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Representing Children in Opera

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
PhD in Instrumental and Vocal Composition

CITY UNIVERSITY

School of Arts – Music Department

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ABSTRACT

This study is a survey of how composers have represented children in opera from the late nineteenth century onwards. Operatic roles for children are analysed from a primarily technical perspective, with those written specifically for children's voices presented alongside those intended for adults playing children; then the relative merits of each approach is considered. A chronological list of child roles can be found in the introduction. Chapter 1 evaluates the ways in which opera composers have approached writing for children's voices; extracts from monologues, dialogues, ensembles and solos with instrumental accompaniment are analysed. Chapter 2 explores methods by which composers have evoked notions of childhood; examples of songs, nursery rhymes, lessons, learning, scale, fantasy, and tantrums are discussed. Chapter 3 treats the musical representation of the notions of innocence and experience in children's roles. Chapter 4 offers the author's recent opera, *I'm the King of the Castle,* as a case study in its use of many of the notions explored in the preceding chapters.

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DECLARATION

I grant powers of discretion to the University Librarian to allow this thesis, 'Representing Children in Opera', to be copied in whole or in part without further reference to the author.

INTRODUCTION

> One literary achievement of the nineteenth century was the discovery of the child. Prior to the rise of Romanticism, childhood had been seen as some pre-human stage that had to be exorcised before reaching maturity; now it was increasingly understood as a deep enduring basis of the adult personality.[1]

Child roles have been a fairly rare feature in opera; indeed, the role of Jemmy in Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* (1829) might justifiably be considered the first significant children's role.[2] Jerome Reel has observed how the emancipation of children in society has been paralleled on the operatic stage; as we shall see below, many 20th-century composers, such as Ravel and Britten, have written involved roles for children who take an integral part of the drama.[3]

Children's roles usually fall into one of three categories. The first comprises those intended to be performed by adult singers, frequently a female adult playing the role of a young boy. These include the eponymous heroes of Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, and the boy in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. The second comprises those roles intended for child actors who have non-singing, sometimes silent roles, like the page in Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* and the apprentice in Britten's *Peter Grimes*. In *Death in Venice* by the same composer, the boy Tadzio is represented by a dancer. The final category comprises those singing roles intended specifically for children, frequently trebles, to perform. These include Amahl in Menotti's *Amahl*

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[1] Steven R. Cerf, 'Too Grimm for words: Taming Hansel and Gretel for opera', Opera News, 61/7, p. 14.

[2] There is evidence to suggest that children were used in baroque opera. For example, Purcell wrote several roles for the young Jemmy Bowin. However, rarely were children used, at that time, to portray notions of childhood or to represent child characters on stage. [Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson: 'Bowen, James', *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 28th September, 2006), https://www.grovemusic.com]. It is also a popular misconception that Mozart intended the three genii in *Die Zauberflöte* to be sung by children. The urtext edition reveals that Anna Schikaneder, the librettist's niece, took one of those roles, and she was 24 at the time. While the genii act as a symbol of purity in Mozart's opera, they do not convey notions of childhood. [Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Die Zauberflöte* ed. Gernot Gruber and Alfred Orel (Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 1970)].

[3] Jerome V. Reel, 'The Image of the Child in Opera', The Opera Quarterly, 11/2, pp. 73-78.

and the Night Visitors, and Miles in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*.

What distinguishes operas like Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, Knussen's *Where the Wild Things Are* and Portman's *The Little Prince* from other operas featuring children is that, in their own ways, they explore the child psyche. The words and music of the operas portray the way children think and behave, and the enormous power of external influences on their development. Henry James' novella *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), upon which Myfanwy Piper's libretto for Britten's opera is based, asks questions about the innocence and experience of the children, Miles and Flora, whereas Sidonie-Gabrielle Collette's libretto for Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* charts the boy's positive journey from innocence to experience. Menotti wrote his own libretto for *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, a work which, unlike *The Turn of the Screw*, explores the goodness inherent in children. In that work, Menotti sought to rekindle memories of his own childhood Christmases in Italy.[4] In the case of *The Little Prince* and *Where the Wild Things Are*, the libretti are based on the classic children's books by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and Maurice Sendak. These operas place children at the heart of their narratives, portraying them as fascinating characters in their own right.

Composers face a potentially difficult choice when writing operas that involve significant roles for children. They can either elect to write for children's voices and, in doing so, endeavour to overcome the challenges of the child voice type and the difficulties associated with minors involved in stage productions. In opting to create roles which can only be realised by child singers, composers also risk rendering their operas impractical as there is a much smaller selection of suitable children to cast in

[4] Rebecca Paller, 'Amahl – Fifty Years Young', Opera, 52/12, p. 1440.

operatic roles than there are adults. John Bridcut, in his book *Britten's Children*, indicates that finding an appropriate boy to sing Miles caused the composer and production team much trouble during preparations for the first performance.[5] The way in which composers have risen to the challenge of writing for children's voices is the subject of the first chapter of this study.

If composers opt to write children's roles for adult singers, then they risk losing some of that role's credibility. Seeing a mature woman on stage, with a mature voice, and then accepting that image as a young boy or girl, involves suspending one's disbelief to a considerable degree. Of course, the stylised nature of opera means that it has always been about suspension of disbelief, but it certainly takes a particularly talented adult singer to convey the child-like qualities of the boy in *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. Thus, composers include common symbols of childhood, such as nursery rhymes, in their operas, in order to render their adult singers convincing children. Evoking childhood in this way is the subject of Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 considers the way in which innocence and experience shape the course of operas with important roles for children. In the concluding chapter, my own opera, *I'm the King of the Castle* (2006), is used as a case study to illuminate how I have responded to the issues raised by involving children in opera.

[5] John Bridcut, *Britten's Children* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), p.194.

After Rossini's *Guillaume Tell,* the next significant child role can be found in Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov,* written in 1869.[6] Boris' son, Fyodor, is represented in a touching domestic scene in Act II, which takes place in the Tsar's apartment in the Kremlin. Reel has commented on the way that children's rituals shape the dramatic landscape of this scene:

> In the second act, the child, originally sung by a mezzo-soprano, plays a clapping game before his father directs his attention to Russian geography, an interesting juxtaposition of childhood games, which Froebel labelled 'mother play' with adult centred education.[7]

Later in the nineteenth century, Humperdinck was the first to place children in leading roles when he adapted the Brothers Grimm fairytale, *Hänsel und Gretel* for the operatic stage (1893). Humperdinck's sister, Adelheid Wette, wrote a libretto based on Ludwig Bechstein's innocuous version of the fairy tale, from which the composer created a large-scale score heavily indebted to Wagner and German folk traditions. The orchestration, and the scale of the lead roles, has meant that Hansel and Gretel are almost always played by adult, female singers. There are also small parts for children in Humperdinck's *Könikskinder* (1897).

In the early twentieth century there are numerous examples of bit parts for children, many of which are intended to be played authentically. Puccini made Dolore, Cio-Cio-San's son, a silent role in *Madama Butterfly* (1904) and created the part of Gherardino, a seven year old boy, in *Gianni Schicchi* (1918). In his adaptation of Maeterlinck's play *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Debussy cast Yniold, Golaud's son by his first marriage (a small but significant role), as a treble in his 1907 opera bearing the

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[6] This summary of children's roles is indebted to *A Short History of Opera* by Donald Jay Grout with Hermine Wiegel Williams (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).
[7] Jerome V. Reel, op. cit., p. 75.

same title. This is the first 'involving' operatic role written for a child's voice, and the boy who sang the part in the first performance found it particularly challenging.[8] In the same year Rimsky Korsakov included a small role for a young boy in *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh and the Maiden Feroniya.* Also in 1907, Delius included significant parts for the young Vreli and Sali in the first scene of *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, a work in which the composer set his own libretto.

Strauss made the minor roles of the page in *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911) and Little Franz, in *Intermezzo* (1924) silent parts. He also used an ensemble of five children's voices in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1917), in which he set a text by Hugo von Hofmannsthaal. Children are included in Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg* (1922) as playmates of the Infanta. In 1923 Falla cast one of the leading roles, the narrator, in his puppet opera *El Retablo de Maese Pedro* as a treble, a work for which he also wrote his own libretto. A year later Janáček used children's voices for the important parts of the young animals in *The Cunning Little Vixen* (1924), having based his own libretto on the stories of R. Tešnohlīdek. In *Wozzeck* (1925), Berg used a treble to create the small but significant role of Marie's Child in his adaptation of Büchner's play. The inclusion of children at play in the final scene of *Wozzeck* alludes to a similar scene at the end of Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg.* For Reel, Marie's child represents 'The fulfilment of the child's role as solo voice and personality . . .', and he cites the aforementioned scene as evidence that 'The world of the child in opera was not all sugarplums.'[9] Later, Berg included a part for schoolboy in *Lulu* (c. 1937). 1925 was also the year Ravel completed *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, his magical tale of a child's journey into adolescence. This was the first opera, since *Hänsel und Gretel*, to represent a child in the leading role. Schoenberg uses a speaking role for the child

[8] David A. Grayson, *The Opera: genesis and sources* in *Pelléas et Mélisande,* ed. Roger Nichols and Richard Langham Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 52.
[9] Jerome V. Reel, op. cit., p. 76.

in his comic opera *Von Heute auf Morgen* (1928) in which he set a text by his second wife Max Blonda.

While the incidence of children in some of the more important operas of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is not uncommon, only in *Hänsel und Gretel* and *L'enfant et les sortilèges* are there lead roles for child protagonists in stories which are actually about the children. There is a marked increase in the number of more significant roles for children from this time on, coupled with a renewed interest in the use of boy trebles.

Benjamin Britten created a string of notable parts for children between the mid-1940s and early 1970s. These often reflected his preoccupation with childhood and fixation on the unique qualities of the treble voice. As Bridcut has observed,

> One of the hallmarks of Britten's sound world is the boy treble voice. He used it as naturally and as idiomatically as he did the oboe, the harp, or the viola. . . Britten took the trebles out of their rarefied habitat of the chancel, which they normally only shared with altos, tenors, and basses and the church organ, and put them in almost every musical context he knew – on the stage and the symphony concert platform, in recital rooms, school halls and the cinema.[10]

While the apprentice in *Peter Grimes* (1945) remains silent until the scream that signals his death, and there are cameo roles for children in *Albert Herring* (1947), *Billy Budd* (1951) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1960), perhaps Britten's most notorious childhood roles are those of Miles and Flora in his adaptation of Henry James' ghost story, *The Turn of the Screw*, composed in 1954. The Spirit of the Boy, in *Curlew River* (1964), is created by a treble, and while the dancer who represents the alluring *Tadzio*, in his adaptation of Thomas Mann's novella *Death in Venice* (1973), is silent, the part is a potent one.

The small role of Willie Maurrant is cast as a treble in Weill's *Street Scene* (1946). The eponymous lead role in Menotti's morality tale, *Amahl and the Night*

[10] Bridcut, op. cit., p. 126.

Visitors (1952), is a treble. The first opera to be commissioned for television (by N.B.C. studios, New York), this work is the most successful opera ever with a child in the leading role. *Amahl and the Night Visitors* still receives multiple performances all over the world, year in year out. The small role of Paris, as a young boy, is cast as a treble in Act I, Scene ii of Tippett's *King Priam* (1962), and a treble also plays the role of the Shepherd boy in Ginastera's *Bomarzo* (1967). A challenging part for treble, playing a choirboy, can be found in the courtroom scenes of Davies' *Taverner* (1972). With a libretto by the composer, *Taverner* was first performed at Covent Garden the year it was completed.

There have been several notable children's parts in recent operas at the end of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first. Oliver Knussen's *Where the Wild Things Are* (1980) was first performed in Brussels, under the title, '*Max et les Maixmonstres*', and it revives the genre of fantasy opera of which *Hänsel und Gretel* and *L'enfant et les sortilèges* are a part. Jane Manning created the role of Max, the naughty boy who, sent to bed without any supper, journeys to the land of the Wild Things. Knussen makes reference to Boris Godunov and Debussy's *La Boite à joujoux*, as Harewood explains:

> These references are symbolic: Mussorgsky is the supreme composer of music *about* children (*The Nursery* and Act 2 of Boris), and Debussy's music for Chouchou is the perfect example of how a composer can make children's music not by 'writing down' to them but by illuminating his harmonic language in particularly gentle and subtle ways.[11]

Other children's roles in the 1980s include Anna's son, Seroshia, played by a treble in Ian Hamilton's *Anna Karenina.* This was written in 1981 and performed by English National Opera the same year. The small parts for the children Davie, Rab, Jack and Dick, in Birtwistle's 'Mechanical Pastoral', *Yan Tan Tethera*, are likewise scored for

[11] The Earl of Harewood, *Where the Wild Things Are* in *The New Kobbé's Opera book*, ed. The Earl of Harewood and Anthony Peattie. (London: Ebury Press, 1997 p. 399).

a treble voice. Commissioned by BBC television in 1986, the libretto for *Yan Tan Tethera* is by poet Tony Harrison. The BBC also commissioned Judith Weir's *A Night at the Chinese Opera* (1987), in which she creates a small and silent role for the young Chao Lin.

In 1991 Robert Saxton created the frightening village children in his chamber opera *Caritas*, commissioned by Opera North. Based on the play of the same name by Arnold Wesker, the opera charts the psychological descent of the pious Anchoress, Christine Carpenter. Param Vir made the prominent Rakhal a treble in his opera *Snatched by the Gods* (1992), first performed by the Netherlands Opera. Vir's work shares much in common with the music and programme of Britten's *Curlew River*, as Bernard Hughes has observed:

> In both operas there is a pilgrimage by water, a last-minute addition to the party, a chorus of pilgrims who comment on, but also contribute to, the narrative, and a martyred child invested with a supernatural significance by the pilgrims.[12]

With a libretto by William Radice, based on Rabindranath Tagore's poem *Devater Gras*, the opera tells the story of how Rakhal is sacrificed to appease a fatalistic storm. A young girl has a cameo role in the final scene of James Macmillan's *Inés de Castro* (1996), commissioned by Scottish Opera.

More recently, film composer Rachel Portman and her librettist, Nicholas Wright, have adapted Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's philosophical children's book *Le Petit Prince* as an opera. *The Little Prince* (2003) was commissioned by Houston Grand Opera, and performed there by a plethora of popular opera singers including Thomas Randle, Willard White and Lesley Garret. It represents a continuation of the genre of 'operetta-style' morality tales like *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. In 2005,

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[12] Bernard Hughes, 'The Music of Param Vir', Tempo, 58/228, p. 4.

Gerald Barry alluded to Berg's *Lulu* by including a school-girl in his opera *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* commissioned by English National Opera.

When casting children's voices in important roles, composers have almost invariably used boy trebles. While this may reflect the requirements of the libretto, correspondingly important girl's parts are typically played by trained female singers. Since the range of a young girl's voice does not change as dramatically as that of a young boy, when maturity is reached and his voice breaks, this may not appear so anachronistic. This use of trebles reflects the fact that child singers are frequently cast from choir schools which have traditionally only taken boys. However, in the case of some composers, notably Britten, there is much evidence to suggest that the inclusion of trebles reflects a personal preference.

While it might appear incongruous to consider the works of Davies, Birtwistle and Knussen, alongside the 'lighter' pieces of Menotti and Portman, the examples in the following chapters have been selected in order to highlight the issues which surround composing music for children's voices, evocations of childhood, and the role of innocence and experience. As this study is primarily concerned with children cast in a theatre dominated by adults, the genre of 'Children's Opera', defined as opera consisting of a cast of children, falls beyond the scope of this study.[13] Suffice to say that, in 'Children's Operas', where children are often cast as adults, the distinction between the ways in which children and adults are characterised becomes blurred, and the subtle nuances which define child-adult relationships become less compelling.

[13] Children's operas include Britten's *The Little Sweep* (1949), Bennett's *All the King's Men* (1968) and Davies' *The Two Fiddlers* (1978).

Chapter 1: Composing for Children's Voices in the Opera House

Despite the obvious logistical and technical drawbacks, twentieth-century composers have often included roles for children's voices in their operas. Some of these roles have even been quite substantial. This chapter offers a technical exploration of those operatic roles composed specifically for children's voices, examining in particular the melodic construction of vocal lines, dialogue, ensembles and instrumental accompaniment.[1]

In *The Turn of the Screw*, Britten specifies that Miles be sung by a boy treble, but does not insist that Flora, a girl of similar age, be sung 'authentically'. Britten intended Flora's part to be sung by a mature woman. As Patricia Howard has observed, 'Flora's lullaby requires a flexibility of voice far more taxing than anything Miles has to sing'.[2] Kennedy has suggested that Britten favours the colour of a young boy's voice, in this instance, for its 'vulnerable yet guileful' quality.[3] However, analysis suggests much more lies behind the decision. Throughout *The Turn of the Screw*, the role of Miles is much more strongly characterised in musical terms than that of Flora. For example, Miles' 'Malo' aria, which recurs at various crucial points in the drama, evolves to become a *leitmotif*. Flora, on the other hand, has no comparable associative theme. This is in part a reflection of the role Miles plays in James' novella. However, Britten's decision to cast Miles as a treble cannot be

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[1] Examples of these can be found in Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902), Strauss's *Die Frau Ohne Schatten* (1917), Falla's *El Retablo de Maese Pedro* (1923), Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* (1924), Schoenberg's *Von Heute auf Morgen* (1928), Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (1952), Davies' *Taverner* (1972), Hamilton's *Anna Karenina* (1981), Tippett's *King Priam* (1962), Birtwistle's *Yan Tan Tethera* (1986), Saxton's *Caritas* (1991), Vir's *Snatched by the Gods* (1992) and Portman's *The Little Prince* (2003). Benjamin Britten, often acknowledged as a leader in the field of composing for children's voices, included roles for them in *Albert Herring* (1947), *Billy Budd* (1951), *The Turn of the Screw* (1954), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1960), and *Curlew River* (1964).

[2] Patricia Howard, *'The Turn of the Screw' in the theatre* in *The Turn of the Screw* ed. Patricia Howard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 127).

[3] Michael Kennedy, *Britten* (London: Dent, 1981), p. 207.

explained simply in terms of satisfying the requirements of James' story, otherwise Flora might also have been cast as a child singer. Rather it suggests a desire to highlight the particular qualities of an unbroken male voice.

The idiosyncrasies of children's voices and the practical requirements of having children on stage naturally effect the way in which the libretto is constructed. In adapting Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*, Rachel Portman and Nick Wright (the librettist) shifted much of the narration on to the principal adult. As the composer explains,

> From the very beginning we were all . . . thinking about . . . whether . . . *The Little Prince* should be sung by a soprano, a young girl soprano, which was something I really didn't want . . . because I always thought children would enjoy it much more if there was a boy in it, and if there were children in it. But then there were real fears that with the amount of weight on his shoulders, he wouldn't be able to carry a whole piece. And so that became my biggest task, actually. And the task of the librettist, Nick Wright, to involve The Pilot more, and keep The Prince's part as simple as possible . . . it happened very naturally, because the book offered it up, in a way, because of the way it's written; we just made much more of it.[4]

Similar approaches can be seen in *The Turn of the Screw* and *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. For example, Amahl's mother recounts much of her son's past in a solo aria in the opening scene of Menotti's opera, and Mrs Grose performs the same function for Miles in Act I, Scene v of *The Turn of the Screw*. Neither Amahl nor Miles ever has to carry the dramatic weight of a scene entirely on his own.

[4] Rachel Portman interviewed by Marc Geelhoed in March 2005. http://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/dialogue/dialogue_lp_portman.html (accessed 15/08/2005)

The characteristics of children's voices

Although children's voices have a unique quality, their use in the opera house can prove problematic. As John Rosselli writes:

> Opera does not readily lend itself to being sung by pre-adolescent children: their voices may sound sweet in church but are rarely strong enough to hold their own in a theatre among those of adults.[5]

Casting children in operatic roles certainly offers challenges to composers, particularly in their approach to balance, vocal range and pitch material. Felicity Laurence, in her article 'Children's Singing', has made the following observations about the range of children's voices:

> Many investigations of children's vocal range give a general picture of about c1-c2 at five to six years, increasing to a-g2 by nine to ten years, and further to a-c3 by eleven to twelve years. However, most studies omit any mention of head or chest register, when in fact each is available to tiny children, as confirmed by observation of very young children's spontaneous, improvised singing which shows that they can manifest a very high voice. Each register yields its own vocal range, and while the lower-chest voice tends to be very limited in small children, many of whom find it difficult to reach tones below c1, the head-voice extends in most children rather higher than indicated in conventional studies and than commonly believed.[6]

In contrast to Rosselli, and directing his practical advice more towards composers, Alfred Blatter, in *Instrumentation and Orchestration*, writes,

> The unique voice of the child soprano has a great deal of appeal to composers. It is sometimes described as being clear and colourless. It is a very light and transparent voice, requiring careful scoring to avoid covering it up. There is little difference in quality between the high register and the low-register notes . . . special care should be exercised to avoid fatiguing the voice, which, due to the limited air capacity and immature qualities, is quite delicate. Notes above the upper break should never be written for these voices unless the children who will sing them have had vocal training.[7]

The issue of vibrato is also central to any discussion of children's voices. The choral tradition of the Anglican Church in Britain, which frequently draws on

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[5] J. Rosselli: 'Child Performers', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 20/03/02), <http://www.grovemusic.com>

[6] Felicity Laurence. 'Children's Singing' in *The Cambridge Companion to Singing*, ed. John Potter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.221.

[7] Alfred Blatter, *Instrumentation and Orchestration* (New York: Schirmer, 1997), p. 314.

repertoire from renaissance polyphony and other early music, has favoured a so-called 'pure' sound without vibrato. Given the formal musical training offered by cathedral schools, many child singers involved in operatic productions in Britain are trained in this tradition. Conversely, some European choirs, such as the world-renowned Vienna Boys Choir, have favoured a more 'mature' sound, embracing vibrato. A composer's awareness of vibrato will not only effect projection, but will, to some extent, influence characterisation, vibrato being seen as a sign of maturity.

Legal Restrictions

The physical properties of children's voices are not the only limitations which face British opera composers. Under Section 37 of the *The Children and Young Persons Act, 1963*, there are strict guidelines which govern the use of children in stage performances. 'The number of days and hours that a child can work is dependant on how old the child is, the type of performance, and which part of the UK they live in.'[8] Such restrictions, which prescribe how long a child may be on stage in one evening's production, have led to the unintentionally comic situation of a different boy being used at the end of *Der Rosenkavalier* from the one used at the beginning. There are also regulations governing the provision of children's education whilst they are involved in productions, and chaperones are required at all times.

The discussion of the way in which composers have approached writing for children's voices is divided into four sections: children's monologues, children in dialogue, children in ensembles, and instrumental accompaniments.

[8]John Terry, *Children in Entertainment* http://www.theknowledgeonline.com/knowhow/children-in-entertainment.pdf (accessed 01/12/2005)

1. Children's monologues (Melodic construction – interval, scale, rhythm)

It appears that composers approach the idiosyncrasies of children's voices in the opera house in similar ways. Most favour vocal lines made up of diatonic melodies, which move largely by step and employ a restrained rhythmic language. However, such apparently simple material, in the hands of composers such as Debussy, Falla, and Britten, has been incorporated into more sophisticated textures. In such instances, it seems that rather than stifling the creative process, writing for children's voices seems to have fired it.

Plainsong has frequently proved a valuable model for melodic lines in children's vocal music. It moves largely by step, and often comprises a conservative range. However, despite its apparent simplicity, it has generally been used for the expression of weighty religious texts. In Falla's *El Retablo de Maese Pedro*, the boy is confined almost entirely to the role of narrator and so is never involved in dialogue. Writing in the performance notes of the piece, the composer is very specific about the manner of delivery:

> The part of the Boy demands a voice which is nasal and rather forced – the voice of a boy shouting in the street, rough in expression and exempt from all lyrical feeling. It should be sung by a boy soprano . . .[9]

Falla's requirement is clear in the boy's first entry (Ex. 1.1). It has been noted that this style of recitation was not only inspired by plainsong, but also by the street cries of Andalusia, incorporating their traditional cadences and inflections.[10] The text is set entirely syllabically and the melody contains a very limited group of pitches: only adding the occasional A and E to the C monotone. Relatively straightforward rhythms

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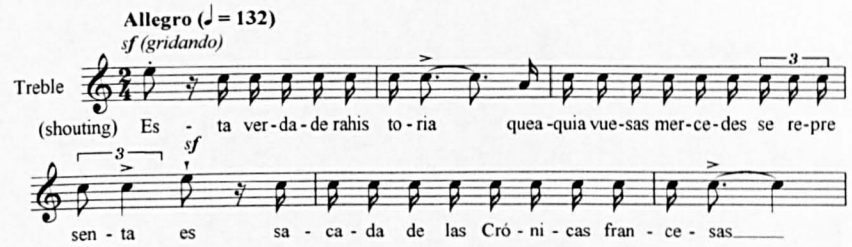
[9] Manuel de Falla, *El Retablo de Maese Pedro* (Full Score - London: Chester, 1924), p. vi. (In his performance directions for the role of Harry, in *Albert Herring*, Britten asks for a similar style of delivery, stating, 'The part of Harry should be sung by a boy with an unbroken voice, who can act well and sing in a natural urchin manner.')[Benjamin Britten, *Albert Herring* (Vocal Score - London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1948), p. v)]

[10] Ronald Crichton. *Falla* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1982), p. 57.

Ex. 1.1: Falla. *El retablo de Maese Pedro*, figure 11

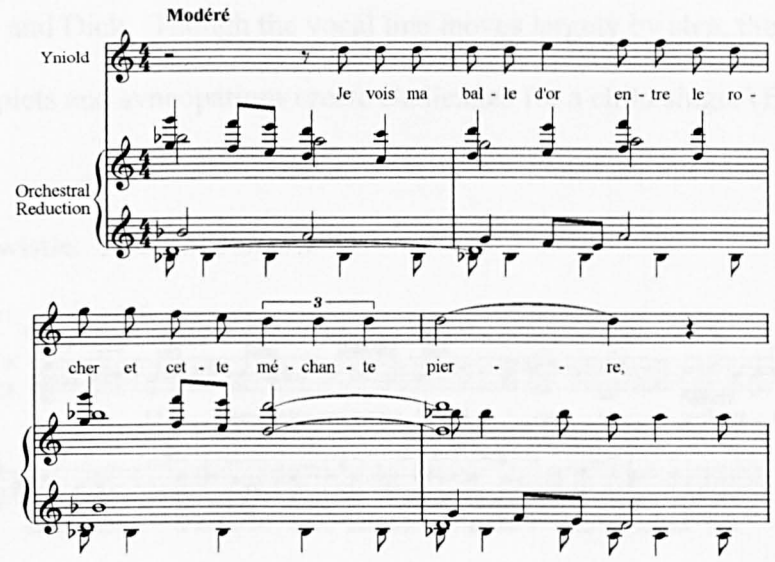


are employed: strings of semiquavers predominate with longer notes at the end of phrases. Falla offers a vocal-line easily within the capabilities of a trained treble, without compromising his dramatic ideal. Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* was premiered in 1924, just over a year after Falla's opera, and the children's first phrases reveal an almost identical style of recitation.

Britten makes more overt use of plainsong than Falla in his writing for the spirit of the boy in *Curlew River*, quoting the hymn *Custodes Hominum* towards the end of the opera. In *Curlew River*, the hymn forms part of a heterophonic texture which is a specific feature of that opera, and its use is fortuitous: the intervals of the treble's melodic lines are heard in five other parts which offer substantial cues and harmonic support. Like much of Britten's idiomatic writing for children, a melodic line, easily within the capabilities of a trained child singer, forms part of a more sophisticated texture.

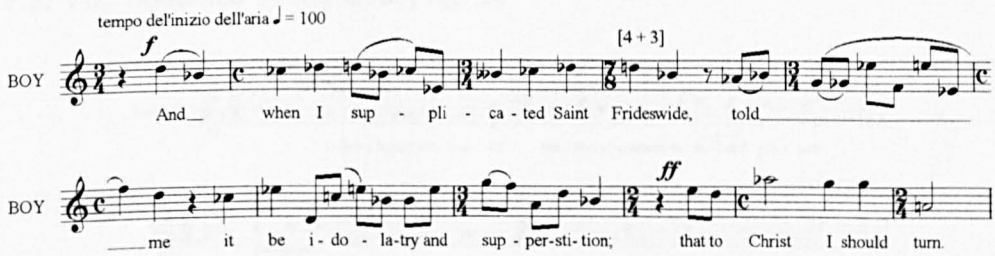
In keeping with the other vocal lines in *Pélleas et Mélisande*, Debussy, in his writing for Yniold, also keeps close to the rhythms and nuances of speech. This 'recitative-like' style is similar to that employed by Falla. In the following passage, the melody moves mostly by step, there is use of monotone, and the range of the phrase is only a perfect fourth. Much of the vocal line is doubled in the orchestra, making it even easier for a child singer.

Ex. 1.2: Debussy. *Pélleas et Mélisande*, Act IV, Scene III, 4 bars after fig. 27



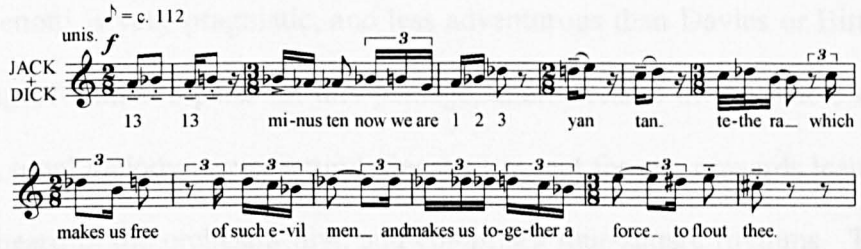
These approaches contrast markedly with Peter Maxwell Davies' melodic writing for the choir boy in the court scenes of his opera, *Taverner.* In the following example he assigns the treble simple rhythms, but a complicated sequence of pitches rich in intervals of major and minor sevenths, minor ninths and diminished fifths (Ex. 1.3). The orchestral accompaniment offers little supportive harmony, and no instrumental doubling. Thus, it might provide a challenge for a child singer who does not possess perfect pitch.

Ex. 1.3: Davies. *Taverner*, Act I, Scene i, bb. 463-473



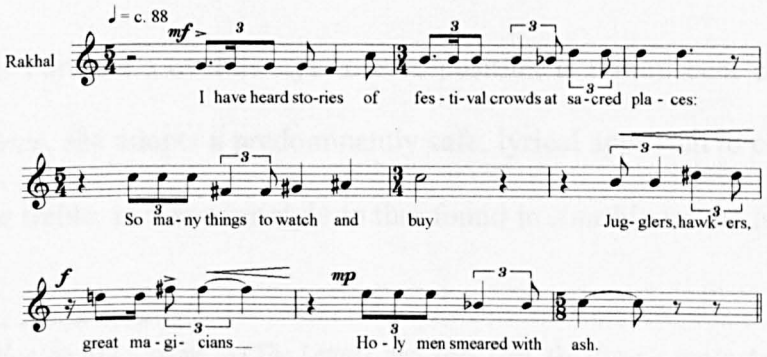
In *Yan Tan Tethera*, Birtwistle creates complex rhythms for the children playing the roles of Jack and Dick. Though the vocal line moves largely by step, the shifting time signature, tuplets and syncopations create challenges for a child singer (Ex. 1.4).

Ex. 1.4: Birtwistle. *Yan Tan Tethera*



Param Vir's approach, in *Snatched by the Gods*, a work which shares much in common with the music and programme of Britten's *Curlew River,* lies somewhere between that of Davies and Britten. Vir adopts several different styles of vocal writing. In the following example he favours a lyrical style: syllabic text setting, relatively simple rhythms, stepwise movement (with the occasional major third, perfect fifth, and diminished fifth leaps) and gentle chromaticism (Ex. 1.5). Vir also employs monotone-like melodies, reflective of speech rhythms, in a style of recitation similar to that favoured by Falla and Debussy.

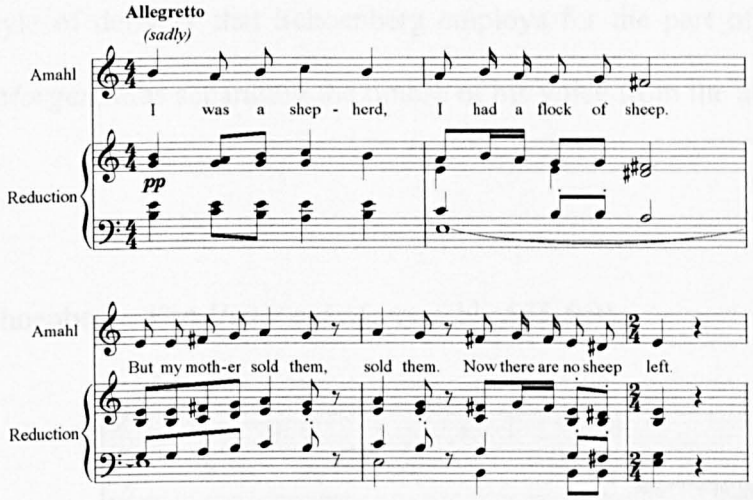
Ex. 1.5: Vir. *Snatched by the Gods*, fig. 20



In *The Turn of the Screw*, Britten also adopts a variety of different approaches to the setting of Miles' melodic lines. In Act I, scene vi (*The Lesson*) he favours the aforementioned monotone approach. Miles also sings two well-known nursery rhymes and the 'Malo' aria, discussed later in this chapter, reveals an engaging lyricism (Ex. 1.20).[11]

Menotti is very pragmatic, and less adventurous than Davies or Birtwistle, in the writing of Amahl's part. In this passage, characteristic of the whole opera, the song-like, tonal melody moves entirely by step, except for one upwards leap of a fifth which is heard in the orchestra first, and comprises four-square rhythms. The line is always doubled in the orchestral accompaniment (Ex. 1.6).

Ex. 1.6: Menotti. *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, fig. 60



Rachel Portman's overall style of composition is reminiscent of Menotti. In *The Little Prince*, she adopts a predominantly safe, lyrical approach to composing the vocal lines for treble, in a similar style to that found in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*.

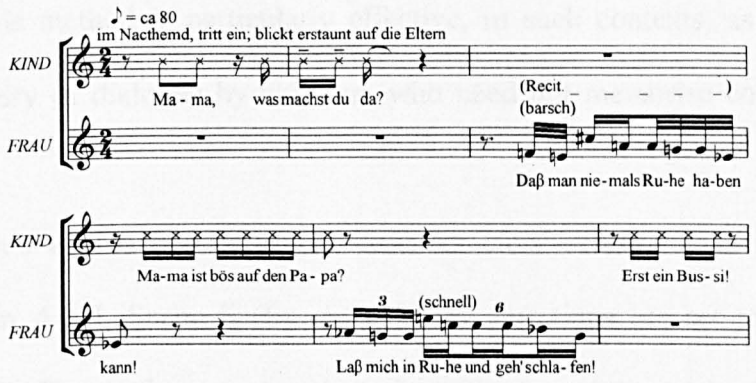
[11] '*Lavender's Blue*' in Act I, scene iii (*The Letter*), and *Tom,Tom, the Piper's son* in Act I, Scene v (*The Window*).

The Prince's words are set to simple, diatonic melodies which move almost entirely by step and are frequently doubled by a single flute.

2. Children in dialogue

What many of the examples below demonstrate is that frequently when children are engaged in dialogue with adults, the adults' style of singing is simplified to match that of the child, but it does not and cannot happen the other way round. The use of *sprechgesang* and actual speech has frequently been favoured by composers when presenting children's dialogue in their operas. In his book *Opera Workshop*, Raymond Warren has observed that 'the moments of change from speech to music and vice versa need especially careful handling, for they have to carry a dramatic weight as signifying changes of level or intensity'.[12] Rhythmically-notated speech is the only style of delivery that Schoenberg employs for the part of the boy in *Von Heute auf Morgen*, thus separating the timbre of his voice from the adults around him (Ex. 1.7).

Ex. 1.7: Schoenberg. *Von Heute auf Morgen*, bb. 555-560



[12] Raymond Warren, *Opera Workshop* (Cambridge: Scolar Press, p. 203).

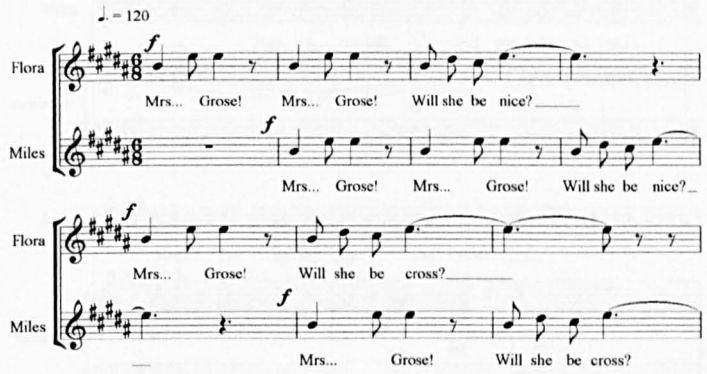
Schoenberg's use of notated speech in *Von Heute auf Morgen* reveals speaking to be an exotic vocal timbre, much as it is in *A Survivor from Warsaw*, rather than an awkward compromise. When setting dialogue, or when the character of Rakhal addresses anyone, Vir adopts a dramatic, *sprechgesang* style. This approach is more 'song-like', than that found in Schoenberg's opera, because Vir notates approximate pitches. When this style is implemented at the climax of the opera, where Rakhal is thrown overboard, it imbues the vocal delivery with a much needed urgency.

As in the traditions of *singspiel* and musicals, Kurt Weill employs spoken dialogue throughout much of his number opera, *Street Scene* (1946). Rather than slavishly notating the speech rhythms in the score, like Schoenberg and Vir, Weill writes the text of the dialogue above the music to indicate 'roughly' at what point the words should be spoken. This technique is used, by both parties, in the opening of Act 1, no. 3, for a conversation between the young child called Willie and Mrs Jones. The conversation between the children which ends Berg's *Wozzeck* (1925) is also notated in this fashion. Berg gives the following directions in the preface to the score, 'in those places where the pitch and rhythm are not given, ordinary speech is to be employed, that is entirely realistic natural conversation over the accompanying music'.[13] This method is particularly effective, in such contexts, as it allows for flexible delivery of dialogue by children, who need not memorise complex speech rhythms.

Britten's approach to dialogue deserves close scrutiny. In the following example, from Act I, Scene ii (Ex. 1.8), Miles' questions are set to a dance-like melody in 6/8. The rhythms are simple and repetitive, and the pitches largely centre on B, D, and E. In order to make the vocal line even more approachable, much of

[13] 'In den Fällen aber, wo die Sprechstimme nicht durch Tonhöhe und Rhythmus dargestellt ist, handelt es sich um ein gewöhnliches Sprechen, also um eine zur darunterliegenden Musik ganz natürlich-realistisch geführte Konversation.' Alban Berg, *Wozzeck* (Full Score - Austria: Universal, 1955), p.X.

Ex. 1.8: Britten. *The Turn of the Screw*, Act I, Scene ii, 6 bars after fig. 5

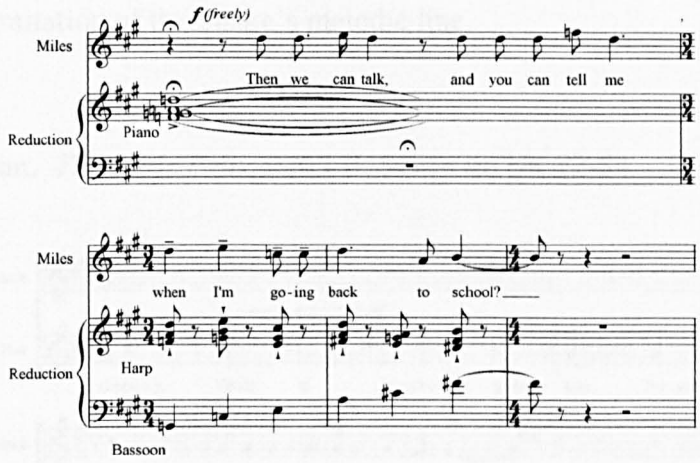


Miles' melody is presented in canon with Flora, so that what Miles has to sing has already been heard. In Act I, Scene iv, Miles responds to the Governess' questions with arioso passages. Simple rhythms are combined with a limited range of tonal pitches, in a style reminiscent of the monotone techniques already outlined. The pitches are prominent in the accompaniment, which further facilitates the vocal part.

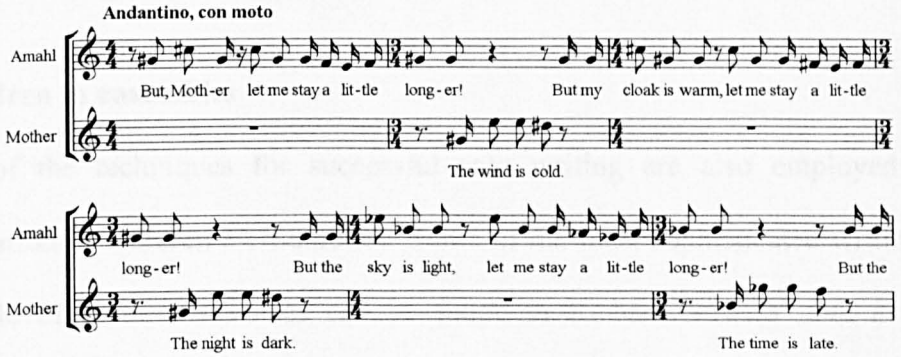
Britten employs a more overtly recitative-like approach to setting dialogue in Act II, Scene ii (*The Bells*) where Miles' free, speech-like lines are punctuated by chords in the orchestra (Ex. 1.9). Menotti's approach to dialogue has much in common with that of Britten: both employ a limited range of pitches, a free approach to rhythm and syllabic text setting. In this example, from the opening of *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, mother and child sing in an arioso style, with simple rhythms, and a limited pitch range (Ex. 1.10).[14] Menotti also employs a 'dry recitative' style, based on speech rhythms, for the more impassioned dialogue between mother and son. In those instances, such as in their discussion about whether Amahl is telling the truth about the star outside, the vocal line is built around the repetition of a limited group of pitches.

[14] Ian Hamilton uses a similar arioso style for the dialogue between Seriosha and his mother in Act II, Scene iii of *Anna Karenina*.

Ex. 1.9: Britten. *The Turn of the Screw*, Act II, Scene ii, 6 bars after fig. 5



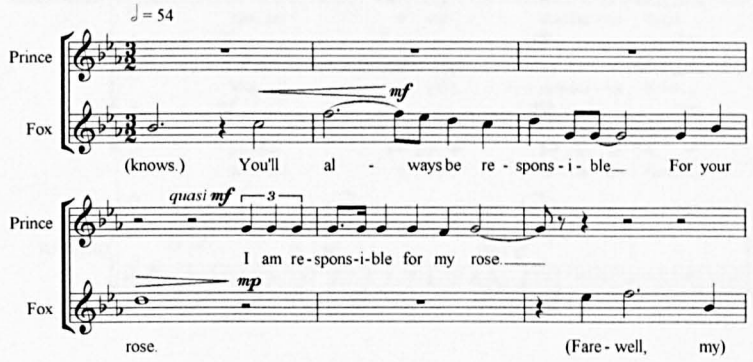
Ex. 1.10: Menotti. *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, fig. 4



In contrast to the simple rhythmic language of the arias in Portman's *The Little Prince*, the dialogue in that opera is much more reflective of speech rhythms. The style of dialogue in Portman's opera varies from the monotone approach to a vocal line which incorporates greater intervallic variety. The choice of delivery depends on the dramatic situation. In this example, in which the Prince is learning a valuable moral lesson from the Fox, Portman employs the monotone style which contrasts clearly with the more lyrical phrases of the Fox (Ex. 1.11). The Prince adopts a more dominant stance when he confronts the Snake at the start of Act II. The persistent

questions he puts to the snake are set to a melodic line which embraces a larger range of intervals, in imitation of the Snake's melodic line.

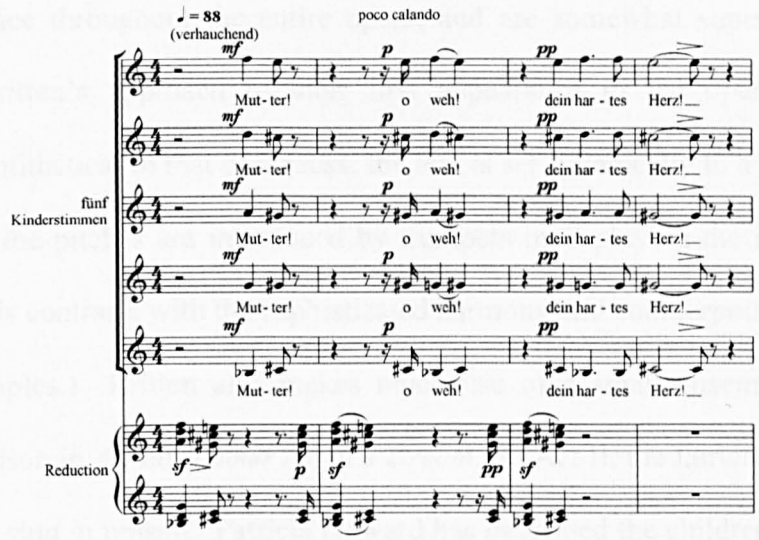
Ex. 1.11: Portman. *The Little Prince*, Act II, Scene iii, bb. 72-84



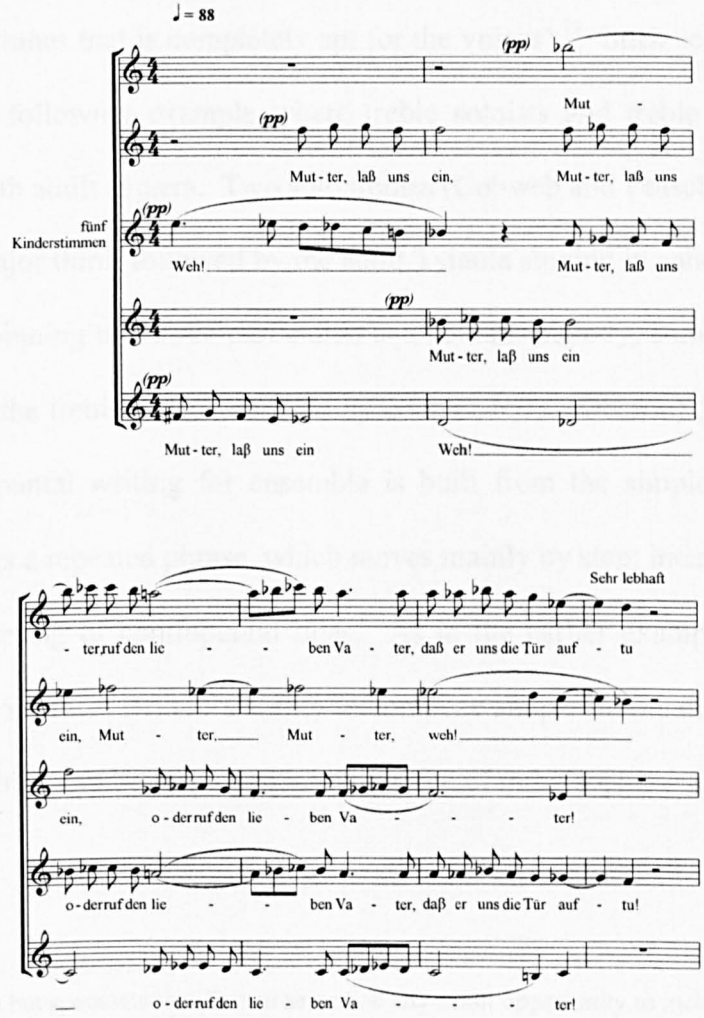
3. Children in ensembles

Many of the techniques for successful solo writing are also employed for the composition of children's ensembles. Some of the most sophisticated writing for an ensemble of children's voices can be found in Richard Strauss' *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. In the following passage, five children sing homophonic chords (Ex. 1.12). The potentially-awkward harmonic shift from a G-minor ninth chord to a C sharp-minor triad is pre-empted by the orchestra. The voice-leading is carefully organised so that the children, apart from the lowest voice, simply oscillate between two pitches a semitone apart. A more complex, contrapuntal passage precedes that example (Ex. 1.13). Some safeguards are implemented: the melodic lines all move by step, and some lines are doubled at the unison or harmonised in parallel fourths. There is however no question that this section provides a much greater challenge, particularly as the top line is so high in the tessitura.

Ex. 1.12: Strauss. *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, 4 bars after fig. 119



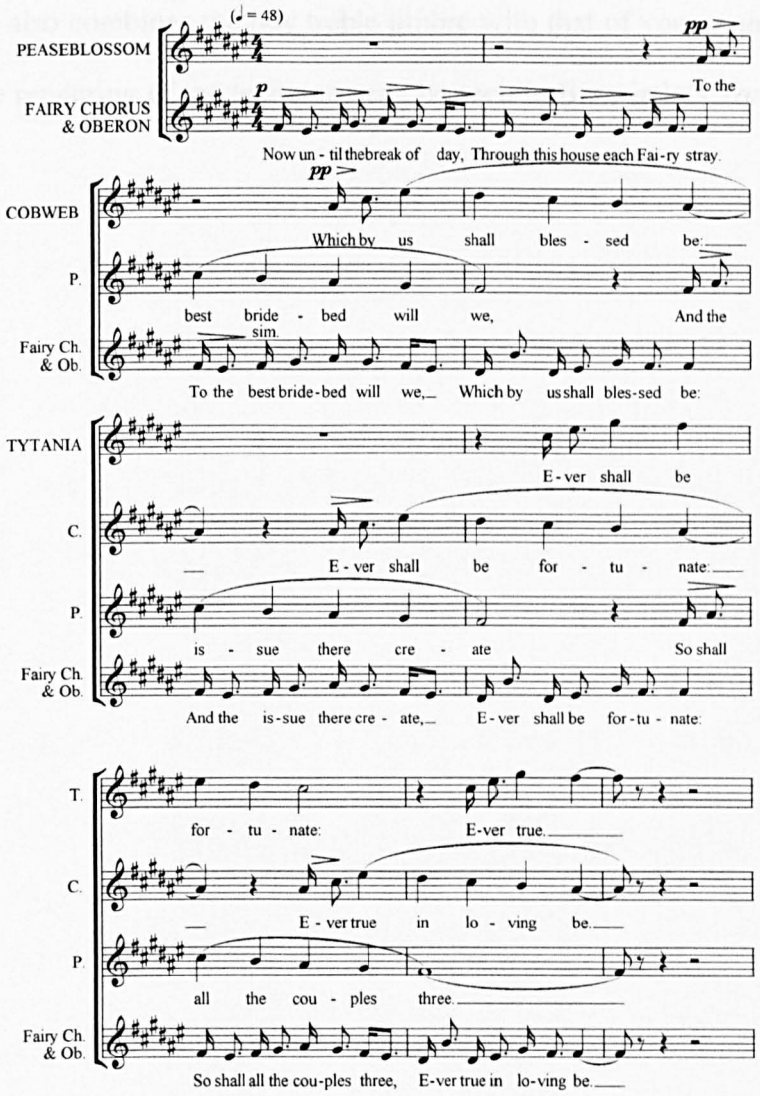
Ex. 1.13: Strauss. *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, 1 bar after figure 118



In *Billy Budd*, Britten calls on four trebles to perform as midshipmen. They only sing twice throughout the entire opera, and are somewhat superfluous to the drama.[15] Britten's approach to their first appearance in the opening scene is completely antithetical to that of Strauss: the text is set syllabically to a simple unison melody, and the pitches are introduced by trumpets in C playing the initial pitch in octaves. (This contrasts with the sophisticated harmony and counterpoint found in the Strauss examples.) Britten also makes much use of a small ensemble of trebles singing in unison in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In Act II, the fairies gradually join each other to sing in unison. Patricia Howard has described the children's music in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as 'more sophisticated than any earlier children's music in Britten's operas, though it has as always an absolute clarity and directness in the structure of the tunes that is completely apt for the voices'.[16] Such sophistication can be seen in the following example where treble soloists and treble chorus sing in counterpoint with adult singers. Two solo trebles (Cobweb and Peaseblossom) sing in canon, at the major third, followed by the adult Tytania singing in canon a minor third higher. Underpinning this three-part canon is a counter-melody, comprised of scotch snaps, sung by the treble chorus doubled by counter-tenor (Oberon) (Ex. 1.14). This elegant, contrapuntal writing for ensemble is built from the simplest of materials. Each voice sings a repeated phrase, which moves mainly by step; interest comes from the gradual layering of contrapuntal lines. As in the earlier example from *Curlew River*, this demonstrates Britten's ability to compose simple, idiomatic vocal lines for child singers which can be employed in the service of more sophisticated textures.

[15] One cannot help but speculate that Britten seized on any small opportunity to include his favoured vocal timbre.
[16] Patricia Howard, *The Operas of Benjamin Britten* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1976), p. 166.

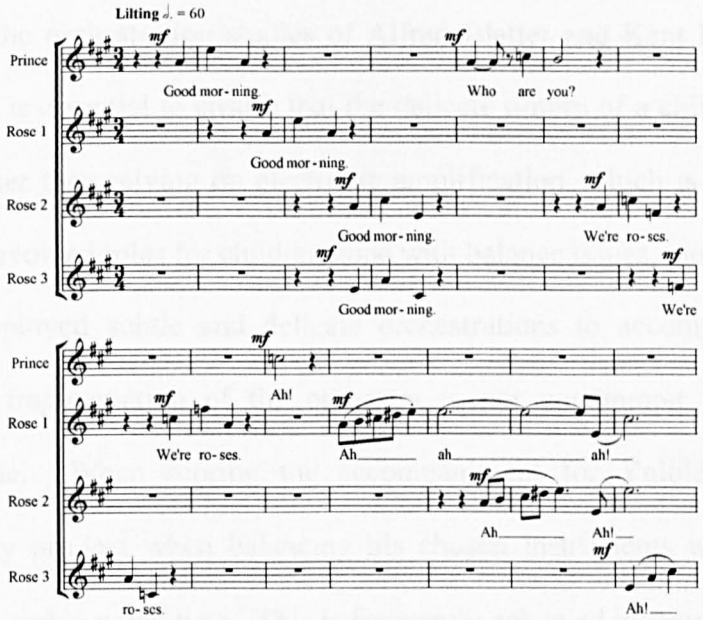
Ex. 1.14: Britten, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Act III, 1 bar after fig. 99



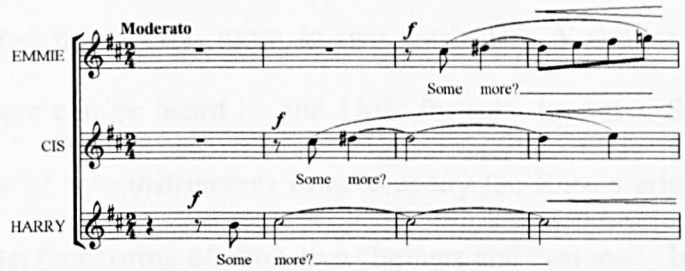
In these operas, children are frequently called upon to sing in canon. This recalls the tradition of 'rounds' found in children's songbooks. In a similar technique to that employed by Britten, in Act I, scene ii of *The Turn of the Screw* (Ex. 1.8), Weill has off-stage children's voices singing in canon, in no. 3 of *Street Scene* and Robert Saxton has the village children sing in canon throughout *Caritas* (Ex. 2. 15). Imitation is also a feature of the following passage from *The Little Prince* in which Portman makes extensive use of imitation combined with the occasional dyad or triad (Ex. 1.15). Portman's technique of building chords from the last notes of the

children's phrase is reminiscent of a similar passage from Britten's *Albert Herring* in which Britten also combines the boy treble timbre with that of young girls (Ex. 1.16). A more subtle rendering of the technique can be seen in Birtwistle's *Yan Tan Tethera* (Ex. 1.17).

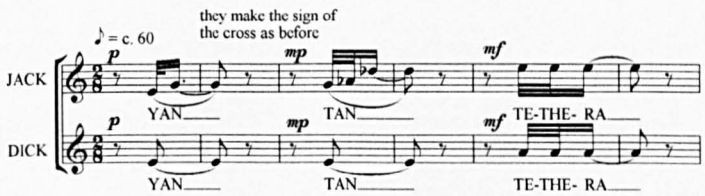
Ex. 1.15: Portman. *The Little Prince* Act II, Scene ii, bb. 150-163



Ex. 1.16: Britten. *Albert Herring*, Act I, scene ii, 11 bars before fig. 64



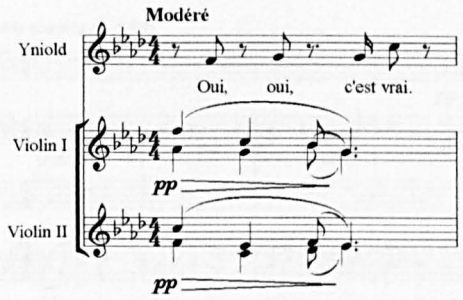
Ex. 1.17: Birtwistle. *Yan Tan Tethera*



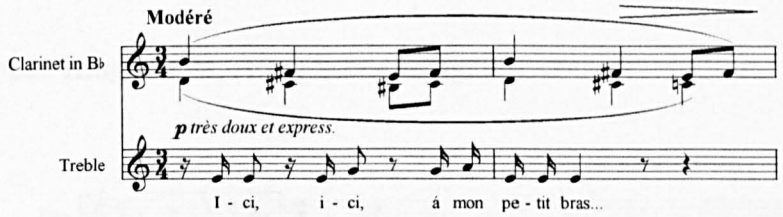
4. Instrumental Accompaniment

As advised in the orchestration studies of Alfred Blatter and Kent Kennan, careful instrumentation is essential to ensure that the delicate timbre of a child's voice is not obscured. Rather than relying on electronic amplification, which is how Broadway musicals with involved roles for children cope with balance issues, most composers of opera have employed subtle and delicate orchestrations to accompany children's voices. Such fragmentation of the orchestra is not uncommon in 20th-century orchestral music. When scoring the accompaniment for Yniold's vocal lines, Debussy is very prudent when balancing his chosen instruments with the relative weakness of the treble voice-type. This is frequently achieved by paring the orchestra down, as in these two examples (Exx. 1.18 – 19). In Ex. 1.18 Yniold's vocal line is accompanied by quiet divided violins playing low in their range, and in Ex.1.19, the orchestra is paired down even more to two clarinets. A similar paring down of instrumental forces can be heard in *The Little Prince.* In Act I, Scene ii, Portman employs quartets of solo instruments to accompany the Rose's aria; a string quartet and a wind quartet (consisting of oboe, two clarinets and bassoon). In the same scene, Portman accompanies an arioso passage for the Prince with just a solo violin.

Ex. 1.18: Debussy. *Pélleas et Mélisande*, Act IV, Scene iii, 4 bars before fig. 46

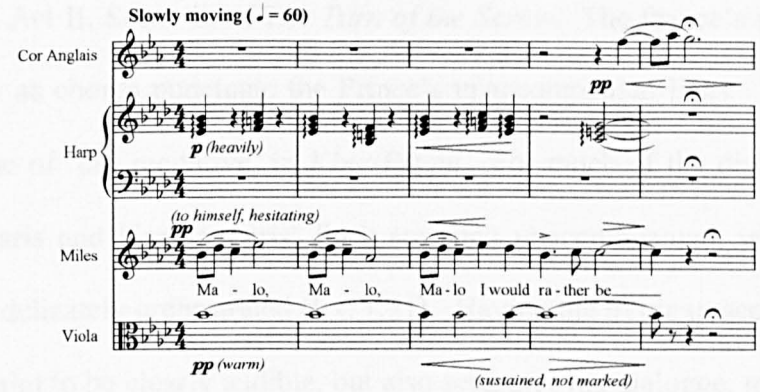


Ex. 1.19: Debussy. *Pélleas et Mélisande*, Act IV, Scene iii, 6 bars after fig. 48

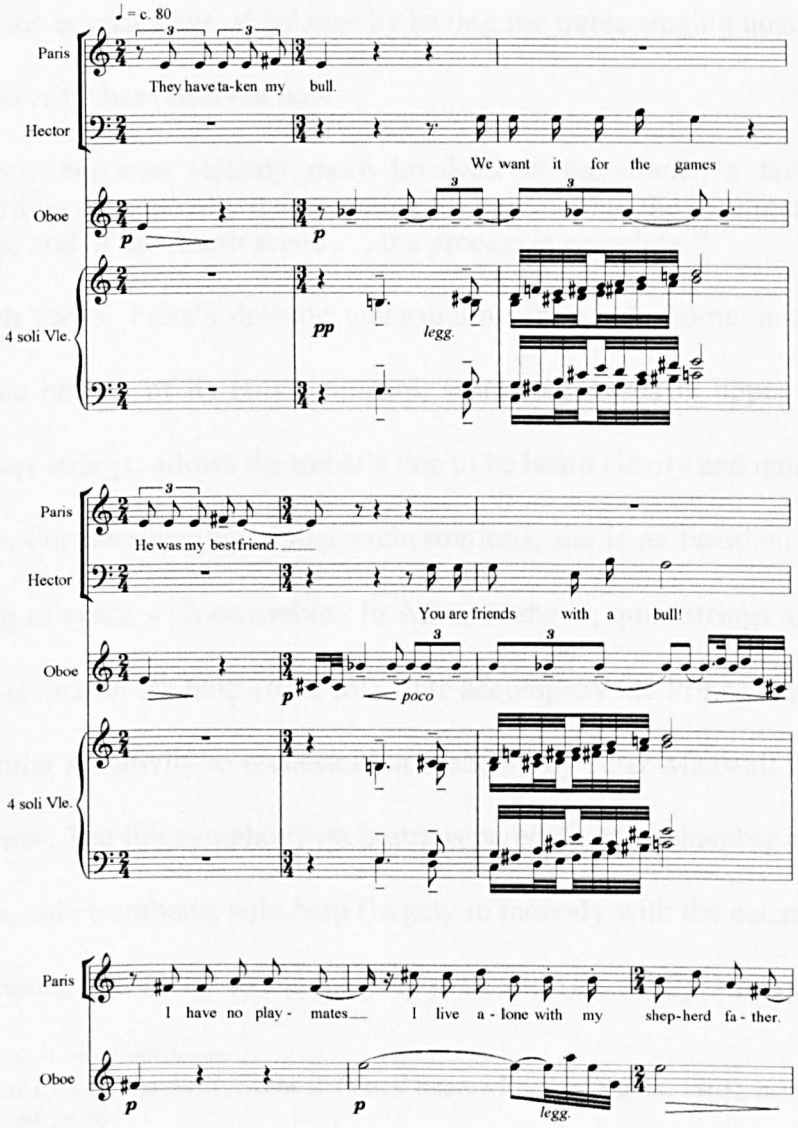


Miles' 'Malo' aria from Act I, Scene iv (*The Lesson*) of *The Turn of the Screw*, displays the characteristics of effective writing for treble in all parameters. The melody is made up entirely of stepwise movement and major or minor thirds, and is accompanied by a harp playing homophonic triads and a solo viola, with interjections from cor anglais (Ex. 1.20). Like Britten, Param Vir, whose supporting orchestration for Rakhal is often pared down to chamber music forces, makes frequent use of the delicate timbre of the harp as an accompanying instrument for the treble. When Rakhal sings of the beauty of the sea, Vir uses a repeated ostinato in which the highest and lowest pitches are also the reciting-note of Rakhal's line. Portman also favours the harp, combined with a quiet triangle in the Rose's narcissistic aria in Act I, Scene ii.

Ex. 1.20: Britten. *The Turn of the Screw*, Act I, Scene iv, fig. 51



Ex. 1.21: Tippet. *King Priam*, Act I, Scene ii, fig. 93



In Act I, Scene iv, Portman employs a 'dry recitative' technique, similar to that used by Britten in Act II, Scene ii, of *The Turn of the Screw*. The Prince's melody can be heard clearly as chords punctuate the Prince's unaccompanied lines. Tippett makes calculated use of 'dry recitative' in *King Priam*. For much of the dialogue between the young Paris and Hector, Paris' lines are sung unaccompanied, whilst the adult Hector's are delicately orchestrated (Ex. 1.21). Having the treble unaccompanied, not only allows him to be clearly audible, but also separates his dialogue, musically, from his adult counterpart. Tippett makes very clear, in his performance notes, that diction is 'paramount' to the narrative sections of the opera.[17]

In the first few appearances of the boy in *El Retablo de Maese Pedro*, Falla circumvents the crucial issue of balance by having the treble singing unaccompanied. However, one critic has observed how

> the boy becomes steadily more involved in the drama, a fact that Falla underlines by gradually incorporating his part . . . into the instrumental texture. By the end of the fourth scene . . . the process is complete.[18]

In that fourth scene, Falla's delicate orchestration (two solo horns, a solo trumpet playing at the bottom of its range, timpani, sustained chords in upper strings, and pizzicato lower strings) allows the treble's line to be heard clearly and unhindered.

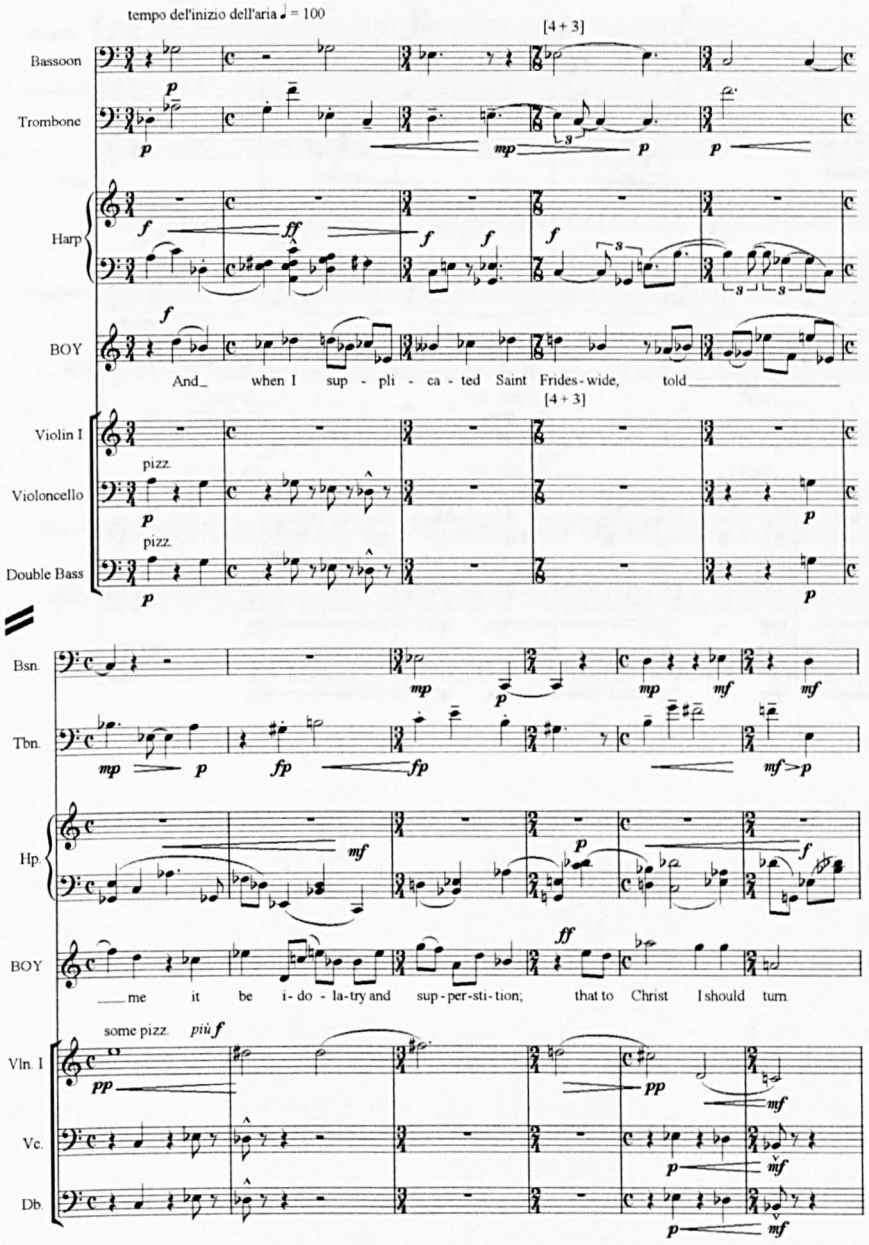
When Portman employs fuller orchestrations, she is as fastidious as Falla in her balancing of voice with ensemble. In Act I, Scene iv, quiet strings are combined with broken chords in the harp and a solo flute accompany the Prince's aria about his Rose. A similar sensitivity to orchestration is shown by Peter Maxwell Davies in his opera, *Taverner*. The full symphony orchestra is pared down to chamber music forces: solo bassoon, solo trombone, solo harp (largely in monody with the occasional two or three part chord), and lower strings playing pizzicato (Ex. 1.22). An equally careful

[17]Michael Tippet *King Priam* Act 1, Scene ii. (Vocal Score - London: Schott, 1963), p. vi.
[18] Crichton, op. cit., p.58.

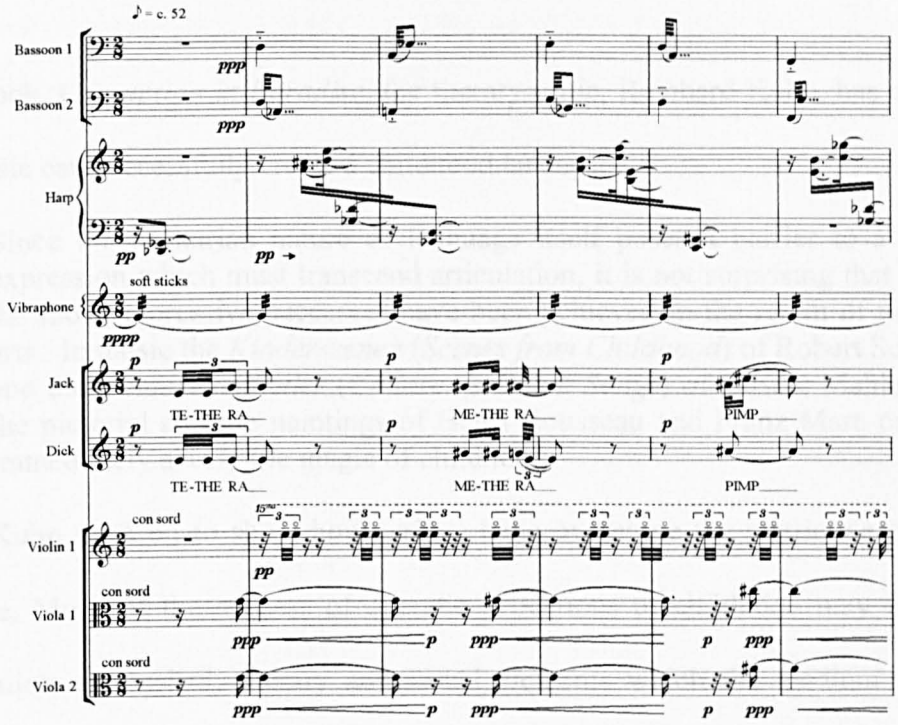
solution to the challenges posed by balance is offered by Birtwistle. A colourful combination of subtle instrumental timbres (muted strings, violin harmonics, vibraphone, harp and two bassoons) surround the insistent chanting of Jack and Dick in *Yan Tan Tethera* (Ex. 1.23). Davies' and Birtwistle's melodies for children may provide rhythmic and pitching challenges for young singers, but these composers have tackled the issue of balance with pragmatic orchestration that has resulted in some ingenious orchestration.

While this chapter has outlined many resourceful solutions to the practical challenges posed by composing for children's voices, the characterisation of children requires more than just the timbre of the treble voice and the presentation of an actual child on stage. An in-depth analysis of how composers have *evoked* childhood, that is, how they have used musical and theatrical devices to convey the impression of childhood to the audience, is necessary to reveal techniques of characterisation.

Ex. 1.22: Davies. *Taverner*, Act I Scene I, bb. 463-473



Ex. 1.23: Birtwistle. *Yan Tan Tethera*



Chapter 2: Evocations of Childhood

In his book, *Corruption in Paradise*, the literary critic, Reinhard Kuhn, has observed how music can successfully create a childhood landscape:

> Since the utilitarian nature of language itself poses a barrier to a form of expression which must transcend articulation, it is not surprising that some of the most impressive successes have been achieved in the realm of nonverbal arts. In music the *Kinderszenen* (*Scenes from Childhood*) of Robert Schumann and the *Kindertotenlieder* (*Children's Death Songs*) of Gustav Mahler and in the pictorial arts the paintings of Henri Rousseau and Franz Marc create the immediately accessible magic of childhood.[1]

Kuhn goes on to show how writers have overcome the restrictive nature of language. Much of the success of operatic evocations of childhood may lie in the combination of musical, literary and visual elements which the medium of opera provides. This is exemplified by *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, a work in which the subtle nuances of childhood found in Colette's libretto are successfully matched by Ravel's music. In order to portray the world of the child, composers weave common childhood activities and behaviour into the music and drama of their operas. These often take the form of instantly recognisable references which include songs, lessons, exaggerated scale, games and tantrums. Broadly speaking, composers present these in one of two ways. Humperdinck, Menotti and Portman, for example, seek to preserve the naïve purity of the childhood activity being enacted. Others, especially Britten, regularly offer multiple readings of the same childhood ritual. This is particularly evident where the reference is to an overtly musical activity, such as a nursery rhyme. For example, the clear tonality of a child's song can be subverted by the inclusion of pitches alien to that of the home key. Evans has observed how,

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[1] Reinhard Kuhn, *Corruption in Paradise* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1982), p. 12.

> Britten's most common means of distorting his models are harmonic: melody and texture suggest a familiar musical type, but harmony either petrifies their flow or superimposes procedures that would conventionally be alternatives.[2]

Such subversion has a dramatic raison d'être, often reflecting subtle implications of the plot.

1 – Songs and Nursery Rhymes

Children's songs are common in opera, and the manner of their presentation can reveal much about the singer's character. In *Hänsel und Gretel*, Humperdinck alludes to the tradition of German children's songs. Sung at the start of Act I, scene ii, '*Ein Mannlein steht im Waldeganz still und stumm*', the tale of a little man standing alone in a wood, is one of two songs taken from the famous *Knaben Wunderhorn* collection (Ex. 2.1). Played by pizzicato strings, the transparent homophonic accompaniment, with its conventional perfect cadences, reinforce the child-like nature of this rendition. Gretel sings it in the forest at sunset, and it demonstrates her lack of fear of the surroundings. There is nothing in the way that Humperdinck presents this song which alludes to the horrors that lie within the forest. This example is symptomatic of the way in which Humperdinck and Adelheid Wette adapted the original Brothers Grimm fairy tale by removing the darker elements of the story.

A contrasting approach to the presentation of children's songs is taken by Berg. With a coup de theatre, he begins the scene which follows Wozzeck's drowning with children singing the nursery rhyme, '*Ringel, Ringel, Rosenkranz*' ('*Ring-a-ring-a-roses*'). The dramatic contrast of these images highlights the notion that everyday life continues, in spite of the shocking events which precede this scene.

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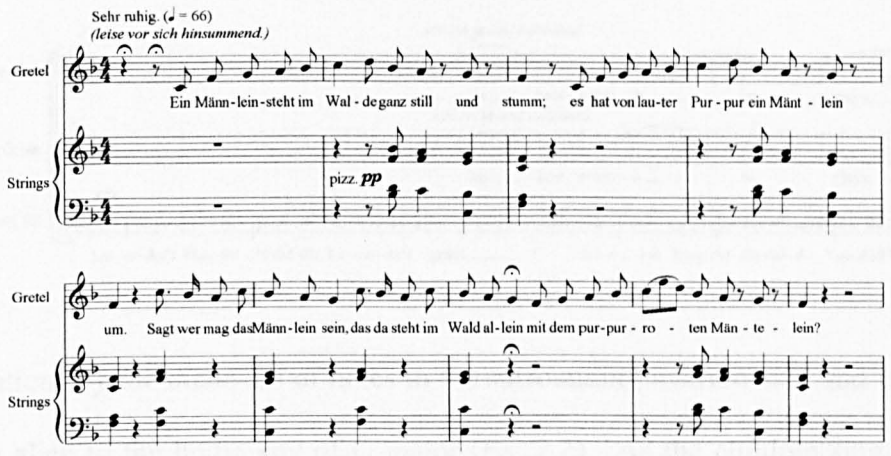
[2] Peter Evans, *The Music of Benjamin Britten* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1979), p. 157.

Ex. 2.1: Humperdink. *Hänsel und Gretel*, Act II, scene i, fig. 68

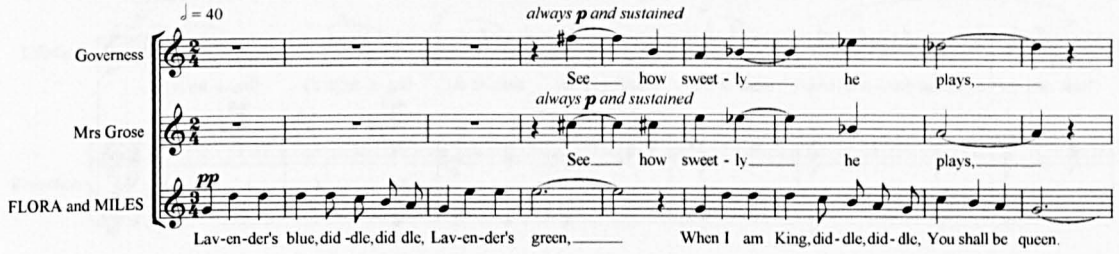


The insistent crotchet - quaver rhythm of the nursery rhyme emphasises the change in mood, which is also reflected in the contrasting weather conditions and time of day (the scene takes place on a bright morning with sunshine). However, the inclusion of this particular nursery rhyme is fortuitous, and its innocence could easily be exaggerated as it has traditionally been associated with the Black Death.

Britten also incorporates two well-known nursery rhymes into the score of *The Turn of the Screw*. The first is in Act I, scene iii. At this point in the drama, the Governess has just discovered that Miles has been expelled from school. She is desperate for proof that Miles is not 'bad'. Britten's inclusion of both children singing the simple nursery rhyme, 'Lavender's Blue', at this point in the drama, superficially suggests the 'angelic' qualities of the boy. Evans has observed that this song acts as an, 'arch caricature of the innocence the children know they have left behind'.[3] The tune is firmly grounded in G major, with no chromaticism. On the surface nothing could seem more 'pure', both in its unison rendition and in its later self-harmonising canon. The song is certainly enough to convince Mrs Grose and the Governess that the boy is an 'angel'. However, Britten suggests alternative

[3] Ibid, p.218.

Ex. 2.2: Britten. *The Turn of the Screw*, Act I, Scene iii, fig. 17



connotations by the inclusion of notes in the surrounding instrumental and vocal parts that are alien to the home key of G major (Ex. 2.2). As the children sing, there are prominent C sharps (and D flats) in the flute, as well as in the vocal lines of Mrs Grose and the Governess. This relationship between the C sharp and the G major of the tune is rich in associations, since the tritone, the so-called 'devil in music', has long been linked with the supernatural. It is ironic that Mrs Grose and the Governess are extolling Miles' virtues at this point in the drama.

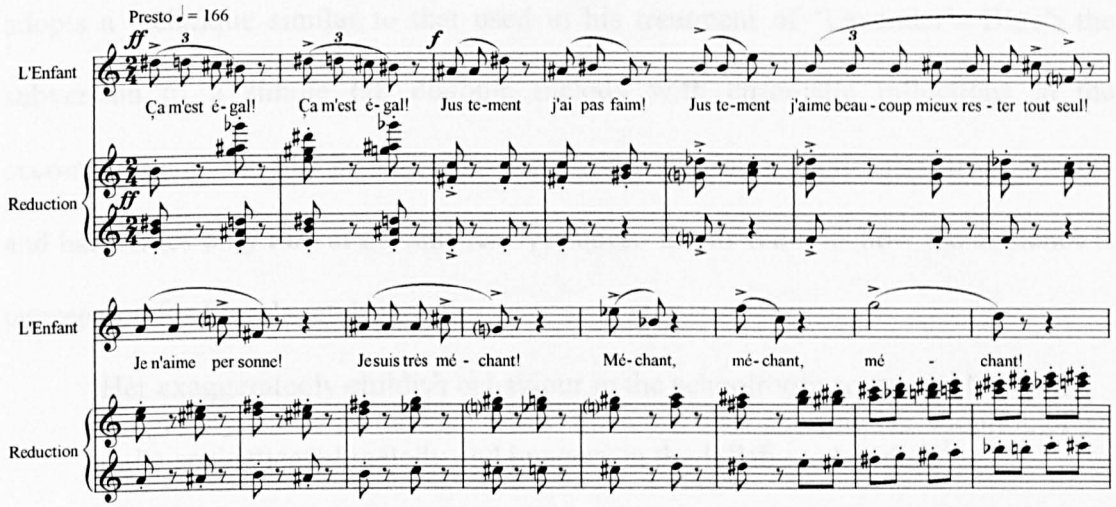
Britten's treatment of the song, 'Tom, Tom the Piper's Son', is less subtle in its suggestions. In Act I, Scene v, the children sing the song as they ride into view on a hobby horse. The surrounding ensemble, with prominent timpani, snare drum, piano and tremolo strings, beat out a military accompaniment which implies violent undercurrents. As Peter Evans has observed, the awkwardness of this nursery rhyme rendition is reinforced by the fact that tune and bass are misaligned in the first two verses.[4]

Although there are no obvious nursery rhyme quotations in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, Richard Langham Smith has observed how

> [t]he child's first utterances, once his mother has locked him in, are as a warped nursery rhyme: its rhythm and phrase-lengths are predictable and simple, but wrong notes are introduced, semitonally clashing with the

[4] Ibid, p. 218.

Ex. 2.3: Ravel. *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, 2 bars after fig. 7



expected cadence-notes [Ex. 2.3]. The semitonal clash is also used in sequence as the child delights in his naughtiness.[5]

Like Britten, Ravel has alluded to a childhood tradition and laced it with further layers of meaning. In this instance, the corruption of the nursery rhyme form is symbolic of the boy's destructive nature.

In contrast with the above examples by Britten and Ravel, Menotti follows on from Humperdinck's legacy, presenting a naïve, transparent approach to children's songs. Early in the opera, Amahl sings a song to comfort his mother, imploring her not to cry for him.[6] The 6/8 lilt, coupled with the clear diatonic accompaniment (with prominent thirds and sixths, reminiscent of Brahms' *Wiegenlied*) place it firmly in the tradition of children's lullabies. The amiable character of this song is emblematic of all the music in Menotti's benign morality tale and, as the examples in the previous chapter demonstrate, Portman adopts a similar style of folk-song like lyricism for the Prince's arias in her opera.

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[5] Richard Langham Smith, 'Ravel's operatic spectacles: *L'Heure* and *L'Enfant*' in *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel*, ed. Deborah Mawer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 207.
[6] Gian-Carlo Menotti, *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (Vocal Score - New York: Schirmer, 1951, fig. 18, p. 9).

Britten includes a lullaby in Act I, Scene vii, of *The Turn of the Screw*. He adopts a technique similar to that used in his treatment of 'Lavender's Blue': the subversion of a simple 6/8 diatonic melody with chromatic inflections in the accompaniment. In this instance, the suggestions are more subtle; the string clusters and harmonics only hint at the sinister overtones. Evans remarks how the audience is unprepared for Flora's rendition:

> Her exaggeratedly childish behaviour in the schoolroom scene and her own geography lesson by the lake makes the more disconcerting her adoption of a quite sophisticated melody and imagery in the lullaby to her doll.[7]

The lullaby has a dramatic function as well, lulling the Governess into a false sense of security before the first appearance of Miss Jessel. Patricia Howard observes how, 'she sings a fantastic lullaby that does nothing to destroy the impression of magic . . . there is an element of spell-casting about the phrase "Dolly must sleep wherever I choose".'[8] The lullaby is also, significantly, Flora's song to her doll from which she is virtually inseparable, and which might be considered a symbol of the supernatural elements of the story.

A more raucous lullaby, concerned with gypsies kidnapping a child unless he goes to sleep, is sung by Marie at the opening of Act II of *Wozzeck*. The ominous undertones of the song are matched by Berg's chromatic, angular melody. This is accompanied by restless horns and a solo violin obligato, constructed from chromatic arpeggios of increasing ferocity (Ex. 2.8). Berg's rendering of the lullaby in this fashion is more a reflection of Marie's guilt, a result of her infidelity, than a genuine attempt to sing her child to sleep. While the child does not sing this lullaby, it is included here to demonstrate how Berg takes a ritual from the world of the child and distorts it to reveal something of the character of the adult.

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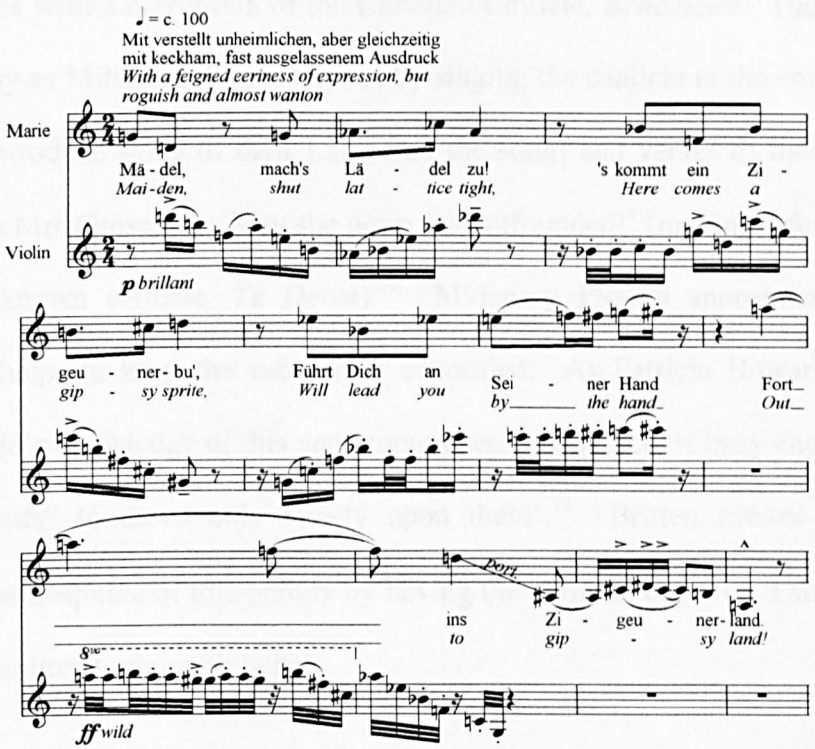
[7] Evans, op. cit., p.220.
[8] Patricia Howard, *The Operas of Benjamin Britten* (Westport: Greenwood Press), pp.137-8.

Ex. 2.4: Berg. *Wozzeck,* Act II, Scene I, bb. 44-59



In Act II, Scene ii of *Hänsel und Gretel*, the children kneel down to say their prayers before bedtime. Humperdinck recreates this time-honored childhood ritual by alluding to the Lutheran chorale tradition, adopting a similar approach to Gretel's song (Ex. 2.1). The phrase structure, homophonic texture, and pastiche harmony create an authentic sounding German hymn. Humperdinck and Wette had based their version of this fairy tale on Ludwig Bechstein's collection of folk tales.[9] Bechstein had removed the frightening elements in *Hänsel und Gretel*, even transforming the forest from a place of unknowable horrors into a spiritual haven. Humperdinck's chorale reflects this change in emphasis.

There is also a quasi-liturgical element to Act II, scene ii (*The Bells*) of *The Turn of the Screw*. The drama takes place in the churchyard, and the children are

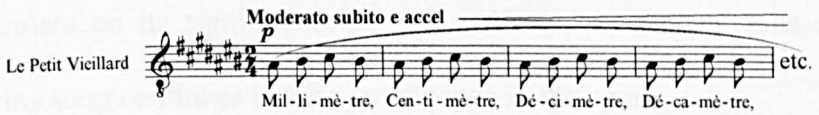
[9] Steven R. Cerf, 'Too Grimm for words: Taming Hansel and Gretel for opera', Opera News, 61/7, p. 16.

presented at their most scheming when they parody what they have learnt in their lesson scenes with a corruption of the Christian canticle, *Benedicite*. The corruption begins subtly as Miles and Flora start out by singing the canticle to the correct words; they then introduce some of their Latin into the song; add verses of their own; and finally bless Mrs Grose, '. . . May she never be confounded!' (making reference to the more well-known canticle, *Te Deum*).[10] Myfanwy Piper's appropriation of the *Benedicite* helps to keep the subversion concealed. As Patricia Howard observes, 'Most people's knowledge of this very comprehensive canticle is hazy enough for the "wrong words" to dawn only slowly upon them'.[11] Britten evokes the mock-devotional atmosphere of this parody by having the children chant on a single note to the accompaniment of church bells.

2 – Lessons and Learning

These feature prominently in *The Turn of the Screw, L'enfant et les sortilèges*, and *Boris Godunov*. They are expressed with commonly-used techniques, such as mnemonics for remembering Latin and arithmetic. This is exemplified by the frightening appearance of 'Arithmetic' personified in Ravel's opera. The figure haunts the boy by chanting sums and mathematical problems at him. In order to teach the boy by rote, he chants the names of various measurements to a repeated, accelerating four-quaver phrase (Ex. 2.5).

Ex. 2.5: Ravel. *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, fig. 83



[10] Benjamin Britten and Myfanwy Piper, *The Turn of the Screw* (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1966), p.199.
[11] Howard, op. cit., p. 142.

Portman alludes to this in Act I, Scene ix, of *The Little Prince* with a histrionic portrayal of the obsessive businessman. The rhythm of his relentless, monotone chanting is doubled by the sound of an old-fashioned typewriter and accompanied by staccato chords in the strings and wind.

Act I, scene vi of *The Turn of the Screw* is entirely concerned with Miles' Latin lesson. In order to translate this academic atmosphere into a musical analogy, Britten precedes the scene with a strict fifteen-part fugue. The fugue is immediately recognizable as such, and is a form associated with strict 'academic' compositional technique. This is mirrored in the scene itself as the children 'automatically' reel off their Latin mnemonics, which translate easily into musical motifs. They chant automatically to a single note. Later in the scene, Miles recalls a more unusual mnemonic,

> Malo I would rather be,
> Malo in an apple tree,
> Malo than a naughty boy,
> Malo in adversity.[12]

The way Britten sets this text reveals to the audience why the Governess might fear that dark forces are exerting an influence on Miles. The musical language of the Malo song sharply contrasts with the previous automatic 'cantillation' style of Latin recitation. The verse is set to a slower, haunting tune in 4/4 based on rising and falling minor thirds (Ex. 2.6). Like Flora's lullaby, the sophistication of this song is uncharacteristic of Miles. As Evans comments, 'Miles . . . sings so little, yet by the lesson scene we are already able to recognise the inconsistency of the Malo song – and to speculate on its significance'.[13] As indicated in the previous chapter, the melody of this song continues to take prominence in the opera.

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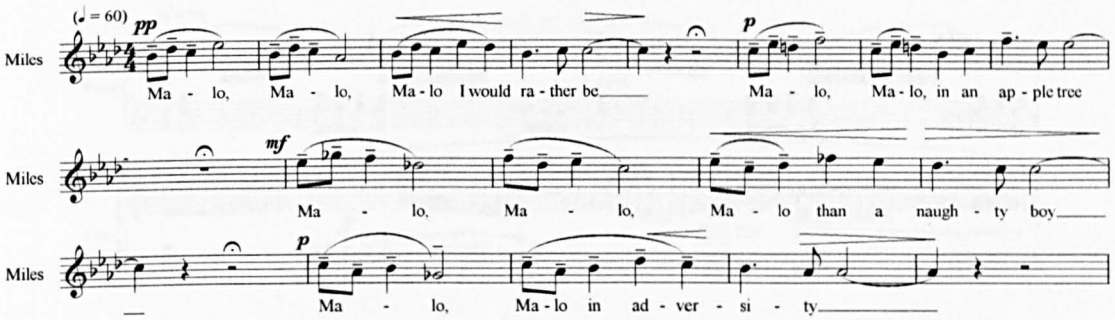
[12] Ibid., p. 111.
[13] Evans, op. cit., p. 219.

Ex. 2.6: Britten. *The Turn of the Screw*, Act I, Scene vi, fig. 51

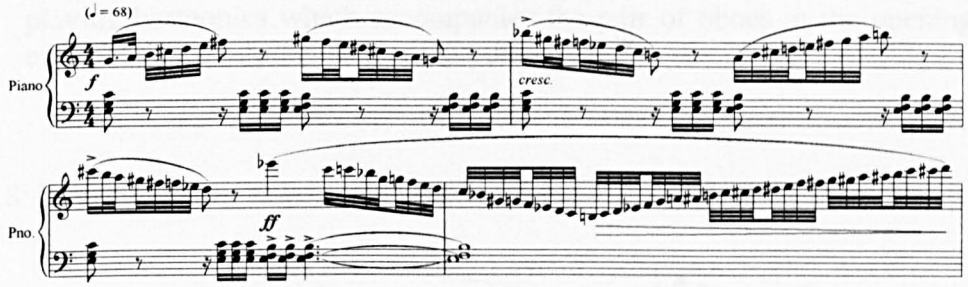


A similar style of automatic chanting is reprised when, during her geography lesson in Act I, Scene vii (*The Lake*), Flora recalls the names of all the seas she knows.[14] She stops when she reaches the name of the Dead Sea, dramatically singing the words to a long note a semitone higher. This style of exaggeration is typical of childish behaviour. The scene brings to mind Act II of *Boris Godunov*, in which Fyodor impresses his father with a precocious knowledge of the geography of the Russian empire.

References in the *Turn of the Screw* to the children's learning music are not restricted to Britten's academic fugue. In Act II, Scene vi, the audience see and hear Miles playing the piano. Britten's music appears to be neo-classical, incorporating scales and an alberti bass (common features of children's piano pieces), but as Wilfred Mellers has observed, 'the simple diatonicism grows polytonal and rhythms are weirdly dislocated'.[15] This can be seen in the following example where unambiguous C major harmonies in the left hand do not quite coincide, in ways one would expect, with scales in the right hand (Ex. 2.7). Evans explains the significance of this scene in relation to the musical and dramatic scheme of the opera:

[14] Britten and Piper, op. cit., pp. 117-119.
[15] Wilfred Mellers, *Turning the Screw* in *The Britten Companion* ed. Christopher Palmer (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p.151.

Ex. 2.7: Britten. *The Turn of the Screw* Act II, Scene vi, fig. 87



> This piano study brings back the C major of variation II but by now the 'innocence' of that key is patently a sardonic mask on the face of the young Miles. So every detail of his diligently-played Diabelli (or whatever) is turned slightly awry: neither in harmony nor scansion do the two hands quite correspond and soon the little twists of key result in some poker-faced bitonality.[16]

Yet again, this distorted childhood model conveys some of the underlying subtext. Much like Flora's seductive lullaby, Miles' superficially 'sweet' piano playing lulls the Governess and Mrs Grose into a false sense of security, allowing Flora to escape to the lake, as Patricia Howard elaborates:

> A piano movement full of the perverted grace the Governess sees in Miles . . . This scene shows Miles as enchanter, imitating Quint. In spite of her knowledge, the Governess is bewitched into inattention.[17]

However, despite the apparent indications of Miles' wickedness, Evans has further observed that this piano music still displays elements of naivety, 'the piano's Romantic gestures of triumph . . . with crashing diminished sevenths to the fore, remind us that Miles, if precociously malignant, is still a child'.[18] (See Ex. 2.7.)

Allusions to a musical education are less apparent in Ravel's opera, but they do seem to exist. Langham Smith suggests that

> Ravel uses several deliberately naïve devices to transport us from the adult world: a child improvises rather randomly in fourths and fifths at the opening,

[16] Evans, op. cit., p. 212.
[17] Howard, op. cit., p. 144.
[18] Evans, op. cit. p. 213.

and Ravel seemingly plays on their forbidden nature to evoke the child's naughtiness . . . [See Ex. 2.8] The extraordinary sound of the double-bass playing harmonics which accompanies the pair of oboes at the opening may evoke the idea of practising an instrument . . .[19]

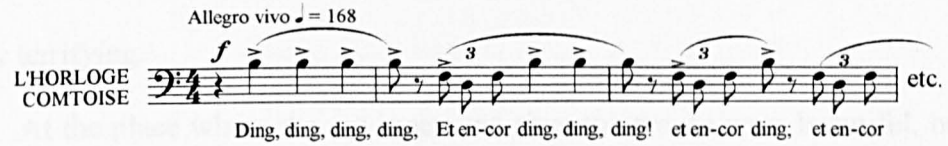
Ex. 2.8: Ravel. *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, bb. 1-4

3 – Scale and Exaggeration

One of the ways in which to portray adult singers as children is to make them appear smaller on stage. Ravel and Colette immediately place the audience in the world of the child at the beginning of their opera by presenting the surrounding in a scale which reflects a child's view of the world. Naturally, this means that everything is made 'larger than life' - adult life, anyway. The directions for scene setting are as follows, 'with the ceiling very low and the entire scale of all the furnishings and all the objects in exaggerated dimensions in order to make more striking the smallness of the child'.[20] This exaggeration of surroundings is a feature of childhood which composer and librettist exploit. As inanimate objects spring to life, their presence becomes even more exaggerated, and they become objects of terror. Ravel captures this in the music when the pendulum from the clock springs to life. It chants its onomatopoeic chimes to a manic, repeated phrase which constantly returns to a B natural (Ex. 2.9). This may remind an audience of the mechanical clock which fascinates Fyodor in Act II of *Boris Godunov*, and which also terrorises his father when it chimes later in the scene.

[19] Langham Smith, op. cit., pp.206-7.
[20] Maurice Ravel and Colette, *L'enfant et les Sortilèges.* (Paris: Durand & co., 1925), p.3.

Ex. 2.9: Ravel. *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, fig. 21



Max, the protagonist in Knussen's *Where the Wild Things Are,* embraces much hyperbole when describing the journey to and from the island of the wild things. He exaggerates the time-scale, thus emphasising his child's perspective.

> It was very far to here
> Through days and nights
> and even weeks
> And surely over a year
> And it still seems very far away.[21]

Maeterlinck also makes use of exaggeration, as demonstrated in Act IV, Scene iii of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, where Yniold complains, 'Oh, but this stone is heavy! It is more heavy than I . . . It is more heavy than the whole earth. It is the heaviest thing'.[22] Flora makes a similarly absurd comparison in Act I, Scene vii of *The Turn of the Screw*, when she asks the Governess if the lake is in her book. When told that it is too small, she responds by saying it is a 'great white sea!'.[23]

Rakhal's vibrant description of both the impending festival and the sea, in *Snatched by the Gods*, reveals him basking in imagined surroundings:

> I have heard stories of festival crowds at sacred places: so many things to watch and buy - jugglers, hawkers, great magicians, holy men smeared with ash . . . I'm going to the sea. I want to bathe in the sparkling water. I want to jump, I want to splash, I want to dance in the wind and spray.[24]

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[21] Oliver Knussen, *Where the Wild Things Are* (London: Faber music, 1983), pp. 228-229.
[22] Claude Debussy and Maurice Maeterlinck (trans. Henry Grafton Chapman), *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Vocal Score - Paris: Durand, 1907), pp. 223-224.
[23] Britten and Piper op. cit., p.116.
[24] Param Vir and William Radice, *Snatched by the Gods* (London: Chester Music, 1998), pp. 50-51.

His idyllic fantasy about the wind and water sharply contrast with the reality of facing these elements later in the opera. All that had previously been beautiful and seductive is now terrifying.

> At the place where the sea meets the river the waves were beautiful, but here they frighten me, here they flicker and hiss like the tongues of a thousand headed snake . . . I'm frightened, mother, the waves are high, the stream so fast, the sky is black stormy, I can't see the shore. I see snakes' heads rearing.[25]

Such an elaborate, ornamental discourse, from a young child, might be difficult for an audience to accept. William Radice, the librettist, offers a stylised representation of Rakhal's fear, which an audience must accept, in the same way that they frequently have to accept young boys' roles sung by adult women.

4 – Fantasy, imagination, game playing and toys

Rowan Williams has observed that fantasy and role-play are an integral part of child development:

> we accept that there is a sphere of legitimately irresponsible talking, of fantasy and uninhibited role-playing, language without commitments beyond the particular game being played . . . We are familiar, from fiction and autobiography, with the trauma that can be suffered by a child whose fantasy is taken for distorted or intended fact, whose imagination is interpreted as lying, by a hostile, stupid or tyrannous adult.[26]

One could add 'naïve' to Williams' list of adjectives, when referring to the Governess in *The Turn of the Screw*. In Act II, Scene ii (*The Bells*), her response to Miles' insinuations and challenges is to treat them as fact, an overreaction which further strengthens her belief that the children have been interfered with, ultimately resulting in Miles' death.

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[25] Ibid, pp. 177-178.
[26] Rowan Williams, *Lost Icons: Reflections on cultural bereavement* (London: T&T Clark, 2000), p. 13.

Miles: So much I want to do, so much I might do.
Governess: But I trust you Miles.
Miles: You trust me my dear, but you think of us and of the others. Does my uncle think what you think?
Governess: It was a challenge! He knows what I know, and dares me to act.[27]

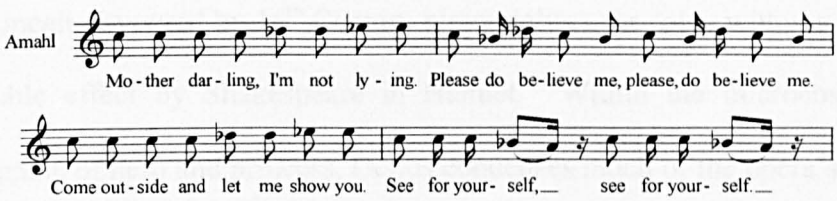
As already observed, Britten's use of the nursery rhyme, *Tom, Tom the Piper's Son* and the related role-playing on stage demonstrates the importance and potentially sinister implication of the games acted out by Miles and Flora. Similarly, in Act II, Scene vi (*The Piano*), Flora lulls Mrs Grose to sleep with a seemingly innocuous game of 'cat's cradle', only to take advantage of the situation and join Miss Jessel.[28]

The idea of fantasy leading to 'crying wolf' can be seen in the opening scene of *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. Amahl's mother refuses to believe his (true) story about the enormous star outside. Her response to his tale is to sing dramatically of the 'woe' his lies cause, and to list his previous fantasies.

Mother: Oh! Amahl, when will you stop telling lies? All day long you wander about in a dream. Here we are with nothing to eat, not a stick of wood on the fire, not a drop of oil in the jug, and all you do is worry your mother with fairy tales. Oh! Amahl, have you forgotten your promise never, never to lie to your mother again?
Amahl: Mother darling, I'm not lying. Please do believe me, please, do believe me. Come outside and let me show you. See for yourself, see for yourself.
Mother: Stop bothering me! Why should I believe you? You come with a new one everyday! First it was a leopard with a woman's head. Then it was a tree branch that shrieked and bled. Then it was a fish as big as a boat, with whiskers like a cat and wings like a bat and horns like a goat. And now it is a star as large as a window . . . or was it a carriage . . . And if that weren't enough, the star has a tail and the tail is of fire!

[27] Britten and Piper, op. cit., pp.211-216.
[28] Ibid., pp. 258-264.

Ex. 2.10: Menotti. *Amahl and the night visitors*, fig. 13



Menotti sets Amahl's initial response to his mother's scolding to a pleading musical phrase. Appoggiaturas on the 'lieve' of 'believe me' and 'self' of 'yourself' emphasise the notion that Amahl is desperate to be believed (Ex. 2.10). This lack of understanding of child fantasy is one of the ways in which the adult world and that of the child can be separated, musically and dramatically.

A seemingly innocuous game signals the first appearance of the young Vreli and Sali in Delius' *A Village Romeo and Juliet.*

> Sali: Come, Vreli, Come! Let's go into the wood and play.
> Vreli: Yes, yes!
> Sali: I'll slay the robber chief and free the fair princess! Hark! I hear her calling.
> Vreli: Don't leave me here alone, give me your hand and lead me. I do not know the way, and when the dragon comes and all the fierce wild beasts, the wood makes me afraid.
> Sali: Don't be afraid I'll slay them all![29]

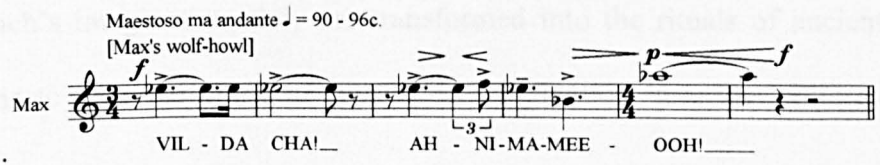
Like much of the music already examined, Delius' setting offers alternative readings of this fairy-tale game. Sali's brooding tune in B minor is accompanied by a plaintive cor anglais counter-melody. Vreli's plea not to be left alone is set to a chromatic, angular melody accompanied by tremolo strings playing sul ponticello. This game foreshadows future events in the opera. In Scene iii, when Vreli's father, Marti, tries to drag her away, the adult Sali really does rescue her by knocking Marti to the ground. This heroic action frees Vreli from her oppressive father, who is consigned to an asylum. However, the consequences are far reaching and ultimately prove to be

[29] Frederick Delius. *A Village Romeo and Juliet* (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1910), pp.12-13.

the reason why the lovers can never be together in this world. This is much like the dramatic conceit, favoured by 16th Century playwrights - the 'play within a play' used to memorable effect by Shakespeare in Hamlet. Within the microcosm of this children's game of hero and princess, Delius condenses much of the opera's plot.

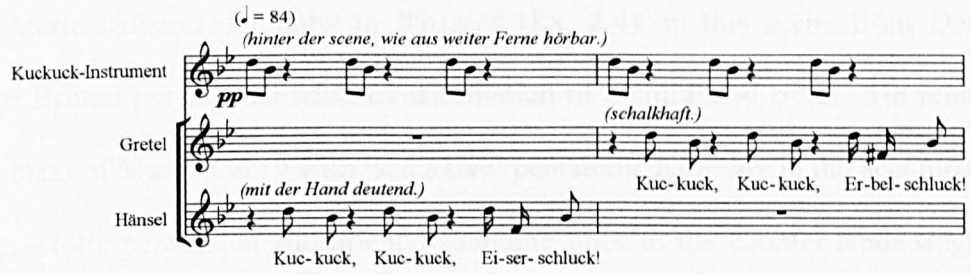
Many of these operas portray children acting out rituals from the adult world. Hansel and Gretel engage in idyllic role-play in Act II, Scene i of Humperdinck's opera. Gretel makes a garland of flowers, and with this Hansel crowns her Queen of the wood. This is echoed in Scene v, *Coronation*, of *Where the Wild Things Are*. Knussen quotes from Mussorgsky's music for the coronation in Scene ii of the Prologue in *Boris Godunov*, as Max is crowned king by the wild things. As in the Delius example above, Knussen and Sendak allude to this earlier in the opera when, in the first scene of *Where the Wild things Are*, Max acts out the fantasy that he is the 'wild wolf-king', even wearing a wolf costume on stage.[30] Max's aggressive domination of the toys during that game is echoed later in his successful domination of the wild things in Scene iv. During Max's role-play, he adopts his own language to evoke a wolf-howl. These nonsense syllables are initially set to a monotone E flat, before fanning out to embrace a series of wider intervals (Ex. 2.11). The fanfare-like nature of this melody, punctuated by unevenly spaced staccato chords, ensures that that the sounds are clearly differentiated from the previous, intelligible, English words.

Ex. 2.11: Knussen. *Where the Wild Things Are*, Scene i, fig. 10



[30] Knussen and Sendak, op. cit., p.9.

Ex. 2.12: Humperdinck. *Hänsel und Gretel*, Act 2, Scene i, 8 bars after fig. 71



These animal noises also have their precedent in *Hänsel und Gretel*, as the children make cuckoo noises in Act II, Scene i. The children hocket with the cuckoo instrument (the toy instrument used to memorable effect in the Toy Symphony, attributed to Leopold Mozart).

In *Wozzeck*, Berg capitalises on the naivety of children's games. In the final scene, when confronted with the news of his mother's death, the boy, unable to comprehend the significance of what the other boys have told him, continues to ride his hobby horse. Berg captures the innocence of the game with the words 'hopp, hopp!' set to a descending perfect fourth, which sounds startlingly similar to the Cuckoo noises in the previous example from *Hänsel und Gretel*.[31]

In *Death in Venice,* the beach games in Act I, Scene viii establish a hierarchy between the children, with Tadzio as the clear winner (of both the game and the affection of the protagonist, Aschenbach). Britten accompanies the running, long jump, discus, javelin-throwing and wrestling with a series of percussion-heavy, choral dances. The seemingly innocent children's games have ambiguous connotations: in Aschenbach's imagination, they are transformed into the rituals of ancient Greece, 'He seems to hear the voice of Apollo, in imagination turns the children's beach

[31] Berg, op. cit., p.p. 481-483.

games into some sort of Olympiad with Tadzio crowned victor of the pentathlon'.[32] Like Marie's distorted lullaby in *Wozzeck* (Ex. 2.4), in this scene from *Death in Venice* Britten portrays an adult transformation of a childhood ritual. He reinforces the subtext of Mann's story with 'seductive' pentatonic harmony in the accompanying music, exotic percussion and oriental-sounding lines in the counter-tenor singing of Apollo. This subtext becomes explicit with the words, 'Then Eros is in the world'.[33]

Imitation is a behavioural trait of children which can frequently be observed in these operas. In the first scene of Humperdinck's opera, Gretel teaches the other children a dance game.[34] She begins by demonstrating the moves with a series of claps, taps, clicks, and nicks and then encourages Hansel to imitate these (which he does to the same melody). When Hansel refuses to dance with a 'little girl', and then Gretel refuses to dance with a 'naughty boy', something of the hierarchy that children establish among themselves, as demonstrated in the above example from *Death in Venice*, is revealed. Gretel's game also recalls Fyodor's ebullient clapping game in Act II of *Boris Godunov,* incorporated by Mussorgsky to contrast with the dramatic appearance of the melancholy Boris which it immediately precedes. As one critic has observed,

> In the scene in the Tsar's apartment, the songs and games are not only delightful in themselves, but serve a definite purpose. They evoke an atmosphere of peace and potential happiness, and impart a particular significance to the sudden interruption of Boris, grim and shaky, furious at seeing the old nurse startled by his appearance.[35]

Britten includes mocking imitation, in Act I, Scene vii of *The Turn of the Screw* (*The Lake*), another form of role play commonly exercised by children. The

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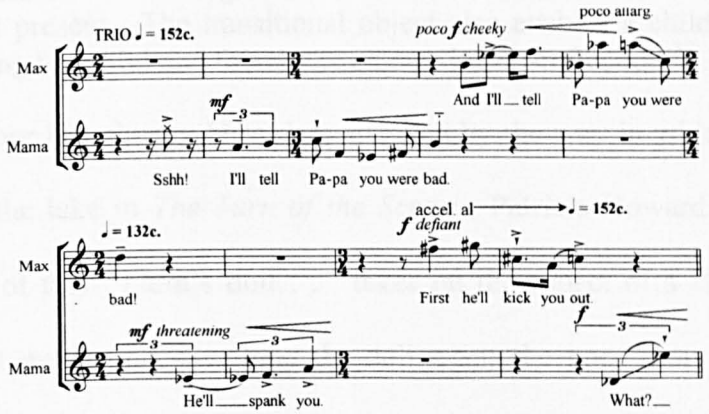
[32] Harewood, *The new Kobbé's Opera book* ed. The Earl of Harewood and Anthony Peattie (London: Ebury Press, 1997) p. 140.
[33] Britten and Piper, op. cit., p. 172
[34] Humperdinck, op. cit., pp. 43-57.
[35] M.D. Calvacoressi (Completed and revised by Gerald Abraham), *Mussorgsky.* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1964), pp. 128-129.

Governess tells of how Flora must sing to her dolly, and the girl repeats her words and melody. At the climax of the opera, Miles imitates the Governess in a more confrontational fashion by turning her questions back on her, persuading her to reveal her intentions, and how she really feels about him.

Governess:	Do you mind being left alone?
Miles:	Do you?
Governess:	Dearest Miles, I love to stay with you. What else should I stay for?
Miles:	So, my dear, for me you stay?
Governess:	I stay as your friend. Miles, there is nothing I would not do for you, remember.
Miles:	If I'll do something now for you?[36]

Max behaves in a similar, but more threatening fashion in the following example from *Where the Wild Things Are* (Ex. 2.13).

Ex. 2.13: Knussen. *Where the Wild Things Are*, Scene ii, fig. 26



A more flattering style of imitation is employed in Act I, Scene iii of Judith Weir's *A Night at the Chinese Opera*, 'The boy ponders momentarily, and walks off in the direction of the soldier, perhaps imitating his gestures with the sword'.[37] The implications of this suggested role-playing foreshadow the friendship that will later

[36] Benjamin Britten and Myfanwy Piper, *The Turn of the Screw* (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1966), pp.292-2955.
[37] Judith Weir, *A Night at the Chinese Opera* (London: Novello and co., 1989), p.40.

blossom between the adult Chao Lin and the soldier. Similarly, the Prince's imitation of the Fox, in Act II, Scene iii of *The Little Prince* is a sign of their friendship. In an attempt to digest what he is being taught, the Prince copies the Fox's moral sermon in monotone phrases, an augmented version of those phrases reeled off by Miles and Flora in their lesson scene.

The inclusion of sentimental, childhood possessions, such as the doll and the hobby horses in *The Turn of the Screw* and *Wozzeck*, or the bouncing ball in *Albert Herring*, are an integral part of any childhood landscape. The strategic incorporation of these items often reveals aspects of the child's character. Some of these toys may even be considered 'transitional objects', as Hugh Raymant-Pickard explains:

> The term 'transitional object' was coined by the psychologist D. W. Winnicott to describe the cuddly toys, blankets and other 'comforters' to which children become very attached. Winnicott argued that children use these objects to negotiate their separation from the mother. The transitional object is a safe, controlled 'other' that gives the child security and confidence when the mother is not present. The transitional object also enables a child to soliloquise by 'talking to teddy' and thereby to engage in self-reflection.[38]

Such behaviour has already been demonstrated by the way in which Flora addresses her doll by the lake in *The Turn of the Screw.* Patricia Howard elaborates on the significance of this: 'Flora's doll . . . takes on the aspect of a "familiar" and it is ominous that we see her clutching the doll when she goes away at the end of the opera.' [39]

In Weill's *Street Scene*, Willie Maurrant's first entry onto the stage is by roller skates, and in *A Night at the Chinese Opera,* the seven year old Chao Lin is first seen flying a kite, captured in the orchestra with a moto perpetuo built around tremolo triads in piano and xylophone. This importance of toys and other possessions is a central theme in *L'enfant et les sortilèges.* In the opening scene, the boy laments for

[38] Hugh Rayment-Pickard, *The Devil's Account: Philip Pullman and Christianity* (Lonoon: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2004), pp.57-58.
[39] Howard, op. cit., p.138.

his Chinese cup which he has broken, and yet his story book, featuring the beautiful princess, ultimately turns out to be the most life-changing of his childhood possessions, allowing him to explore his most emotional, adolescent fantasy.

5 – Tantrums and Outbursts

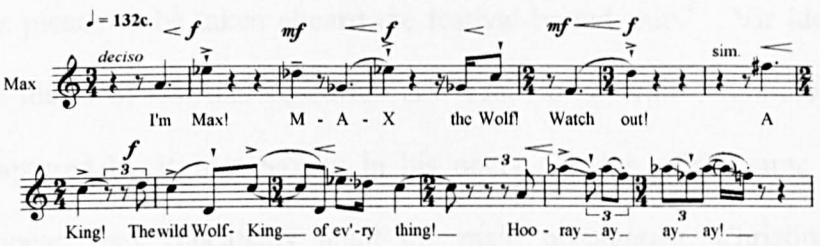
Tantrums and outbursts feature prominently in *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, *The Turn of the Screw*, and *Where the Wild Things Are*, where they are transformed into music. Having been scolded by his mother, the child, in Ravel's opera, sets about wrecking the room with several destructive acts. These include smashing the teapot and stirring up the fire. Each of these moments is captured by Ravel with extrovert bursts of orchestral colour. Langham Smith explains how these reflect the childish behaviour:

> The child's first 'frenzy of perversity' initiates several related parodistic techniques. A 'rude-noise' sound in the orchestra – as if blowing a raspberry – begins the episode, effected by a burst of rapid staccato wind notes and *fortissimo* tremolandos: techniques which no wind player could sustain for much longer than Ravel requires.[40]

Echoing Ravel's child, Max's first appearance in *Where the Wild Things Are* sees him scattering his toys about and uttering 'exclamations of joy in his naughtiness'.[41] This is reflected in a melodic line awash with vocal acrobatics, including wide intervals, syncopations and glissandi, which are emulated by contrasting groups in the orchestra playing similar gestures (Ex. 2.14). Also of note is the way in which Max self-consciously spells out his name, undeniably childish behaviour. Again, Max's domestic antics foreshadow later events in the opera: at the close of Scene v he commands the wild things to indulge in a 'Wild Rumpus'. The orchestra, marked 'Furioso', responds to this command with primal dance-like music

[40] Langham Smith, op. cit., p. 207.
[41] Knussen and Sendak, op. cit., p .8.

Ex. 2.14: Knussen. *Where the Wild Things Are*, Scene i, 1 bar after fig. 3



reminiscent of *The Rite of Spring*.[42] I have already shown how the child's tantrum, in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, resembles a distorted nursery rhyme (Ex. 2.3). Britten employs similar techniques for Flora's tantrum-like outburst in *The Turn of the Screw* (Act II, Scene viii). The nursery rhyme crotchet - quaver rhythms are shrilly screamed out by Flora.

Contrasting with the previous examples, Amahl's righteous outburst to save his mother, at the climax of Menotti's opera, is built around a series of arresting triplets and a fanfare-like rising-fourth motif.[43] The text is set syllabically as Amahl spits out his words in a quasi-hysterical frenzy. Portman uses a similar style to express the Prince's anger at the insensitivity of the pilot, in Act I, Scene iv of *The Little Prince*. She especially focuses on rising fifths, and using spoken text to articulate the Prince's exasperation. In *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Act III Scene iv, Yniold desperately pleads with his father, Golaud, to be let down (so that he no longer has to spy on his mother, Mélisande, with Pelléas). Debussy's syllabic recitative style of text setting is in keeping with the rest of the opera, but at this climactic moment the scoring and volume of the accompanying orchestra are increased so much that the treble, already high in his tessitura, has to force the sound to be heard, imbuing the delivery with the necessary 'desperate' quality.

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[42] Ibid., p. 153.
[43] Menotti, op. cit., fig. 117, pp. 53-55.

In *Snatched by the Gods* Rakhal repeats the words, 'I'm going to the sea' five times, as he pleads to be taken aboard the festival-bound ship.[44] Vir identifies and exploits the idea that insistent repetition is a behavioural trait of children, a notion which is captured by Robert Saxton in his opera *Caritas*. Each time the village children appear, they repeatedly taunt the main protagonist, Christine. Saxton recreates the claustrophobic atmosphere of a group of children maliciously chanting with a series of short fragments, based on a nursery rhyme-like crotchet - quaver motif, presented in a series of close canons (Ex. 2.15). Writing the music in this way, and scoring it for three trebles, Saxton suggests an antithesis of the three genii in *Die Zauberflöte*. In modern performances they are played by trebles, and sing in homophony of 'the symbolical joys of the rising sun whose rays drive away the fears of night and herald the reign of light and love' (Ex. 2.16).[45] Conversely the village children, in Saxton's opera, mock in cacophonic counterpoint, which drags Christine further into the darkness. In Act II of *Caritas* the children are heard on tape because, like the ghosts in *The Turn of the Screw*, it is unclear whether at that stage in Christine's descent they are real or imagined.

What many of these examples demonstrate is that even when composers present highly stylised versions of the various different childhood activities, the world of the child and the adult can still be suggested simultaneously. The ambiguity suggested by this simultaneity warrants a more detailed exploration of the roles that innocence and experience play in the dramatic presentation of children in opera.

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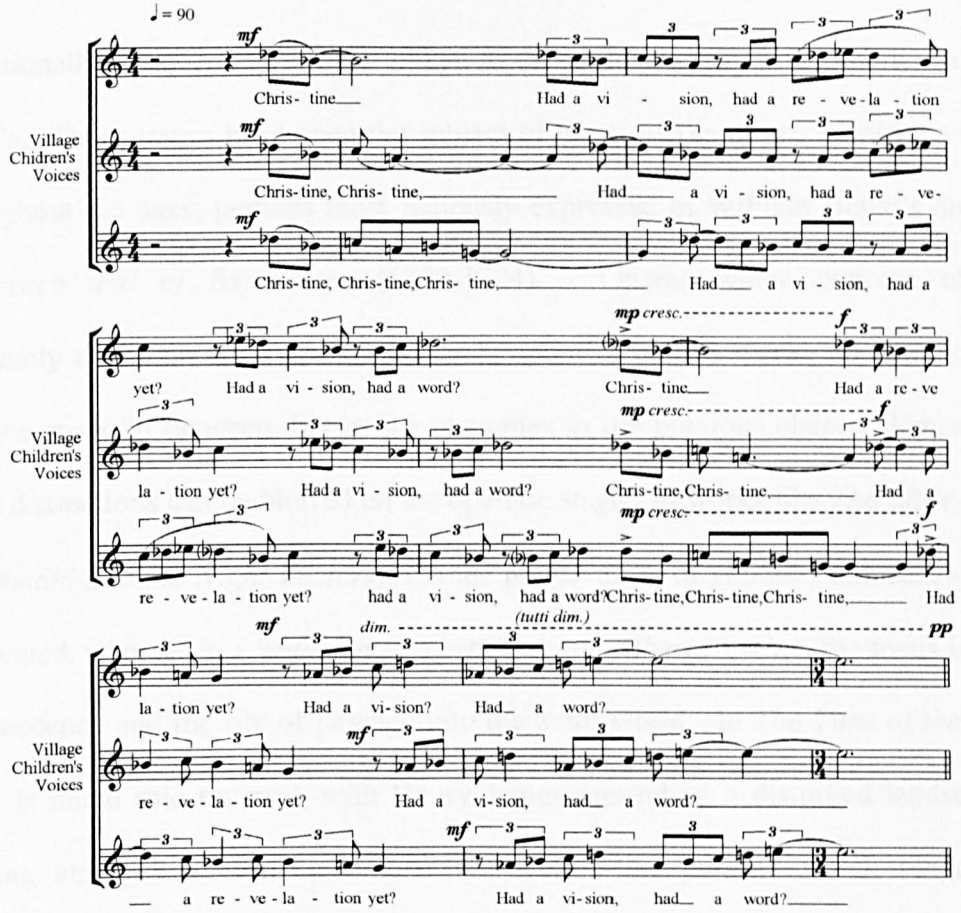
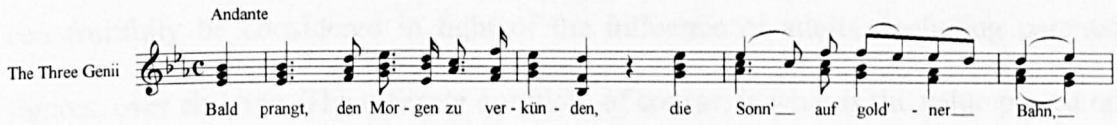
[44] Vir and Radice, op. cit., p.50.
[45] Gustav Kobbé and Harewood, *Die Zauberflöte* in *The new Kobbé's Opera book* (ed. The Earl of Harewood and Anthony Peattie (London: Ebury Press, 1997) p.525.

Ex. 2.15: Saxton. *Caritas*, Act I, scene i, bb. 186-193



Ex. 2.16: Mozart. *Die Zauberflöte*, Act II, no. 21, bb. 10-14



Chapter 3: Innocence and Experience

Traditionally, innocence has been linked to the child's world, and experience to the adult's. These issues have been the subject of many works of art, in various media, throughout the ages, perhaps most famously expressed in William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1789-1794).[1] Operas which concern children inevitably create an aural and visual landscape of a child's world, an adult's world and the space in between, but as the examples in the previous chapter demonstrate, these distinctions can be blurred on the operatic stage. In works like *The Little Prince* and *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, it is the preservation of youthful innocence that is celebrated, whereas in *L'enfant et les sortilèges* and *Albert Herring*, the focus is a loss of innocence and the rite of passage into the adult world. In *The Turn of the Screw* there is much role reversal, with Henry James presenting a disturbed landscape of shifting ambiguities: the Governess has a child-like persona which renders her unprepared for her work at Bly, and the children have been corrupted to a degree which is unquantifiable.

In *The Turn of the Screw*, themes which concern innocence and experience can fruitfully be considered in light of the influence of adults, including parental figures, over children. The ultimate question, of course, is what is the value placed on innocence in the opera?

[1] Blake, *Complete Writings* ed. Geoffrey Keynes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 210-221.

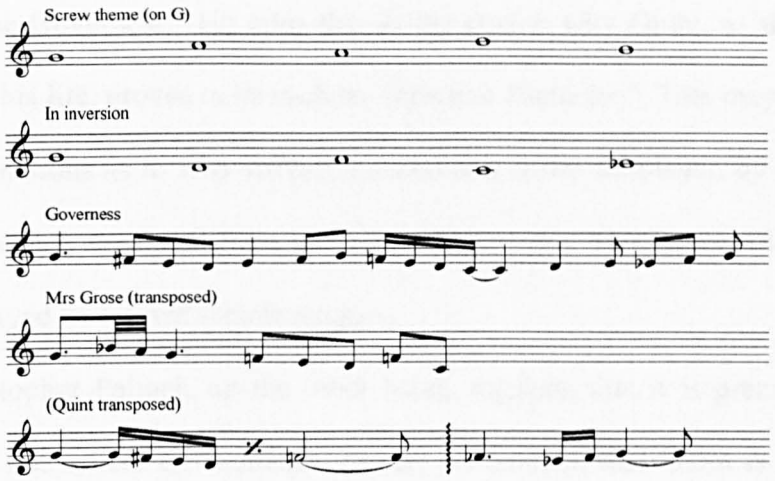
1. Influence and Corruption

The behaviour of parental figures can go some way to explaining the course of events in *The Turn of the Screw*. The children encounter a number of these, none of them their natural parents, who all, in some way, contribute to Flora's broken-down mental state and Miles' death. The audience is told in the prologue that the Guardian has no time for the children and that, should anything go wrong, he is not to be disturbed. His lack of commitment means that the children are left in the care of a series of strangers. He is ultimately responsible for consigning the children to the mercy of Peter Quint. Quint and Miss Jessel were clearly at some stage influential parental figures. Quint's negative influence on the children is palpable, if not widespread. Mrs Grose's maternal instinct to protect the children from Quint was quelled by her fear and apathy at confronting him before permanent damage was done. Finally, the new Governess, who at first promised to love the children as she loves her own, becomes possessive, paranoid and arguably delusional.

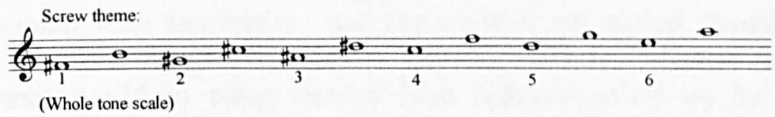
Howard has observed that throughout the opera Britten links the music of the parental figures, deriving it all from the 'Screw' theme.[2] This would appear to confirm that all the adults are complicit in the fate of the children. The example below demonstrates that the music of the Governess, Mrs Grose, and Quint, are all based on an inverted version of the 'Screw' theme (Ex. 3.1). The appearances of Miss Jessel are frequently initiated by a series of chords based on whole tone scales (Ex. 3.2 a + b). These are also derived from the 'Screw' theme, though their association is less explicit; perhaps Britten believes that she is not as responsible as the others.

[2] Patricia Howard, 'Structures: an overall view' in *The Turn of the* Screw ed. Patricia Howard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 86.

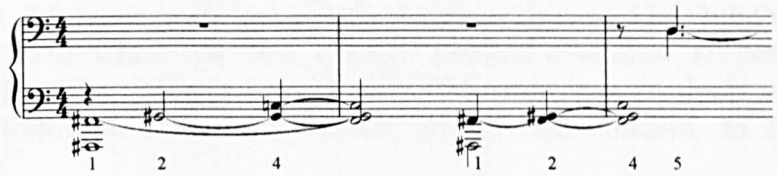
Ex. 3.1: Britten. *The Turn of the Screw*. Adults relationship to 'Screw' Theme[3]



Ex. 3.2a: Britten. *The Turn of the Screw*. 'Screw' theme (whole tone scale)



Ex. 3.2b: Appearance of Miss Jessel. Britten. *The Turn of the Screw*, Act I, Scene vii, fig. 65. [4]



Many critics argue that sexual identity is the key to understanding the influence of parental figures in *The Turn of the Screw*. Britten's original title for the opera was *The Tower and the Lake* which is, as Seymour has observed, 'loaded with Freudian overtones'.[5] In the opera, Quint first appears on the tower, and Miss Jessel at the lake. Bridcut has put forward the idea that, throughout his life, Miles is almost

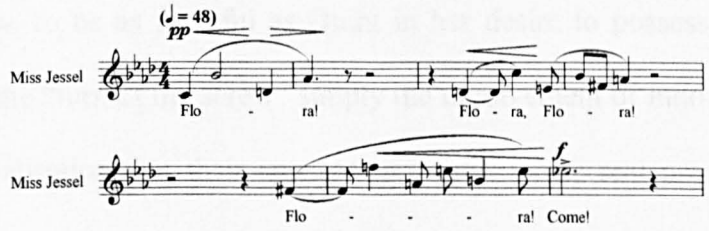
[3] Ibid., p. 86.
[4] Ibid, p. 89.
[5] Seymour, op. cit., p.182.

entirely surrounded and imprisoned by dominant female figures: Miss Jessel, Mrs Grose and the Governess. He cites this as the reason why Quint, as the only male influence on his life, proves to be such an attractive character.[6] This may also provide further explanations as to why Britten insisted that Miles be played by a boy treble: his vocal timbre is separated from that of the Governess, Mrs Grose, Flora and Miss Jessel (all played by trained female singers).

Christopher Palmer, on the other hand, suggests that it is precisely because Britten does not adhere to traditional gender stereotypes that Quint is made all the more alluring:

> In the 'normal' world we would immediately associate a man with a low or bass voice, the woman with a high or treble voice; the man with masculinity, the woman with femininity, and any number of related sexual stereotypes, most of them fairly meaningless anyway. Here, because we are in an abnormal world in many senses (and homosexuality is, by conventional standards, 'abnormal'), none of this applies. Miss Jessel has the low voice and the low sonorities of the gong and double-bass; Quint the high voice with high sonorities of celesta, harp and (at one point) glockenspiel. There is nothing in the least feminine or alluring about Miss Jessel: listen to her siren-call to Flora with its atonal melodic profile (how ugly those twisted minor sevenths!) and ungainly rhythms which have the effect of torturing and dislocating the child's name [Ex. 3.3]; how much more likely are we to be wooed by Quint's sinuous, seductive arabesques with their sybaritic oriental overtones, all concord and fluency [Ex. 3.8]. Of this Curst Pair of Sirens there is no doubt which one Britten (following James) intends us, no less the children, to find more attractive.[7]

Ex. 3.3: Britten. *The Turn of the Screw*, Act I, Scene viii, 1 bar after fig. 79



[6] Bridcut, op. cit., p. 203.
[7] Christopher Palmer, 'The colour of the music' in *The Turn of the Screw* ed. Patricia Howard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 110-111.

In the light of this, the final climactic scene of the opera can be viewed as either a battle for sexual supremacy (the Governess's femaleness versus Quint's maleness), or as a battle of innocence (personified by the Governess) versus experience (displayed by Quint's character). Seymour subscribes to the latter angle:

> Both adults are desperate to control the children's access to 'knowledge' . . . Quint urges Miles to spurn the ignorance which is inexperience and to enter the world of knowledge and adventure, of instinct and natural desire. In contrast, the Governess aims to force the young boy to speak out and 'tell the truth', to shatter Quint's silent world with a 'confession' which will cleanse his soul of Quint's influence, and by doing so purge her own heart of her disturbing desires.[8]

Neither viewpoint alters the fact that the events enacted in Act II, Scene viii (*Miles*) represent a struggle for Miles' soul, a struggle that began with Quint's first appearance in Act I, Scene iv and continues throughout the rest of the opera reaching catharsis in this final scene. Britten and Piper, following on from James, leave the identity of the one responsible for Miles' death open to interpretation. The Governess' final line in the libretto reads, 'What have we done between us?'[9] As if to cement this joint responsibility, Britten precedes that final line with a passage in unison octaves for the Governess and Quint (Ex. 3.4). Continuing the ambiguity, the Governess' line, 'Together we have destroy'd him', could refer as much to Miles as it does to Quint, particularly in the context of this duet.

This final scene reveals the Governess, behaving much like Goethe's Erlking, discussed below, to be as forceful as Quint in her desire to possess Miles. Vivien Jones asks, 'Is the "turn of the screw" simply the involvement of innocent children, or the dawning realisation that their apparent protector is the real predator?'[10] Many critics have suggested that, as a result of the Guardian's silence, the Governess

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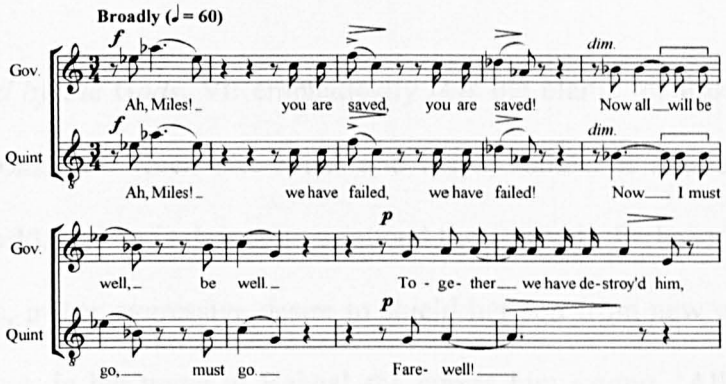
[8] Seymour, op. cit., pp. 198-199.
[9] Britten and Piper, op. cit., p. 317.
[10] Vivien Jones in *The Turn of the Screw* ed. Patricia Howard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 19.

Ex. 3.4: Britten. *The Turn of the Screw*, Act II, scene viii, 1 bar after fig. 134



transfers her affection from him to Miles. Howard even implies that her behaviour in this scene is sexually charged:

> Now she 'pushes Miles around so that he can't see [Quint]' (libretto, II. 8). The action is on the surface an intensification of her protective role – she is still concerned to shield Miles from Quint – but it also betrays her possessive fear of competition. She is afraid that if Miles sees Quint he may chose Quint rather than herself. There are sexual resonances in her action too. And there is more than a hint of a woman quizzing her lover over his previous attachments in the interrogation which follows.[11]

The mothers in *Albert Herring* and *Amahl and the Night Visitors* are also portrayed as stereotypically stifling, though they are mild when compared with the Governess. In Act III, the emancipated Albert criticises his mother's suffocation:

> It was all because you squashed me down and reined me in.
> Did up my instincts with safety pins,
> Kept me wrapped in cotton wool,
> Measured my life by a twelve-inch rule,
> Protected me with such devotion,
> My only way out was a wild explosion.[12]

When Amahl is offered the chance to leave home, and join the kings on their journey, his mother, when she bids farewell, makes a last ditch attempt to emphasise his child-

[11] Howard, op. ct, p. 61.
[12] Benjamin Britten and Eric Crozier, *Albert Herring* (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1948), pp. 361-362.

like qualities, 'Don't forget to wear your hat! . . . Wash Your Ears . . . Don't tell lies!'[13]

In *Snatched by the Gods*, Vir emphatically lays the blame for Rakhal's death on his mother, Moksada. Much like Miles and Flora, Rakhal is naturally curious about the adult world, and so is desperate to attend the festival. Perhaps Moksada is like the Governess, in her aggressive desire to shield her son from new experiences. For whatever reason, in her anger at Rakhal she curses him saying, 'All right then, Come! The sea can have you!'[14] Vir denies any sense of unpremeditated impulse by having Moksada repeat it three times. Later in the opera, when the storm breaks, that insistent repetition from Moksada will have left the audience in no doubt that Rakhal is thrown overboard as a direct result of her curse.

Parental figures have a much more positive role in *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. Following the example of Melanie Klein, child psychologist and disciple of Freud's, Langham Smith observes that,

> The actions of the child, and his relationship with his mother (and indeed absent father), mirror Klein's thought in several ways. Naturally the Child reacts sadistically to oral deprivation: the 'dry bread' and 'sugarless tea'. Supporting Klein's theory of 'repetition-compulsion' is the fact that the mother already has these laid out on a tray, knowing that he will incur the previously administered punishment once again and will not repent. The Armchair and Bergère (an easy chair), the first objects that the child encounters, threaten further deprivations in an extended duet and may be seen as representing the unified wrath of mother and father . . . The parental music . . . is essentially Bachian: the counterpoint over the relentless bass is without conflict, using an antique form to convey age, authority and unflinching parental unity [Ex. 3.5].[15]

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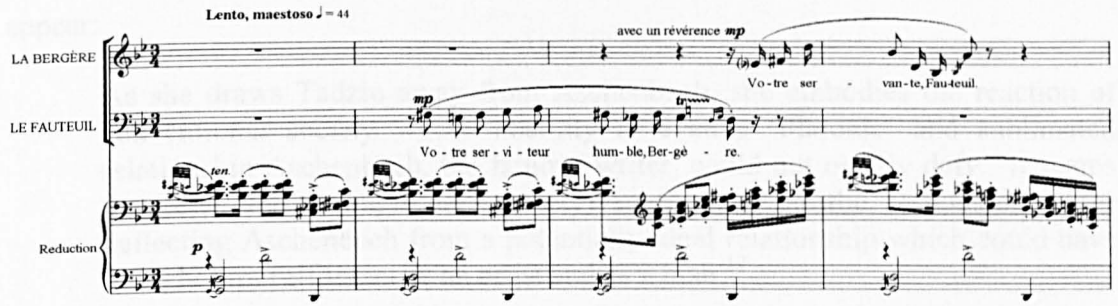
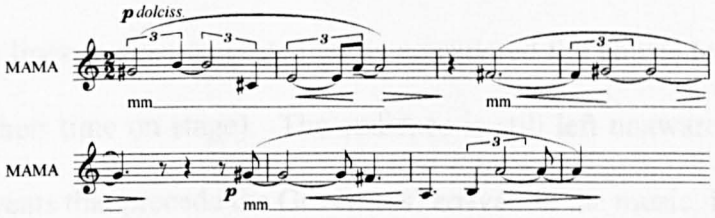
[13] Gian-Carlo Menotti, *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (Vocal Score - New York: Schirmer, 1951), pp. 62-63).
[14] Param Vir and William Radice, *Snatched by the Gods* (London: Chester Music, 1998), p. 59.
[15] Richard Langham Smith, 'Ravel's operatic spectacles: *L'Heure* and *L'Enfant*' in *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel*, ed. Deborah Mawer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 200-201.

Ex. 3.5: Ravel. *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, fig. 17



While in *Turn of the Screw* it is a lack of a stable parental figure that contributes to Miles' death, it is the opposite which ultimately saves the boy in Ravel's opera. After he has dressed the squirrel's wounds he whispers, 'Maman', and on hearing that, the animals return him to the safety of his mother. Knussen alludes to this aspect of Ravel's opera in *Where the Wild Things Are*. In the closing bars of Knussen's opera, Mama's voice can be heard off stage humming a lyrical vocalise which invitingly calls Max home (Ex. 3.6). This melody is one of the only traditionally lyrical vocal lines in the whole opera, and surely represents a mother's love.

Ex 3.6: Knussen. *Where the Wild Things Are*, Scene viii, fig. 108



Maternal protection even features in *Death in Venice*. In Act II, Scene ix, 'Tadzio's mother deliberately gets up and places herself between her son and Aschenbach'.[16] The irony is that where she perceives Aschenbach to be threatening, he had initially viewed himself as a father figure to Tadzio (Act I, Scene v). Clifford

[16] Britten and Howard, *Death in Venice*, p. 197.

Hindley questions whether Tadzio's Mother's behaviour is as positive as it might first appear:

> As she draws Tadzio away from Aschenbach, she embodies the reaction of conventional society whose hostility to even a 'Platonic' and sublimated relationship Aschenbach, the famous writer, could not openly defy. It seems that she (and through her, society) must share in the responsibility for deflecting Aschenbach from a potentially ideal relationship which could have brought him fulfilment as an artist and as a man.[17]

Curlew River displays Britten's expression of the maternal bond at his most personal, as Bridcut explains:

> That maternal bond, which was so real to Britten from his own experience, is the central feature of *Curlew River*. His involvement with the 'Madwoman' is deeply felt, deranged as she is by the disappearance of her twelve-year-old son, abducted into slavery . . . in *Curlew River* there is a transcendent moment of redemption as the voice of the boy's spirit (a treble of course) emerges faintly from the plainsong hymn loudly chanted by the woman's companions. At first it is almost an aural illusion, but the boy's voice gathers strength, and with his benediction the mother is released from her insanity.[18]

The difficulties which face interpreters of James' *The Turn of the Screw* have been summarised by Claire Seymour:

> The four main issues of contention are the 'reality' of the ghosts, the reliability of the Governess, the integrity of the children's innocence and the exact nature of their contamination by the ghosts, Peter Quint and Miss Jessel.[19]

Much of this ambiguity is carried over into Britten's opera (although his decision to give the ghosts lines to sing suggests that he considered the ghosts to be 'real' for at least some of their time on stage). The audience is still left unaware of the specific nature of the events that precede the Governess' arrival. In the music, Britten certainly implies that Quint has interfered with the children, and Patricia Howard has observed how the brief three-note celesta motif which represents Quint 'can be shown to have

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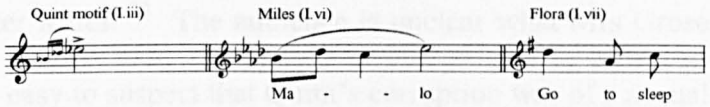
[17] Clifford Hindley, 'Contemplation and Reality: A Study in Britten's *Death in Venice*', Music and Letters, 71/4, p. 522.
[18] Bridcut, op. cit., pp.270-271.
[19] Claire Seymour, *The Operas of Benjamin Britten* (Bury St. Edmunds: The Boydell Press, 2004), p.182.

Ex. 3.7: Presence of Quint Motif in Britten. *The Turn of the Screw*



permeated to the heart of the children. It shapes their most equivocal expressions' (Ex 3.7).[20] Bridcut has suggested that there are also strong sexual connotations in the aforementioned 'Malo' song which, as the above example demonstrates, is musically connected with Quint (Ex. 2.6):

> *Malo* . . . sets the context for the discomfiting relationship between the boy and Peter Quint which pervades the rest of the drama. We realise that the boy, consciously or not, is advertising his own emotional and psychological complexity on the brink of adolescence . . . He is apparently reciting a classroom jingle designed to remind pupils of the different meanings of the Latin word *malo*. But the words suggest a deeper awareness of temptation and evil:
>
> *Malo* . . . I would rather be
> *Malo* . . . in an apple tree
> *Malo* . . . than a naughty boy
> *Malo* . . . in adversity.
>
> It is a pivotal point in the opera. We realise that there is much more to Miles than a larky little boy. This song is both simple and complex, poignant and unsettling, and it encapsulates Britten's interest in the co-existence of innocence and sensuality.[21]

Seymour suggests that what the 'Malo' song really demonstrates is the choice Miles is presented with:

> The first two lines summarise the Governess's conservative approach to Miles's education while the final two lines imply the alternative education offered by Quint. Significantly, the melody of the last two lines is an inversion of the first two, words and melody thus clarifying the choice which Miles must make [Ex. 2.6].[22]

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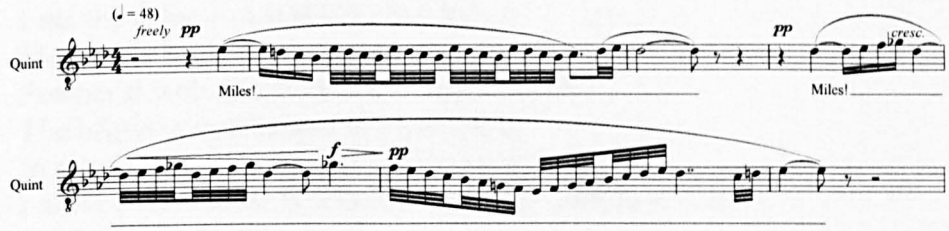
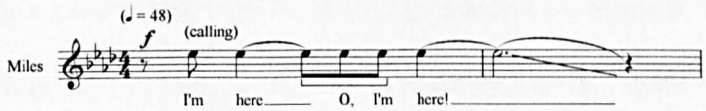
[20] Howard, op. cit., pp. 88-89.
[21] John Bridcut, *Britten's Children* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), p. 202.
[22] Seymour, op. cit., p. 203.

Mrs Grose informs the Governess, in Act I, scene v, that Quint, 'was free . . . with little Master Miles.'[23] The audience is unclear what Mrs Grose means by this, and it would be easy to suspect that Quint's corruption was of a sexual nature. Britten and Piper seem to suggest this in Act I, scene viii, a fundamental moment when considered in the context of Quint's corruption of the children. At this point in the opera, Miles and Flora meet the ghosts for a late night tryst. Miles responds to Quint's 'seductive' music (Ex. 3.8) with 'seductive' calls of his own, answering Quint's exotic melismas with sensual glissandi (Ex. 3.9). Bridcut suggests that Miles' use of 'oh' is 'surely a sign of longing'.[24]

Ex. 3.8: Britten. *The Turn of the Screw* Act 1, Scene viii, 8 bars before fig. 72



Ex. 3.9: Britten. *The Turn of the Screw* Act I, Scene viii, fig. 73



Bridcut has also observed how Quint's tantalising description of himself, offered later in this scene, has its origins in Goethe's poem *Erlkönig*, set to music by Schubert.[25]

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[23] Benjamin Britten and Myfanwy Piper, *The Turn of the Screw* (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1966), p. 82.
[24] Bridcut, op. cit, p.203.
[25] Bridcut, op. cit., p.203.

The Erl-King *(Erlkönig)*

Sweet child, come with me,
I'll play wonderful games with you!
Many a pretty flower grows on the shore,
My mother has many a golden robe . . .

Won't you come with me my fine lad?
My daughters shall wait upon you;
My daughters will lead the nightly dance,
And will rock, and dance, and sing you to sleep . . .

I love you, your fair form allures me,
And if you don't come willingly, I'll use force.[26]

The Turn of the Screw Act I, Scene viii, 1 bar after fig. 73.

I'm all things strange and bold,
The riderless horse
Snorting, stamping on the hard sea sand,
The hero-highwayman plundering the land.
I am King Midas with gold in his hand . . .
I am the smooth world's double face,
Mercury's heels.
Feather'd with mischief and a God's deceit.
The brittle blandishment of counterfeit.
In me secrets, half-formed desires meet . . .
I am the hidden life which stirs when the candle is out;
Upstairs and down,
The footsteps barely heard,
The unknown gesture,
The soft persistent word,
The long sighing flight of the night-wing'd bird.[27]

Adopting a contrasting view to that put forward by Bridcut, Howard implies that this scene does not, in fact, reveal Miles and Flora to be aware of the subtext of Quint's words. She observes that:

> Miles seizes on the harmless images suggested by Quint and rejects all the more pernicious suggestions . . . Flora too picks up the magic enticements of Miss Jessel's complaint and shares no part of her bitterness.[28]

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[26] Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, *Erlkönig* trans. Richard Wigmore (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988), pp. 205-206.
[27] Benjamin Britten and Myfanwy Piper, *The Turn of the Screw* (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1966), pp. 134-141.
[28] Howard op. cit., pp. 47-48.

Miles only picks up on the words 'Gold', 'Secrets', and 'Bird', and Flora only responds to Miss Jessel with the words 'Pandora with her box as well'.[29] Howard goes on to suggest that the children's inquisitive interest in the adult world is perfectly natural:

> The children evince no more than a very normal fascination with night and 'the hidden life that stirs when the candle is out' – the very normality being underlined by Mrs Piper's own account of the genesis of this scene: 'I searched about for possibilities in books and dreams and remembered too being driven as a child into a state of high excitement and frustration by the sounds of adult life after I had gone to bed'.[30]

Clifford Hindley asks:

> What, in the libretto, is 'evil' about the offers Quint makes to the boy? In riddling words we sense ambition, adventure, wealth, a degree of double-dealing admittedly ('the smooth world's double face'), but above all the realization of mysterious but deep desires. None of this substantiates the dark accusations of evil voiced by Mrs Grose and the Governess . . . On the contrary, Quint's words allude to the expanding horizons and developing maturity of a growing boy.[31]

Seymour even goes so far as to suggest that Quint's motives could be pure in origin, 'There is no denying the beauty and seductiveness of Quint's melodies, and Britten may be suggesting that 'love' is essentially good even if society decrees that paedophilia is not.'[32] Hindley suggests that the relationship between Miles and Quint could be one of homosexual 'love'.[33]

The *Turn of the Screw* seems overtly to have influenced the creation of several other operas. For instance, on the surface, *Death in Venice,* written many years later, seems to represent a curiously inverted version of it. In *The Turn of the Screw*, it is the adults who must take at least some responsibility for the corruption of the

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[29] Benjamin Britten and Myfanwy Piper, op. cit., pp. 138-149.
[30] Howard op. cit. p. 48.
[31] Clifford Hindley, 'Why Does Miles Die? A study of Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* ', The Musical Quarterly, 74/1, p. 3.
[32] Seymour, op. cit., p. 189.
[33] Clifford Hindley, op. cit., p. 15.

children; in *Death in Venice*, it is the boy Tadzio who, consciously or not, seduces Aschenbach.

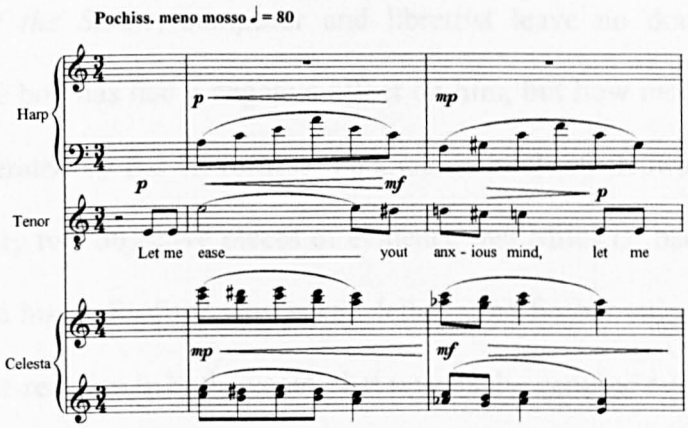
Portman alludes to Act I, Scene viii of *The Turn of the Screw*, in Act II, Scene i of her opera, *The Little Prince*. In that scene the Snake, a tenor like Quint, tries to tempt the Prince, a treble like Miles, into a journey which would culminate in his death. The Snake's vocal lines allude to the same style of exoticism as Quint's; Portman even underpins them with a prominent part for celesta, the instrument most associated with Quint throughout the whole of *The Turn of the Screw*, and used by Britten to evoke Quint's pentatonic sound world in that pivotal seduction scene (Ex. 3.10). There is much innuendo in the last four lines of this example from Nicholas Wright's libretto for *The Little Prince*, and the reference to the gold bracelet, particularly, reminds one of Quint.

> I can take you further than a ship
> To a place that none can name.
> That's far.
> Who ever I touch I send back
> To the place from which he came.
> But you're young and weak
> Just an innocent child
> A waif away from home
> Daring to dream that you'll find what you seek
> In a place of grit and granite.
> Don't you miss your tiny planet?
> Aren't you lonely where you are?
> Let me ease your anxious mind,
> Let my little length enfold you
> Tightly coiled, close entwined.
> Like a bracelet cast in gold.[34]

Apart from the pilot, most of the adults in *The Little Prince* are portrayed, both in the libretto and the music, as unattractive. The Prince encounters the impotent king, the vain man, the drunkard, and the obsessive businessman. They are all depicted in

[34] Rachel Portman and Nicholas Wright, *The Little Prince* (New York: St. Rose Music Publishing, 2005), pp.11-15.

Ex. 3.10: Portman. *The Little Prince*, Act II, Scene i, bb.108-110



unflattering musical caricatures which highlight the value of the Prince's innocence. This makes his encounter with the seductive, Quint-like Snake all the more potent.

The Turn of the Screw itself, while serving as a reference-point for later works, might be seen to allude to operas that precede it. For instance, where Quint tries to seduce Miles with promises of revelations from the adult world, the witch in *Hänsel und Gretel* tempts the children with sweets and cakes, symbols of their own world. (Similarly, it is the smell of 'good things to eat' which sustains Max on his journey back from the land of the wild things, and hot food with which he is rewarded on his return.)[35] In *Albert Herring*, peaches are used a symbol of temptation. In Act I, Scene ii, the qualities of the peach are an integral part of Sid and Nancy's flirting. Following his emancipation, Albert offers the peaches to the children in Act III. Now that Albert has tasted the forbidden fruit, he seems resolved to tempt others with it. [36]

[35] Oliver Knussen and Maurice Sendak, *Where the Wild Things Are* (London: Faber music, 1983), p. 231.

[36] The rituals associated with food represent an important collision of the child and adult worlds. In the opening scene of Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* the child is given 'sugarless tea' and 'dry bread', in place of a proper meal, as punishment for his laziness and bad behaviour. (Maurice Ravel and Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette, *L'enfant et les sortilèges.* (Paris: Durand & co., 1925), p. 4.)

2. Contrasting perspectives on the value of innocence

In *The Turn of the Screw*, composer and librettist leave no doubt that Quint's corruption of the boy has had a negative effect on him, but how much this 'damage' has been exaggerated by the Governess' paranoia is unclear. Howard has observed that there are only two objective pieces of evidence that Miles is 'bad': his expulsion from school, and his theft of the Governess' letter. She further suggests that it is the Governess' 'over-reaction to both events' that reveals the genuine evil.[37]

Critics are divided about the innocence inherent in the children. In Act II, Scene i, the audience is informed by the ghosts, through a quotation from Yeats' *The Second Coming*, that, 'The ceremony of innocence is drowned'.[38] James' own comments, though ambiguous, also appear to suggest that evil is rife:

> James had been asked what possible construction should be put upon *The Turn of the Screw*, and he replied, 'The worst possible construction'. Basil Coleman points to the hostile reactions James received when the original story was published. 'He got a great many letters afterwards, accusing him of all sorts of evils, and he said, 'Well, then I know I've succeeded. Because you read into it the evil that you know'.[39]

Eli Siegel, in her book *James and the Children*, argues that a Freudian, psychoanalytical interpretation of James' novella is unrealistic and represents a naïve desire to avoid an interpretation which suggests that evil is inherent in children.[40] Some even believe that the children are so corrupt that their relationship is incestuous. Jonathan Miller's 1979 production for English National Opera put that notion across, as Tom Sutcliffe observed:

> Never have Britten's children less deserved the title the Innocents. When Miles asks, 'Now *chase* me,' it's a sexual invitation. Likewise 'Tom was *beat*.' Dr Miller finds it's a Bergamesque psycho-drama about incest rather than paedophilia, though there may have been some of that too.[41]

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[37] Howard, op. cit., p. 37.
[38] Benjamin Britten and Myfanwy Piper, op. cit., p. 181.
[39] Bridcut, op. cit., p. 205.
[40] Eli Siegel, *James and the Children* (New York: Definition Press, 1969) p. 4.
[41] Tom Sutcliffe in *The Guardian* (8th, November 1979), p. 11.

Miles, himself, admits at the end of Act I, that he is 'bad'.[42] However, Mellers has indicated that this admission may have a dual meaning,

> such passions and terrors may be 'bad', to use Miles' word, they are not necessarily and only bad since in representing the daemonic they embrace the heights along with the depths of human potential.[43]

This would suggest that Miles' knowledge is simply part of his natural journey from childhood to adulthood. Christopher Palmer even goes so far as to suggest that Miles might have been better off with Quint than with the neurotic Governess.[44]

Seymour indicates that a middle ground could exist between these contrasting perspectives on the value of the children's innocence:

> Britten might be suggesting that it is not innocence itself but the collective rituals of innocence which must be drowned in order to liberate the individual, enabling them to progress physically and emotionally from childhood to adulthood. However, the undercurrents of sexual tension in Yeats's longing for the world to end through apocalyptic change persist in the opera and challenge this moral position: breaking conventions which may have good or bad results.[45]

Described as a 'youth', Albert Herring is not technically a child. However, he begins Britten's opera with a child-like innocence. That work charts Albert's comic journey from the innocence of his naïve, virtuous upbringing to experience, in the form of alcohol, women and general debauchery. When the audience first see Albert alone, in Act I, Scene ii, he sings of his unadventurous lifestyle in a reserved, dry recitative style, punctuated by staccato chords in the orchestra (Ex. 3.11). The melody is constructed from a series of predictable sequences, comparable to his predictable life, and there are few moments of lyricism, as heard in the preceding love duet of Sid and Nancy, and little use of melisma. This contrasts markedly with the impassioned

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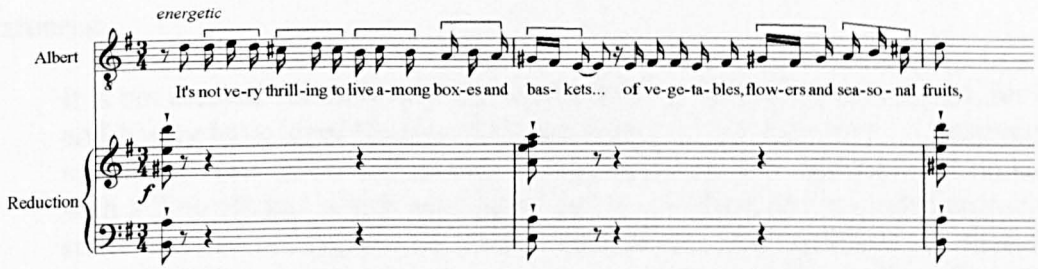
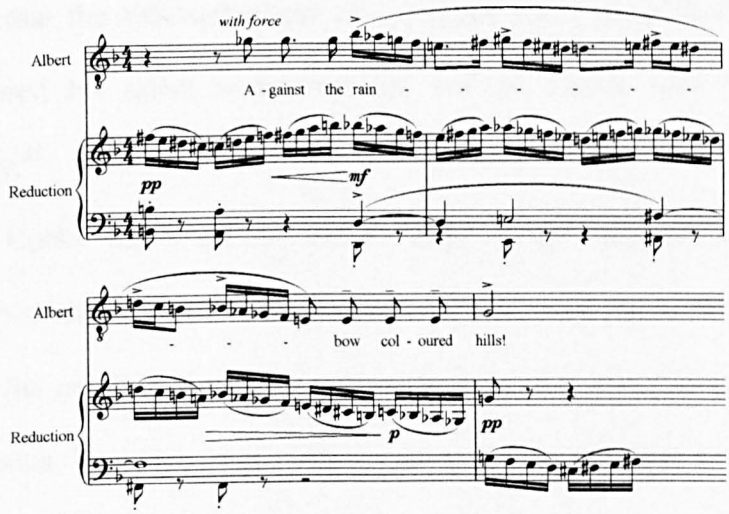
[42] Benjamin Britten and Myfanwy Piper, op. cit., p. 162.
[43] Wilfred Mellers, in *The Britten Companion* (ed. Christopher Palmer) (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p. 153.
[44] Palmer, op. cit., p. 113.
[45] Seymour, op. cit., pp. 194-195.

Ex. 3.11: Britten. *Albert Herring*, Act I, Scene ii, 33 bars after fig. 76



Ex. 3.12: Britten. *Albert Herring*, Act II, Scene ii, 3 bars after fig. 88



aria he sings after tasting the forbidden fruits of alcohol and sensuality in Act II, Scene ii (Ex. 3.12). Here, wild melismatic lyricism is explored with abandon. The orchestra emulates this new found mood with running semiquavers in the woodwind.

Critics are divided as to whether, by the end of the opera, Albert really has gained true liberation following his new experiences. Kennedy asks,

> Is it really likely that Albert will have gained his freedom by a night on the tiles in which he has done nothing more than get drunk and be thrown out of two pubs? 'Never mind, Albert', one can imagine his mother saying, once she regained her composure, 'you weren't yourself. It won't happen again.' And I bet it never did.[46]

[46] Kennedy, op. cit., p. 184.

Seymour suggests that alcohol is merely the catalyst for a deeper form of self-awareness:

> It is not alcohol which is responsible for Albert's rebellion but passion, for Sid and Nancy have laced his lemonade not with rum but with love . . . Innocence, mistakenly identified with sexual inexperience, is now rejected and replaced with a 'knowledge' which establishes an equilibrium between independence of spirit and some degree of social integration. The problem is that this 'knowledge' or experience is never openly acknowledged in either the text or score of *Albert Herring*.[47]

In his article, 'Not the marrying kind: Britten's *Albert Herring*', Clifford Hindley argues that the subdued nature of that final scene suggests that Albert has in fact discovered his latent homosexuality, and so cannot celebrate his 'coming out' publicly.[48]

Cooke has observed that A major is the key that Britten associates with innocence and purity.[49] The Balinese *selisir* scale, upon which Tadzio's theme is based, fits neatly into Britten's Arcadian key of A major (Ex. 3.13). Its use here is ambiguous, however, as Tadzio is surely not as innocent as he might first appear. Aschenbach himself observes, in Act I, Scene v, that the boy notices when he is noticed, and the smile Tadzio bestows on Aschenbach at the end of Act I causes him to exclaim, 'Nobody deserves to be smiled at like that'.[50] Tadzio's alluring awareness of Aschenbach seems to render him complicit in the writer's downfall. Britten's use of A major as a symbol of purity, most likely reflects that, as Evans has observed 'all the Tadzio music is Aschenbach's, his idealization of what attracts him in the boy into

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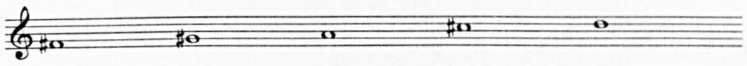
[47] Seymour, pp. 115-116.
[48] Clifford Hindley, 'Not the marrying kind: Britten's *Albert Herring*', Cambridge Opera Journal, 6/2, pp. 159-174.
[49] This can be witnessed early on in his career in the harmonically static *Young Apollo* (1939), as well as in the evocation of Auden's 'Dear white children' in *A Hymn to St. Cecilia* (1942). It is demonstrated in an ironic context as the key for *Tom, Tom the Piper's Son* in *The Turn of the Screw*, and more genuinely in the closing bars of the *War Requiem* (1961). [Mervyn Cooke, *Britten and the Far East* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1988), p. 237.]
[50] Benjamin Britten and Myfanwy Piper, *Death in Venice* (London: Faber Music, 1979), p. 176.

Ex. 3.13: Tadzio's mode in Britten. *Death in Venice*



a model of that poised beauty towards which he aspired in his own work'.[51] The fact that Tadzio remains mute throughout the opera, and is only ever witnessed conducting his movements in the form of a stylised dance serves to heighten this notion. Much like Quint's three note motif (Ex. 3.7), Tadzio's pitches impregnate the other music in the score, as Cooke observes:

> The frequent occurrence of his mode on instruments not associated with the gamelan and in Aschenbach's vocal lines and piano accompaniments ensures that Tadzio's influence is felt not merely as an isolated phenomenon but as a feature which infuses the musical fabric of the whole opera.[52]

Like many of the children in these operas, Tadzio undergoes a rite of passage when he is crowned victor of the beach games in Act I, Scene viii. However, his music remains unaltered throughout the opera, suggesting that his innocence remains intact. As Mitchell puts it, 'The beautiful Tadzio leaves the opera as beautiful and as untouched as he entered it, whereas Aschenbach undergoes the ultimate modification: from life to death'.[53]

Ravel's use of childhood parody is concerned with the impregnation of the child's consciousness. In some ways, *L'enfant et les sortilèges* presents the antithesis of *The Turn of the Screw*, certainly of the more obvious interpretations of the latter. Although the children in both operas are portrayed as malevolent, in Ravel's opera this malevolence stems from a lack of awareness of the adult world. It is the boy's

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[51] Evans, op. cit., p. 526.
[52] Cooke in Mitchell, op. cit., p. 124.
[53] Mitchell in Palmer, op. cit., p. 245.

loss of innocence, his sexual awakening, which ultimately saves him. As Langham Smith explains,

> He has now been challenged by fundamental adult feelings within: firstly by tumescent stirrings of adolescent love for the princess; and secondly by the raw spectacle of the two cats, a stroke of genius on Ravel's part, for it is not just funny, it is raunchy [Ex. 3.14]. Thus the hinge in the piece is the Child's awakening into romantic love and his witnessing of the sex act.[54]

The boy, in Ravel's opera, moves from acts of sadistic violence aimed at the animals and the furnishings at the start of the opera to acts of compassion at the end of it, such as the bandaging of the squirrel's paw. This is reflected in the music which moves from the distorted nursery rhyme style of the start (Ex. 2.3), to the more expansive lyricism of his encounter with the princess (Ex. 3.15).

In a comparable act of compassionate altruism, Amahl offers his crutch to the kings for them to present to the Christ-child. He is rewarded for his naïve generosity by being healed and, now that he can walk, he is allowed to join the adults on the final leg of their journey. It is perhaps a tragedy that Marie's child, in *Wozzeck*, is too young to have undergone any kind of emancipation, and is thus demonstrably unable to comprehend the fate of his parents. While the opera is not primarily concerned with his fate, this is the final image with which the audience is left.

When considered in the context of other operas, and set against each other, Britten's characterisation of children is multifaceted. Both Miles and Tadzio suggest innocence and experience simultaneously. Tadzio, while portrayed as incorrupt, has the power to corrupt. Meanwhile, by specifying that Miles be sung by a treble, Britten seems at odds with his use of that vocal timbre in several of his other works, where trebles seem to symbolise an Arcadian purity (The *War Requiem* and the *Missa Brevis* for example). As Bridcut observes:

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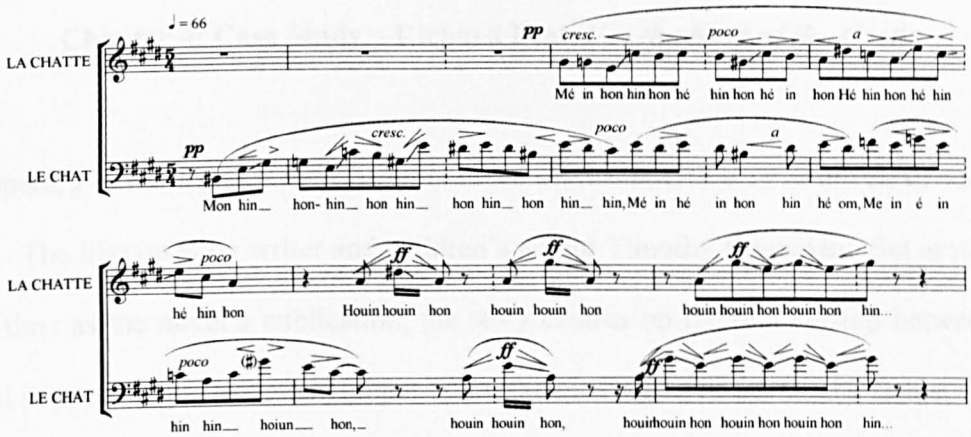
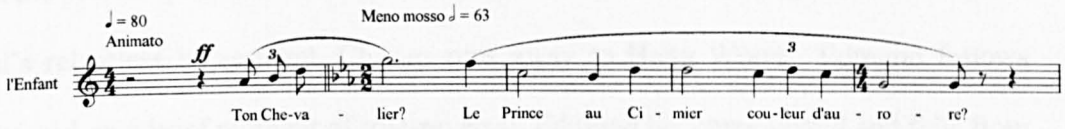
[54] Langham Smith, op. cit. p. 205.

Ex. 3.14: Ravel. *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, 3 bars after fig. 98



Ex. 3.15: Ravel. *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, 3 bars after fig. 67



> he also knew that, both for him and for his audience, boys' voices conveyed resonances (of innocence, purity and vulnerability) that were invaluable to his musical and dramatic purpose.[55]

By composing a part for Miles that could not easily be realised by a female singer, because much of the drama of that part would be lost and the balance of the children's relationship to each other would be upset, Britten may be suggesting that an idealistic interpretation of all his music for children is unrealistic. Palmer has observed that,

> It is a fact of life that the childhood vision, once clouded over, can never be recaptured in its pristine purity; a fact of life that Britten was never able to come to terms with. None perceived more plainly or more painfully that children, before they are corrupted by systemised education, possess the artistic emotion or sensibility in its quintessence; they resemble primitive man before he was subjected to the so called 'refining' influence of civilisation.[56]

[55] Bridcut, p. 126.
[56] Palmer in Palmer, op. cit, p. 68.

Chapter 4: Case Study – Richard Peat. *I'm the King of the Castle*

The opera, *I'm the King of the Castle*, is based on Susan Hill's 1970 novel, of the same name. The libretto is by writer and children's author Timothy Knapman. Set around the same time as the novel's publication, the story centres on the relationship between two eleven year old boys: Edmund Hooper and Charles Kingshaw. Edmund's father, Joseph, invites Charles and his mother, Helena, to live with him. She is to act as an informal housekeeper. Edmund mercilessly bullies Charles, while a hesitant courtship develops between the parents (who remain neglectfully oblivious to Charles' plight). As a result of Edmund's relentless harassment, Charles runs away to Hang Wood. Edmund follows him there and, in a brief moment of role-reversal, Edmund becomes scared and falls from a tree. Charles believes Edmund dead. Thereafter, he makes friends with another boy in the village, Anthony Fielding. However, it transpires that Edmund is still alive and Charles is informed of two further pieces of devastating news: the parents are to marry, and he is to attend the same school as Edmund. In the belief that there will never be any escape from Edmund, he returns to Hang Wood to commit suicide by jumping from the tree.

The opera is in two acts, each divided into three days. These are not consecutive days, and the implication is that some time will have passed between each day. The balance between the acts is cemented dramatically by the parallelism of near-tragic and tragic events at the end of each. In the first act, days one to three comprise the arrival of the Kingshaws to Warings, the Hooper family home, and all the events leading up to Edmund's fall in Hang Wood. In the second, days four to six comprise Charles' meeting

with Anthony Fielding, and all the events leading up to his funeral. It is intended that the roles of Charles and Anthony be sung by trebles. Edmund's part is spoken throughout, so his role should be played by a child actor who has received musical training. Helena is a soprano, and Joseph a tenor.

What separates *I'm the King of the Castle* from many of the other operas composed for children's voices is the high proportion of stage time given to the children on their own. During Days 3 and 4, for example, the parents do not make a single appearance. In *The Turn of the Screw*, Miles and Flora are always portrayed in the company of adults who play an equal role in the shaping of the scene's dramatic integrity. The same situation exists in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and *The Little Prince*. Susan Hill's novel and the opera are concerned primarily with relationships forged between children. While their relationship with adults is important, these remain essentially static throughout the story.[1] The subject matter and musical language preclude this opera from being considered a 'children's opera' in the manner of Britten's *The Little Sweep* or Bennett's *All the Kings Men*. Hill has said that her novel 'is primarily about children. But it was written when I was an adult, for adults.'[2] Timothy Knapman and I have adopted a similar approach to the creation of the opera. Hill concedes that her book has often been best understood by young people in their early teens, and I hope that my operatic treatment of this story does not exclude that response.

Humphrey Carpenter has written of the friendship between Susan Hill and

[1] While Helena, Charles' mother, does 'abandon' him by the end of the novel (as she becomes preoccupied with Joseph Hooper and what he can offer), it is clear from the start that there is a great distance between Helena and Charles.
[2] Susan Hill, *I'm the King of the Castle*, (London: Penguin Books, 1989), p. 225.

Benjamin Britten, and of her love of his music.[3] Her novel *Strange Meeting* (1971) was written in response to the *War Requiem*, and it is hard to imagine that *I'm the King of the Castle* was not influenced by *The Turn of the Screw*. The house, Warings, shares much of the atmosphere of Bly, both works feature an 'evil' child, and both present adult figures of dubious merit.

1. Pitch Material

Great importance is attached to pitch relationships in this piece. The challenge facing the composer was the integration of vocal music appropriate to child singers with suitable material for all of the opera's characters and dramatic situations. In pieces of mine such as *The Hunter and the Hunted* (2005/6), an instrumental work for mixed ensemble, I had explored a totally chromatic harmonic language which I deemed appropriate for the evocation of some of the drama and atmosphere which pervade Hill's story. However, the use of totally chromatic vocal lines, such as those used in *Proverbs* (2005 - for soprano, bass clarinet and piano), would ill-suit child singers. In the tradition of other significant operatic roles for children's voices, like those in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and *Turn of the Screw,* I wanted to create vocal lines based on tonal and modal archetypes which could convey the necessary weight of meaning behind the libretto. With this in mind, I sought a method of marrying material with a clear pitch centre to totally chromatic music. Integration of this kind can be found in *Wozzeck*, *The Turn of the Screw* and *Death in Venice.*[4]

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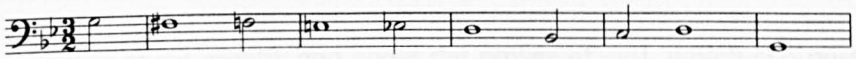
[3] Humphrey Carpenter, *Benjamin Britten: A Biography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), pp. 515-516.
4 I had explored this notion in several of the other works in my portfolio. In the orchestral piece, *Sredni Vashtar* (2003), I interpolated a lyrical modal melody, amongst sections of totally chromatic writing. In *Eden Chacony* (2003/4), for flute, clarinet and harp, a lyrical, modal melody gradually evolves to become a

For the opera, my solution was to connect all the music with the bass line of the aria, 'When I am laid in earth' from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (Ex. 4.1). Sometimes this is made explicit, and at other times heavily concealed. There are autobiographical, symbolic and musical reasons why this was chosen as the basis. *Dido and Aeneas* was the first opera I saw, aged eleven (the same age as Charles, Edmund and Anthony). The contour of Purcell's bass line, a chromatic descent spanning an octave, reflects Charles' gradual descent over the course of the story, as well as the manner of his death, a fatal fall from a tree. The irony is that, in her final plaintive aria, Dido begs to be remembered; the implication at the end of *I'm the King of the Castle* is that Charles will soon be forgotten by the 'brave new family.' However, it is in the nature of a chromatic bass line supporting a diatonic melody, as demonstrated by Purcell, which provides the means of linking the totally chromatic music in the opera with the more diatonic elements.

Ex. 4.1: Purcell. *Dido and Aeneas*, 'When I am laid in earth', no. 37, bb.1-6



Purcell's bass line is incorporated into the score in several different guises, and like the 'Screw' theme in Britten's opera, its influence throughout the score is widespread. Sometimes it is employed in a traditional manner, in the way Purcell uses it, as a bass line which harmonically underpins the surface melodic activity. This is most frequently used during dialogue which involves the children, as in Act I, Day 1 (bb. 141-156), where the

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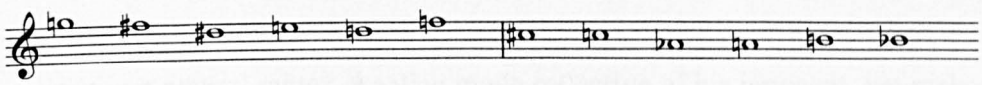
fierce, atonal dance. In *Winter Landscape* (2003/4), totally chromatic melodies, played by the trumpet, are heard in the same context as an unceasing drone in the organ, an ancient carol, and flashes of the harmonic series. Wild atonal screams are transformed into a children's lullaby in *One Short Sleepe Past* (2004, rev. 2006). In *Dark Clouds*, the final song of the cycle *Separation* (2002, rev. 2006 - for counter-tenor, cello and harp), a totally chromatic counter-melody weaves in and out of a cantus firmus derived from a German folk song.

children are left alone together for the first time. It is even used occasionally as the basis for melody, as demonstrated in the mensuration canon heard when Charles throws himself from the tree (Act II, Day 6, bb. 262-297). The first six notes, the chromatic scale, were reordered, repeated (transposed down a diminished fifth) and reordered again to create a twelve note melody formed from these two chromatic hexachords (Ex. 4.2). The pitch material of much of the instrumental music throughout the opera is drawn from this twelve note melody, which has a particular association with Edmund. That association can be heard in the horn's dialogue with Edmund's opening reading (Act I, Day 1, bb. 7-15).

Ex. 4.2: Peat. *I'm the King of the Castle*, Twelve note melody (chromatic hexachords)



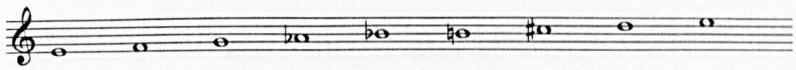
Of her book, Hill has written that:

> It is a novel about cruelty and about the power of evil, which can possess even a young child: about a victim and tormentor. But most of all, it is about isolation and the lack of love. No one in the novel is loved, gives love or feels its redeeming power. Hooper is all that he is because of that fact, and makes Kingshaw suffer as a result of it; lack of love has made the adults selfish, insensitive, blind, stupid. Only the boy Fielding has goodness and innocence, openness and warmth.[5]

To reflect this sense of selfishness and isolation, each character is given a specific melodic mode which reflects their identity, and from which they rarely waver. This is comparable to Britten's use of the selisir scale for Tadzio's music in *Death in Venice*. Joseph sings in an octatonic mode which twists and turns chromatically, symbolising his

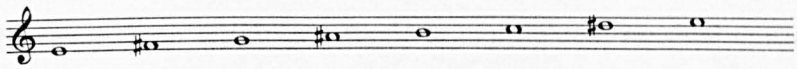
[5] Susan Hill, op. cit., pp. 225-226.

Ex. 4.3: Peat. *I'm the King of the Castle* - Joseph's scale



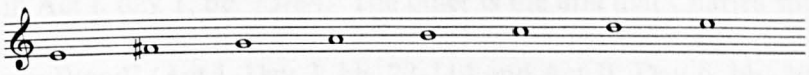
repression and inner guilt (Ex. 4.3). The high proportion of minor seconds connects this scale with the Purcell. Similarly, Helena sings in a Hungarian gypsy mode, with characteristic raised fourths and sixths, which reflects her unsettled past of constant travel (Ex. 4.4).

Ex. 4.4: Peat. *I'm the King of the Castle* - Helena's scale



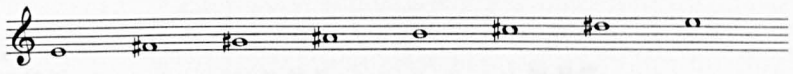
Charles sings in a natural minor, Aeolian mode reflective of his innocent, yet melancholy nature (Ex. 4.5). This scale is closest to the traditional minor scale used by Purcell for the vocal line of his aria.

Ex. 4.5: Peat. *I'm the King of the Castle* - Charles's scale



Anthony Fielding sings in a Lydian mode, with bright sounding raised fourths which imbue his music with a feeling of unbridled optimism (Ex. 4.6). The rising tones are reminiscent of notes 7-9 of Purcell's bass line.

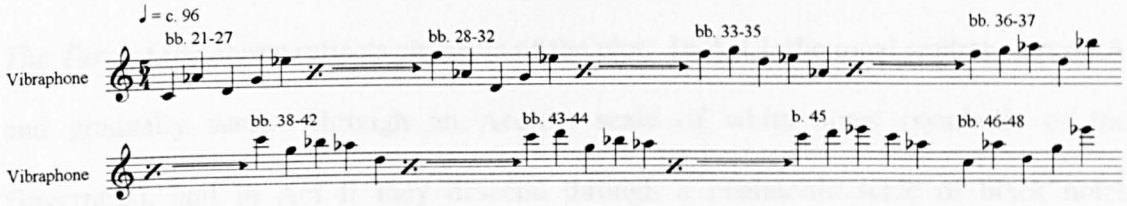
Ex. 4.6: Peat. *I'm the King of the Castle* - Anthony's scale.



Throughout the opera, almost all the harmony is derived from the pitches of the vocal lines. The notes of the vocal lines, are rearranged vertically and heard in the surrounding ensemble. Deriving harmony in this way is a particular feature of Britten's *Curlew River*, and is also characteristic of serial techniques. This can be heard in its simplest form in the music that accompanies Fielding in Act II, Day 4 (bb. 38-75), when the organ sustains the pitches of Felding's melody to form chord clusters. By deriving harmony in this way, each character's mode is highlighted; musical tension frequently comes from the interaction of different types of pitch material (chromatic, octatonic, modal etc.). This situation is particularly evident during ensembles, where different scales are heard simultaneously, as in the climactic ensemble at the end of the first day (Act I, day 1, bb. 251-264).

There are two significant places where harmony is not derived from a vertical treatment of horizontal lines. The first is where Purcell's bass line is used as a traditional bass line, as in Act I, day 1, bb. 75-84. The other is the aria that Charles sings each time he enters 'Hang Wood' (Act I, Day 3, bb. 23-114 and Act II, Day 6, bb. 206-261). Like Miles' 'Malo' aria, the intention is that the style of Charles' aria separates it from everything else in the opera to highlight the significance of 'Hang Wood', the place where Charles finds freedom, where he finds the strength to face Hooper, and where he chooses to end his life. No reference is made to this music anywhere else in the score. Charles' vocal line is primarily accompanied by a 5/4 ostinato, in the vibraphone, which

Ex. 4.7: Peat. *I'm the King of the Castle*, Act I, Day 3, bb. 21-48 – Vibraphone ostinato



alludes to Rachmaninoff's tone poem, *The Isle of the Dead.* This ostinato is developed using a technique of gradual transformation, such as I had already explored in the second song from the cycle *Separation* (Ex. 4.7). Pitches in the ostinato are substituted in order to create new patterns.

In a technique comparable to Britten's treatment of nursery rhymes (discussed in Chapter 2), pedal notes, outlining an alien key, are frequently introduced when the harmony is at its most consonant. In Act II, Day 6 (bb. 168-179), the clarinet and vibraphone play in B Flat minor, while the cello and double bass play a drone of B and F sharp. This represents Charles' status as an alien in the Hooper's house.

2. Form

The overall form was taken into consideration when the libretto was drafted. The opera begins with the funeral of Edmund's grandfather and ends with Charles' funeral. In order to articulate this essentially circular journey from one funeral to the other, the music's tonal centres travel through a cycle of fifths, beginning and ending on E. Thus, the opening material is reprised at the end. Each day is a self-contained piece which makes a cadential journey. There is also a sense of cadence between days (Fig. 4.1). The use of a cycle of fifths, which encompasses every note of the chromatic scale, connects the work's

overall form with the more local issues of blending diatonic and totally chromatic material that are outlined above. Evans has observed how Britten's overall tonal plan for *The Turn of the Screw* reflects elements of the plot. In Act I, the tonal centres start on A and gradually ascend through an Aeolian scale of white notes (symbolic of the Governess), and in Act II they descend through a pentatonic scale of black notes (symbolic of Quint).[6]

Fig. 4.1: Peat. *I'm the King of the Castle* – Pitch Centres

Day 1: E-A
Day 2: D-G
Day 3: C-F
Day 4: B♭-E♭
Day 5: A♭-D♭
Day 6: F#-B-E

Each day begins with the same gesture: tolling bells and a low tremolo in the double bass which spell out the opening pitch centre.[7] With the exception of Day 1, there then follows a short instrumental interlude which, like the variations in *The Turn of the Screw*, augurs the music and atmosphere of the scene. These instrumental passages are of sufficient length to allow a quick change of scene if necessary.

The scenes themselves present a traditional mix of arias, ensembles, recitatives and instrumental interludes. However, these blend seamlessly into each other; a recitative may introduce music from an aria, or an interlude may recall an ensemble. For example, the loud chord which is part of Joseph and Helena's first dialogue (Act I, Day 1,

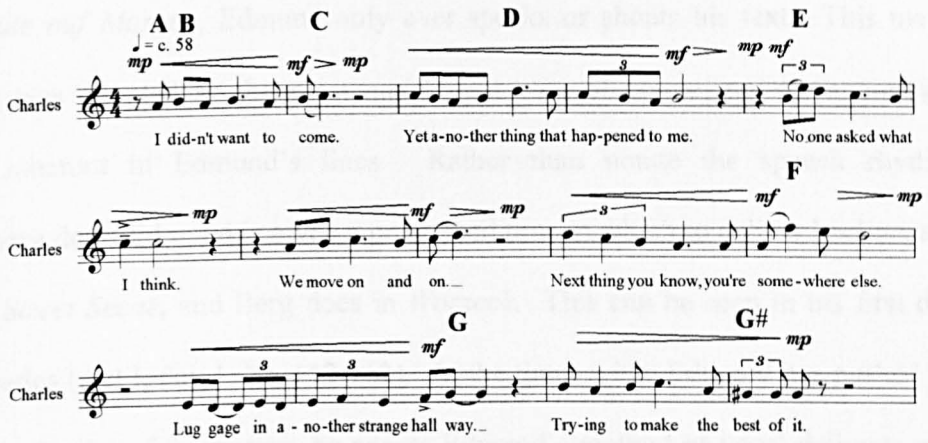
[6] Peter Evans, *The Music of Benjamin Britten* (London: J & M Dent and Sons), p. 206.
[7] Over the course of the opera, the bells play a descending whole tone scale, an inversion of the whole tones at the end of the bass line in *Dido and Aeneas*.

b. 133), forms the basis of the instrumental music which accompanies Charles and Edmund's fight later that day (Act I, Day 1, bb. 240-246). The original chord, derived from six pitches of a chromatic scale, is transposed and repeated several times to form a sequence of chords of diminishing note values. Each character's idiosyncratic music is carried over into the following scene, where it is developed or augmented with new material, as light is gradually shed on the character's motives as well as their musical motifs. For example, Joseph's repeated note motif, which accompanies his first and subsequent appearances (Act I, Day 1, b. 16) is transformed into the relentless harpsichord texture of his fantasy aria (Act II, Day 5, bb. 68-132).

3. Children's Voices

The source of the pitch material for Anthony and Charles' vocal lines has already been outlined above. I have employed a restrained rhythmic language and predominantly stepwise melodic movement for the children's arias and dialogue, such as can be found in the operas of Falla, Britten, Menotti, and Portman (discussed in Chapter 1). The surrounding ensemble decorates the melodies to create more sophisticated textures, a technique employed by Britten in *Curlew River* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* Charles sings in an arioso style for much of the opera. In the following example, a technique of gradually increasing the variety of pitches is employed (Ex. 4.8). Charles begins by oscillating between two pitches (A and B), a third is then added (C), then a fourth (D), and so on. It is written in 4/4, employing mostly quavers, crotchets and minims with the occasional triplet.

Ex. 4.8: Peat. *I'm the King of the Castle*, Act I, Day 1, bb.141-154



The aria Charles sings in Hang Wood is more expansively lyrical, and differs in style from his other vocal melodies with more extensive use of melisma (Act I, Day 3, bb. 23-48). This greater breadth of expression represents his escape from 'Warings' and his new found freedom. The vocal line still moves mostly by step, and uses a similar technique of gradually expanding the variety of pitches. 5/4 might make it a rhythmic challenge for a child singer, but this should not be an insurmountable problem. The style of this aria significantly contrasts with the monotone, chant-like, singing which Charles adopts for his desperate prayer in the Church (Act II, Day 4 bb. 25-37). This style of recitation recalls the sound-world of the narrator in Falla's *El Retablo de Maese Pedro*. At this point Charles sings the words to a repeated B flat, only occasionally exploring the semitones above and below this pitch.

Anthony's vocal lines are more traditional in character. This can be seen in his first aria (Act II, Day 4, bb. 39-75). He sings a folk-like tune in 6/8, based on the crotchet - quaver nursery rhyme rhythms, such as those found in the final scene of *Wozzeck*. Again, it moves mainly by step with occasional familiar intervals.

As I have already indicated, following on from the example set by Schoenberg in *Von Heute auf Morgen*, Edmund only ever speaks or shouts his text. This manner of delivery was adopted as the most anti-lyrical way of conveying the aggression and cruelty inherent in Edmund's lines. Rather than notate the speech rhythms, as Schoenberg does, Edmund is given a prescribed time in which to deliver his line, as Weill does in *Street Scene*, and Berg does in *Wozzeck*. This can be seen in his first dialogue with Charles (Act I, day 1, bb. 142-162). At the times when Edmund has pushed Charles to a critical point of frustration, he adopts Edmund's method of vocal delivery, shouting his lines. He does this in Act II, Day 5 (bb. 33-43), after his mother has given Edmund his treasured model of a Spanish Galleon.

4. Instrumentation and Orchestration

Each of the children is partnered by an instrument. The idea for this was suggested by my reading Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, a trilogy of novels in which children are always partnered by a 'daemon', an animal representative of their soul. Thus, the children's instrumental doubles not only accompany them, but also express truths about their personality which they cannot or will not express in words. This is particularly crucial to Edmund who never sings, and so is only expressed in music by his instrumental double: a horn, chosen for its association with hunting. It is a horn cadenza that ends the opera, revealing Edmund's triumph (Act II, day 6, b. 329). Miles develops a similar relationship with the cor anglais in *The Turn of the Screw*. After its first appearance, in dialogue with the 'Malo' song in Act I, Scene vi, the cor anglais continues to take prominence when Miles sings. Britten also uses the instrument to remind listeners of

Miles even when he is not on stage. Christopher Palmer has observed how the use of the cor anglais, in this context, carries a symbolic charge, 'The last instrument one would "normally" connect with the clear daylight of childhood is the sombre, melancholic cor anglais; yet this is the colour central to the emotional resonance of "Malo".'[8] Sali also develops a relationship with the cor anglais in the opening scene of Delius' *A Village Romeo and Juliet.*

Charles' instrumental partner is the clarinet, a reflection of his dark, yet unselfish melancholy. When Charles first appears on stage, the clarinet plays a soulful melody accompanied by the vibraphone (Act I, Day 1, bb. 75-86). For much of the time, the clarinet shadows Charles' vocal lines with plainer versions of his melodies. The idea for this technique came from Paul Klee's Pedagogical Sketchbook, in which he draws a line and accompanies it with complimentary forms (Fig. 4.2).[9] The result of this shadowing is a series of suspension-like dissonances which surround Charles' vocal lines. Like the instances found in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Curlew River*, plain melodic material is used here in the service of more sophisticated textures.

Fig. 4.2: Klee. *Pedagogical Sketchbook* – A line accompanied by a complimentary form

[8] Christopher Palmer, 'The colour of the music' in *The Turn of the Screw* ed. Patricia Howard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.119.
[9] Paul Klee, *Pedagogical Sketchbook*, Introduction and Translation by Sibyl Moholy-Nagy (London: Faber and Faber, 1953), p. 16.

Examples of this technique can be heard throughout the opera, such as in Act I, Day 2, bb. 28-39. I have already indicated above that at the moments where Charles reaches a point of critical frustration he takes on some of Edmund's musical characteristics. Correspondingly, the clarinet takes on the aggressive qualities associated with the horn. This is heard in Act I, Day 2 (bb. 75-79) where Charles's exasperated shouts are interspersed with aggressive flourishes in the clarinet.

Fielding is always accompanied by a flute or piccolo. The flute is used as a symbol of love, and the piccolo recalls the sound of that favoured instrument of children, the penny whistle. Humperdinck's inclusion of the cuckoo instrument in *Hänsel und Gretel* and Portman's use of a kazoo in *The Little Prince* are precedents for the inclusion of timbres which evoke children's instruments. Rather than shadow Fielding's lines, the piccolo plays the notes of a tonic triad in tandem with the pitches of his melody. Much like the way in which Eastern European composers, like Arvo Pärt, view the symbolic properties of the triad, it is used here to represent Fielding's innocence and purity. This is exemplified by a passage in Act II, day 4, bb. 39-75. When Charles is at his happiest, immersed in Anthony's world, the clarinet begins to accompany his vocal lines with a tonic triad; a technique comparable to that used to represent Fielding (Act II, Day 4, bb. 152-179).

The children's instruments sometimes make appearances even when the characters they represent are not present on stage, just as the celesta is frequently heard to remind the listener of Peter Quint in *The Turn of the Screw*, even when he is not present. In *I'm the King of the Castle*, an example of this can be found in Act II, Day 4 (bb. 139-

148) where the horn appears to remind the audience that even when Charles is at his happiest, the memory of Edmund's terror is never far away.

The adults do not have such strong associations with specific instruments, although the cello gradually becomes linked with Helena as she grows in confidence (Act II, Day 6, bb. 5-65 for example), and the bass clarinet plays in sassy counterpoint with the double bass to express the sordid undercurrents of Joseph's climactic aria (Act II, Day 5, bb. 71-124 for example). Other instruments also carry a symbolic charge: a harpsichord is used throughout to reflect the antiquity of Warings, and bells begin each day to mark the passing of time. The bells look back to the funeral that began the opera, and forward to the one that will end it. They are also reminiscent of the bells in Act II, Scene ii of *The Turn of the Screw*.

The fragility of children's voices is balanced by a corresponding reduction of accompanying instrumental forces, much like Birtwistle does in *Yan Tan Tethera*, and Davies does in *Taverner*. Charles and Edmund's first dialogue is accompanied by quiet clarinet shadowing, vibraphone playing tremolo on a single pitch, and high string harmonics (Act I, Day 1, bb. 141-165). This allows Charles' vocal lines and Edmund's spoken lines to be heard clearly. A similar approach is adopted for the accompaniment of Fielding's melodies: piccolo playing low in its range, a quiet tremolo on the bass drum, clusters on an organ and a drone in cello and double bass (Act II, Day 4, b. 75).

5. Evocations of Childhood

Charles and Edmund have not enjoyed a happy, 'normal' childhood. The libretto, following on from Hill, does not offer the same kind of opportunities for the musical portrayal of traditional childhood rituals that one finds in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* or Knussen's *Where the Wild Things Are.* As suggested earlier, only Anthony's music alludes to the rhythms of nursery rhymes. From the description of his upbringing in the book, it is more than likely that Anthony's mother would have sung him such songs.[10] It would be hard to imagine that the uptight Joseph would have sung nursery rhymes to Edmund. The eponymous nursery rhyme, *I'm the King of the Castle*, is referred to several times in the opera. Edmund tells Charles that he is 'King of the Castle' during their chess game (Act I, Day 2) and Charles sings it on both his trips into Hang Wood. In the closing bars of the opera, a snare drum beats out the rhythm of that nursery rhyme in celebration of Edmund's victory over Charles (Act II, Day 6, bb. 336-246).

There are some references to children's games in the opera, comparable to those found in *Boris Godunov*, *Hänsel und Gretel*, *The Turn of the Screw* and *Where the Wild Things Are.* Charles and Edmund play chess in Act I, Day 2 and Edmund's strategic success in the game mirrors his psychological manipulation of Charles. This is reminiscent of the way in which Vreli and Sali's game, in the first scene of Delius' *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, foreshadows later events in the opera. The undercurrents of the chess game are represented by aggressive snap pizzicato gestures in the strings (Act I, Day 2, bb. 28-37). Charles and Anthony play happily together in a field in Act II, Day 4. This is accompanied by a fairground-organ style figure, and contrapuntal lines of lyrical

[10] Susan Hill, *I'm the King of the Castle* (London: Penguin, 1989), pp. 203-204.

warmth in the flute and clarinet (Act II, Day 4, bb. 121-148). This is the only piece of overt pastiche in the opera, and it quotes from the slow movement of Ravel's Piano Concerto in G Major, in homage to the many examples of expertly executed pastiche found in that composer's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. It is hard to view the 'sweetness' of this passage without irony. This notion is confirmed with the entry of the horn and the double bass (Act II, Day 4, b. 139). The latter plays an F sharp pedal which clashes with the tonic key of F minor.

Charles' model of a Spanish Galleon also acquires importance. It is one of the only remaining links with his deceased father and it becomes, for Charles, a symbol of escape recalling Flora's attachment to her doll in *The Turn of the Screw*. In Act I, Day 1 he does not let Mr Hooper carry it, and this is accompanied by a loud, dissonant chord in the ensemble (Act I, Day 1, b. 133). Later that day, the children fight over the Galleon, and that chord is now developed into a series of chords which accompany the fight. During the aforementioned chess game, Edmund compares the Galleon unfavourably to his chess set. In Act II, Day 5, the audience discover that Mrs Kingshaw has let Edmund have the Galleon. Another fight ensues, which ends with Joseph slapping Charles causing the Galleon to fall to the ground and smash. In Act II, Day 6 Charles gathers what is left of the Galleon and takes it with him on his final journey into Hang Wood.

In the novel, Charles has many nightmares in which surreal images mingle with flashbacks of the abuse he has suffered from Edmund. These are alluded to in the opera in two dreamlike scenes which recall the sense of exaggerated scale that Colette and Ravel create in *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. During Act I, Day 1, Charles runs into the field and is attacked by a crow that seems to react to Edmund's command. This is

accompanied by a gradual accelerando in the ensemble which comprises an increasingly manic clarinet solo (joined later by all the instruments in counterpoint) and heart beat rhythms in a low tom-tom. Over this, disembodied voices read of the event, as it is described in the novel, in close canon which renders their speech incomprehensible, with only the occasional word in the onomatopoeic text coming to the fore (Act I, Day 1, bb. 283-311). This 'speech canon' technique is also used in Act II, Day 4, when Kingshaw witnesses the birth of a calf. Distorted speech is used in these scenes to create a surreal and fearful atmosphere of disquiet. Speech also associates Charles' fear with Edmund, who never sings in the opera.

Tantrums and outbursts, which feature so prominently in *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, and *Where the Wild Things Are*, are common in *I'm the King of the Castle*. As I have already outlined, Charles has outbursts in Act I, Day 2 (bb. 72-90) and Act II, day 5 (bb. 17-43). On each of those occasions he replaces singing with shouting, and much of his anger is expressed in the frantic clarinet gestures. Edmund's horn gestures frequently include much flutter-tonguing, a reference to the kind of rude noises that children make with their tongues, that can also be found in the orchestral textures of *L'enfant et les sortilèges* to accompany the boy's tantrum. This rude noise sound is heard when Hooper taunts Charles for the last time in Act II, Day 6 (bb. 156-166). When Edmund has an outburst of panic in Hang Wood (Act I, Day 3, bb. 50-76 and 90-98), he is shorn of his accompanying horn as a mark of the fact that he is no longer in a position to taunt Charles.

6. Parental Figures

Like the Governess, the Guardian and Mrs Grose in *The Turn of the Screw*, Joseph and Helena, as parents, take some responsibility for Charles' fate. In his first aria, Joseph sings of his inability to form a relationship with his son (Act I, Day 1, bb. 18-37). As the opera progresses, his attentions become more and more focused on Helena, and in Act II, Day 5, we discover that it was his frustrated sexual desires which caused him to invite a woman to live at Warings. Thus Charles is simply a casualty of Joseph's selfish plan. His sexual fantasies are expressed in an aria which gradually accelerates as the full extent of his perversions becomes apparent (Act II, Day 5, bb. 68-125). His wildly melismatic aria is, in some ways, like a distorted version of Peter Quint's seduction music in Act I, Scene viii of *The Turn of the Screw*. Where that music was alluring, even beautiful, Joseph's aria is graphic and sordid.

There is no sense of the maternal bond, so touchingly portrayed by Knussen and Ravel in their operas, between Charles and his mother. In Mrs Kingshaw's first aria, she sings of how coming to Warings is their one chance, and they must not waste it (Act I, Day 1, bb. 87-123). Throughout the opera she is shown to be so concerned about making a good impression on Joseph so that her domestic situation might improve, that she ignores the countless signs she receives about Charles' dilemma. I allude to Helena's failure to heed the warnings in her music. It is always underlined by Morse code rhythms that spell out the following line from the novel, 'For they talked at length about their children, knowing nothing of the truth.'[11] This can be heard spelt out in the dotted crotchet - quaver rhythms played by the ensemble during her first aria (Act I, Day 1, bb. 87-123).

[11] Hill, op. cit., p. 64.

The child and adult worlds are separated dramatically and musically. The parents sing long introspective arias, whereas the children's music is less indulgent and more immediate. The role of the adults gradually recedes, so that Days 3 and 4 are only concerned with the children. Their roles resurface, revealing their preoccupations with each other and their lack of interest in the children. The opera ends with the image of Joseph, Helena and Edmund, a family united now that Charles is dead.

CONCLUSION

As the examples in the previous chapters demonstrate, composers have responded to the idiosyncrasies associated with representing children on the operatic stage in many different ways. However, those who favour children's voices have all, by necessity, had to tailor the drama as well as the singing to the abilities of children. For example, in *The Turn of the Screw,* Miles frequently appears on stage to sing a set piece, like a nursery rhyme or the Malo song, but he is only ever required to take part in dramatic dialogue at truly climactic moments in the score, as in Act II, Scene viii. Much of the children's story is recounted by adult figures. In Act I, Scene v of *The Turn of the Screw*, we hear of events in the children's past from Mrs Grose, not from the children themselves. Britten and Piper's cunning concealment of the children's own perceptions of their past adds to the ambiguities inherent in the story. Portman echoes this technique by having the pilot narrate the story of the Prince's past in Act I, Scene ii of *The Little Prince.* However, this may be a narrative representation of the way in which composers 'frame' stories about children, often distancing themselves from their operatic creations, just as the audience never 'become' the children but remain on the outside looking in.

What *The Turn of the Screw* highlights is the problem that faces composers who attempt to represent both male and female children in the same opera. One could surmise that Miles cannot easily be cast as an adult female singer, because it would damage the subtle balance of his relationship with Flora. Therefore, Britten's decision to cast Flora as an adult singer is problematic, given that in James' story Flora is younger than Miles. While Britten's decision to cast Miles as a treble is undoubtedly the result of a

combination of musical, dramatic and personal reasons, it could be argued that Chamber Opera, particularly in the way that Britten conceives it (with sparse orchestrations supporting speech-like vocal lines) is so intimate that it does not allow for the kind of stylisation found in Grand Opera, where a greater distance exists between audience and stage. In an opera like *The Turn of the Screw*, the style of vocal delivery and chamber ensemble accompaniment may go some way to break down that distance. Thus, the timbre of Miles' voice becomes an integral part of the intimate drama.[1] In writing the following programme note at the start of the score of *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Menotti voices similar concerns: 'It is the express wish of the composer that the role of Amahl be performed by a boy. Neither the musical nor the dramatic concept of the opera permits the substitution of a woman, costumed as a child.'[2] The same situation does not seem to apply to the casting of adult female singers in the roles of Hansel and Gretel; in presenting such a well-known fairy tale on such a grand scale, and creating such stylised singing roles, Humperdinck aids in the suspension of disbelief required to accept the stage action. Of course the notion of the 'trouser role' in opera and other theatrical media goes back centuries, and continues today in pantomime. Mozart plays on the idea in *La Nozze di Figaro* with his portrayal of the page, Cherubino, and Britten's casting of the madwoman in *Curlew River* as a tenor presents his take on that tradition.

However, it can be no coincidence that the boy, in *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, and Max, in *Where the Wild Things Are*, never interact with other children. Both Ravel and

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[1] Of course, the emancipation of timbre in the 20th Century could have shaped the musical concept of Miles' character. By specifying that Miles be sung by a treble, Britten may have been following on from the example set by Debussy, Schoenberg, Webern, Messiaen and many other 20th Century composers who often put timbre at the forefront of their musical arguments.

[2] Gian-Carlo Menotti, *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (Vocal Score - New York: Schirmer, 1951), p. VI.

Knussen use the fact that they are writing for adult singers to their advantage. The expansive lyricism with which Ravel portrays the essence of adolescent love, heard during the child's song to his beloved story-book princess, could not easily be achieved by an immature singer. As I outlined in Chapter 3, Ravel has used this lyricism to musically demarcate the transformation from child to young adult. Similarly, during Max's tantrums and games, Knussen is able to indulge in all sorts of scripted vocal acrobatics that have a child-like sense of abandon that a child singer would rarely be able to accomplish. Of course a child could engage in such acrobatics, but they would have to be extemporised; *Where the Wild Things Are* demonstrates that Knussen clearly had a singer like Jane Manning in mind when he conceived the part.

Many of the examples in Chapter 2 demonstrate that a child's world can be evoked without using a child singer. Much of the success of this depends on the type of story a composer is trying to convey, and how stylised the representation of children can be. A fascinating addendum to this issue is provided by the character of Tadzio in *Death in Venice*. Because he does not speak, Britten is able to convey Aschenbach's, and possibly his own, stylised view of the innocence of youth through the exotic, gamelan-like music that accompanies Tadzio.

My own conclusions to the issues explored in the first three chapters are conveyed in the score and performance of my own opera, *I'm the King of the Castle*. Practical issues rendered it impossible to use children in the student performance of the opera, even though the parts had been written with trebles in mind.[3] My solution to the challenge this posed was to cast the adults as Romantic-style opera singers, and the children as sopranos using little vibrato and mostly head-voice, as is fashionable in

[3] September 2nd, 2006 (Holywell Music Room, Oxford). See accompanying programme for details.

performing early music, following the example of Emma Kirby et al. It was an advantage that the story only involves three boys, and not an interaction of the two sexes, as some of the incongruity inherent in using three girls to sing the part of three boys was subdued. Much of the importance of using child singers lies in differentiating their vocal timbre from that of the adults. This meant that, in that performance, vibrato carried a symbolic charge, as its use became associated with age and experience, and its absence with youth and innocence. While, for the reasons outlined above, such a solution might not be appropriate for *The Turn of the Screw* or *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, head-voice and 'vibrato-less', sopranos could put across the roles of Yniold (*Pelléas et Mélisande*), Paris (*King Priam*), Seroshia (*Anna Karenina*), Rakhal (*Snatched by the Gods*) and the Prince (*The Little Prince).*

I'm the King of the Castle was first presented in a concert performance, and was therefore reliant solely on purely musical means for the evocation of childhood. Whether the children's parts are performed by adults or not, the 'suspension of belief' required for concert performances of opera is greatly magnified. Nevertheless, by identifying the various compositional techniques which other composers have used in confronting the challenge of depicting child characters in opera, and incorporating a number of them into my own opera, I hope to have demonstrated that this 'suspension of disbelief' can be facilitated by musical means. It is a testament to the power of opera, and thus of music in general, that it can evoke such compelling images of childhood in the audience's imagination without visual stimuli.

COMPOSITION PORTFOLIO

I'm the King of the Castle	Opera in Two Acts
Separation	Songs for Counter Tenor, Cello, and Harp
Proverbs	Songs for Soprano, Bass Clarinet and Piano
Winter Landscape	Trumpet, Organ and Soprano Choir
Sredni Vashtar	Full Symphony Orchestra
The Hunter and the Hunted	Solo Marimba with Mixed Ensemble
One Short Sleepe Past	Clarinet and Piano
Eden Chacony	Flute, Clarinet and Harp

CD 1 – TRACK LISTINGS

Tracks 1-6	*I'm the King of the Castle*	*Rebecca Bouckley*	Charles Kingshaw
		Hannah Nepil	Edmund Hooper
		Emma Lewis	Anthony Fielding
		Lynsey Docherty	Helena Kinghaw
		Andrew O'Brien	Joseph Hooper
		Castle Ensemble	cond. Andrew Morley
Tracks 1-3	ACT I (Days 1-3)		
Tracks 4-6	ACT II (Days 4-6)		

For further information please see accompanying programme from the performance of *I'm the King of the Castle* at the Holywell Music Room on September 2nd, 2006.

CD 2 – TRACK LISTINGS

Track 1	*The Hunter and the Hunted*	London Sinfonietta, cond. Martyn Brabbins
Track 2	*Winter Landscape*	Onyx Brass, Daniel Cook Chapel Choir of Selwyn College Cambridge cond. Stephen Layton
Track 3	*Sredni Vashtar*	City University Symphony Orchestra cond. Patrick Bailey
Track 4	*One Short Sleepe Past*	Jenny Ferrar (Clarinet) Mariko Brown (Piano)
Tracks 5-8	*Proverbs*	*Calisto* - Lynsey Docherty (Soprano) Jenny Ferrar (Bass Clarinet) Rosie Richardson (Piano)

I'm the King of the Castle – Libretto by Timothy Knapman
(Based on the novel by Susan Hill)

DAY 1

Church

Edmund Hooper reading at a funeral. Joseph Hooper, his father, sitting in a pew.

Edmund
"There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all."

Joseph
He is like his mother.
The same hardness.
Always making secrets.
We have only each other,
I ought to be able to talk to him.
My wife knew how, but she died.
Six years.
If it weren't for him,
I should have forgotten her face.

Edmund has finished. He gets down from the pulpit. His father stands and puts his hand on his shoulder.

Joseph
Your grandfather is dead. You must not be afraid.

Edmund
I am never afraid.

Short Interlude

Edmund and Joseph leave the church and walk the short distance to an ugly, red brick house.

Warings.

Joseph
This is Warings.
My family lived here
Their ghosts thicken the shadows.
It is our house now.
I know that you're unhappy.

I do my best.
Without a woman.
I cannot be here the whole time.
So I have arranged for some people.
A friend for you and someone to look after us.

Lights up on Mrs Helena Kingshaw and her son Charles and their luggage. Charles carries a model of a Spanish galleon.

Joseph
His name is Charles Kingshaw and he
is just your age.
You must make him welcome.

Helena
You must be good.
This is not our house.
This is my chance and I shall not
waste it.
This could be just the home we seek
If it all works out
If we can just rub along.
I am thinking of the boy,
My fatherless boy,
Adrift in the world.
Love he needs and a place called home.
No more hotels and furnished rooms -
Vacancies, vacancies -
Relying on kindness,
Mixing with people
Not quite our sort.
I mean for us all to be happy.

Joseph
I mean for us all to be happy.
So why am I so alarmed at the thought
of them?
At the thought of her?

Helena
Mr Hooper.

Joseph
Mrs Kingshaw. And this must be Charles
Edmund, say hello.
Let me help you.

Joseph picks up some of their luggage. He reaches for the galleon, but Charles clings on to it.

Helena
Charles!

Joseph
I understand.
Edmund, show your new friend around.

Helena
Play nicely, darling.

Joseph leads Helena off on a tour of the house.

Edmund
I didn't want you here.
I didn't ask for a friend.
I got here first.
This house is mine.
Ugly but mine.
We belong here.

Charles
I didn't want to come.
Yet another thing that happened to me.
No one asked what I think.
We move on and on.
Next thing you know,
You're somewhere else.
Luggage in another strange hall way
Trying to make the best of it.

Edmund
(*Reaching for the galleon*)
Show me!

Charles
(*Pulling away*)
My father made it for me!

Edmund
Why didn't he buy you a house?

Charles
He's dead.

Edmund
When my father dies, I shall be master here.

Charles
That's nothing. It's just an old house. And it smells.

Crossfade to Helena and Joseph,
elsewhere.

Helena
The windows, the furniture.
Everything.
This is just what we've been looking for.

Joseph
It's all as it was in the beginning.

Crossfade to Edmund and Charles in a room lined with display cases and stuffed animal and bird specimens. Dominating everything is a great, stuffed crow.

I'm the King of the Castle – Libretto by Timothy Knapman
(Based on the novel by Susan Hill)

DAY 2

The drawing room in Warings.

Joseph enters carrying an expensive-looking antique chess set. Helena, Charles and Edmund follow him.

Joseph
I thought you might like to play chess.

Helena
What a clever idea!

Edmund and Charles sit opposite one another, playing chess.

Helena
It's nice to see them play together.

Joseph
I think they may be friends.

Edmund
Your move.

Charles
It can't go on.
Time will pass and I can go back to school.

Edmund
Do you see the crow in your nightmares?

Charles
Perhaps he will have to go away.

Edmund
Careful.
They're valuable.
My grandfather left them.

Charles
Perhaps Mr Hooper will quarrel with us.

Edmund
And what did your father leave you?
Some stupid model.

Charles
Perhaps Hooper will die.

Edmund
You can never escape.
This will never end.
Your move.

Charles
He can see into my head.

Joseph
I shall throw a party.
We must go to London.

Helena
But what about the boys?

Joseph
Left alone?
It will be fun for them.

Helena
Charles wouldn't want to come.

Joseph
I feel like a new man.
We shall throw open the windows!
Redecorate! Entertain!
As I enter a room,
I find myself looking for you.
You have given me new strength.

Helena
My life is changing.
Colour in my cheeks,
A spring in my step.
As I enter a room,
I find myself looking for you.
How right I was to come here!

Joseph and Helena leave.

Edmund
Check.

Charles
I have gone as far as I can.
I can't defend myself.

Edmund
Your father was a failure.
And so are you.
Checkmate.

Charles
Stuff it!

Charles pushes the chessboard over, stamps on the pieces and runs out of the room.

Edmund
You've done it now!

Charles rushes into his mother's arms.

Charles
Make Mr Hooper hate us!
Make him send us away!
I hate this place!
It's old, it's dark. It stinks!
I can't bear it any longer, Mummy.
We have to go!

Helena
Charles, Enough!
He doesn't hate you.
He wants to help you.
Your schooling, your future.
Tomorrow we are going to London.
I shall bring you back a treat

Charles
Look at you!
Dressing like that!
Have you no pride?
You're nothing but a servant!

Helena
How dare you!

Charles runs away from her

Helena
Charles! Come back!
Don't spoil it!
I must think of myself.

Lights fade on Helena.

Charles
They will be in London.
My mind is made up.
Tomorrow, I shall be gone.
Nothing will matter.

Charles runs to his room, starts to pack things into a satchel. Lights fade on Charles. And on Edmund, watching him.

DAY 3

Hang wood.

Charles enters carrying his satchel and his galleon.

Charles
Hang wood.
Alive.
Green light.
Safe.
Like the bottom of the sea.
They are in London.
They won't miss me.
At last I am free.

Edmund bursts into view.

Edmund
There's something chasing me!

Charles
Hooper?

Edmund
Go and look!

Charles
It's only a deer.

Edmund
What are we going to do?

Charles
It won't hurt us.
Haven't you seen one before?

Edmund
Only dead things in the Red Room.
Make it go!

Charles
You're scared.

Edmund
So are you.

Charles
Don't be stupid.
Why are you here?

Edmund
Why shouldn't I be?
I can do anything I like.
Where are we?

Charles
I don't know.

Edmund
I feel sick.
It's your fault.
Don't go!
Don't leave me, Kingshaw.
They'll never find us.
Don't go.
Please.

Charles
I don't want them to find us.

Charles hesitates, then:

Edmund
Where are you going?

Charles starts to climb the tree.

Charles
Up this tree.
I'll be able to see.
There is always a way out.
Look.
We just follow the river.

Edmund
You'll fall off.
It's too high.
Don't leave me here!

Edmund climbs up after him.
Charles is at the top of the tree.

Charles
Hooper, what's wrong?

Edmund
Can't. Can't.

Charles
He's wet himself.
Come on, Hooper, down you go.
I can't climb over you.

Edmund
Can't move.
Terrified.

Charles
I could kill him.
I could make him fall.
I am the king.
I am the king of the castle.
I can make him do anything.
But I won't.
Come on, Hooper. Give me your hand.
I'll help you.

Charles holds out his hand to Edmund.
Edmund recoils in terror and falls out of the tree.

Charles
Hooper!

Lights fade.

End of Act I

I'm the King of the Castle – Libretto by Timothy Knapman
(Based on the novel by Susan Hill)

ACT TWO
DAY 4

Church.
Charles is on his knees, praying.

Charles
I didn't kill him.
I didn't push him.
It was his own fault.

Anthony Fielding, another little boy of Charles' age, appears.

Fielding
What's the matter with you?
You're not supposed to be here.
Hey, I know you.
You live with the Hoopers.
I heard about Edmund.
I'm sorry.
You must be lonely now.

Charles
You don't know anything.

Fielding
I've seen you go by.
You can see everything from here.
Do you want to play?
Come on. Let's go.
I live on a farm.
Our turkeys came this morning.
Do you want to see them?
They're ten days old, they're good.
My Mum will make us tea.

Charles hesitates, then follows Fielding out of the church.

Charles
What's your name?

Fielding
Fielding. And you're Kingshaw.
There's a cow calving.
Do you want to see?

Fielding opens the wooden door of the cowshed.

Charles
Panting.
Breathing.
Sweat.
The cow, the calf, the blood.
I'm going to be sick.
I shan't be sick.
I am not afraid.

Fielding
Heifer calf. Nice and big.

Charles
It's all right. It's all right.

Crossfade to Charles and Fielding playing happily in a field.

Instrumental

Charles and Fielding charge at each other, wailing and laughing with happiness.

Crossfade to Charles and Fielding, sitting quietly together in the grass.

A pause.

Charles
He said things, he could do things.
It scares me.
He locked me in a room.
Full of dead moths.

Fielding
But dead moths can't hurt you.
Besides, Hooper can't do anything now, can he?
You can always come here.
Come on, let's go and see the donkey.

The boys get up and leave. Charles touches something with his foot, stops and looks down.

Charles
Look! I've found a tortoise!

Fielding
(*Reaching down to pick the tortoise up*)
Hey! That's Archie!
I thought he was lost!
You're dead clever, Kingshaw!

Charles watches Fielding leave.

Charles
Fielding is mine!
This is all mine!
It will be all right!

Charles runs off after Fielding.

DAY 5

Warings.

Charles is on his way out. Helena appears.

Helena
Where are you going?
You can't go out today!
Charles, have you forgotten?

Edmund enters in a wheelchair being pushed by his father.

Helena
Edmund has come home.

Charles
Hooper! But you're dead!

Helena
Charles!
Don't be so silly!
He broke his leg, that's all.

Charles
You're dead! You're dead!
He's dead, Mummy!
He was stupid.
He was scared.
He couldn't climb
He's a baby.
He wet himself!

Helena
Charles, you're being hysterical!
Joseph, I'm sorry.

Charles
Hooper's not dead.

Joseph
Perhaps we should go.
It's the shock of the accident.

Helena
Charles, how could you?
That poor boy!
Your best friend.

Charles
He's not my friend.
I hate him!
He isn't dead
Everything is the same.
Worse.

I'm the King of the Castle – Libretto by Timothy Knapman
(Based on the novel by Susan Hill)

Edmund shows Charles that he is
holding the Spanish galleon model.

Charles
Where did you get that?
Give it back!

Helena
I gave it to him.
It's the least we could do.

Charles
You didn't even ask!
Give it back!

Charles goes over to wrest the galleon from Edmund's grasp.

Helena
Charles, what are you doing?

Joseph
Steady on, old chap.

Charles and Edmund fight over the
galleon.

Charles
Give it back, I said!

Joseph
Charles.

But the boys keep fighting.

Charles
You've got to make him give it back.
It's mine, mine, *mine.*
He *can't* have anything of mine!

Joseph pulls Charles away, slaps his face. The galleon falls to the floor and breaks.

Charles
Fuck!
Fuck you!

Charles runs out in tears.

Crossfade to a telephone ringing
elsewhere in the house.
Helena appears, answers it.

Helena
Enid, darling.
What a lovely surprise!
I'd been meaning to call you.

Lights fade up on Charles, unseen by her. He dries his tears and listens.

Helena
Charles?
There have been upsets, frustrations,
jealousies.
That's only to be expected.
Sometimes I worry.

Lights fade up on Joseph, now also
listening.

Helena
Of course, we may not still be here.

Joseph
Of course we may not still be here?

Charles
Of course we may not still be here!
Soon I'll be back at school
Free of Hooper.
Free of this place
I must tell Fielding
I'll miss him, though.

Charles leaves.

Helena
I don't know.
Nothing is settled.
I have not made up my mind about the future.

Joseph
It is my own fault.
I have been so slow.
I have seen her looking at me.
Her skirts.
I have been disturbed.
I am an intensely sexual man.
There is a strain.
An unease.
Girls on the tube.
Silk stockings.
Buttocks and thighs.
The breasts, the mouths
In cinema doorways.
It would be a physical marriage.
No politeness, no routine.

Joseph comes up behind Helena,
unseen by her.

Helena
We may not still be here.
I have not made up my mind about the future.

Joseph
She will answer to me.
Bridge the gap between life and
fantasy.
Ah!

He puts his hand on her shoulder, she turns to him.

Helena
What took you so long?

Helena hangs up the phone.
Joseph leans in, kisses her, his hand slipping
inside her clothes.

Lights fade on them.

DAY 6

Warings.

Helena looking into a mirror.

Helena
I am going to look younger.
I am going to take care over my looks.
I shall wear perfume
Perfume in places only he can find.
He knows who I am now;
He will not desert me,
Property makes an impression.
For good or for ill
I owe it to myself, I owe it to him,
I owe it to Warings, to the family name.
This is my chance and no one must spoil it.
Children get used to things.
He's much more at home, than he'd like us to think.
It's not a sin to want to be happy.

Charles comes in.

Helena
Darling, I've got a surprise.

Charles
We're leaving!
I knew it!
Next time I come back from school
We'll be far away from Hooper.

Helena
Silly boy!
Anyway, you won't be going back to your old school.
Next term you'll be going to the same school as Edmund.

Enter Joseph

Joseph
There's nothing *wrong* with your old school, Charles.
Edmund's school will be better for you, that's all.

Helena
You must work hard.
You can be a clever boy.

Joseph
But that isn't our only news.

Joseph goes.

Helena
We are going to be so happy!

Joseph re-enters, pushing Edmund in his wheelchair.

Edmund
He's going to be your *step-father.*

Joseph
On Thursday, before you go to school, We will go to the Register Office.

Helena
And then a family lunch.
Just the four of us together.
Won't it be wonderful?

Charles
I have to go.

Helena
Where?

Charles
The shop.

Helena
What do you want?

Charles
Just something.

Helena
Don't be secretive, dear.
You know Mummy doesn't like it

Charles is about to leave when he meets Fielding coming into the house.

Charles
Fielding?

Fielding
Hello Kingshaw.

Charles
What's he doing here?

Helena
Don't be so rude.
I've invited Anthony to tea.
I thought it might be rather jolly.

Charles
I don't *ever* want him here!

Helena
Don't be so silly!
I can't keep up with the way you boys fall in and out.

Charles
He's *my* friend.

Helena
Well then.
Anthony, dear, this is Edmund.

Fielding
Hello, Edmund.

Joseph
Perhaps we should leave you chaps alone.
You could show Anthony the Red Room.

Helena and Joseph leave.

Fielding
Do you want to, Kingshaw?

Edmund
Kingshaw daren't.

Charles
Shut your face, Hooper.
I'll punch you.

Edmund
You wait till we get to school.
I'll show you the ropes.
Just you wait.

Fielding
I know.
Let's go to my place.
My Dad's going to market.
You can come if you like.
We're taking the calf,
The one you saw born.

Charles
To the market? But it's not very old.

Fielding
They go at ten days.
Veal. You know.

Fielding draws his finger across his throat.

Fielding
Come on.

Edmund
Kingshaw's sulking.
That's what he's like.
He'll follow.
He's bound to.

Fielding
All right then.

Fielding pushes Edmund out. Charles waits until they've gone, then goes to his bedroom. He finds what's left of his Spanish galleon, carefully puts it into the satchel he carried into Hang Wood.

He carries it out of the house, passing Helena and Joseph who are kissing and petting and do not see him.

Instrumental

Charles walks alone into Hang Wood.

Charles
Hang wood.
Alive.
Green light.
Safe.
Like the bottom of the sea.
Up this tree.
There is always a way out.
Look.
We just follow the river.

Charles starts to climb the tree.

Charles
They won't miss me.
At last I am free.
I could have killed him.
I could have made him fall.
I am the king.
I am the king of the castle.

Charles throws himself out of the tree. He seems to fall in slow motion.

The Church.

As at the beginning, Edmund reads at a funeral.

Edmund
"There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all."

Edmund steps down from the pulpit.

Helena and Joseph appear out of the darkness behind him. Helena puts a hand on Edmund's shoulder. Joseph puts his arm around Helena. They look out at us blankly.

At last, they are a family . . .

End of Opera

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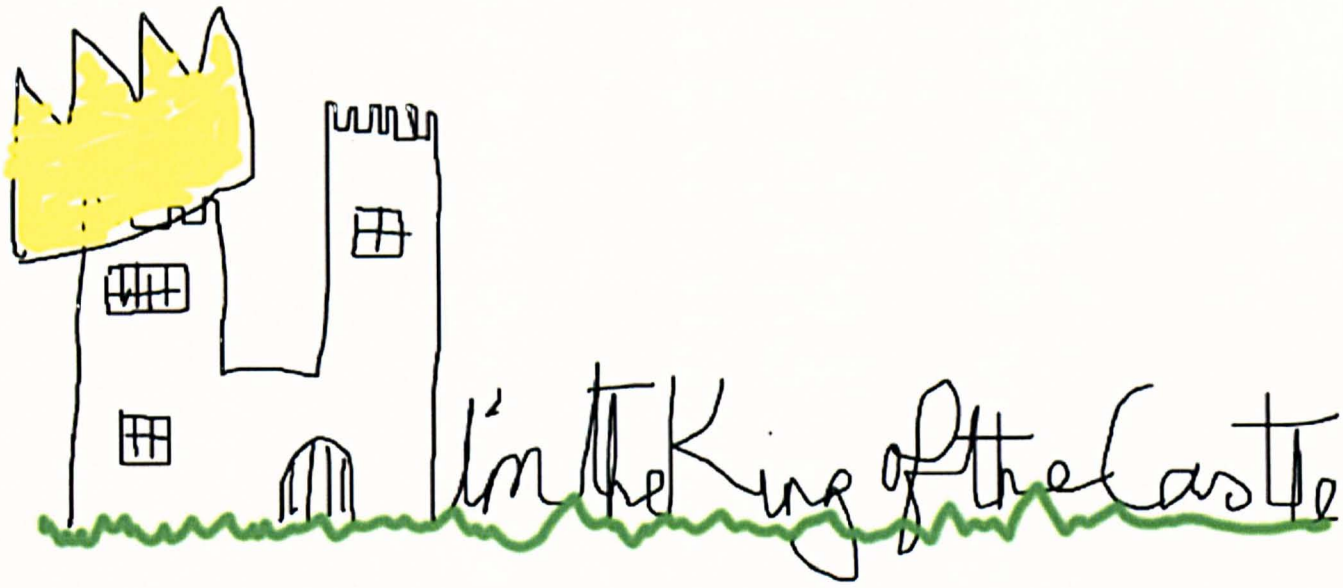

OPERA IN TWO ACTS

Music by Richard Peat

Libretto by Timothy Knapman

Adapted from the novel by Susan Hill

Saturday September 2nd 2006, 7.30pm

The Holywell Music Room, Oxford

ACT 1

Day 1: *Warings etc.*
Day 2: *Warings*
Day 3: *Hang Wood*

15 MINUTE INTERVAL

ACT 2

Day 4: *Farm*
Day 5: *Warings*
Day 6: *Warings etc.*

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE

CAST

Charles Kingshaw	An eleven year old boy	**Rebecca Bouckley**
Edmund Hooper	An eleven year old boy	**Hannah Nepil**
Anthony Fielding	An eleven year old boy	**Emma Lewis**
Helena Kingshaw	Charles' mother	**Lynsey Docherty**
Joseph Hooper	Edmund's father	**Andrew O'Brien**
	Conductor	**Andrew Morley**
	Chorus Master	**Alex Silverman**
	Flute	**Laurie Seddon**
	Clarinet	**Jenny Ferrar**
	Horn	**Jocelyn Lightfoot**
	Percussion	**Ian Cape**
	Harpsichord (Organ)	**Mariko Brown**
	Cello	**Julie Peat**
	Double Bass	**Deborah Pritchard**
	Front of house	**Lisa Newton** **Victoria Swan**
	Programme	**David Futcher**
	Artwork	**Aliki Braine**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The composer would like to thank the following for their unwavering support, without which this opera could not have been written or performed!

Freda Attwell, Bob and Yvonne Beardsley-Colmer, John Bentley, Hans Biorn-Lian, Paul Max Edlin, Timothy Gee, Susan Hill, Jimmy, Graham and Dean Joy, Mark Lawrence, Nick Lewis, Eleanor Lloyd, June Peat, Michael Peat, Helen Reid, Rhian Samuel, Elizabeth Szücs, and Jess Tipton.

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY

Donations to cover performers' expenses, venue, rehearsal space and hire of instruments, will be gratefully received.

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE

BIOGRAPHIES

RICHARD PEAT (Composer)

Richard Peat's first publicly performed work, *Tenebrae*, was given by the Britten Sinfonia at the *Sounds New* festival in 1997. Subsequently he studied with Paul Max Edlin, and then at City University with Rhian Samuel, where he was awarded a BMus with first class honours and an MA with distinction. He is now pursuing a doctorate, funded by the AHRC, at City, where he is also a visiting lecturer in theory and composition.

He is a regular contributor to Faber Music's *Fingerprints* series, publications designed to introduce young performers to contemporary music, and has recently been appointed assistant artistic and education director of the Deal festival. Richard has had works performed by distinguished musicians such as Martyn Brabbins, Stephen Layton, Nicholas Cleobury, Jane Manning, the London Sinfonietta, the Britten Sinfonia, the Kreutzer Quartet, Icebreaker, Onyx Brass, Ixion, the Choir of St. Bride's Fleet Street, and the Aurora Ensemble.

His research interests include the music of Latvian composer Pēteris Vasks, the Harpsichord in the 20th/21st Century and the representation of children in opera.

TIMOTHY KNAPMAN (Librettist)

Timothy is an experienced playwright, lyricist and children's writer. His opera, *Una parola nell'orecchio*, was written in collaboration with composer Roderick Williams for the the award-winning vocal ensemble *I Fagiolini*. It has been broadcast on Radio 3 and performed at the Wigmore Hall, the Cheltenham Festival, the Dartington Summer School and all over the country, as well as in Australia and the USA. His play *Broken Promise* won the Brighton Polytechnic Young Playwrights Award, and more recently *The Smallest Person,* commissioned by the Trestle Theatre Company, was performed by them at the Edinburgh Festival and then taken on a national tour. He has written several opera libretti (including English versions of *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Barber of Seville*) and several children's books, the first of which, *Mungo and the Picture Book Pirates*, is published by Puffin.

ANDREW MORLEY (Conductor)

Andrew studied conducting and orchestration with Denis McCaldin at Lancaster University and subsequently won the Hertford Choral Scholarship to study with Peter Stark at Trinity College of Music, London. Having graduated with distinction, winning the Ricordi Conducting Prize, he is now in demand as a teacher and conductor in and around London.

Andrew started his career with many ensembles in Lancaster. He has a particular interest in 20th Century orchestral music and is the composer of incidental music to *Frühlings Erwachen*, *Time Transfixed*, and more recently Six Miniatures for Chamber Ensemble. At Trinity, Andrew's conducting work included Aaron Copland's ballet *Appalachian Spring* with the TCM Sinfonia, Heinz Holliger's experimental study in breath, *Pneuma*, with the TCM Wind Orchestra, and a concert of film music arranged by the late Stanley Black with the TCM Symphony Orchestra. In recognition of his successes at conservatoire, Andrew was chosen as Trinity's entry for the intercollegiate Harriet Cohen Memorial Awards.

Andrew has directed the Wallace Ensemble in concerts including Walton Viola Concerto, Mathias Harp Concerto, Scriabin Piano Concerto and has given the première of a number of works by the Greek composer Basil Athanasiadis. Recent work includes Stockhausen's rarely performed *Gruppen* for three orchestras, an appearance with the National Youth Orchestra Sinfonietta at the Lake District Summer Music Festival and a performance of Rachmaninov's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini with David Owen Norris. Andrew has also conducted Khachaturian's Flute Concerto with international soloist Wissam Boustany, given the première of a new work for 'DJ' and ensemble by Gabriel Prokofiev and has just worked with the film and television composer Debbie Wiseman and conductor Barry Wordsworth as part of Junior Trinity's centenary celebrations. Future projects include guest appearances with The Wolsey Orchestra and the Surrey Mozart Players. In addition, Andrew has held teaching posts at Lancaster University, Trinity College of Music and Oxford Brookes University and currently holds conducting posts with the Junior Trinity Symphony Orchestra, St Paul's Sinfonia, the Southend Philharmonic Orchestra and the Southampton University Sinfonietta.

In February 2004 Andrew was awarded first prize at the Allianz-Cornhill Musical Insurance Conducting Competition (formerly British Reserve competition) having received unanimous votes from both jury and orchestra.

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE

BIOGRAPHIES

ALEX SILVERMAN (Chorus Master)

Alex Silverman is a Composer and Musical Director. He made his West End debut in Spring this year, providing original music and arrangements for *Pete and Dud: Come Again* at The Venue. He has co-written two musicals including *Hamlet! The Musical* which has toured nationally and internationally, as well as making brief appearances at Shakespeare's Globe and the RSC in 2006. Other theatre work includes *The Promise* (Union Theatre), *London Nativity* (Scoop), *Road to Pisa* (Pleasance), *Mafeking* (Imperial War Museum), *It's A Plot!* (Assembly Rooms and national tour), *Factory Girls* (Arcola Theate), and at this year's Edinburgh Fringe, Stage Award Nominated *Why Pay More?*, *The Black Sheep*, and Total Theatre Award Nominated *Crunch!* (all at Pleasance).

Alex also enjoys working on a variety of projects outside of the theatre: he has recently contributed music to Baddiel & Skinner's *World Cup Podcasts*, and Channel 4's *Friday Night Project*, as well as pursuing a career in classical music. He has workshopped new music with the Philharmonia Orchestra, and is increasingly successful as a composer of choral music: *Triumph to Shame* was commissioned for broadcast on BBC Radio 4 in 2005; *The King of Love* was recently shortlisted for this year's John Armitage Memorial Project.

REBECCA BOUCKLEY (Soprano)

Rebecca read music at City University and the GSMD, where she has remained to pursue an MA in Performance. Whilst at University, Rebecca developed a passion for contemporary music, and intends to make this an important aspect of her performing career. She has worked as a deputy in many professional choirs around London and the Midlands, winning a choral scholarship to St Martin-in-the-fields in 2004. Rebecca has performed as a soloist in many distinguished venues such as Birmingham Cathedral, Cadogan Hall and St John's, Smith Square.

LYNSEY DOCHERTY (Soprano)

Lynsey read music at City University and the GSMD, subsequently studying privately with Jane Highfield and Phillip Thomas at English National Opera. She has sung many lead opera roles including Fiordiligi (*Cosi Fan Tutte*), Pamina/1st Lady (*The Magic Flute*), Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), Countess/Susanna (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Marenka (*The Bartered Bride*), Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*), Giannetta (*The Elixir of Love*). At the age of twenty she was the founding Artistic Director of *Winterbourne Grange Opera* – a company based in Salisbury producing full-scale opera involving the local community and young professionals giving summer performances in aid of charity.

She has performed in distinguished venues including St. Martin-in-the-Fields (London), Chelmsford Cathedral, Cheltenham Town Hall, Barber Institute of Fine Arts (Birmingham), Chapel Royal (Brighton), and at Salisbury International Arts Festival as well as music societies across the UK. Oratorio appearances include Mendelssohn's *Elijah* (Exeter Philharmonic Choir, Exeter Cathedral), Brahms' Requiem (Hayes Symphony Orchestra and Chorus), Mozart's C Minor Mass (Aylesbury Choral Society) and Beethoven Mass in C (Henley Choral Society). She has recently been selected as Young Artist with the Sarum Orchestra, for their 2006/7 season, and will give her debut performance of Strauss' *Four Last Songs* with the EMFEB Symphony Orchestra in December.

Lynsey has been much in demand for her work with contemporary music and has had two song cycles written especially for her, performing them at the South Bank Centre in the Park Lane Group Composers Forum. She appeared in the world premiere of Howard Fredrics' Opera *The Whitechapel Whirlwind* at the Bloomsbury Theatre in London last year.

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE

BIOGRAPHIES

EMMA LEWIS (Soprano)

Emma read music at Edinburgh University, where she studied singing with Eric von Ibler. She has since studied in London with Jessica Cash and Fiona Dobie. In September she will commence a postgraduate course in singing at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama.

Recent oratorio performances include *Tochter Zion* in Handel's *Brockes Passion* with Edinburgh Symphony Baroque, Poulenc's *Gloria* with Thames Voyces, Brahms' Requiem with Bishops Stortford Choral Society, *Angel* in *Jeptha* for Stour Music 2005 and Handel's *Messiah* with Folkestone Choral Society.

Emma appears regularly as a soloist at Edinburgh Festival Fringe (last year with the Scottish Chamber Choir in Bach's *St John Passion* at St Mary's Cathedral), and also with the Whistable Choral Society (in Mozart's Mass in C Minor, Haydn's *Nelson Mass* and Handel's *Messiah*). Recent song recitals included performances of Schumann's *Frauenliebe und Leben* in Canterbury Cathedral and at St Giles' Cathedral Edinburgh.

Emma is a keen participant in masterclasses: she has worked with Richard Jackson and Patricia McMahon in Edinburgh, Rudolf Jansen at the Royal Academy of Music, James Lockhart, Jane Manning, and Malcolm Martineau at Oxenfoord International Summer School, and Robin Bowman as part of the Oxford Lieder Festival.

HANNAH NEPIL (Actress)

Hannah is a second year Music student at Hertford College, Oxford and a member of the National Youth Theatre. At Oxford she appeared as Nora in excerpts from *A Doll's House* (Michaelmas Term 2004, Burton Taylor Theatre), Grandma Josephine in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Trinity Term 2005, Christ Church Cathedral Gardens), Smeraldina in *A Servant to Two Masters* (Michaelmas Term 2005, O'Reilly Theatre) and as Estelle in *Huis Clos* (Hilary Term 2006, Burton Taylor Theatre).

ANDREW O'BRIEN (Tenor)

Andrew was born in South Wales and is currently studying at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Professor Rudolph Piernay. He recently completed his MA at King's College, London graduating with distinction. He is the Director of Music at Holy Trinity, Sloane Square and Artistic Director of The Chelsea Consort and Lady Margaret Music Society. He is also a founding Artistic Director of the Chelsea Schubert Festival.

Prior to this, he studied music at the University of East Anglia where he held major scholarships for piano and organ, and The Britten/Pears Scholarship for singing. As an undergraduate there, he founded two choirs and became the founding Artistic Director of the The University Music Festival as well as being Conductor of the Festival Chorus and Orchestra, along with extensive work as a soloist throughout East Anglia. He also held two national choral conducting scholarships, studying with Gregory Rose and Odaline de Martinez.

A late starter to singing, he studied with Gareth Williams and subsequently with Stuart Burrows before moving to London and studying with Anthony Rolf-Johnson and Ian Partridge. He was also a principle in the Welsh National Youth Opera and the New Opera performing lead roles in Weber's *Der Freischutz* and Rameau's *Hyppolytus and Aricie*. Aged 27, Andrew already pursues an active career in singing. Recent engagements have included performances of the *St. Matthew Passion* as both evangelist and tenor soloist in London, Scotland and Stuttgart (with the Bach Akademie and Helmut Rilling), Stravinsky's *Les Noces* and Pärt's *Passio* with the BSO Contemporary Music Group, Handel's *Messiah* in London, Wales, Yorkshire, *Israel in Egypt* and Rachmaninov's Vespers in the Vitterbo Baroque Festival and Orvietto Cathedral, as well as other concerts in Sienna, Bolsena, Toulouse and a UK tour of *The Magic Flute* with Surrey Opera. Future engagements include performances of Britten's Canticles and Serenade, Vaughan Williams' *On Wenlock Edge*, Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, Schubert's *Die Schöne Mullerin*, the Evangelist in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and a recording with Bishop Michael Marshall of Schubert Songs. He has also attended a large variety of music courses, some of which include Ardingly Summer School, Stuttgart Bach Akademie, Cambridge and four courses in 2005 at the Britten/Pears School where he was given the opportunity to take part in classes with Yvonne Kenny, Andreas Scholl and Philip Langridge.

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE

SCENE SYNOPSIS

Each act is divided into three days that are not necessarily consecutive.

ACT ONE

DAY 1

THE CHURCH

"There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow." Edmund Hooper, alone on stage, reads the lesson at his grandfather's funeral. Lights fade up on his father, Joseph, sitting in a pew. As Edmund speaks, Joseph begins to sing of how disconnected he feels from his son. His wife knew how to talk to him, but now she is dead there is a gulf between them.

Edmund finishes his reading and goes to his father. Joseph takes his hand and leads him into...

WARINGS (The family home)

Joseph sings that it is only now that his father is dead that he can return to the house in which he grew up.

Joseph tells Edmund that he has arranged for a little boy and his mother to come and keep them company.

Lights fade up on Charles Kingshaw and his mother Helena. The stage picture is symmetrical, two widowed parents and their sons. Charles carries a suitcase and a model galleon.

Helena, who has lived a life of genteel impoverishment since the death of her husband and perhaps before, sings to her son that they are guests in this house and must do everything they can to fit in with the Hoopers.

Joseph moves across to welcome Helena. He offers to give her a tour of the house. The boys are left alone.

Charles sings of how he didn't want to come to this house. Edmund speaks of how Warings is his and that he doesn't want to share it with anyone. He is the king of this particular castle; master of this solitary and forbidding domain.

Edmund leads Charles into an eerie room full of dead moths called the Red Room.

Joseph and Helena sing of their loneliness and their hope that they are at the beginning of a new and happy stage in their lives. A hesitant courtship begins.

Edmund tries to seize Charles' toy galleon. The boys fight and Edmund locks Charles in the Red Room. Charles eventually screams for help, and is set free by Joseph. He runs into the cornfield outside. Edmund watches him from a window and plays with the great stuffed bird as out in the field Charles is menaced by real crows.

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE

SCENE SYNOPSIS

DAY 2

WARINGS

The adults watch the boys play chess. The set is an old one, expensive, a Hooper family heirloom that Joseph has found for them. The adults' relationship has clearly improved. The adults leave.

We might think that things have similarly thawed between the children. Until we hear them. Edmund compares Charles' galleon unfavourably with the chess set. The galleon is Charles' only heirloom, made for him by his father, and it is now the only tangible connection he has with him. Edmund needles Charles about his father. Edmund tells Charles that there is no escape for him.

Joseph asks Helena if she'd like to come with him to London the next day. They sing a duet about how they have found each other.

Edmund's psychological manipulation of Charles is paralleled by his strategic success in the game of chess. As he wins, Charles snaps, upending the chess board and sending the pieces flying across the room.

Charles runs in to his mother and demands that they leave Warings. She ignores his plea, and sings of how Joseph really wants to help them.

Lights fade on Joseph and Helena as Charles starts to pack a bag. Lights fade on Edmund, who watches Charles pack.

DAY 3

HANG WOOD

Charles is alone in a clearing in Hang Wood. He sings about escape and a newfound sense of freedom and possibility.

Then Edmund crashes into the clearing. He's been following Charles, only now he's terrified. Charles tries to calm him down, but it's clear that Edmund is panicking and cannot be reassured.

Charles climbs the tree to look for a way out. Edmund follows him up the tree, and becomes paralysed by fear. For a brief moment Charles contemplates pushing Edmund off. For once he is the powerful one. He is the king of the castle. But he realises he just can't do it.

Edmund falls anyway, letting go of the tree in his panic.

And for all we know he is dead.

15 MINUTE INTERVAL

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE

SCENE SYNOPSIS

ACT TWO

DAY 4

THE CHURCH

Charles is alone, kneeling. He is trying to ask God's forgiveness for what has happened to Edmund. He is clearly very confused and upset – he wanted Edmund dead but now this has apparently happened he realises that the situation is even worse. He is tormented by guilt but doesn't think his contrition will be believed.

While he's struggling with this, a voice calls out to him. It is a boy of his own age, a farmer's son from the village called Anthony Fielding. At first we think that Fielding, like Edmund, is a bully, but soon it transpires that he is just a rather forthright, kindly boy who wants to be friends with Charles.

THE FARM

Fielding takes Charles to see a cow calving. Charles is initially scared, but is soon at ease with this manifestation of nature. He is slowly reassured by Fielding's practical, open-hearted, unworried attitude. Under its influence, and in the absence of Edmund, Charles relaxes and becomes happy. At last we as an audience see him opening up. Soon, Charles so trusts Fielding that he confides all his fears to Fielding. He tells Charles that Edmund can't hurt him anymore.

DAY 5

WARINGS

Charles says he wants to leave. Helena asks him where he wants to go, but he doesn't tell her – he doesn't want her to know about Fielding and so jeopardise his only friendship. Helena says he can't leave. When Charles asks why she tells him it's because Edmund is coming home.

And then Joseph pushes Edmund, in a wheelchair, into the room. Charles cannot believe it. Edmund is carrying Charles' toy galleon. Charles' mother has given it to him. This is the last straw. Charles throws a tantrum, listing all the terrible things that Edmund has done to him. Charles gives vent to everything that has oppressed him since the beginning of the story and in a final gesture he tries to seize the galleon. The boys struggle.

Joseph steps in and slaps Charles' face. The galleon falls to the floor where it is smashed to pieces.

Charles runs out of the house.

The telephone rings.

It's a friend of Helena's. It's clear she's talking about how long she will stay at Warings. She says she has not made up her mind about the future. Perhaps we think that she is so upset at what has been done to her son that she wants to leave. This is the way Charles interprets her comment. Joseph, overhearing, sings of how he has been slow with Helena. We then hear of the extremely disturbing sex fantasies he has about random women he sees on his visits to London.

Helena hangs up. Joseph takes her in his arms, and his hands disappear under her clothes.

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE

SCENE SYNOPSIS

DAY 6

WARINGS

Helena sings of her new relationship with Joseph and her hope for the future.

Charles enters. His mother tells him she has a surprise: Charles is to go to the same school as Edmund. There is another shock for Charles, as it transpires that Helena and Joseph are to be married the day before the boys go to school.

Charles has to see Fielding. He always knows the right thing to say, maybe Fielding will be able to help him now. It's his last hope. As he's running out of the room, however, he meets Fielding coming in. Helena tells Charles that she's found out about his friendship with Fielding and has invited him for tea.

Charles is sullen, uncommunicative. Helena says she doesn't understand him. She thought Fielding was his friend. She says she can't be doing with the way these boys fall in and out.

Fielding tries to be nice, but Charles hangs back and instead Edmund talks to him. Fielding says that he and his father are going to market. They're taking the calf that he and Charles saw being born. Charles remarks that it's so young. It's to be sold for veal, Fielding tells him, you know: and he draws a finger across his throat in explanation. Charles won't go. Alas, Fielding is too trusting to understand the depths of Edmund's calculating nature and too innocent to understand the pain that is being caused to Charles. Fielding thinks that that they should wait for him. Edmund says no, he's just sulking. Fielding is sure Charles will catch them up and so pushes Edmund's wheelchair off towards his farm.

But Charles has no intention of following them. Instead, he walks in the opposite direction, passing Helena and Joseph kissing and petting.

HANG WOOD

Charles walks into the clearing, the memory of the brief moment on the tree when he got the better of Edmund the only thing now that gives him any comfort. "I'm the King of the Castle" he sings as he climbs the tree once more.

It's like a film in slow motion when he throws himself off the tree.

THE CHURCH

"There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow." And so it ends as it began, with Edmund reading the lesson at a funeral, Charles' funeral.

Not quite as it began. After leaving the lectern, Edmund goes over to Helena and Joseph. Helena puts her arm around him. At last, they are a family.

THE END

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE

THE MUSIC OF THE OPERA

All the music of the opera is in some way connected with the ground bass of the aria, 'When I am laid in earth' from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. Sometimes this is made explicit, and at other times heavily concealed. There are many reasons why this was chosen as the basis for the musical material of the opera. The contour of Purcell's bass line, a chromatic descent spanning an octave, reflects Charles' gradual descent over the course of the story, as well as the manner of his death, a fatal fall from a tree. The nature of a chromatic bass line supporting a diatonic melody, so brilliantly demonstrated by Purcell, provides a way of linking the totally chromatic music in the opera with the more diatonic elements. The irony is that, in her final plaintive aria, Dido begs to be remembered; the implication at the end of *I'm the King of the Castle* is that Charles will soon be forgotten by the brave new family.

As this opera is about isolation and selfishness, each character is given a specific melodic mode which reflects their identity, and from which they rarely waver. Joseph sings in an octatonic mode which twists and turns chromatically, symbolising his repression and inner guilt. Helena sings in a Hungarian gypsy mode, with characteristic raised fourths and sixths, which reflects her unsettled past of constant travel. Charles sings in a natural minor, Aeolian mode reflective of his innocent, yet melancholy nature. Fielding sings in a Lydian mode, with bright sounding raised fourths which imbue his music with a feeling of unbridled optimism.

Each of the children is partnered by an instrument. This is particularly crucial to Edmund who never sings, and so is only expressed in music by his instrumental double: a horn, chosen for its association with hunting. Charles' instrumental partner is the clarinet, another reflection of his dark, yet unselfish melancholy. Fielding is always accompanied by a flute, used as a symbol of love. The children's instrumental doubles not only accompany them, but also express things about their personality which they can not or will not express in words. The adults do not have such strong associations with specific instruments, although the cello gradually becomes associated with Helena as she grows in confidence, and the bass clarinet plays in sassy counterpoint with the double bass to express the sordid undercurrents of Joseph's climactic aria. A harpsichord is used throughout to reflect the antiquity of Warings, and bells begin each day to mark the passing of time.

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE

LIBRETTO

DAY 1

Church

Edmund Hooper reading at a funeral. Joseph Hooper, his father, sitting in a pew.

Edmund
"There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all."

Joseph
He is like his mother.
The same hardness.
Always making secrets.
We have only each other,
I ought to be able to talk to him.
My wife knew how, but she died.
Six years.
If it weren't for him,
I should have forgotten her face.

Edmund has finished. He gets down from the pulpit. His father stands and puts his hand on his shoulder.

Joseph
Your grandfather is dead. You must not be afraid.

Edmund
I am never afraid.

Short Interlude

Edmund and Joseph leave the church and walk the short distance to an ugly, red brick house.

Warings.

Joseph
This is Warings.
My family lived here
Their ghosts thicken the shadows.
It is our house now.
I know that you're unhappy.

I do my best.
Without a woman.
I cannot be here the whole time.
So I have arranged for some people.
A friend for you and someone to look after us.

Lights up on Mrs Helena Kingshaw and her son Charles and their luggage. Charles carries a model of a Spanish galleon.

Joseph
His name is Charles Kingshaw and he is just your age.
You must make him welcome.

Helena
You must be good.
This is not our house.
This is my chance and I shall not waste it.
This could be just the home we seek
If it all works out
If we can just rub along.
I am thinking of the boy,
My fatherless boy,
Adrift in the world.
Love he needs and a place called home.
No more hotels and furnished rooms -
Vacancies, vacancies -
Relying on kindness,
Mixing with people
Not quite our sort.
I mean for us all to be happy.

Joseph
I mean for us all to be happy.
So why am I so alarmed at the thought of them?
At the thought of her?

Helena
Mr Hooper.

Joseph
Mrs Kingshaw. And this must be Charles
Edmund, say hello.
Let me help you.

Joseph picks up some of their luggage. He reaches for the galleon, but Charles clings on to it.

Helena
Charles!

Joseph
I understand.
Edmund, show your new friend around.

Helena
Play nicely, darling.

Joseph leads Helena off on a tour of the house.

Edmund
I didn't want you here.
I didn't ask for a friend.
I got here first.
This house is mine.
Ugly but mine.
We belong here.

Charles
I didn't want to come.
Yet another thing that happened to me.
No one asked what I think.
We move on and on.
Next thing you know,
You're somewhere else.
Luggage in another strange hall way
Trying to make the best of it.

Edmund
(*Reaching for the galleon*)
Show me!

Charles
(*Pulling away*)
My father made it for me!

Edmund
Why didn't he buy you a house?

Charles
He's dead.

Edmund
When my father dies, I shall be master here.

Charles
That's nothing. It's just an old house.
And it smells.

Crossfade to Helena and Joseph, elsewhere.

Helena
The windows, the furniture. Everything.
This is just what we've been looking for.

Joseph
It's all as it was in the beginning.

Crossfade to Edmund and Charles in a room lined with display cases and stuffed animal and bird specimens. Dominating everything is a great, stuffed crow.

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE

LIBRETTO

Edmund
This is the Red Room.
Grandfather's collection.

Charles
"Hawkmoths. Footmen moths.
Lutestring moths."

Edmund
He was famous.

Charles
"Acheroptia Atropos. The death's head."

Edmund
Haven't you ever heard of him?
You're thick, aren't you?
This is all worth a great deal of money.

Charles
"Corvus corax.
Largest of the crows."

Lights up on Joseph and Helena.

Joseph
You'll have passed the village of Derne.
Beyond that cornfield is Hang Wood.
My family used to own much of the land around here.

Helena
He's very nervous,
Not used to all this
A place in the country.
My first husband was the same
Though he had nothing.
I thought that was my one chance,
And my life ended with his.
Perhaps I was wrong.

Joseph
I am a dull man.
I had a family, a wife.
Now they're gone
Leaving two strangers
Completely alone.
A polite little marriage,
Formal, routine.
Perhaps there's a chance.

Charles
Perhaps it will be all right.
Perhaps we will be friends.

Edmund grabs the galleon out of Charles' hands.

Edmund
Or what?
Your mother's a servant.
She gets paid.
You must do what I say.
I'm the king of the castle.
Never forget that!
I'm the king of the castle
And you're the dirty rascal!

The boys fight.

Charles punches Edmund hard in the face and takes back his galleon. Edmund runs out of the room, closing and locking the door behind him. Charles tries to open the door.

Charles
Open this door!

Edmund
Not frightened of dead things, are you, Kingshaw?

Charles
Let me out!

Edmund
I didn't want you to come!

Charles
It's her fault.

Helena
I have been alone.

Charles
I mustn't cry out!

Joseph
But now...

Charles
I must stand up to him!

Helena
Perhaps I might just...?

Joseph
Is there a chance that...?

Charles
Help! Help me! Mummy! Mummy!

Helena
Charles?

Joseph rushes to and unlocks the door of the Red Room.

Helena
Darling! What happened?

He runs off.

Helena follows.

Joseph
Edmund!

Edmund leaves.

Joseph
Perhaps I should strike him.
I look into his face.
Only a blank.

Lights fade on Joseph.

Charles runs out of the house and into the cornfield. From a window high up in the house, Edmund watches him. Edmund stands by the stuffed crow while outside, in the field, Charles reacts as Edmund describes.

Edmund
The crow, coming down to flap around his head.
Its beak opens to screech.
Its mouth is scarlet.
Its claws dig into his flesh.
He tries to run.
The crow keeps coming.

Charles runs into the house, weeping. Edmund is waiting for him.

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE

LIBRETTO

DAY 2

The drawing room in Warings.

Joseph enters carrying an expensive-looking antique chess set. Helena, Charles and Edmund follow him.

Joseph
I thought you might like to play chess.

Helena
What a clever idea!

Edmund and Charles sit opposite one another, playing chess.

Helena
It's nice to see them play together.

Joseph
I think they may be friends.

Edmund
Your move.

Charles
It can't go on.
Time will pass and I can go back to school.

Edmund
Do you see the crow in your nightmares?

Charles
Perhaps he will have to go away.

Edmund
Careful.
They're valuable.
My grandfather left them.

Charles
Perhaps Mr Hooper will quarrel with us.

Edmund
And what did your father leave you?
Some stupid model.

Charles
Perhaps Hooper will die.

Edmund
You can never escape.
This will never end.
Your move.

Charles
He can see into my head.

Joseph
I shall throw a party.
We must go to London.

Helena
But what about the boys?

Joseph
Left alone?
It will be fun for them.

Helena
Charles wouldn't want to come.

Joseph
I feel like a new man.
We shall throw open the windows!
Redecorate! Entertain!
As I enter a room,
I find myself looking for you.
You have given me new strength.

Helena
My life is changing.
Colour in my cheeks,
A spring in my step.
As I enter a room,
I find myself looking for you.
How right I was to come here!

Joseph and Helena leave.

Edmund
Check.

Charles
I have gone as far as I can.
I can't defend myself.

Edmund
Your father was a failure.
And so are you.
Checkmate.

Charles
Stuff it!

Charles pushes the chessboard over, stamps on the pieces and runs out of the room.

Edmund
You've done it now!

Charles rushes into his mother's arms.

Charles
Make Mr Hooper hate us!
Make him send us away!
I hate this place!
It's old, it's dark. It stinks!
I can't bear it any longer, Mummy.
We have to go!

Helena
Charles, Enough!
He doesn't hate you.
He wants to help you.
Your schooling, your future.
Tomorrow we are going to London.
I shall bring you back a treat

Charles
Look at you!
Dressing like that!
Have you no pride?
You're nothing but a servant!

Helena
How dare you!

Charles runs away from her

Helena
Charles! Come back!
Don't spoil it!
I must think of myself.

Lights fade on Helena.

Charles
They will be in London.
My mind is made up.
Tomorrow, I shall be gone.
Nothing will matter.

Charles runs to his room, starts to pack things into a satchel. Lights fade on Charles. And on Edmund, watching him.

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE

LIBRETTO

DAY 3

Hang wood.

Charles enters carrying his satchel and his galleon.

Charles
Hang wood.
Alive.
Green light.
Safe.
Like the bottom of the sea.
They are in London.
They won't miss me.
At last I am free.

Edmund bursts into view.

Edmund
There's something chasing me!

Charles
Hooper?

Edmund
Go and look!

Charles
It's only a deer.

Edmund
What are we going to do?

Charles
It won't hurt us.
Haven't you seen one before?

Edmund
Only dead things in the Red Room.
Make it go!

Charles
You're scared.

Edmund
So are you.

Charles
Don't be stupid.
Why are you here?

Edmund
Why shouldn't I be?
I can do anything I like.
Where are we?

Charles
I don't know.

Edmund
I feel sick.
It's your fault.
Don't go!
Don't leave me, Kingshaw.
They'll never find us.
Don't go.
Please.

Charles
I don't want them to find us.

Charles hesitates, then:

Edmund
Where are you going?

Charles starts to climb the tree.

Charles
Up this tree.
I'll be able to see.
There is always a way out.
Look.
We just follow the river.

Edmund
You'll fall off.
It's too high.
Don't leave me here!

Edmund climbs up after him. Charles is at the top of the tree.

Charles
Hooper, what's wrong?

Edmund
Can't. Can't.

Charles
He's wet himself.
Come on, Hooper, down you go.
I can't climb over you.

Edmund
Can't move.
Terrified.

Charles
I could kill him.
I could make him fall.
I am the king.
I am the king of the castle.
I can make him do anything.
But I won't.
Come on, Hooper. Give me your hand.
I'll help you.

Charles holds out his hand to Edmund. Edmund recoils in terror and falls out of the tree.

Charles
Hooper!

Lights fade.

15 MINUTE INTERVAL

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE

LIBRETTO

ACT TWO
DAY 4

Church.
Charles is on his knees, praying.

Charles
I didn't kill him.
I didn't push him.
It was his own fault.

Anthony Fielding, another little boy of Charles' age, appears.

Fielding
What's the matter with you?
You're not supposed to be here.
Hey, I know you.
You live with the Hoopers.
I heard about Edmund.
I'm sorry.
You must be lonely now.

Charles
You don't know anything.

Fielding
I've seen you go by.
You can see everything from here.
Do you want to play?
Come on. Let's go.
I live on a farm.
Our turkeys came this morning.
Do you want to see them?
They're ten days old, they're good.
My Mum will make us tea.

Charles hesitates, then follows Fielding out of the church.

Charles
What's your name?

Fielding
Fielding. And you're Kingshaw.
There's a cow calving.
Do you want to see?

Fielding opens the wooden door of the cowshed.

Charles
Panting.
Breathing.
Sweat.
The cow, the calf, the blood.
I'm going to be sick.
I shan't be sick.
I am not afraid.

Fielding
Heifer calf. Nice and big.

Charles
It's all right. It's all right.

Crossfade to Charles and Fielding playing happily in a field.

Instrumental

Charles and Fielding charge at each other, wailing and laughing with happiness.

Crossfade to Charles and Fielding, sitting quietly together in the grass.

A pause.

Charles
He said things, he could do things.
It scares me.
He locked me in a room.
Full of dead moths.

Fielding
But dead moths can't hurt you.
Besides, Hooper can't do anything now, can he?
You can always come here.
Come on, let's go and see the donkey.

The boys get up and leave. Charles touches something with his foot, stops and looks down.

Charles
Look! I've found a tortoise!

Fielding
(*Reaching down to pick the tortoise up*)
Hey! That's Archie!
I thought he was lost!
You're dead clever, Kingshaw!

Charles watches Fielding leave.

Charles
Fielding is mine!
This is all mine!
It will be all right!

Charles runs off after Fielding.

DAY 5

Warings.

Charles is on his way out.
Helena appears.

Helena
Where are you going?
You can't go out today!
Charles, have you forgotten?

Edmund enters in a wheelchair being pushed by his father.

Helena
Edmund has come home.

Charles
Hooper! But you're dead!

Helena
Charles!
Don't be so silly!
He broke his leg, that's all.

Charles
You're dead! You're dead!
He's dead, Mummy!
He was stupid.
He was scared.
He couldn't climb
He's a baby.
He wet himself!

Helena
Charles, you're being hysterical!
Joseph, I'm sorry.

Charles
Hooper's not dead.

Joseph
Perhaps we should go.
It's the shock of the accident.

Helena
Charles, how could you?
That poor boy!
Your best friend.

Charles
He's not my friend.
I hate him!
He isn't dead
Everything is the same.
Worse.

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE

LIBRETTO

Edmund shows Charles that he is holding the Spanish galleon model.

Charles
Where did you get that?
Give it back!

Helena
I gave it to him.
It's the least we could do.

Charles
You didn't even ask!
Give it back!

Charles goes over to wrest the galleon from Edmund's grasp.

Helena
Charles, what are you doing?

Joseph
Steady on, old chap.

Charles and Edmund fight over the galleon.

Charles
Give it back, I said!

Joseph
Charles.

But the boys keep fighting.

Charles
You've got to make him give it back.
It's mine, mine, *mine.*
He *can't* have anything of mine!

Joseph pulls Charles away, slaps his face. The galleon falls to the floor and breaks.

Charles
Fuck!
Fuck you!

Charles runs out in tears.

Crossfade to a telephone ringing elsewhere in the house.
Helena appears, answers it.

Helena
Enid, darling.
What a lovely surprise!
I'd been meaning to call you.

Lights fade up on Charles, unseen by her. He dries his tears and listens.

Helena
Charles?
There have been upsets, frustrations, jealousies.
That's only to be expected.
Sometimes I worry.

Lights fade up on Joseph, now also listening.

Helena
Of course, we may not still be here.

Joseph
Of course we may not still be here?

Charles
Of course we may not still be here!
Soon I'll be back at school
Free of Hooper.
Free of this place
I must tell Fielding
I'll miss him, though.

Charles leaves.

Helena
I don't know.
Nothing is settled.
I have not made up my mind about the future.

Joseph
It is my own fault.
I have been so slow.
I have seen her looking at me.
Her skirts.
I have been disturbed.
I am an intensely sexual man.
There is a strain.
An unease.
Girls on the tube.
Silk stockings.
Buttocks and thighs.
The breasts, the mouths
In cinema doorways.
It would be a physical marriage.
No politeness, no routine.

Joseph comes up behind Helena, unseen by her.

Helena
We may not still be here.
I have not made up my mind about the future.

Joseph
She will answer to me.
Bridge the gap between life and fantasy.
Ah!

He puts his hand on her shoulder, she turns to him.

Helena
What took you so long?

Helena hangs up the phone. Joseph leans in, kisses her, his hand slipping inside her clothes.

Lights fade on them.

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE

LIBRETTO

DAY 6

Warings.

Helena looking into a mirror.

Helena
I am going to look younger.
I am going to take care over my looks.
I shall wear perfume
Perfume in places only he can find.
He knows who I am now;
He will not desert me,
Property makes an impression.
For good or for ill
I owe it to myself, I owe it to him,
I owe it to Warings, to the family name.
This is my chance and no one must spoil it.
Children get used to things.
He's much more at home, than he'd like us to think.
It's not a sin to want to be happy.

Charles comes in.

Helena
Darling, I've got a surprise.

Charles
We're leaving!
I knew it!
Next time I come back from school
We'll be far away from Hooper.

Helena
Silly boy!
Anyway, you won't be going back to your old school.
Next term you'll be going to the same school as Edmund.

Enter Joseph

Joseph
There's nothing *wrong* with your old school, Charles.
Edmund's school will be better for you, that's all.

Helena
You must work hard.
You can be a clever boy.

Joseph
But that isn't our only news.

Joseph goes.

Helena
We are going to be so happy!

Joseph re-enters, pushing Edmund in his wheelchair.

Edmund
He's going to be your *step-father.*

Joseph
On Thursday, before you go to school,
We will go to the Register Office.

Helena
And then a family lunch.
Just the four of us together.
Won't it be wonderful?

Charles
I have to go.

Helena
Where?

Charles
The shop.

Helena
What do you want?

Charles
Just something.

Helena
Don't be secretive, dear.
You know Mummy doesn't like it

Charles is about to leave when he meets Fielding coming into the house.

Charles
Fielding?

Fielding
Hello Kingshaw.

Charles
What's he doing here?

Helena
Don't be so rude.
I've invited Anthony to tea.
I thought it might be rather jolly.

Charles
I don't *ever* want him here!

Helena
Don't be so silly!
I can't keep up with the way you boys fall in and out.

Charles
He's *my* friend.

Helena
Well then.
Anthony, dear, this is Edmund.

Fielding
Hello, Edmund.

Joseph
Perhaps we should leave you chaps alone.
You could show Anthony the Red Room.

Helena and Joseph leave.

Fielding
Do you want to, Kingshaw?

Edmund
Kingshaw daren't.

Charles
Shut your face, Hooper.
I'll punch you.

Edmund
You wait till we get to school.
I'll show you the ropes.
Just you wait.

Fielding
I know.
Let's go to my place.
My Dad's going to market.
You can come if you like.
We're taking the calf,
The one you saw born.

Charles
To the market? But it's not very old.

Fielding
They go at ten days.
Veal. You know.

Fielding draws his finger across his throat.

Fielding
Come on.

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE

LIBRETTO

Edmund
Kingshaw's sulking.
That's what he's like.
He'll follow.
He's bound to.

Fielding
All right then.

Fielding pushes Edmund out. Charles waits until they've gone, then goes to his bedroom. He finds what's left of his Spanish galleon, carefully puts it into the satchel he carried into Hang Wood.

He carries it out of the house, passing Helena and Joseph who are kissing and petting and do not see him.

Instrumental

Charles walks alone into Hang Wood.

Charles
Hang wood.
Alive.
Green light.
Safe.
Like the bottom of the sea.
Up this tree.
There is always a way out.
Look.
We just follow the river.

Charles starts to climb the tree.

Charles
They won't miss me.
At last I am free.
I could have killed him.
I could have made him fall.
I am the king.
I am the king of the castle.

Charles throws himself out of the tree. He seems to fall in slow motion.

The Church.

As at the beginning, Edmund reads at a funeral.

Edmund
"There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all."

Edmund steps down from the pulpit.

Helena and Joseph appear out of the darkness behind him. Helena puts a hand on Edmund's shoulder. Joseph puts his arm around Helena. They look out at us blankly.

At last, they are a family . . .

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Eden Chacony

Flute, Clarinet, Harp

Richard Peat

City University – School of Arts

(Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
PhD submission, March 2007)

Eden Chacony

Richard Peat

Score in C

Flute, Clarinet in B♭, Harp

Duration: c. 6m

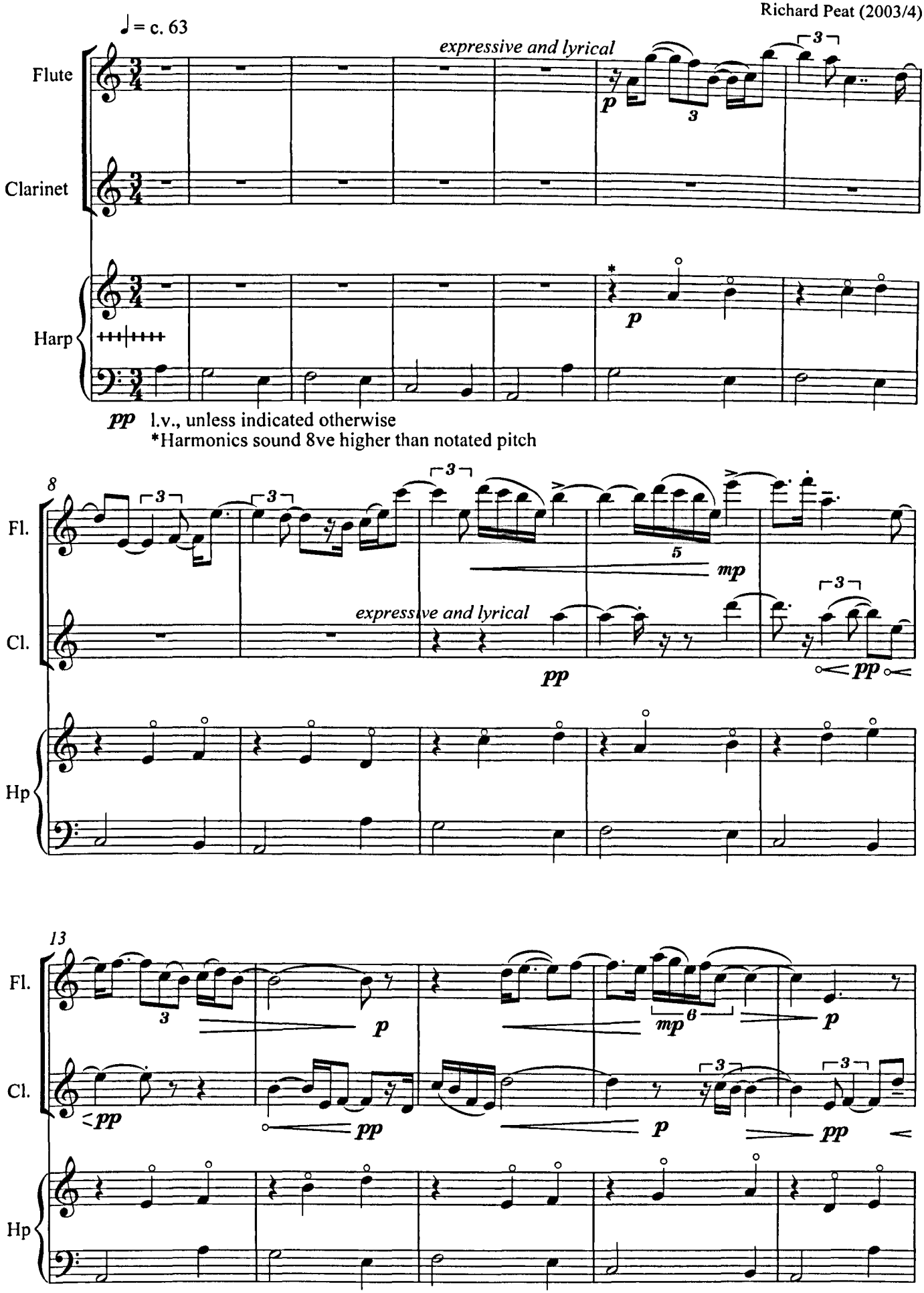
Programme Note

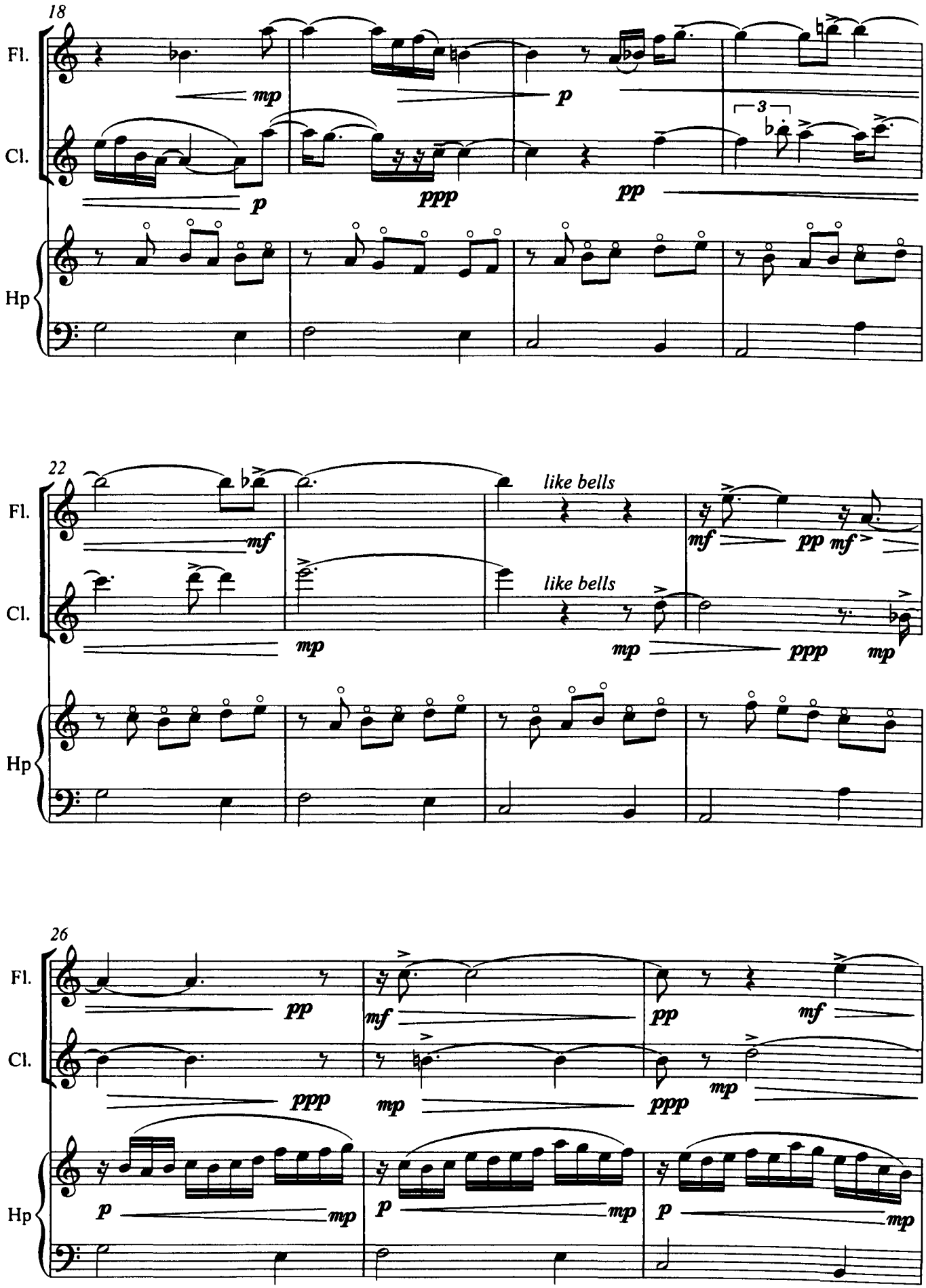
Written for the *Korros* ensemble, this harp trio explores the space between modality and chromaticism. It begins with all instruments in an 'idyllic' A minor modality. The flute and clarinet gradually separate from their monophonic opening and begin to explore 'forbidden' chromaticism, leaving the 'eden'-like, white-note paradise of the opening. They try to tempt the harp to join them with increasingly chromatic phrases, culminating in an atonal, canonic dance. Eventually the harp relents and performs a solo dance of its own, exploring chromaticism through a cycle of fifths. When the cycle is finished, it beckons the flute and clarinet to re-join it in white-note paradise.

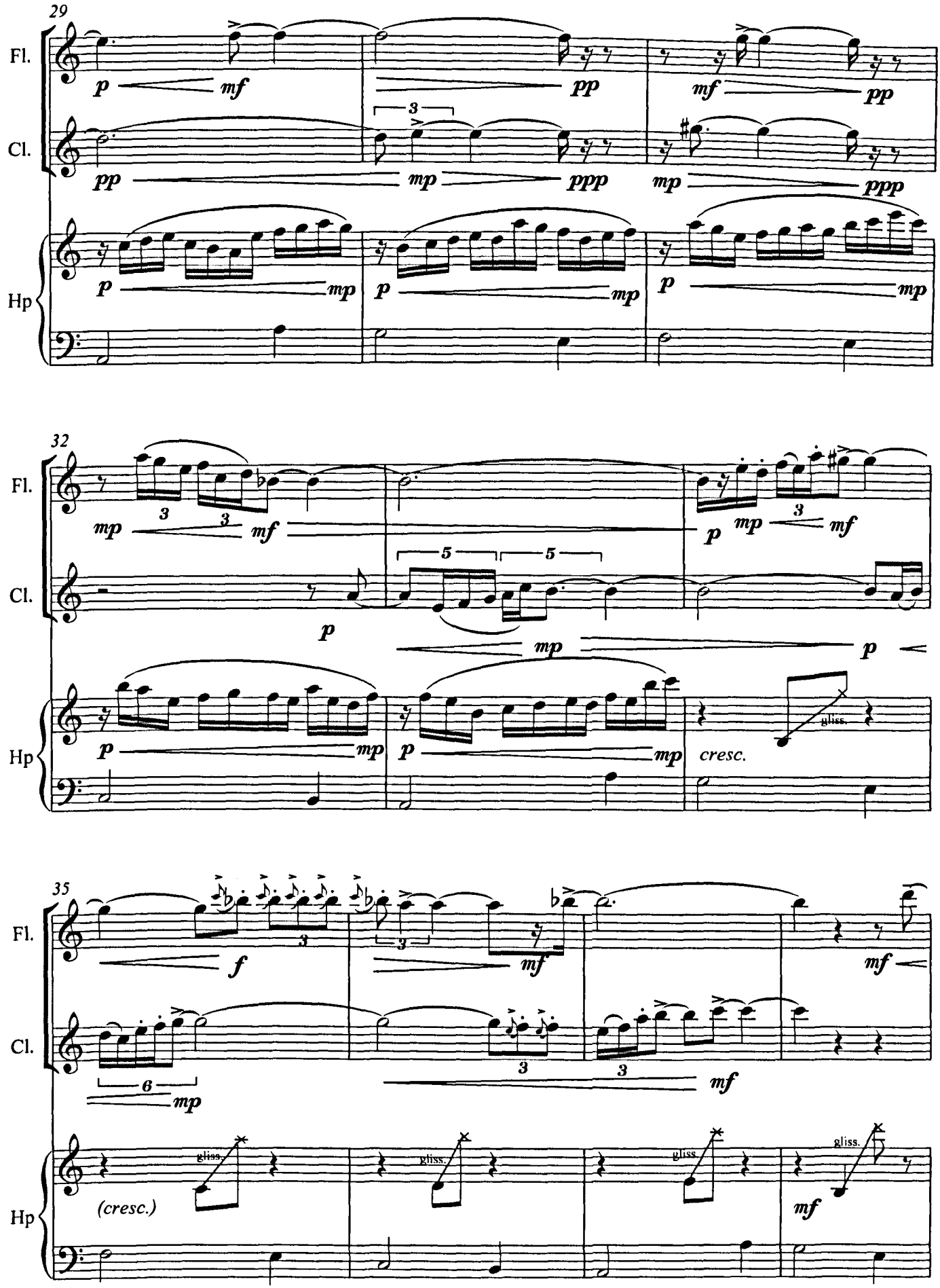
Eden Chacony was first performed by the *Korros* ensemble (Eliza Marshall, Nicholas Ellis and Camilla Pay) on July 11th, 2004 in St. Andrew's Church, Deal as part of the Deal Festival.

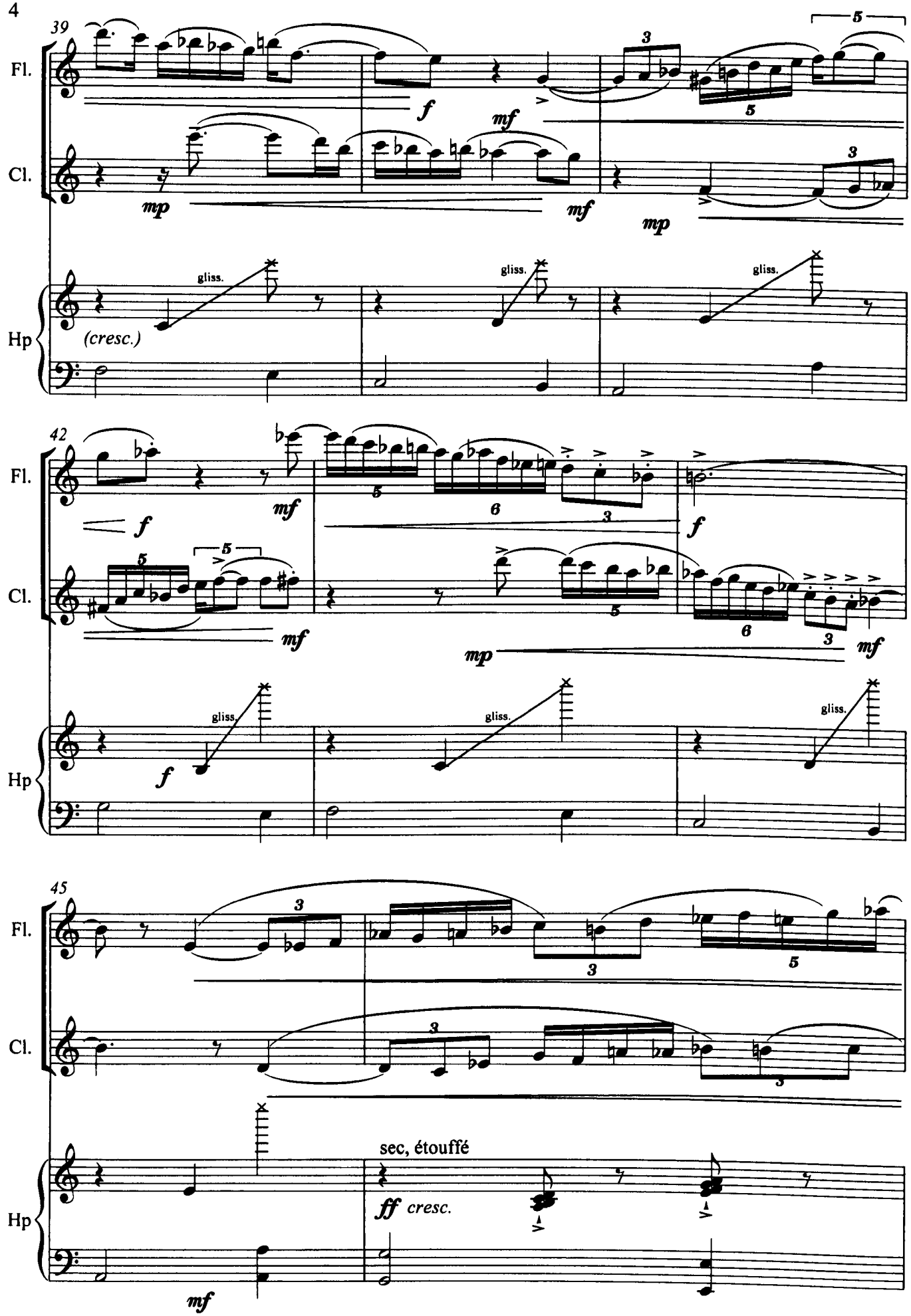
Eden Chacony

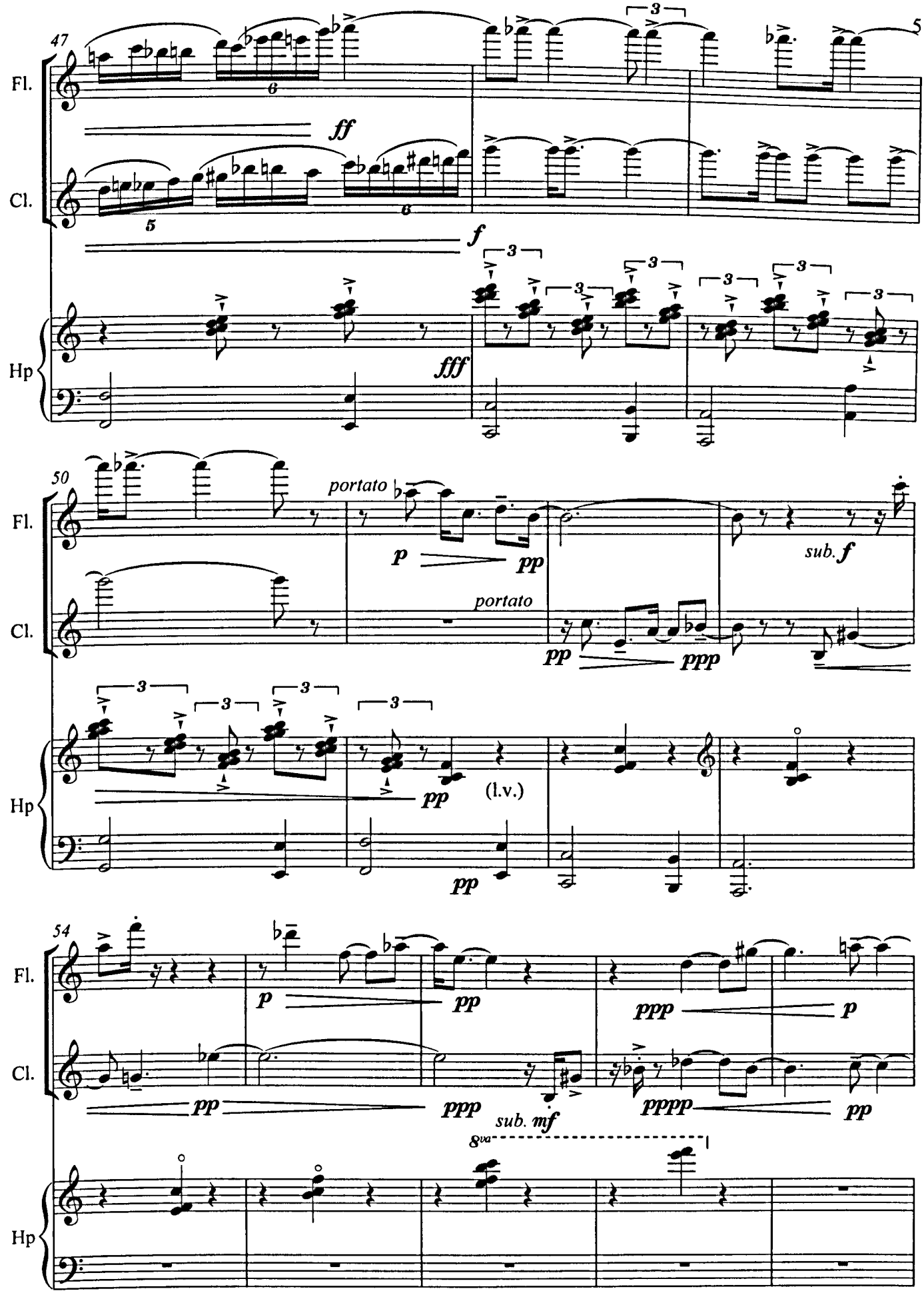
Richard Peat (2003/4)

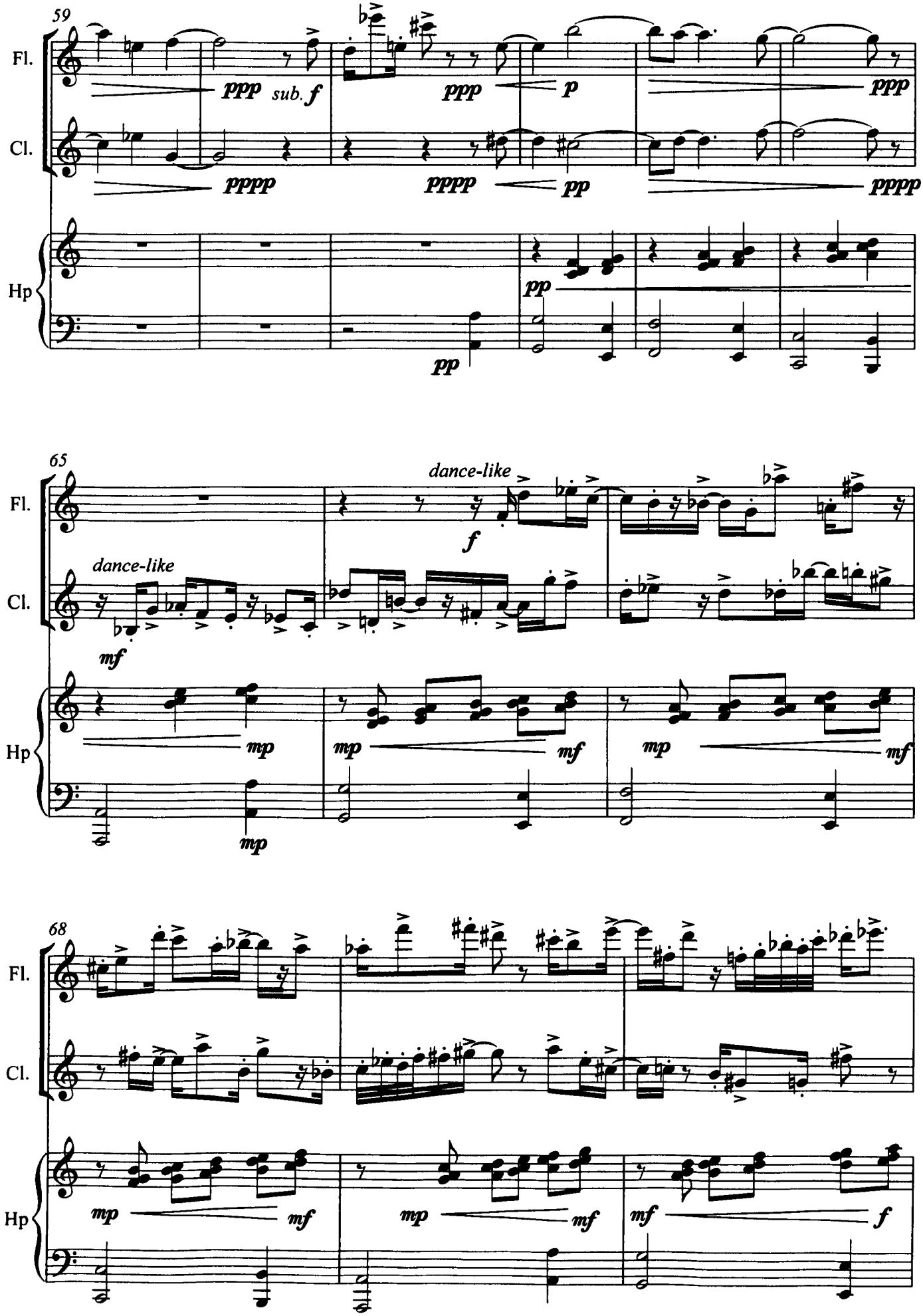


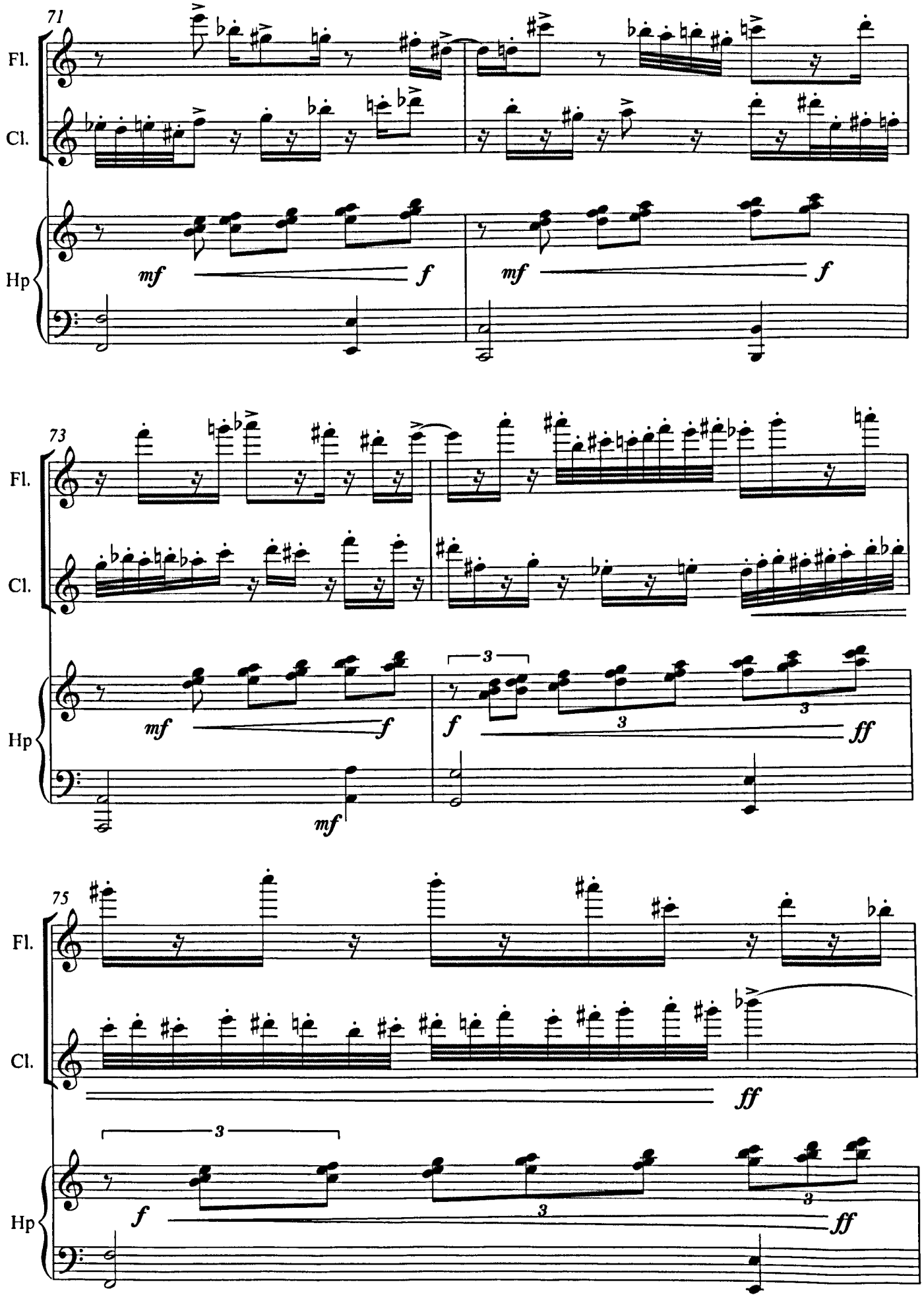

18
Fl.
Cl.
Hp
mp
p
ppp
pp
3
22
like bells
like bells
mf
mp
pp
ppp
26
pp
mf
ppp
mp
p
mp

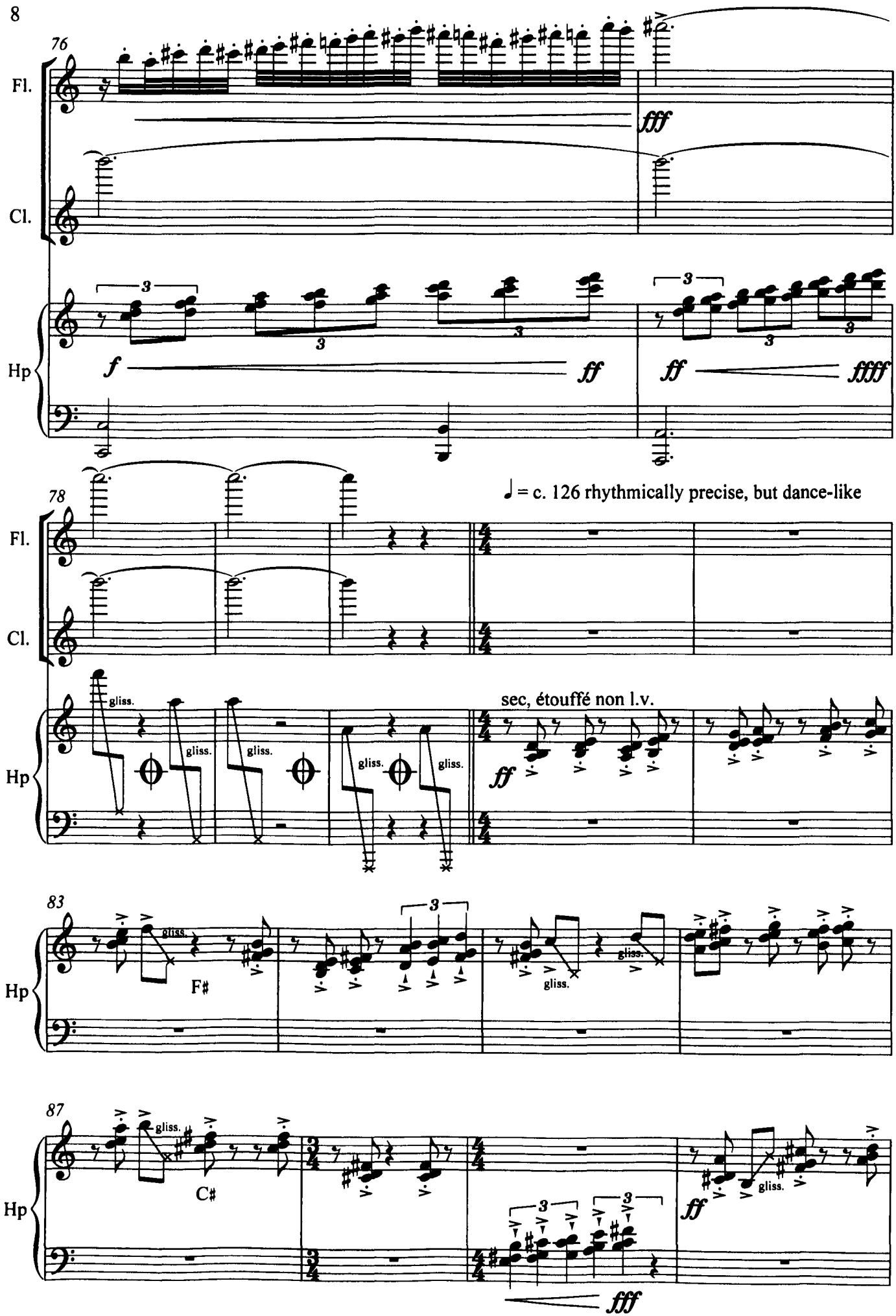

29
Fl.
Cl.
Hp
p
mf
pp
mf
pp
3
pp
mp
ppp
mp
ppp
p
mp
p
mp
p
mp
32
Fl.
Cl.
Hp
3
3
mp
mf
p
mp
3
mf
5
5
p
mp
p
p
mp
p
mp
cresc.
gliss.
35
Fl.
Cl.
Hp
3
f
3
mf
mf
6
mp
3
3
mf
(cresc.)
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.
mf

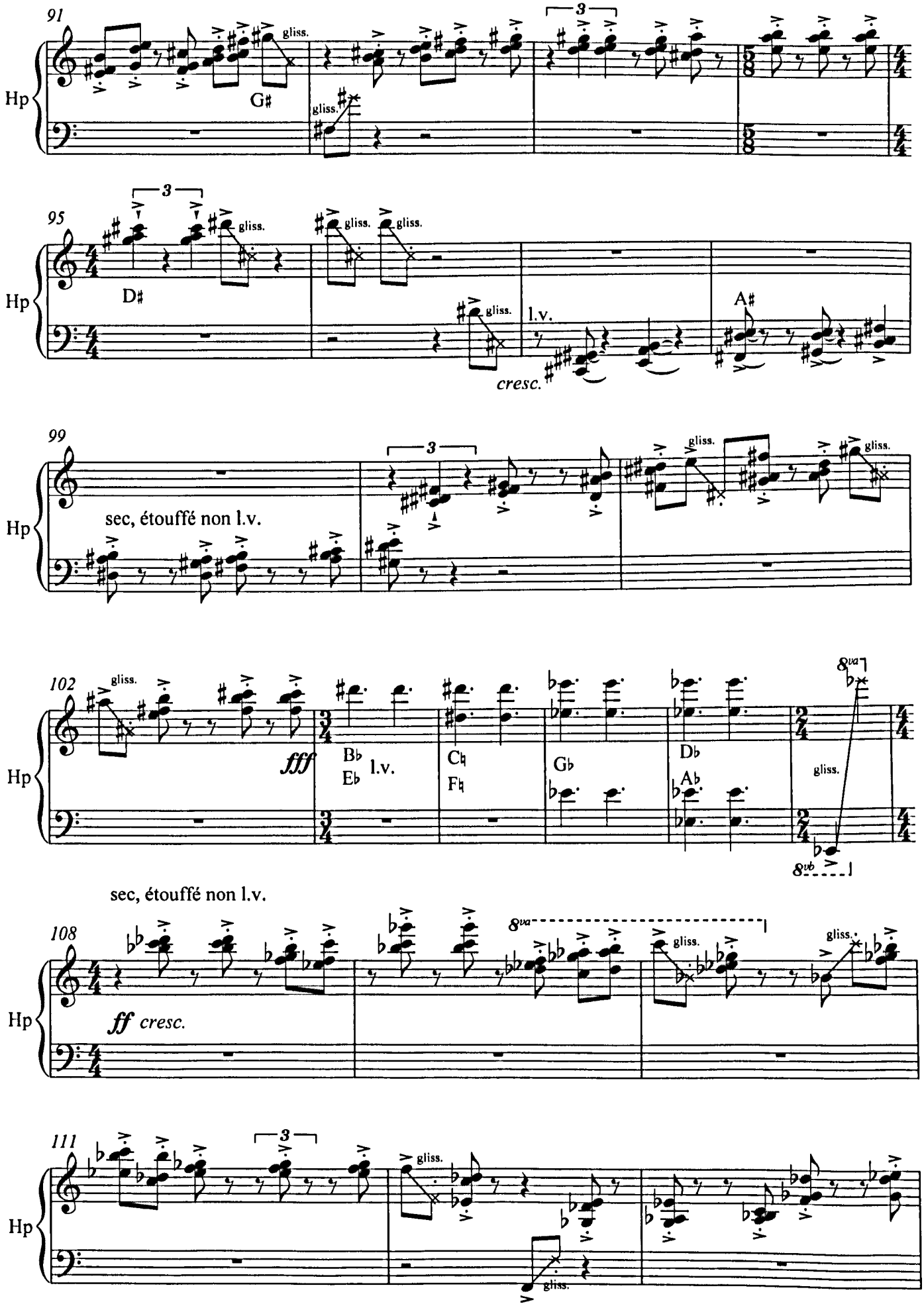

39
Fl.
Cl.
Hp
mp
f
mf
gliss.
(cresc.)
42
45
sec, étouffé
ff cresc.

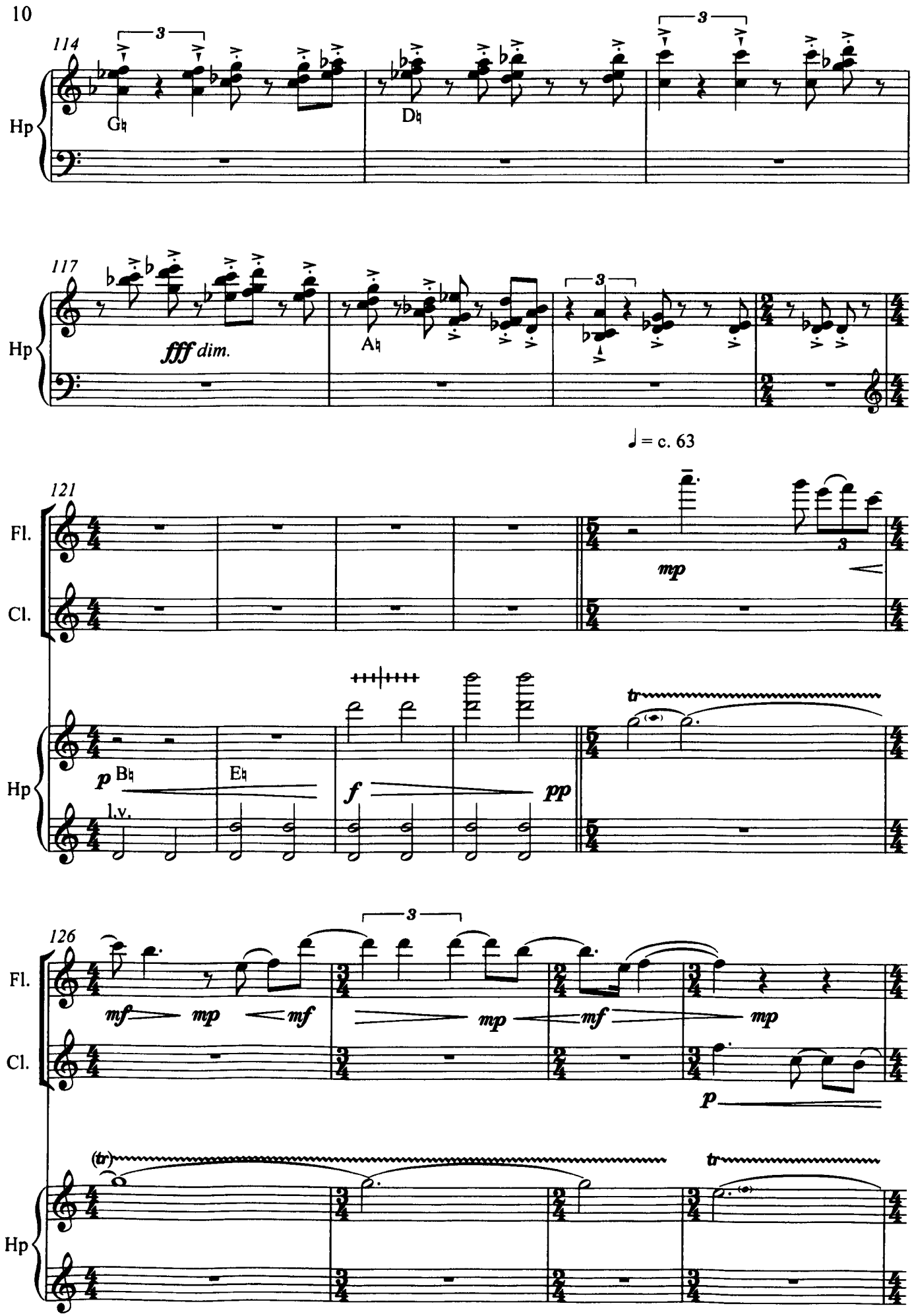

47
5
Fl.
Cl.
Hp
ff
f
fff
50
portato
p
pp
sub. f
portato
pp
ppp
pp
(l.v.)
pp
54
p
pp
ppp
p
pp
ppp
sub. mf
pppp
pp
8va

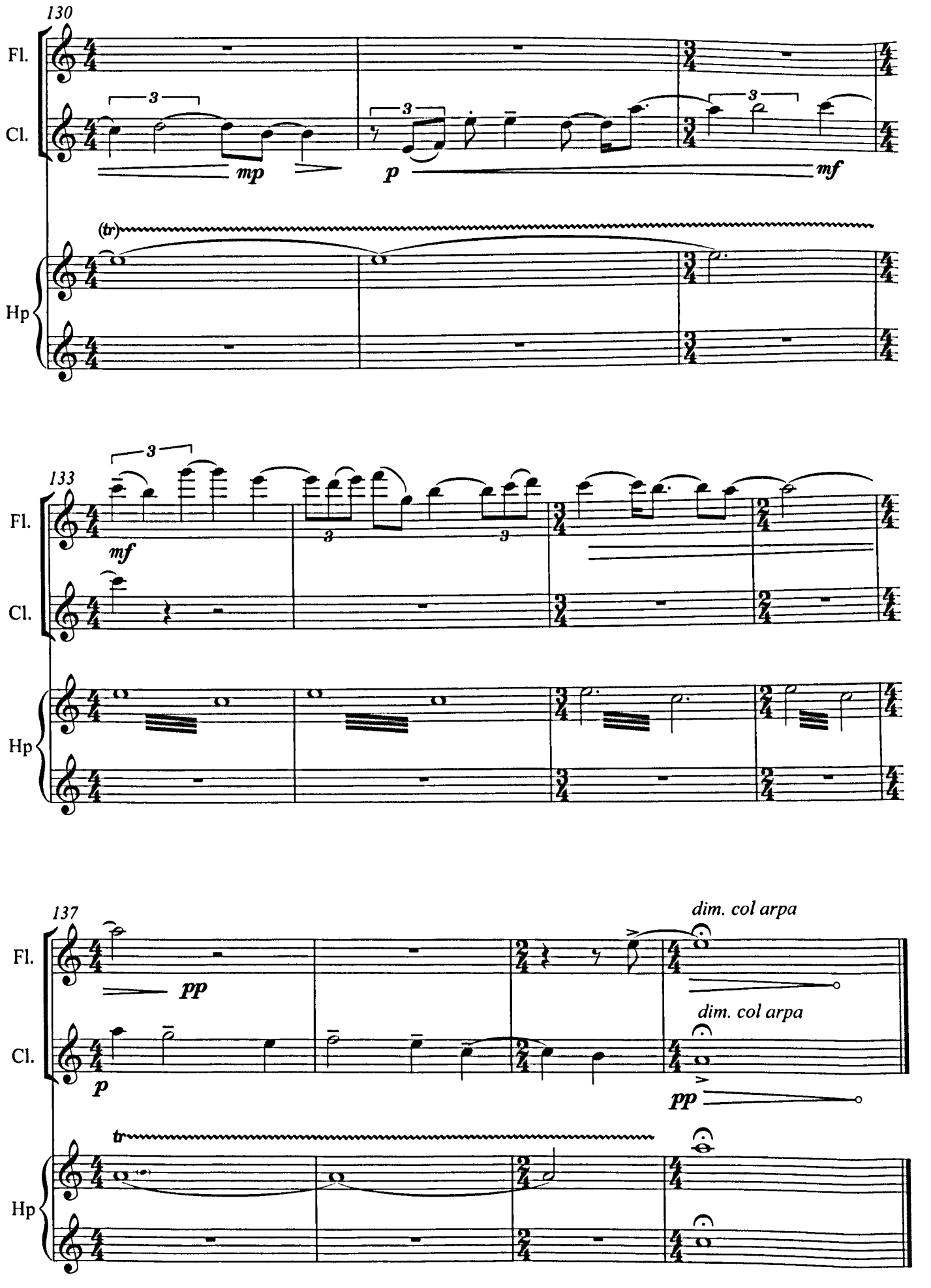

59
Fl.
Cl.
Hp
ppp sub. f
ppp
p
ppp
pppp
pppp
pp
pppp
pp
pp
65
dance-like
dance-like
f
mf
mp
mp
mf
mp
mf
mp
68
mp
mf
mp
mf
mf
f


71
Fl.
Cl.
Hp
mf
f
mf
f
73
Fl.
Cl.
Hp
mf
f
3
f
3
3
ff
mf
75
Fl.
Cl.
Hp
ff
3
f
3
3
ff


76
Fl.
Cl.
Hp
fff
f
ff
ffff
78
♩ = c. 126 rhythmically precise, but dance-like
gliss.
sec, étouffé non l.v.
83
F♯
87
C♯


91
Hp
G♯
gliss.
3
95
D♯
l.v.
cresc.
A♯
99
sec, étouffé non l.v.
102
fff
B♭
E♭
l.v.
C♮
F♮
G♭
D♭
A♭
8va
8vb
sec, étouffé non l.v.
108
ff cresc.
111


114
Hp
G♮
D♮
117
Hp
fff dim.
A♮
♩ = c. 63
121
Fl.
Cl.
Hp
mp
p
B♮
E♮
l.v.
f
pp
tr
126
Fl.
Cl.
Hp
mf
mp
mf
mp
mf
mp
p
(tr)
tr


130
Fl.
Cl.
Hp
3
3
3
mp
p
mf
(tr)
133
3
mf
3
3
137
dim. col arpa
pp
dim. col arpa
p
pp
tr

One Short Sleepe Past

Clarinet, Piano

Richard Peat

City University – School of Arts

(Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
PhD submission, March 2007)

One Short Sleepe Past

Richard Peat

Score Transposed

Clarinet in B♭, Piano

Duration: c. 10m

Programme Note

One Short Sleepe Past takes John Donne's optimistic Sonnet X, rich in vivid images of death's destruction, as a starting point. After a frenetic opening, where arresting chords in the piano interact with terse fragments and high screams in the clarinet, running semi-quaver passages intervene and subside into the first, more gentle, dream sequence, in which tremolos in the piano ornament the clarinet's more extended lines. The semi-quavers return, this time culminating in a quasi-canonic passage overlaid with the sound of bells. A second, calmer, dream sequence hints at memories of a childhood lullaby. As if inspired by this, the clarinet offers another, more extended, melody before the rude return of the opening chords threatens to bring us back to reality.

Sonnet X – John Donne

Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadfull, for, thou art not soe,
For, those, whom thou think'st, thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poore death, nor yet can thou kill mee.
From rest and sleepe, which but thy pictures bee,
Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee doe goe,
Rest of their bones, and soules deliverie.
Thou art sleve to Fate, Chance, kings and desperate men,
And dost with poison, warre and sicknesse dwell,
And poppie, or charmes can make us sleepe as well,
And better than thy stroake; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.

John Donne, *The Collected Poems of John Donne* ed. Roy Booth (Ware: Wordsworth, 2002), p. 251.

One Short Sleepe Past

Richard Peat (2004/rev. 2006)

screaming: raucous and plaintive

♩ = c. 120

Clarinet in B♭

mf

♩ = c. 120

biting

Piano

ff

6

Cl.

fff *mf* *ff* *sfzp*

Pno.

10

Cl.

f *ff* *sfzp* *ff*

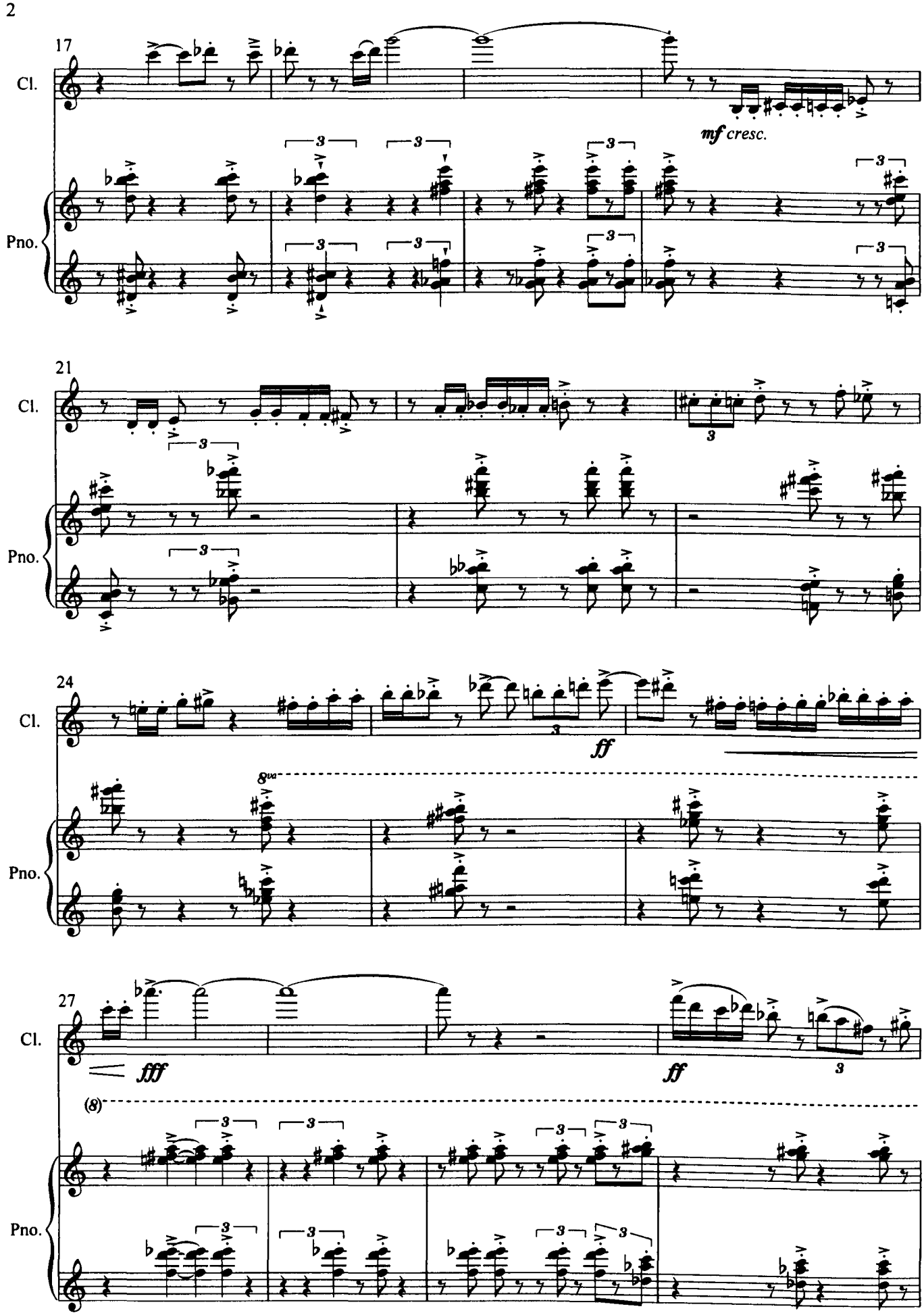
Pno.

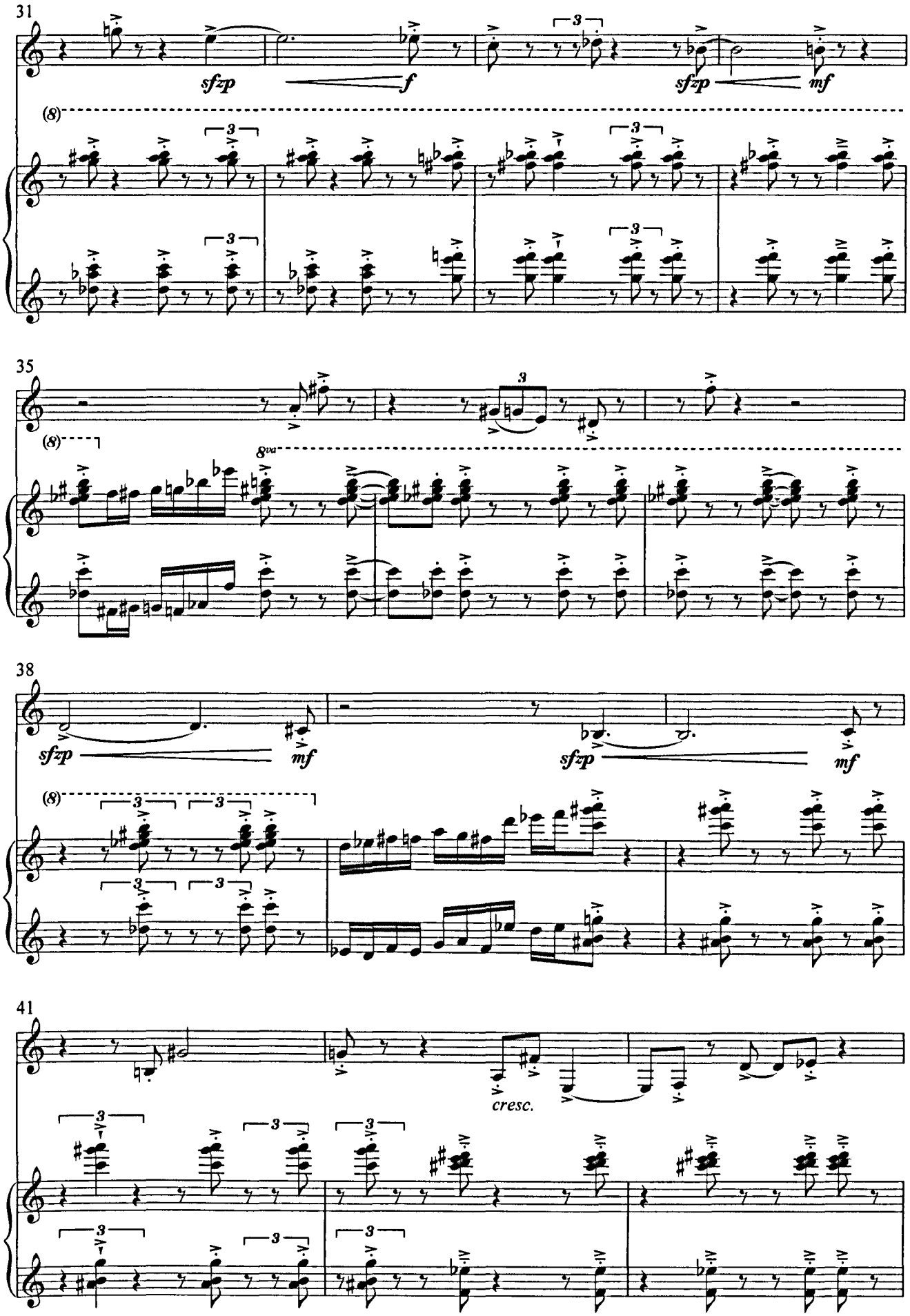
13

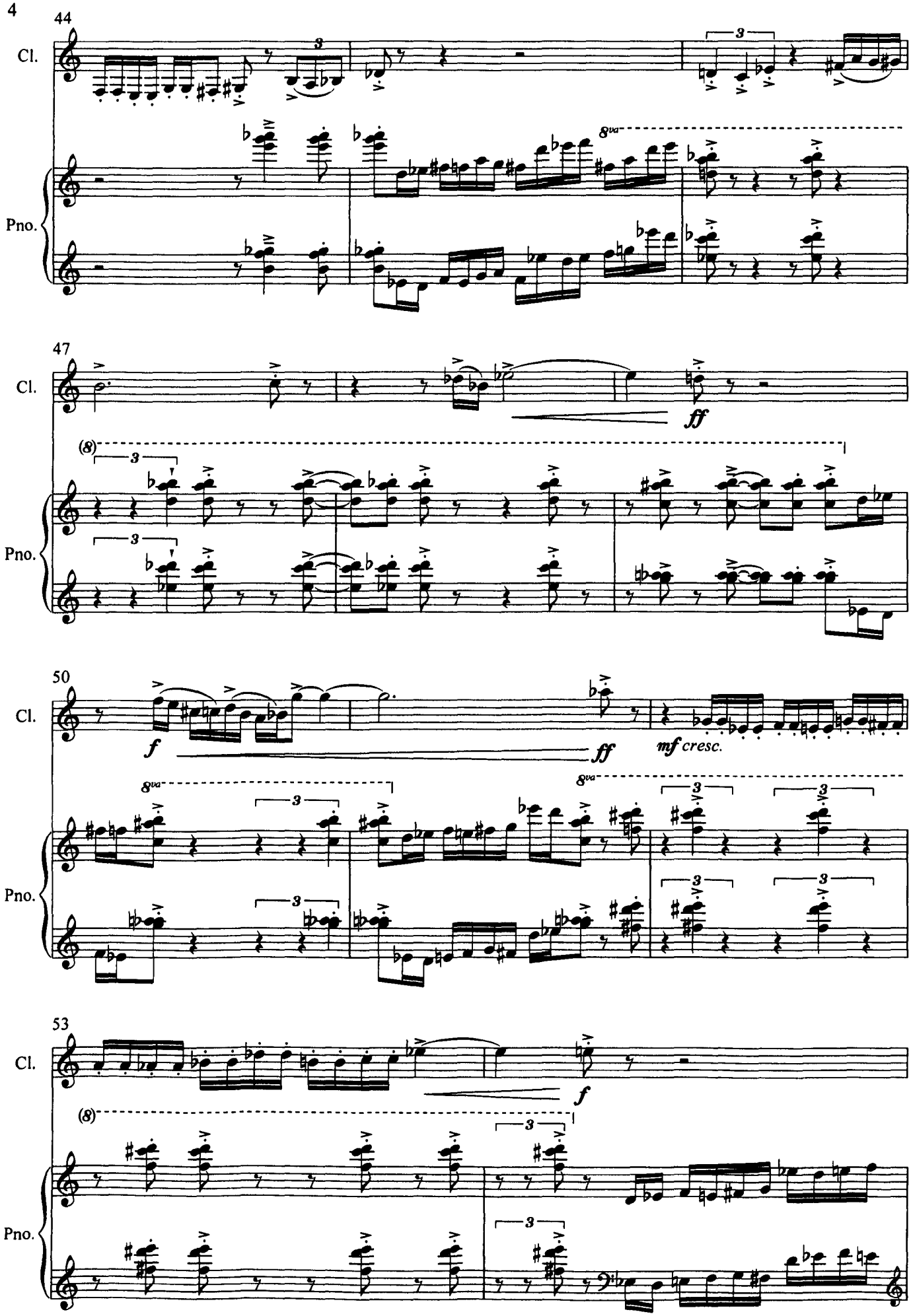
Cl.

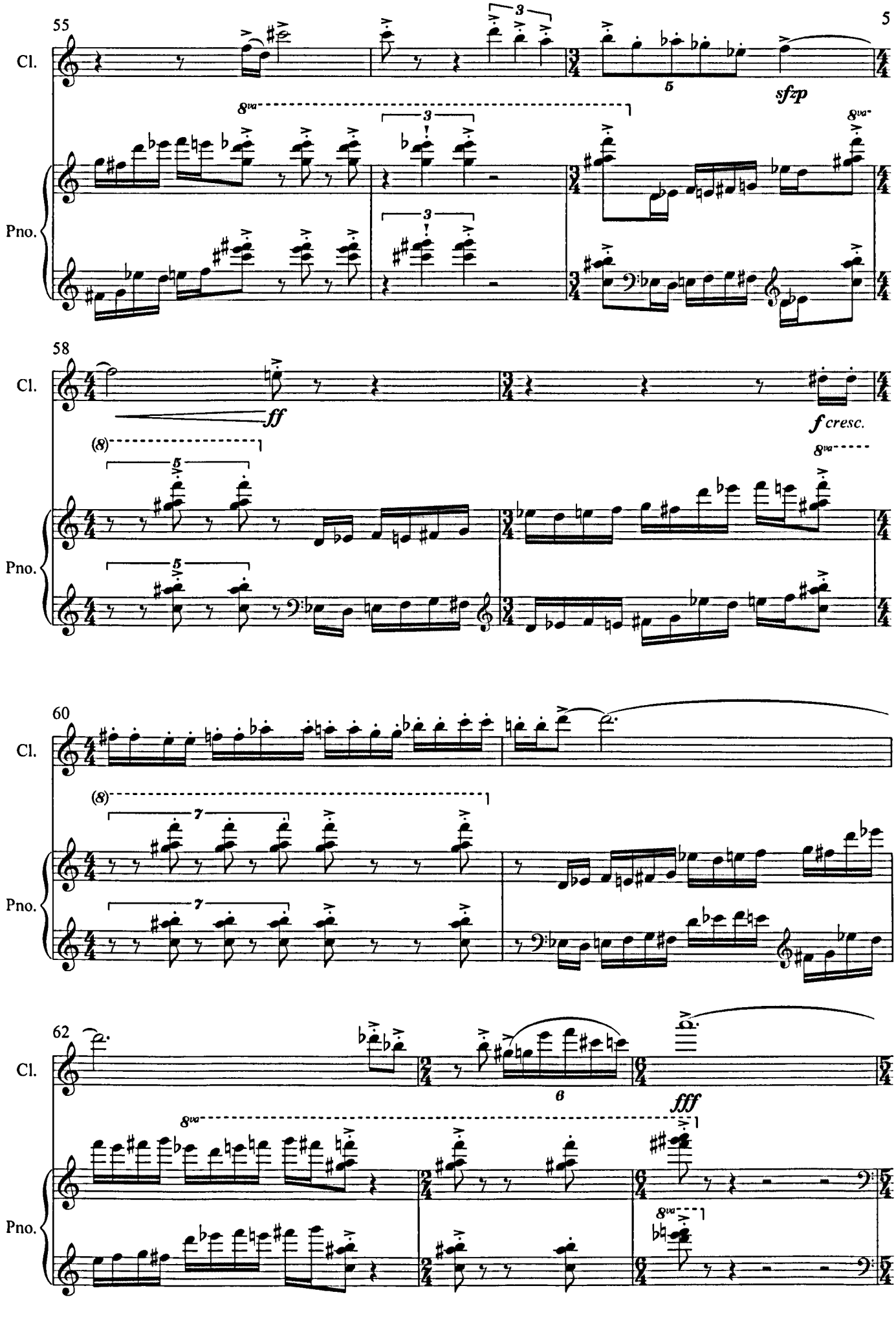
sfzp *ff* *sfzp* *f*

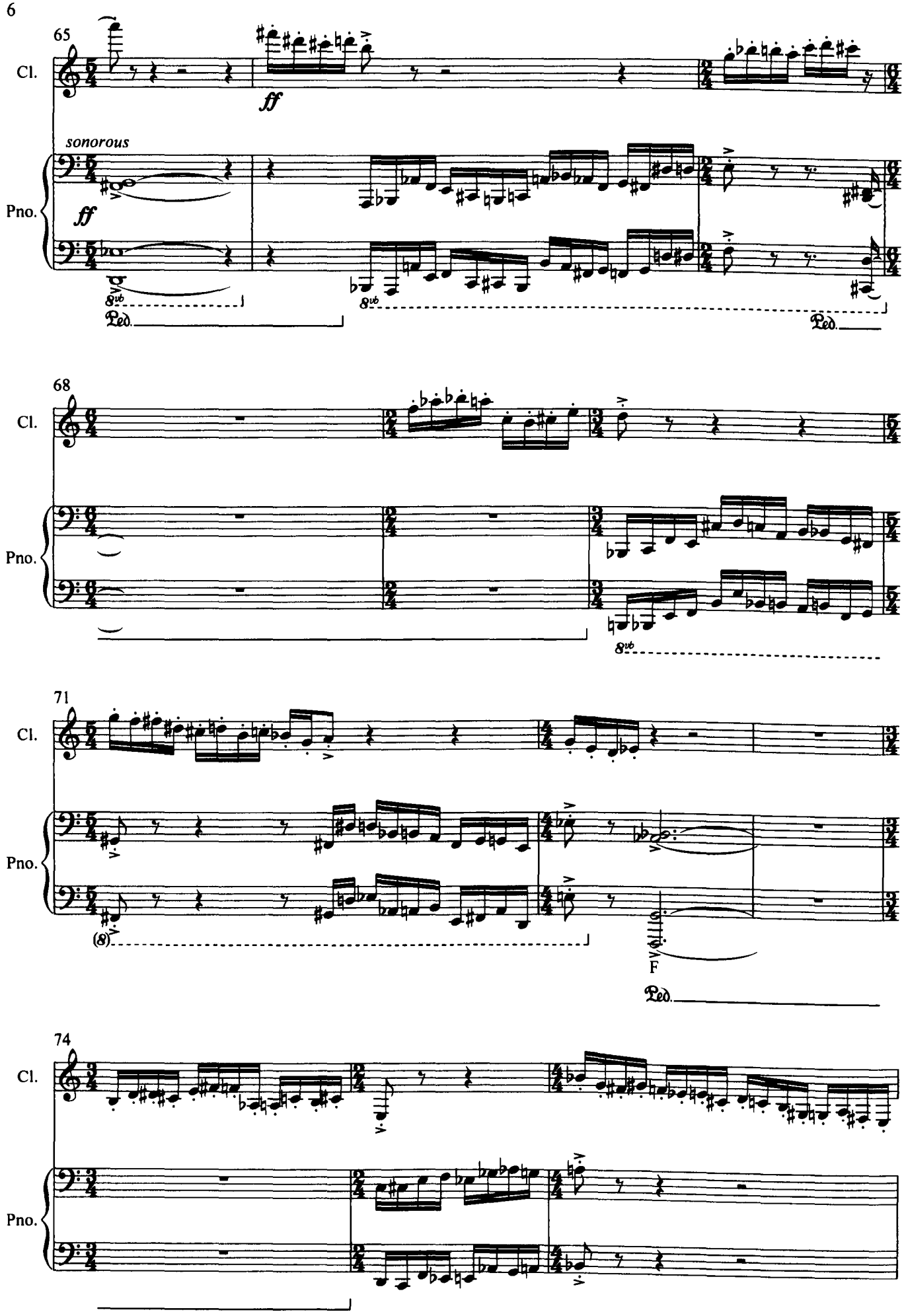
Pno.

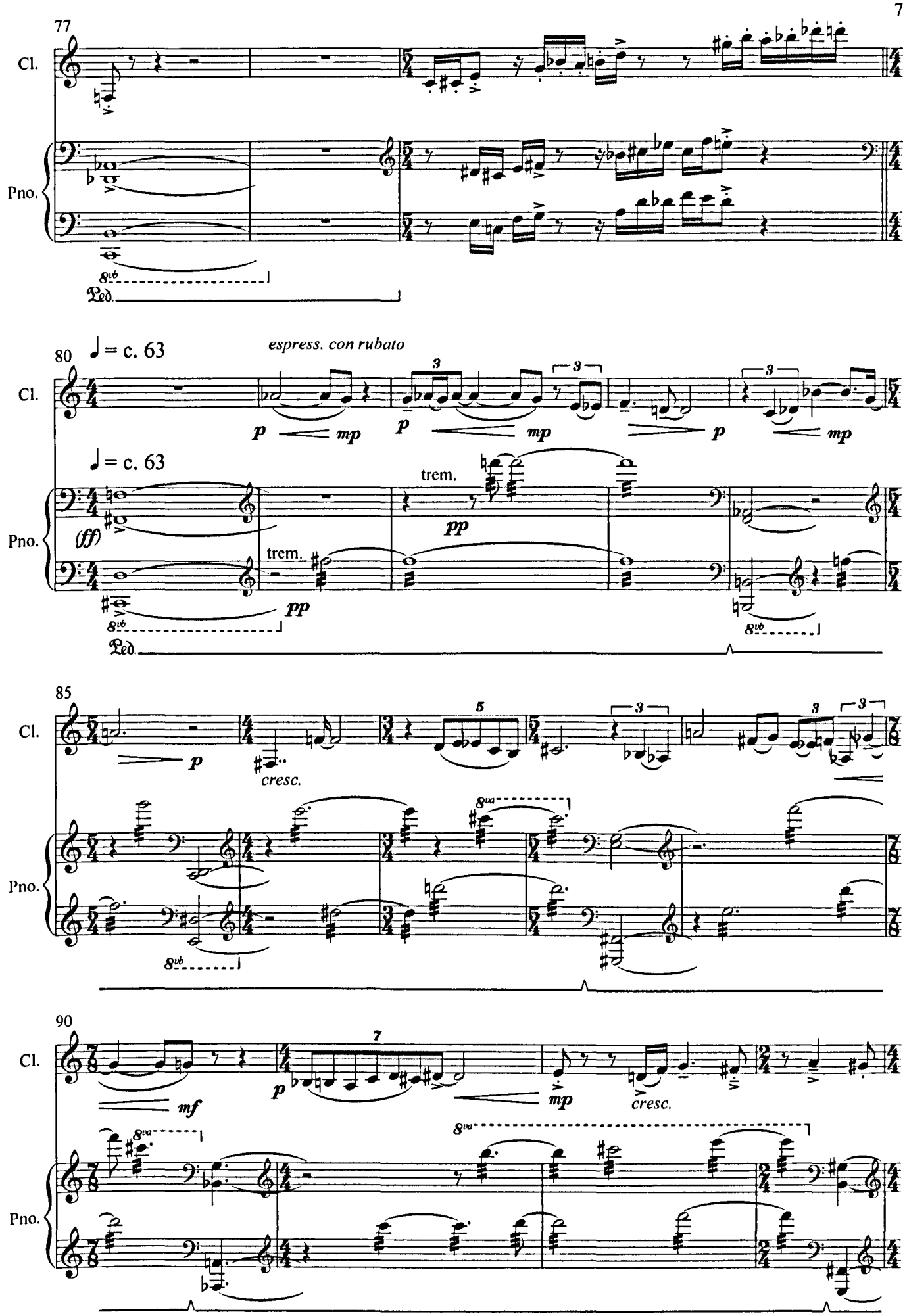

17
Cl.
Pno.
mf cresc.
21
Cl.
Pno.
24
Cl.
Pno.
8va
ff
27
Cl.
Pno.
fff
ff
(8)

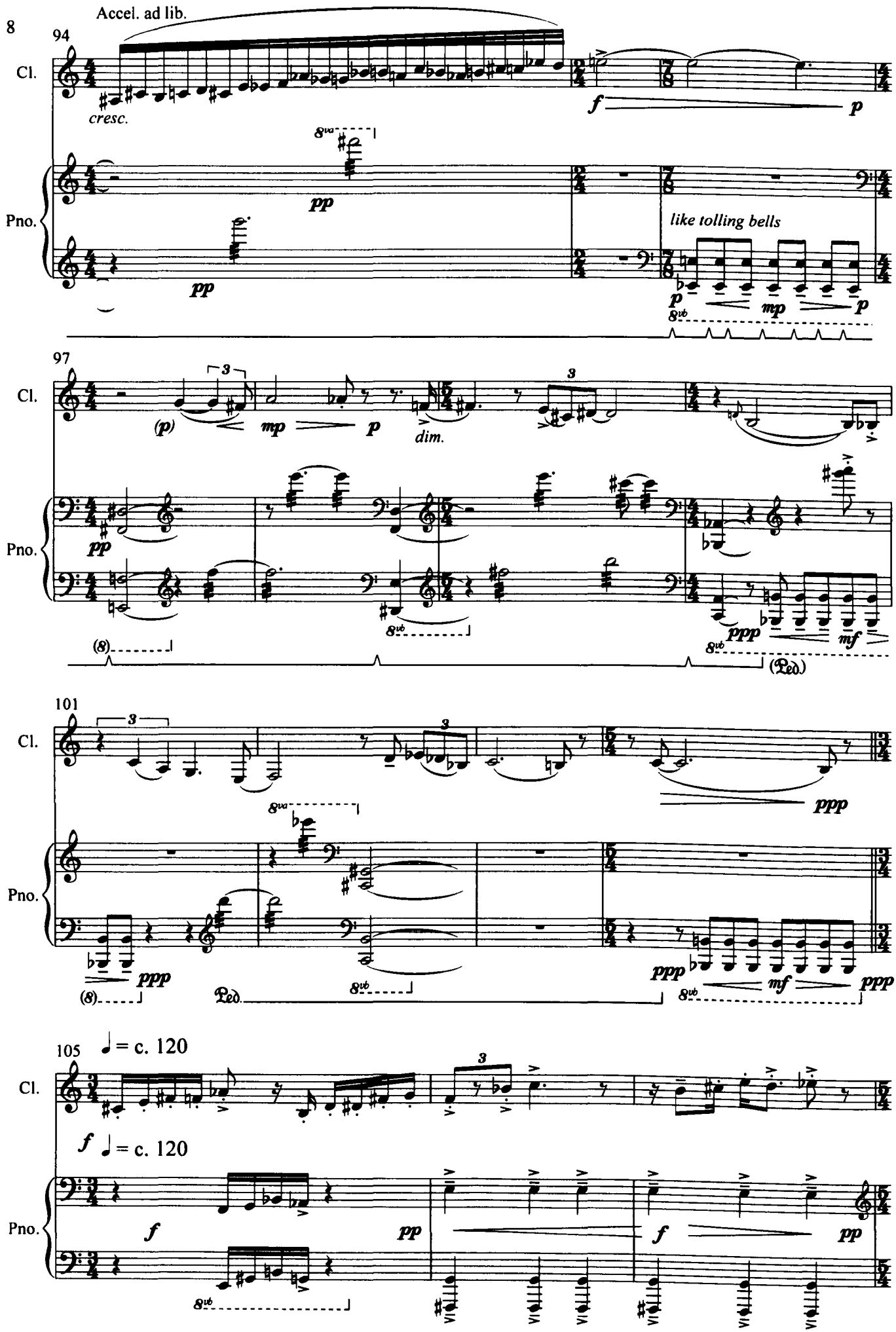

31
Cl.
sfzp
f
sfzp
mf
(8)
Pno.
35
Cl.
(8)
8va
Pno.
38
Cl.
sfzp
mf
sfzp
mf
(8)
Pno.
41
Cl.
cresc.
Pno.

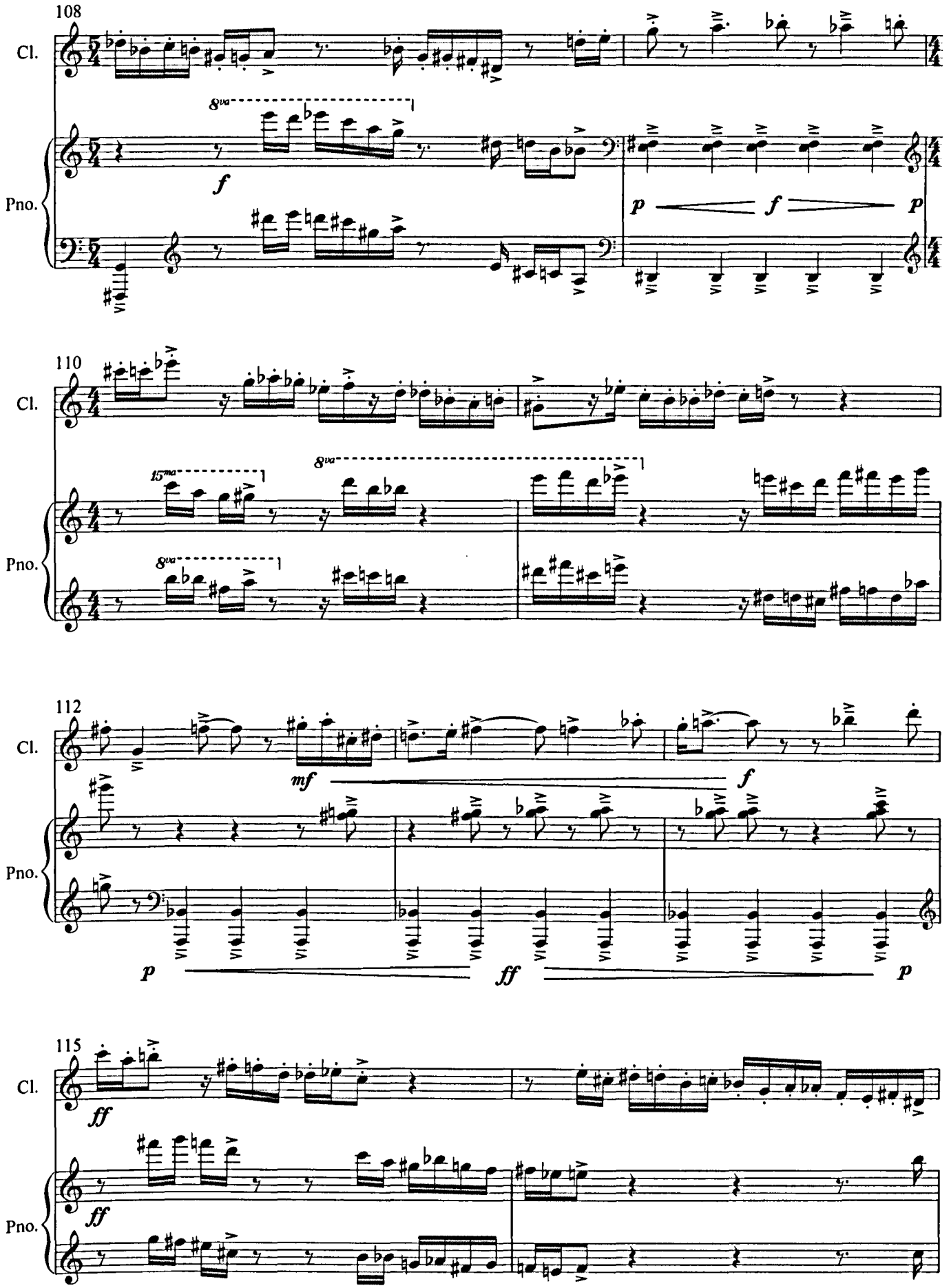

44
Cl.
Pno.
8va
47
Cl.
Pno.
ff
(8)
3
50
Cl.
Pno.
f
ff
mf cresc.
8va
53
Cl.
Pno.
f
(8)

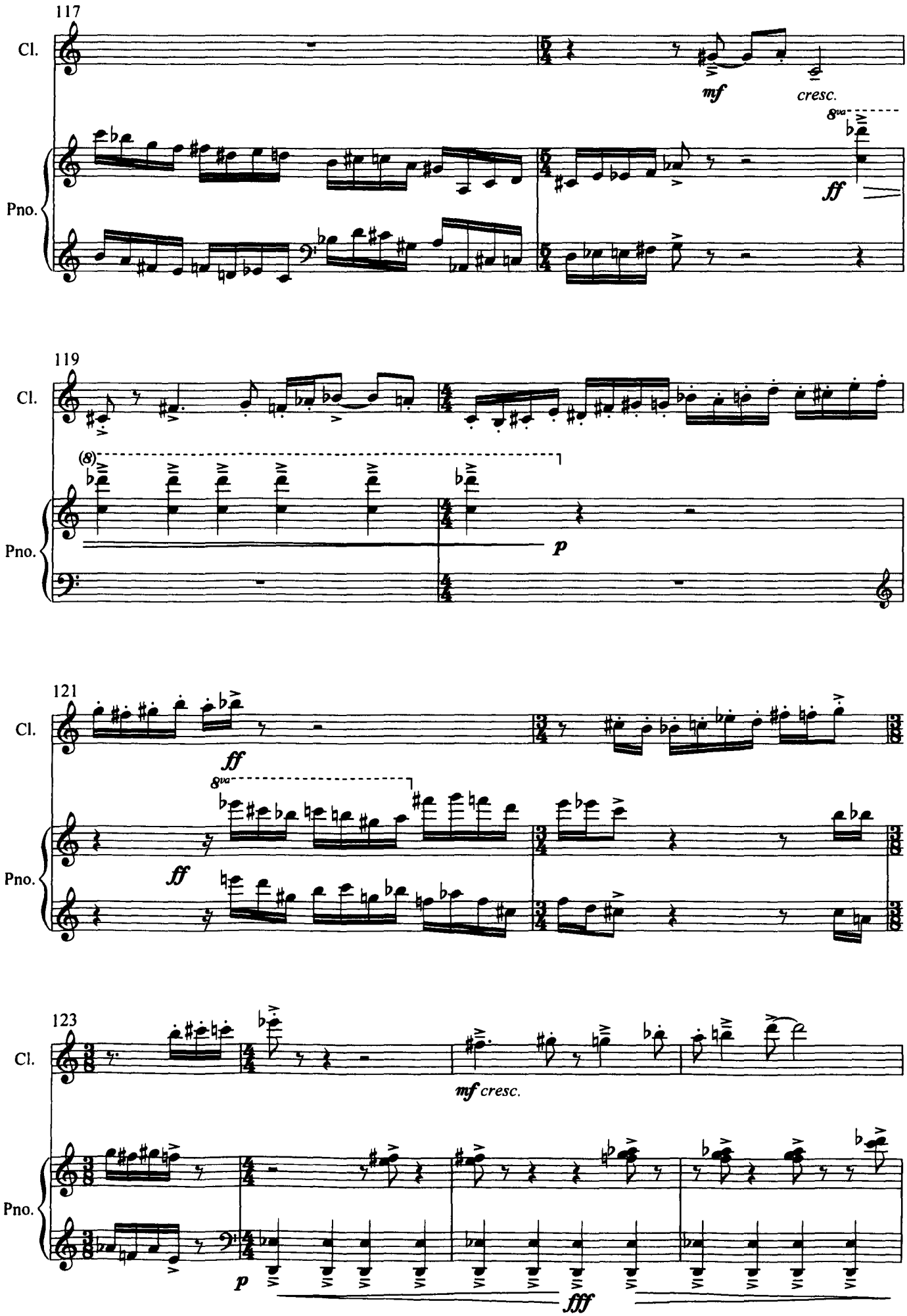

55
Cl.
Pno.
8va
3
5
sfzp
58
ff
f cresc.
(8)
60
7
62
fff

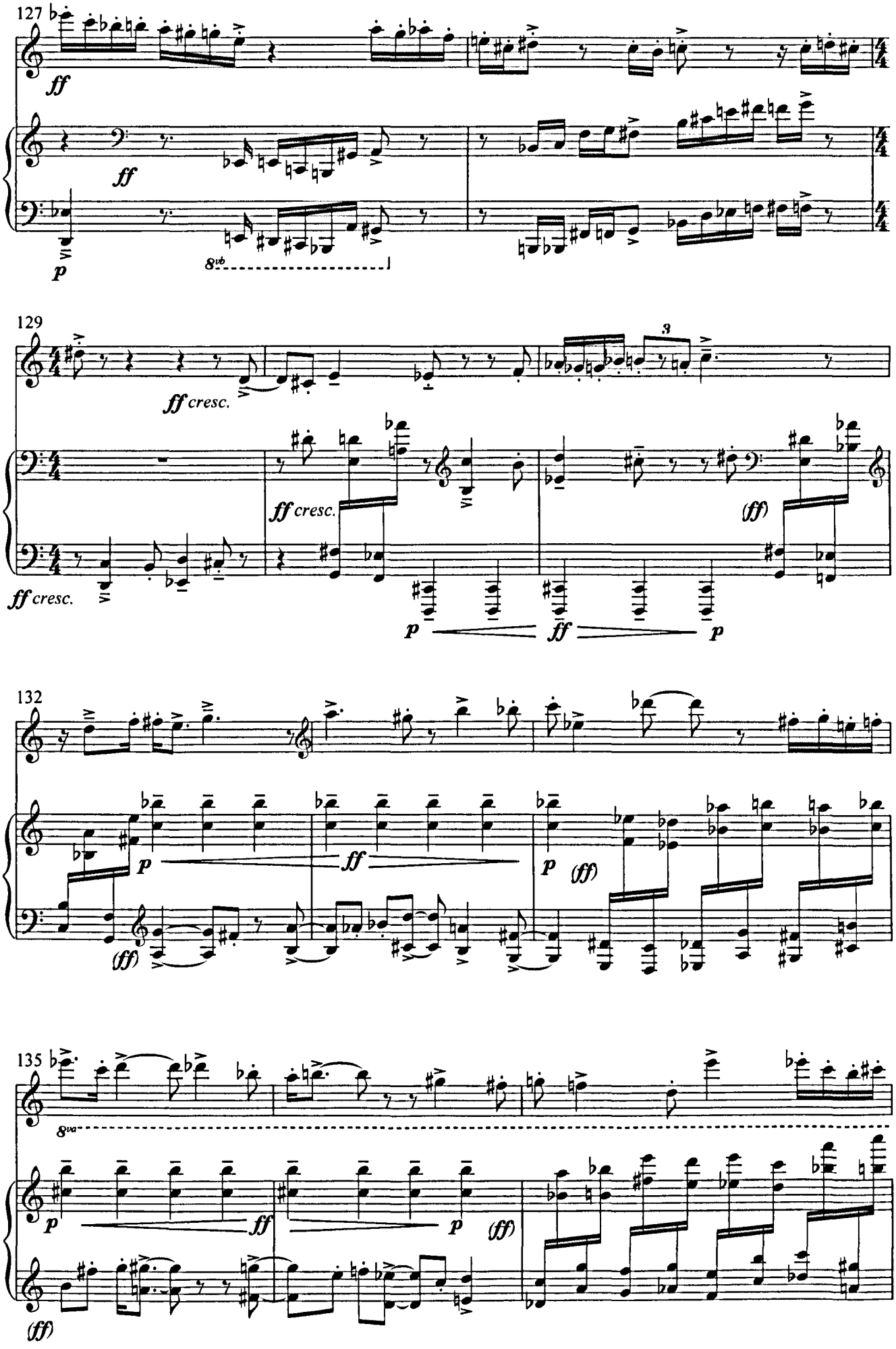

65
Cl.
ff
sonorous
Pno.
ff
8vb
Ped.
8vb
Ped.
68
Cl.
Pno.
8vb
71
Cl.
Pno.
(8)
F
Ped.
74
Cl.
Pno.

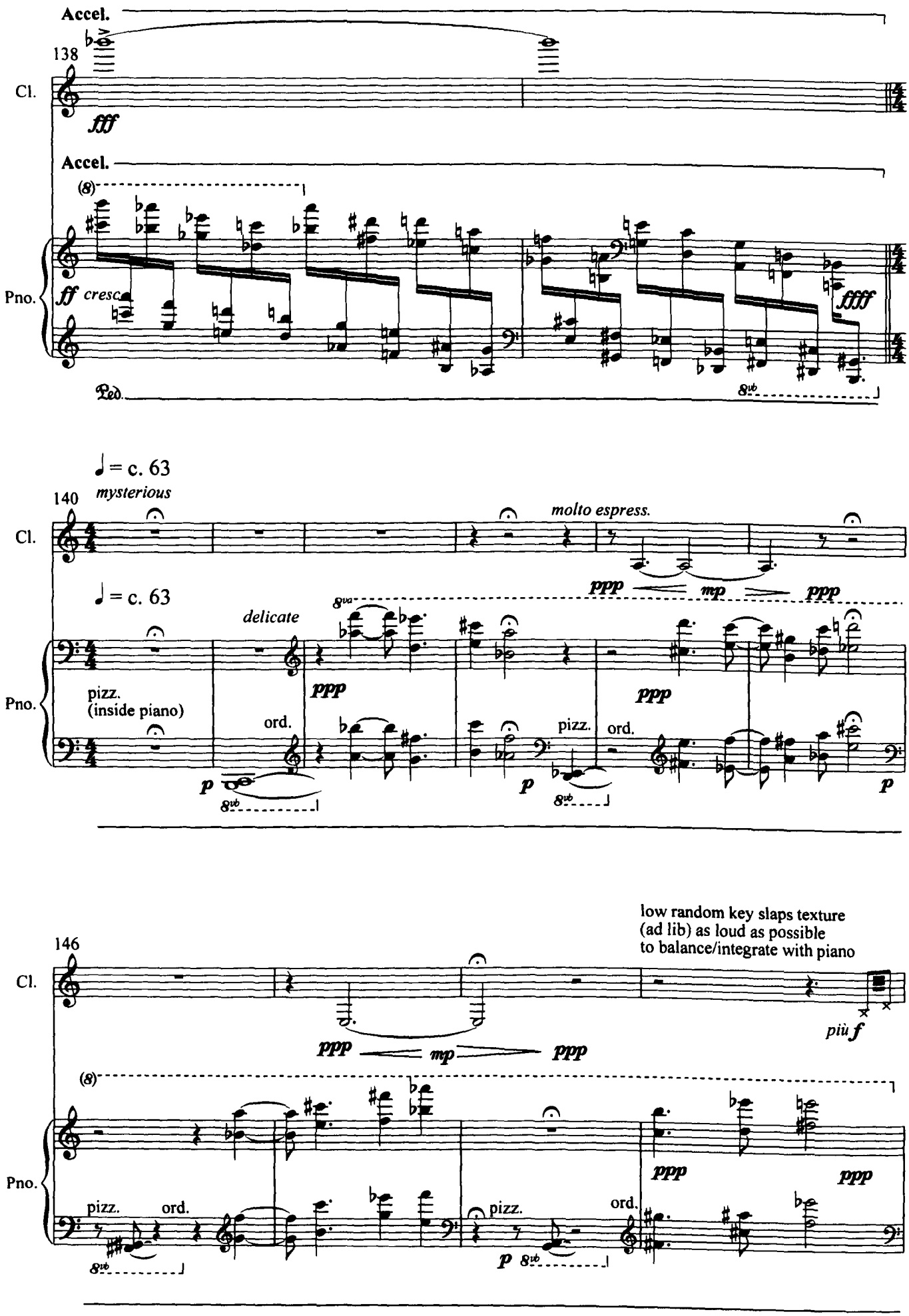

77
Cl.
Pno.
8vb
Ped.
80
♩ = c. 63
espress. con rubato
p
mp
3
♩ = c. 63
(ff)
trem.
pp
85
cresc.
5
8va
90
mf
7
cresc.

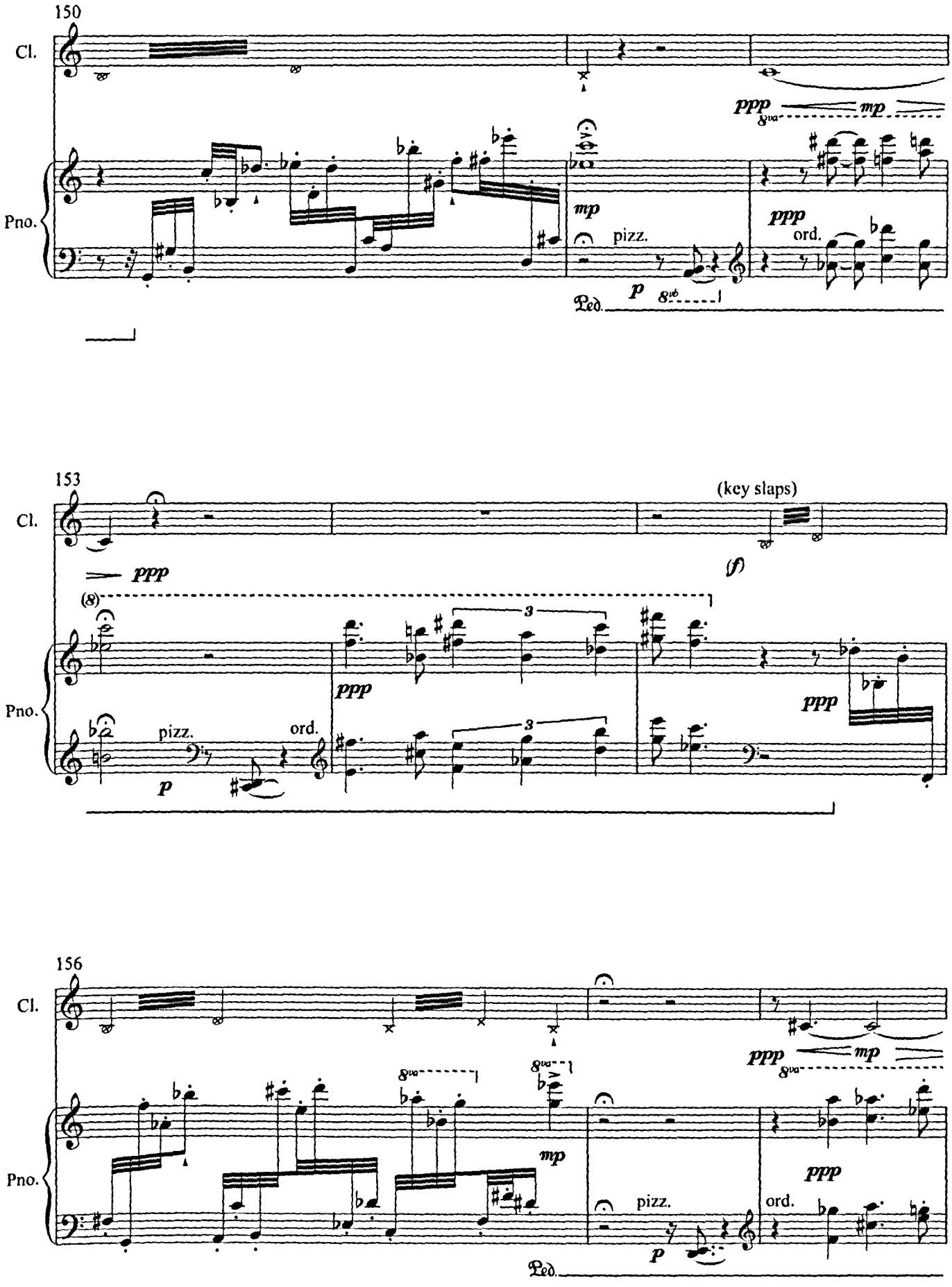

94
Accel. ad lib.
Cl.
cresc.
f
p
8va
pp
Pno.
pp
like tolling bells
p
mp
p
8vb
97
Cl.
(p)
mp
p
dim.
3
Pno.
pp
8vb
(8)
ppp
mf
8vb
(Ped.)
101
Cl.
3
ppp
8va
Pno.
ppp
(8)
Ped.
8vb
ppp
mf
ppp
8vb
105
♩ = c. 120
Cl.
f ♩ = c. 120
Pno.
f
pp
8vb
f
pp

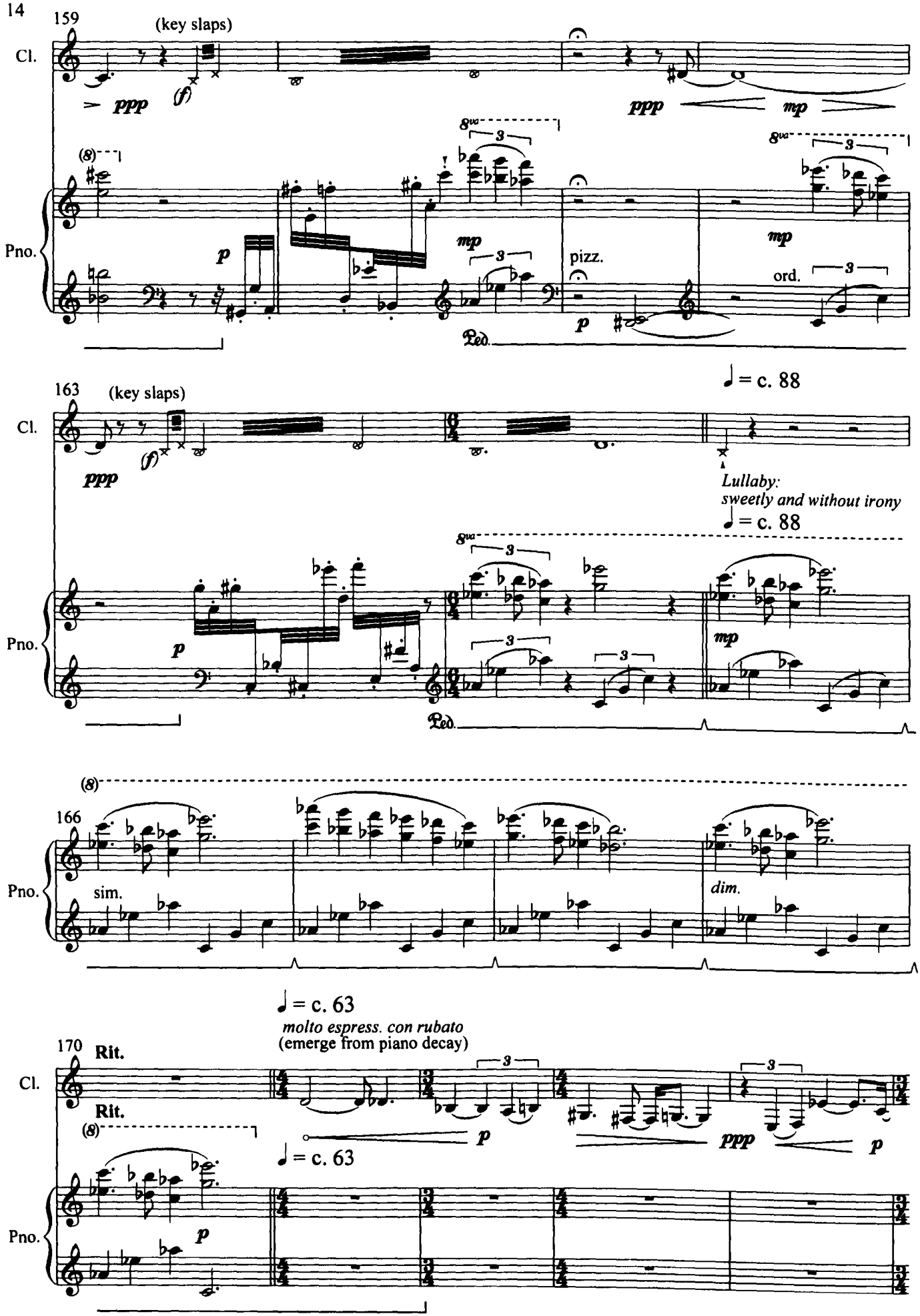

108
Cl.
Pno.
8va
f
p
f
p
110
Cl.
Pno.
15ma
8va
8va
112
Cl.
Pno.
mf
f
p
ff
p
115
Cl.
Pno.
ff
ff

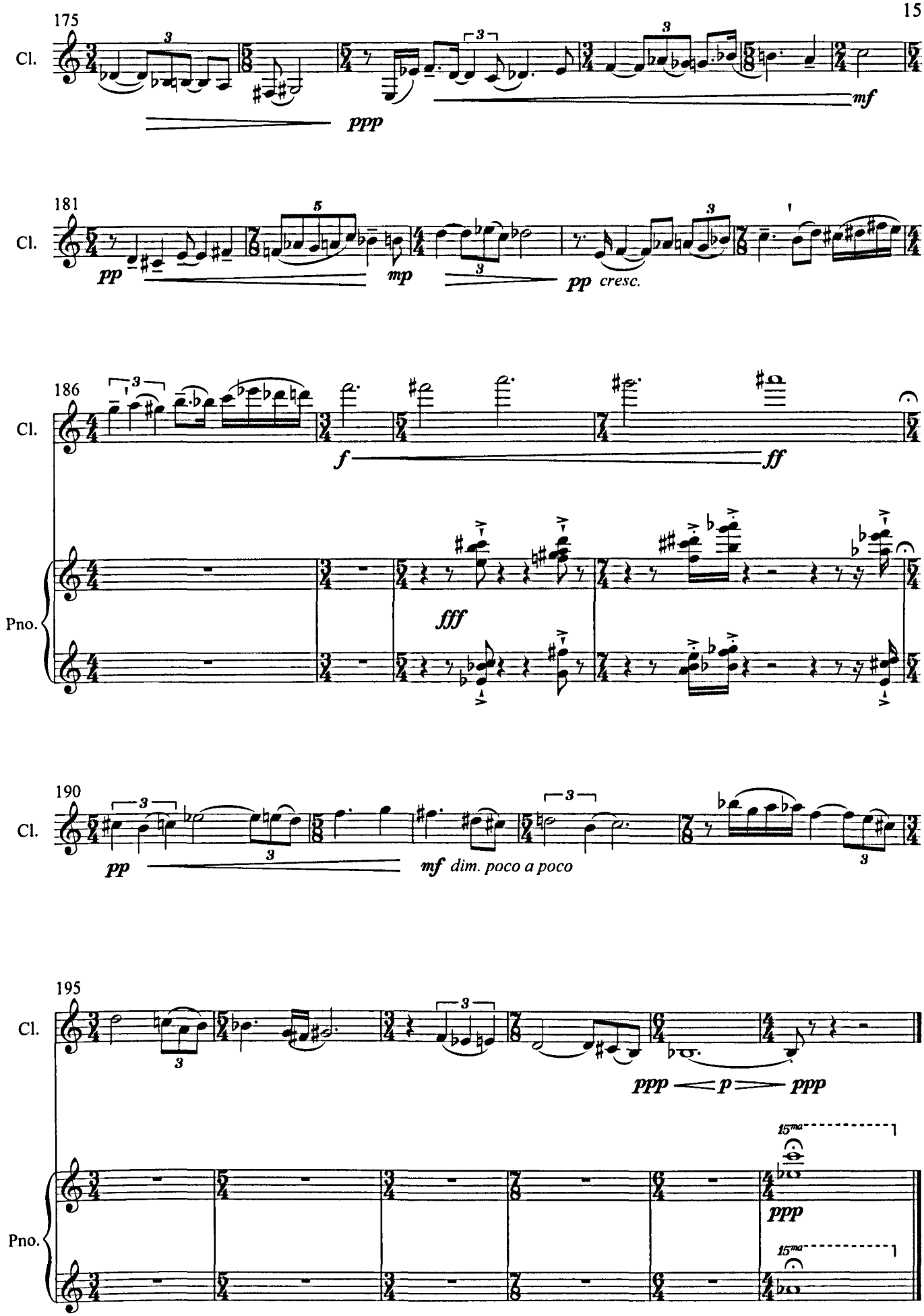

117
Cl.
Pno.
mf
cresc.
8va
ff
119
Cl.
Pno.
(8)
p
121
Cl.
Pno.
ff
8va
ff
123
Cl.
Pno.
mf cresc.
p
fff


127
Cl.
Pno.
ff
p
8vb
129
ff cresc.
3
(ff)
132
135
8va


Accel.
138
Cl.
fff
Accel.
(8)
Pno.
ff cresc.
ffff
Ped.
8vb
♩ = c. 63
140
mysterious
molto espress.
ppp
mp
ppp
♩ = c. 63
delicate
8va
pizz.
(inside piano)
ord.
ppp
ppp
pizz.
ord.
p
p
p
8vb
8vb
low random key slaps texture
(ad lib) as loud as possible
to balance/integrate with piano
146
Cl.
ppp
mp
ppp
più f
(8)
Pno.
pizz.
ord.
pizz.
ord.
ppp
ppp
p
8vb
8vb


150
Cl.
Pno.
ppp
8va
mp
mp
pizz.
p
8vb
Ped.
ppp
ord.
153
(key slaps)
(f)
ppp
(8)
3
ppp
ppp
pizz.
ord.
p
156
Cl.
Pno.
ppp
mp
8va
mp
pizz.
p
ord.
ppp
Ped.


159
(key slaps)
Cl.
ppp
(f)
ppp
mp
Pno.
p
mp
pizz.
ord.
Ped.
163
(key slaps)
♩ = c. 88
Cl.
ppp
(f)
Lullaby:
sweetly and without irony
♩ = c. 88
Pno.
p
mp
Ped.
166
Pno.
sim.
dim.
♩ = c. 63
molto espress. con rubato
(emerge from piano decay)
170
Rit.
Cl.
Rit.
p
ppp
p
♩ = c. 63
Pno.
p


175
Cl.
ppp
mf
181
Cl.
pp
mp
pp cresc.
186
Cl.
f
ff
Pno.
fff
190
Cl.
pp
mf dim. poco a poco
195
Cl.
ppp p ppp
Pno.
ppp
15ma
15ma

The Hunter and the Hunted

Variations for Marimba and Ensemble

Bass clarinet, Horn, Marimba, Violin, Cello, Double Bass

Richard Peat

City University – School of Arts

(Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
PhD submission, March 2007)

The Hunter and the Hunted

Variations for Marimba and Ensemble

Richard Peat

Score in C

Bass Clarinet, Horn, Marimba, Violin, Cello, Double Bass

Duration: c. 6m

Programme Note

In this piece the marimba (the hunted) finds itself in situations often characterised by texture. At the opening, it dances in and out of ominous chords played by the surrounding ensemble. These chords, becoming briefer, are then propelled into a section in which fragmented gestures are thrown around the ensemble. This subsides, leaving a bass clarinet solo shadowed by a blend of string harmonics and tremolo marimba. The marimba's opening material rudely interrupts, but this time the surrounding ensemble engulfs it in a combination of long notes (acting as a cantus firmus) and increasingly insistent Morse code rhythms. By the close the marimba is almost completely hidden in the surrounding texture.

The Hunter and the Hunted was first performed at LSO St. Luke's on May 4th, 2006 by members of the London Sinfonietta conducted by Martyn Brabbins.

Performance Note

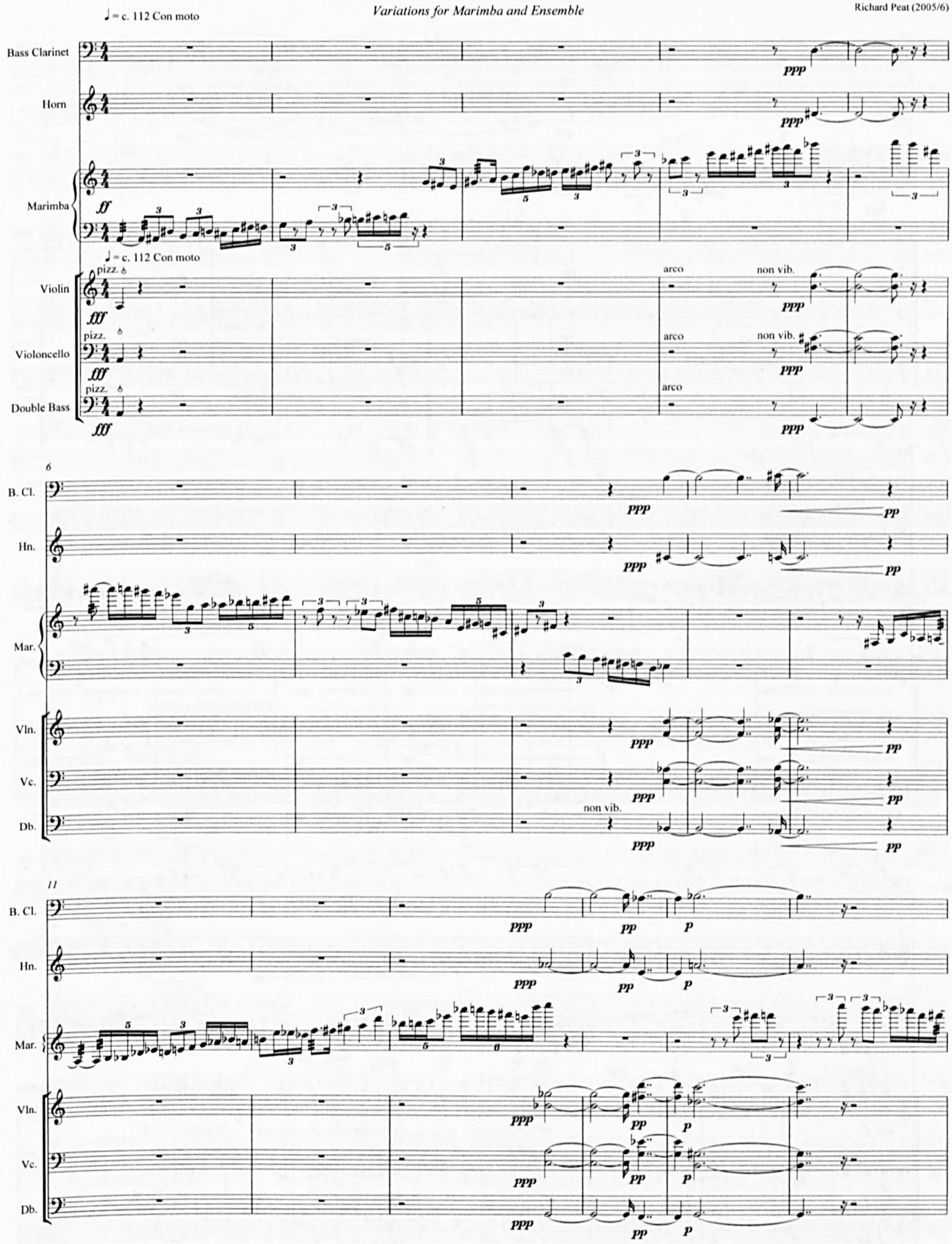
'Fingered' refers to the 'clavichord' style technique of fingering the notes with the left hand only.

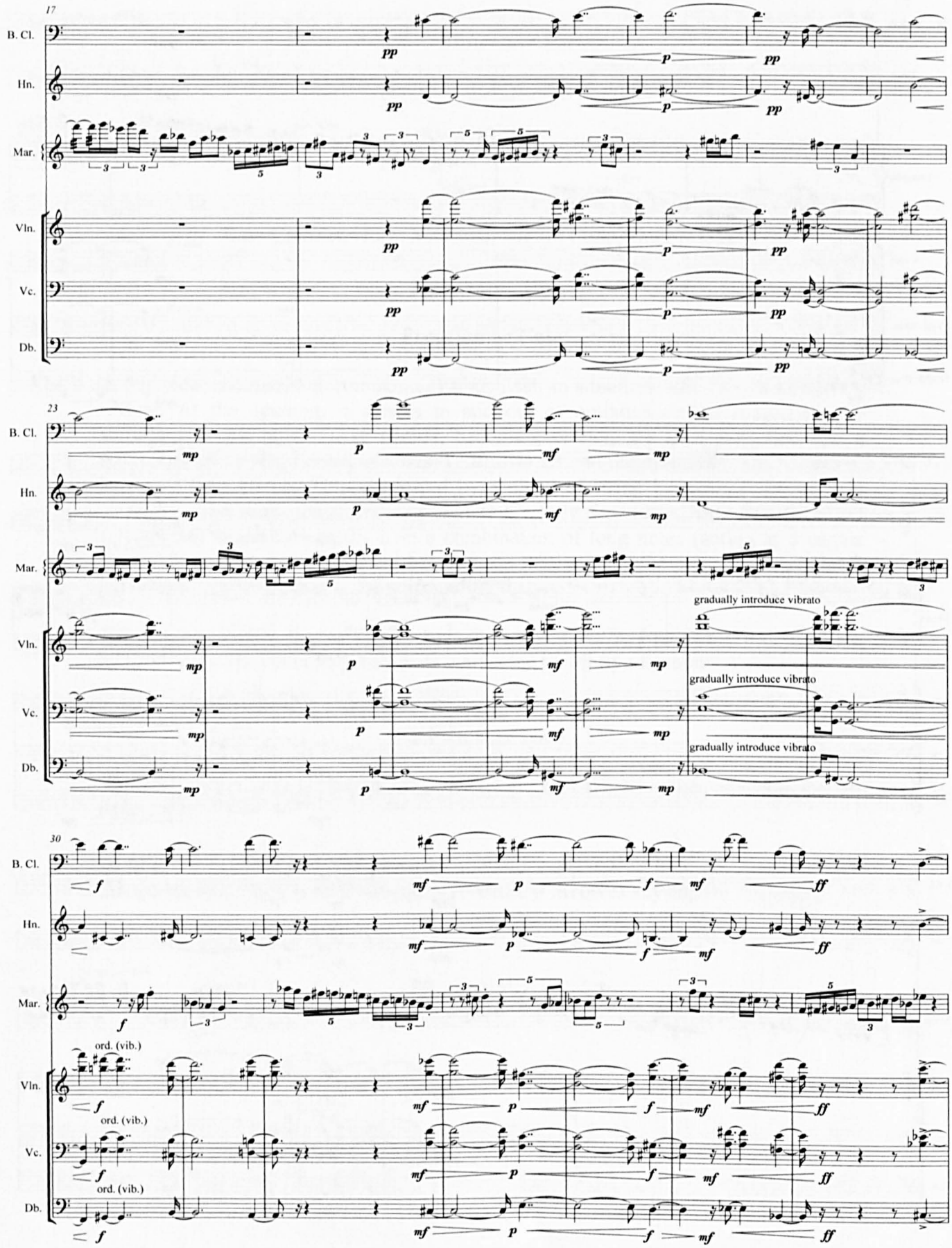
p *(più* ***f****)* indicates that this passage should be played as loud as possible, even though the result will still be very quiet (because it involves keyslaps or fingering).

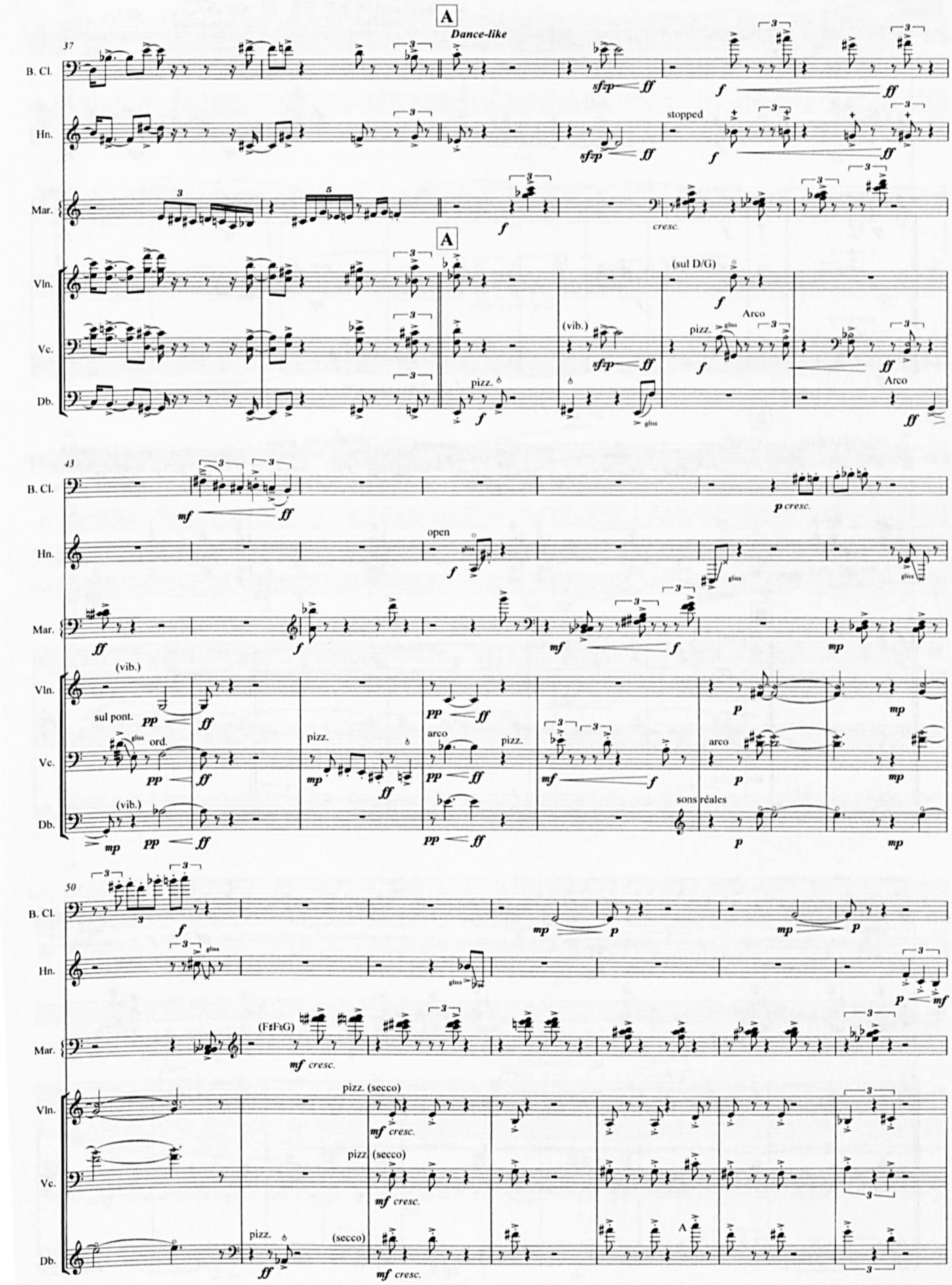
The Hunter and the Hunted

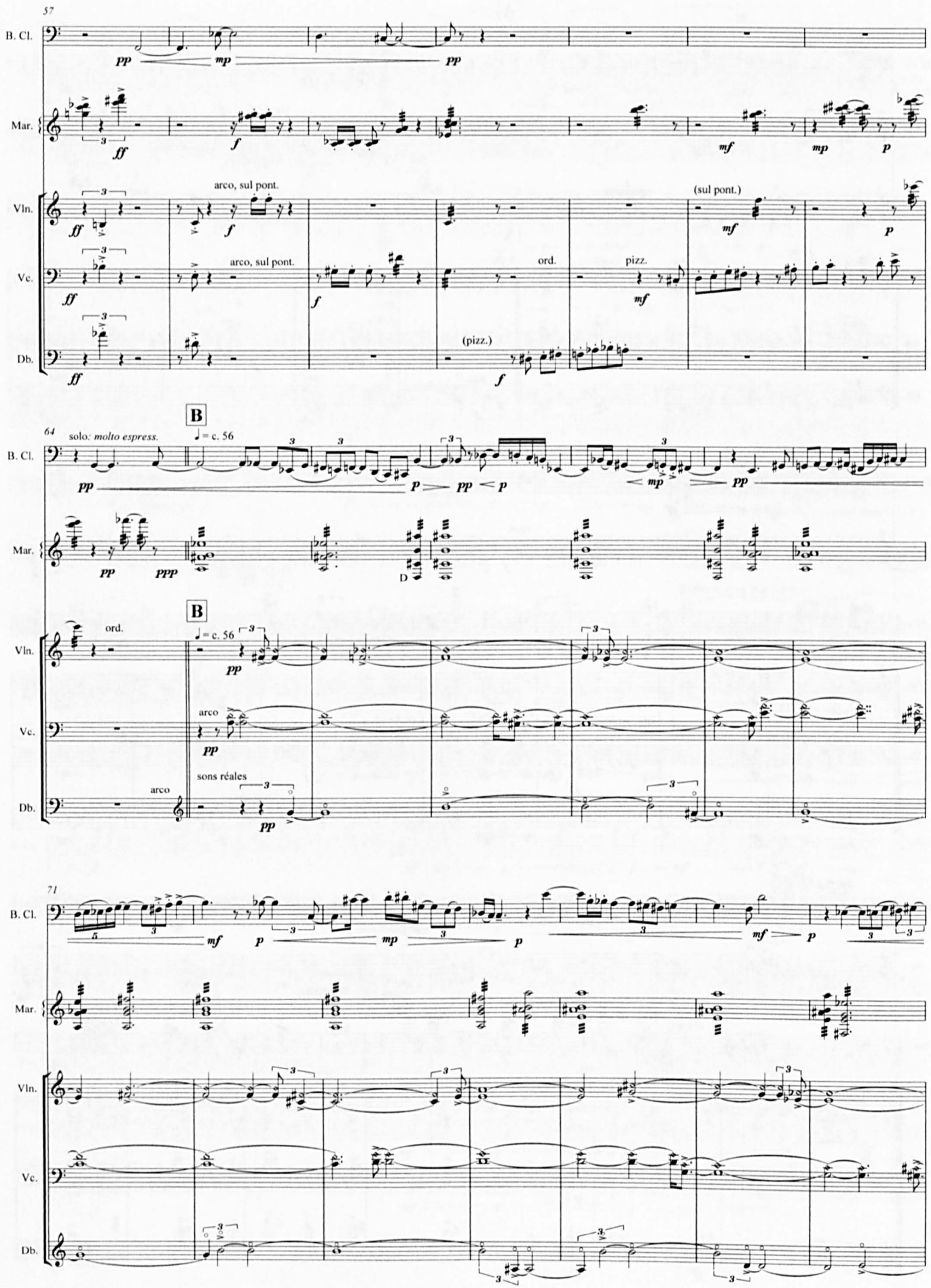
Variations for Marimba and Ensemble

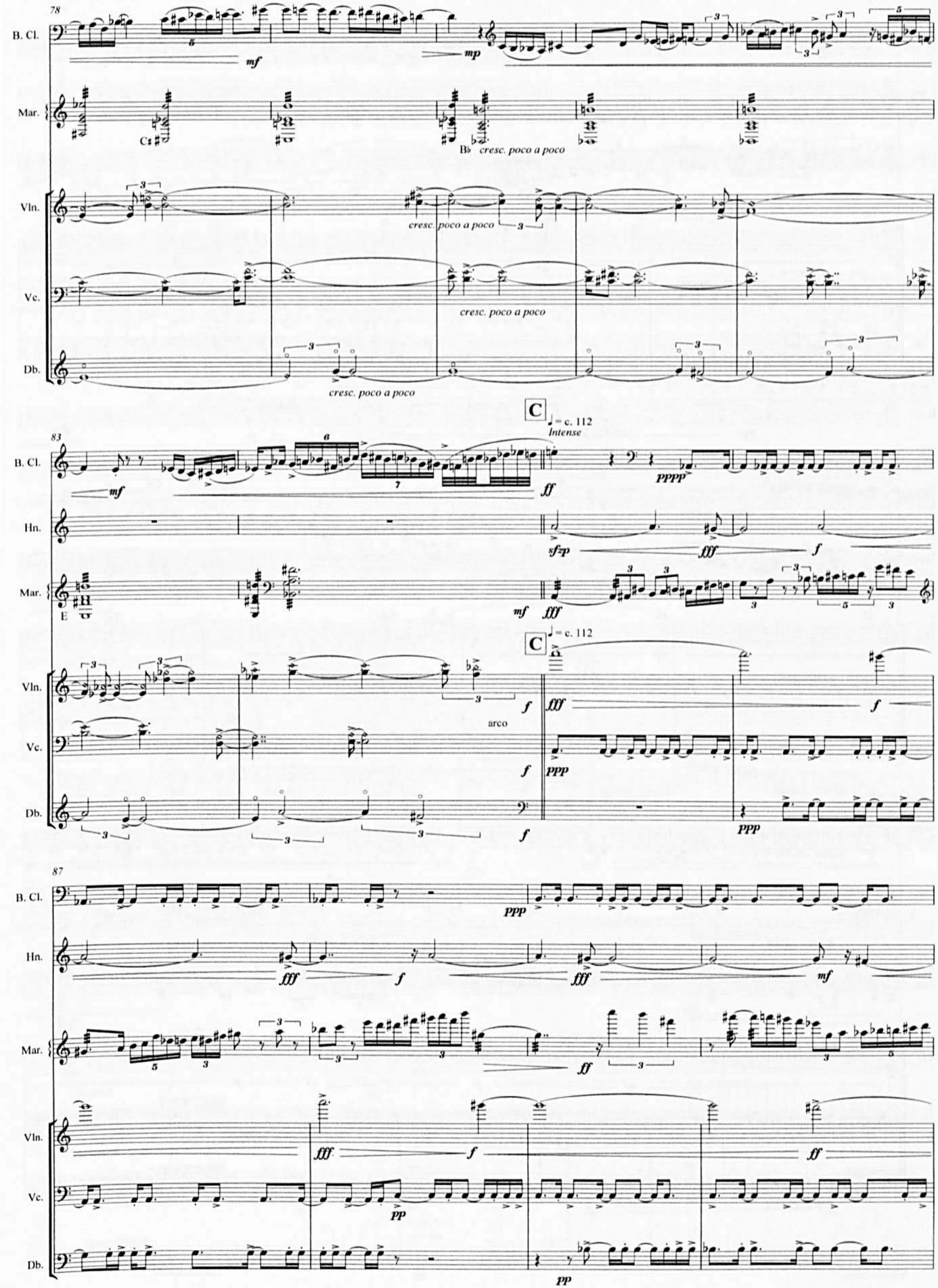
Richard Peat (2005/6)

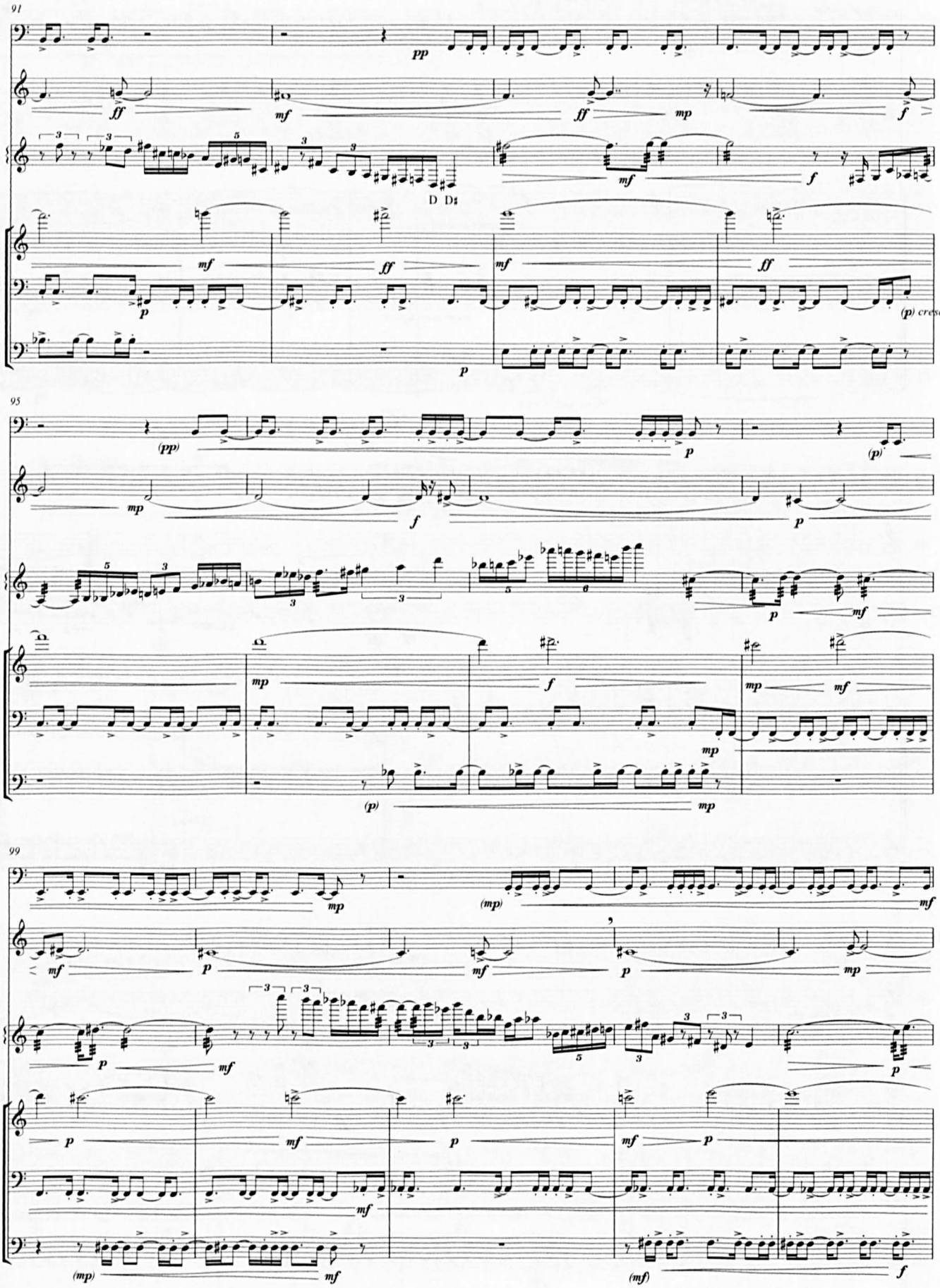


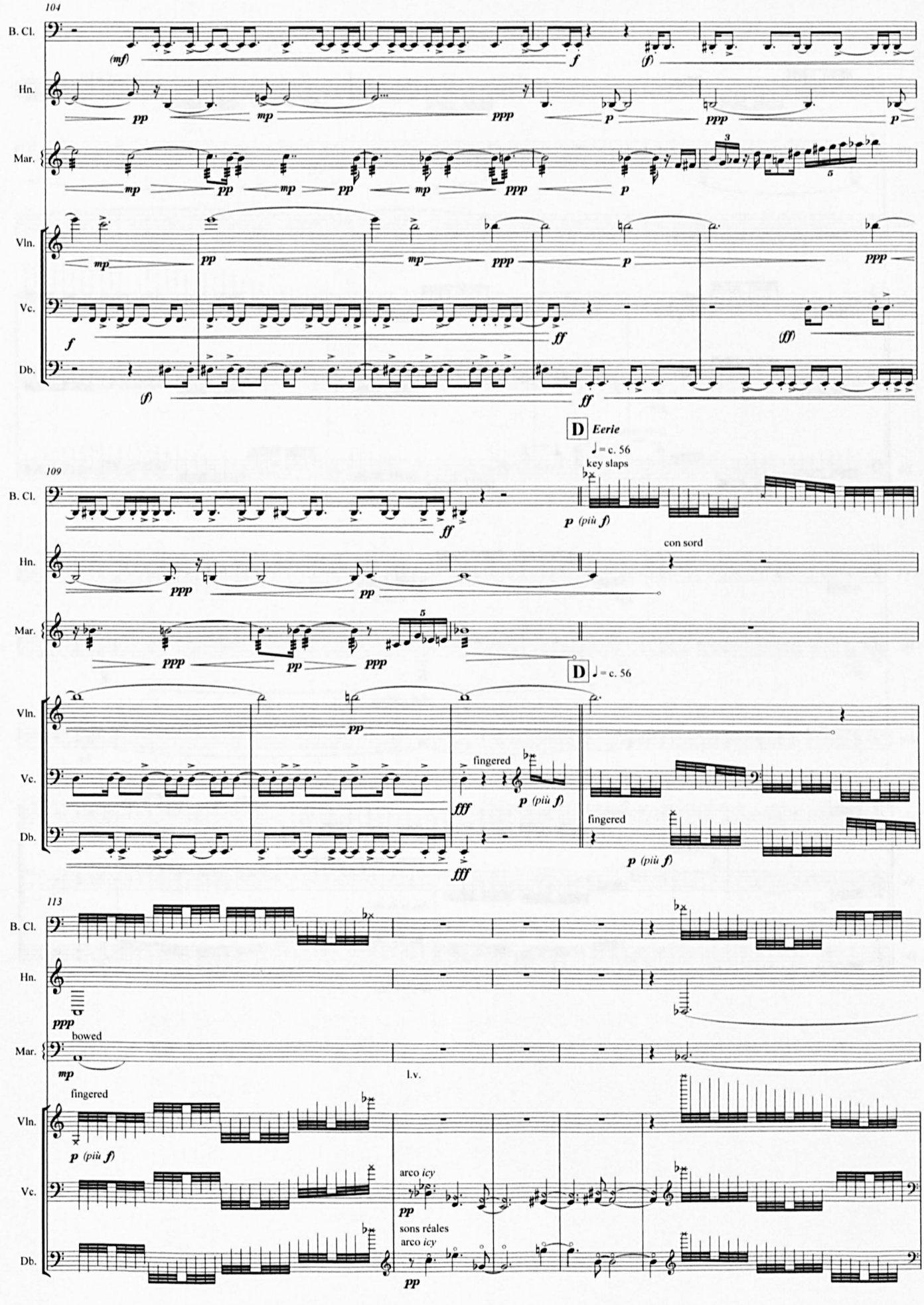

17
B. Cl.
Hn.
Mar.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
23
gradually introduce vibrato
gradually introduce vibrato
gradually introduce vibrato
30
ord. (vib.)
ord. (vib.)
ord. (vib.)

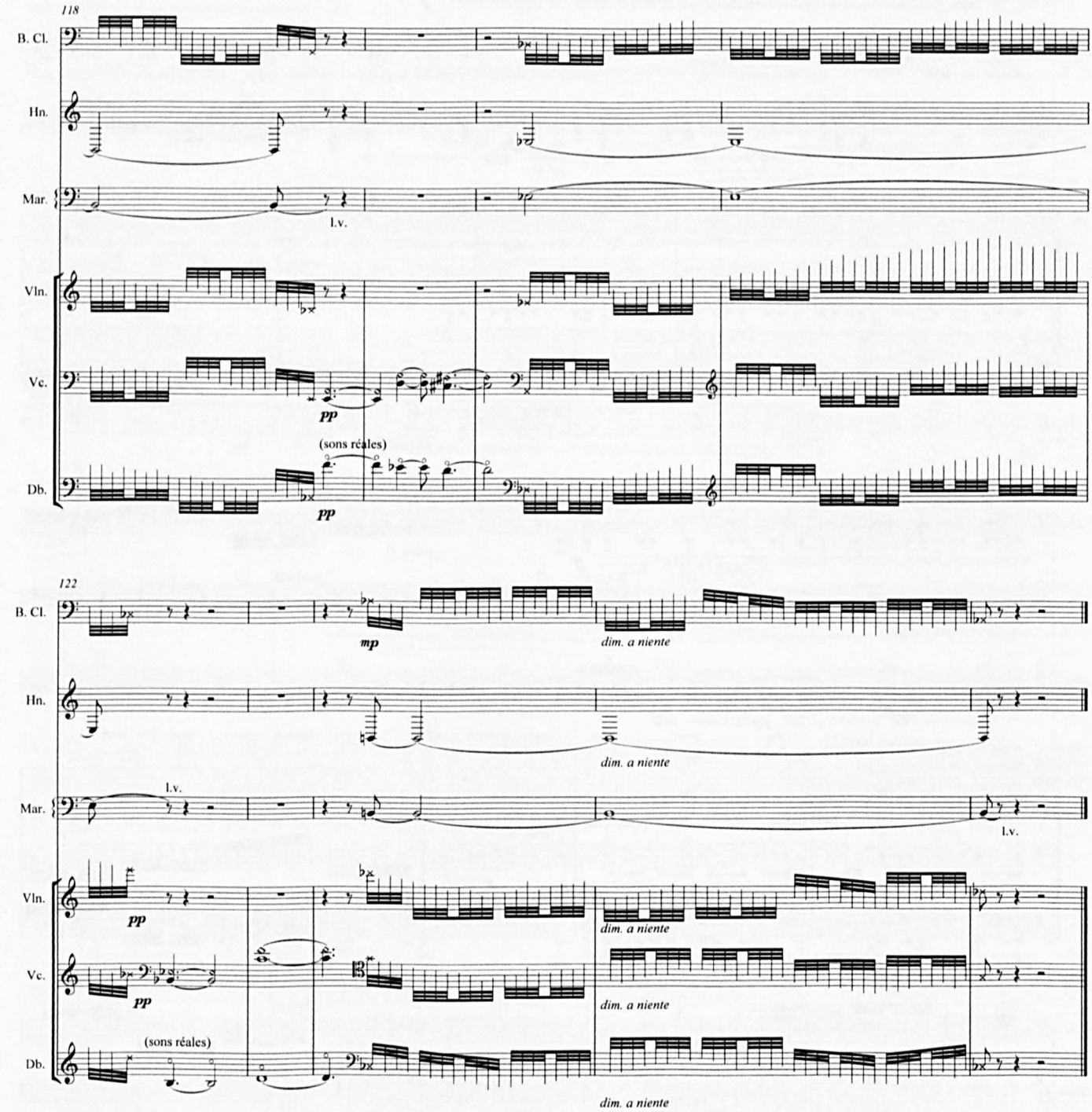

A
Dance-like
37
B. Cl.
Hn.
Mar.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
stopped
(sul D/G)
Arco
pizz.
(vib.)
cresc.
43
open
sul pont.
ord.
arco
sons réales
50
(F♯F♮G)
pizz. (secco)
(secco)


57
B. Cl.
Mar.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
arco, sul pont.
ord.
pizz.
(sul pont.)
(pizz.)
64
solo: molto espress.
B
♩ = c. 56
D
ord.
arco
sons réales
71


78
B. Cl.
Mar.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
mf
mp
C:
B♭
cresc. poco a poco
83
C
♩ = c. 112
Intense
ff
pppp
Hn.
sf-p
fff
f
E
arco
ppp
87
pp


91
B. Cl.
Hn.
Mar.
D D♯
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
(p) cresc.
95
(pp)
(p)
99
(mp)
(mf)


104
B. Cl.
Hn.
Mar.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.
(mf)
f
(f)
pp
mp
ppp
p
ff
(ff)
D Eerie
♩= c. 56
key slaps
p (più f)
con sord
109
fingered
fff
bowed
mp
l.v.
arco icy
sons réales
arco icy
113


118
B. Cl.
Hn.
Mar.
l.v.
Vln.
Vc.
pp
(sons réales)
Db.
pp
122
B. Cl.
mp
dim. a niente
Hn.
dim. a niente
Mar.
l.v.
l.v.
Vln.
pp
dim. a niente
Vc.
pp
dim. a niente
(sons réales)
Db.
dim. a niente

Winter Landscape

Solo Trumpet, Soprano Choir, Organ

Richard Peat

City University – School of Arts

(Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of PhD submission, March 2007)

Winter Landscape

Richard Peat

Score in C

Solo Trumpet, Soprano Choir, Organ

Dur. c. 6m

Programme Note

This piece was inspired by the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich, particularly his *Winter Landscape with Church, 1811* (which hangs in the National Gallery). I have explored notions of texture, colour, foreground/background relationships, lines etc. which are comparable to the techniques found in landscape painting. Musical 'objects' associated with winter are embedded in the piece, most obviously the music of the traditional carol, *Down in yon forest* (the text of which describes a scene similar to those found in Friedrich's paintings). This is essentially a solo trumpet piece, where organ and voices fade in and out of the foreground.

Winter Landscape was first performed on 12th March, 2005 at Southwark Cathedral by Onyx Brass, Daniel Cook, and The Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge conducted by Stephen Layton. It was one of the winning entries in the John Armitage Memorial Project, 2005.

Performance Notes

Some registration for organ has been suggested as a guide, but it is expected that the performer will choose their own registration in the specific performance context.

The soprano choir should be placed at a distance from the other forces, such as in an organ loft and the trumpet should be at the front of the 'stage'.

Winter Landscape

Richard Peat 2003/4

♩ = c. 100
con sord
(harmon, stem not extended)

Trumpet

f

flz.

ff *f*

flz.

ff *f*

flz.

at a distance from the other forces

Soprano choir

♩ = c. 100

(Great) Solo trumpet 8
(balance with trumpet) *f*

flowing

Organ

Pedals

16 + 8 *p*

10

Tpt.

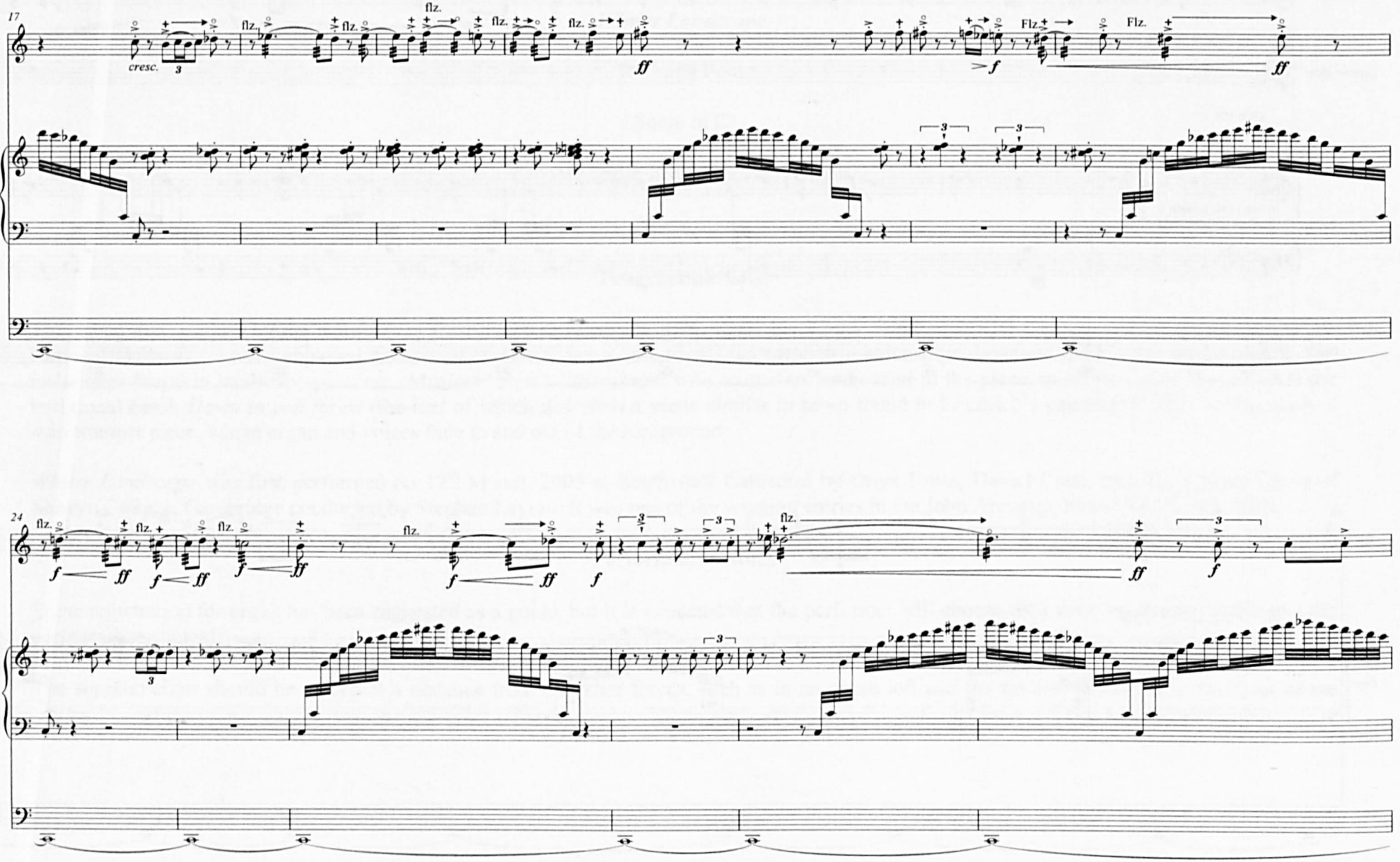
flz.

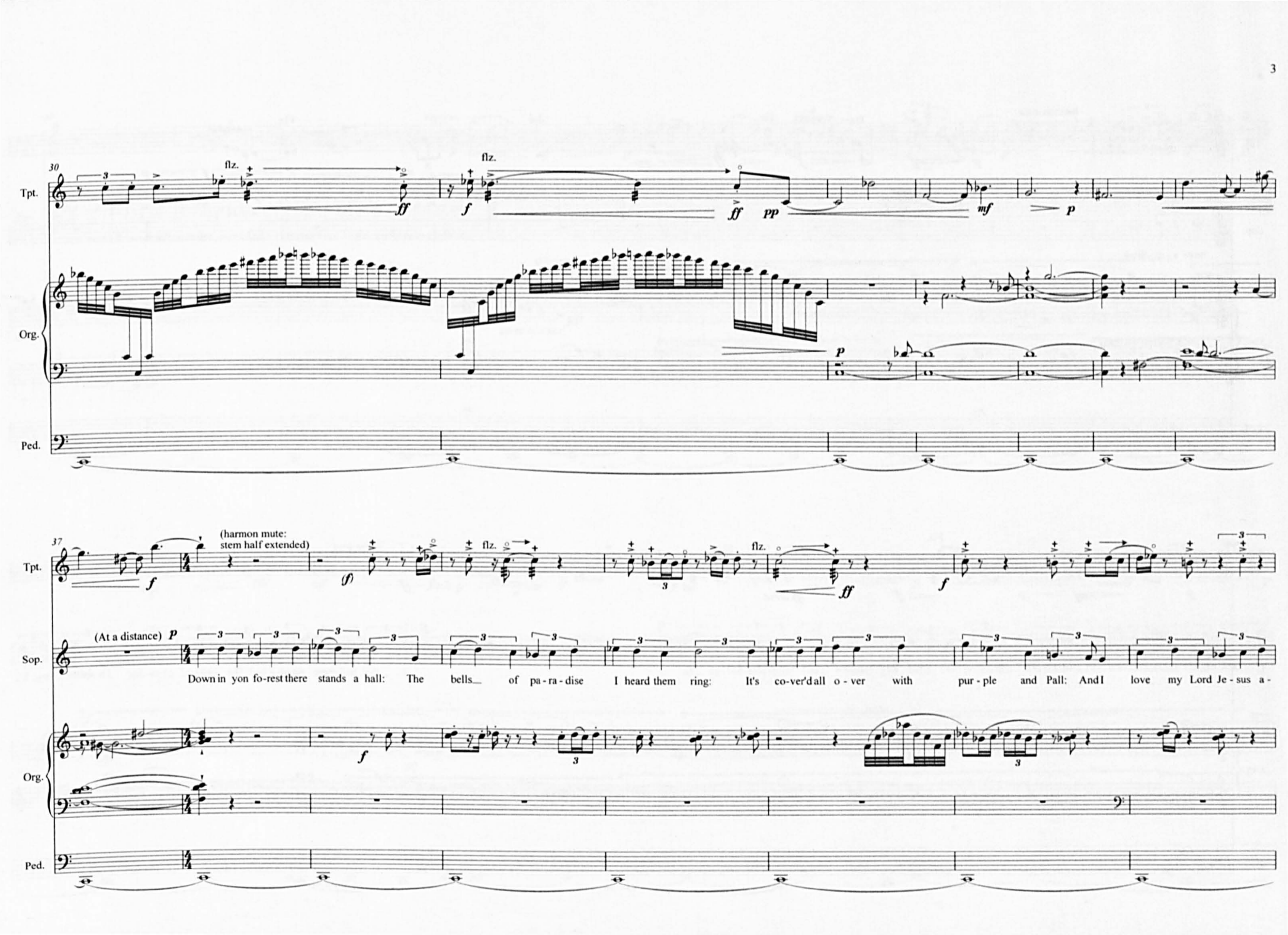
flz.

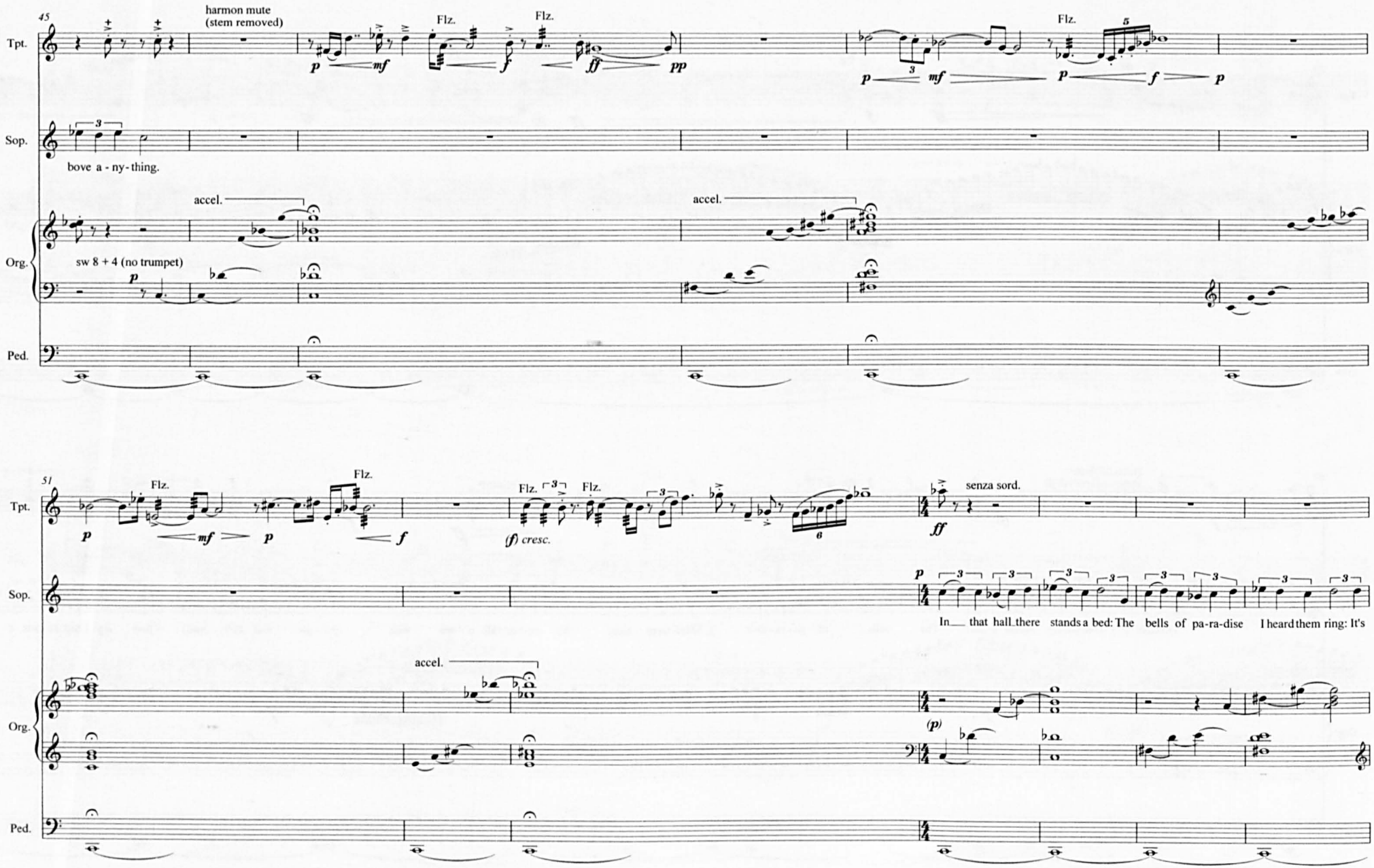
flz.

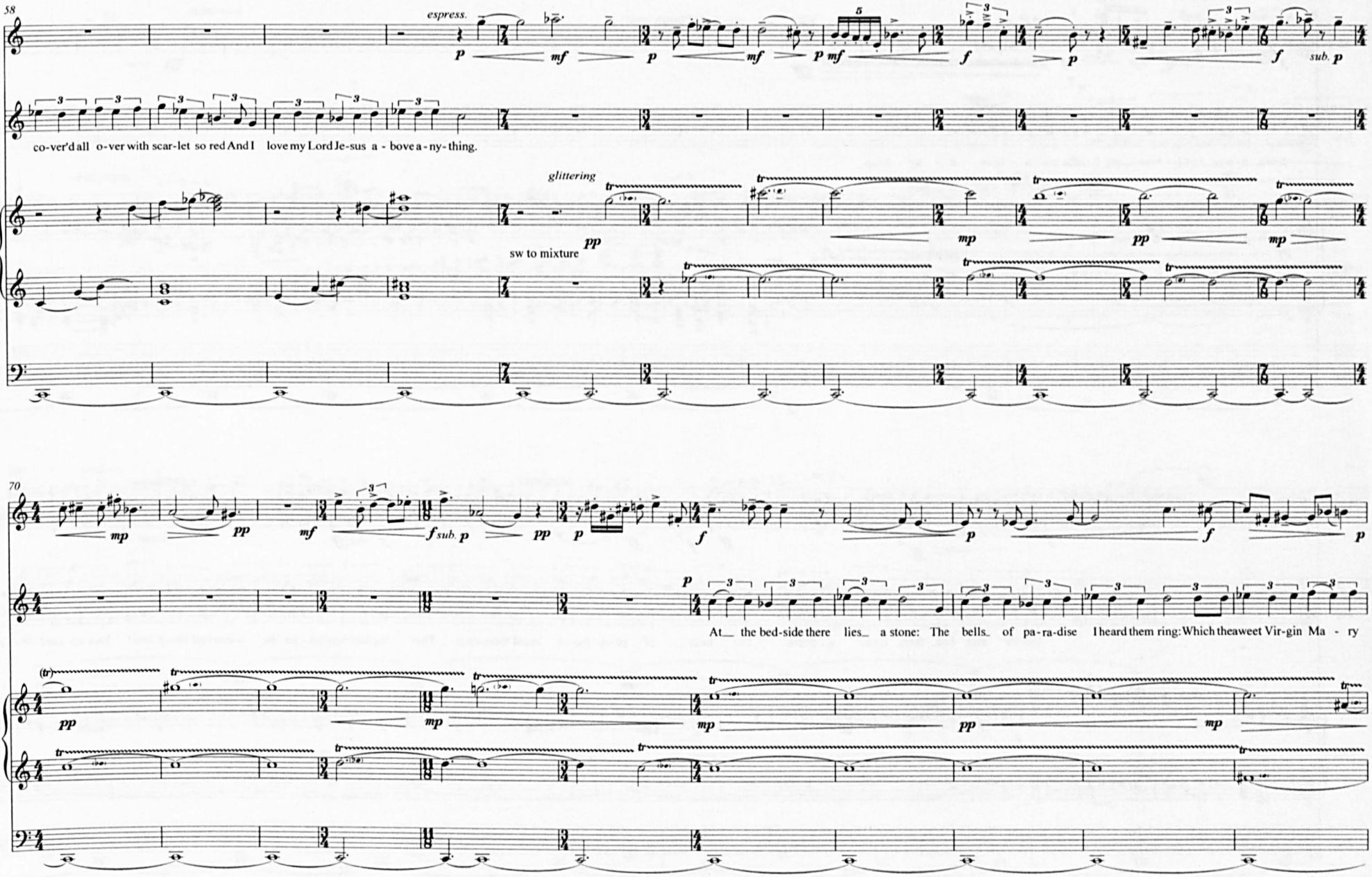
Org.

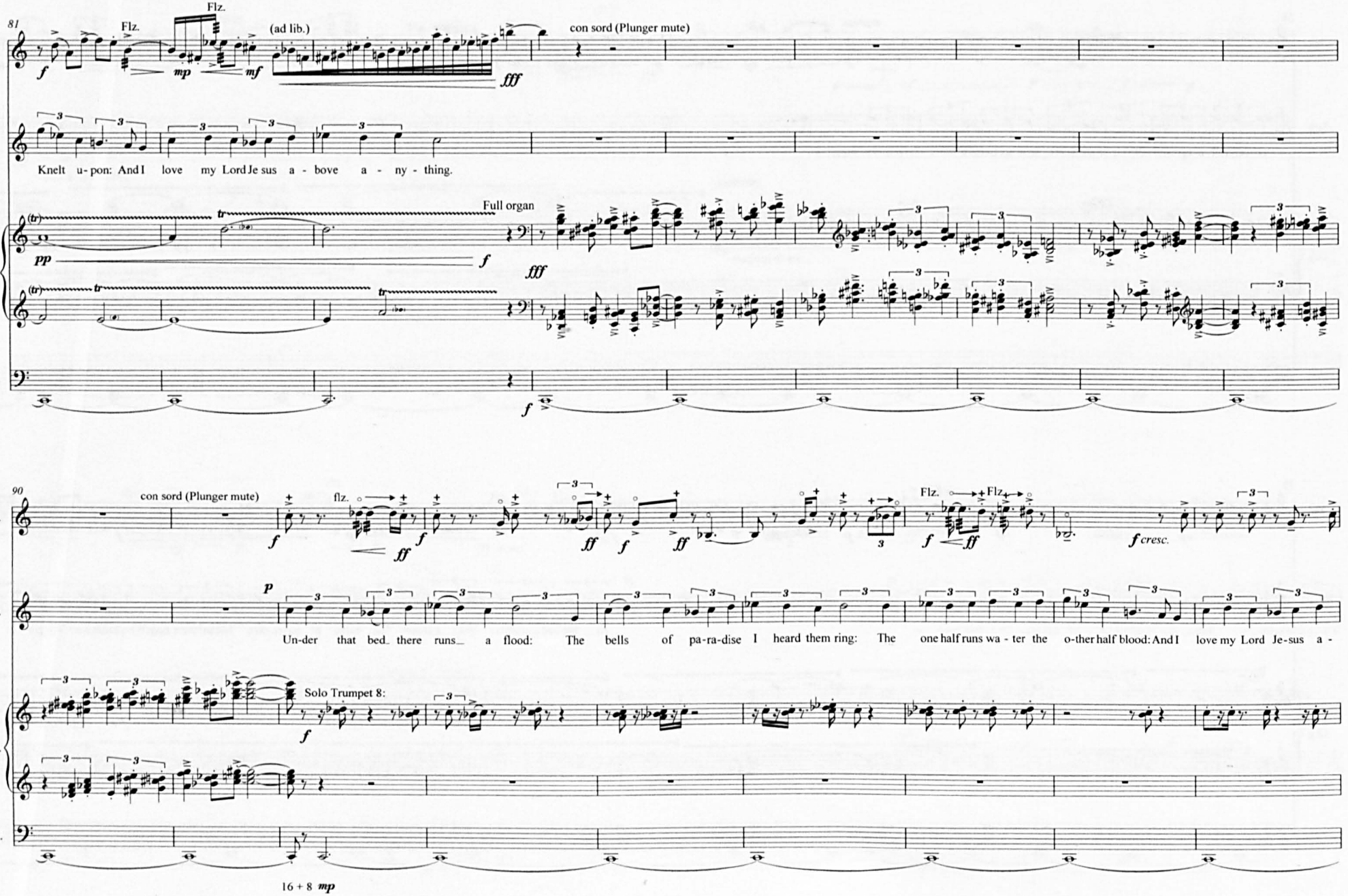
Ped.

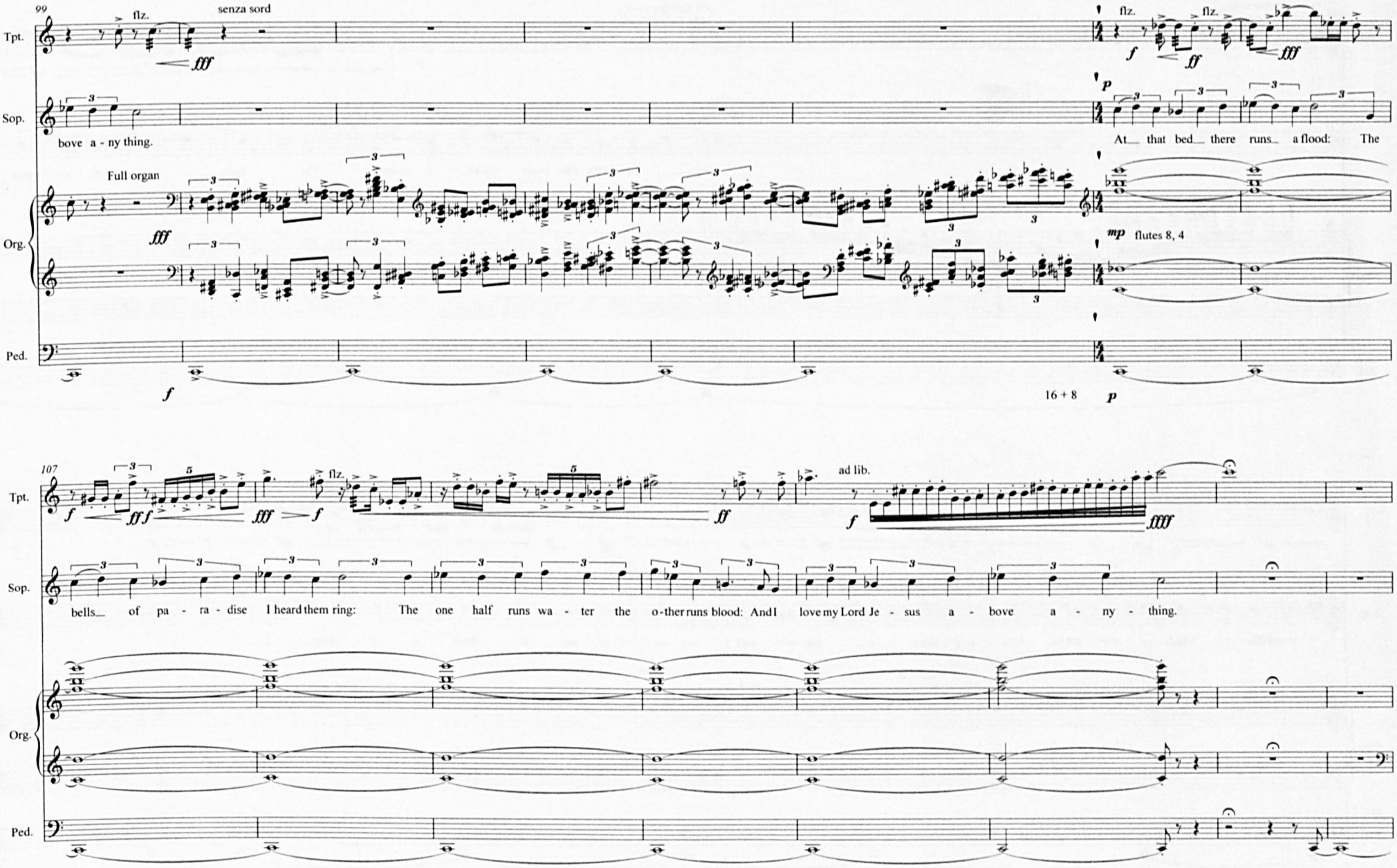

17
Tpt.
cresc.
flz.
ff
f
Org.
Ped.
24
Tpt.
Org.
Ped.

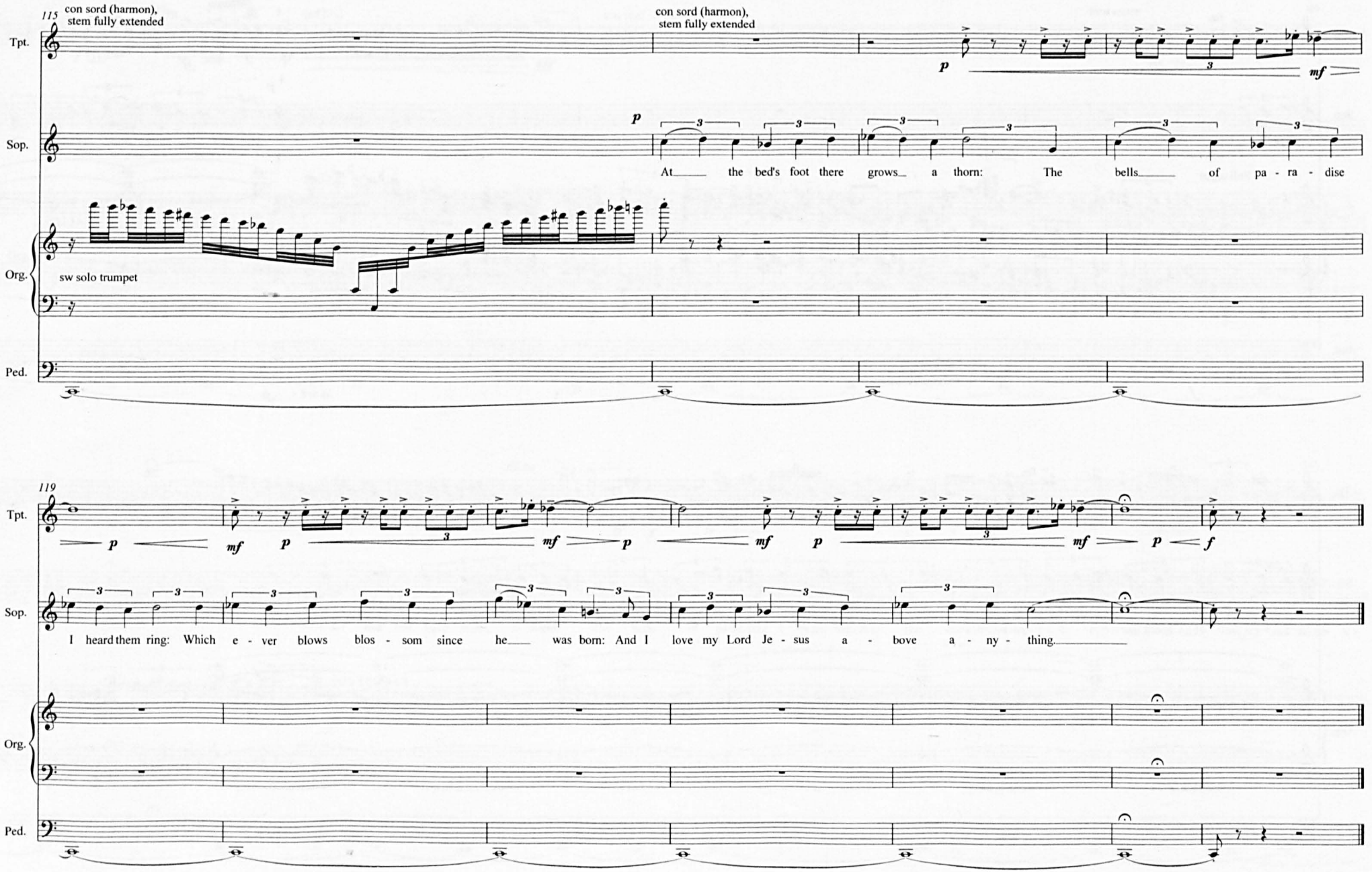

30
flz.
flz.
Tpt.
Org.
Ped.
37
(harmon mute:
stem half extended)
flz.
flz.
(At a distance)
Sop.
Down in yon fo-rest there stands a hall: The bells_ of pa-ra-dise I heard them ring: It's co-ver'd all o-ver with pur-ple and Pall: And I love my Lord Je-sus a-


45
Tpt.
harmon mute
(stem removed)
Flz.
Flz.
Flz.
Sop.
bove a - ny - thing.
accel.
accel.
Org.
sw 8 + 4 (no trumpet)
Ped.
51
Tpt.
Flz.
Flz.
Flz.
Flz.
(f) cresc.
senza sord.
Sop.
In___ that hall there stands a bed: The bells of pa-ra-dise I heard them ring: It's
accel.
Org.
Ped.


58
Tpt.
espress.
Sop.
co-ver'd all o-ver with scar-let so red And I love my Lord Je-sus a - bove a - ny - thing.
glittering
Org.
sw to mixture
Ped.
70
Tpt.
Sop.
At_ the bed-side there lies_ a stone: The bells_ of pa-ra-dise I heard them ring: Which the a weet Vir-gin Ma - ry
Org.
Ped.


81
Tpt.
Flz.
Flz.
(ad lib.)
con sord (Plunger mute)
Sop.
Knelt u-pon: And I love my Lord Je sus a - bove a - ny - thing.
Full organ
Org.
Ped.
90
con sord (Plunger mute)
flz.
Flz.
Flz.
cresc.
Un-der that bed_ there runs_ a flood: The bells of pa-ra-dise I heard them ring: The one half runs wa - ter the o-ther half blood: And I love my Lord Je-sus a -
Solo Trumpet 8:
16 + 8


99
flz.
senza sord
fff
Tpt.
Sop.
bove a - ny thing.
Full organ
fff
Org.
Ped.
f
flz.
flz.
f
ff
fff
p
At that bed there runs a flood: The
mp flutes 8, 4
16 + 8
p
107
f
ff f
fff
f
flz.
ff
ad lib.
f
ffff
Tpt.
Sop.
bells of pa - ra - dise I heard them ring: The one half runs wa - ter the o-ther runs blood: And I love my Lord Je - sus a - bove a - ny - thing.
Org.
Ped.


115
con sord (harmon), stem fully extended
con sord (harmon), stem fully extended
Tpt.
Sop.
At the bed's foot there grows a thorn: The bells of pa - ra - dise
Org.
sw solo trumpet
Ped.
119
Tpt.
Sop.
I heard them ring: Which e - ver blows blos - som since he was born: And I love my Lord Je - sus a - bove a - ny - thing.
Org.
Ped.

Proverbs

Soprano, Bass Clarinet, Piano

Richard Peat

City University – School of Arts

(Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
PhD submission, March 2007)

Proverbs

Richard Peat

Score in C

Soprano, Bass Clarinet in B♭, Piano

Duration: c. 2m

Programme notes

1. *APPEARANCES*

You don't really need make-up.

Celebrate your authentic face by frightening
people on the street.

2. *FIRST DATE*

Going on a first date? Before you leave the
house, give your immune system a boost by
eating lots of raw garlic.

3. *GRIEVING*

There is no such thing as inappropriate
grief. Losing a friend can lead to
feelings of great sadness.
Losing a sock can also be distressing.

In the same way that you make space to
mourn your friends, make space to
mourn your socks.

4. *A TIP*

Never underestimate the healing
powers of custard.

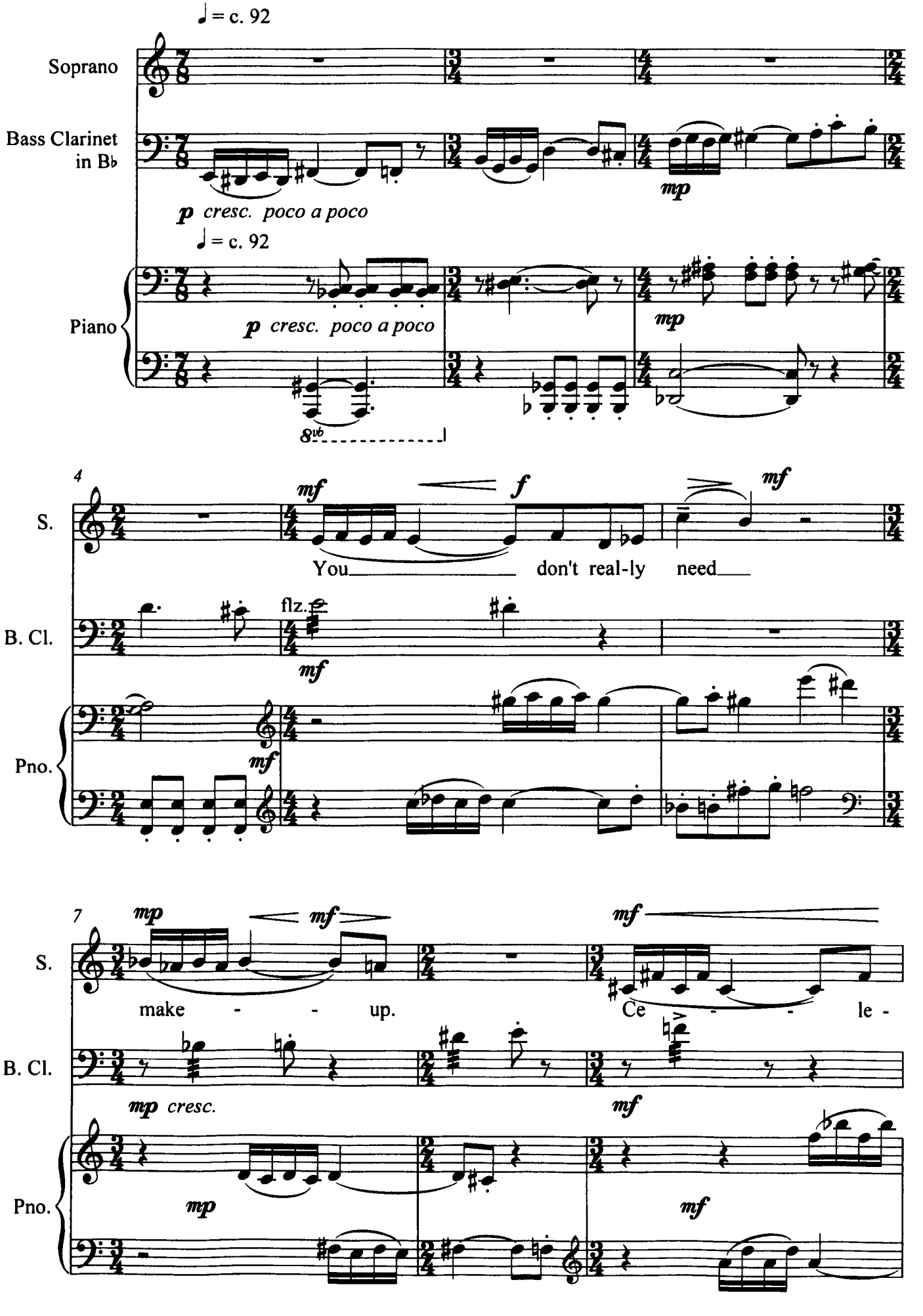
Texts taken from: Alistair Beaton, *The Little Book of Complete Bollocks* (London: Simon and Shuster, 1999).

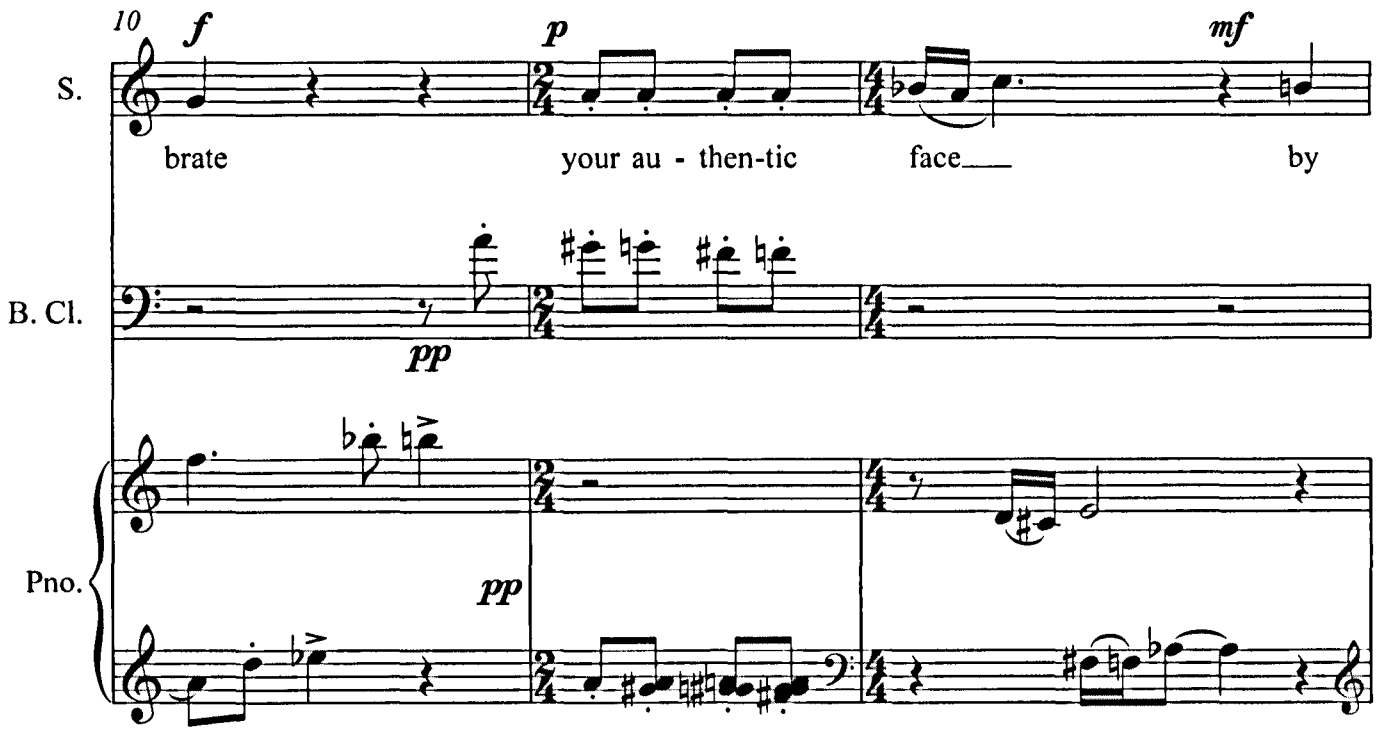
Written for *Calisto* (Lynsey Docherty, Jenny Ferrar and Rosie Richardson), these settings present spontaneous responses to Alistair Beaton's pithy texts. They are all based on the same twelve note melody, and pay homage to Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and Copland's folk song settings.

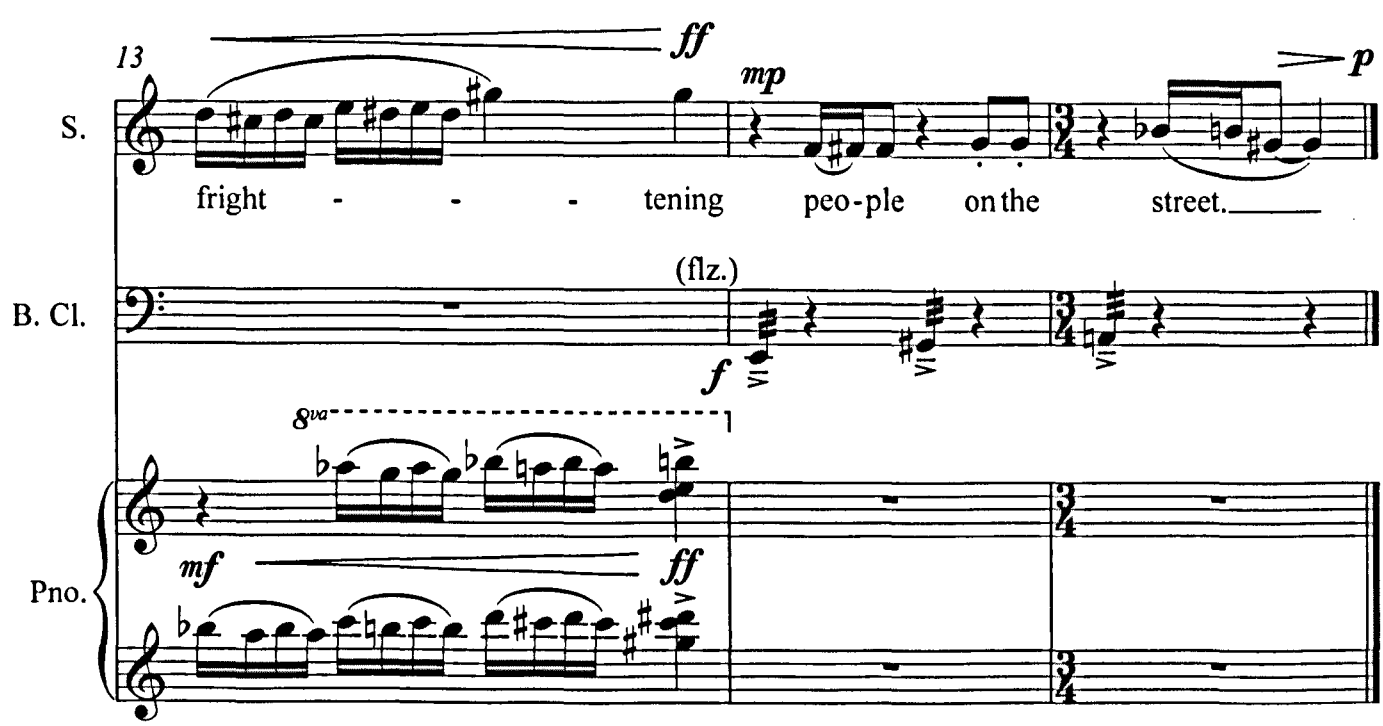
Proverbs was first performed by *Calisto* at City University on October 25th, 2005.

APPEARANCES

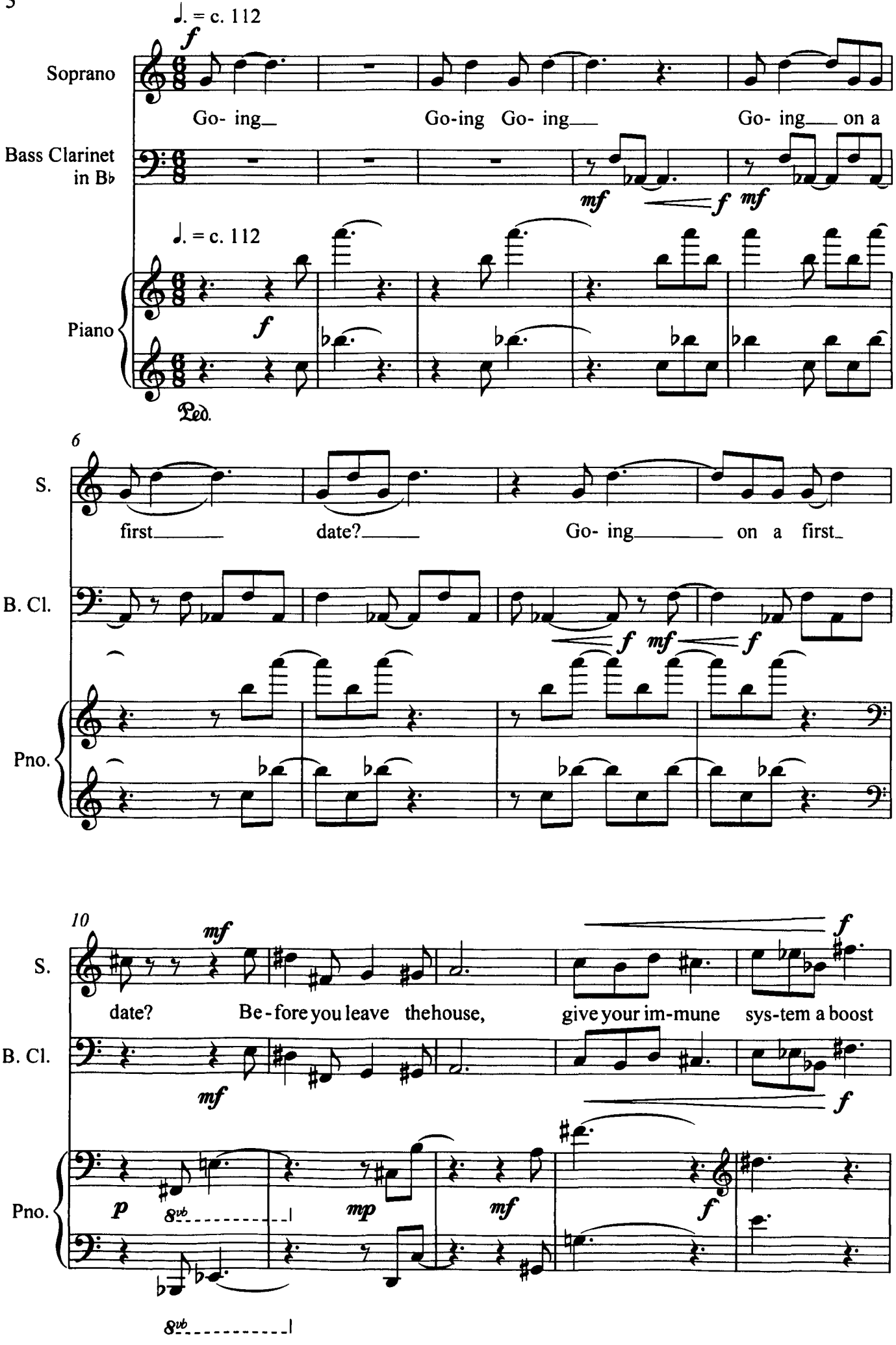
Richard Peat (2005)

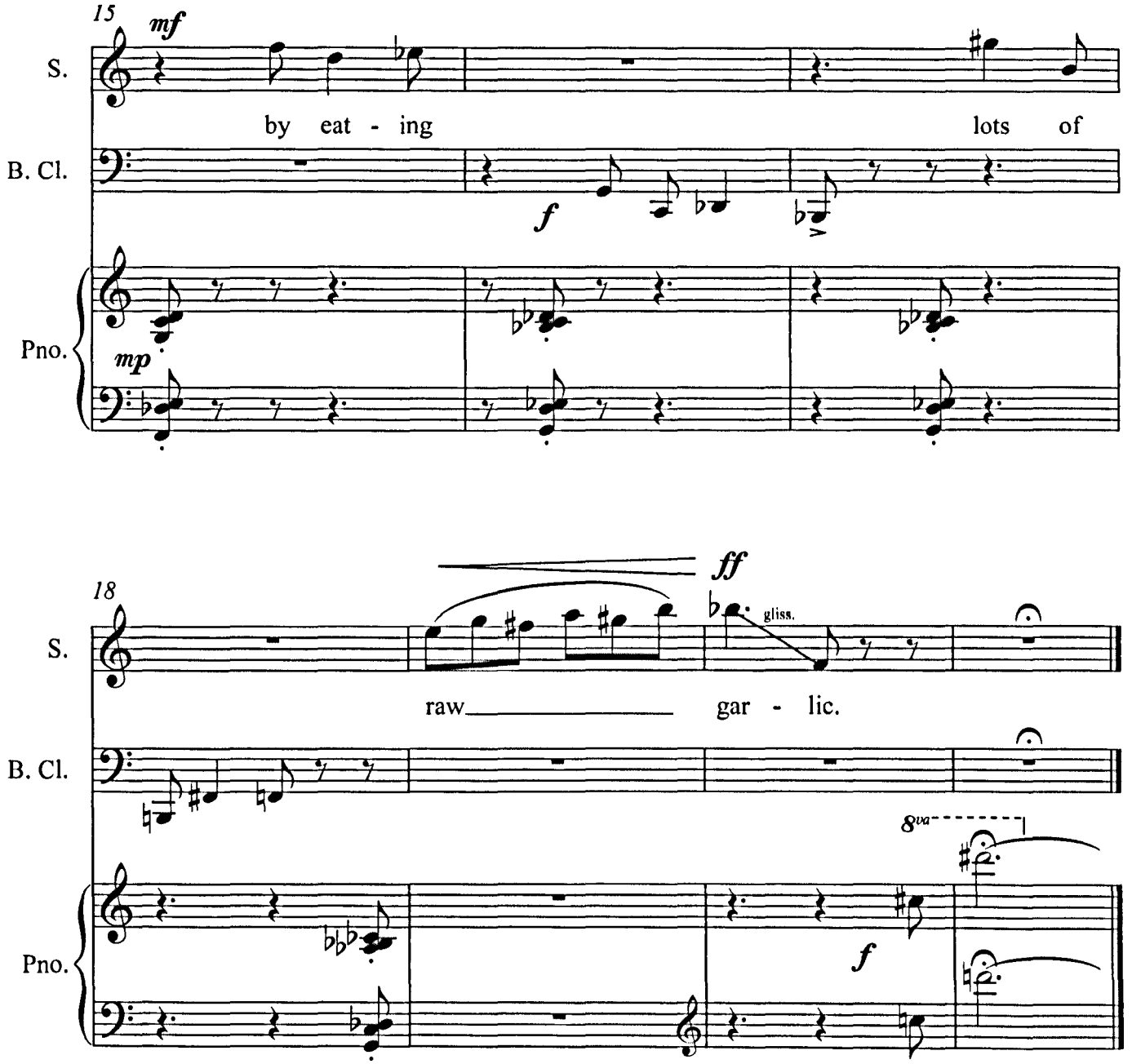



10
f
p
mf
S.
brate
your au - then-tic
face
by
B. Cl.
pp
Pno.
pp


13
ff
mp
p
S.
fright - - - tening
peo-ple on the
street.
(flz.)
B. Cl.
f
8va
mf
ff
Pno.

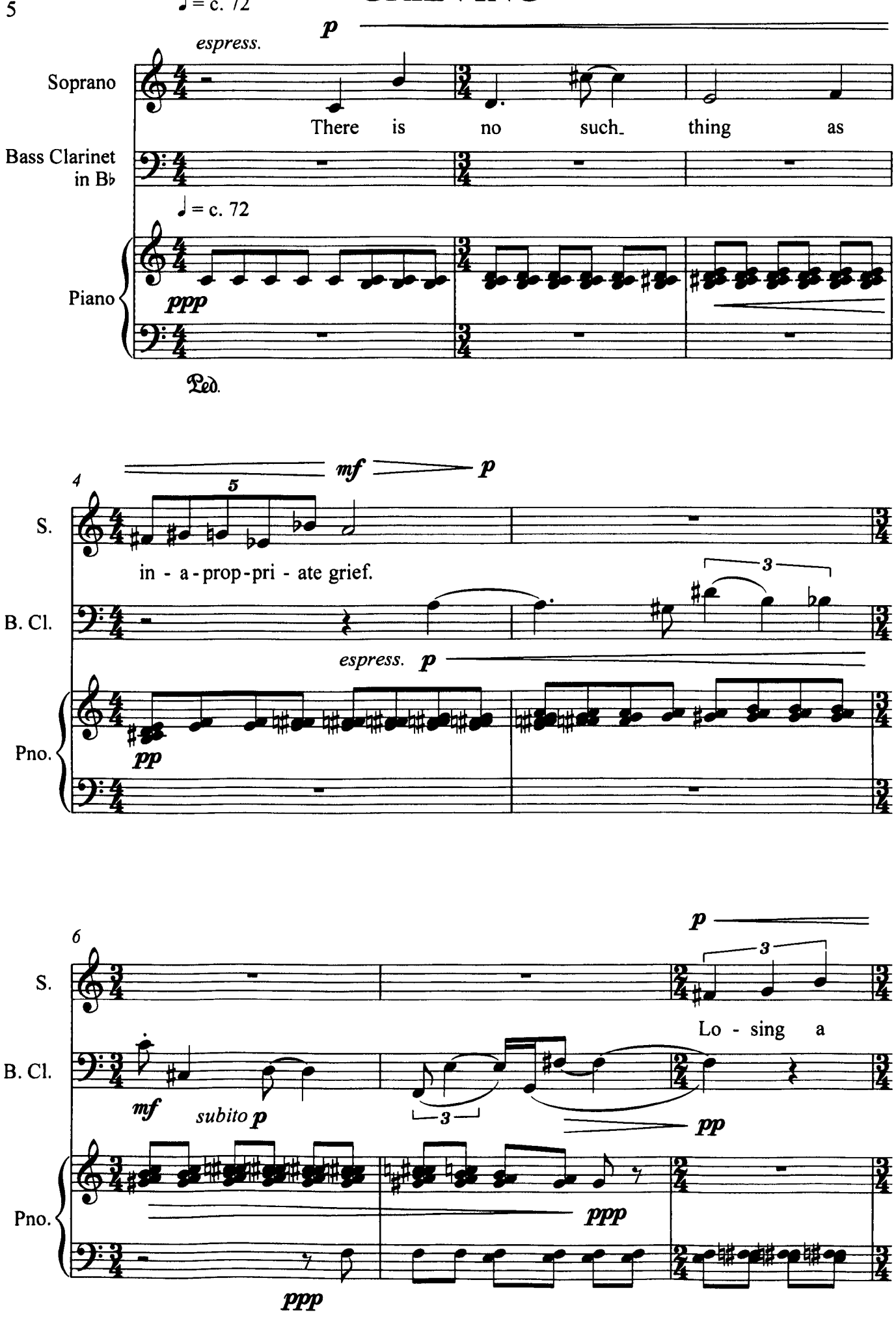
FIRST DATE

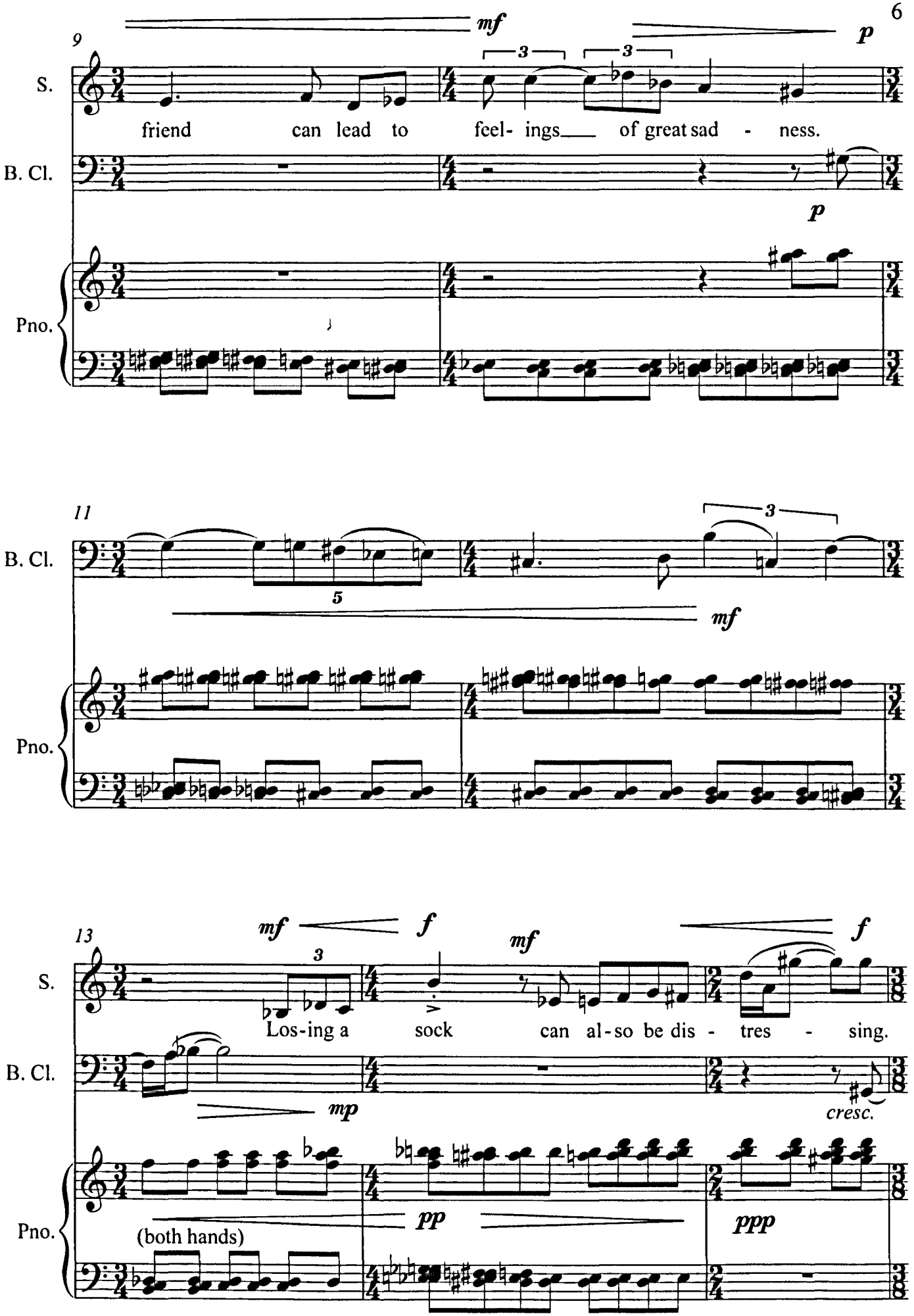

♩. = c. 112
Soprano
Go- ing_ Go-ing Go- ing_ Go- ing_ on a
Bass Clarinet in B♭
Piano
Ped.
6
S.
first_ date?_ Go- ing_ on a first_
B. Cl.
Pno.
10
S.
date? Be-fore you leave the house, give your im-mune sys-tem a boost
B. Cl.
Pno.
8vb

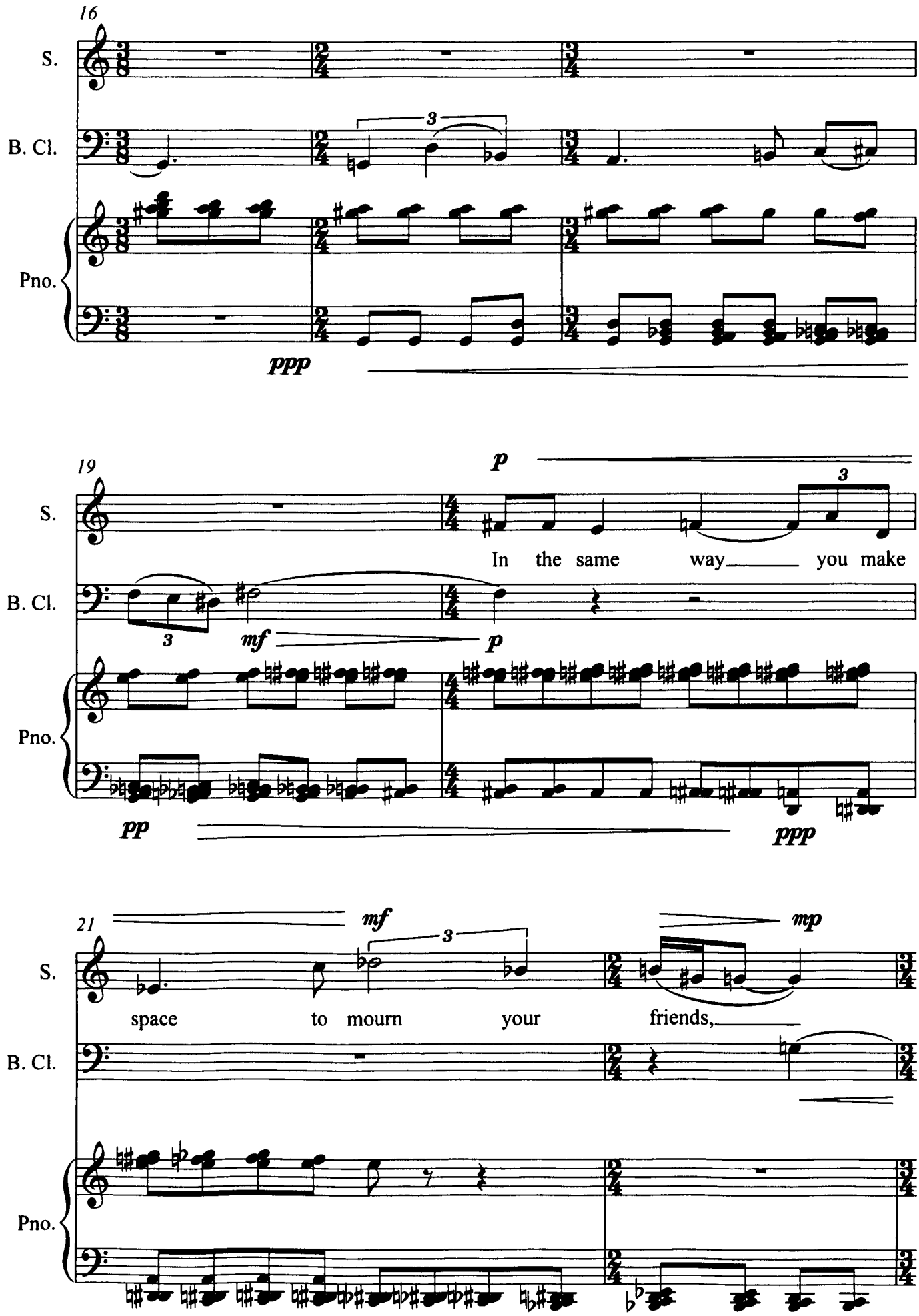

15
mf
S.
by eat - ing
lots of
B. Cl.
f
Pno.
mp

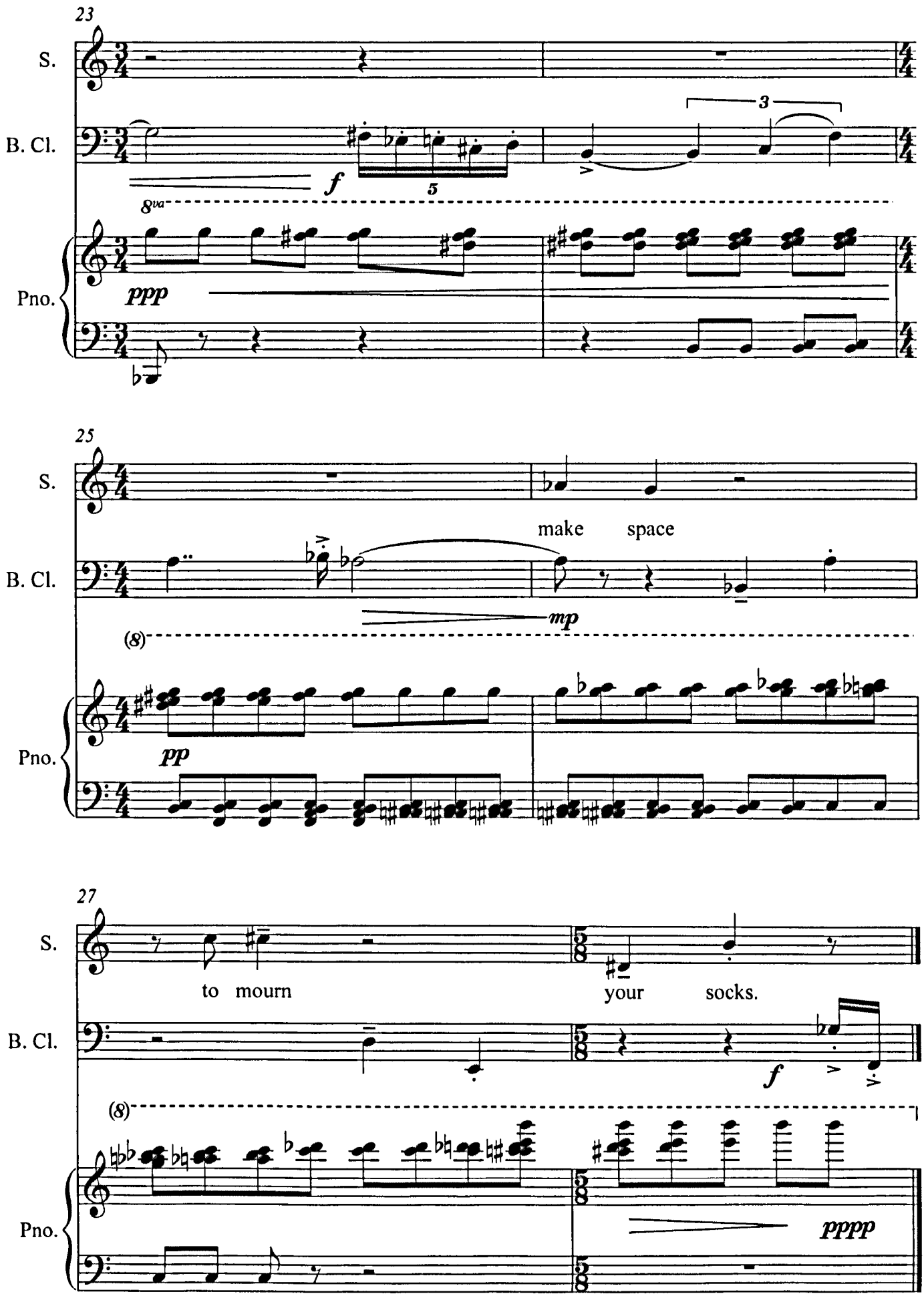
18
ff
gliss.
S.
raw
gar - lic.
B. Cl.
8va
Pno.
f

GRIEVING

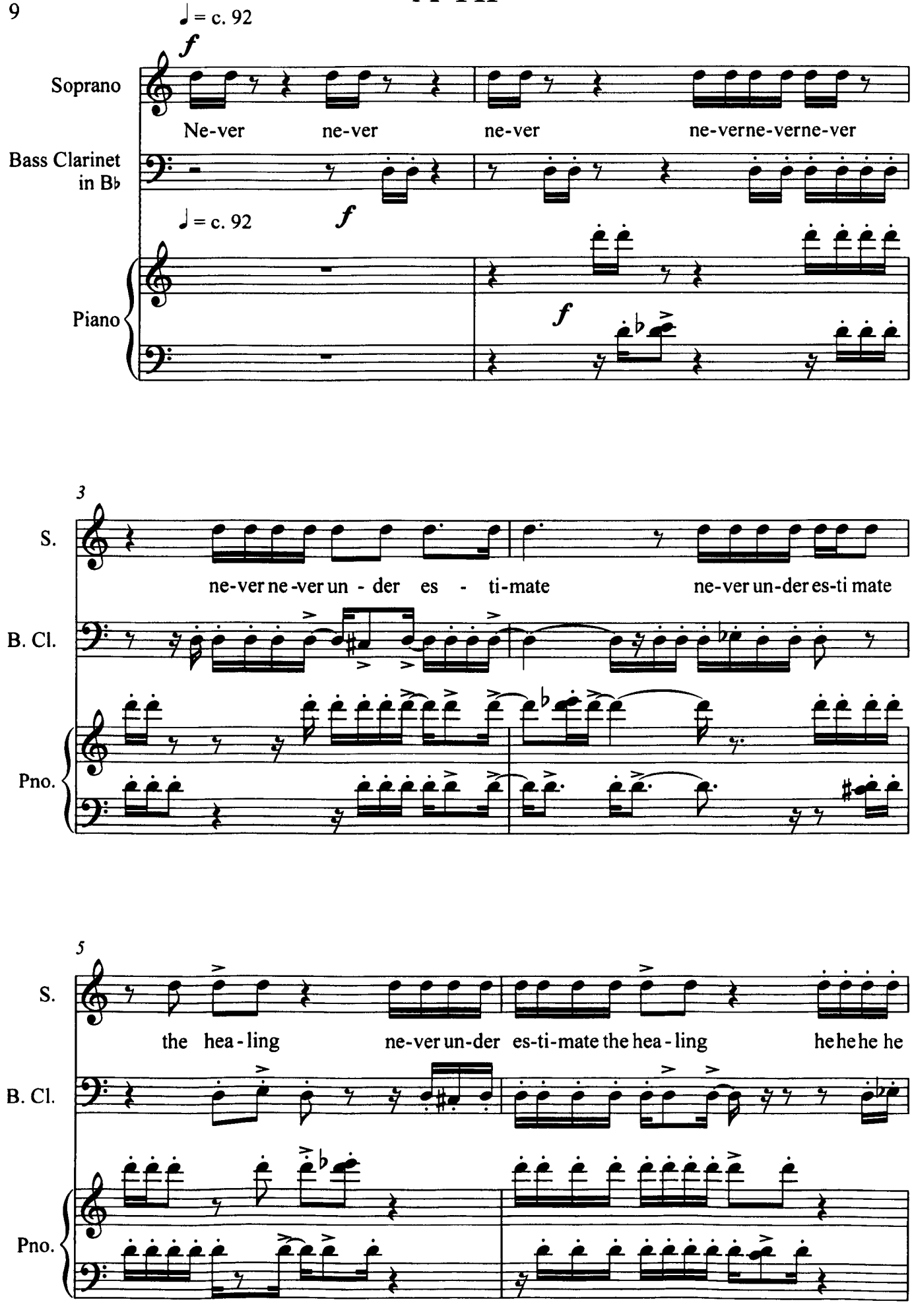

♩ = c. 72
p
espress.
Soprano
There is no such thing as
Bass Clarinet in B♭
♩ = c. 72
Piano
ppp
Ped.
4
mf
p
5
S.
in - a - prop - pri - ate grief.
3
B. Cl.
espress. p
Pno.
pp
6
p
3
S.
Lo - sing a
B. Cl.
mf
subito p
3
pp
Pno.
ppp
ppp

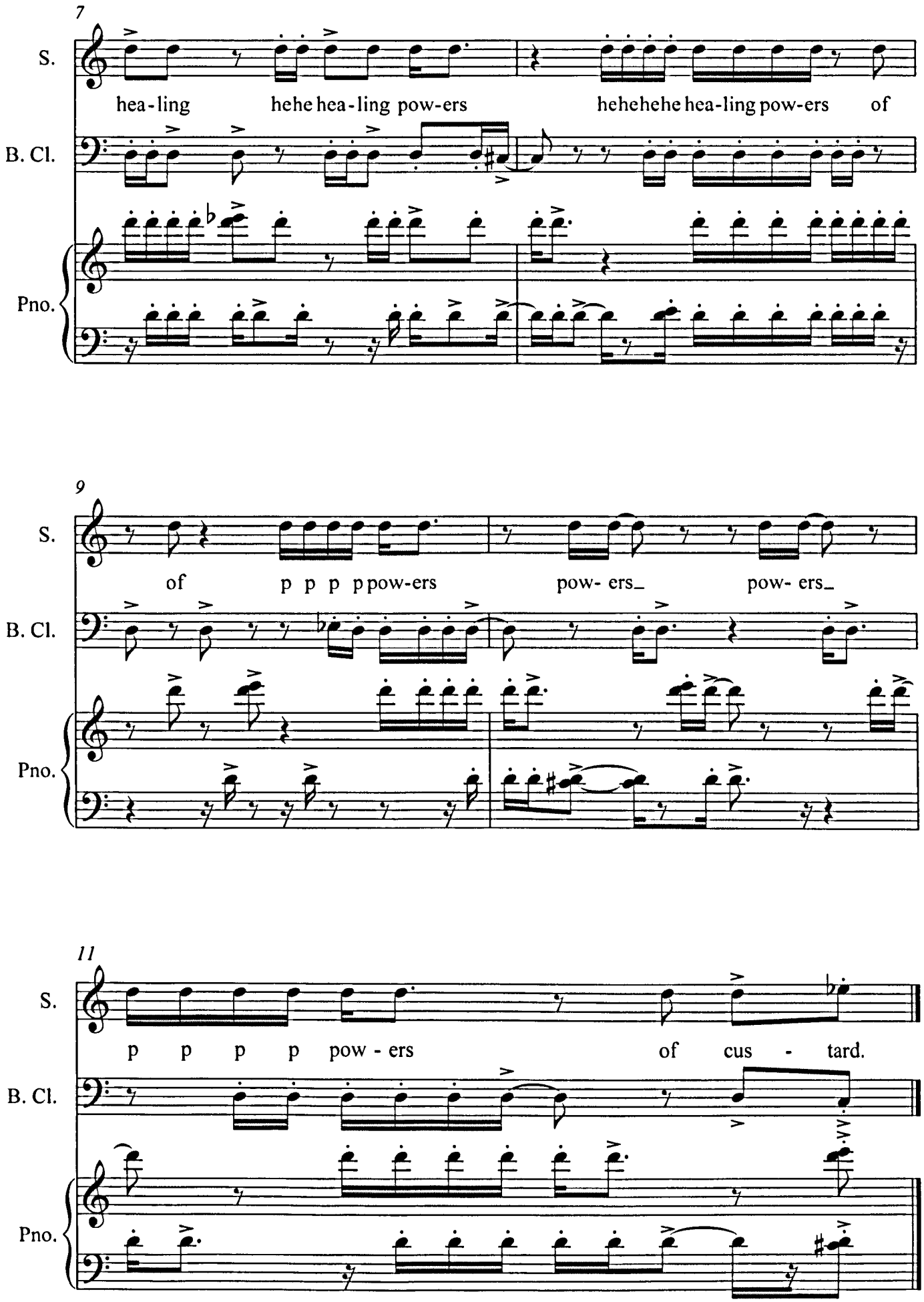

9
mf
p
S.
friend can lead to feel- ings of great sad - ness.
B. Cl.
p
Pno.
11
B. Cl.
mf
Pno.
13
mf
f
mf
f
S.
Los-ing a sock can al-so be dis - tres - sing.
B. Cl.
mp
cresc.
Pno.
(both hands)
pp
ppp


16
S.
B. Cl.
Pno.
3
ppp
19
p
3
In the same way you make
mf
p
pp
ppp
21
mf
3
mp
space to mourn your friends,


23
S.
B. Cl.
Pno.
f
5
3
8va
ppp
25
S.
B. Cl.
Pno.
make space
mp
(8)
pp
27
S.
B. Cl.
Pno.
to mourn
your socks.
f
(8)
pppp

A TIP


♩ = c. 92
Soprano
Ne-ver ne-ver ne-ver ne-verne-verne-ver
Bass Clarinet in B♭
♩ = c. 92
Piano
3
S.
ne-ver ne-ver un - der es - ti-mate ne-ver un-der es-ti mate
B. Cl.
Pno.
5
S.
the hea - ling ne-ver un-der es-ti-mate the hea - ling he he he he
B. Cl.
Pno.


7
S.
hea-ling hehe hea-ling pow-ers hehehehe hea-ling pow-ers of
B. Cl.
Pno.
9
S.
of p p p p pow-ers pow- ers_ pow- ers_
B. Cl.
Pno.
11
S.
p p p p pow - ers of cus - tard.
B. Cl.
Pno.

Separation

Counter Tenor, Cello, Harp

Richard Peat

City University – School of Arts

(Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
PhD submission, March 2007)

Separation

Richard Peat

Counter Tenor, Cello, Harp

Duration: c. 6m

Programme notes

1 – *The ragdoll to the heedless child* David Harsent
2 – *Separation* Peter Dale
3 – *Dark clouds* Anon

This short cycle of songs, written for the counter tenor David Sheringham, explores different perspectives of separation. This is a theme common to the poems of David Harsent and Peter Dale, and the German folk song, *Dunkle Wolk* (upon which the third song is based). The music begins with the performers sharing tonal and gestural material. These strands are gradually separated out as the music progresses. In the final song the harp attempts to accompany the singer, but it becomes sidetracked by its own song.

Separation was first performed by David Sheringham, Kate Bingley and Camilla Pay at City University on 4th March, 2003.

Performance Note

In *Dark Clouds*, the first verse of 'Dunkle Wolk' should be sung on stage, the second at a distance from the other forces, and the last off stage. The singer gradually separates themselves from the rest of the ensemble leaving the cello's melodic journey to come to the fore.

The rag doll to the heedless child - David Harsent

I love you
with my linen heart.

You cannot
know how these

rigid, lumpy arms
shudder in your grasp,

or what
tears dam up against

these blue eye-smudges at
your capriciousness.

At night I watch you sleep;
you'll never know

how I thrust my face
into the stream

of your warm breath;
and how

love-words choke me behind
this sewn up mouth.

David Harsent, 'The rag doll to the heedless child' in *Living Poets* compiled by Michael Morpurgo and Clifford Simmons (London: John Marray, 1984), pp. 37-38.

Separation - Peter Dale

Because the night is cold
and I'm warm from your fire
I hurry down the road.

Yet glancing back
I see your shadow watching
at the upper curtains.

Before I wave
You turn into the darkened room.

Peter Dale, *Mortal Fire* (London: Macmillan, 1970), p. 51.

Dunkle Wolk - German Folk Song

Es geht ein' dunkle Wolk herein
Mich deucht, es wird ein Regen sein,
Ein regen aus den wolken,
Wohl in das grüne Gras.

Und kommst du, liebe Sonn', nit bald,
So weset all's im grünen Wald,
Und all die müden Blumen,
Die haben müden Tod.

Es geht ein' dunkle Wolk Herein,
Es soll und muß geschieden sein,
Ade, Feinslieb, dein Scheiden
Macht mir das Herze schwer.

A dark cloud passeth over,
Methinks there'll soon be rain;
A downpour from the clouds above
Upon the green, green grass.

And if thou comest not soon, sweet sun,
Then all in the greenwood shall perish;
And all the weary flowers there
Shall meet a weary death.

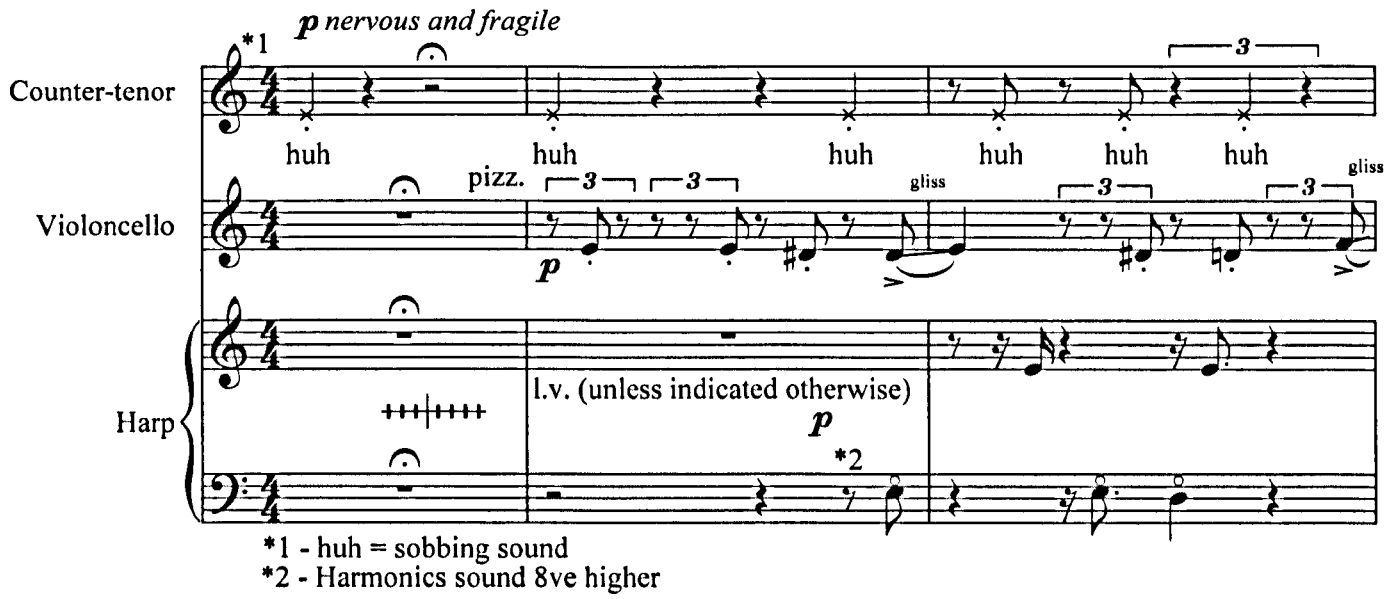
A dark cloud passeth over,
Forsooth we twain must part;
Farewell, sweet love, thy parting
Doth surely break my heart.

Anon

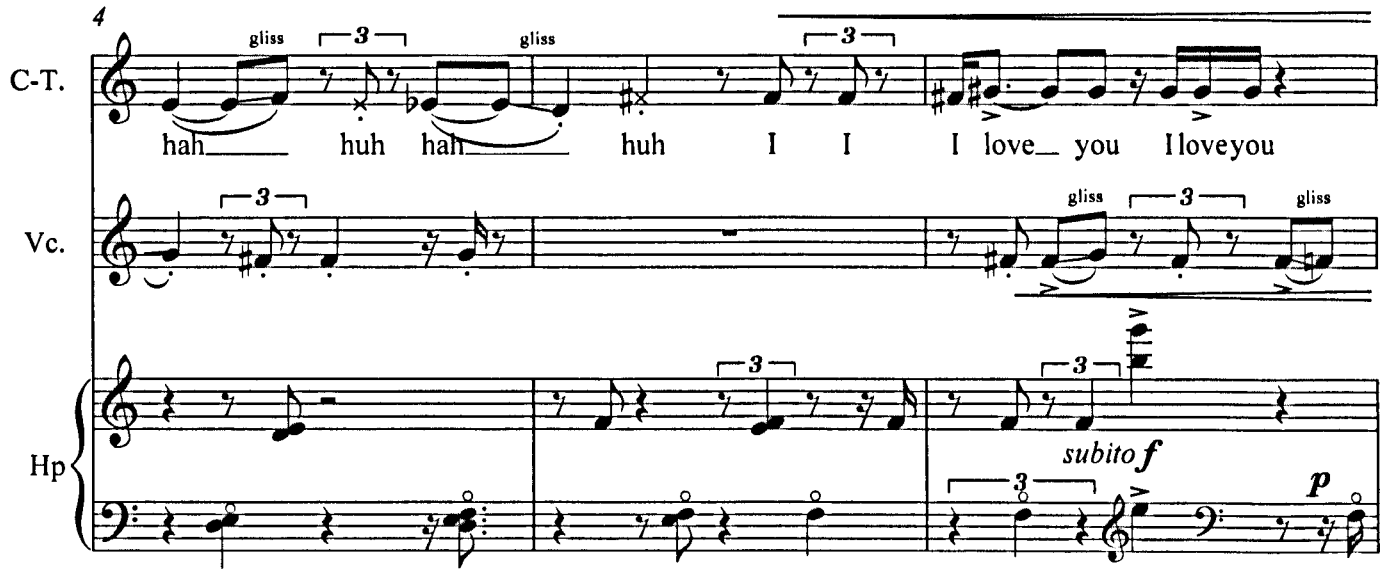
The ragdoll to the heedless child

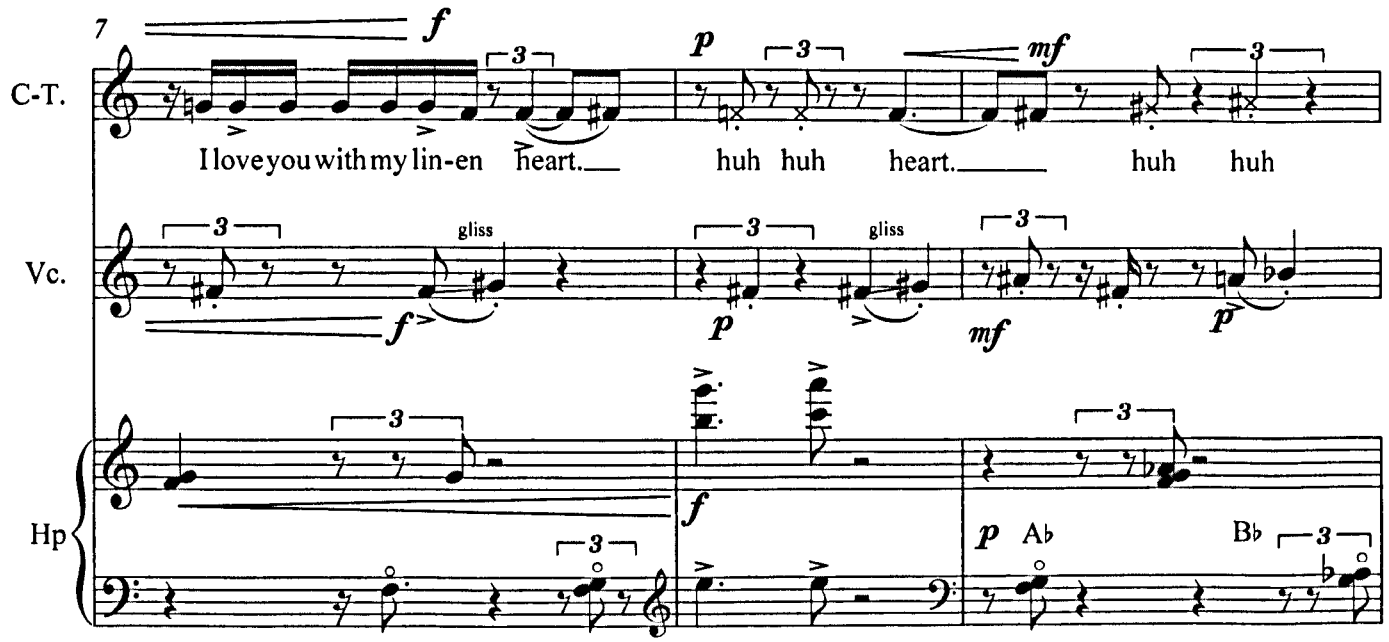
David Harsent

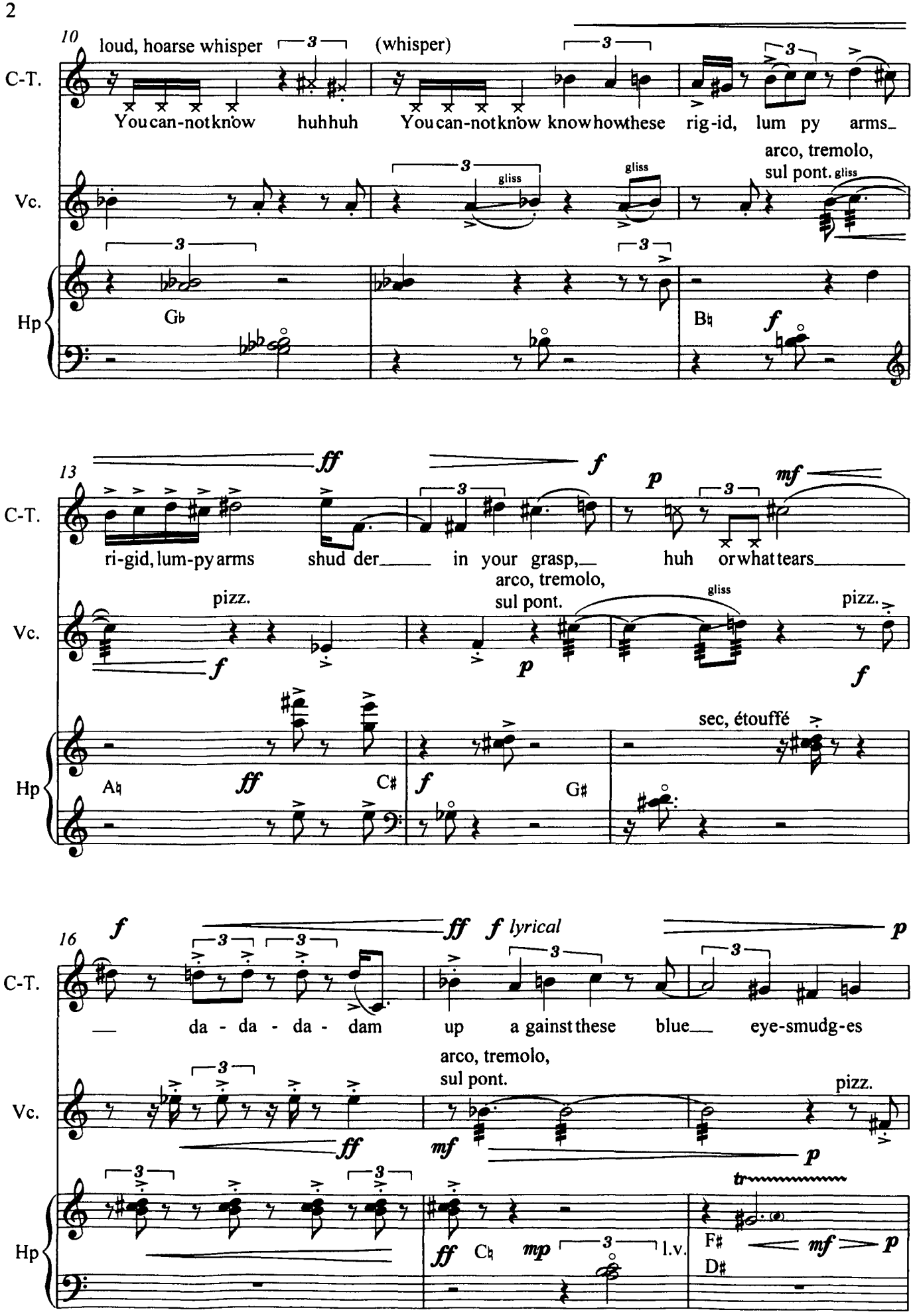
Richard Peat (2002/rev. 2006)

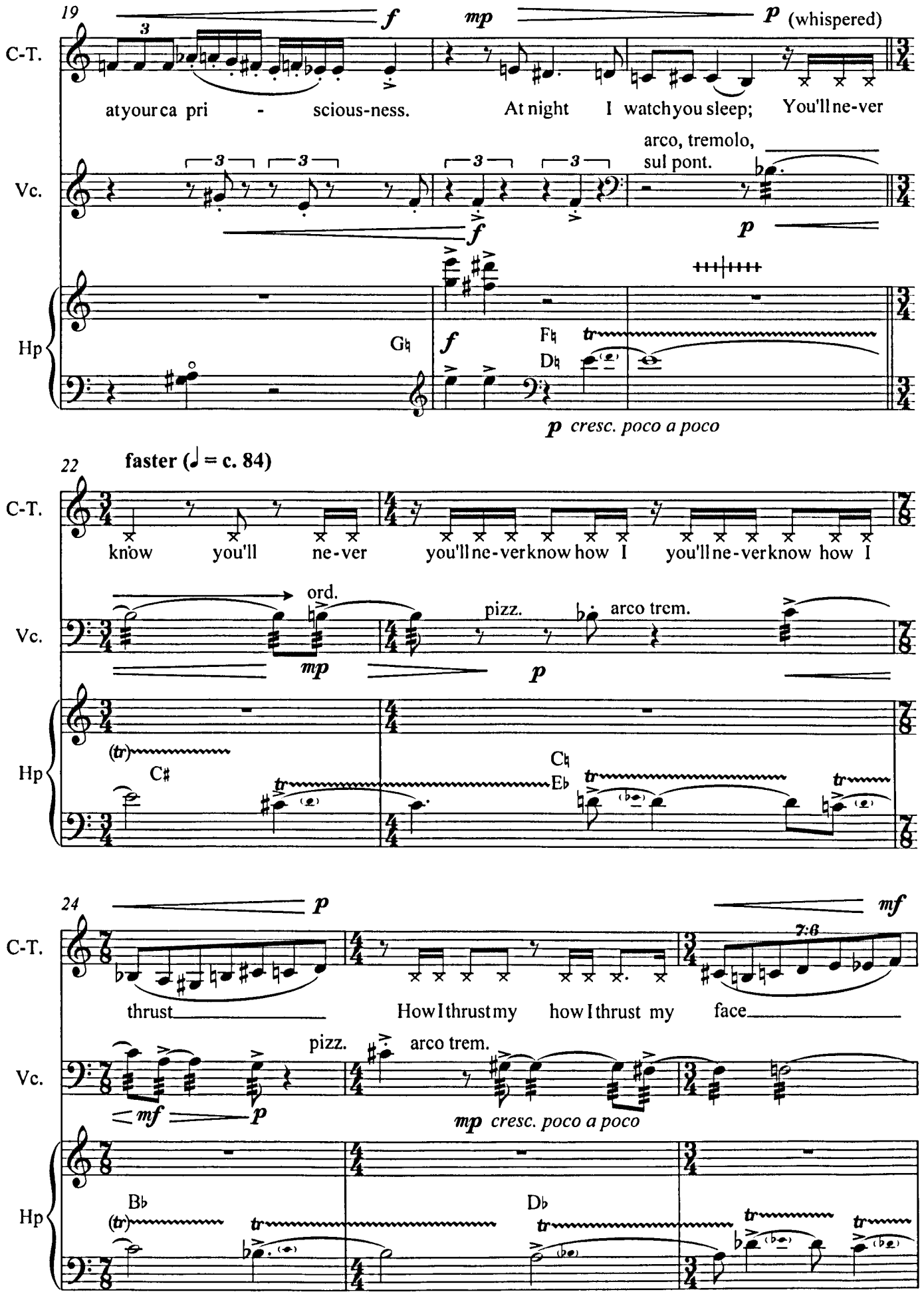


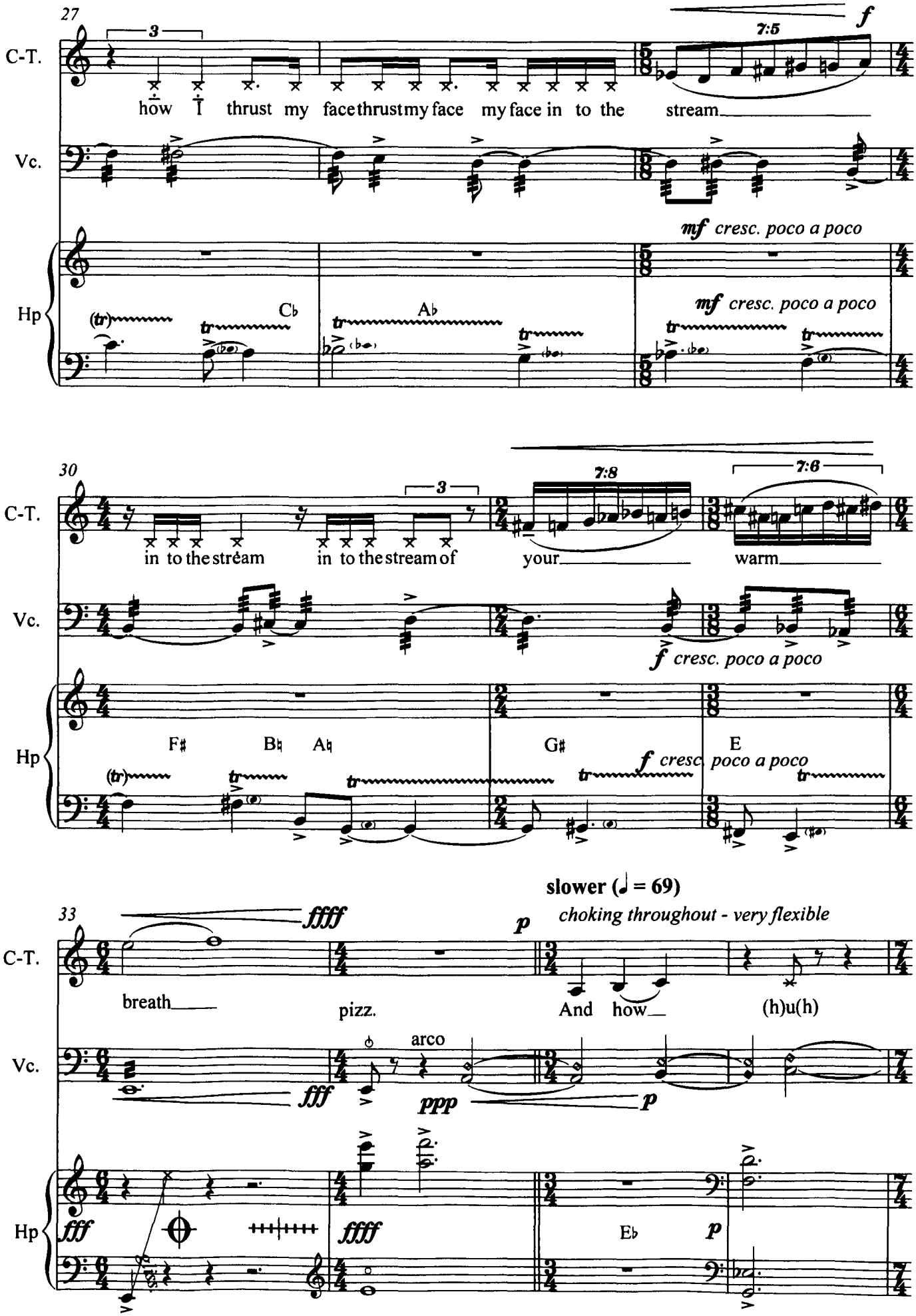
*1 - huh = sobbing sound
*2 - Harmonics sound 8ve higher

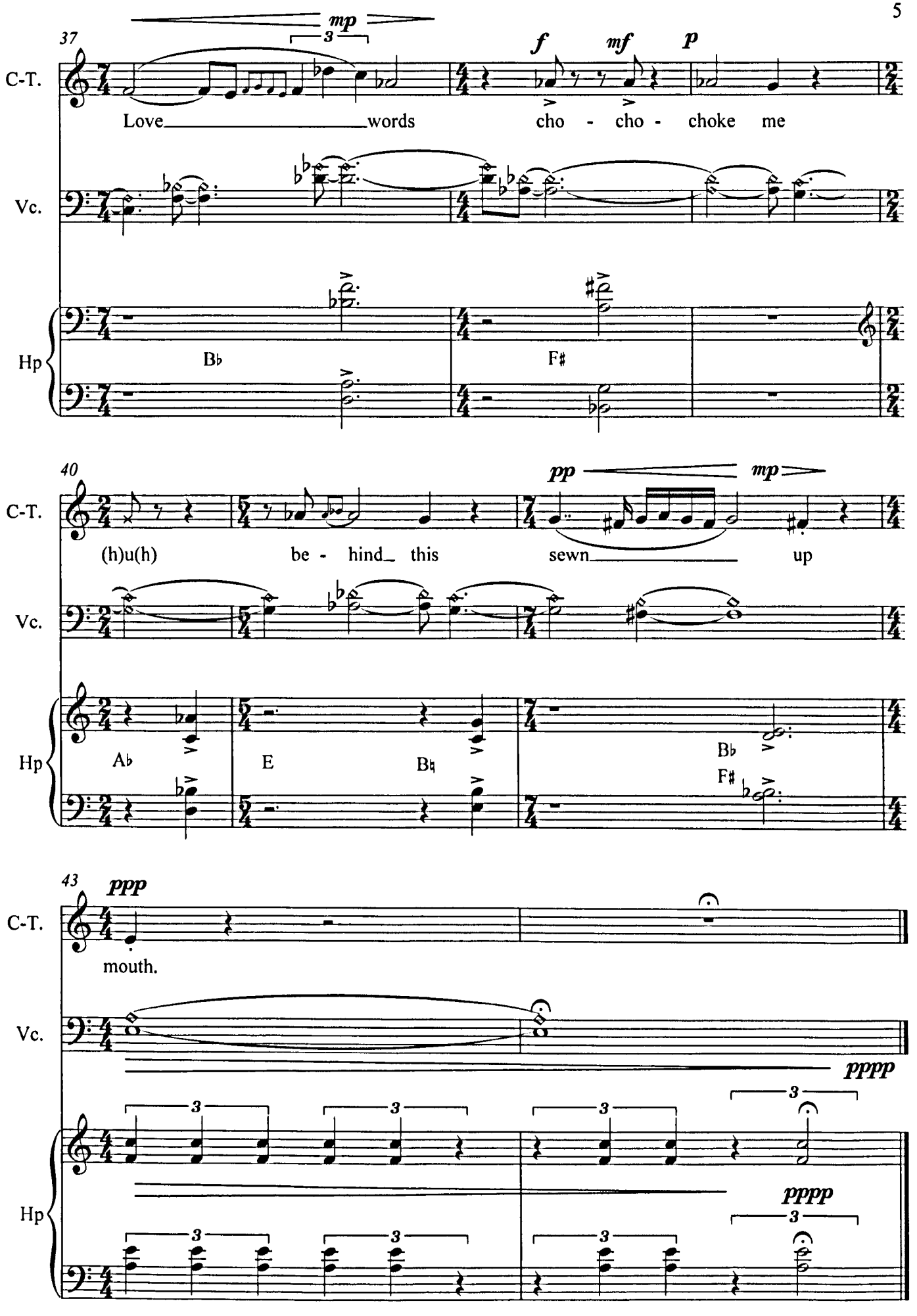




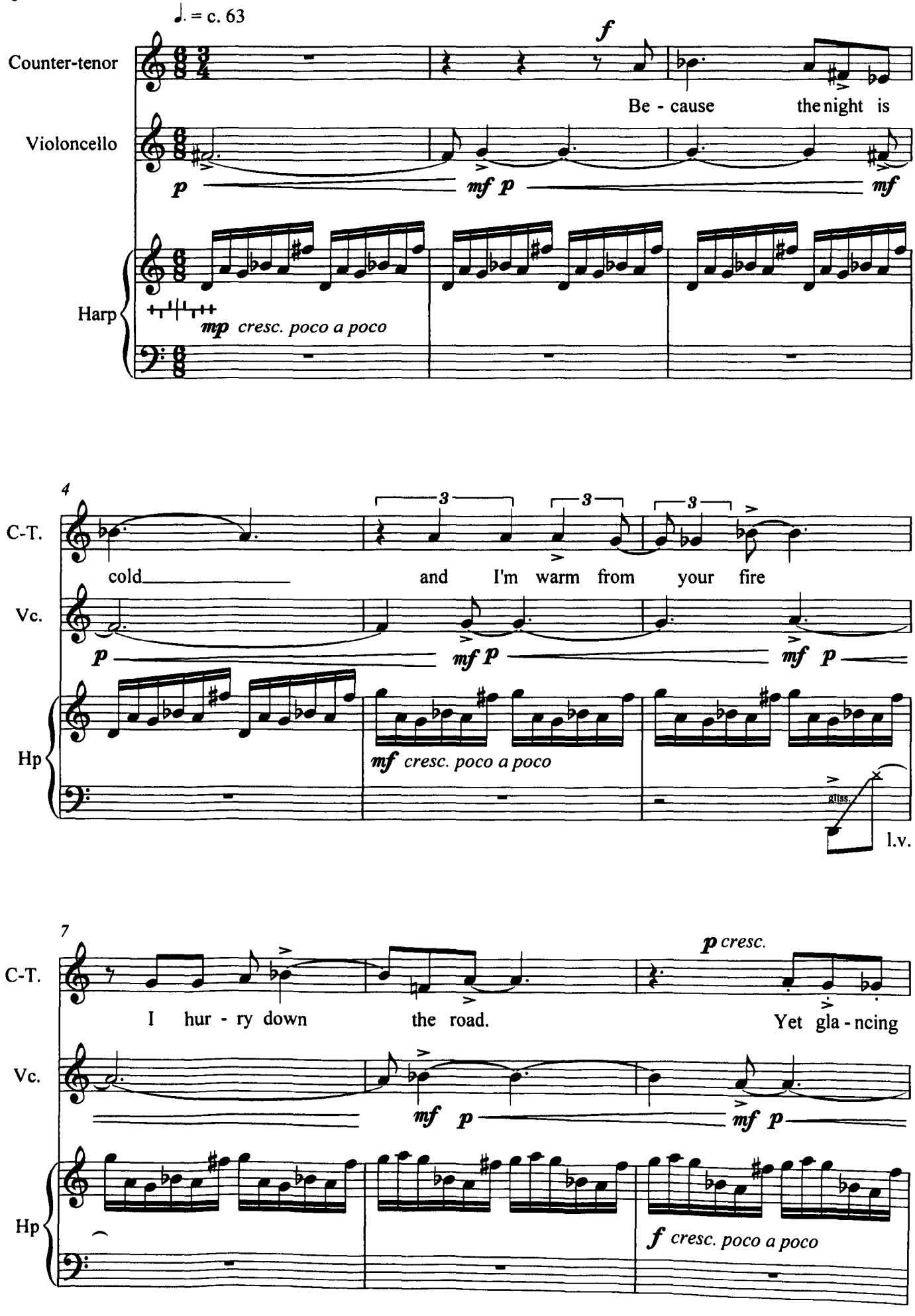

10
loud, hoarse whisper
(whisper)
C-T.
You can-not know huh huh You can-not know know how these rig-id, lum py arms_
Vc.
gliss
arco, tremolo, sul pont.
Hp
G♭
B♮
13
ff
f
p
mf
ri-gid, lum-py arms shud der___ in your grasp,_ huh or what tears___
pizz.
arco, tremolo, sul pont.
A♮
C♯
G♯
sec, étouffé
16
lyrical
da - da - da - dam up a gainst these blue___ eye-smudg-es
l.v.
F♯
D♯

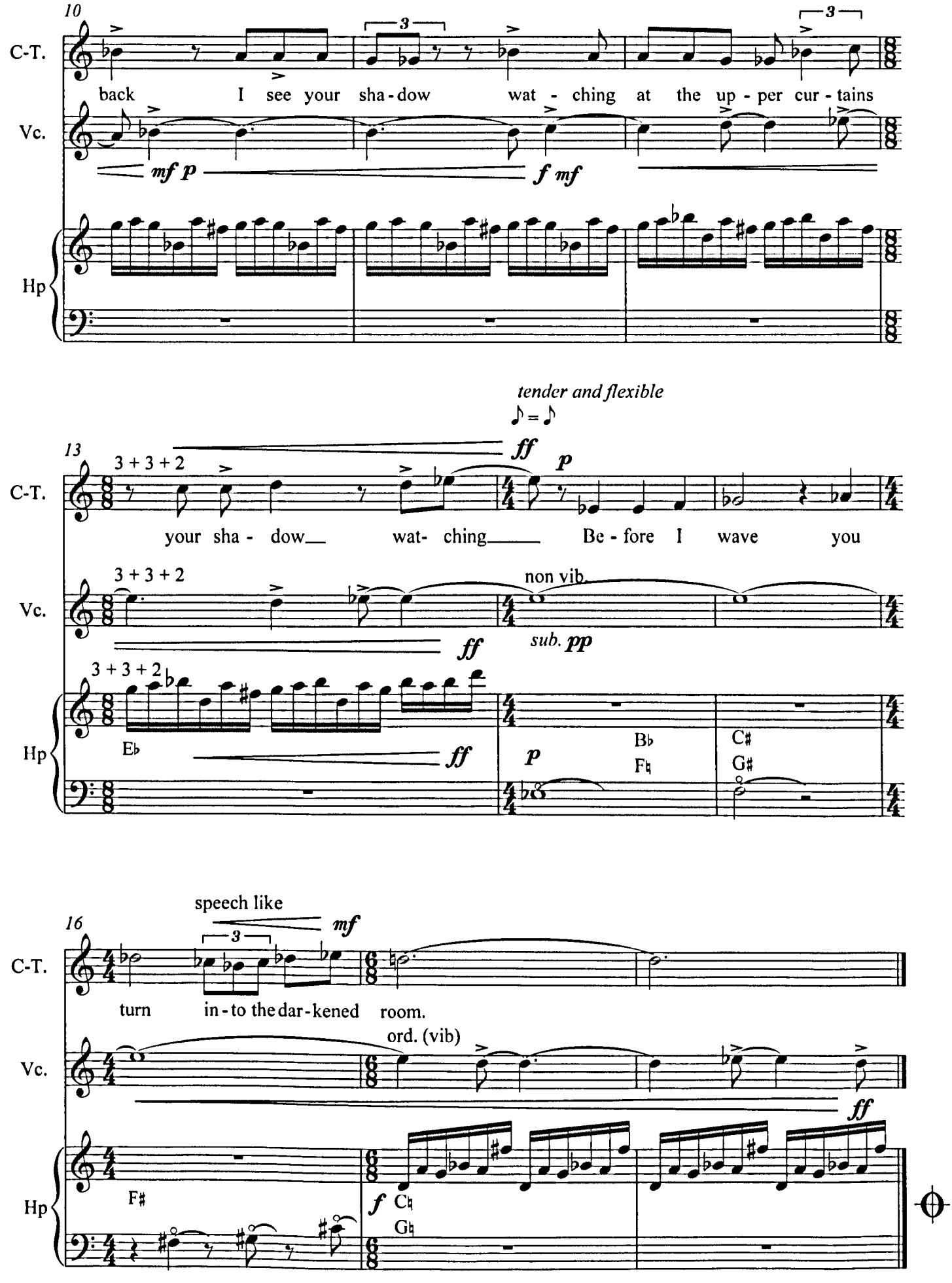

19
f
mp
p (whispered)
C-T.
at your ca pri - scious-ness. At night I watch you sleep; You'll ne-ver
Vc.
arco, tremolo, sul pont.
f
p
Hp
G♮
f
F♮
D♮
tr
p cresc. poco a poco
22
faster (♩ = c. 84)
C-T.
know you'll ne-ver you'll ne-ver know how I you'll ne-ver know how I
Vc.
ord.
mp
pizz.
arco trem.
p
Hp
(tr)
C♯
tr
C♮
E♭
tr
tr
24
p
mf
C-T.
thrust How I thrust my how I thrust my face
7:6
Vc.
pizz.
arco trem.
mf
p
mp cresc. poco a poco
Hp
B♭
(tr)
tr
D♭
tr
tr
tr


27
C-T.
how I thrust my face thrust my face my face in to the stream
7:5
f
Vc.
mf cresc. poco a poco
Hp
Cb
Ab
mf cresc. poco a poco
30
C-T.
in to the stream in to the stream of your warm
7:8
7:6
Vc.
f cresc. poco a poco
Hp
F♯ B♮ A♮
G♯
E
f cresc. poco a poco
slower (♩ = 69)
33
C-T.
ffff
breath
pizz.
p
choking throughout - very flexible
And how
(h)u(h)
Vc.
arco
fff
ppp
p
Hp
fff
ffff
Eb
p


37
mp
3
f
mf
p
C-T.
Love words
cho - cho - choke me
Vc.
Hp
B♭
F♯
40
pp
mp
C-T.
(h)u(h) be - hind this sewn up
Vc.
Hp
A♭
E
B♮
B♭
F♯
43
ppp
C-T.
mouth.
Vc.
pppp
Hp
pppp

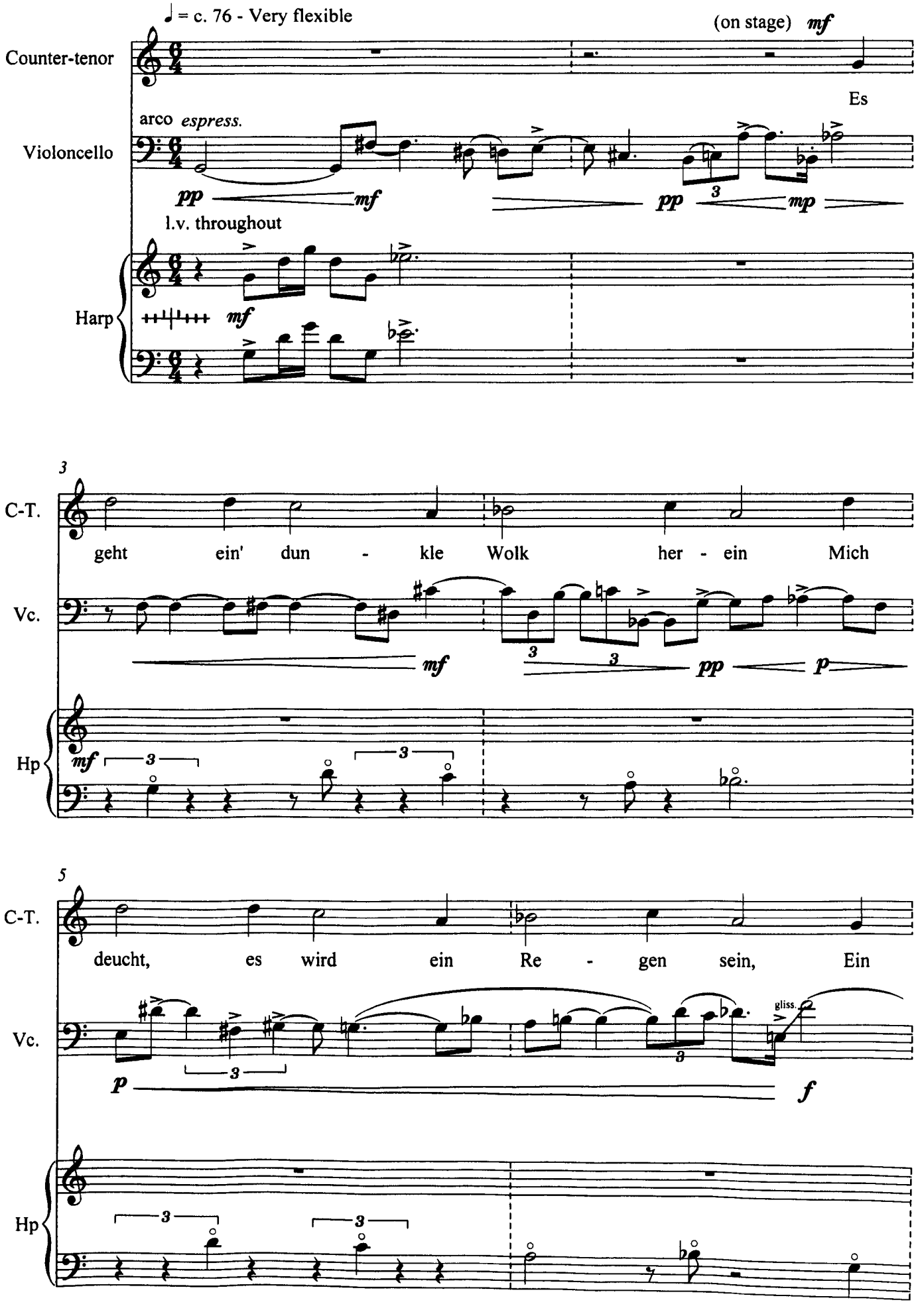
Separation

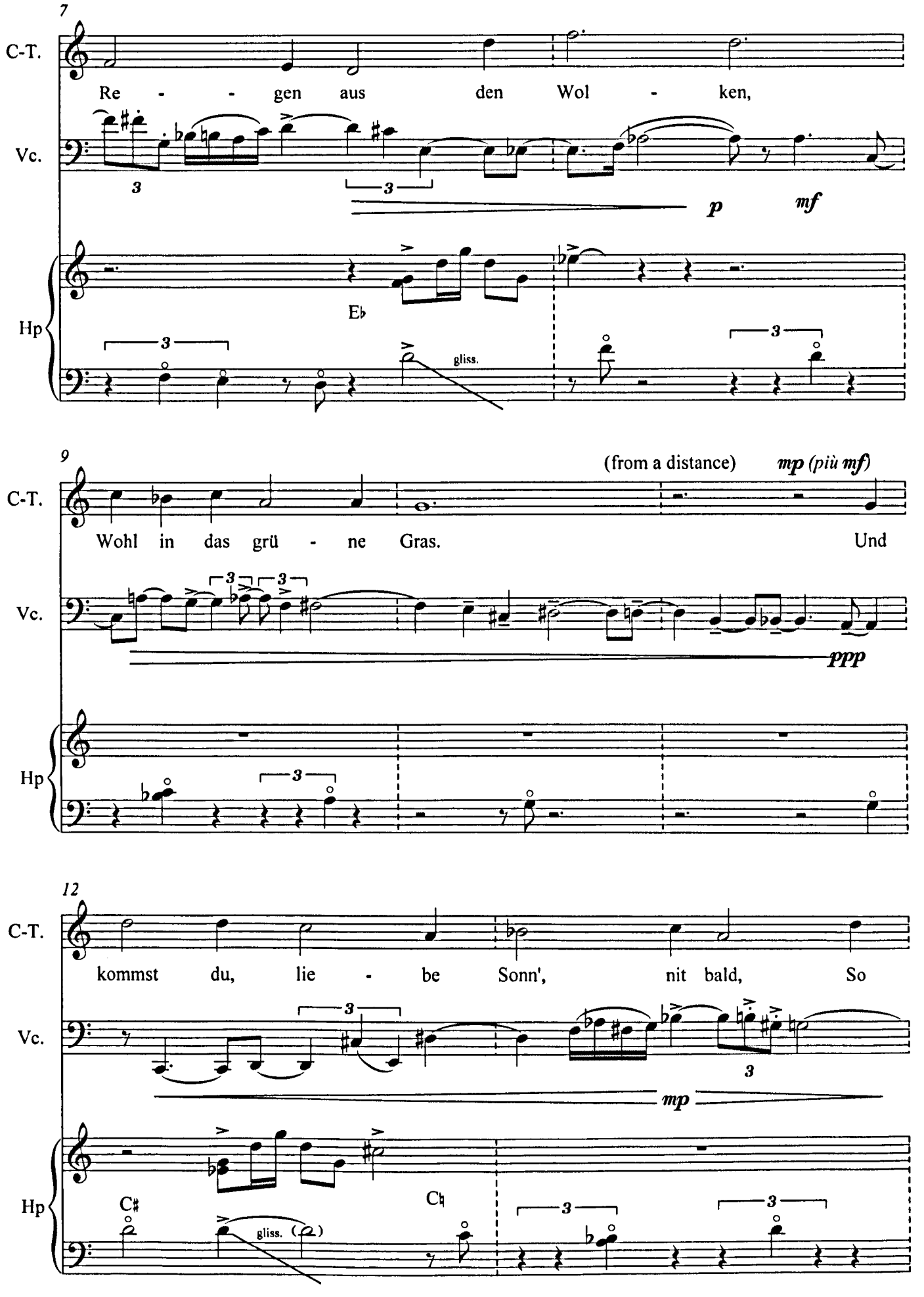

♩. = c. 63
Counter-tenor
Violoncello
Harp
f
Be - cause the night is
p
mf p
mf
mp cresc. poco a poco
4
C-T.
Vc.
Hp
cold
and I'm warm from your fire
3
mf cresc. poco a poco
gliss.
l.v.
7
p cresc.
I hur - ry down the road.
Yet gla - ncing
f cresc. poco a poco

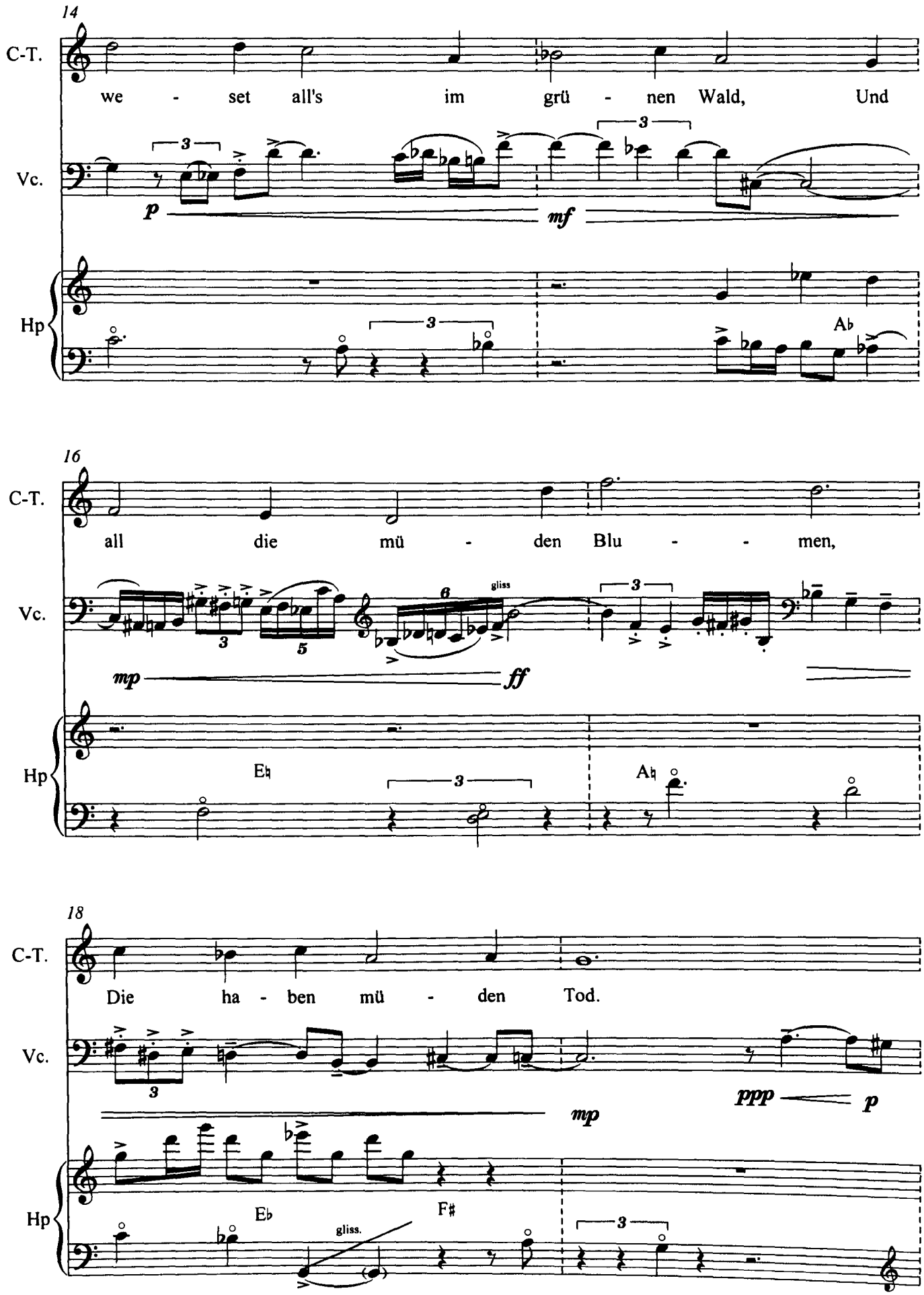

10
C-T.
back I see your sha - dow wat - ching at the up - per cur - tains
Vc.
mf p
f mf
Hp
tender and flexible
♪ = ♪
13
3 + 3 + 2
ff
p
C-T.
your sha - dow wat- ching Be - fore I wave you
3 + 3 + 2
non vib.
Vc.
ff
sub. pp
3 + 3 + 2
Hp
E♭
ff
p
B♭
F♮
C♯
G♯
speech like
16
mf
C-T.
turn in - to the dar - kened room.
ord. (vib)
Vc.
ff
Hp
F♯
f
C♮
G♮

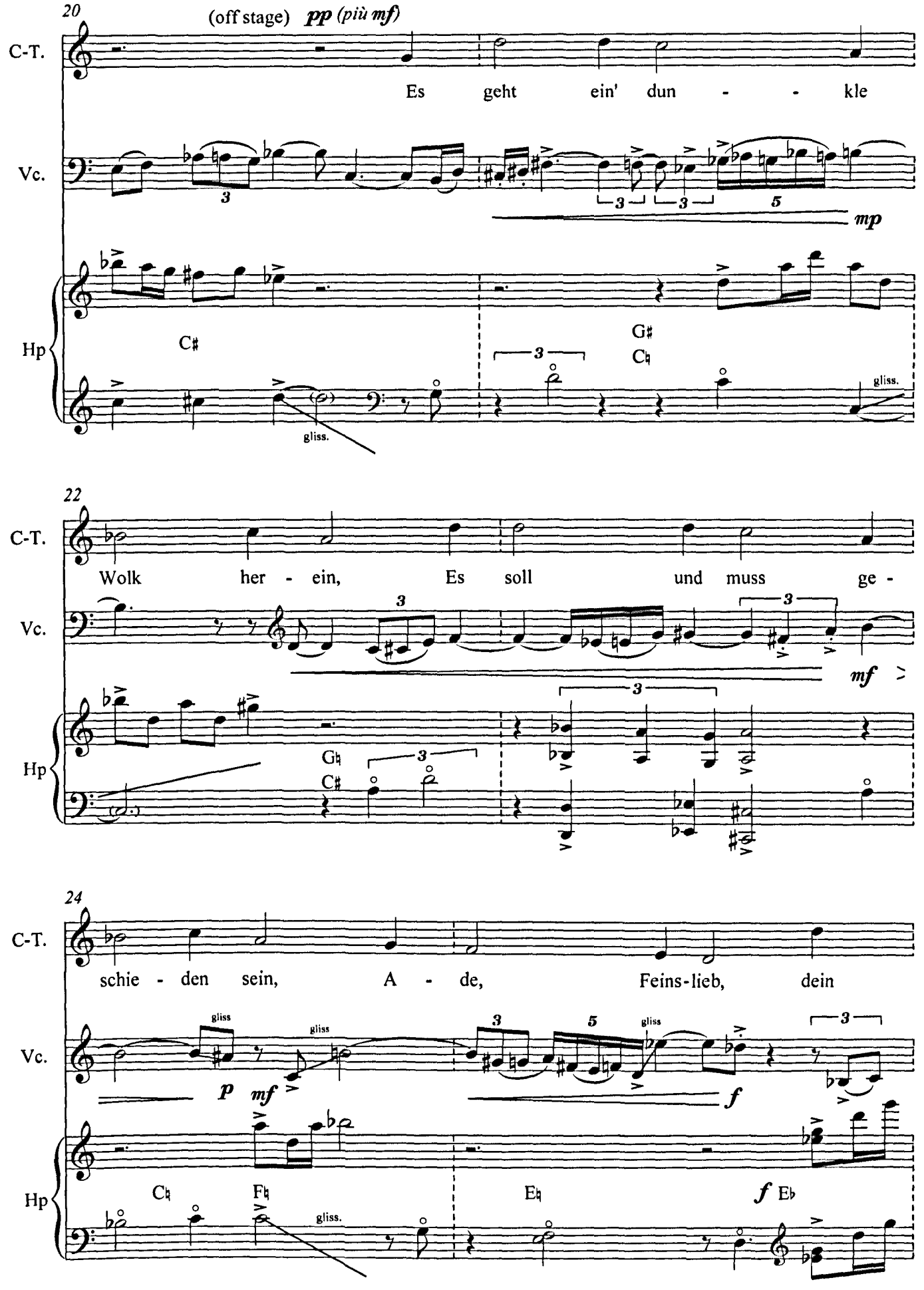
Dark Clouds

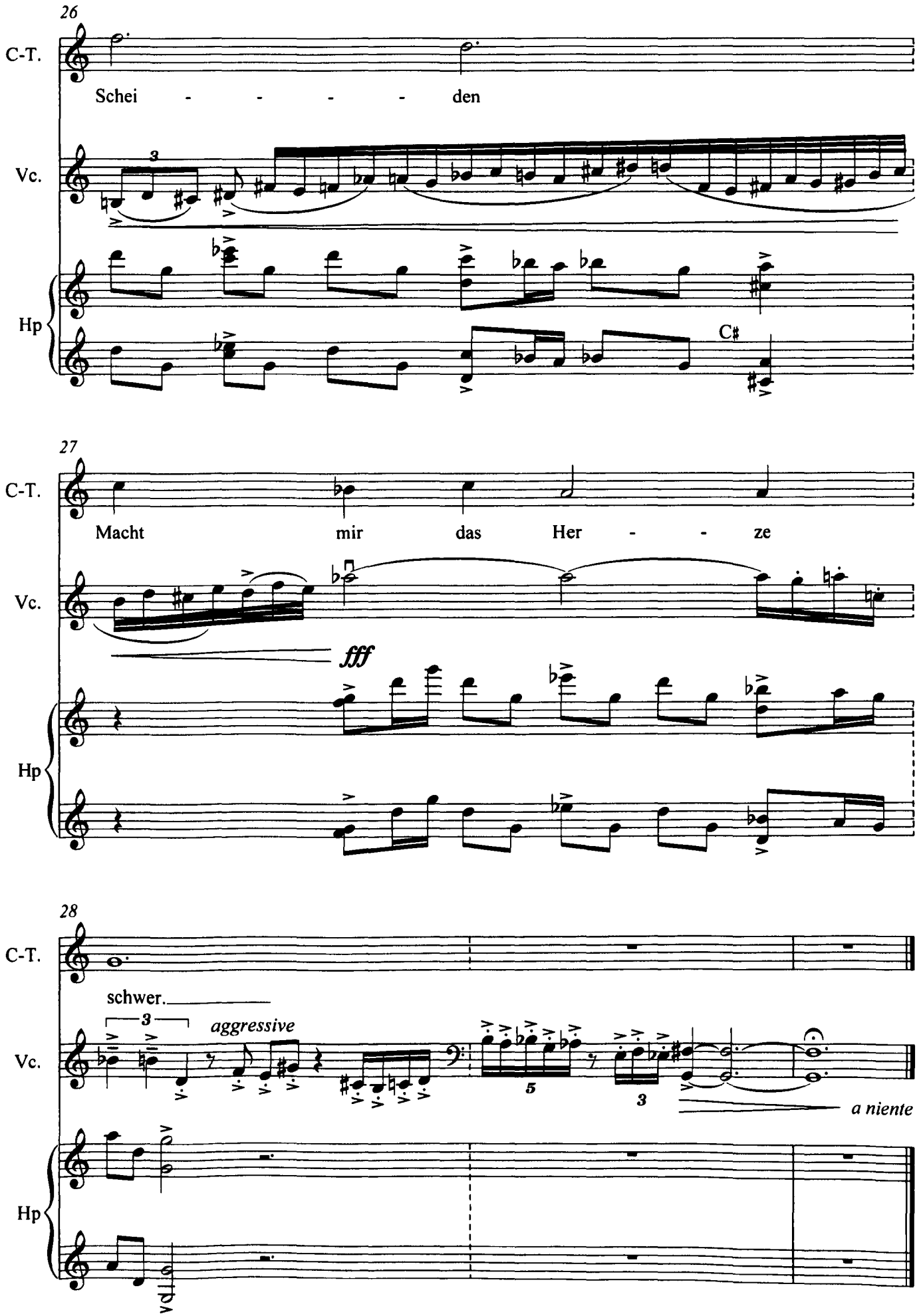
based on the German folk song *Dunkle Wolk*




7
C-T.
Re - - gen aus den Wol - ken,
Vc.
p
mf
Hp
Eb
gliss.
9
(from a distance)
mp (più mf)
C-T.
Wohl in das grü - ne Gras.
Und
Vc.
ppp
Hp
12
C-T.
kommst du, lie - be Sonn', nit bald, So
Vc.
mp
Hp
C♯
C♮
gliss.


14
C-T.
we - set all's im grü - nen Wald, Und
Vc.
p
mf
Hp
Ab
16
C-T.
all die mü - den Blu - - men,
Vc.
mp
ff
gliss
Hp
Eb
Ab
18
C-T.
Die ha - ben mü - den Tod.
Vc.
mp
ppp
p
Hp
Eb
F#
gliss.


20
(off stage) pp (più mf)
C-T.
Es geht ein' dun - - kle
Vc.
mp
Hp
C♯
G♯
C♮
gliss.
22
C-T.
Wolk her - ein, Es soll und muss ge -
Vc.
mf
Hp
G♮
C♯
24
C-T.
schie - den sein, A - de, Feins-lieb, dein
Vc.
gliss
p mf
f
Hp
C♮
F♮
E♮
f E♭


26
C-T.
Schei - - - - - den
Vc.
Hp
C♯
27
C-T.
Macht mir das Her - - ze
Vc.
fff
Hp
28
C-T.
schwer.
Vc.
aggressive
a niente
Hp

I'm the King of the Castle

Opera in Two Acts

ACT II: Days 4-6

Music by Richard Peat

Libretto by Timothy Knapman
(Based on the novel by Susan Hill)

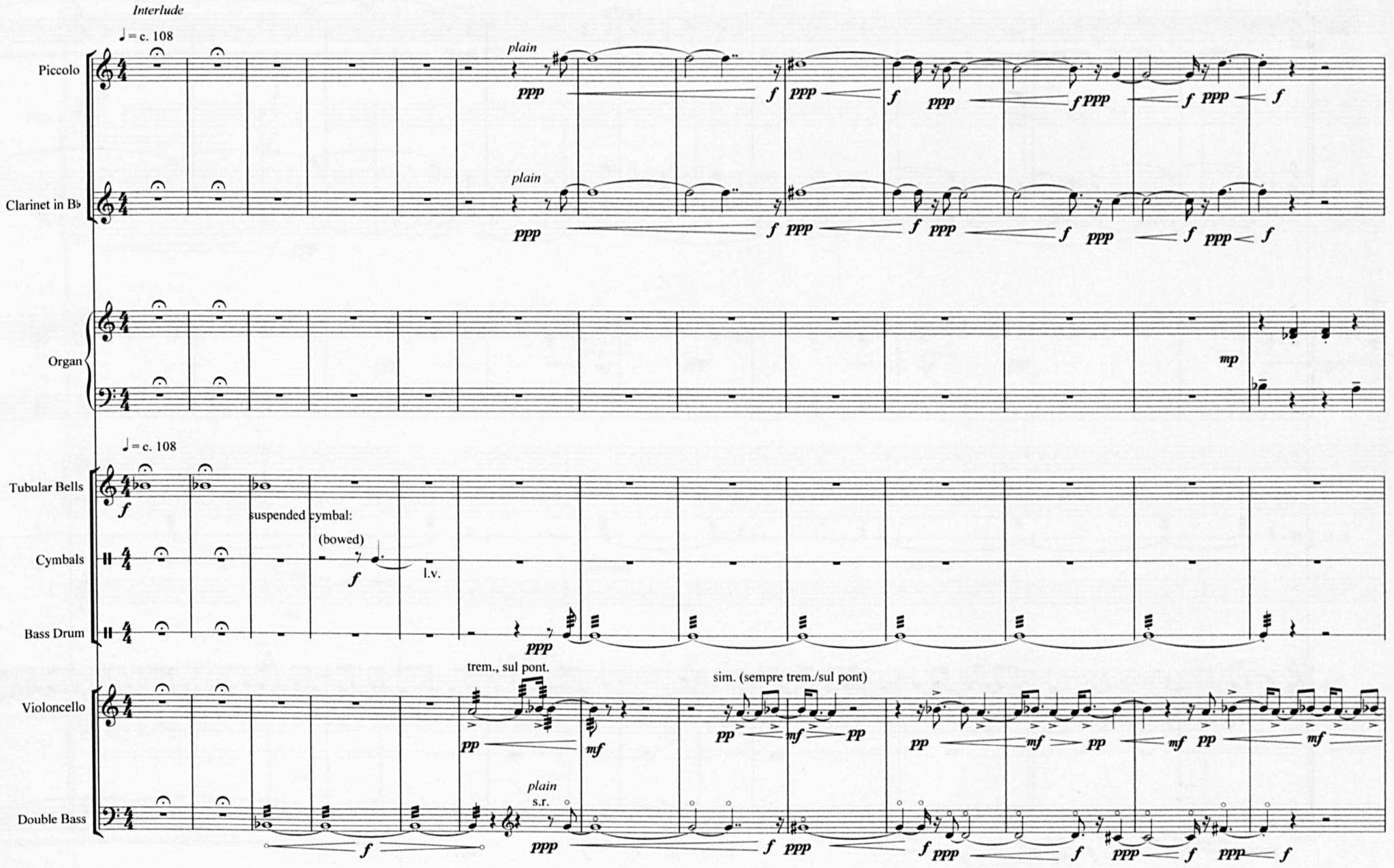
City University – School of Arts

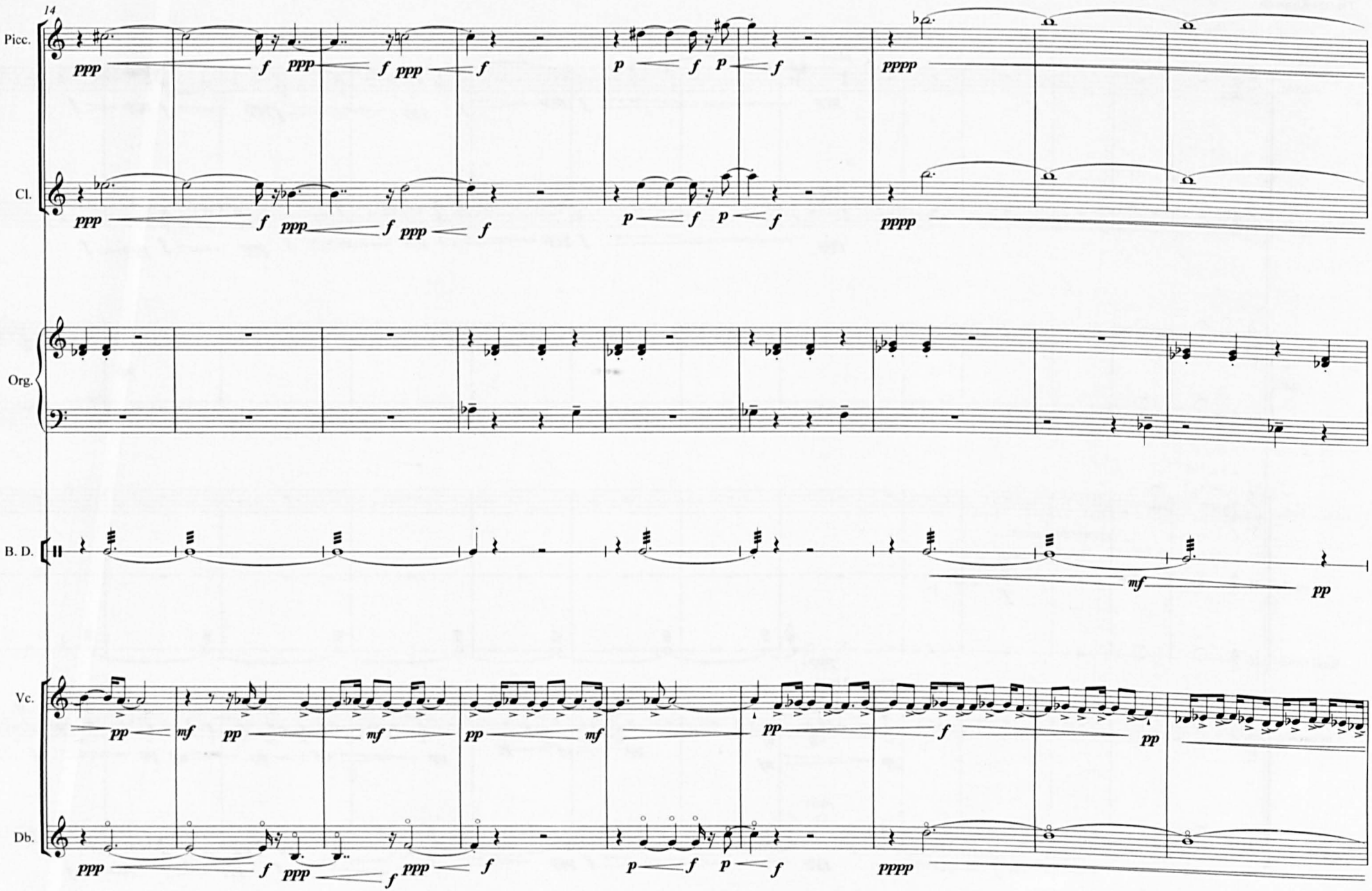
(Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of PhD submission, March 2007)

I'm the King of the Castle - Day 4

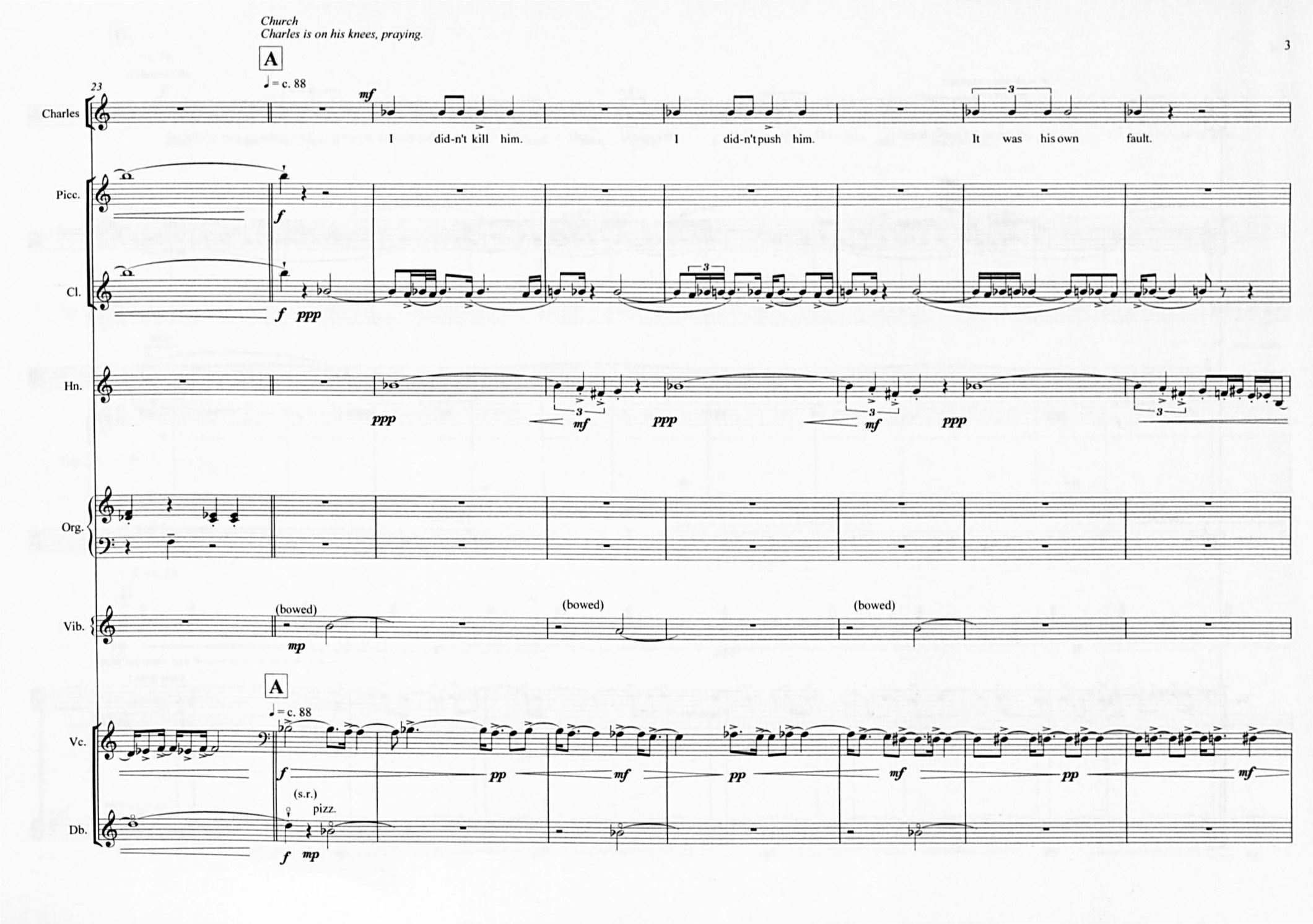
Timothy Knapman

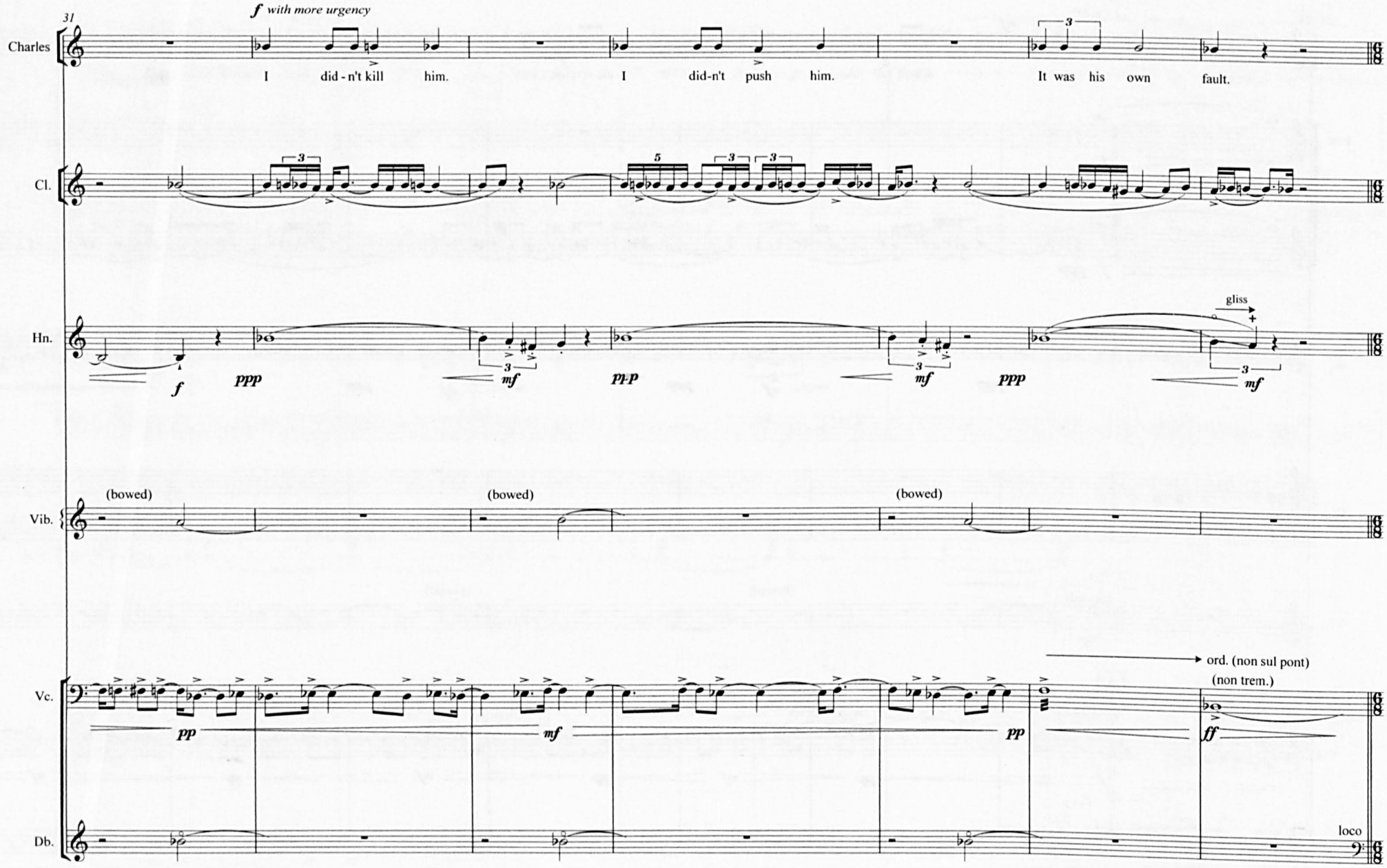
Richard Peat (2006)

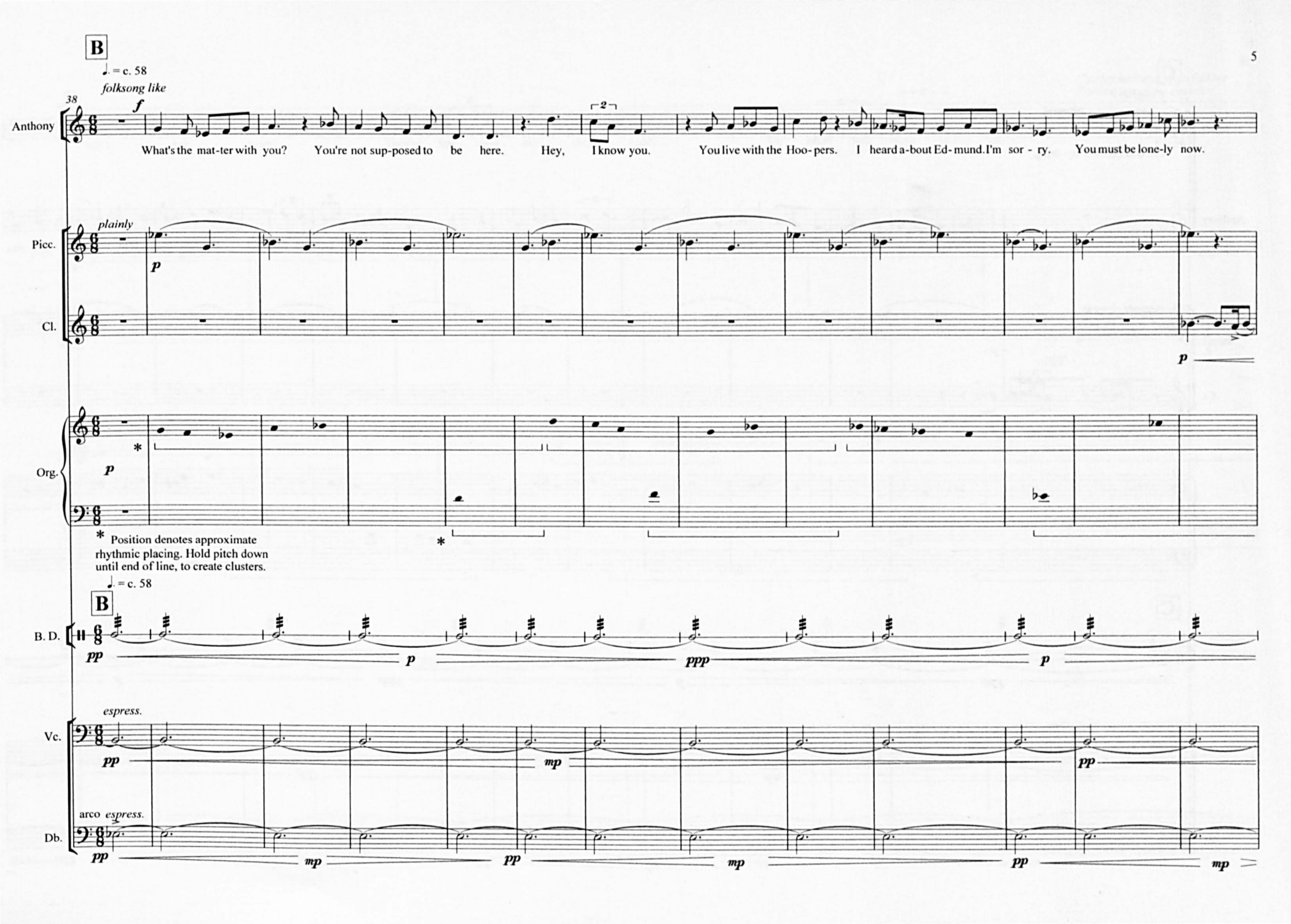


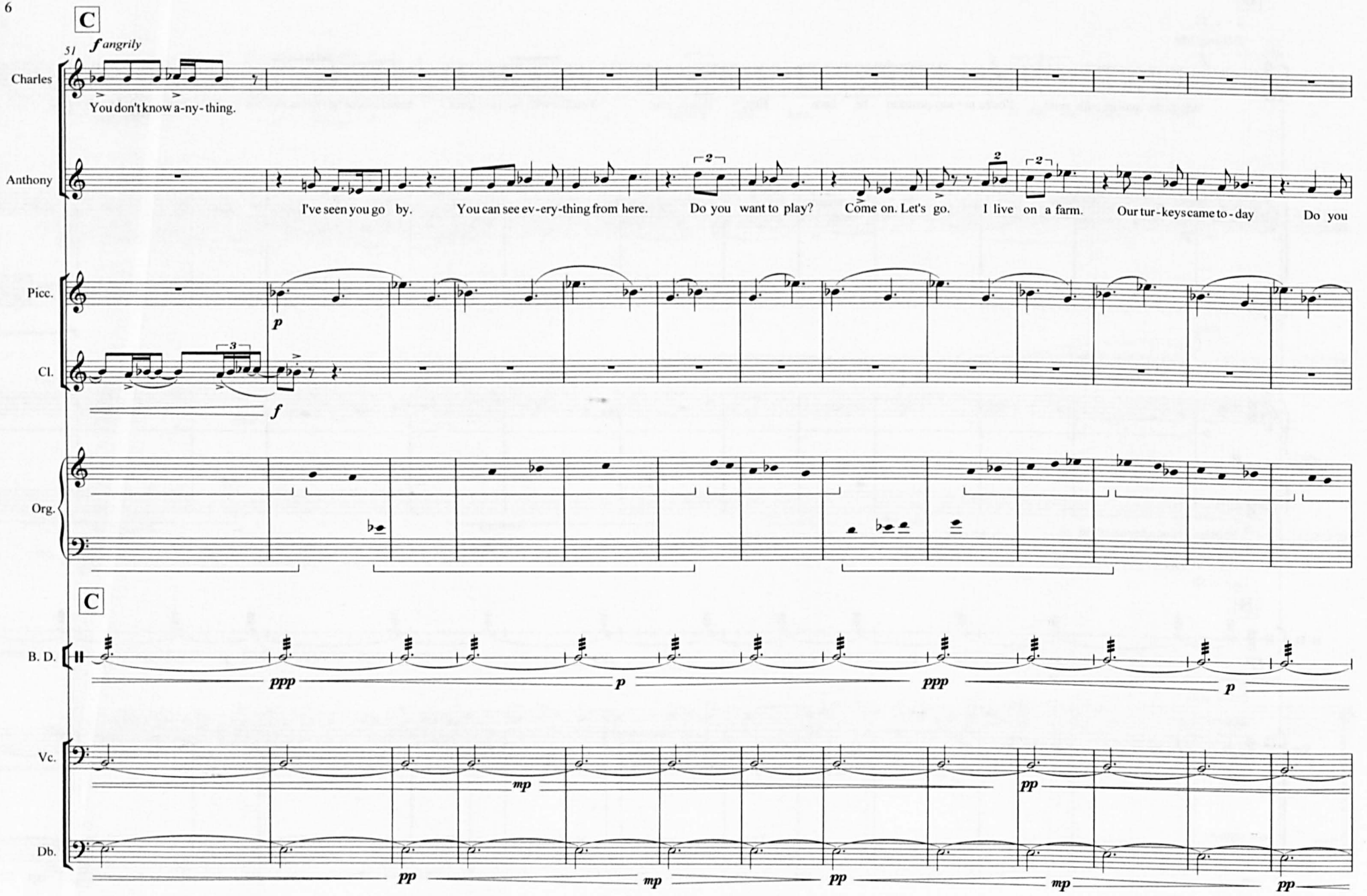

14
Picc.
Cl.
Org.
B. D.
Vc.
Db.
ppp
f
p
pppp
mf
pp

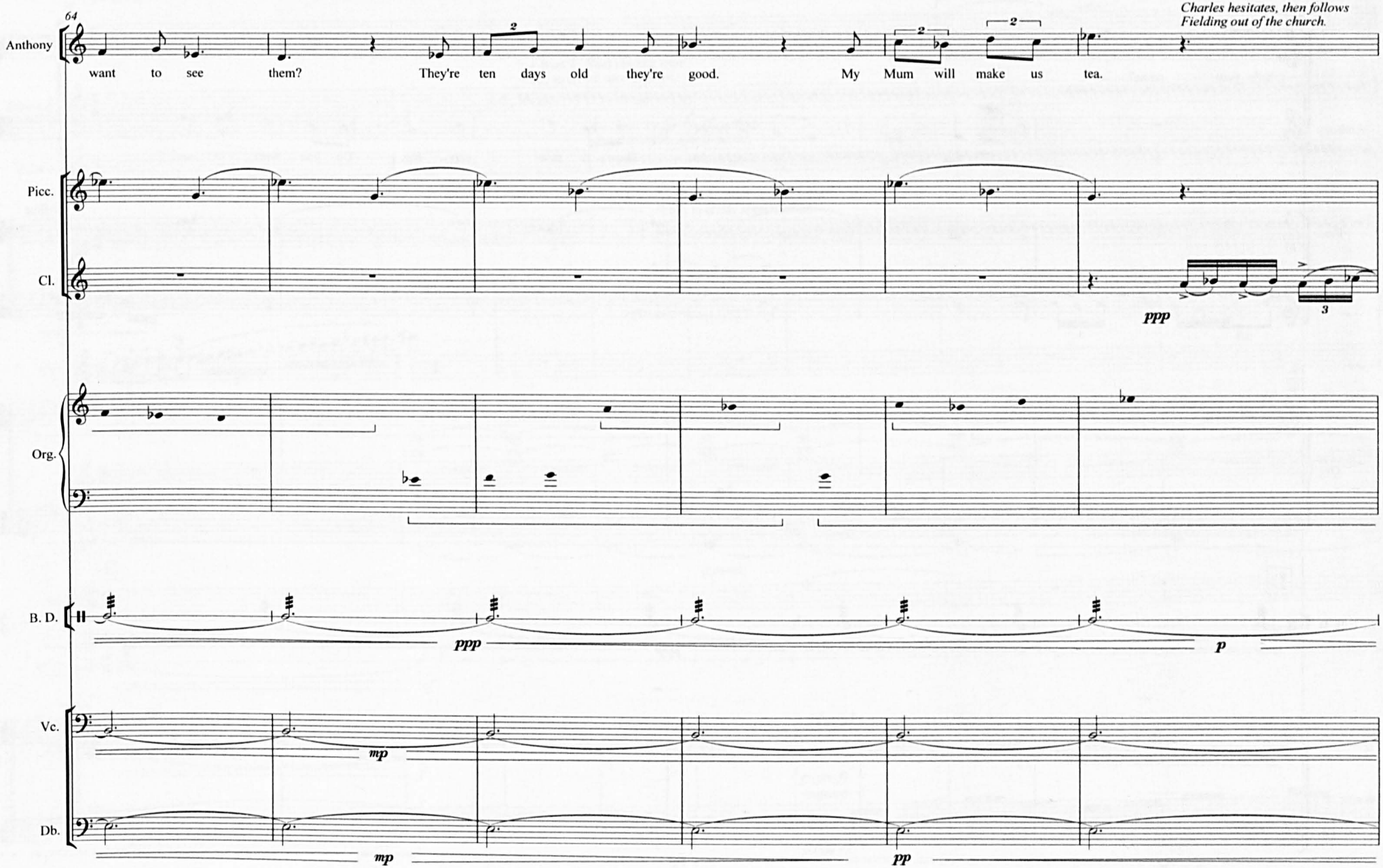
Church
Charles is on his knees, praying.

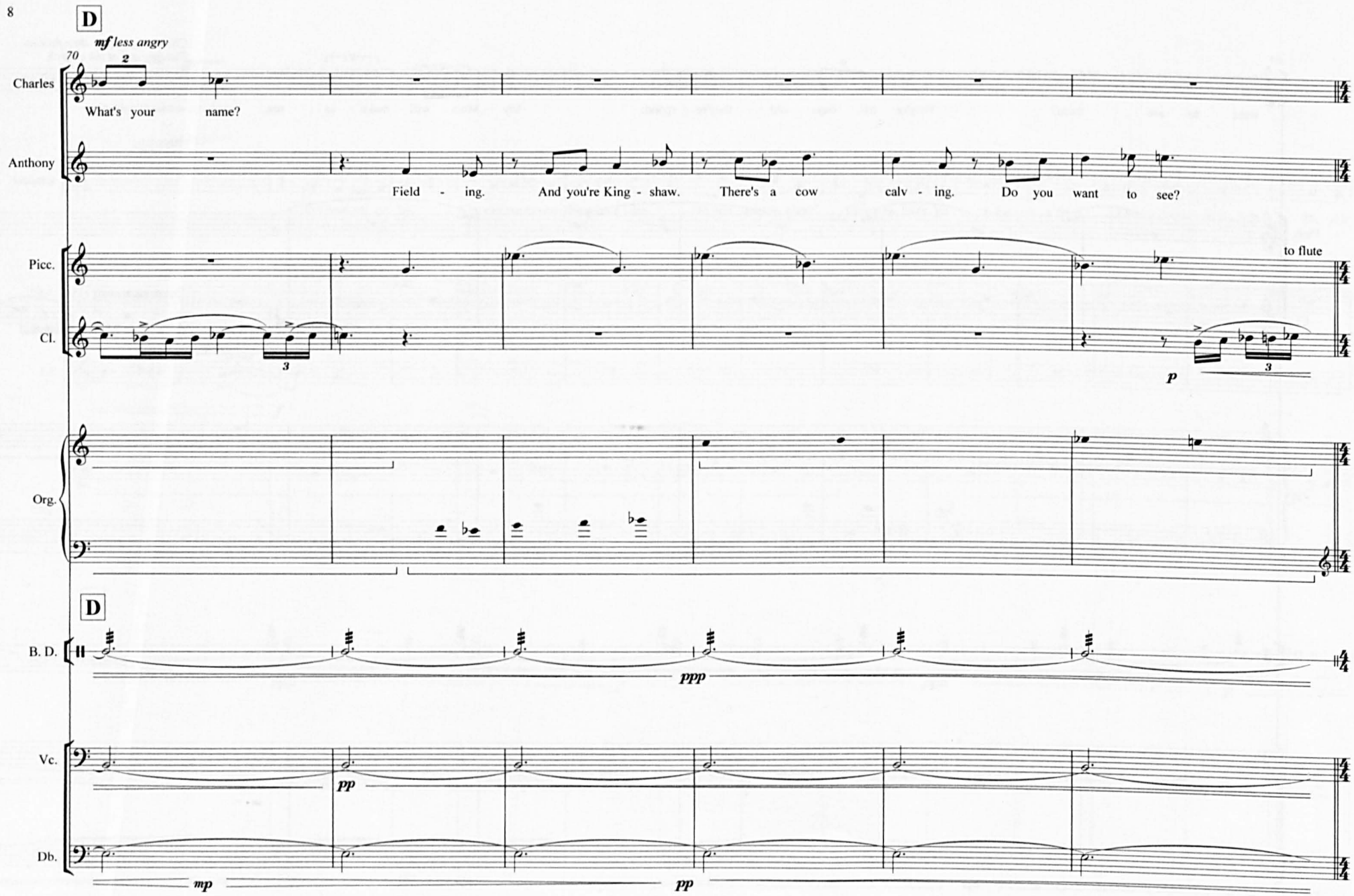



31
f with more urgency
Charles
I did - n't kill him.
I did-n't push him.
It was his own fault.
Cl.
Hn.
f
ppp
mf
pp-p
mf
ppp
gliss
mf
Vib.
(bowed)
(bowed)
(bowed)
Vc.
pp
mf
pp
ord. (non sul pont)
(non trem.)
ff
Db.
loco


B
♩. = c. 58
folksong like
38
Anthony
f
What's the mat-ter with you? You're not sup-posed to be here. Hey, I know you. You live with the Hoo-pers. I heard a-bout Ed-mund. I'm sor - ry. You must be lone-ly now.
plainly
Picc.
p
Cl.
p
Org.
p
* Position denotes approximate rhythmic placing. Hold pitch down until end of line, to create clusters.
♩. = c. 58
B
B. D.
pp
p
ppp
p
espress.
Vc.
pp
mp
pp
arco espress.
Db.
pp
mp
pp
mp
pp
mp


C
51
f angrily
Charles
You don't know a-ny-thing.
Anthony
I've seen you go by.
You can see ev-ery-thing from here.
Do you want to play?
Come on. Let's go.
I live on a farm.
Our tur-keys came to-day
Do you
Picc.
p
Cl.
f
Org.
C
B. D.
ppp
p
ppp
p
Vc.
mp
pp
Db.
pp
mp
pp
mp
pp


64
Anthony
want to see them? They're ten days old they're good. My Mum will make us tea.
Charles hesitates, then follows Fielding out of the church.
Picc.
Cl.
ppp
3
Org.
B. D.
ppp
p
Vc.
mp
Db.
mp
pp


D
mf less angry
70
Charles
What's your name?
Anthony
Field - ing. And you're King - shaw. There's a cow calv - ing. Do you want to see?
Picc.
to flute
Cl.
p
Org.
D
B. D.
ppp
Vc.
pp
Db.
mp
pp

E

Fielding opens the wooden door of the cowshed.

76

♩ = c. 108

Charles

Edmund

Helena

Joseph

Fl.

Cl.

Org.

E

Vib.

B. D.

♩ = c. 108

Vc.

Db.

f gliss

Pant - - ing.

* ♩ Beat 2: Start reading from sheet, to create speech canon.

* ♩ Beat 1: Start reading from sheet, to create speech canon.

* ♩ Beat 4: Start reading from sheet, to create speech canon.

mp *mf*

flz.

ff

p

(bowed)

f

mf

fingered

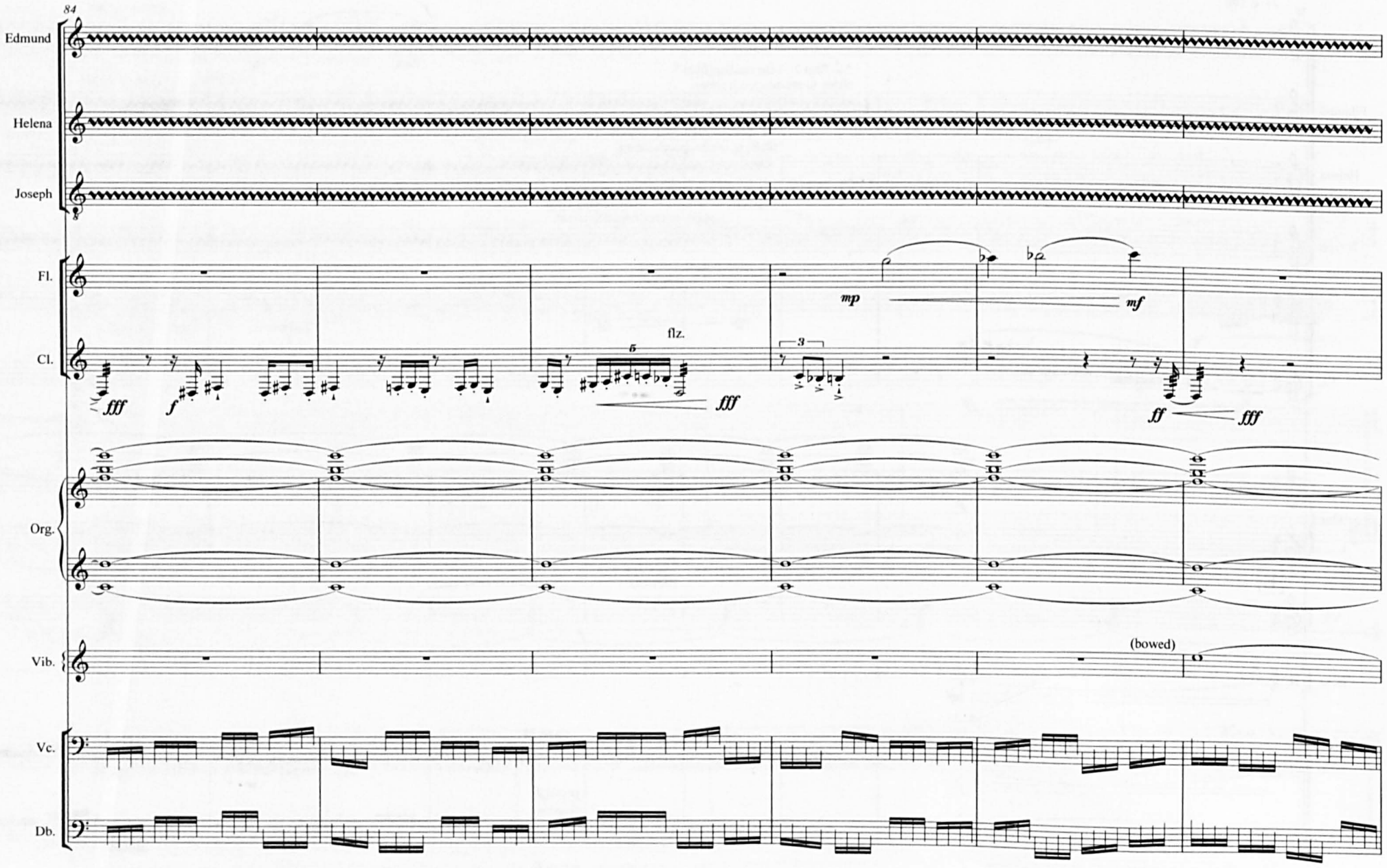
f

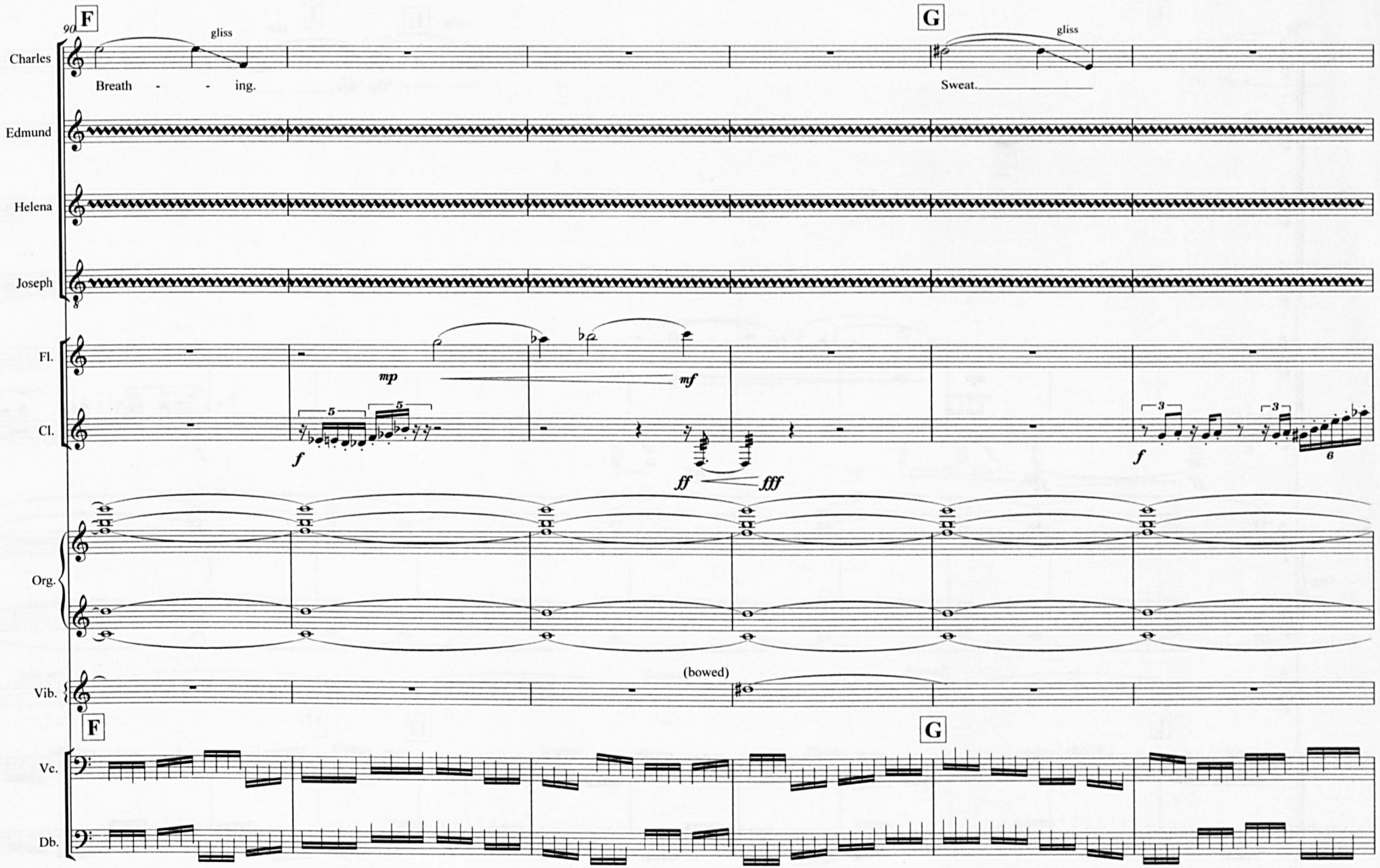
p (più f)

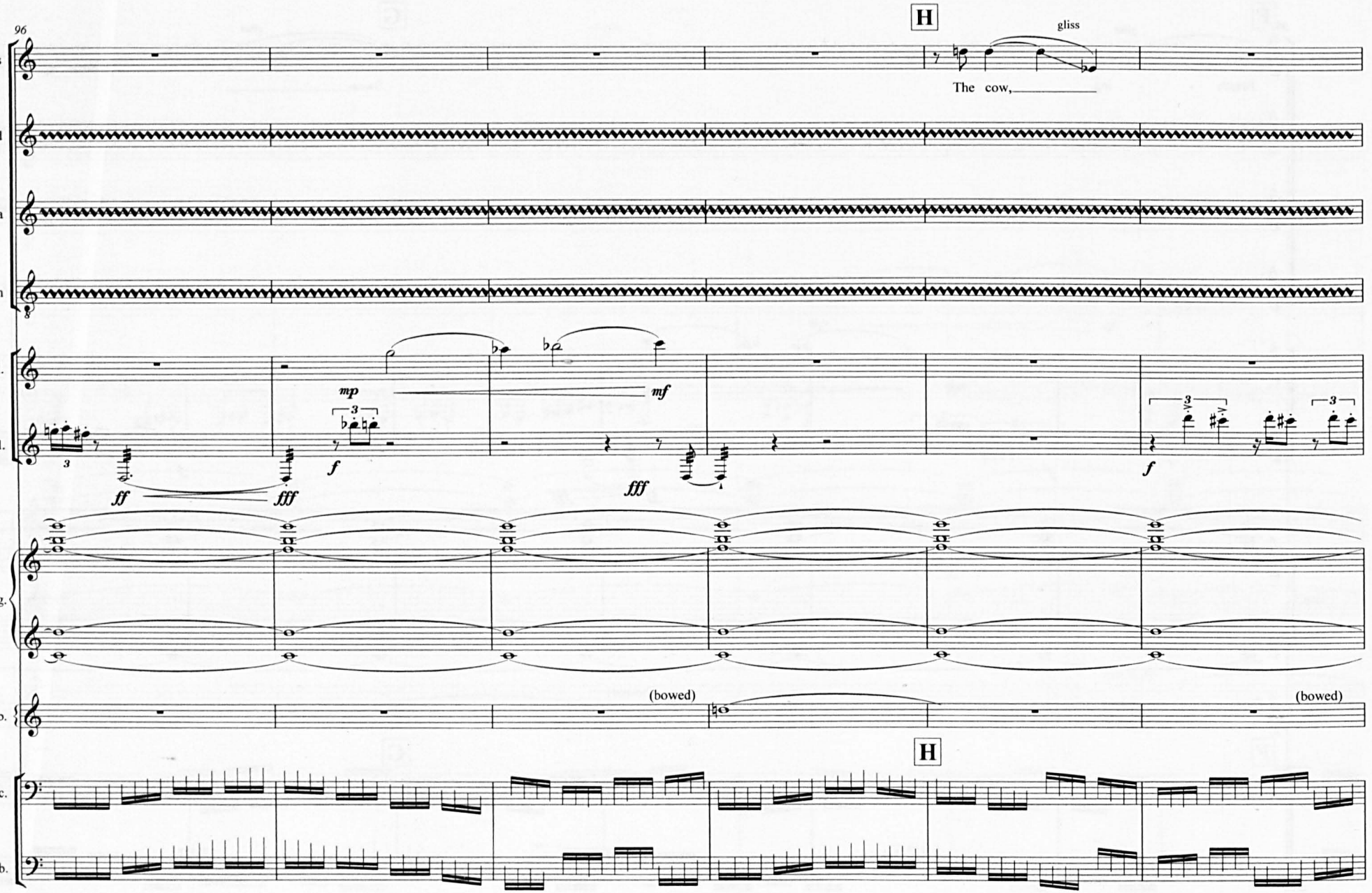
fingered

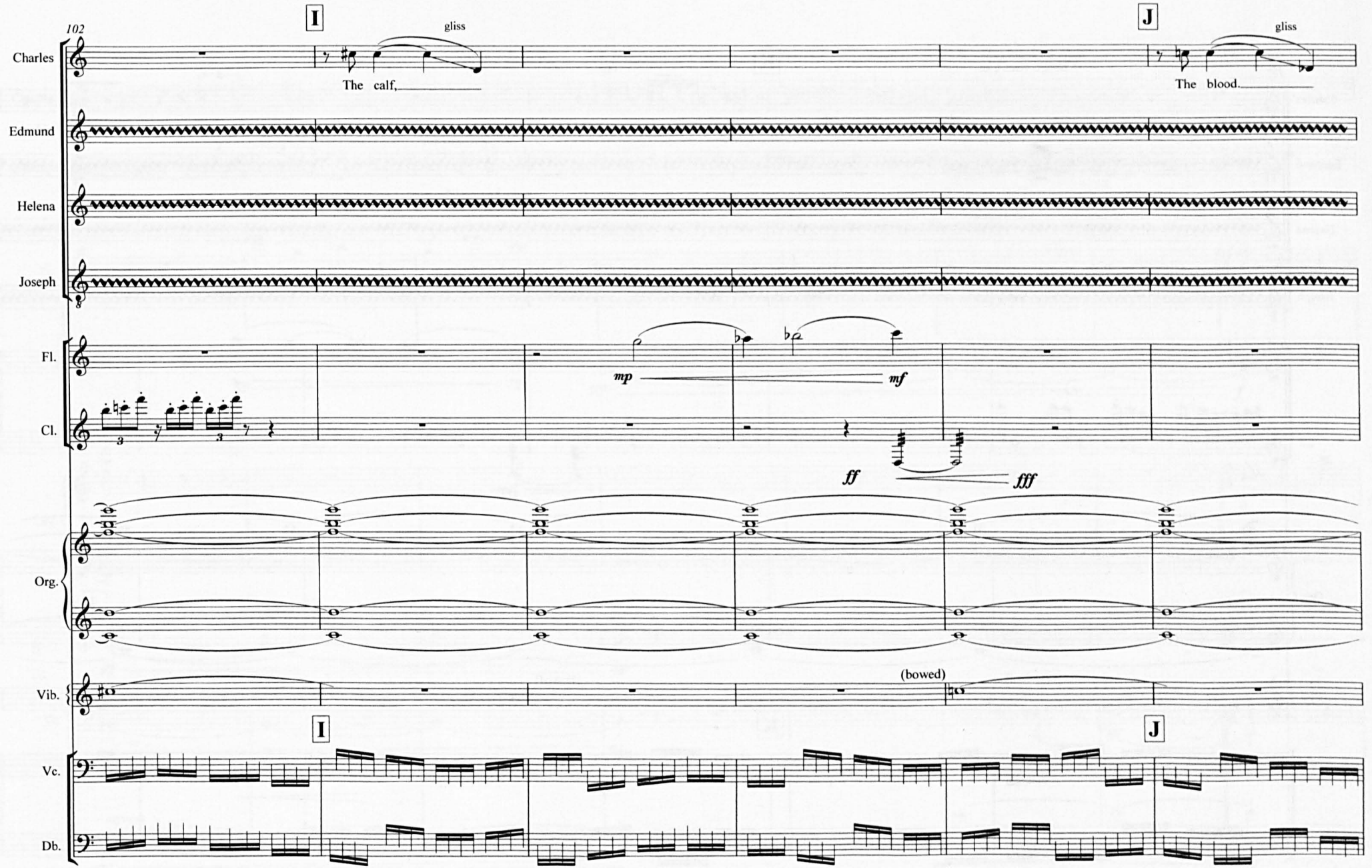
f

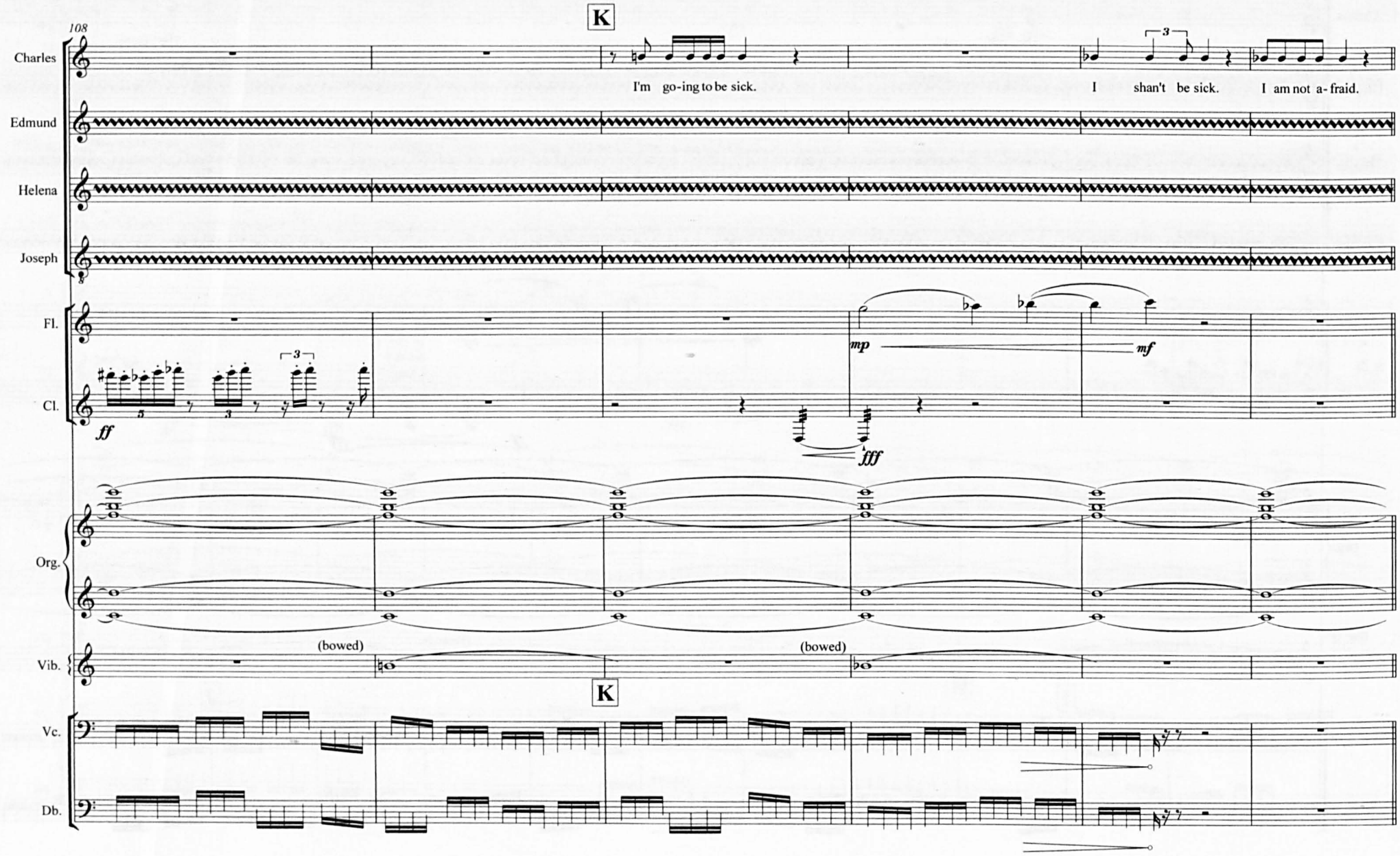
p (più f)

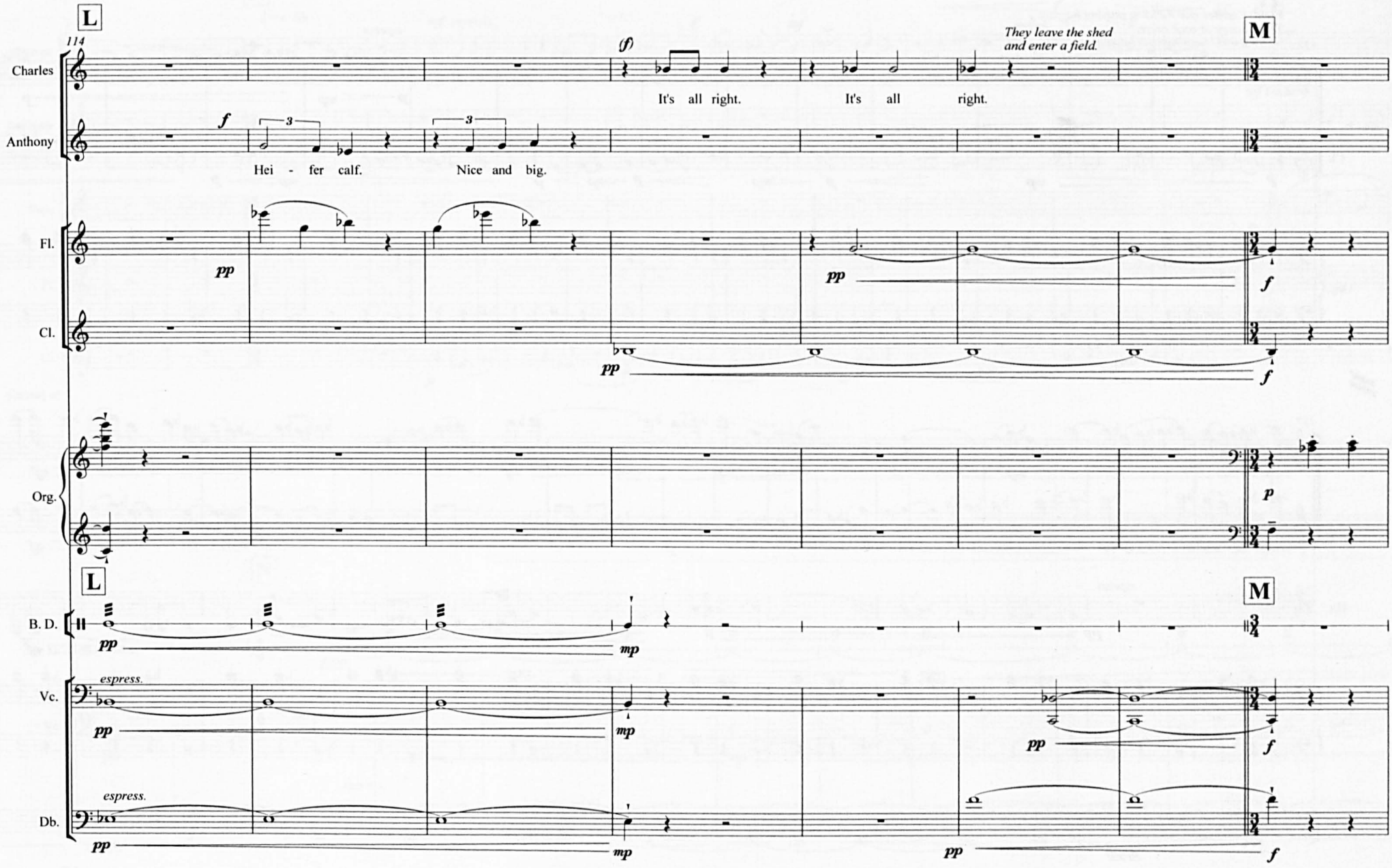

84
Edmund
Helena
Joseph
Fl.
Cl.
Org.
Vib.
Vc.
Db.
fff
f
flz.
fff
mp
mf
ff
fff
(bowed)

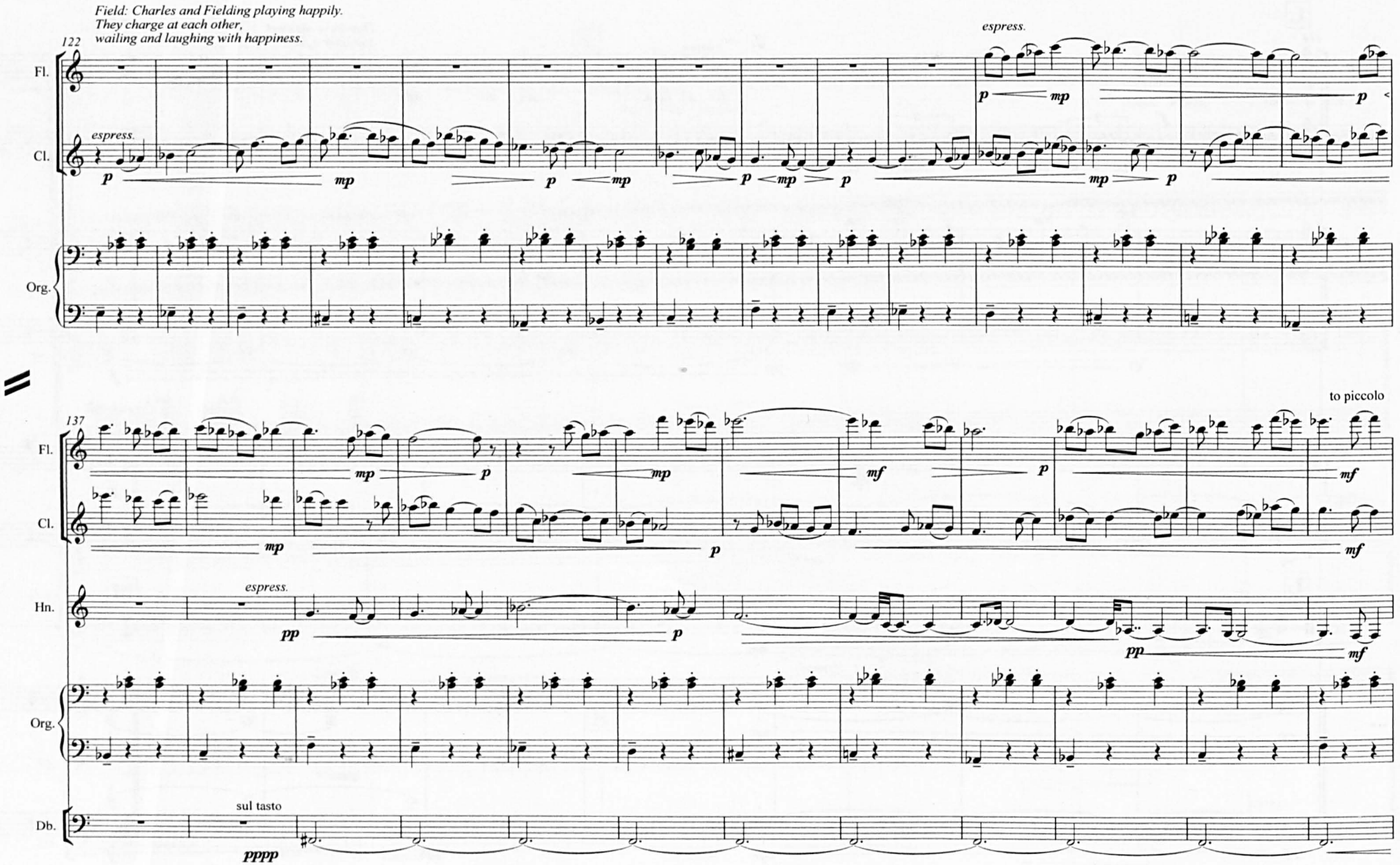

90
F
G
Charles
gliss
Breath - - ing.
gliss
Sweat.
Edmund
Helena
Joseph
Fl.
Cl.
mp
mf
f
ff
fff
f
Org.
Vib.
(bowed)
F
G
Vc.
Db.


96
H
gliss
Charles
The cow,
Edmund
Helena
Joseph
Fl.
Cl.
mp
mf
f
ff
fff
fff
f
Org.
Vib.
(bowed)
(bowed)
H
Vc.
Db.

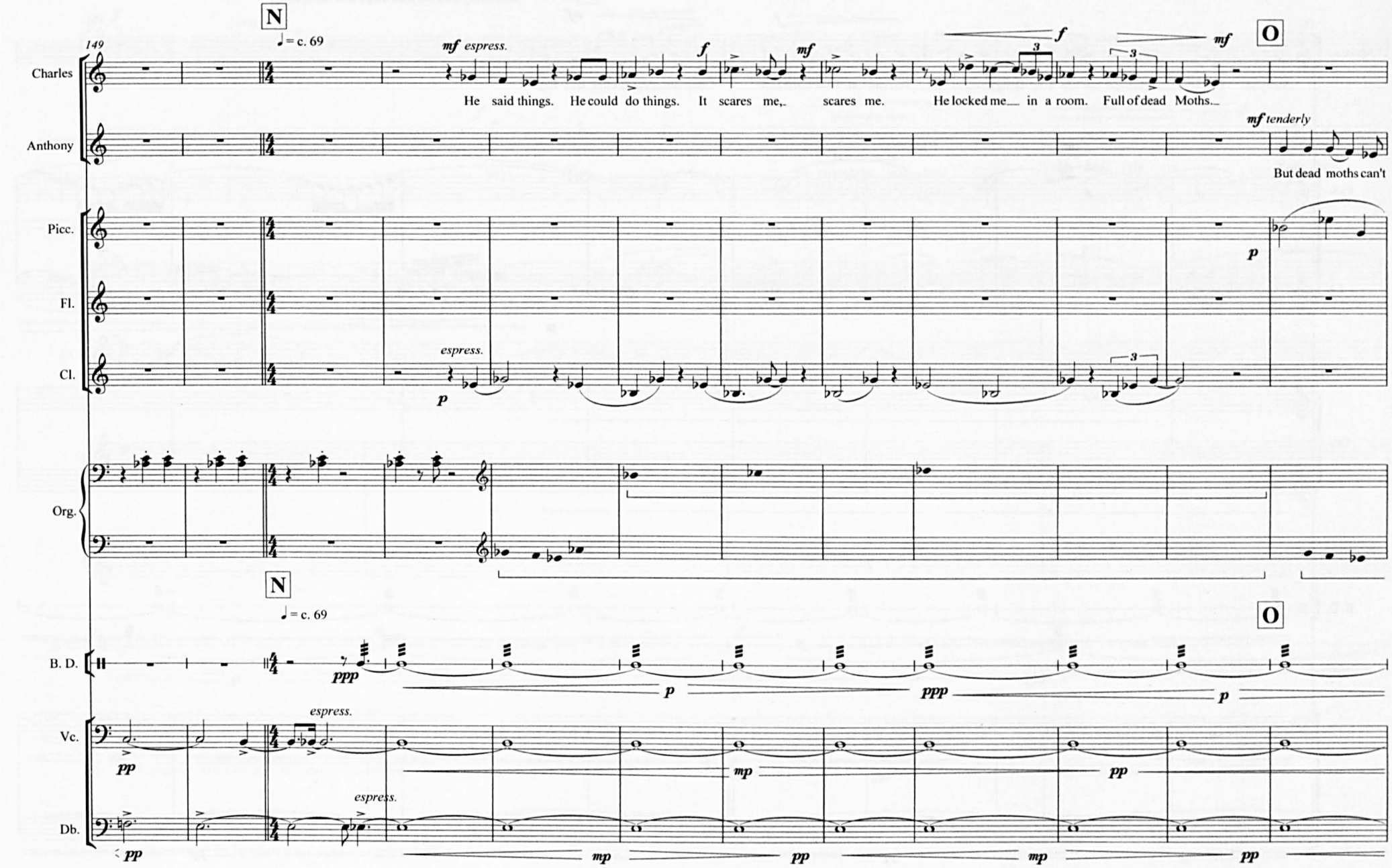

102
I
J
Charles
gliss
The calf,
gliss
The blood.
Edmund
Helena
Joseph
Fl.
Cl.
mp
mf
ff
fff
Org.
Vib.
(bowed)
I
J
Vc.
Db.

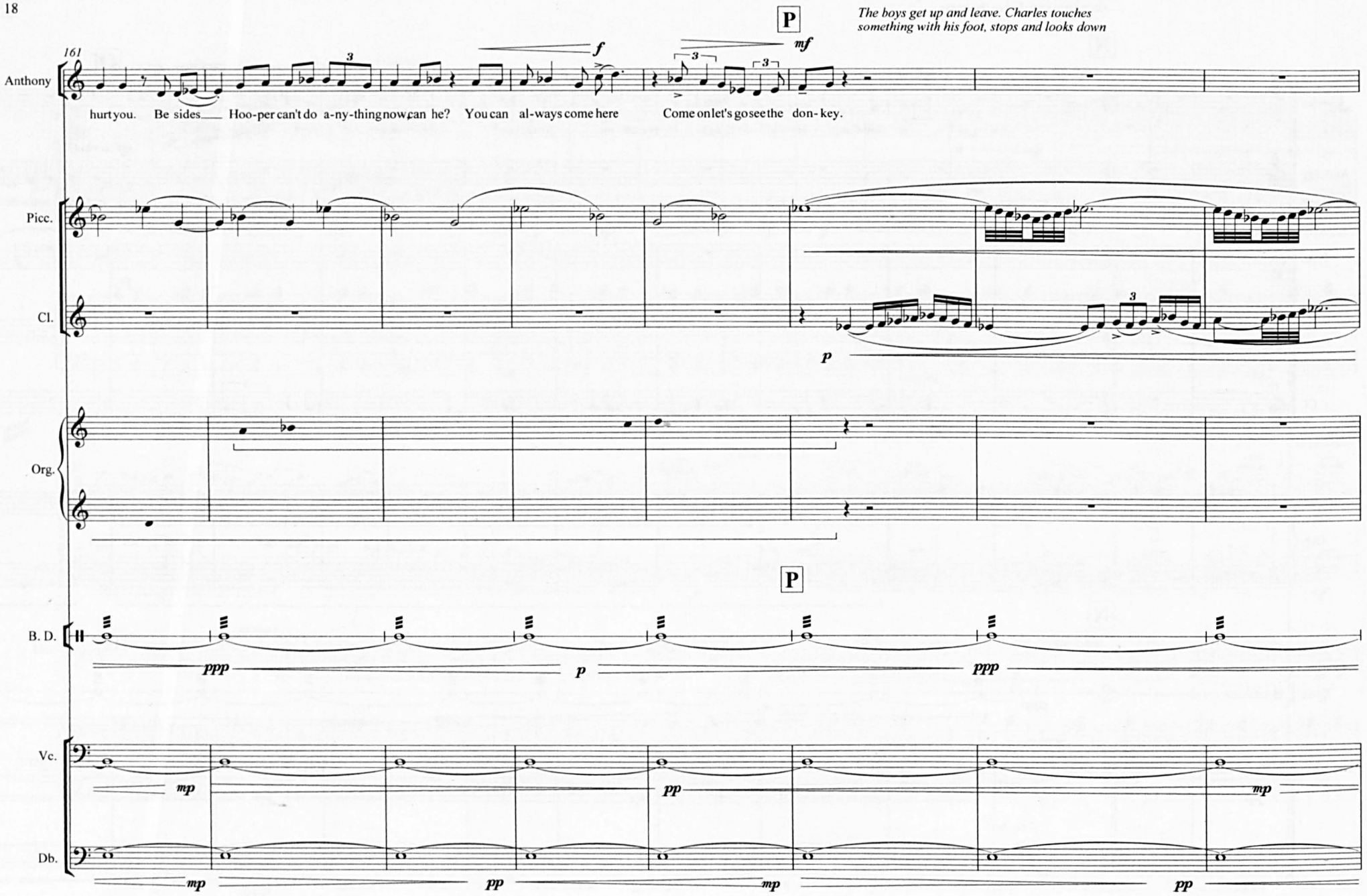

K
108
Charles
I'm go-ing to be sick.
I shan't be sick.
I am not a-fraid.
Edmund
Helena
Joseph
Fl.
Cl.
ff
mp
mf
fff
Org.
Vib.
(bowed)
(bowed)
K
Vc.
Db.

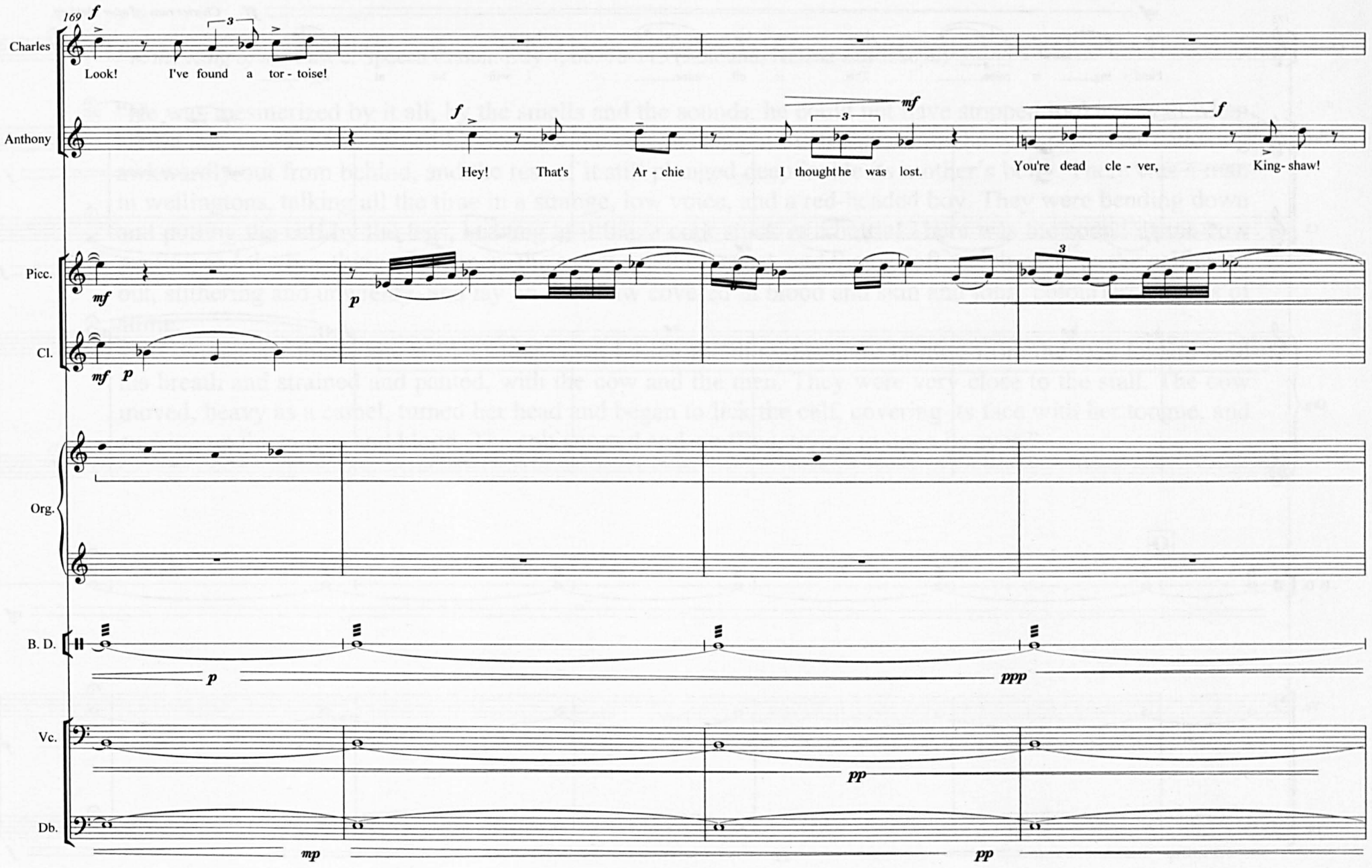

L
114
Charles
Anthony
(f)
It's all right.
It's all right.
They leave the shed
and enter a field.
M
f
3
Hei - fer calf.
Nice and big.
Fl.
Cl.
pp
f
Org.
p
L
M
B. D.
mp
espress.
Vc.
Db.


Field: Charles and Fielding playing happily.
They charge at each other,
wailing and laughing with happiness.
122
espress.
espress.
Fl.
Cl.
Org.
137
to piccolo
Hn.
Db.
sul tasto
pppp

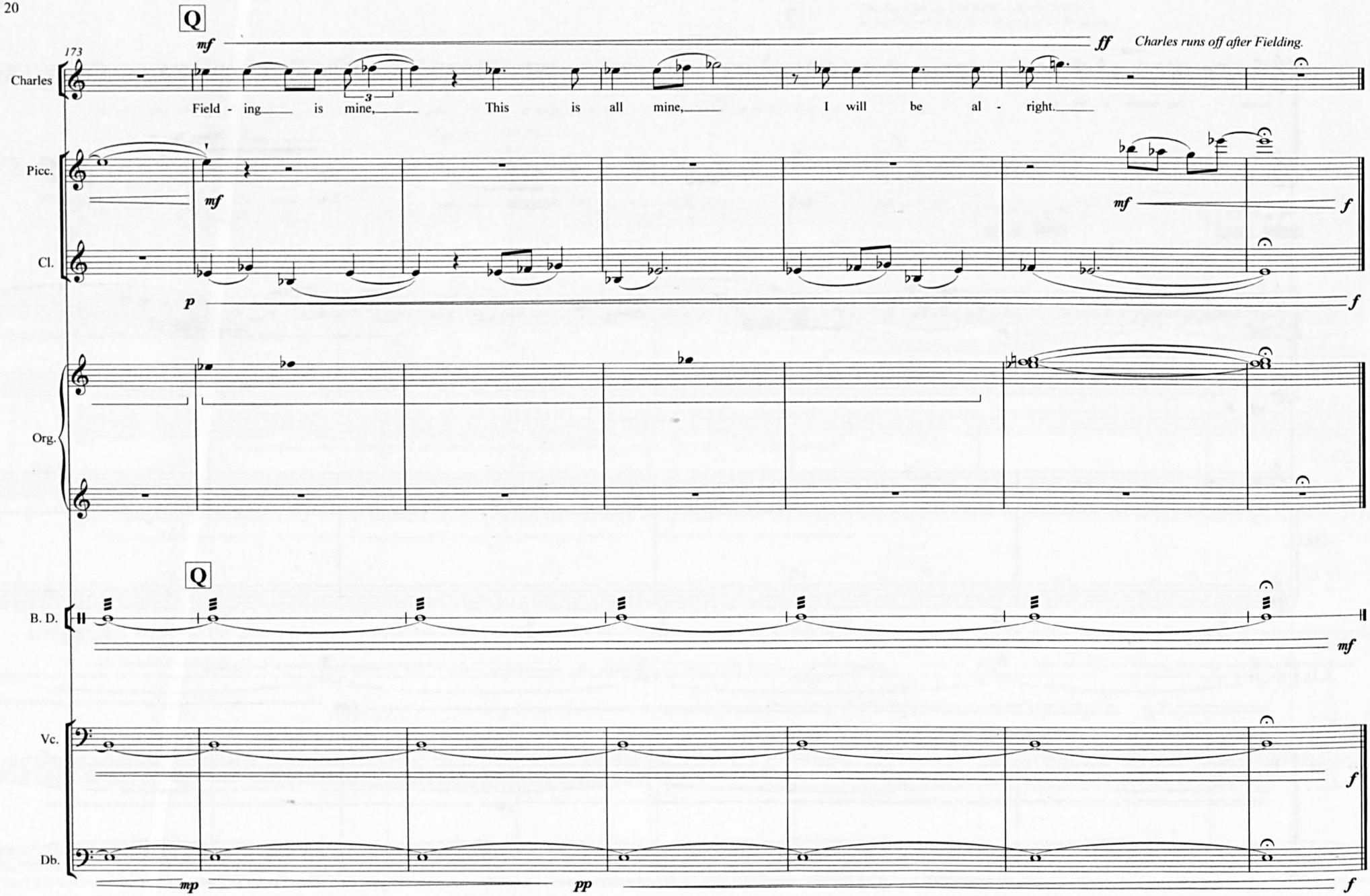
After playing, Charles and Fielding sit quietly together in the grass.




P
The boys get up and leave. Charles touches something with his foot, stops and looks down
161
Anthony
hurt you. Be sides Hoo-per can't do a-ny-thing now, can he? You can al-ways come here Come on let's go see the don-key.
Picc.
Cl.
Org.
P
B. D.
Vc.
Db.


169
Charles
Look! I've found a tor - toise!
Anthony
Hey! That's Ar - chie
I thought he was lost.
You're dead cle - ver,
King- shaw!
Picc.
Cl.
Org.
B. D.
Vc.
Db.

Charles watches Filding leave.



I'm the King of the Castle, Speech Canon: Day 4, bb. 78-113 (Edmund, Helena and Joseph)

"He was mesmerized by it all, by the smells and the sounds, he could not have stopped looking even when he did not want to look. When he first saw the cow, he caught his breath, at the bony legs of a calf sticking awkwardly out from behind, and the rest of it still plunged deep inside its mother's belly. There was a man in wellingtons, talking all the time in a strange, low voice, and a red-headed boy. They were bending down and pulling the calf by the legs, heaving at it like a cork stuck in a bottle. There was the sound of the cow panting and the breathing of the men, the sweet smell of sweat, and then a soft, quick suck, as the calf came out, slithering and unwieldy, and lay on the straw covered in blood and skin and long, colourless strands of slime.

Kingshaw found himself kneeling down beside Fielding, his chest hurting from the way he had held his breath and strained and panted, with the cow and the men. They were very close to the stall. The cow moved, heavy as a camel, turned her head and began to lick the calf, covering its face with her tongue, and sucking up the mucus and blood. The calf snorted and snuffled, trying to open its eyes."

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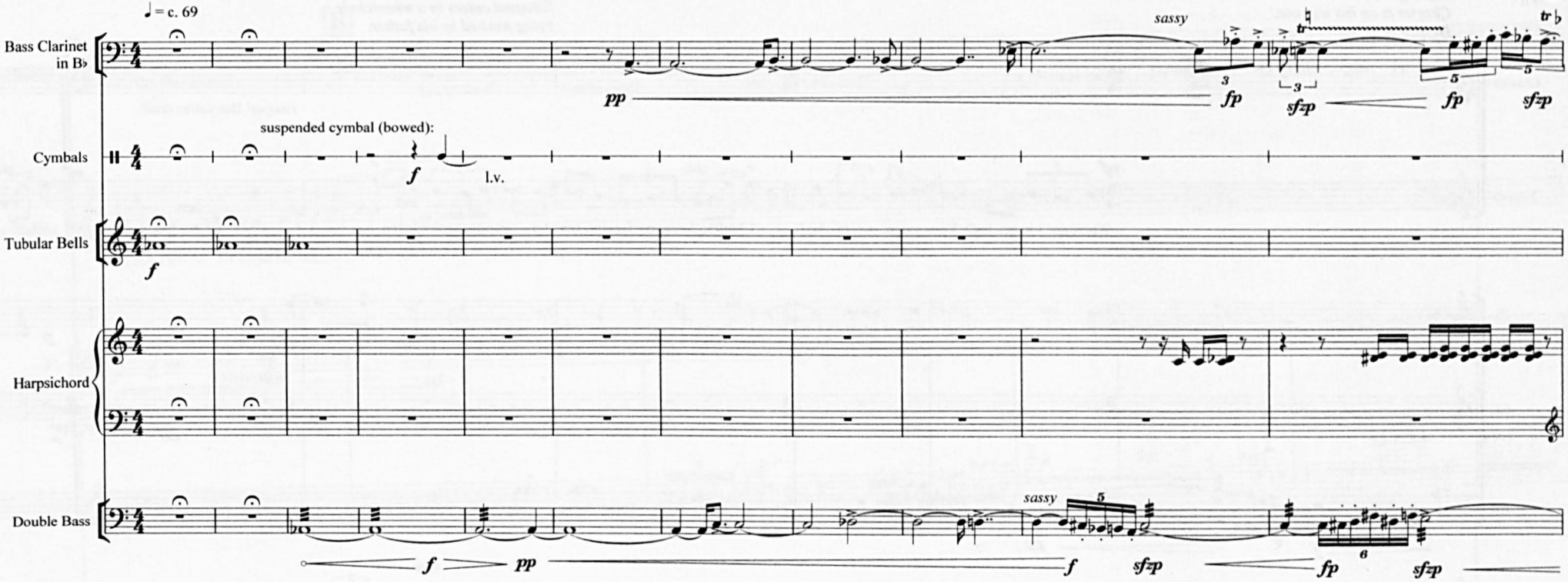
I'm the King of the Castle - Day 5

Interlude

♩ = c. 69



Warings.
Charles is on his way out.
Helena appears.

Edmund enters in a wheelchair being pushed by his father.

12

A

Charles

spoken: (*panic stricken*)

Hooper! But you're dead!

Helena

mf 3 3 3 gliss 3 *f* 3 *mf* gliss

Where are you go- ing? You can'tgo out to- day! Charles,_have you for-got-ten? Ed- mund has come home._ Charles,

Fl.

p *mf* *p*

Cl.

aggressive

fff

B. Cl.

(tr) tr to clarinet

f 6 *pp*

Hn.

p *aggressive* *mf* *fff* *p*

Hpsd.

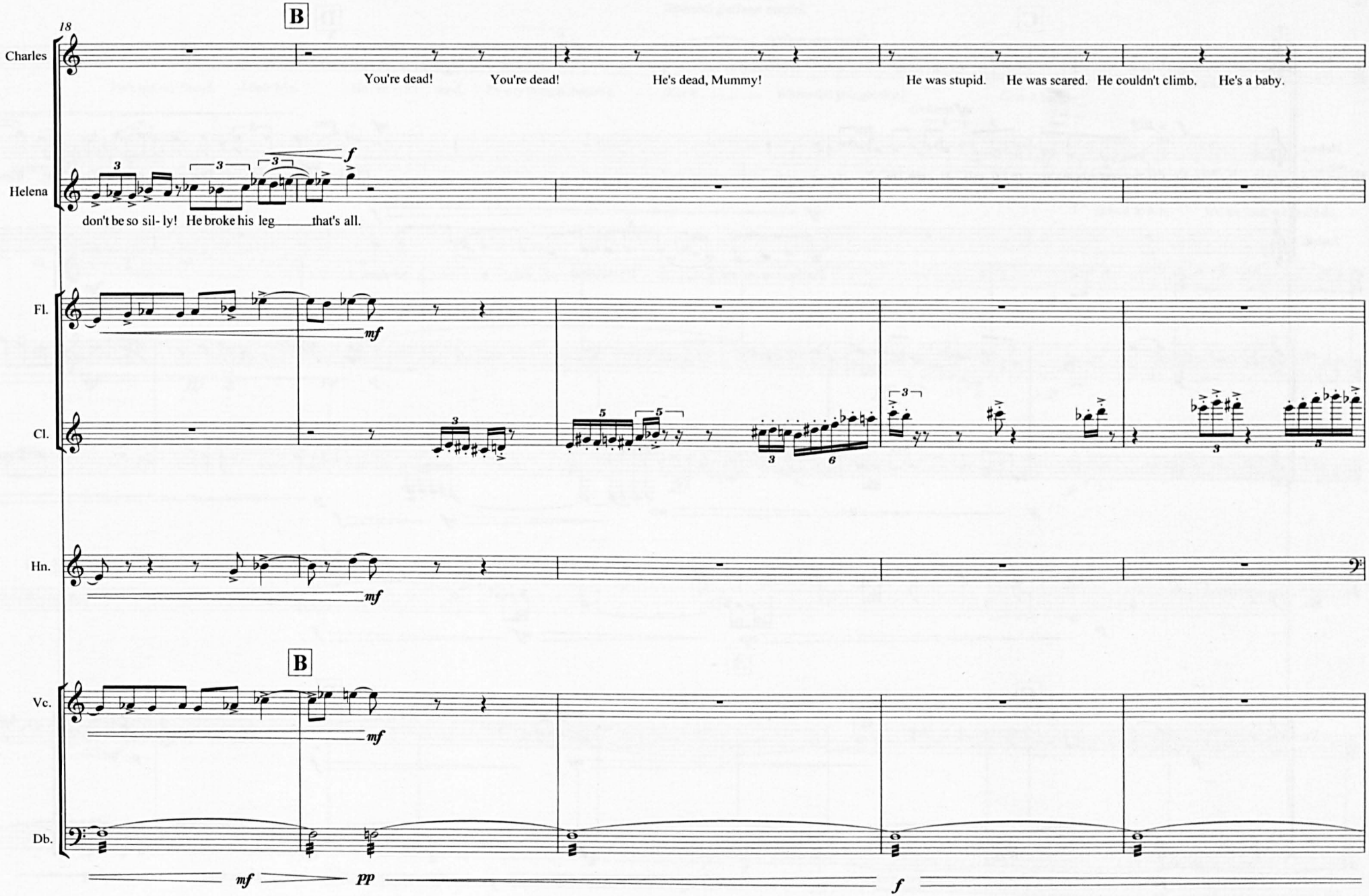
A

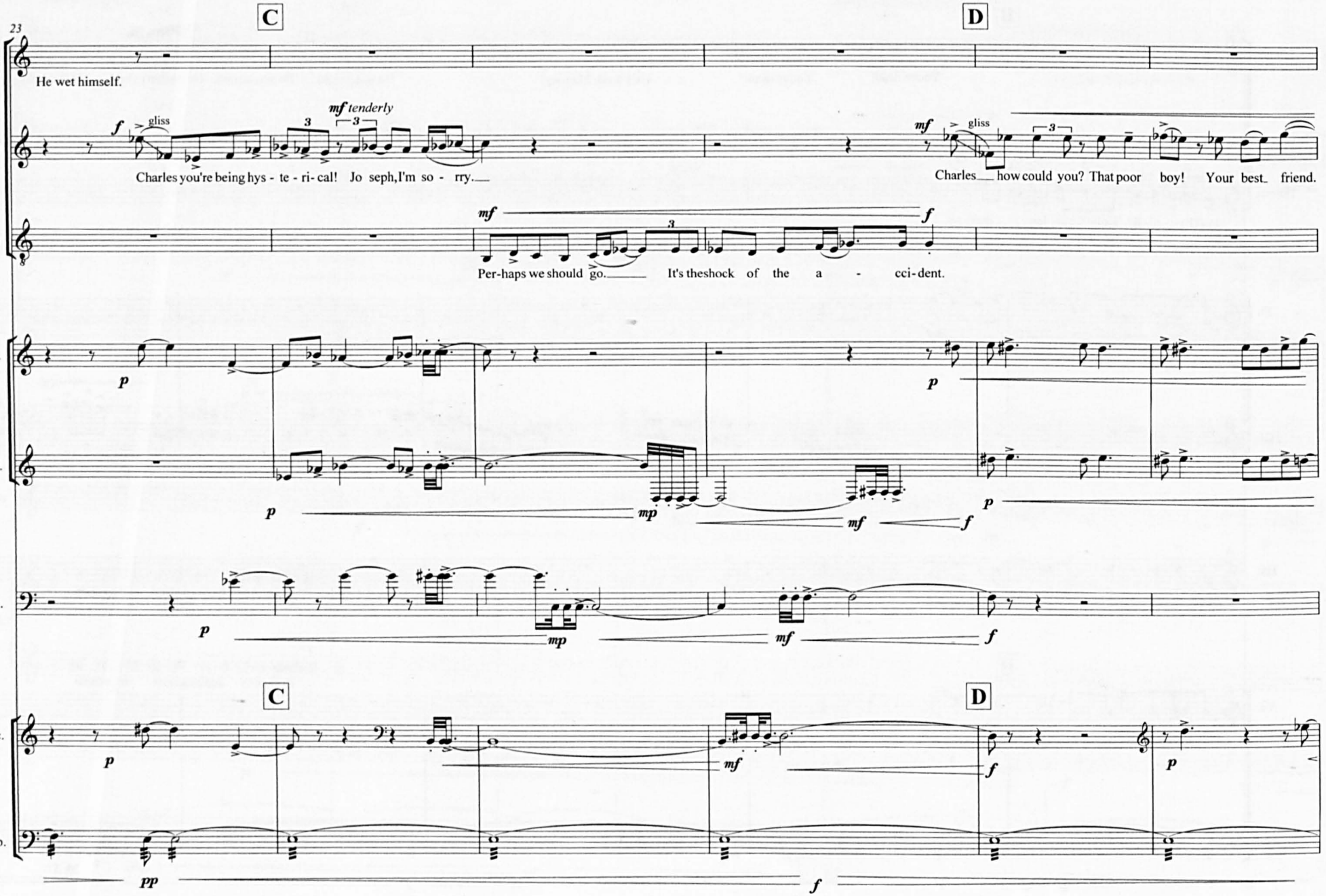
Vc.

p *mf* *p*

Db.

ff 7 *sfzp* *mf* *pp* *f* *pp*


18
B
Charles
You're dead! You're dead! He's dead, Mummy! He was stupid. He was scared. He couldn't climb. He's a baby.
Helena
don't be so sil- ly! He broke his leg that's all.
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
B
Vc.
Db.
mf
pp
f


C
D
23
Charles
He wet himself.
Helena
f gliss
mf tenderly
Charles you're being hys - te - ri- cal! Jo seph, I'm so - rry.
mf gliss
Charles how could you? That poor boy! Your best friend.
Joseph
mf
f
Per-haps we should go. It's theshock of the a - cci- dent.
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Vc.
Db.
p
mp
mf
f
pp

E

Edmund shows Charles that he is carrying the Spanish galleon model.

29

Charles

spoken *aggressivly*

He's not my friend. I hate him. He is - n't dead_ Ev-ery thing is thesame. Worse._____ Where did you get that? Give it back!

Helena

I gave it to him. It's the least we could do_

Fl.

Cl.

Hn.

Vib.

Ped.

E

Vc.

Db.

Charles goes over to wrest the galleon from Edmund's grasp.

Charles and Edmund fight over the galleon.

The boys keep fighting.

36

F

Accel.

Charles

You didn't even ask! Give it back! Give it back, I said! You've got to make him give it back. It's mine,

Helena

gliss

Charles, what are you do- ing?

Joseph

Stea-dy on, old chap. Charles, stea-dy on, Charles,

Fl.

Cl.

flz.

Hn.

S. D.

snare drum: (snare on)

F

Accel.

Vc.

Db.

Accel.

Joseph slaps Charles' face.
The galleon falls to the floor and breaks.

40

Joseph pulls Charles away.

G ♩ = c. 88

Charles runs out in tears.

G.P.

Charles

mine, *mine.* He *can't* have anything of mine!

Fuck! Fuck you!

Joseph

fff

stea - dy on, Charles, stea-dy on, Charles, stea - dy on!

Fl.

f *fff*

Cl.

f *fff*

Hn.

ff

Cym.

suspended sizzle cymbal:

fff

S. D.

f *f*

G ♩ = c. 88

G.P.

Vc.

ff

Db.

ff *sfzp* *fff*

Crossfade to a telephone ringing elsewhere in the house. Helena appears, answers it.

Lights fade up on Charles, unseen by her. He dries his tears and listens.

H

46 ♩ = c. 69 *sweetly and self conscious*

Helena: En- id, dar - ling. What a love-ly sur- prise! I'd been mean-ing to call you. Charles? There have been up- sets, frus-tra- tions, jea-lou- sies. That's

Fl.

Cl.

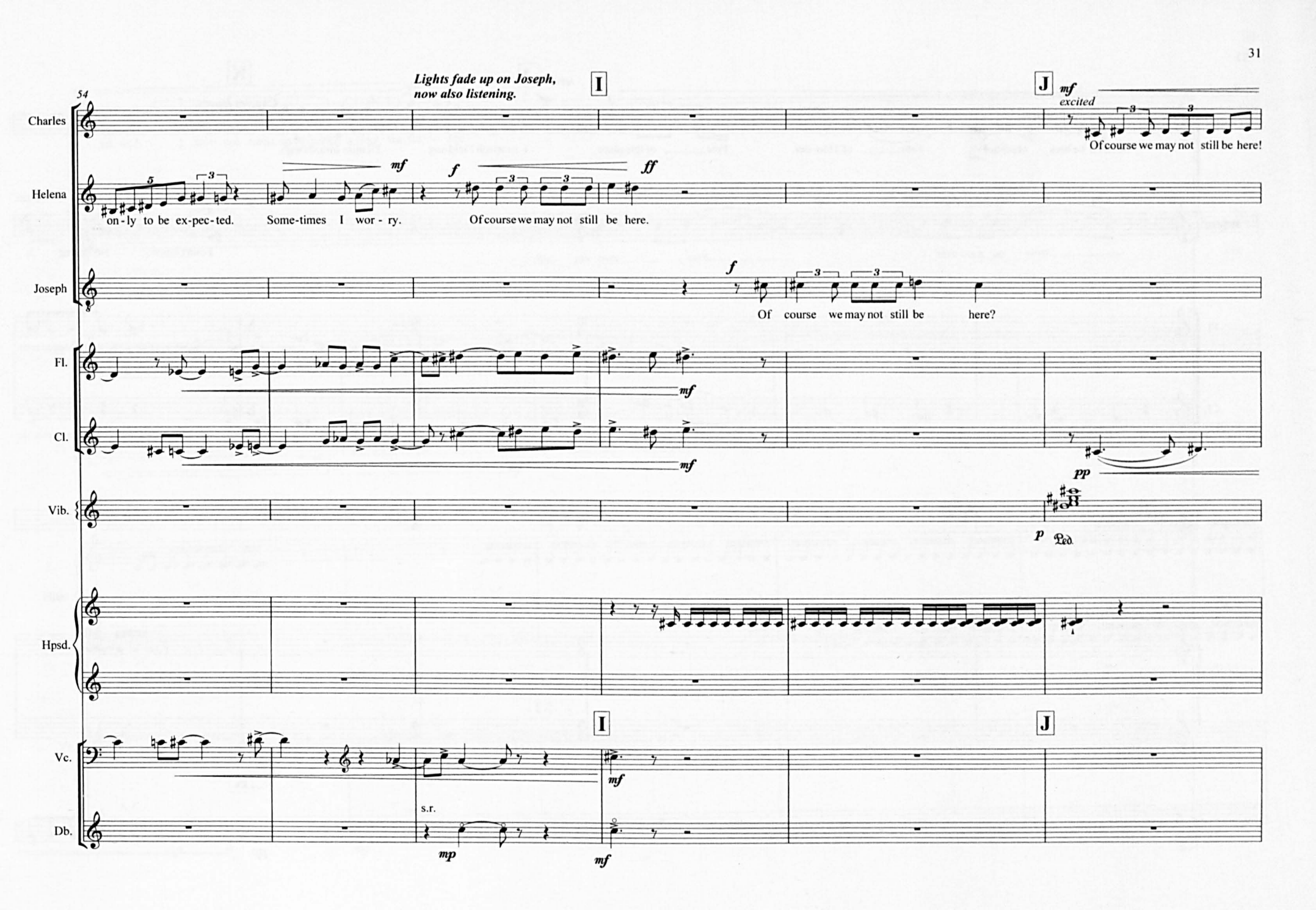
Vib.

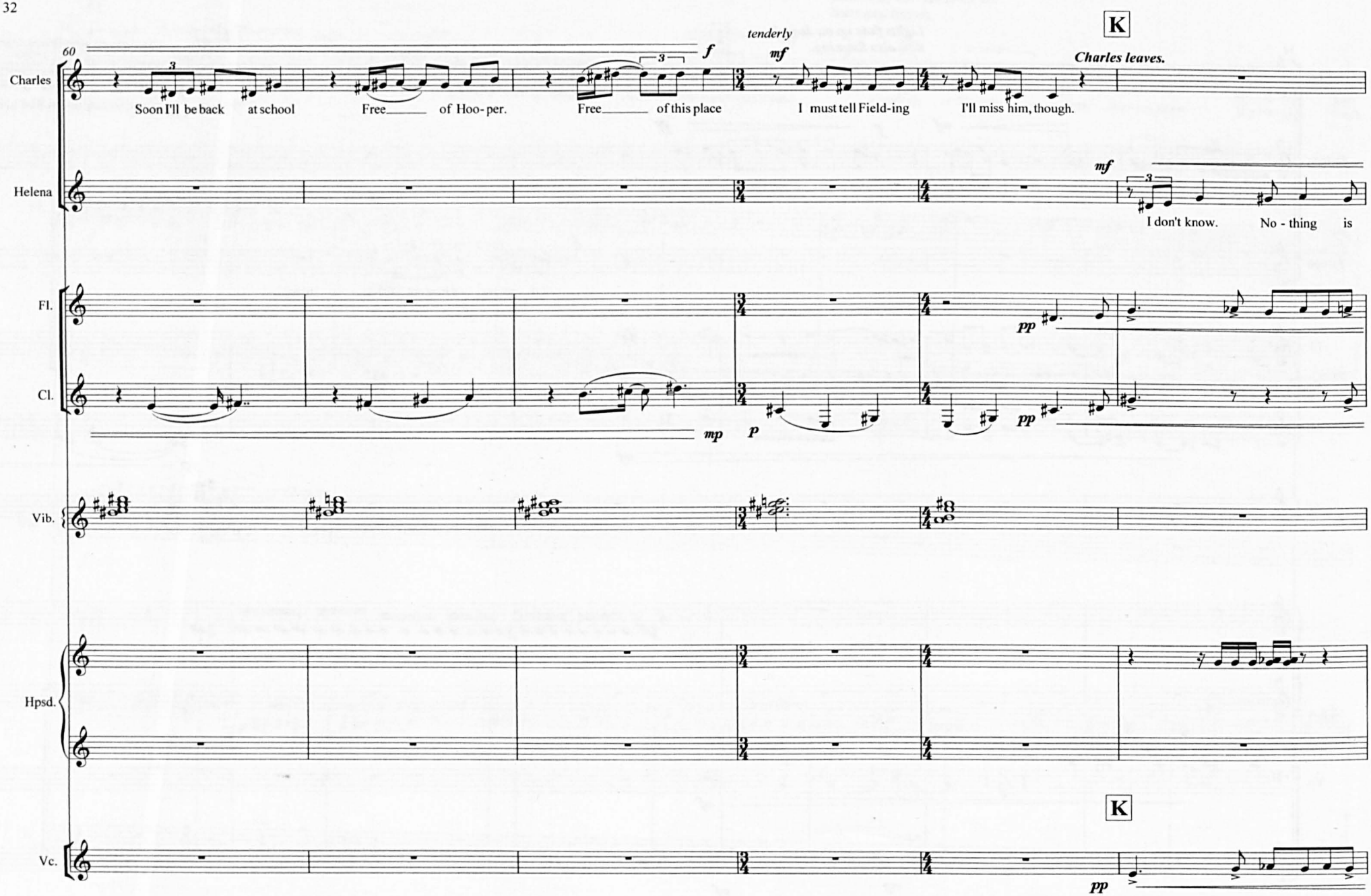
H

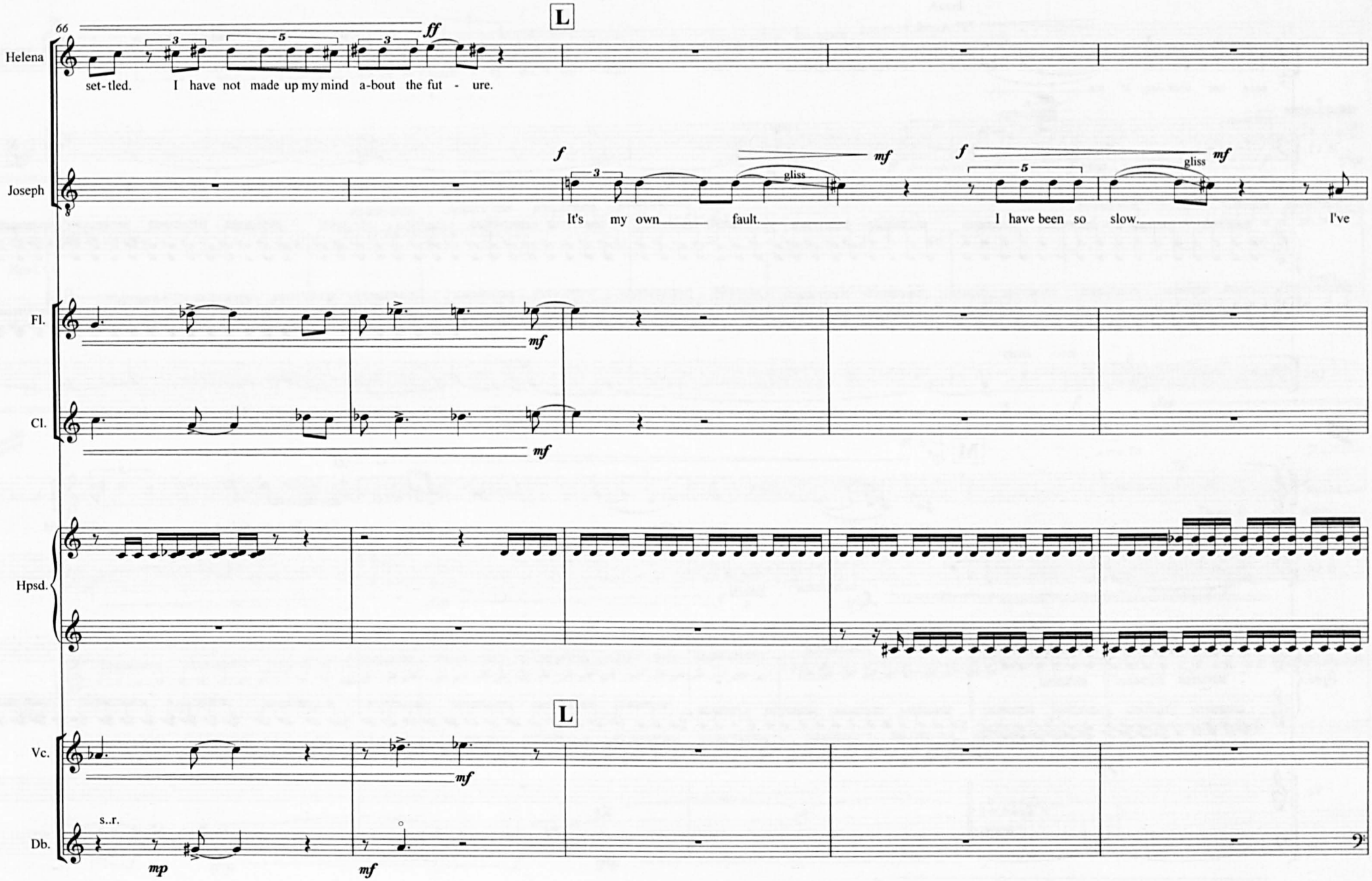
♩ = c. 69

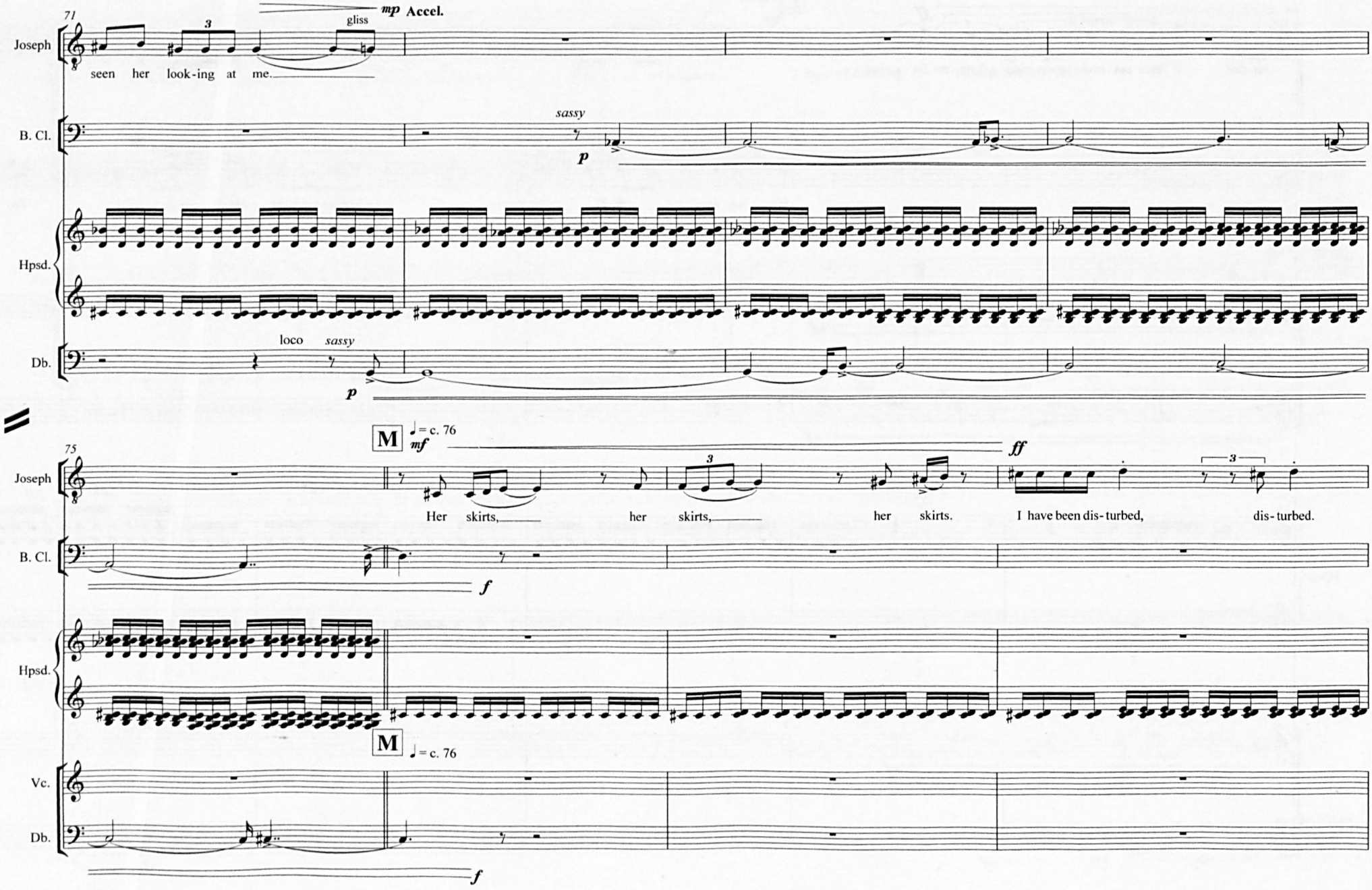
Vc.

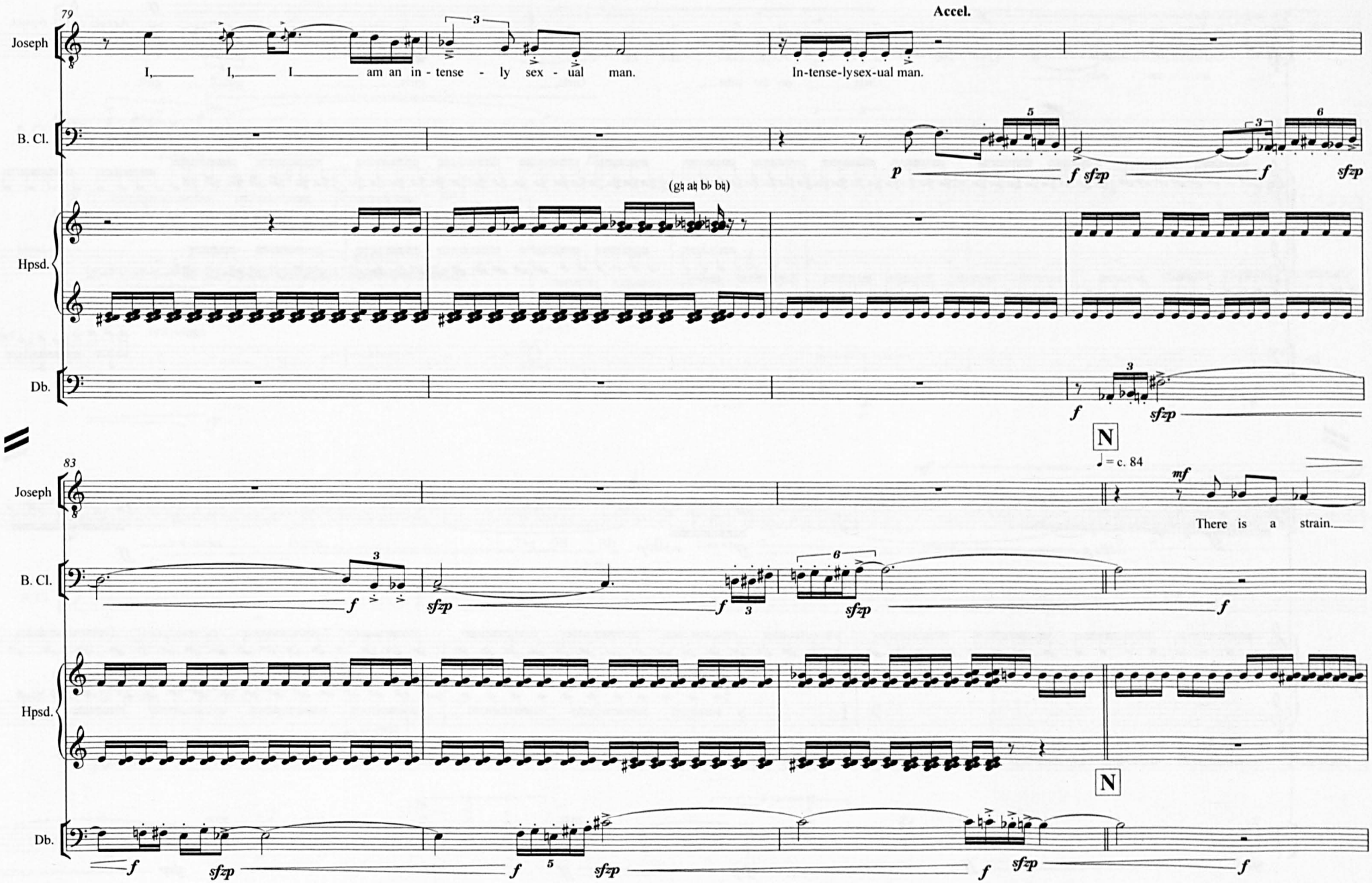
Db.

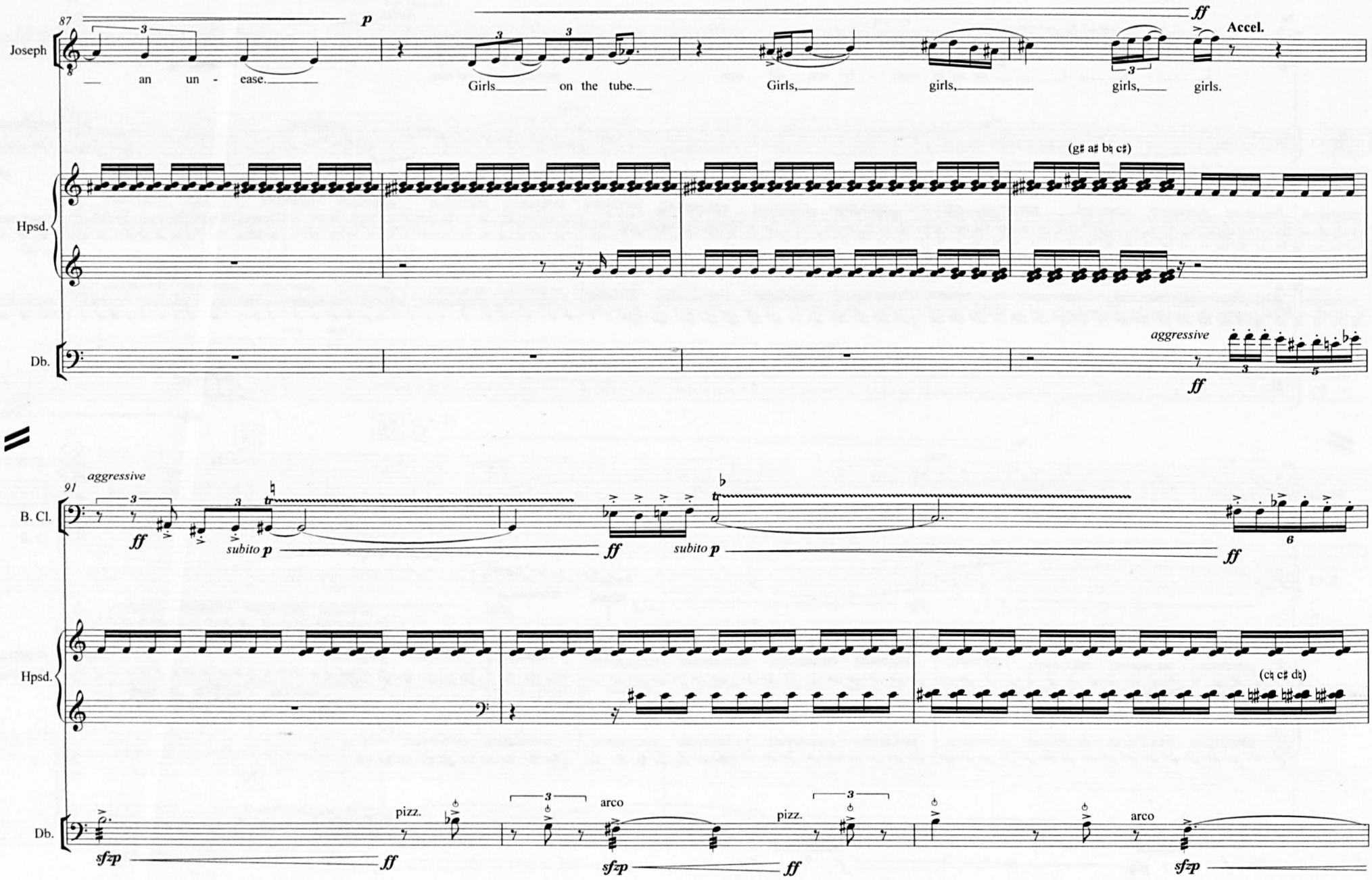

54
Lights fade up on Joseph, now also listening.
I
J
Charles
mf
excited
Of course we may not still be here!
Helena
mf
f
ff
on-ly to be ex-pec-ted.
Some-times I wor-ry.
Of course we may not still be here.
Joseph
f
Of course we may not still be here?
Fl.
mf
Cl.
mf
pp
Vib.
p
Ped.
Hpsd.
I
J
Vc.
mf
s.r.
Db.
mp
mf

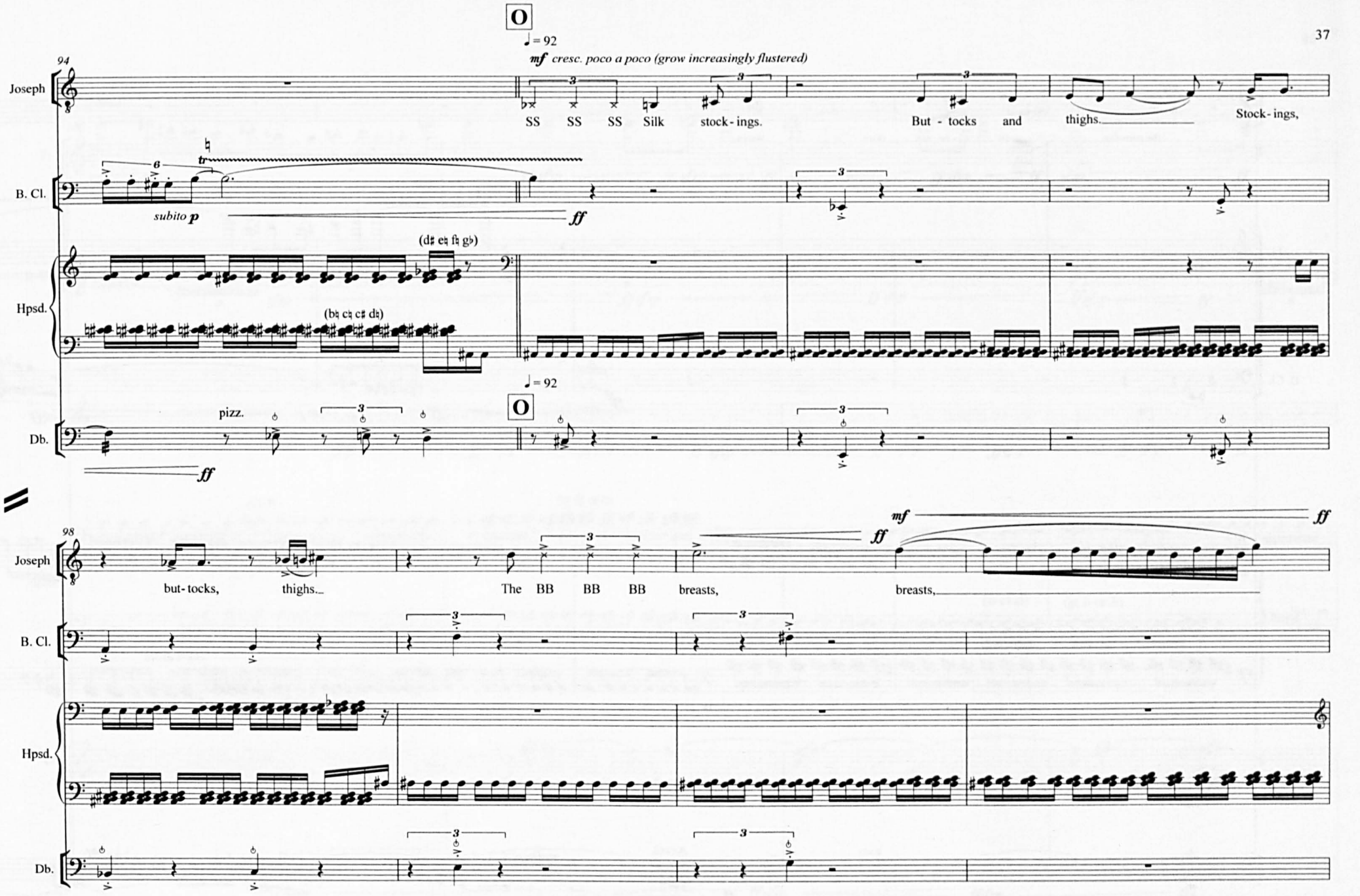

60
Charles
Soon I'll be back at school
Free of Hoo-per.
Free of this place
I must tell Field-ing
I'll miss him, though.
Charles leaves.
tenderly
f
mf
K
Helena
I don't know. No - thing is
Fl.
Cl.
pp
mp
p
Vib.
Hpsd.
Vc.

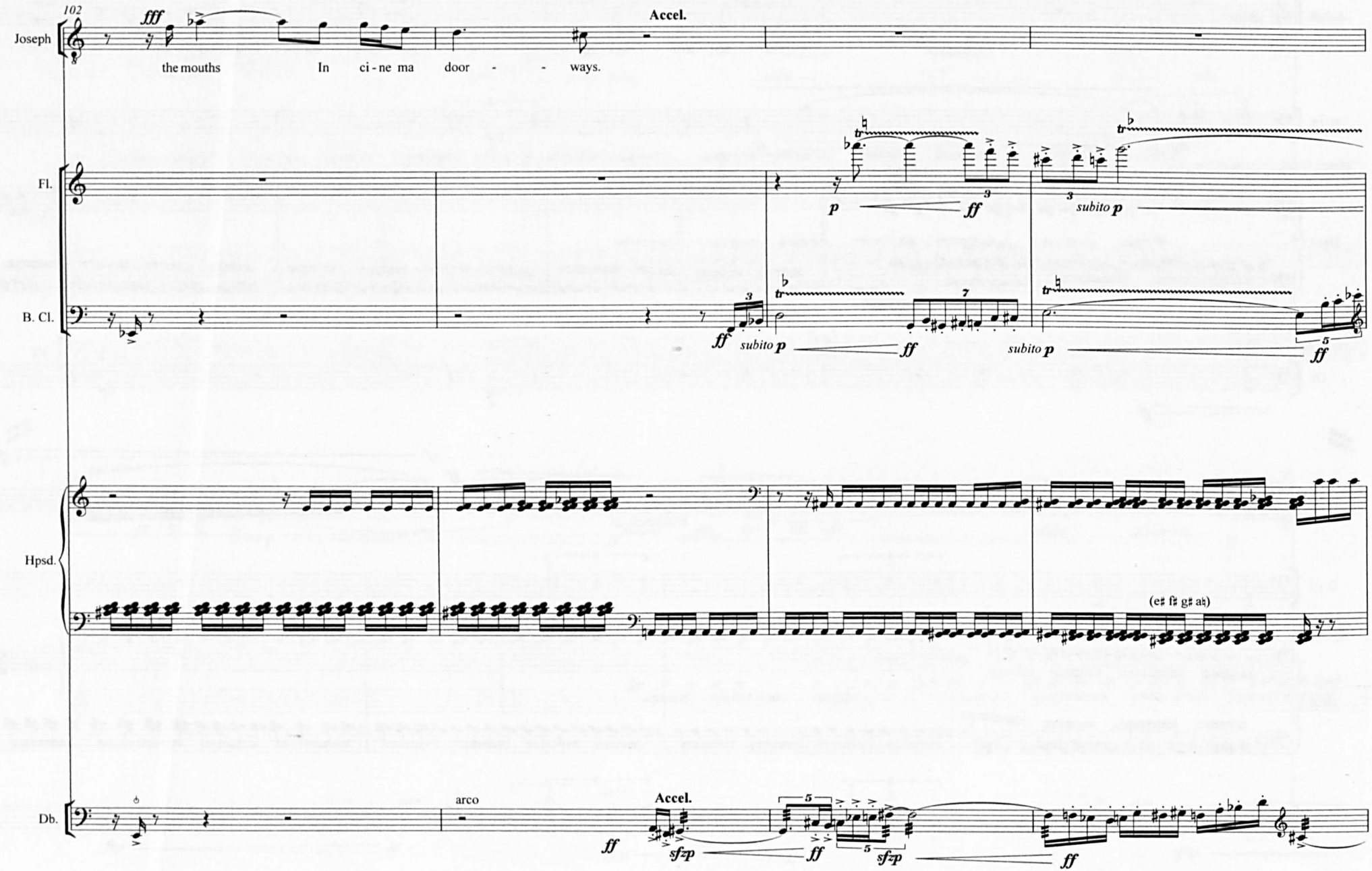

66
L
Helena
ff
set- tled. I have not made up my mind a-bout the fut - ure.
Joseph
f
mf
gliss
It's my own fault.
f
mf
gliss
I have been so slow. I've
Fl.
mf
Cl.
mf
Hpsd.
L
Vc.
mf
s..r.
Db.
mp
mf

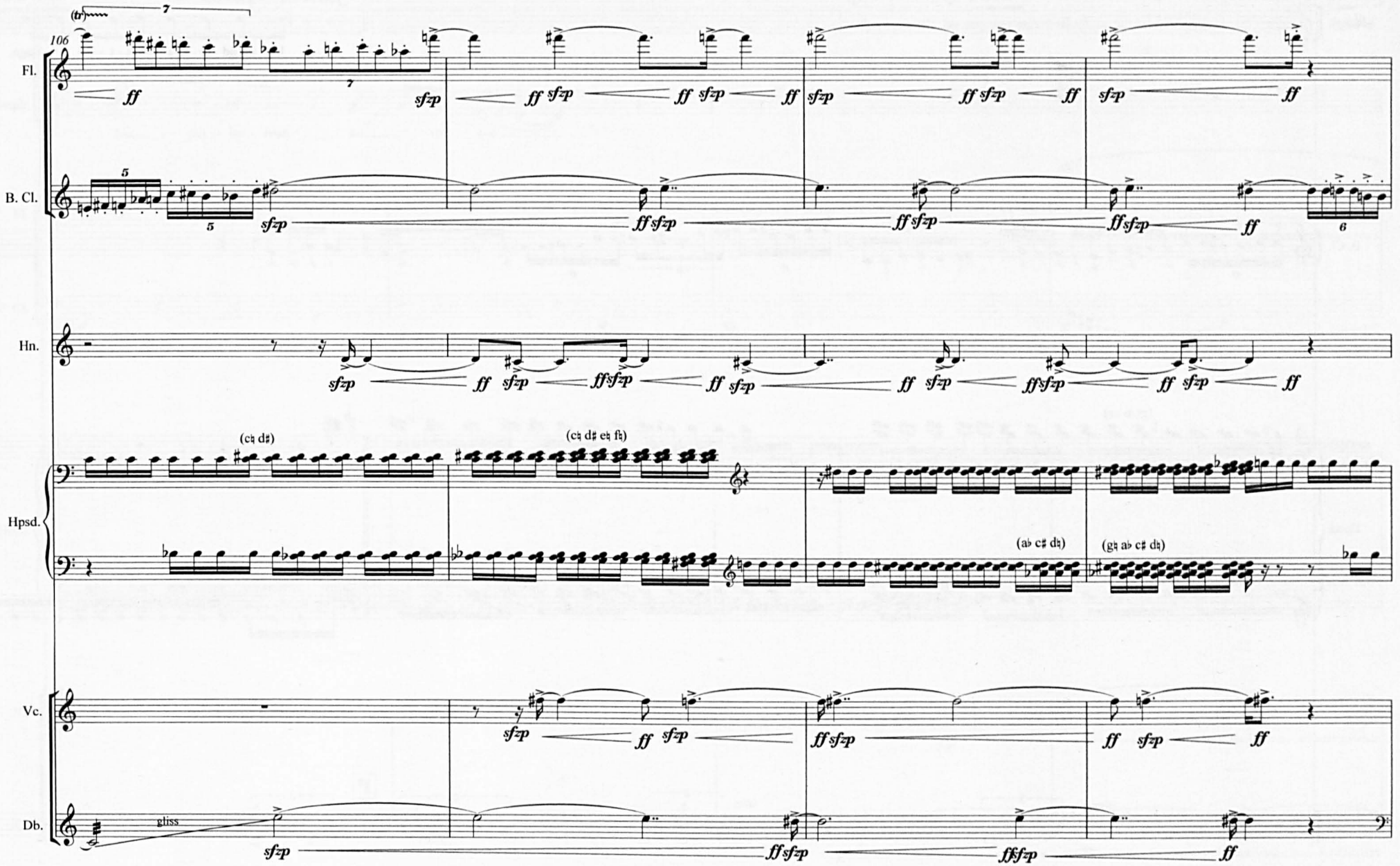

71
Joseph
mp Accel.
gliss
seen her look-ing at me.
B. Cl.
sassy
p
Hpsd.
Db.
loco
sassy
p
75
M
♩= c. 76
mf
ff
Her skirts, her skirts, her skirts. I have been dis-turbed, dis-turbed.
f
Vc.
M
♩= c. 76
f

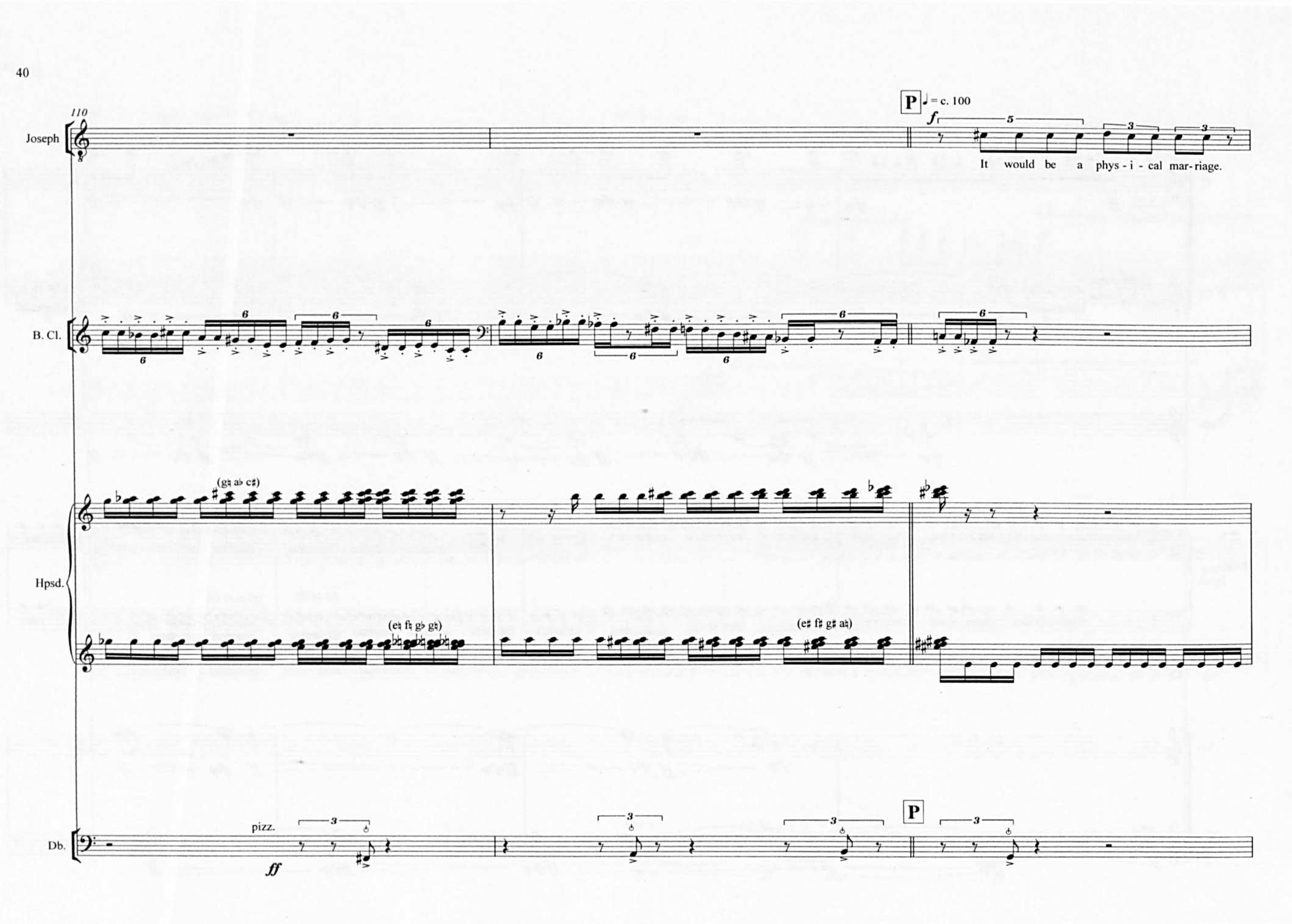

79
Accel.
Joseph
I, I, I am an in - tense - ly sex - ual man.
In-tense-ly sex-ual man.
B. Cl.
Hpsd.
(g♮ a♮ b♭ b♮)
Db.
N
83
♩ = c. 84
Joseph
There is a strain.
B. Cl.
Hpsd.
N
Db.


87
Joseph
p
ff
Accel.
an un - ease.
Girls on the tube.
Girls, girls, girls, girls.
Hpsd.
(g♯ a♯ b♮ c♯)
Db.
aggressive
ff
91
B. Cl.
aggressive
ff
subito p
ff
subito p
ff
Hpsd.
(c♮ c♯ d♮)
Db.
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
sfzp
ff
sfzp
ff
sfzp

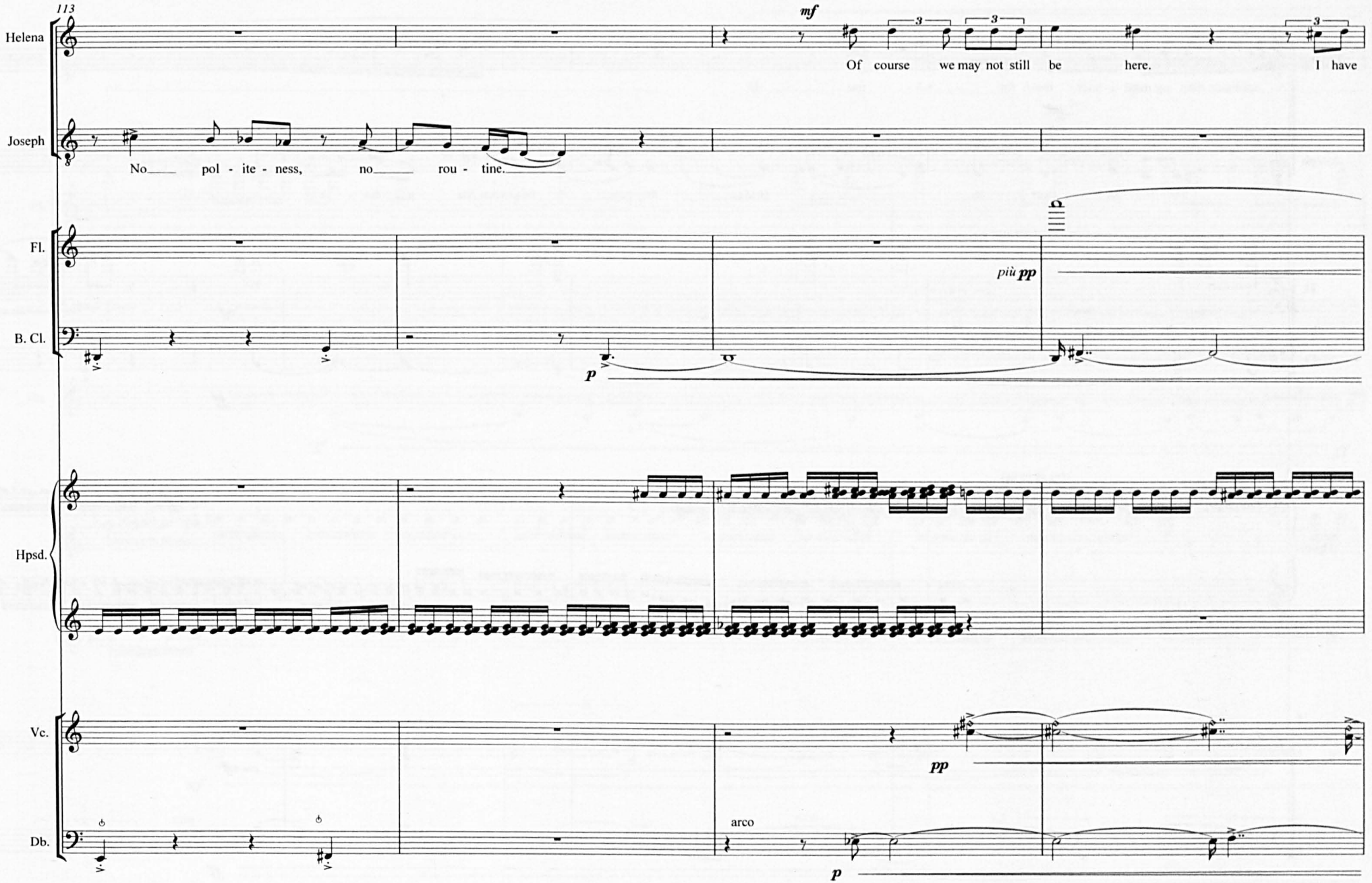

O
♩ = 92
mf cresc. poco a poco (grow increasingly flustered)
94
Joseph
SS SS SS Silk stock - ings.
But - tocks and thighs.
Stock - ings,
B. Cl.
subito p
ff
Hpsd.
(d♯ e♮ f♮ g♭)
(b♮ c♮ c♯ d♮)
Db.
pizz.
ff
O
♩ = 92
98
Joseph
but - tocks, thighs.
The BB BB BB breasts,
breasts,
mf
ff
B. Cl.
Hpsd.
Db.

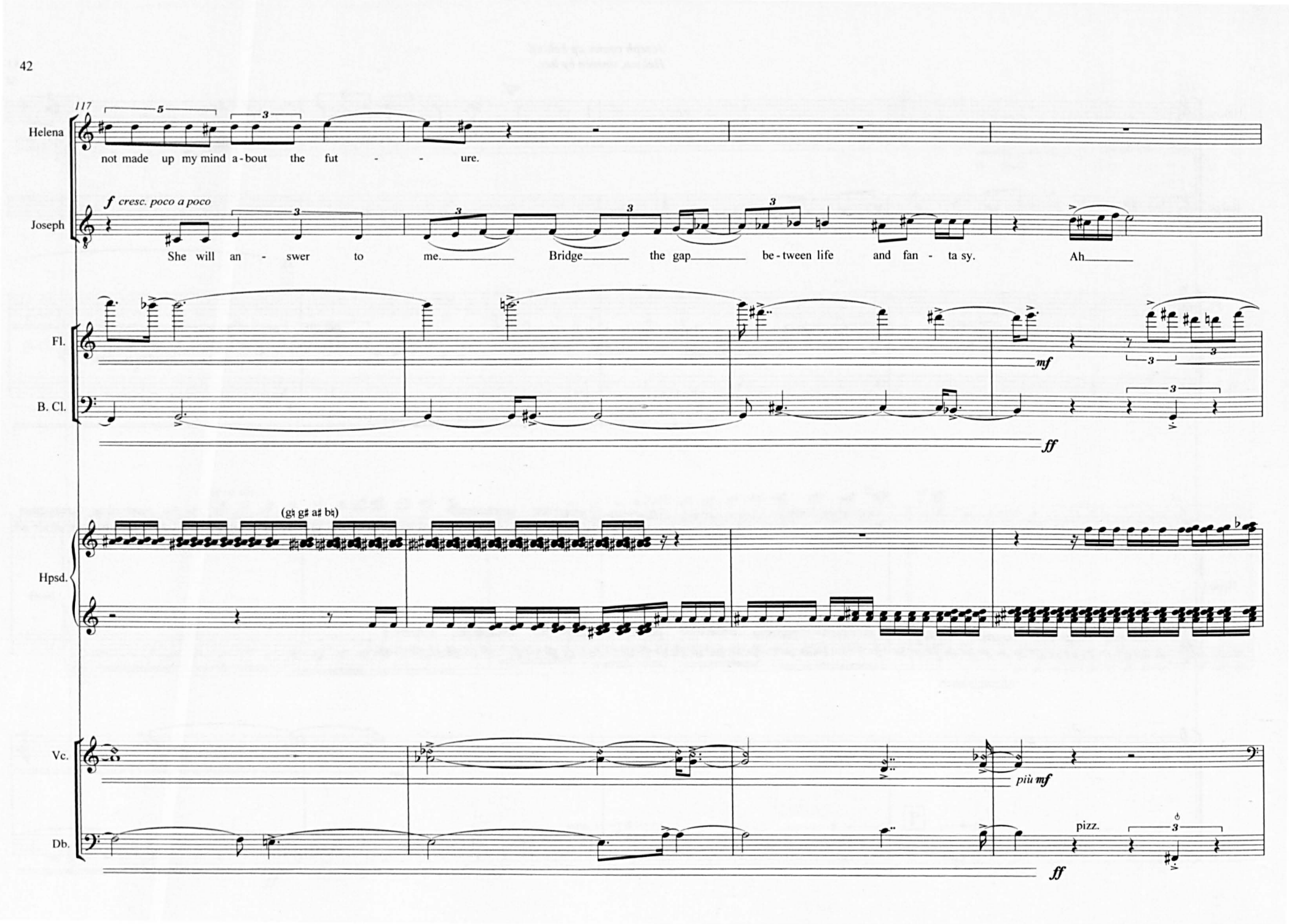

102
Joseph
fff
Accel.
the mouths In ci - ne ma door - - ways.
Fl.
p
ff
subito p
B. Cl.
ff
subito p
ff
subito p
ff
Hpsd.
(e♯ f♯ g♯ a♮)
Db.
arco
Accel.
ff
sfzp
ff
sfzp
ff

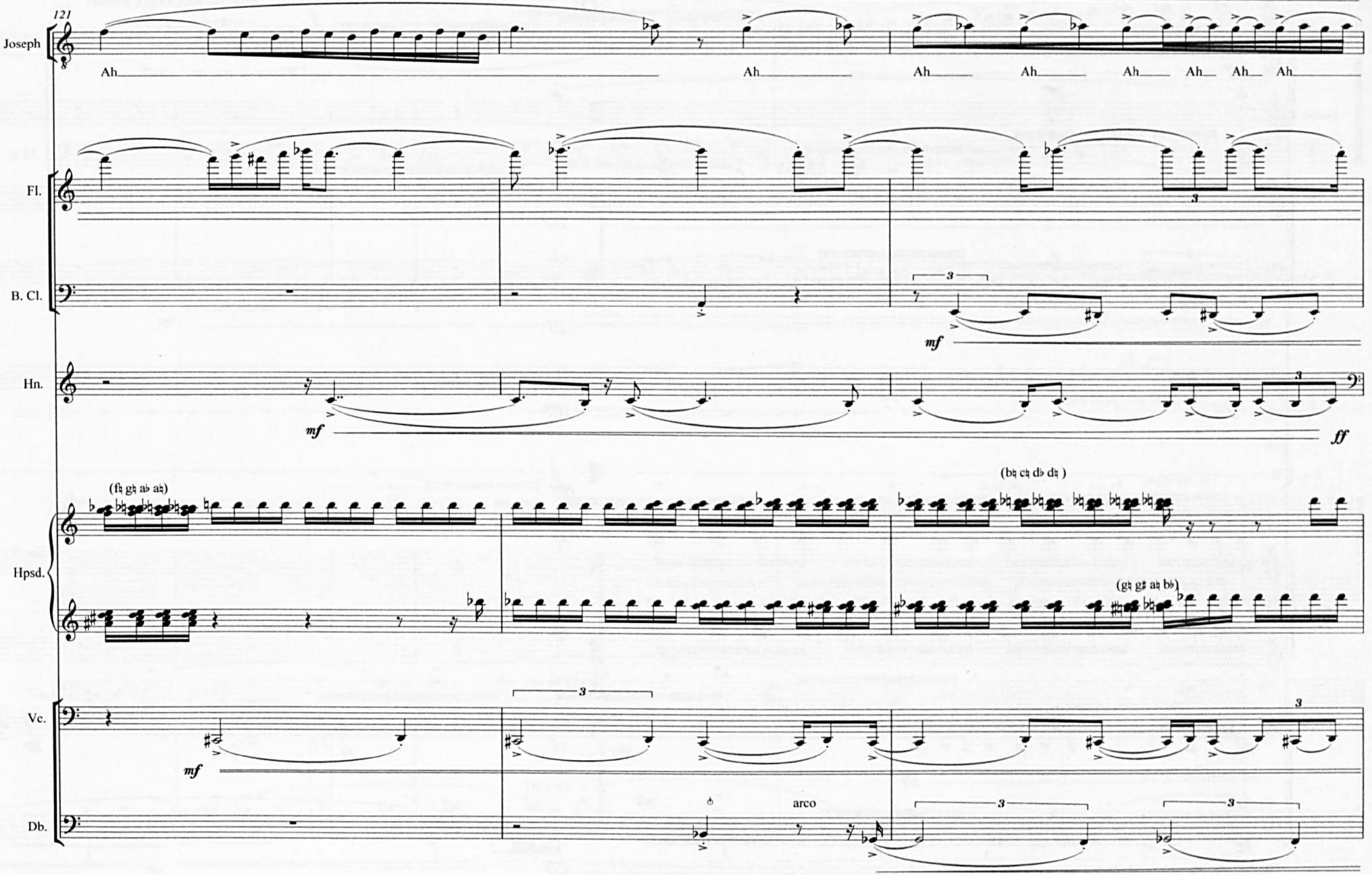

106
Fl.
B. Cl.
Hn.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.
(tr)
7
5
6
(c♮ d♯)
(c♮ d♯ e♮ f♮)
(a♭ c♯ d♮)
(g♮ a♭ c♯ d♮)
gliss
ff
sfzp


110
Joseph
P
♩ = c. 100
f
It would be a phys - i - cal mar-riage.
B. Cl.
Hpsd.
(g♮ a♭ c♯)
(e♮ f♮ g♭ g♮)
(e♯ f♯ g♯ a♮)
Db.
pizz.
ff
P

Joseph comes up behind
Helena, unseen by her.




117
Helena
not made up my mind a-bout the fut - - ure.
Joseph
f cresc. poco a poco
She will an - swer to me. Bridge the gap be-tween life and fan - ta sy. Ah
Fl.
B. Cl.
mf
ff
Hpsd.
(g♮ g♯ a♯ b♮)
Vc.
Db.
più mf
pizz.
ff


121
Joseph
Ah
Ah
Ah
Ah
Ah
Ah
Ah
Ah
Fl.
B. Cl.
mf
Hn.
mf
ff
(f♮ g♮ a♭ a♮)
(b♮ c♮ d♭ d♮)
Hpsd.
(g♮ g♯ a♮ b♭)
Vc.
mf
Db.
arco

He puts a hand on her shoulder, she turns to him.

124

Q ♩ = c. 69

Helena — ffff — f — What took you so long?

Joseph

Fl. — ffff

B. Cl. — ffff

Hn. — fff — gliss. — ffff

T.-t. — ffff — l.v.

Hpsd. — (d♮ e♭ f♭) — (d♮ e♭ f♭ f♮)

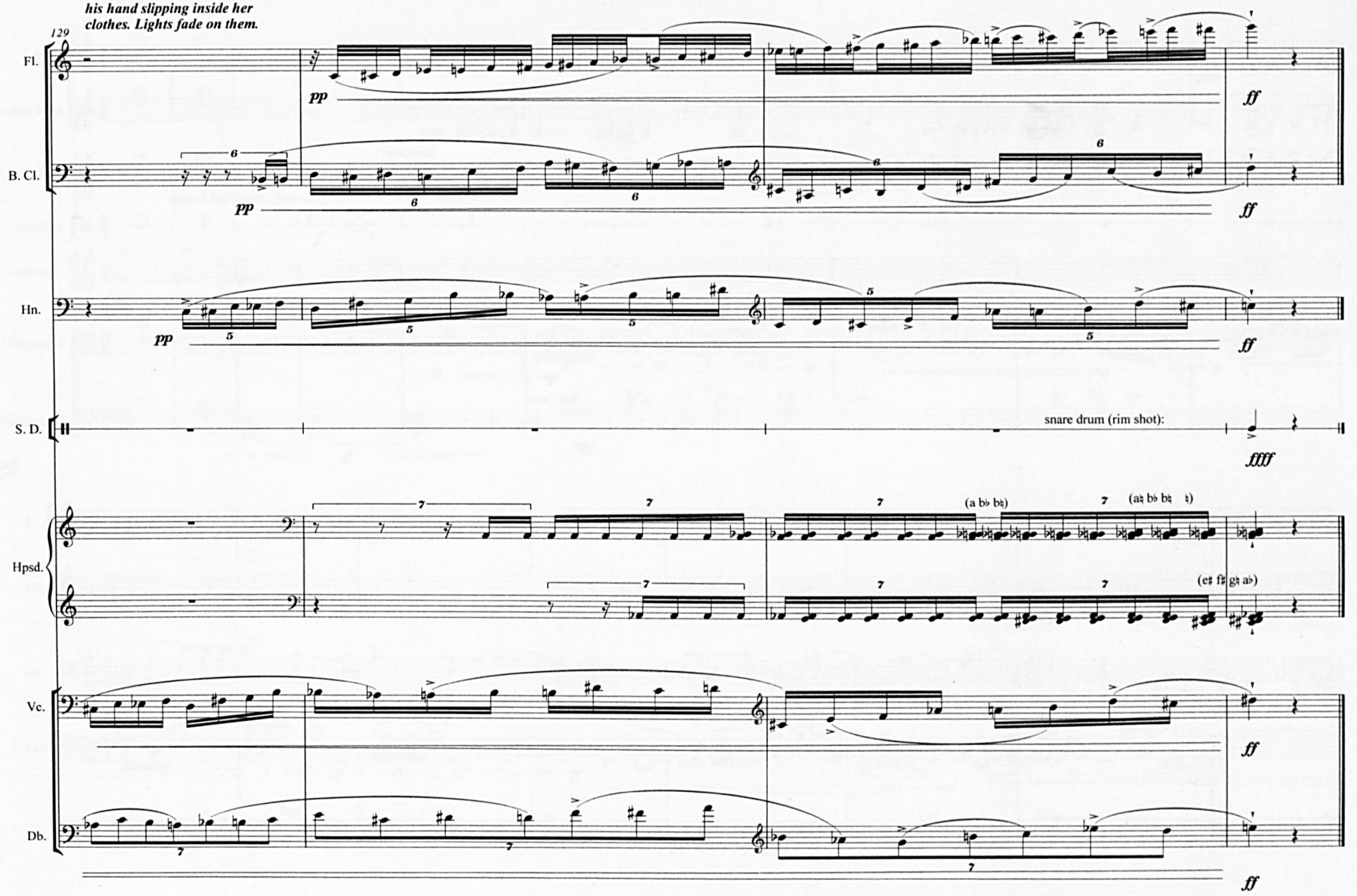
pizz. Q ♩ = c. 69

Vc. — fff — ffff — ff — gliss — gliss — arco — pp

Db. — arco — ffff — ♩ = c. 69 — pp

Helena hangs up the phone. Joseph leans in, kisses her, his hand slipping inside her clothes. Lights fade on them.

129



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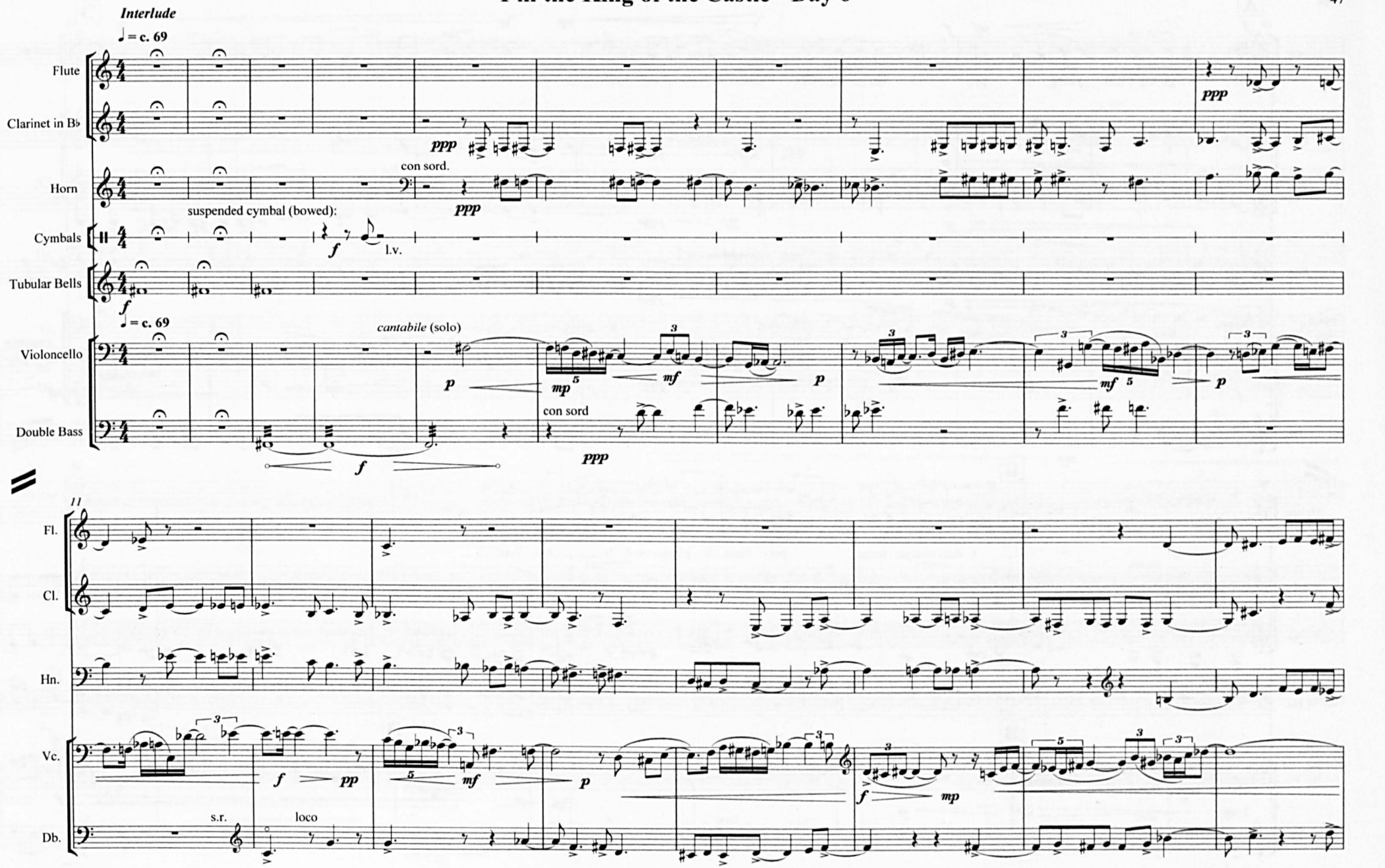
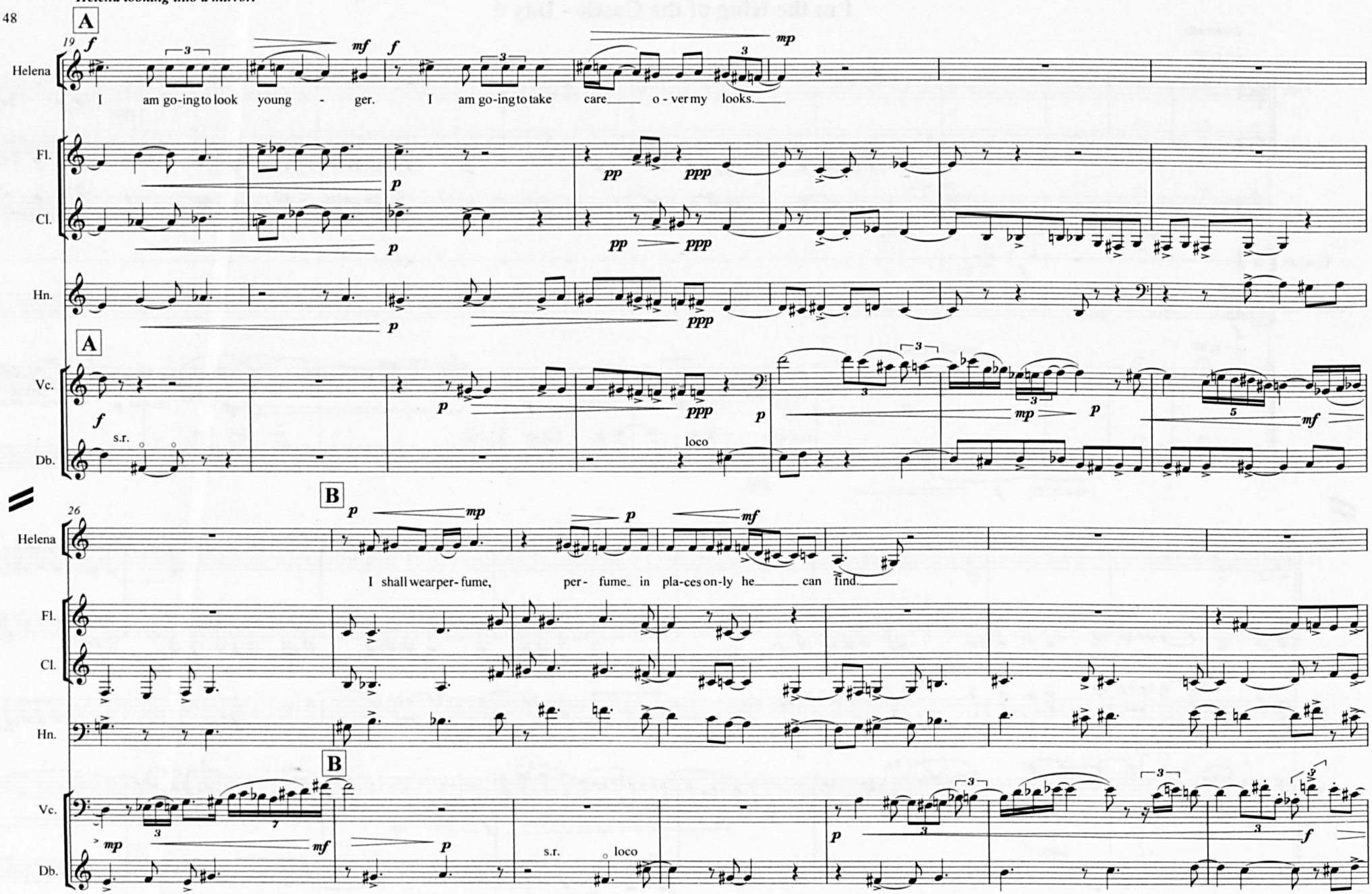
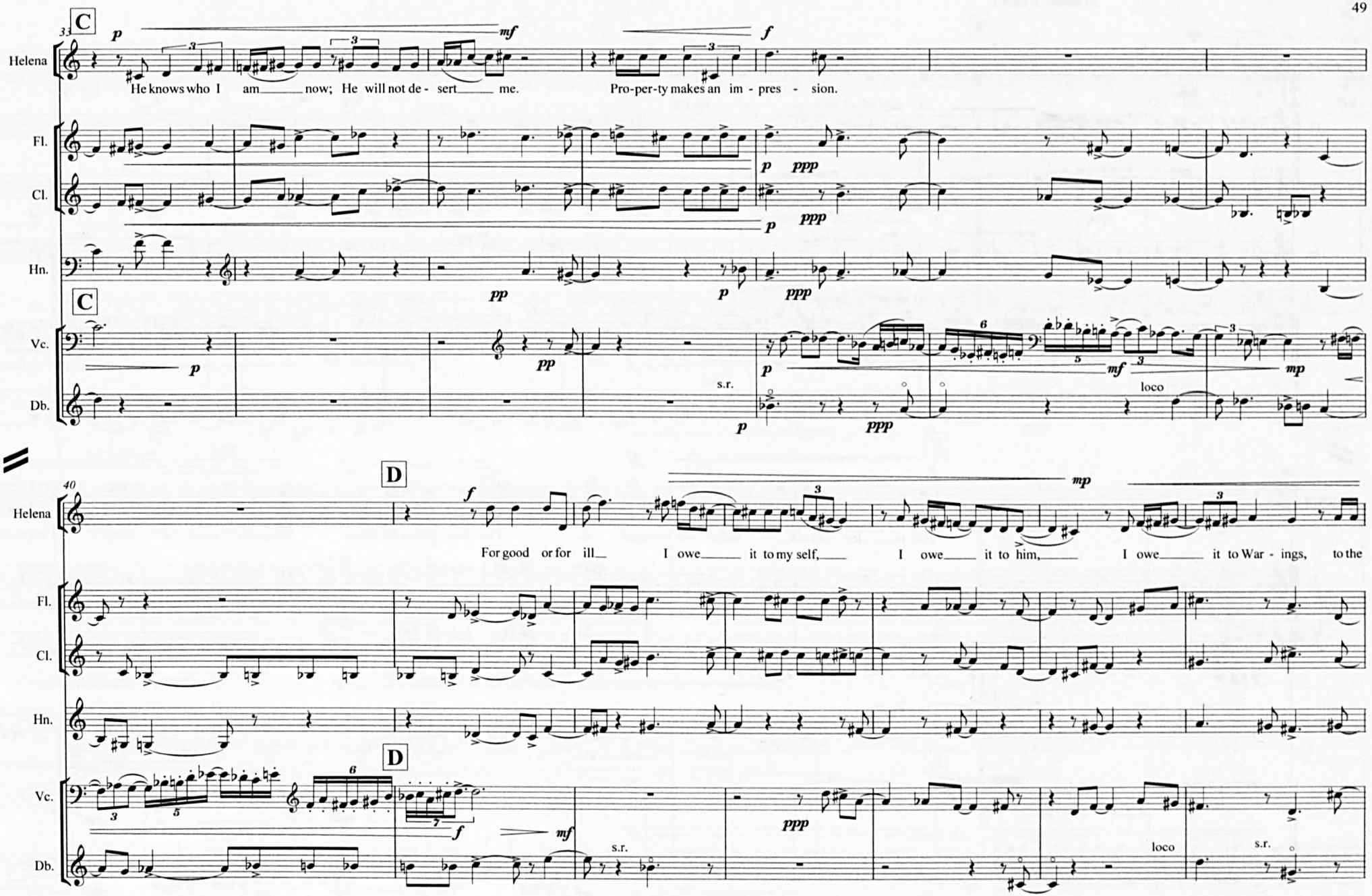
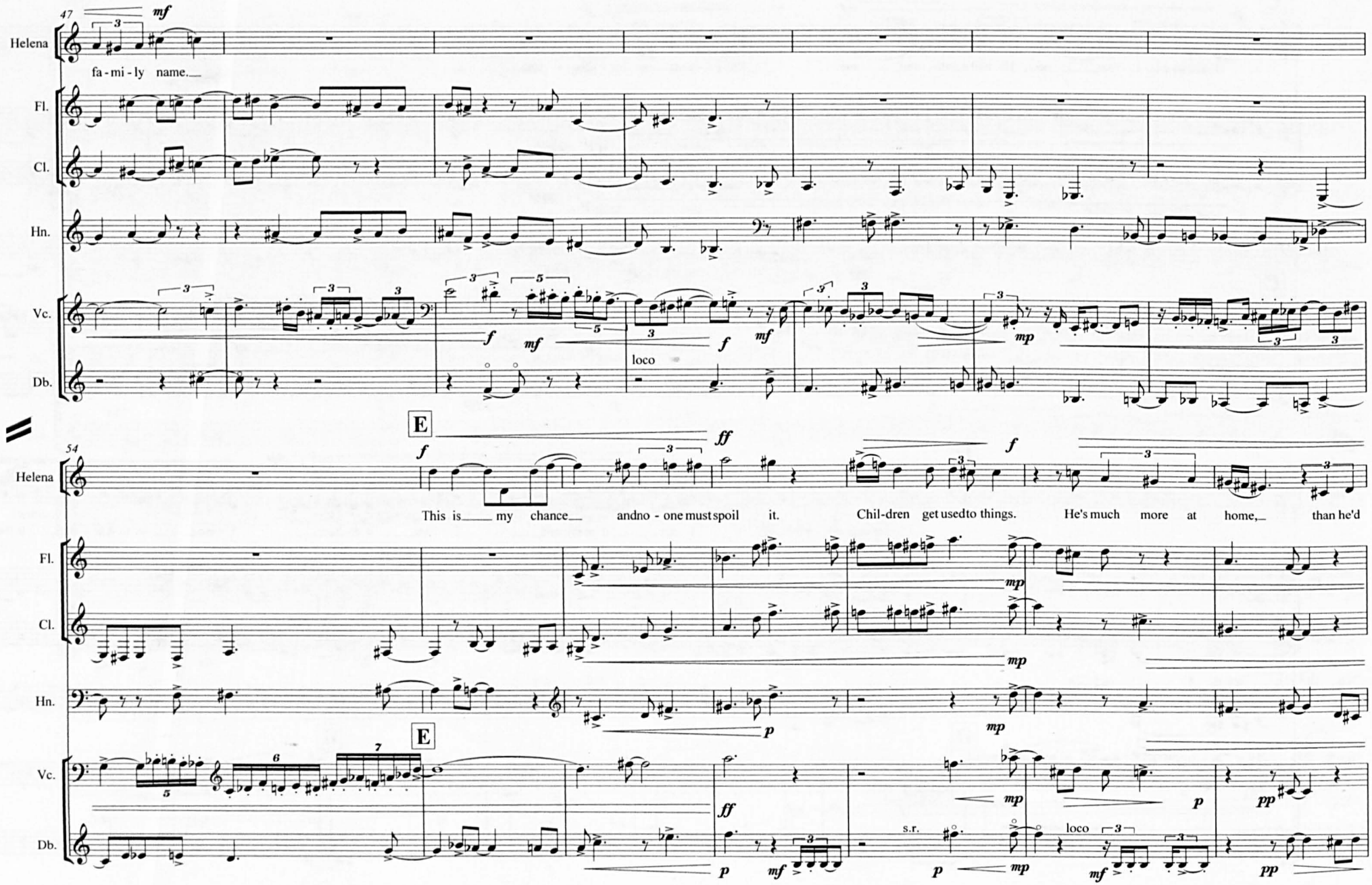
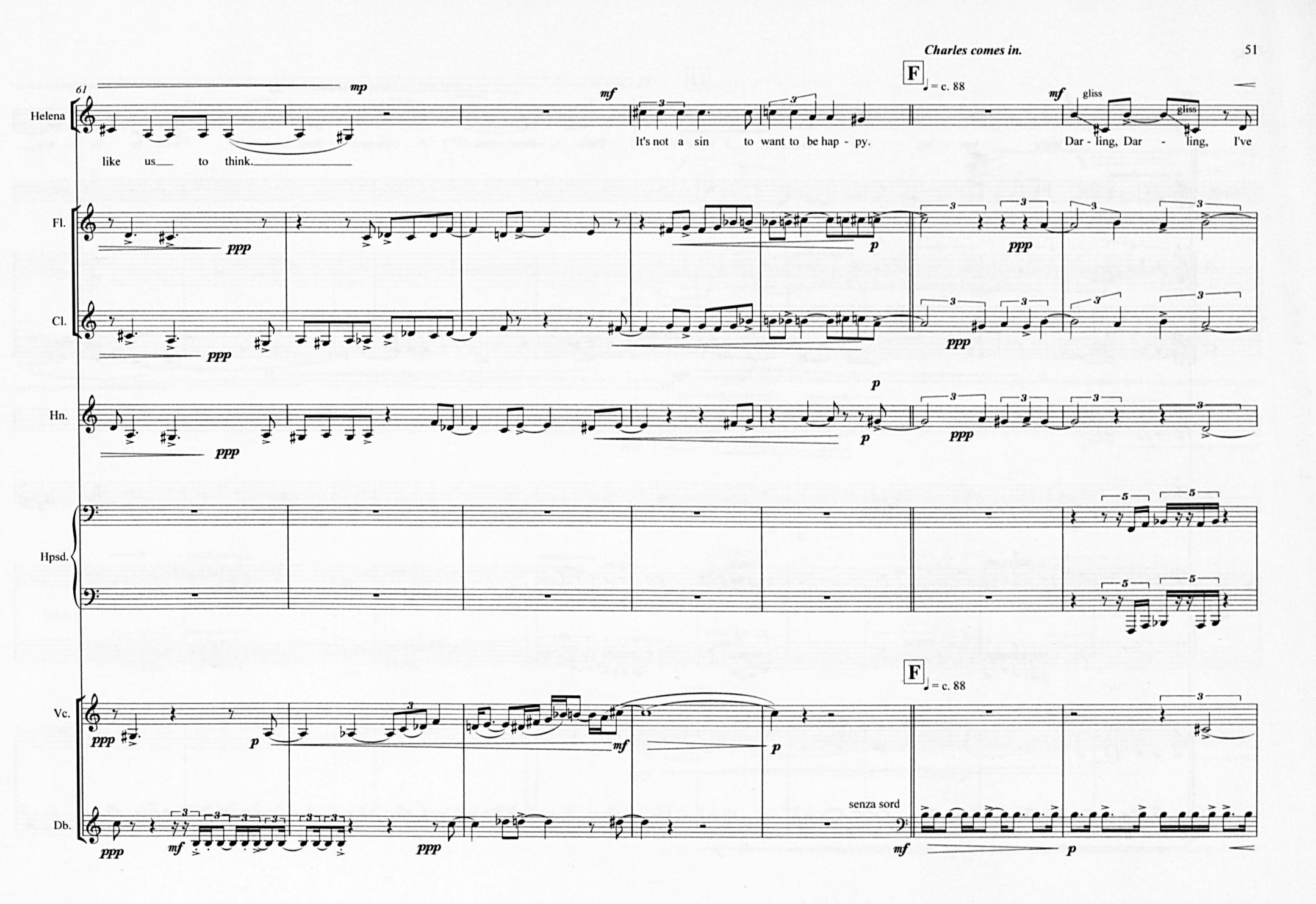

Interlude
♩= c. 69
Flute
Clarinet in B♭
Horn
con sord.
suspended cymbal (bowed):
Cymbals
l.v.
Tubular Bells
♩= c. 69
cantabile (solo)
Violoncello
con sord
Double Bass
11
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Vc.
s.r.
loco
Db.

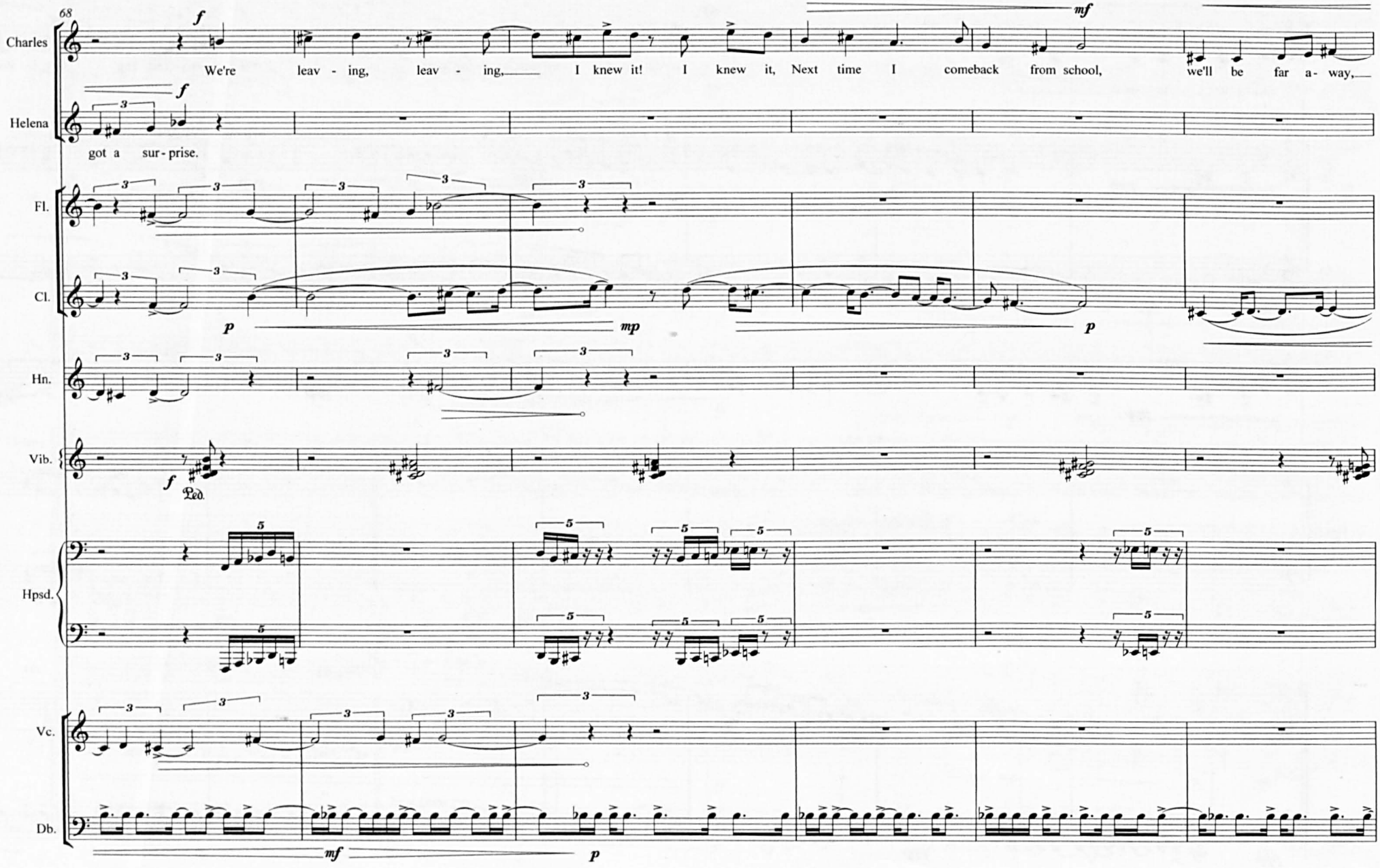
Warings
Helena looking into a mirror.

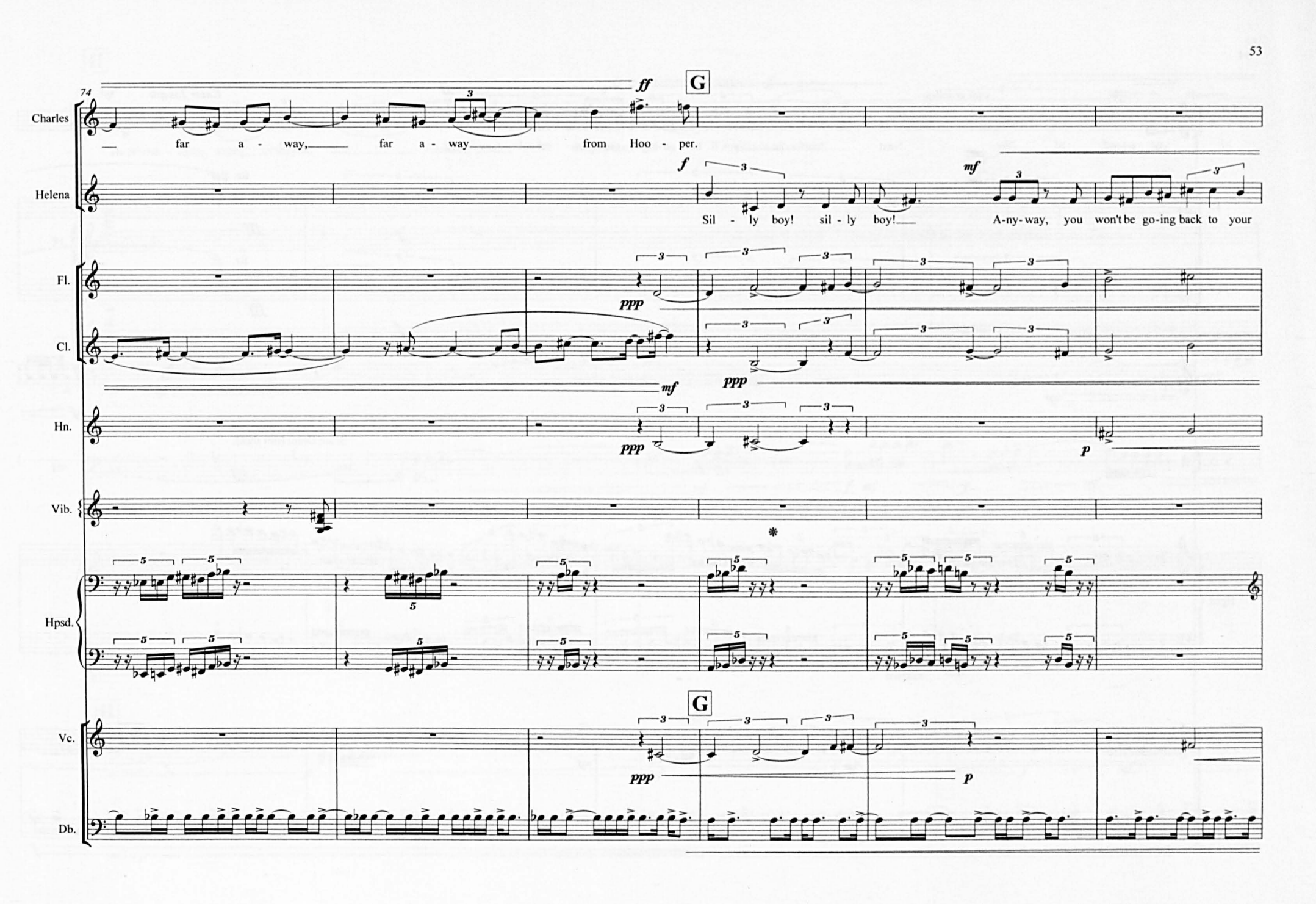


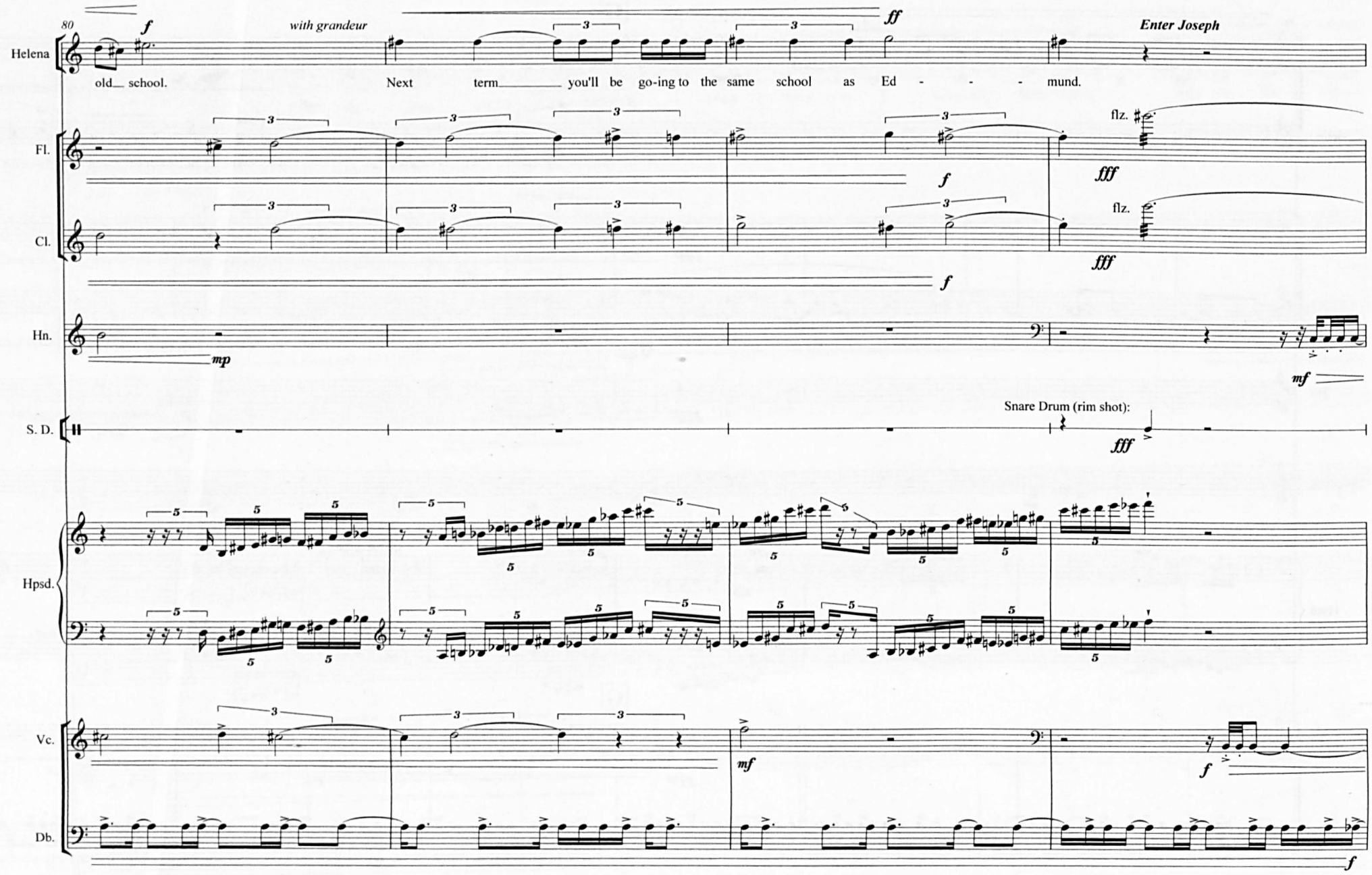

C
33
Helena
He knows who I am now; He will not de - sert me.
Pro-per-ty makes an im - pres - sion.
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Vc.
Db.
s.r.
loco
D
40
For good or for ill I owe it to my self, I owe it to him, I owe it to War - ings, to the

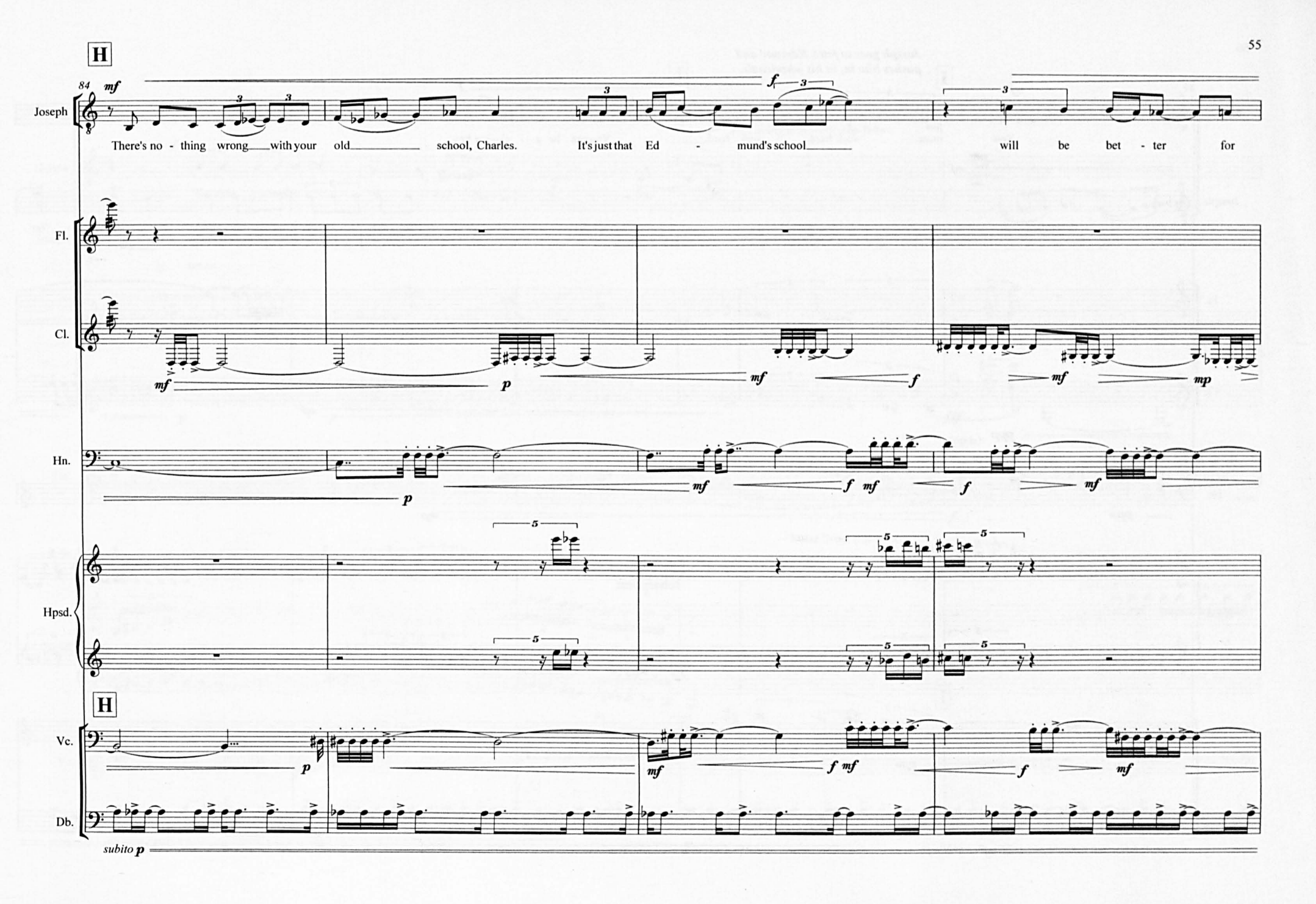

47
Helena
fa - mi - ly name.
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Vc.
Db.
loco
E
54
Helena
This is my chance and no - one must spoil it. Chil-dren get used to things. He's much more at home, than he'd
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
E
Vc.
Db.
s.r.
loco

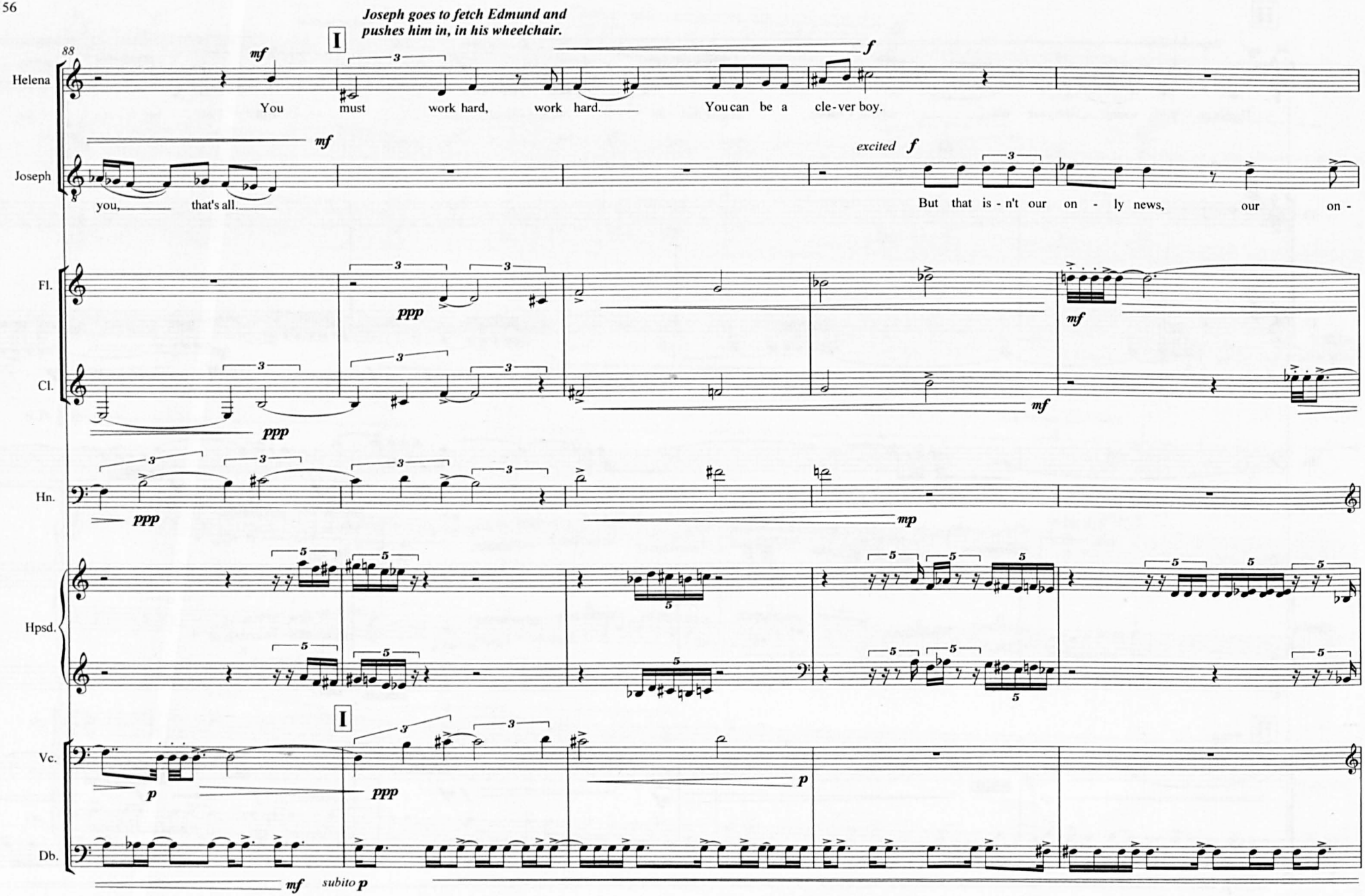

61
Helena
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.
mp
mf
F
♩= c. 88
like us to think.
It's not a sin to want to be hap - py.
Dar - ling, Dar - ling, I've
gliss
ppp
p
senza sord

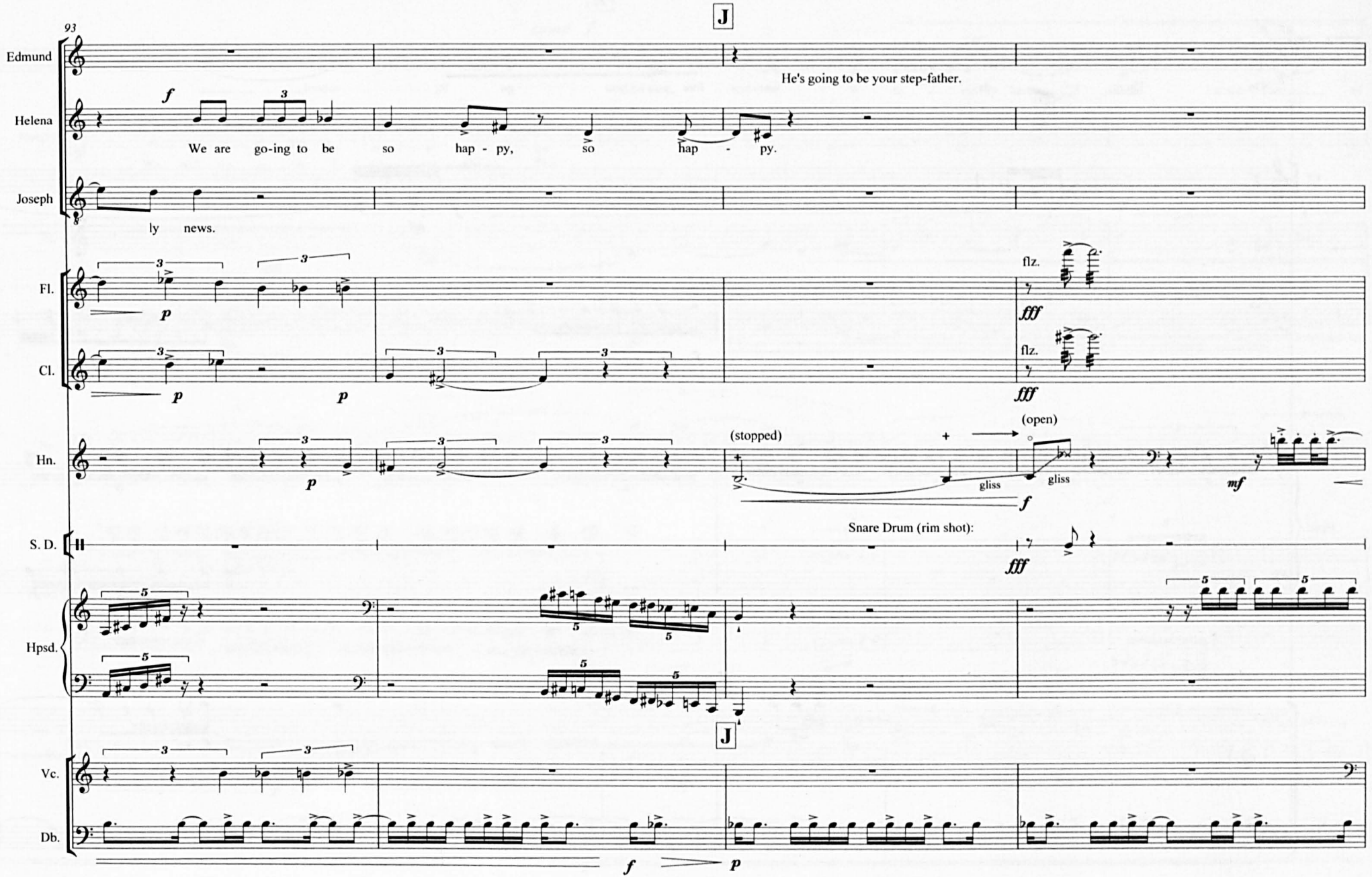

68
Charles
We're leav - ing, leav - ing, I knew it! I knew it, Next time I comeback from school, we'll be far a- way,
Helena
got a sur- prise.
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Vib.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.
f
mf
p
mp
Ped.

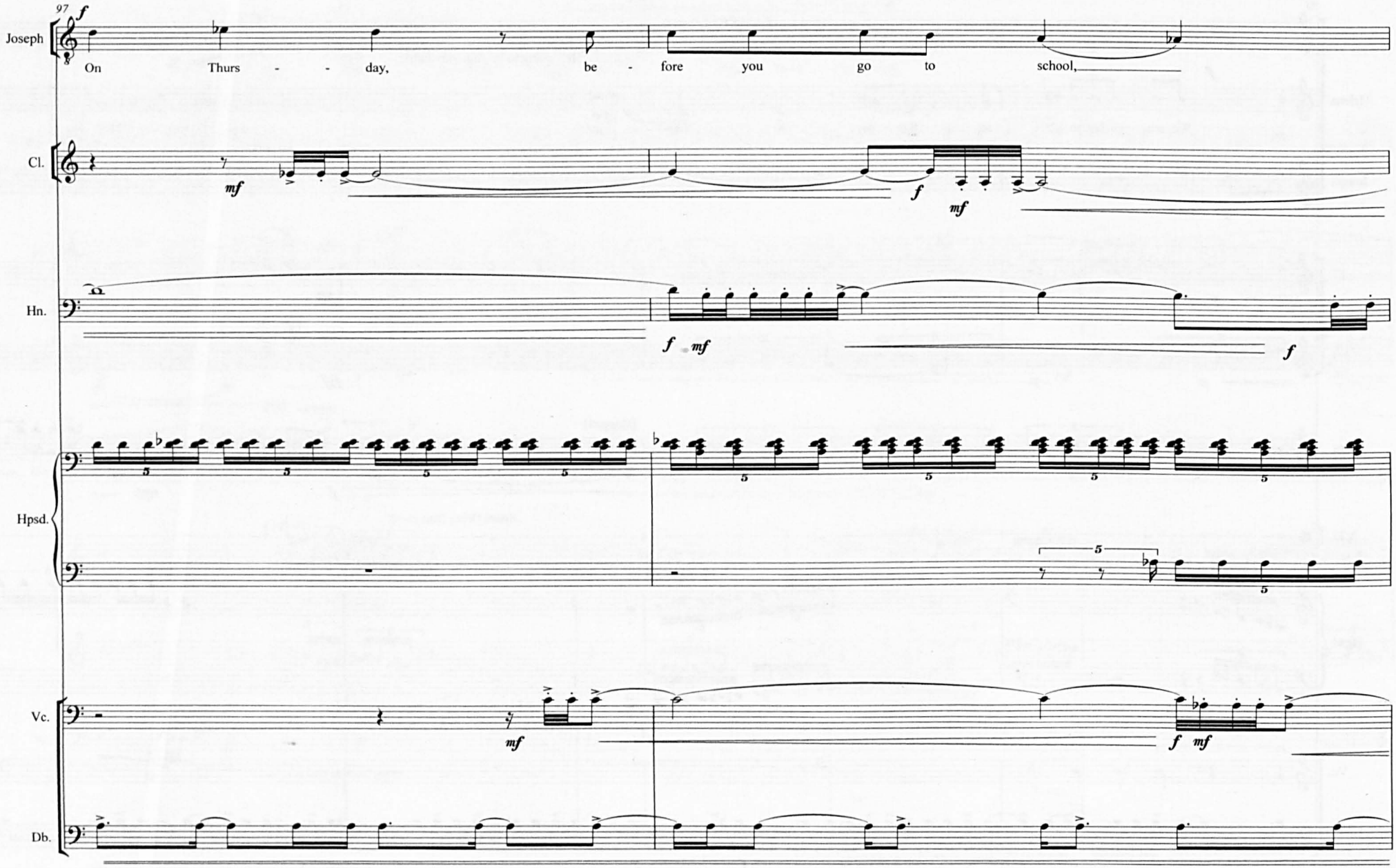

74
Charles
Helena
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Vib.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.
ff
G
far a - way, far a - way from Hoo - per.
f
mf
Sil - ly boy! sil - ly boy!
A-ny-way, you won't be go-ing back to your
ppp
p
*

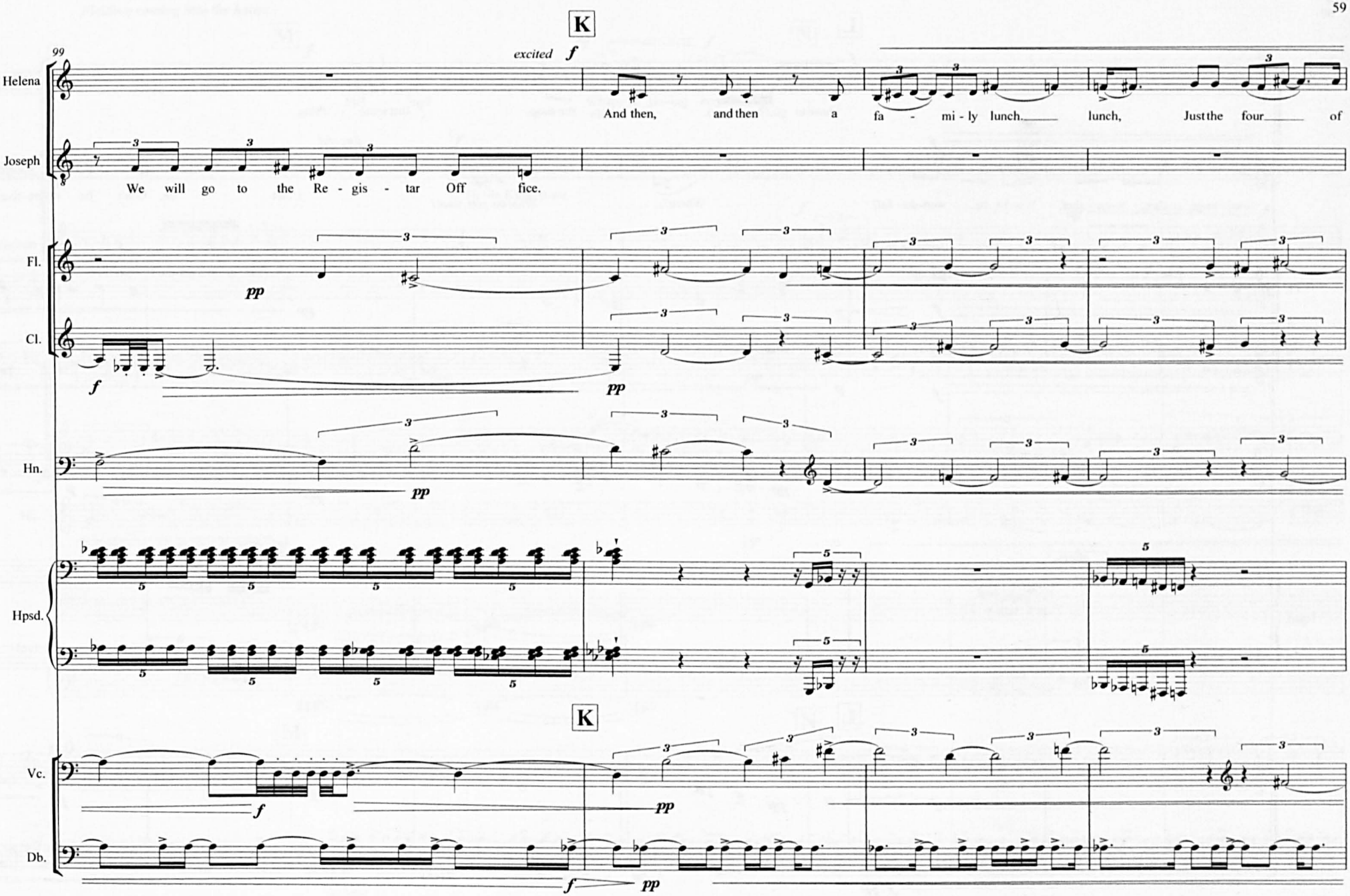

80
Helena
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
S. D.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.
f
with grandeur
ff
Enter Joseph
old_ school.
Next term_____ you'll be go-ing to the same school as Ed - - - - mund.
flz.
fff
mp
mf
Snare Drum (rim shot):

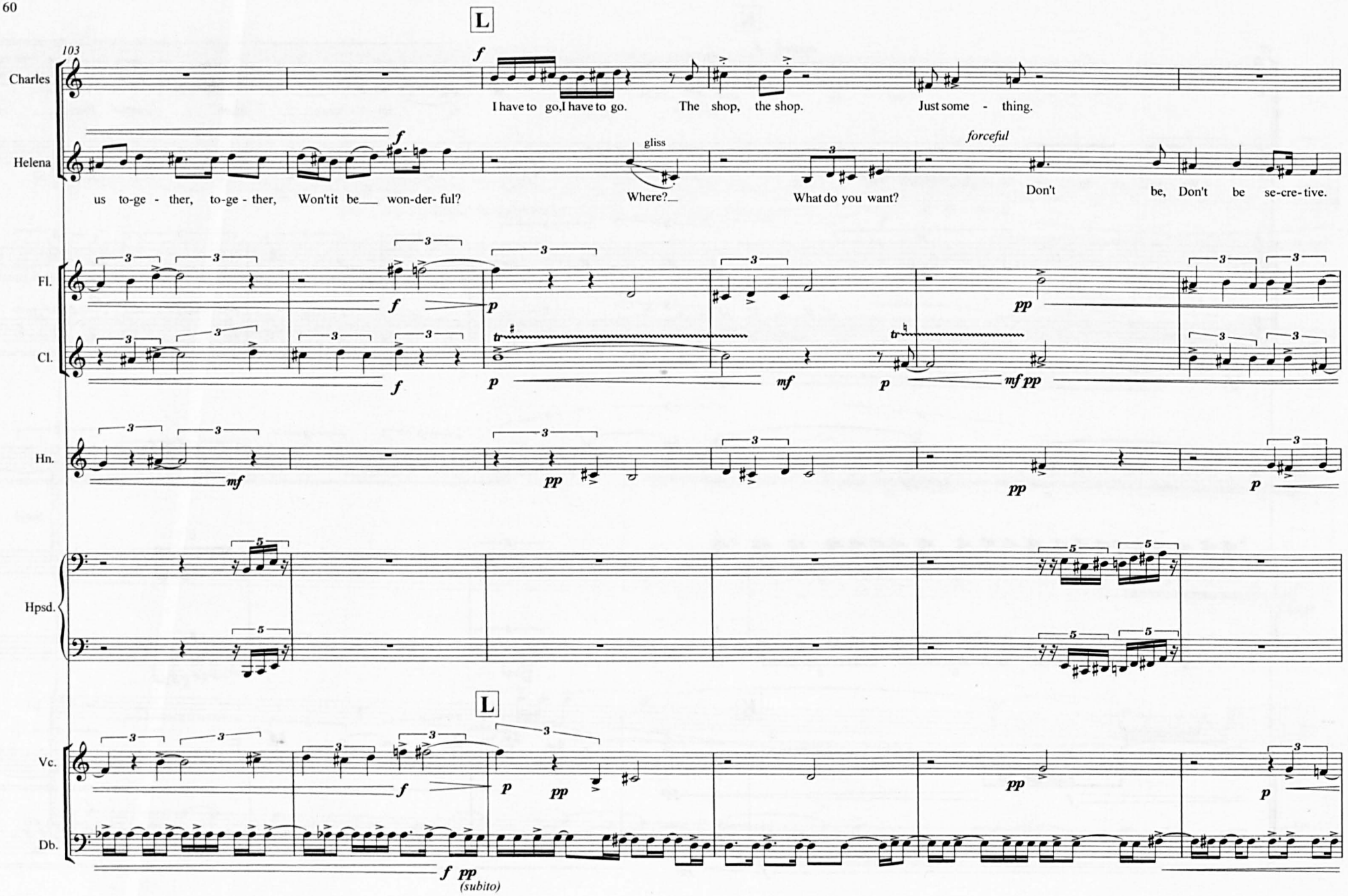

H
84
mf
Joseph
There's no - thing wrong with your old school, Charles. It's just that Ed - mund's school will be bet - ter for
Fl.
Cl.
mf
p
mf
f
mf
mp
Hn.
p
mf
f mf
f
mf
Hpsd.
H
Vc.
p
mf
f mf
f
mf
Db.
subito p


Joseph goes to fetch Edmund and pushes him in, in his wheelchair.
I
88
Helena
Joseph
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.
mf
f
You must work hard, work hard. You can be a cle-ver boy.
you, that's all.
excited f
But that is-n't our on - ly news, our on-
ppp
mp
p
subito p

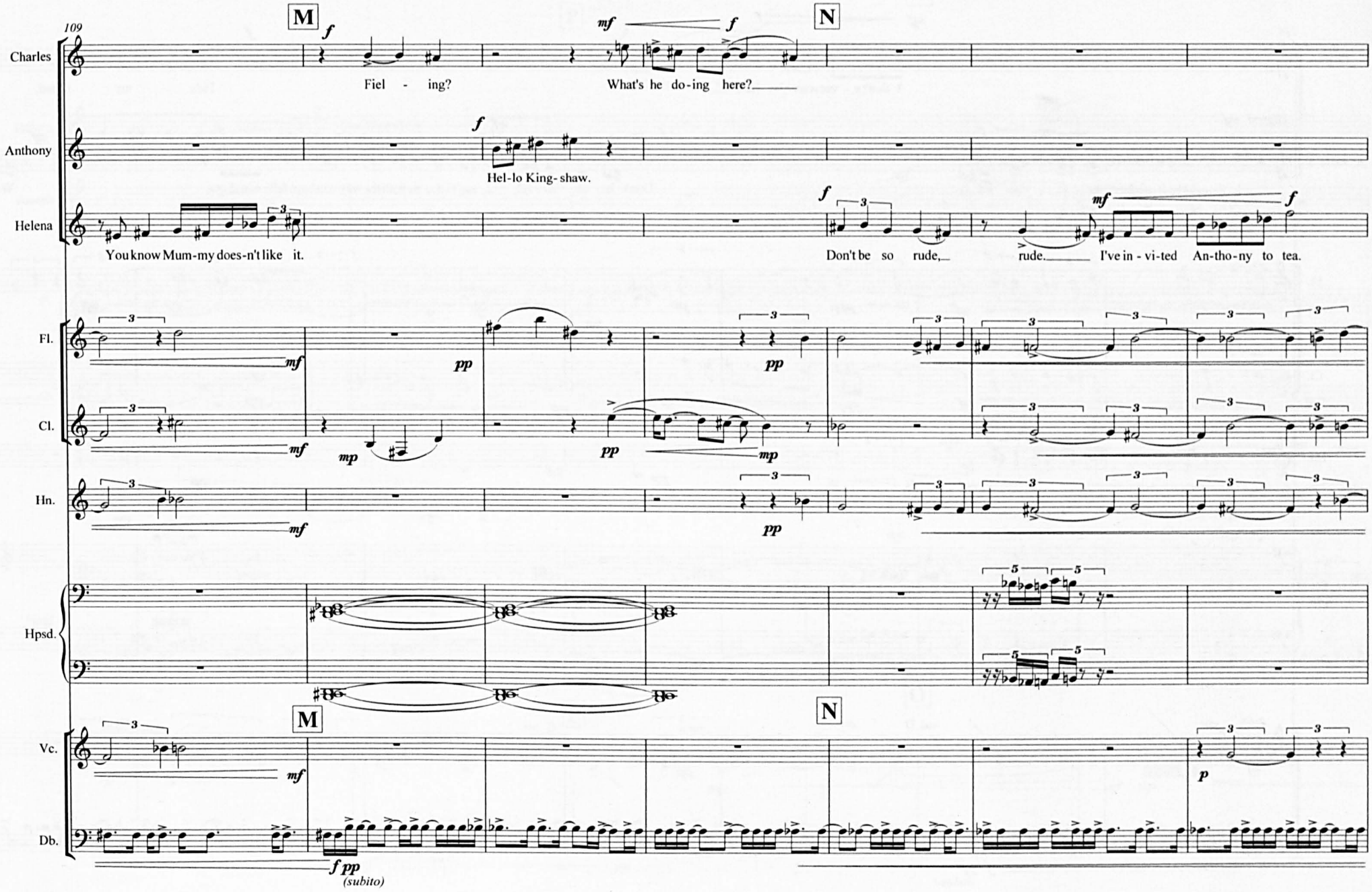

93
J
Edmund
He's going to be your step-father.
Helena
We are go-ing to be so hap - py, so hap - py.
Joseph
ly news.
Fl.
flz.
Cl.
flz.
Hn.
(stopped)
(open)
gliss
gliss
S. D.
Snare Drum (rim shot):
Hpsd.
J
Vc.
Db.

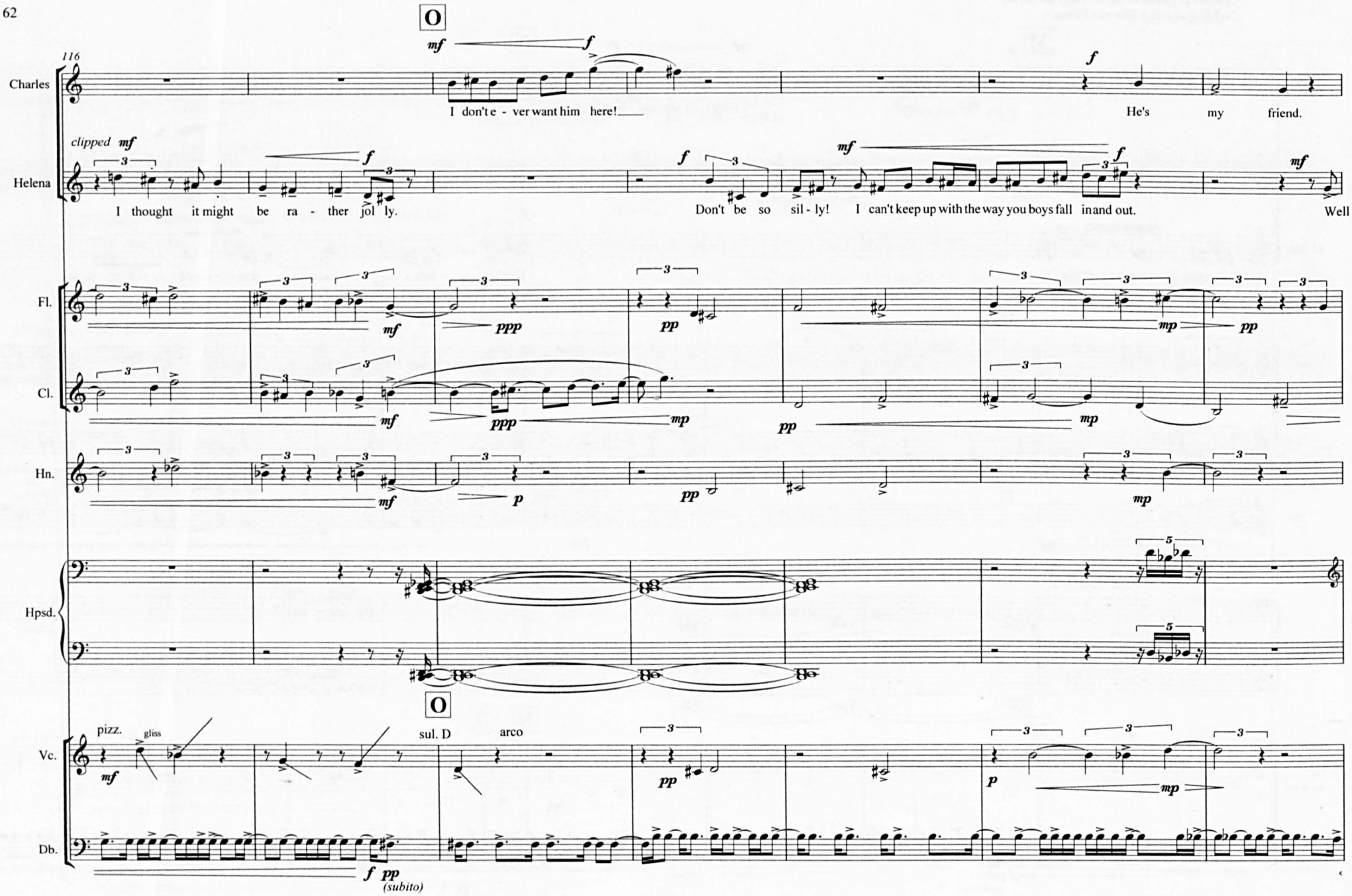

97
Joseph
On Thurs - - day, be - fore you go to school,
Cl.
Hn.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.

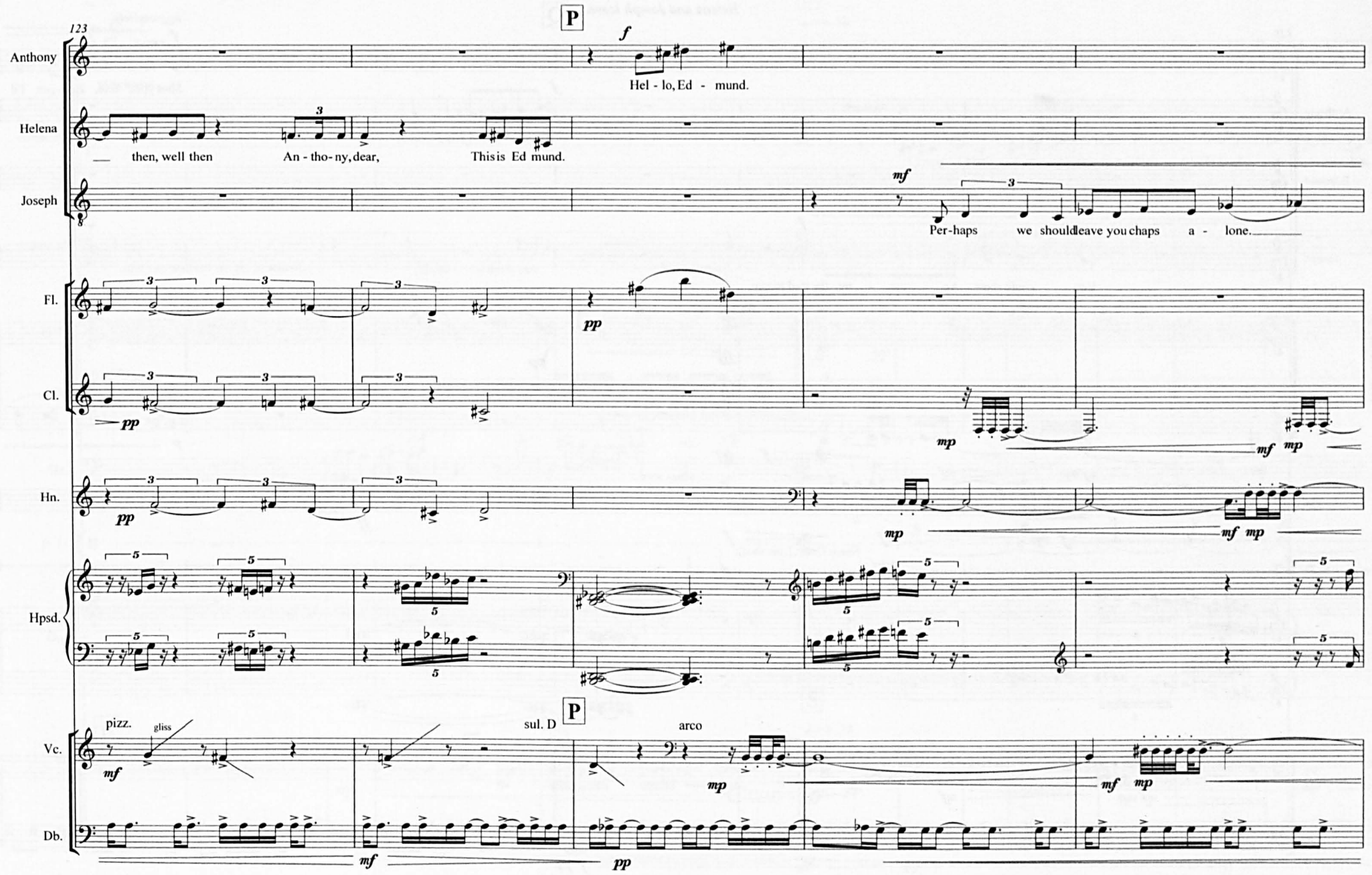

K
99
excited
f
Helena
And then, and then a fa - mi - ly lunch. lunch, Just the four of
Joseph
We will go to the Re - gis - tar Off fice.
Fl.
pp
Cl.
f
pp
Hn.
pp
Hpsd.
K
Vc.
f
pp
Db.
f
pp

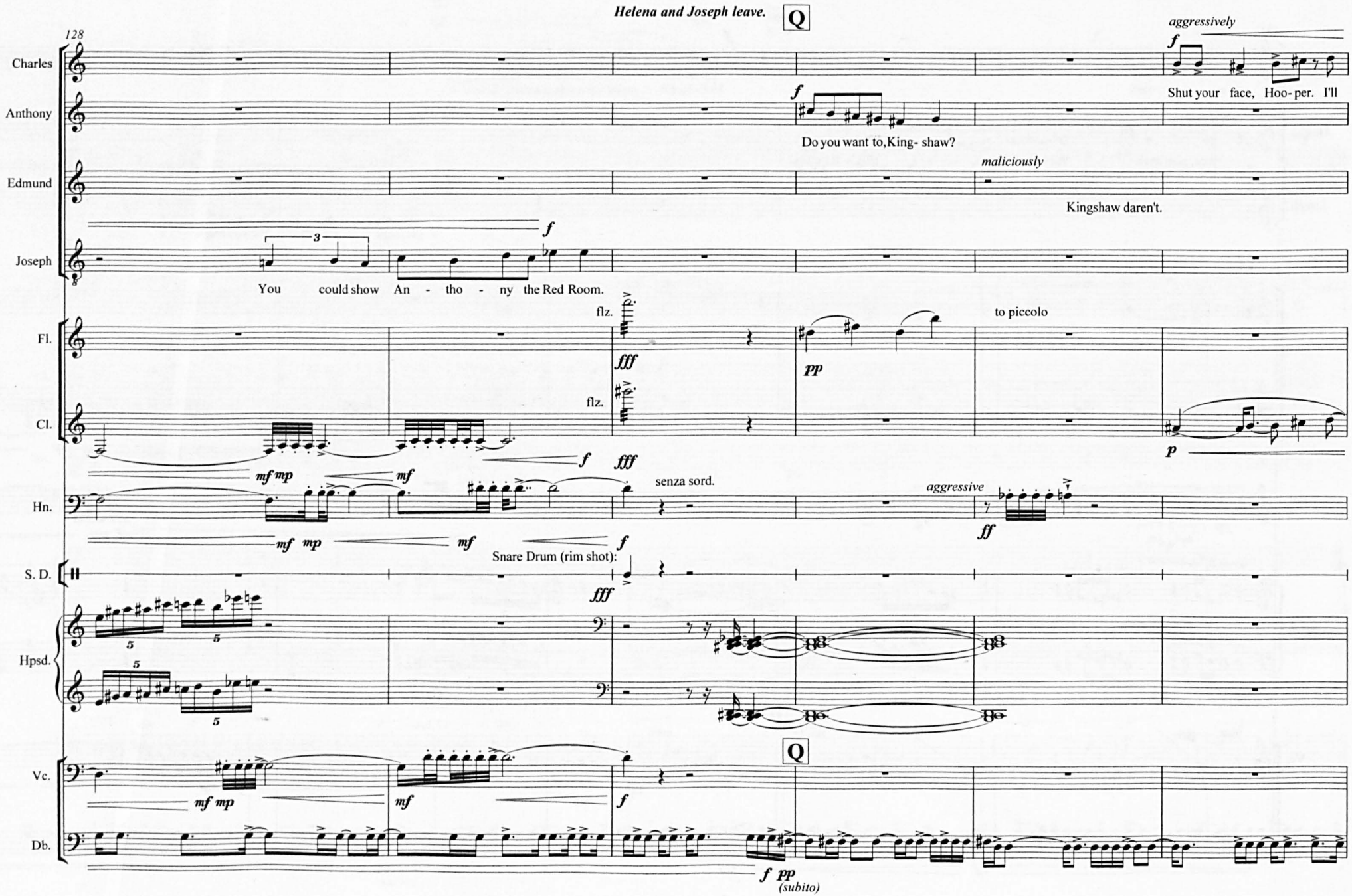

L
103
Charles
I have to go, I have to go. The shop, the shop. Just some - thing.
Helena
us to-ge - ther, to-ge - ther, Won't it be won-der- ful?
gliss
Where?
What do you want?
forceful
Don't be, Don't be se-cre-tive.
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Hpsd.
L
Vc.
Db.
(subito)

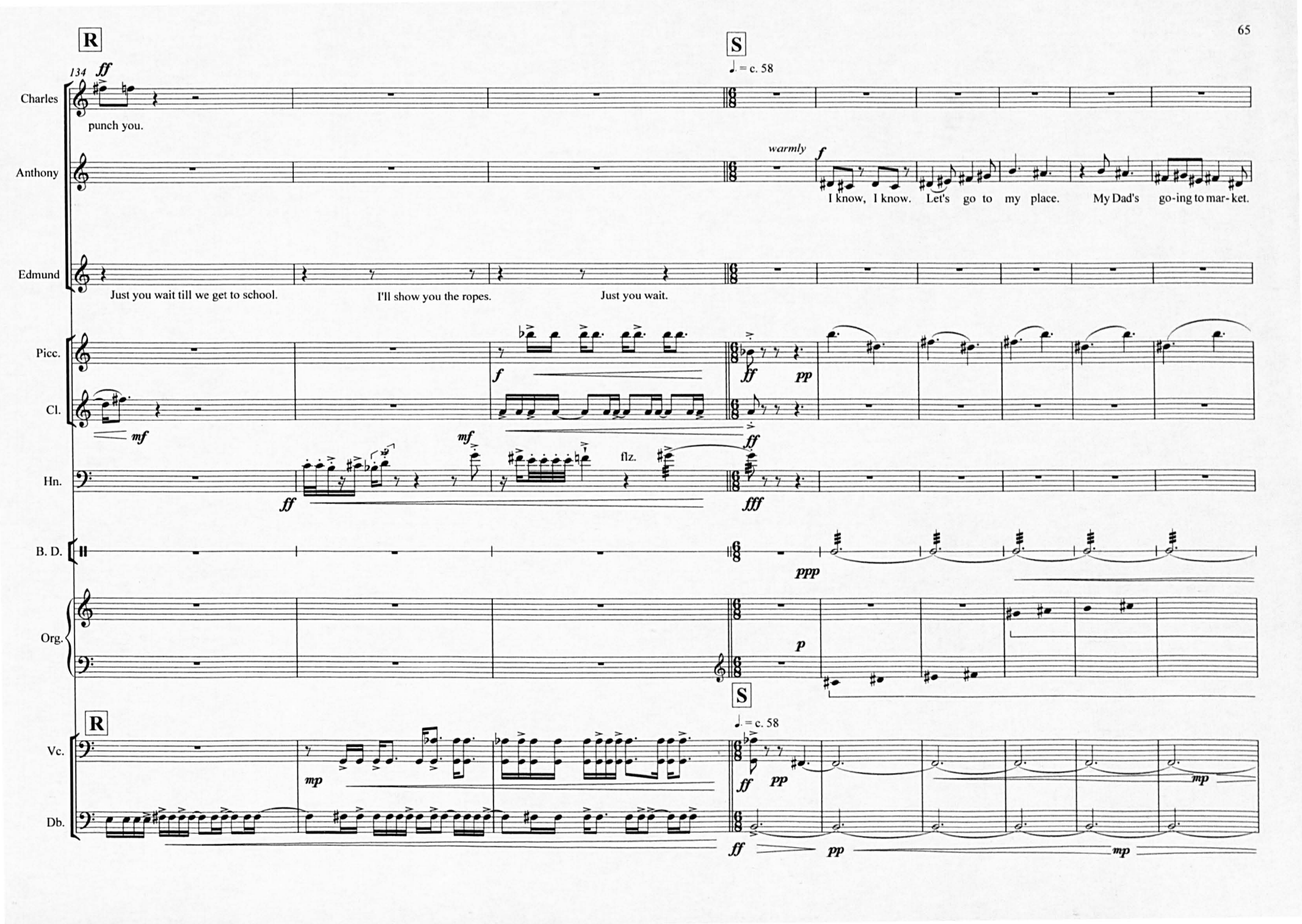
Charles is about to leave when he meets
Fielding coming into the house.

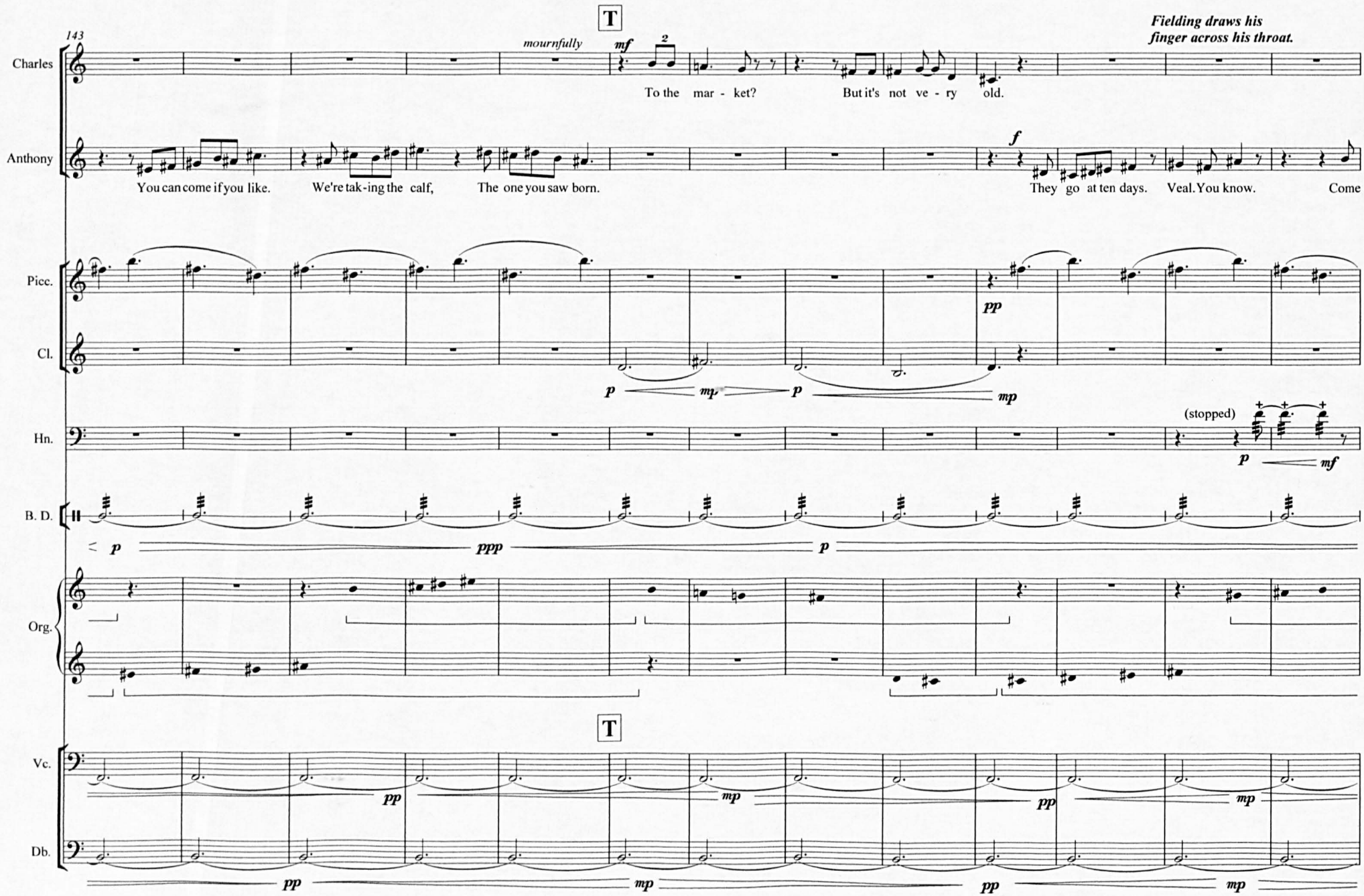


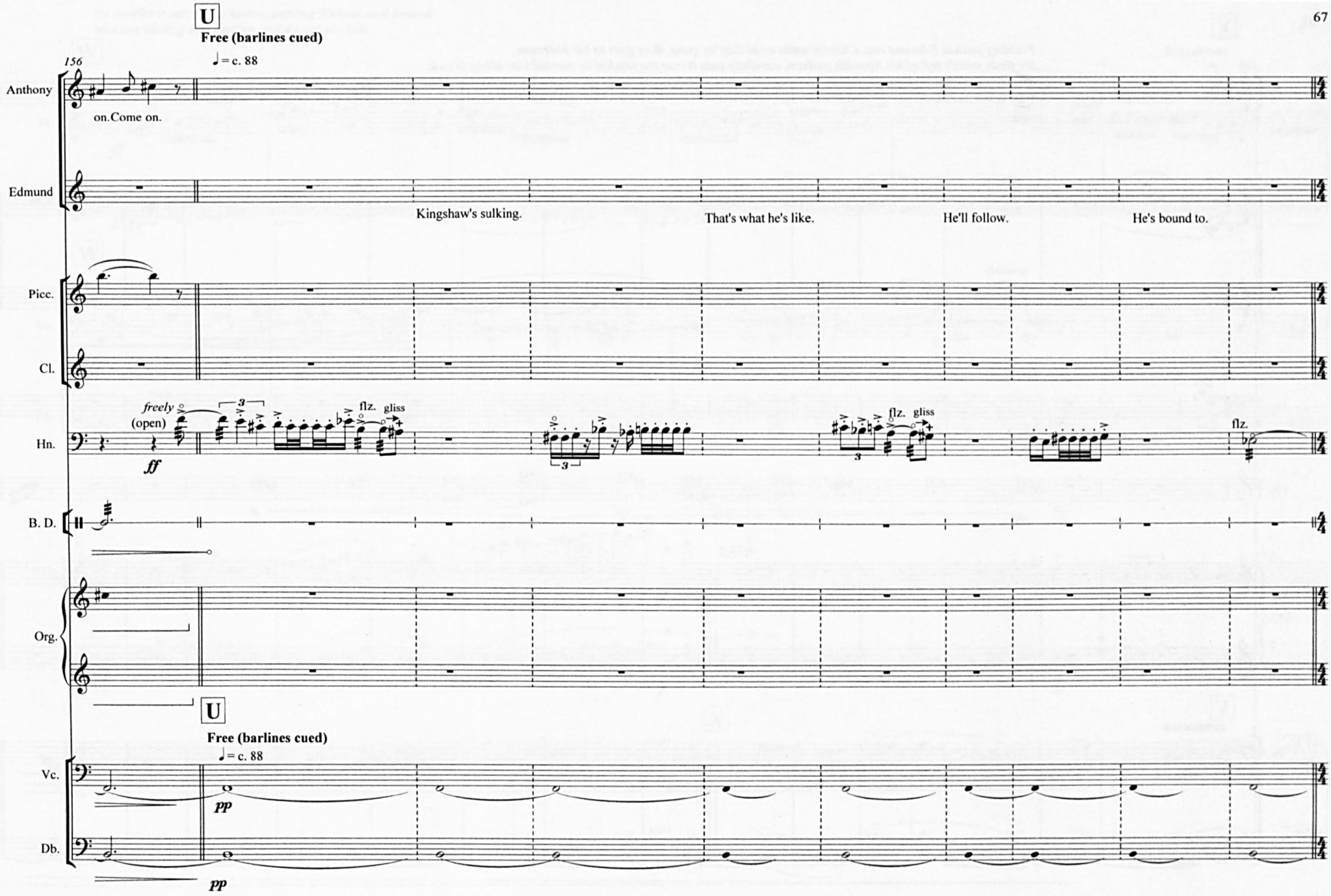

O
116
Charles
mf
f
I don't e - ver want him here!
f
He's my friend.
clipped mf
Helena
f
I thought it might be ra - ther jol ly.
f
mf
f
Don't be so sil - ly! I can't keep up with the way you boys fall in and out.
mf
Well
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Hpsd.
O
pizz.
gliss
sul. D
arco
Vc.
Db.
f pp
(subito)

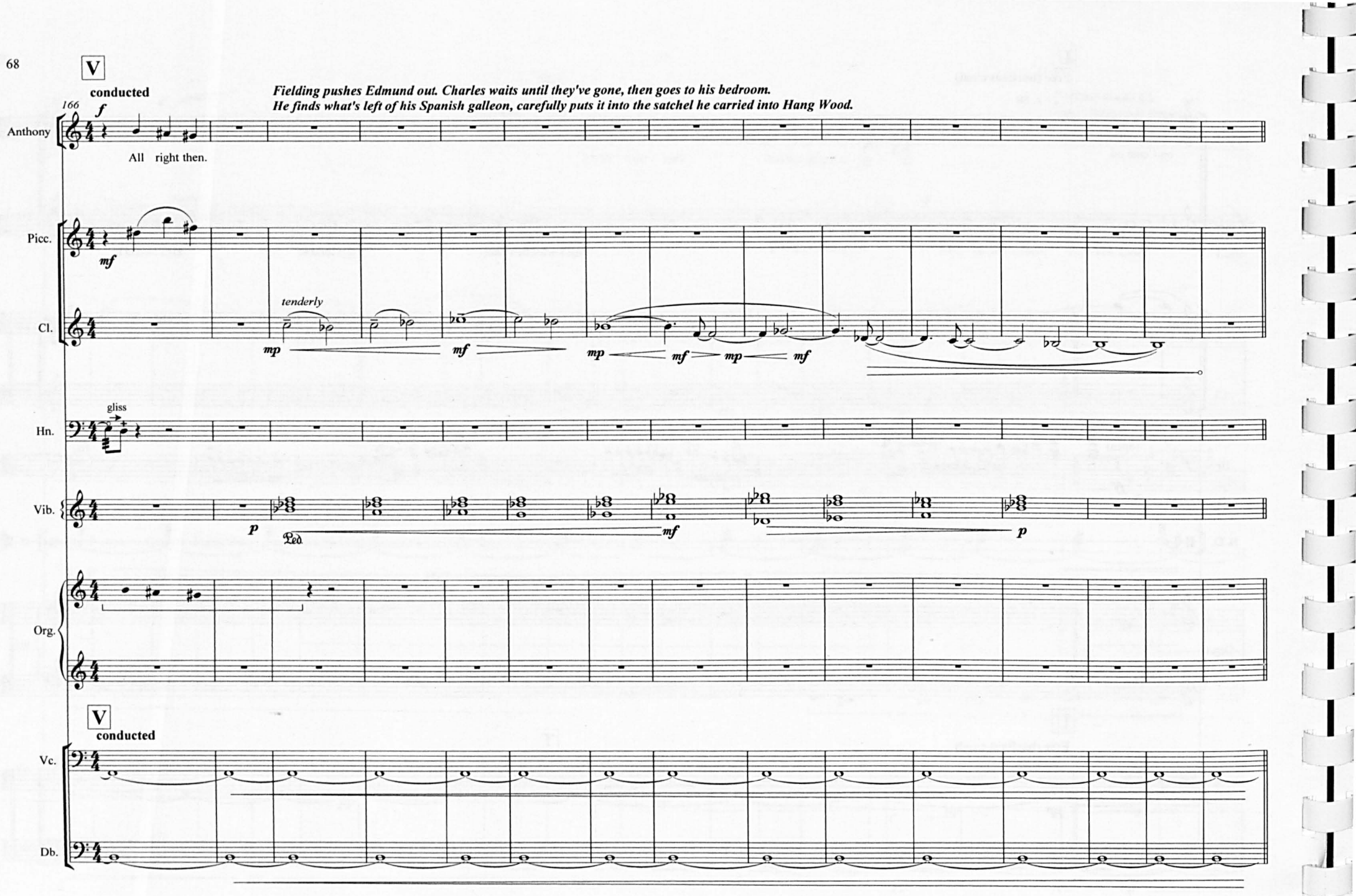

123
P
Anthony
Helena
Joseph
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.
f
Hel - lo, Ed - mund.
— then, well then
An - tho - ny, dear,
This is Ed mund.
mf
Per-haps we should leave you chaps a - lone.
pp
mp
mf mp
pizz.
gliss
sul. D
arco


Helena and Joseph leave.
Q
128
Charles
Anthony
Edmund
Joseph
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
S. D.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.
aggressively
Shut your face, Hoo-per. I'll
Do you want to, King- shaw?
maliciously
Kingshaw daren't.
You could show An - tho - ny the Red Room.
flz.
to piccolo
senza sord.
aggressive
Snare Drum (rim shot):
(subito)

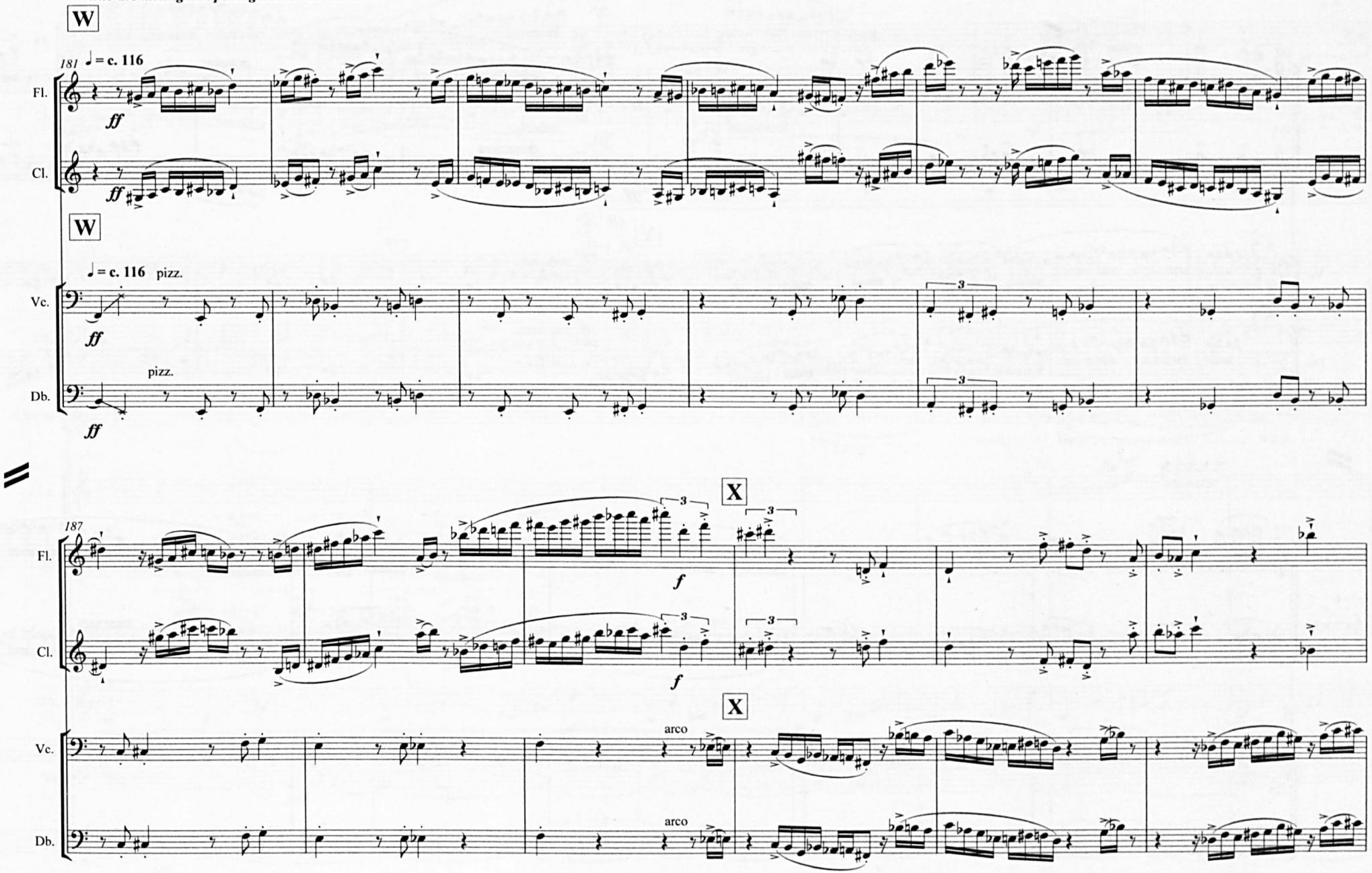

R
S
134
ff
♩. = c. 58
Charles
punch you.
Anthony
warmly
f
I know, I know. Let's go to my place. My Dad's go-ing to mar-ket.
Edmund
Just you wait till we get to school.
I'll show you the ropes.
Just you wait.
Picc.
Cl.
mf
f
ff
pp
Hn.
flz.
fff
B. D.
ppp
Org.
p
R
S
Vc.
Db.
mp
pp
mp

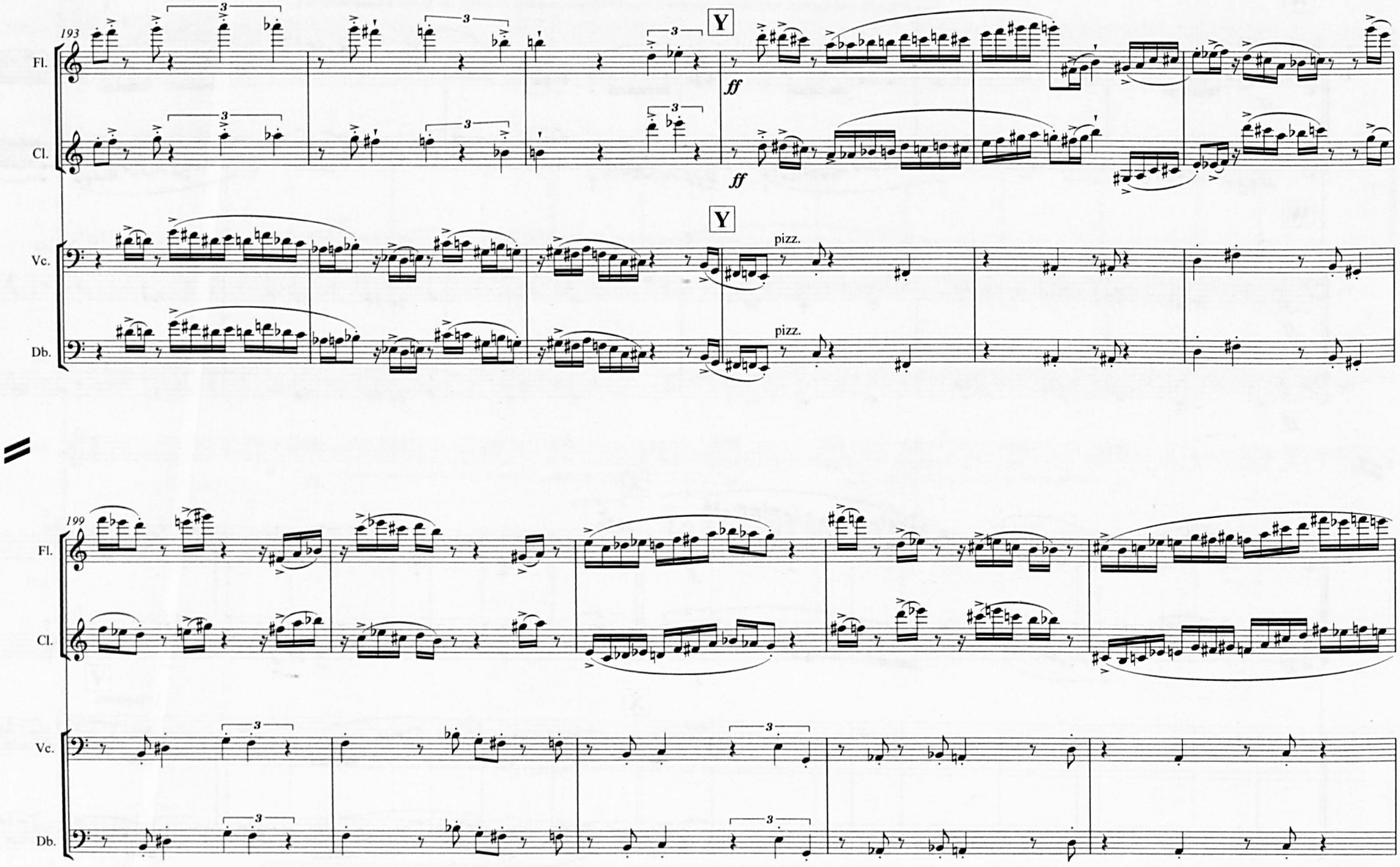

143
T
mournfully
mf
2
Fielding draws his finger across his throat.
Charles
To the mar - ket?
But it's not ve - ry old.
Anthony
f
You can come if you like.
We're tak-ing the calf,
The one you saw born.
They go at ten days.
Veal. You know.
Come
Picc.
Cl.
pp
p
mp
p
mp
Hn.
(stopped)
p
mf
B. D.
p
ppp
p
Org.
T
Vc.
pp
mp
pp
mp
Db.
pp
mp
pp
mp

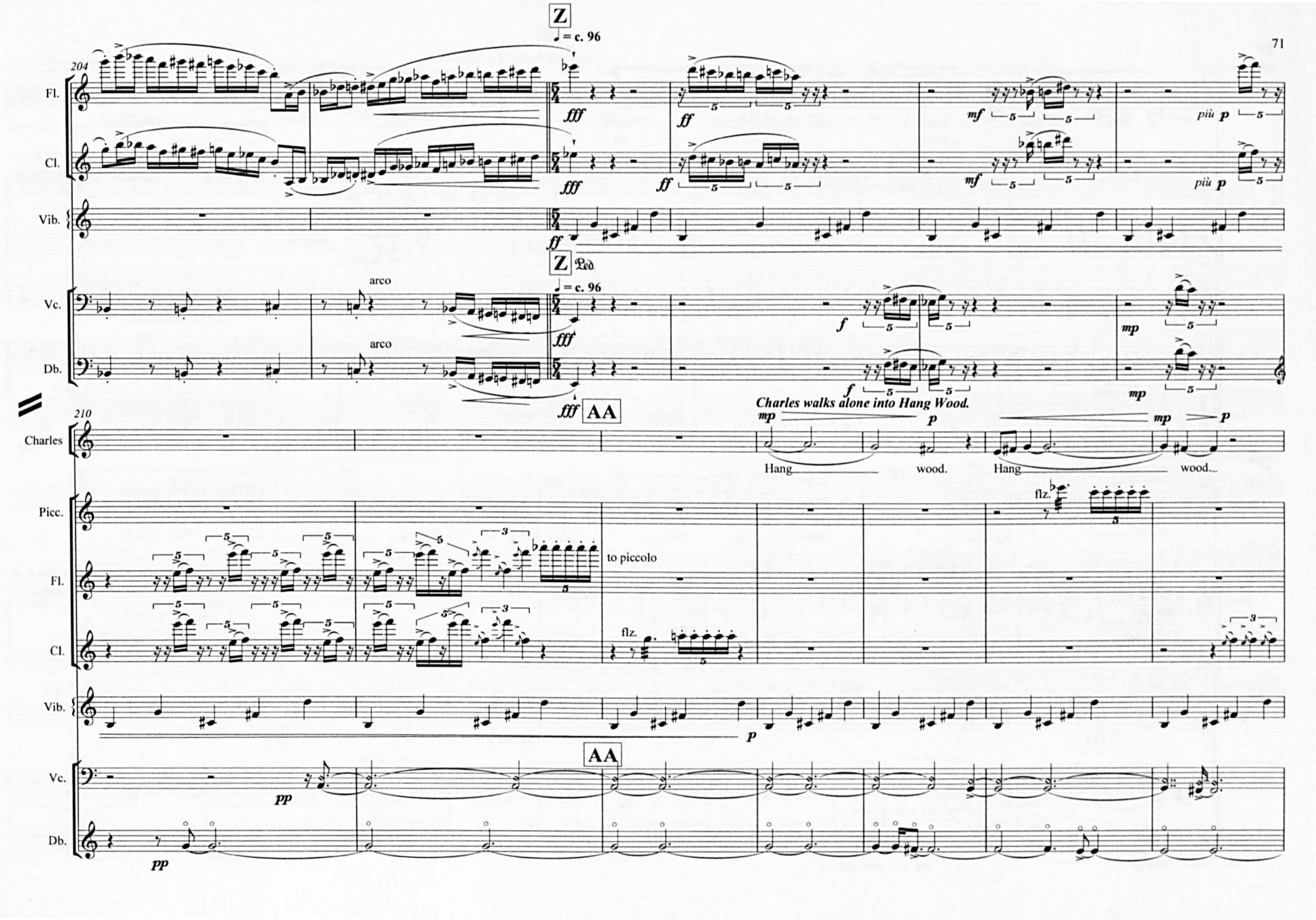

U
Free (barlines cued)
♩= c. 88
156
Anthony
on.Come on.
Edmund
Kingshaw's sulking.
That's what he's like.
He'll follow.
He's bound to.
Picc.
Cl.
Hn.
freely
(open)
ff
flz.
gliss
B. D.
Org.
U
Free (barlines cued)
♩= c. 88
Vc.
pp
Db.
pp

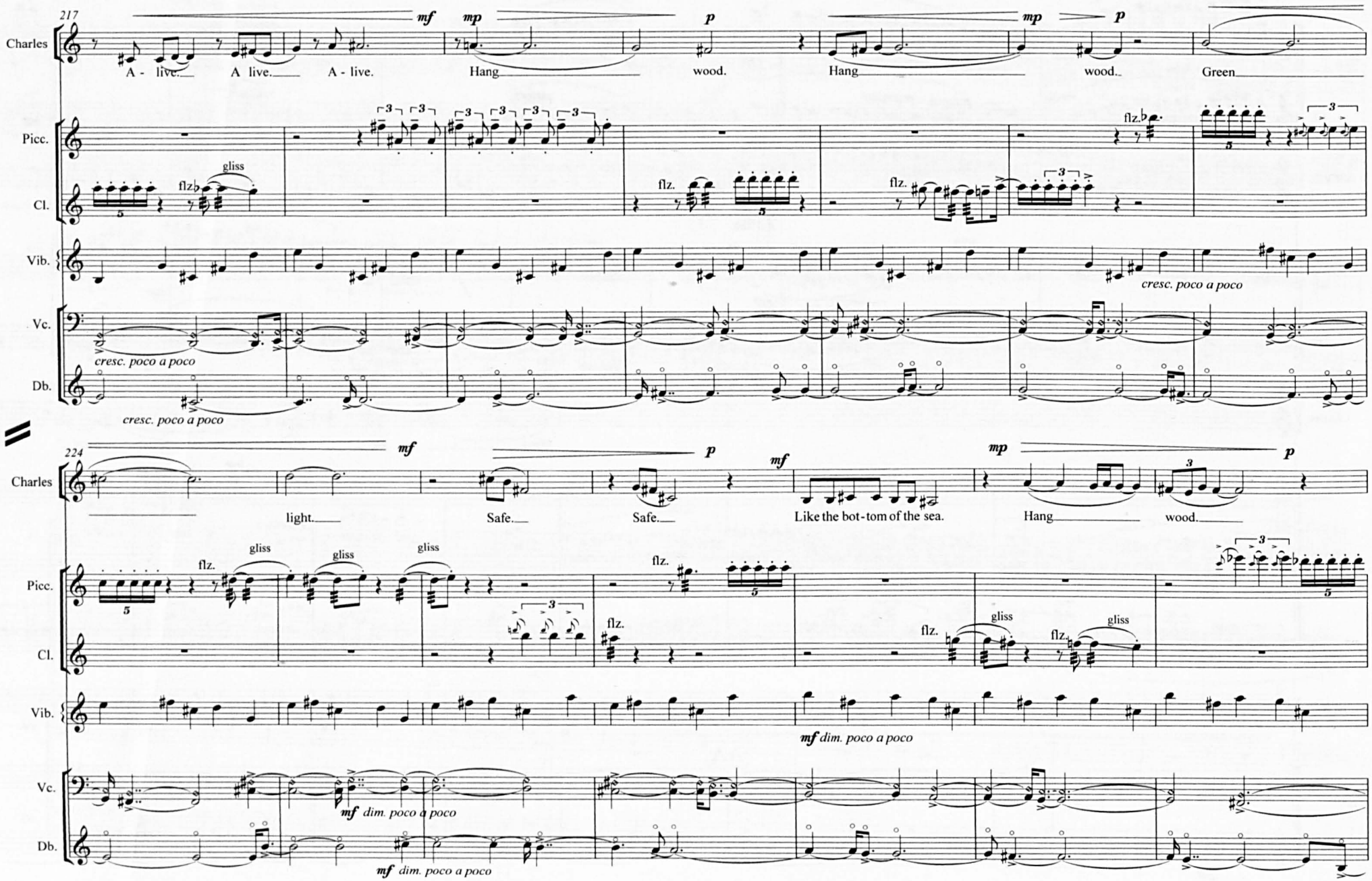

V
conducted
Fielding pushes Edmund out. Charles waits until they've gone, then goes to his bedroom.
He finds what's left of his Spanish galleon, carefully puts it into the satchel he carried into Hang Wood.
166
Anthony
All right then.
Picc.
Cl.
tenderly
Hn.
gliss
Vib.
Ped.
Org.
V
conducted
Vc.
Db.

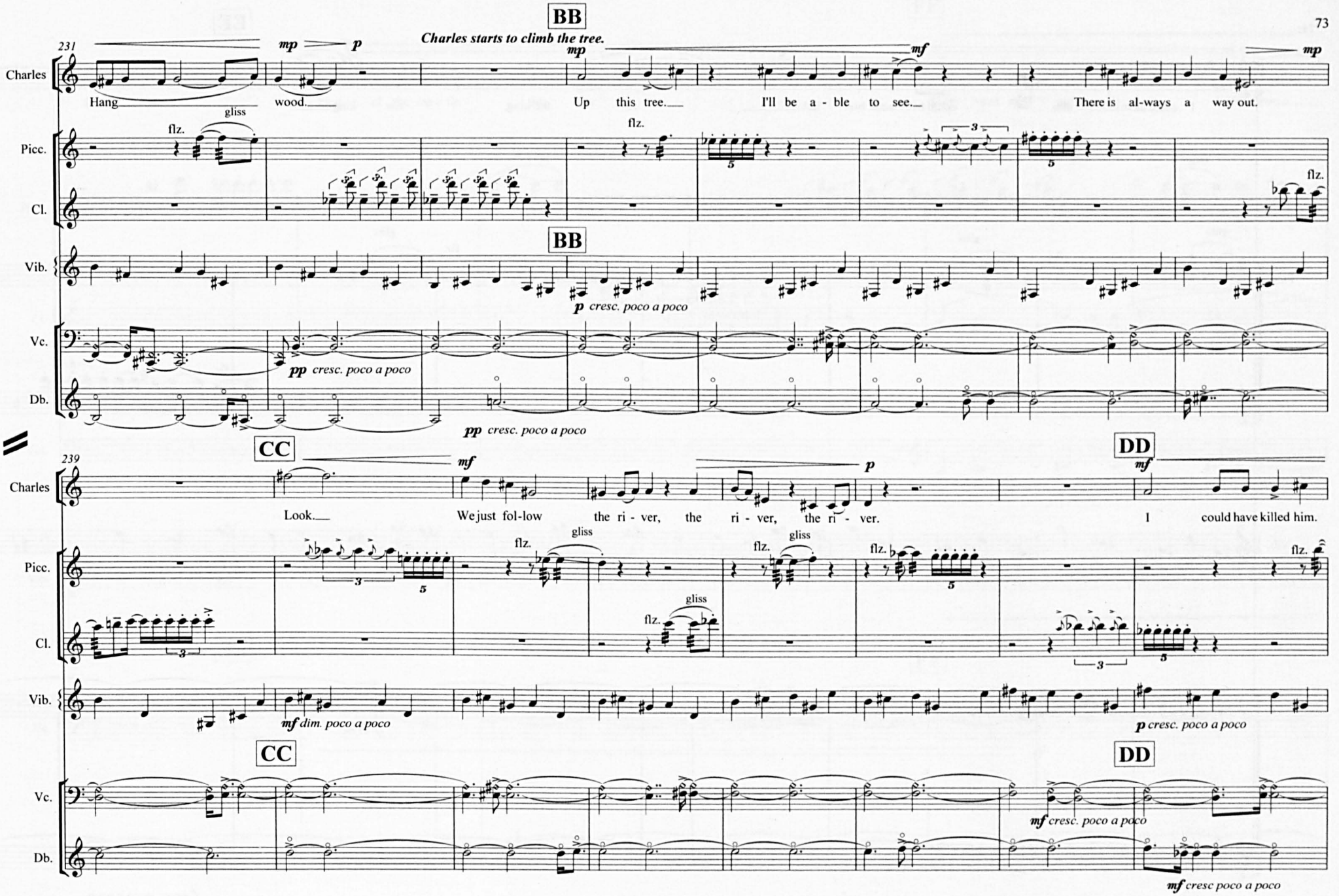
He carries it out of the house, passing Helena and Joseph who are kissing and petting and do not see him.

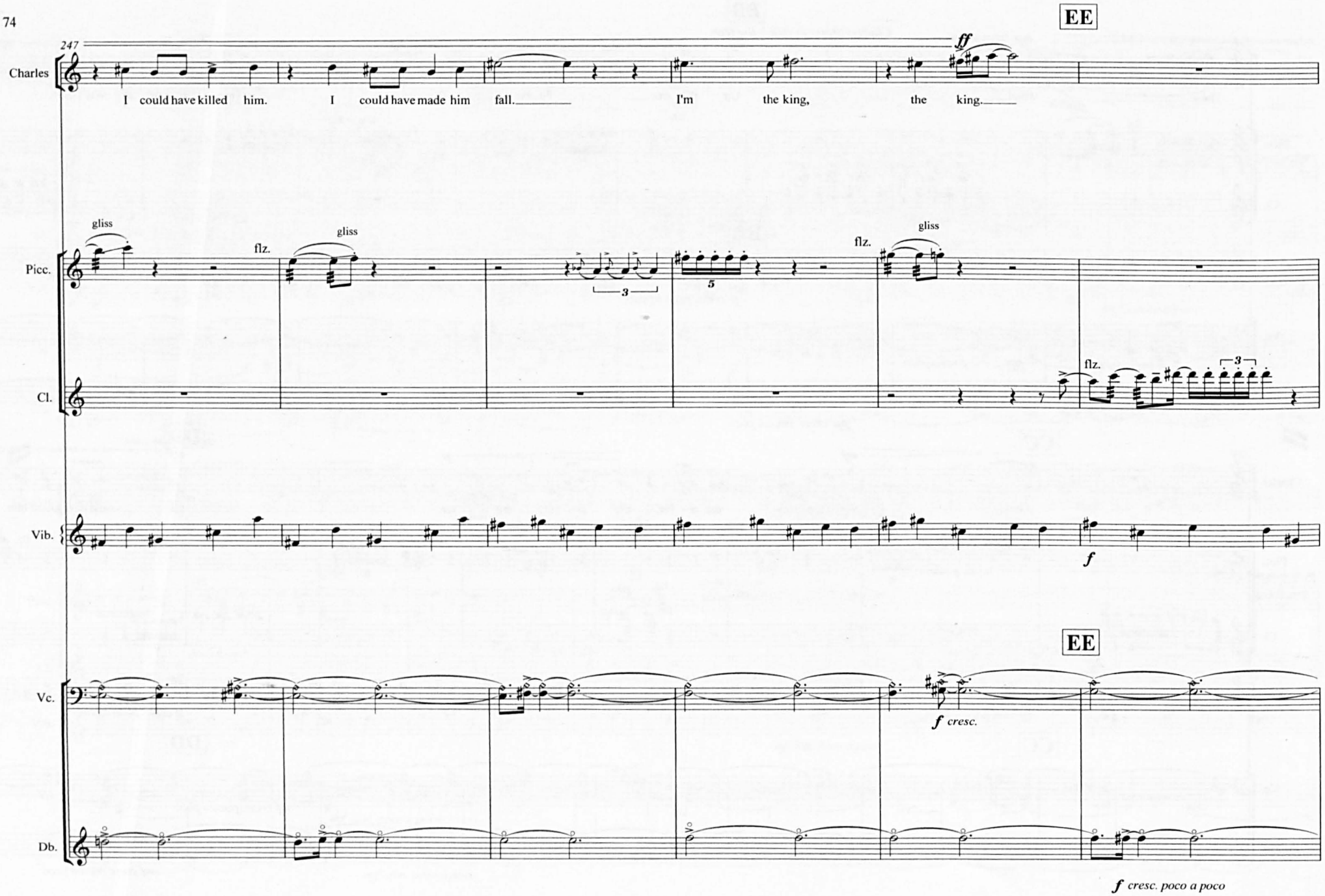


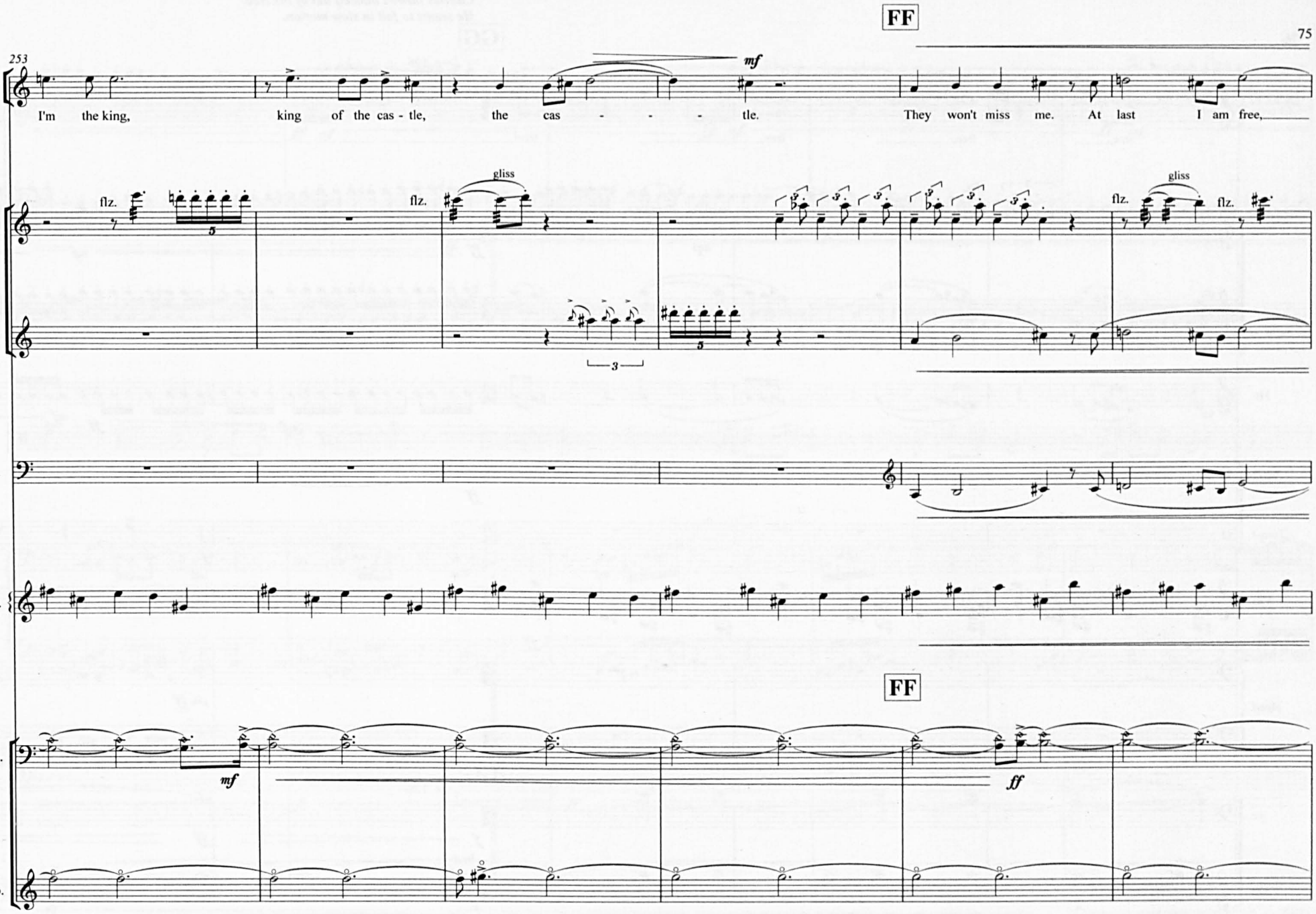

193
Fl.
Cl.
Vc.
Db.
Y
ff
pizz.
199


Z
♩ = c. 96
204
Fl.
Cl.
Vib.
fff
ff
mf
più p
Z
Ped.
Vc.
Db.
arco
f
mp
AA
210
Charles
Charles walks alone into Hang Wood.
Hang
wood.
Picc.
flz.
to piccolo
pp

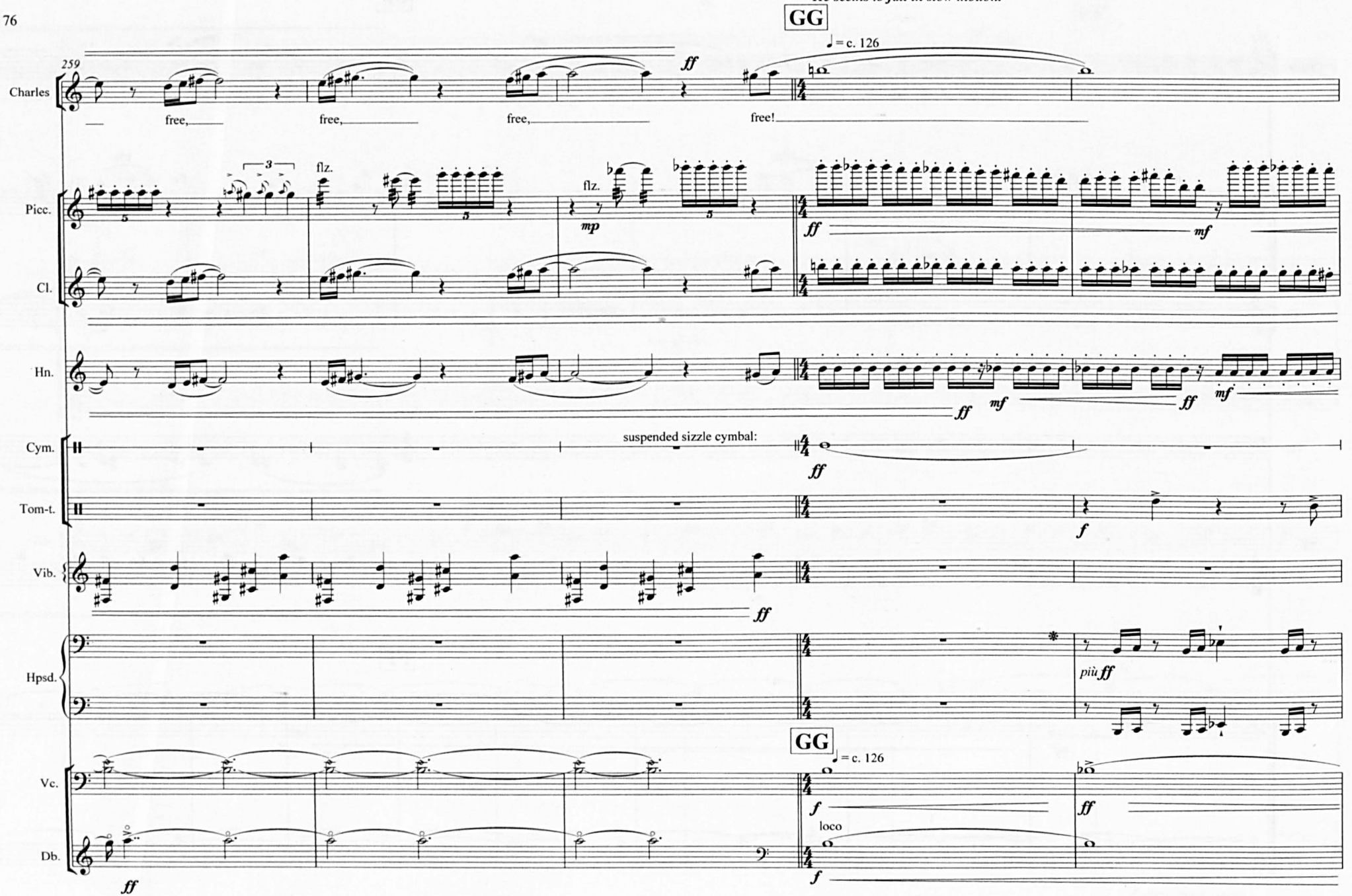

217
Charles
A - live. A live. A - live.
Hang wood.
Hang wood.
Green
Picc.
Cl.
Vib.
Vc.
Db.
gliss
flz.
cresc. poco a poco
224
light.
Safe.
Safe.
Like the bot-tom of the sea.
Hang wood.
mf dim. poco a poco

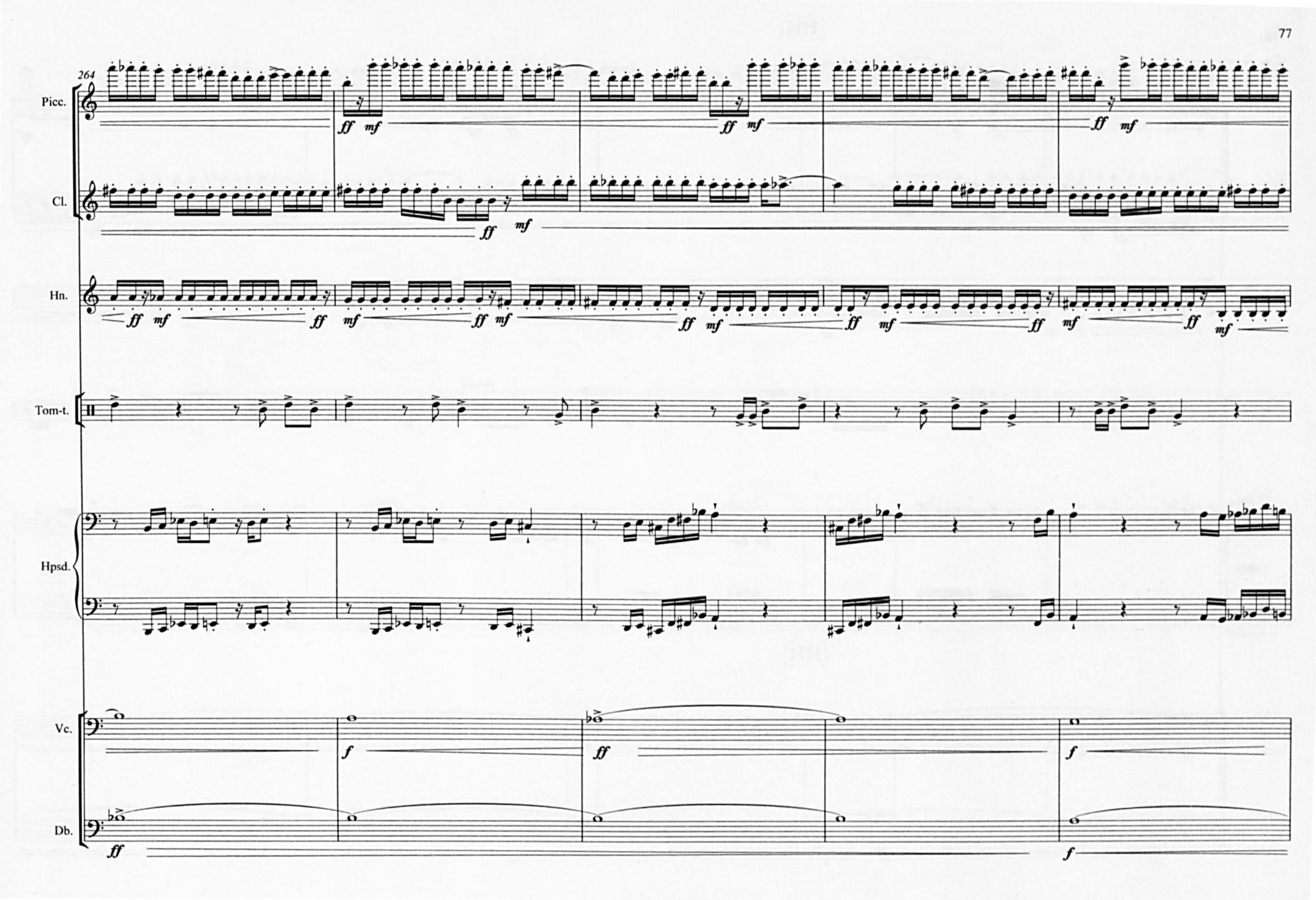

BB
Charles starts to climb the tree.
231
Charles
Hang wood.
Up this tree. I'll be a - ble to see. There is al-ways a way out.
Picc.
Cl.
Vib.
Vc.
Db.
gliss
flz.
mp
p
mf
pp cresc. poco a poco
CC
DD
239
Look. We just fol-low the ri - ver, the ri - ver, the ri - ver. I could have killed him.
mf dim. poco a poco
mf cresc. poco a poco
mf cresc poco a poco

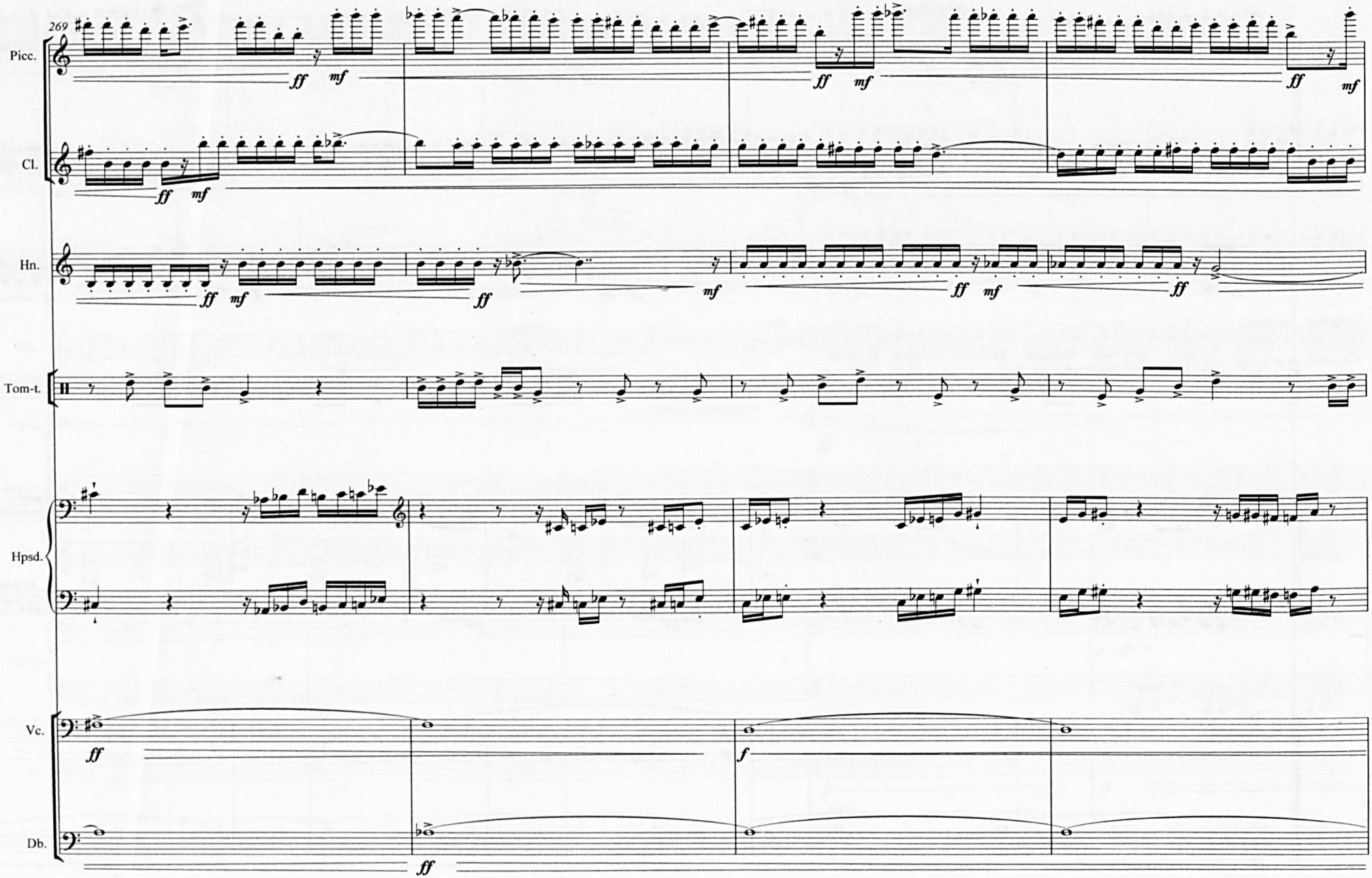

EE
247
Charles
ff
I could have killed him. I could have made him fall. I'm the king, the king.
Picc.
gliss
flz.
gliss
flz.
gliss
Cl.
flz.
Vib.
f
EE
Vc.
f cresc.
Db.
f cresc. poco a poco

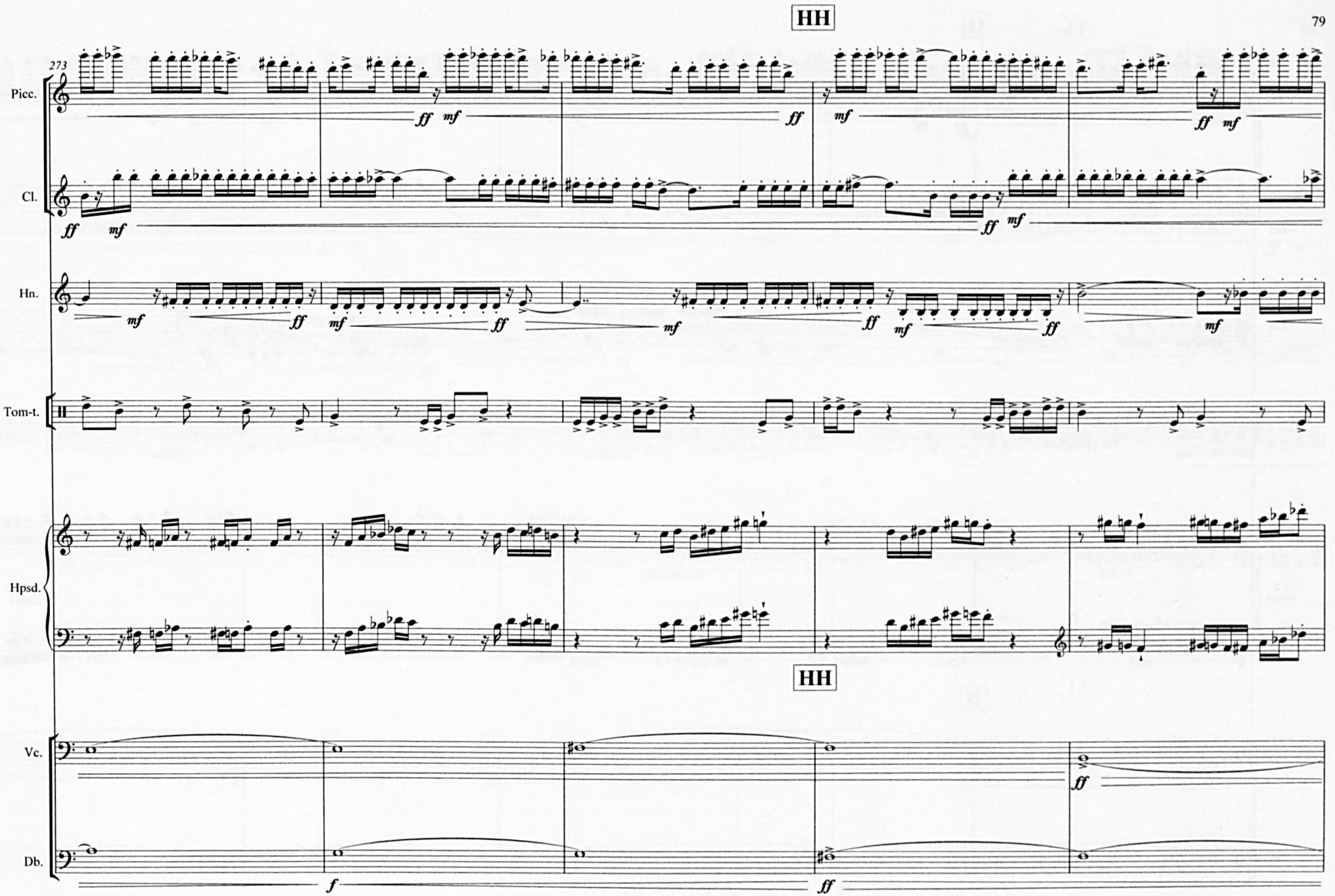

FF
253
Charles
I'm the king, king of the cas - tle, the cas - - - tle. They won't miss me. At last I am free,
mf
Picc.
Cl.
flz.
gliss
Hn.
Vib.
FF
Vc.
Db.
mf
ff

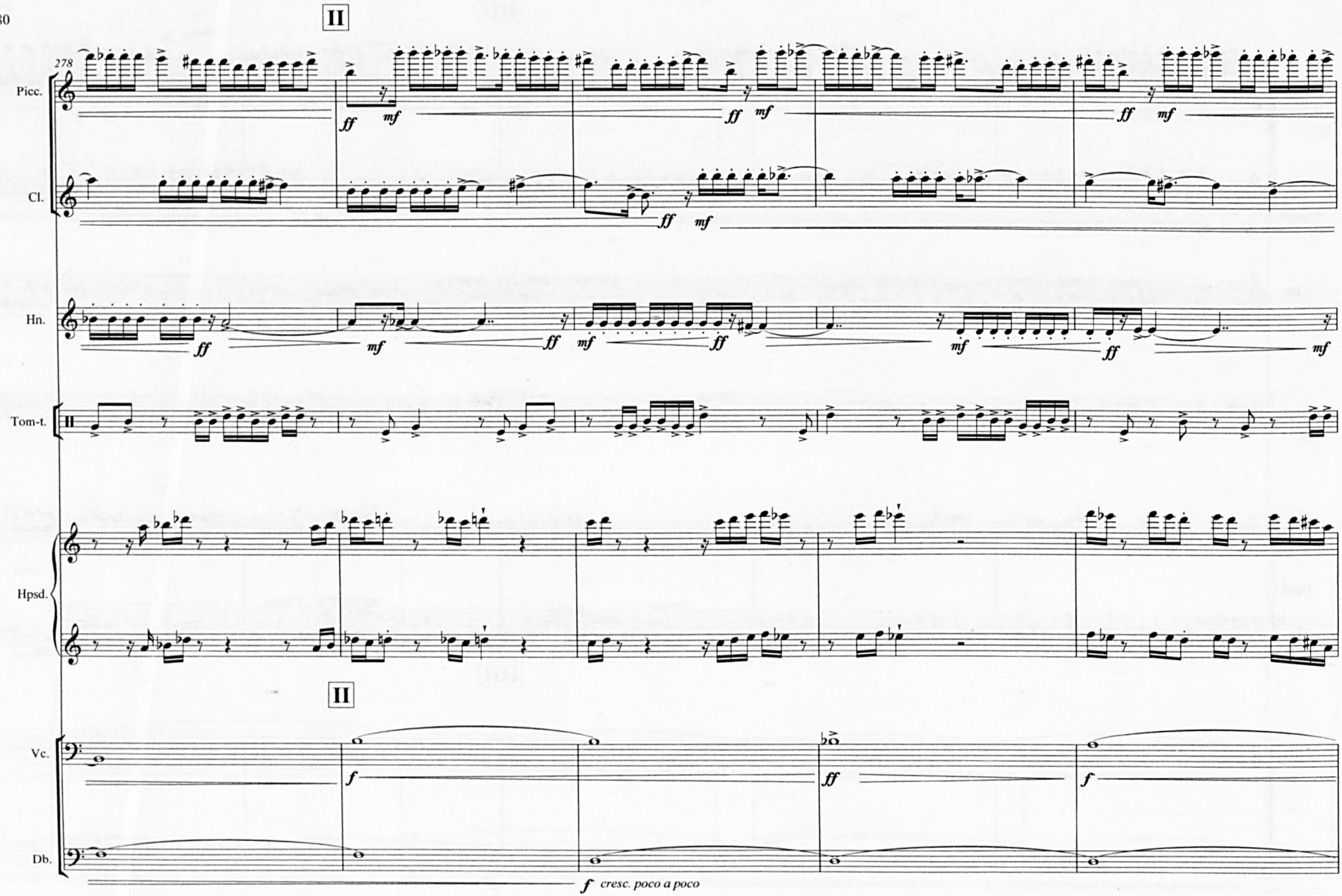
Charles throws himself out of the tree.
He seems to fall in slow motion.

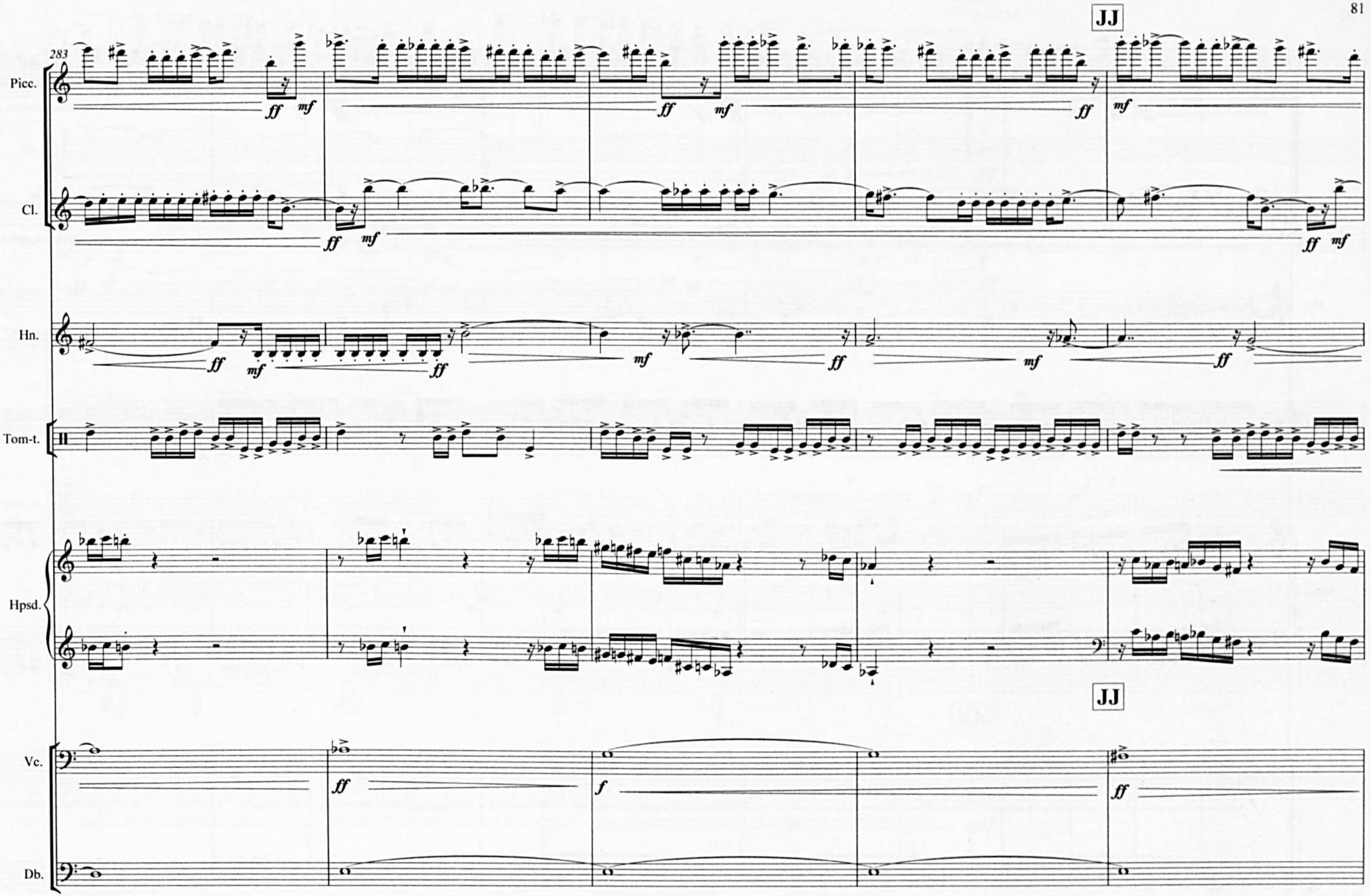


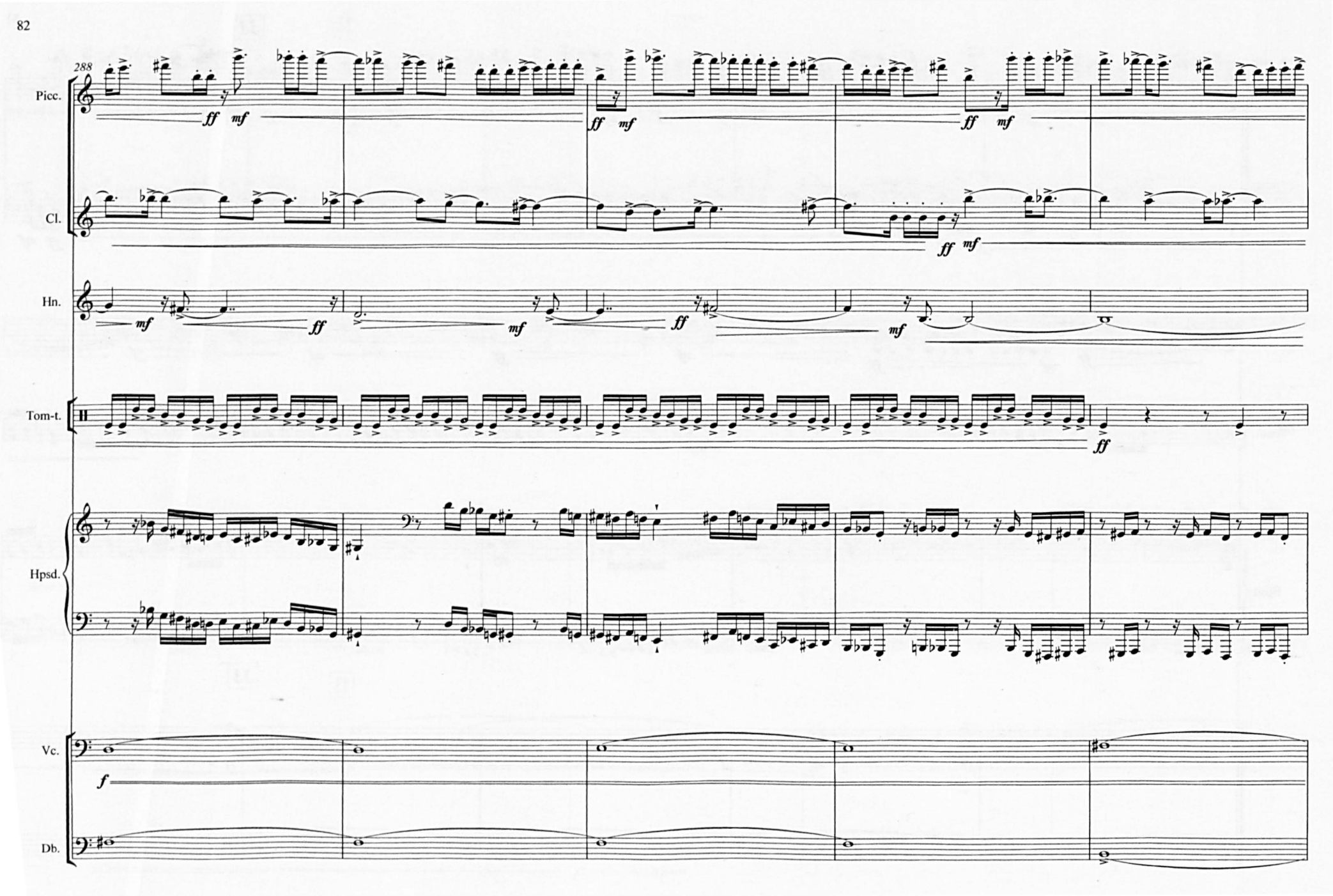

264
Picc.
Cl.
Hn.
Tom-t.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.

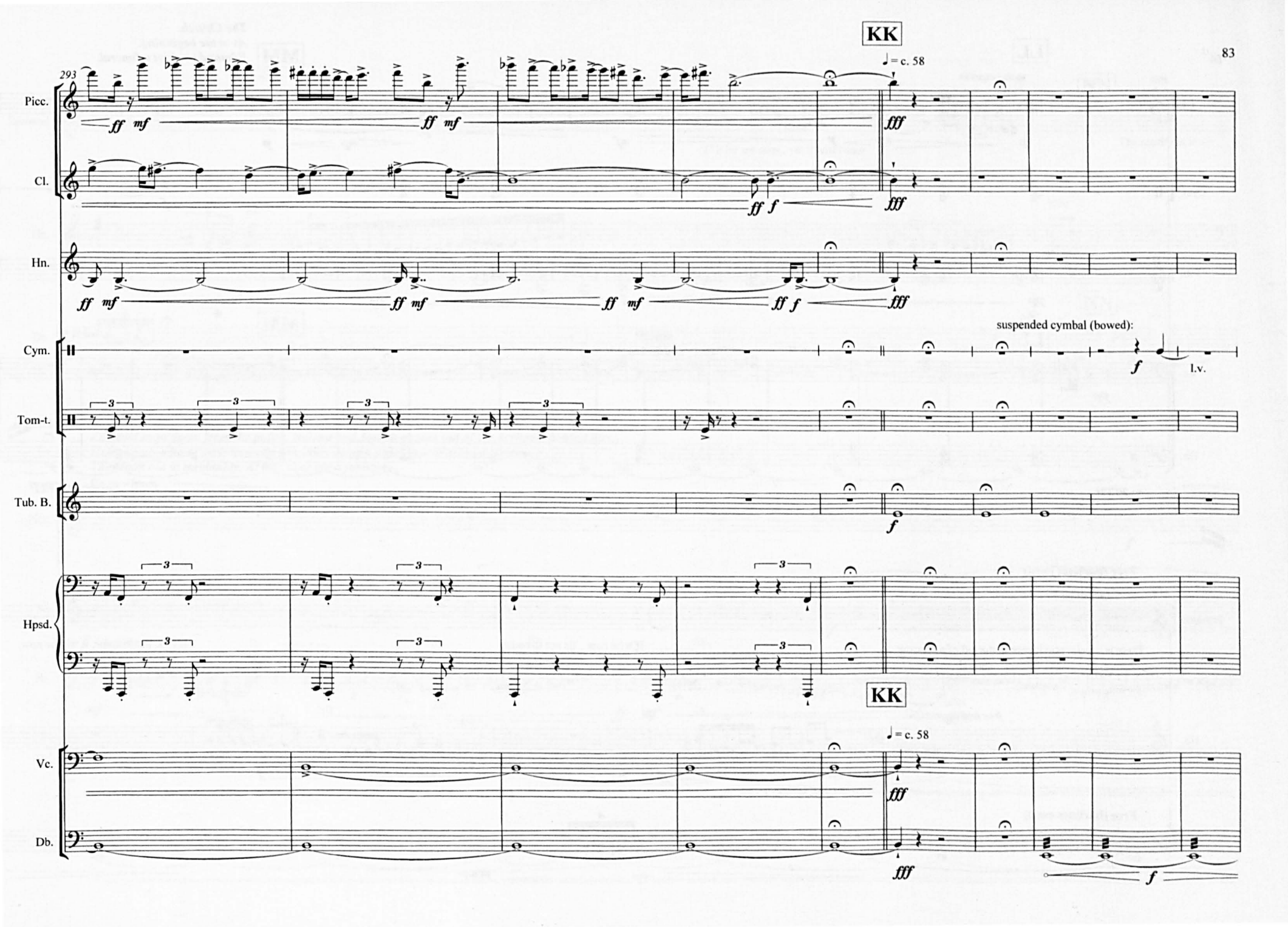

269
Picc.
Cl.
Hn.
Tom-t.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.
ff
mf
f

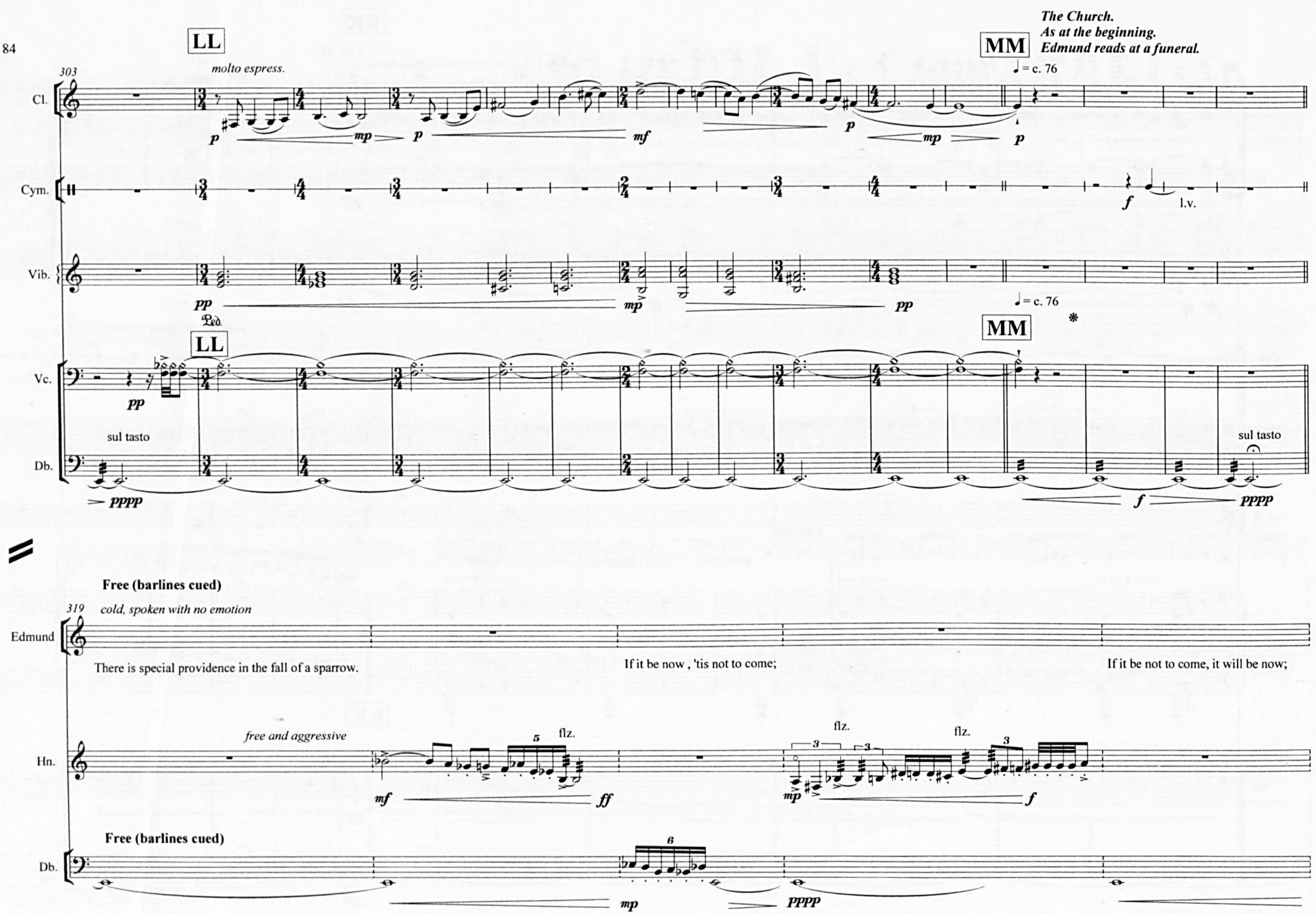

HH
273
Picc.
Cl.
Hn.
Tom-t.
Hpsd.
HH
Vc.
Db.
ff
mf
f

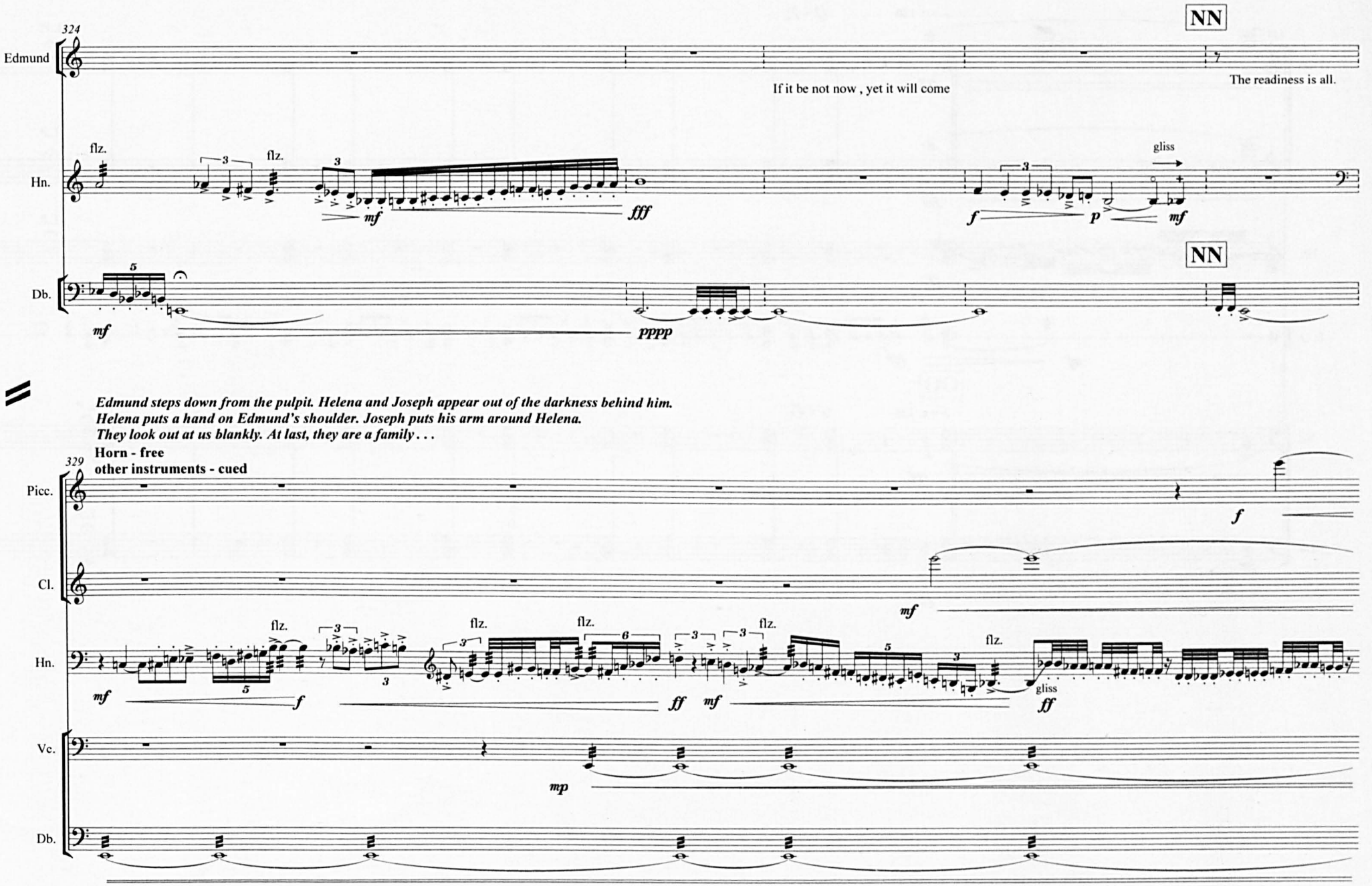

II
278
Picc.
Cl.
Hn.
Tom-t.
Hpsd.
II
Vc.
Db.
ff
mf
f
cresc. poco a poco

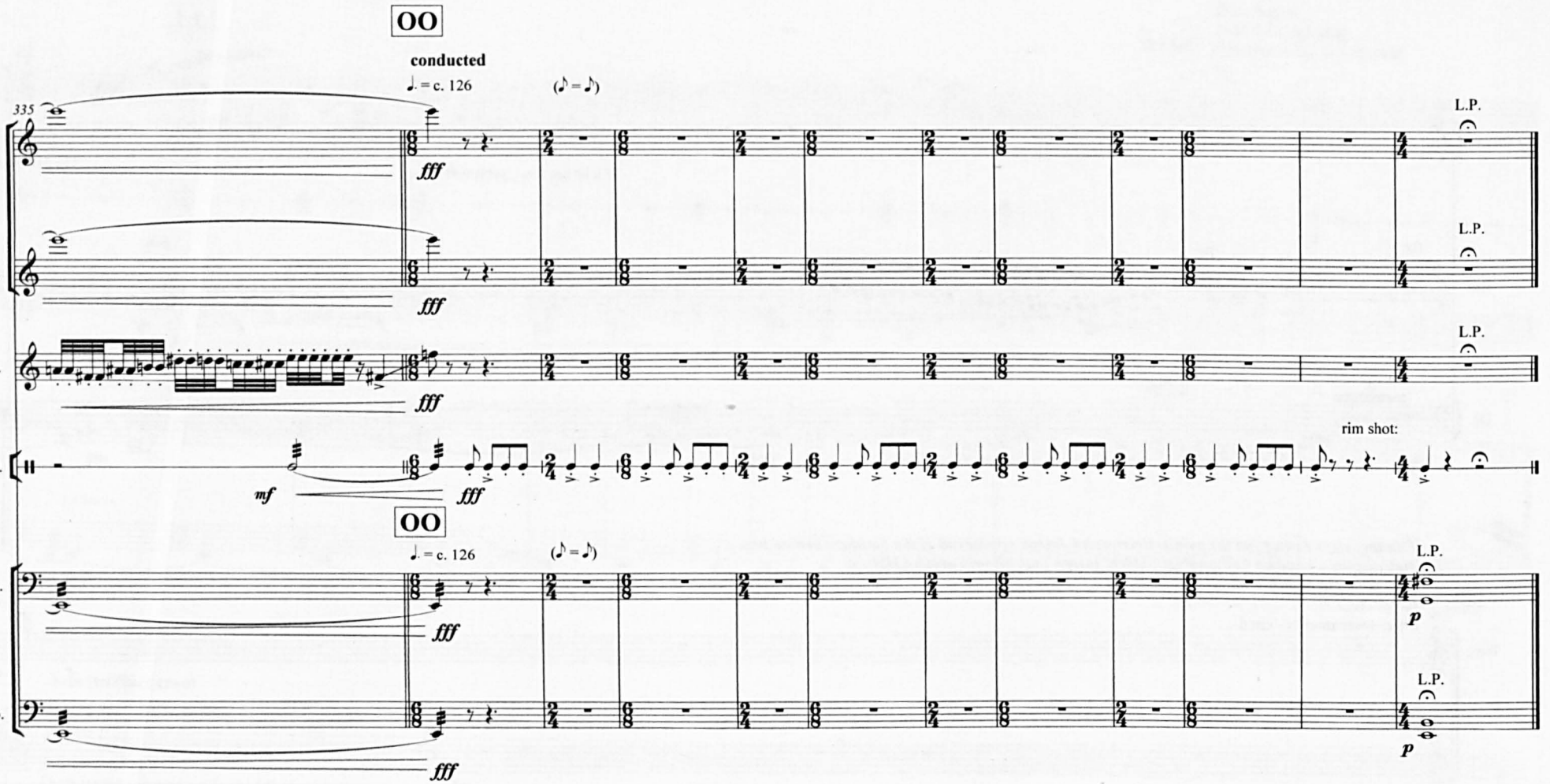

JJ
283
Picc.
Cl.
Hn.
Tom-t.
Hpsd.
JJ
Vc.
Db.
ff
mf
f


288
Picc.
Cl.
Hn.
Tom-t.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.
ff
mf
f


KK
293
♩ = c. 58
Picc.
Cl.
Hn.
Cym.
suspended cymbal (bowed):
l.v.
Tom-t.
Tub. B.
Hpsd.
KK
♩ = c. 58
Vc.
Db.


LL
molto espress.
MM
The Church.
As at the beginning.
Edmund reads at a funeral.
303
Cl.
Cym.
Vib.
Vc.
Db.
l.v.
sul tasto
sul tasto
Free (barlines cued)
319
cold, spoken with no emotion
Edmund
There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow.
If it be now , 'tis not to come;
If it be not to come, it will be now;
free and aggressive
flz.
flz.
flz.
Hn.
Free (barlines cued)
Db.


NN
324
Edmund
If it be not now , yet it will come
The readiness is all.
flz.
flz.
gliss
Hn.
mf
fff
f
p
mf
NN
Db.
mf
pppp
Edmund steps down from the pulpit. Helena and Joseph appear out of the darkness behind him.
Helena puts a hand on Edmund's shoulder. Joseph puts his arm around Helena.
They look out at us blankly. At last, they are a family . . .
Horn - free
other instruments - cued
329
Picc.
f
Cl.
mf
flz.
flz.
flz.
flz.
flz.
Hn.
mf
f
ff
mf
gliss
ff
Vc.
mp
Db.


OO
conducted
♩. = c. 126
(♪ = ♪)
335
Picc.
Cl.
Hn.
S. D.
Vc.
Db.
fff
mf
L.P.
rim shot:
OO
♩. = c. 126
(♪ = ♪)
p

I'm the King of the Castle

Opera in Two Acts

ACT I: Days 1-3

Music by Richard Peat (2006)

Libretto by Timothy Knapman
(Adapted from the novel by Susan Hill)

City University – School of Arts

(Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of PhD submission, March 2007)

I'm the King of the Castle

Score in C

Opera in Two Acts and Six Days

Duration: c. 60m

Charles Kingshaw	*An eleven year old boy*	Treble
Edmund Hooper	*An eleven year old boy*	Actor
Anthony Fielding	*An eleven year old boy*	Treble
Helena Kingshaw	*Charles' mother*	Soprano
Joseph Hooper	*Edmund's father*	Tenor

Ensemble: Flute, Clarinet in B♭ (doubling Bass Clarinet in B♭), Horn in F, Percussion (Tubular Bells, Large Suspended Cymbal, Sizzle Cymbal, Small Bass Drum, Snare Drum, Small Tam-tam, four Concert Tom-toms , Vibraphone), Harpsichord (doubling Chamber Organ), Cello, Double Bass

Programme Note

All the music of the opera is in some way connected with the ground bass of the aria, 'When I am laid in earth' from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. Sometimes this is made explicit, and at other times heavily concealed. There are many reasons why this was chosen as the basis for the musical material of the opera. The contour of Purcell's bass line, a chromatic descent spanning an octave, reflects Charles' gradual descent over the course of the story, as well as the manner of his death, a fatal fall from a tree. The nature of a chromatic bass line supporting a diatonic melody, so brilliantly demonstrated by Purcell, provides a way of linking the totally chromatic music in the opera with the more diatonic elements. The irony is that, in her final plaintive aria, Dido begs to be remembered; the implication at the end of *I'm the King of the Castle* is that Charles will soon be forgotten by the brave new family.

As this opera is about isolation and selfishness, each character is given a specific melodic mode which reflects their identity, and from which they rarely waver. Joseph sings in an octatonic mode which twists and turns chromatically, symbolising his repression and inner guilt. Helena sings in a Hungarian gypsy mode, with characteristic raised fourths and sixths, which reflects her unsettled past of constant travel. Charles sings in a natural minor, Aeolian mode reflective of his innocent, yet melancholy nature. Fielding sings in a Lydian mode, with bright sounding raised fourths which imbue his music with a feeling of unbridled optimism.

Each of the children is partnered by an instrument. This is particularly crucial to Edmund who never sings, and so is only expressed in music by his instrumental double: a horn, chosen for its association with hunting. Charles' instrumental partner is the clarinet, another reflection of his dark, yet unselfish melancholy. Fielding is always accompanied by a flute or piccolo, used as symbols of love. The children's instrumental doubles not only accompany them, but also express things about their personality which they cannot or will not express in words. The adults do not have such strong associations with specific instruments, although the cello gradually becomes associated with Helena as she grows in confidence, and the bass clarinet plays in sassy counterpoint with the double bass to express the sordid undercurrents of Joseph's climactic aria. A harpsichord is used throughout to reflect the antiquity of Warings, and bells begin each day to mark the passing of time.

Performance Note

The Part of Edmund

The part of the boy, Edmund, is spoken throughout. His speech should be natural and dramatic. The rhythms of his speech are not notated, but there are indications, in the score, as to where he should begin a line, and roughly how much time he has to deliver it.

Speech Canons

The 'speech canons' that occur in Act I, Day 1 and Act II, Day 4 should be recited off stage and should not be in character. They should sound like a texture with certain words, in the onomatopoeic text, appearing to come to the fore. While the speech recitation should be natural, loud and dramatic, it should never obscure any speaking or singing that takes place on stage. If the singer reaches the end of the text before the cut-off point, then they should start again at any point in the text. The recitation should never be in unison.

I'm the King of the Castle - Day 1

Timothy Knapman

Richard Peat (2006)

♩= c. 76

Edmund Hooper reading at a funeral
Joseph Hooper, his father sitting in a pew.

Free (barlines cued)

Charles

Edmund

cold, spoken with no emotion

There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow.

If it be now, 'tis not to come;

Anthony

Helena

Joseph

Flute

Clarinet in B♭

Horn

free and aggressive

5

flz.

mf

ff

Cymbals

suspended cymbal (bowed):

f

l.v.

Tubular Bells

f

Harpsichord

♩= c. 76

Free (barlines cued)

Violoncello

Double Bass

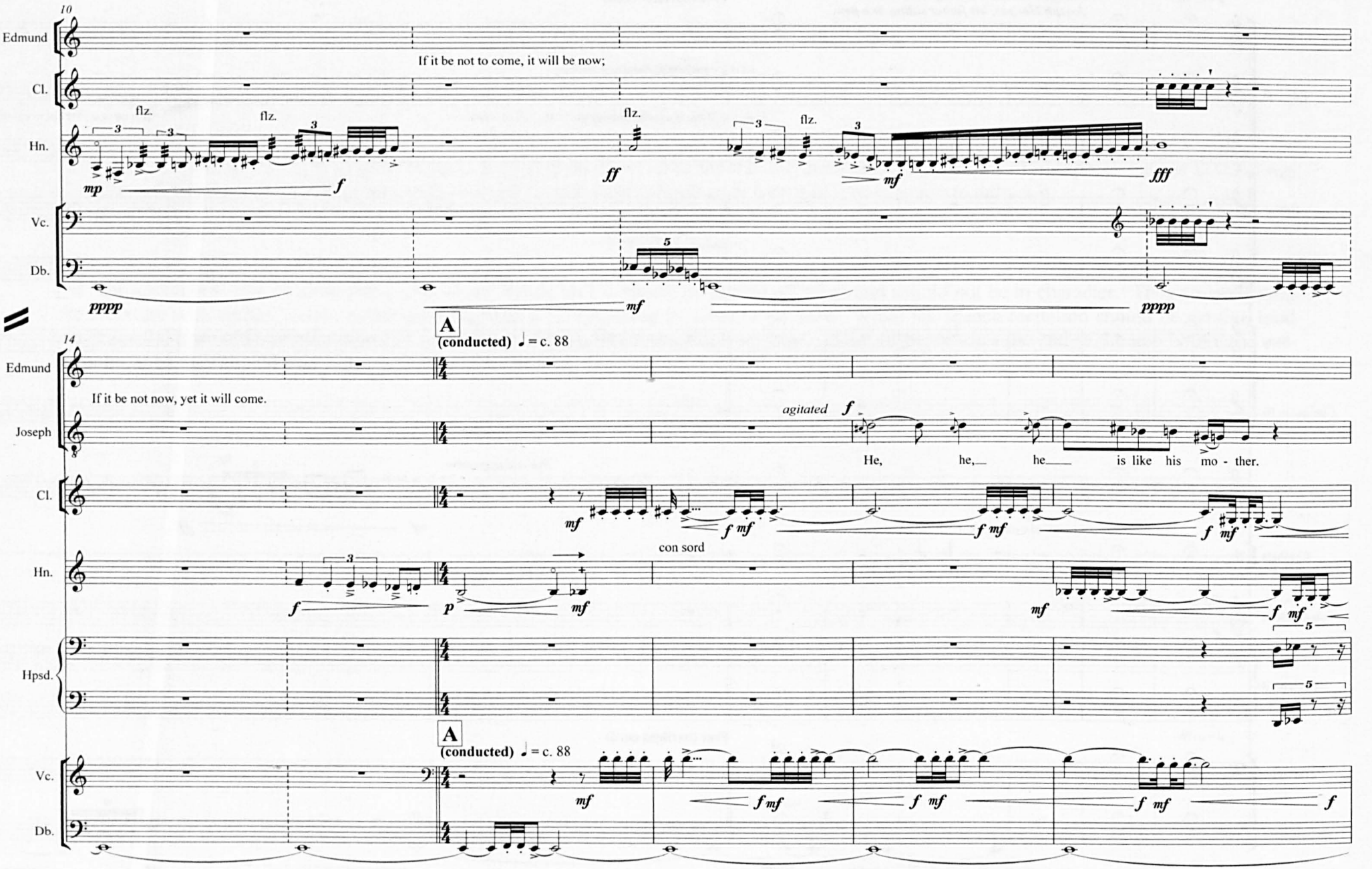
sul tasto

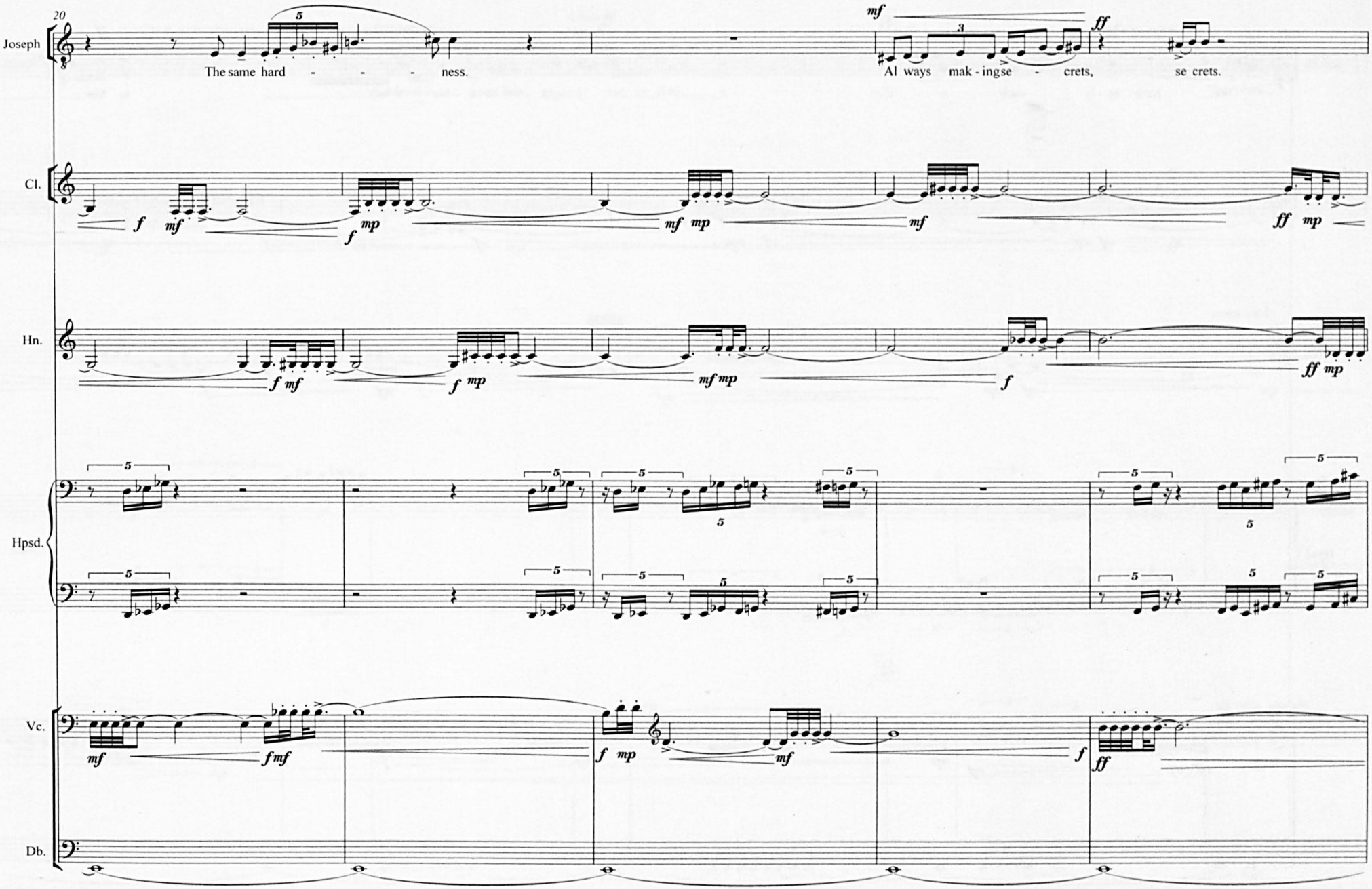
f

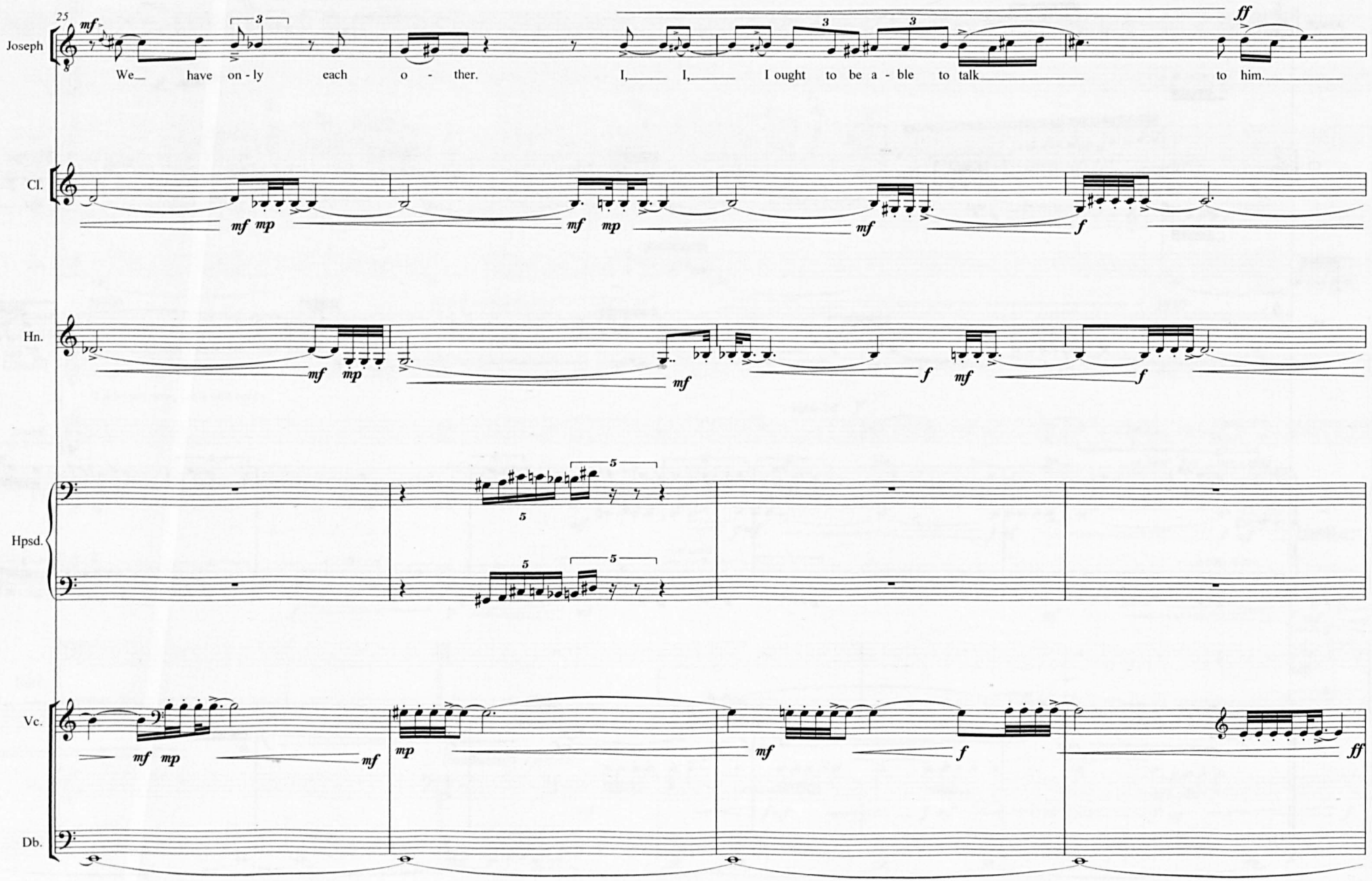
pppp

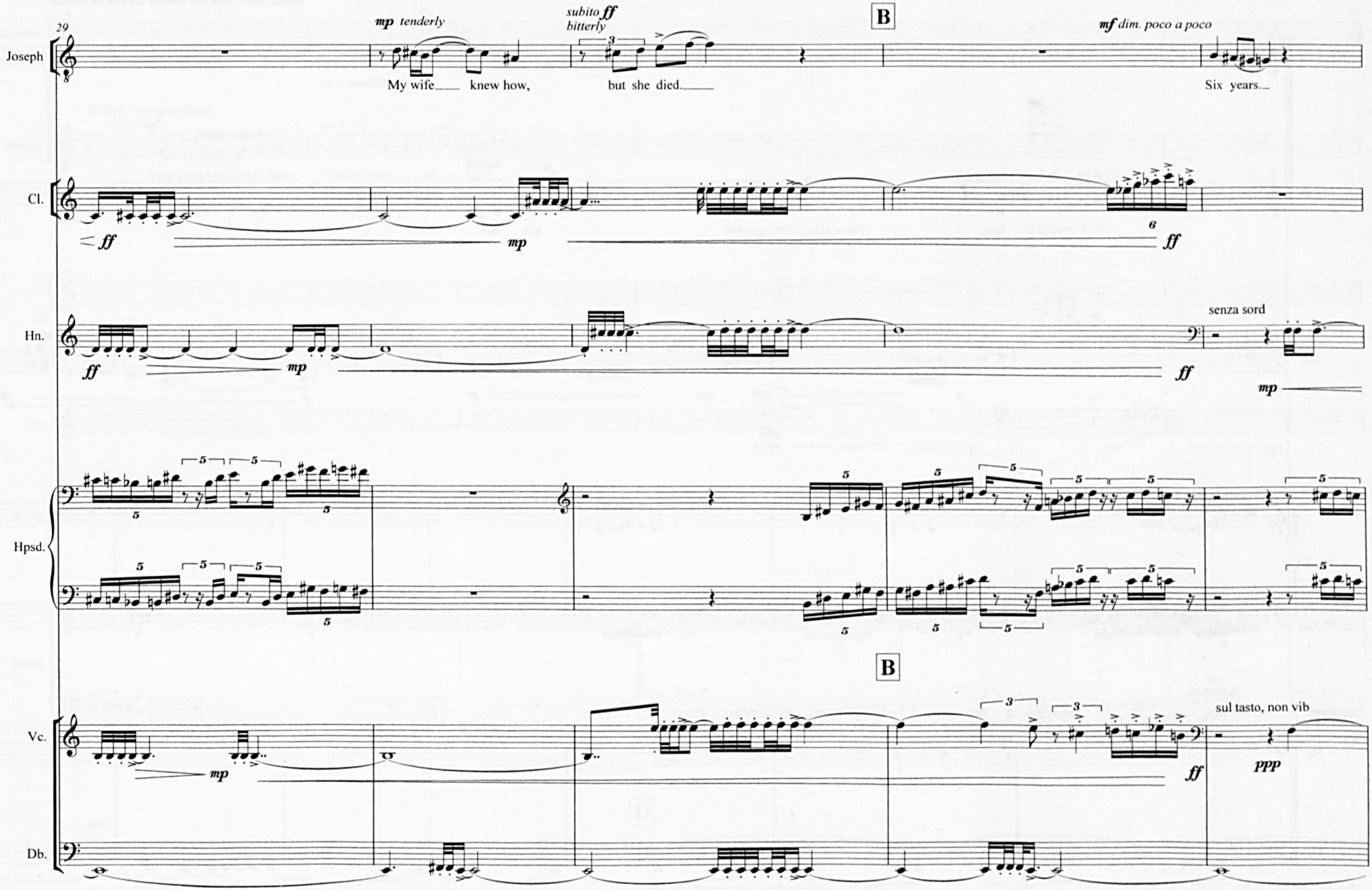
6

mp

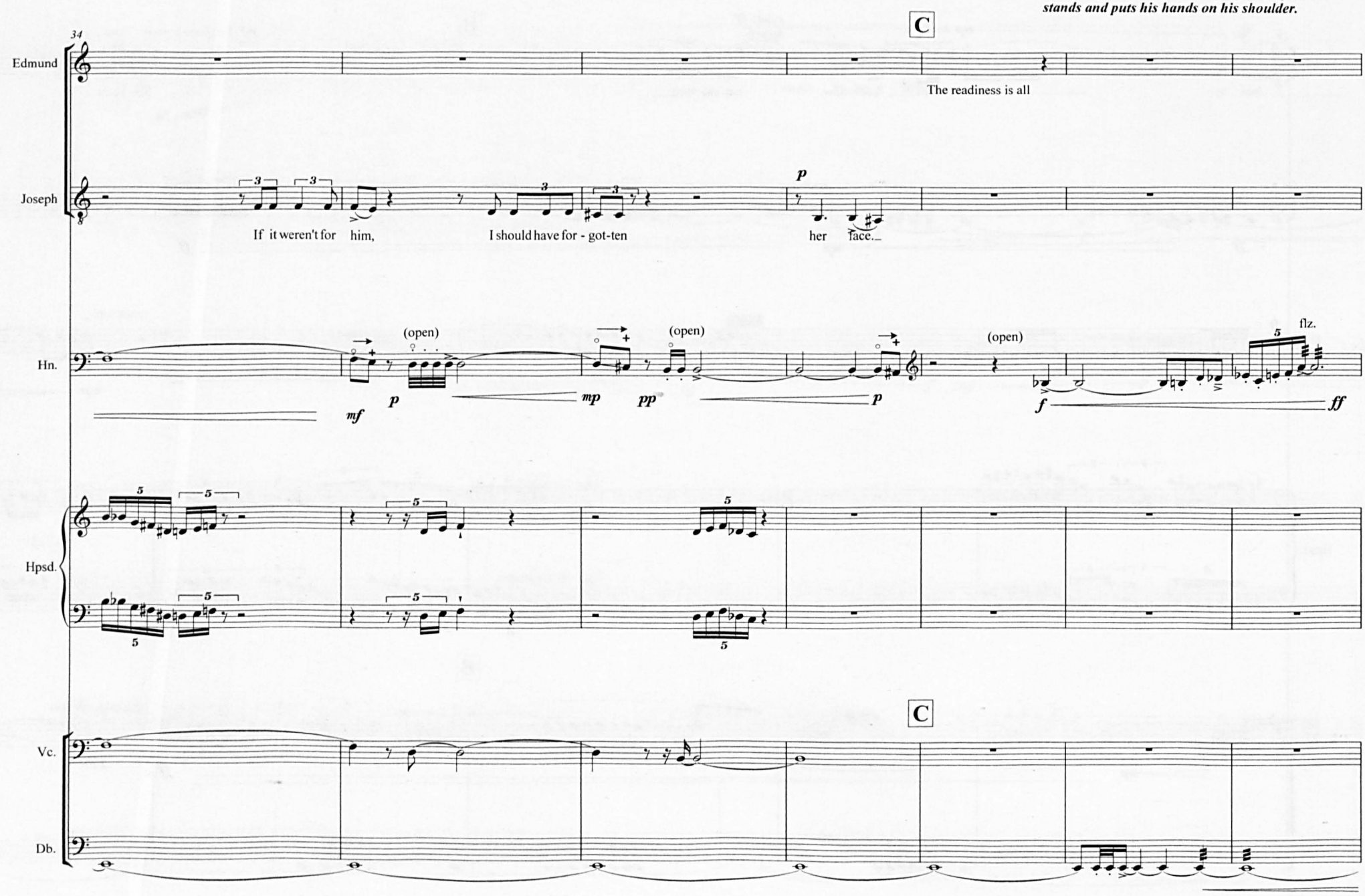

10
Edmund
If it be not to come, it will be now;
Cl.
flz.
flz.
flz.
flz.
Hn.
mp
f
ff
mf
fff
Vc.
Db.
pppp
mf
pppp
A
(conducted) ♩ = c. 88
14
Edmund
If it be not now, yet it will come.
Joseph
agitated
f
He, he, he is like his mo - ther.
Cl.
con sord
Hn.
Hpsd.
A
(conducted) ♩ = c. 88
Vc.
Db.


20
Joseph
The same hard - - - ness.
Al ways mak - ing se - crets, se crets.
Cl.
Hn.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.


25
Joseph
Cl.
Hn.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.
We have on - ly each o - ther.
I, I, I ought to be a - ble to talk to him.


29
Joseph
mp tenderly
My wife knew how,
subito ff
bitterly
but she died.
B
mf dim. poco a poco
Six years.
Cl.
ff
mp
ff
Hn.
ff
mp
ff
senza sord
mp
Hpsd.
B
Vc.
mp
ff
sul tasto, non vib
ppp
Db.

Edmund gets down from the pulpit. His father stands and puts his hands on his shoulder.



Edmund and Joseph leave the church and walk the short distance to an ugly, red brick house.

D

41

Edmund

I am never afraid.

formal, conversational

Joseph

mf

Your grand-fa-ther is dead. You must not be a- fraid.

Cl.

pp *mp*

Hn.

ppp *p* *pp* *mp*

suspended cymbal:

bowed

Cym.

f

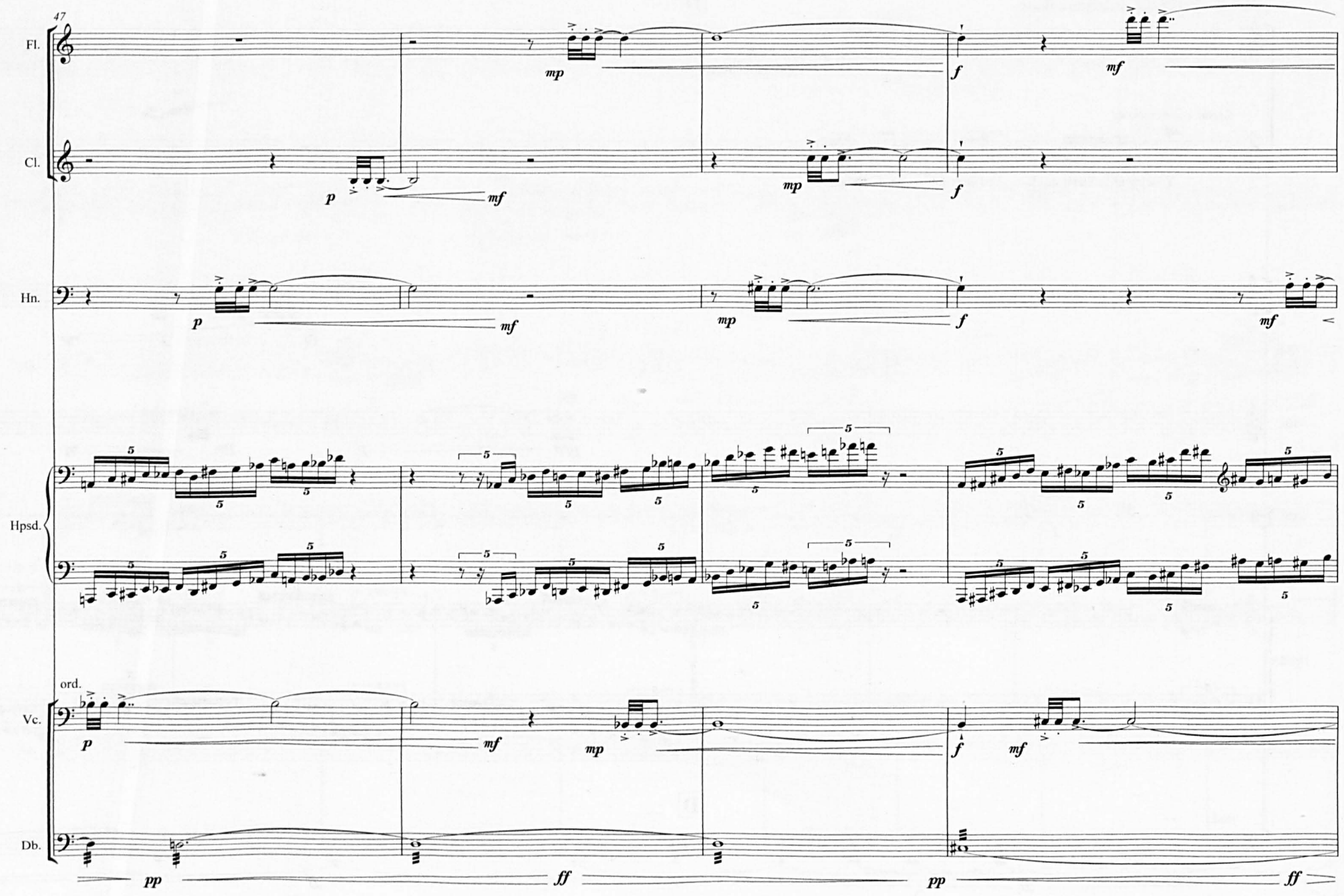
Hpsd.

D

(ord.)

Db.

ff *pp* *ff*


47
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Hpsd.
ord.
Vc.
Db.
p
mf
mp
f
pp
ff

E

ff declamatory

51

Joseph

This is War-ings,

Fl.

Cl.

Hn.

Hpsd.

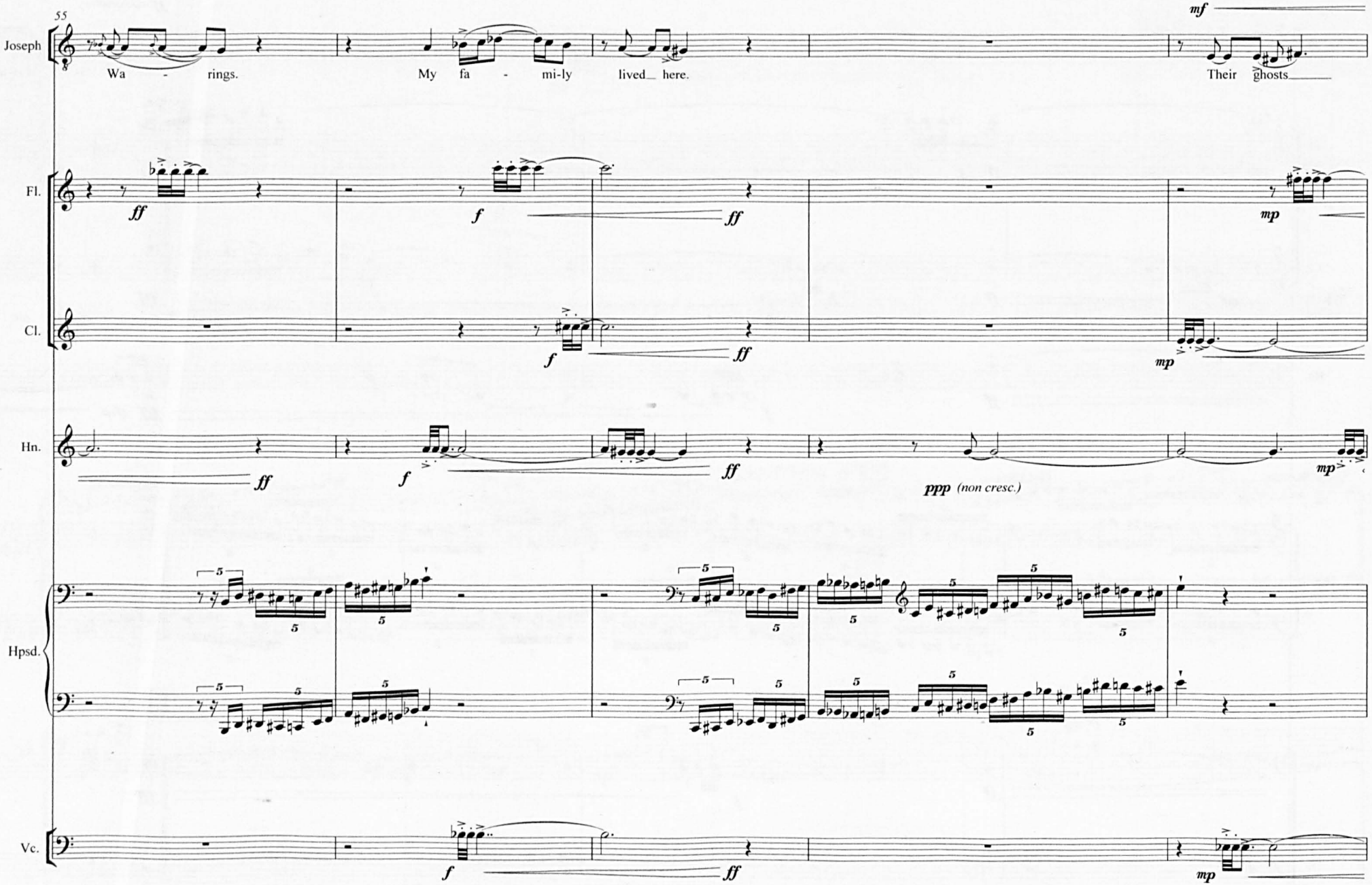
Vc.

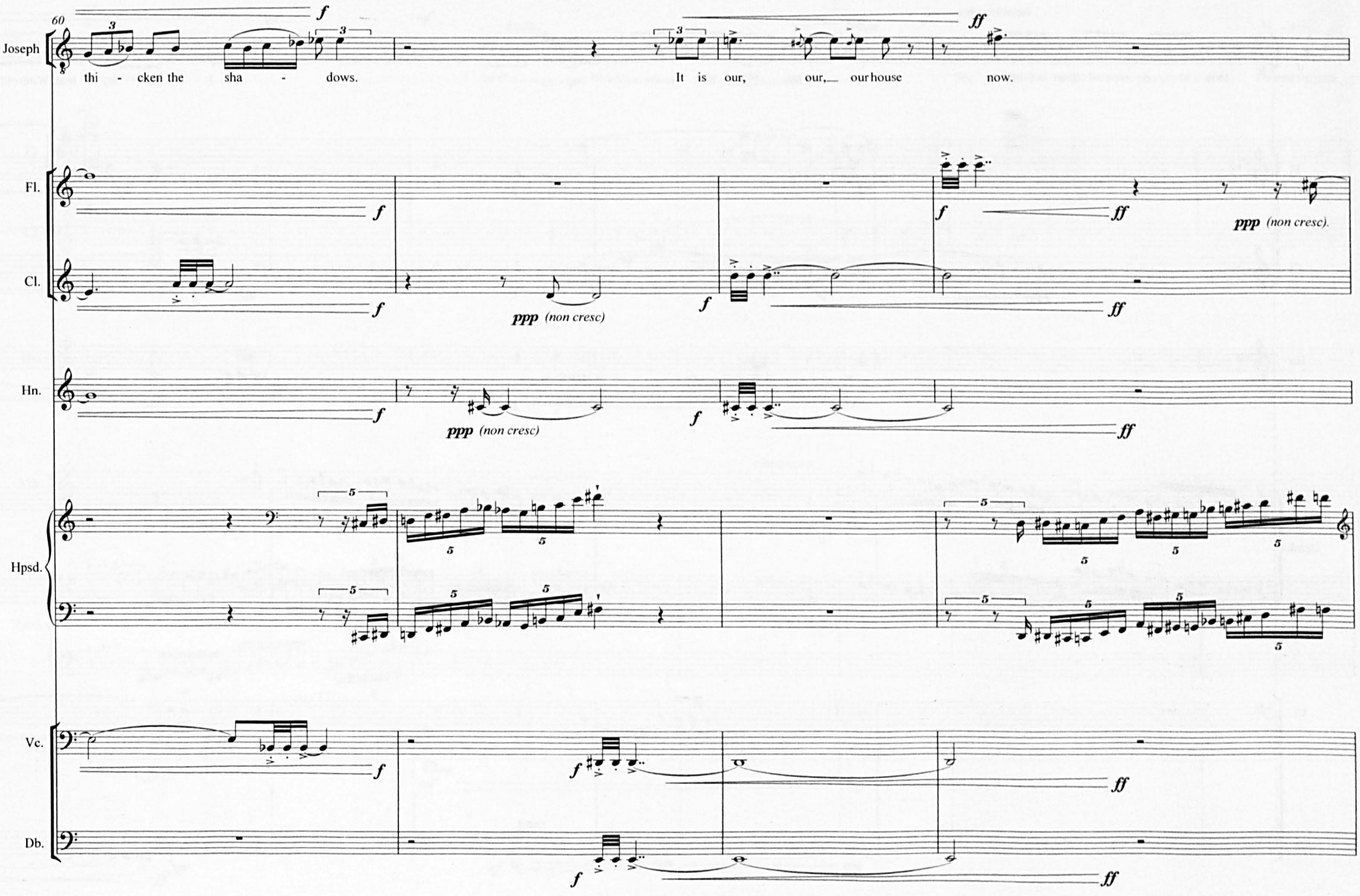
Db.

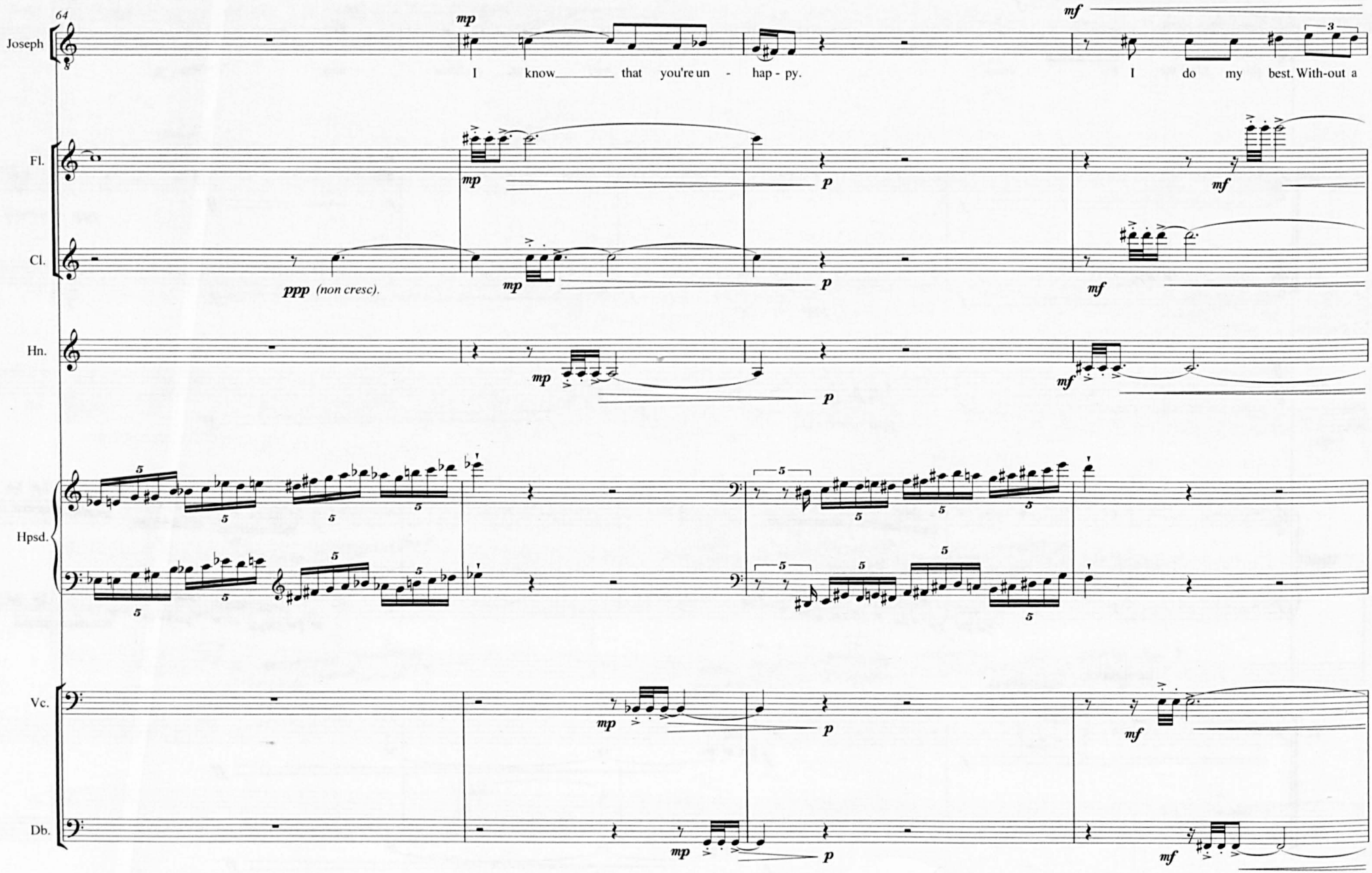
mf *ff* *f* *fff* *sf=p* *p*

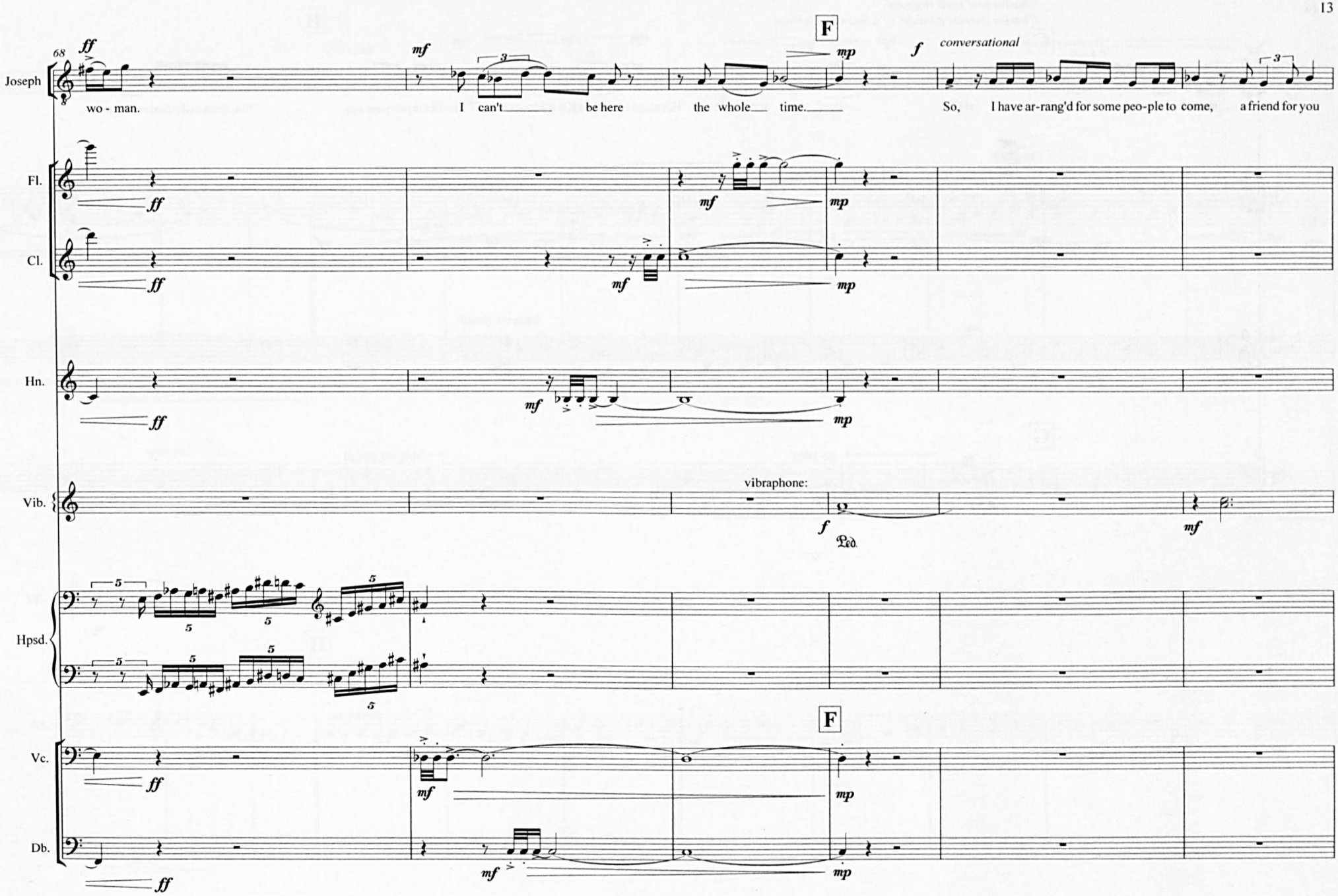
gliss

E

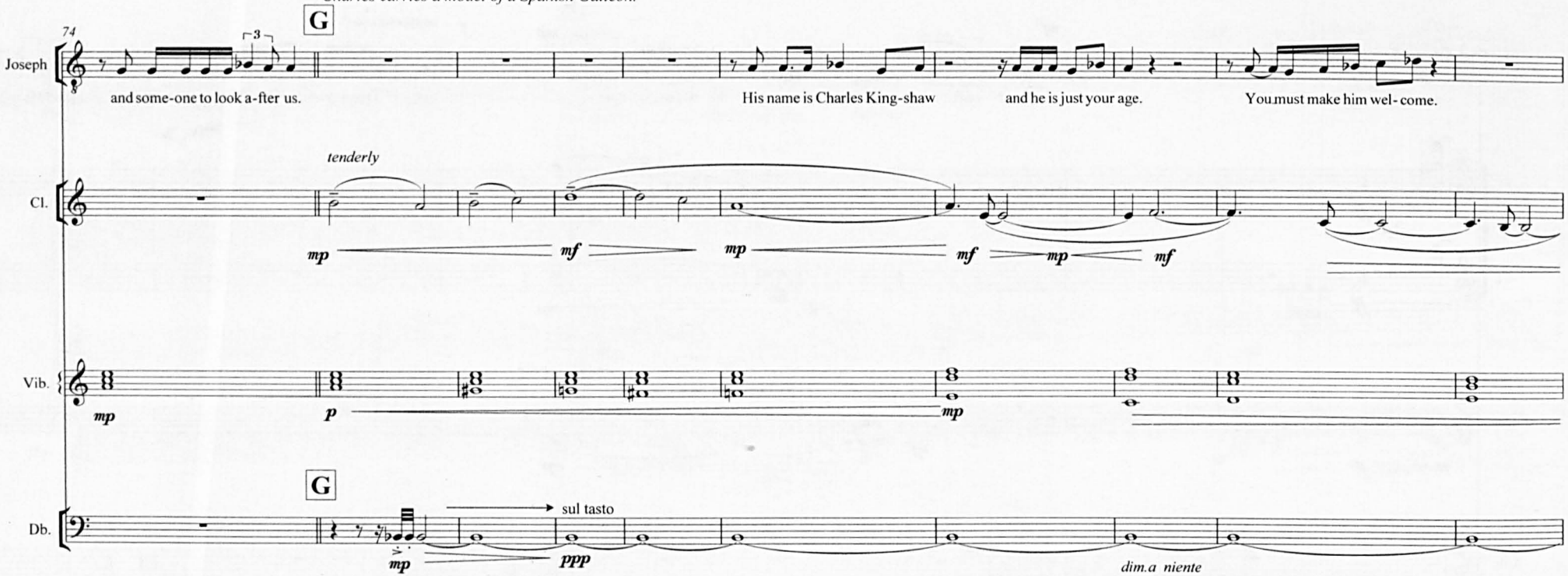

55
Joseph
Wa - rings.
My fa - mi-ly lived here.
Their ghosts
mf
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Hpsd.
Vc.
ff
f
mp
ppp (non cresc.)

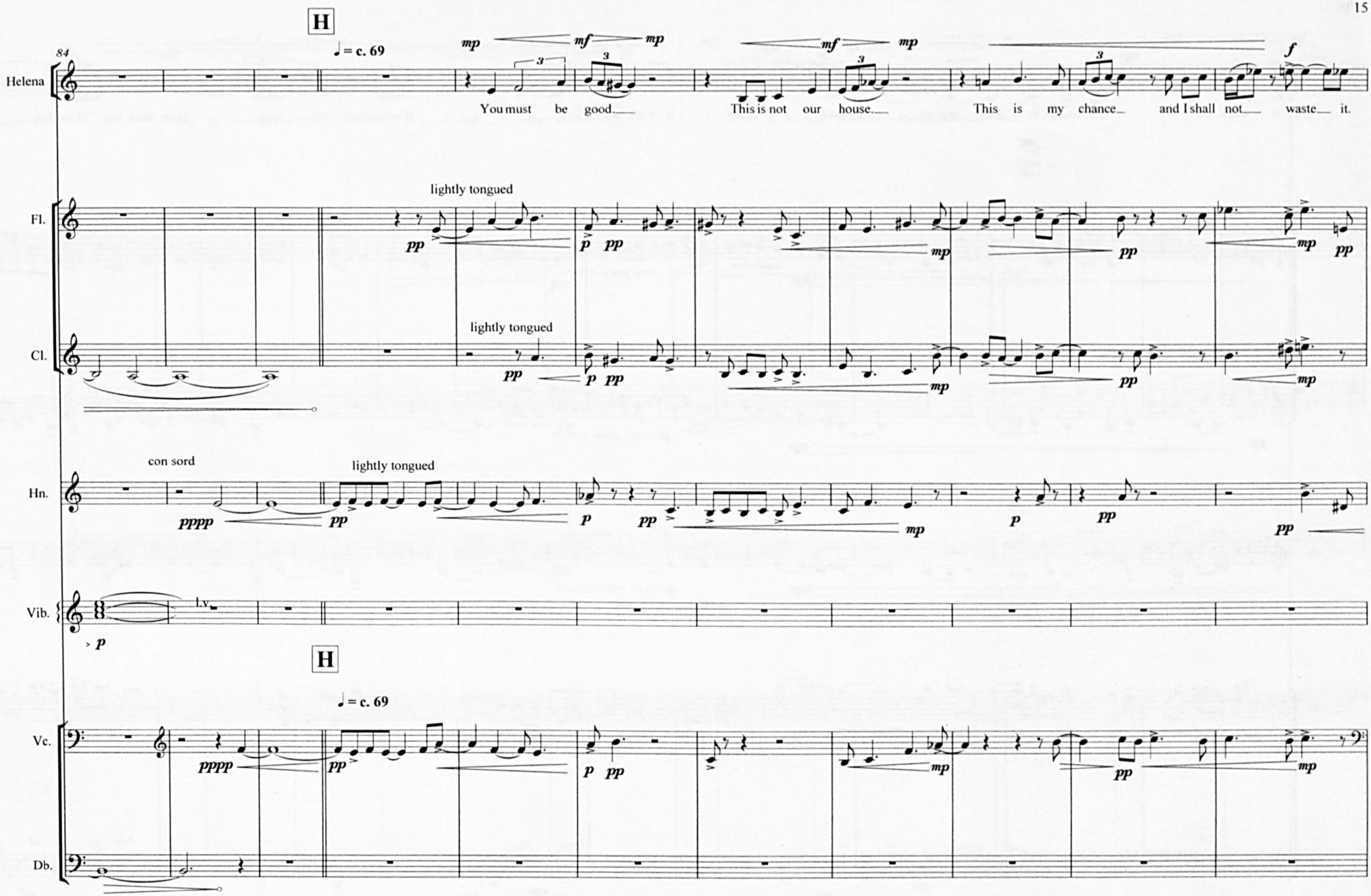

60
Joseph
thi - cken the sha - dows.
It is our, our, our house now.
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.
f
ff
ppp (non cresc).
ppp (non cresc)

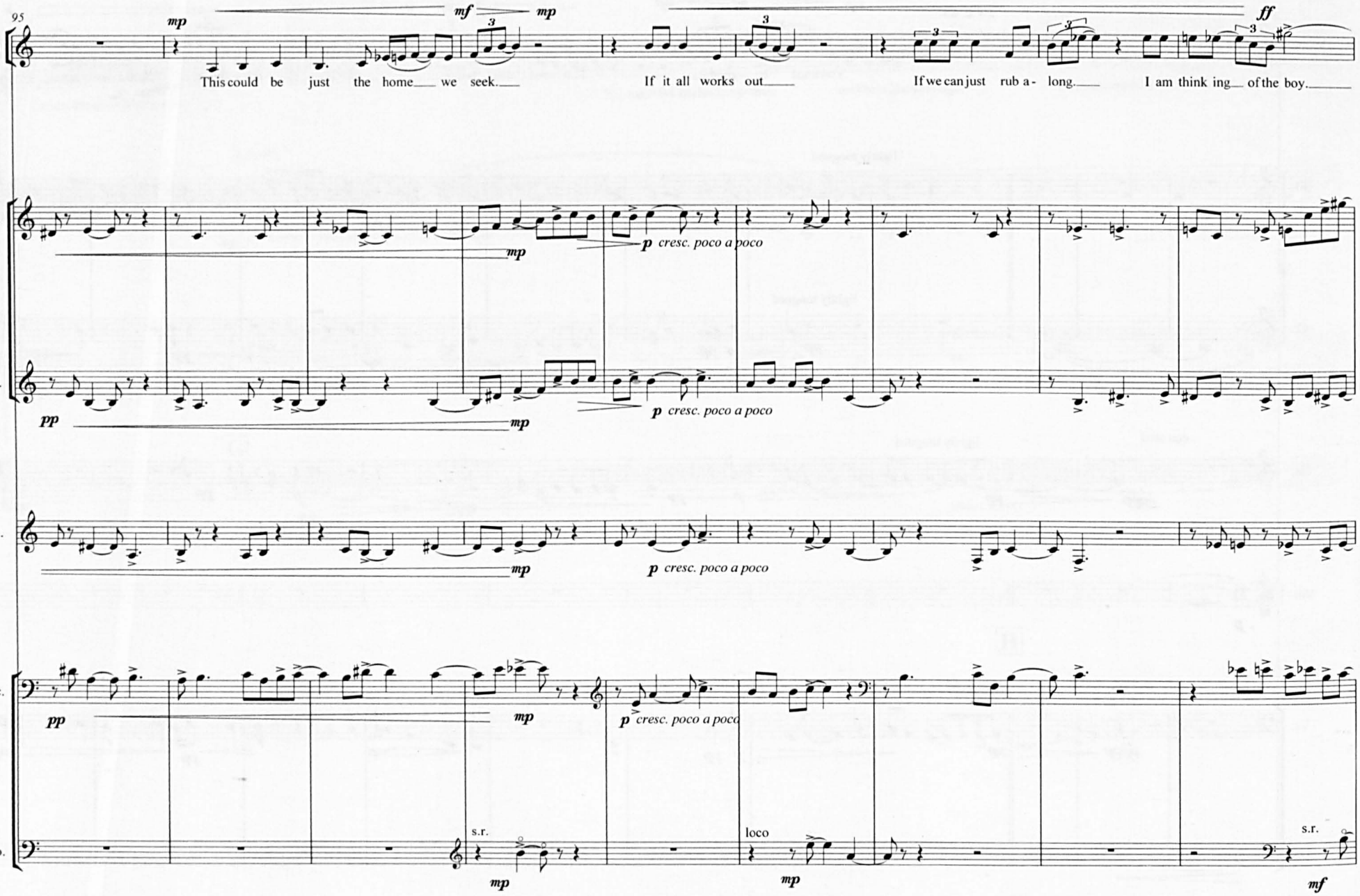

64
Joseph
mp
I know that you're un - hap - py.
mf
I do my best. With-out a
Fl.
Cl.
ppp (non cresc).
Hn.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.
p

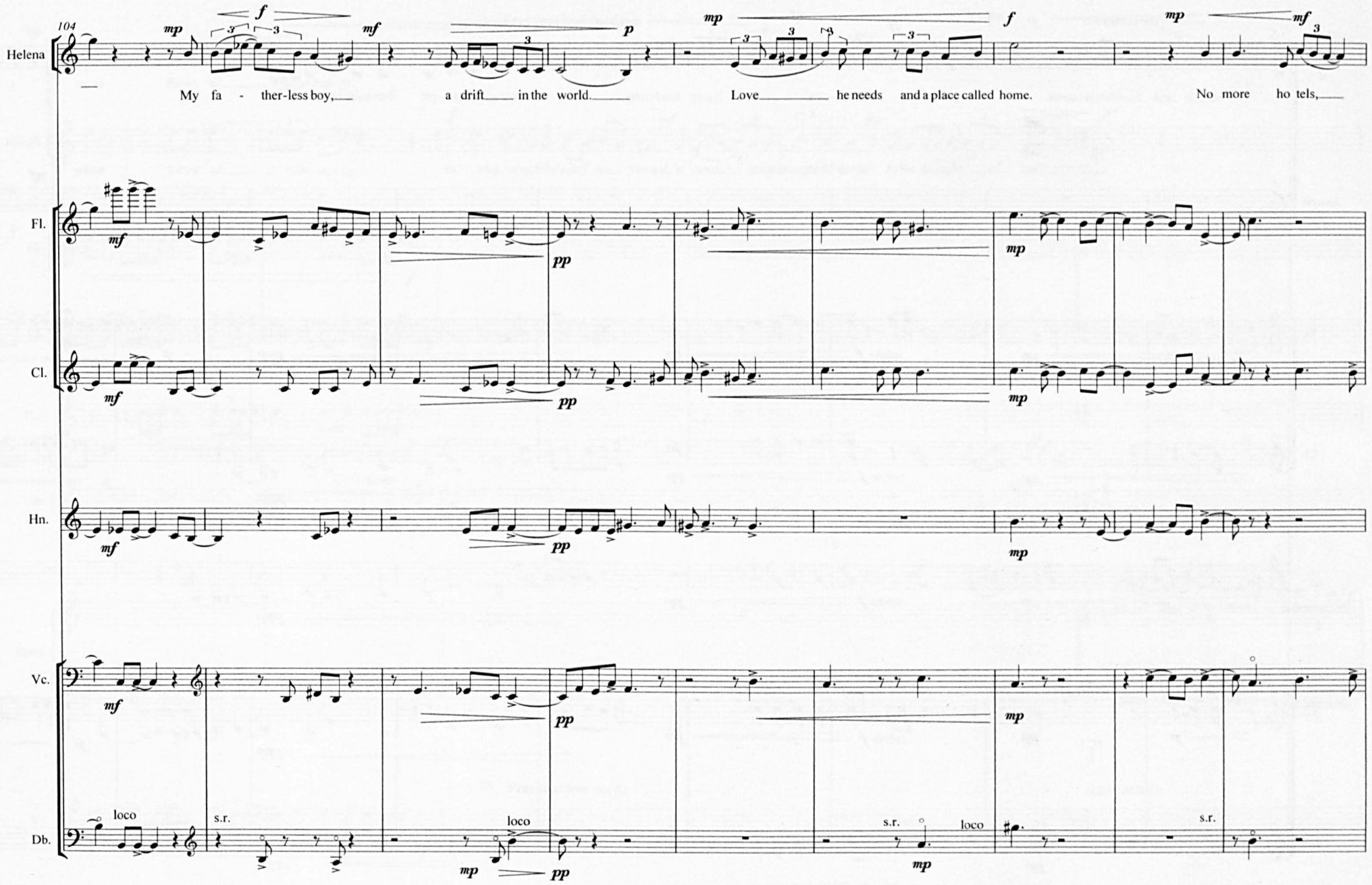

68
Joseph
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Vib.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.
F
F
conversational
vibraphone:
Ped.
wo - man.
I can't be here the whole time.
So, I have ar-rang'd for some peo-ple to come, a friend for you
ff
mf
mp
f

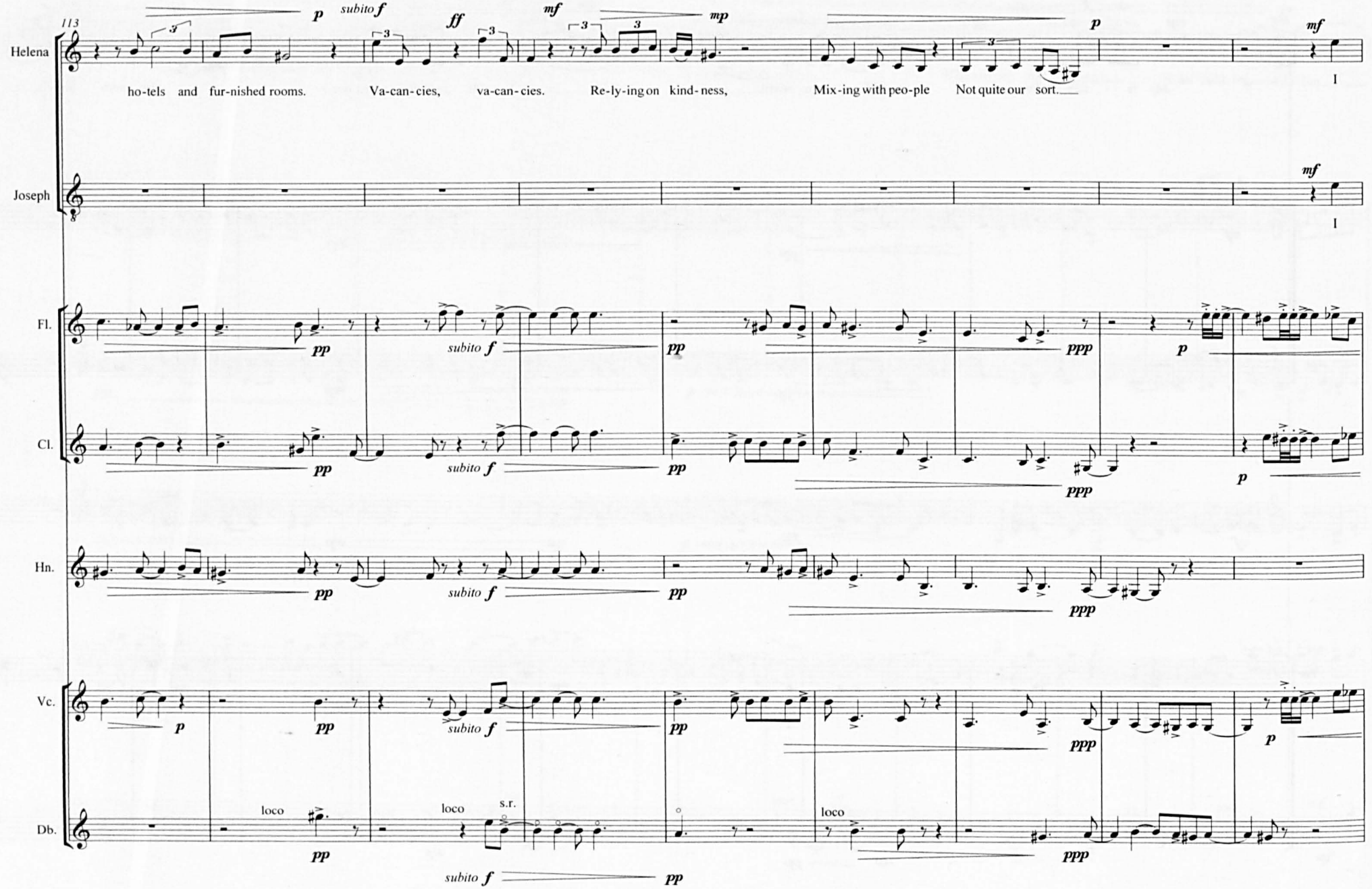
Lights up on Mrs Helena Kingshaw, her son
Charles and their luggage.
Charles carries a model of a Spanish Galleon.

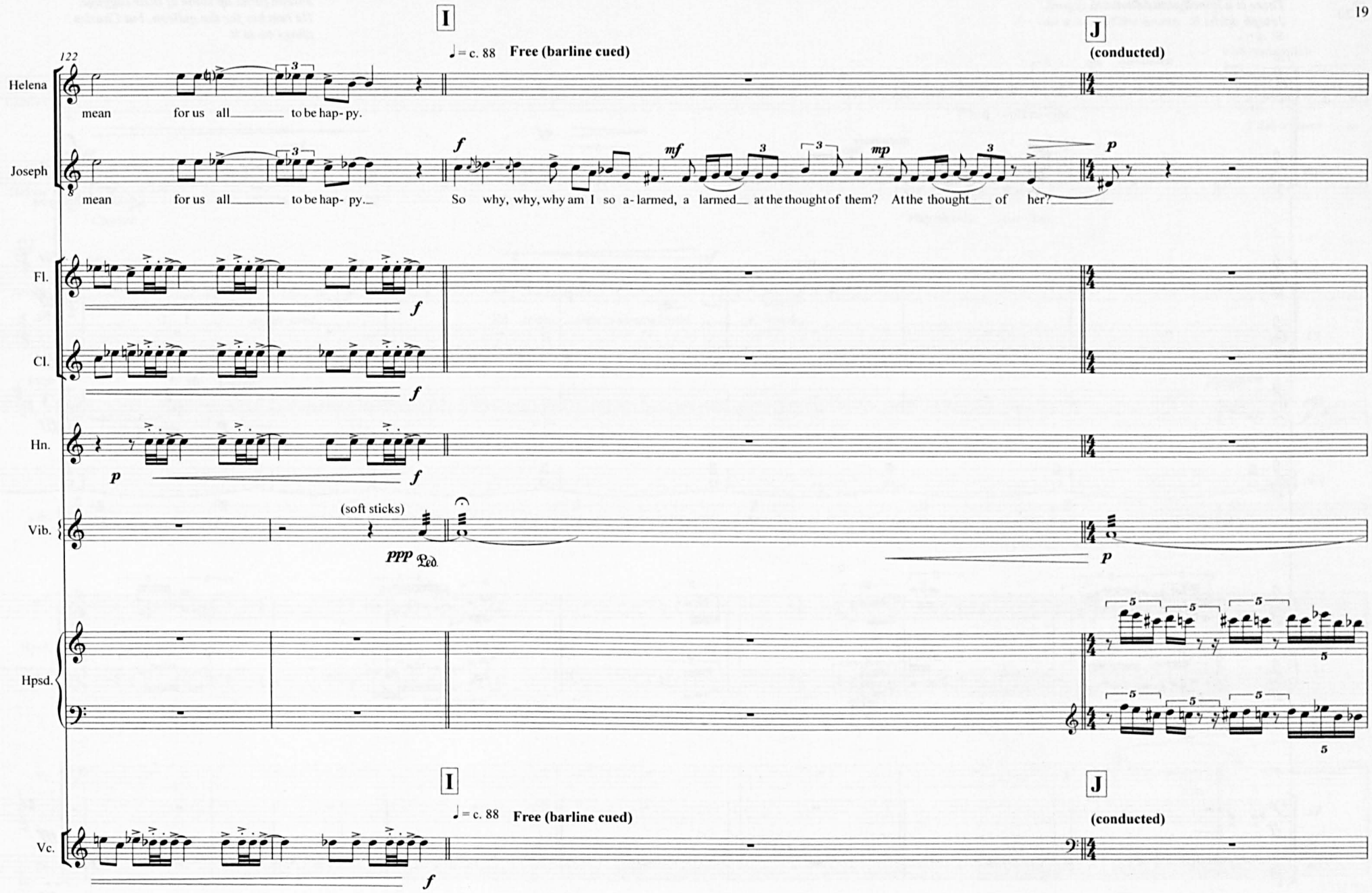



H
84
♩ = c. 69
Helena
You must be good.
This is not our house.
This is my chance and I shall not waste it.
Fl.
lightly tongued
Cl.
lightly tongued
Hn.
con sord
lightly tongued
Vib.
l.v.
H
♩ = c. 69
Vc.
Db.


95
Helena
mp
mf
mp
ff
This could be just the home we seek.
If it all works out
If we can just rub a - long.
I am think ing of the boy.
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Vc.
Db.
pp
mp
p cresc. poco a poco
s.r.
loco
mf

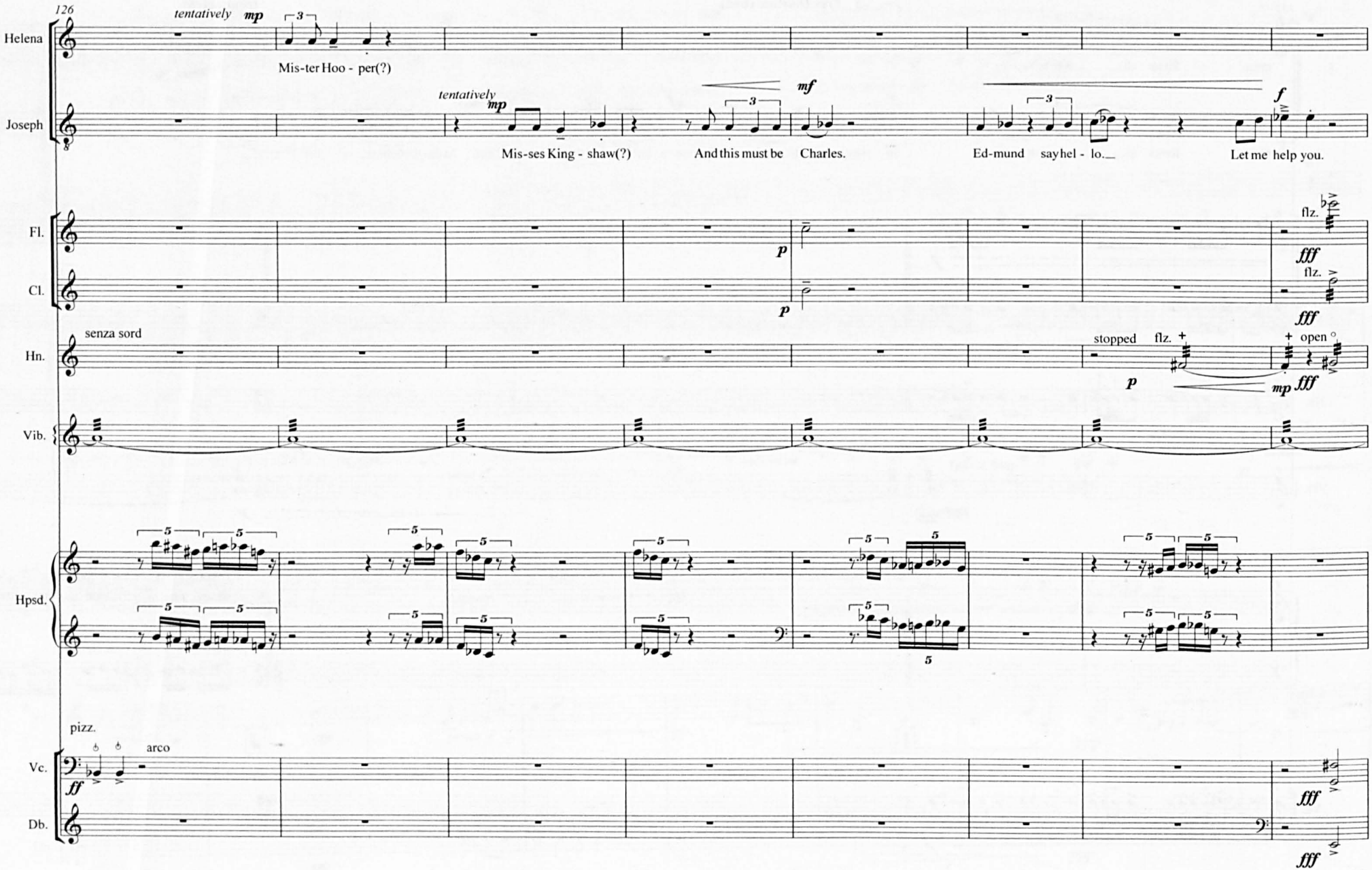

104
Helena
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Vc.
Db.
My fa - ther-less boy, a drift in the world. Love he needs and a place called home. No more ho tels,
loco
s.r.
loco
s.r.
loco
s.r.


113
Helena
Joseph
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Vc.
Db.
ho-tels and fur-nished rooms.
Va-can-cies, va-can-cies.
Re-ly-ing on kind-ness,
Mix-ing with peo-ple
Not quite our sort.
p
subito f
ff
mf
mp
pp
ppp
loco
s.r.


I
J
122
♩= c. 88 Free (barline cued)
(conducted)
Helena
mean for us all to be hap- py.
Joseph
mean for us all to be hap- py.
So why, why, why am I so a- larmed, a larmed at the thought of them? At the thought of her?
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Vib.
(soft sticks)
Hpsd.
Vc.

There is a knock at the door.
Joseph opens it.

Joseph picks up some of their luggage.
He reaches for the galleon, but Charles clings on to it.



Joseph leads Helena off on a tour of the house. **K**

134

Charles

Helena

Joseph

Cl.

Vib.

Hpsd.

Vc.

Db.

♩ = c. 58

with resignation

mp

I did-n't want to

ff gliss.

Charles!

mf

Play nice-ly, dar-ling.

mf tenderly ***mp*** ***mf*** ***mp***

I, I un-der stand. Ed mund show your new friend a round.

espress.

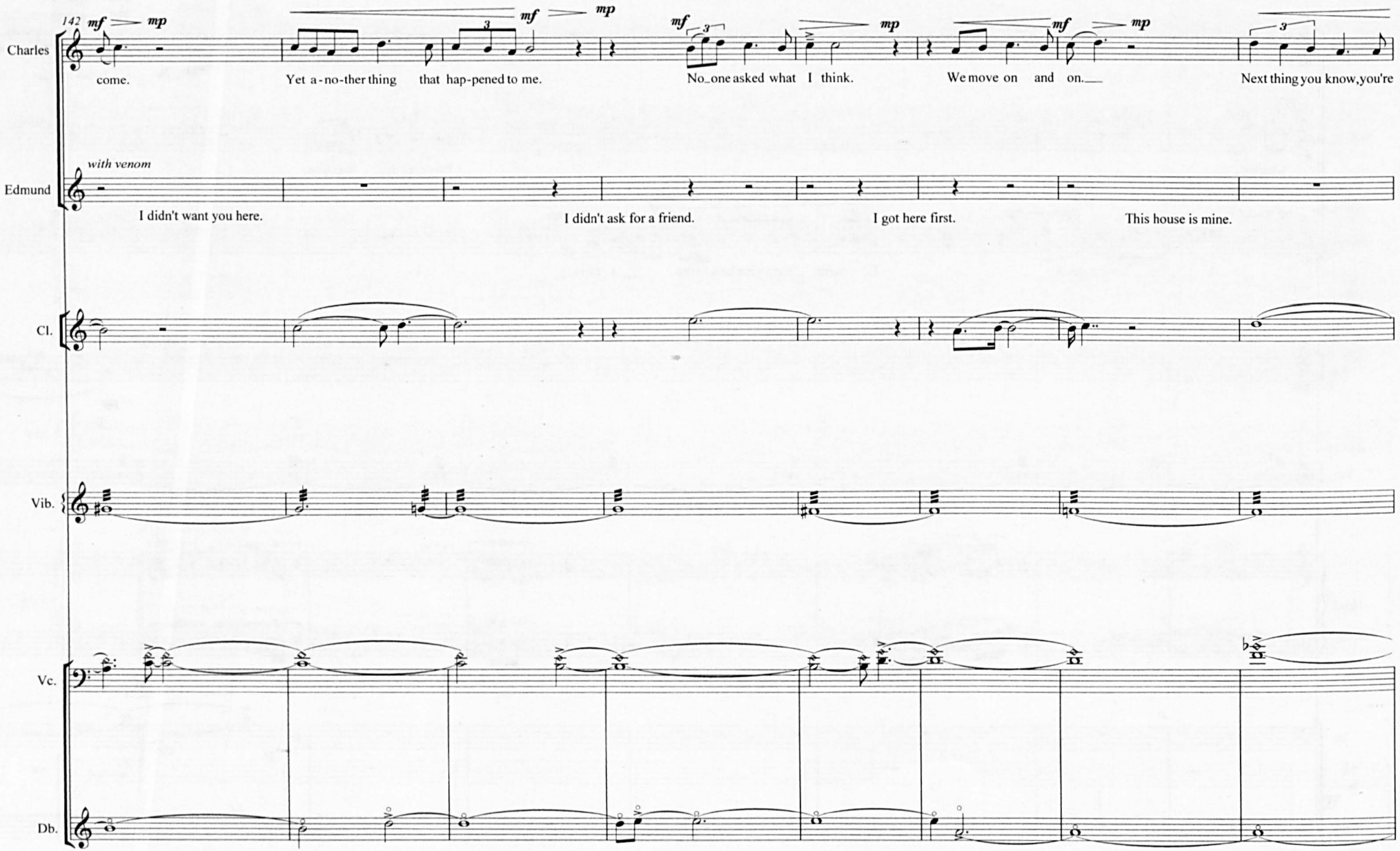
pp

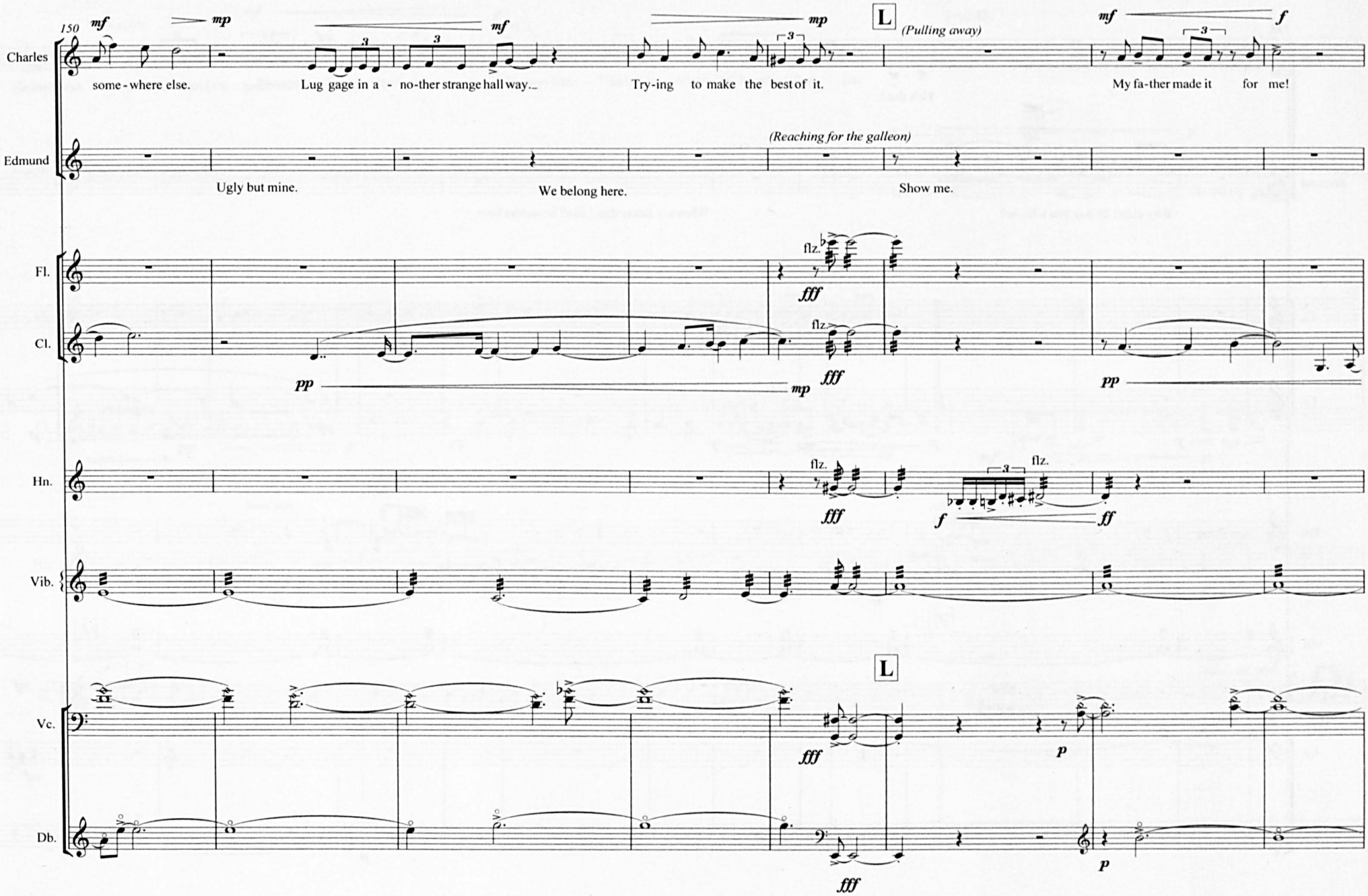
K ♩ = c. 58

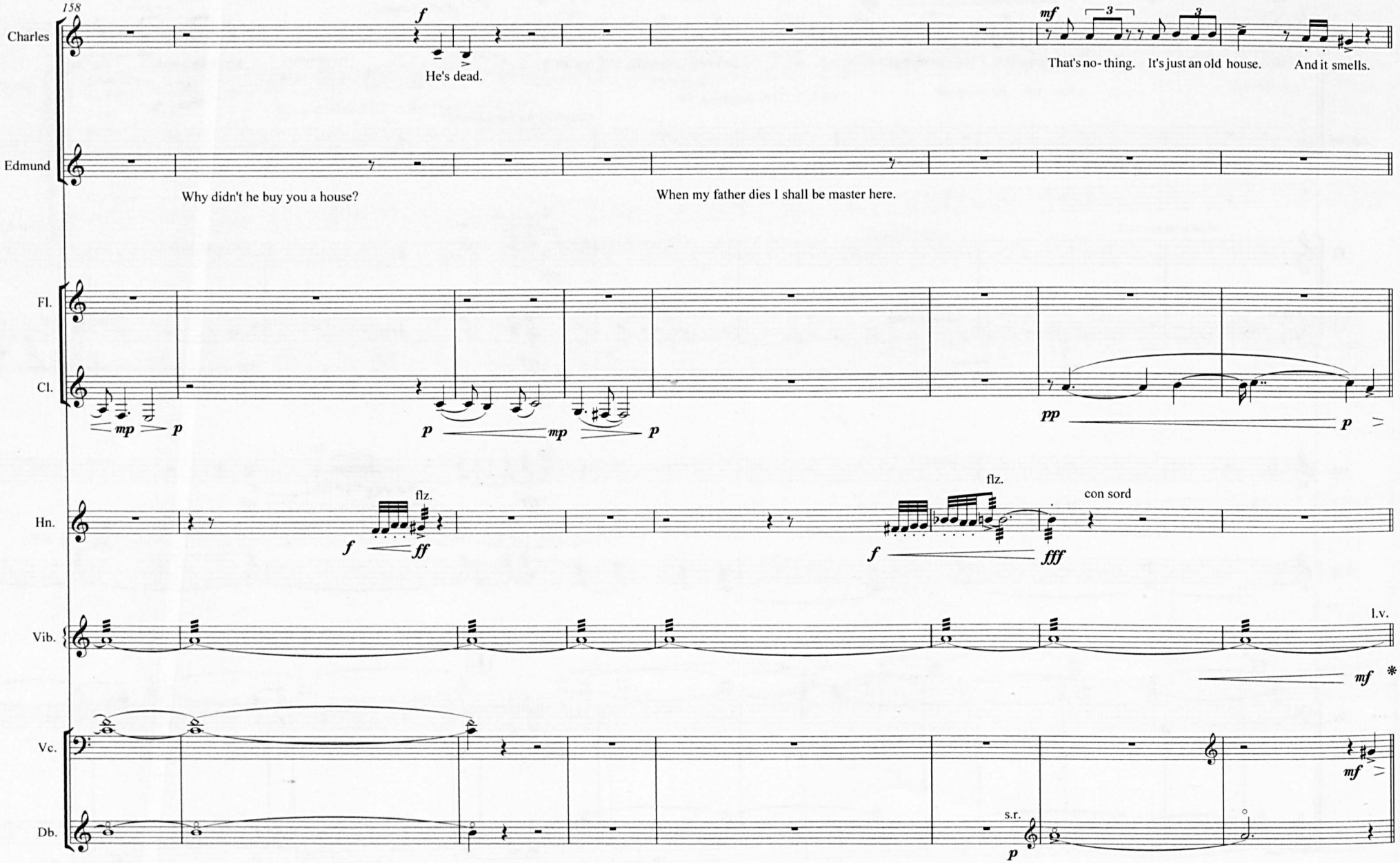
p

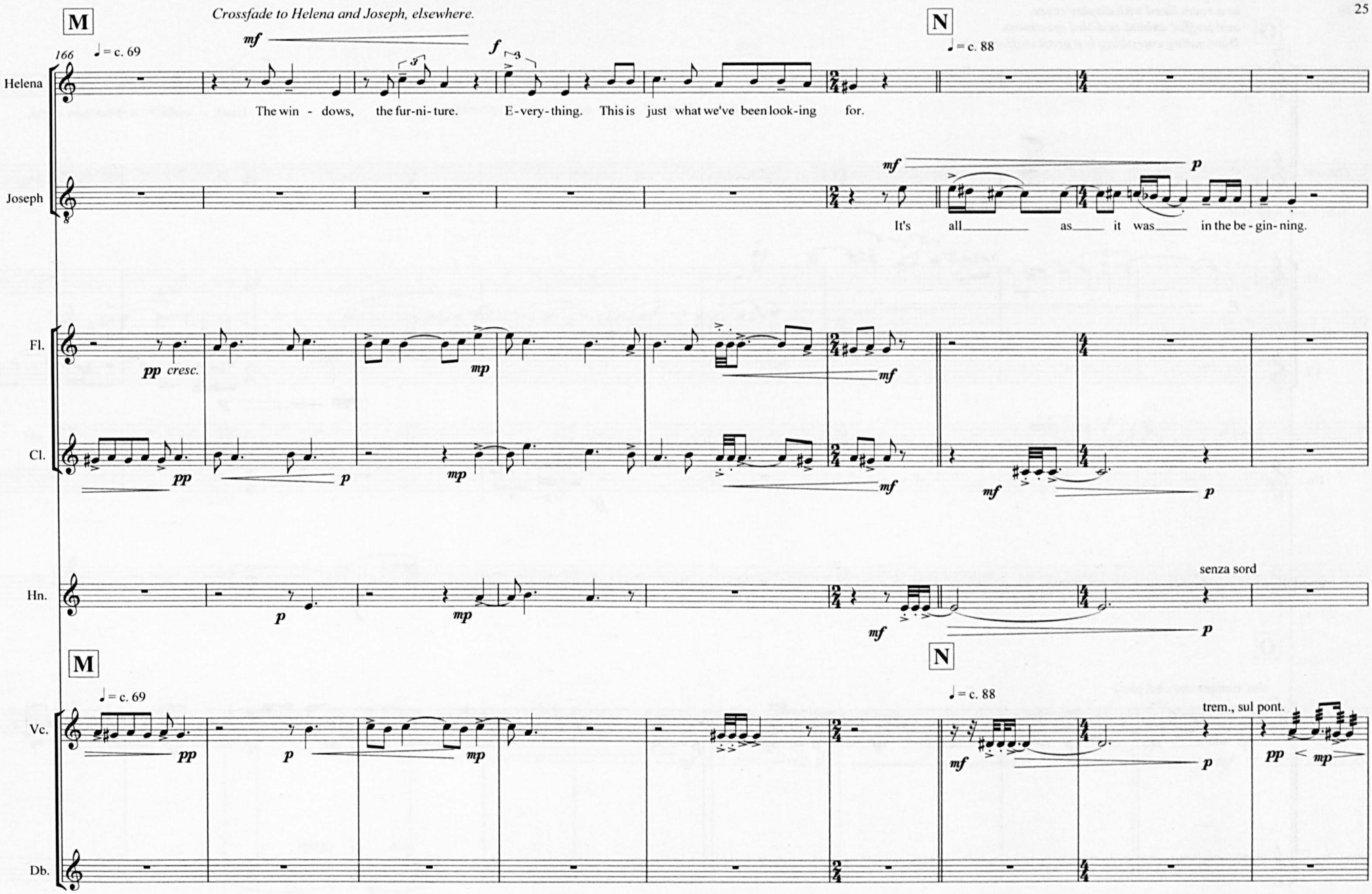
s.r.

p


142
Charles
mf
mp
come.
Yet a-no-ther thing that hap-pened to me.
No_one asked what I think.
We move on and on.
Next thing you know, you're
Edmund
with venom
I didn't want you here.
I didn't ask for a friend.
I got here first.
This house is mine.
Cl.
Vib.
Vc.
Db.


150
Charles
Edmund
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Vib.
Vc.
Db.
L
(Pulling away)
(Reaching for the galleon)
some - where else.
Lug gage in a - no-ther strange hall way.
Try-ing to make the best of it.
My fa-ther made it for me!
Ugly but mine.
We belong here.
Show me.
flz.


158
Charles
f
He's dead.
mf
3
That's no-thing. It's just an old house. And it smells.
Edmund
Why didn't he buy you a house?
When my father dies I shall be master here.
Fl.
Cl.
mp p
p mp p
pp p
Hn.
flz.
f ff
flz.
con sord
f fff
Vib.
l.v.
mf *
Vc.
mf
Db.
s.r.
p


M
Crossfade to Helena and Joseph, elsewhere.
166
♩ = c. 69
mf
f
N
♩ = c. 88
Helena
The win - dows, the fur-ni-ture. E-very-thing. This is just what we've been look-ing for.
Joseph
mf
p
It's all as it was in the be - gin- ning.
Fl.
pp cresc.
mp
mf
Cl.
pp
p
mp
mf
mf
p
Hn.
senza sord
p
mp
mf
p
M
♩ = c. 69
N
♩ = c. 88
Vc.
pp
p
mp
mf
p
trem., sul pont.
pp
mp
Db.

Crossfade to Edmund and Charles
in a room lined with display cases
and stuffed animal and bird specimens.
Dominating everything is a great stuffed crow.

O

175

Charles

Hawk - moths. Foot-men moths.

Edmund

This is the Red Room Grandfather's collection.

Fl.

Cl.

Hn.

Vib.

bowed

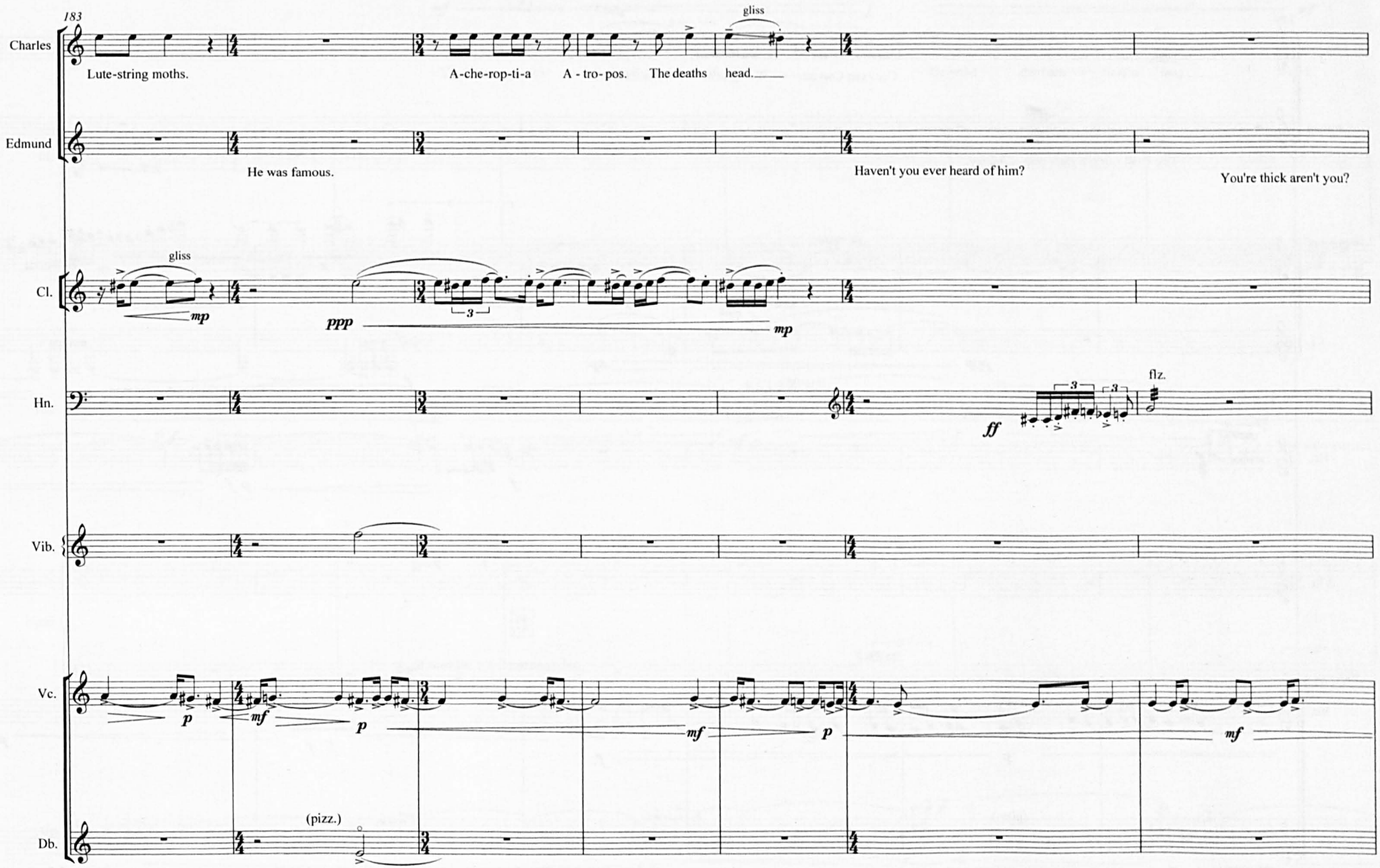
O

sim. (sempre trem./sul pont)

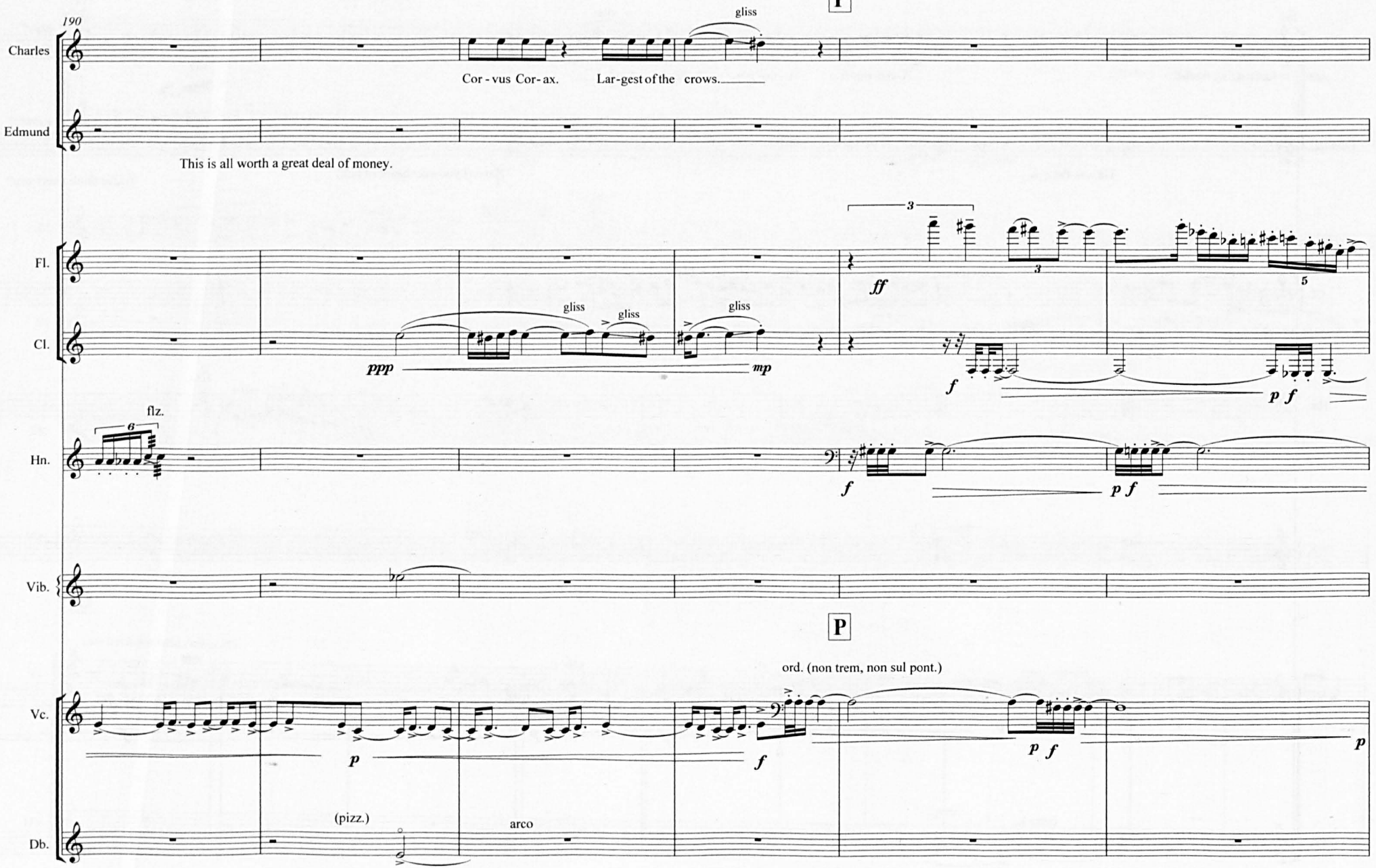
Vc.

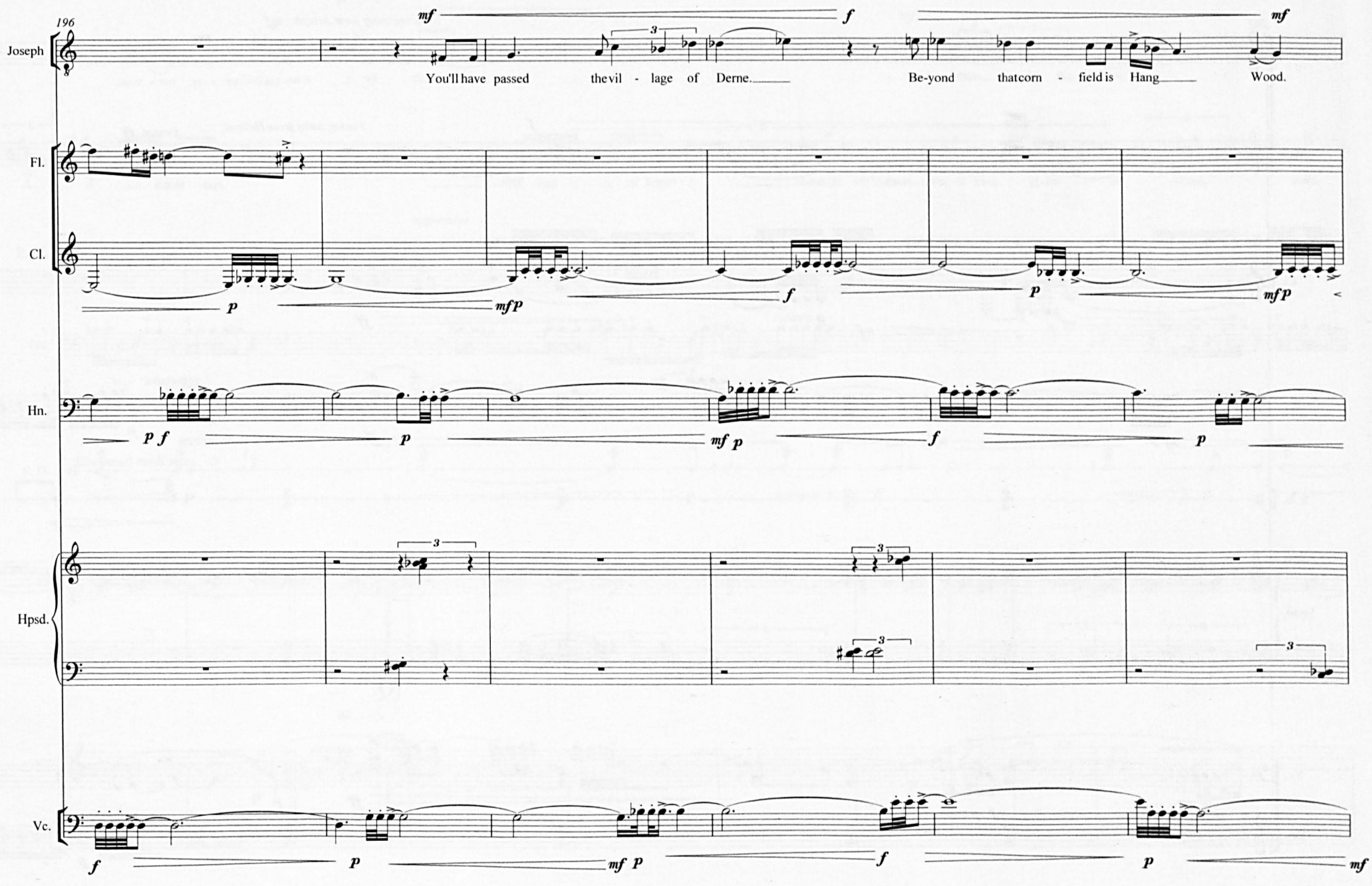
Db.

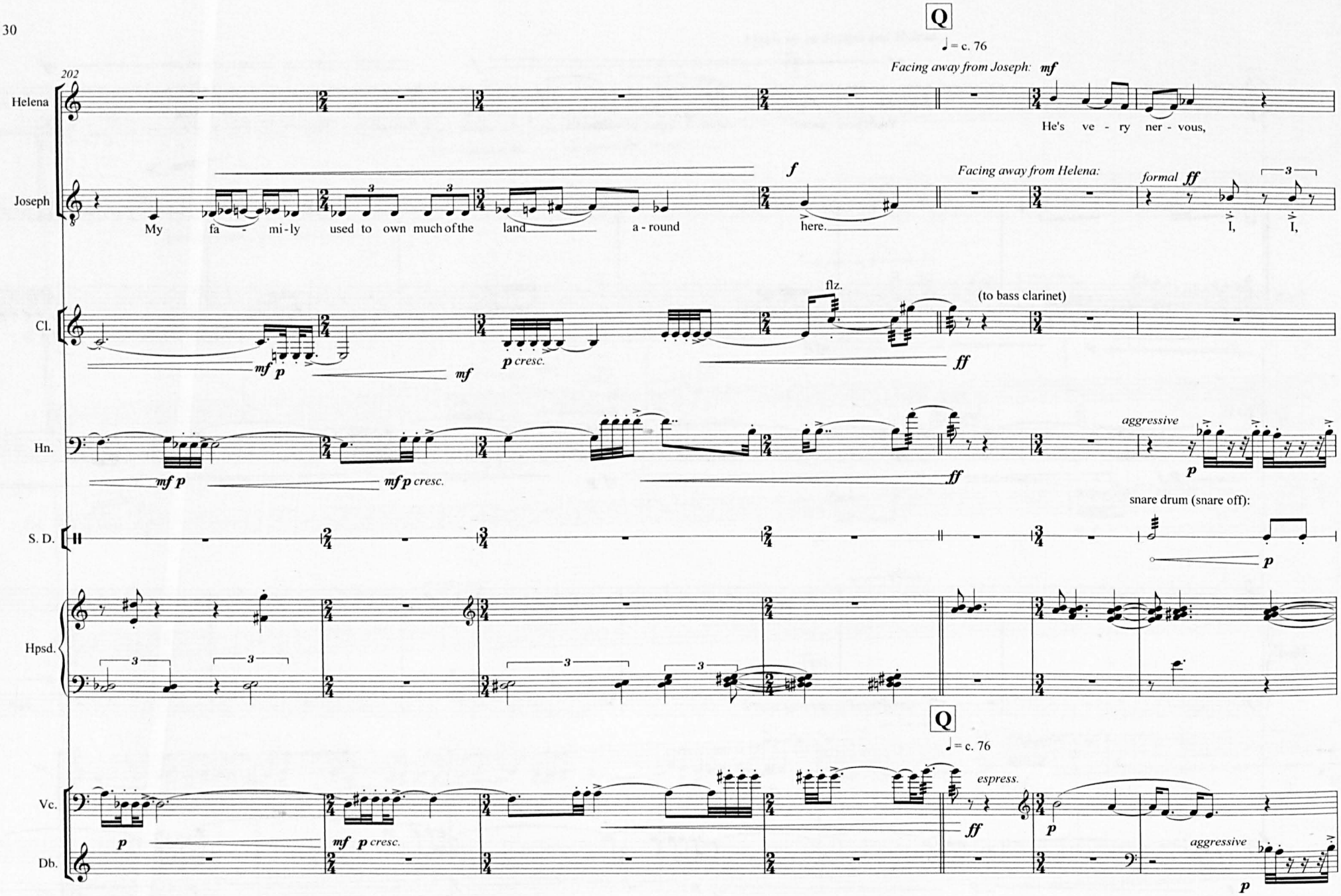
pizz. s.r.

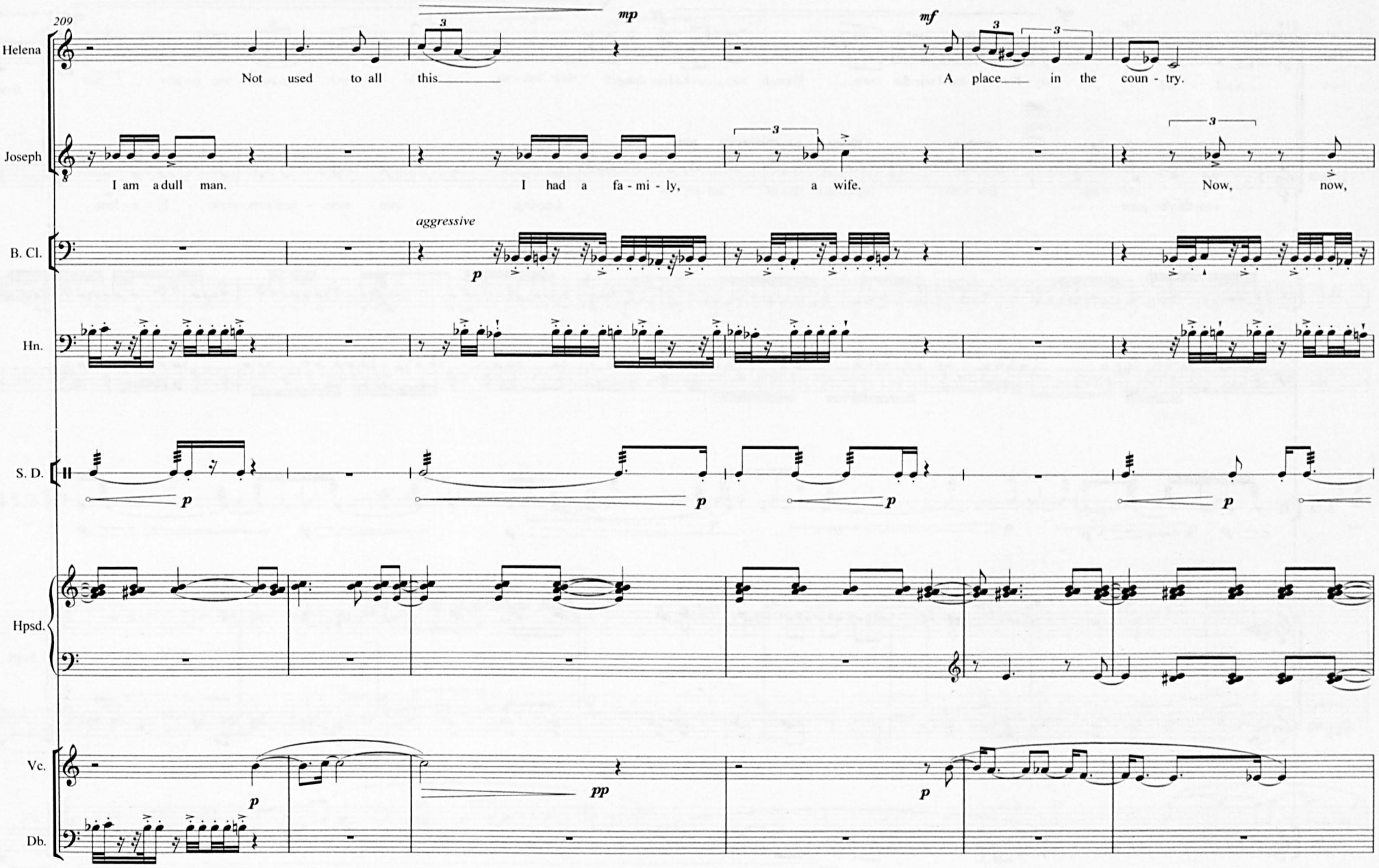

183
Charles
Lute-string moths.
A-che-rop-ti-a
A - tro- pos.
The deaths
head.
gliss
Edmund
He was famous.
Haven't you ever heard of him?
You're thick aren't you?
Cl.
gliss
mp
ppp
mp
Hn.
ff
flz.
Vib.
Vc.
p
mf
p
mf
p
mf
Db.
(pizz.)

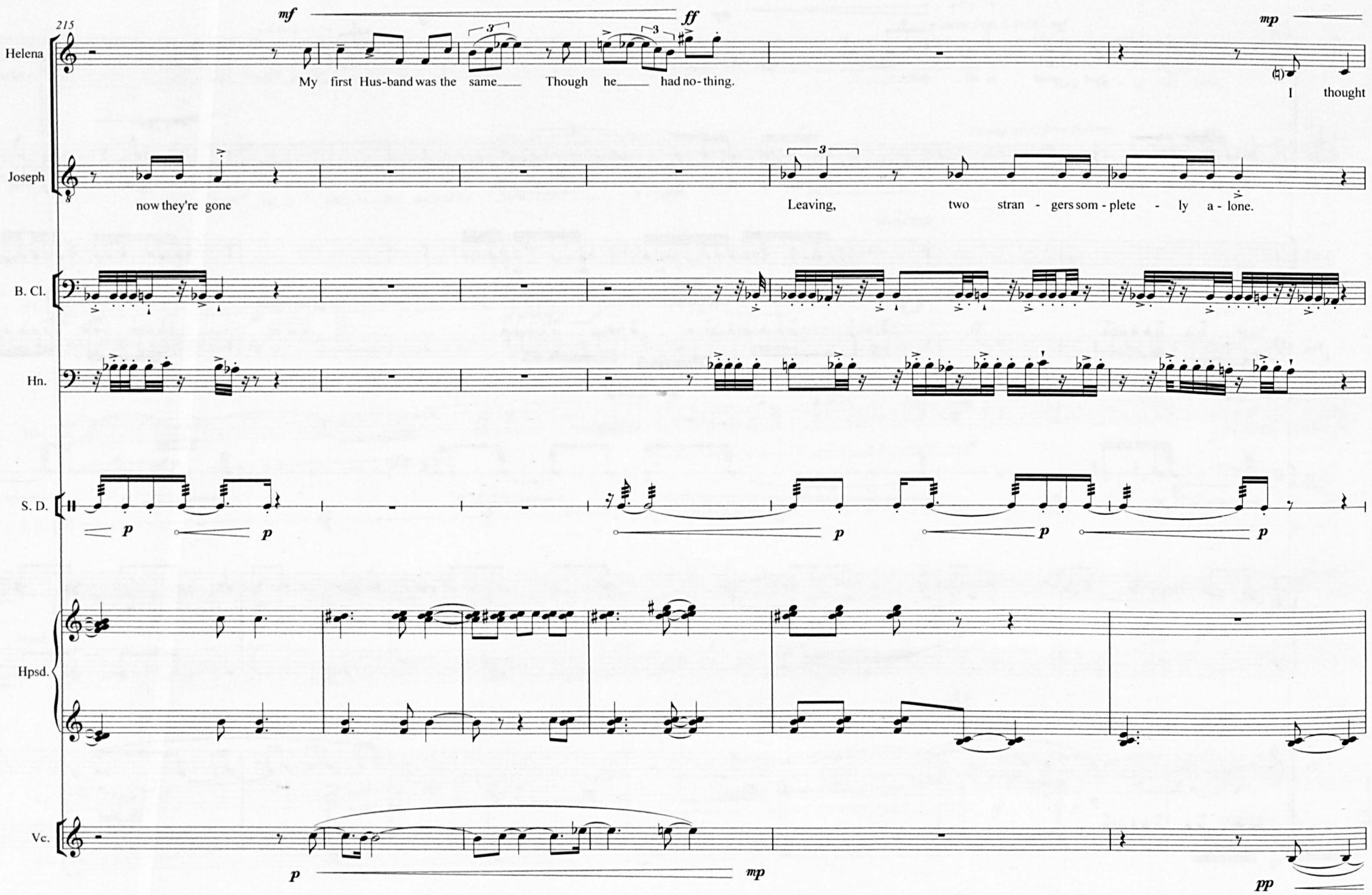
Lights up on Joseph and Helena.

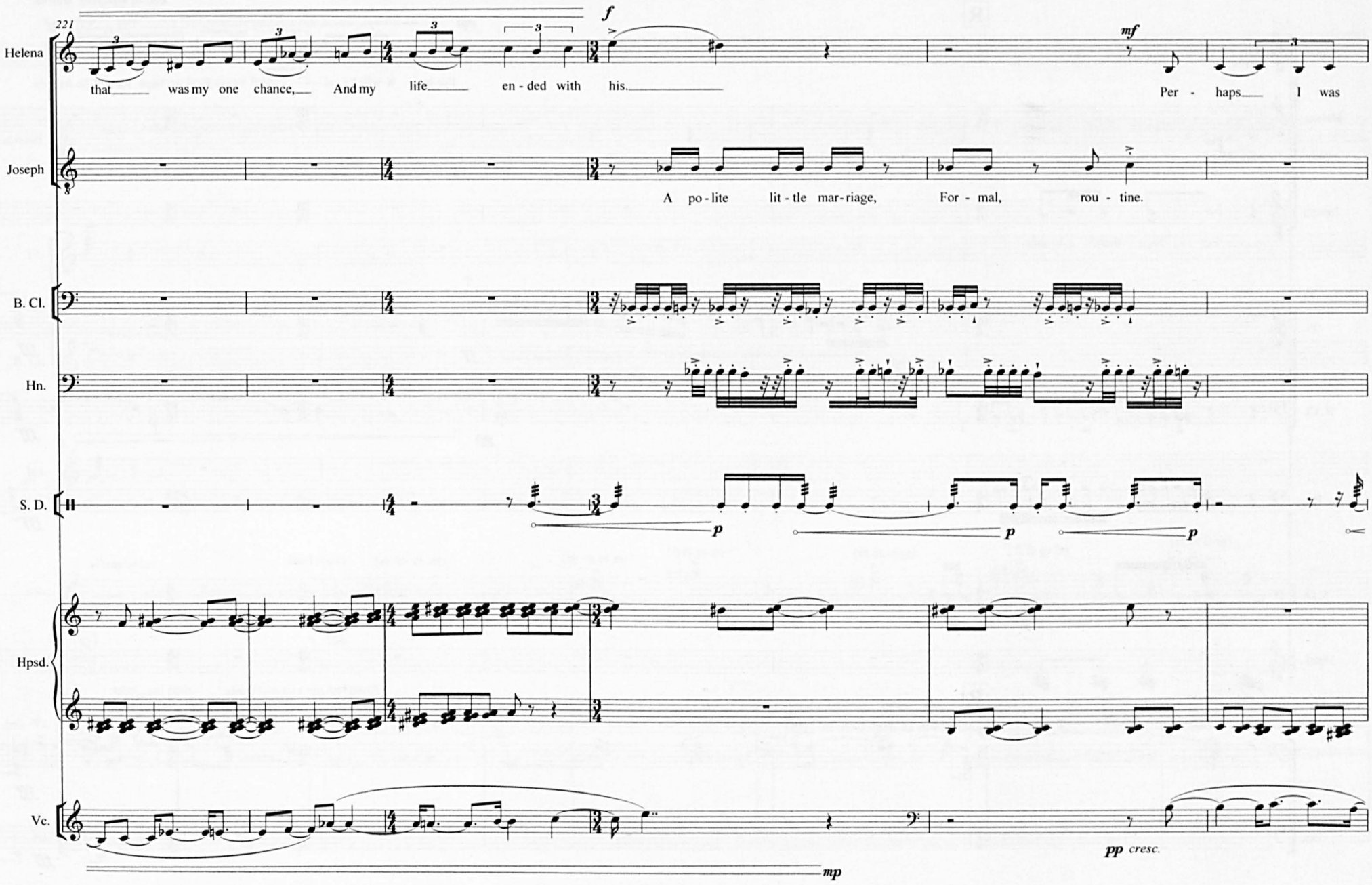



196
Joseph
mf
f
mf
You'll have passed the vil - lage of Derne.
Be-yond that corn - field is Hang
Wood.
Fl.
Cl.
p
mf p
f
p
mf p
Hn.
p f
p
mf p
f
p
Hpsd.
Vc.
f
p
mf p
f
p
mf

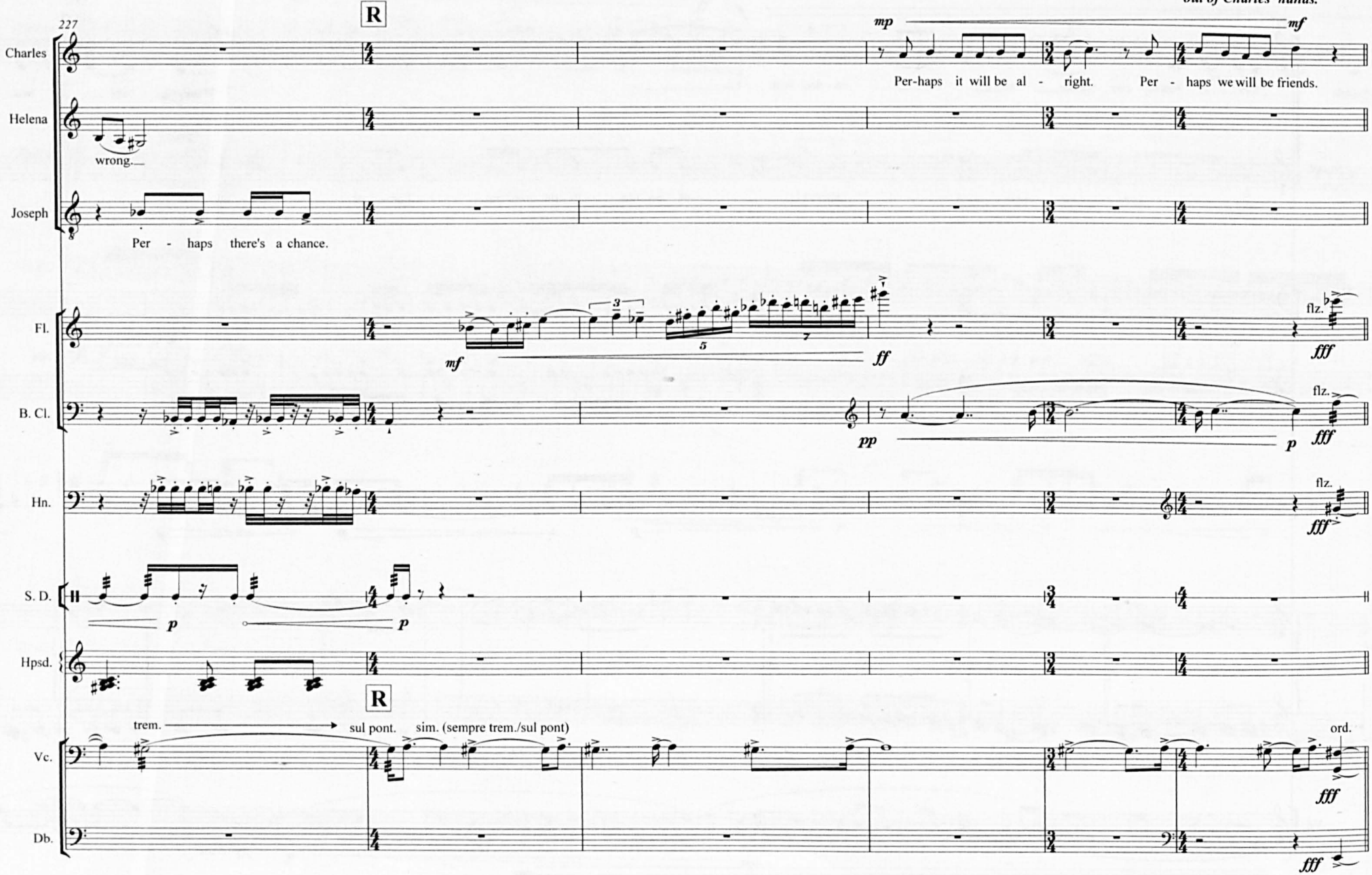

Q
♩= c. 76
202
Facing away from Joseph: mf
Helena
He's ve - ry ner - vous,
Joseph
My fa - mi-ly used to own much of the land a - round
f
here.
Facing away from Helena:
formal ff
I, I,
Cl.
flz.
(to bass clarinet)
mf p
mf
p cresc.
ff
Hn.
mf p
mf p cresc.
ff
aggressive
p
snare drum (snare off):
S. D.
p
Hpsd.
Q
♩= c. 76
Vc.
Db.
p
mf p cresc.
ff
espress.
p
aggressive
p

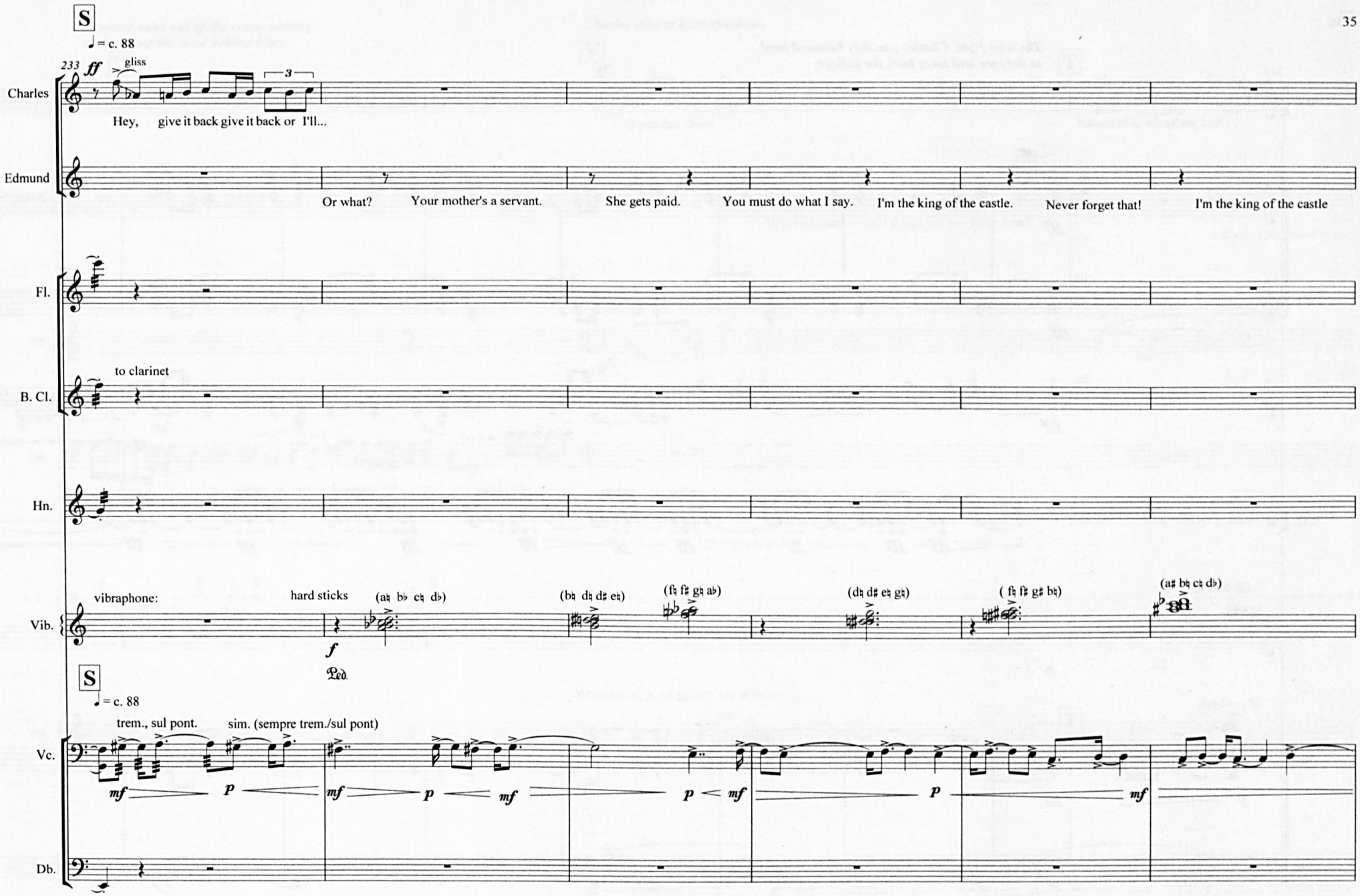

209
Helena
Not used to all this
mp
mf
A place in the coun - try.
Joseph
I am a dull man.
I had a fa - mi - ly,
a wife.
Now, now,
aggressive
B. Cl.
Hn.
S. D.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.
p
pp

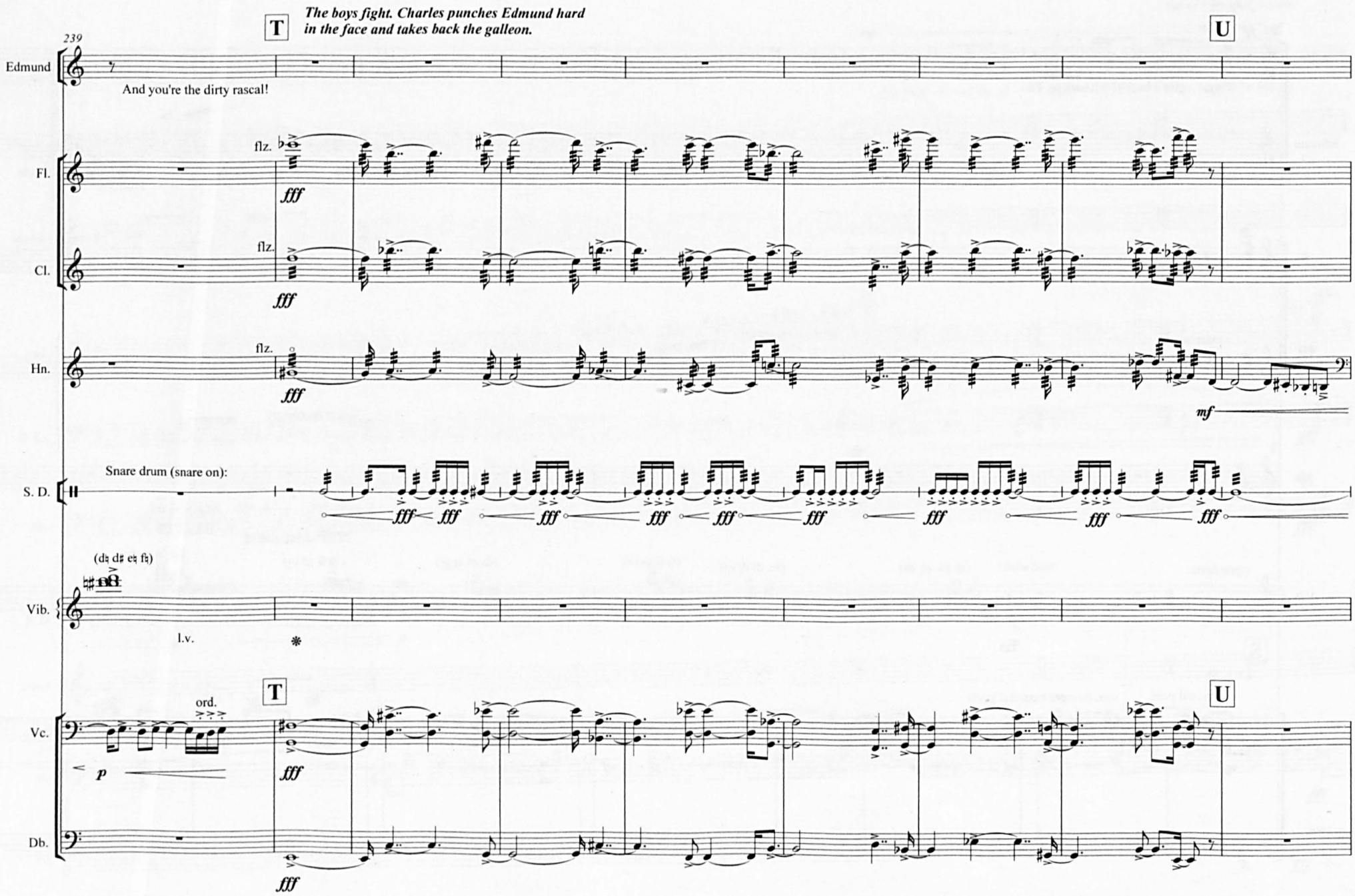

215
Helena
Joseph
B. Cl.
Hn.
S. D.
Hpsd.
Vc.
mf
ff
mp
My first Hus-band was the same___ Though he___ had no-thing.
I thought
now they're gone
Leaving, two stran - gers som - plete - ly a - lone.
p
mp
pp


221
Helena
that was my one chance, And my life en - ded with his.
f
mf
Per - haps I was
Joseph
A po - lite lit - tle mar - riage, For - mal, rou - tine.
B. Cl.
Hn.
S. D.
p
p
p
Hpsd.
Vc.
mp
pp cresc.

Edmund grabs the galleon out of Charles' hands.




S
♩ = c. 88
233
ff
gliss
3
Charles
Hey, give it back give it back or I'll...
Edmund
Or what?
Your mother's a servant.
She gets paid.
You must do what I say.
I'm the king of the castle.
Never forget that!
I'm the king of the castle
Fl.
to clarinet
B. Cl.
Hn.
vibraphone:
hard sticks
(a♮ b♭ c♮ d♭)
(b♮ d♮ d♯ e♮)
(f♮ f♯ g♮ a♭)
(d♮ d♯ e♮ g♮)
(f♮ f♯ g♯ b♮)
(a♯ b♮ c♮ d♭)
Vib.
f
Ped.
S
♩ = c. 88
trem., sul pont.
sim. (sempre trem./sul pont)
Vc.
mf
p
mf
p
mf
p
mf
p
mf
Db.


T
The boys fight. Charles punches Edmund hard in the face and takes back the galleon.
U
239
Edmund
And you're the dirty rascal!
Fl.
flz.
fff
Cl.
flz.
fff
Hn.
flz.
fff
mf
S. D.
Snare drum (snare on):
fff
Vib.
(d♮ d♯ e♮ f♮)
l.v.
Vc.
ord.
p
T
fff
U
Db.
fff

Edmund runs out of the room, closing and locking the door behind him.

Charles tries to open the door.

248

V

Charles

ff

O-pen this door!

Let me out! Let me out!

Edmund

Not frightened of dead things are you Kingshaw?

I didn't want you to come!

Cl.

mf

Hn.

flz.

ff

mp

fff

S. D.

fff

Vibraphone: (hard sticks) (g♯ a♮ b♭ c♮)

(c♮ d♭ e♮ f♮)

Vib.

ff Ped.

V

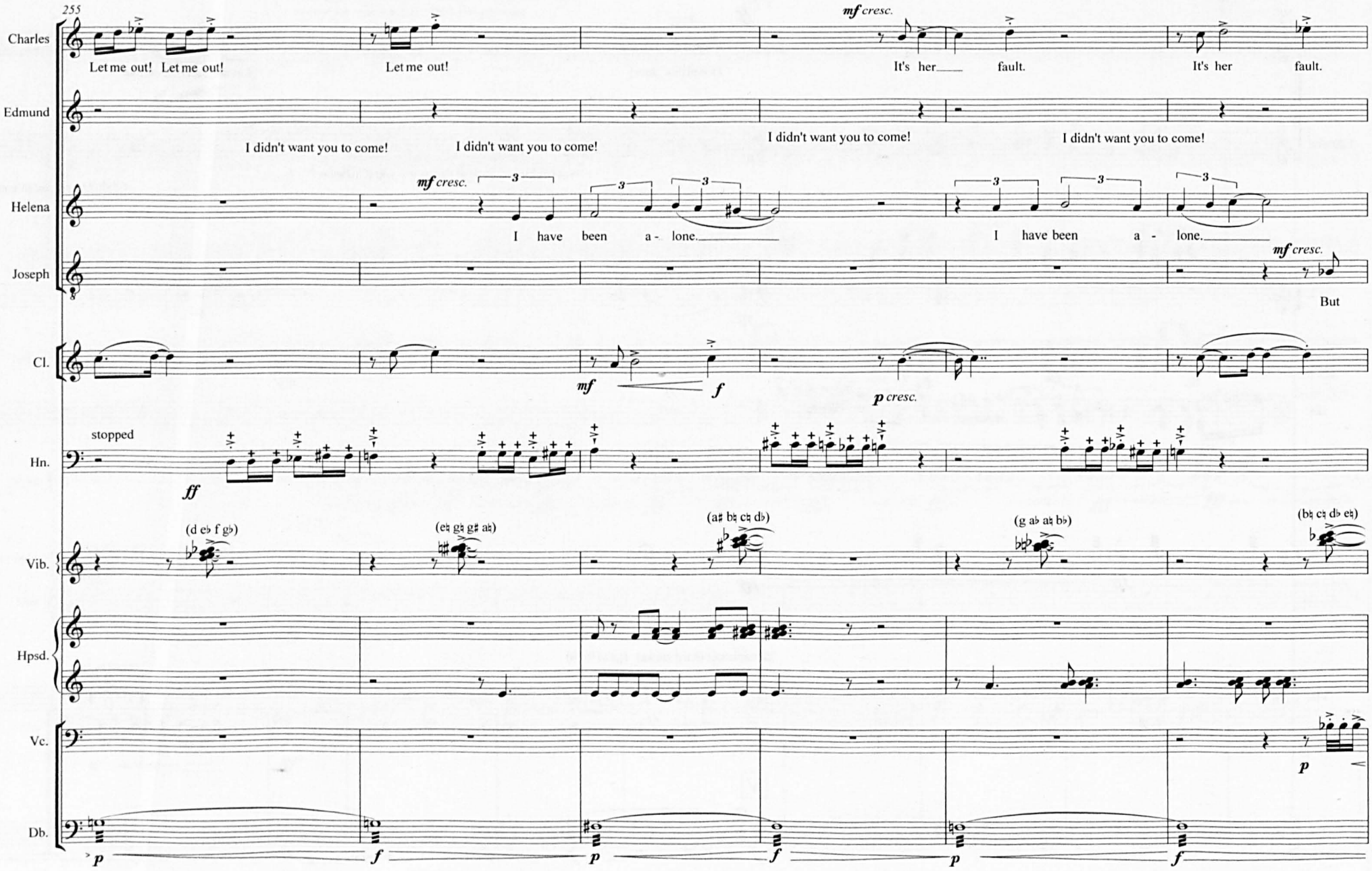
Db.

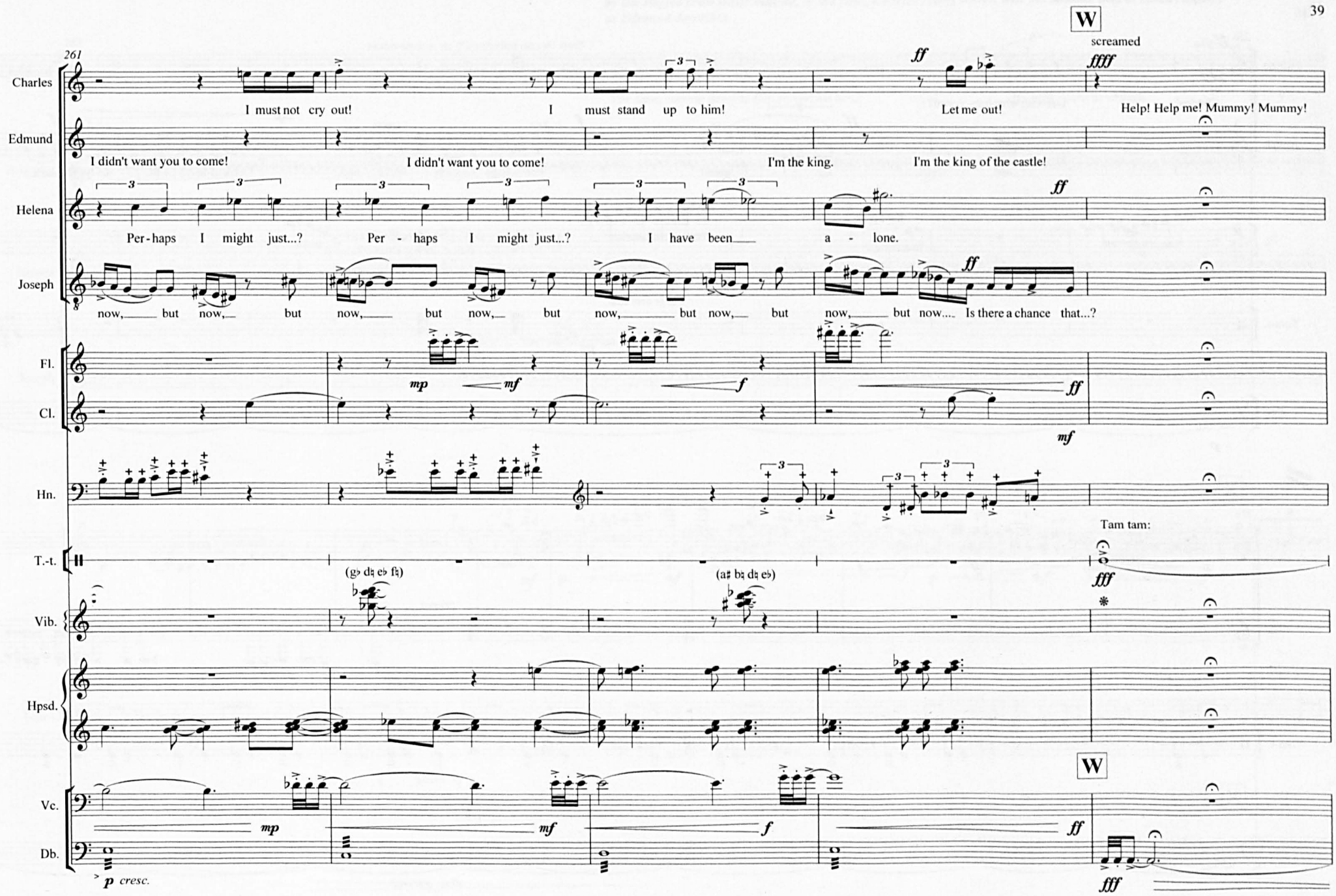
p

f

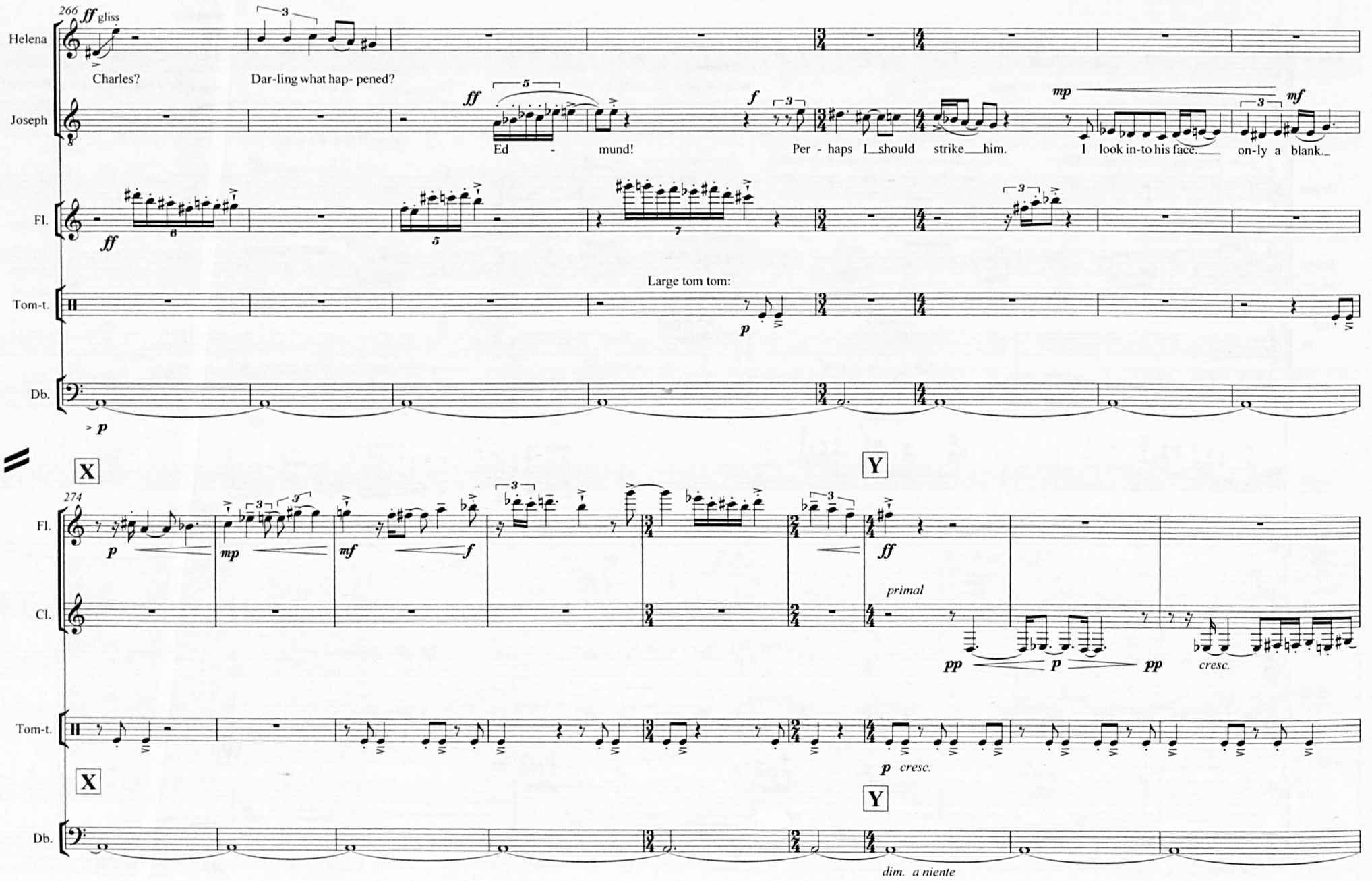
p

f


255
Charles
Let me out! Let me out!
Let me out!
mf cresc.
It's her fault.
It's her fault.
Edmund
I didn't want you to come!
I didn't want you to come!
I didn't want you to come!
I didn't want you to come!
Helena
mf cresc.
I have been a - lone.
I have been a - lone.
Joseph
mf cresc.
But
Cl.
mf
f
p cresc.
Hn.
stopped
ff
Vib.
(d eb f gb)
(eb gb g# ab)
(a# b♮ c♮ db)
(g ab a♮ bb)
(b♮ c♮ db eb)
Hpsd.
Vc.
p
Db.
p
f
p
f
p
f


W
screamed
261
Charles
I must not cry out!
I must stand up to him!
Let me out!
Help! Help me! Mummy! Mummy!
Edmund
I didn't want you to come!
I didn't want you to come!
I'm the king.
I'm the king of the castle!
Helena
Per-haps I might just...?
Per - haps I might just...?
I have been a - lone.
Joseph
now, but now, but now, but now, but now, but now, but now.... Is there a chance that...?
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Tam tam:
T.-t.
Vib.
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.
p cresc.
W

Joseph rushes to and unlocks the Red Room.



Charles has run out into the cornfield. From a window high up in the house Edmund watches him. Edmunds stands by the stuffed crow while outside, in the field, Charles reacts as Edmund describes.

283

malevolently, as if conjuring an evil spell

Edmund

The crow, coming down to flap around his head. It's beak opens to screech.

Anthony

* ♩ Beat 1: Start reading from sheet, to create speech canon.

Helena

* ♩ Beat 2: Start reading from sheet, to create speech canon.

Joseph

* ♩ Beat 1: Start reading from sheet, to create speech canon.

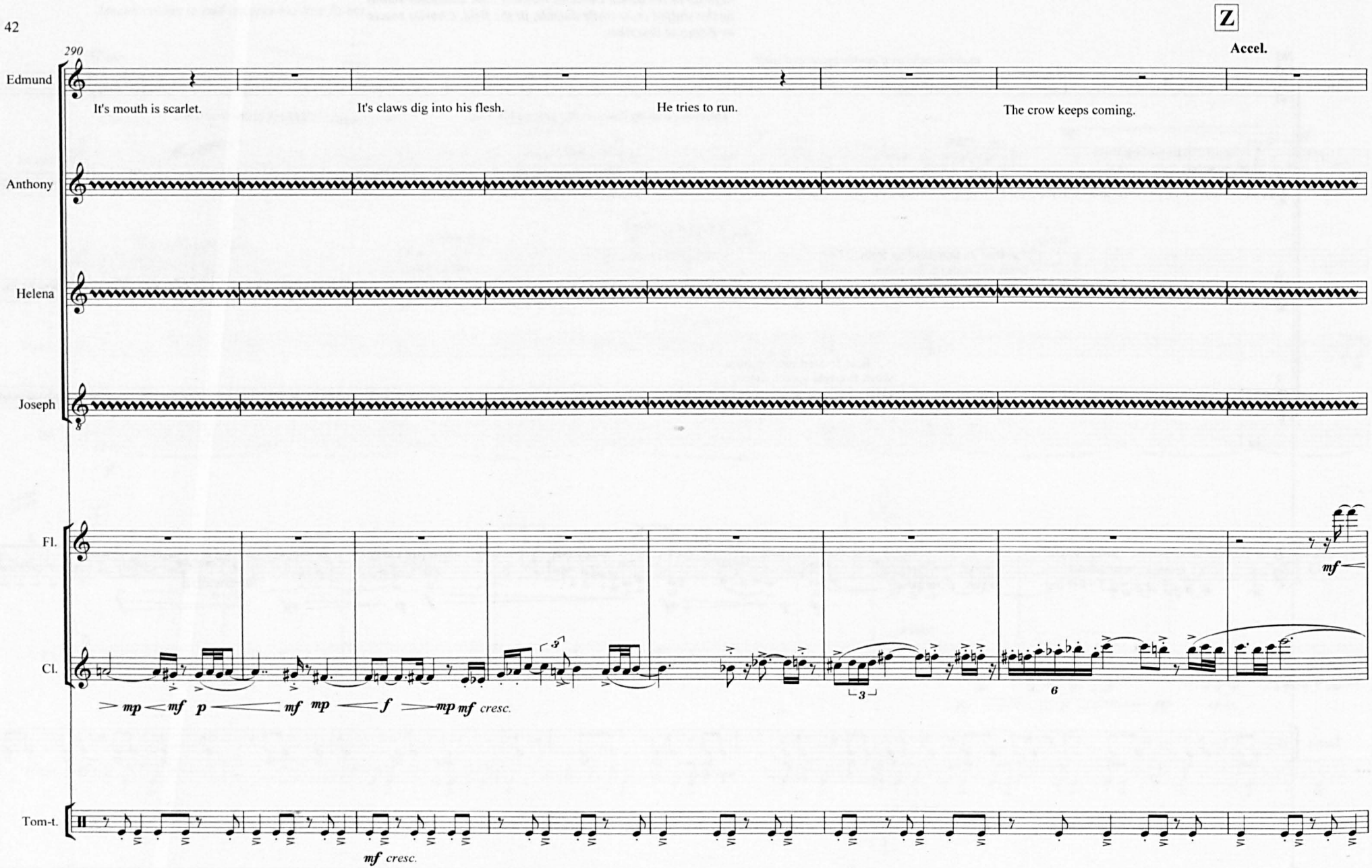
Cl.

mf *p* *mf* *f* *p* *mf* *f*

Tom-t.

mp cresc.

Db.


Z
Accel.
290
Edmund
It's mouth is scarlet.
It's claws dig into his flesh.
He tries to run.
The crow keeps coming.
Anthony
Helena
Joseph
Fl.
Cl.
mp mf p mf mp f mp mf cresc.
mf
Tom-t.
mf cresc.

298

♩ = c. 104 **(Accel.)**

Anthony

Helena

Joseph

Fl.

ff *f* *ff* *mf* *f*

Cl.

ff *f cresc.*

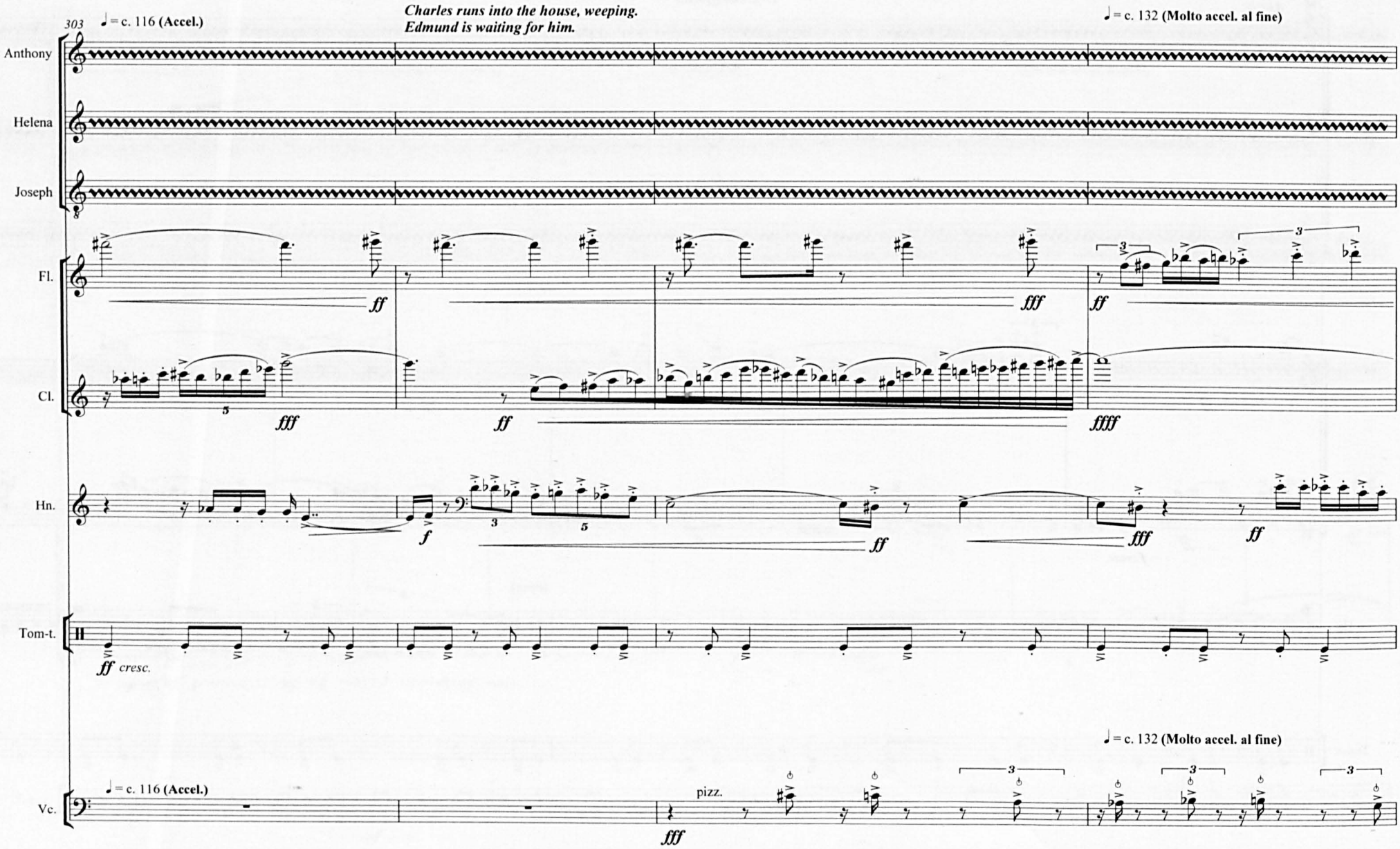
Hn.

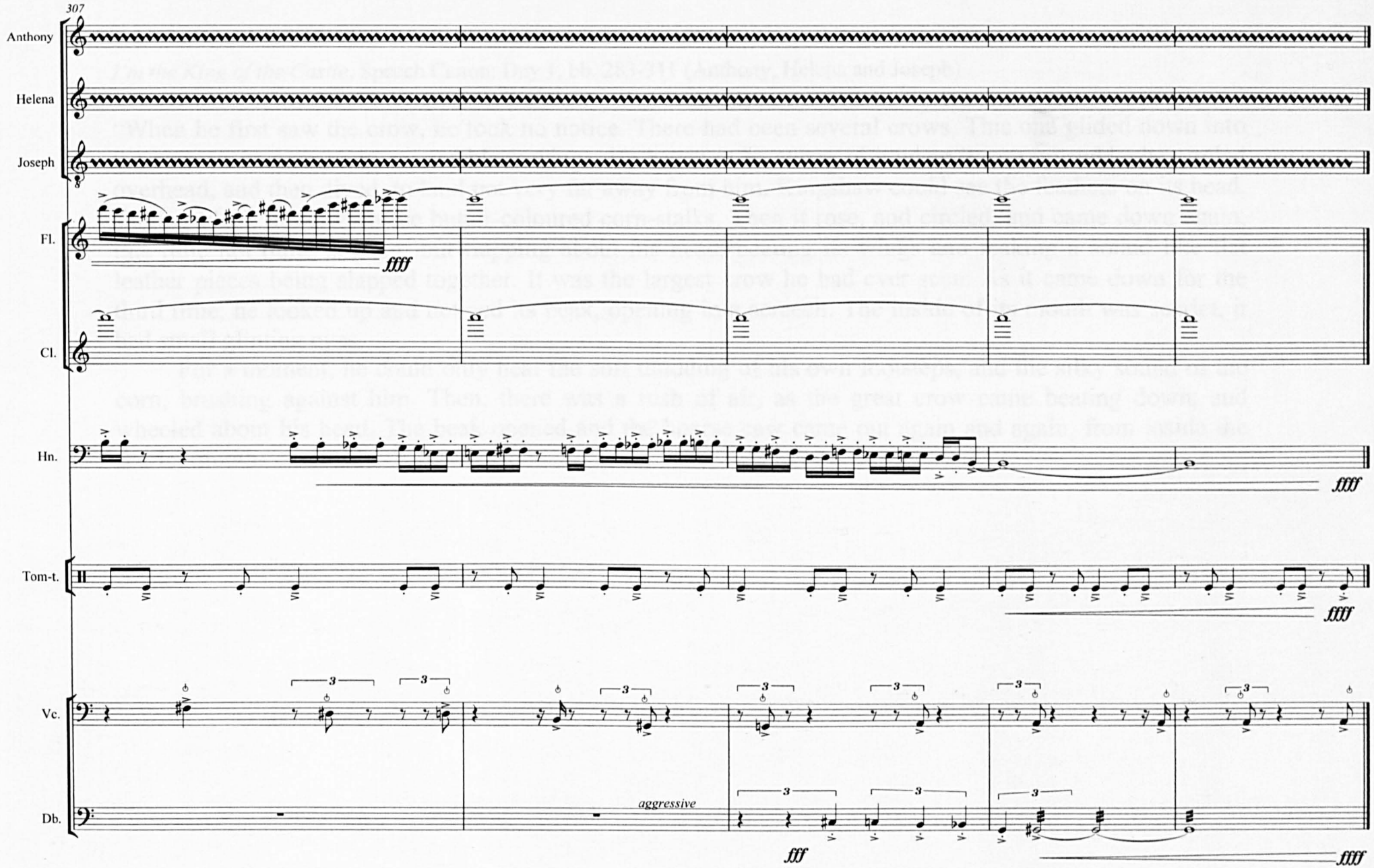
(open)

p *f* *ff*

Tom-t.

f cresc.


303
♩= c. 116 (Accel.)
Charles runs into the house, weeping.
Edmund is waiting for him.
♩= c. 132 (Molto accel. al fine)
Anthony
Helena
Joseph
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
Tom-t.
Vc.
ff
fff
ff
fff
ff
fff
ffff
f
ff
fff
ff
ff cresc.
♩= c. 116 (Accel.)
pizz.
fff
♩= c. 132 (Molto accel. al fine)


307
Anthony
Helena
Joseph
Fl.
ffff
Cl.
Hn.
ffff
Tom-t.
ffff
Vc.
Db.
aggressive
fff
ffff

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I'm the King of the Castle, Speech Canon: Day 1, bb. 283-311 (Anthony, Helena and Joseph)

"When he first saw the crow, he took no notice. There had been several crows. This one glided down into the corn on its enormous, ragged black wings. He began to be aware of it when it rose up suddenly, circled overhead, and then dived, to land not very far away from him. Kingshaw could see the feathers on its head, shining blank in between the butter-coloured corn-stalks. Then it rose, and circled, and came down again, this time not quite landing, but flapping about his head, beating its wings and making a sound like flat leather pieces being slapped together. It was the largest crow he had ever seen. As it came down for the third time, he looked up and noticed its beak, opening in a screech. The inside of its mouth was scarlet, it had small glinting eyes.

For a moment, he could only hear the soft thudding of his own footsteps, and the silky sound of the corn, brushing against him. Then, there was a rush of air, as the great crow came beating down, and wheeled about his head. The beak opened and the hoarse caw came out again and again, from inside the scarlet mouth."

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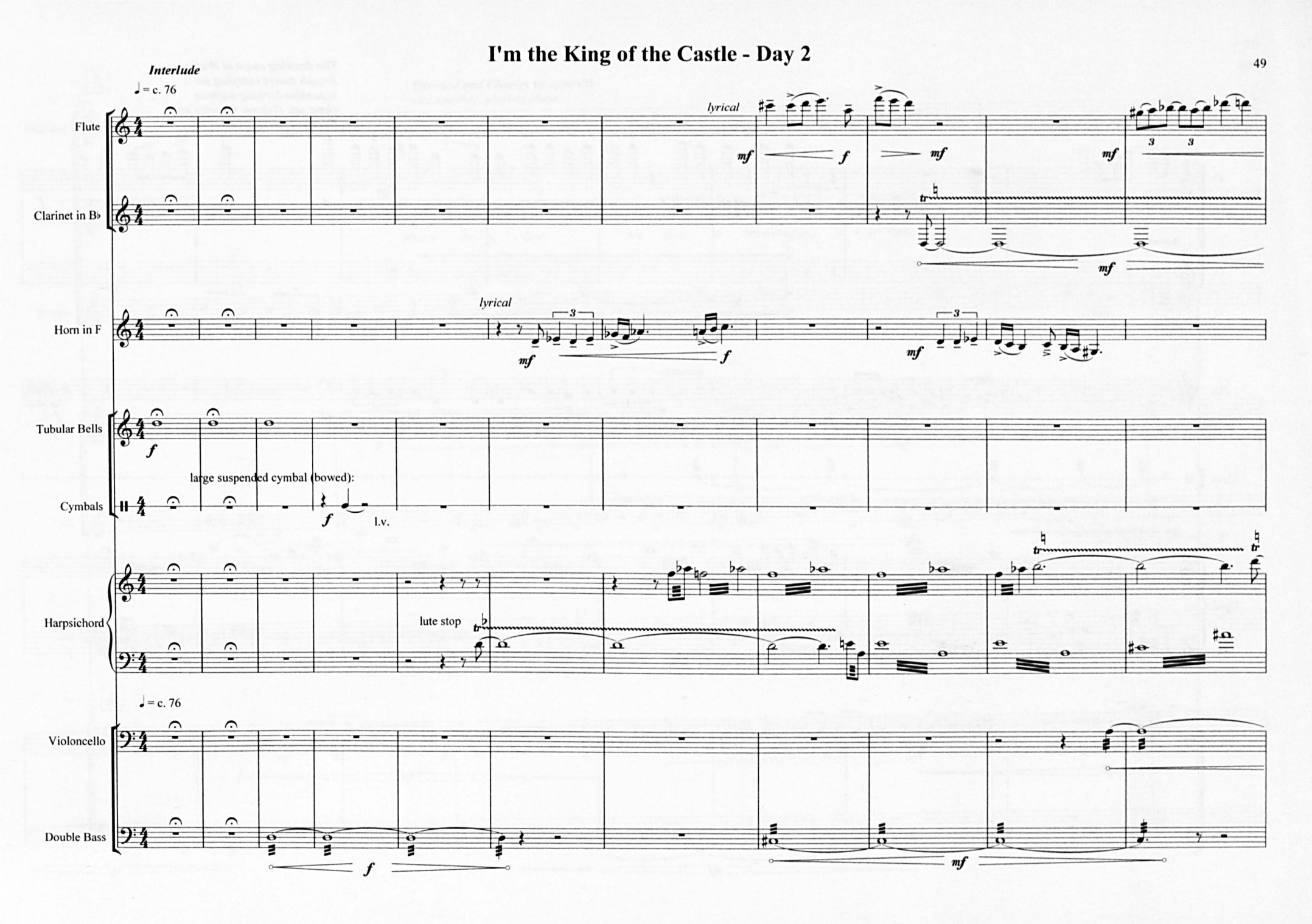
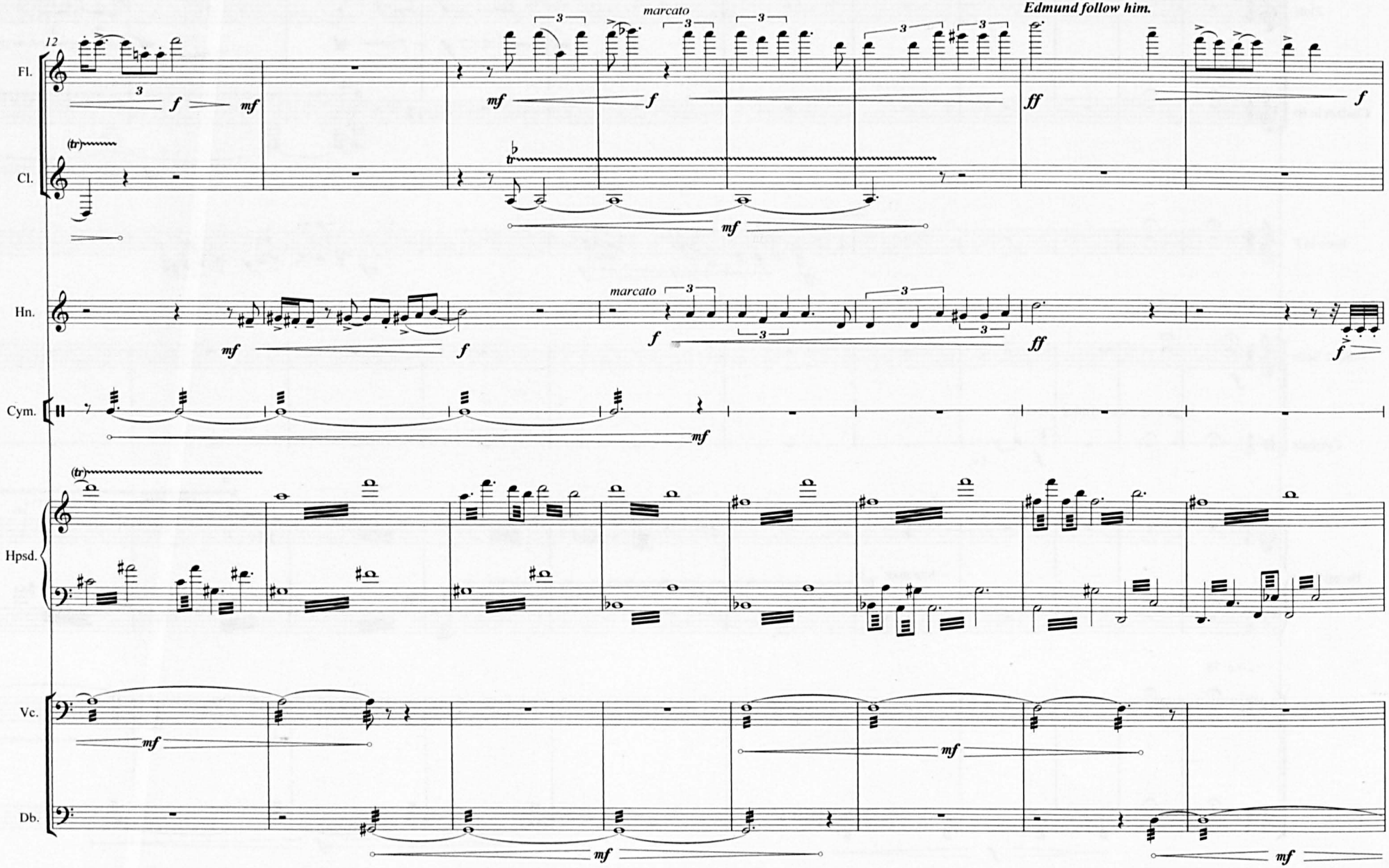
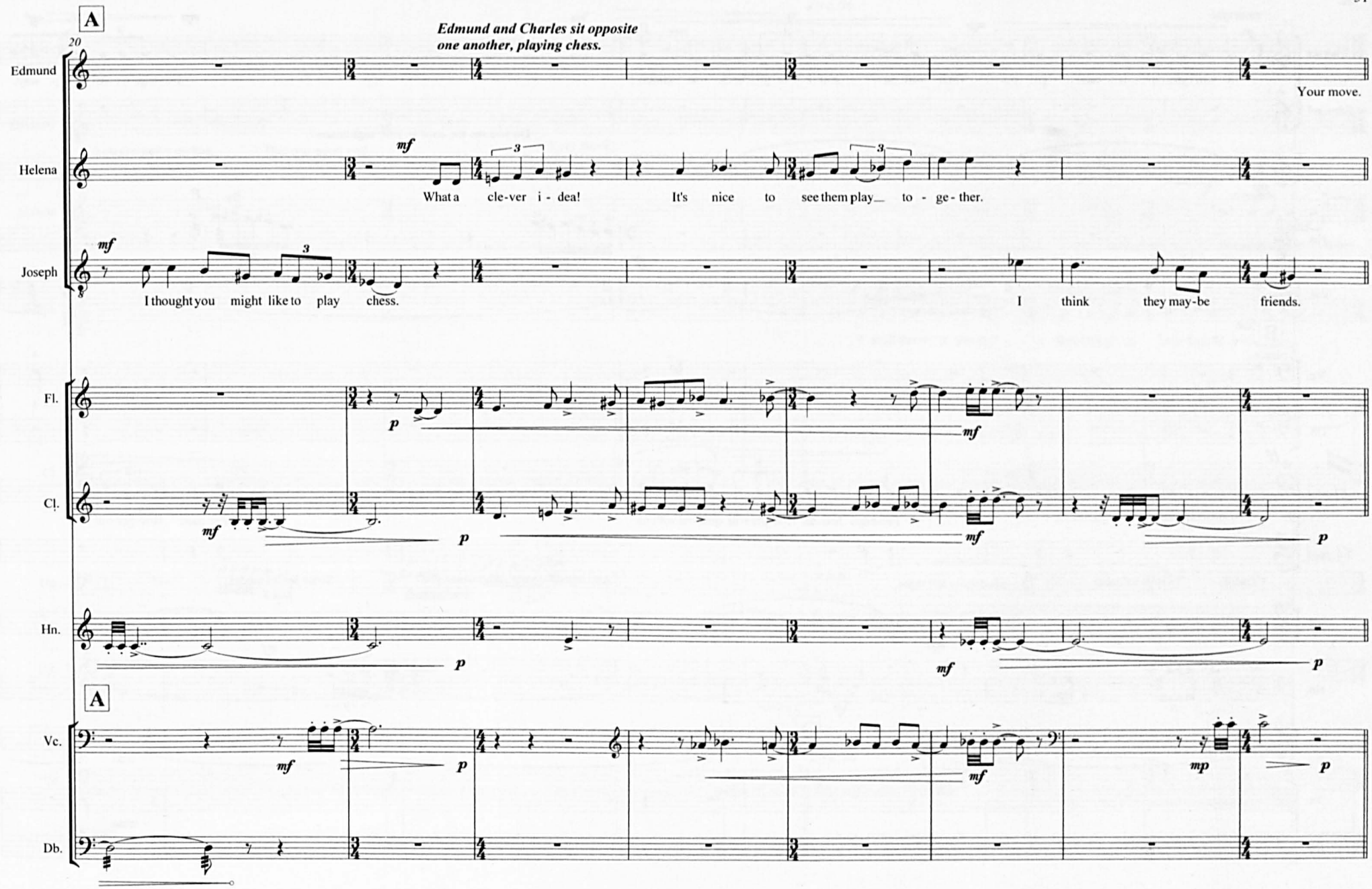
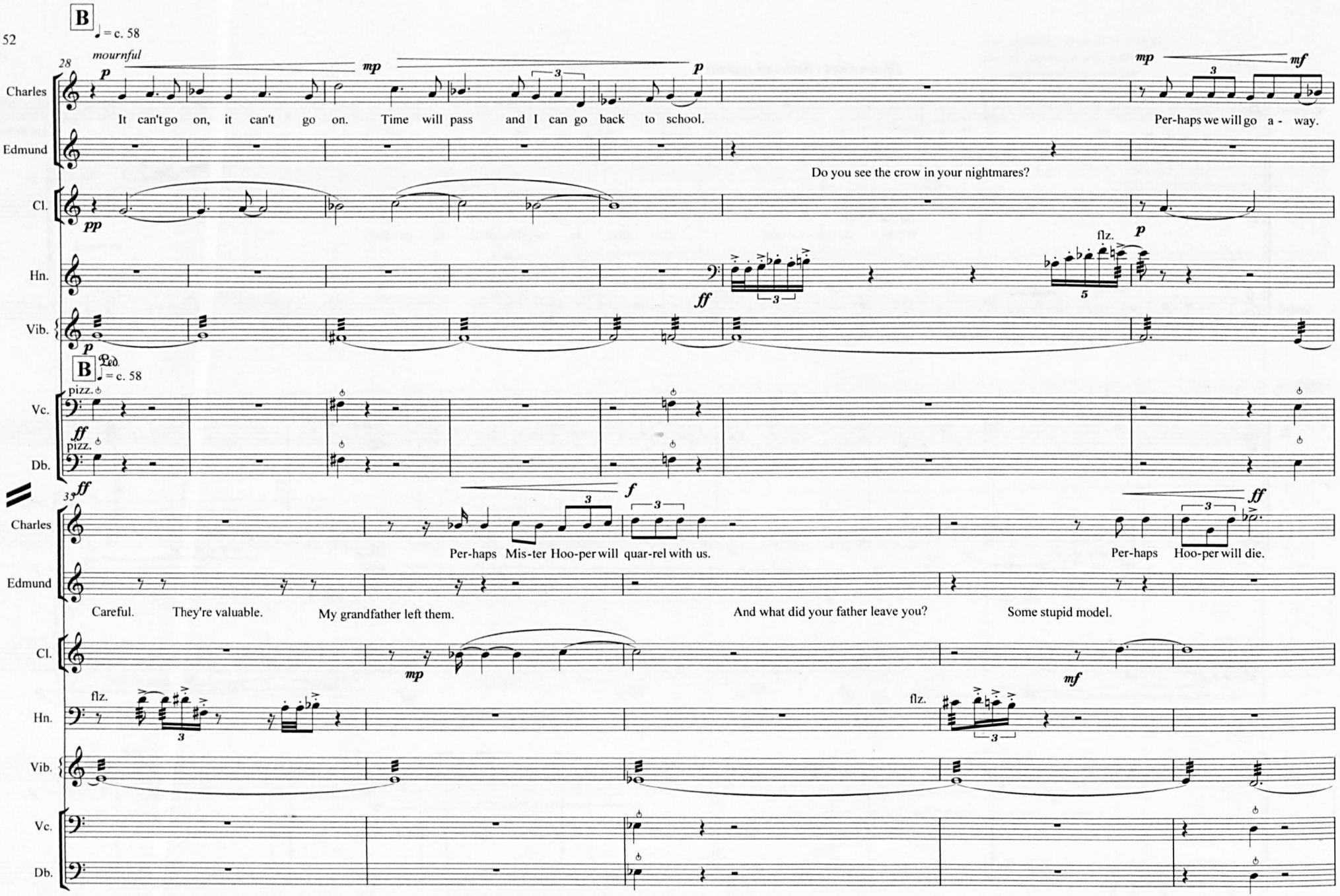
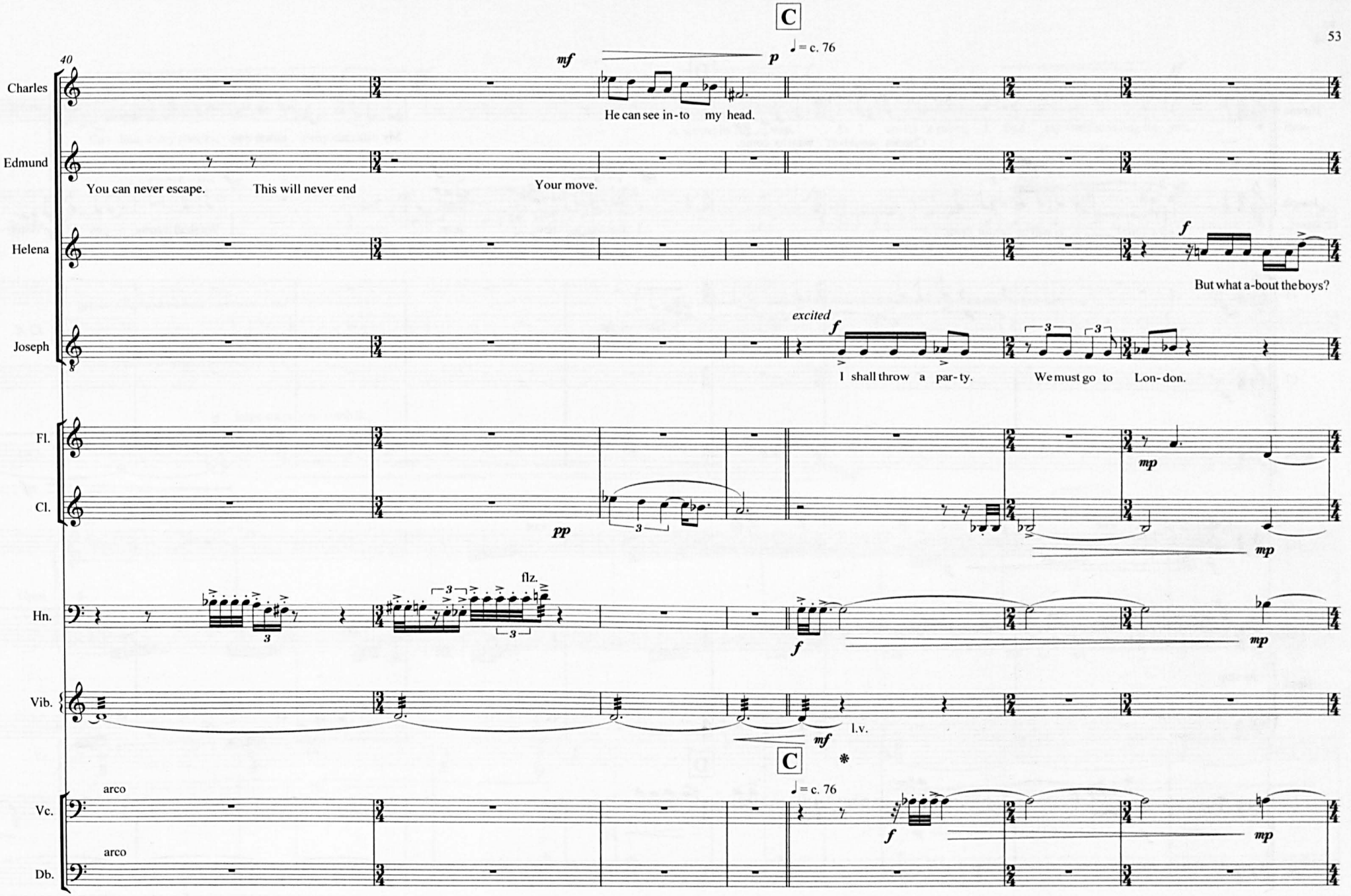

Interlude
♩= c. 76
Flute
Clarinet in B♭
Horn in F
Tubular Bells
Cymbals
Harpsichord
Violoncello
Double Bass
lyrical
lyrical
large suspended cymbal (bowed):
l.v.
lute stop
♩= c. 76

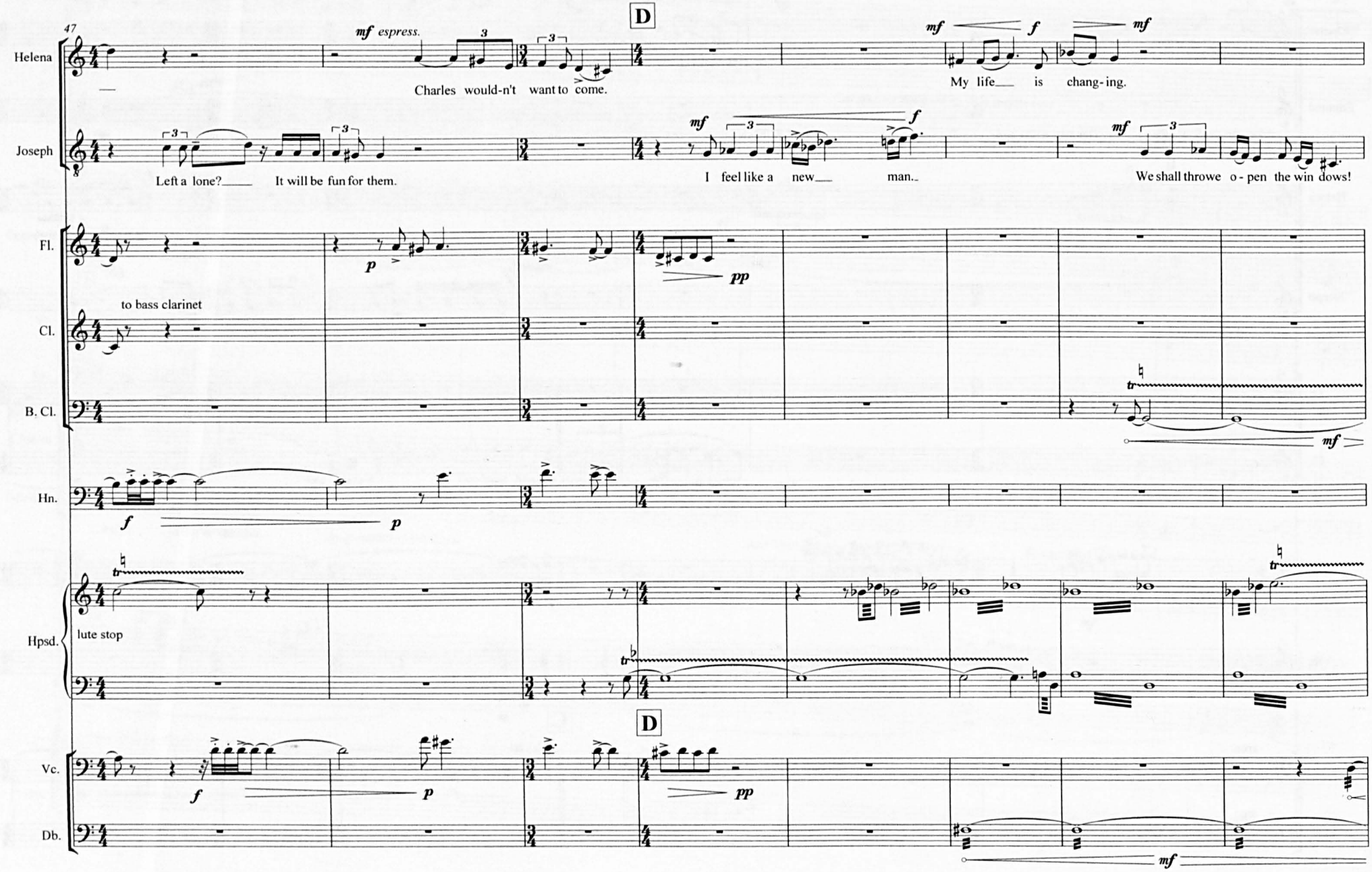
The drawing room at Warings. Joseph enters carrying an expensive-looking antique chess set. Helena, Charles and Edmund follow him.

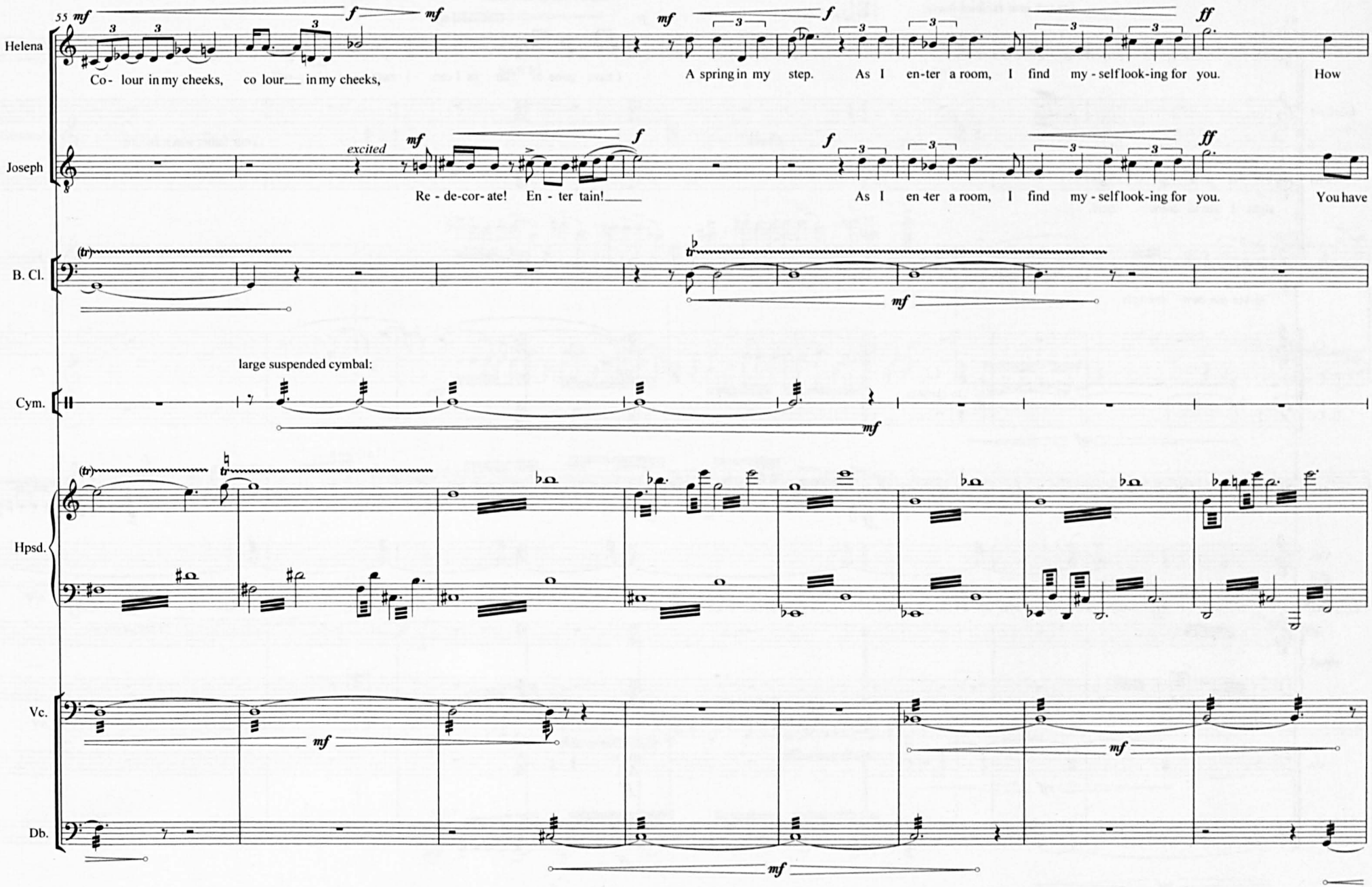


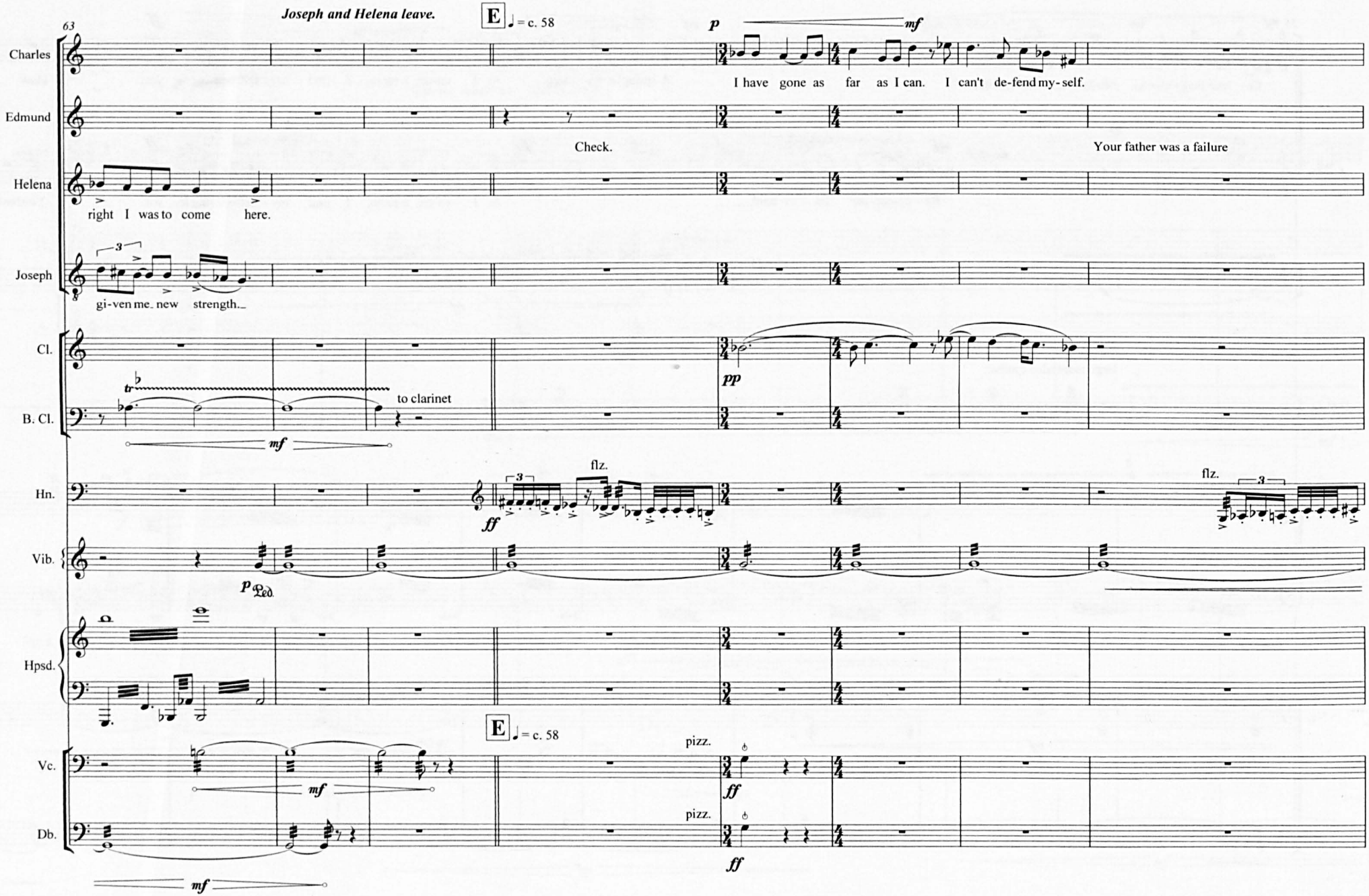

A
20
Edmund and Charles sit opposite one another, playing chess.
Edmund
Your move.
Helena
mf
What a cle-ver i - dea!
It's nice to see them play to - ge - ther.
Joseph
mf
I thought you might like to play chess.
I think they may-be friends.
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
A
Vc.
Db.
mf
p
mp

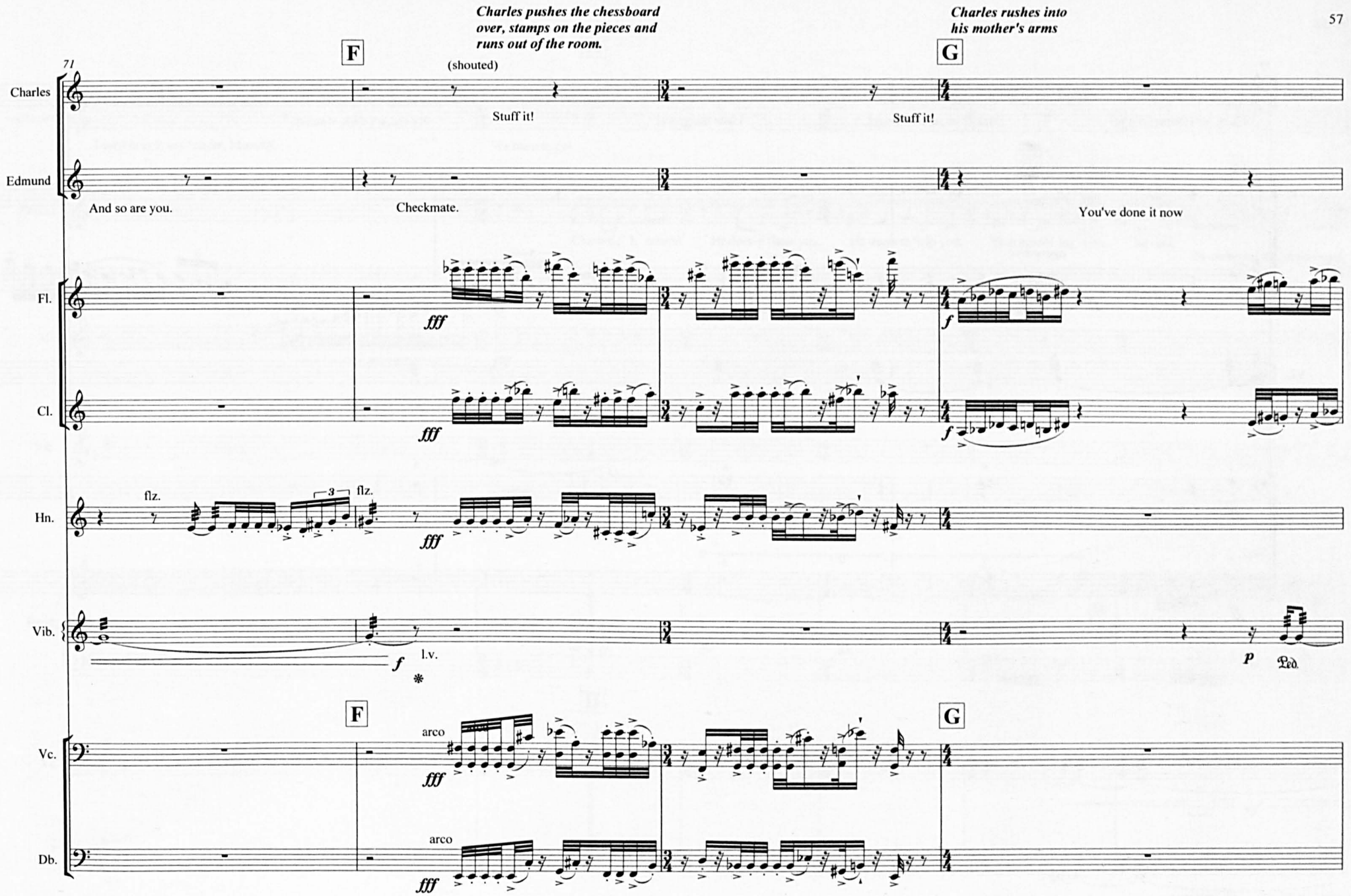

B
♩ = c. 58
mournful
28
Charles
Edmund
Cl.
Hn.
Vib.
It can't go on, it can't go on. Time will pass and I can go back to school.
Per-haps we will go a - way.
Do you see the crow in your nightmares?
flz.
B
Ped.
♩ = c. 58
pizz.
Vc.
Db.
33
Per-haps Mis-ter Hoo-per will quar-rel with us.
Per-haps Hoo-per will die.
Careful. They're valuable. My grandfather left them.
And what did your father leave you?
Some stupid model.

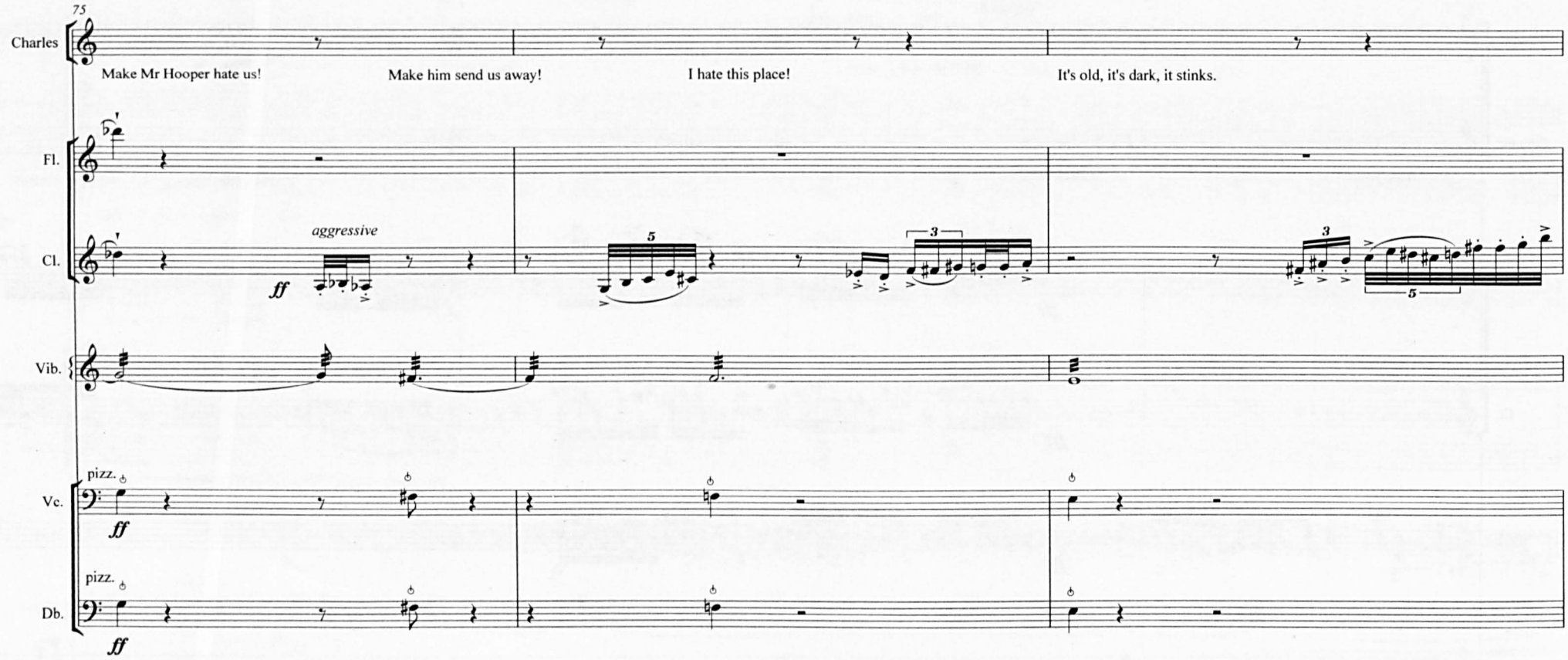

C
40
mf
p
♩= c. 76
Charles
He can see in-to my head.
Edmund
You can never escape.
This will never end
Your move.
Helena
f
But what a-bout the boys?
Joseph
excited
f
I shall throw a par-ty.
We must go to Lon-don.
Fl.
Cl.
pp
mp
Hn.
flz.
f
mp
Vib.
mf
l.v.
C
♩= c. 76
Vc.
arco
Db.
arco
f
mp

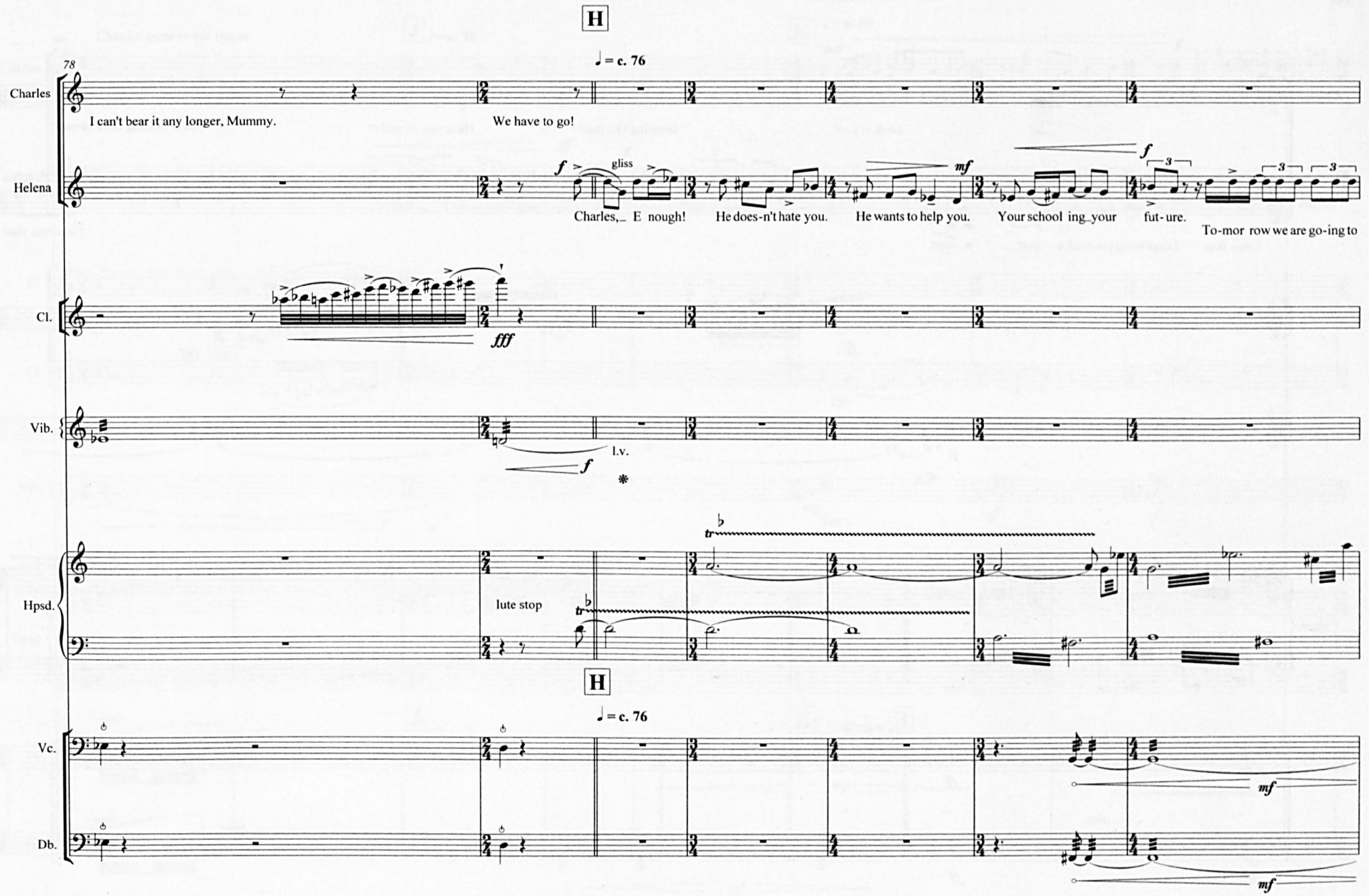

47
D
Helena
mf espress.
Charles would-n't want to come.
mf f mf
My life is chang-ing.
Joseph
Left a lone? It will be fun for them.
mf f
I feel like a new man.
mf
We shall throwe o-pen the win dows!
Fl.
p pp
to bass clarinet
Cl.
B. Cl.
tr
mf
Hn.
f p
Hpsd.
lute stop
tr
D
Vc.
f p pp
Db.
mf

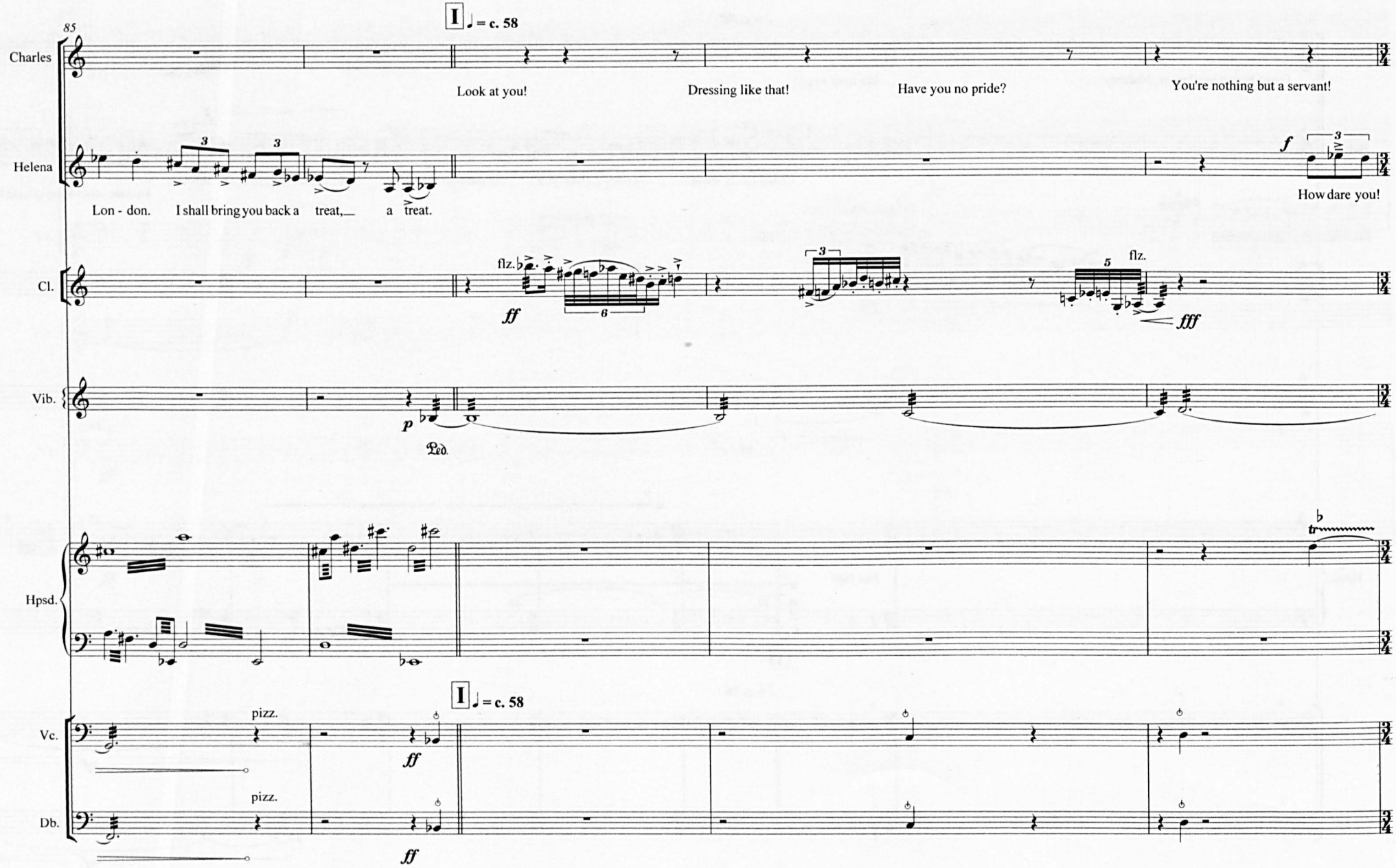

55
Helena
Co- lour in my cheeks, co lour in my cheeks,
A spring in my step. As I en-ter a room, I find my-self look-ing for you. How
Joseph
excited
Re - de-cor- ate! En - ter tain!
As I en-ter a room, I find my-self look-ing for you. You have
B. Cl.
Cym.
large suspended cymbal:
Hpsd.
Vc.
Db.


63
Joseph and Helena leave.
E ♩ = c. 58
p
mf
Charles
I have gone as far as I can. I can't de-fend my-self.
Edmund
Check.
Your father was a failure
Helena
right I was to come here.
Joseph
gi-ven me new strength.
Cl.
B. Cl.
to clarinet
pp
mf
Hn.
flz.
ff
Vib.
p
Ped.
Hpsd.
E ♩ = c. 58
Vc.
Db.
pizz.
ff
mf


Charles pushes the chessboard over, stamps on the pieces and runs out of the room.
Charles rushes into his mother's arms
71
F
G
Charles
(shouted)
Stuff it!
Stuff it!
Edmund
And so are you.
Checkmate.
You've done it now
Fl.
Cl.
Hn.
flz.
flz.
Vib.
l.v.
Ped.
Vc.
Db.
arco
arco


75
Charles
Make Mr Hooper hate us!
Make him send us away!
I hate this place!
It's old, it's dark, it stinks.
Fl.
Cl.
aggressive
ff
Vib.
pizz.
Vc.
ff
pizz.
Db.
ff


H
♩ = c. 76
78
Charles
I can't bear it any longer, Mummy.
We have to go!
Helena
gliss
Charles,_ E nough!
He does-n't hate you.
He wants to help you.
Your school ing_your
fut- ure.
To-mor row we are go-ing to
Cl.
fff
Vib.
l.v.
Hpsd.
lute stop
H
♩ = c. 76
Vc.
Db.
mf
mf


85
I ♩ = c. 58
Charles
Look at you!
Dressing like that!
Have you no pride?
You're nothing but a servant!
Helena
Lon - don. I shall bring you back a treat,_ a treat.
How dare you!
Cl.
flz.
ff
fff
Vib.
p
Ped.
Hpsd.
I ♩ = c. 58
Vc.
pizz.
ff
Db.
pizz.
ff

Lights fade on Helena.

90 *Charles runs to his room.*

J ♩ = c. 76

K ♩ = c. 58

Charles

mp *f*

They willbe in Lon- don. My mind is made up. To-mor-row I shall be gone.

Helena

gliss *ff* *f*

Charles! Come back! Don't spoil it! I must think of my self.

Fl.

Cl.

pp

Vib.

f l.v. *mp* Ped. *mf* *f*

Hpsd.

(tr)

J ♩ = c. 76

K ♩ = c. 58

Vc.

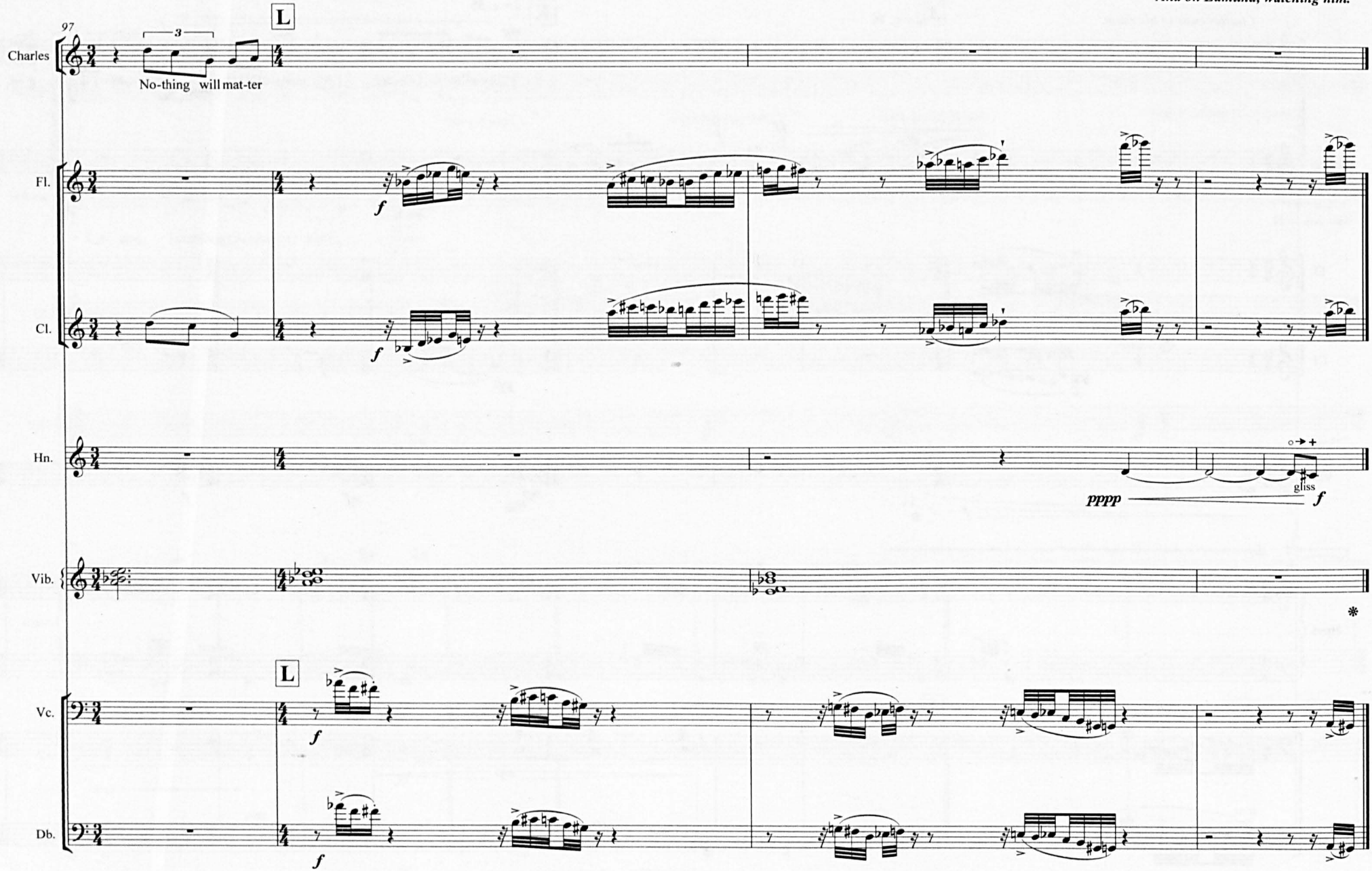
arco *mp*

Db.

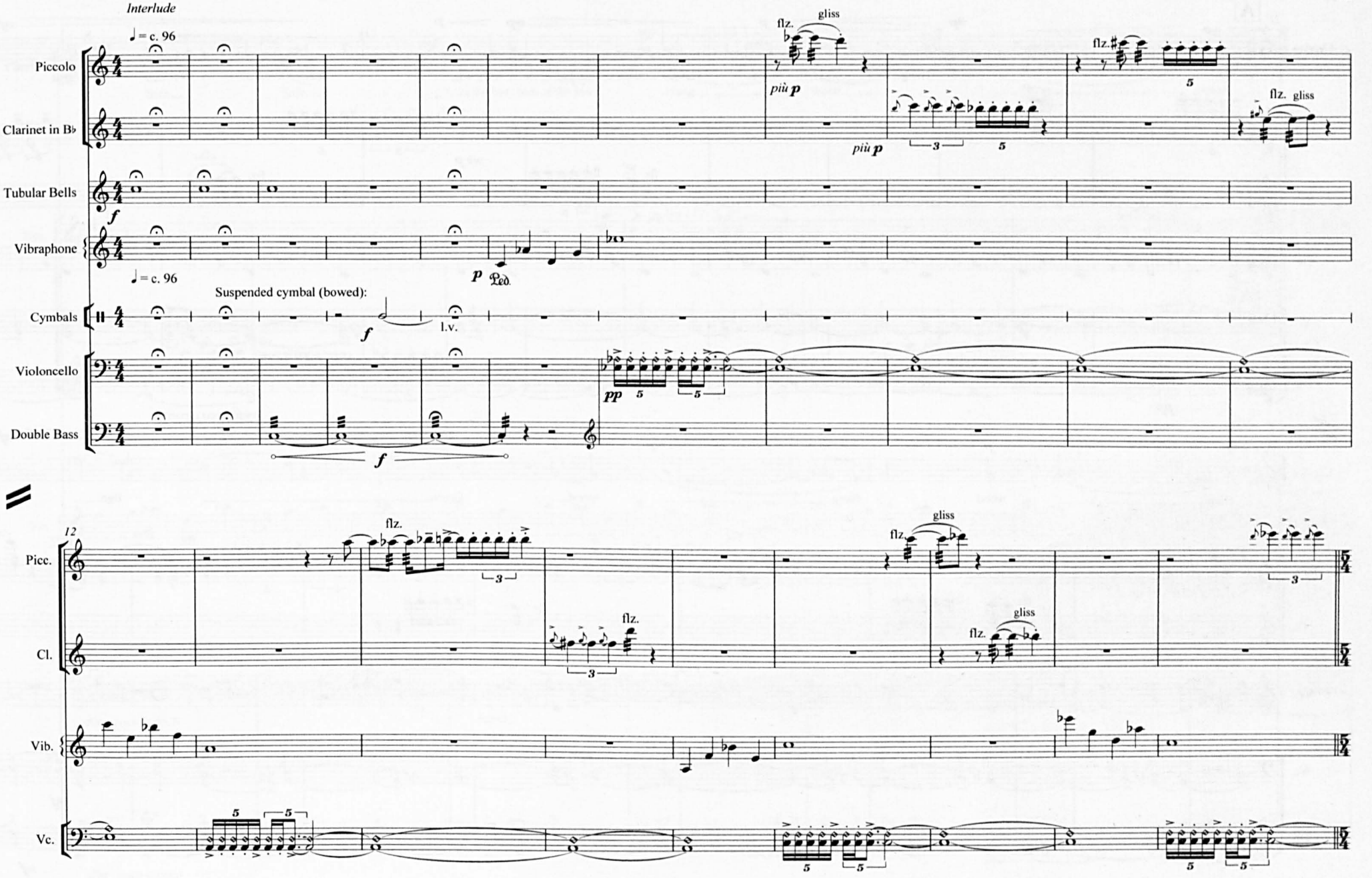
arco *mf*

Charles starts to pack things into a satchel.

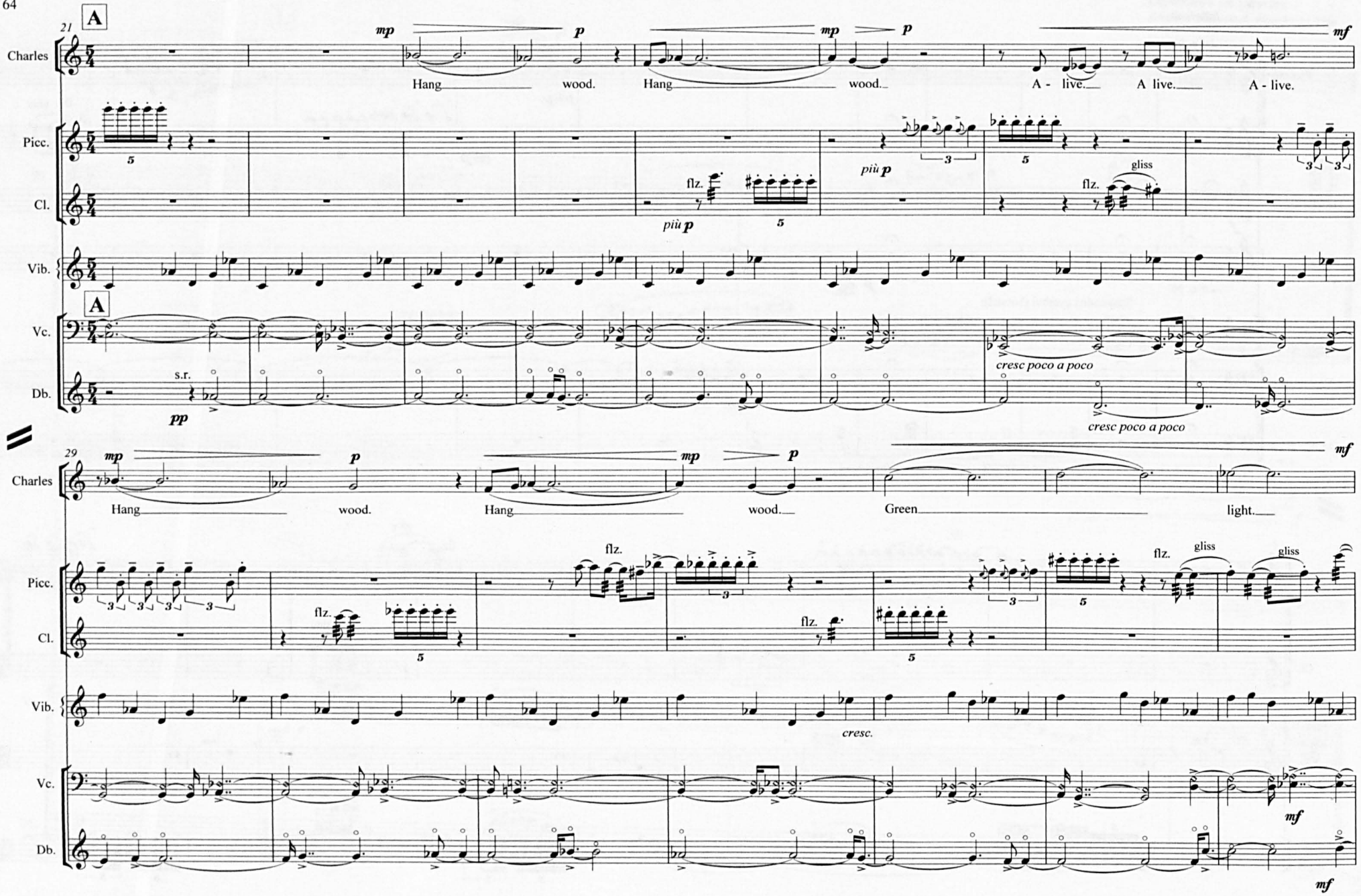
Lights fade on Charles. And on Edmund, watching him.

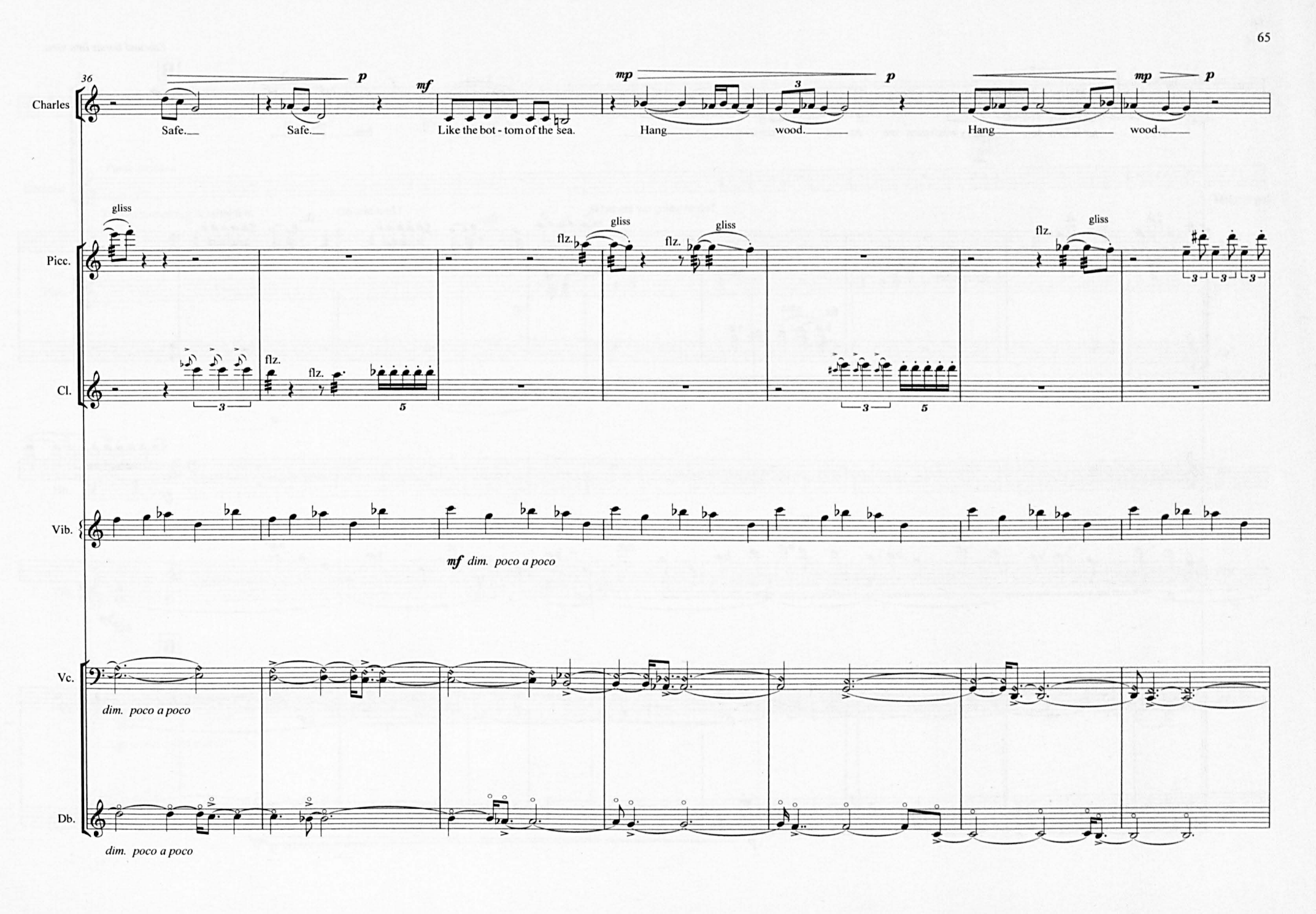


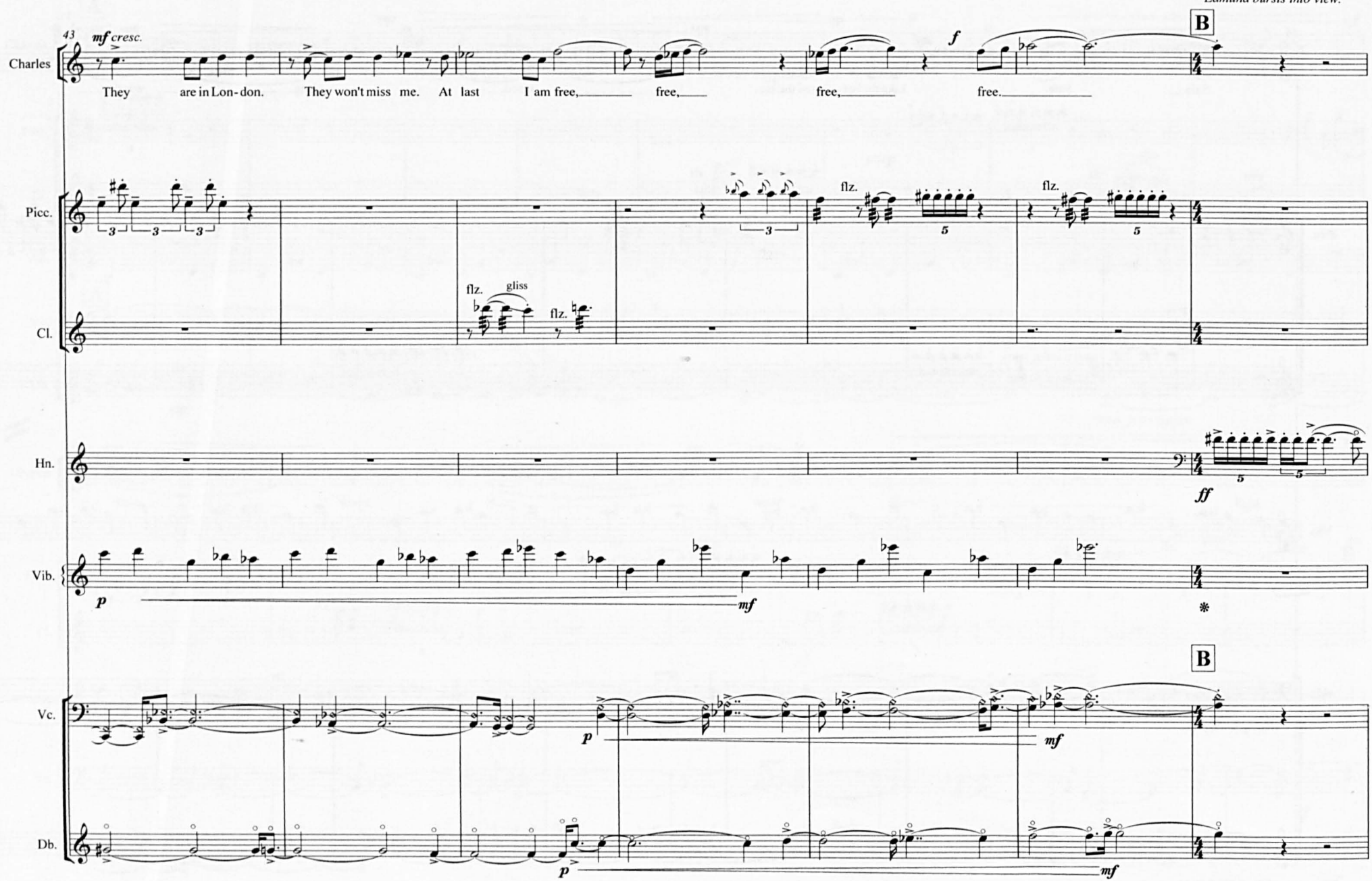
I'm the King of the Castle - Day 3

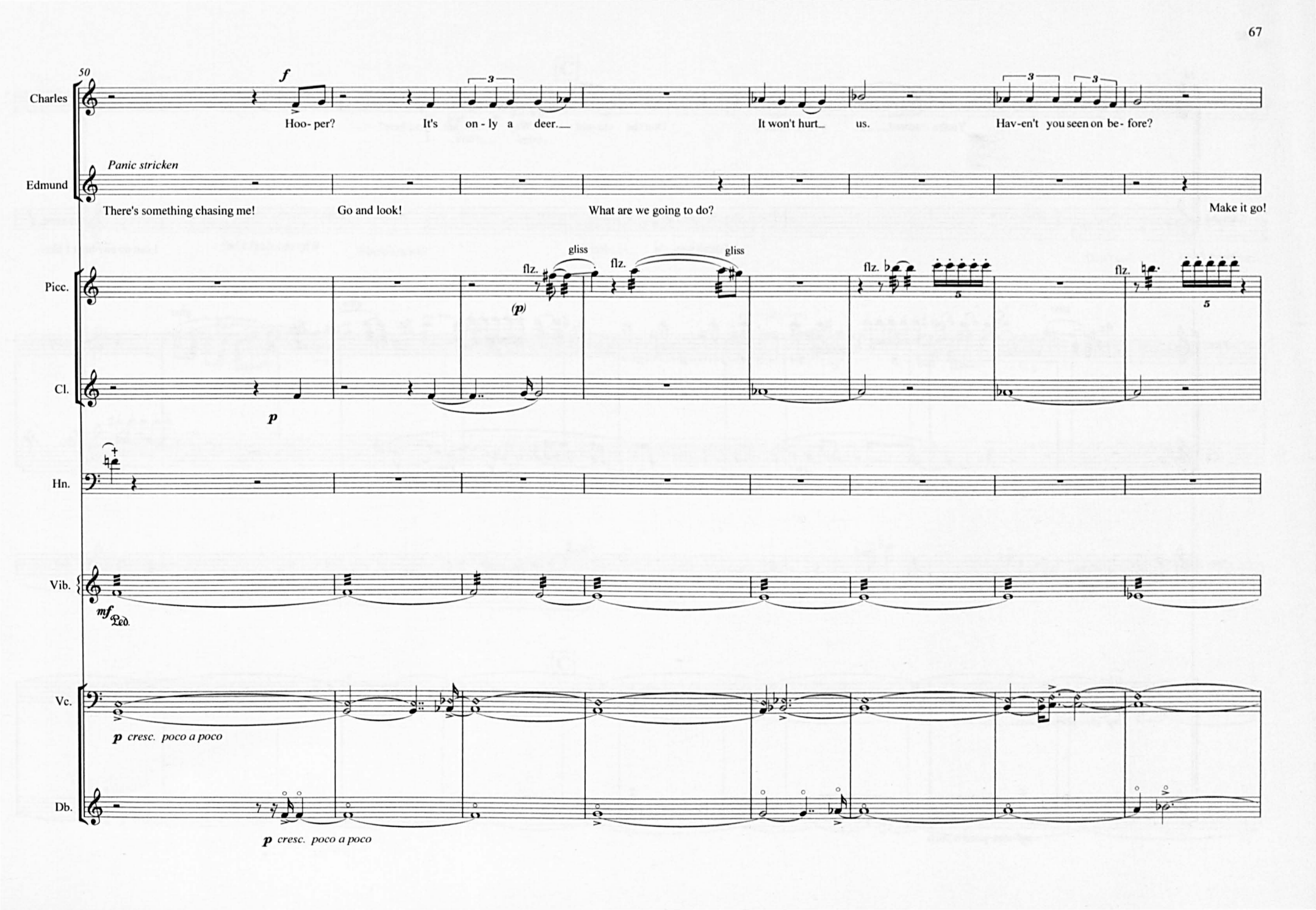


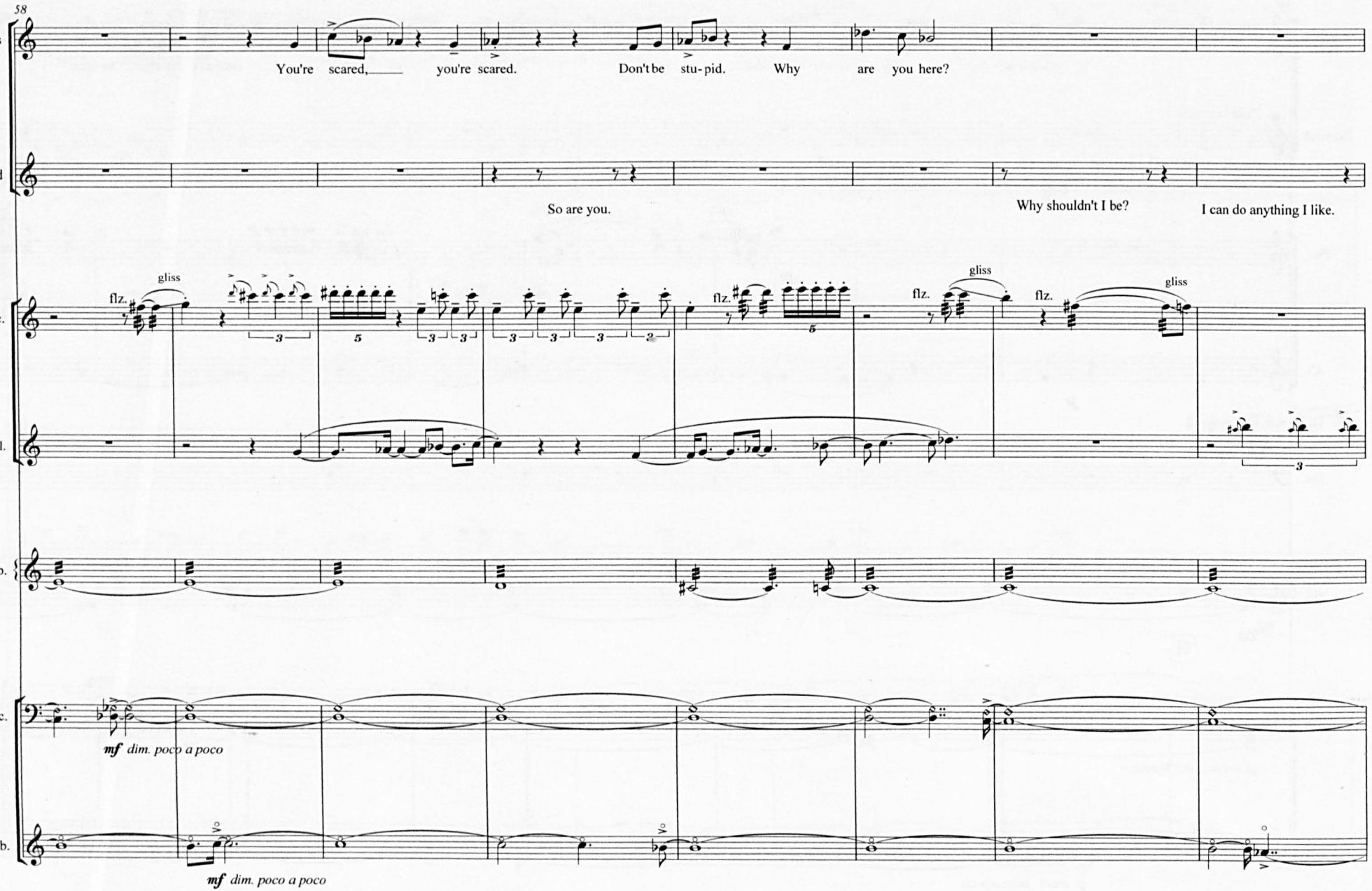
Hang wood
Charles enters carrying his satchel and his galleon.

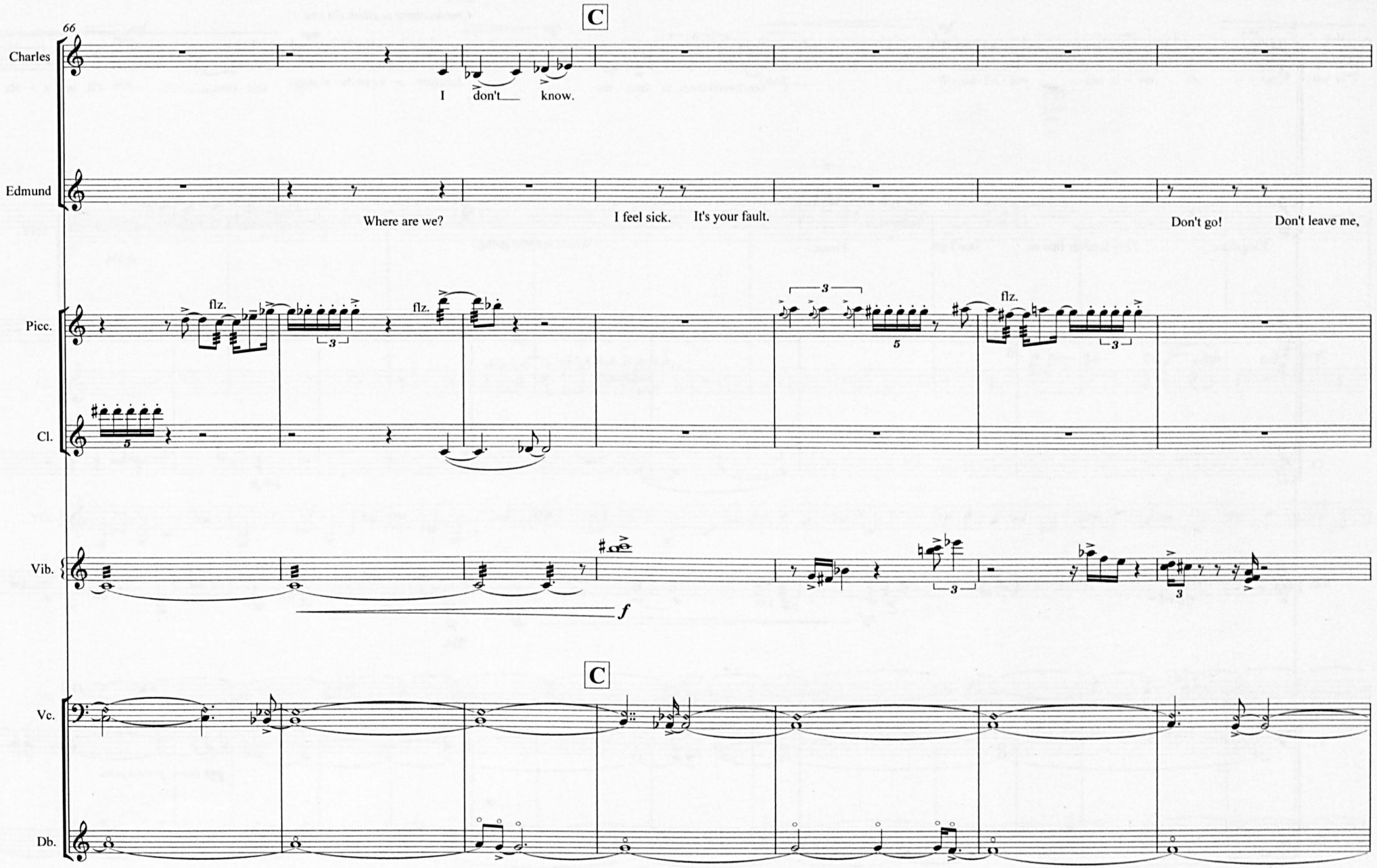


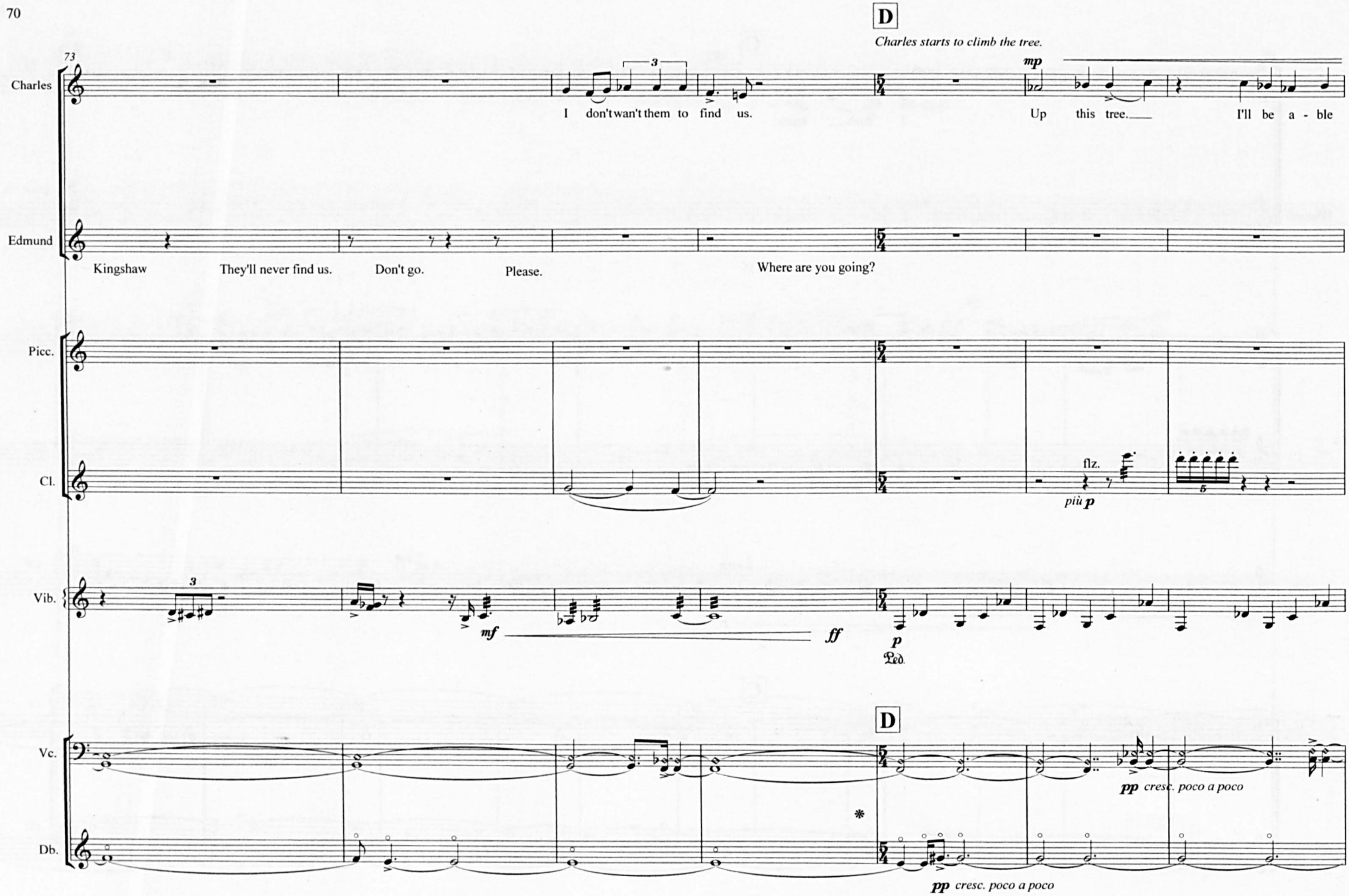

36
Charles
Safe.
Safe.
Like the bot - tom of the sea.
Hang
wood.
Hang
wood.
p
mf
mp
p
mp
p
Picc.
gliss
flz.
Cl.
flz.
Vib.
mf dim. poco a poco
Vc.
dim. poco a poco
Db.
dim. poco a poco

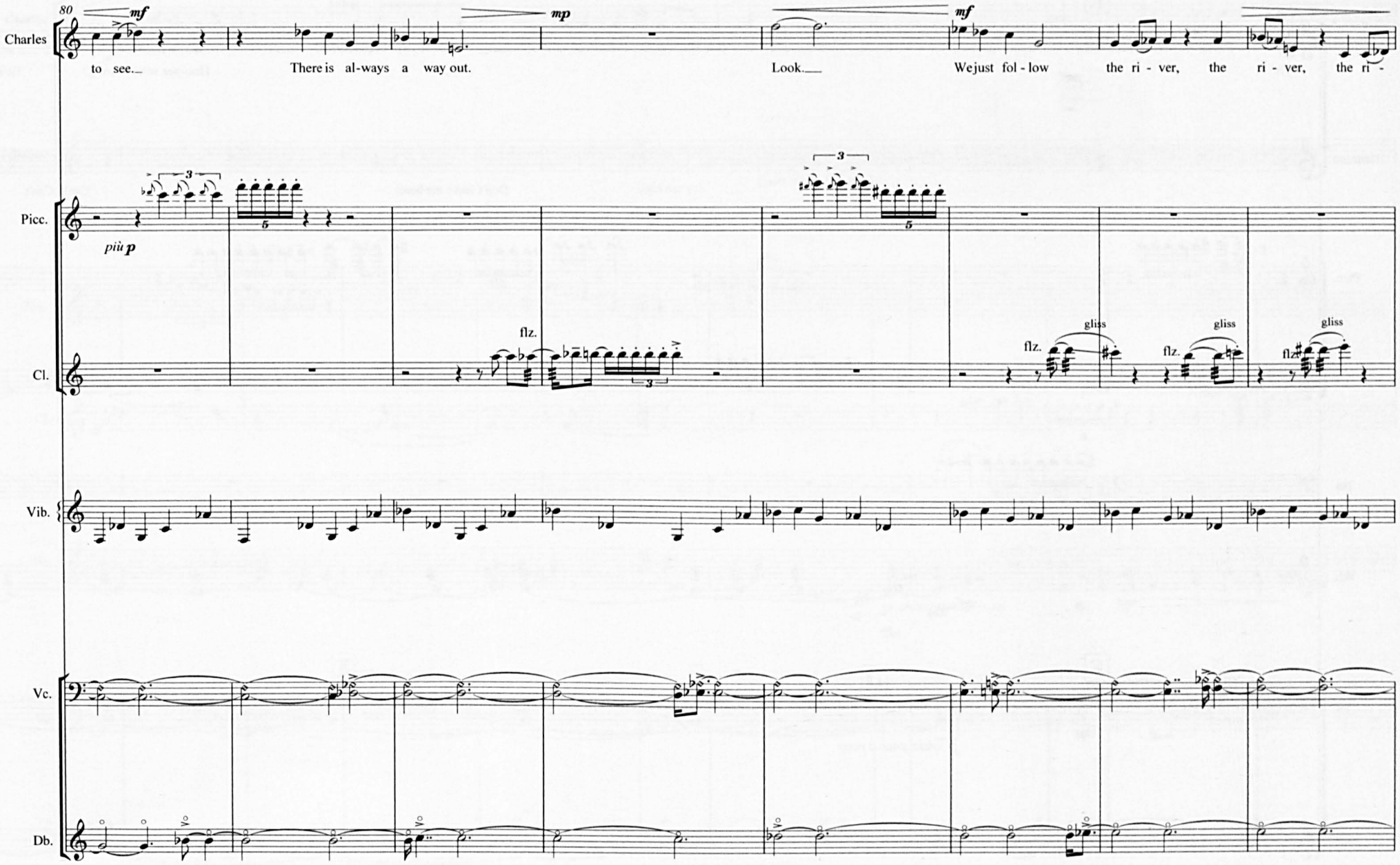

Edmund bursts into view.
43
mf cresc.
Charles
They are in Lon-don. They won't miss me. At last I am free, free, free, free.
f
B
Picc.
flz.
flz.
Cl.
flz.
gliss
flz.
Hn.
ff
Vib.
p
mf
*
B
Vc.
p
mf
Db.
p
mf

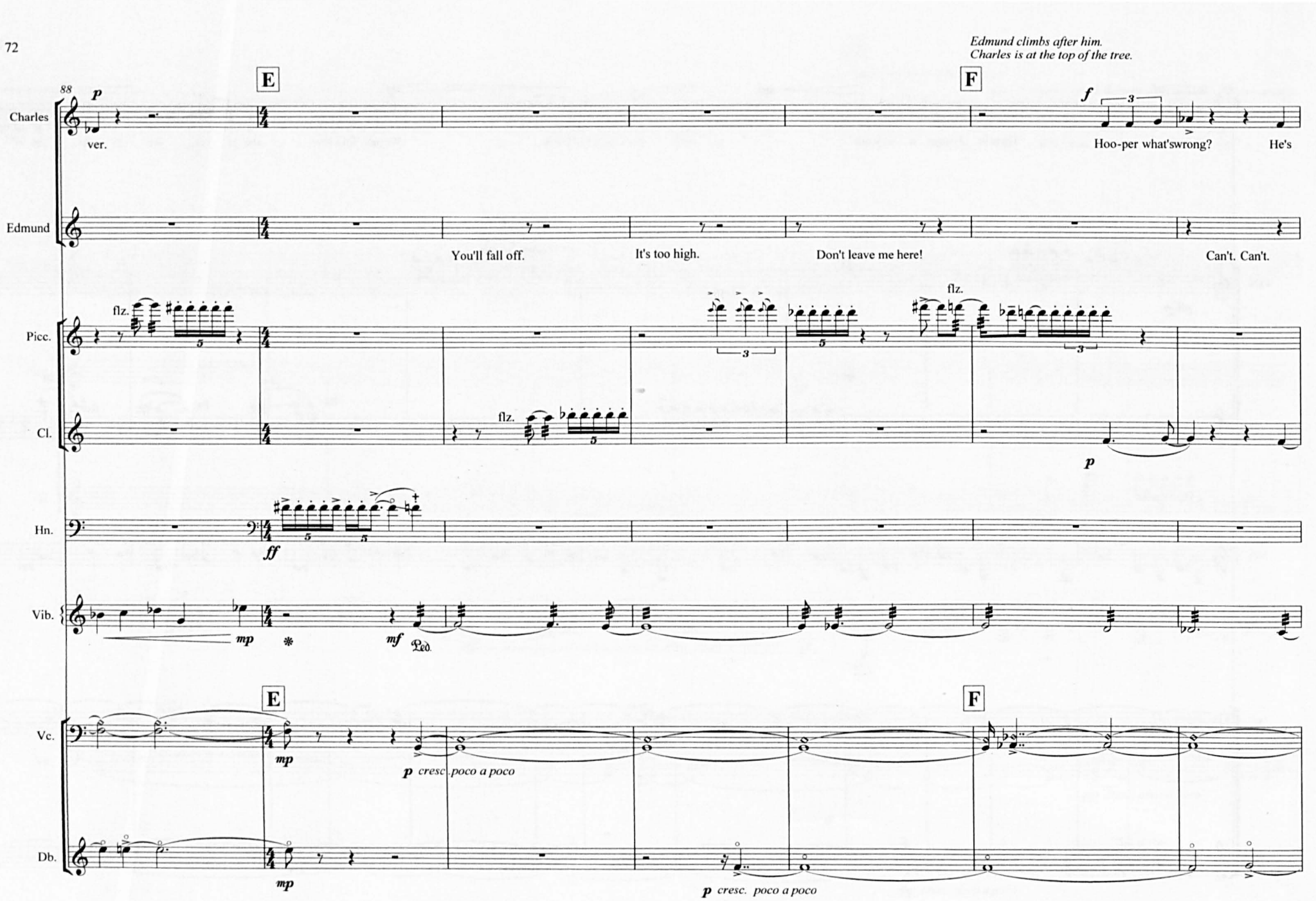

50
Charles
f
Hoo- per?
It's
on - ly a deer.
It won't hurt us.
Hav-en't you seen on be- fore?
Panic stricken
Edmund
There's something chasing me!
Go and look!
What are we going to do?
Make it go!
Picc.
gliss
flz.
(p)
Cl.
p
Hn.
Vib.
mf
Ped.
Vc.
p cresc. poco a poco
Db.
p cresc. poco a poco

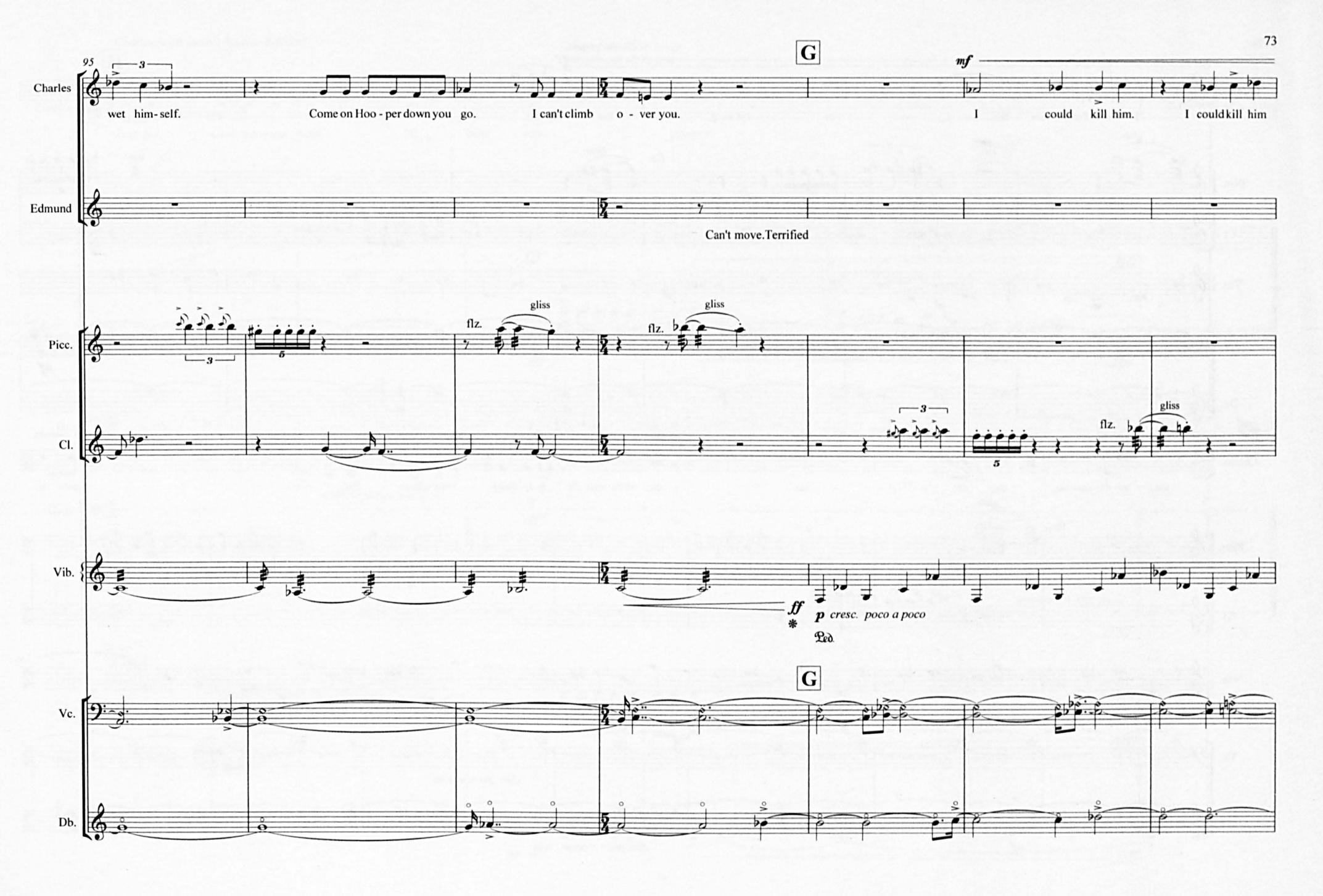

58
Charles
You're scared, you're scared. Don't be stu-pid. Why are you here?
Edmund
So are you.
Why shouldn't I be?
I can do anything I like.
Picc.
flz.
gliss
Cl.
Vib.
Vc.
mf dim. poco a poco
Db.
mf dim. poco a poco

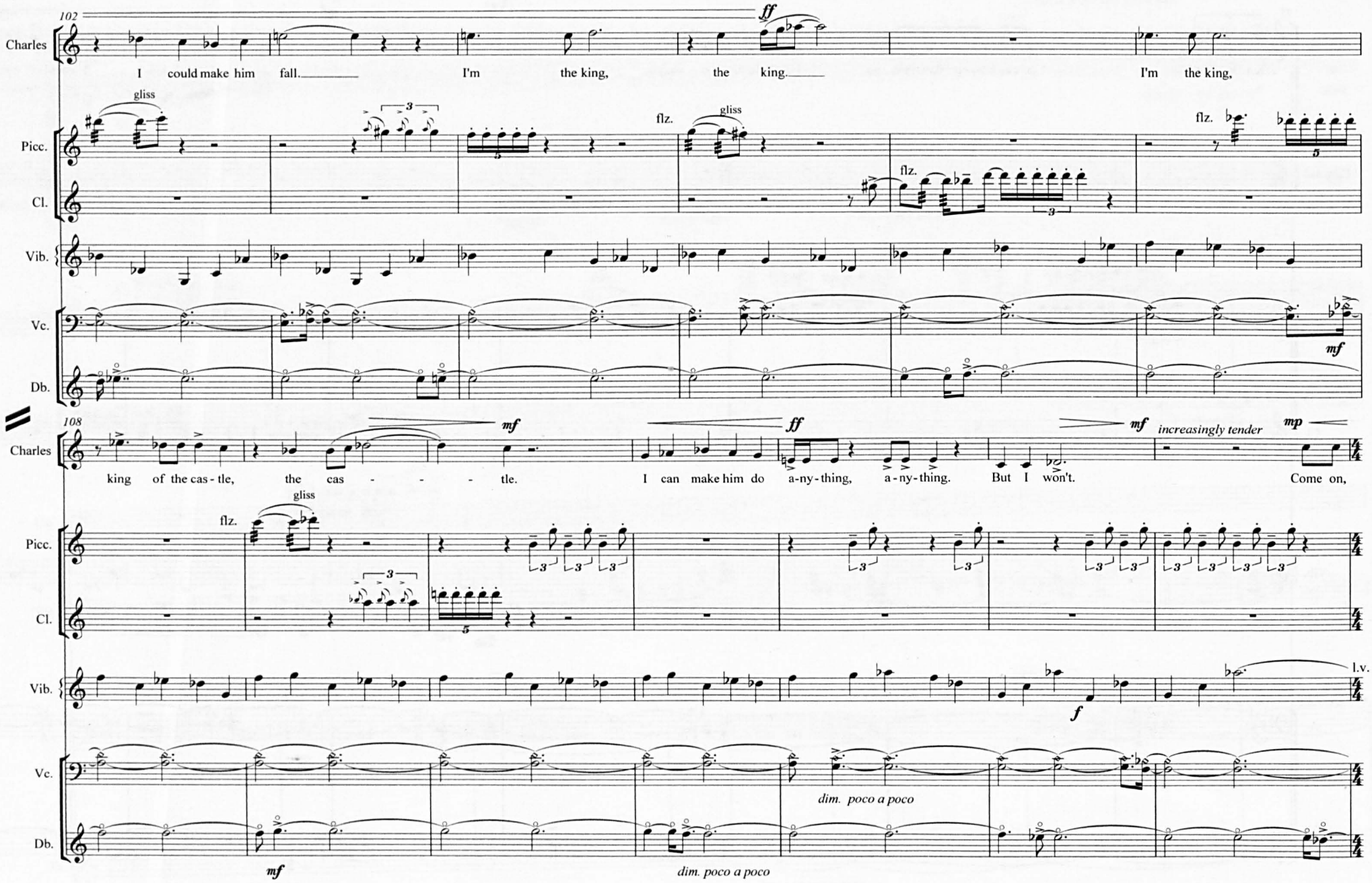

C
66
Charles
I don't know.
Edmund
Where are we?
I feel sick. It's your fault.
Don't go!
Don't leave me,
Picc.
flz.
flz.
flz.
Cl.
Vib.
f
C
Vc.
Db.


D
Charles starts to climb the tree.
73
Charles
I don't wan't them to find us.
mp
Up this tree.
I'll be a - ble
Edmund
Kingshaw
They'll never find us.
Don't go.
Please.
Where are you going?
Picc.
Cl.
flz.
più p
Vib.
3
mf
ff
p
Ped.
D
Vc.
pp cresc. poco a poco
Db.
pp cresc. poco a poco


80
mf
mp
mf
Charles
to see.
There is al-ways a way out.
Look.
We just fol - low the ri - ver, the ri - ver, the ri -
Picc.
più p
3
5
Cl.
flz.
gliss
Vib.
Vc.
Db.


Edmund climbs after him.
Charles is at the top of the tree.
88
E
F
Charles
ver.
Hoo-per what'swrong?
He's
Edmund
You'll fall off.
It's too high.
Don't leave me here!
Can't. Can't.
Picc.
flz.
Cl.
Hn.
Vib.
Ped.
Vc.
Db.
cresc. poco a poco


95
G
mf
Charles
wet him-self.
Come on Hoo - per down you go.
I can't climb o - ver you.
I could kill him.
I could kill him
Edmund
Can't move. Terrified
Picc.
Cl.
flz.
gliss
Vib.
ff
p cresc. poco a poco
Ped.
G
Vc.
Db.


102
Charles
I could make him fall.
I'm the king,
the king.
I'm the king,
ff
gliss
Picc.
Cl.
flz.
Vib.
Vc.
Db.
mf
108
king of the cas - tle,
the cas - - - - tle.
I can make him do a-ny-thing, a-ny-thing.
But I won't.
increasingly tender
mp
Come on,
ff
mf
f
l.v.
dim. poco a poco
dim. poco a poco

Charles holds out his hand to Edmund.

Edmund recoils in terror and falls out of the tree.

H

115

Charles

f

Hoo-per. Give me your hand. I'll help you.

Screamed:

Hooper!

Picc.

Cl.

Hn.

fff *ffff*

Cym.

suspended sizzle cymbal:

fff

l.v.

S. D.

snare drum (rim shot):

fffff

H

Vc.

Db.

(p) *fff* *ffff*