Raphaël Belfiore

Edgar Varèse and the Jazzmen

2021

duration: 10 min.

revised version for large amplified ensemble and fixed media

(fl, ob, cl, sax(a), bsn, hn, tp, tb, vn, va, vc, cb + el.)

Edgar Varèse and the Jazzmen is a piece for amplified ensemble and fixed media which is based on a found recording in which Edgar Varèse meets with notorious jazzmen such as Charles Mingus and Art Farmer. Despite its historical importance, the recording is of low informational value. It documents a transitional moment in which musicians experiment and have unintelligible discussions. My piece is a series of six variations taking this recording and its ambivalent state between information and noise as a basis. In each one, different parts of the recording are replaced with instrumental sounds, each time according to a different definition of the concept of noise.

Section 1: noise as unwanted information

The short recording is considered a musical composition in which the speech is undesired. It is thus censored with a "bleep", a 1000 Hz sinus wave typically used for sonic censorship on TV. The instruments double the bleeps in various ways. This process of sonic censorship will be the structural principle used in each variation.

Section 2: noise as unimportant sound

All the parts of the recording containing something more than noise are cut away and replaced by "instrumental" background noise. The loudspeaker also present an inverted version of the recording: the quietest sounds become the loudest and vice versa.

Section 3: noise as the result of aperiodic fluctuations

The noise of the recording is used to generate chords that replace the moments in which only noise can be heard.

Section 4: noise as necessary part of any recording

The parts in which only speech or noise are heard are replaced with computer generated re-orchestrations of themselves. The loudspeakers play the residual noise of a "noise reduction" effect during the instrumental moments of the recording.

Section 5: noise as redundant/useless information

The vocal and instrumental moments are respectively replaced by: 2'500 instances of the recording starting at different points and the (clipped) original recording with an amplitude multiplied by 10'000.

Section 6: noise as relative and general concept

Noise, speech and instrumental playing moments are processed by a computer program that orchestrates them as static sounds, disregarding any of their internal complexity.

Performance Notes:

the conductor is performs with a click track

instrumental techniques

— all verbal indications about instrumental techniques only apply when written except indicated otherwise —

flute:

↑ = slightly higher pitch

whst tn = whistle tone

oboe:

↑ = slightly higher pitch

(no reed) = take off reed for the whole section and blow directly into the instrument.

key cl. = play the indicated pitch making noise with the key.

clarinet:

↑ = slightly higher pitch

key cl. = play the indicated pitch making noise with the key.

saxophone:

↑ = slightly higher pitch

key cl. = pitch + key click.

bassoon:

(no reed) = take off reed for the whole section and blow directly into the instrument.

horn:

(inverted mouthpiece) = take of the mouthpiece and place it back on the instrument the other way around, thus blowing into the smallest end of the mouthpiece.

p ⇄ ***mf*** (ad. lib) = oscillate between ***p*** and ***mf*** in a chaotic manner. Combined with the efffect of the inverted mouthpiece, it should also change the spectrum of the "white" noise.

trumpet:

↑ = slightly higher pitch

(inverted mouthpiece) = take of the mouthpiece and place it back on the instrument the other way around, thus blowing into the smallest end of the mouthpiece.

p ⇄ ***mf*** (ad. lib) = oscillate between ***p*** and ***mf*** in a chaotic manner. Combined with the efffect of the inverted mouthpiece, it should also change the spectrum of the "white" noise.

trombone:

(inverted mouthpiece) = take of the mouthpiece and place it back on the instrument the other way around, thus blowing into the smallest end of the mouthpiece.

p ⇄ ***mf*** (ad. lib) = oscillate between ***p*** and ***mf*** in a chaotic manner. Combined with the efffect of the inverted mouthpiece, it should also change the spectrum of the "white" noise.

violin:

↑ = slightly higher pitch

= "fingerboard clef" : indicates the position of the fingers (no pitch)

"air sound" str. II+III = use multiple fingers to dampen the indicated strings, thus producing an airy sound with as less pitch as possible.

viola:

↑ = slightly higher pitch

= "fingerboard clef" : indicates the position of the fingers (no pitch)

"air sound" str. II+III = use multiple fingers to dampen the indicated strings, thus producing an airy sound with as less pitch as possible.

cello:

↑ = slightly higher pitch

𝅝 = bartok pizzicato

= "fingerboard clef" : indicates the position of the fingers (no pitch)

"air sound" str. II+III = use multiple fingers to dampen the indicated strings, thus producing an airy sound with as less pitch as possible.

double bass:

= "fingerboard clef" : indicates the position of the fingers (no pitch)

"air sound" str. II+III = use multiple fingers to dampen the indicated strings, thus producing an airy sound with as less pitch as possible.

𝅝 = bartok pizzicato

electronics:

1 = indicates the cue on the Max/MSP patch. The cue change happens automatically with the playing of the appropriate key (see instructions for the max patch).

The electronic part can be achieved with any controller (even a laptop) as long as it allows to be as rythmically precise as possible. There is either the possibility of using the Max/MSP patch or use the samples to build a confortable and personal solution.

— sample 1:
original recording, found on UbuWeb

https://ubu.com/media/sound/varese_edgard/jazz/Edgar_Varese_and_the_Jazzmen_-_02_-_Track_02.mp3

— sample 2:
original recording processed with an inverted noise gate: Only what is at the level of the noise is heard at normal volume, the original recording is reduced to background noise.

— sample 3:
residual noise of the original recording after an aggressive noise reduction.

— sample 4:
2'500 simultaneous instances of the recording beginning at different points. The amplitude is proportioned to the number of instances to avoid saturation.

— sample 5:
The signal of the original recording multiplied by 10'000. The amplitude is clipped

Amplification:

All instruments are amplified. The amplification should be adapted for each part as the instrumentation changes and the instrumental playing is very different from section to section. The changes between each section is not more precise than variations of amplification of entire instrumental sections (winds / brass / strings)

Section I: the instruments and the electronic sounds should mix together. Instruments should be in the background and "color" the sinus wave.

Section II: all instruments are more amplified in this section. The strings should not be predominant.

Section III: the instruments should blend together and not be louder than the fixed media.

Section VI: This section contains loud parts as very quiet ones. Ideally, the amplification should highlight the quiet ones without amplifying too much the

Section V: the electronic sounds should be relatively loud. Particularly for this section, a subwoofer would be welcome.

Section VI: the instruments are amplified at the limit of discernibility. The general volume should still be low but with as much sonic richness as possible.

placement of loudpseakers:

All sounds should come from the same place as the ensemble, for example with loudspeakers placed just in front of the musicians or at least in front of each section. The mix between instrumental amplification and fixed media should be emitted by the same loudspeakers.

Edgar Varèse and the Jazzmen (2021) - I
revised version for large amplified ensemble and fixed media

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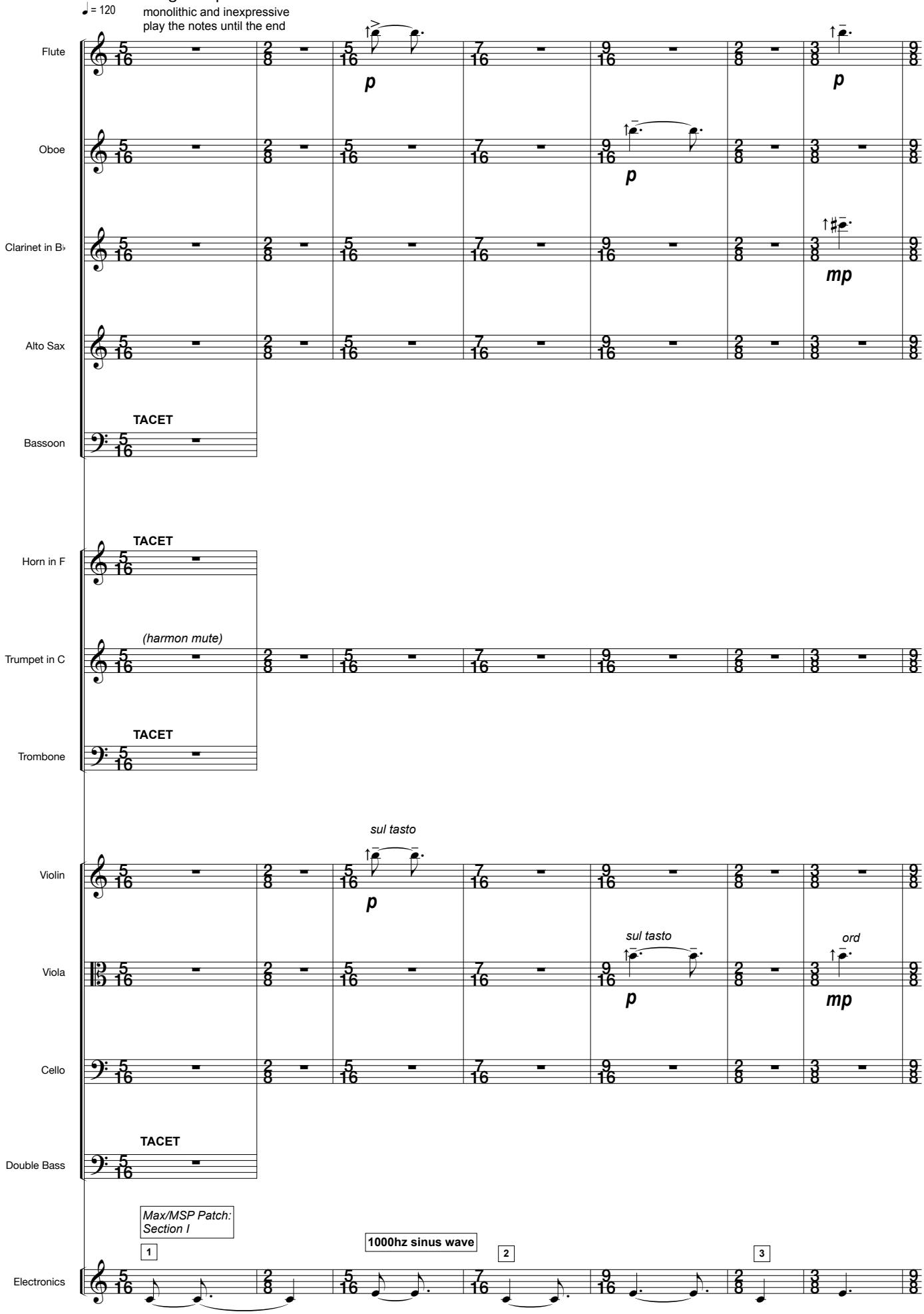
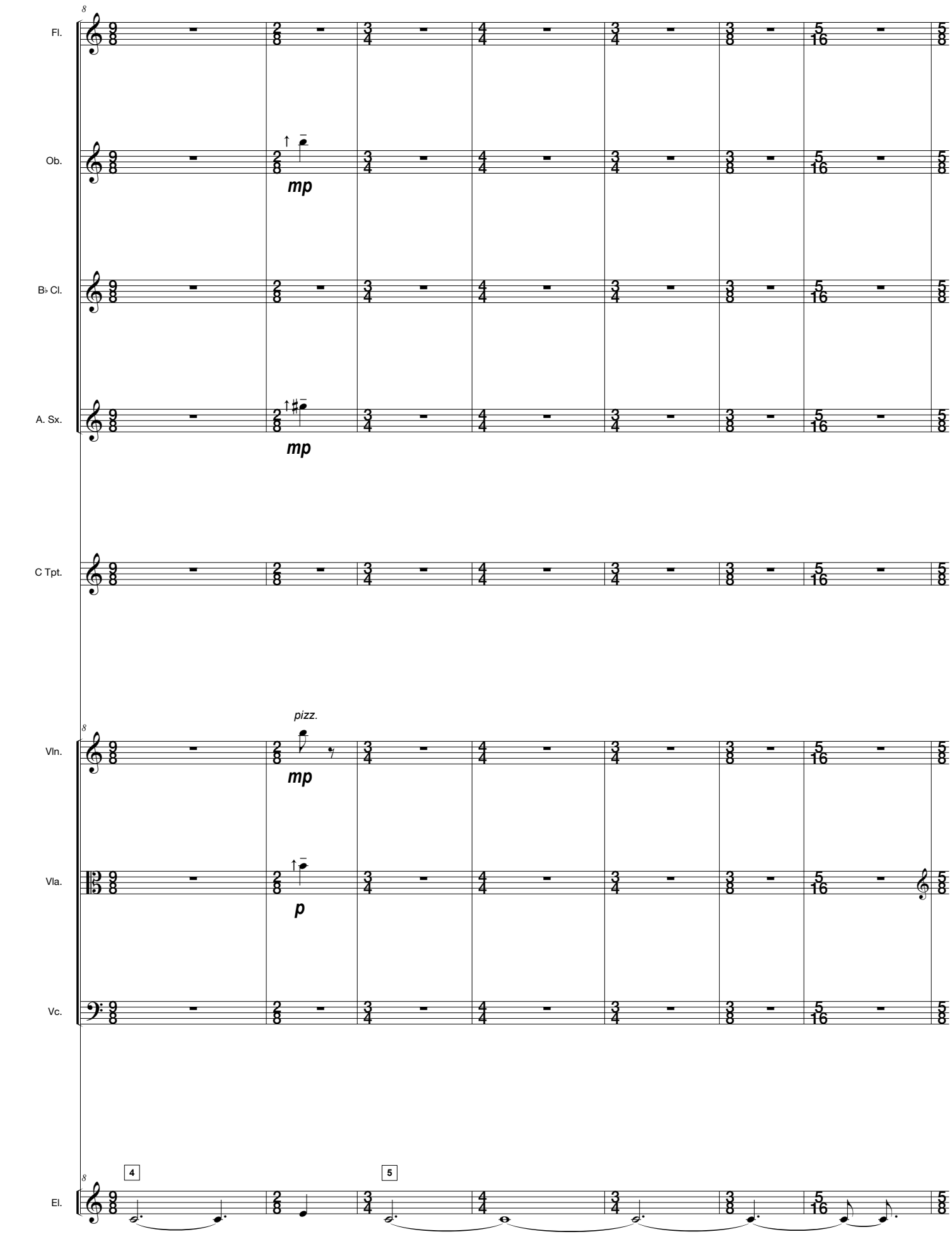
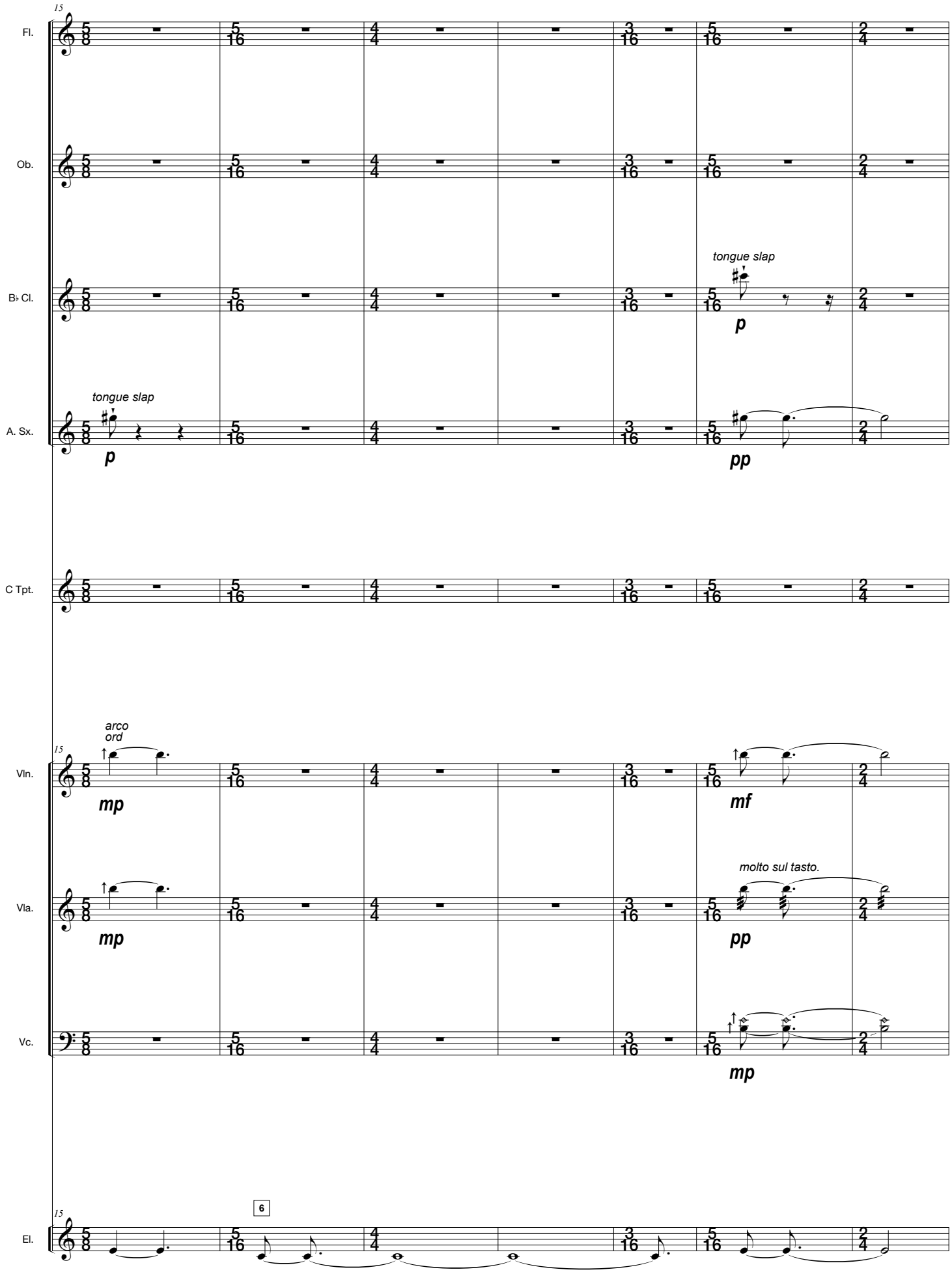
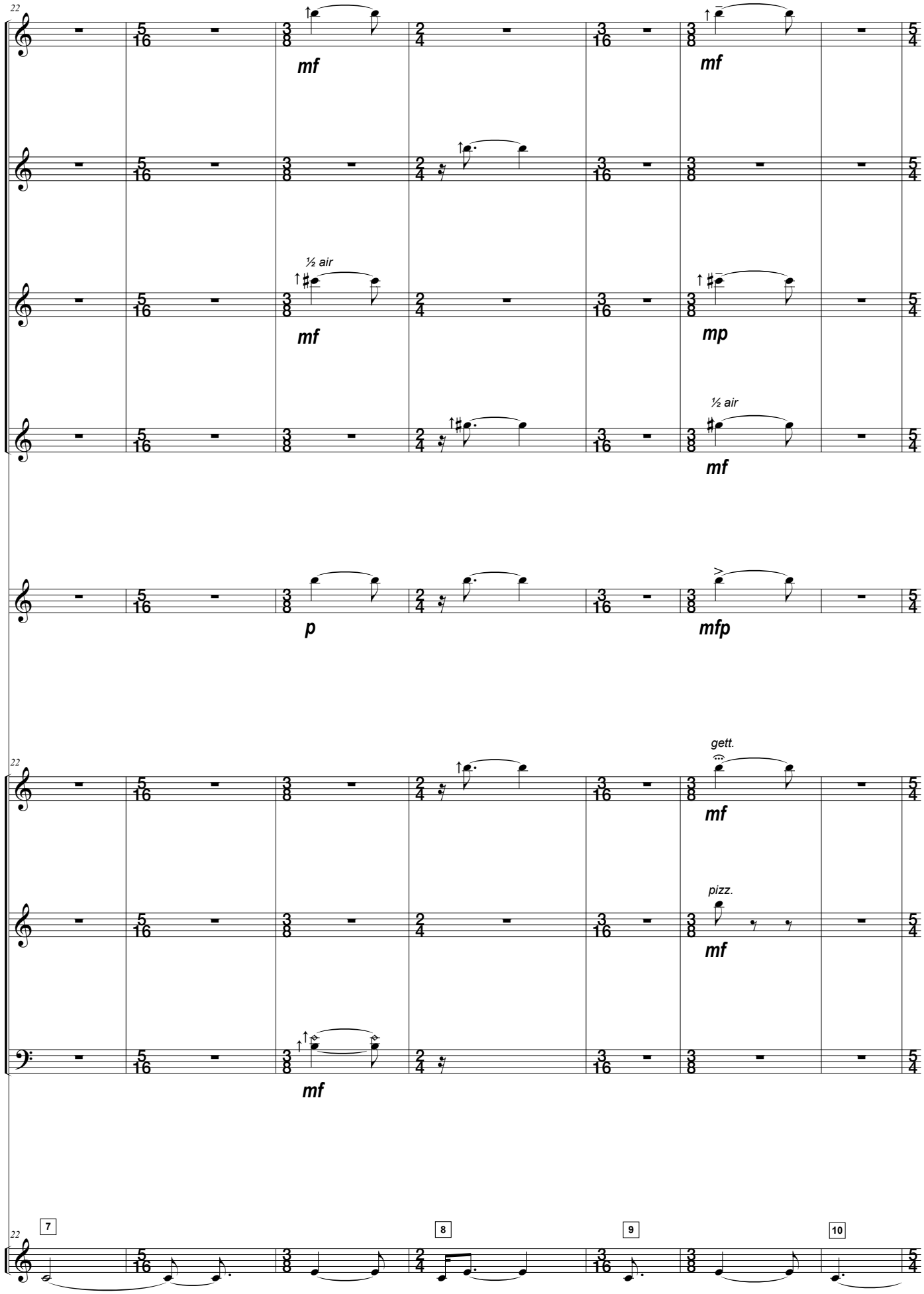
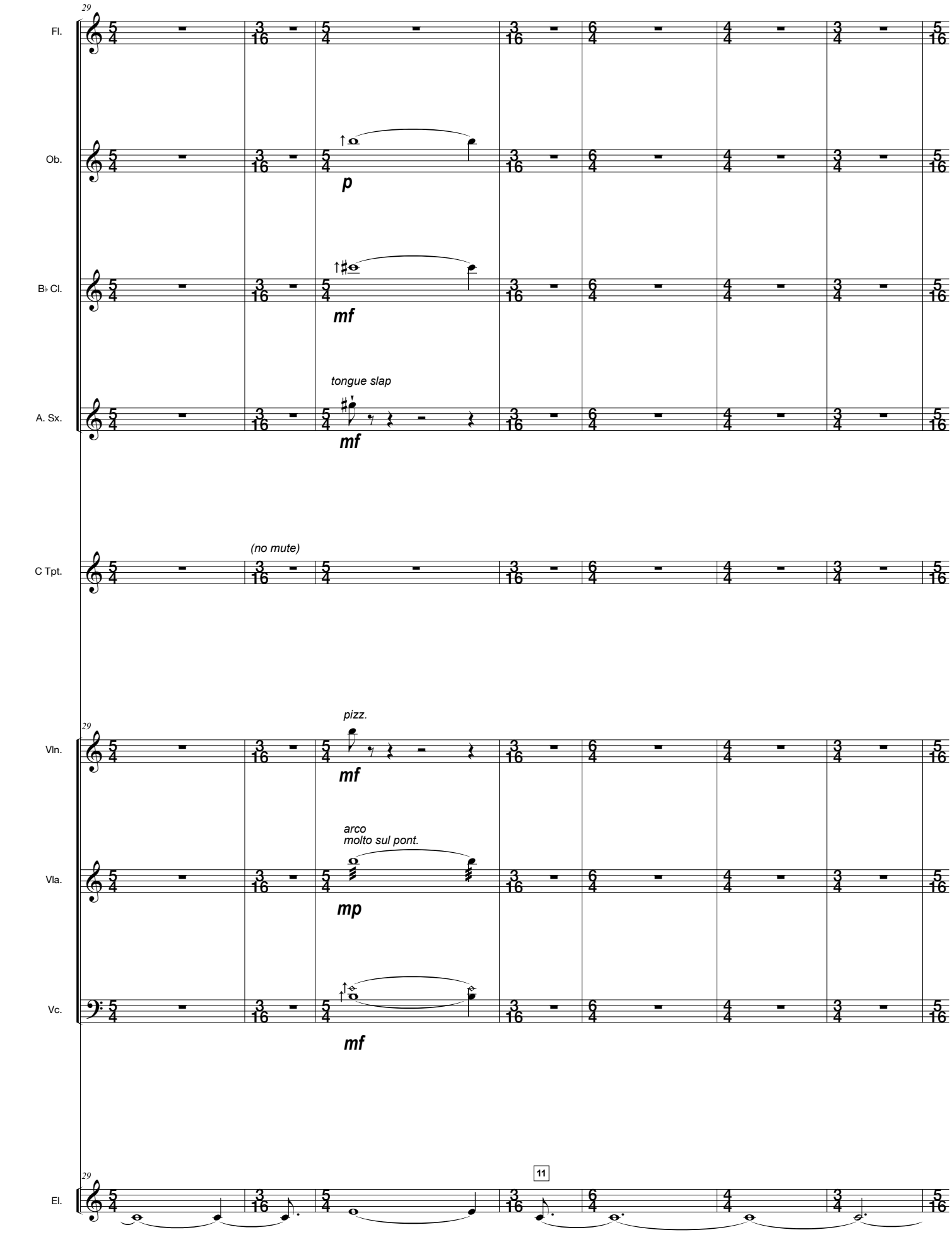
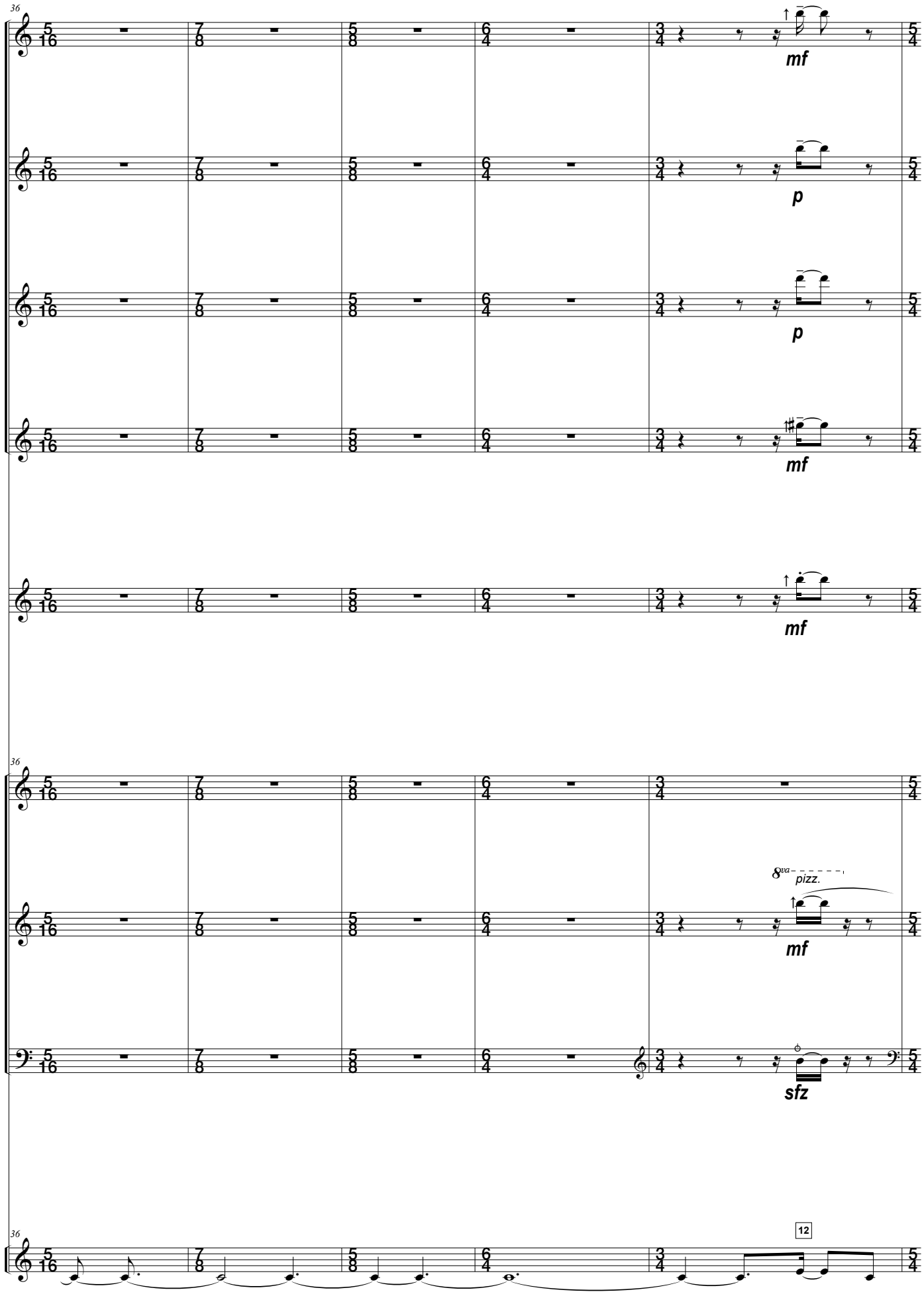


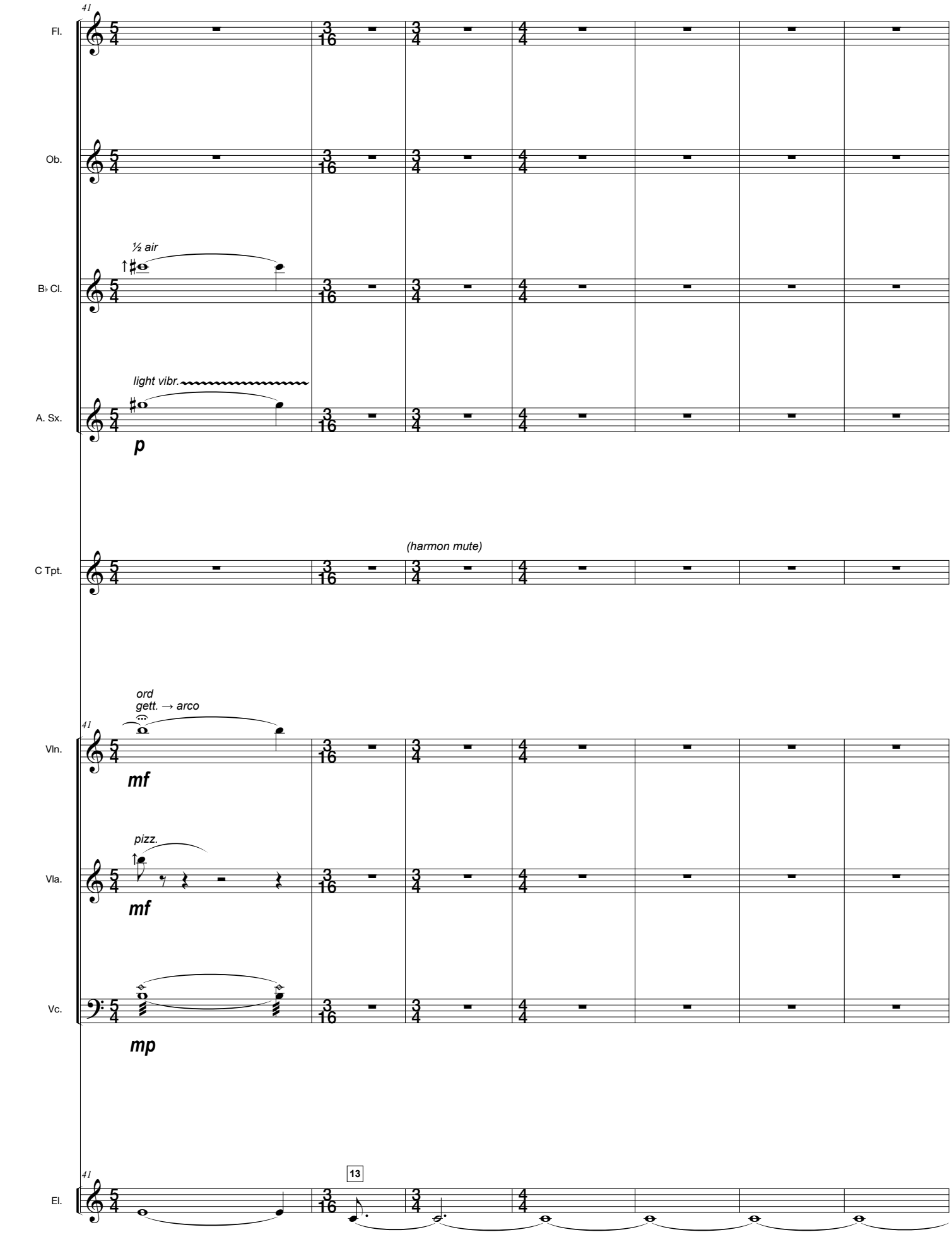

Fl.
Ob.
mp
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
mp
C Tpt.
Vln.
pizz.
mp
Vla.
p
Vc.
El.
4
5

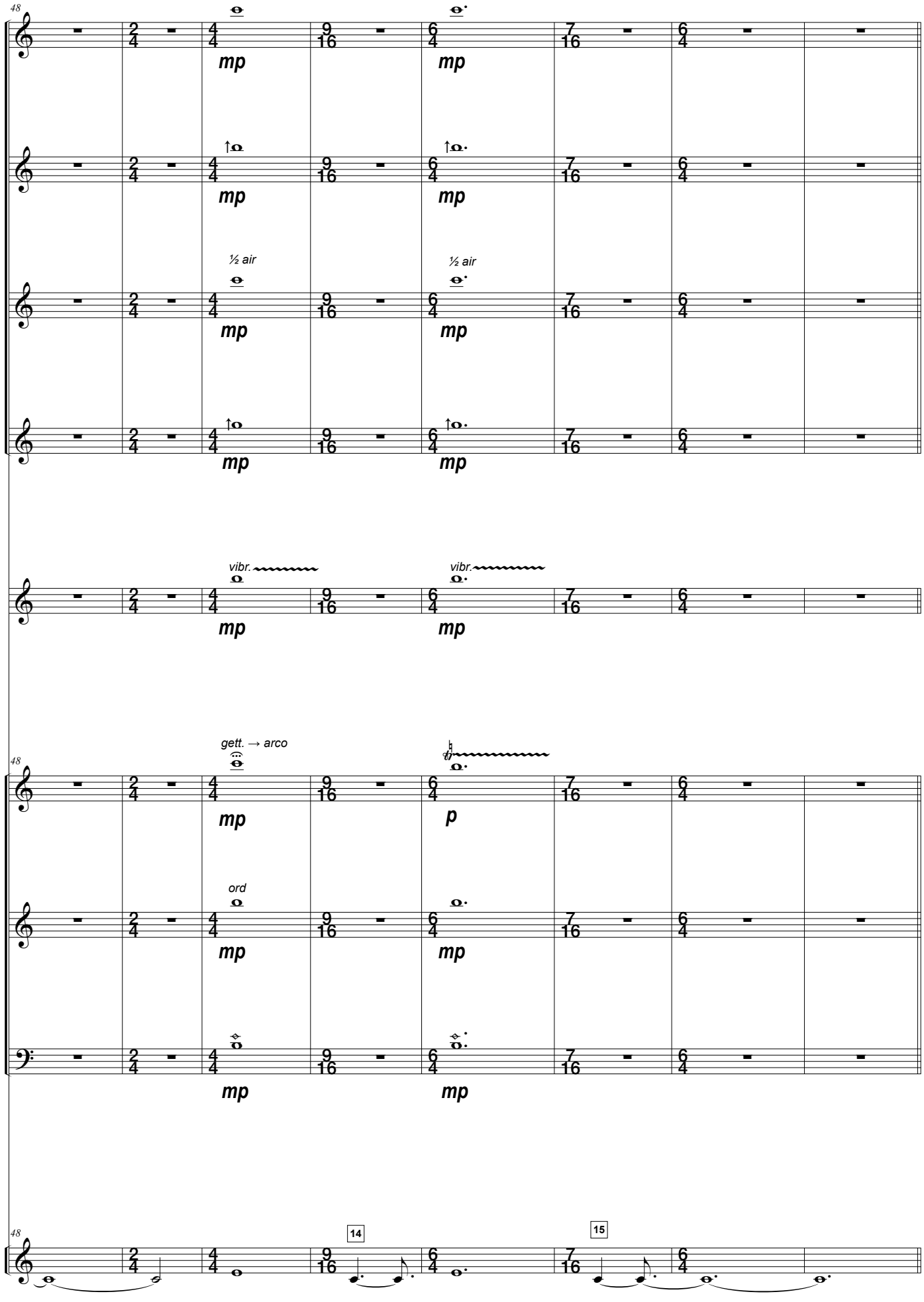

15
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
tongue slap
p
A. Sx.
tongue slap
p
pp
C Tpt.
15
Vln.
arco
ord
mp
mf
Vla.
mp
molto sul tasto.
pp
Vc.
mp
15
El.
6


22
Fl.
mf
mf
Ob.
½ air
B♭ Cl.
mf
mp
½ air
A. Sx.
mf
C Tpt.
p
mfp
22
Vln.
gett.
mf
pizz.
Vla.
mf
Vc.
mf
22
7
8
9
10
El.


29
Fl.
Ob.
p
B♭ Cl.
mf
tongue slap
A. Sx.
mf
(no mute)
C Tpt.
29
pizz.
Vln.
mf
arco
molto sul pont.
Vla.
mp
Vc.
mf
29
11
El.


36
Fl.
mf
Ob.
p
B♭ Cl.
p
A. Sx.
mf
C Tpt.
mf
36
Vln.
Vla.
8va
pizz.
mf
Vc.
sfz
36
El.
12


41
Fl.
Ob.
½ air
B♭ Cl.
light vibr.
A. Sx.
p
(harmon mute)
C Tpt.
ord
gett. → arco
41
Vln.
mf
pizz.
Vla.
mf
Vc.
mp
41
13
El.


48
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
C Tpt.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
El.
mp
p
½ air
vibr.
gett. → arco
ord
14
15

Edgar Varèse and the Jazzmen (2021) - II
revised version for large amplified ensemble and fixed media

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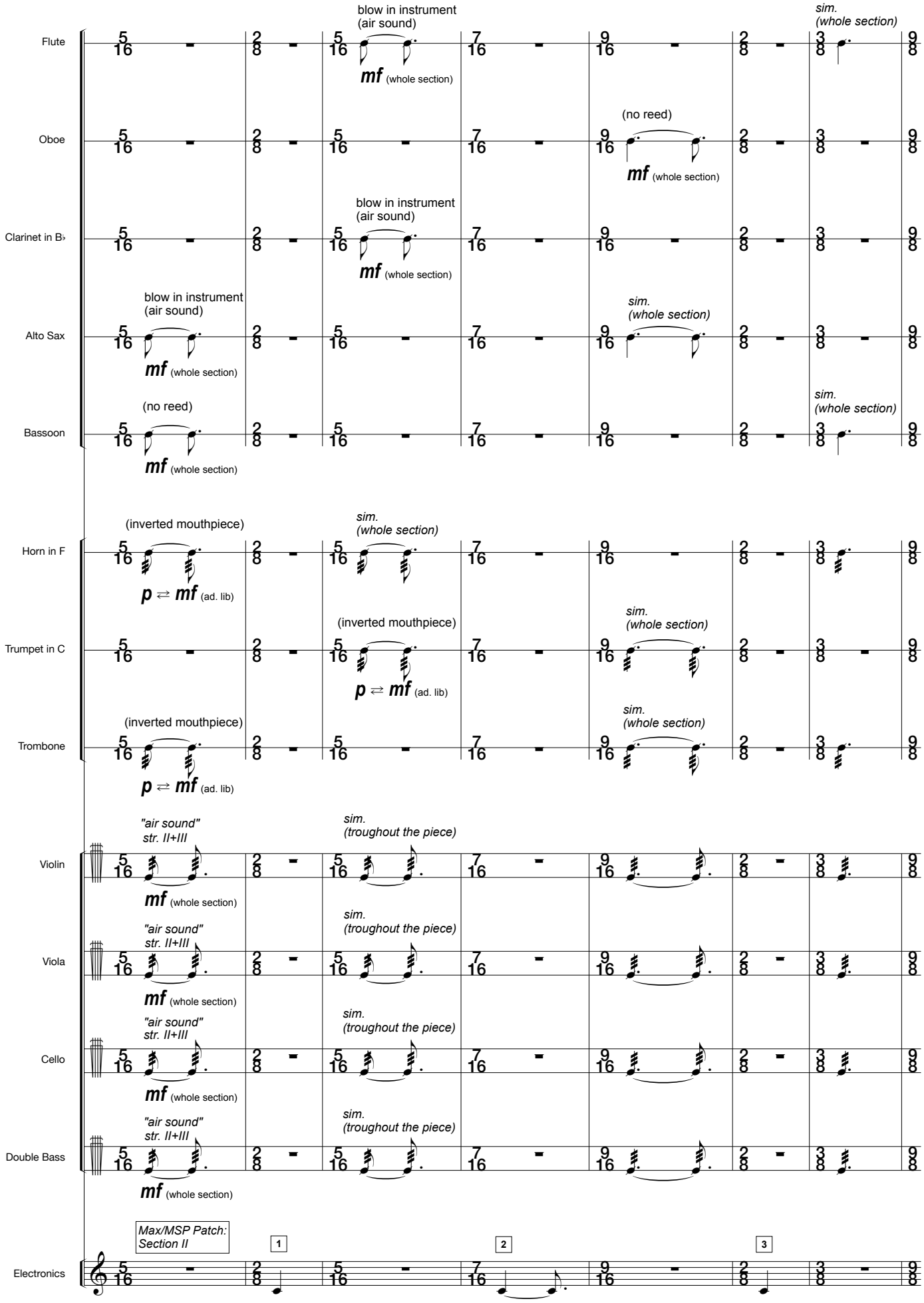
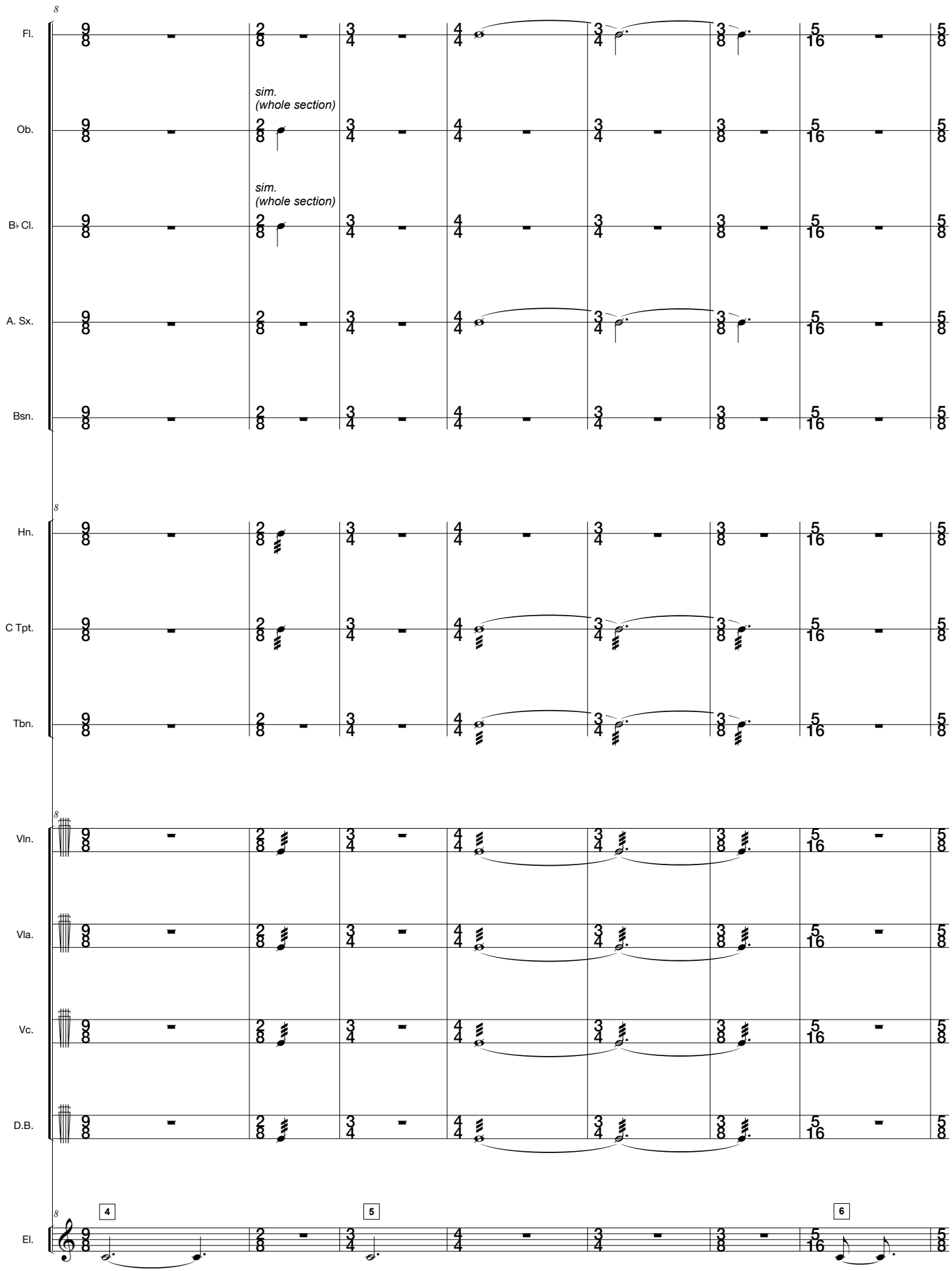
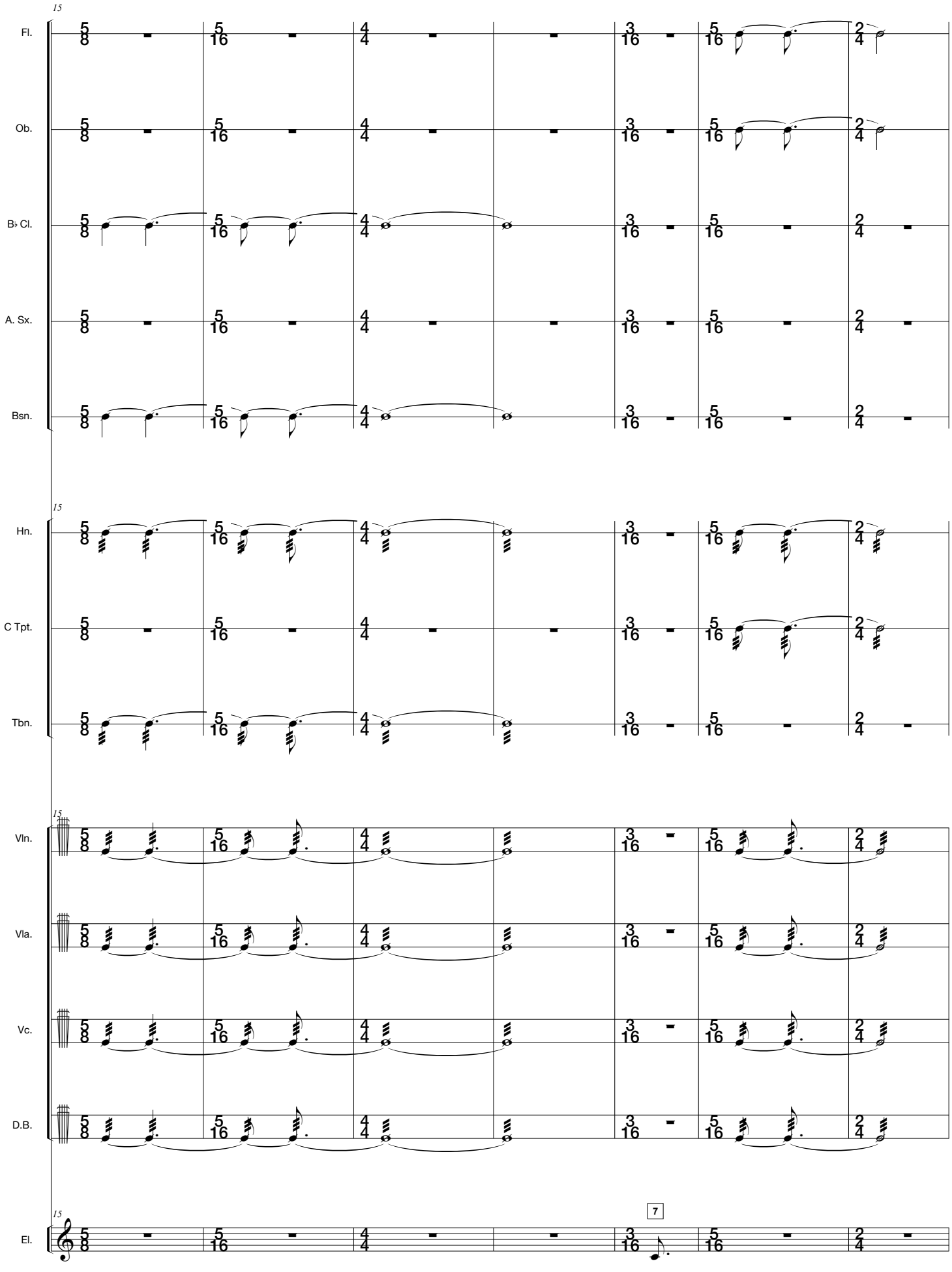
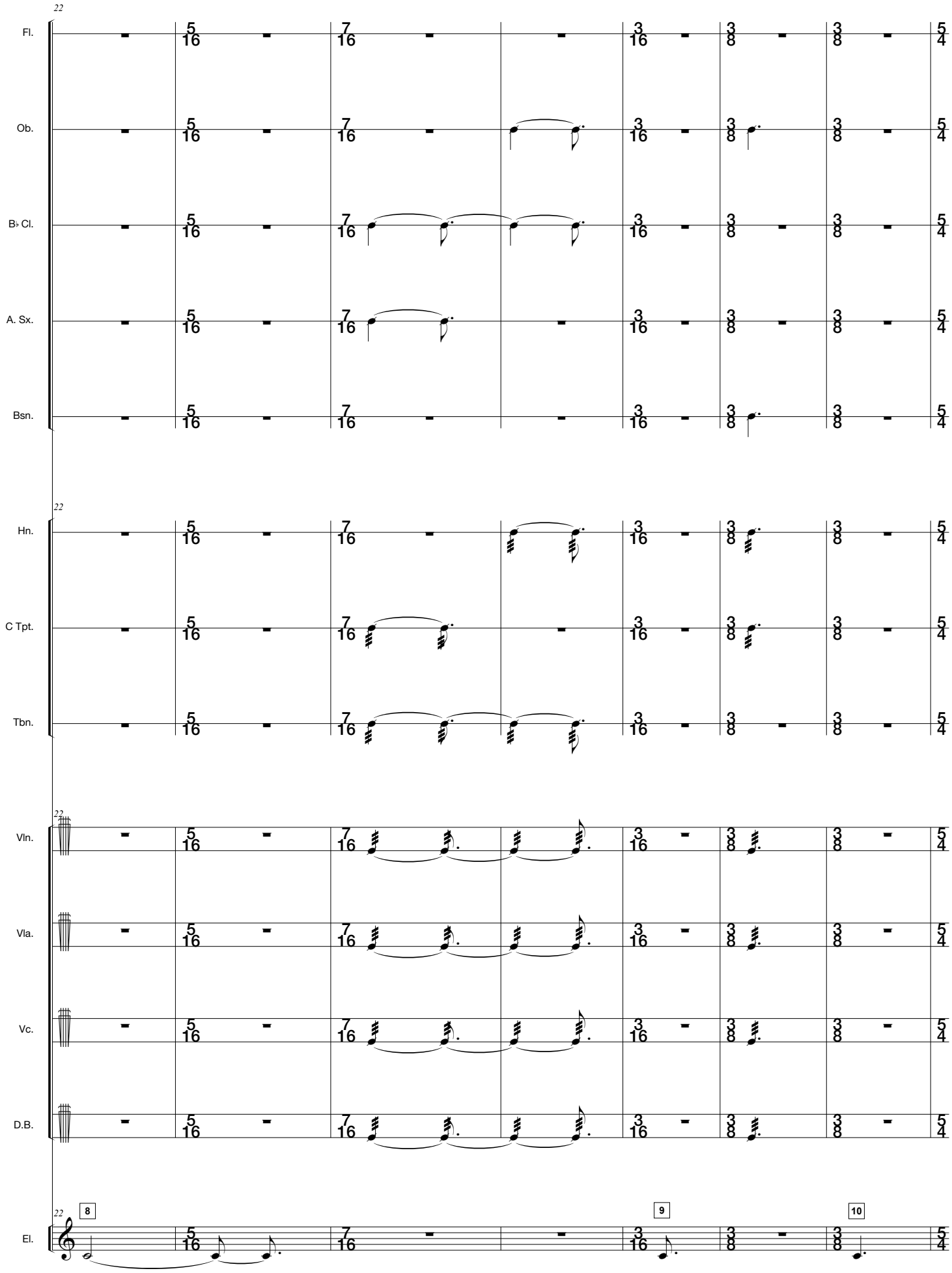
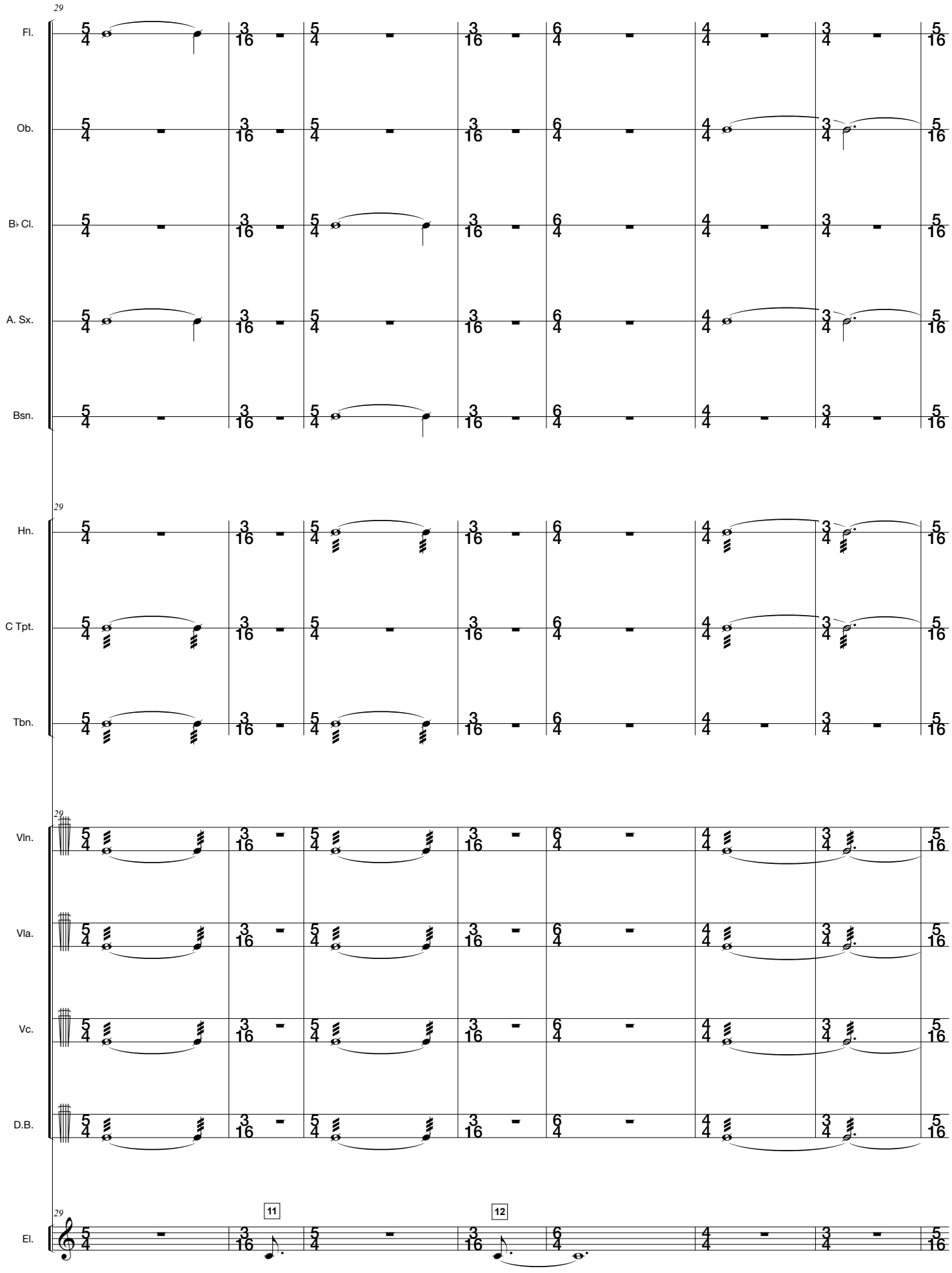
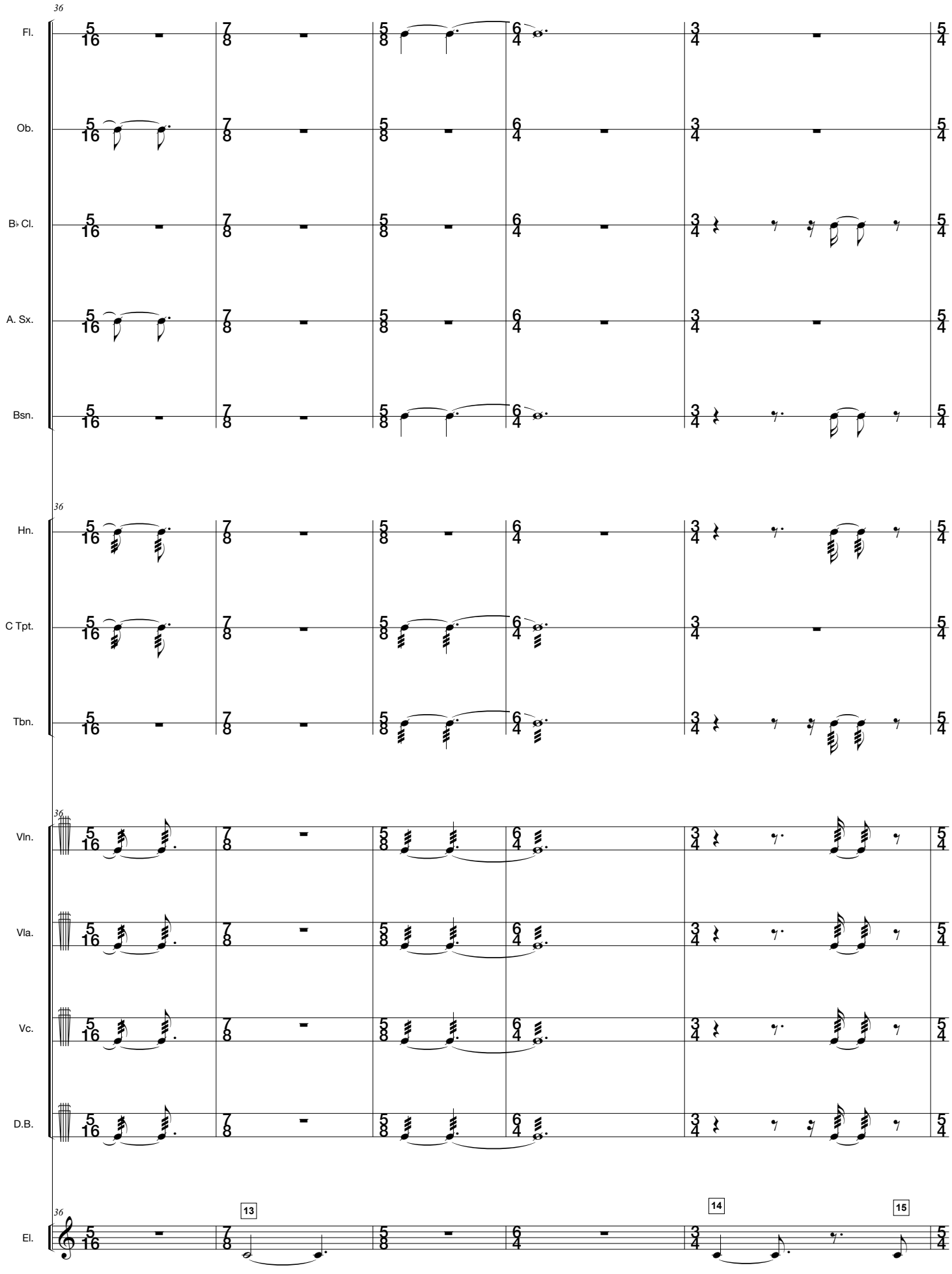


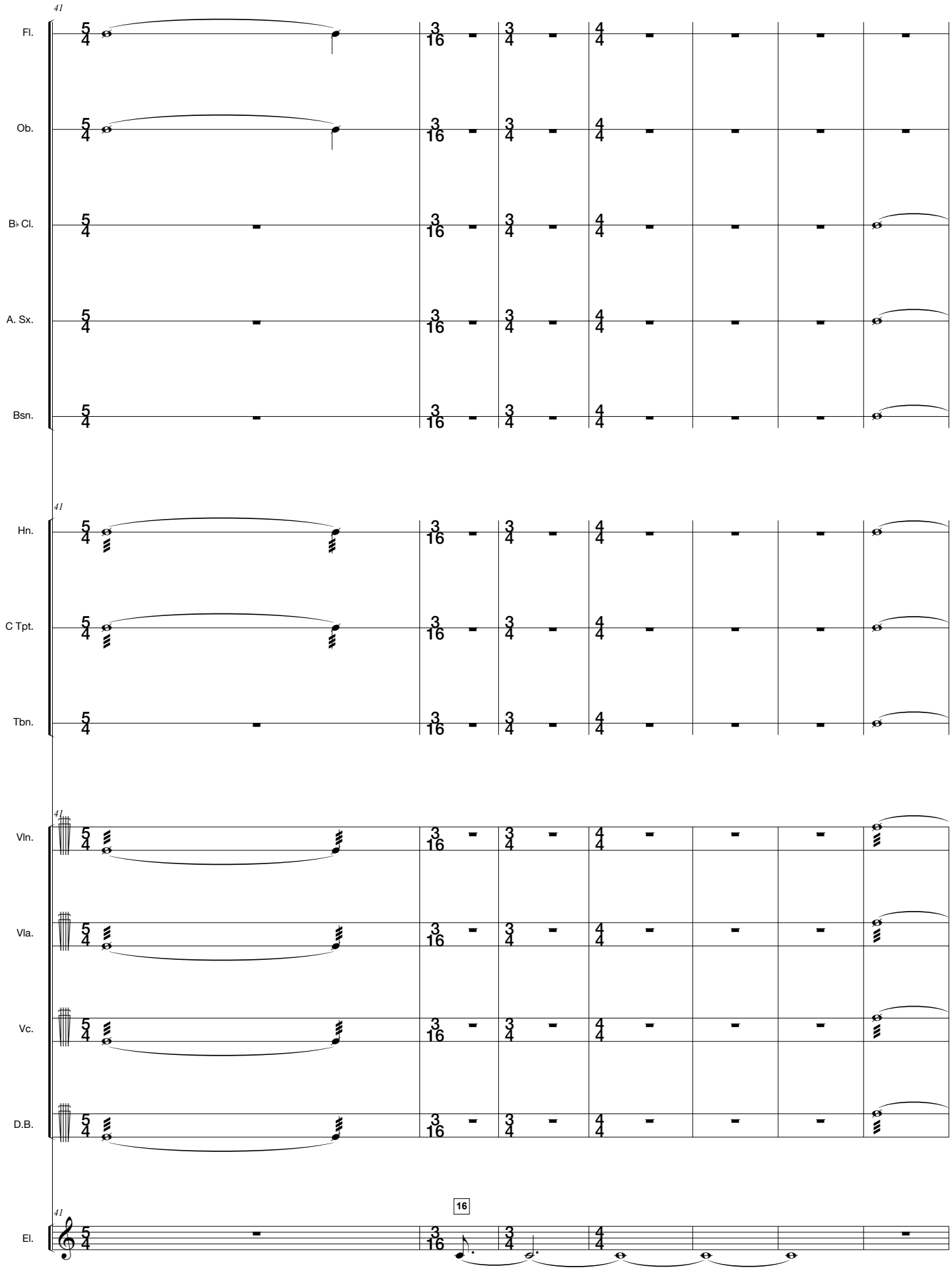

Fl.
Ob.
sim.
(whole section)
B♭ Cl.
sim.
(whole section)
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
El.
4
5
6

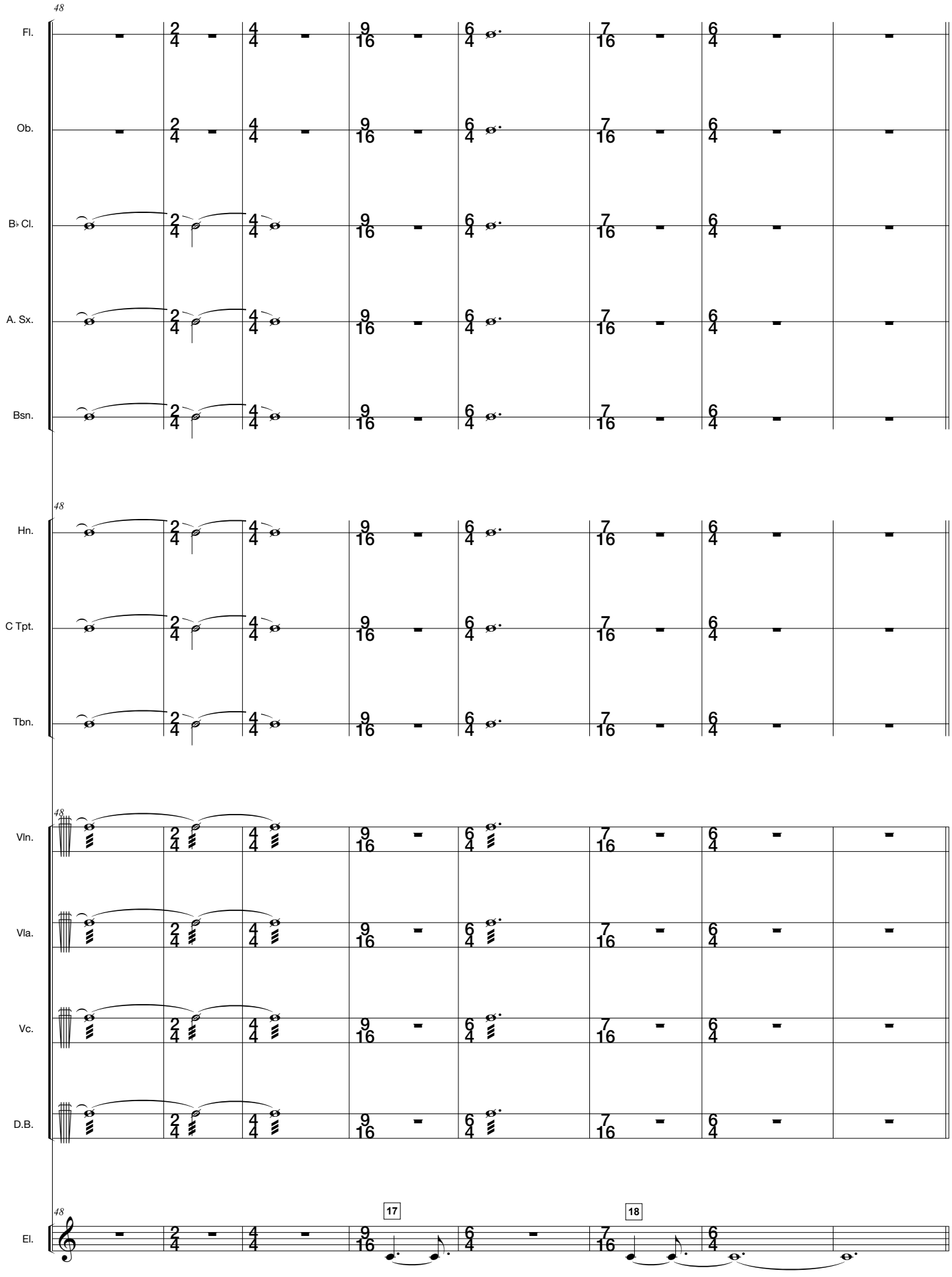

15
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
15
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
15
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
15
El.
7


22
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
22
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
22
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
22
8
9
10
El.


29
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
29
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
29
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
29
El.
11
12


36
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
36
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
36
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
36
El.
13
14
15


41
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
41
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
41
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
41
16
El.


48
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
48
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
48
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
48
El.
17
18

Edgar Varèse and the Jazzmen (2021) - III
revised version for large amplified ensemble and fixed media

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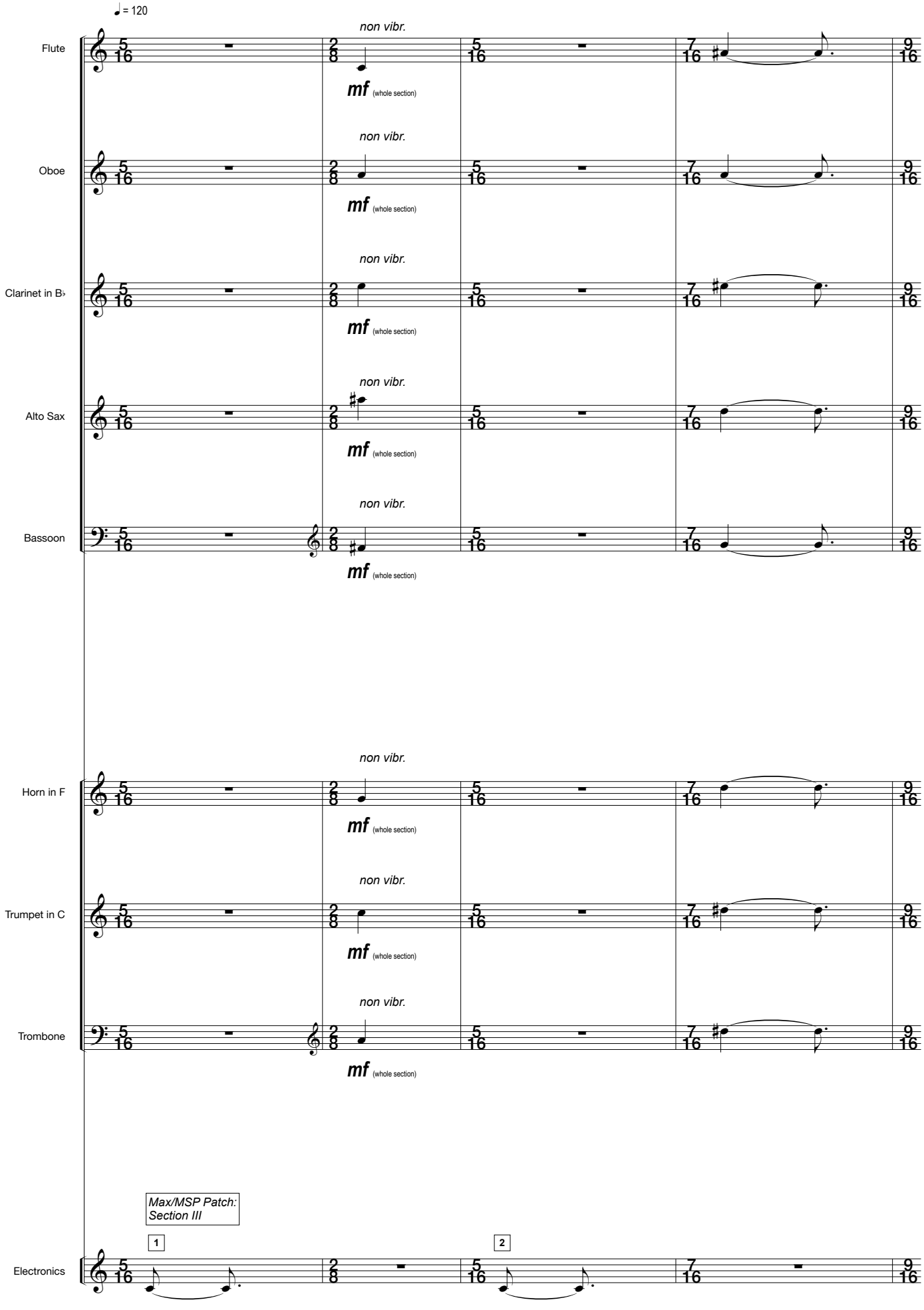
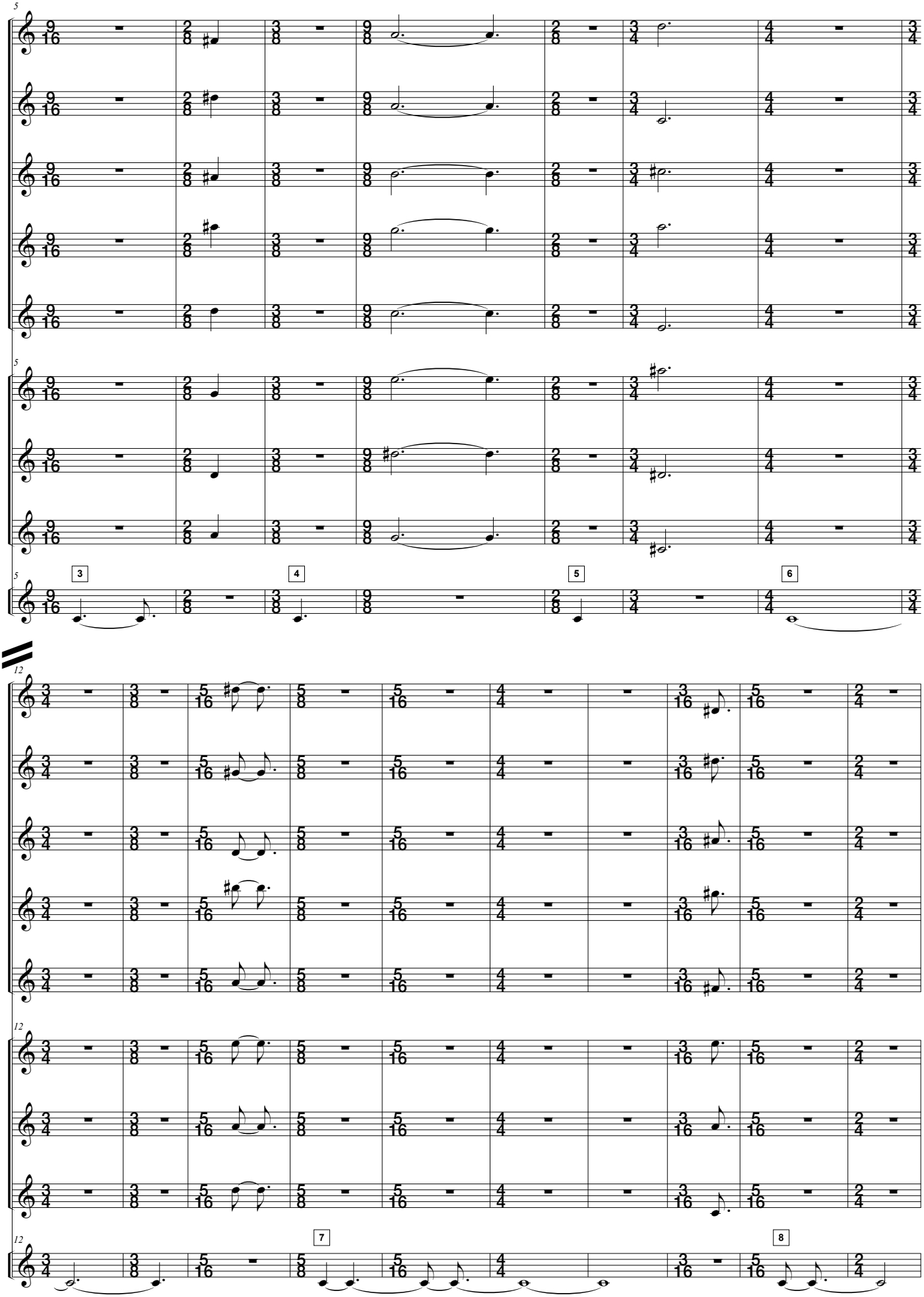
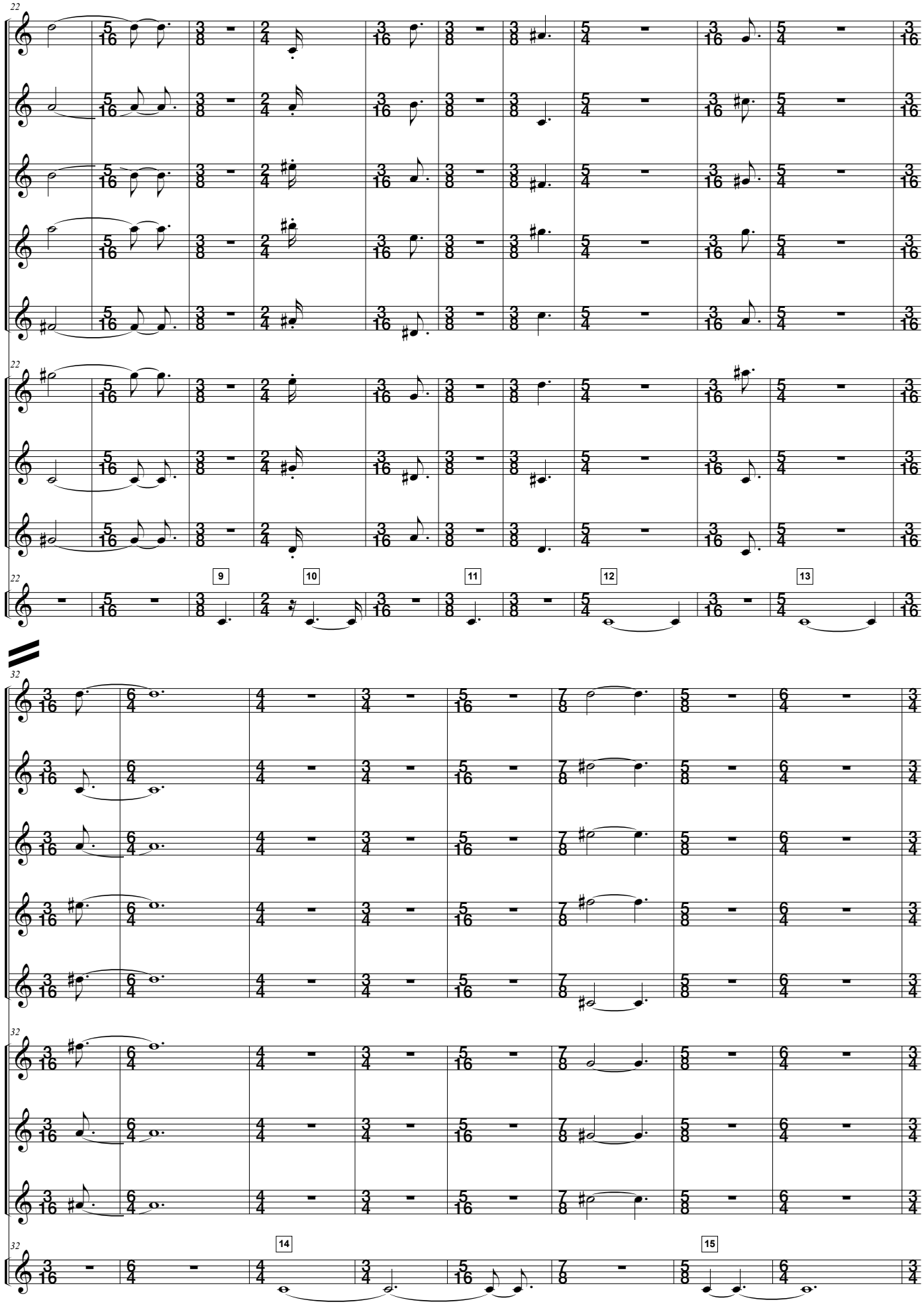
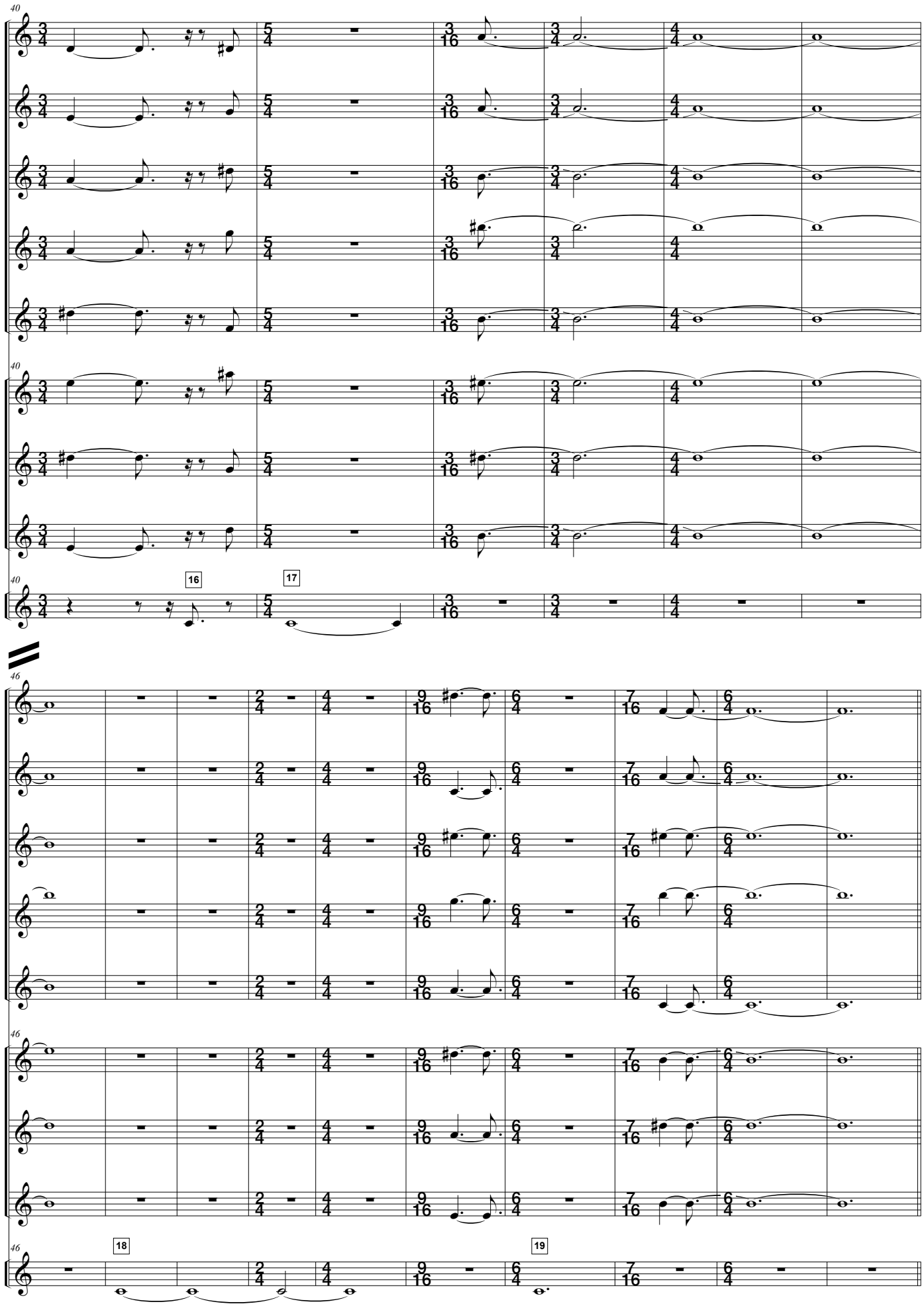
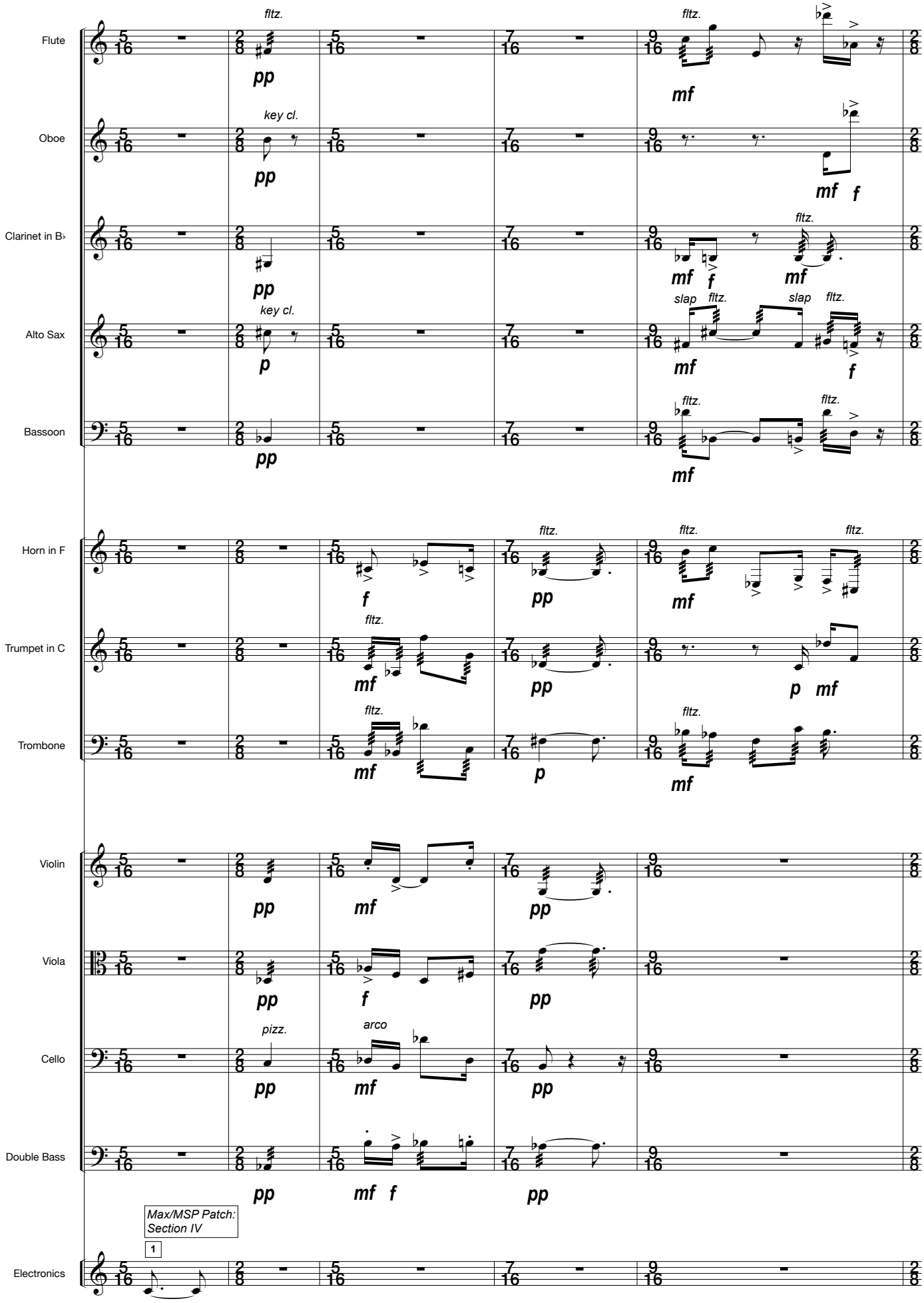


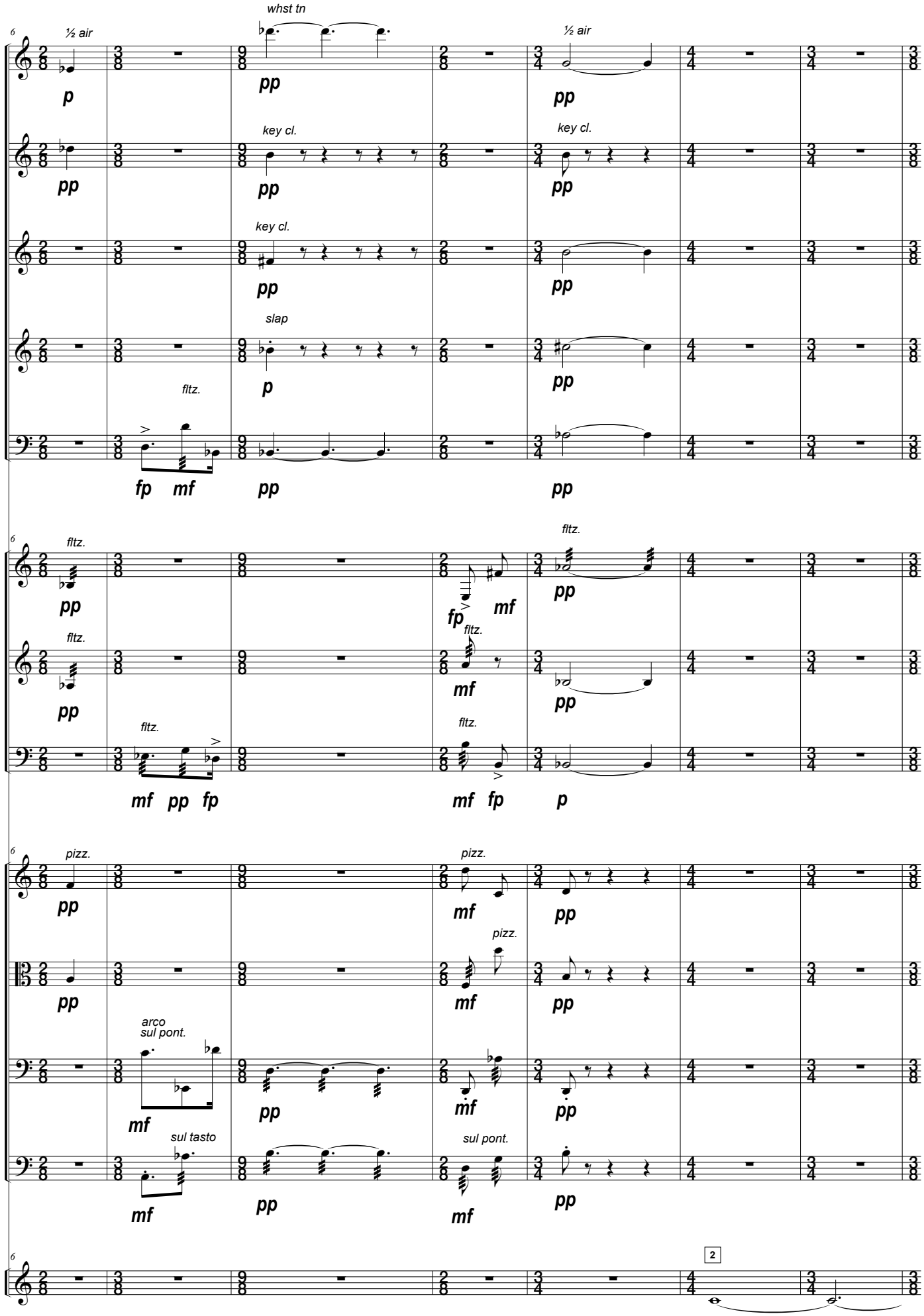

5
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
El.
3
4
5
6
12
7
8

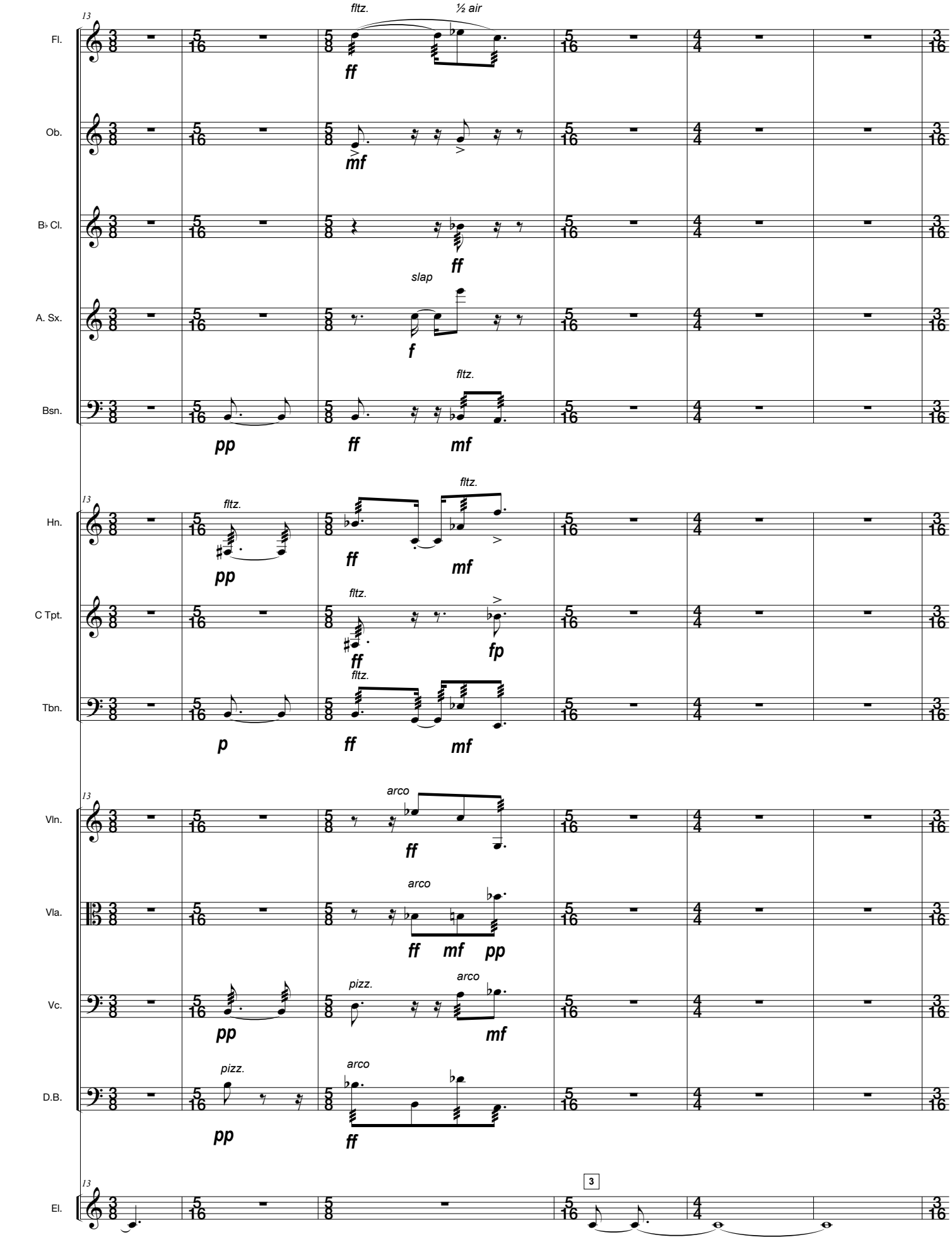

22
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
El.
9
10
11
12
13
32
14
15

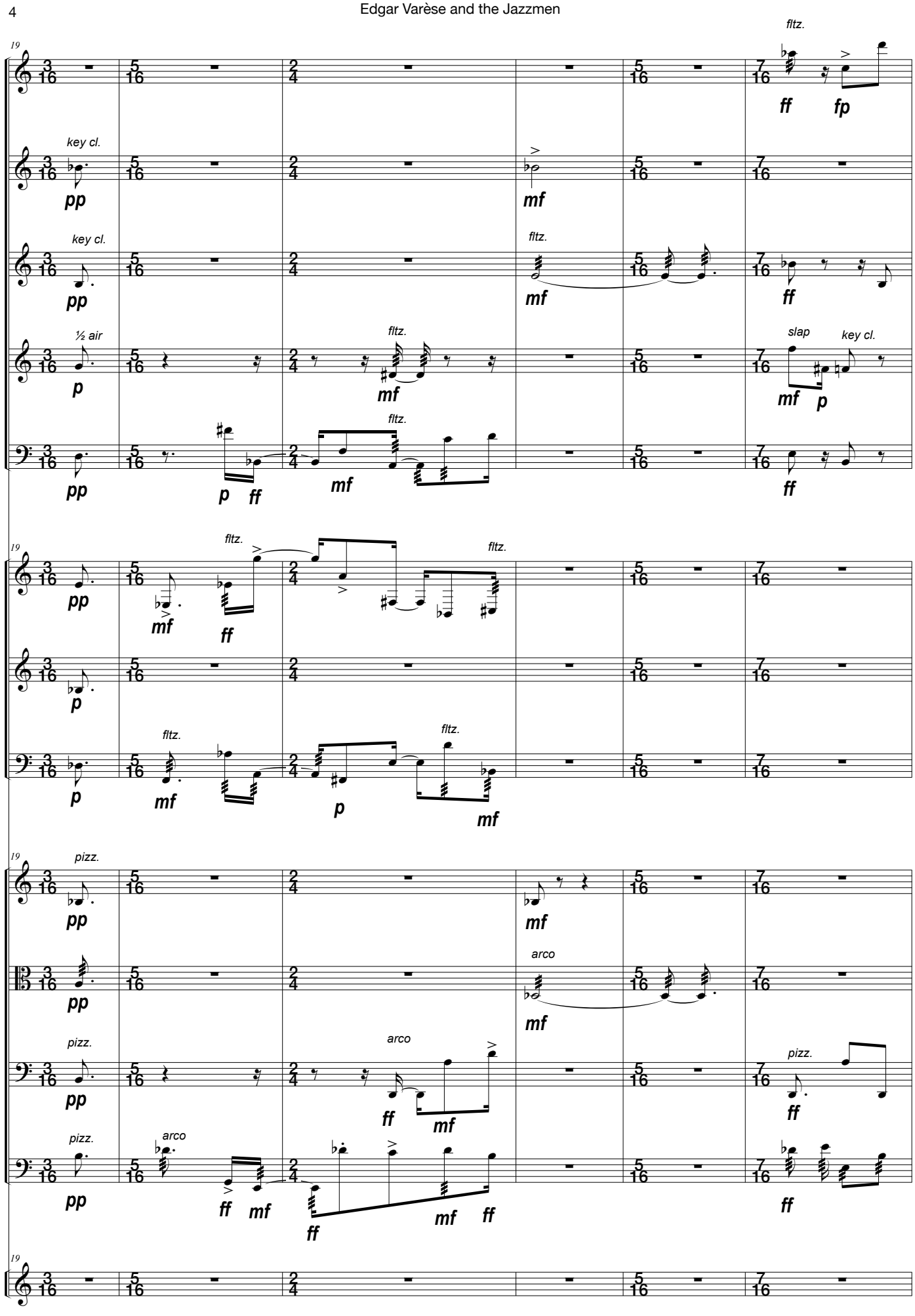

40
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
El.
16
17
46
18
19

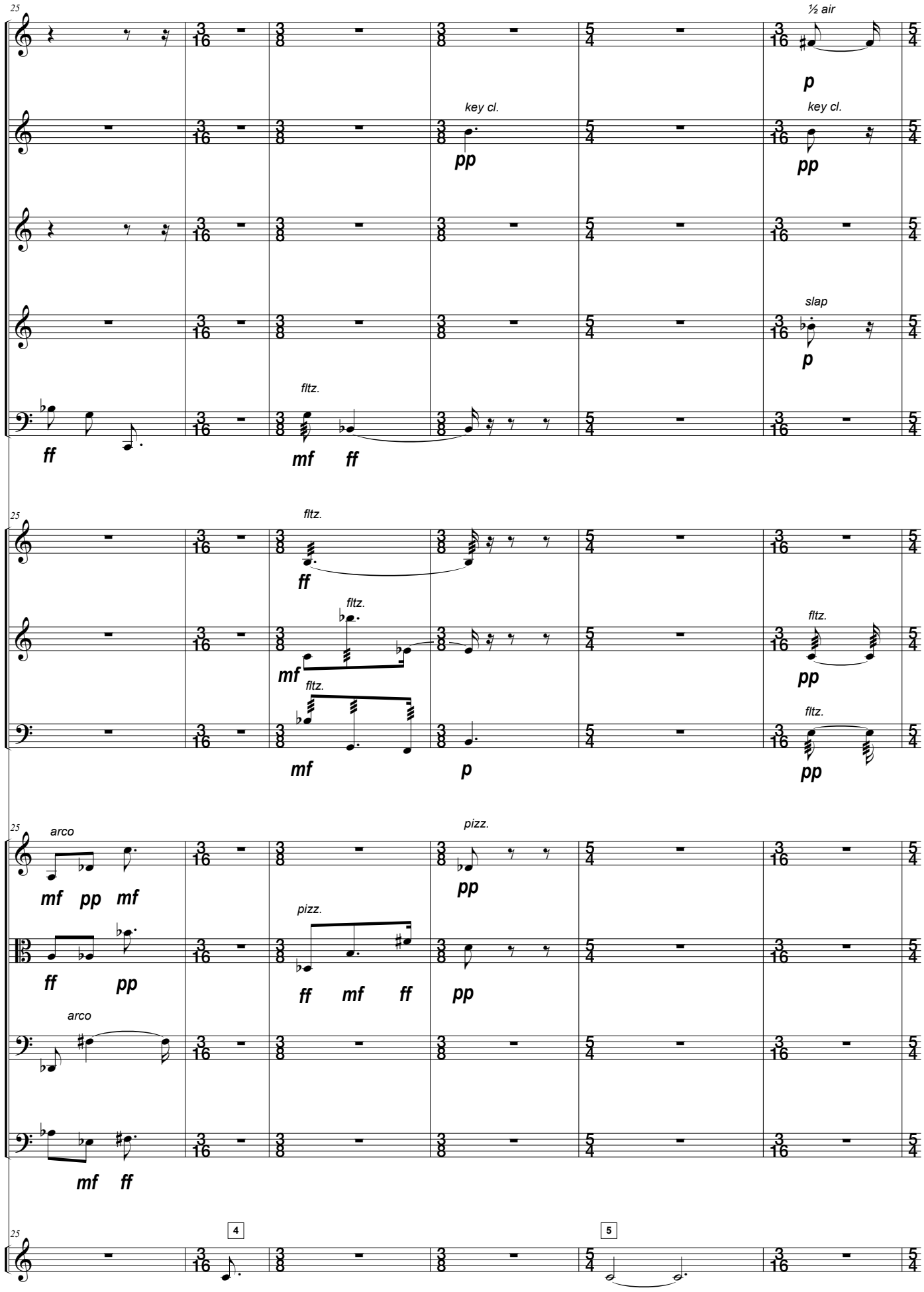
Raphaël Belfiore

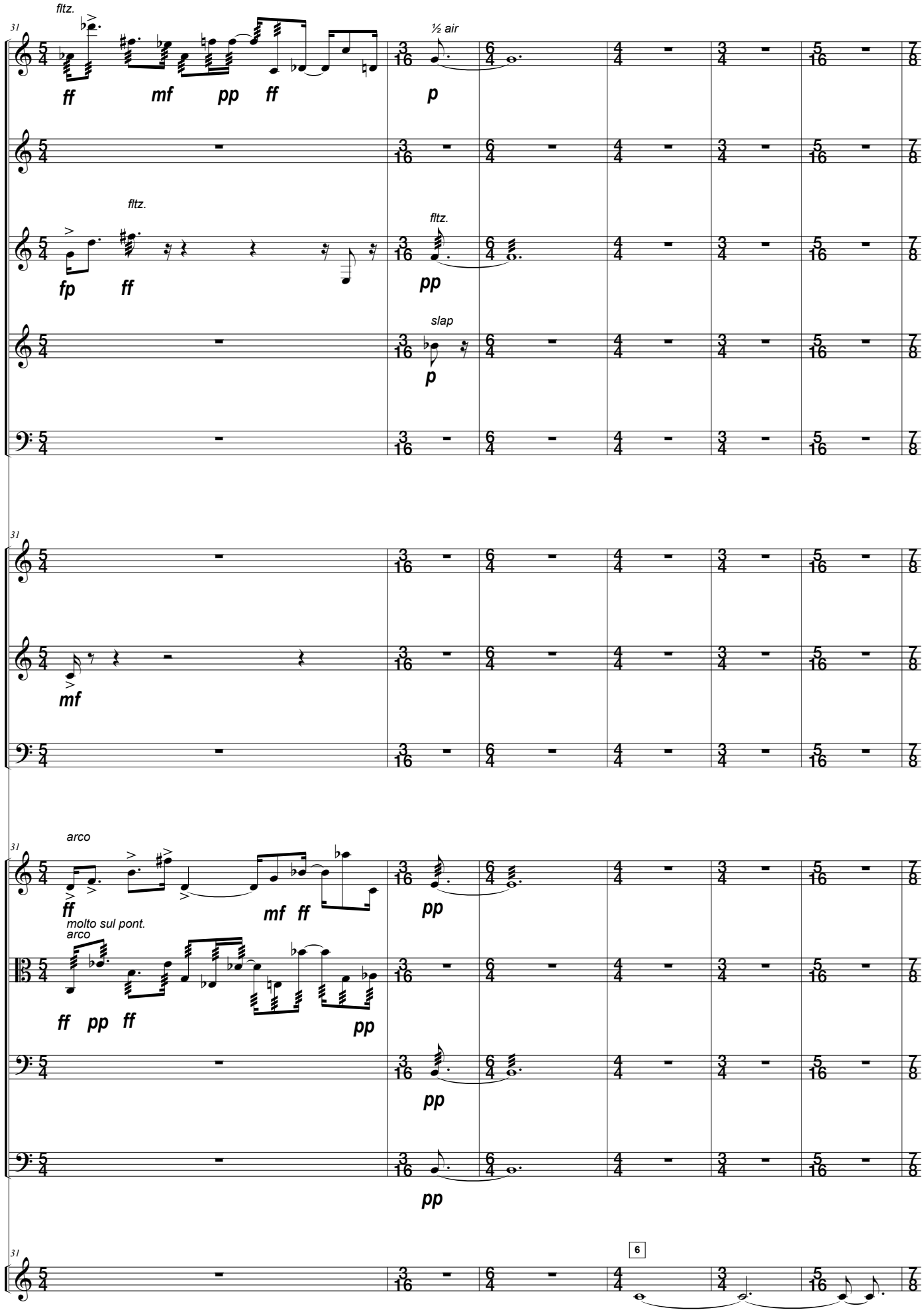


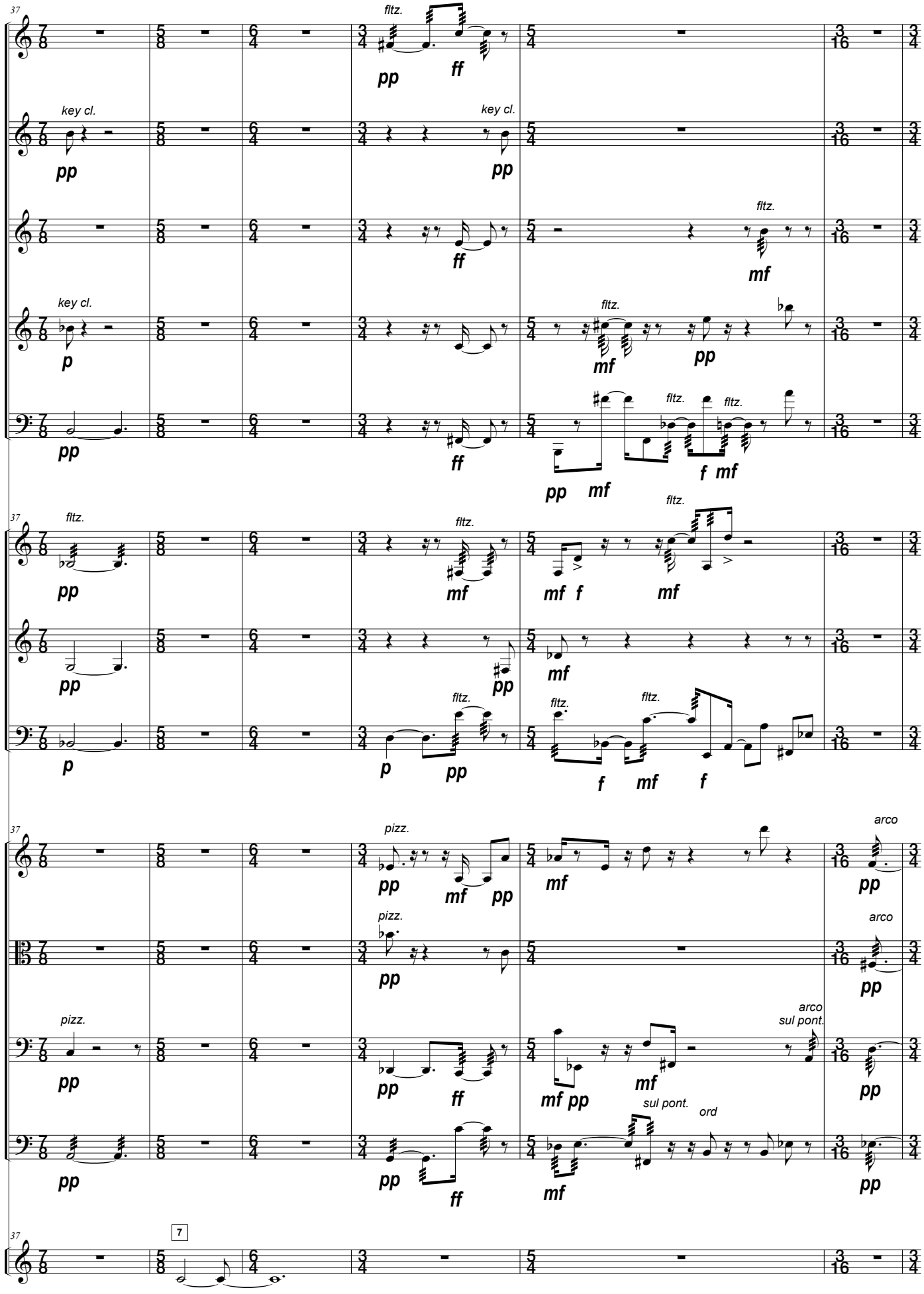

Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
El.
½ air
whst tn
key cl.
slap
fltz.
pizz.
arco
sul pont.
sul tasto
2

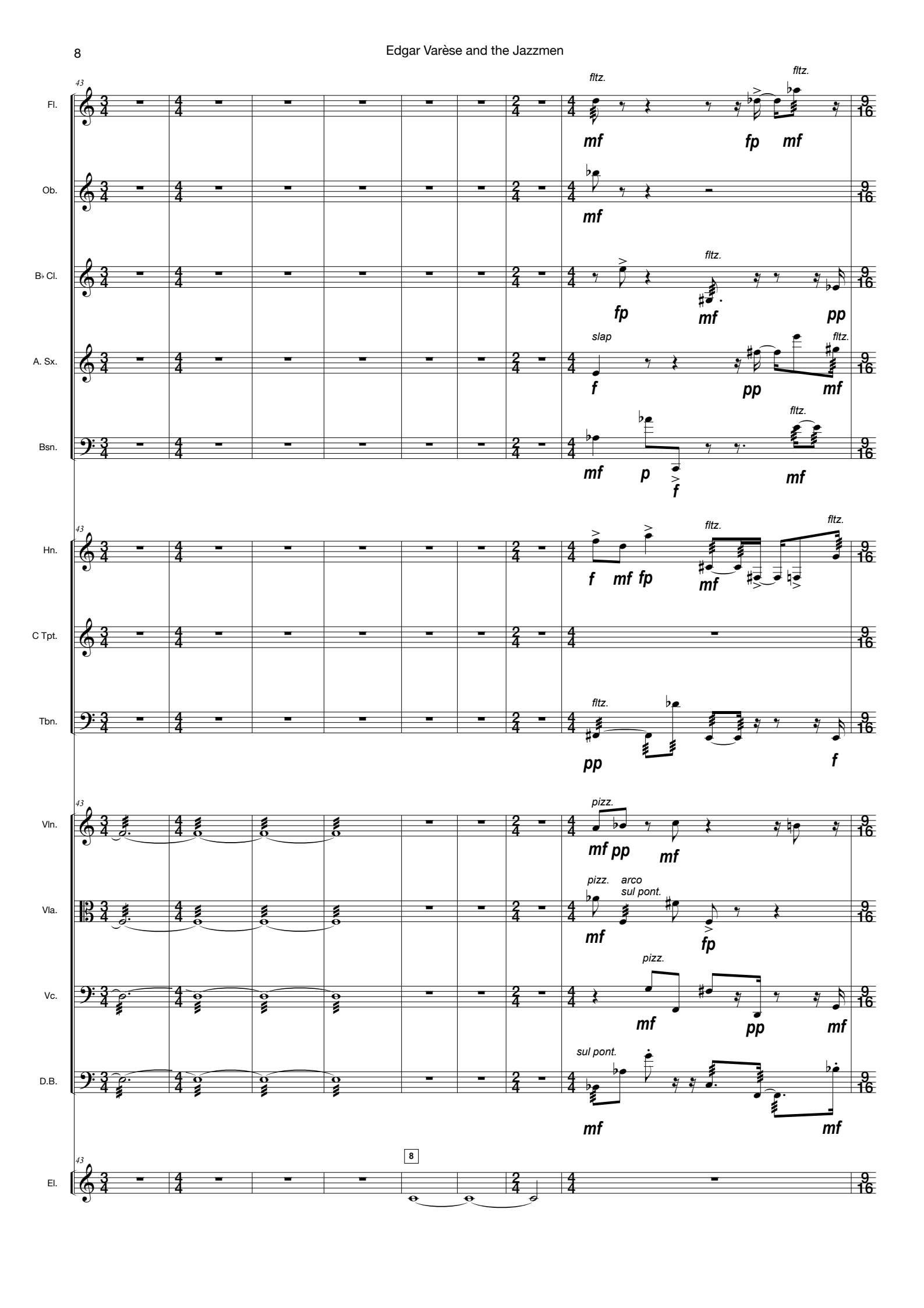

13
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
El.
fltz.
½ air
slap
arco
pizz.
ff
mf
f
pp
fp
3

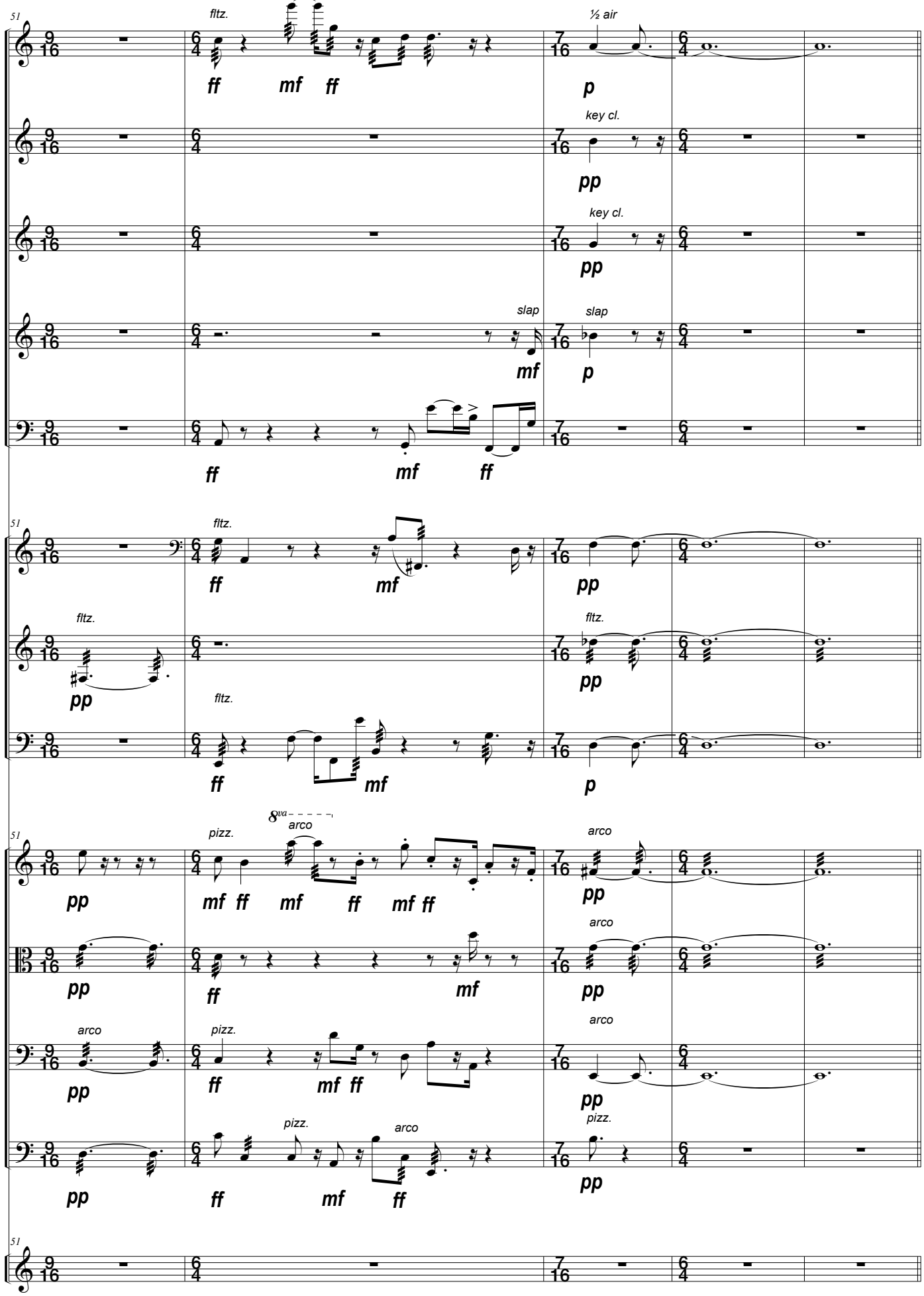

19
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
El.
fltz.
key cl.
½ air
slap
pizz.
arco
pp
p
mf
ff
fp


25
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
El.
½ air
key cl.
slap
fltz.
arco
pizz.
4
5
ff
mf
pp
p


31
Fl.
fltz.
ff
mf
pp
ff
½ air
p
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
fltz.
fp
ff
fltz.
pp
A. Sx.
slap
p
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
mf
Tbn.
Vln.
arco
ff
mf
ff
pp
Vla.
molto sul pont.
arco
ff
pp
ff
pp
Vc.
pp
D.B.
pp
El.
6


37
Fl.
fltz.
pp
ff
Ob.
key cl.
pp
key cl.
pp
B♭ Cl.
ff
fltz.
mf
A. Sx.
key cl.
p
fltz.
mf
pp
Bsn.
pp
ff
fltz.
fltz.
f mf
pp mf
37
Hn.
fltz.
pp
fltz.
mf
fltz.
mf f
mf
C Tpt.
pp
pp
mf
Tbn.
p
fltz.
p
pp
fltz.
fltz.
f mf f
37
Vln.
pizz.
pp
mf pp
mf
arco
pp
Vla.
pizz.
pp
arco
pp
Vc.
pizz.
pp
pp
ff
mf pp
mf
arco
sul pont.
pp
D.B.
pp
pp
ff
mf
sul pont.
ord
pp
37
El.
7


43
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
El.
fltz.
slap
pizz.
arco
sul pont.
mf
fp
pp
f
p
8


51
Fl.
fltz.
½ air
ff mf ff
p
Ob.
key cl.
pp
B♭ Cl.
key cl.
pp
A. Sx.
slap
slap
mf
p
Bsn.
ff mf ff
51
Hn.
fltz.
ff mf
pp
C Tpt.
fltz.
pp
fltz.
pp
Tbn.
fltz.
ff mf
p
51
Vln.
pizz.
8va
arco
arco
pp
mf ff mf ff mf ff
pp
Vla.
arco
pp
ff mf
pp
Vc.
arco
pizz.
arco
pp
ff mf ff
pp
D.B.
pizz.
arco
pizz.
pp
ff mf ff
pp
51
El.

Edgar Varèse and the Jazzmen (2021) - V
revised version for large amplified ensemble and fixed media

Raphaël Belfiore

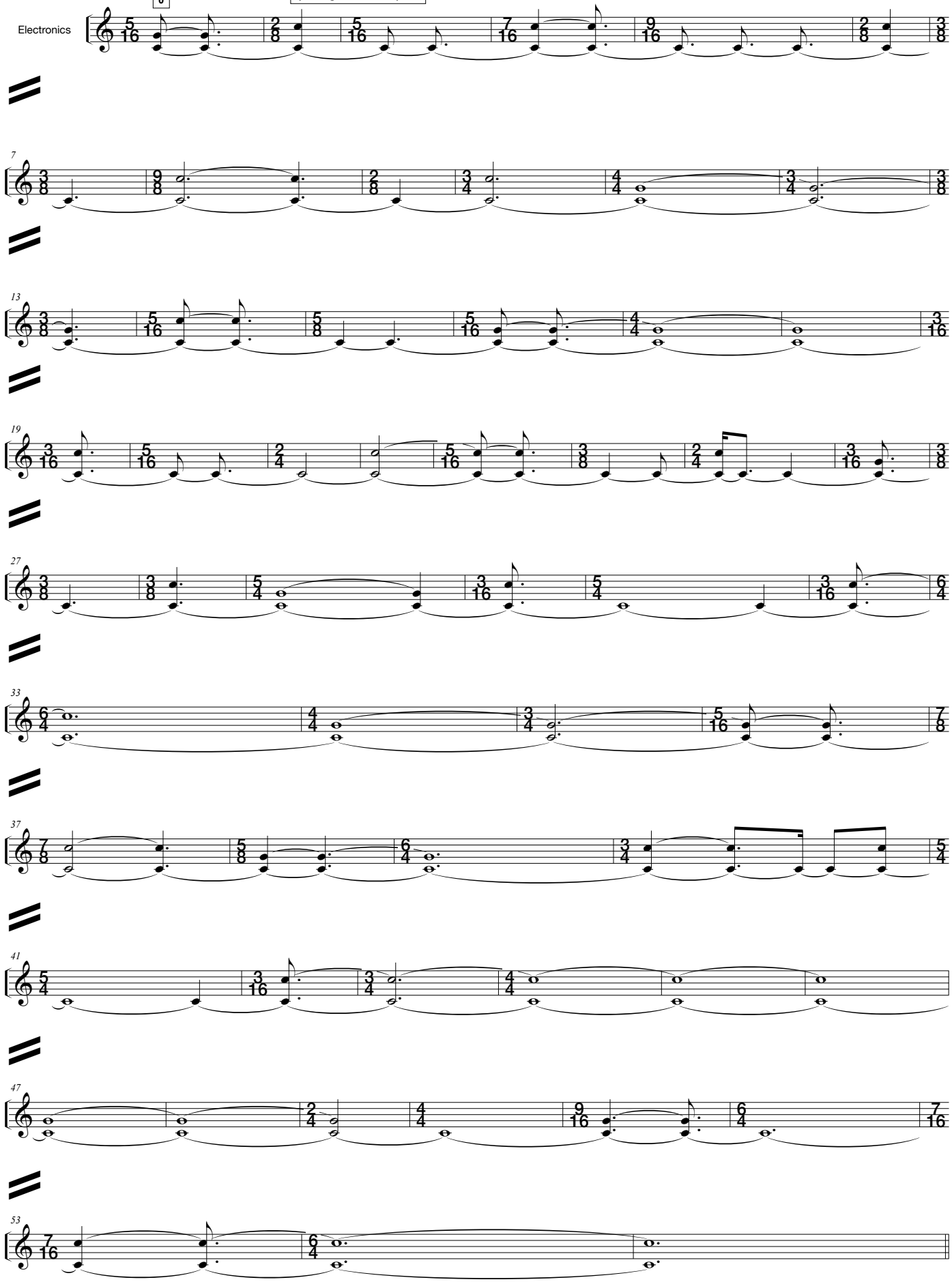
Max/MSP Patch: Section V

opens gain for sample 4

0

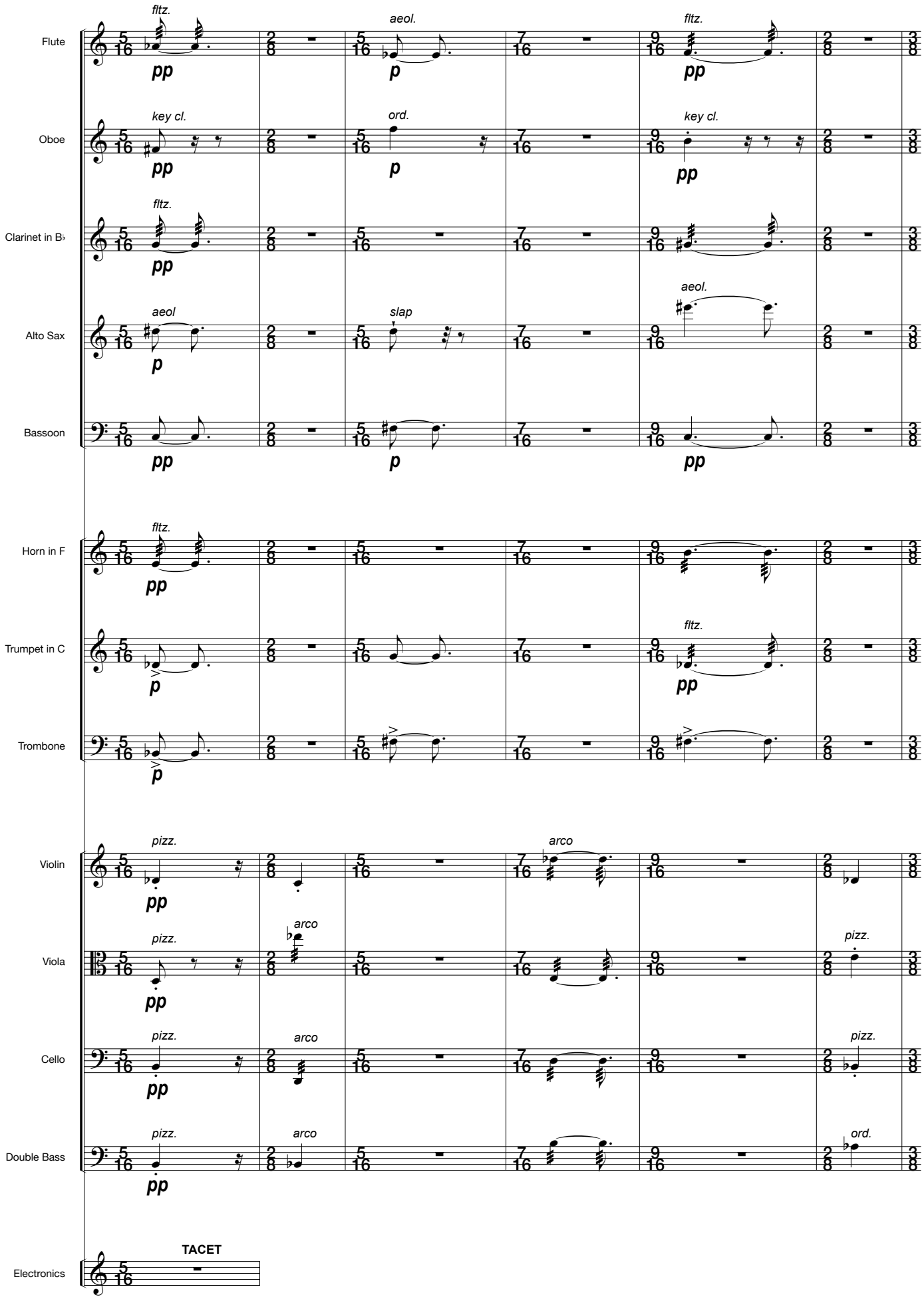
opens gain for sample 5

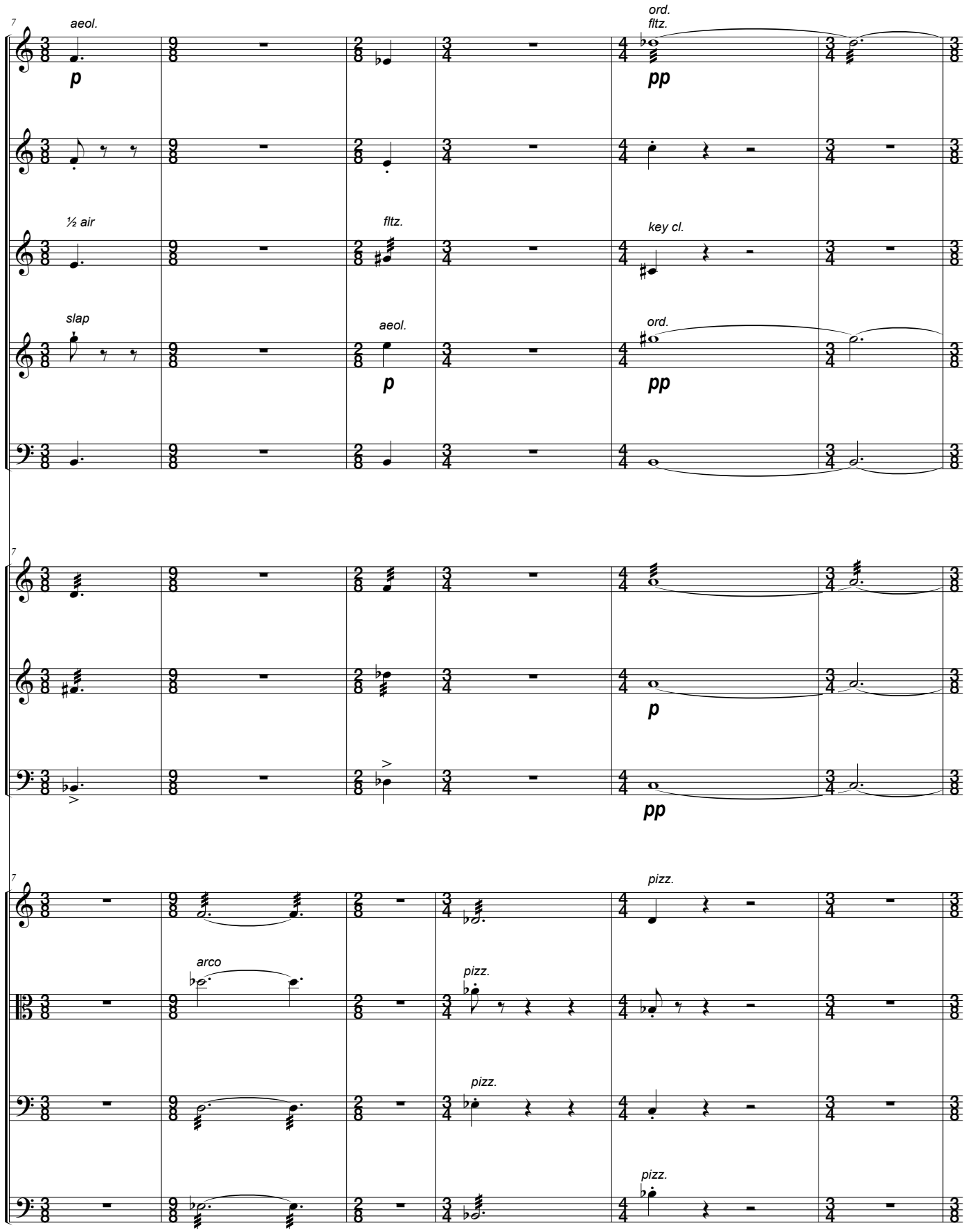
Electronics

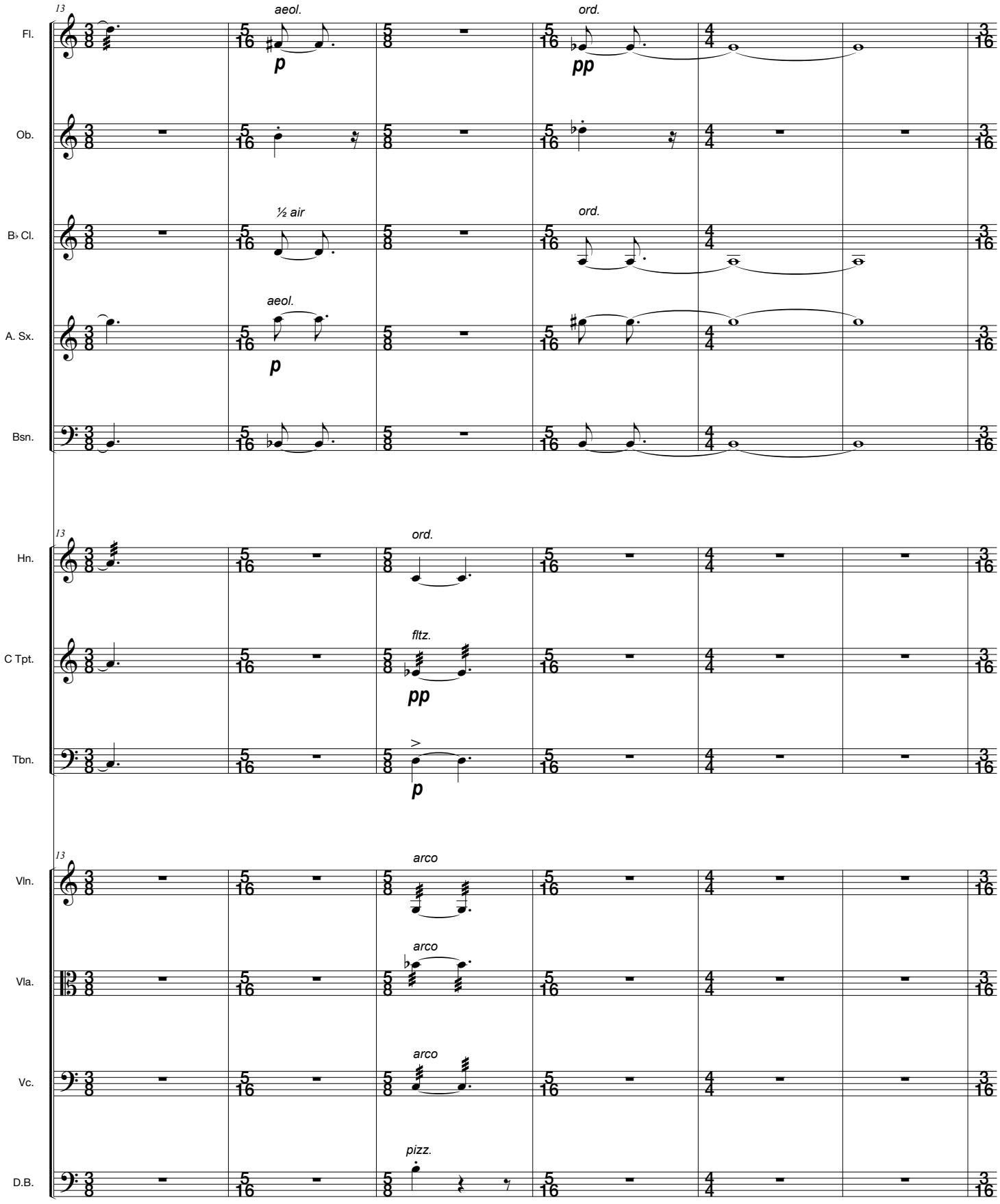


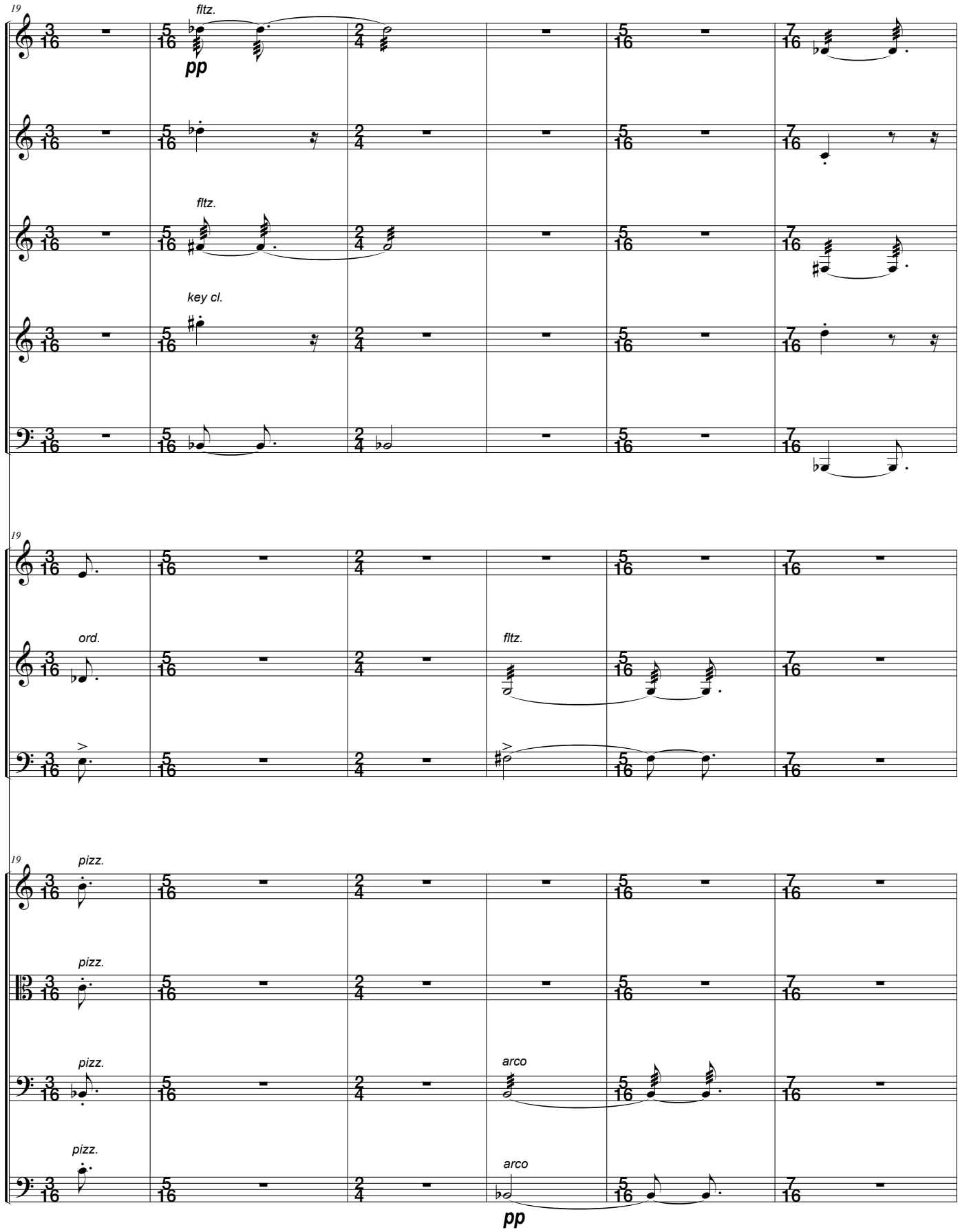
Edgar Varèse and the Jazzmen (2021) - VI
revised version for large amplified ensemble and fixed media

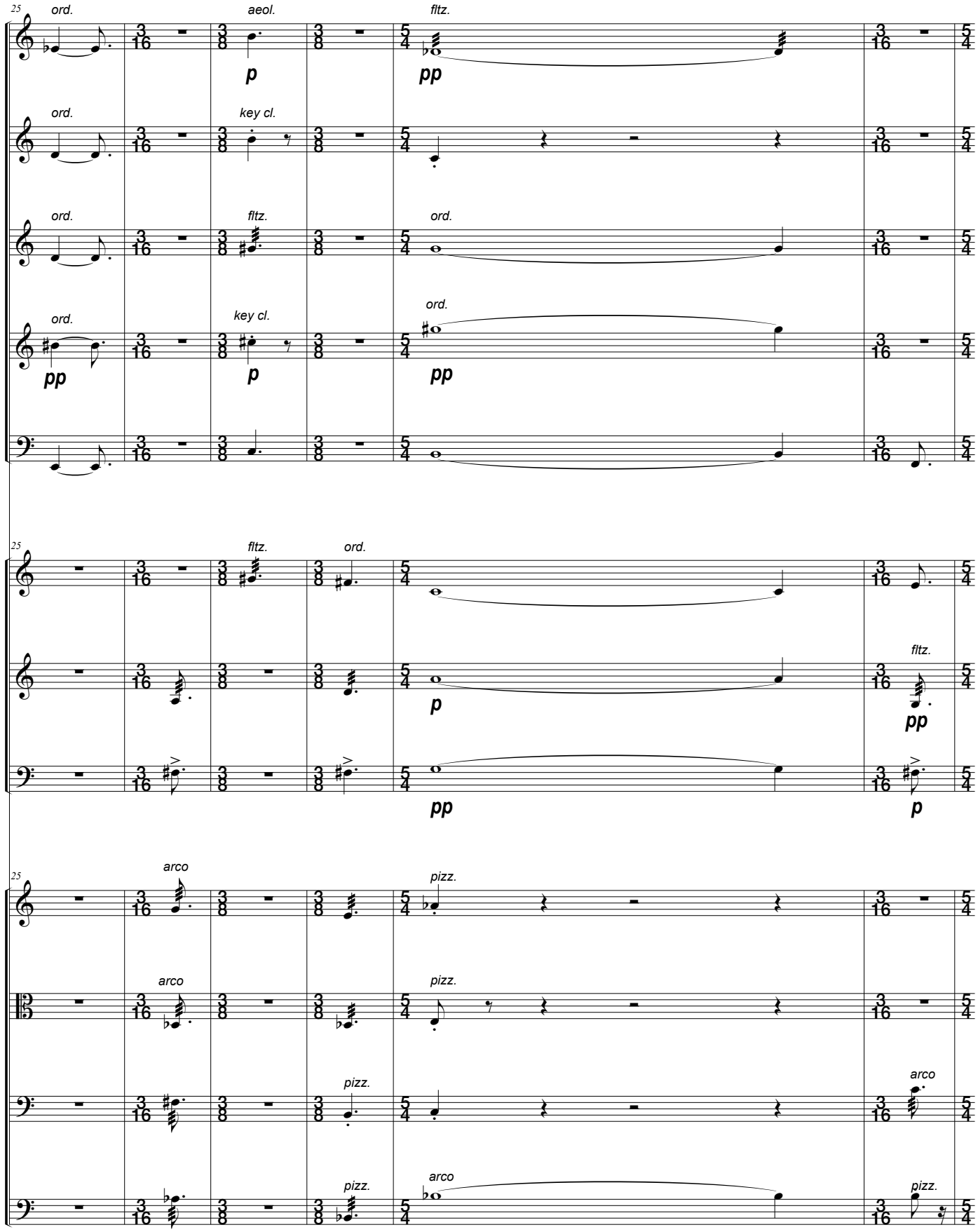
Raphaël Belfiore

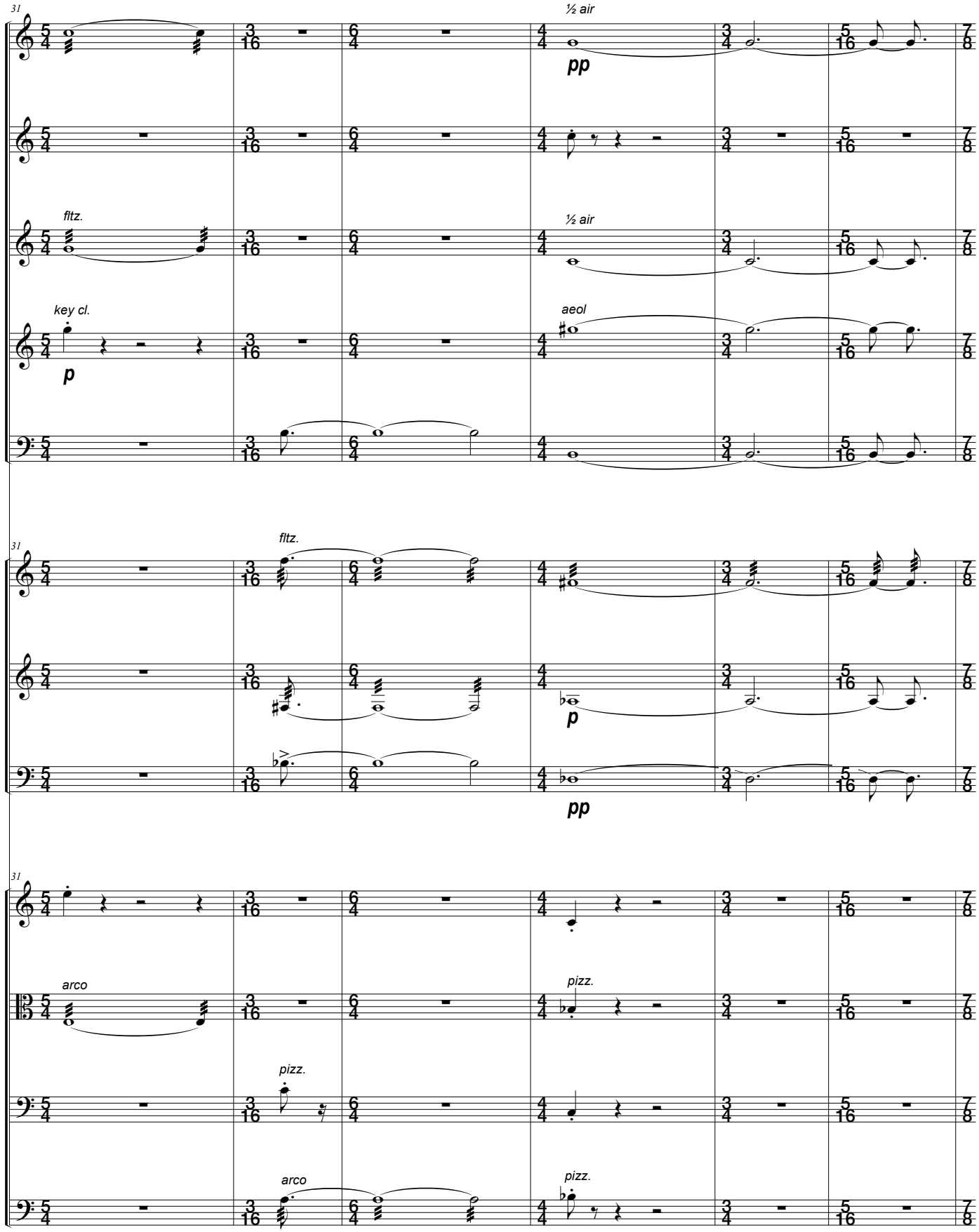


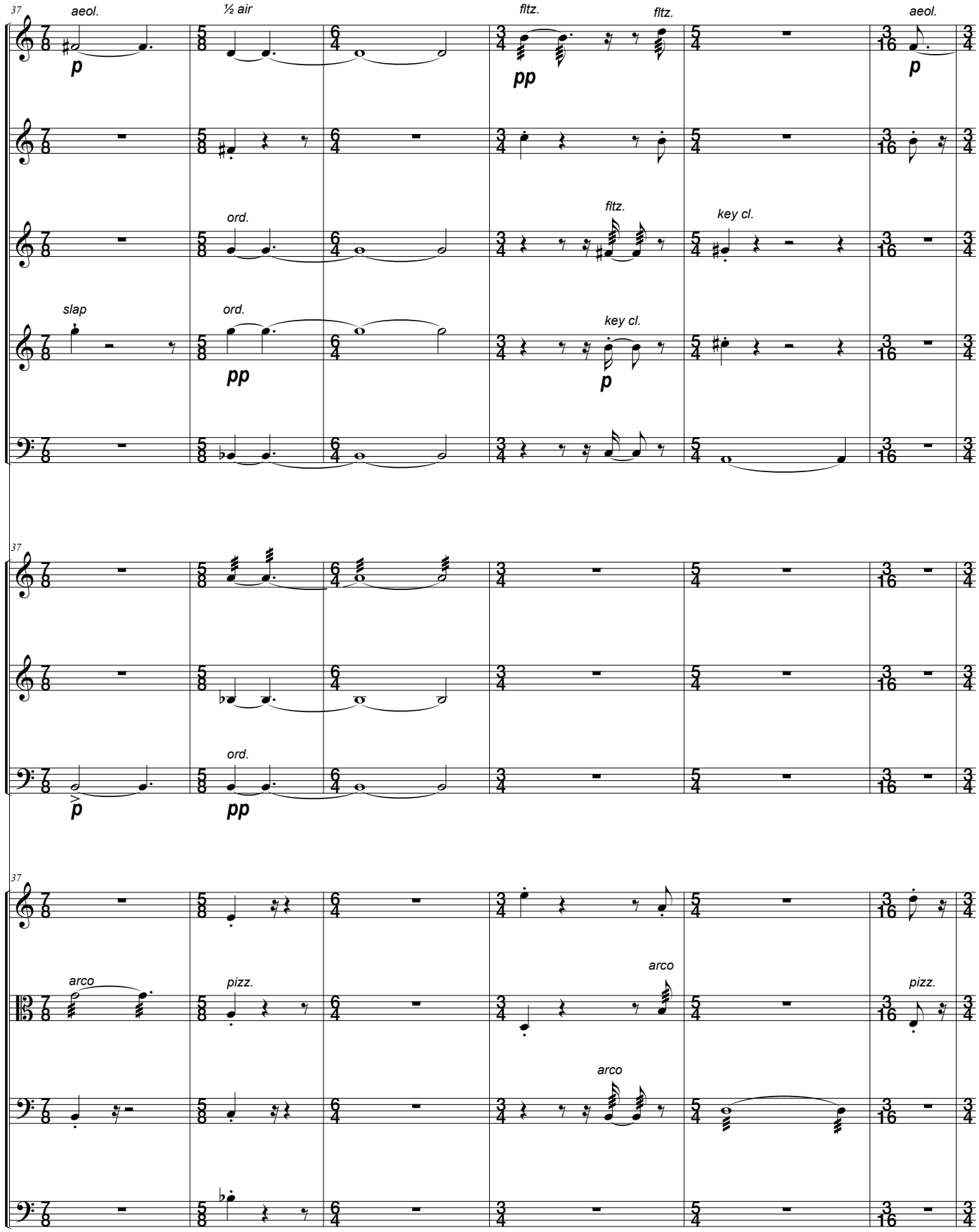

7
Fl.
aeol.
p
ord.
fltz.
pp
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
½ air
fltz.
key cl.
A. Sx.
slap
aeol.
p
ord.
pp
Bsn.
7
Hn.
C Tpt.
p
Tbn.
pp
7
Vln.
pizz.
Vla.
arco
pizz.
Vc.
pizz.
D.B.
pizz.

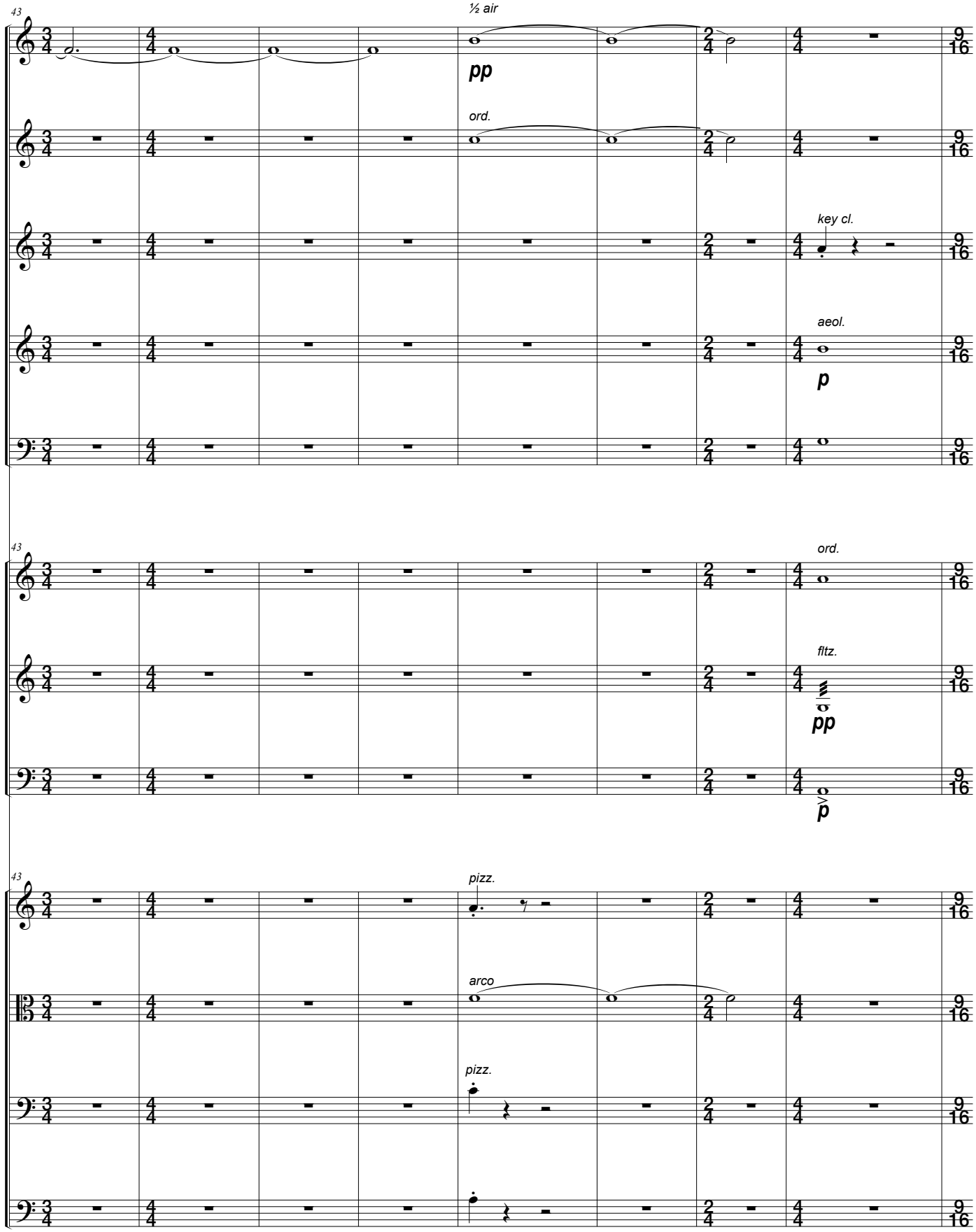

13
Fl.
aeol.
p
ord.
pp
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
½ air
ord.
A. Sx.
aeol.
p
Bsn.
13
Hn.
ord.
C Tpt.
fltz.
pp
Tbn.
>
p
13
Vln.
arco
Vla.
arco
Vc.
arco
D.B.
pizz.

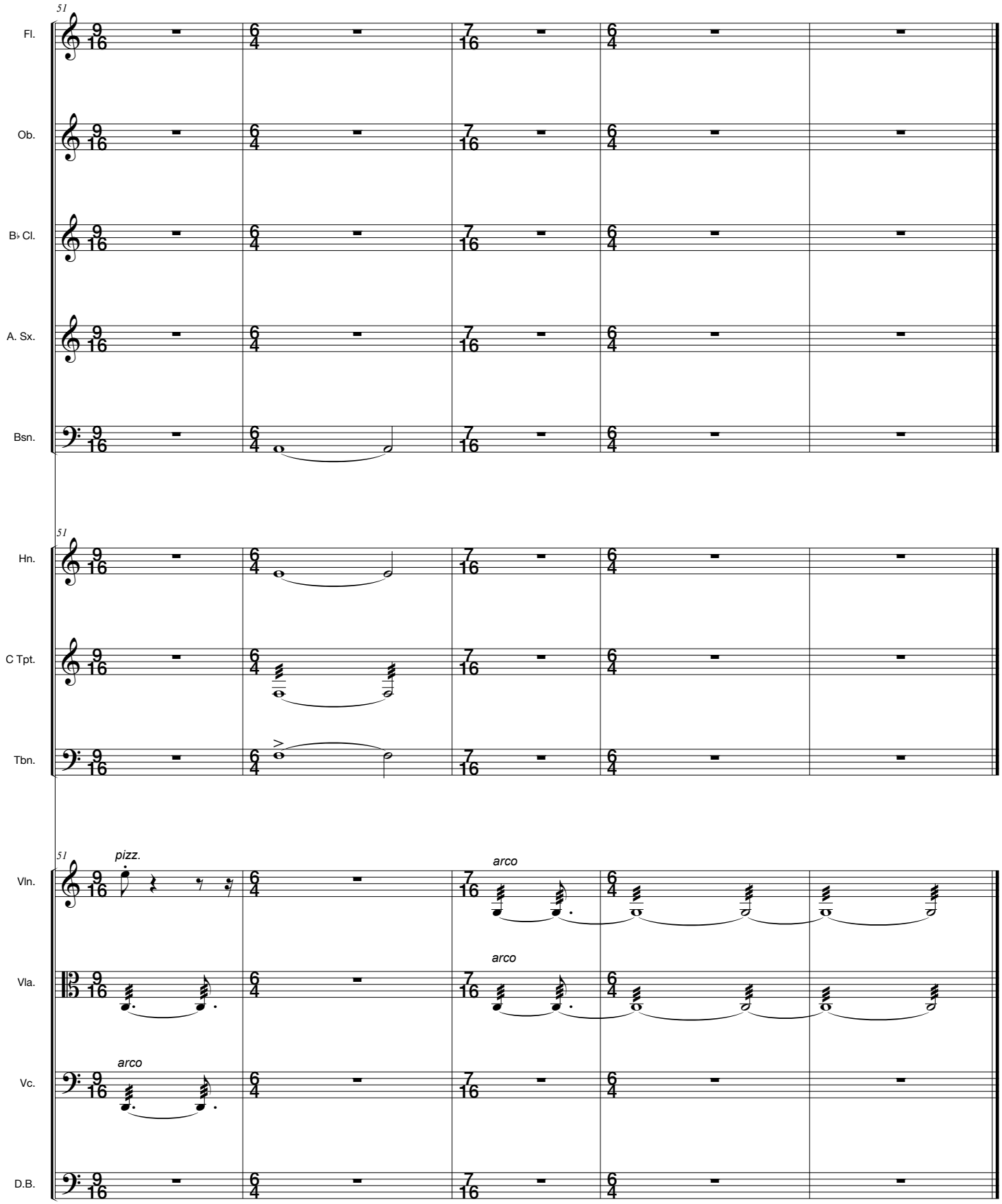

19
Fl.
fltz.
pp
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
fltz.
A. Sx.
key cl.
Bsn.
19
Hn.
C Tpt.
ord.
fltz.
Tbn.
19
Vln.
pizz.
Vla.
pizz.
Vc.
pizz.
arco
D.B.
pizz.
arco
pp


25
Fl.
ord.
aeol.
fltz.
p
pp
Ob.
ord.
key cl.
B♭ Cl.
ord.
fltz.
ord.
A. Sx.
ord.
key cl.
ord.
pp
p
pp
Bsn.
25
Hn.
fltz.
ord.
C Tpt.
p
fltz.
pp
Tbn.
pp
p
25
Vln.
arco
pizz.
Vla.
arco
pizz.
Vc.
pizz.
arco
D.B.
pizz.
arco
pizz.


31
Fl.
½ air
pp
Ob.
fltz.
B♭ Cl.
½ air
key cl.
aeol
A. Sx.
p
Bsn.
31
fltz.
Hn.
C Tpt.
p
Tbn.
pp
31
Vln.
arco
pizz.
Vla.
pizz.
Vc.
arco
pizz.
D.B.


37
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
aeol.
½ air
fltz.
fltz.
aeol.
ord.
fltz.
key cl.
slap
ord.
key cl.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
p
pp
pp
p
p
pp


43
½ air
pp
ord.
key cl.
aeol.
p
ord.
fltz.
pp
p
pizz.
arco
pizz.
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.


51
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
A. Sx.
Bsn.
51
Hn.
C Tpt.
Tbn.
51
pizz.
arco
arco
arco
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.