Feona Lee Jones

Time is Running Out

[2017]

For String Quartet

15 Min.

Title: String Quartet No. 1 *Time is Running Out*
Composer Name: Feona Lee Jones
Expected Duration: 14:40

Instrumentation:

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello

Program Notes

Time is Running Out is a 5-movement string quartet piece that was composed alongside Maya Deren's black and white silent film, "At Land" as a structural device to create a unique twist on the narrative. The film is non-linear and cyclical in nature and I created specific thematic elements in the music to bring out this quality. Each movement have a different mood associated it using a different gestures or textures, which represent various "characters" or qualities in the piece. These characters are not necessarily human but point towards different levels of consciousness that the main protagonist journeys through throughout the course of the film.

Performance Notes

Movement 1

The first movement is virtuosic and improvisatory in nature with jagged scalar runs and fast trills that create a texture of anxiety, intensity, and uncertainty. It is fleeting in nature and comes to an abrupt ending point after a little over a minute.

Movement 2

The second movement is the deeper emotional response to the erratic and improvisatory first movement. This movement features short bursts of energy with Bartok pizzicato, which build to a lyrical and angular melody all based on intervals of minor ninths and tritones. I wanted the momentum of the piece to build in a slow and eerie pacing that would pay off later with a climactic moment with all the parts coming to a giant halt on a chord. After this moment, the piece returns to a peaceful version of the beginning, using the same intervallic content but thinned out heavily and more space punctuating the different lines.

Movement 3

The third movement is a palate cleanser and a transitory movement designed to prepare the listener for the following movement, which is a change in tempo and pacing. I wanted this movement to have a cyclical feel as if the players were playing the same long-range material but offset slightly each time.

Movement 4

The fourth movement is fast-paced, ostinato-driven, and machine-like in nature. It is the climactic point of the five movements. This movement is the most harmony-driven and dramatic of the movements.

Movement 5

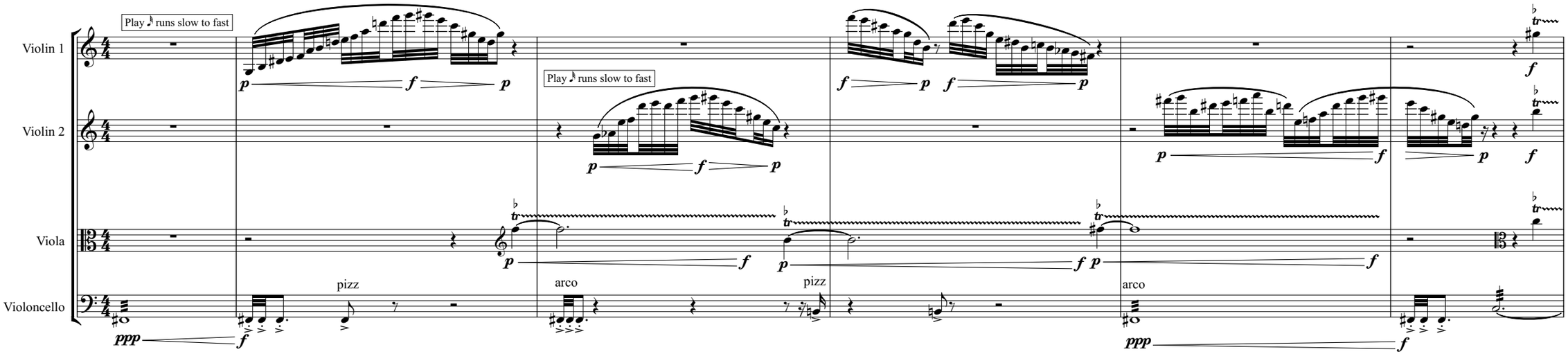
The fifth movement is an electroacoustic movement utilizing sonic material from the previous four movements. I experimented with various effects and filters to create a surreal atmosphere where the piece would reach a dream-like conclusion with moments that would feel like a nightmare. This play on reality connects with the film in how the protagonist traverses different environments that could easily be confused with actual reality and a false perception of reality. The audio file should be played out of a P.A. system at the same volume of the string quartet. The file can be played and/or downloaded from the following link:

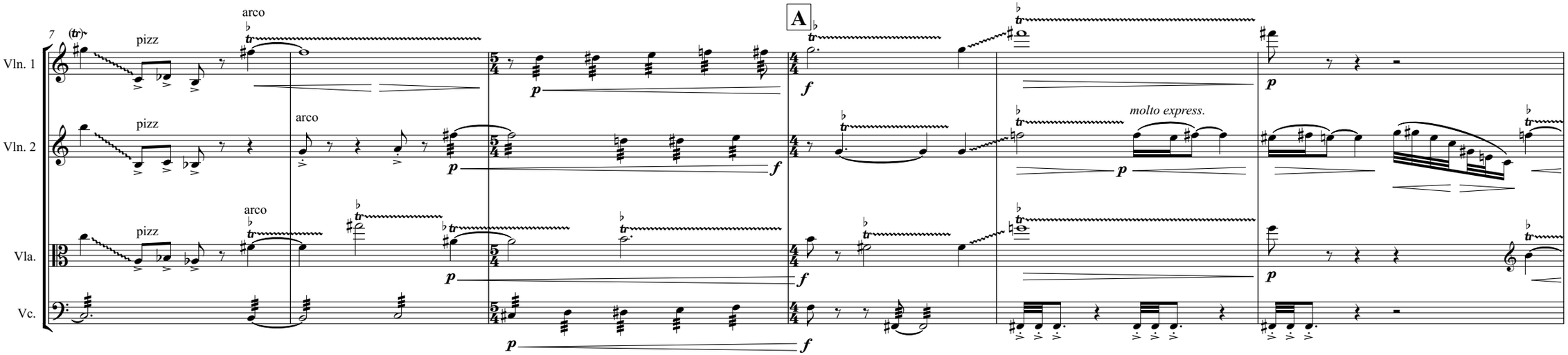
https://soundcloud.com/feona-lee-jones/movt5

String Quartet No. 1
Movement 1

Feona Lee Jones (2017)

♩=60
Freely ad lib, improvisational





13

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

♩=90
Aggressive, relentless

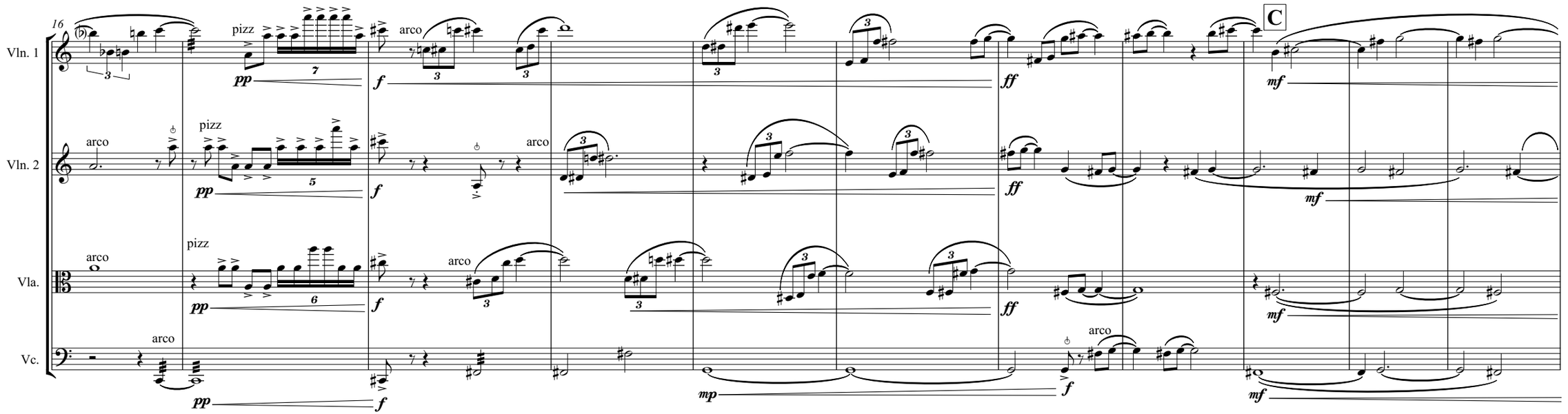
Movement 2

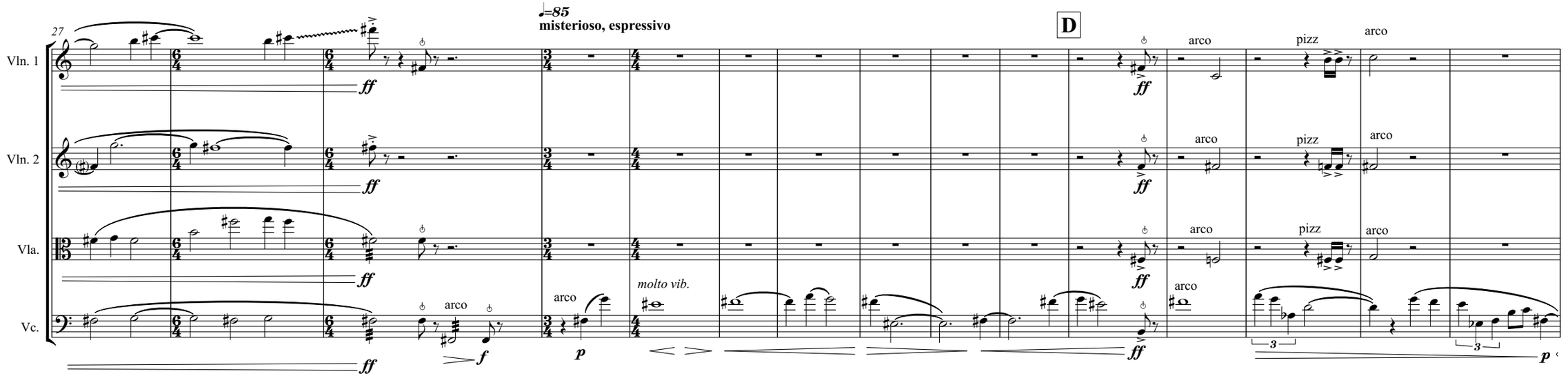
1

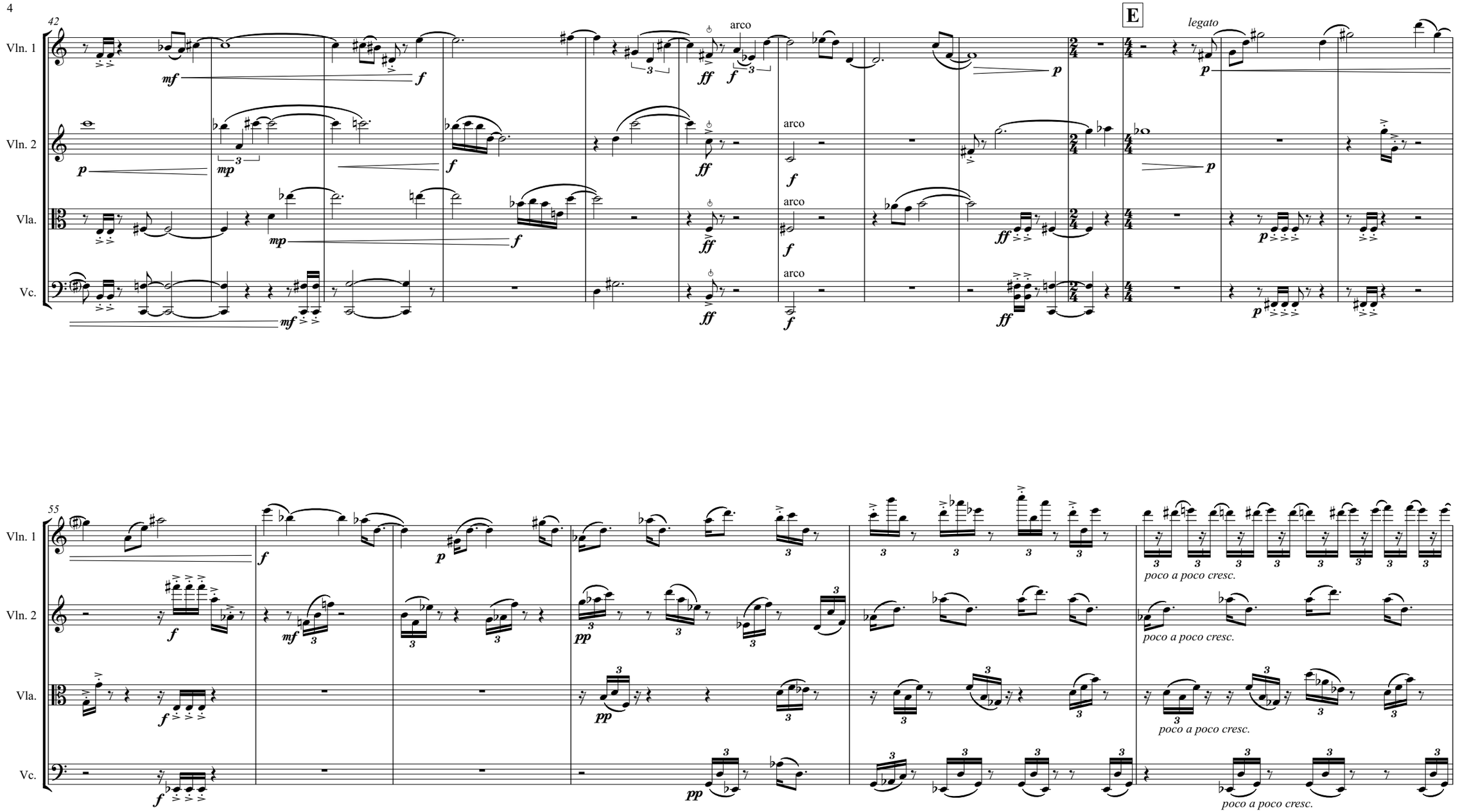
B

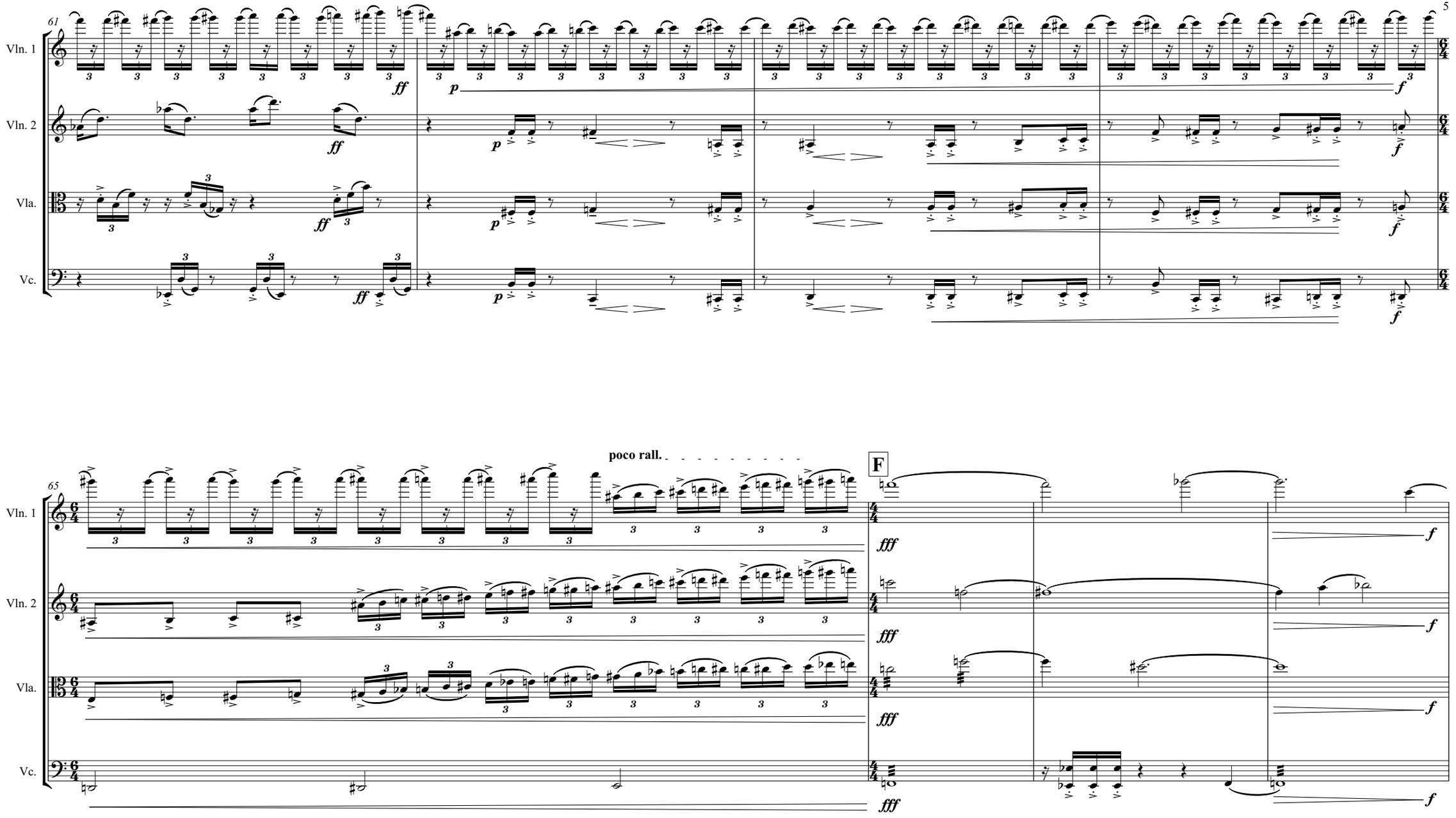
con moto

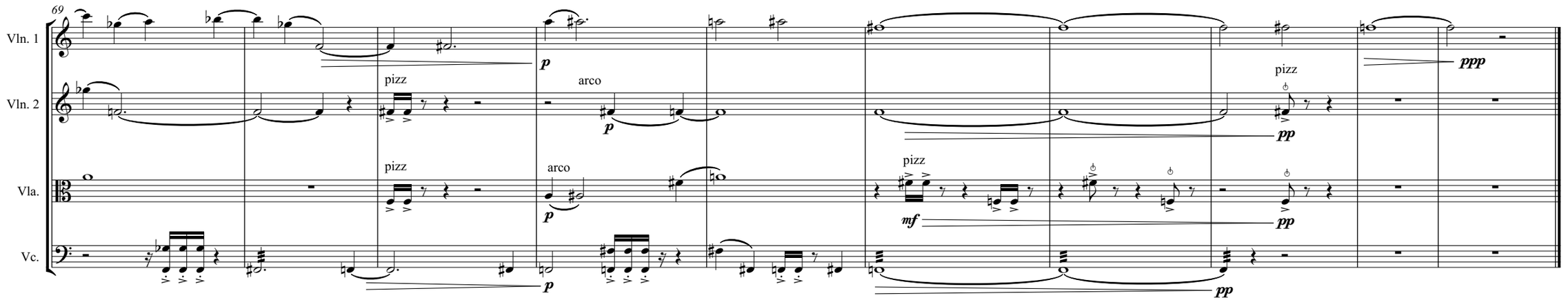
poco a poco allargando



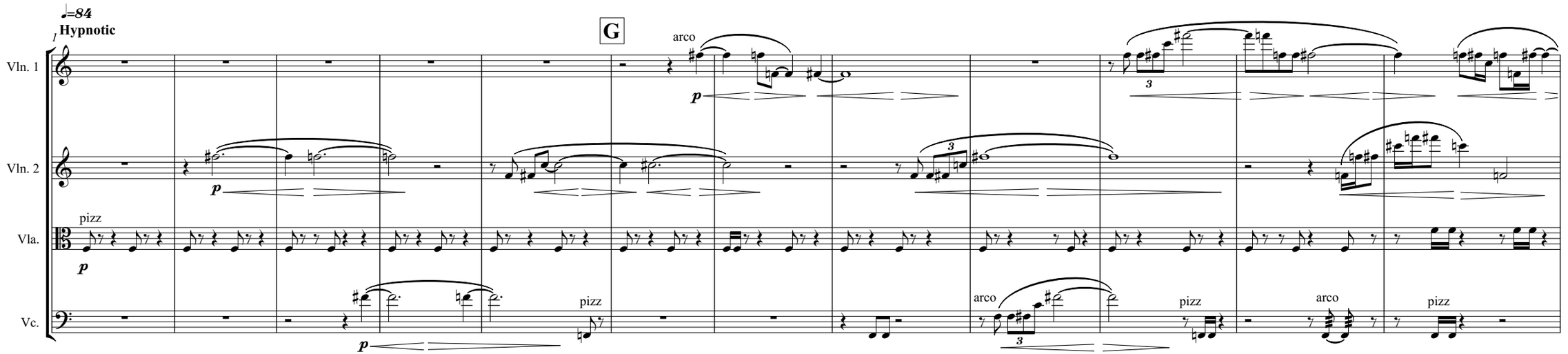


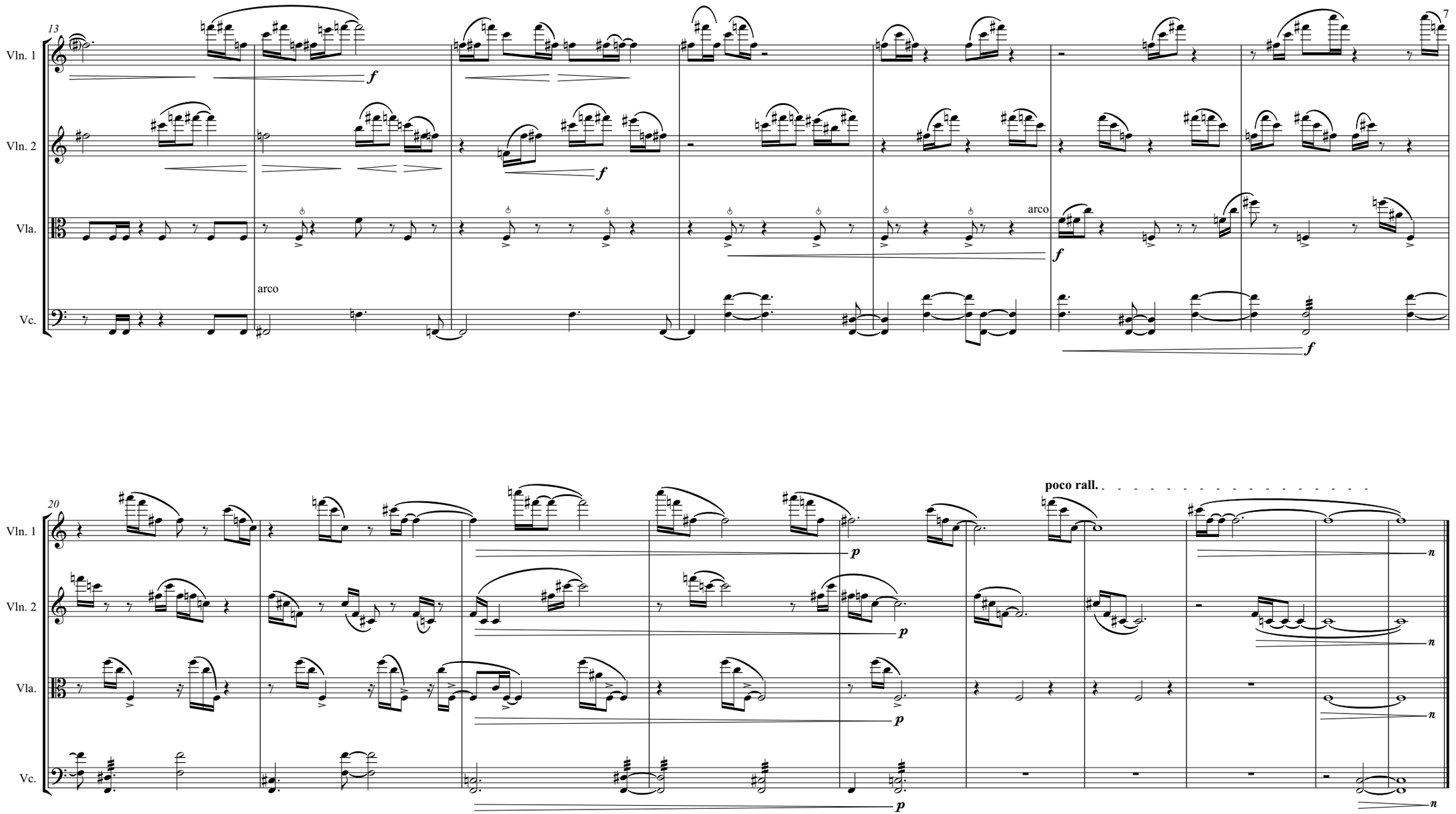

42
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
arco
E
legato
55
poco a poco cresc.


61
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
ff
p
f
65
poco rall.
F
fff


69
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
pizz
arco
p
mf
pp
ppp

Movement 3


♩=84
1
Hypnotic
G
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
arco
pizz
p


13
7
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
arco
arco
f
f
f
f
20
poco rall.
p
p
p
p
n
n
n
n

Movement 4

♩=104

Machine-like

1

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

pizz

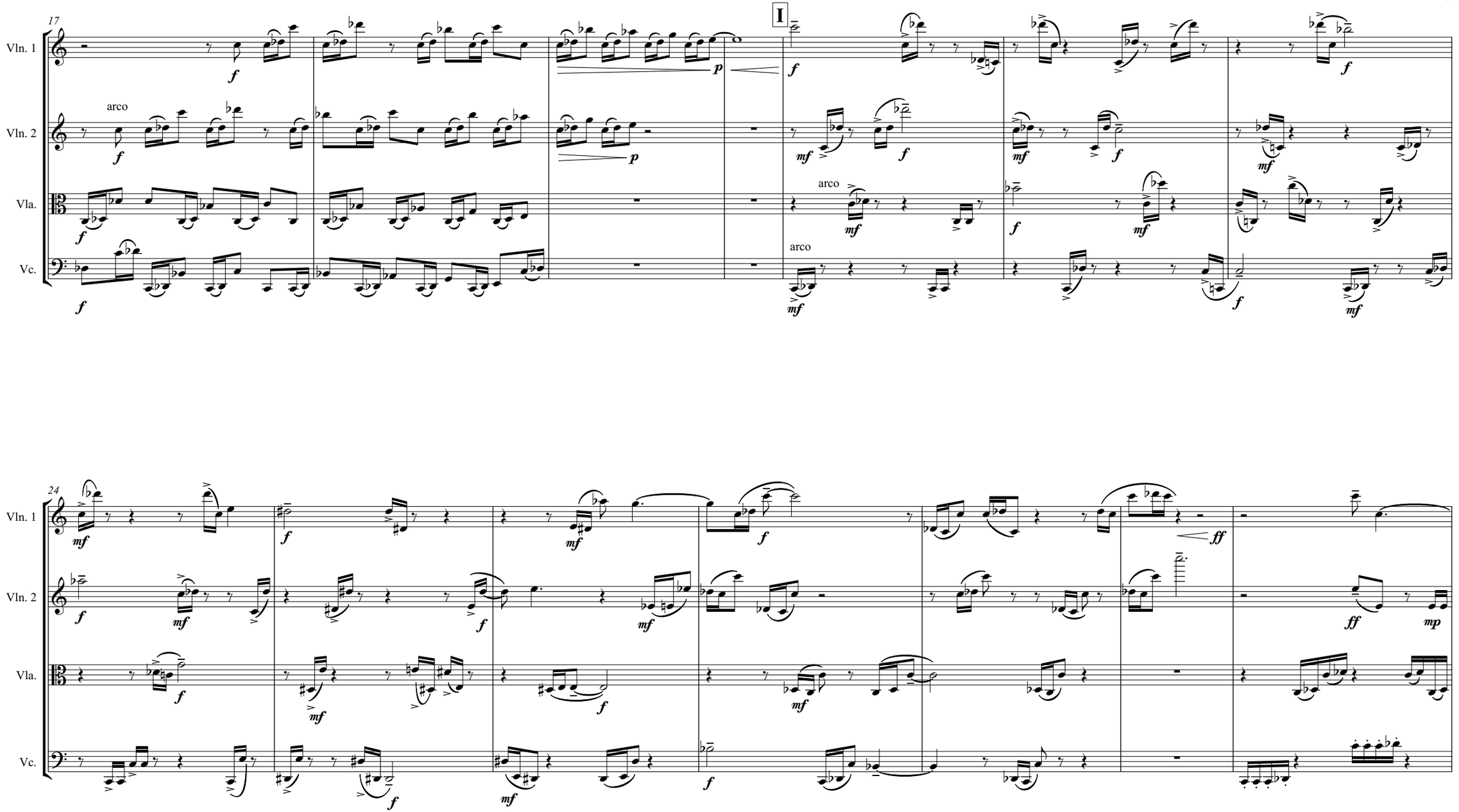
f

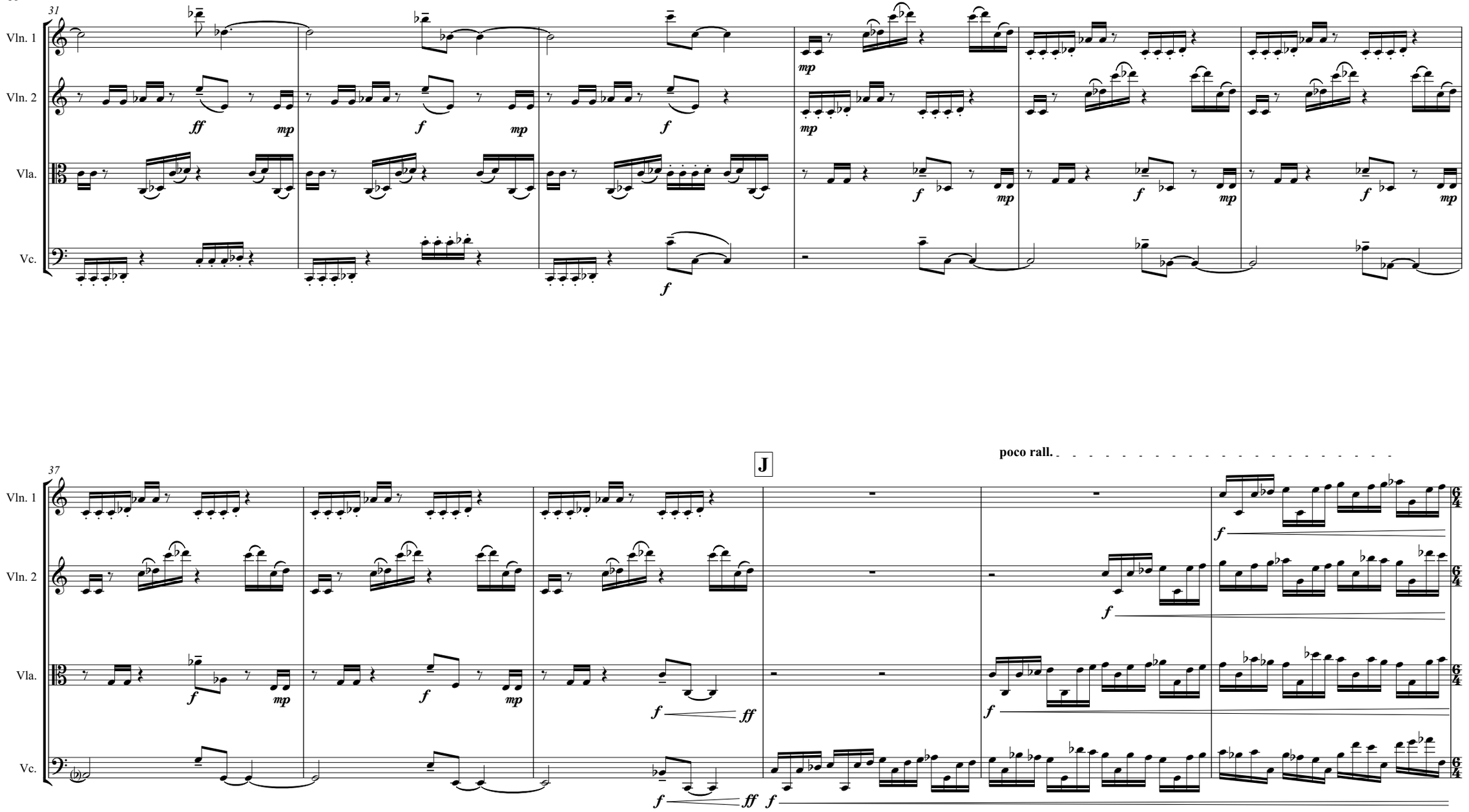
10

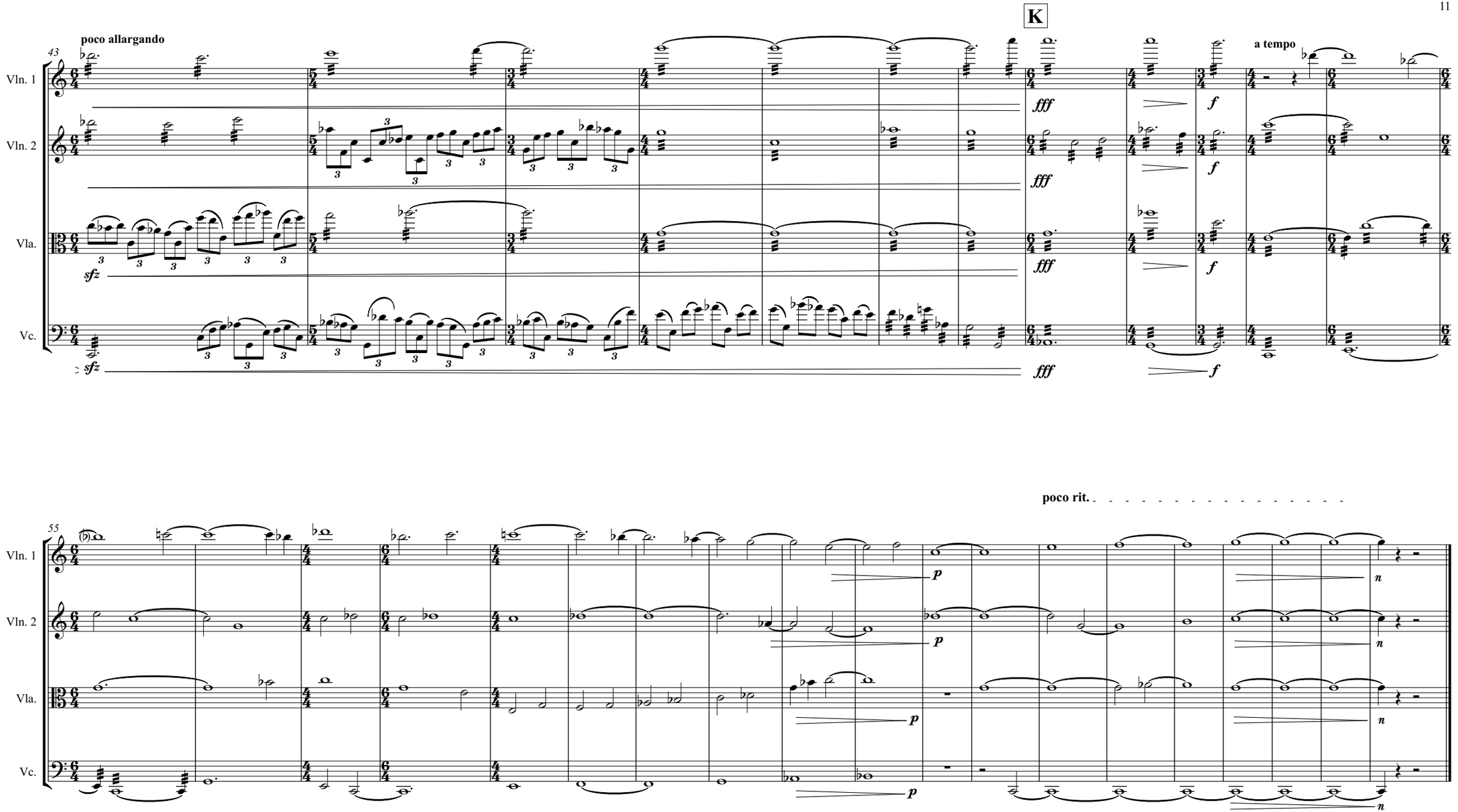
H

p

mf


17
I
24
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
arco


31
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
ff
mp
f
mp
f
mp
mp
f
mp
f
mp
f
37
J
poco rall.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
f
mp
f
mp
f
ff
f
ff
f
ff
f
f
f
6/4


K
poco allargando
43
a tempo
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
sfz
fff
f
55
poco rit.
p
n

Movement 5: (Fixed-Media Sound Collage) – 4 Min.

Performance Notes: begin playing *Movement 5* fixed-media sound collage after the fourth movement has ended.

Download audio file at the following link: https://soundcloud.com/feona-lee-jones/movt5