Béla Bartók

Three Rondos on Slovak Folk Tunes

Sz. 84

Transcribed for String Orchestra
by Alan Bonds

Three Rondos on Slovak Folk Tunes

Sz.84

Andante (C major, 162 bars)
Vivacissimo (D major, 231 bars)
Allegro molto (F lydian, 143 bars)

Year/Date of Composition: 1916 (1), 1927 (2-3)
First Publication: 1930 – Vienna: Universal Edition

Wikipedia:

"Béla Bartók had a lifelong artistic interest in folk music primarily from modern day Romania and Hungary. This is shown in his output as a composer since, even though Bartók first intended to use opus numbers to categorize his most artistically relevant compositions, he eventually refused to use any numbering system. The first of the three rondos was composed in 1916, together with many other compositions based on Hungarian and Romanian folk songs. Bartók composed the rondo while he was collecting folk tunes from Hungary and surrounding areas. It is a somewhat faithful transcription of a children's tune named *Lánc, lánc, eszterlánc* [hu], with a few ornamentations, that he made in one of his trips.

The other two rondos were composed in 1927 and follow a much more different style from their preceding one. The compositional structure is much more complex and rhythms are much more emphasized than in the first rondo. The traditional melodies are still present but are developed much further. Béla Bartók admitted to have tried to include a third theme for the second rondo, whereas rondos usually have only two themes, but eventually decided not to include it for practicality reasons. All three rondos were compiled together and published by Universal Edition, Vienna, later in 1930. All rondos follow a rondo-like form, in which a first theme is presented, then a second theme, then a somewhat developed version of the first theme. The different themes in each rondo are also in different tonalities."

My obervation:

The (last two) Rondos were written at the same time as the 3rd String Quartet, which was said to have been inspired after hearing Berg's Lyric Suite (1926) in 1927. The first section of the 3rd Quartet is quite bleak, while the following sections are inspired by Eastern European folk melodies and folk dance. It contains very adventurous modern harmonies and contrapuntal techniques reminiscent of the Viennese School. It is also often fearlessly dissonant, qualities which characterize the following quartets.

It is also difficult to ignore the influence of Stravinsky's blend of folklore and modernism, particularly the *barbaro* element in the Rondos.

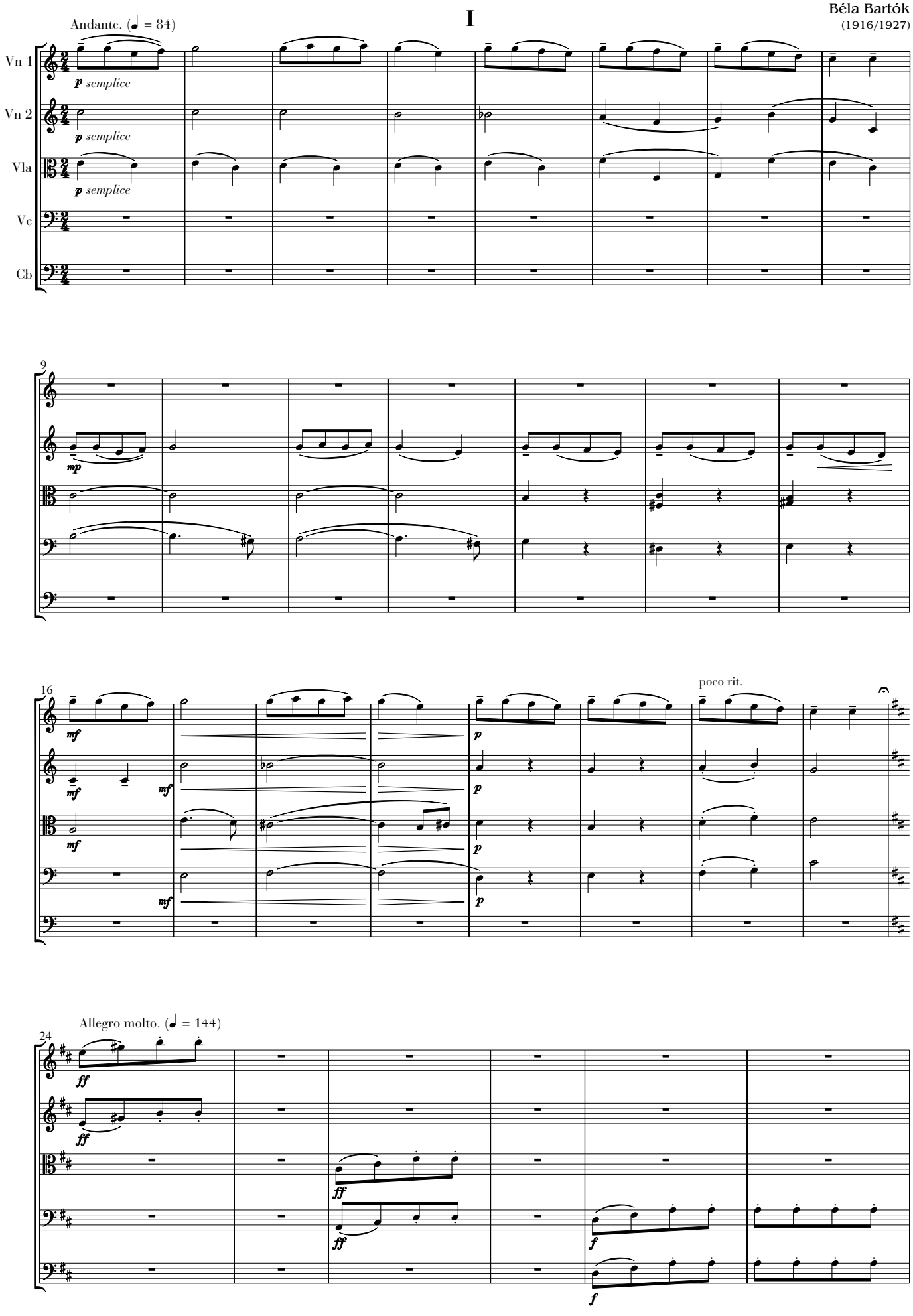
Alan Bonds,
Perth, Western Australia
August 2022

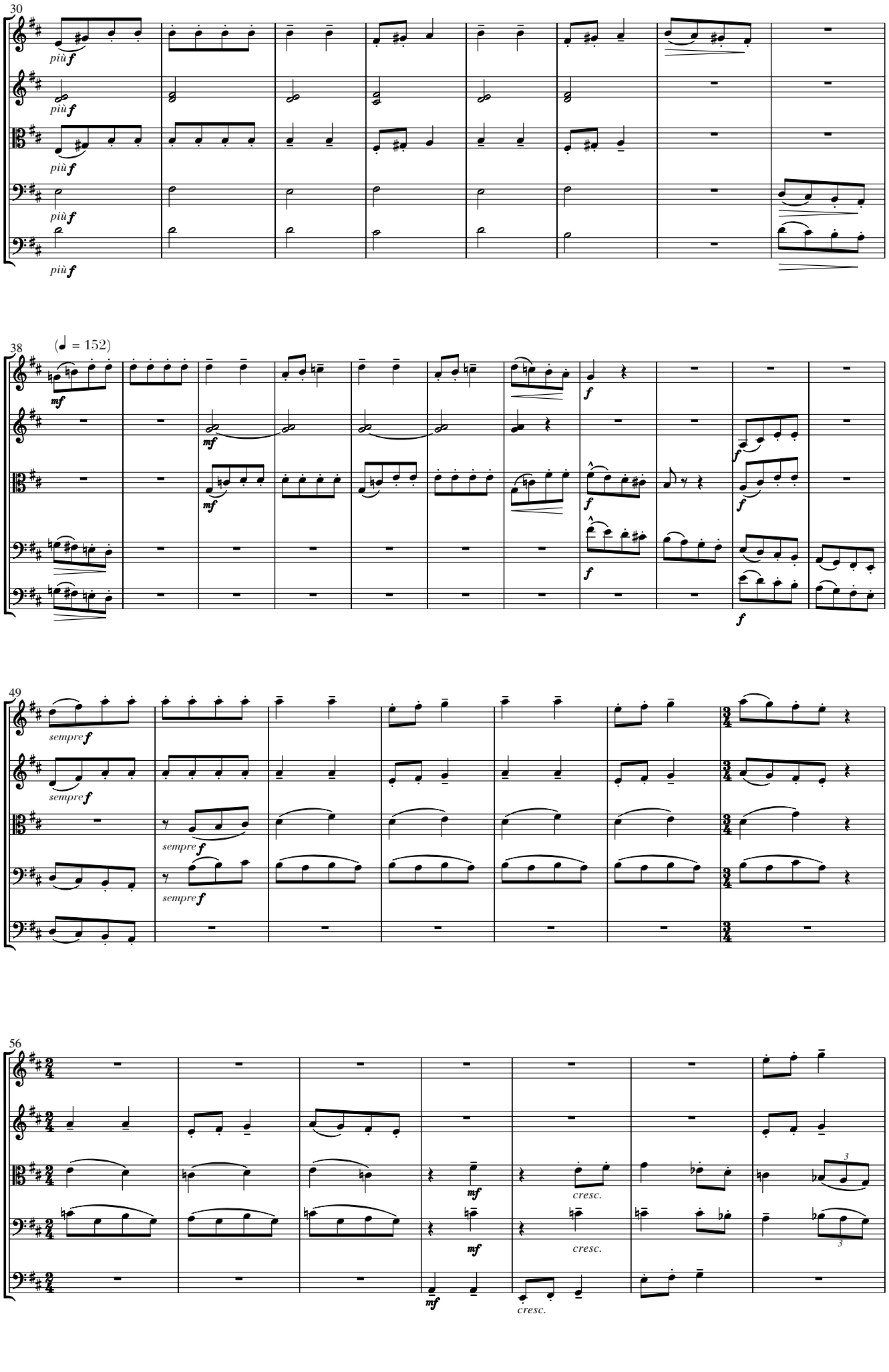
Three Rondos on Slovak Folk Tunes

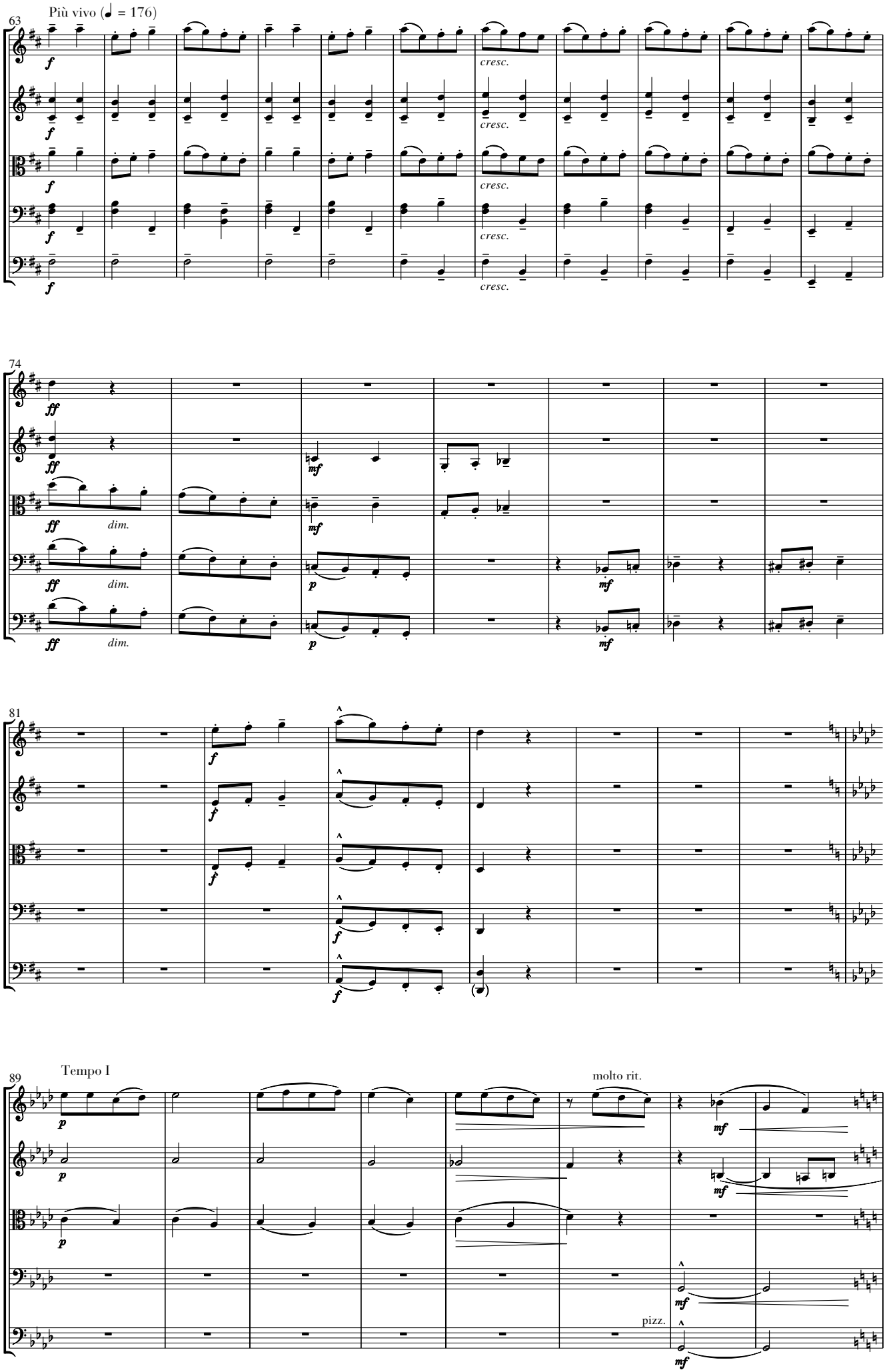
Suite for String Orchestra

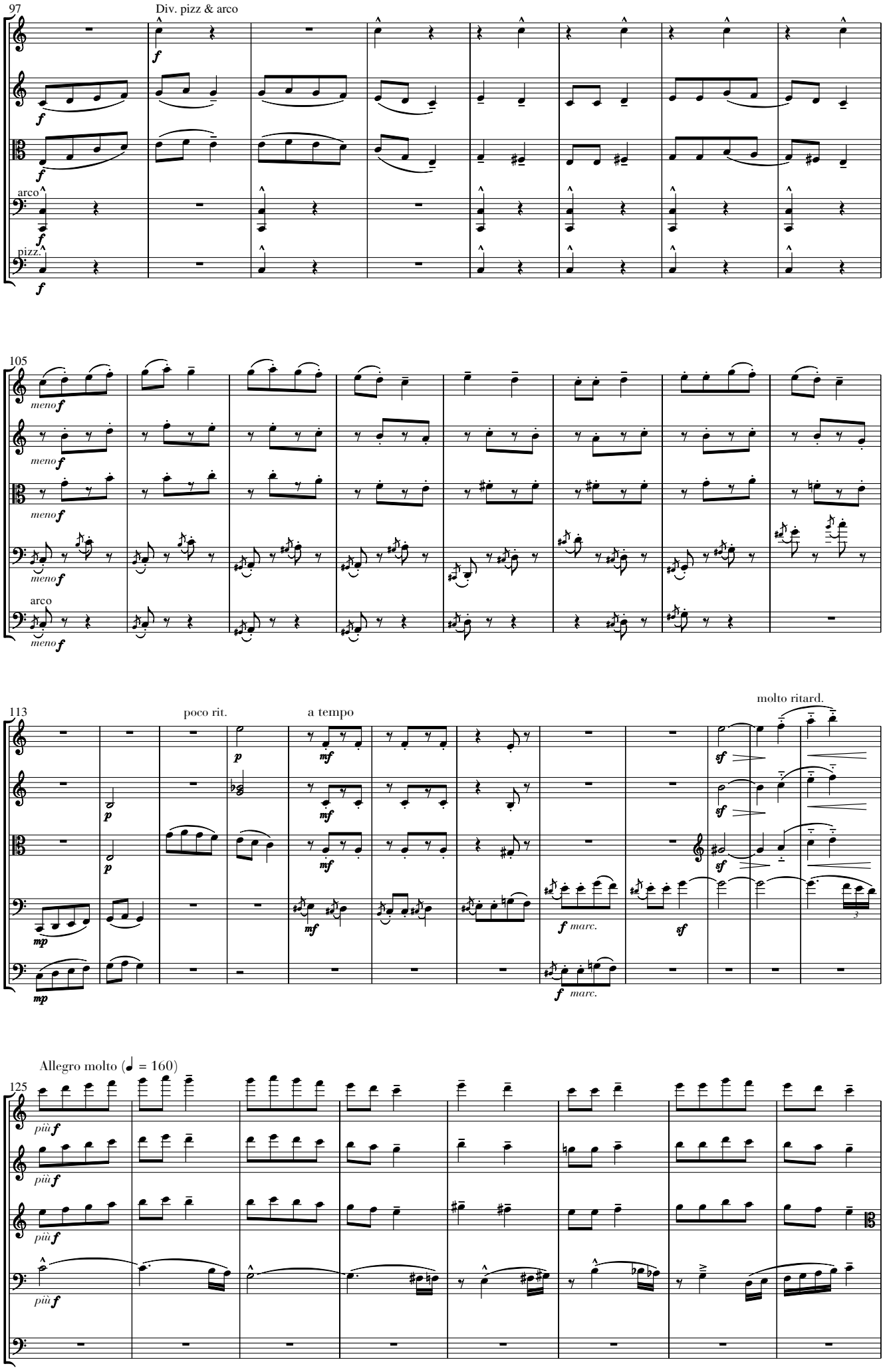
I

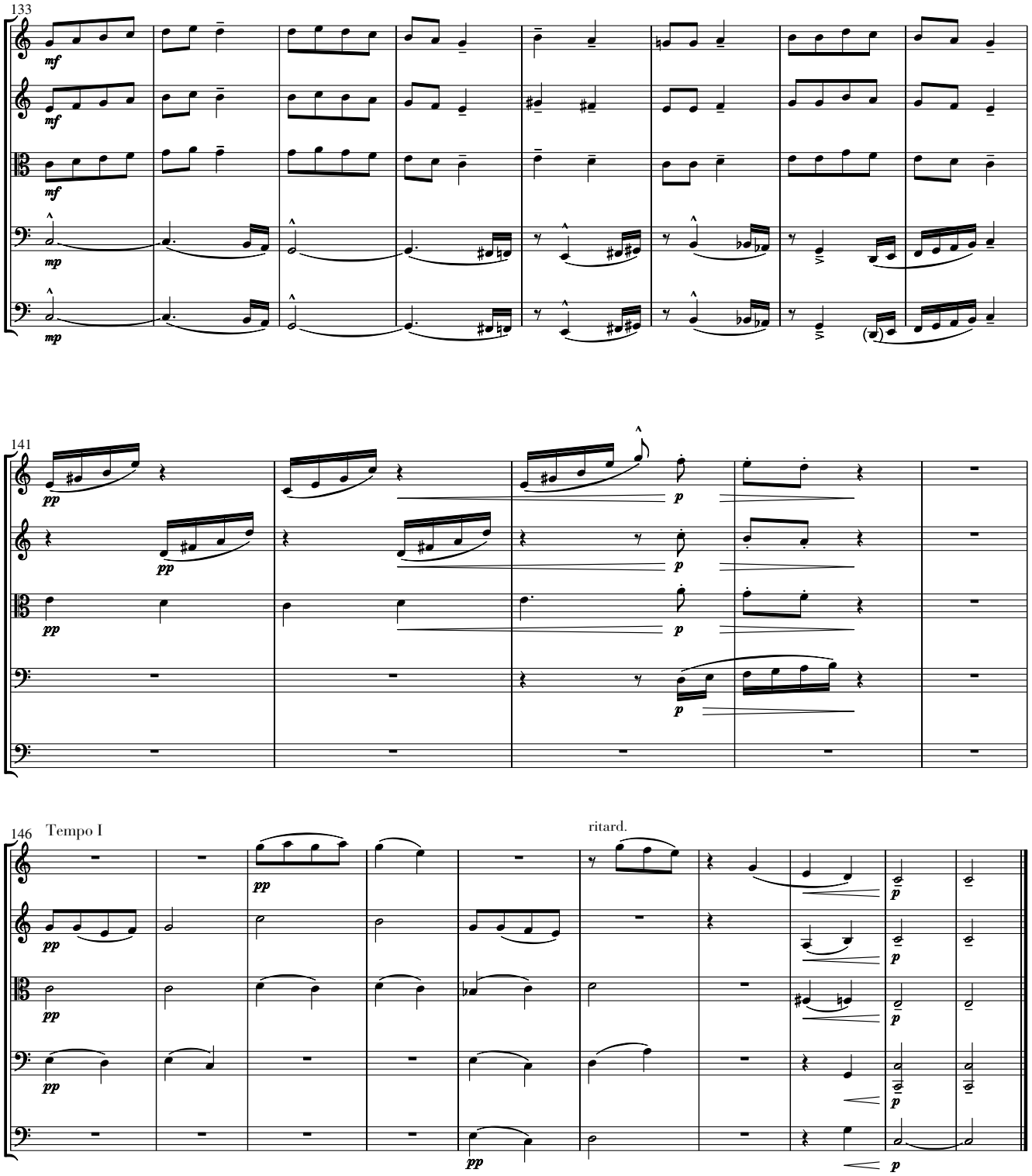
Béla Bartók
(1916/1927)



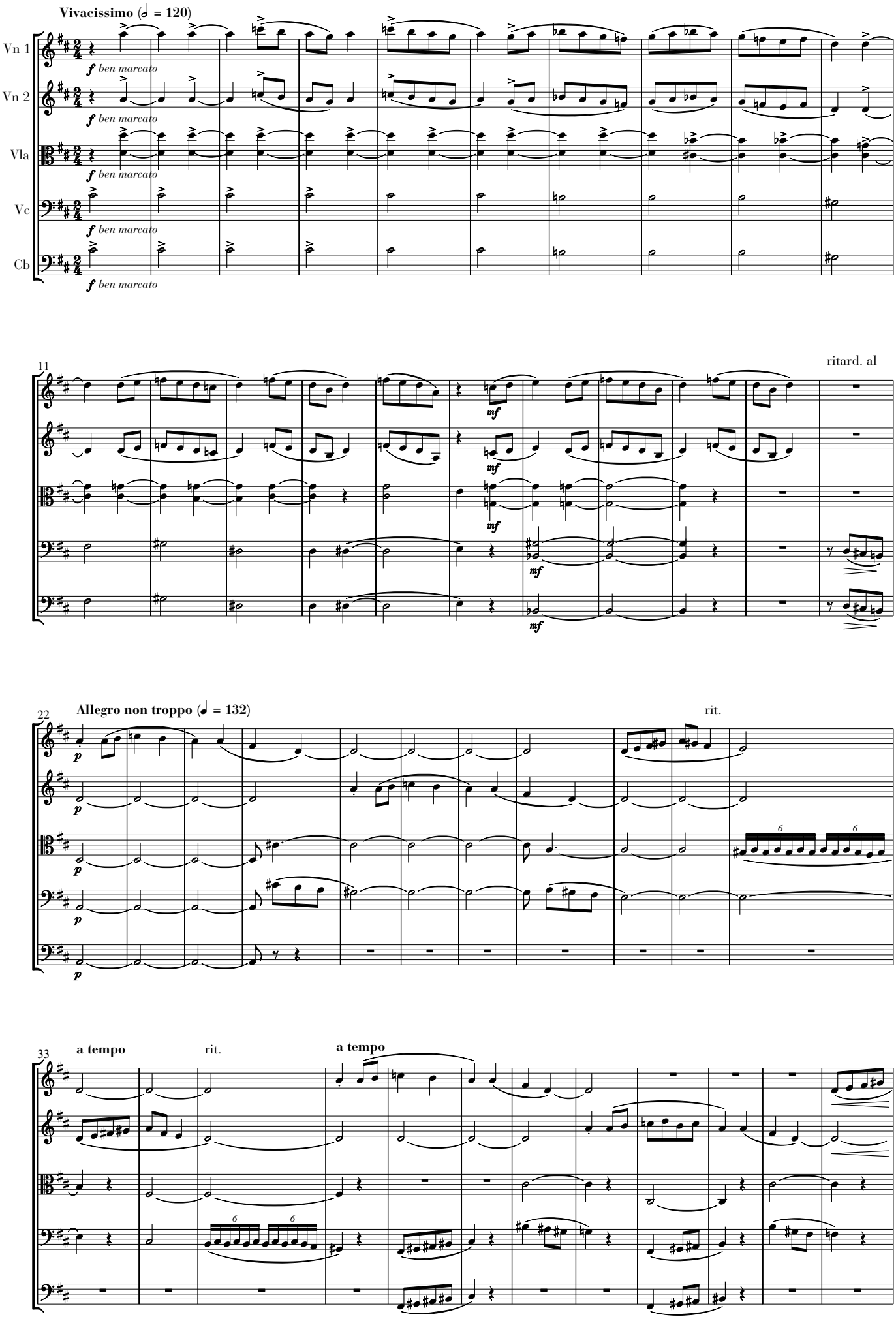

30
più f
più f
più f
più f
più f
38
(♩ = 152)
mf
mf
mf
f
f
f
f
f
49
sempre f
sempre f
sempre f
sempre f
56
mf
cresc.
mf
cresc.
mf
cresc.

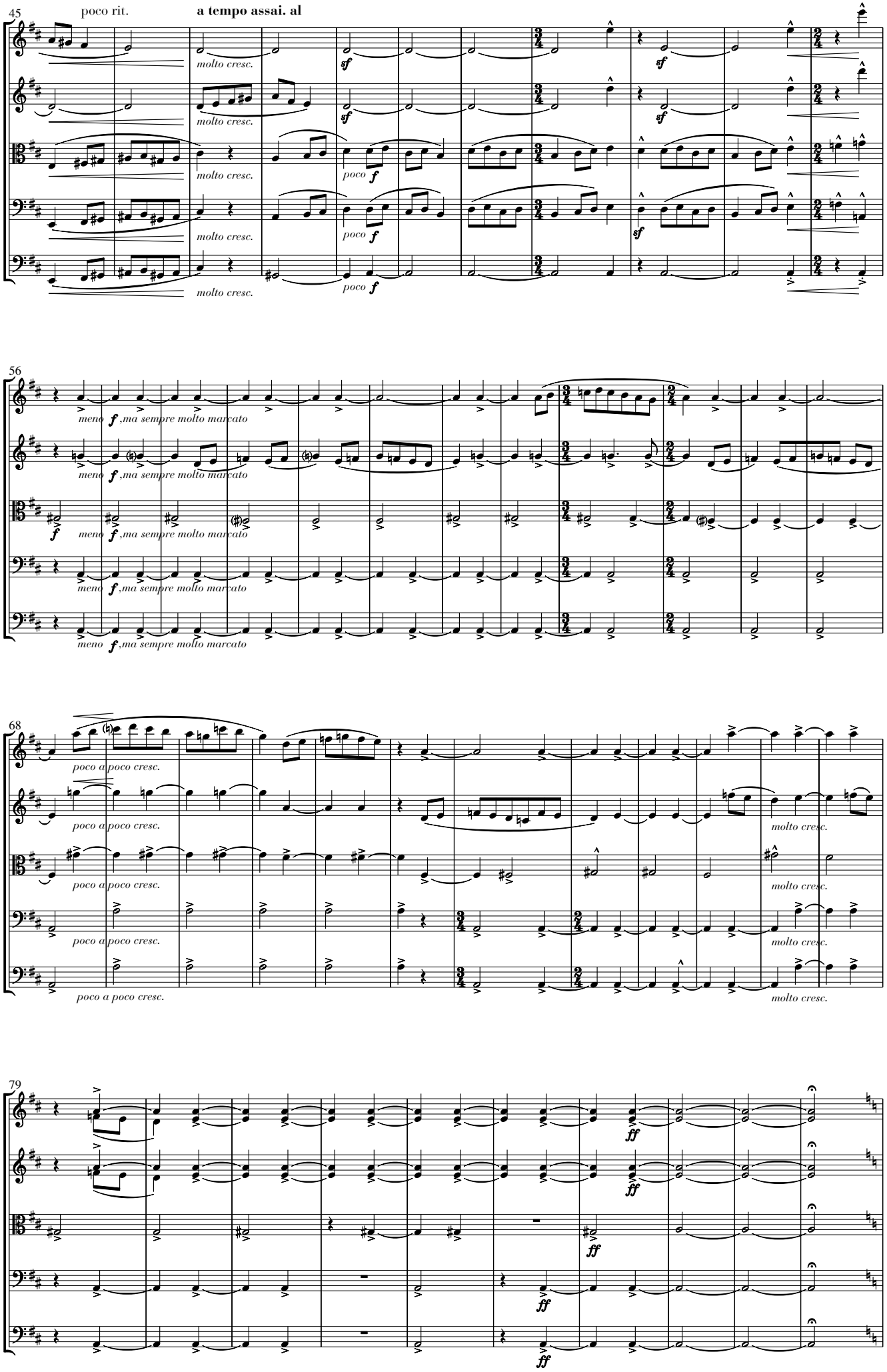

63
Più vivo (♩ = 176)
cresc.
74
dim.
81
(D)
89
Tempo I
molto rit.
pizz.

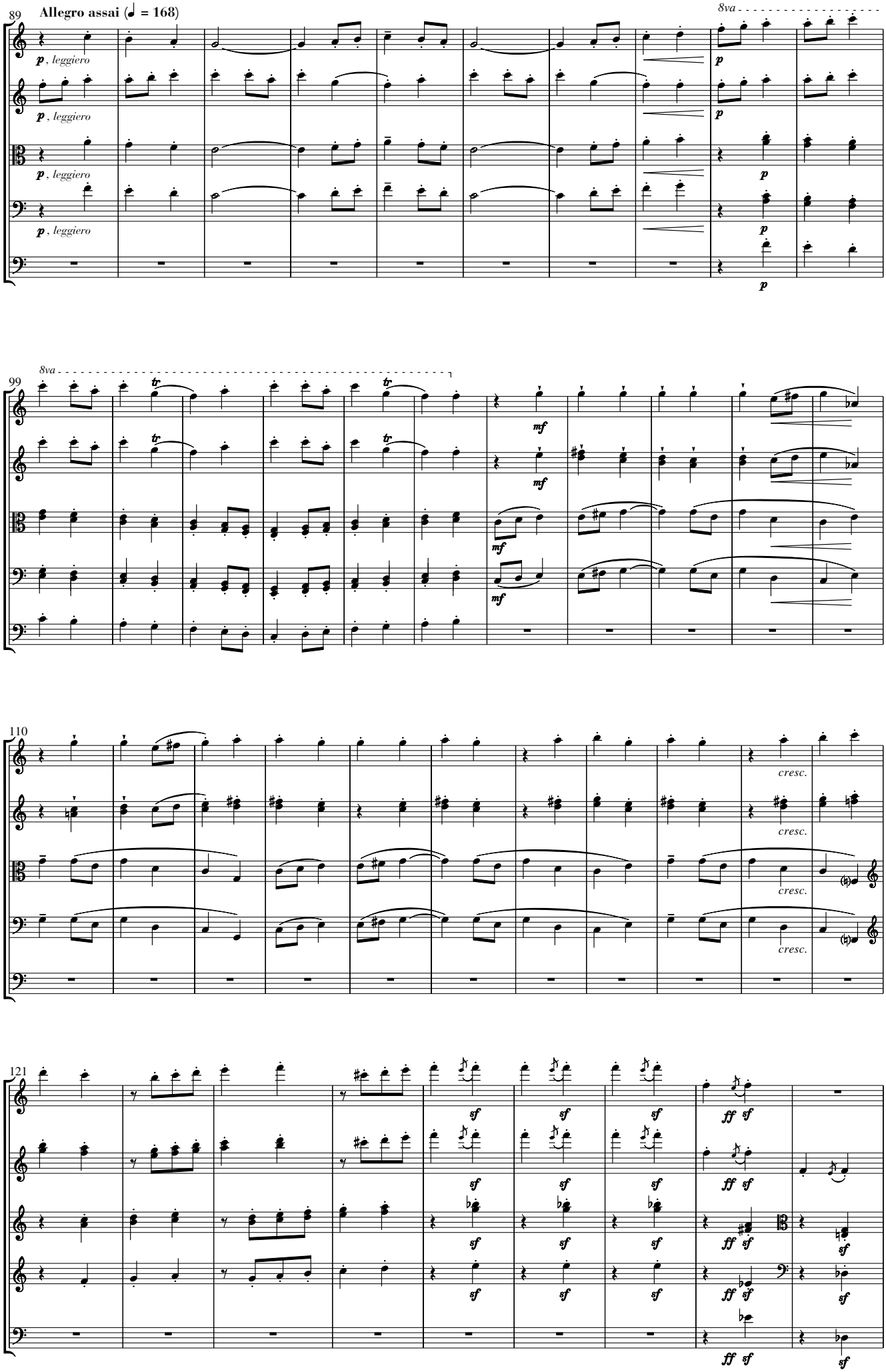

97
Div. pizz & arco
arco
pizz.
105
meno
arco
113
poco rit.
a tempo
molto ritard.
marc.
Allegro molto (♩ = 160)
più

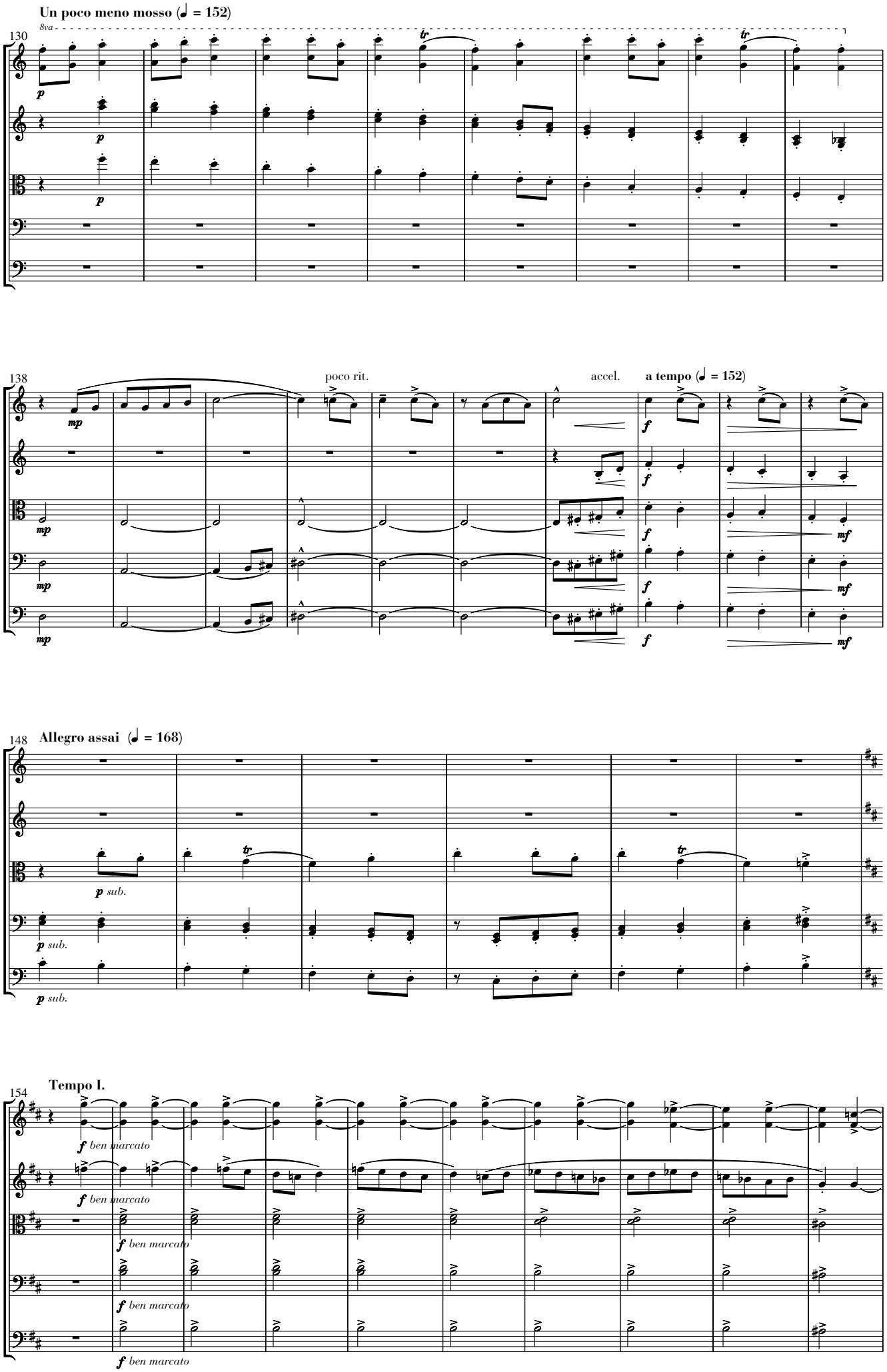

133
mf
mf
mf
mp
mp
141
pp
pp
pp
p
p
p
p
146
Tempo I
ritard.
pp
pp
pp
pp
pp
p
p
p
p
p

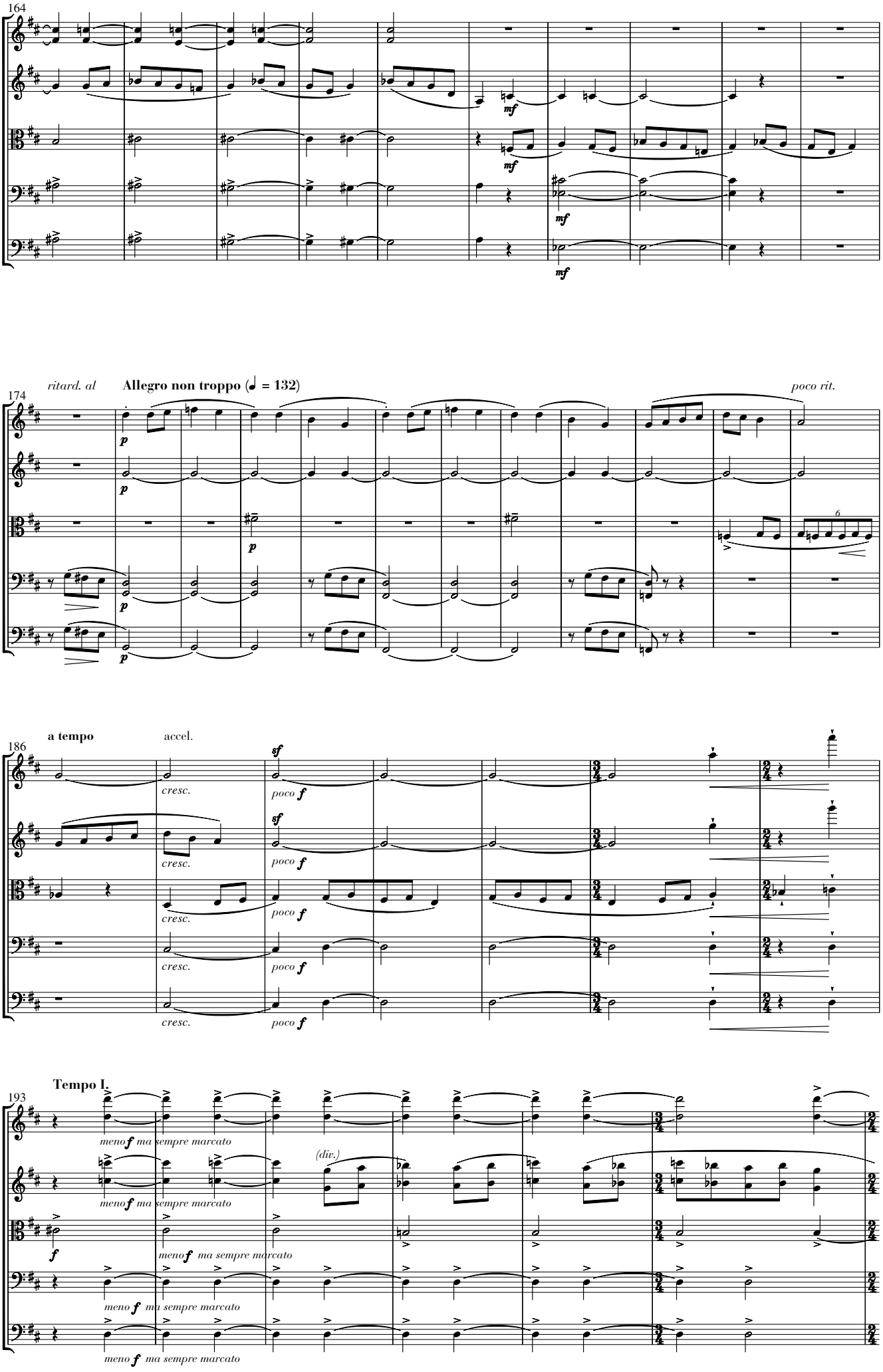
II

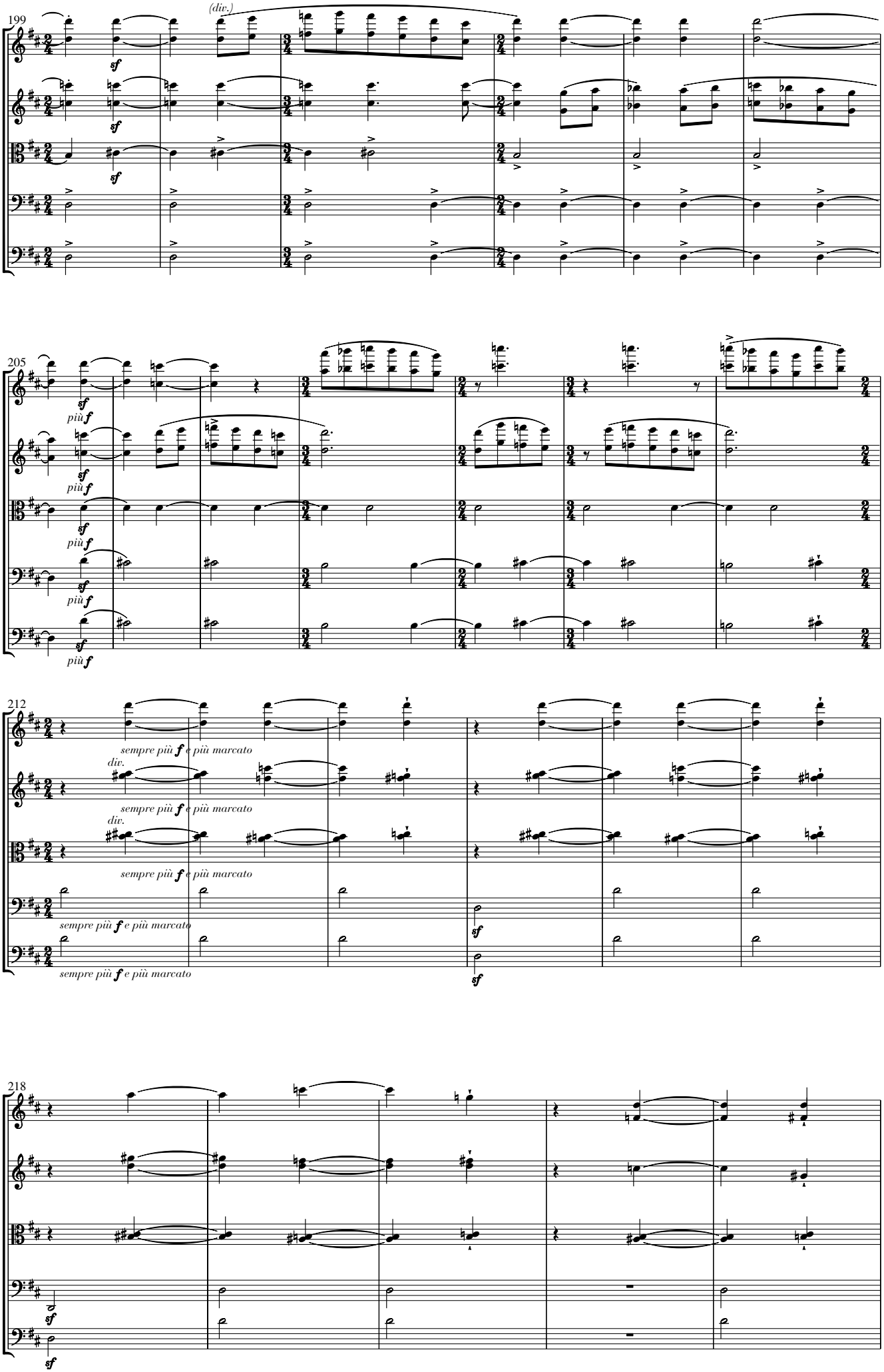

Vivacissimo (𝅗𝅥 = 120)
Vn 1
Vn 2
Vla
Vc
Cb
f ben marcato
11
ritard. al
mf
22
Allegro non troppo (♩ = 132)
p
rit.
6
33
a tempo
rit.
a tempo

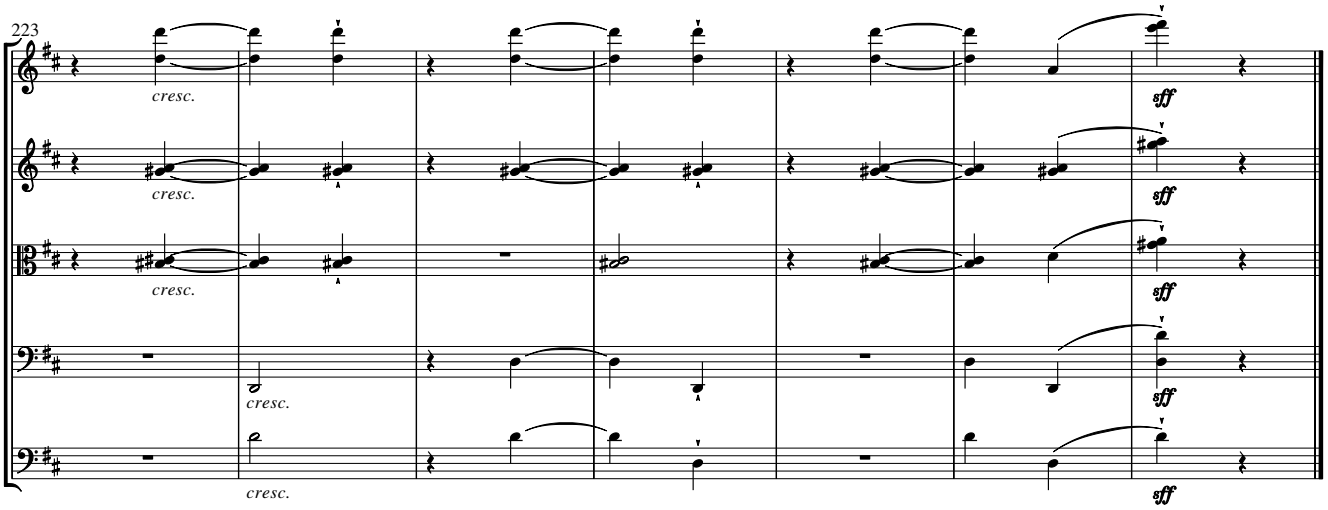

45
poco rit.
a tempo assai. al
molto cresc.
poco f
sf
56
meno f, ma sempre molto marcato
68
poco a poco cresc.
molto cresc.
79
ff


89
Allegro assai (♩ = 168)
8va
p , leggiero
99
8va
tr
mf
110
cresc.
121
sf
ff sf

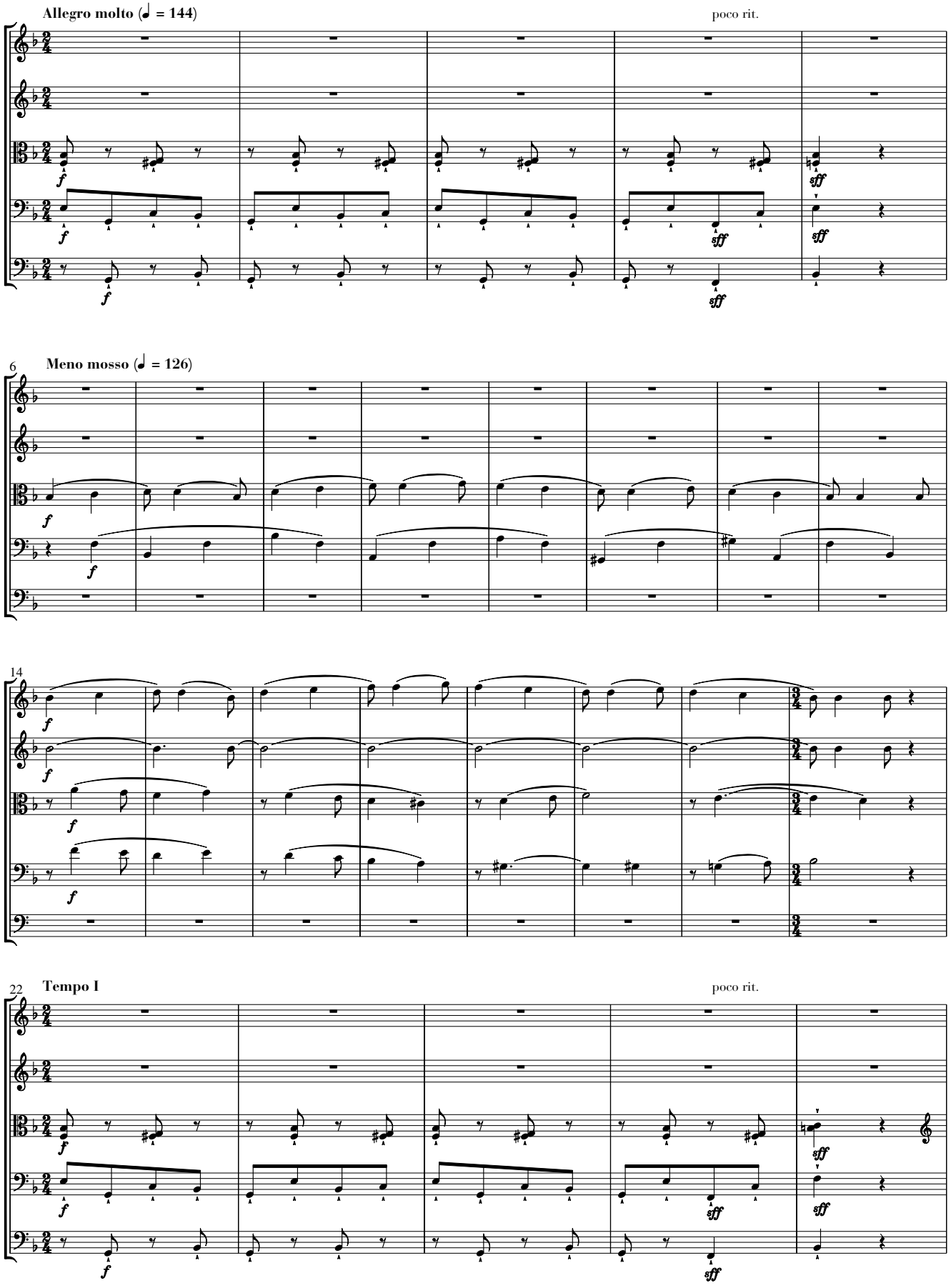

Un poco meno mosso (♩ = 152)
8va
130
p
tr
138
mp
poco rit.
accel.
a tempo (♩ = 152)
f
mf
148
Allegro assai (♩ = 168)
p sub.
154
Tempo I.
f ben marcato

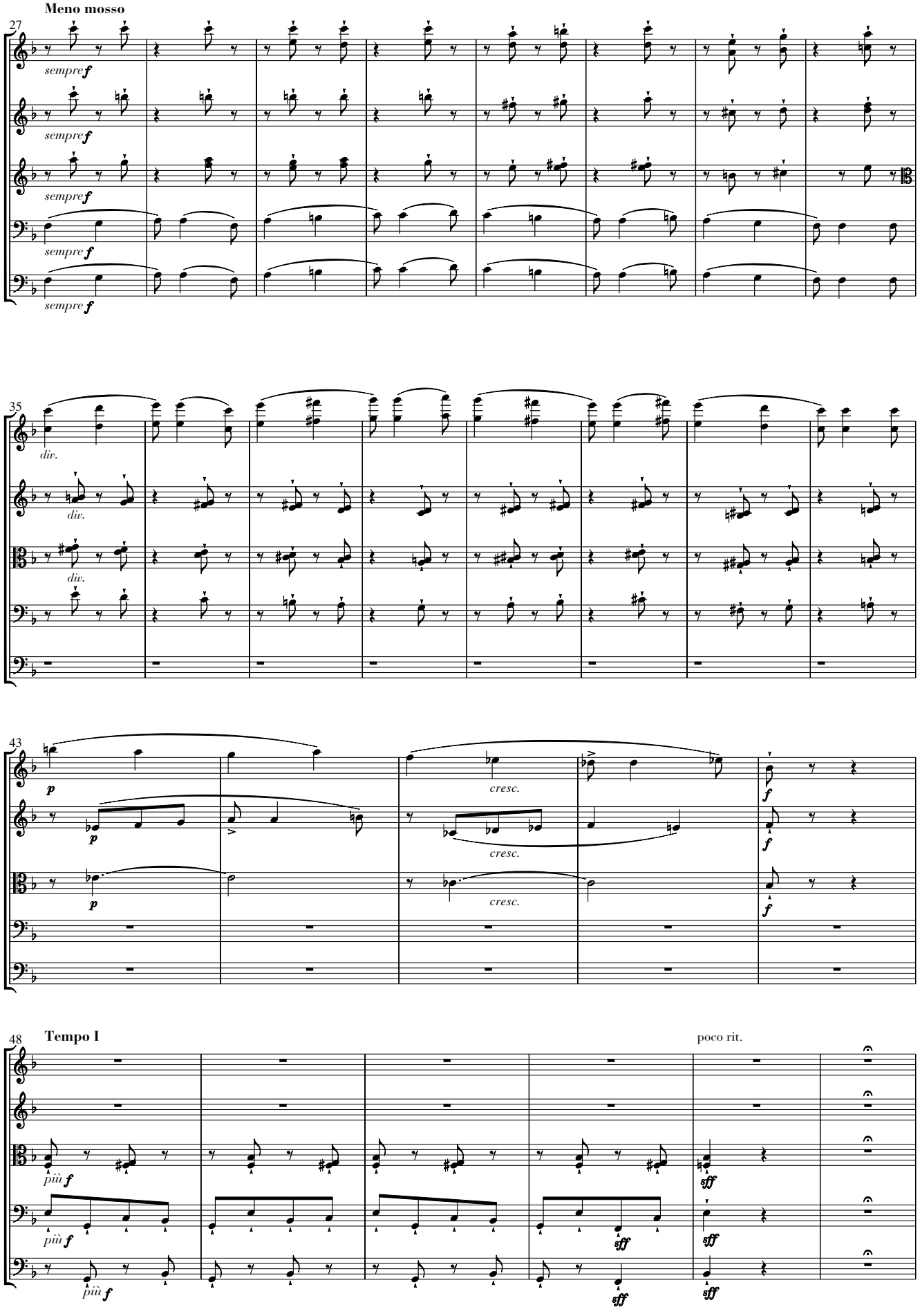

164
mf
mf
mf
mf
ritard. al
Allegro non troppo (♩ = 132)
poco rit.
174
p
p
p
p
6
a tempo
accel.
186
sf
poco f
cresc.
Tempo I.
193
meno f ma sempre marcato
(div.)
f

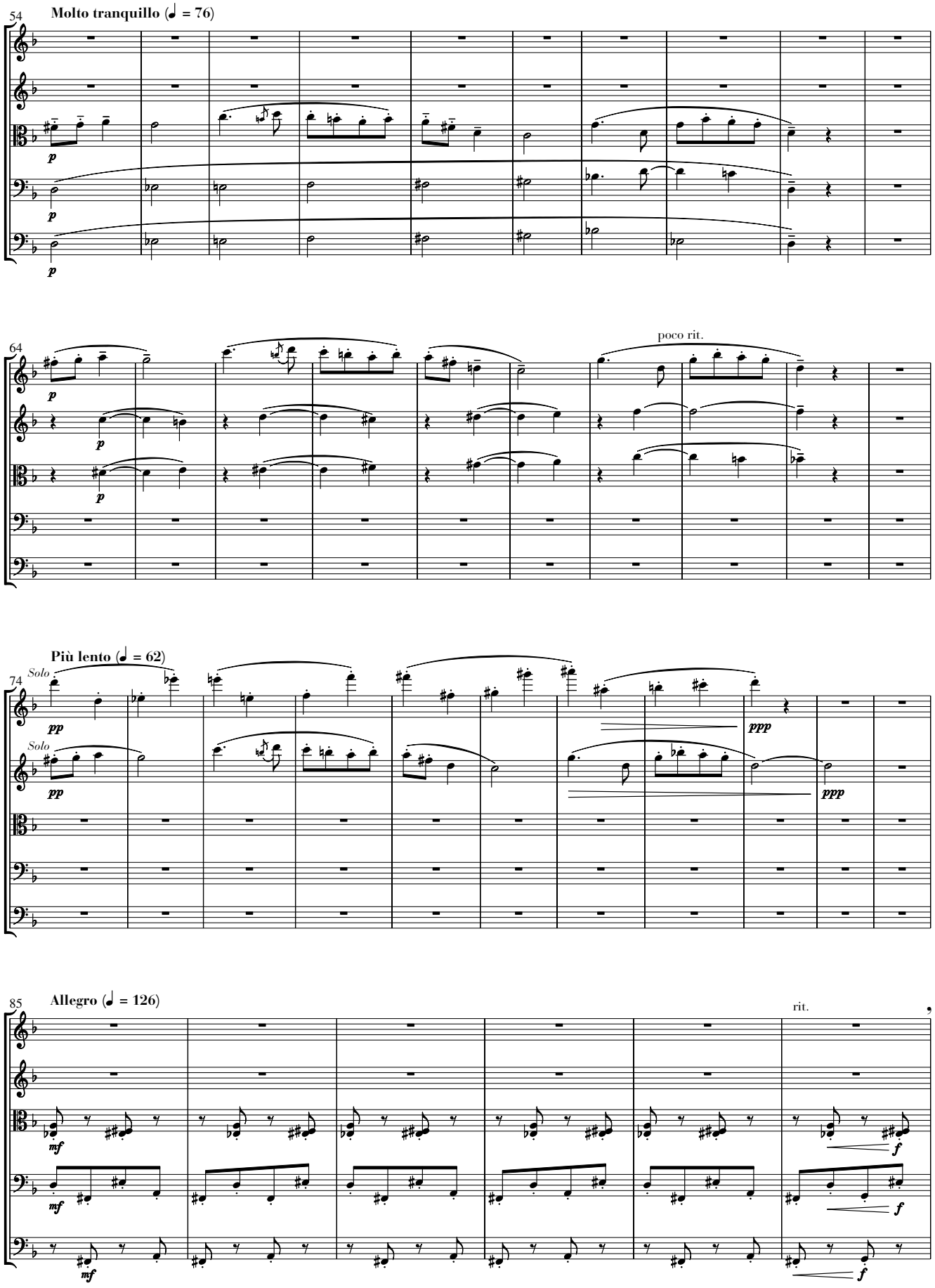

199
(div.)
sf
205
più f
212
sempre più f e più marcato
div.
218

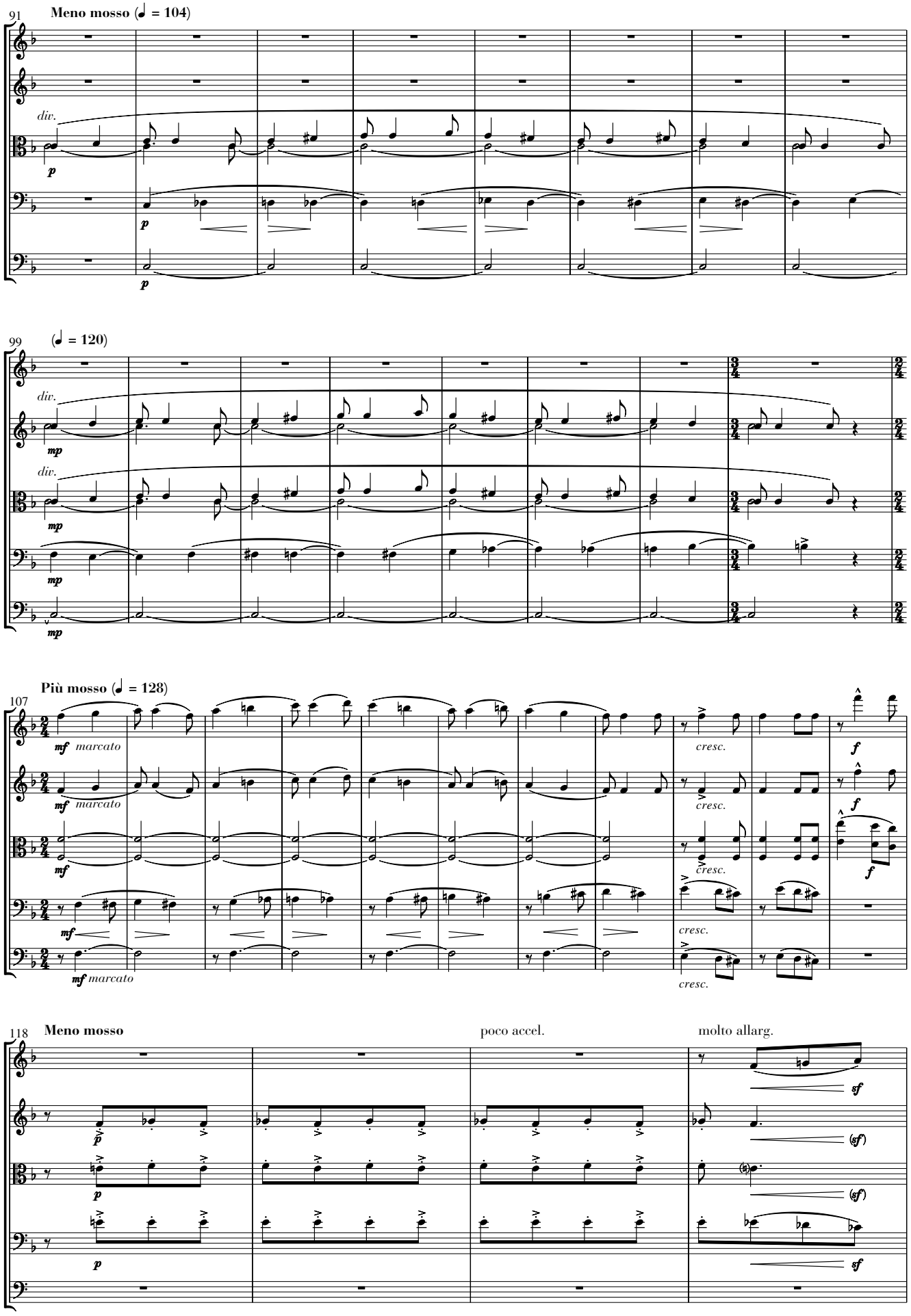

223
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
sff
sff
sff
sff
sff

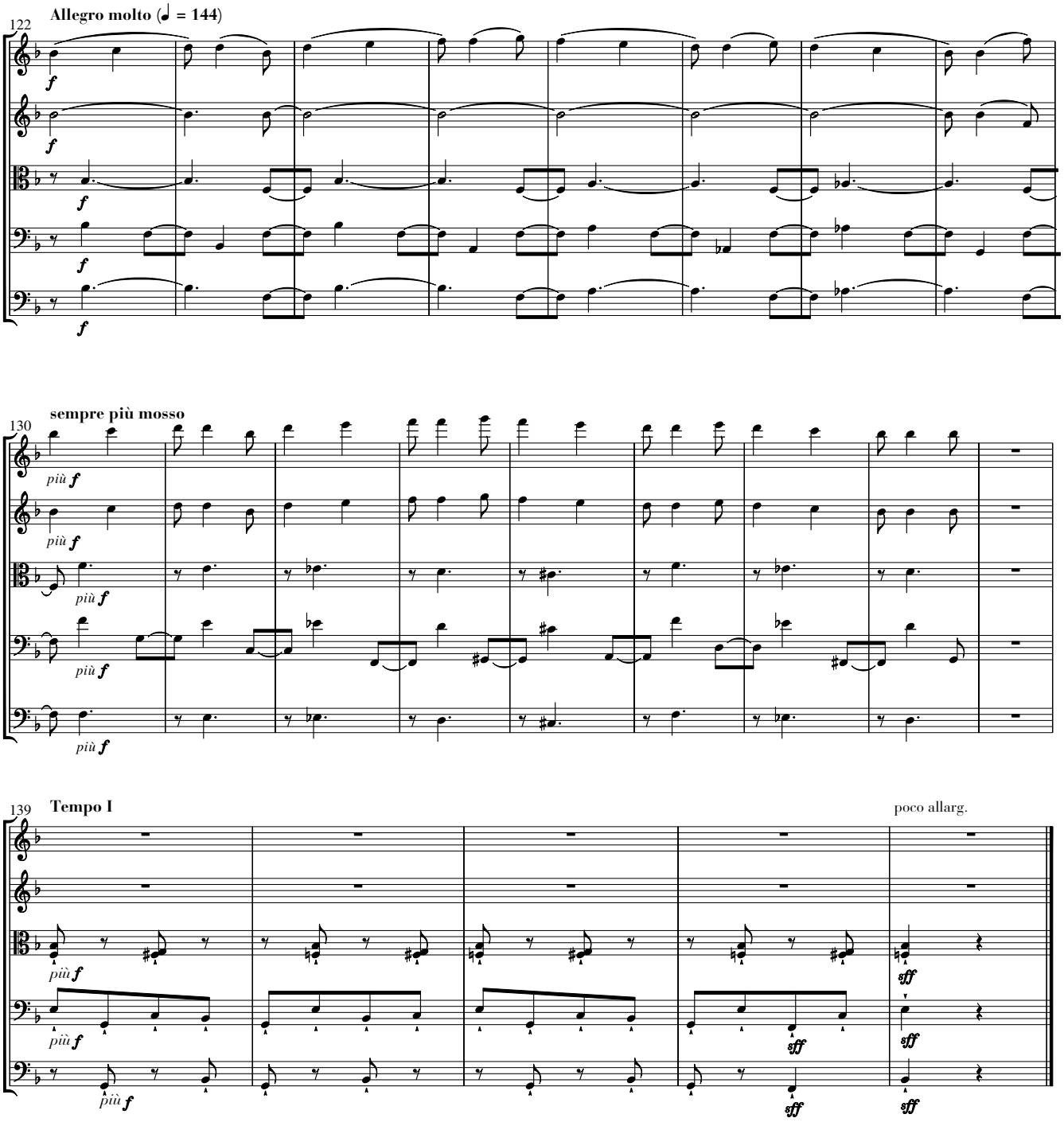
III


Allegro molto (♩ = 144)
poco rit.
6
Meno mosso (♩ = 126)
14
22
Tempo I
poco rit.


Meno mosso
27
sempre f
35
div.
43
p
cresc.
f
48
Tempo I
poco rit.
più f
sff


54
Molto tranquillo (♩ = 76)
p
64
poco rit.
Più lento (♩ = 62)
74
Solo
pp
ppp
85
Allegro (♩ = 126)
rit.
mf
f


91
Meno mosso (♩ = 104)
div.
p
p
p
99
(♩ = 120)
div.
mp
div.
mp
mp
mp
107
Più mosso (♩ = 128)
mf marcato
mf marcato
mf
mf
mf marcato
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
f
f
f
118
Meno mosso
poco accel.
molto allarg.
p
p
p
sf
(sf)
(sf)
sf


122
Allegro molto (♩ = 144)
f
130
sempre più mosso
più f
139
Tempo I
poco allarg.
più f
sff