Béla Bartók

15 Hungarian Peasant Songs

orig. for piano (1914-18)

Arranged for String Orchestra

by Alan Bonds

(Full Score)

FIFTEEN HUNGARIAN PEASANT SONGS (1914)

The Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs (*Tizenöt magyar paraszt'dal*) for piano were written during World War I, and are based on authentic Hungarian folk melodies collected by Bartók on his numerous field trips as a musicologist between the years 1910 and 1918.

In a note for the planned first edition of his Hungarian Peasant Songs in 1914, Bartók wrote that "the melodies published here are folksongs in the truest sense of the word; more precisely, peasant songs". Bartók initially withdrew this work from publication, however, and added new pieces to it using folk music he had collected in the meantime. The first edition was only finally published in 1920.

The first four of its short sections are labeled as *Four Old Tunes*, followed by a *Scherzo*and a *Ballade*. The last nine sections are grouped under the title *Old Dance Tunes*.

They follow the 2 books of *For Children* based on Hungarian & Slovakian folk melodies. Significantly, Bártok also finished the *Bagatelles* and the *10 Easy Pieces* at the same time, but the publisher Rozsavölgy didn't want anything quite so experimental or modern (especially as in the *Bagatelles*). In a letter to Bartók he says:

> "I wish to emphasize that it would be better if the rules of classical harmony would be even more strictly observed without any modernization than in the ones already published. I should not like to see a new trend in the undertaking but rather the beaten track on which you can continue working from time to time…"

Szelényi observes that this was simply a reflection of the conservatism of the time. However, within these strictures, Bartók was determined to set his folk melodies in a manner which reflected their modality. He wished to move beyond the clichéd diatonic accompaniments common at this time. In a lecture, Bartók said:

> "It is always important, however, that the musical mantle in which we dress the melody should be related to the character of the melody as well as the musical traits openly or disguisedly inherent in the melody. In other words, so that the melody and every addition to it should create the impression of being an organic entity."

Sz.71
Year/Date of Composition: 1914-18
First Publication: 1920
I-Catalogue Number: IBB 15
Movements/Sections: 15 pieces:

Four old tunes / Négy régi keserves ének (1). Rubato (D minor, 26 bars)
Four old tunes (2). Andante (D dorian, 47 bars)
Four old tunes (3). Poco rubato (F phrygian, 13 bars)
Four old tunes (4). Andante (F# dorian, 16 bars)
Scherzo Allegro (C dorian, 47 bars)
Ballad (Theme with variations) Andante (G dorian, 43 bars)
Old dance tunes / Regi tdncdalok (1). Allegro (C dorian, 51 bars)
Old dance tunes (2). Allegretto (G dorian, 24 bars)
Old dance tunes (3). Allegretto (A mixolydian, 16 bars)
Old dance tunes (4). L'istesso (B dorian, 32 bars)
Old dance tunes (5). Assai moderato (A dorian, 36 bars)
Old dance tunes (6). Allegretto (A minor, 21 bars)
Old dance tunes (7). Poco più vivo (D dorian, 18 bars)
Old dance tunes (8). Allegro (A major, 39 bars)
Old dance tunes (9). Allegro (Bb mixolydian, 103 bars)

PERFORMANCE NOTES

A couple of the pieces have been transposed to more idiomatic string keys.

In order to see Bartok's original phrasings in the piano version, they have been retained and some bowings overlayed. Every care has been taken to preserve the natural song or dance accentuations, usually taking strong beats on down bows and weak beats on up bows in the traditional way. Bartok's hierarchy of accentuations is very detailed & clear and has been faithfully retained.

Likewise Bartók's articulations are always very clear and have been scrupulously retained. Only a few are specifically pianistic and require interpretation.

A few fingerings have been suggested, mostly to restrain players from using too sophisticated an approach, and sometimes to deliberatly encourage the use of open strings in the dances.

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Perth, Western Australia
September 2006
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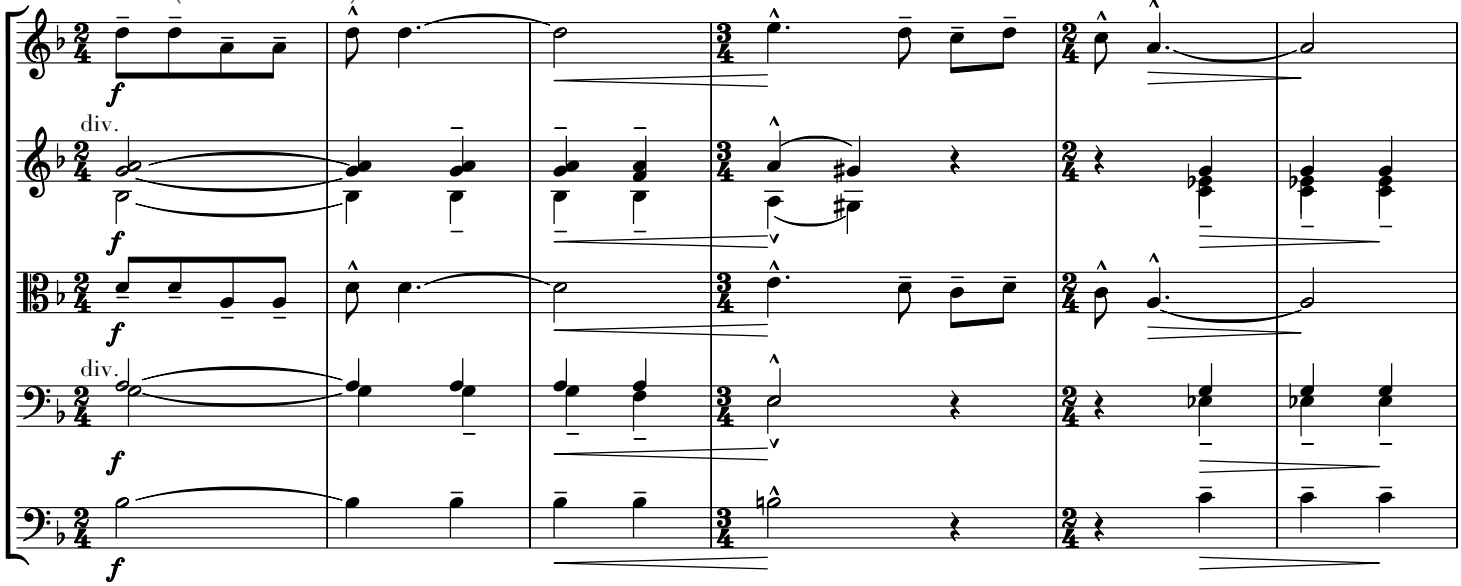
arr. Alan Bonds

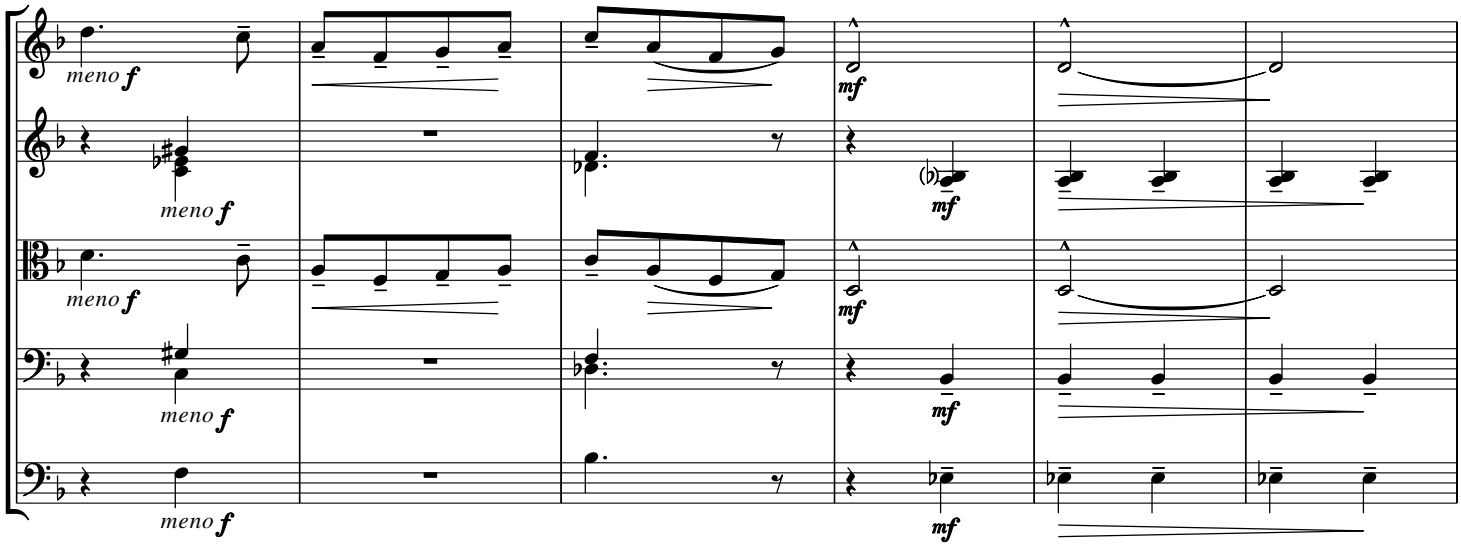
FIFTEEN HUNGARIAN PEASANT SONGS

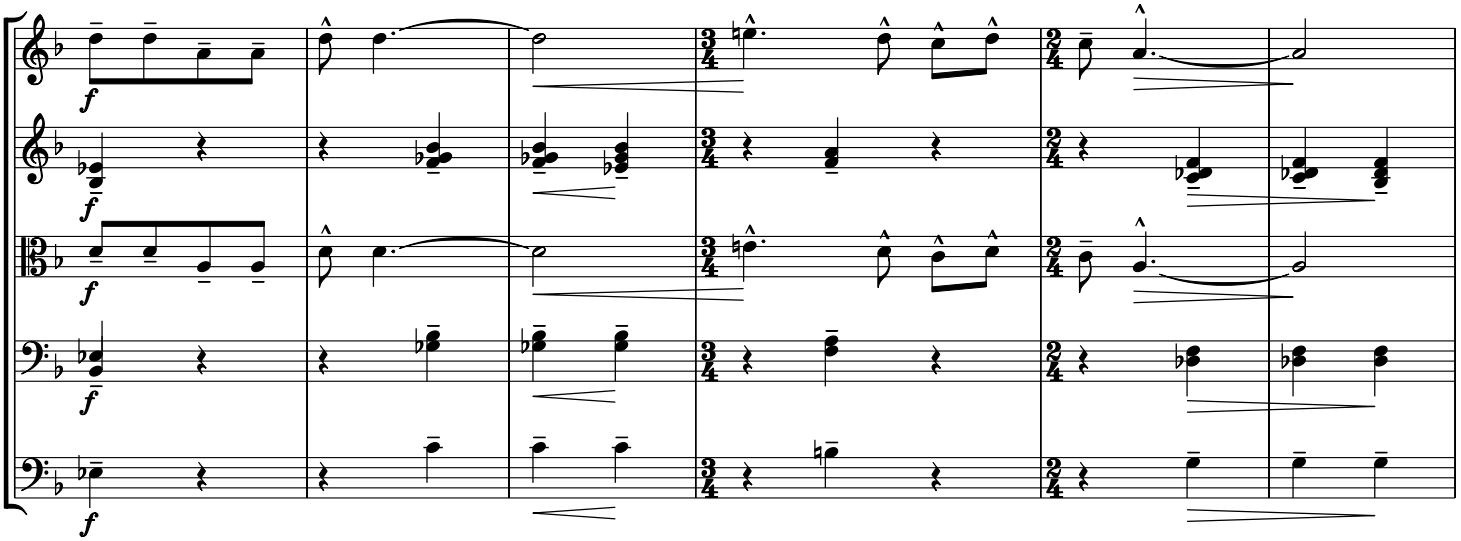
Four Old Tunes

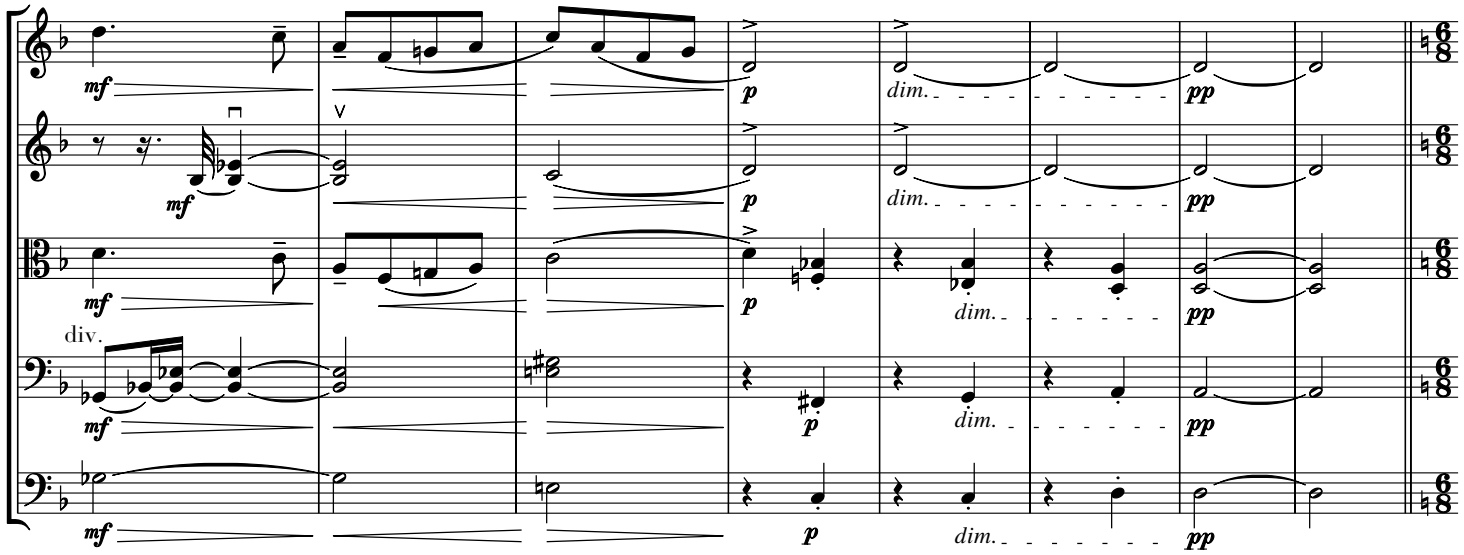
Béla Bartók
(1915 - 18)

1. Rubato. (♩ = ca. 80 -70)



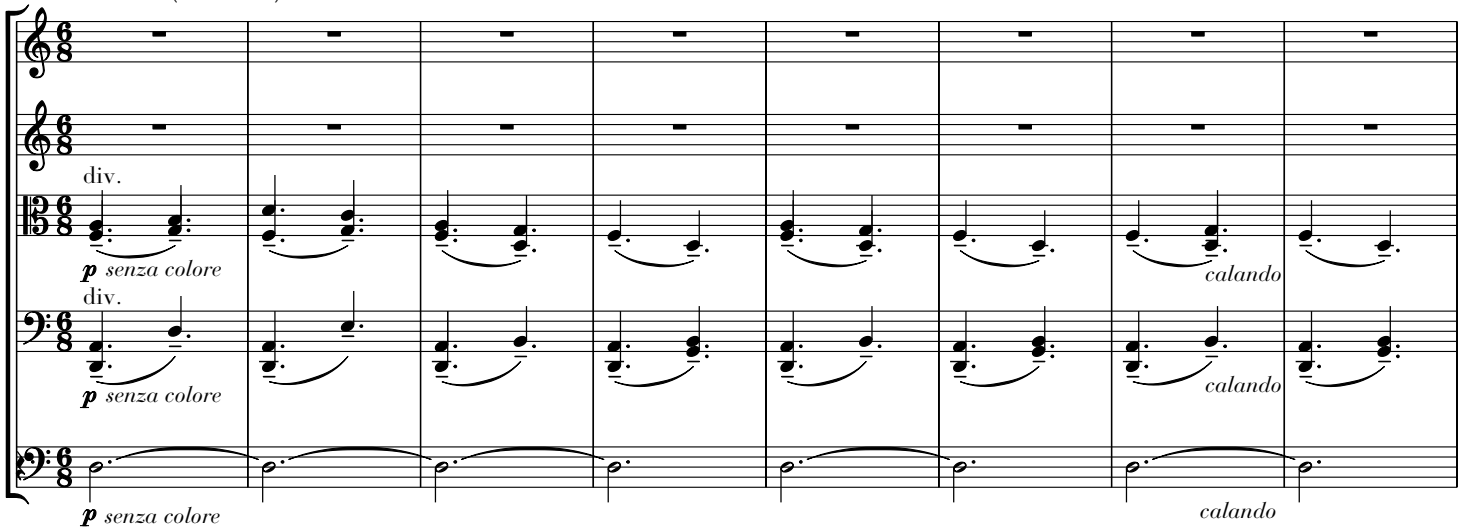




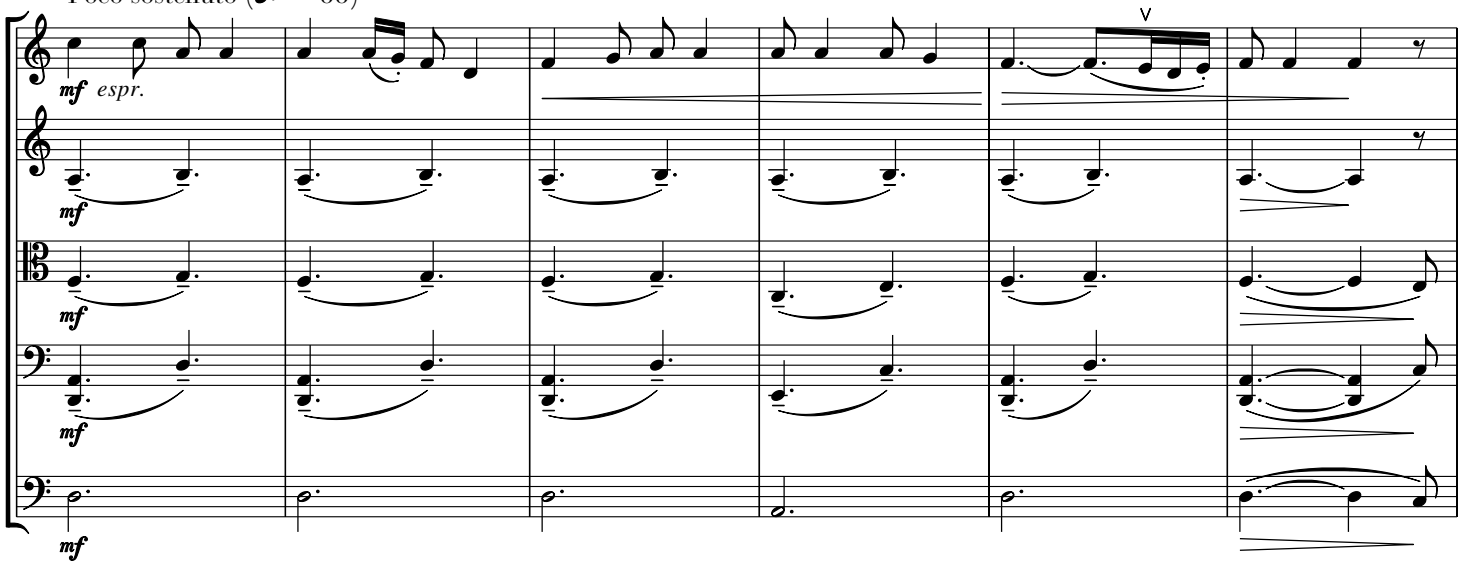

mf
p
dim.
pp
div.

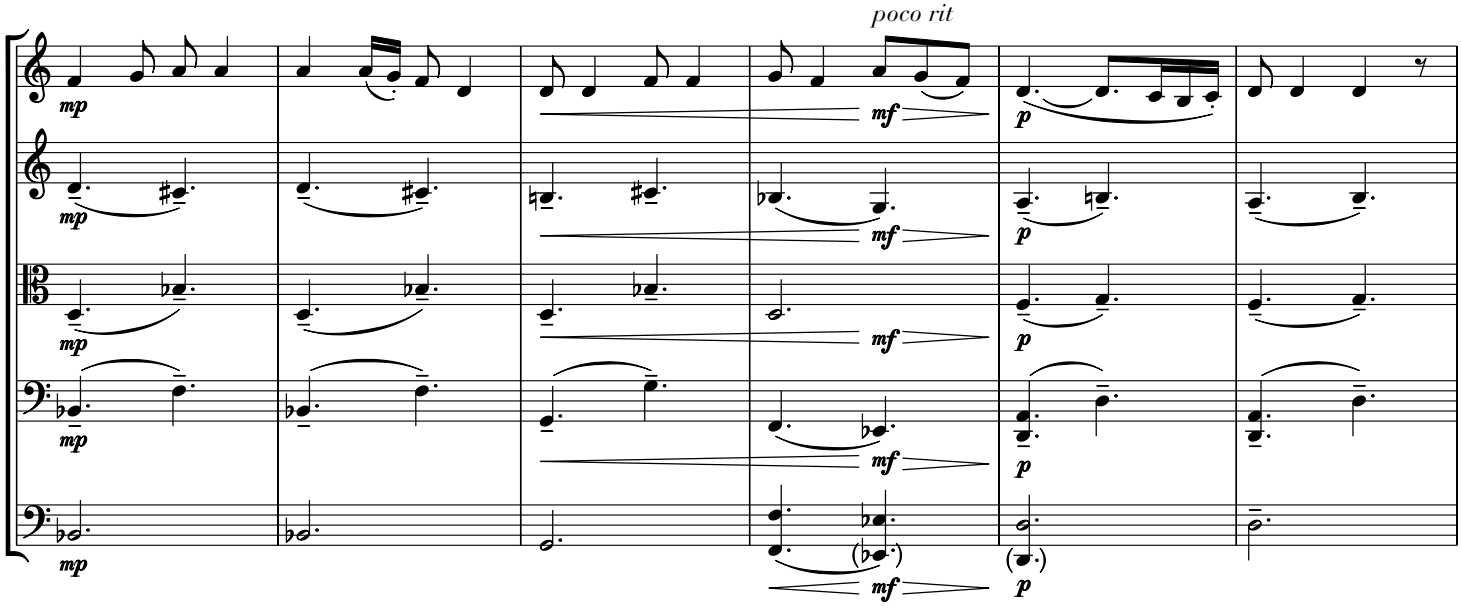
2.

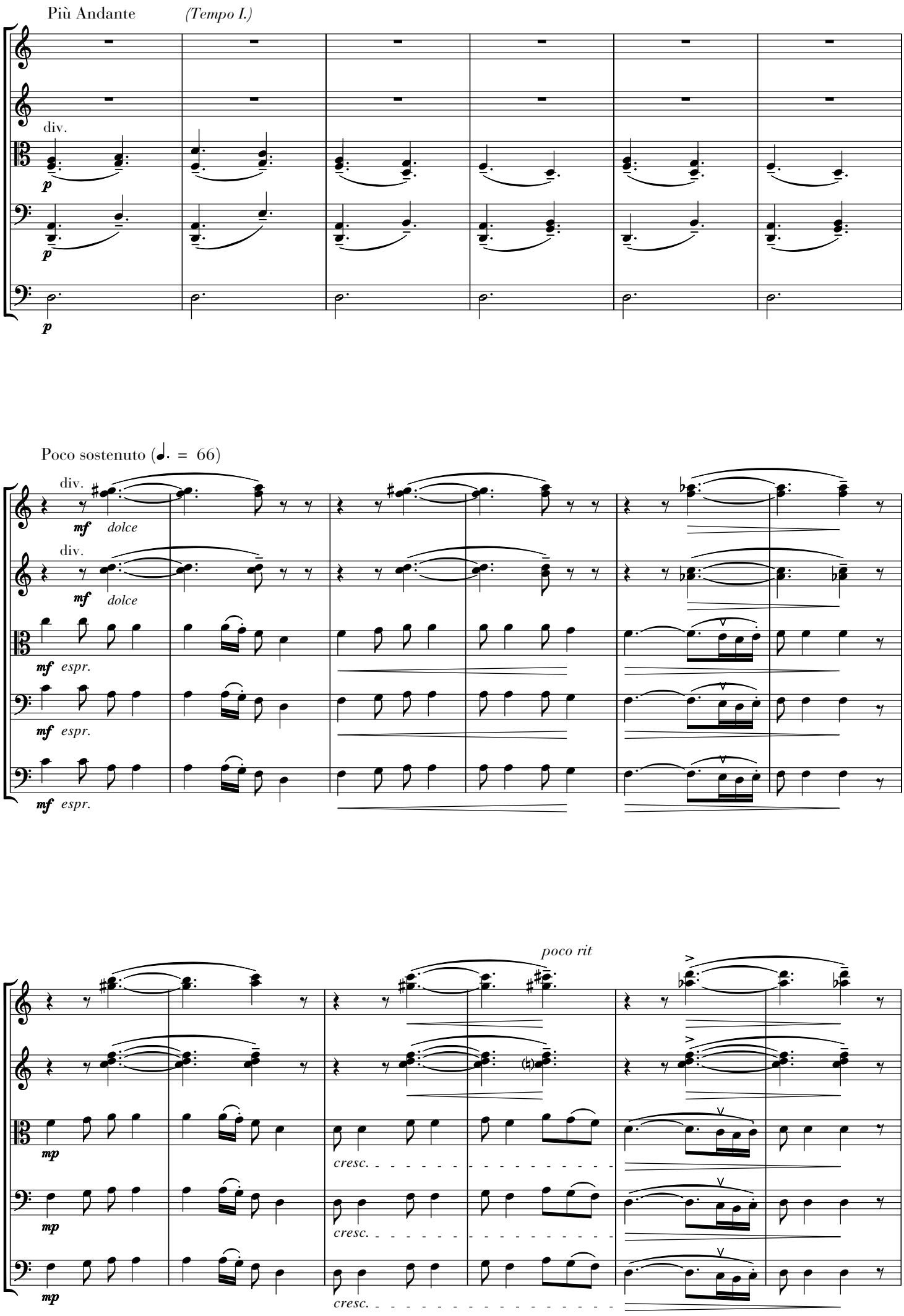
Andante (♩. = 80)

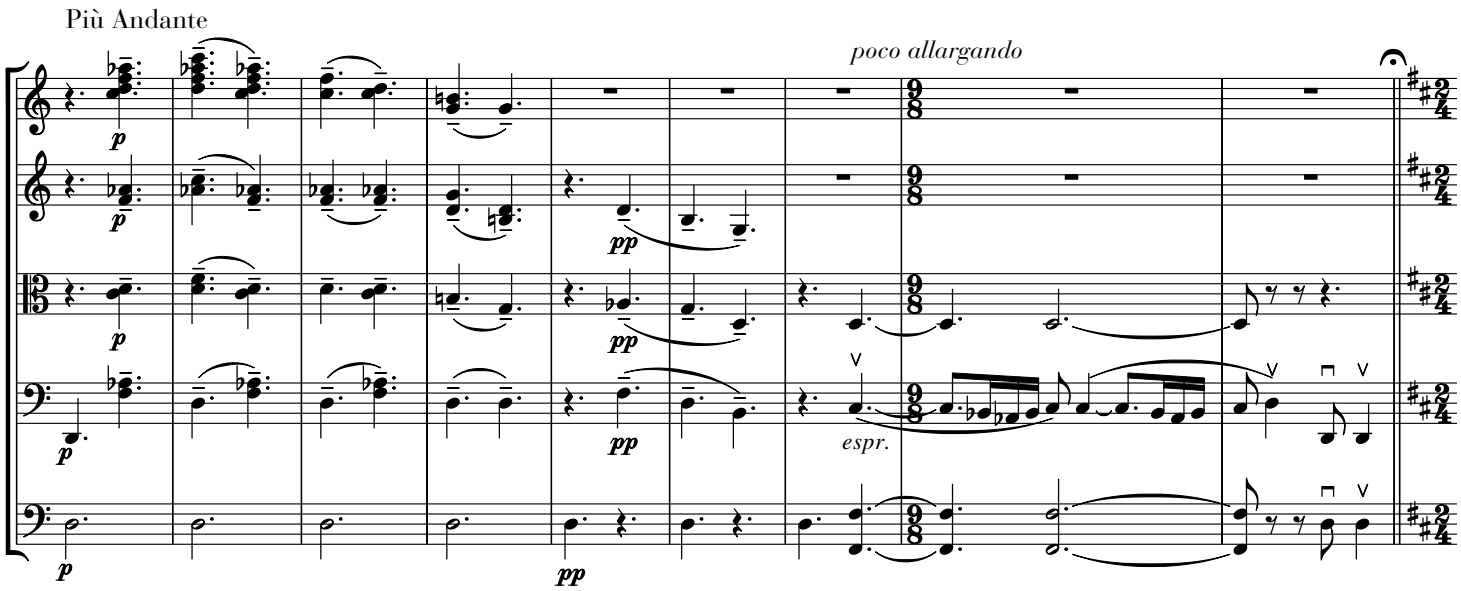


Poco sostenuto (♩. = 66)

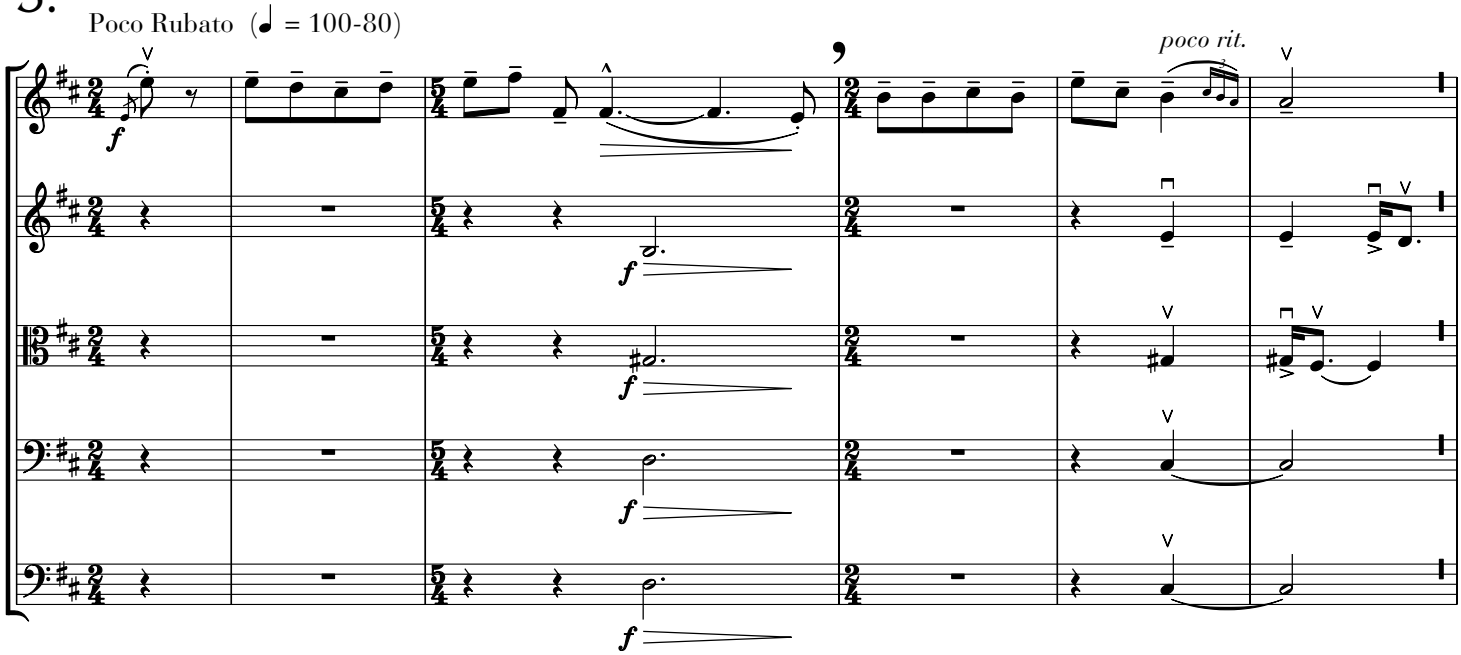


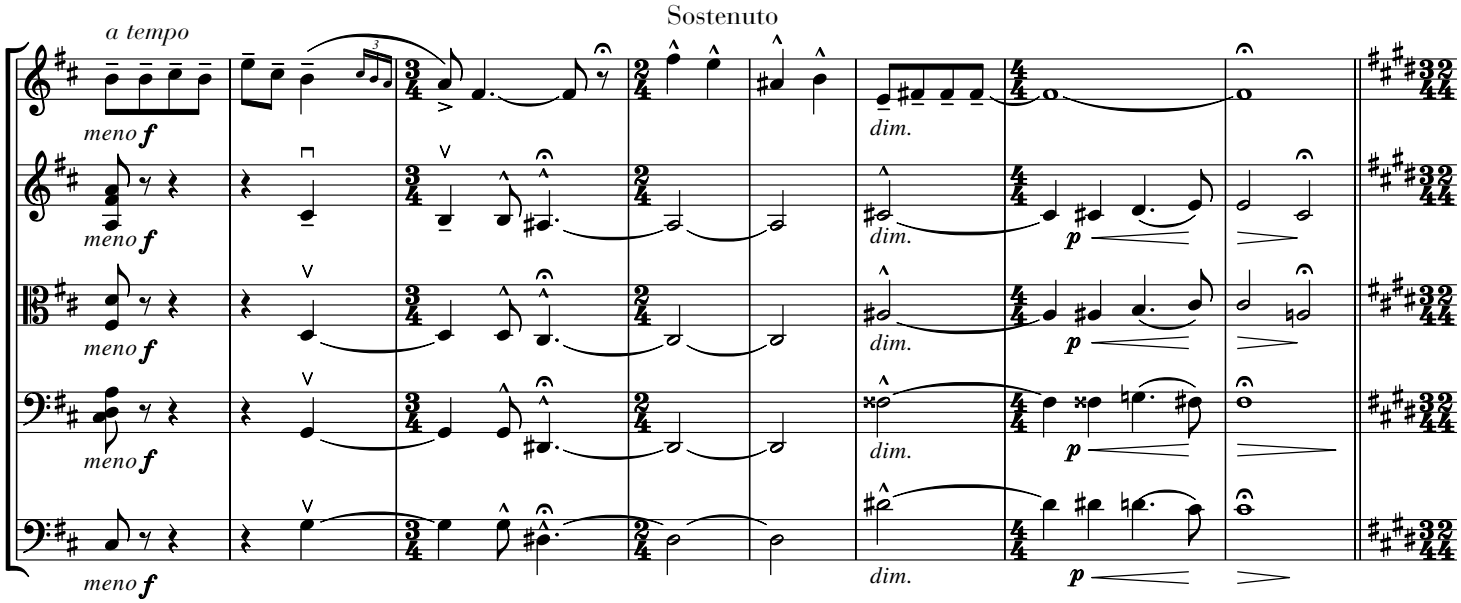


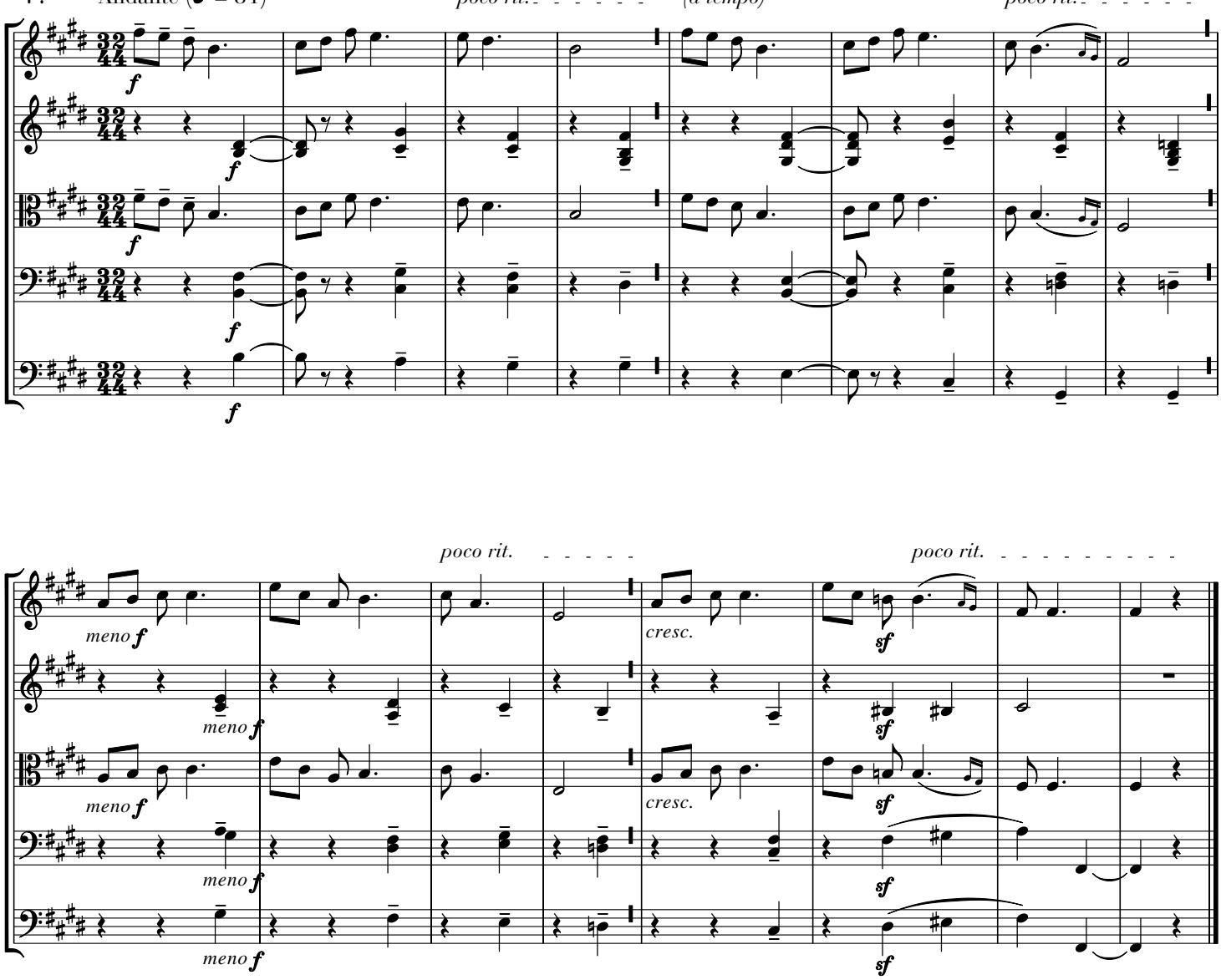

Più Andante
(Tempo I.)
div.
p
p
p
Poco sostenuto (♩. = 66)
div.
mf dolce
div.
mf dolce
mf espr.
mf espr.
mf espr.
poco rit
mp
cresc.
mp
cresc.
mp
cresc.


Più Andante
poco allargando
espr.

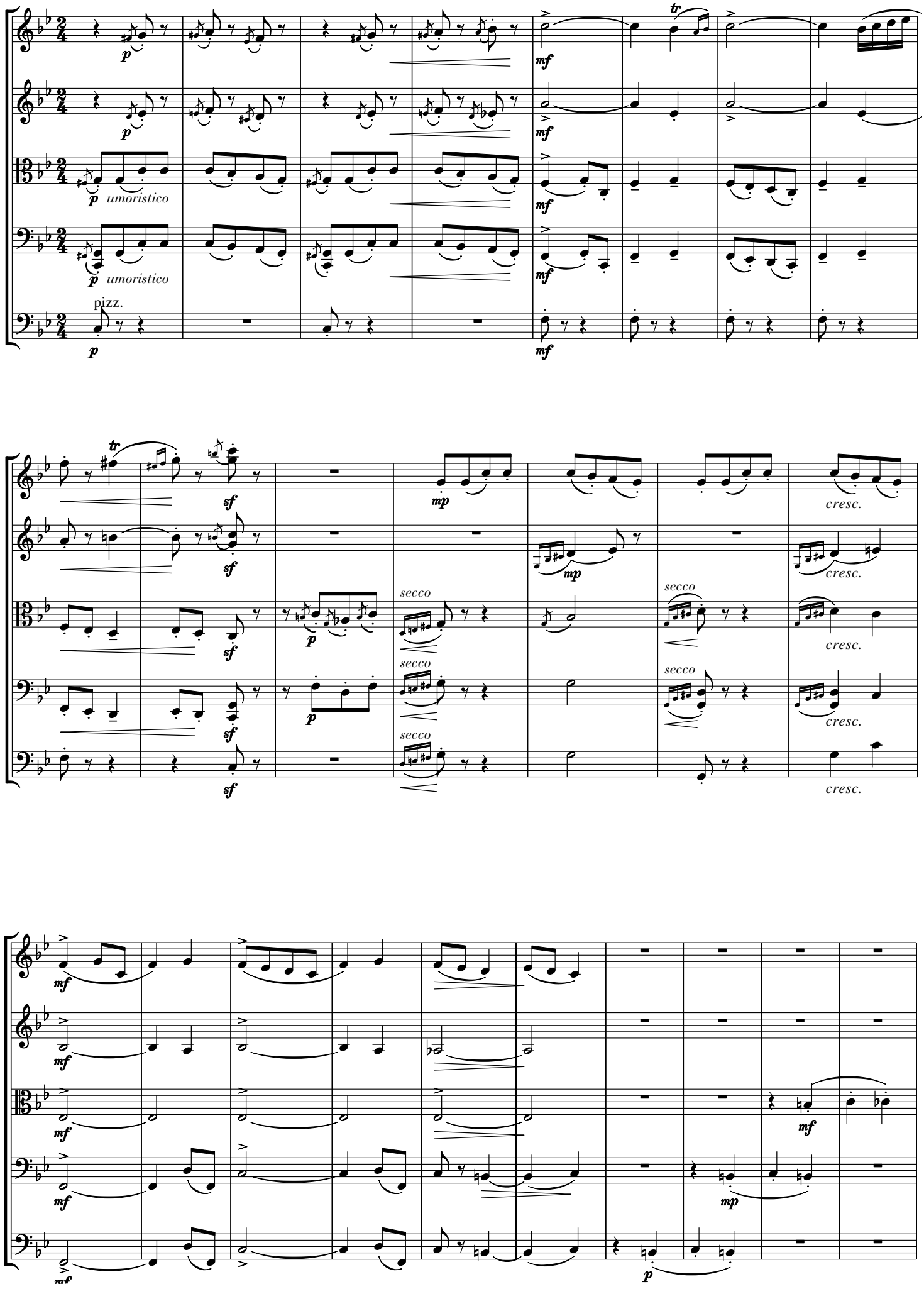
3.

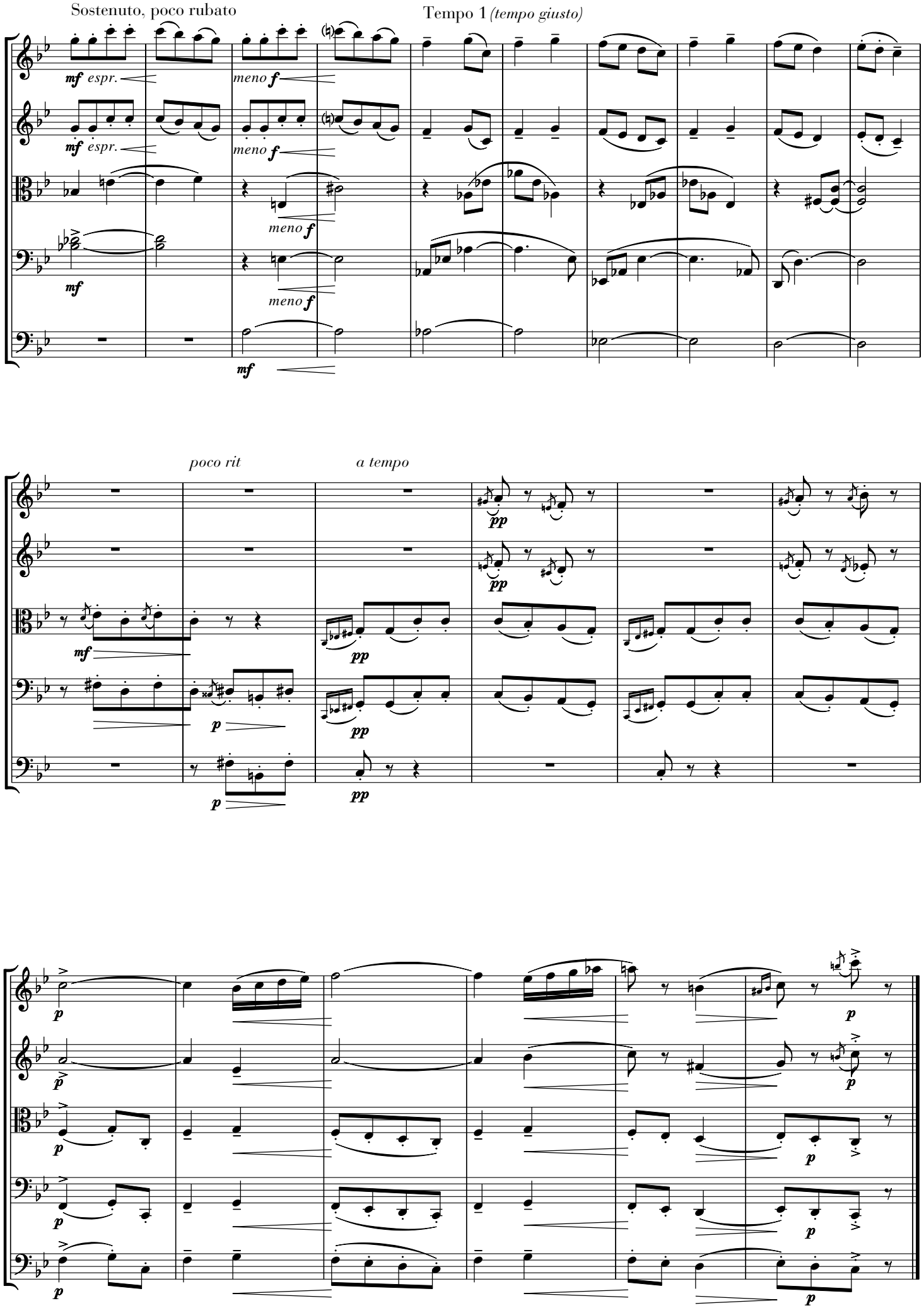

Poco Rubato (♩ = 100-80)
poco rit.


a tempo
Sostenuto
meno f
dim.
p


4.
Andante (♩ = 84)
poco rit.
(a tempo)
poco rit.
f
poco rit.
poco rit.
meno f
cresc.
sf

5. Scherzo




Sostenuto, poco rubato
Tempo 1 (tempo giusto)
mf espr.
meno f
mf
poco rit
a tempo
pp
p

6. Ballad

(Theme with variations)

Andante (♪ = 114)

poco allarg.

f pesante

sempre simile

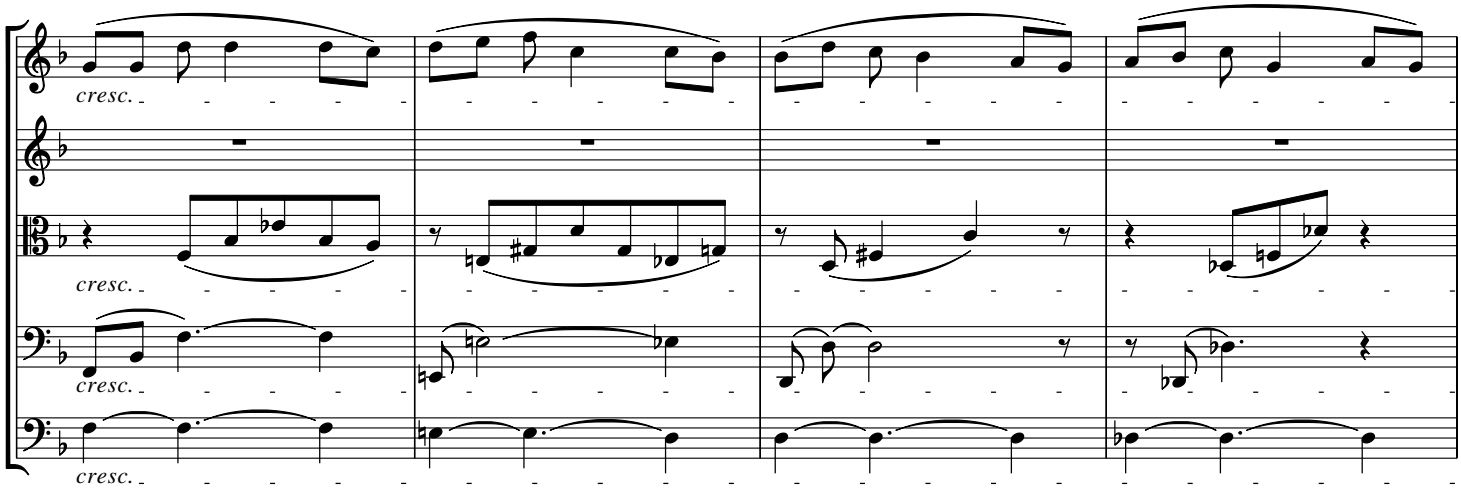
Più andante (♪ = 144)

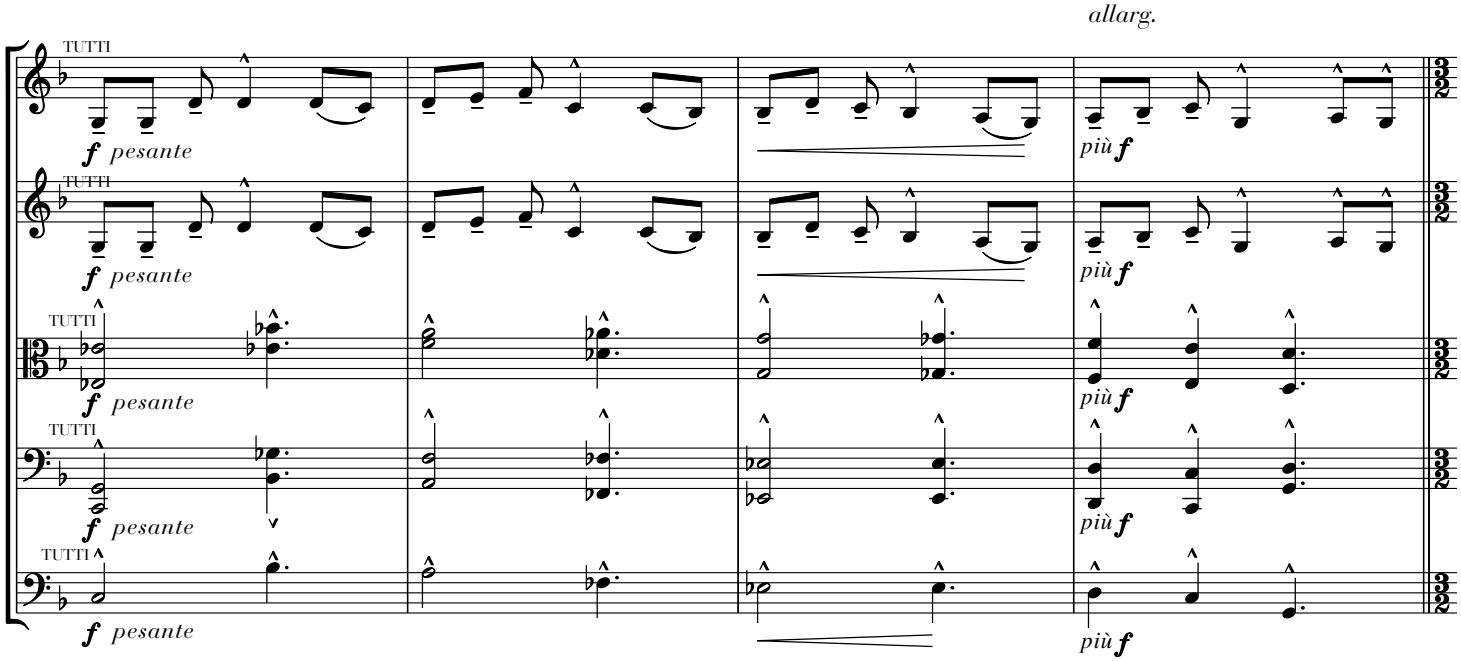
SOLO

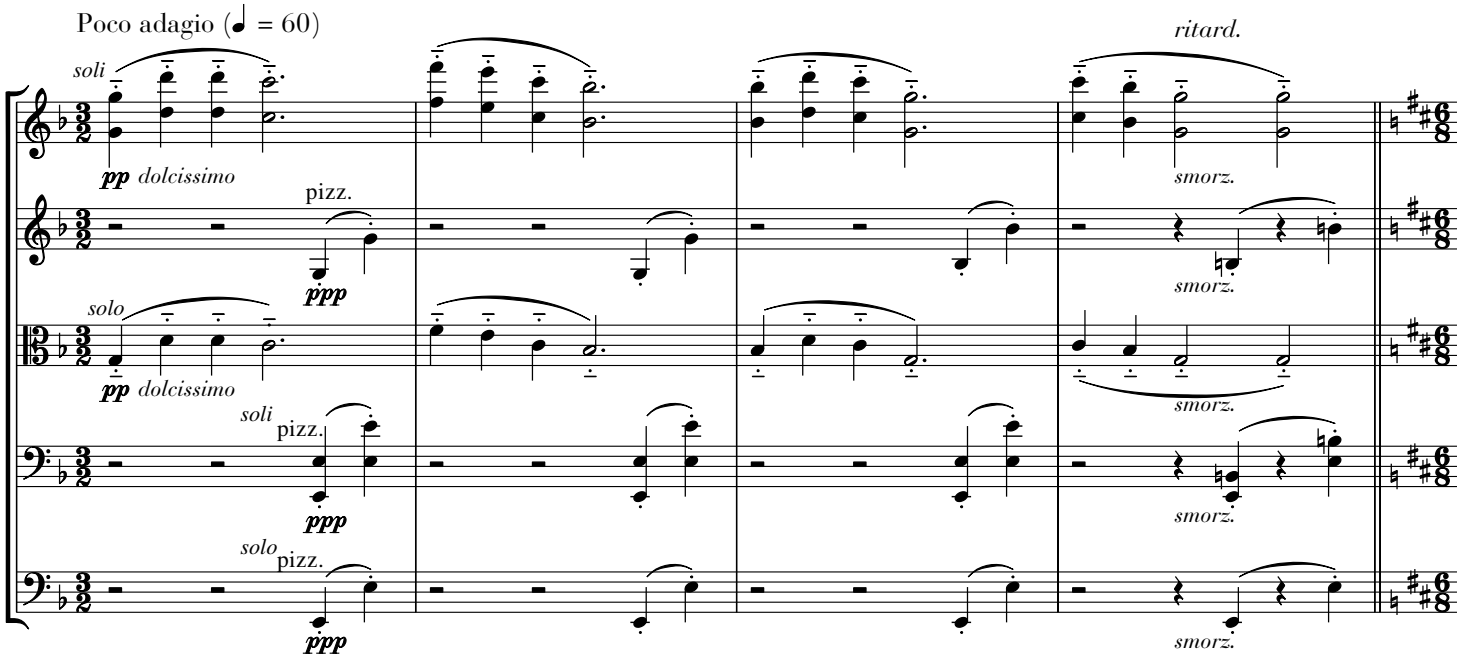
p dolce

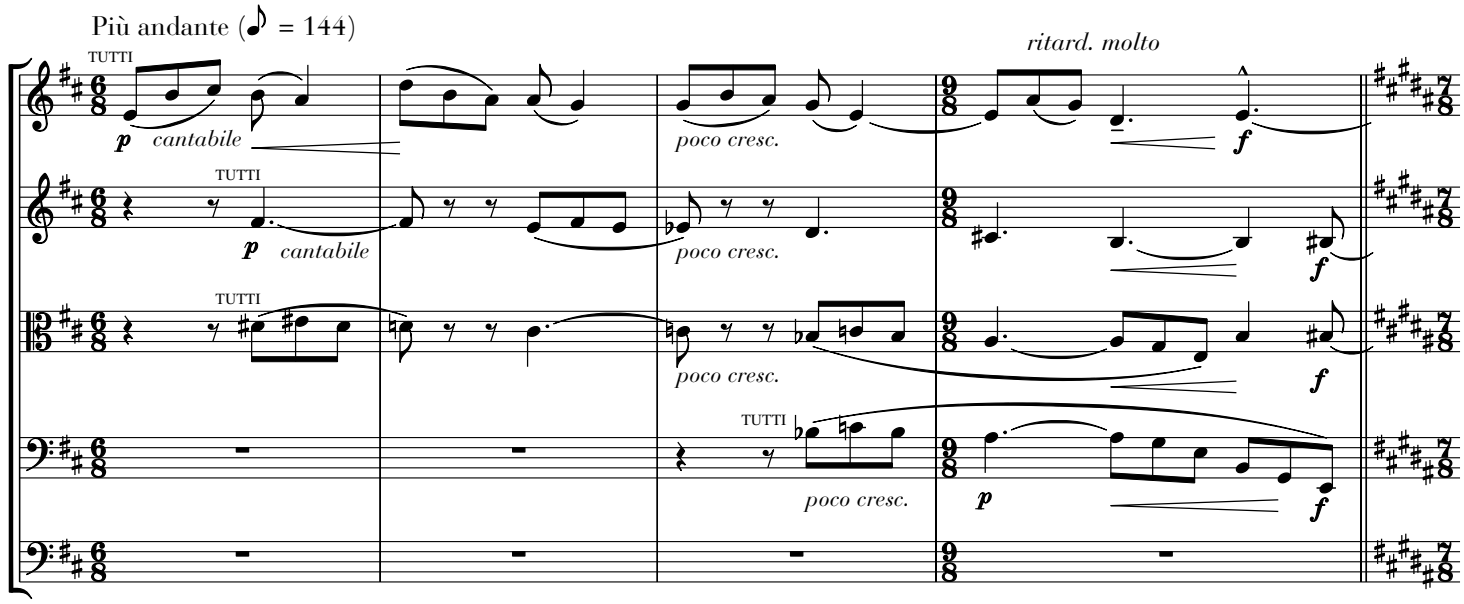
mp espr.

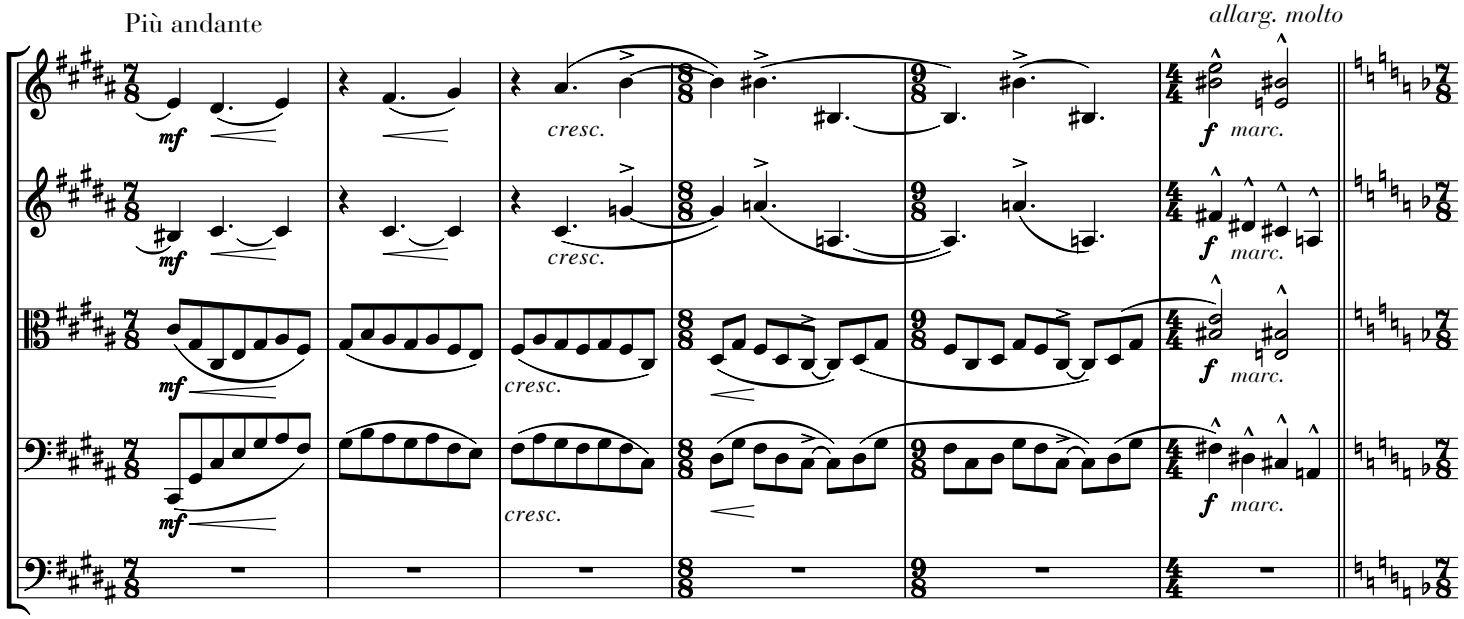
mp

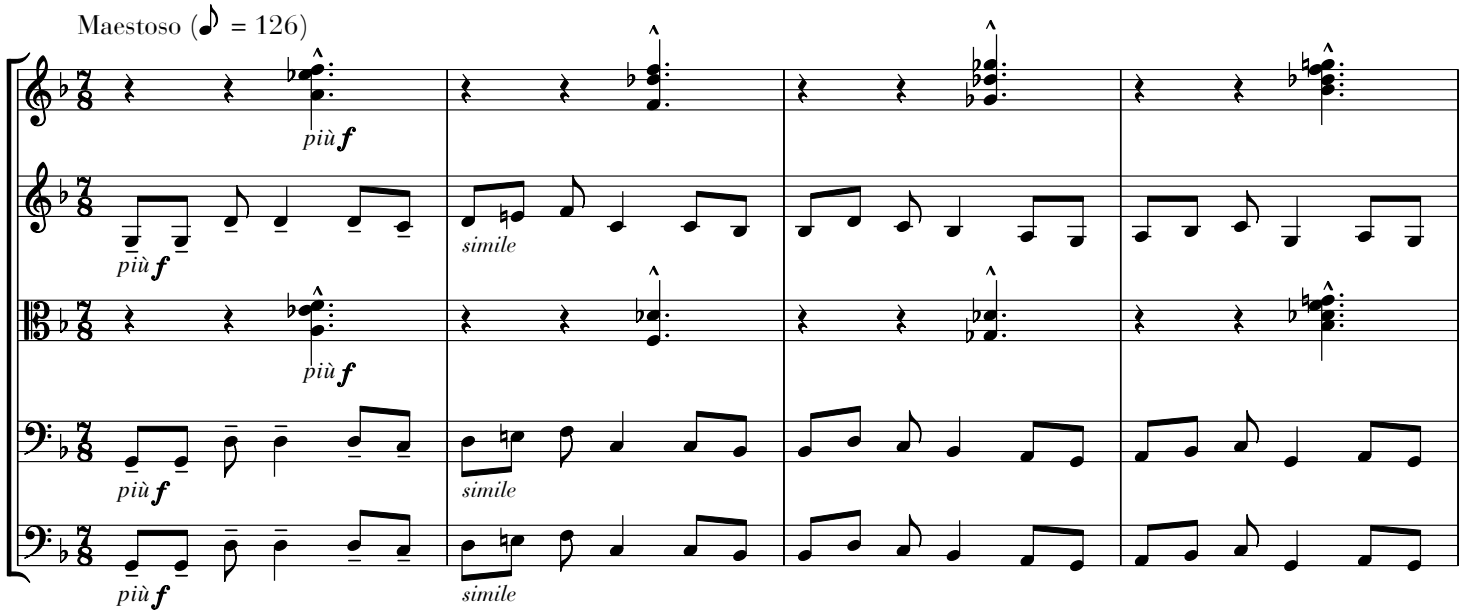

cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.

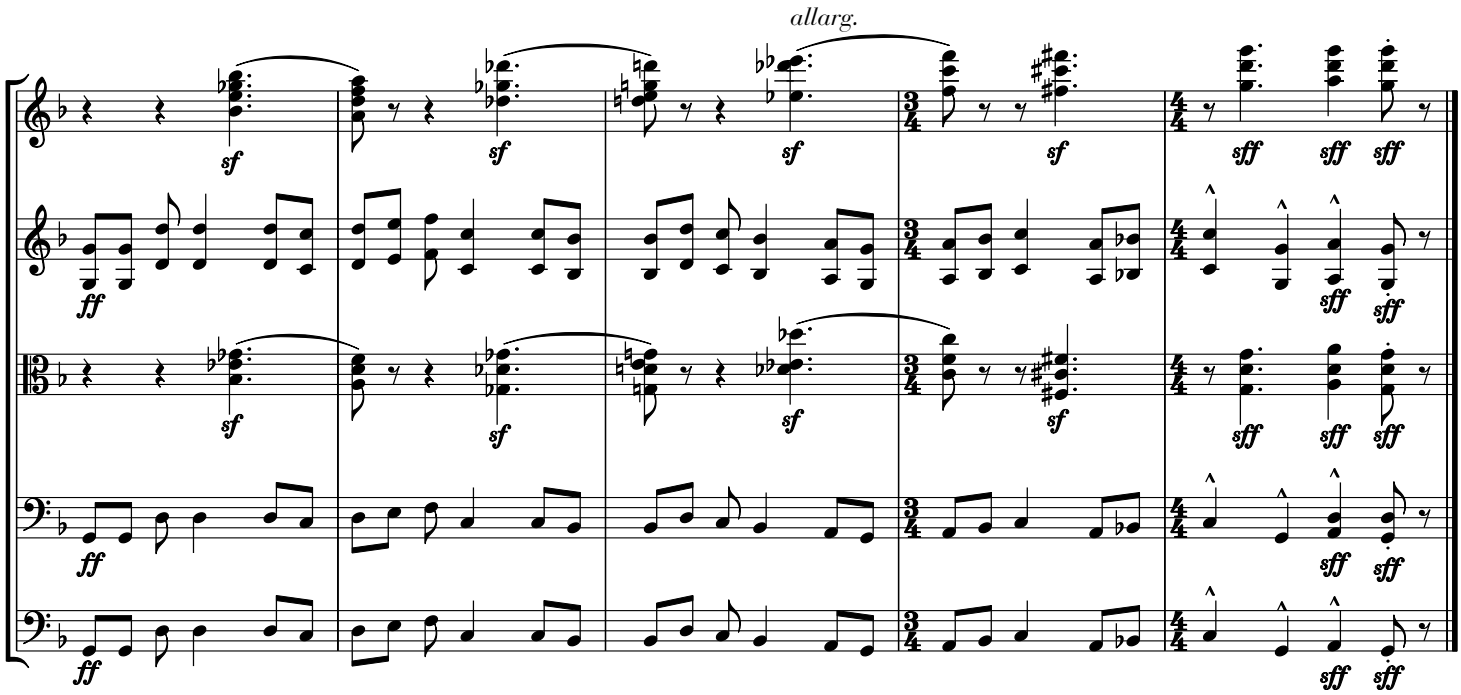

allarg.
TUTTI
f pesante
più f


Poco adagio (♩ = 60)
ritard.
soli
pp dolcissimo
pizz.
ppp
solo
pp dolcissimo
soli
pizz.
ppp
solo
pizz.
ppp
smorz.

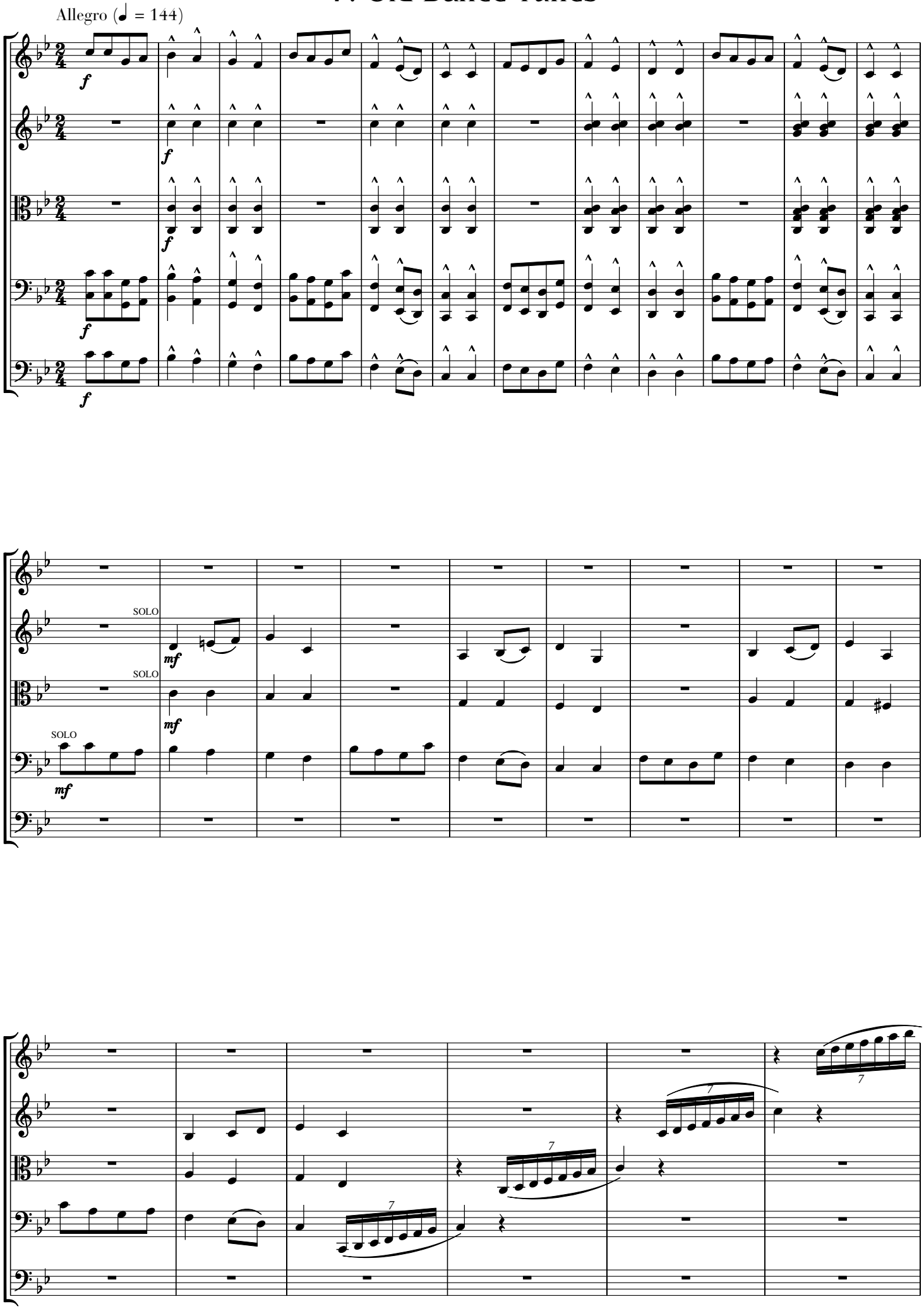

Più andante (♪ = 144)
TUTTI
p cantabile
poco cresc.
ritard. molto
f

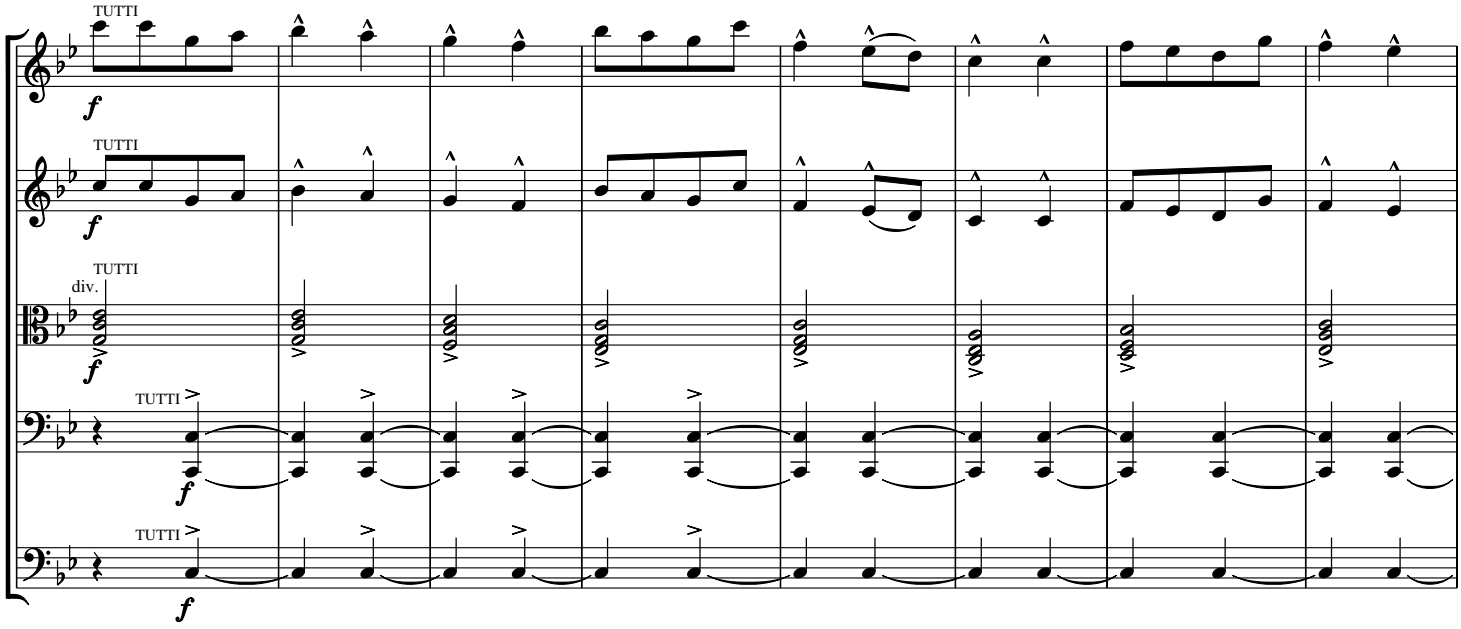

Più andante
mf
cresc.
allarg. molto
f marc.

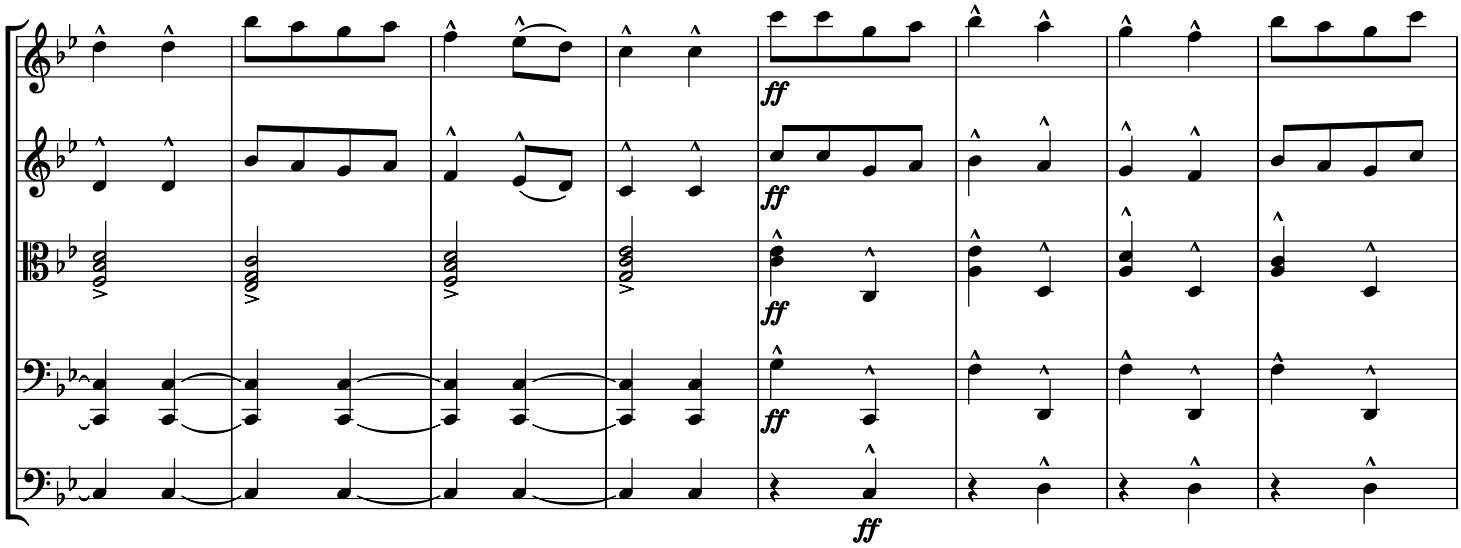

Maestoso (♪ = 126)
più f
simile

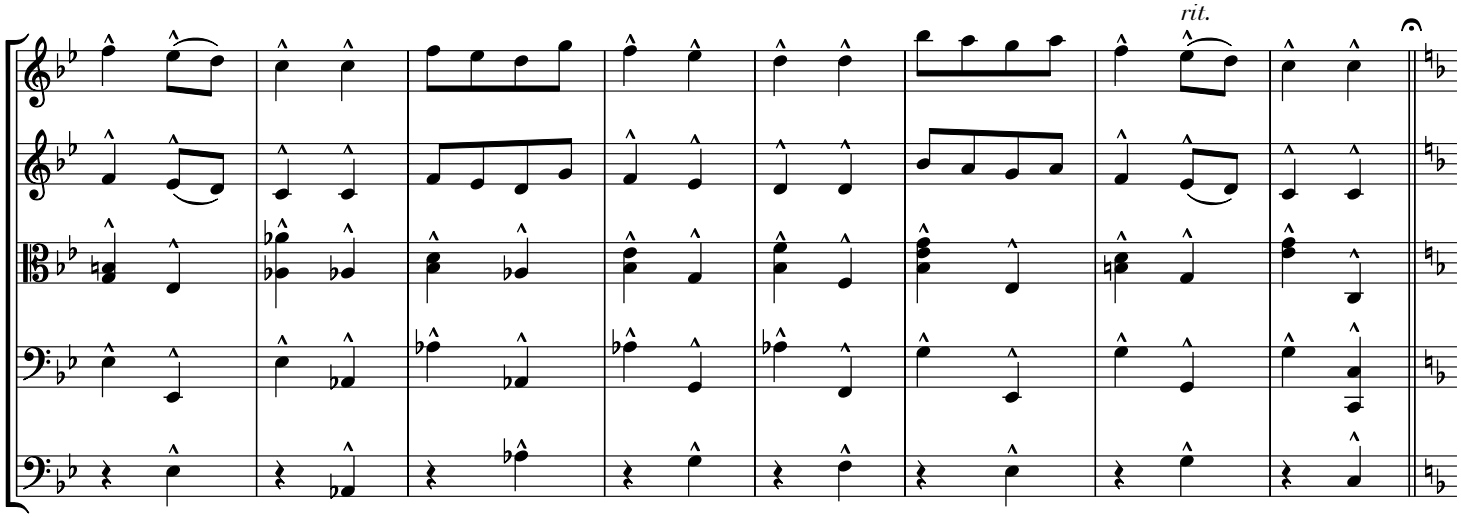

allarg.
sf
ff
sff

7. Old Dance Tunes

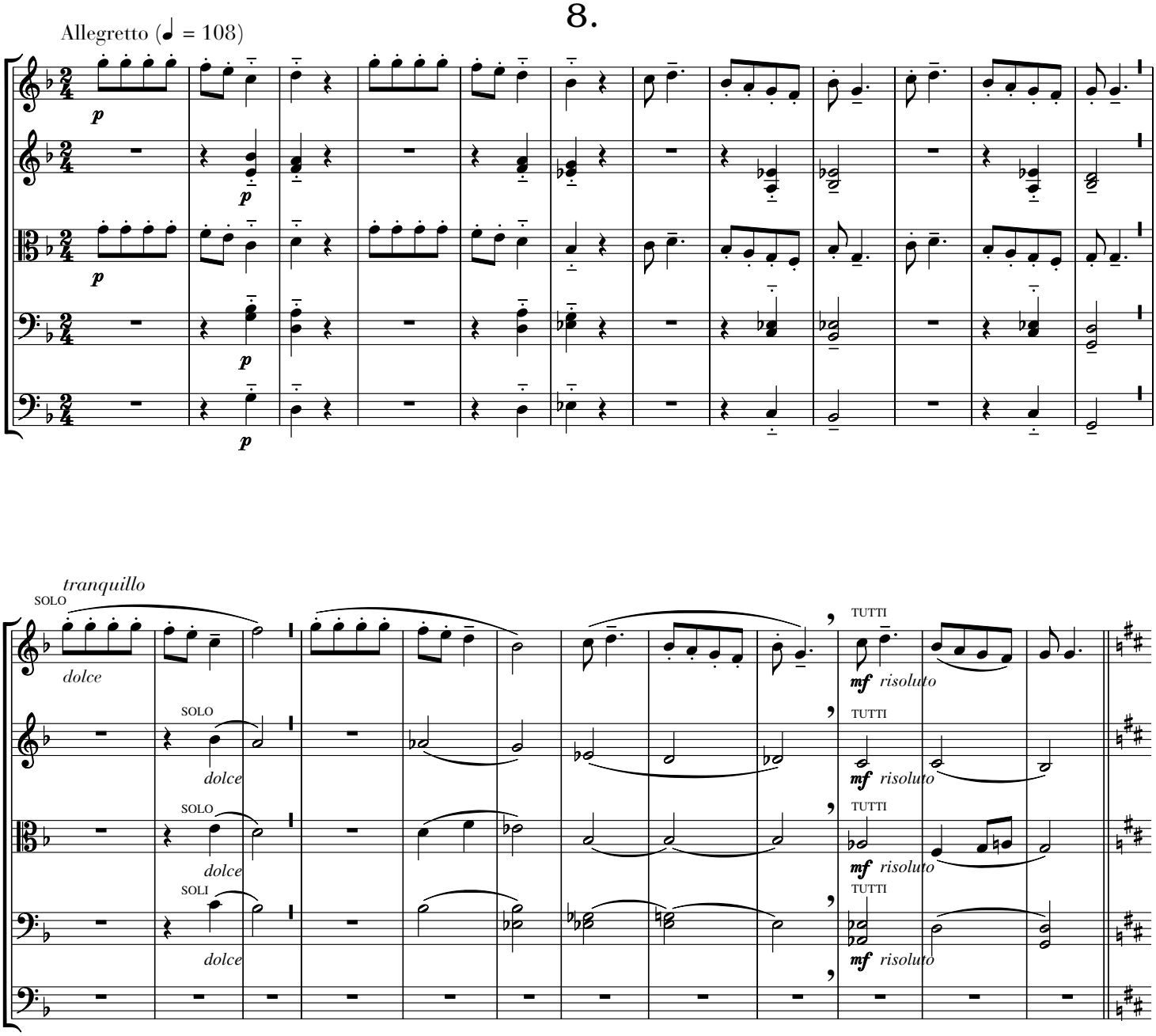



TUTTI
f
TUTTI
f
TUTTI
div.
f
TUTTI
f
TUTTI
f


ff
ff
ff
ff
ff

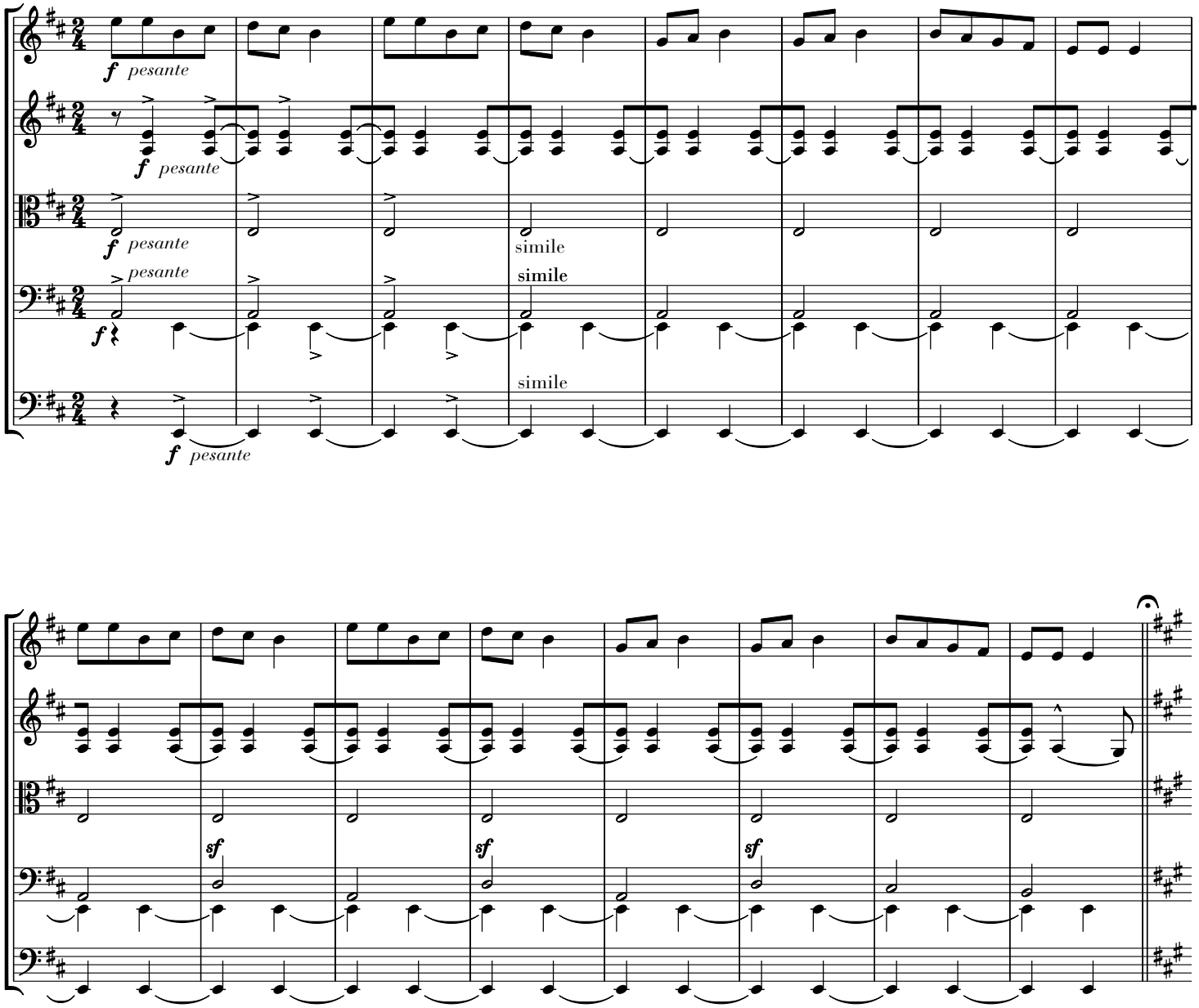

rit.

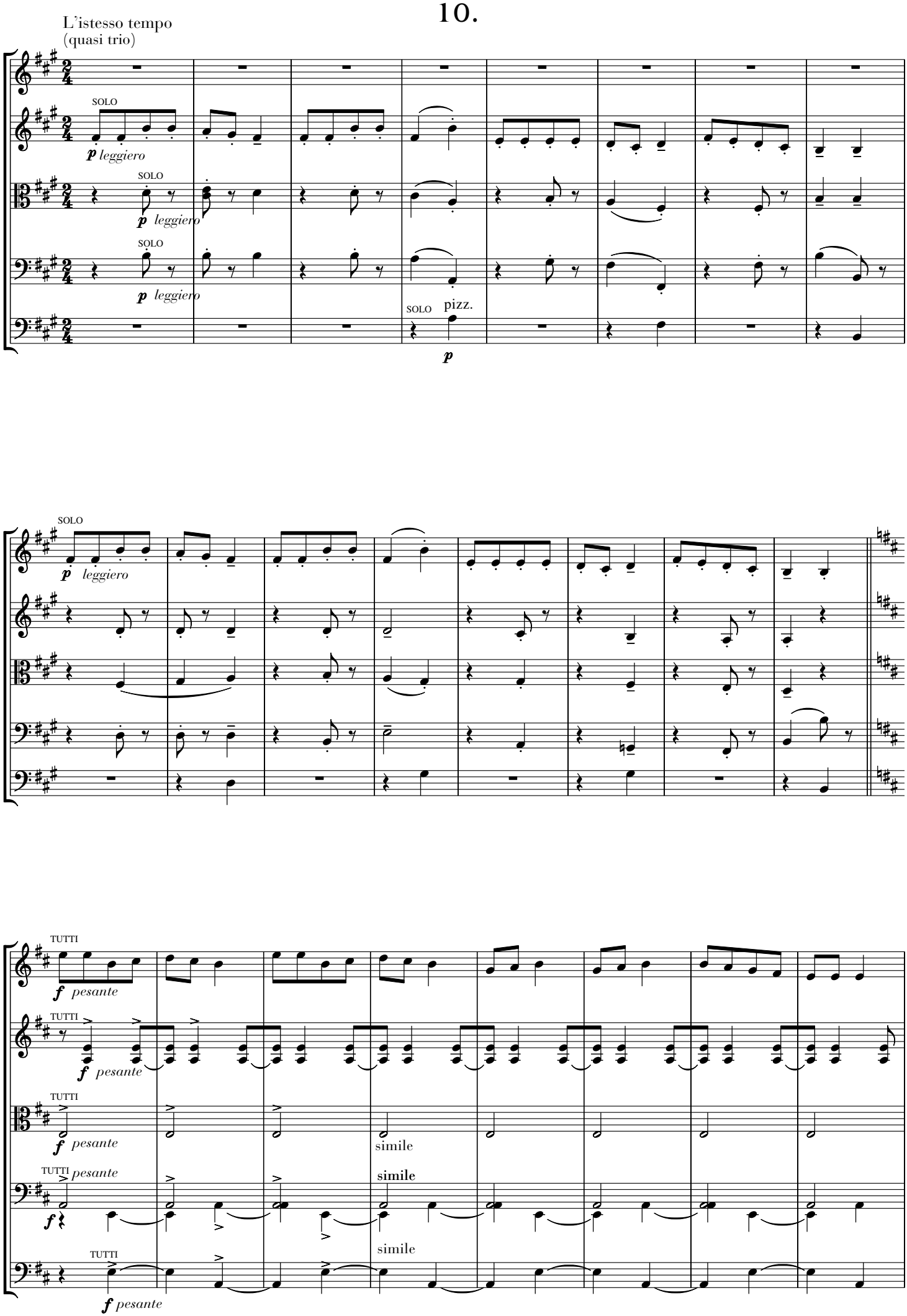
8.

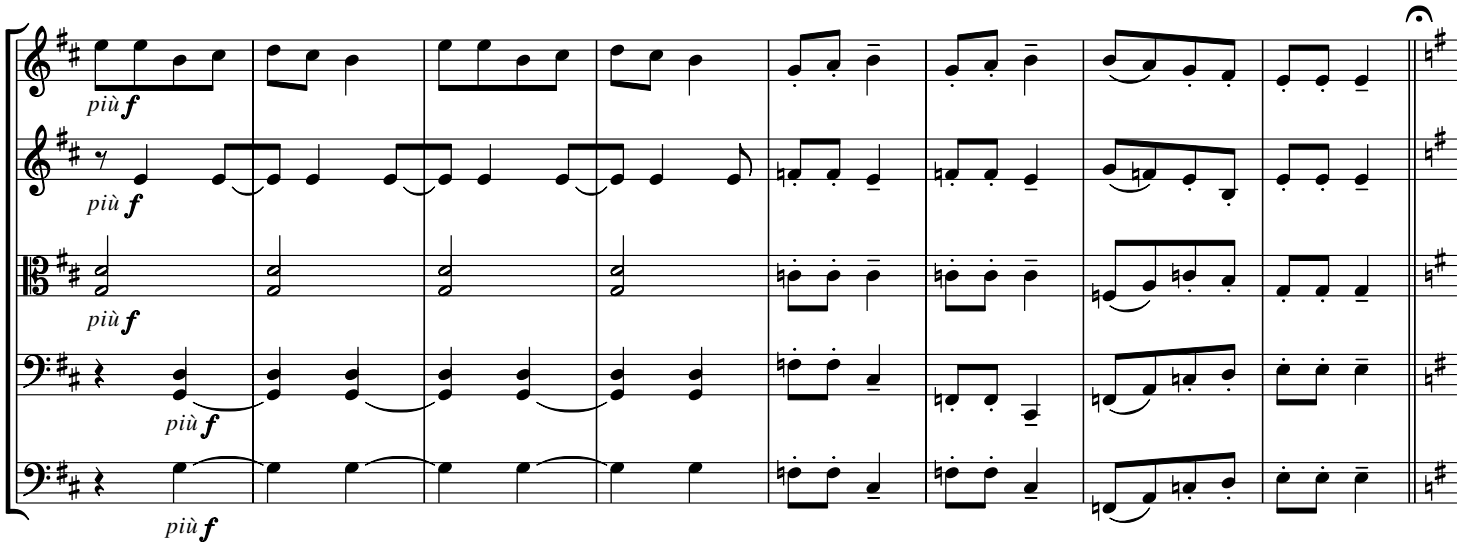

Allegretto (♩ = 108)
p
tranquillo
SOLO
dolce
SOLO
dolce
SOLO
dolce
SOLI
dolce
TUTTI
mf risoluto
TUTTI
mf risoluto
TUTTI
mf risoluto
TUTTI
mf risoluto

9.

Allegretto (♩ = 138)

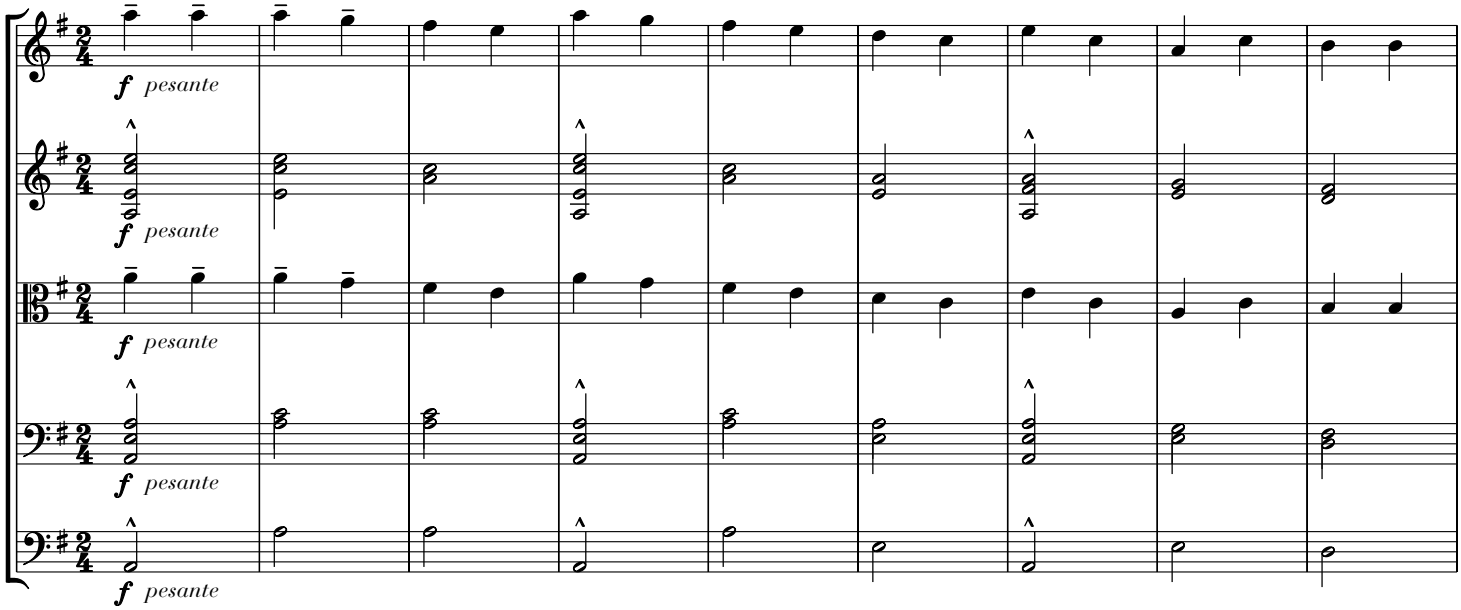


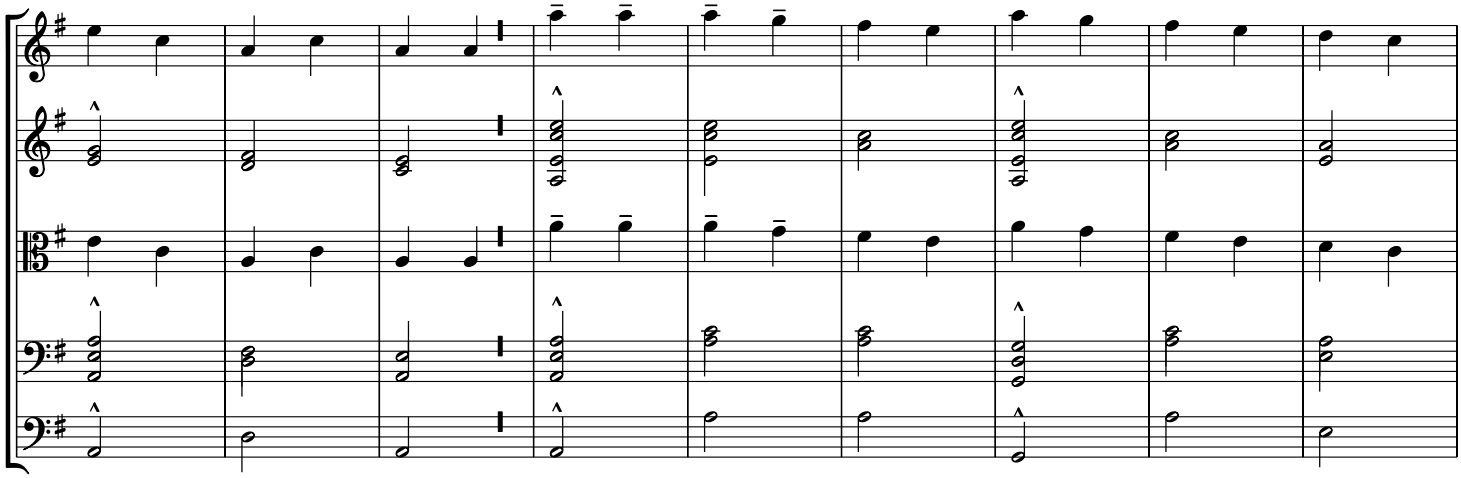

L'istesso tempo
(quasi trio)
SOLO
p leggiero
SOLO
p leggiero
SOLO
p leggiero
SOLO pizz.
p
SOLO
p leggiero
TUTTI
f pesante
TUTTI
f pesante
TUTTI
f pesante
simile
TUTTI pesante
f
simile
simile
TUTTI
f pesante

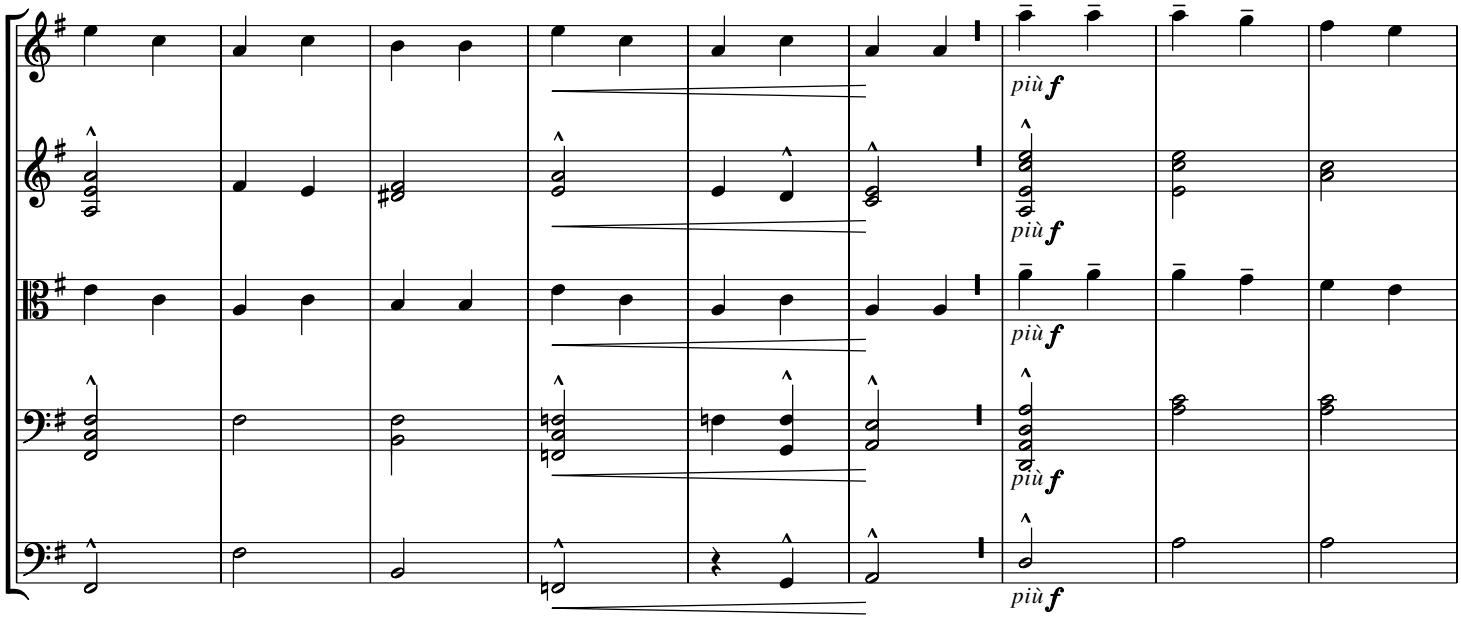

più f
più f
più f
più f
più f

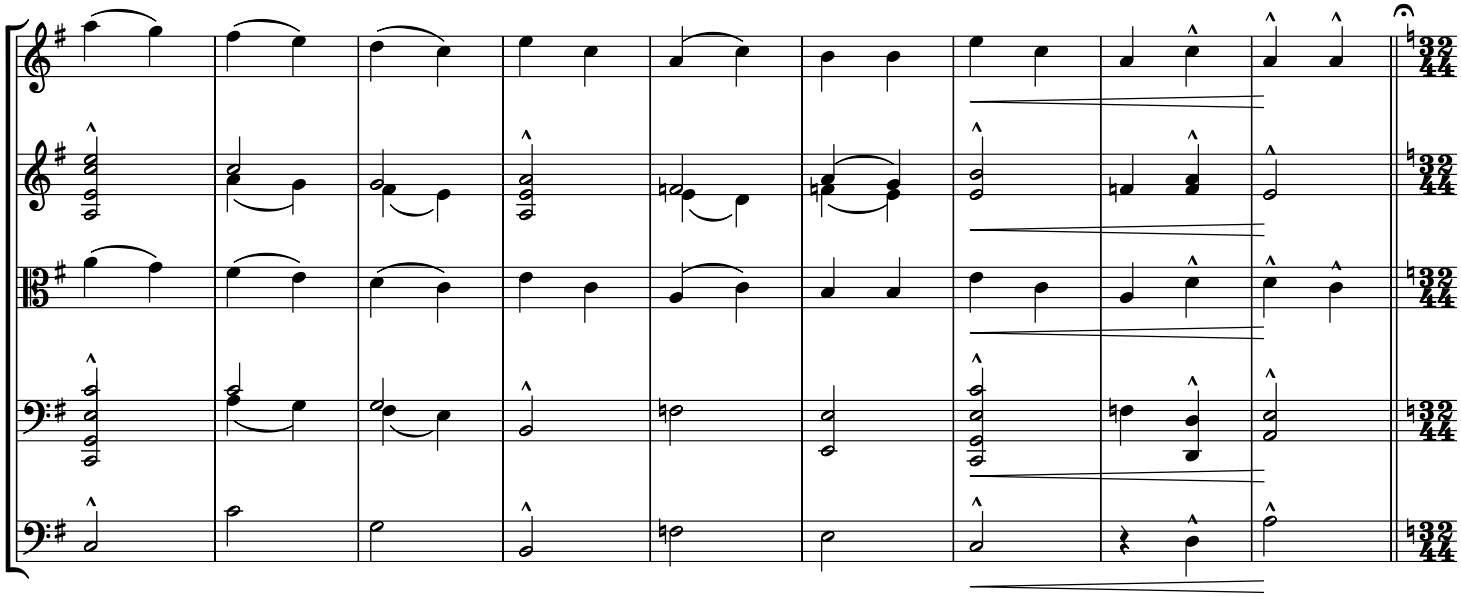
11.

Assai moderato (♩ = 102)
a 3 battute

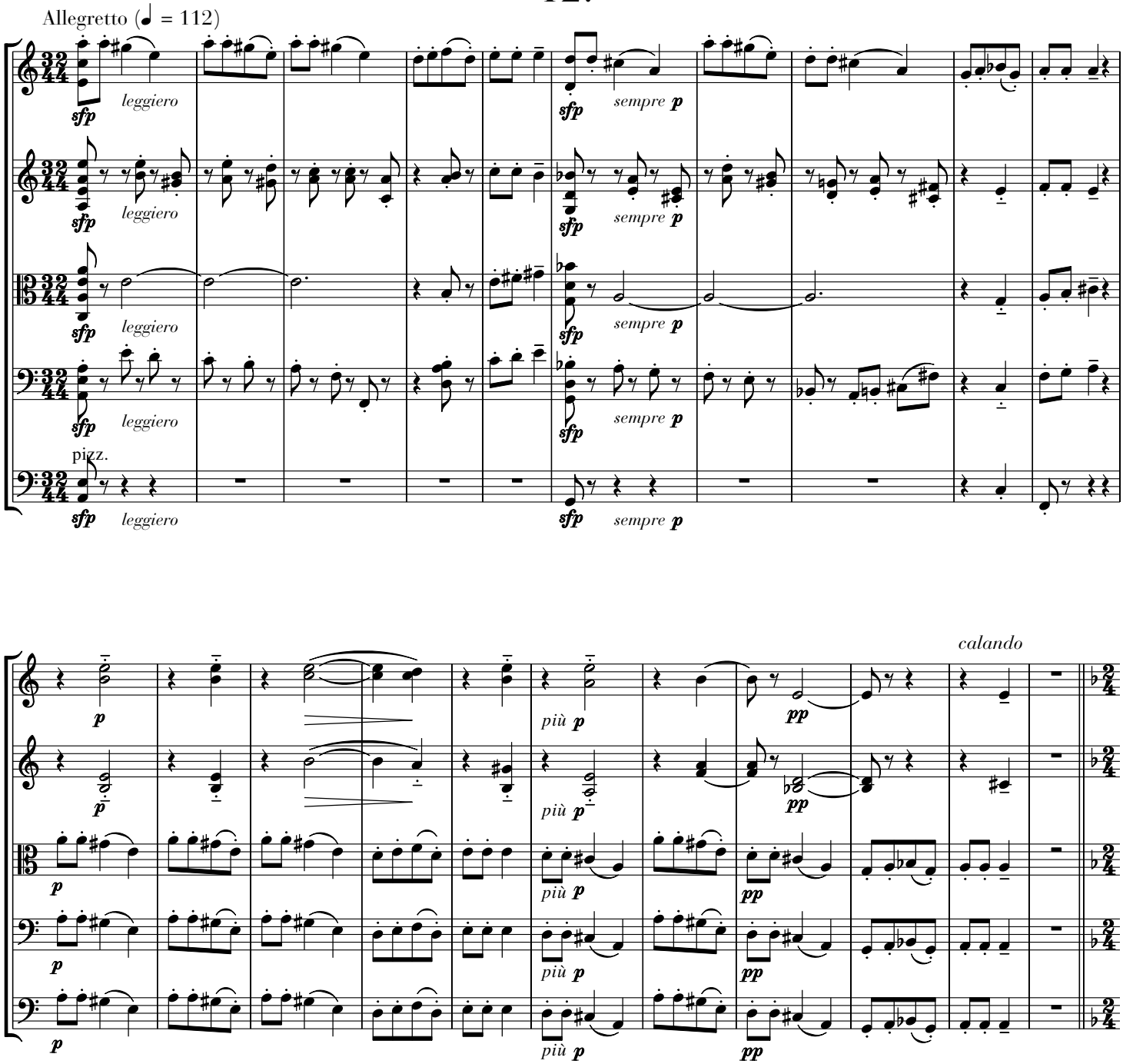






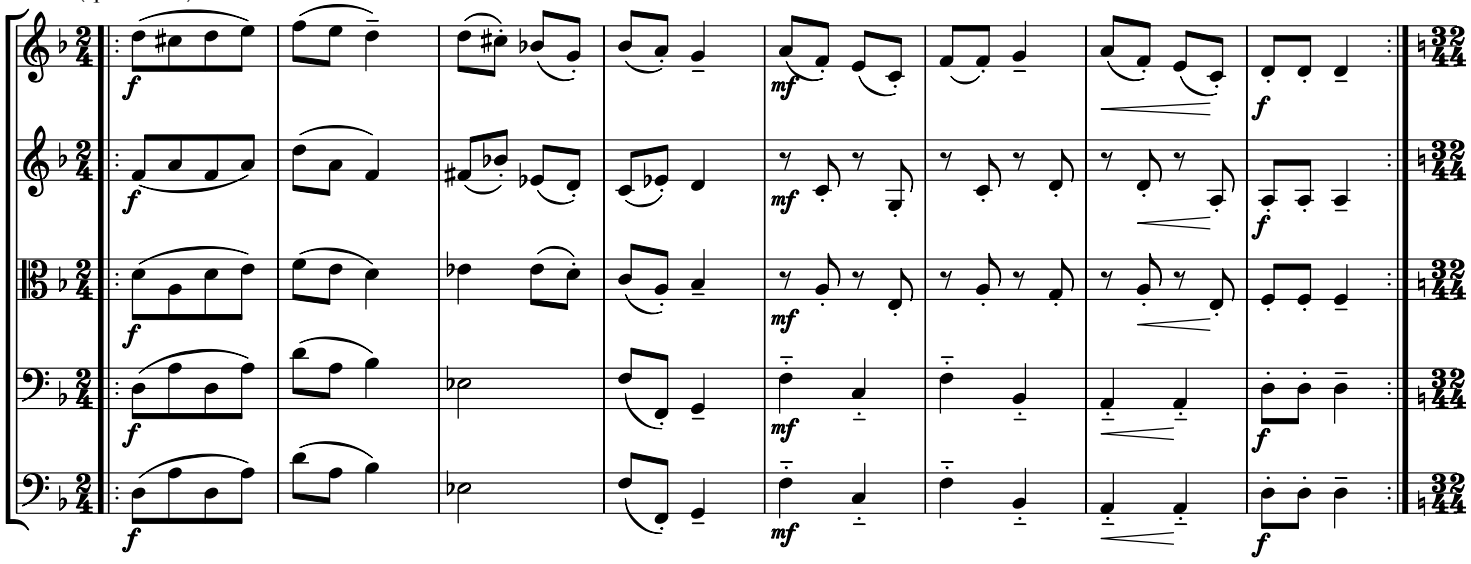


12.

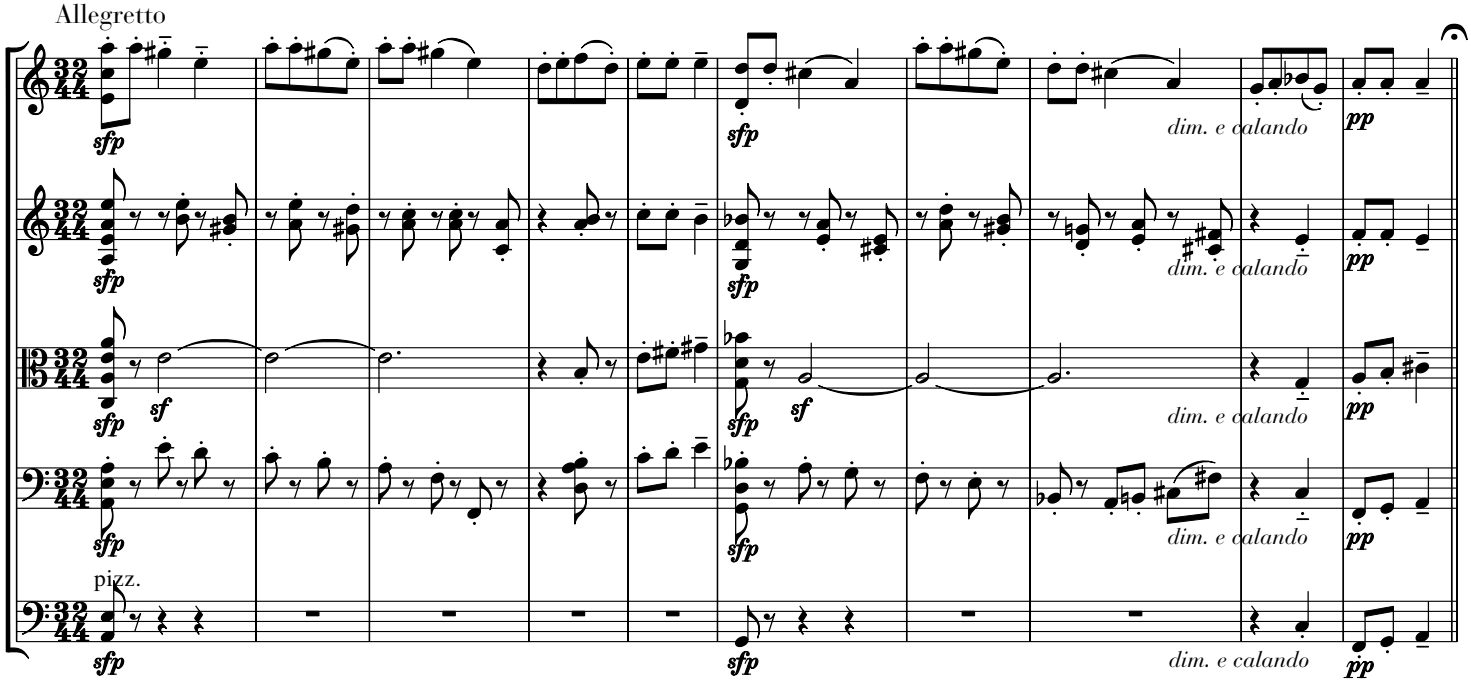


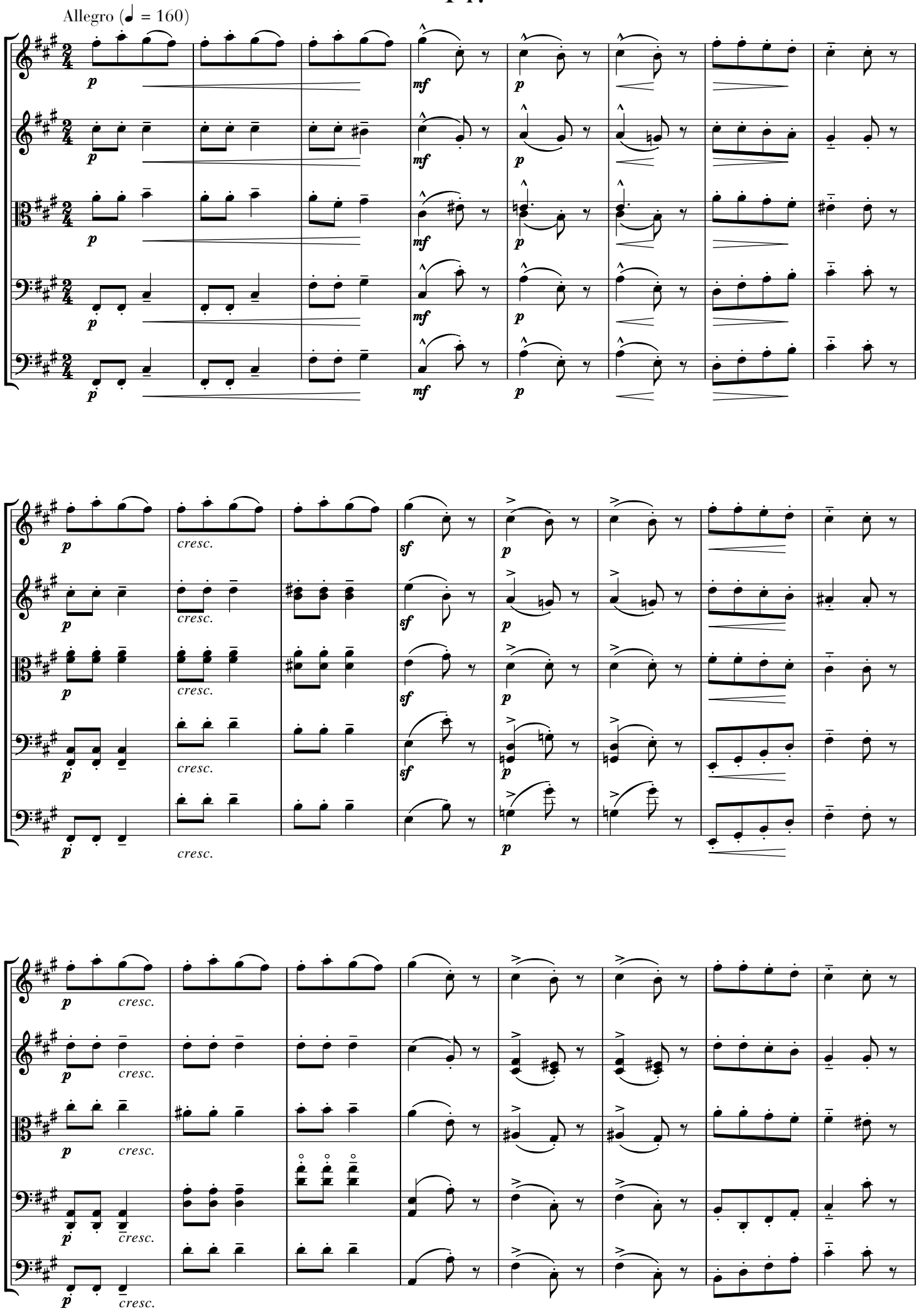
13.

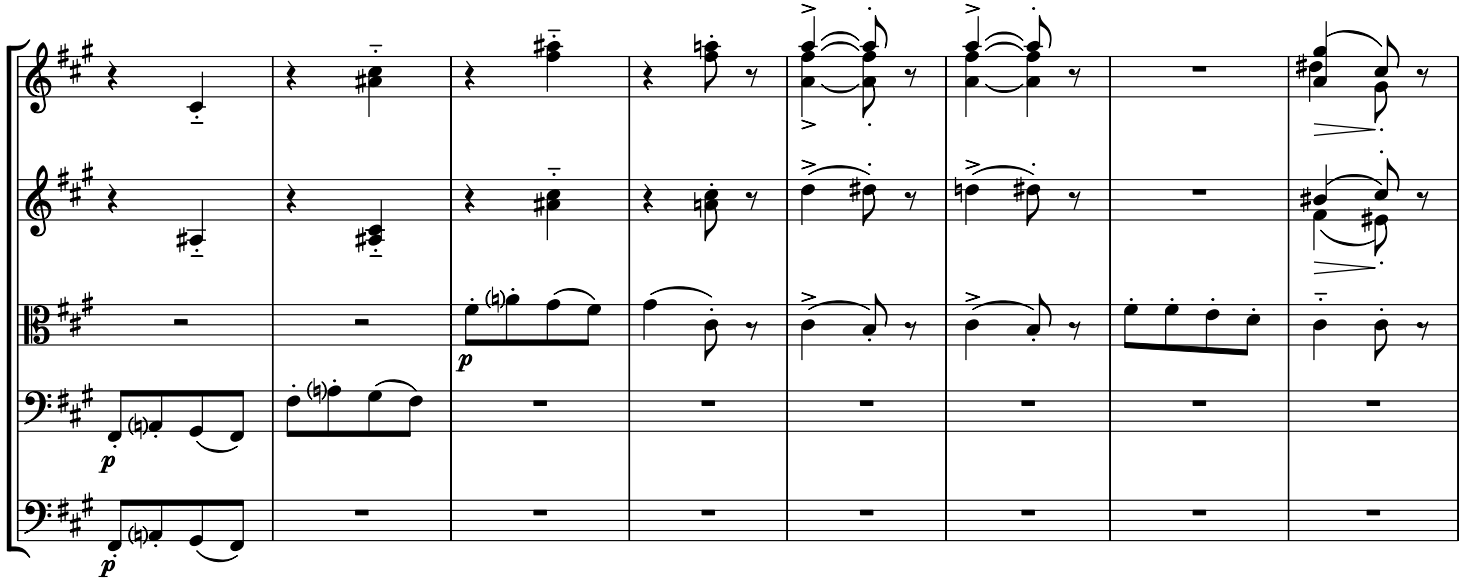
Poco più vivo (♩ = 136)
(quasi trio)

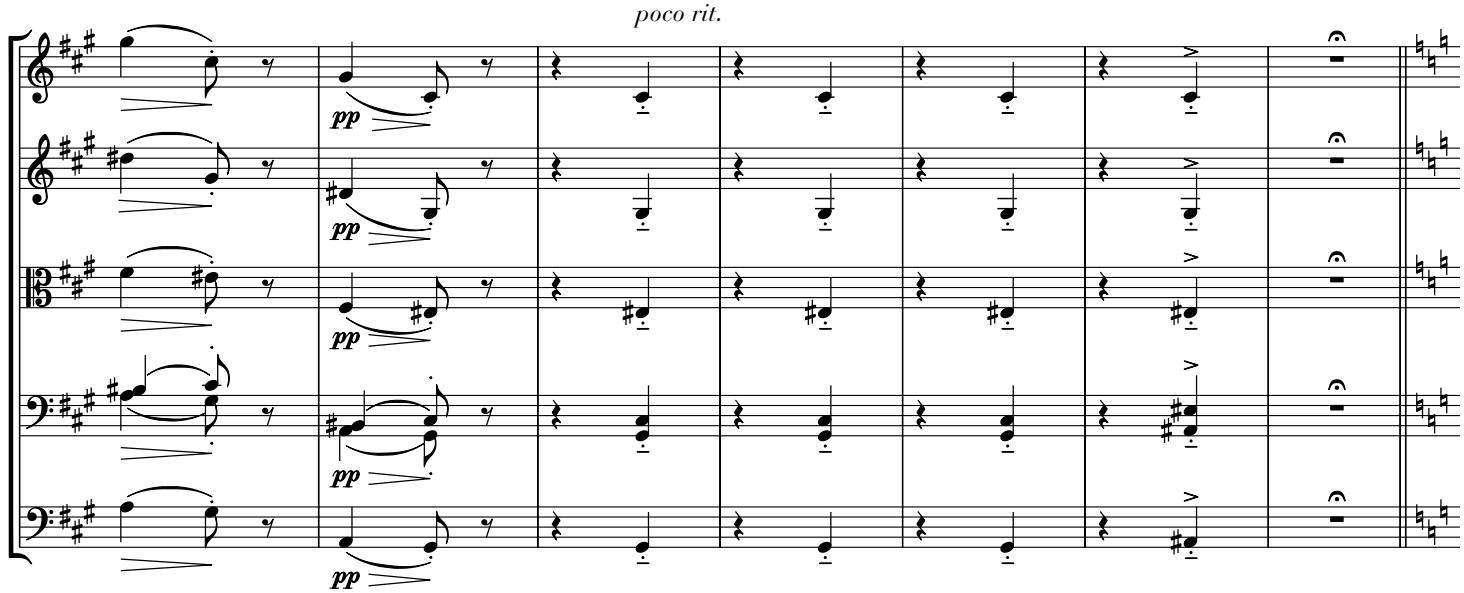


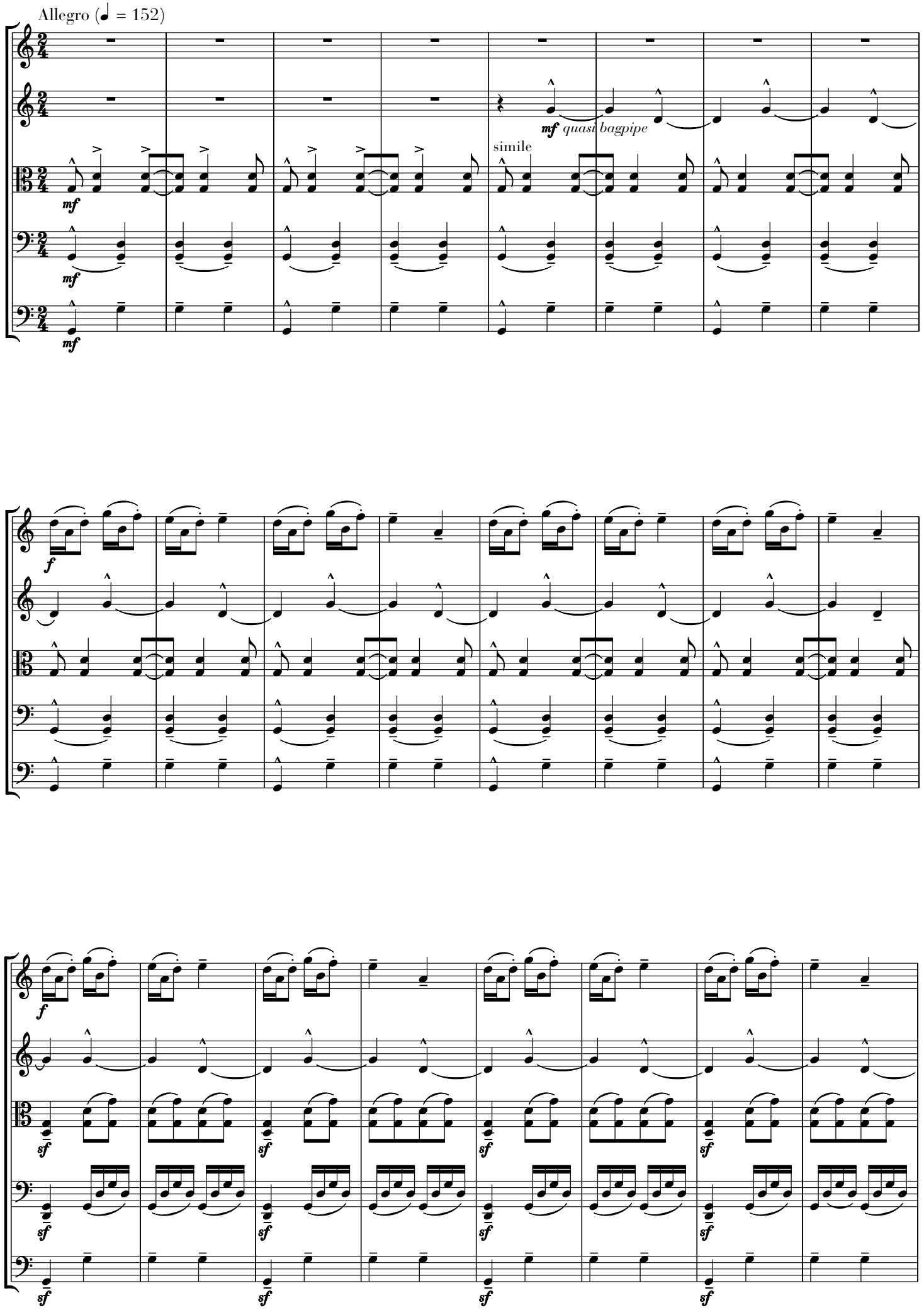
Allegretto

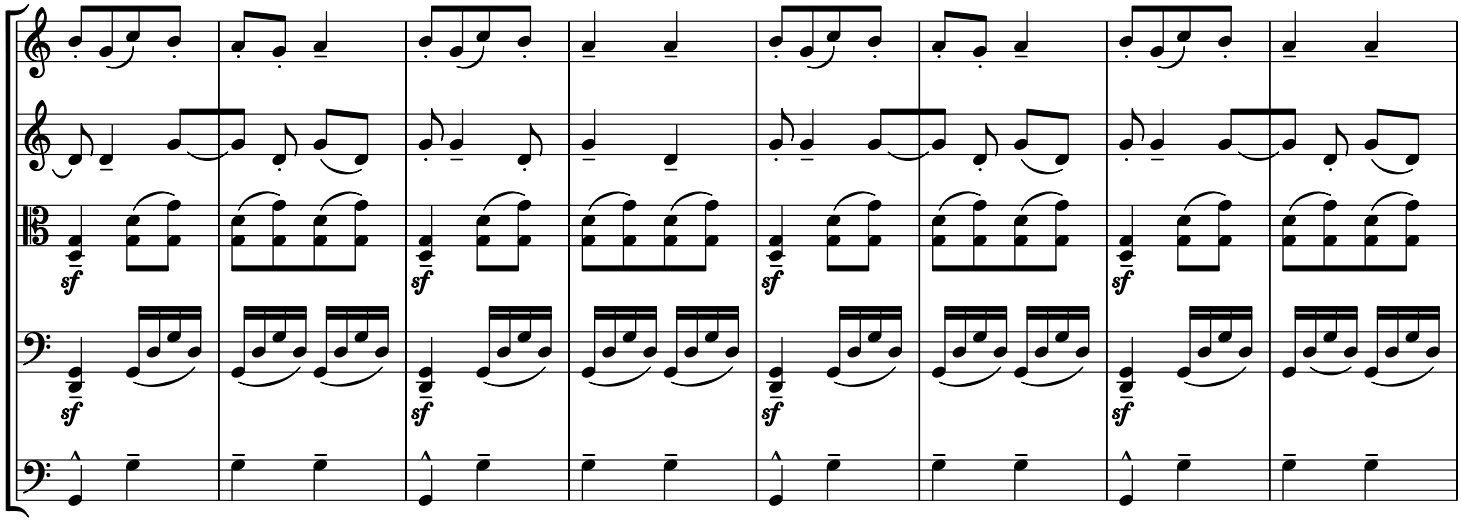


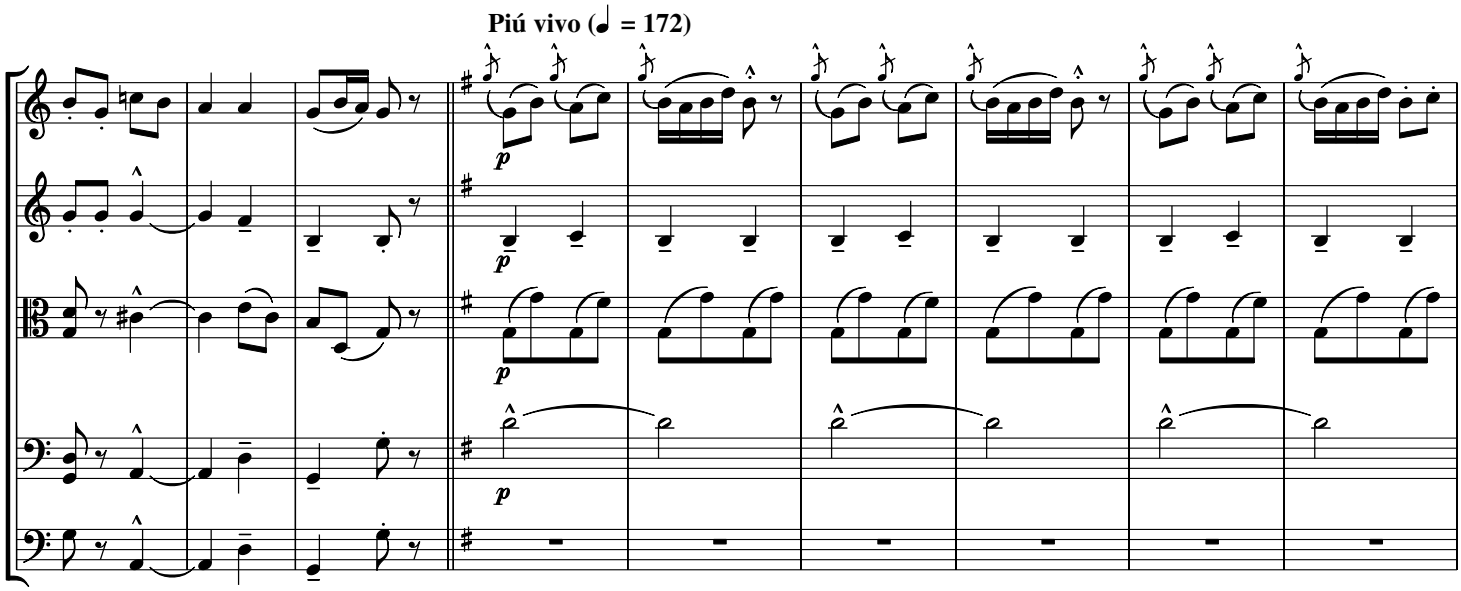

Allegro (♩ = 160)
p
mf
sf
cresc.


p
p
p


poco rit.
pp
pp
pp
pp


Allegro (♩ = 152)
mf quasi bagpipe
simile
mf
mf
mf
f
f
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf


sf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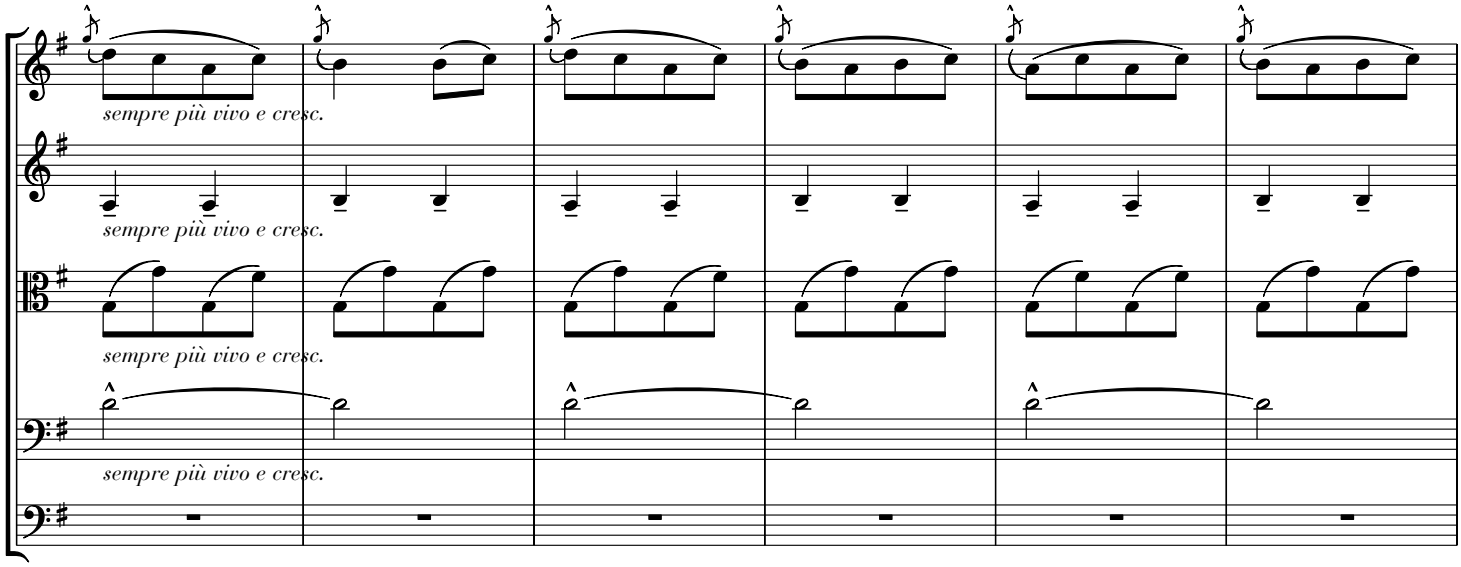
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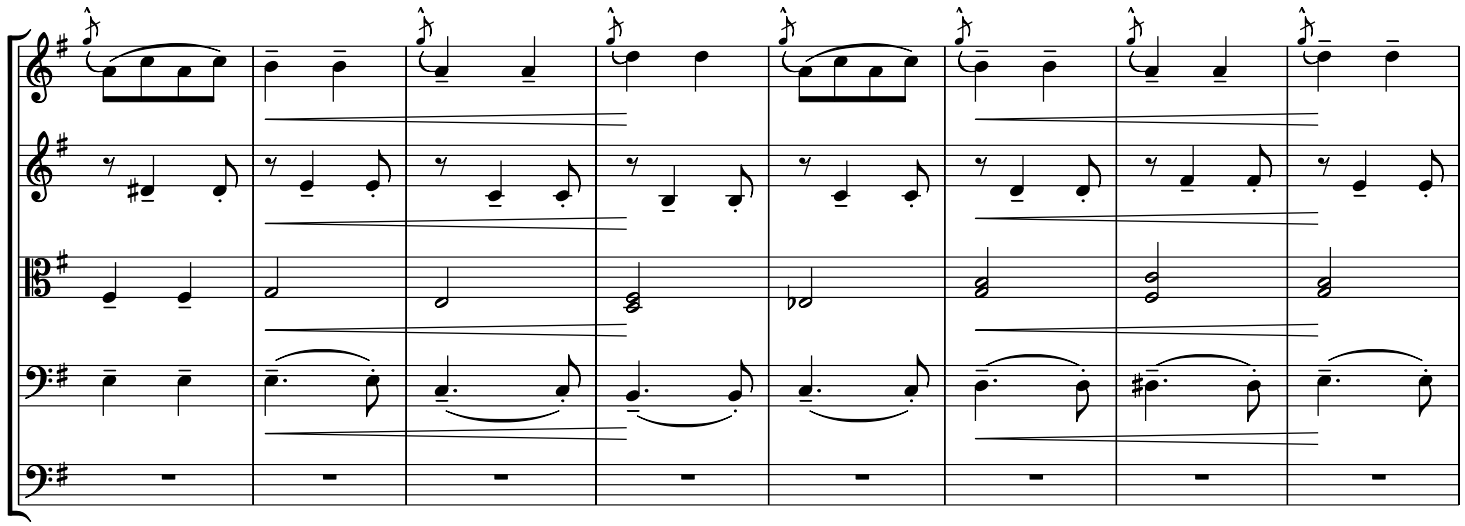

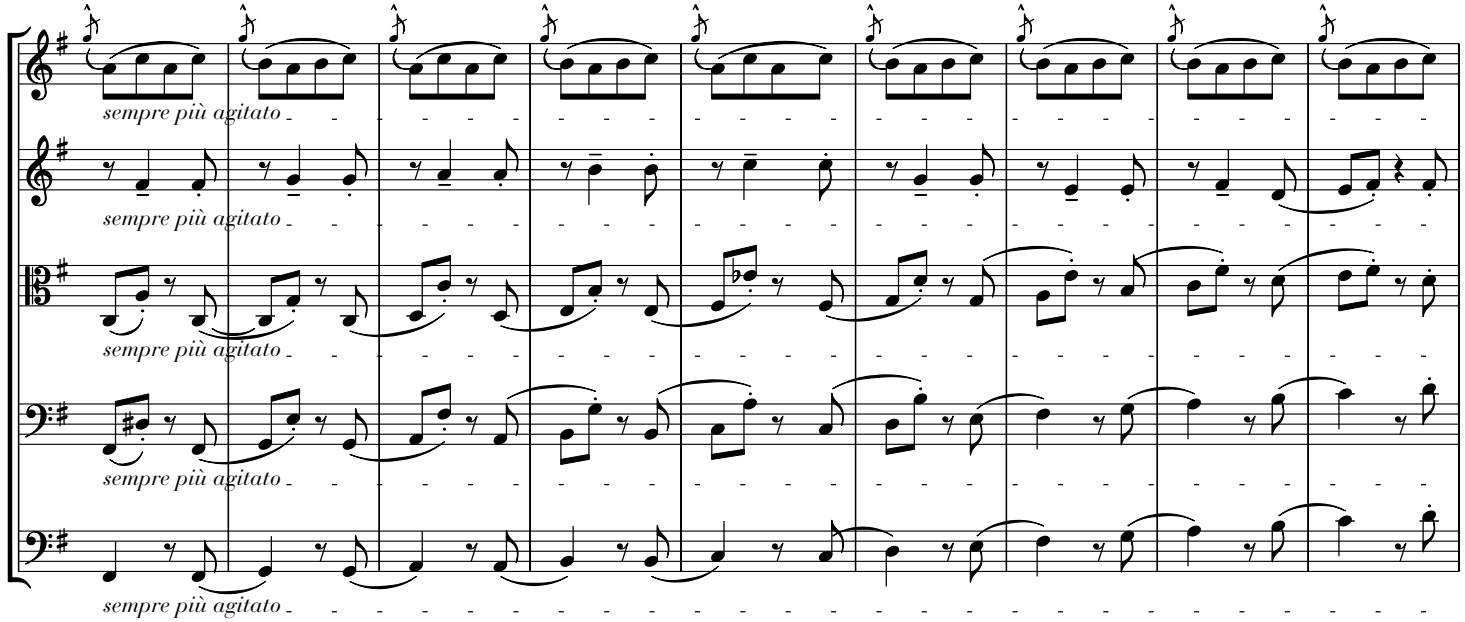
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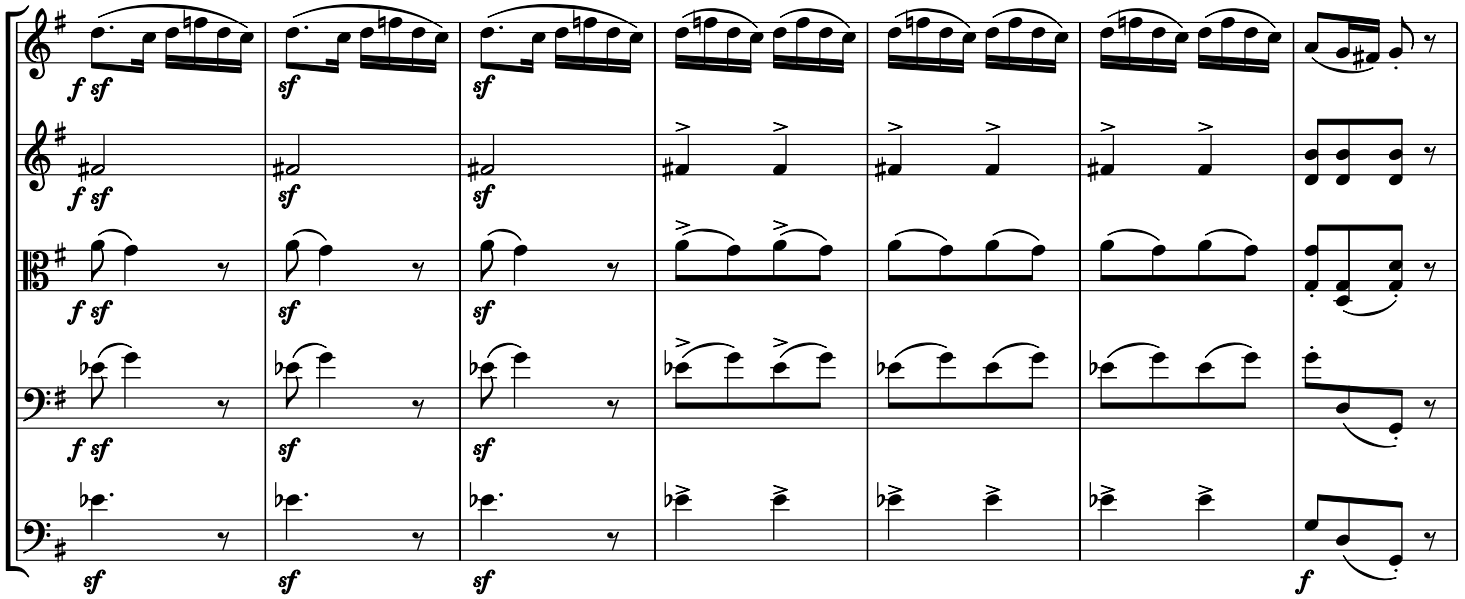
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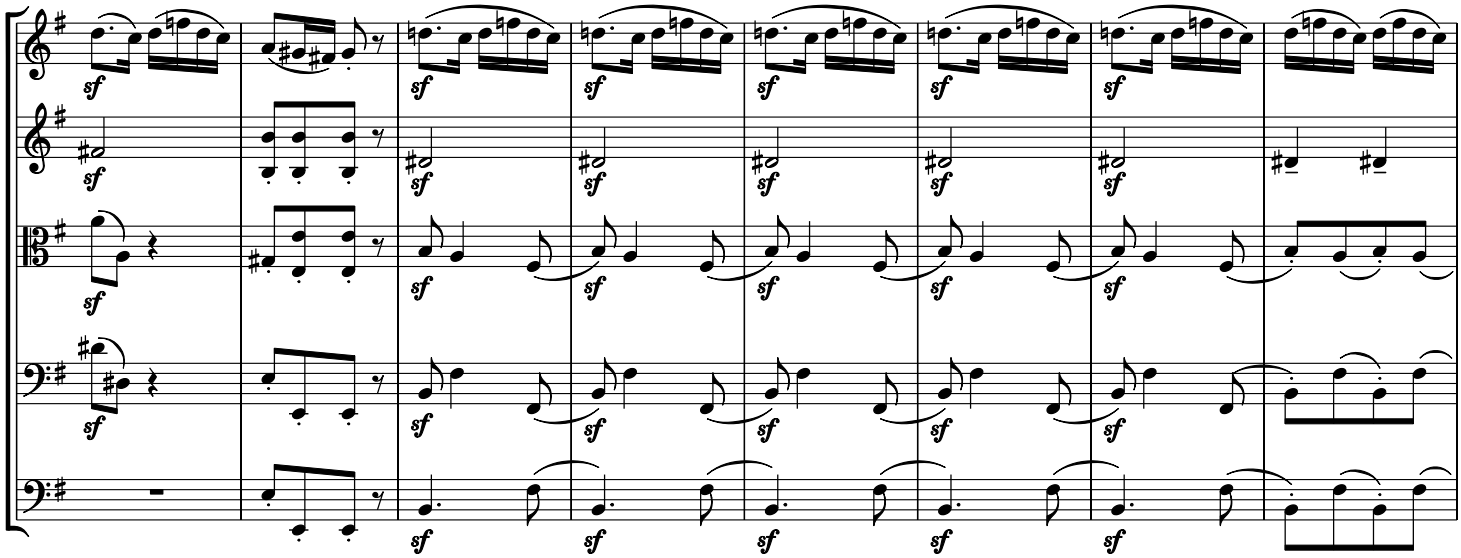
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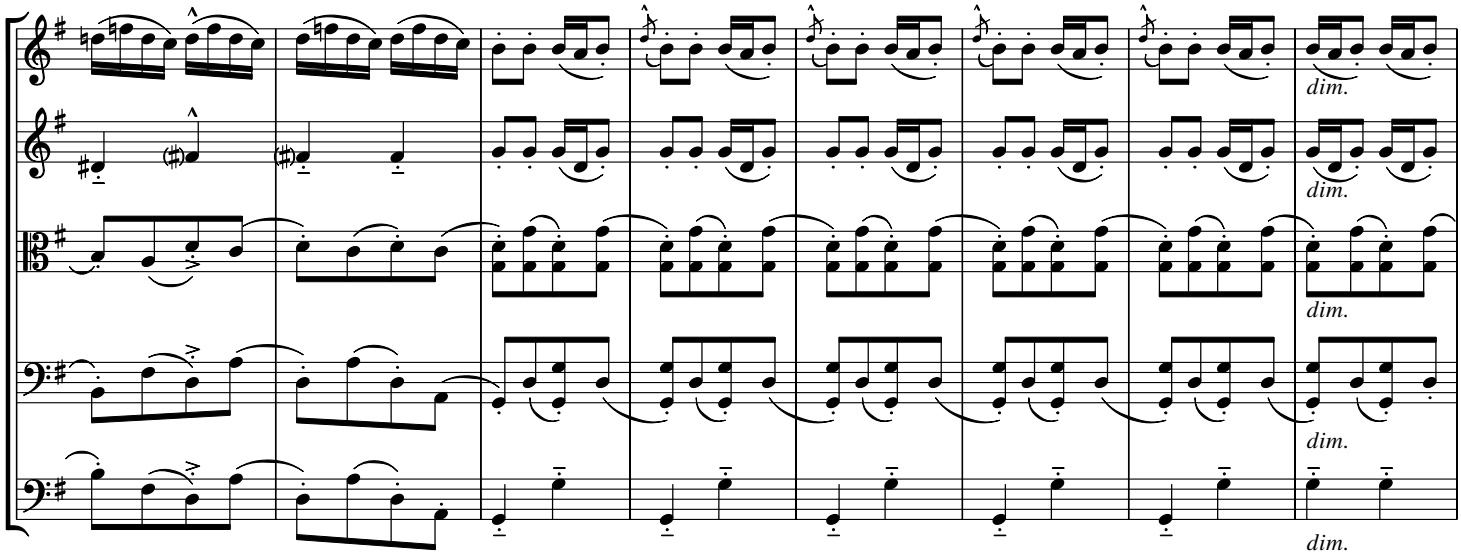
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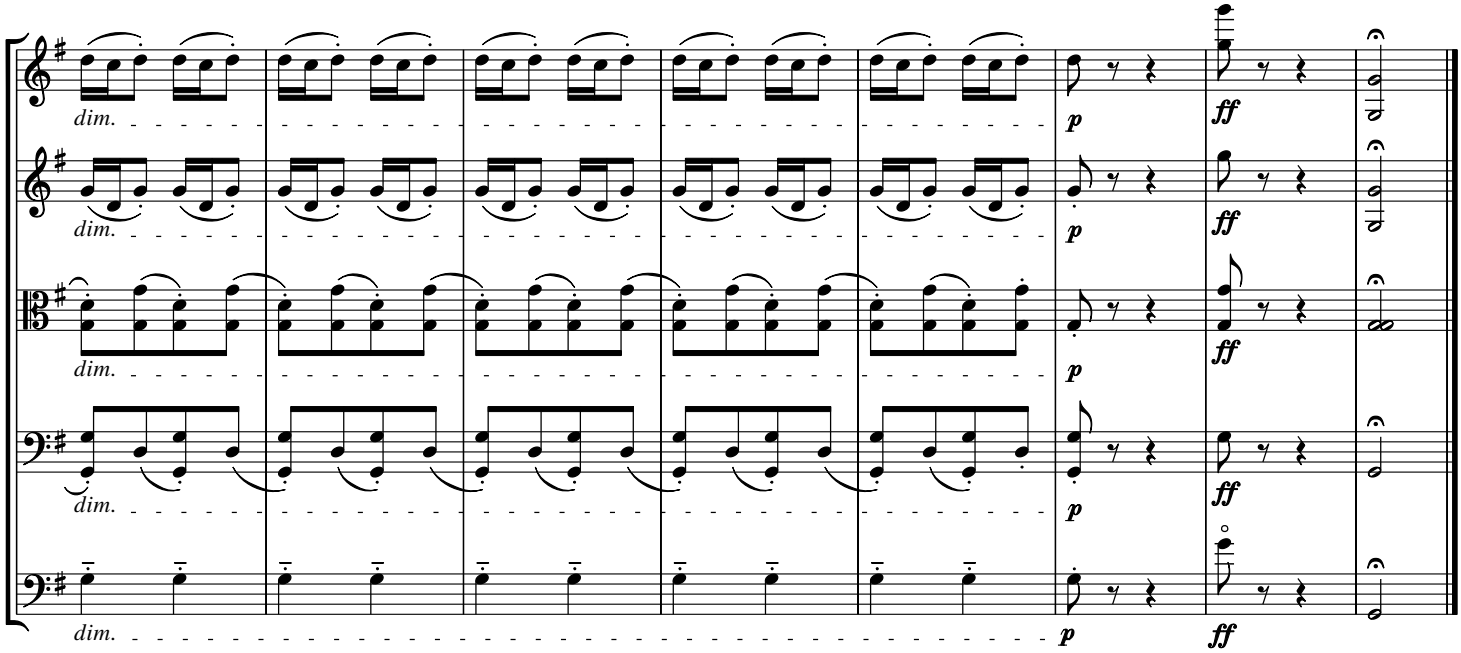
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