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1995

Spiritual Excursion

Alan Schmitz

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Spiritual Excursion

for viola, vibraphone and timpani

by

Alan Schmitz

1990
rev. 1995

Spiritual Excursion
for Viola, Vibraphone and Timpani
(notes by Alan Schmitz)

SPIRITUAL EXCURSION was written in 1990 and revised in 1995 and is dedicated to conductor/violist/composer Russell Guyver, who premiered the work in Alaska. The melodic aspects of the viola part are built around the well known Bahama Spiritual "All My Trials," made famous in the 1960s by folk singers like Joan Baez and in a moving choral arrangement by Norman Luboff. Fragments of the spiritual melody appear a number of times in the viola part and should be fairly easy to hear by those familiar with its opening few bars and refrain. The percussion instruments supply harmonic support but do not have any recognizable relationship with the melody of the spiritual. All three instruments do have, however, special features in that each has its own characteristic set of motives and each has a cadenza or solo passage, thus giving everyone an opportunity to "shine" for a moment.

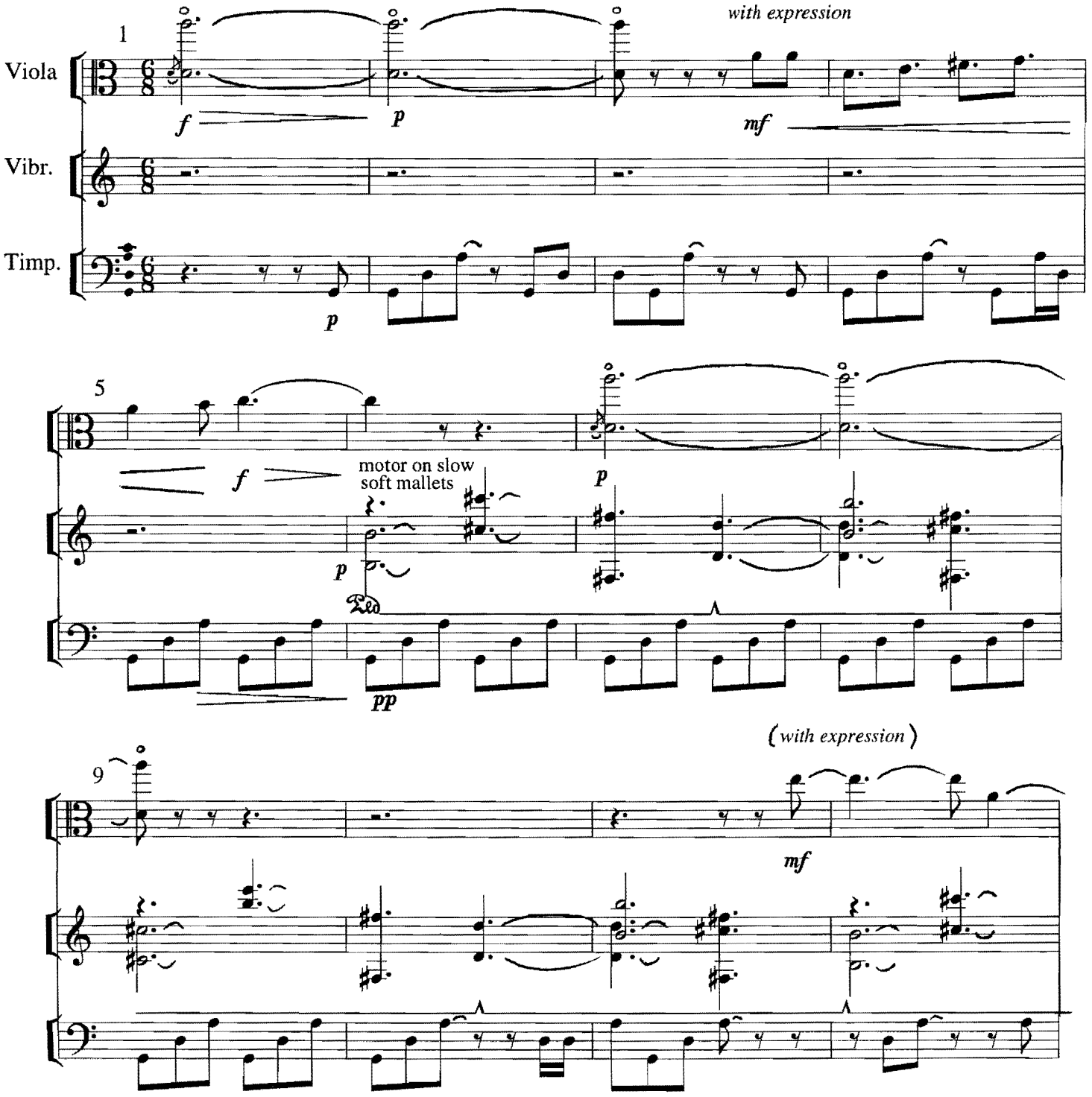
Formally, the piece consists of a calm section, used at the opening and elsewhere, that includes the "All My Trials" theme. This is followed by a section that is a bit more energetic and the thematic material is developed in the viola part. All three instruments perform in these sections. The other sections consist of short cadenzas: first by the vibraphone, then the timpani, and finally, the viola. These cadenzas are separated by brief interludes derived from the material used in the opening. Following the viola solo, the piece ends calmly, just as it began.

Spiritual Excursion

for Viola, Vibraphone and Timpani
to Russell Guyver

Alan Schmitz
1990
rev. 1995

♩. = 52 - 63



duration: 7 1/2 minutes

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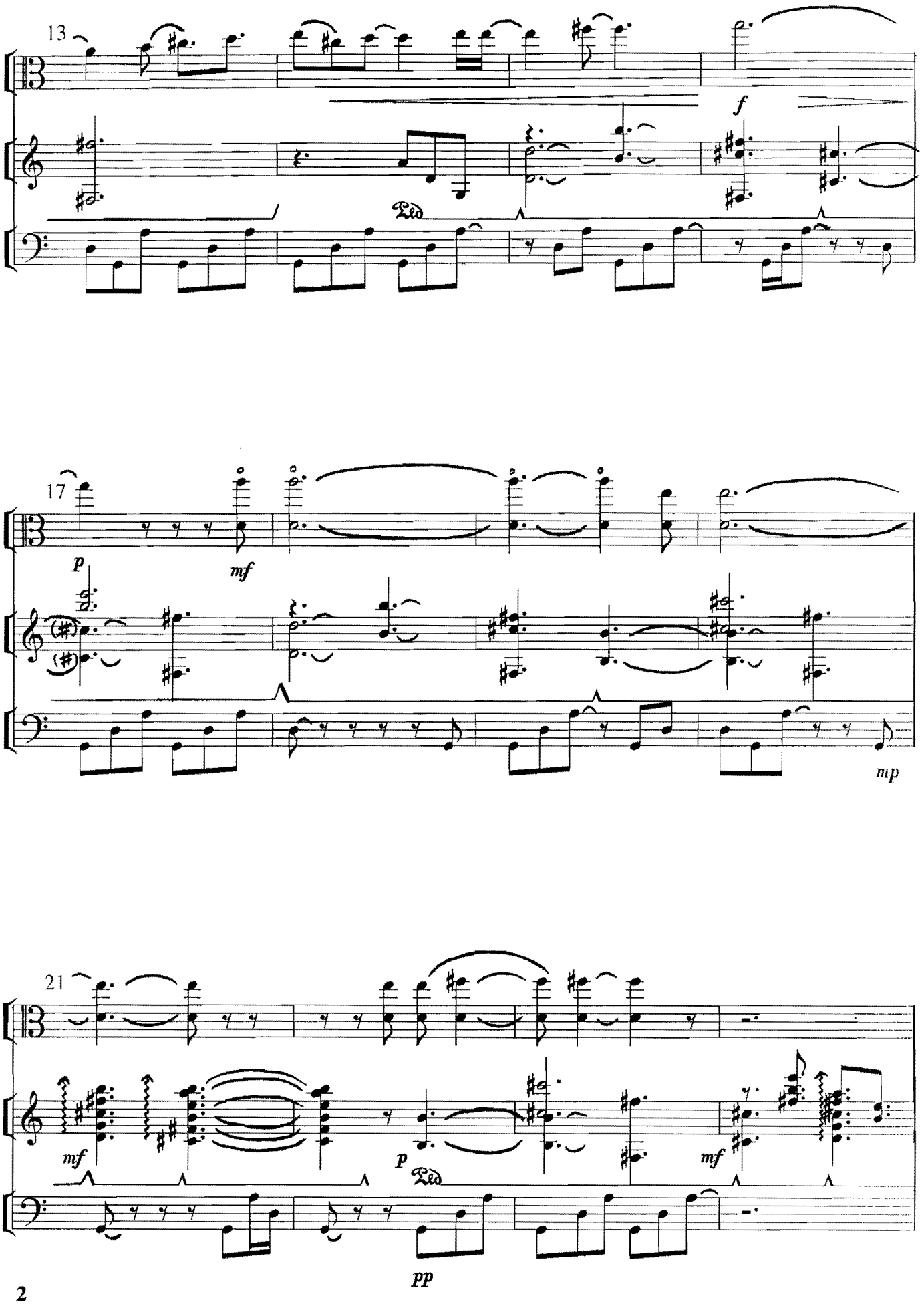
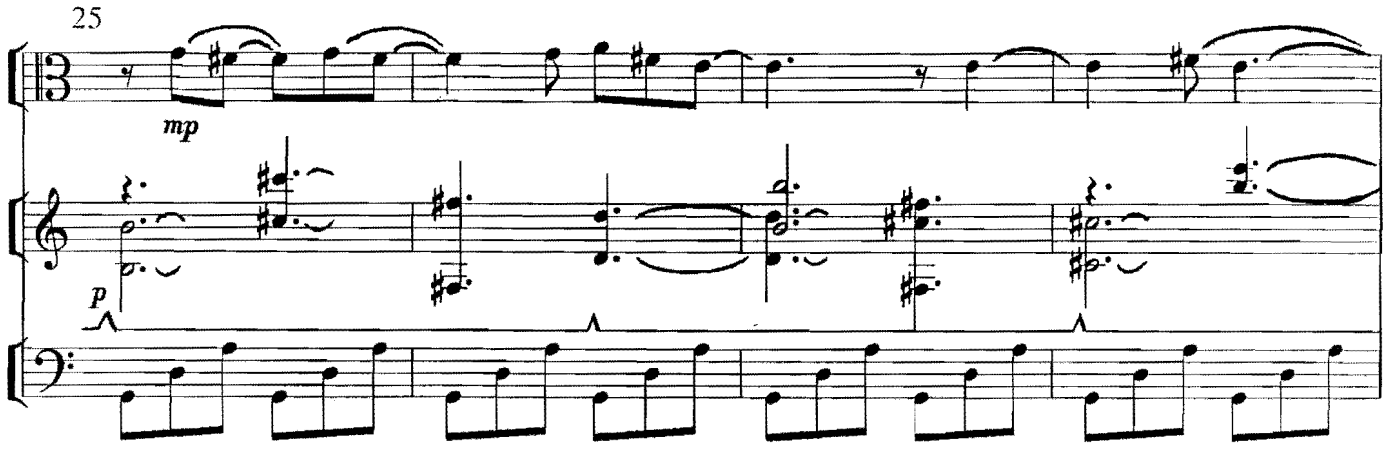
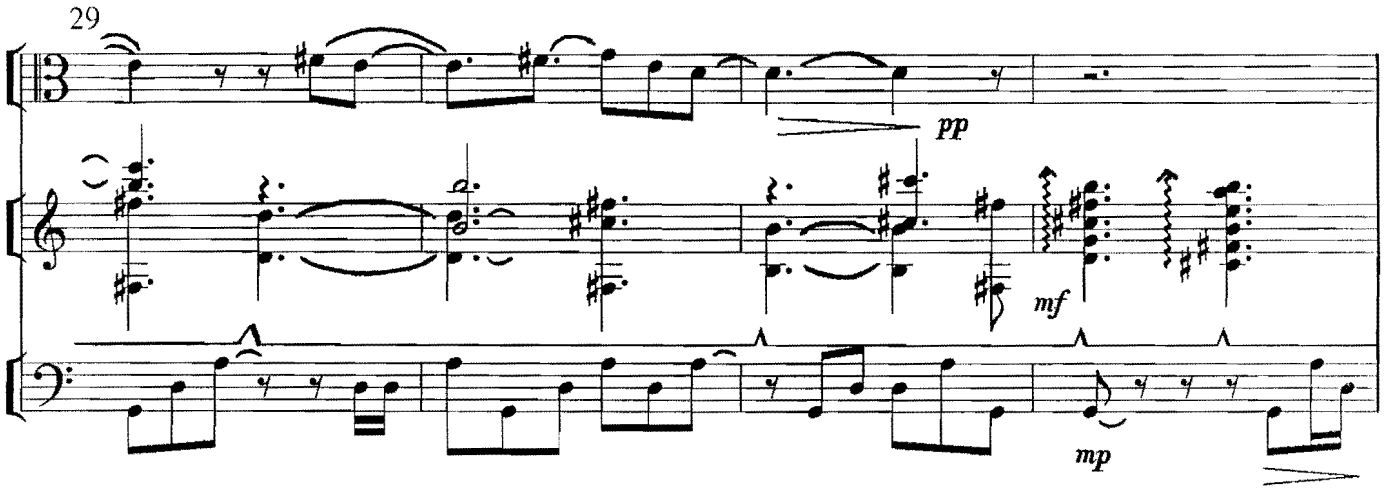
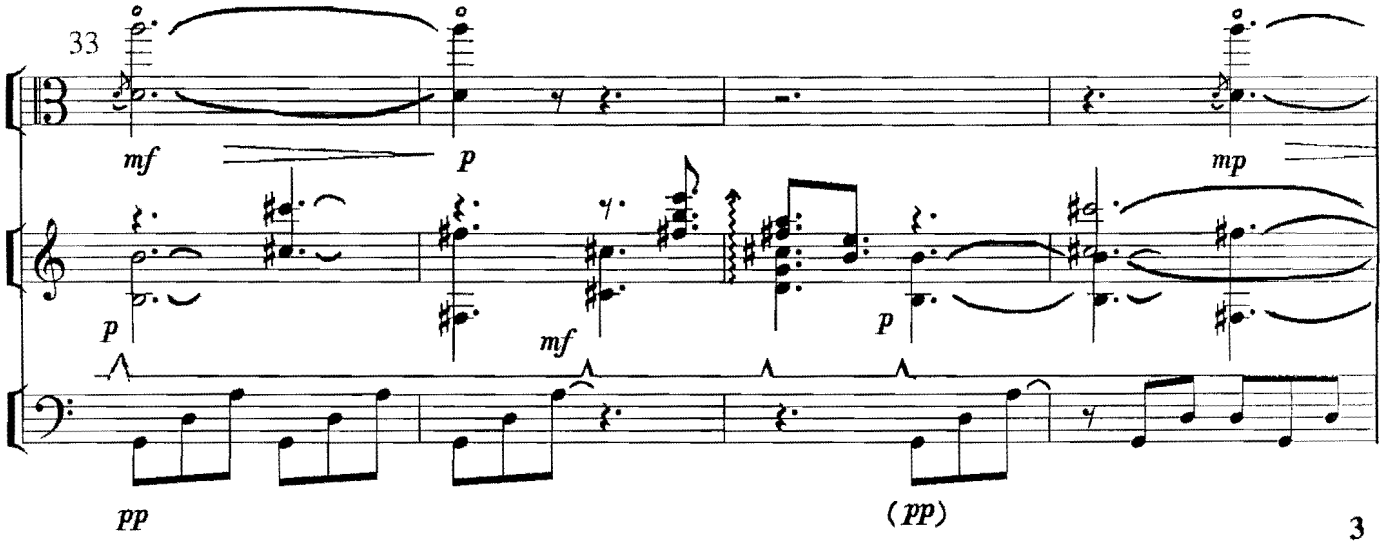
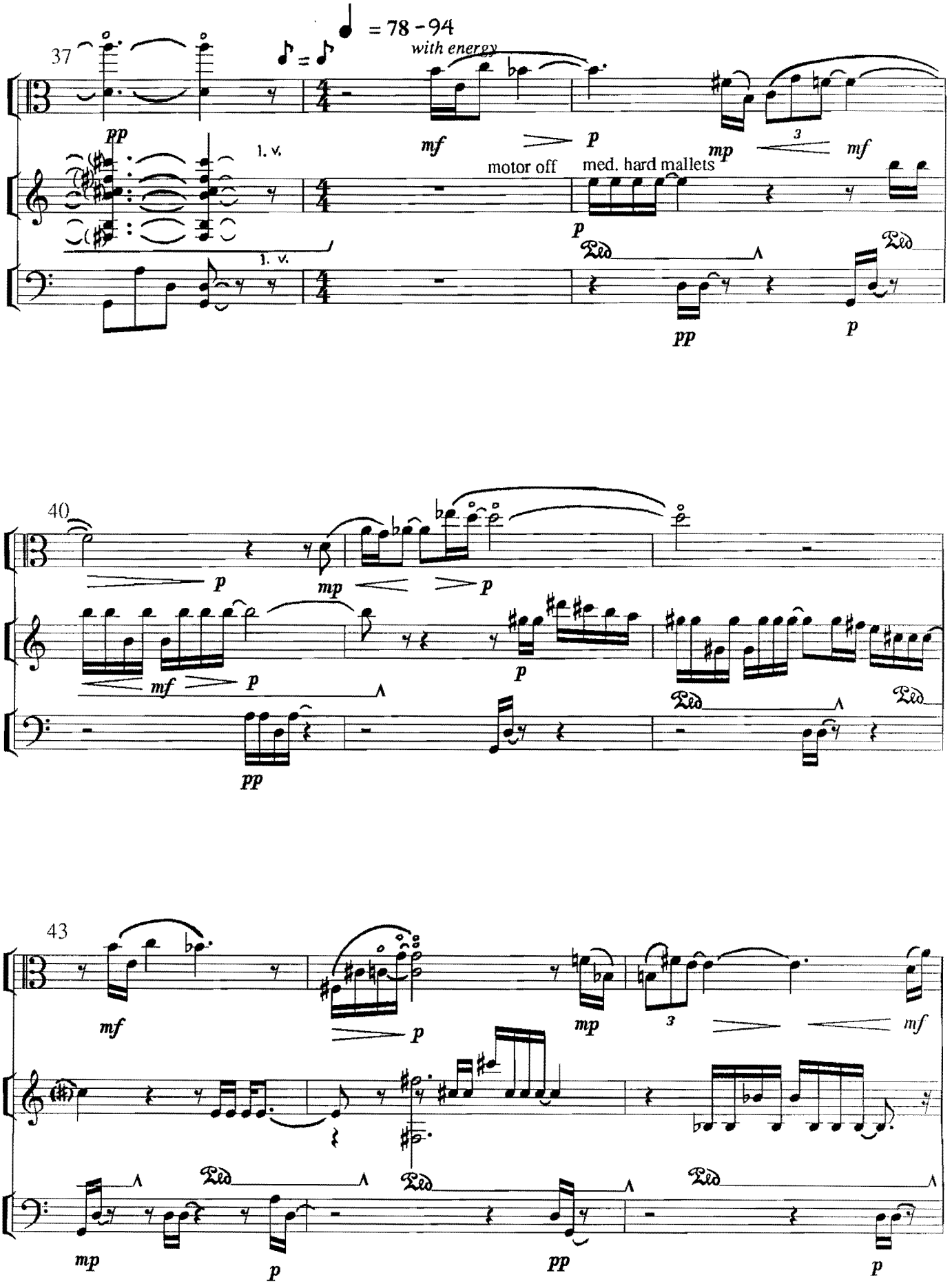
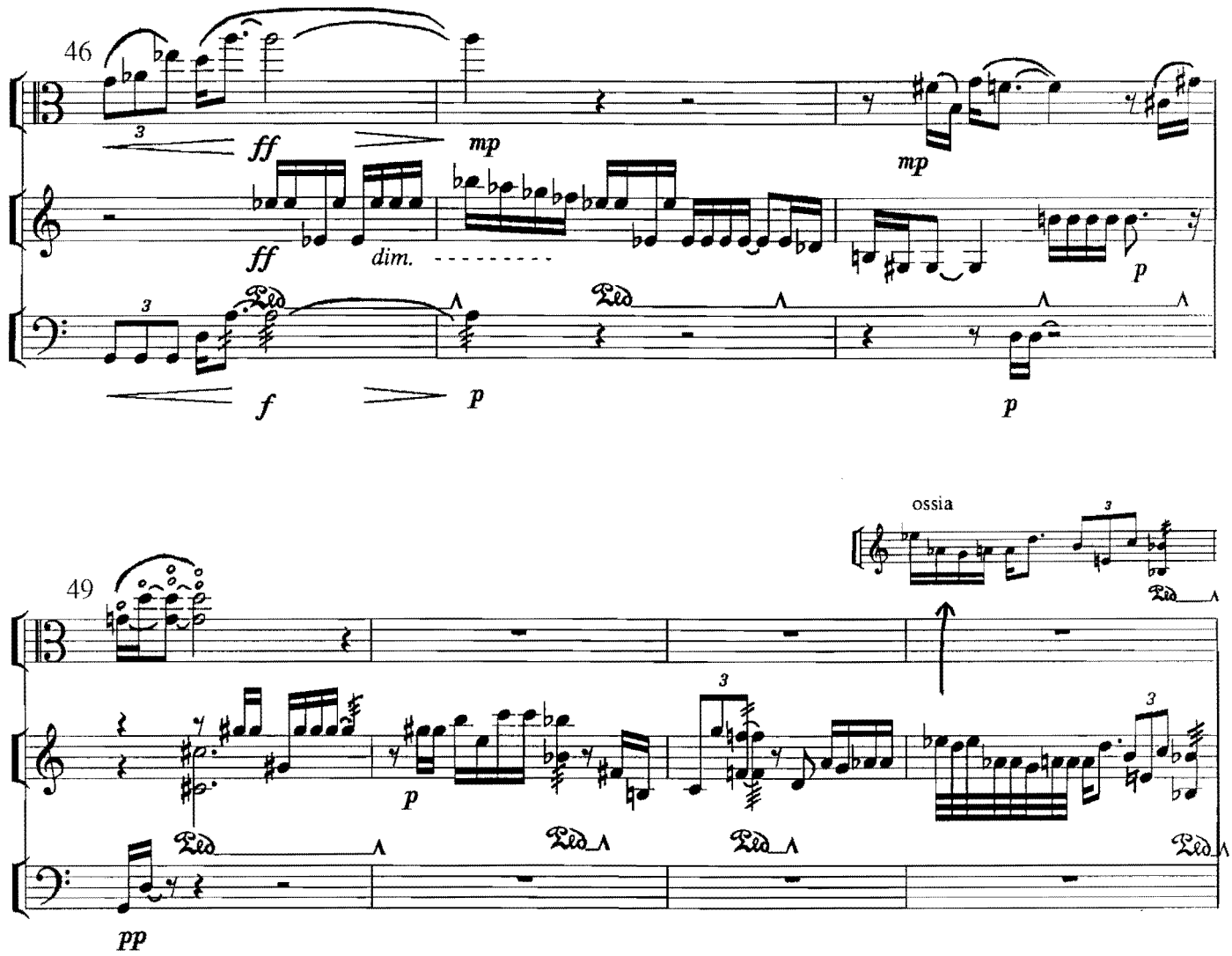

13
f
Ped
17
p
mf
mp
21
mf
p
Ped
mf
pp


25
mp
p

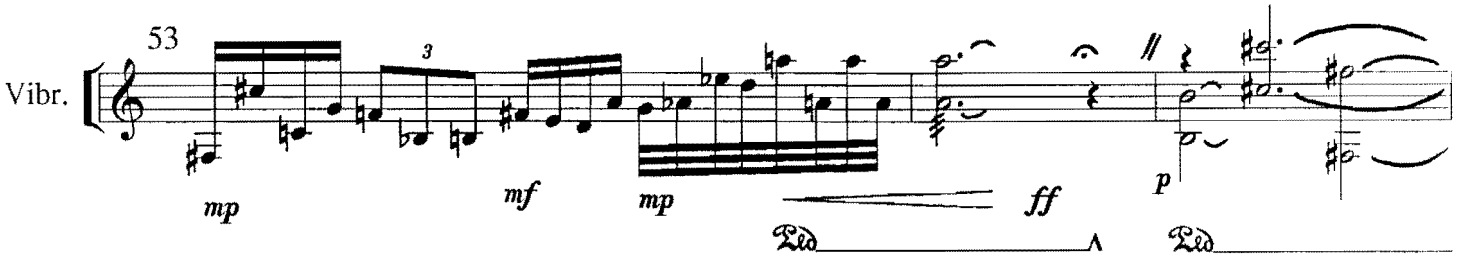

29
pp
mf
mp

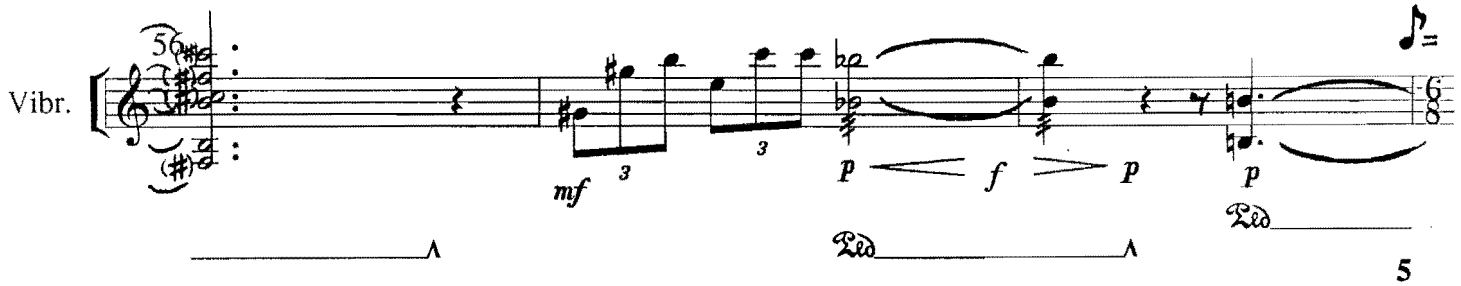

33
mf
p
mp
p
mf
p
pp
(pp)

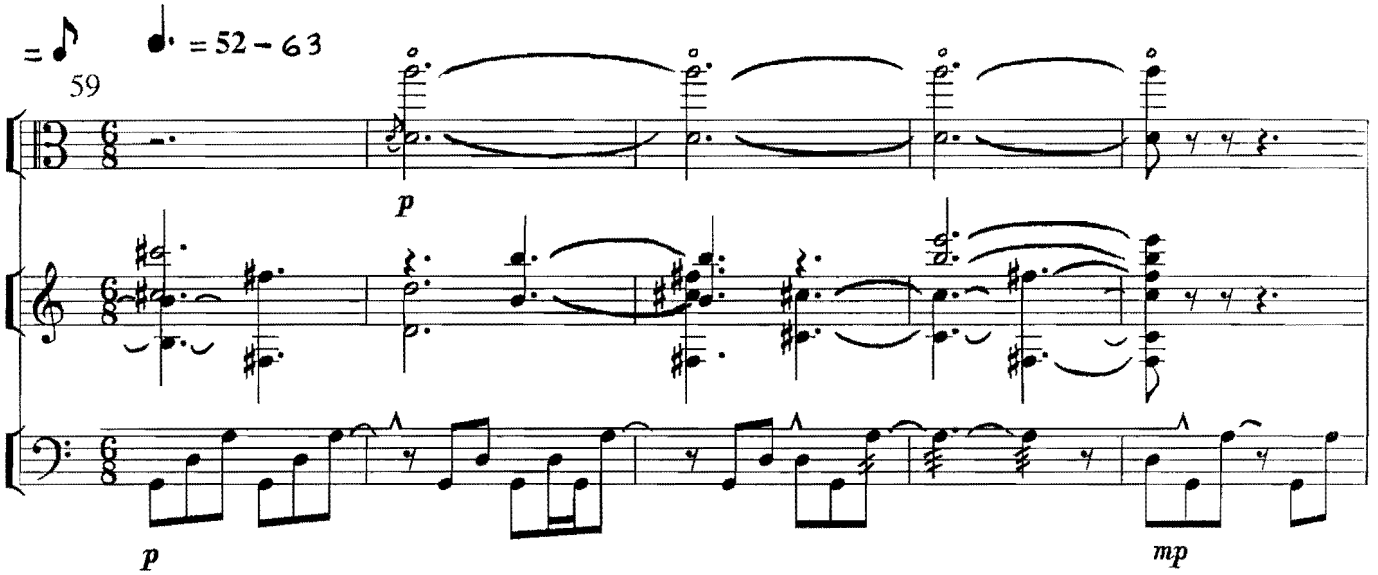

37
♩ = 78 - 94
with energy
pp
1. v.
mf
p
motor off
med. hard mallets
mp
3
mf
p
1. v.
pp
p
40
p
mp
p
mf
p
p
pp
43
mf
p
mp
3
mf
mp
p
pp
p

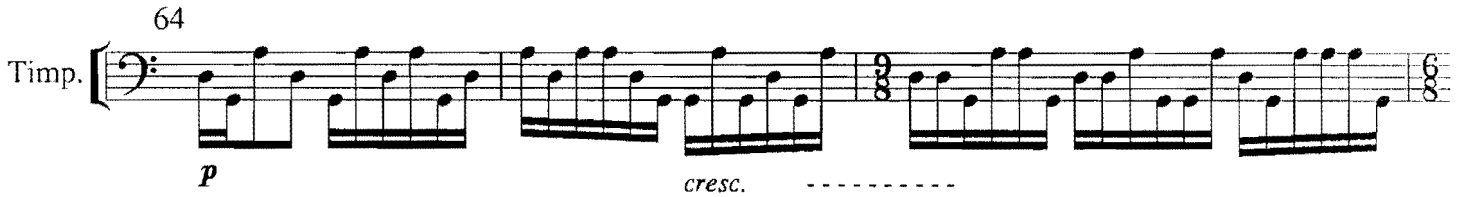

46
ff
mp
mp
ff
dim.
p
f
p
p

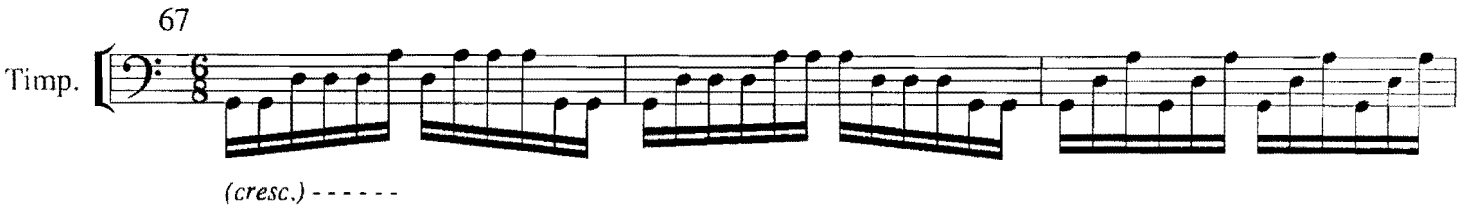
ossia
49
p
pp

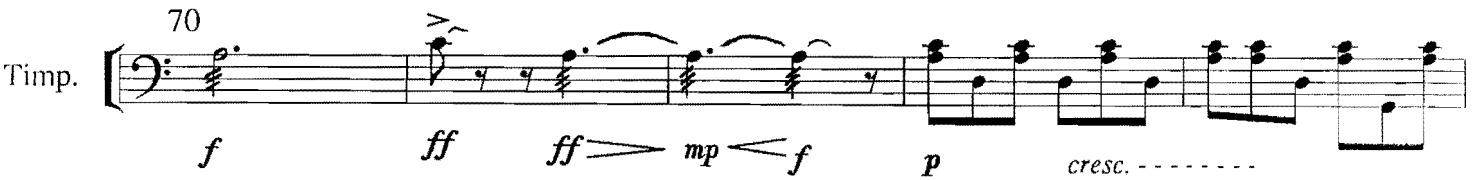

53
Vibr.
mp
mf
mp
ff
p

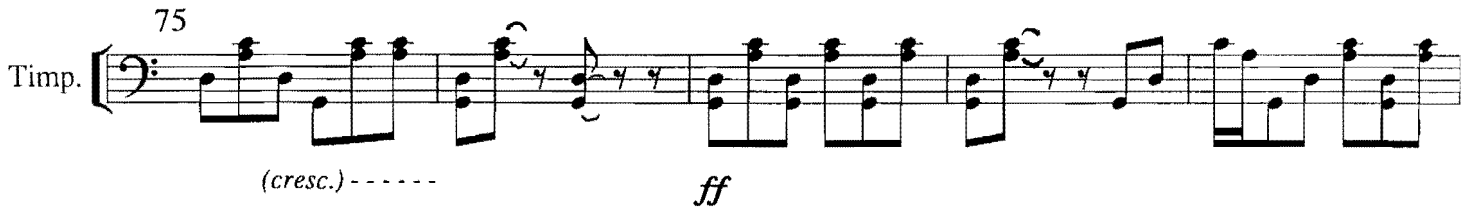

56
Vibr.
mf
p
f
p
p

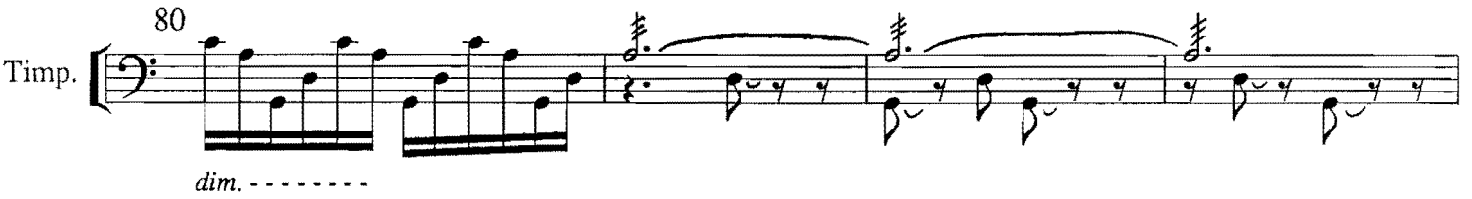

= ♪ ♩. = 52 – 63
59
p
p
mp

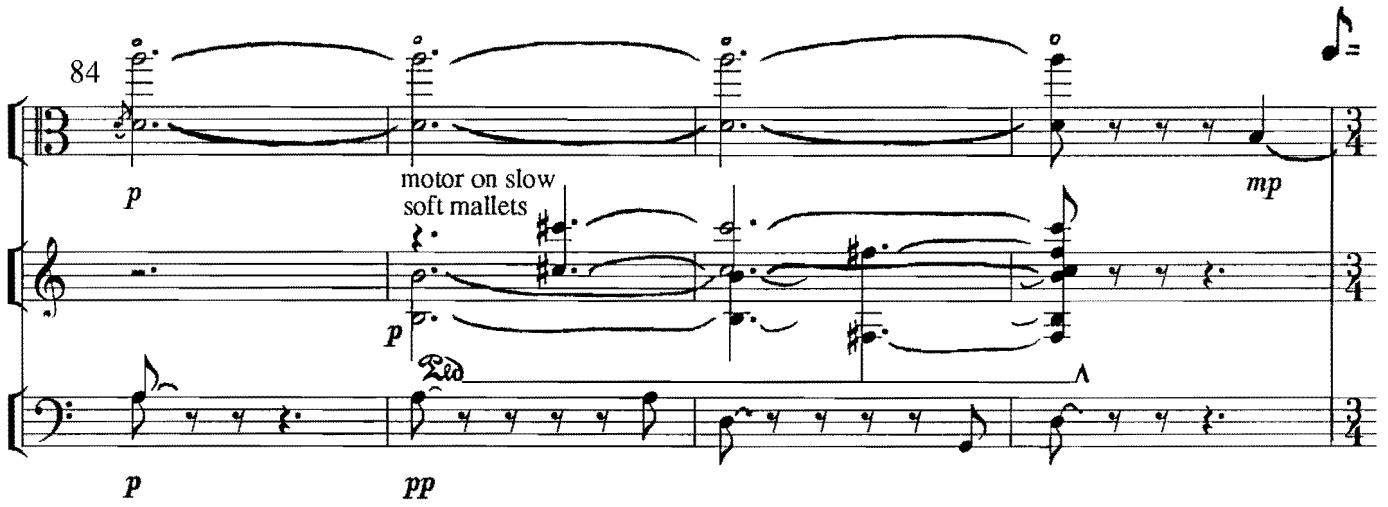

64
Timp.
p
cresc.

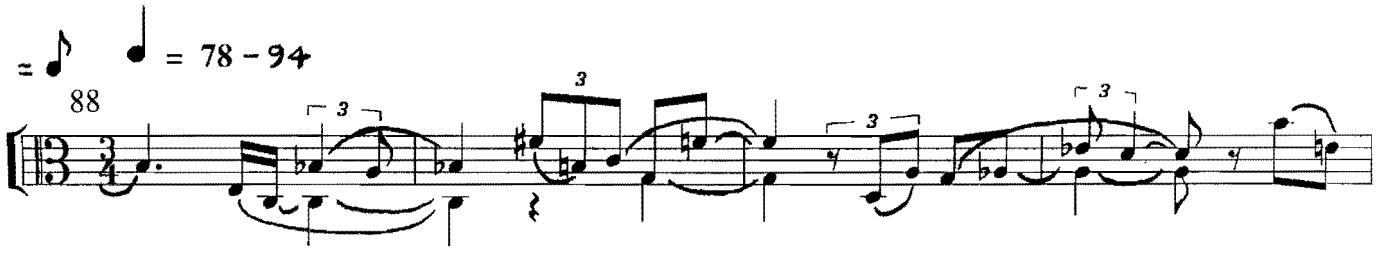

67
Timp.
(cresc.)

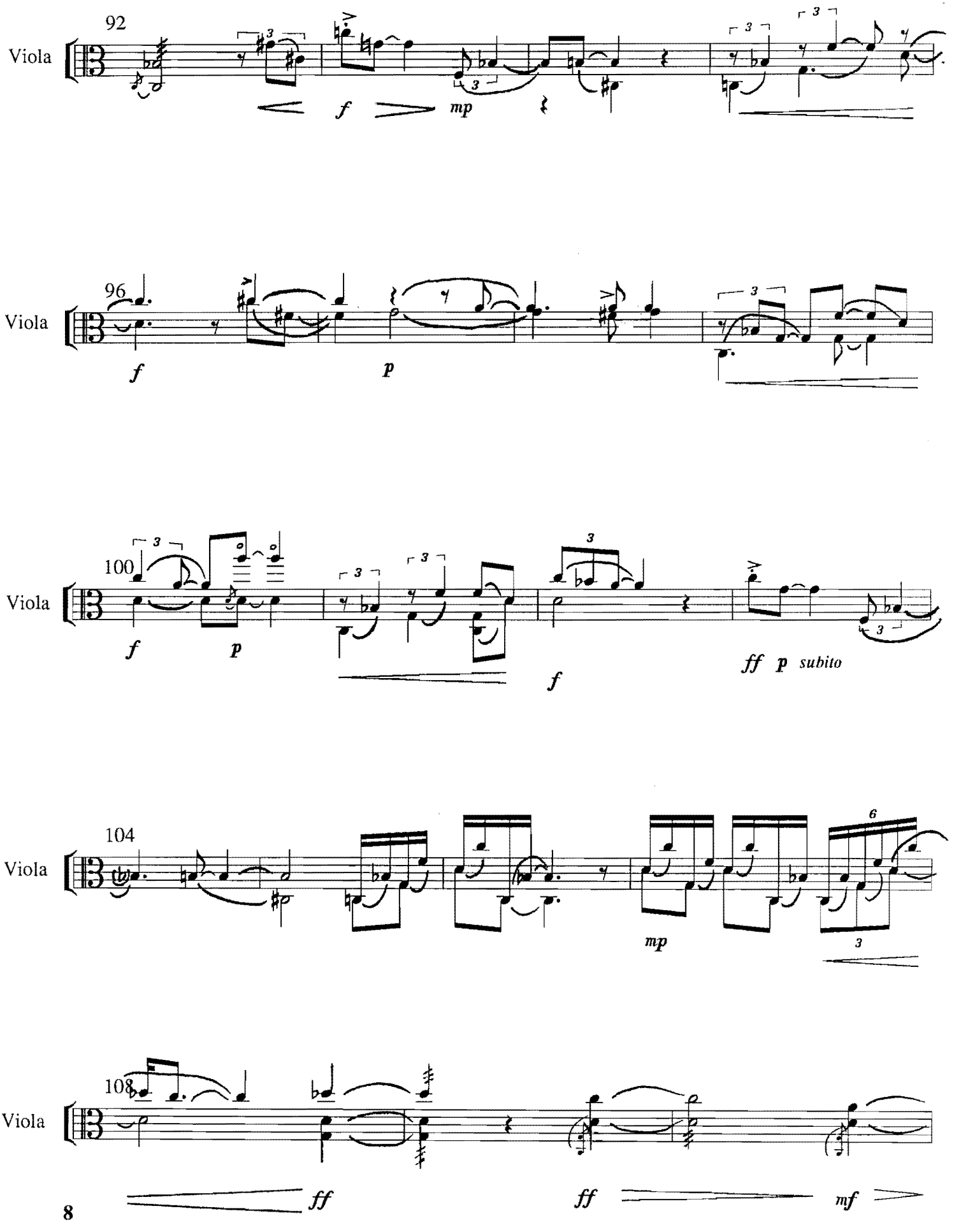

70
Timp.
f
ff
ff
mp
f
p
cresc.

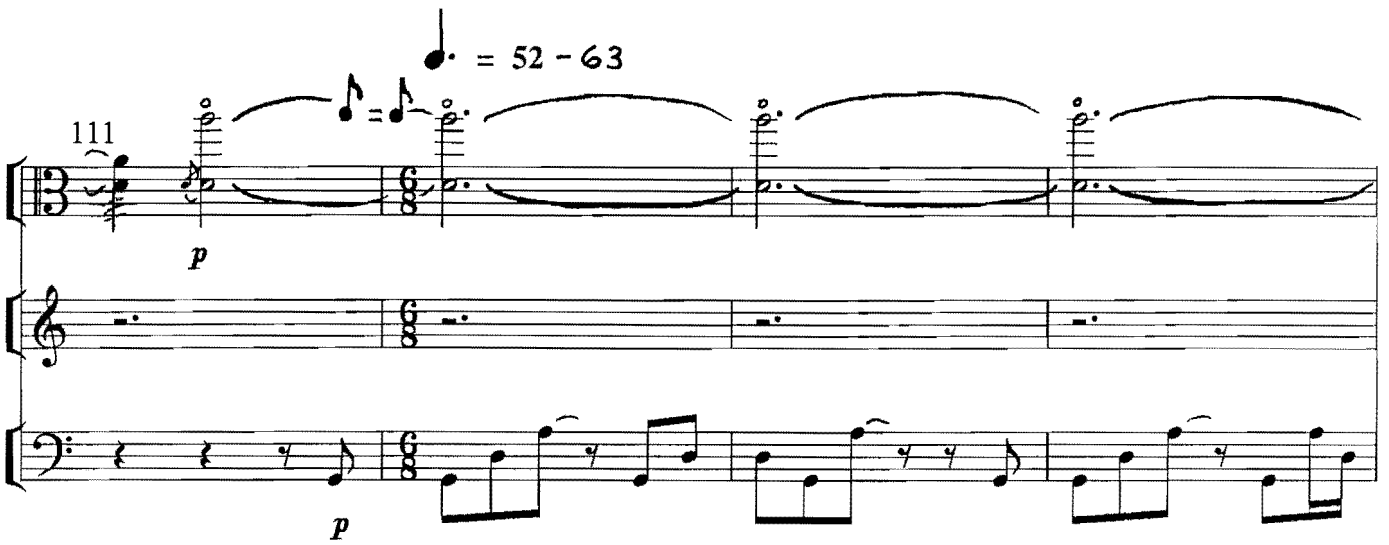

75
Timp.
(cresc.) - - - - - -
ff

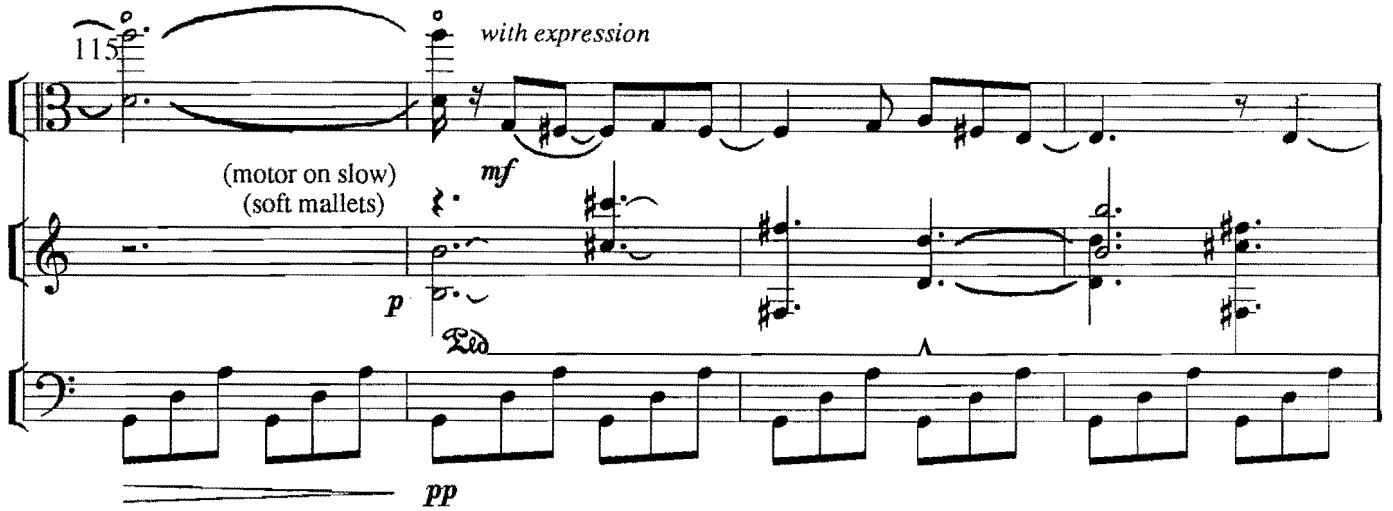

80
Timp.
dim. - - - - - - - -

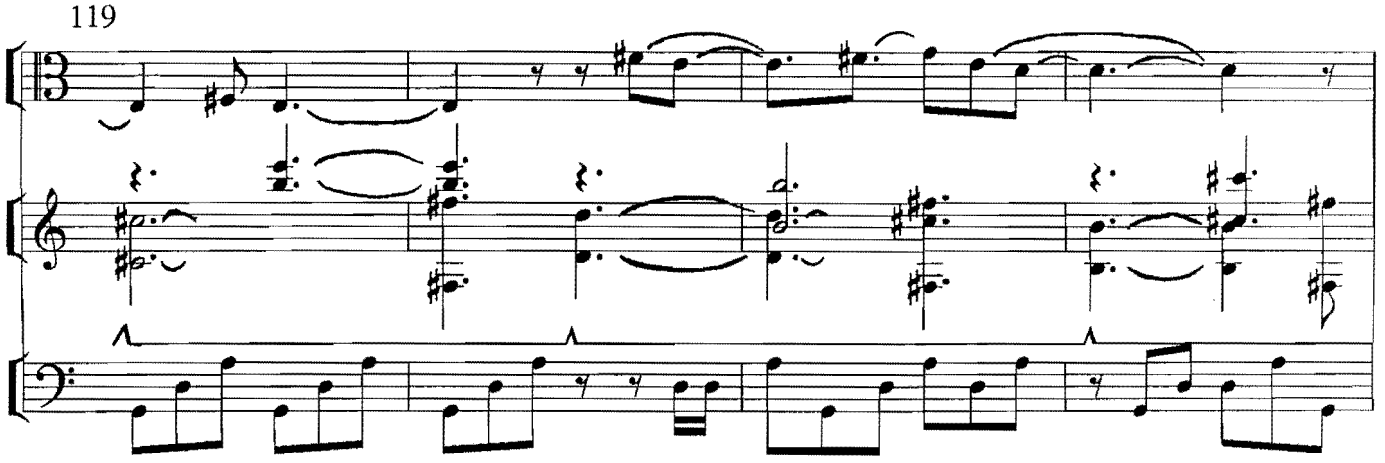

84
p
motor on slow
soft mallets
mp
p
p
pp

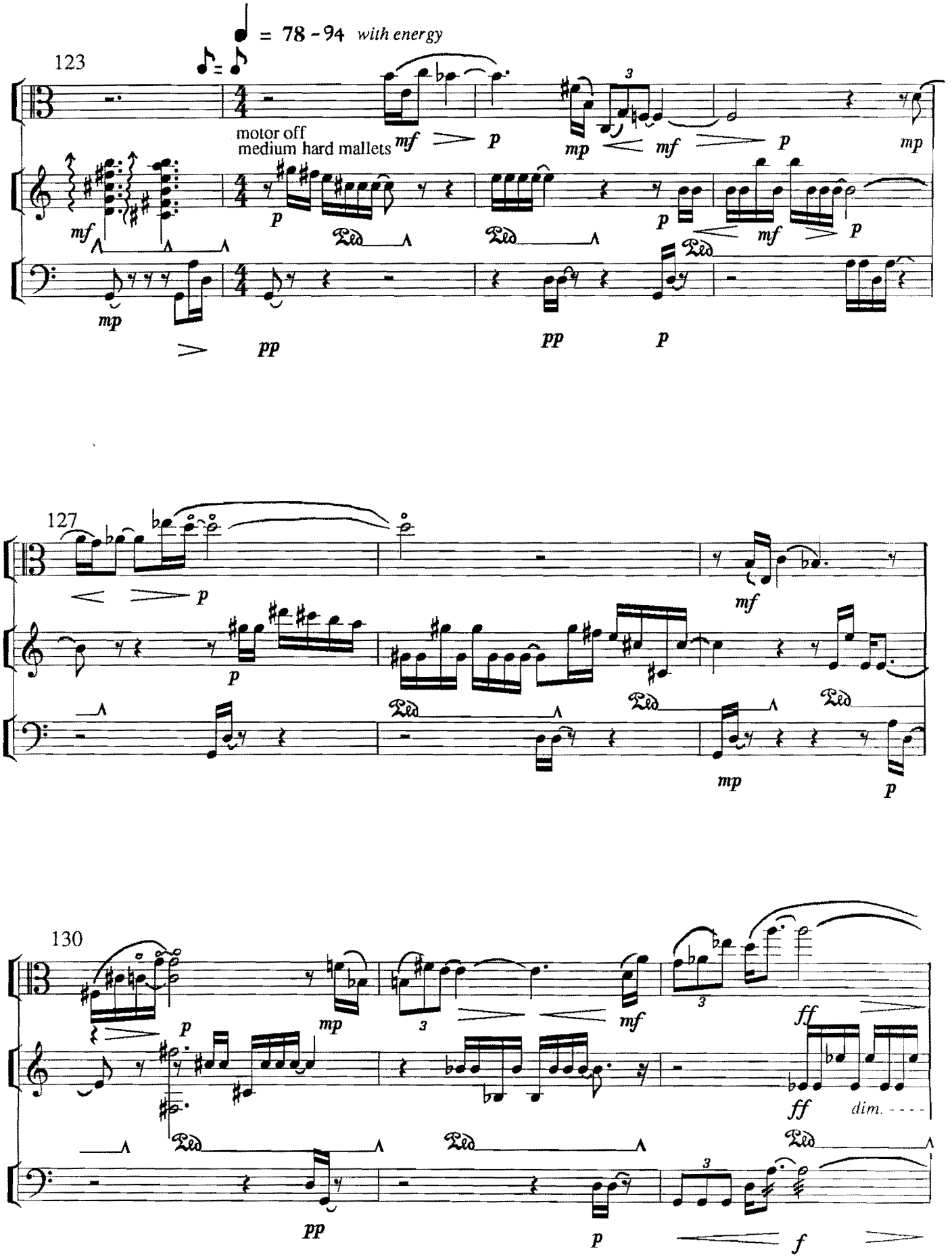

= 78 - 94
88
Viola

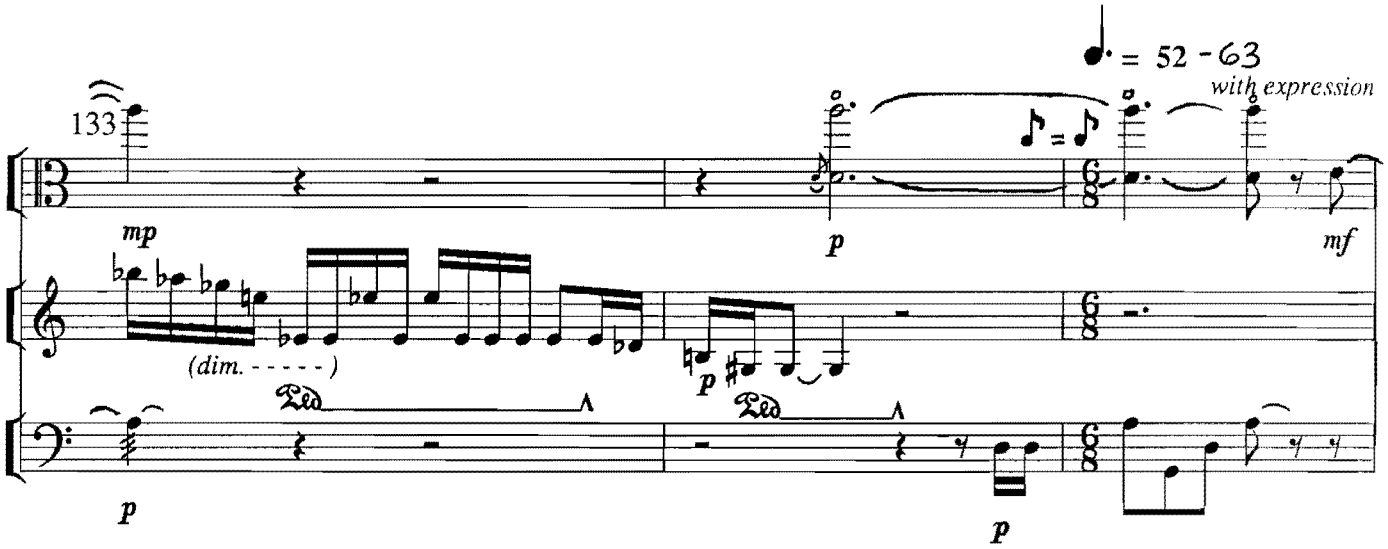

92
Viola
f
mp
96
Viola
f
p
100
Viola
f
p
f
ff p subito
104
Viola
mp
6
3
108
Viola
ff
ff
mf

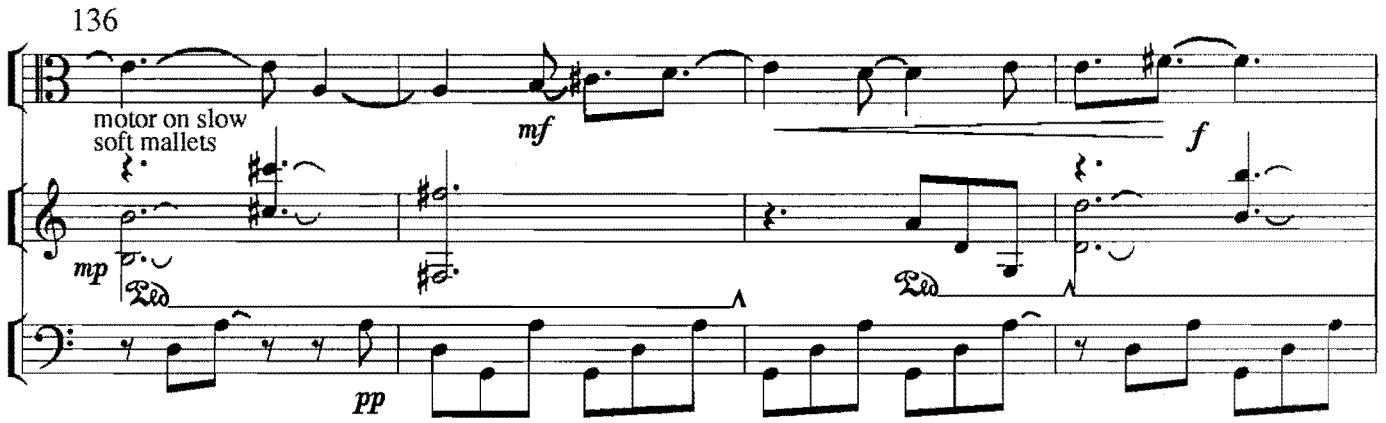

♩. = 52 - 63
111
p
p

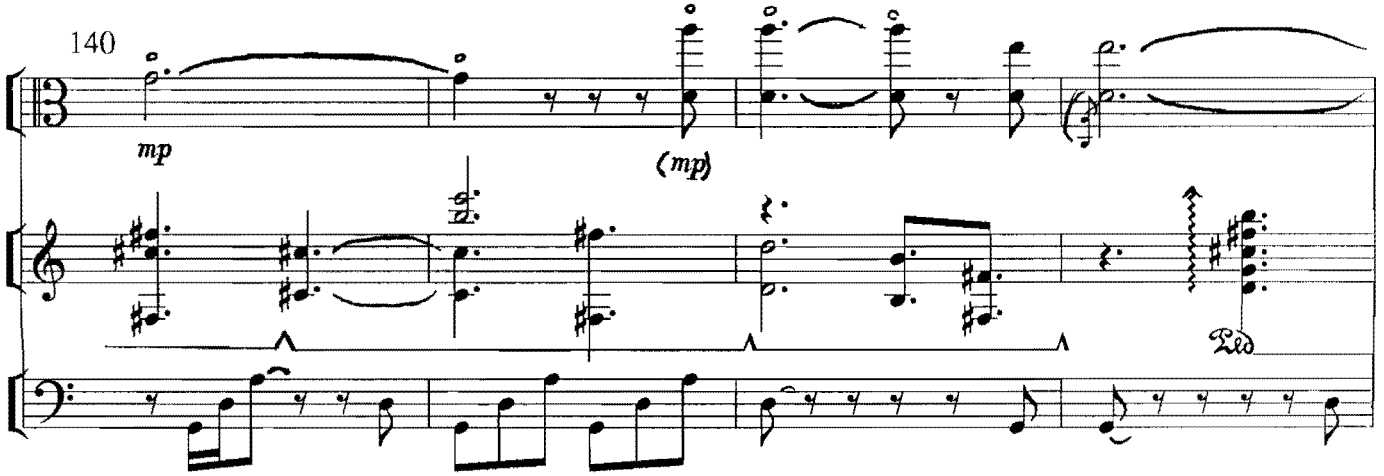

115
with expression
(motor on slow)
(soft mallets)
mf
p
Ped
pp

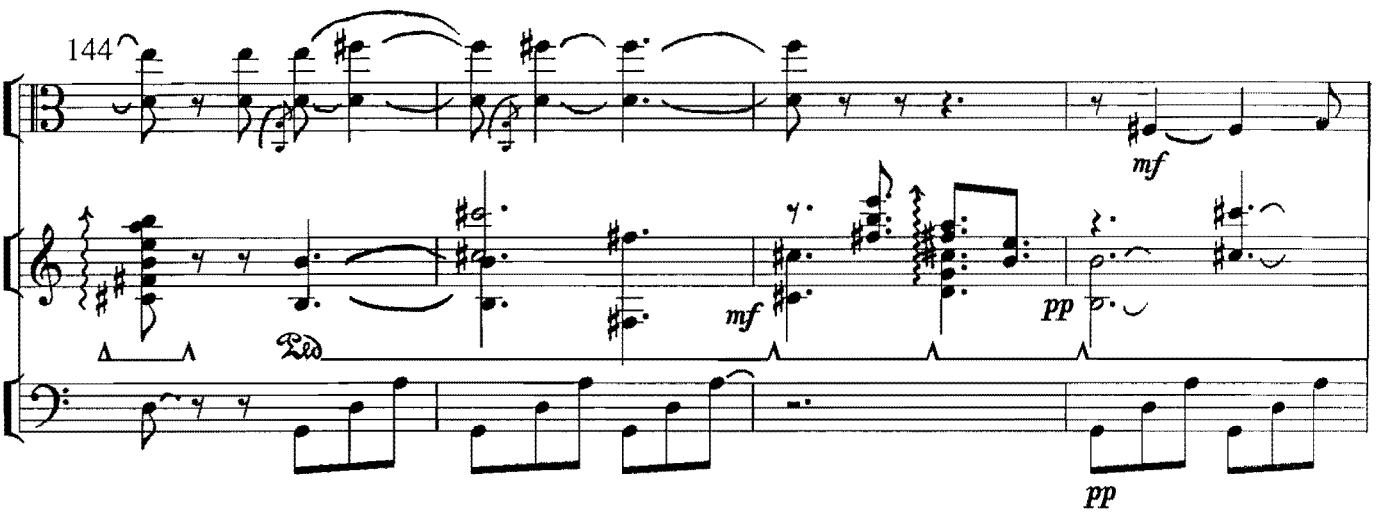

119

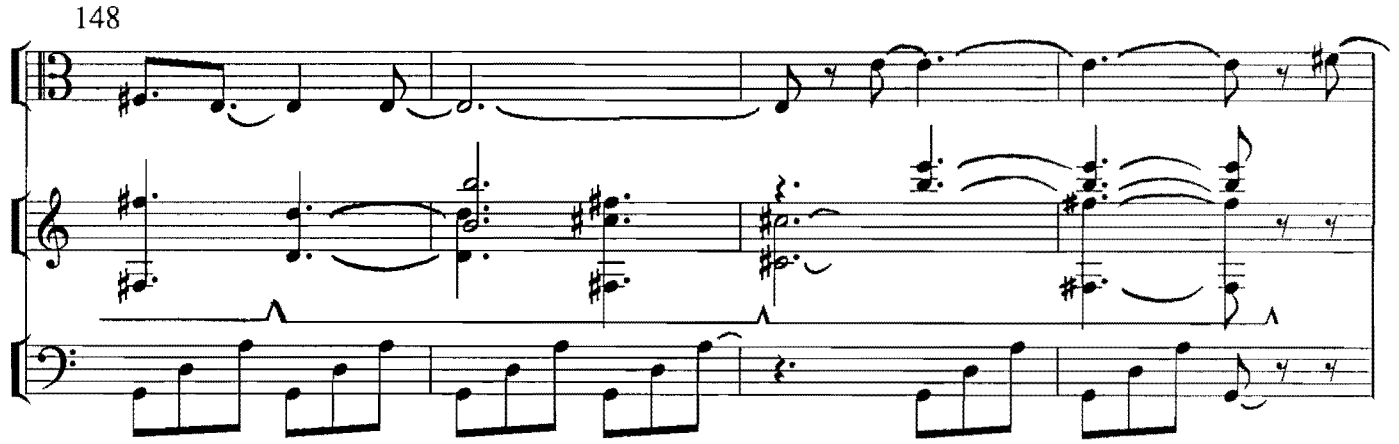

= 78 - 94 with energy
123
motor off
medium hard mallets
mf
p
mp
mf
p
mp
mf
p
p
mf
p
mp
pp
pp
p
127
p
mf
p
mp
p
130
p
mp
mf
ff
ff
dim.
pp
p
f


133
♩. = 52 - 63
with expression
mp
p
mf
(dim. - - - - -)
p
p
p


136
motor on slow
soft mallets
mf
f
mp
pp


140
mp
(mp)


144
mf
mf
pp
pp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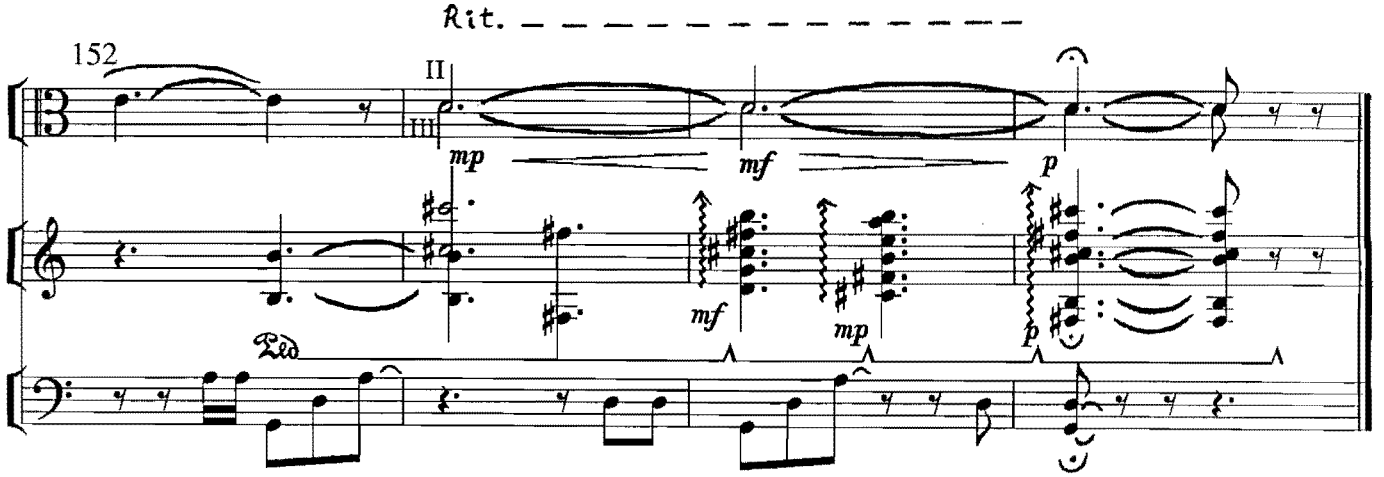
Rit.
152
II
III
mp
mf
p
mf
mp
p