Duck Soup

§

Clark Winslow Ross

for Bass Trombone
and Piano

Commissioned by Kenneth Knowles
through the assistance of The Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council

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DUCK SOUP (1994) CLARK WINSLOW ROSS

Composed in 1994 at the request of trombonist Ken Knowles and funded by the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council, *Duck Soup* was conceived as a virtuosic piece for bass trombone and piano combining elements of play, jazz, and mystery. The title, taken from the Marx brothers movie of the same name, is meant to reflect the more lighthearted aspects of the work, but is also a reference to Ken Knowles' avid hobby of bird-watching,. At times, I also had the music of jazz musician Charlie Parker, known as 'the bird,' in mind while composing this, although there are no overt references to his music; just an occasional foray into a more "jazzy" feel in some sections. Another composer about whom the same can be said was Olivier Messiaen, whose used bird songs in his music extensively. Again, no specific Messiaen elements or bird songs exist in this work, only occasional moments when such elements are hinted at. *Duck Soup* was revised in 2002 for a reading organized by the Canadian Music Centre.

It was premiered in February of 1994 by Ken Knowles and Kristina Szutor.

BIOGRAPHY

Clark Winslow Ross is Associate Professor at Memorial University of Newfoundland's School of Music, where he teaches composition, theory, electronic music, orchestration, and classical guitar. He is one of Canada's more active composers, with over 20 commissions and many performances of his works throughout Canada, in England, and the United States since moving to Newfoundland in the fall of 1992. His compositions have had frequent radio broadcasts, and he has been awarded numerous grants by the Canada Council, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Newfoundland Arts Council, the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra (NSO), and other organizations. Artists and groups performing his music include Paul Bendzsa, Bill Brennan, Omar Daniel, Mark Fewer, Rivka Golani, Bev Johnston, Liana Lam, Ken Knowles, Rob Power, Barbara Pritchard, James Rolfe, Kristina Szutor, the *Atlantic Arts Trio*, the *Atlantic String Quartet*, *Continuum*, *Duo Concertante*, *Symphony Nova Scotia*, and the *Nashua Chamber Orchestra* (USA).

Clark Ross was awarded Memorial University's *President's Award for Outstanding Research* in 1999, the first composer to have been honoured in this way. In 1993, he also won Young Composer's Awards for different works in national competitions by *The Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra* and *Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra*. Ross holds B.A. (humanities), M.Mus., and Mus.Doc. (composition) degrees from the University of Toronto. He performs in St. John's frequently as a classical and electric guitarist, and is Music Director (evening services) at St. Thomas' Anglican Church in St. John's.

Clark was born in Maracaibo, Venezuela, and had moved 18 times by the time he was in his early twenties, including stops in Caracas, Lima, Lennoxville, New York City, Fort Lee (NJ), Brussels, Scarborough, and Toronto. He married Dr. Jennifer Porter of Memorial University's Department of Religious Studies in 2000, and in March of 2001 their son, Andrew, was born. His daughter, Julia, was born in 1990.

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DURATION: ca. 10 minutes.

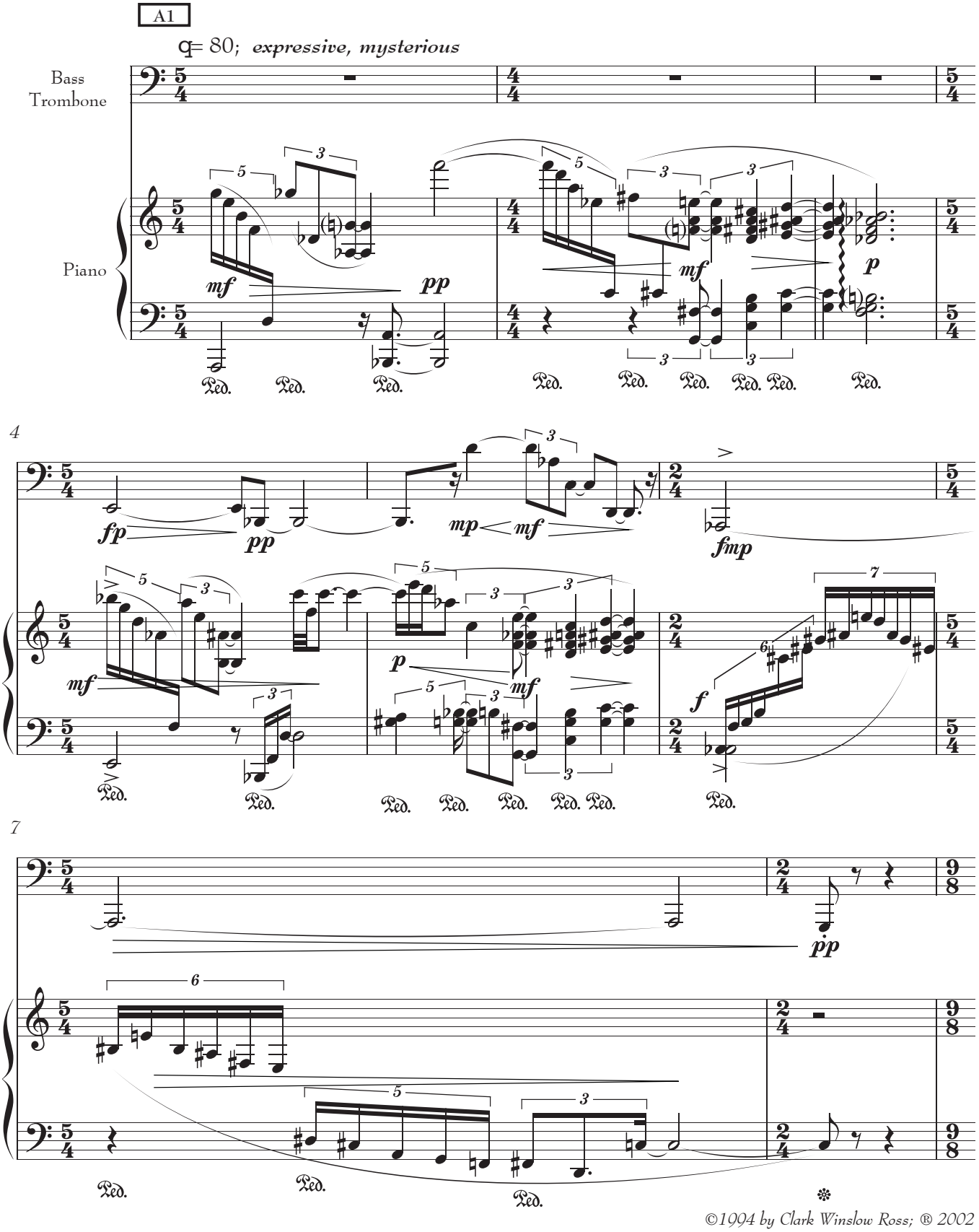
STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF *DUCK SOUP*

Measure #	Section	Comments
1	A1	**First Theme**; ♩ = 80; flowing, expansive, expressive, mysterious
4		2nd phrase; BTbn joins in
9		3rd phrase
12		Codetta of Th. 1 introduces 3plet ♩s material (*x*), which becomes basis of section D below; this leads to "Thunk" sound in pno., m. 13
14	A2	**Second Theme**; ♩ = 86; more energetic (tbn mel. based on 1st th.); Messiaen-like chords
25	A1´ + A2´	**1st th. varied + combined with 2nd th**. (♩ = 86)
31		Last Chord of section; BTbn plays into piano, which responds with another "thunk" sound
36	B1	Poco Piú Mosso (♩ = 92); **sparser texture**, nervous, dry (**quirky**); (quasi-development)
40	B2	Less dry; transition to...
45		'Heroic' cadence motive (*y*) introduced, in 3plet ♪s
46	C1	**Strange** (canard-like) **Waltz** (i.e., awkward, somewhat humorous)
49	C1.1	Waltz becomes more schmaltzy and somewhat more straight-ahead while still retaining a waddling quality; doesn't last long…
53		Waltz appears to break down, so...
54	C1.2	Piano attempts to resurrect it. However...
56	C1.coda	it doesn't get very far; end of waltz section (cadence material for 5 mm.)
57		… cadence material re-introduces 1 bar of 3plet ♩s (*x*; see m. 12), the basis of section D
61	A2´´	15 mm. of **Th. 2** returns, var.; ♩ = 86
76	A2.coda/trans'n	Th. 2 coda (m.76), then trans. (m.78) using 3plet ♩s and ♪s leading to...
80	D1	**3plet ♩s chordal section** (*x*; ♩ = 92) begins with piano solo; playful character, "jazzy" (Oscar Peterson?) feel
89	D1.1	3plet ♩s section; b.tbn. joins in (sparse at first)
94		… continues, piano begins to go nuts (very low)
97		'Heroic' cadence motive (*y*) returns, in 3plet ♪s
98	D2	3plet ♩s continue; more forceful character; BTbn becomes more active with selective unison doublings
107	D2.1	3plet ♩s continue; another variation I
115	D2.codetta	Pattern breaks for **codetta**; becomes more 'heroic' (*y* motive used, extended)
119		… codetta winds down to a complete stop at m. 122 (this is the *golden mean!*)
123	B1´	"Quasi-development" (♩ = 92; **sparse, nervous**, etc.) **section** returns (varied), leads to...
128	B2	"Less dry" sect. returns, unchanged; transition to...
133		'Heroic' cadence motive (*y*) again, in 3plet ♪s
134	C1	**Strange Waltz again** (awkward, somewhat humorous, web-footed, etc.)
137	C1.1	"Schmaltzier", more straight-forward waltz again (unchanged)
141	C1.1-ext.	Waltz accompaniment figure in pno extended; seems to get stuck-BTbn is silent; refuses to help out
143:4		… Pno plays Sfz ♪ chord in frustration; is fed up! ("HEY! PAY ATTENTION!!!)
144	C1.2	However, to its credit, the piano once again valiantly attempts to resurrect waltz...
145	ext.	…This time, it works! **Waltz** IS **extended**; however, pno is on its own (BTbn, apparently working to rule, steadfastly refuses to participate)
153	A2"	**Th. 2** returns for the 3rd time, **varied**; ♩ = 86
164	A1´	**Th 1 returns, varied** (BTbn more involved this time, so character more dramatic, less mysterious); ♩ = 80
169		… continues with long arpeggio in pno; note the faster tempo this time (♩ = 92). Extended by a couple of bars (ascending arpeggios in pno, tbn)
174	A1´ + A2´	3rd phrase (truncated) at original tempo (♩ = 80), morphing into end of Th 2
177	transition	Last bar of previous section begins a 2-bar transition into D2.2; tempo (♩ = 92) is faster than it appears because basic pulse is felt in 3plet ♩s. (Tempo is really 3plet ♩ = 138.)
179	D2.2	**3plet ♩s brought back** one last time; a somewhat more-chaotic, more-energetic variation
187	**CODA**	Uses 'Heroic' motive (*y*) a lot; exciting character (♩ = 80)
195		Last chord

Duck Soup

For Ken Knowles

Clark Winslow Ross



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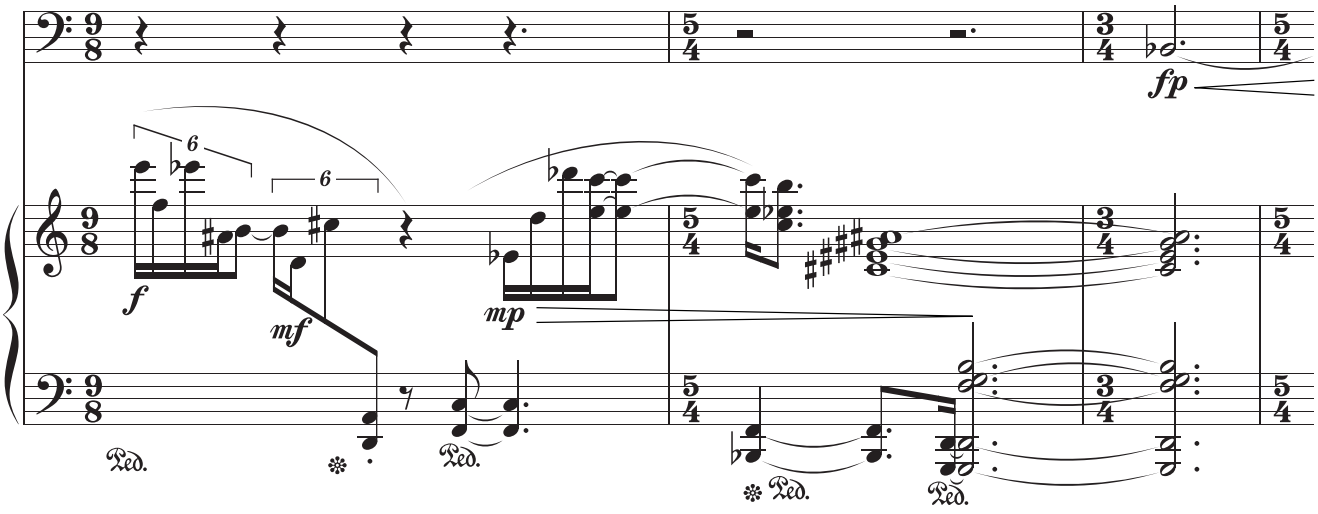

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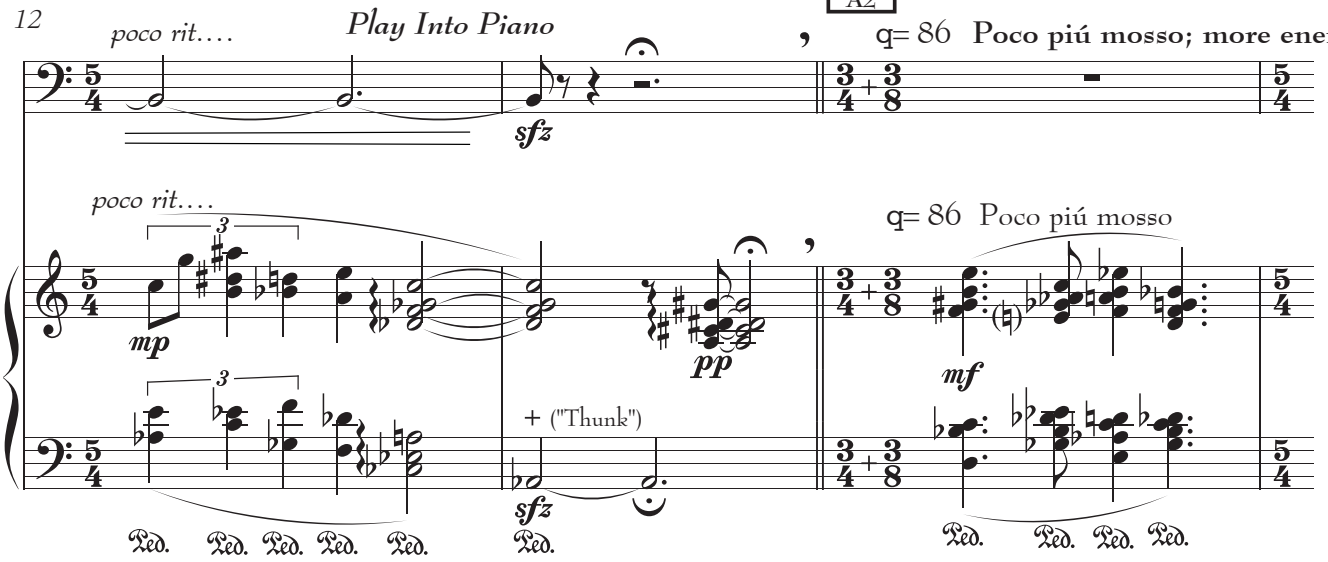

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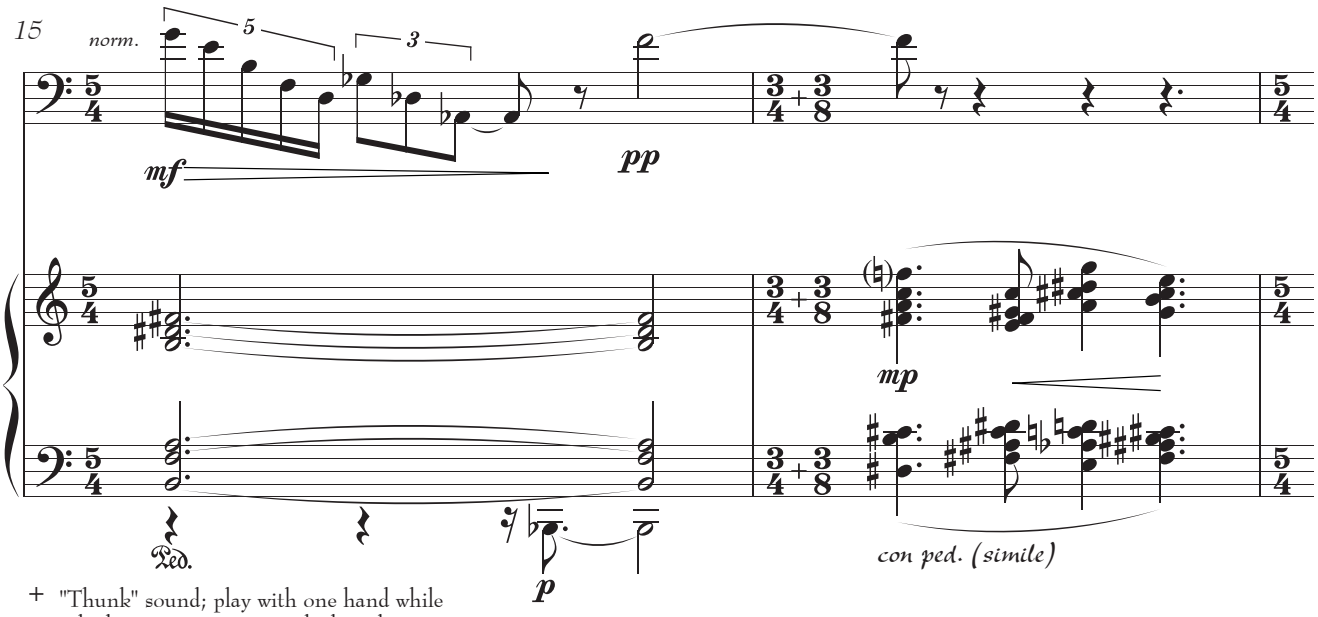
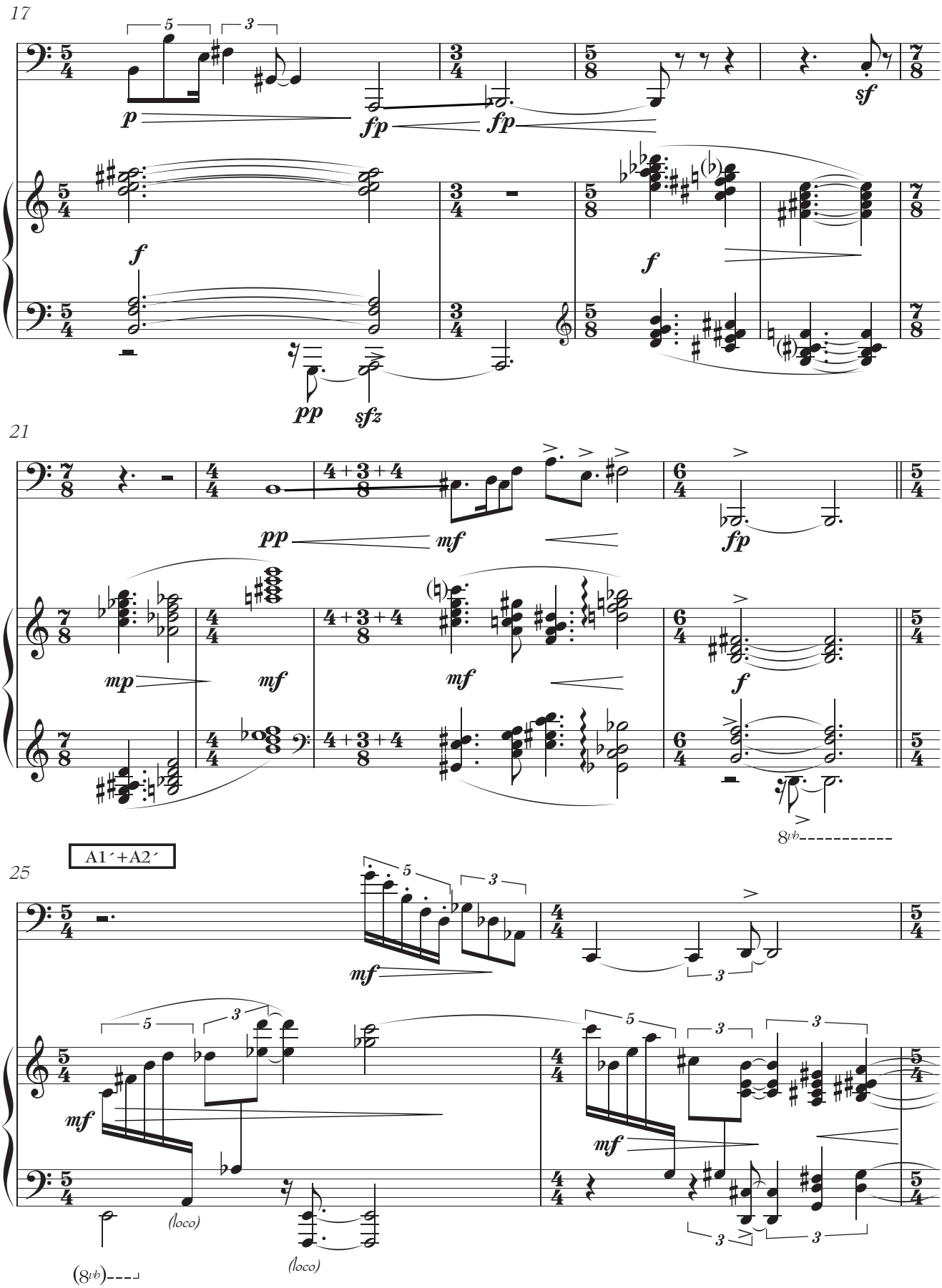
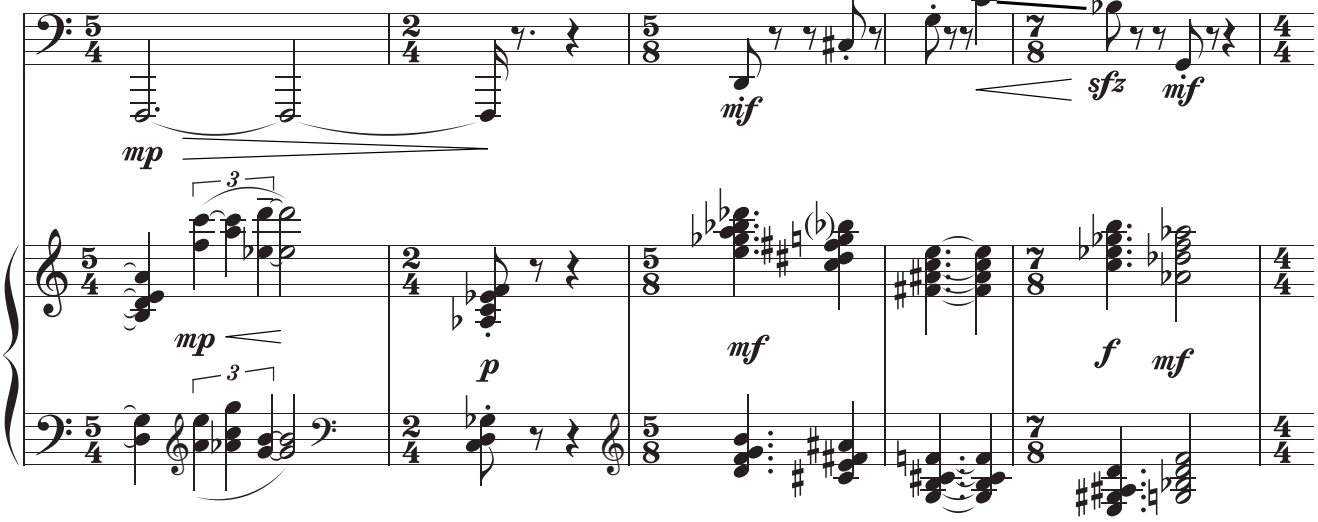


\+ "Thunk" sound; play with one hand while partly dampening strings with the other.


17
21
25
A1´+A2´
(loco)
(loco)

27



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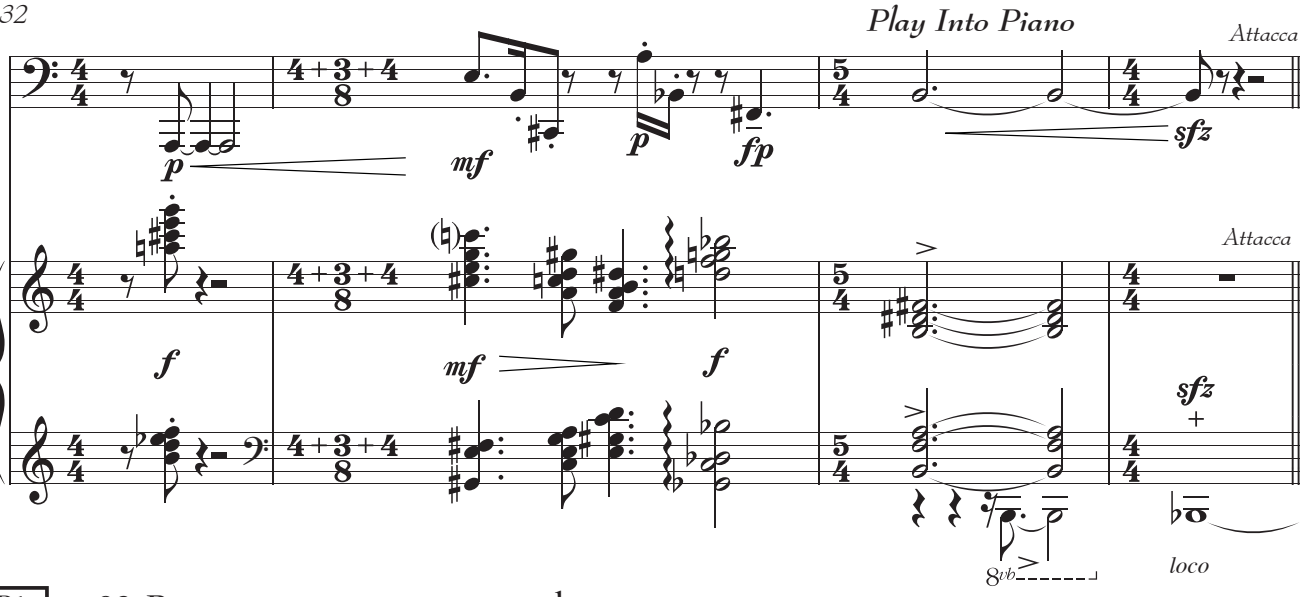
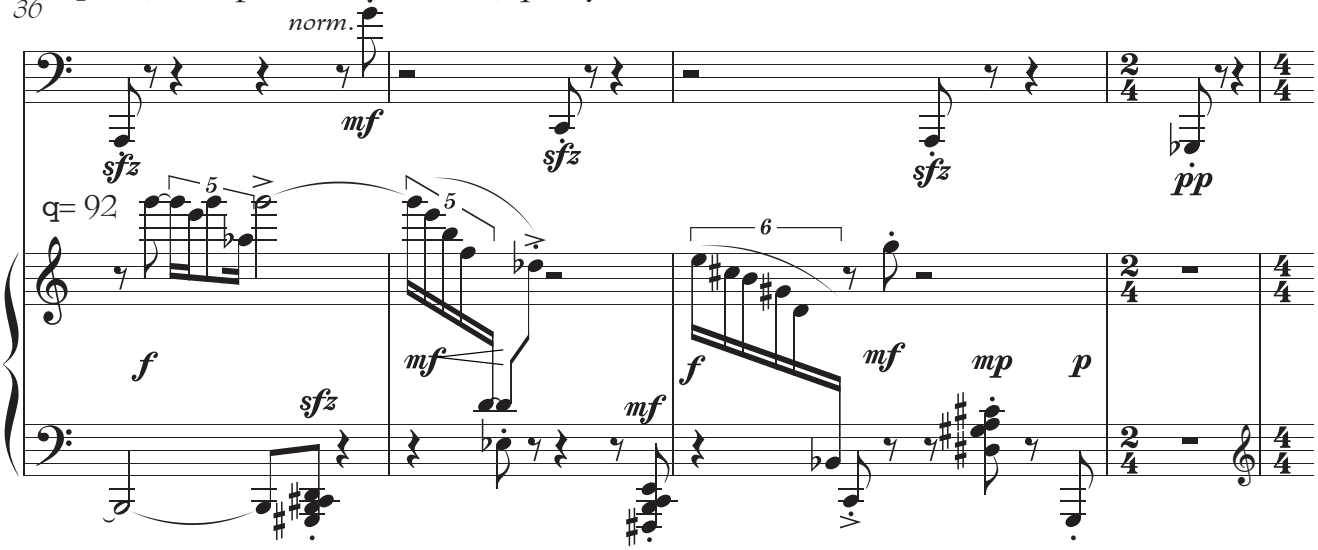
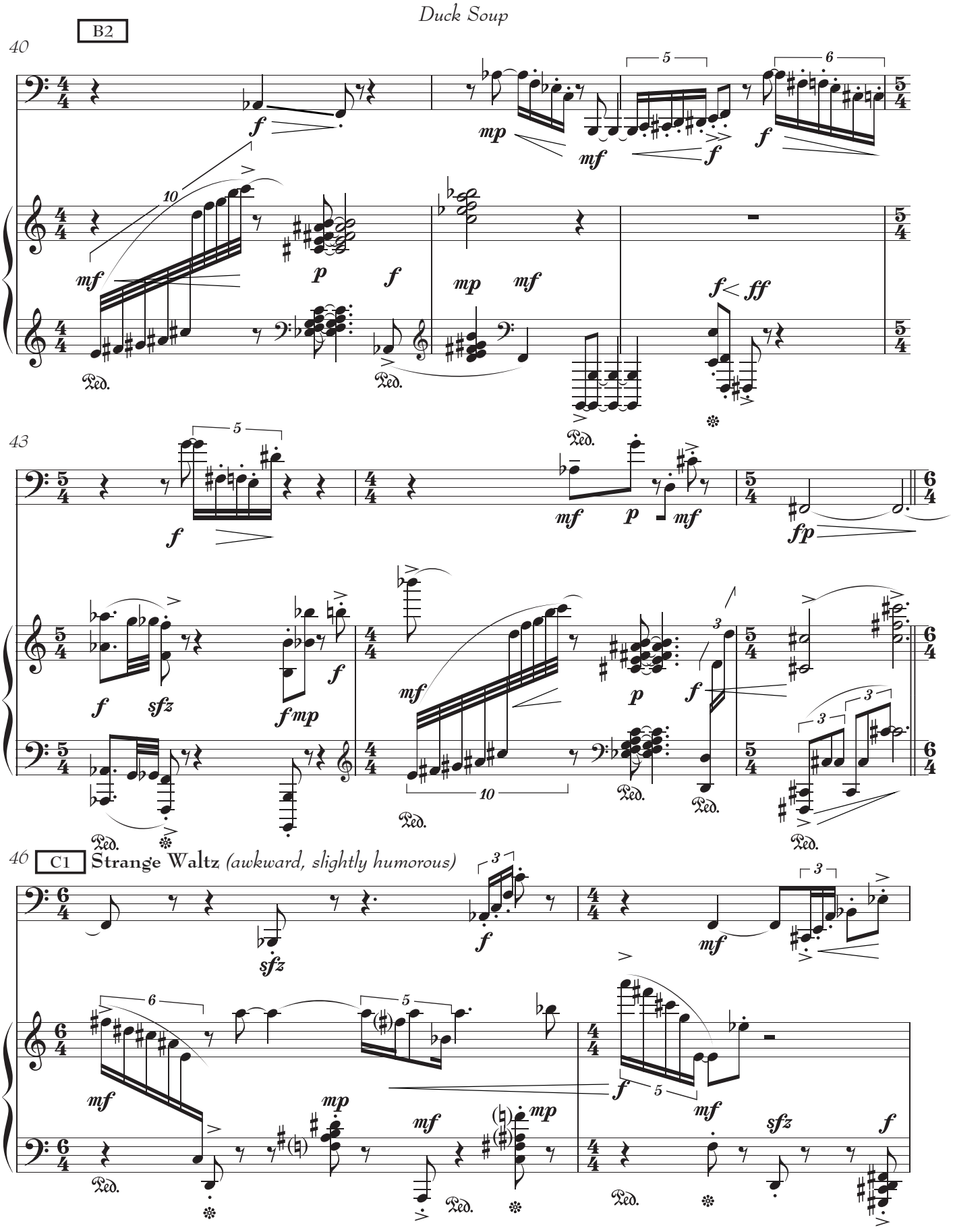
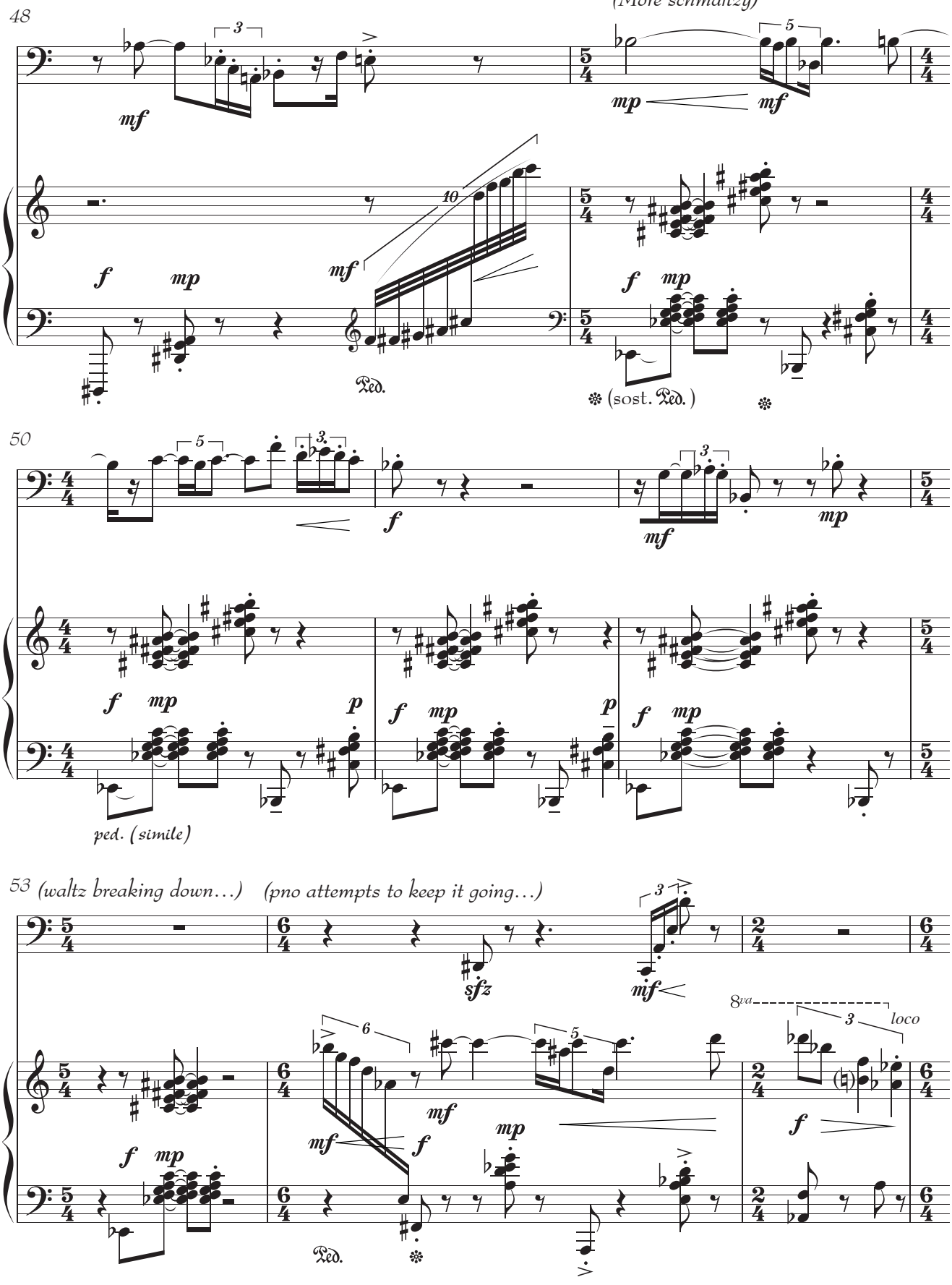


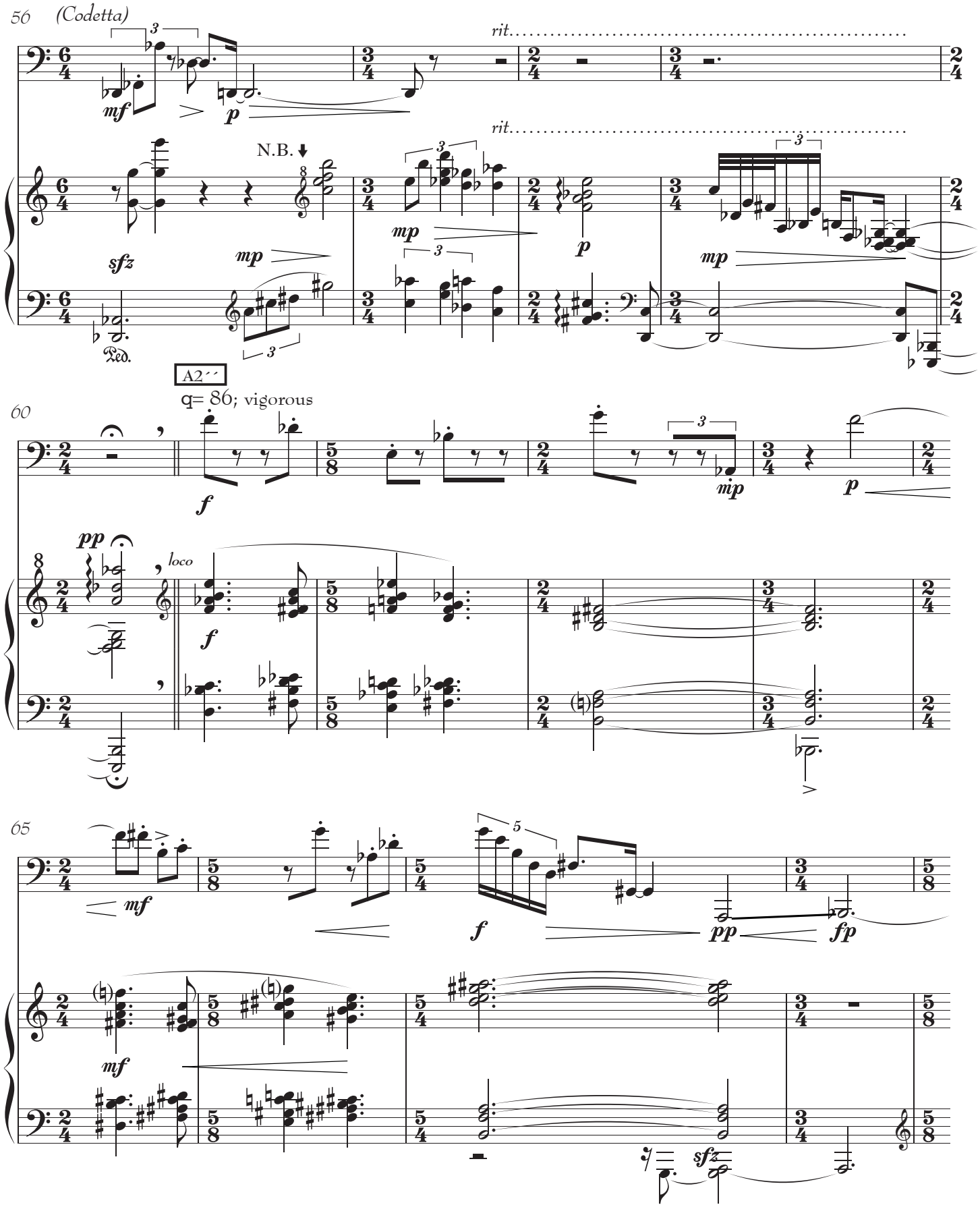
B1 q= 92; **Poco piú mosso; nervous, quirky**

36

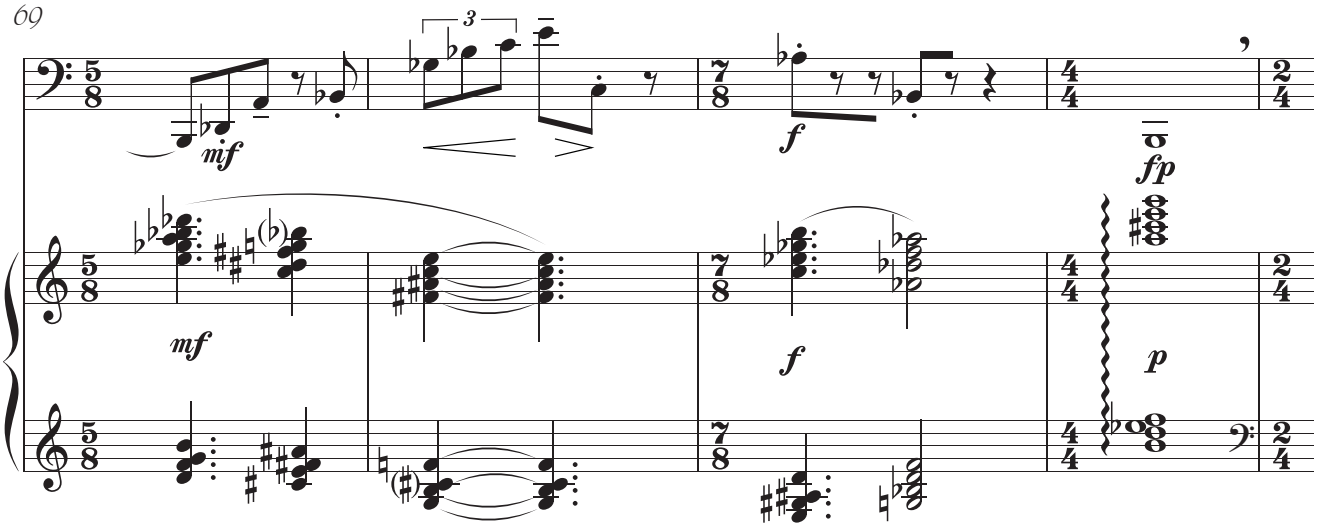



B2
40
43
46
C1
Strange Waltz (awkward, slightly humorous)

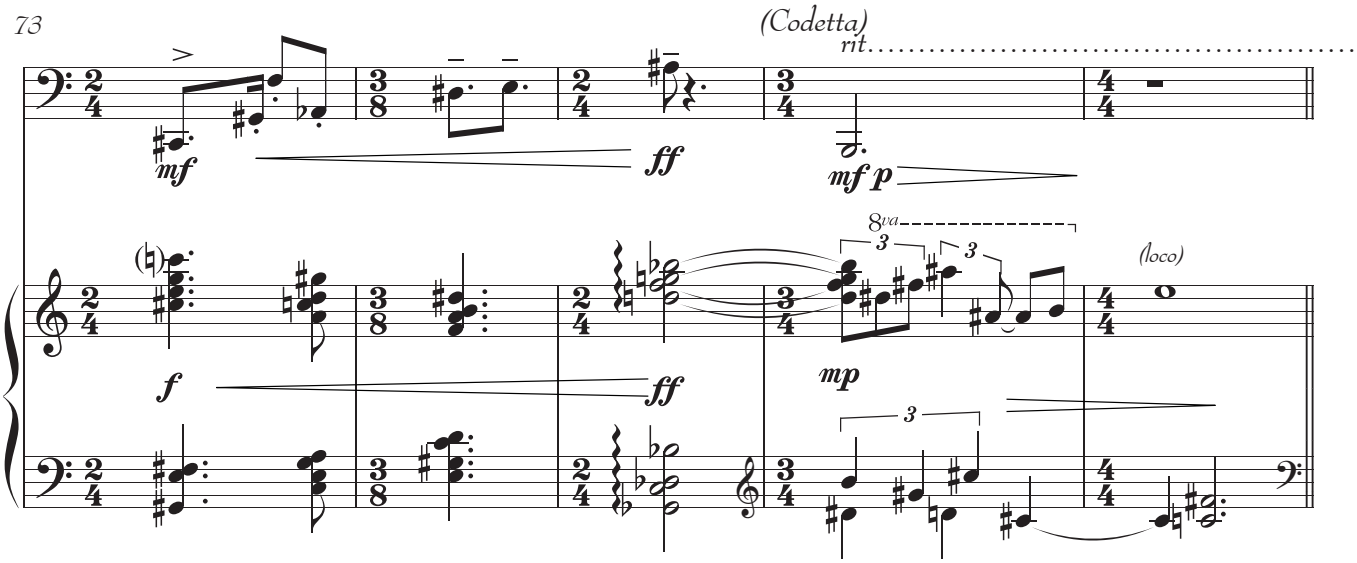

48
(More schmaltzy)
mf
mp
mf
f
mp
mf
Ped.
f
mp
(sost. Ped.)
50
f
mf
mp
f
mp
p
f
mp
p
f
mp
ped. (simile)
53 (waltz breaking down…)
(pno attempts to keep it going…)
sfz
mf
8va
loco
mf
f
mf
mp
f
f
mp
Ped.


56 (Codetta)
rit.
rit.
N.B.
mf
p
sfz
mp
mp
p
mp
Ped.
A2´´
q= 86; vigorous
60
f
mp
p
pp
loco
f
65
mf
f
pp
fp
mf
sfz

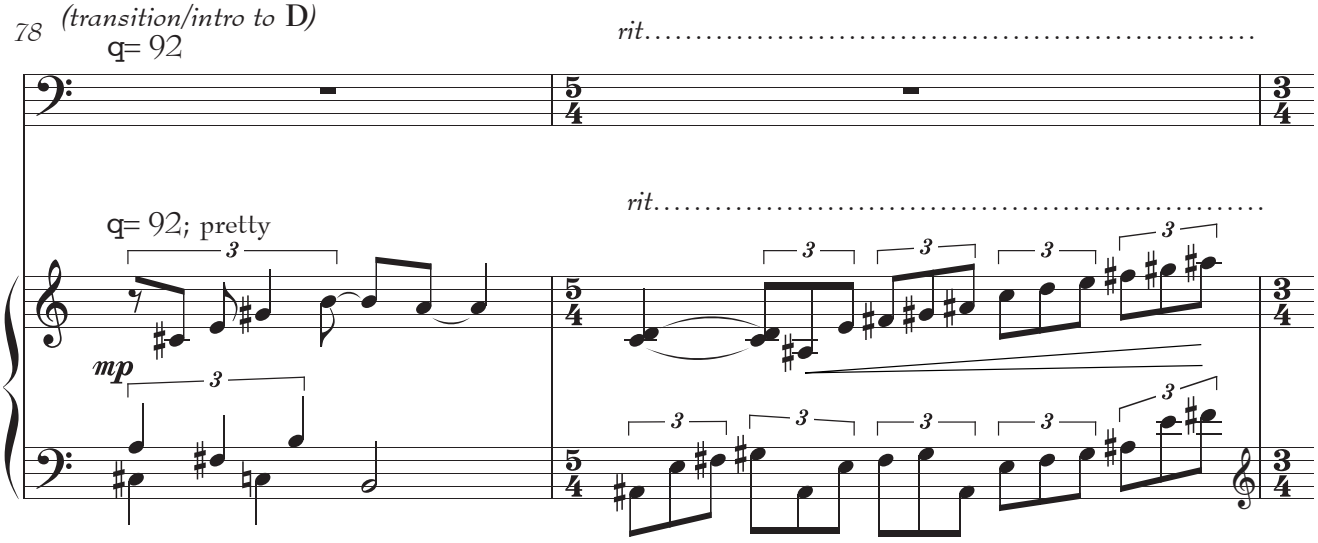
69



73



78 *(transition/intro to* **D***)*



D1 **Piano solo**

80

a tempo

a tempo; playful (jazzy)

mf

84

rit.....

rit.....

mf

p

mp

D1.1

89

a tempo

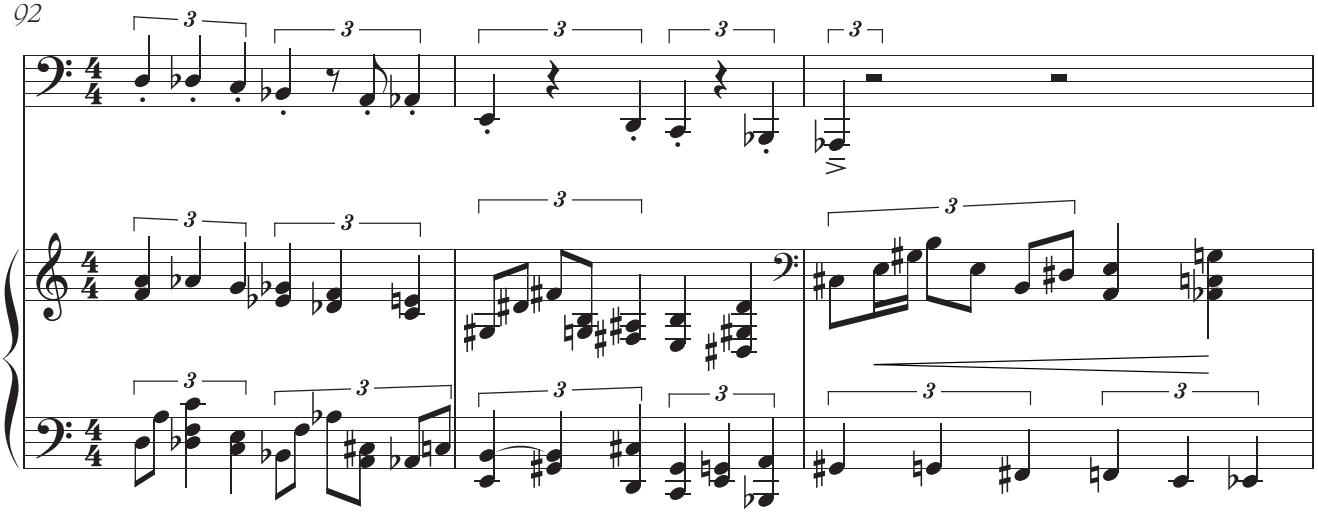
mf

a tempo

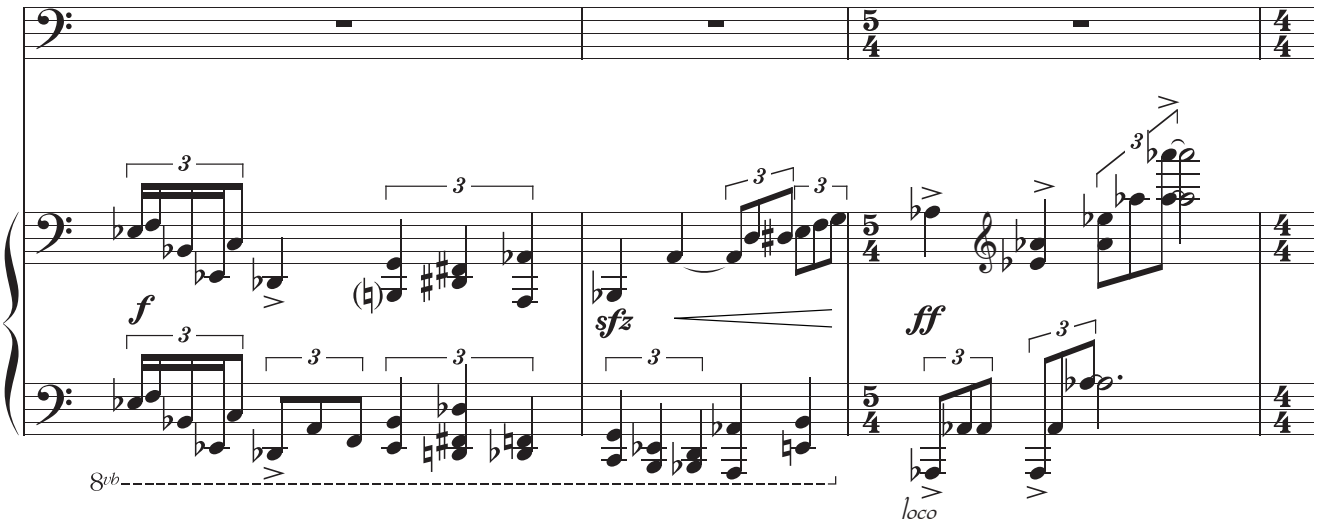
mf

Ped. Ped.

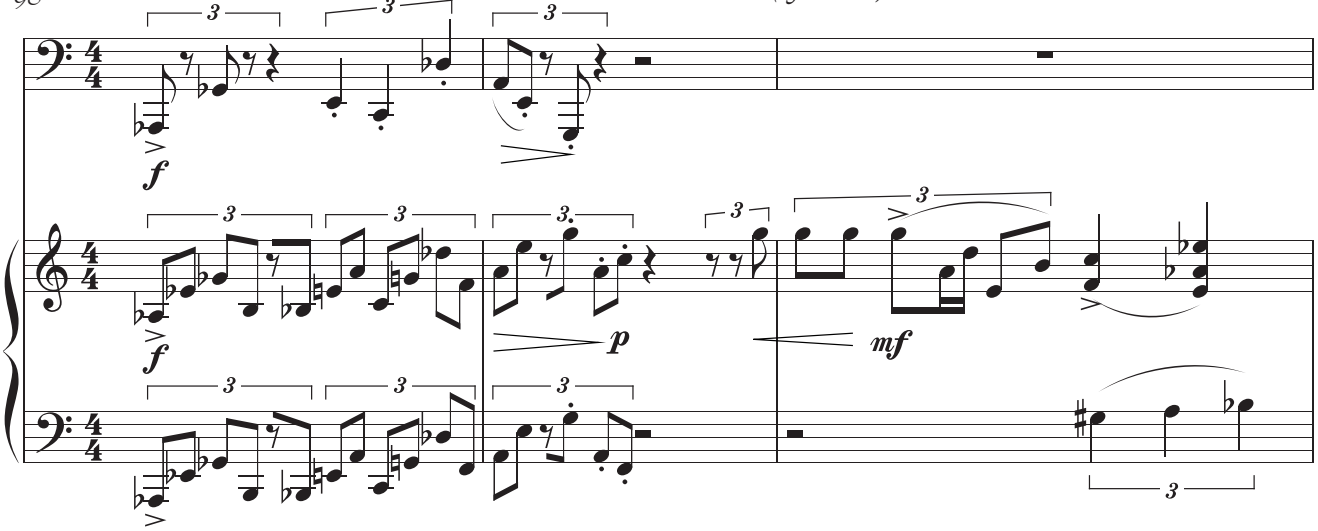
92

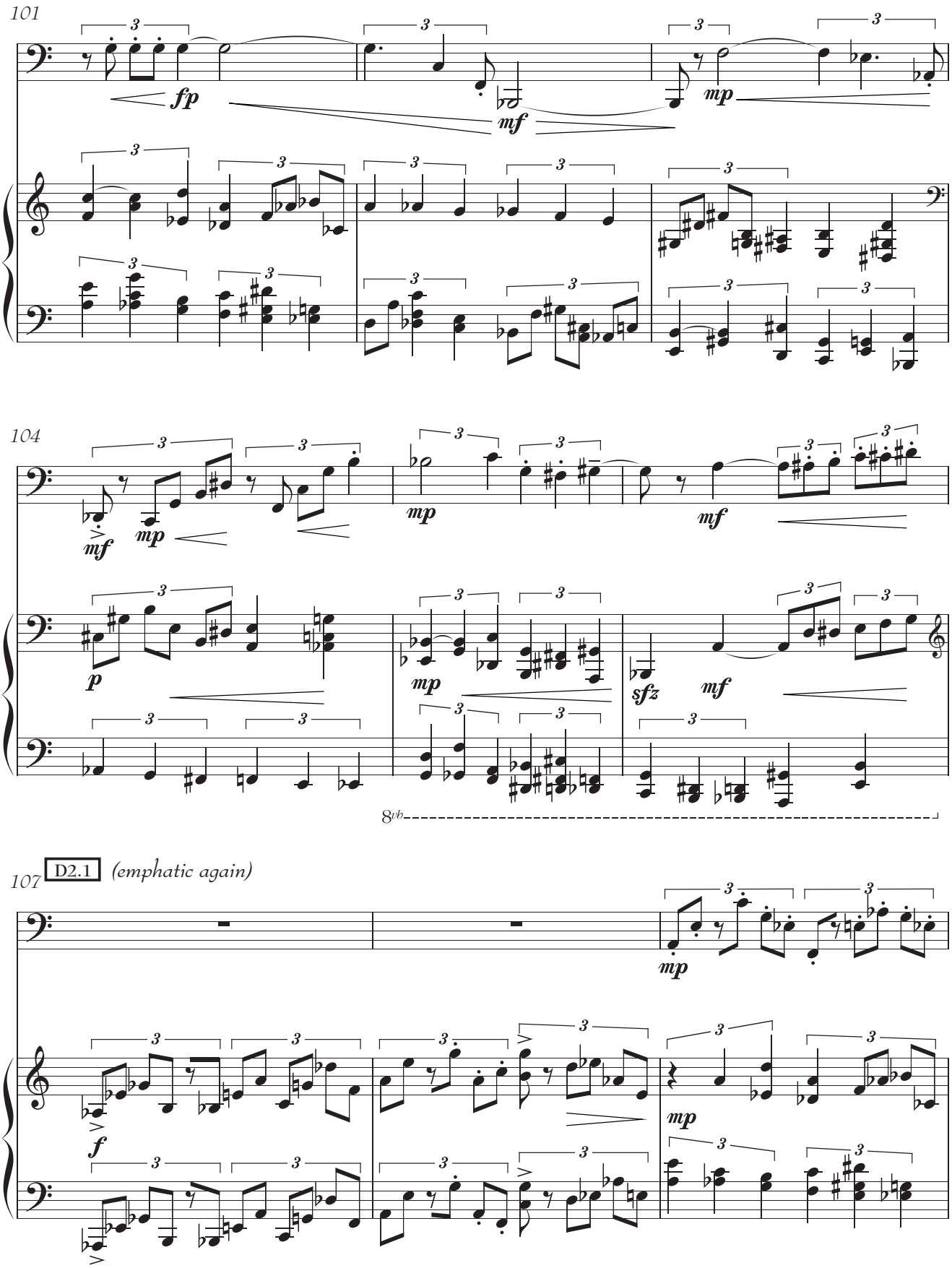


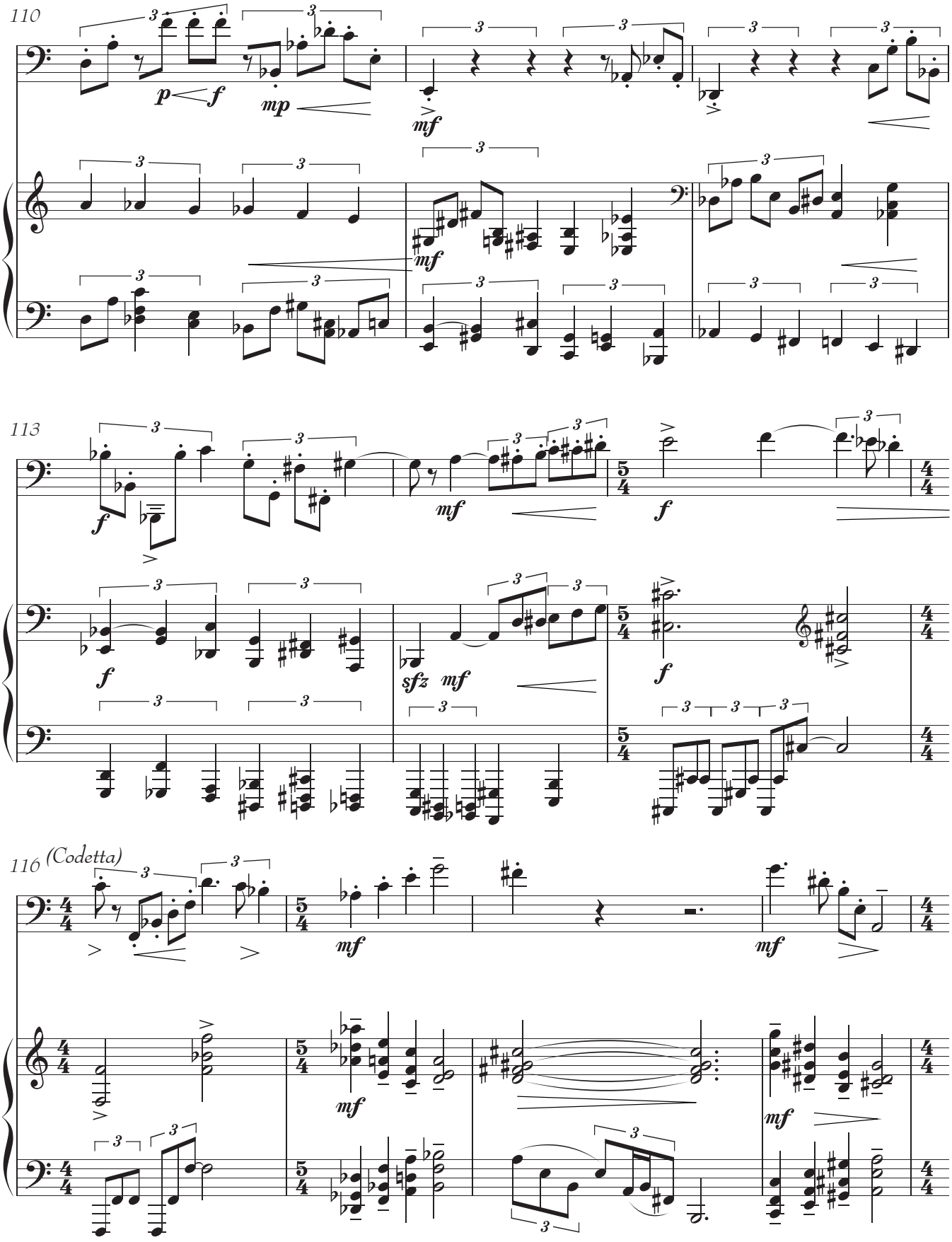
95

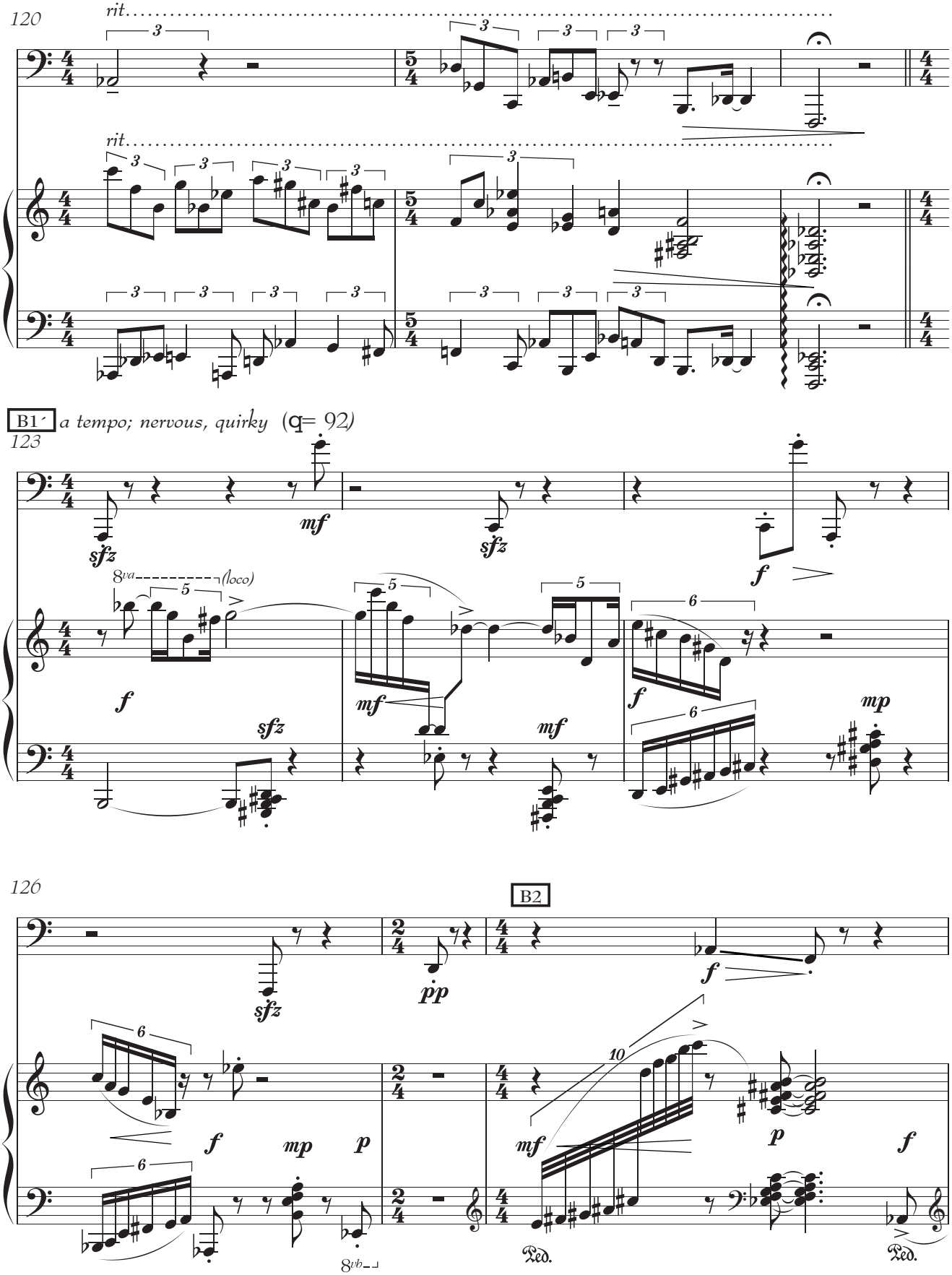


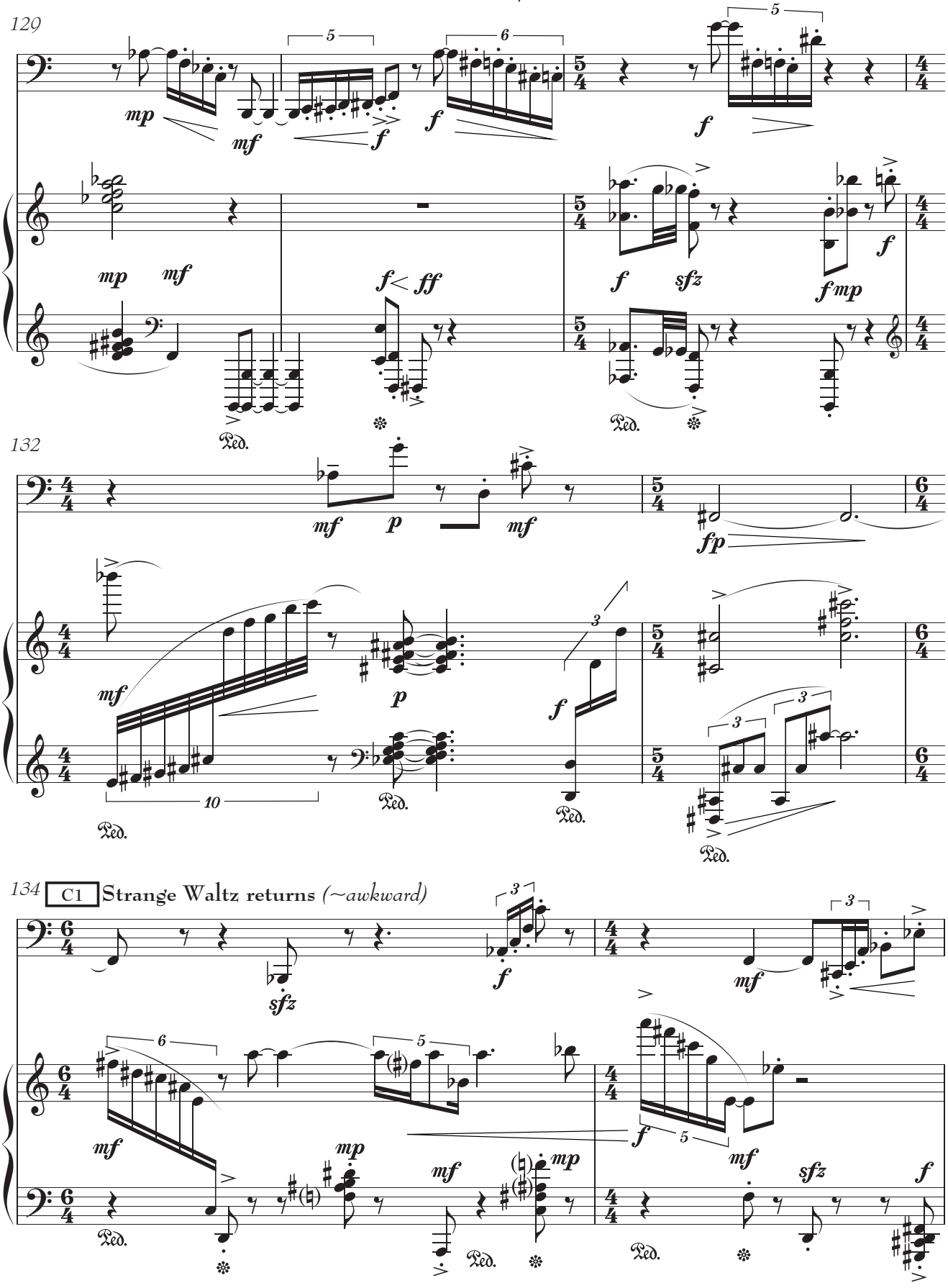
98 D2 *(more forceful…)* *(lyrical…)*




101
fp
mf
mp
104
mf
mp
mp
mf
p
mp
sfz
mf
8vb
107
D2.1
(emphatic again)
mp
f
mp

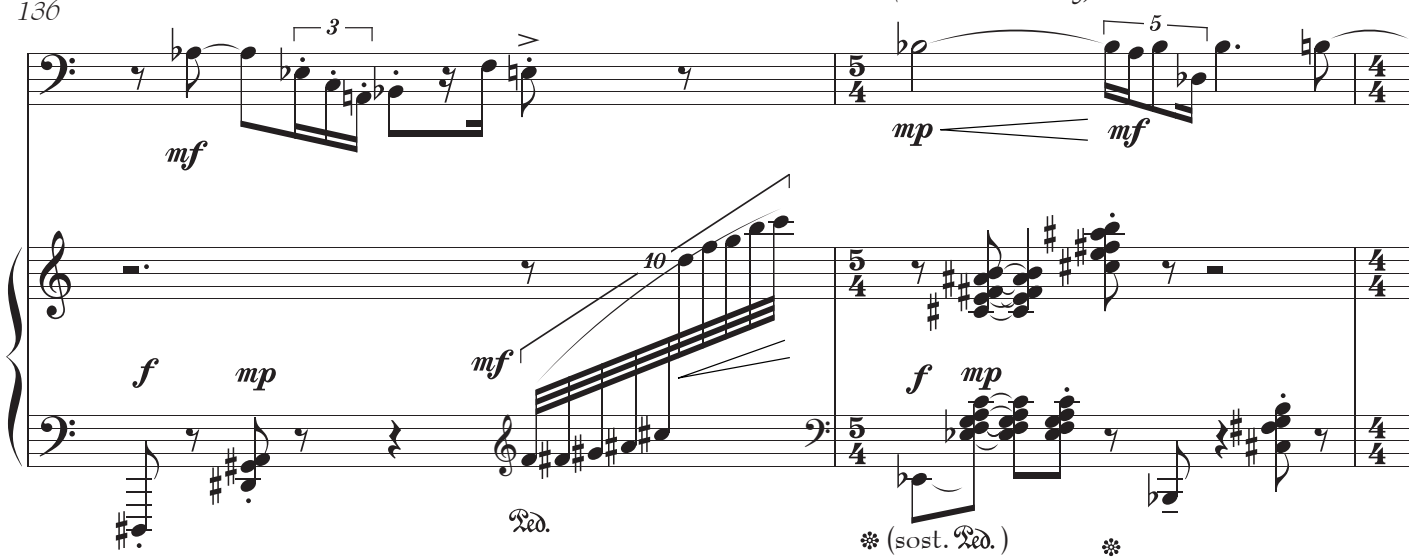

110
113
116 (Codetta)


120
rit.
rit.
B1´
a tempo; nervous, quirky (q= 92)
123
sfz
mf
sfz
f
8va (loco)
f
mf
sfz
mf
f
mp
126
B2
sfz
pp
f
f
mp
p
mf
p
f
8vb
Ped.
Ped.


129
132
134
C1
Strange Waltz returns (~awkward)

136

(More schmaltzy)



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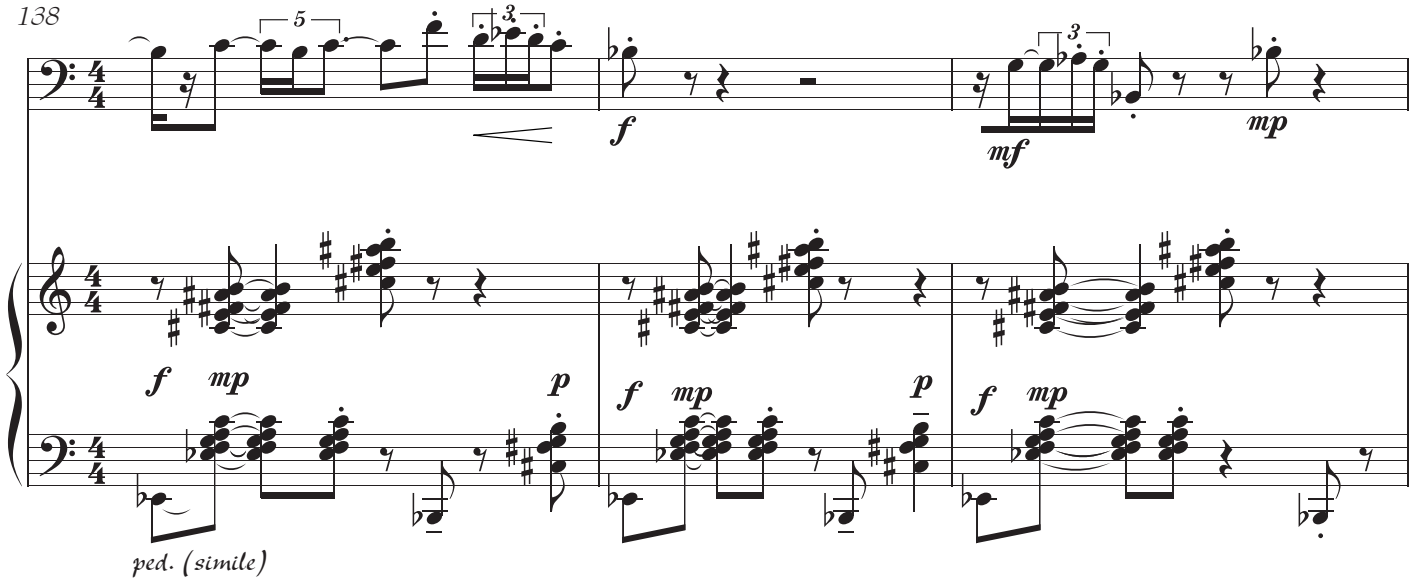
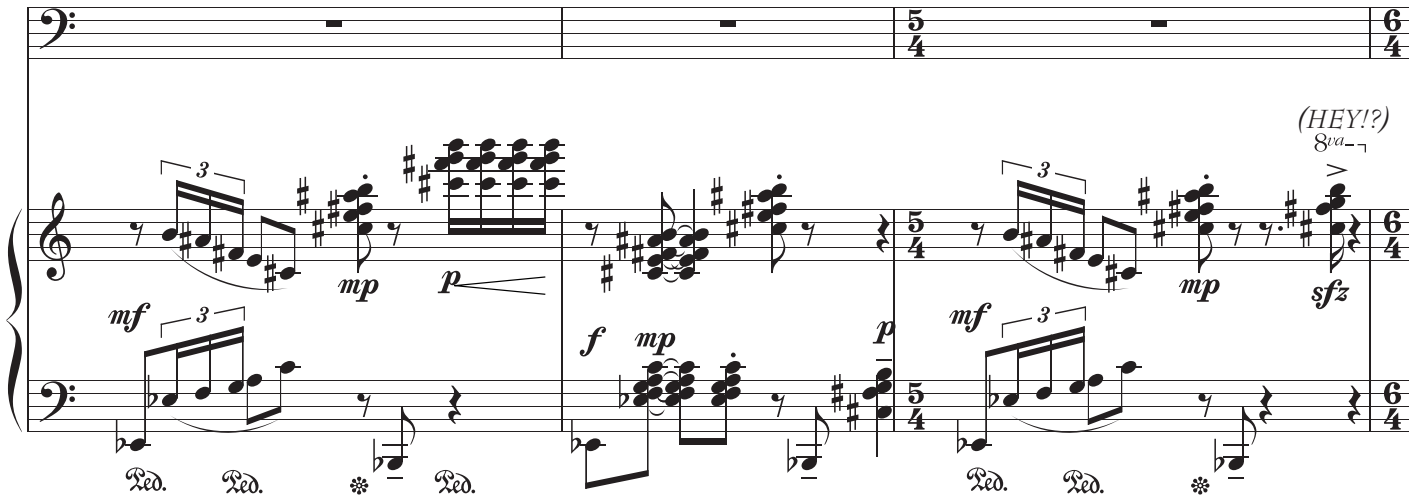
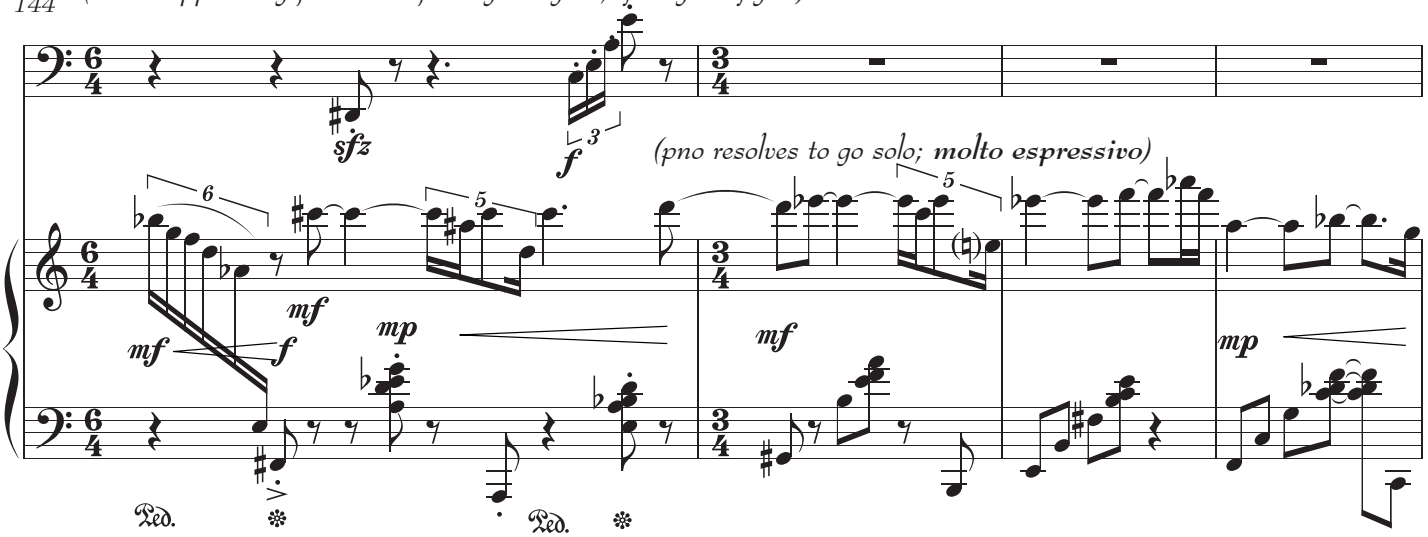


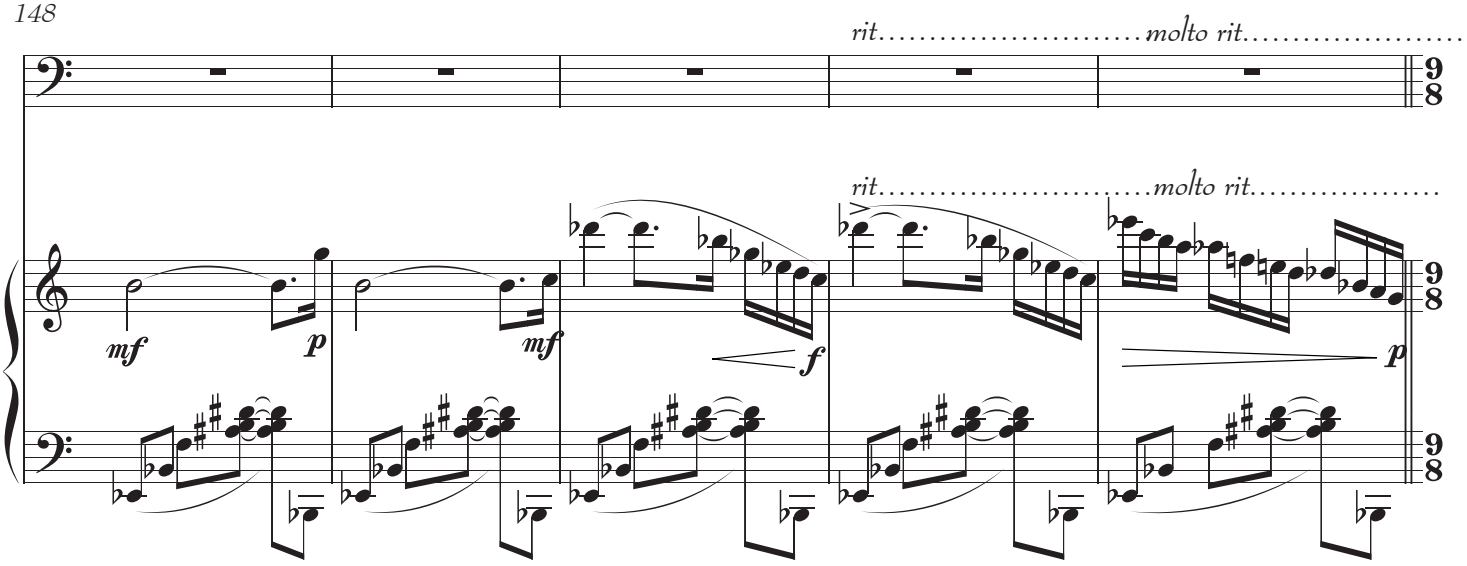
141 (waltz extended, but tbn. appears unwilling to participate…)



144 *(tbn is apparently jolted into joining in again, if only briefly…)*

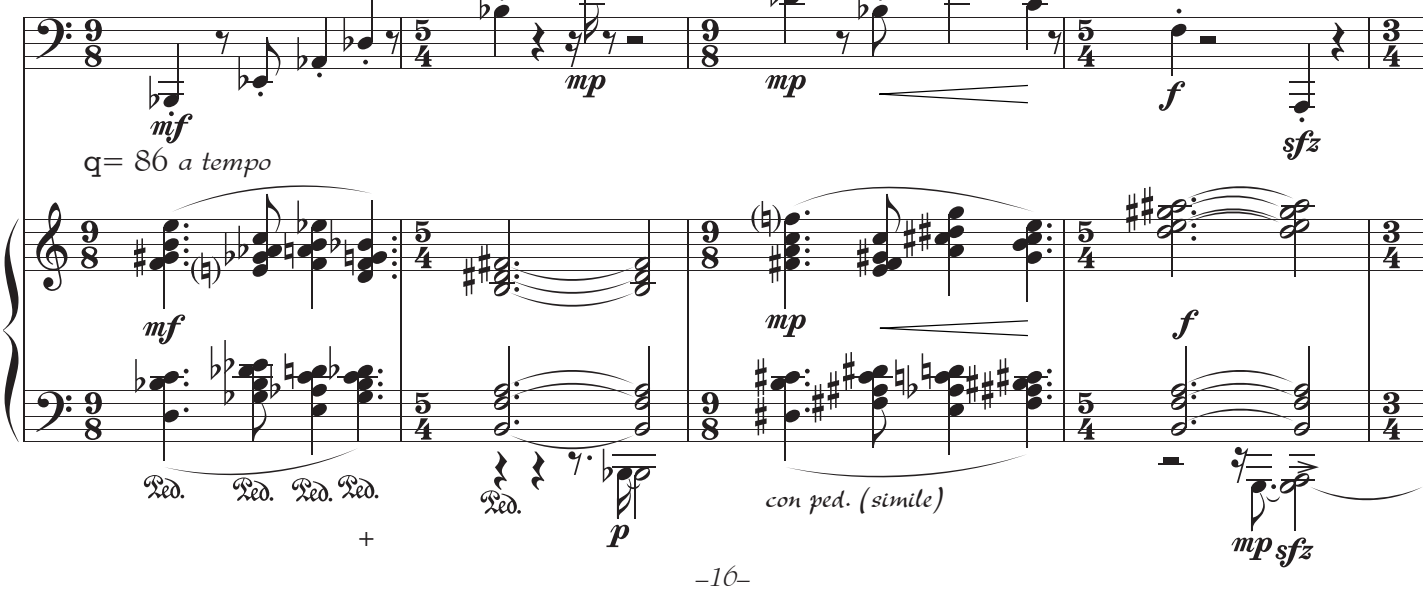


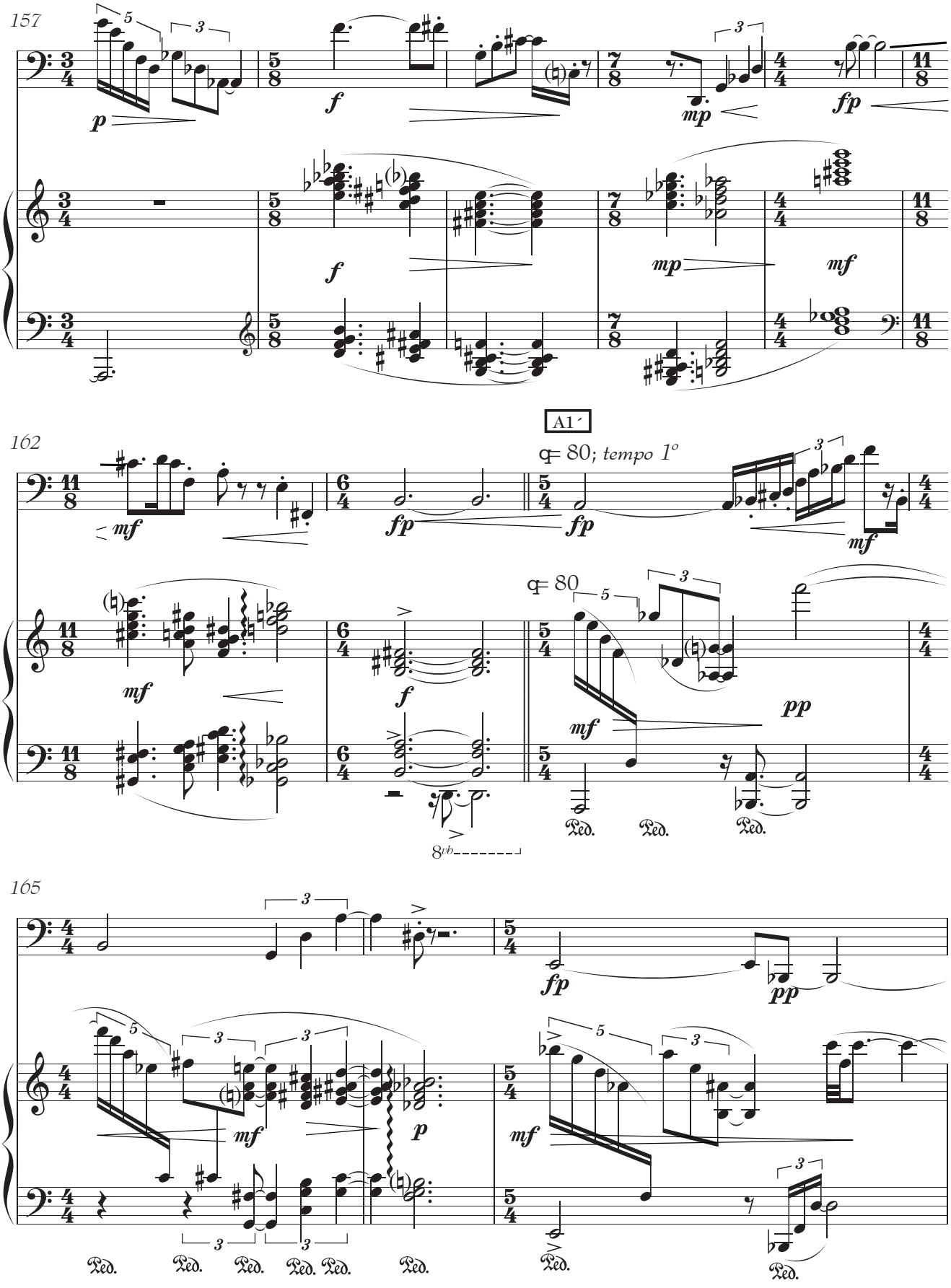
148

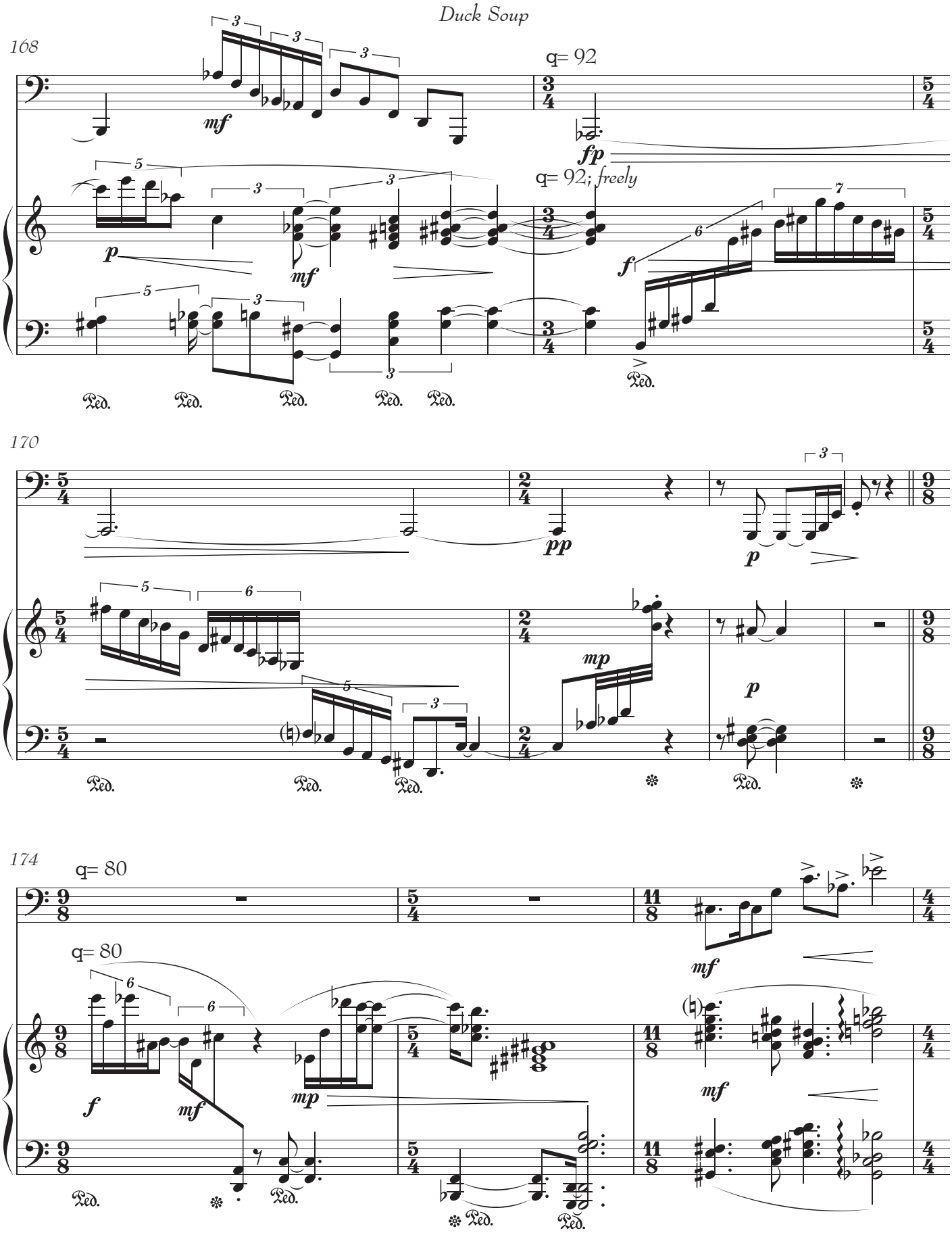


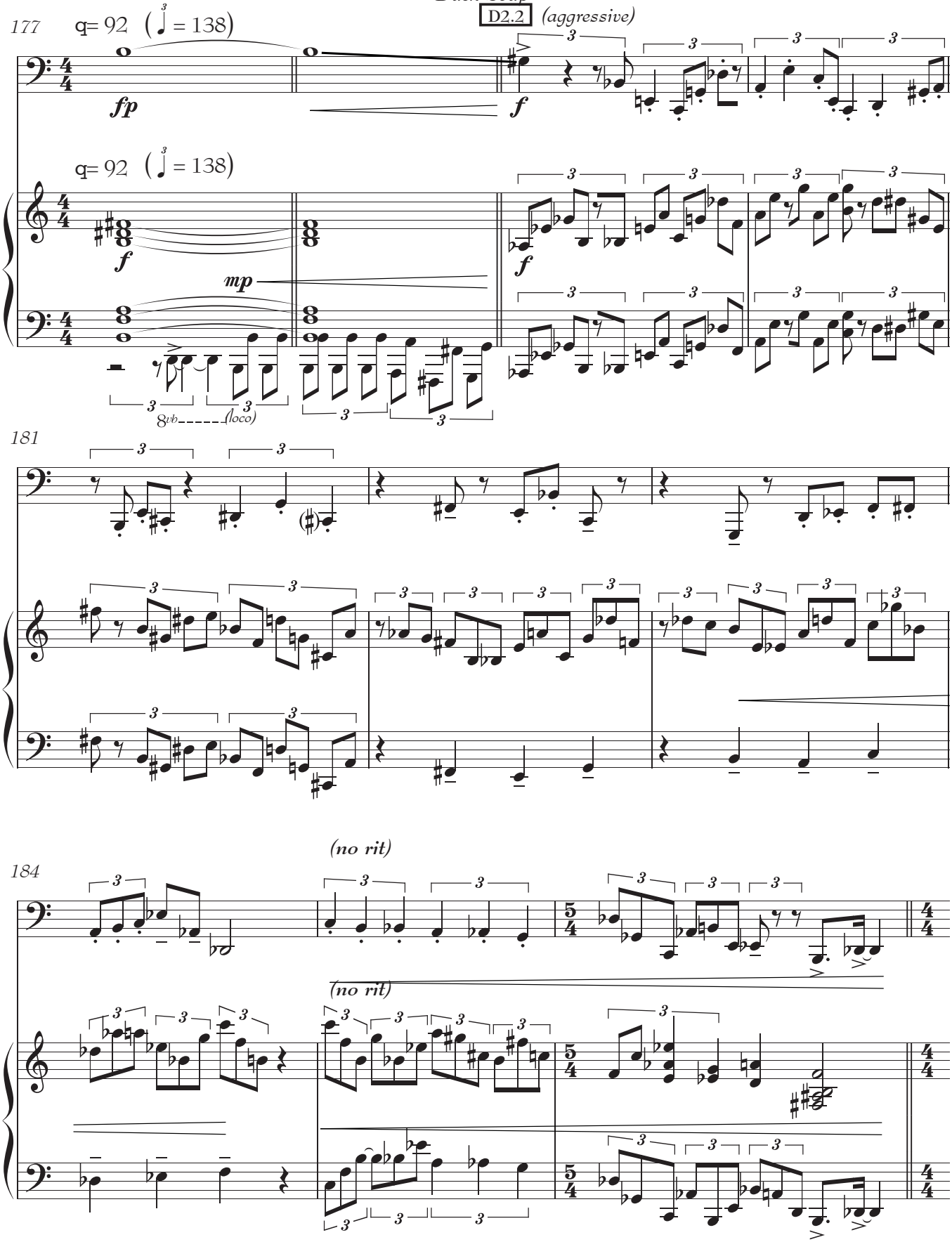
A2

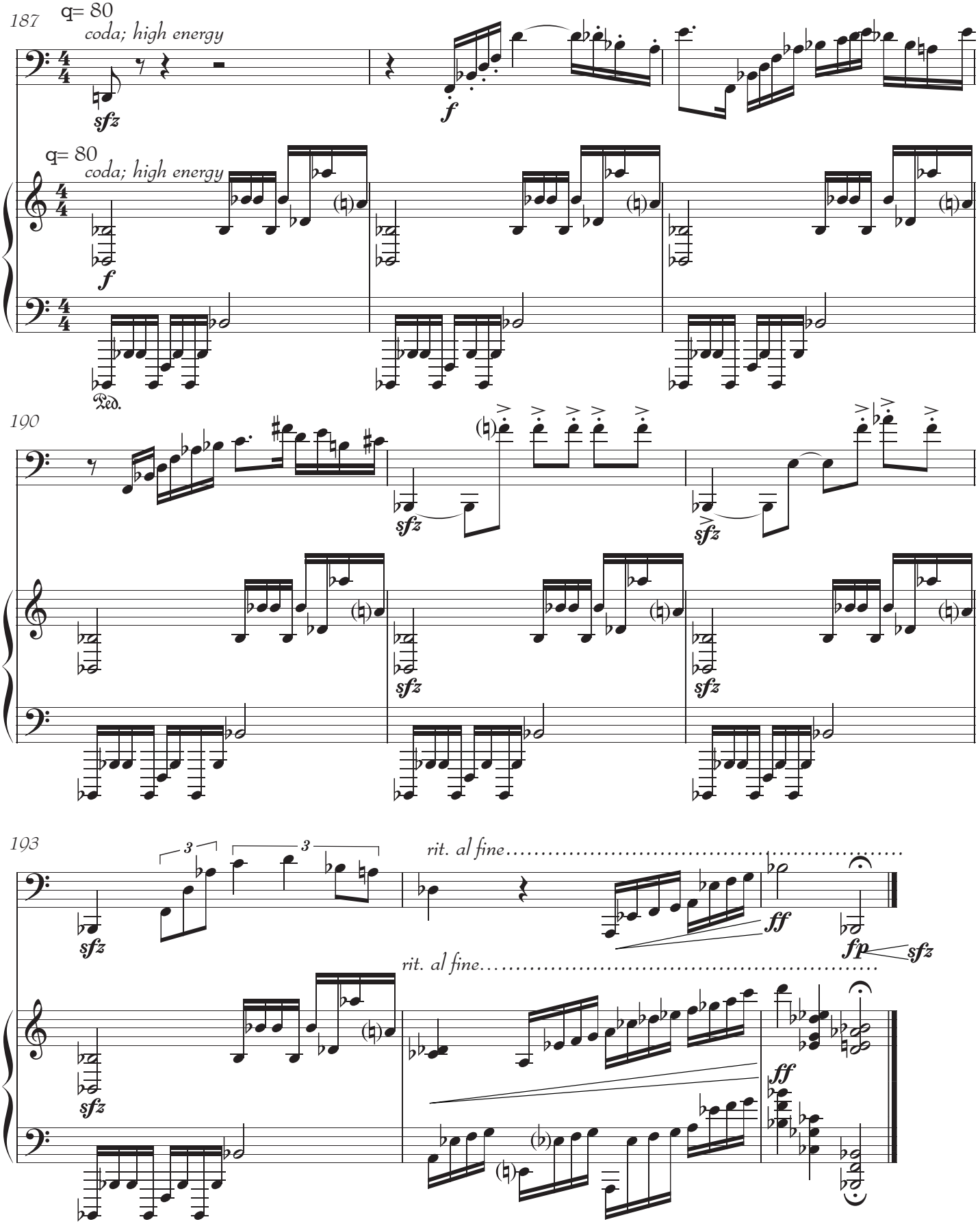
153 q= 86 *a tempo*




157
A1´
162
♩= 80; *tempo 1º*
♩= 80
165


168
q= 92
fp
q= 92; freely
mf
p
f
170
pp
mp
174
q= 80
q= 80


177
q= 92 (♩ = 138)
D2.2
(aggressive)
fp
f
q= 92 (♩ = 138)
f
mp
f
8vb
(loco)
181
184
(no rit)
(no rit)


187
q= 80
coda; high energy
sfz
f
q= 80
coda; high energy
f
Ped.
190
sfz
sfz
sfz
sfz
193
3
3
sfz
rit. al fine
ff
fp
sfz
rit. al fine
sfz
ff