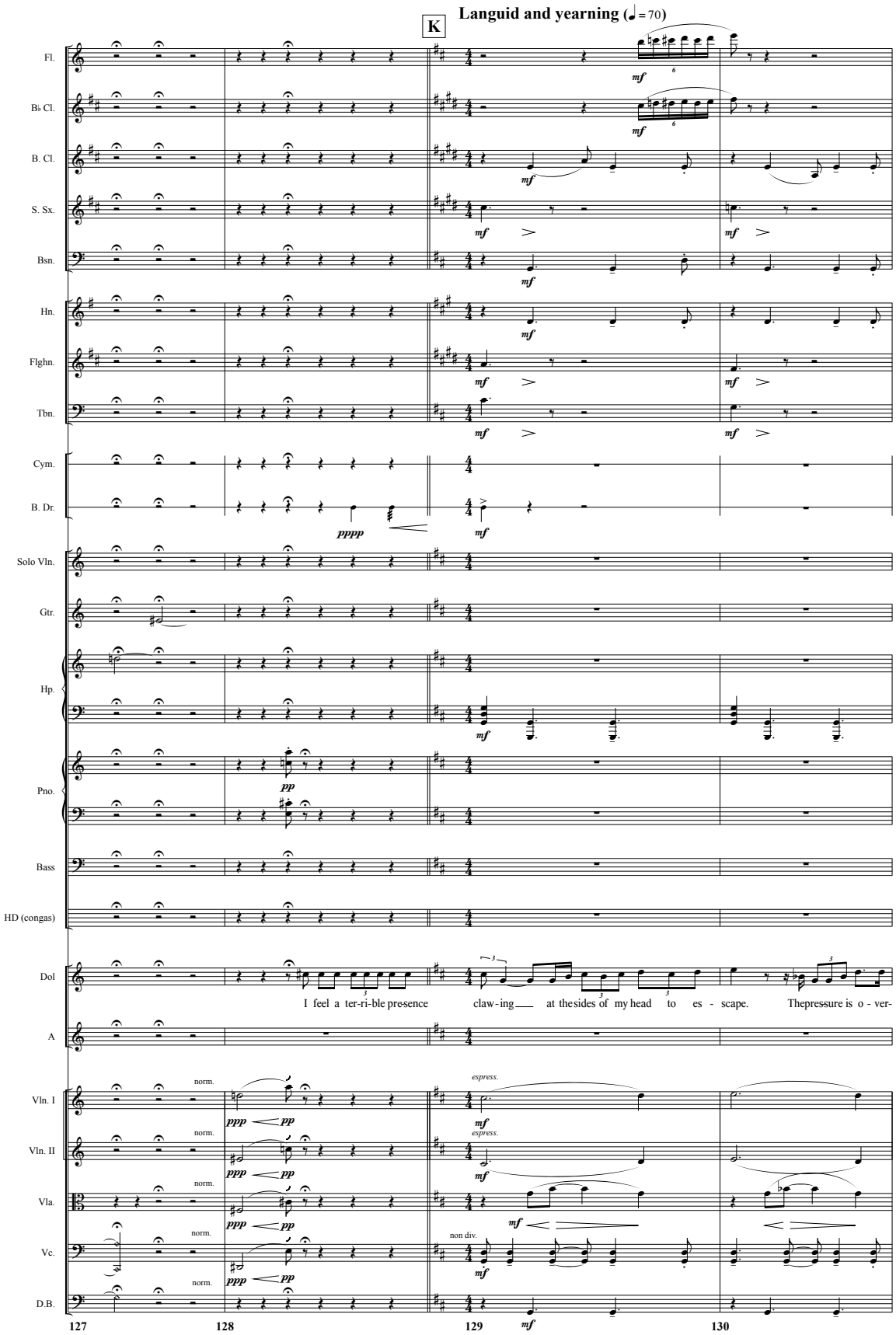

a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
bring out
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
glissando
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
weeping hauntingly
(slide between notes; pitch a piacere)
Cold, dark, clear, i - cy wa - ter.
A
Fo - cused and fil - tered in flu - id har - mo - ny.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
div.
arco
116
117
118

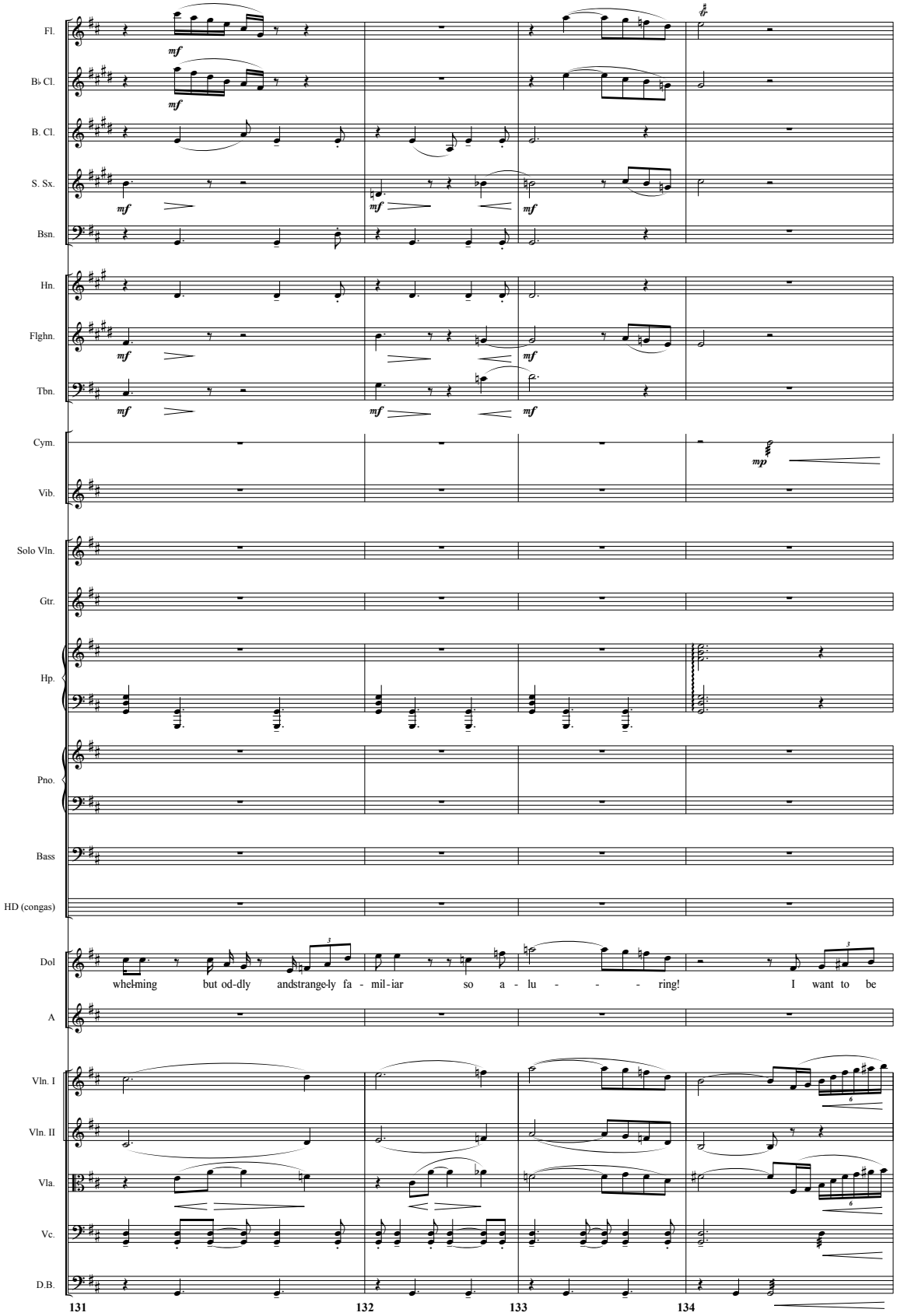

rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
A
(sung to yourself)
Li-sten to the ri-ver wa-ter from the Sea.
Oh my pre-cious moon-flow-er.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
Unis.
arco
solo
espress.
119
120
121

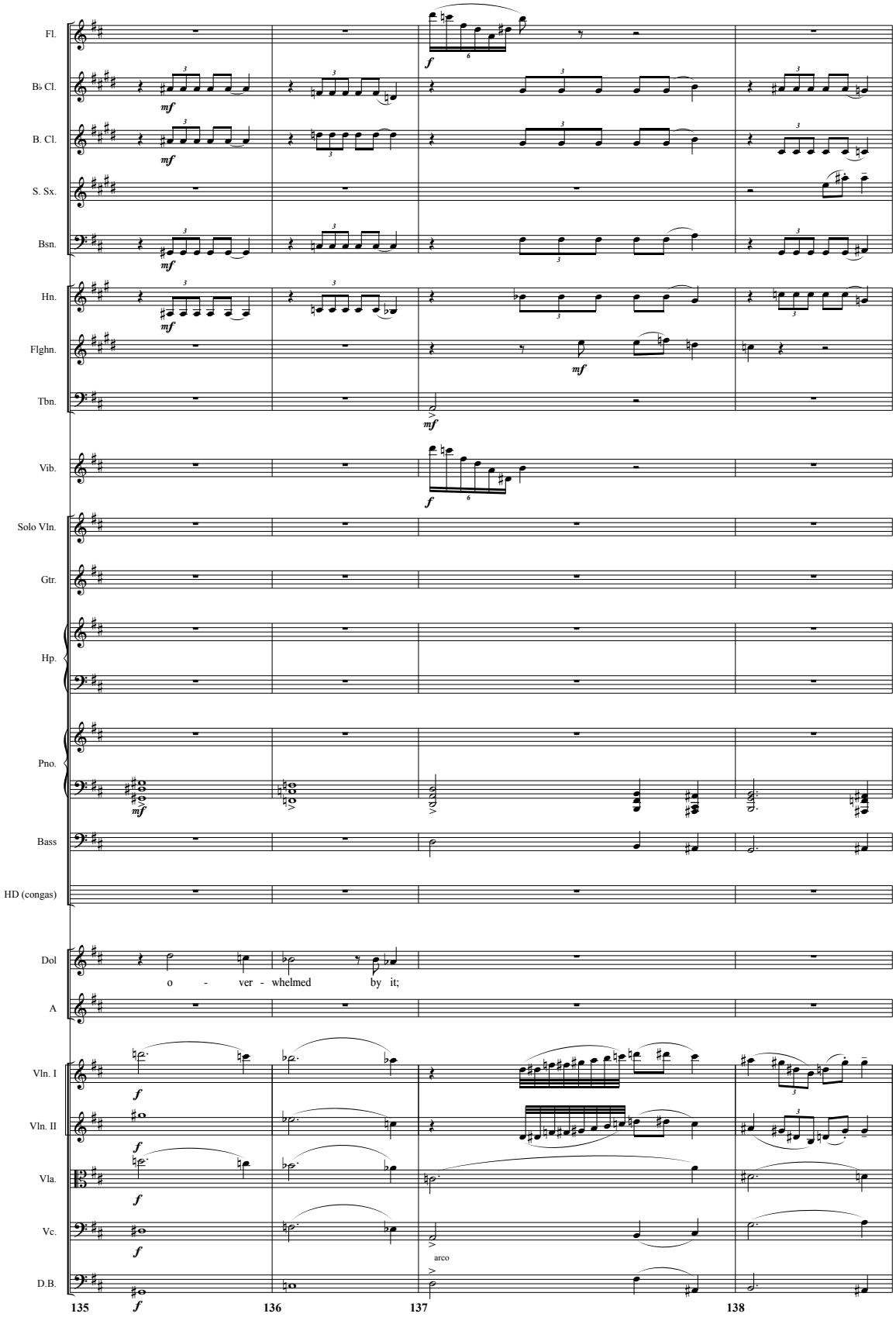

Sung to herself (♩ = 65)
Dolores is peaceful
a tempo
rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
dolce
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
I hear the ri - ver sing a sing - u - lar syl-la-ble of sil - ence.
A
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
122
123
124
125

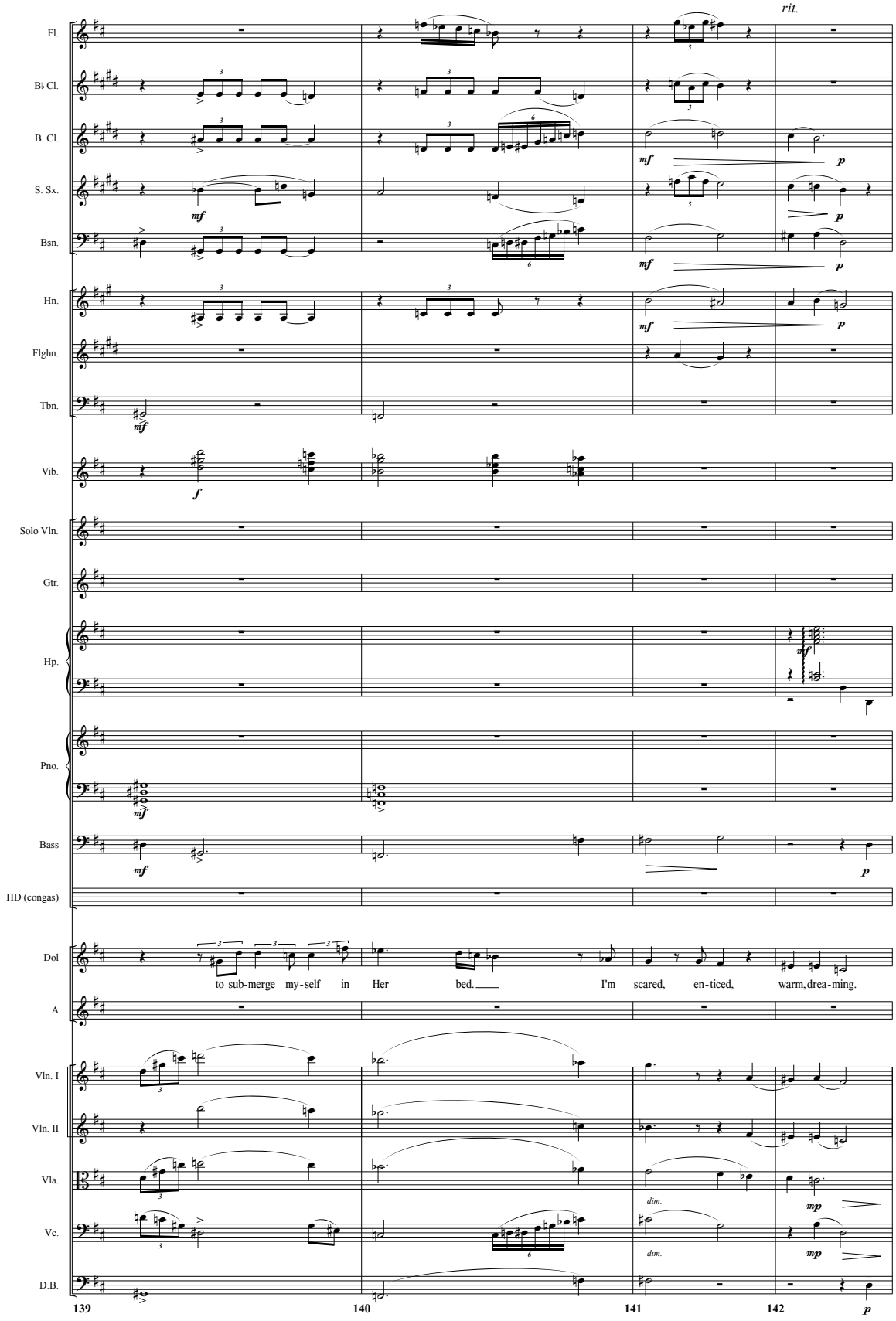
Dolores hears something...startled, mood changes (conductor cues each gesture)

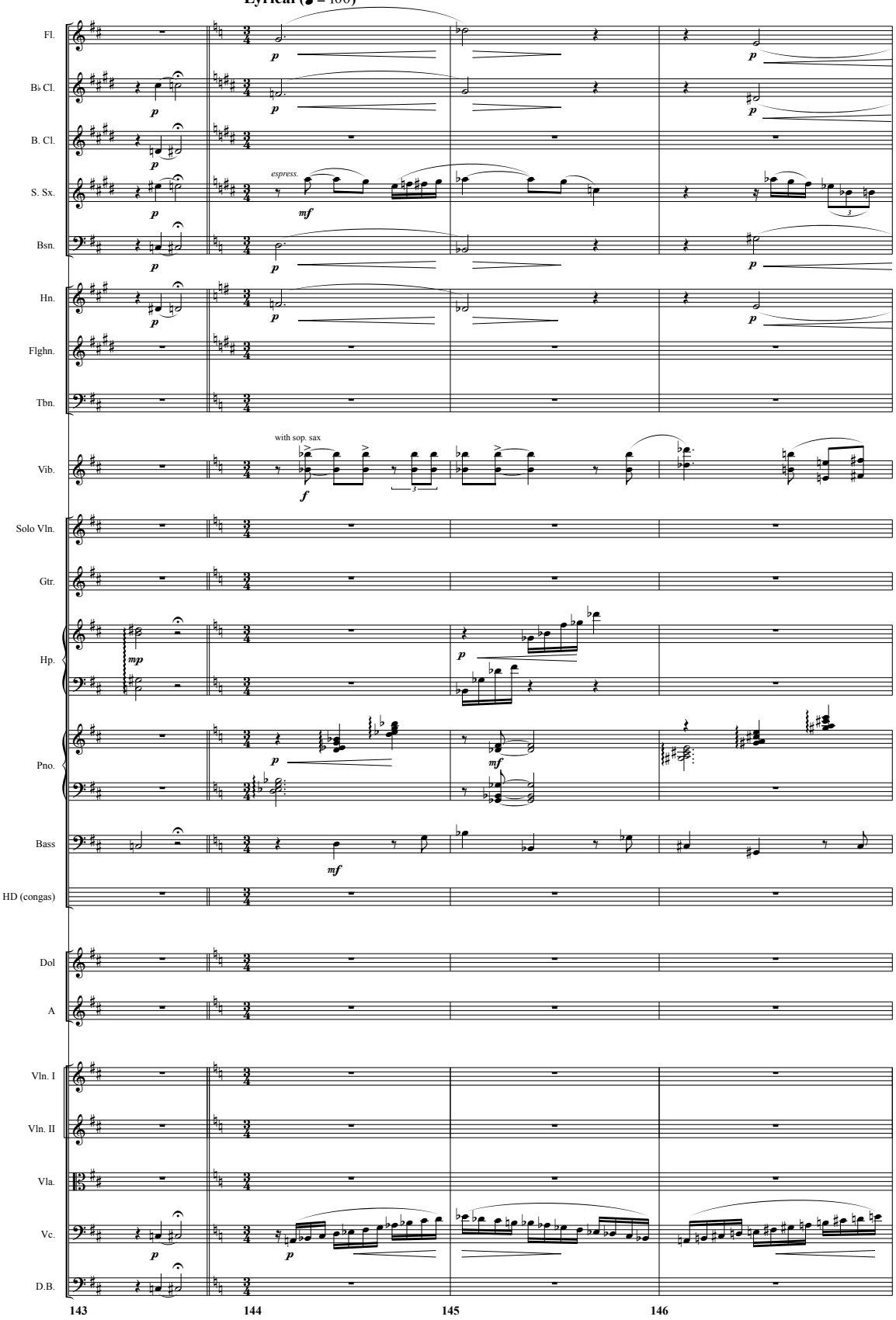


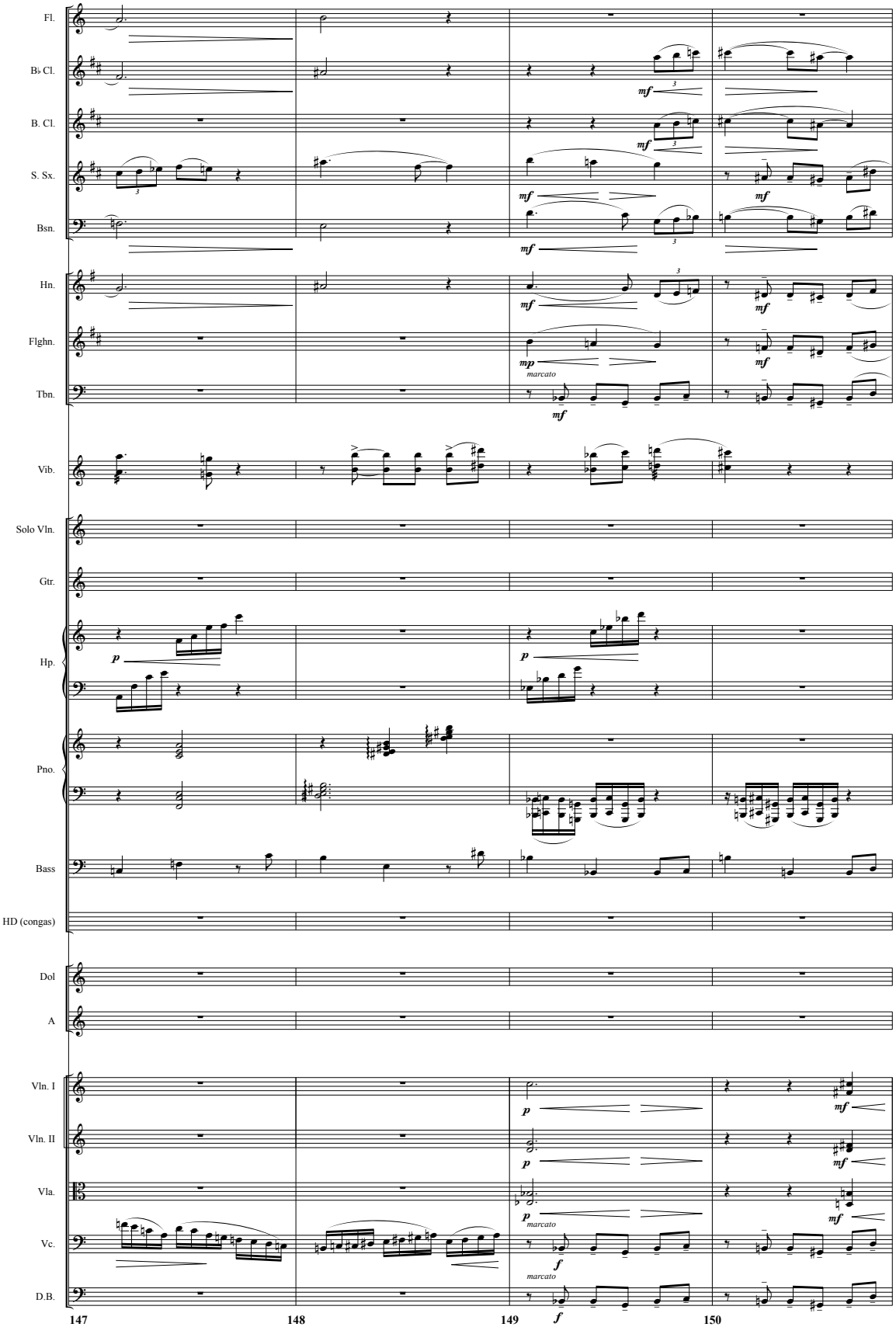

K
Languid and yearning (♩ = 70)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
A
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
I feel a ter-ri-ble pre-sence claw-ing at the sides of my head to es - scape. The pressure is o - ver-
norm.
espress.
non div.
127
128
129
130

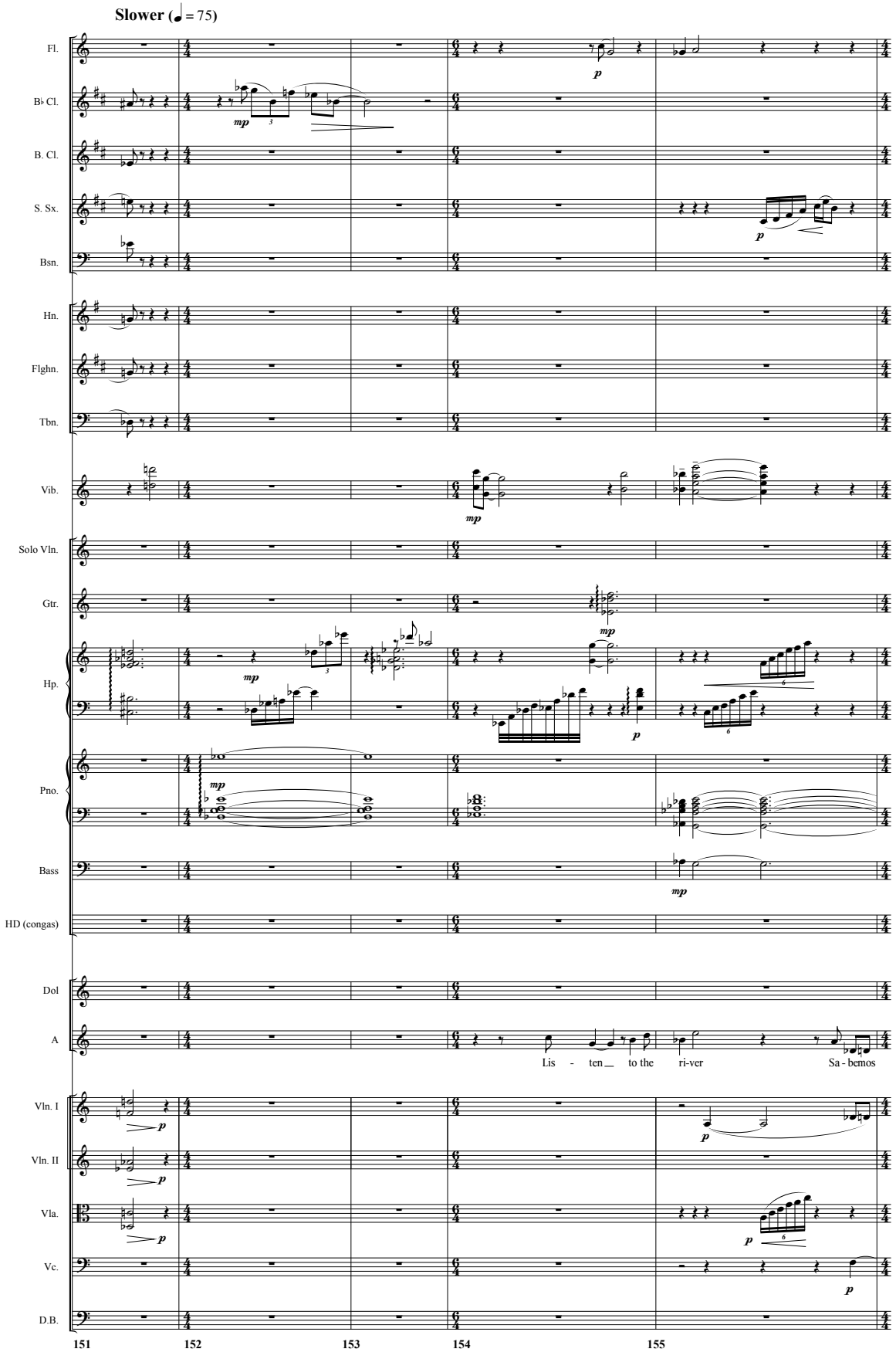

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
A
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
mp
whelming but od-dly andstrange-ly fa - mil-iar so a - lu - - - ring! I want to be
131
132
133
134

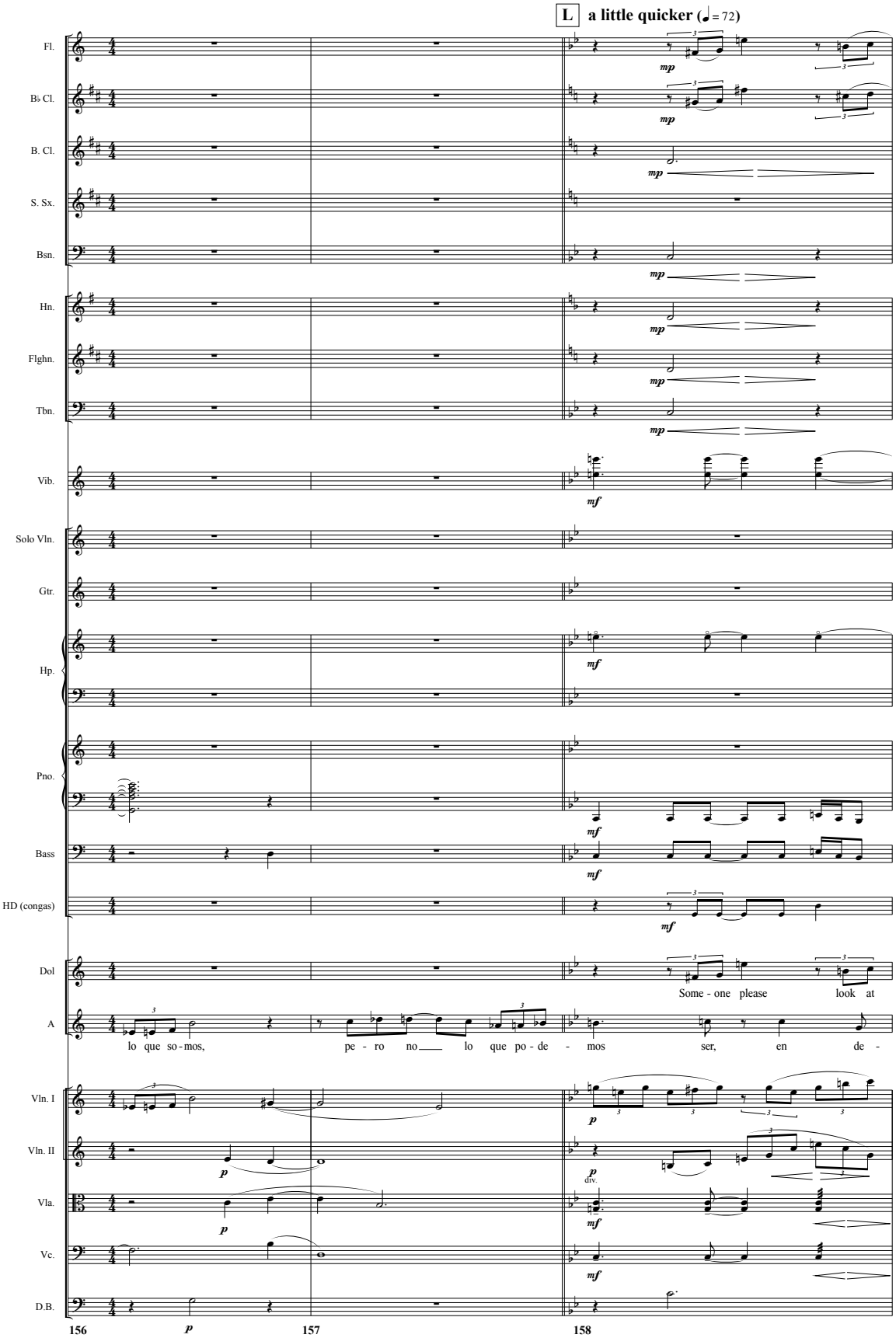

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
o - ver - whelmed by it;
A
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
D.B.
135
136
137
138

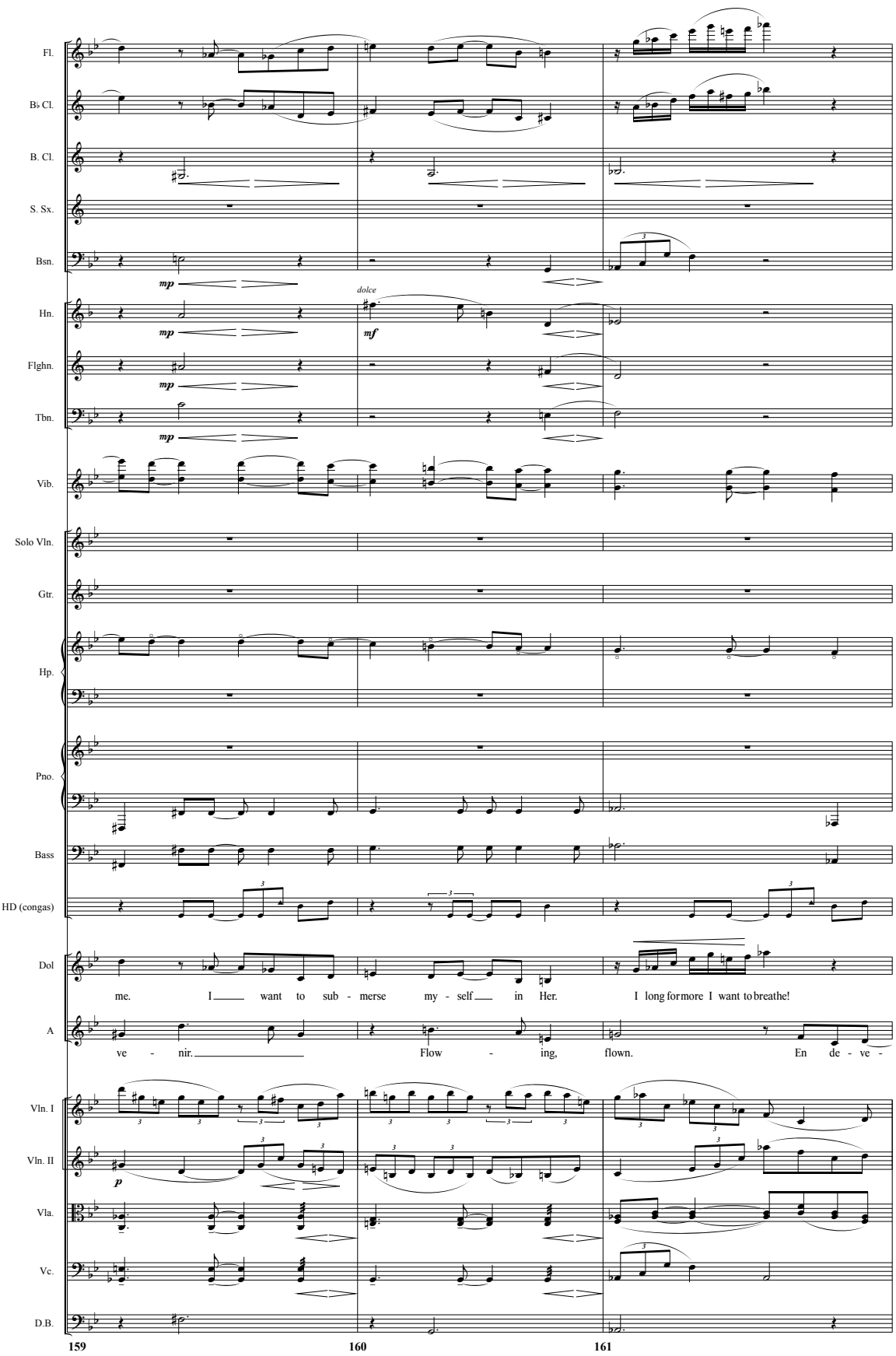

rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
A
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
p
f
mp
dim.
to sub-merge my-self in Her bed. I'm scared, en-ticed, warm, drea-ming.
139
140
141
142

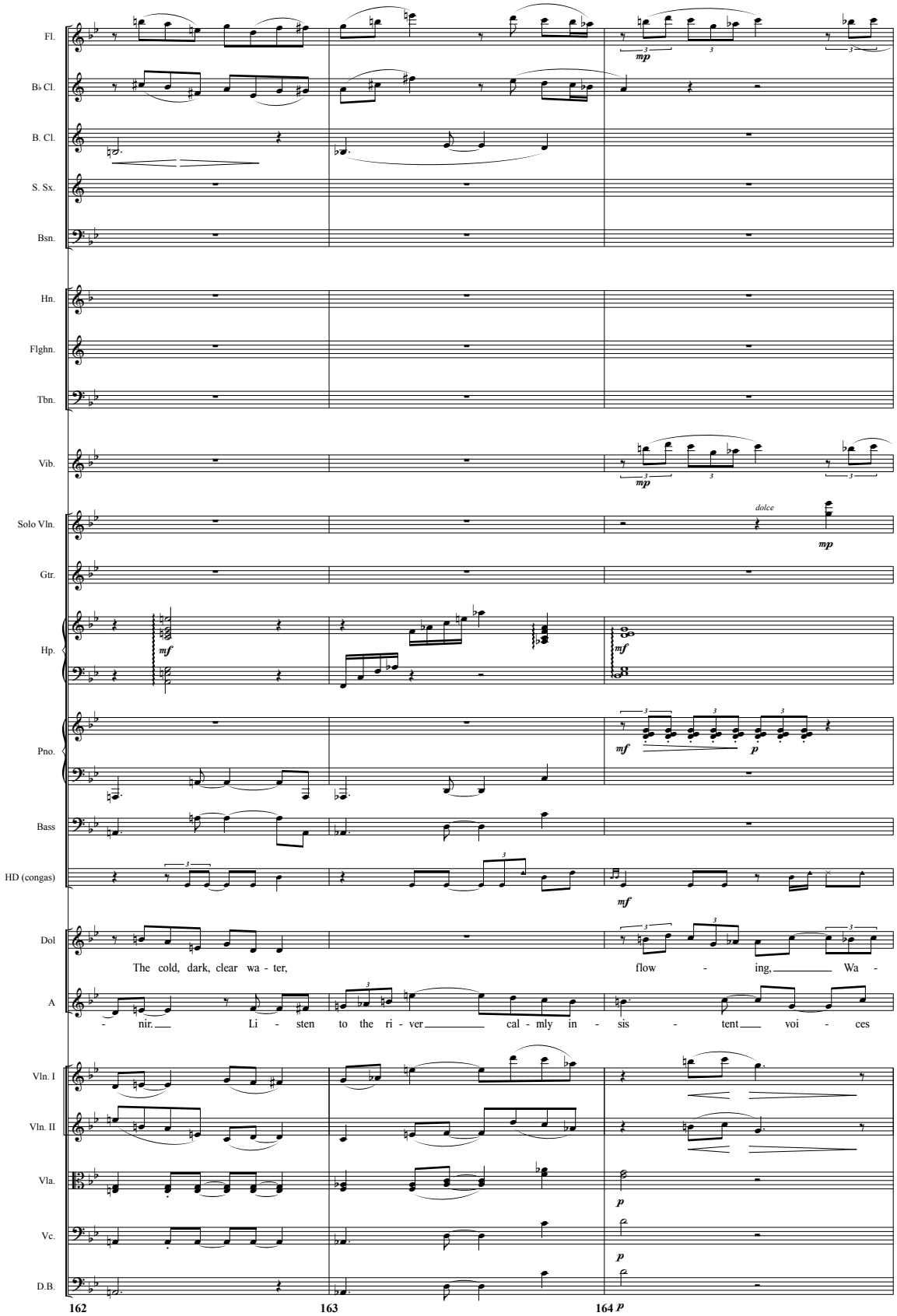

Lyrical (♩ = 100)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
A
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
espress.
with sop. sax
143
144
145
146


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
A
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
147
148
149
150
mf
mp
marcato
p
f

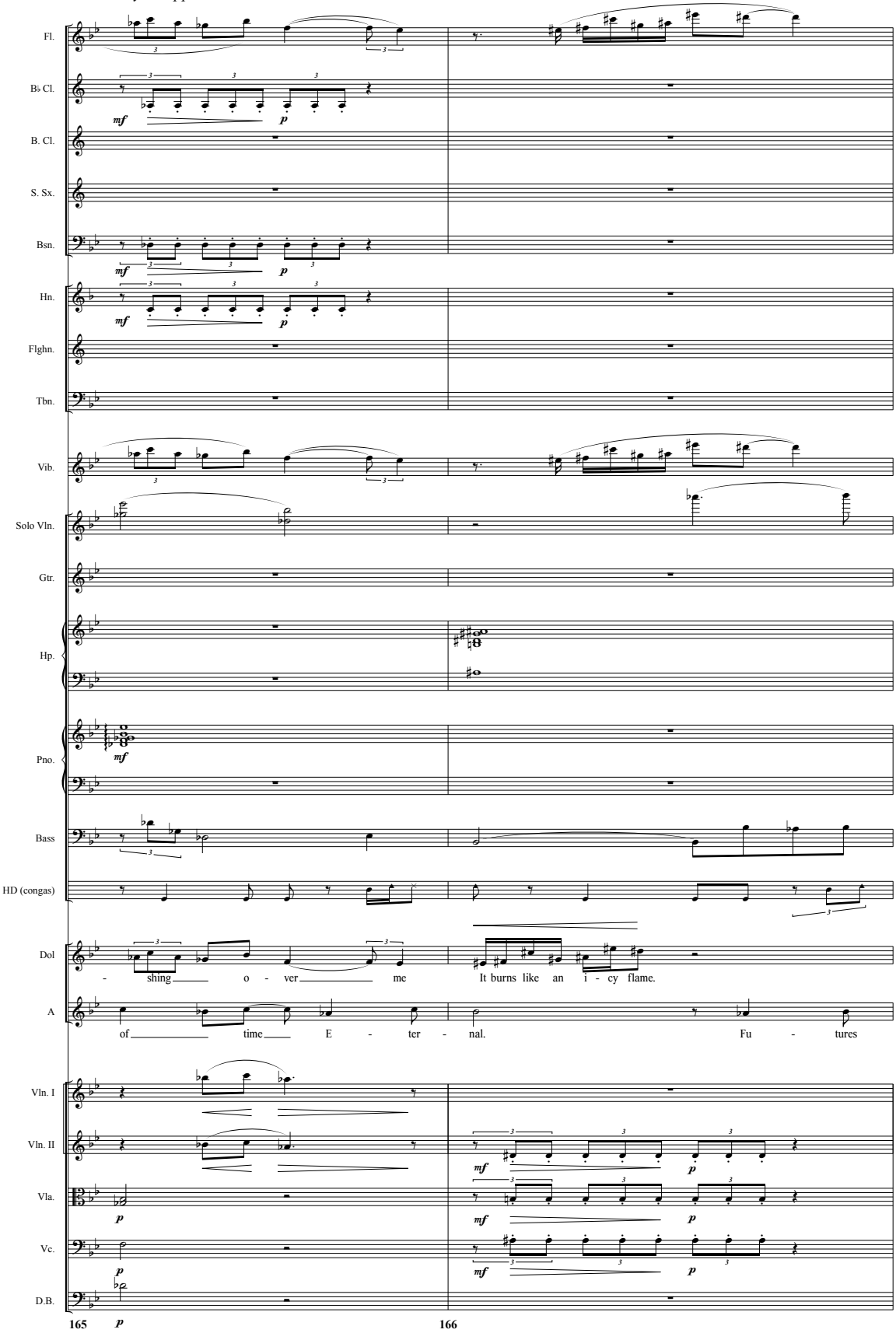

Slower (♩ = 75)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
A
Lis - ten to the ri-ver Sa - bemos
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
151
152
153
154
155

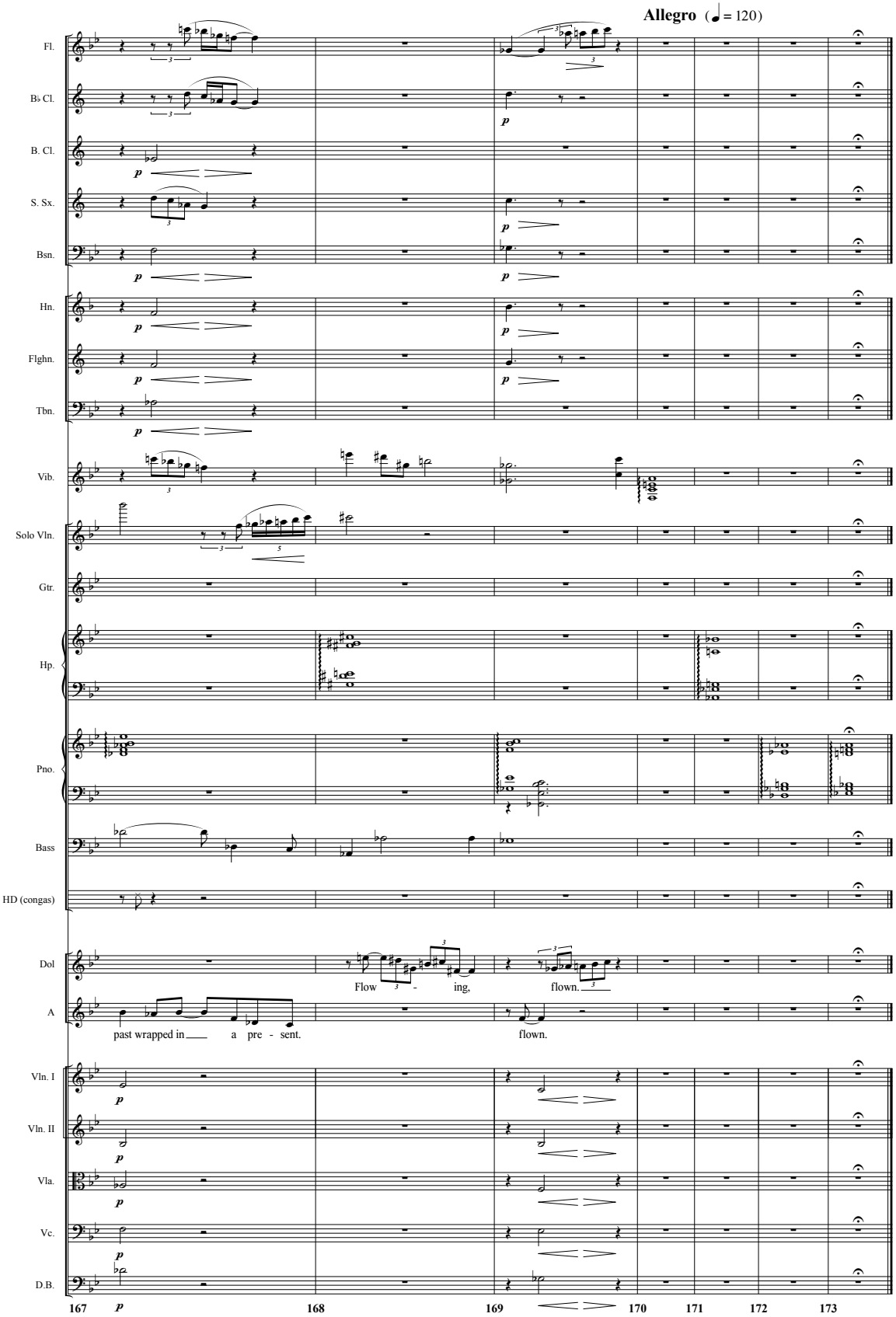

L a little quicker (♩= 72)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
A
Some - one please look at
lo que so - mos, pe - ro no lo que po - de - mos ser, en de -
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
div.
156
157
158


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
mp
dolce
Hn.
mp
mf
Flghn.
mp
Tbn.
mp
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
me. I want to sub - merse my - self in Her. I long for more I want to breathe!
A
ve - nir. Flow - ing, flown. En de - ve -
Vln. I
Vln. II
p
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
159
160
161


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
A
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mp
dolce
mf
p
The cold, dark, clear wa - ter, flow - ing, Wa -
- nir. Li - sten to the ri - ver cal - mly in - sis - tent voi - ces
162
163
164

Gradually disappear




Allegro (♩ = 120)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Vib.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD (congas)
Dol
A
Flow - ing, flown.
past wrapped in a pre - sent. flown.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
167
168
169
170
171
172
173

Work In Progress

Bouchard Interlude Before Scene 2: The townsfolk once again sing of their anxiety and fear of the pirate Bouchard.

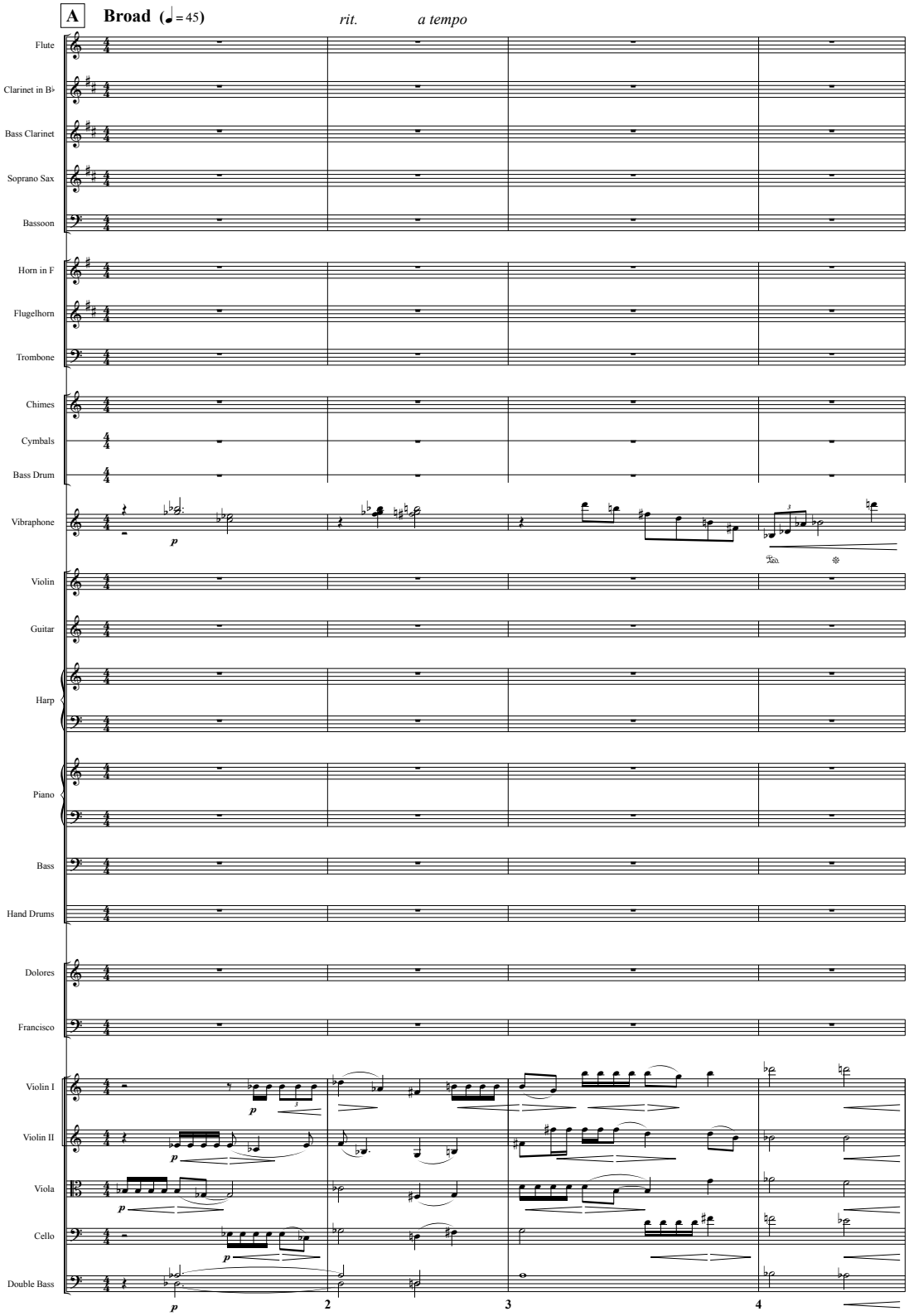
Music utilizes the ‘Time’ vamp.

Act I – Scene 2

Francisco and Dolores

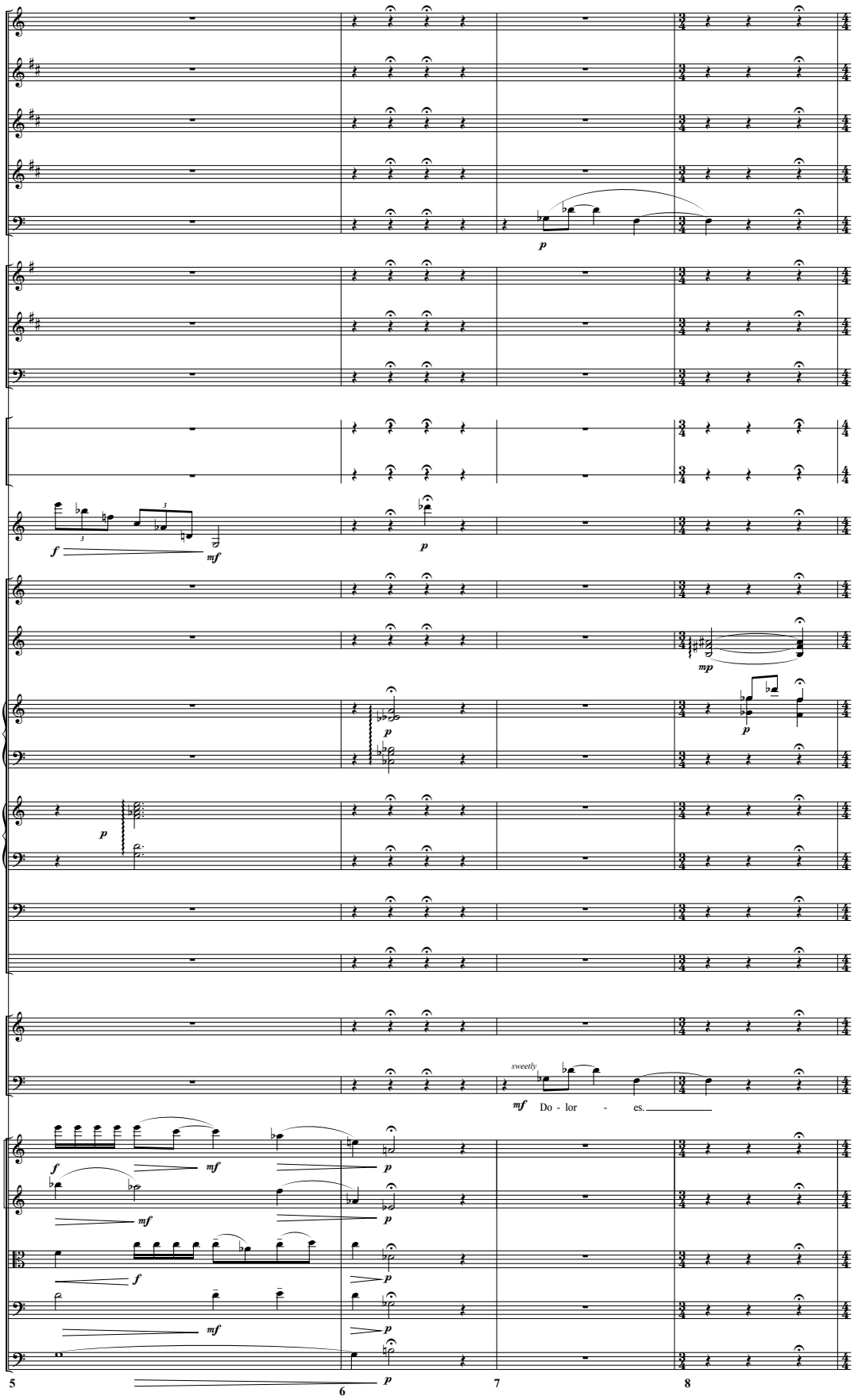
Daniel Aaron Ramirez

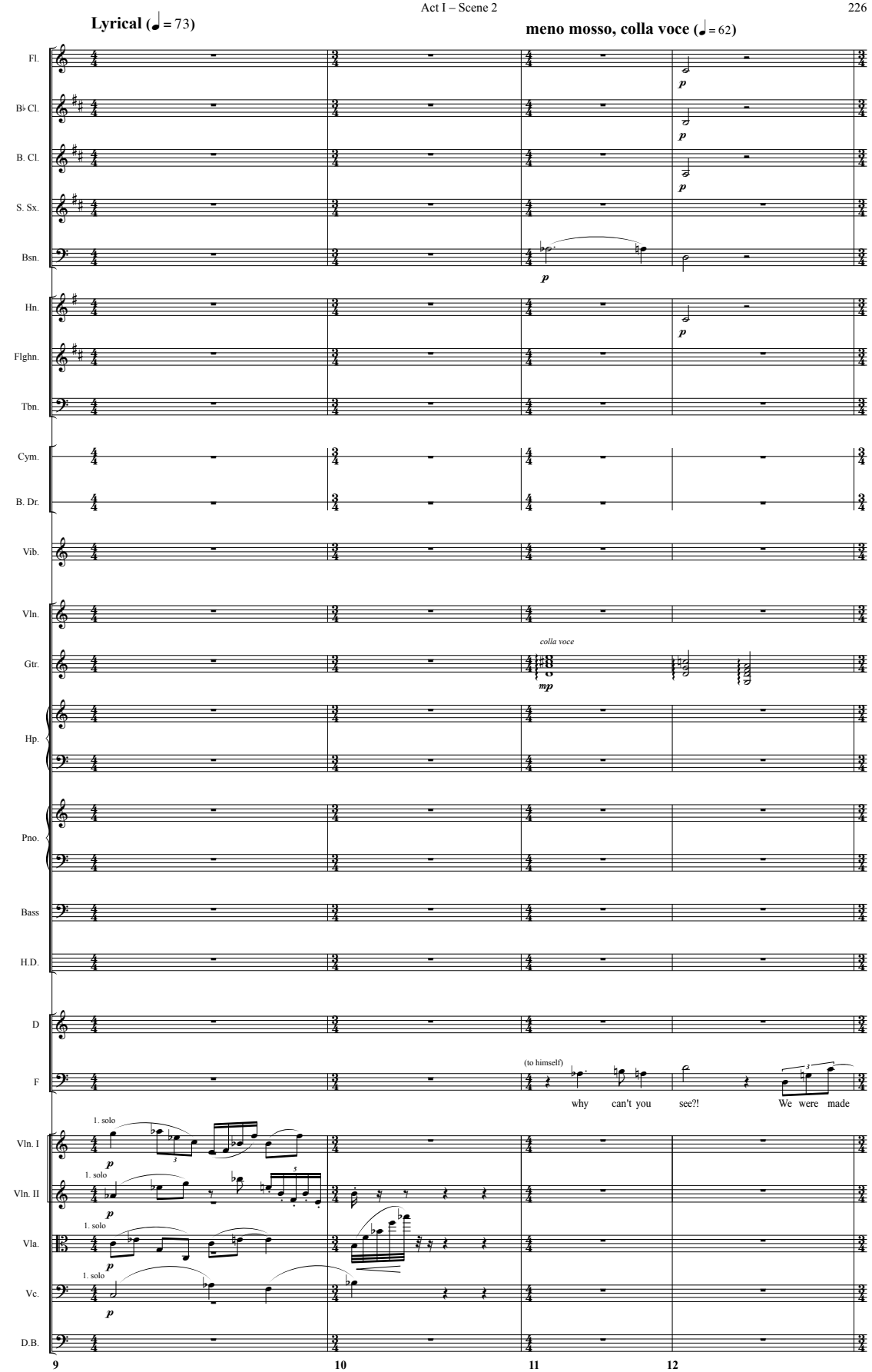
Scene 2. Dolores's garden outside the Church. She is tending to her flowers while Francisco prepares to approach her.



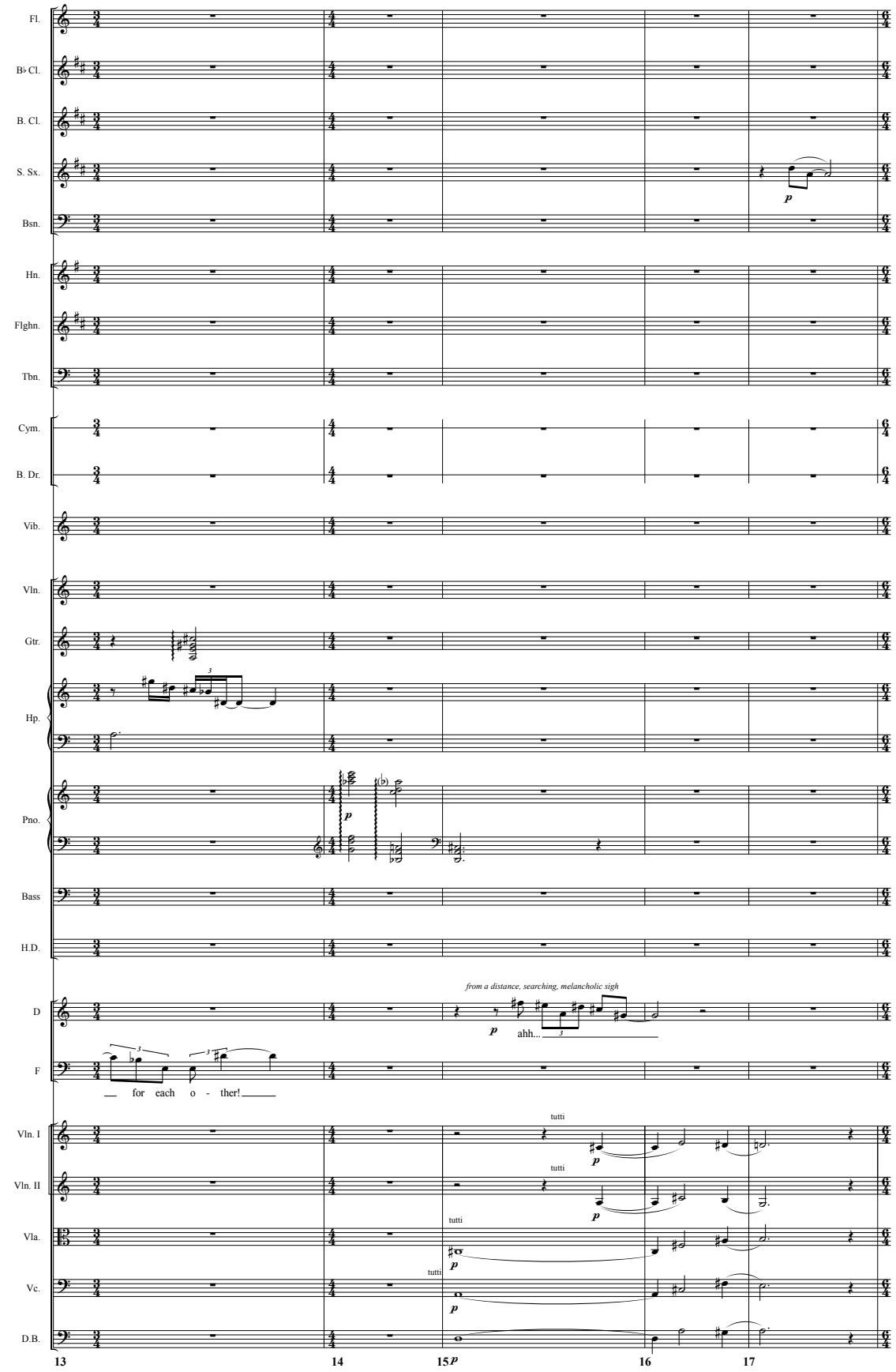
©2020, Daniel Aaron Ramirez

pìu mosso (♩ = 62)

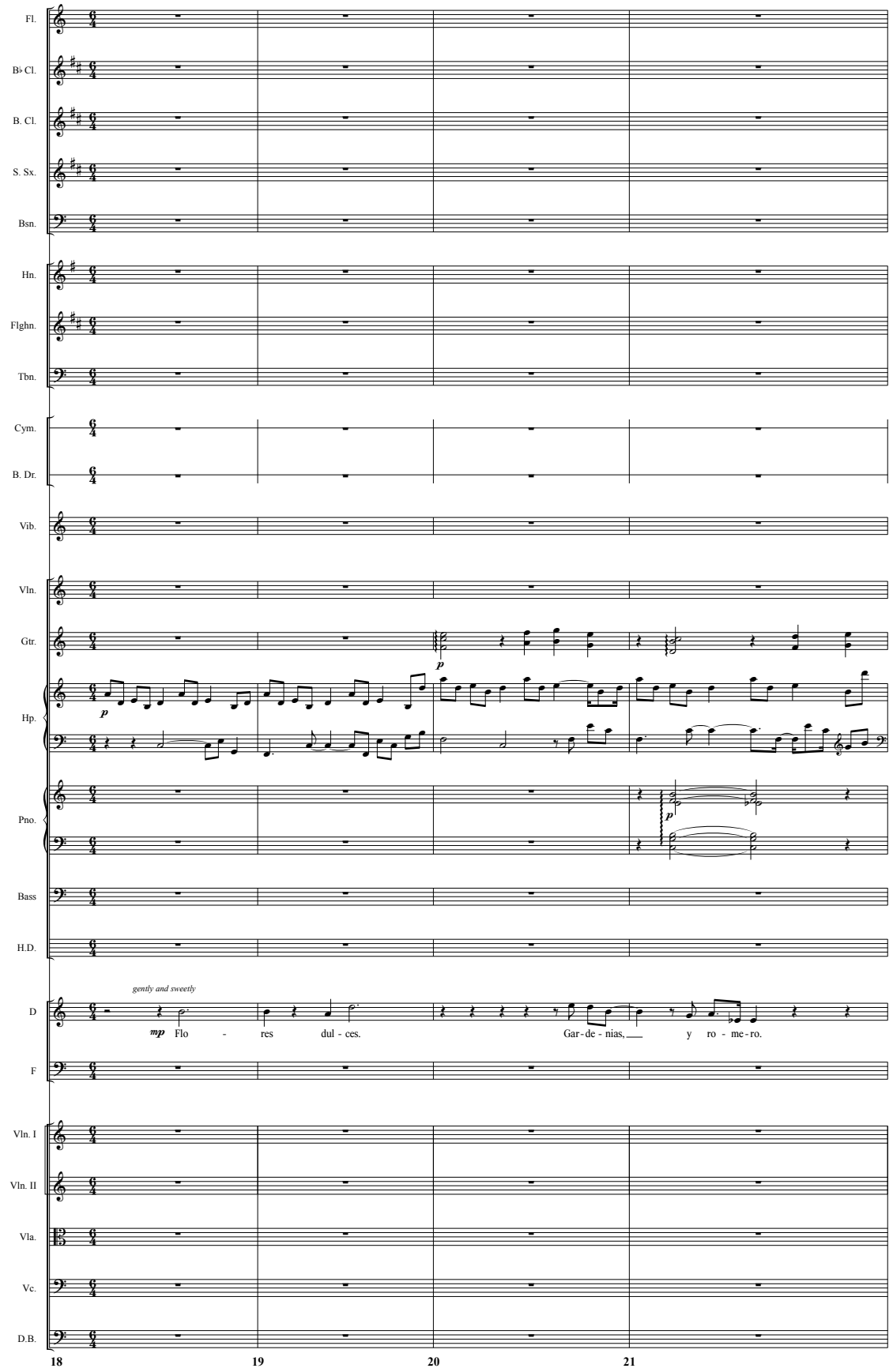

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
sweetly
Do - lor - es.
5
6
7
8

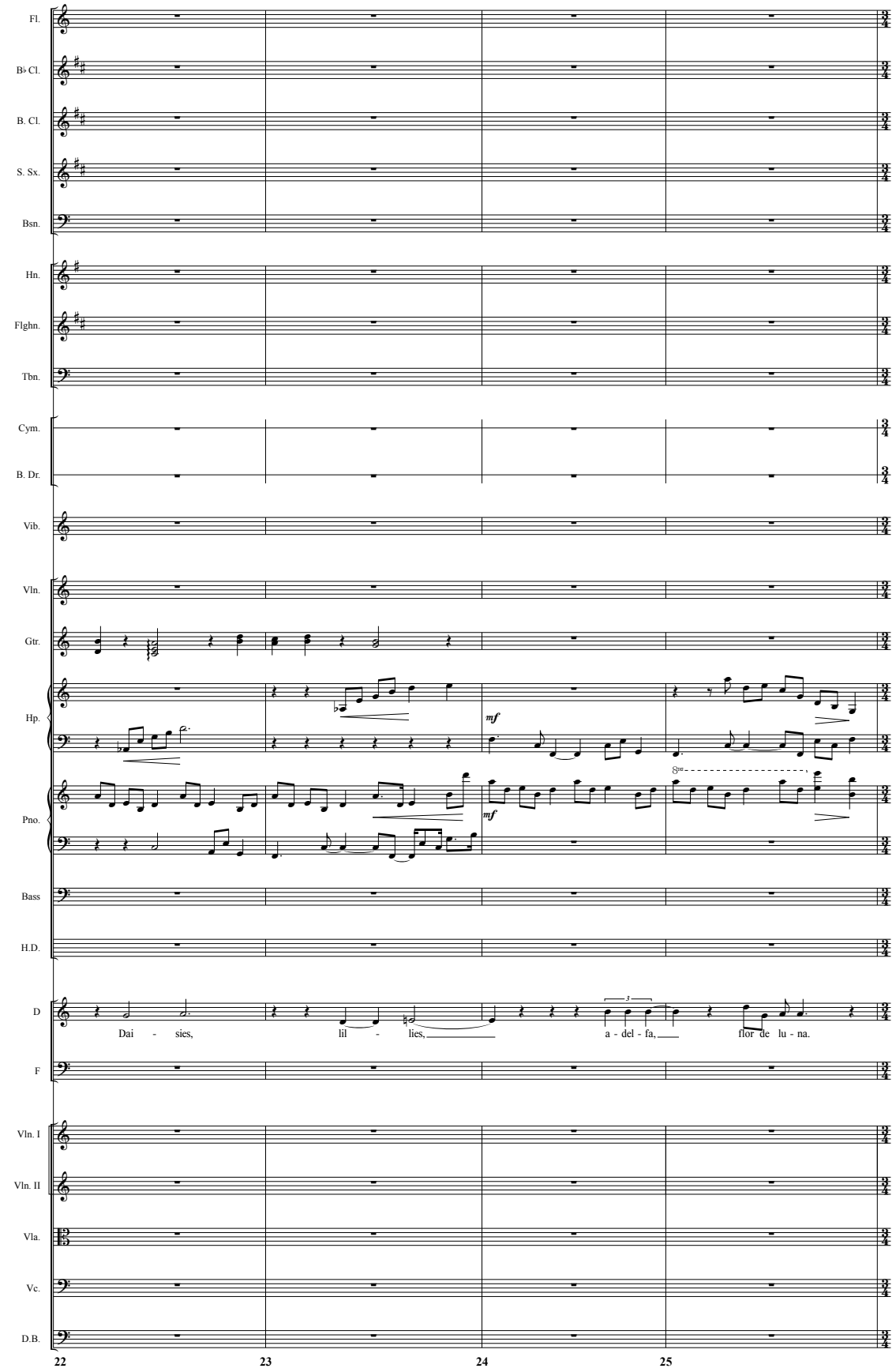

Lyrical (♩ = 73)
meno mosso, colla voce (♩ = 62)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
colla voce
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
F
(to himself)
why can't you see?!
We were made
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
1. solo
9
10
11
12

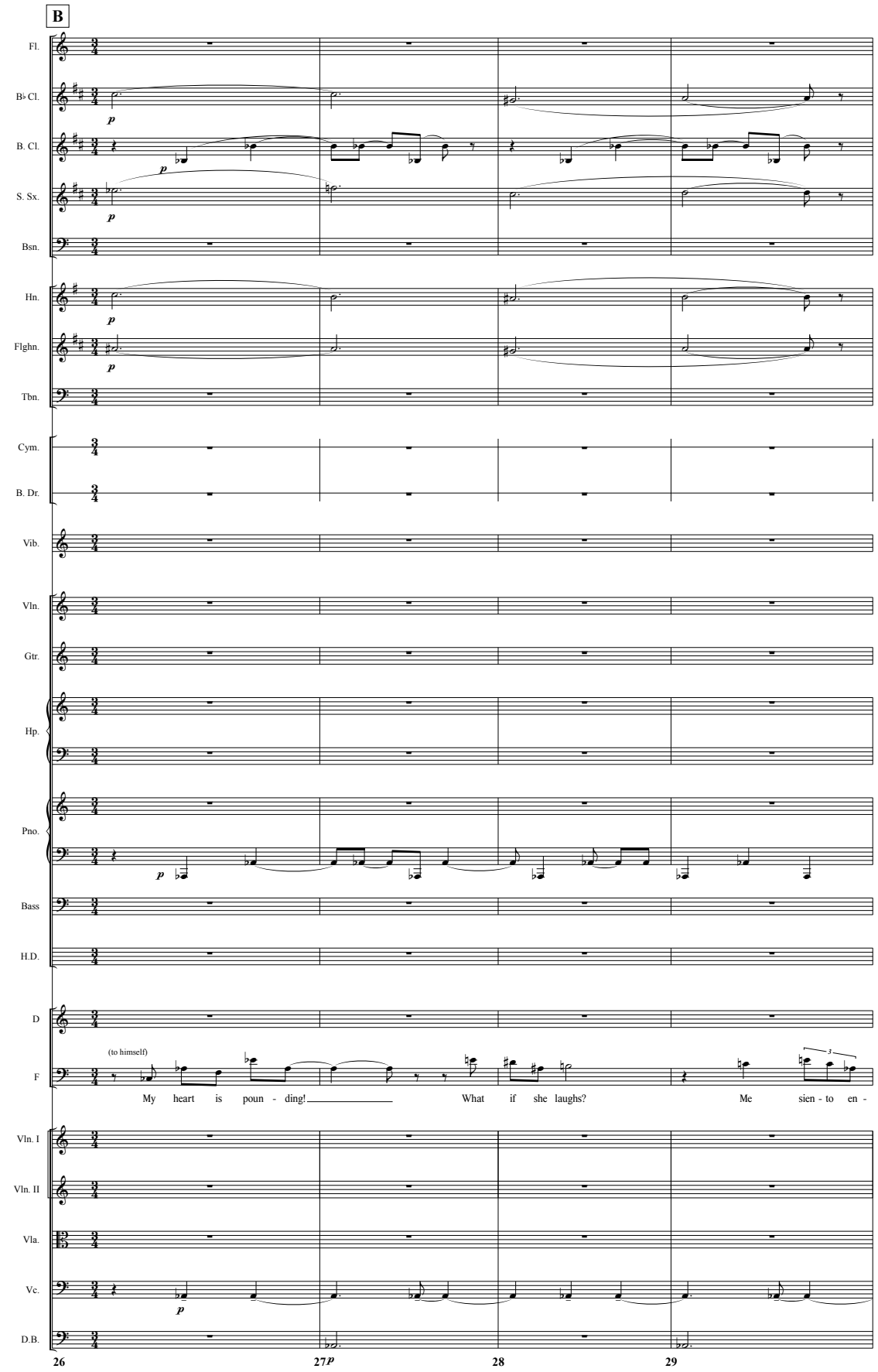
colla voce

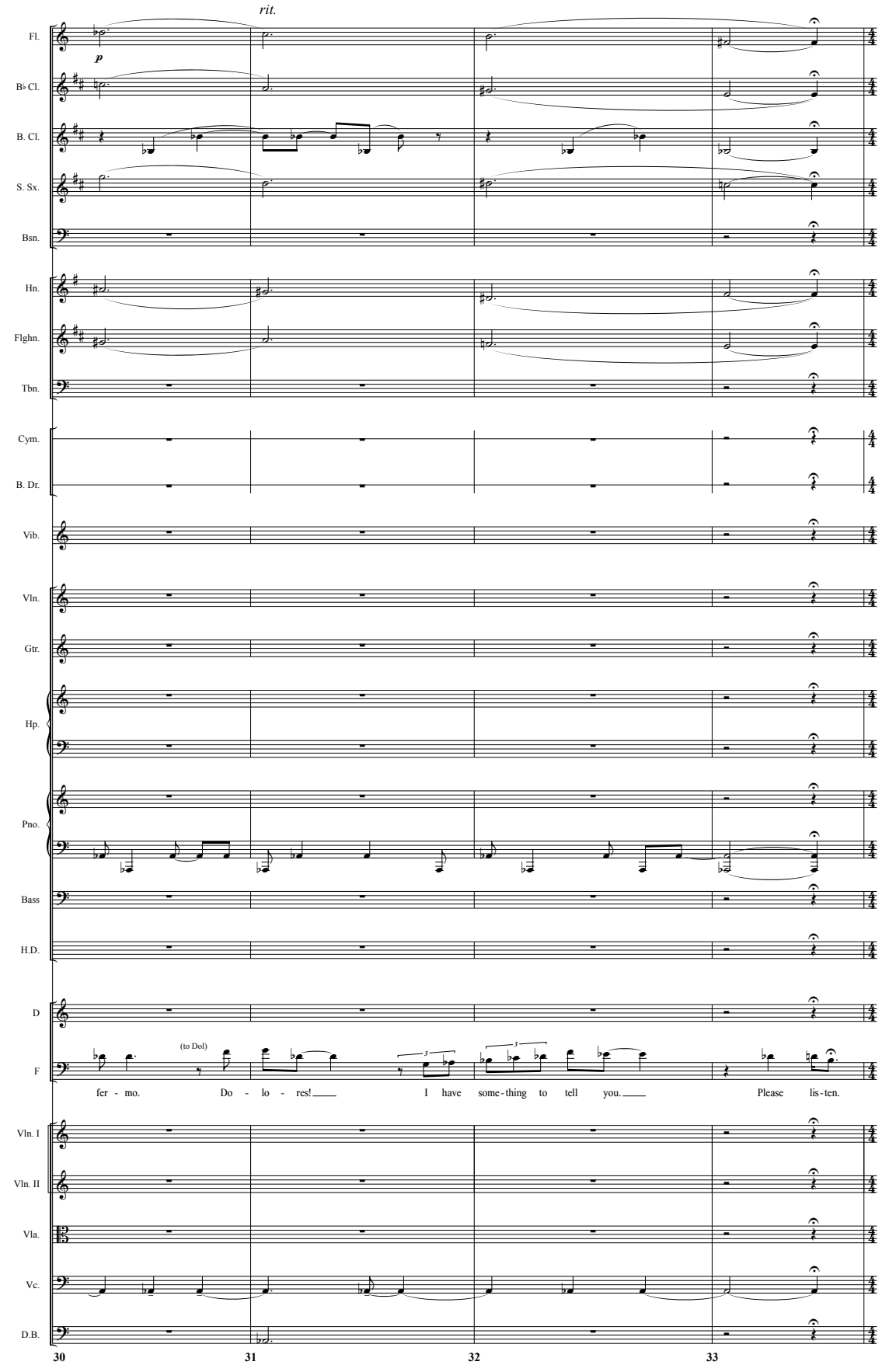

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
from a distance, searching, melancholic sigh
ahh...
for each o - ther!
tutti
13
14
15
16
17

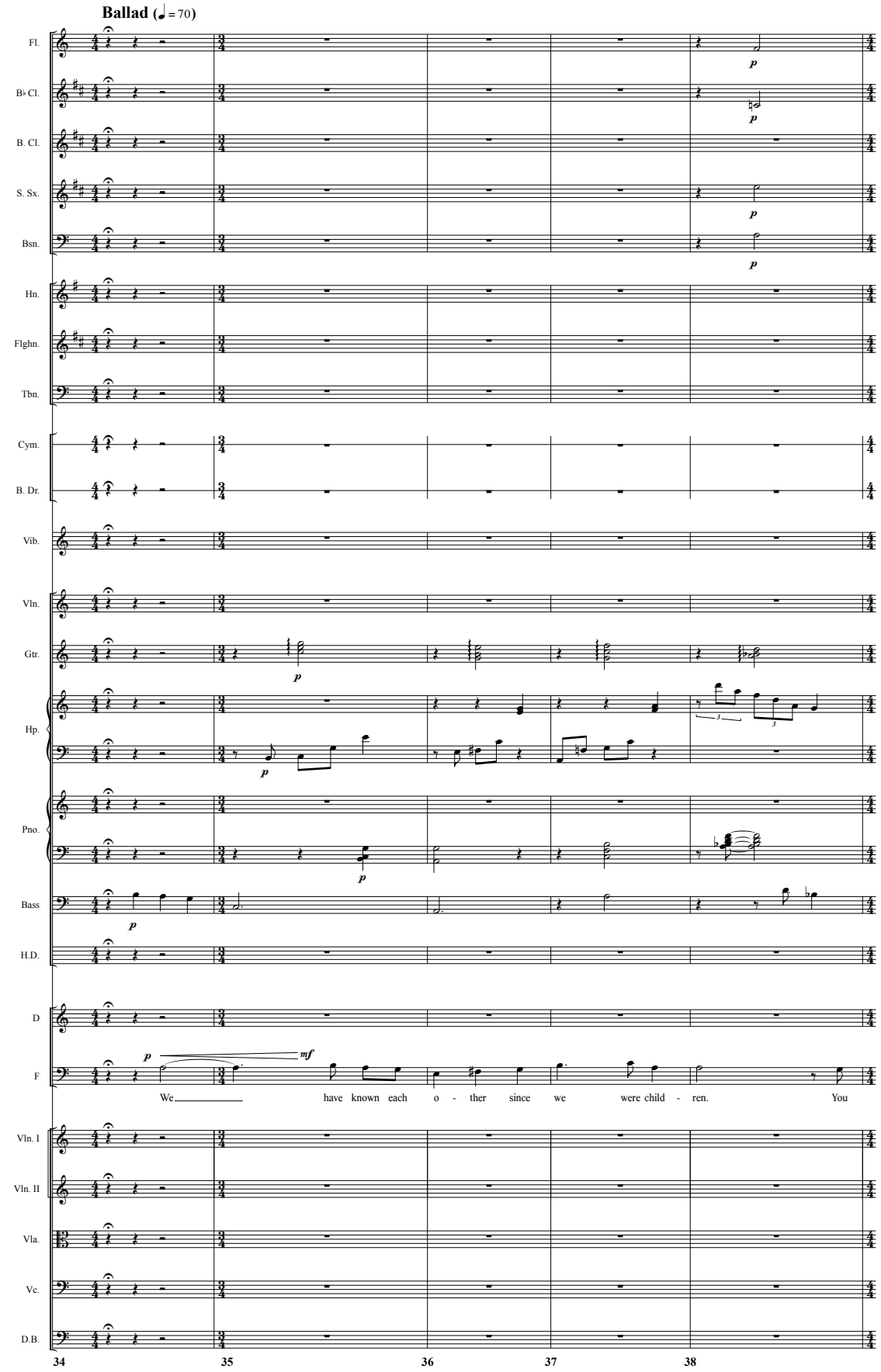
Light and carefree (♩ = 95) – *make room for voice*

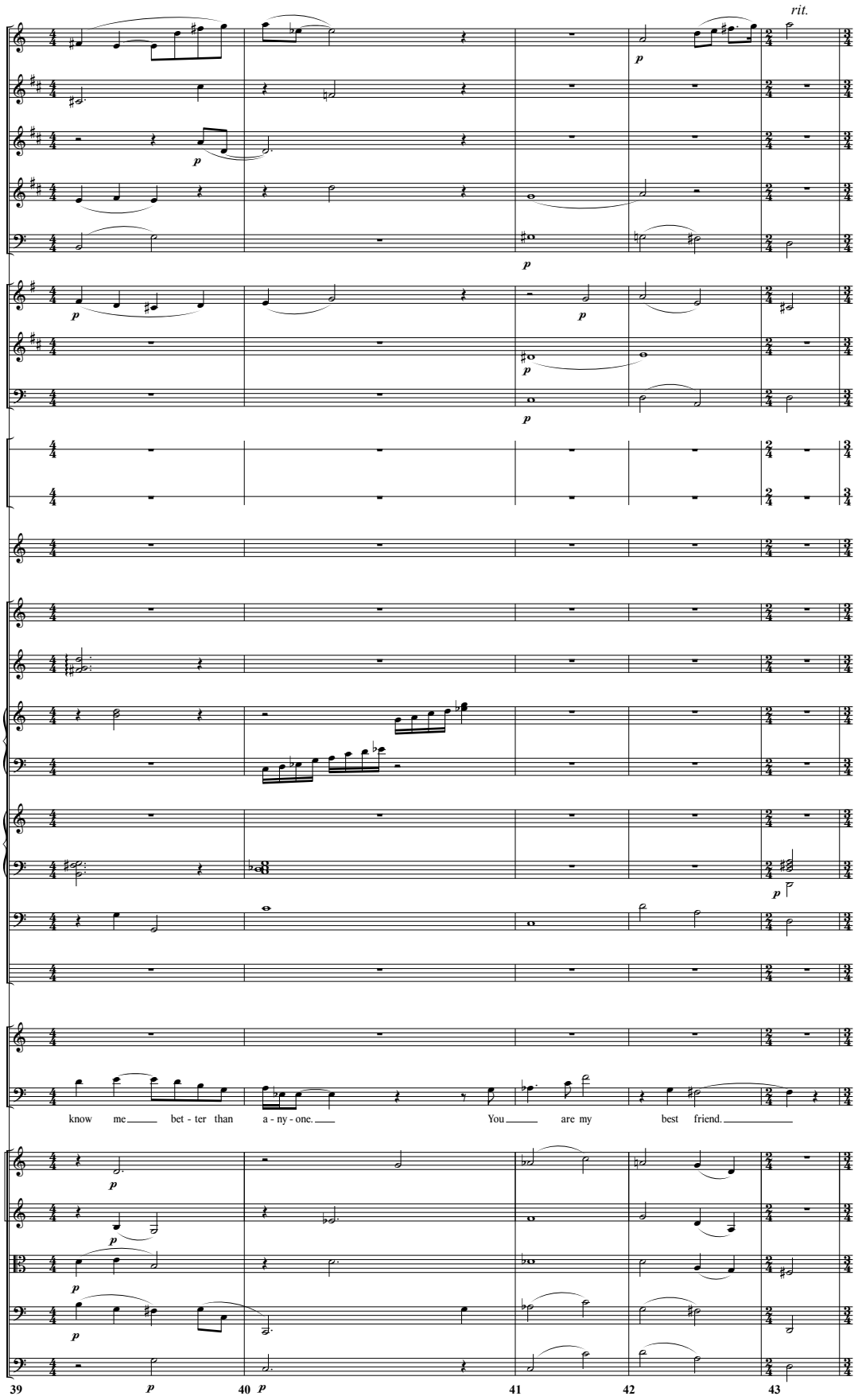


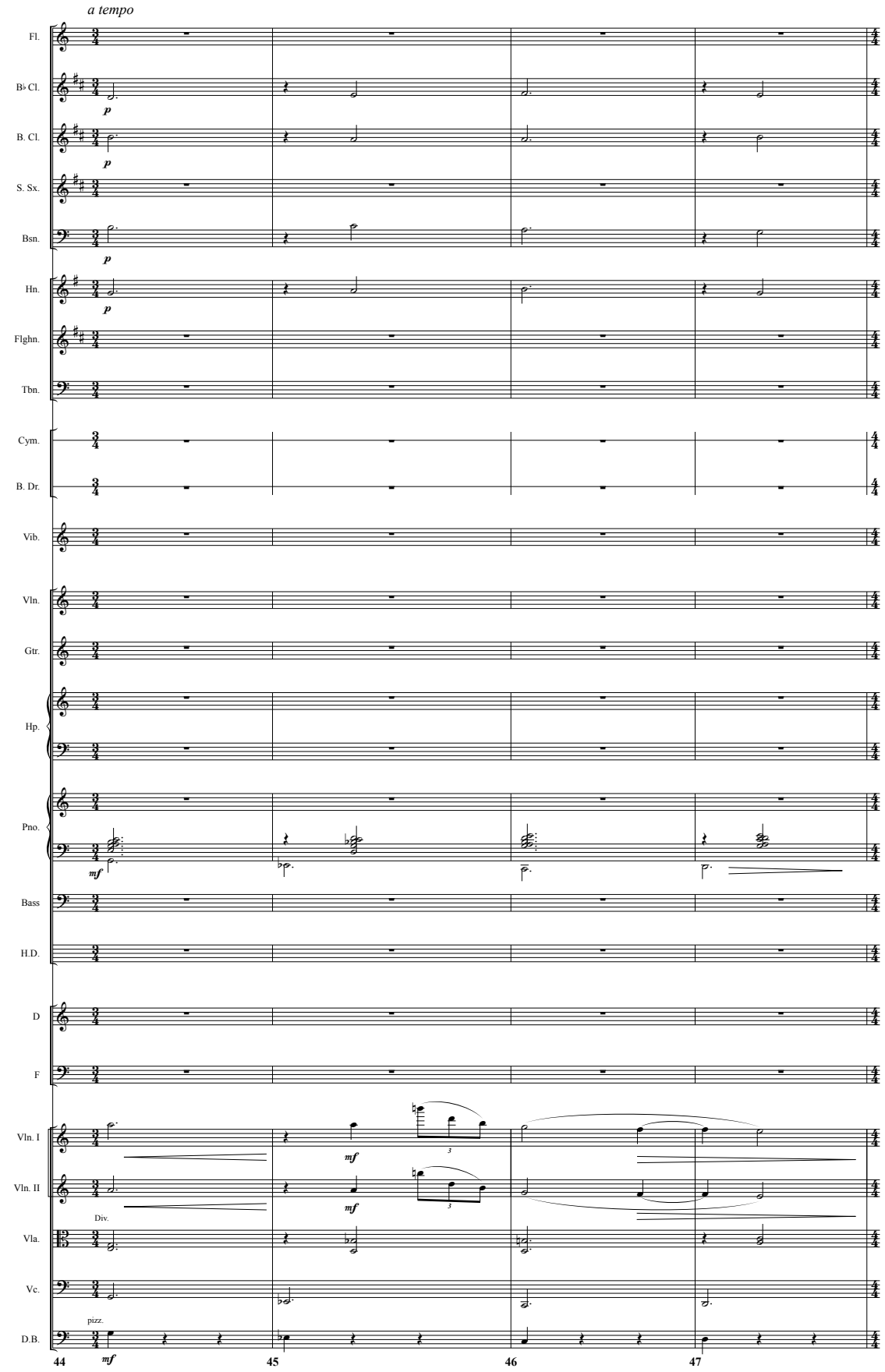

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
mf
Dai - sies, lil - lies, a - del - fa, flor de lu - na.
22
23
24
25

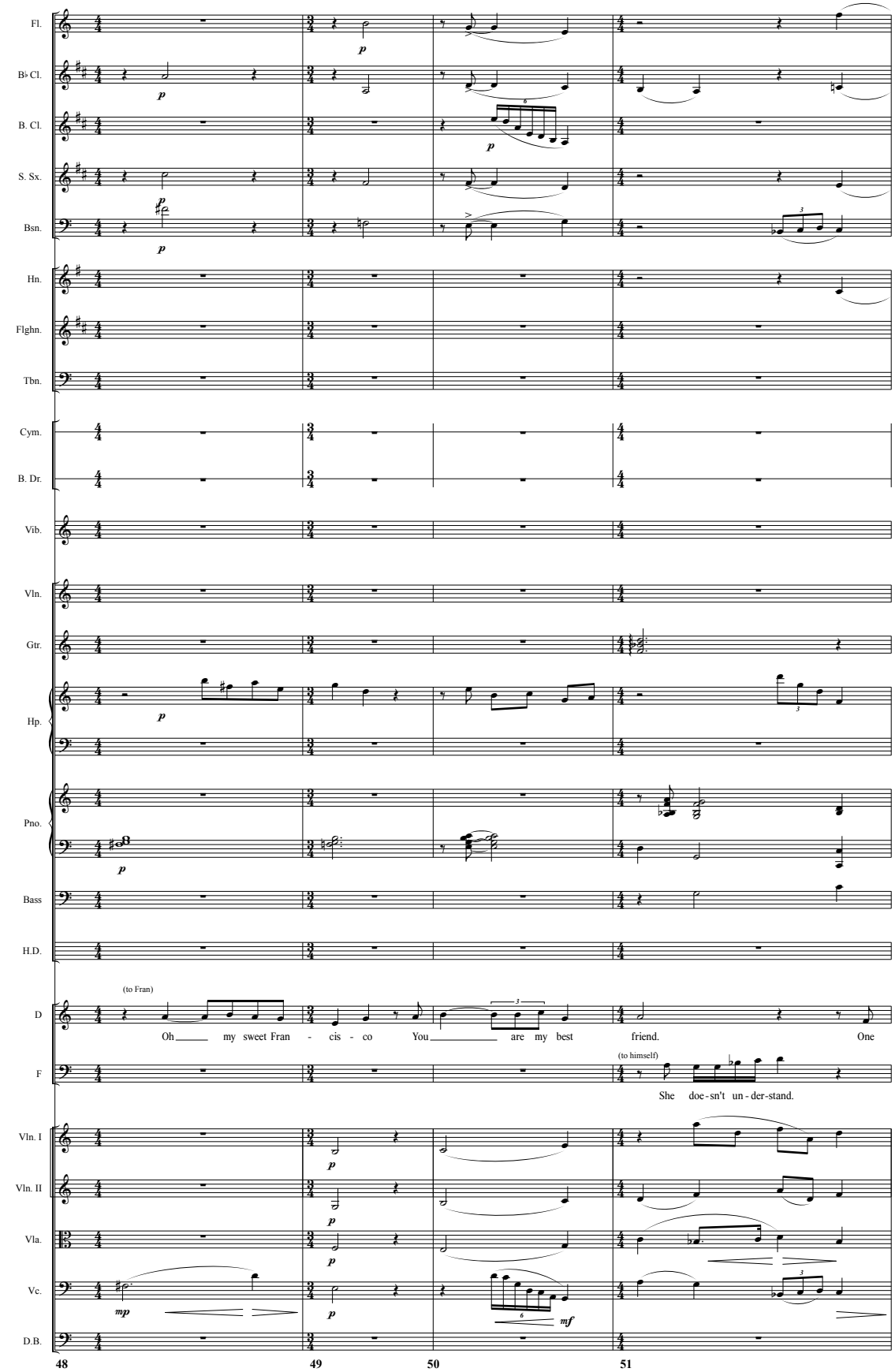

B
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
(to himself)
My heart is poun - ding!
What if she laughs?
Me sien - to en -
3
26
27
28
29


rit.
Fl.
p
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
F
(to Dol)
fer - mo. Do - lo - res! I have some-thing to tell you. Please lis-ten.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
30
31
32
33

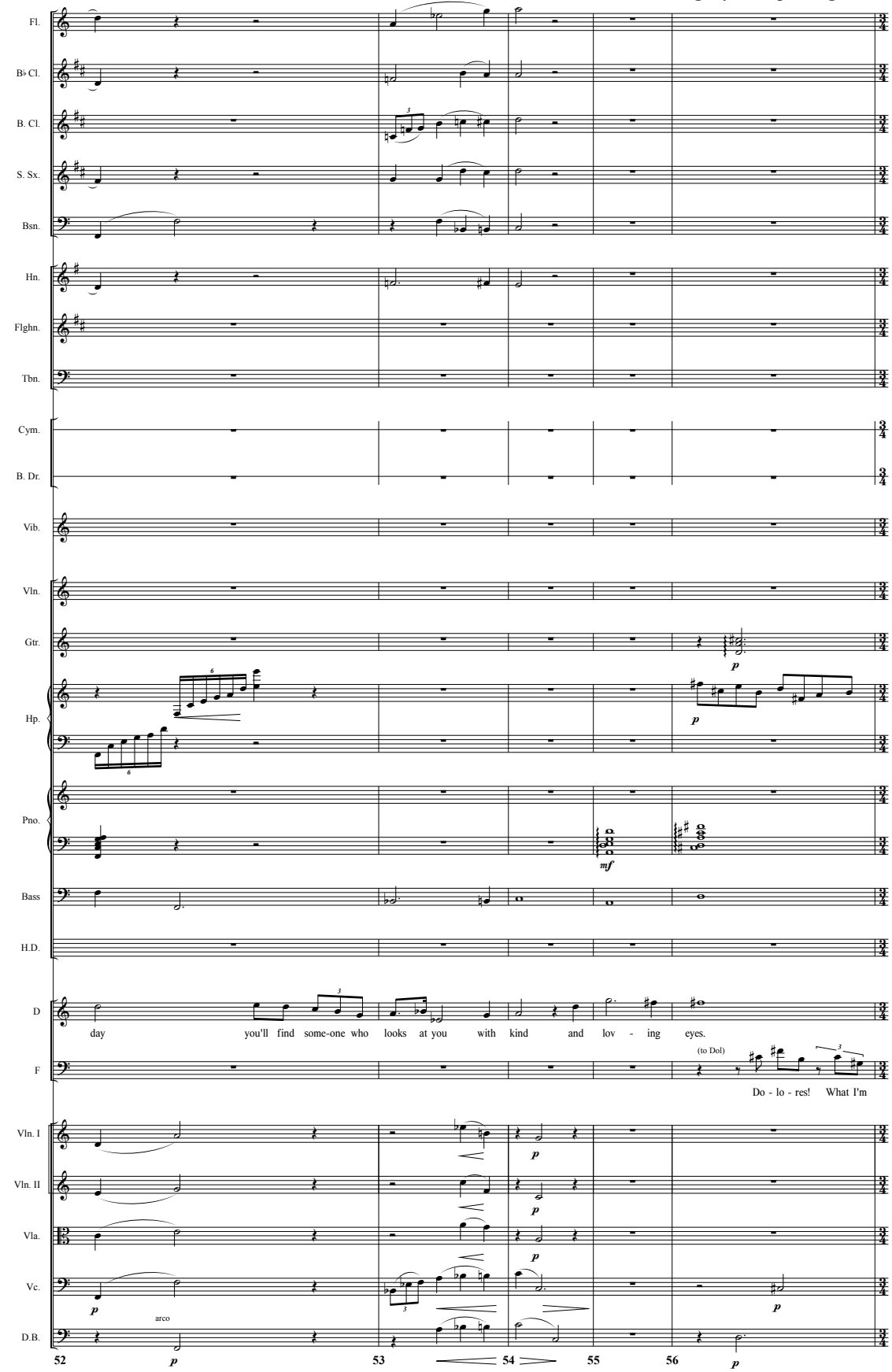

Ballad (♩ = 70)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
F
We have known each o - ther since we were child - ren. You
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
34
35
36
37
38

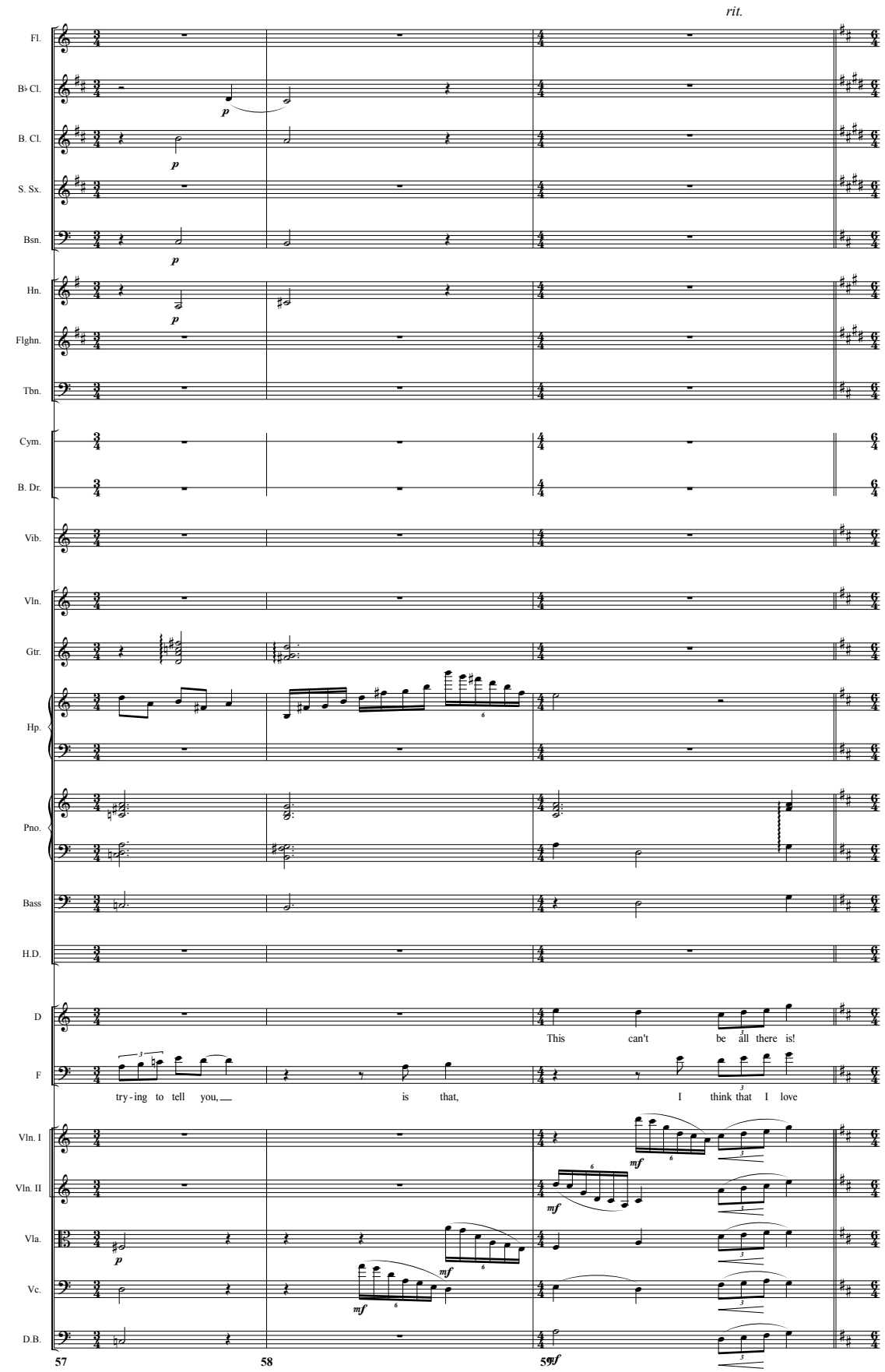

rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
F
know me bet - ter than a - ny - one. You are my best friend.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
39 40 41 42 43


a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
Div.
pizz.
p
mf
44
45
46
47

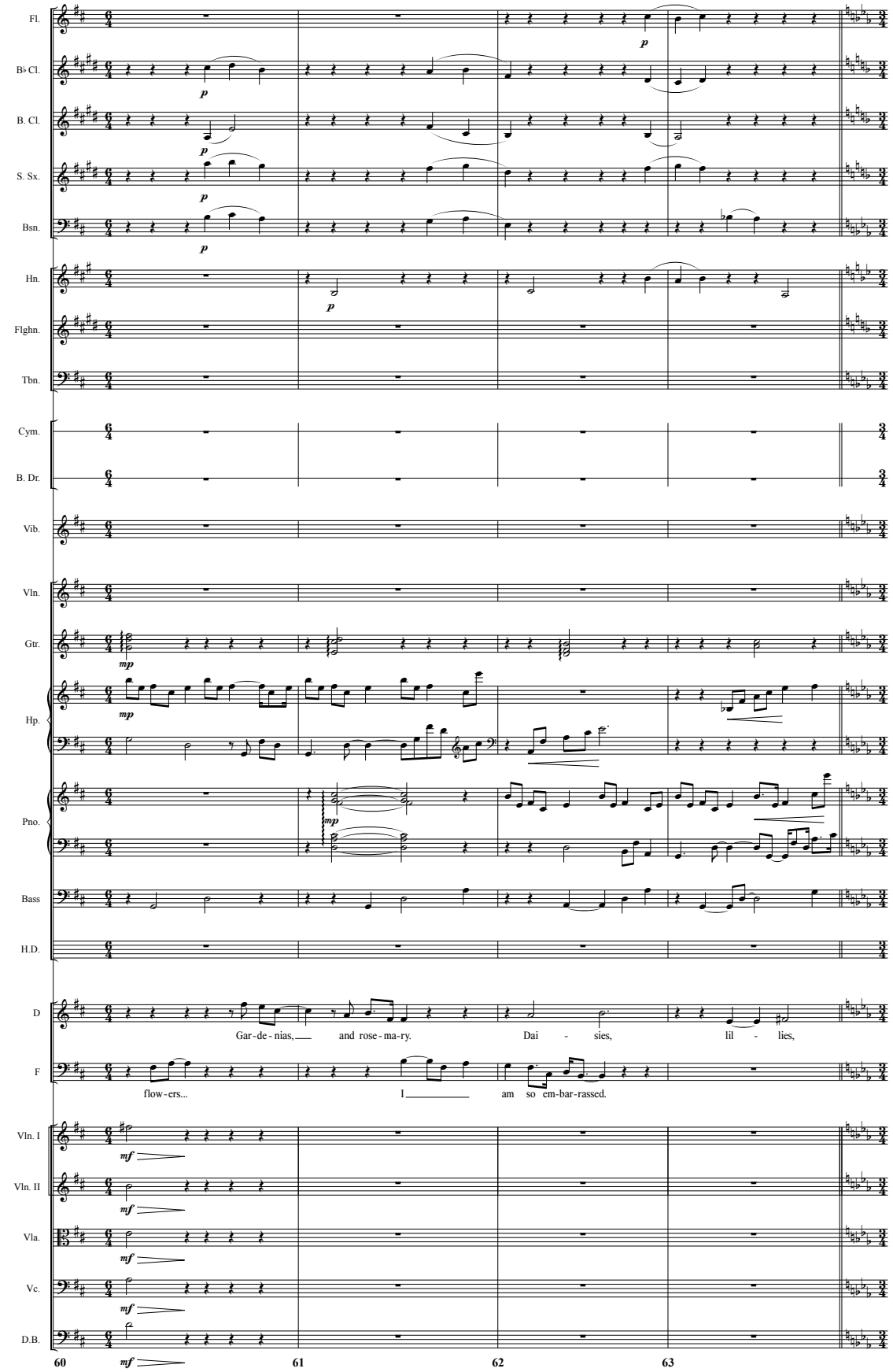

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
(to Fran)
Oh my sweet Fran - cis - co You are my best friend. One
(to himself)
She doe - sn't un - der - stand.
48
49
50
51

rit. **slightly more pace, agitated**

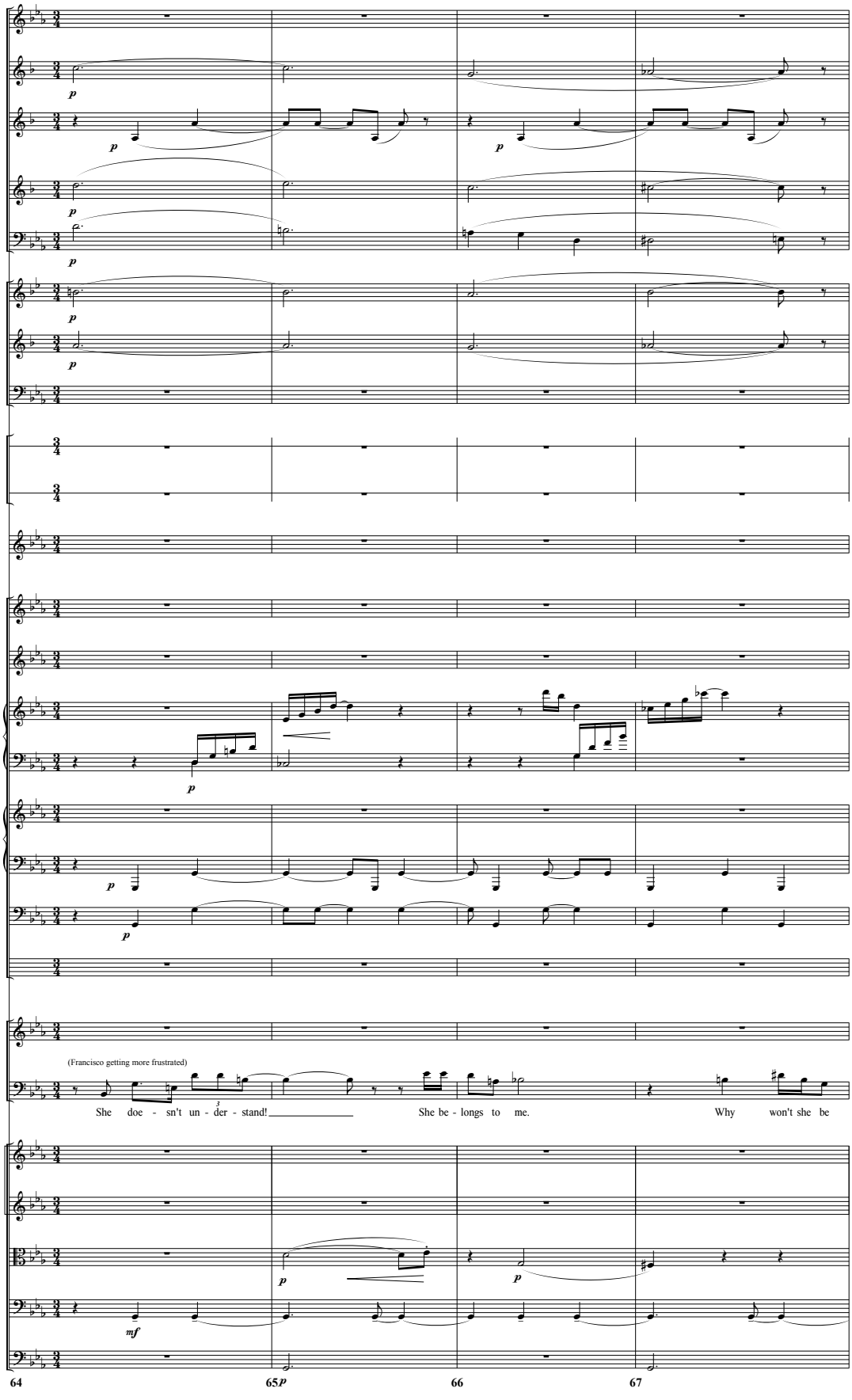


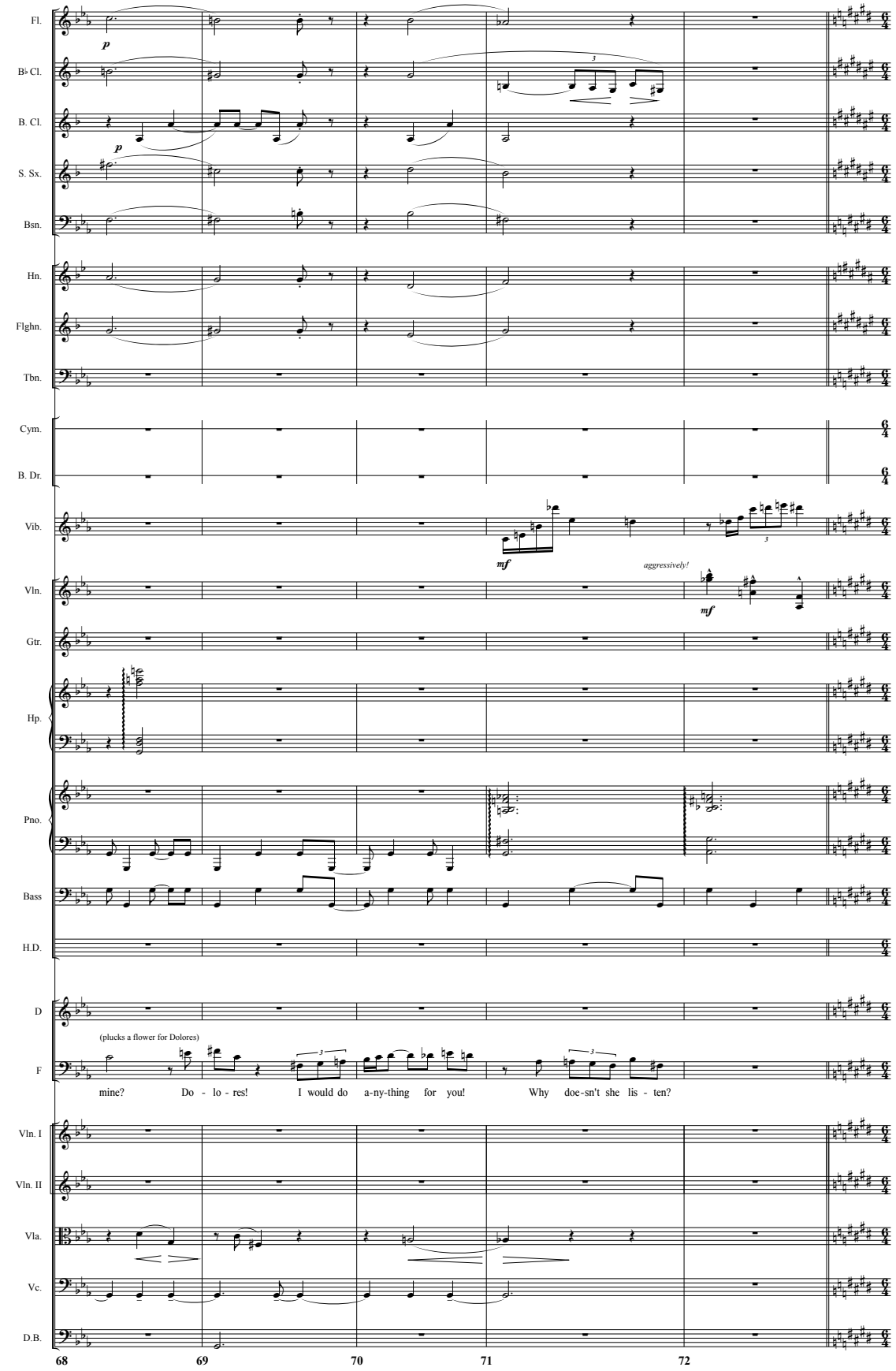

rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
This can't be all there is!
try-ing to tell you, is that, I think that I love
57
58
59

Light and carefree (♩ = 95) – *make room for voice*

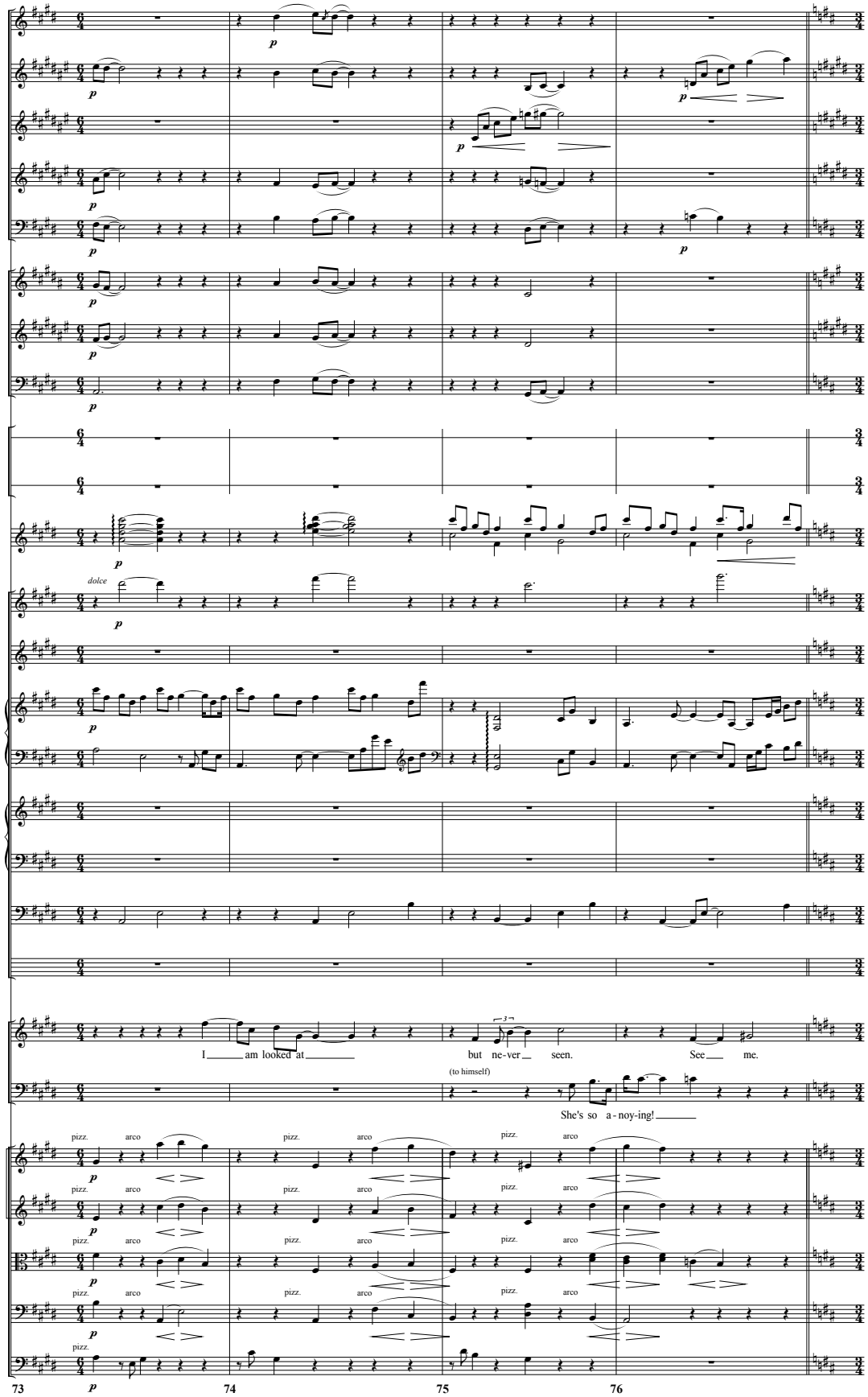


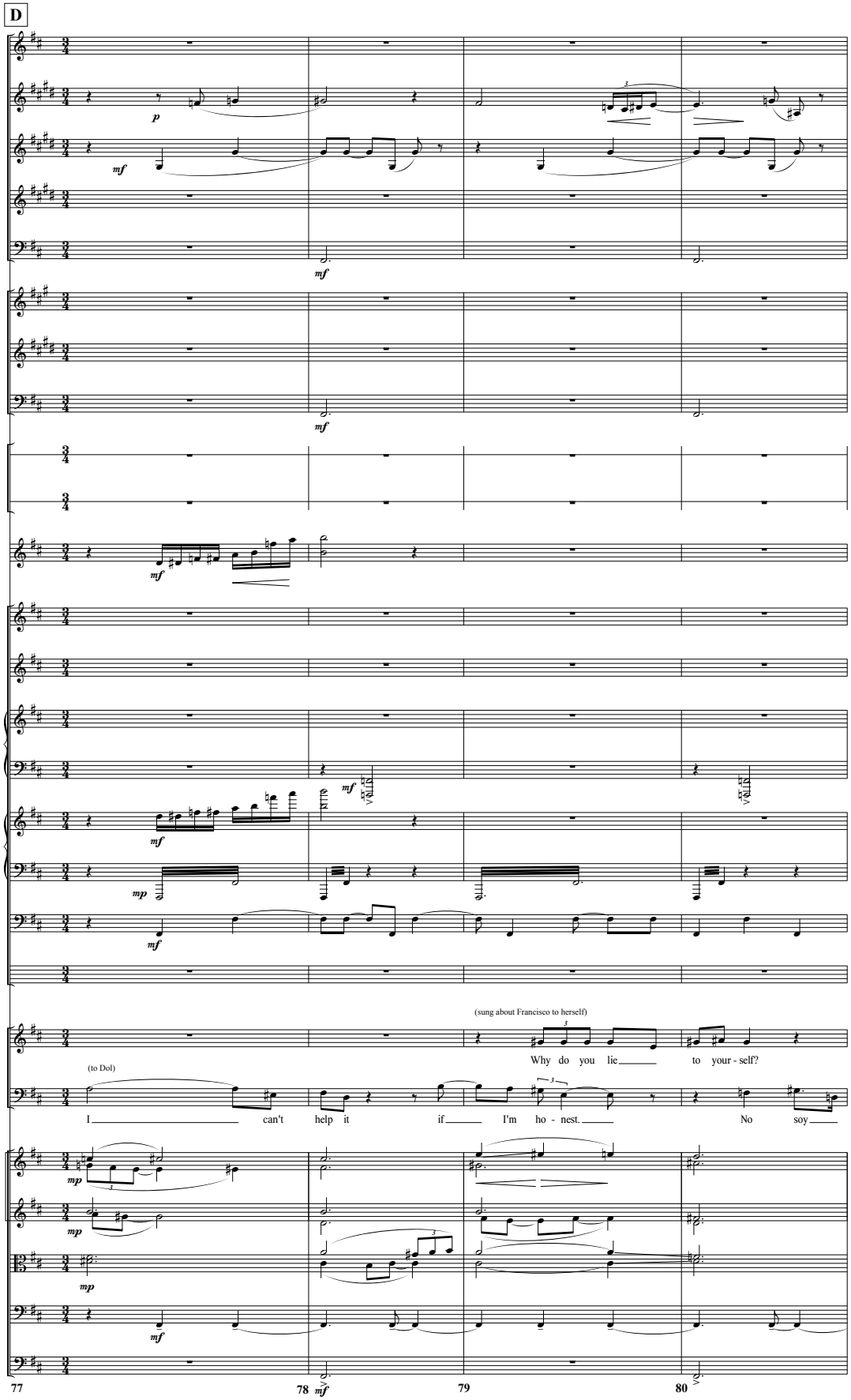
C

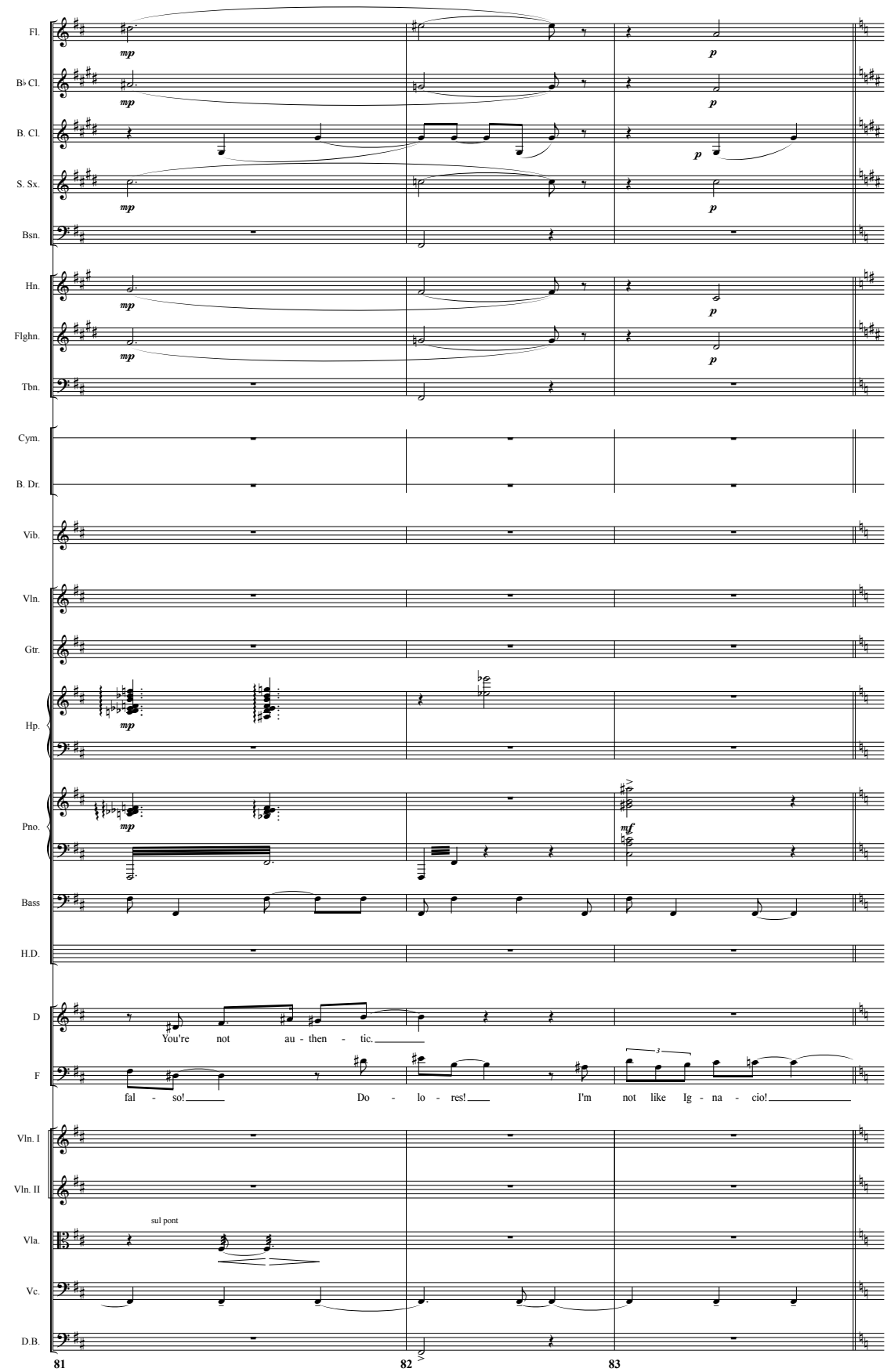

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
mf
(Francisco getting more frustrated)
She doe - sn't un - der - stand!
She be - longs to me.
Why won't she be
64
65
66
67

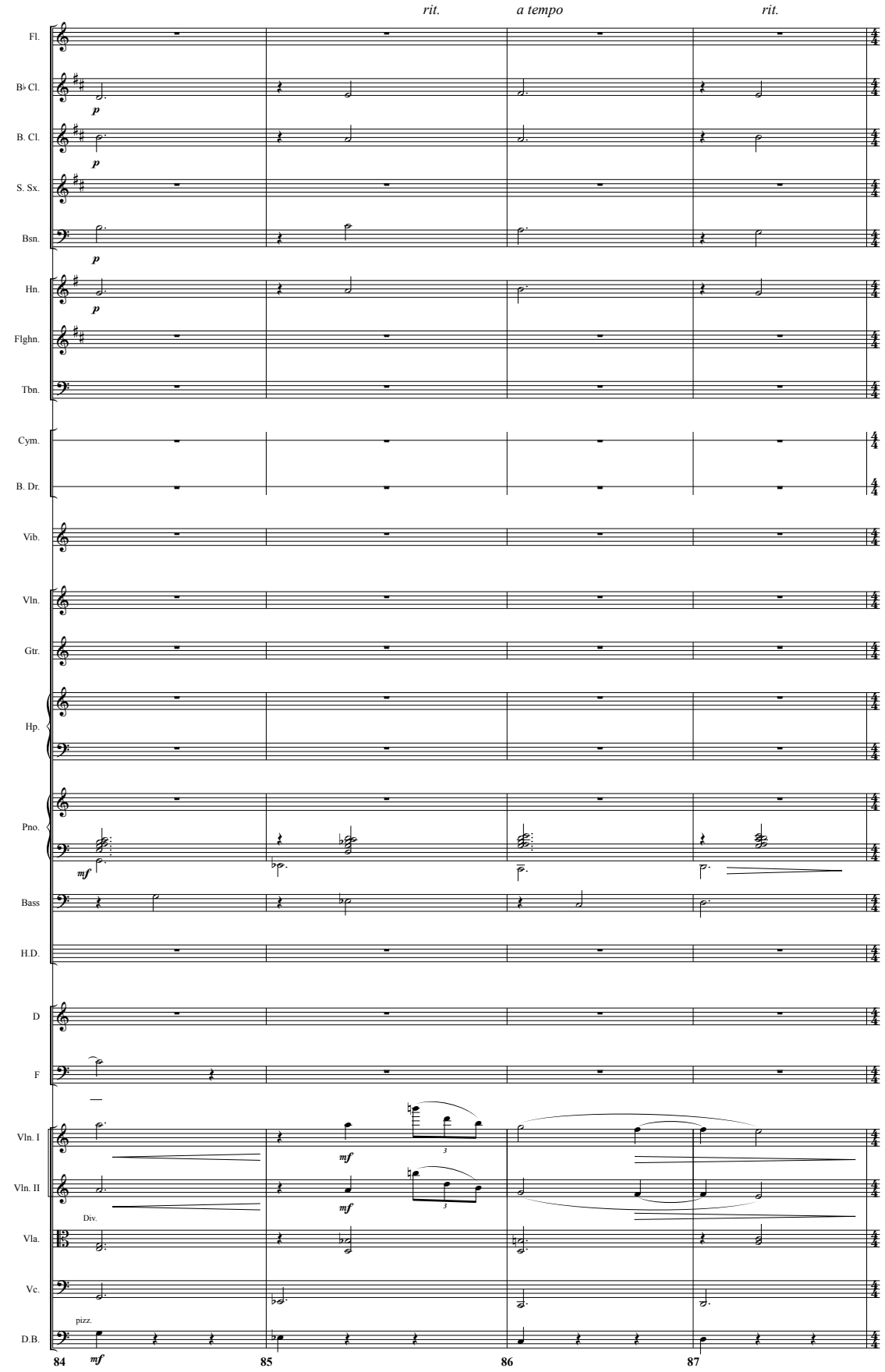

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
mf
aggressively!
(plucks a flower for Dolores)
mine? Do - lo - res! I would do a-ny-thing for you! Why doe-sn't she lis - ten?
68
69
70
71
72

Light and carefree (♩ = 95) – *make room for voice*

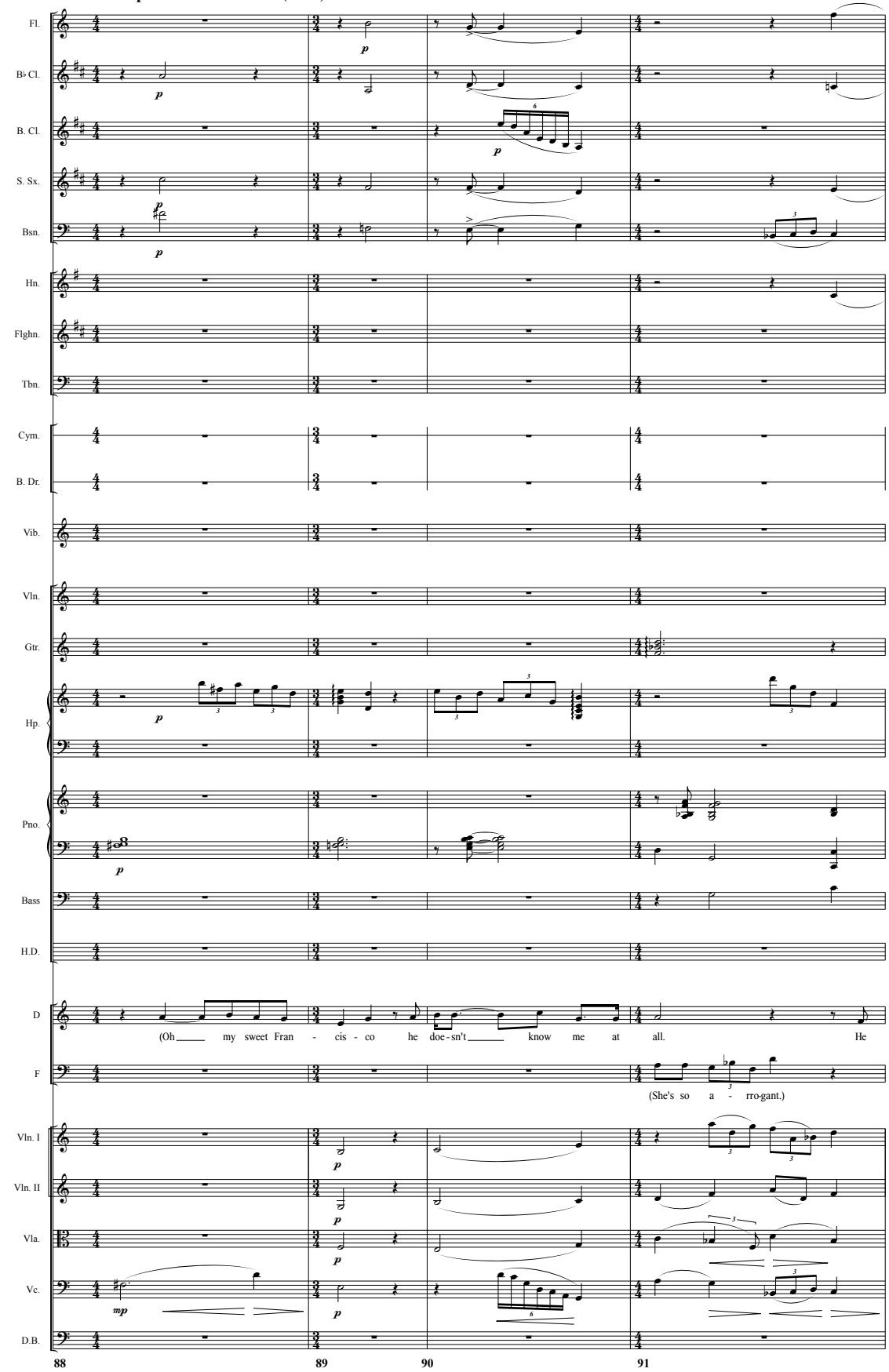


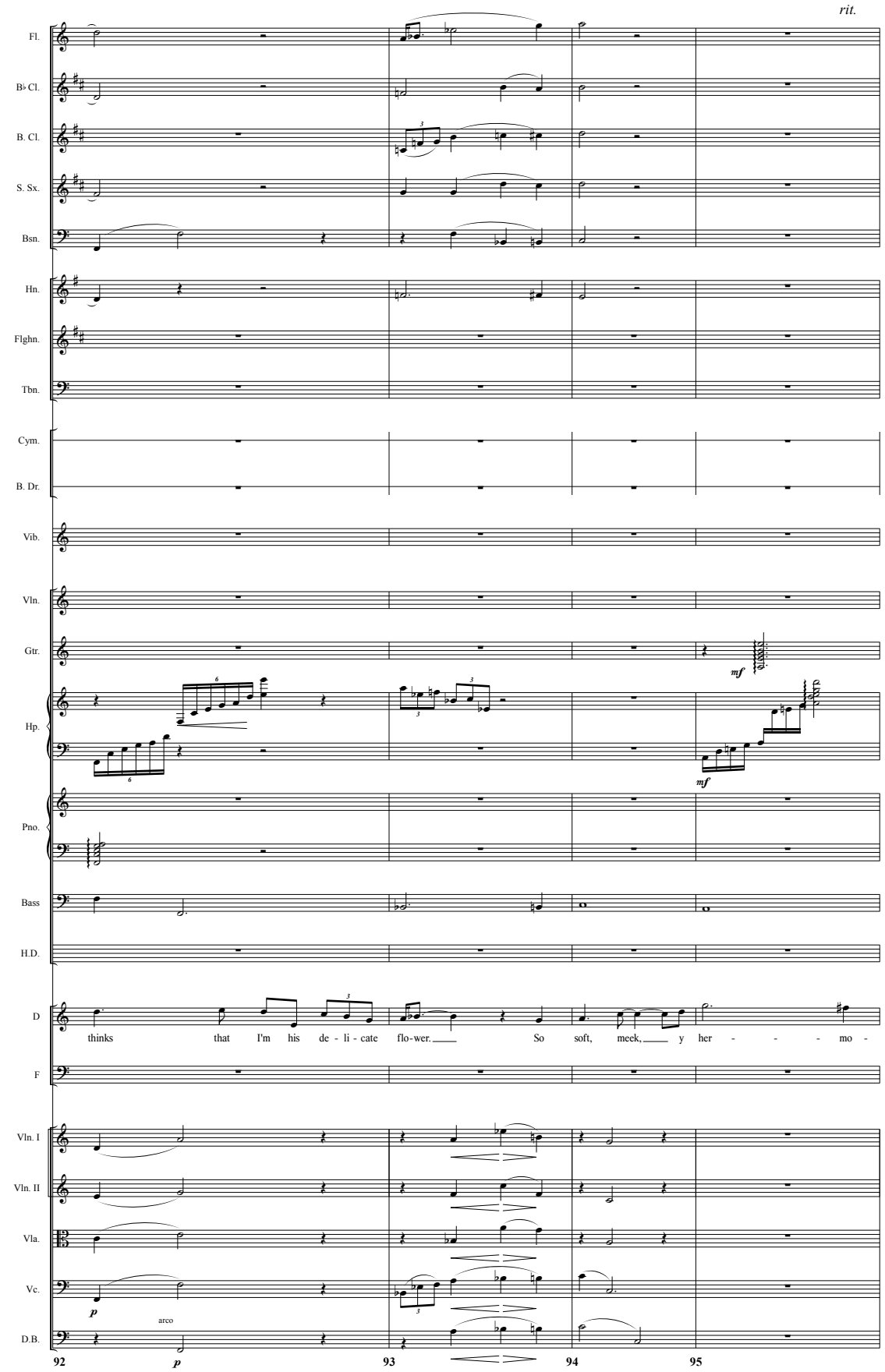

D
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
(sung about Francisco to herself)
Why do you lie to your - self?
(to Dol)
I can't help it if I'm ho - nest. No soy
77
78
79
80


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mp
p
mf
You're not au - then - tic.
fal - so!
Do - lo - res!
I'm not like Ig - na - cio!
sul pont
81
82
83


rit.
a tempo
rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
Div.
pizz.
84
85
86
87

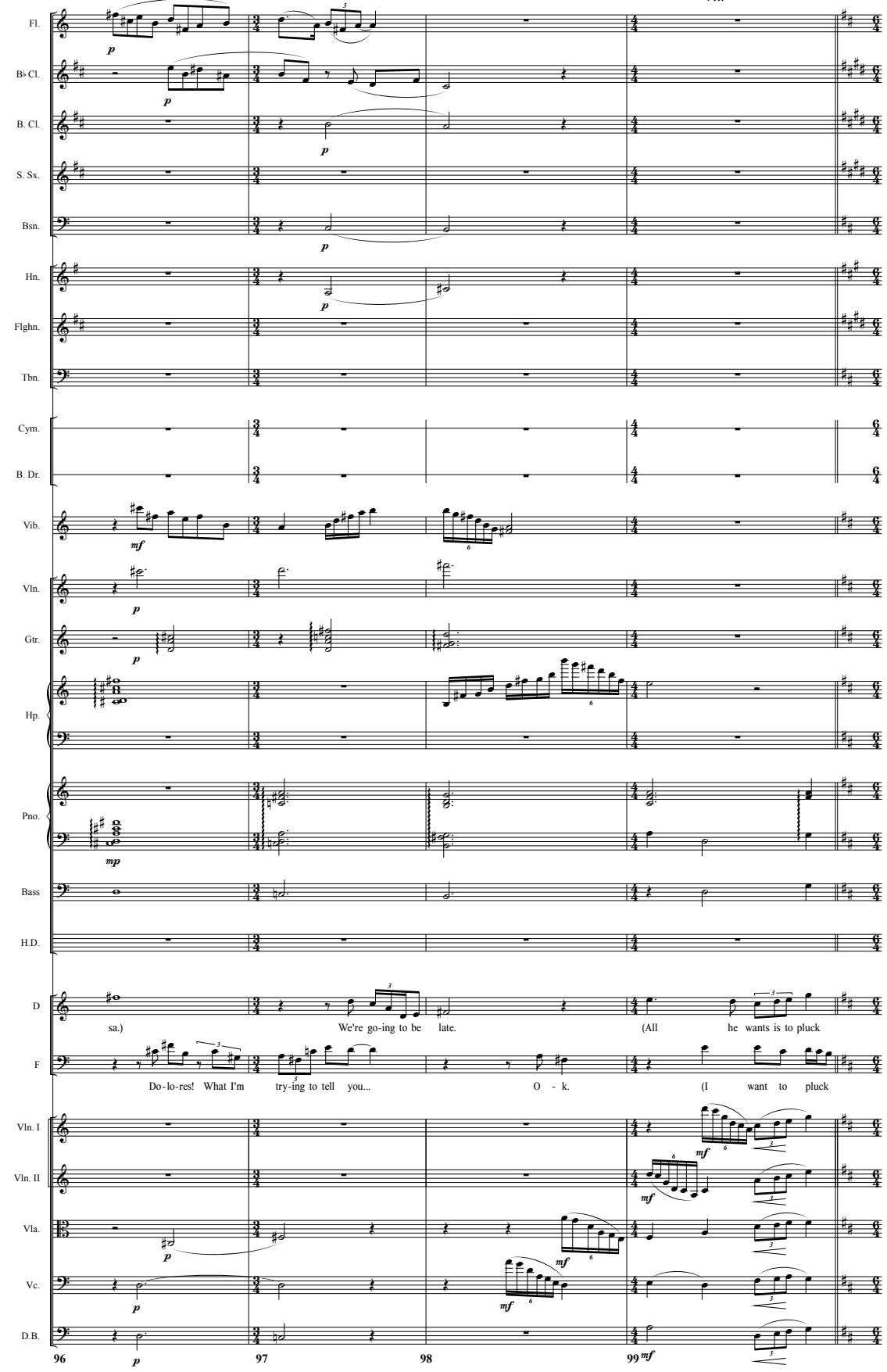
More pace than first time (♩ = 85)

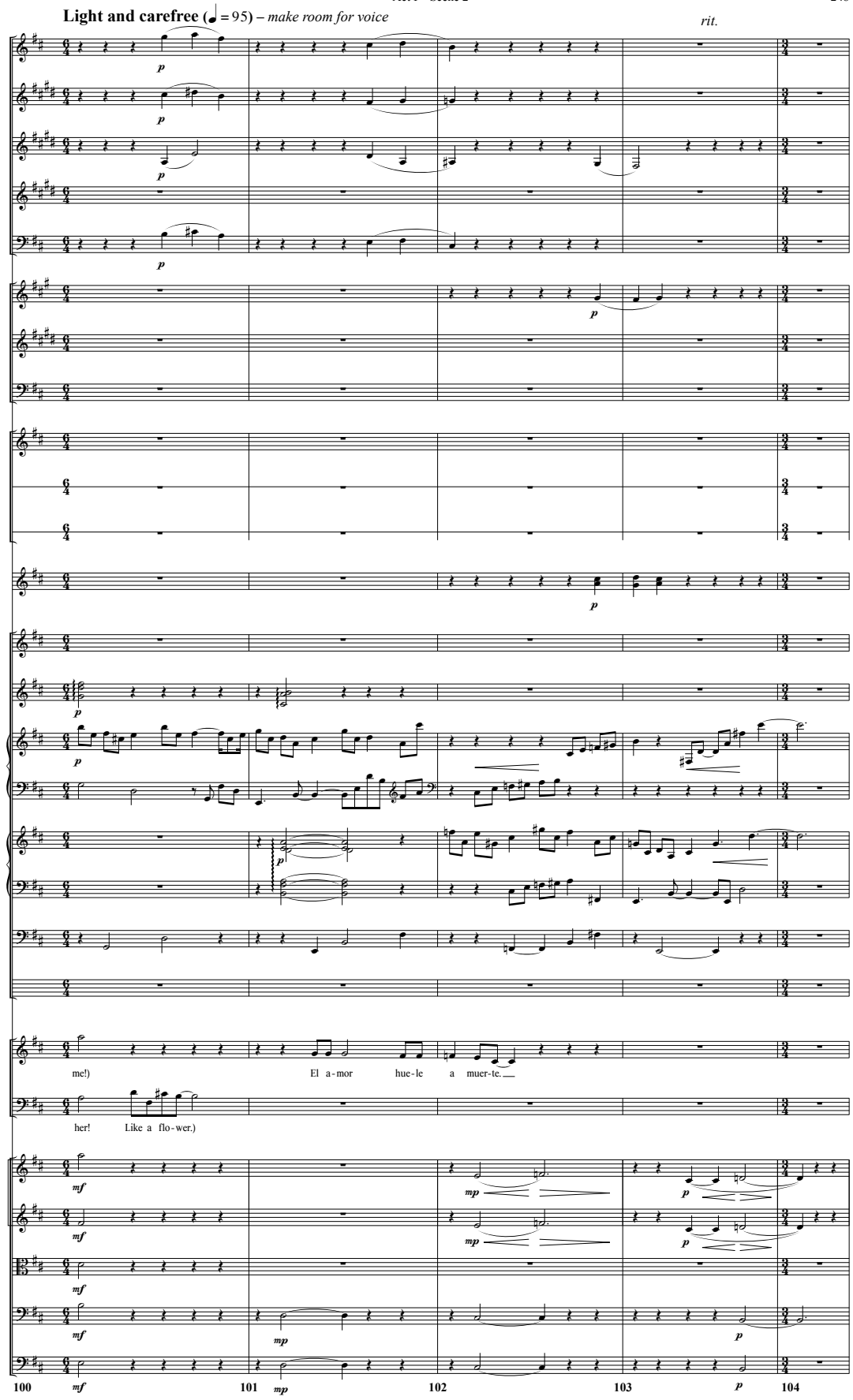



rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
mf
Hp.
mf
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
thinks that I'm his de - li - cate flo-wer. So soft, meek, y her - - - mo -
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
arco
D.B.
92
p
93
94
95

slightly more pace, agitated

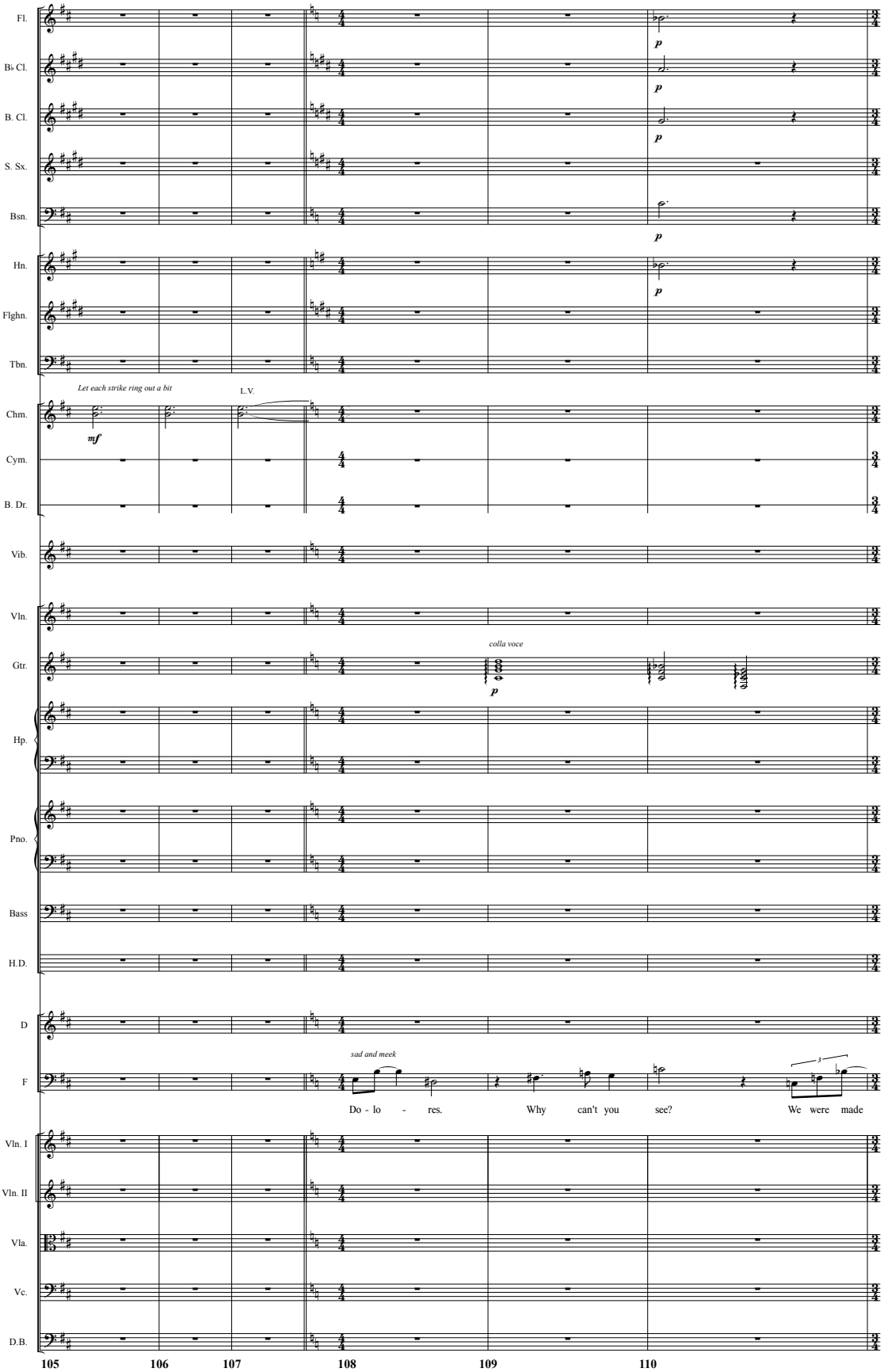
rit.

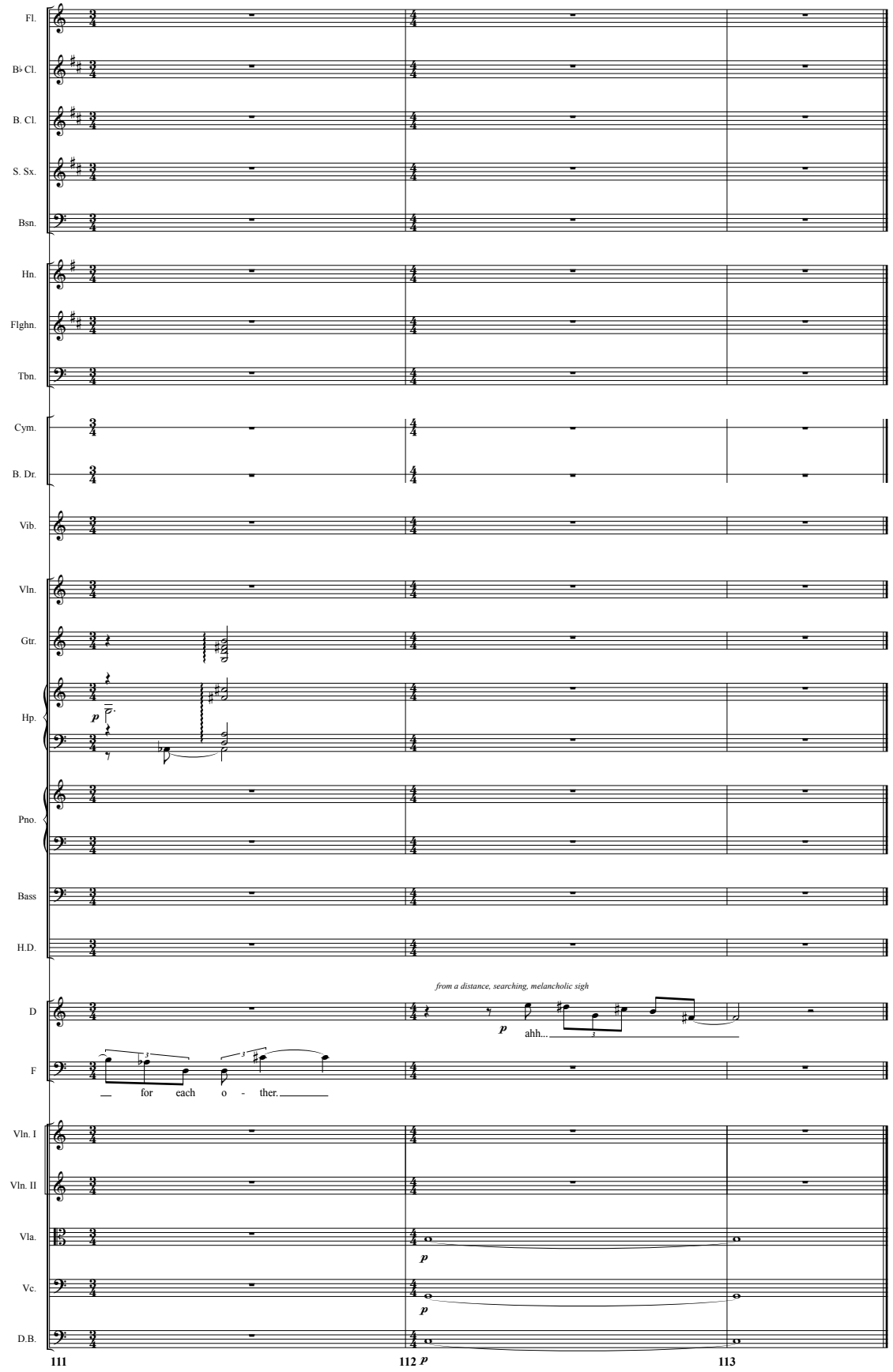



Light and carefree (♩ = 95) – make room for voice
rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Chm.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
me!) El a-mor hue-le a muer-te.
F
her! Like a flo-wer.)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
100 101 102 103 104

Slow, deliberate strikes

Delicate, slow and out of time

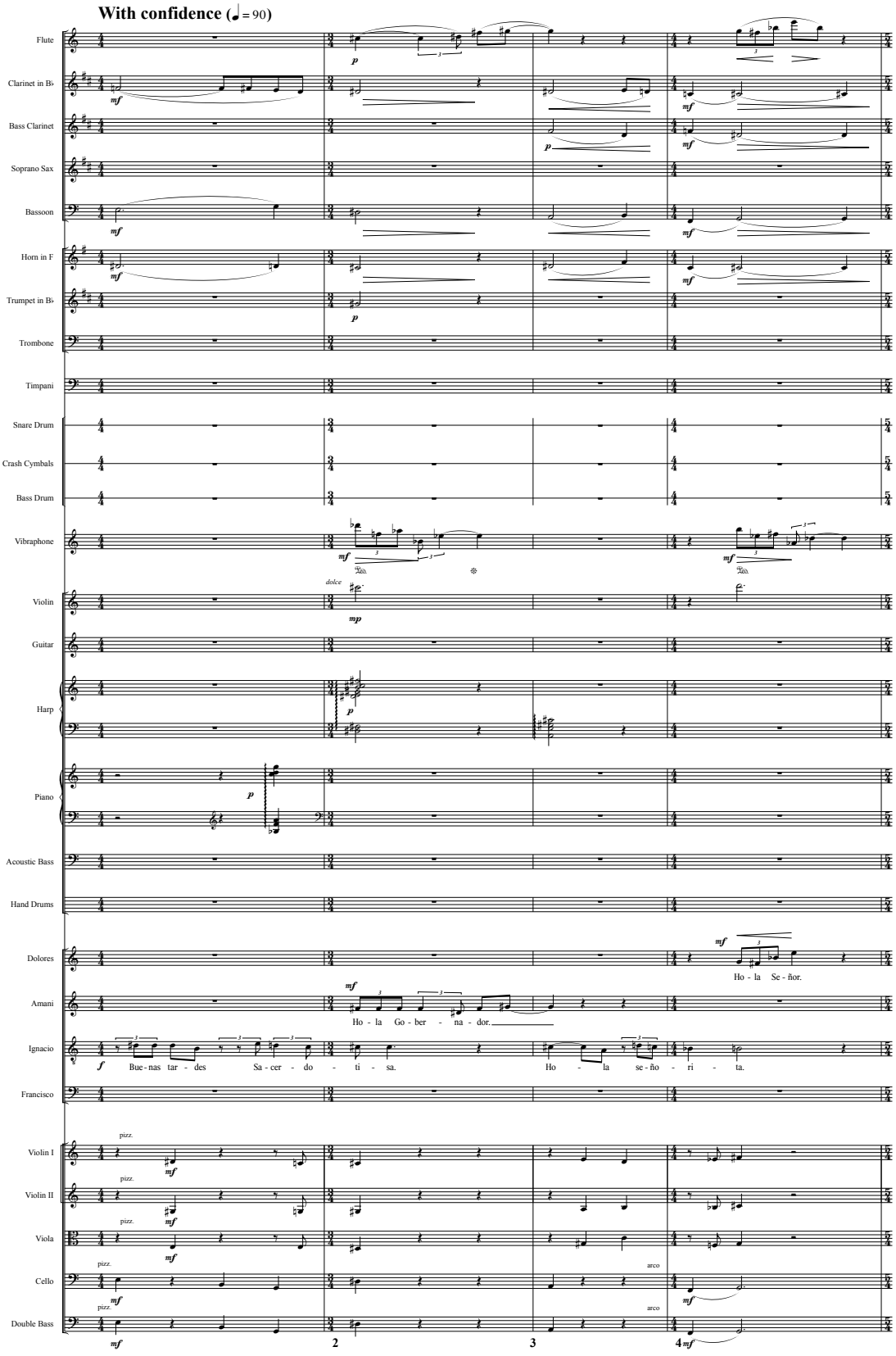



Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
D
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
from a distance, searching, melancholic sigh
ahh...
for each o - ther.
111
112
113

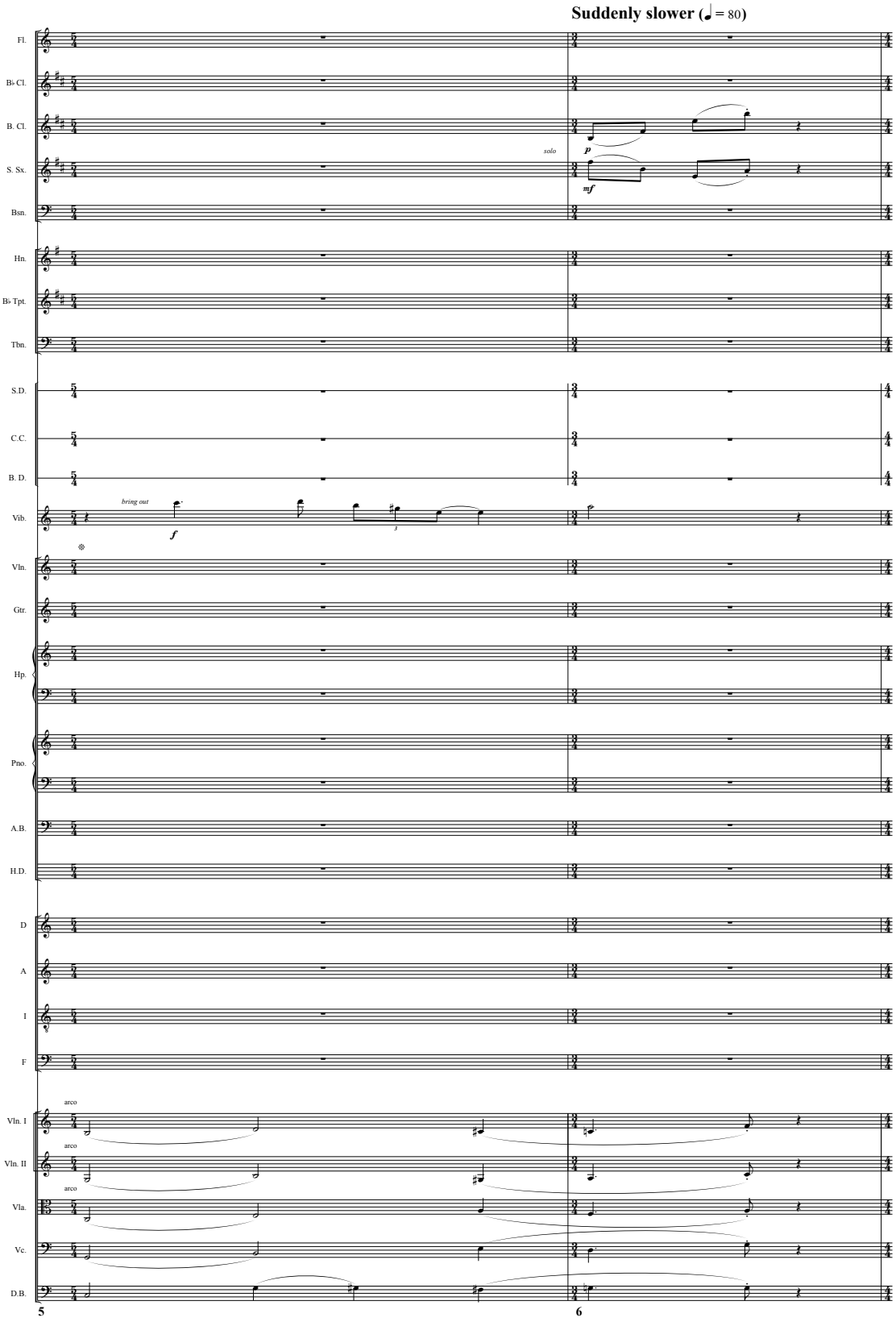
Act I – Scene 2

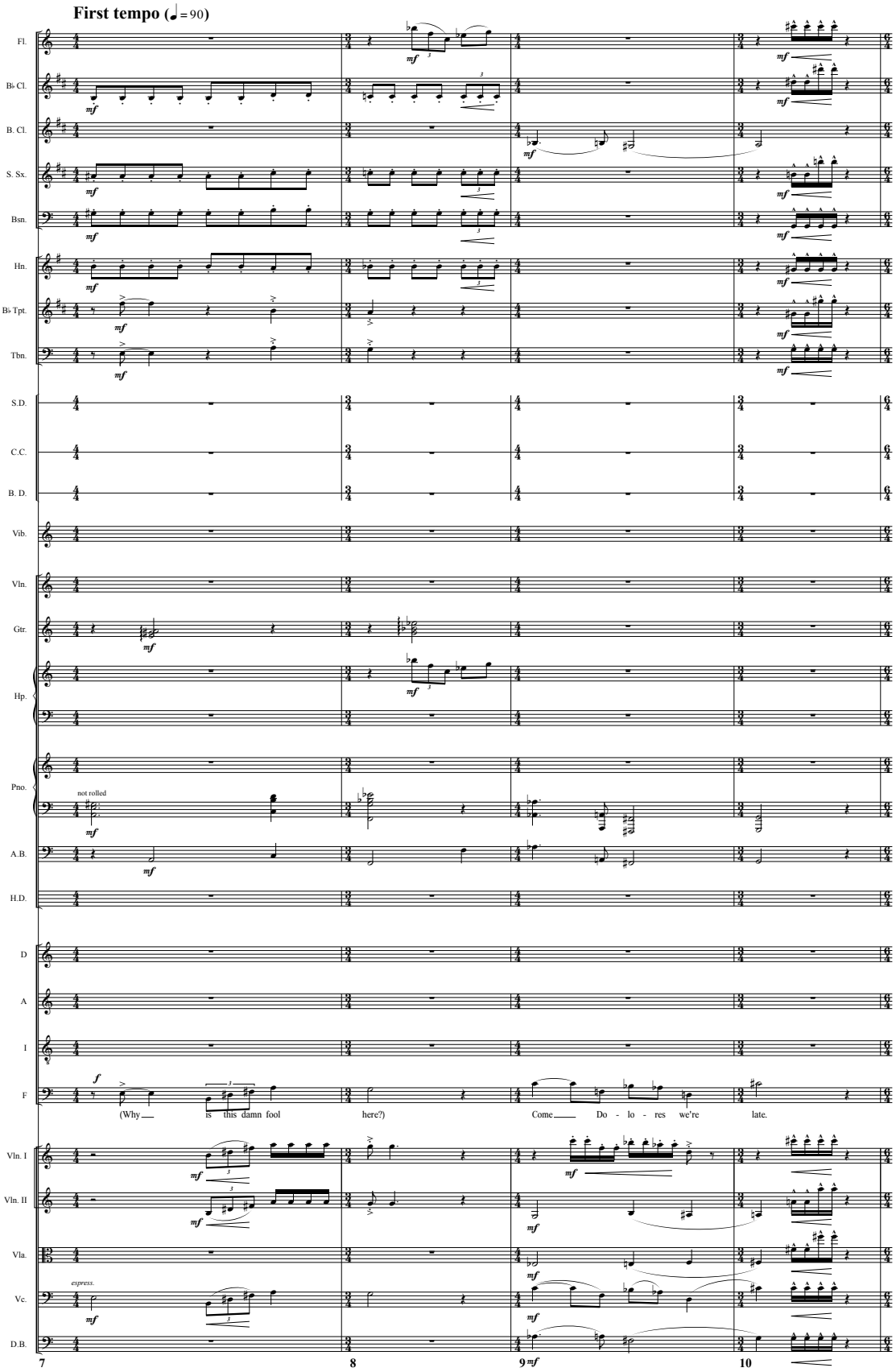
Ignacio, Francisco, Dolores, Amani

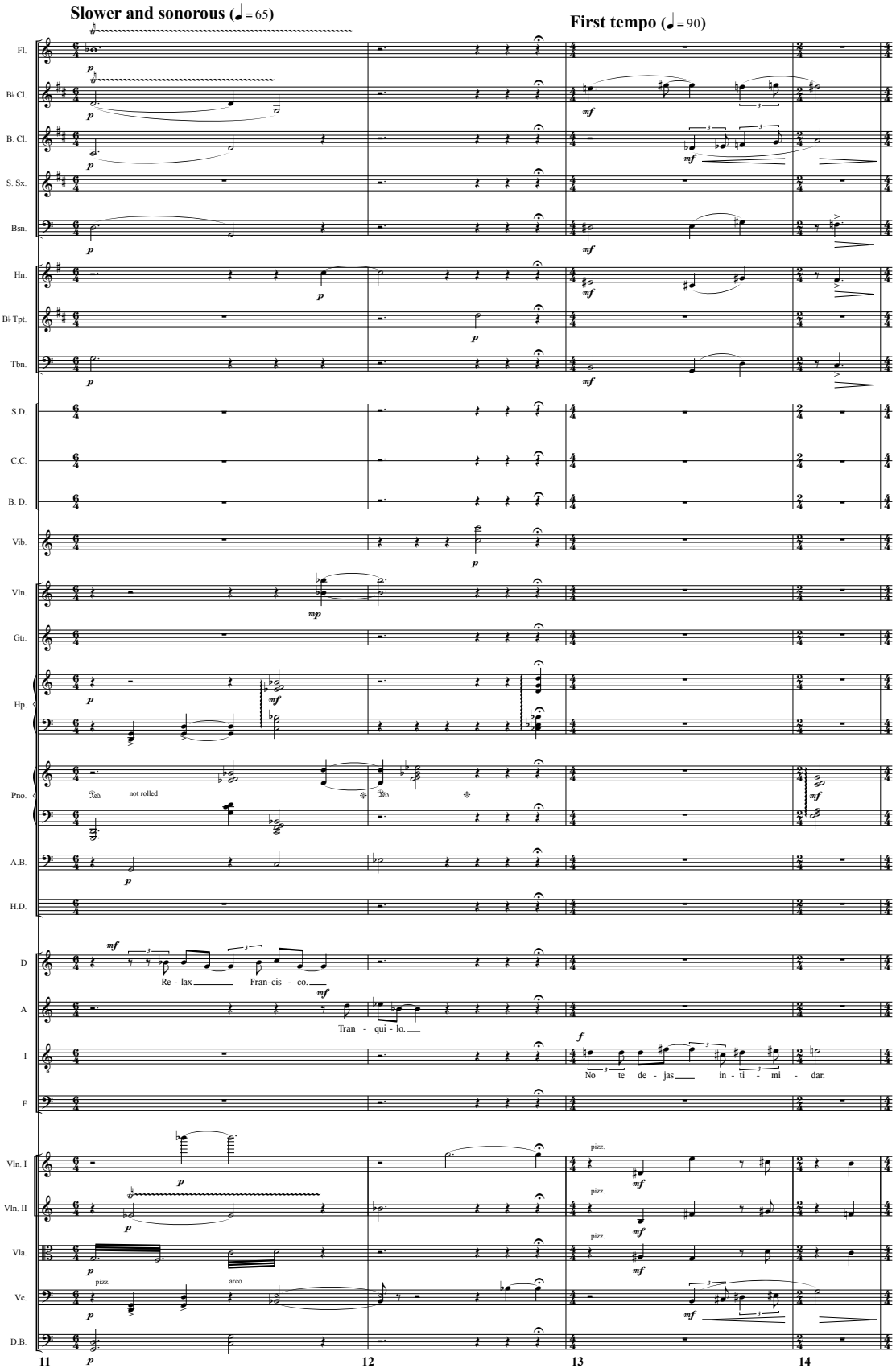
Daniel Aaron Ramirez

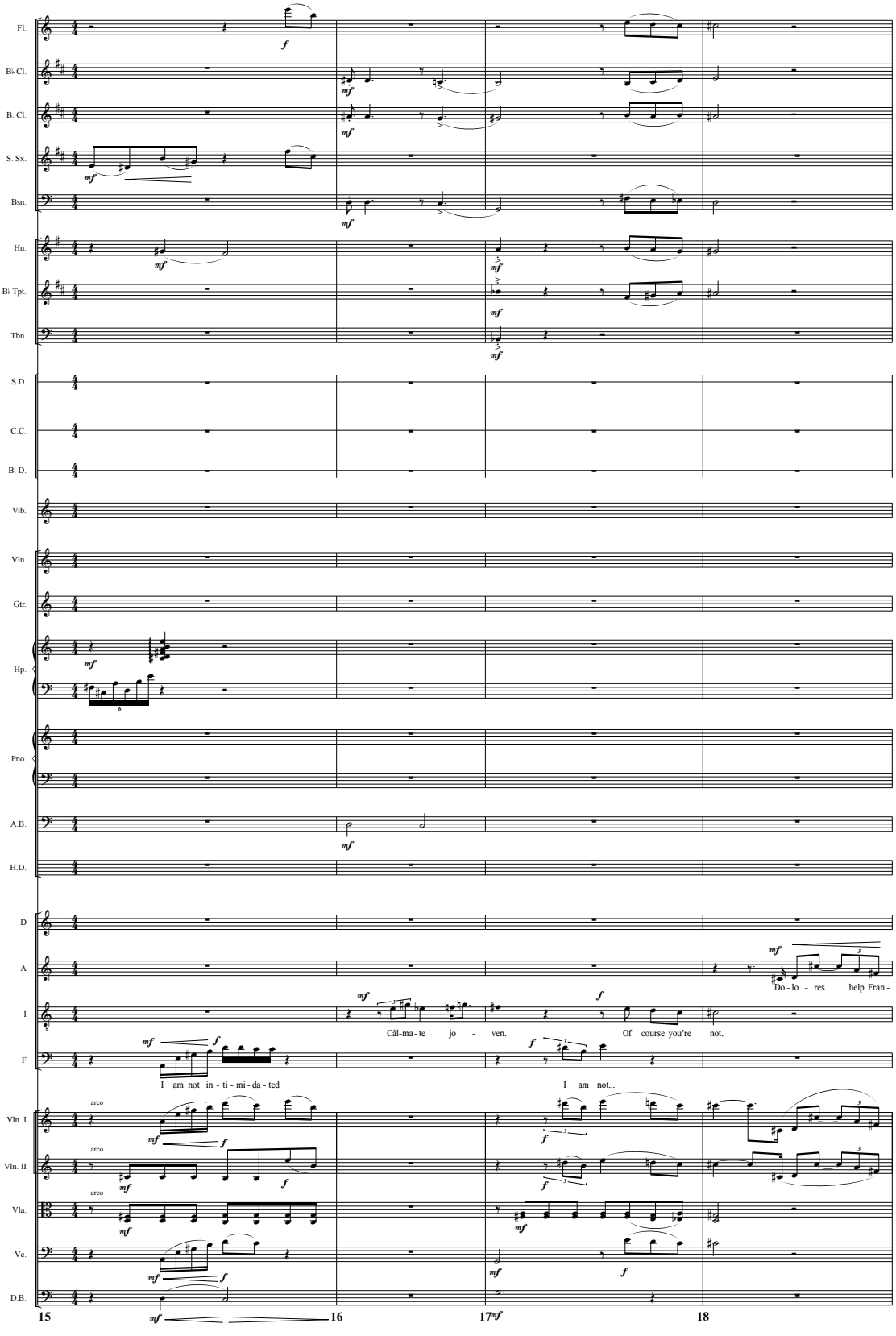


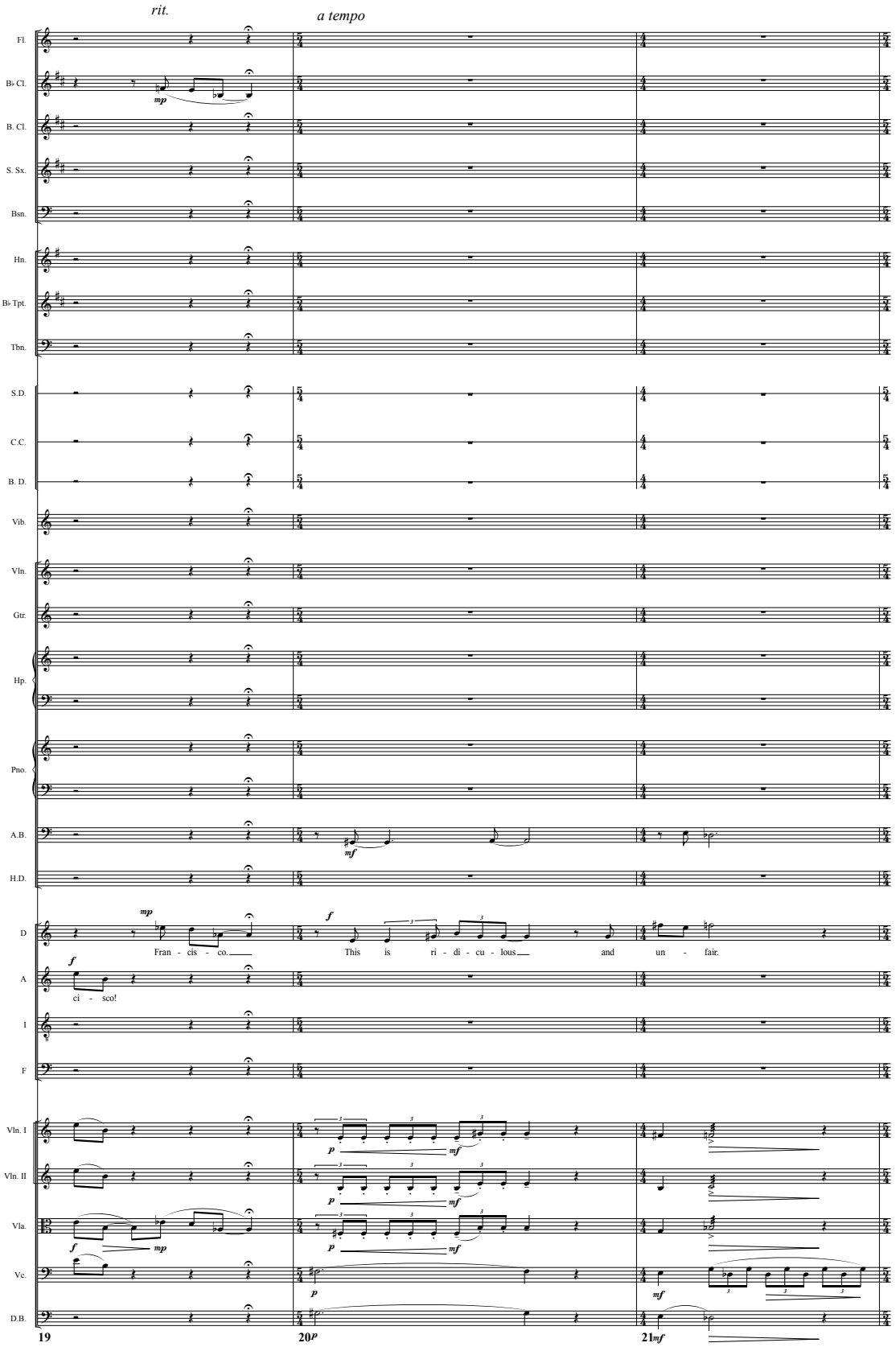
©2020, Daniel Aaron Ramirez

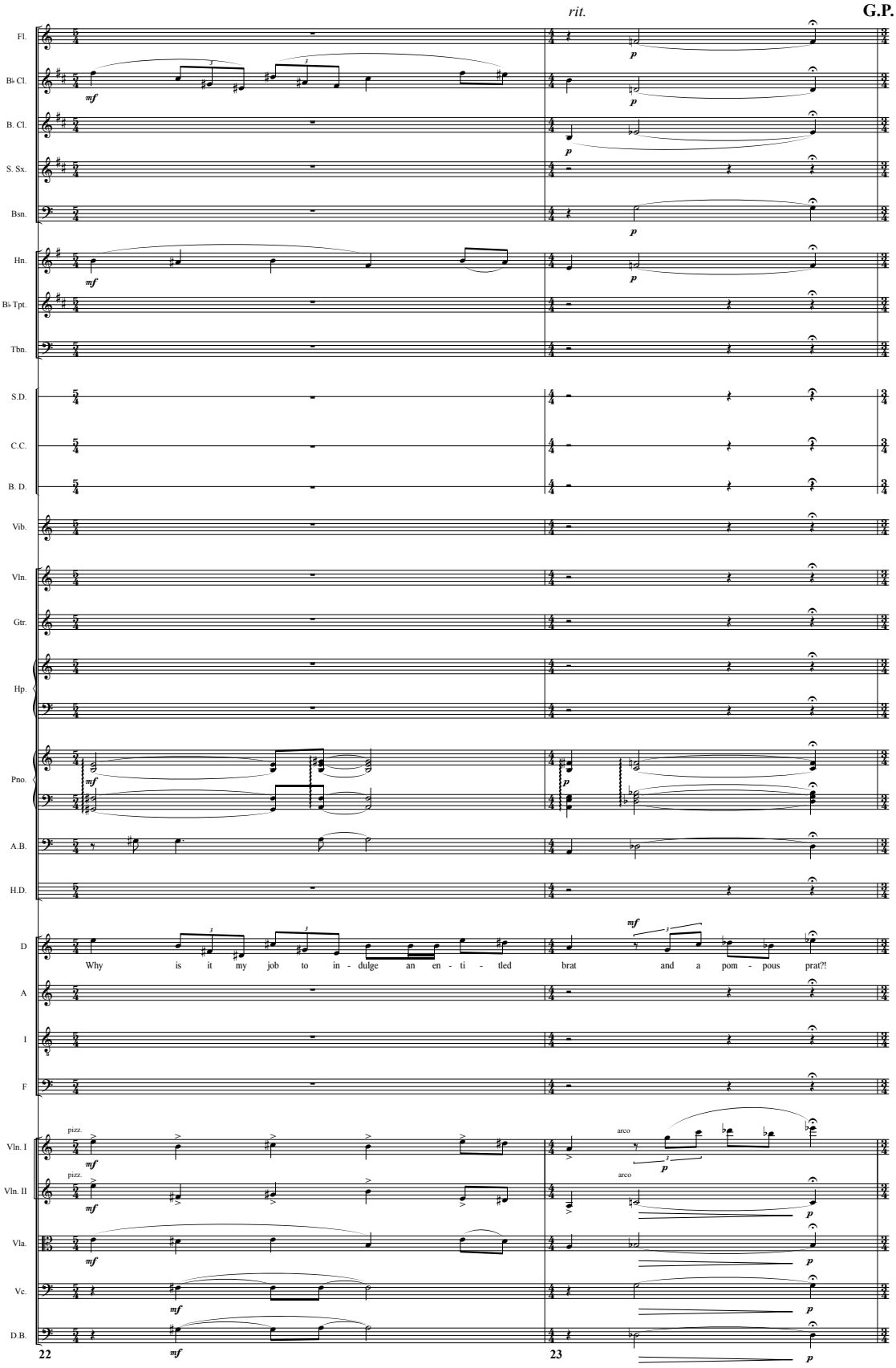

Suddenly slower (♩ = 80)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.D.
C.C.
B. D.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
H.D.
D
A
I
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
solo
p
mf
bring out
f
arco
arco
arco
5
6


First tempo (♩= 90)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.D.
C.C.
B. D.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
not rolled
A.B.
H.D.
D
A
I
F
(Why is this damn fool here?) Come Do - lo - res we're late.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
express.
D.B.
7
8
9
10

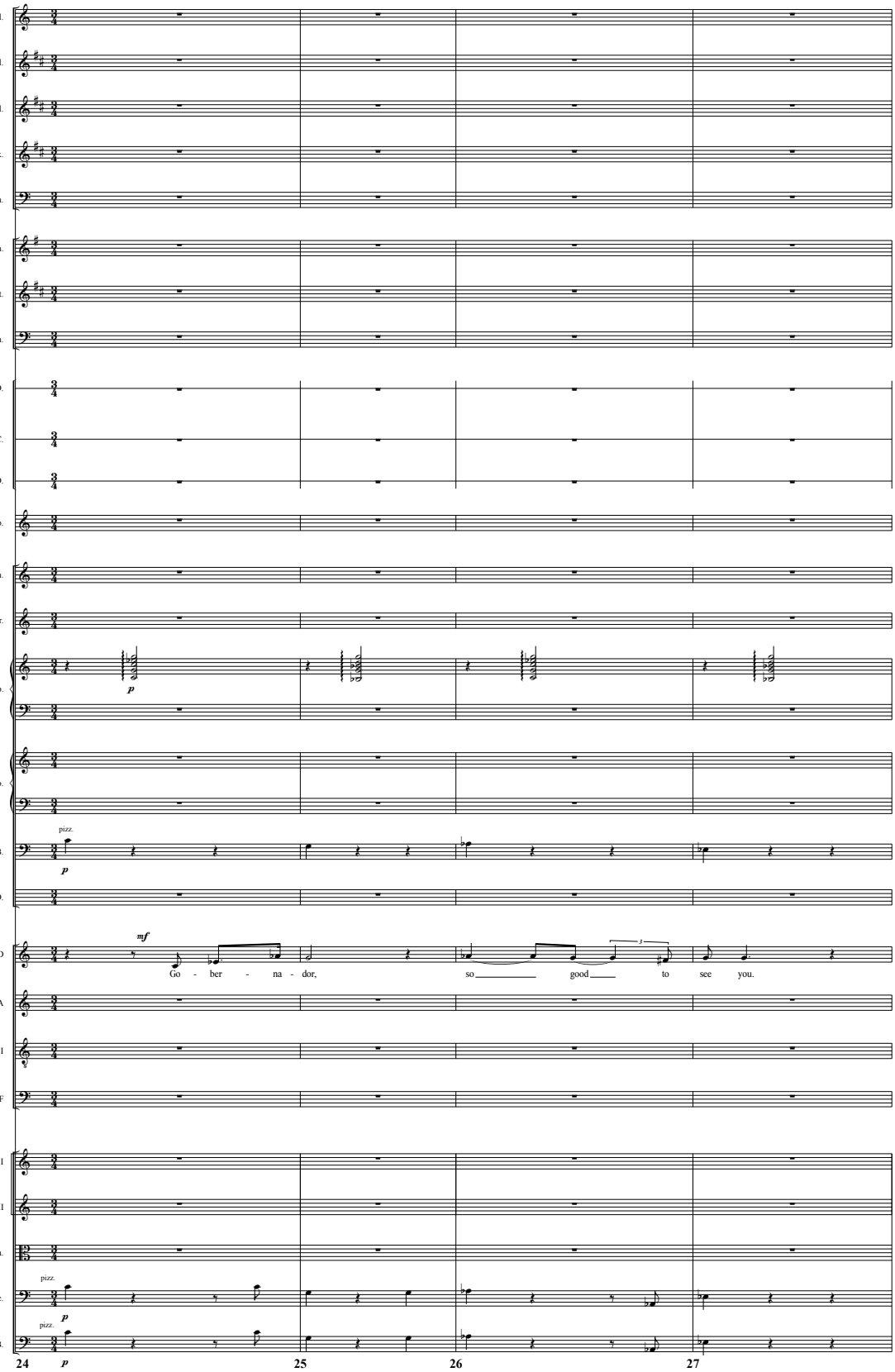

Slower and sonorous (♩ = 65)
First tempo (♩ = 90)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.D.
C.C.
B. D.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
not rolled
A.B.
H.D.
D
A
I
F
Re - lax Fran-cis - co.
Tran - qui - lo.
No te de - jas in - ti - mi - dar.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
pizz.
arco
11
12
13
14

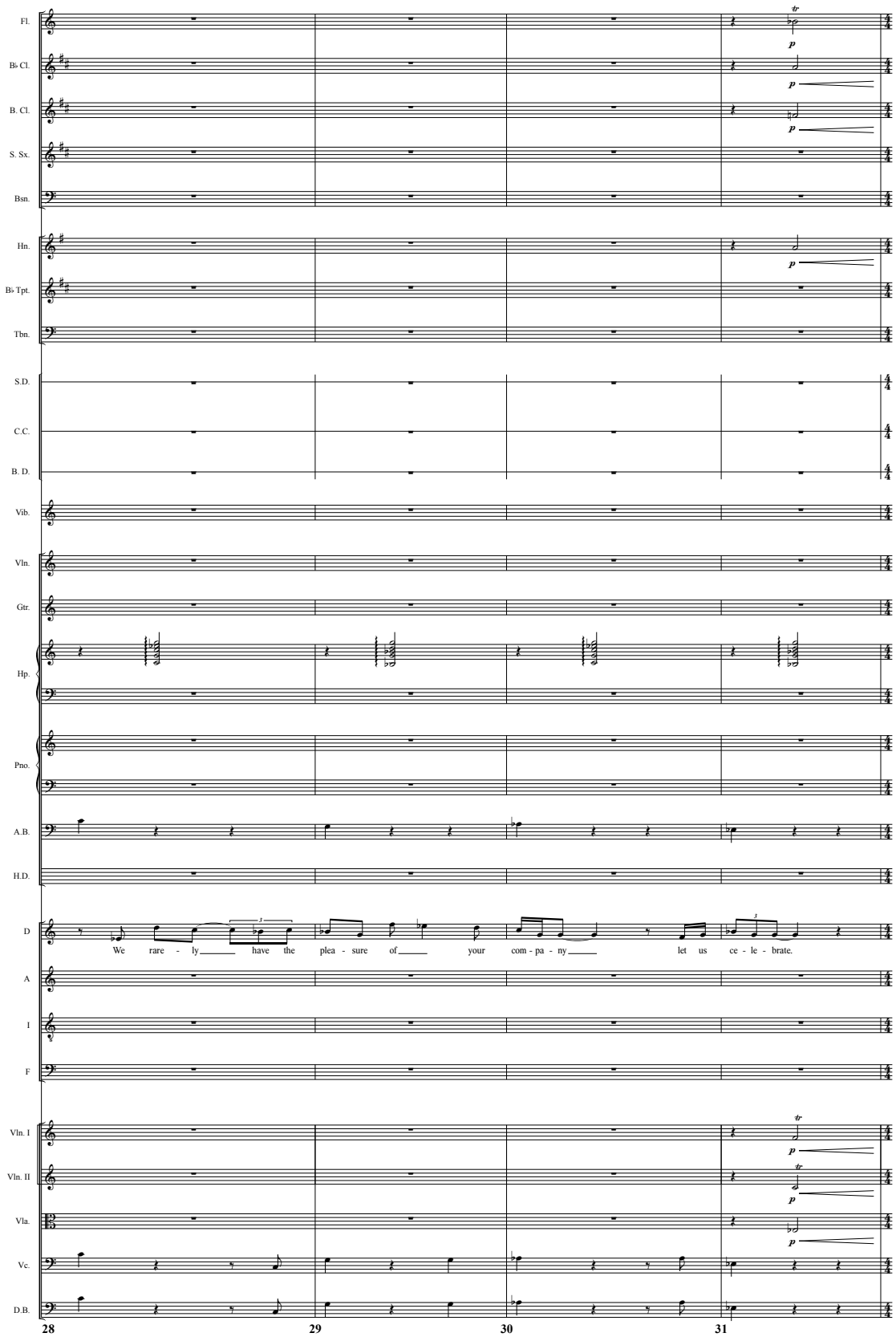

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.D.
C.C.
B. D.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
H.D.
D
A
I
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
Do - lo - res help Fran -
Cál - ma - te jo - ven.
Of course you're not.
I am not in - ti - mi - da - ted
I am not...
arco
arco
arco
15
16
17
18


rit.
a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.D.
C.C.
B. D.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
H.D.
D
A
I
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
Fran - cis - co.
This is ri - di - cu - lous and un - fair.
ci - sco!
19
20
21

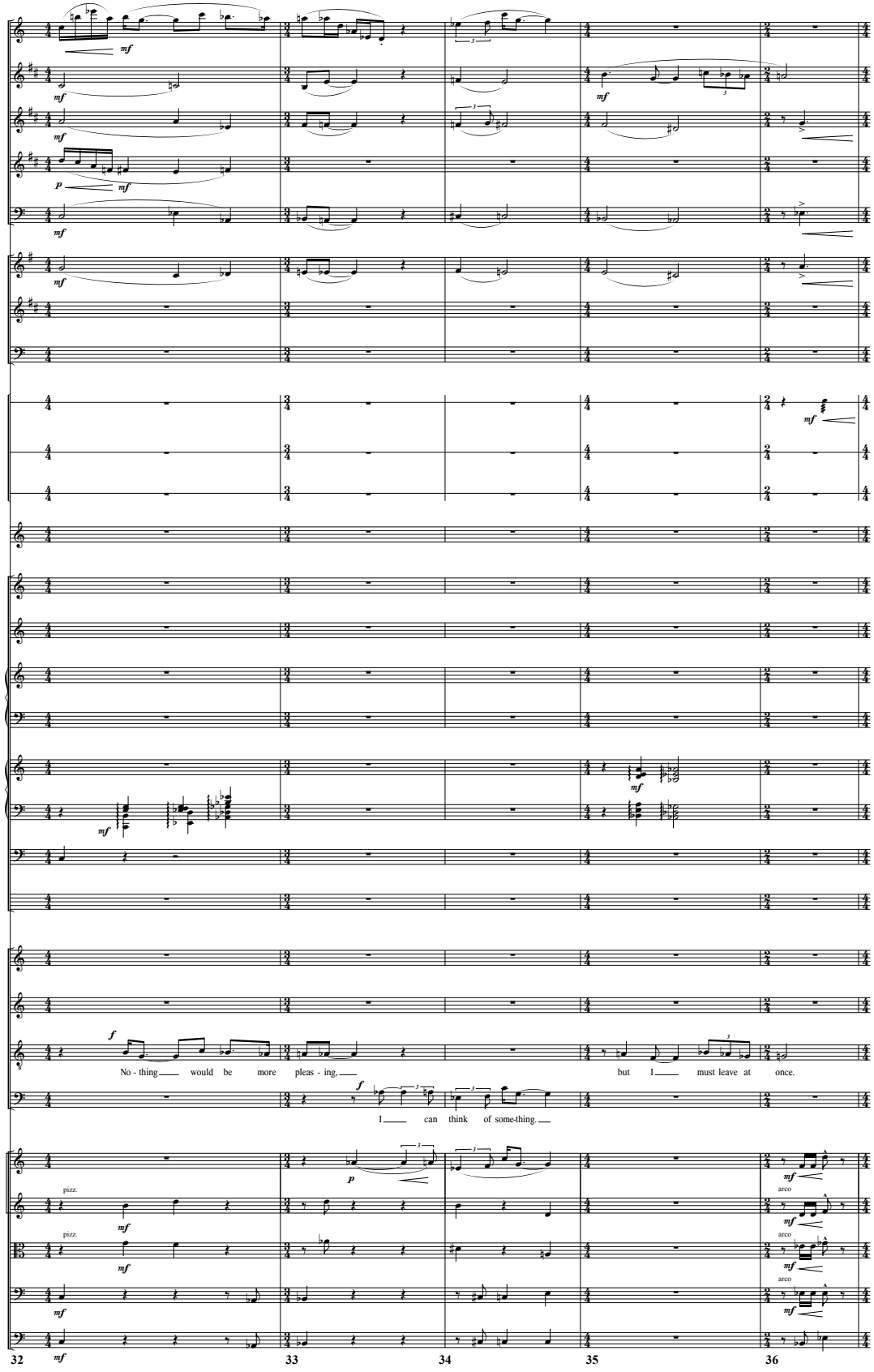

rit.
G.P.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.D.
C.C.
B. D.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
H.D.
D
A
I
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
Why is it my job to in - dulge an en - ti - tled brat and a pom - pous prat?!
pizz.
arco
22
23

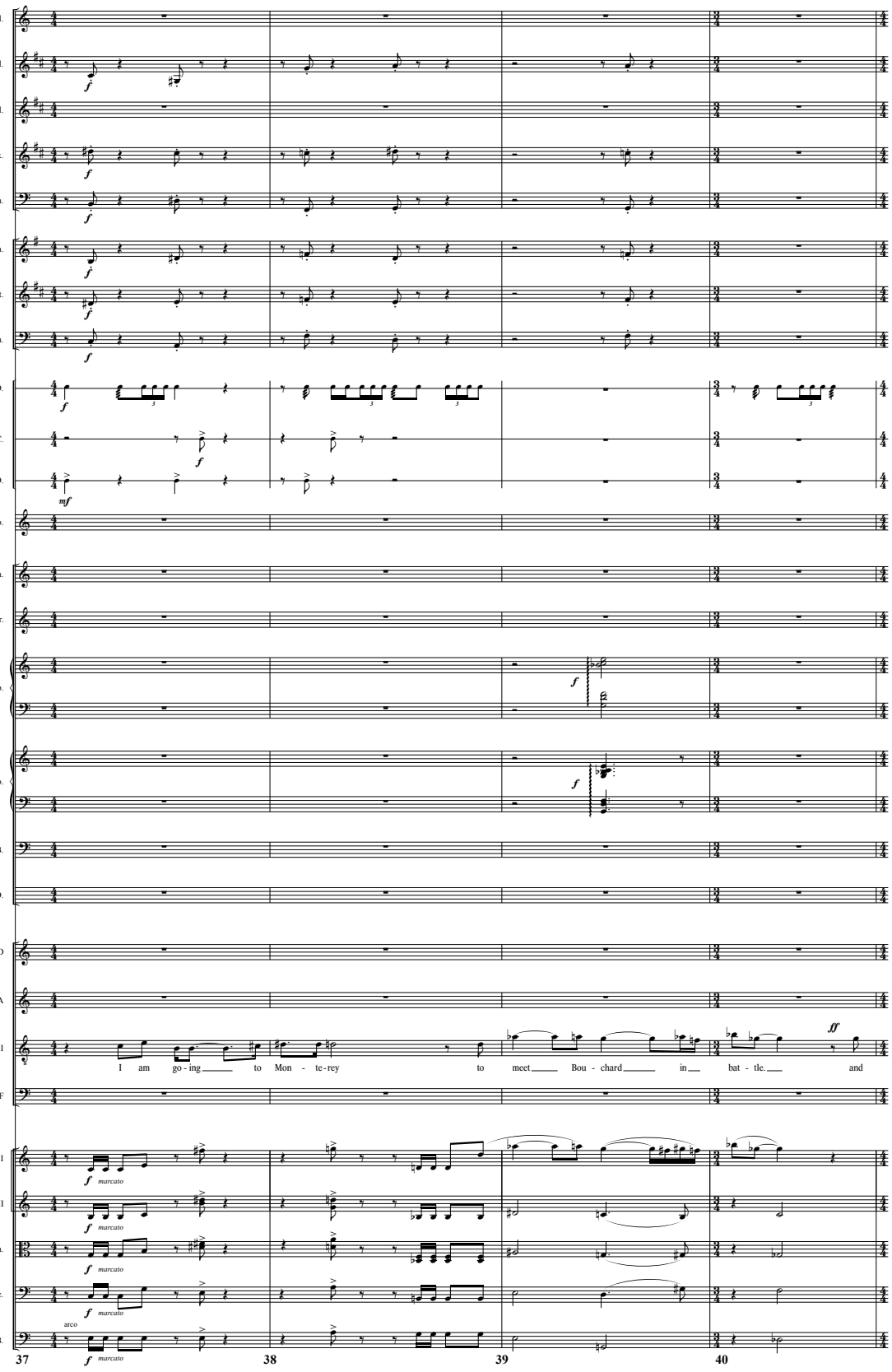
Calmly (♩ = 80)


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.D.
C.C.
B. D.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
H.D.
D
A
I
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
pizz.
mf
Go - ber - na - dor,
so good to see you.
24
25
26
27

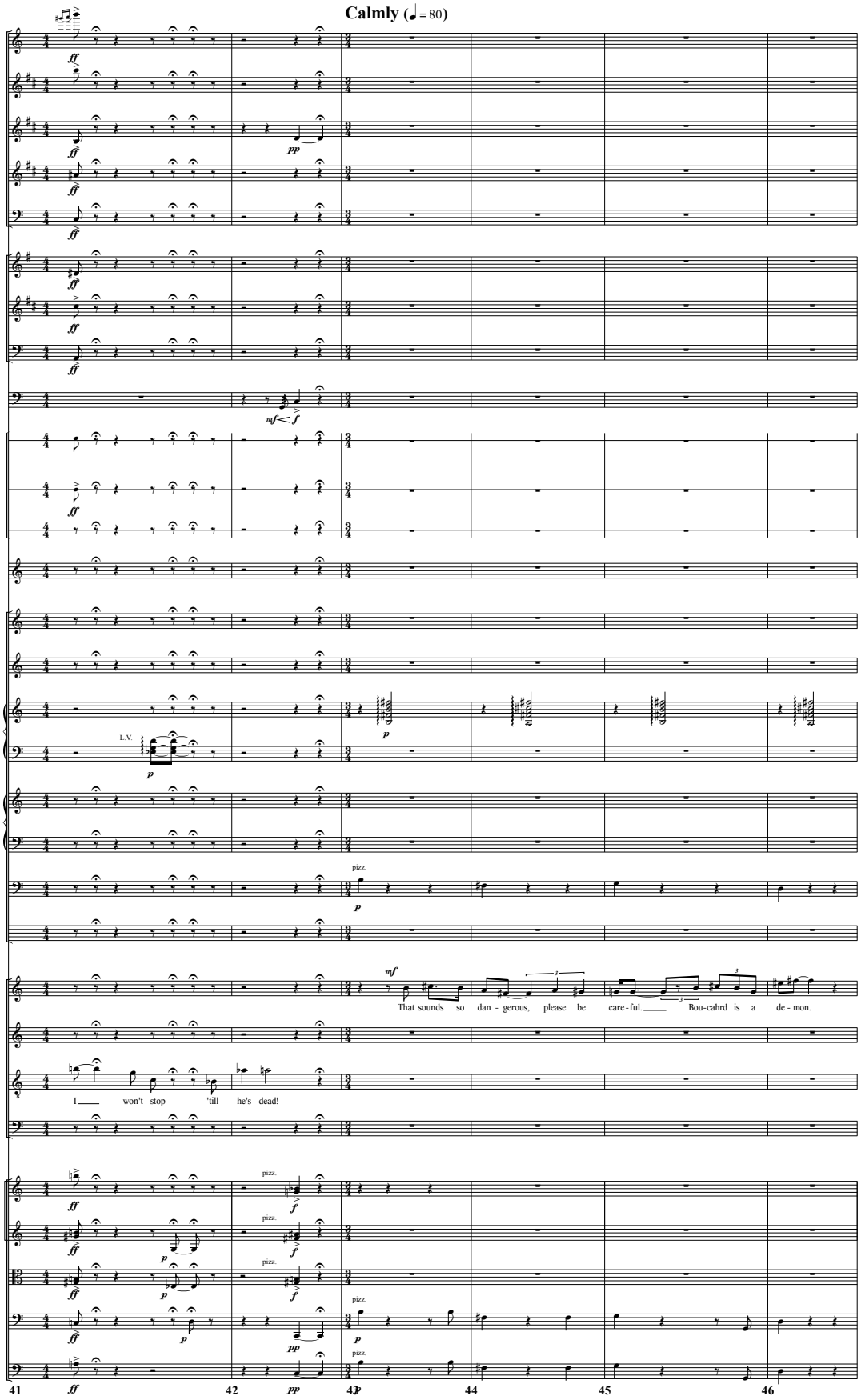

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.D.
C.C.
B. D.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
H.D.
D
A
I
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
We rare - ly have the plea - sure of your com - pa - ny let us ce - le - brate.
28
29
30
31

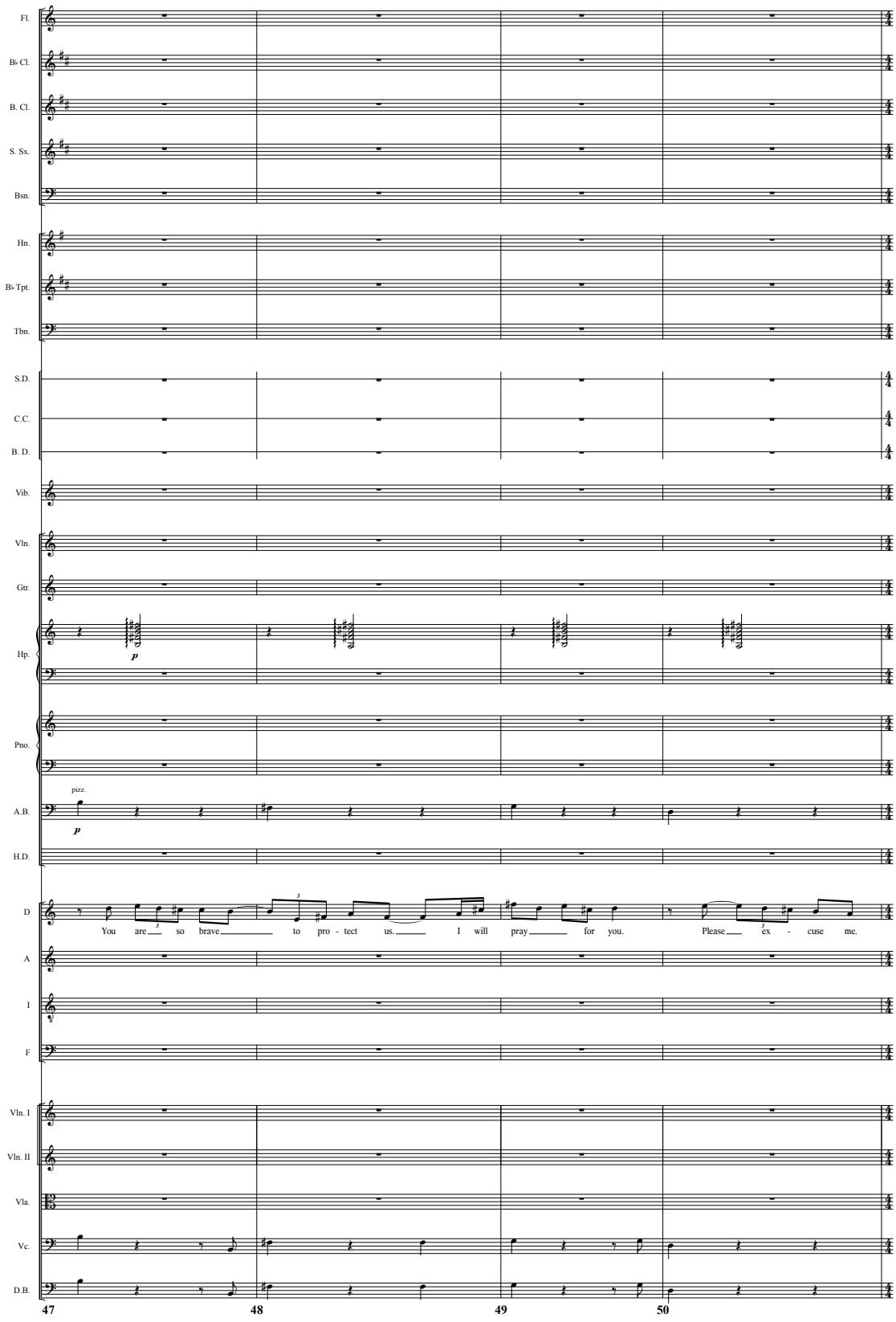
First tempo (♩ = 90)




Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.D.
C.C.
B. D.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
H.D.
D
A
I
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
I am go - ing to Mon - te - rey to meet Bou - chard in bat - tle. and
arco
37
38
39
40

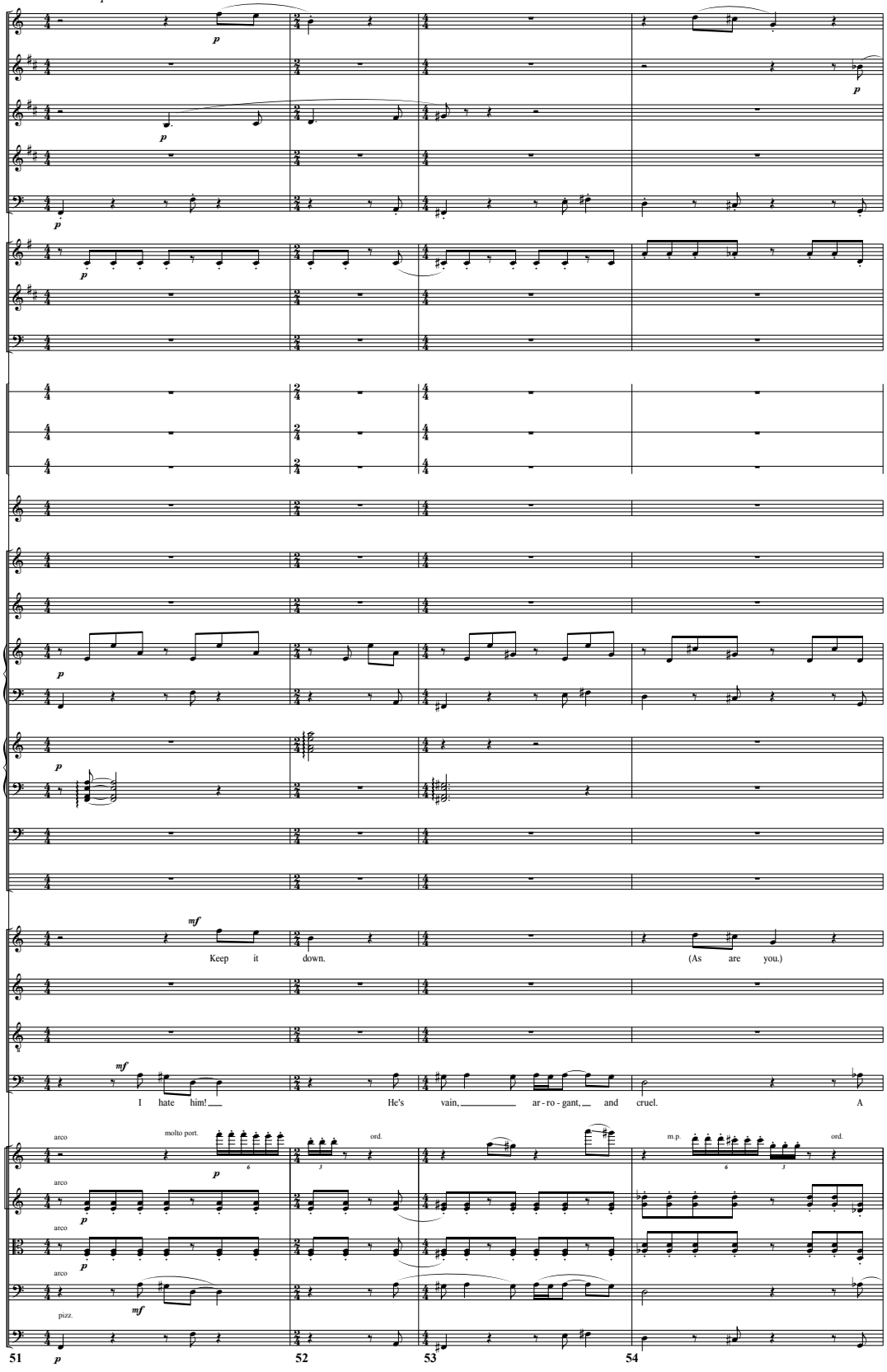
Calmly (♩ = 80)

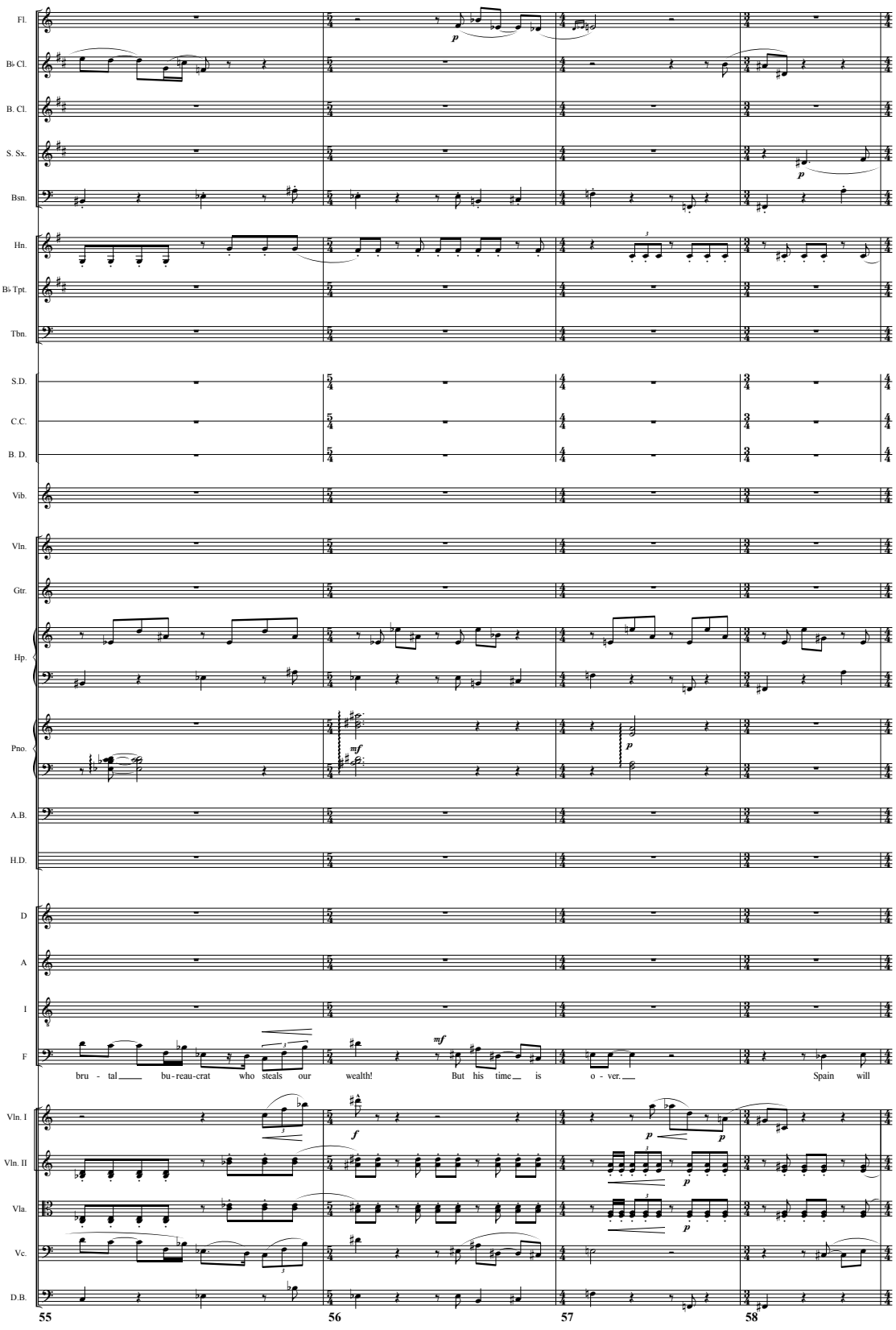

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Timp.
S.D.
C.C.
B. D.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
L. V.
Pno.
A.B.
pizz.
H.D.
D
That sounds so dan - gerous, please be care - ful. Bou-cahrd is a de - mon.
A
I
I won't stop 'till he's dead!
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
41
42
43
44
45
46

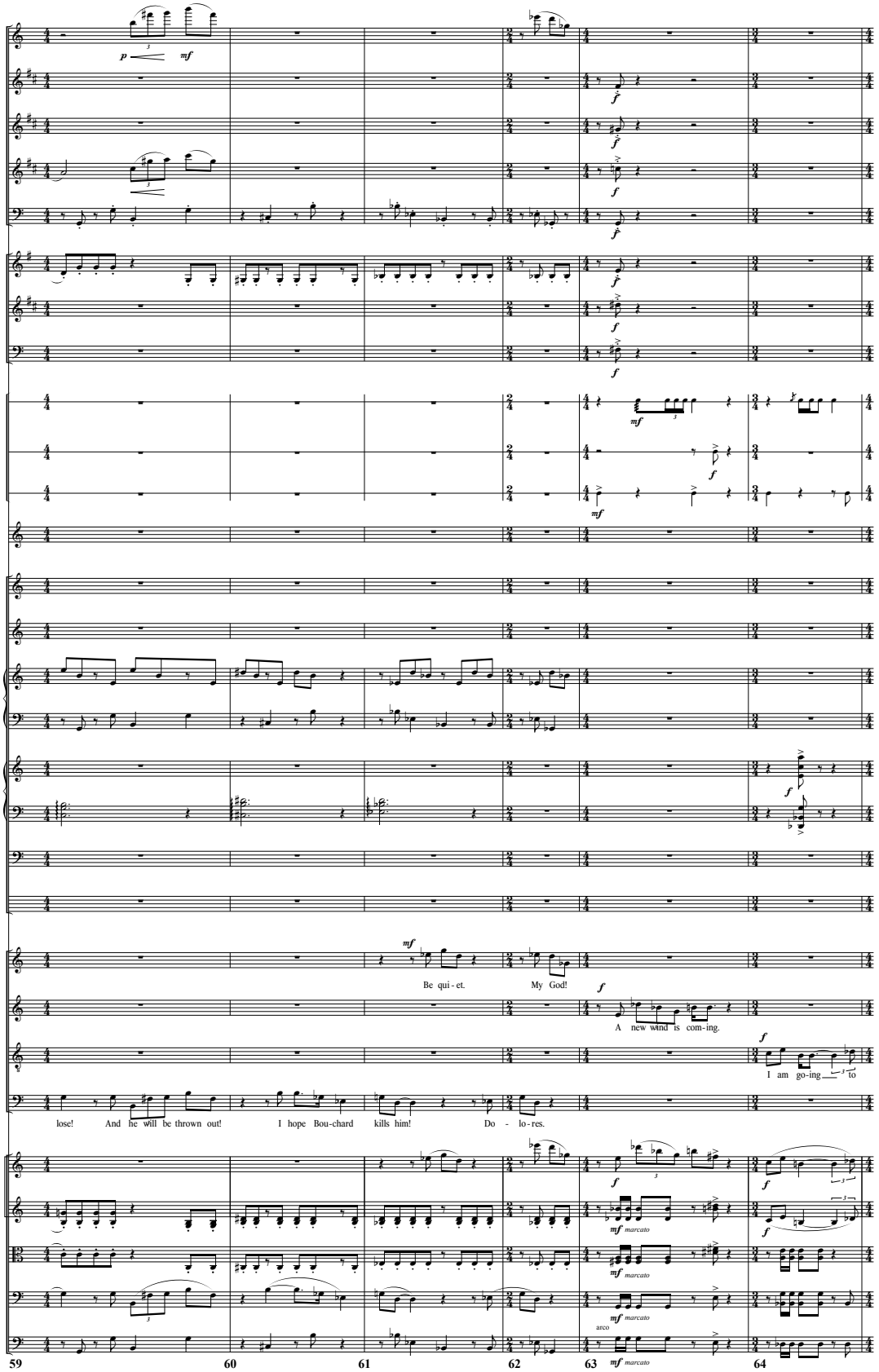

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.D.
C.C.
B. D.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
pizz.
H.D.
D
A
I
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
You are so brave to pro - tect us. I will pray for you. Please ex - cuse me.
47
48
49
50

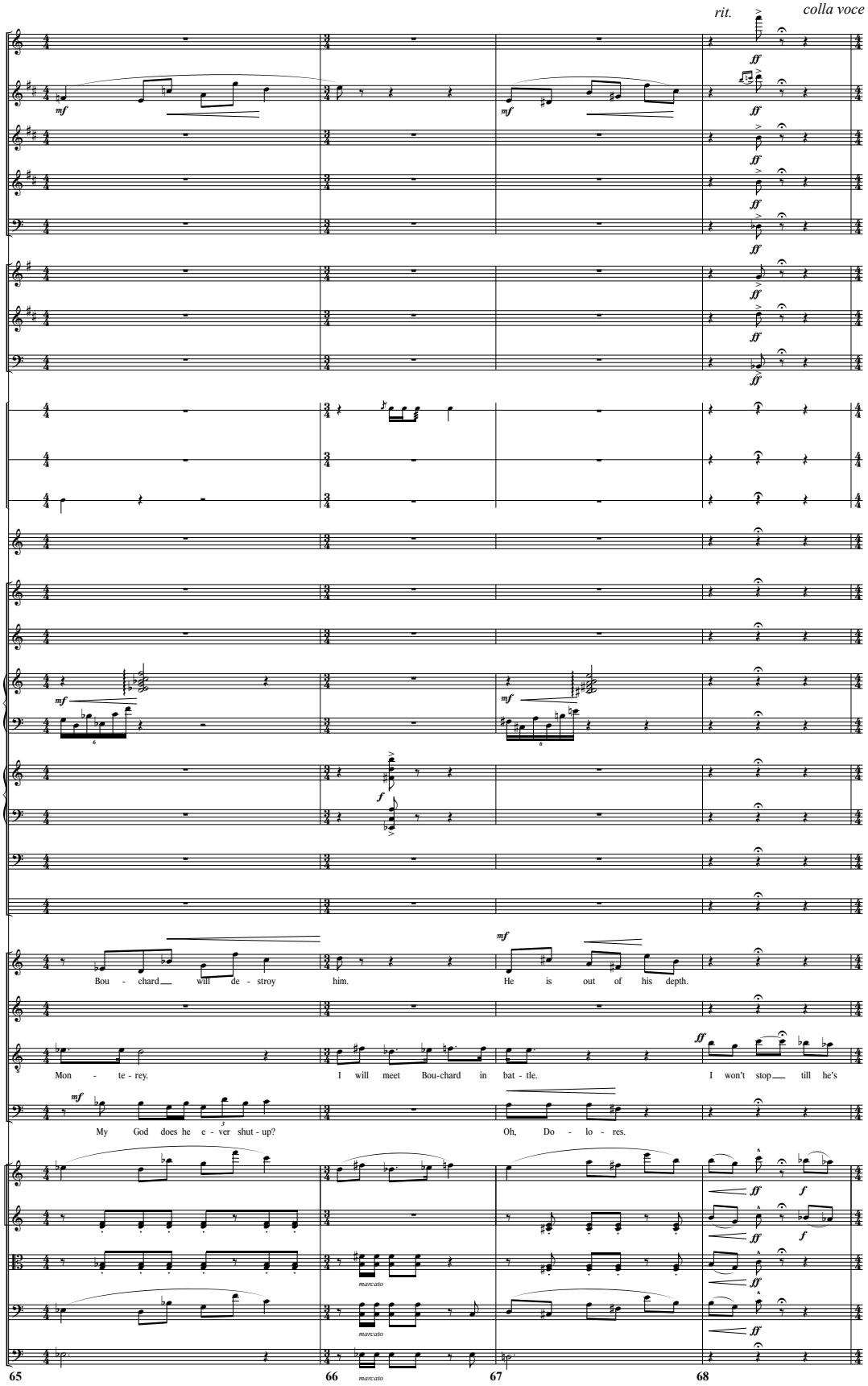
A little slower (♩ = 85)

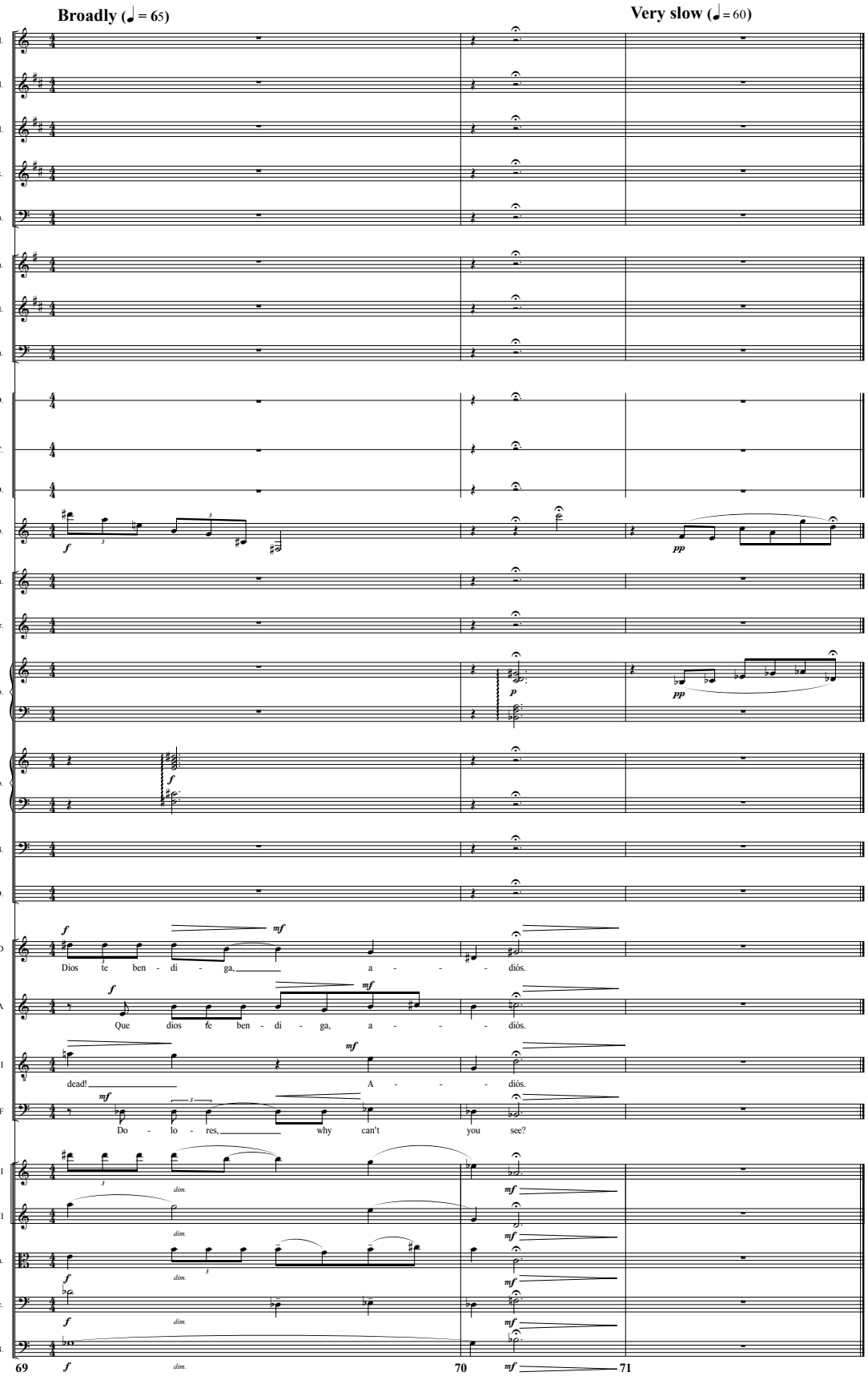
Francisco pulls Dolores aside




Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.D.
C.C.
B. D.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
H.D.
D
A
I
F
bru - tal bu - reau - crat who steals our wealth! But his time is o - ver. Spain will
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
55
56
57
58


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.D.
C.C.
B. D.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
H.D.
D
A
I
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
Be qui - et.
My God!
A new wind is com-ing.
I am go-ing to
lose! And he will be thrown out!
I hope Bou-chard kills him!
Do - lo-res.
arco
59
60
61
62
63
64


rit.
colla voce
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.D.
C.C.
B. D.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
H.D.
D
A
I
F
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
Bou - chard will de - stroy him.
He is out of his depth.
Mon - te - rey.
I will meet Bou-chard in bat - tle.
I won't stop till he's
My God does he e - ver shut - up?
Oh, Do - lo - res.
marcato
65
66
67
68


Broadly (♩ = 65)
Very slow (♩ = 60)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.D.
C.C.
B. D.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
H.D.
D
Dios fe ben - di - ga, a - - - diós.
A
Que dios fe ben - di - ga, a - - - diós.
I
dead! A - - - diós.
F
Do - lo - res, why can't you see?
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
dim.
69
70
71

Work In Progress

Abuelita Interlude Before Scene 3
Abuelita continues the story and tells how the boastful Ignacio tried and failed to stop Bouchard or defend Monterey. Fear and panic has gripped the town as they wait for Bouchard to arrive.

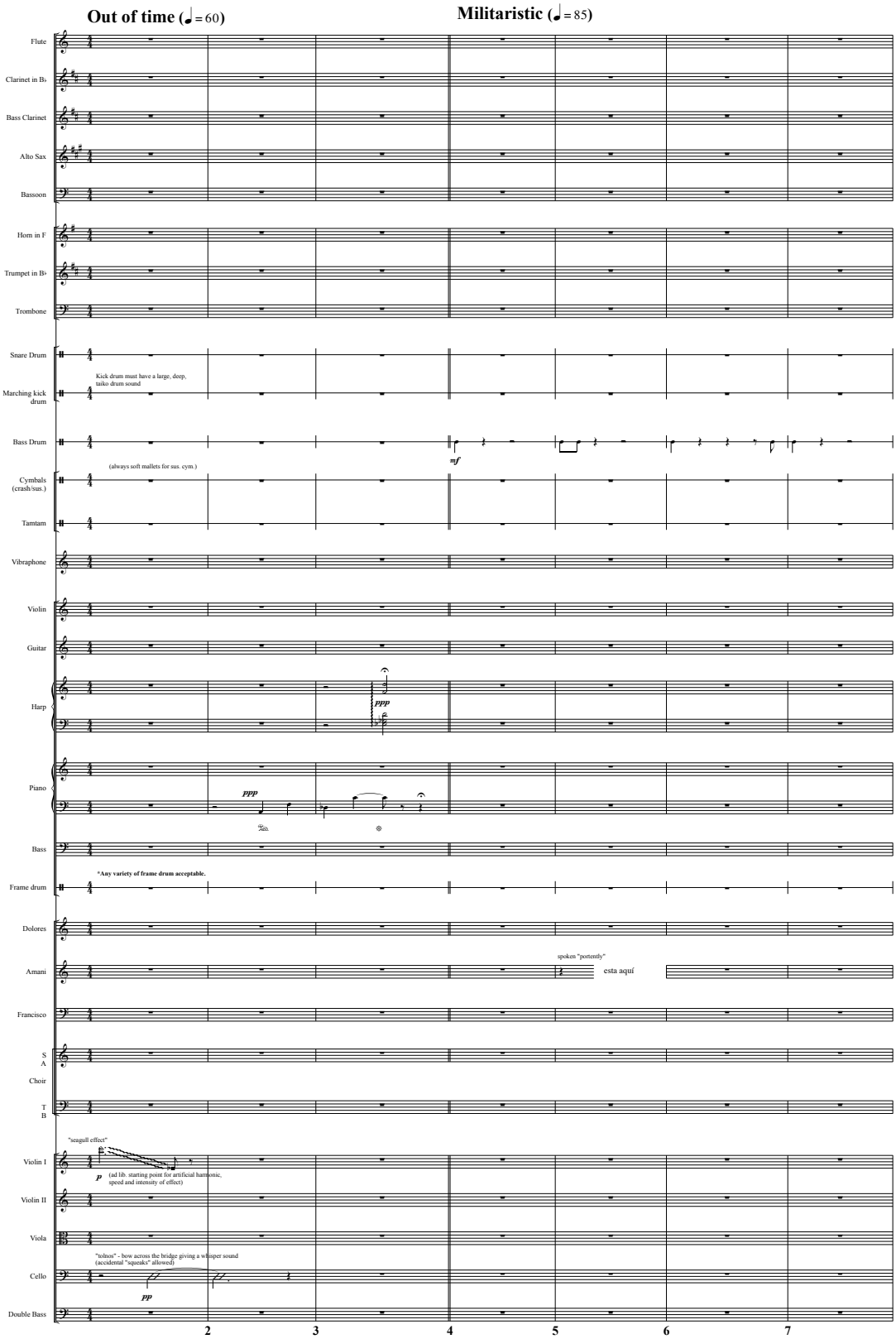
Light music accompanies. (Perhaps the 'Time' vamp).

Act I Scene 3

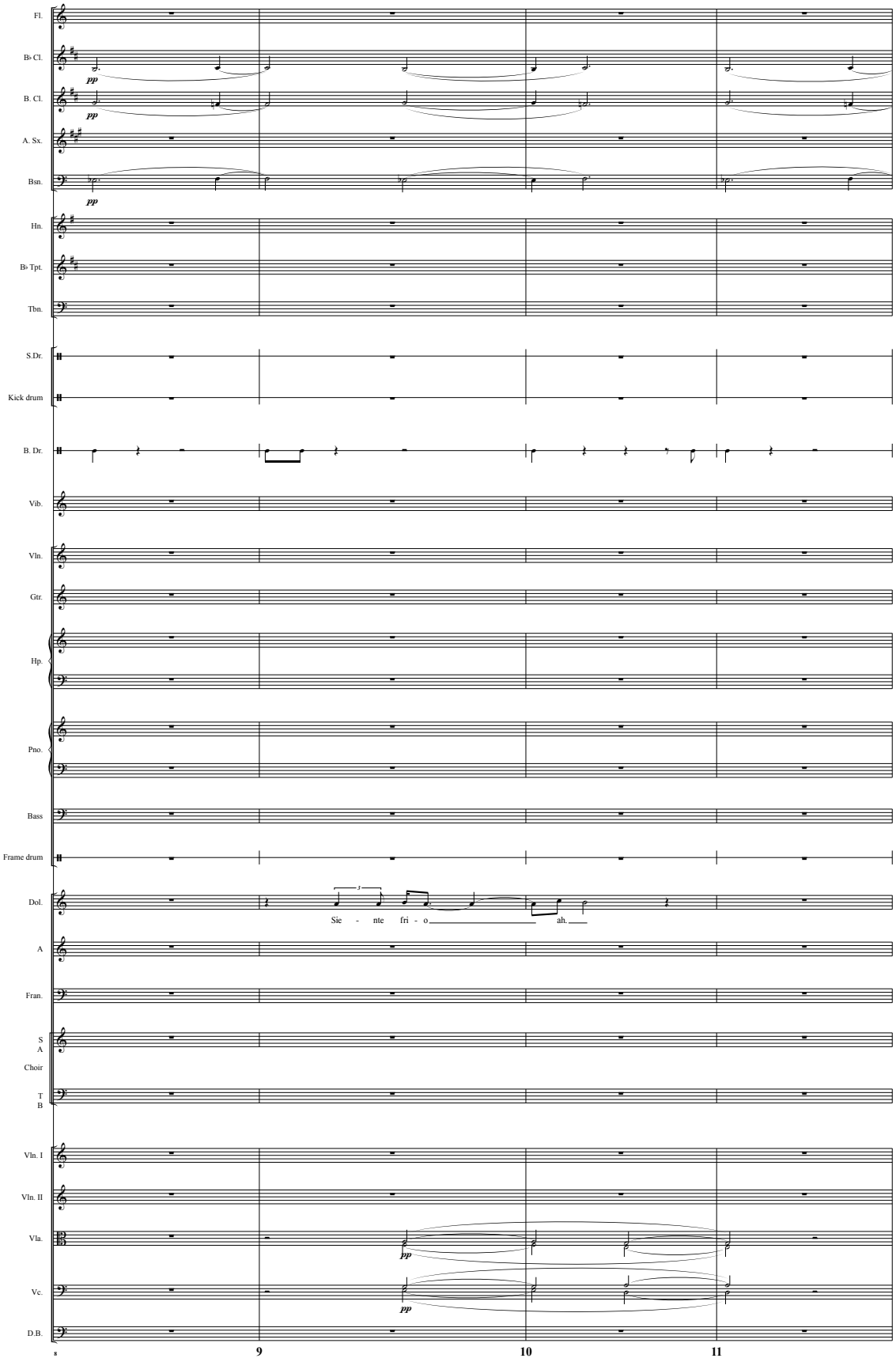
Bouchard Approaches
Trio and Choir

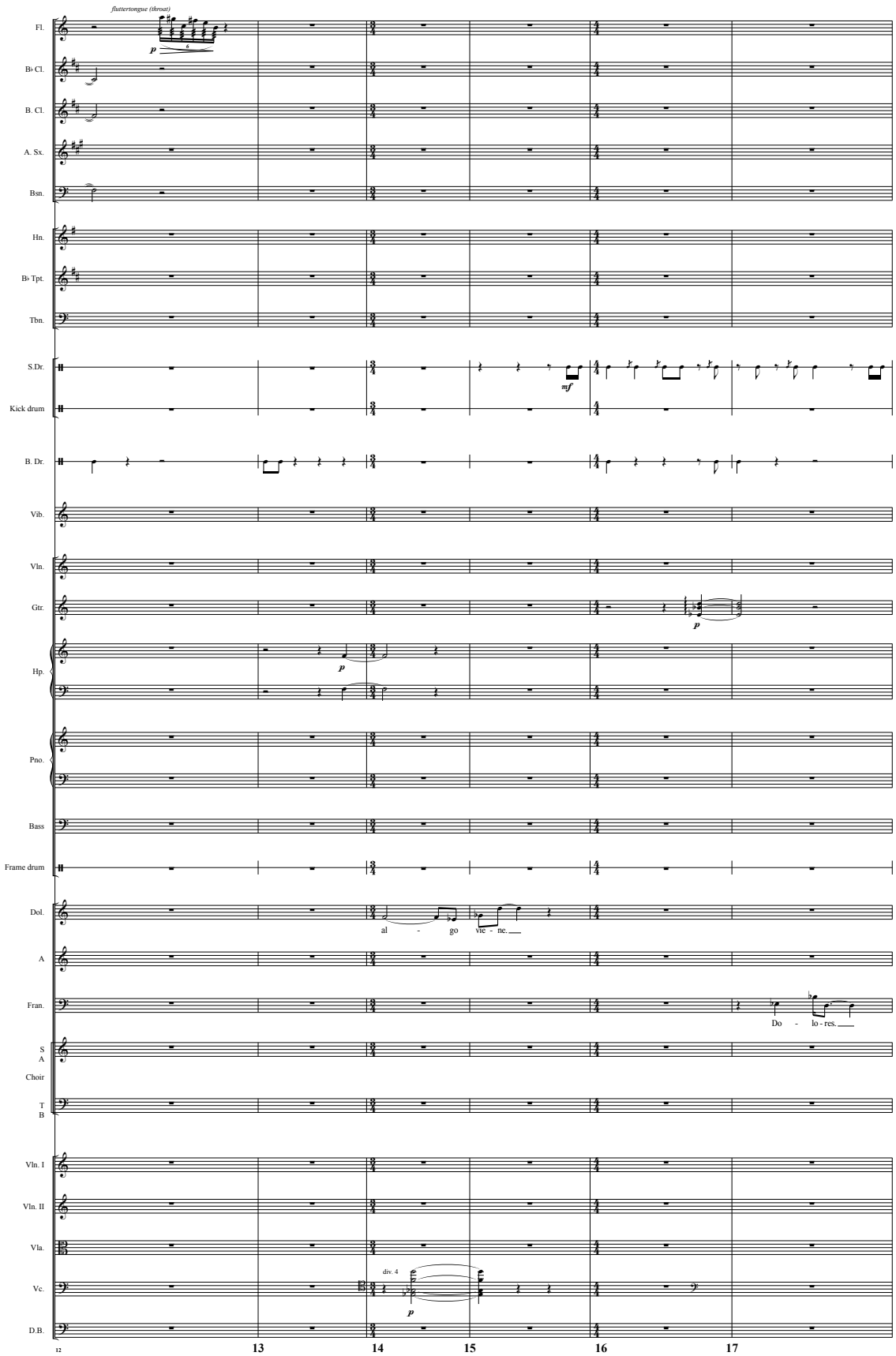
Daniel Aaron Ramirez

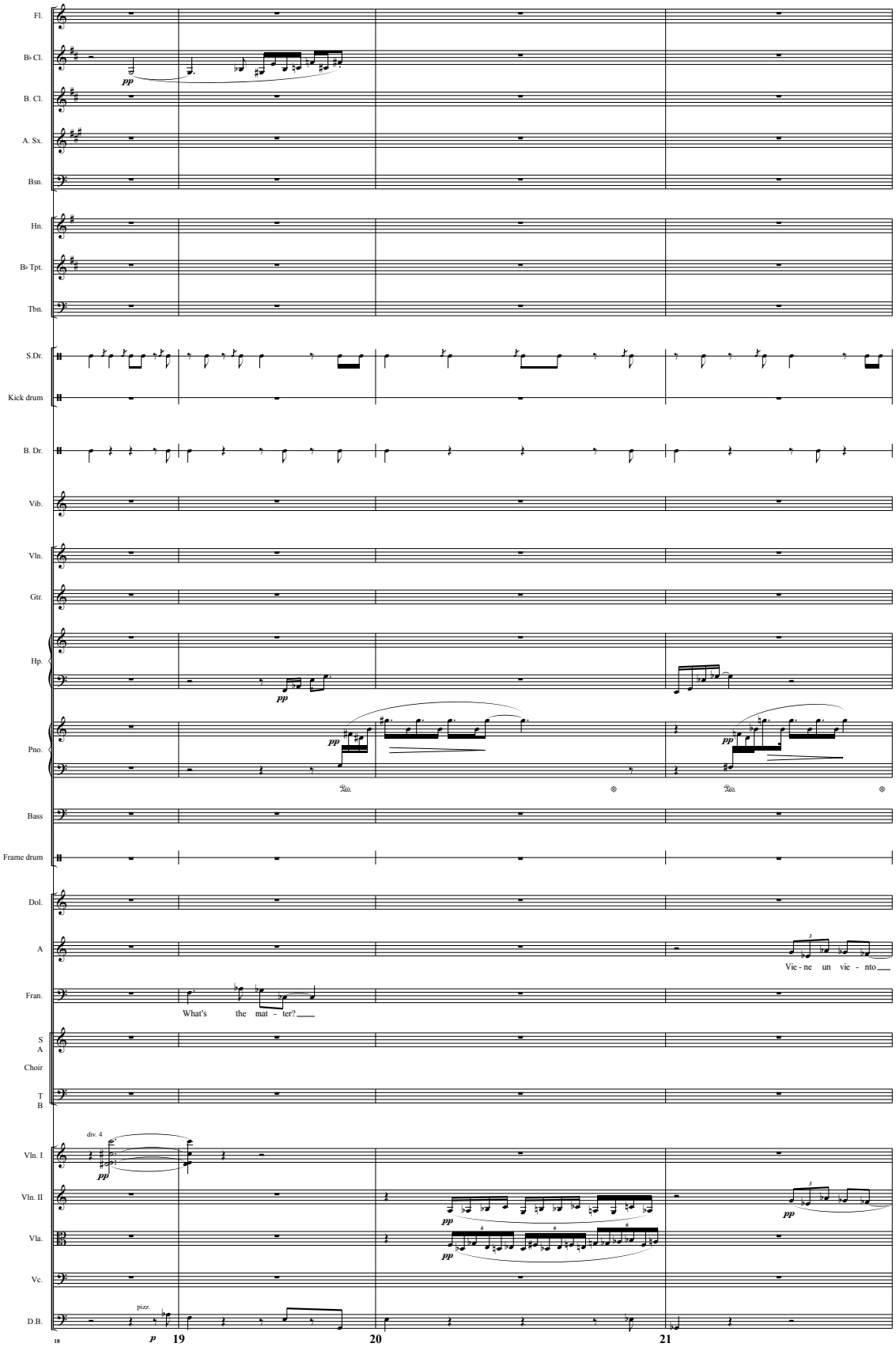
Scene 3. Town square in front of the Church. A month or so has passed. Monterey has fallen. Bouchard approaches.

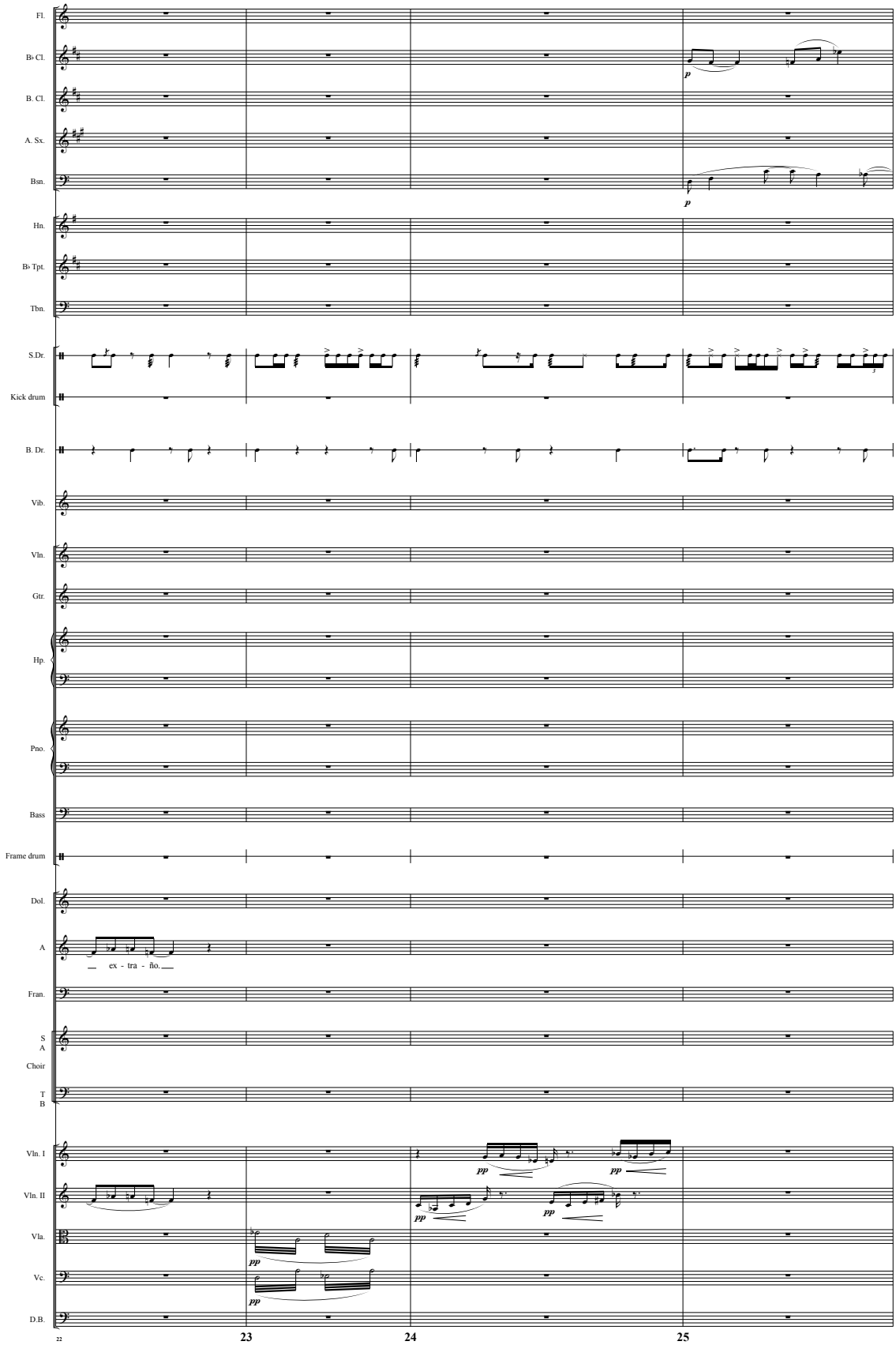


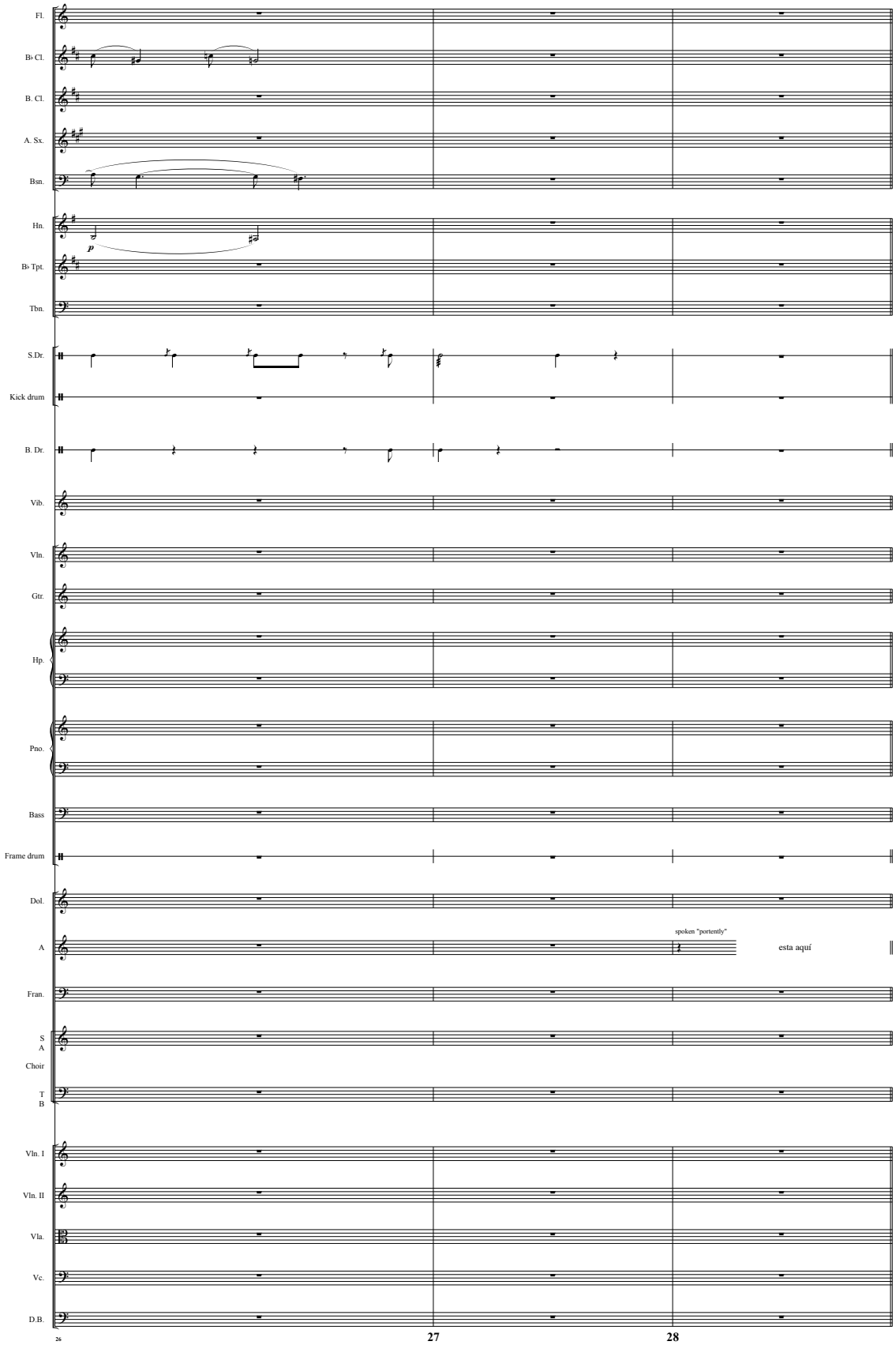
© 2020, Daniel Aaron Ramirez

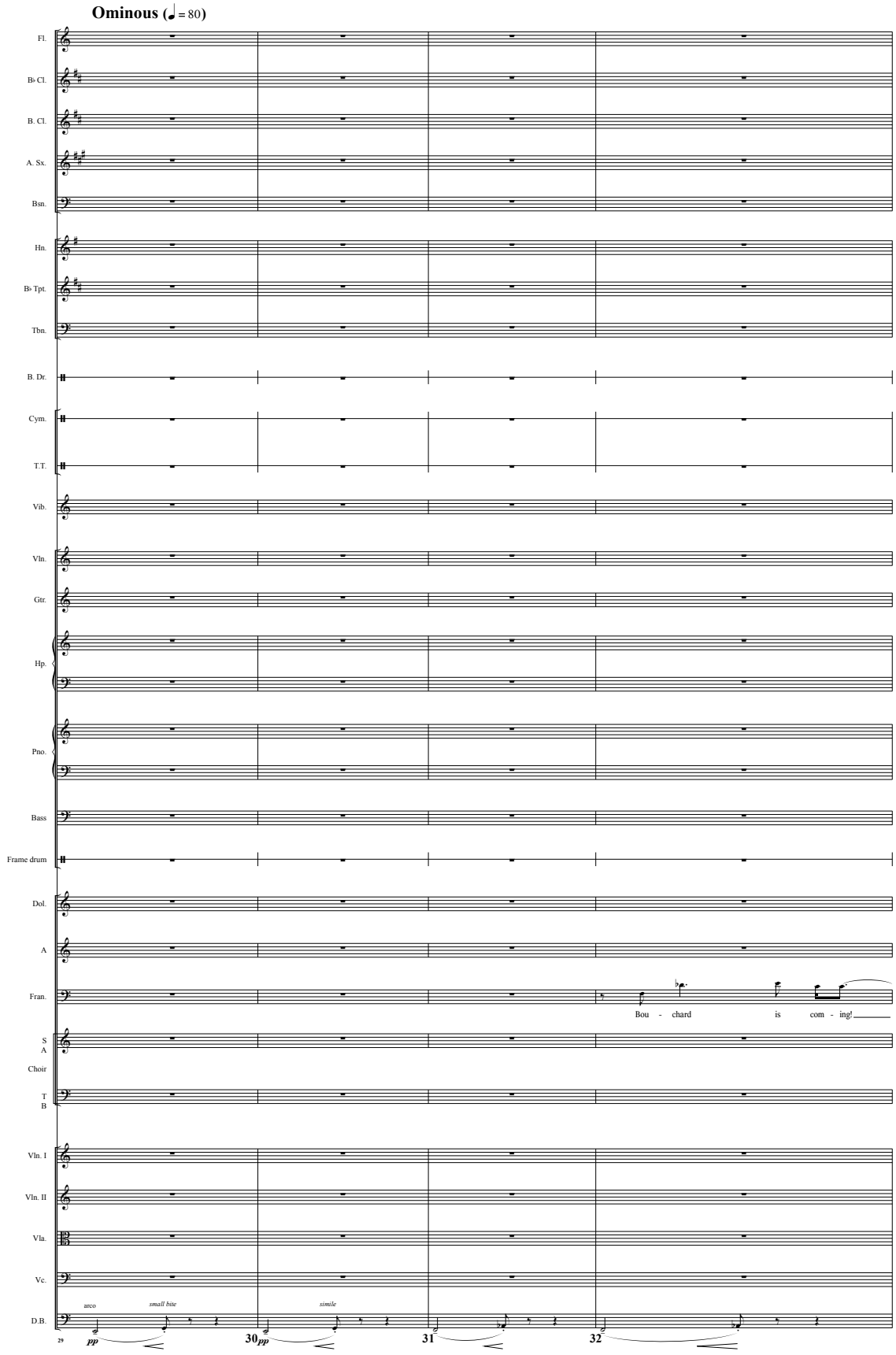

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
pp
Sie - nte fri - o ah.
8
9
10
11

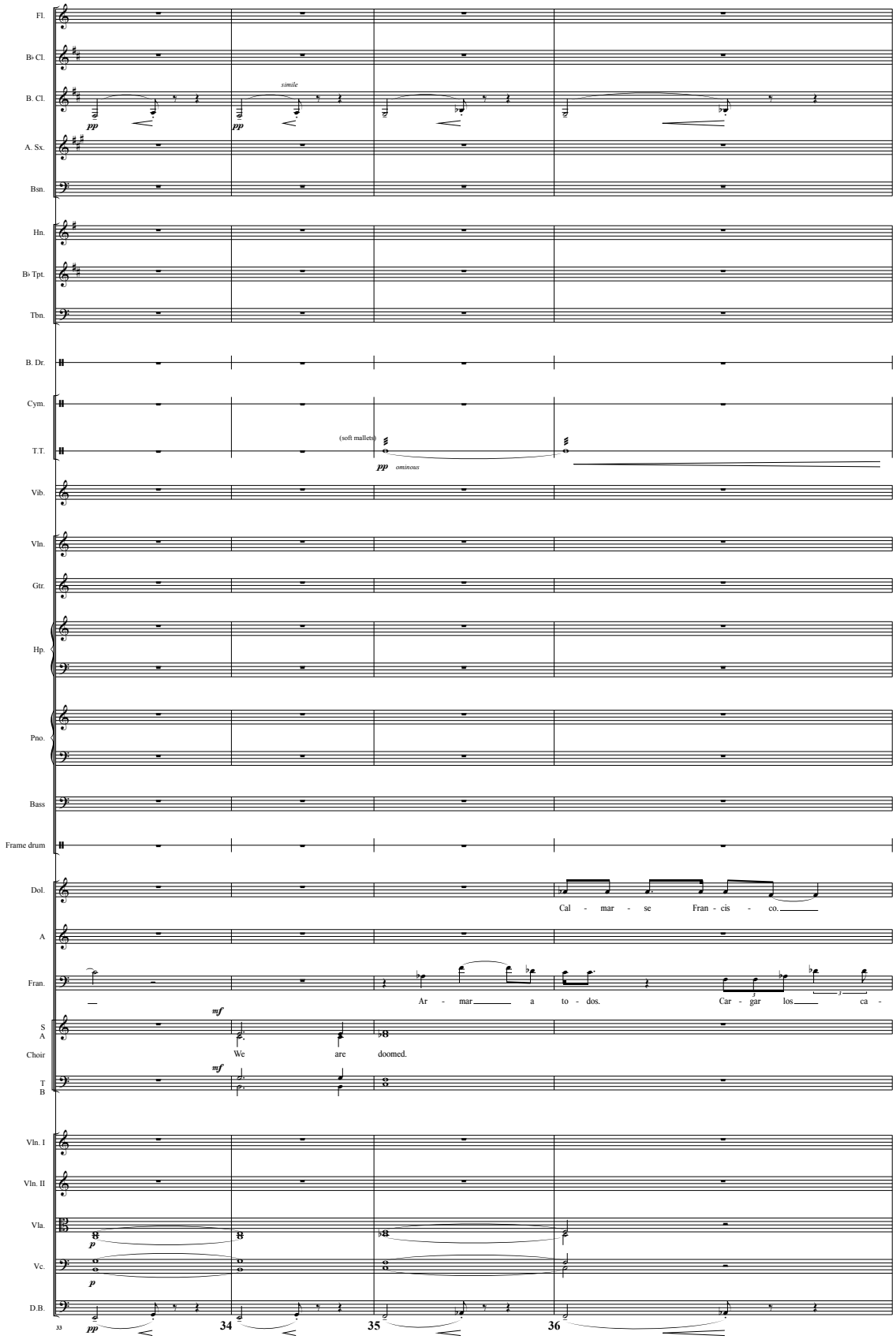

fluttertongue (throat)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
al - go vie - nc.
Do - lo - res.
div. 4
12
13
14
15
16
17

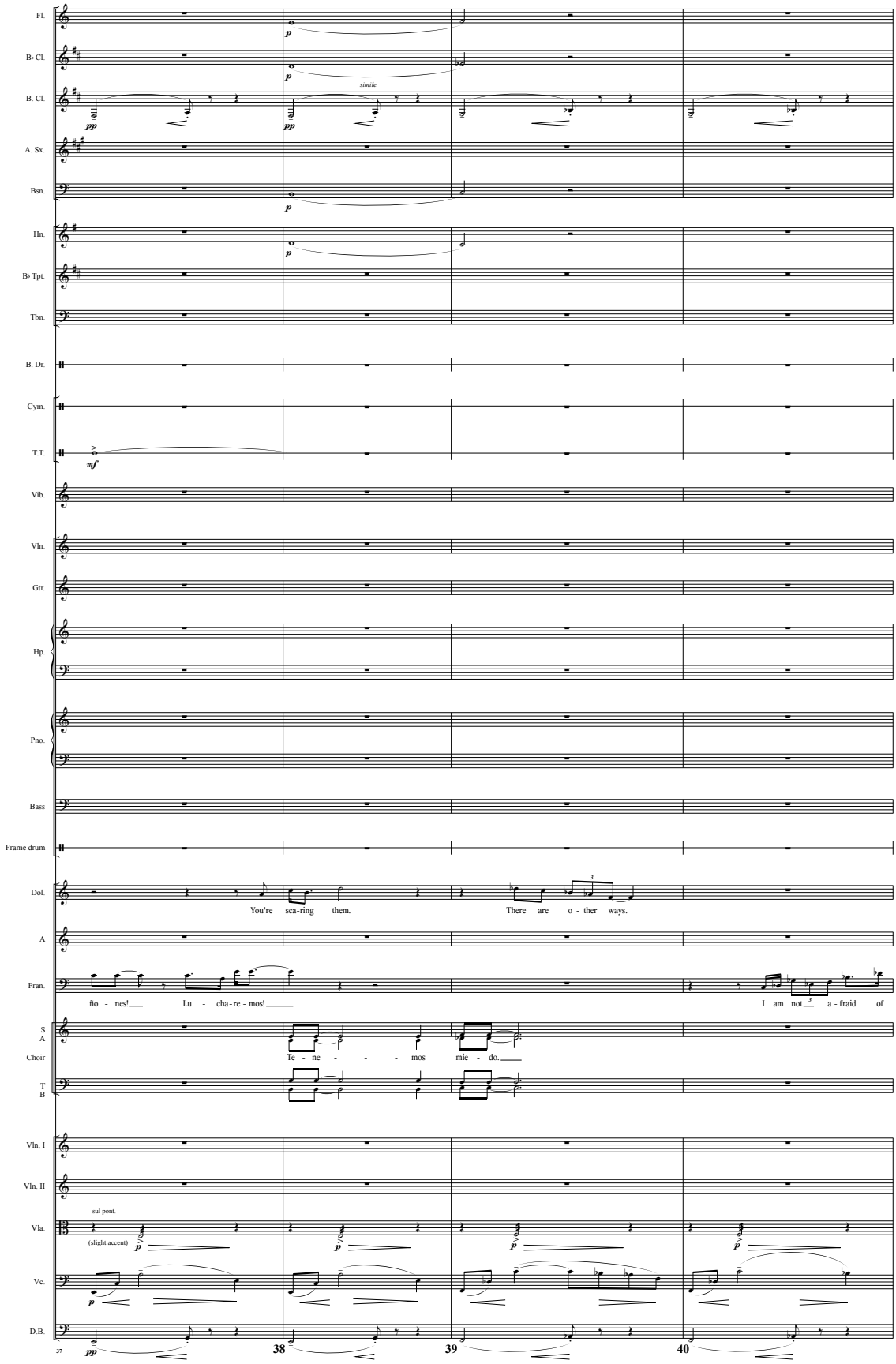

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
pp
What's the mat - ter?
Vie - ne un vie - nto
div. 4
pizz.
p
18
19
20
21

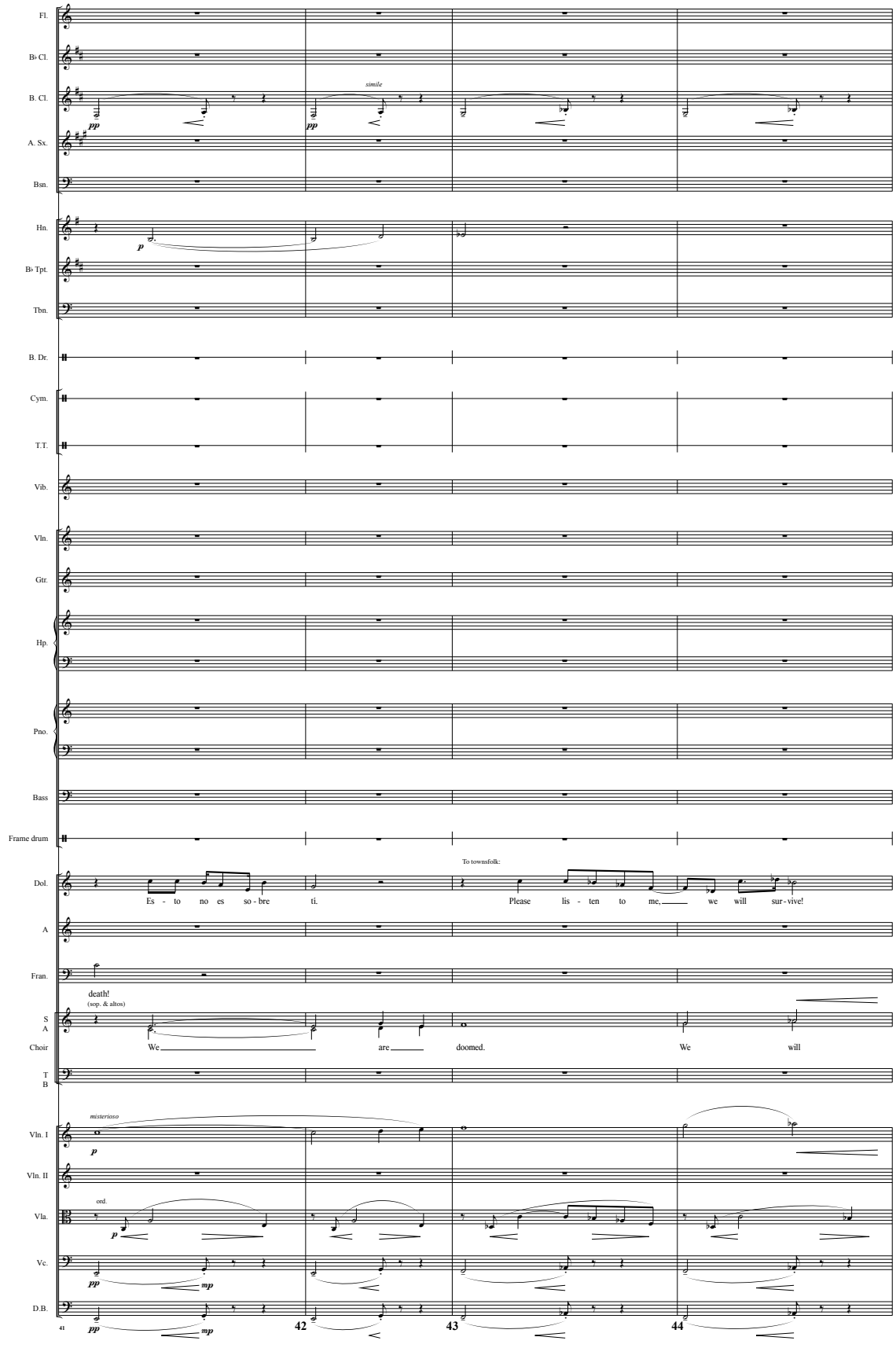

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
ex - tra - ño.
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
pp
22
23
24
25

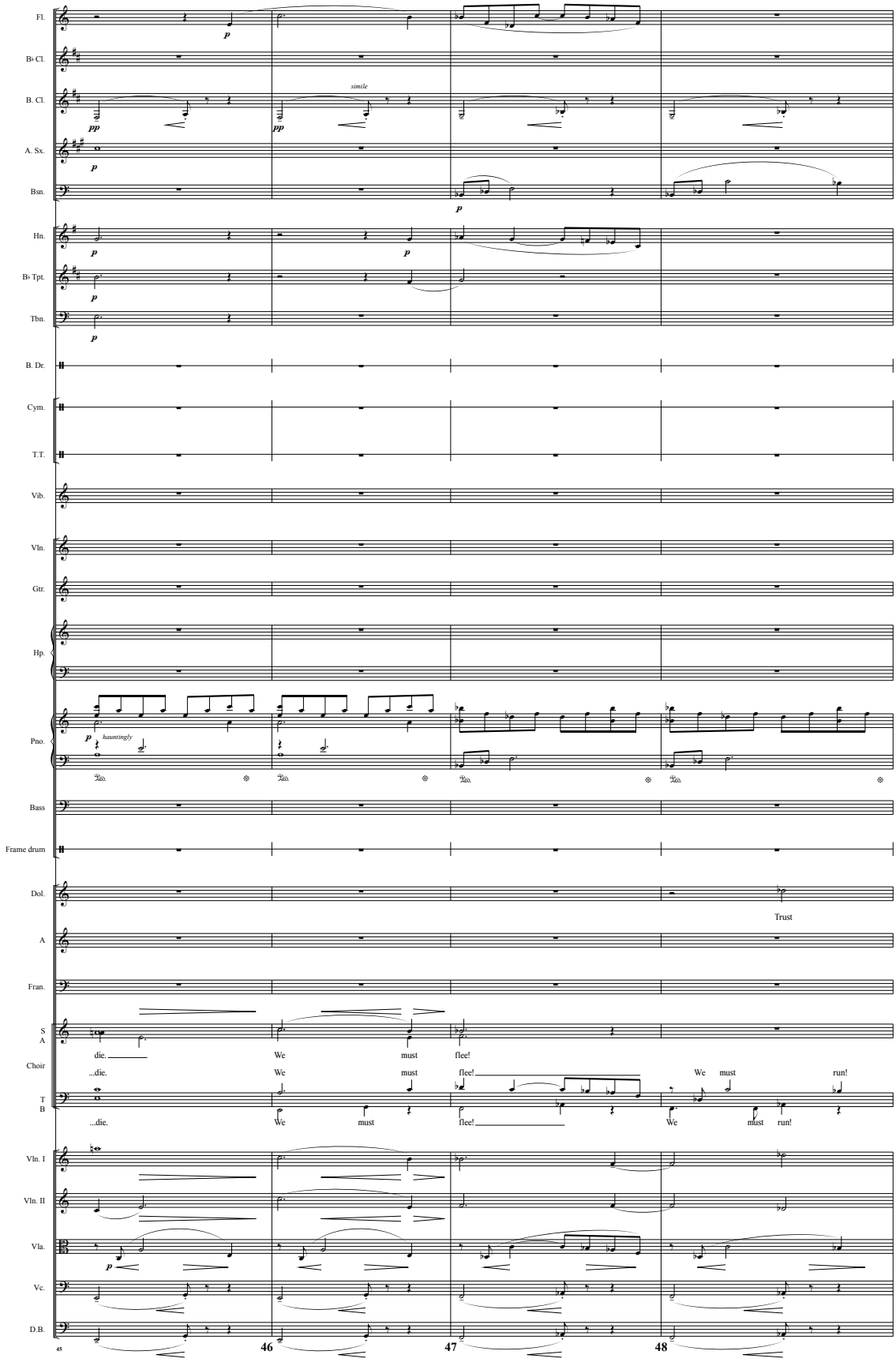

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
p
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
spoken "portently"
esta aquí
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
26
27
28

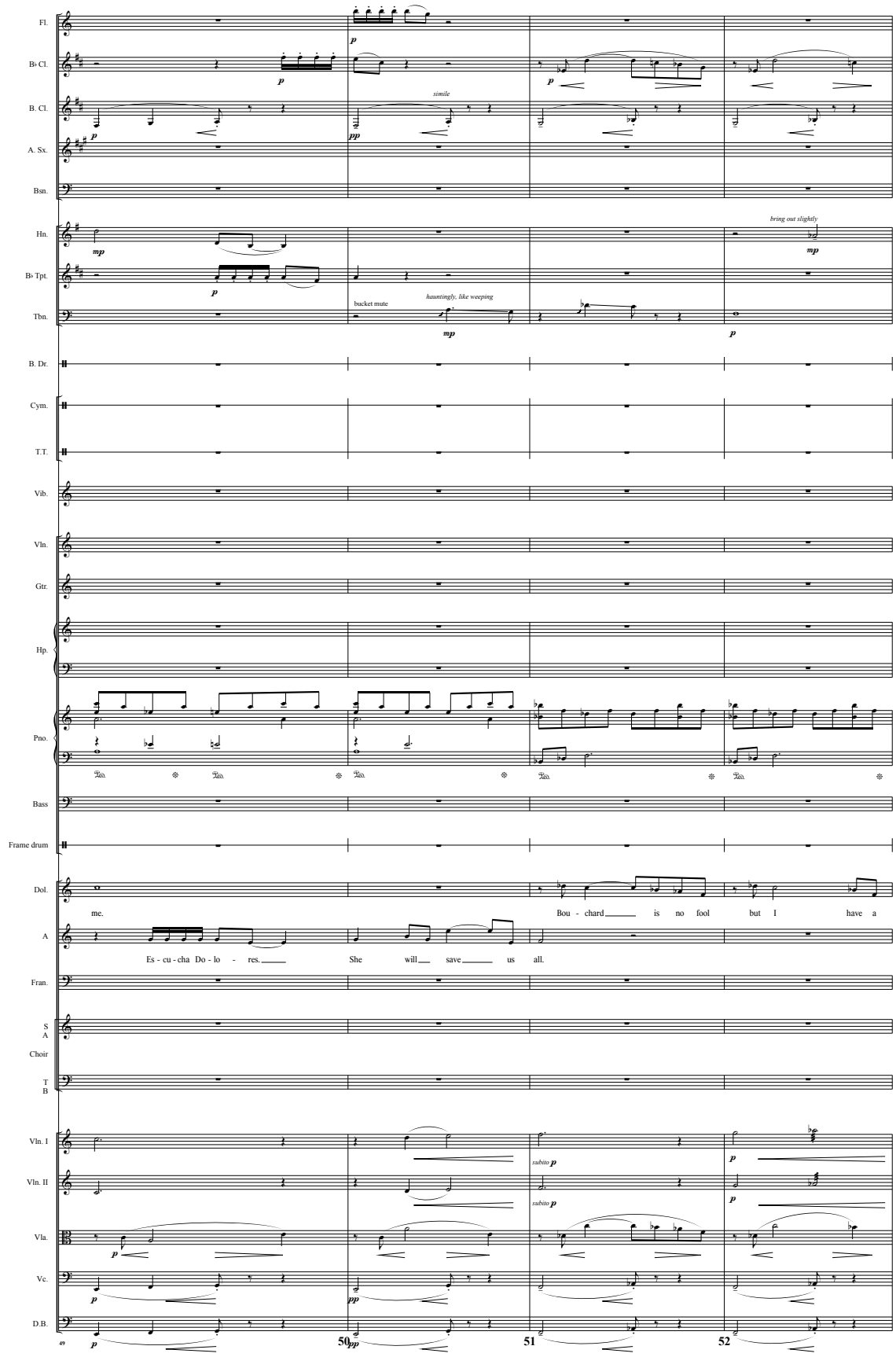

Ominous (♩= 80)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
Bou - chard is com - ing!
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
arco
small bite
simile
29
pp
30
pp
31
32

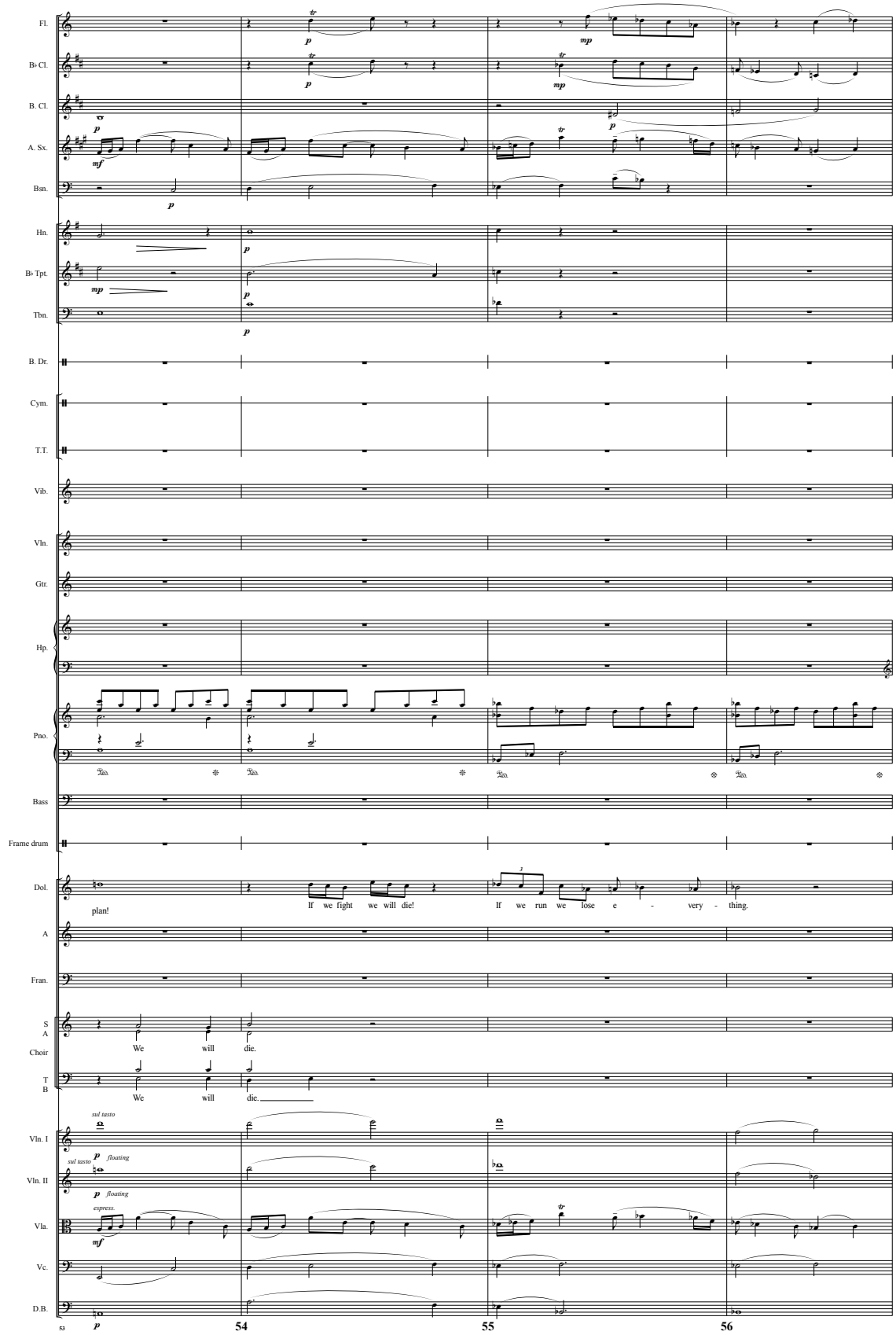

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
simile
pp
pp
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
(soft mallets)
pp ominous
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
Cal - mar - se Fran - cis - co.
A
Fran.
Ar - mar a to - dos. Car - gar los ca -
mf
S
A
Choir
We are doomed.
mf
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
p
Vc.
p
D.B.
pp
33
34
35
36

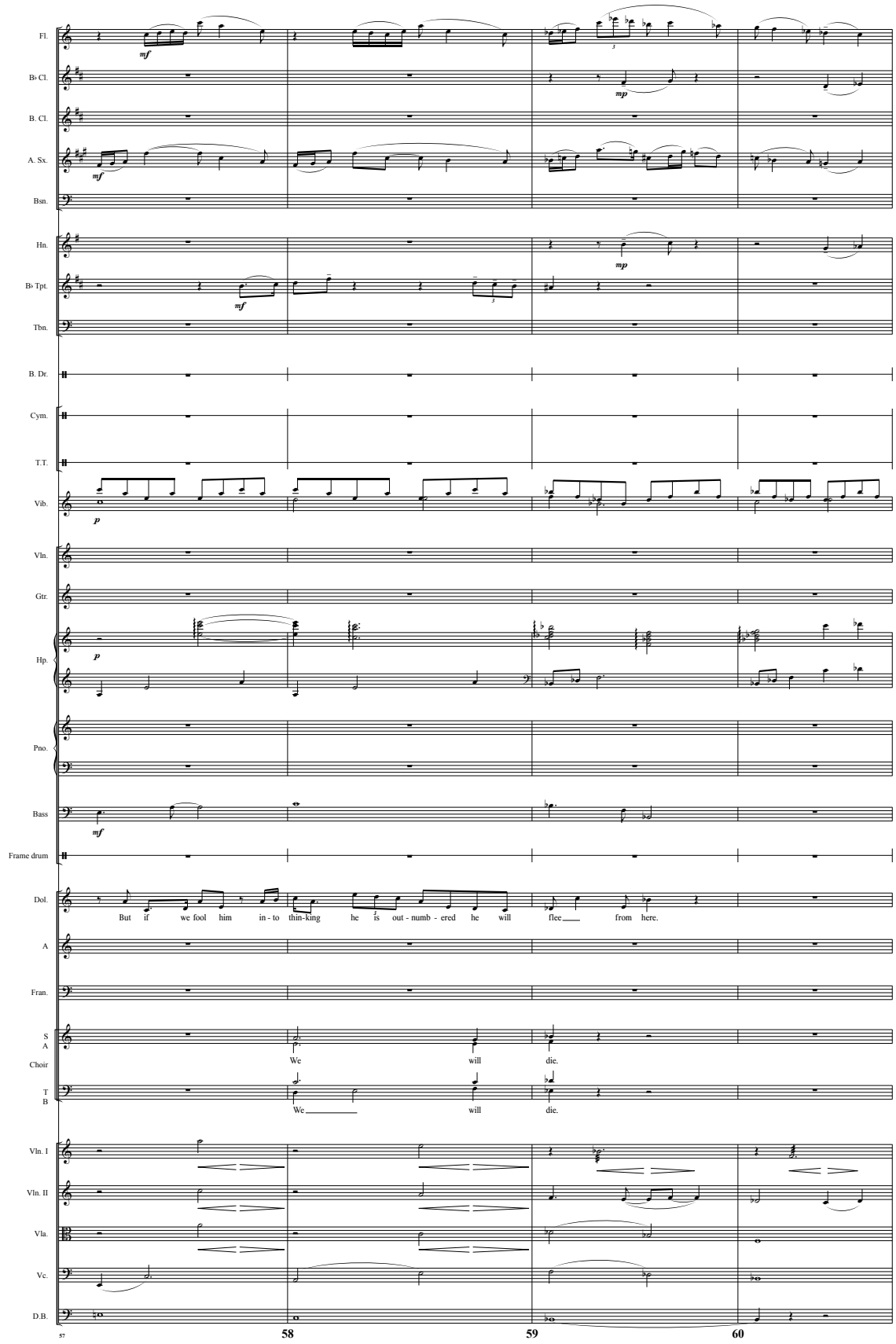

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
simile
You're sca-ring them.
There are o - ther ways.
ño - nes!
Lu - cha-re - mos!
I am not a - fraid of
Te - ne - - - mos mie - do.
sul pont.
(slight accent)
37
38
39
40

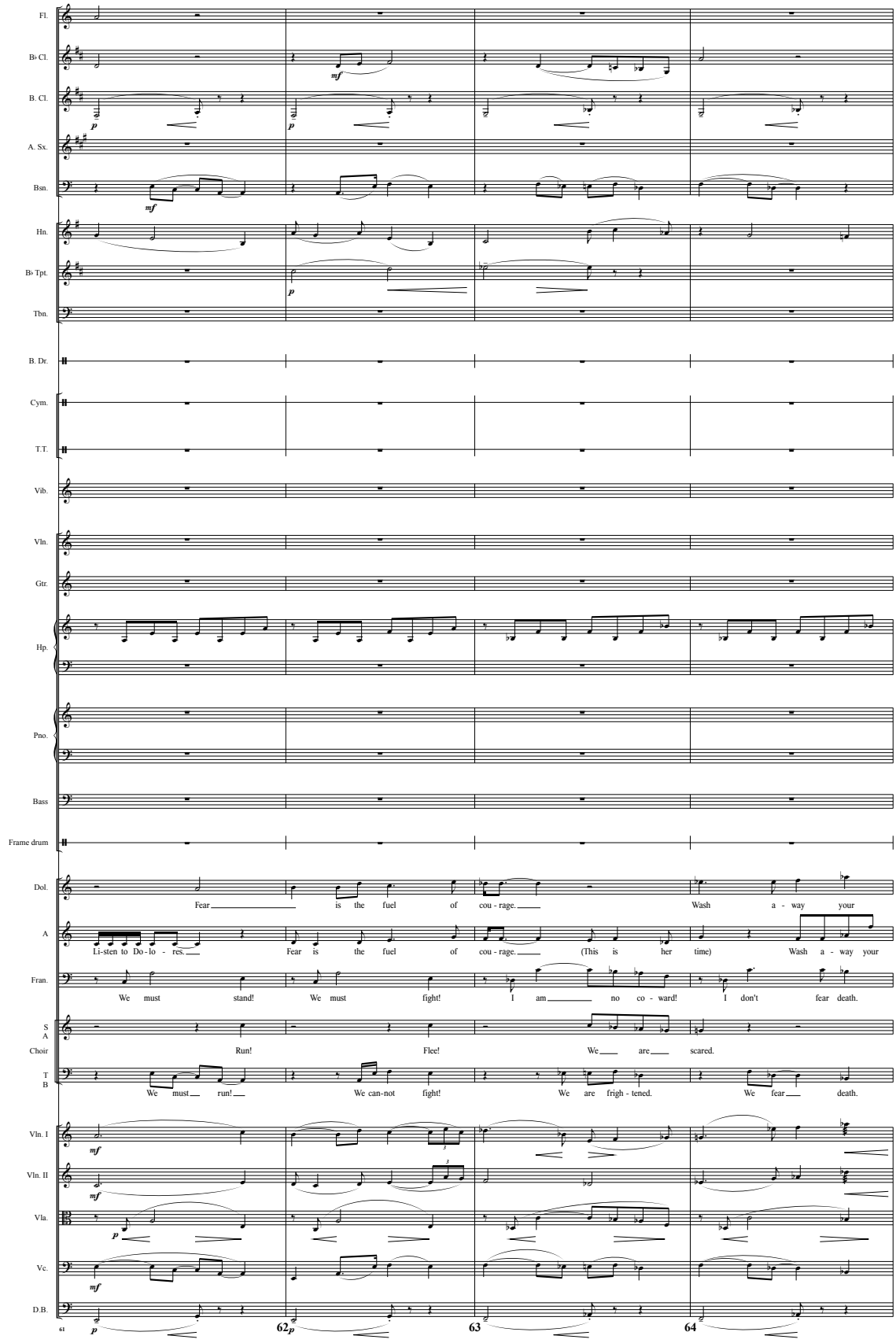

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
simile
pp
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
p
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
To townsfolk:
Dol.
Es - to no es so - bre ti.
Please lis - ten to me, we will sur - vive!
A
Fran.
death!
(sop. & altos)
S
A
Choir
We are doomed. We will
T
B
misterioso
Vln. I
Vln. II
ord.
Vla.
Vc.
mp
D.B.
41
42
43
44

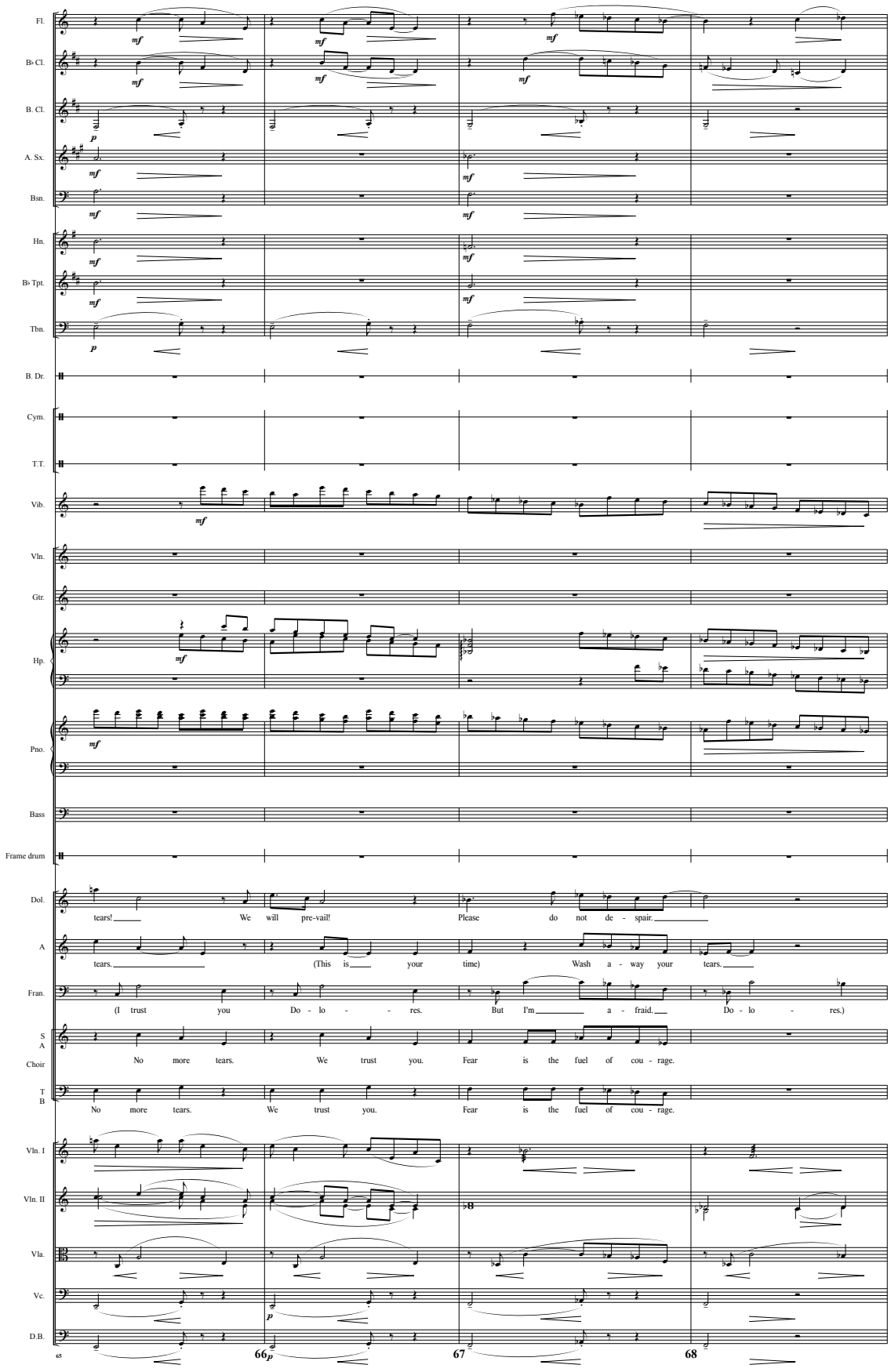

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
simile
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
hauntingly
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
Trust
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
die.
We must flee!
...die. We must flee! We must run!
...die. We must flee! We must run!
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
45
46
47
48

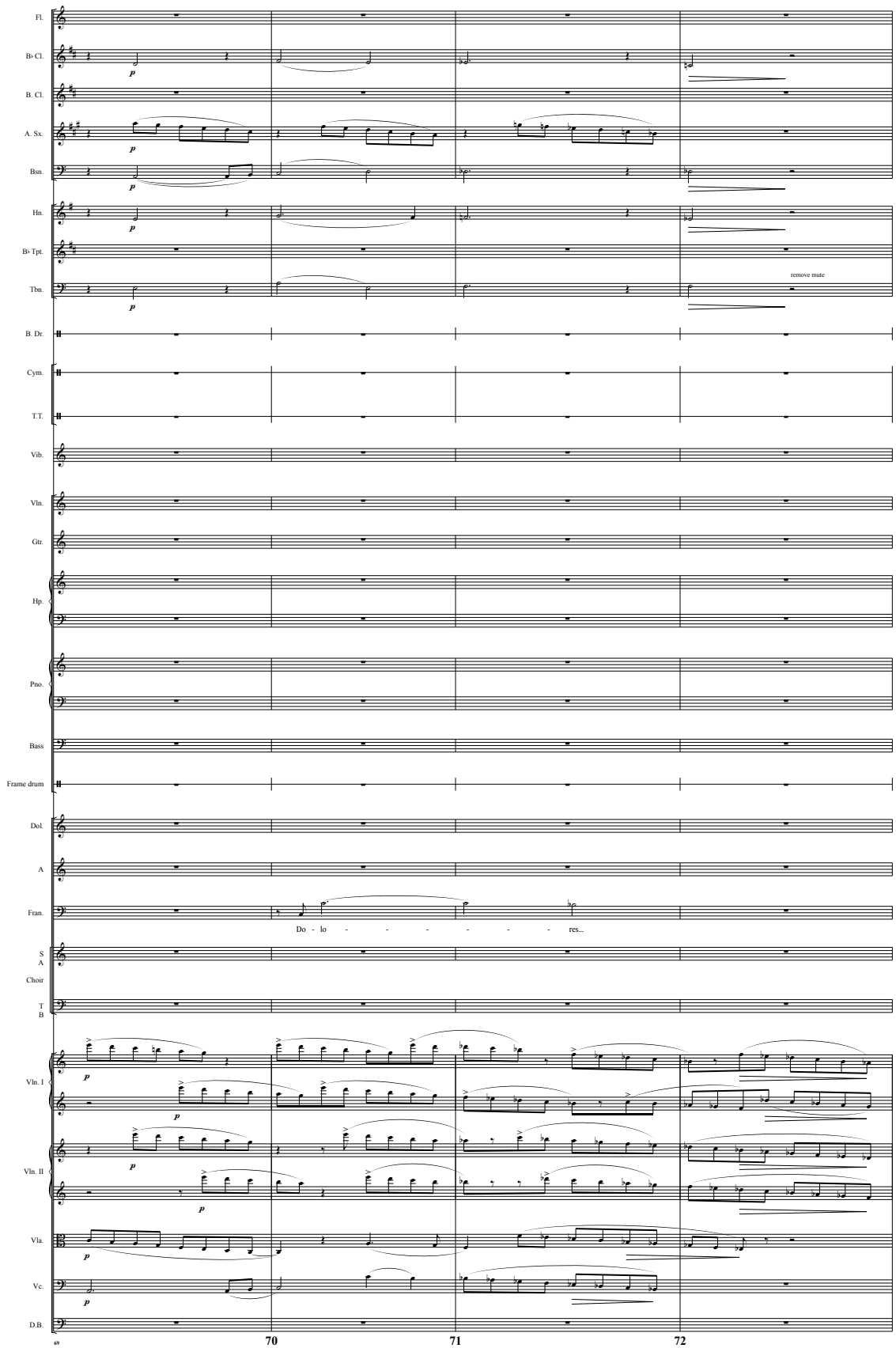

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
simile
bucket mute
hauntingly, like weeping
bring out slightly
me.
Bou - chard is no fool but I have a
Es - cu - cha Do - lo - res. She will save us all.
xubito p
xubito p
49
50
51
52


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
plan!
If we fight we will die!
If we run we lose e - very - thing.
We will die.
We will die.
sul tasto
floating
sul tasto
floating
express.
53
54
55
56

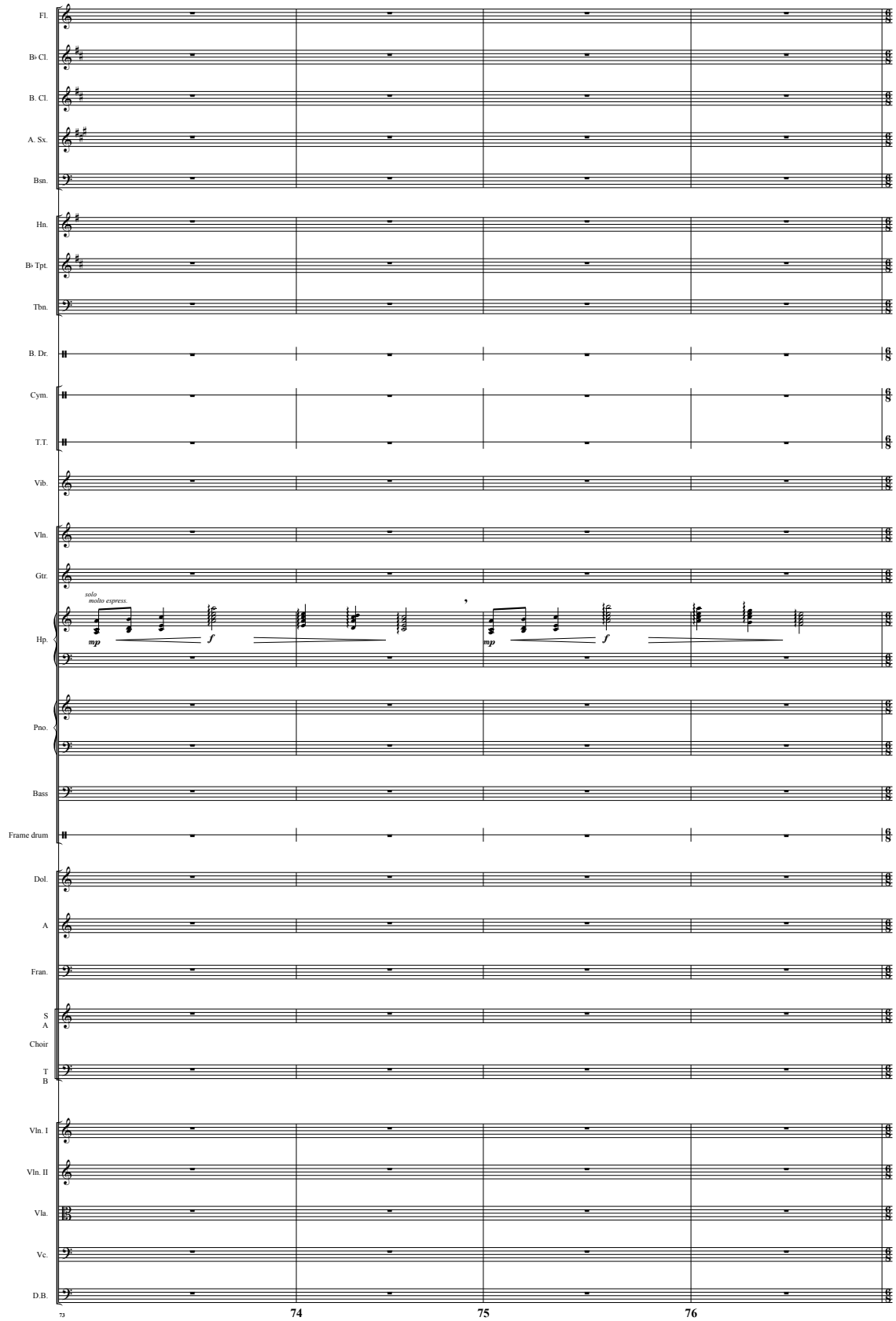

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
But if we fool him in - to thin-king he is out - numb - ered he will flee from here.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
We will die.
T
B
We will die.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
57
58
59
60

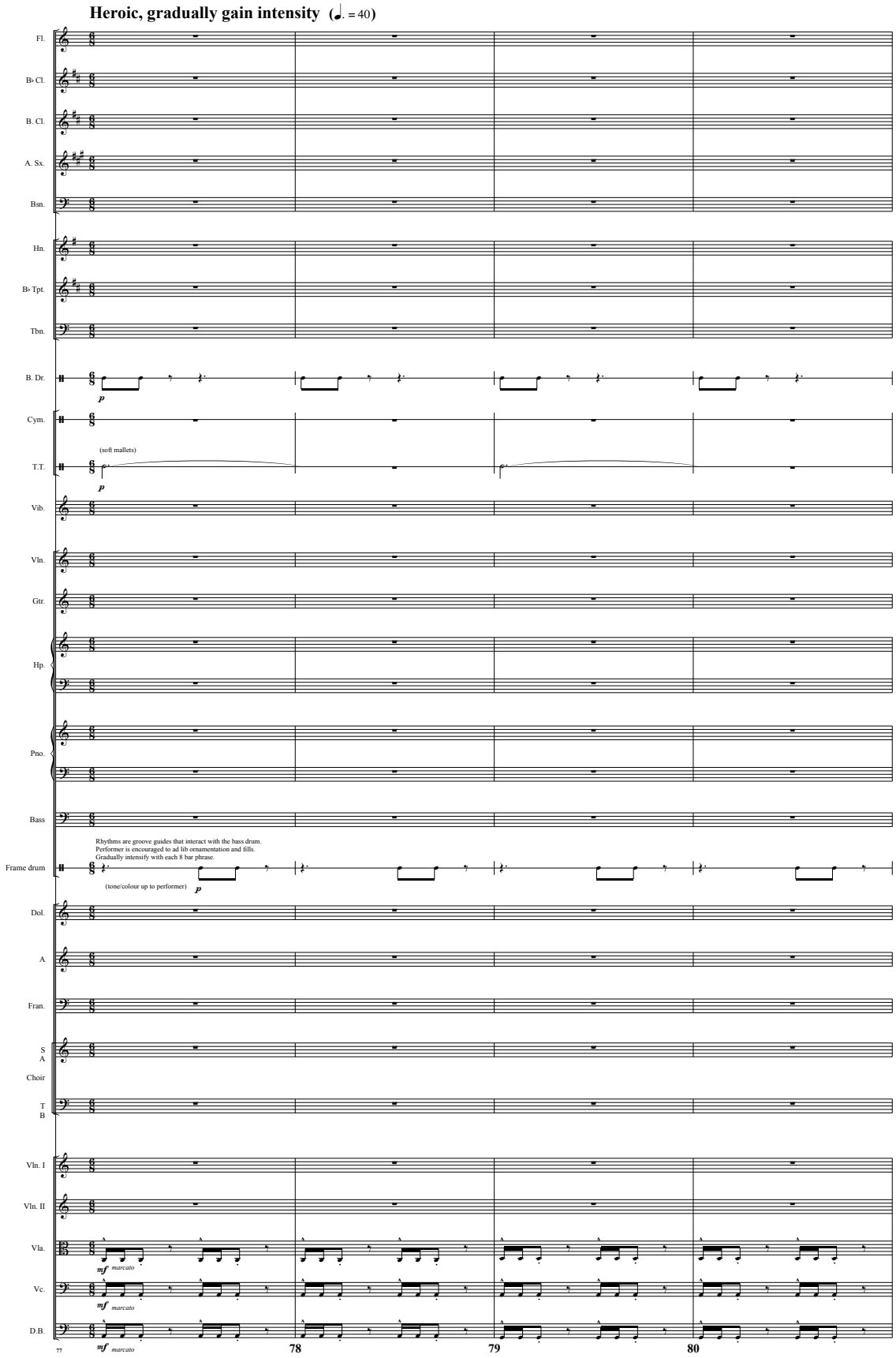

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
Fear is the fuel of cou - rage.
Wash a - way your
Li-sten to Do - lo - res.
Fear is the fuel of cou - rage.
(This is her time)
Wash a - way your
We must stand!
We must fight!
I am no co - ward!
I don't fear death.
Run!
Flee!
We are scared.
We must run!
We can-not fight!
We are frigh - tened.
We fear death.
61
62
63
64


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
p
tears! We will pre-vail! Please do not de - spair.
tears. (This is your time) Wash a - way your tears.
(I trust you Do - lo - - res. But I'm a - fraid. Do - lo - res.)
No more tears. We trust you. Fear is the fuel of cou - rage.
No more tears. We trust you. Fear is the fuel of cou - rage.
65
66
67
68

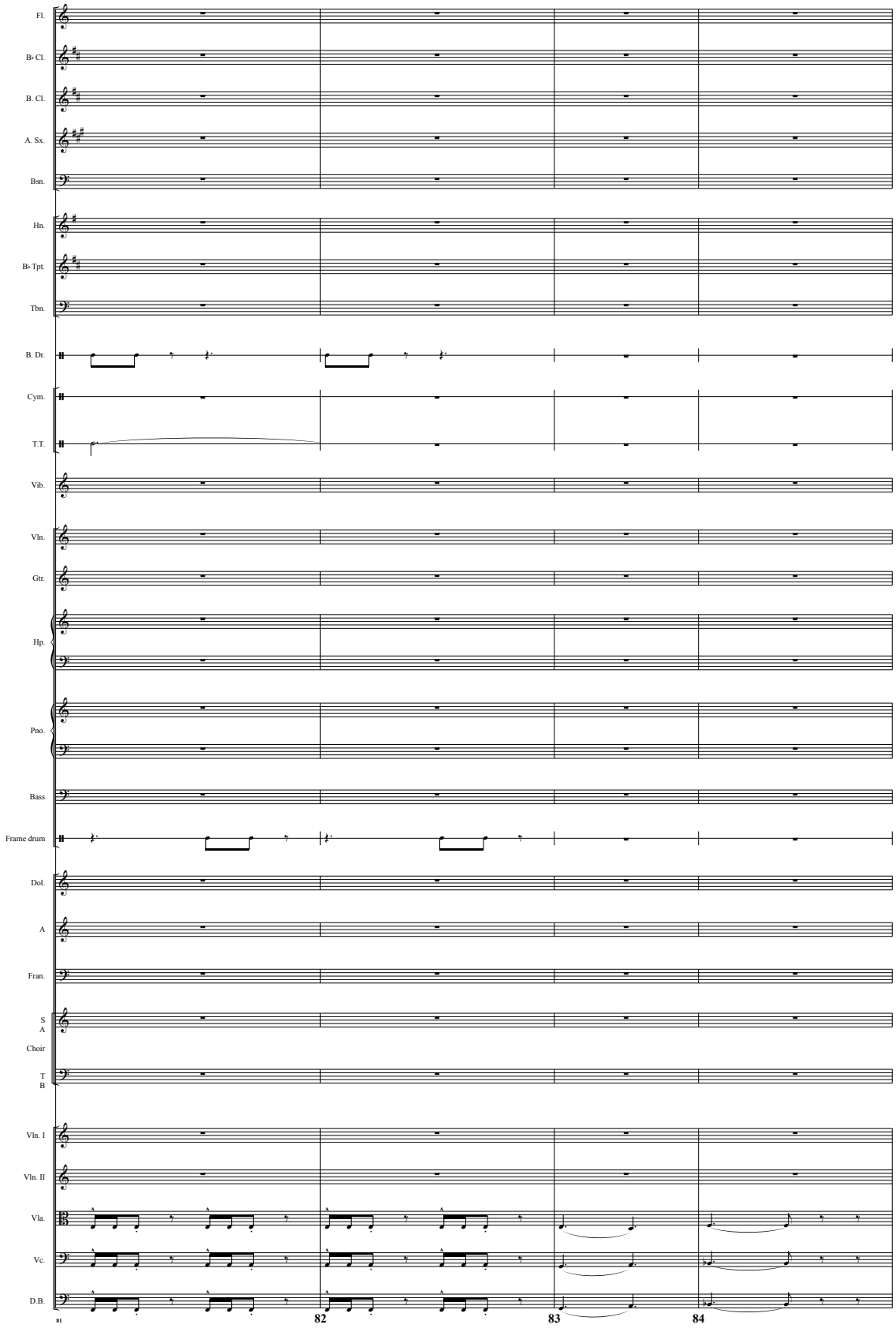

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
remove mute
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
Do - lo - - - - - - res...
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
70
71
72

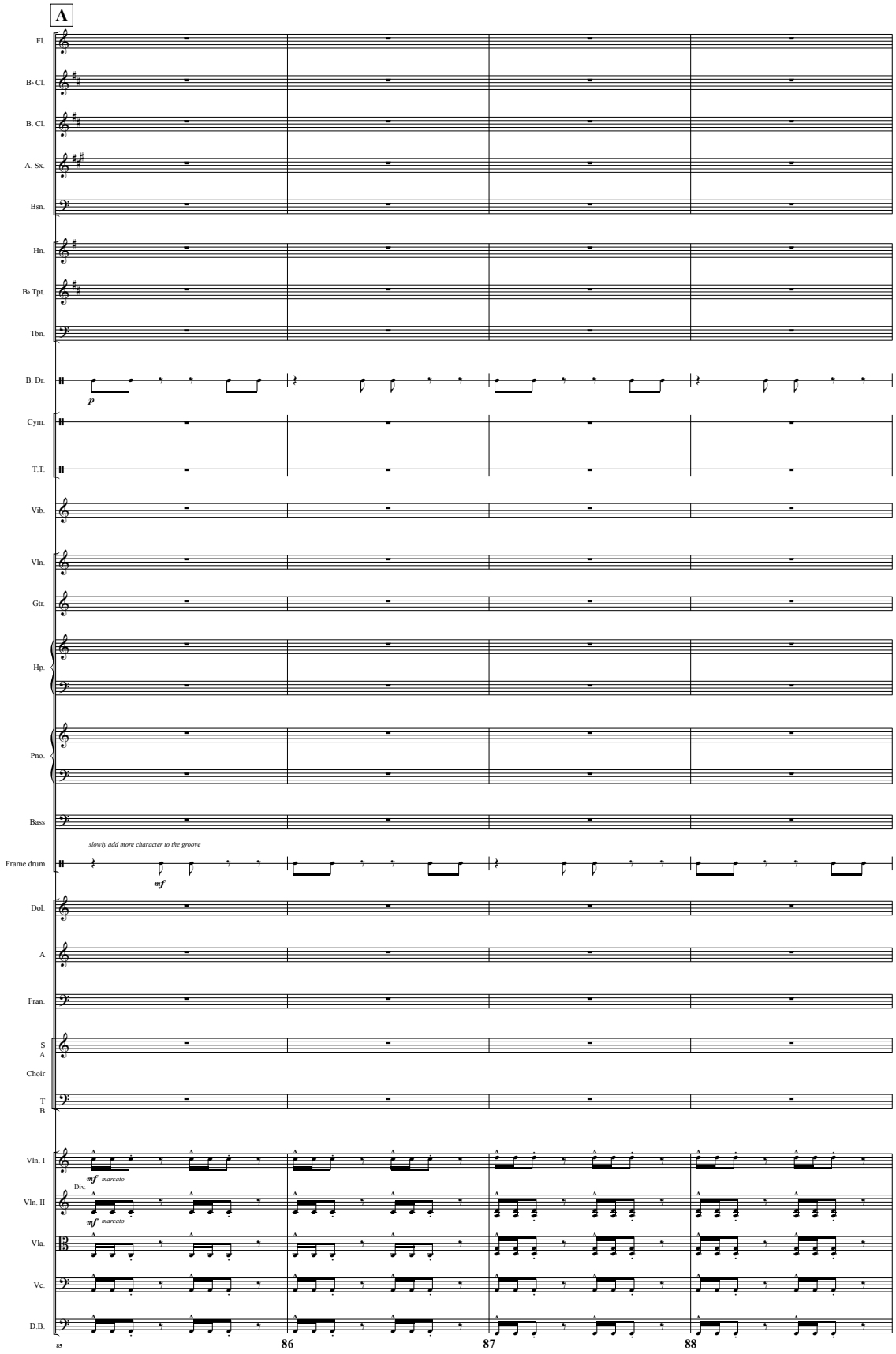
Lighting change

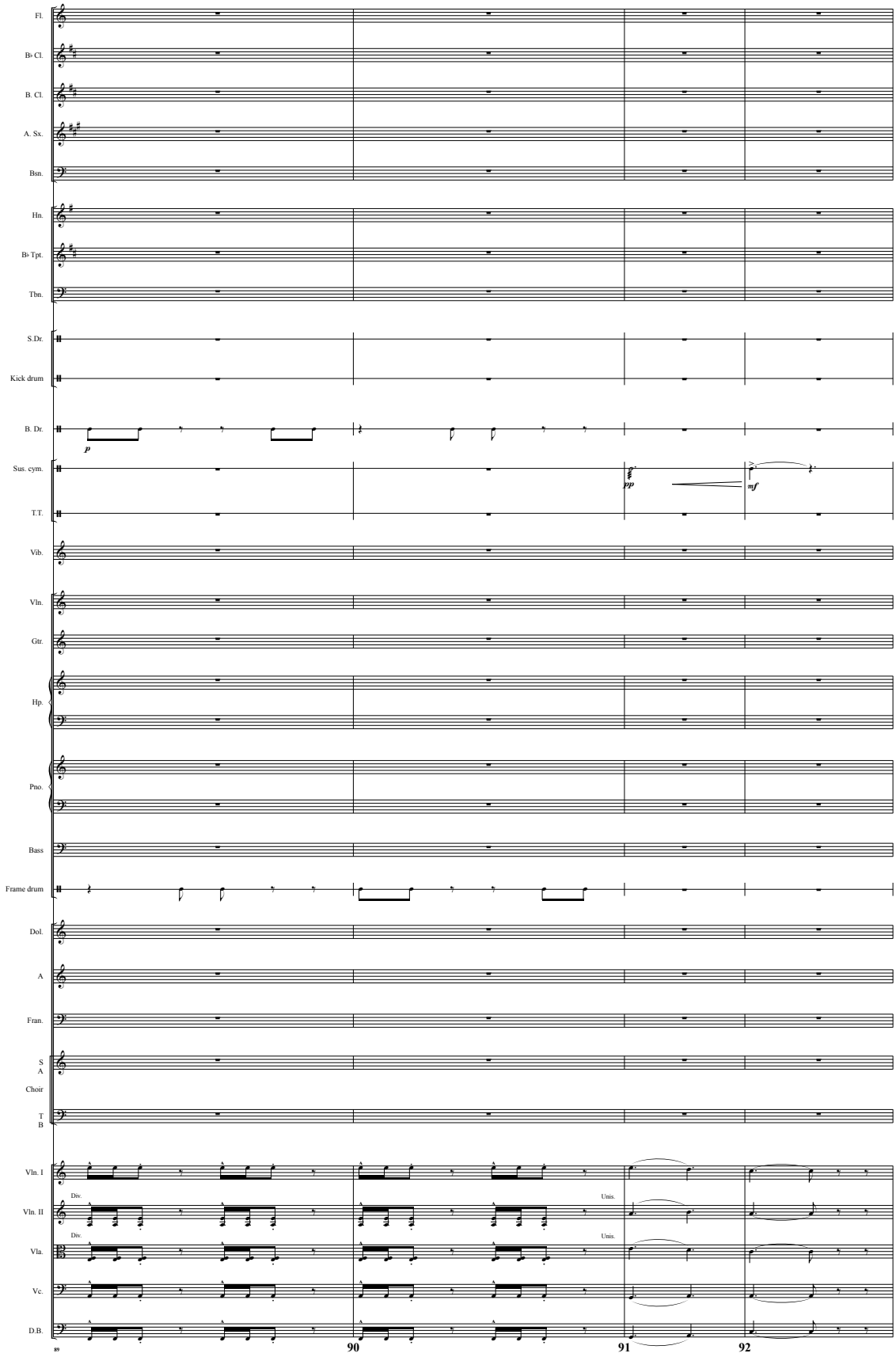


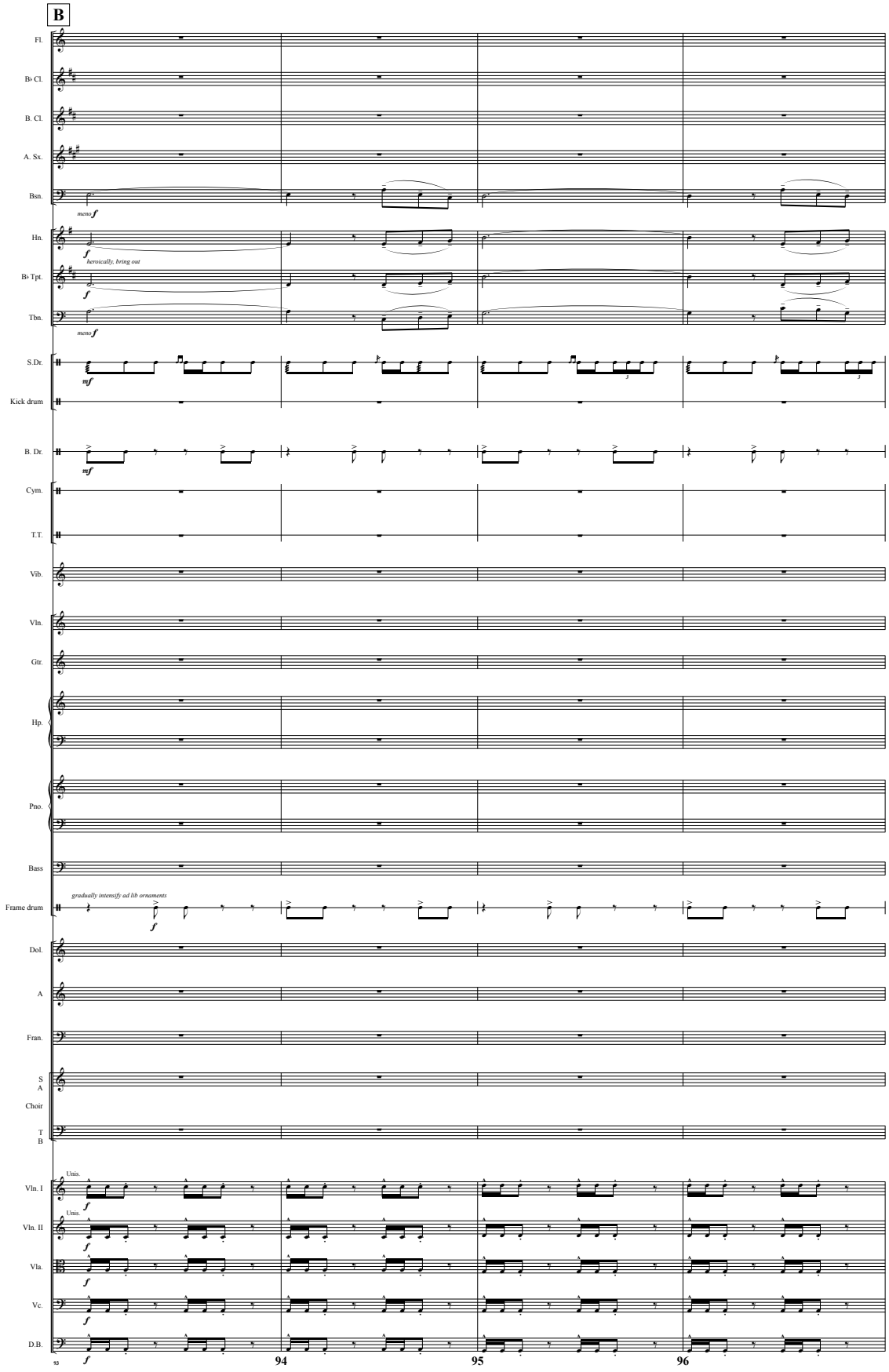


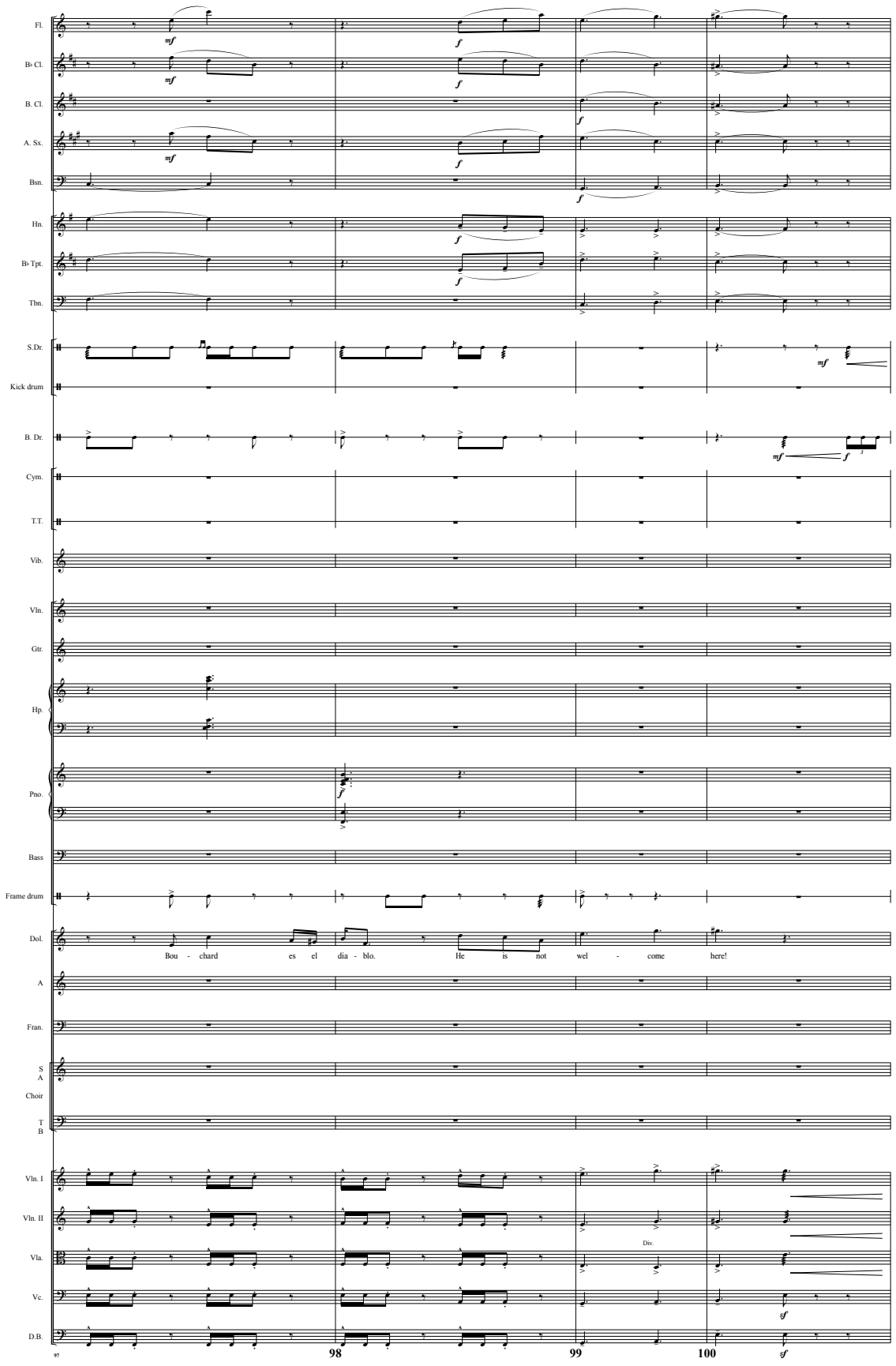
***PG. 19-23 – NEED TO INPUT DOLORE'S SPEECH AND VOCAL LINES.**

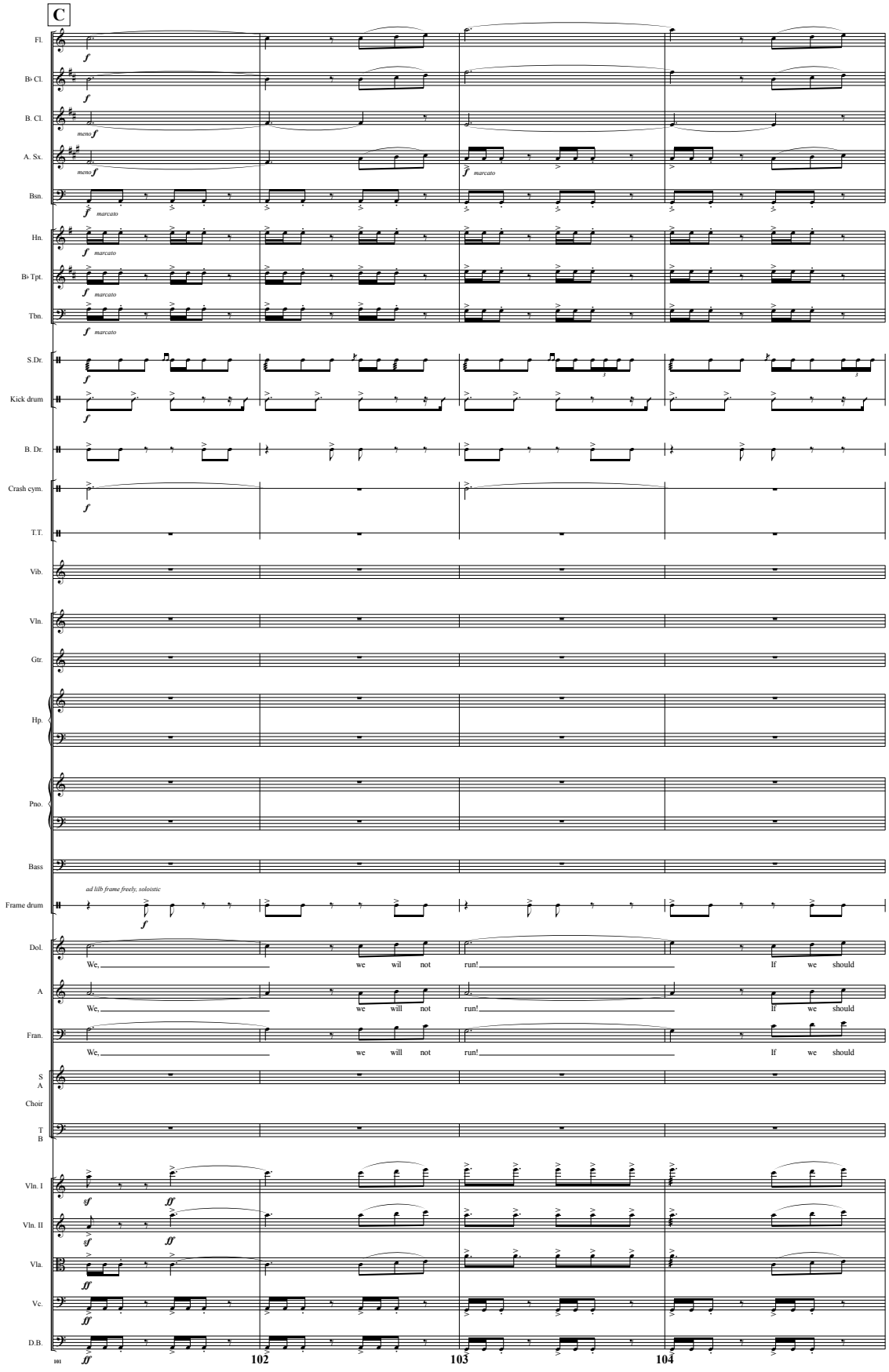

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
81
82
83
84

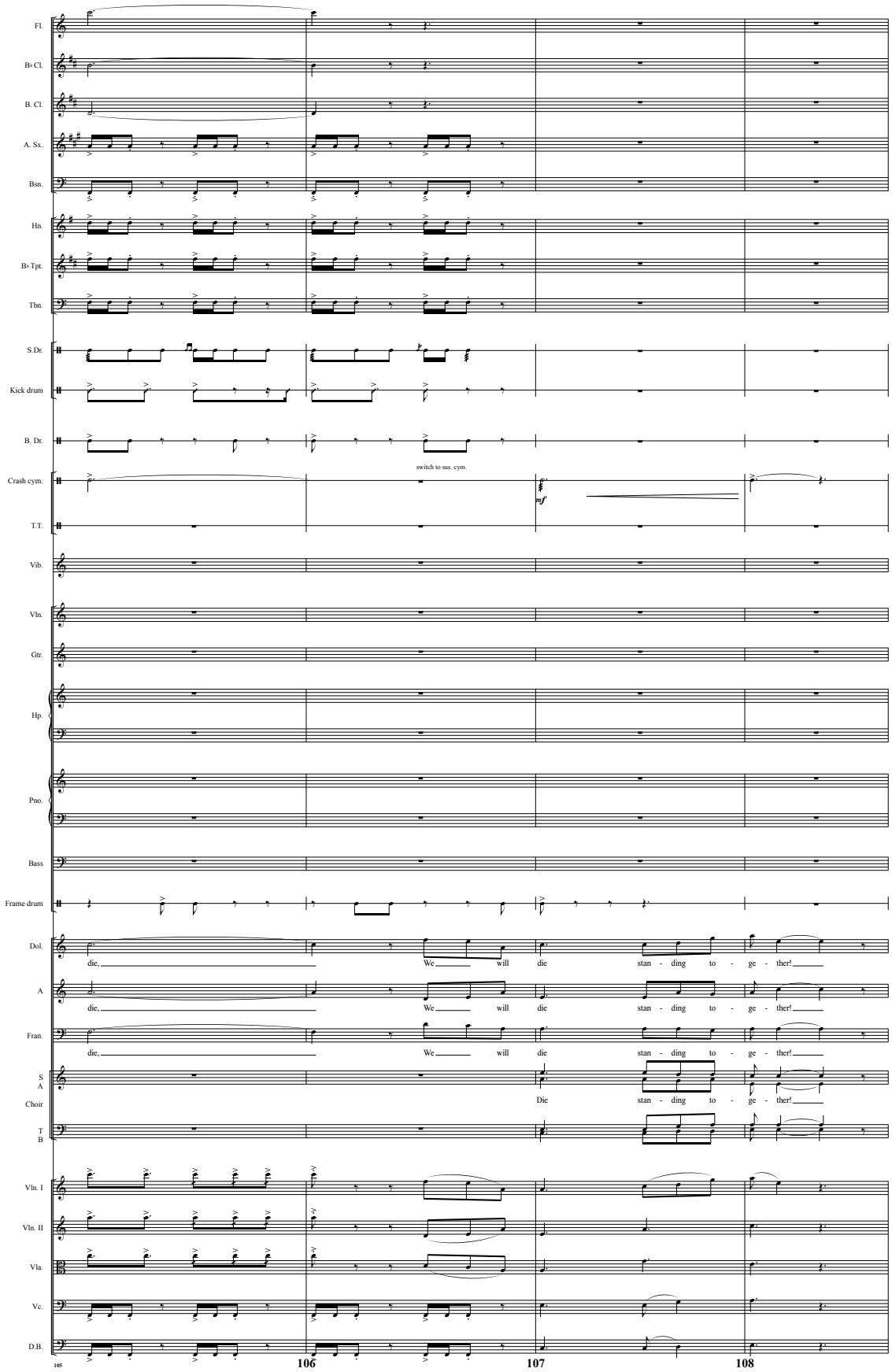

A
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
p
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
slowly add more character to the groove
Frame drum
mf
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
mf marcato
Div.
Vln. II
mf marcato
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
85
86
87
88

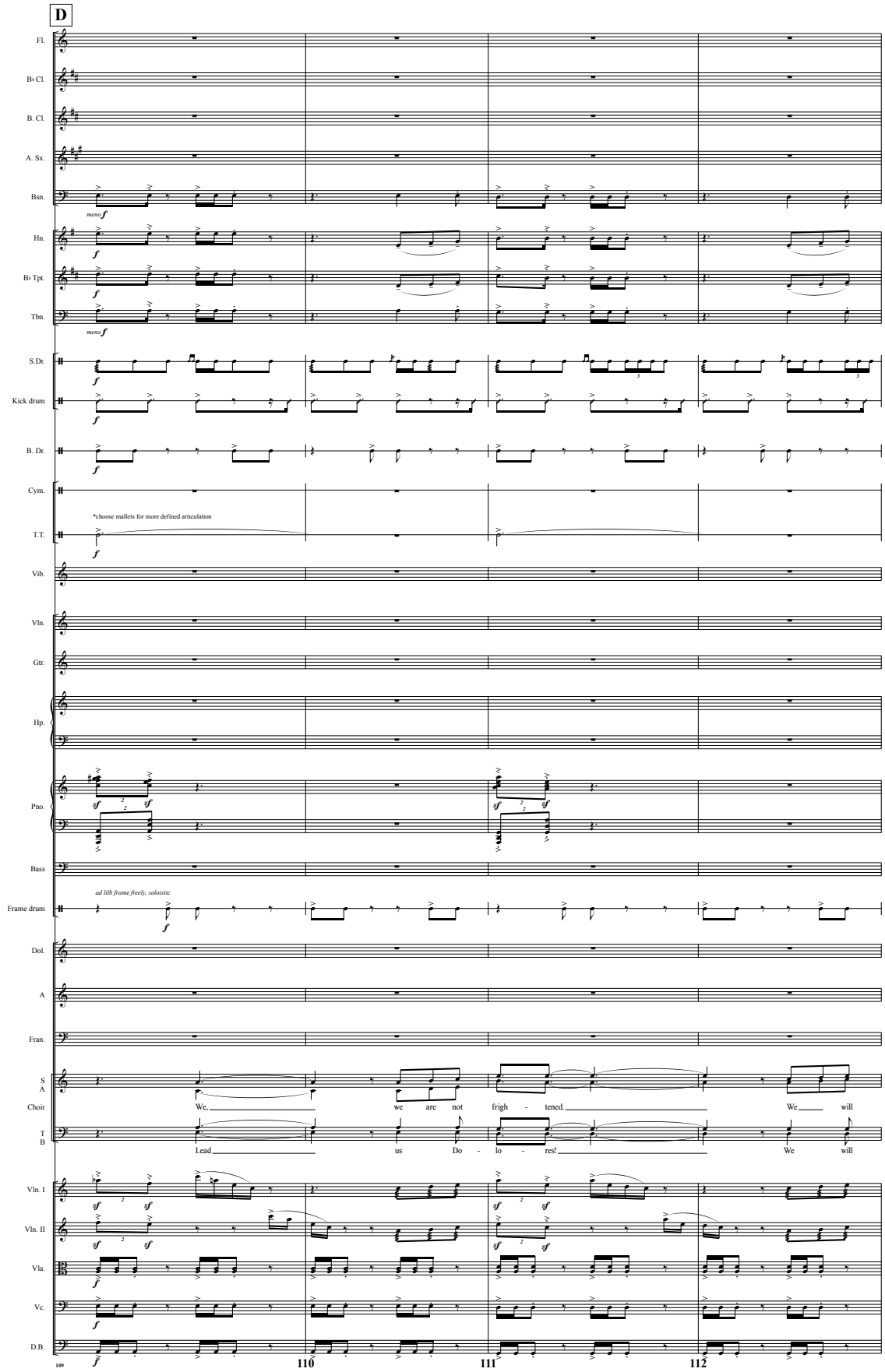

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
p
Sus. cym.
pp
mf
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Div.
Unis.
Vla.
Div.
Unis.
Vc.
D.B.
89
90
91
92

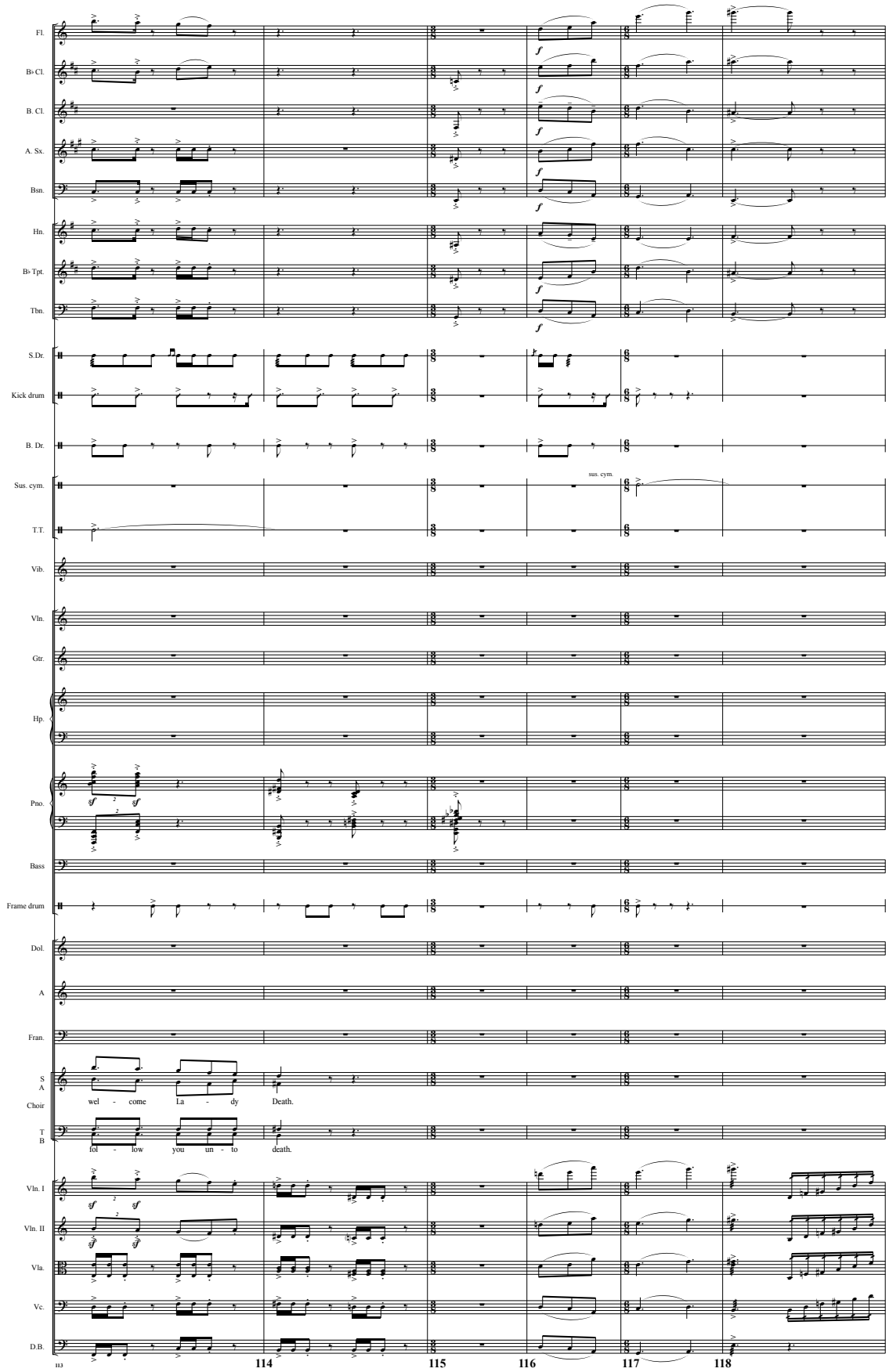

B
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
meno f
Hn.
f
heroically, bring out
B♭ Tpt.
f
Tbn.
meno f
S.Dr.
mf
Kick drum
B. Dr.
mf
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
gradually intensify ad lib ornaments
Frame drum
f
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Unis.
f
Vln. II
Unis.
f
Vla.
f
Vc.
f
D.B.
f
93
94
95
96

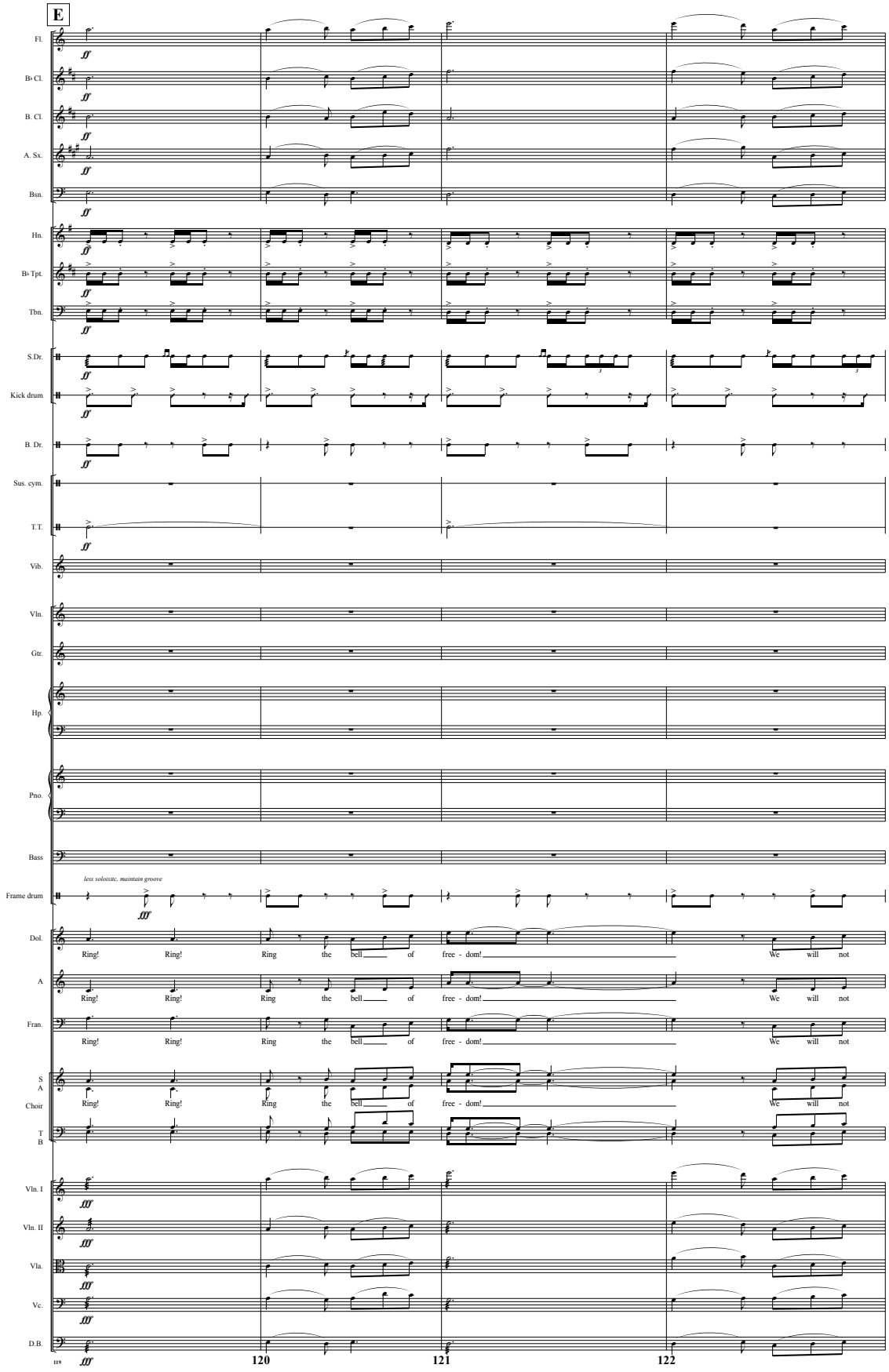

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
Bou - chard es el dia - blo. He is not wel - come here!
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
Div.
97
98
99
100

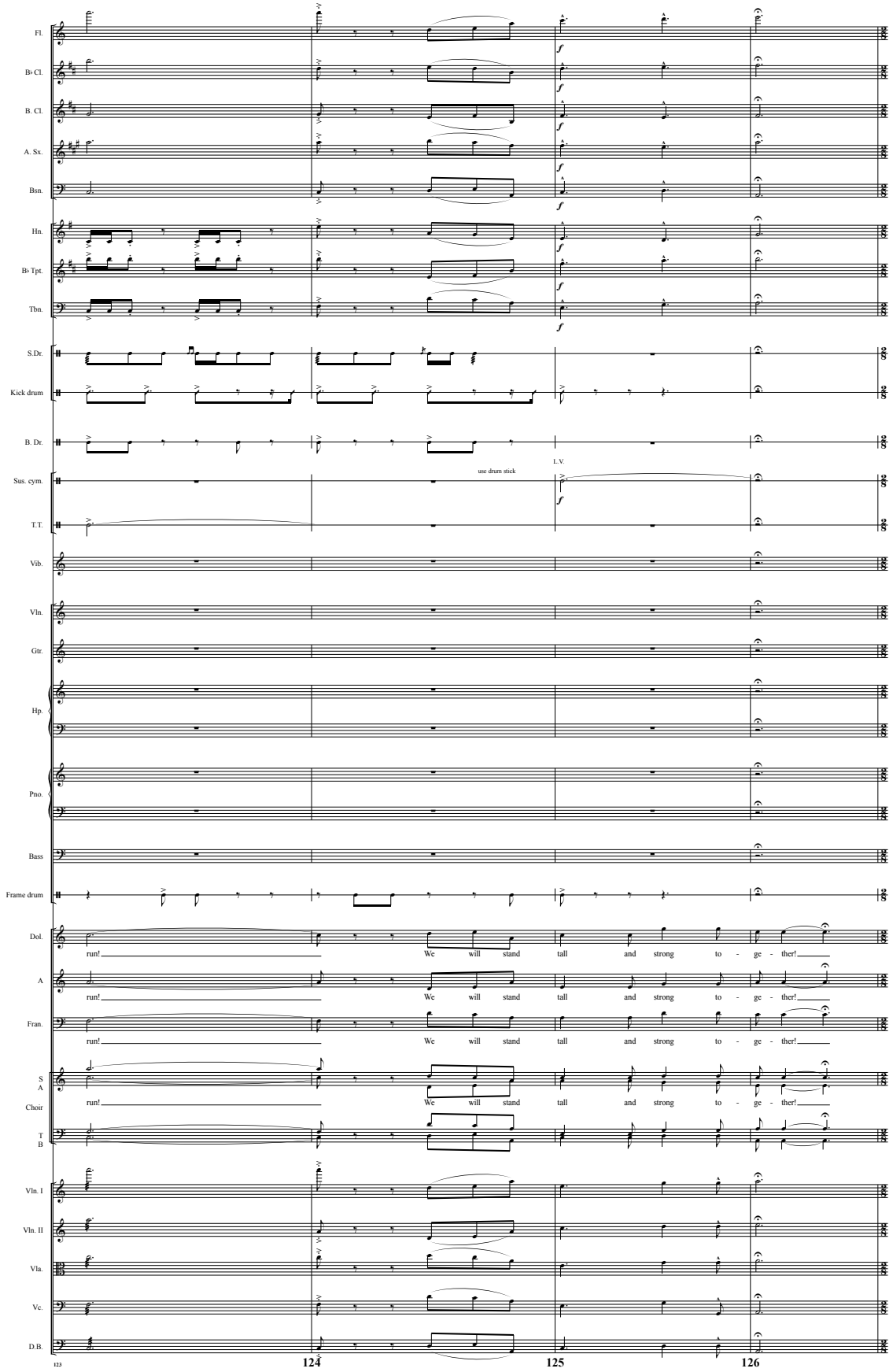

C
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Crash cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
ad lilb frame freely, soloistic
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
We, we wil not run! If we should
We, we will not run! If we should
We, we will not run! If we should
101
102
103
104


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Crash cym.
switch to sus. cym.
mf
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
die, We will die stan - ding to - ge - ther!
Die stan - ding to - ge - ther!
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
105
106
107
108

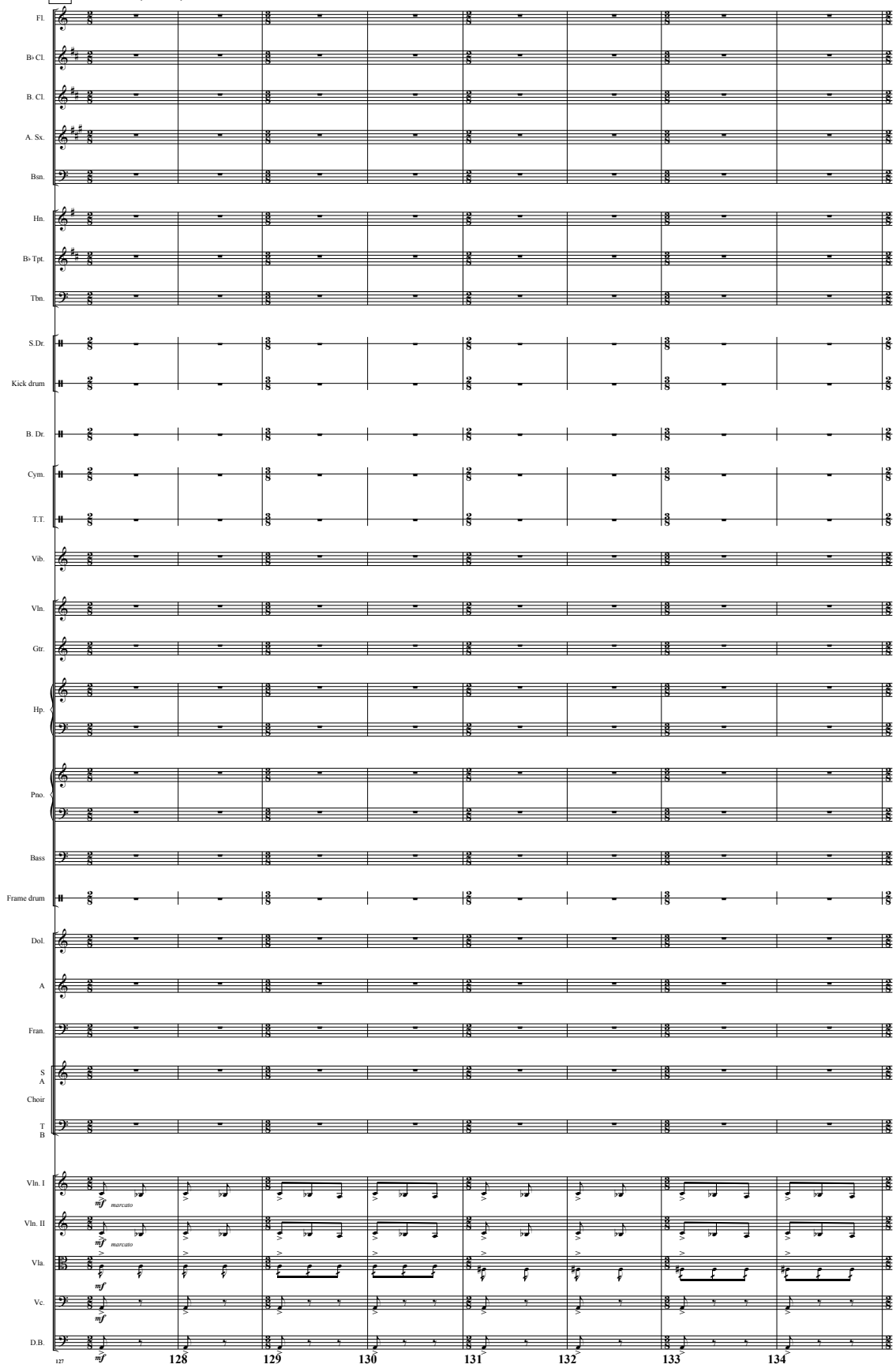

D
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
meno f
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
meno f
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Cym.
*choose mallets for more defined articulation
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
ad lilb frame freely, soloistic
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
We, we are not frigh - tened. We will
T
B
Lead us Do - lo - res! We will
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
109
110
111
112

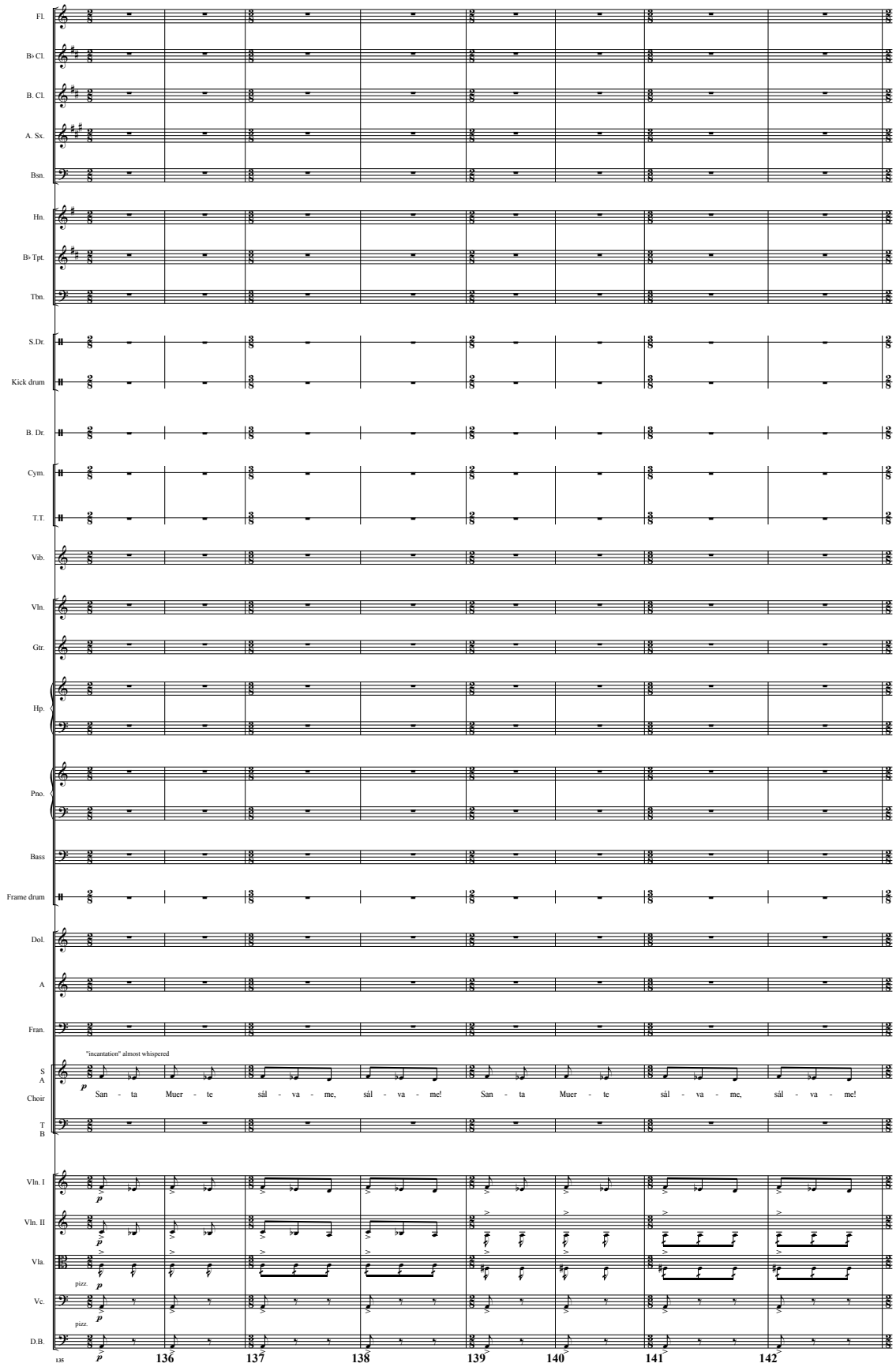

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Sus. cym.
sus. cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
wel - come La - dy Death.
fol - low you un - to death.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
113
114
115
116
117
118

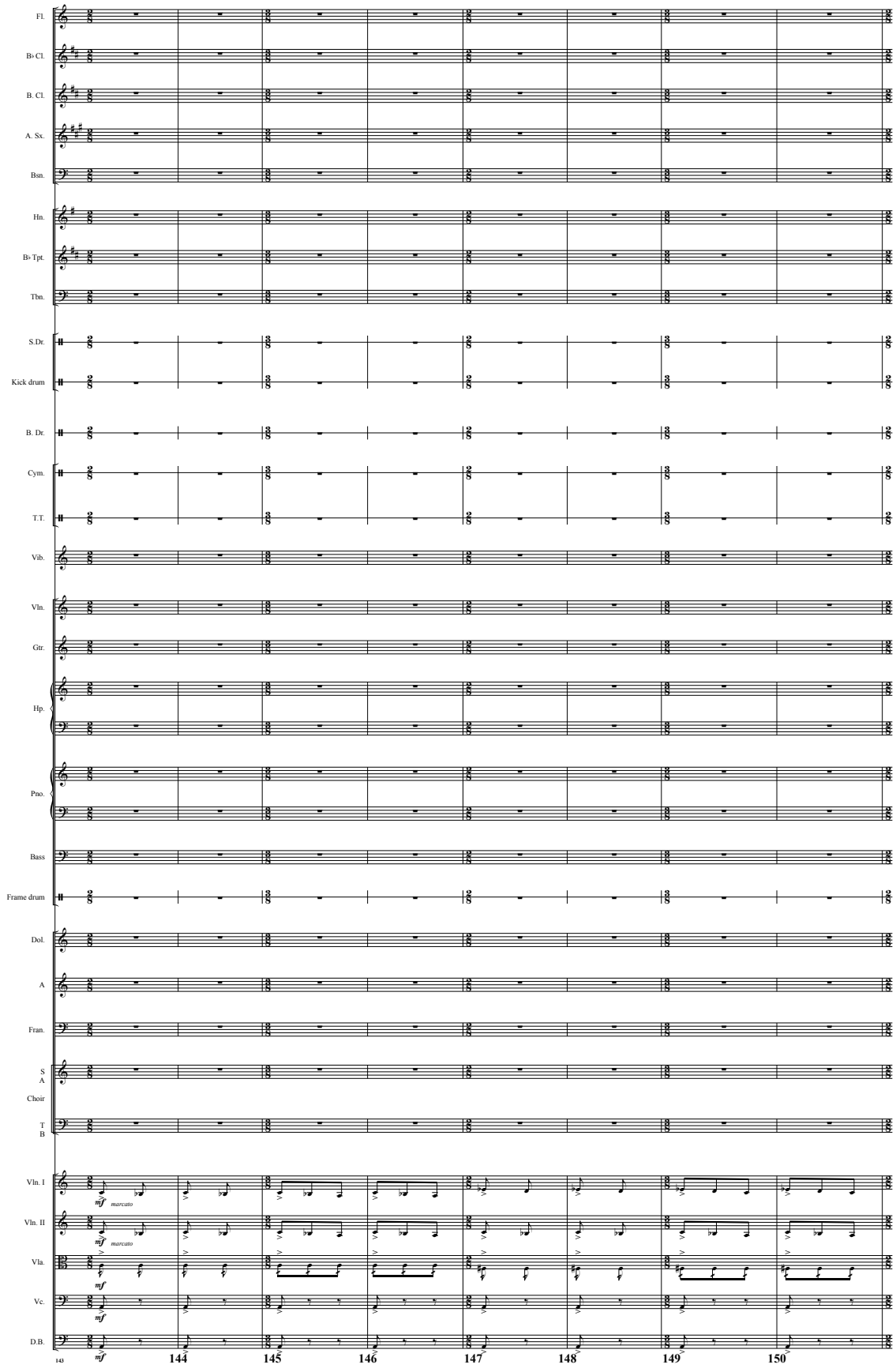

E
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Sus. cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
less soloistic, maintain groove
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Ring! Ring! Ring the bell of free - dom! We will not
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
119
120
121
122

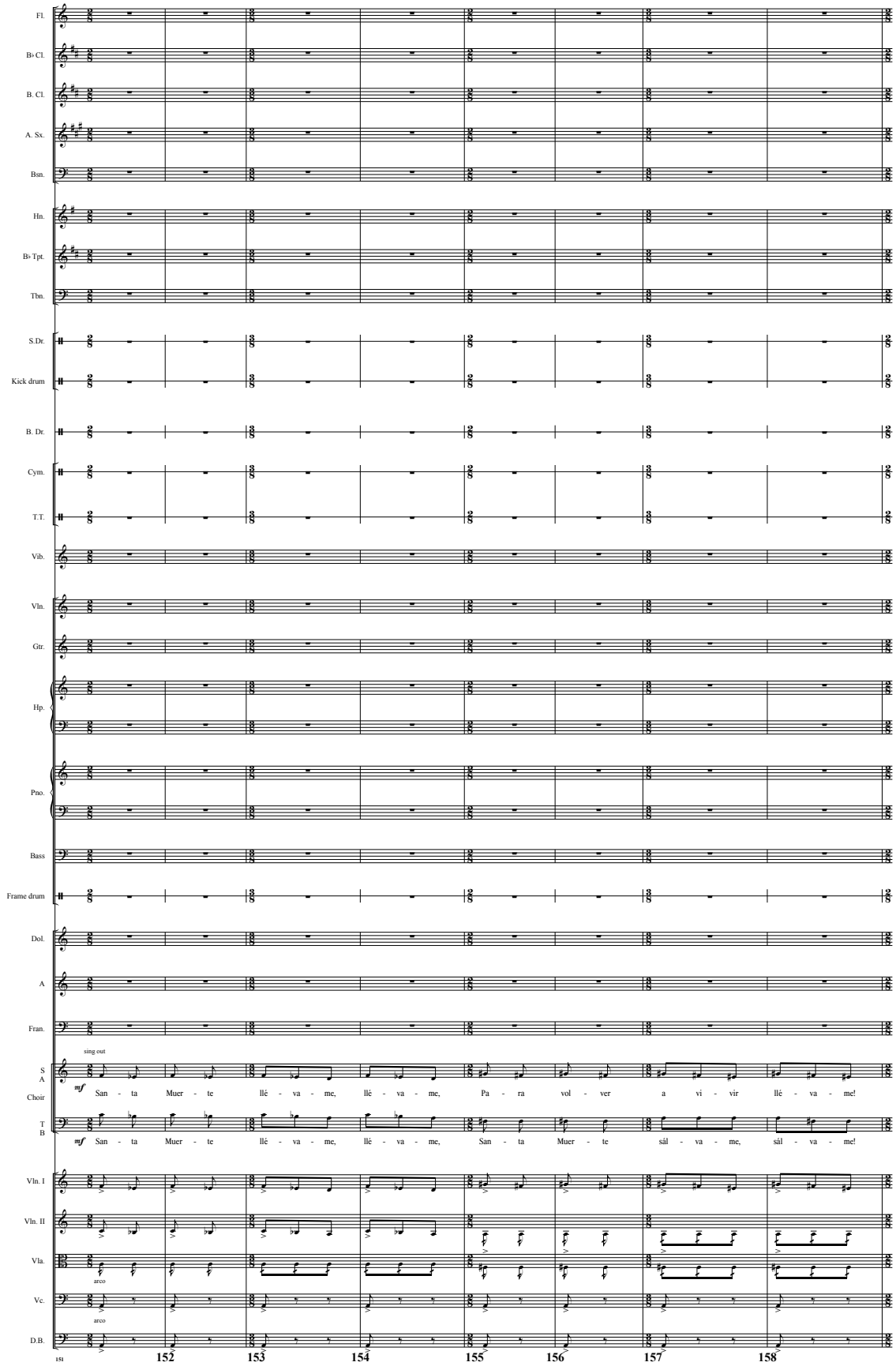

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Sus. cym.
use drum stick
L.V.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
run! We will stand tall and strong to - ge - ther!
A
run! We will stand tall and strong to - ge - ther!
Fran.
run! We will stand tall and strong to - ge - ther!
S
A
Choir
run! We will stand tall and strong to - ge - ther!
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
123
124
125
126

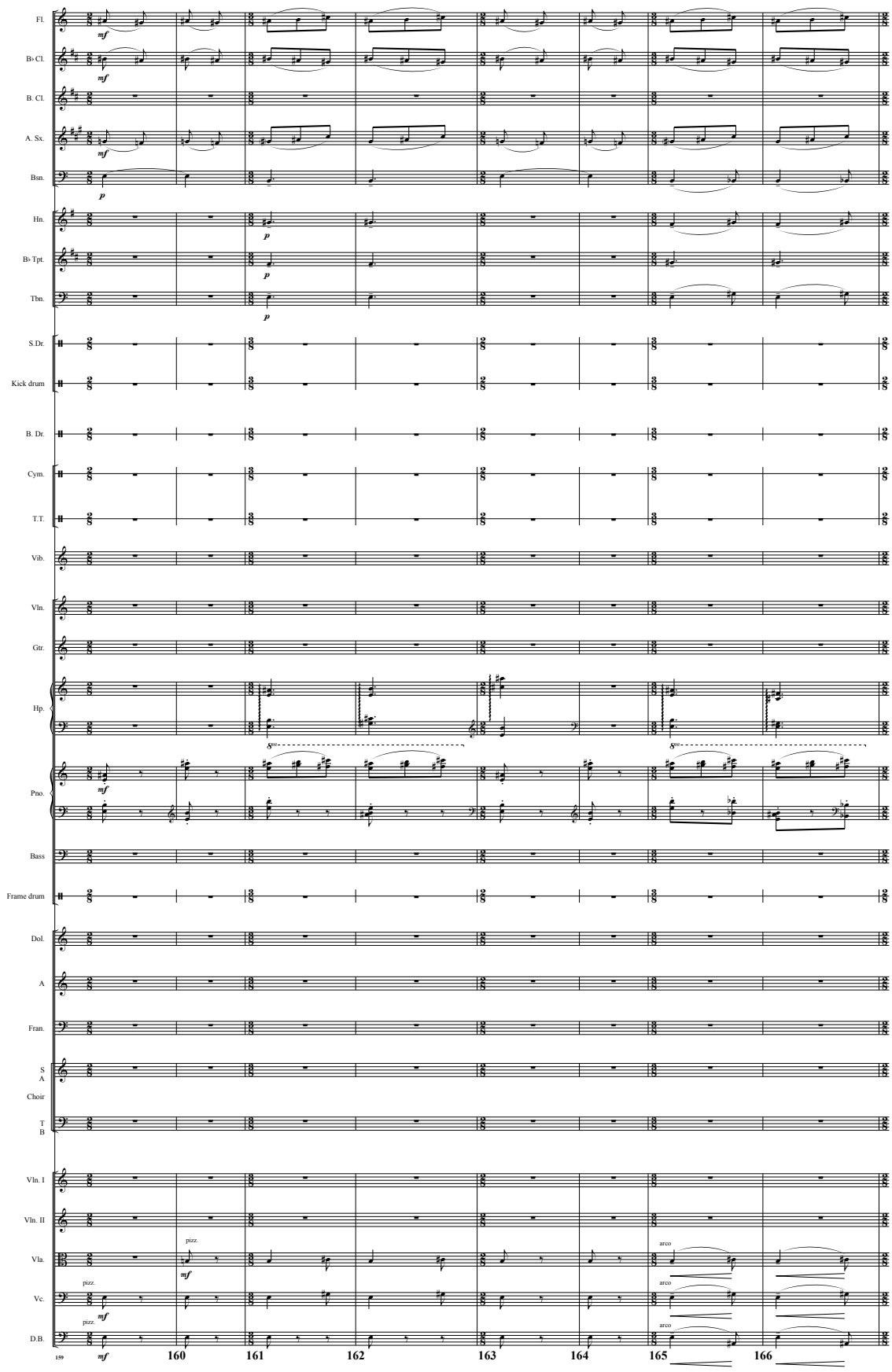
F **Chant** (♩ = 115)

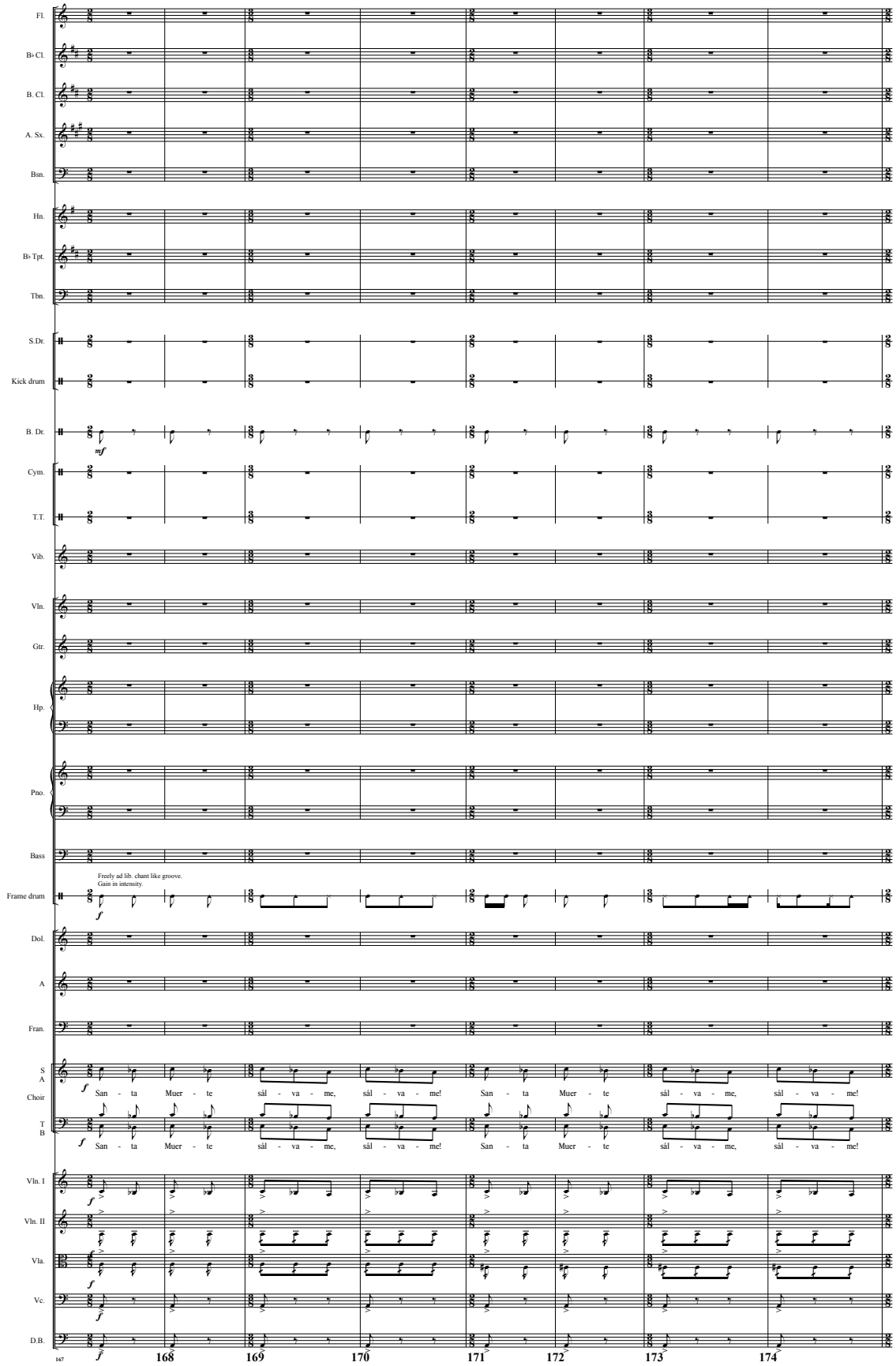

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf marcato
mf marcato
mf
mf
mf
127
128
129
130
131
132
133
134


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
"incantation" almost whispered
S
A
Choir
T
B
San - ta Muer - te sál - va - me, sál - va - me! San - ta Muer - te sál - va - me, sál - va - me!
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
pizz.
Vc.
pizz.
D.B.
135
136
137
138
139
140
141
142

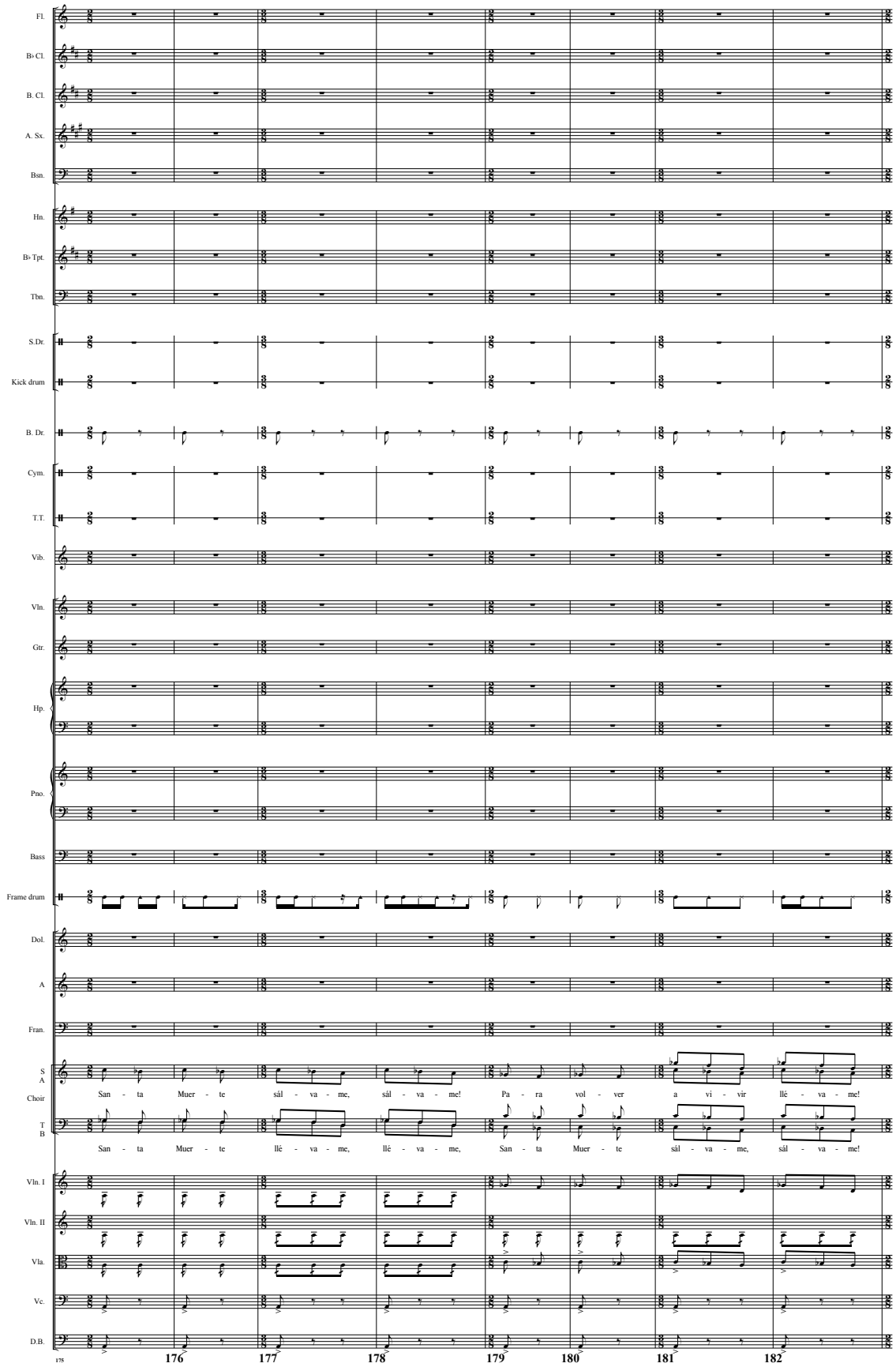

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf marcato
mf
143
144
145
146
147
148
149
150

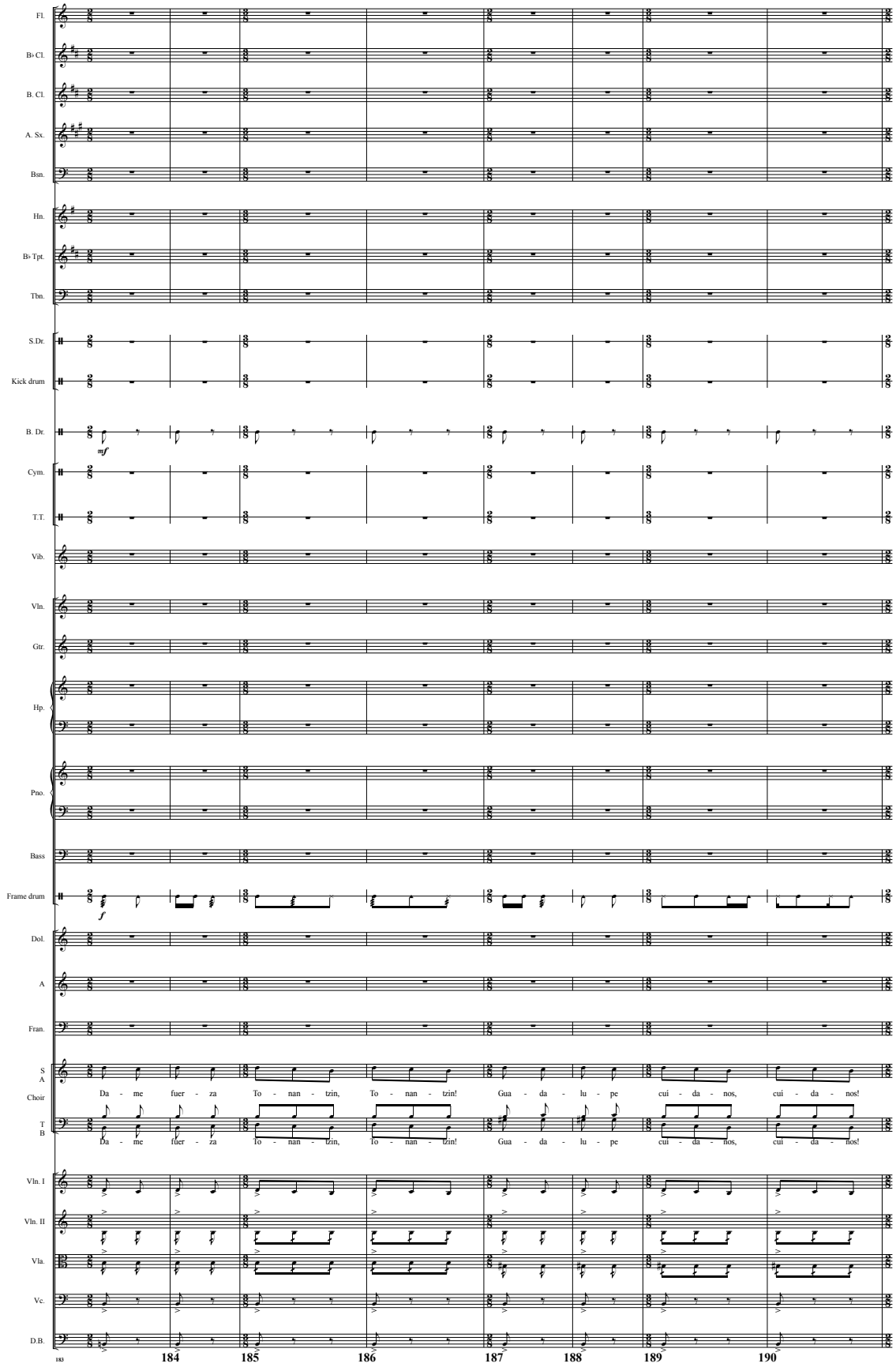

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
sing out
S
A
Choir
T
B
mf San - ta Muer - te llé - va - me, llé - va - me, Pa - ra vol - ver a vi - vir llé - va - me!
mf San - ta Muer - te llé - va - me, llé - va - me, San - ta Muer - te sál - va - me, sál - va - me!
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
arco
Vc.
arco
D.B.
151
152
153
154
155
156
157
158

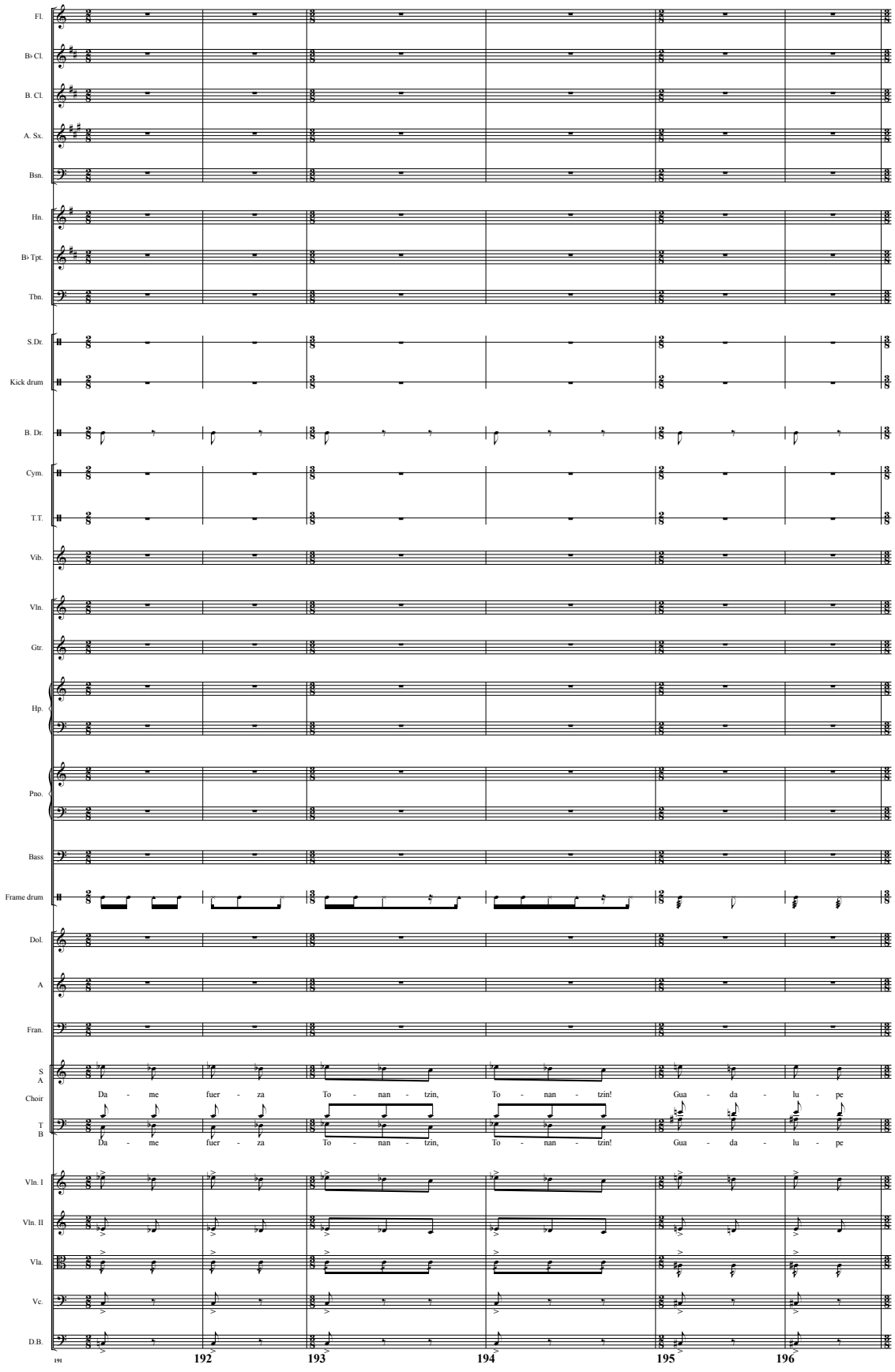

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
p
pizz.
arco
159
160
161
162
163
164
165
166

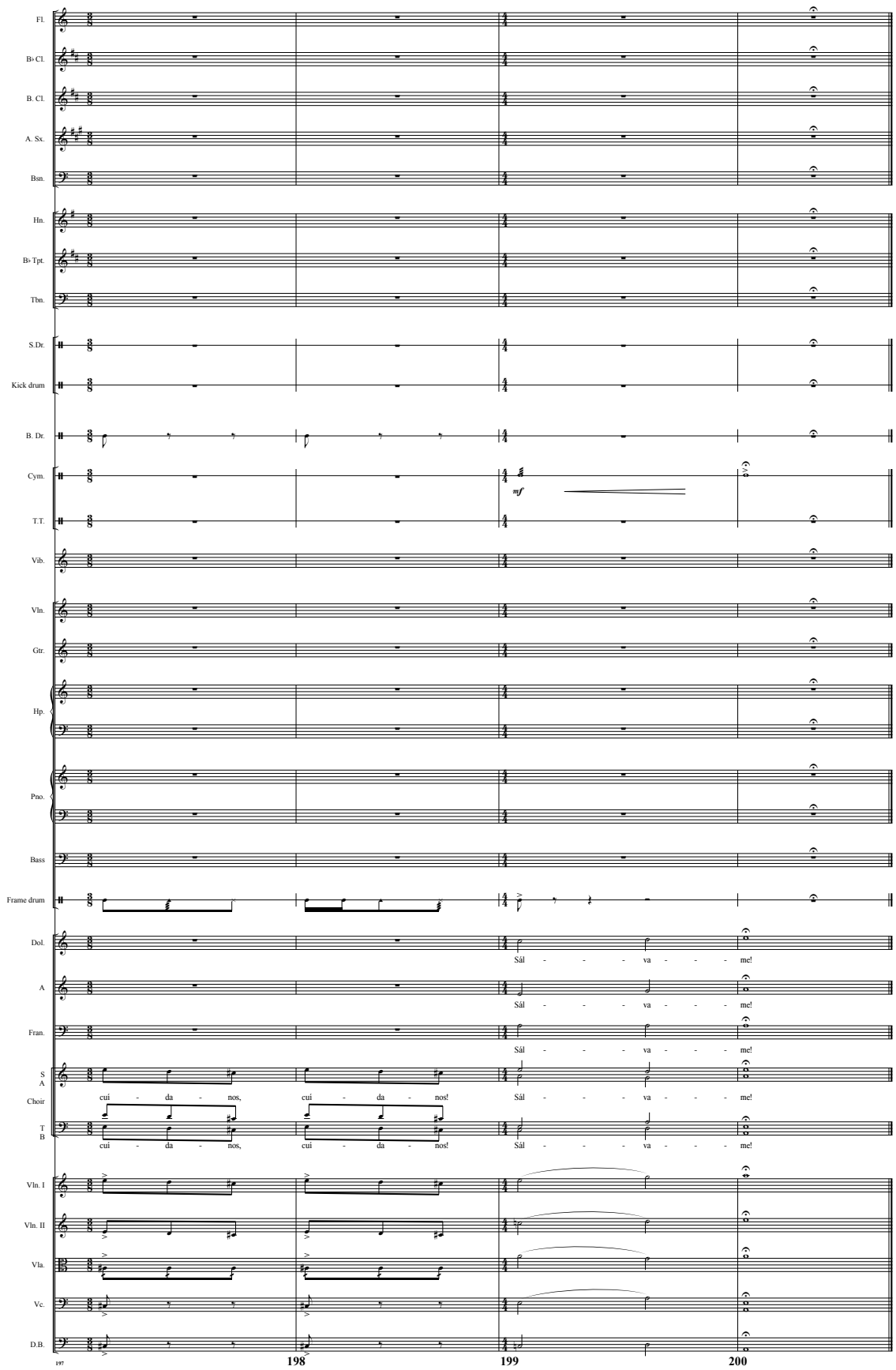


*Considering dynamic contrasts between phrases


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
San - ta Muer - te sál - va - me, sál - va - me! Pa - ra vol - ver a vi - vir llé - va - me!
San - ta Muer - te llé - va - me, llé - va - me, San - ta Muer - te sál - va - me, sál - va - me!
175
176
177
178
179
180
181
182


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
mf
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
f
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Da - me fuer - za To - nan - tzin, To - nan - tzin! Gua - da - lu - pe cui - da - nos, cui - da - nos!
Da - me fuer - za To - nan - tzin, To - nan - tzin! Gua - da - lu - pe cui - da - nos, cui - da - nos!
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
183
184
185
186
187
188
189
190


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Cym.
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
A
Fran.
S
A
Choir
T
B
Da - me fuer - za To - nan - tzin, To - nan - tzin! Gua - da - lu - pe
Da - me fuer - za To - nan - tzin, To - nan - tzin! Gua - da - lu - pe
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
191
192
193
194
195
196


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
S.Dr.
Kick drum
B. Dr.
Cym.
mf
T.T.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Frame drum
Dol.
Sál - - - va - - - me!
A
Sál - - - va - - - me!
Fran.
Sál - - - va - - - me!
S
A
Choir
cuí - da - nos, cuí - da - nos! Sál - - - va - - - me!
T
B
cuí - da - nos, cuí - da - nos! Sál - - - va - - - me!
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
197
198
199
200

*WORK IN PROGRESS

Scene 4. Inside the Church one month later. Ignacio pulls Dolores aside to a corner of the Church while services begin. Mass music can be faintly heard in the background which gradually morphs into a Fandango. Dolores and Ignacio speak their dialogue during the mass but it gradually morphs into singing by the end of the Fandango.

Dolores and Ignacio

Missa in the background into sung Fandango. Before Catrina's Dance

IGNACIO
Dolores.
DOLORES
Gobernador.
IGNACIO
Please, Dolores, I've known you since you were a child. Call me Ignacio.
DOLORES
That seems inappropriate.
IGNACIO
I insist. At least when we're alone, if that makes you more comfortable.
DOLORES
Okay…Ignacio.
IGNACIO
Dolores you look stunning! Are you looking forward to the festivities?
DOLORES
Thank you and yes I am, we all are. It has been a difficult few weeks.
IGNACIO
Yes I know. That was incredibly quick, creative thinking Dolores. I wish I had someone with your bravery and intelligence in Monterrey.
DOLORES
Thank you. But I was just trying to help. We were lucky.
IGNACIO
False modesty doesn't suit such a brilliant woman.
DOLORES
But it can help her survive.
IGNACIO
(*with an approving smirk*)
Fair enough. But to outwit Bouchard is more than impressive. It shows talent. A willingness to take control when needed.
(*Pause*)
Is it true that you dressed with the soldiers and led the patrols?
DOLORES

(*hesitates*)

…yes.

IGNACIO

(*As if to himself. Looks on Dolores as a predator looks at prey.*)

Brilliant.

(*Changes demeanor. Begins pitch.*)

History is ironic and progress an illusion. Borders come and go. Time and identity… meaningless. Chumash, Spaniard…Californio. In the end what does it really matter? After the bluster fades, all that remains is Power and those strong enough to take it and Control their environment; to lead and protect the weak.

DOLORES

(*sharp rebuke*)

Identity means so little to those who have none.

(*Ignacio taken aback by Dolores's brazenness. Dolores recovers.*)

You use words to categorize and control. But for us, words reflect our experiences. They free us.

IGNACIO

Exactly! Your family and the other *Pobladores* helped found Pueblo de Los Angeles. You are trusted. Help protect this land you love, these people, just like you did with Bouchard. Take control and join me.

(*Dolores is visibly shocked*)

I have the trust of the Crown. You have the trust and respect of the people. You're a hero. Dolores, theworld is changing (or *El mundo esta cambiando*). Together we can be a part of that change and guide them into a new age.

DOLORES

My family was brought here to shape this land. Our destiny was never our own but we made it ours. Whether the Church or Crown we have had to adapt to survive.

(I'm aware of your reputation and am flattered. You have made many advances in the past but please do not try and manipulate me to further your status.

IGNACIO

(*Frustrated but not deterred, Ignacio changes tone again taking a more direct approach.*)

Fine then. But don't you want to see an independent California? Spain has always left us relatively untouched. Mexico is too busy consolidating power to be bothered by us. If we act swiftly we can govern this land independent of Spain or Mexico.

DOLORES

Señor, not everyone feels "untouched". Besides, California is far too rich in resources to be left alone. Mexico will claim California as her own, just as so many have in the past and I, like my family before, will keep the river flowing.

Perhaps the Fandango begins. Perhaps sung.

IGNACIO

(*Another change in tone. Ignacio gives up on trying to "pitch" and becomes stark and dire. He speaks to Dolores as an equal*.)

You won't be able to stop the flood that's coming.

DOLORES

We can adapt to Mexico.

IGNACIO

That's not what I'm talking about and you know it.

DOLORES

I know.

IGNACIO

I know you know.

DOLORES

Their appetite is insatiable.

IGNACIO

And they get hungrier by the day. If we don't seize power they will take it.

DOLORES

This is just the beginning.

IGNACIO

All that remains is power.

DOLORES

And those willing to take it.

IGNACIO

Control your environment.

DOLORES

To protect it.

IGNACIO

We can help each other. I know you yearn for something more. Your ambition desires a platform equal to your talent. Embrace your place in the world! Take what is yours!

DOLORES

(*to herself*)

I don't trust him but he is right. We can help each other. His allegiance is to himself and himself alone. That makes him dangerous but predictable.

IGNACIO

Dance with me.

CUE CATRINA'S DANCE

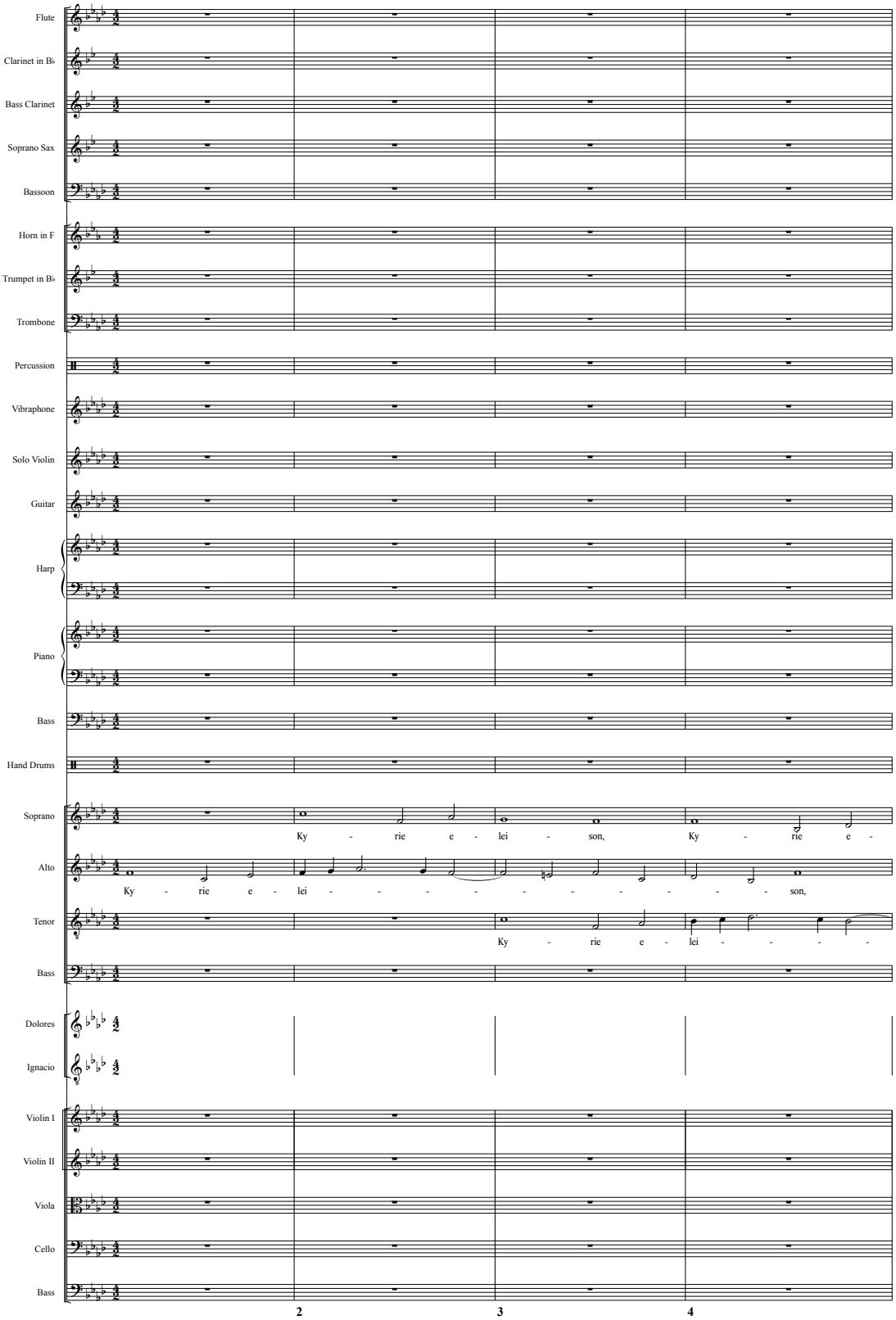
Ignacio Tempts Dolores

Inside the Church

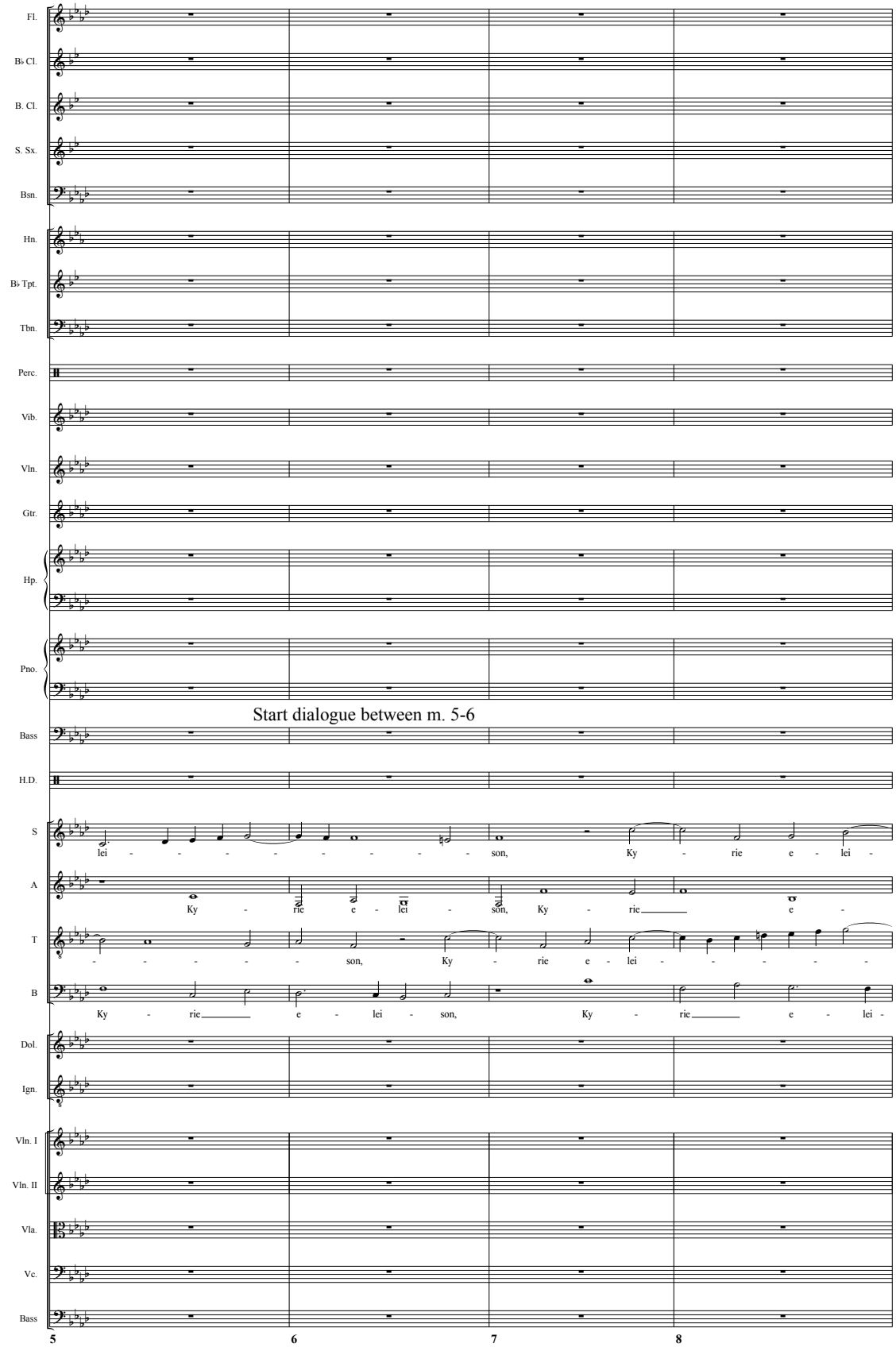
Daniel Aaron Ramirez

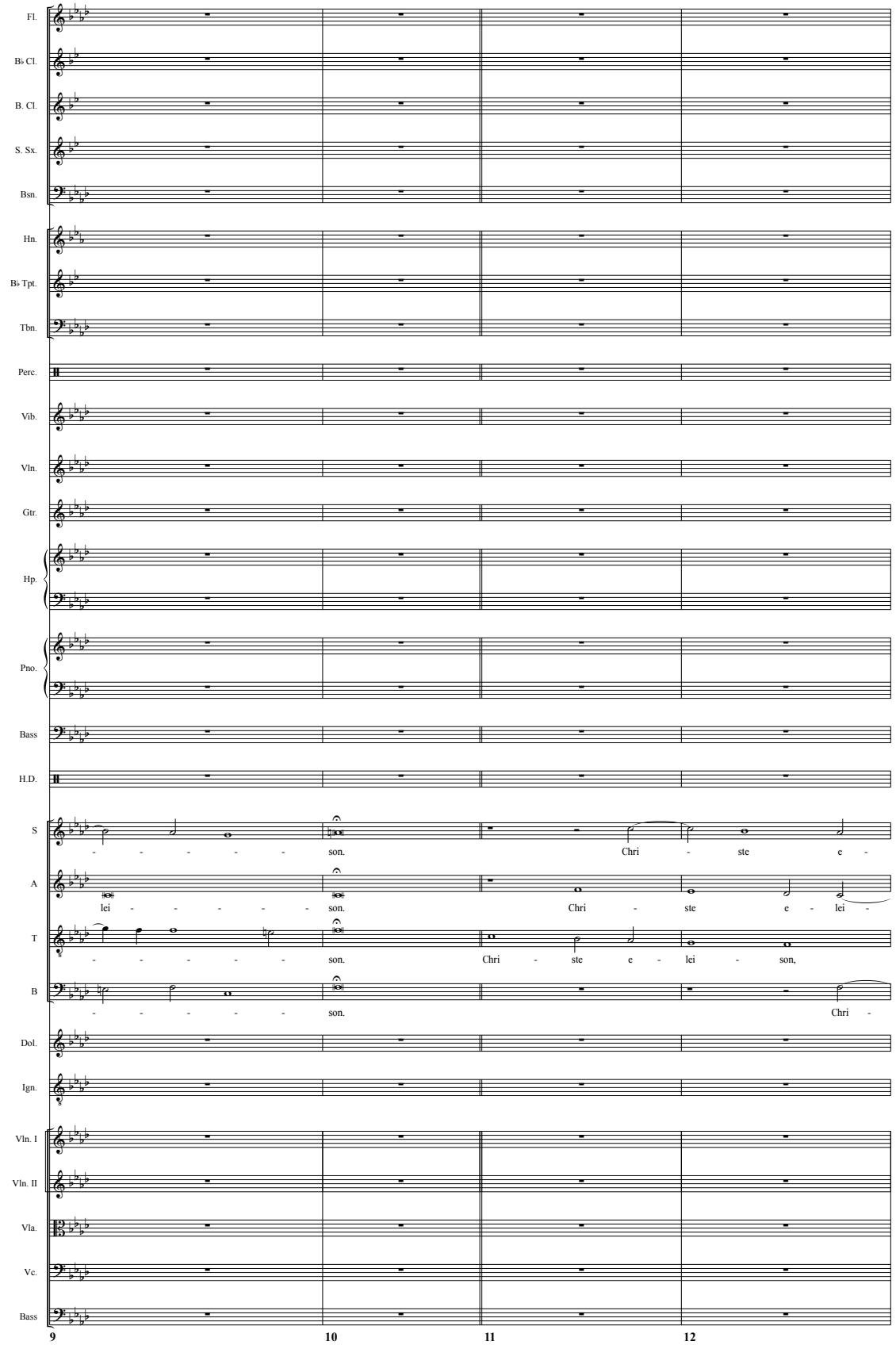
(Dolores and Ignacio speak dialogue over the choir.
Placement of dialogue is approximate but should be timed
to end with the word 'brilliant'. Section is approximately one minute.)

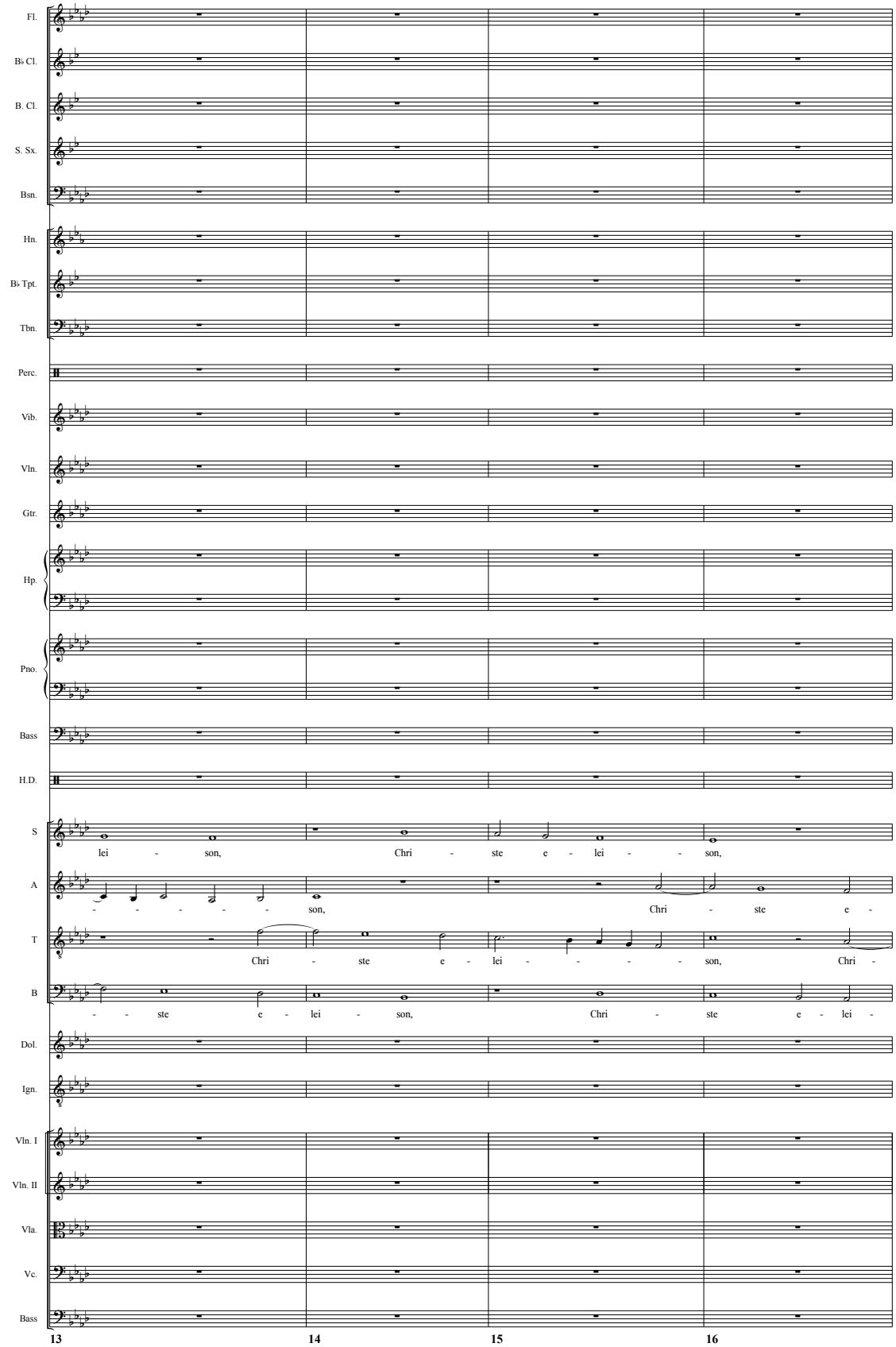
Choir sotto voce (♩ = 85)

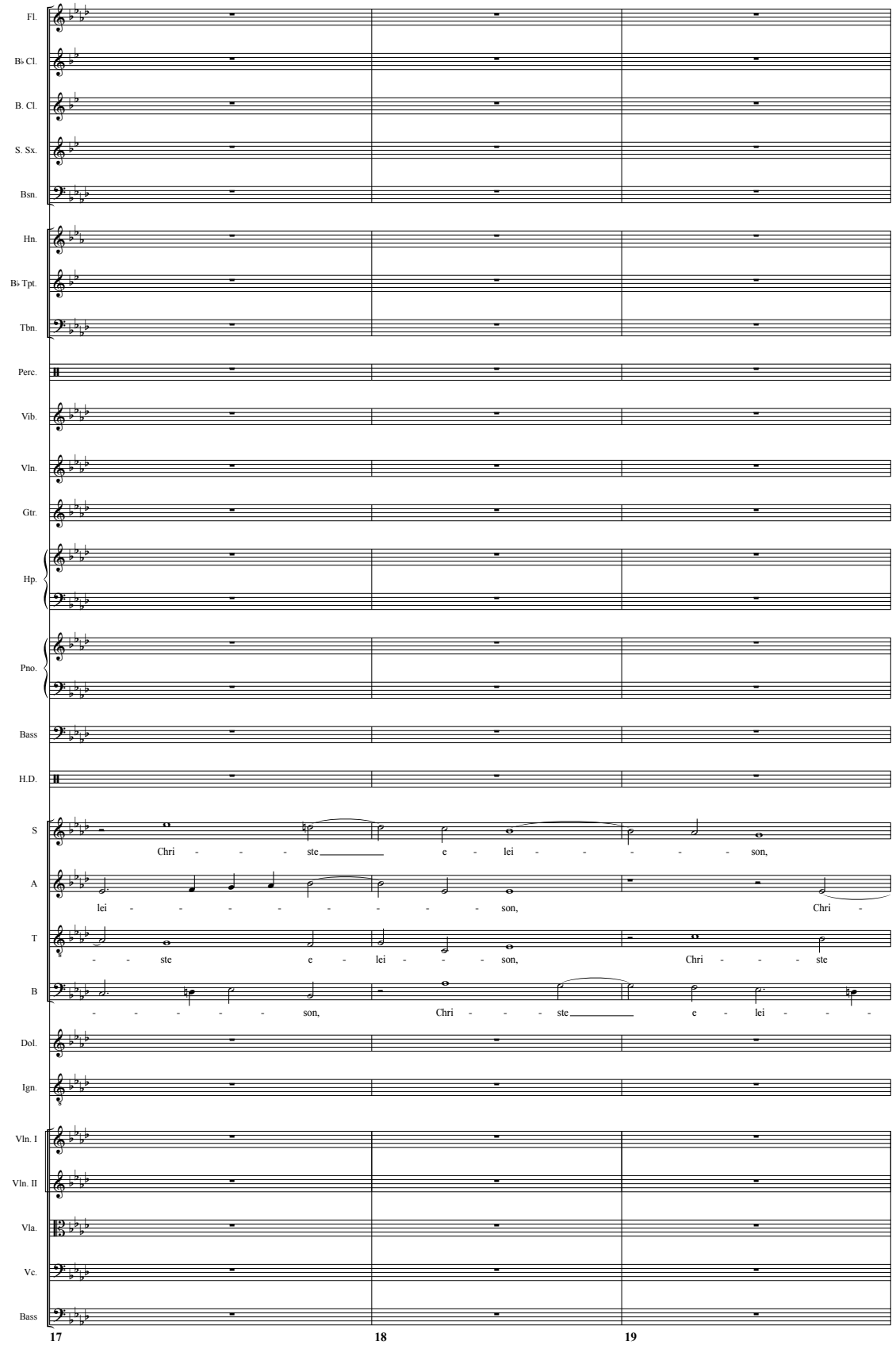


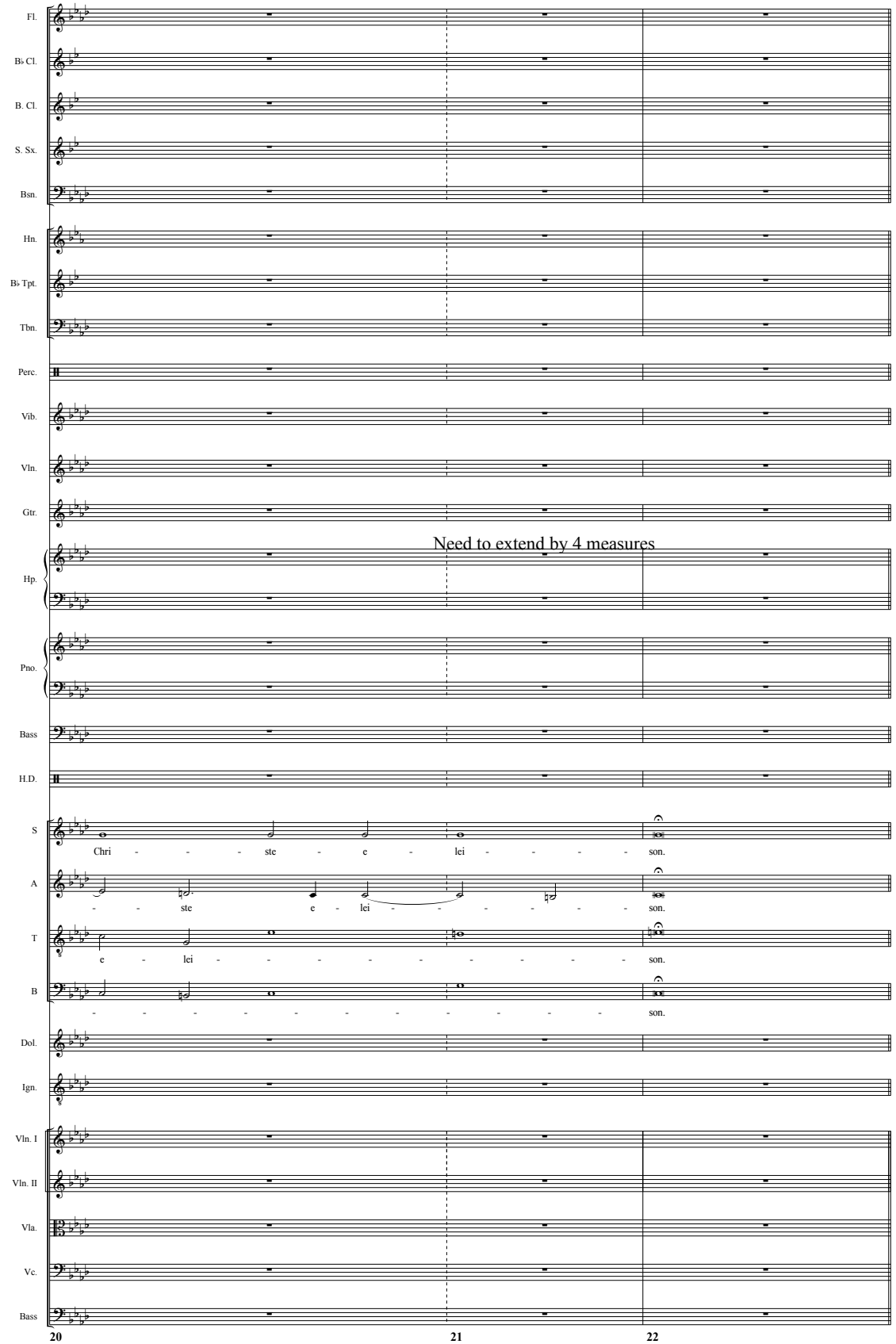
©


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Start dialogue between m. 5-6
Bass
H.D.
S
lei - - - - - - - - - son, Ky - rie e - lei -
A
Ky - rie e - lei - son, Ky - rie e -
T
- - - - - son, Ky - rie e - lei - - - - - -
B
Ky - rie e - lei - son, Ky - rie e - lei -
Dol.
Ign.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
5
6
7
8

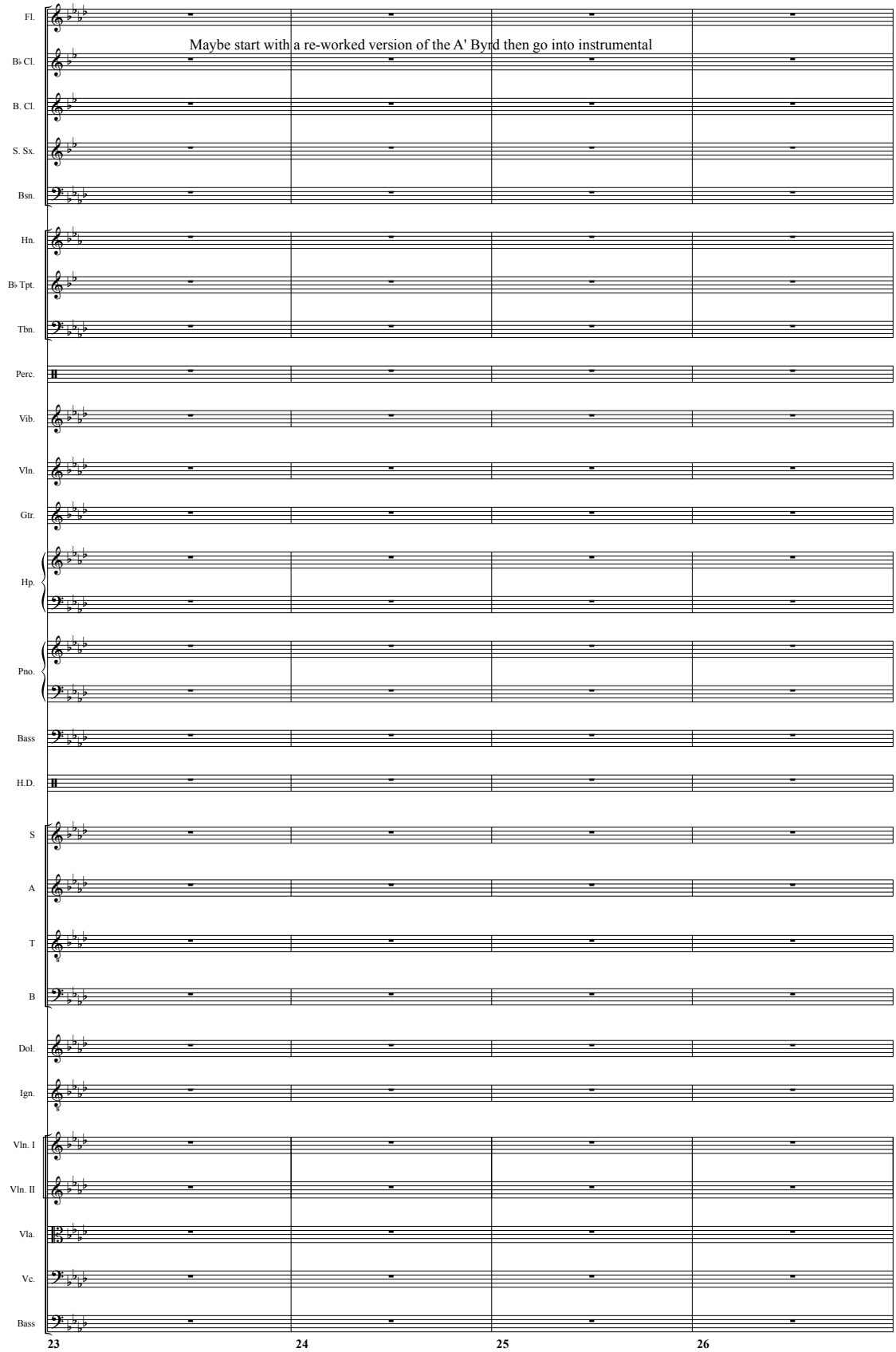

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
S
A
T
B
Dol.
Ign.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
son.
Chri - ste e -
lei - son.
Chri - ste e - lei -
son.
Chri - ste e - lei - son,
son.
Chri -
9
10
11
12


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
S
lei - son, Chri - ste e - lei - - son,
A
- - - - - son, Chri - ste e -
T
Chri - ste e - lei - - - - son, Chri -
B
- - ste e - lei - son, Chri - ste e - lei -
Dol.
Ign.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
13
14
15
16


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
S
Chri - - - - ste e - lei - - - - - - son,
A
lei - - - - - - - - - son, Chri -
T
- - - ste e - lei - - - - son, Chri - - - - ste
B
- - - - - - son, Chri - - - - ste e - lei - - -
Dol.
Ign.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
17
18
19


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Need to extend by 4 measures
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
H.D.
S
Chri - - - ste - e - lei - - - - - son.
A
- - ste e - lei - - - - - - - son.
T
e - lei - - - - - - - - - - son.
B
- - - - - - - - - - - - son.
Dol.
Ign.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
20
21
22

(Ignacio saying the word 'brilliant' cues this section)



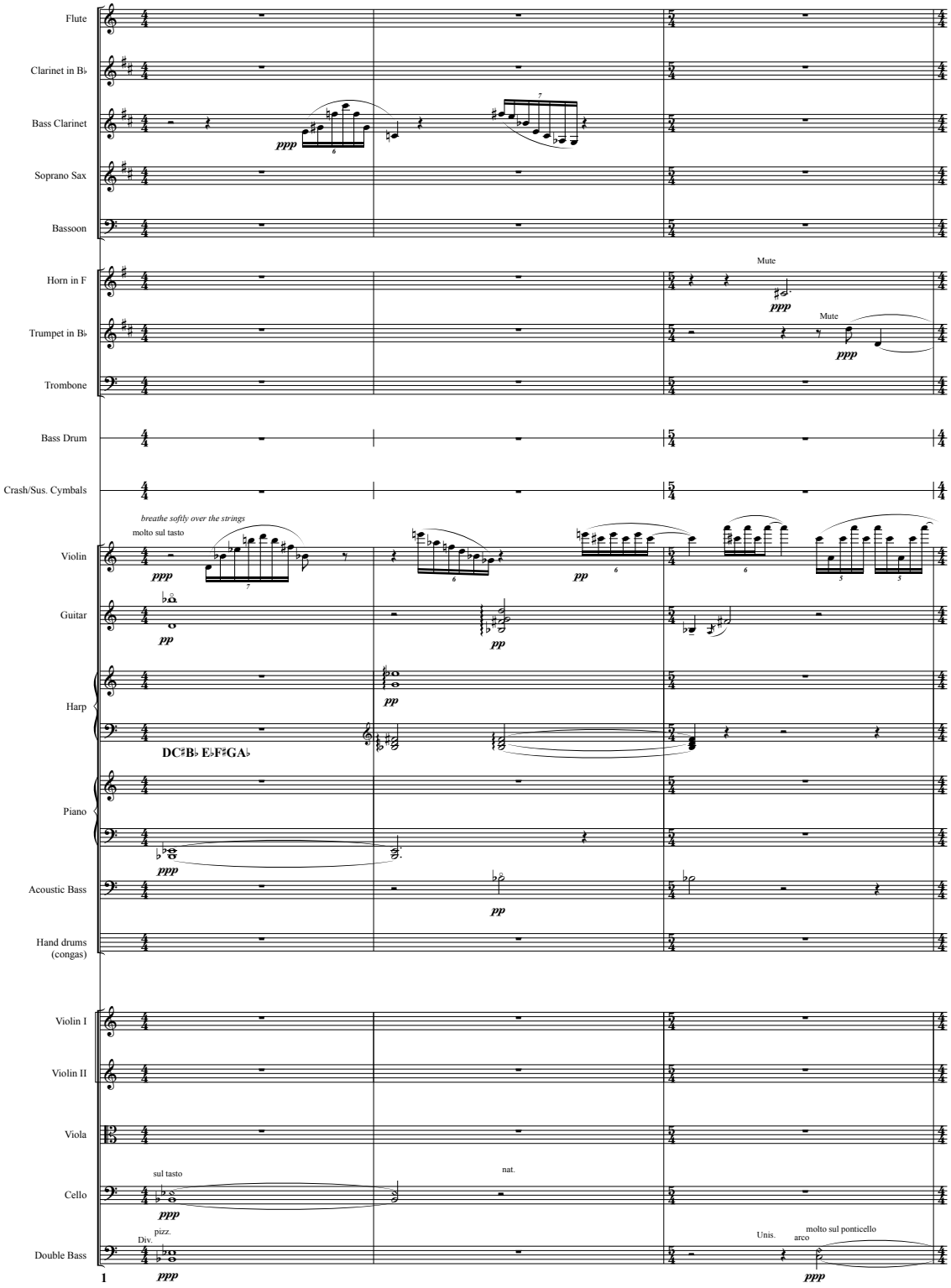
Act I Scene 4

Dolores and Ignacio's Dance

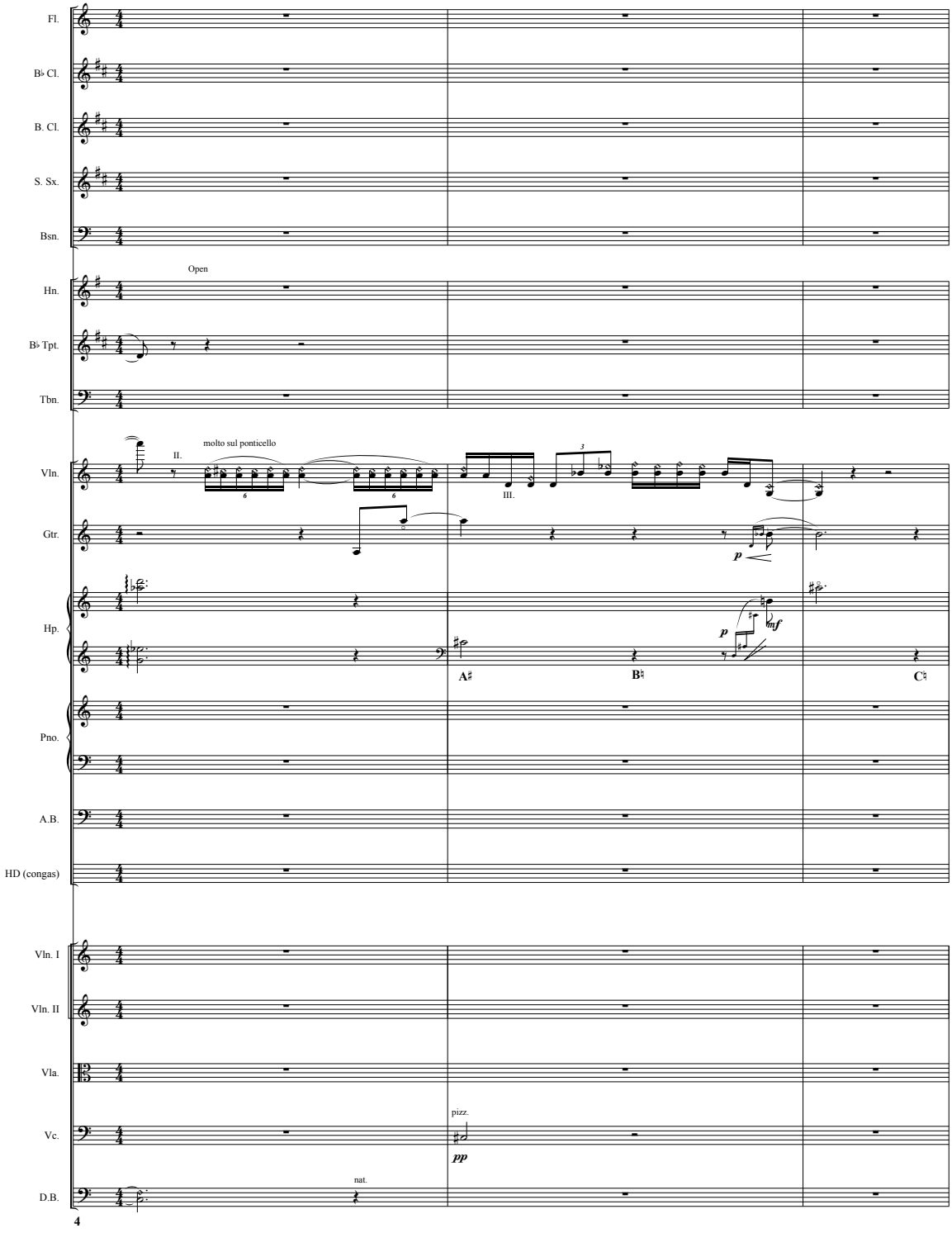
Daniel Aaron Ramirez

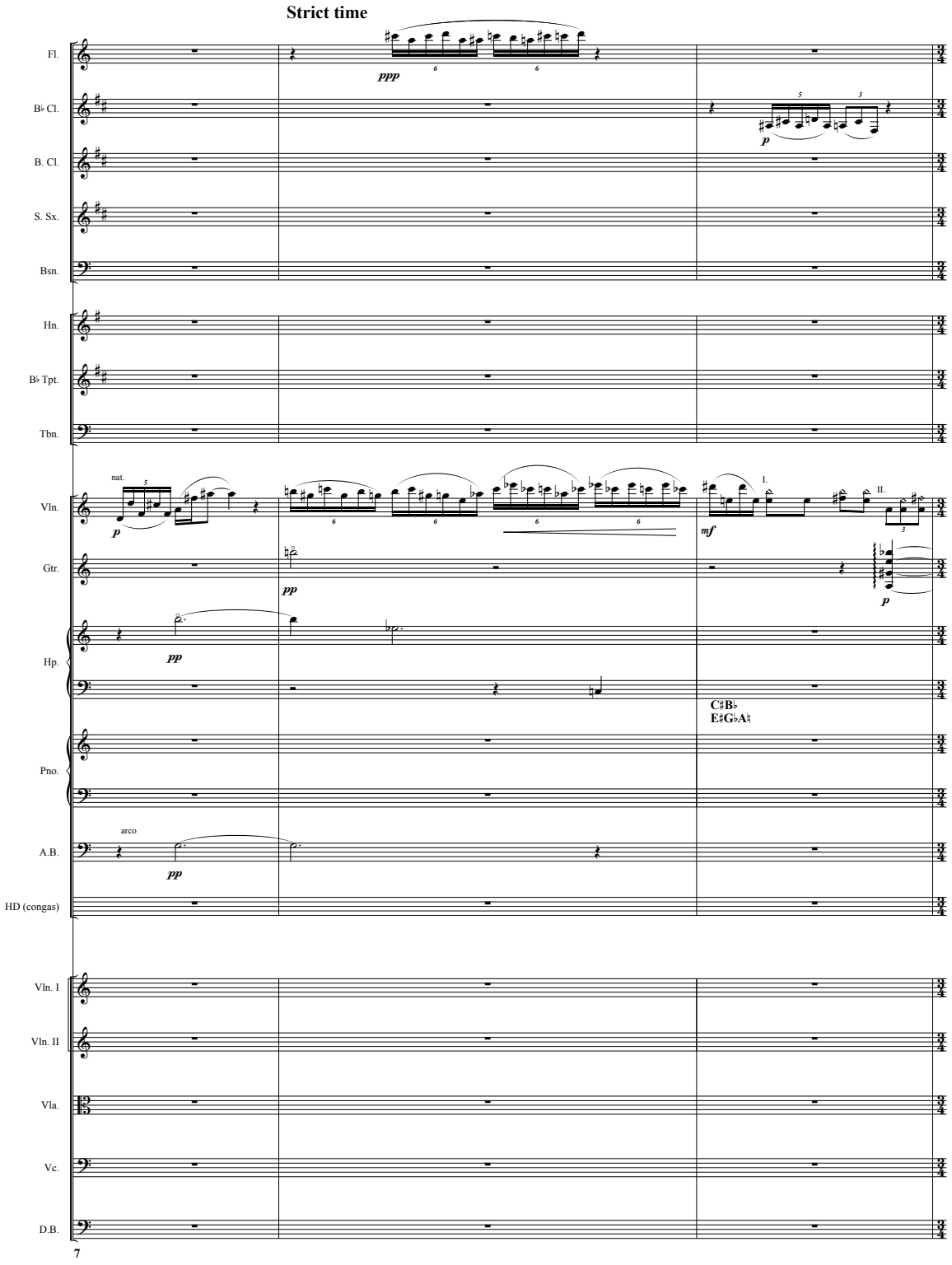
Dolores contemplates 'dancing' with Ignacio...Catrina stirs

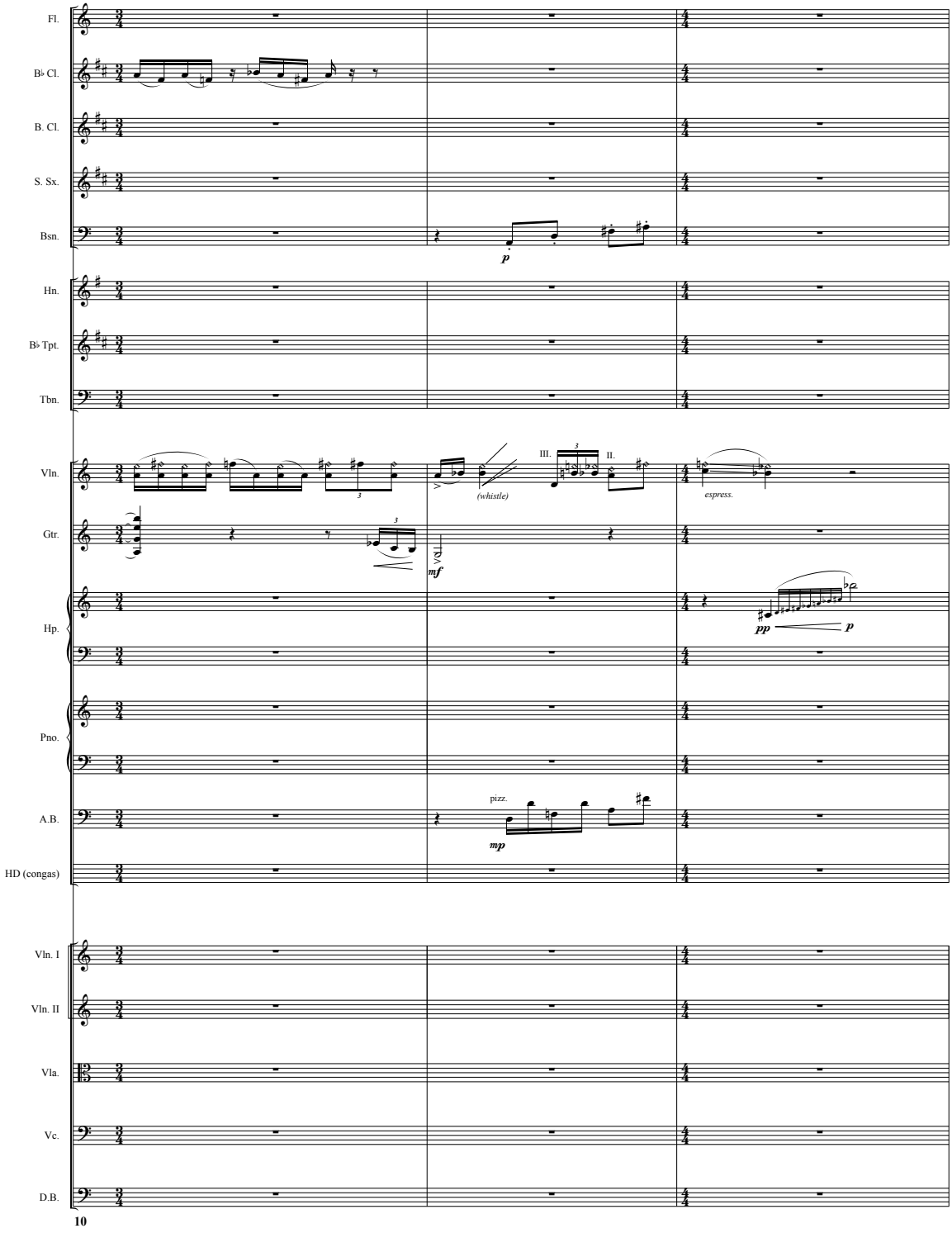
A **Rubato feel, flexible solo lines** (*app.* ♩ = 55)



©2020, Daniel Aaron Ramirez

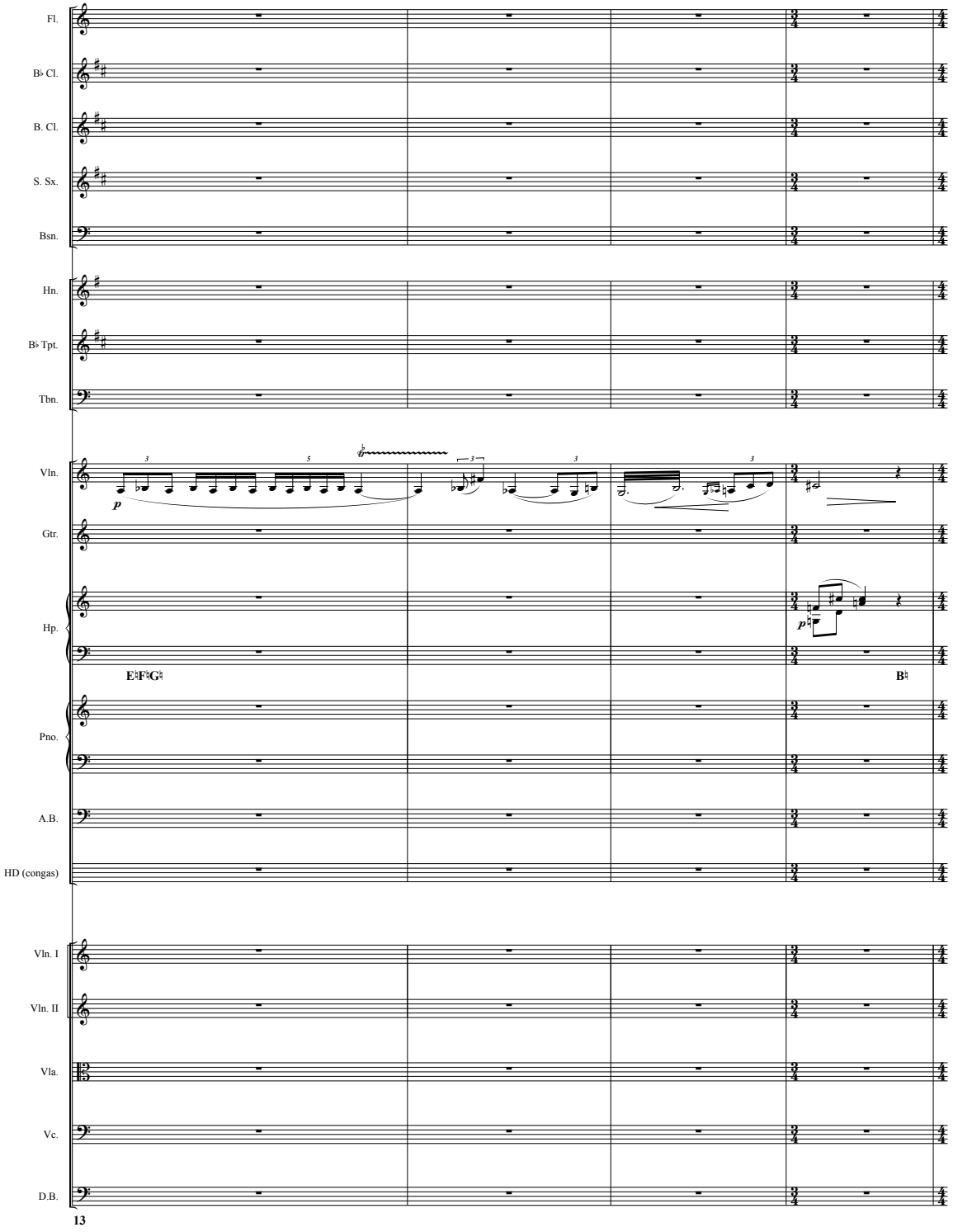

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Open
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
molto sul ponticello
II.
III.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
A♯
B♯
C♯
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
pizz.
Vc.
pp
nat.
D.B.
4

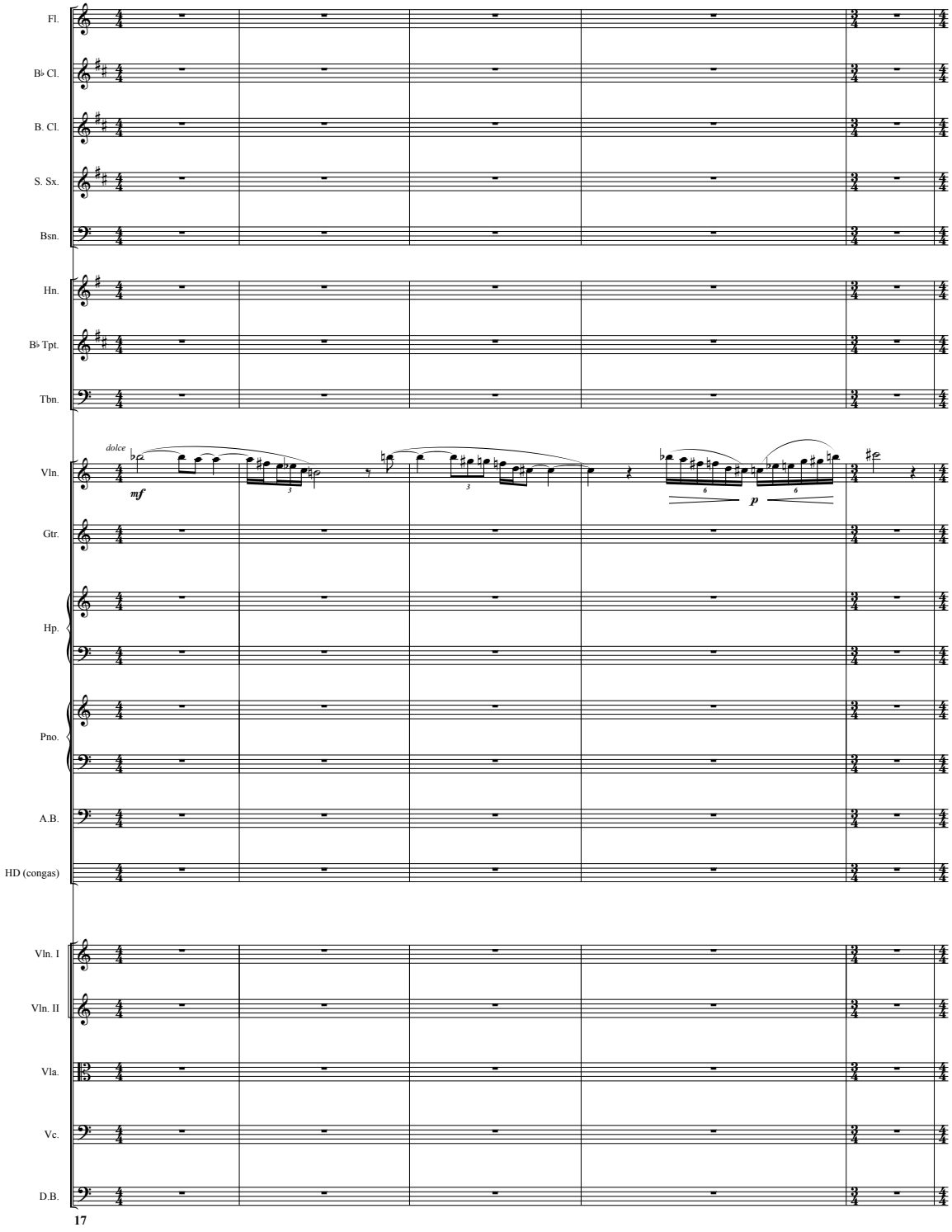

Strict time
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
ppp
p
pp
mf
nat.
arco
I.
II.
C♯B♭
E♯G♭A♮
7

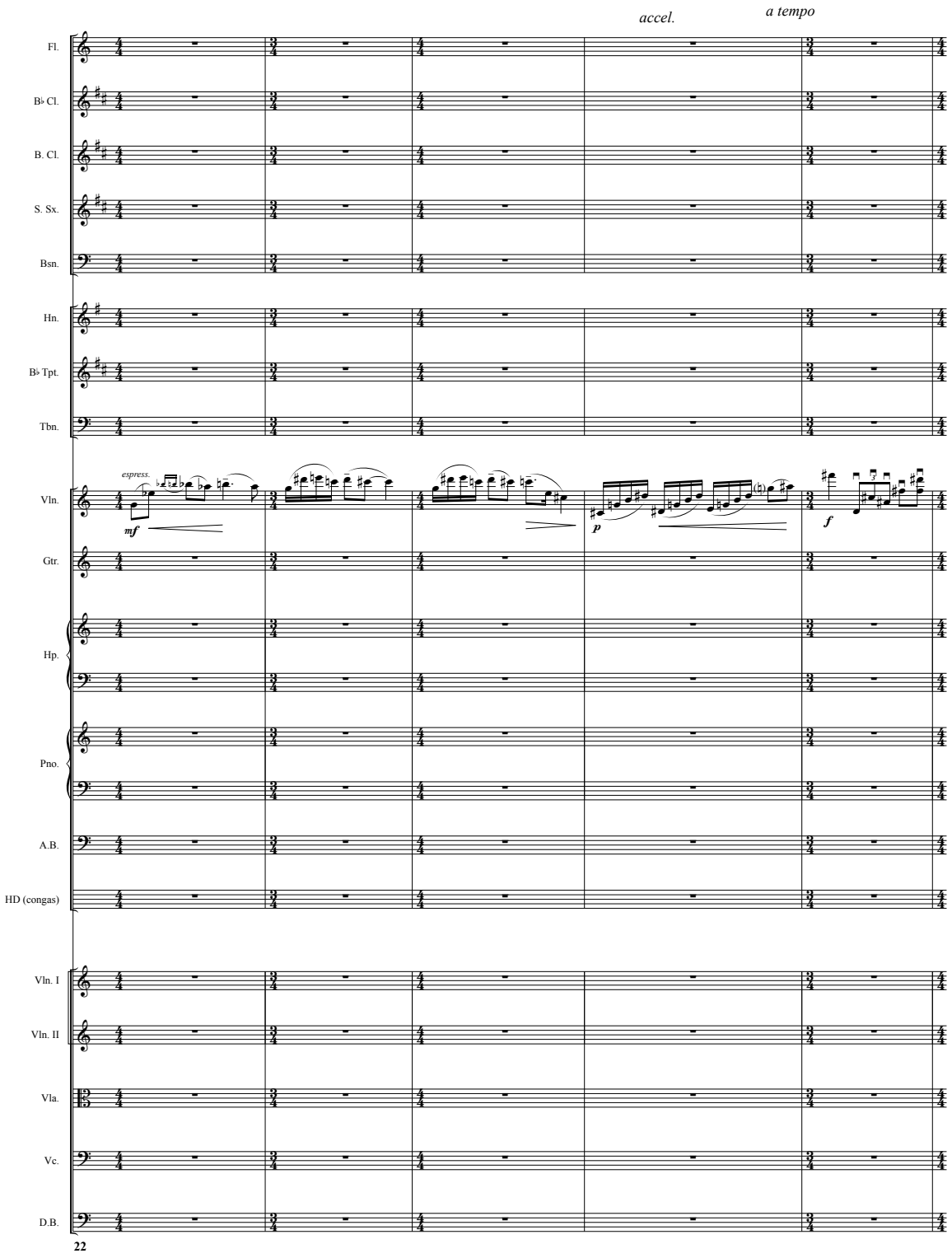

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
p
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
III.
II.
(whistle)
espress.
Gtr.
mf
Hp.
pp
p
Pno.
A.B.
pizz.
mp
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
10

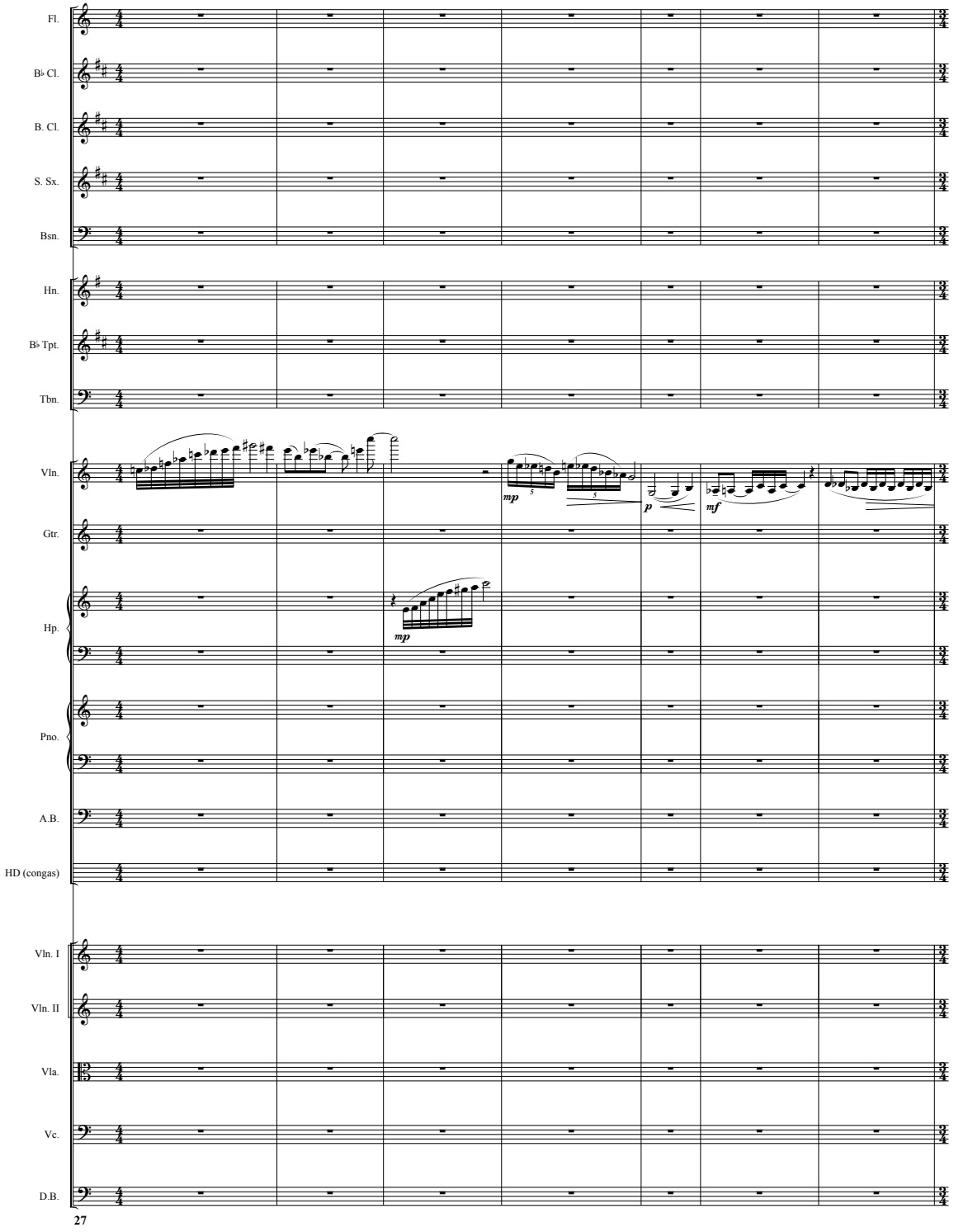
Calavera Catrina (violin) takes center stage

B **Andante, solo violin** (♩=75)



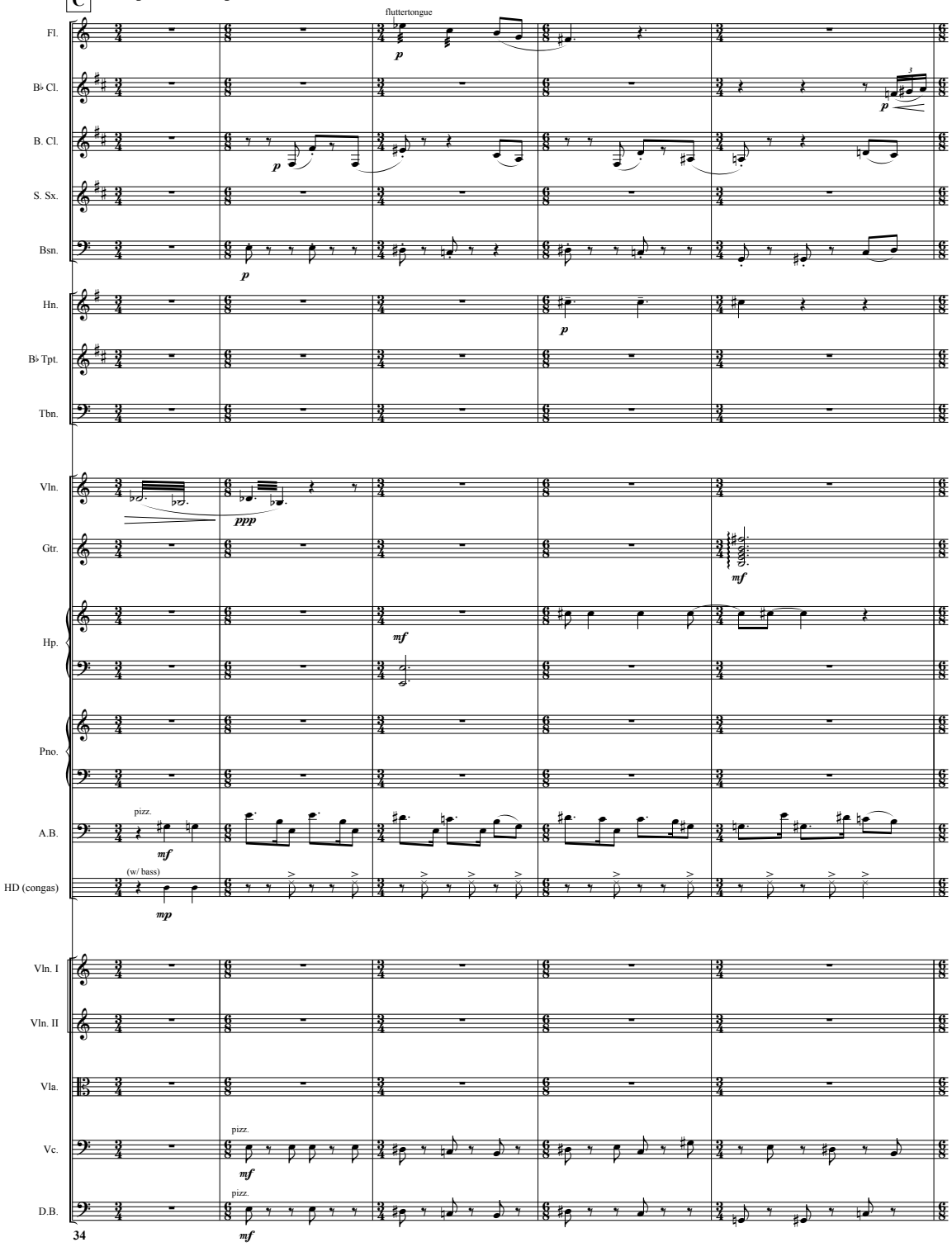

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
dolce
mf
p
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
17

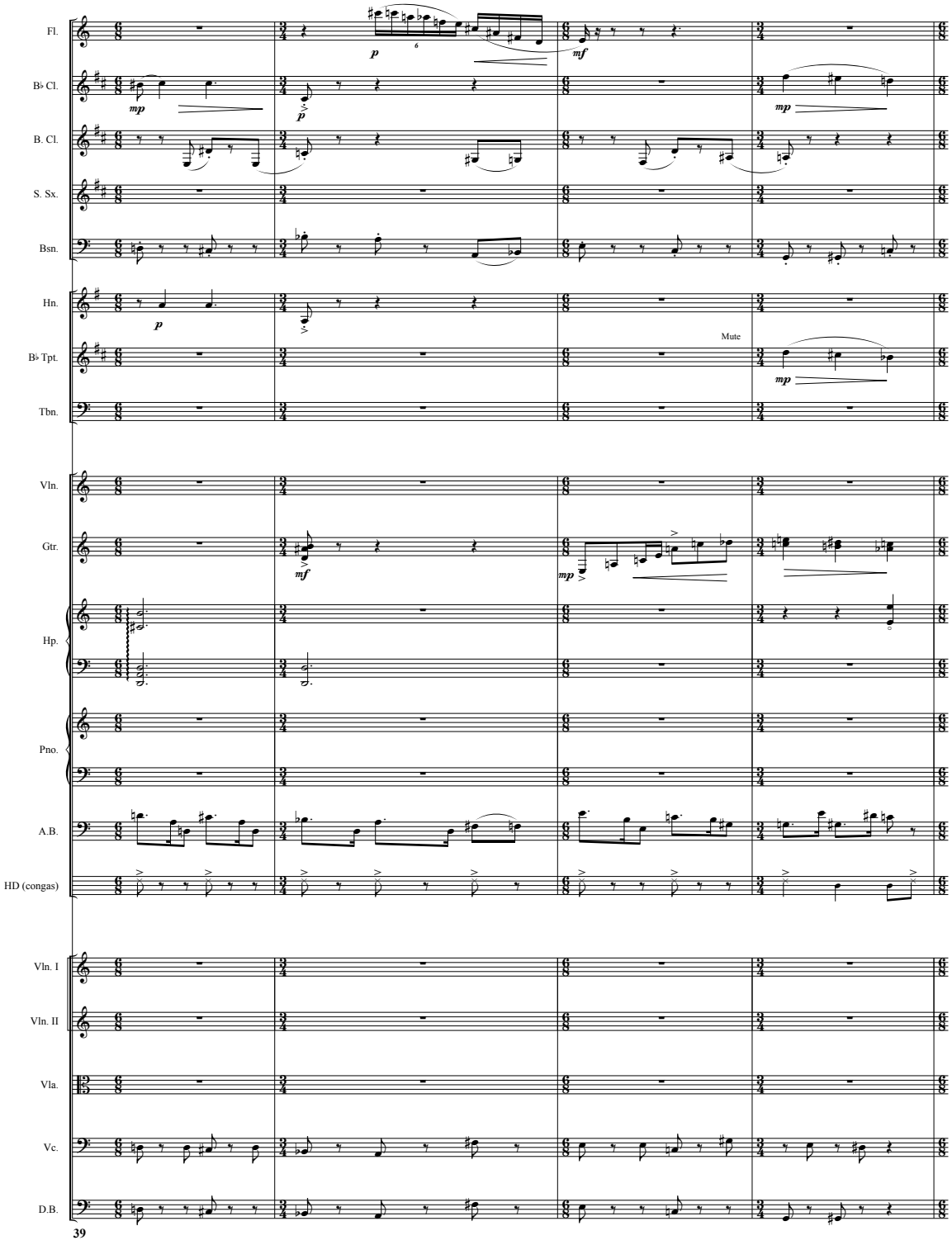

accel.
a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
espress.
mf
p
f
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
22

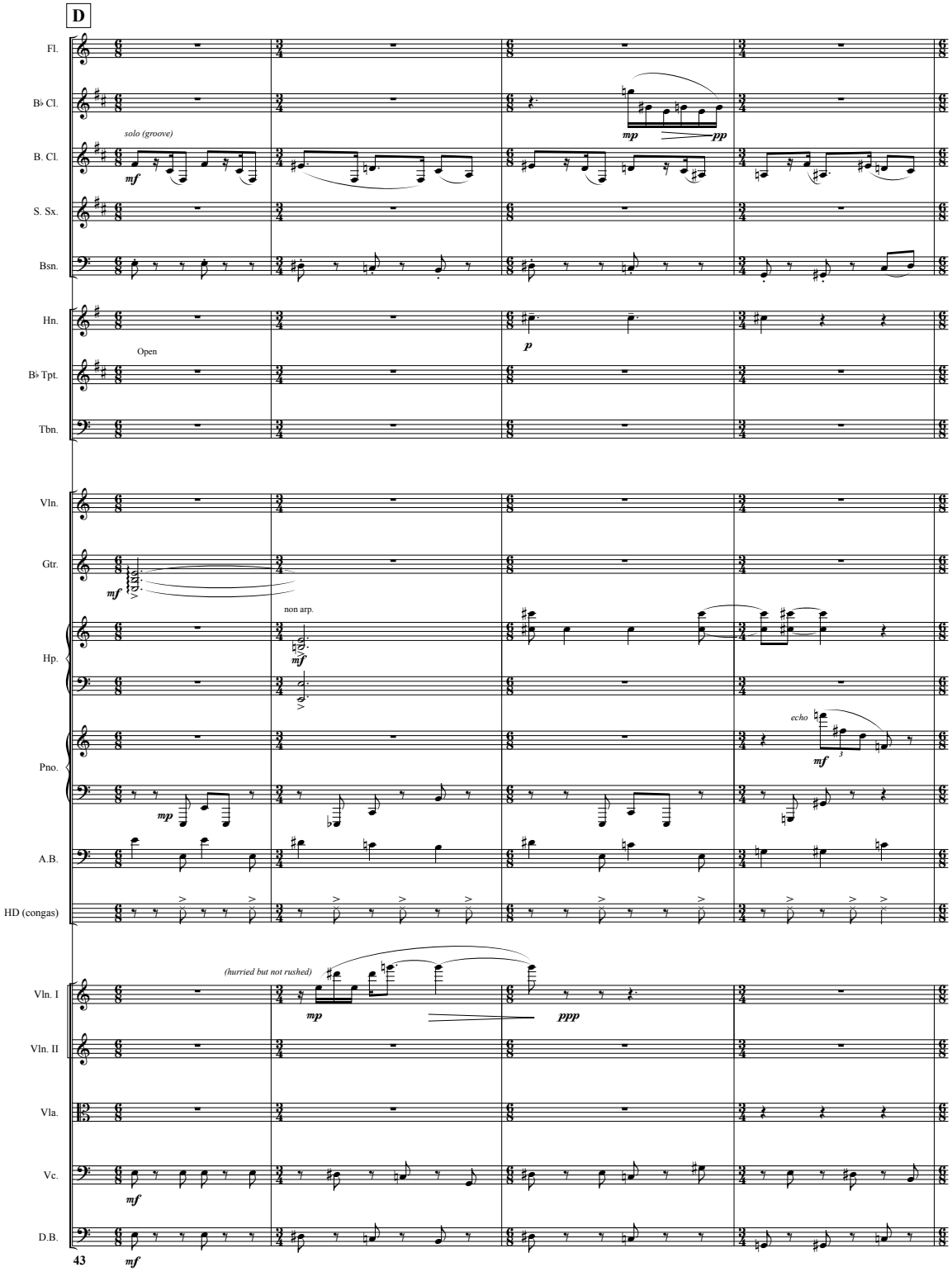

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mp
p
mf
mp
27

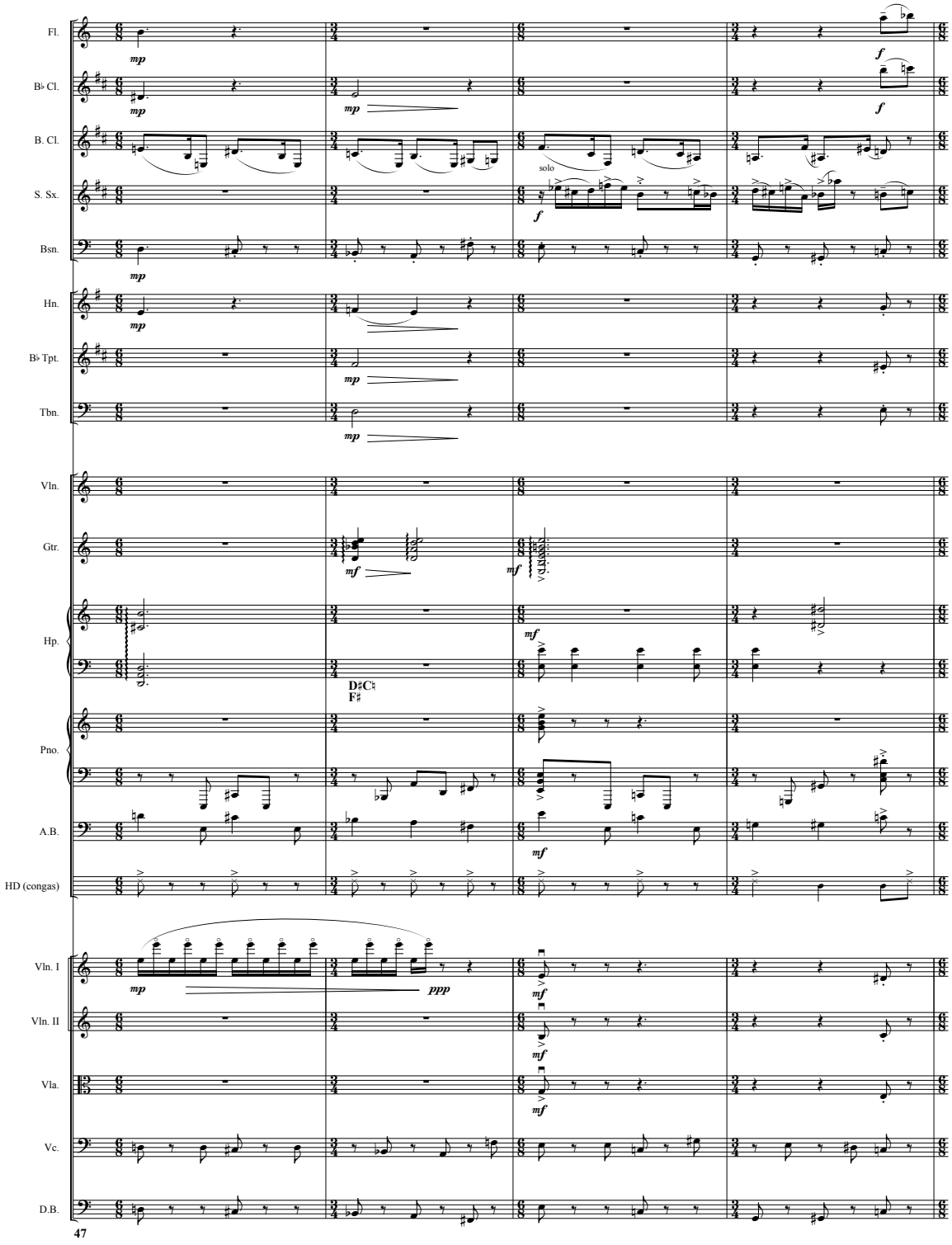
Dolores begins her solo dance

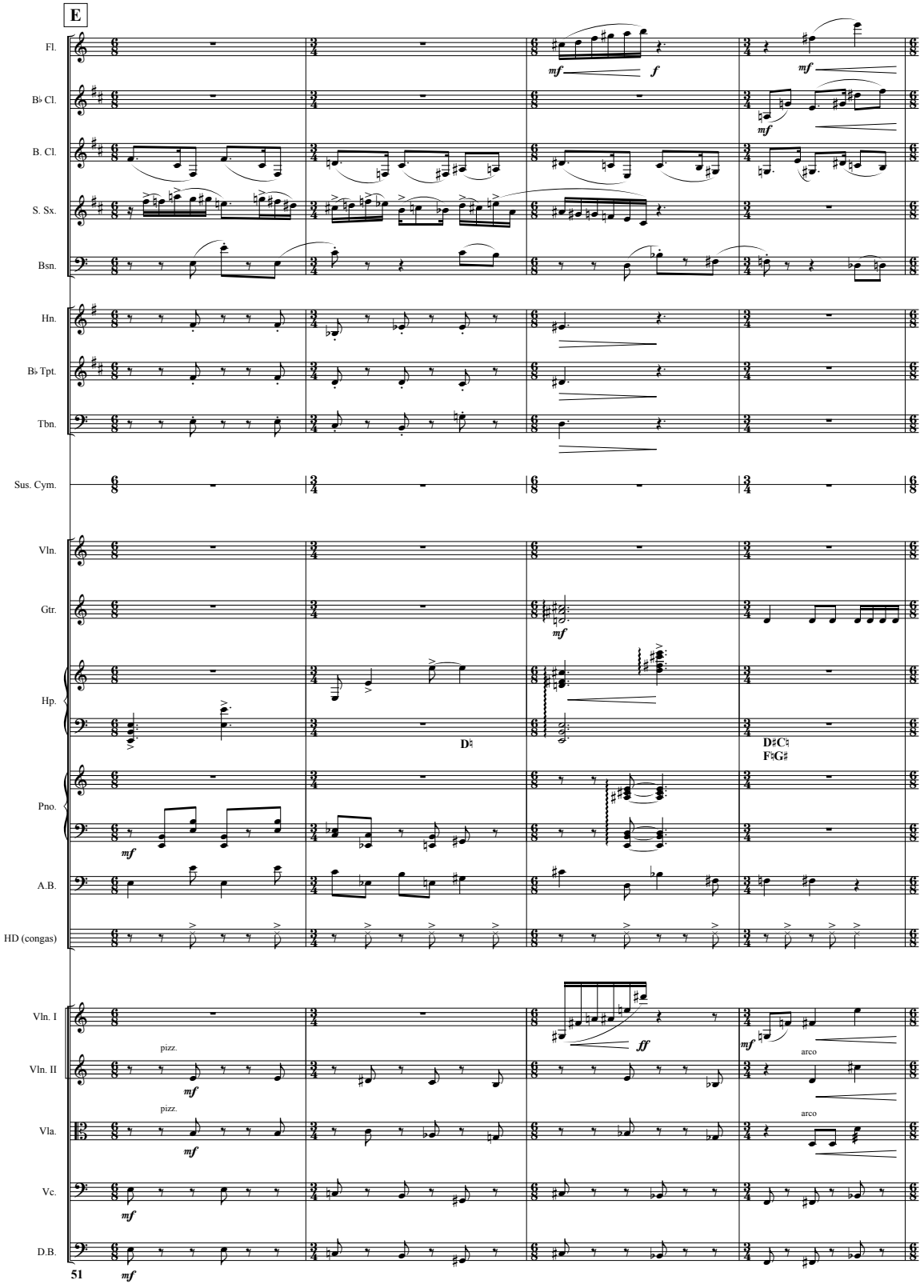
C **Tempo di Solea por Bulerias, ensemble & orchestra** (♩ = 90)

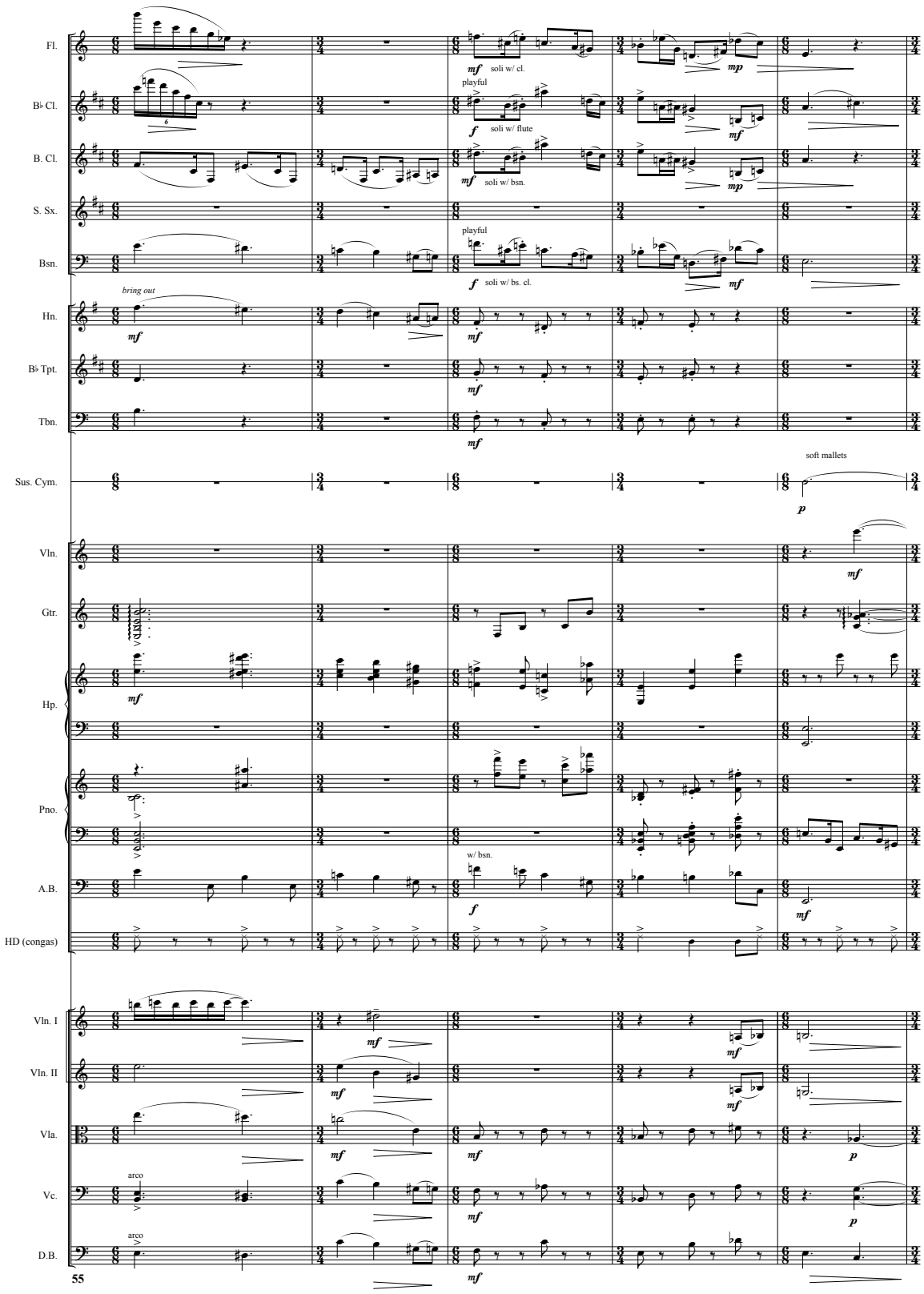


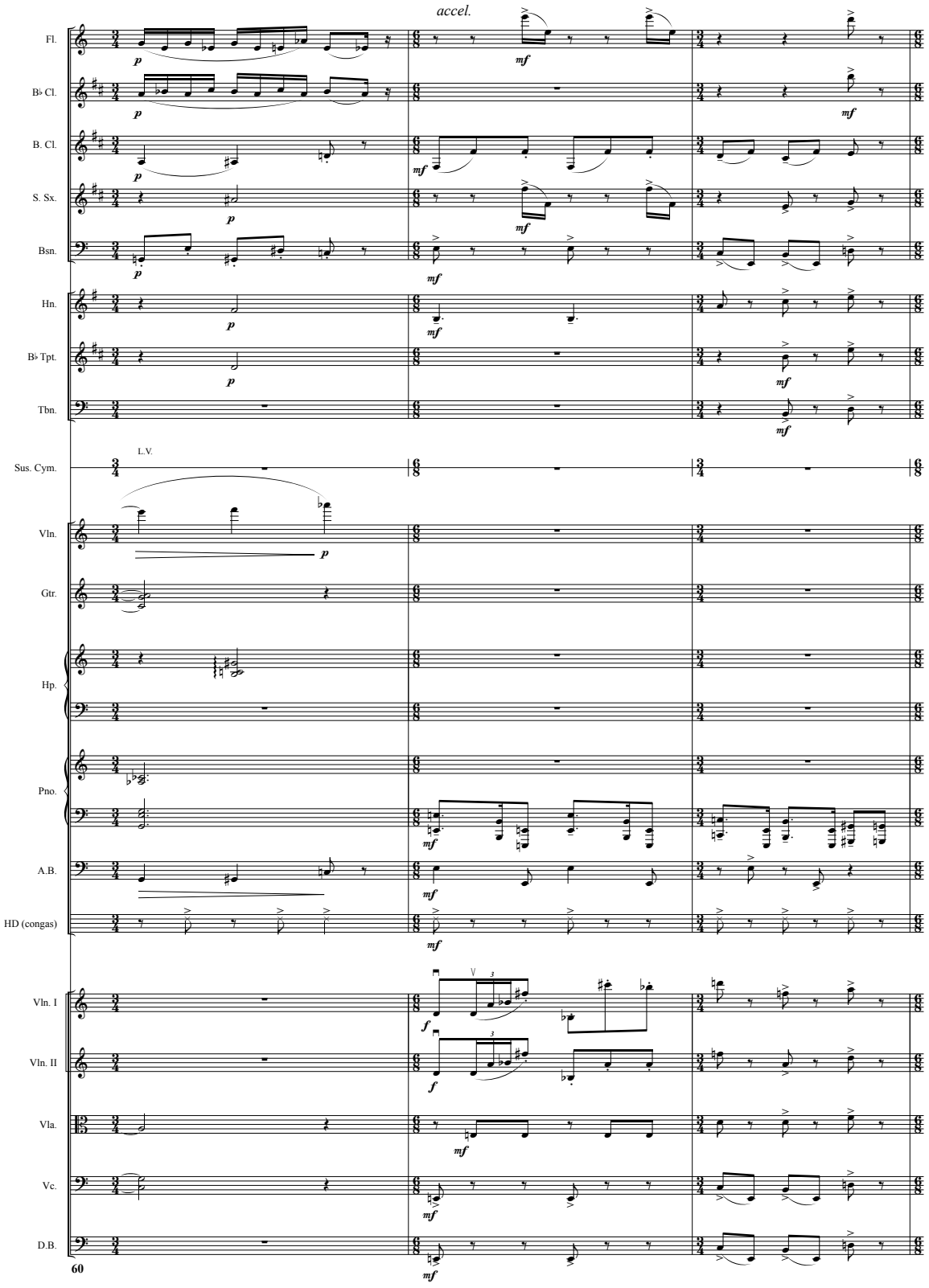

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Mute
Tbn.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
39

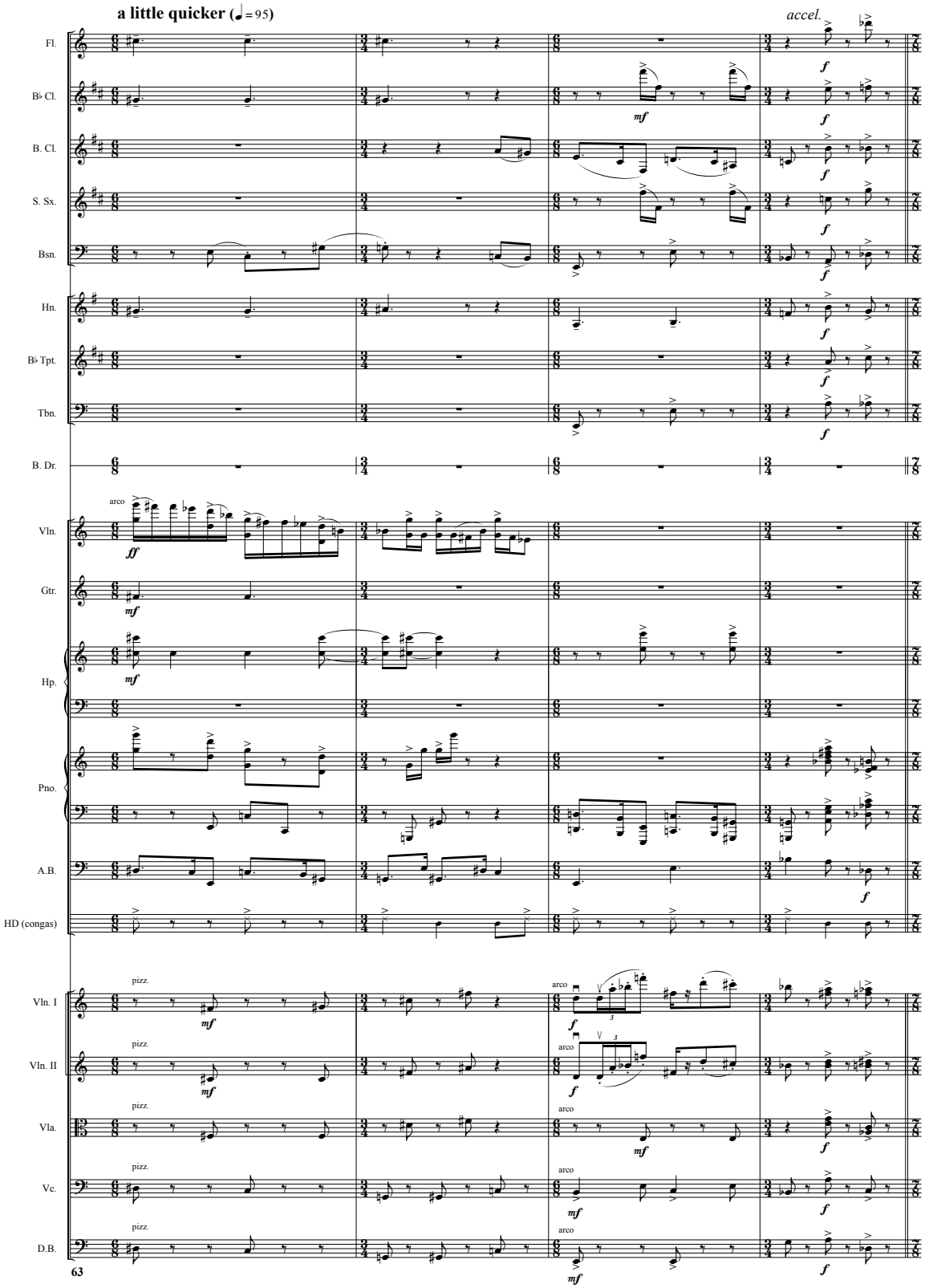

D
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
solo (groove)
mf
mp
pp
p
Open
non arp.
echo
(hurried but not rushed)
ppp
43


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
solo
D♯C♮
F♯
47


E
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Sus. Cym.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
f
ff
pizz.
arco
D♮
D♯C♮
F♮G♯
51

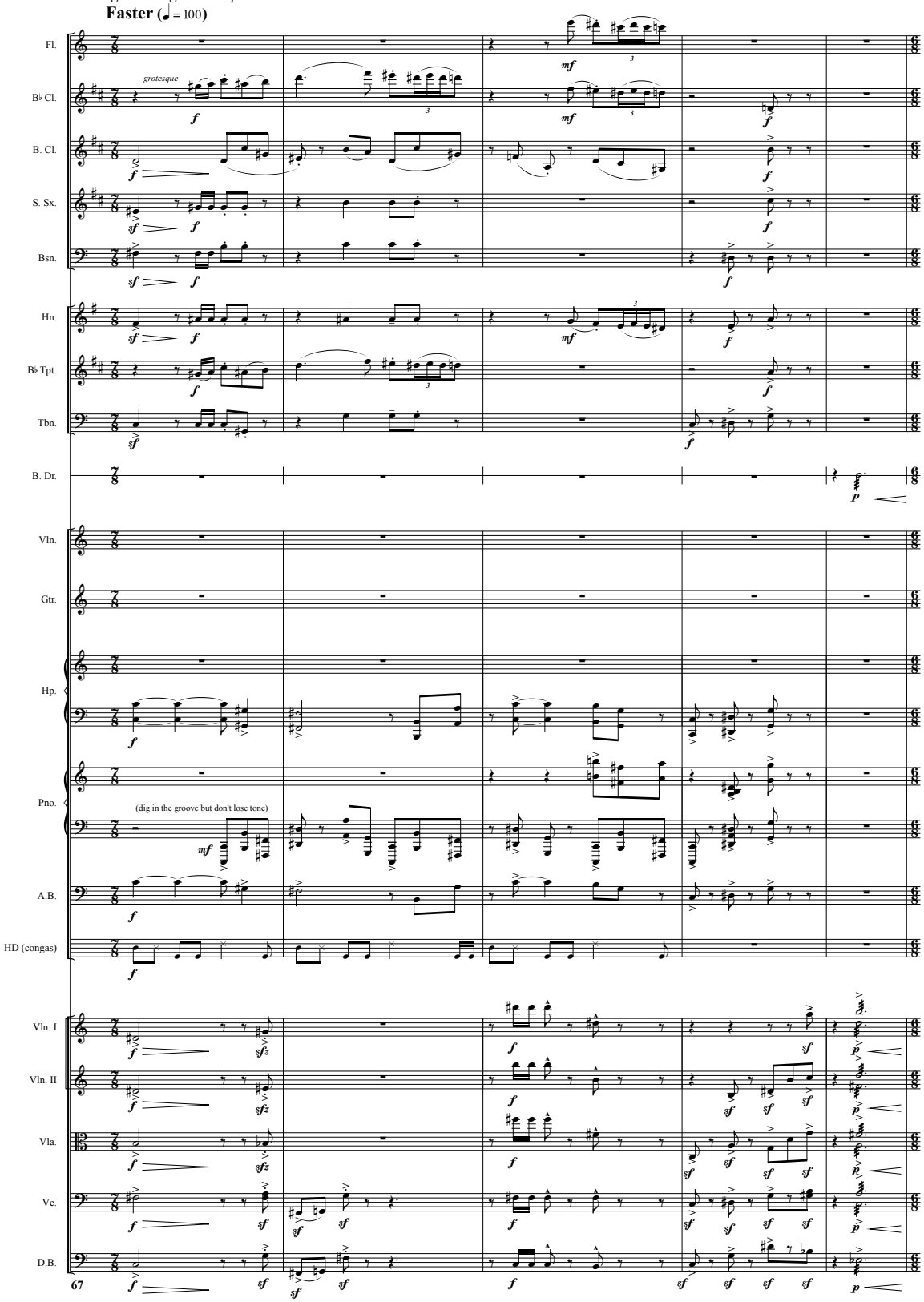

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Sus. Cym.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf soli w/ cl.
playful
f soli w/ flute
mf soli w/ bsn.
mp
playful
f soli w/ bs. cl.
mf
bring out
soft mallets
p
w/ bsn.
arco
arco
55


accel.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Sus. Cym.
L.V.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
60

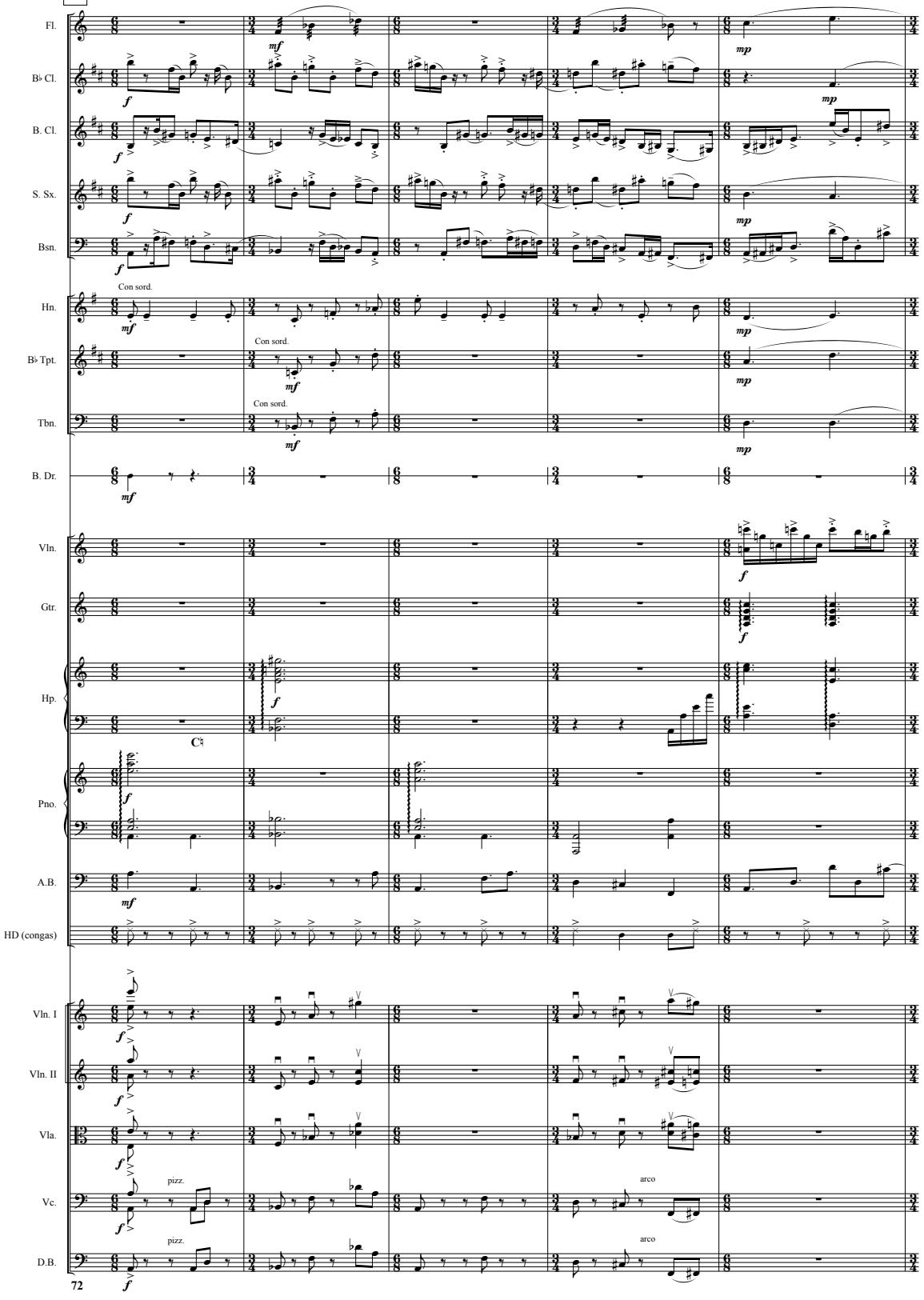

a little quicker (♩= 95)
accel.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
arco
pizz.
63

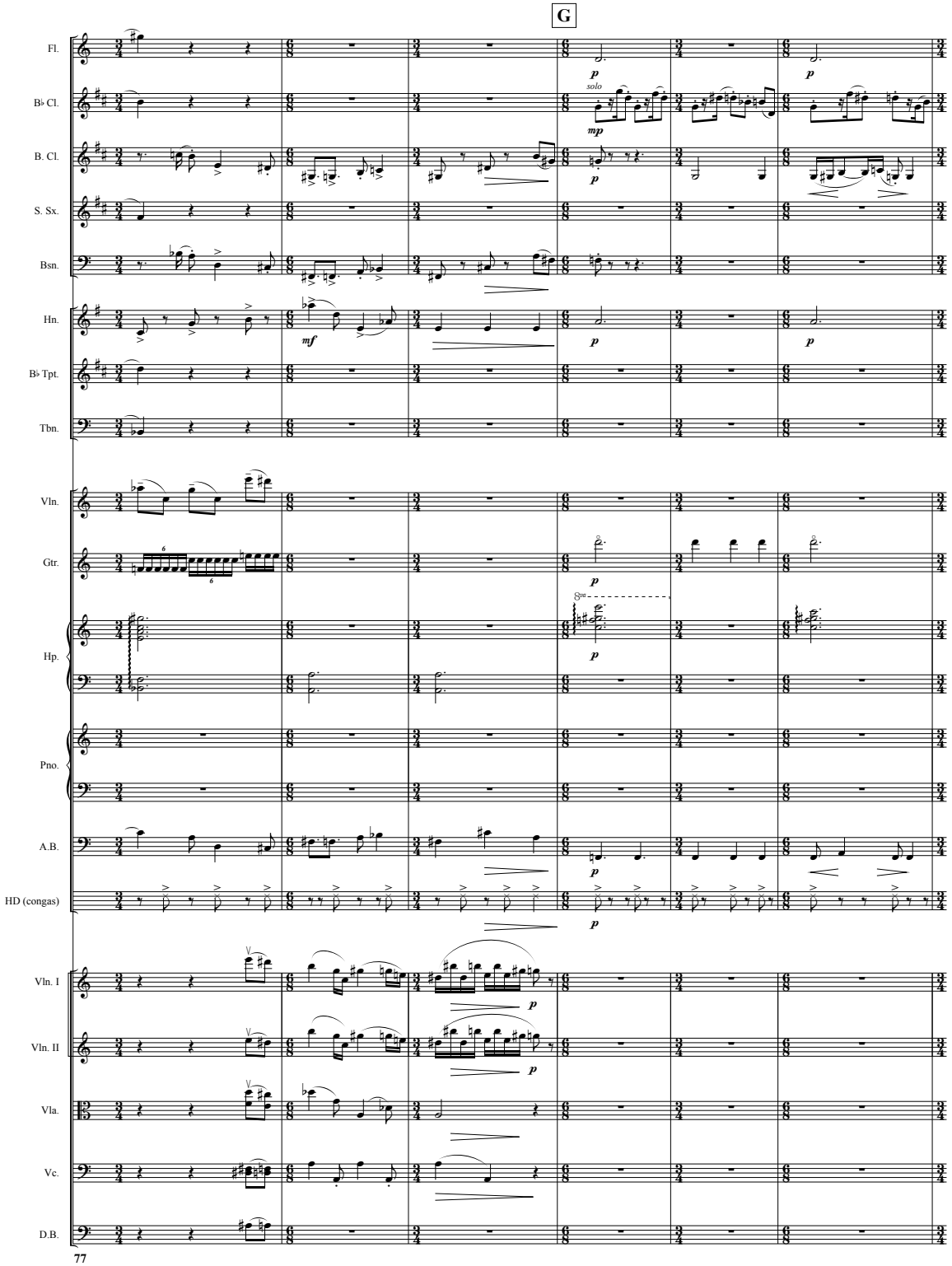
Ignacio begins to respond...

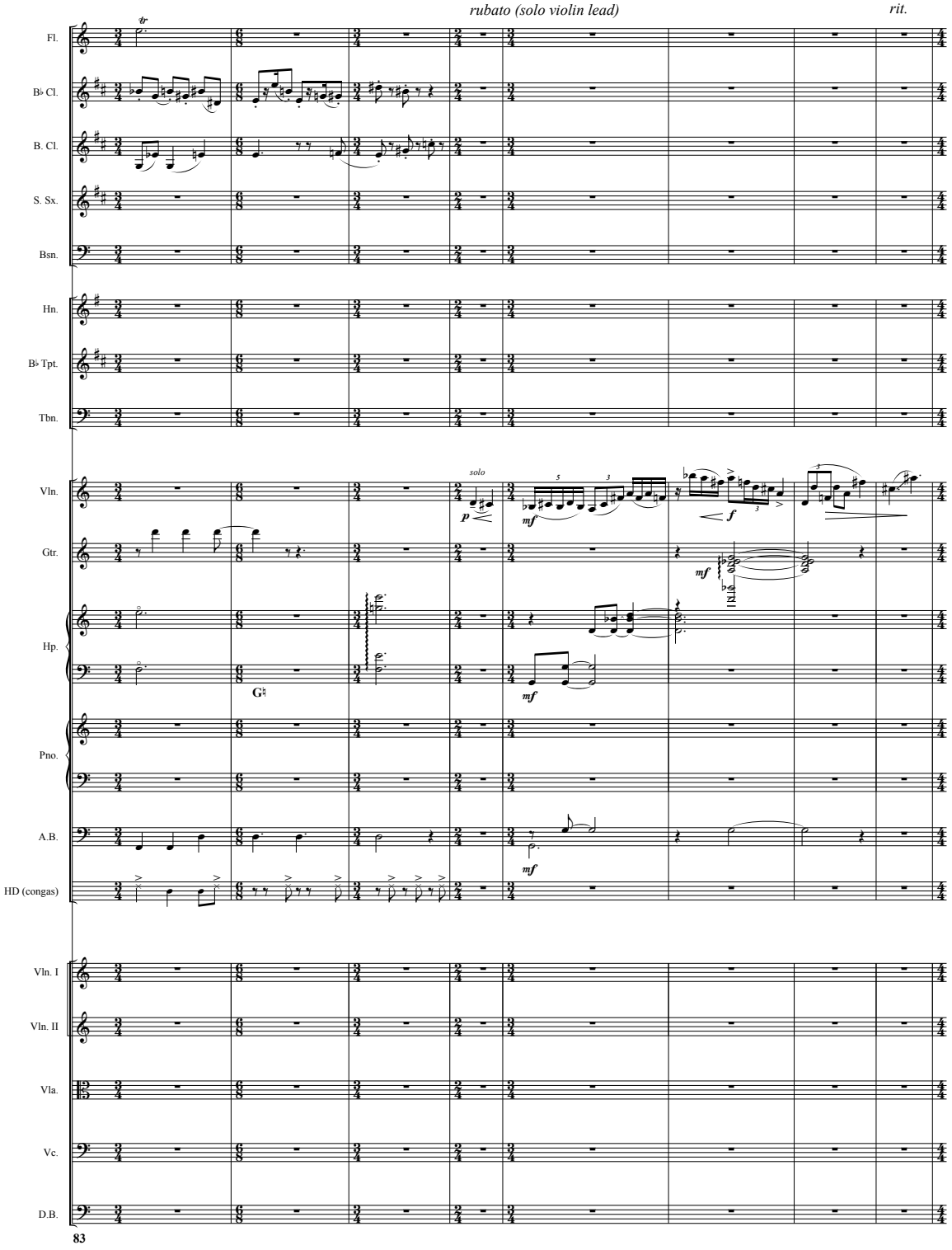
Faster (♩ = 100)

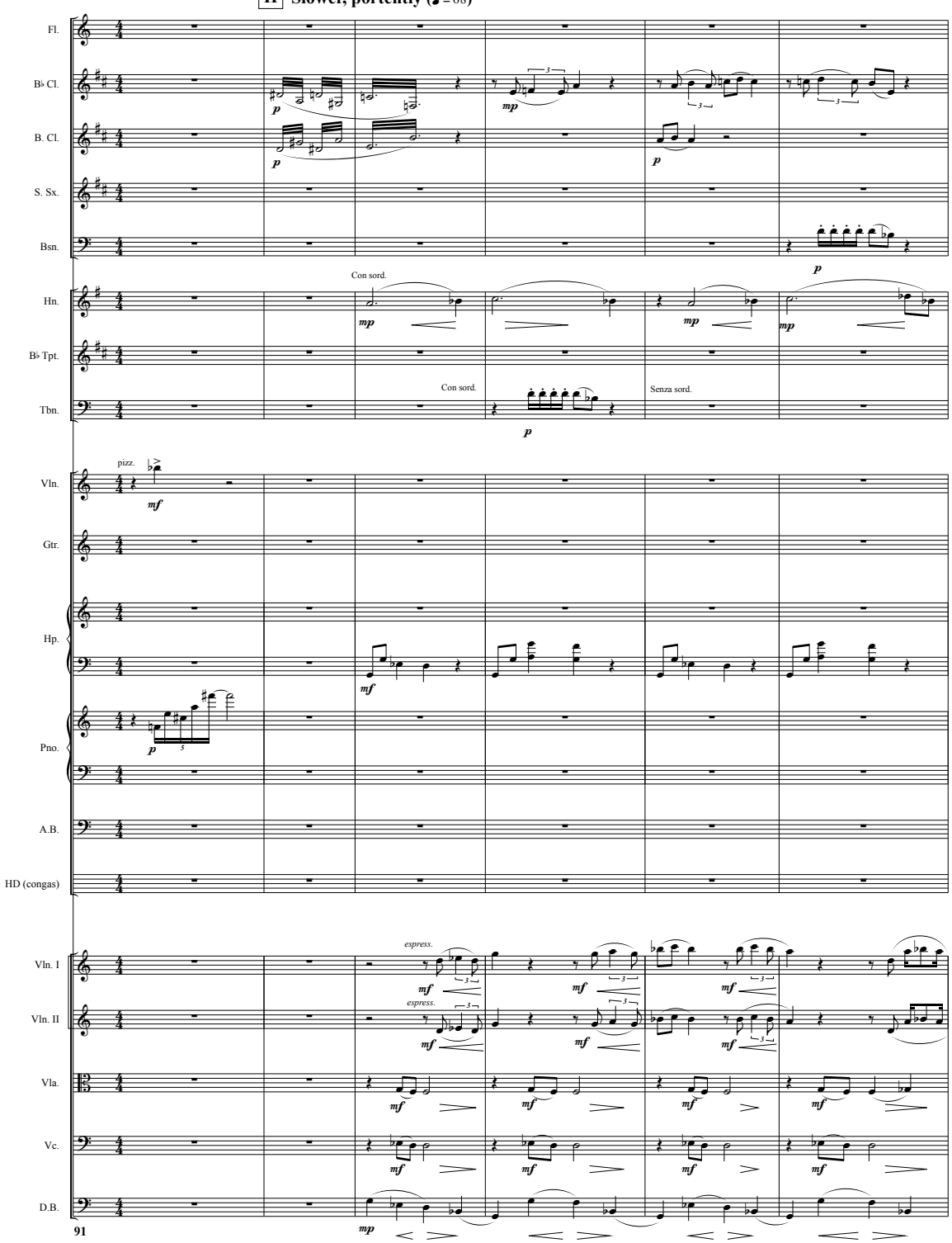


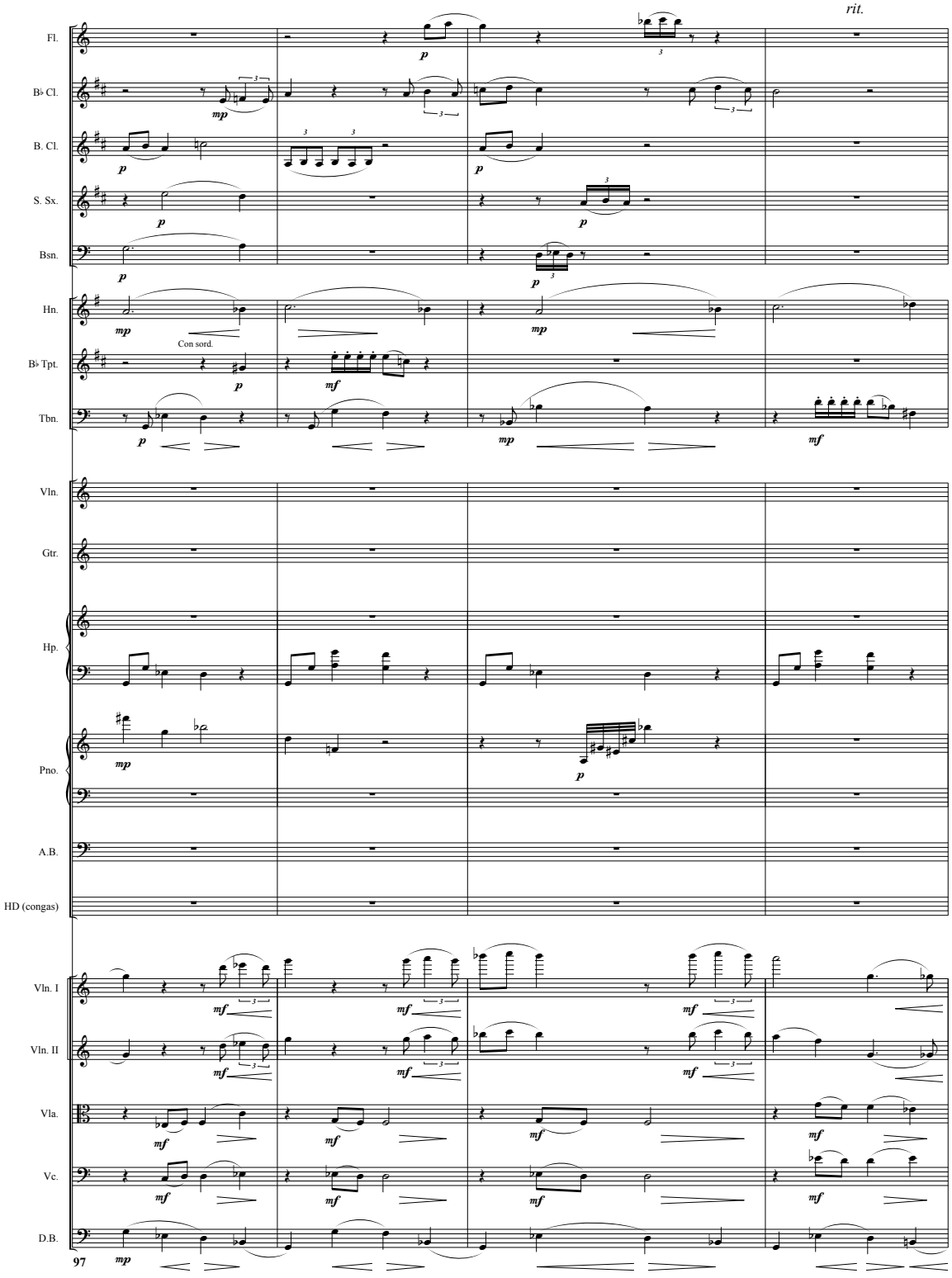
F **Ignacio responds** *(solo dance)*

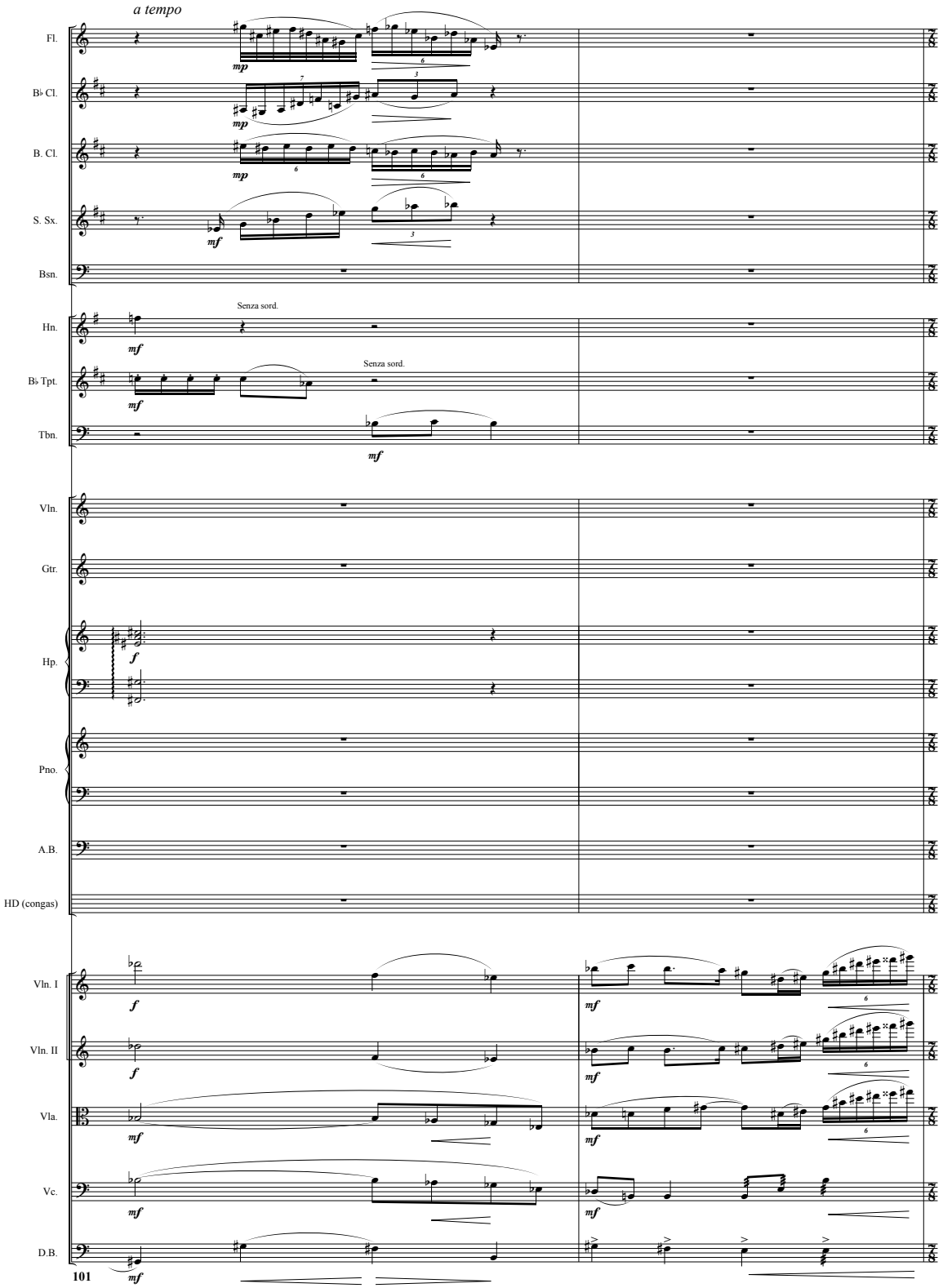



G
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
solo
mp
mf
p


rubato (solo violin lead)
rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
solo
83

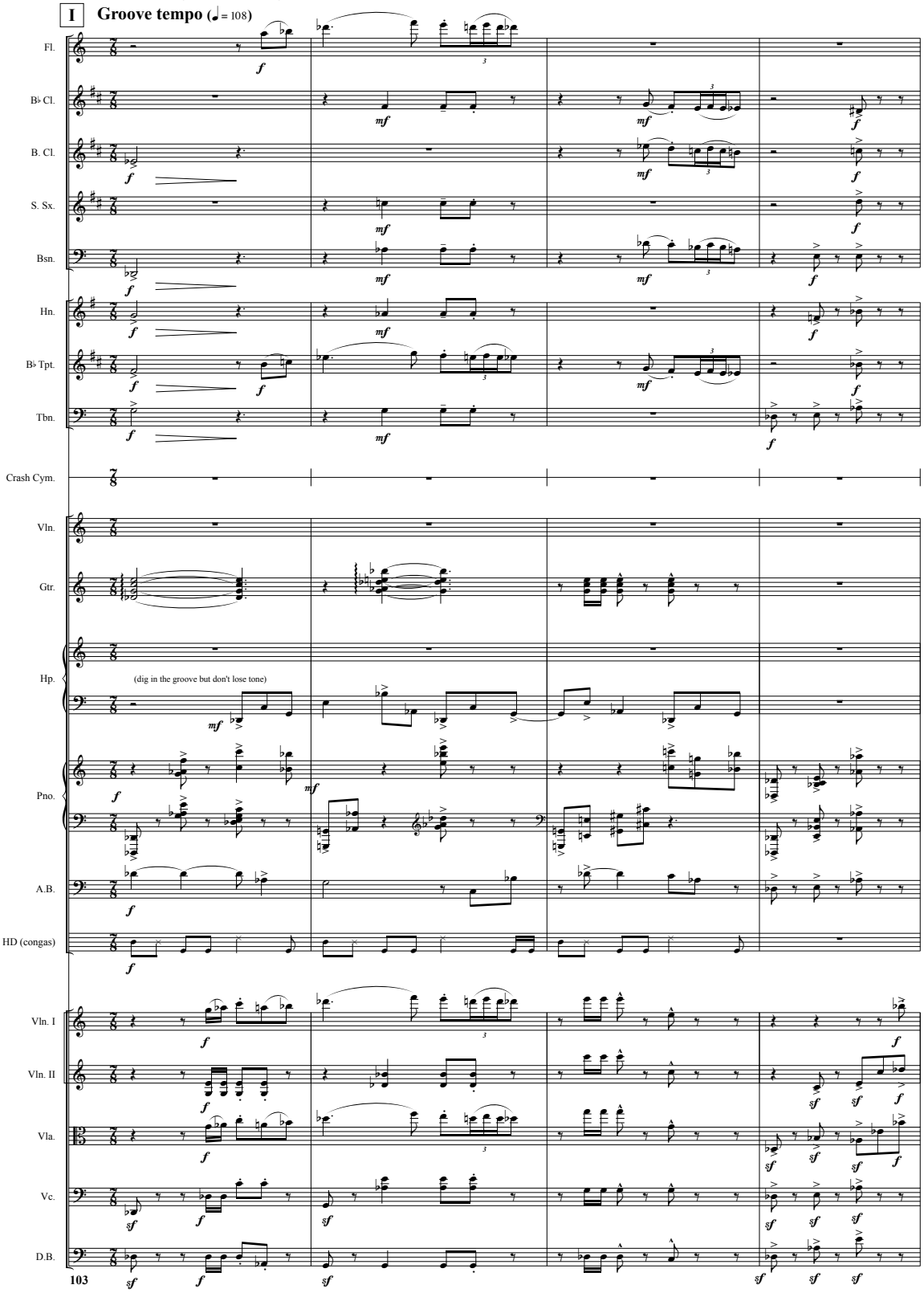

H Slower, portently (♩ = 68)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Con sord.
Con sord.
Senza sord.
Vln.
pizz.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
espress.
espress.
91

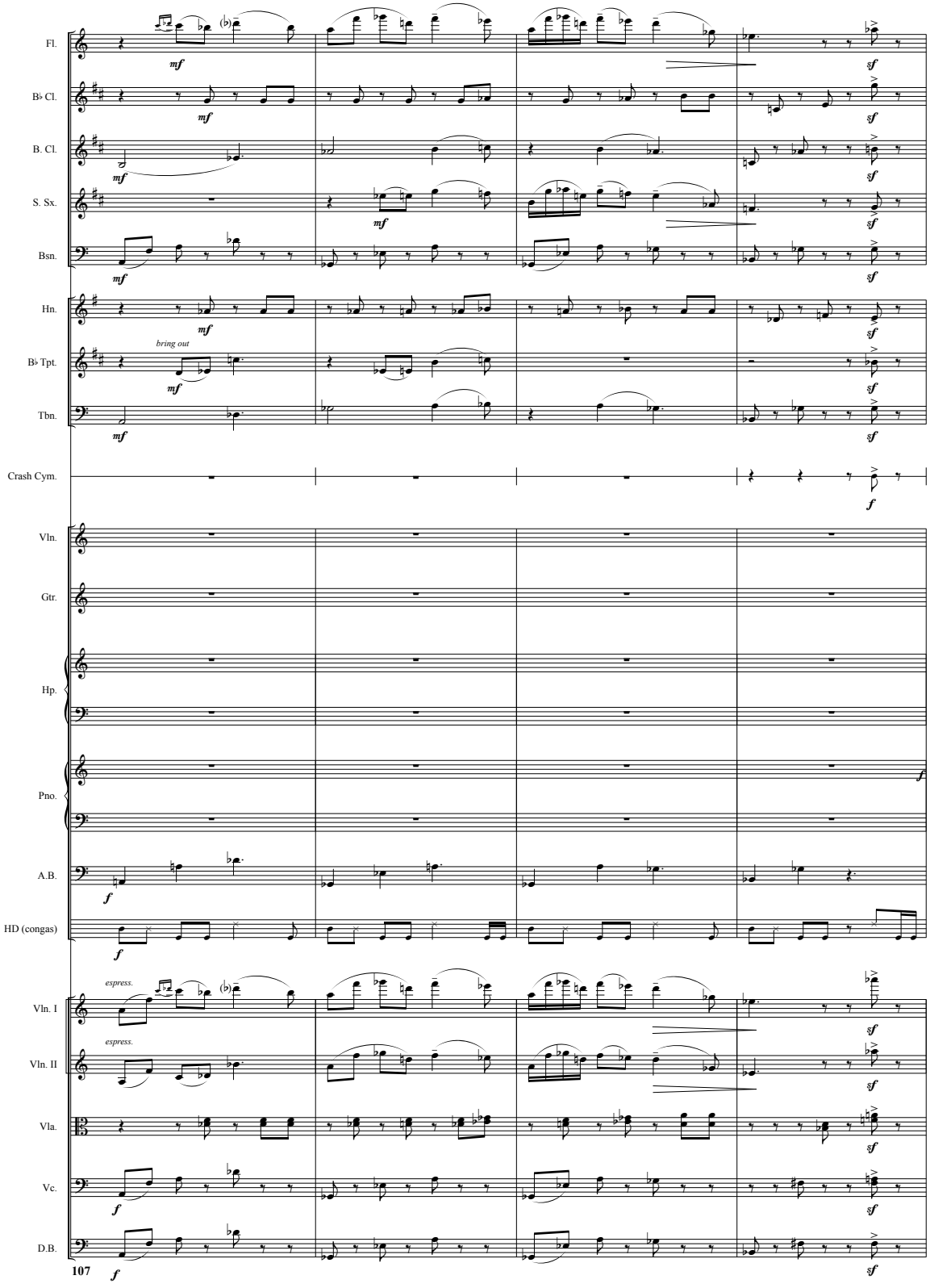

rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Con sord.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
97

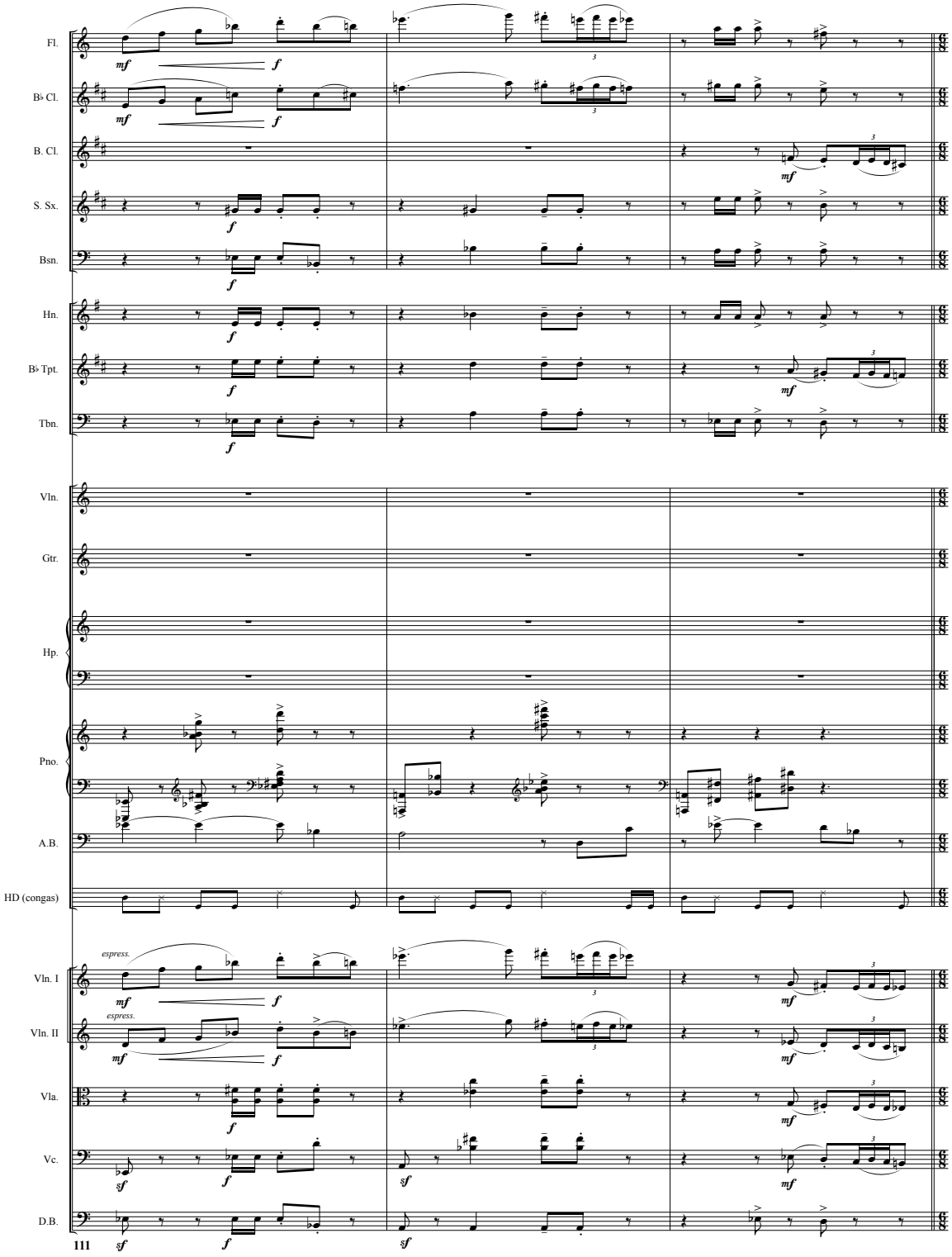

a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Senza sord.
B♭ Tpt.
Senza sord.
Tbn.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
101

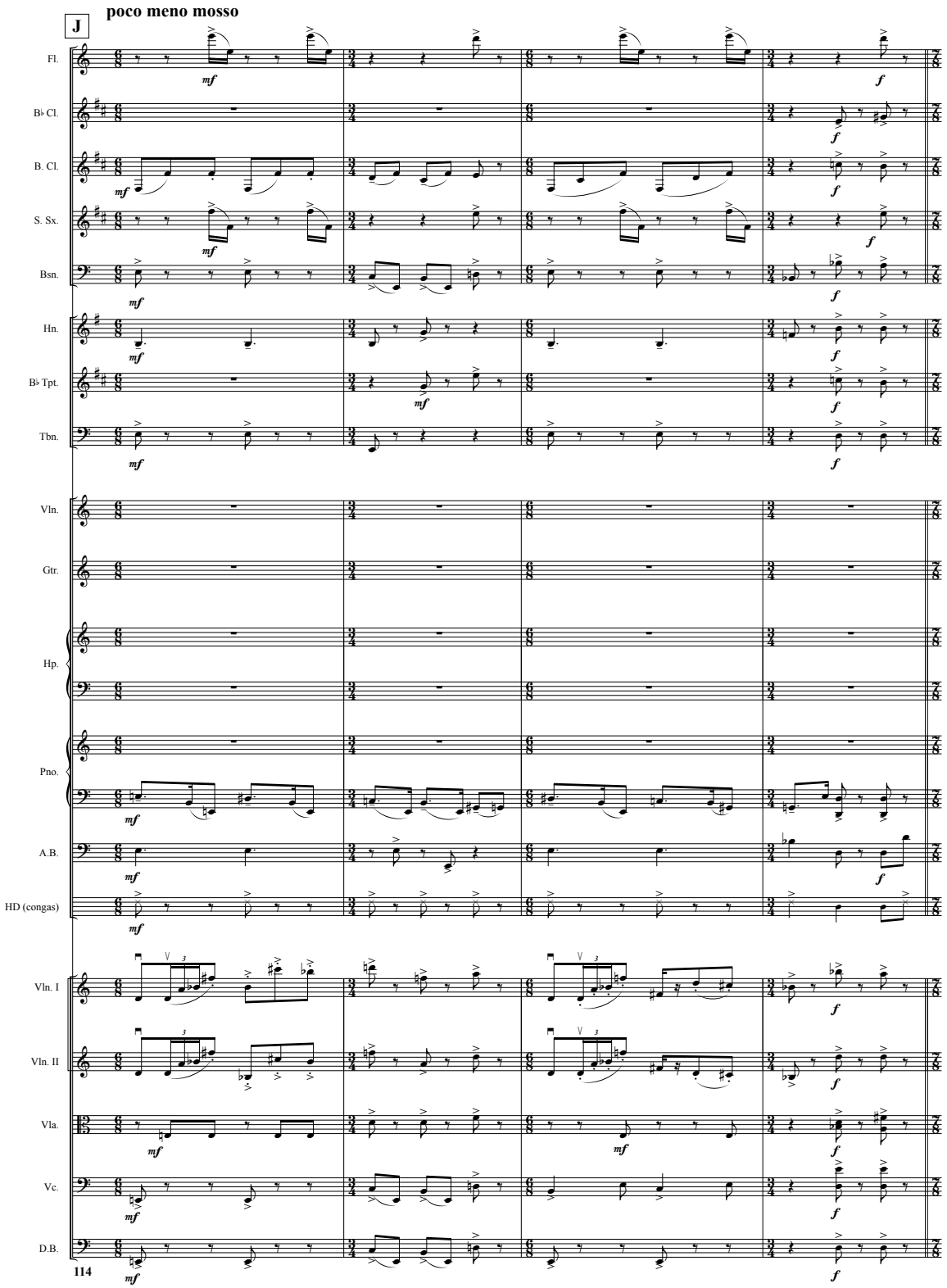
Dolores and Ignacio dance together...

I **Groove tempo** (♩ = 108)



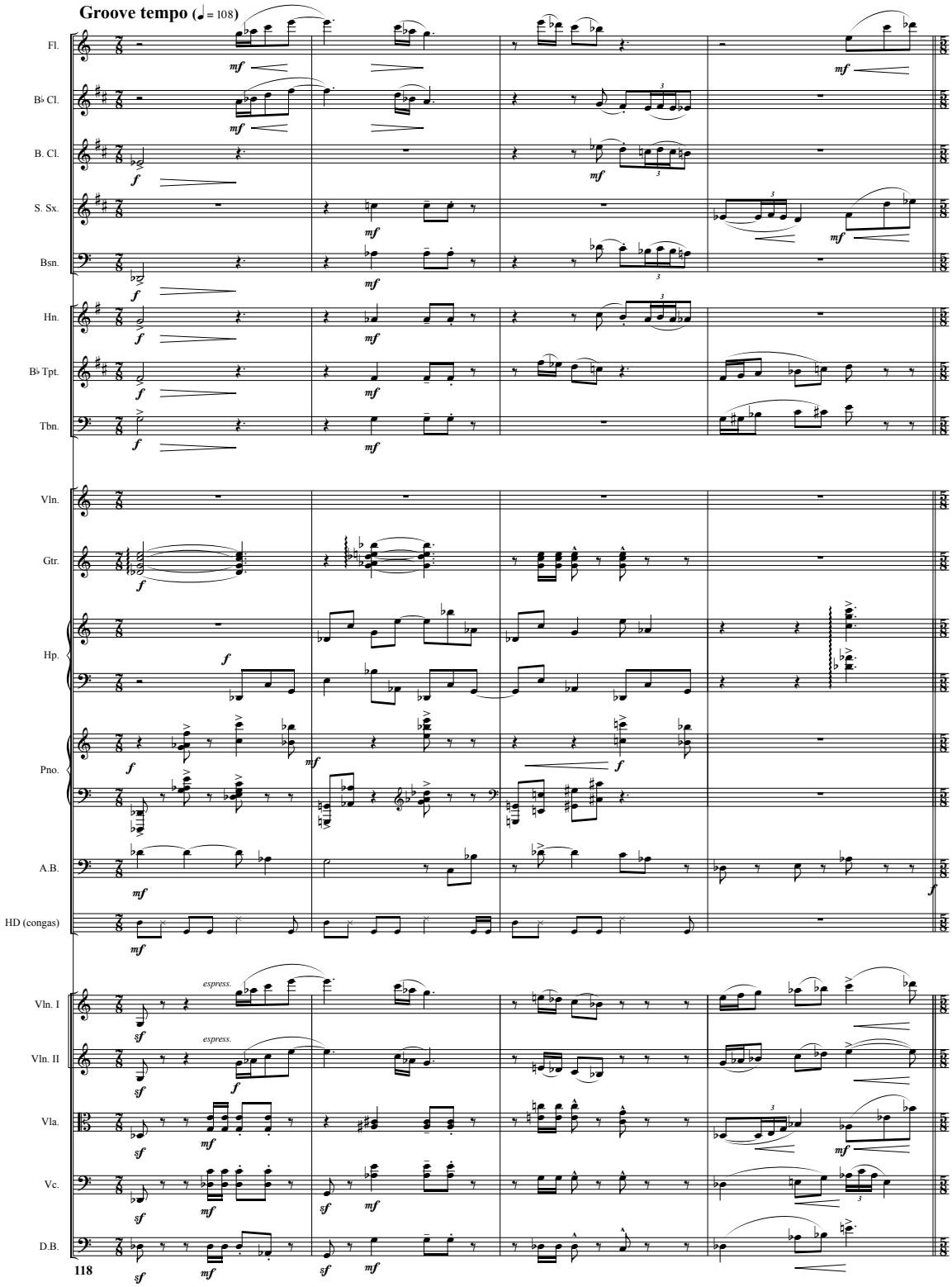

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
bring out
Tbn.
Crash Cym.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
espress.
Vln. I
espress.
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
107

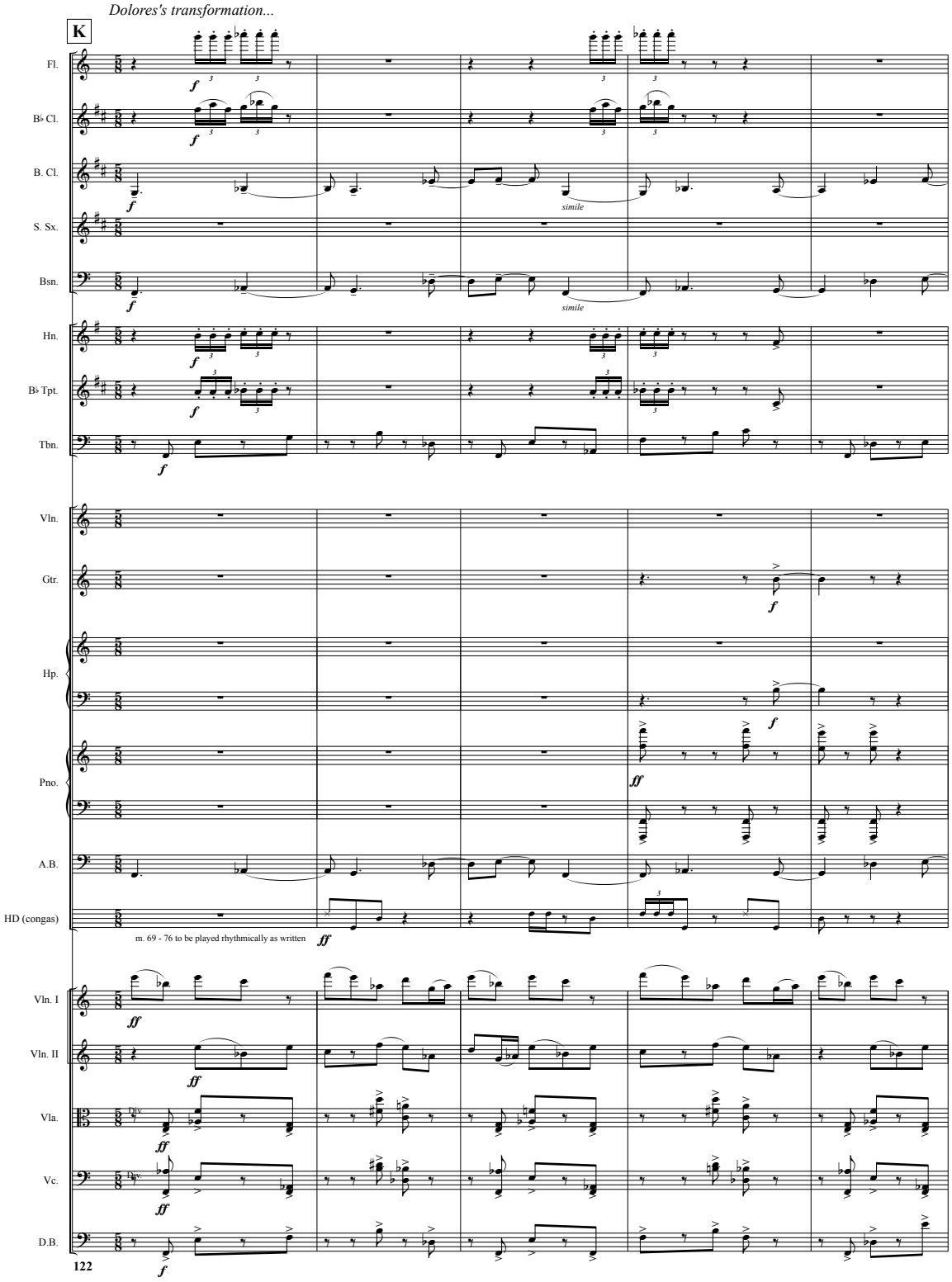

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
espress.
111

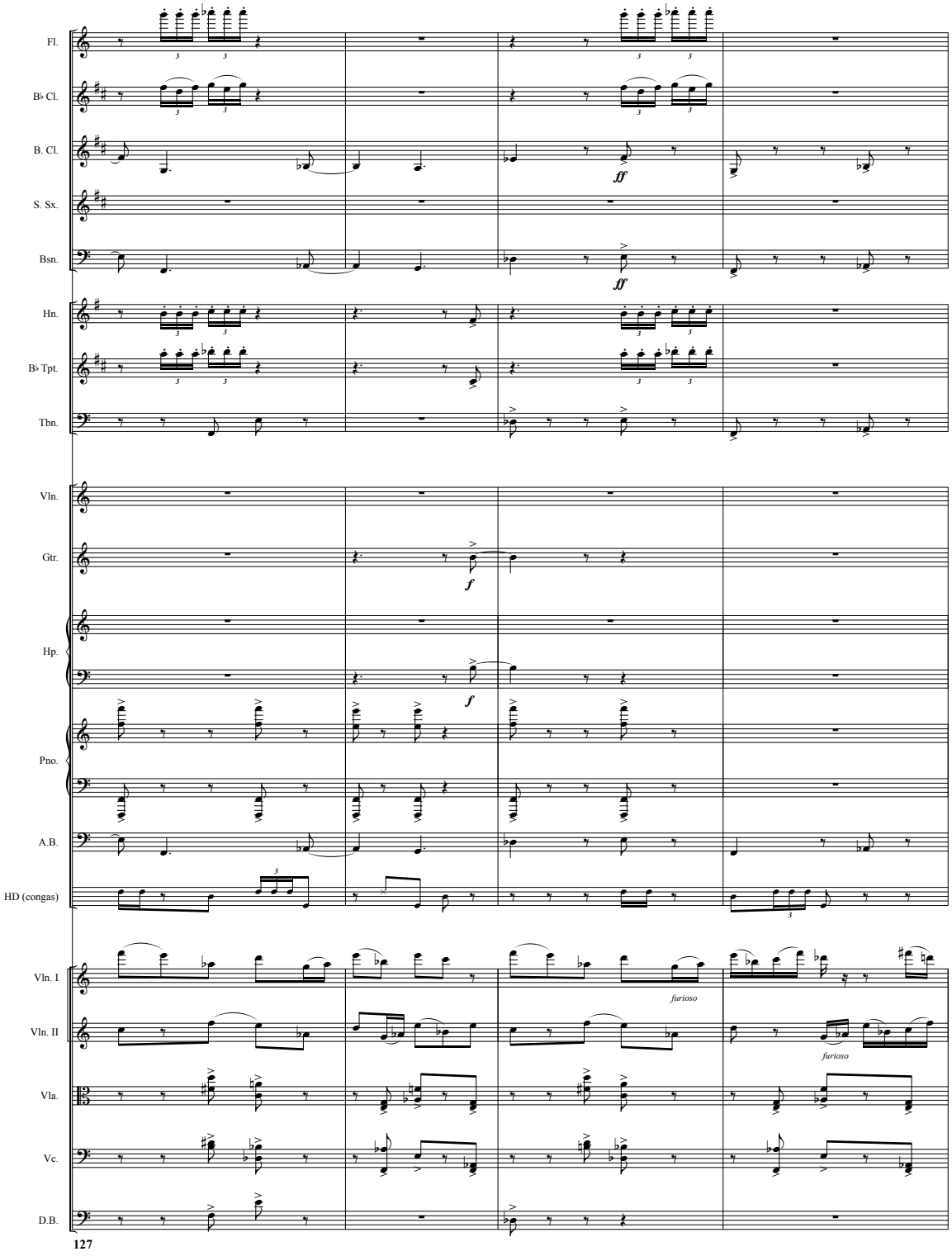

J
poco meno mosso
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
114

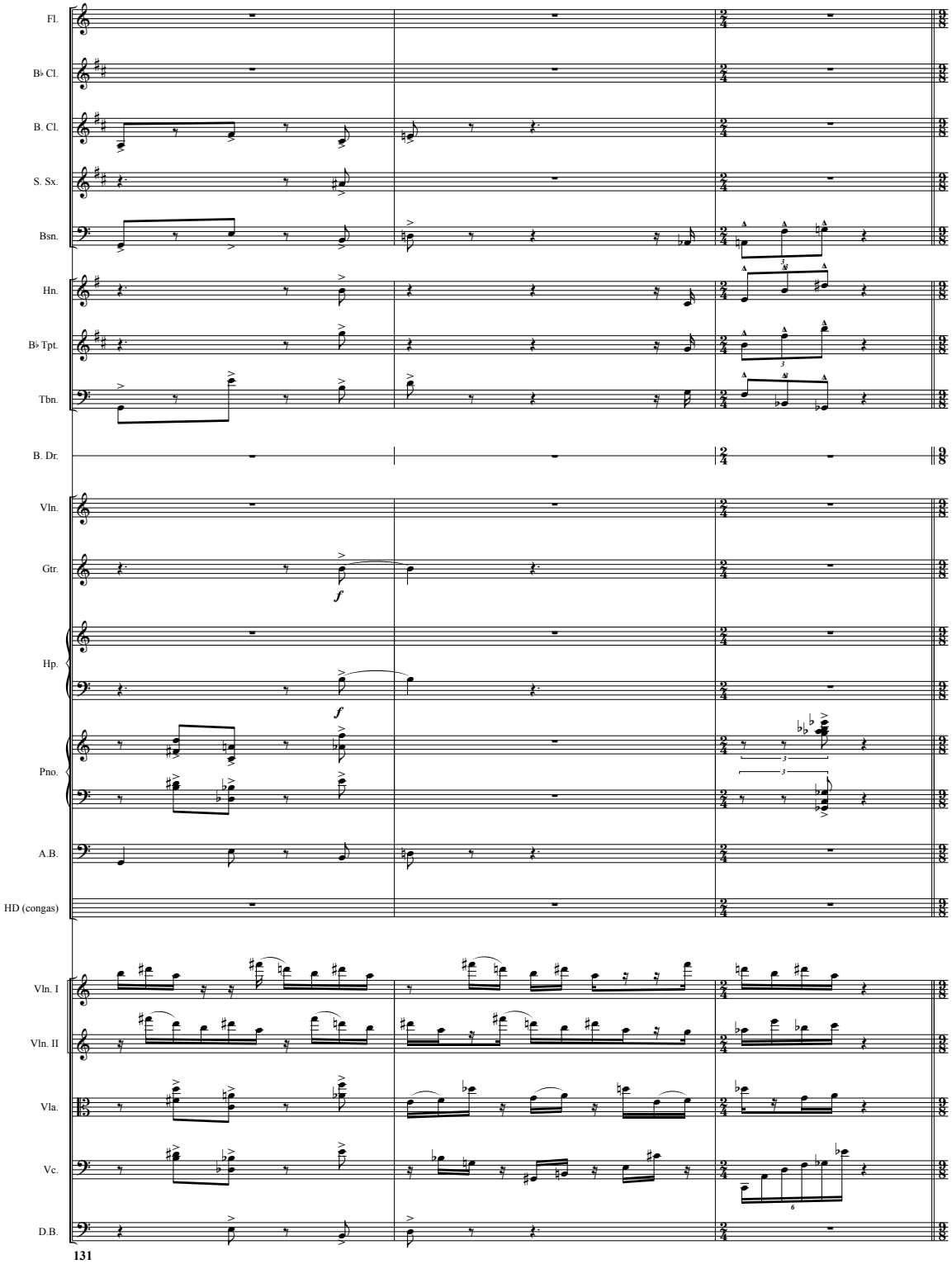
Calavera Catrina warns Dolores
of the consequences of transformation

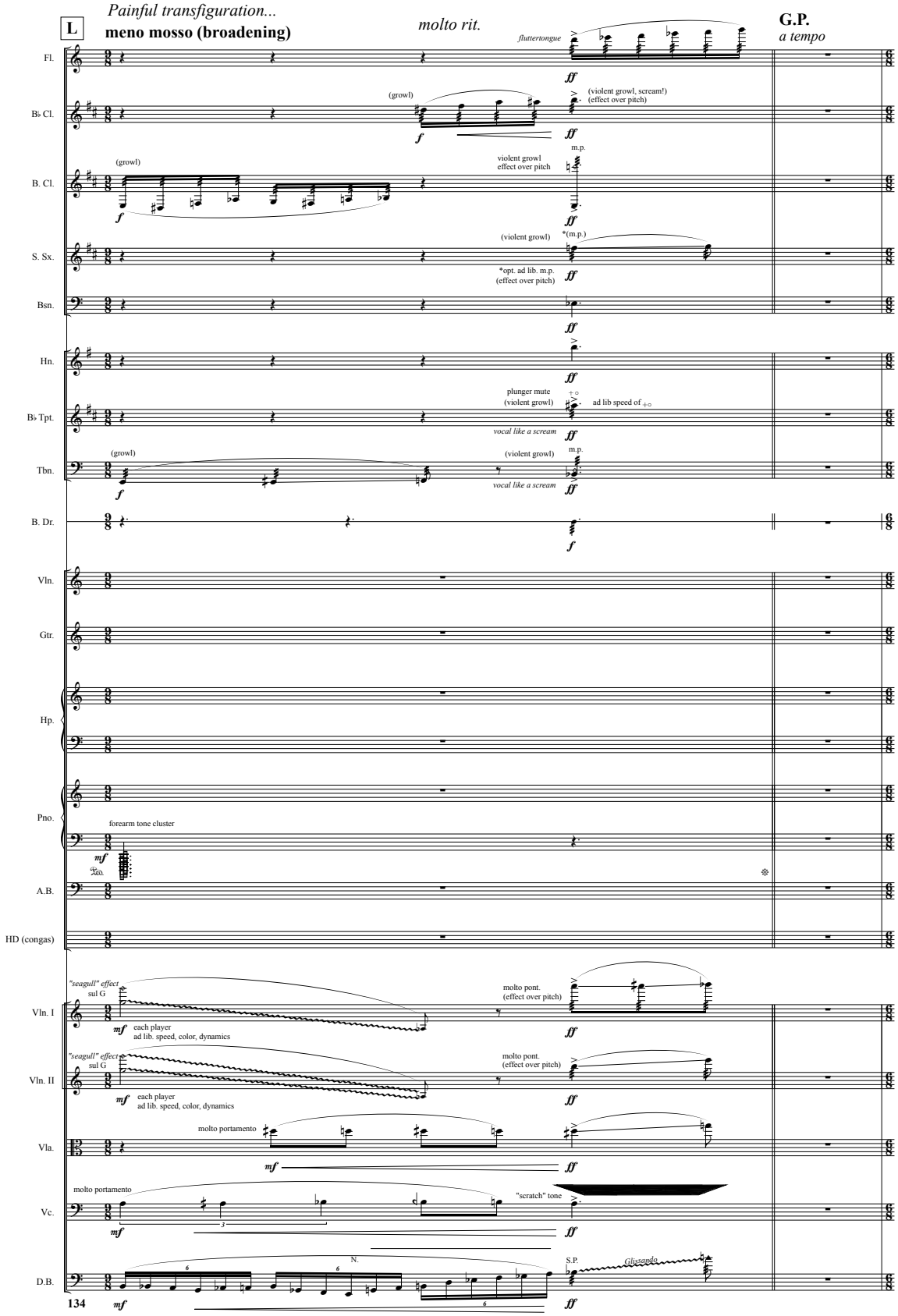
Groove tempo (♩ = 108)




Dolores's transformation...
K
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
m. 69 - 76 to be played rhythmically as written
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
simile
simile
Div.
Div.
122

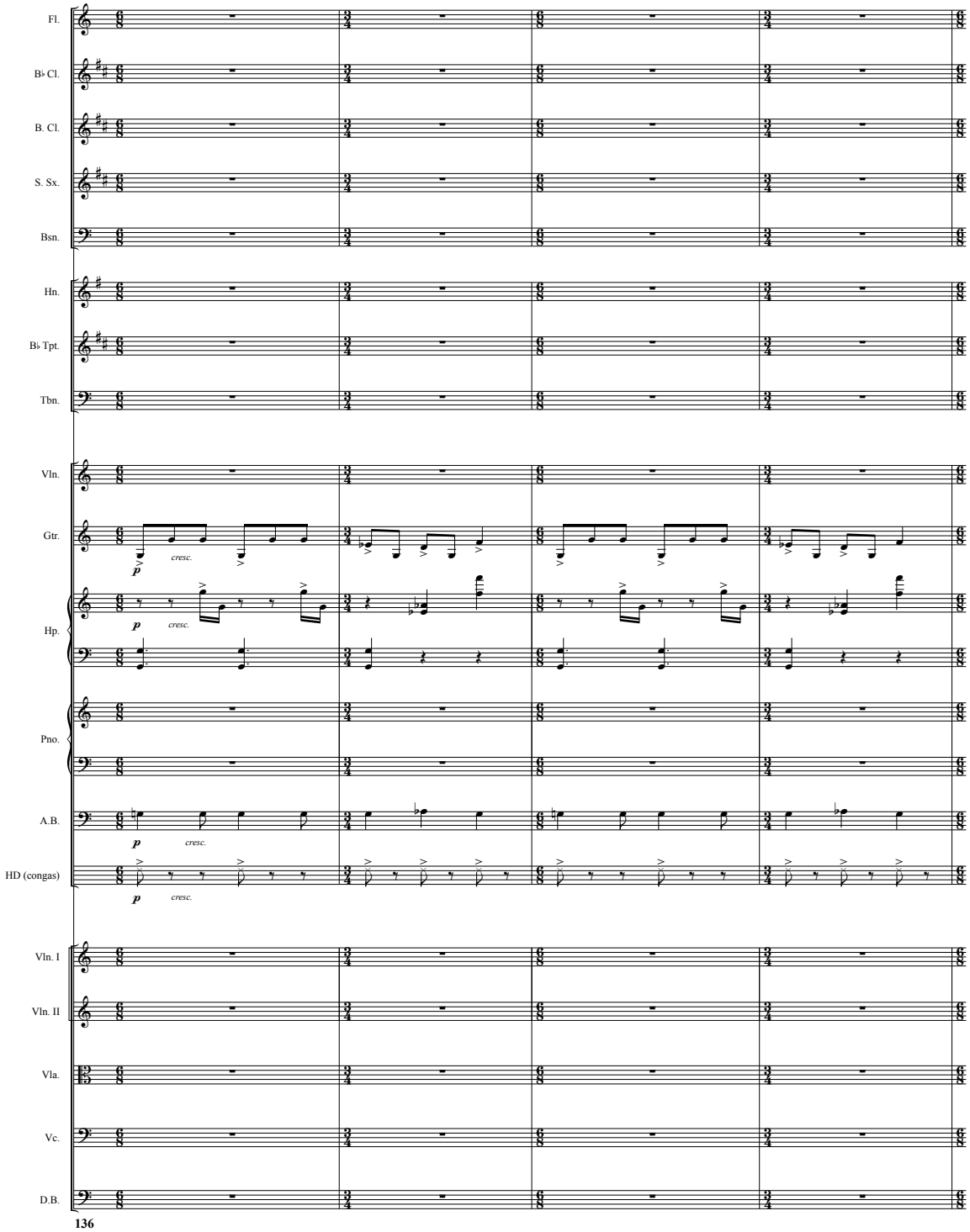

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
ff
ff
f
f
furioso
furioso
127

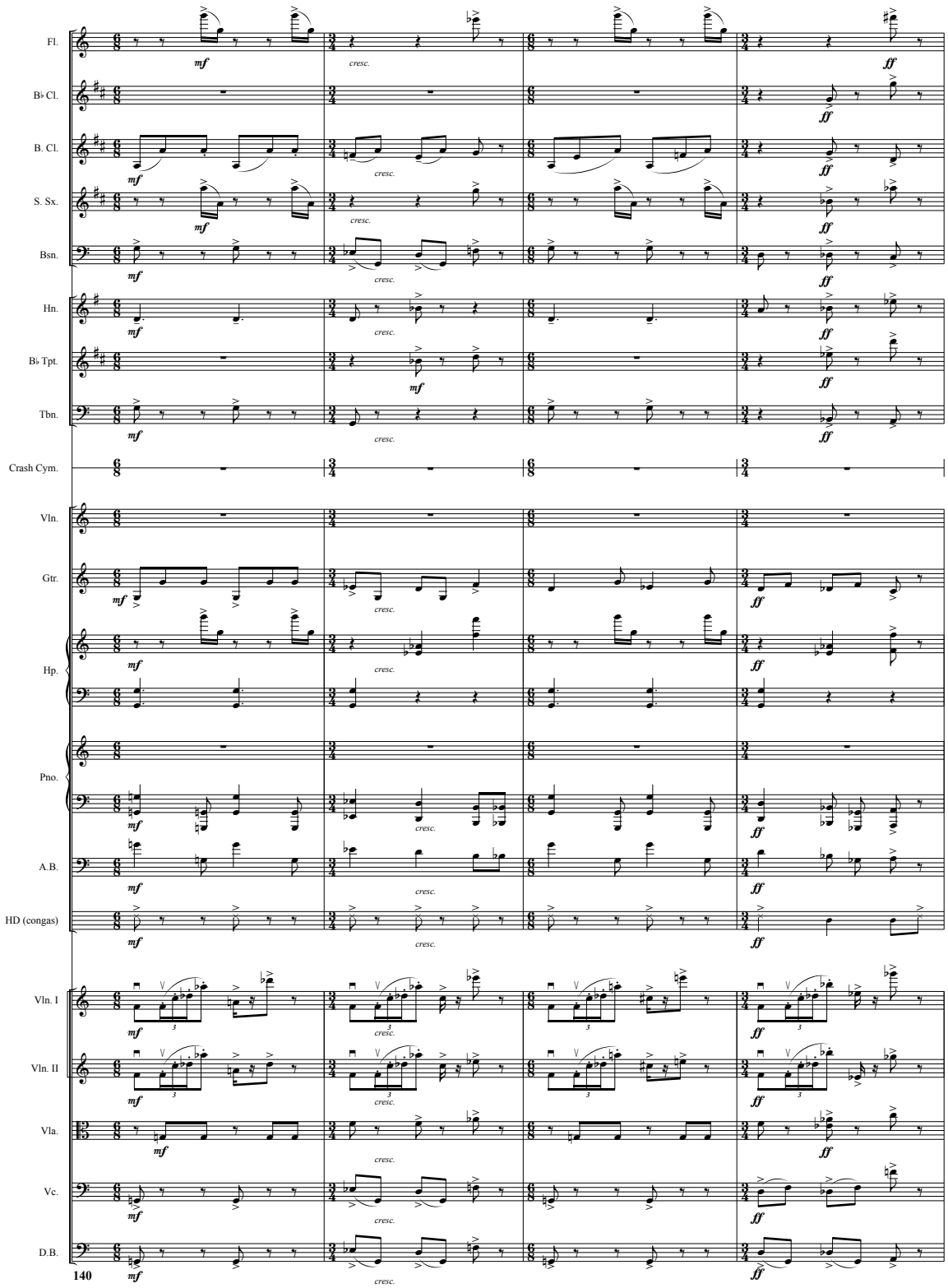

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
f
131

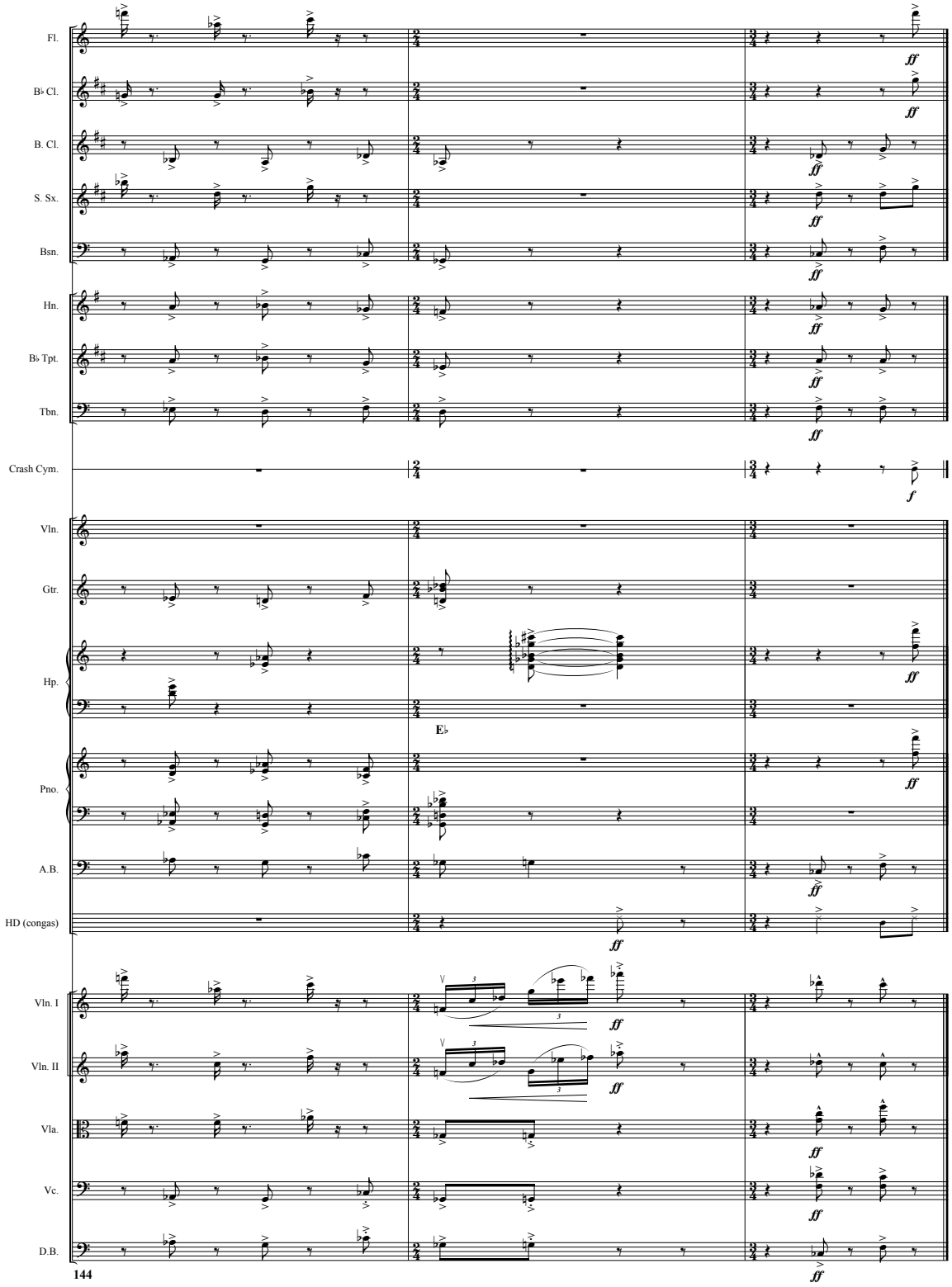

L
Painful transfiguration...
meno mosso (broadening)
molto rit.
G.P.
a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
fluttertongue
(growl)
(violent growl, scream!)
(effect over pitch)
violent growl
effect over pitch
m.p.
(violent growl)
*(m.p.)
*opt. ad lib. m.p.
(effect over pitch)
plunger mute
(violent growl)
ad lib speed of
vocal like a scream
forearm tone cluster
"seagull" effect
sul G
each player
ad lib. speed, color, dynamics
molto pont.
(effect over pitch)
molto portamento
"scratch" tone
N.
S.P.
Glissando
134

Dolores is transformed...Llorona and her are one

M **With swagger** (♩ = 100)




Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Crash Cym.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
140
mf
cresc.
ff


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Crash Cym.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
A.B.
HD (congas)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
E♭
ff
f
144

Work In Progress

Abuelita Introduction Act II

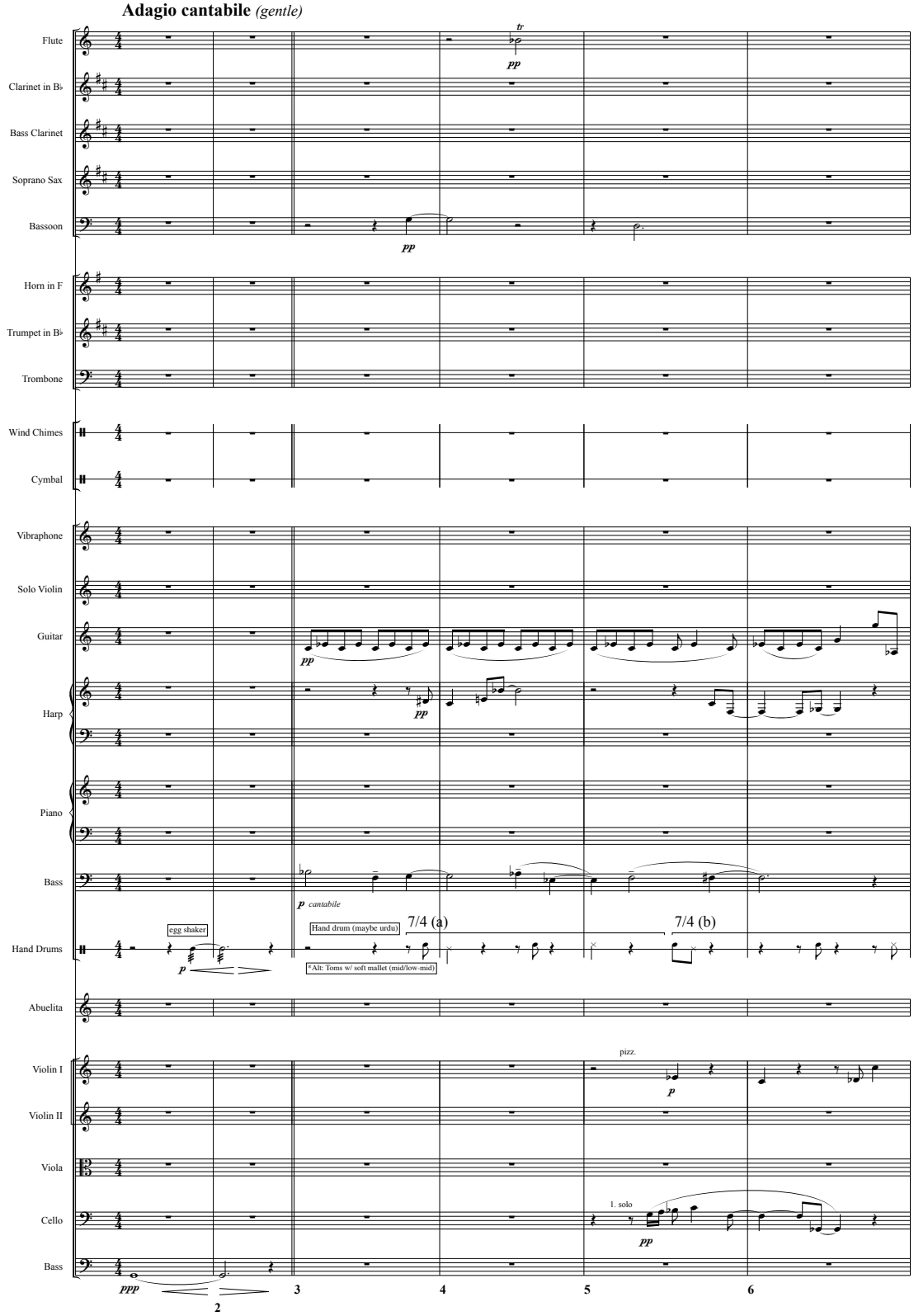
The prelude (Piedra de Sol) begins – Abuelita walks on stage and describes the passage of time. Six years have passed. Mexico's independence from Spain is solidified and she has claimed Alta California.

Dolores has two children with Ignacio and has solidified her place as an influential figure at the expense of the people she was supposed to stand for. Ignacio is still Governor and Dolores has been promised the position of official representative of Alta California to Mexico City. The lust for power and control are starting to consume Dolores. She is changing and the spirit of La Llorona looms.

Act II

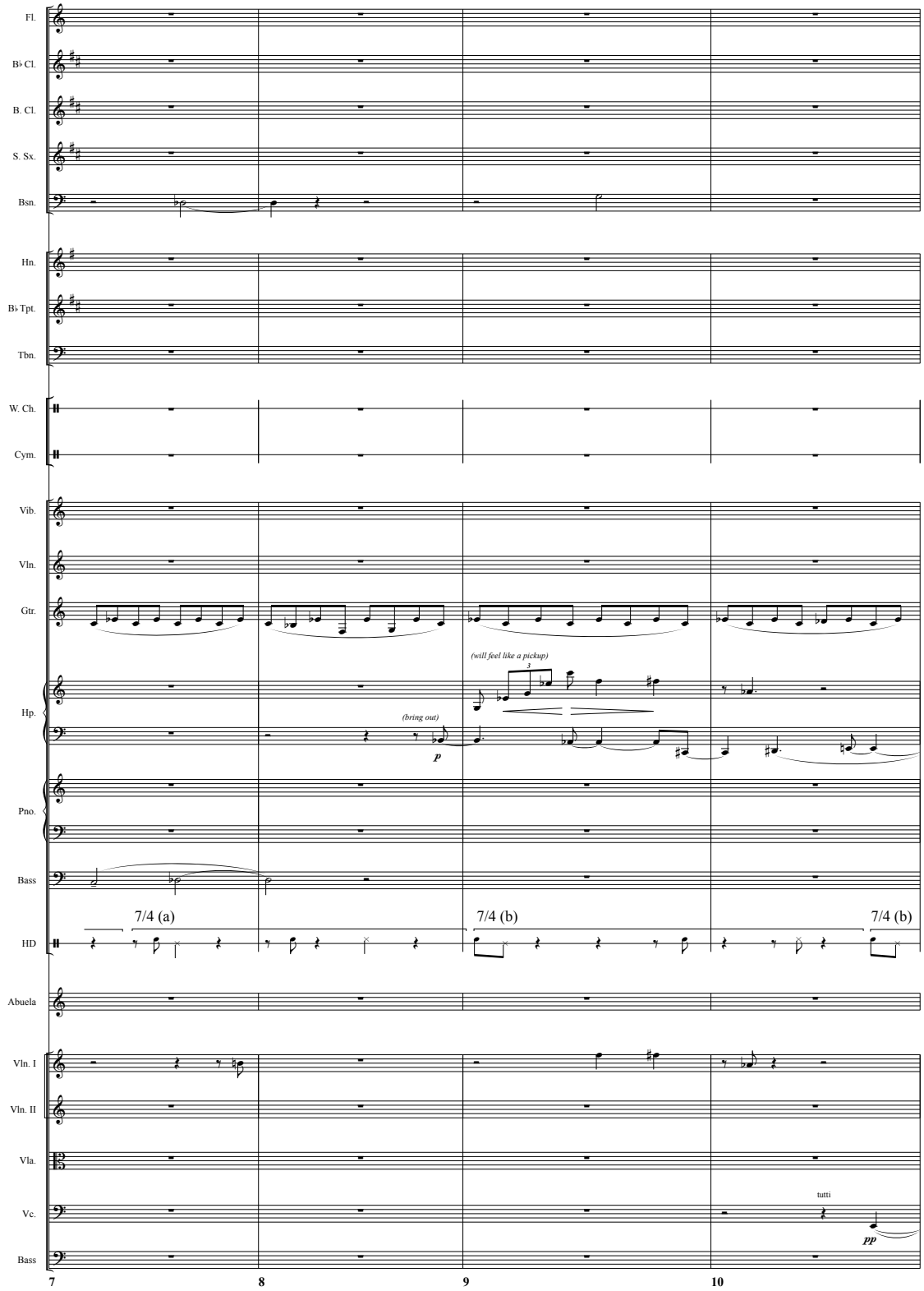
Prelude (Piedra de Sol)

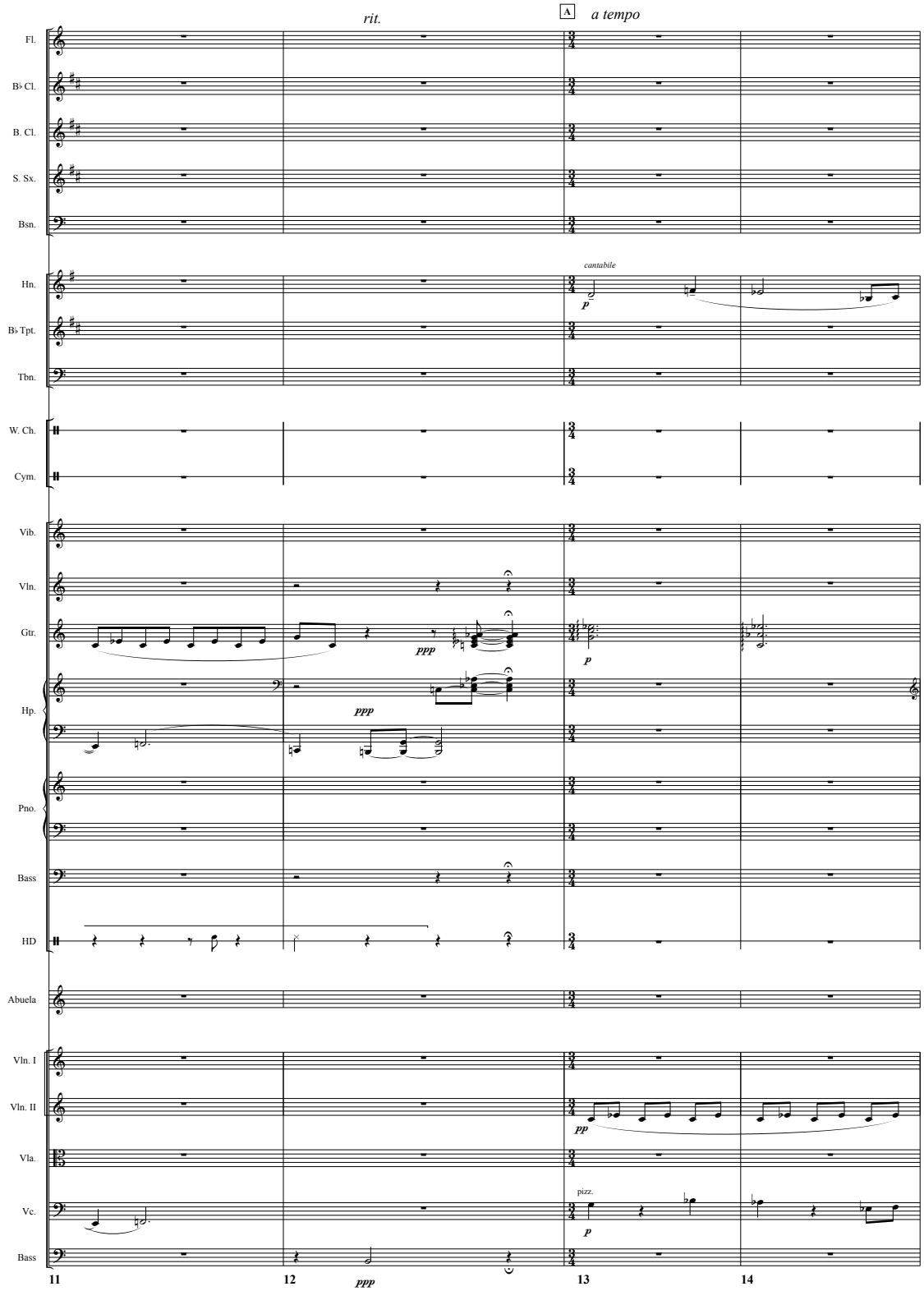
Daniel Aaron Ramirez

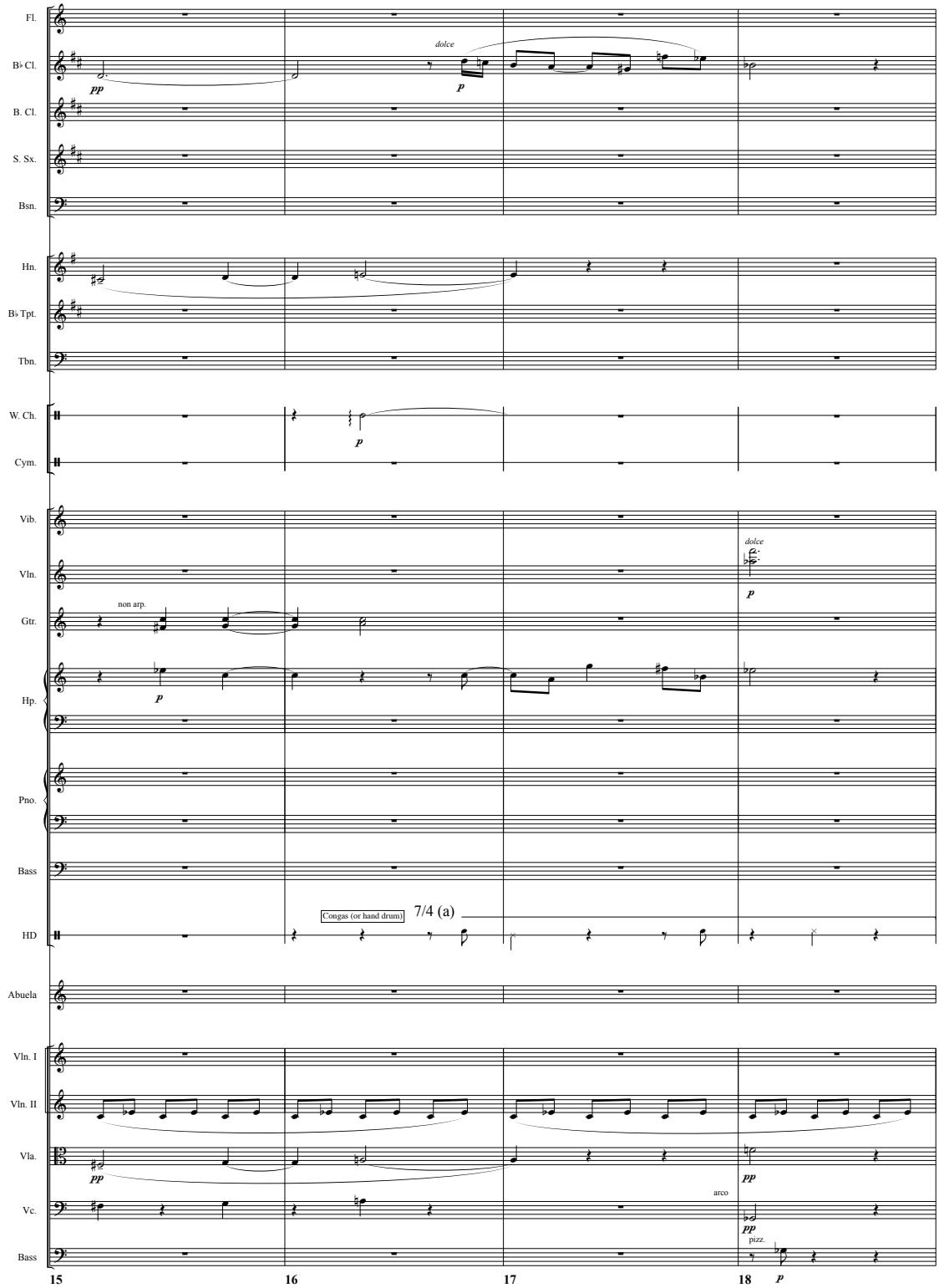


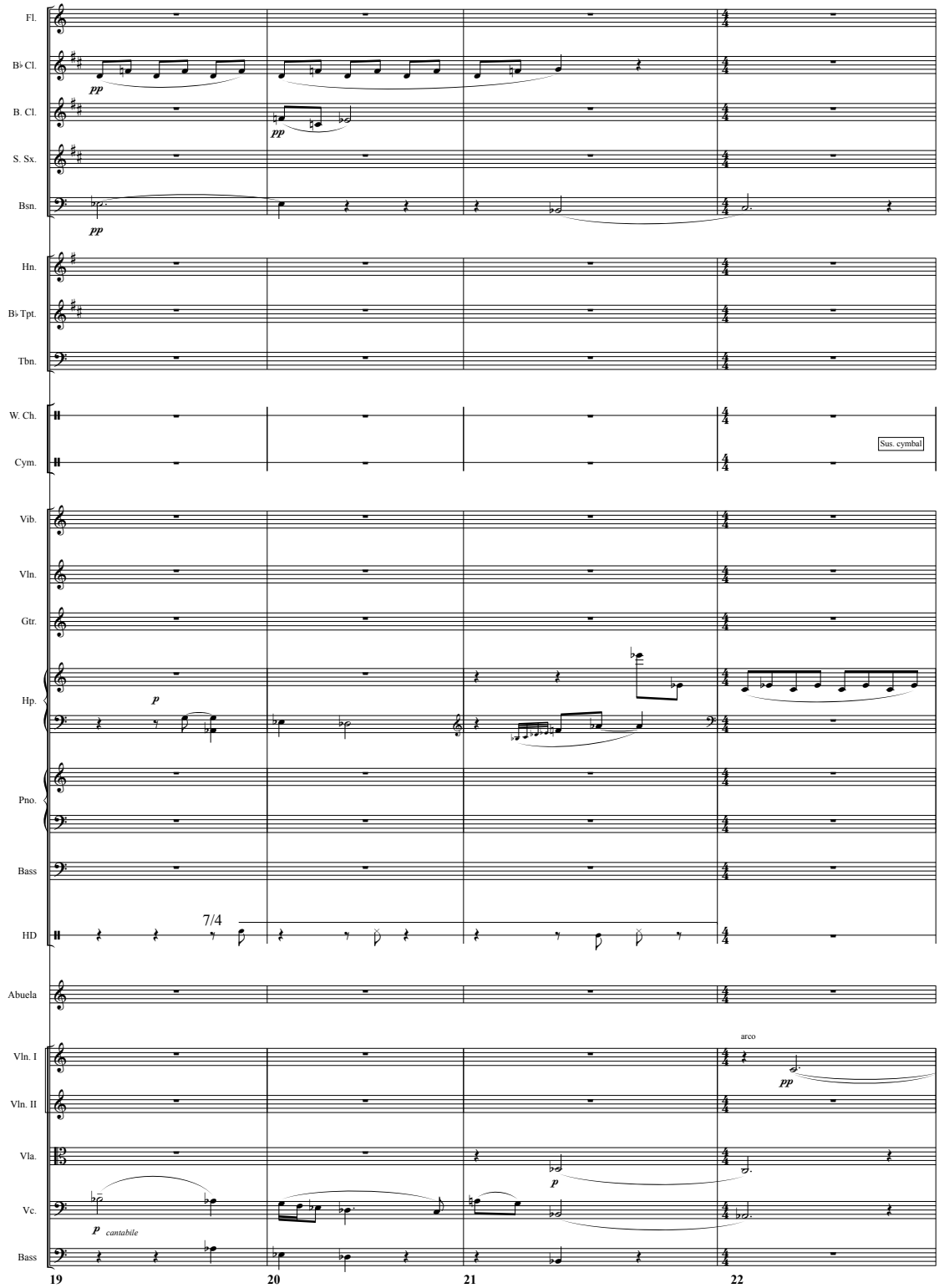
*****MISSING NARRATION*****

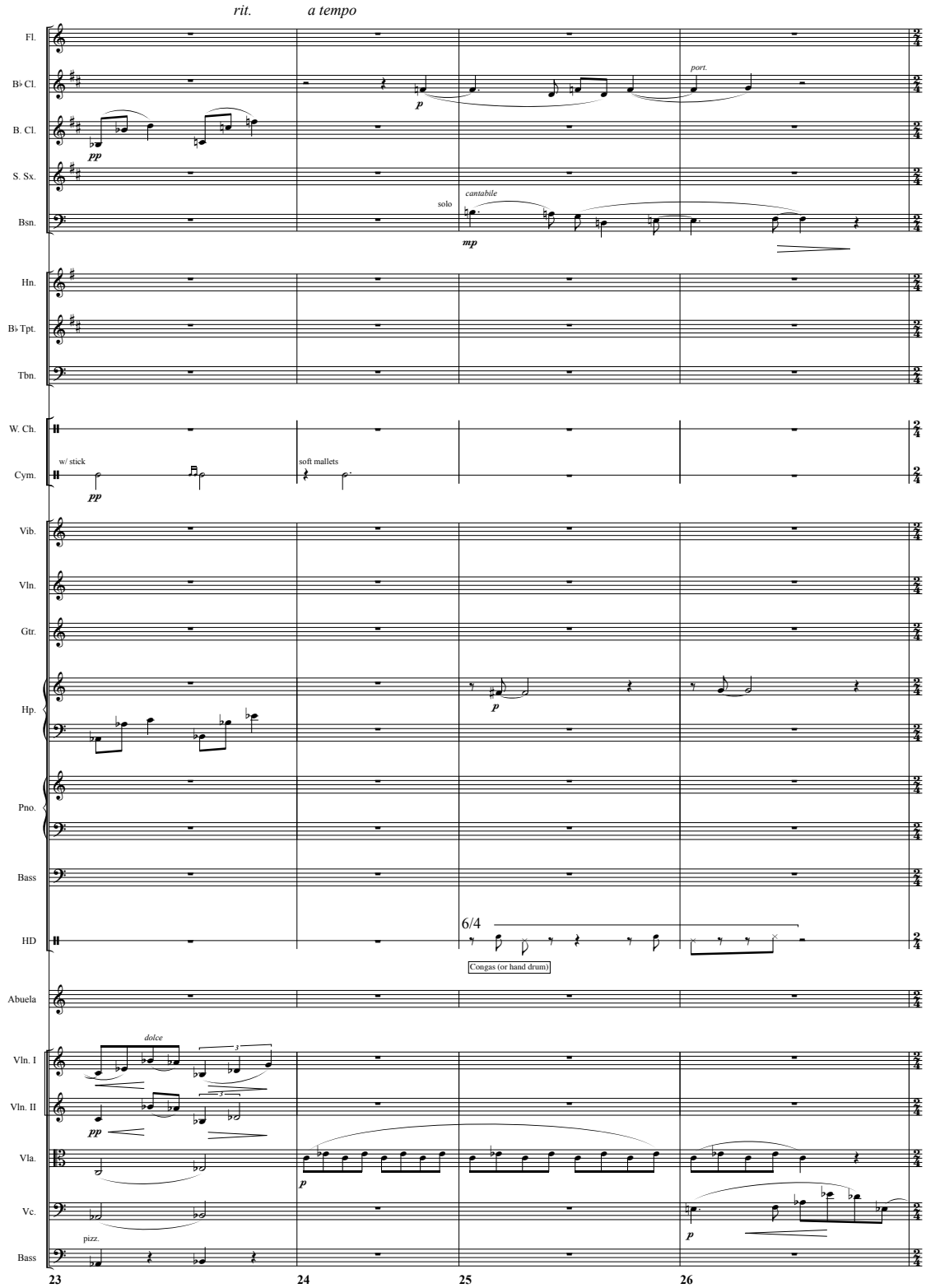
©2021, Daniel Aaron Ramirez

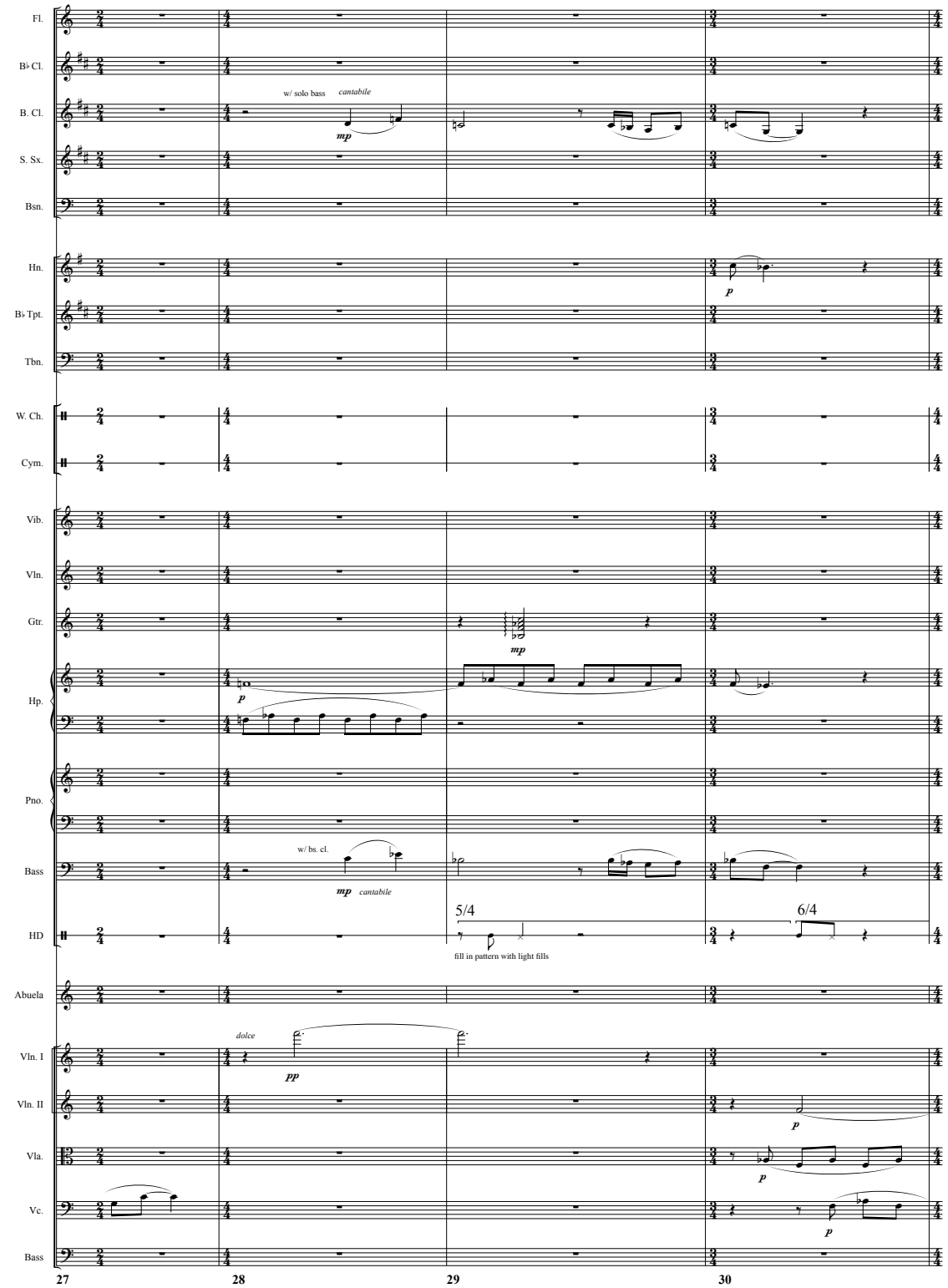

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
W. Ch.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
(will feel like a pickup)
3
Hp.
(bring out)
p
Pno.
Bass
7/4 (a)
7/4 (b)
7/4 (b)
HD
Abuela
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
tutti
pp
Bass
7
8
9
10

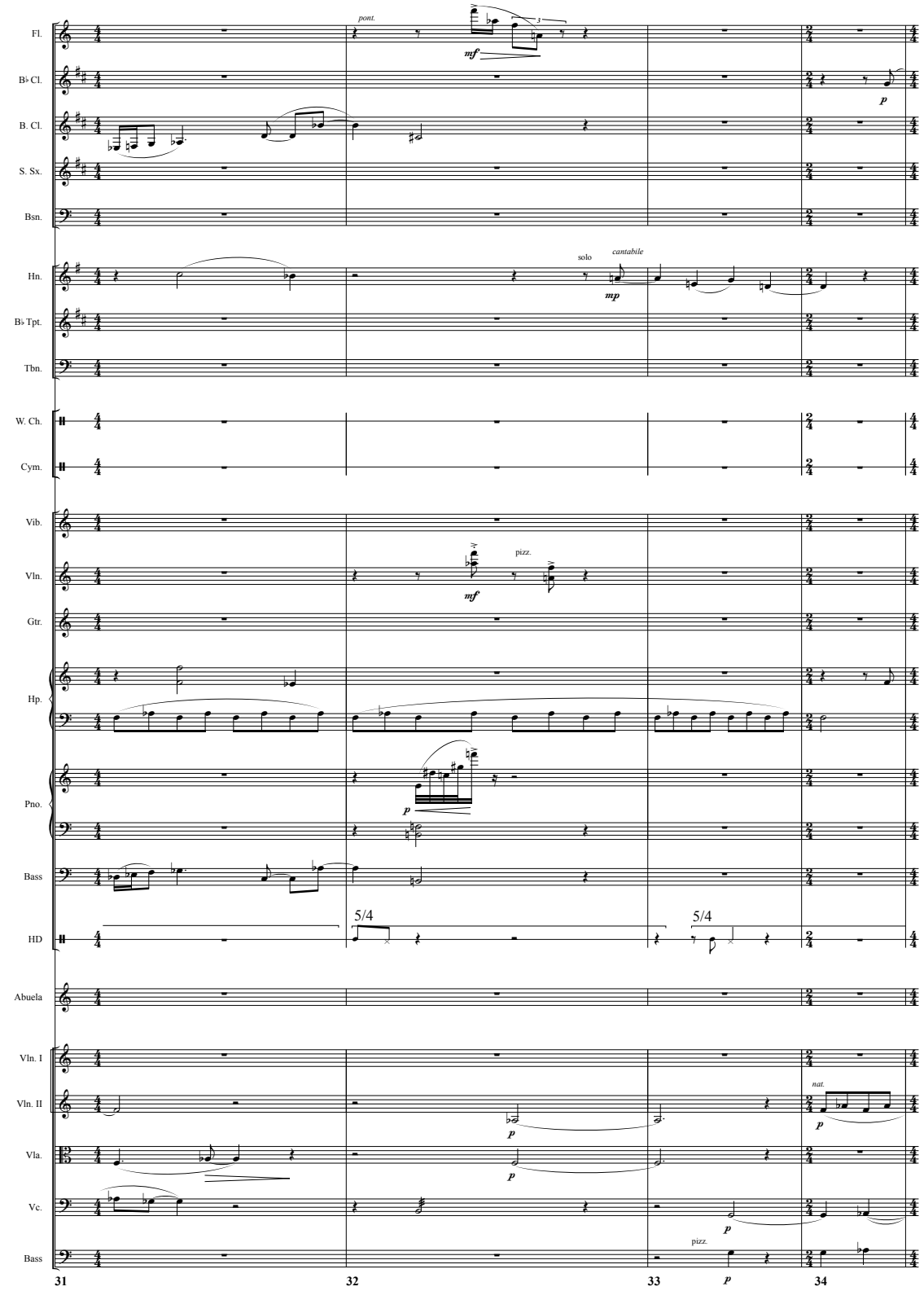

rit.
A
a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
cantabile
p
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
W. Ch.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
ppp
p
Hp.
ppp
Pno.
Bass
HD
Abuela
Vln. I
Vln. II
pp
Vla.
Vc.
pizz.
p
Bass
ppp
11
12
13
14

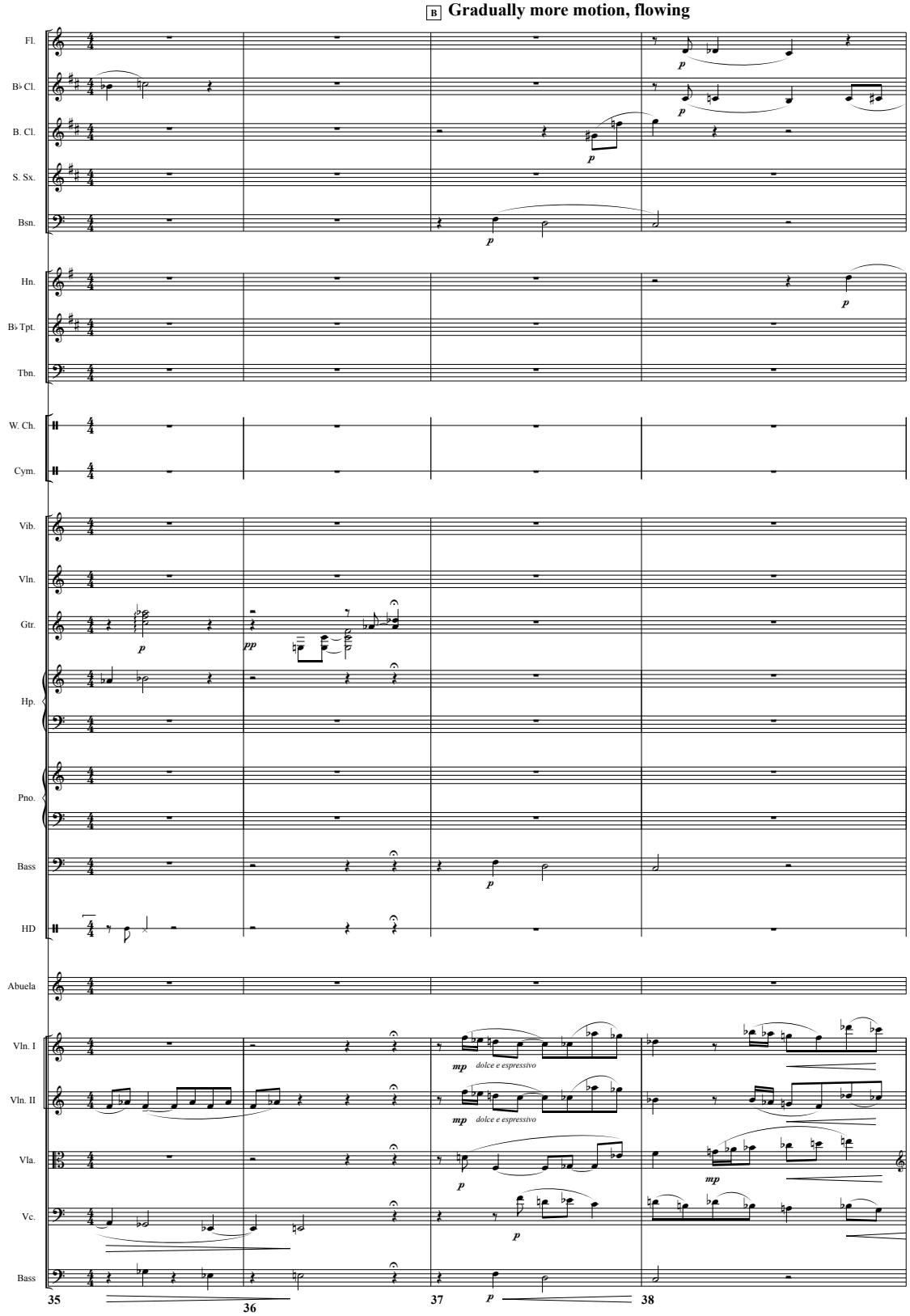

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
W. Ch.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Abuela
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
dolce
pp
p
non arp.
Congas (or hand drum)
7/4 (a)
arco
pizz.
15
16
17
18

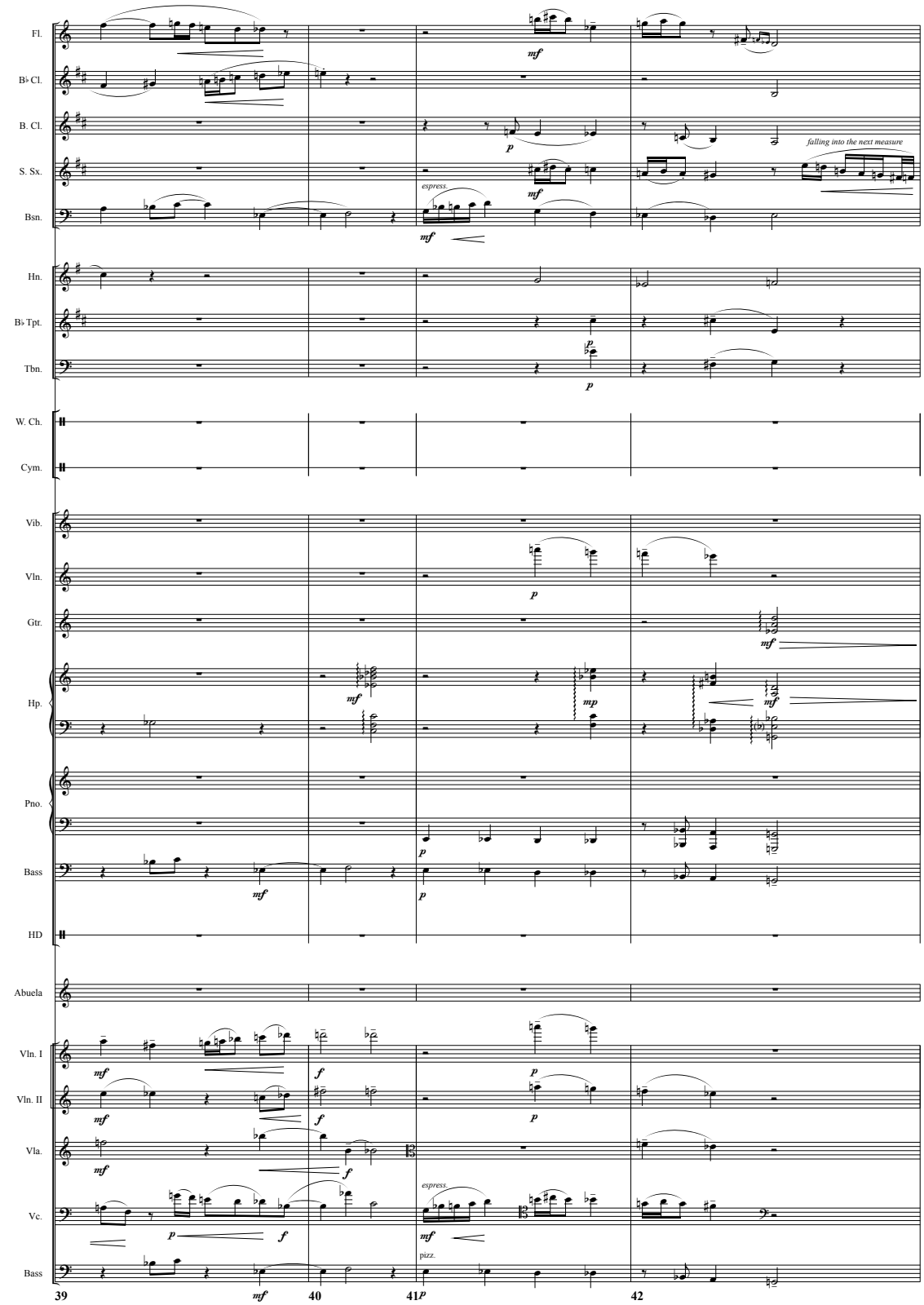

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
W. Ch.
Cym.
Sus. cymbal
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
7/4
Abuela
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
arco
pp
p
cantabile
19
20
21
22

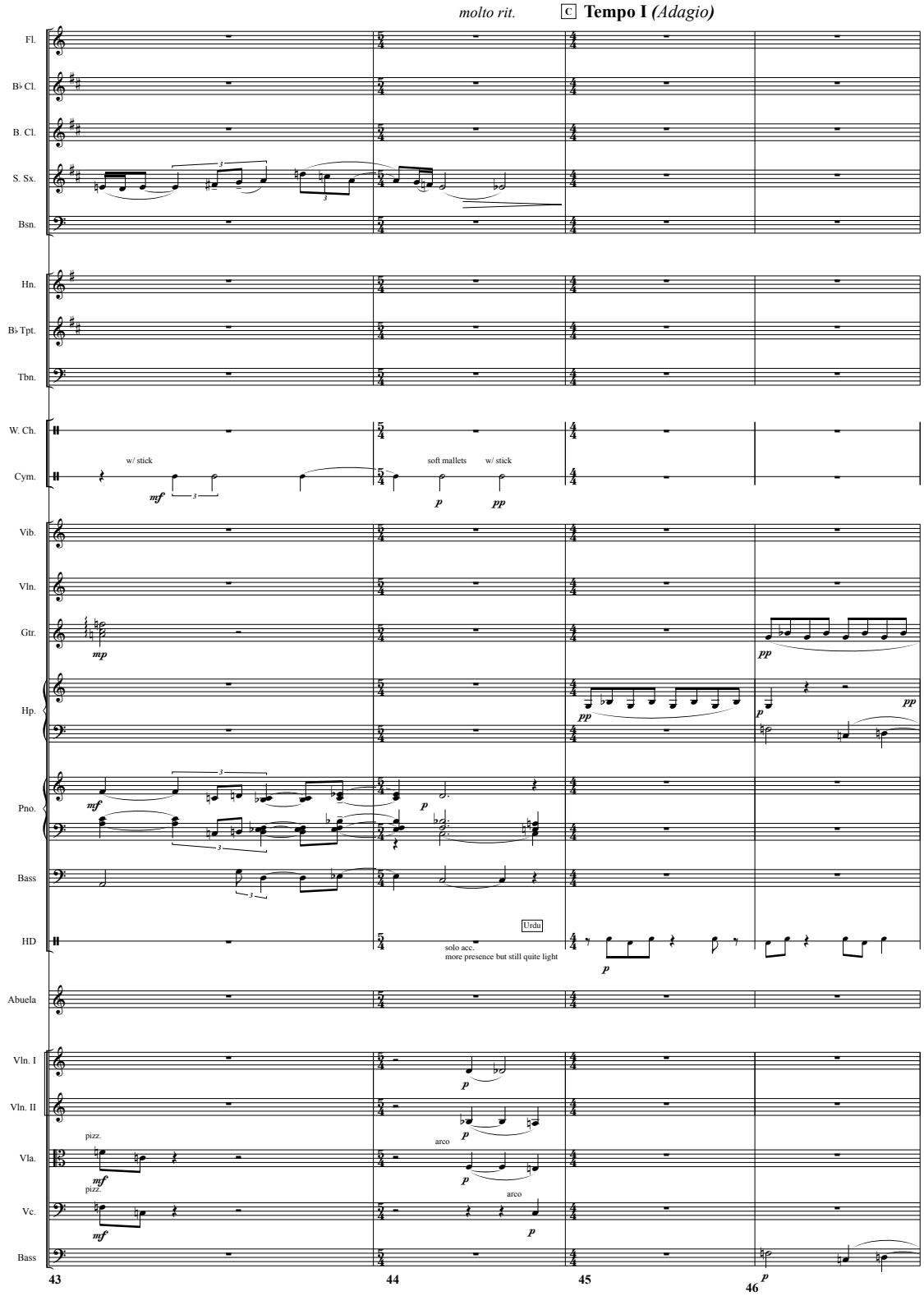

rit.
a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
port.
solo
cantabile
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
W. Ch.
Cym.
w/ stick
soft mallets
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
6/4
Congas (or hand drum)
Abuela
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
dolce
pizz.
23
24
25
26

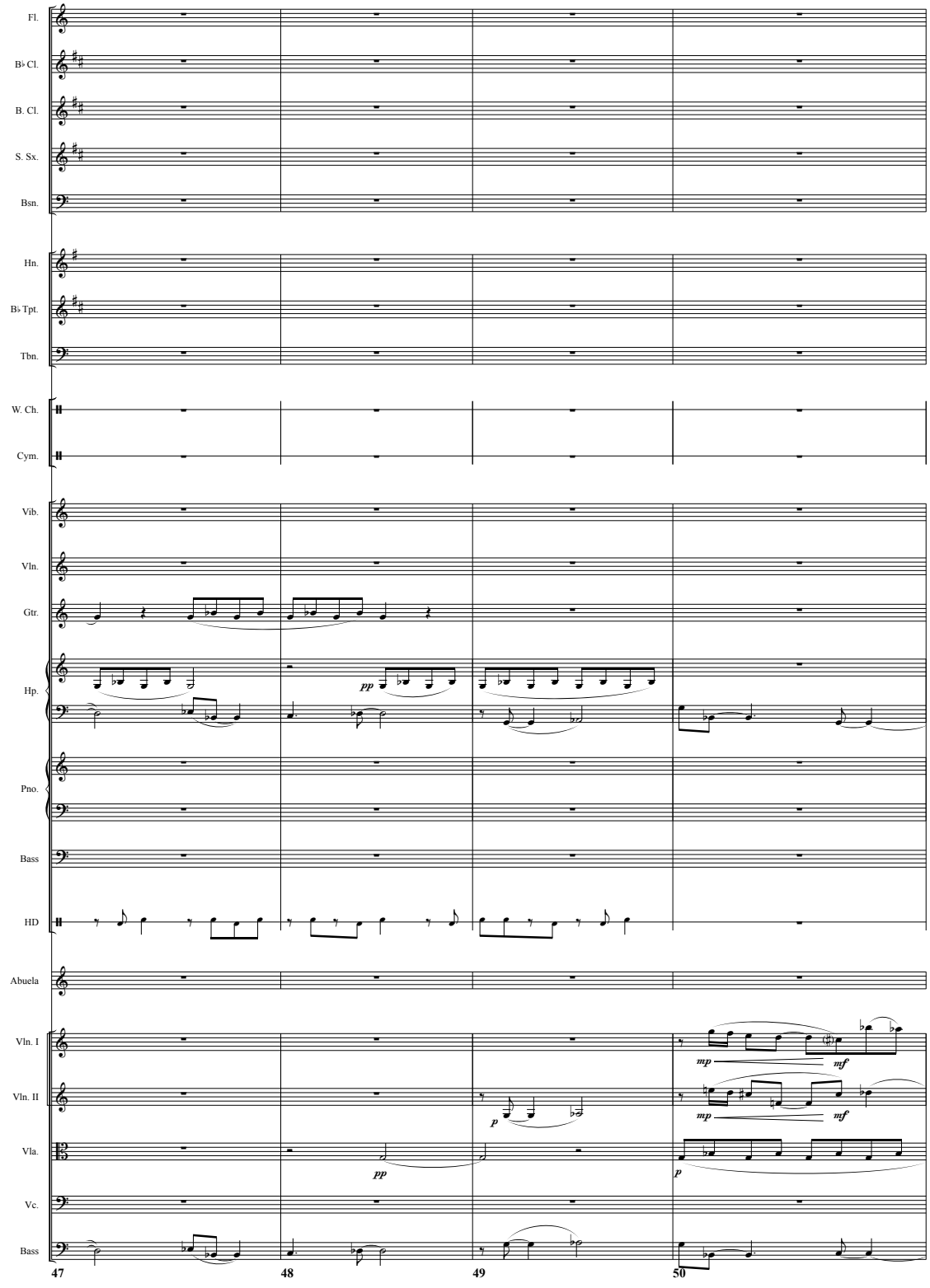

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
W. Ch.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Abuela
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
w/ solo bass
cantabile
mp
p
mp
p
w/ bs. cl.
mp cantabile
5/4
6/4
fill in pattern with light fills
dolce
pp
p
p
p
27
28
29
30

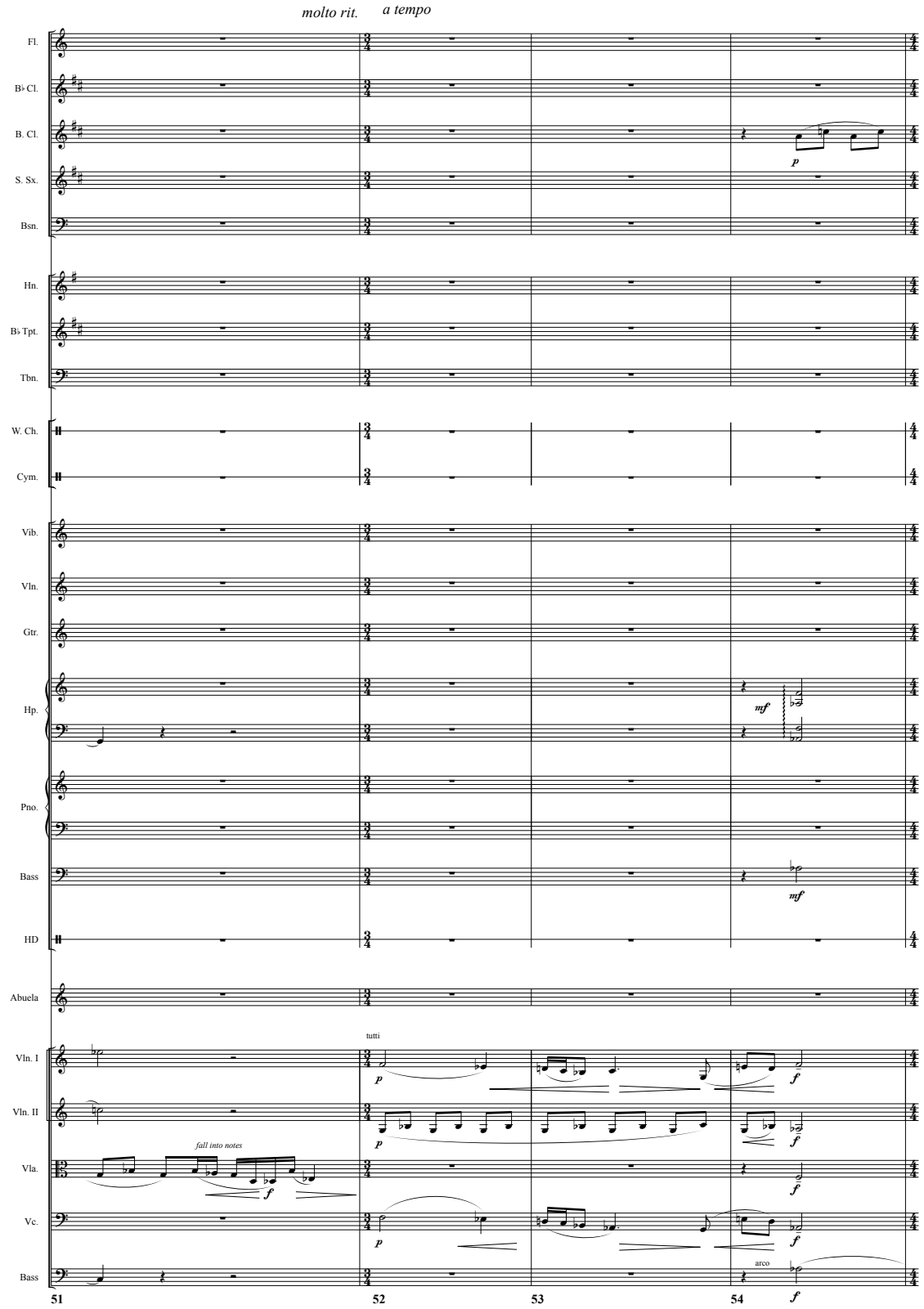

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
W. Ch.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Abuela
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
pont.
mf
p
solo
cantabile
mp
pizz.
mf
p
5/4
5/4
nat.
p
p
p
pizz.
p
31
32
33
34

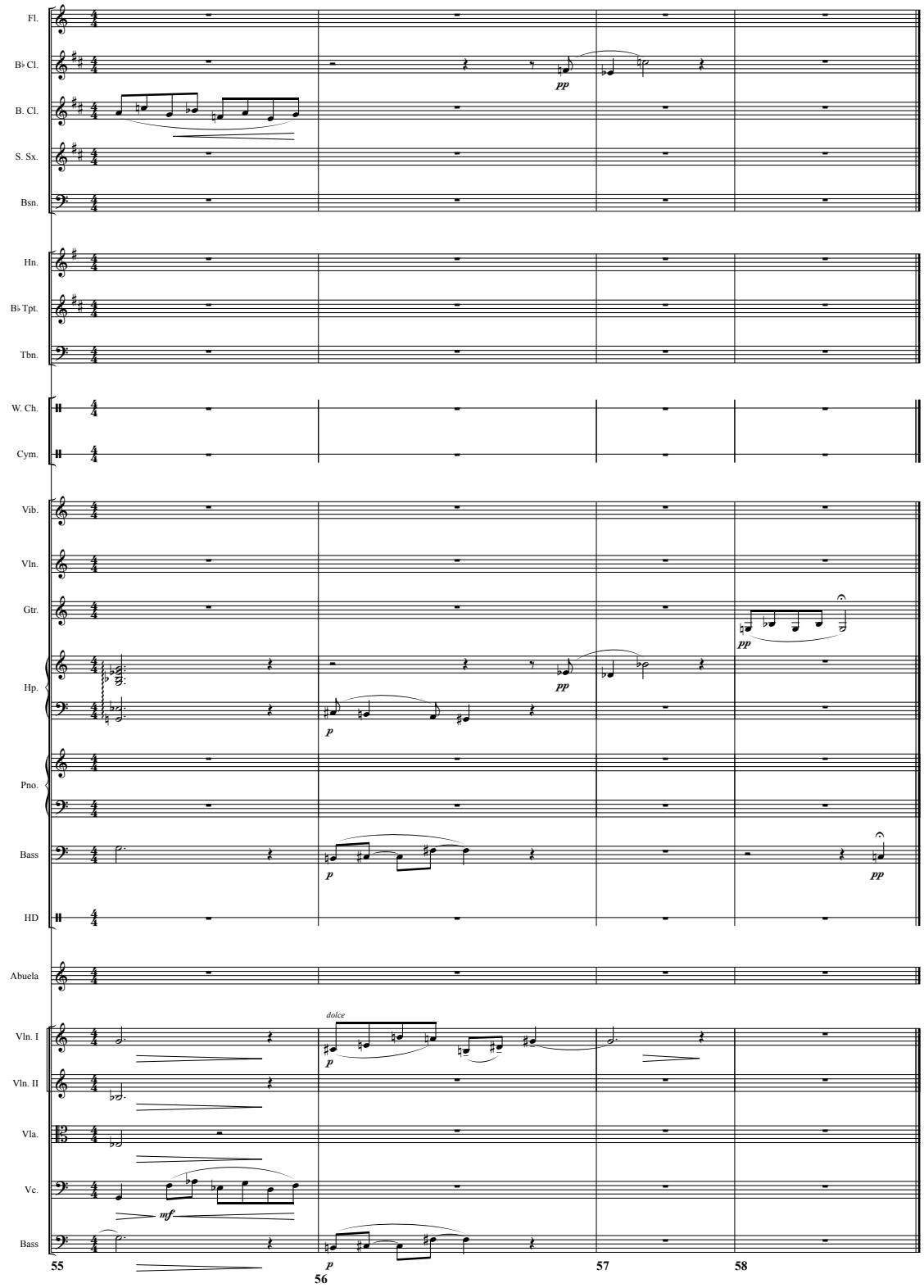

B Gradually more motion, flowing
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
W. Ch.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Abuela
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
p
pp
mp
dolce e espressivo
35
36
37
38


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
W. Ch.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Abuela
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
mf
p
espress.
falling into the next measure
mp
f
pizz.
39
40
41
42


molto rit.
C Tempo I (Adagio)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
W. Ch.
Cym.
w/ stick
mf
soft mallets
w/ stick
p
pp
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
mp
pp
Hp.
pp
p
pp
Pno.
mf
p
Bass
HD
Urdu
solo acc.
more presence but still quite light
p
Abuela
Vln. I
p
Vln. II
p
pizz.
arco
Vla.
mf
pizz.
p
arco
Vc.
mf
p
Bass
p
43
44
45
46


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
W. Ch.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Abuela
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
pp
mp
mf
p
47
48
49
50


molto rit.
a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
W. Ch.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Abuela
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
tutti
fall into notes
arco
51
52
53
54


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
W. Ch.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Abuela
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
pp
p
mf
dolce
55
56
57
58

Work In Progress

Act II, scene 1 – Townsfolk, Amani, Francisco, Dolores

1824. Plaza in front of Dolores and Ignacio's mansion. Ignacio oversees from his balcony as the townsfolk are in the marketplace in the plaza. Dolores is in her private courtyard connected to the mansion. Amani and Francisco are searching for Dolores to convince her to change her ways. Choir and duets.

The townsfolk sing of dashed hopes and broken promises and of how Dolores has turned cold and cruel. Meanwhile, Amani mirrors her first song about Dolores. Only this time she doesn't sing of 'wandering' Dolores but of 'lost' Dolores. Amani warns Dolores of the path that she is on. She sings of how Dolores's addiction to power and control will warp her soul.

Dolores responds kindly but somewhat dismissively as she sings of controlling the river instead of flowing with it. Amani leaves saddened and gives one last warning of the looming spirit of La Llorona only to accept that Dolores may be too far gone.

After Amani leaves, Francisco begs for a word with Dolores. He sings of how she has turned cold and distant. Francisco scolds Dolores for her actions and pleads with Dolores to come back to herself. Dolores, gradually becoming more annoyed, sings loudly of the responsibility of progress and mirrors Ignacio's speech about power (justice is power).

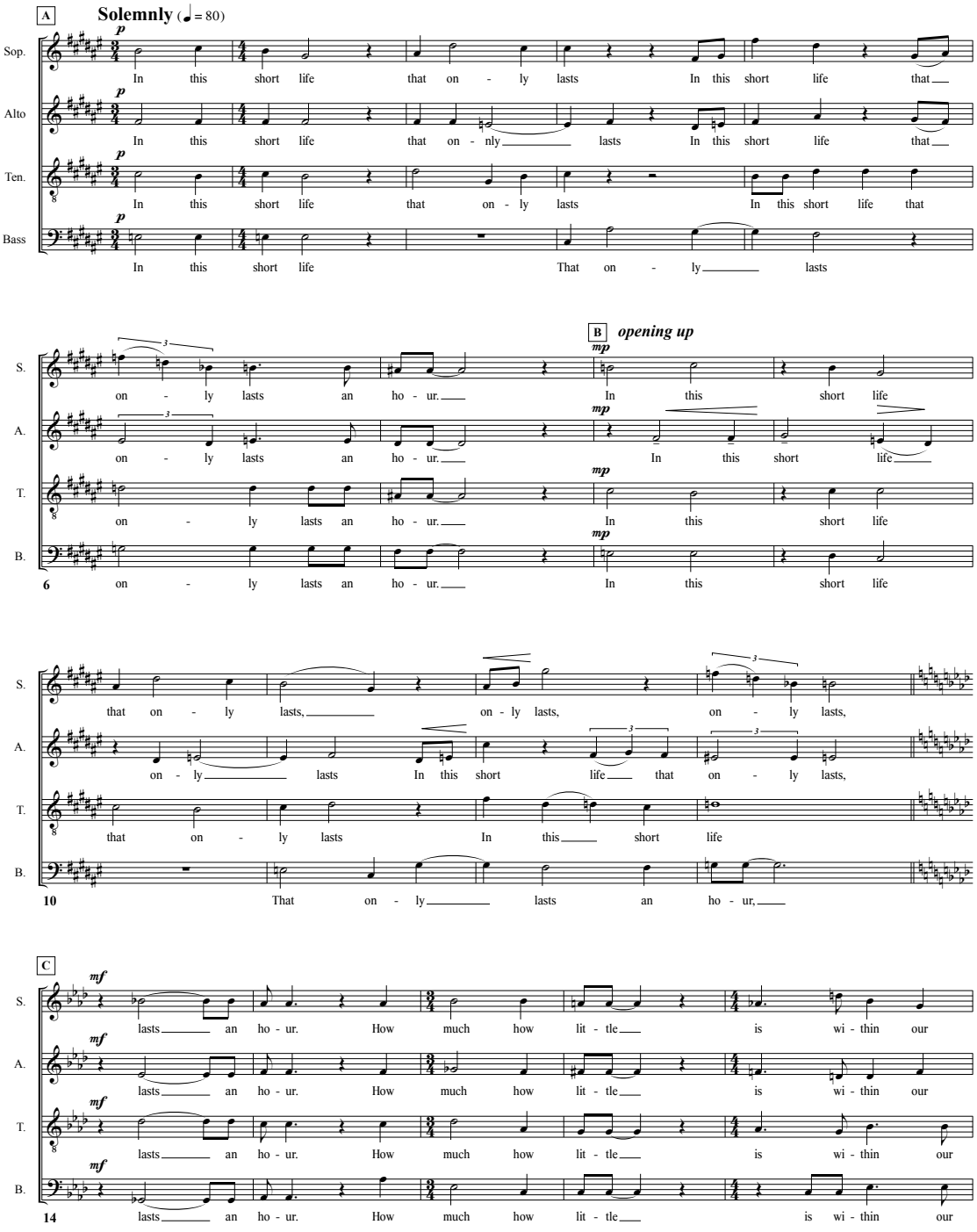
A devastated Francisco blames Ignacio and sings of how he's always drunk and doesn't love Dolores and is using her. Enraged at the insinuation that she is an unwitting pawn, Dolores humiliates Francisco by saying how he is merely a jealous boy and how she's always known his feelings for her and tried sparing him pain out of pity but that now he is just pathetic. Ignacio interrupts, briefly brushing off Francisco before telling Dolores that he wants her to meet someone. Ignacio introduces his cousin from Spain, Isabelle, and tells Dolores that she'll be staying with them for the foreseeable future.

*****The music to this section is lively and includes elements of previous music. It is largely finished needing orchestration and lyrics.*****

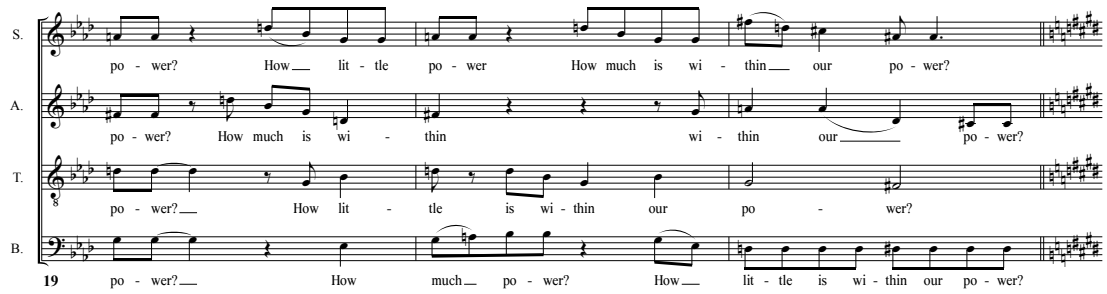
Act II, scene 2

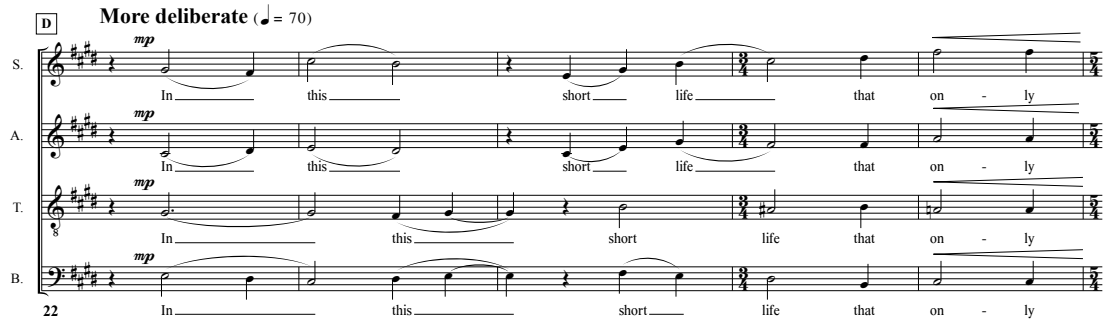
Townsfolk

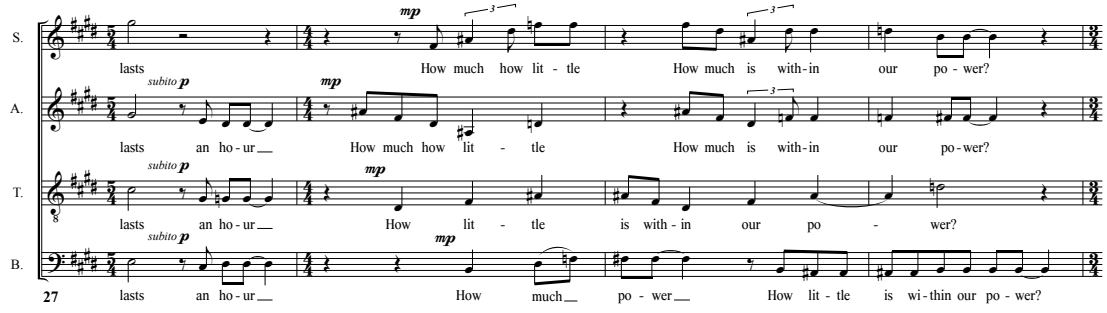
Daniel Aaron Ramirez

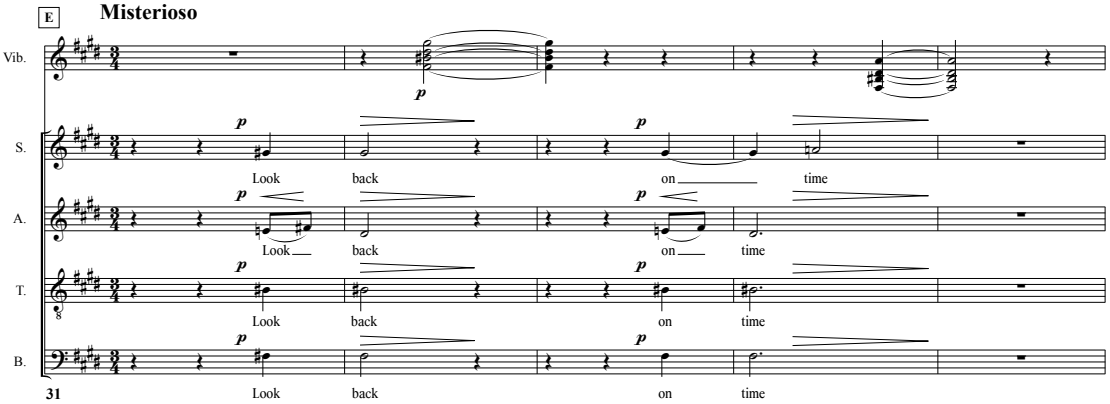


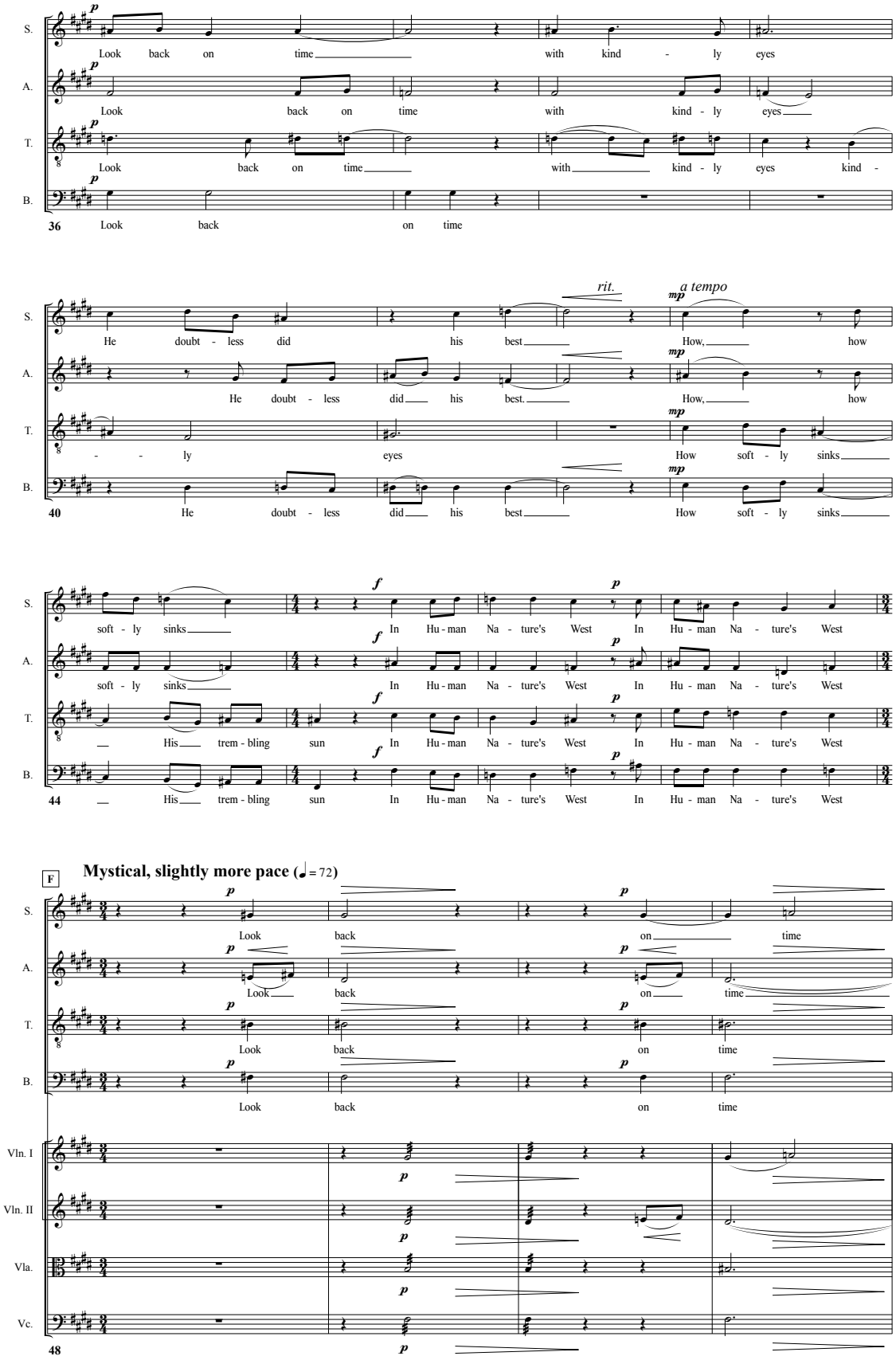
©2020, Daniel Aaron Ramirez

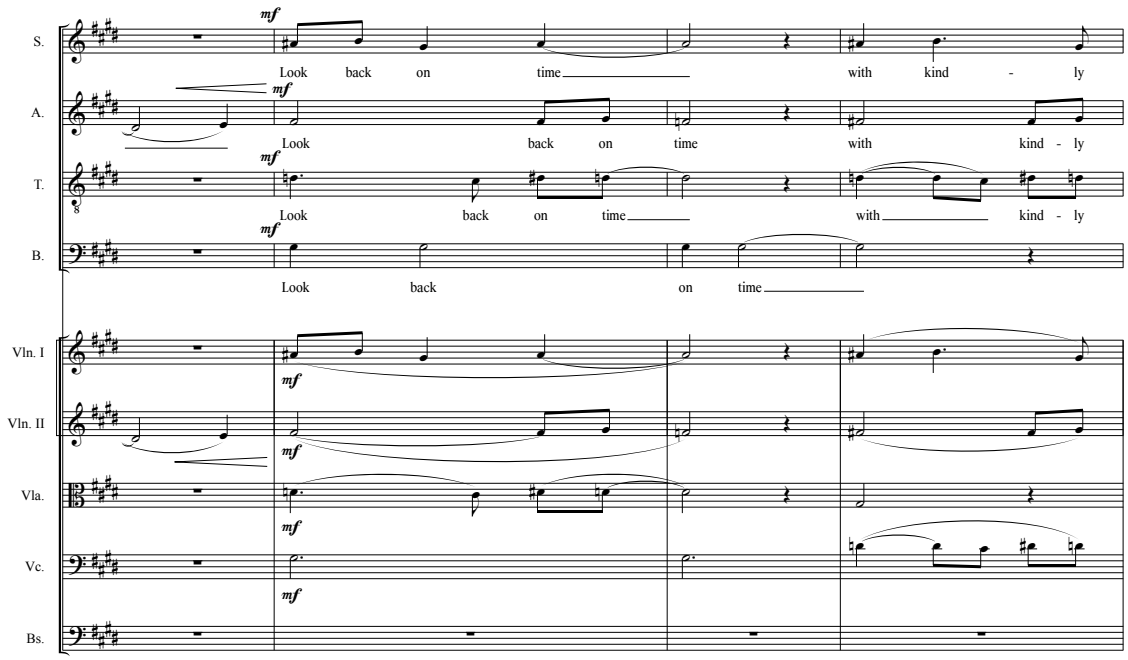

S.
po - wer? How lit - tle po - wer How much is wi - thin our po - wer?
A.
po - wer? How much is wi - thin wi - thin our po - wer?
T.
po - wer? How lit - tle is wi - thin our po - wer?
B.
19
po - wer? How much po - wer? How lit - tle is wi - thin our po - wer?

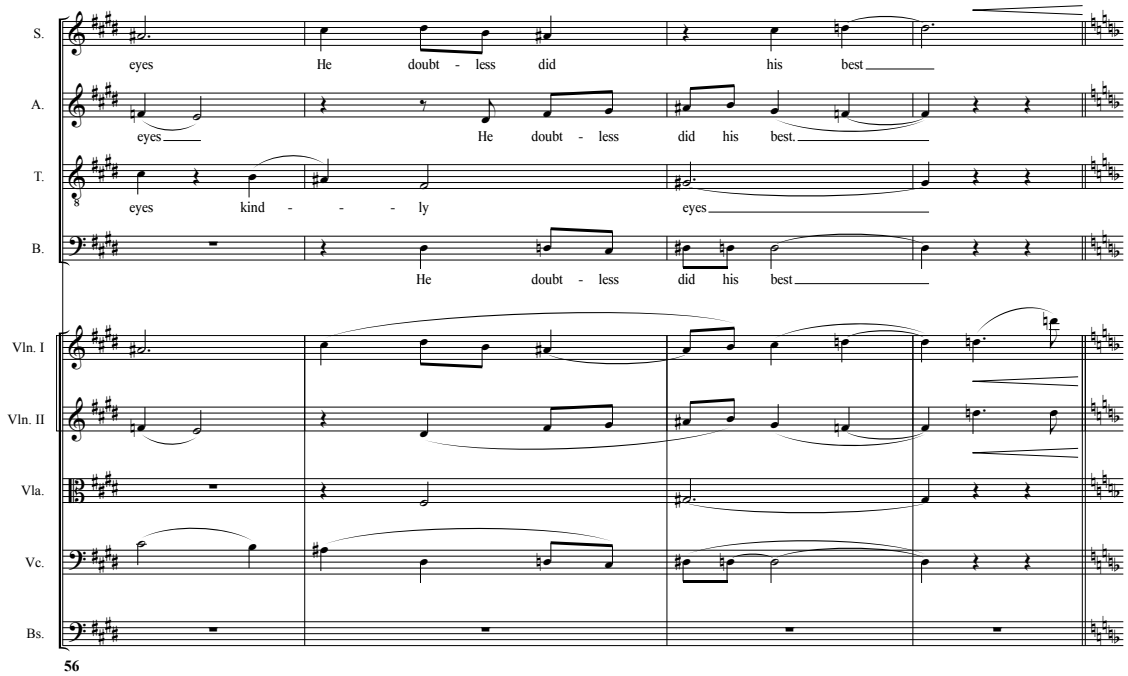

D
More deliberate (♩ = 70)
S.
mp
In this short life that on - ly
A.
mp
In this short life that on - ly
T.
mp
In this short life that on - ly
B.
mp
22
In this short life that on - ly

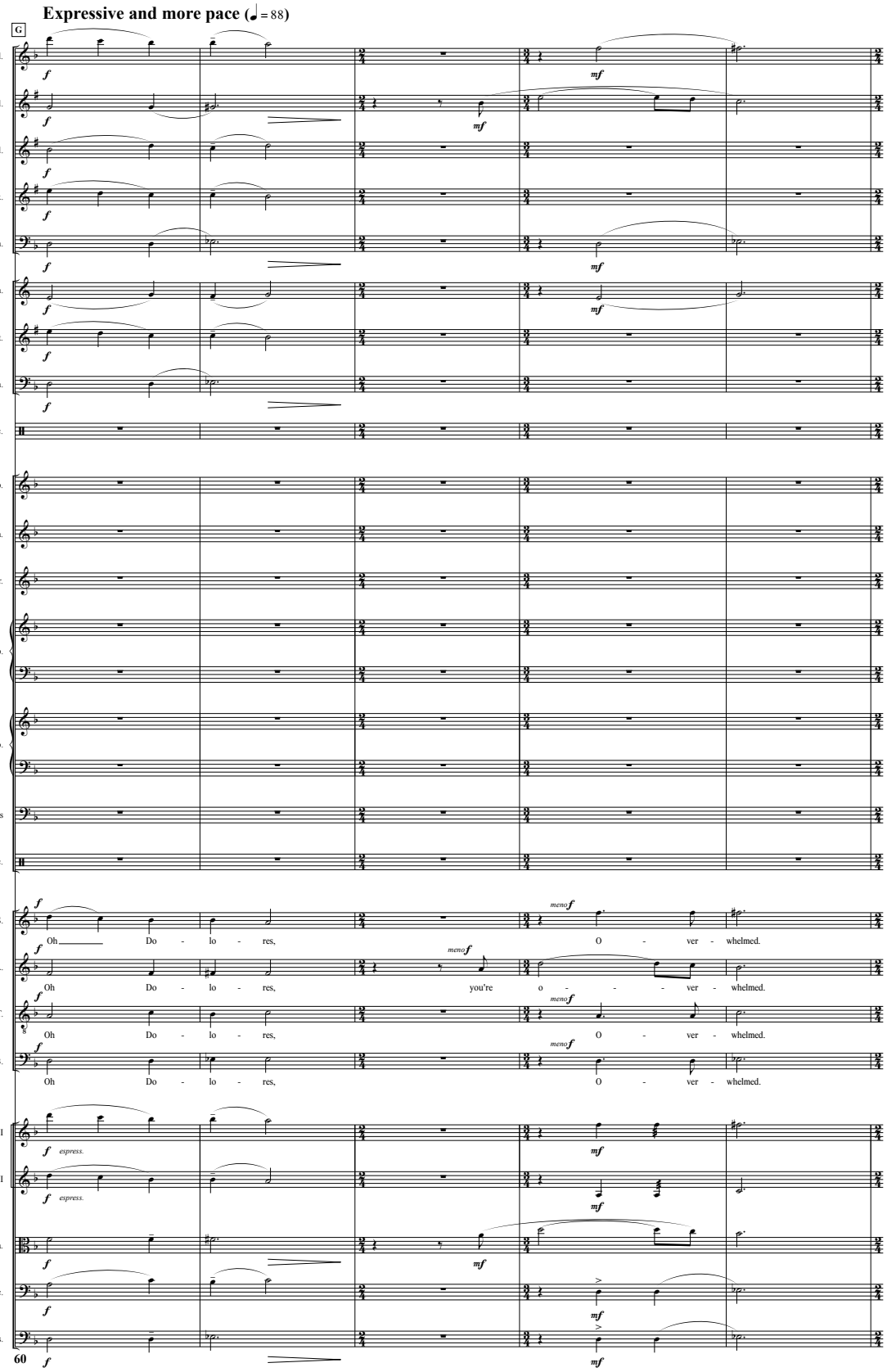

S.
mp
lasts How much how lit - tle How much is with - in our po - wer?
A.
subito p
mp
lasts an ho - ur How much how lit - tle How much is with - in our po - wer?
T.
subito p
mp
lasts an ho - ur How lit - tle is with - in our po - wer?
B.
subito p
mp
27
lasts an ho - ur How much po - wer How lit - tle is wi - thin our po - wer?

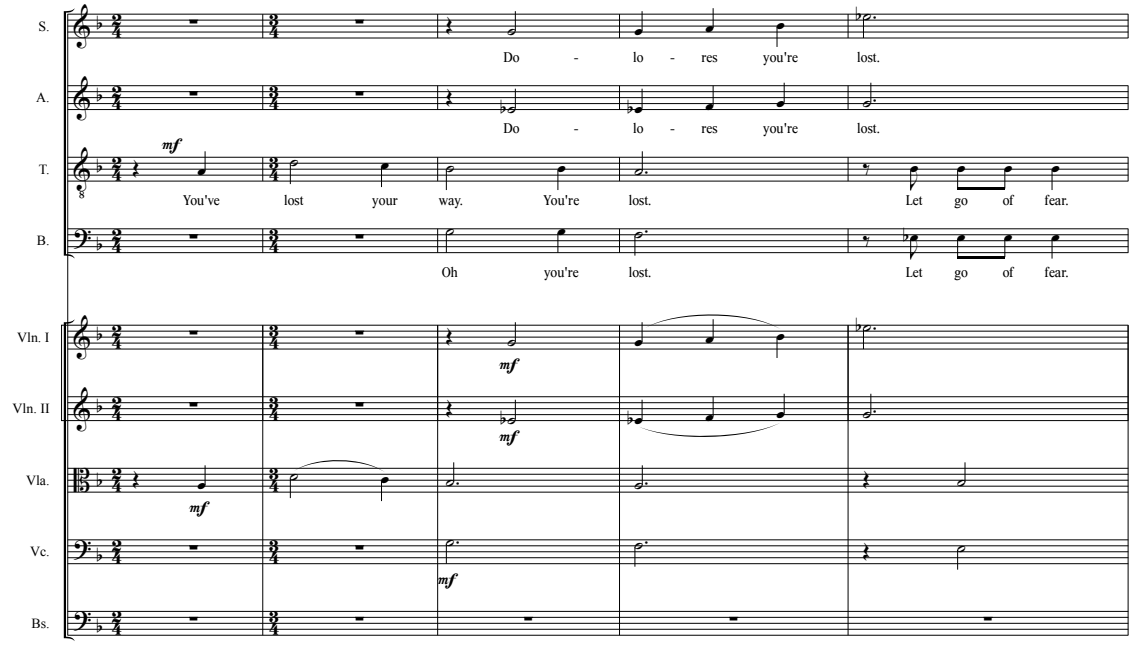

E
Misterioso
Vib.
p
S.
p
Look back on time
A.
p
Look back on time
T.
p
Look back on time
B.
p
31
Look back on time

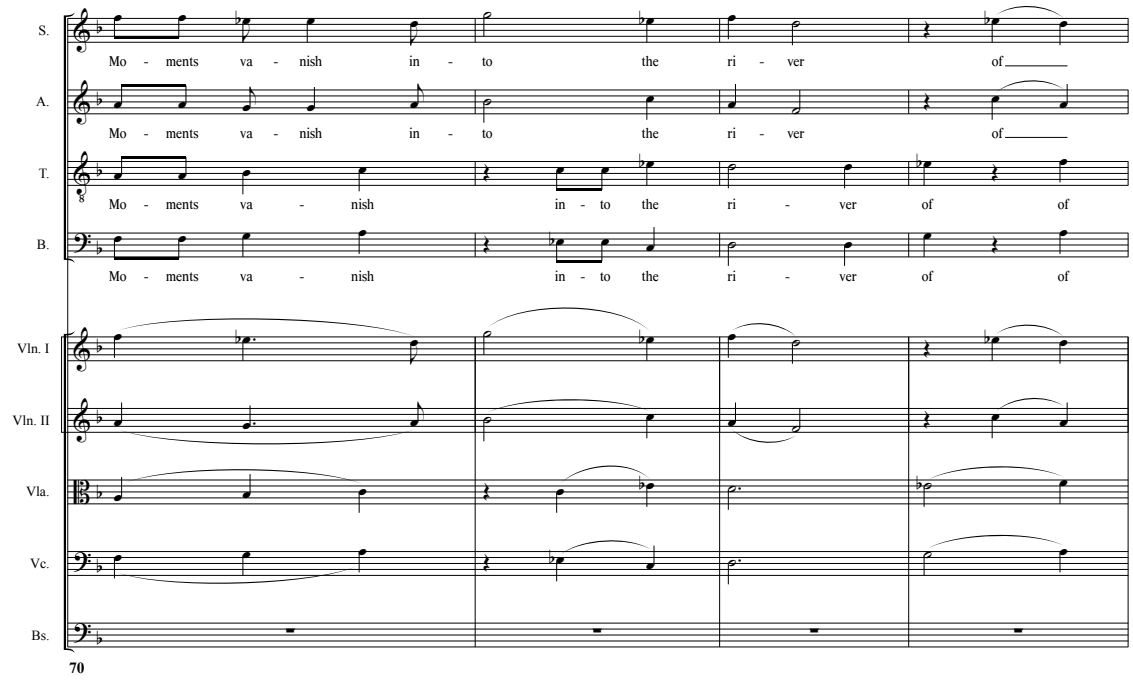

S.
A.
T.
B.
36
Look back on time with kind - ly eyes
Look back on time with kind - ly eyes
Look back on time with kind - ly eyes kind -
Look back on time
rit.
a tempo
40
He doubt - less did his best How, how
He doubt - less did his best. How, how
- - ly eyes How soft - ly sinks
He doubt - less did his best How soft - ly sinks
soft - ly sinks In Hu - man Na - ture's West In Hu - man Na - ture's West
soft - ly sinks In Hu - man Na - ture's West In Hu - man Na - ture's West
His trem - bling sun In Hu - man Na - ture's West In Hu - man Na - ture's West
44
His trem - bling sun In Hu - man Na - ture's West In Hu - man Na - ture's West
F
Mystical, slightly more pace (♩= 72)
Look back on time
Look back on time
Look back on time
Look back on time
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
48

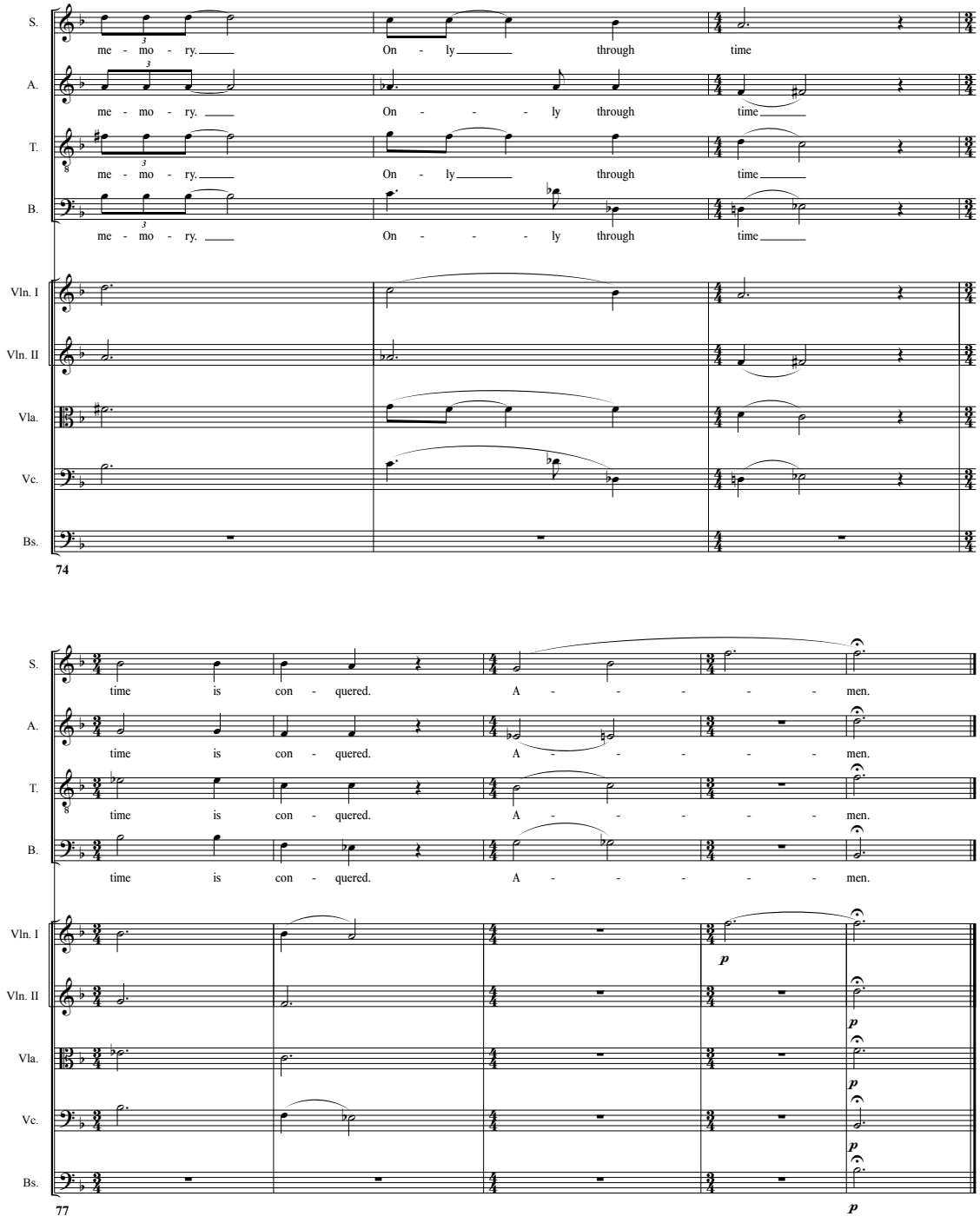

S.
A.
T.
B.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bs.
mf
Look back on time with kind - ly
Look back on time with kind - ly
Look back on time with kind - ly
Look back on time
52


S.
A.
T.
B.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bs.
eyes He doubt - less did his best
eyes He doubt - less did his best.
eyes kind - - - ly eyes
He doubt - less did his best
56


Expressive and more pace (♩ = 88)
G
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
Perc.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Perc.
S.
A.
T.
B.
Oh Do - lo - res,
O - ver - whelmed.
Oh Do - lo - res, you're o - - - ver - whelmed.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bs.
espress.
60


S.
Do - lo - res you're lost.
A.
Do - lo - res you're lost.
T.
mf
You've lost your way. You're lost. Let go of fear.
B.
Oh you're lost. Let go of fear.
Vln. I
mf
Vln. II
mf
Vla.
mf
Vc.
mf
Bs.
65


S.
Mo - ments va - nish in - to the ri - ver of
A.
Mo - ments va - nish in - to the ri - ver of
T.
Mo - ments va - nish in - to the ri - ver of of
B.
Mo - ments va - nish in - to the ri - ver of of
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bs.
70

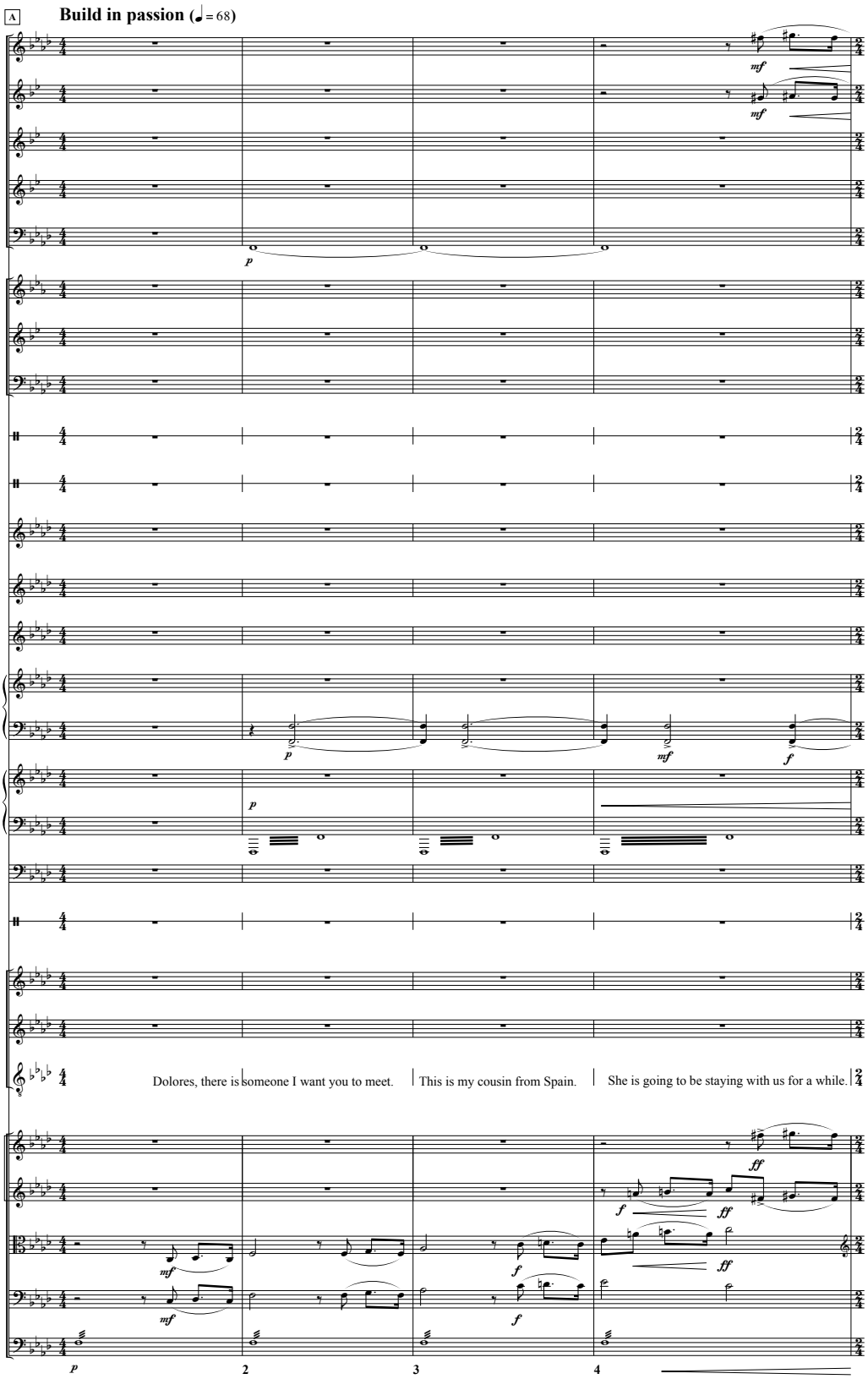

S.
me - mo - ry.
On - ly through time
A.
me - mo - ry.
On - - - ly through time
T.
me - mo - ry.
On - ly through time
B.
me - mo - ry.
On - - - ly through time
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bs.
74
time is con - quered.
A - - - - - men.
77
p

Act II, scene 2

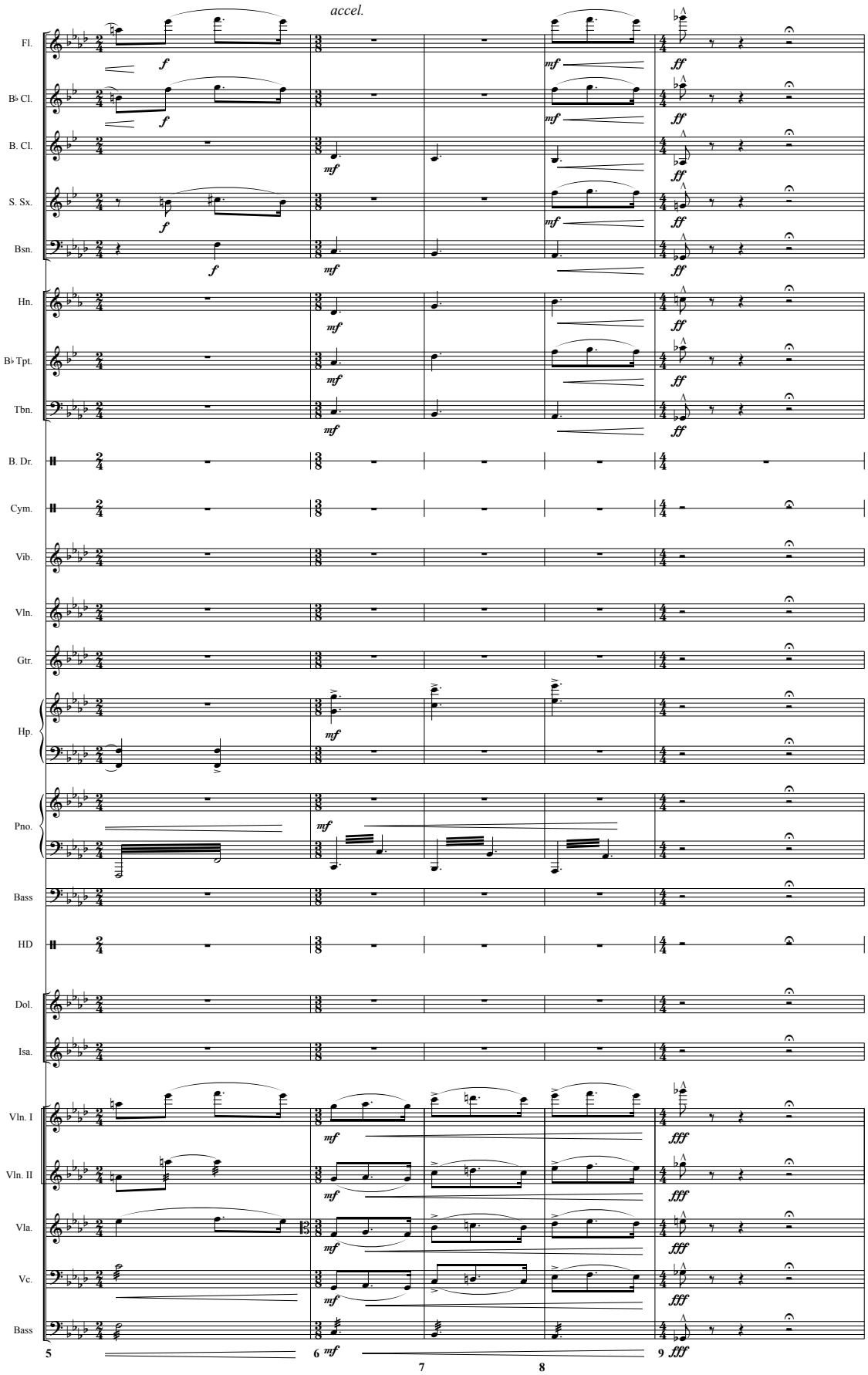
Dolores meets Isabelle

Daniel Aaron Ramirez

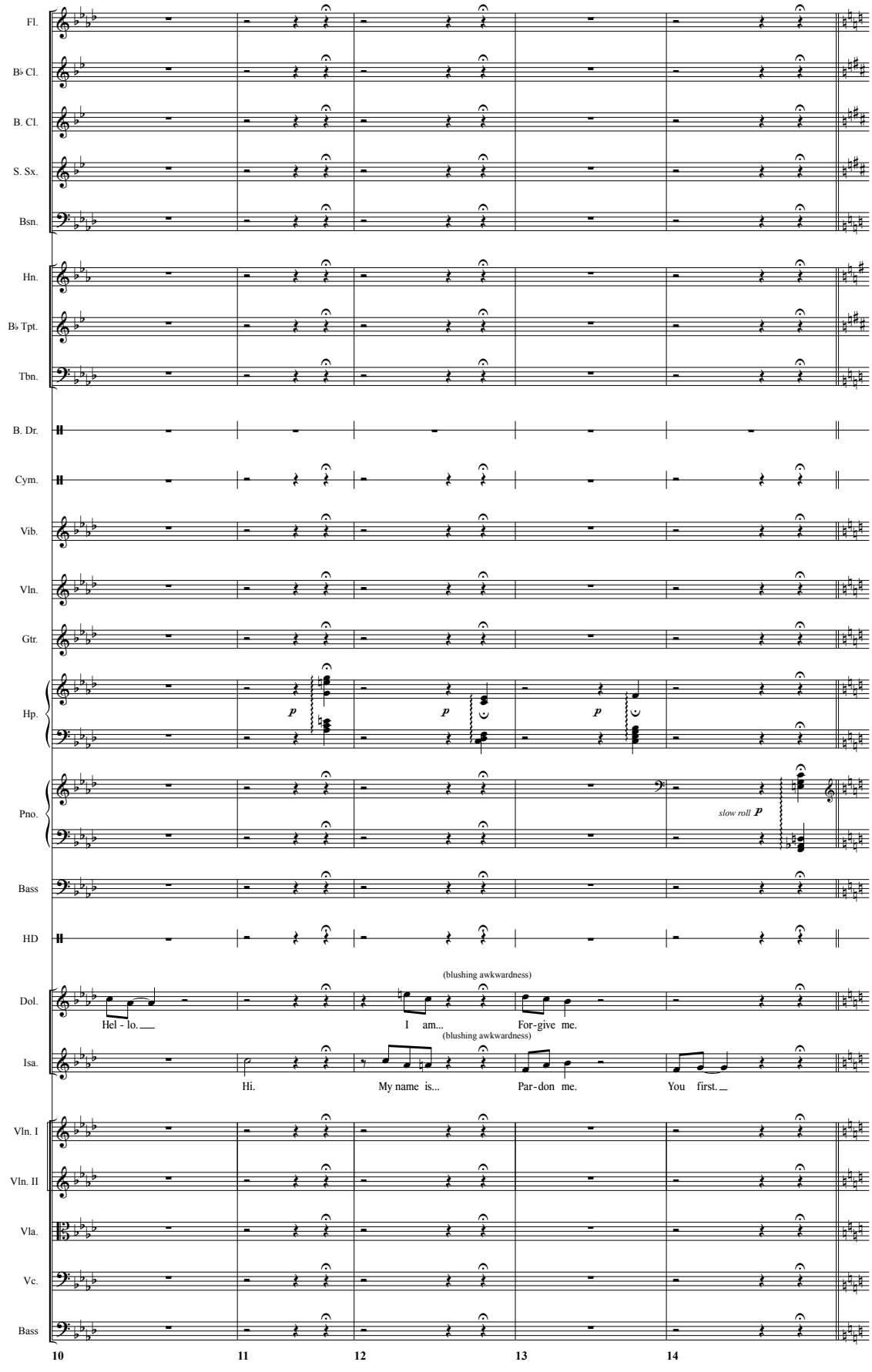
Scene 2: Private courtyard in Dolores's home. Dolores and Isabelle are left alone. Duet.



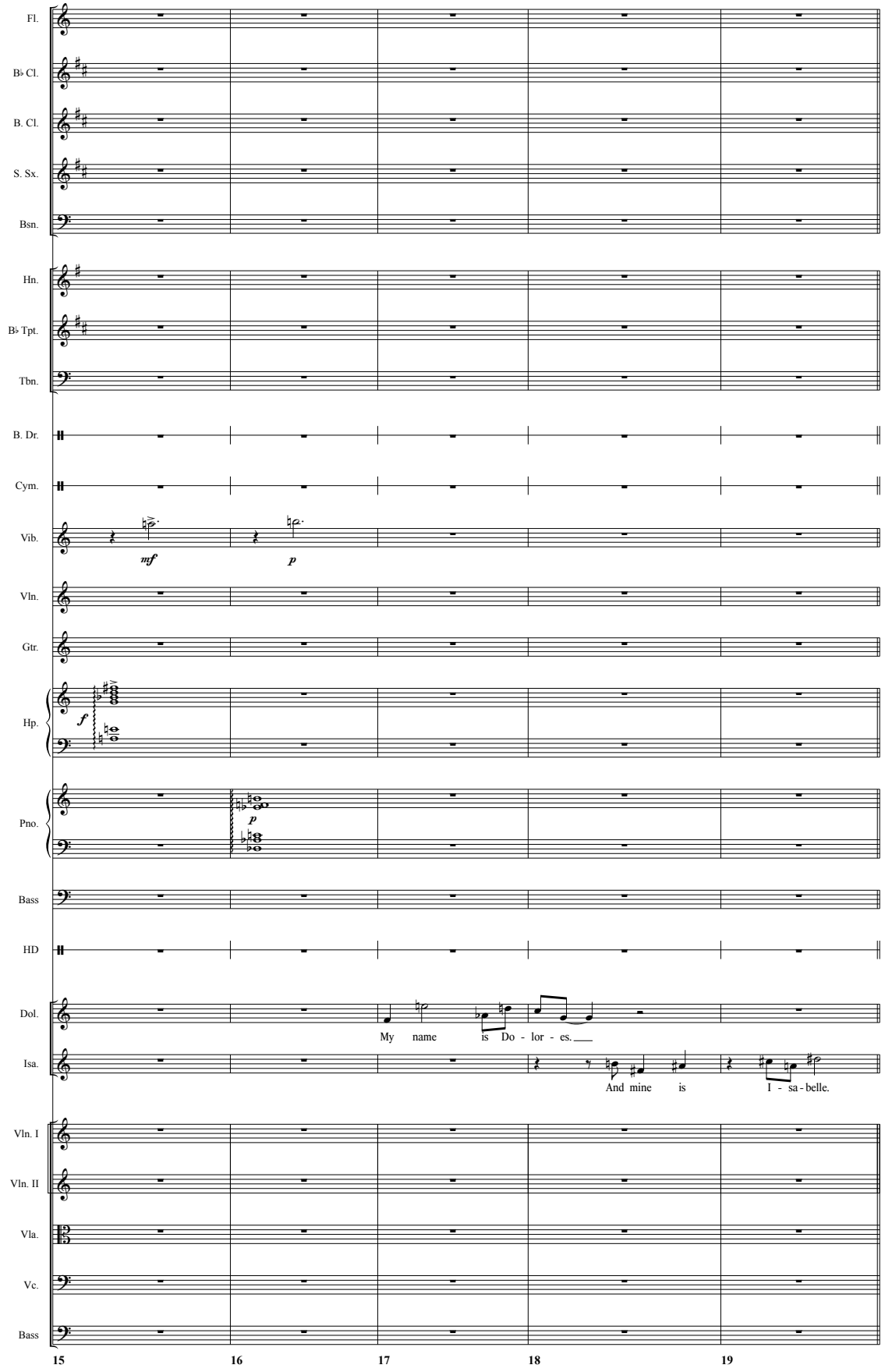
©2021, Daniel Aaron Ramirez


accel.
a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
5
6
7
8
9

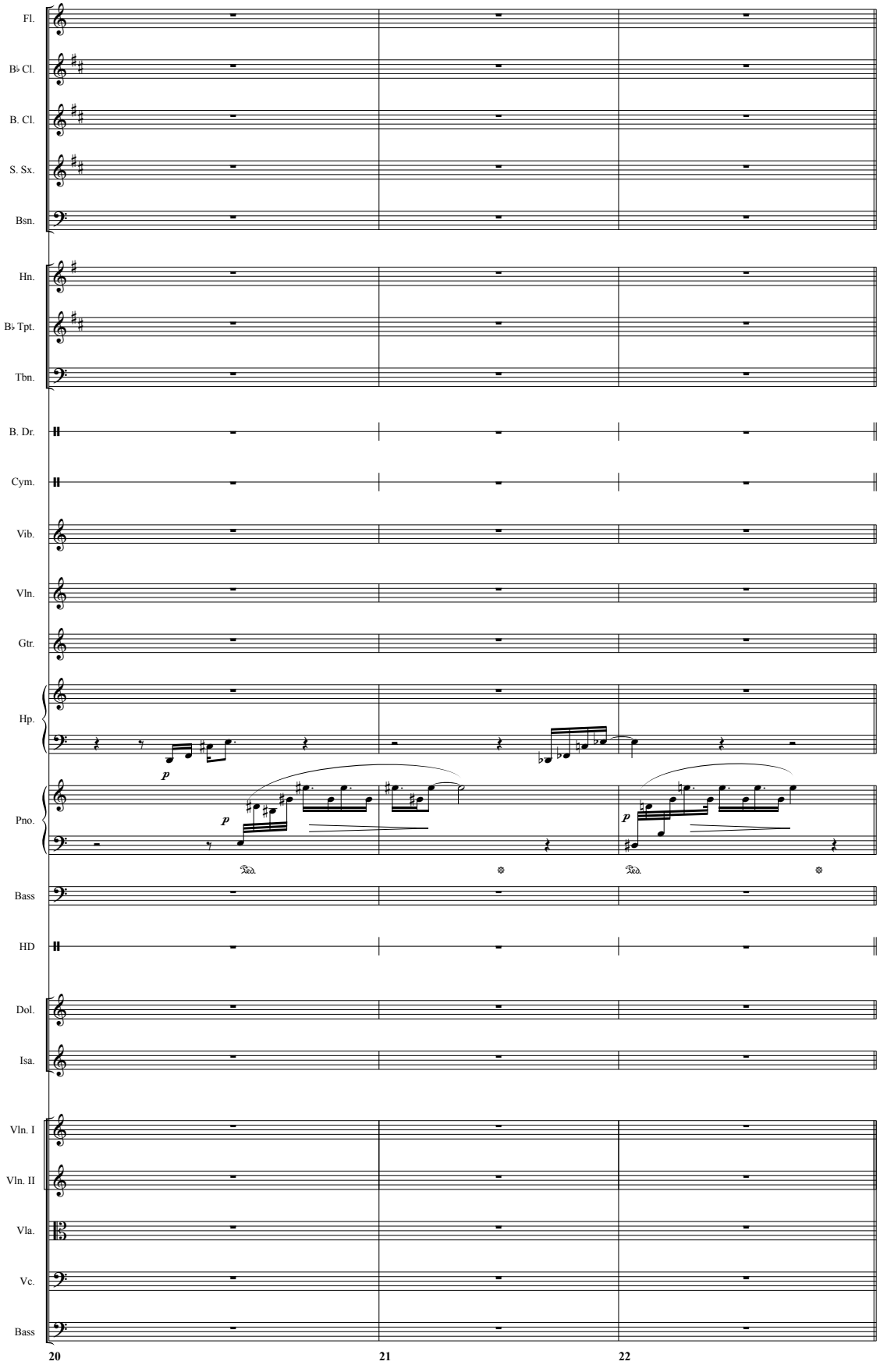
Rubato and natural, follow voice (app. ♩ = 65)

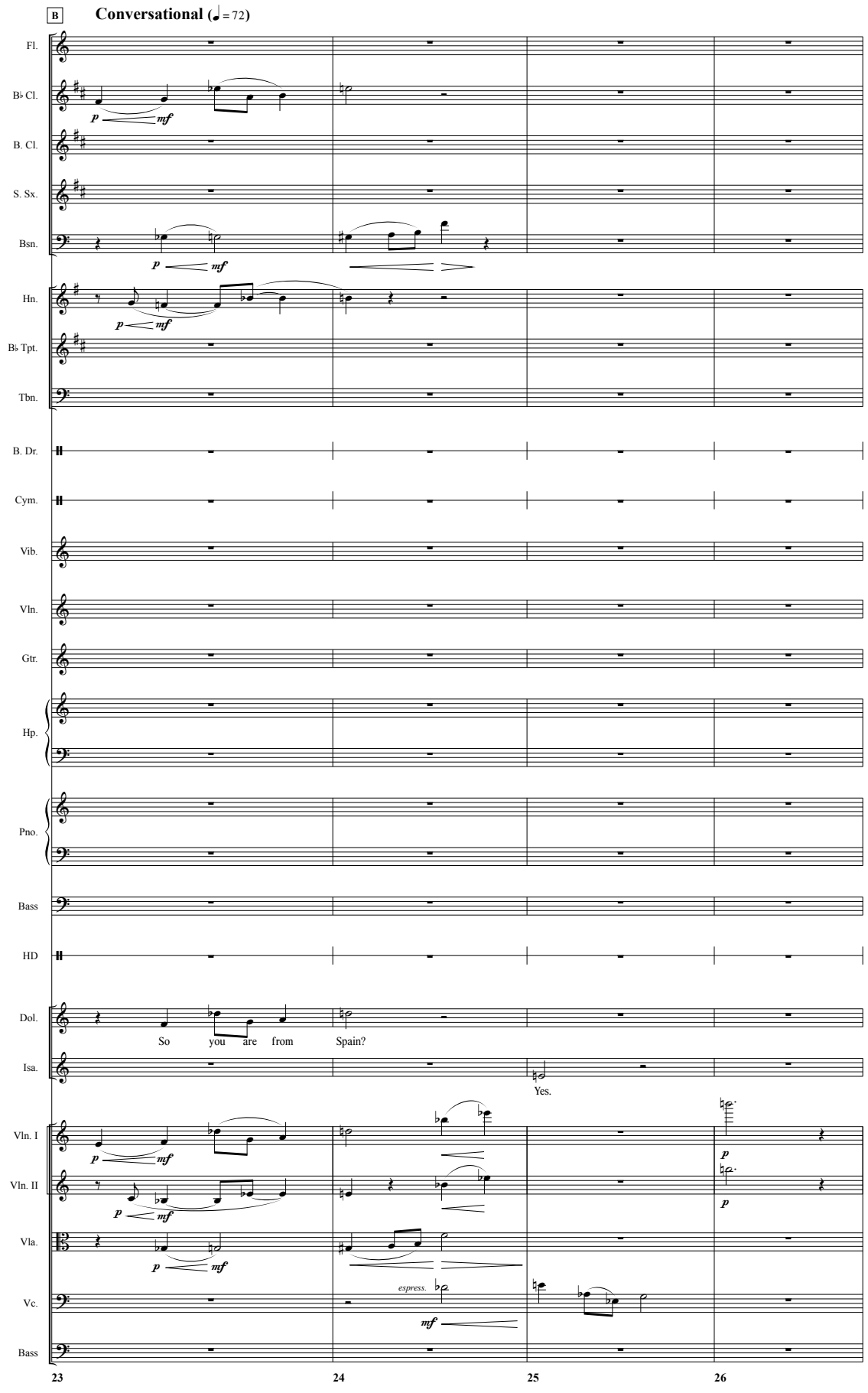


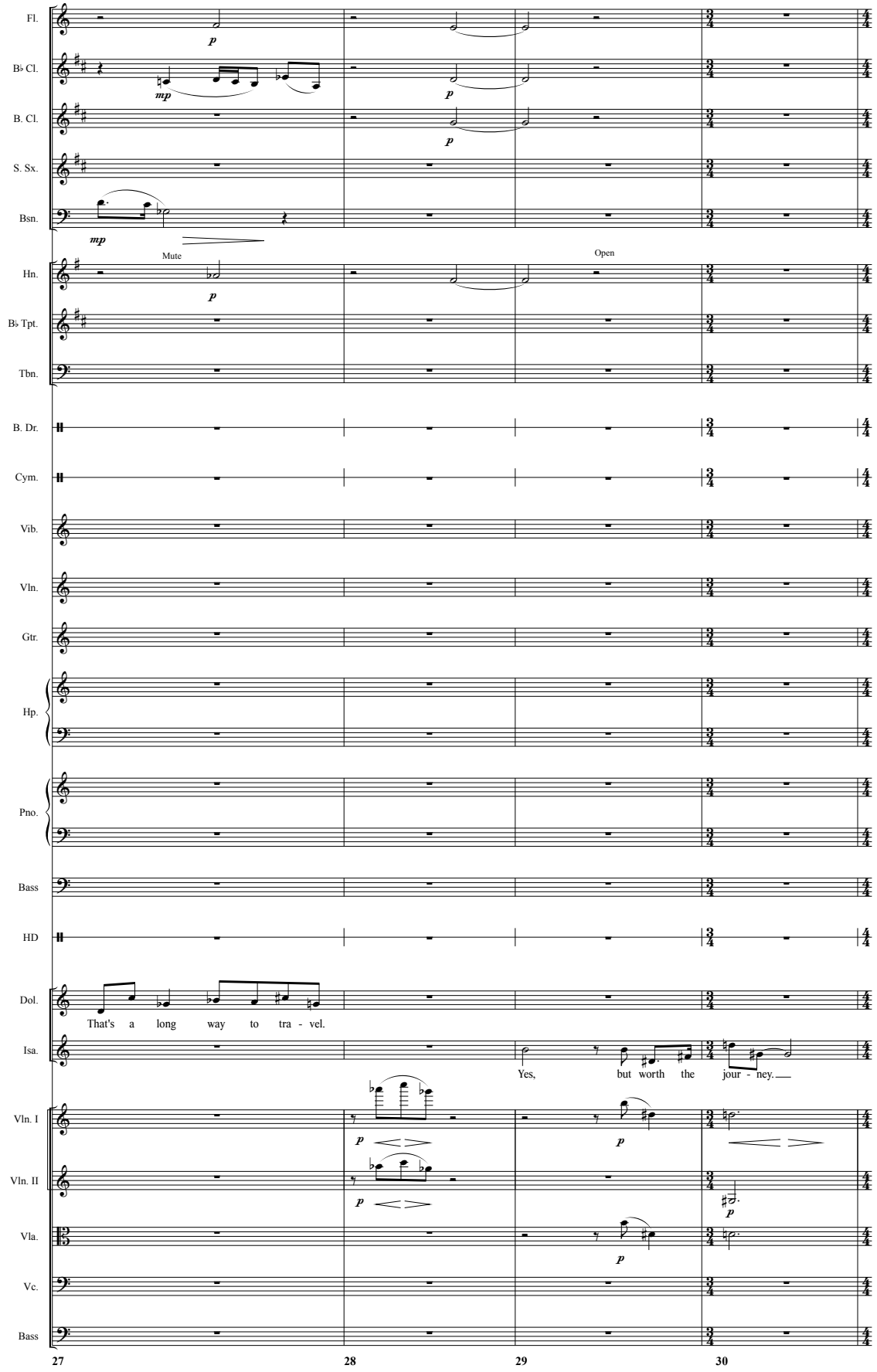
More pace, still rubato (app. ♩ = 72)

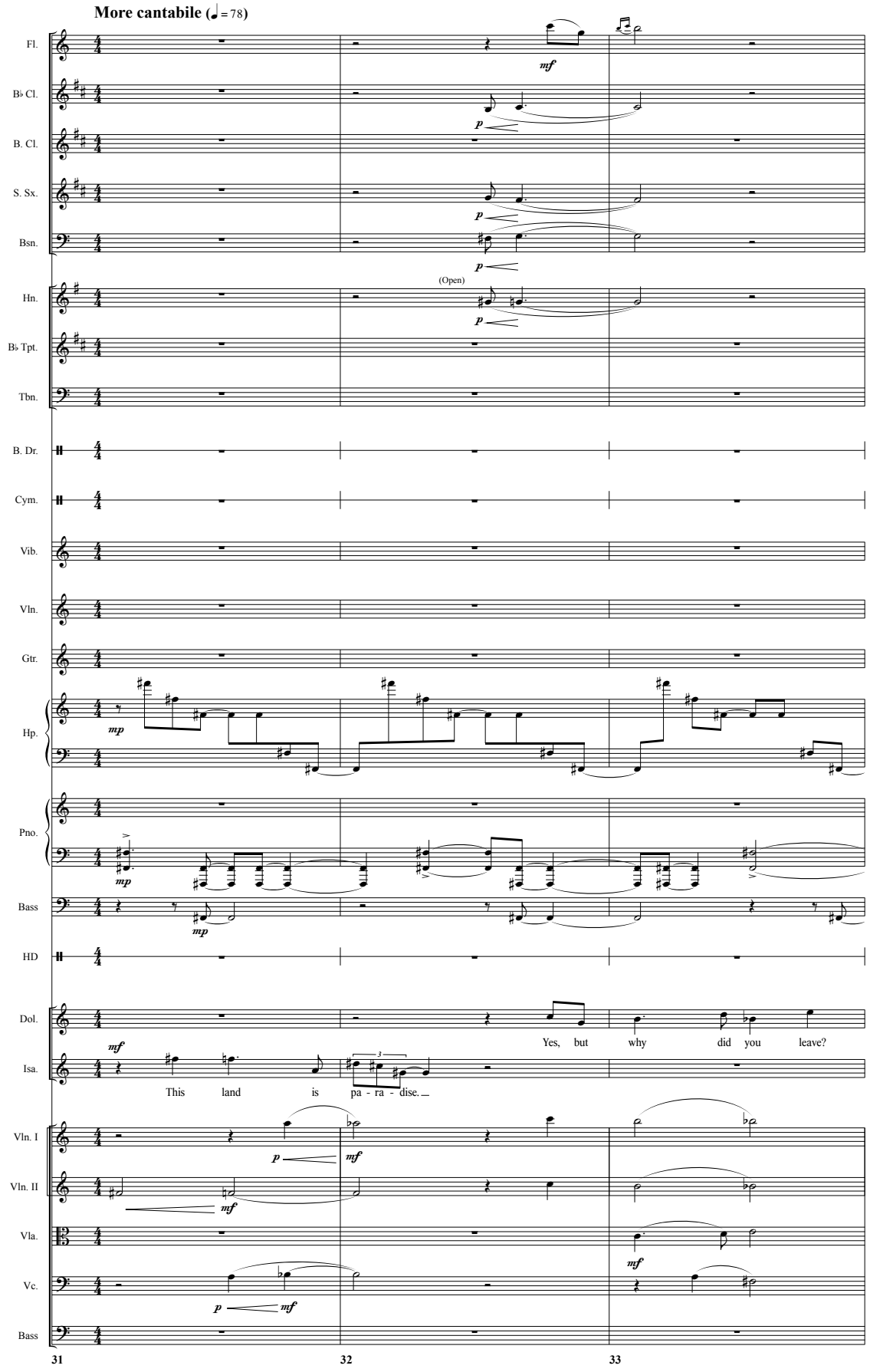


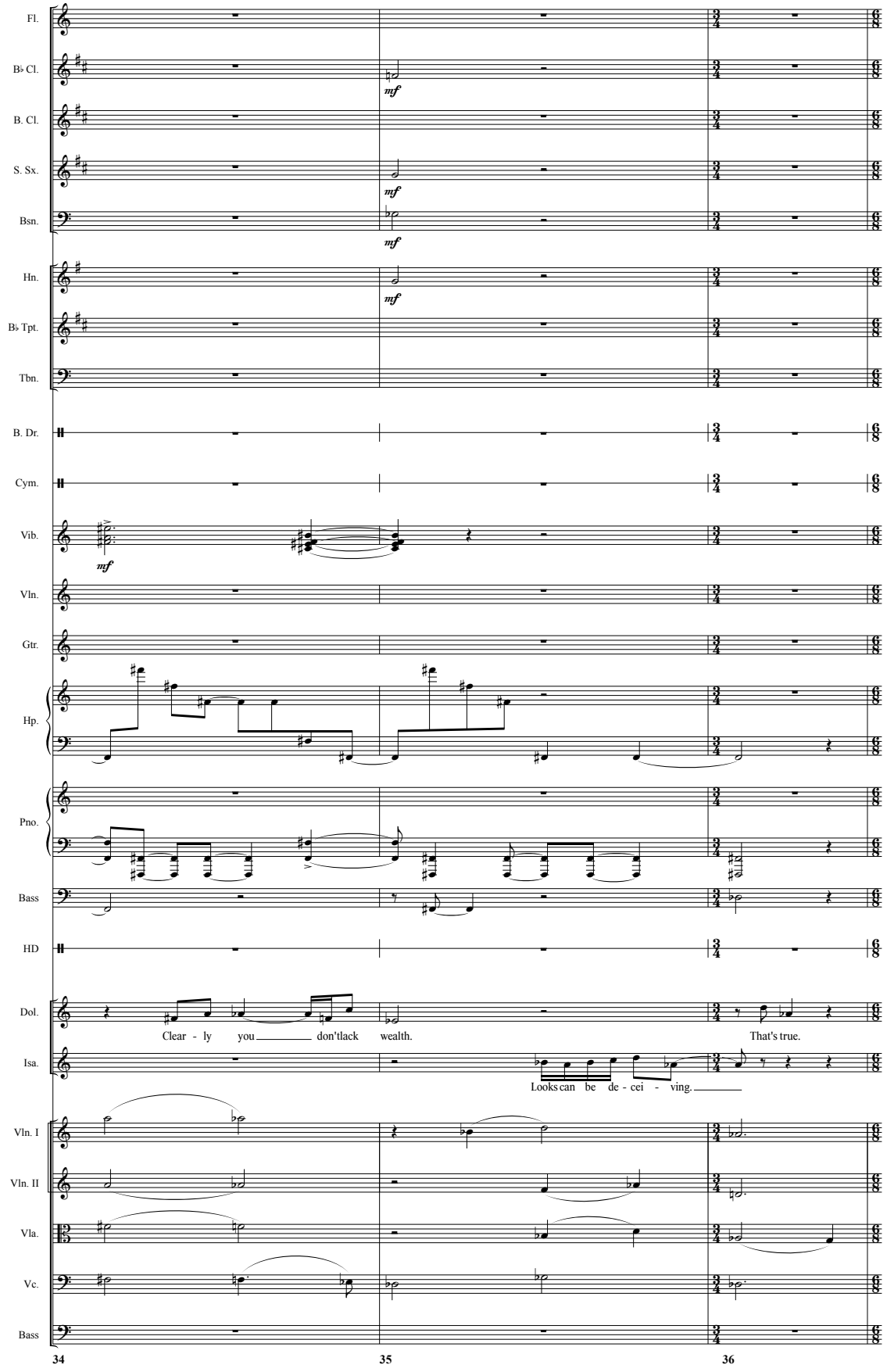
Flowing and in time (♩ = 80)

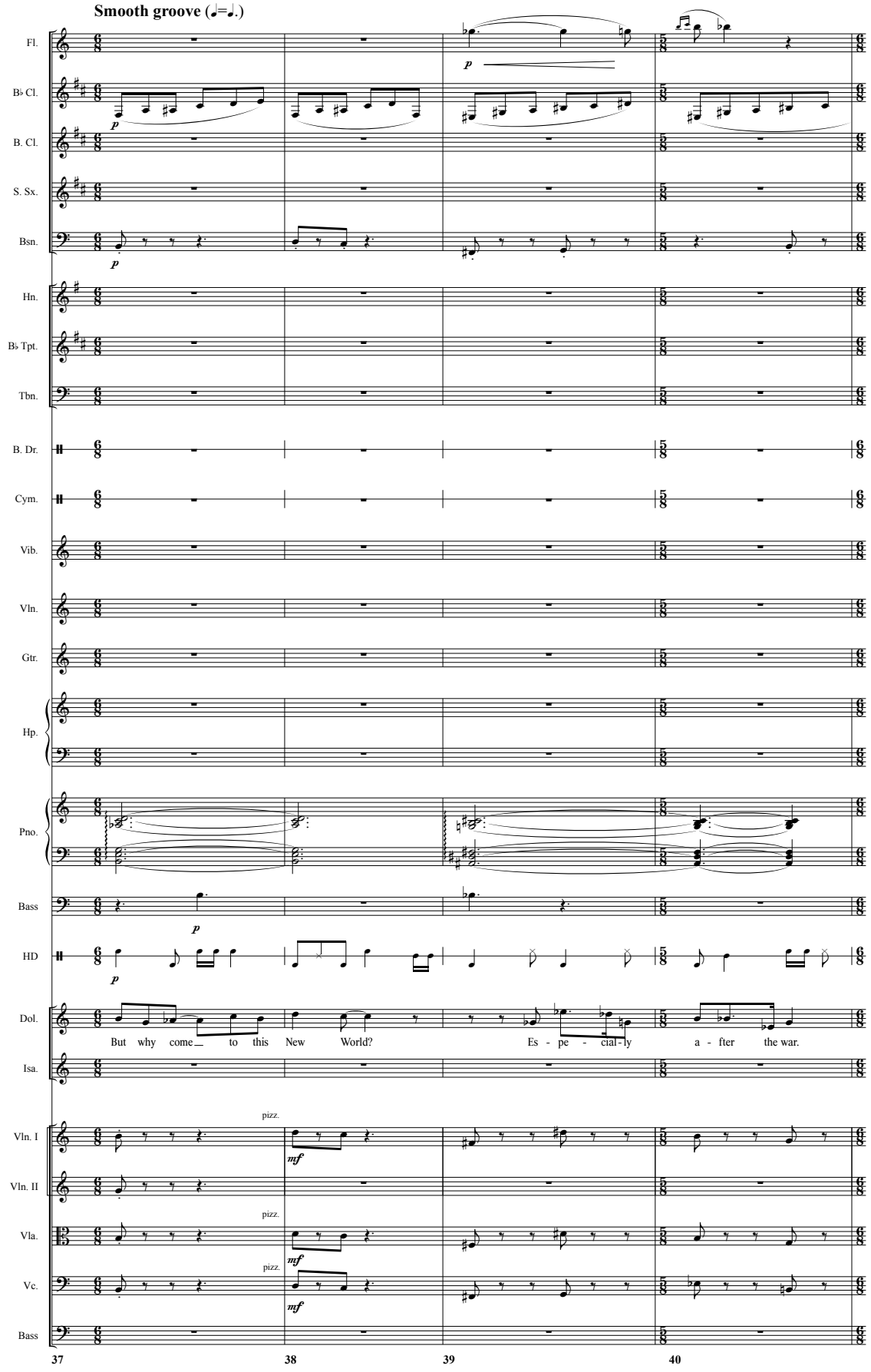


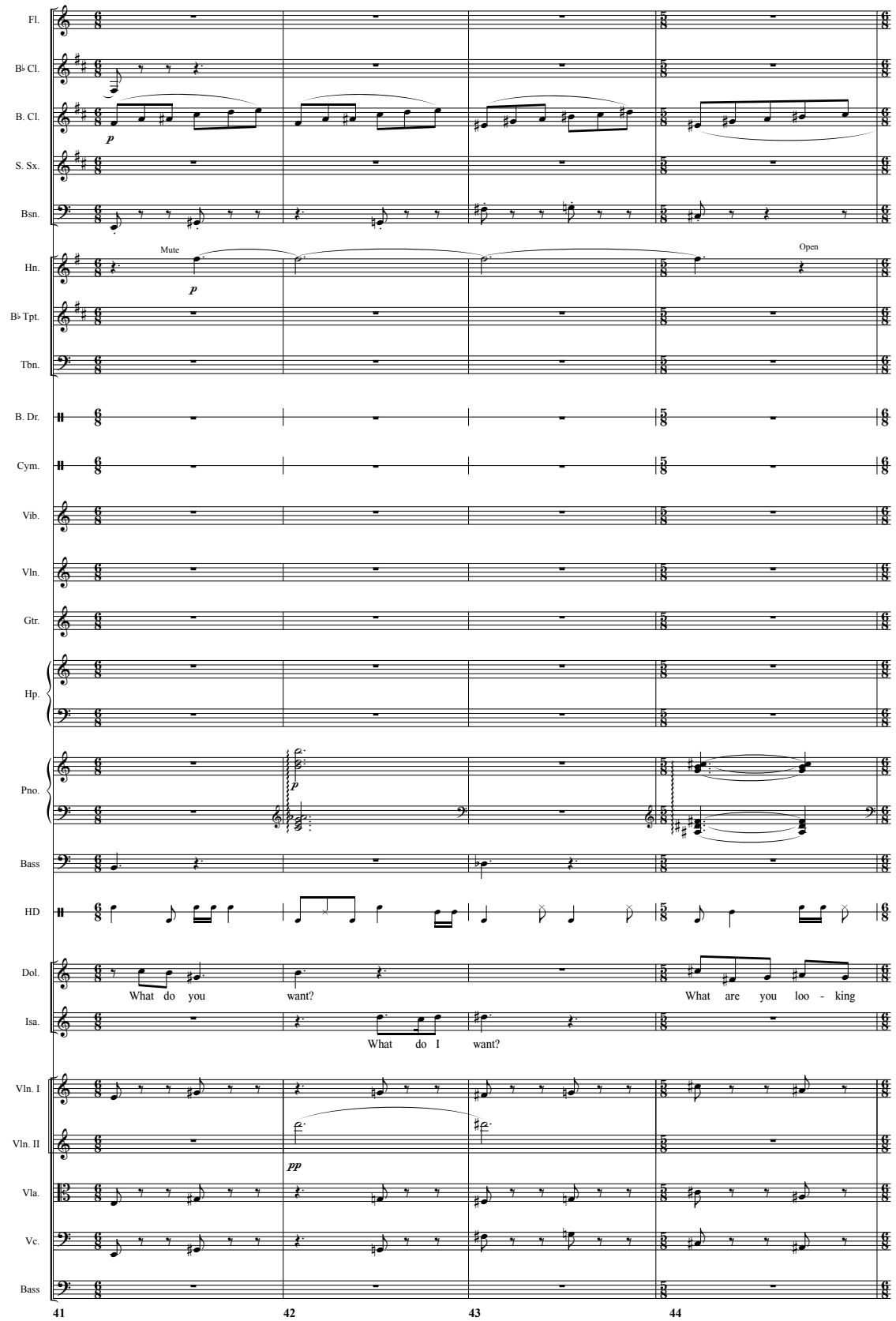

B
Conversational (♩= 72)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
So you are from Spain?
Isa.
Yes.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
espress.
Vc.
Bass
23
24
25
26

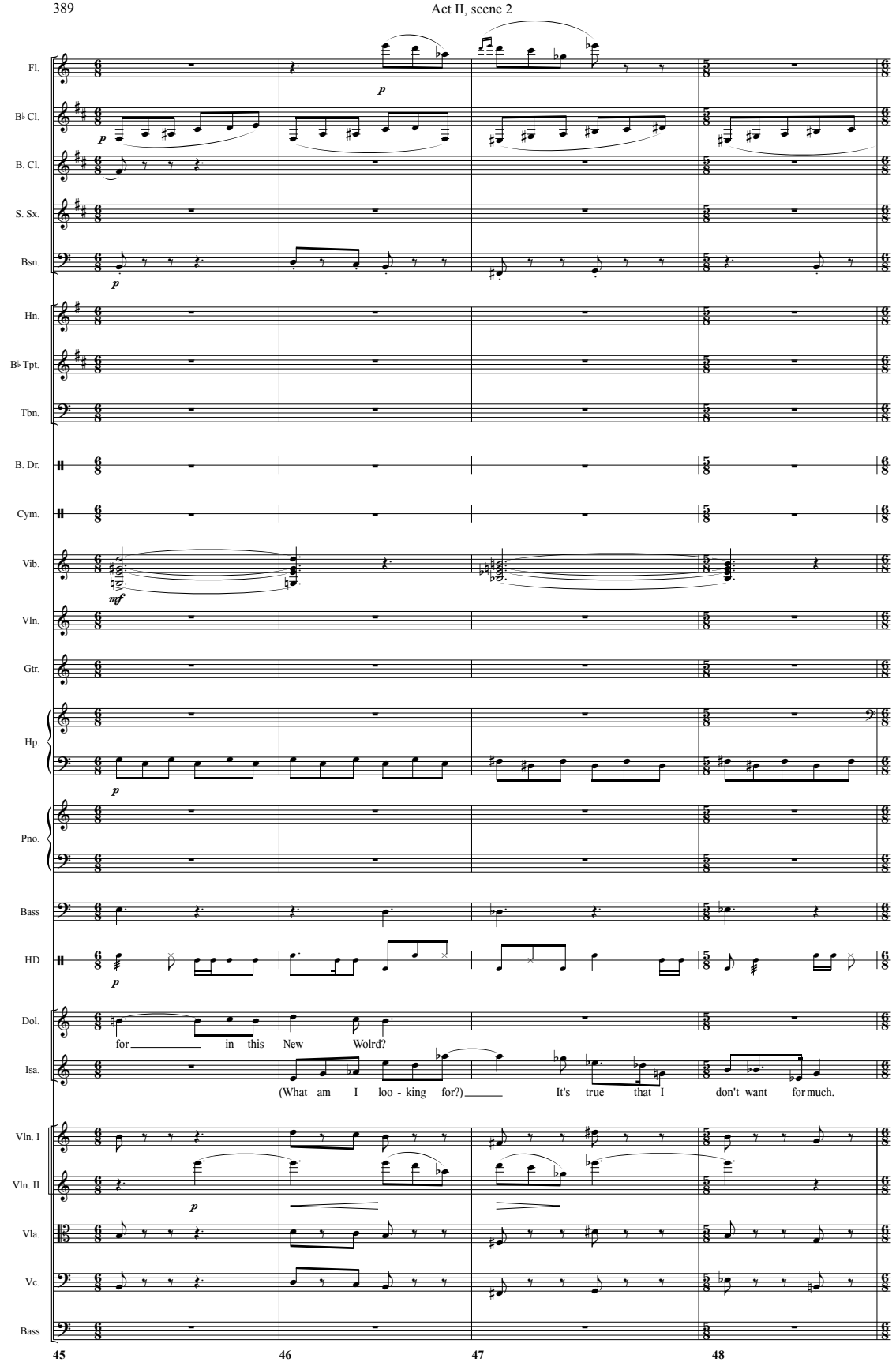

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Mute
Open
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
That's a long way to tra - vel.
Isa.
Yes, but worth the jour - ney.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
27
28
29
30


More cantabile (♩ = 78)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
(Open)
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Yes, but why did you leave?
This land is pa - ra - dise.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
31
32
33

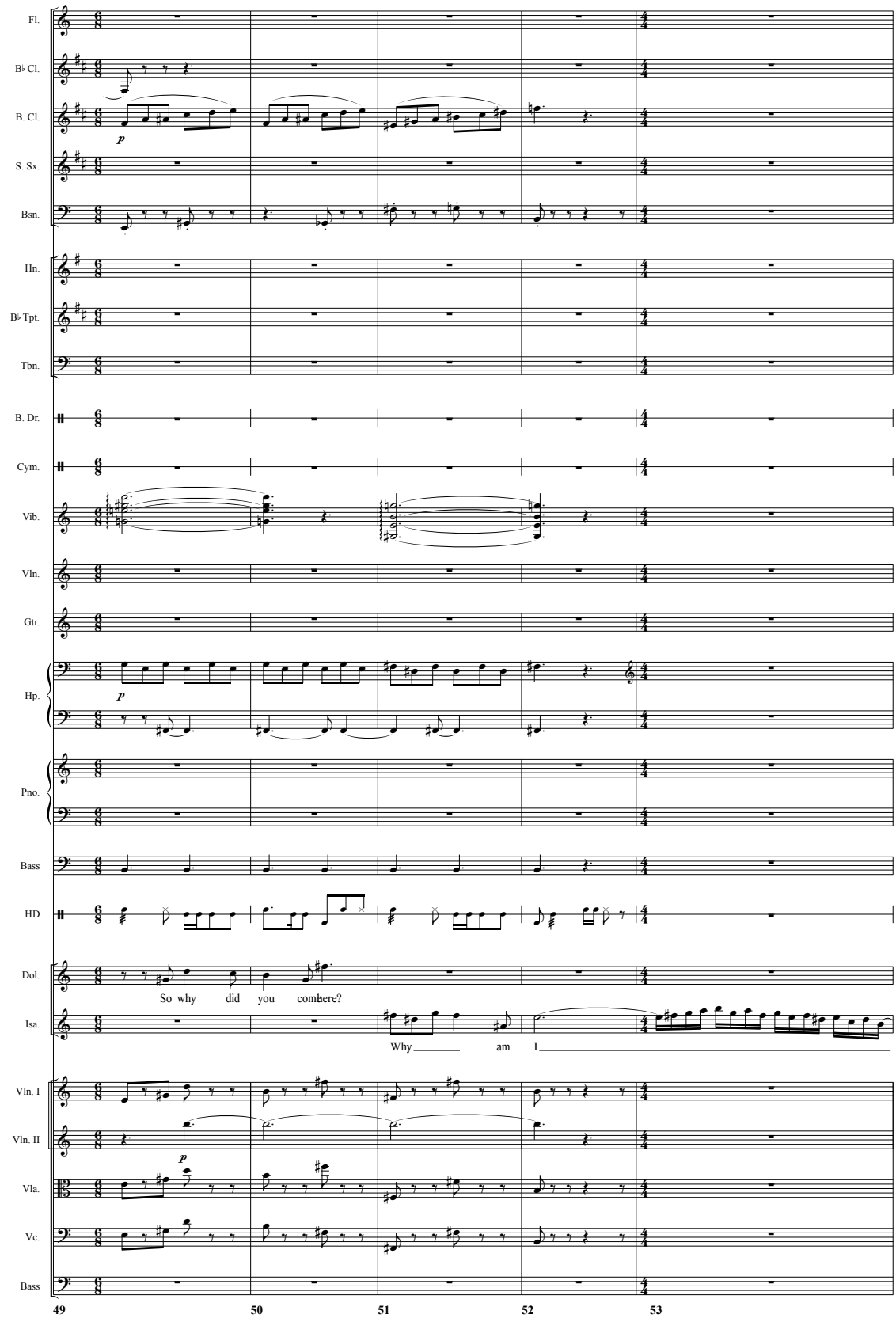

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
mf
Clear - ly you don't lack wealth.
That's true.
Looks can be de - cei - ving.
34
35
36


Smooth groove (♩=♩.)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
But why come to this New World?
Es - pe - cial - ly a - fter the war.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
pizz.
37
38
39
40

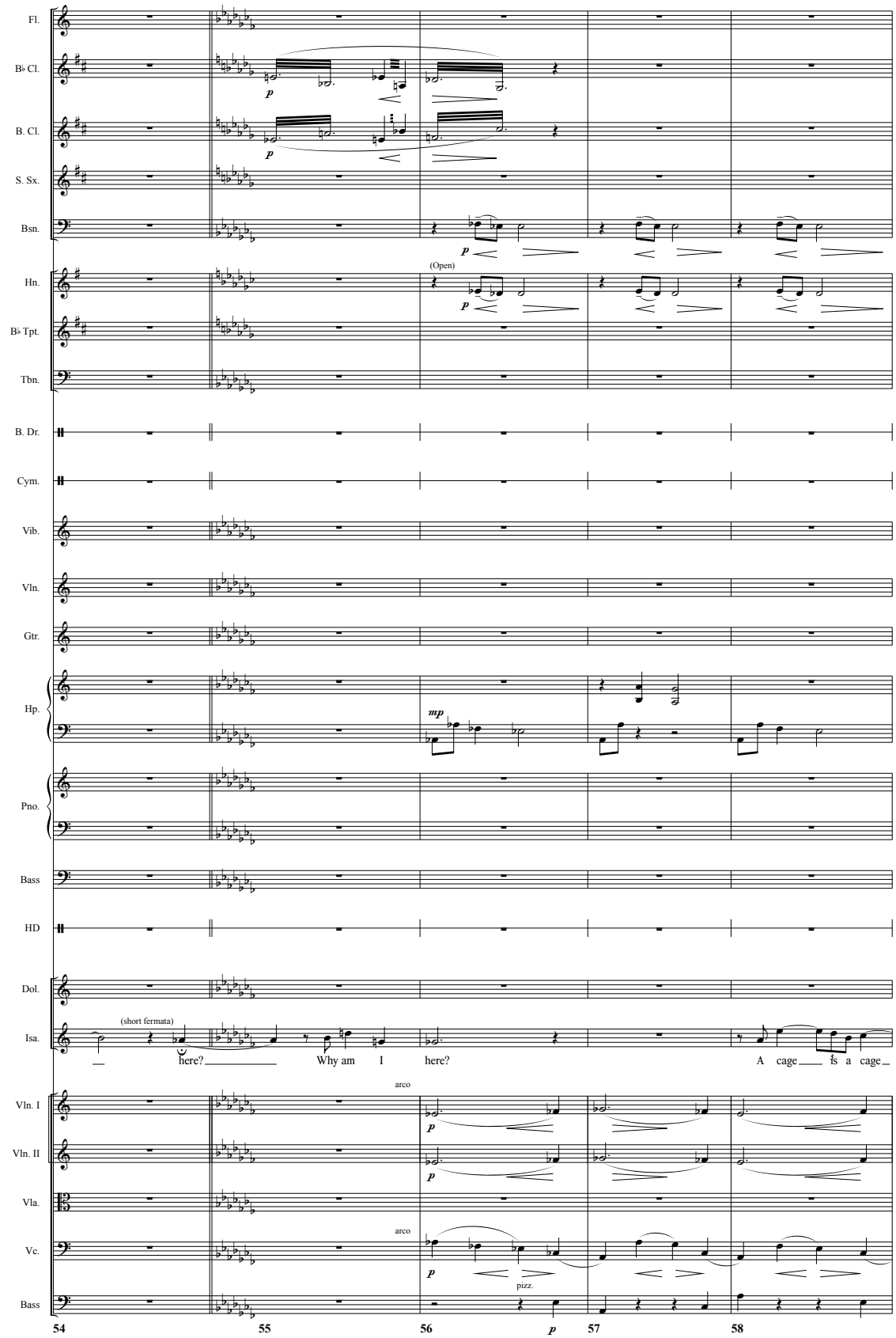

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Mute
Open
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
What do you want? What are you loo - king
Isa.
What do I want?
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
41
42
43
44

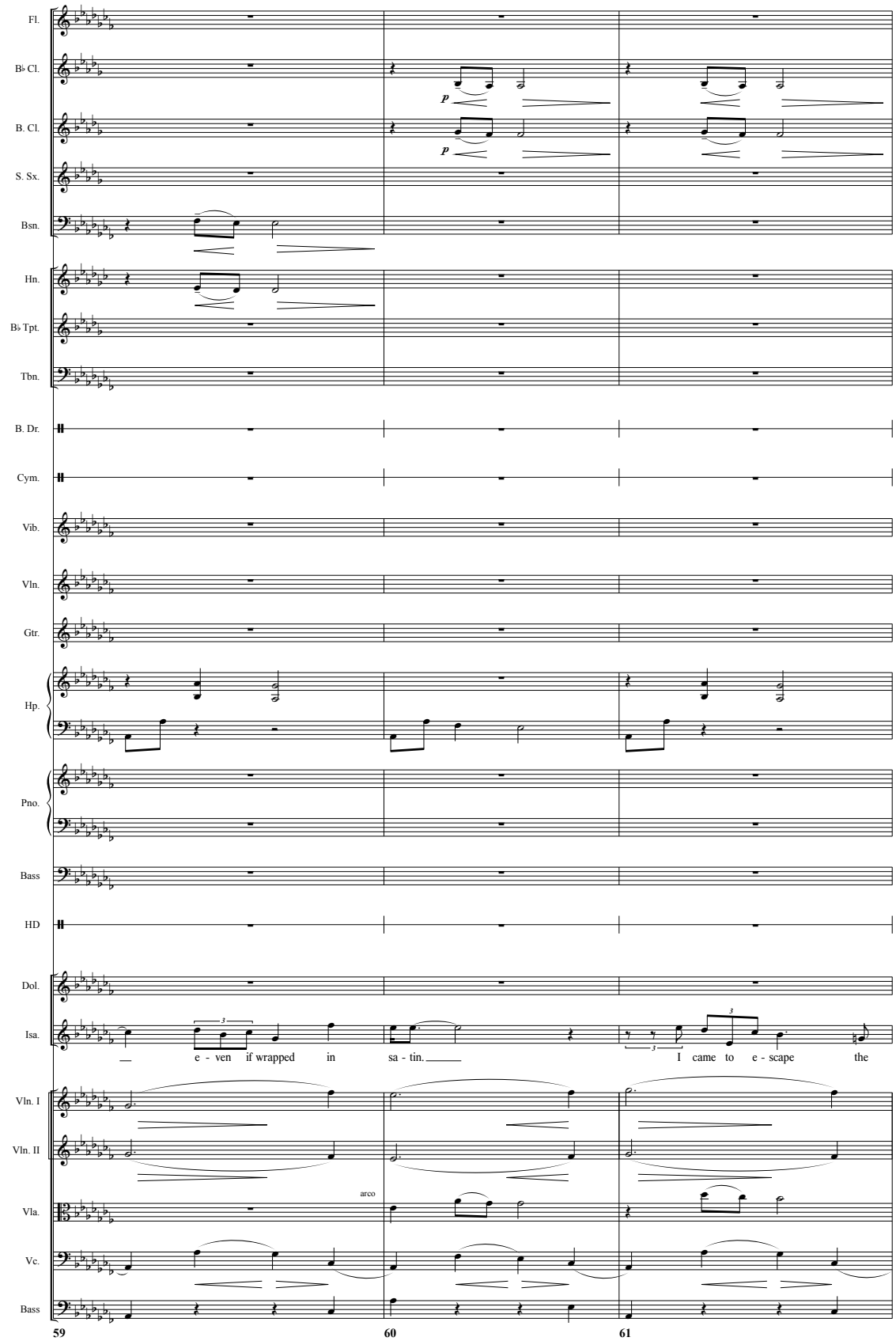

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
p
mf
for in this New Wolrd?
(What am I loo - king for?) It's true that I don't want for much.
45
46
47
48

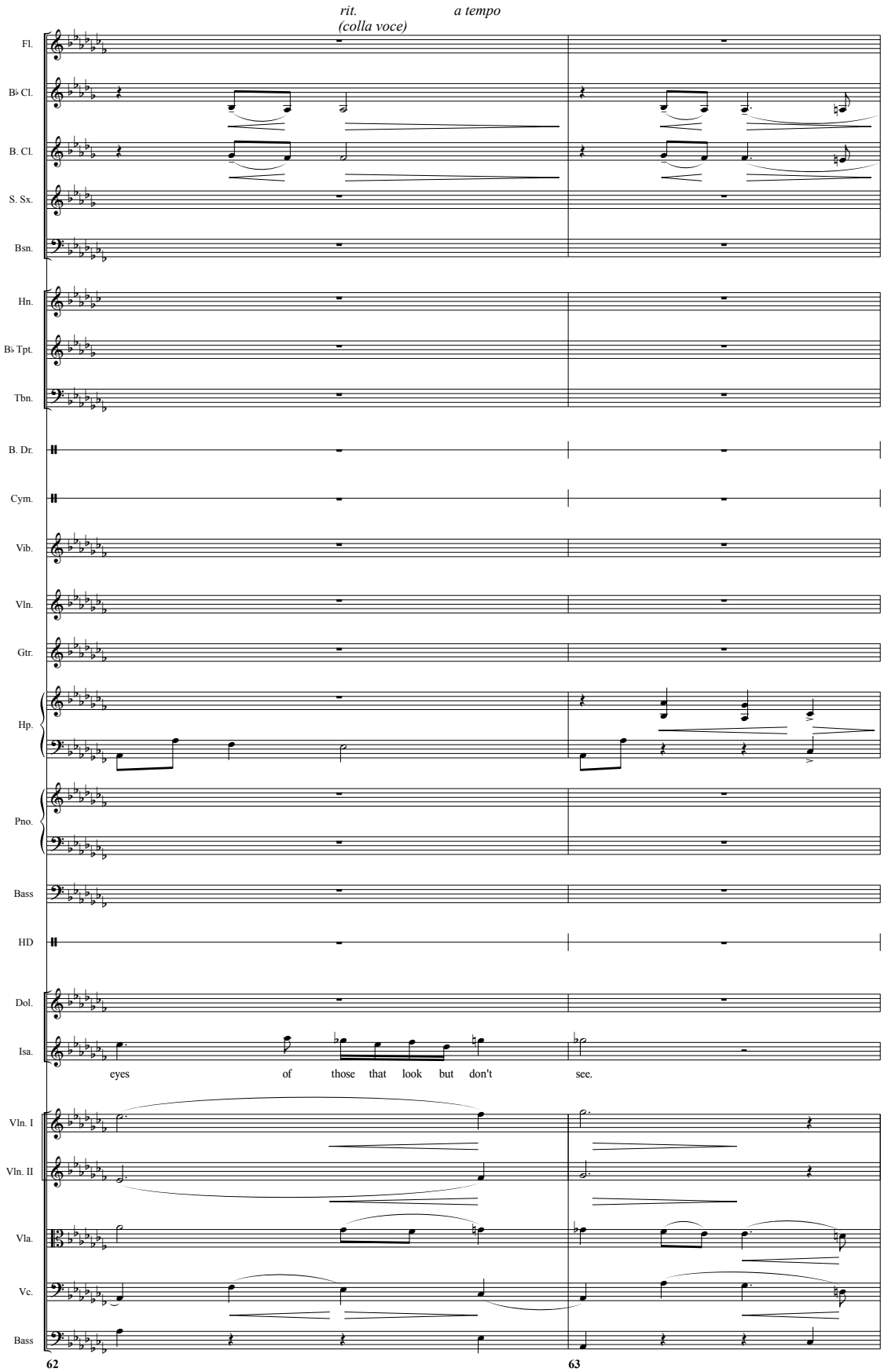
Cadenza (app. ♩ = 68)

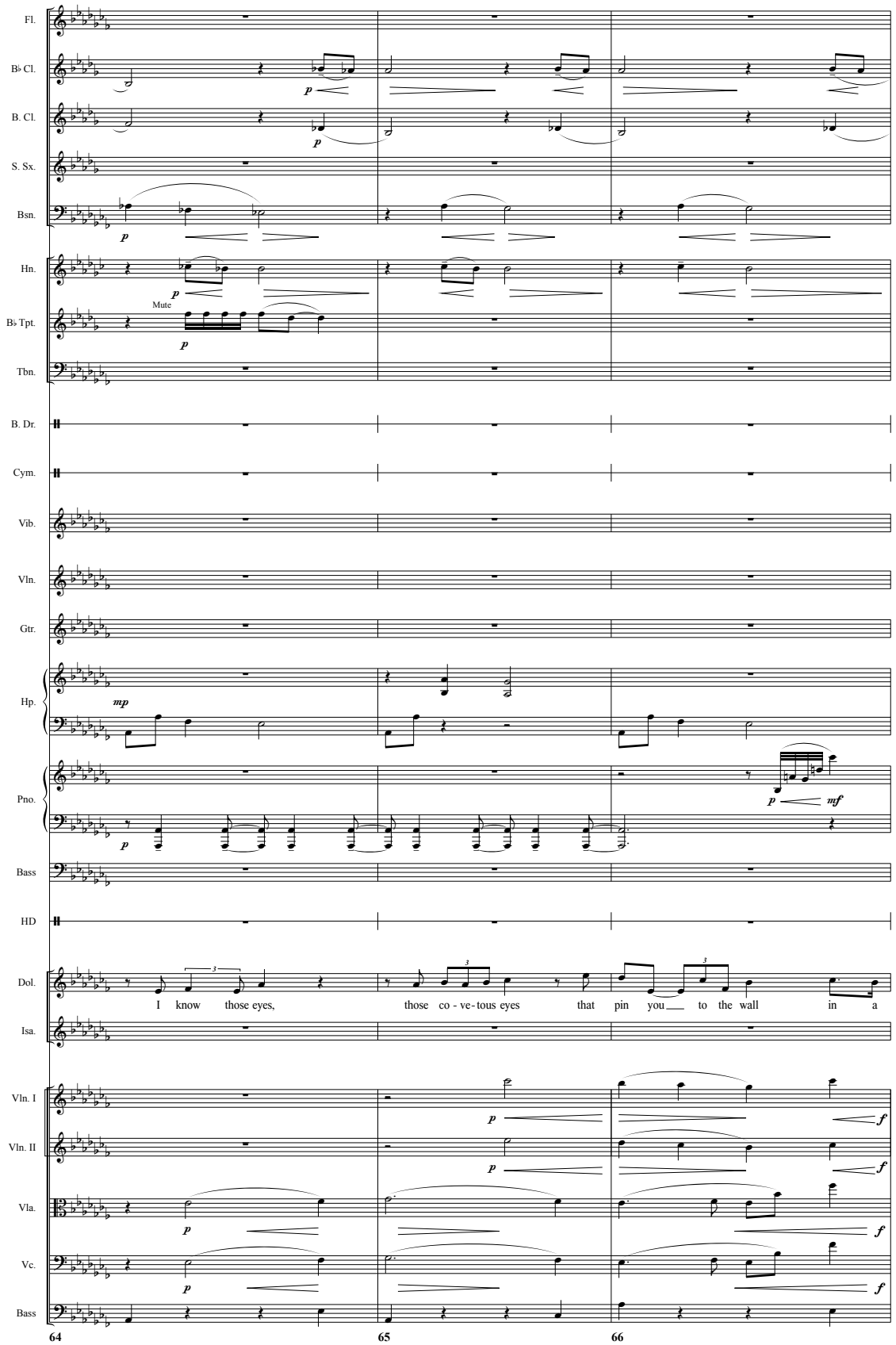


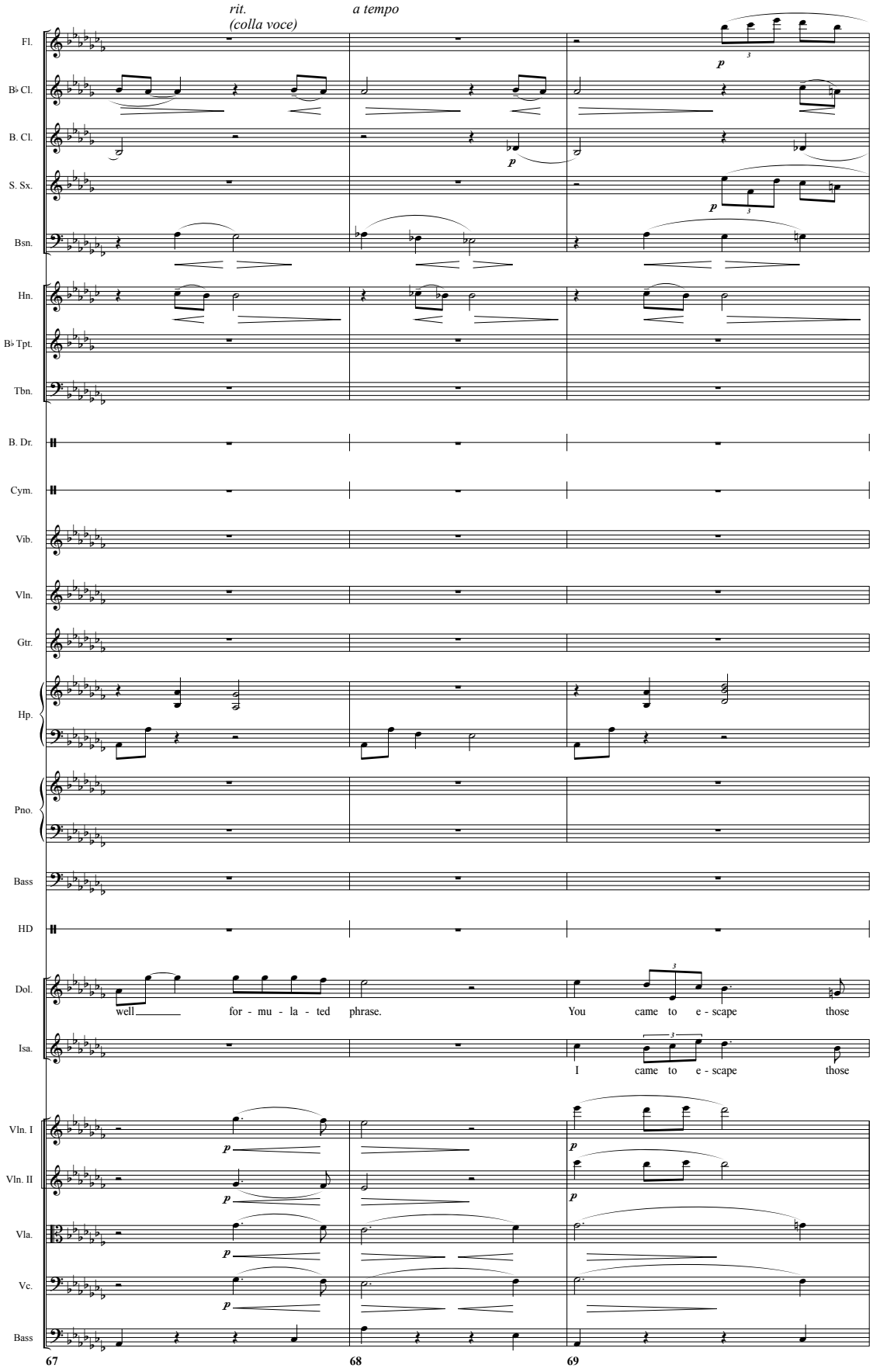
Yearning (♩ = 75)

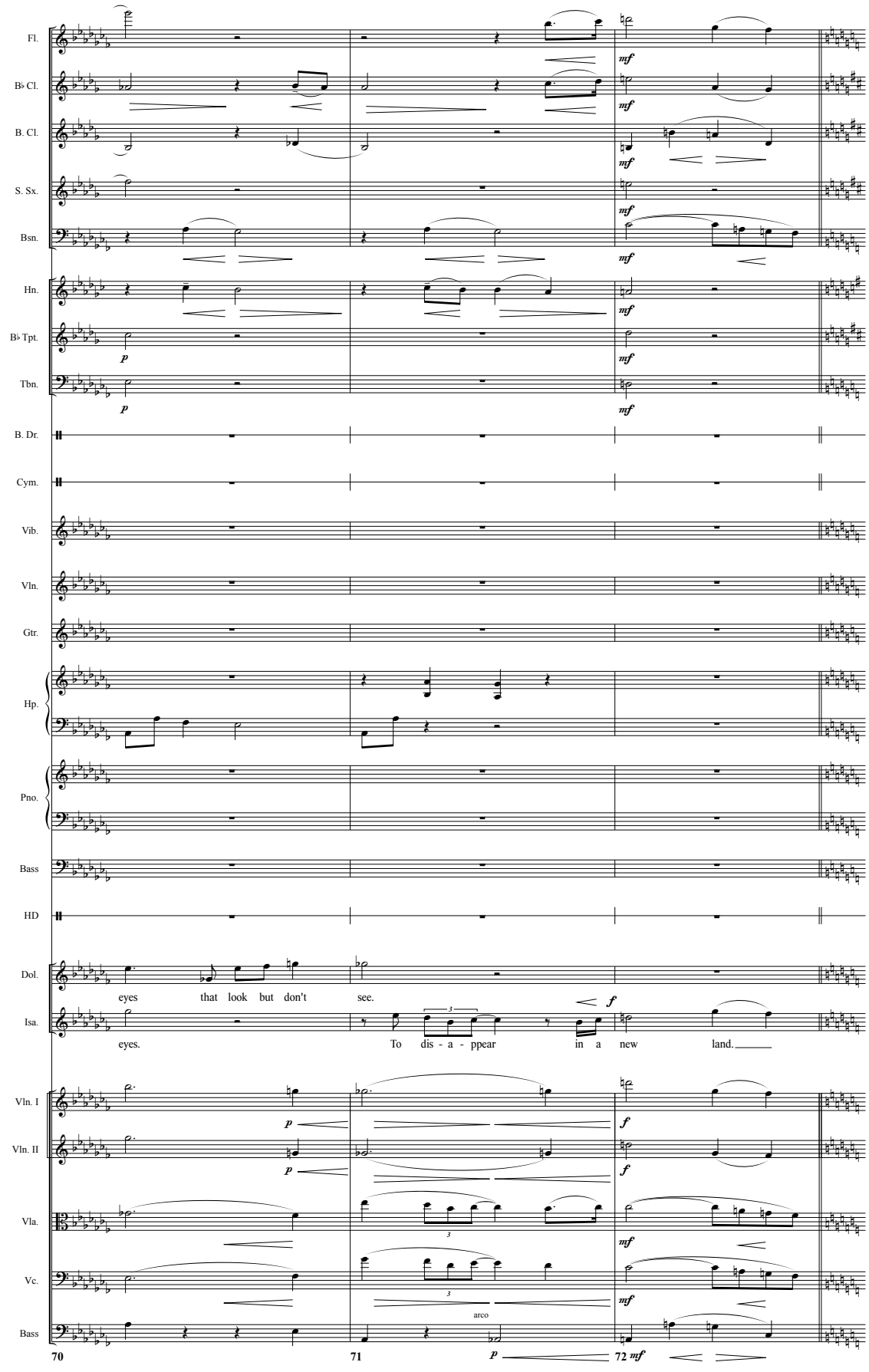

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
(Open)
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
(short fermata)
here? Why am I here? A cage is a cage
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
arco
pizz.
54 55 56 57 58

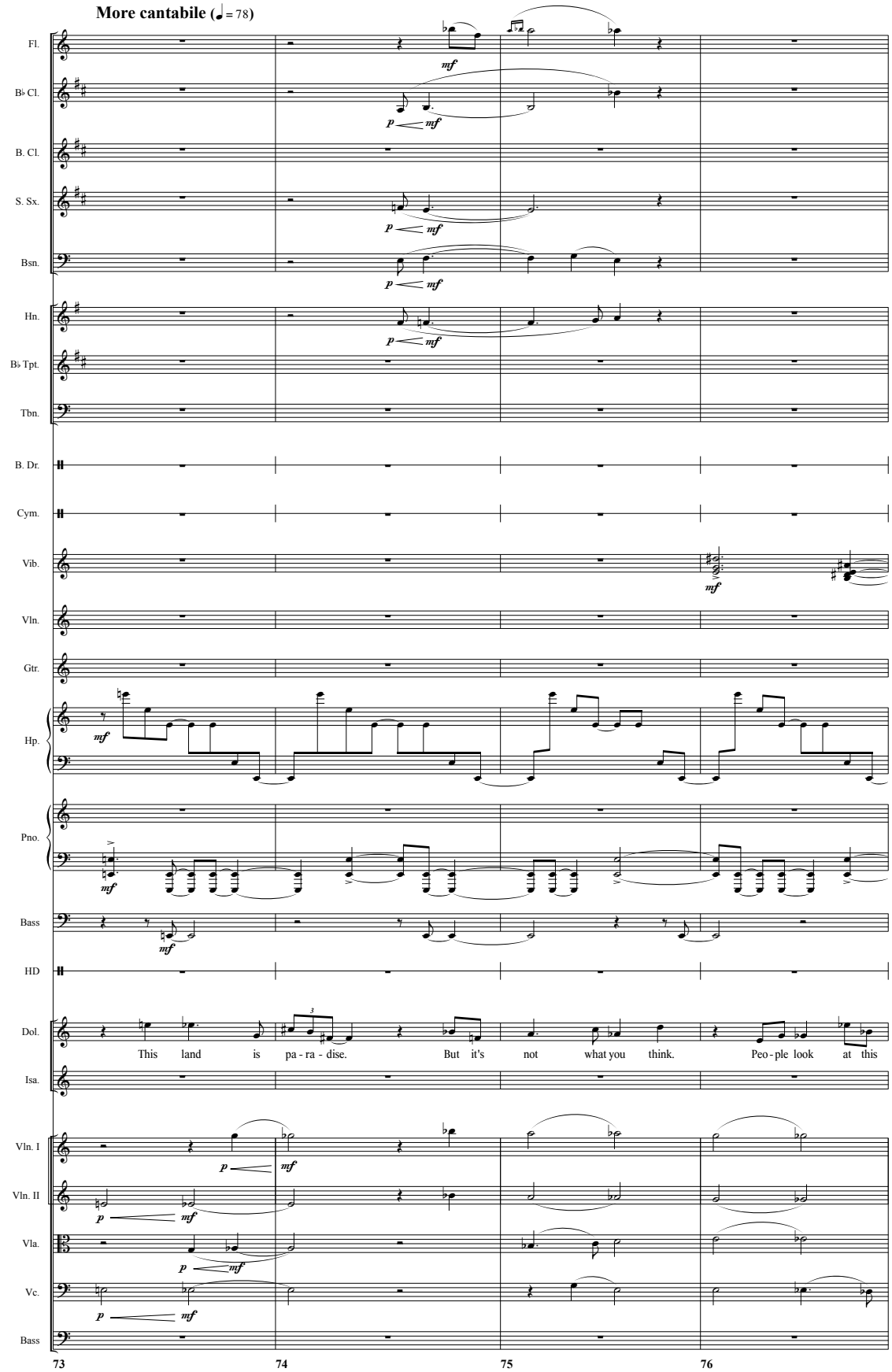

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
p
p
arco
e - ven if wrapped in sa - tin.
I came to e - scape the
59
60
61


rit.
(colla voce)
a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
eyes of those that look but don't see.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
62
63

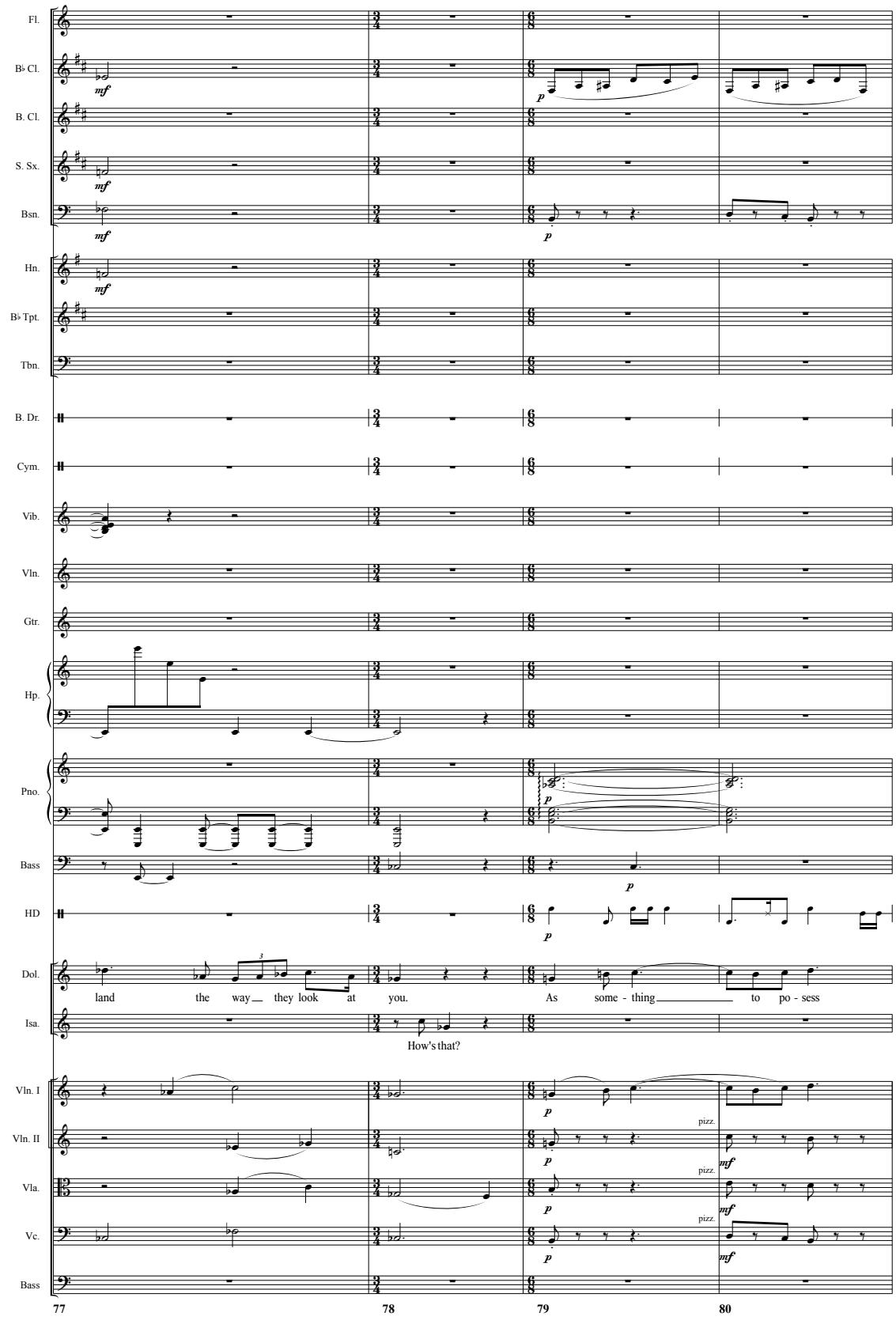

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Mute
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
I know those eyes, those co - ve - tous eyes that pin you to the wall in a
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
64
65
66

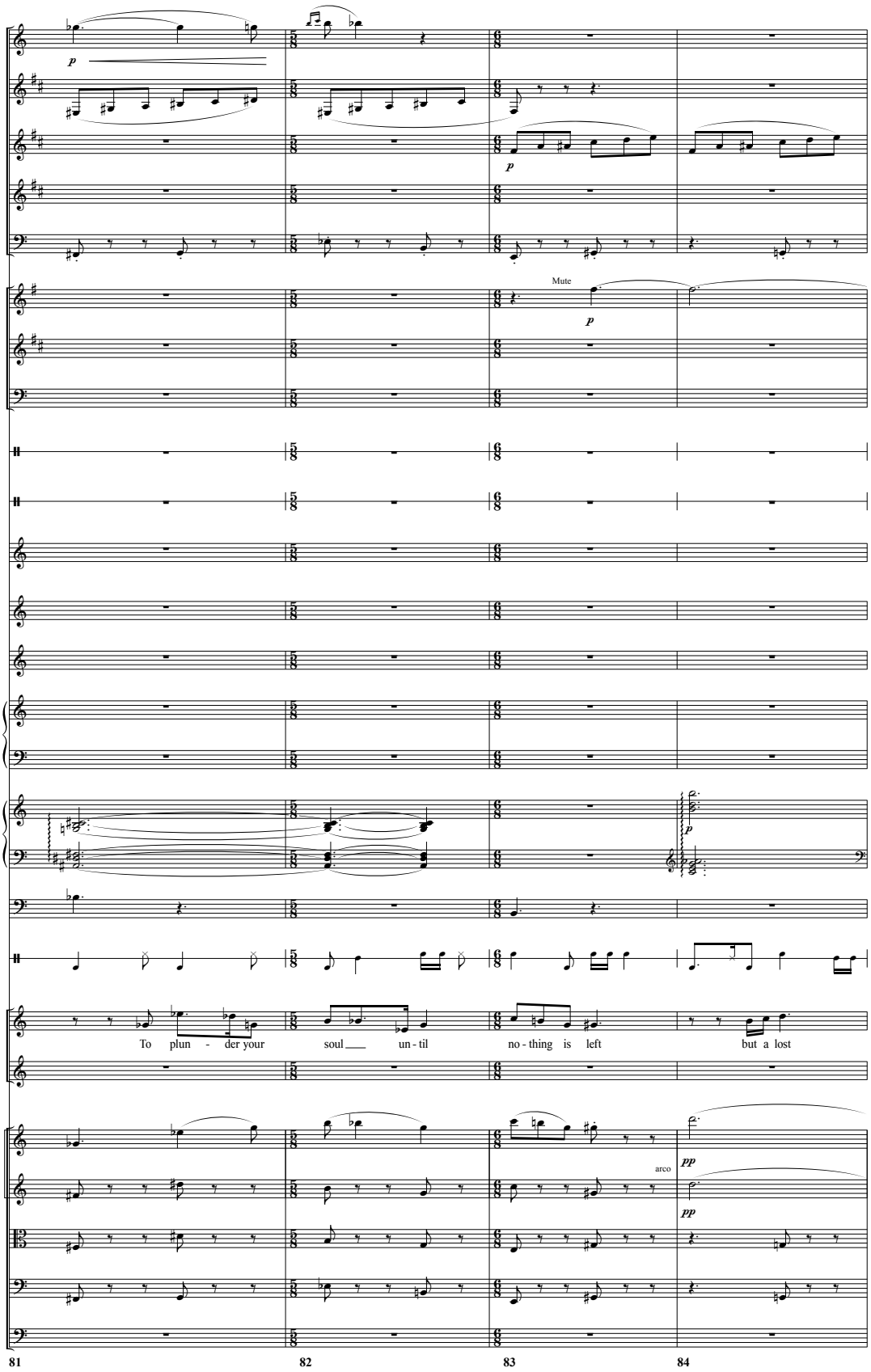

rit.
(colla voce)
a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
well for - mu - la - ted phrase.
You came to e - scape those
I came to e - scape those
67
68
69

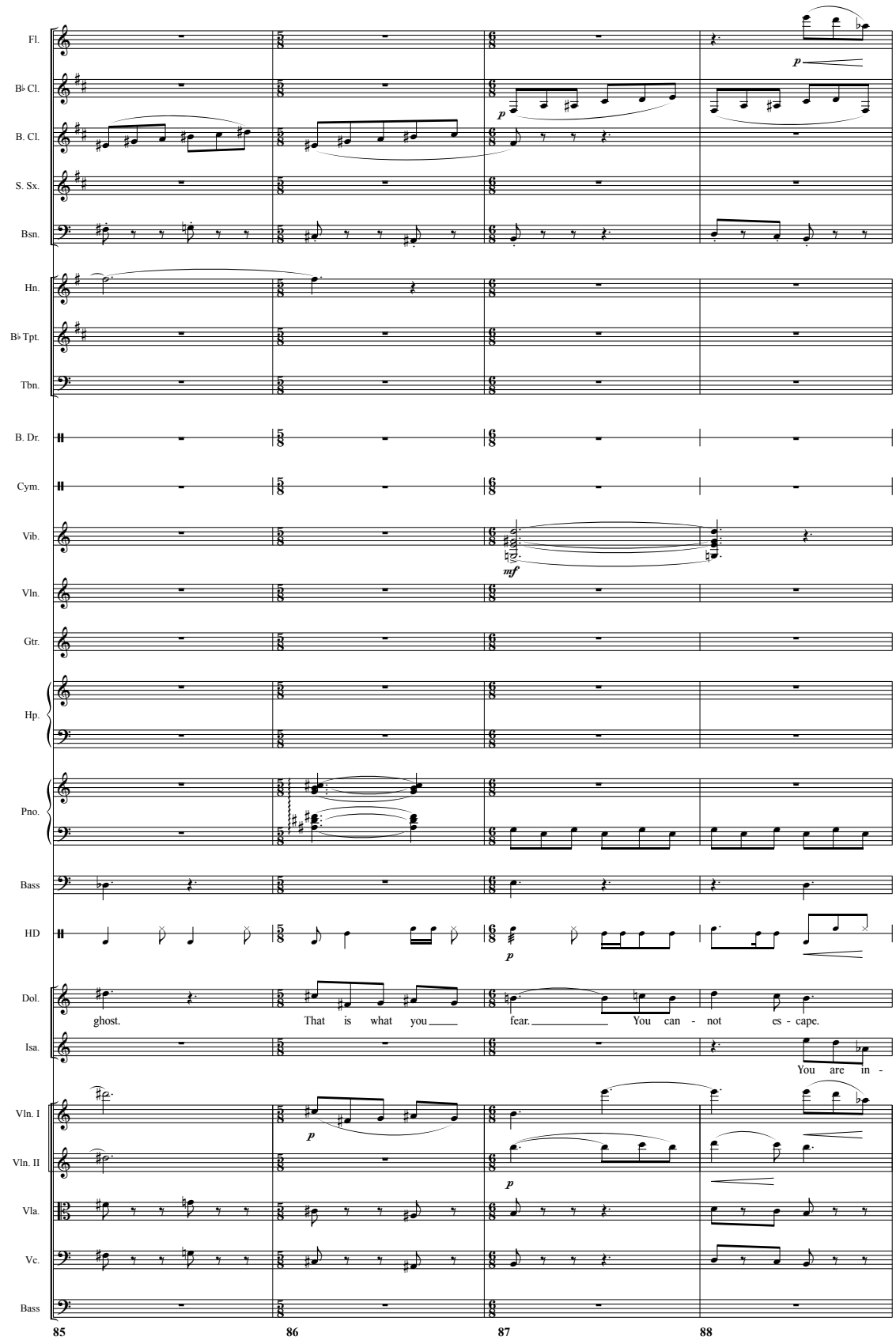

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
eyes that look but don't see.
eyes. To dis - a - ppear in a new land.
arco
70
71
72

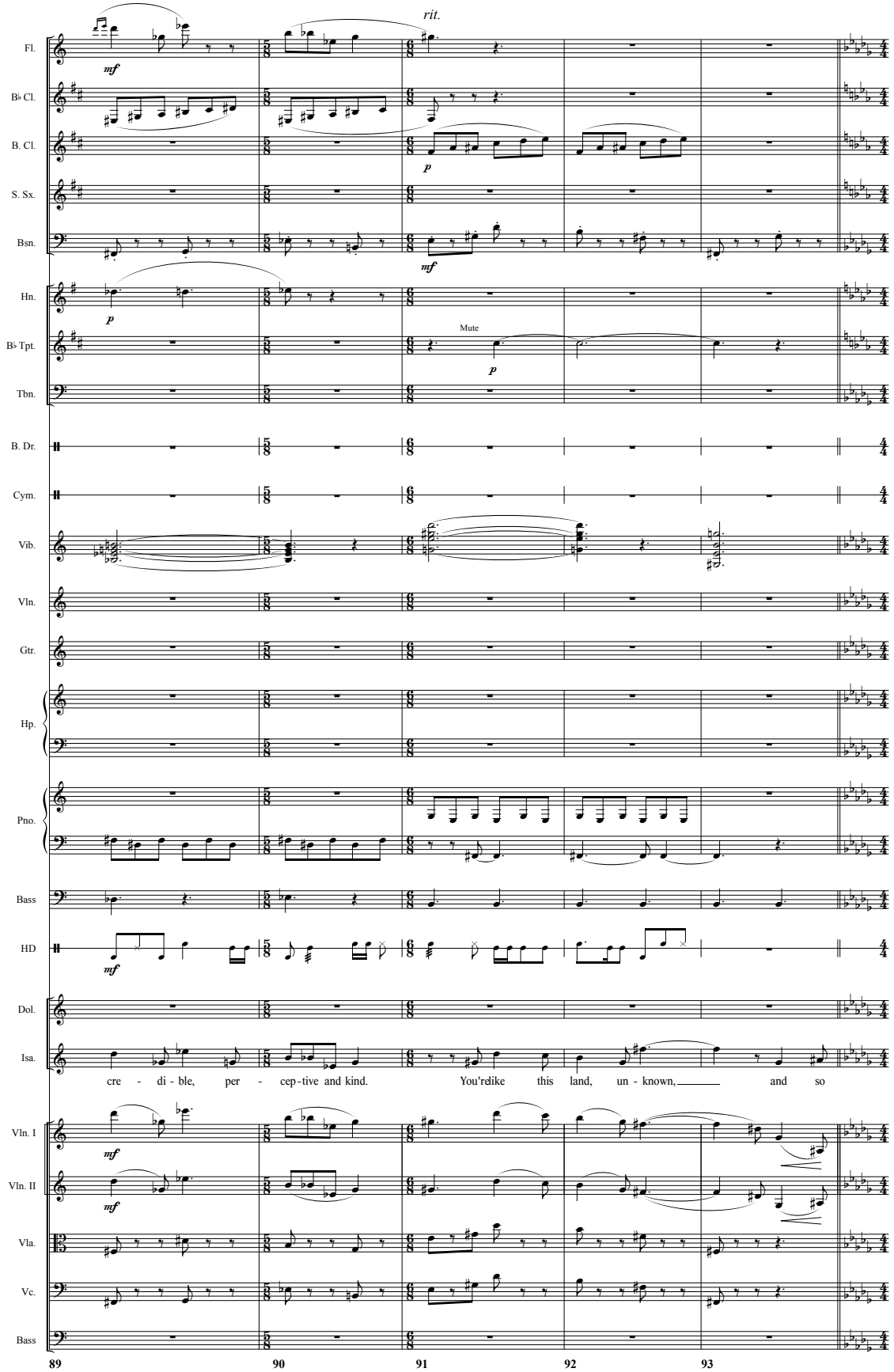

More cantabile (♩= 78)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
This land is pa - ra - dise. But it's not what you think. Peo - ple look at this
73
74
75
76

Smooth groove (♩=♩.)

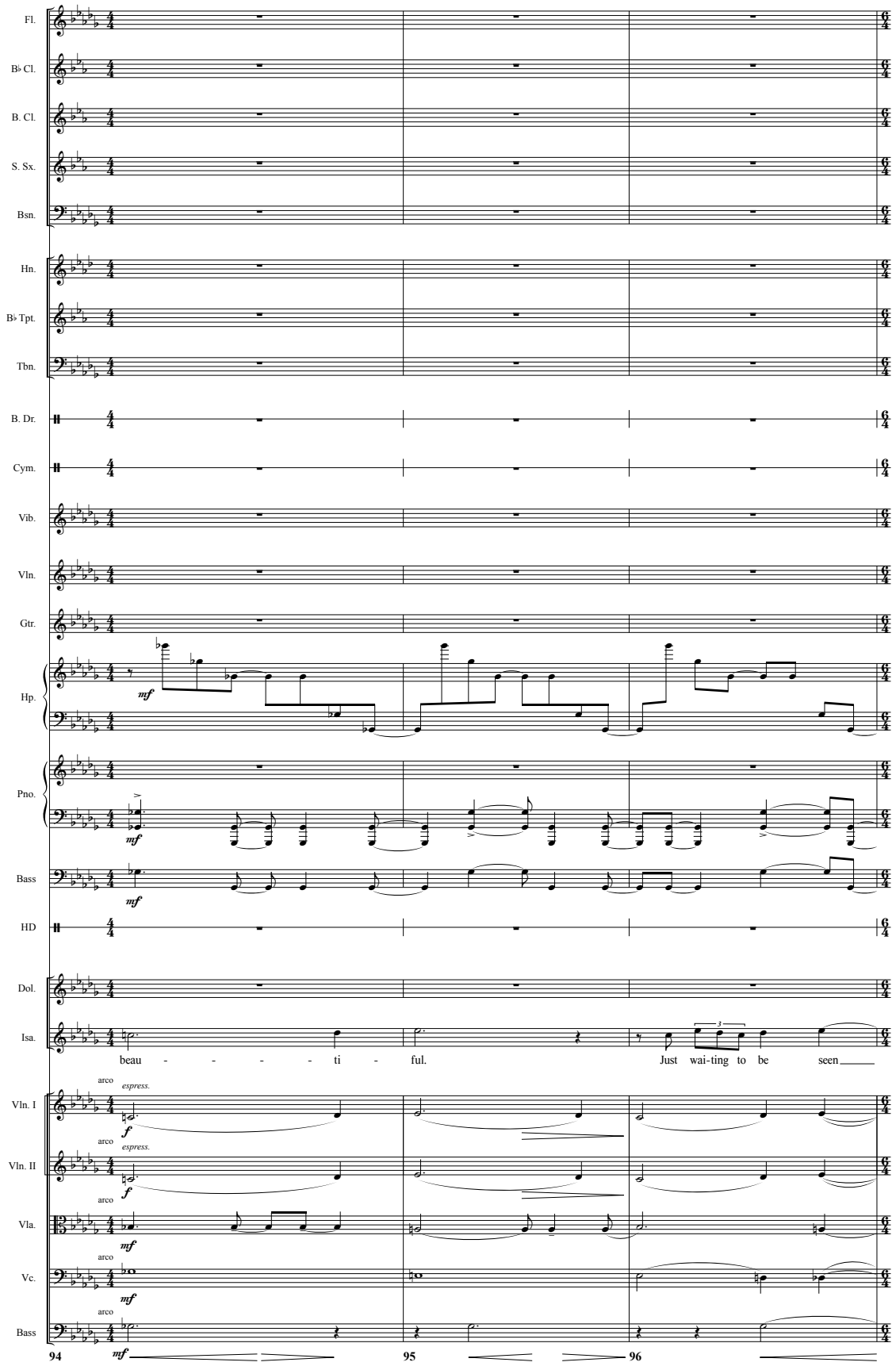


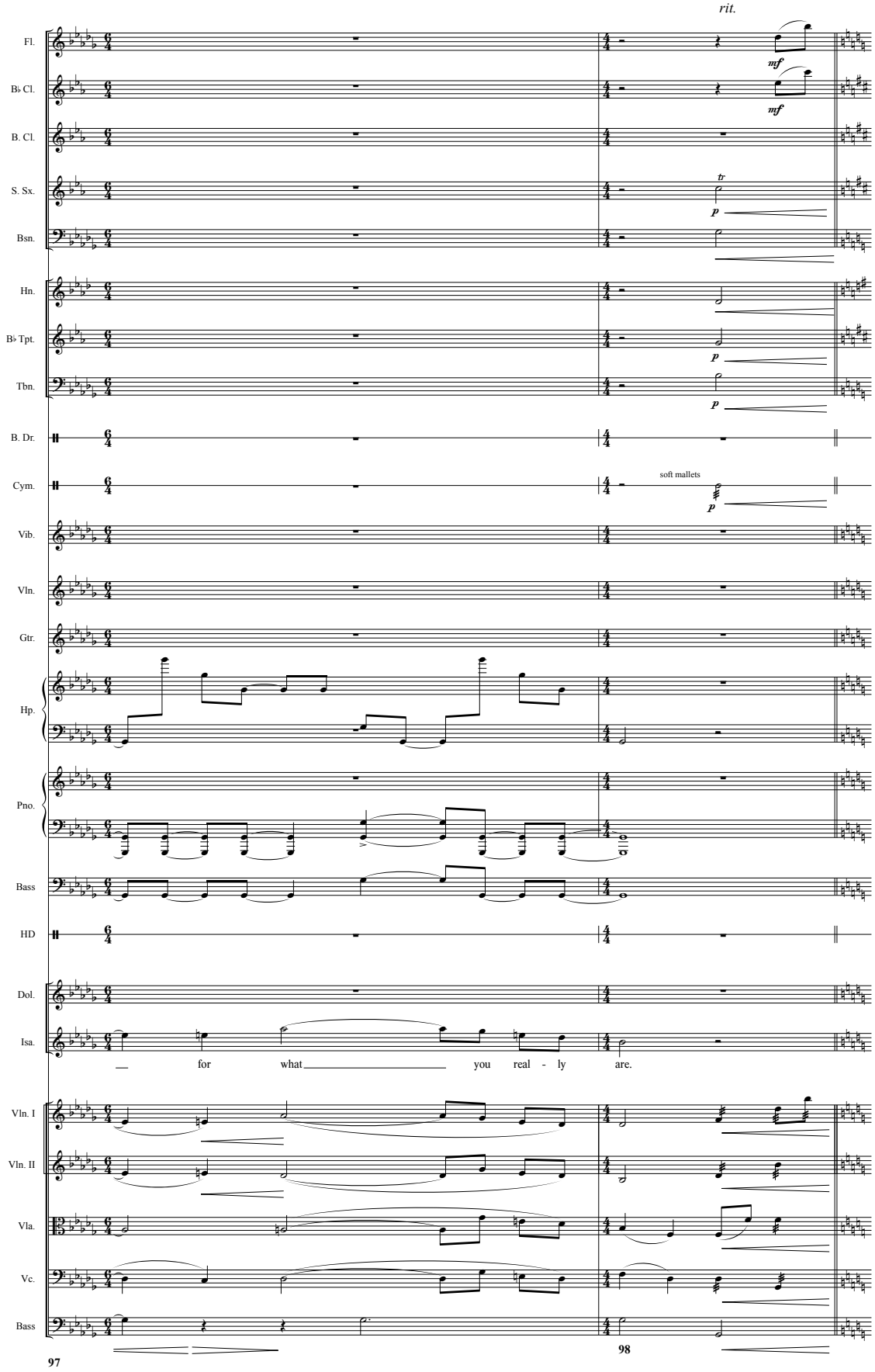

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
Mute
arco
To plun - der your soul un - til no - thing is left but a lost
81
82
83
84

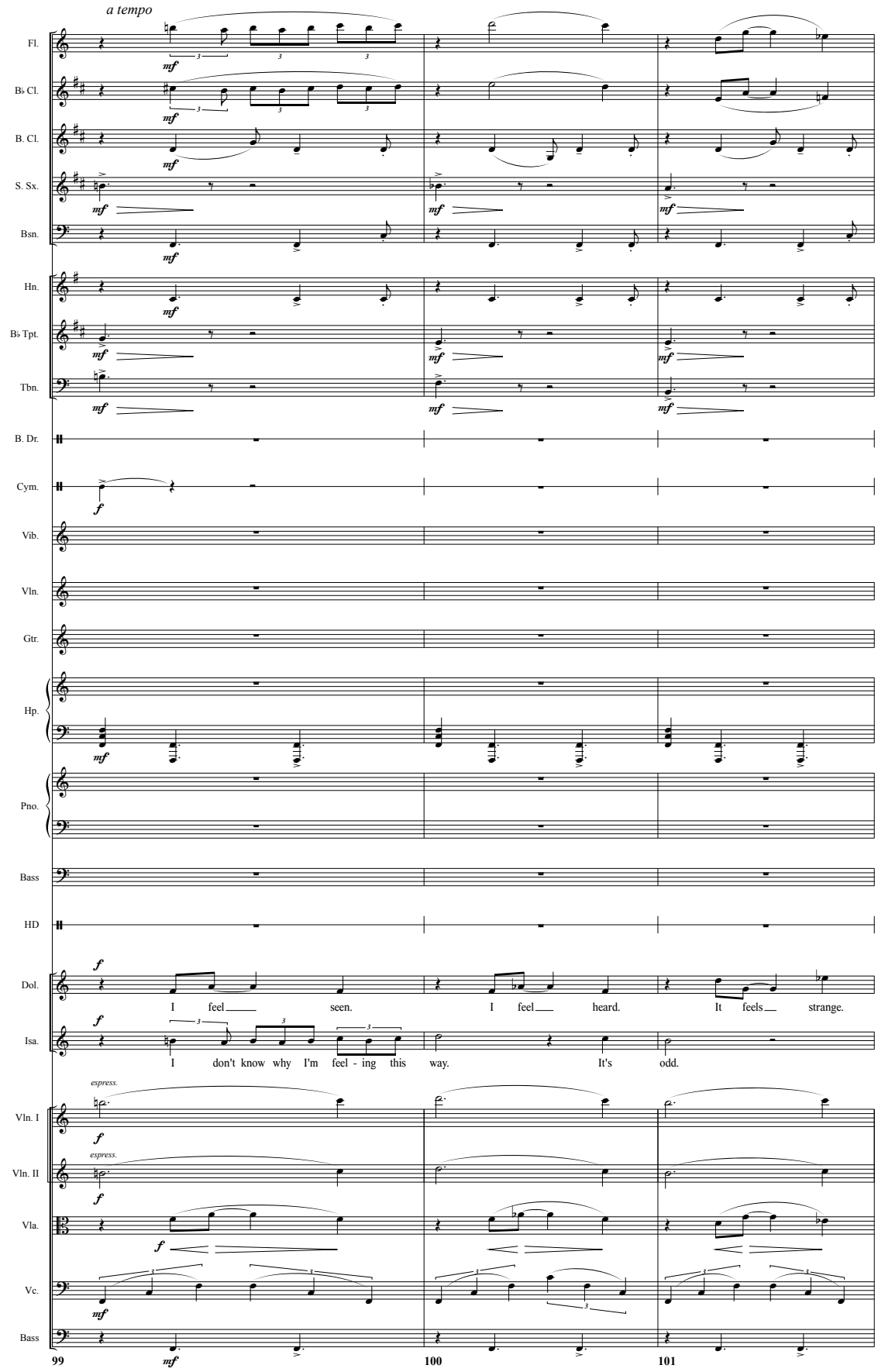

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
p
mf
ghost. That is what you fear. You can - not es - cape.
You are in -
85
86
87
88

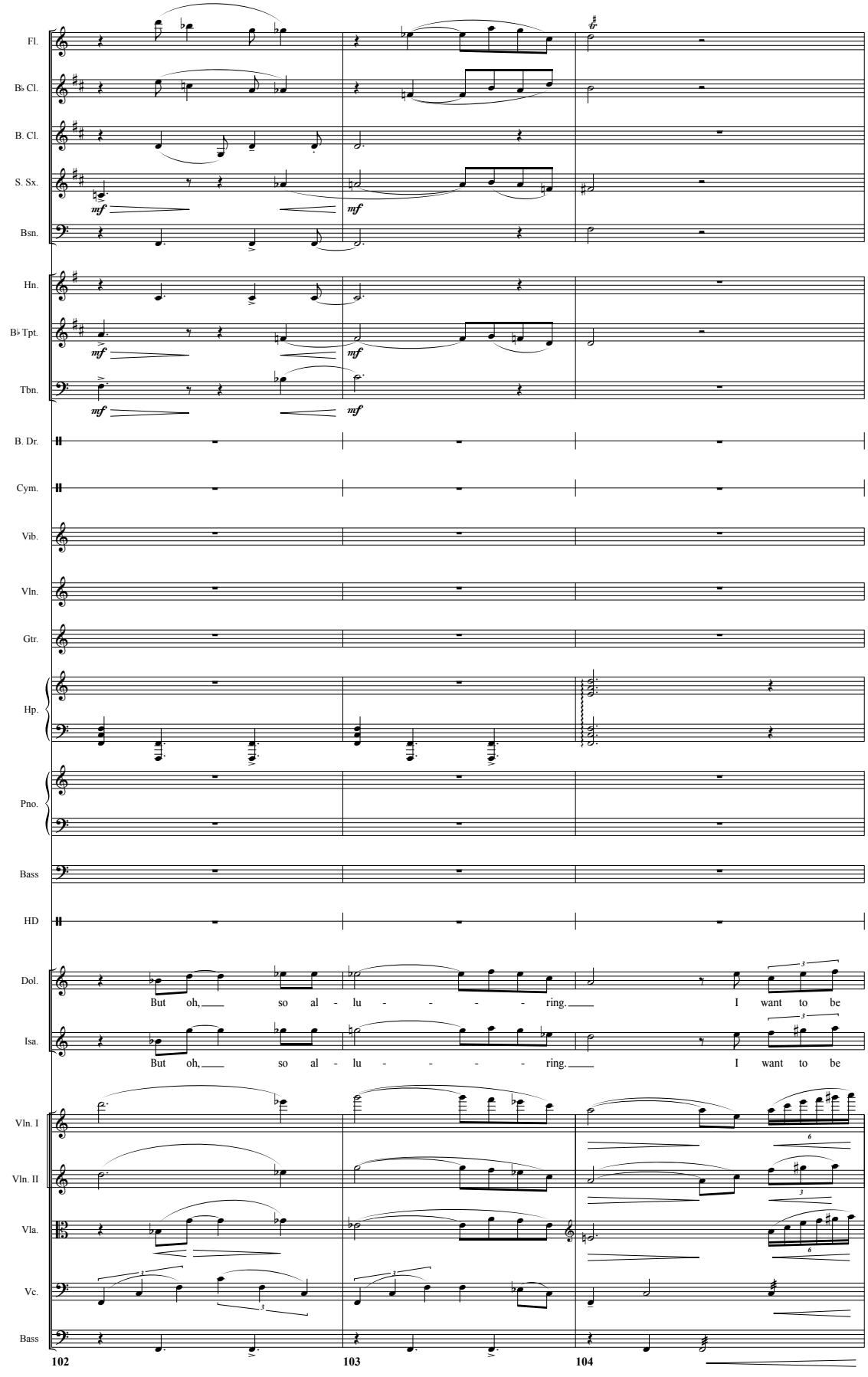

rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Mute
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
cre - di - ble, per - cep - tive and kind. You'rdike this land, un - known, and so
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
89
90
91
92
93

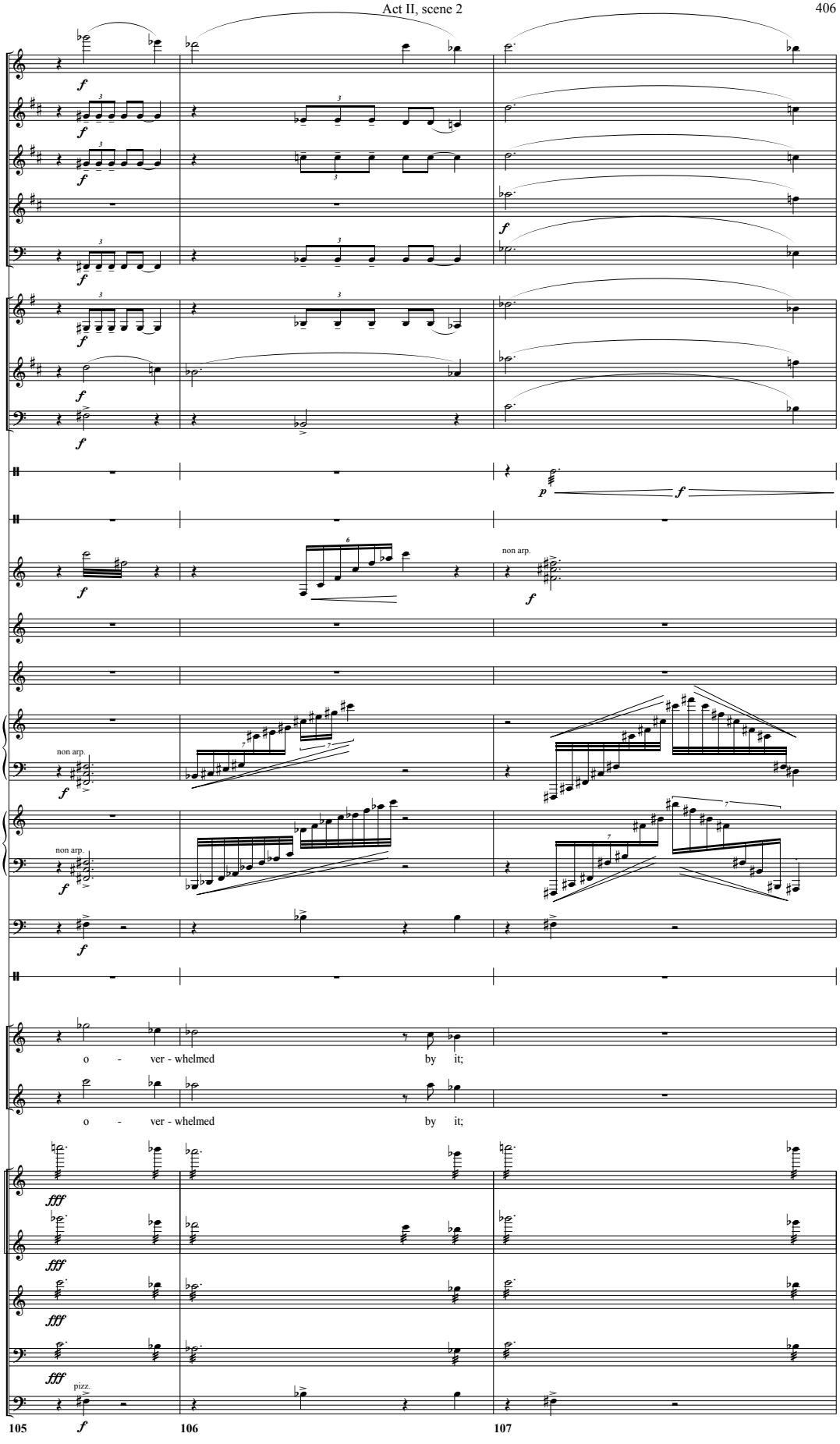
More pace but not rushed (♩= 85)

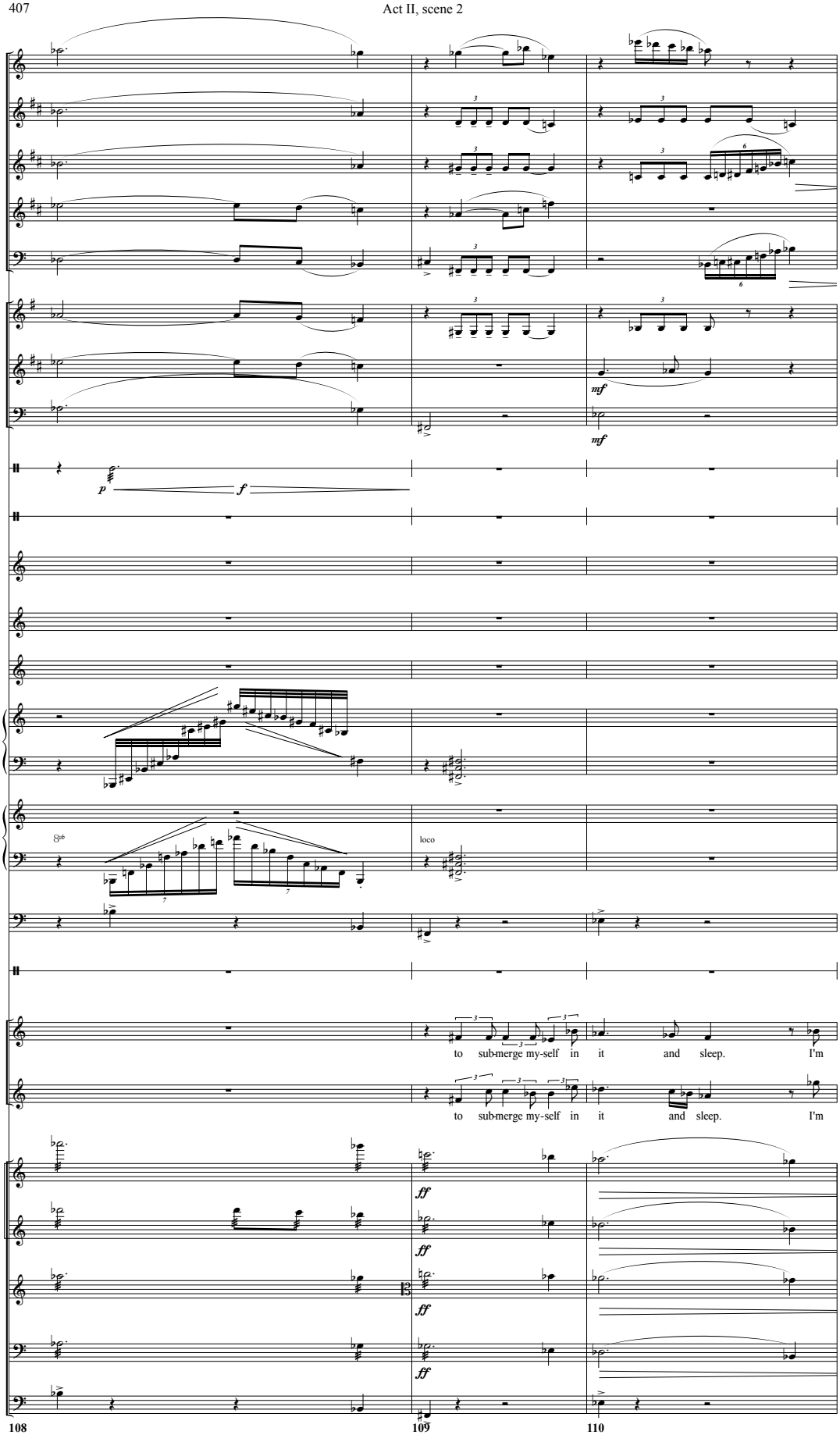


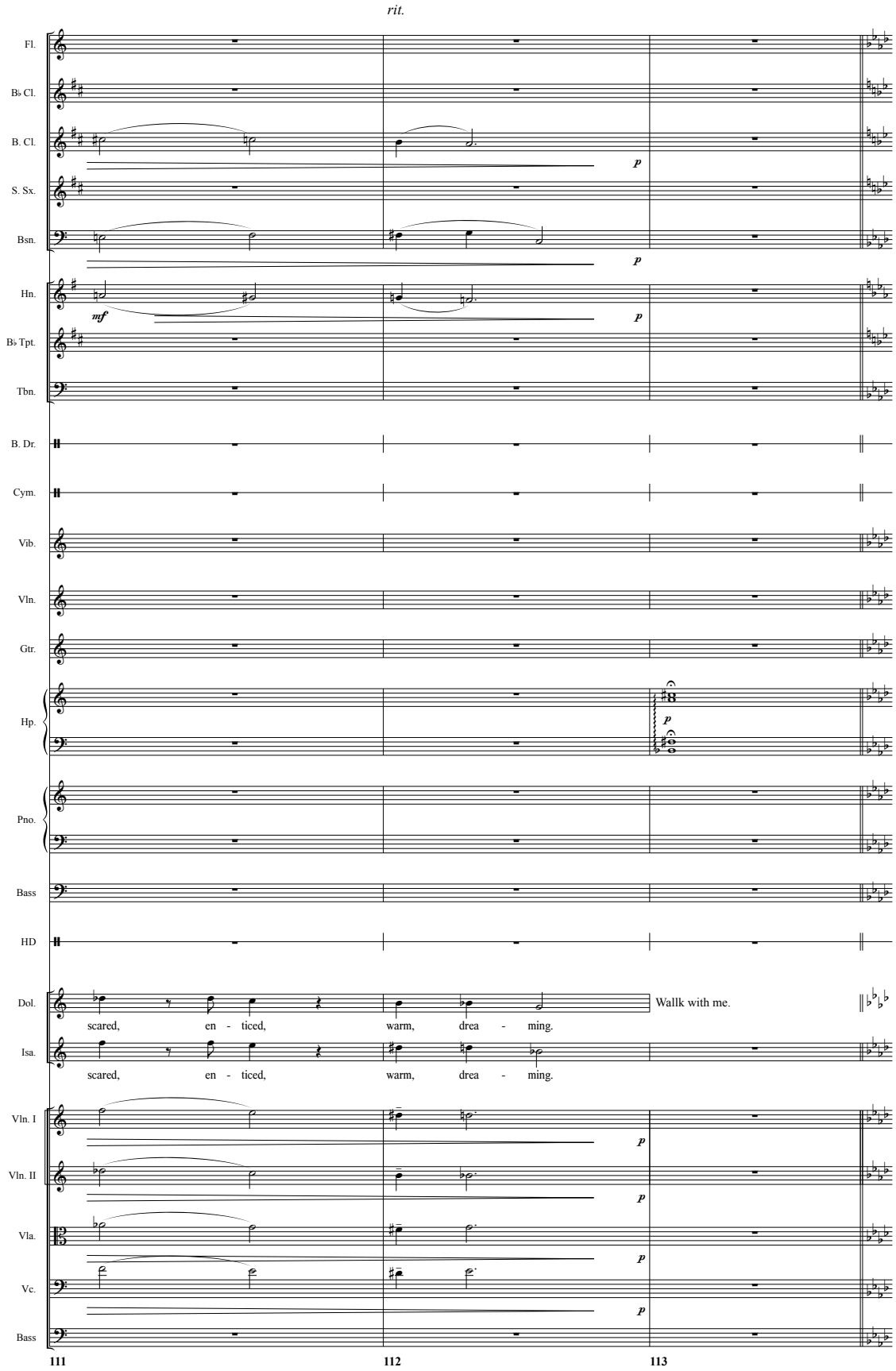

rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
soft mallets
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
— for what — you real - ly are.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
97
98


a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
I feel seen. I feel heard. It feels strange.
Isa.
I don't know why I'm feel - ing this way. It's odd.
espress.
Vln. I
espress.
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
99
100
101


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
mf
But oh, so al - lu - - - - ring. I want to be
But oh, so al - lu - - - - ring. I want to be
102
103
104


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
non arp.
pizz.
o - ver - whelmed by it;
o - ver - whelmed by it;
105
106
107


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
p
f
mf
mf
8va
loco
to sub-merge my-self in it and sleep. I'm
to sub-merge my-self in it and sleep. I'm
ff
ff
ff
ff
108
109
110

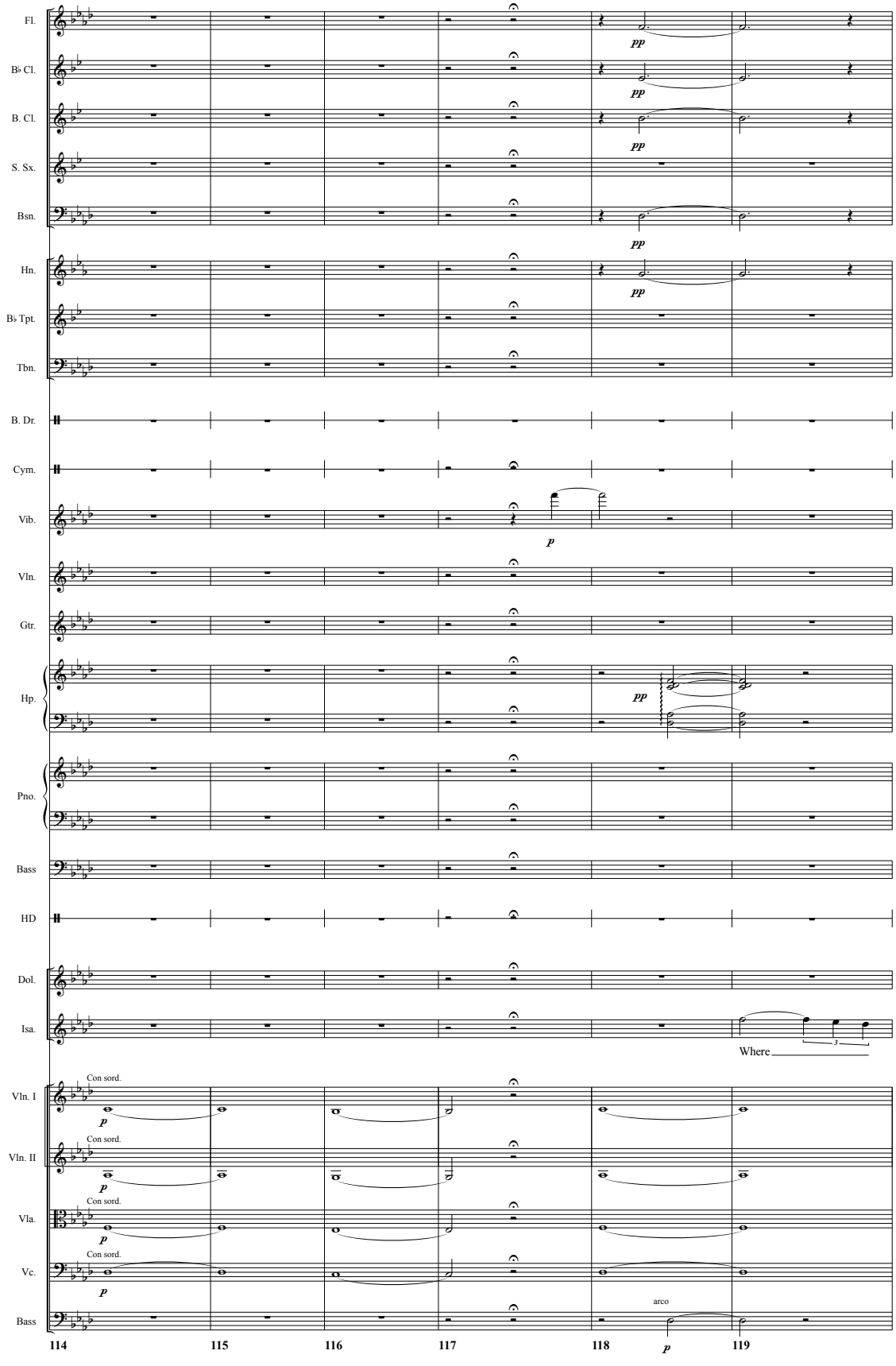

rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
mf
p
scared, en - ticed, warm, drea - ming.
Wallk with me.
111
112
113

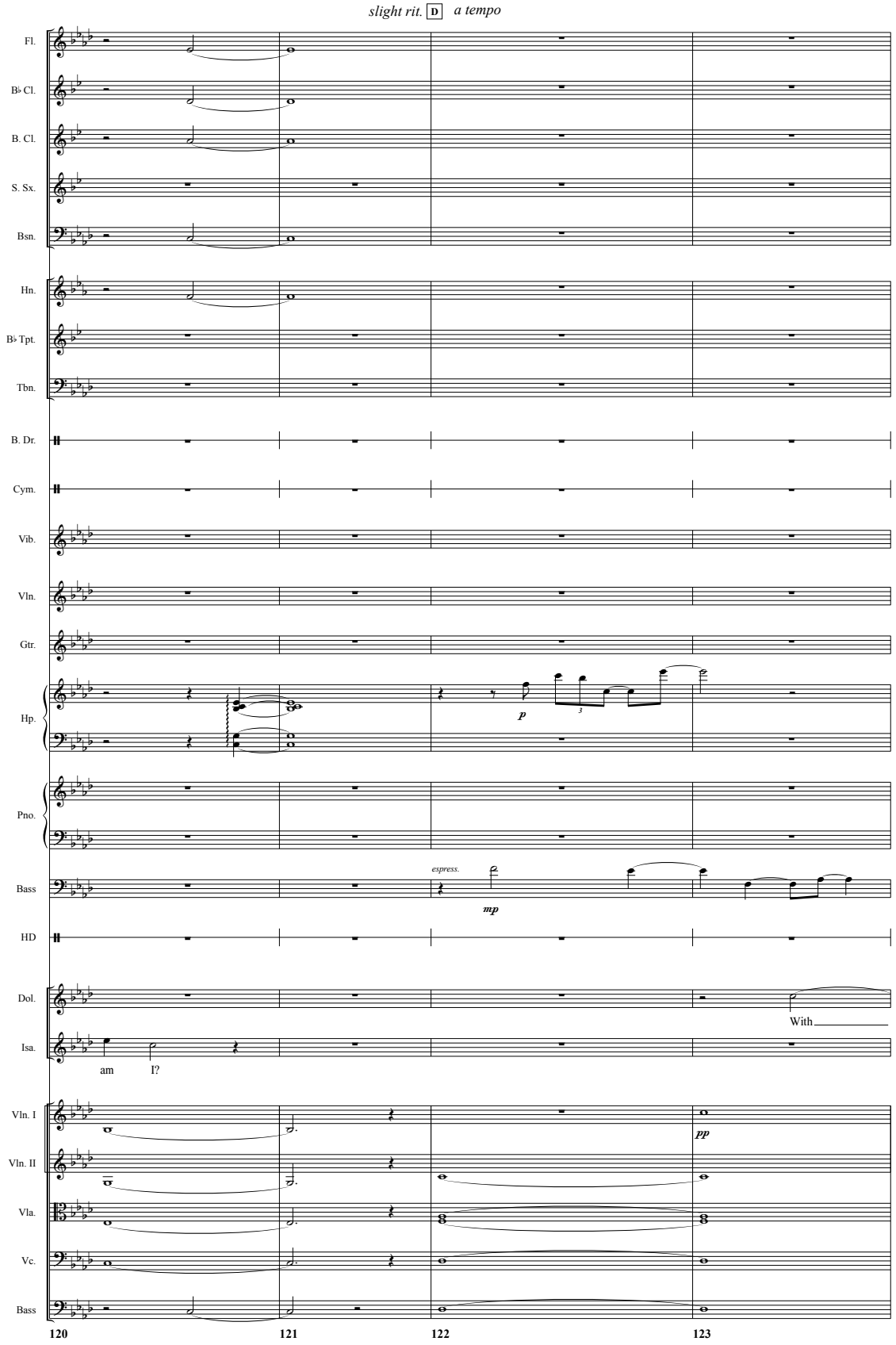
Act II, scene 3

Dolores and Isabelle in the Garden

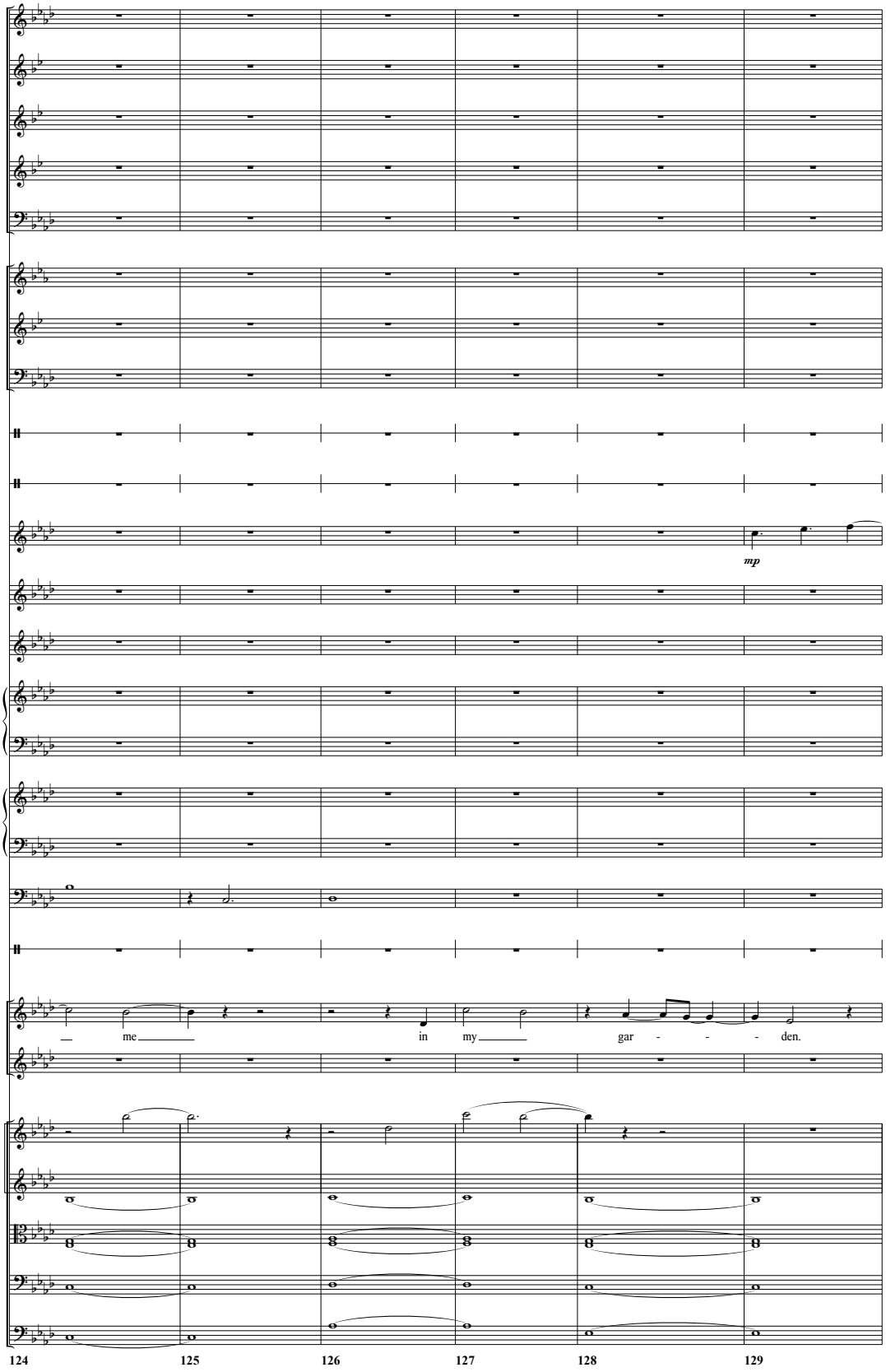
Scene 3: Dolores's private garden at her country home. The lighting changes to represent moonlight. All is dark except Isabelle, Dolores, and her garden.

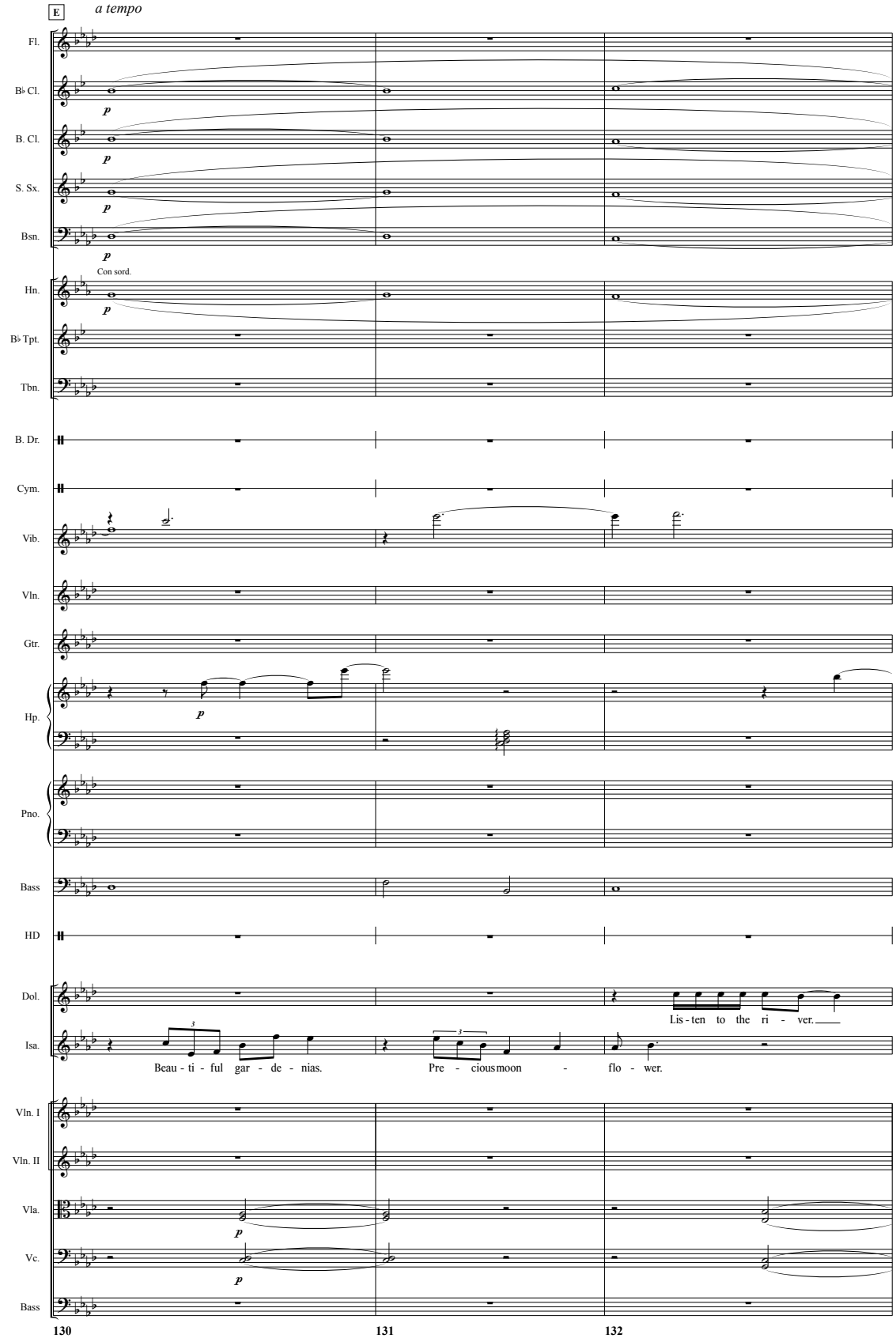
C **Serene** (♩= 65)

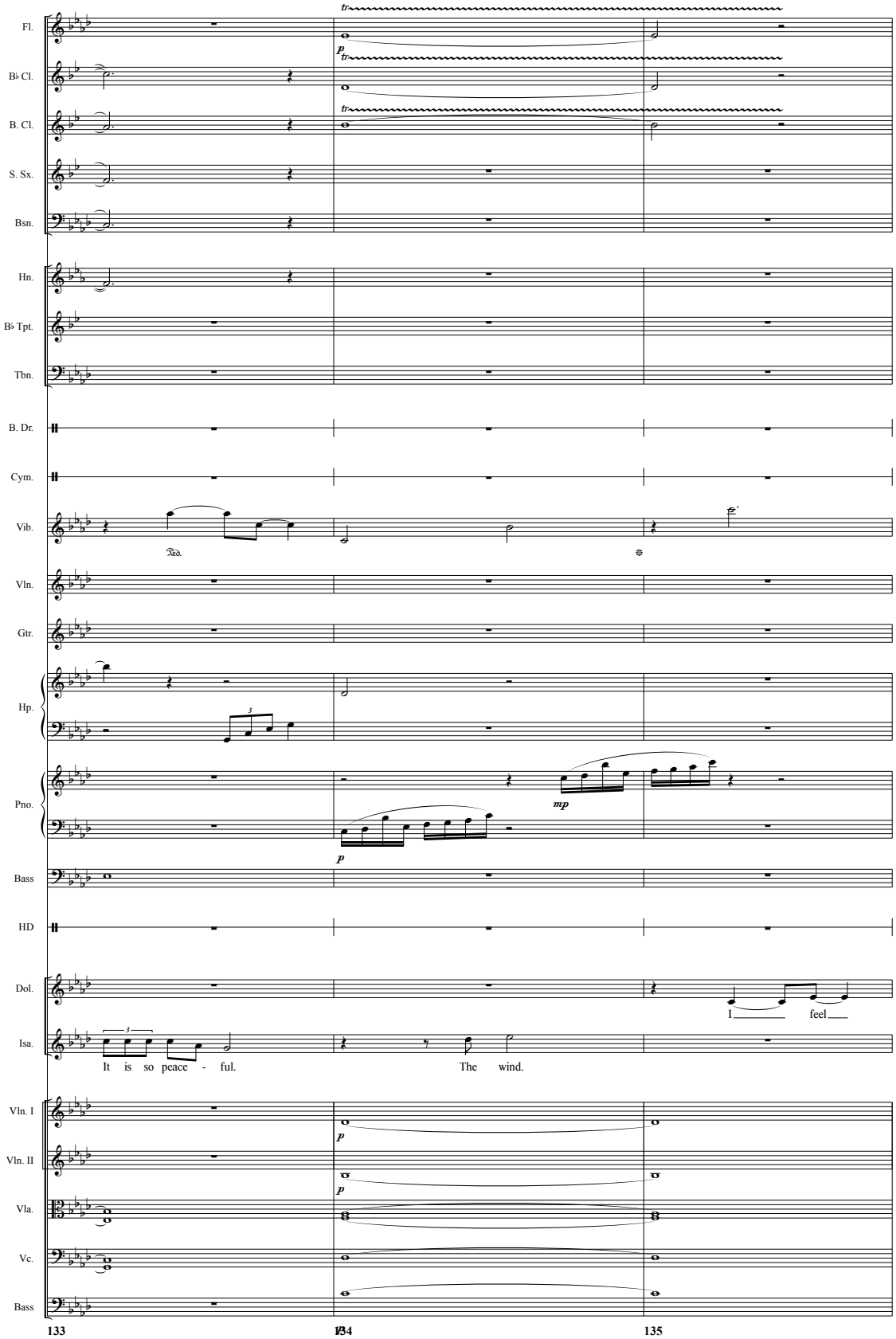


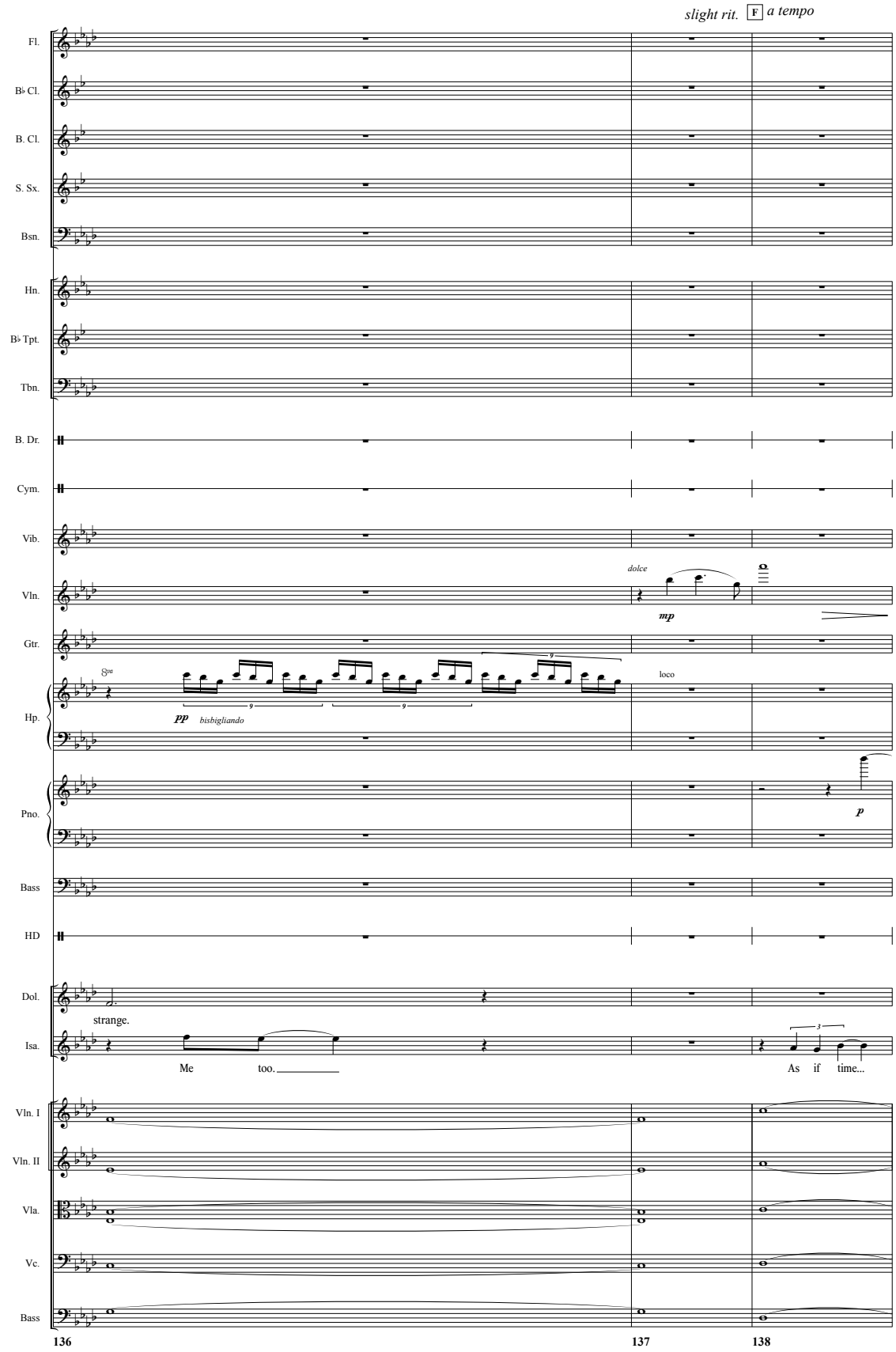

slight rit.
D
a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
p
3
Pno.
Bass
espress.
mp
HD
Dol.
With
Isa.
am
I?
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
pp
120
121
122
123

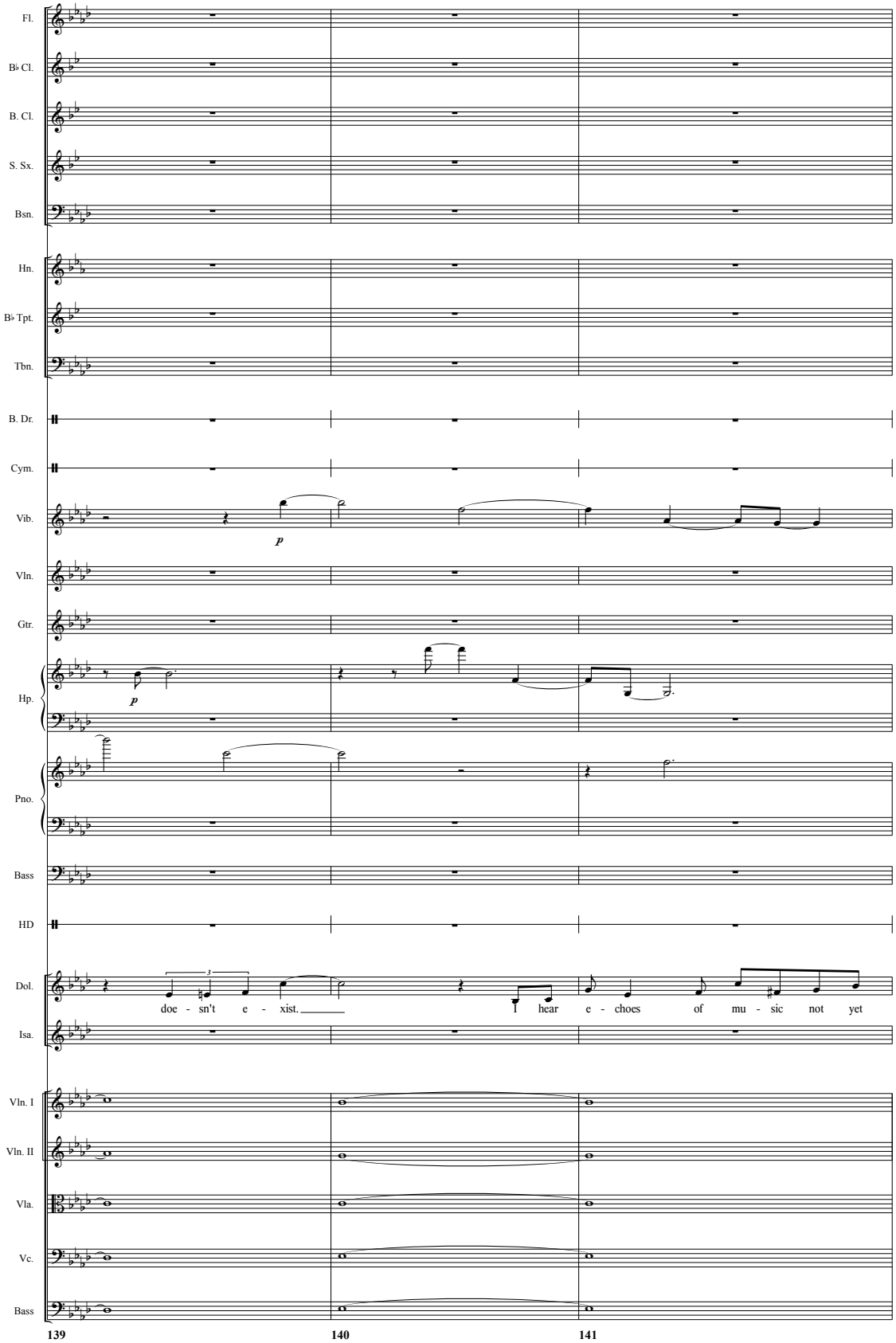
slight rit.

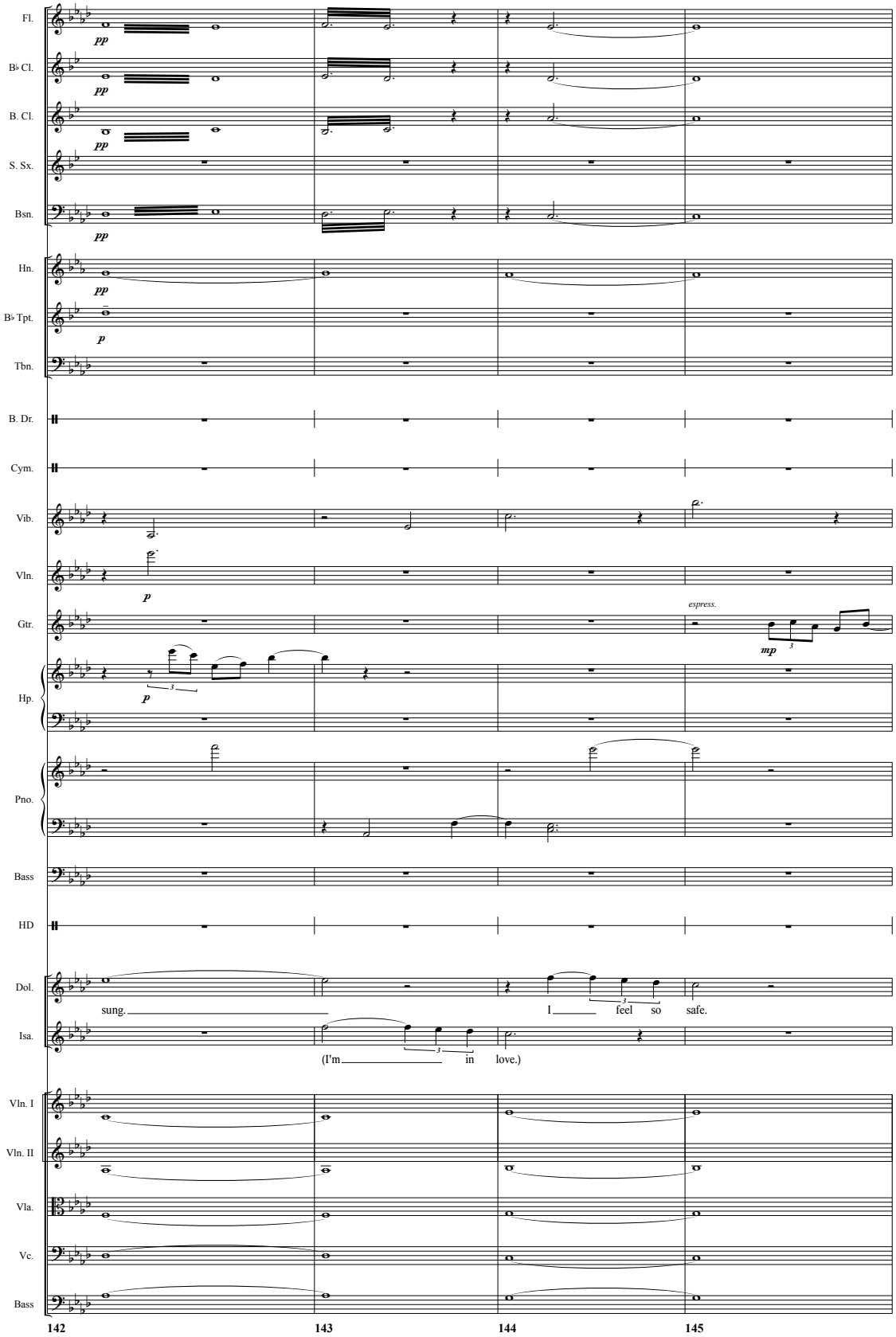

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
mp
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
me
in
my
gar
den.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
124
125
126
127
128
129

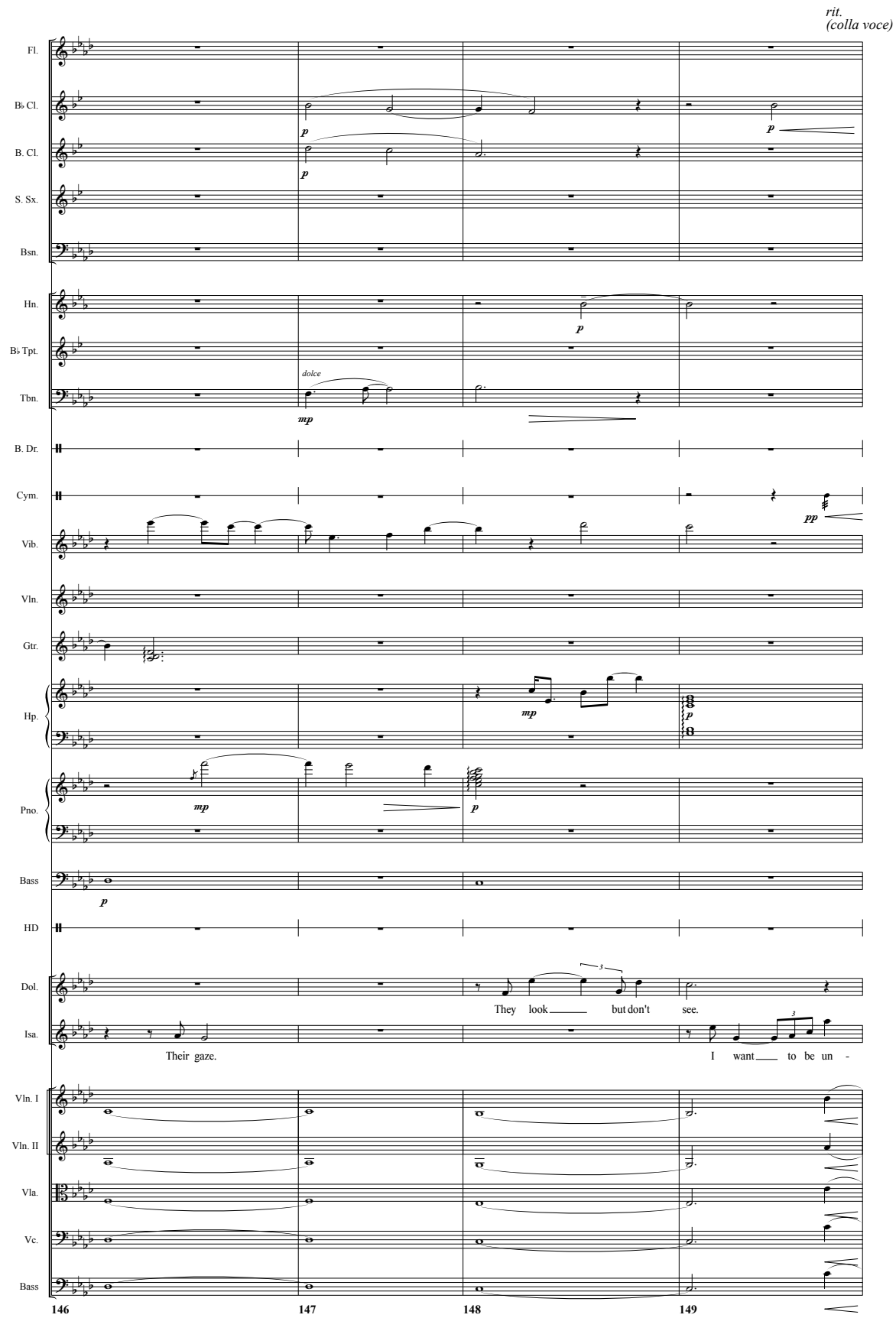

E
a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
p
Con sord.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Beau - ti - ful gar - de - nias.
Pre - cious moon - flo - wer.
Lis - ten to the ri - ver.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
130
131
132

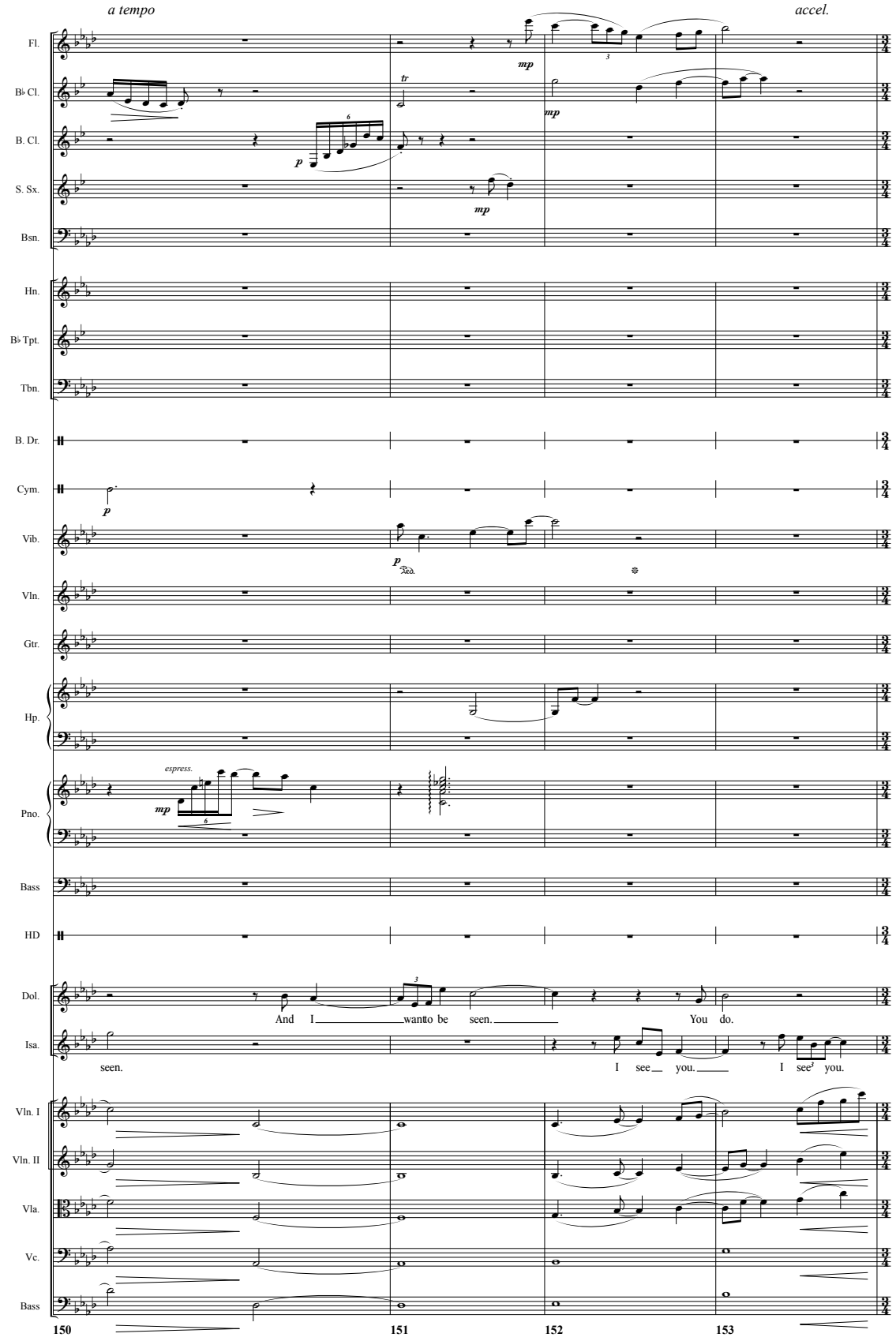

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
p
mp
It is so peace - ful.
The wind.
I feel
133
134
135

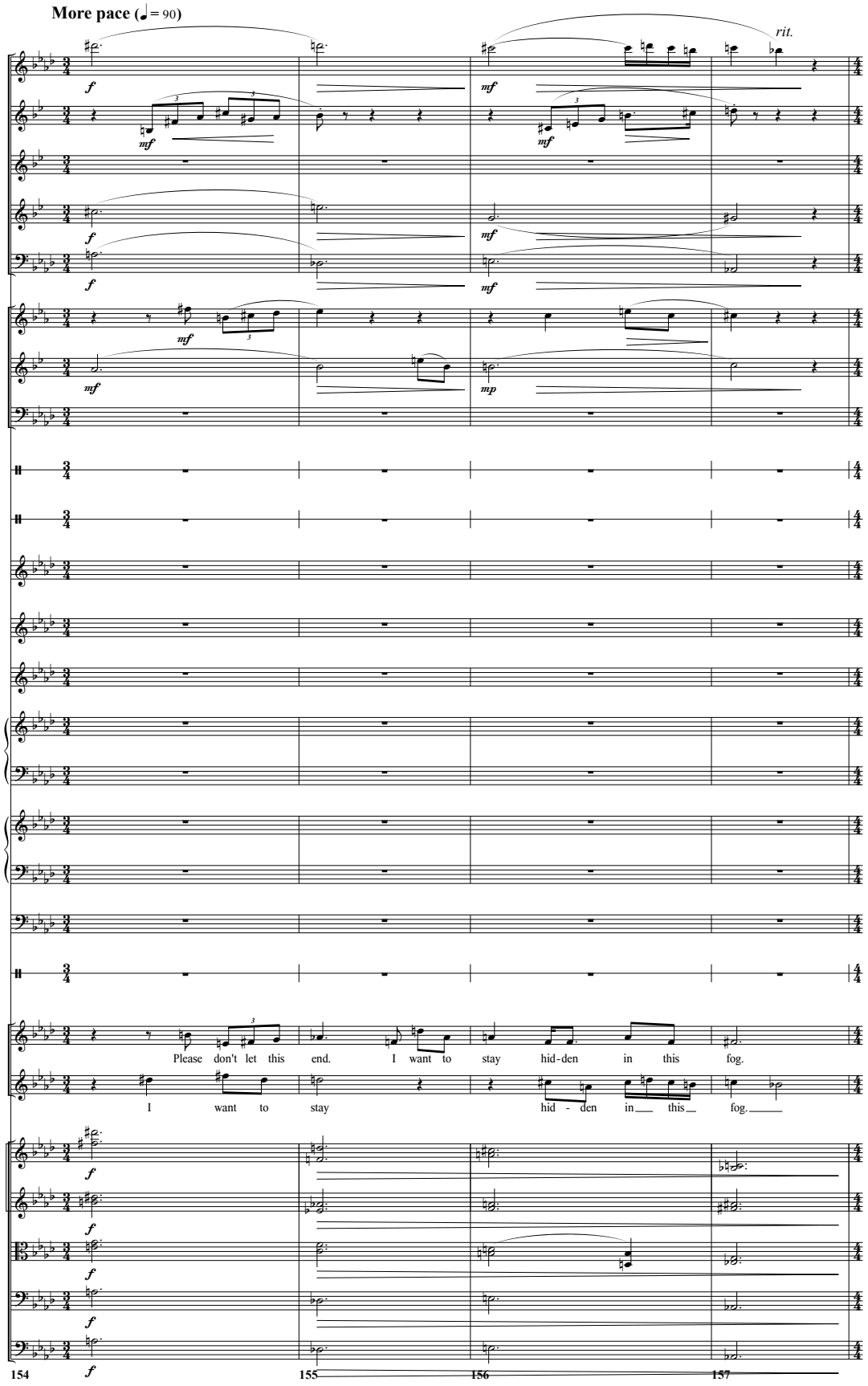

slight rit.
F
a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
dolce
mp
Gtr.
8va
loco
Hp.
pp
bisbigliando
Pno.
p
Bass
HD
Dol.
strange.
Isa.
Me too.
As if time...
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
136
137
138

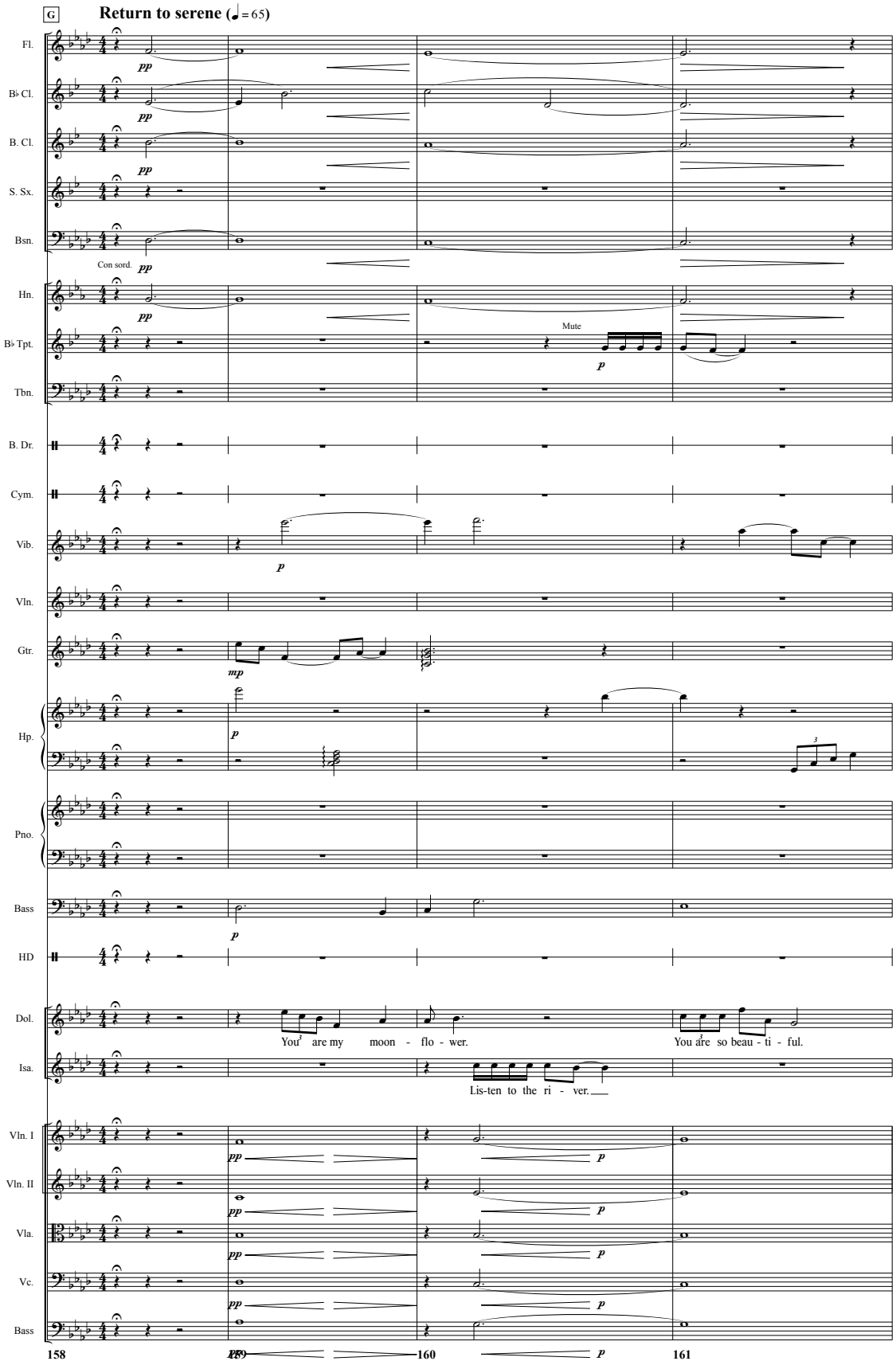

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
p
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
p
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
doe - sn't e - xist.
I hear e - choes of mu - sic not yet
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
139
140
141

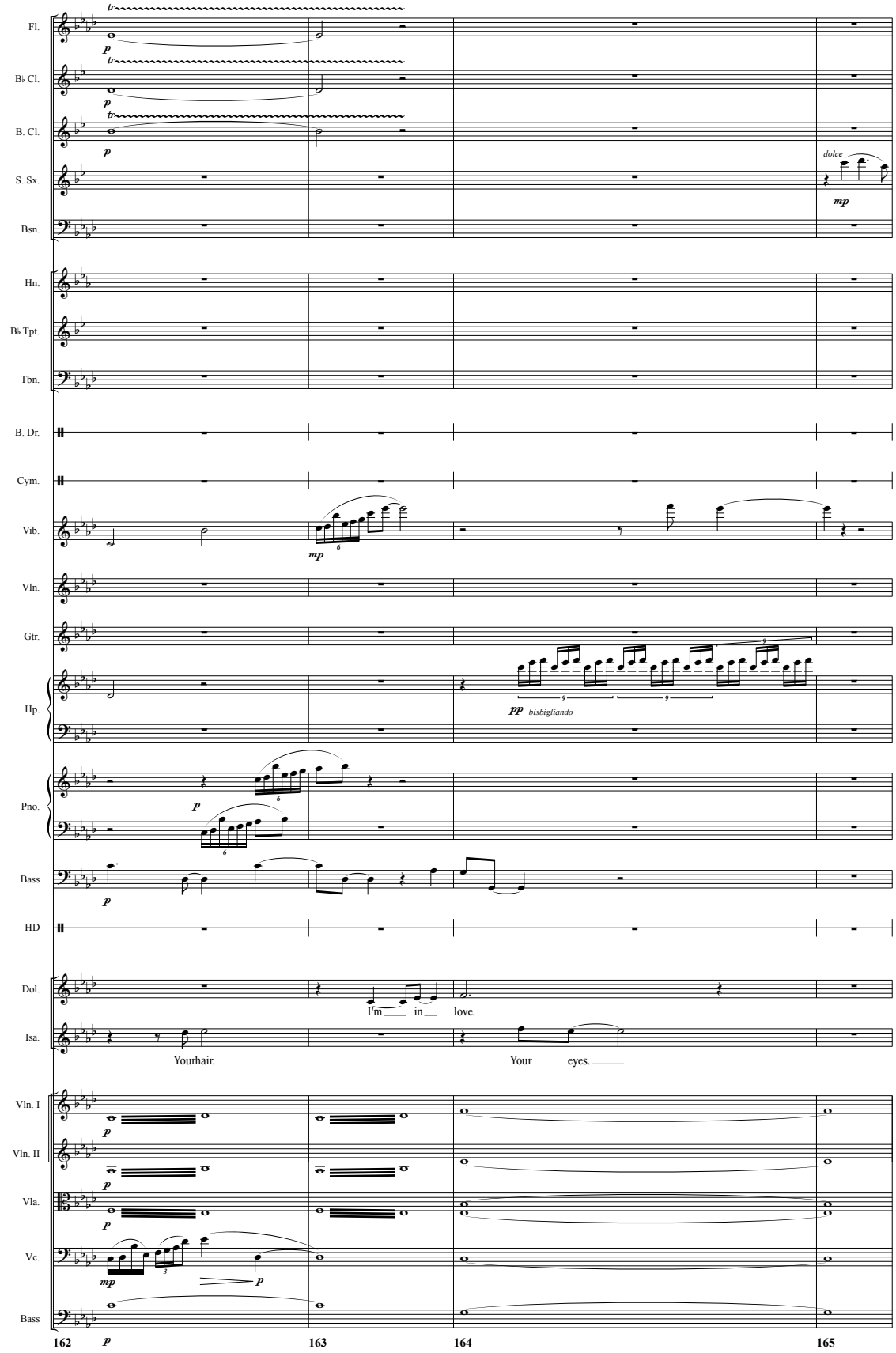

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
pp
p
mp
espress.
sung.
I feel so safe.
(I'm in love.)
142
143
144
145

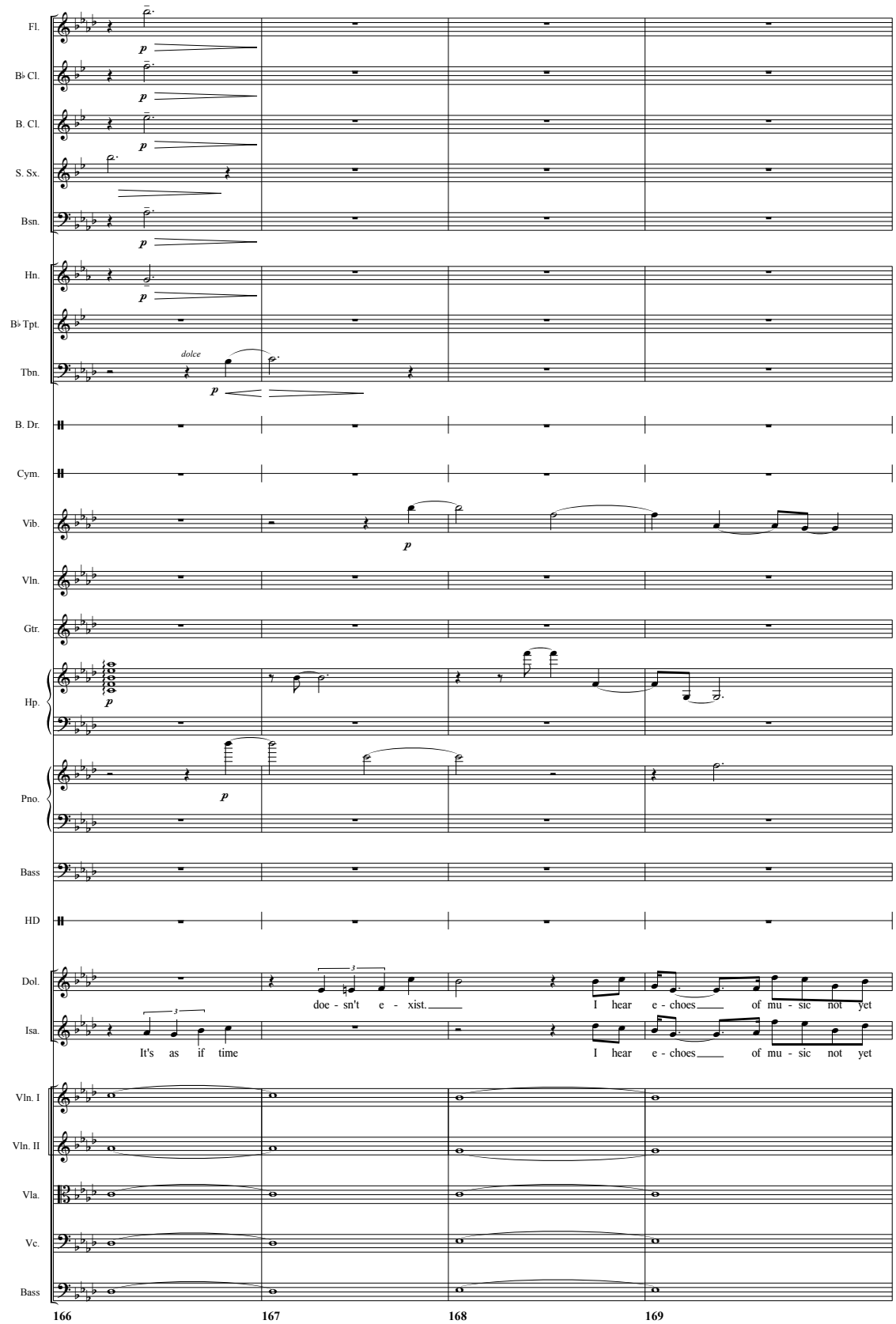

rit.
(colla voce)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
dolce
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
They look but don't see.
Their gaze.
I want to be un -
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
146
147
148
149


a tempo
accel.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
mp
p
tr
espress.
And I want to be seen. You do.
seen. I see you. I see you.
150
151
152
153

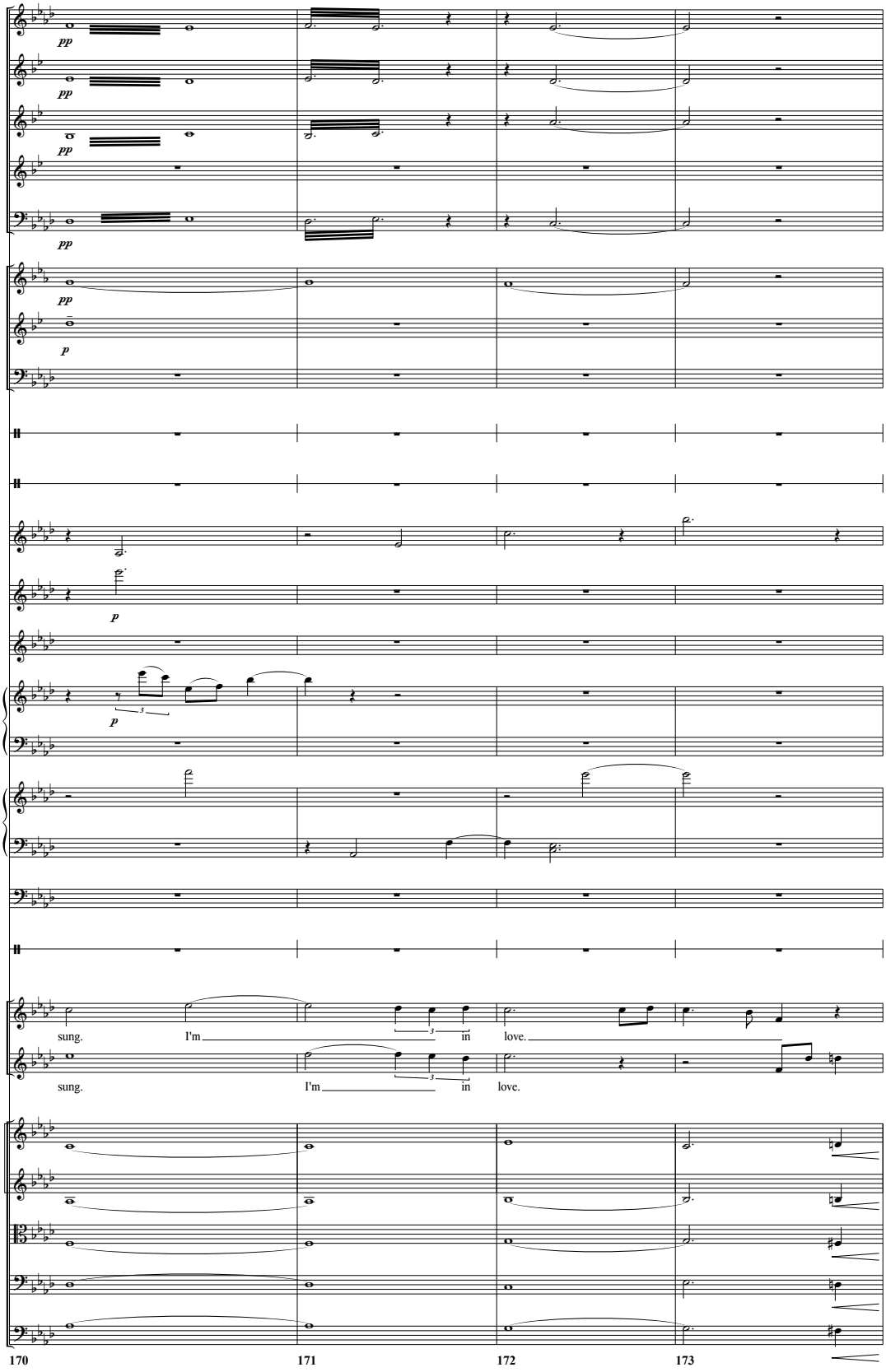

More pace (♩= 90)
rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Please don't let this end. I want to stay hid-den in this fog.
Isa.
I want to stay hid - den in this fog.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
154
155
156
157

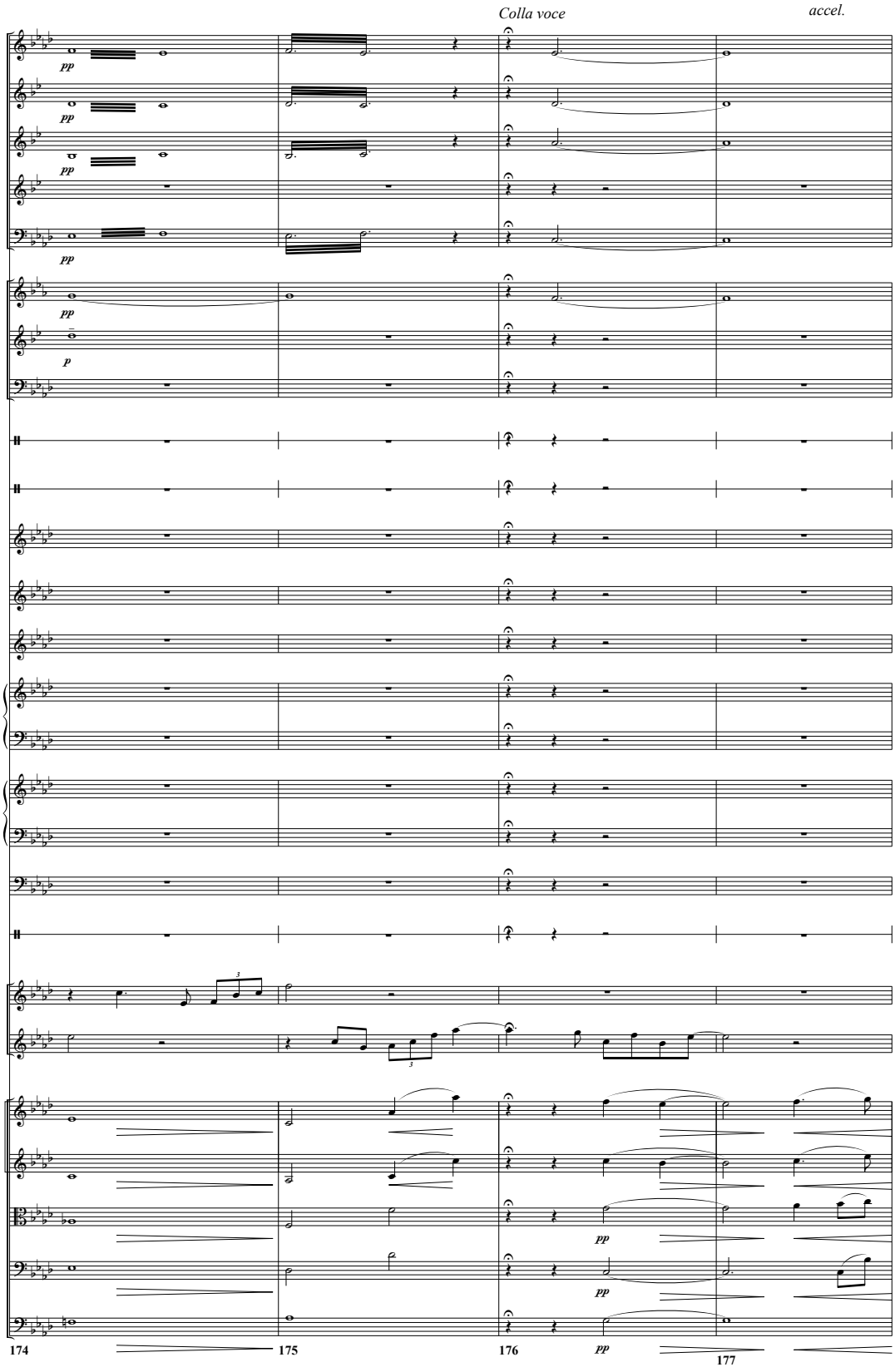

G
Return to serene (♩ = 65)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Con sord.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Mute
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
You are my moon - flo - wer.
You are so beau - ti - ful.
Isa.
Lis-ten to the ri - ver.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
158
159
160
161


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
dolce
mp
pp bisbigliando
I'm in love.
Yourhair.
Your eyes.
162
163
164
165

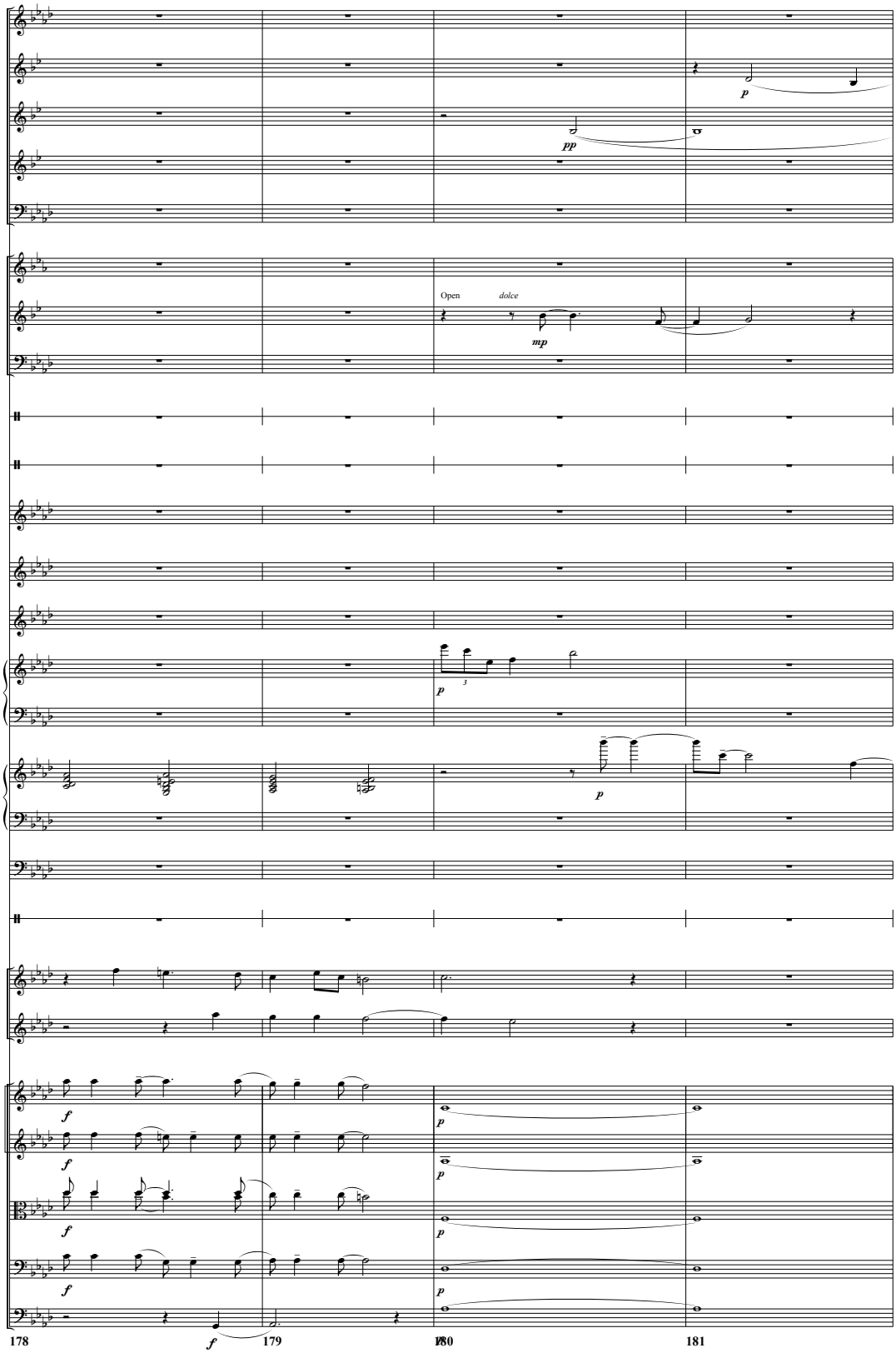


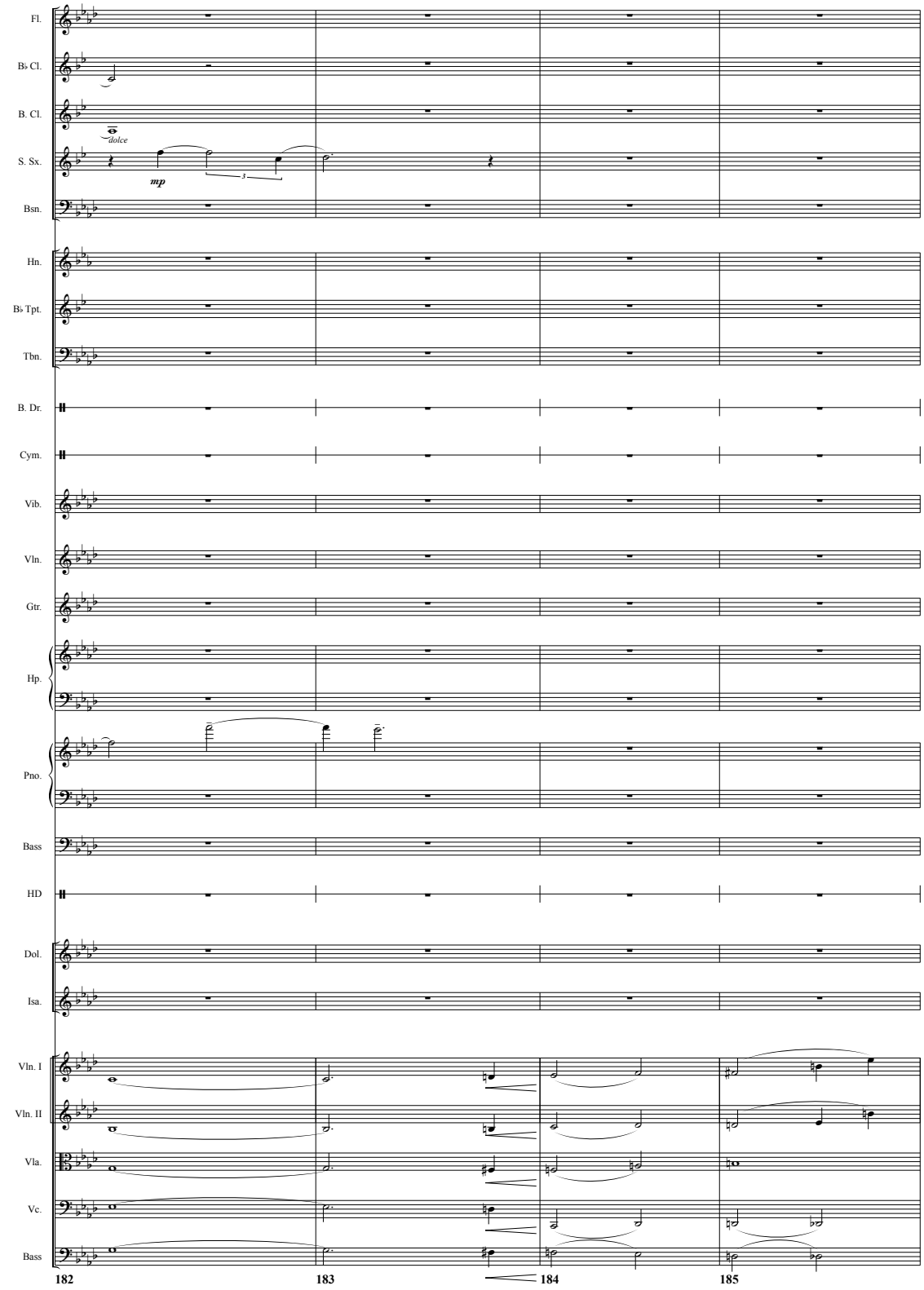
*****finishing lyrics (pages 46 - 49)*****


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
pp
p
sung. I'm in love.
sung. I'm in love.
170
171
172
173

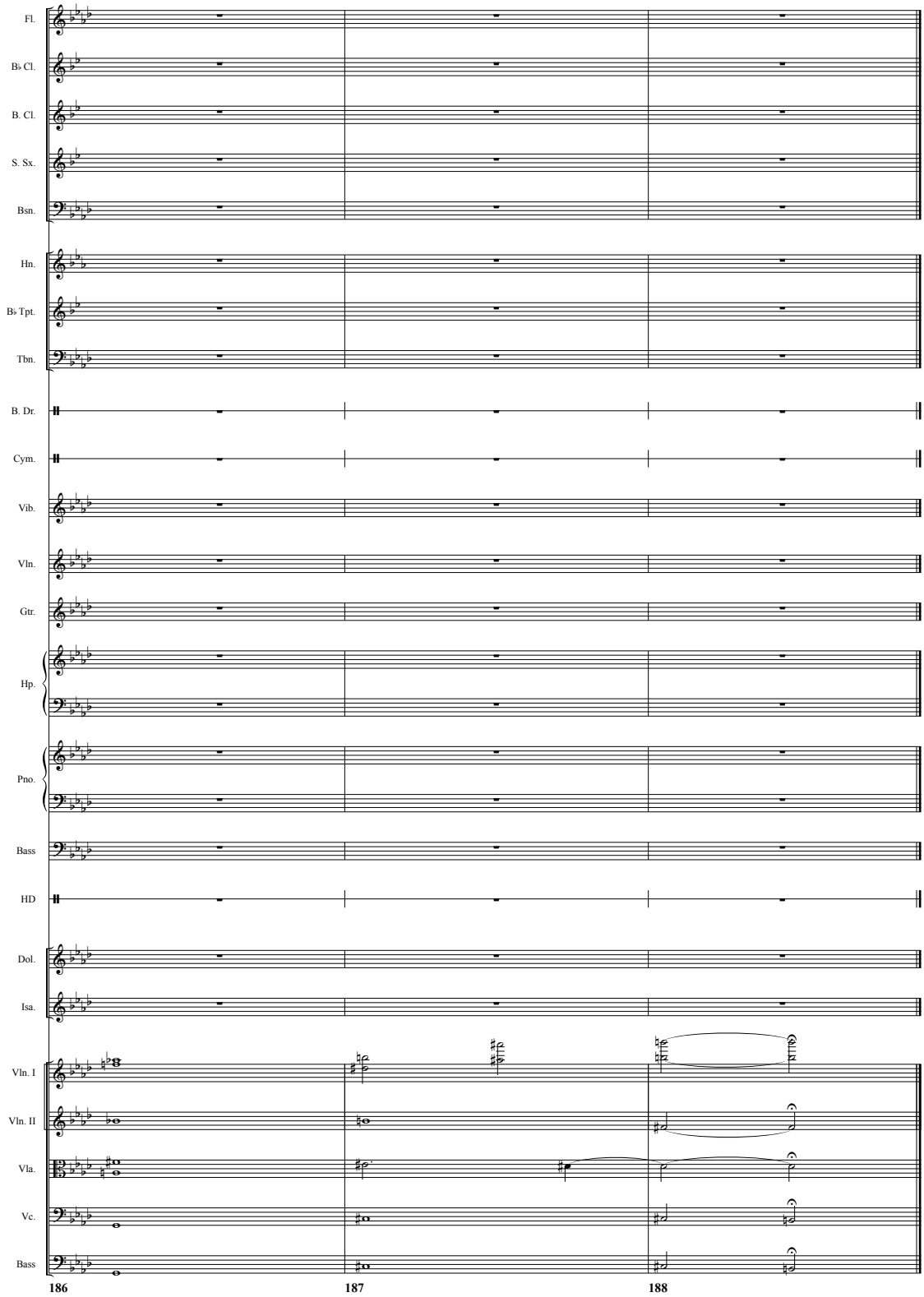

Colla voce
accel.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
pp
p
174
175
176
177

More pace (♩ = 72)


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
Open
dolce
178
179
180
181


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
dolce
S. Sx.
mp
3
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
182
183
184
185

rit.


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Dr.
Cym.
Vib.
Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
HD
Dol.
Isa.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Bass
186
187
188

Work In Progress

Abuelita Interlude/"Inner Turmoil" theme

Abuelita tells of how love and power can be very dangerous ingredients. She speaks of how pride can be blinding to even the most clever of people. Even the most talented cannot escape the path of misery we lay for ourselves when we give in to power and control. In the end, people are trapped in history and history is trapped in them.

Work In Progress

*****Scenes 4-5 are the least developed sections and are undergoing significant changes*****

Scene 4: Ball in Dolores's mansion a few months later.

Ignacio is visibly drunk and wanders in and out of the festivities and Dolores's study where he is suspiciously plotting. Isabelle and Dolores exchange glances at the ball while Amani and Francisco make one more attempt to convince Dolores to not sell the land promised to them.

Quartet. Lively music is playing while the guests dance and enjoy food and wine. Dolores sings of how she has finally gotten everything she's desired – wealth, power, status, and perhaps even love. She is going to be sent to Mexico City as a representative and finally recognized on a global stage.

Dolores is content and looks at Isabelle from a distance. Isabelle sings to herself of the beautiful lie of love ('el amore huele a muerte'). Francisco and Amani both plead with Dolores to stop being blind and see how she is losing herself. Dolores screams with a terrible voice not her own at both Francisco and Amani. Francisco is horrified but Amani recognizes the undeniably dark auditory impression of *La Llorona* and departs with a pitiful farewell to Dolores.

Scene 4 (cont'd):

Dolores goes into her study to find Ignacio drunk but also with an odder than usual demeanor of smugness. Isabelle sees Dolores go into the study and she departs along with Amani. Only Francisco waits while the party continues.

(Spoken and sung). Dolores goes into the study to remind Ignacio to finish preparations for her trip to Mexico City. Ignacio begins to laugh. He tells her that she's not going. Annoyed, Dolores dismisses him as being drunk. Ignacio sings of how he doesn't need her anymore. The war is over and he has maintained his position of power thanks to her influence. Now he plans on a more 'suitable' partner in Isabelle and will send Dolores's children to Spain so as not to be reminded of his 'necessary mistake'. As for Dolores, Ignacio smirks and tells Dolores 'surely those peasants you betrayed will take you back in.'

Dolores is dismayed and argues that he can't just get rid of her and how she knows secrets that could destroy him. Ignacio counters with forged documents detailing

Dolores's plan to sell land to prospectors from America and Spain and not just Mexican rancheros. He adds on accusations of infidelity with Francisco. Dolores is flustered but counters by saying that no one would believe she was with Francisco. Ignacio sings of another potential partner, 'perhaps Isabelle'.

He divulges that he put Isabelle up to gathering information but never thought he would be so lucky to have Dolores actually fall for her. This pushes Dolores over the edge with anger and embarrassment as she insults Ignacio. Ignacio goes to strike Dolores but she dodges and hits him instead. Ignacio, drunk and raging, grabs Dolores's letter opener but Dolores pulls a small gun on him. She knows it's over now. Her only option is to quickly grab her possessions and flee with her children.

Scene 4 (cont'd): Francisco hears noises and rushes to the study just as Dolores rushes out of the study and exits the party.

Francisco is taken aback by the fear and panic in Dolores as she leaves. He sees the disheveled Ignacio and assumes Ignacio has hit Dolores. He confronts Ignacio and angrily tells him to never lay a hand on her again. He sings about how Ignacio has poisoned his friend Dolores's soul and that he should leave her alone for good. Ignacio is dismissive of Francisco but Francisco confronts him again, only more forcibly, and blocks his exit. In a fit of drunken rashness Ignacio stabs Francisco with Dolores's letter opener killing him. Ignacio has an idea and quickly cleans up the mess.

Scene 5: Dolores's garden. Her country adobe home where her children are staying is in the distance. It is dark with only moonlight paving the way. Isabelle intercepts Dolores before she gets to the adobe home with a message. The river can be heard in the background.

Dolores is frantically rushing to get her children and leave. She'll plot her counterattack later but she knows that after standing up to Ignacio she has sealed her fate, at least temporarily. Isabelle, with a nervous but firm voice, tells Dolores that she has to listen to her. Dolores, however, spills out everything that transpired and tells Isabelle that Ignacio knows about them and she has to hurry and pack quickly if they are to leave together.

Isabelle's demeanor changes quickly as she tells Dolores to "stop acting like a child" and asks with shock and confusion "are you crazy?" Isabelle explains that they can't just leave together. Dolores confronts Isabelle asking if she had been conspired with Ignacio from the beginning. Isabelle admits her initial deceit but that it all changed once they met each other. What she felt was real, but she tells Dolores that they don't live in a dream world but rather in this time and in this place. Dolores, heartbroken and humiliated, seethingly calls her a coward through tears in her eyes and pushes Isabelle out of her way. Isabelle shouts "Francisco is dead!"

!7

There is a deafening silence before Isabelle tells Dolores that is why she came. It was to warn her that Ignacio has framed her and has called the authorities to arrest Dolores. Isabelle says that she will protect her children but that she must run ("Please go!"). Isabelle then exits with a look of shame and melancholic love.

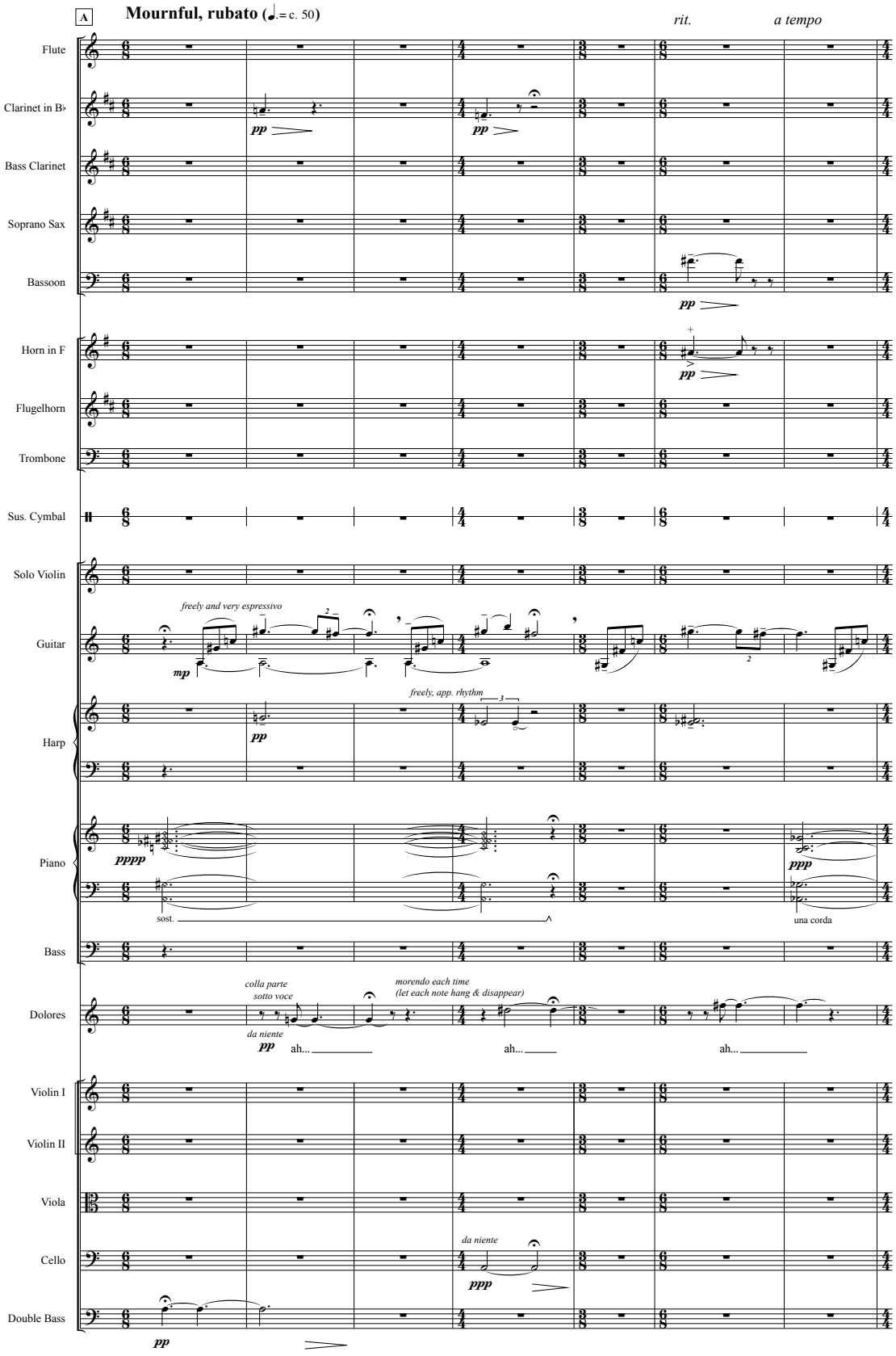
Scene 5 (cont'd): Dolores is all alone.

Now when it is too late, Dolores realizes just how much she has lost. She is distraught and humiliated. Dolores has alienated those closest to her, lost her position of wealth and power, lost her love, will lose her children, is going to get arrested, and her childhood friend has been murdered by the man who facilitated much of this tragedy. She sings a brief a cappella song **"Let the world wash away."** She is a broken person.

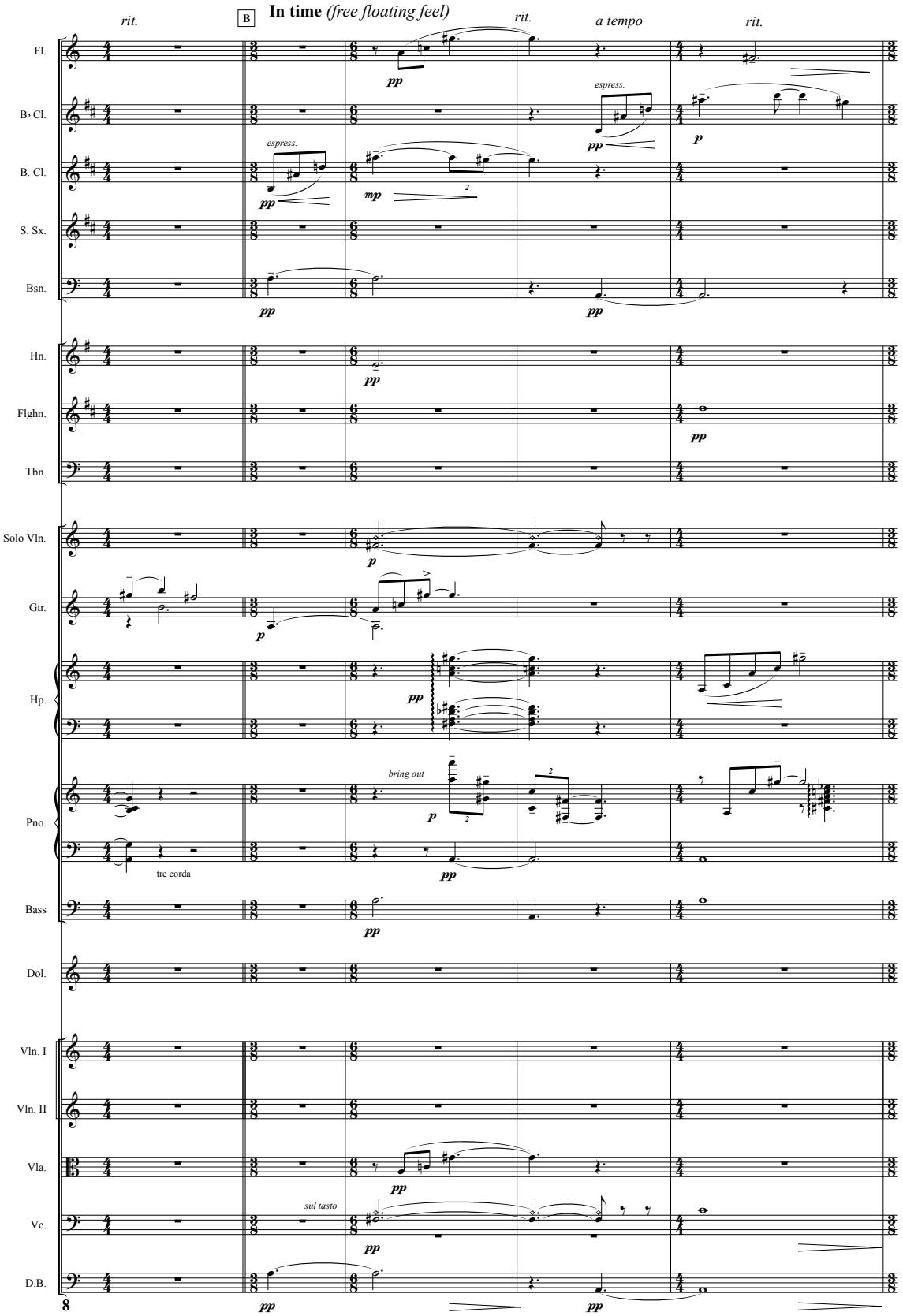
La Llorona's Lullaby

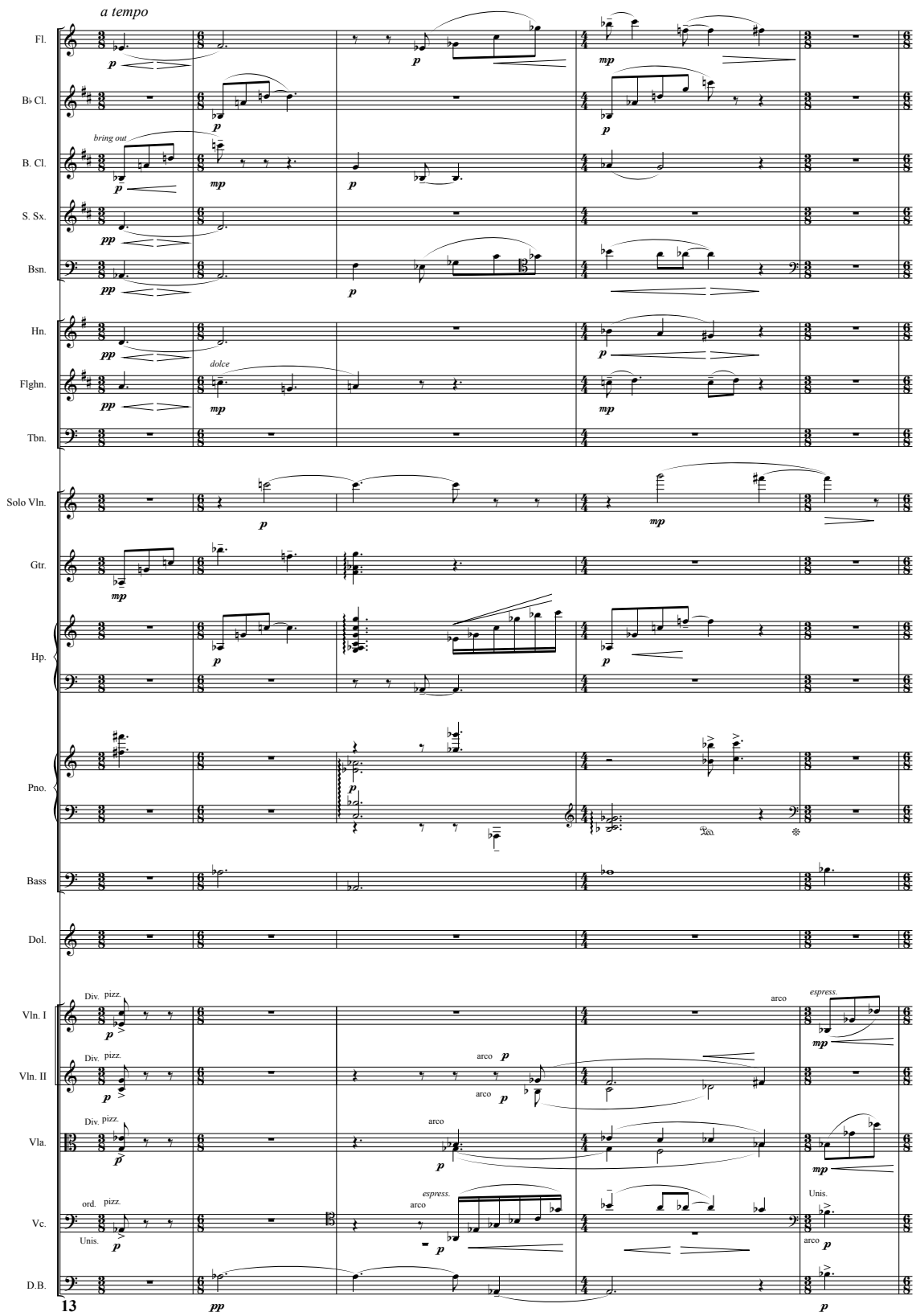
Act II – Scene 5

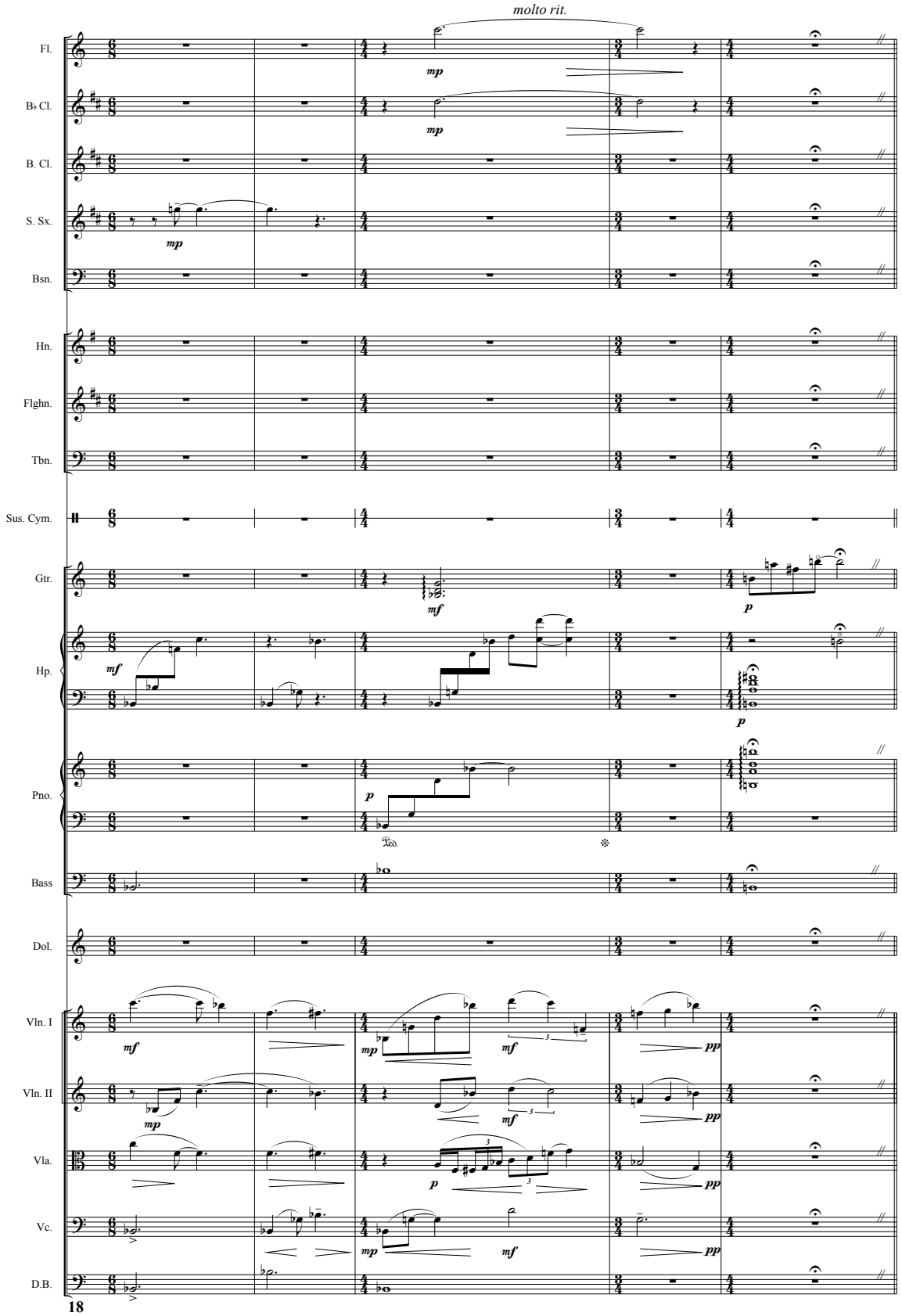
Daniel Aaron Ramirez



©2020, Daniel Aaron Ramirez


rit.
B
In time (free floating feel)
rit.
a tempo
rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Dol.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
espress.
espress.
bring out
tre corda
sul tasto
8


a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
bring out
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
dolce
Flghn.
Tbn.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Dol.
Div. pizz.
arco
espress.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
ord. pizz.
Unis.
Vc.
D.B.
13


molto rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Sus. Cym.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Dol.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
18

C **Larghetto cantabile** (♩ = 55)

Colla voce
rit.

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Sus. Cym.
Gtr.
Hp.
Bass
Dol.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.

dolce

soft mallets

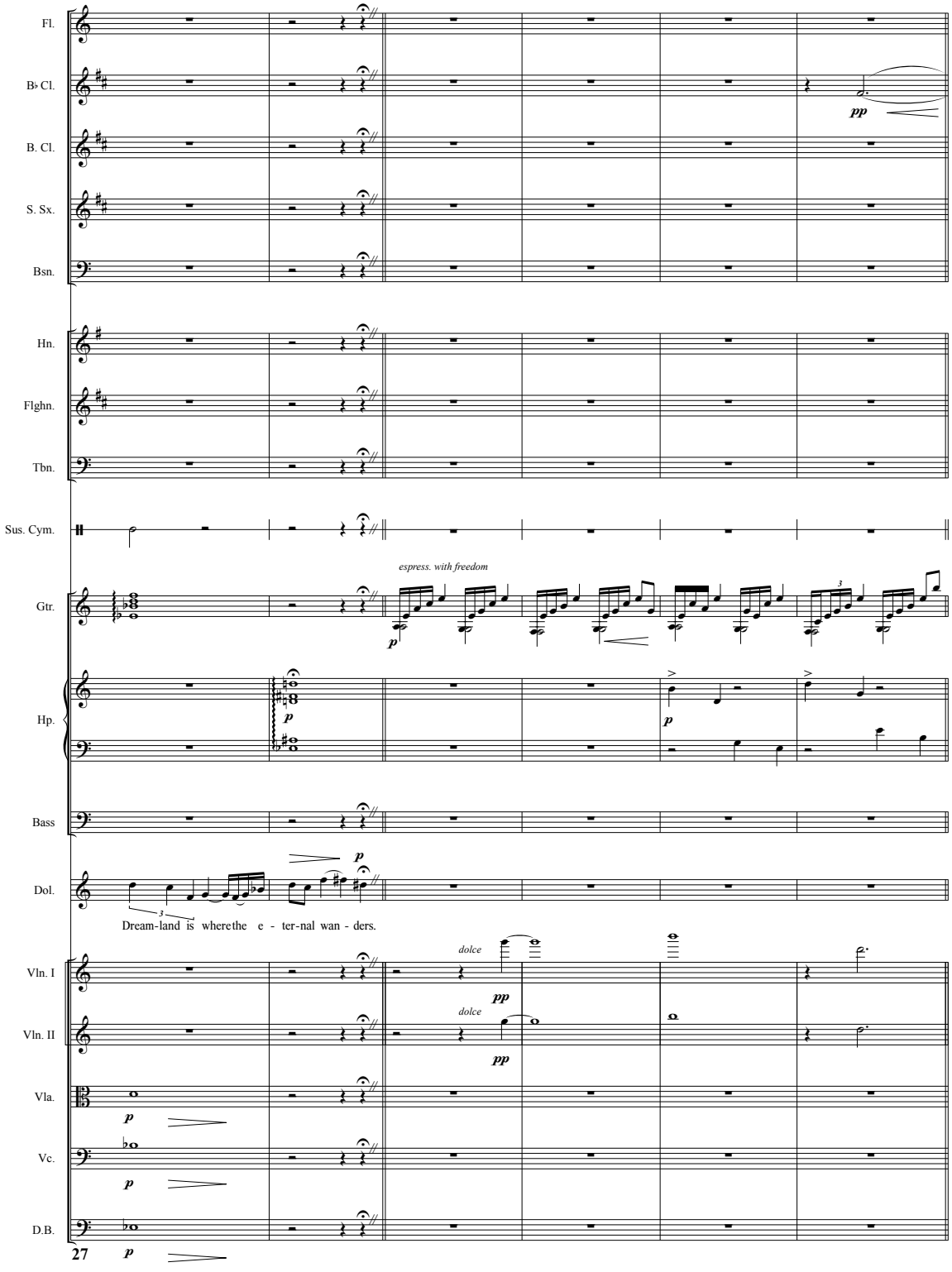
ignore rit. play arp. rapidly

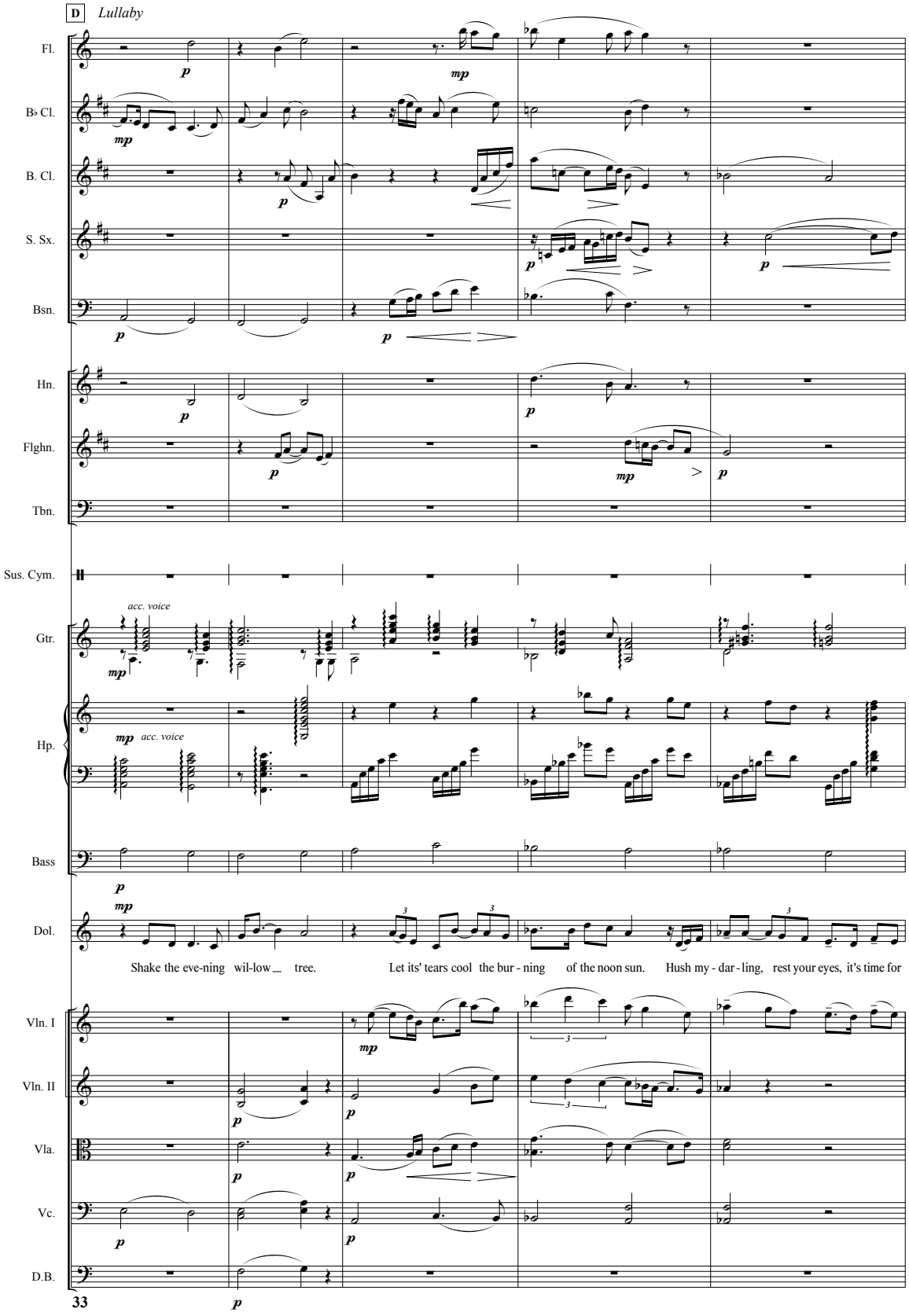
cresc.

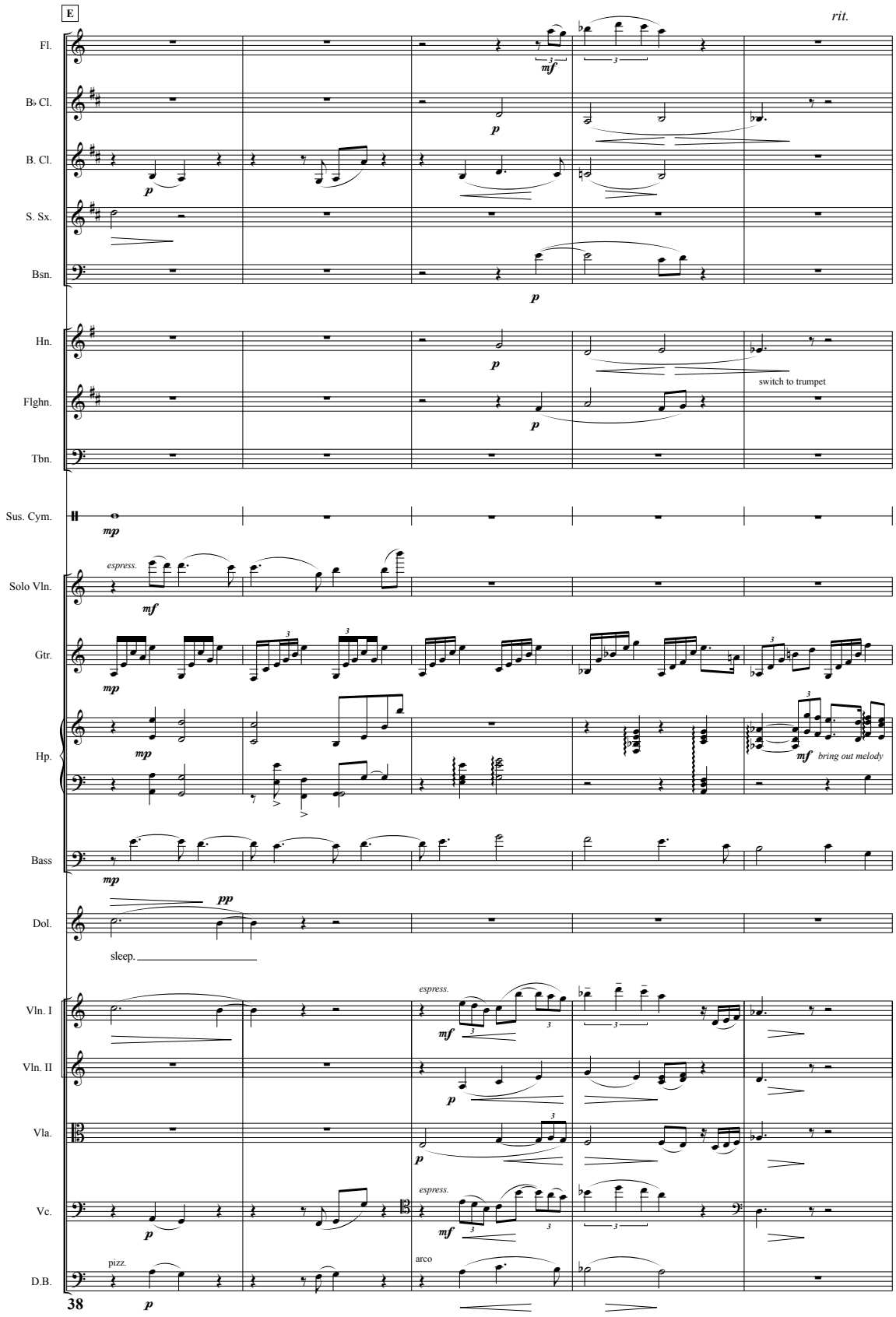
espress.

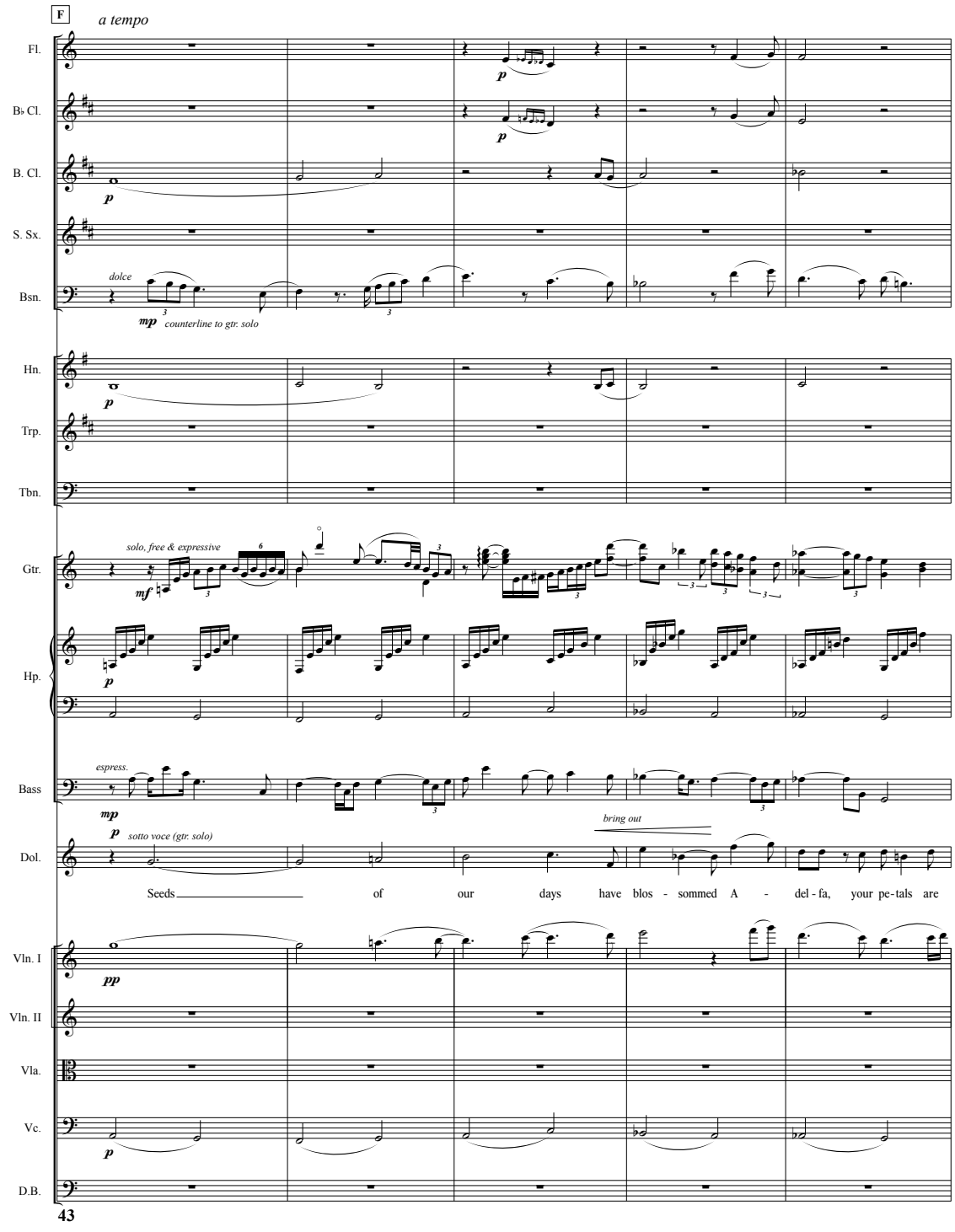
molto

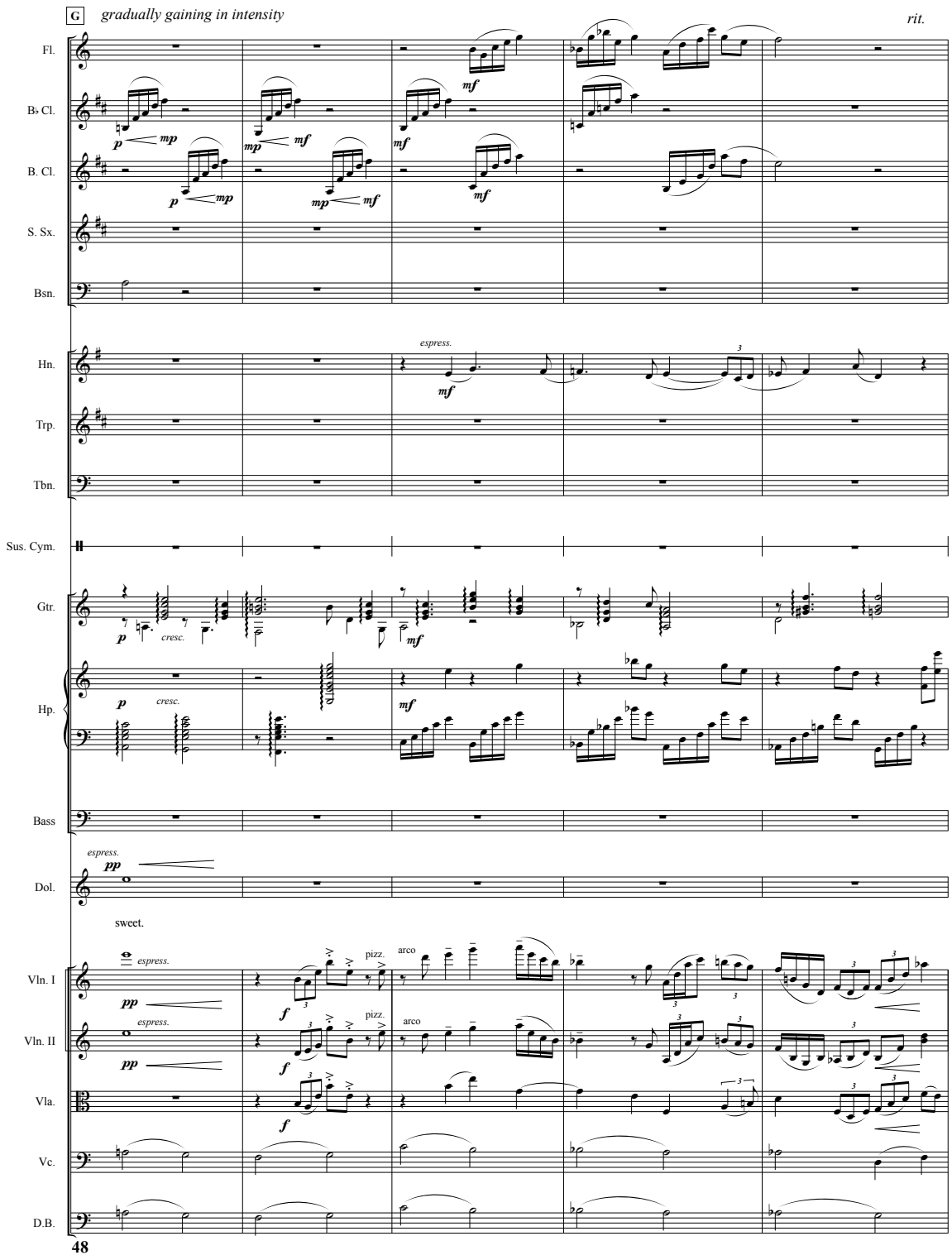
Time pas-sing a - way. Don't be a - fraid my dear A - del - fa,

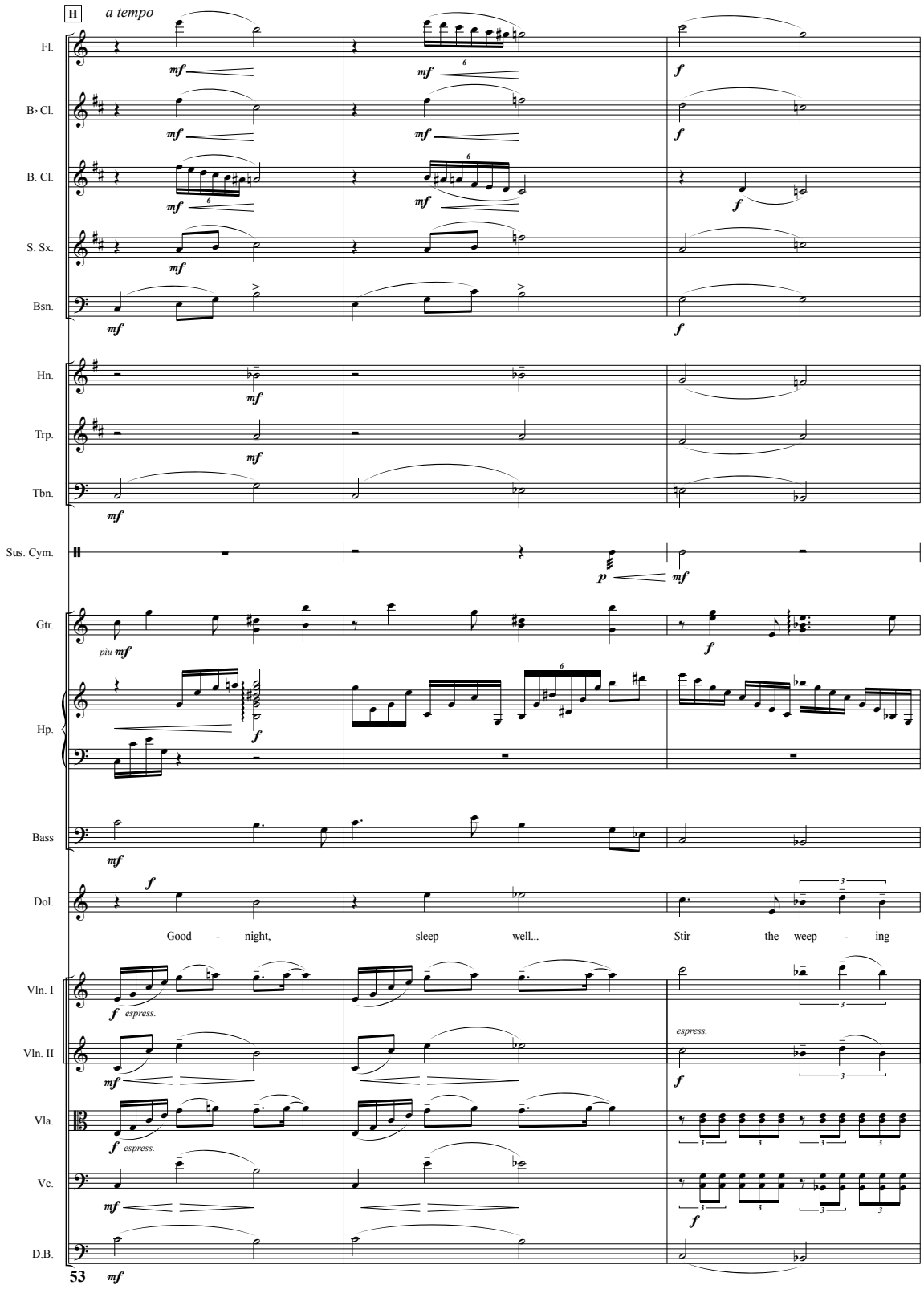

Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Sus. Cym.
Gtr.
Hp.
Bass
Dol.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
espress. with freedom
Dream-land is where the e - ter-nal wan - ders.
dolce
dolce
27

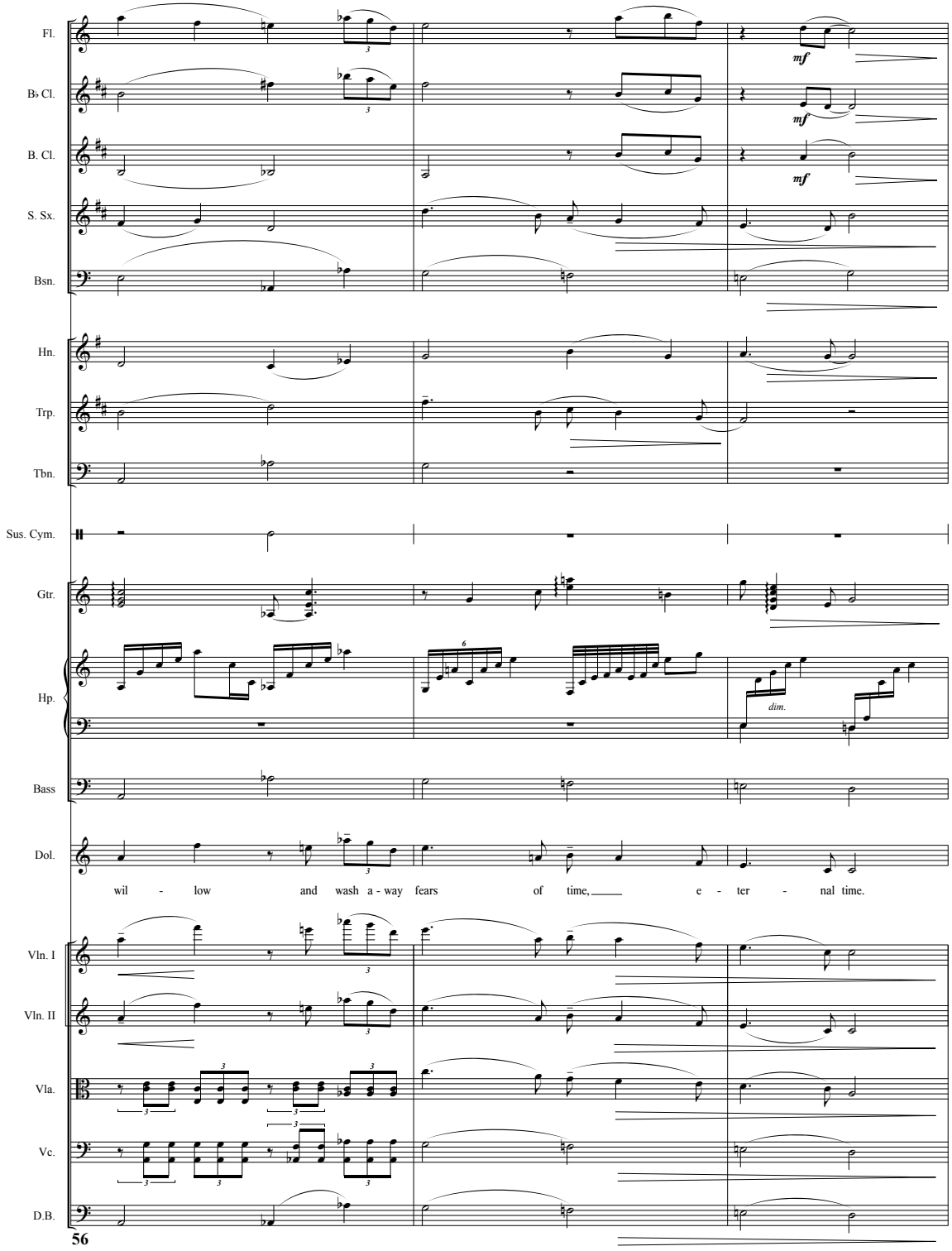

D Lullaby
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Flghn.
Tbn.
Sus. Cym.
Gtr.
acc. voice
Hp.
acc. voice
Bass
Dol.
Shake the eve-ning wil-low tree. Let its' tears cool the bur - ning of the noon sun. Hush my - dar - ling, rest your eyes, it's time for
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
33

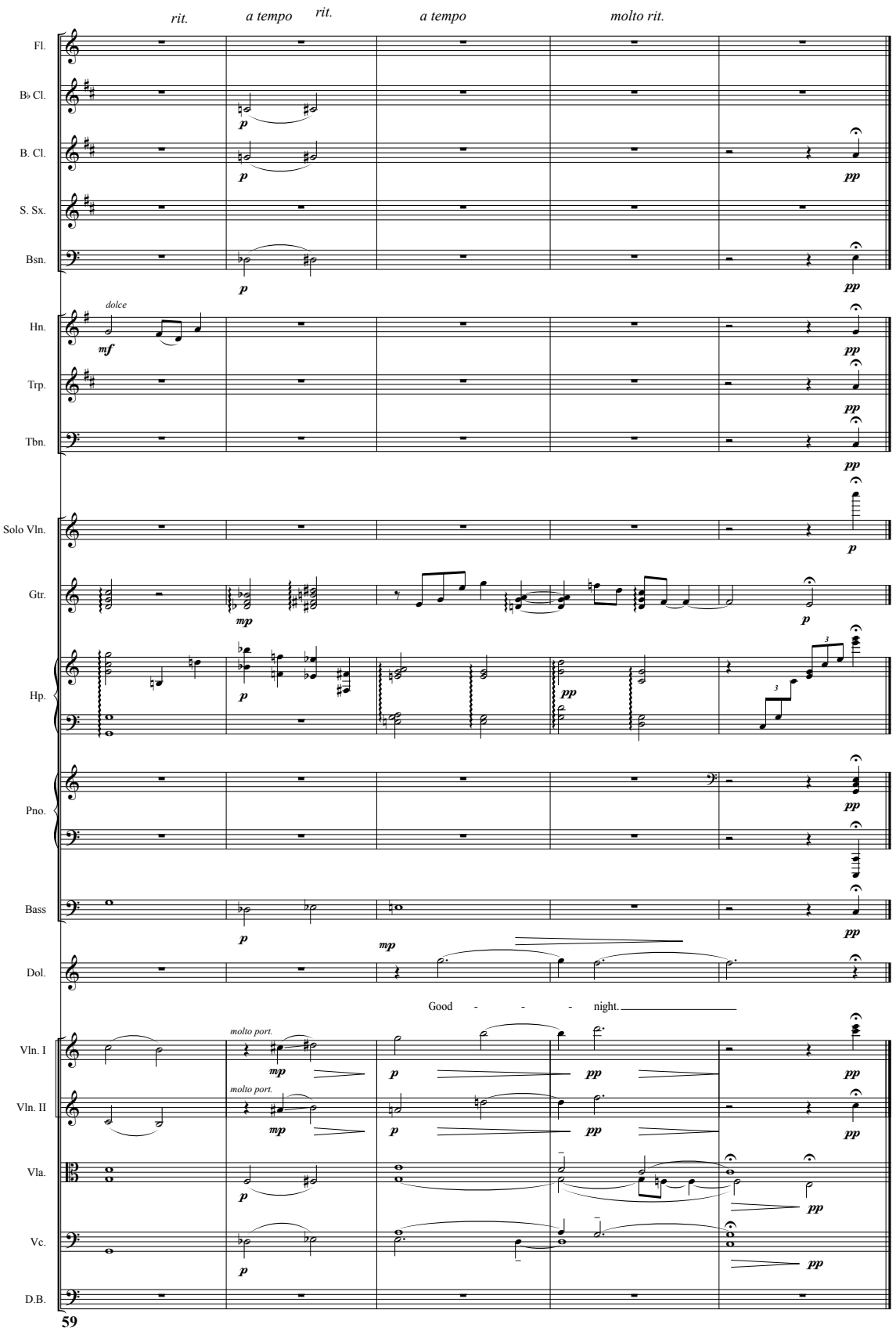

E
rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
switch to trumpet
Flghn.
Tbn.
Sus. Cym.
Solo Vln.
espress.
Gtr.
Hp.
bring out melody
Bass
Dol.
sleep.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
pizz.
arco
38


F
a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
dolce
mp
counterline to gtr. solo
Hn.
Trp.
Tbn.
Gtr.
solo, free & expressive
mf
Hp.
Bass
espress.
mp
p
sotto voce (gtr. solo)
bring out
Dol.
Seeds of our days have blos - sommed A - del - fa, your pe - tals are
Vln. I
pp
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
43


G
gradually gaining in intensity
rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Trp.
Tbn.
Sus. Cym.
Gtr.
Hp.
Bass
Dol.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
espress.
cresc.
sweet.
pizz.
arco
48


H
a tempo
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Trp.
Tbn.
Sus. Cym.
Gtr.
Hp.
Bass
Dol.
Good - night, sleep well... Stir the weep - ing
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
espress.
53


Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
Trp.
Tbn.
Sus. Cym.
Gtr.
Hp.
Bass
Dol.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
mf
mf
dim.
wil - low and wash a - way fears of time, e - ter - nal time.
56


rit.
a tempo
rit.
a tempo
molto rit.
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
S. Sx.
Bsn.
dolce
Hn.
Trp.
Tbn.
Solo Vln.
Gtr.
Hp.
Pno.
Bass
Dol.
Good - - - night.
molto port.
Vln. I
molto port.
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
59

Work In Progress

*****while this song will remain, it's placement is undergoing a change as is the entire second half of act two*****

Scene 5 (cont'd): La Llorona's Lullaby.

From silence comes Dolores's resignation to death. She has lost her grip on reality and sings a lullaby to herself and her children as she prepares a tea mixed with the poisonous adelfa flower. In a severe state of disassociation, Dolores sees death as salvation for her and her children. She prepares a peaceful, watery rest in the river. The lullaby ends with "Goodnight."

Dolores then hears the spirit of La Llorona singing of 'Immortal Revenge' and Dolores asks 'the spirit' to give her the power to take her revenge on Ignacio and all who try to cross her now and forever. Dolores then drinks the tea and walks into her home to give it to her children with the lights fading to black.

Scene 5 (cont'd): Ignacio, Isabelle, group of soldiers, and the Priestess go to find Dolores only to discover three floating bodies in the river. The music builds to a quick climax as we are left with the haunting, wailing, cry of La Llorona.

CURTAIN

VITA

After Daniel Aaron Barnidge completed his B.F.A. at New School University in 2007 he went on to have a successful career as a composer, arranger, and producer. Daniel has worked with high profile artists such as Sting, Plácido Domingo, and Rolando Villazón and with some of the worlds top orchestras including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, and Tokyo Philharmonic. Daniel shifted his focus towards being a full time composer under his family surname, Daniel Aaron Ramirez, before deciding to enroll in the Graduate program at the Stephen F. Austin School of Music in 2020. He received his degree of Master of Music in August of 2022.

Permanent Address: 7101 4th Ave. C8
Brooklyn, NY 11209

The style guide for this document was *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (ninth edition) by Kate L. Turabian.

This thesis was typed by Daniel Aaron Barnidge

.