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Plains Minimalism

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Plains Minimalism

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Music in Music with a concentration in Composition

by

Matthew Magerkurth

University of Tulsa
Bachelor of Music with a concentration in Composition, 2017

May 2022
University of Arkansas

This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

_____
Robert Mueller, DMA
Committee Chair

_____
Er-Gene Kahng, DMA
Committee Member

_____
Jacob Hertzog, PhD
Committee Member

Abstract

Plains Minimalism is a set of four musical scores that seeks to reconcile classical and folk music styles in a semi-improvisatory style. In each piece, the musicians are asked to interact with each other in different ways, alternating between a specifically-notated classical score and esoteric text descriptions. Additionally, this body of work includes instruments traditionally associated with American folk music, including banjo, manolin, and acoustic guitar. Through both the textural and notational fusion, these pieces are designed to be performed by musicians with variable degrees of reading ability, thus widening access to traditional classical music spaces.

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Introduction

In the years since my finishing my undergraduate degree, the trajectory of both of my performance and composition lives has been moving away from classical music. As a cellist and bass player, I found myself learning music almost exclusively orally, and only rarely would a staff of notation appear in my working life. My friends and colleagues in the Tulsa music community pushed me to improve at some of the bedrock abilities that I didn't learn in music school; thinking about rhythm on a grid, bass playing that holds down the groove, deeply listening to mixes and the content of recorded music, and beginning to grasp the feeling of tension and release in group improvisation. All in all, my participation in classical music decreased as my involvement with folk music and other non-classical music increased.

As I entered my graduate study at the University of Arkansas, I felt a pull back to classical music while making weekend jaunts back to Tulsa for gigs, rehearsals, and recording sessions. This hectic schedule resulted in my being immersed in both classical and non-classical modes of learning at the same time, and I wanted to find some way to bridge these two ways of thinking in my eventual thesis.

During this time I've also been thinking about my family and upbringing on the plains. All of my family comes from central Kansas, and over the course of innumerable drives through the heart of the state, the imagery of flatness and lovely mundanity wormed its way into my head, and I wanted to channel that landscape into music that gently unfurls over time. The overall sound and texture is influenced by artists like Kalyn Fay, Adrianne Lenker, Gilian Welch, John Adams, and Tigran Hamasayan.

With these pieces, I wanted to make music that is intensely collaborative and prioritizes the ability of the performers to make decisions within a semi-prescribed form. Furthermore, I'm explicitly writing these pieces with specific players in mind; all folks that I've worked with in Tulsa. I also intend to perform in all of the ensembles here as a cellist or guitarist, and from the position as composer/performer I hope to be available to shape the pieces as needed while also allowing the pieces freedom to move in directions I didn't anticipate. I fully expect these pieces will change in the rehearsal process, but these scores are roadmaps with which to begin.

The resulting music should be able to live in a concert hall, gallery space, or any listening room, but it is primarily intended to be recorded. That project may not be able to come to fruition for a while, but I'm hopeful to be able to rehearse, record, and collaborate with the necessary players as more folks are able to get vaccinated.

Blurry Canons is the introduction to this body of work, as it features the folk band texture and the type of rhythmic development that exists later in the work as well. Essentially, this movement uses a consistent 9-beat time signature, in which each individual part creates their own repeating subdivisions, thereby blurring the entry before them. This movement also introduces the "flocking" gesture amongst the plucked instruments (in this movement, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, and banjo) in which each player rapidly and freely plays arpeggios to make a large, cloudy chord texture.

Following *Blurry Canons* is *Plane of Water/Sea of Grass,* the most traditionally "classical" of the set. This piece is a piano trio, an instrumentation forged in the

European classical tradition, but it is a comfortable medium I've written in many times, and I have trusted colleagues who would be excellent to perform this with. This piece is inspired by a certain swath of Kansas Turnpike which once was an ocean floor. This piece imagines the process of drying up as the ocean recedes, and then flips it around and conjures a deluge of water entering and flooding it all again with the ocean.

Third in the set is *Congregation,* a piece for four acoustic guitars in different tunings. The notation in this piece is the least prescribed than any of the pieces, as this piece is intended to be the most improvisatory. This piece includes a climactic moment that features the instruments being detuned and improvised on wildly and noisily. All in all, this piece should be the most dynamic of the set - from the most delicate to the most intense and noisy.

The final piece in the set is *Empty in Full,* which features the return of the folk band instrumentation. This piece is mostly defined by the flocking gesture, and as a conclusion, it moves gently and slowly. The plucked instruments are asked to bow their instruments at the end, and the sound is intended to be stretched out and crusty as the piece fades out freely.

The impetus for this set of pieces is both a genuine personal interest in the landscape of the plains region and a desire to share the artistry of people who live here. The finished, recorded product will likely include elements of spoken word and folk songs written and performed by plains-based artists, and will aim to show that these places are a destination, and not merely a flyover.

Blurry Canons

for seven string instruments

Matt Magerkurth

2021

Performance Notes

This piece is part of a series of folk-music-related chamber pieces in part prompted by the prairie landscapes I associate with my family in rural Kansas and my life as a young adult in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This piece, for seven string instruments, is intended to be performable by players who are less-experienced music readers via its semi-graphic nature. A demo recording will be provided to ensembles hoping to perform this piece in order to accomodate players wishing to perform this piece moreso by ear than by score. In addition to specific rhythms and timings, this piece uses both a system of numbered cues inside standard lettered rehearsal marks and boxed ostinatos inside of a regular time signature. For instances where numbered cues are used, the ensemble is not required to follow any sort of regular time, and arpeggiated gestures should be loose, cloudy, and almost like flocks of birds. For instances of boxed ostinatos within a time signature, musicians should maintain the rhythmic integrity of their patterns while feeling free to change notes as fit. Each ensemble may designate a leader to issue cues, or they may decide cues as a group. Unless otherwise notated, boxed material should dovetail in and out, so if a cue occurs, finish your thought and move on.

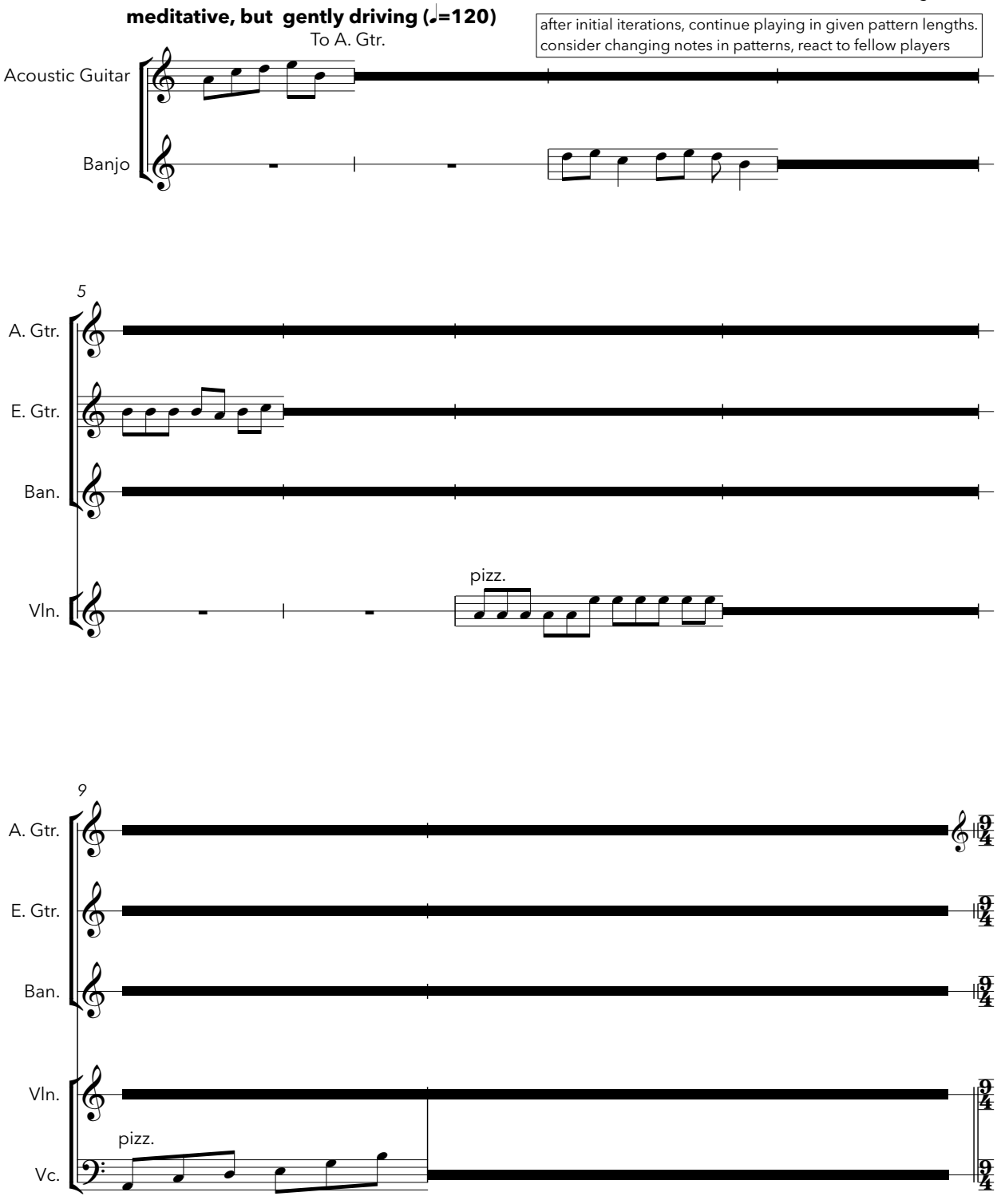
In all circumstances, boxed musical material is to be repeated in any rhythm or sequence. Sections involving dotted bar lines should not be treated metrically.

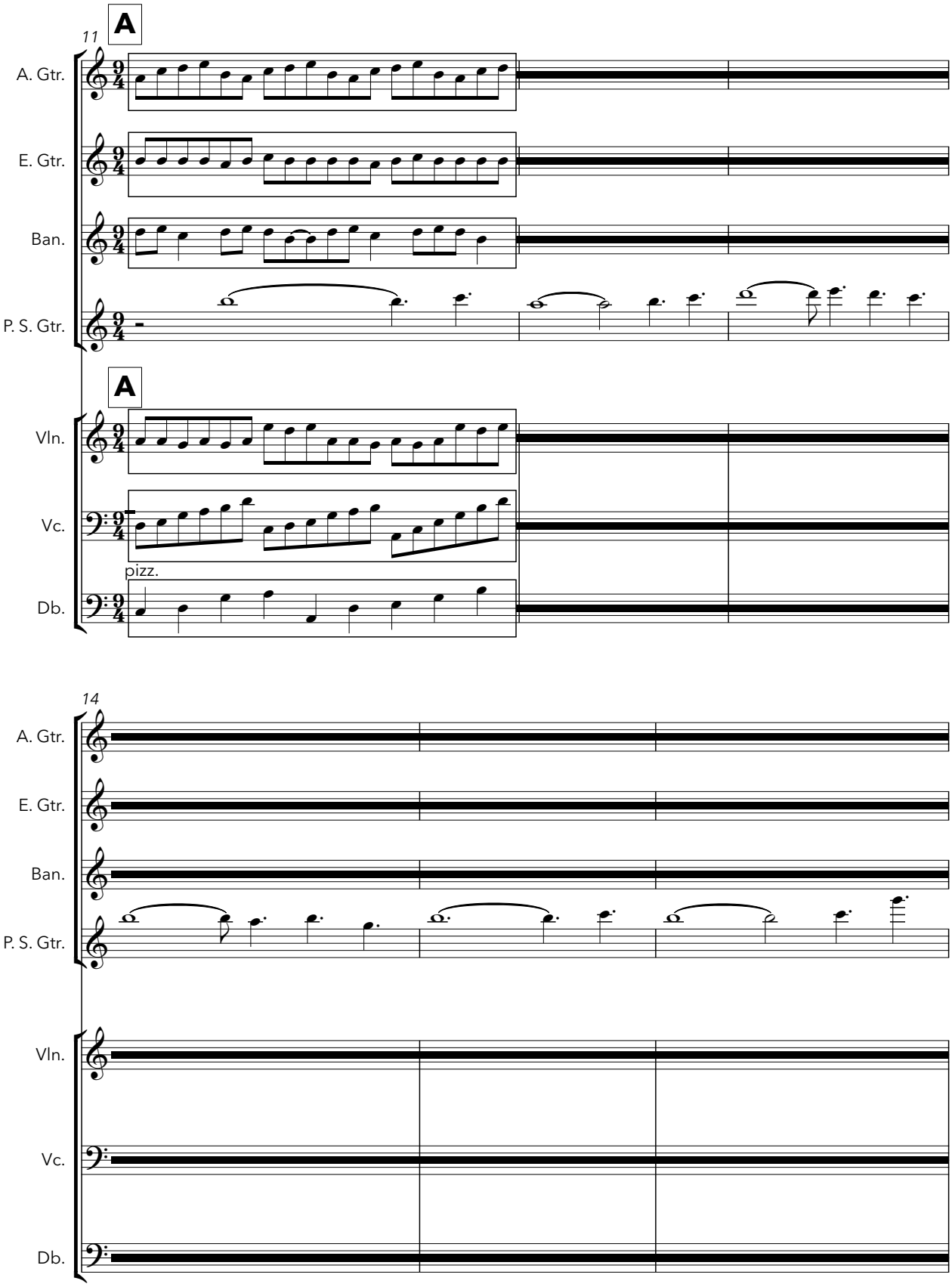
Approximate Duration: 9'

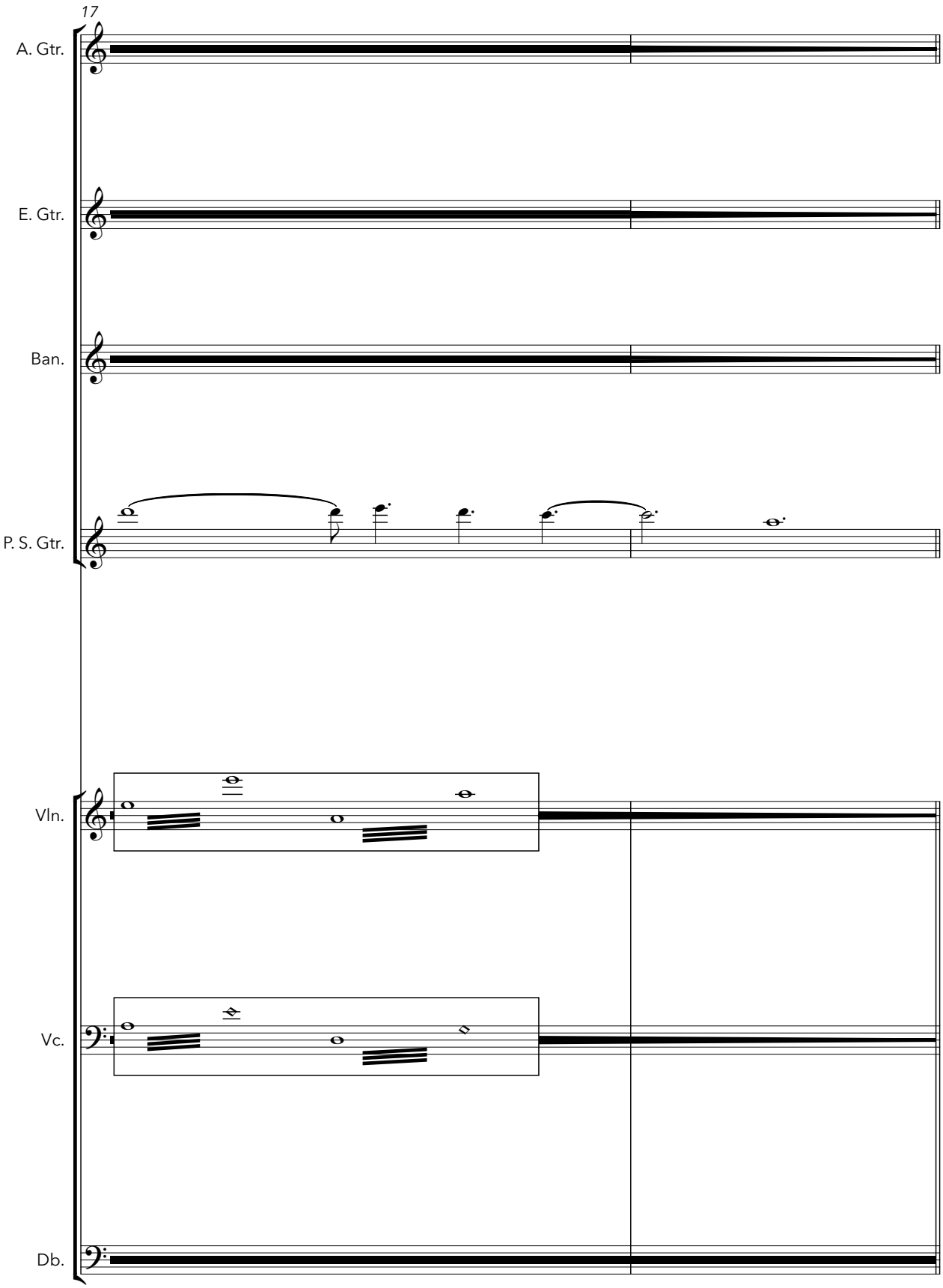
BLURRY CANONS

for seven string instruments

Matt Magerkurth




11
A
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
A
Vln.
Vc.
pizz.
Db.
14
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.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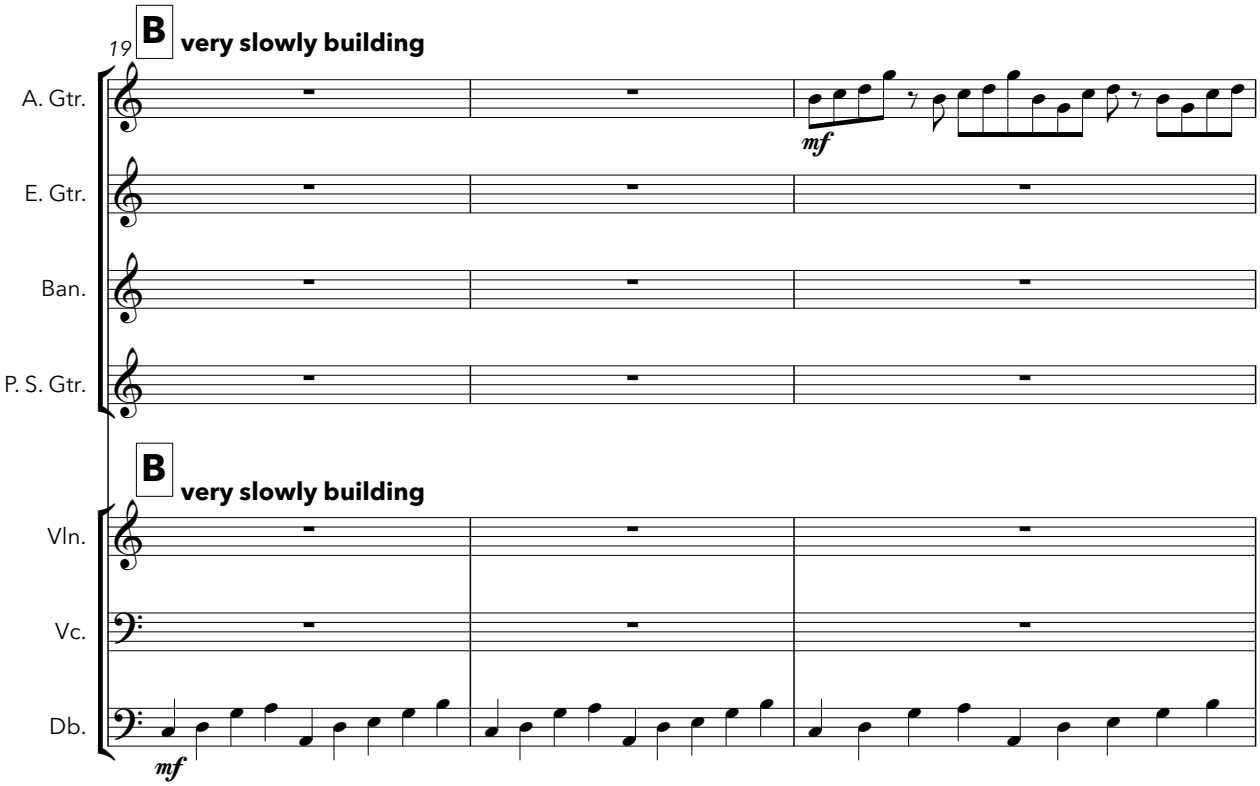
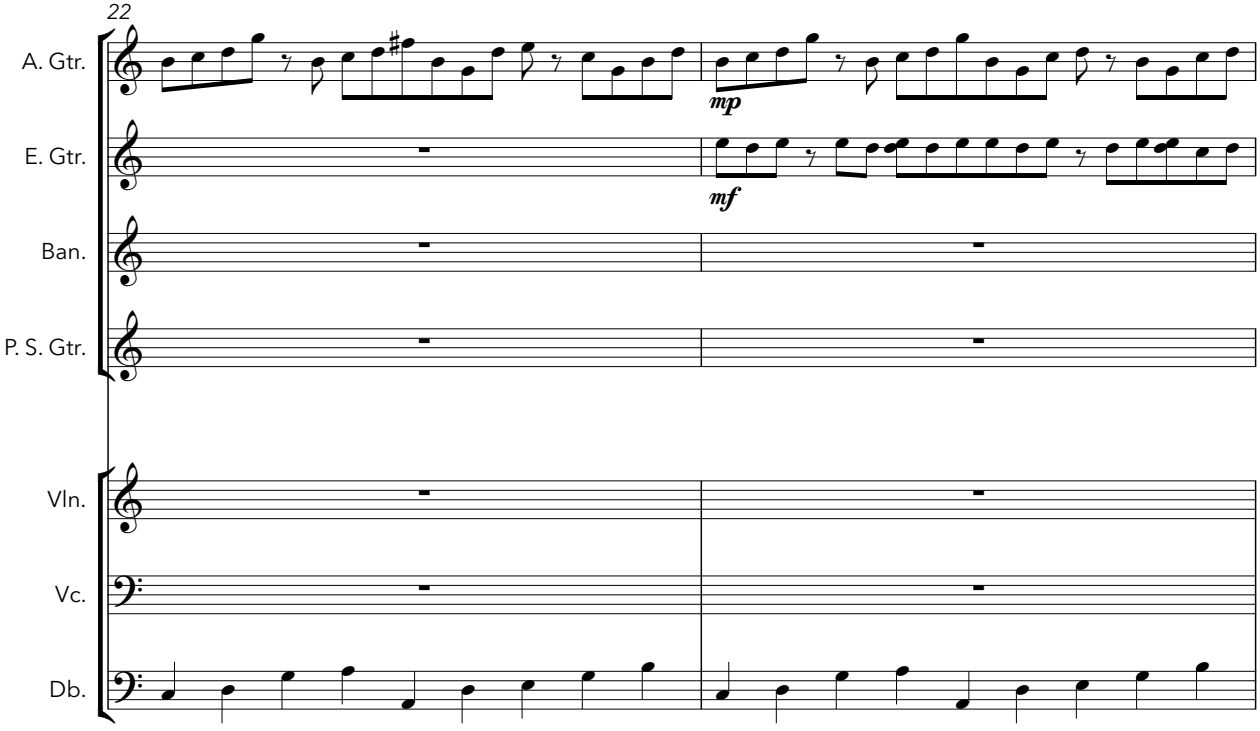
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


19
B
very slowly building
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
mf
B
very slowly building
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
mf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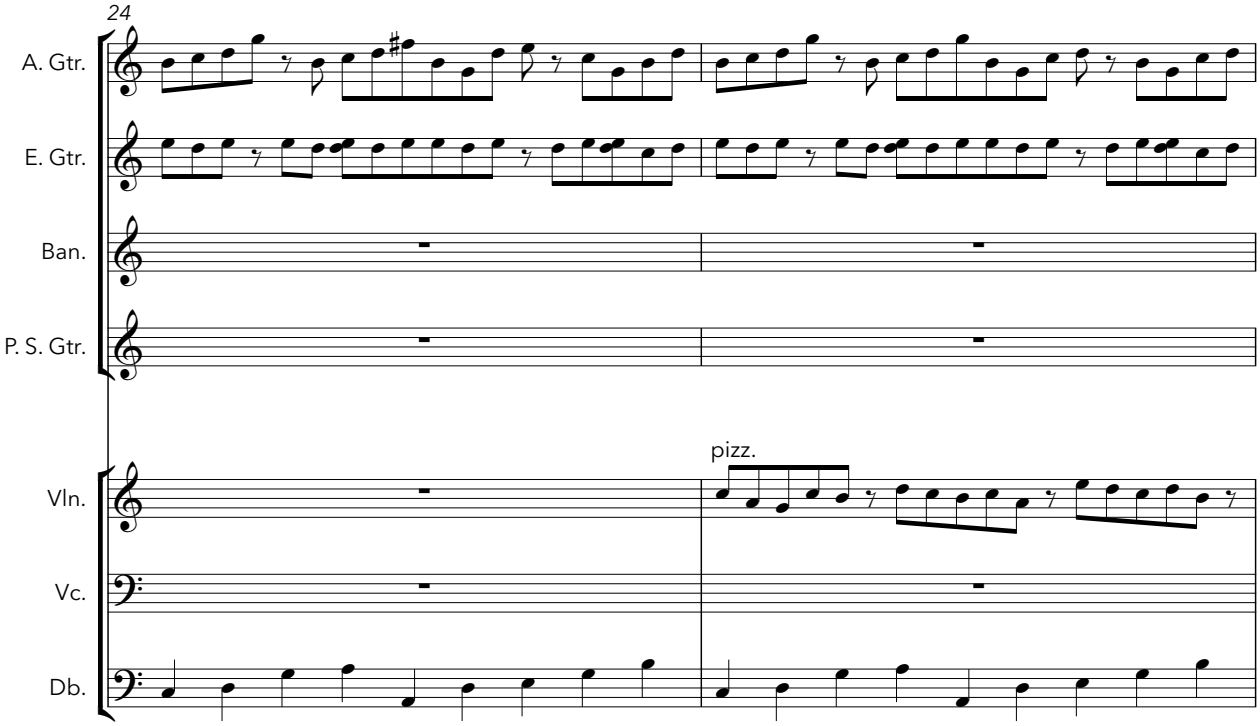
A. Gtr.
mp
E. Gtr.
mf
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.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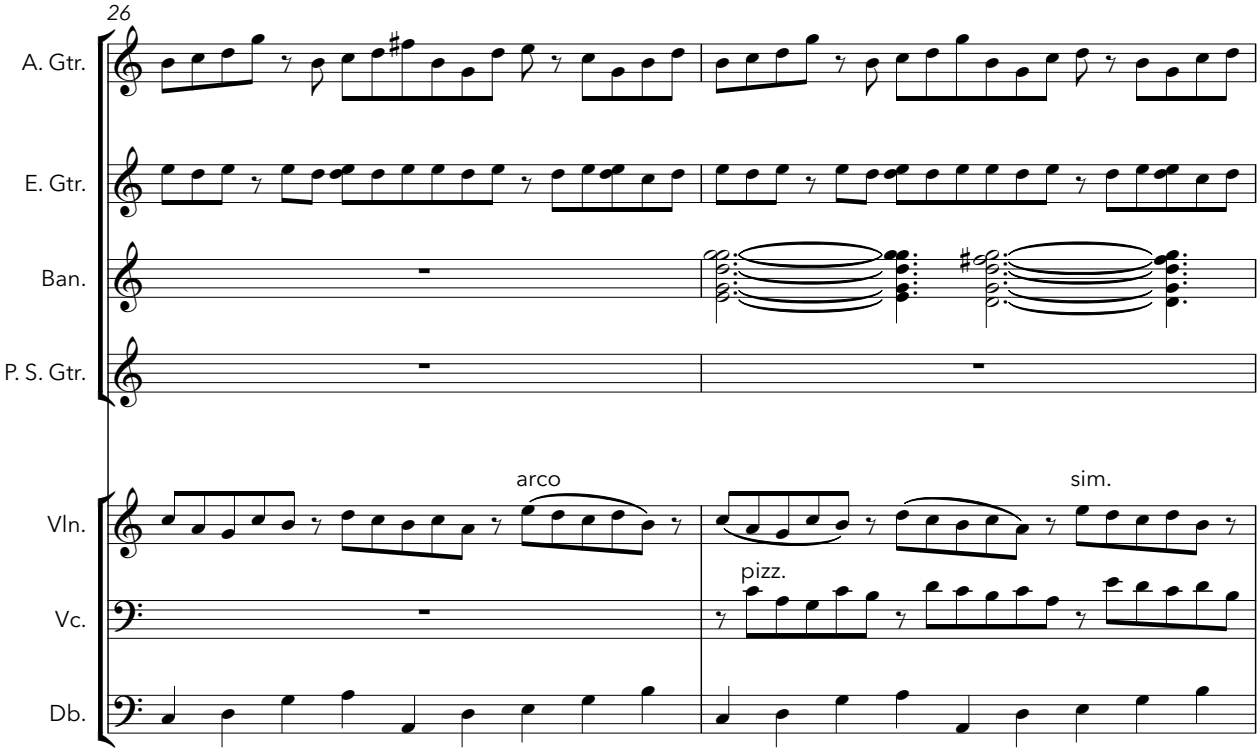
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
pizz.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.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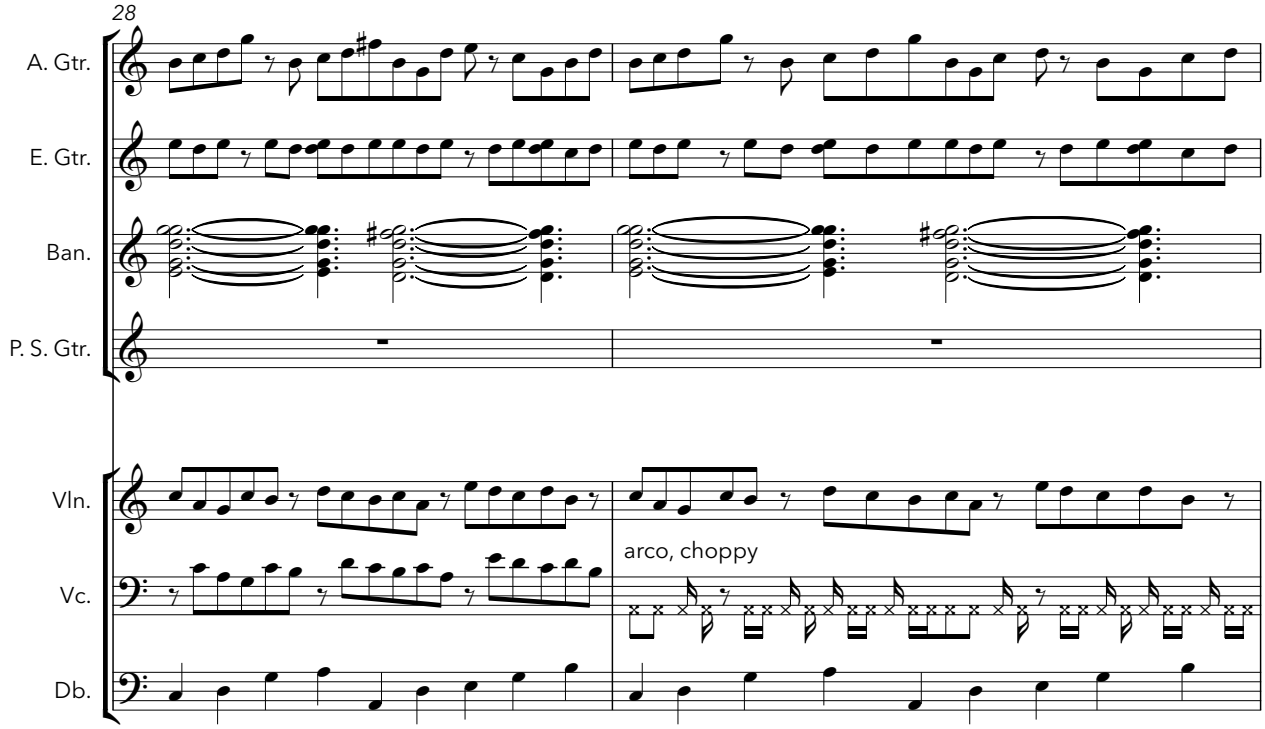
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
arco
sim.
Vln.
pizz.
Vc.
Db.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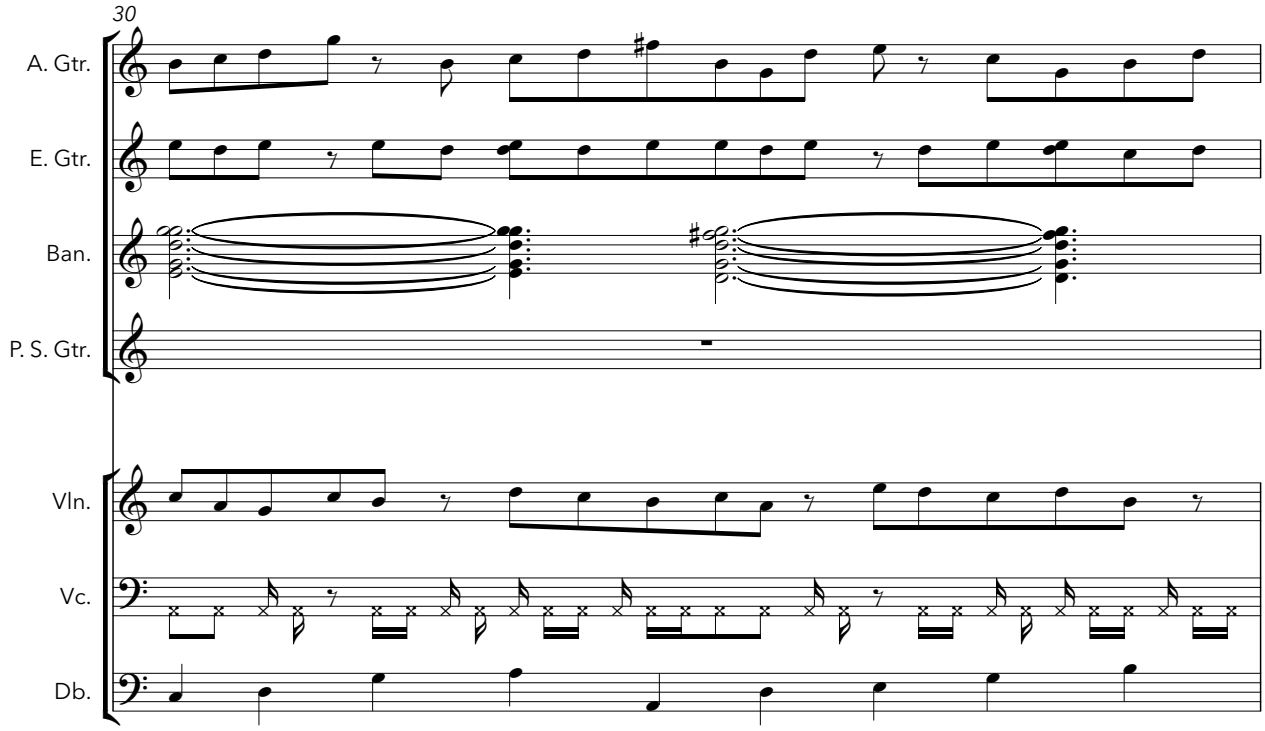
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
arco, choppy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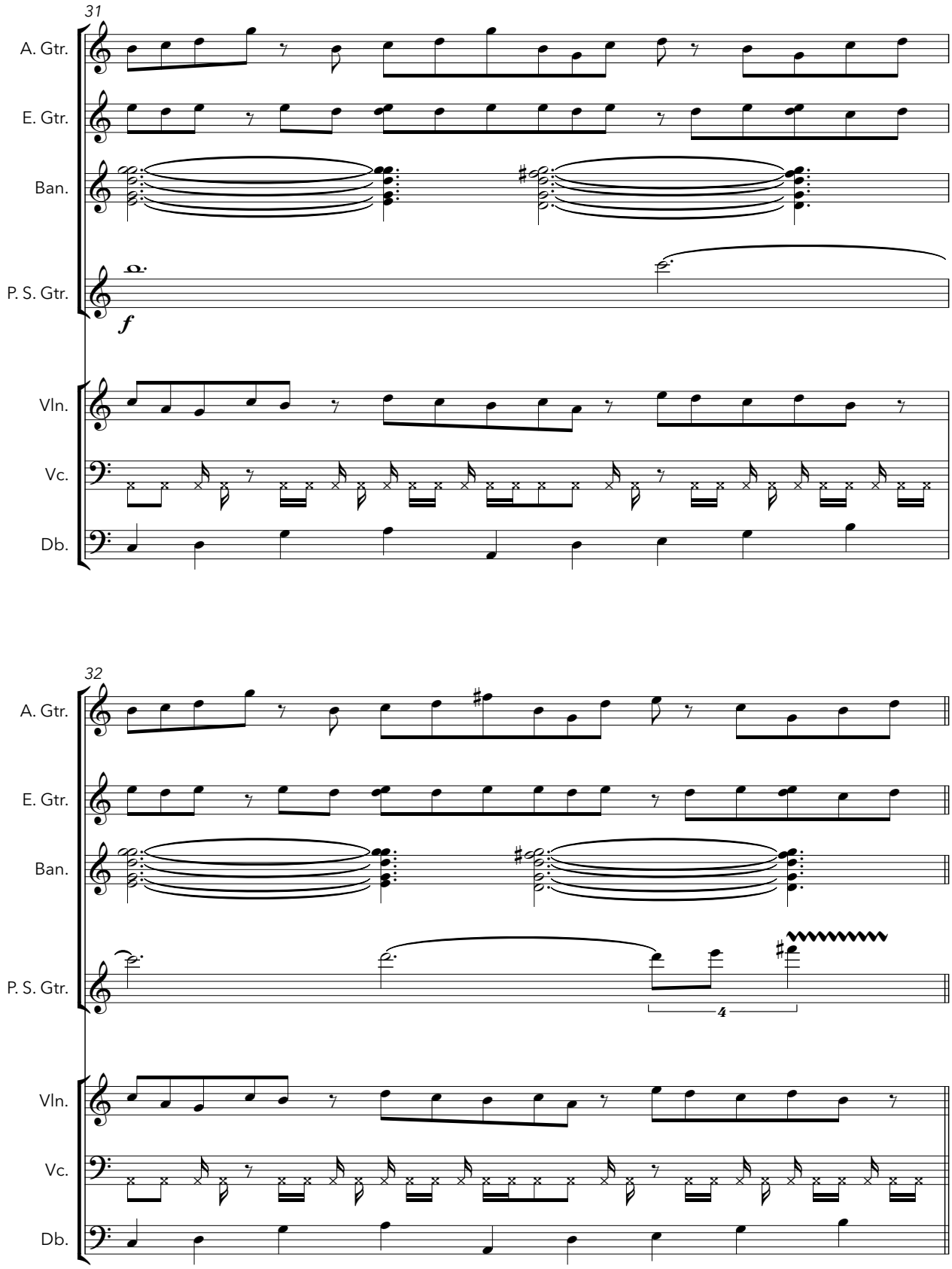
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.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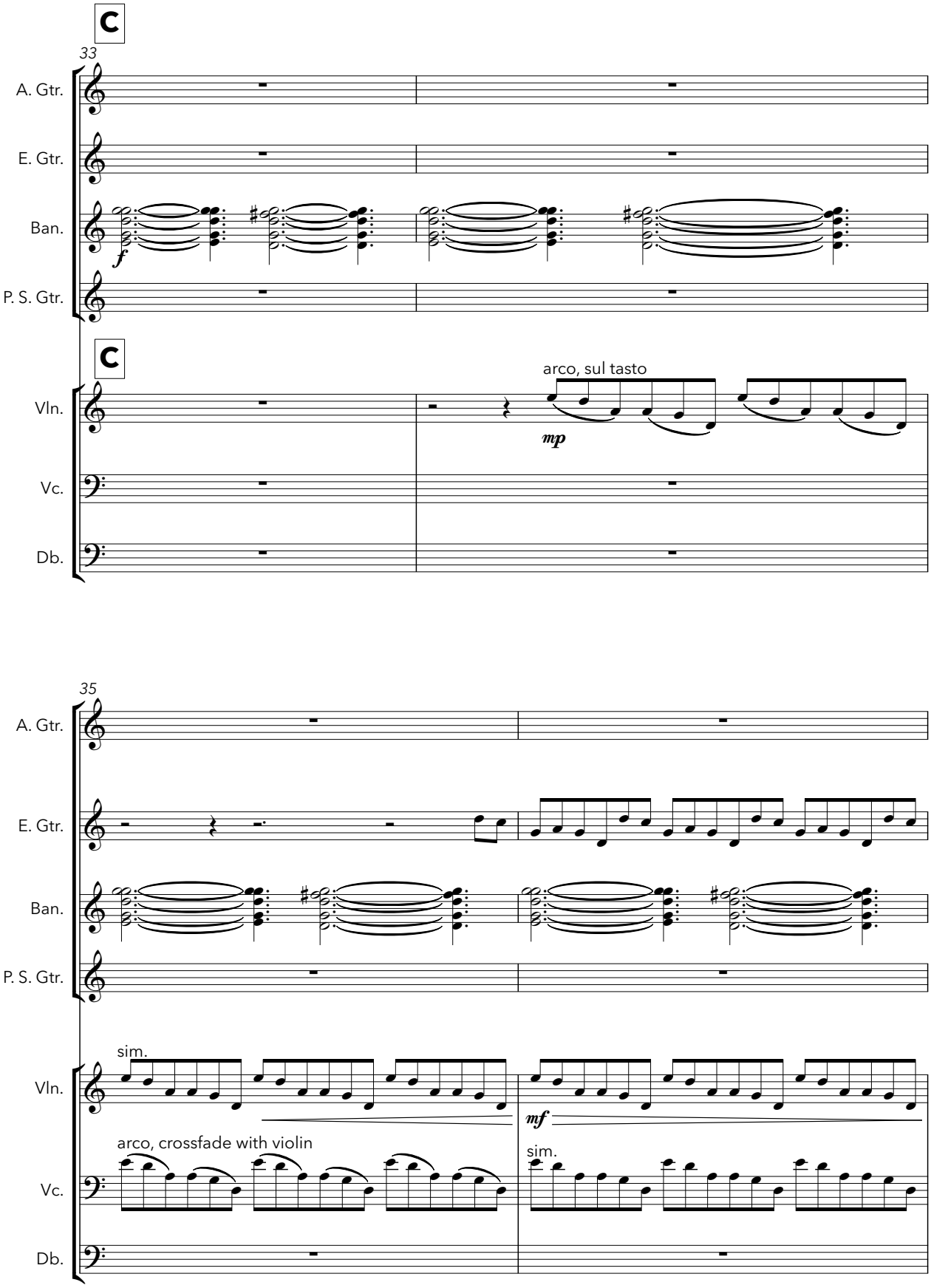
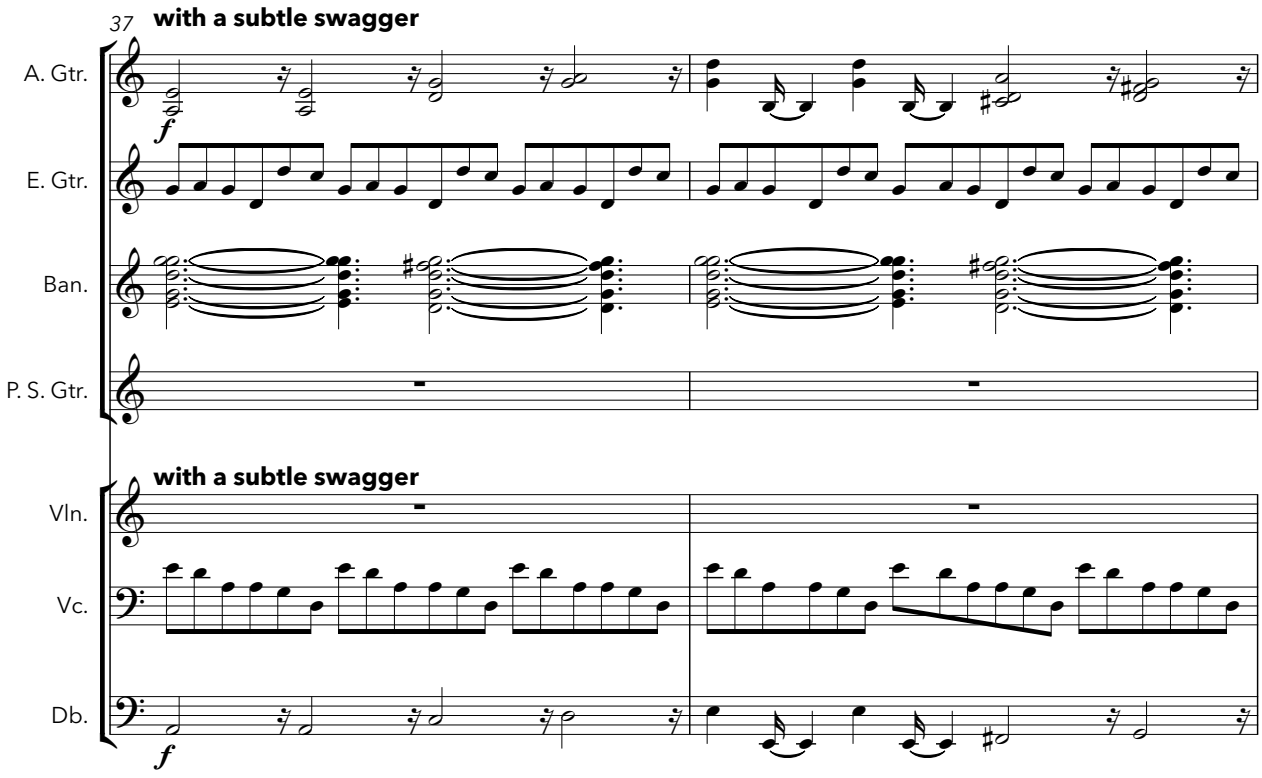
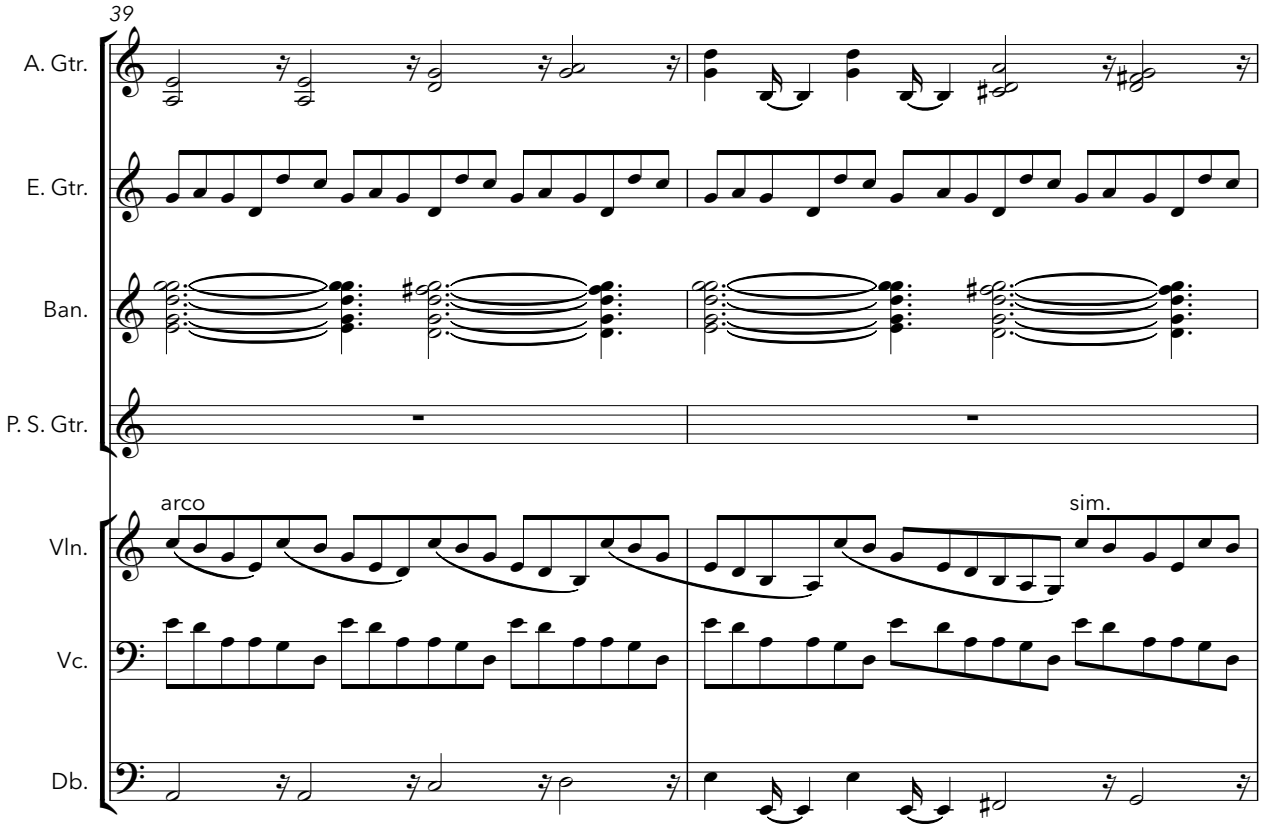
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
f
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
32
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
4
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


C
33
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
f
C
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
arco, sul tasto
mp
35
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
sim.
Vln.
mf
arco, crossfade with violin
sim.
Vc.
Db.


37
with a subtle swagger
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
with a subtle swagger
Vln.
Vc.
Db.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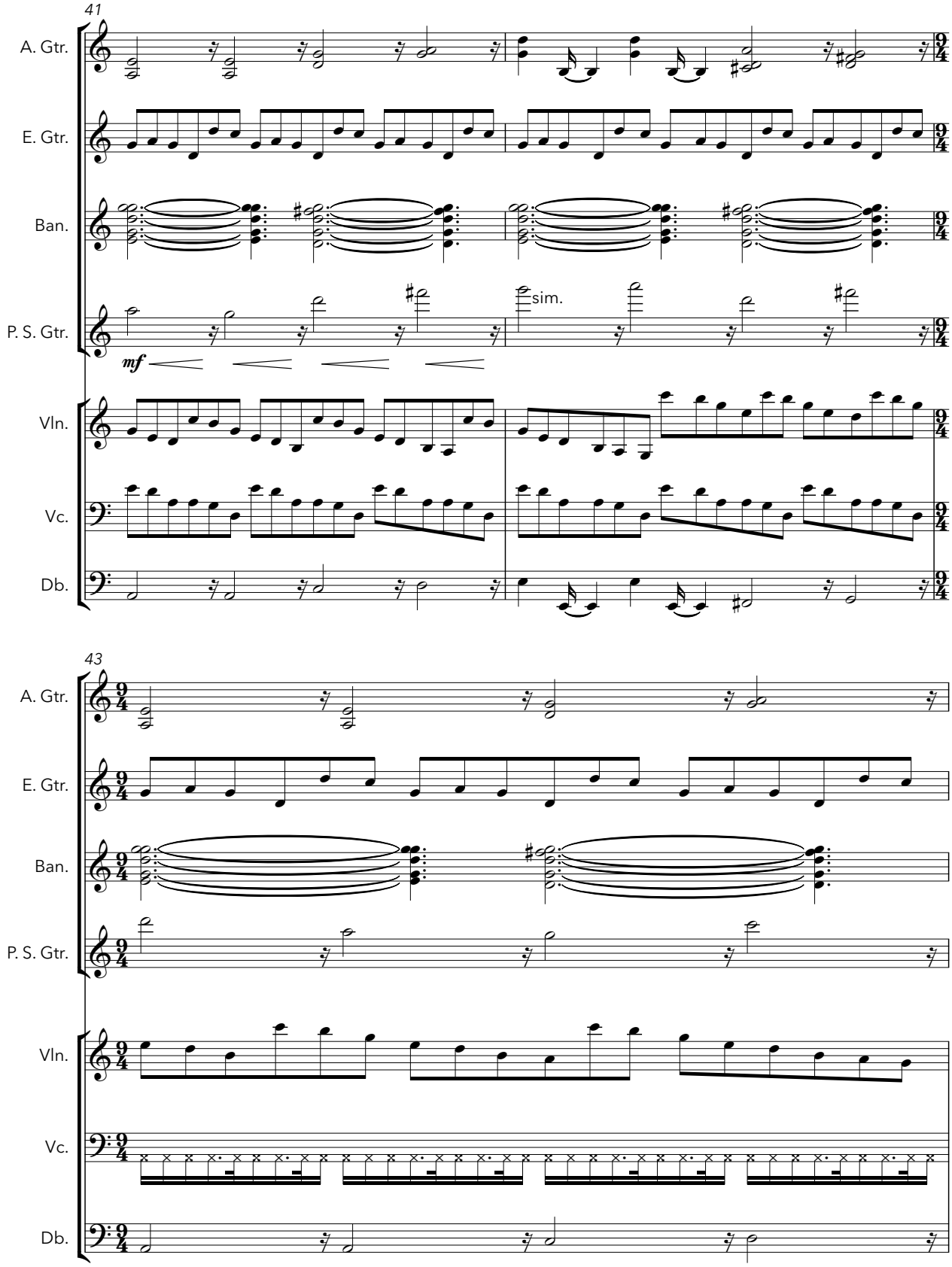
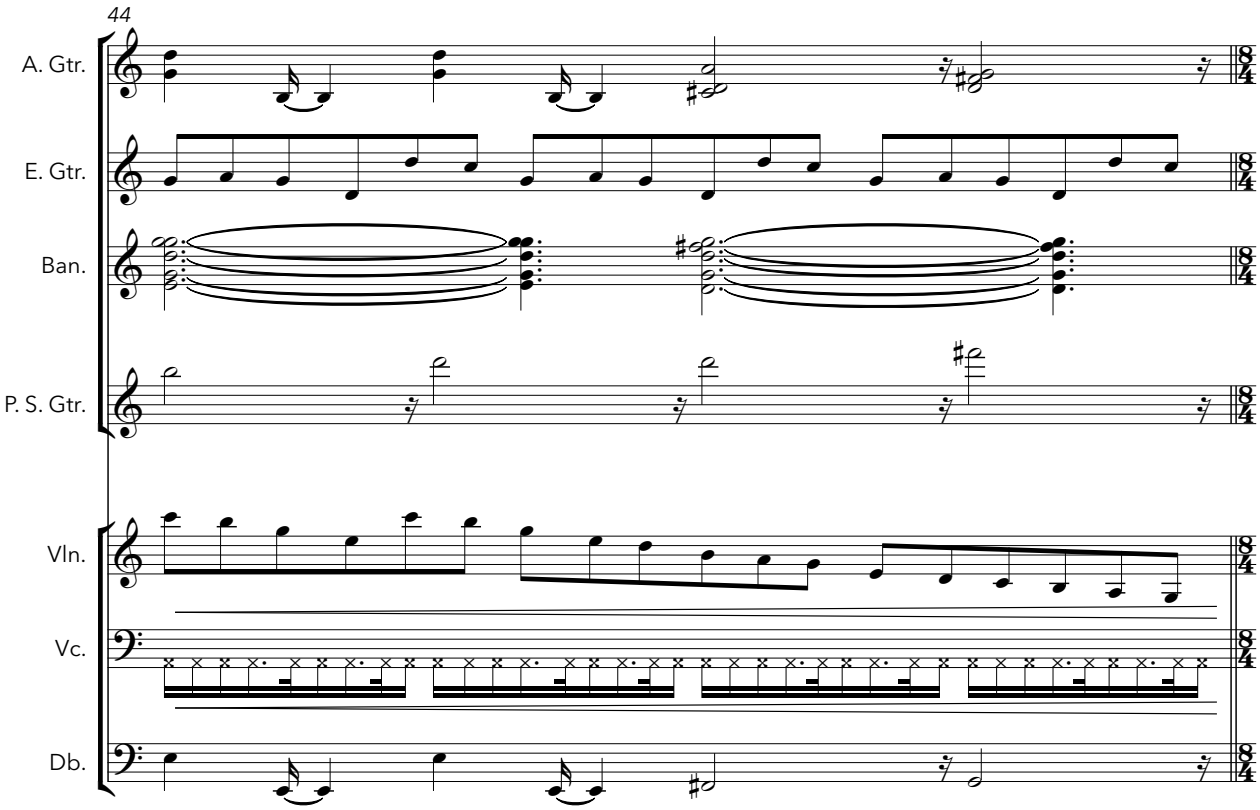
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
arco
sim.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


41
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
sim.
mf
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
43
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.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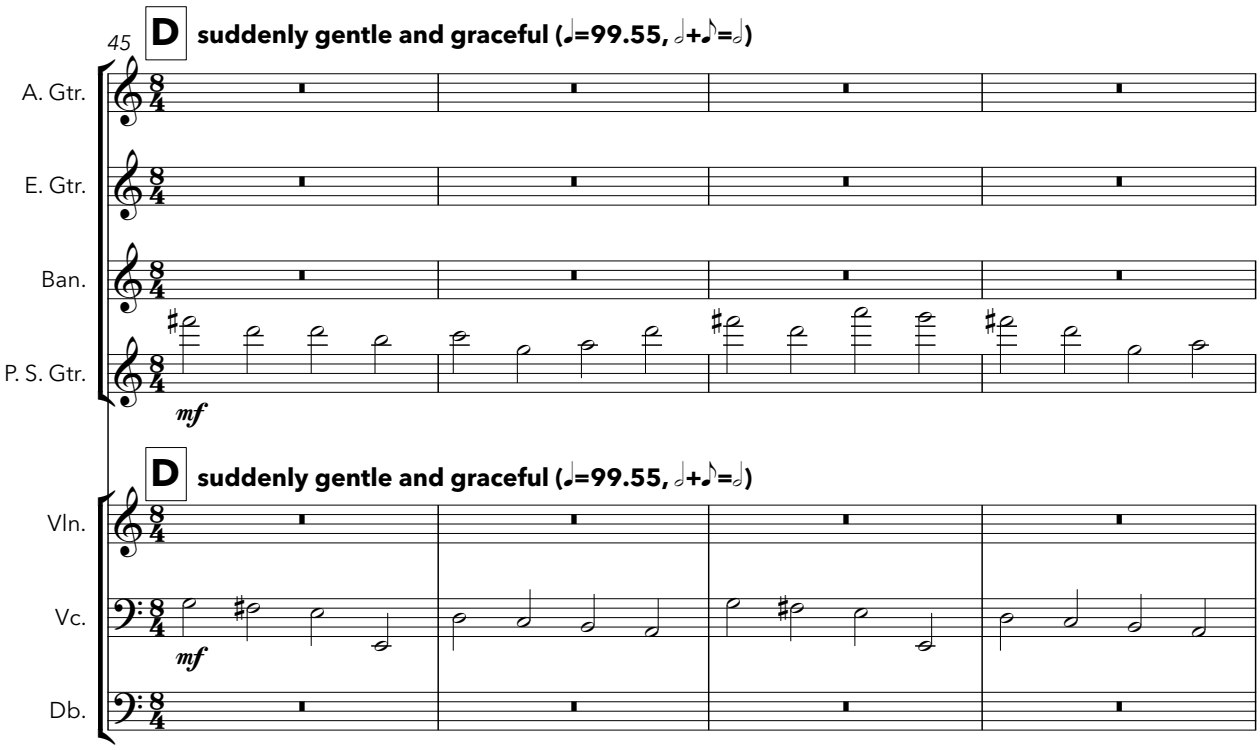
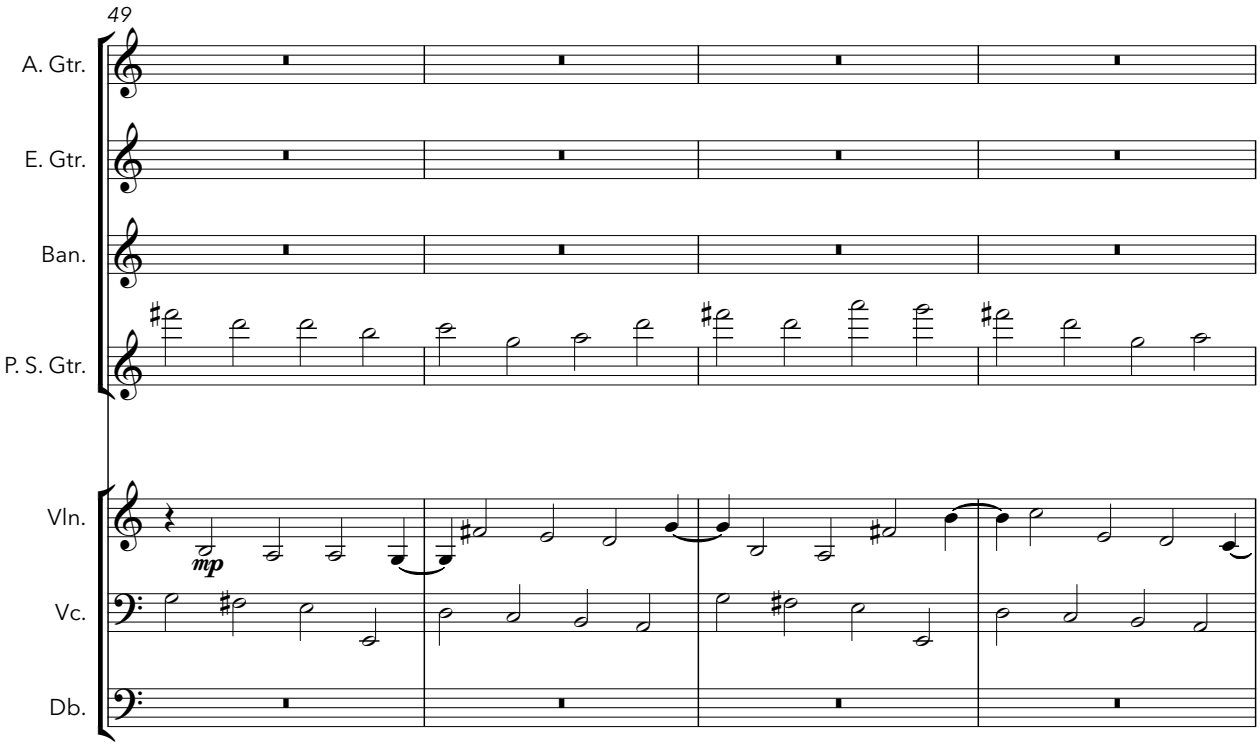
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


45
D
suddenly gentle and graceful (♩=99.55, 𝅗𝅥+♪=𝅗𝅥)
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
mf
D
suddenly gentle and graceful (♩=99.55, 𝅗𝅥+♪=𝅗𝅥)
Vln.
Vc.
mf
Db.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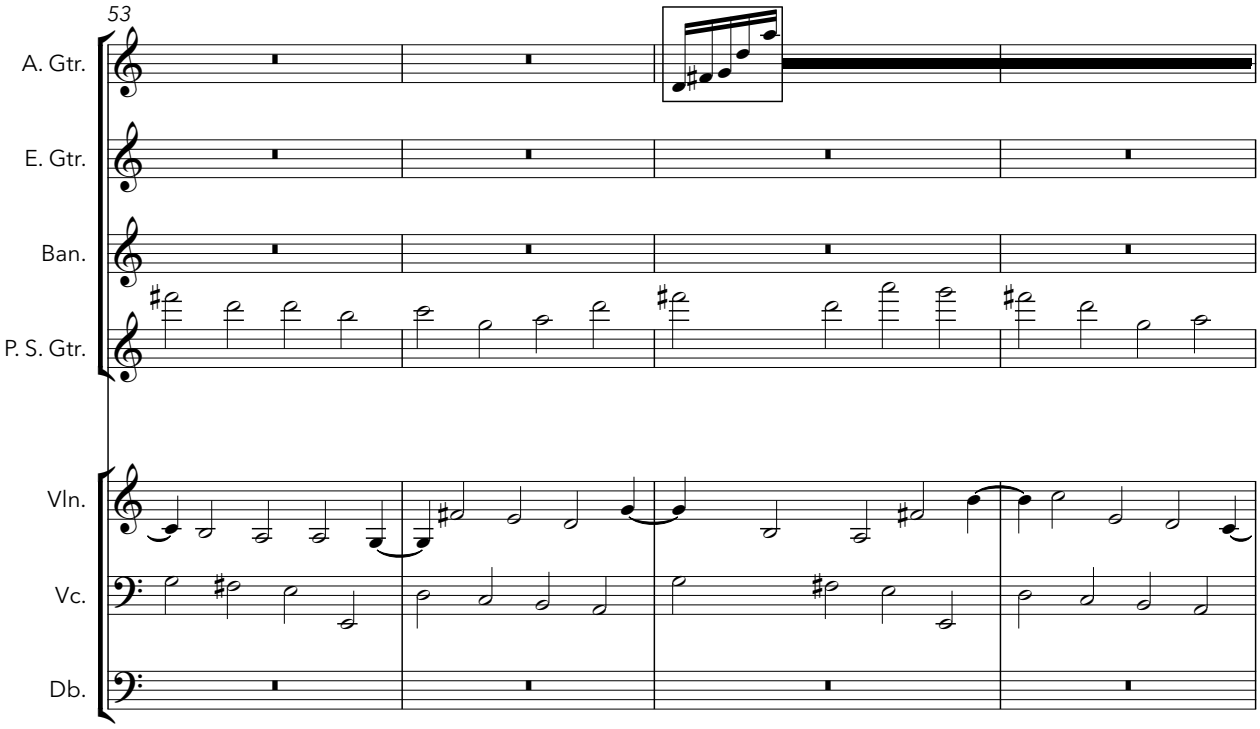
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
mp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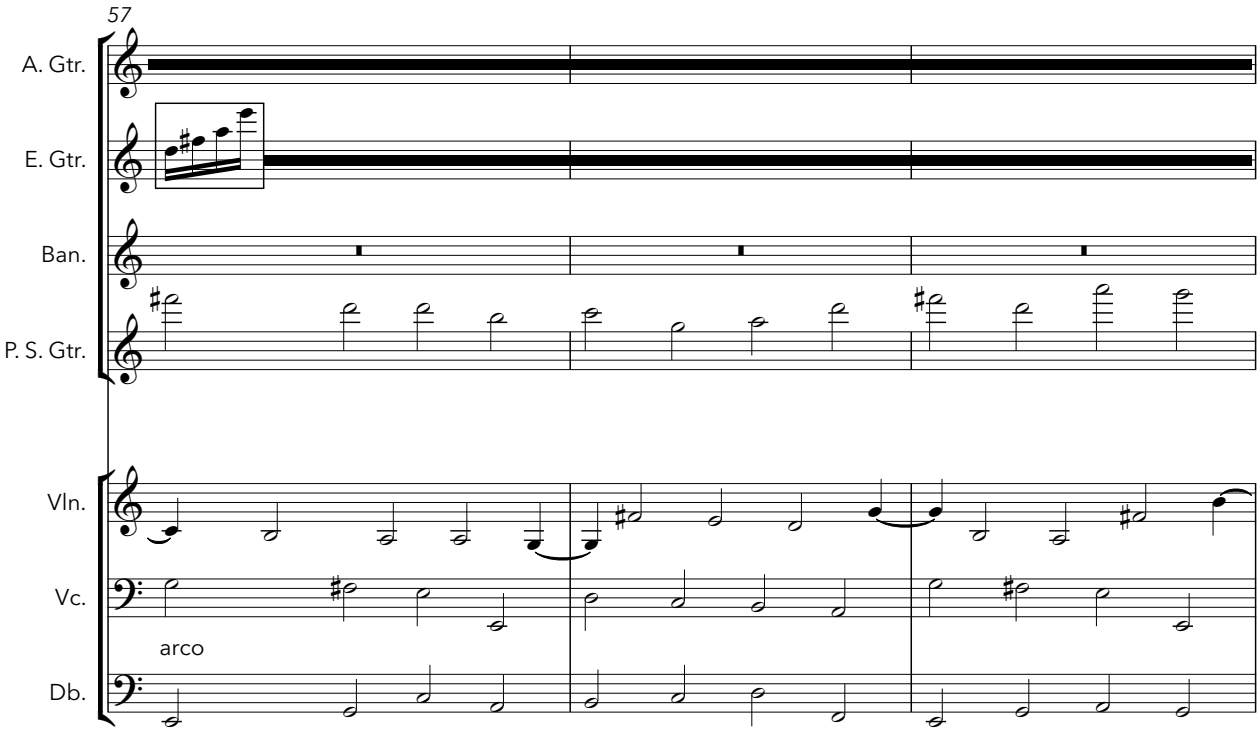
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.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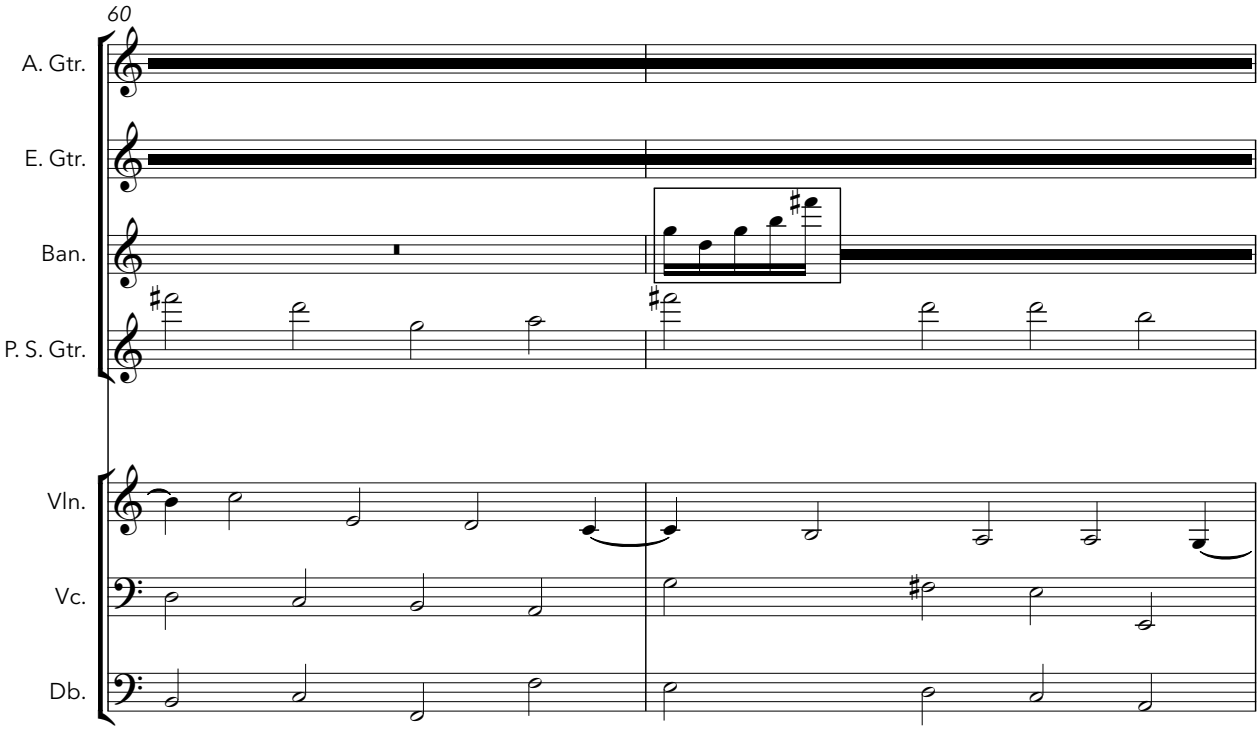
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
arco
Db.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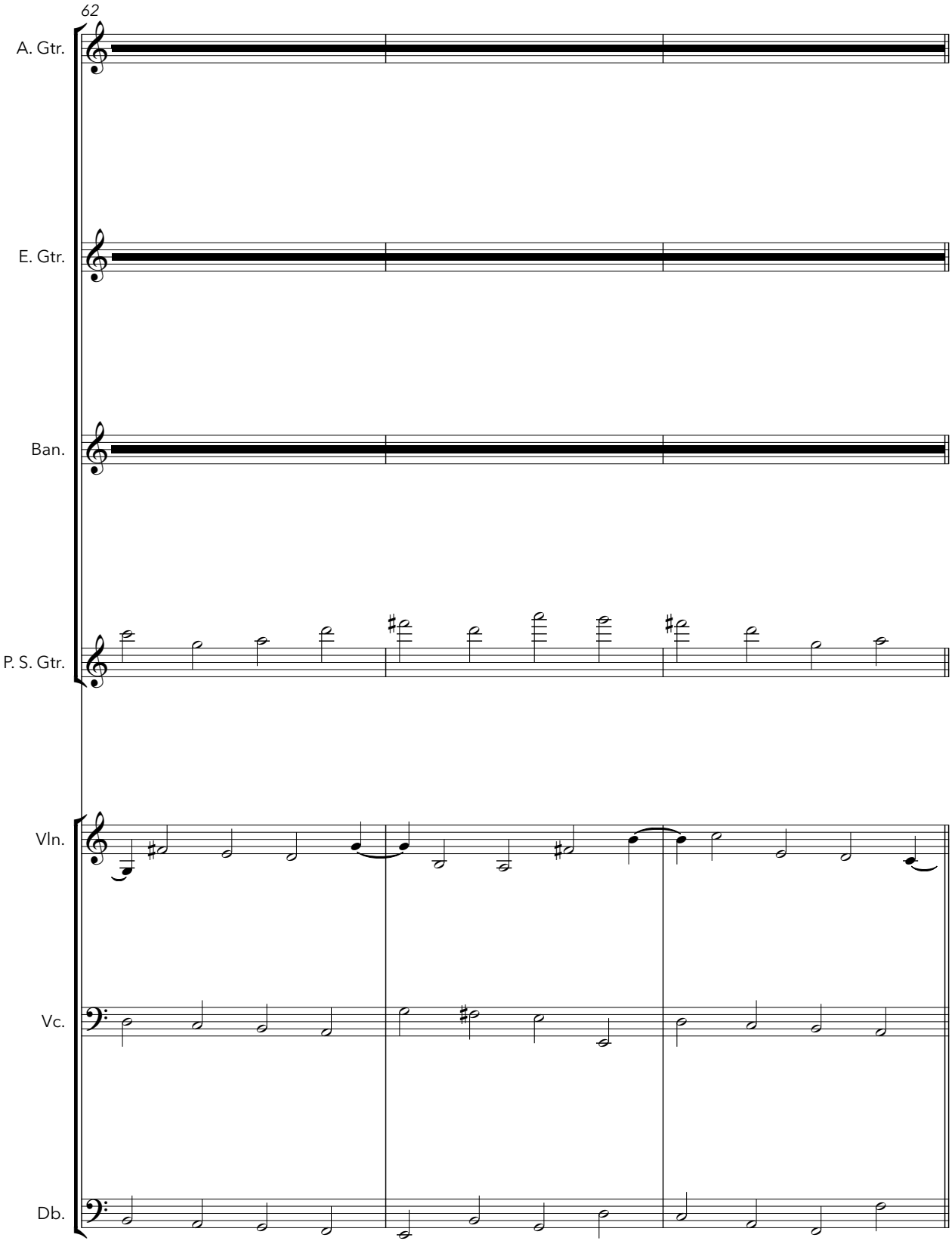
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.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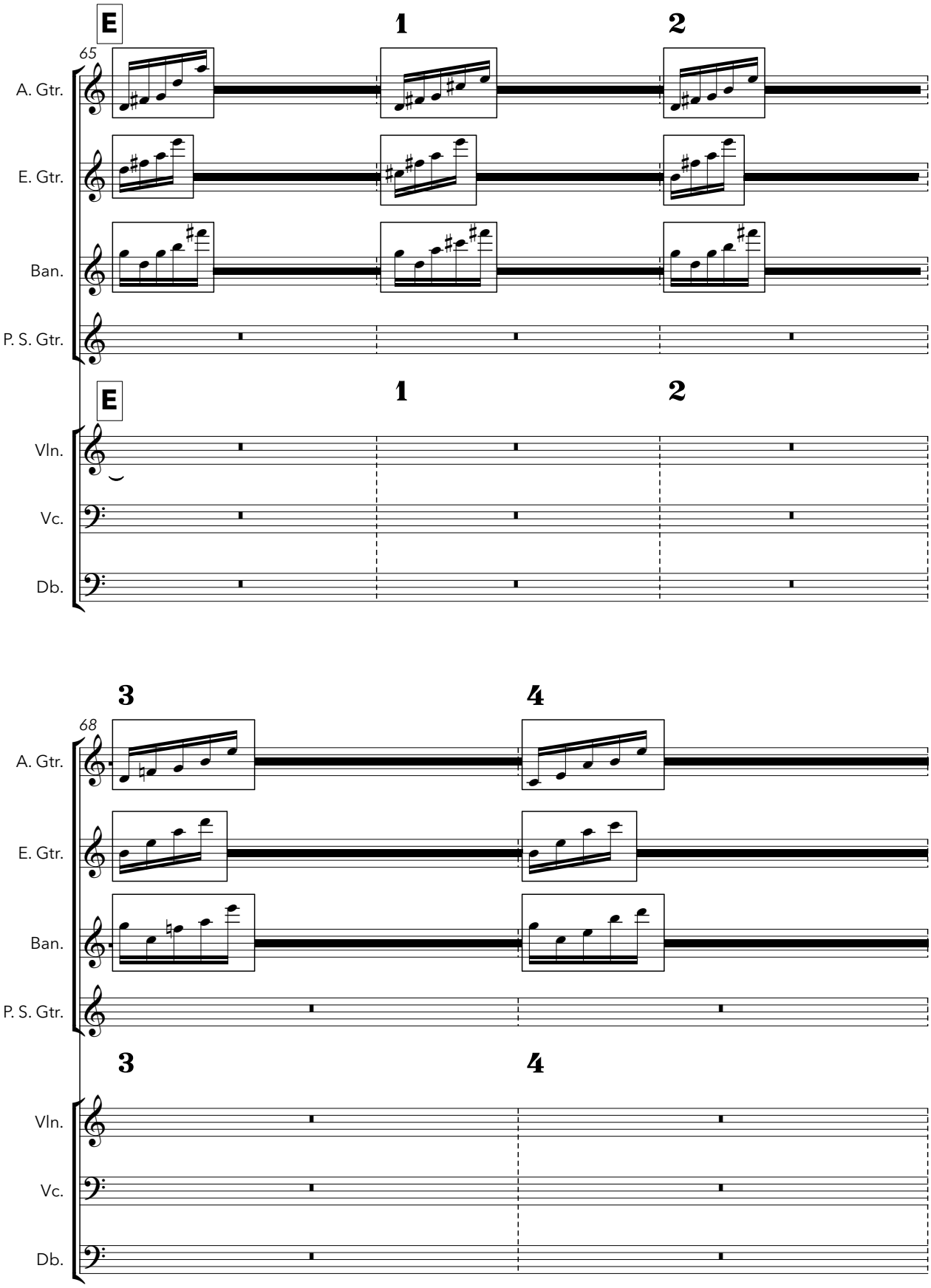
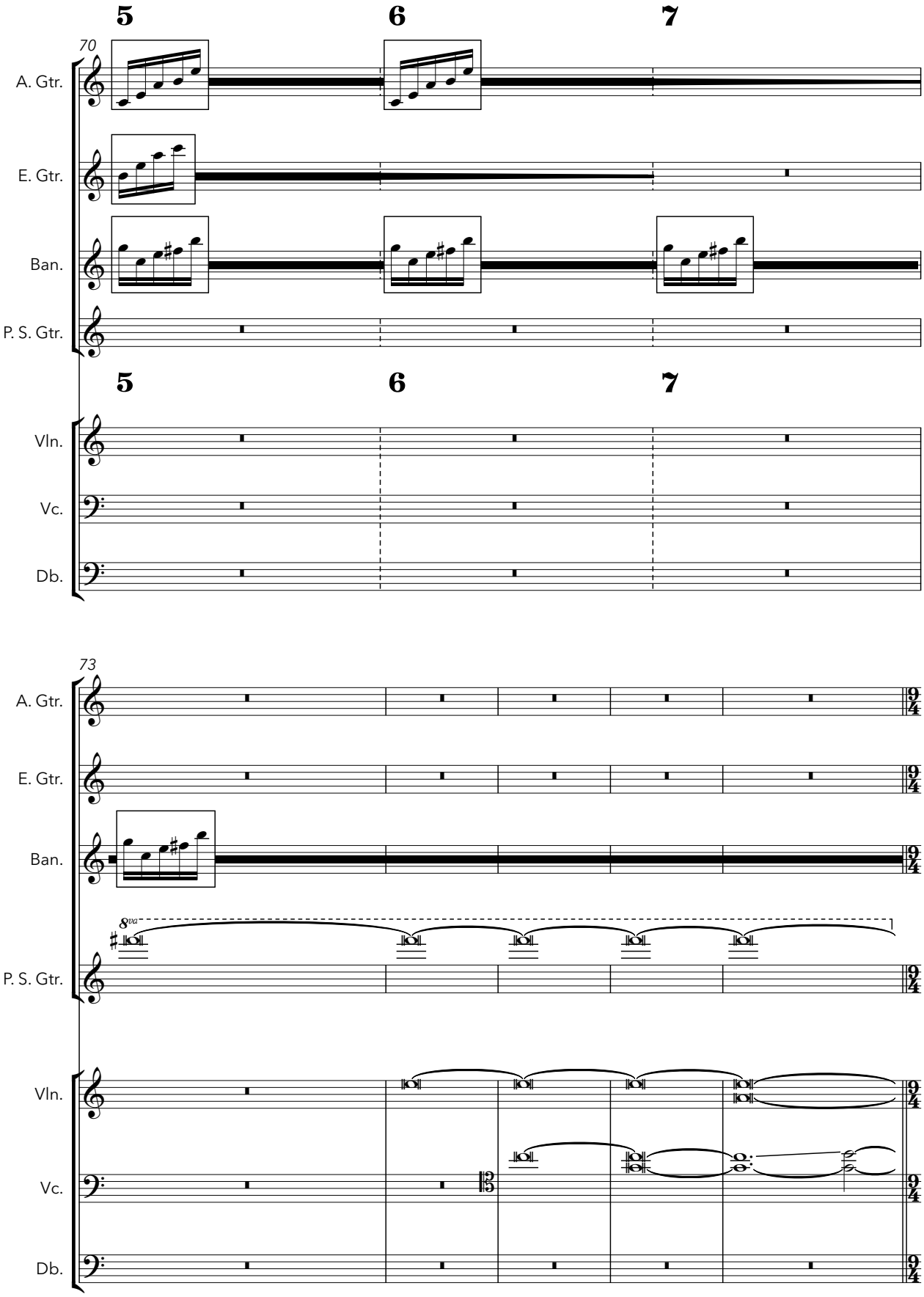
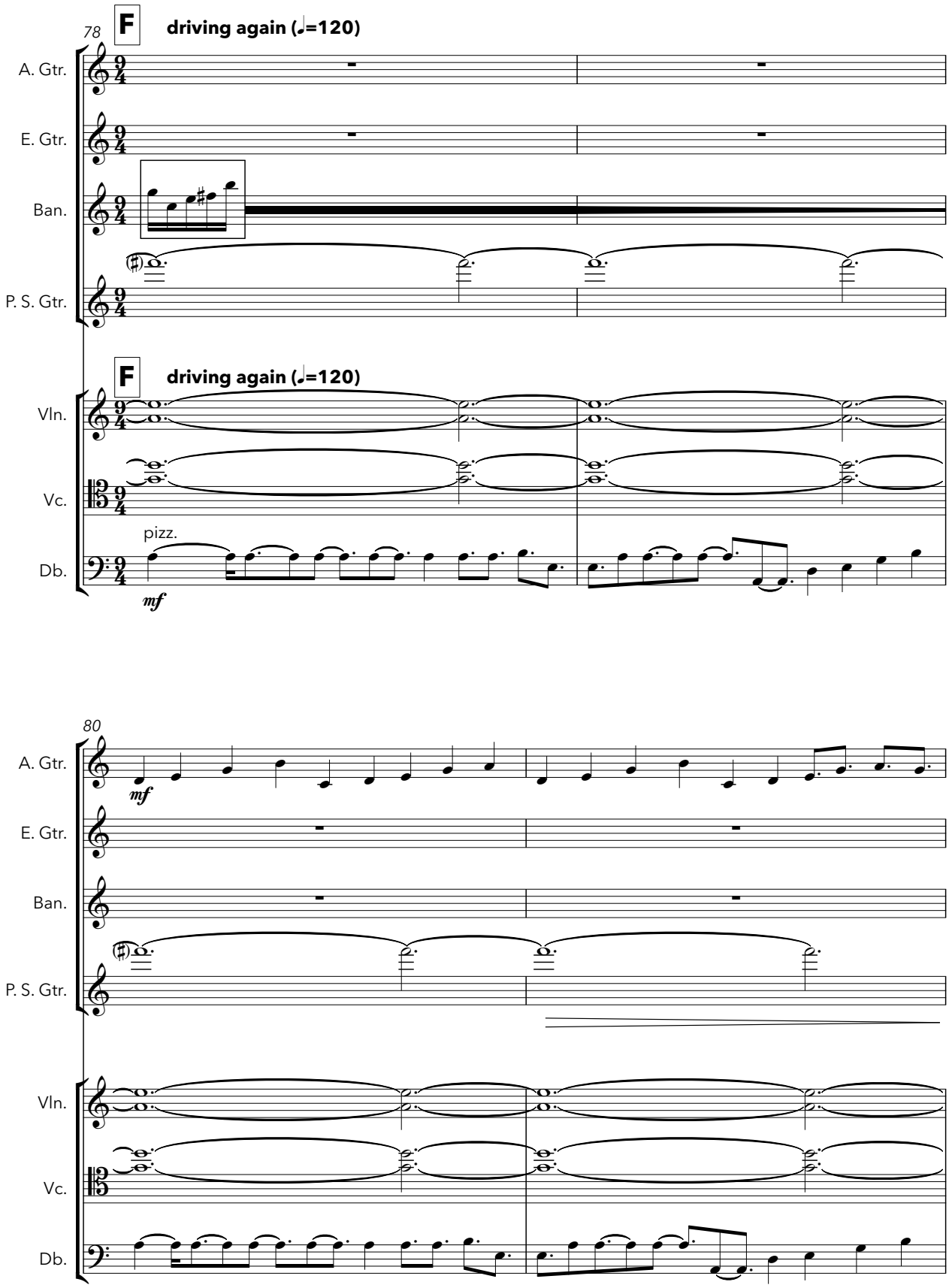
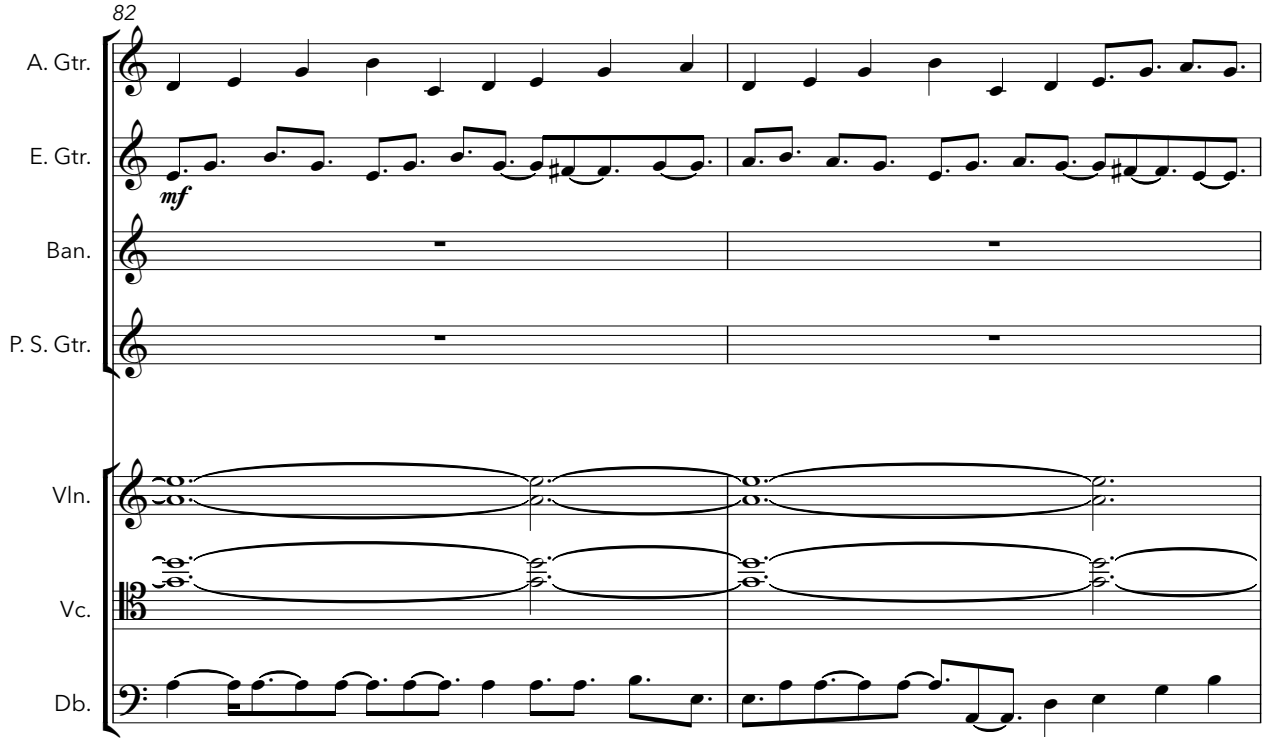
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


E
1
2
65
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
E
1
2
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
3
4
68
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
3
4
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


5
6
7
70
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
5
6
7
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
73
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
8va
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


78
F
driving again (♩=120)
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
F
driving again (♩=120)
Vln.
Vc.
pizz.
Db.
mf
80
A. Gtr.
mf
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.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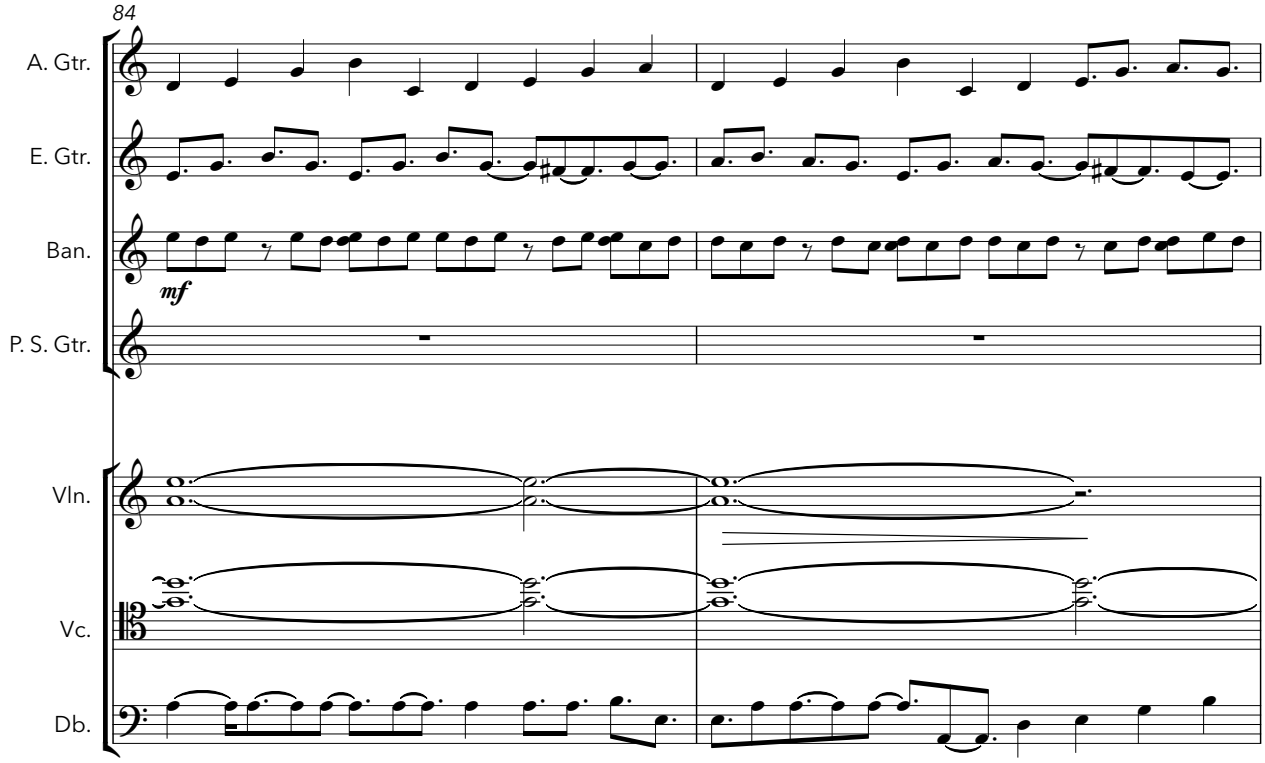
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
mf
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.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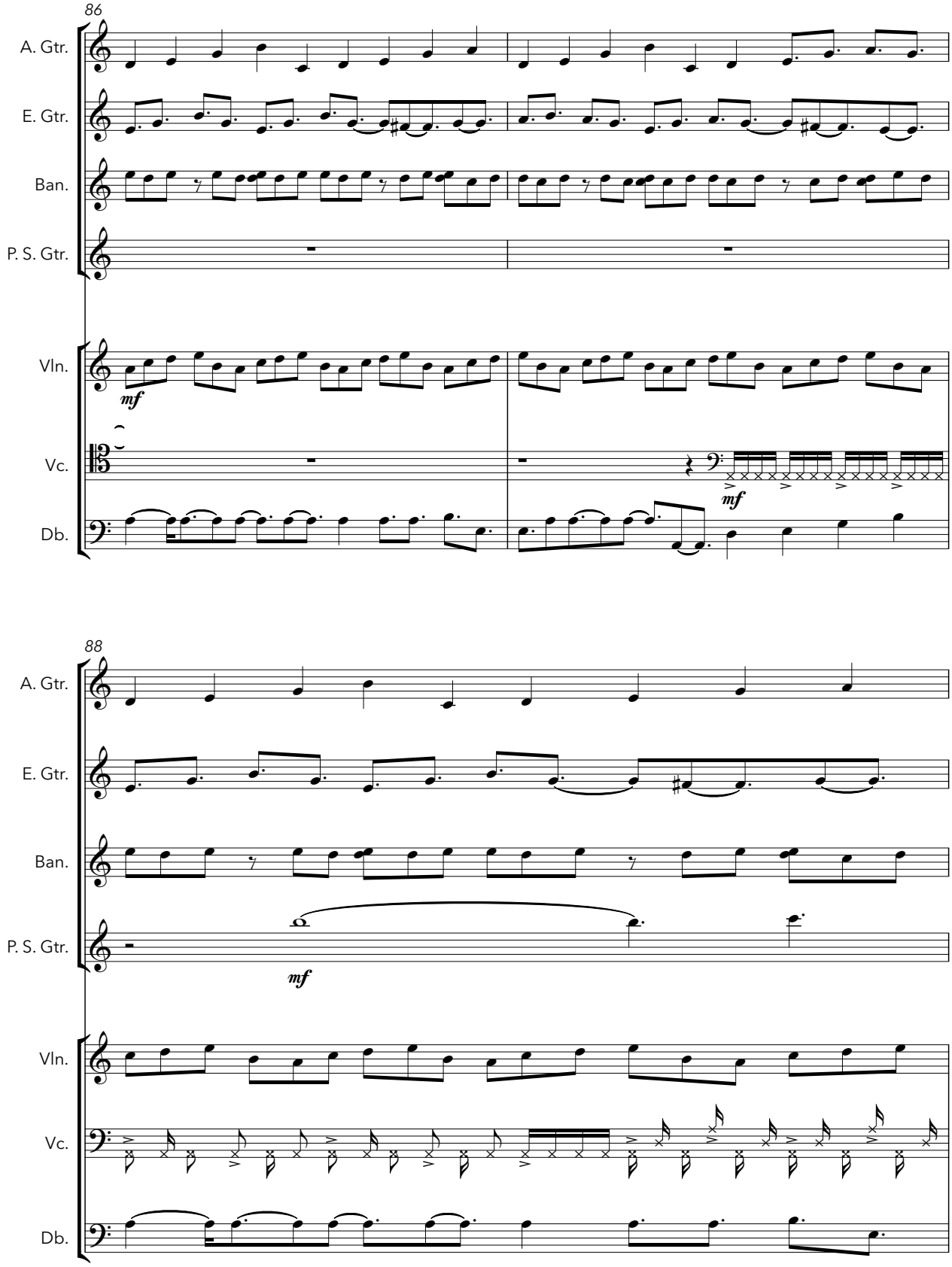
Ban.
mf
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.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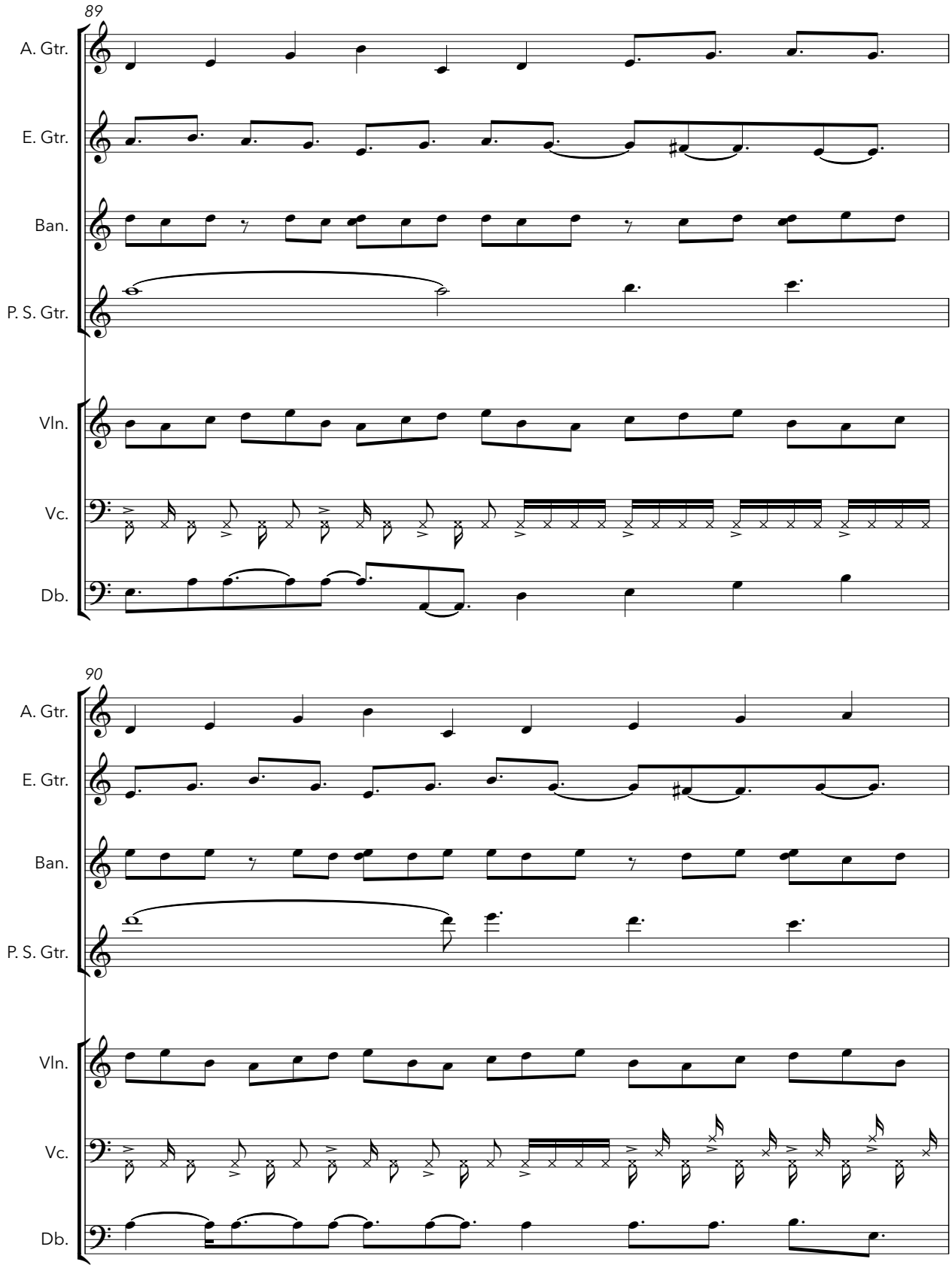
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
mf
mf
88
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
mf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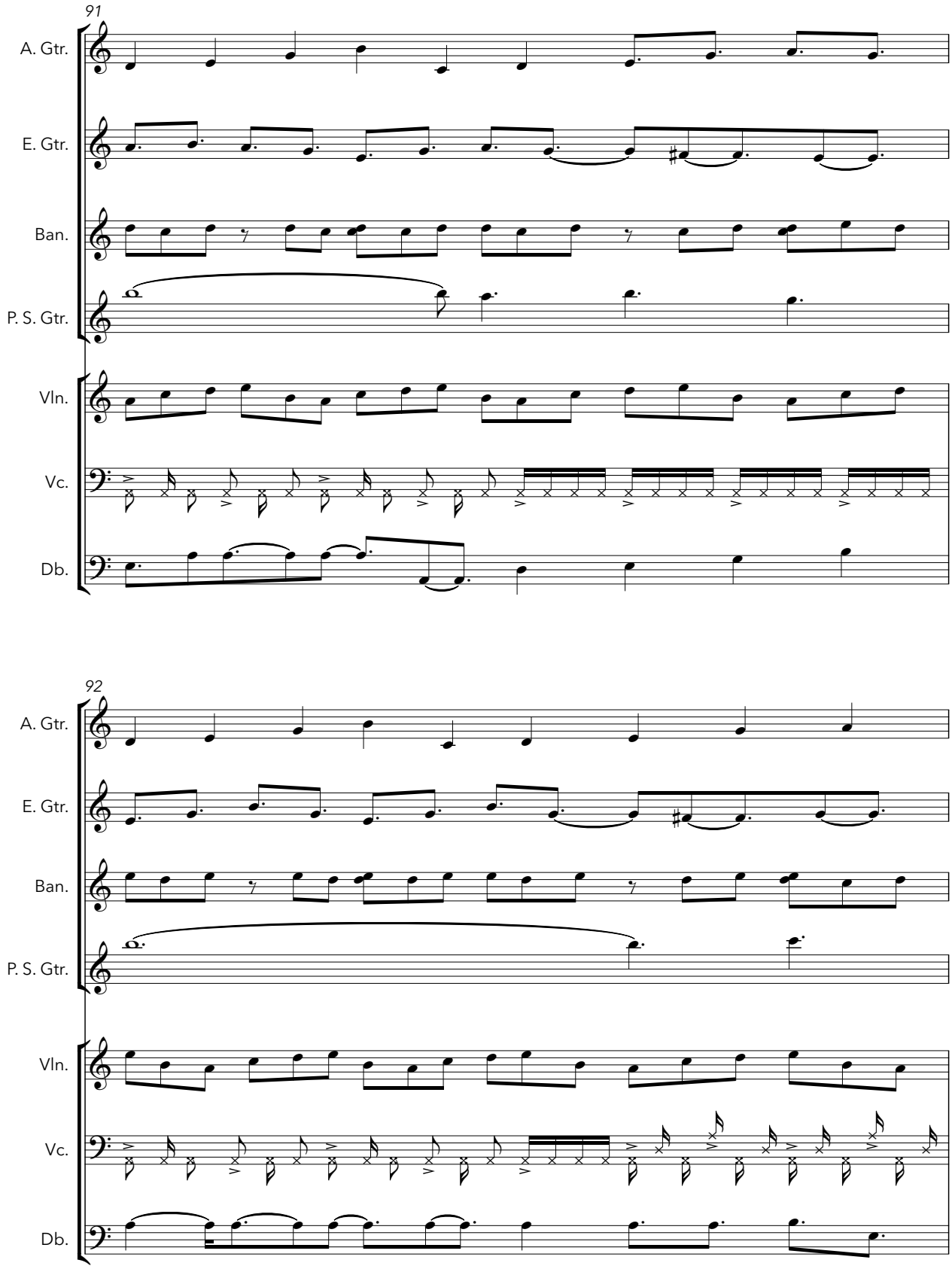
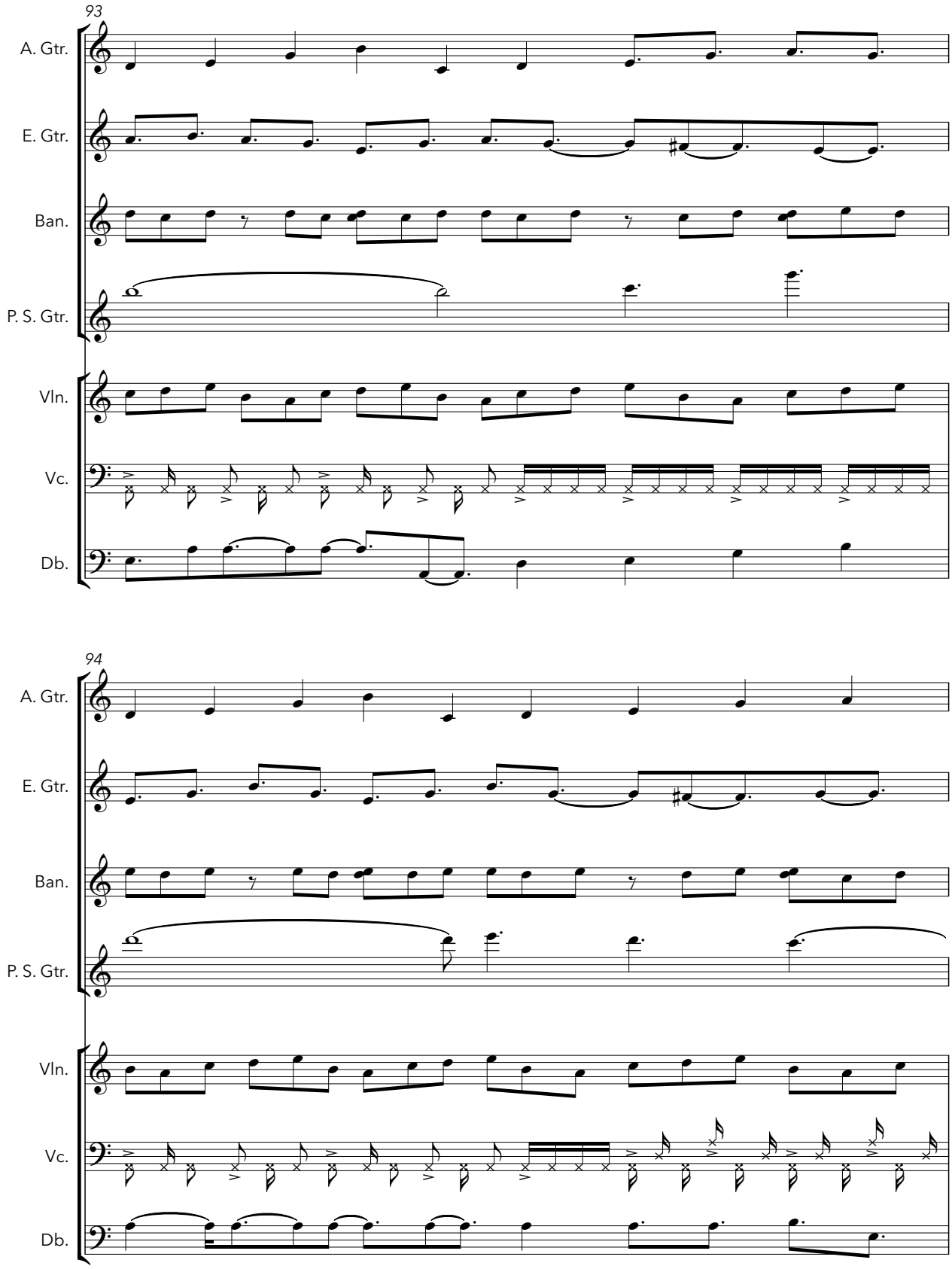
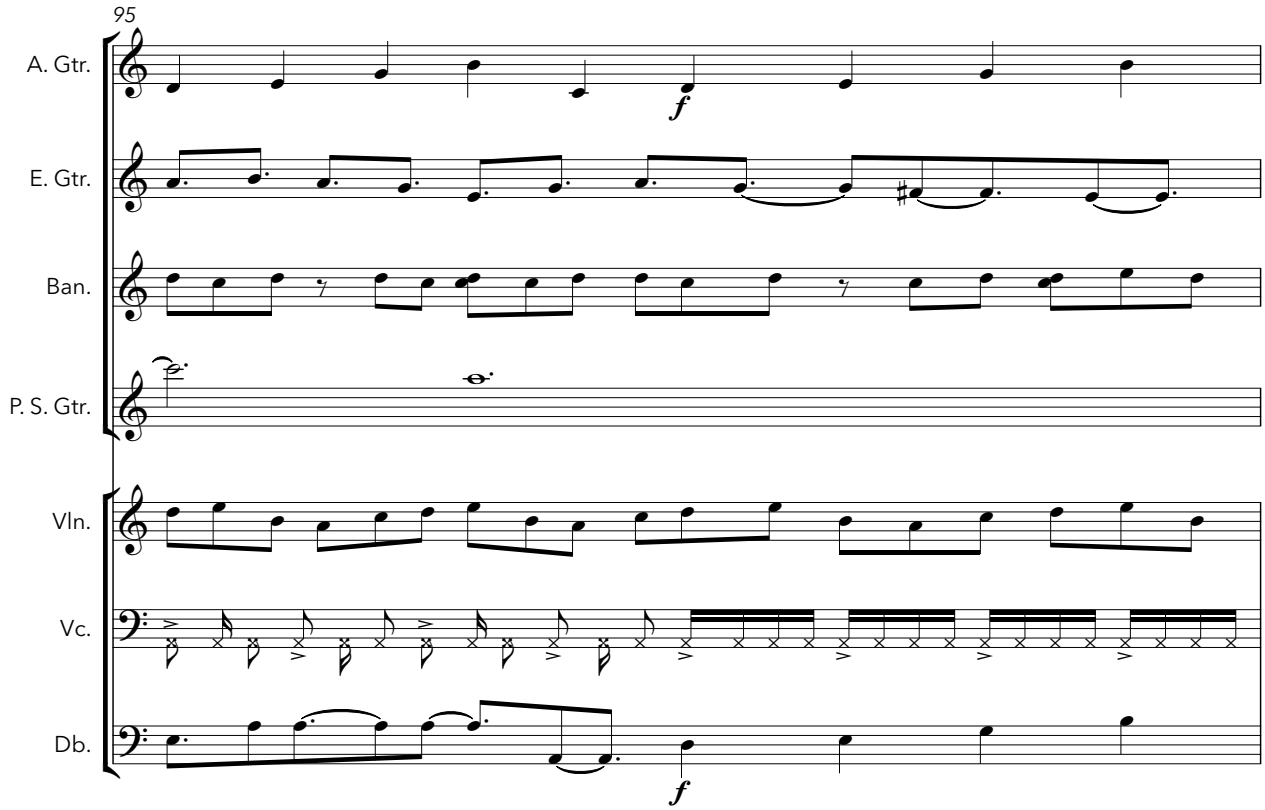
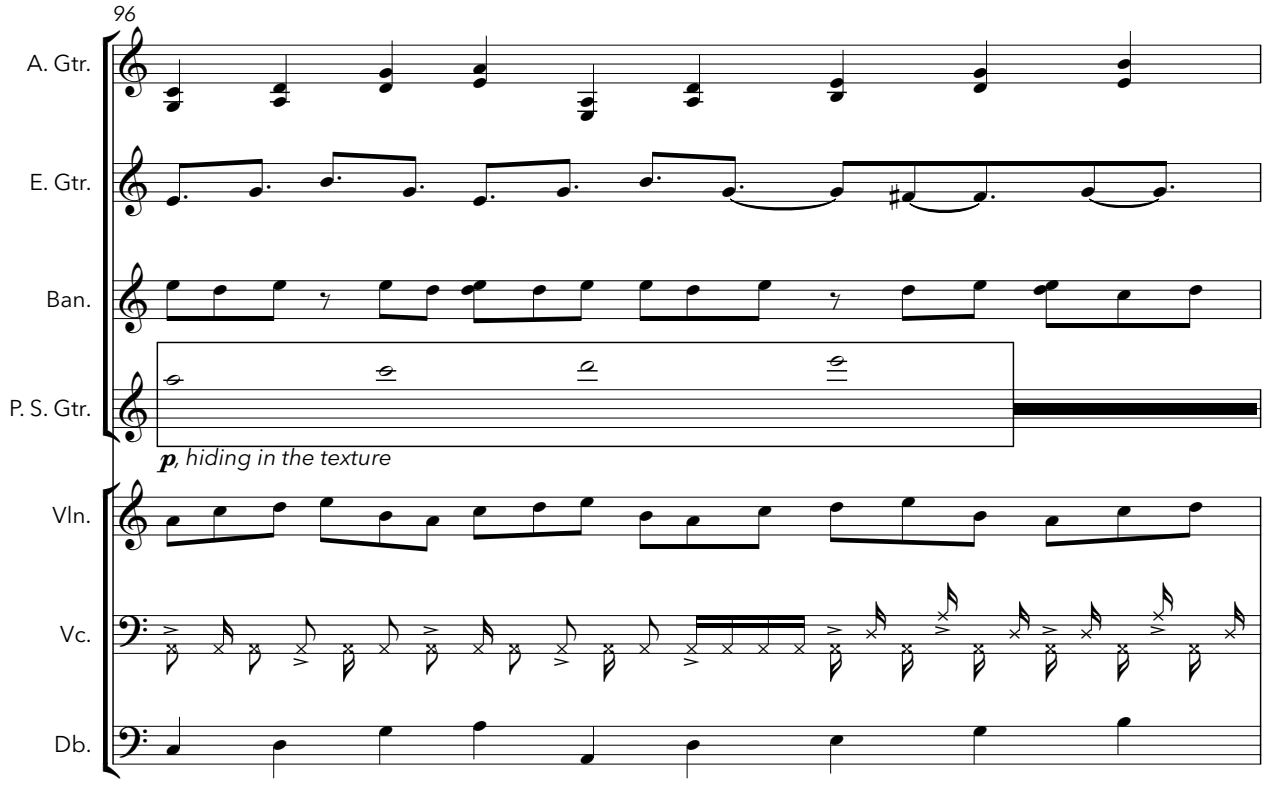
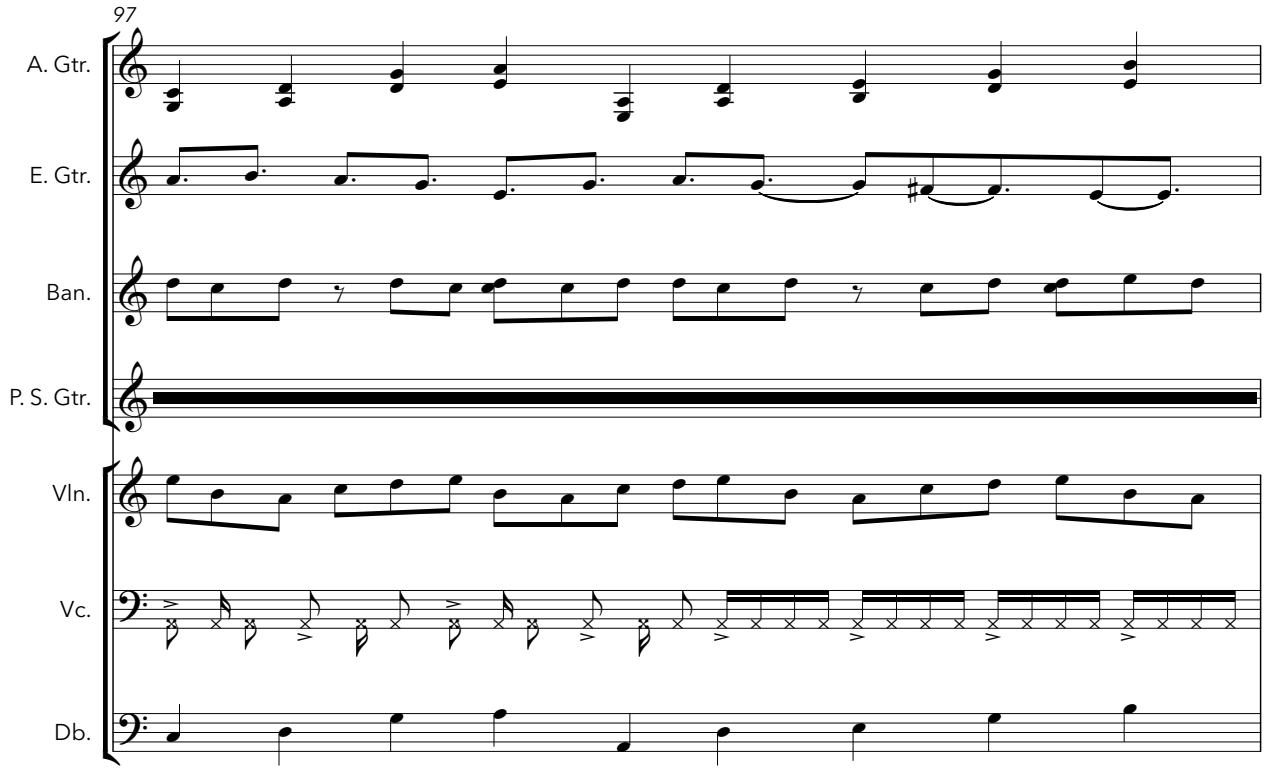
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
90
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

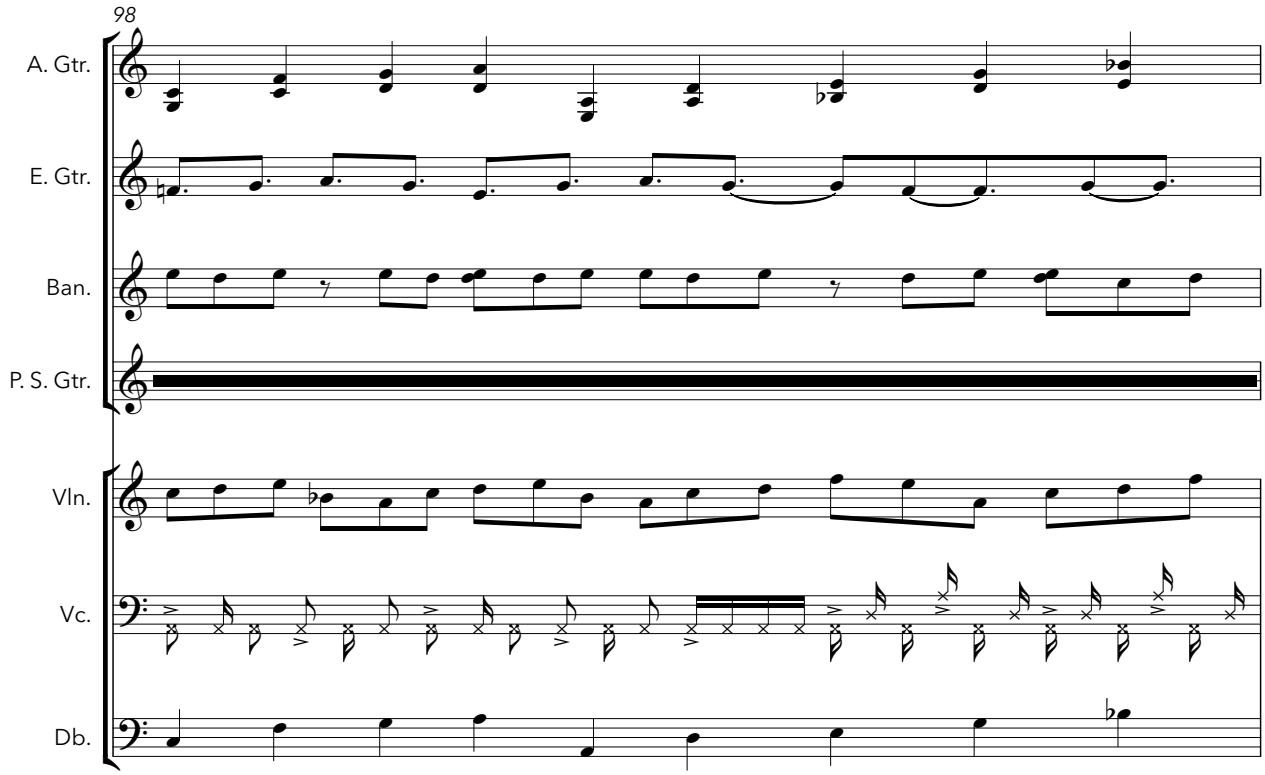

91
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
92
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


93
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
94
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


95
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
f
f


96
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
p, hiding in the texture
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


97
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


98
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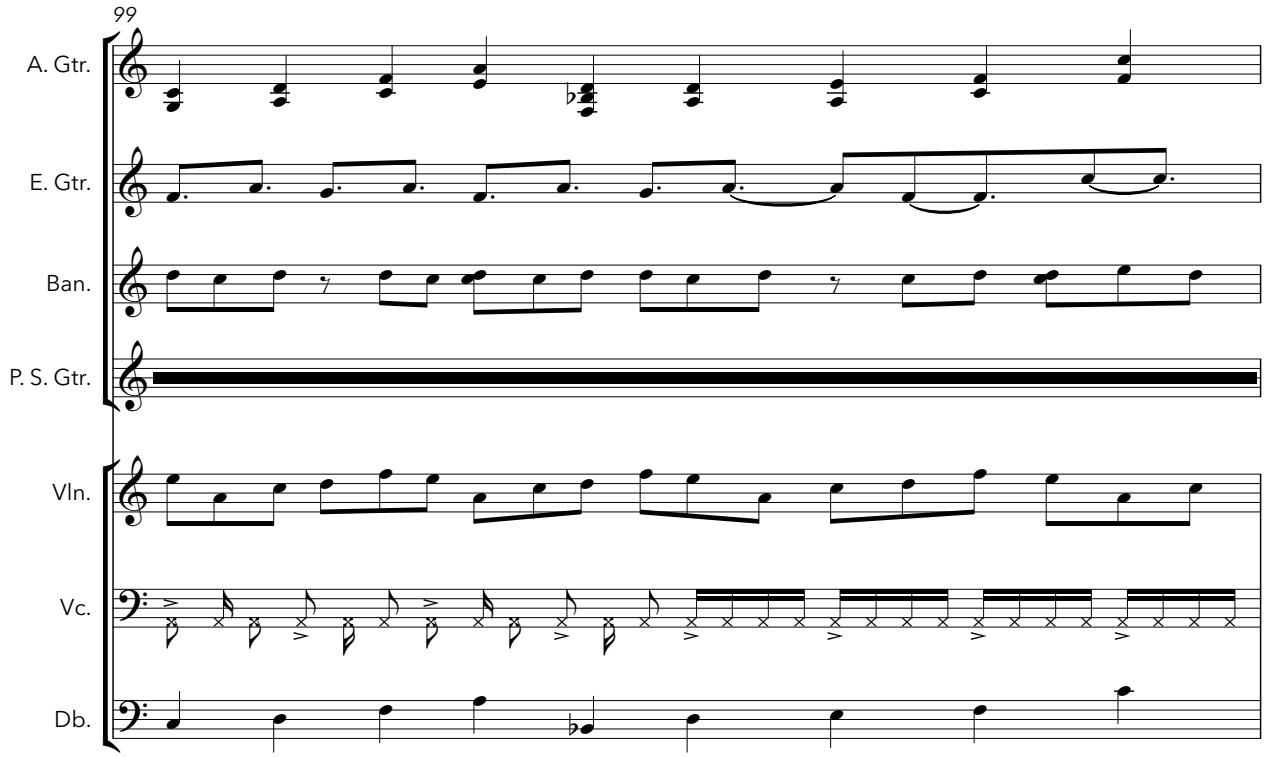
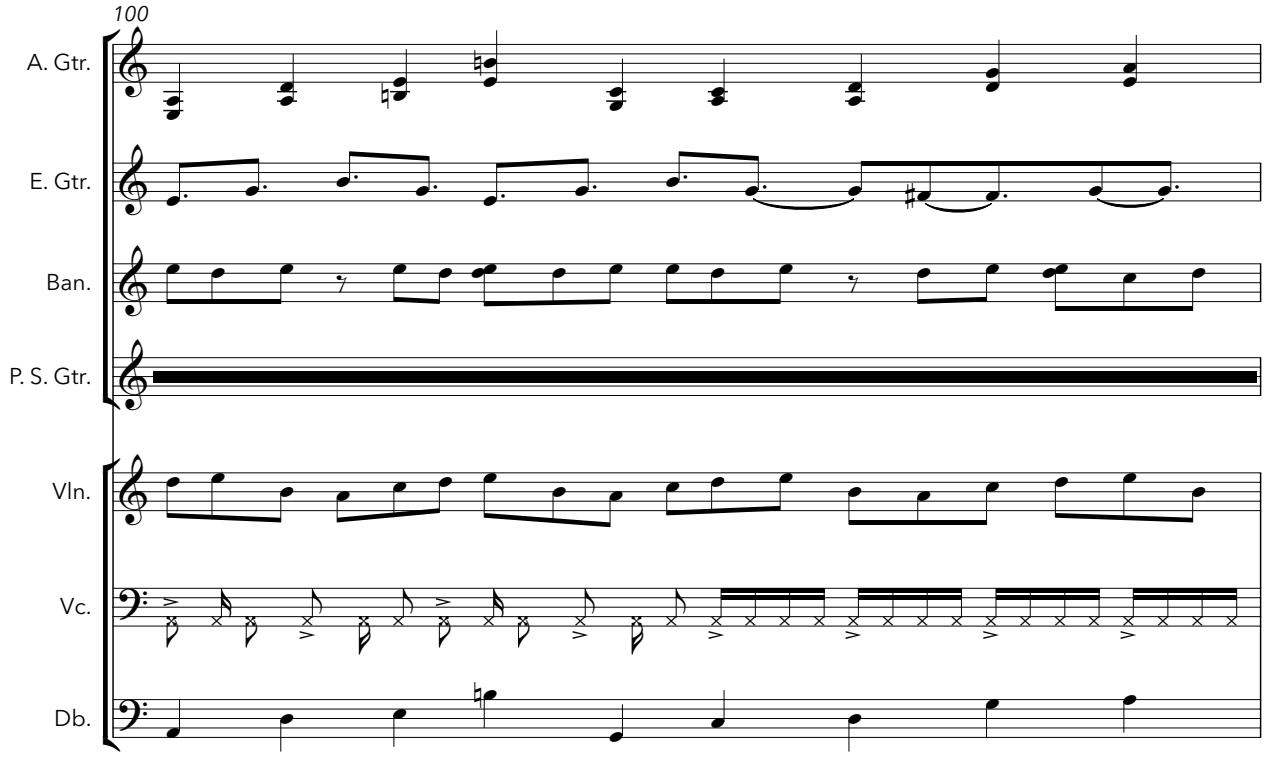
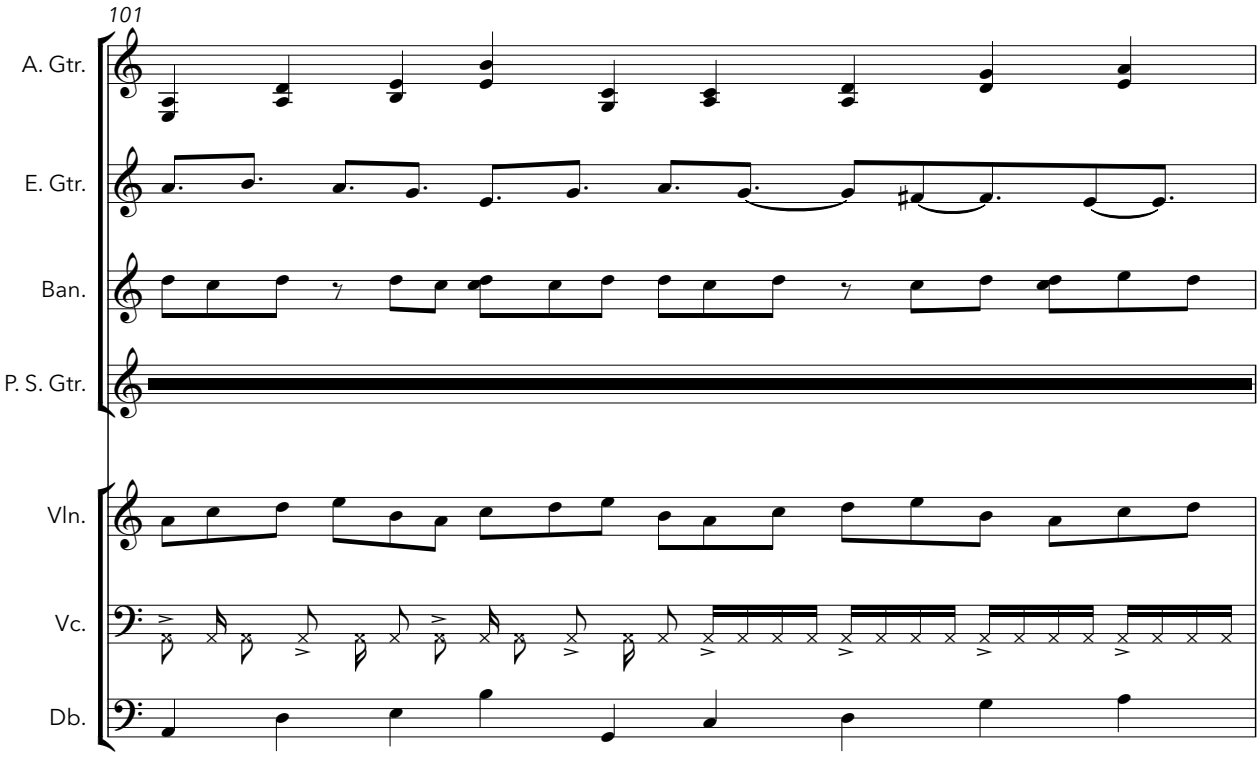
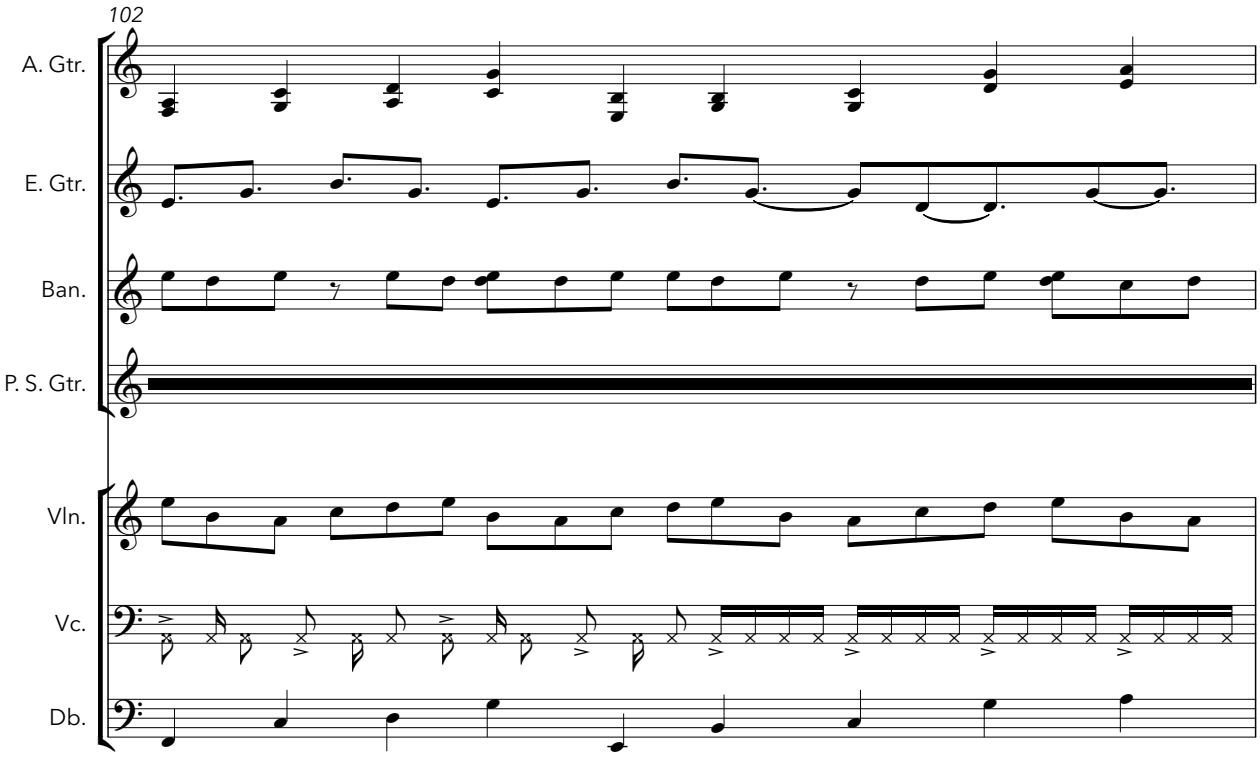
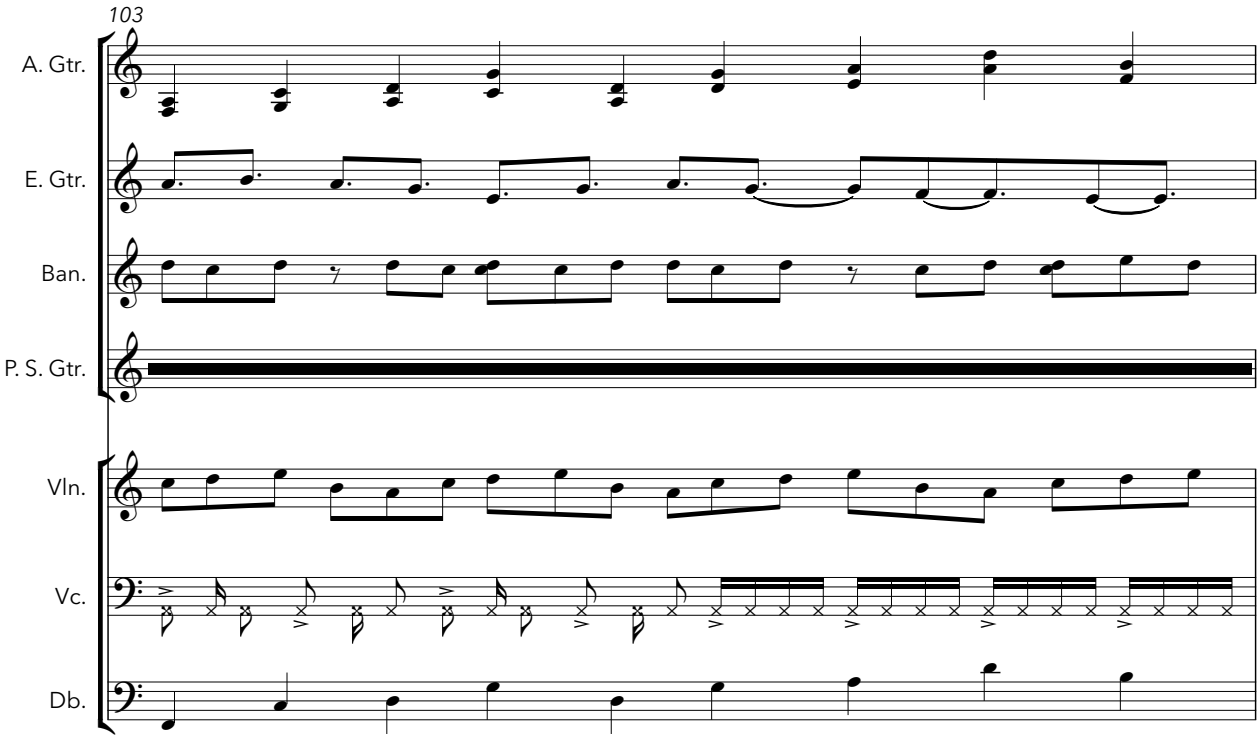
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

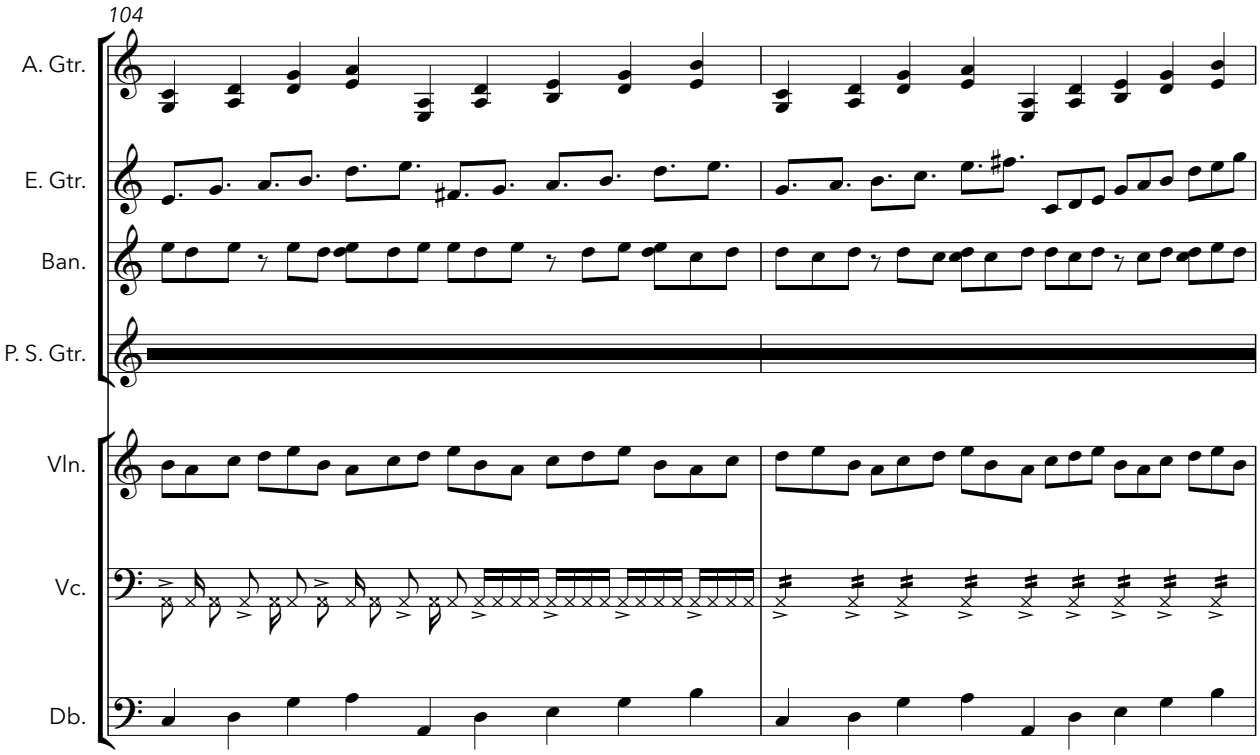

99
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

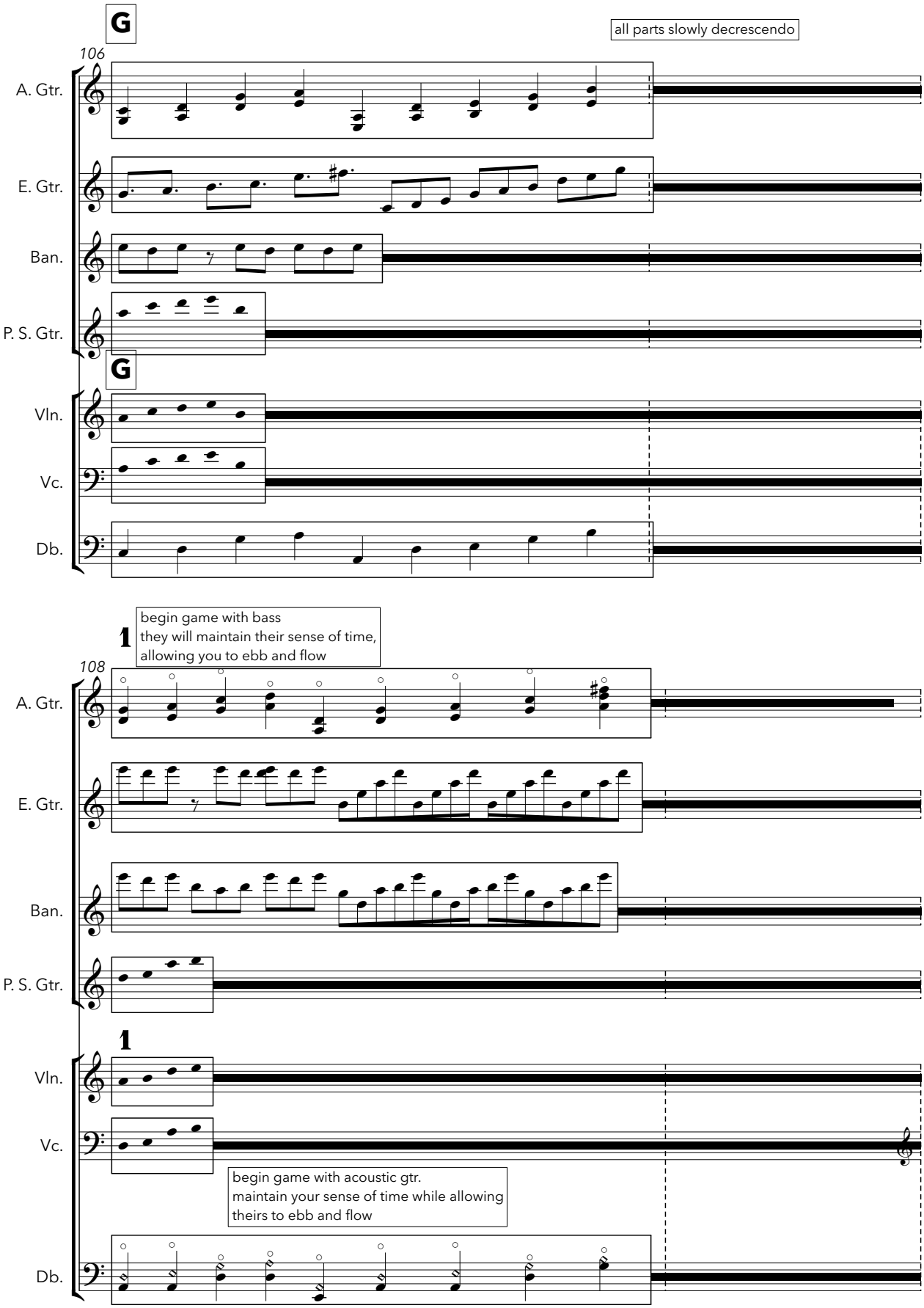

100
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

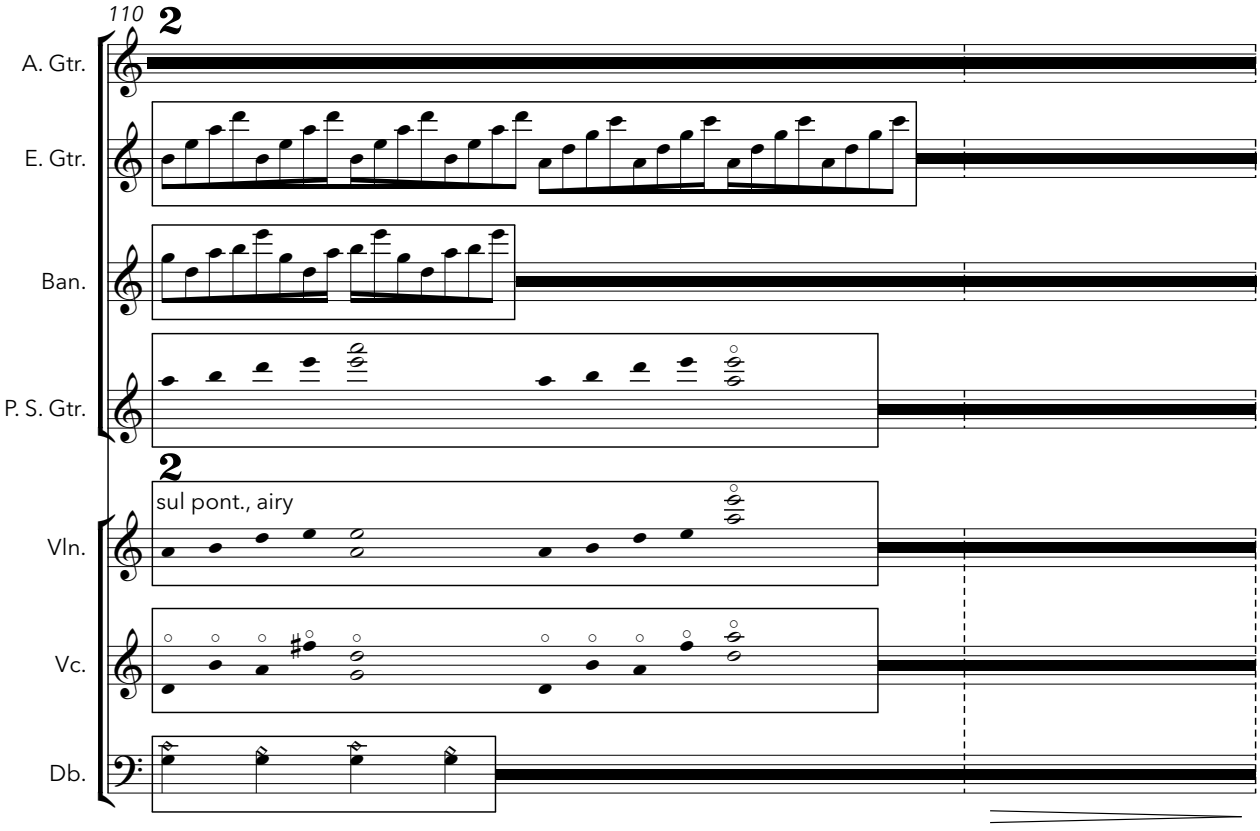

101
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

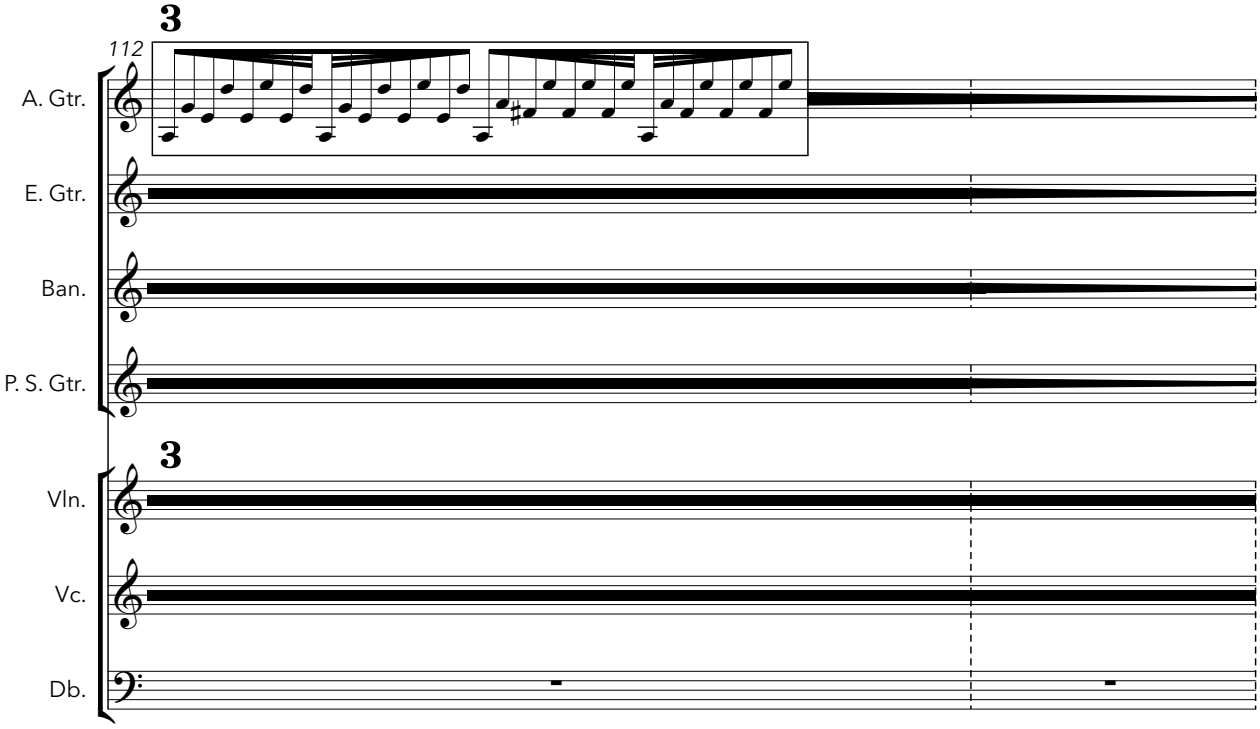

102
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

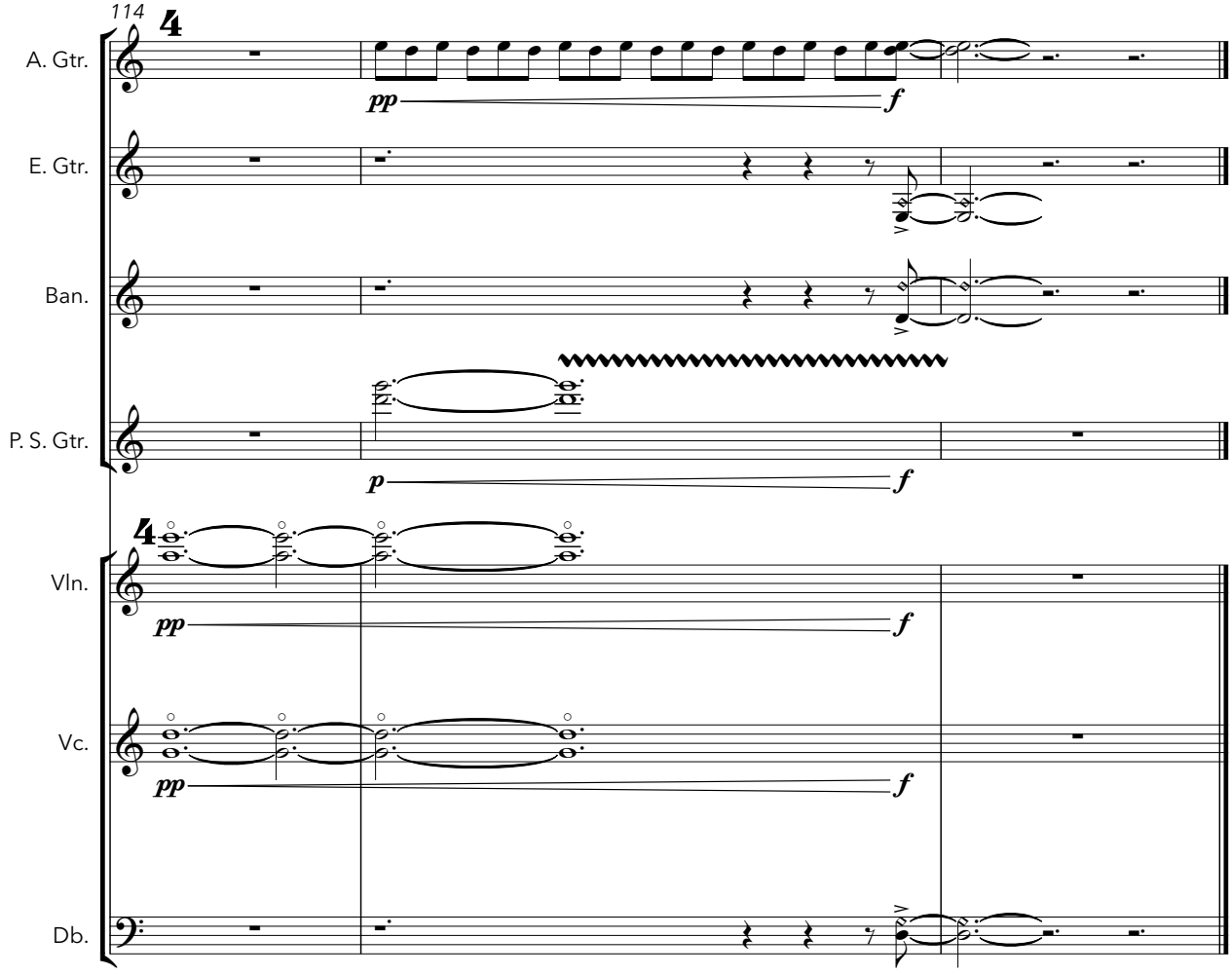

103
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


104
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


G
all parts slowly decrescendo
106
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
G
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
1
begin game with bass
they will maintain their sense of time,
allowing you to ebb and flow
108
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
1
Vln.
Vc.
begin game with acoustic gtr.
maintain your sense of time while allowing
theirs to ebb and flow
Db.


110
2
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
2
sul pont., airy
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


3
112
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
3
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


114
A. Gtr.
E. Gtr.
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
pp
f
p
f

Plane of Water/Sea of Grass

for piano trio

Matt Magerkurth

2020-2021

Performance Notes

This piece is part of a series of folk-music-related chamber pieces in part prompted by the prairie landscapes I associate with my family in rural Kansas and my life as a young adult in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This piece, for piano trio, is the most traditional classical piece of the set in both notation and medium, but should feel alternatively classical, folky, and even free and jammy at different intervals.

When there are continuous stretches of sixteenth notes, the piece should feel driving and very metric, as though it was being played with a drummer. The second half of the piece, beginning at letter G, has an optional violin improvised solo from H-J. Players who require a composed part may contact the composer to send one.

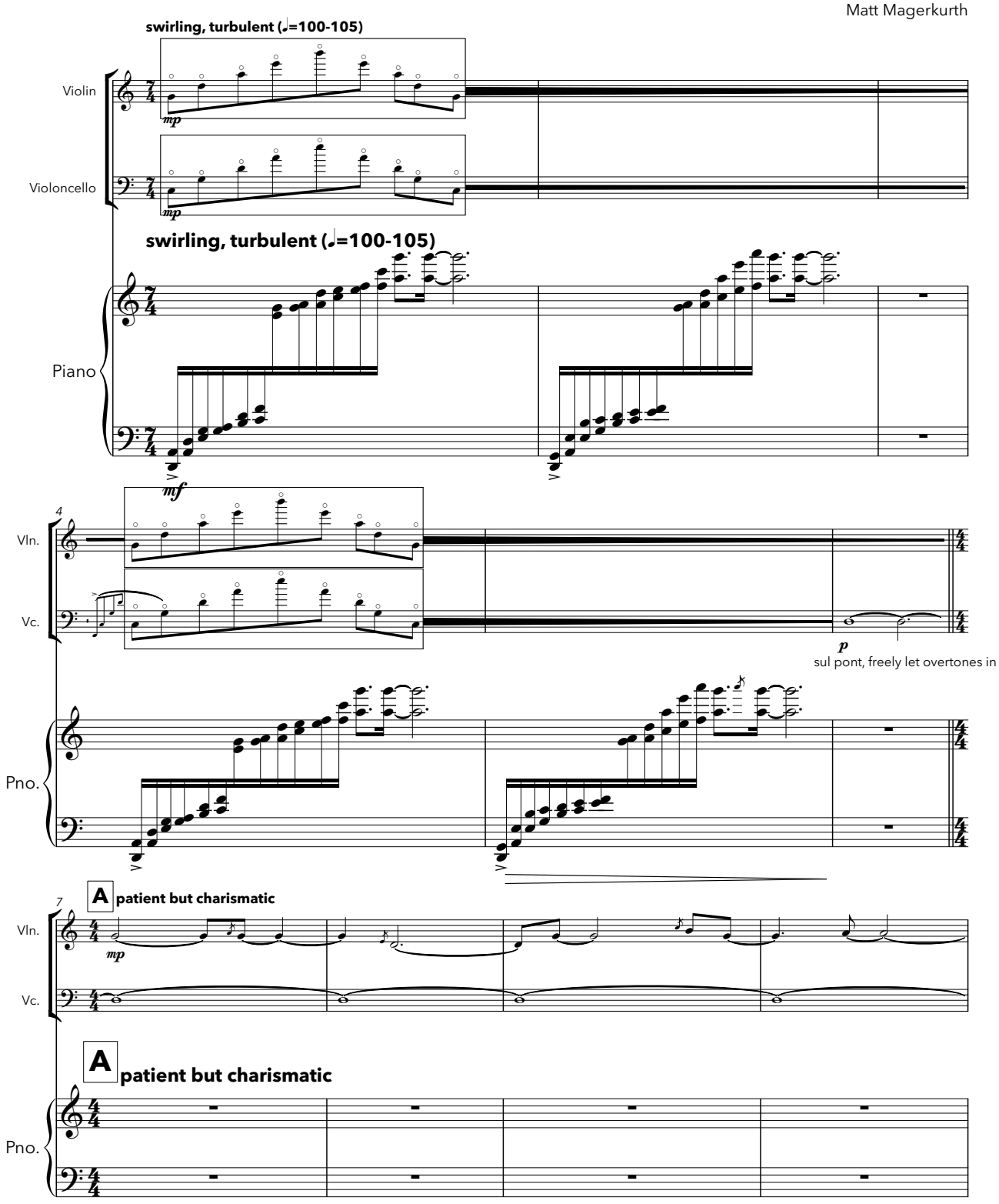
In all circumstances, boxed musical material is to be repeated in any rhythm or sequence.

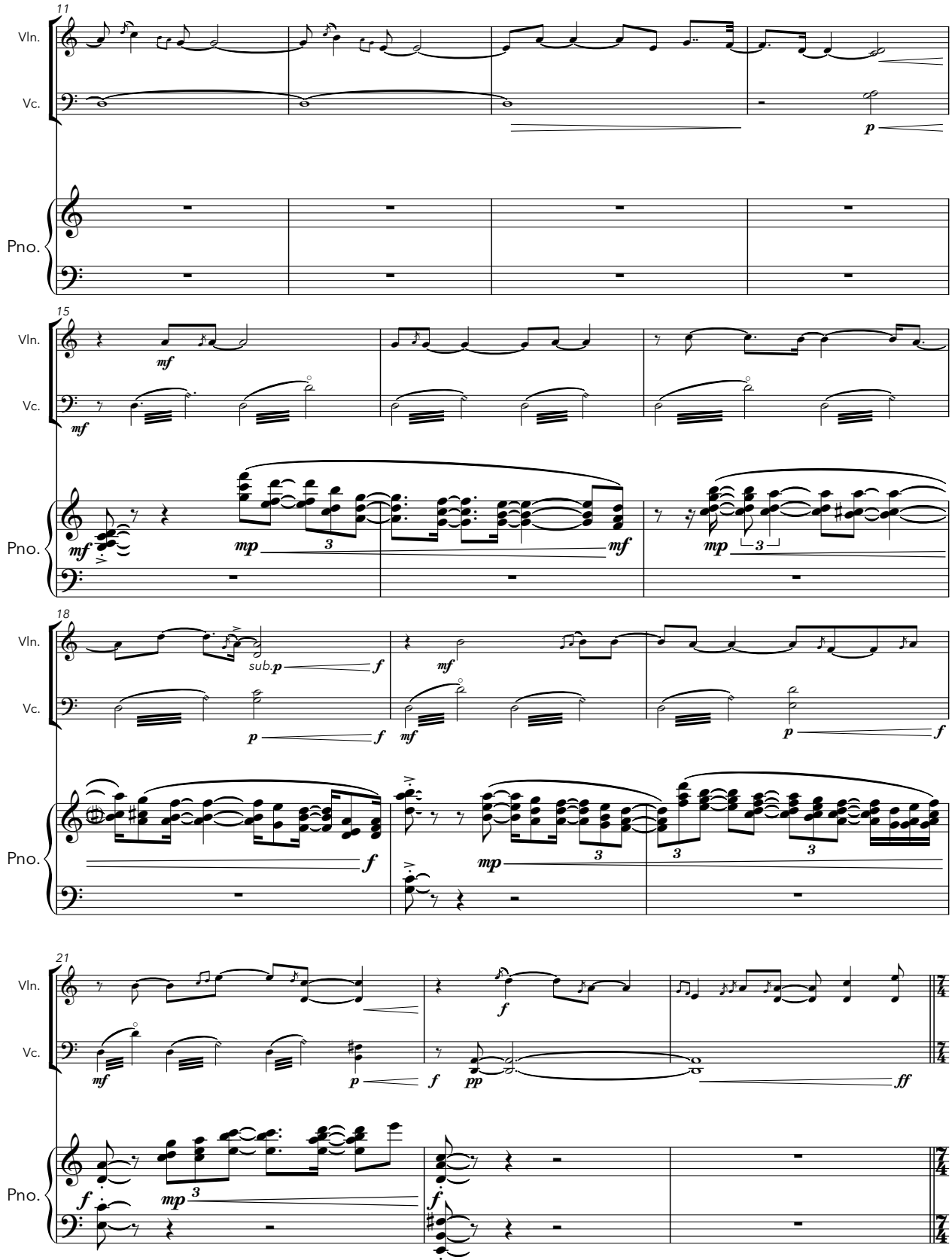
Approximate Duration: 10'

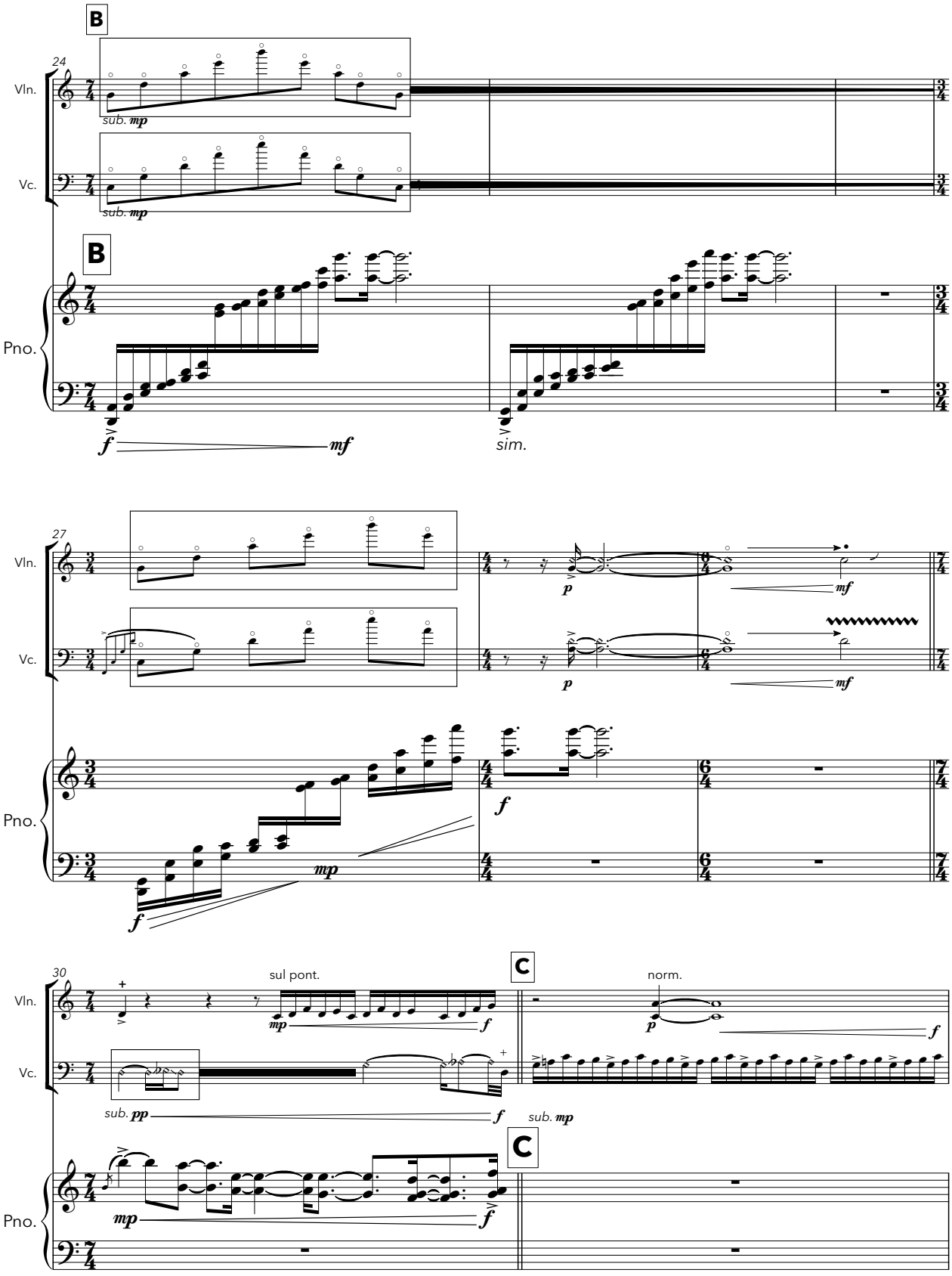
PLANE OF WATER/SEA OF GRASS

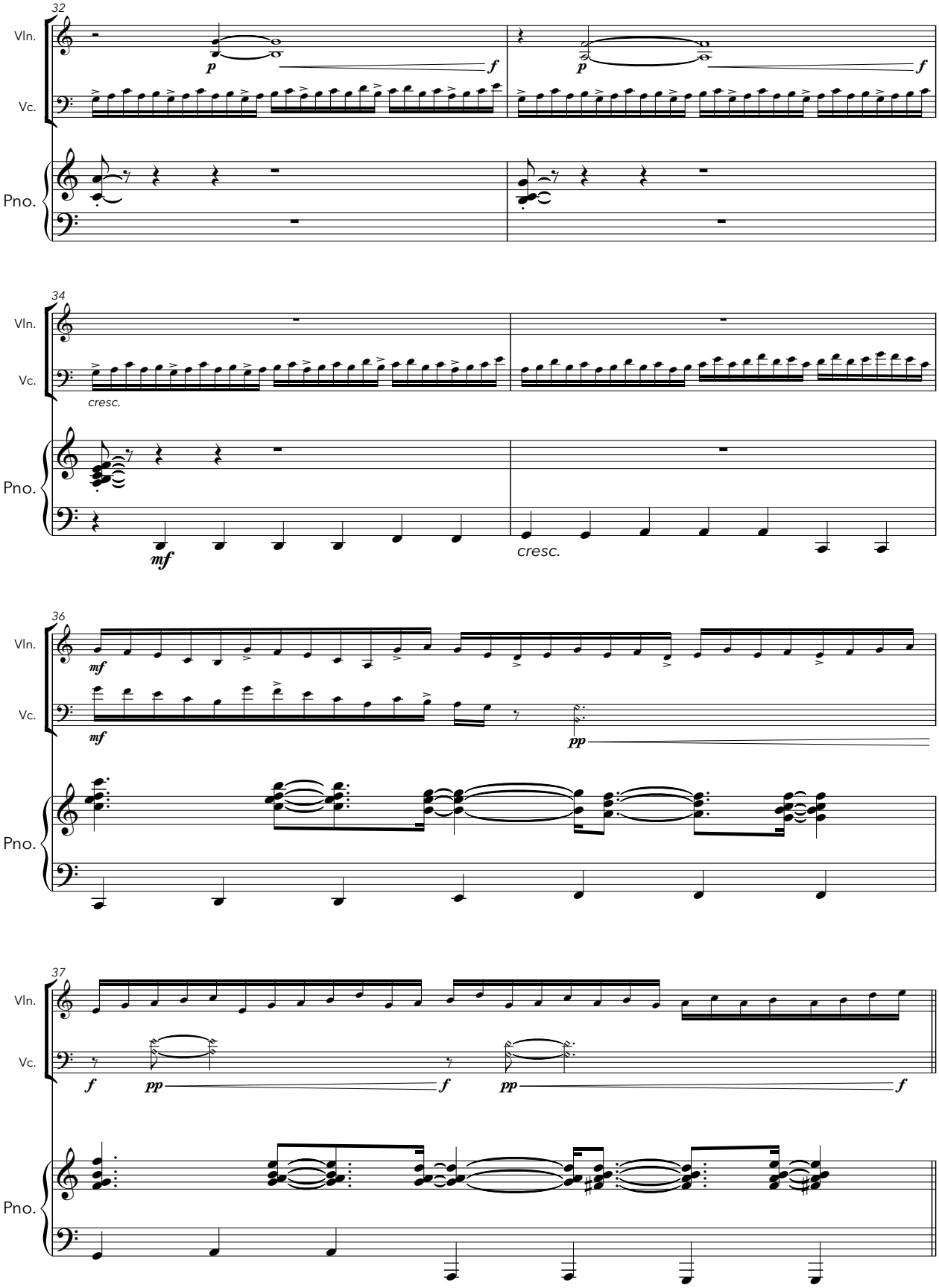
for piano trio

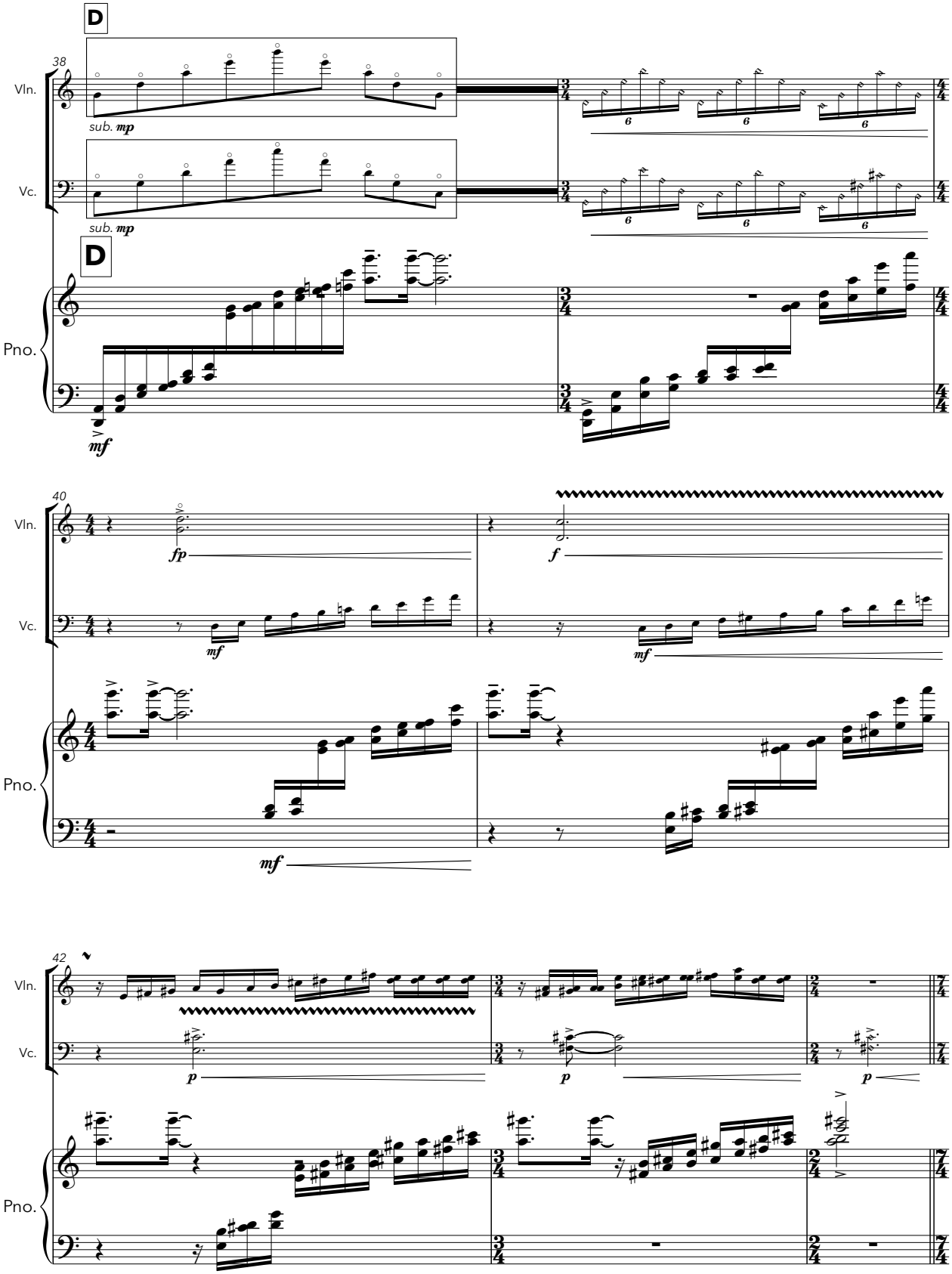
Matt Magerkurth

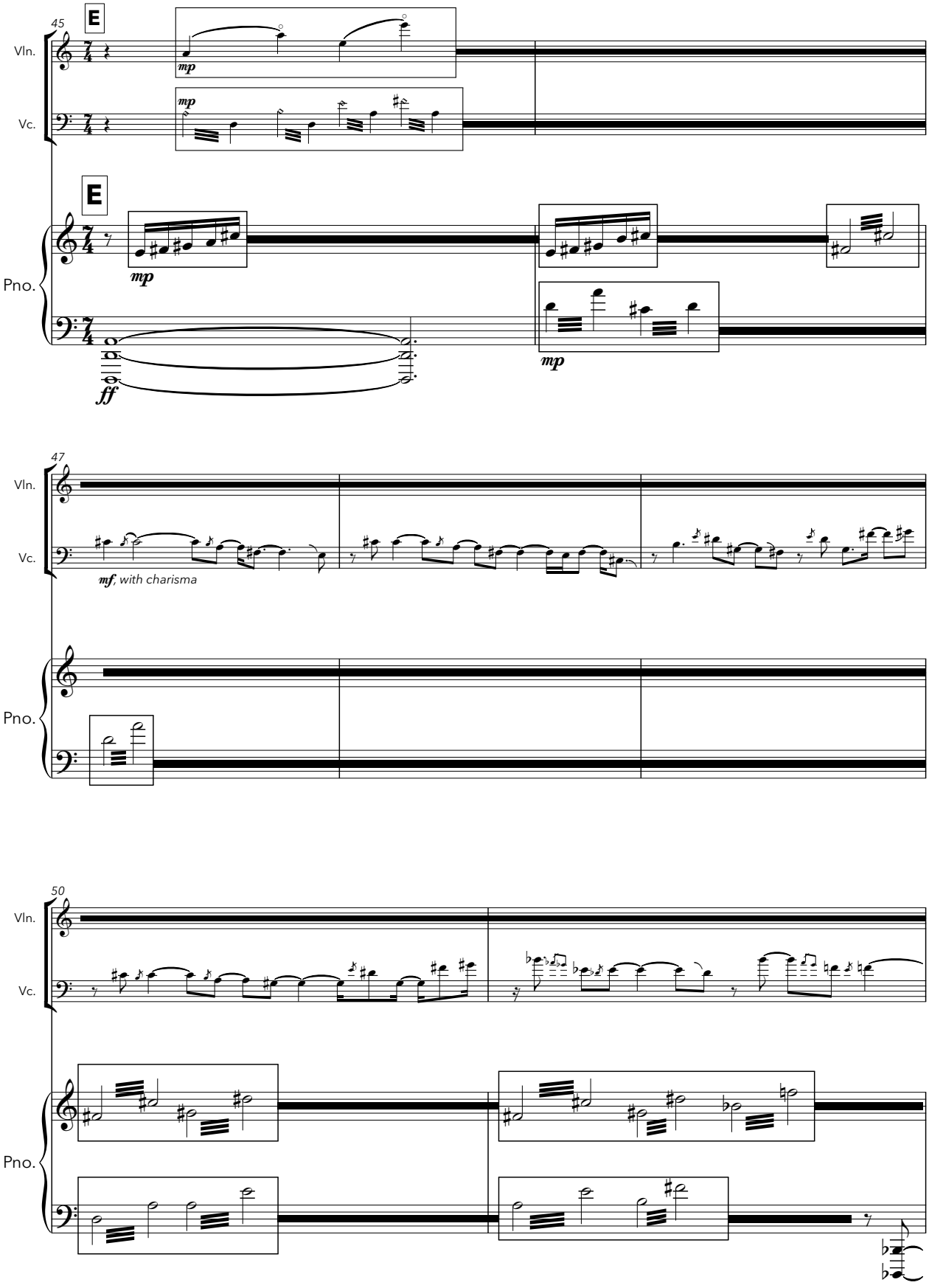


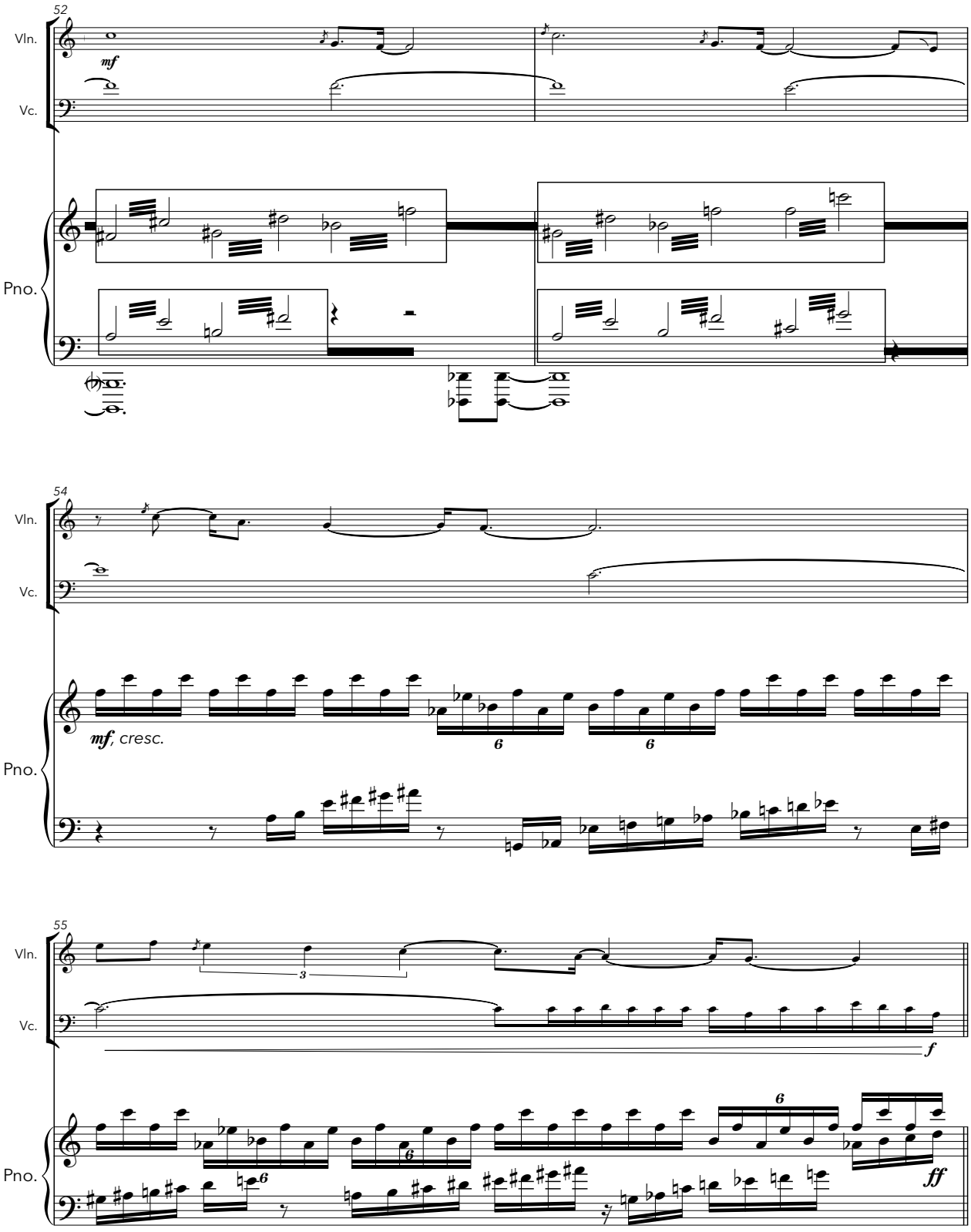

11
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
p
15
mf
mp
3
18
sub.p
f
21
pp
ff
7/4

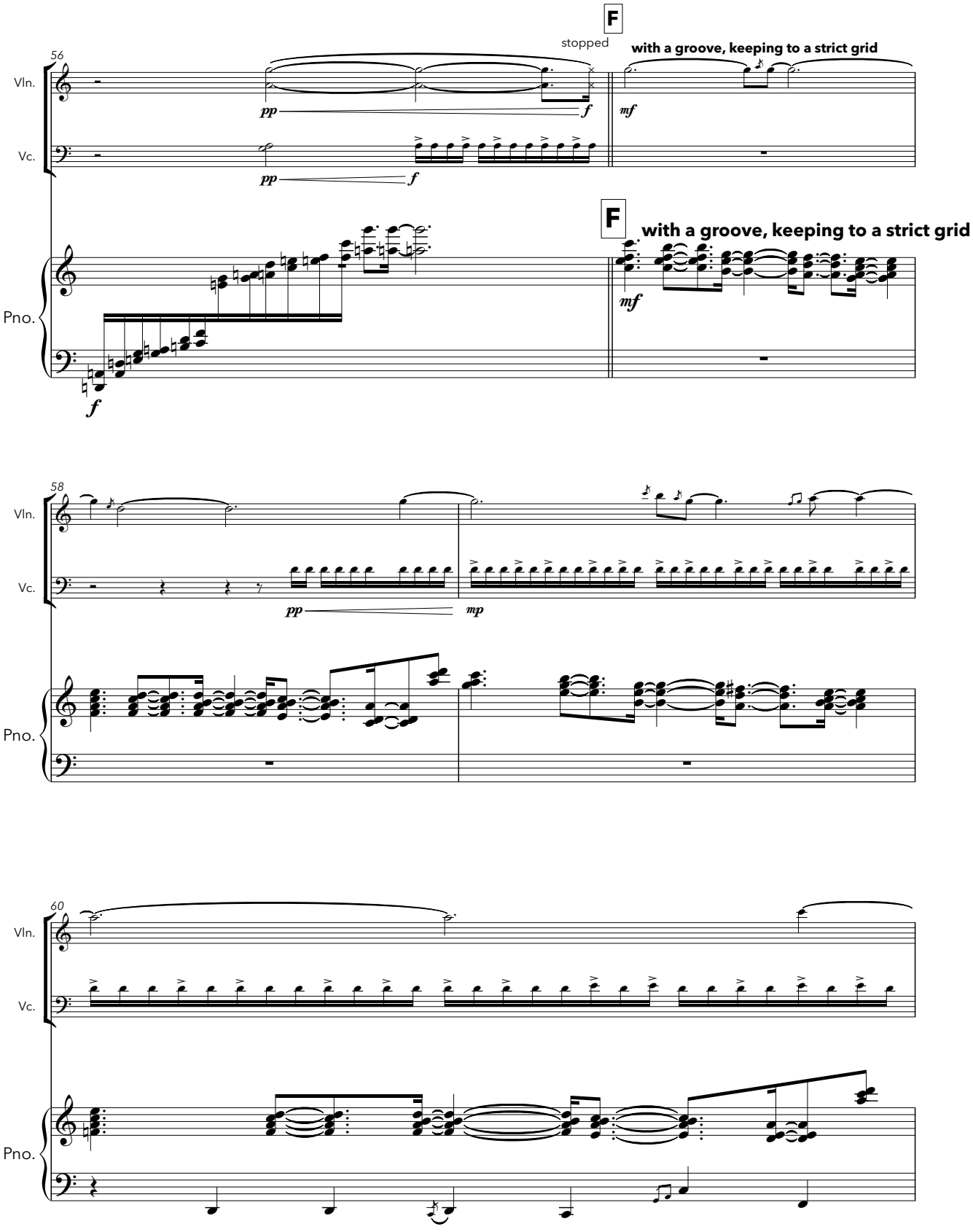

B
24
Vln.
sub. mp
Vc.
sub. mp
B
Pno.
f
mf
sim.
27
Vln.
p
mf
Vc.
p
mf
Pno.
f
mp
f
30
sul pont.
C
norm.
Vln.
mp
f
p
f
Vc.
sub. pp
f
sub. mp
C
Pno.
mp
f

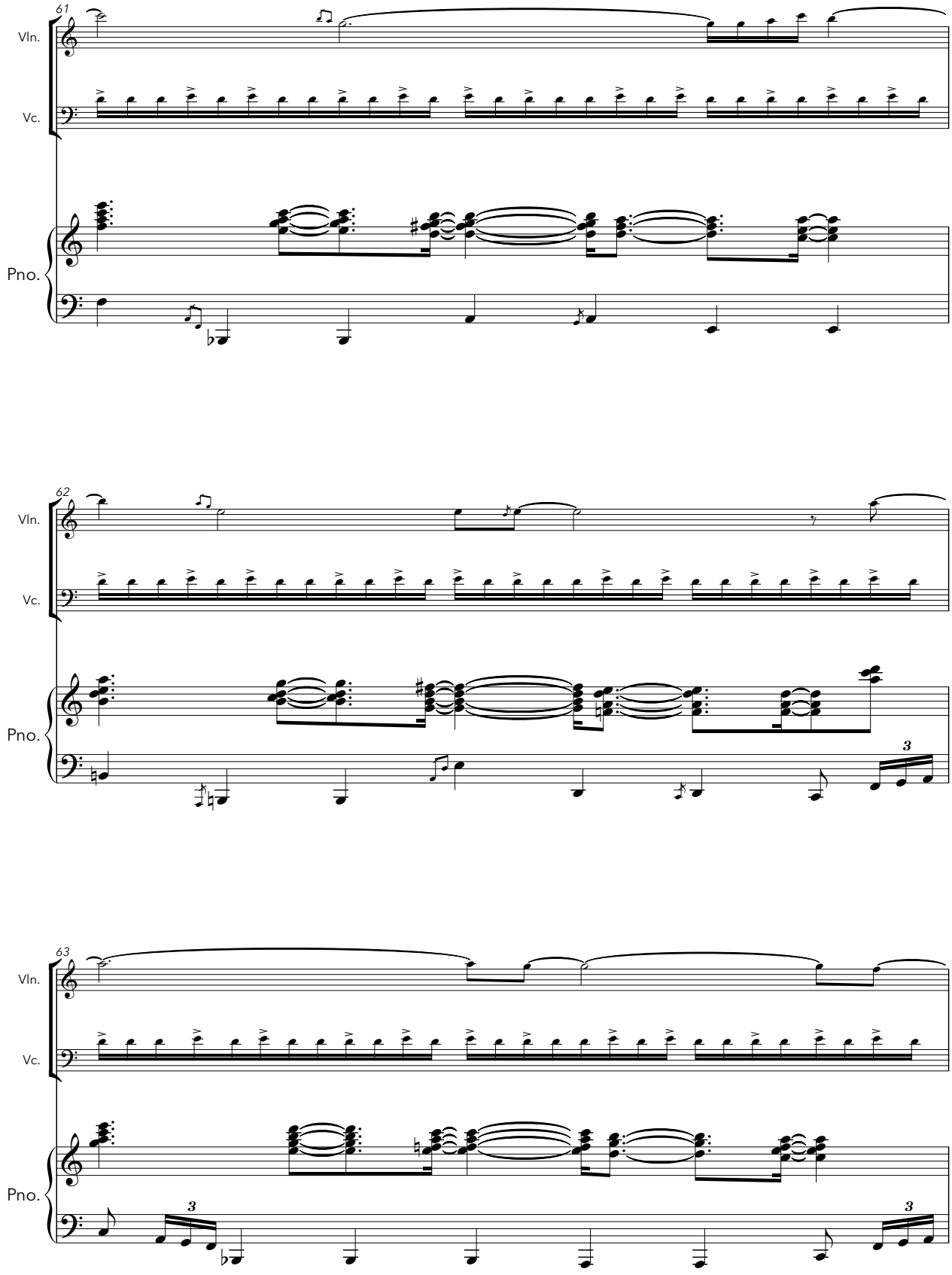

32
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
p
f
p
f
34
Vln.
Vc.
cresc.
Pno.
mf
cresc.
36
Vln.
mf
Vc.
mf
pp
Pno.
37
Vln.
Vc.
f
pp
f
pp
f
Pno.

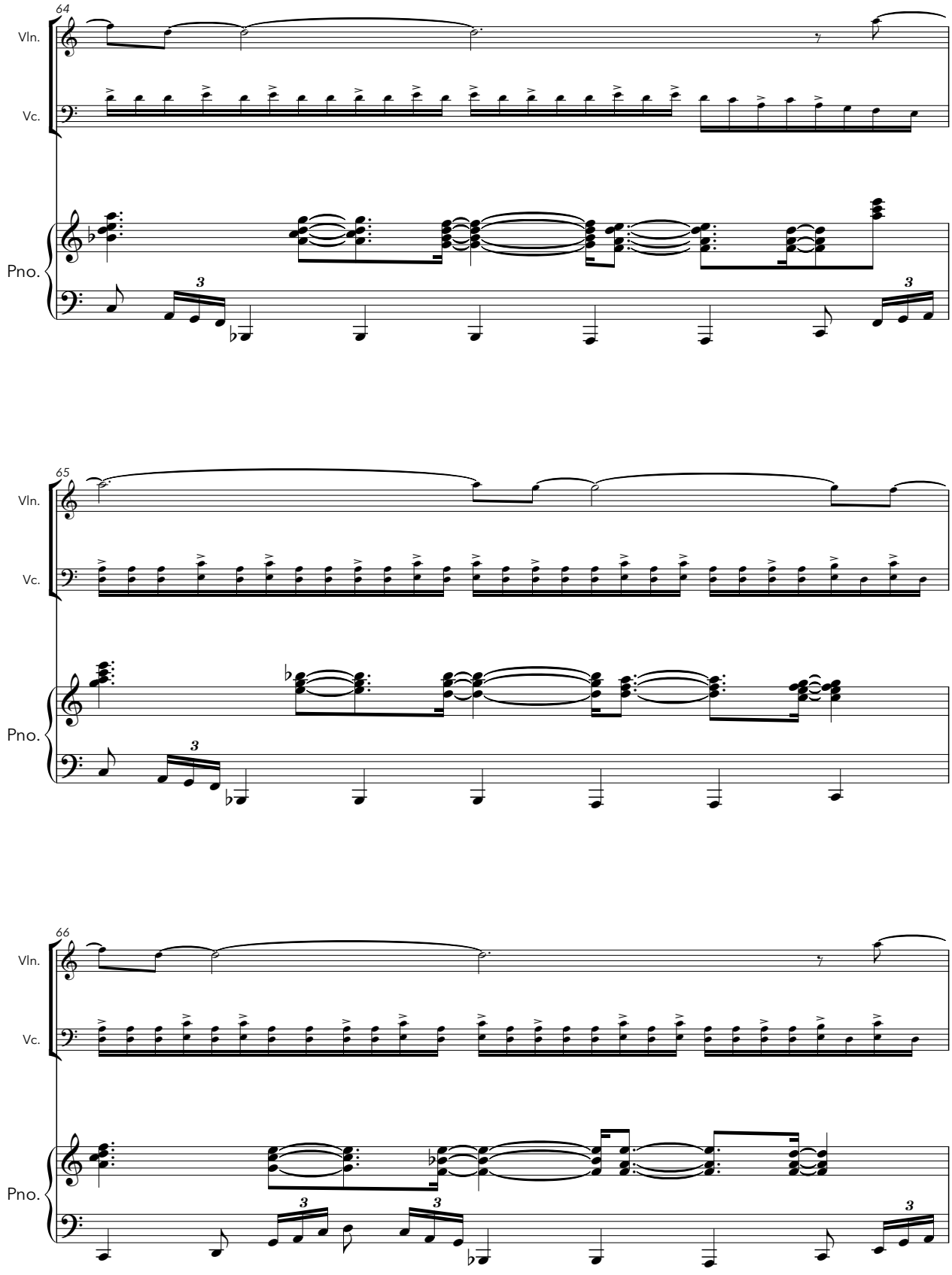

D
38
Vln.
sub. mp
Vc.
sub. mp
D
Pno.
mf
40
Vln.
fp
f
Vc.
mf
mf
Pno.
mf
42
Vln.
Vc.
p
p
p
Pno.

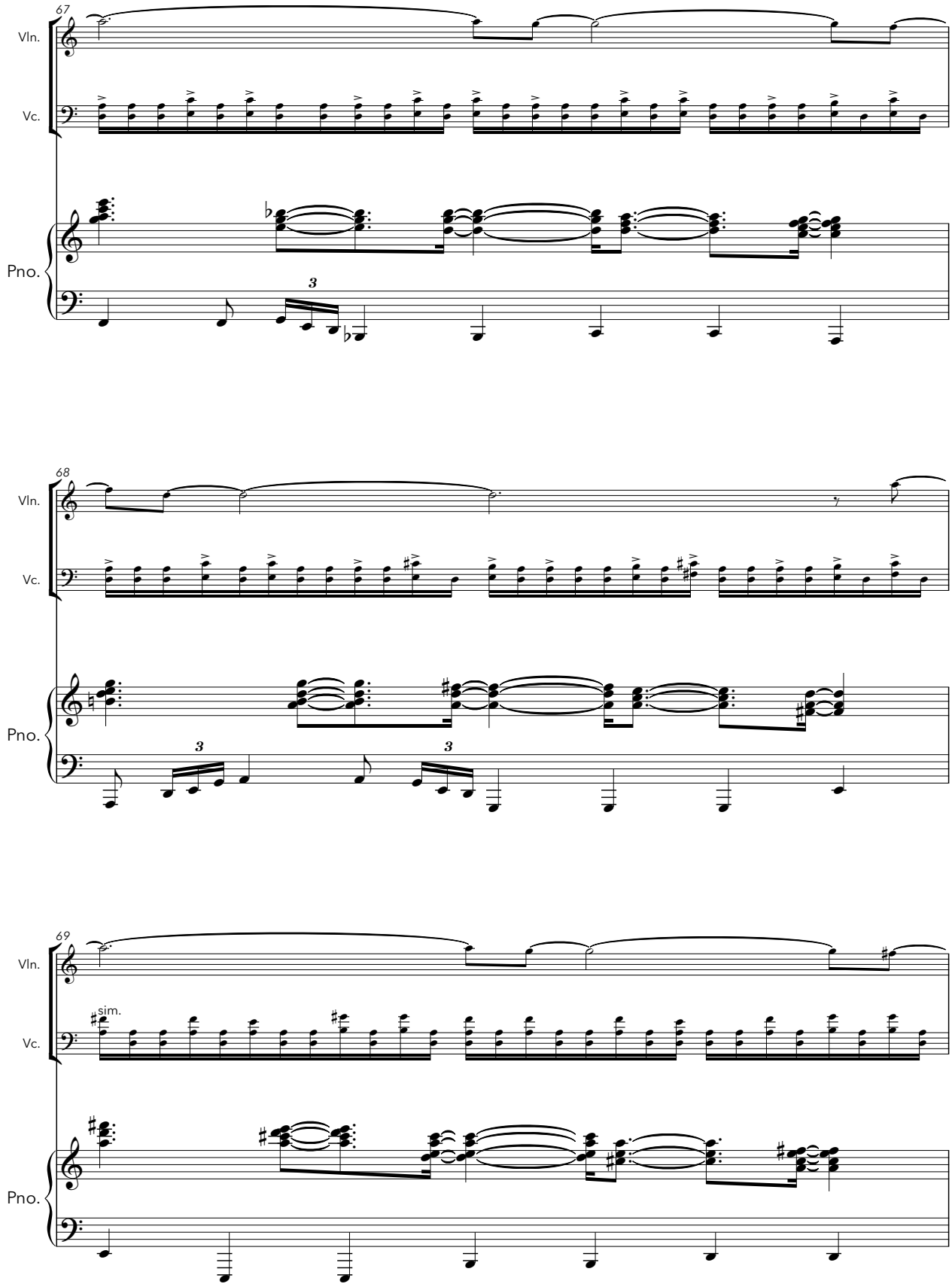

45
E
Vln.
Vc.
mp
mp
E
Pno.
mp
mp
ff
47
Vln.
Vc.
mf, with charisma
Pno.
50
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

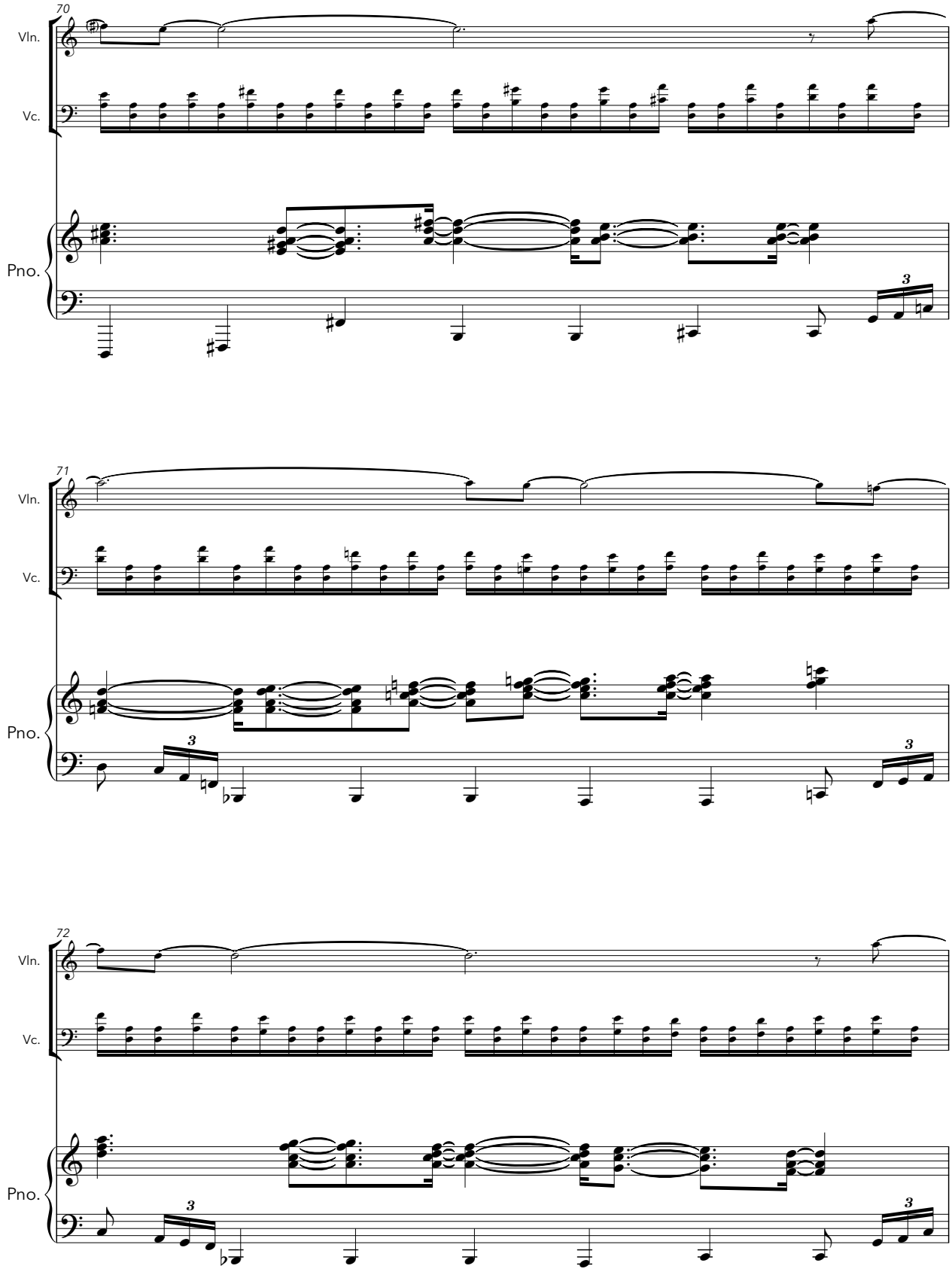

52
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
mf
54
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
mf, cresc.
55
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
f
ff

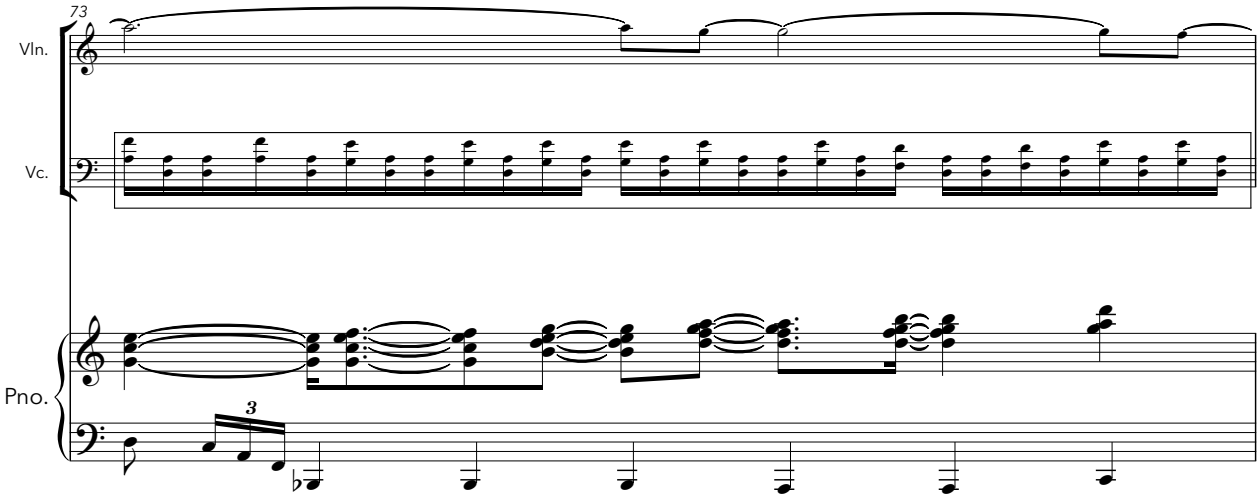

56
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
pp
f
stopped
F
with a groove, keeping to a strict grid
mf
58
mp
60

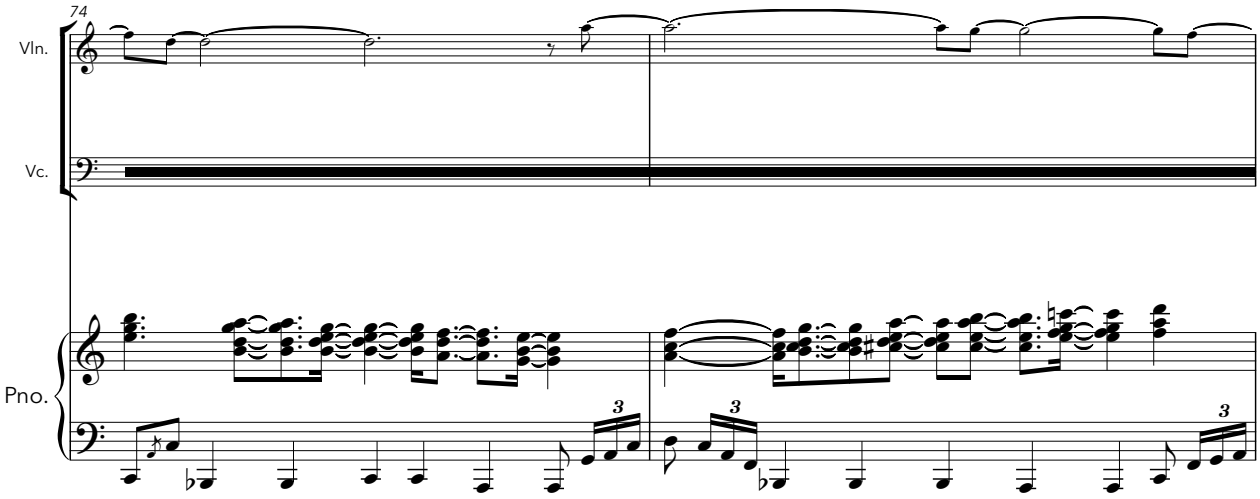

61
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
62
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
3
63
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
3
3


64
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
65
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
66
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

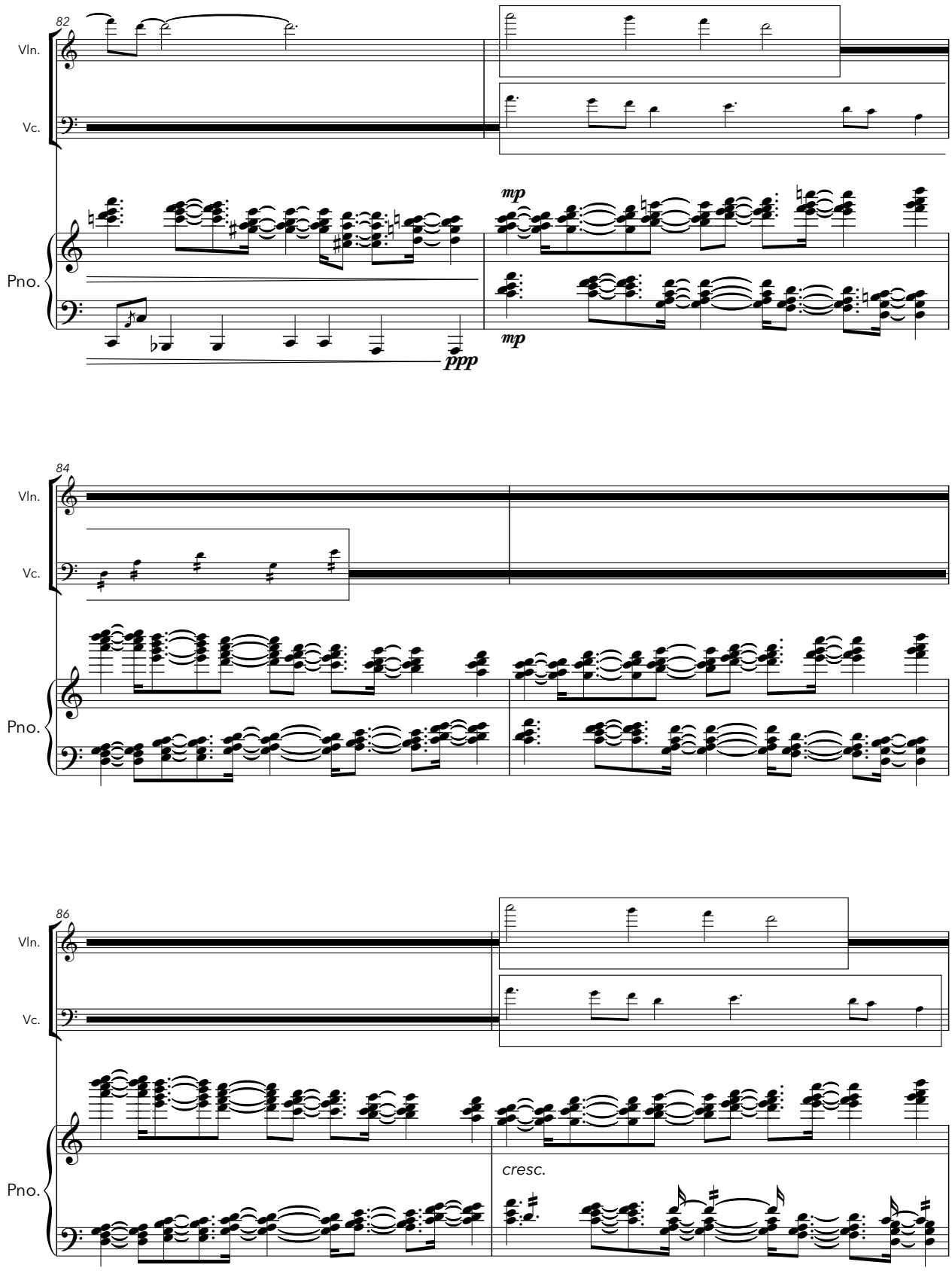

67
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
68
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
69
Vln.
sim.
Vc.
Pno.

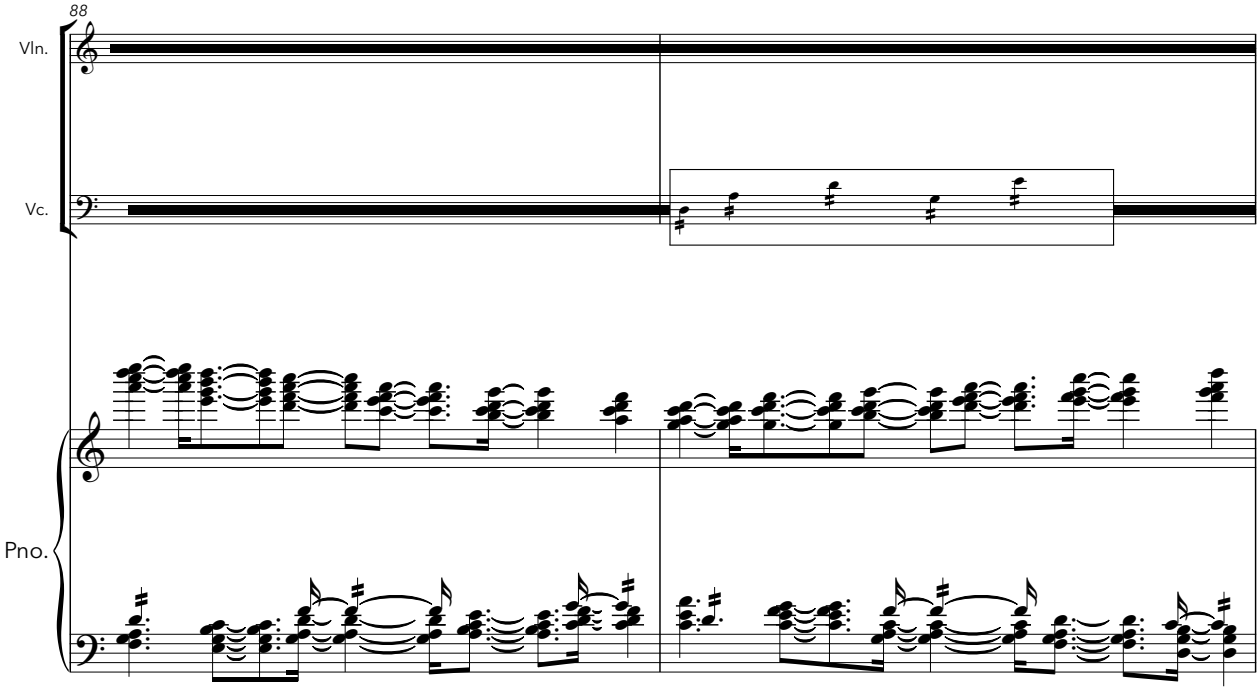

70
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
71
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
72
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

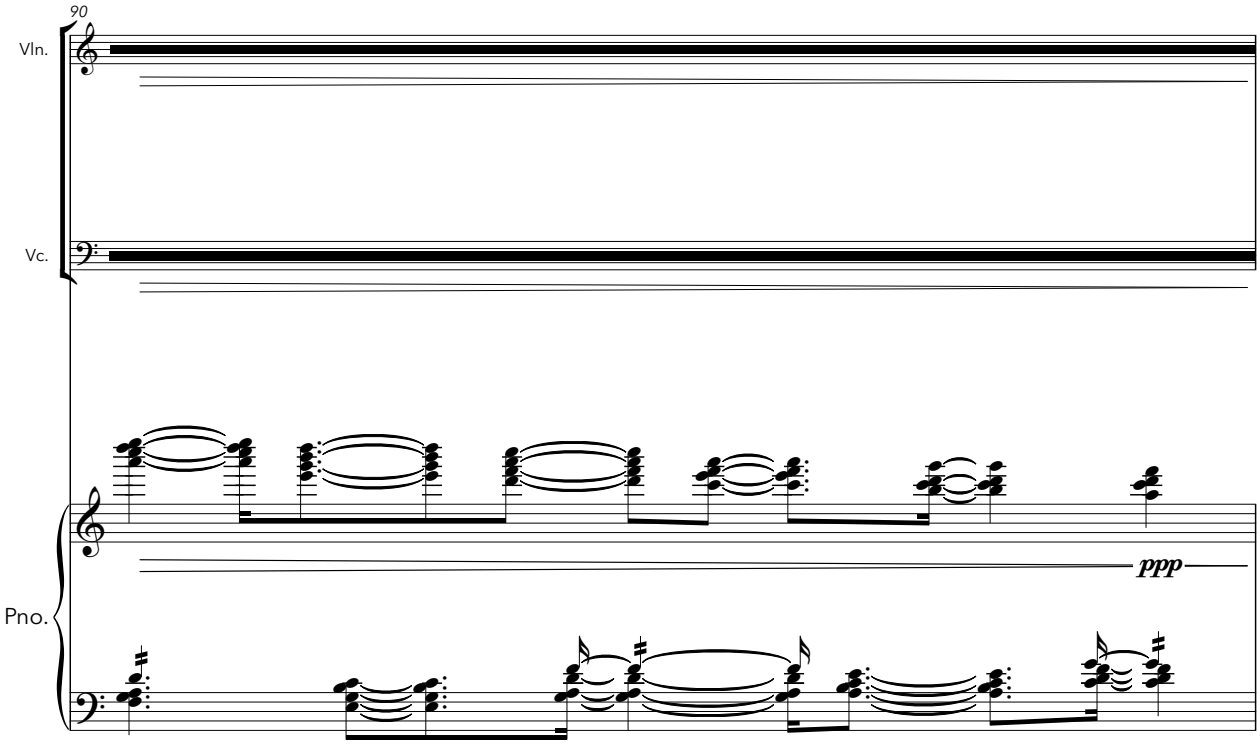

73
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
3

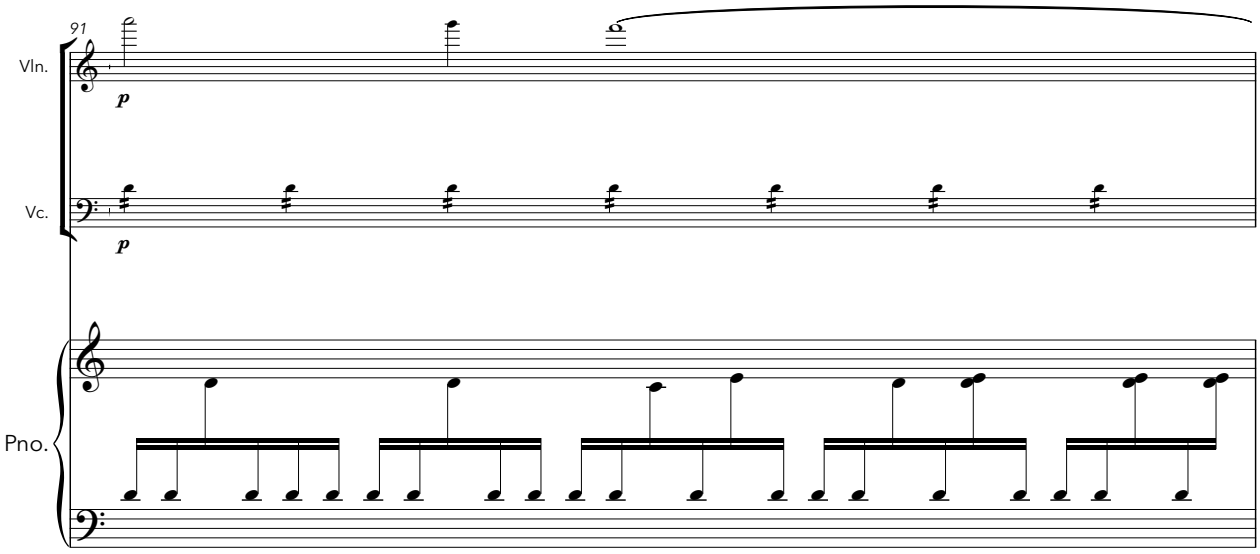

74
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
3
3
3

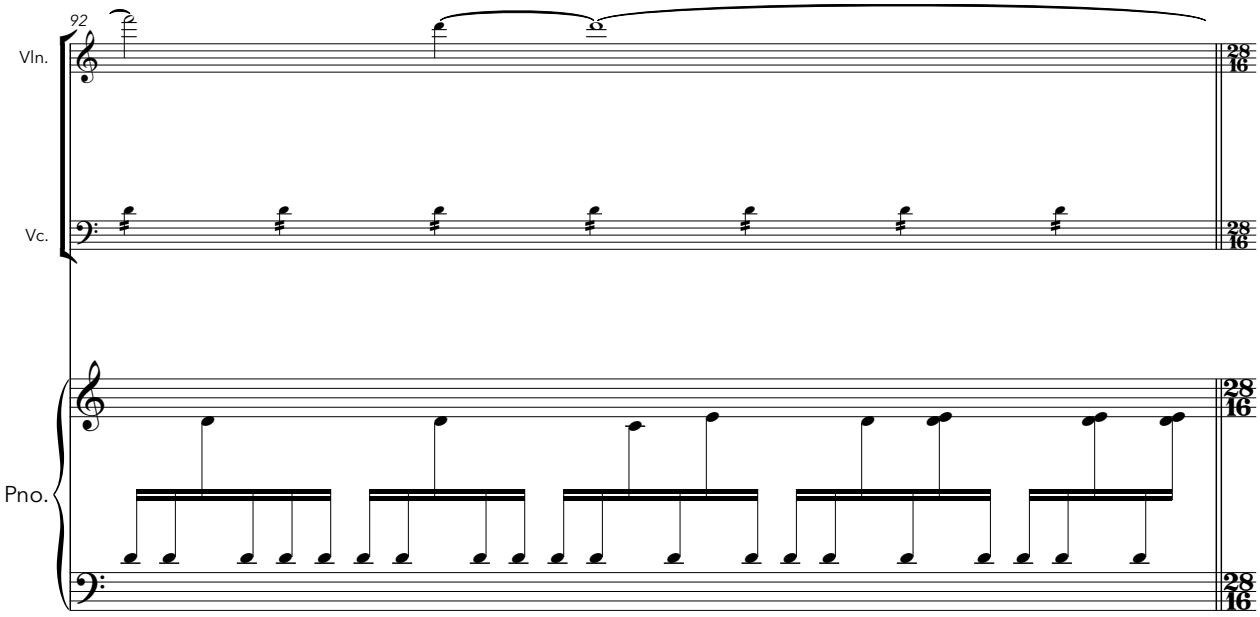
76
Vln.
Vc.
decresc.
Pno.
78
Vln.
Vc.
decresc.
Pno.
80
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

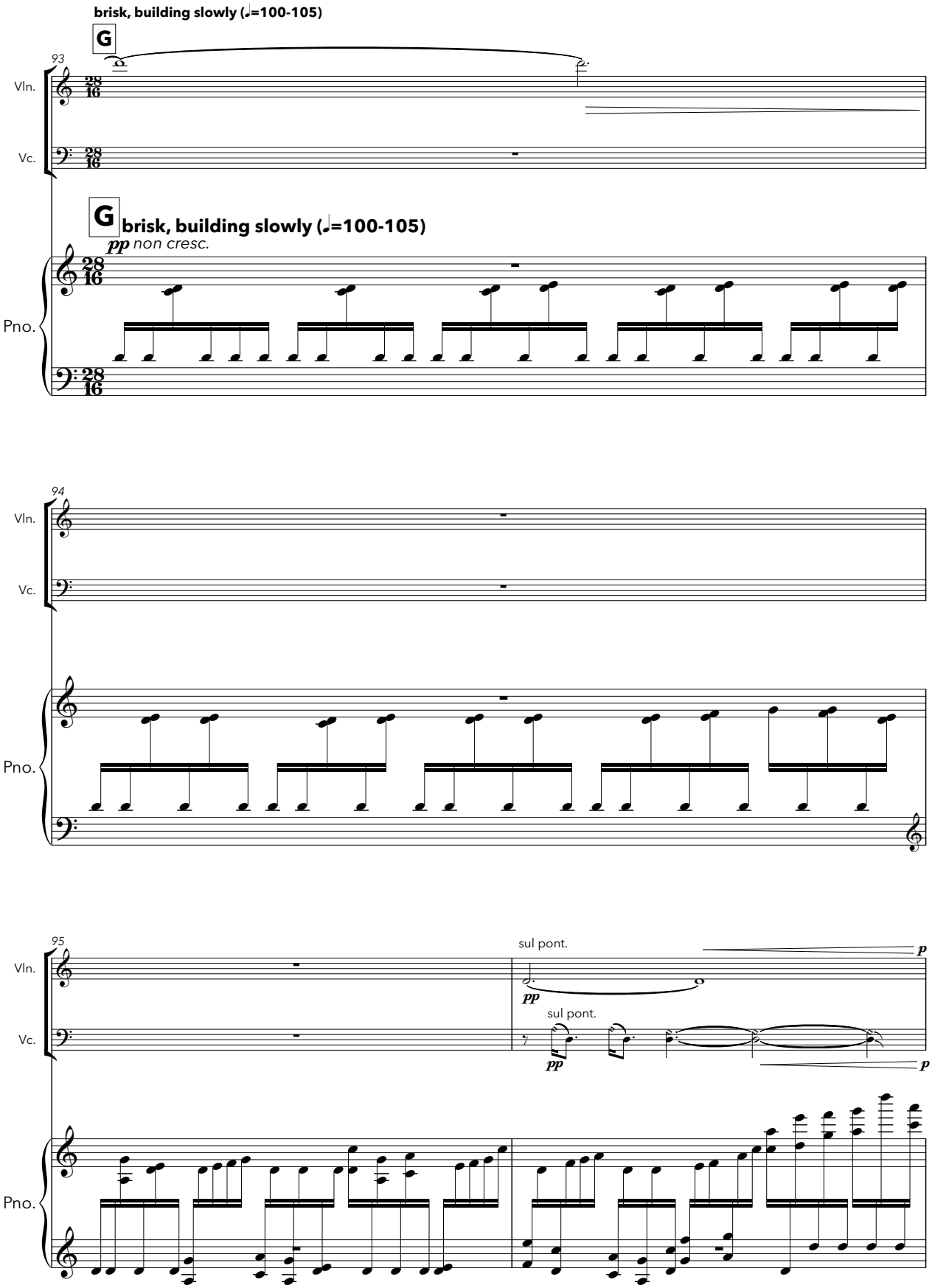

82
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
mp
mp
ppp
84
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
86
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
cresc.

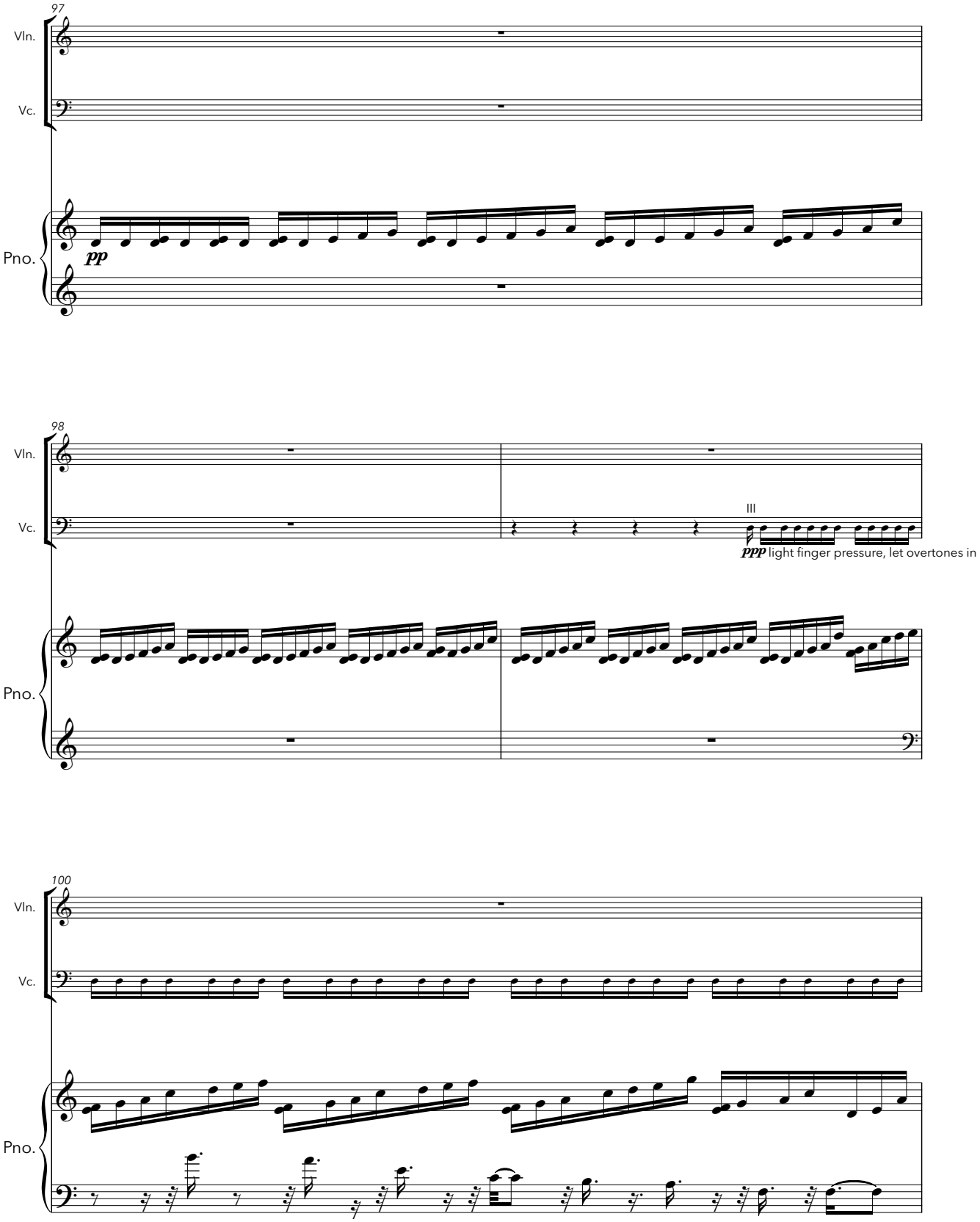

88
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

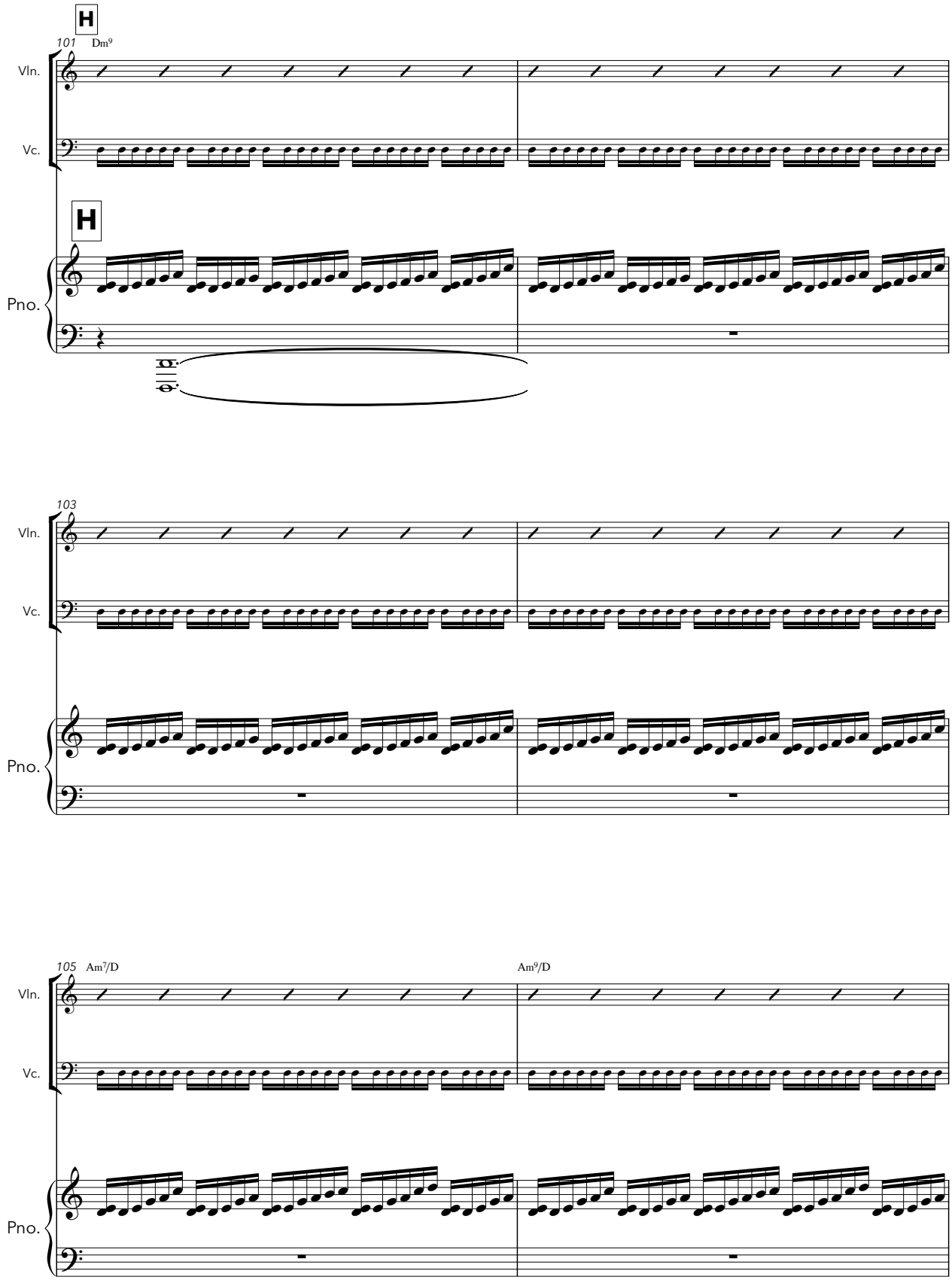

90
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
ppp

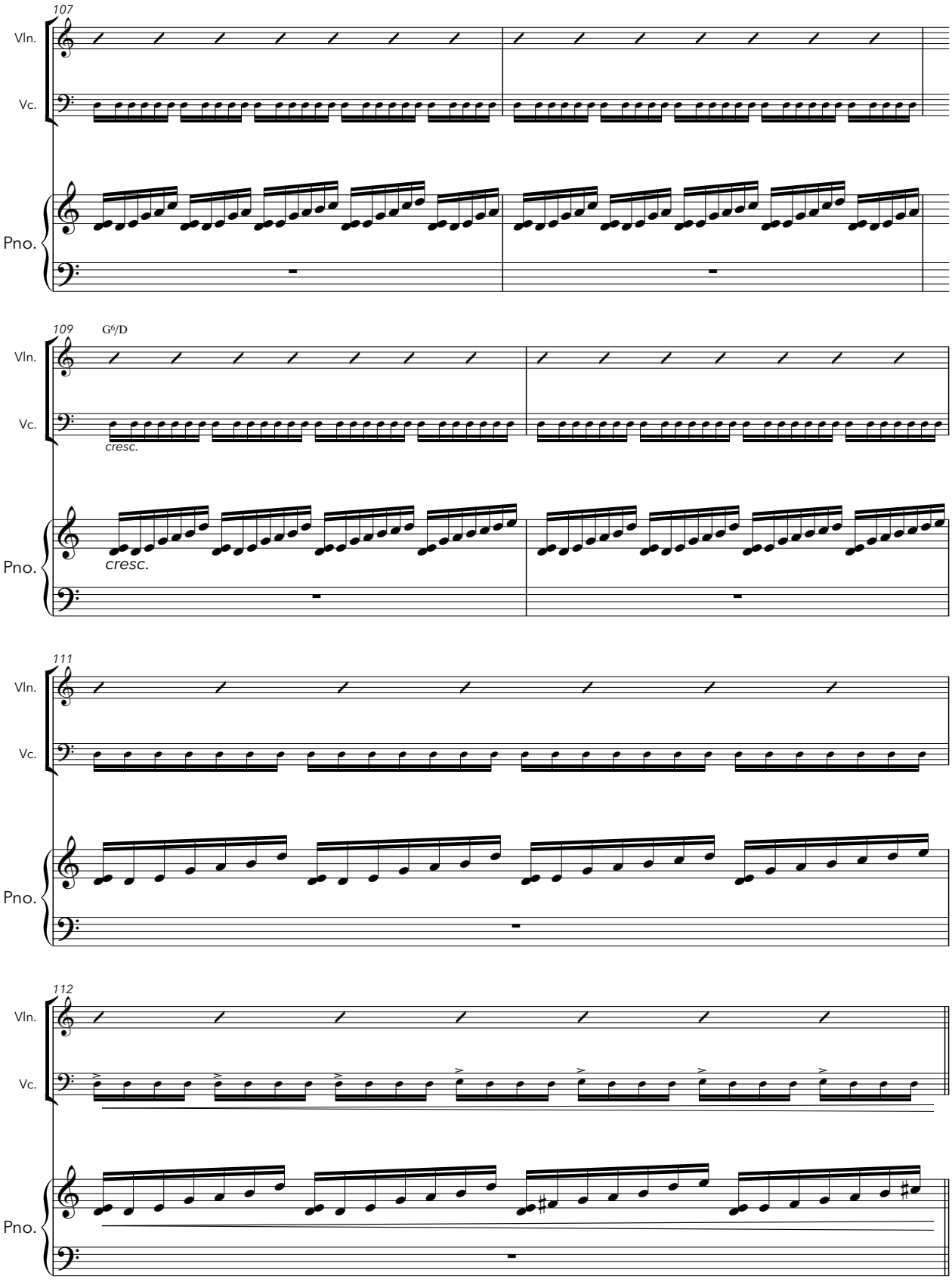

91
Vln.
p
Vc.
p
Pno.

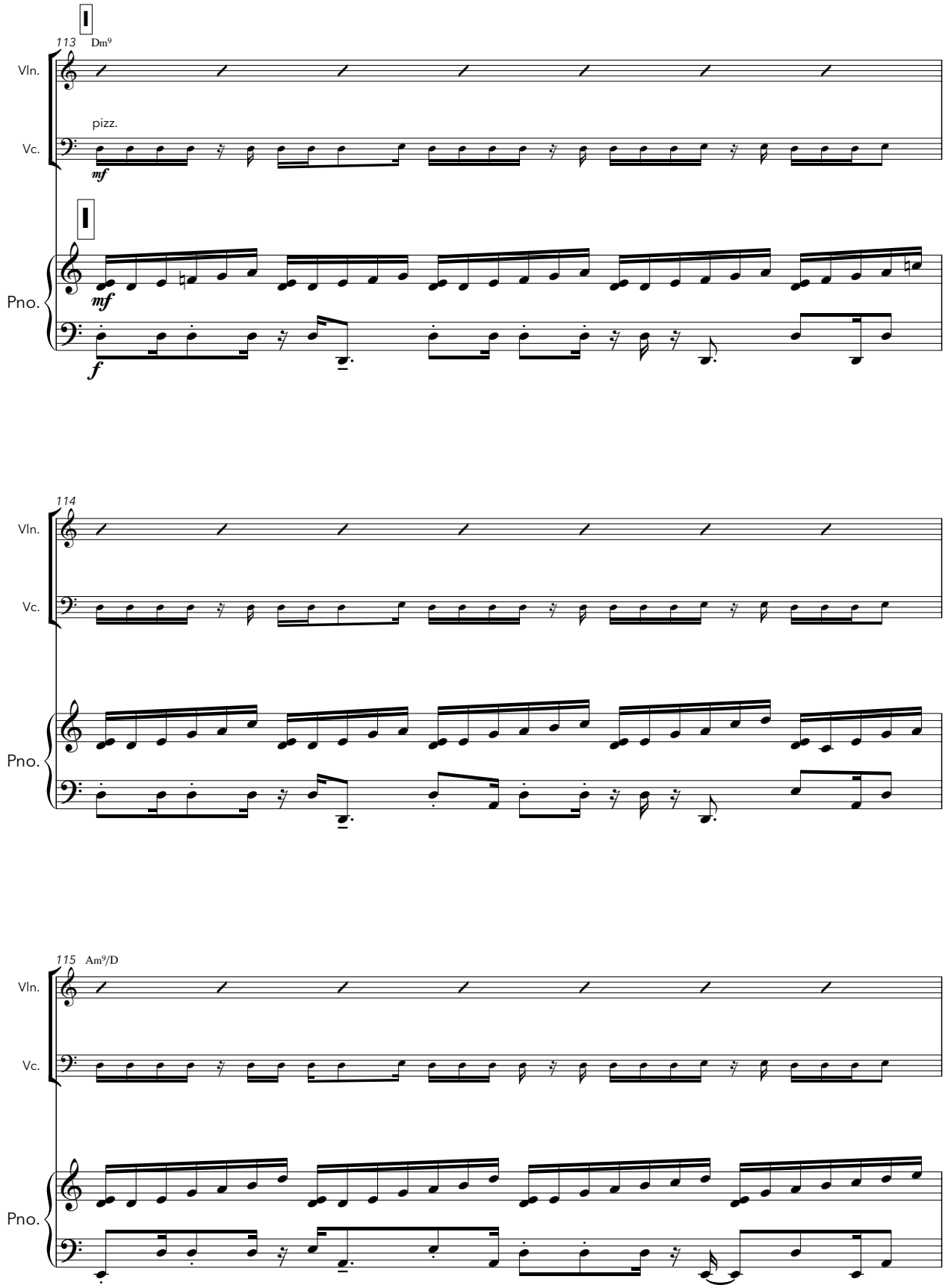

92
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

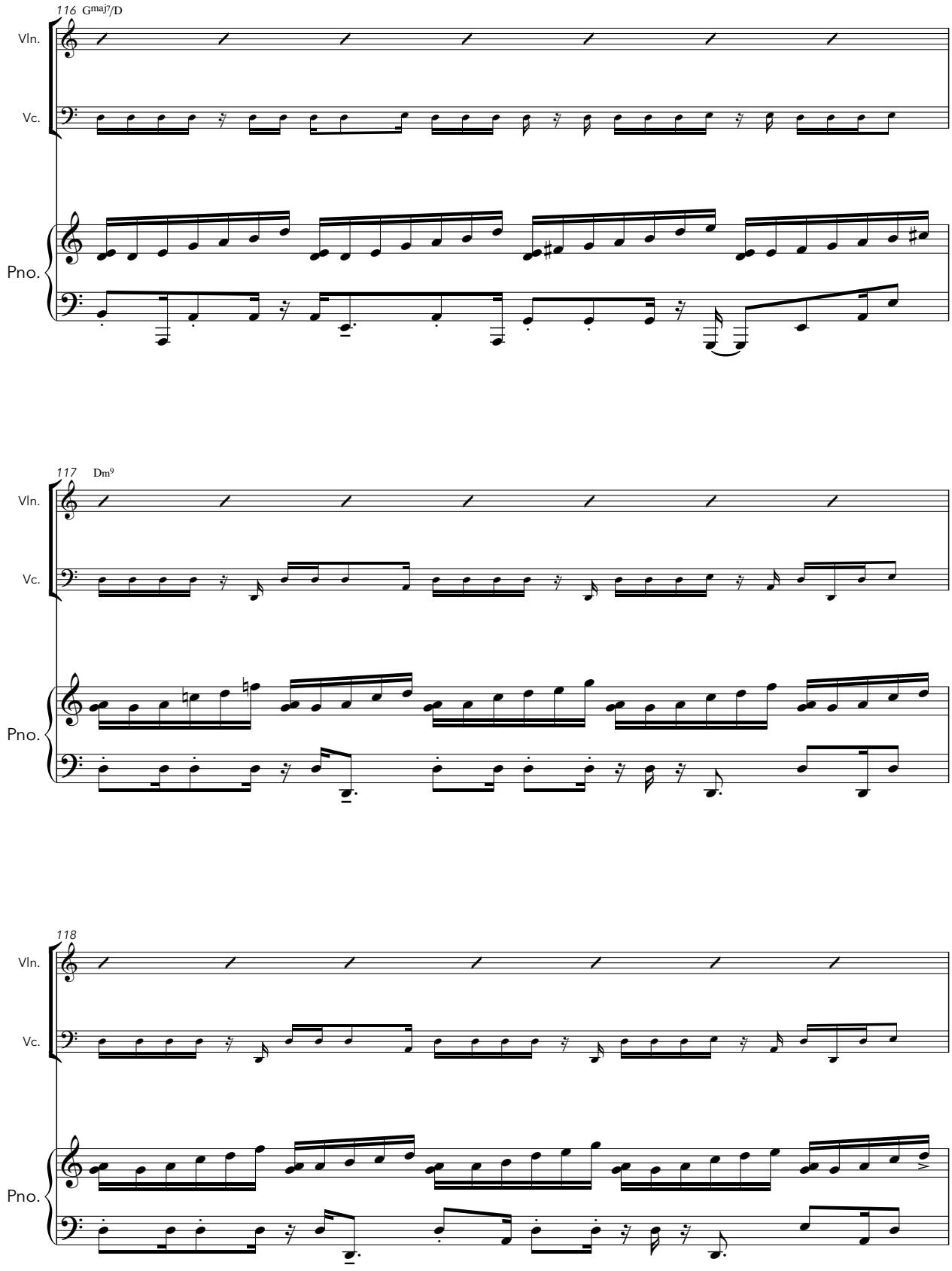

brisk, building slowly (♩=100-105)
G
93
Vln.
Vc.
G
brisk, building slowly (♩=100-105)
pp non cresc.
Pno.
94
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
95
sul pont.
p
Vln.
pp
sul pont.
Vc.
pp
p
Pno.

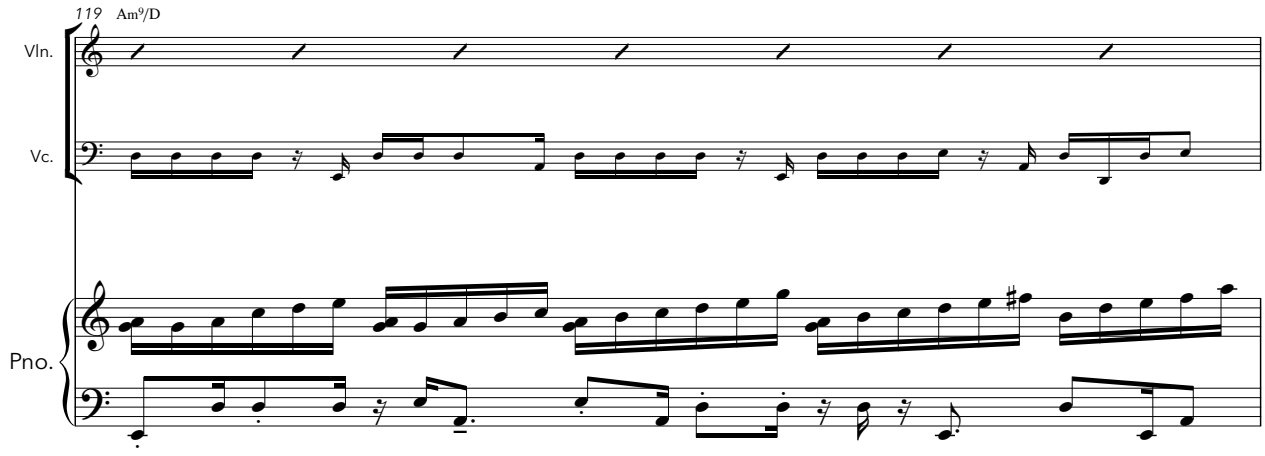

97
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
pp
98
Vln.
Vc.
III
ppp light finger pressure, let overtones in
Pno.
100
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

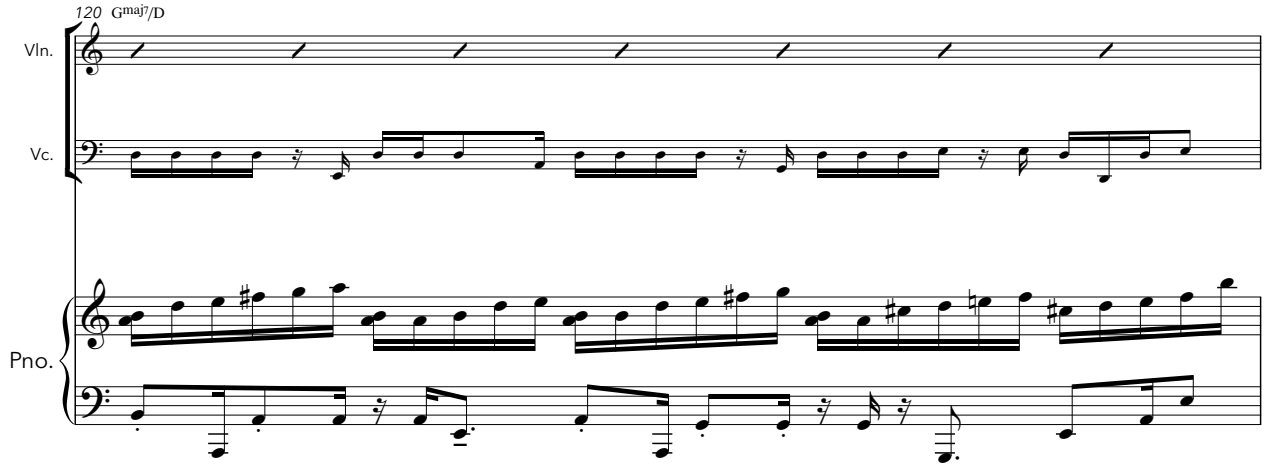

H
101
Dm9
Vln.
Vc.
H
Pno.
103
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
105
Am7/D
Am9/D
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

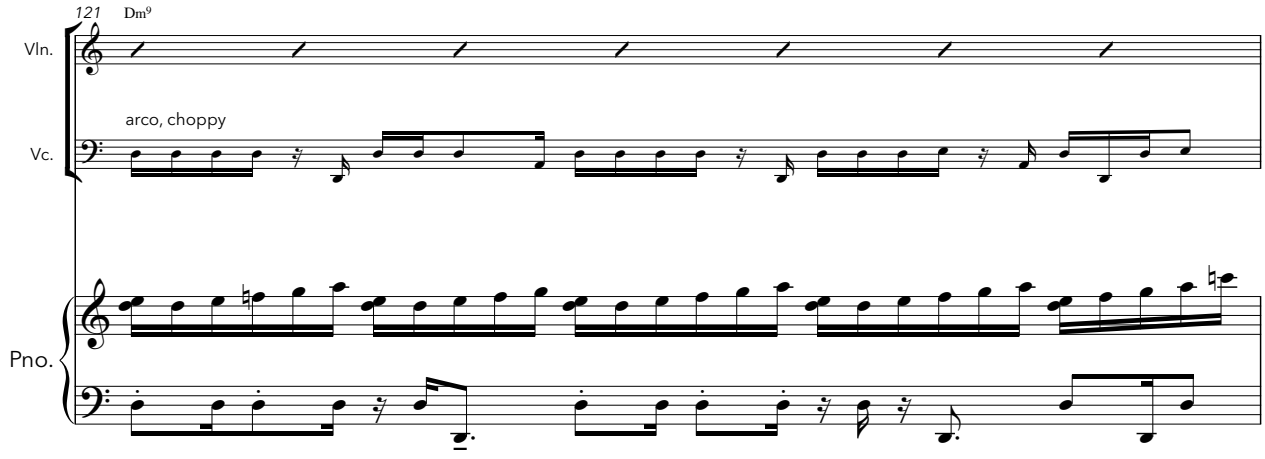

107
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
109
G6/D
cresc.
111
112

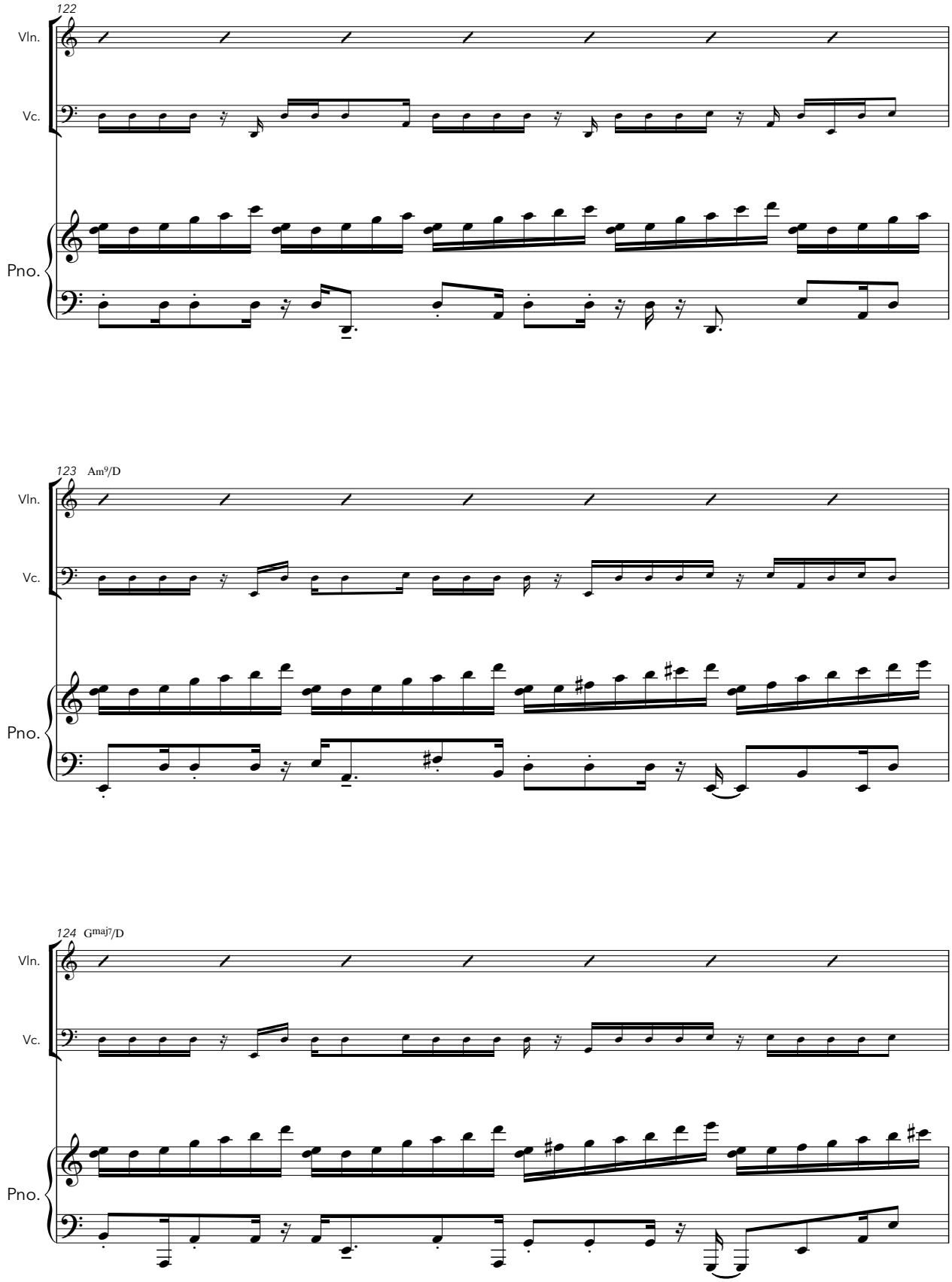

113
Dm9
Vln.
pizz.
Vc.
mf
Pno.
mf
f
114
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
115
Am9/D
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

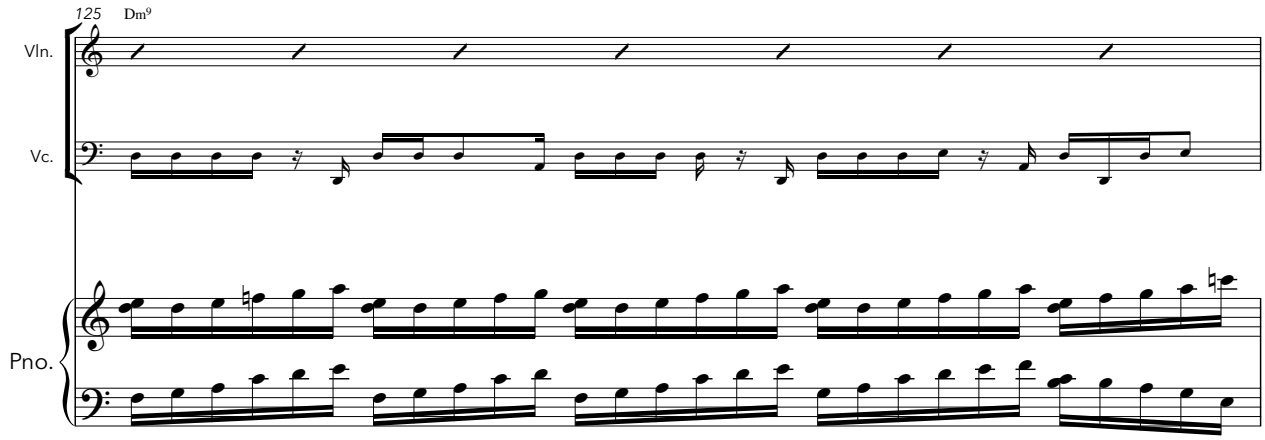

116 Gmaj7/D
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
117 Dm9
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
118
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

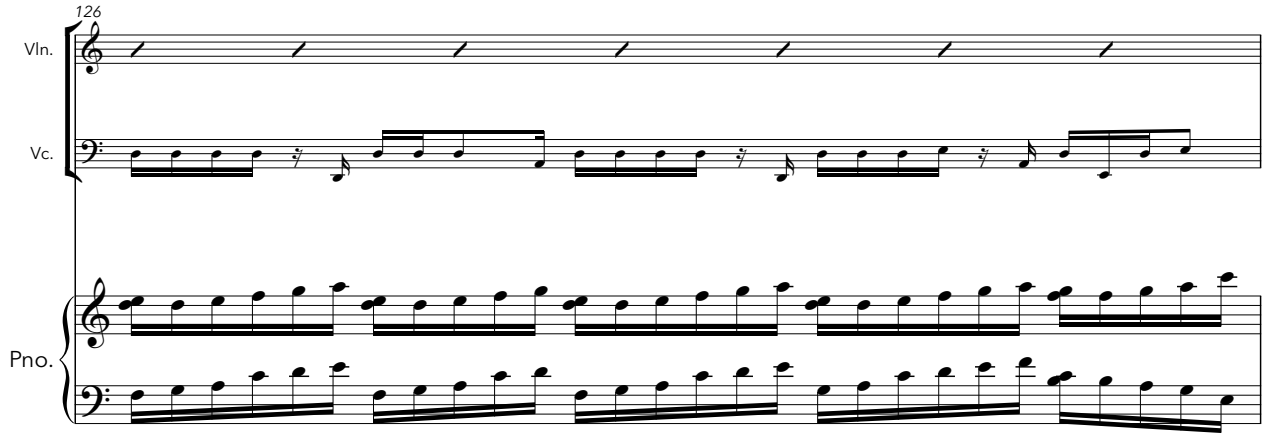

119
Am9/D
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

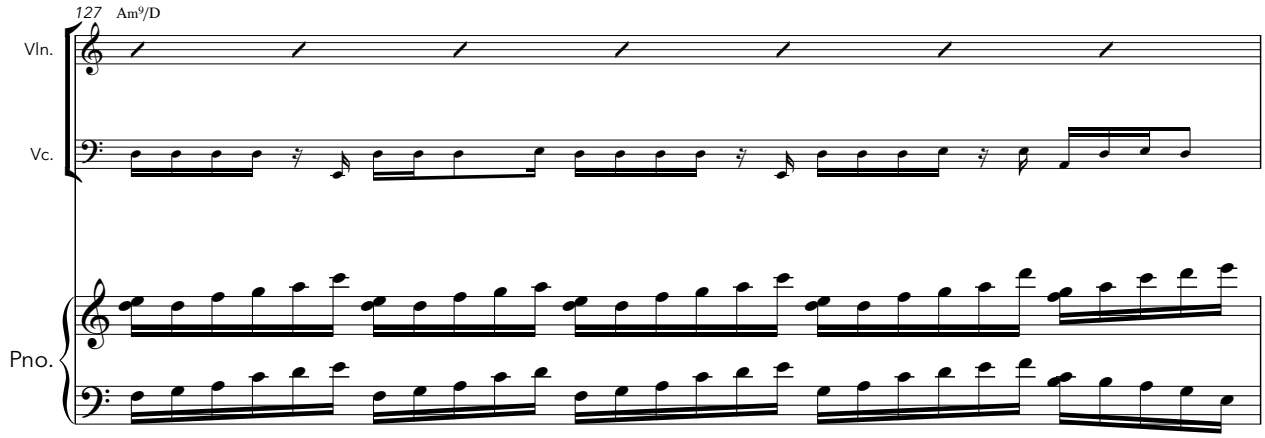

120
Gmaj7/D
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

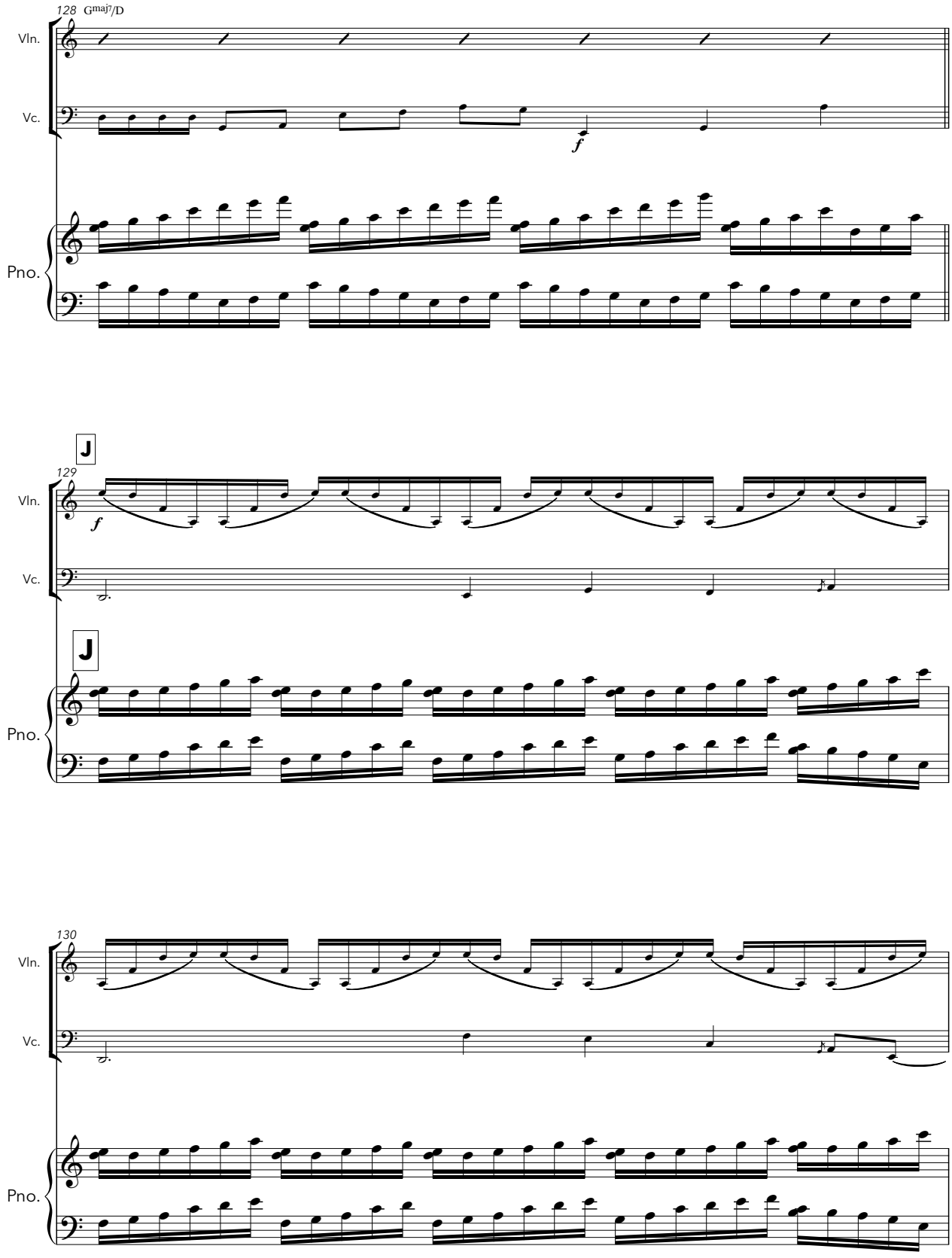

121
Dm9
Vln.
arco, choppy
Vc.
Pno.

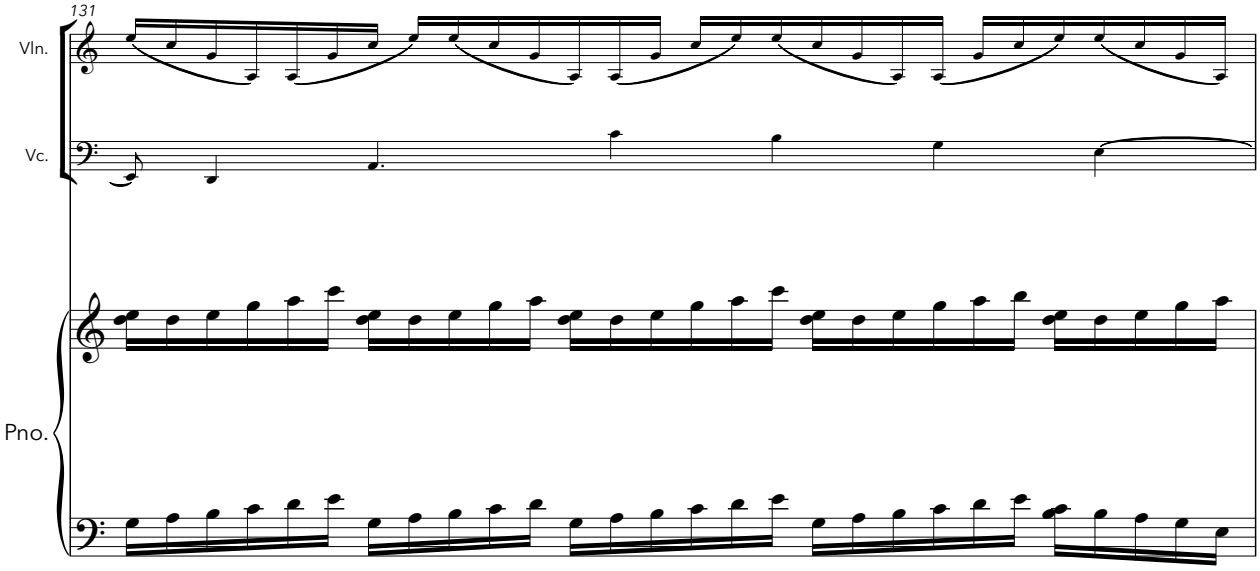

122
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
123
Am9/D
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
124
Gmaj7/D
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

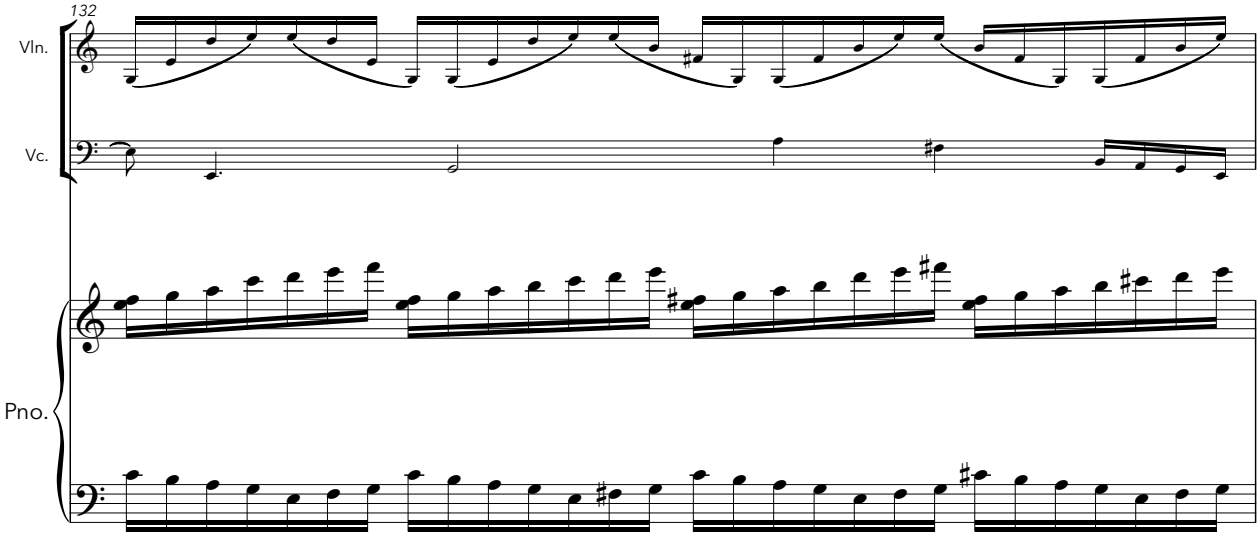

125
Dm9
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

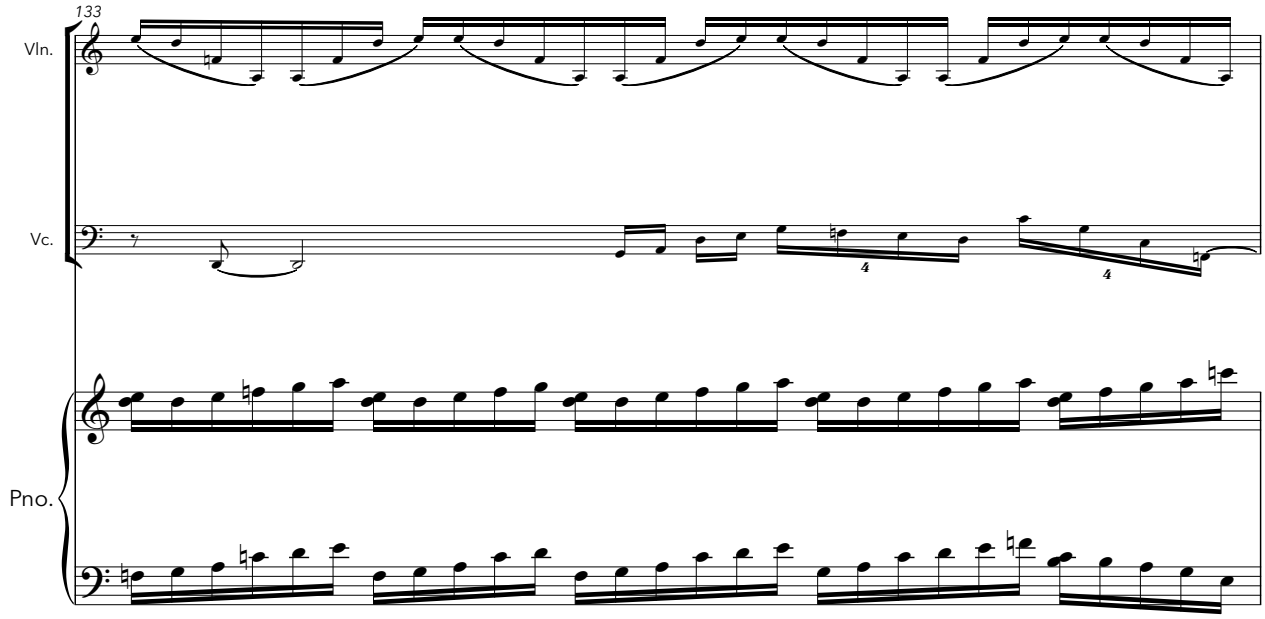

126
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

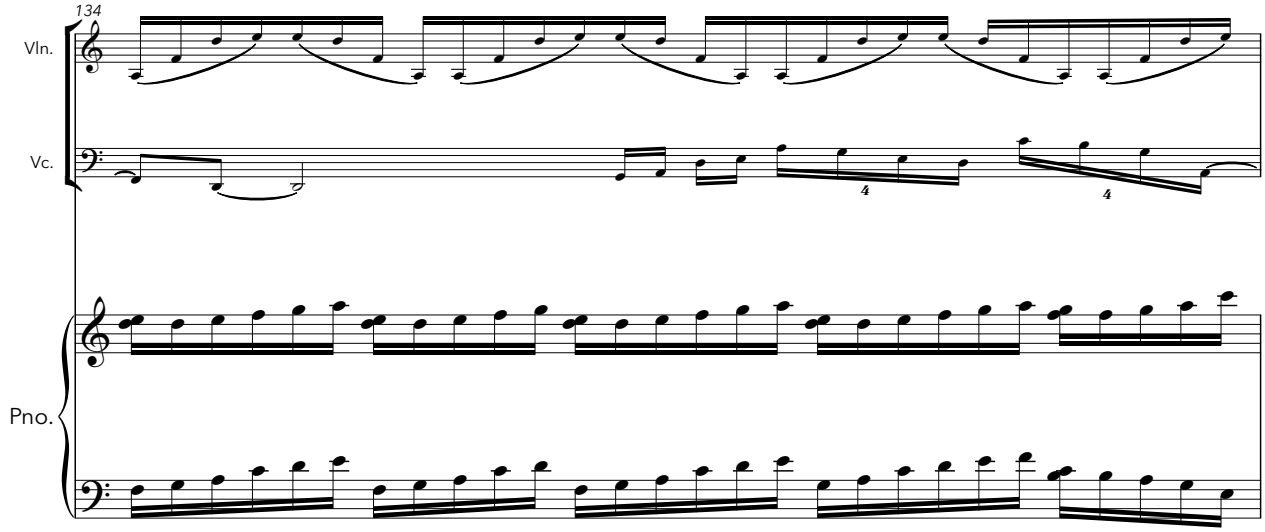

127
Am9/D
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

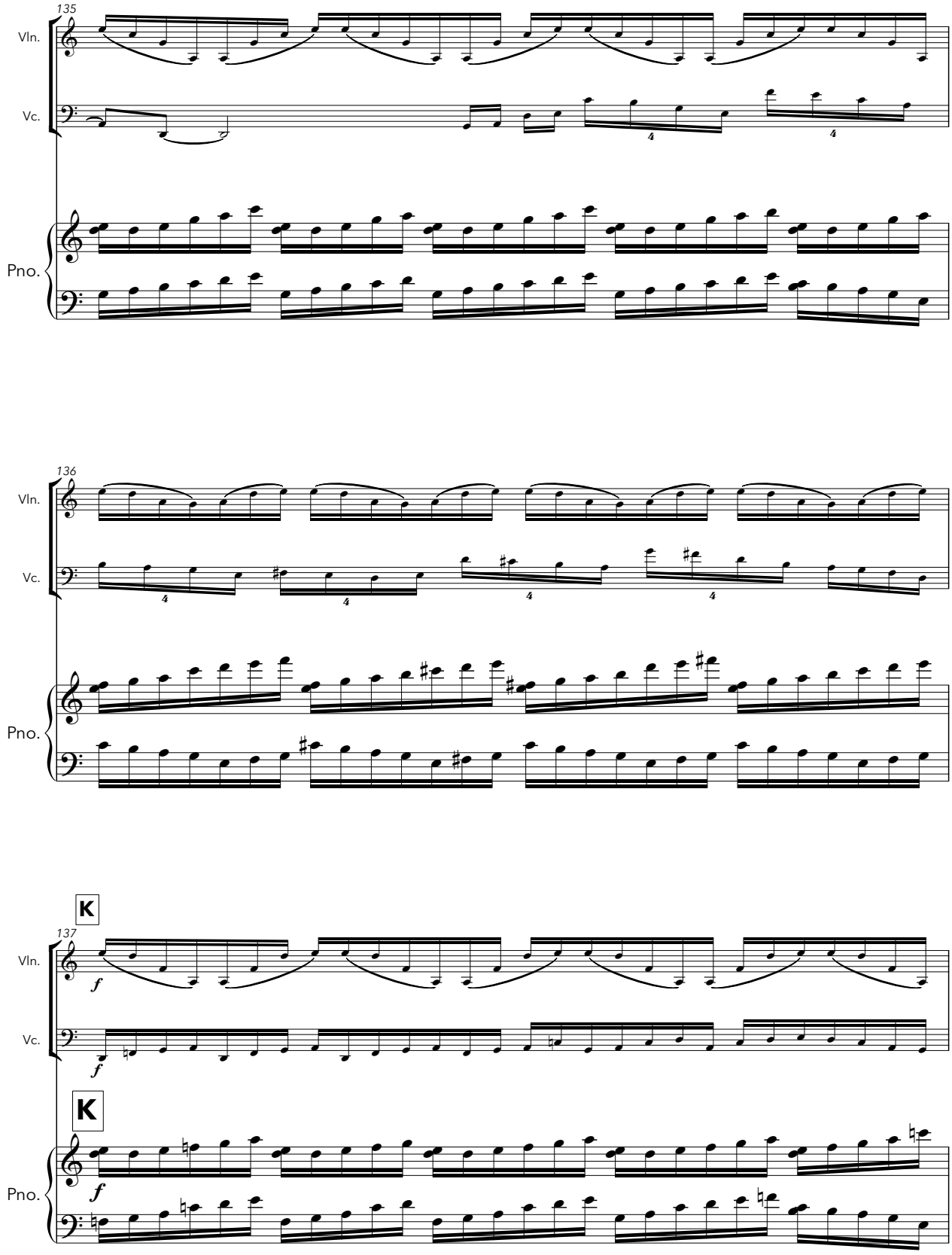

128 Gmaj7/D
Vln.
Vc.
f
Pno.
J
129
Vln.
f
Vc.
J
Pno.
130
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

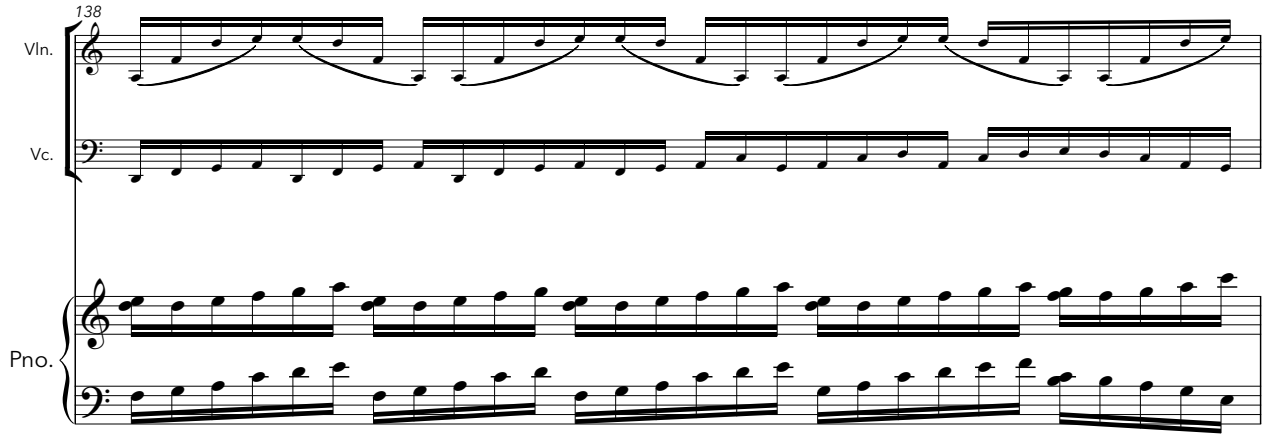

131
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

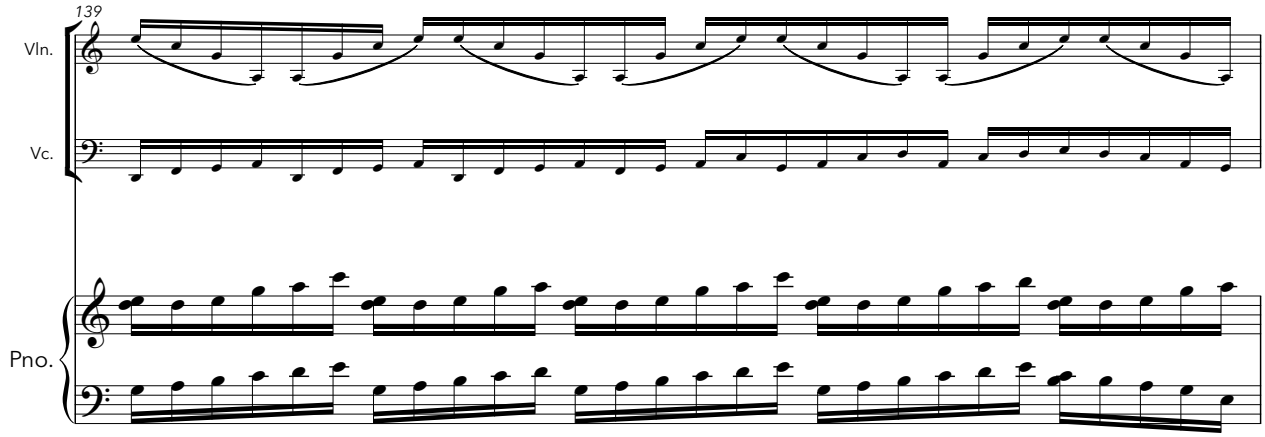

132
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

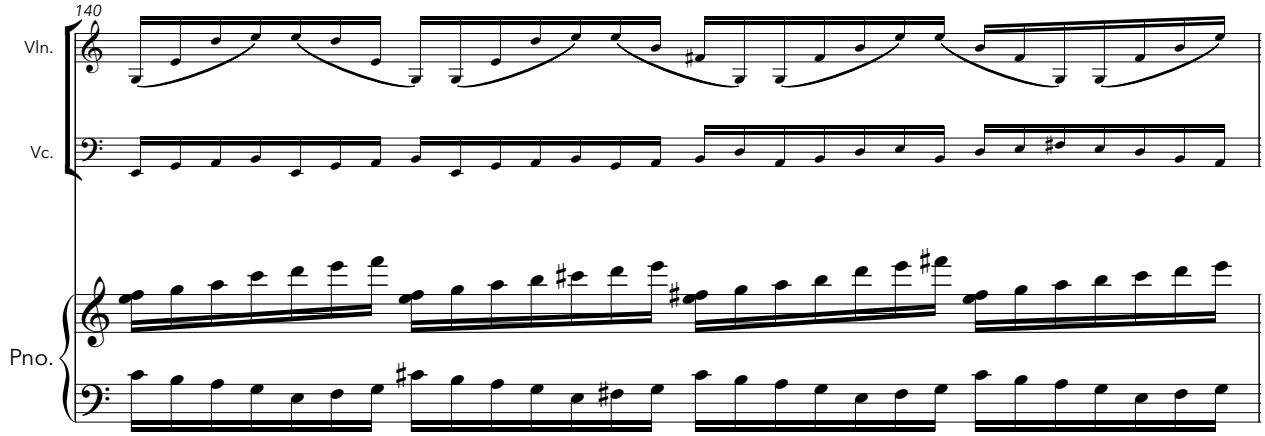

133
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

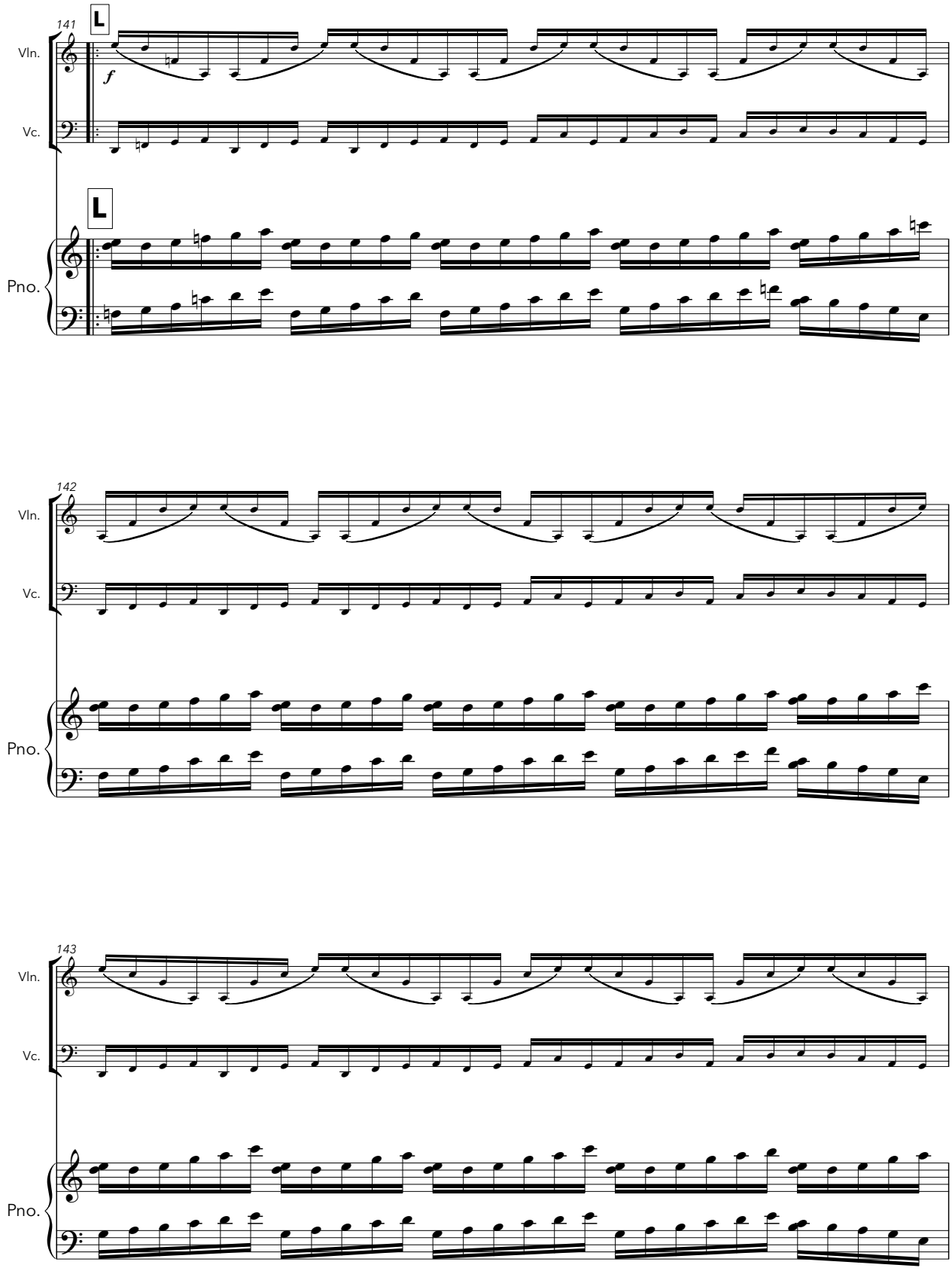

134
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

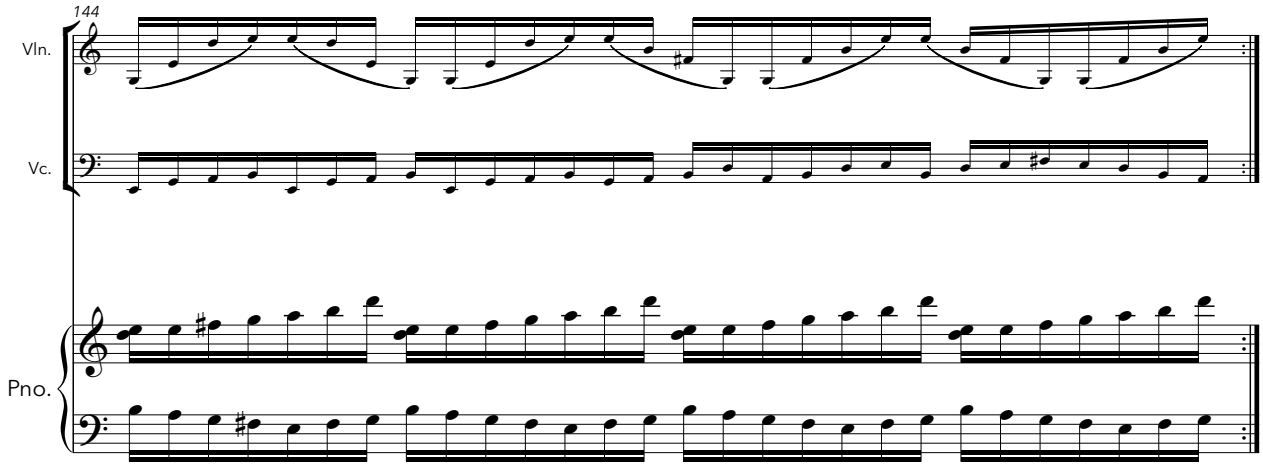

135
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
136
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
K
137
Vln.
f
Vc.
f
K
Pno.
f

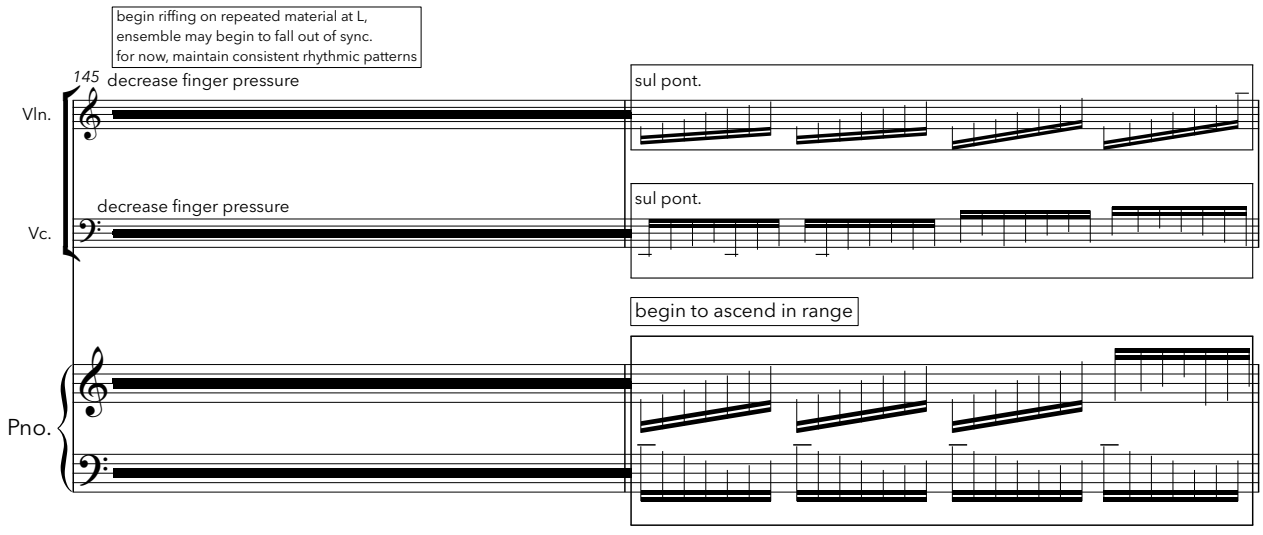

138
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

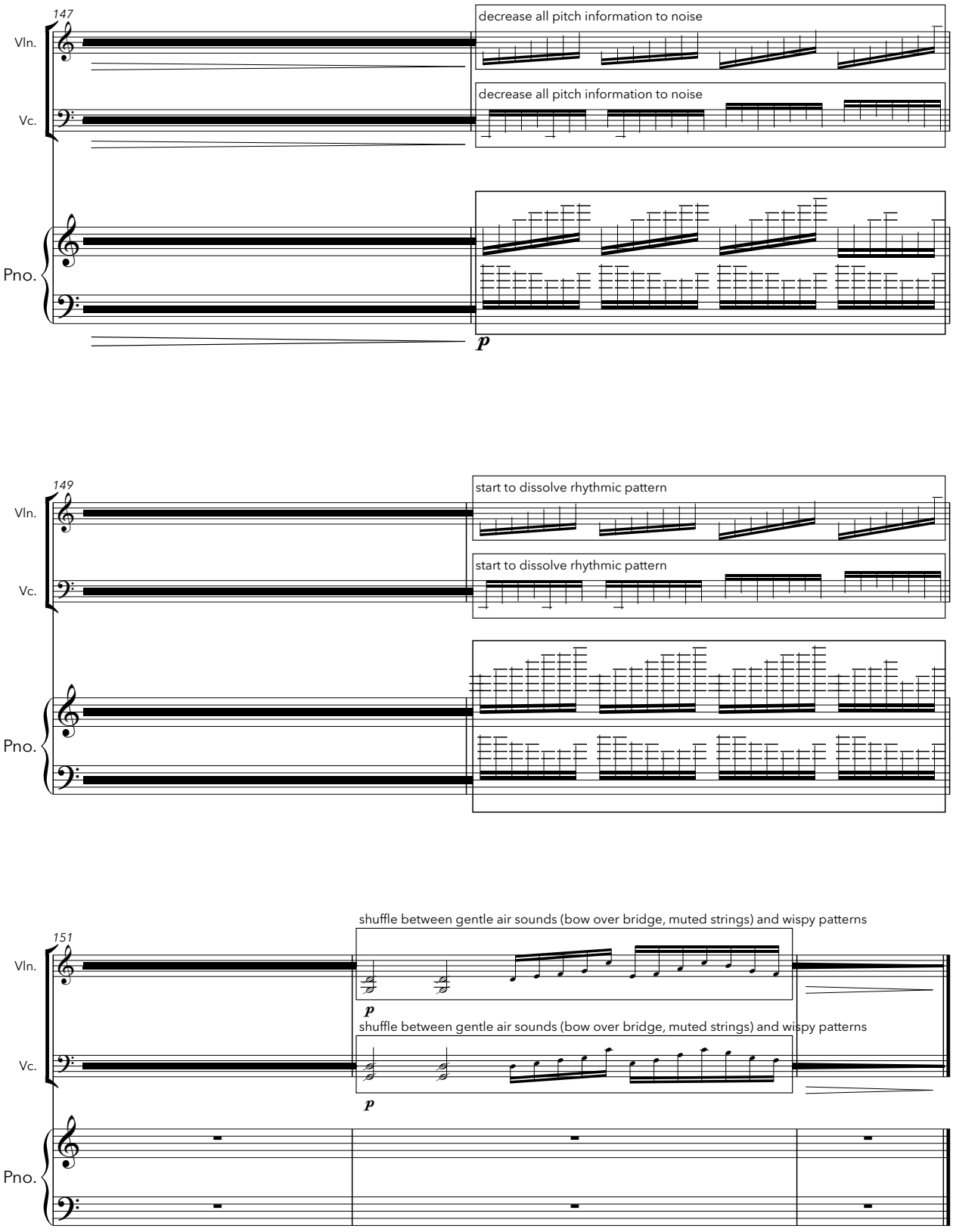

139
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.


140
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.


141
L
Vln.
Vc.
f
L
Pno.
142
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
143
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.


144
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.


begin riffing on repeated material at L,
ensemble may begin to fall out of sync.
for now, maintain consistent rhythmic patterns
145
decrease finger pressure
sul pont.
Vln.
decrease finger pressure
sul pont.
Vc.
begin to ascend in range
Pno.


147
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
decrease all pitch information to noise
decrease all pitch information to noise
p
149
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
start to dissolve rhythmic pattern
start to dissolve rhythmic pattern
151
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
shuffle between gentle air sounds (bow over bridge, muted strings) and wispy patterns
p
shuffle between gentle air sounds (bow over bridge, muted strings) and wispy patterns
p

Congregation

for four acoustic guitars

Matt Magerkurth

2021

Performance Notes

This piece is part of a series of folk-music-related chamber pieces in part prompted by the prairie landscapes I associate with my family in rural Kansas and my life as a young adult in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This piece, for four acoustic guitars, is intended to be performable by players who are less-experienced music readers via its semi-graphic nature. A demo recording will be provided to ensembles hoping to perform this piece in order to accomodate players wishing to perform this piece moreso by ear than by score.

In lieu of specific rhythms and timings, this piece uses a system of numbered cues inside standard lettered rehearsal marks. Each ensemble may designate a leader to issue cues, or they may decide cues as a group. Unless otherwise notated, each cue should dovetail into the next, so if a cue occurs, finish your thought and move on. With the exception of the sections involving de-tuning the guitars, performers' note choices should generally stay diatonic to G Ionian, but bearing in mind that it is an improvisatory piece - any well-justified choice is permissible.

In all circumstances, boxed musical material is to be repeated in any rhythm or sequence.

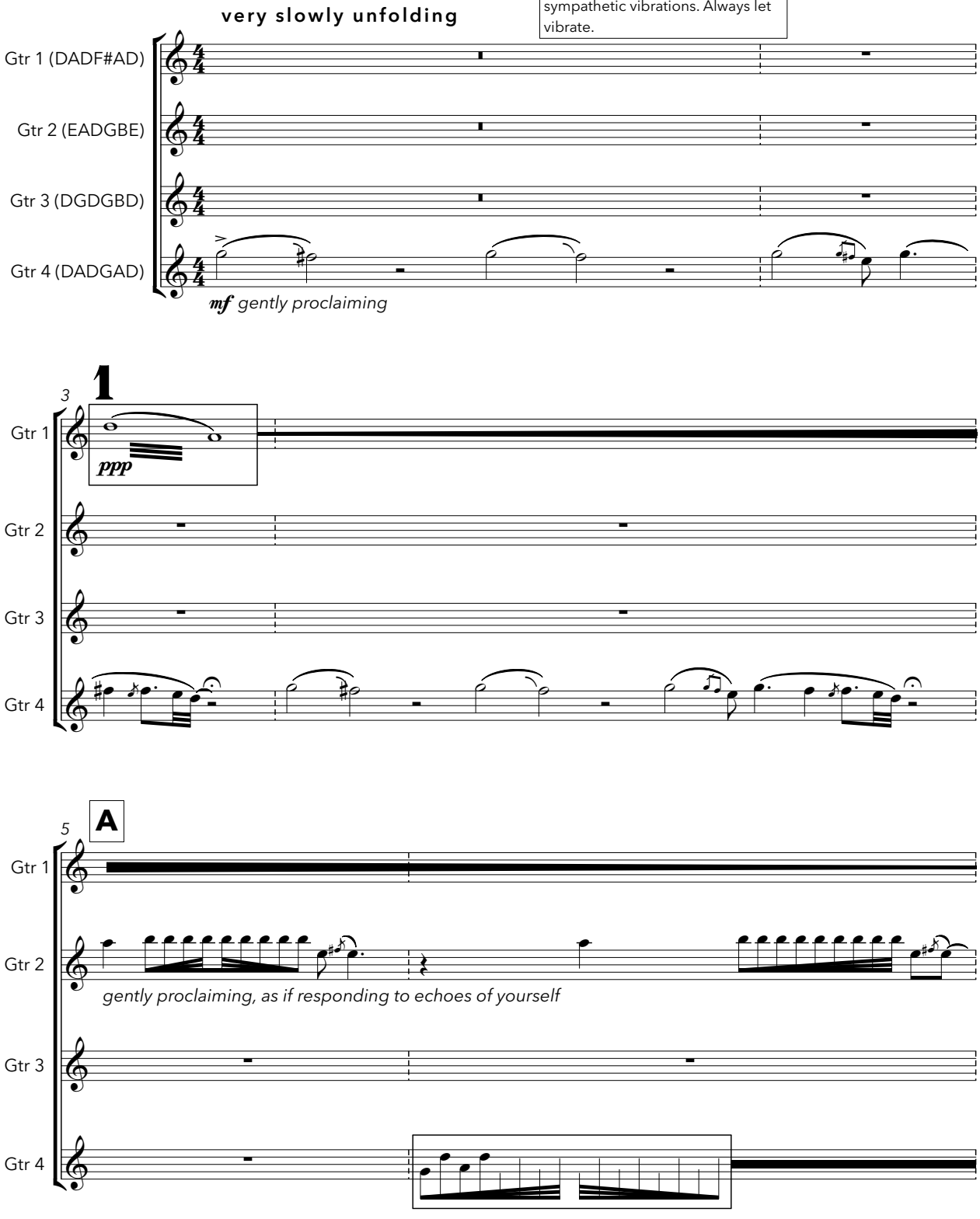
Approximate Duration: 8'

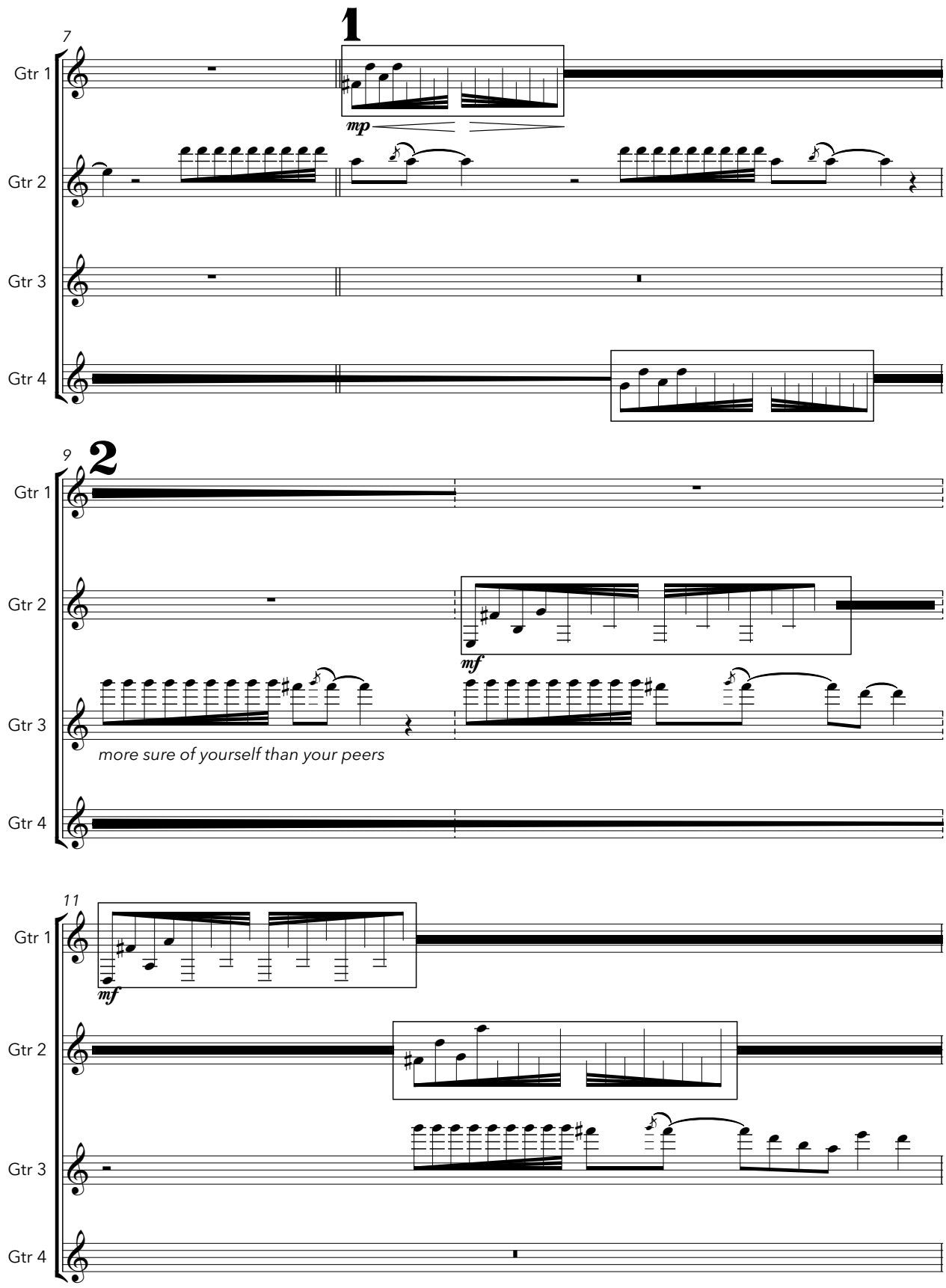
CONGREGATION

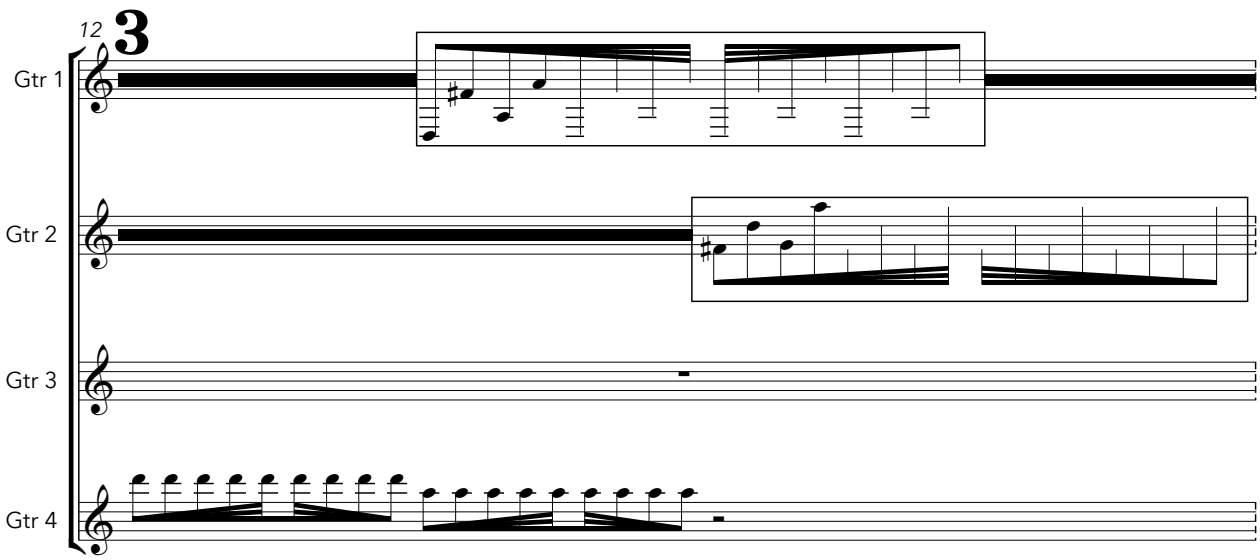
for four acoustic guitars

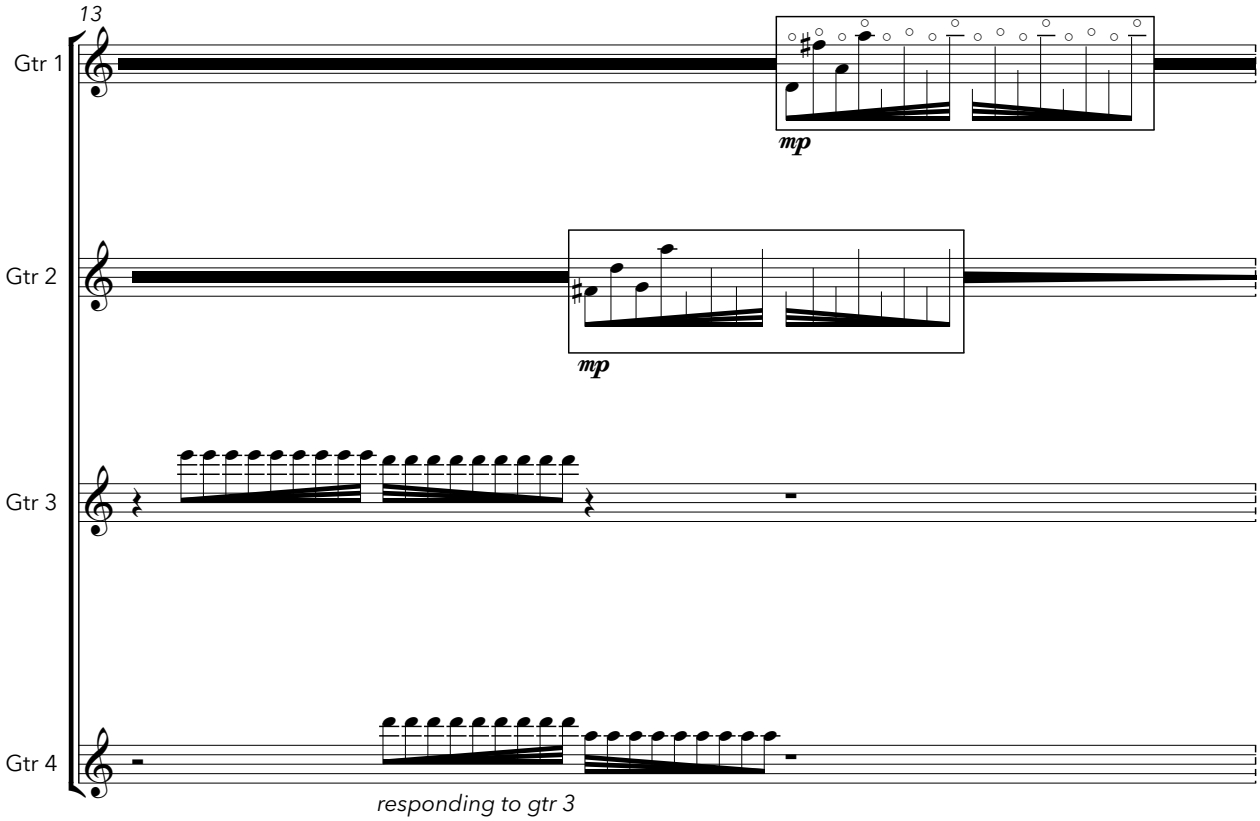
melodic parts should be played on highest string possible to maximize sympathetic vibrations. Always let vibrate.

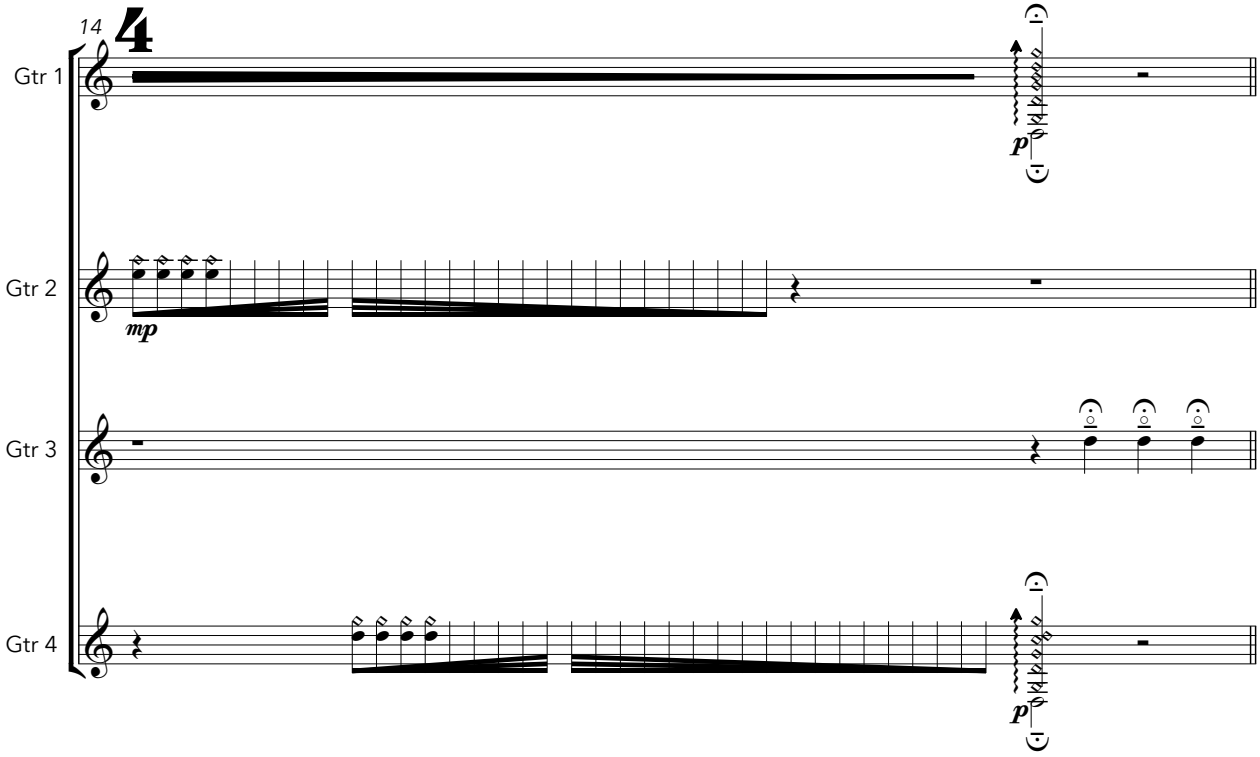
Matt Magerkurth

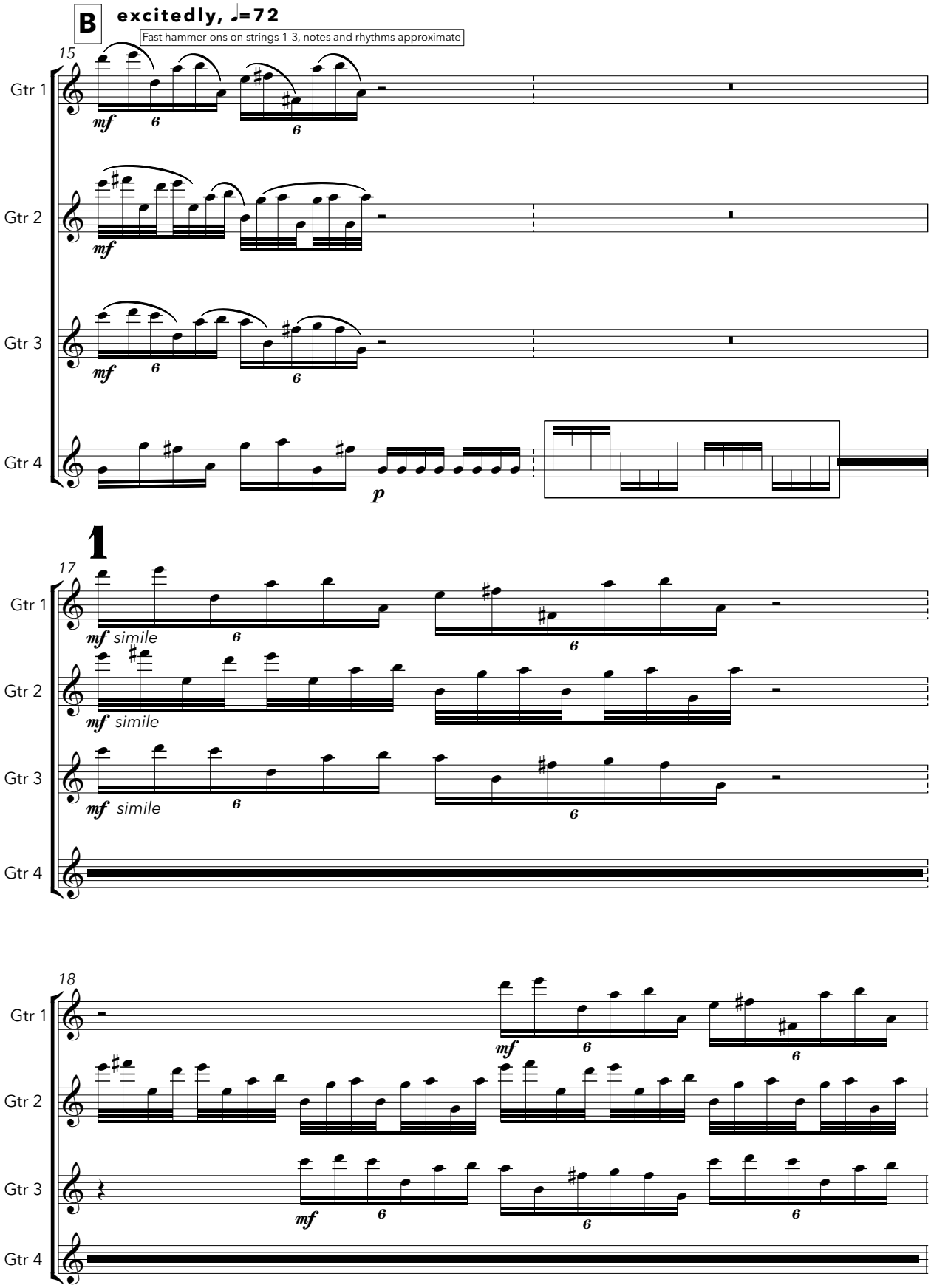


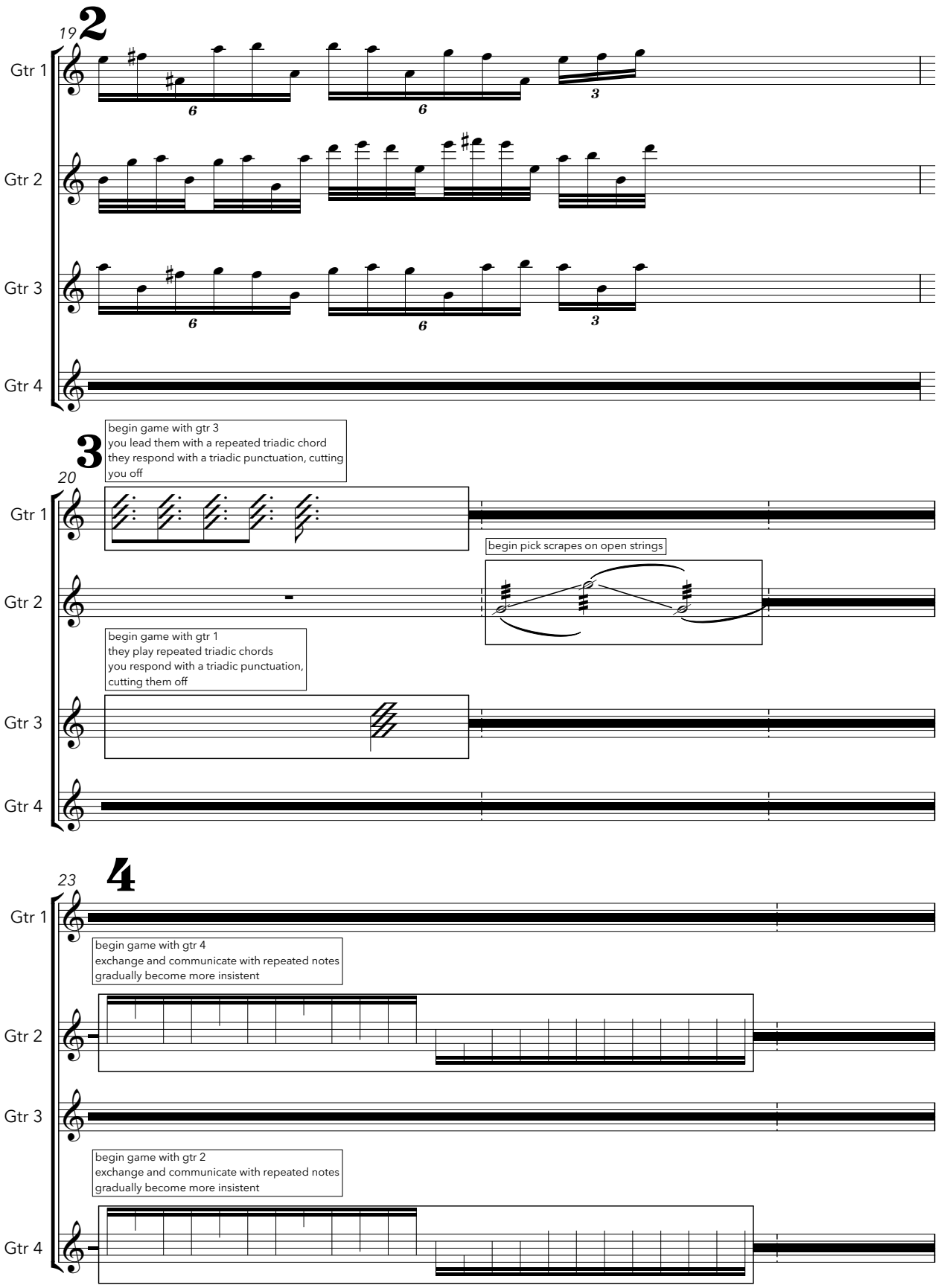

7
1
Gtr 1
mp
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4
9
2
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
mf
Gtr 3
more sure of yourself than your peers
Gtr 4
11
Gtr 1
mf
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4

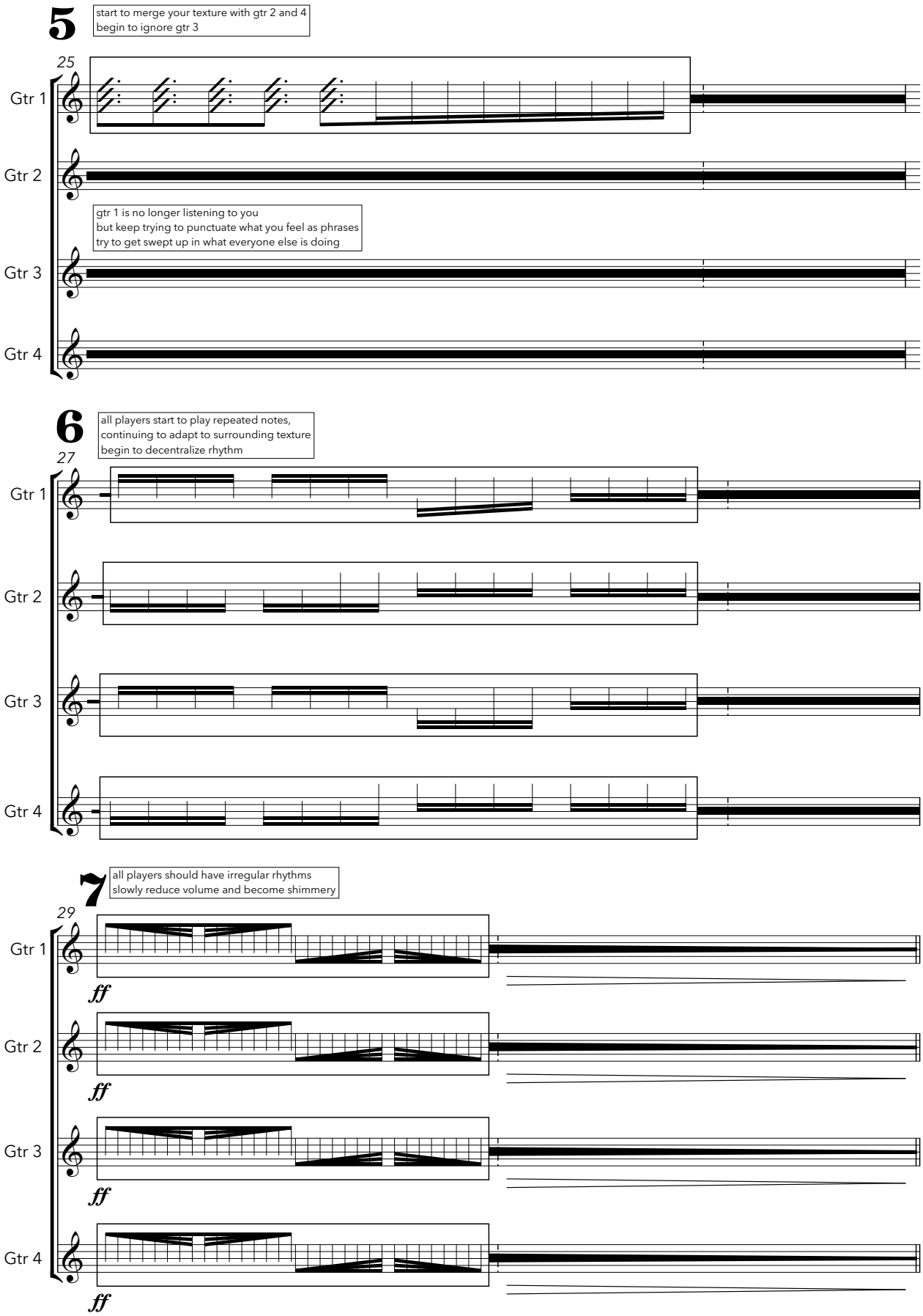

12
3
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4

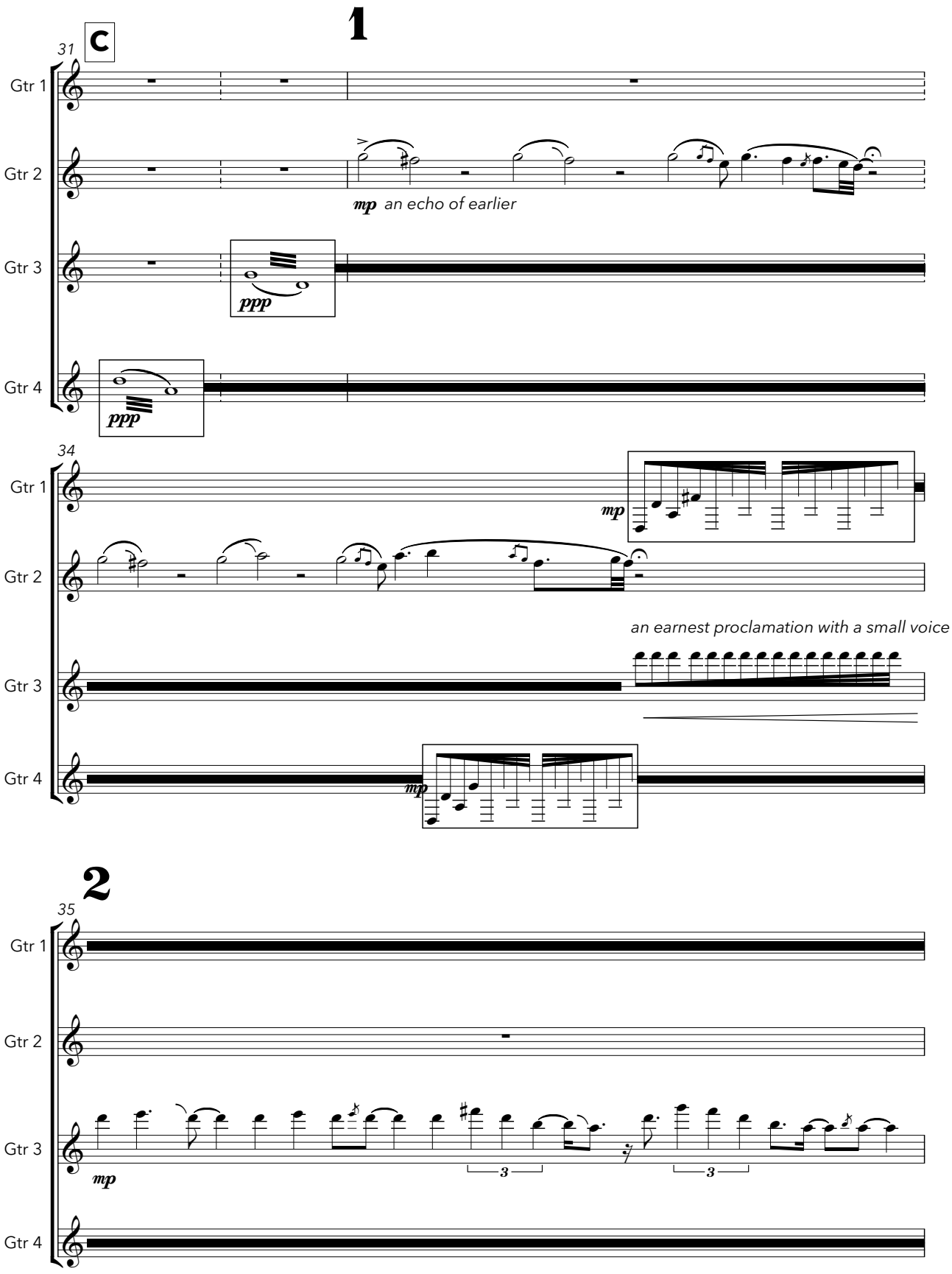

13
Gtr 1
mp
Gtr 2
mp
Gtr 3
Gtr 4
responding to gtr 3

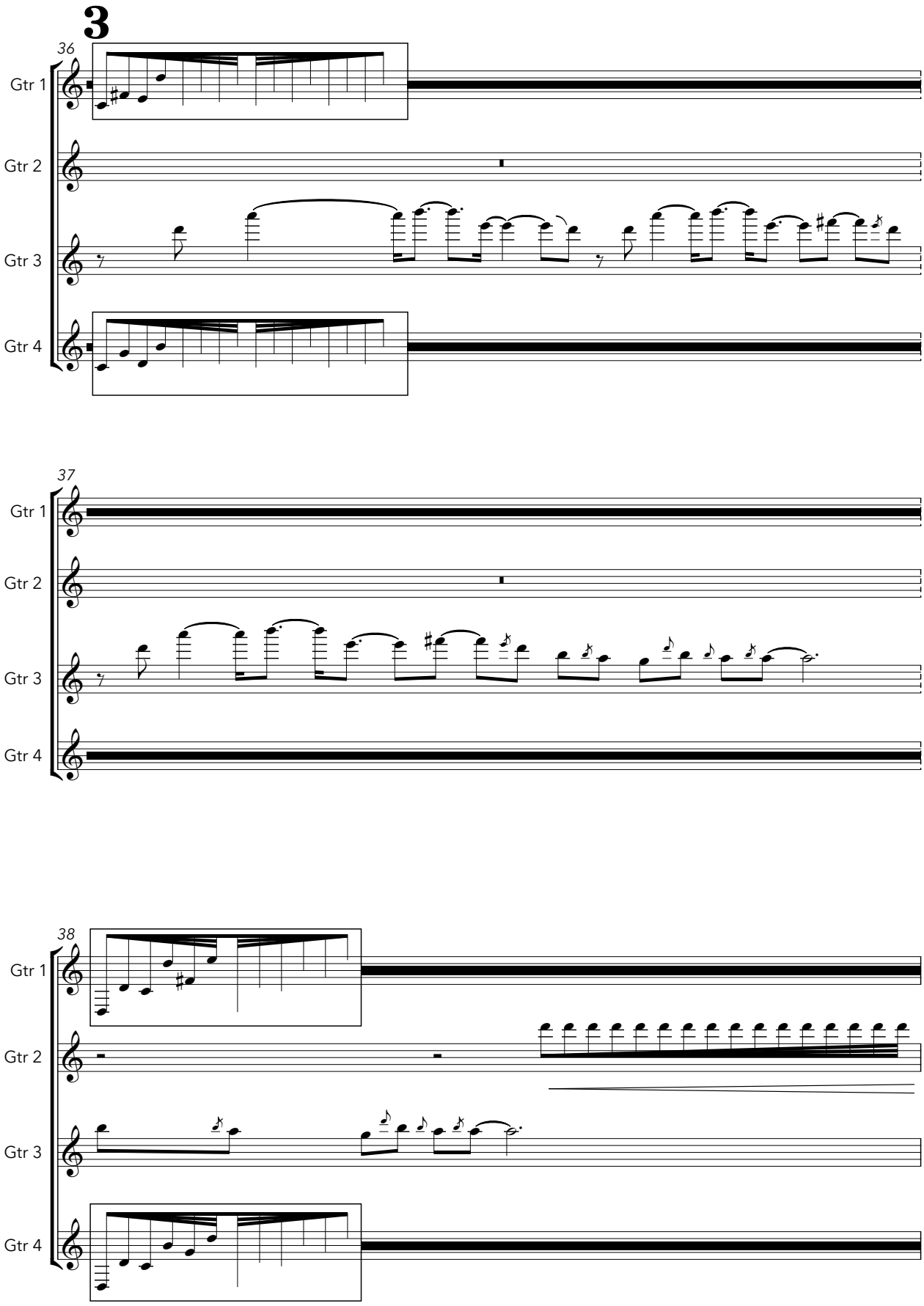

14
4
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4
mp
p
p

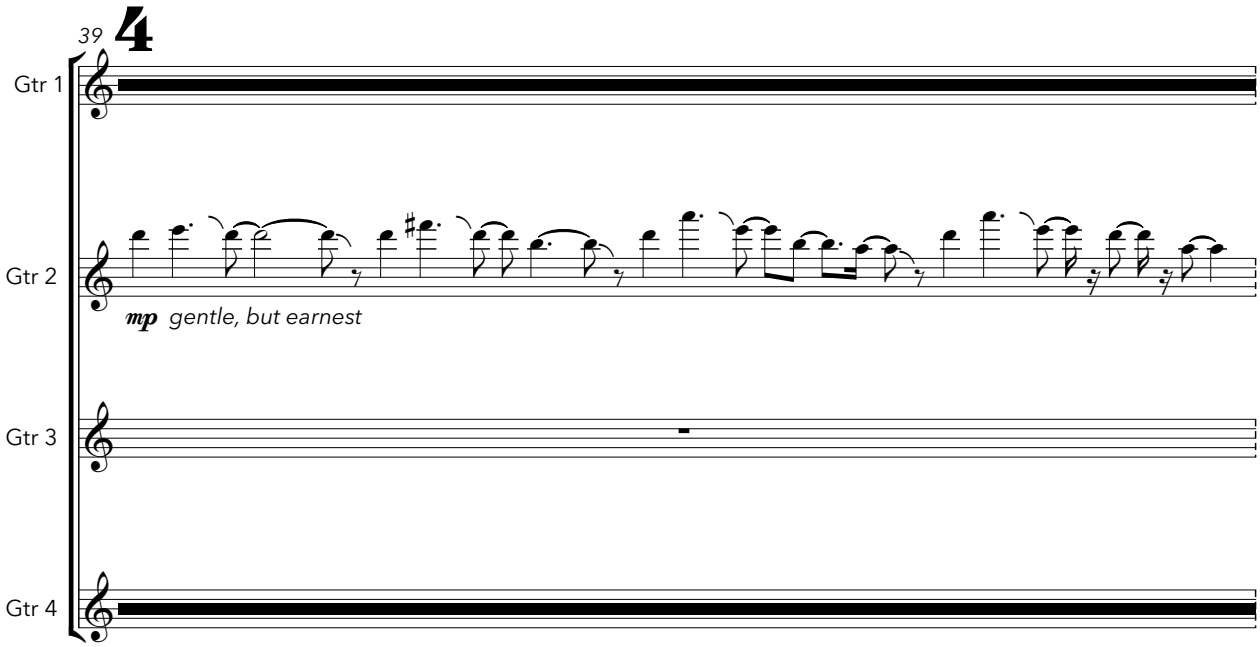

B
excitedly, ♩=72
Fast hammer-ons on strings 1-3, notes and rhythms approximate
15
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4
mf
p
1
17
mf simile
18

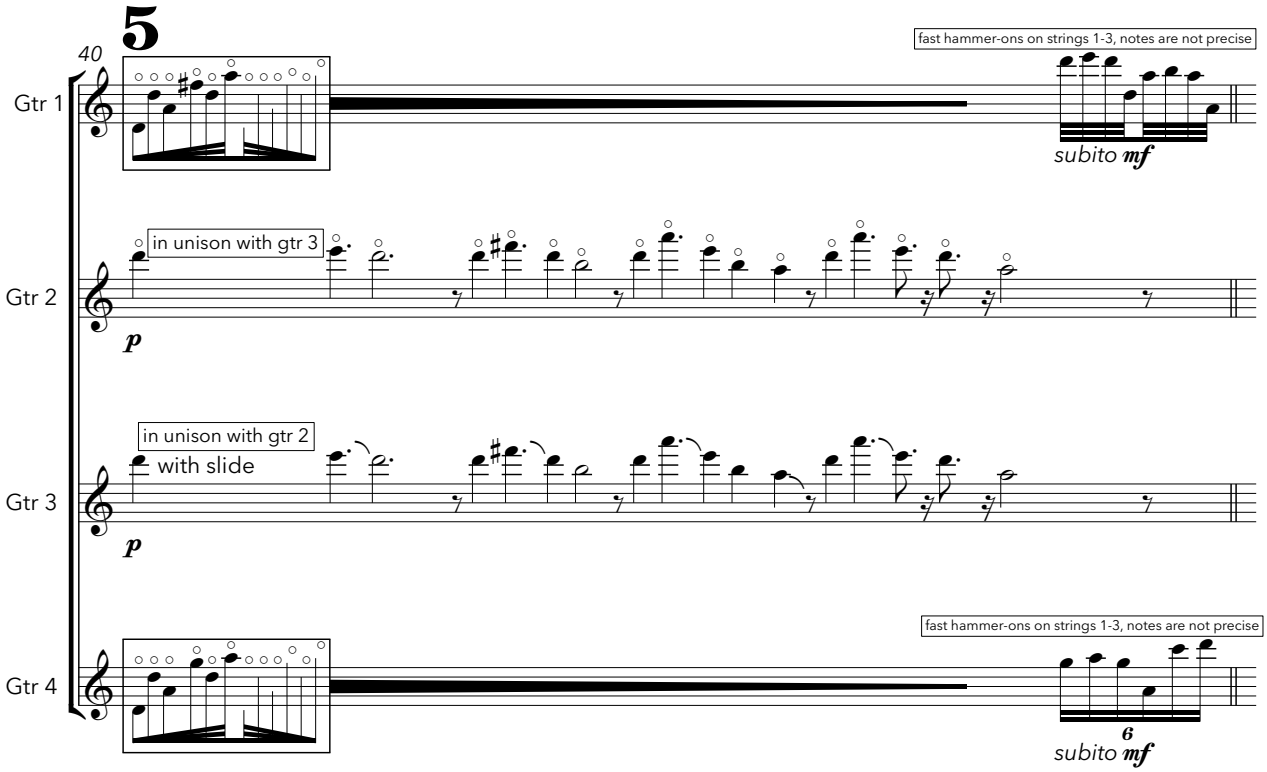

2
19
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4
6
6
3
3
begin game with gtr 3
you lead them with a repeated triadic chord
they respond with a triadic punctuation, cutting you off
20
begin pick scrapes on open strings
begin game with gtr 1
they play repeated triadic chords
you respond with a triadic punctuation, cutting them off
4
23
begin game with gtr 4
exchange and communicate with repeated notes
gradually become more insistent
begin game with gtr 2
exchange and communicate with repeated notes
gradually become more insistent

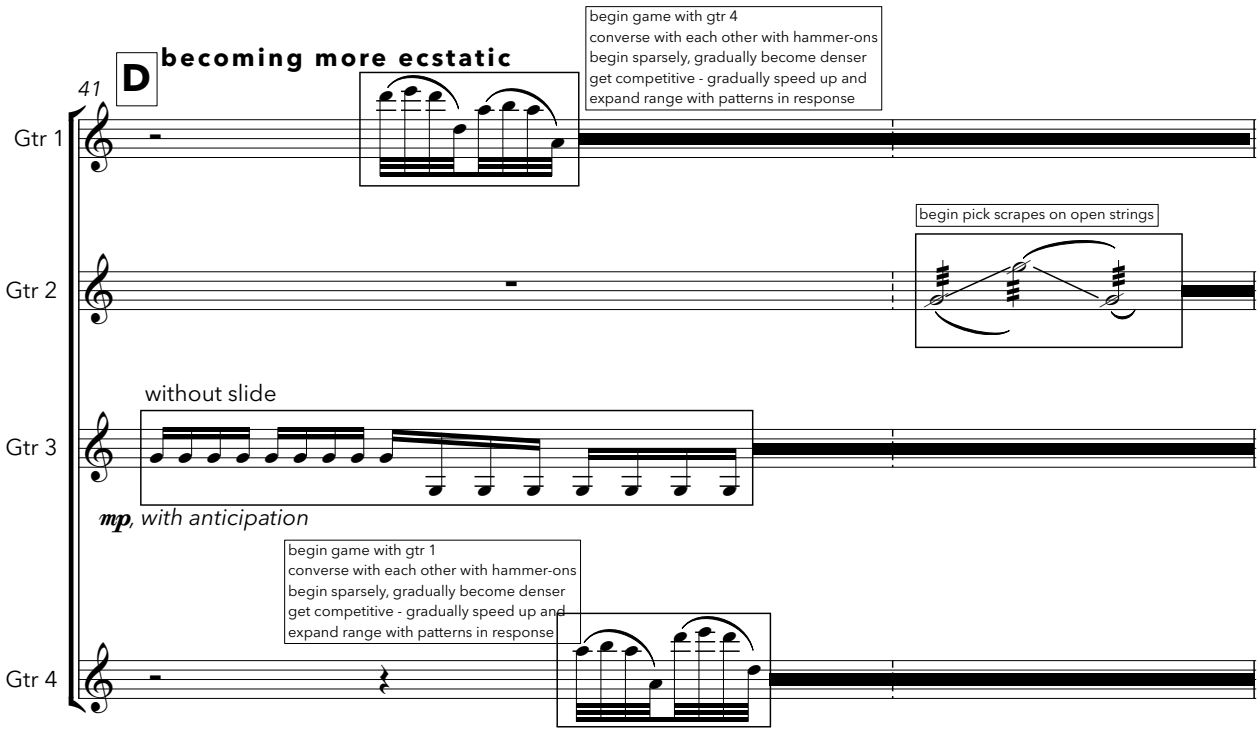

5
start to merge your texture with gtr 2 and 4
begin to ignore gtr 3
25
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
gtr 1 is no longer listening to you
but keep trying to punctuate what you feel as phrases
try to get swept up in what everyone else is doing
Gtr 3
Gtr 4
6
all players start to play repeated notes,
continuing to adapt to surrounding texture
begin to decentralize rhythm
27
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4
7
all players should have irregular rhythms
slowly reduce volume and become shimmery
29
Gtr 1
ff
Gtr 2
ff
Gtr 3
ff
Gtr 4
ff

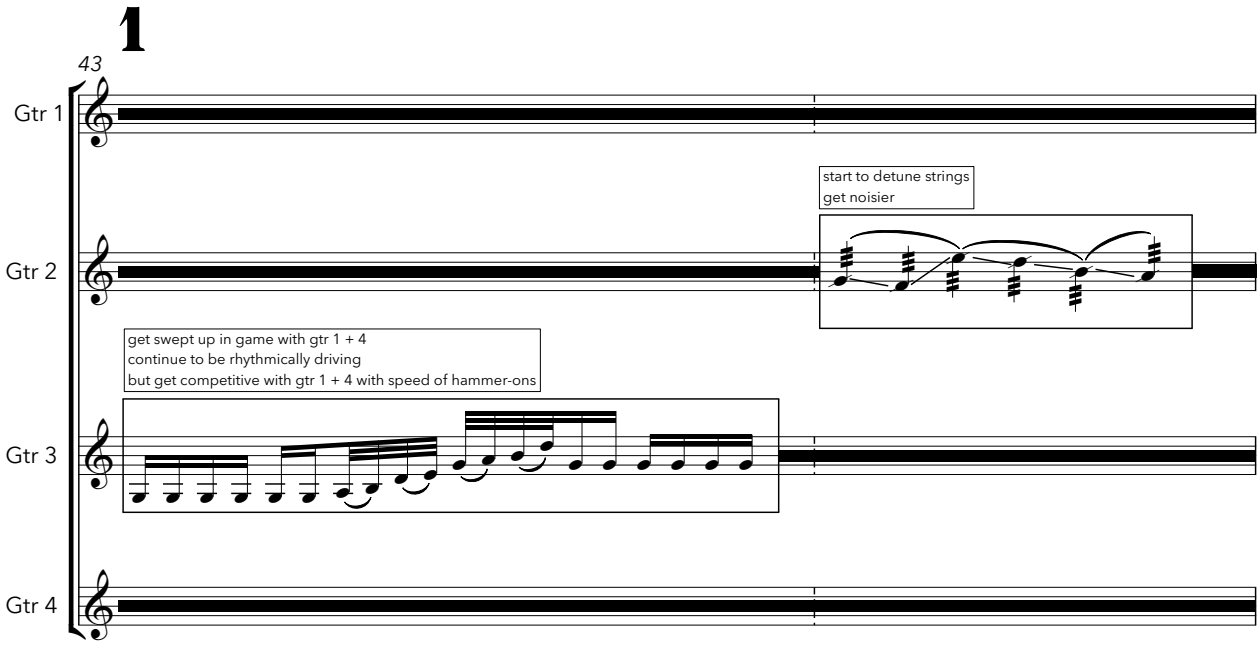

1
C
31
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4
mp an echo of earlier
ppp
ppp
34
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4
mp
an earnest proclamation with a small voice
mp
2
35
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4
mp
3
3

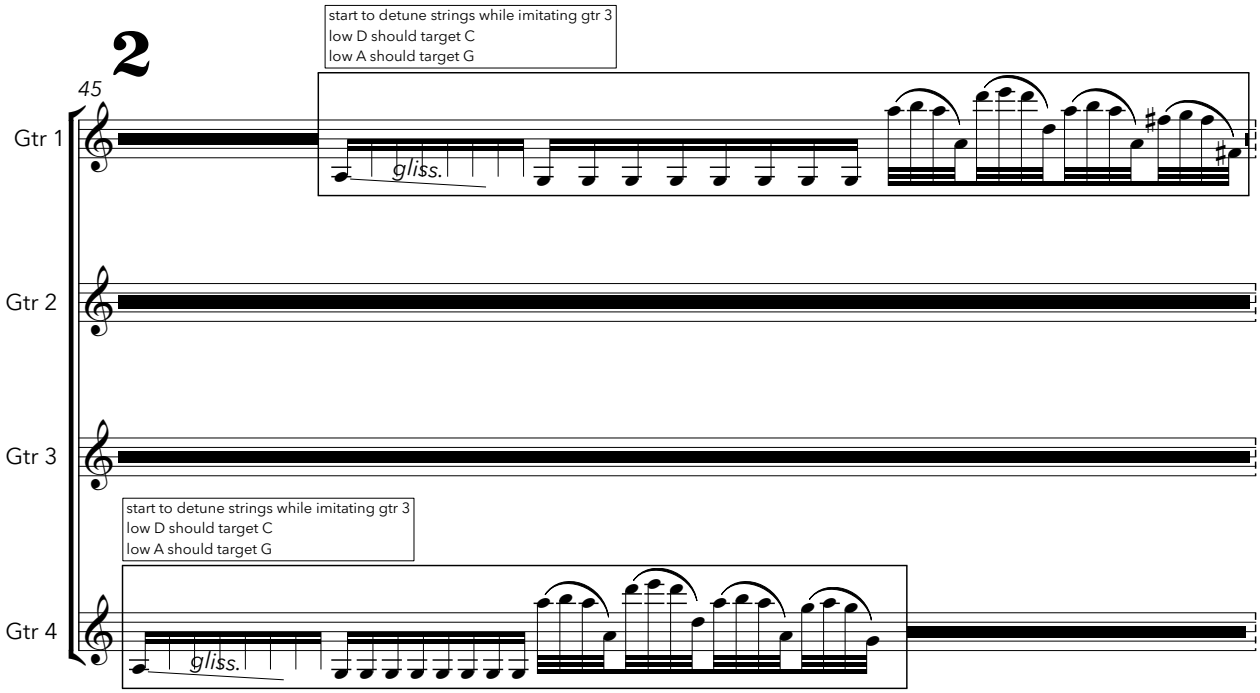

3
36
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4
37
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4
38
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4

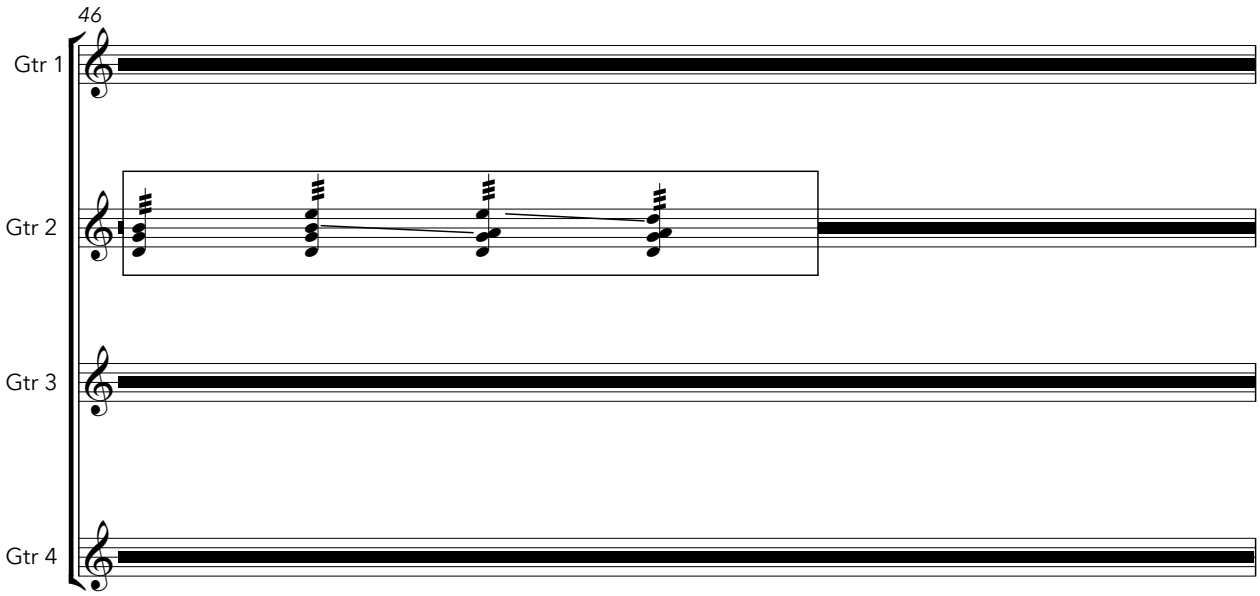

39
4
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
mp gentle, but earnest
Gtr 3
Gtr 4


40
5
Gtr 1
fast hammer-ons on strings 1-3, notes are not precise
subito mf
Gtr 2
in unison with gtr 3
p
Gtr 3
in unison with gtr 2
with slide
p
Gtr 4
fast hammer-ons on strings 1-3, notes are not precise
6
subito mf


D
becoming more ecstatic
41
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4
begin game with gtr 4
converse with each other with hammer-ons
begin sparsely, gradually become denser
get competitive - gradually speed up and
expand range with patterns in response
begin pick scrapes on open strings
without slide
mp, with anticipation
begin game with gtr 1
converse with each other with hammer-ons
begin sparsely, gradually become denser
get competitive - gradually speed up and
expand range with patterns in response

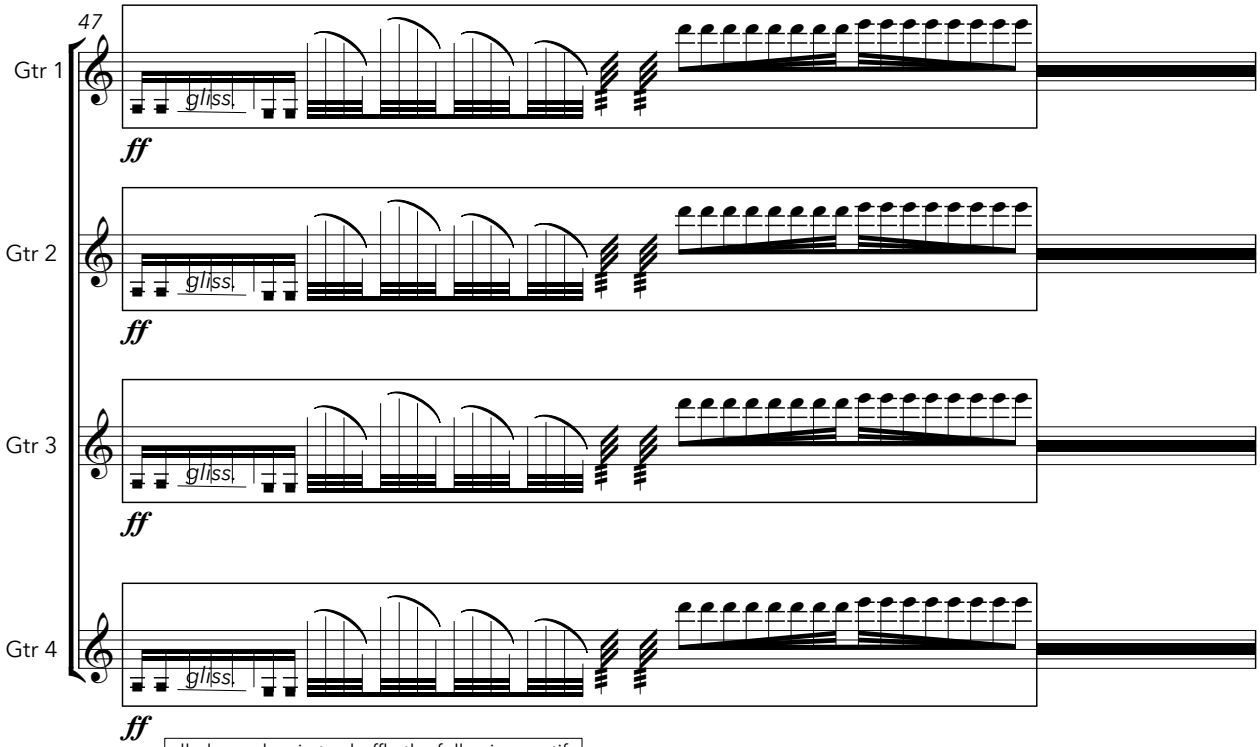

1
43
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4
start to detune strings
get noisier
get swept up in game with gtr 1 + 4
continue to be rhythmically driving
but get competitive with gtr 1 + 4 with speed of hammer-ons


2
start to detune strings while imitating gtr 3
low D should target C
low A should target G
45
Gtr 1
gliss.
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
start to detune strings while imitating gtr 3
low D should target C
low A should target G
Gtr 4
gliss.


46
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4

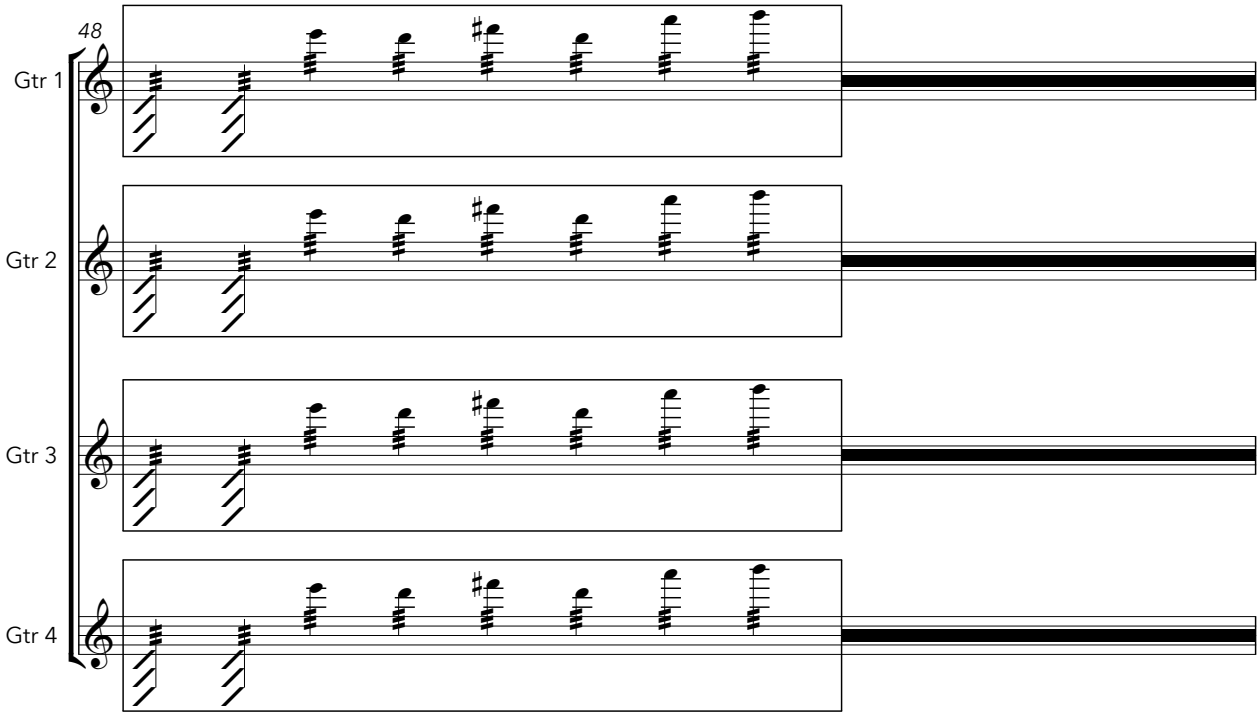
all players begin to shuffle the following motifs
-detuning open strings
-busy hammer-ons
-dense, noisy tremolos
-high tremoloed notes, hinting at a melody
notes should be generally diatonic to G,
but some straying is accepted and expected

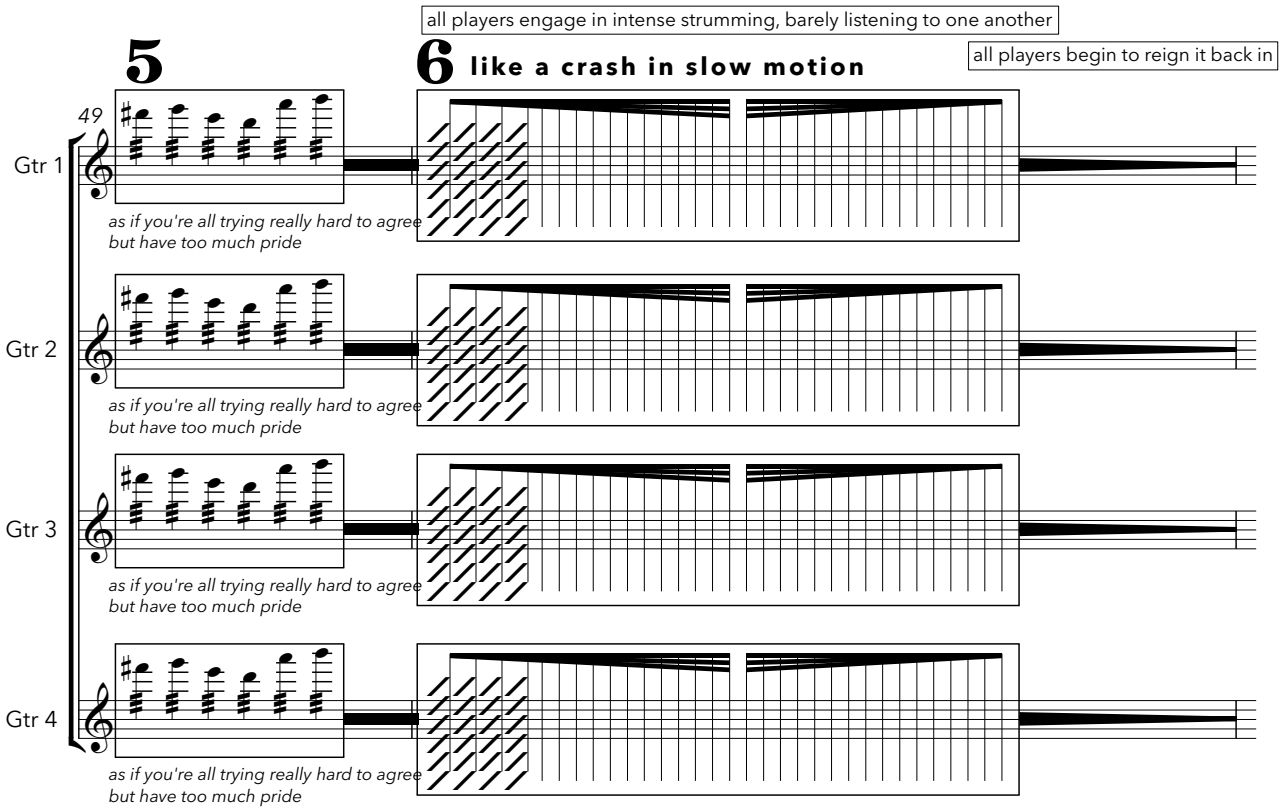
3 **wildly ecstatic group improvisation**

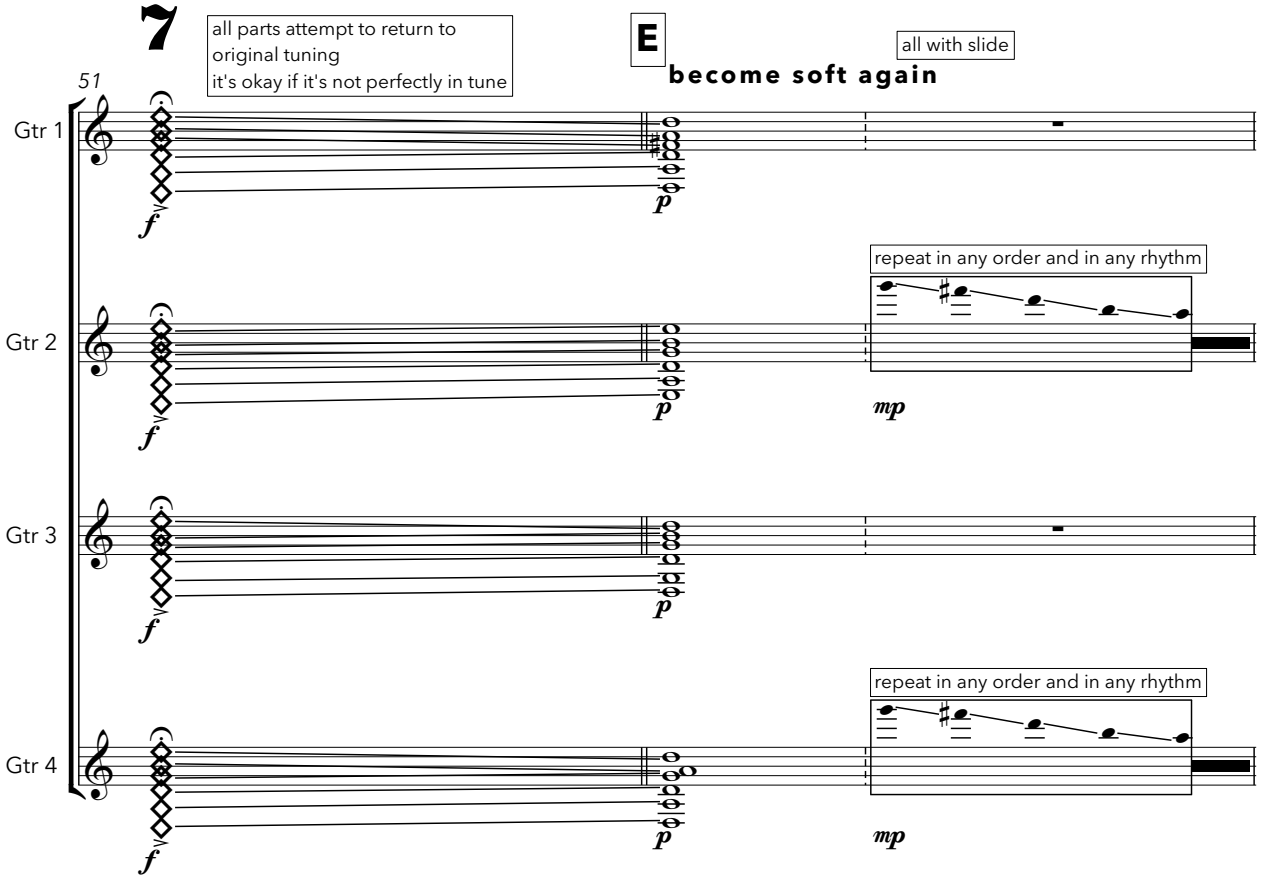


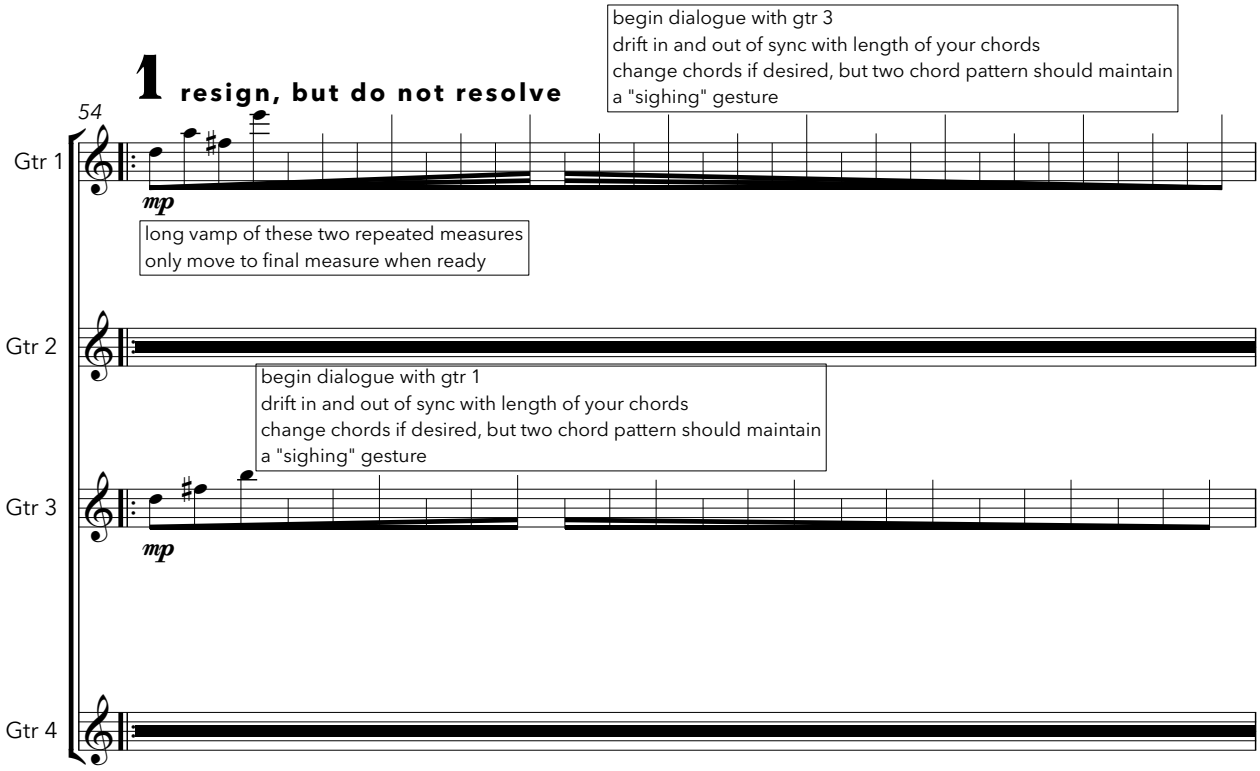
all players begin to shuffle the following motifs
-dense, noisy tremolos on low strings,
which will roughly be tuned CGD
-high tremoloed notes, hinting at a melody

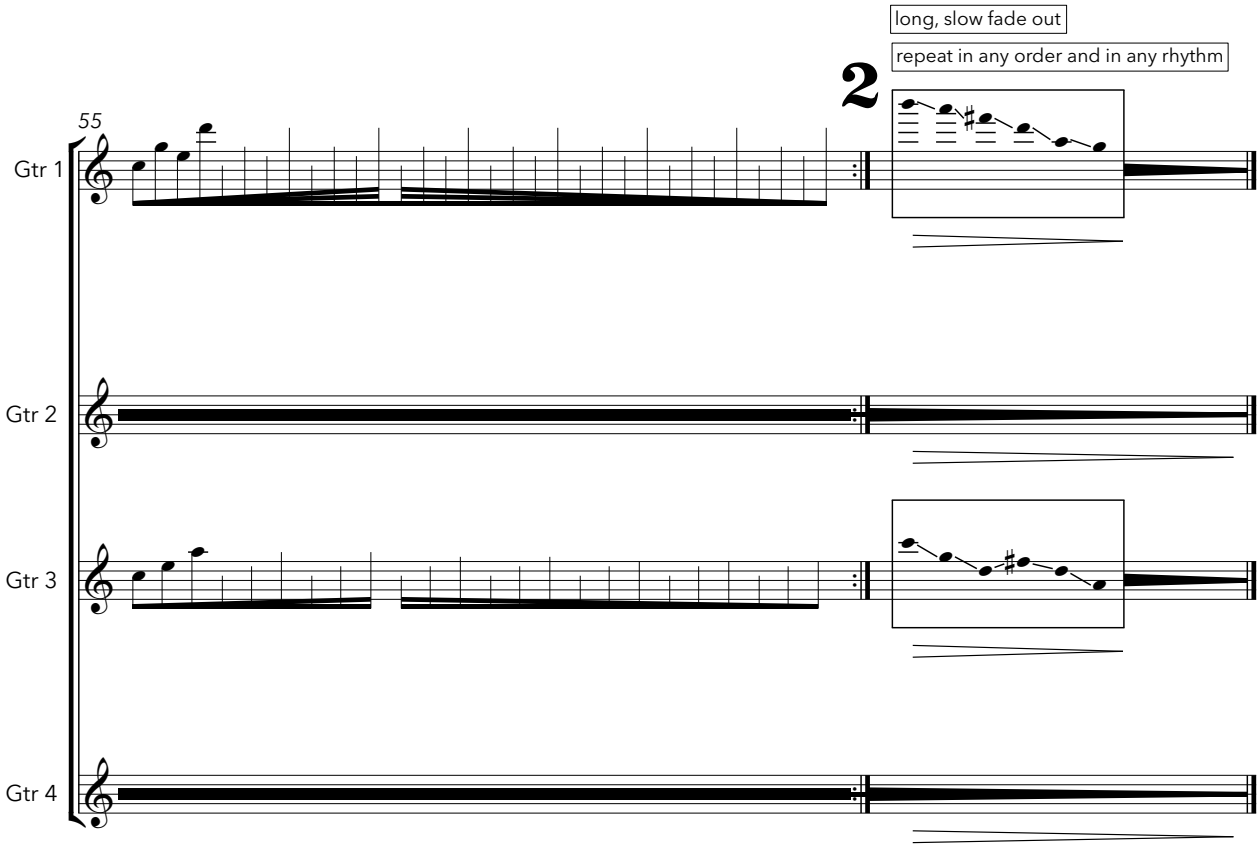
4




all players engage in intense strumming, barely listening to one another
5
6 like a crash in slow motion
all players begin to reign it back in
49
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4
as if you're all trying really hard to agree
but have too much pride


7
all parts attempt to return to
original tuning
it's okay if it's not perfectly in tune
E
all with slide
become soft again
51
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4
repeat in any order and in any rhythm
repeat in any order and in any rhythm


1 resign, but do not resolve
begin dialogue with gtr 3
drift in and out of sync with length of your chords
change chords if desired, but two chord pattern should maintain
a "sighing" gesture
54
Gtr 1
mp
long vamp of these two repeated measures
only move to final measure when ready
Gtr 2
begin dialogue with gtr 1
drift in and out of sync with length of your chords
change chords if desired, but two chord pattern should maintain
a "sighing" gesture
Gtr 3
mp
Gtr 4


long, slow fade out
repeat in any order and in any rhythm
2
55
Gtr 1
Gtr 2
Gtr 3
Gtr 4

Empty in Full

for seven string instruments

Matt Magerkurth

2021

Performance Notes

This piece is part of a series of folk-music-related chamber pieces in part prompted by the prairie landscapes I associate with my family in rural Kansas and my life as a young adult in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This piece, for seven string instruments, is intended to be performable by players who are less-experienced music readers via its semi-graphic nature. A demo recording will be provided to ensembles hoping to perform this piece in order to accomodate players wishing to perform this piece moreso by ear than by score. Empty in Full is intended to be the closing piece of this series, and the textures of this piece move from chattery and fluttery to rich and elongated, and the plucked instruments are called to be bowed at the end. If the sound is crusty or inconsistent, more power to it! This texture should be as intimate as possible, and inconsistencies are welcome within that.

In all cases of dense rhythmic material in this movement, there is no need to try for any rhythmic unison, even if it's notated as a unison. If your playing happens to line up with another player's, great! But feel no need to maintain the coordination. Plucked instruments with tremolos/trills can interpret these as just hammer-ons or with sublte picking, but the texture shouldn't be overly percussive.

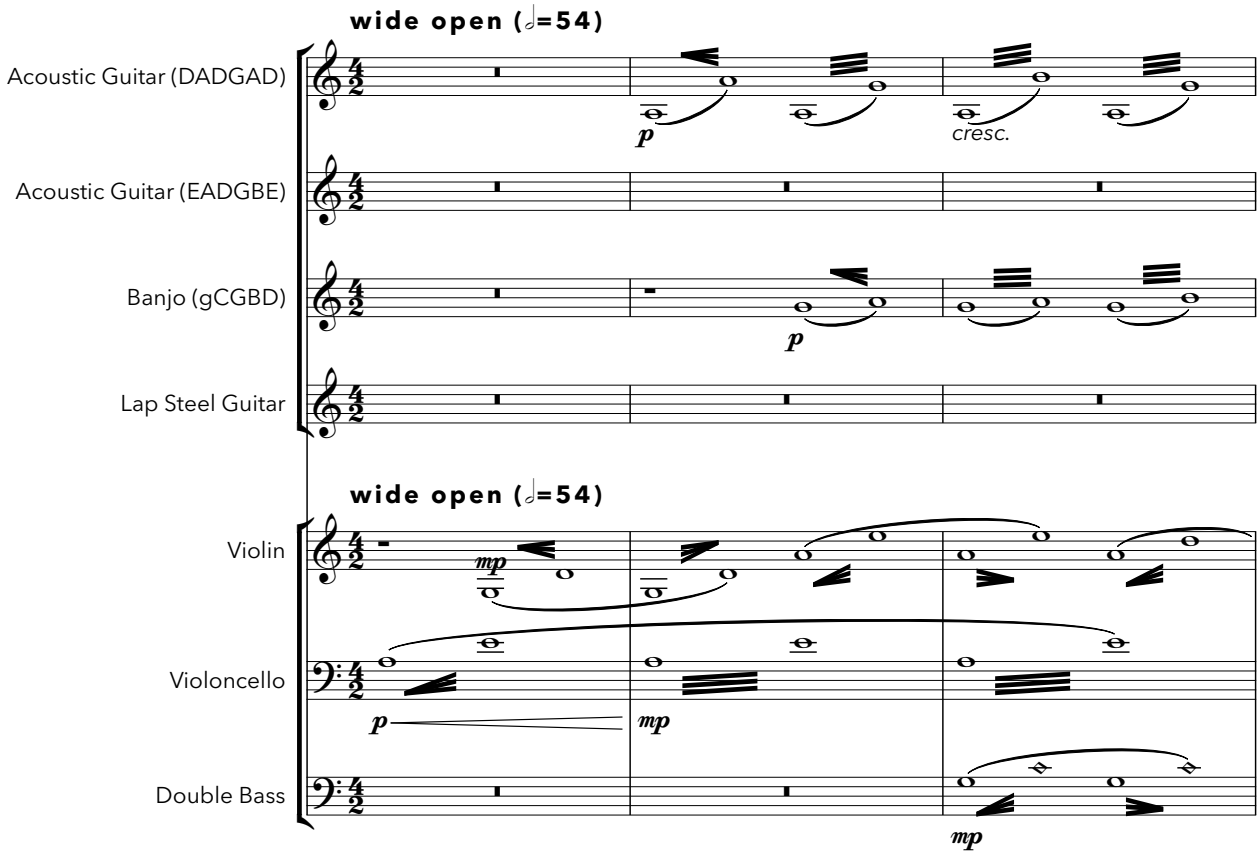
In all circumstances, boxed musical material is to be repeated in any rhythm or sequence. Sections involving dotted bar lines should not be treated metrically.

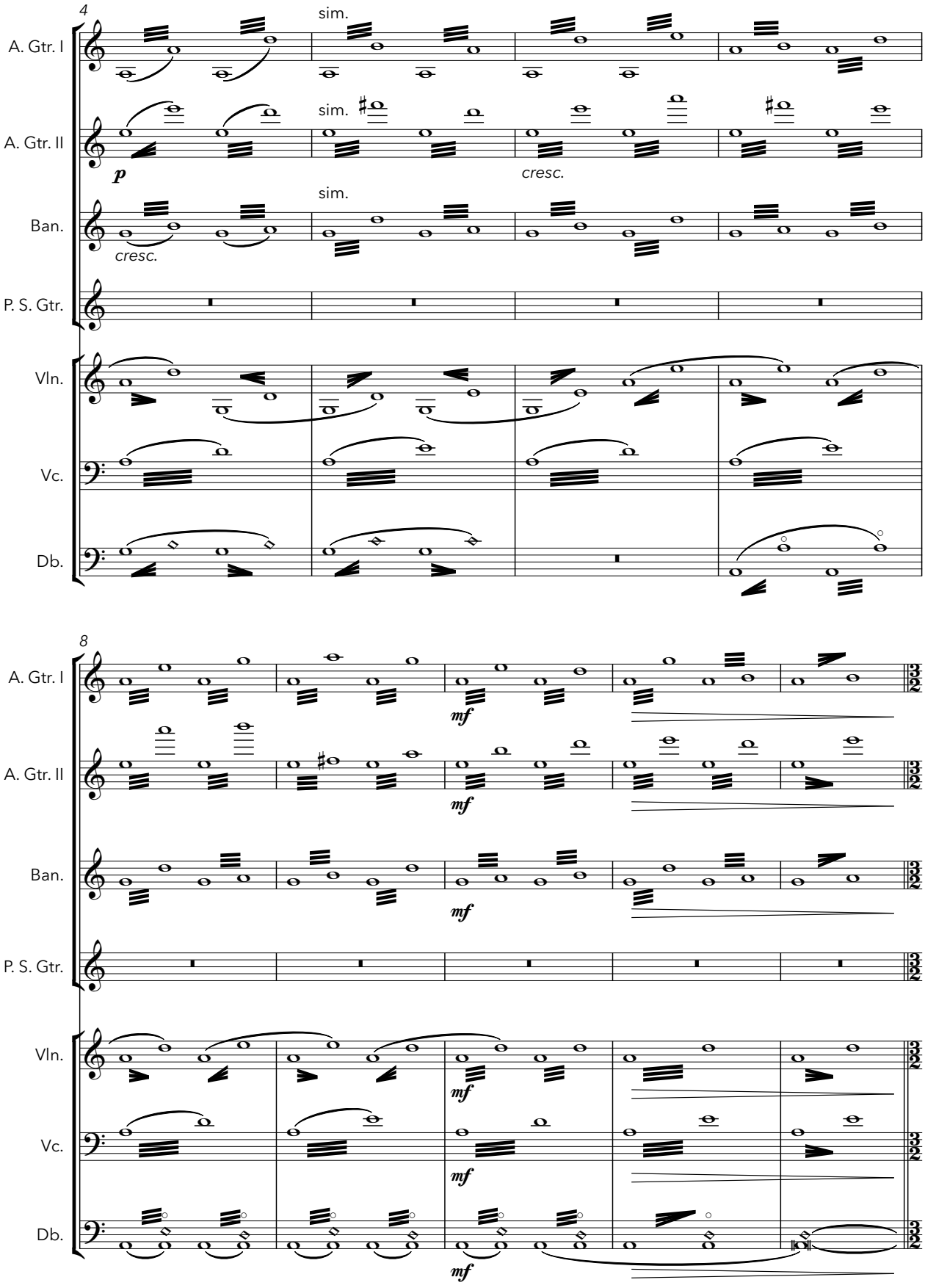
Approximate Duration: 7'

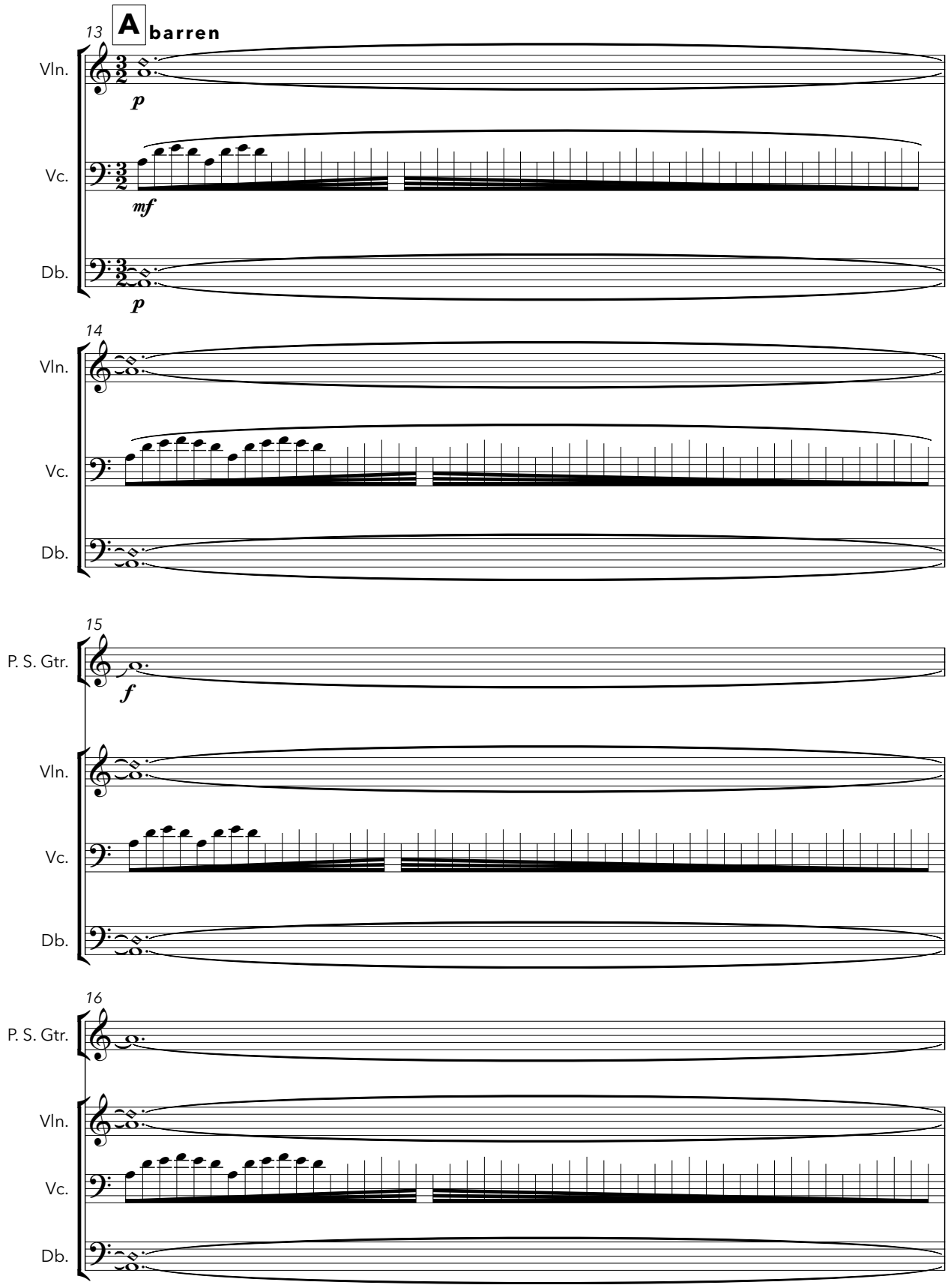
EMPTY IN FULL

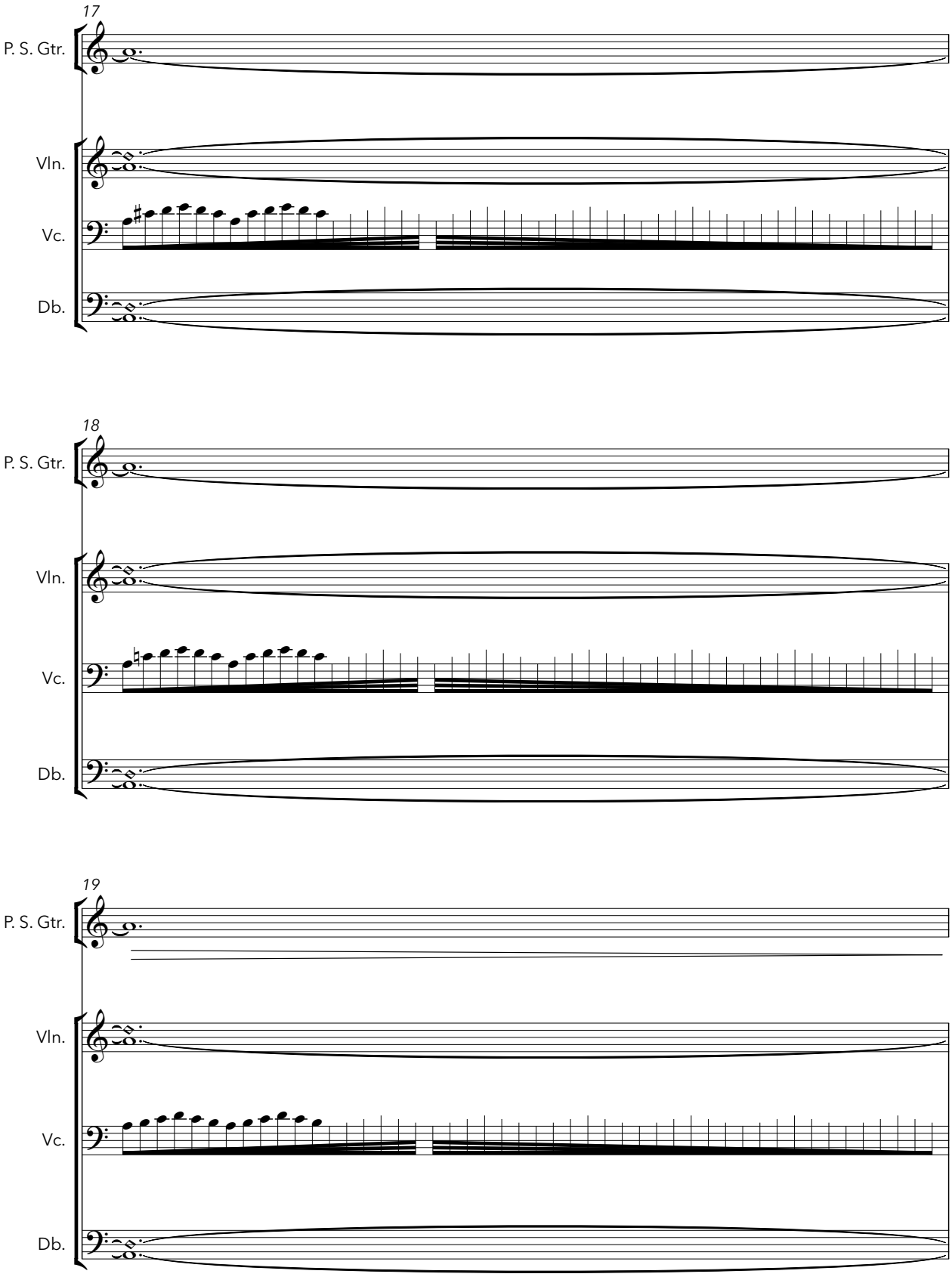
for seven string instruments

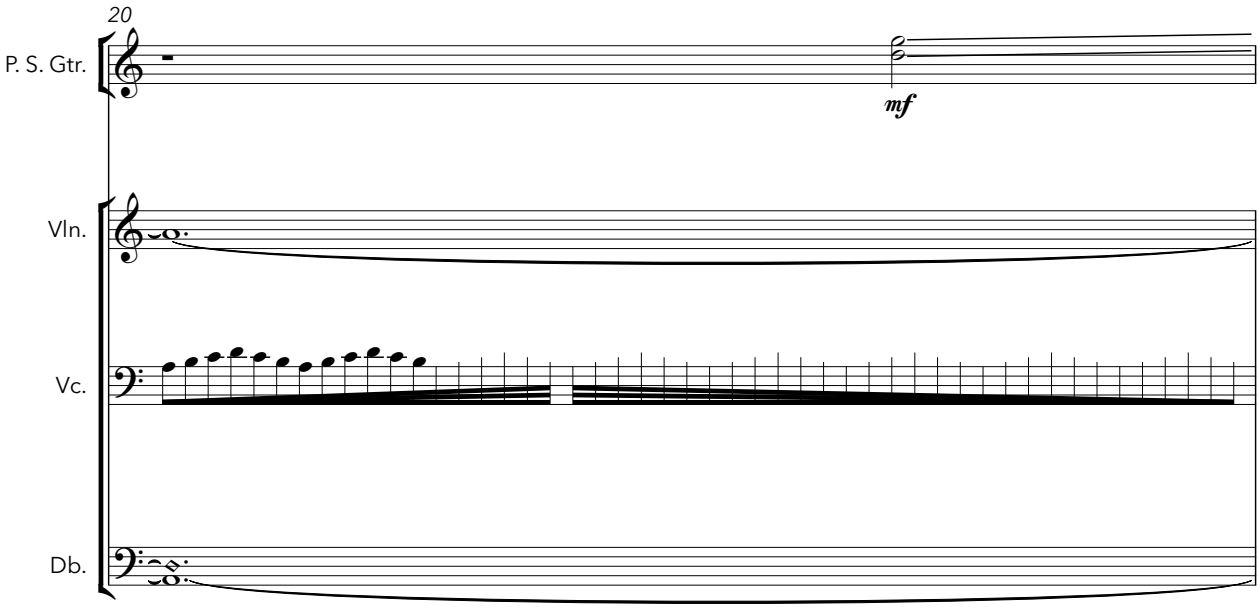
Matt Magerkurth

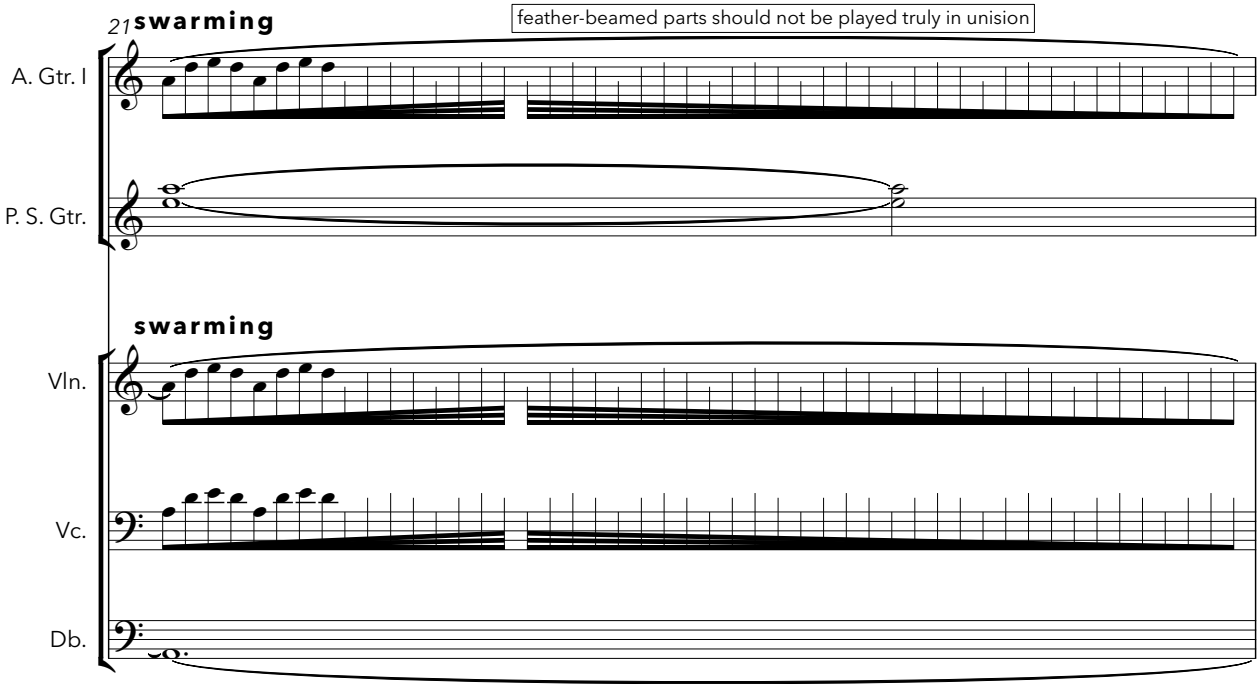


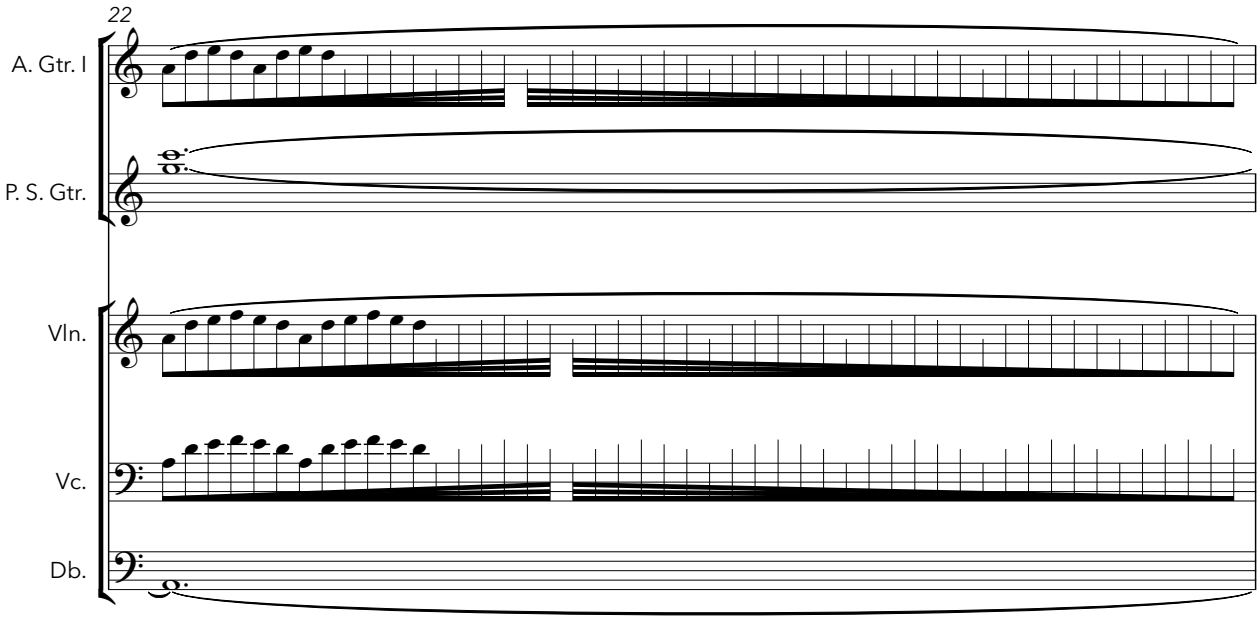

4
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
sim.
sim.
sim.
p
cresc.
cresc.
8
mf
mf
mf
mf
mf

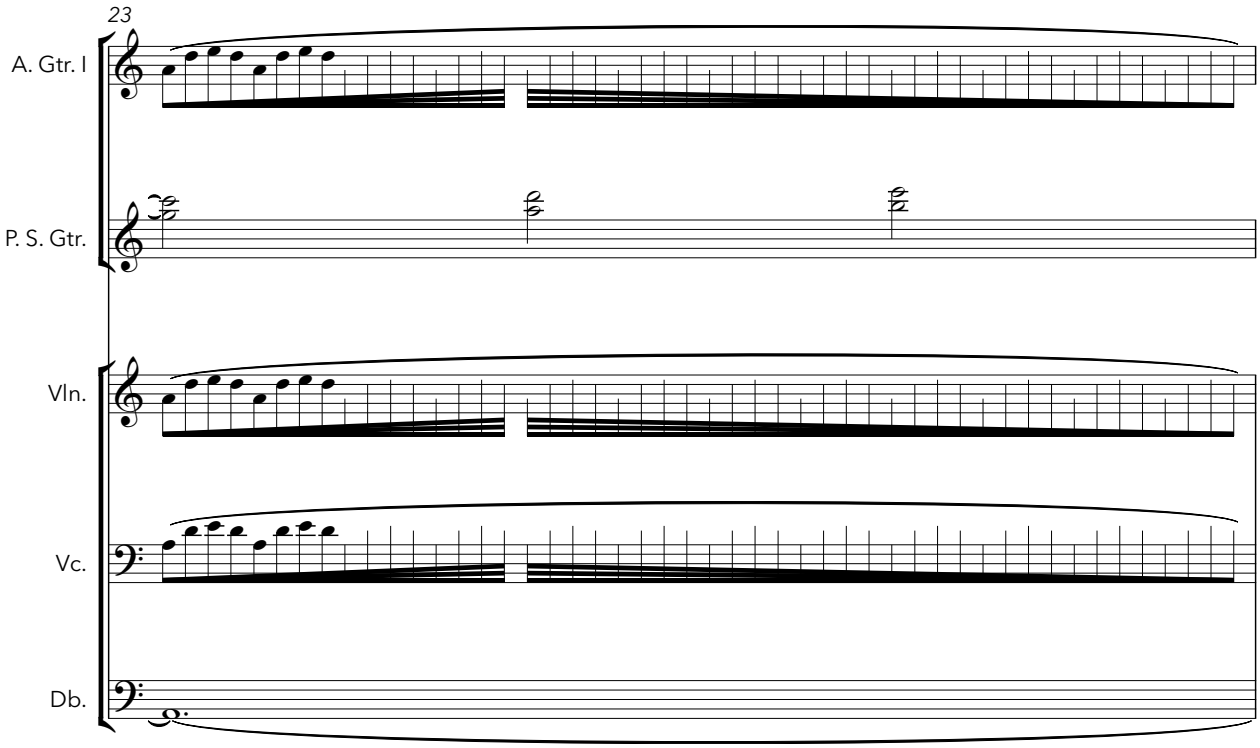

13
A
barren
Vln.
p
Vc.
mf
Db.
p
14
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
15
P. S. Gtr.
f
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
16
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

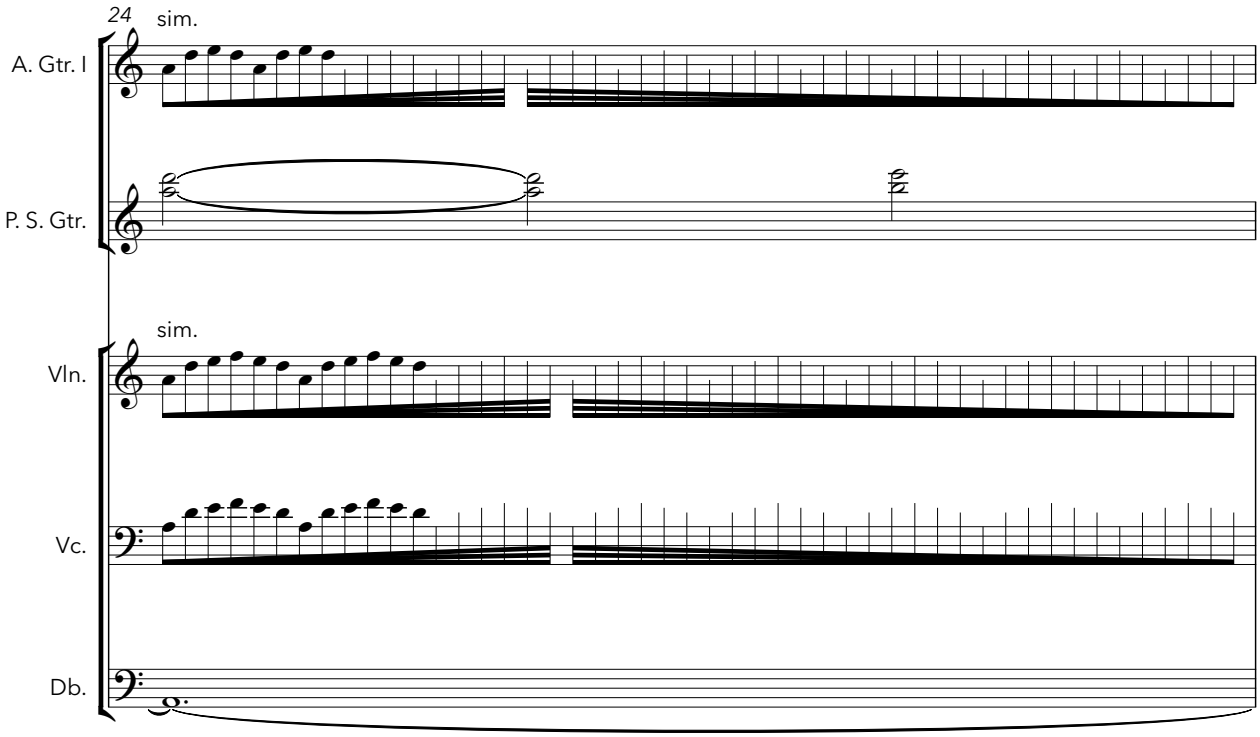

17
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
18
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
19
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

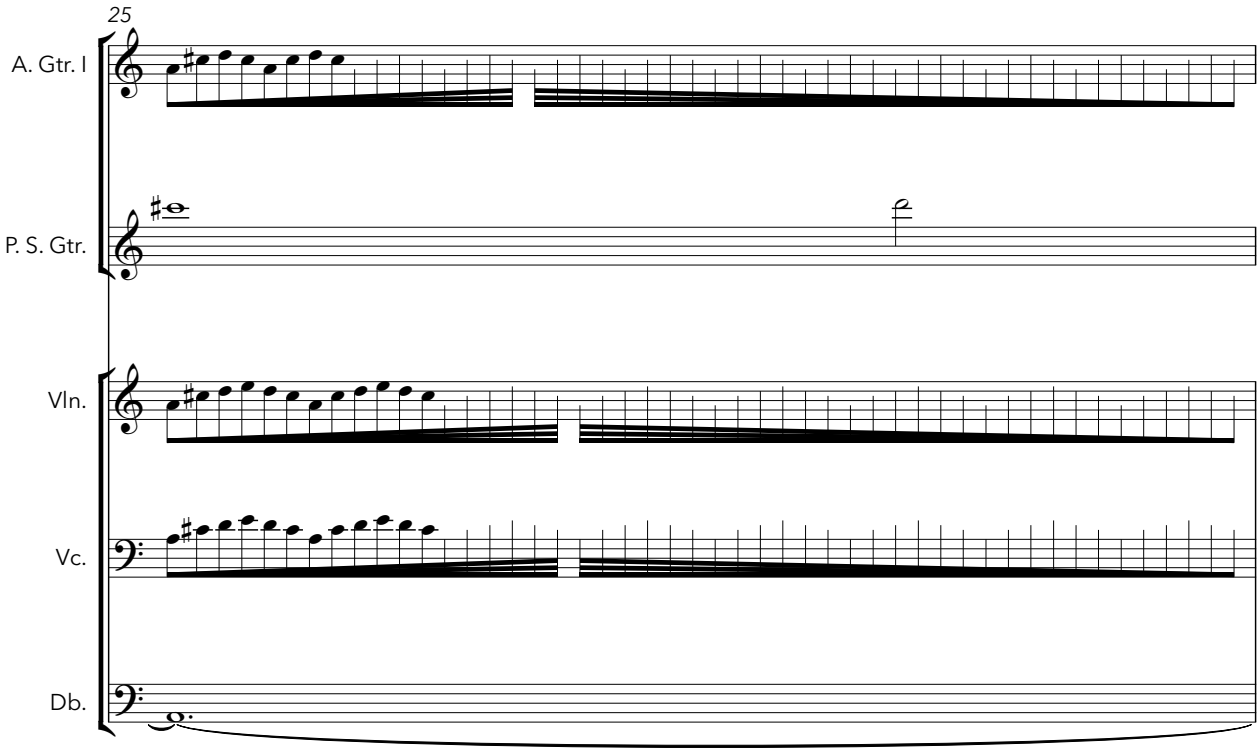

20
P. S. Gtr.
mf
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

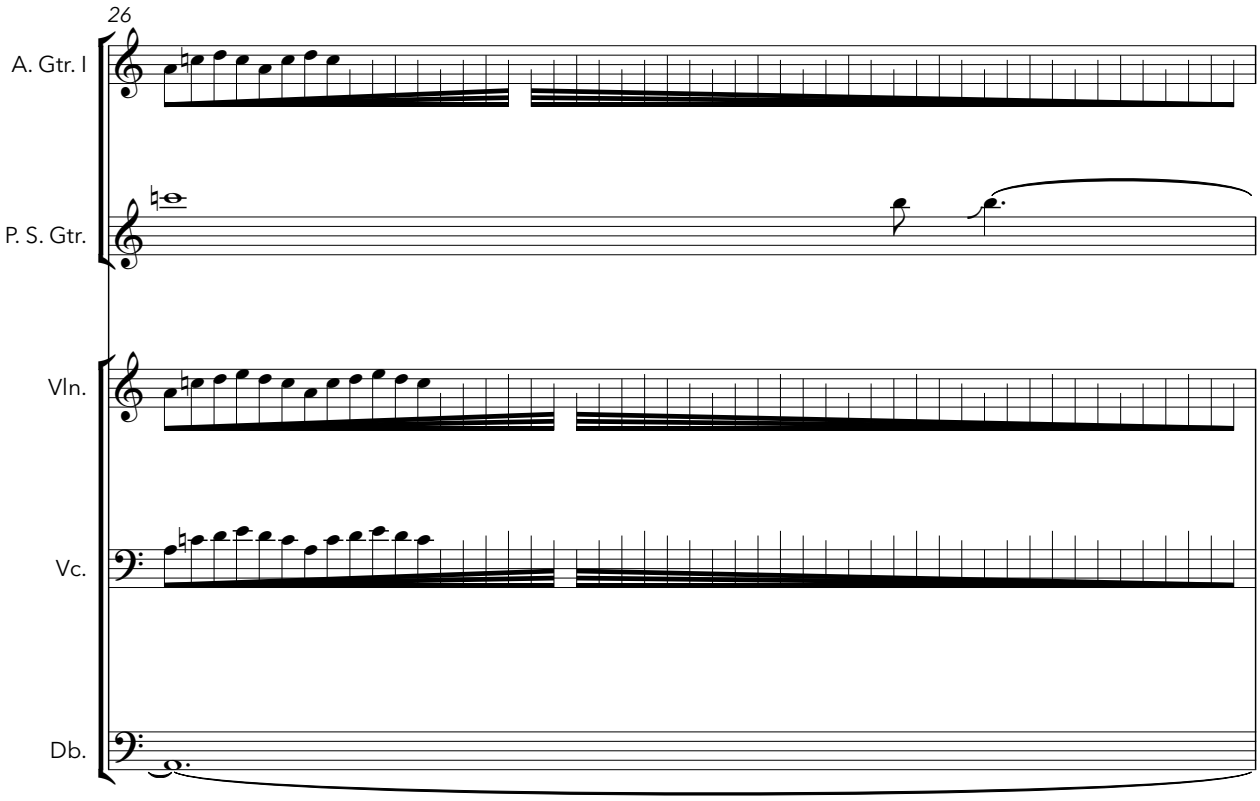

21
swarming
feather-beamed parts should not be played truly in unision
A. Gtr. I
P. S. Gtr.
swarming
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

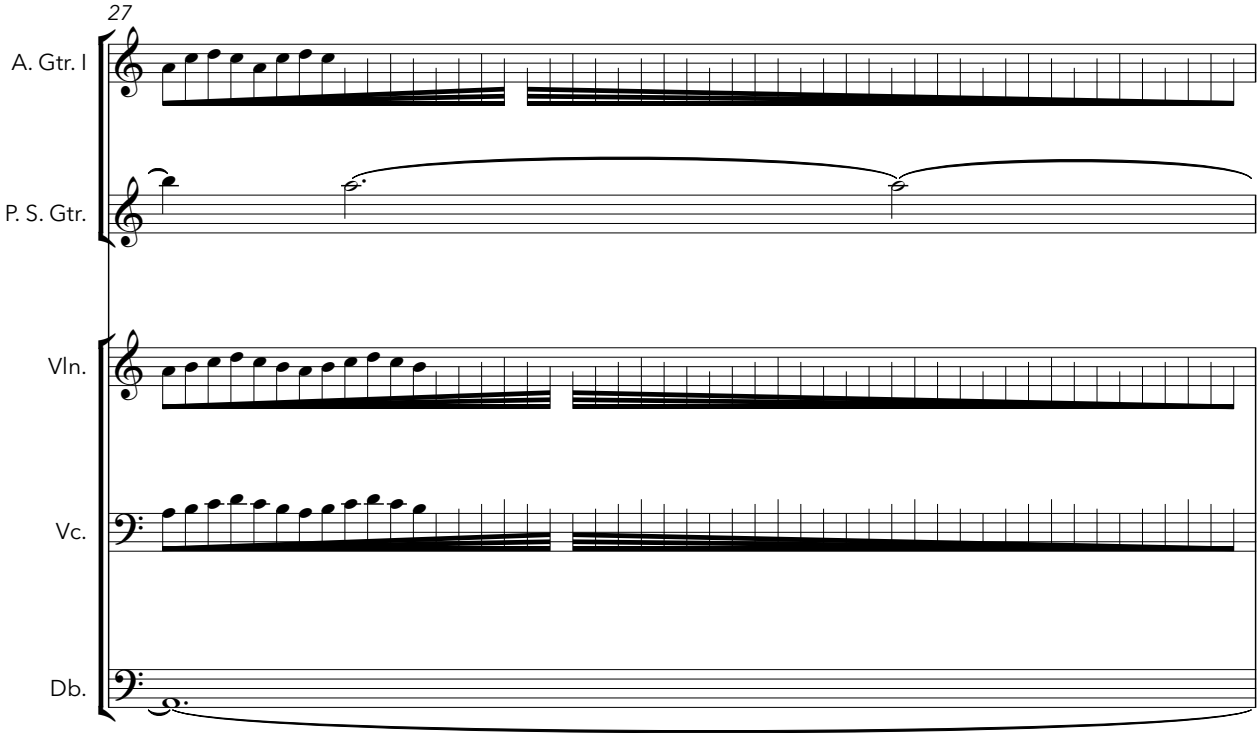

22
A. Gtr. I
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

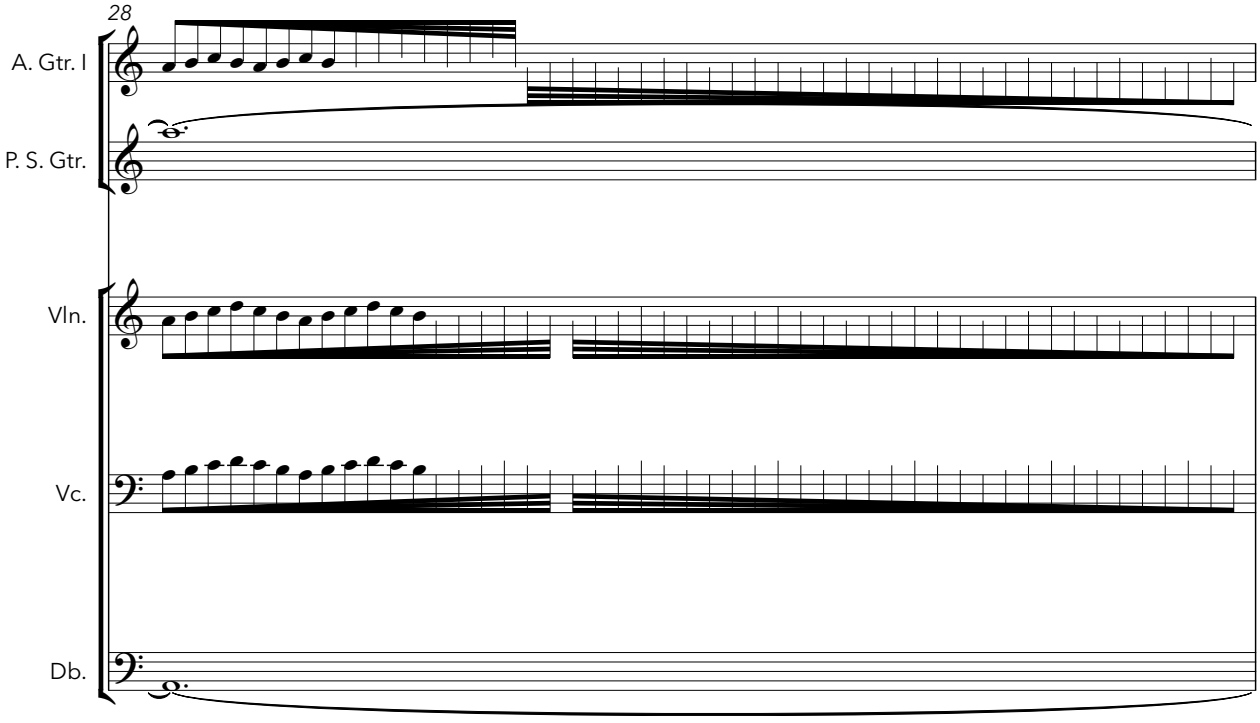

23
A. Gtr. I
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

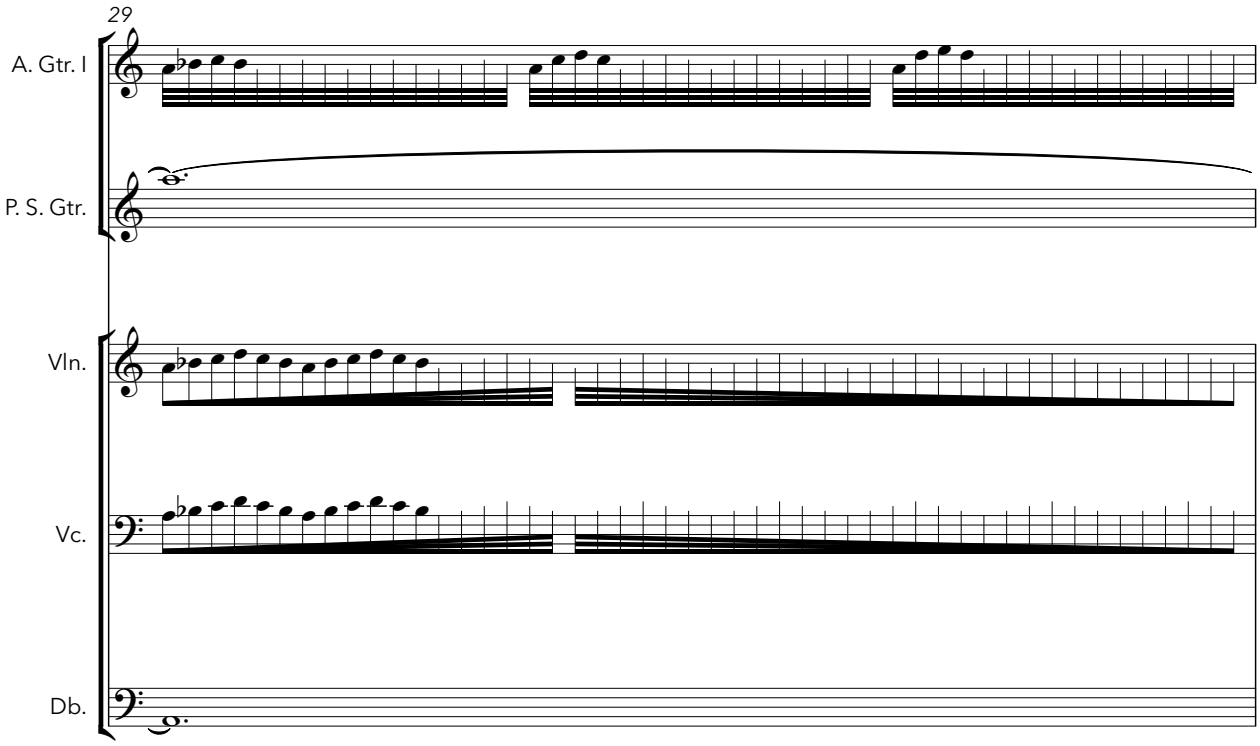

24
sim.
A. Gtr. I
P. S. Gtr.
sim.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

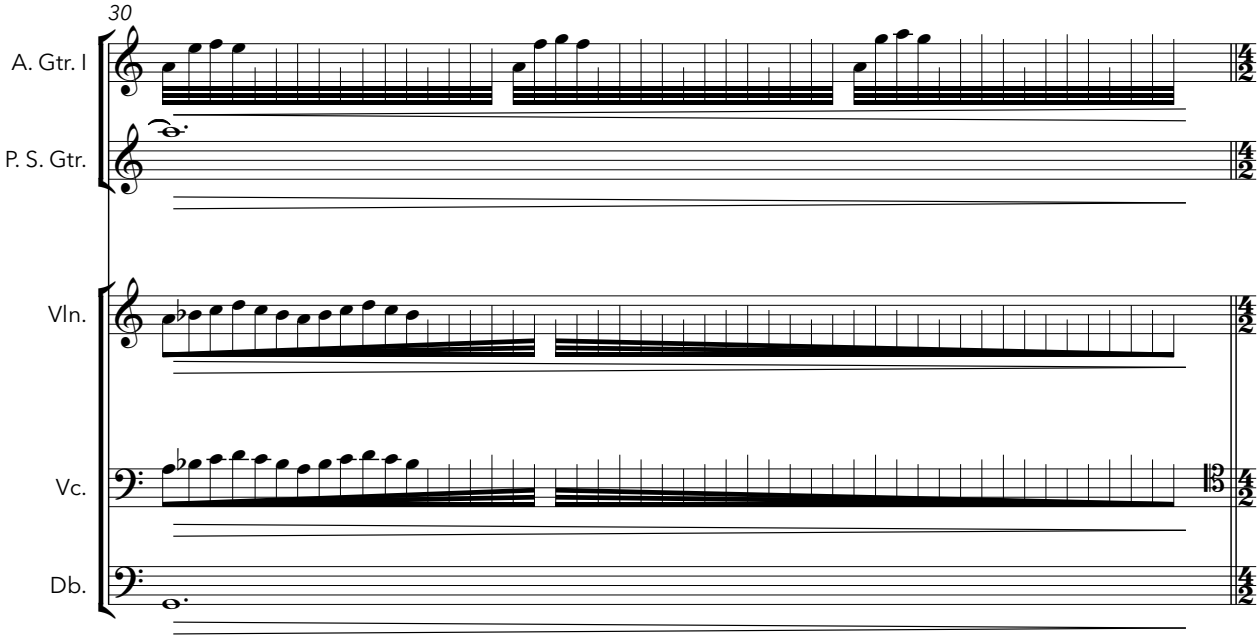

25
A. Gtr. I
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

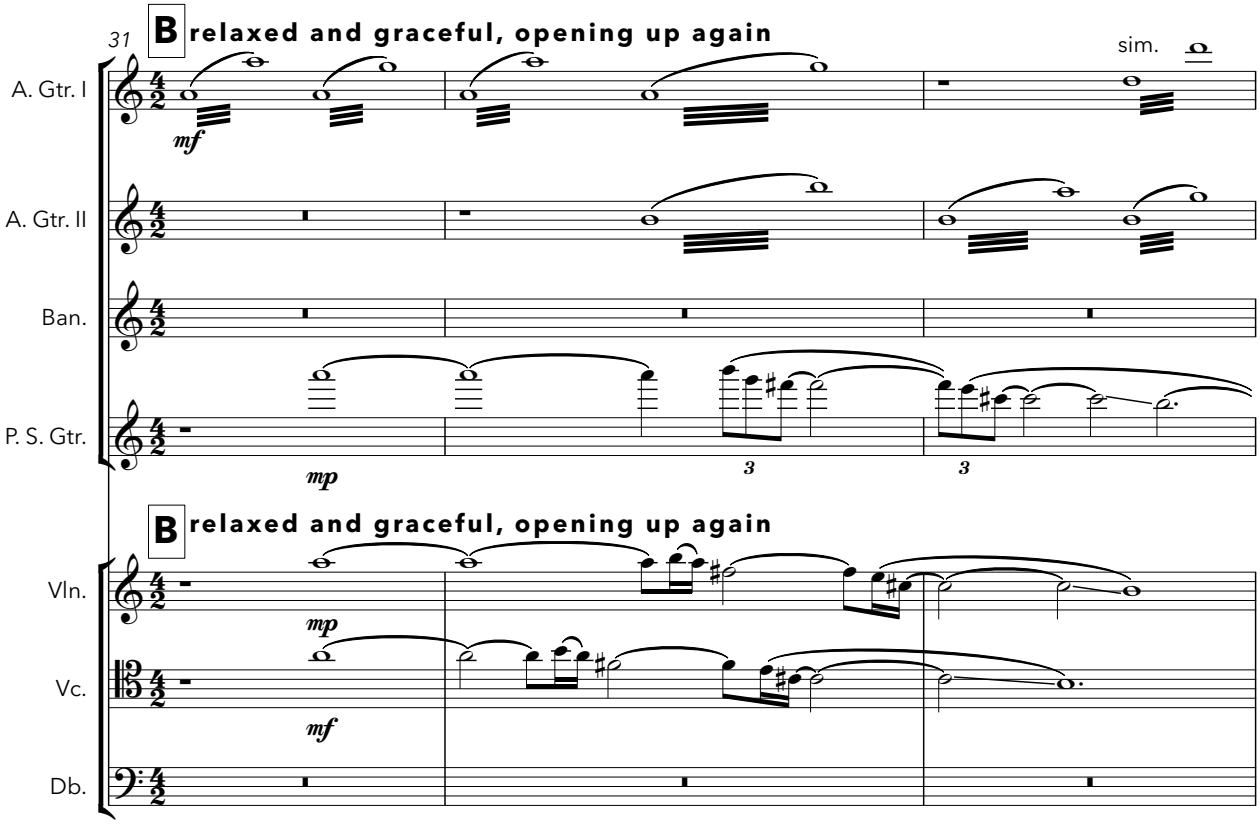

26
A. Gtr. I
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

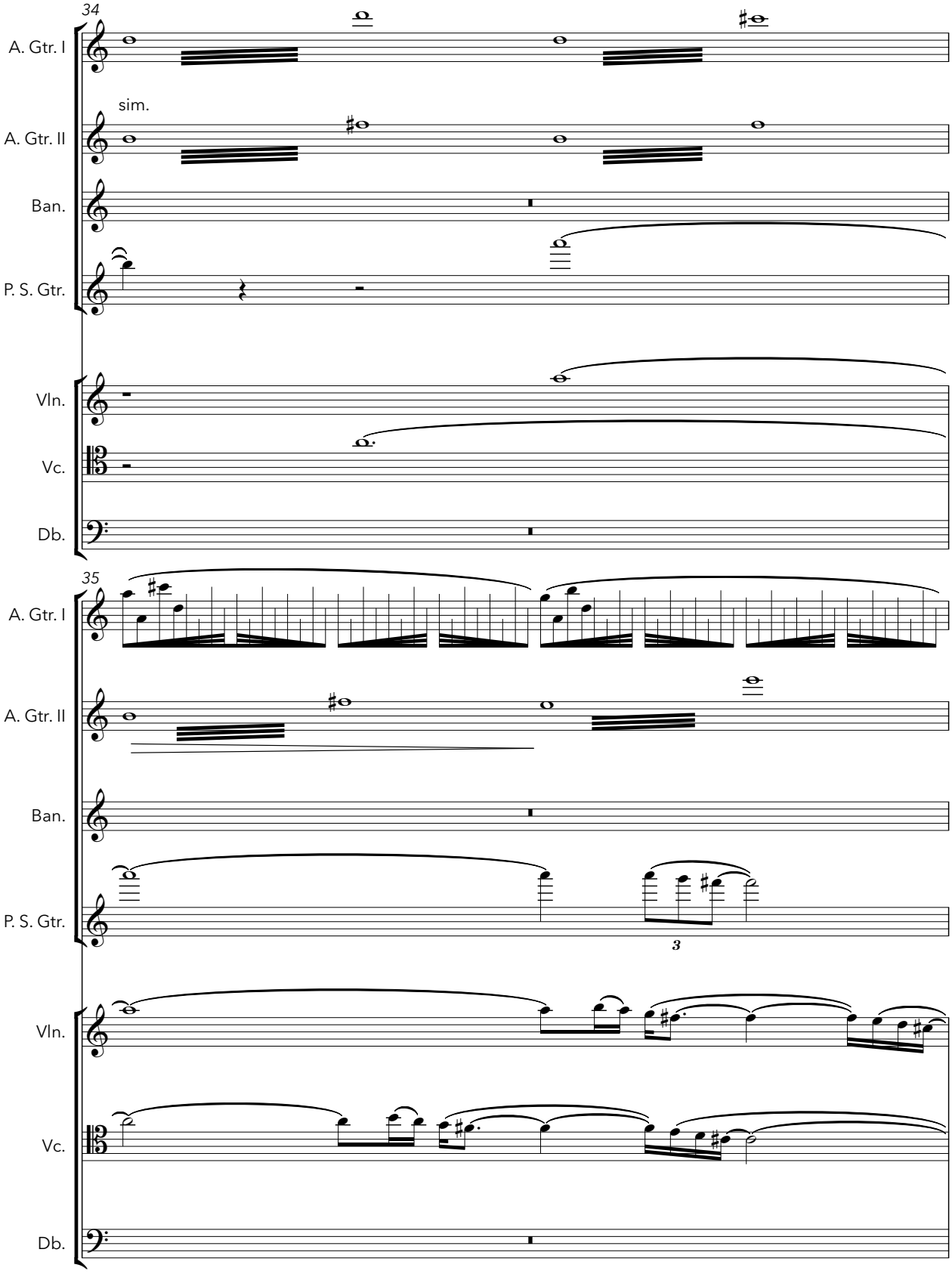

27
A. Gtr. I
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

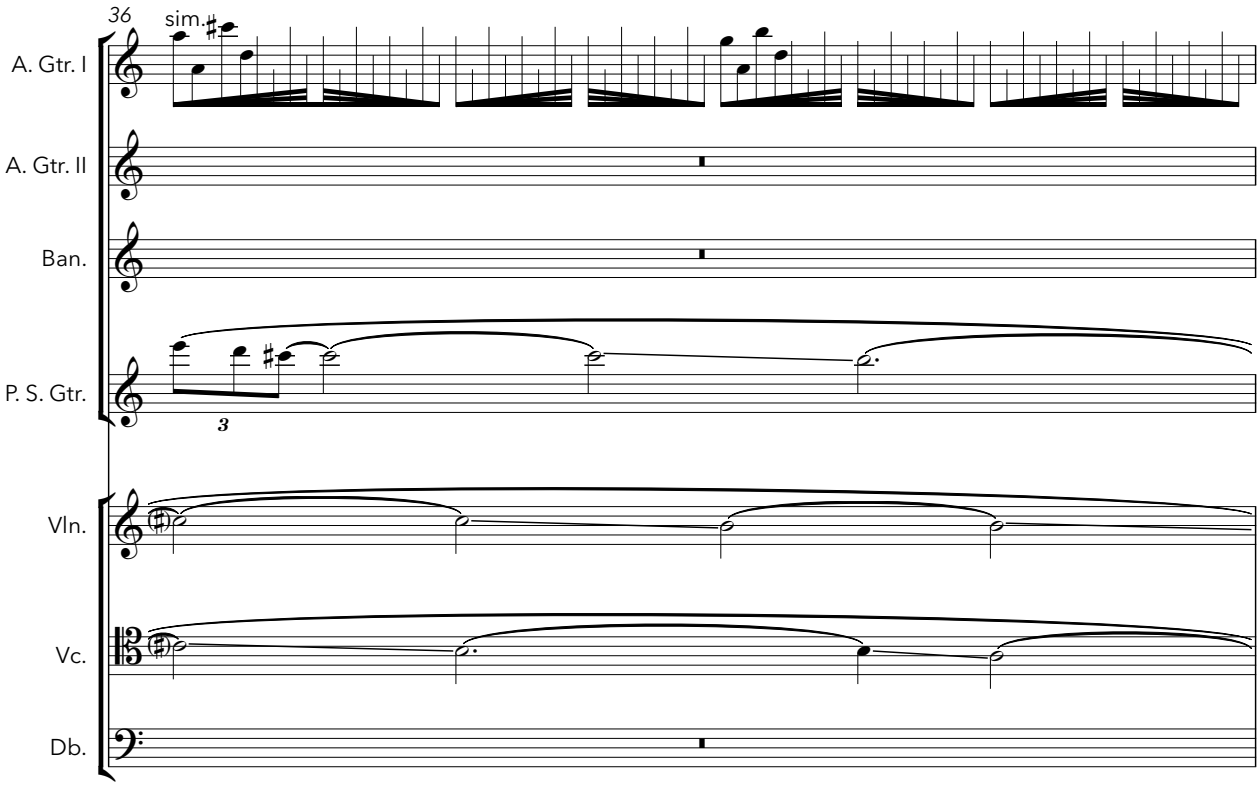

28
A. Gtr. I
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

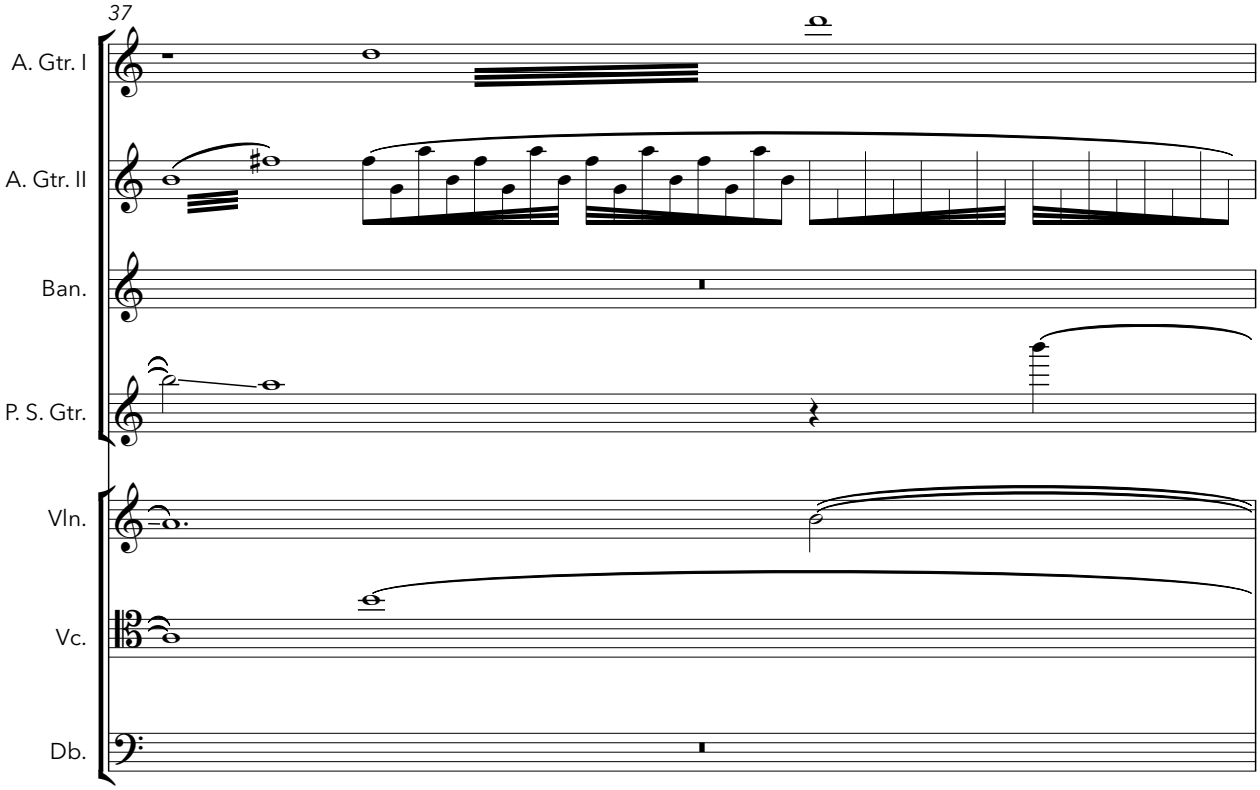

29
A. Gtr. I
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

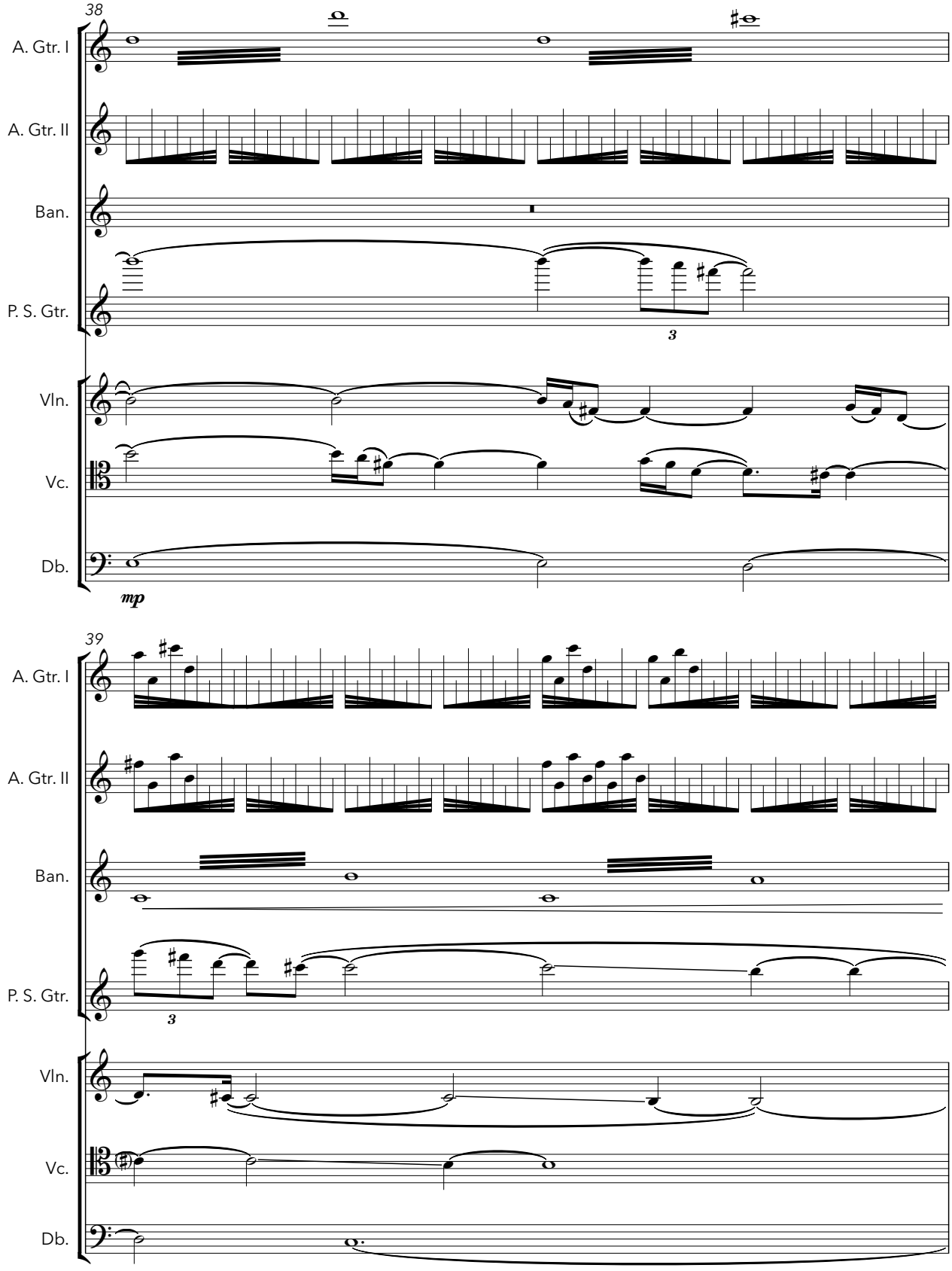

30
A. Gtr. I
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

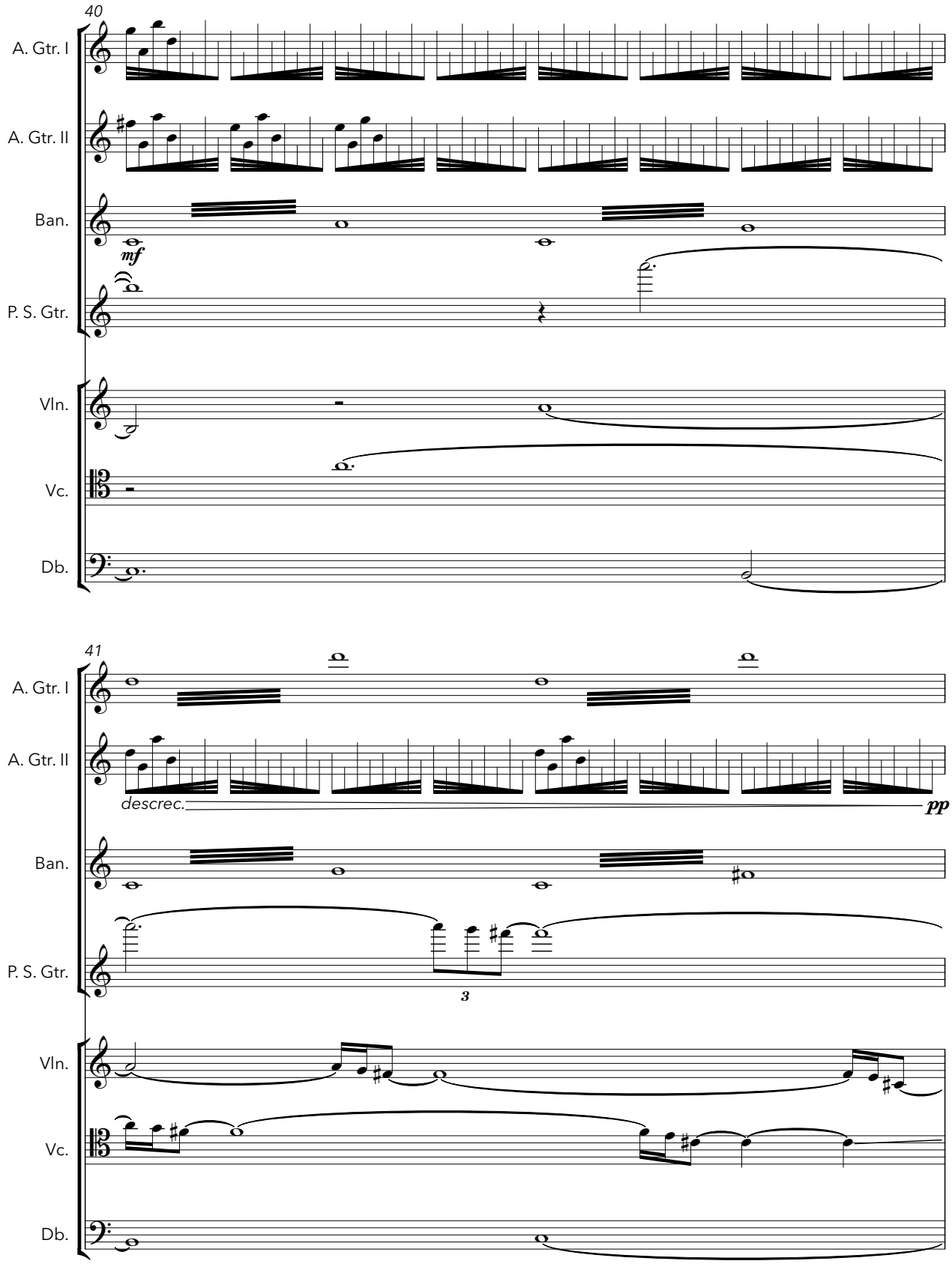

31
B relaxed and graceful, opening up again
sim.
A. Gtr. I
mf
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
mp
3
3
B relaxed and graceful, opening up again
Vln.
mp
Vc.
mf
Db.

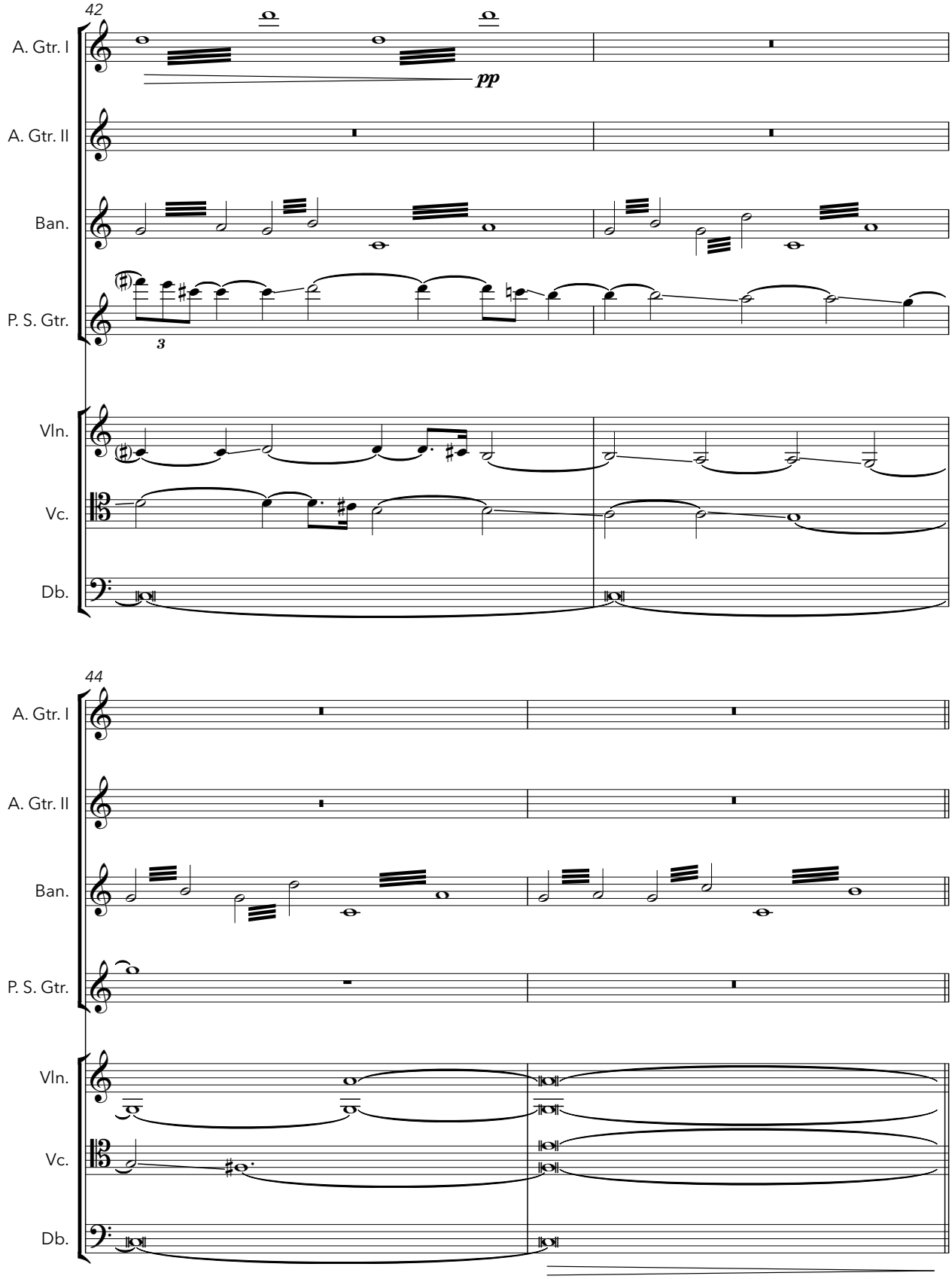

34
A. Gtr. I
sim.
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
35
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
3
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

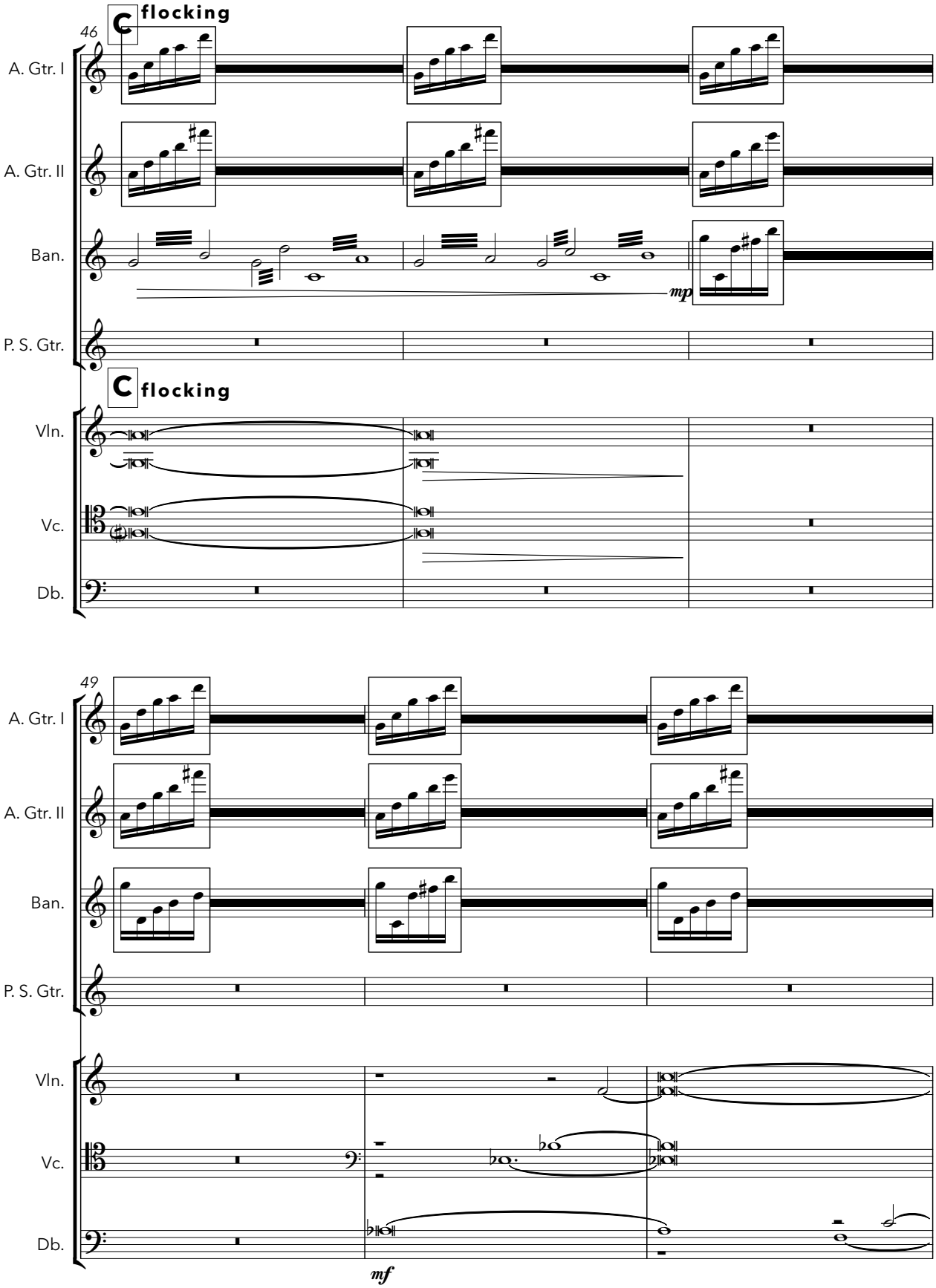

36
sim.
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
3
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

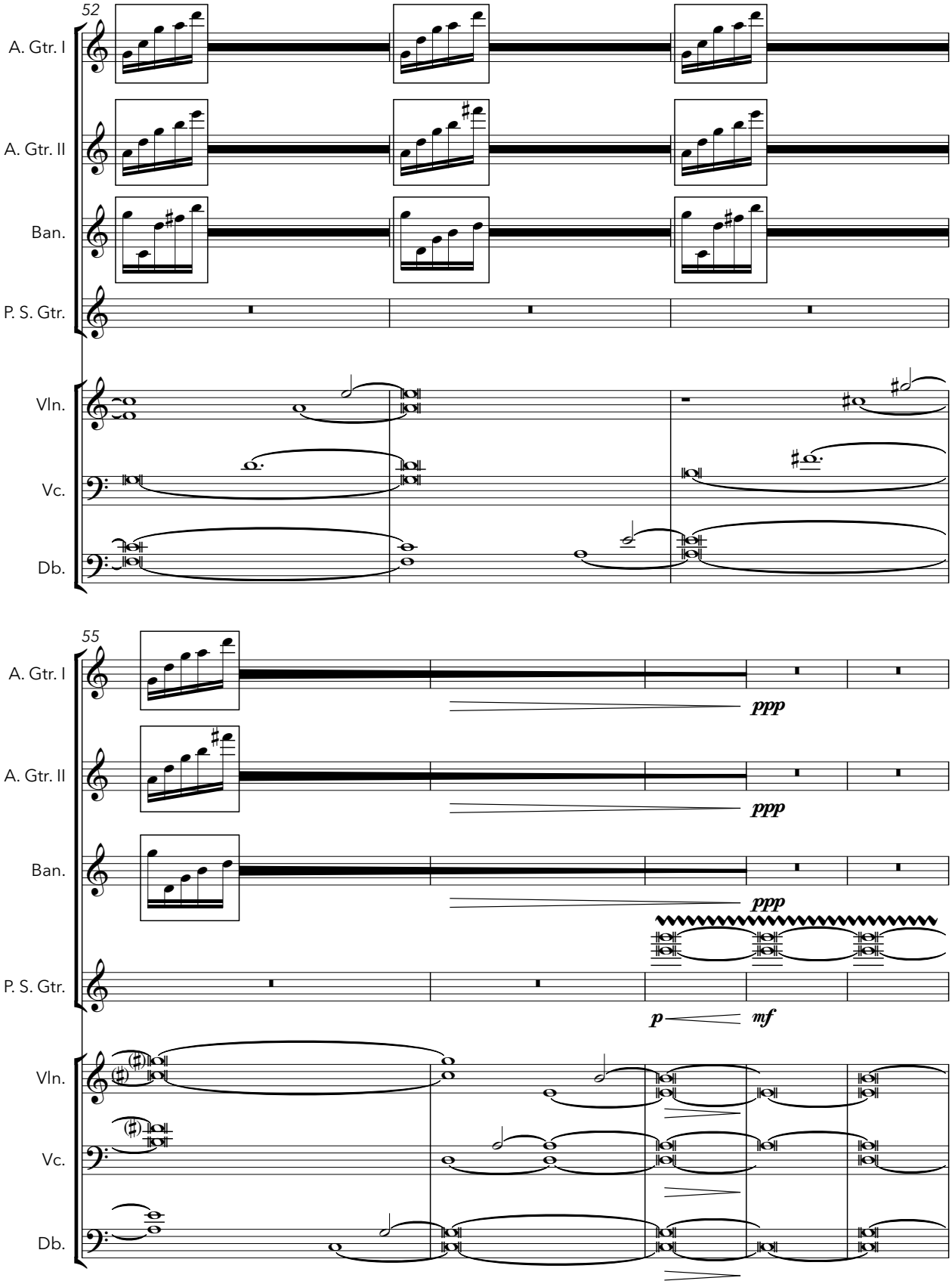

37
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

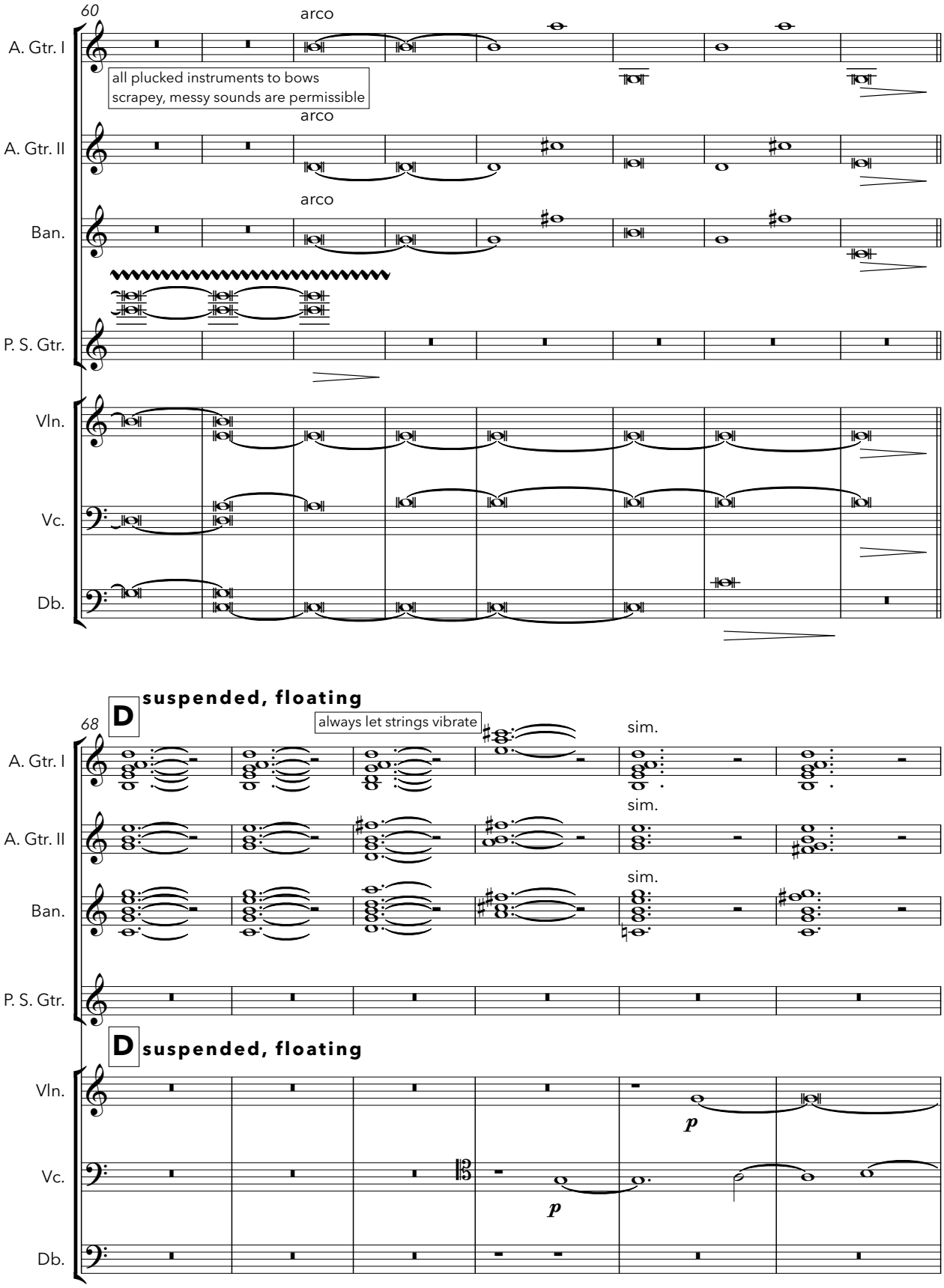

38
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
3
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
mp
39
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
3
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

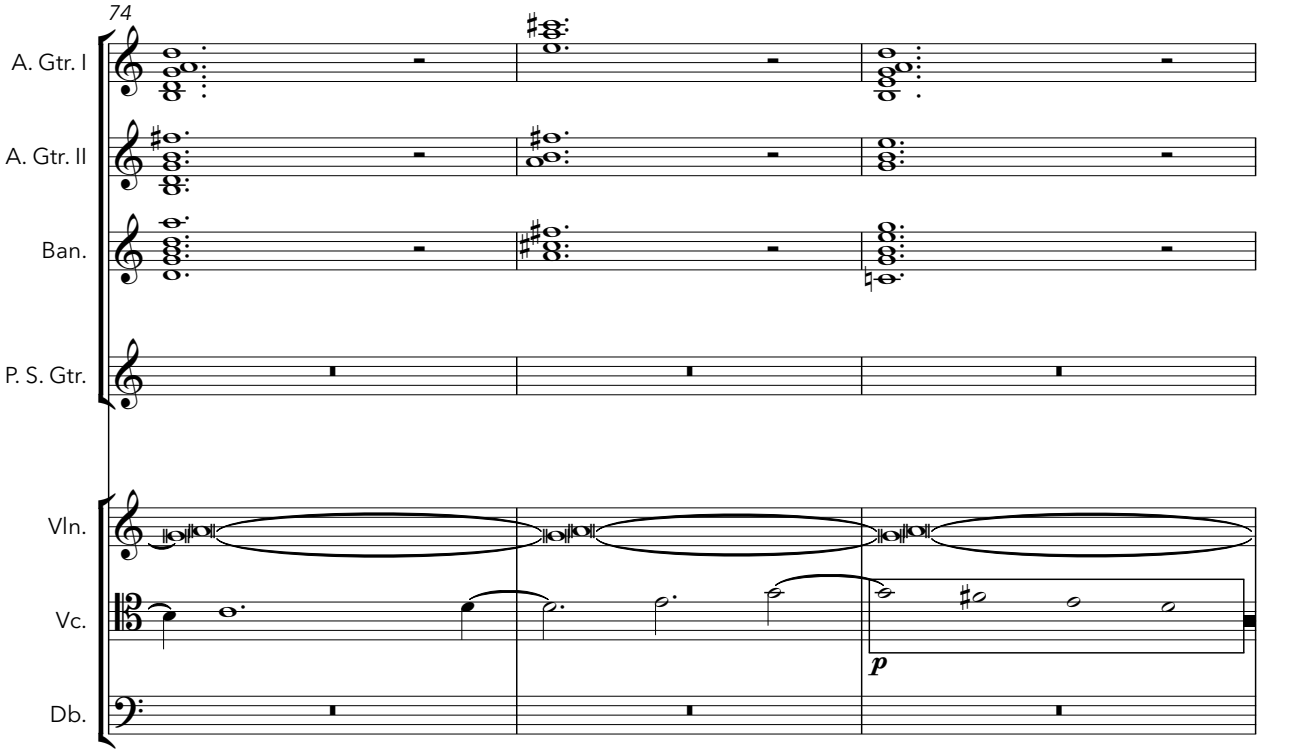

40
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
mf
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
41
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
descrec.
pp
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
3
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

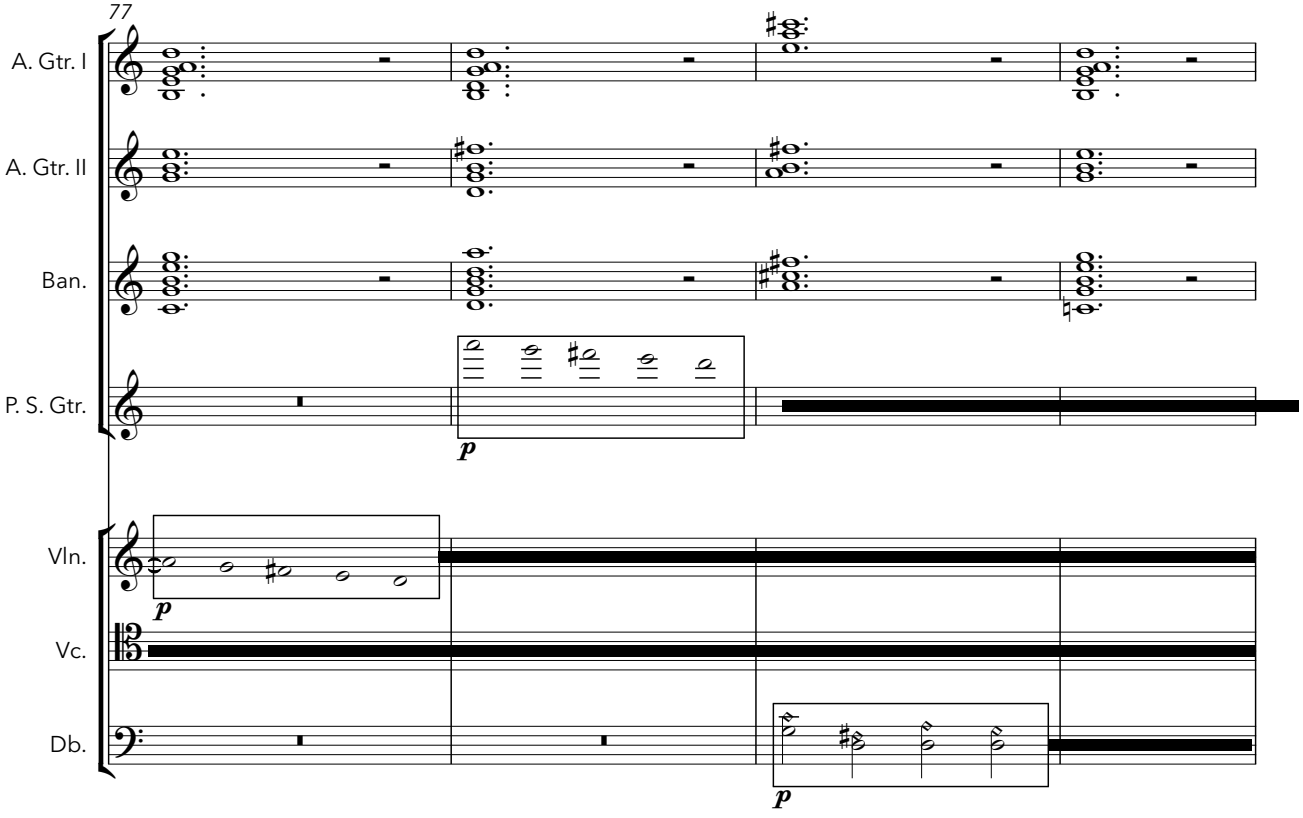

42
A. Gtr. I
pp
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
3
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
44
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

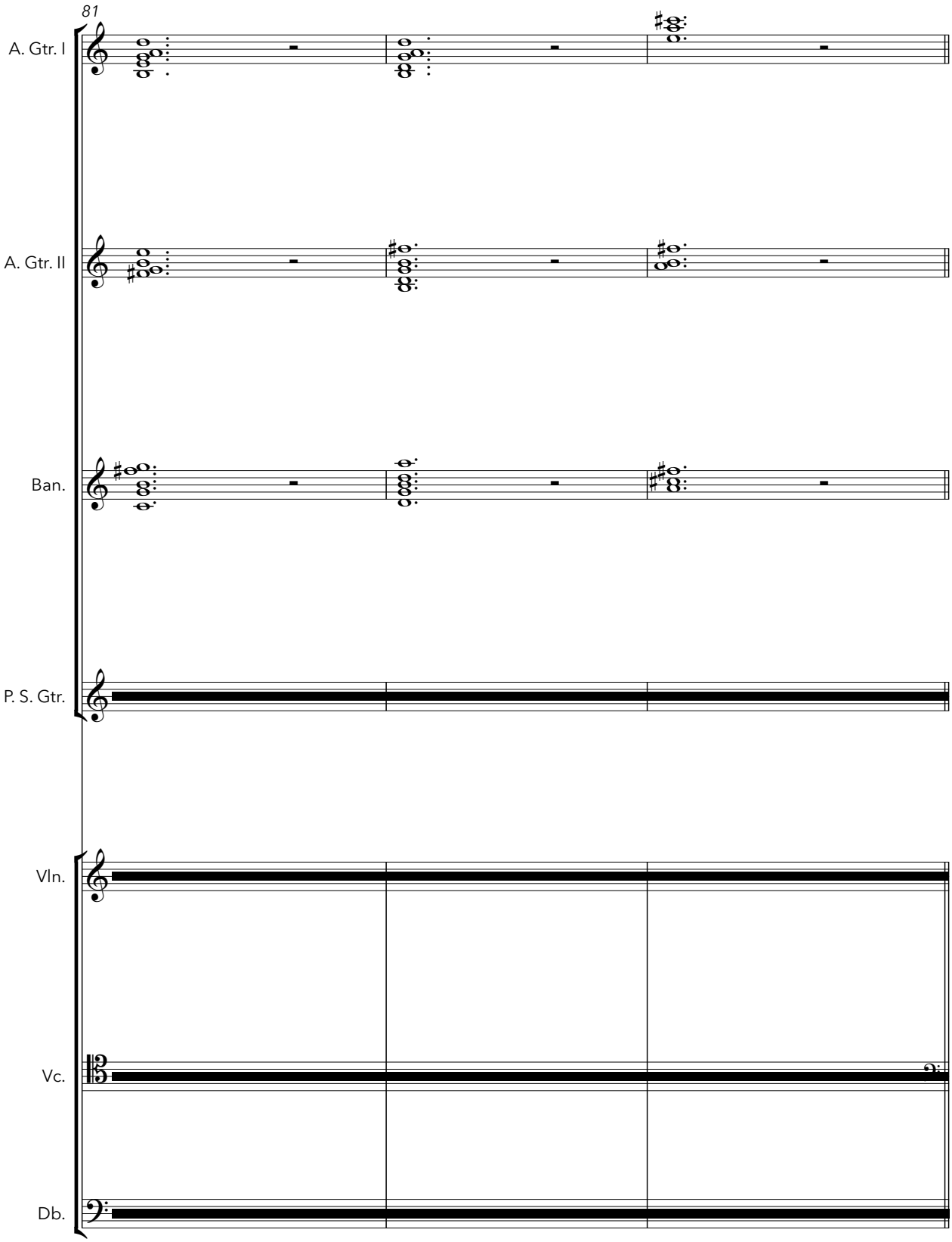

C flocking
46
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
mp
C flocking
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
49
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
mf

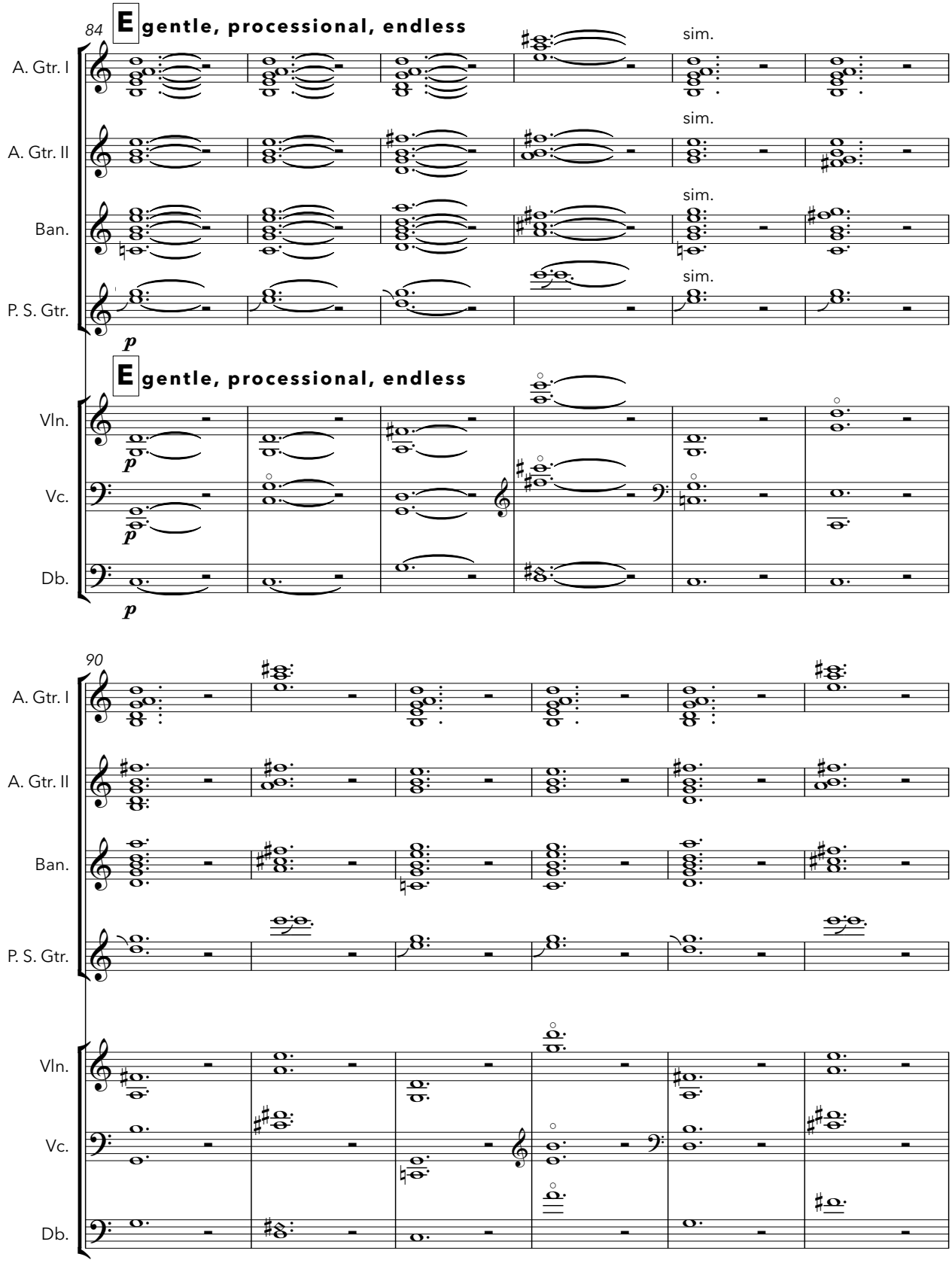

52
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
55
A. Gtr. I
ppp
A. Gtr. II
ppp
Ban.
ppp
P. S. Gtr.
p
mf
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

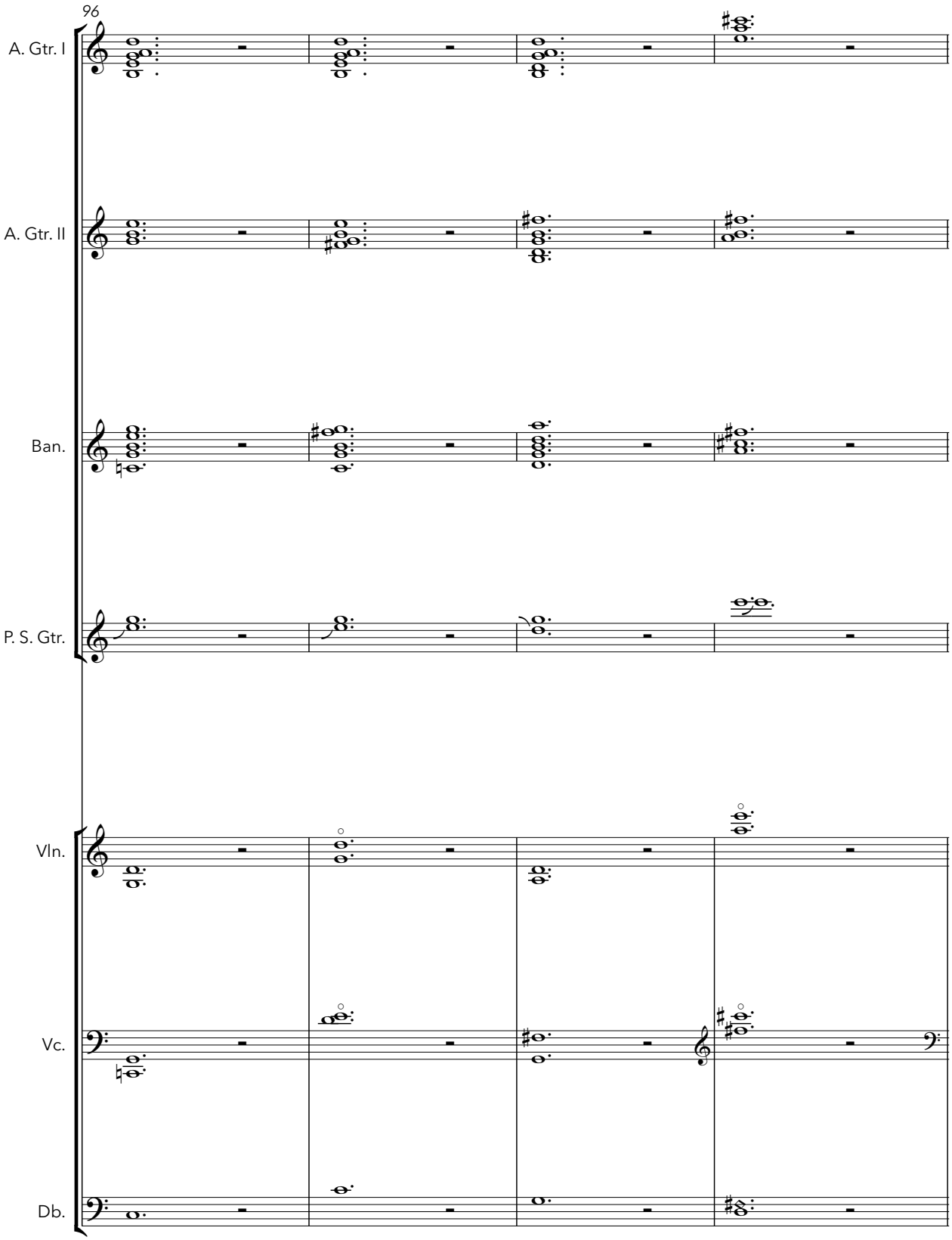

60
arco
A. Gtr. I
all plucked instruments to bows
scrapey, messy sounds are permissible
arco
A. Gtr. II
arco
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
68
D
suspended, floating
always let strings vibrate
sim.
sim.
sim.
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
D
suspended, floating
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
p
p

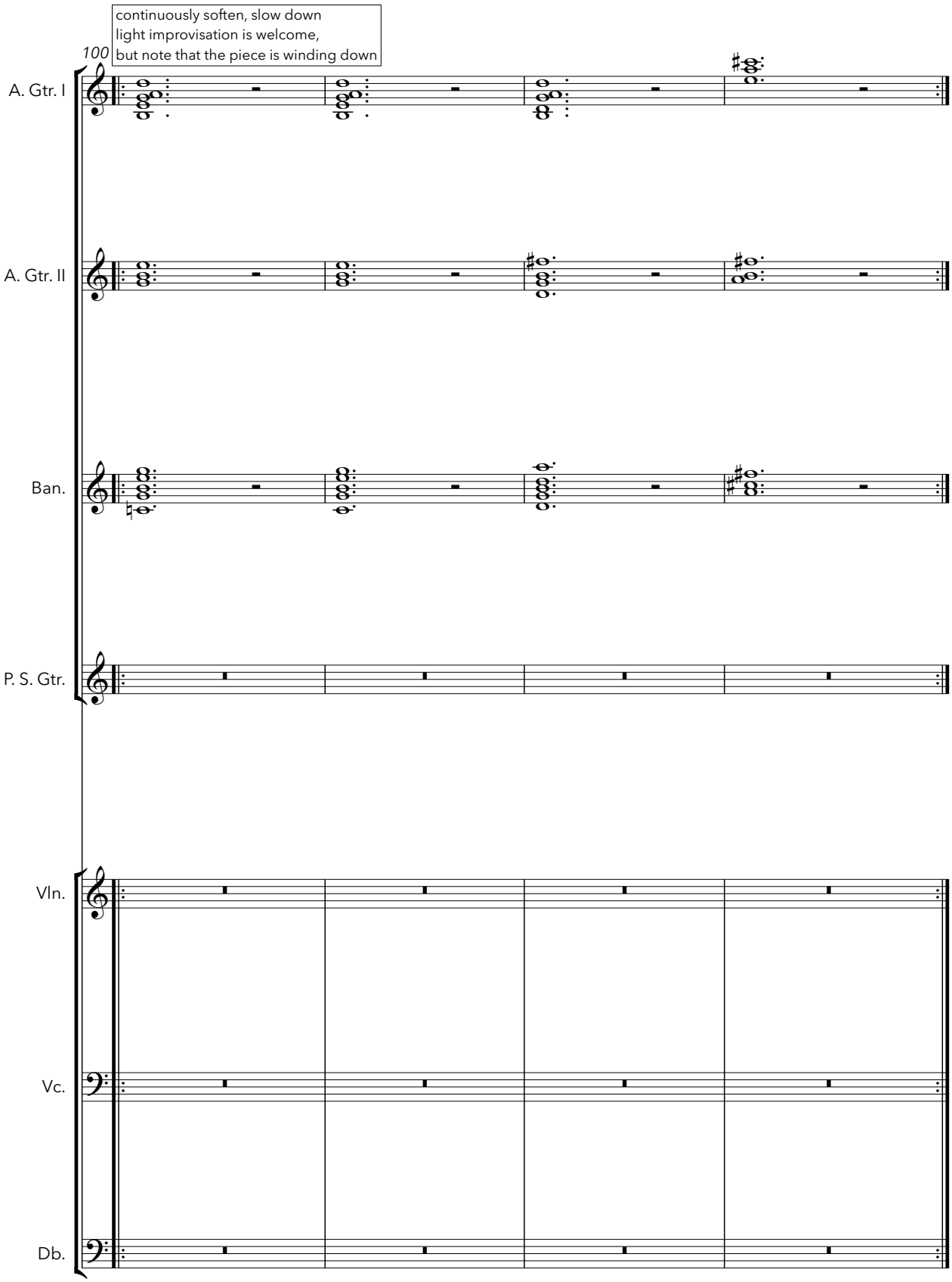

74
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
p


77
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
p
p
p


81
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


84
E gentle, processional, endless
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
sim.
sim.
sim.
sim.
p
E gentle, processional, endless
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
p
p
p
90
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


96
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.


continuously soften, slow down
light improvisation is welcome,
but note that the piece is winding down
100
A. Gtr. I
A. Gtr. II
Ban.
P. S. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.