Israel Lai (2020)

after some tomorrows

for alto flute and bass clarinet

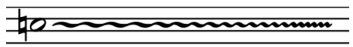
after some tomorrows is a woodwind duet for alto flute and bass clarinet, two of the less common wind instruments. it is commissioned by Lai Tsoi-yin and dedicated to our shared alma mater, the chinese university of hong kong. the piece commemorates the siege of this university over 11-12 november 2019, where tear gas was recklessly deployed onto our beautiful college grounds, spoiling the teeming, diverse lives in the nature, and harming our precious young students in the process. the movements of the piece capture the blinding colours over the course of the siege: the break of dawn, the dreaded black flags, and the unnaturally blue water. the music also draws inspiration from rachel leung's poem *muscovado*, which documents the same event from the perspective of a medical student at the university.

performance notes

air sound

sing

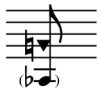
sing and play simultaneously



vary freely the intensity of vibrato

pizzicato (flute)

foot stomp



tongue ram (sounded pitch in brackets)

key click

now i have learnt that
it was always
something watching us with
the parlance of sugar

the most edible lie is how
starved you are for acridity-
how eyes flickered when you
said the people started
putting it on their tongues, sick as
syrup

i will always remember it as a
disembarkment of molasses.
effigy of grime come to cling,
smell of armed men
on the hill.
how the air tasted haphazard before
you started trespassing from the
clogged highway with your rounds and
canisters.

all across the land
you and i were watched on LCD.
water found its way in through any of
the thickjammed
exits.
an unfamiliar quench began pooling
the dormitories.
even now i think of how young their bodies
were, positively juvenile when the siege
began and how, by the time the older ones
repatriated
they were already in the sweetthick mire.

by second dusk
you brought in your big toys
billeted them on our bridge,
chock full of your lewd blue.
how do you not understand, even now,
that no one
at all likes building barricades?
imagine the fear of a tomorrow so terrible
that eggs shell themselves for oblation on
highwalls.

yesterday i was thinking of how
despite all their professorship,
they could not stop
all the young limbs being shot blue all limbs
shot bare sodden for years
from now i will see many up close
tend likewise to bloodied gapes but none
with such
saccharine colour.
(so thorough in blueness.)

after some tomorrows
the streams here have spattered.
rolling off, as they do,
to quell the arsoned city.
and i
am only just realizing how many half-
lives have been taken, why
a city in vertigo
thinks hyperglycemia is the
sweetest way to die.

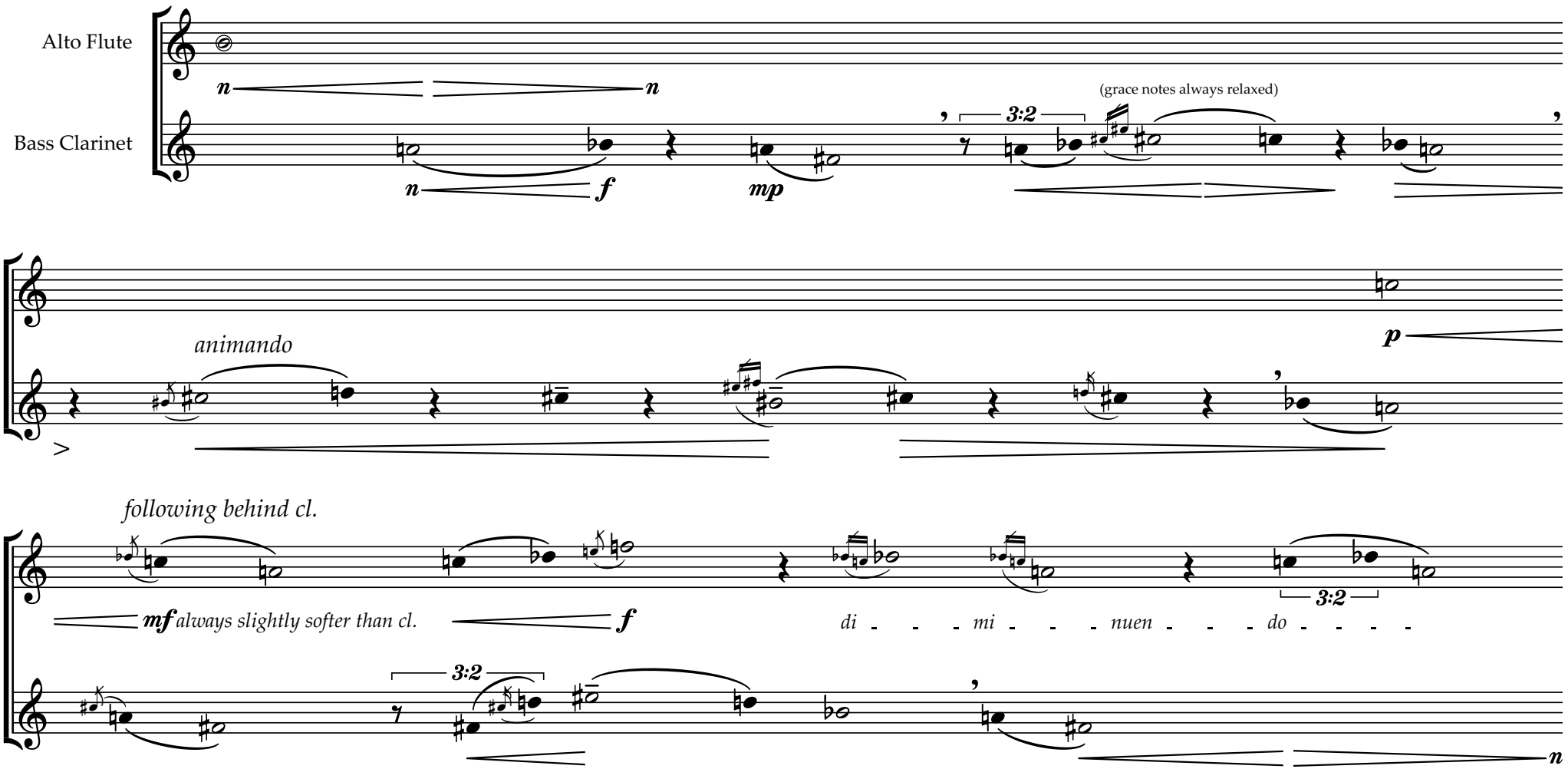
-l.r.k.y

after some tomorrows

duet for no.2 bridge

Israel Lai (2020)

1. the air tasted haphazard



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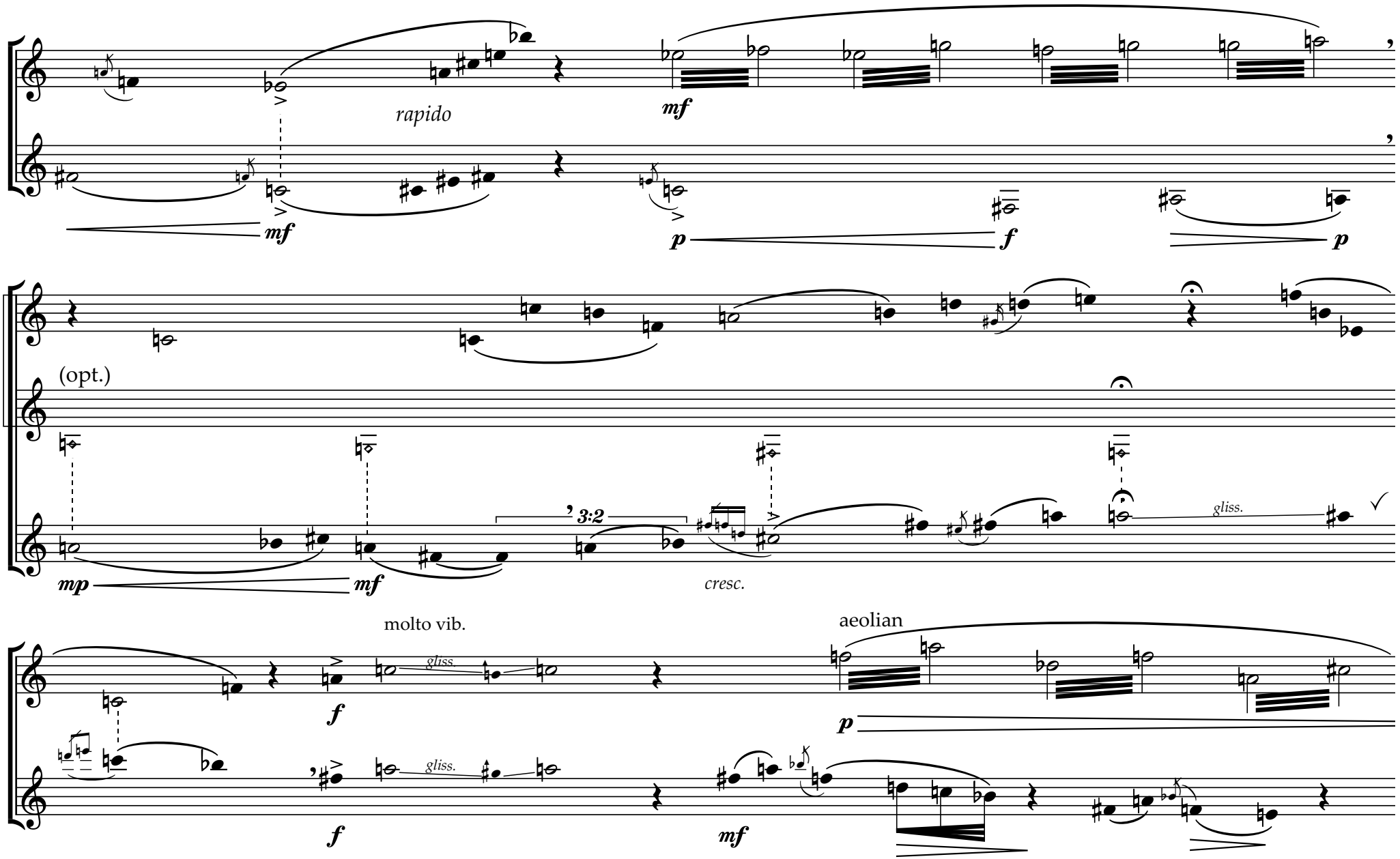
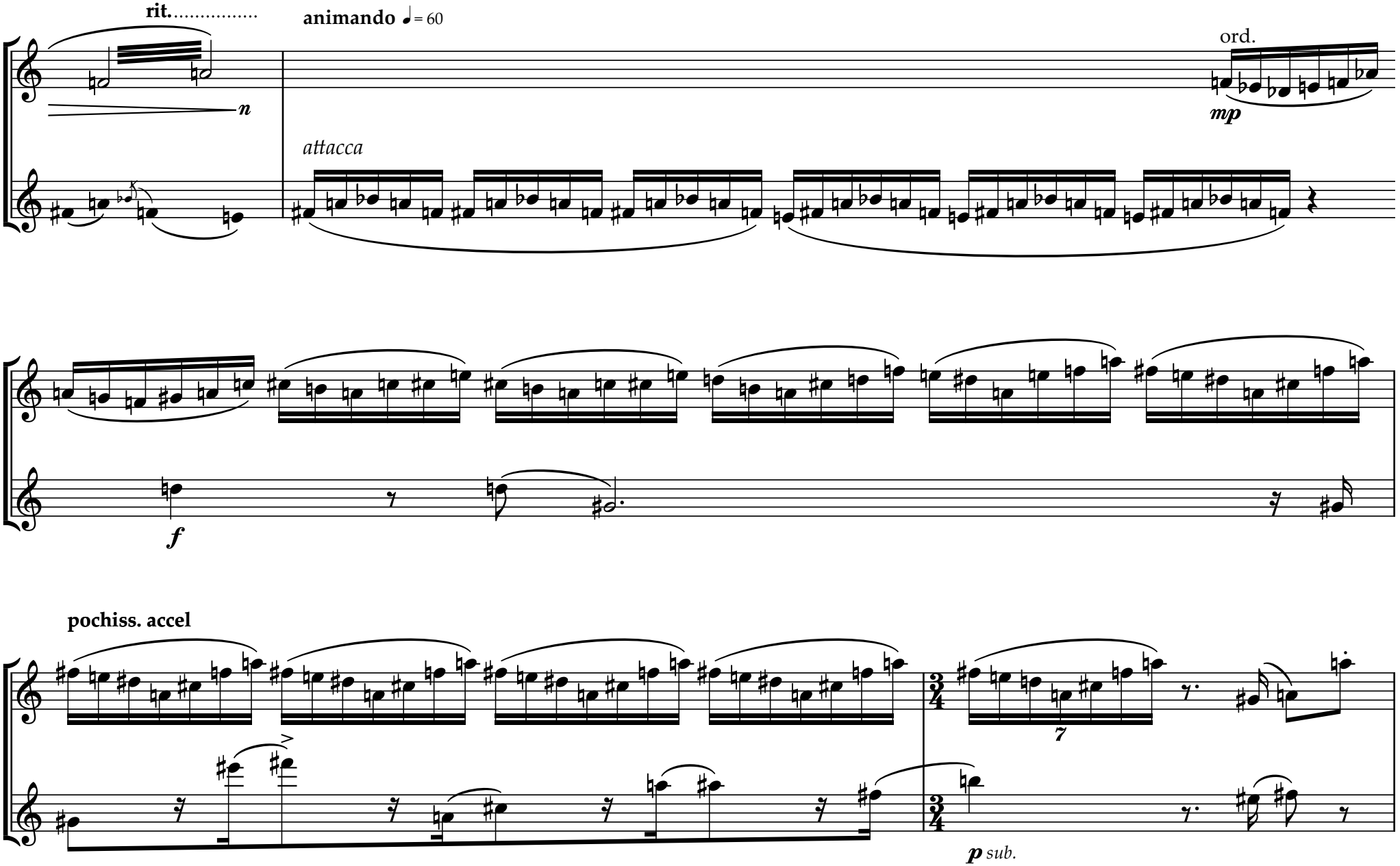
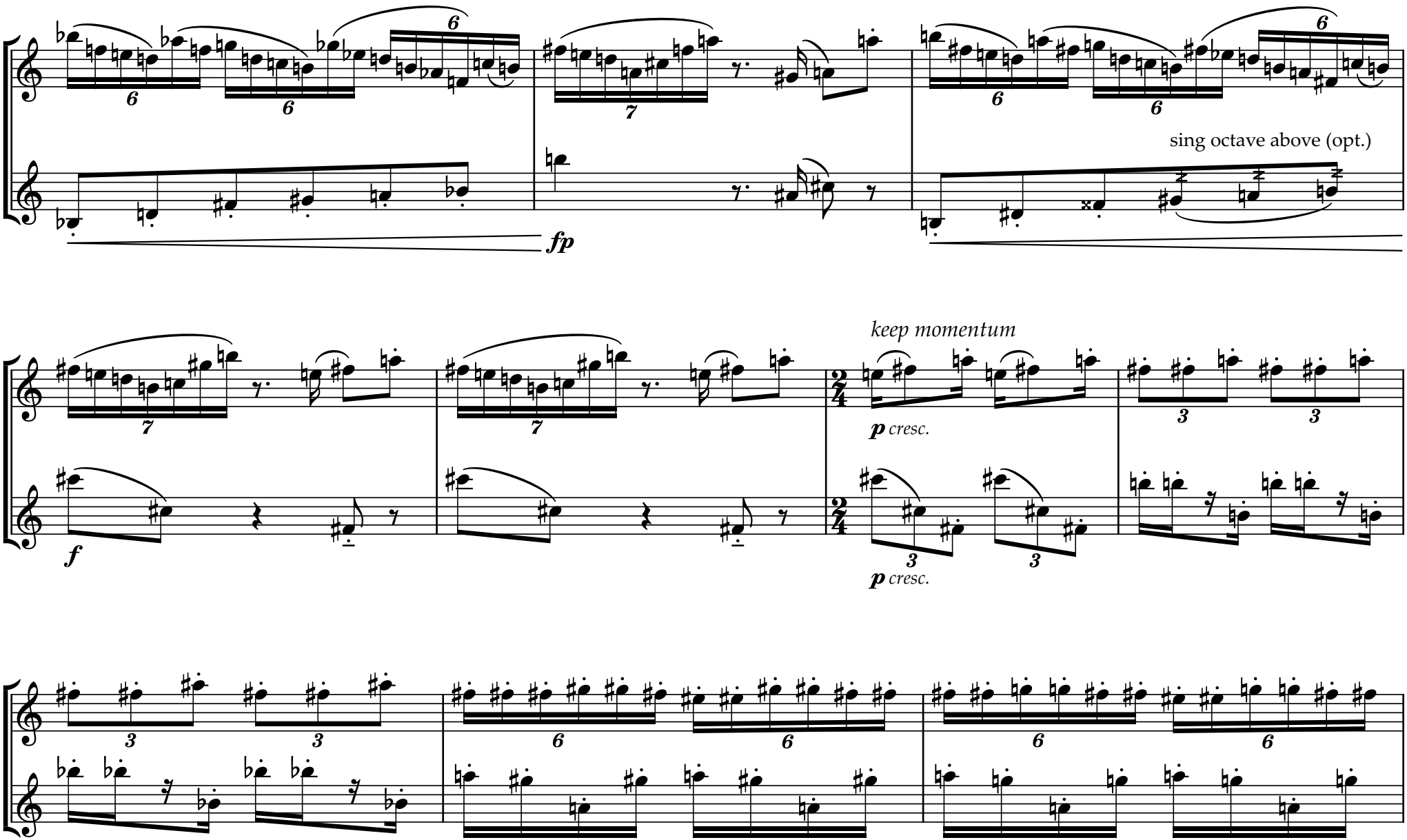

rapido
mf
mf
p
f
p
(opt.)
mp
mf
3:2
cresc.
gliss.
molto vib.
f
gliss.
f
gliss.
mf
aeolian
p


rit.
animando ♩= 60
n
ord.
mp
attacca
f
pochiss. accel
7
p sub.


sing octave above (opt.)
fp
keep momentum
p cresc.
f
p cresc.

play pitches in any order in this rhythm;
vary tempo freely and independently

cue each other when each set begins

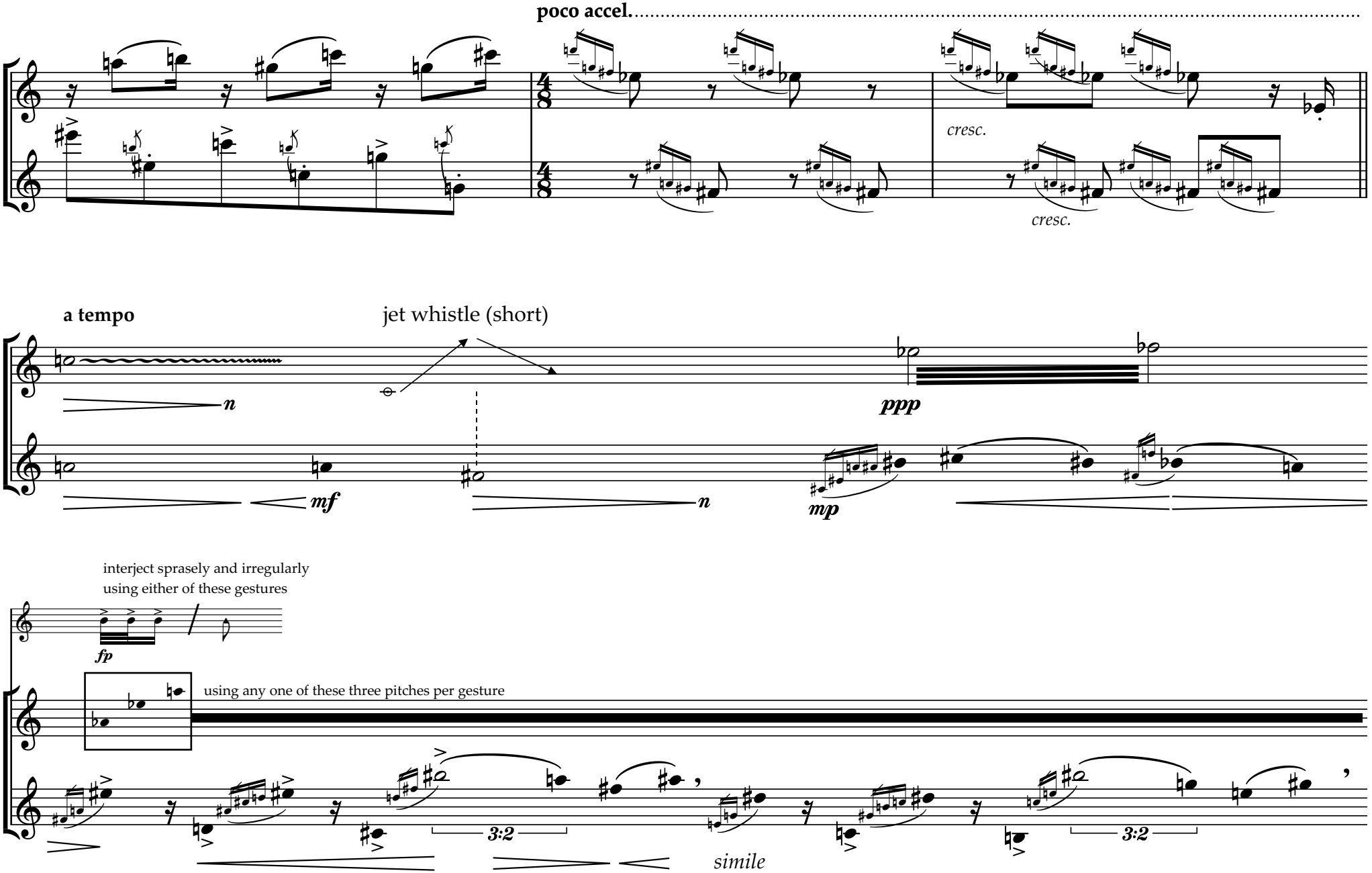
mf poco cresc.

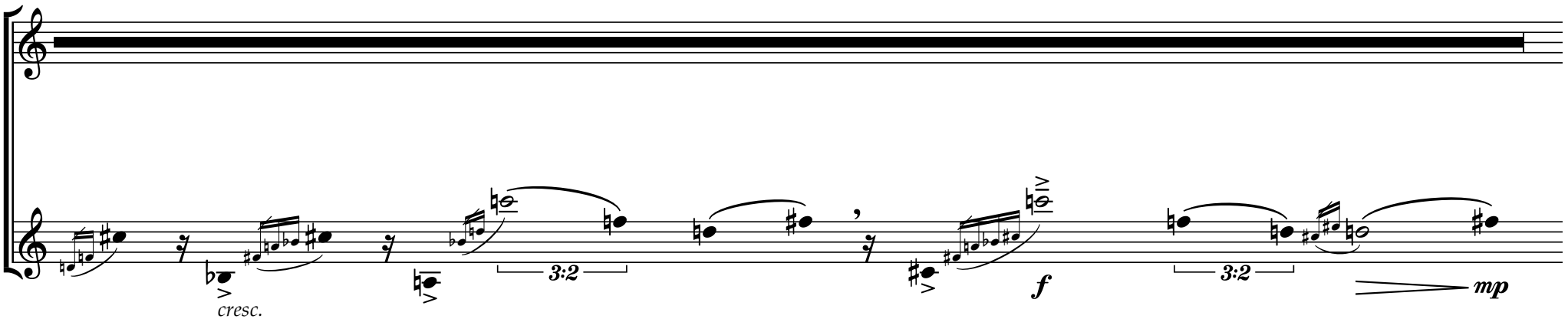
liberamente ♩= 44

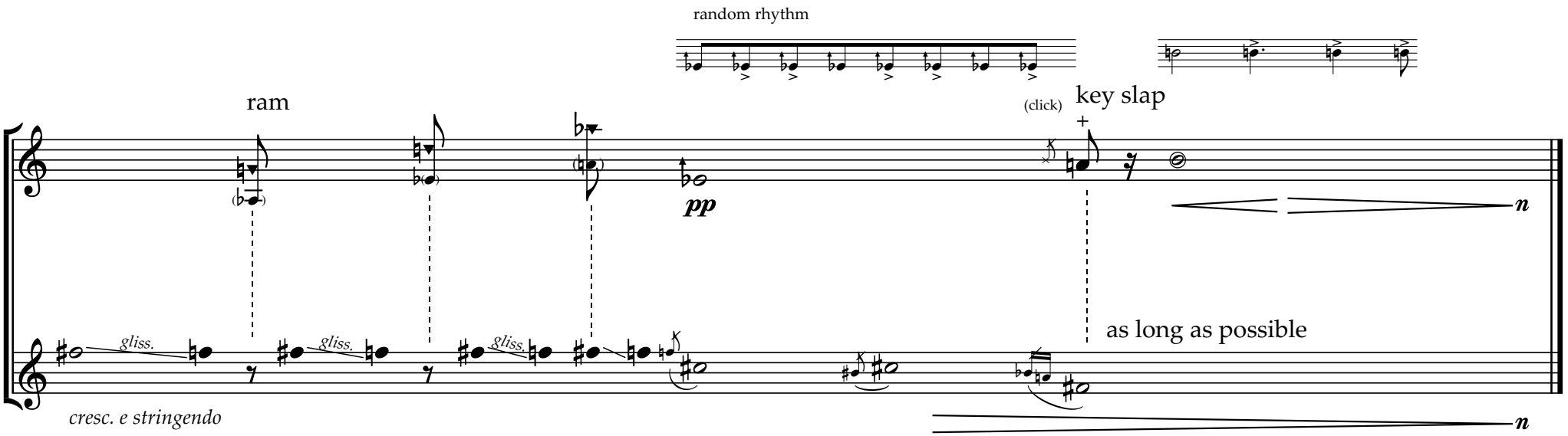
fff *fff* *mp* *mp* *simile* (pizz.)

gliss.

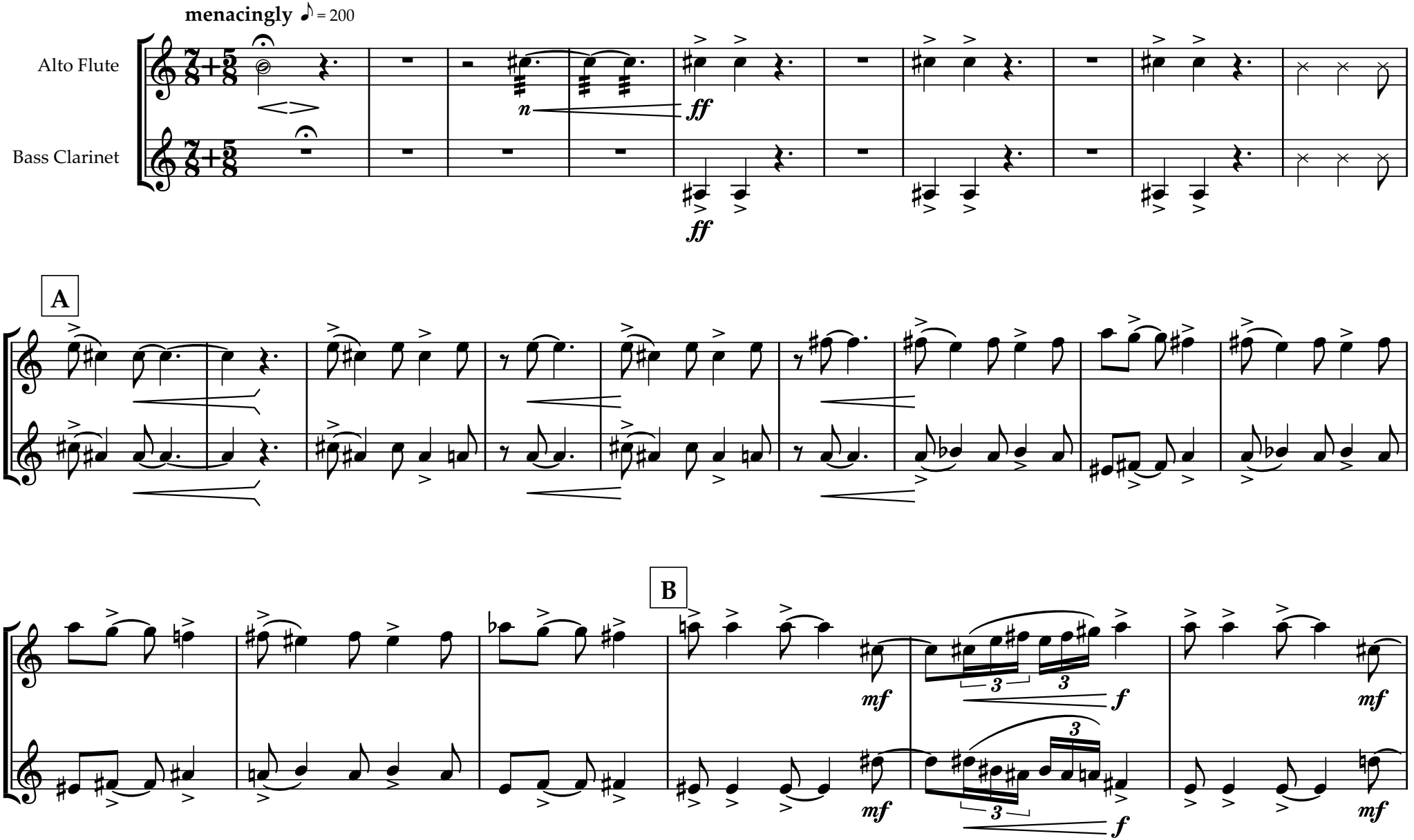
3 3 3

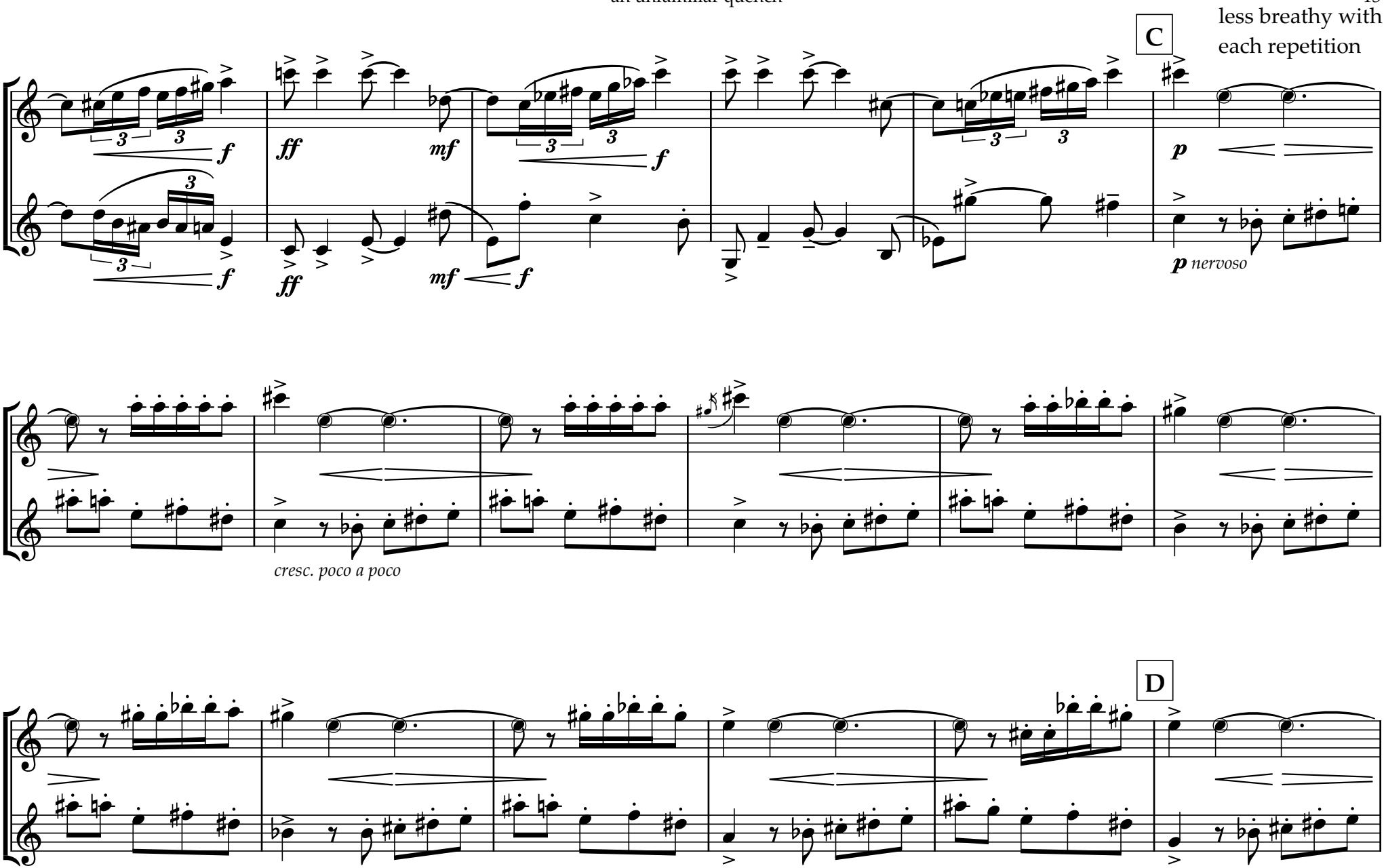

poco accel.
cresc.
cresc.
a tempo
jet whistle (short)
n
mf
n
ppp
mp
interject sprasely and irregularly
using either of these gestures
fp
using any one of these three pitches per gesture
3:2
3:2
simile

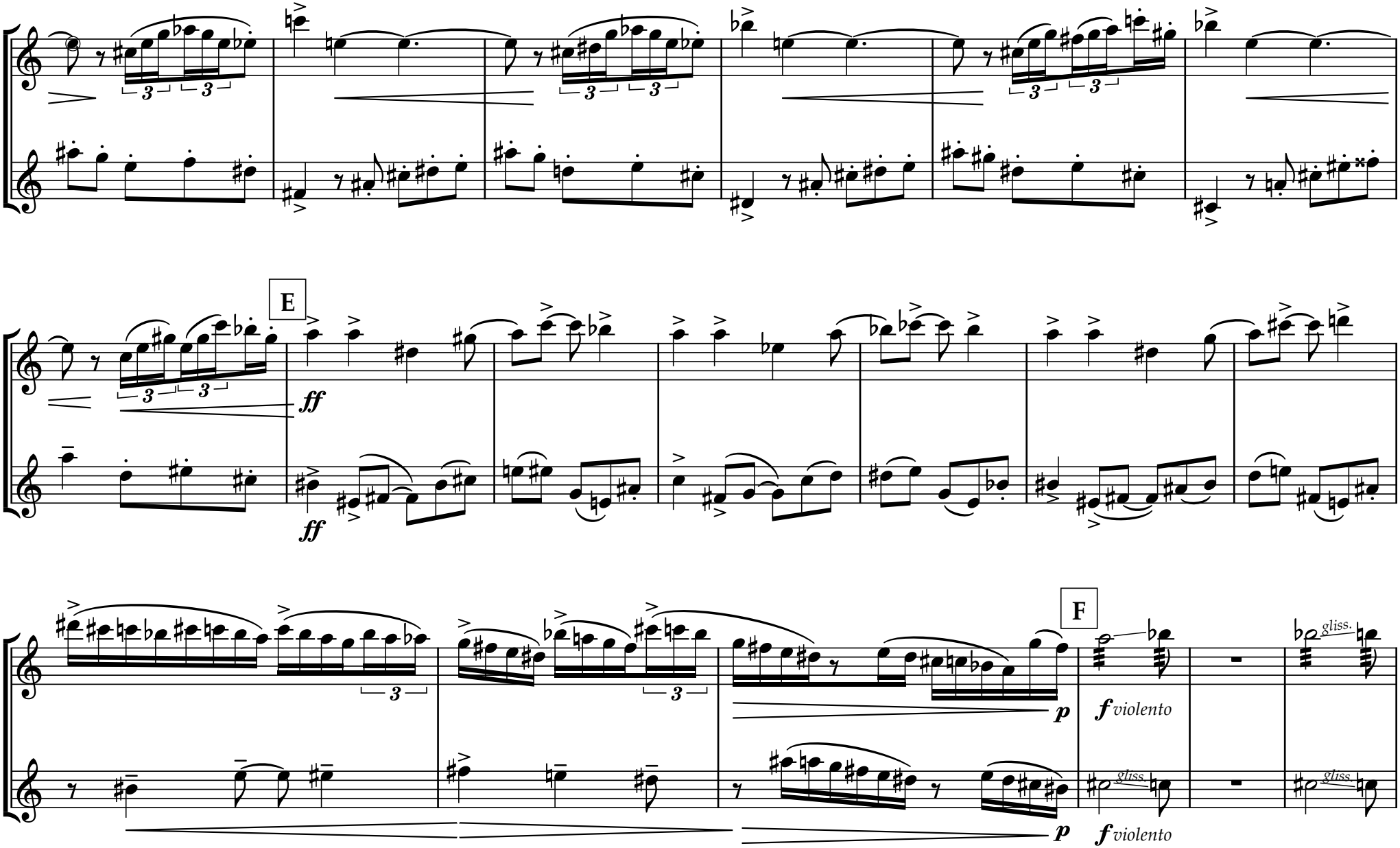

cresc.
3:2
f
3:2
mp

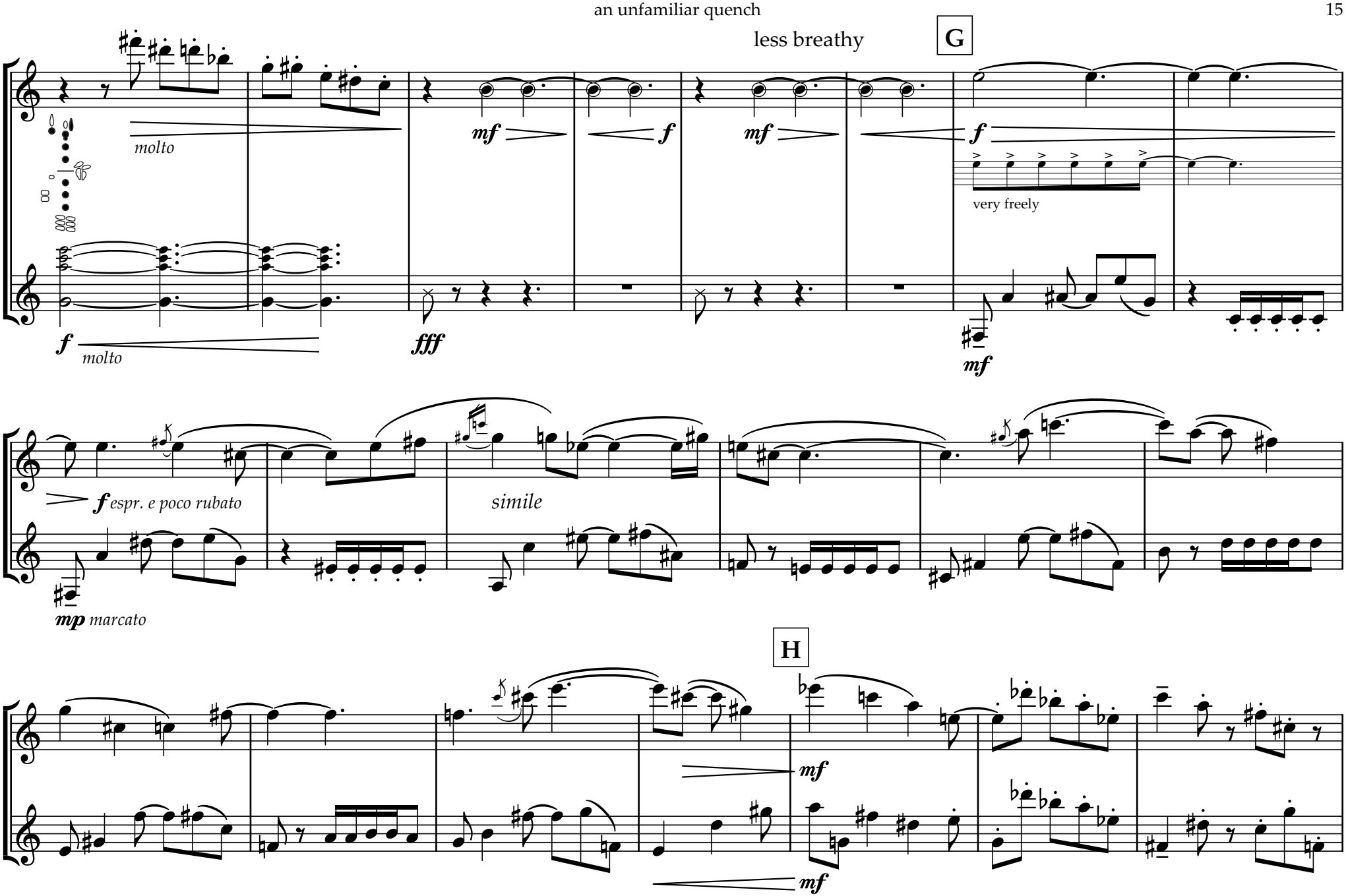

random rhythm
ram
(click)
key slap
pp
n
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.
as long as possible
cresc. e stringendo
n

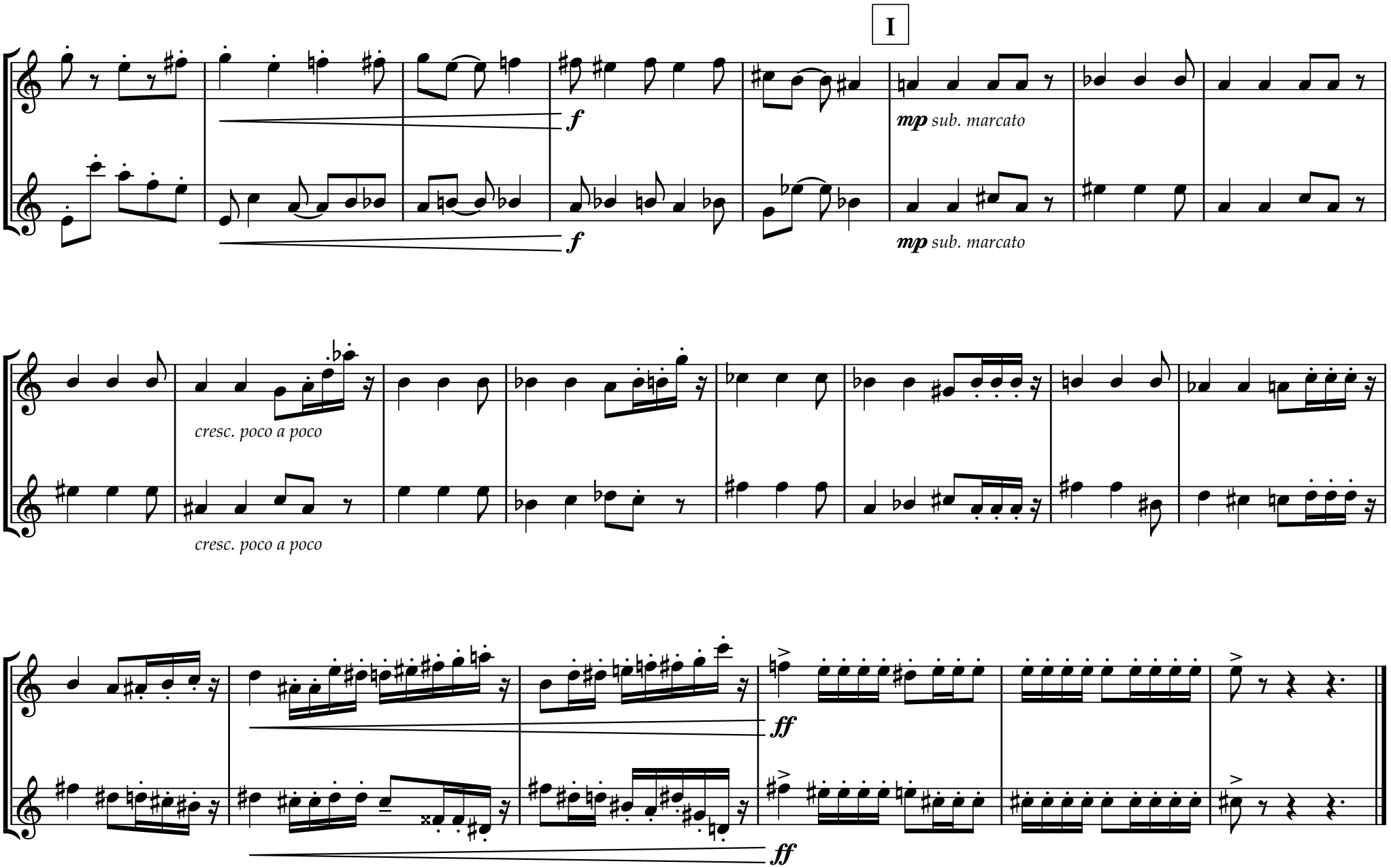
2. an unfamiliar quench




C
less breathy with each repetition
ff
mf
f
p
p nervoso
cresc. poco a poco
D

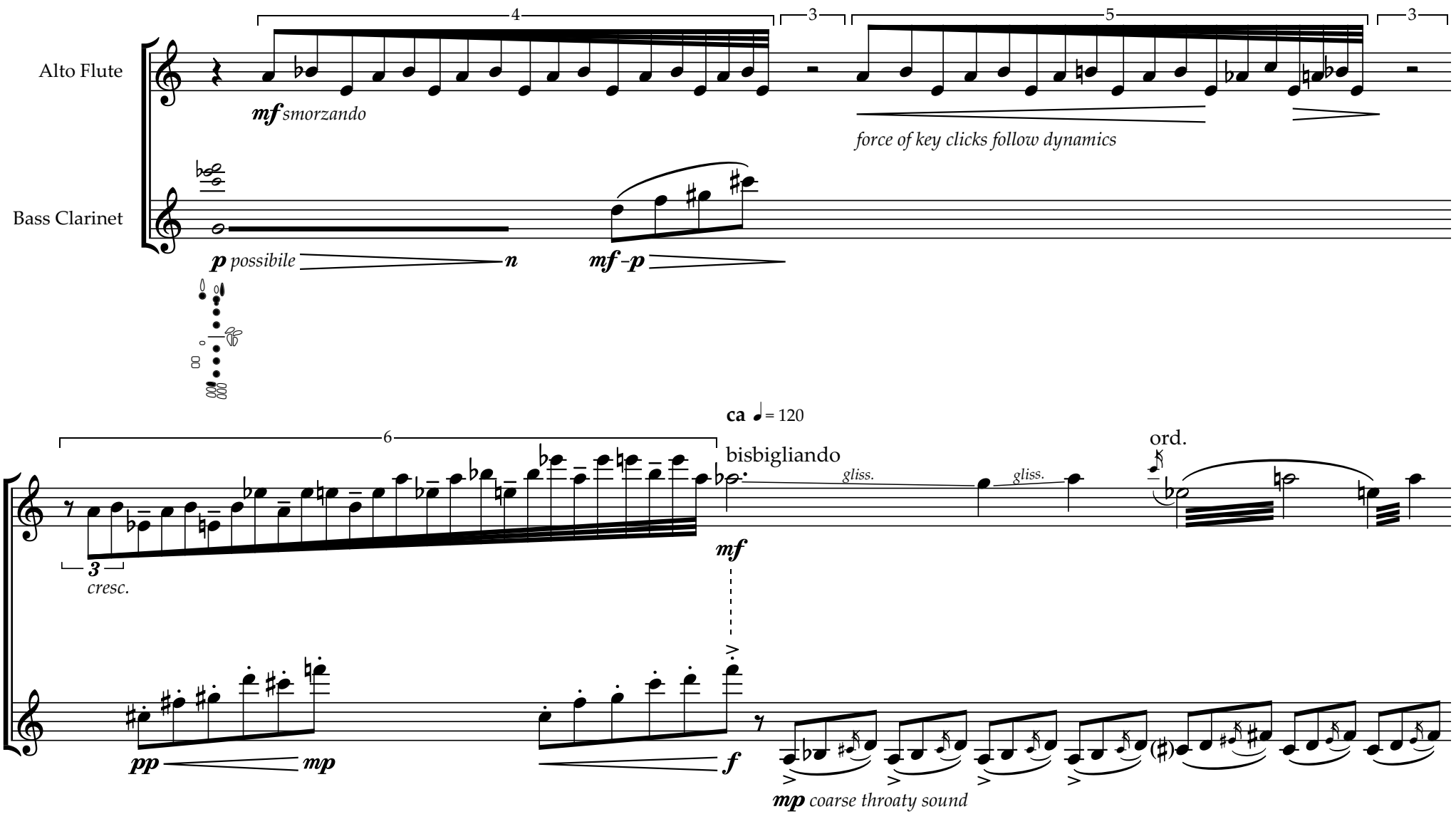

E
ff
ff
F
p
f violento
gliss.
p
f violento
gliss.
gliss.

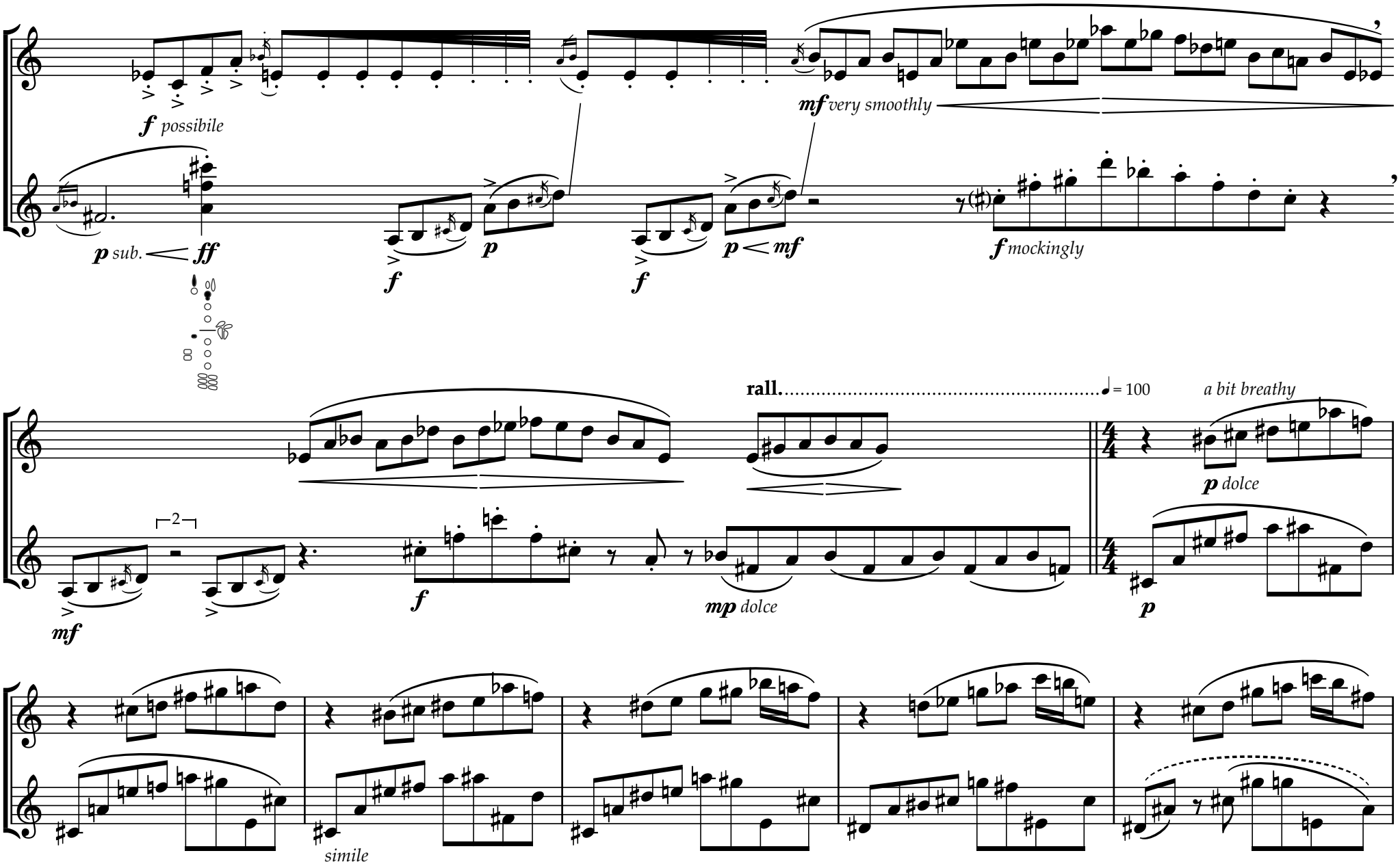

less breathy
G
molto
mf
f
mf
f
very freely
f
molto
fff
mf
f espr. e poco rubato
simile
mp marcato
H
mf
mf

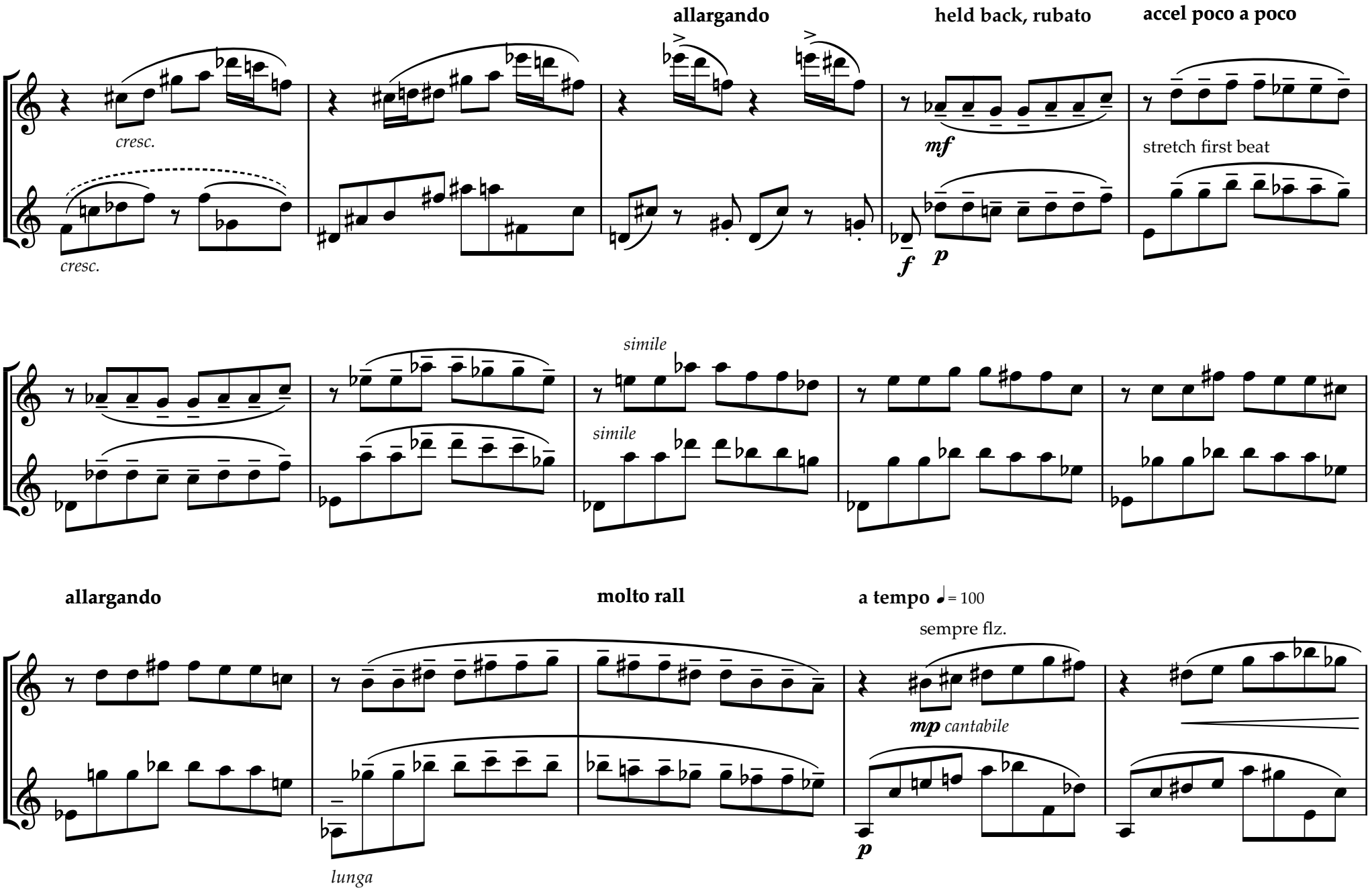

I
f
f
mp sub. marcato
mp sub. marcato
cresc. poco a poco
cresc. poco a poco
ff
ff

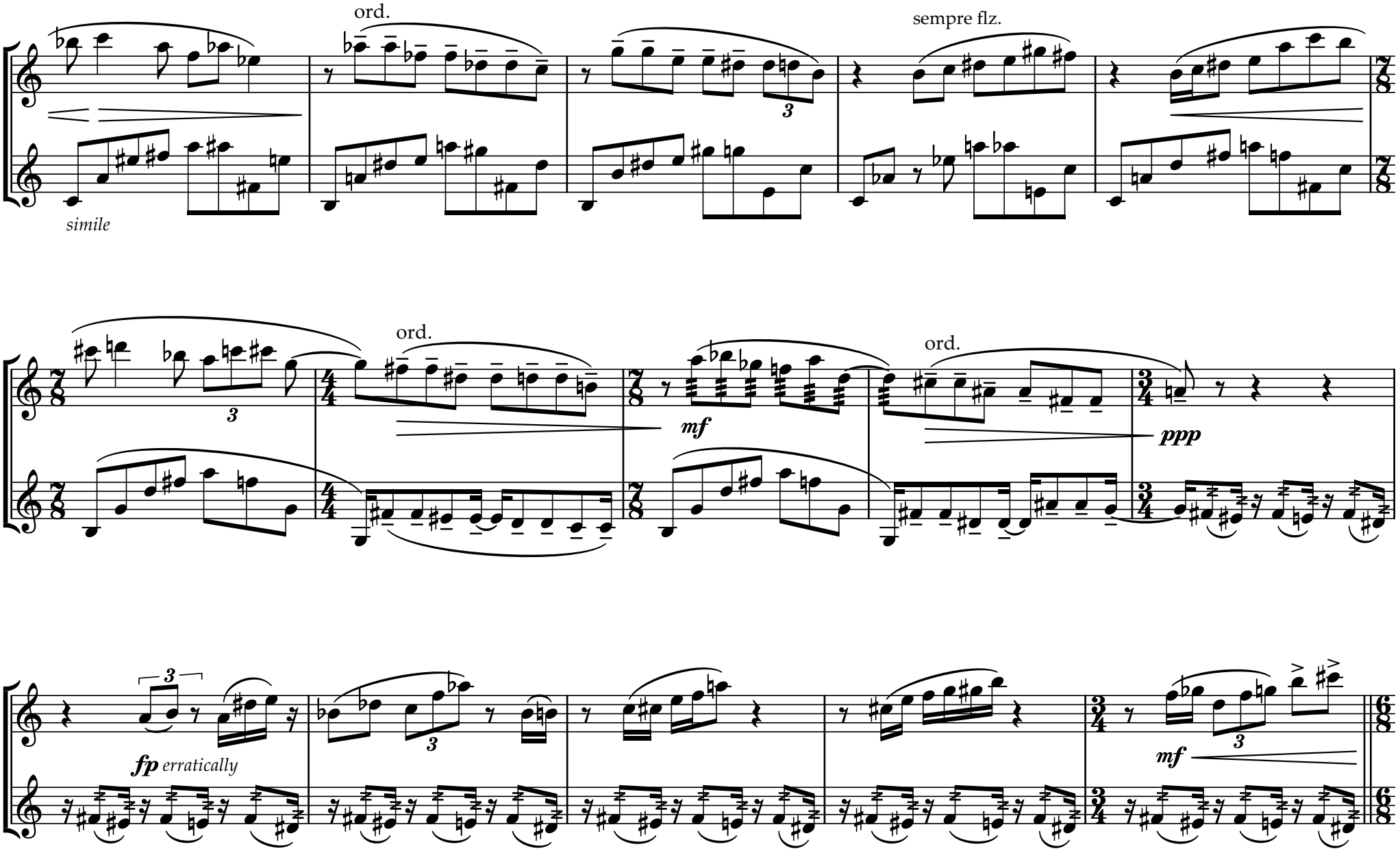
3. sweetest way to die

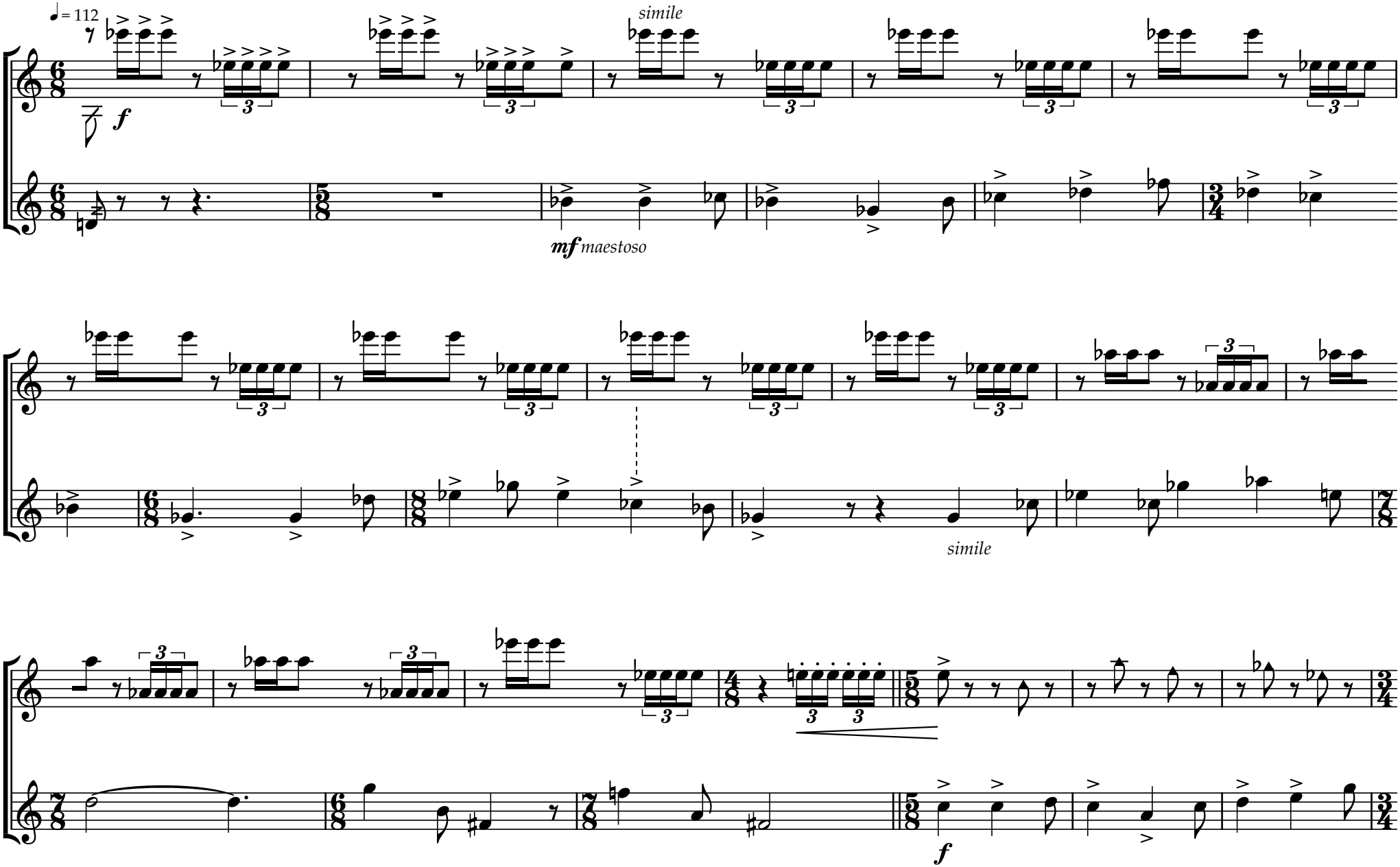
Accidentals last until the end of each system.

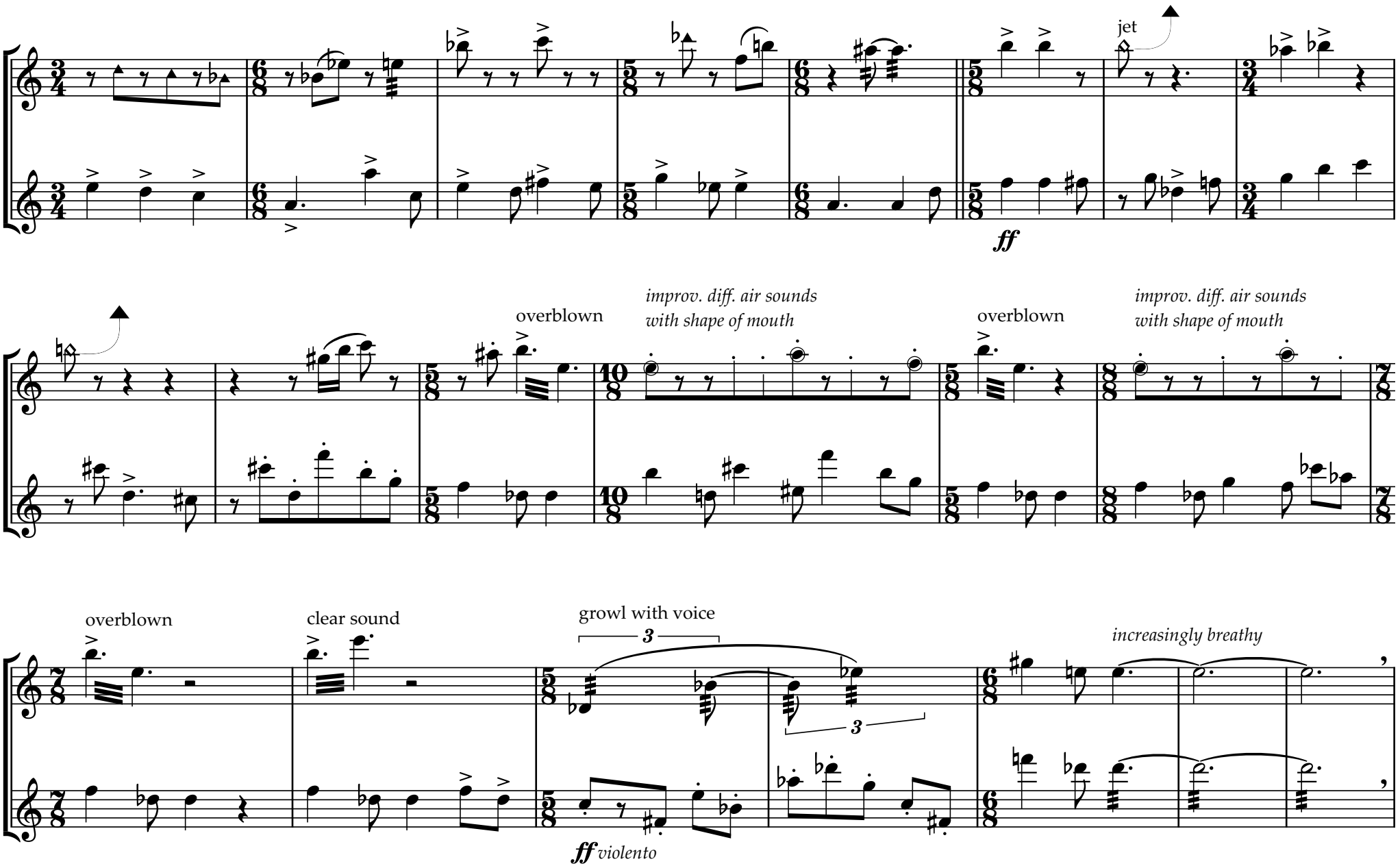


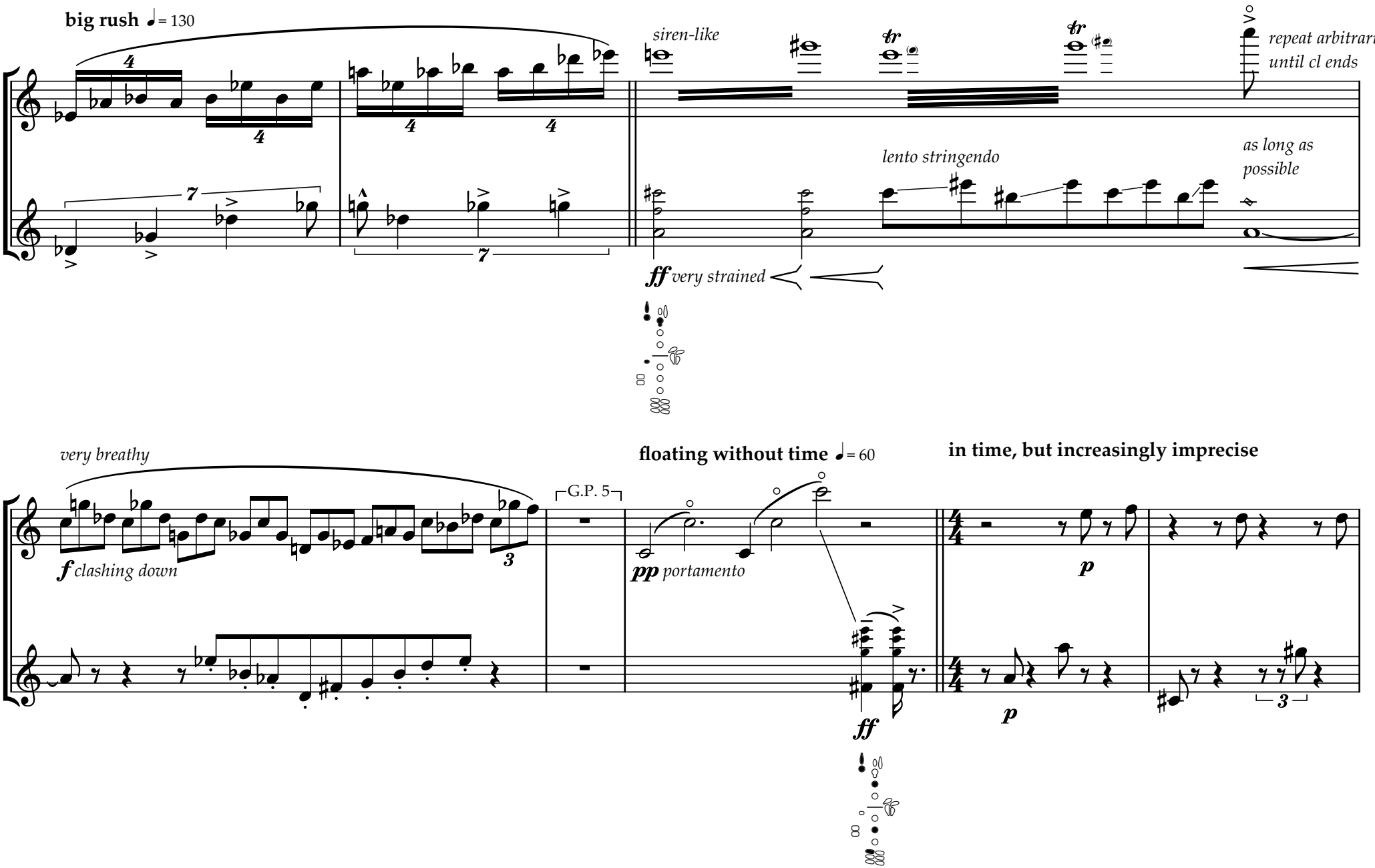

f possibile
mf very smoothly
p sub.
ff
f
p
f
p
mf
f mockingly
rall.
= 100
a bit breathy
p dolce
mf
f
mp dolce
p
simile

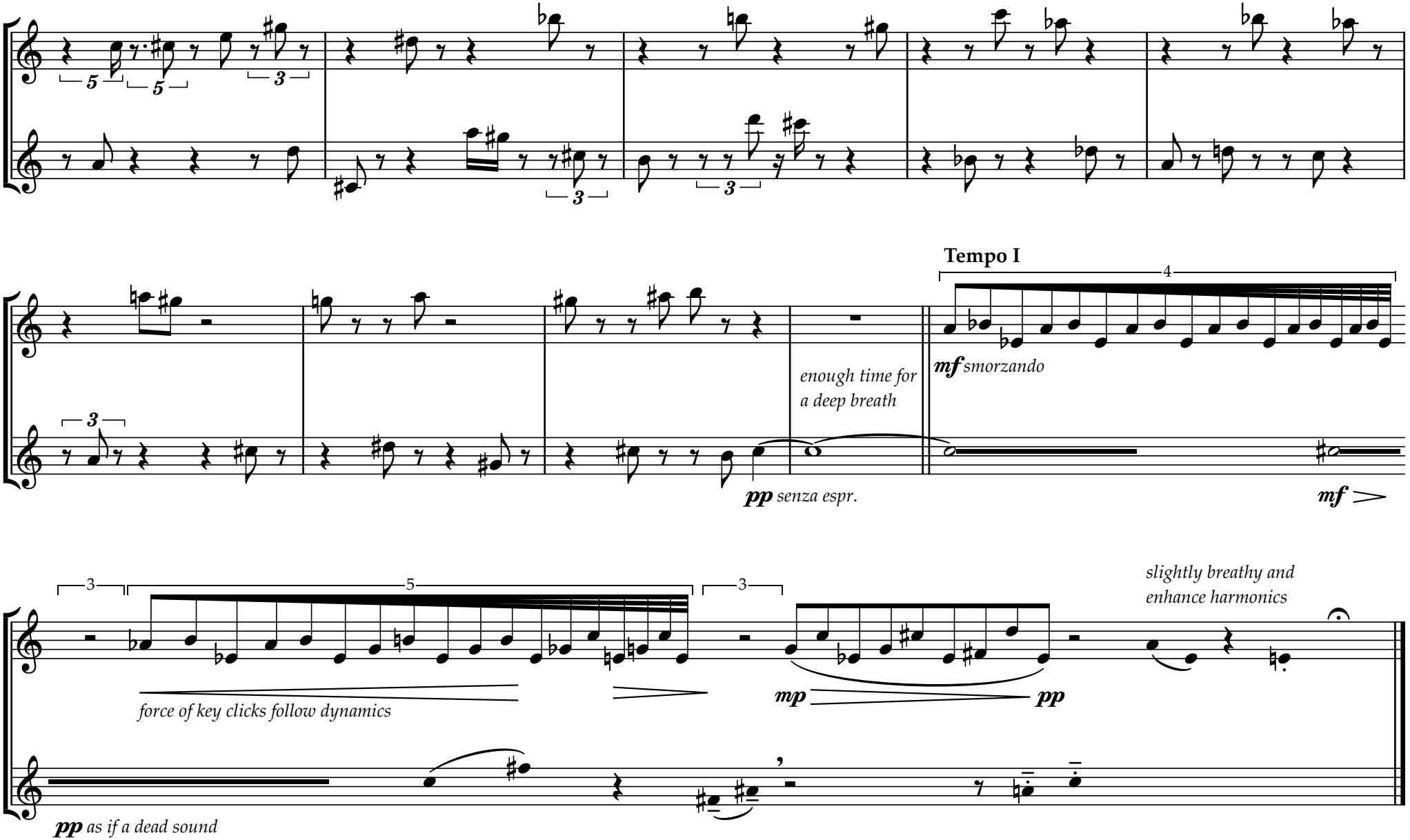

allargando
held back, rubato
accel poco a poco
cresc.
cresc.
mf
f
p
stretch first beat
simile
simile
allargando
molto rall
a tempo ♩= 100
sempre flz.
mp cantabile
p
lunga


ord.
sempre flz.
simile
ord.
ord.
mf
ppp
fp erratically
mf


♩= 112
f
simile
mf maestoso
simile
f


jet
ff
overblown
improv. diff. air sounds
with shape of mouth
overblown
improv. diff. air sounds
with shape of mouth
overblown
clear sound
growl with voice
3
3
increasingly breathy
ff violento


big rush ♩= 130
siren-like
repeat arbitrarily
until cl ends
lento stringendo
as long as
possible
ff very strained
very breathy
f clashing down
G.P. 5
floating without time ♩= 60
pp portamento
in time, but increasingly imprecise
p
p
ff


Tempo I
mf smorzando
enough time for
a deep breath
pp senza espr.
mf
force of key clicks follow dynamics
mp
pp
slightly breathy and
enhance harmonics
pp as if a dead sound