Parting

for viola alone

DANIEL OTT

commissioned by the
Max Aronoff Viola Institute

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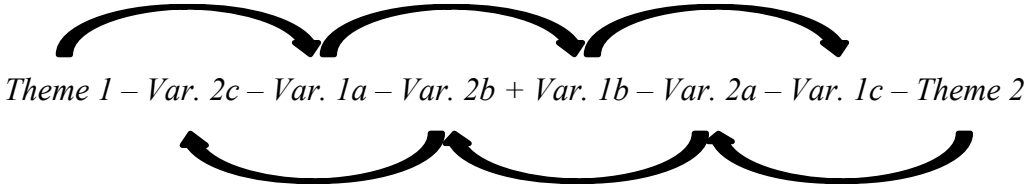
Prior to composing *Parting*, I had long wanted an opportunity to write a solo work for my friend, the violist Charles Noble (currently Assistant Principal Viola of the Oregon Symphony Orchestra). The chance finally came in 2005 in the form of a commission from the Max Aronoff Viola Institute who wanted either a sonata with piano or an unaccompanied work for their summer recital series.

Truth be told, *Parting* is not the first piece on which Charles and I have worked together. Charles is one of my first musical collaborators, having been there at the start of it all. He actually took part in my very first public performance (of a quartet for violin, two violas, and cello—now resting eternally in a trunk in my parents' house). Since that beginning, back in my high school days, he has likely played seven or eight of my works, including a nascent sonata for viola and piano, which sadly never knew completion. But *Parting* is the first *finished* work written expressly for him.

A single-movement piece, *Parting* (whose title has several meanings) is a set of continuous variations on two themes, one light, the other dark. The themes are heard at the beginning and end of the work, respectively, and their variations unfold in opposite directions, as it were, meeting in the middle for a larger combined variation. In diagram, it looks like this:



In actuality, the two themes are variations on one another—flip sides of the same coin. Embedded in the abstract design is a narrative, loosely based on the Orpheus myth (in which the hero's lyre is replaced by a viola!). The plucking motive that resounds throughout alludes to this story, as does the title, whose meanings can refer to both a leave-taking and a division into smaller parts (variations).

I am delighted that Charles Noble finally has a work of his own to "create." His robust and impassioned playing is perfectly tailored to the dramatic sense of this work.

for Charles Noble

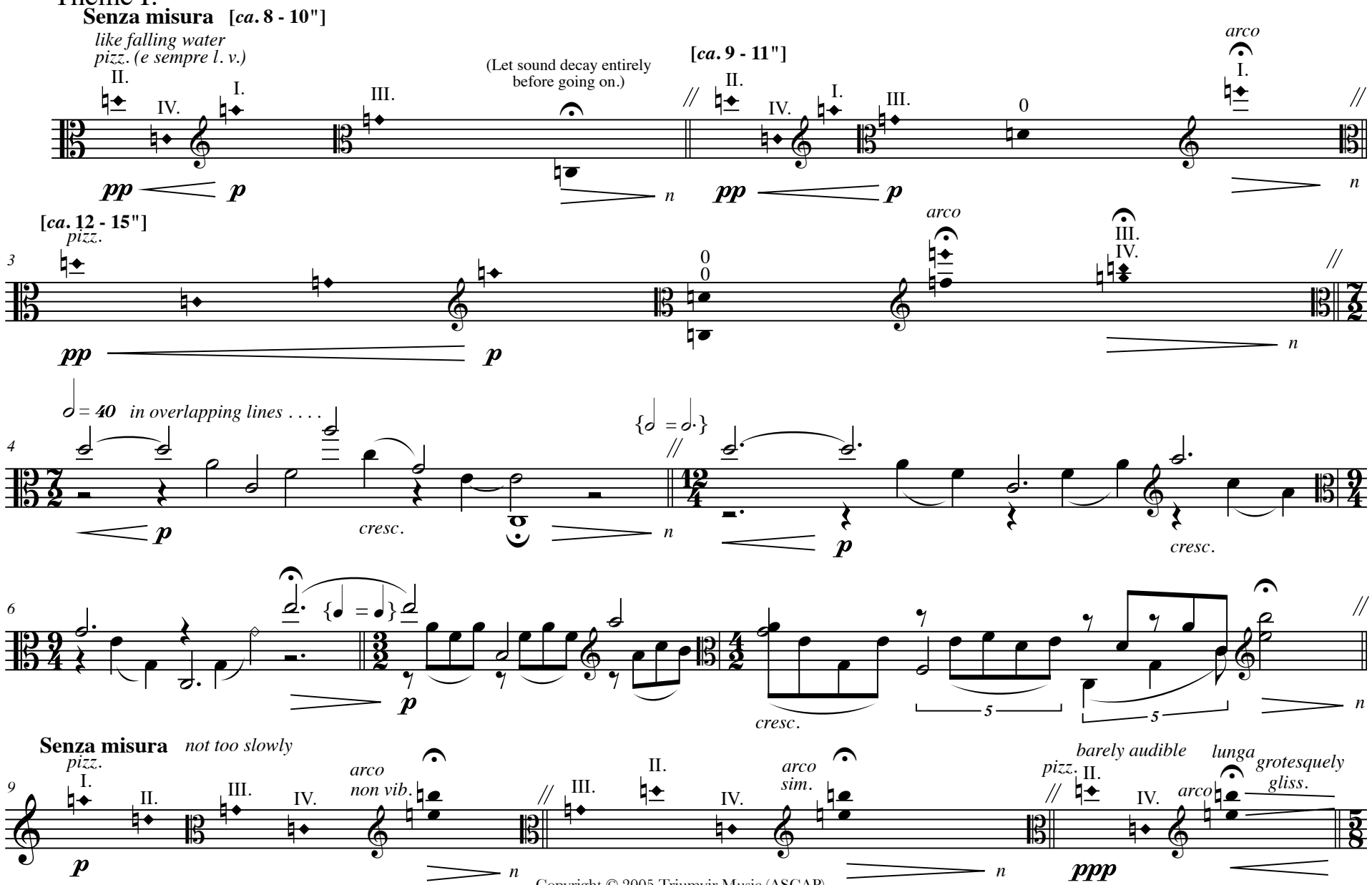
Parting

for Viola Alone

Commissioned by the 2005 Max Aronoff Viola Institute

Daniel Ott
(2005)

Theme I.



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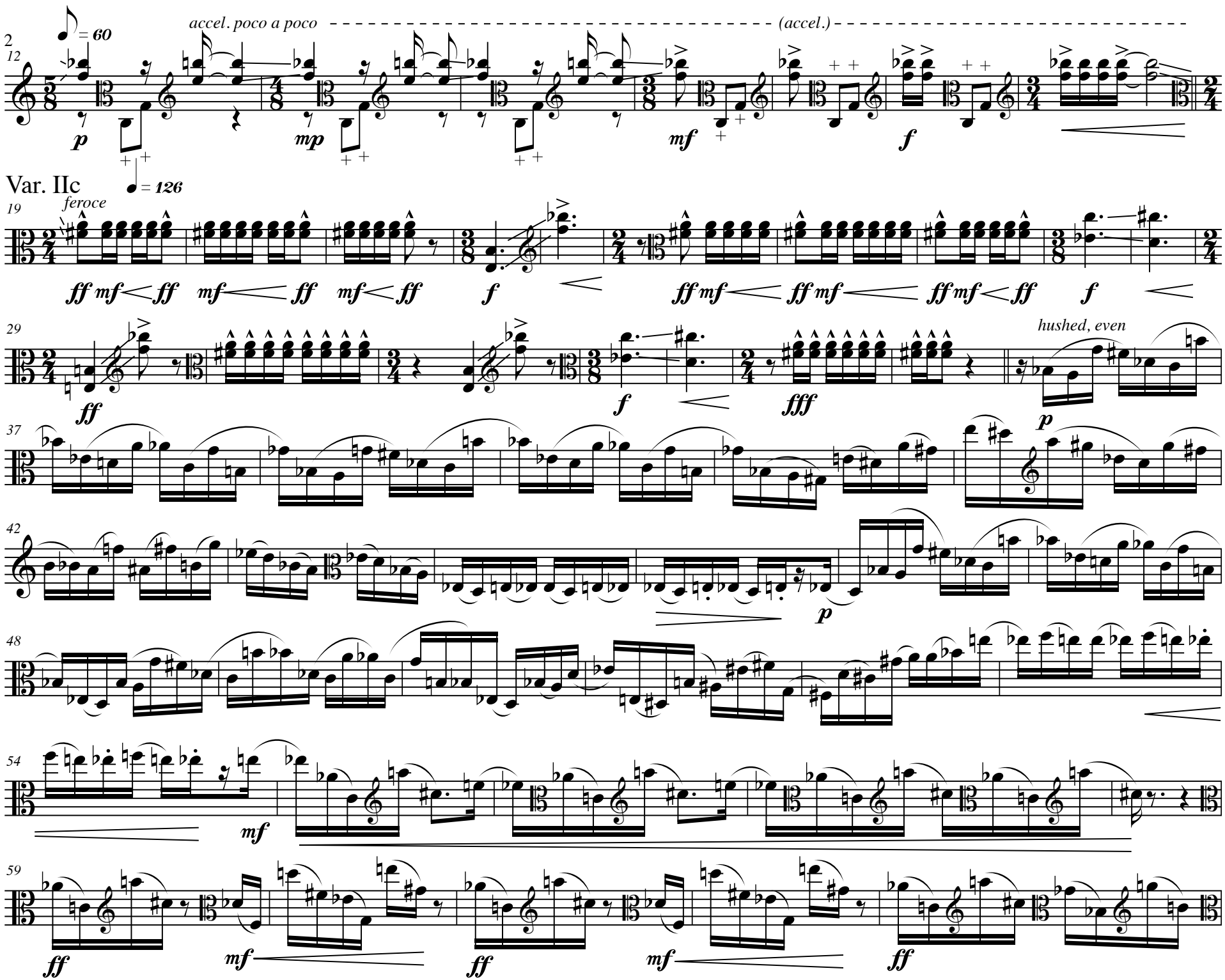
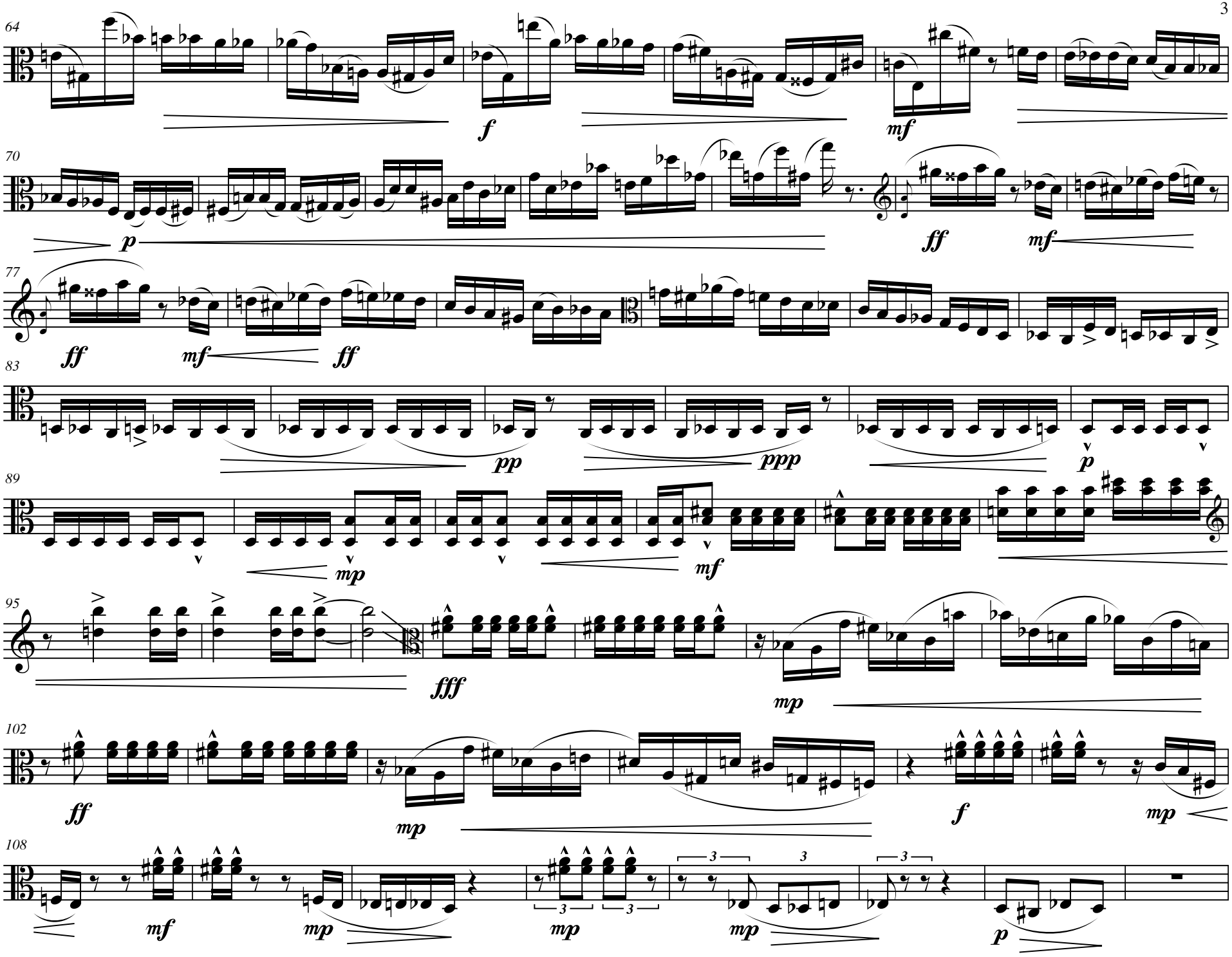
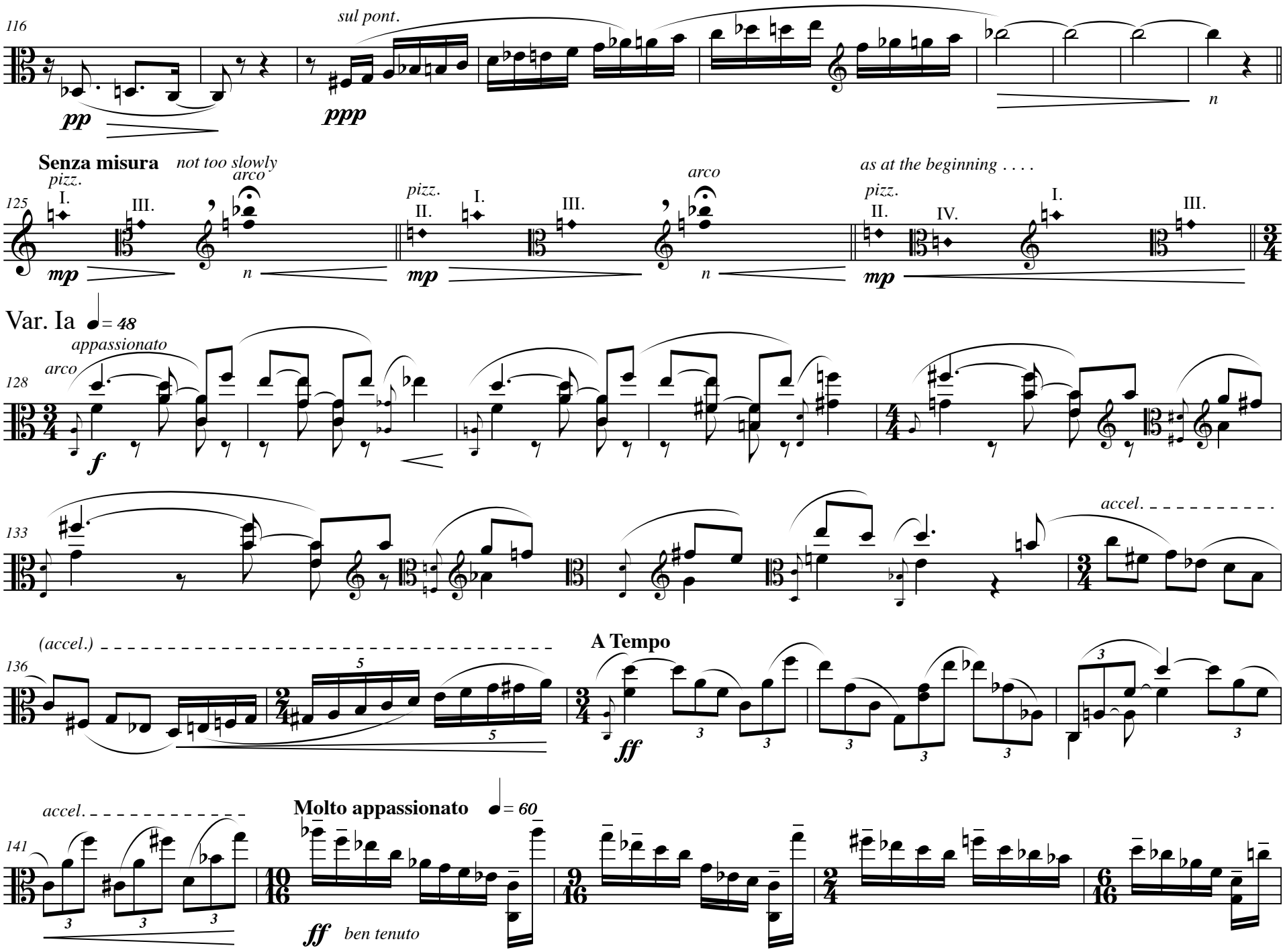
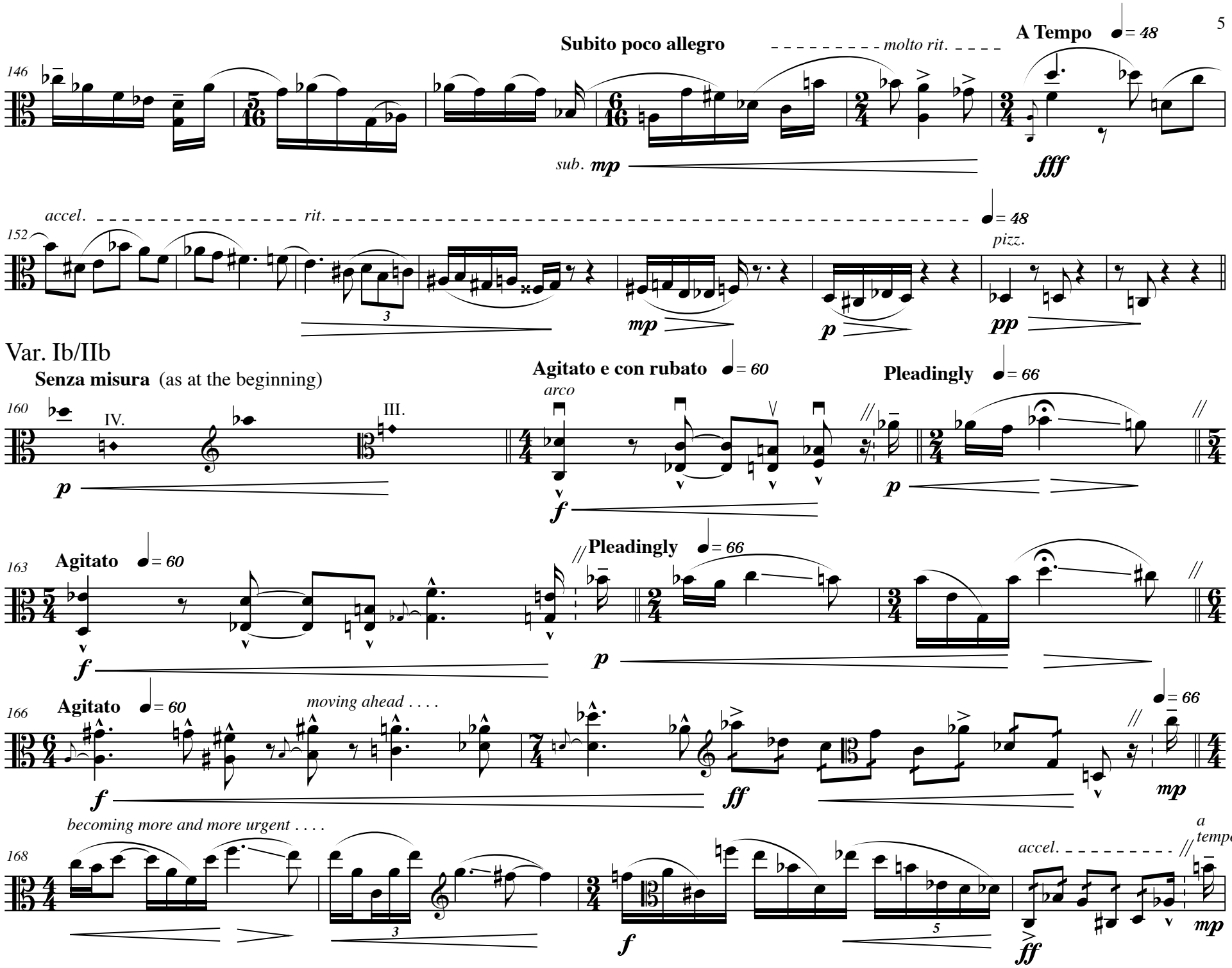
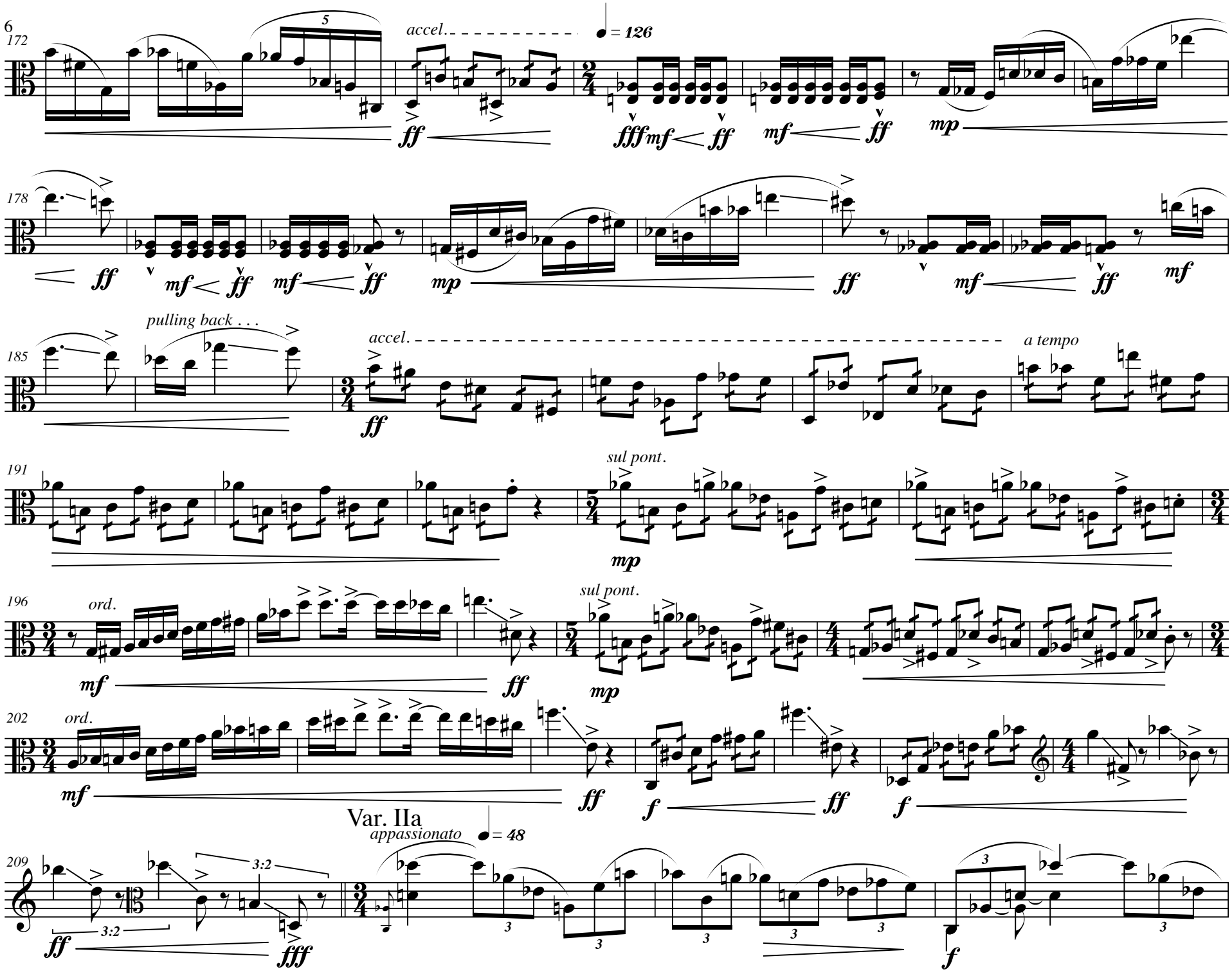
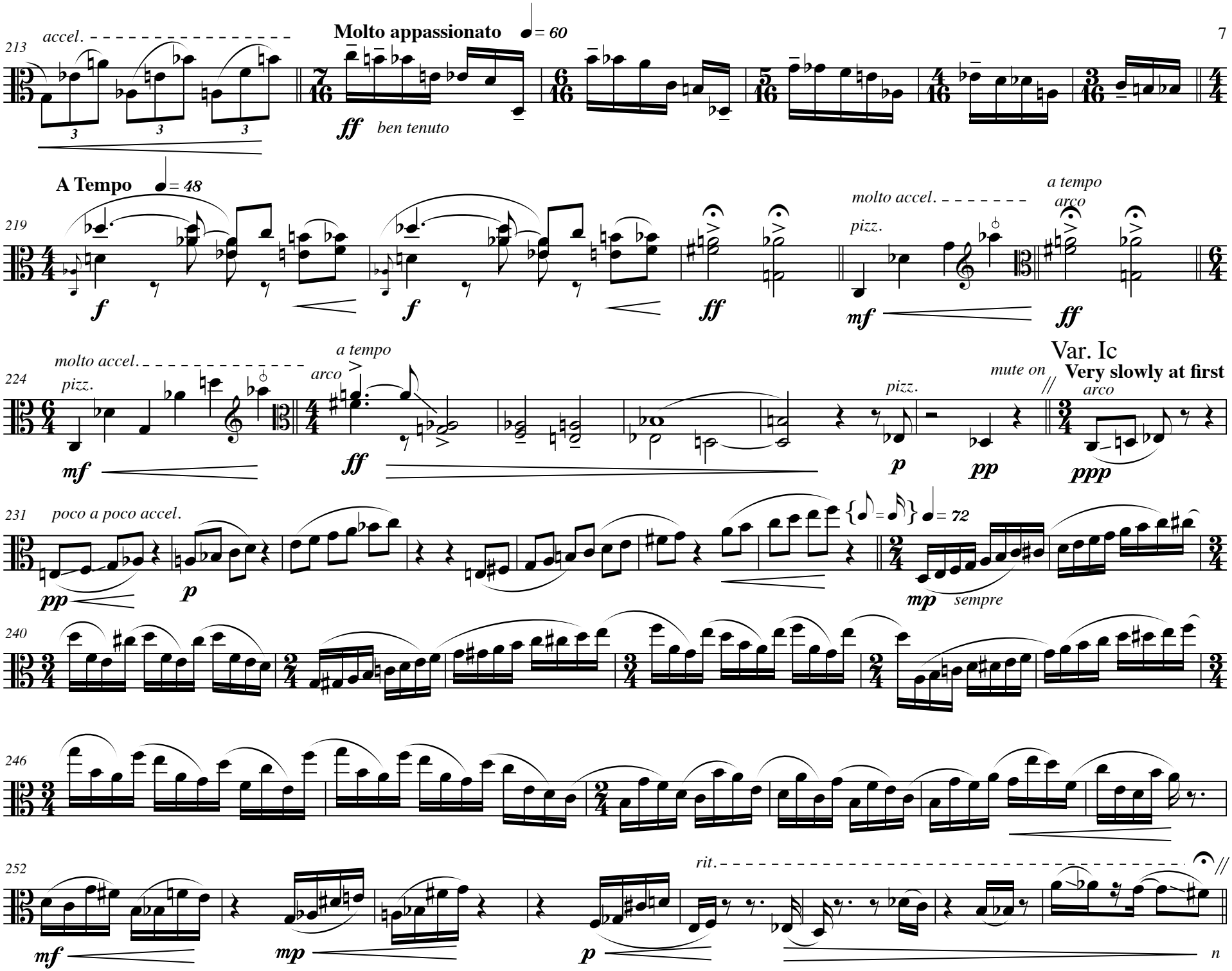

accel. poco a poco
(accel.)
= 60
Var. IIc
= 126
feroce
hushed, even


64
f
mf
70
p
ff
mf
77
ff
mf
ff
83
pp
ppp
p
89
mp
mf
95
fff
mp
102
ff
mp
f
mp
108
mf
mp
mp
mp
p


116
sul pont.
pp
ppp
n
Senza misura
not too slowly
125
pizz.
arco
I.
III.
II.
IV.
mp
n
as at the beginning . . . .
Var. Ia
= 48
appassionato
128
f
133
accel.
(accel.)
136
5
A Tempo
ff
3
141
Molto appassionato
= 60
ff
ben tenuto

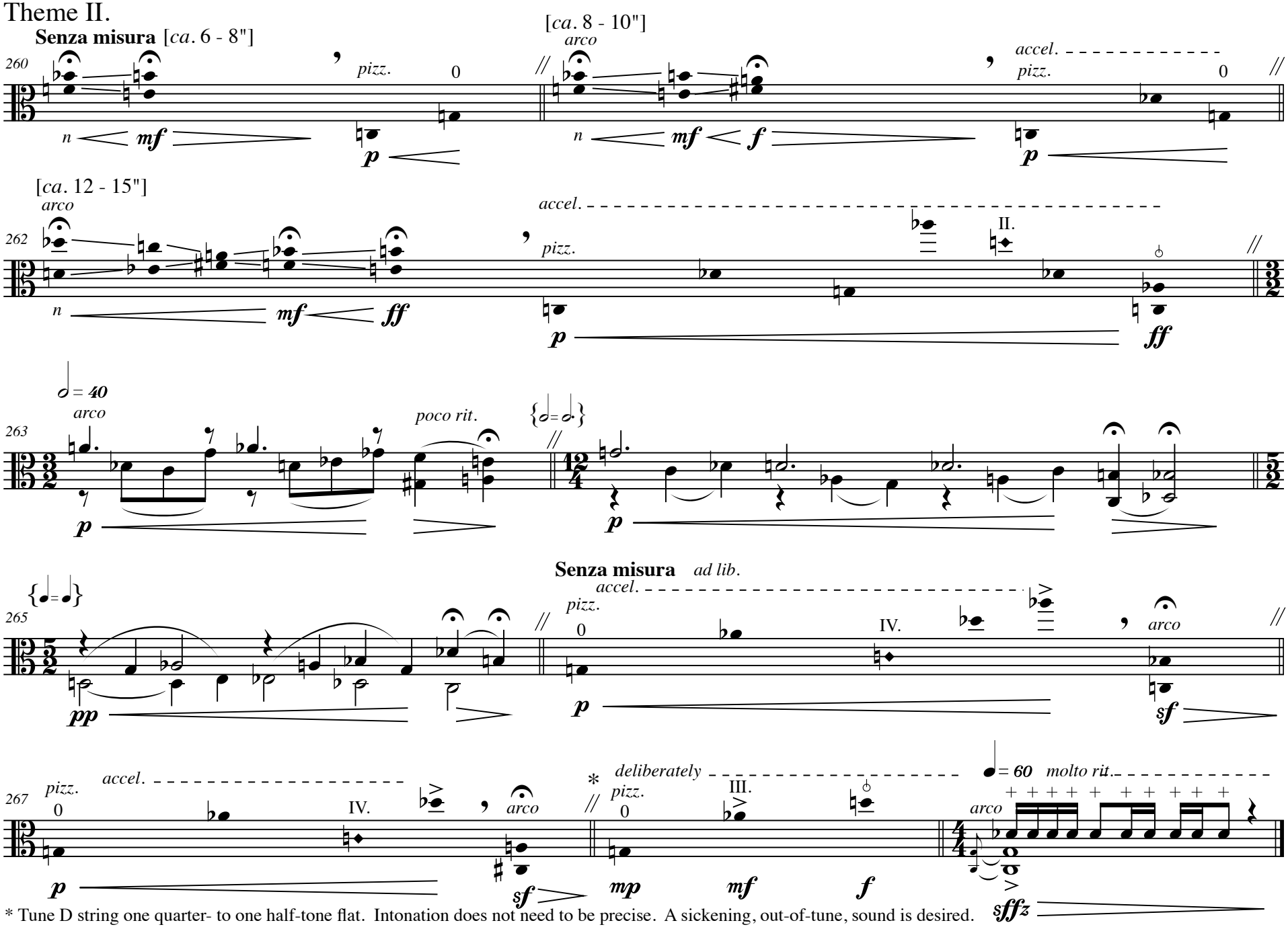

Subito poco allegro
molto rit.
A Tempo
= 48
146
sub. mp
fff
accel.
rit.
= 48
152
pizz.
3
mp
p
pp
Var. Ib/IIb
Senza misura (as at the beginning)
Agitato e con rubato
= 60
Pleadingly
= 66
160
IV.
III.
arco
p
f
Agitato
= 60
163
Pleadingly
= 66
f
p
Agitato
= 60
moving ahead . . . .
166
f
ff
mp
becoming more and more urgent . . . .
168
3
f
5
accel.
a tempo
ff
mp


172
accel.
♩ = 126
178
185
pulling back . . .
accel.
a tempo
191
sul pont.
196
ord.
sul pont.
202
ord.
Var. IIa
appassionato
♩ = 48
209
3:2
3:2


213
accel.
Molto appassionato
= 60
ff
ben tenuto
A Tempo
= 48
219
f
f
ff
molto accel.
pizz.
mf
a tempo
arco
ff
224
molto accel.
pizz.
mf
a tempo
arco
ff
pizz.
p
pp
mute on
Var. Ic
Very slowly at first
arco
ppp
231
poco a poco accel.
pp
p
= 72
mp
sempre
240
246
252
rit.
mf
mp
p
n

Theme II.

Senza misura [*ca.* 6 - 8"]



* Tune D string one quarter- to one half-tone flat. Intonation does not need to be precise. A sickening, out-of-tune, sound is desired.