Lamentation on The Disasters of War

after etchings by Francisco de Goya

for string sextet

Karim Al-Zand

(2006)

PROGRAM NOTE:

Napoleon's incursion into Spain in the year 1808 marked the beginning of a brutal and ultimately futile war. Though the French army was the world's superpower, the following six years of bloody conflict proved that even "the most determined of invaders, equipped with strong armies and copious intelligence about its enemy, can make myopic blunders that seem close to madness."[1]

Napoleon's ill-fated decision to march on Spain was in part a product of his own arrogance, which did not allow him to foresee the resistance his occupation would inspire. As he wrote to one of his senior officers, he found the Spanish people "vile and cowardly, about the same as I found the Arabs to be" and he was convinced that when he brought "the words liberty, freedom from superstition, destruction of the nobility, I will be welcomed...You will see how they think of me as the liberator of Spain."

Among other things, the war brought a new word into the military lexicon: *guerrilla*. Bands of insurgents operated out of the mountains, continuously sapping the French forces of both manpower and morale through kidnapping, torture, execution and public displays of mutilation.

The civilian population of Spain was brutalized by both sides in the conflict, caught in a cycle of "oppression and outrage, atrocity and counter-atrocity; pillage, marauding, starvation, maiming, torture and murder."[2] They were beaten and raped by soldiers, terrorized and executed as traitorous sympathizers and driven from their homes by unremitting violence and bloodshed. Eventually thousands fled; their towns and cities conquered and re-conquered, houses burned and razed, churches looted and defiled. The ongoing military campaign also caused a devastating and widespread famine. In all, tens of thousands died. Eventually Napoleon was ousted and the Spanish monarchy was restored, only to usher in a new era of ruthless and despotic rule under Ferdinand VII.

Francisco de Goya (1746–1828) produced the series of 82 etchings known as *The Disasters of War* during the period from 1812 to 1820. The work is both a response to the horrific conflict he witnessed and a commentary on the ravages of war in general. What distinguishes *The Disasters of War* from earlier treatments of bellicose subjects is the unflinching realism of its portrayal (it almost serves as a kind of documentary, eye-witness account) and Goya's refusal to see either side in the conflict as having absolute moral superiority. The imagery is dark and violent, its message profoundly pessimistic.

Lamentation on the Disasters Of War is an elegy. While the composition is inspired by Goya's work, it does not attempt to literally portray the events and actions depicted in the images. The piece is dedicated to my late cousin Husam Al-Zand (1966–2005) who was tragically killed in Iraq last year; to his surviving wife and children; and to the rest of my courageous family in Baghdad. Peace be upon them.

1. Hughes, Robert, Goya, (2003), p. 261.
2. Geoffrey Best, War and Society in Revolutionary Europe, 1770-1870 (1982), p. 174.

Premiere performance: *Lamentation on The Disasters of War* received its premiere on April 30, 2006 by the Enso String Quartet (Maureen Nelson, John Marcus, violin; Robert Brophy, viola; Richard Belcher, cello) with violist Katherine Lewis and cellist Valdine Ritchie

Dana Al-Zand. May 2006

DURATION:

ca. 10'

PERFORMANCE NOTE:

A selection of Goya's etchings, perhaps thirty or so, may be shown via projection prior to the performance, as was the case at the work's premiere; however, they should not be shown during the performance itself.

in memory of Husam Al-Zand (1966-2005)

Lamentation on The Disasters of War

after etchings by Francisco de Goya

for string sextet

Karim Al-Zand
(2006) *in tempore belli*

Very Slowly; ominous ♪=72 (𝅗𝅥=36)

Violin I
Violin II
Viola I
Viola II
Cello I
Cello II

pleading *gli.* pizz.

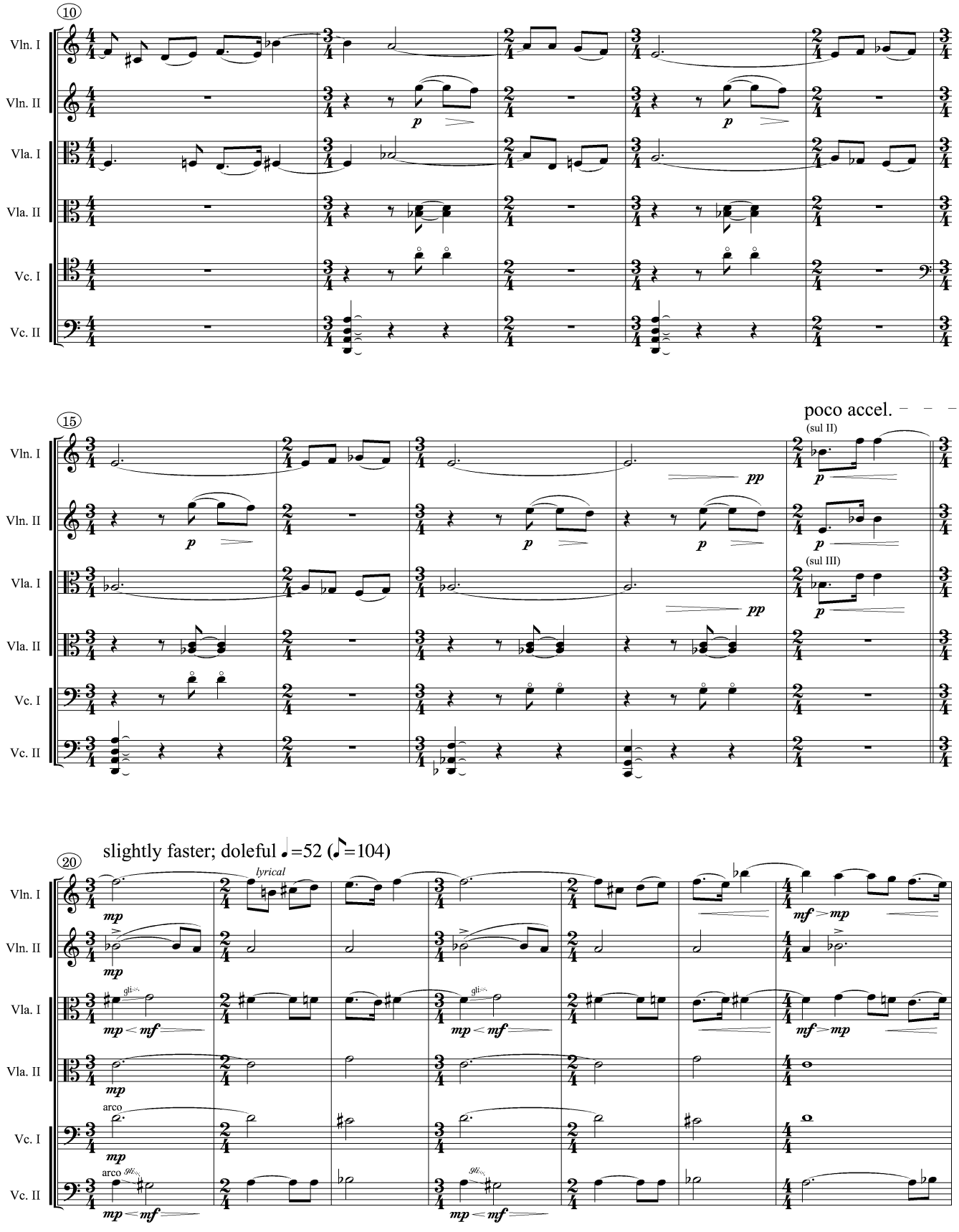
pp *p* *mp* *ppp*

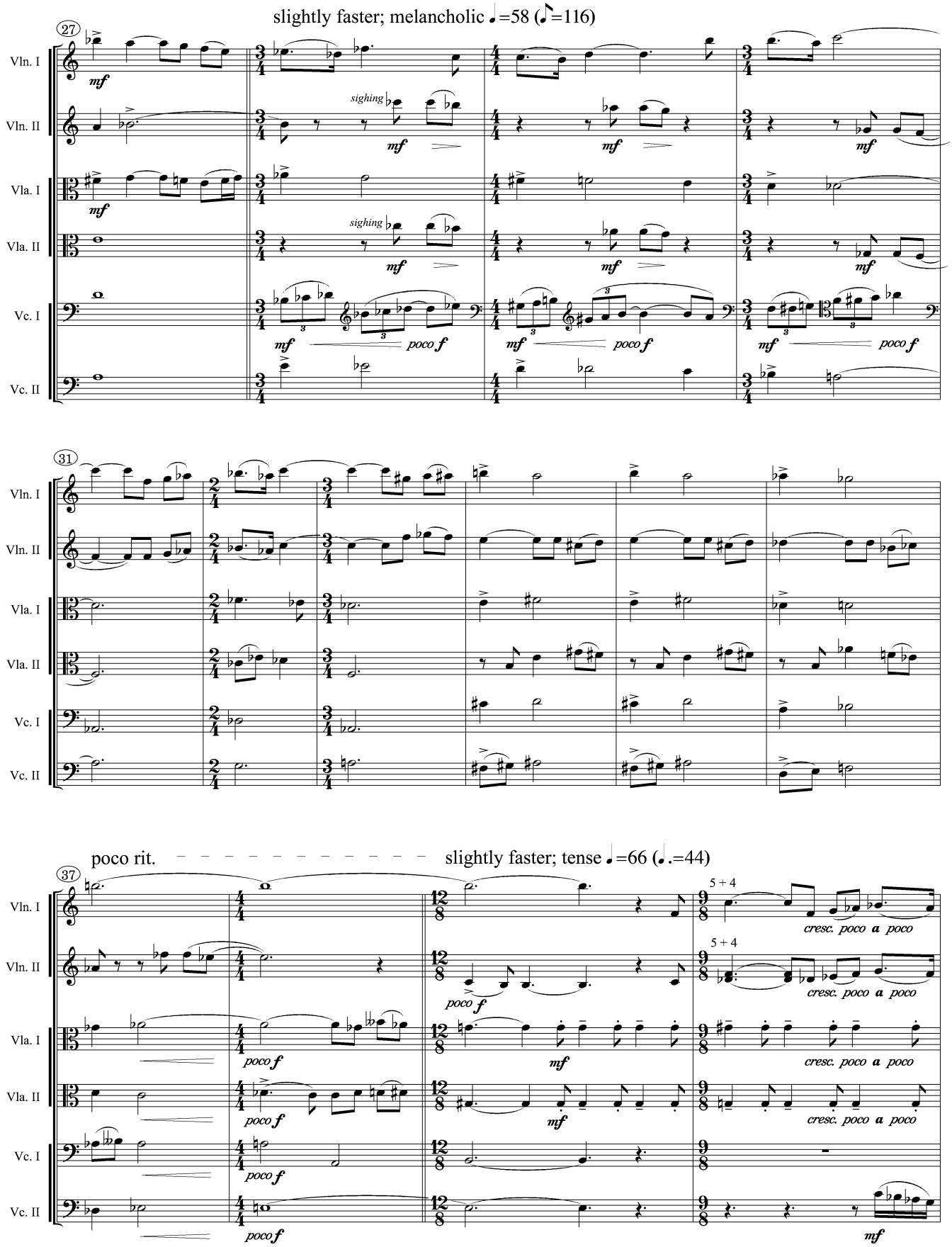
slightly faster; dirge-like ♪=92 (𝅗𝅥=46)

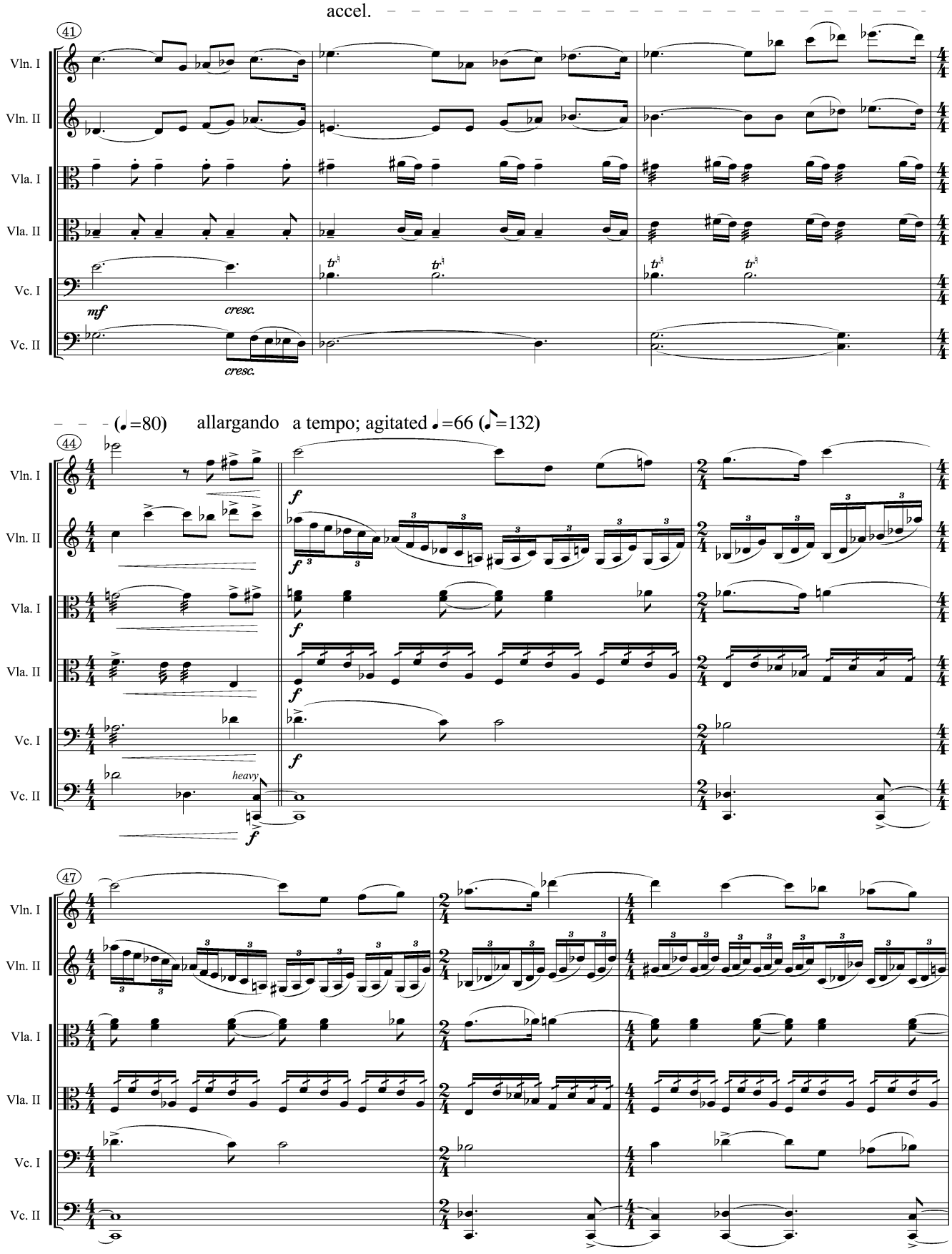
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II

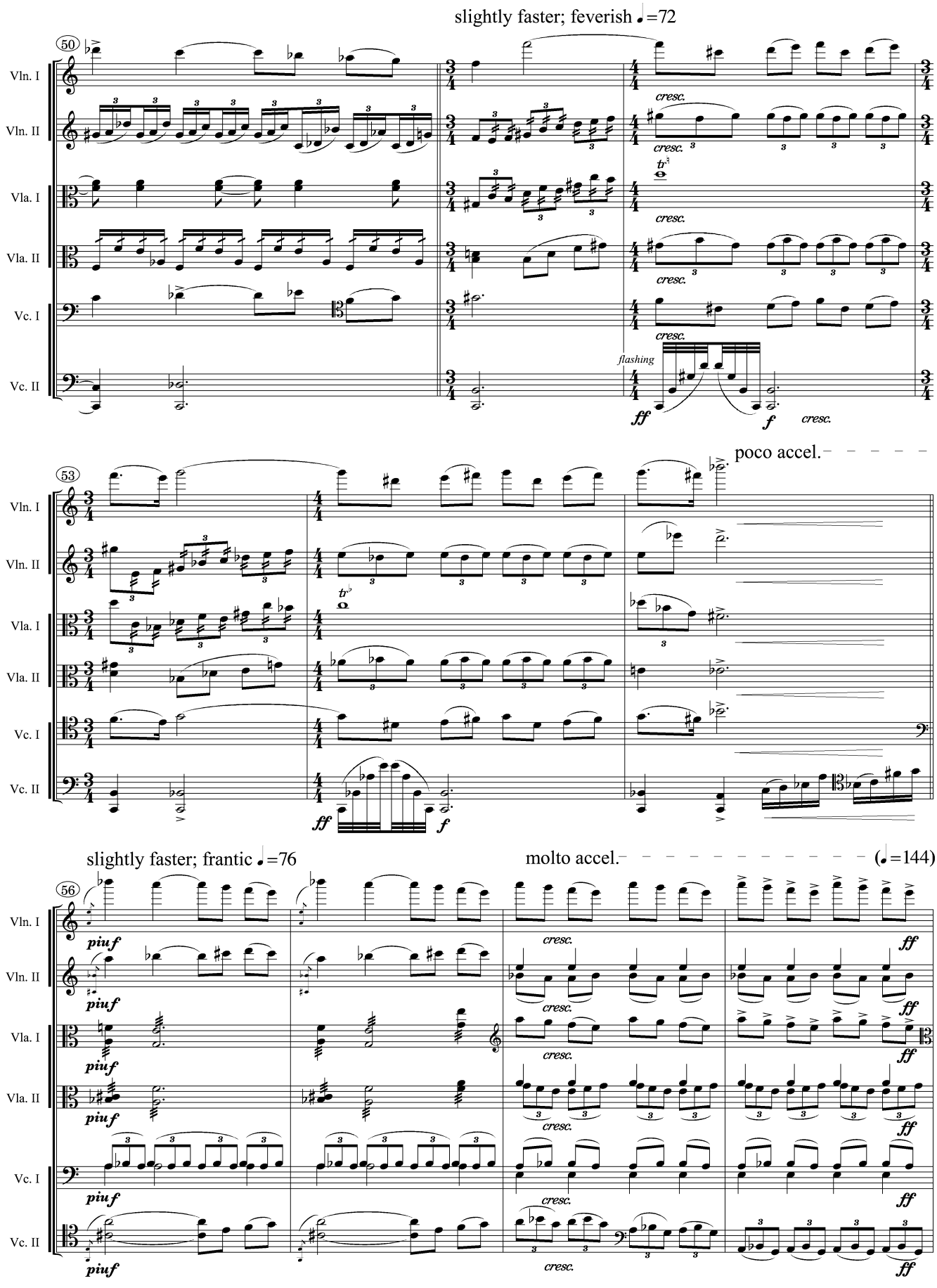
espres. sul IV *gli.* pizz. *sonorous*

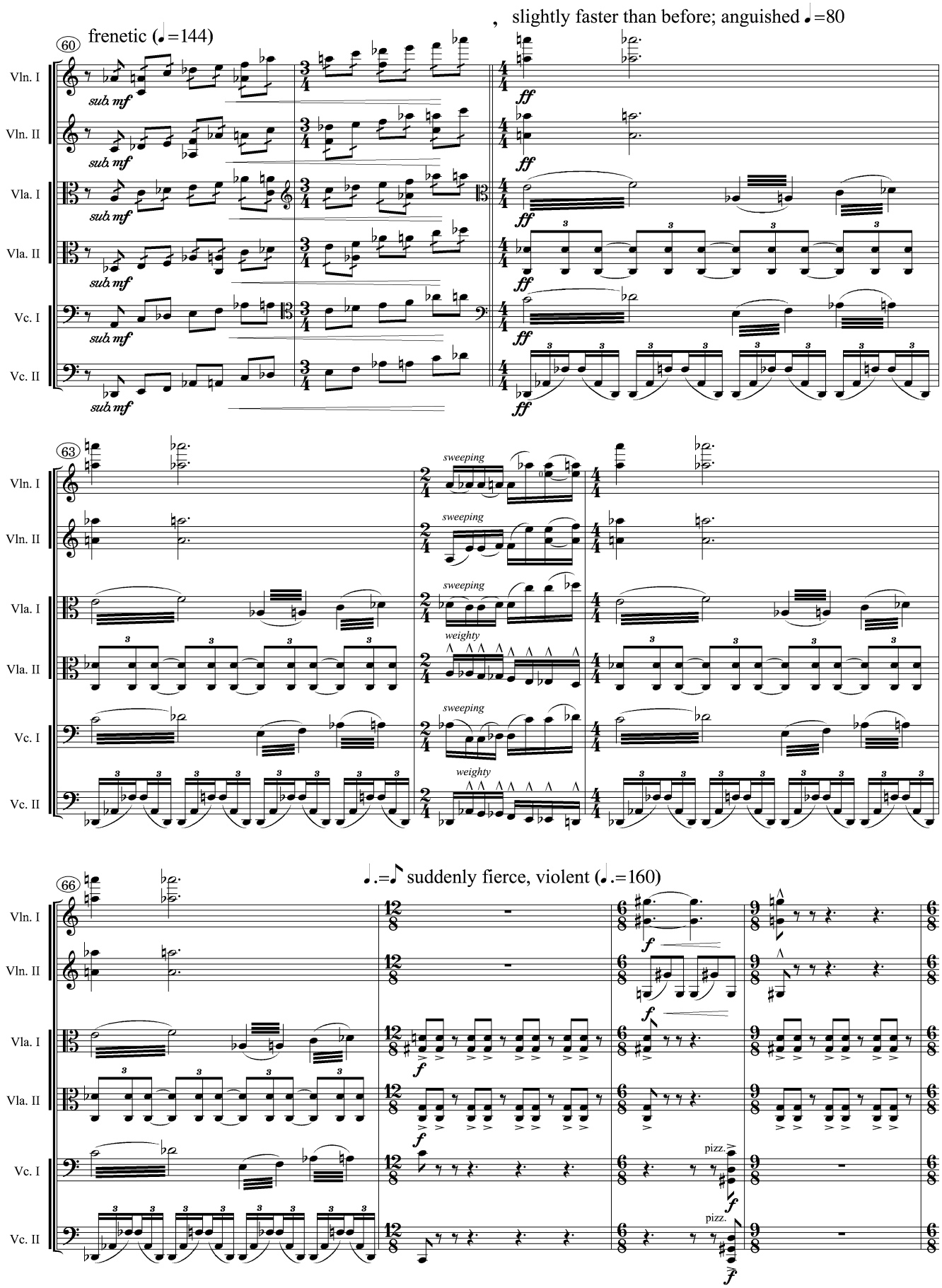
p *mp*

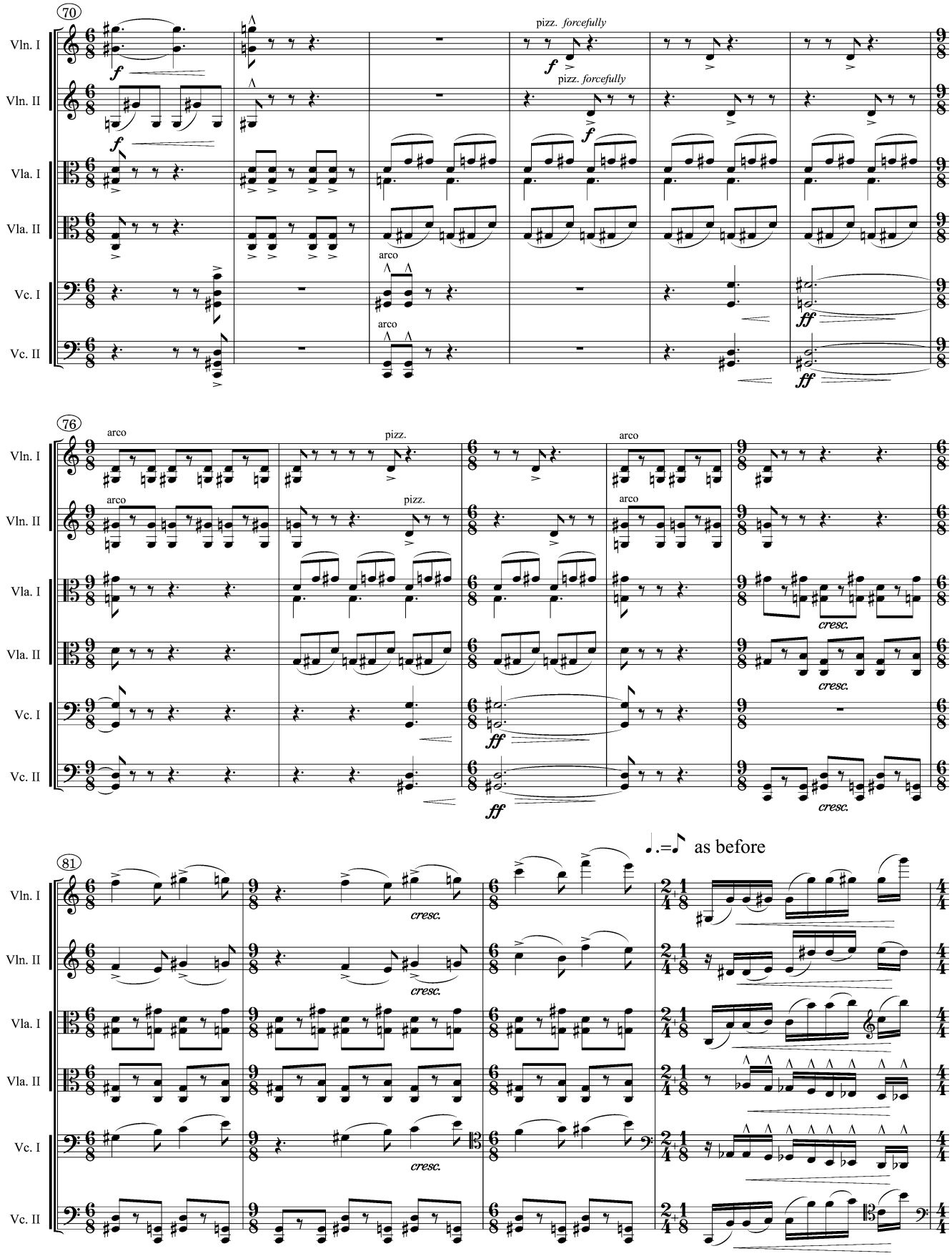

10
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
p
15
poco accel.
(sul II)
(sul III)
pp
20
slightly faster; doleful ♩=52 (♪=104)
lyrical
mp
mf
arco
gliss.

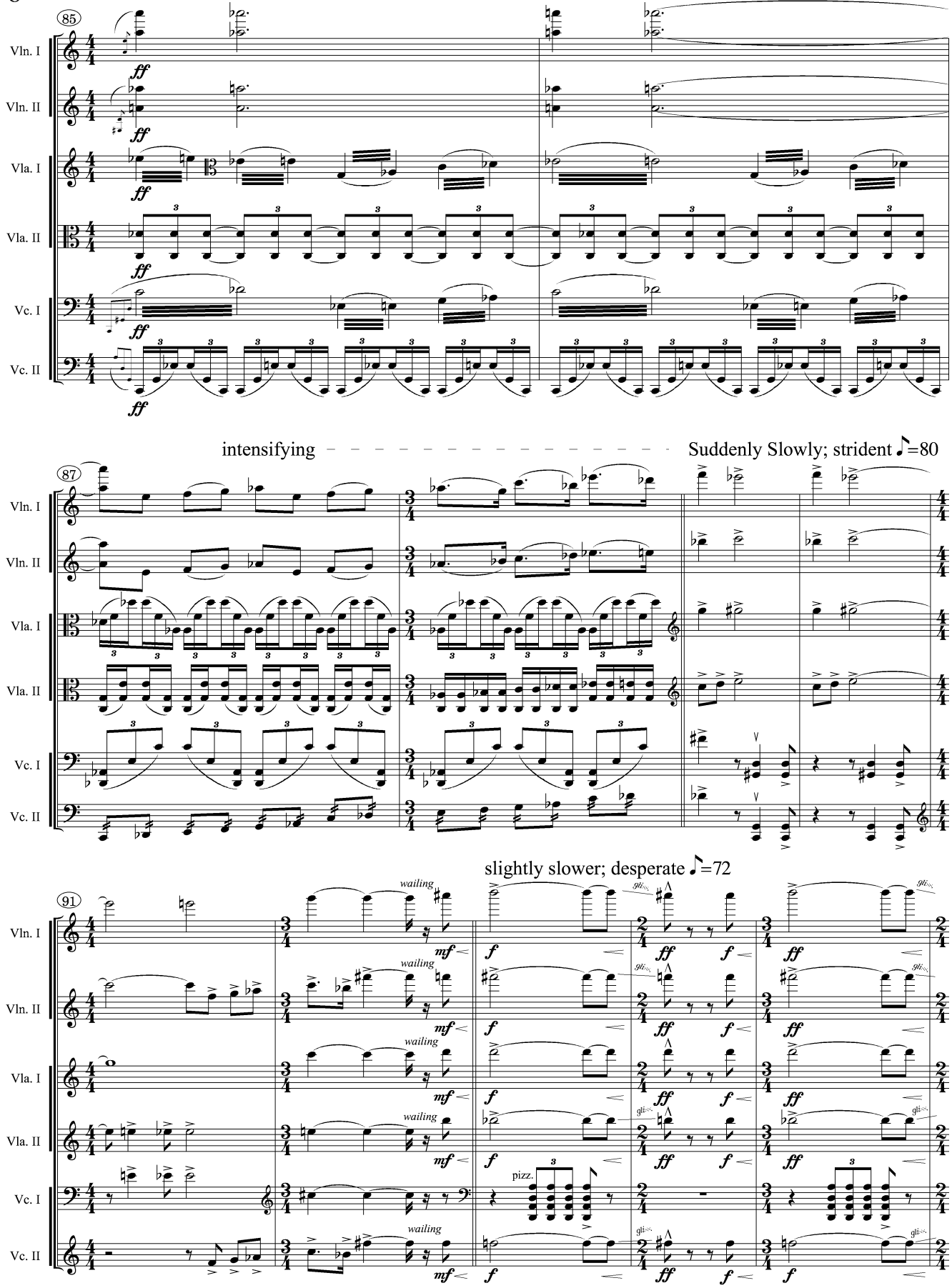

slightly faster; melancholic ♩=58 (♪=116)
27
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
mf
sighing
poco f
31
poco rit.
slightly faster; tense ♩=66 (♩.=44)
37
5 + 4
cresc. poco a poco

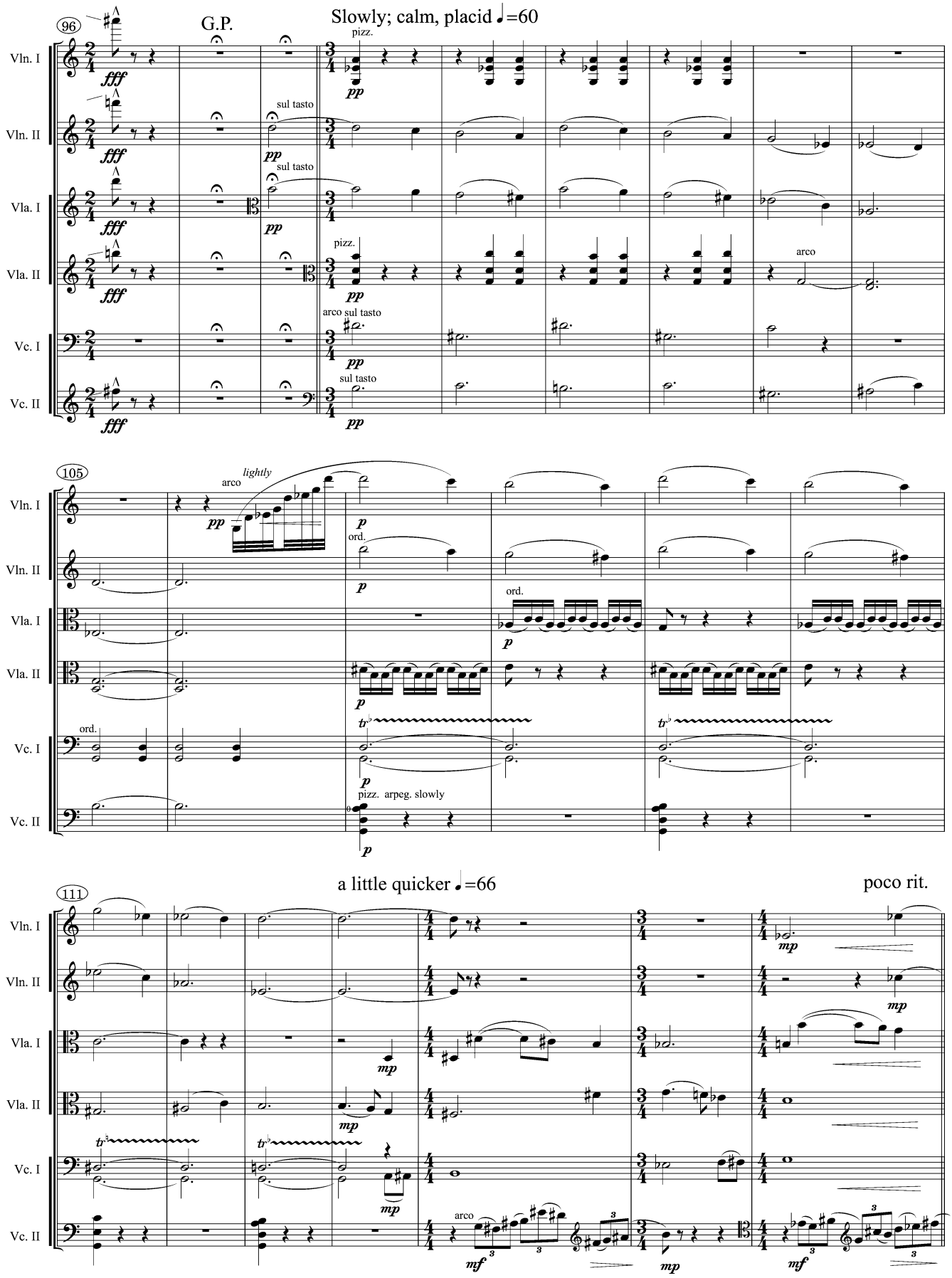

accel.
41
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
mf
cresc.
cresc.
(♩=80)
allargando
a tempo; agitated ♩=66 (♪=132)
44
f
heavy
47

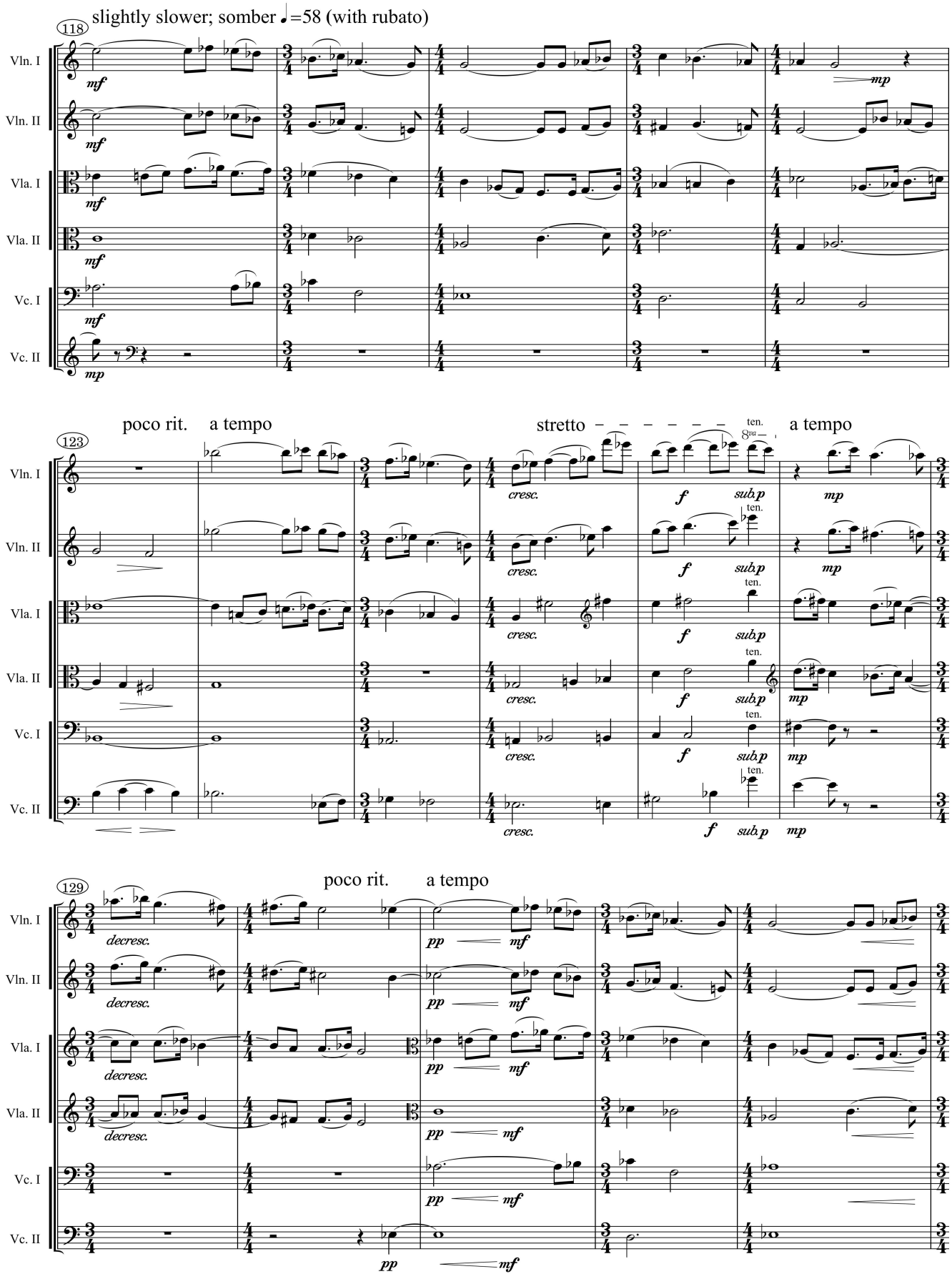

slightly faster; feverish ♩=72
50
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
cresc.
flashing
ff
f
poco accel.
53
slightly faster; frantic ♩=76
molto accel.
(♩=144)
56
piuf
ff

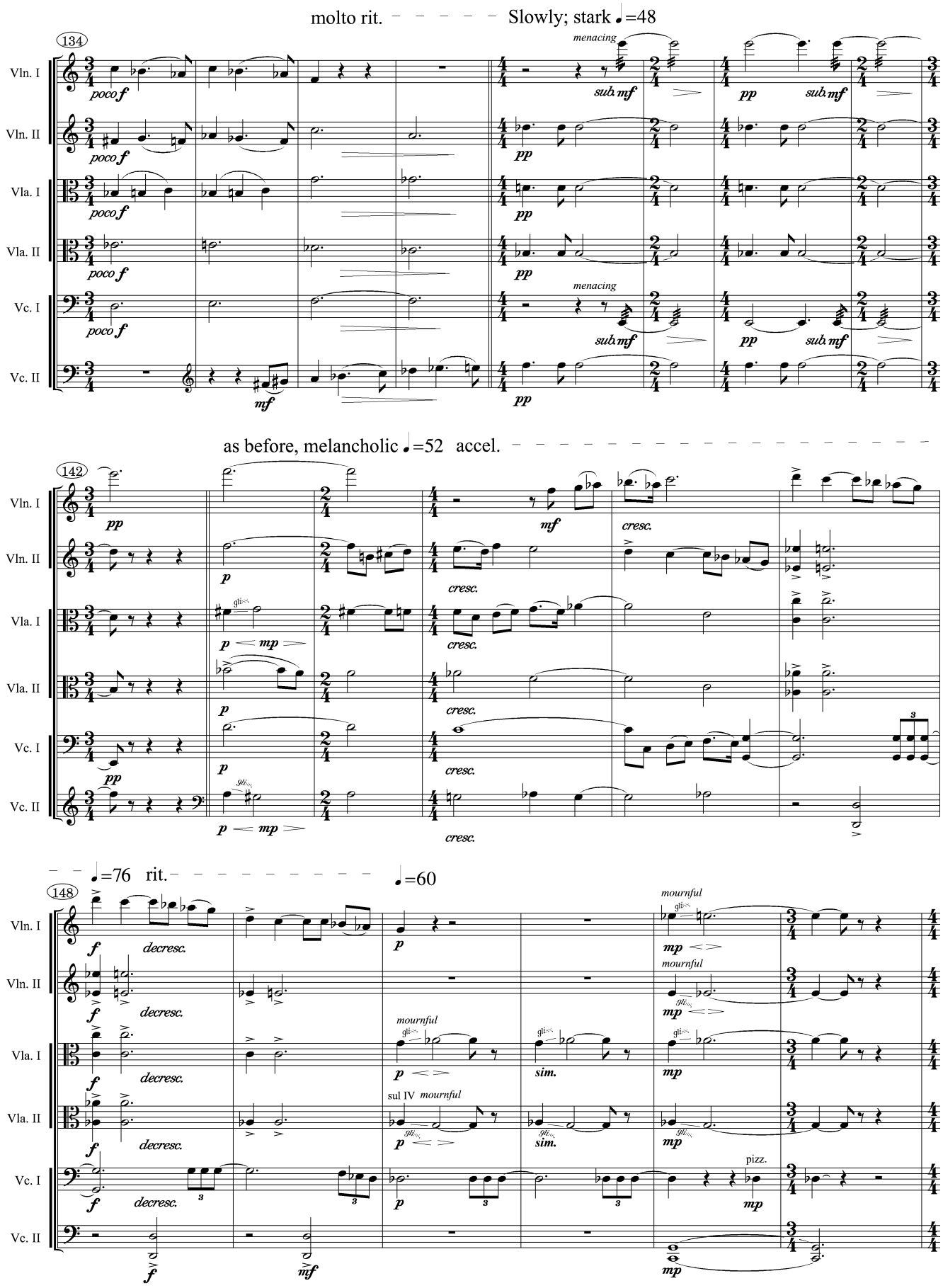

60
frenetic (♩=144)
, slightly faster than before; anguished ♩=80
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
sub. mf
ff
63
sweeping
weighty
66
♩.=♪ suddenly fierce, violent (♩.=160)
f
pizz.

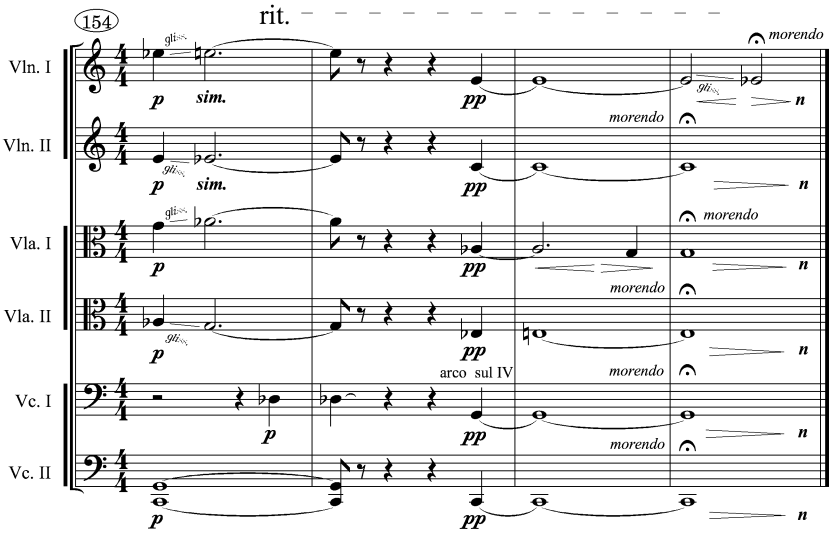

70
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
pizz. forcefully
arco
76
pizz.
cresc.
81
as before


85
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
ff
intensifying
Suddenly Slowly; strident ♪=80
87
slightly slower; desperate ♪=72
91
wailing
pizz.
gliss.
mf
f
ff


96
G.P.
Slowly; calm, placid ♩=60
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
fff
pp
pizz.
sul tasto
arco sul tasto
arco
105
lightly
arco
ord.
p
tr
pizz. arpeg. slowly
111
a little quicker ♩=66
poco rit.
mp
mf
arco
3


118
slightly slower; somber ♩=58 (with rubato)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
mf
mp
123
poco rit.
a tempo
stretto
ten.
8va
cresc.
f
sub.p
129
decresc.
pp
mf


molto rit.
Slowly; stark ♩=48
134
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
poco f
mf
menacing
sub. mf
pp
as before, melancholic ♩=52 accel.
142
p
mp
cresc.
♩=76 rit.
♩=60
148
f
decresc.
mournful
sul IV
sim.
pizz.


154
rit.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vc. I
Vc. II
gliss.
p
sim.
pp
morendo
n
arco sul IV