A New Piano Reduction of the Piazzolla *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* For Violin and String orchestra

by

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ABSTRACT

Argentine composer Astor Piazzolla started to receive greater recognition throughout the world after his death in 1992, leading to the growing popularity of his compositions. An excellent example of this is *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* composed by Piazzolla for his tango ensemble in the late 1960s and later arranged by Russian violinist Leonid Desyatnikov for violin soloist with string orchestra. As this arrangement has grown in popularity, it has become among the many extraordinary pieces that talented violinists play for recitals, concerto competitions and even final jury exams in many musical institutions. However, as of now, many musicians have faced a challenge because there is no published piano reduction for them to use. This project aims to create an orchestral reduction of the string orchestra parts that can benefit both collaborative pianists and violinists. This reduction will create timbres and textures similar to the original orchestration in an arrangement that is idiomatic for the instrument, and worthwhile to rehearse and perform as a collaborative pianist. While the appendix features the new reduction in its entirety, this paper aims at discussing and explaining the most important editing choices in different aspects when arranging the reduction, rather than examining each choice measure by measure throughout the composition. In this way, the technique demonstrated in this document can be employed in other reductions, and will hopefully provide inspiration for collaborative pianists to create new reductions for other works.

DEDICATION

To my parents and entire family members

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would love to thank you, my mentor – Dr. Andrew Campbell, for all of his support and numerous times of encouragement throughout my entire time at ASU. It is so honored to have him as my professor. I could not have been what I am now without his help and patience to solve all of my problems.

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INTRODUCTION

Playing orchestral reductions is one of the essential tasks of every collaborative pianist's life. As we approach orchestral reductions, our goal is to reproduce the sounds of an entire orchestra, and many advanced techniques are required in order to achieve the greatest success. We as collaborative pianists are expected to be talented arrangers as a result.

On many occasions, especially in competitions and recitals during their studies, instrumentalists and vocalists collaborate with pianists rather than a full orchestra on orchestrated material. Consequently, having or creating an effective piano reduction is crucial to the success of our partners. However, many of the piano reductions that have been published have multiple issues, such as unreachable chords, incomplete phrases, wrong articulations, or the elimination of important musical materials. This creates extra work for collaborative pianists when learning new orchestra reductions and can be very distracting for our colleagues when they ultimately perform with the orchestra. Therefore, having a well-written piano reduction can be crucial, as it will save much of the collaborative pianists' time by creating the sounds closest to the composer's original intentions, therefore providing our colleagues with accurate information in the future.

While fixing an existing reduction is a staple of every collaborative pianist’s technique and daily work, creating a new piano reduction from an orchestral piece without any existing published one is a challenge, as nothing can be reviewed as a reference. However, even though the process can be a challenge, there are positive aspects when creating it, such as directly using the original score without distractions

from other problematic reductions. Creating a new reduction from the original full score consists of many different steps, but perhaps the most crucial is the first one: listening to notable recordings while consulting the full score. Though it sounds simple and obvious, it requires paying much attention to the articulation, phrasing, and sound quality created by different instruments, as this is the principal rule of making editorial choices. While other arrangers may have held different opinions and goals in the past, most modern reductions have the same intent: create a playable version for the piano that sounds as close to the original orchestration as possible, without the need for any further modification in the future.

Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas by Astor Piazzolla/Leonid Desyatnikov is an exceptional violin concerto that has become quite popular. However, with no existing piano reduction at the time of this document, many violinists struggle to find pianists to create a piano reduction from the full orchestral score for them to perform. This situation has become an obstacle for violinists who are eager to perform this piece with pianists. As a result, creating a piano reduction of *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* is needed.

The purpose of this research project is to create a well-written piano reduction of *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* by Astor Piazzolla. After initial chapters featuring biographies of the composer, arranger and the historical background of the piece, subsequent chapters will feature each of the four seasons, with detailed examples and discussions of the specific choices made when creating this piano reduction. This piano reduction will benefit both professional and student violinists, creating more opportunities for them to perform this work in recitals, competitions, and pedagogical situations when having a full orchestra is not possible.

CHAPTER II

COMPOSER'S BIOGRAPHY

Argentine composer Astor Piazzolla was born on March 11th, 1921, in an ocean city south of Buenos Aires called Mar del Plata. Although he was born in Argentina, he was raised and spent most of his childhood in New York City. When Piazzolla was young, his father, Vicente Piazzolla, a barber, heard from his friends that life could be better in New York than in Argentina.[1] After multiple times traveling by boat to examine the prospects, he decided to take his family to emigrate to Greenwich Village, populated by gangsters and hard-working immigrants.[2] In early childhood, Piazzolla quickly learned to take care of himself because of his parents' heavy workload. However, at the same time, due to the violent environment in which he lived, in a poor neighborhood full of clashes between gangster gangs, he became a fighter and troublemaker, which influenced his music.[3]

At the age of eight, Piazzolla's father bought him a bandoneón[4], a prominent instrument of tango music,[5] and desperately hoped that Piazzolla would become a famous tango musician.[6] At first, Piazzolla was not highly engaged in learning this instrument; instead, he preferred spending time playing baseball and boxing. In spite of receiving many musical lessons, everything fell through because of his roguish attitude, which

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[1] Maria Susana Azzi and Simon Collier, *Le Grand Tango: The Life and Music of Astor Piazzolla* (Oxford: Oxford
University Press, 2000), 5.
[2] Natalio Gorin, *Astor Piazzolla: a Memoir* (Portland, Or.: Amadeus Press, 2001), 13.
[3] Ibid., 30.
[4] A German concertina-like instrument which may have been invented as early as 1835 and closely associated with the tango.
[5] Gabriela Mauriño, "A New Body for a New Tango: The Ergonomics of Bandoneon Performance in Astor Piazzolla's Music," *The Galpin Society Journal* 62 (April 2009): pp. 263-264.
[6] Azzi and Collier, 8.

stemmed from his exposure to a nefarious neighborhood[7]. Fortunately, his focus on music improved during his nine-month visit to Mar del Plata in 1930, where he took lessons with competent bandoneonists. In addition, with his first memorable musical experience at the Cotton Club, listening to Duke Ellington in Harlem, those experiences built up his interest in jazz music and influenced his compositions.[8]

After returning from Mar del Plata, his family moved to Little Italy in lower Manhattan, where a Hungarian pianist named Bela Wilda was his next-door neighbor. By listening to his playing of Bach, Piazzolla started change how he felt about the importance of music and baseball or boxing, and decided to study music seriously. In the biography of Piazzolla by Azzi and Collier, they described this encounter:

> The Piazzollas' next-door neighbor on East 9th Street was Bela Wilda, a Hungarian pianist and pupil of Sergei Rachmaninoff. Astor was mesmerized by the sound of Wilda's piano as he practiced, and he began staying at home simply to listen. He became obsessed by Wilda's playing of Bach ("I fell in love with Bach, I went crazy," he would say later) and quickly decided he want to study with Wilda. Vicente finally gave in. Wilda have no knowledge of the bandoneón but could arrange piano pieces for the instrument. More important, he introduce Astor to classical music, which soon seemed as alluring as jazz … Astor was regard him as his "first great master" … it was only with Wilda that he really learned to read music.[9]

The Piazzolla family returned to Argentina when Piazzolla turned sixteen in 1937. At first, Piazzolla was unmotivated about music and uncertain about his future, and witnessed his parents drown with worry. Piazzolla's ambition reawakened when he discovered Elvino Vardaro's sextet, one of the outstanding ensembles of the day on the radio. Piazzolla admired Vardaro's violin playing and his unique tango interpretations,

[7] Gorin, 31-32.
[8] Azzi and Collier, 10-12.
[9] Ibid., 13-14.

and this led him to become a member of Piazzolla's *Orquesta de Cuerdas*[10] and violinist of his first quintet later on. During this one-year living in Mar del Plata, Piazzolla joined many local tango bands as a bandoneónist, which built the foundation of his future career as a professional tango musician.

At the age of seventeen in 1938, taking advice from Miguel Caló[11], Piazzolla moved to Buenos Aires seeking work as a musician.[12] Unfortunately, as a classically trained musician with only tango experience, he did not earn many opportunities. However, luckily enough, with a year of dues-paying, his dream of being a member of the Anibal Troilo[13] orchestra (widely praised as the best golden age *orquestas típicas*[14]) finally came true. With an impressive audition, Piazzolla won the job in an emergency performance to replace their ill bandoneónist, and was invited to stay as a regular musician afterward. In addition, he also became an arranger for the Trolio orchestra. Years later, having earned enough from the Troilo orchestra, Piazzolla started to have lessons with the famed Argentine composer Alberto Ginastera. Under the instruction of Ginastera, Piazzolla strengthened his compositional skills of orchestration, counterpoint, and harmony. Although extremely busy with studying and performing simultaneously, it is no doubt that this period constituted one of the turning points in Piazzolla's career.

Piazzolla's relationship with Troilo was steady until Troilo realized that Piazzolla's arrangements were becoming less appealing to his fellow musicians and audiences because of their complexities and challenges for the musicians. Instead, Troilo

[10] String Orchestra in Spanish.
[11] Argentine tango bandoneonist, composer, and the leader of the Orchestra Miguel Caló.
[12] Gorin, 41.
[13] Argentine tango musician.
[14] A Latin American term for a band which plays popular music.

desired music that was more accessible and danceable. He even shouted to Piazzolla: "You are turning my band into a symphony orchestra!"[15] On the other hand, Piazzolla also felt that since their musicals idea did not match, staying in the Troilo orchestra might limit his career development. With this as the deciding factor, Piazzolla decided to leave his orchestra and join the orchestra led by Francisco Fiorentino.

Initially, the time in Fiorentino's ensemble was pleasant and productive. Fiorentino was indeed flexible and respectful of Piazzolla's innovative arrangements. Between 1945 and 1946, the band recorded many songs and instrumental tangos for Odeon label, which was a huge success.[16] Nevertheless, Piazzolla's personality and his expectations for the band made him feel that the partnership with Fiorentino would not be permanent; he decided to amicably end this partnership and form his orchestra in June 1946. Although some of his fellow musicians joined Piazzolla's orchestra later on to support him, surprisingly, his band still dissolved in mid-1949.[17]

Despite some frustrations in the previous few years, his success did not stop. After he wrapped up his band, he started to compose film and classical music for a living. During his lessons with Ginastera, Piazzolla dived into studying the scores of Stravinsky, Bartók, and Ravel, which fostered his skill as a composer of serious music. In 1953, at Ginastera's recommendation, Piazzolla entered a competition with his new three-movement symphonic work *Buenos Aires*, Op.15. In accordance with expectation from Ginastera, the result came back for him as the winner of the Fabiem Sevitzky Prize,

[15] Azzi and Collier, 34.
[16] Ibid., 36.
[17] Ibid., 41-42.

including a cash prize and a one-year French government scholarship to study with the legendary composition teacher Nadia Boulanger in Paris.

During the first few lessons with Nadia Boulanger, Piazzolla decided to hide his identity as a tango musician to avoid disrespectful and uncomfortable feelings. Almost all of Boulanger's students were leading composers worldwide, such as Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein. However, surprising his expectations, he received this feedback: "This music is well-written, but it lacks feeling,"[18] which emphatically discouraged and disheartened him. Boulanger did not provide this feedback to dissuade him from his compositional career; instead, she helped him. After a thoughtful conversation in which he demonstrated his tango compositions, she complimented him firmly: "This is Piazzolla, and never leave it."[19] Since then, Piazzolla always said proudly: "Nadia helps me find myself" when he recalled his memory of Paris.[20]

Having concluded a rewarding and inspiring educational journey in Paris, Piazzolla returned to Argentina in 1955 and immediately formed his Octeto Buenos Aires, intending to modernize the tango genre. Piazzolla's Octeto instrumentation was similar to the traditional *orquestas típicas* but included an electric guitar for the first time in a tango ensemble. Although they played tangos, the musical setting was considerably more like chamber music. Azzi and Collier have described this unique sound in their Piazzolla biography:

> For the first time, Piazzolla treated all his musicians as solo instrumentalists. He allowed the electric guitar a high degree of improvisation, something totally unknown in previous tango music. The piano's free-flowing role, the counterpoint achieved with the strings, the percussive effects created by the strings and electric

[18] Ibid., 51.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.

> guitar, and the neatly calculated dissonances, gave the ensemble a revolutionary sound…[21]

Despite the fact that Piazzolla's new setting of tango music, which he later called *nuevo tango*,[22] received much support and appreciation from younger generations and many jazz enthusiasts, no one had treated tango music like this before; the tango was mainly for dancing audiences, not to sit, listen and appreciate. With the majority of audiences in Argentina insisting that the tango be danceable, Piazzolla Octeto faced inactivity for more than six months and ultimately disbanded due to financial difficulties in 1958.

Following his father's footsteps and hoping that American audiences would be more receptive than Argentinians to his *nuevo tango*, he once again relocated to New York City with his family in 1958. Despite making some television appearances, radio engagements, and touring with local musicians, his professional success did not last long due to the general musical taste of Americans at that time. Hearing of his father's death and wondering about his future and career, Piazzolla's family returned to Argentina for good. Fortunately, Argentina's politics and culture dramatically changed while he was absent and music that had not originated from Argentina has steadily gained ground over traditional tango music. Piazzolla established his first quintet, the Quinteto Tango Nuevo, which was the best group to express his approach to tango. With those facts and Piazzolla's own effort, he finally received recognition for his nuevo tango. For Piazzolla,

[21] Ibid., 59.
[22] A fusion of tango, jazz, and classical music.

the 1960s were his best years as a composer, as he later mentioned: "The 1960s were the nicest years Buenos Aires ever had."[23]

In the later years of Piazzolla's life, he was busy traveling the world as a soloist as well as occasionally with his Quinteto; meanwhile, he continued composing music, including symphonic pieces and chamber music, something he had not touched since he studied with Boulanger. With his reputation secured through his performing and composing, he was finally considered one of the most influential figures in Argentina. Unfortunately, as his career reached the climax, he suffered some health issues which ultimately led to an unexpected, tragic end. Severely ill, he was forced to stay in the hospital for almost two years until he lost consciousness and died due to cerebral hemorrhage on July 4th, 1992, in Buenos Aires.

[23] Azzi and Collier, 78.

ARRANGER'S BIOGRAPHY

Leonid Desyatnikov was born on October 16th, 1955, in Kharkov, the second-largest city in northeast Ukraine. At the age of eighteen, Desyatnikov moved to what was then called Leningrad, now known as, St. Petersburg. He majored in composition and instrumentation under Boris Arapov[24] and Boris Tishchenko[25] at the N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov Saint Petersburg State Conservatory, then known as the Leningrad Conservatory. Desyatnikov first earned his reputation as a film composer, but soon after his controversial opera, *The Children of Rosenthal* premiered in Moscow, and he was treated as a multi-style composer. As one of the most esteemed composers of his generation, Desyatnikov represented a rare instance of a contemporary composer who had all his works performed in his mid-forties.[26]

In 1979, Desyatnikov became a member of the St. Petersburg Union of Composers,[27] an organization formerly known as Union of Soviet Composers that many notable composers belong to, such as Dmitri Shostakovich.[28] Although his compositions primarily focused on the techniques of 19th-century Romanticism, a style full of emotion and complexity, the use of simple and pure Baroque techniques were also his specialty. In her article of his music, Olga Manulkina commented: "Desyatnikov's works were – or

[24] Soviet and Russian composer who receive People's Artist of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, an honorary title granted to Soviet Union artists in 1976.
[25] Russian and Soviet composer and pianist who also became a faculty at Leningrad Conservatory from 1965.
[26] Olga Manulkina, "The Rite of Beauty: An Introduction to the Music of Leonid Desyatnikov," *Tempo* 220 (April 2002): pp. 20.
[27] Department of the Union of Composers of the Russian Federation.
[28] Olga Manulkina, "Desyatnikov, Leonid Arkad'yevich," *Oxford Music Online*, January 20, 2001.

seem to be – shockingly simple, but subsequently they appeared to be subtle and structurally complex."[29]

Desyatnikov frequently used intriguing titles, often incorporating titles from other published compositions and combining them with cultural artifacts. Examples such as *Dichterliebe und Leben* a combination of Schumann's song cycles *Dichterliebe* and *Frauenliebe und leben,* or *The Rite of Winter 1949,* a reference to Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, demonstrate this trait. Moreover, various artful tricks such as borrowing music, or incorporating quotes and multi-styles can be found in his music.[30] Without a doubt, these techniques are evident in his arrangement of *Las cuatro estaciones porteñas* by Astor Piazzolla.

Desyatnikov has worked with many prominent figures, but his time with violinist Gidon Kremer[31] counts as one of the highlights of his life. Starting in 1996, he collaborated with Kremer as a composer, and worked closely with him in arranging and recording many of Piazzolla's compositions. During that time, Kremer initiated a project of re-orchestrating Piazzolla's suite *Las cuatro estaciones porteñas* and combining it with Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. With the help of Desyatnikov, Kremer released the recording *Eight Seasons* in 2000, a year after Desyatnikov finished the reorchestration. Continuing with Gidon Kremer's *Eight Seasons* idea, in 2000 Desyatnikov composed *Russian Seasons*, which was structurally similar to his arrangement of Piazzolla's

[29] Olga Manulkina, "The Rite of Beauty: An Introduction to the Music of Leonid Desyatnikov," *Tempo* 220 (April 2002): pp. 21.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Latvian classical violinist and founder of Kremerata Baltica, a chamber orchestra to foster outstanding young musicians from the three Baltic States.

Las cuatro estaciones porteñas and showcased perhaps the best of his writing among other compositions.[32]

[32] Olga Manulkina, "The Rite of Beauty: An Introduction to the Music of Leonid Desyatnikov," *Tempo* 220 (April 2002): pp. 22.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas is a suite that was composed between 1965-1970 by an Astor Piazzolla. It consists of four tangos composed in Piazzolla's *nuevo tangos* style, which combined the traditional tango with elements from Classical and Jazz styles, including counterpoint and electric guitar.[33] Initially, the pieces were not conceived to be a suite; instead, they were treated as different compositions and performed separately. In August 1965, Piazzolla was commissioned to compose *Verano porteño* as part of the incidental music for the play *Melenita de oro* by Alberto Rodríguez Muñoz.[34] A few years later, Piazzolla decided to continue composing an additional three pieces based on the remaining seasons and grouped them into a suite. The title of each piece contained the term porteñas ("people of the port") - a term used to represent inhabitants of Buenos Aires.[35]

The suite, at first, was written for bandoneón, electric guitar, violin, piano, and bass;[36] in other words, the same instrumentation of Quinteno Nuevo Tango, which was the group created by Piazzolla to represent his music and transmit his musical vision. Piazzolla had used this instrumentation for most of his compositions since the 1960s, but he did make some modifications later on. Piazzolla once mentioned:

> The quintet has two lives. One is born in the 1960s; the other, with a completely lineup, in 1978. The first communicated a music at times aggressive, at times

[33] Wayanne Watson, "Mashup Strategies In Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas: A Model for Connecting Compositional Technique to Musical Interpretation," *Music Theory Spectrum* 41, no. 1 (January 17, 2019): 21.
[34] Maria Susana Azzi and Simon Collier, *Le Grand Tango: The Life and Music of Astor Piazzolla* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 90.
[35] David J. Keeling et al., "Buenos Aires," Encyclopedia Britannica (Encyclopedia Britannica, inc., November 10, 2020), https://www.britannica.com/place/Buenos-Aires.
[36] MLNF1986, "Astor Piazzolla - Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas (Compilado)," YouTube, October 23, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6Jv_JrjJIY.

> melodic. The second one offer something better prepared, perhaps more intellectual.[37]

The suite was completed in 1970, and on May 19th that year, Piazzolla's quintet recorded a live concert performing the entire suite to celebrate his quintet's ten-year anniversary. This suite was intended to be a respectful nod to Vivaldi and one of his best-known compositions: *Le Quattro Stagioni*. Although there is no direct quotation of Vivaldi in Piazzolla's original suite, Vivaldian traces can be heard in the music, most noticeable in "Invierno porteño."[38]

As most of Piazzolla's compositions were written for his quintet or other tango ensembles, many have been arranged by close colleagues for various chamber music ensembles using instruments of the Western classical tradition, allowing greater performance opportunities for these works by classically-trained musicians. *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas*, for instance, exists in several published versions, the most prominent being for piano trio (piano, violin and cello) and violin solo with string orchestra arranged by Leonid Desyatnikov.

José Bragato, Argentine cellist, composer and Piazzolla's long-time colleague, arranged *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* for piano trio in the 1990s; while the exact date is unknown, these were first published around 2015. The structure of the piano trio version is identical to the original quintet version but with some reduction in length. As the bandoneón was Piazzolla's own instrument and therefore the most prominent instrument in most of Piazzolla's compositions, the bandoneón and violin take the leading role in the original suite. With the different instrumentation, José Bragato equally

[37] Natalio Gorin, *Astor Piazzolla: a Memoir* (Portland, Or.: Amadeus Press, 2001), 51.
[38] Azzi and Collier, 117.

distributed the melody into the violin, cello, and occasionally the right hand of the piano part. Bragato would then use the piano's left hand and occasionally the cello's longer notes to replicate the double bass, and to strengthen the harmonic foundation of the original electric guitar parts.

As was mentioned previously, in the late 1990s, Leonid Desyatnikov was commissioned by Gidon Kremer to reconfigure the suite into a concerto version for solo violin and string orchestra. The impetus for this was an idea for a recording project: *Eight seasons* by Kremer and his ensemble the Kremerata, combining pieces composed by Piazzolla and Vivaldi, which both used *Four Seasons* as the title. Desyatnikov incorporated quotations from Vivaldi's *Quattro Stagioni* into his arrangement, which did not exist in Piazzolla's original. However, with the geographic fact that the seasons in the southern hemisphere of Argentine are the opposite of Vivaldi's northern hemisphere, Desyatnikov ingeniously quoted the opposite seasons in his arrangement, as we can see Vivaldi's *L'inverno (Winter)* in his arrangement of Piazzolla's *Verano (Summer) porteño*.[39]

Indisputably, Desyatnikov's arrangement built a bridge between two figures: Piazzolla and Vivaldi, and created a dialogue between them. Kremer praised the arrangement by saying:

> It is Desyatnikov's achievement to make Piazzolla speak directly to Vivaldi, and in such a way also Vivaldi to Piazzolla, because using certain quotations of Vivaldi in the context of the score helps to build bridges between these two different geniuses, two different cycles, two different worlds, making them a unit,

[39] Wayanne Watson, "Mashup Strategies In Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas: A Model for Connecting Compositional Technique to Musical Interpretation," Music Theory Spectrum 41, no. 1 (January 17, 2019): 21-22.

> a unity, giving them full exposure of the vitality, not just on its own but in the dialogue, making this dialogue possible.[40]

In conclusion, many different versions of *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* can be found, whether published or not, such as piano trio, guitar and piano duo, string quartet, and the solo violin with string orchestra. Most of those can be performed without further modification; however, the solo violin with string orchestra version is not always possible to perform. Although a published orchestral score and parts for this concerto arrangement are available, there is no piano reduction of that arrangement – hence the need for this research paper. Before this document, we as collaborative pianists have created a version for our violin colleagues by playing mostly from the piano trio score, and occasionally adding from the full score those parts that are missing or different, which is not ideal. Therefore, the fully new piano reduction is needed for the reasons cited above.

[40] Kremer Gidon and Baltica Kremerata, "Eight Seasons," Nonesuch Records, February 11, 2000, https://www.nonesuch.com/albums/eight-seasons.

CHAPTER III

INTRODUCTION TO CREATING THE REDUCTION

As mentioned in the introduction, while many principles are useful to consider when creating the piano reduction, the primary goal is maintaining the orchestral sounds while reducing the part in such a way that it is realistic to perform on the piano. Several common ideas will be discussed and addressed throughout the following four chapters of this piano reduction. However, it will be easier for the reader to review those examples that are repeatedly reinforced in the next four chapters if these common ideas are mentioned in advance.

In this concerto *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas*, the orchestration is only for string orchestra instead of a full orchestra, which typically includes woodwind and brass instruments. Therefore, marking the instrumentation in the piano reduction and creating different sound qualities between strings, woodwinds, and brass instruments are not necessary in this piano reduction. However, since this is a string orchestra concerto, the markings of *arco* (bowed sounds) and *pizz* (pizzicato sounds) in the piano reduction, and the ability to imitate those different textures, becomes more crucial. Furthermore, string glissando passages can be seen throughout all four movements. While such passages are rare in other concerti, of often removed because they are just a special sound effect compared to other essential materials, they are an essential part of Desyantikov's arrangement. With the simplicity of instrumentation in this specific concerto, the variety created with the pizz and arco alternation and those glissando effects yield wonderful and creative sounds which should be featured.

Repeating chordal passages are one of the most common orchestral textures that need modification in a piano reduction. It can be seen quite often in orchestra music, as it is very easy and effective for string instruments to repeats notes with the bow, but it is often not practical to play on the piano, especially in a fast tempo. Even if the tempo is moderate and repeating chords are possible on the piano, playing many repeated chords can create loud and heavy sounds instead of the lighter texture that the orchestral strings can create. Many techniques can solve this issue, but one of the best solutions used in many examples in the next four chapters is to divide the chords and alternate the parts within the same hand.

In many cases, harmonic or accompaniment parts may need to move an octave higher or lower to accommodate a principal melodic part. When creating a piano reduction, it is best for the orchestral melody to stay in the same register as the full score, since it usually is what the soloist is listening for, and is most audible to the audience. However, it is highly possible to have other accompaniment parts sitting in the same register as this melodic part. No issue will occur when the orchestra plays the piece, as different forces from the different locations within the orchestra are playing these parts simultaneously, but it will not be the case if played on the piano by one person. It is quite different to maintain consistent voicing of a melodic line if it is clashing in the same register as the accompaniment parts. Failure to clarify this voicing can create confusion for the soloist when rehearsing with the piano, and should be avoided. As a result, moving non-melodic parts into different registers can be seen as a solution in the examples in the next few chapters.

When creating a piano reduction, one thing that also needs to be modified is something simple for strings, woodwinds, and brass, but impossible to play on the piano: crescendo on a long, sustained note. Strings, woodwinds and brass performers can easily create this effect by either increasing bow speed or blowing more air. However, as piano is a percussion instrument, the sound begins to decay once the notes in struck, and it is impossible to achieve a crescendo on a long note. Therefore, in order to better imitate the sound of an orchestra in these cases, creative solutions and extra notations will be needed, as well be shown in the following chapters.

Finally, in concerto textures the soloist is occasionally doubled exactly by one of the orchestral parts; In this work, the first violin section doubles the solo violin for several important passages. When possible, it is always best to include all orchestral parts in the piano reduction, but it is not always the case. When creating a piano reduction, if it is necessary to eliminate something to make it playable, the doubling part will often be the best to remove, as it is heard already in the solo part. In this work, it can actually lead to cases when the piano reduction may look different, even though the two sections are identical in the full score. In the following chapters, there will be some examples to support this idea.

The ideas mentioned above are the fairly common when creating a piano reduction from the majority of concerti, including *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas*. However, due to the unique nature of the material and the creativity of the composer and arranger, a few textures that are not common can also be seen in this particular violin concerto. The following forty-eight examples throughout the next four chapters will

demonstrate the comparisons between the full score and the newly composed piano reduction for those ideas.

Another interesting feature that needs to be addressed is the order of movements for this concerto. In examining various performances, the most common order begins with *Verano* (Summer), since that was composed first in 1965, then continues in calendar order of *Otoño*, *Invierno*, and *Primavera*. When Piazzolla premiered this in a live recorded performance in 1970, he used the order of Winter, Summer, Autumn, Spring. Piazzolla did not specify the order after he completed the work, and indeed all the movements can be performed separately or grouped as a suite according to the wishes of the soloist and orchestra. Therefore, various orders can be seen in different formats of the performance which include the piano trio version and the Kremer recording. This paper will use the order based on the full score published by Alfred music: *Otoño* (Autumn), *Invierno* (Winter), *Primavera* (Spring), and *Verano* (Summer).

CHAPTER IV

OTOÑO PORTEÑO

On the majority of occasions, the structure of a violin concerto is divided into multiple movements, and each movement has a different tempo and character. Yet, some exceptions can be observed: *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* is one of these. Instead of three separate movements for all four concerti, which is the model in Vivaldi's original *Quattro Stagione*, Desyatnikov retained the three distinct sections in each of Piazzolla's *Estaciones*, maintaining his original structure.

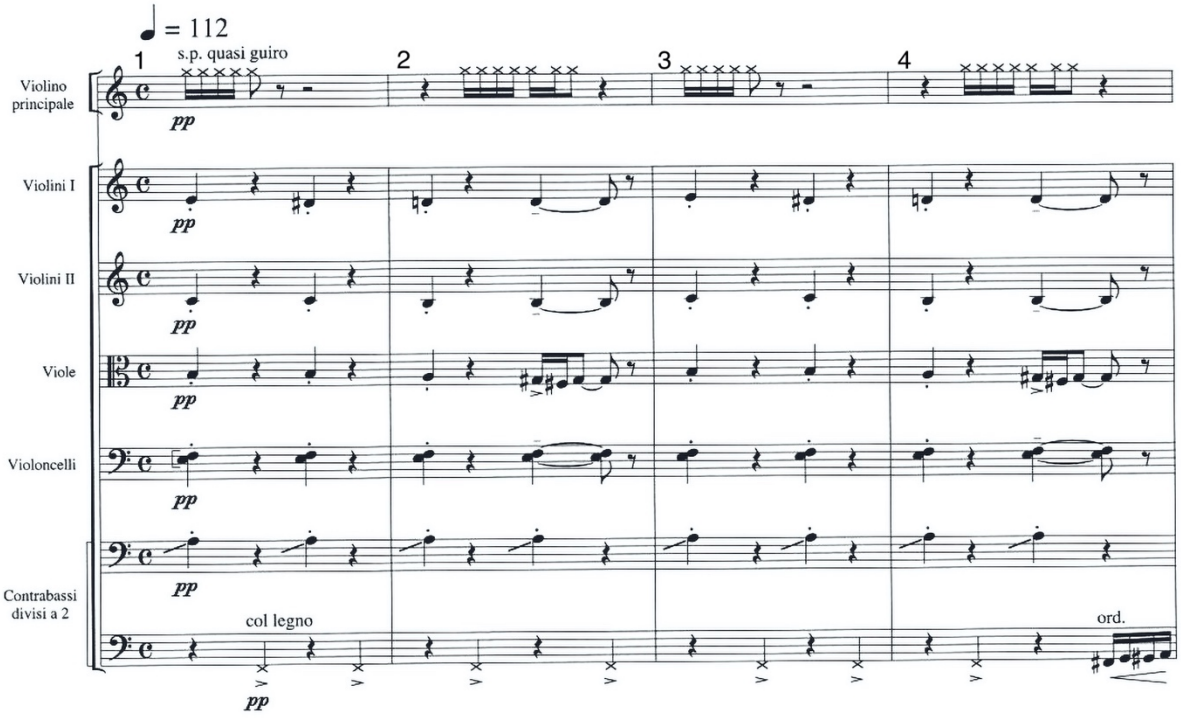
In the next four chapters, the examples from the full score will be mark as FS, and on the other hand, the newly composed piano reduction will be named as PR.

Otoño porteño begins with the full string orchestra playing short, energetic arco chords on the first and third beats, but in the soft dynamic of pp. This is contrasted with double bass divisi on beat two and fours, performing an unpitched note using the technique of col legno[41] (Example 1) Creating an exact replica of this sound on the piano could be possible with special tools or prepared piano techniques. However, considering the many occasions that pianists would play the reduction during competitions or recitals, collaborative pianists would either not be allowed to use tools or would not have permission for preparing the piano; an alternate way to create this specific sound is needed in this case.

The sound quality of a double bassist playing col legno is quiet but noticeable, and that can be replaced by playing a note in the piano lower register of the piano with an

[41] An instruction for bowed string instruments only to strike the string with the stick of the bow, rather than by drawing the hair of the bow across the strings.

accent but in soft dynamic. One of the suggestions will be playing a note that is already in the harmony. From the full score of Example 1, A is used throughout these measures in the first double bass section. Therefore, using an A one octave lower than the chords on the first and third beats will be one of the solutions.

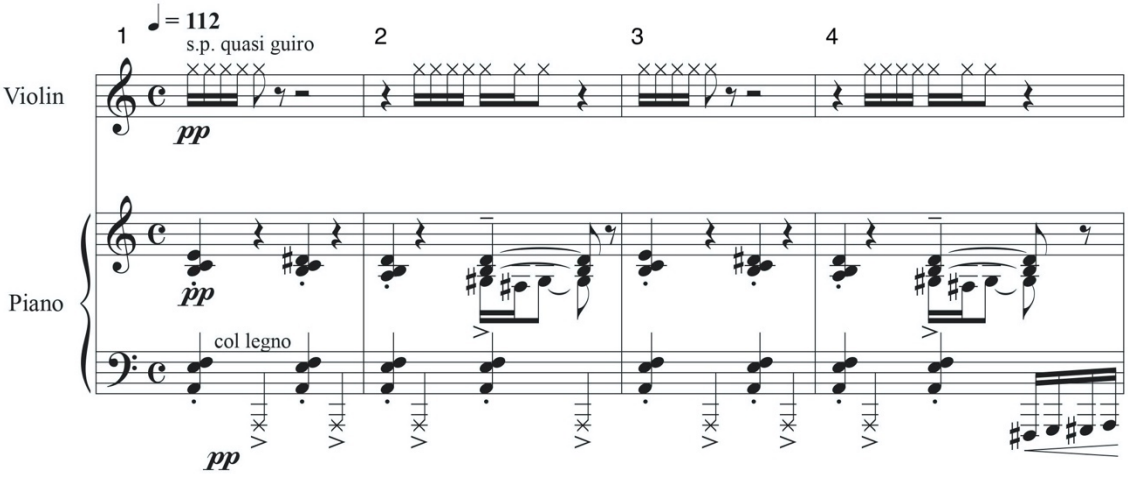


Example 1, FS, measure 1-4[42]

However, since there are many ways to address this issue, the "x" will still be used in the piano reduction which can be seen in example 2 below. One of the suggested ways to perform this passage is using LH to hit the side of the piano to create percussive

[42] Astor Piazzolla and Leonid A Desyatnikov, *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc., 2011). "This and all subsequent examples of the full score come from this source"

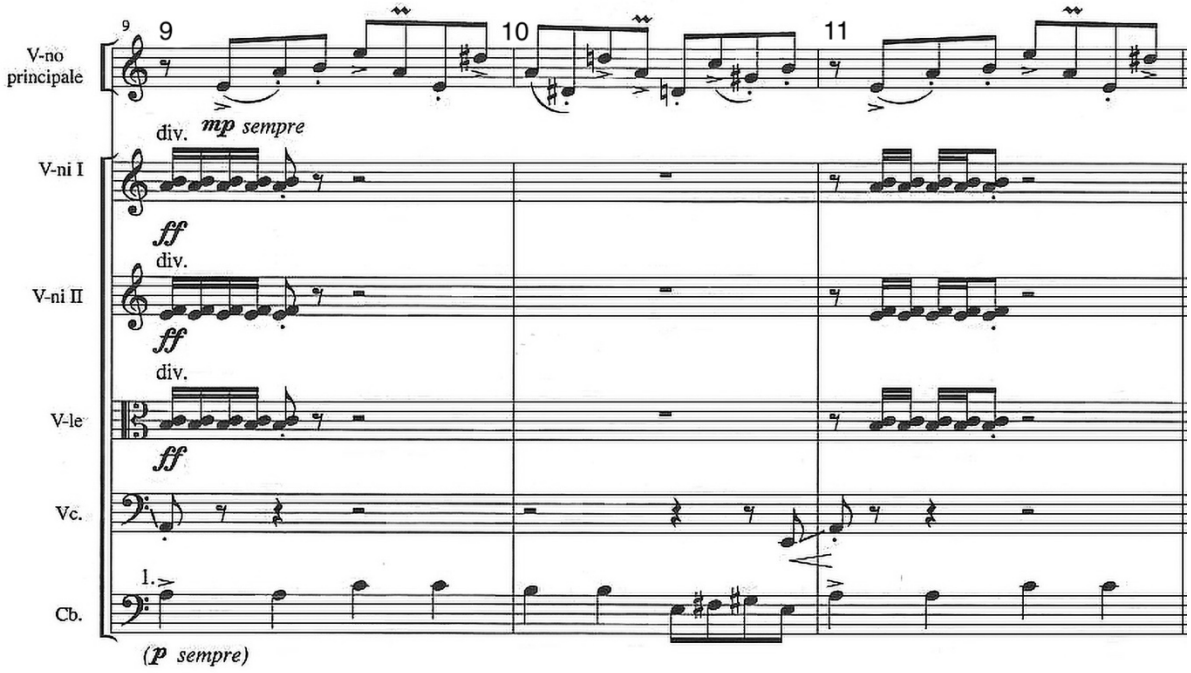
sounds which is similar to what bass section is playing because the tempo of this passage is moderate.



Example 2, PR, measure 1-4

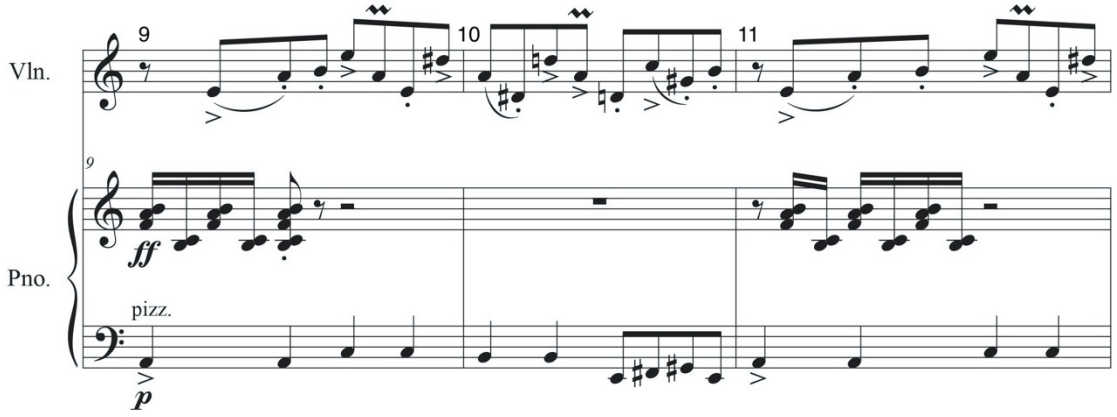
In example 3 (measures 9 and 11) the upper strings play repeating notes in the 16th note value. As a bowed string instrument, it is simple to play these passages steadily without adding an accent, as the bow can move back and forth quite rapidly. But on the other hand, for the piano, it is almost impossible to create a similar sound by playing exactly as written at this tempo without creating tensions physically. For even talented pianists, repeated chords at this fast tempo are simply not practical. Martin Katz has noted a similar idea in his book about making a decision when playing reductions: "Comfort and practicality must be part of all our decisions."[43]

[43] Martin Katz, *The Complete Collaborator, The Pianist as Partner*, (Oxford: University Press, 2009), 135.



Example 3, FS, measure 9-11

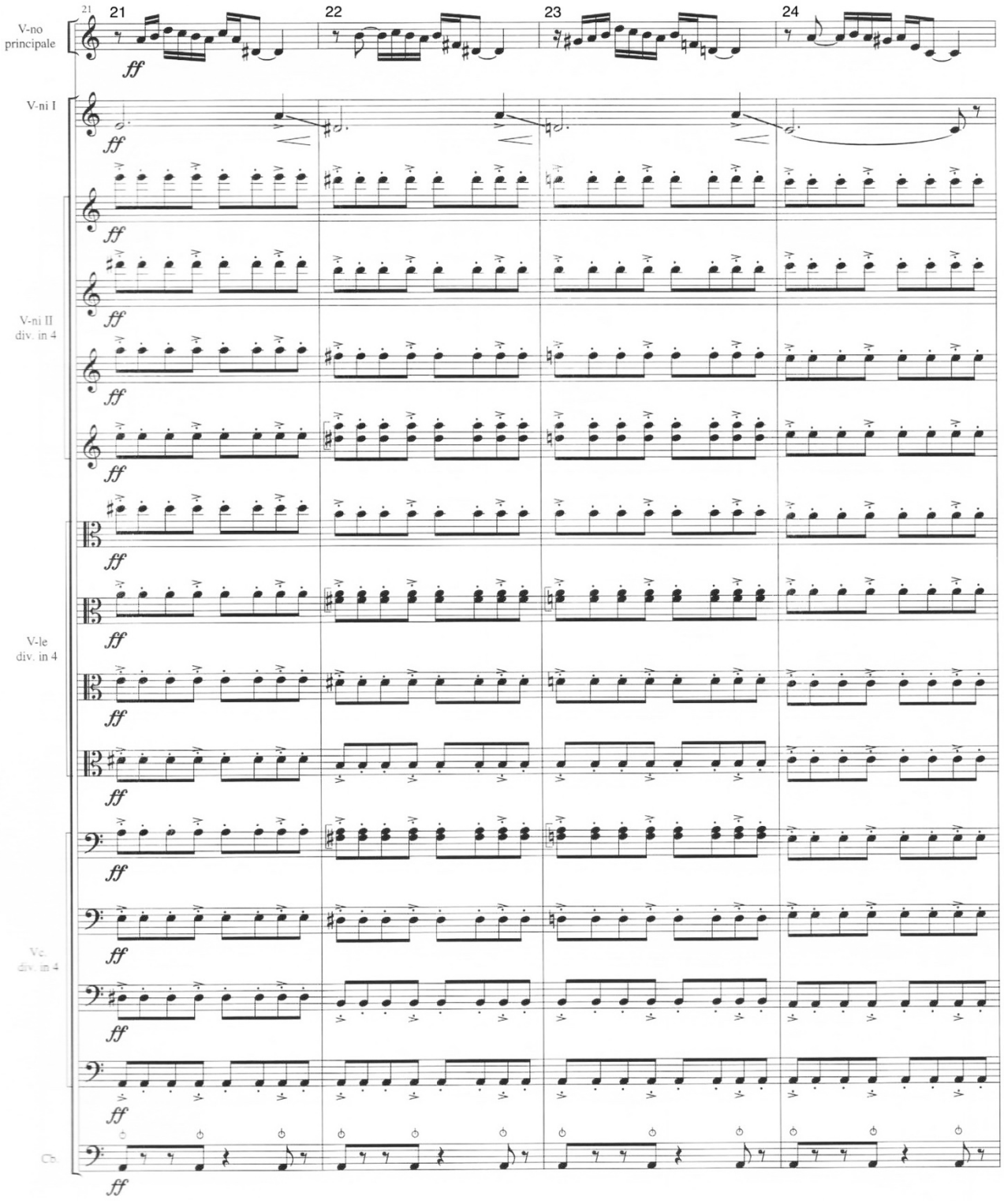
The suggested solution, which can be seen in the example 4 below, is splitting the chord into two parts, alternating it, and adding damper pedal for the whole beat to create a similar sound quality similar to the original. This is a time-honored technique for such passages in the piano reductions.



Example 4, PR, measure 9-11

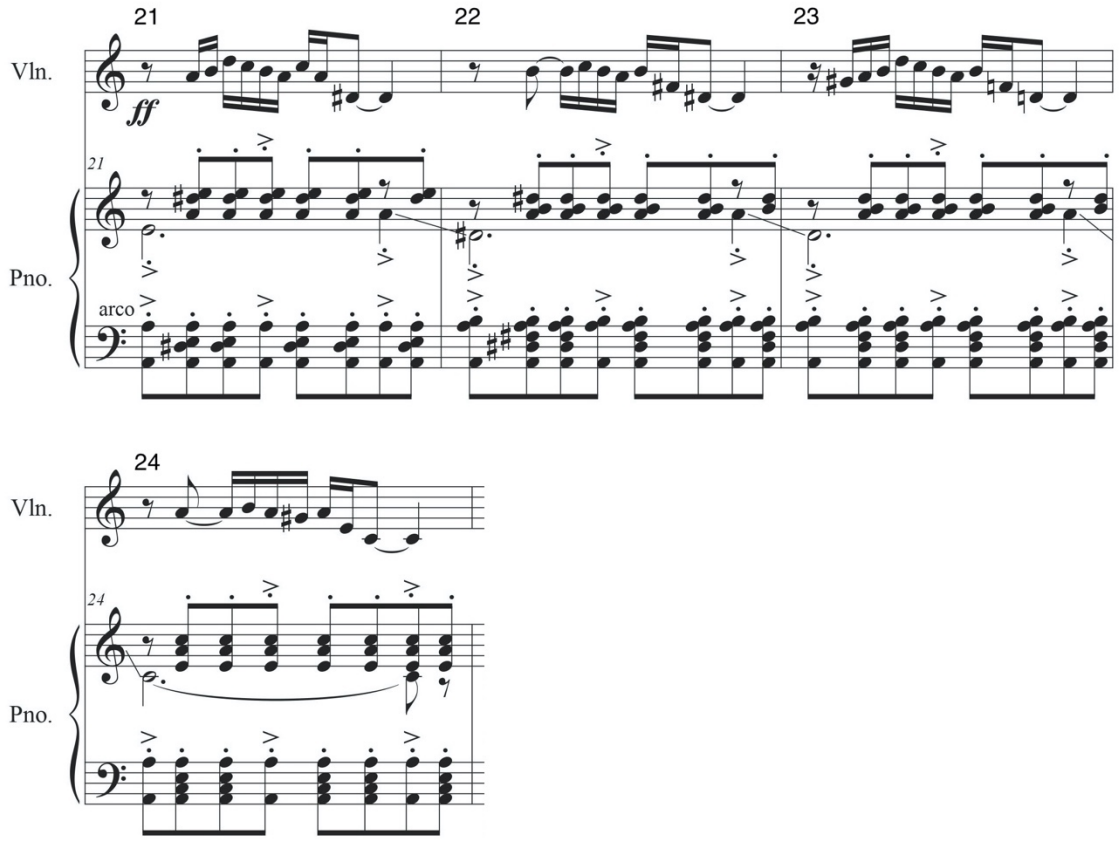
In many concerti, large tutti sections can be a challenge for collaborative pianists, since there is often no perfect solution to accommodate numerous individual orchestral parts by one person with ten fingers. In example 5 (measures 21 to 24), the first violin section has a melodic component while Piazzolla's distinctive tango rhythm (3+3+2), which he claimed was influenced by the Jewish wedding music he heard as a child,[44] is in the double bass part as a Bartok piazzacatto. The rest of the orchestra features repeated 8th notes divided into 12 distinct parts, accenting the 3+3+2 of the bass which would be impossible for one pianist. However, on closer observation, several parts are doubling with other parts, but in a different register.

[44] Maria Susana Azzi and Simon Collier, Le Grand Tango: *The Life and Music of Astor Piazzolla* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 6.



Example 5, FS, measure 21-24

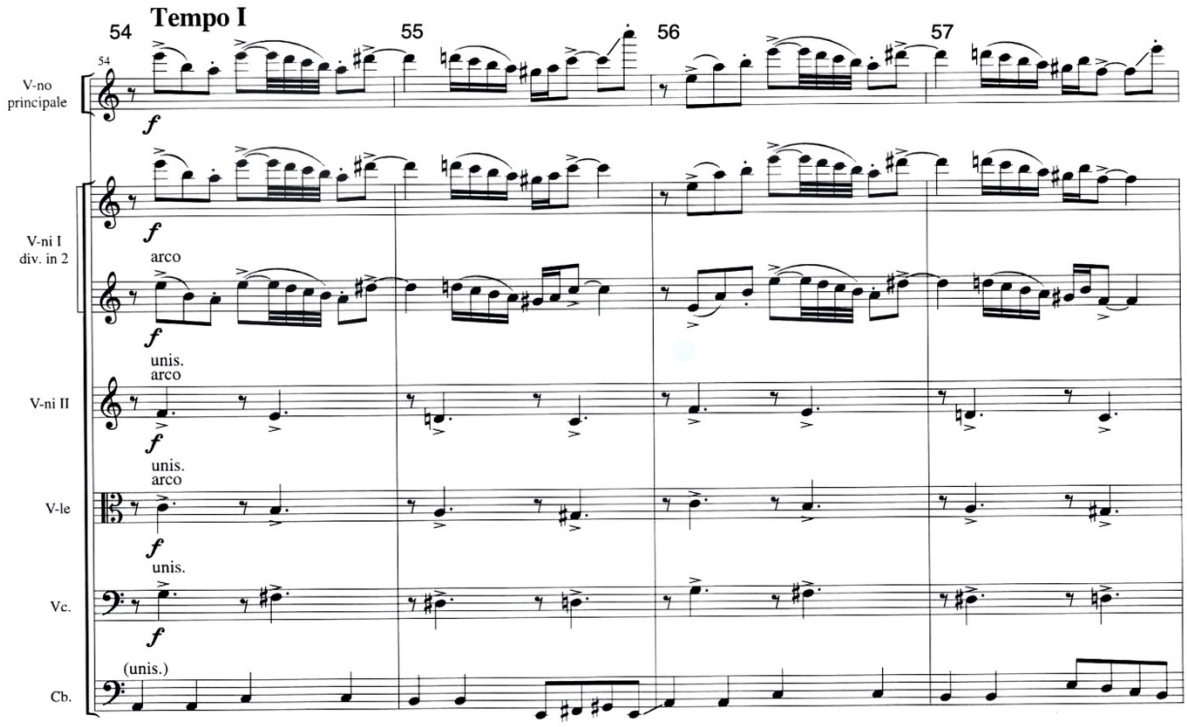
Therefore, taking these factors into consideration, the best solution is to leave the melody in its original register in the right hand, fill in the repeated notes as chords both above and below this melody, and using octaves in the LH to enhance the syncopated rhythm. This can be seen in the example 6 below.



Example 6, PR, measure 21-24

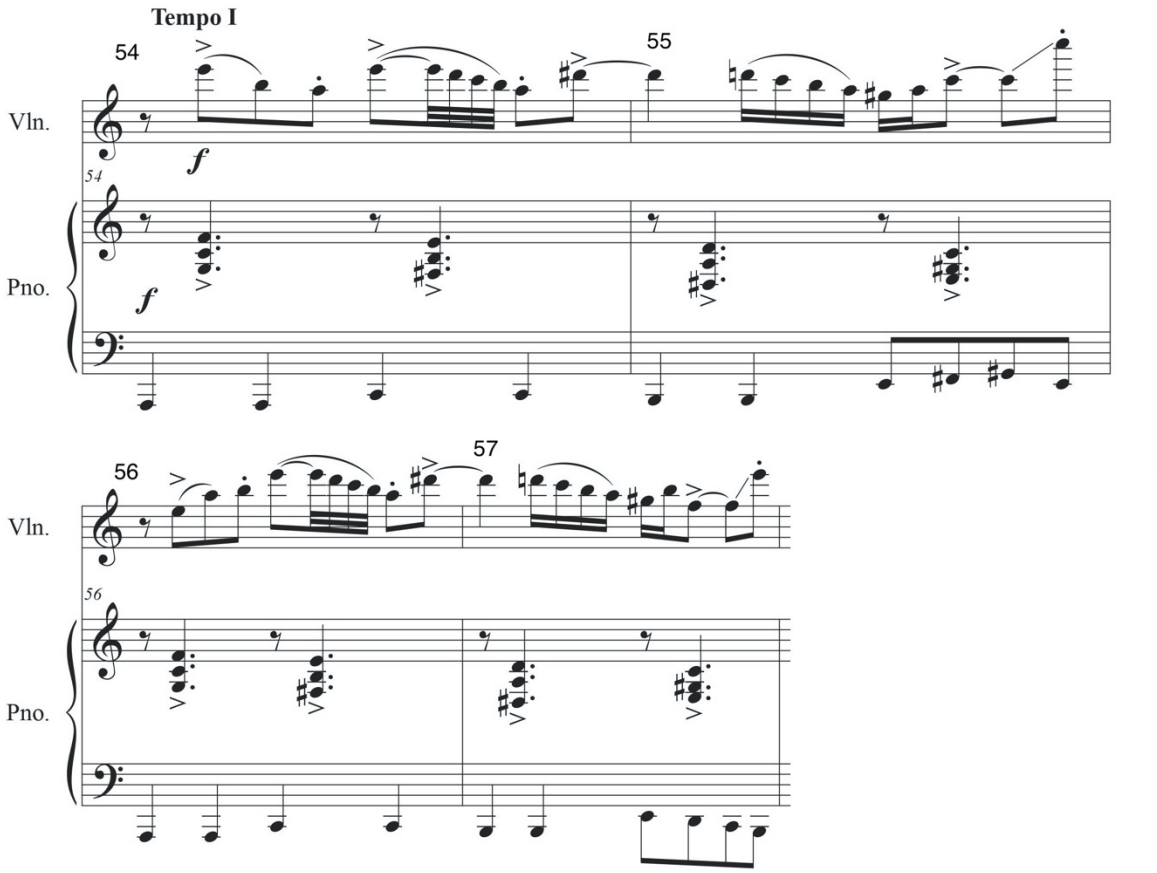
In the tempo primo section, from measure 54 to 57 of example 7, the first violin section doubles the soloist part. Doubling passages can be found in many concerti, and composers use them for many reasons, such as thickening the texture or enhancing the

color. In this passage, the second violin, viola, and cello sections have harmonic and rhythmic implications in their chords, which are important as well and should also be included in the piano reduction, along with the crucial walking bass line in the basses.



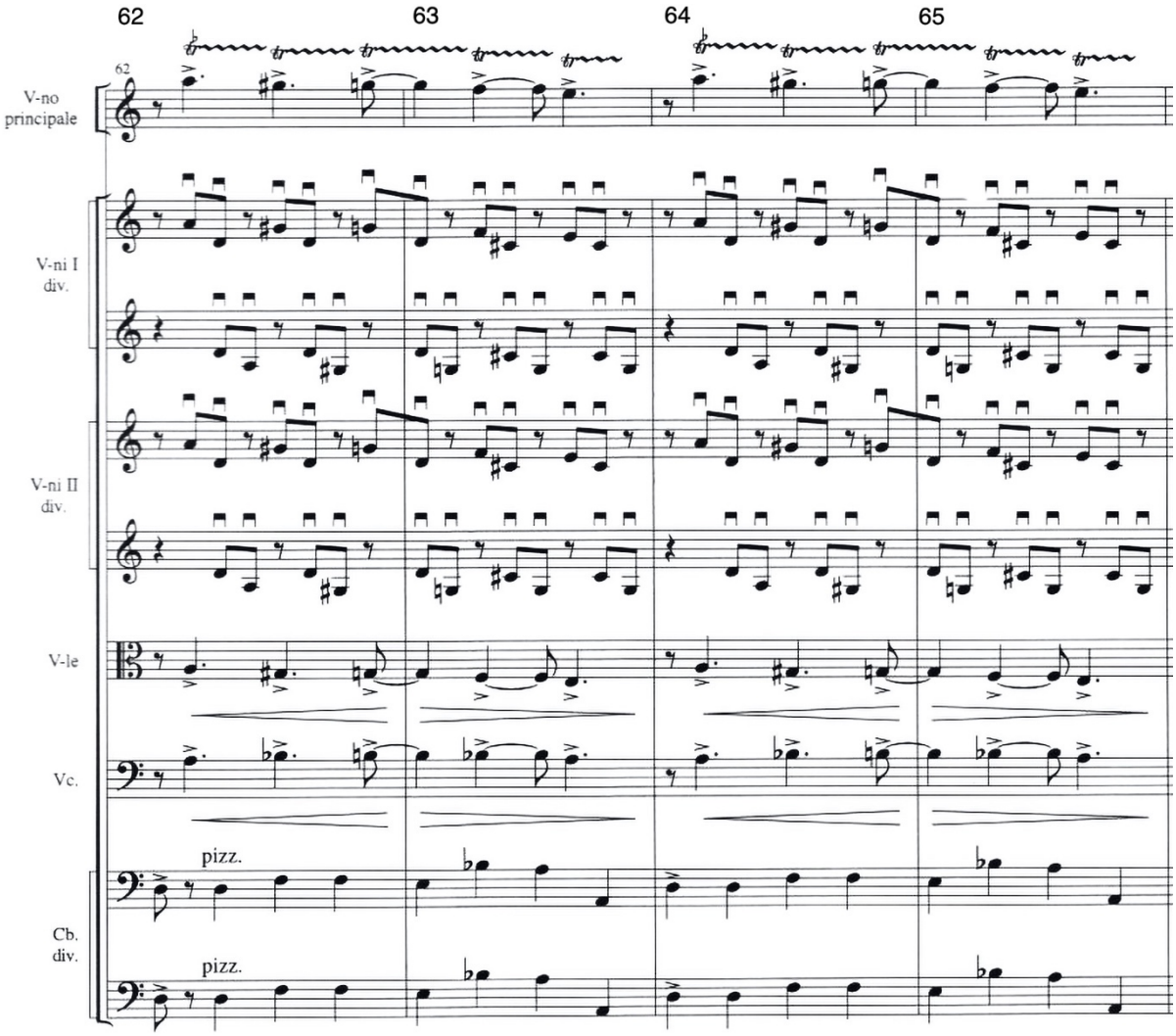
Example 7, FS, measure 54-57

In order to create the texture closest to the orchestra in the piano reduction, while creating a passage that is physically possible for pianists to play, eliminating the doubling passages and keeping the other parts in the piano reduction will be a smart move. (Example 8)



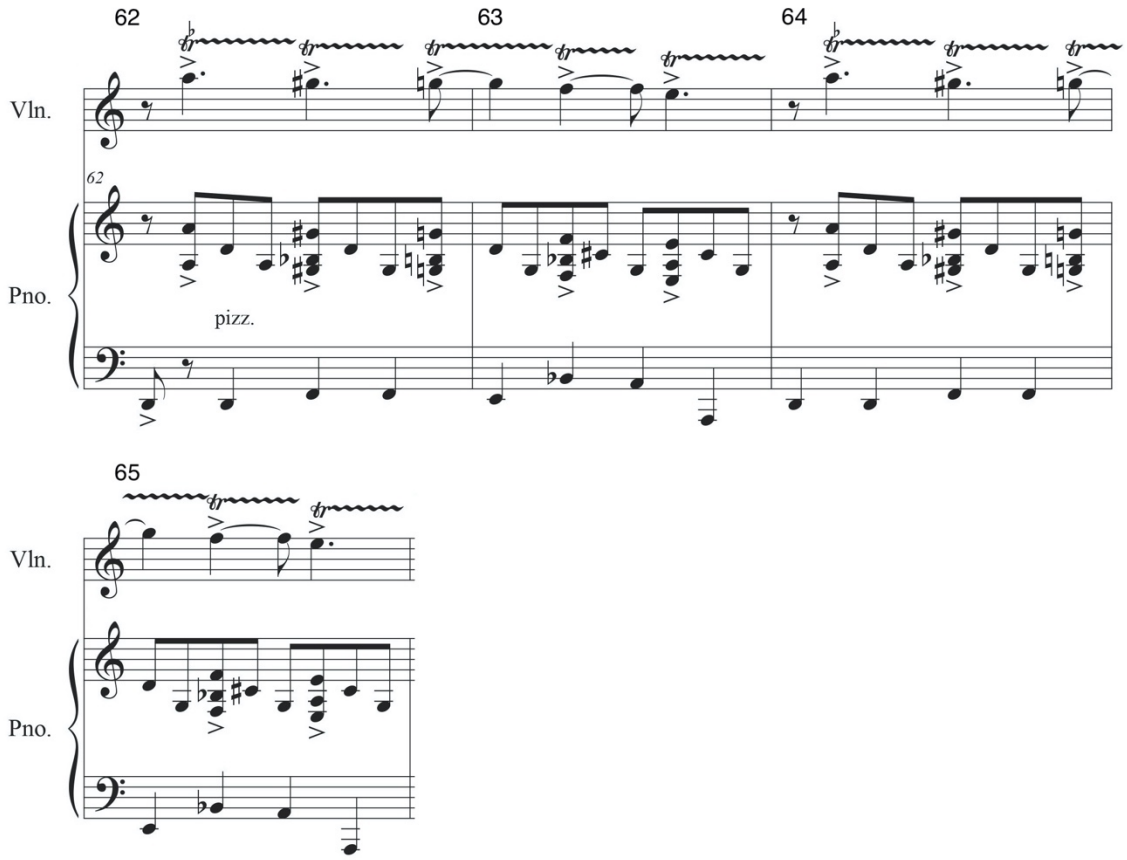
Example 8, PR, measure 54-57

In the following excerpt, both the first and second violin sections are divisi, and yet play the same chords in a descending arpeggio. The viola section has the same melody as the solo but two octaves lower, while cello section has a countermelody, and the double bass section has the walking bass in pizzicato, similar to what we hear in jazz music.



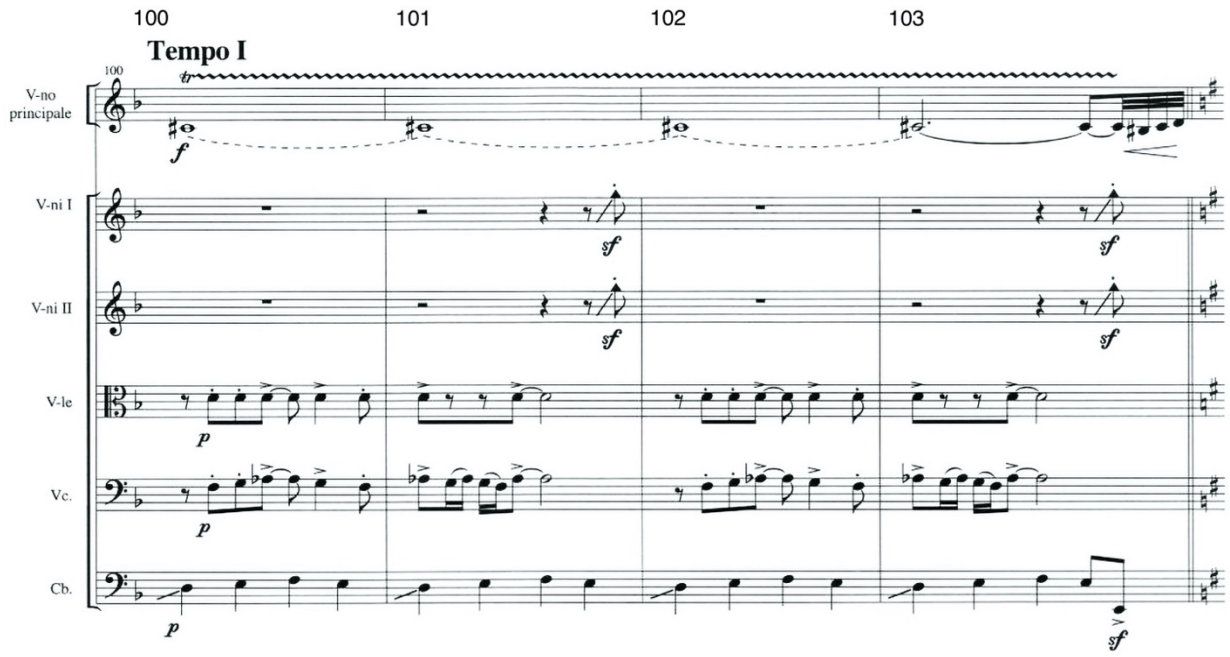
Example 9, FS, measure 62-65

Although it seems complicated and not practical to include everything into piano reduction, it turns out that all parts except the double bass section can be wholly included in the RH of piano part, and the LH focuses on the important walking bass part. In the piano reduction that can be seen as example 10 below, the cello and viola sections will line up with the first note of every three-notes pattern that played by the divisi violins.



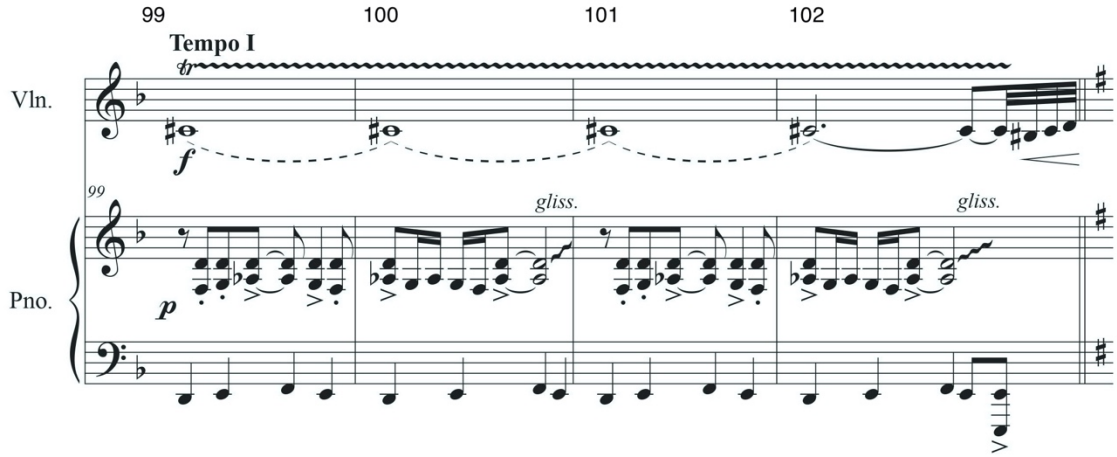
Example 10, PR, measure 62-65

As mentioned earlier, many extended string techniques are used in this piece. In example 11, both violins play something similar to the piano's glissando. As can be seen in both violin sections of the full score, G is noted on the fourth beat of measure 101 and 103. However, it is actually a quick slide up to whatever sfz note each musicians wishes. Therefore, the best solution to present this effect could be using a tool such as a chisel to scrape the strings inside the piano.



Example 11, FS, measure 100-103

However, with limited access to such tools during many performances, as well as the speed of this passage, playing a glissando on the piano's white keys will be the next-best solution for this passage. (Example 12)



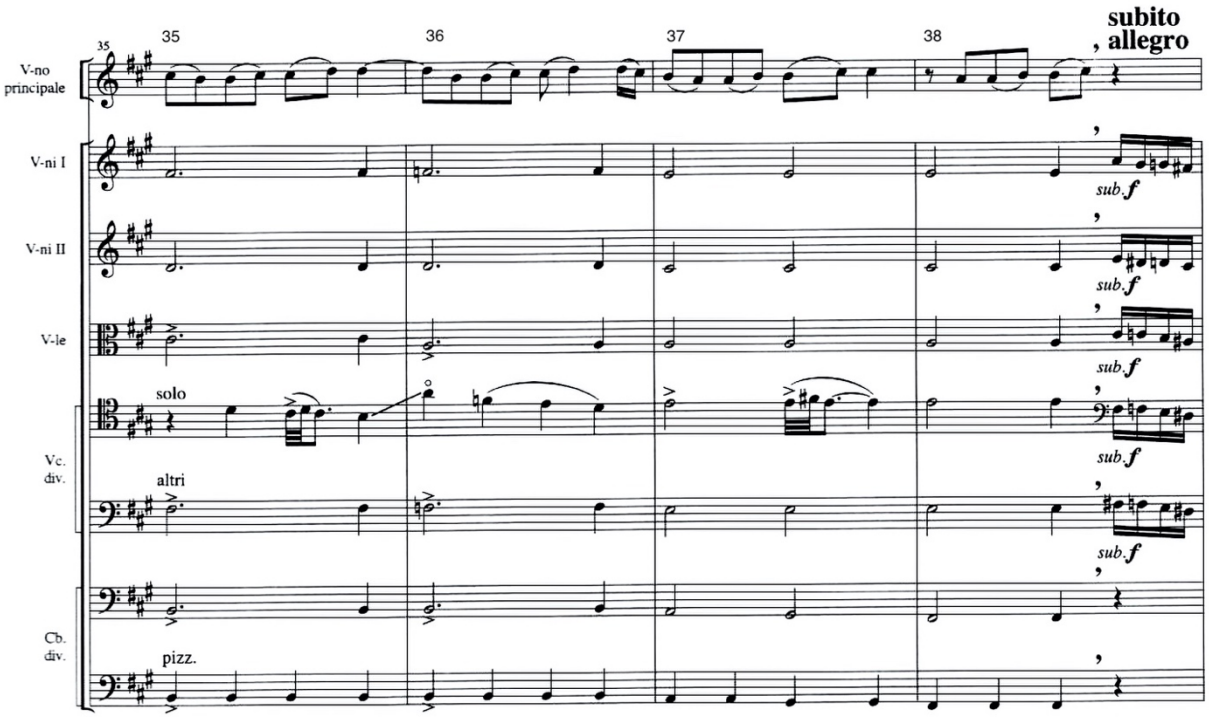
Example 12, PR, measure 99-102

CHAPTER V

INVIERNO PORTEÑO

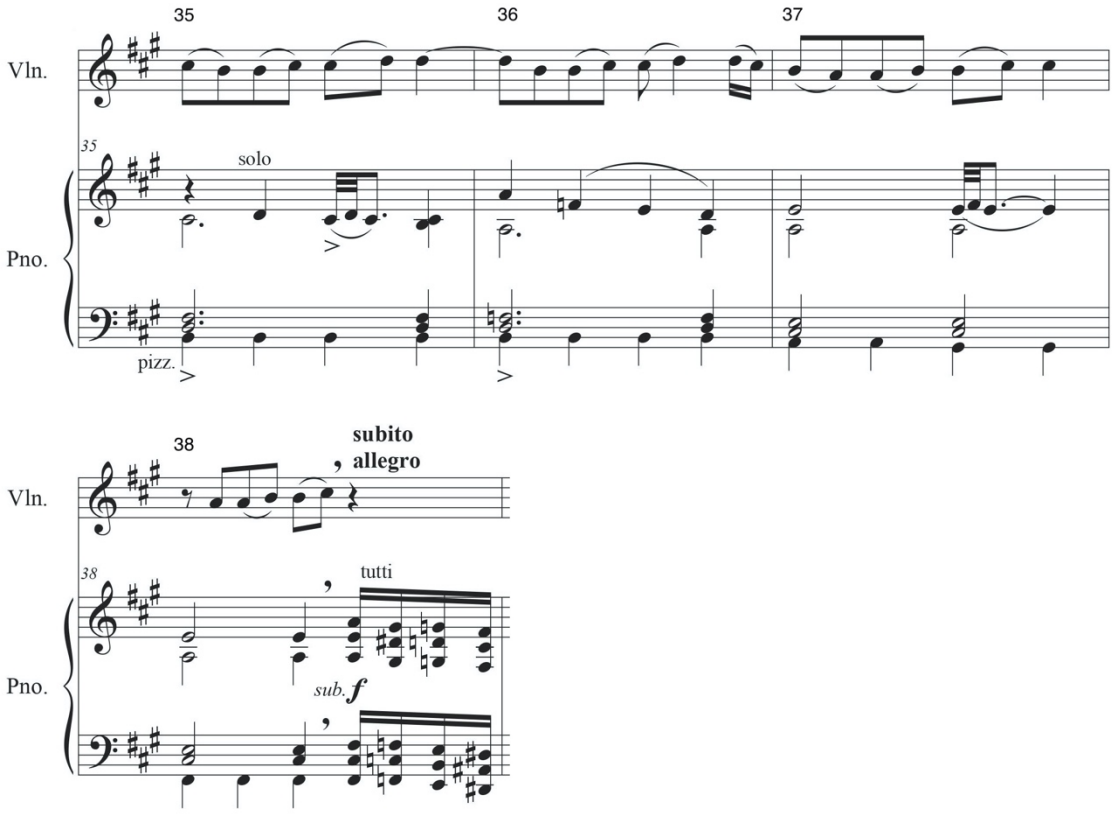
Compared with the other movements, the orchestration in *Invierno Porteño* is more straightforward. Most of the parts in the orchestra accompany the soloist by playing long notes or repeating figures to emphasize the Piazzolla's distinctive rhythm, with only a few occasions featuring solo melodies. With the simplicity in the orchestra part, nearly the entire full score can be included in the piano reduction without modification. However, when playing on the piano, several passages still cannot precisely imitate the sounds created by the orchestra. Therefore, some adjustments or additions are required when arranging the piano reduction. This chapter will focus on discussing those passages and provide suggestions in the examples as follows.

In example 13 (measure 35 to 38) the principal cello has a solo melody that is in dialogue with the solo violin, while the rest of the strings provide the harmonic foundation and bass line. In spite of different sound qualities produced by different string instruments, the melody in the solo cello part will be audible in the orchestra, even if the accompanying parts in the upper strings are in the same or higher register. However, the case will be different if playing on the piano because it will not be easy to distinguish when both are in the same register. In order to have both parts clearly heard, to separate the primary melody and the accompanying part into different registers may be the educated decision.



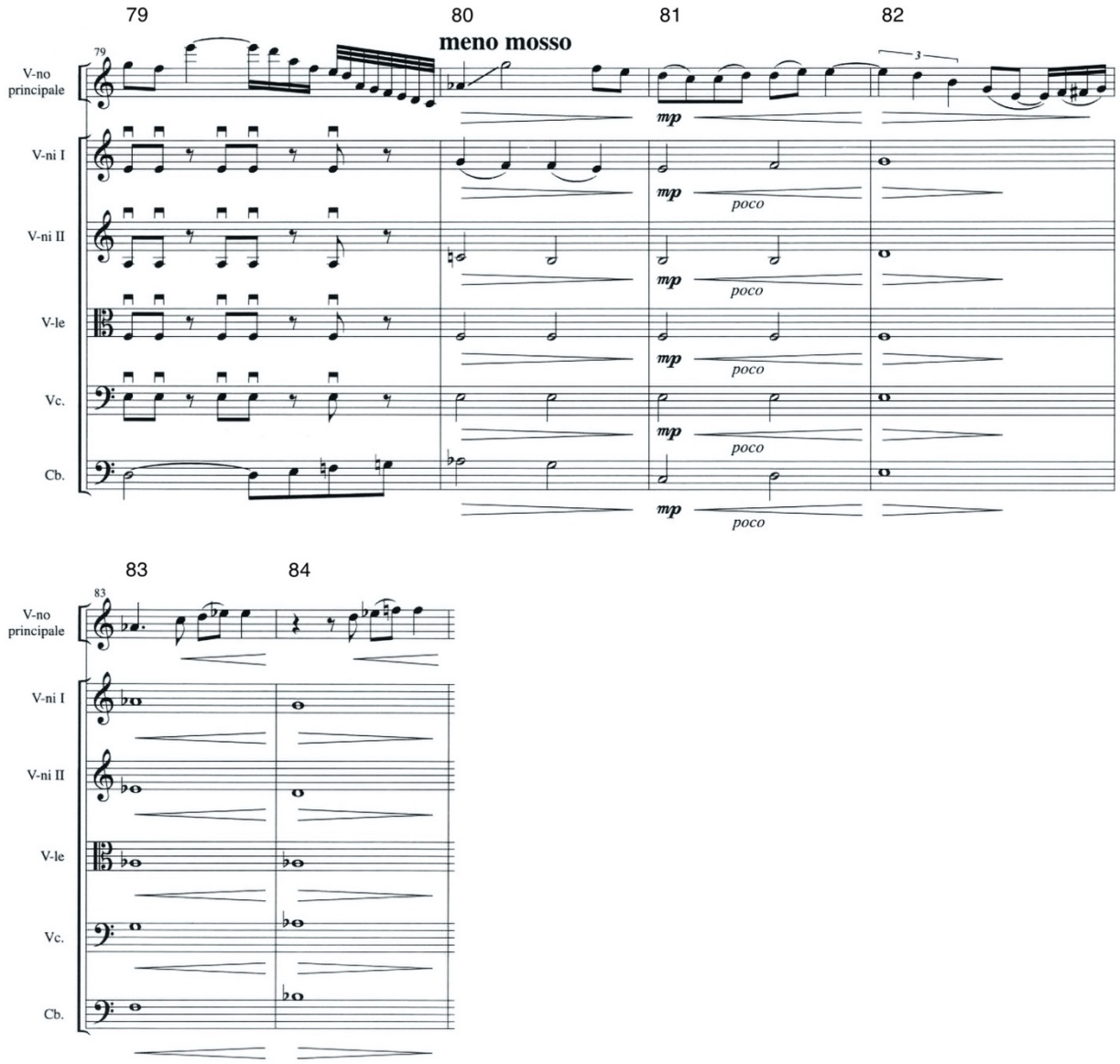
Example 13, FS, measure 35-38

Continuing with the idea mentioned above, moving the less important parts into a different register while keeping the primary melodic part in its original register can create greater separate between these parts, and therefore the closest sound of to the original orchestration. Using example 13 as the reference for this idea, moving the harmonic support of the violin parts down one octave will be the suggested solution. (Example 14)



Example 14, PR, measure 35-38

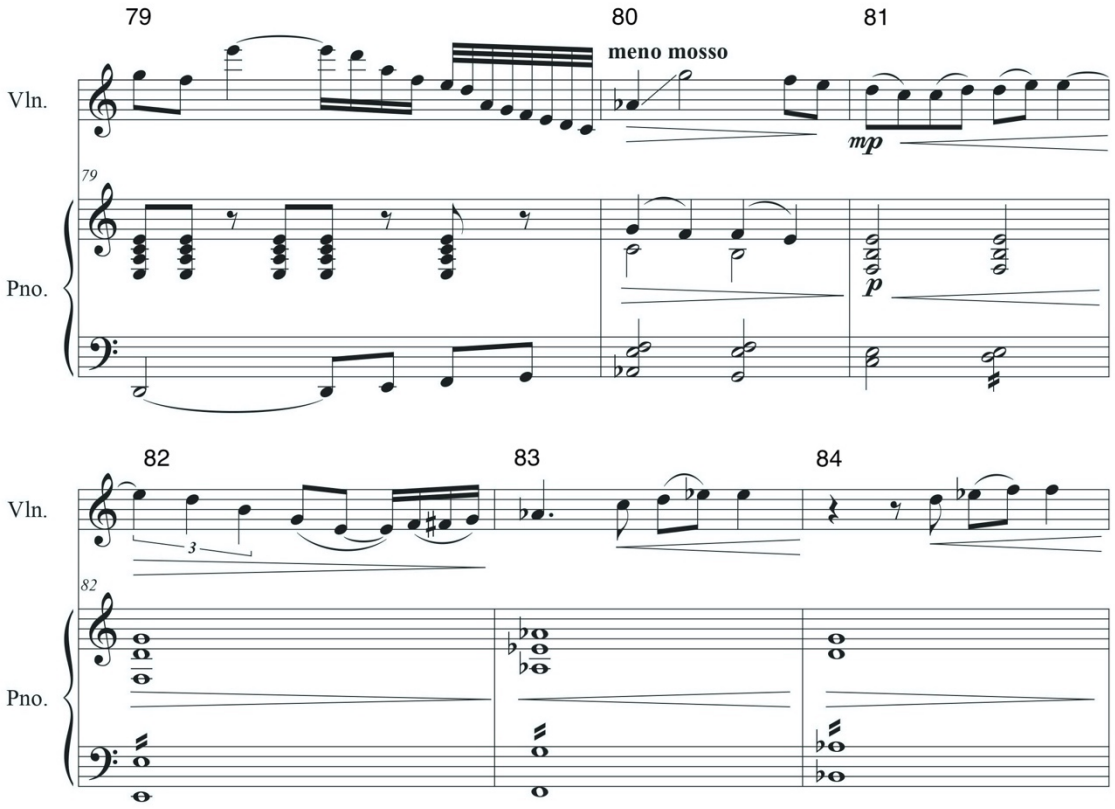
Another issue that needs to be considered when creating a piano reduction is dealing with something strings can do naturally but which is impossible for the piano. Using example 15 for discussion, strings can easily sustain a long note or even crescendo on it. In measures 81 and 83, Desyatnikov marks crescendo on all the sustained string parts. As a string player, increasing bow speed or speeding up the vibrato can create crescendo easily. Sadly, for the piano as a percussion instrument, it is impossible to crescendo on a sustained note.



Example 15, FS, measure 35-38

After trying many different options, it turns out that adding a tremolo in the LH will be the best solution to this situation. By using the tremolo, however, the goal is to increase the richness and volume (just like strings doing crescendo) instead of hearing each individual note repeating which is not the case in the orchestra. In his book "The

Complete Collaborator" Martin Katz writes that a tremolo's function is to provide excitement inside the material; it is never important on its own.[45] Following the guideline, in example 16 (measures 83 and 84), first strike every chord entirely in the dynamic accordingly, then slowly and quietly alternate two notes to create the similar sound effect to the strings' crescendo.

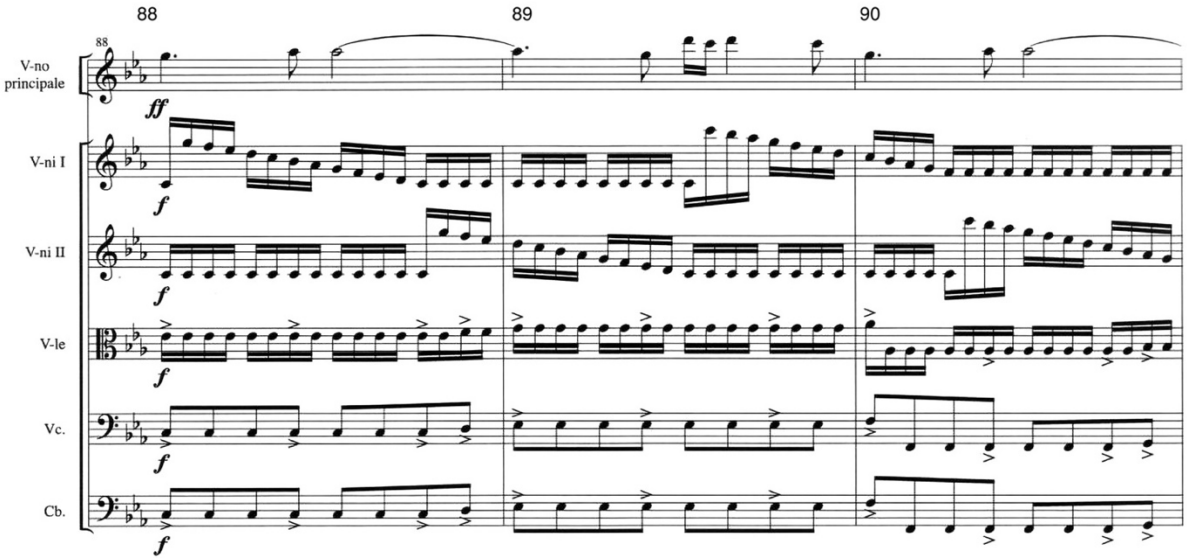


Example 16, PR, measure 79-84

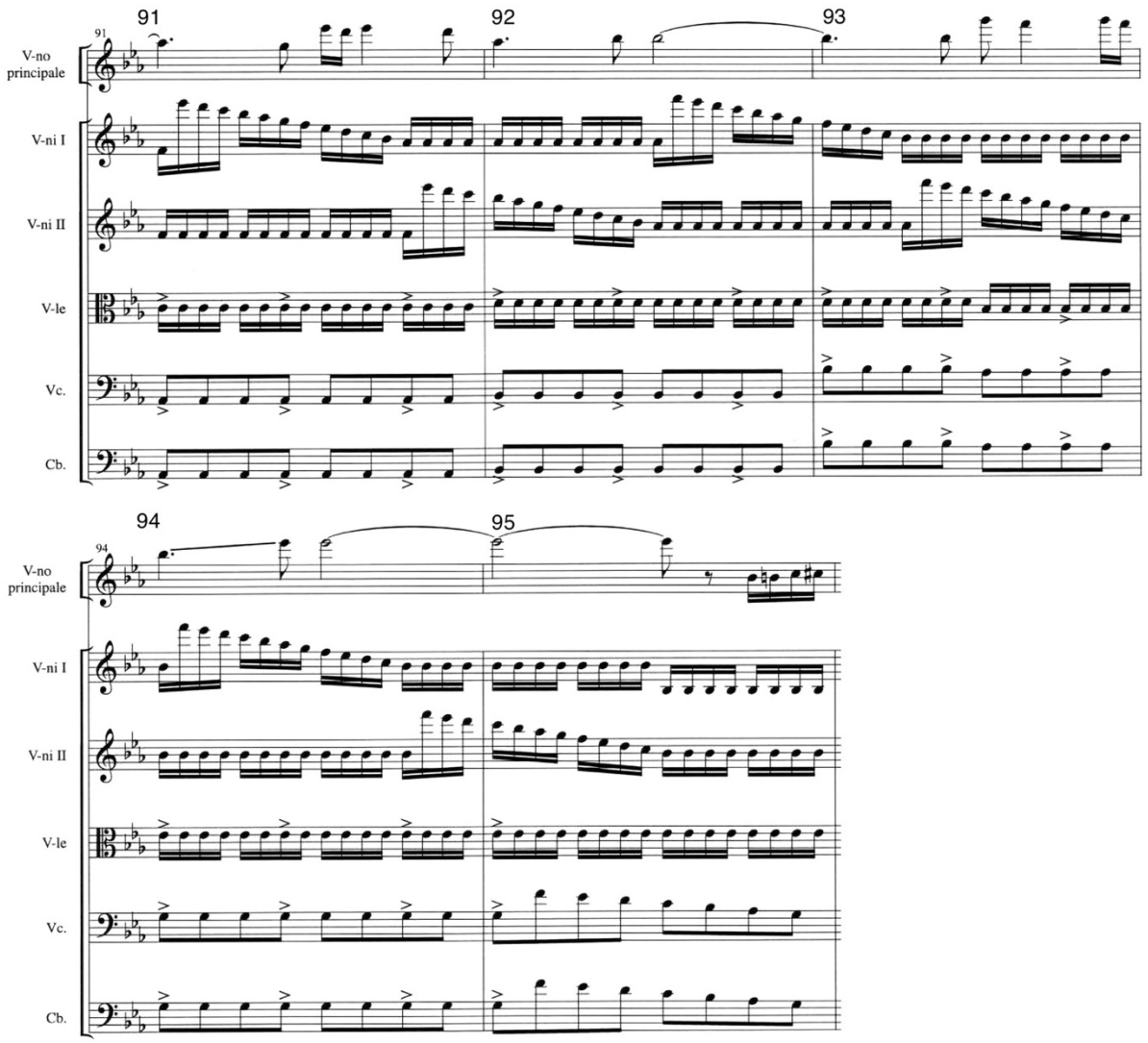
[45] Martin Katz, *The Complete Collaborator, The Pianist as Partner*, (Oxford: University Press, 2009), 167.

As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, repeating notes in the strings are frequently seen in orchestra music. It is easy for string players to do it but not always the case for pianists. Different factors, such as tempo, can result in different solutions when arranging orchestra reduction.

In the following excerpt, example 17, the viola section has repeating 16th notes throughout the example, while cello and double bass sections have the same notes but in the simpler 8th notes version. At the same time, the first and second violin sections have a melody in canon that Desyatnikov quoted from Vivaldi's "*Léstate.*"[46]



[46] Wayanne Watson, "Mashup Strategies In Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas: A Model for Connecting Compositional Technique to Musical Interpretation," Music Theory Spectrum 41, no. 1 (January 17, 2019): 30-31.

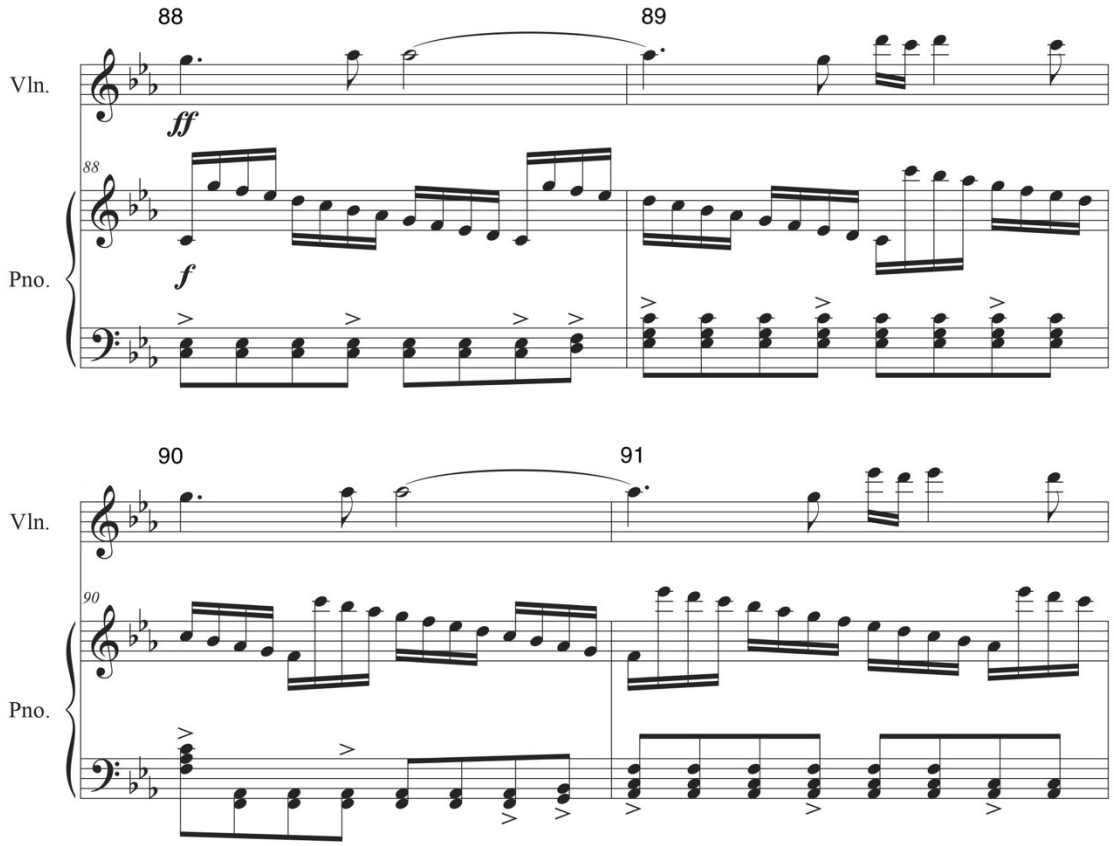


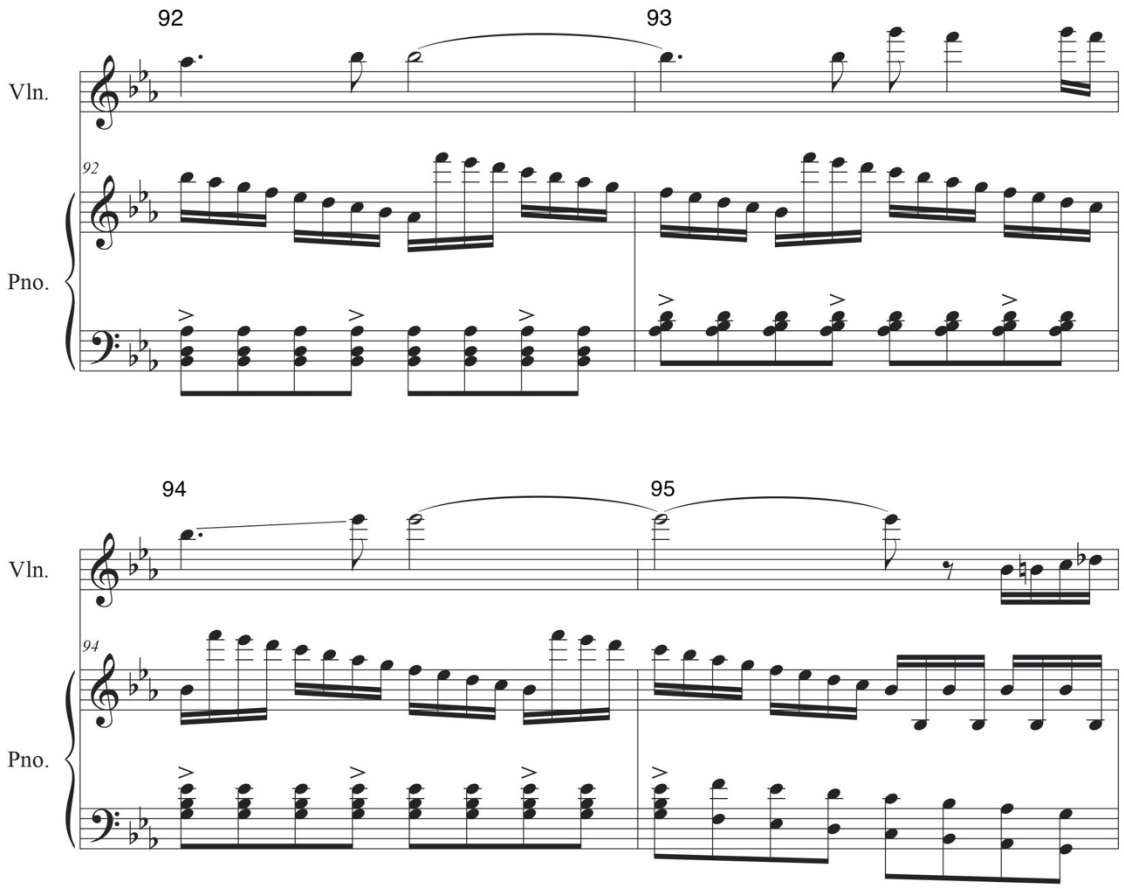
Example 17, FS, measure 88-95

When putting the melody of both violin parts as written into piano reduction, it sounds louder and busier than the original orchestra, owing to the piano's structure. When playing fast repeating notes on the piano, we need to use a fair amount of energy to make sure the hammer hits the piano strings evenly; therefore, it can create piercing sounds. In addition, with the tempo that most violinists use when playing this passage, it

is less possible to play every note in the viola part. Moreover, the 4/4 meter in the traditional tango 3+3+2 pattern in the lower strings part is the most vigorous of this passage, and it is what solo violin with listen for when playing with the orchestra. Compared with the solid foundation of rhythm in the lower strings part, the 16th notes scales in the upper strings part is less important, even though it is the quote from the Vivaldi.

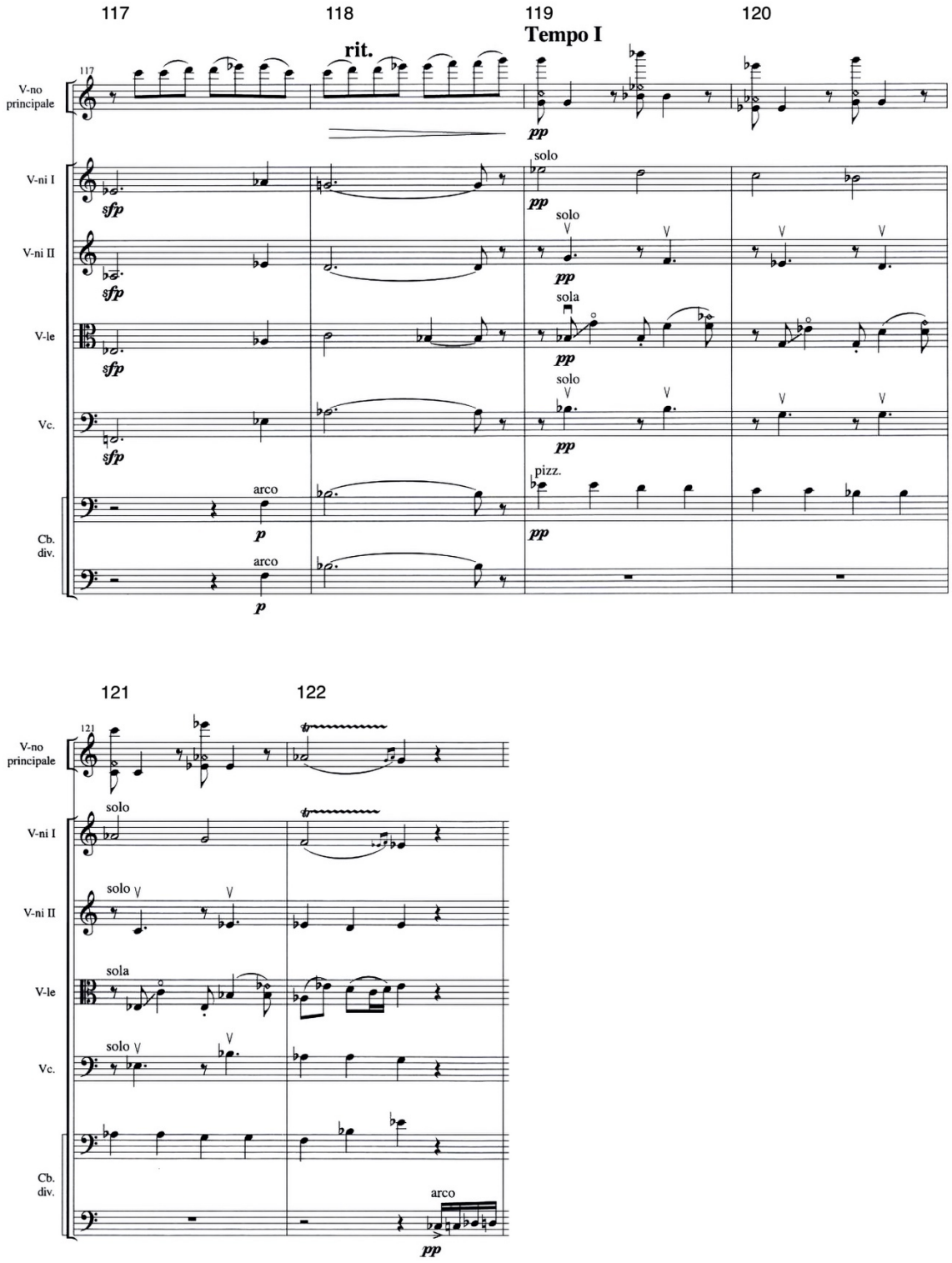
Consequently, instead of keeping all parts of this complex passage in the piano reduction, leaving out the viola part but keeping the lower strings parts for balance and tempo issues is the suggested way to approach.





Example 18, PR, measure 88-95

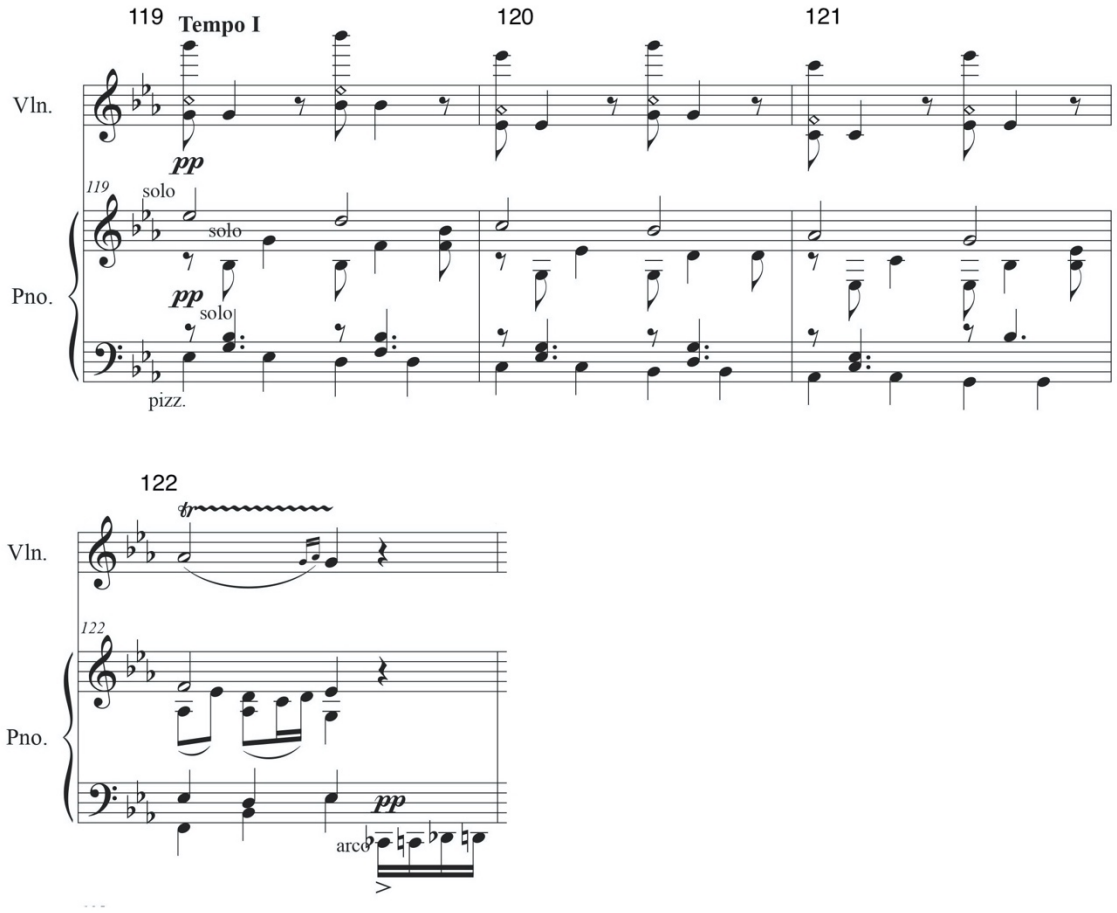
Chamber music textures are sometimes employed by composers in concerti, where only one musician per part plays the passage. The following excerpt, example 19, is one such passage. Although the first violin's descending line is the main melody, all the other solo parts are equally important, especially the viola's distinctive countermelody. In this circumstance, it will be best to include all of these solo lines in the piano reduction, but in most case, this is not possible. Luckily, with just a few modifications, every part can be included in the piano reduction.



Example 19, FS, measure 117-122

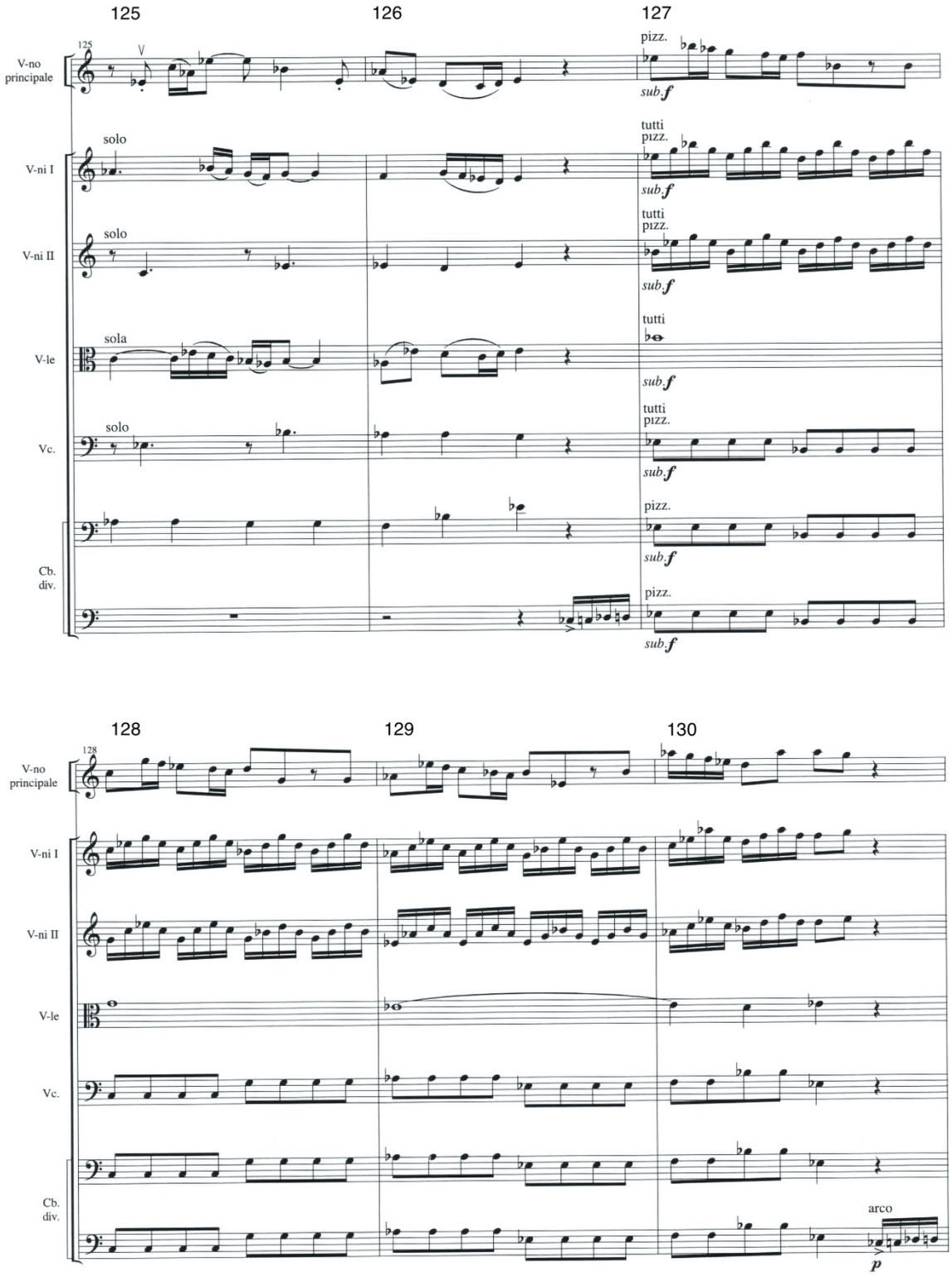
When creating a piano reduction, one technique that is crucial to follow: keep the outer voices in their original range, and move the inner harmonic parts when needed. The reason for that is that outer voices are more audible in both the orchestra and the piano versions. By doing so, the piano reduction will sound closer to the original orchestra, which is one of the goals to accomplish.

Continue with the idea discussed above, from measure 119 to 122, leaving the first violin, viola and double bass in the same register as full score in the piano reduction is the first step. Since the second violin and the viola have many same notes, moving the second violin part an octave lower will be the only solution to include every part into piano reduction. The solution will show as example 20 below.



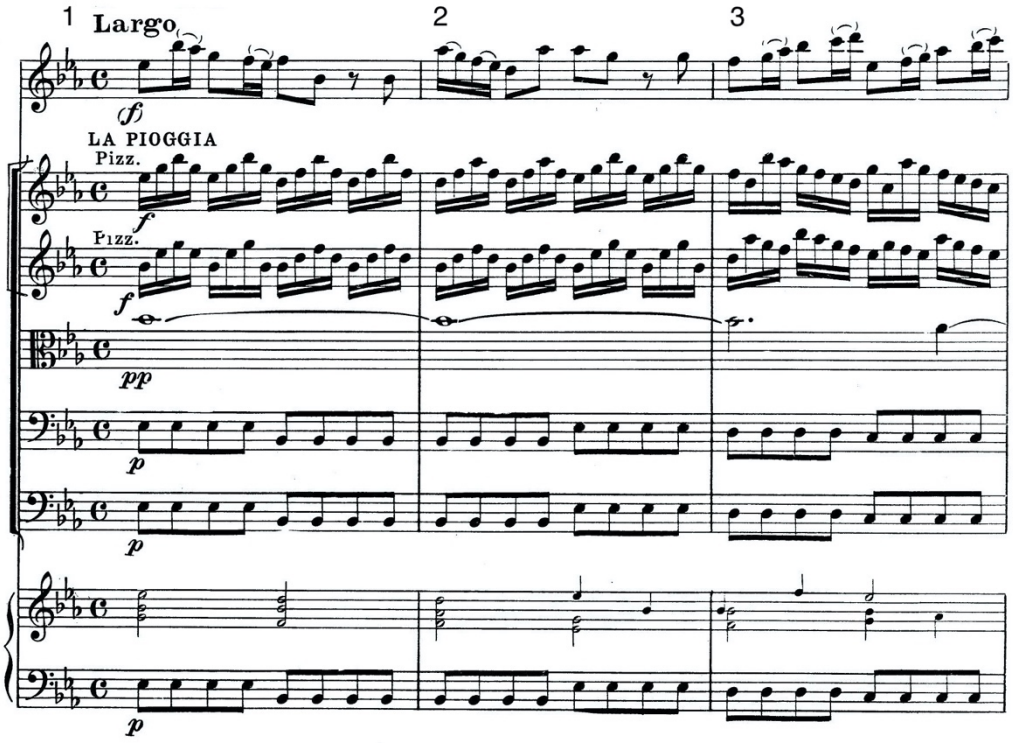
Example 20, PR, measure 119-122

In example 19 and example 21, Desyatnikov's decided not to use a key signature; instead, he used accidental for the rest of the piece, starting from measure 119, even though this closing section is clearly in E-flat major. Although the actual reason for doing this is unknown, it is not unusual to see this in published works. However, as a courtesy to pianists, the key signature will be used in the piano reduction, which can be reviewed in the appendix. This modification is an editorial decision that can save pianists' time while learning and make it more playable.



Example 21, FS, measure 125-130

Another interested point that can be seen from example 21 above: starting from measure 126 until 130, Desyatnikov smartly quotes the melody from the slow movement of *L'inverno* by Vivaldi, completing the rest of the movement in that style.[47] Although the passages are not exactly same, but it is another way to prove the close relationship between the two pieces. (Example 22)



Example 22, Vivaldi: *L'inverno* II. Largo, measure 1-3

[47] Wayanne Watson, "Mashup Strategies In Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas: A Model for Connecting Compositional Technique to Musical Interpretation," *Music Theory Spectrum* 41, no. 1 (January 17, 2019): 20-22.

CHAPTER VI

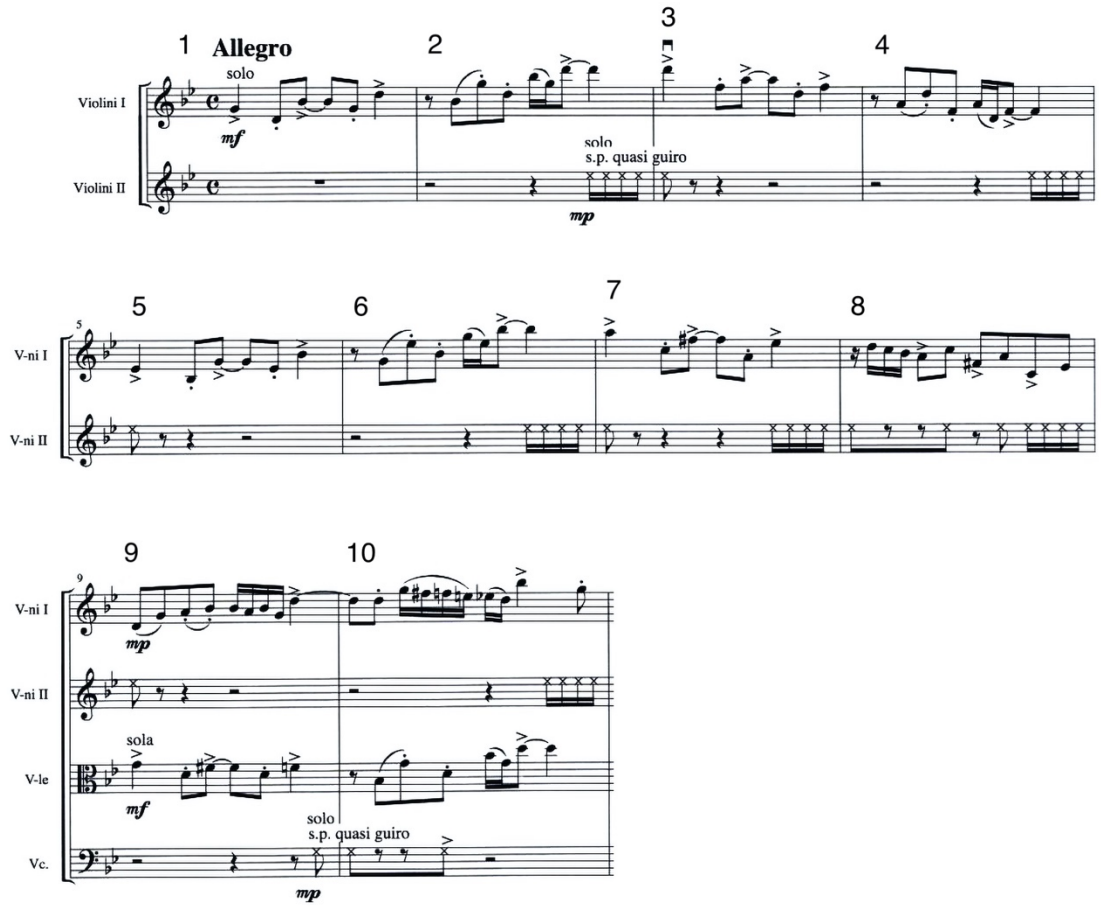
PRIMAVERA PORTEÑO

We occasionally may see an orchestra accompaniment part in sections of concerti that are identical, but not the soloist parts. When creating the piano reduction, the relationship between orchestra accompaniment and soloist parts is one of the many factors that need to be considered. Therefore, the piano reduction in those sections may look different, even though the orchestra part is identical in the full score. Further discussion and examples will be included in this chapter.

At the beginning of this movement, the concertmaster has the melody and is accompanied by the principal second violin, creating a particular sound effect called "s.p. quasi guiro[48]," imitating an instrument that tango composers commonly used. Starting from measure 9 until 23, the principal viola joins and is in duet with the concertmaster, while the principal cello and the principal second violin alternate to produce this unique sound effect. The four principal strings solely play the entire section until the tutti entrance starting from measure 24.

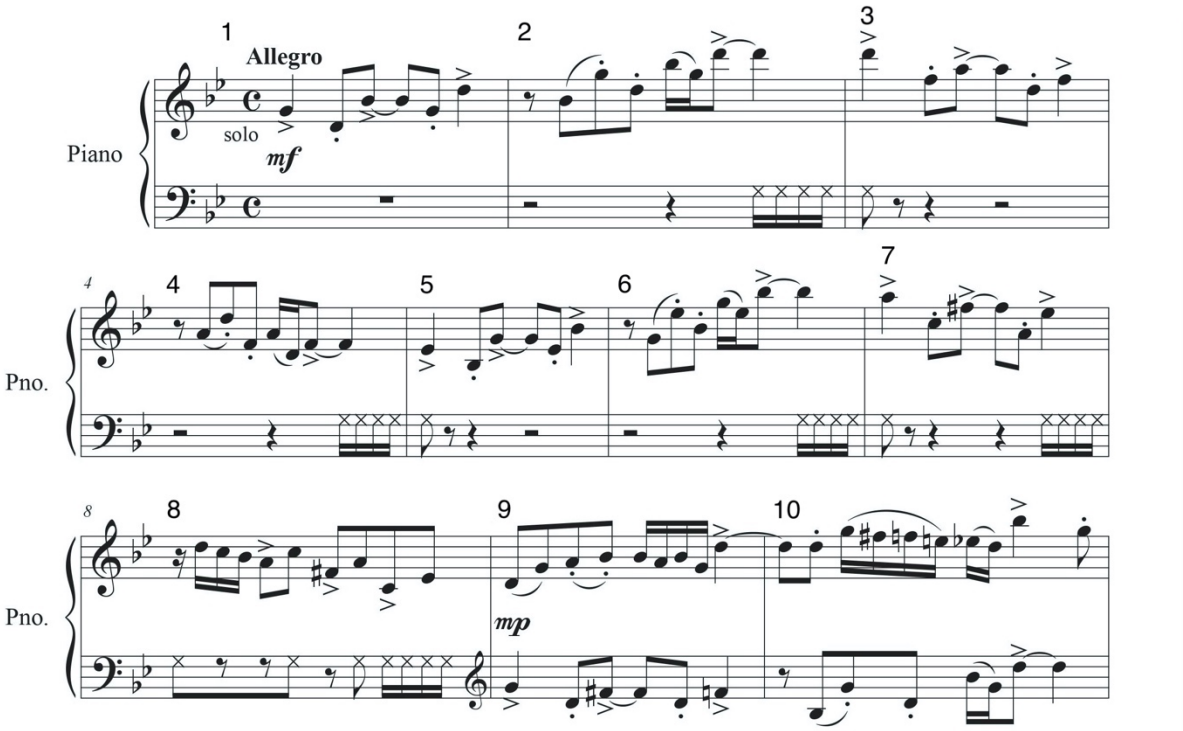
As an arranger, the goal is to include every part and detail into the piano reduction, but it is not always possible. As a result, in the process of arranging piano reduction, picking the most important parts and eliminating those parts that will not greatly affect the sound will be the way to approach.

[48] s.p. is sul ponticello, and the quiro is a percussive instrument commonly used in a tango ensemble.



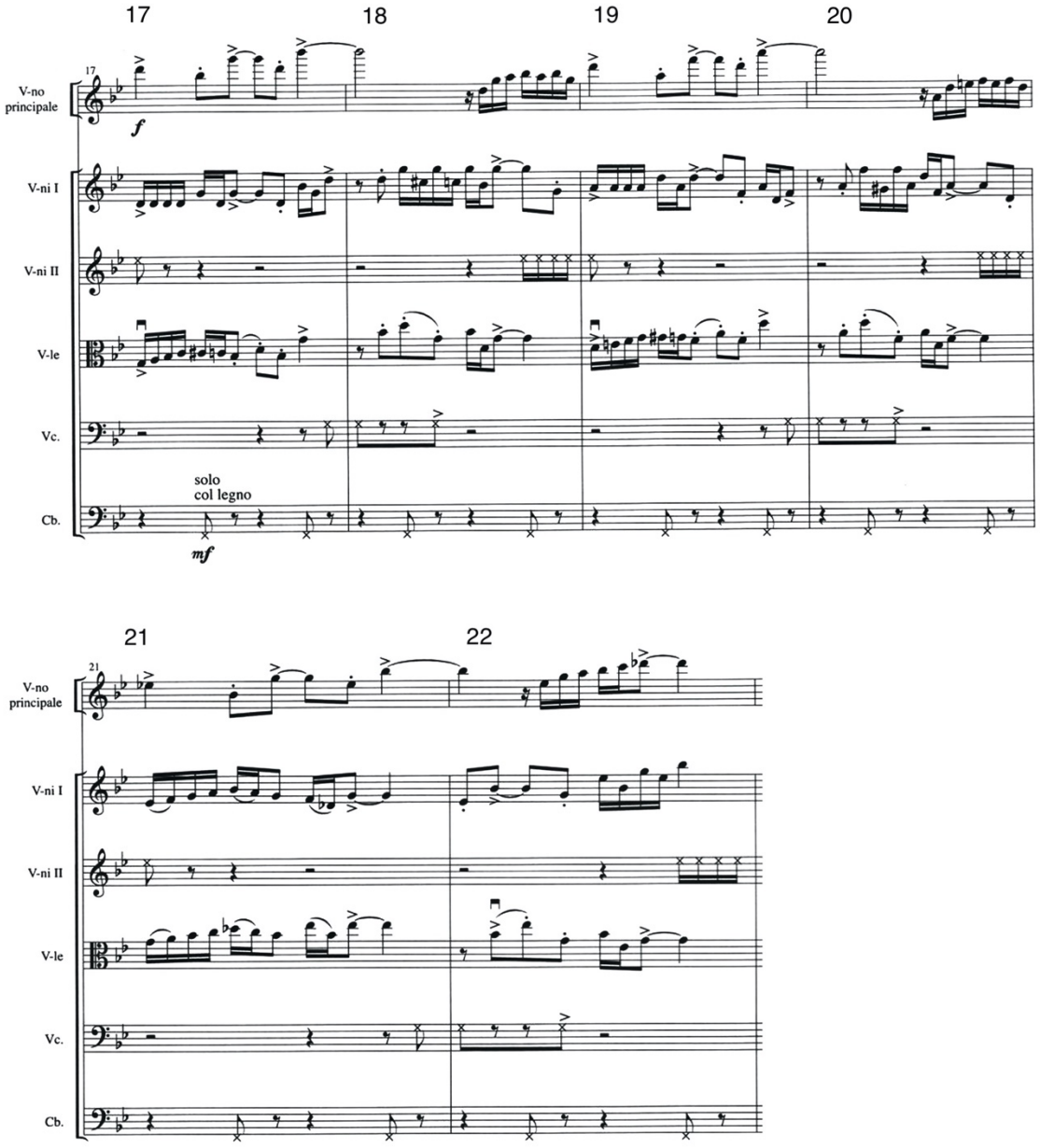
Example 23, FS, measure 1-10

For that reason, since only the concertmaster and the principal second violin are playing in the first eight bars, adding the "s.p. quasi guiro" passage in the left hand so that the pianist can create the percussion sound by either hitting the side of the piano or music rack is possible. However, starting from measure 9 until 23, the duet between concertmaster and principal viola are more important; eliminating the percussive effects and keeping only the duet will be the solution. (Example 24)



Example 24, PR, measure 1-10

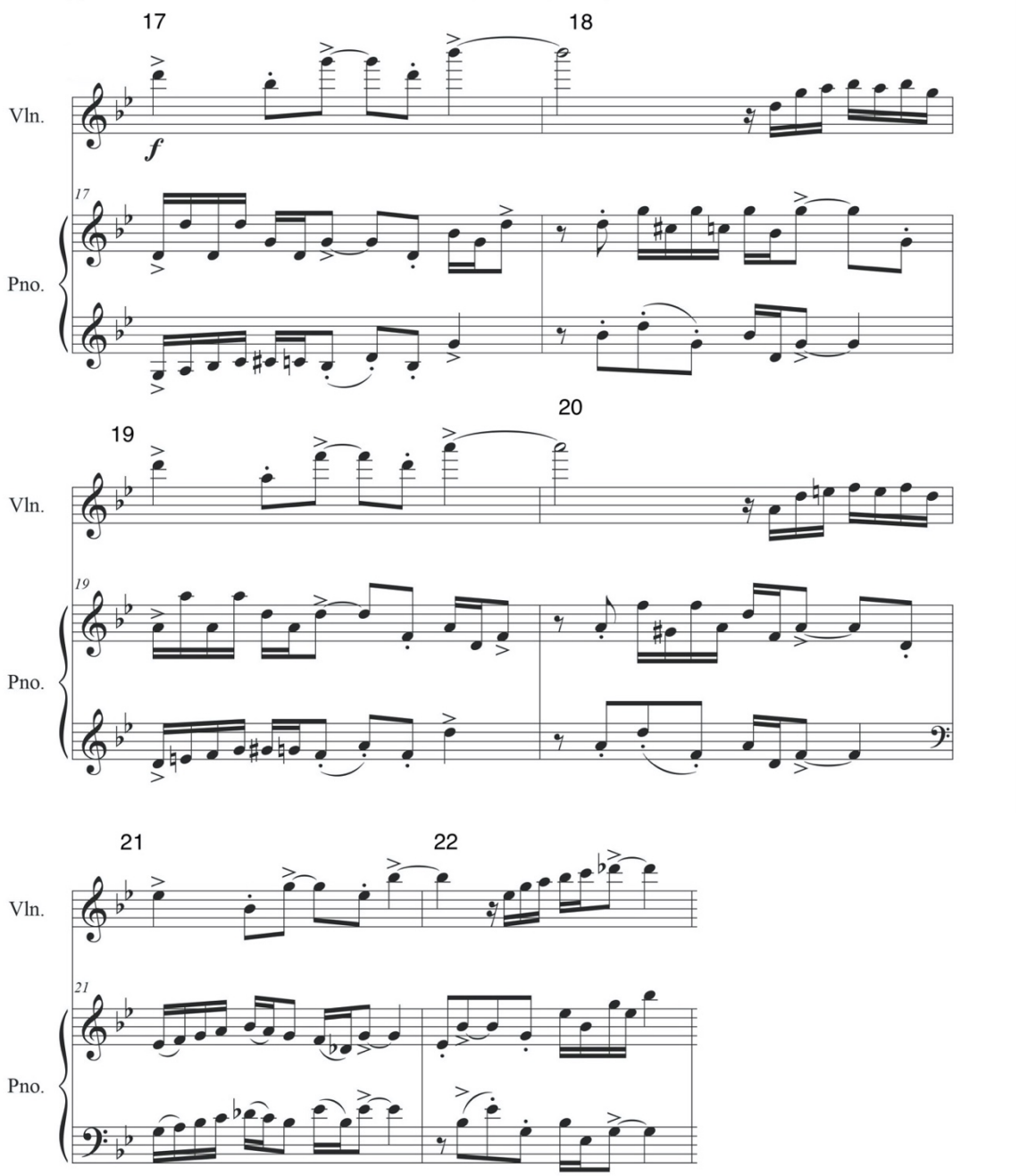
In some cases, it will also be necessary to move parts to a different register for many reasons. In example 25, measures 21 and 22, the viola's melody occasionally overlaps with the violin. It will not be an issue when the orchestra performs it because the two instruments' sound is easily recognized, and they are separated by the geography of the orchestra. However, since both parts are played on the piano in the piano reduction, it will not be easy to distinguish two melody lines if they are overlapping.



Example 25, FS, measure 17-22

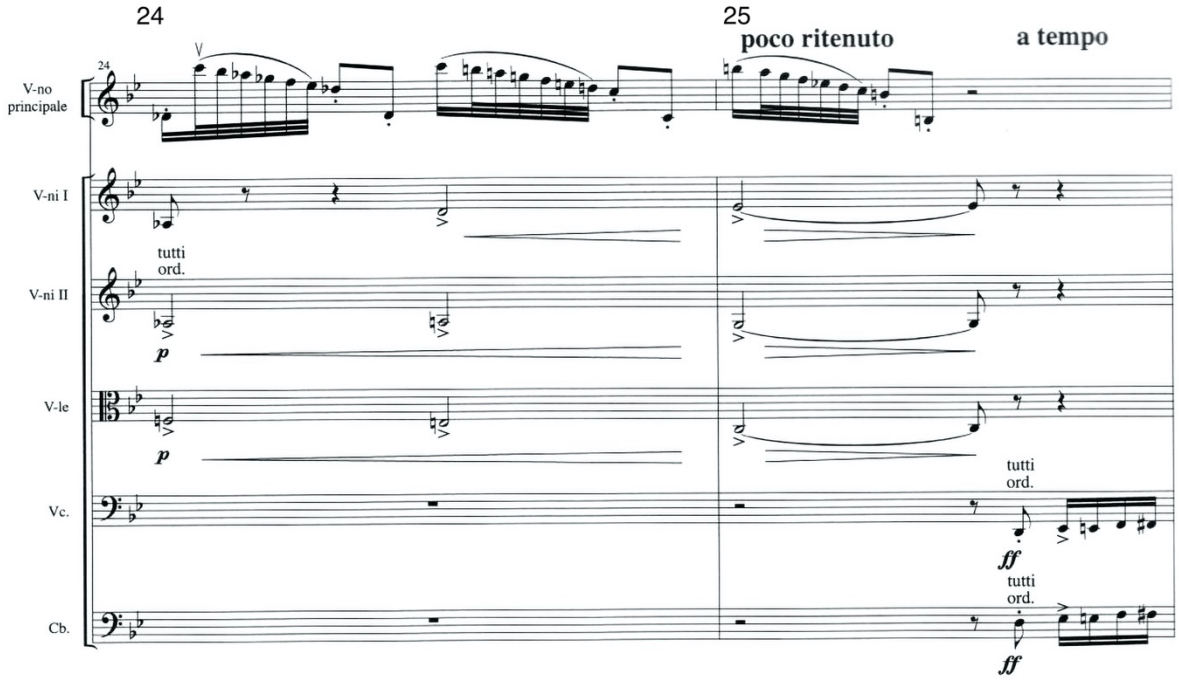
Consequently, both the concertmaster and principal viola will stay in their original octaves from measure 9 until measure 21, then the viola will move one octave lower. The adjustment can be seen in the piano reduction as example 26. By doing so, the solo

violinist can still clearly hear the two melodic lines, which can be expected when playing with the orchestra.



Example 26, PR, measure 17-22

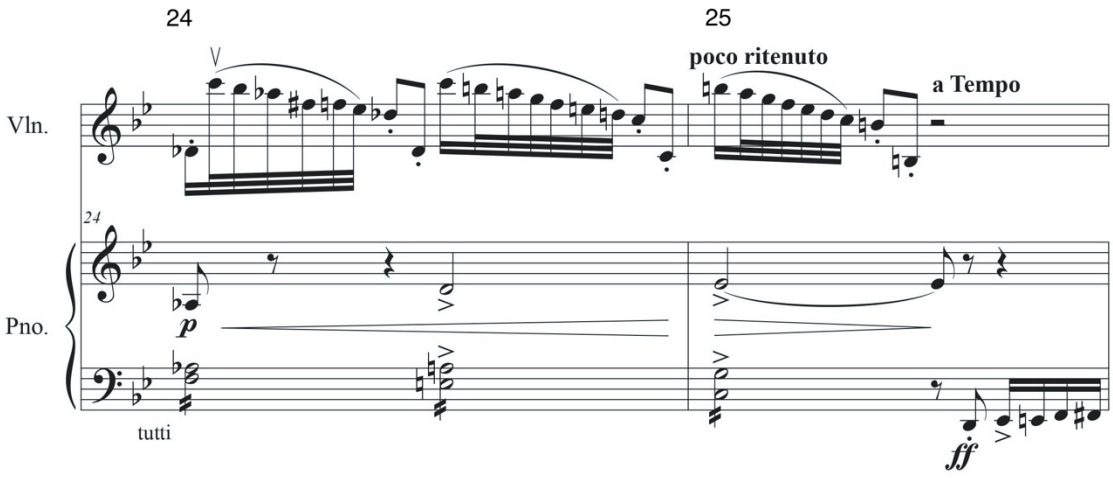
As mentioned in the previous chapter, extra markings or notations may need to be added to the piano reduction to better imitate the sound for those techniques that can only be performed by strings. Crescendos on long, sustained notes are frequently used by composers in orchestral music, but of course are impossible on the piano. In the following example, the upper strings play a few chords to support the violin soloist in measures 24 and 25. In order to increase the volume and intensity, Desyatnikov adds crescendo marking to all three parts. Many different methods can be used as a string player to create this crescendo, but only limited choices can be applied to the piano.



Example 27, FS, measure 24-25

Tremolo is a special effect that can steadily increase and decrease in volume, which is one option for the piano. However, the use of the tremolo to create a crescendo

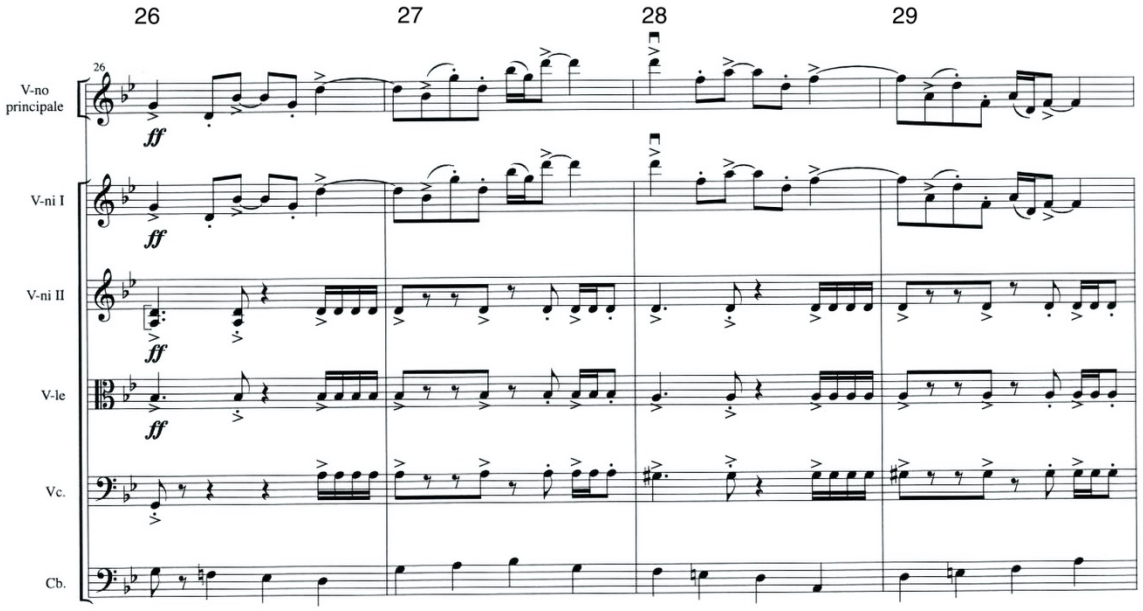
need to be quite subtle, as the tremolo does not actually exist in the orchestral version. As a result, keeping the first violin section as written in RH, while moving the second violin and the viola sections in LH, and adding a tremolo marking will be the best scenario. The reason for adding tremolo in the LH is because it creates a more muffled sound but still increases the intensity, rather than hearing each individual note due to the brighter sound quality if added it in the RH. The result for the passage will be shown in example 28 below.



Example 28, PR, measure 24-25

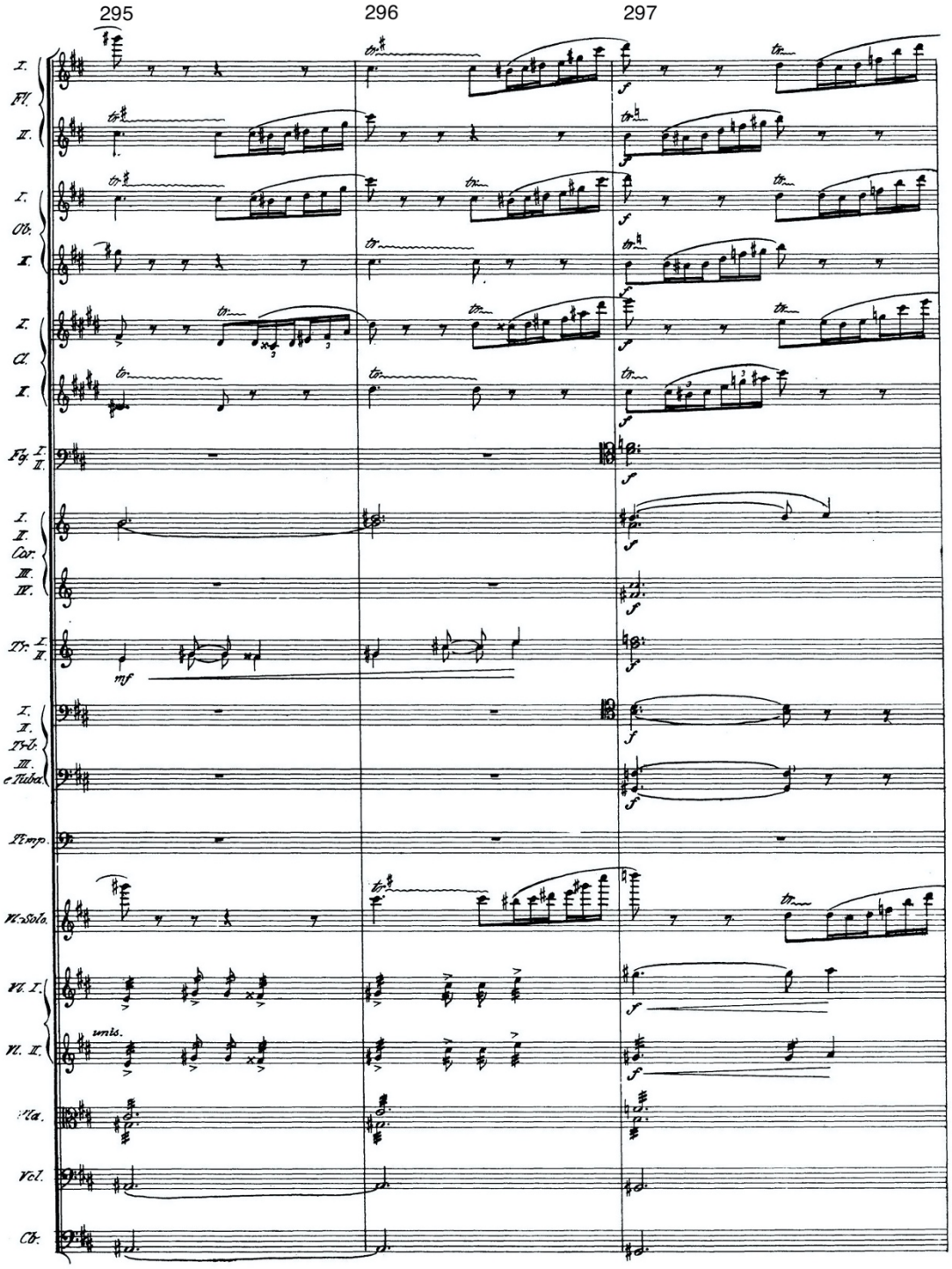
As was mentioned previously, some sections of a piano reduction may look different, even though in the full score they are identical. The reasons may vary, and one of them will demonstrated in the following examples. In examples 29 and 33 of the full score, the orchestra parts of measures 26 to 29 and 102 to 105 are identical. However, the soloist part is different in these two passages.

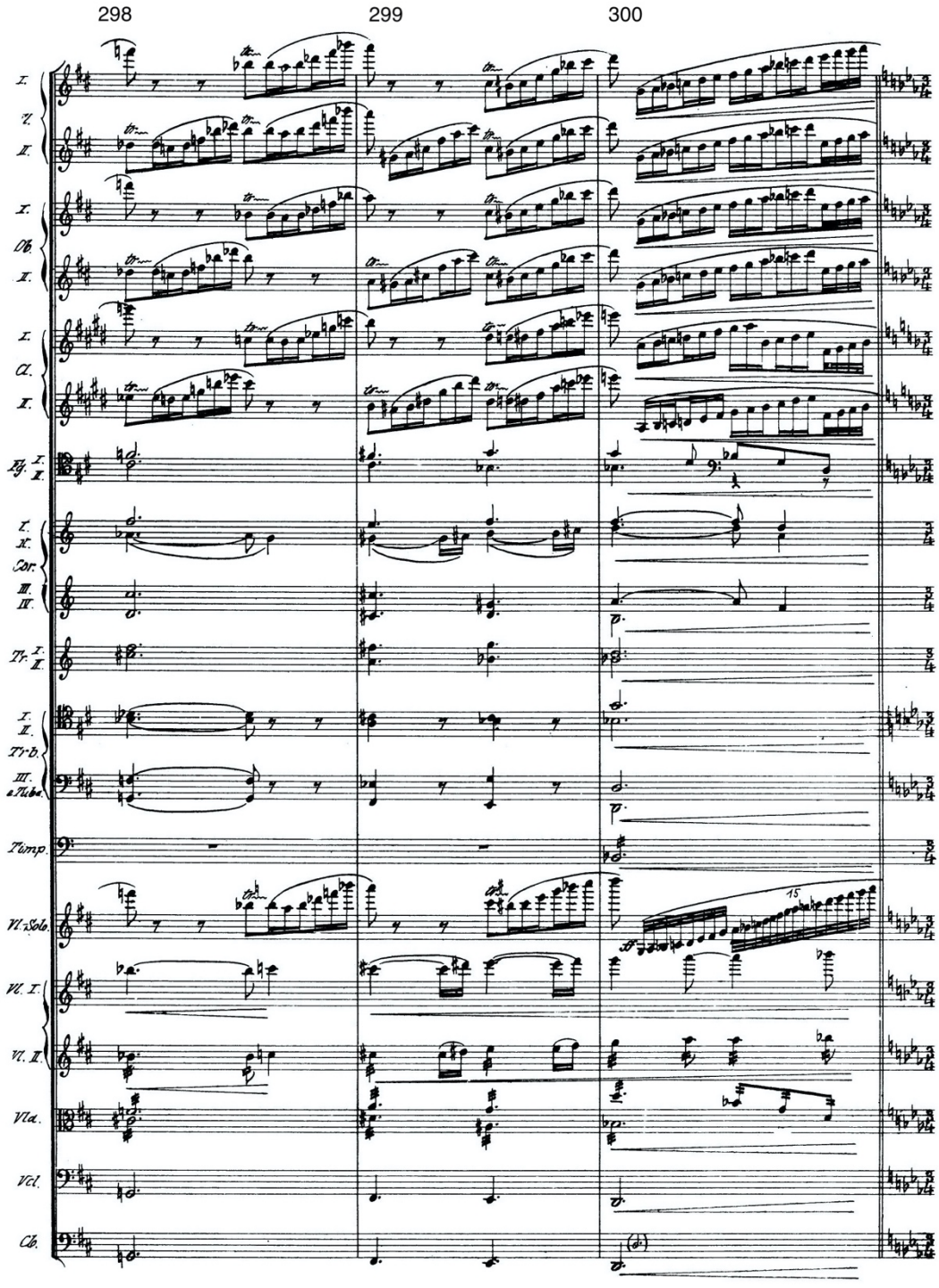
In example 29 below, the first violin section has the main melody, which is doubling the soloist part. The second violin, viola, and cello have the fundamental rhythm of tango music, while the double bass has walking bass figures.



Example 29, FS, measure 26-29

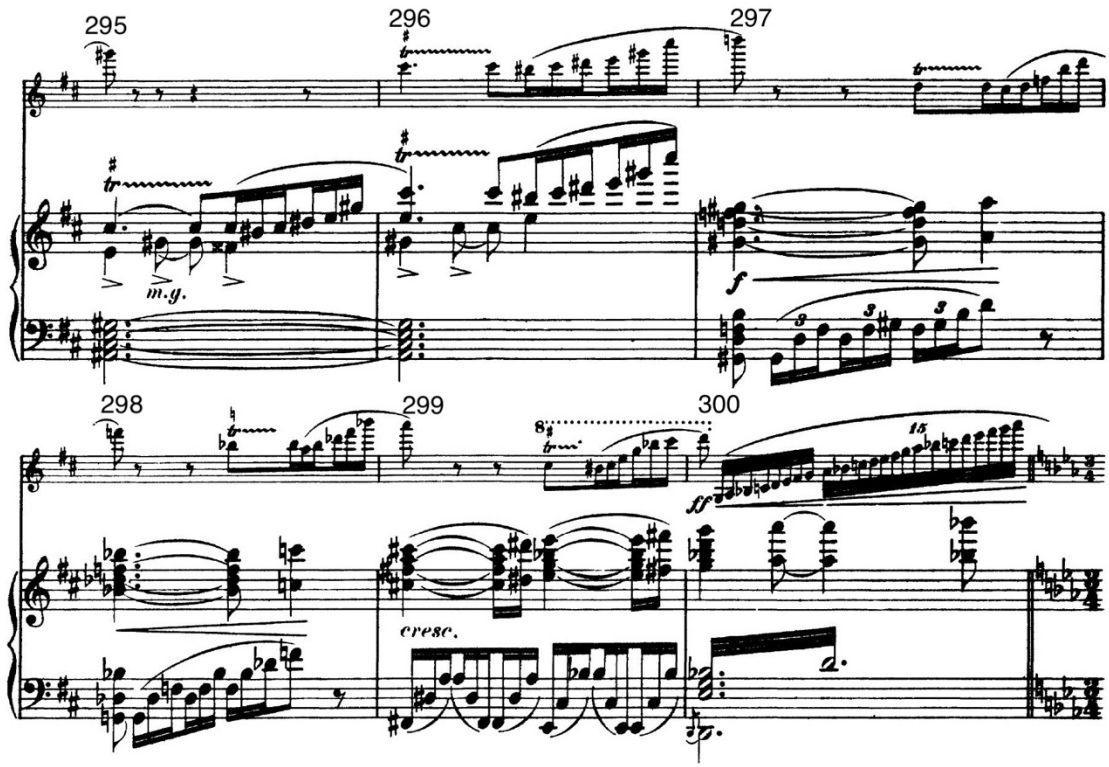
In most cases, when all parts cannot be included in the piano reduction, the orchestral part doubling the solo part will be eliminated to keep other substantial parts intact. This idea has been used in some piano prominent reductions: *Poème* for violin and orchestra composed by Ernest Chausson is one good examples. In example 30 of the full score from *Poème*, the principal flute, oboe and clarinet have the same melody as the violin soloist part, but at the same time, the trumpet and both the violin sections have important materials as well.


295
296
297
Fl. I.
Fl. II.
Ob. I.
Ob. II.
Cl. I.
Cl. II.
Fg. I. II.
Cor. I. II.
Cor. III. IV.
Tr. I. II.
mf
Trb. I. II.
Tb. III. e Tuba
Timp.
Vl. Solo
Vl. I.
Vl. II.
unis.
Vla.
Vcl.
Cb.
f



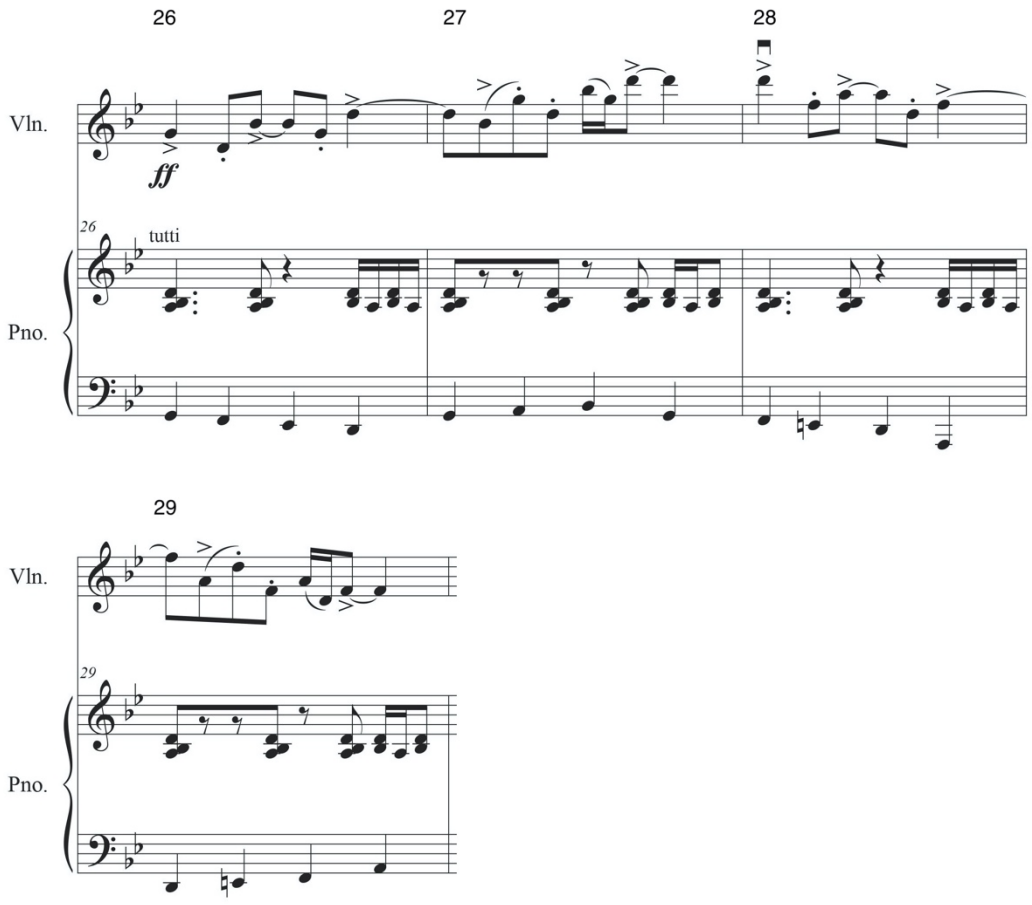
Example 30, Chausson: *Poème*, measure 295-300

Therefore, in the published piano reduction, the arranger decided to eliminate those doubling parts in order to keep other, more important materials. By doing this, it will sound closer to the original format.



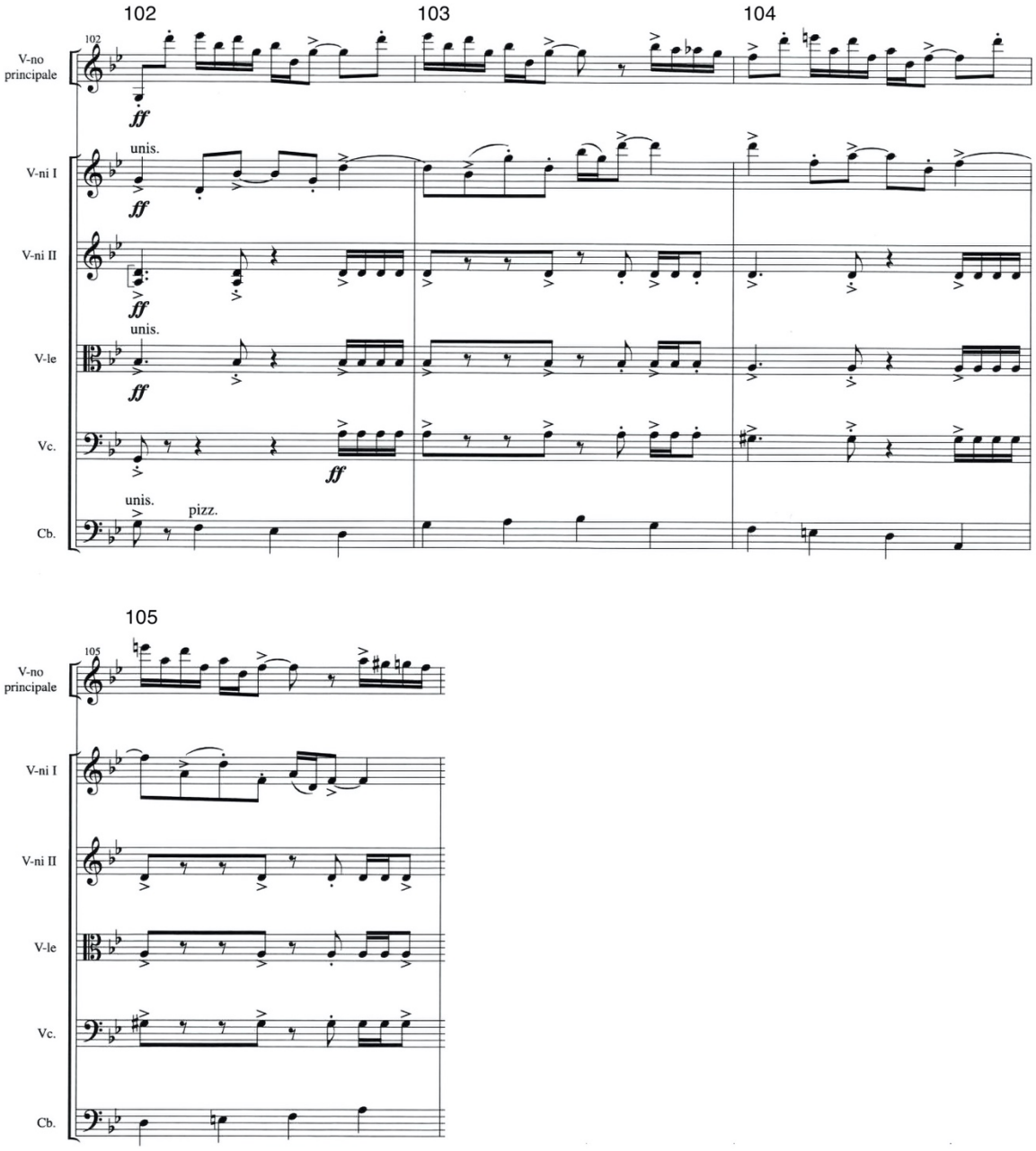
Example 31, Chausson: *Poème*, measure 295-300

After reviewing the example from the *Poème*, the same technique will be also applied here. On account of the importance of the middle three parts in this passage, eliminating the first violin part but including the entire three parts and alternating the repeating note into the piano reduction will be the solution. It can be seen in example 32 below.



Example 32, PR, measure 26-29

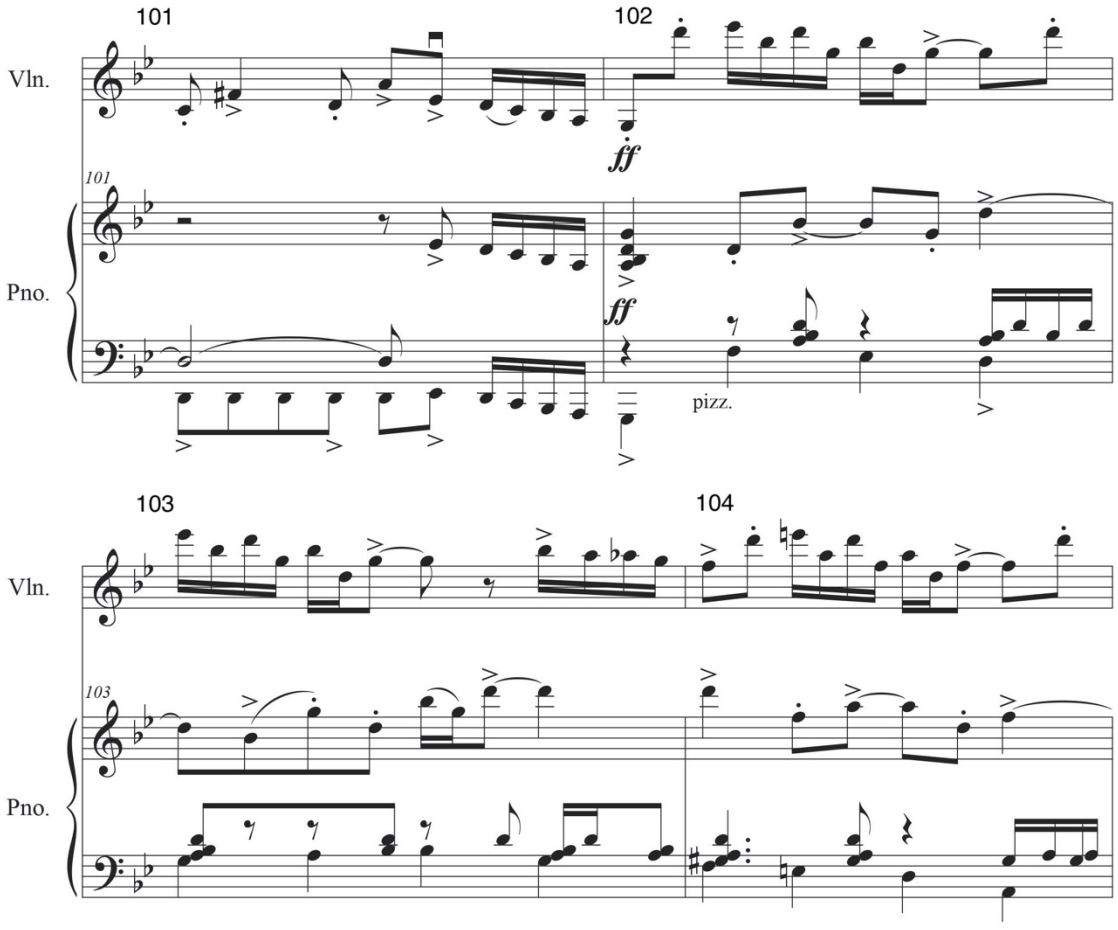
Moving ahead to the identical section in the recapitulation of the piece, example 33 shows that the orchestral part is precisely the same as example 29. However, the piano reduction needs to be adjusted slightly because the solo part is different. In most situations, when the orchestral part stays the same in multiple parts within the piece, the piano reduction should be the same as well, but exceptions sometimes exist, as it does in this case.

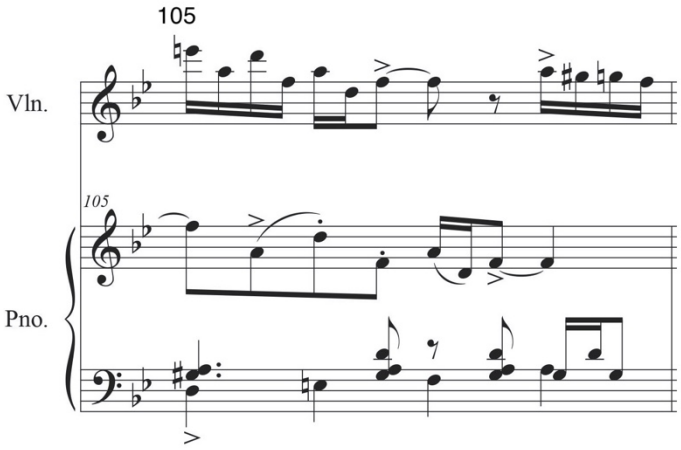


Example 33, FS, measure 102-105

While the first violin section in example 30 doubles the violin solo melody, that is not the case in the recapitulation. In example 33, the soloist no longer plays the melody,

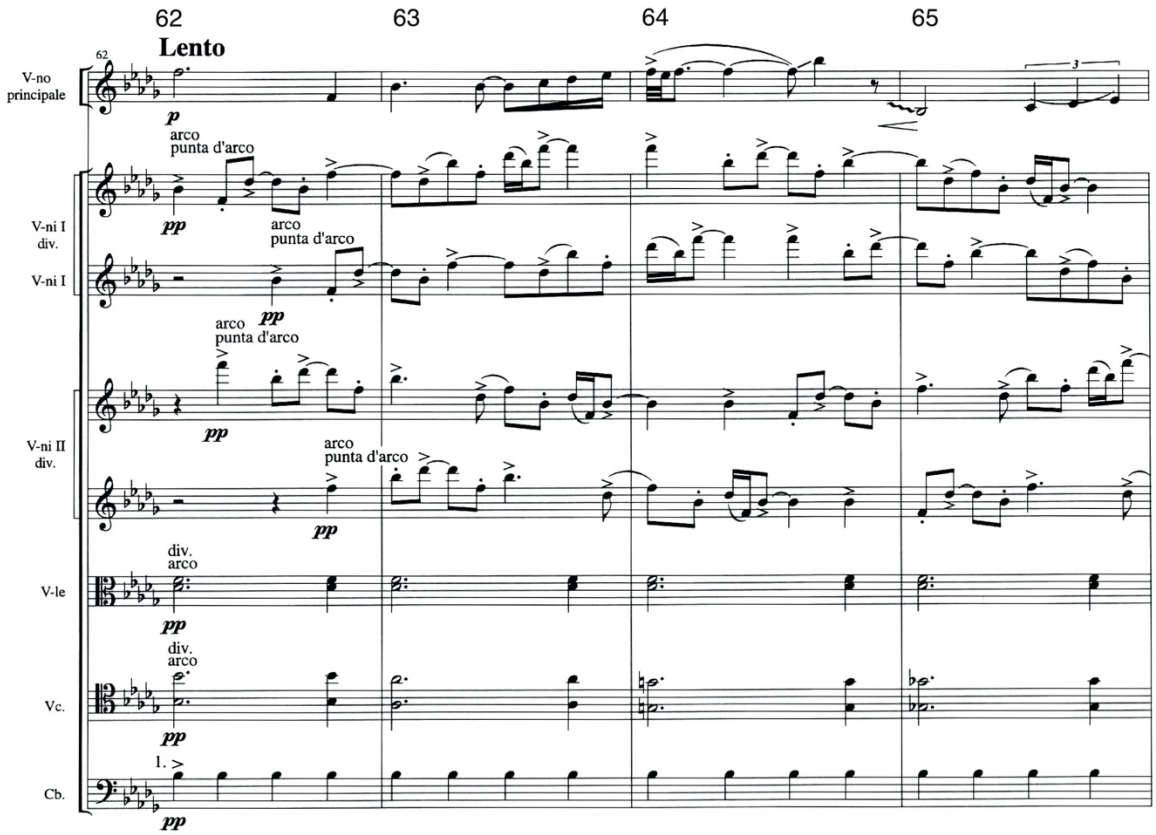
but a separate virtuosic improvisation. Therefore, the theme in the first violin section will be the primary part that needs to stay in the piano reduction. Moreover, since the melody needs to stay and will be the only thing in the RH, all other parts will need to move to LH. For this reason, the repeating notes on the fourth beat of measure 102 to 104 from the second violin, viola and cello sections will need to be simplified and occasionally eliminated in order to make it practical to play on the piano. By doing this, instead of eliminating the three middle parts entirely, the rhythmic element will still stay in the piano reduction which will create the closest sound to the original. The suggested modification of this passage will show below as example 34.





Example 34, PR, measure 101-105

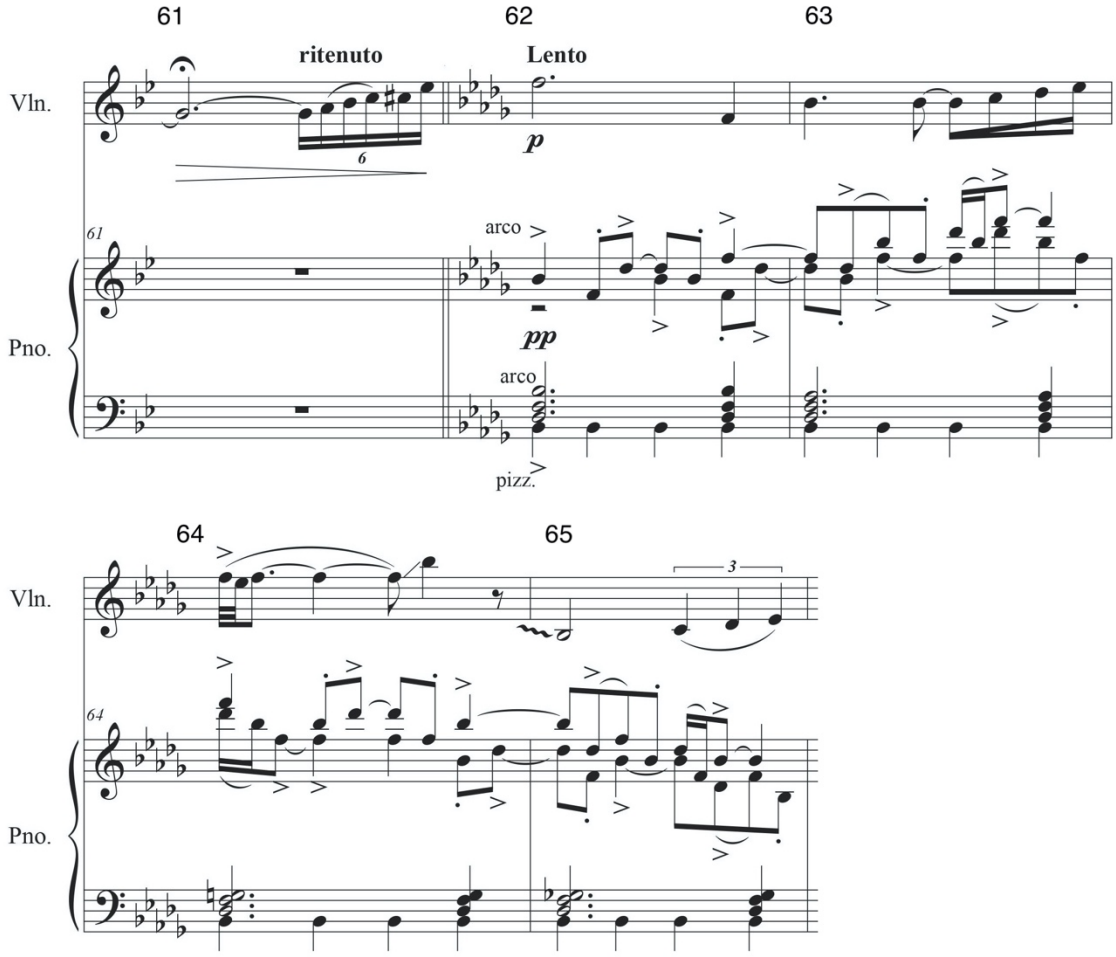
The following example features a complex orchestral passage divided into seven distinct parts. Making the right decisions as to which part should be included will be crucial, since it is not possible to include everything. Based on one guideline of creating piano reductions, the melody and the bass parts will need to be included, and those are the first violin and the double bass in this case. As demonstrated in example 35, both the first and the second violin sections are divisi, with canonic imitation between the two parts. At the same time, the viola and the cello sections play chords to support the melody in the violin sections.



Example 35, FS, measure 62-65

As one can see from the example above, the second violin section has the inverted melody of the first violin section. Although it would be wonderful to be able to include both original and inverted melody into the reduction, it is not possible in this specific example because of the unreachable interval for pianists between those two parts. As a result, keeping either the first violin part or the second violin part will be the next best solution. As mentioned earlier, the first violin section has the melody throughout this section, and in general is the more prominent part in the orchestra. In addition, the second violin part functions as an inverted echo to the first violin section; removing the second

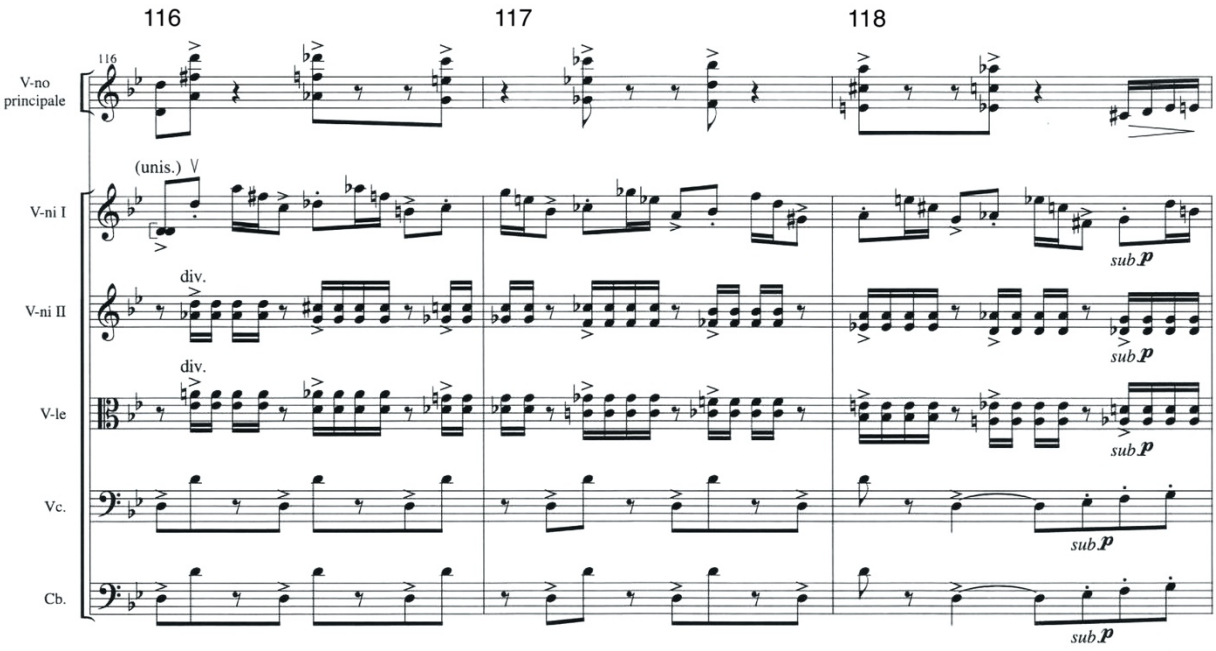
violin parts will be the only option. In example 36 below, the first violin section will be in the RH of the piano with the viola section and lower string sections in the LH of the piano in the piano reduction. Although this solution looks complex, it will be workable because the tempo here is fairly slow.



Example 36, PR, measure 61-65

The last excerpt of this movement is yet another example of repeated notes, which has been seen throughout other movements as well. Many repeating note passages in

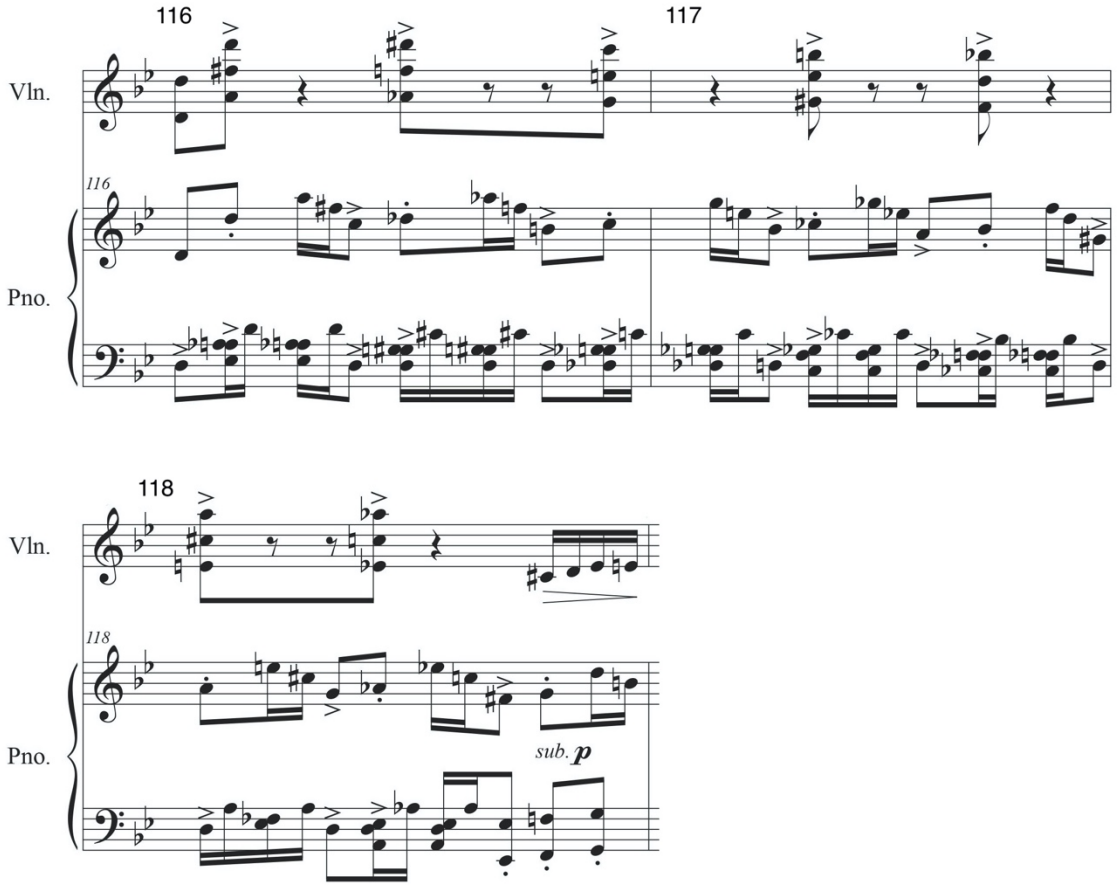
orchestral music are solely for increasing the intensity and creating excitement to the music, and the following example is one of them. In example 37, the first violin section has the primary melody, and the cello and the double bass play the D pedal note in syncopation rhythm. However, the second violin and the viola sections play the repeating chords in another syncopated rhythm to fill in the eighth rest of the lower string parts in a type of rhythmic counterpoint.



Example 37, FS, measure 116-118

Because the first violin section is the most significant part among the others, it will be included in the RH of the piano reduction. In addition, it is an extremely angular, awkward and virtuosic melody, and it is impossible to put anything else in RH especially in this fast tempo. Since putting the other four other sections as written in the LH is not

practical nor accessible for most pianists, the solution will be alternating the chords and filling up the beats by adding the low D on the eighth rest of the middle two parts. The arrangement can be seen in example 38 below.



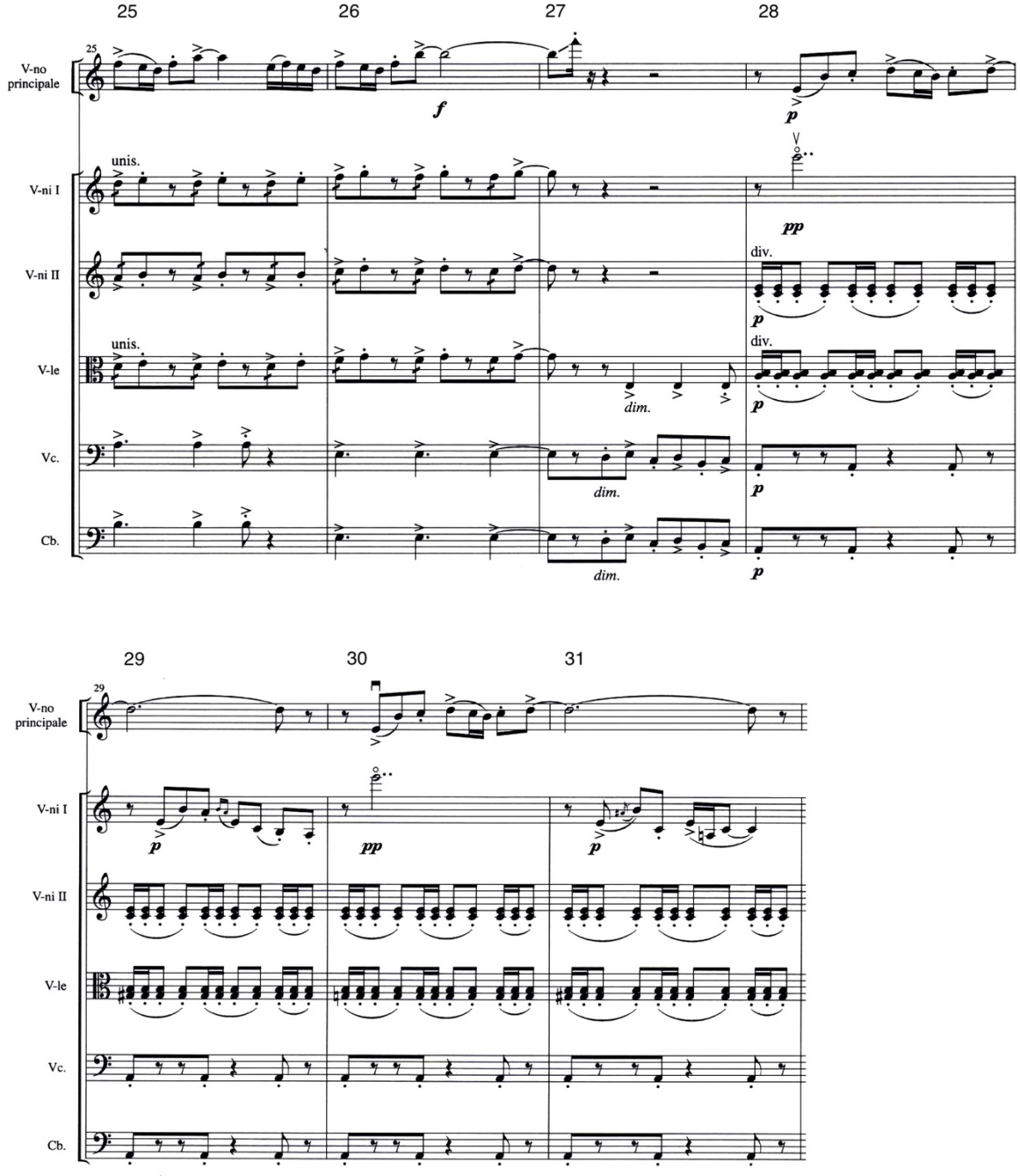
Example 38, PR, measure 116-118

CHAPTER VII

VERANO PORTEÑO

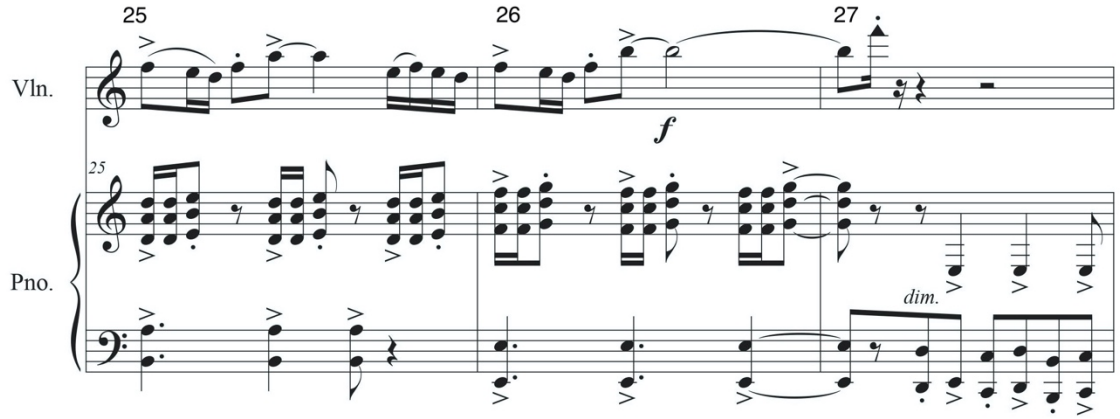
When creating piano reductions, two different philosophies can be seen when approaching complex orchestral passages. One is to acknowledge that certain passages would not be possible to play on the piano for any pianists, even those with advanced technique. Such solutions should obviously be avoided. The other philosophy is a practical consideration, in keeping with Martin Katz's ideas about "comfort and practicality." Certain passages in a reduction might be possible by investing an unlimited amount of time to practice, but the reality for the busy collaborative pianists is what we do not have an unlimited time to practice certain passages. There might be a more practical solution that works just as well, and would be more realistic for the working collaborative pianists. Seeking to create these solutions is the key to any successful reduction.

As mentioned previously, repeating note passages can be seen in the string parts of orchestral music very often. As a string player, it is very simple and practical to play repeating notes because of the structure of the instruments; with the light weight of the bow, string players can easily to move the bow back and forth and only use very little amount of bow to play the repeating note passages. However, this is not always the case when playing on the piano, as repeating notes can be quite difficult or impossible, depending on the speed of the passage. Therefore, repeating note passages often need to be modified when creating a piano reduction.



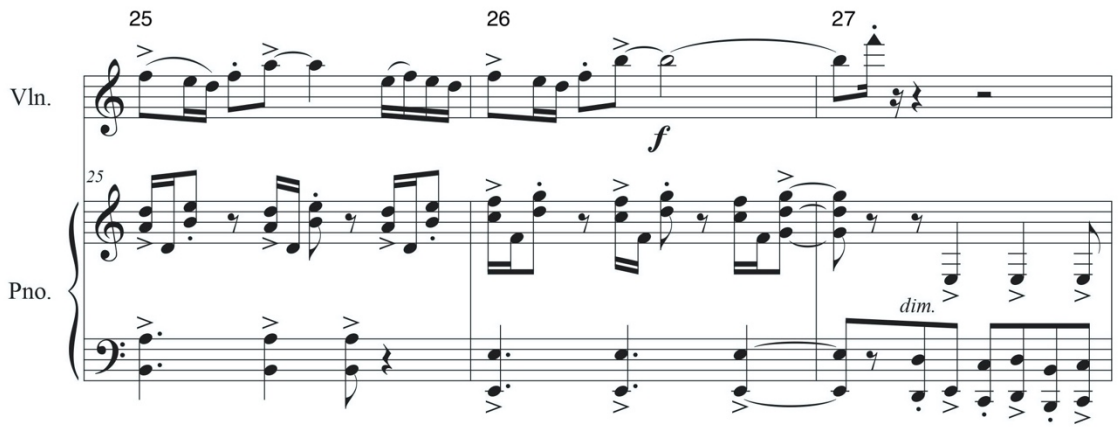
Example 39, FS, measure 25-31

In the example above (measure 25 to 27), the upper strings have repeating notes in syncopation rhythm, and those repeating notes are perhaps playable on the piano because the tempo is moderate. Nevertheless, playing exactly as written on the piano will create a much thicker sound than the original when playing by the orchestra. In the example 40 below, the repeating notes stay exactly as written in the piano reduction. It is one of the options and doable but not ideal.



Example 40, PR, measure 25-27

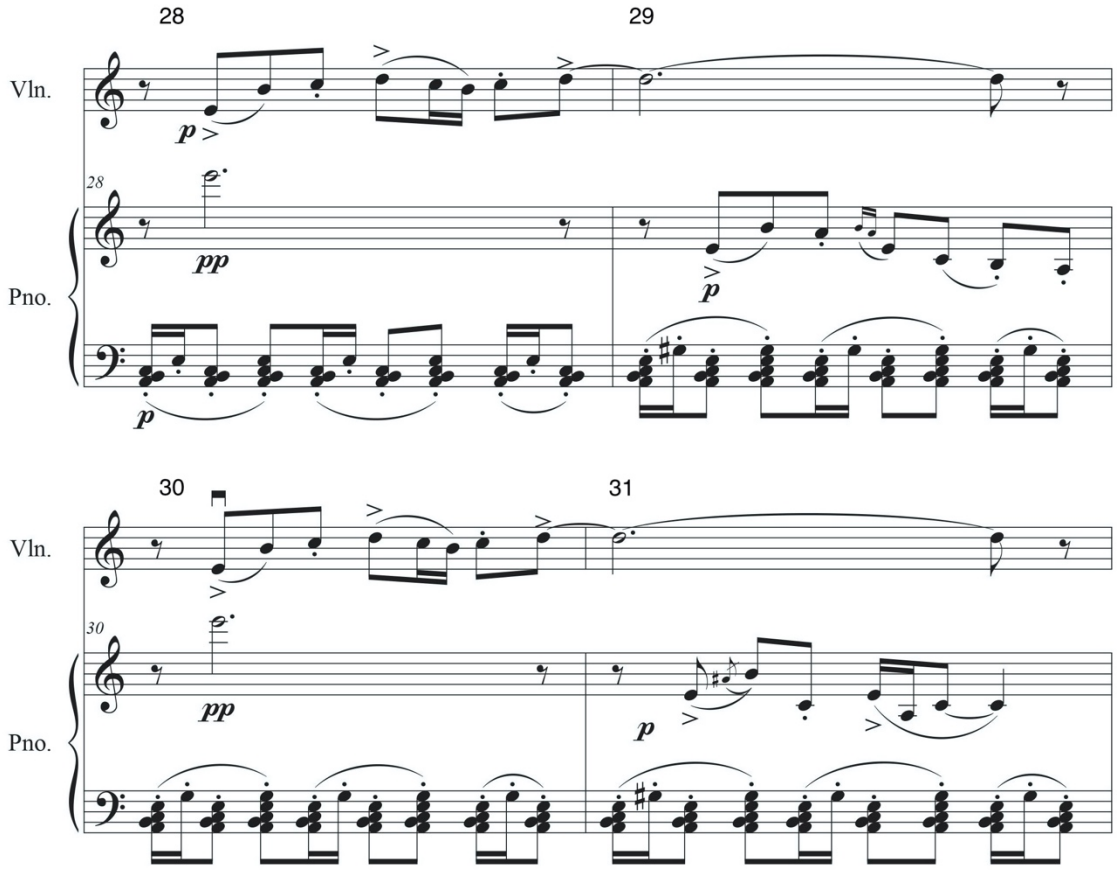
However, since the viola and the first violin section play the same note but just in a different octave, making both violin sections on the first 16th note of the group and the viola section on the second 16th note will be the better way to play this passage. Doing this will create a lighter sound, similar to the original, while the rhythm stays unchanged. (Example 41)



Example 41, PR, measure 25-27

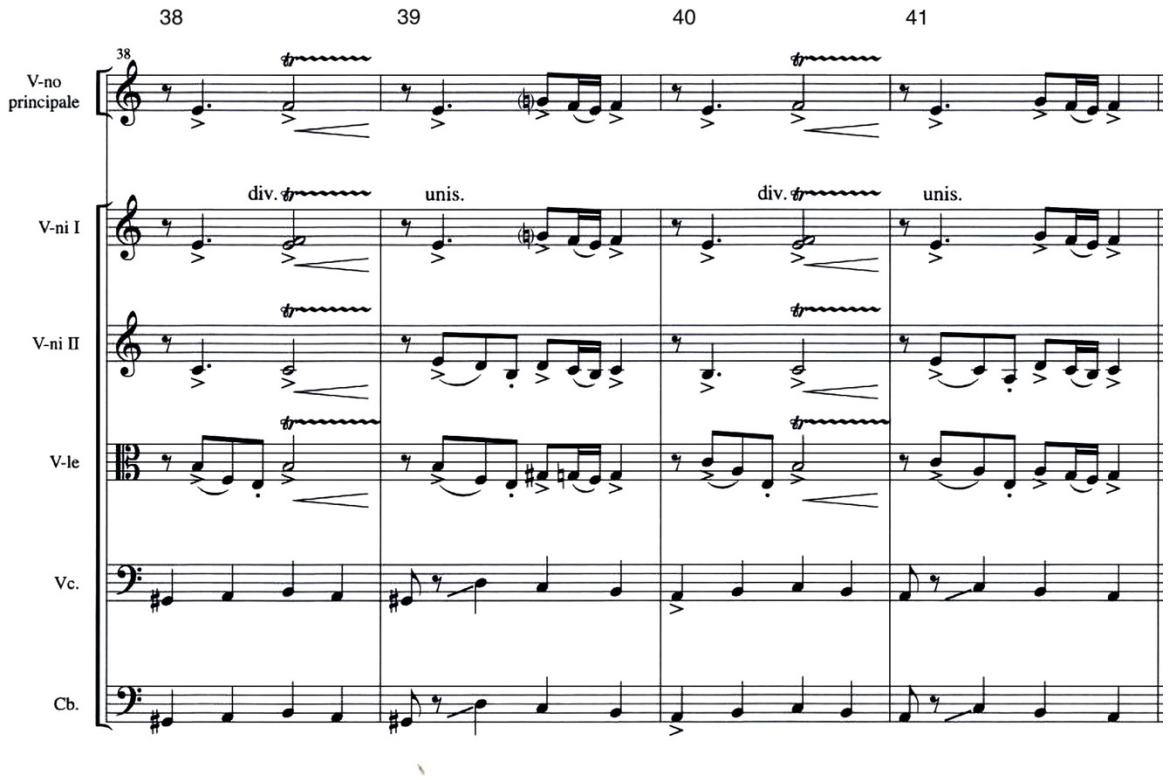
Using the same example 39 (measures 28 to 31), the second violins and the violas have a repeating chordal pattern while the first violins have the primary theme in conversation with the soloist. Due to the fact that all three parts are in the same treble register, moving the accompanying rhythmic figure (the second violin and viola) an octave lower to the piano left hand, while keeping the first violin part in the original octave for the piano reduction will be the first step. Another advantage is that the celli and bass notes are also include in this lower octave repeated chord.

However, because the low register on the piano creates a heavier and louder sound quality, the repeating note pattern will need to be modified, even if it is doable on the piano. As it can be seen, the entire repeating note passage is in the piano dynamic, and it is impossible to play everything but still maintain this softer dynamic. Consequently, as shown in example 42 below, the best solution for this passage will be to alternate the notes of the chord originally played by the second violin and viola.



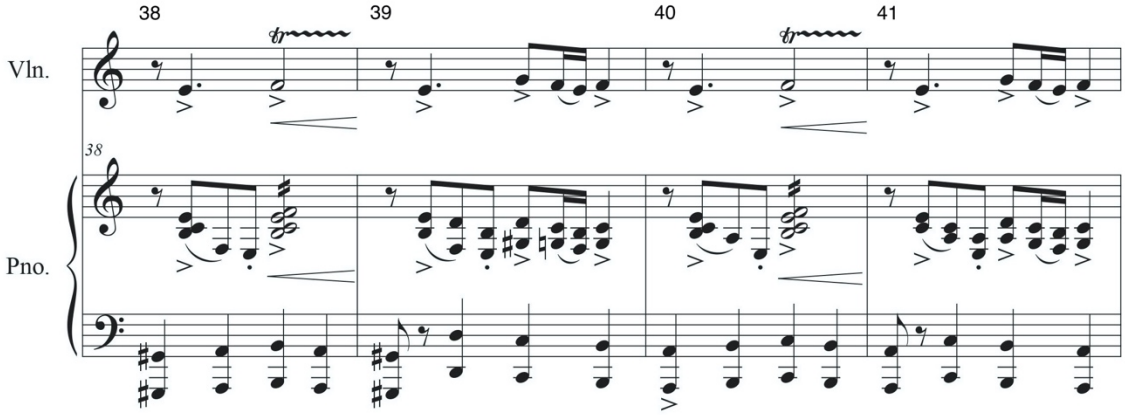
Example 42, PR, measure 28-31

In the following excerpt, in measures 38 and 40 of example 43, the upper string parts have trills in the second half of both measures, but on several different notes – F, E, C, B trilling up to G, F and D, C. As there seems to be no harmonic relationship between these notes, the sound effect it creates is more important than the notes themselves.



Example 43, FS, measure 38-41

There are several ways to approach this problem when reducing this passage for piano, as a four-note trill in the right hand is not possible; creating a trembling sound effect will be the right direction to proceed. After examining different options, combining those four notes from all three parts and adding the tremolo will create the closest sounds to the orchestra. In the same passage, since the first violin section is doubling the soloist for the entire passage and it is not practical to play everything, removing the first violin section but keeping the other two upper string sections on measures 39 and 41 is a good solution, as can be seen in example 44 below.

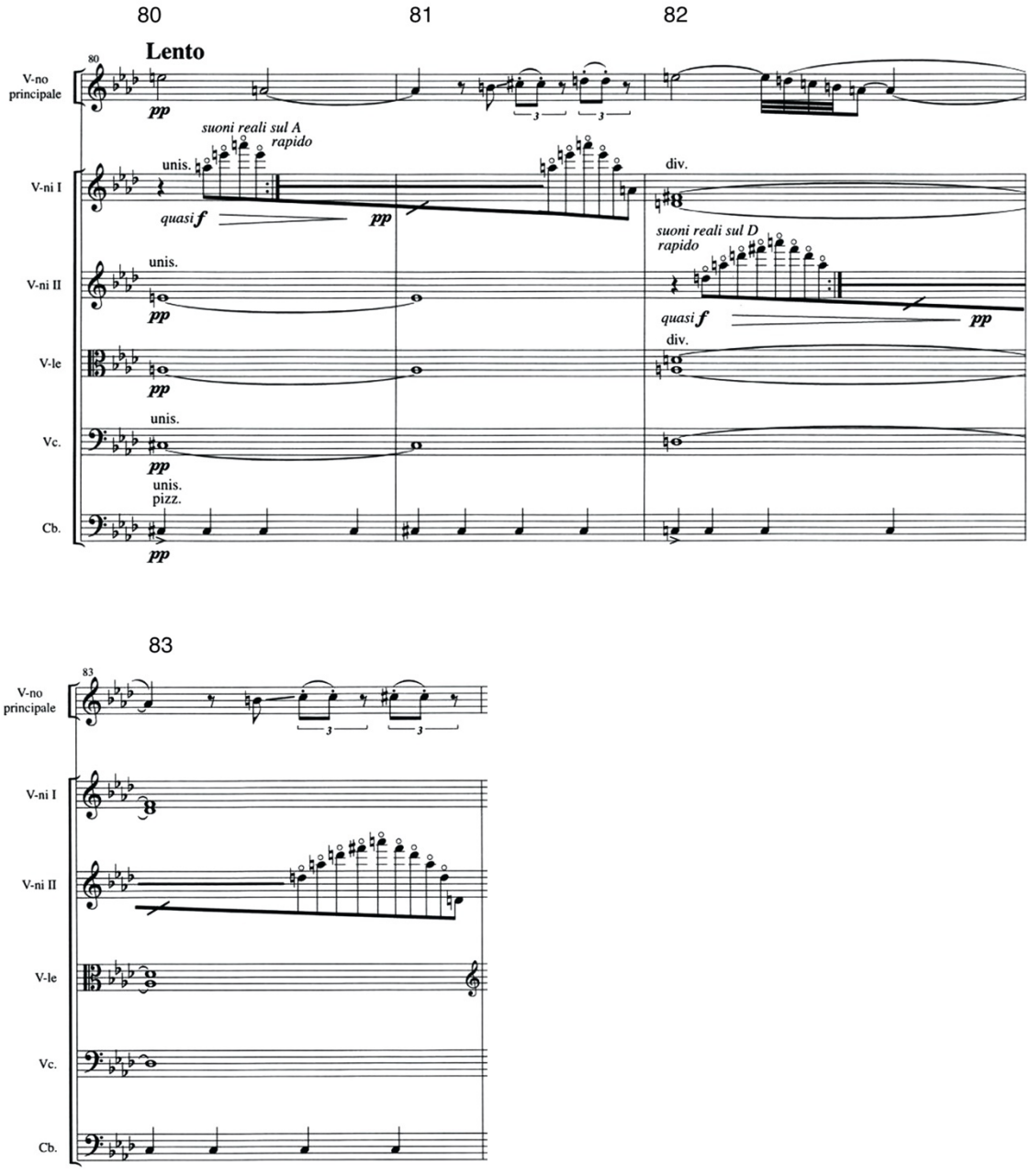


Example 44, PR, measure 38-41

In some cases, an editor will remove passages that they decide are not playable on the piano at their own discretion; however, many can actually be modified and therefore retained in the piano reduction. Despite the fact that the modified passage may not sound exactly as it does in the original full score, if an important passage was removed in the piano reduction, the soloist might be confused when playing with the orchestra. One of the goals of creating a good piano reduction is keeping everything as close as the original orchestration as possible.

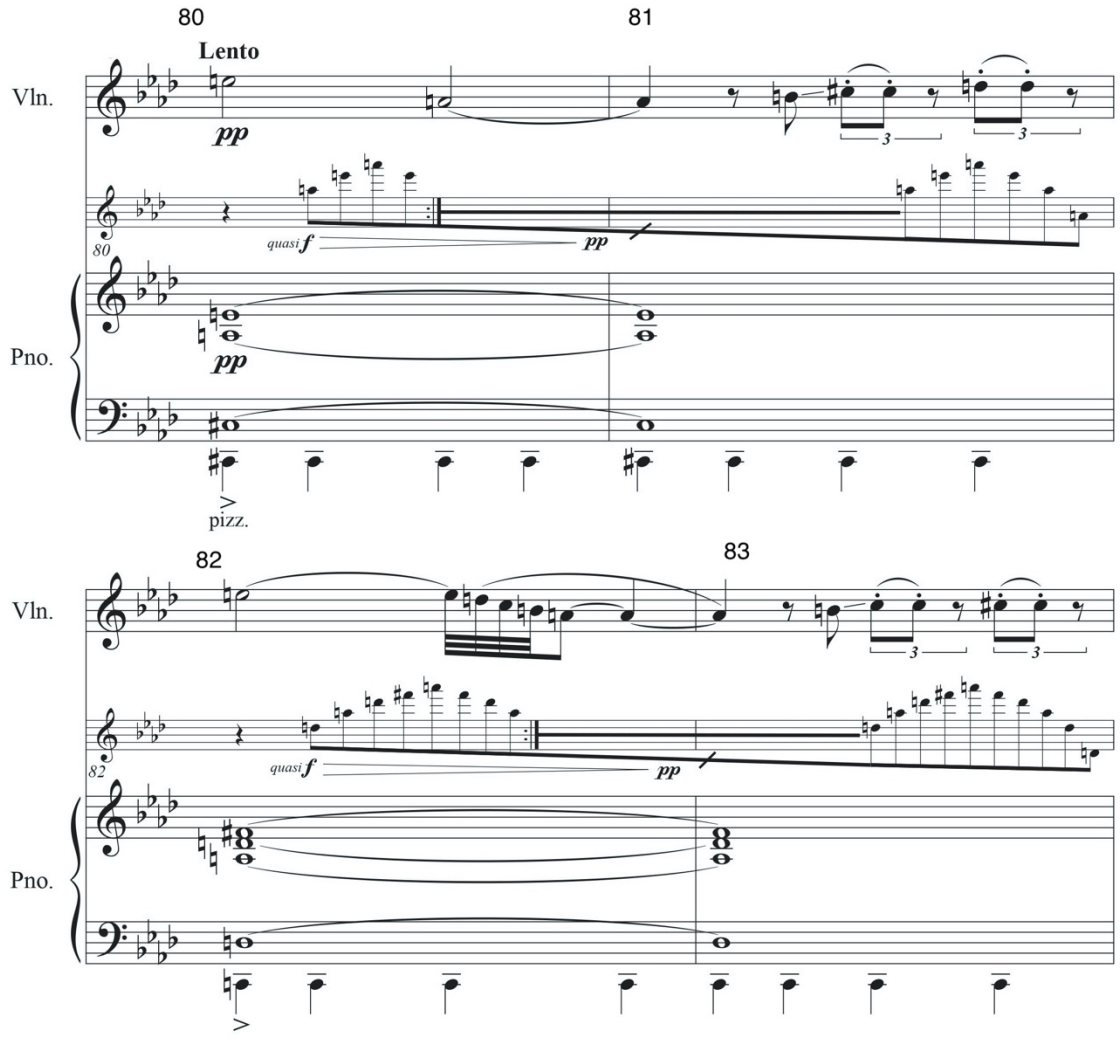
In example 45 of the full score below, strings alternate harmonic arpeggios with longer held chords. The harmonic arpeggios are rapid but without coordinating across the section, and therefore provide a transparent, dreamy sound quality. At first glance, it seems impossible to include the harmonic arpeggio in the piano reduction because it is not possible for pianists to play harmonics. However, after trying multiple ways on the piano to imitate the sounds of strings playing harmonics, it is indeed possible to play the passage, and is equally important as other parts. Without the arpeggios in the piano

reduction, the sound of this passage will be tedious since the sound of long notes will be decaying once the hammer hit the strings and the walking bass will be the only part to be heard. As a result, the passage should be included.



Example 45, FS, measure 80-83

In creating the piano reduction, the suggestion for this passage is to put the cello section and walking bass in the left hand, and the upper string sections in the right hand. In example 46 shown below, an extra music staff will be used for the harmonic arpeggio passage that was originally played by the strings. While it may be impossible to precisely imitate the sound of strings playing the harmonic on the piano, the passages can be improvised in the same key center as the string parts and can freely create the chordal atmosphere that the original orchestration yields.

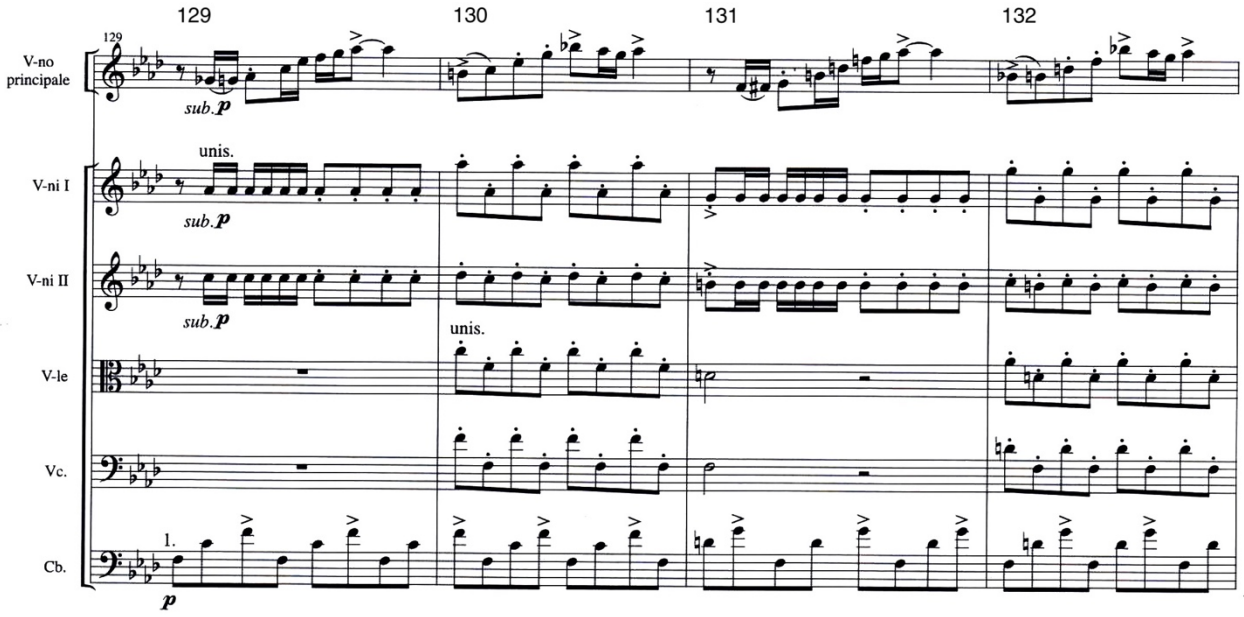


Example 46, PR, measure 80-83

While it is an unwritten rule that the outer parts of the melody and bass line are best kept in the piano reduction when parts need to be reduced for multiple reasons, exceptions have existed, and example 47 will be one of the issues.

It is not practical to play everything as written on the piano for measures 130 and 132 because of the tempo most violinists take. Accuracy and creating the softer dynamic are the critical issues for this passage, and there is need for it to be modified. While the

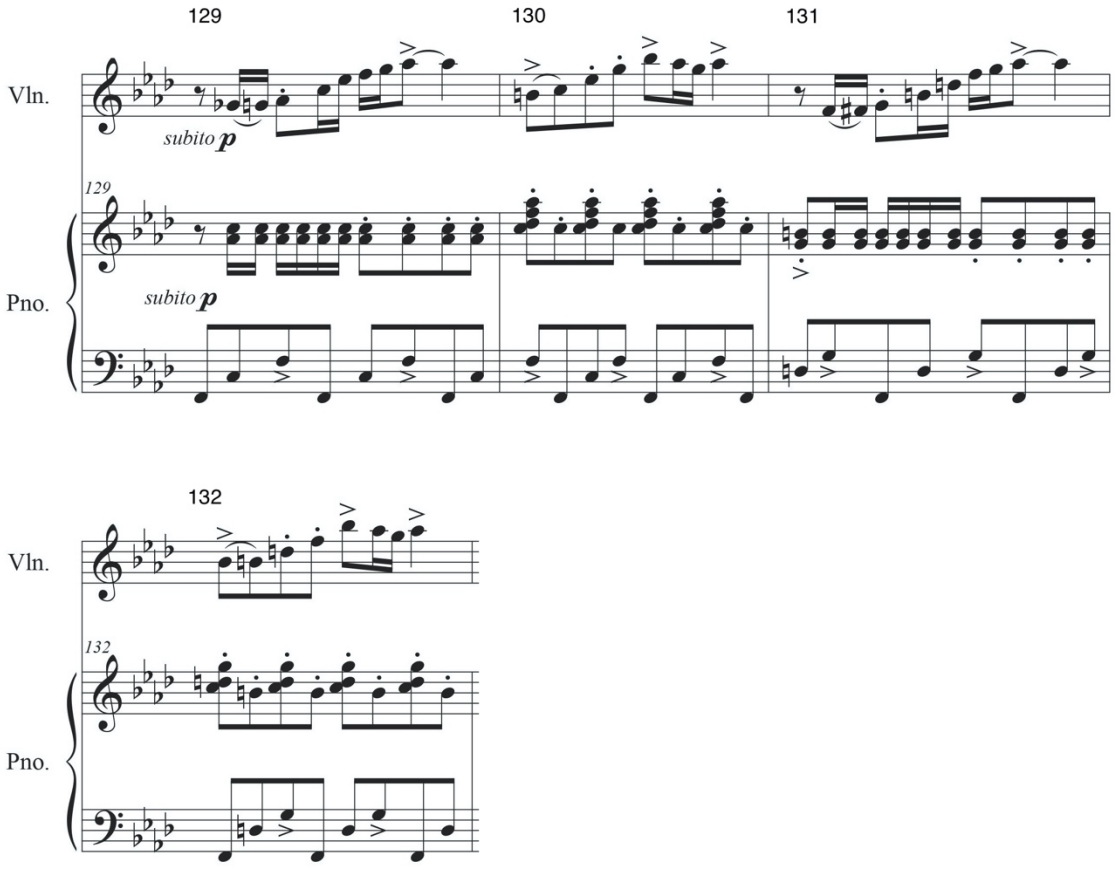
left hand can play the important bass part as written, the right hand cannot play all of the string parts due to the extensive jumping required at this fast tempo. In addition, the second violin section has a higher pitch than the first violin section on the second 8th note, and this is more audible when played by the orchestra.



Example 47, FS, measure 129-132

To avoid confusing the soloist between the rehearsal with piano and playing with an orchestra, the solution will be keeping both violin sections in the piano reduction. However, the interval between the viola and both violin sections on all downbeats in measures 130 and 132 creates a unique color, making this orchestra accompaniment special. As a result, the solution is to leave all upper string sections for the downbeats and just the second violin section on every offbeat in measures 130 and 132. Example 48

demonstrates this solution, which is both practical, and playable at the tempo and dynamic of this passage, and yields the best result.



Example 48, PR, measure 129-132

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

As a collaborative pianist, expertise in playing different formats of music is part of our lives and an indispensable skill; this includes playing piano reductions of pieces originally written for orchestra. Unlike songs or sonatas, for which pianists can just read from the score when playing, piano reductions require extra work before learning it. Playing the piano reduction can be fun and has both advantages and disadvantages during the learning process. Pianists need to use their imagination when imitating the orchestral sounds and do homework to revise the impossible passages from the editor; on the other hand, freedom exists for pianists to choose what to play or not.

Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas by Astor Piazzolla is undoubtedly an amazing violin concerto and should be played more often. However, it becomes a stumbling block for many violinists eager to play this piece with because there is (as of this writing) no existing piano reduction. Few pianists are willing to read from the piano trio version and add the missing parts from the full score when playing. Luckily, with the publisher's approval, the situation may change with the completion of this document.

The primary goal when creating this piano reduction was to maintain the orchestral sounds while arranging the part in a way that is realistic to perform on the piano. Many passages that were technically risky for pianists, but naturally easy for strings, were modified. In addition, idiomatic passages that were easy to perform but did not capture the orchestral truth were altered.

In creating this piano reduction, many issues mentioned above, such as repeating note passages or crescendo on long sustained notes, can be seen throughout all four

pieces. Besides those technical issues, moving parts to a different register or eliminating doubled parts to capture the orchestral truth can also occasionally be noticed. All of what is mentioned above will be modified and presented more realistically in the piano reduction, which can be seen wholly in the complete piano reduction in the appendix. Additionally, all the techniques discussed and demonstrated in this paper will be a good resource for pianists to use as a reference for other works that either have poorly executed reductions, or no existing reduction.

To sum up, this new piano reduction will hopefully inspire pianists to create piano reductions of orchestral works which have yet to be realized. Furthermore, this is only a starting point; as with all reductions, future modifications still may be necessary because of numerous reasons, such as differences in hand size, technical expertise, comfort level, or simple differences of opinion as to which parts are most important in the orchestra. However, the existence of this piano reduction will undoubtedly create more chances for professional and student violinists to perform *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* when it is not possible to have a string orchestra.

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APPENDIX A

APPROVAL LETTER FROM ALFRED PUBLISHING

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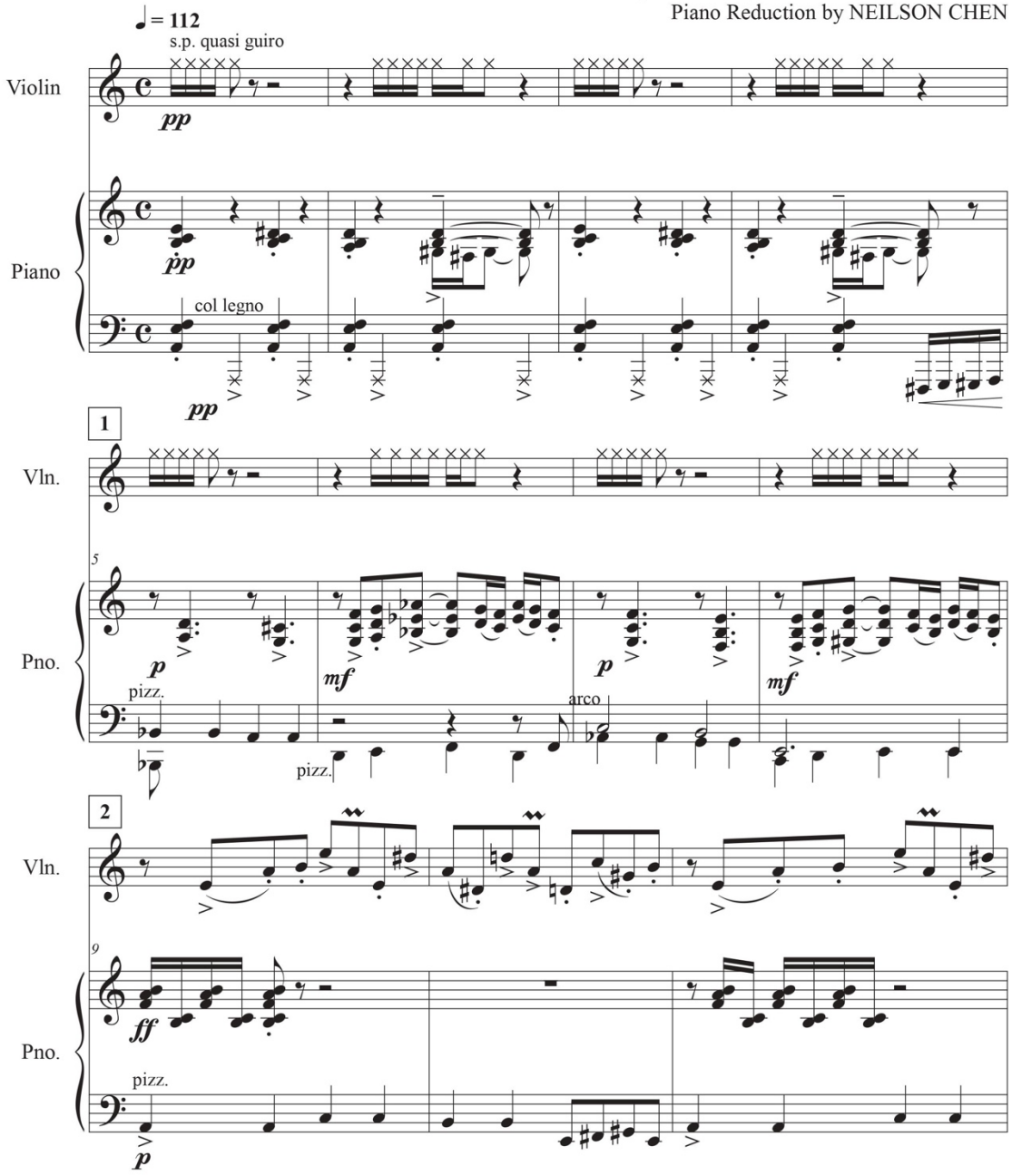
APPENDIX B

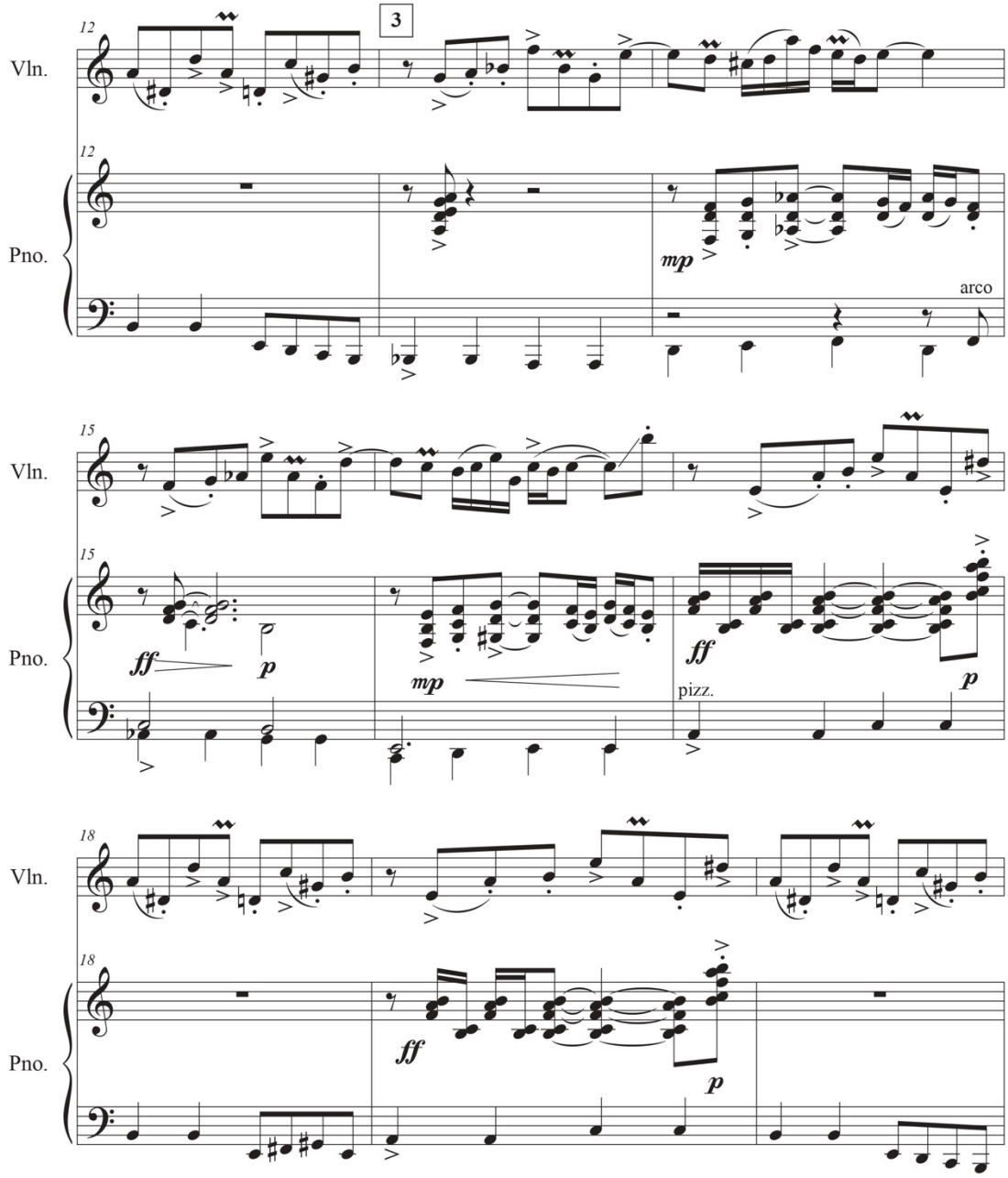
REDUCTION OF PIAZZOLLA LAS CUATRO ESTACIONE

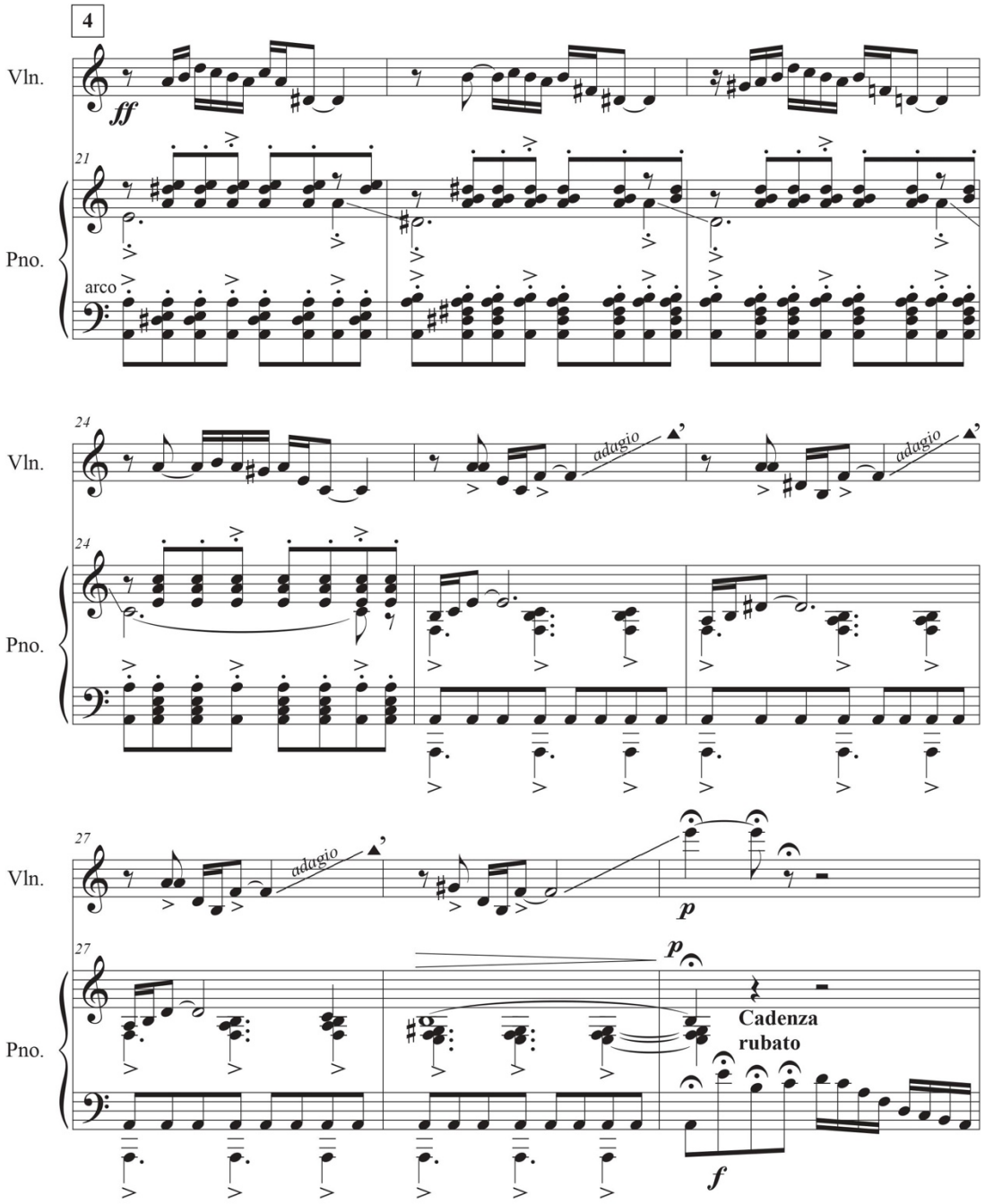
Score

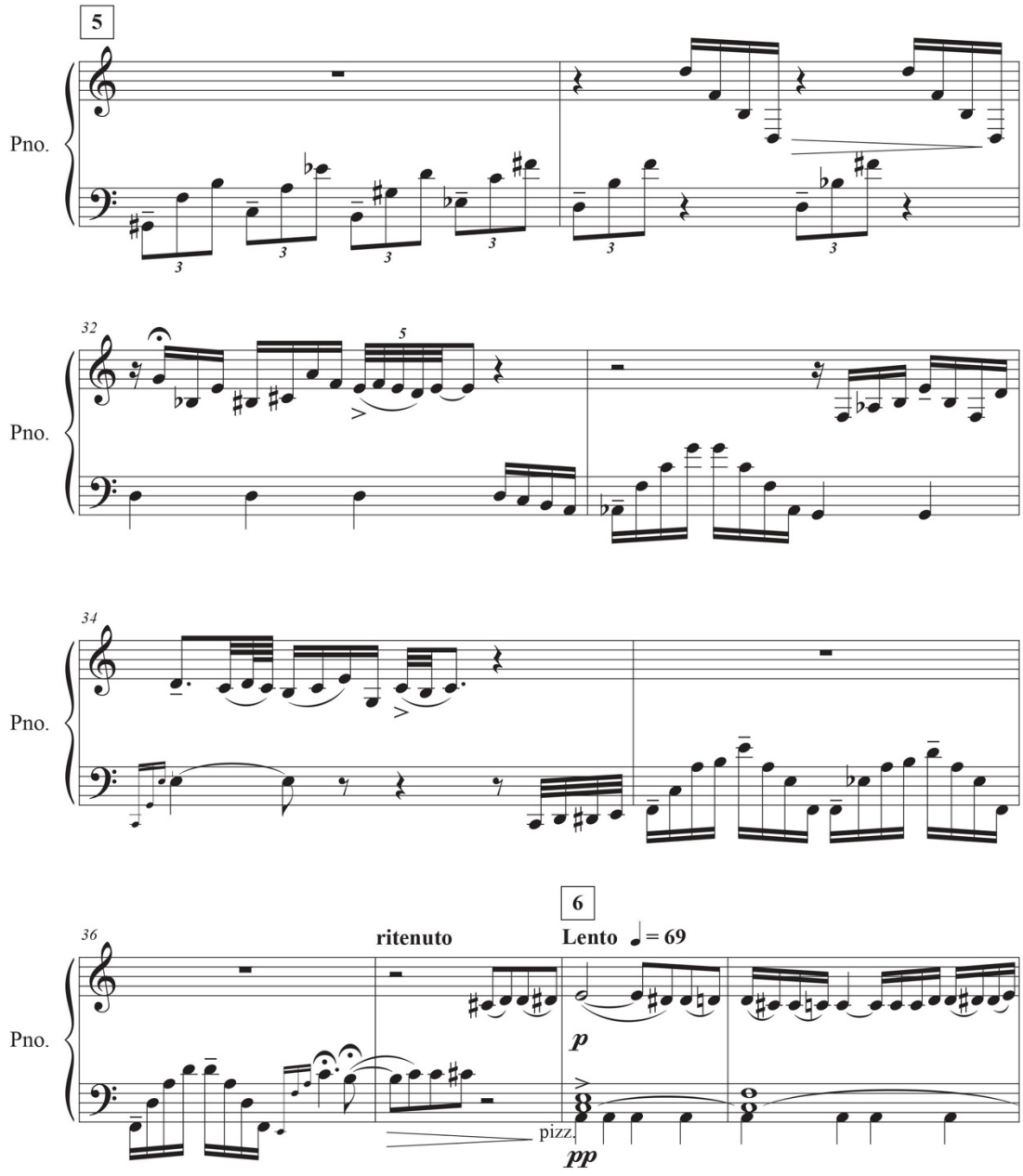
OTOÑO PORTEÑO

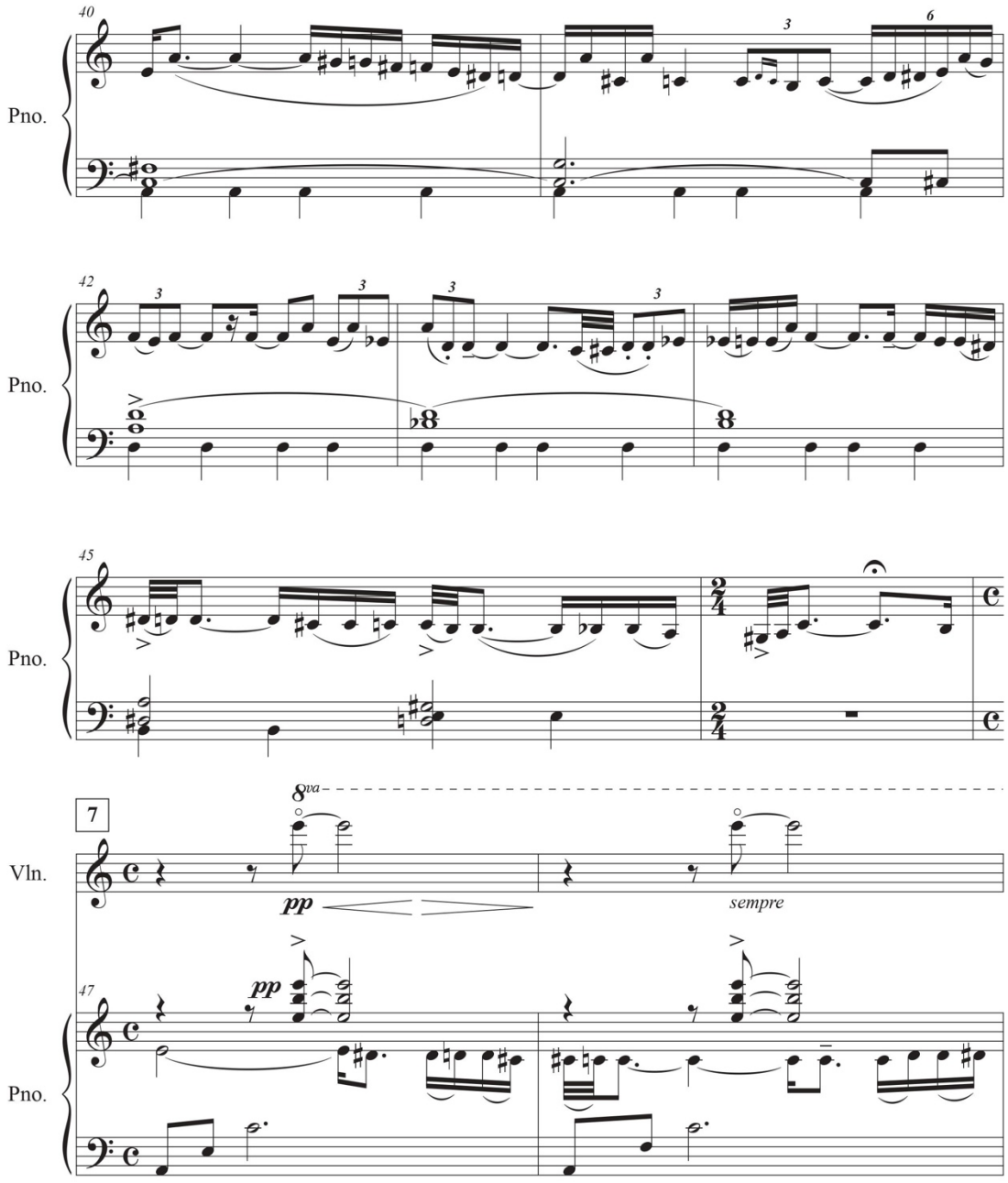
ASTOR PIAZZOLLA
String Orchestra by LEONID DESYATNIKOV
Piano Reduction by NEILSON CHEN

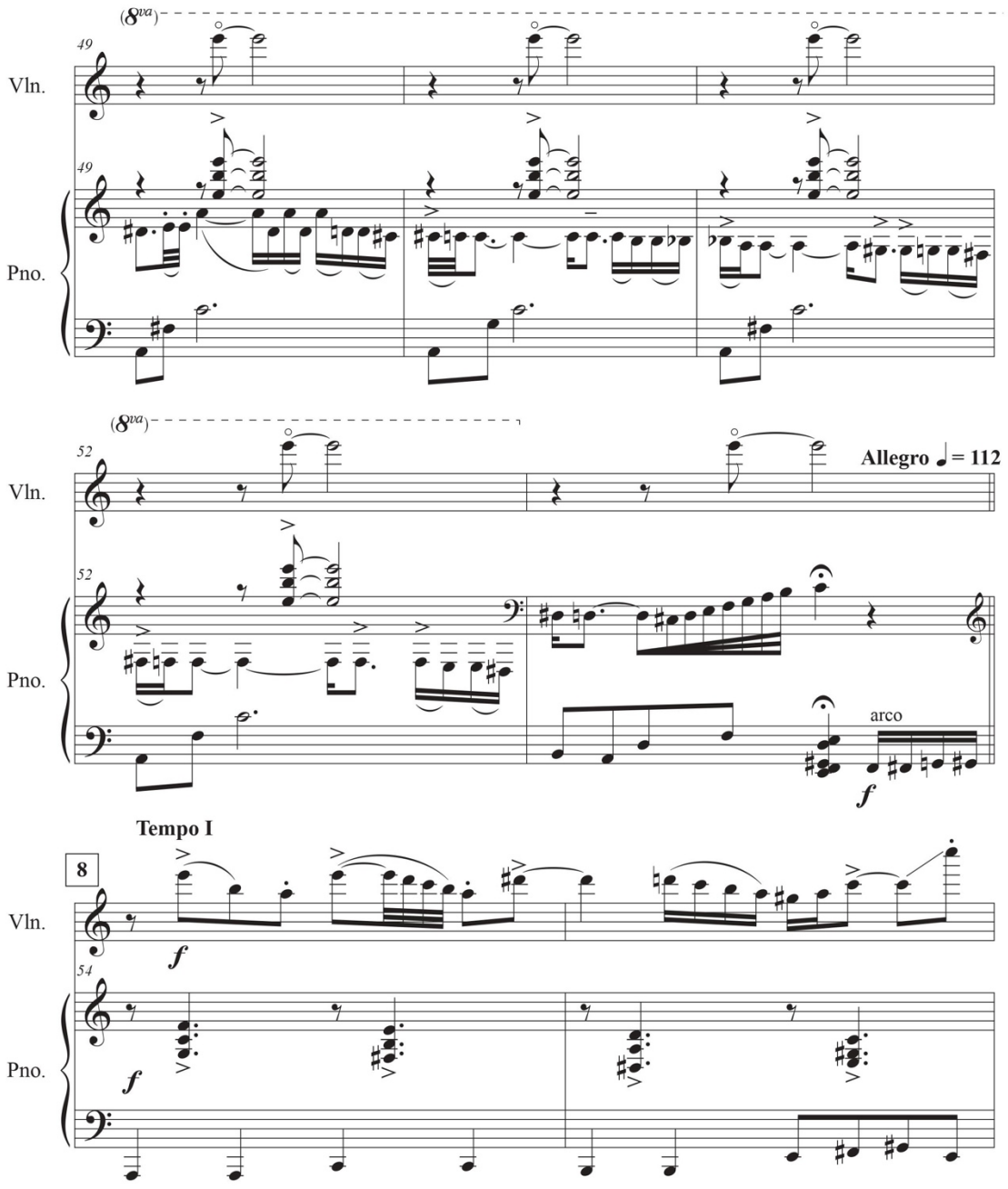


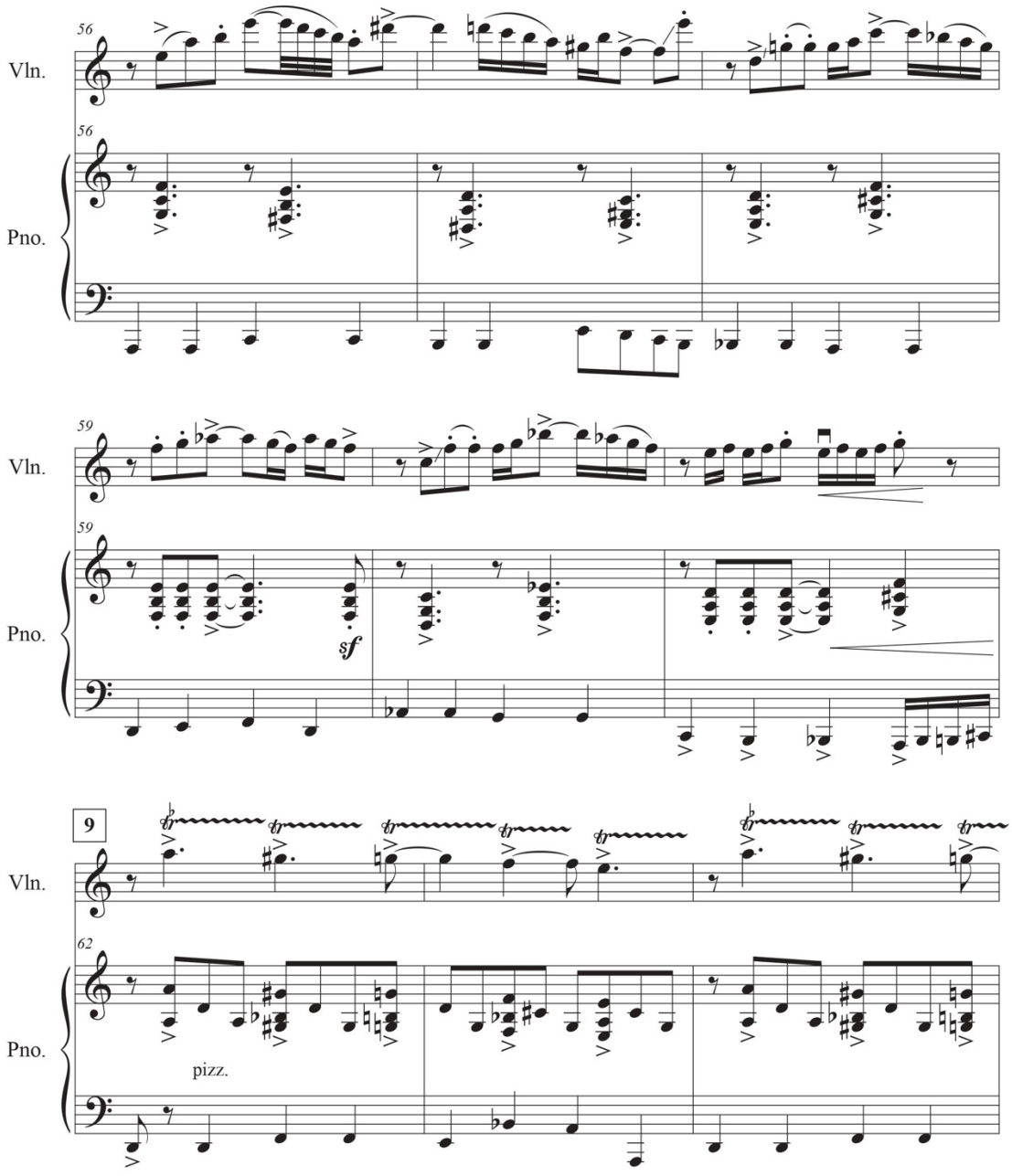

12
3
Vln.
12
Pno.
mp
arco
15
Vln.
15
Pno.
ff
p
mp
ff
pizz.
p
18
Vln.
18
Pno.
ff
p

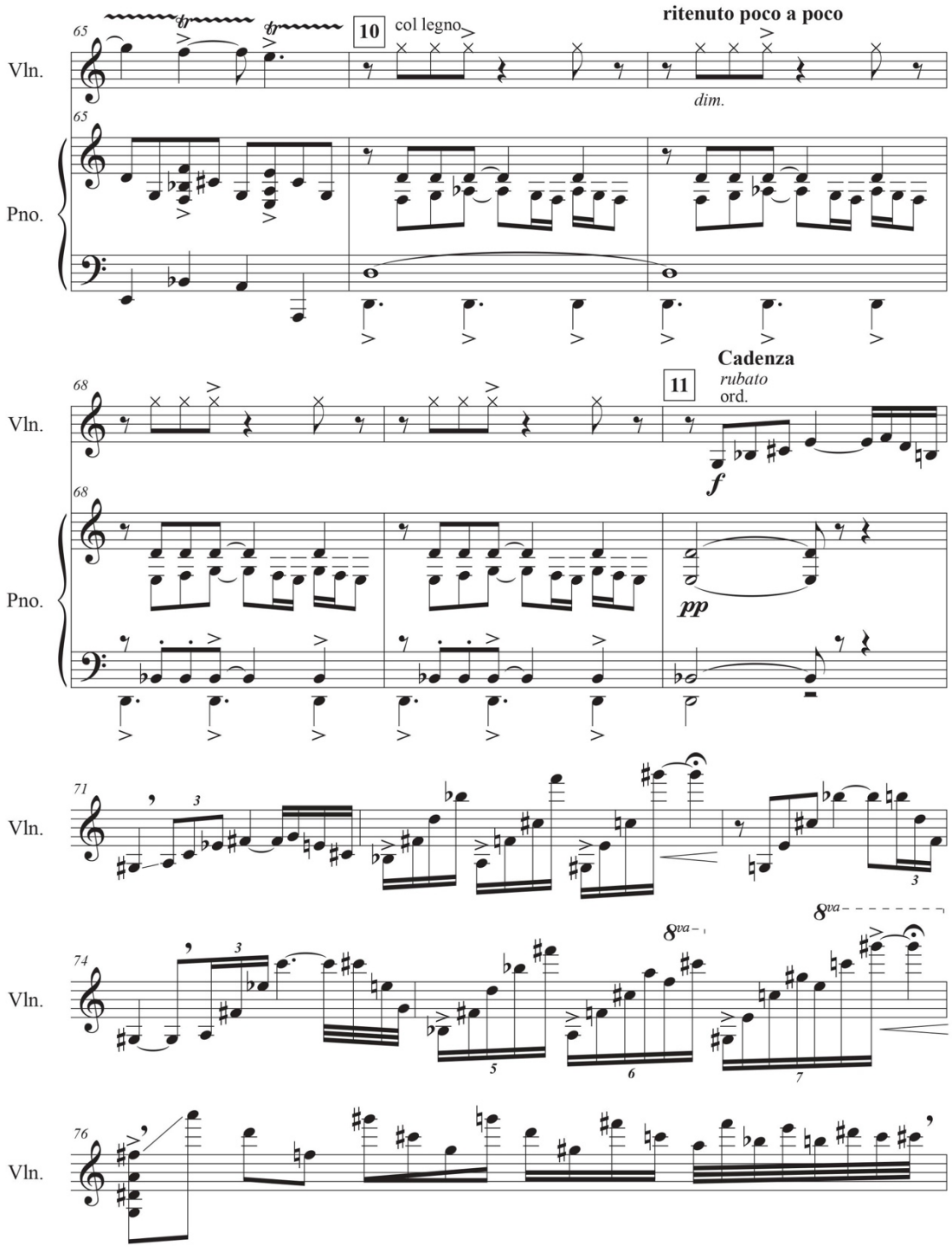

4
Vln.
ff
21
Pno.
arco
24
Vln.
adagio
24
Pno.
27
Vln.
adagio
p
27
Pno.
p
Cadenza
rubato
f

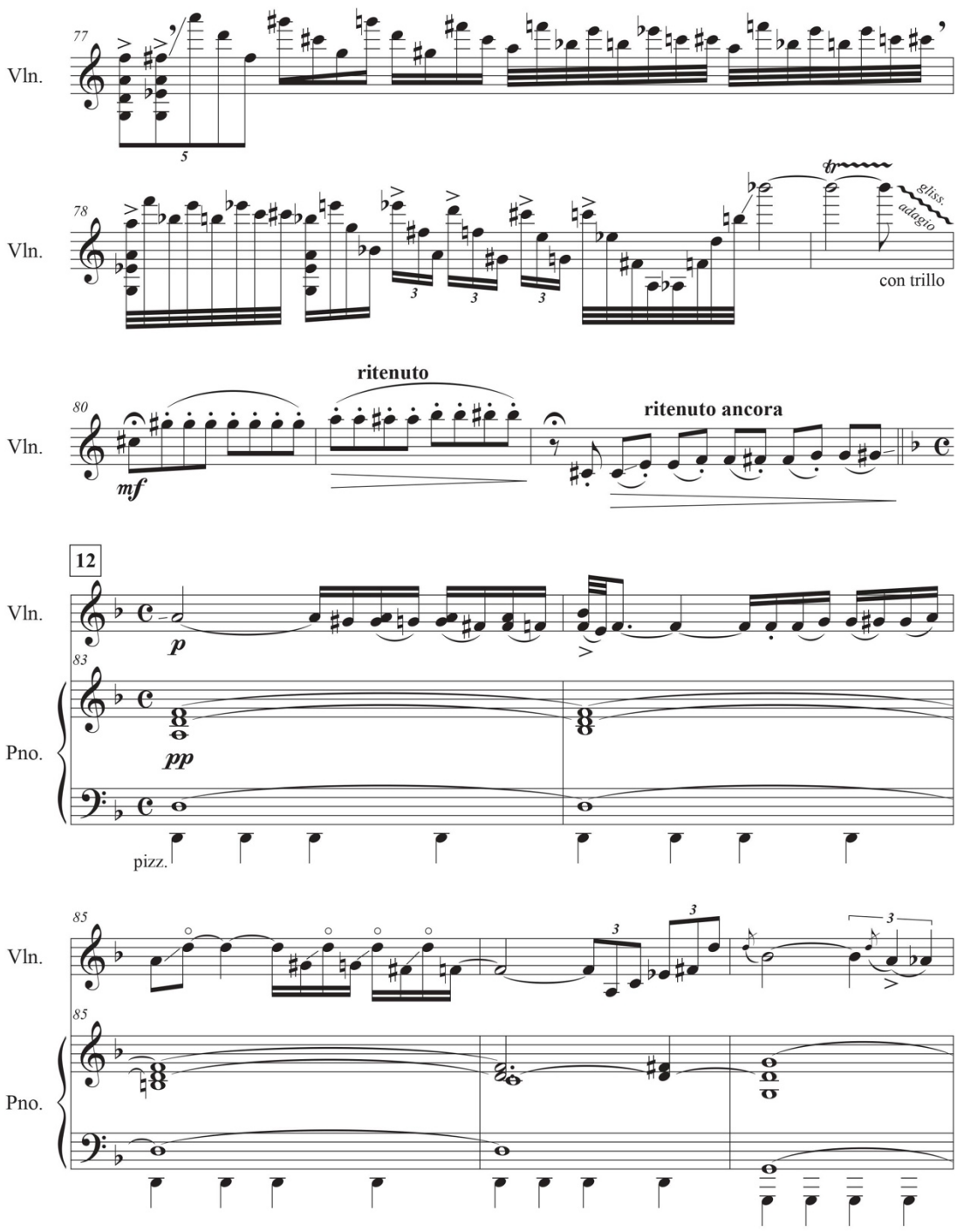

5
Pno.
32
5
Pno.
34
Pno.
6
36
ritenuto
Lento ♩= 69
Pno.
p
pizz.
pp

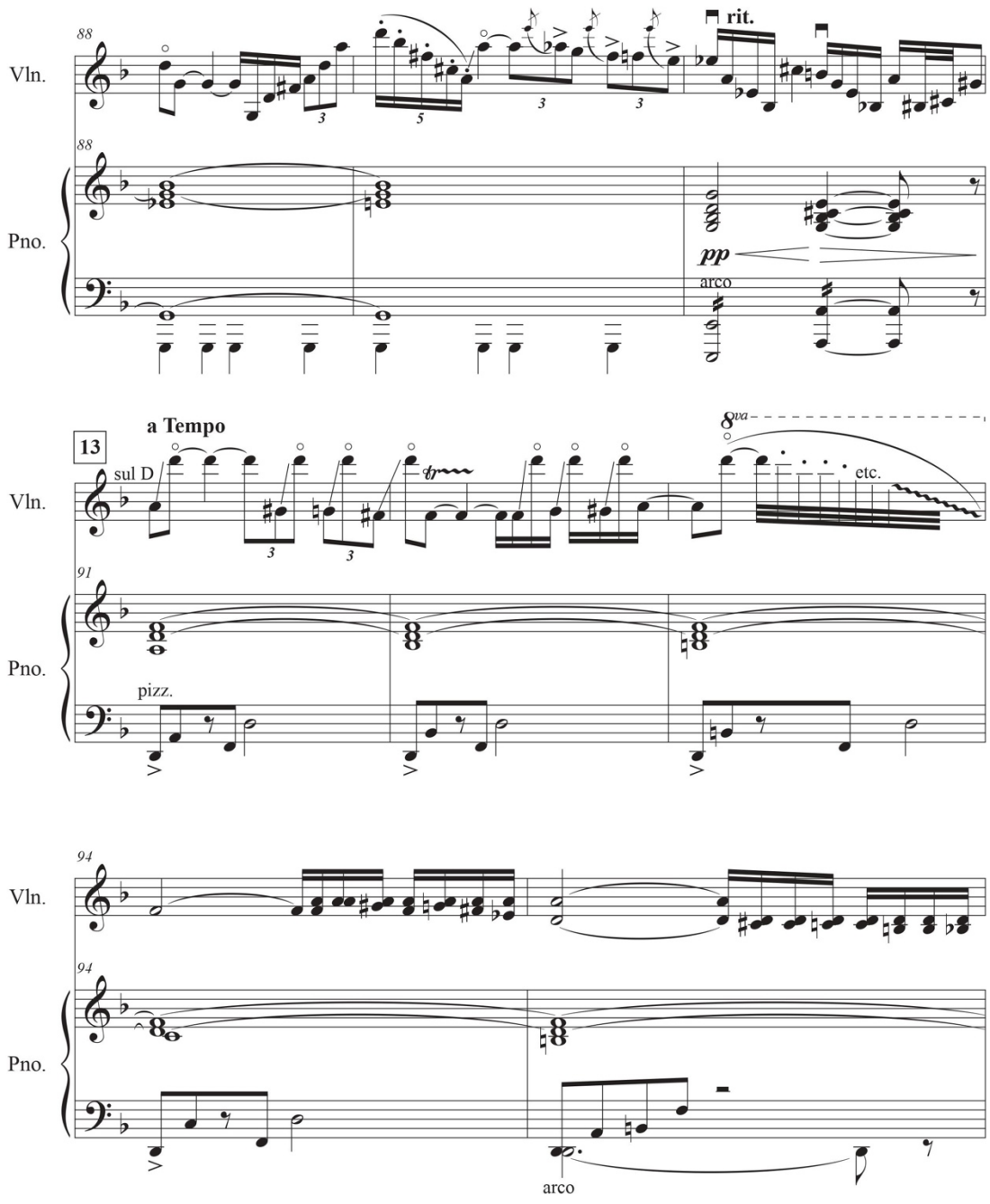

40
Pno.
42
Pno.
45
Pno.
7
Vln.
8va
pp
sempre
47
pp
Pno.

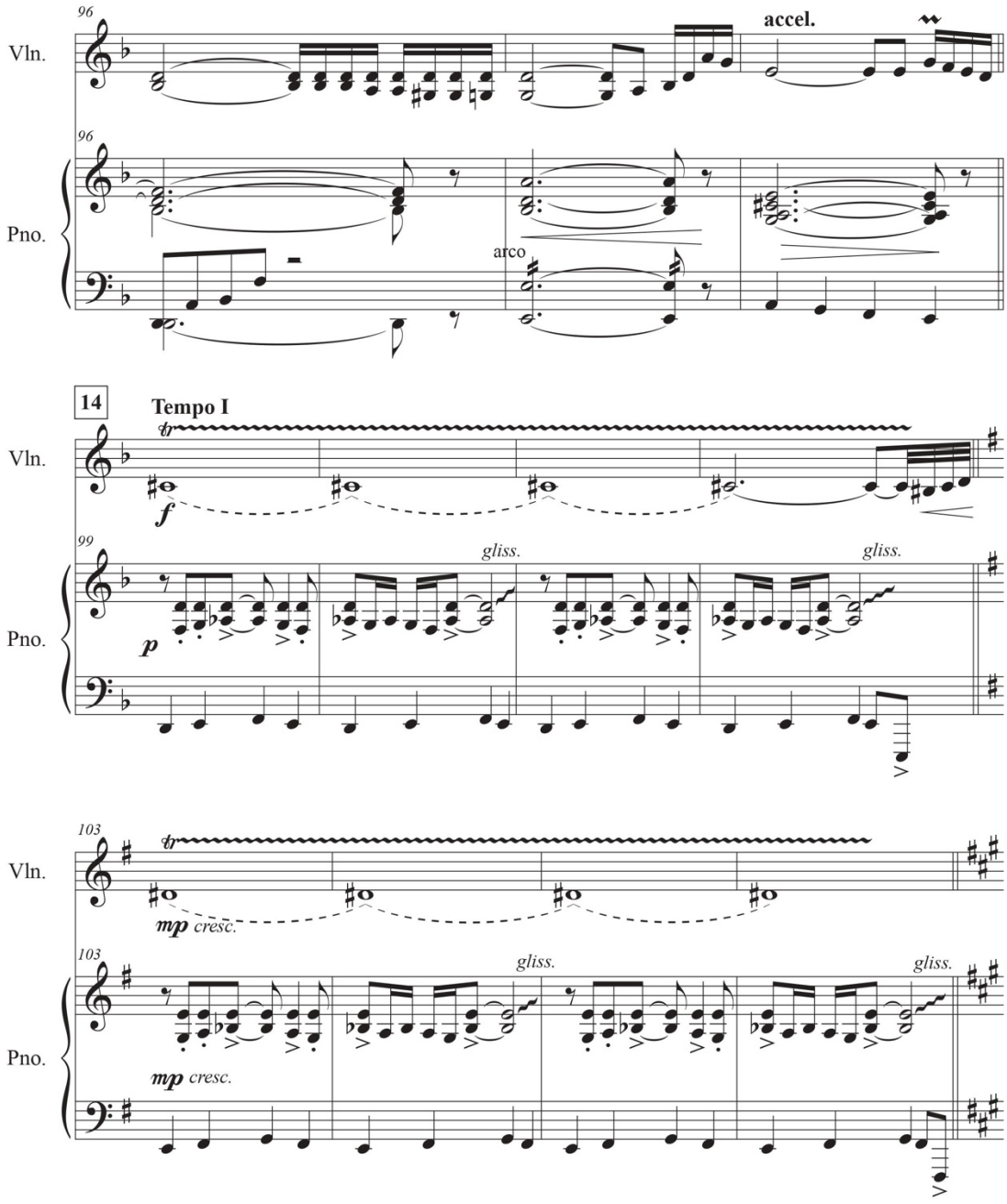

(8va)
49
Vln.
49
Pno.
(8va)
52
Allegro ♩= 112
Vln.
52
Pno.
arco
f
Tempo I
8
Vln.
f
54
Pno.
f

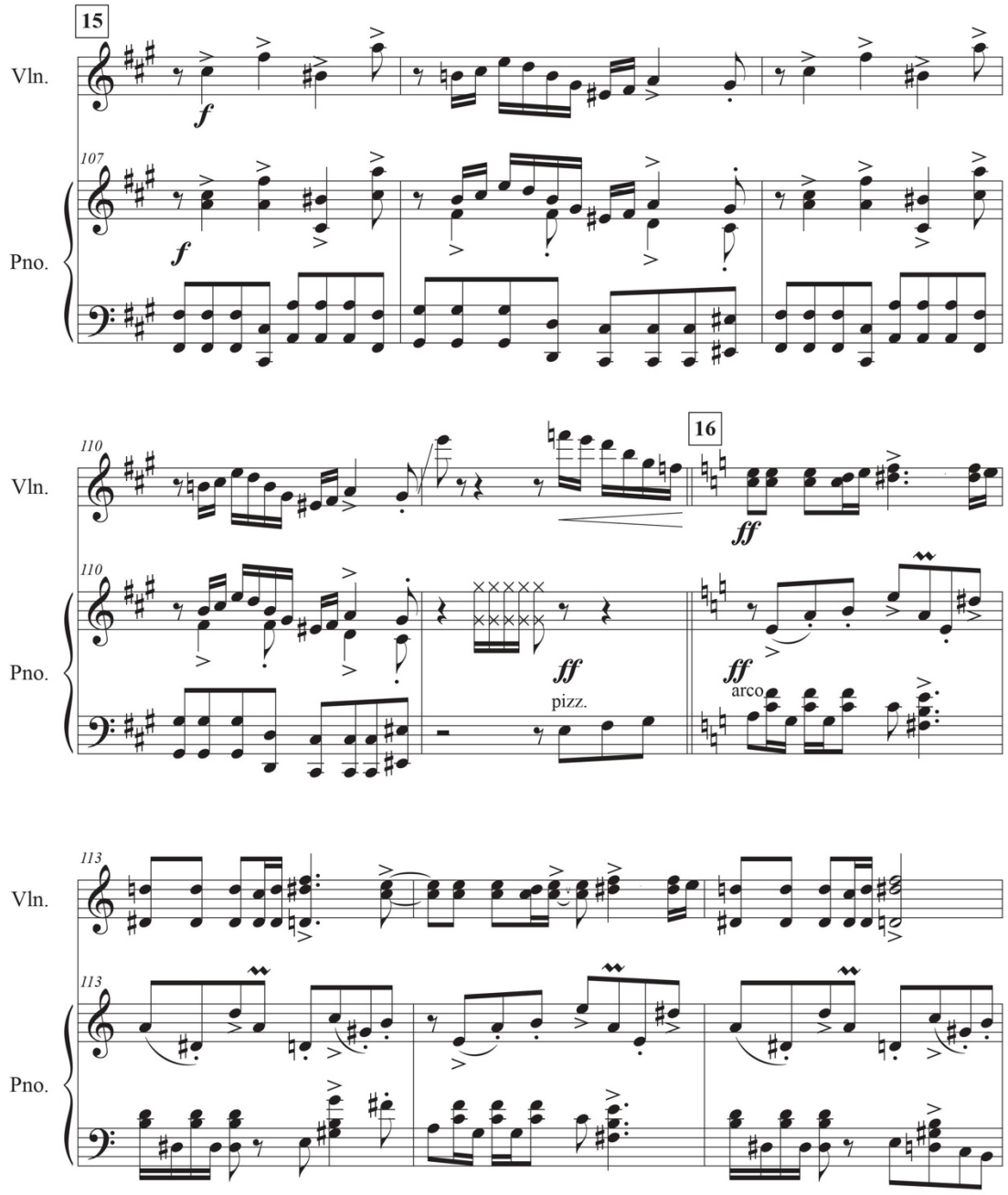

56
Vln.
56
Pno.
59
Vln.
59
Pno.
sf
9
Vln.
62
Pno.
pizz.

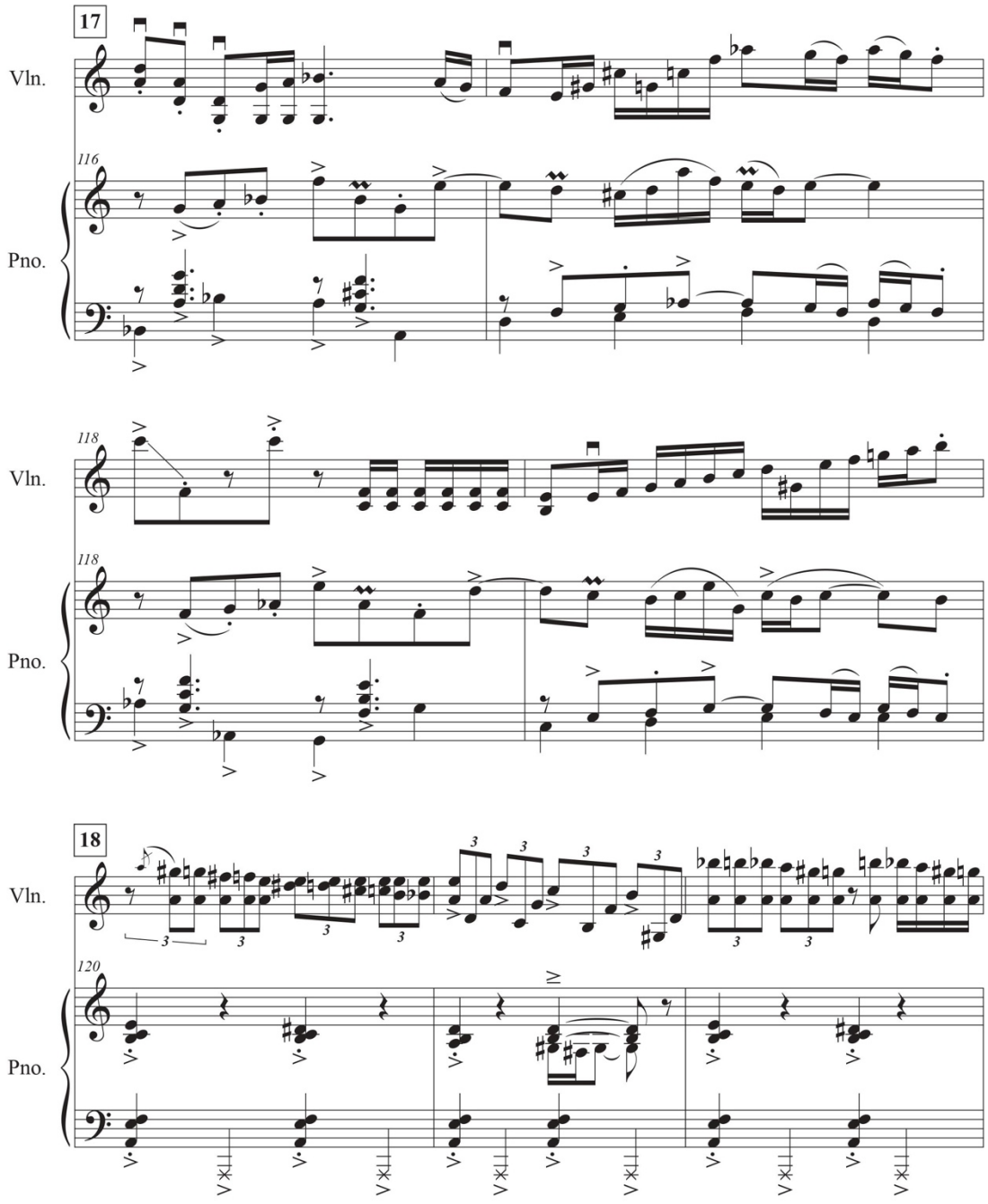

Vln.
Pno.
65
10
col legno
ritenuto poco a poco
dim.
68
11
Cadenza
rubato
ord.
f
pp
71
74
76
8va
8va

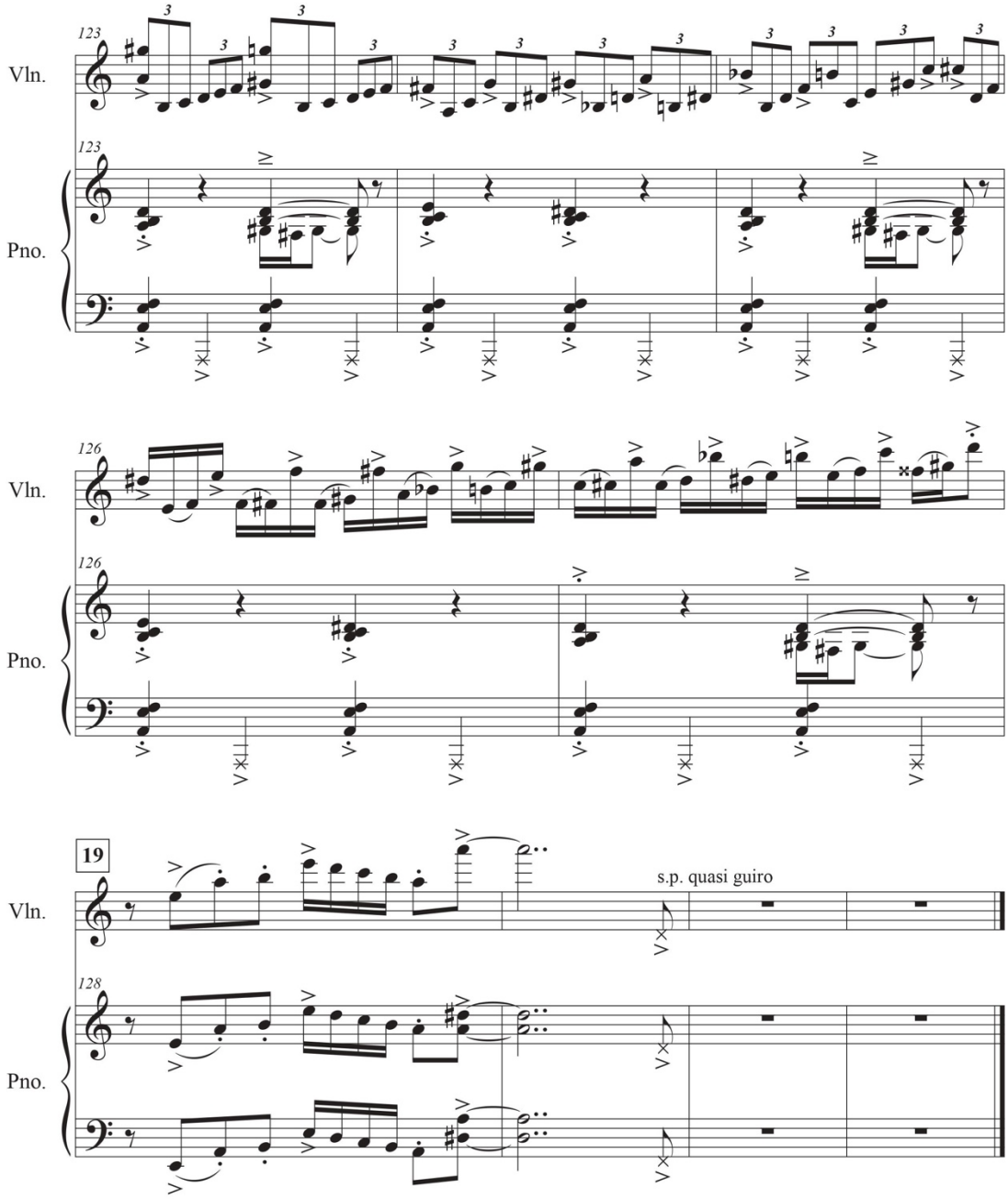

Vln.
77
5
Vln.
78
3
3
3
tr
gliss.
adagio
con trillo
Vln.
80
mf
ritenuto
ritenuto ancora
12
Vln.
p
Pno.
83
pp
pizz.
Vln.
85
3
3
Pno.
85


88
Vln.
88
Pno.
rit.
pp
arco
13
a Tempo
sul D
8va
etc.
91
Pno.
pizz.
94
Vln.
94
Pno.
arco


96
Vln.
96
Pno.
accel.
arco
14
Tempo I
tr
f
99
p
gliss.
gliss.
103
tr
mp cresc.
103
mp cresc.
gliss.
gliss.

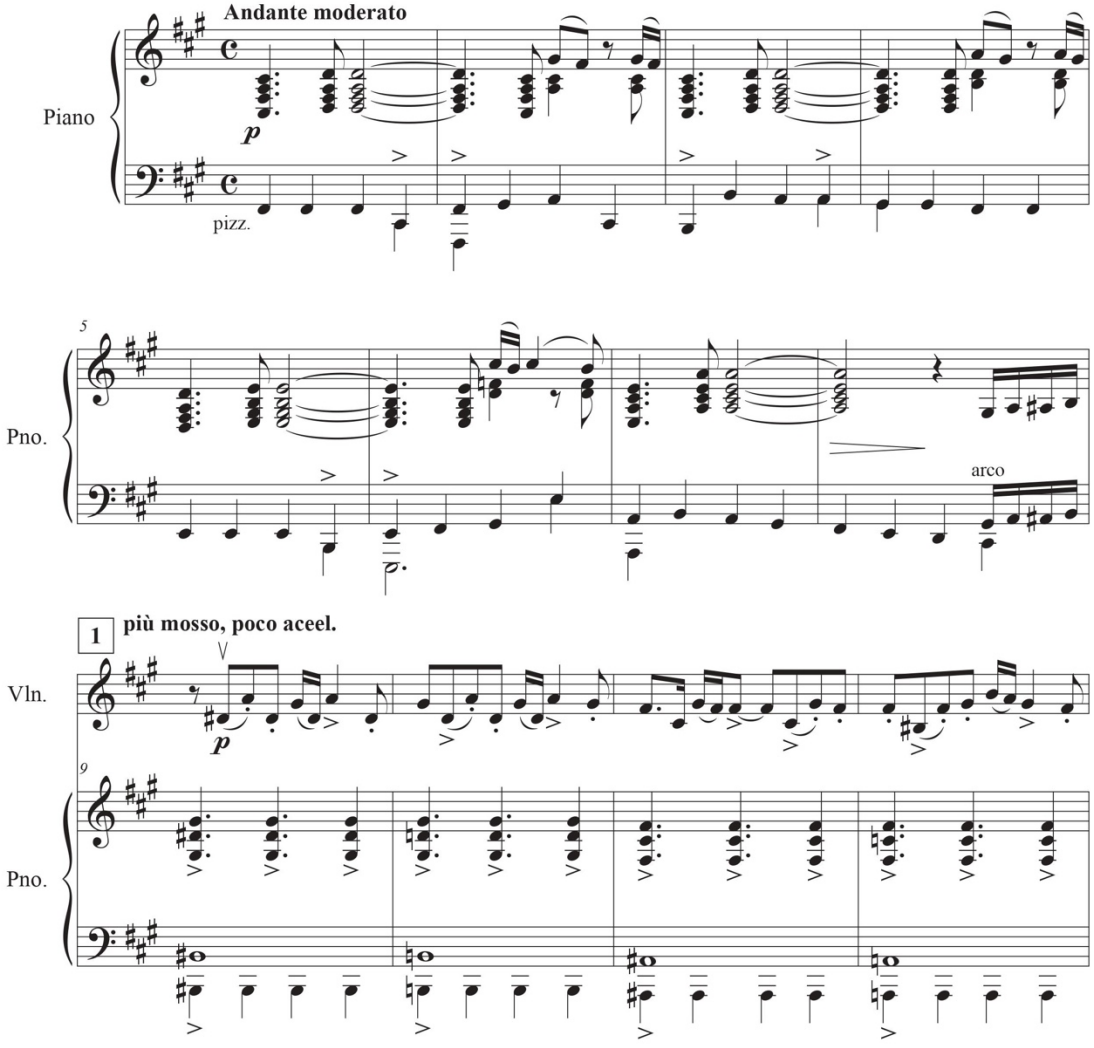

15
Vln.
f
107
Pno.
f
110
Vln.
16
ff
110
Pno.
ff
pizz.
ff
arco
113
Vln.
113
Pno.

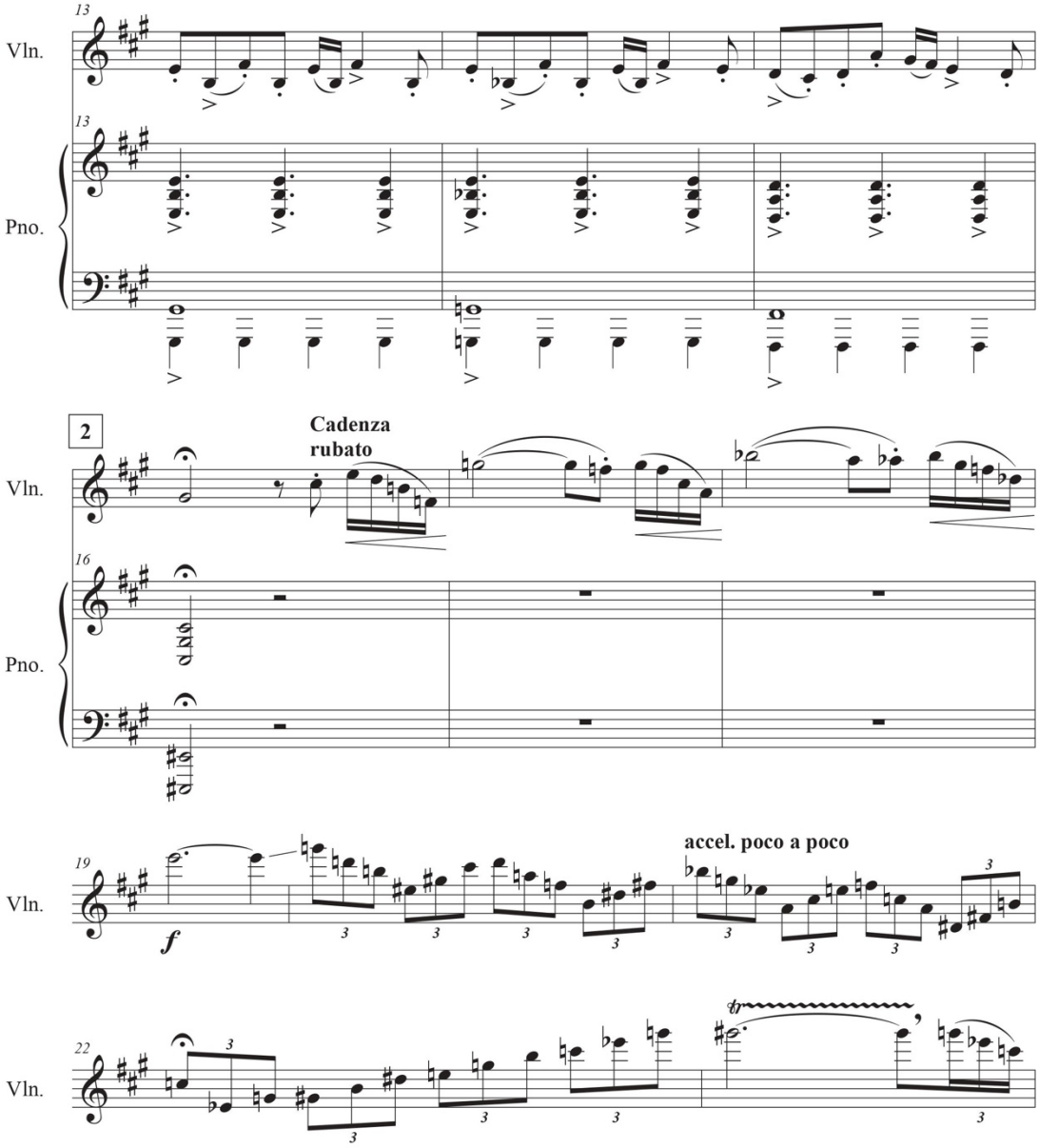

17
Vln.
116
Pno.
118
Vln.
118
Pno.
18
Vln.
120
Pno.

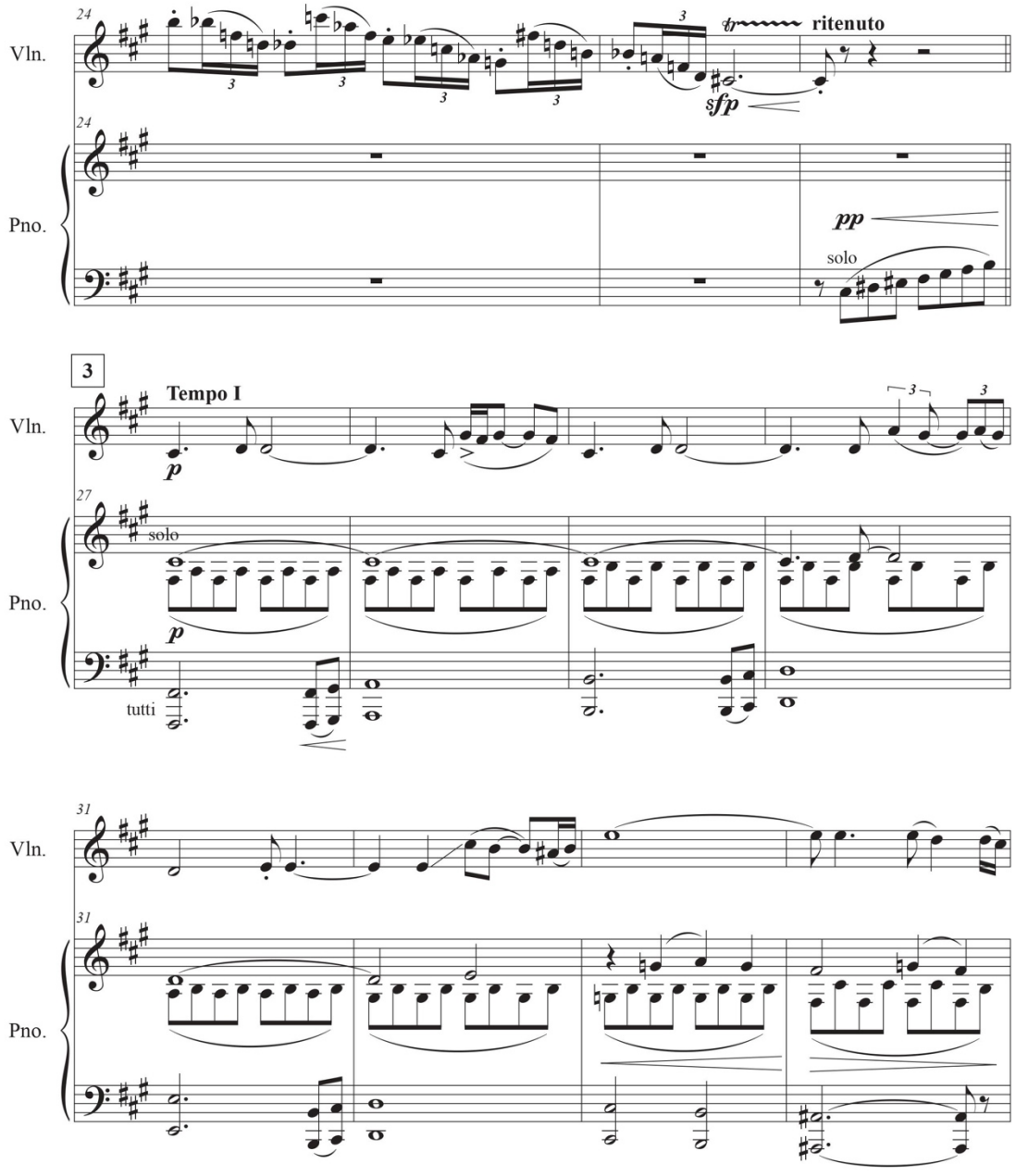

123
Vln.
123
Pno.
126
Vln.
126
Pno.
19
s.p. quasi guiro
Vln.
128
Pno.

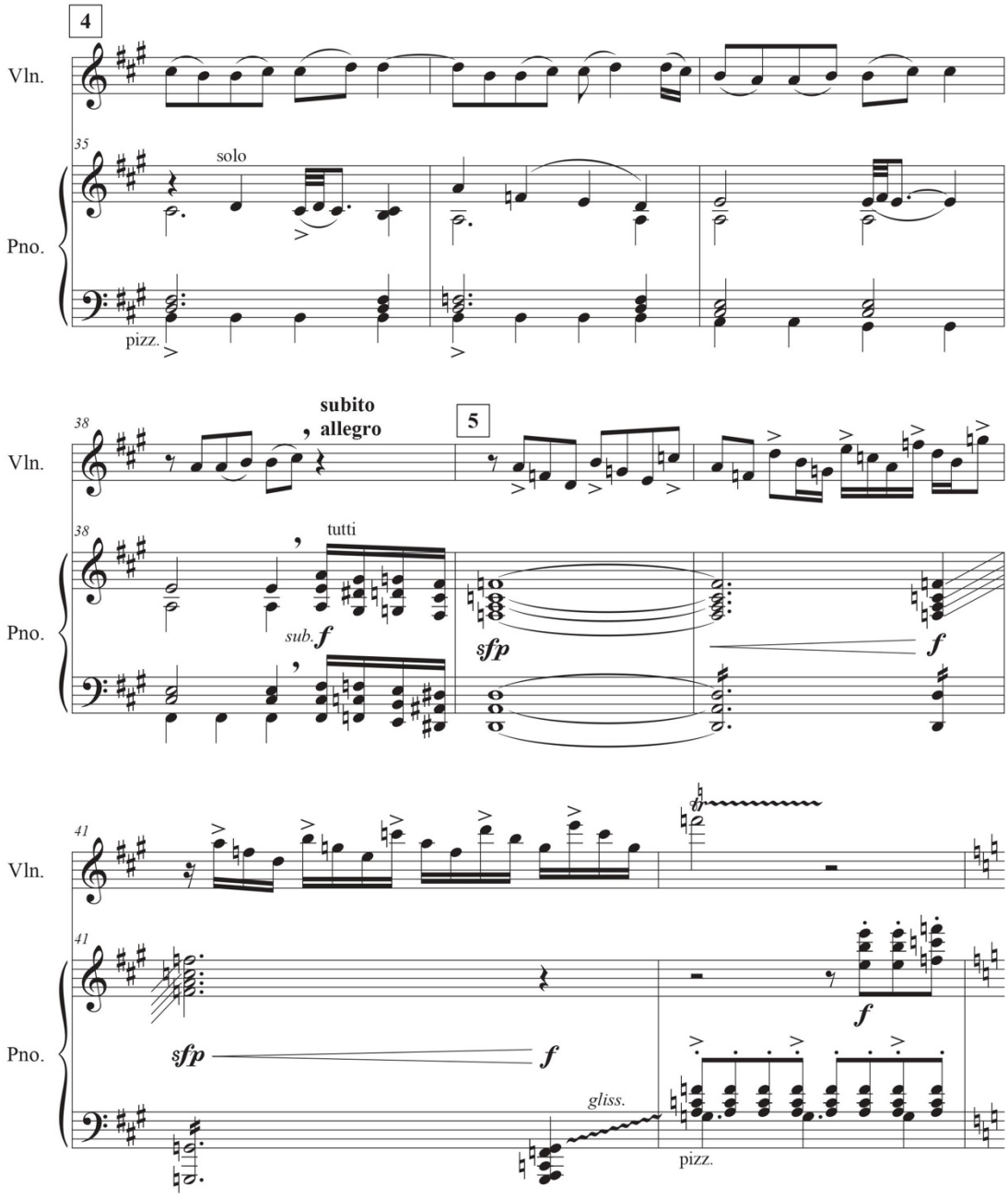
INVIERNO PORTEÑO

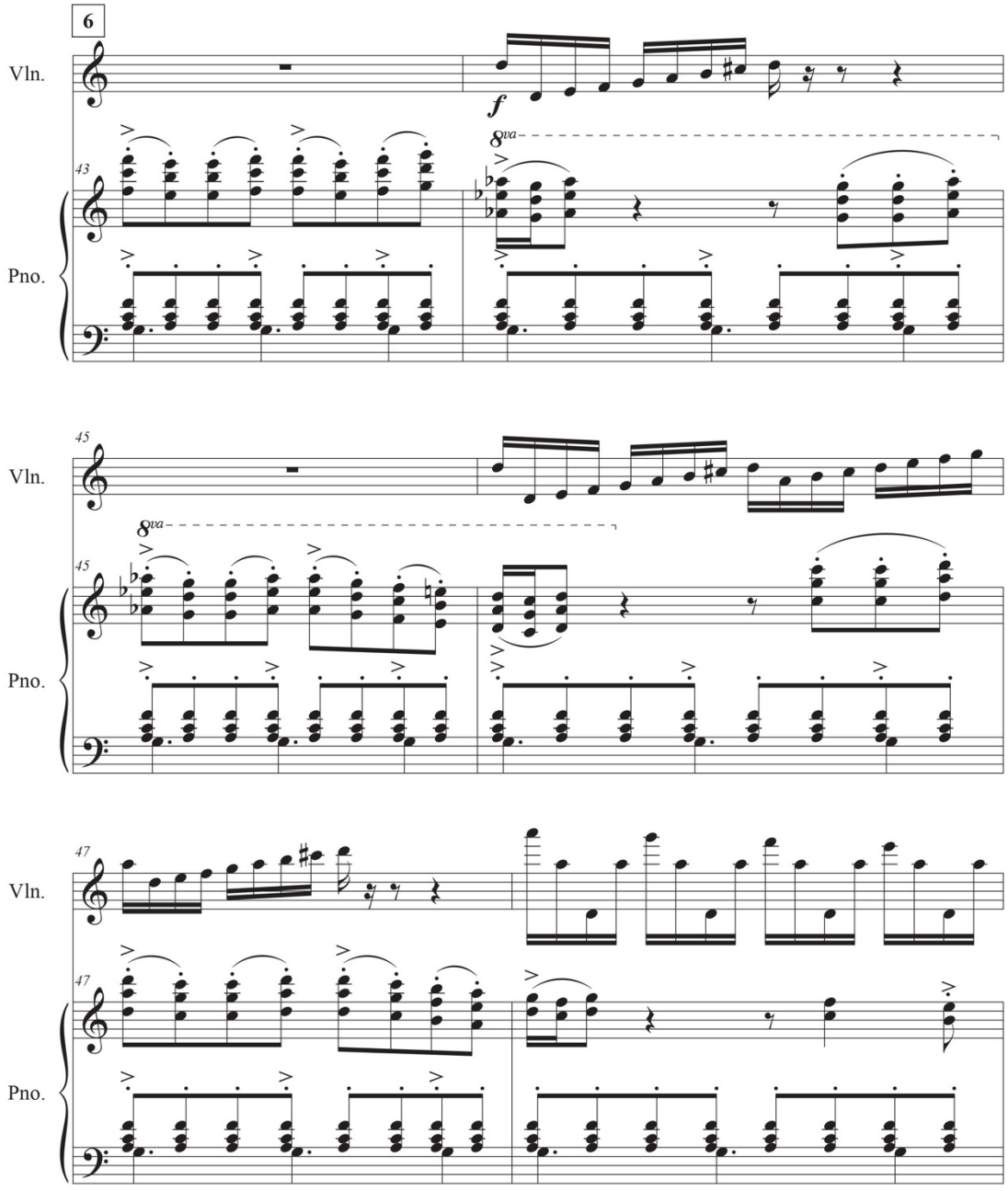
ASTOR PIAZZOLLA
String Orchestra by LEONID DESYATNIKOV
Piano Reduction by NEILSON CHEN

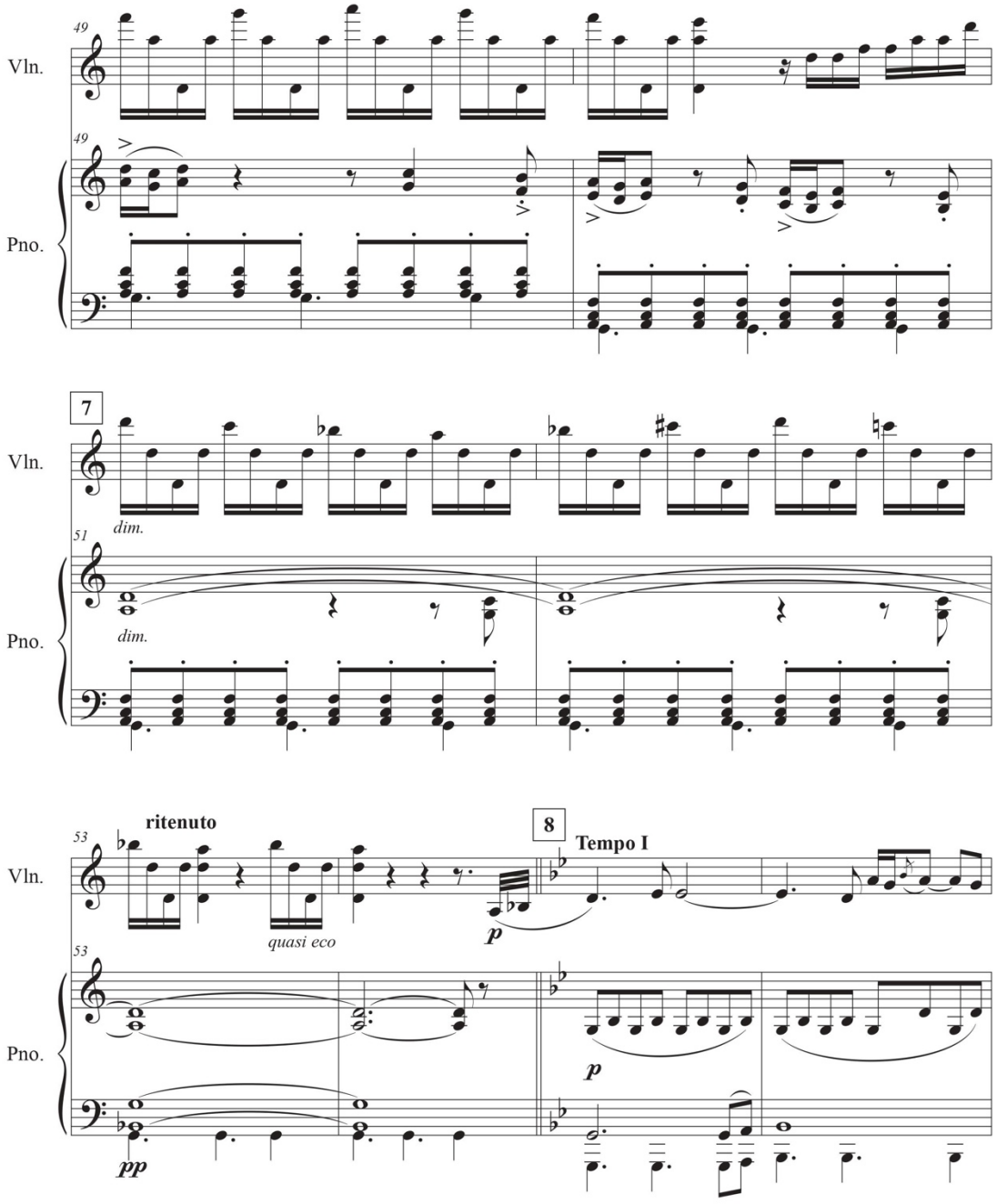


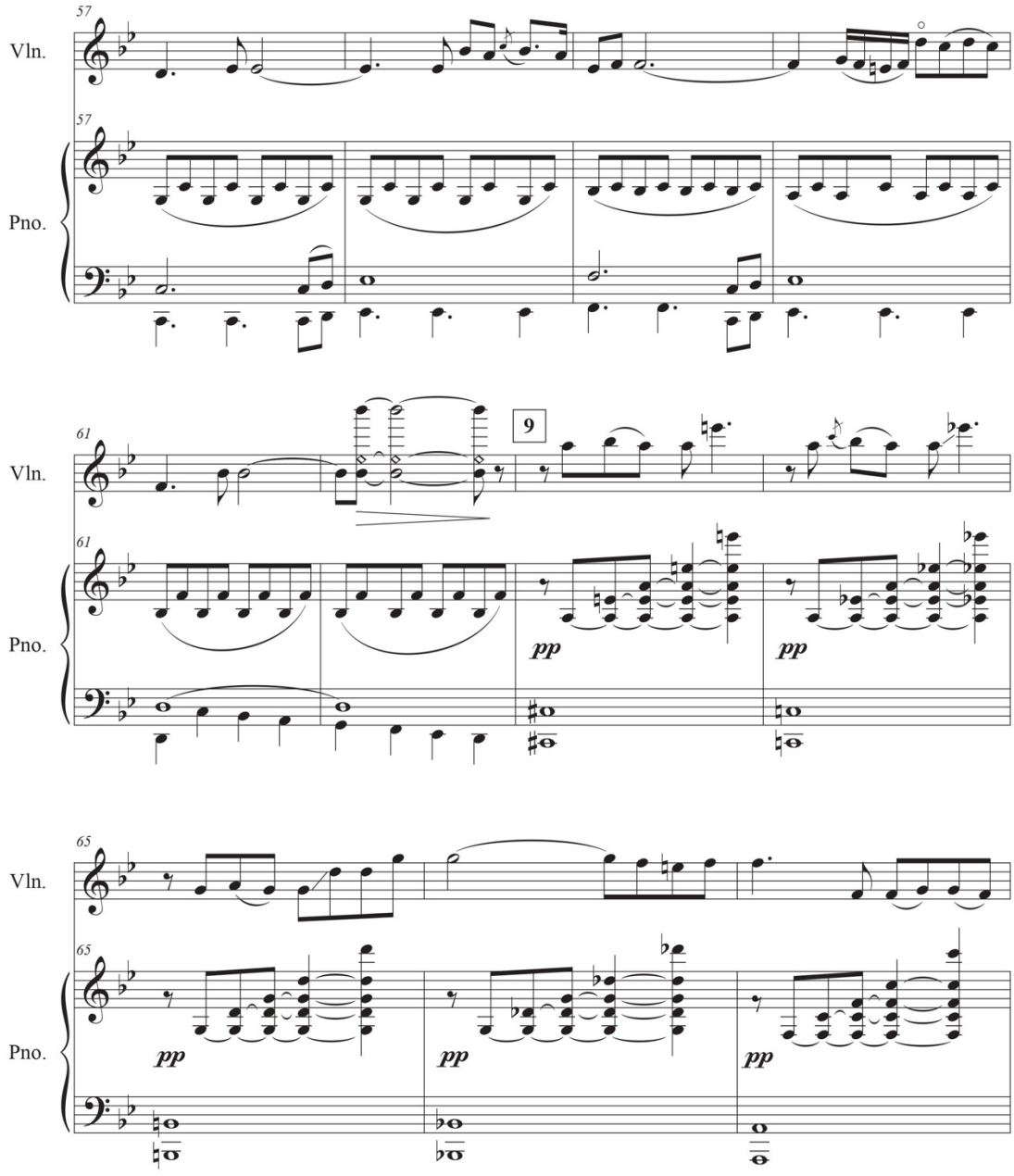

13
Vln.
13
Pno.
2
Cadenza
rubato
Vln.
16
Pno.
19
Vln.
f
accel. poco a poco
22
Vln.

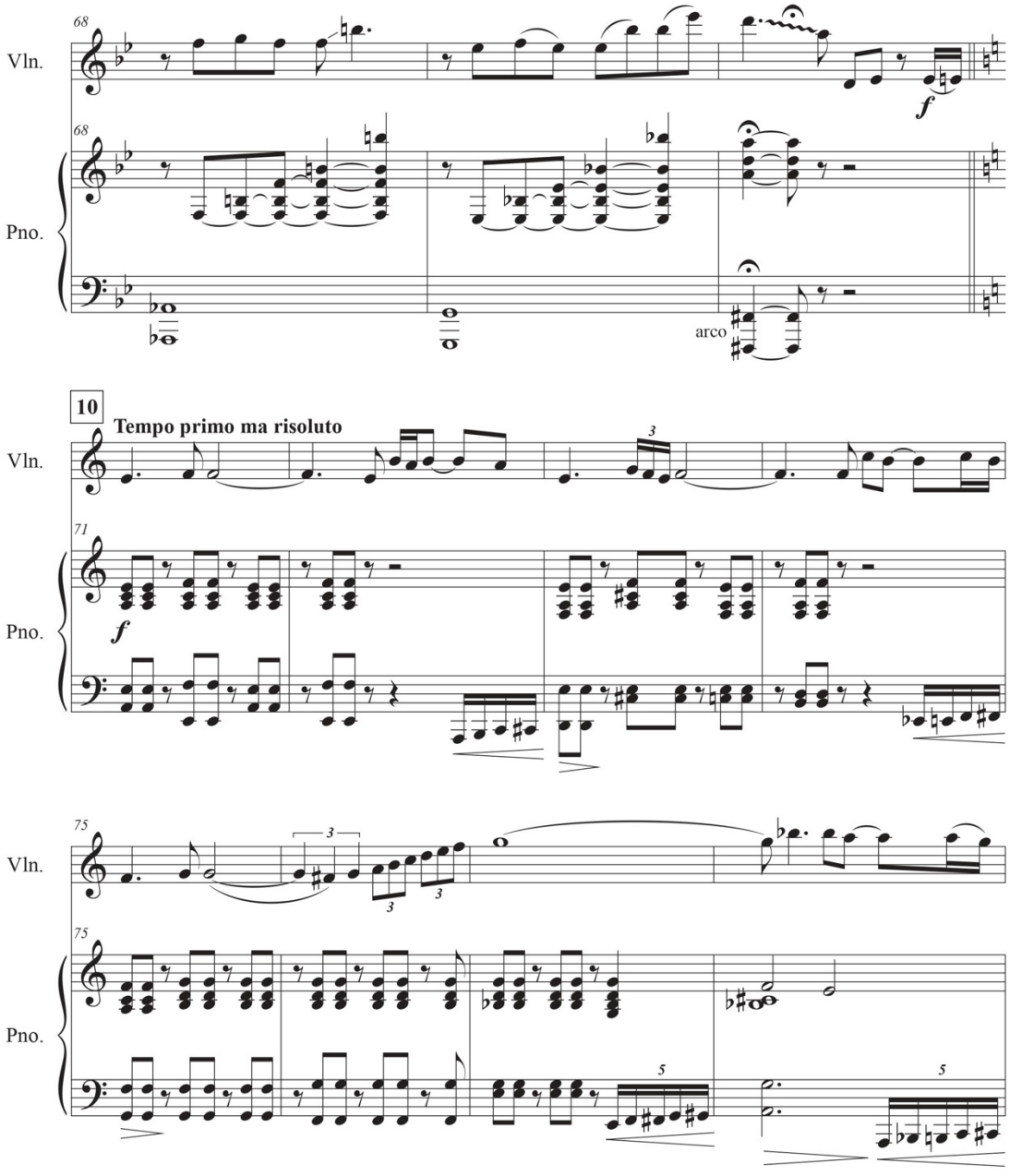

24
Vln.
ritenuto
sfp
Pno.
pp
solo
3
Tempo I
p
27
solo
tutti
31

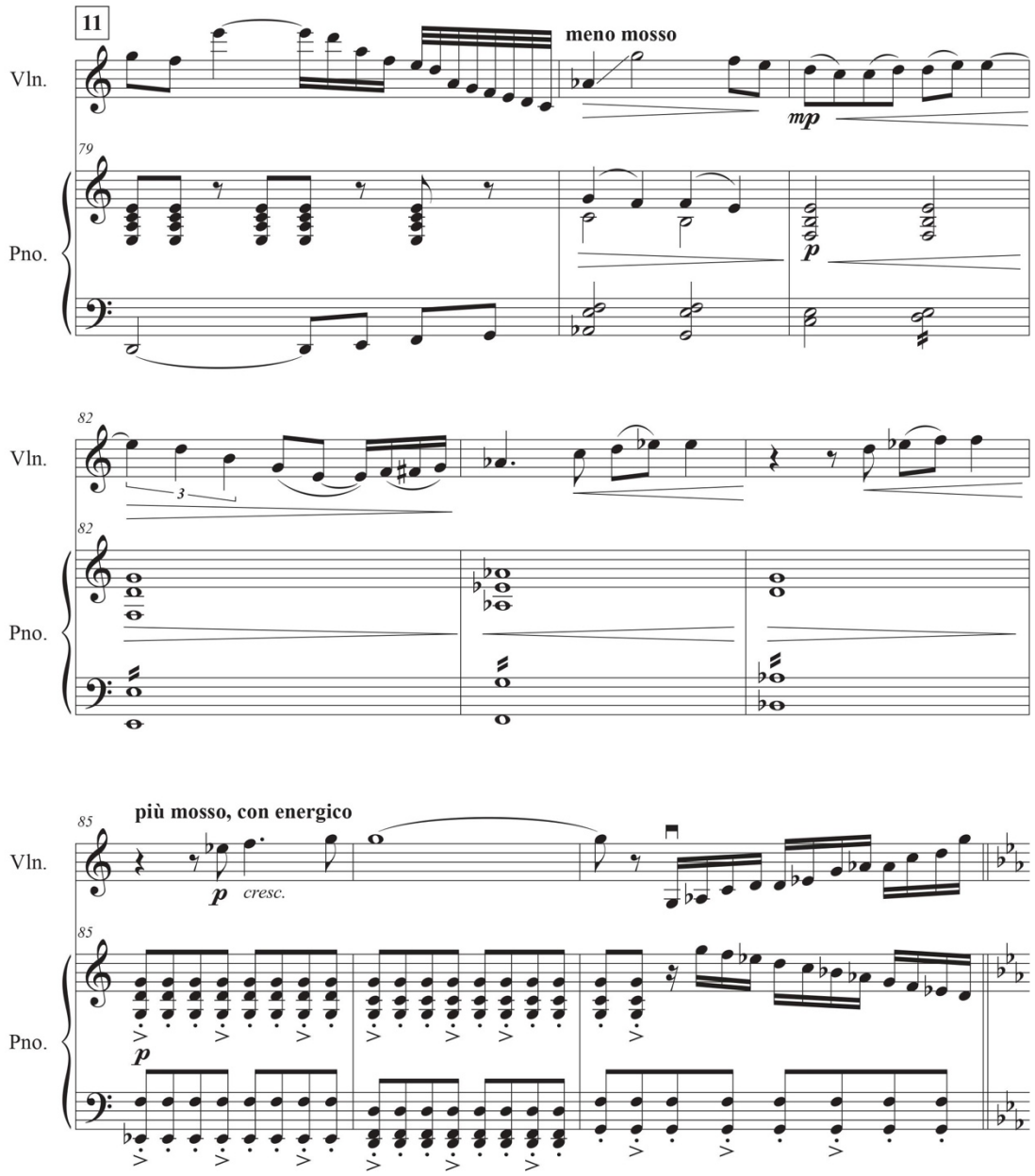

4
Vln.
35
solo
Pno.
pizz.
subito
, allegro
5
38
Vln.
38
tutti
Pno.
sub. f
sfp
f
41
Vln.
41
sfp
f
Pno.
gliss.
f
pizz.

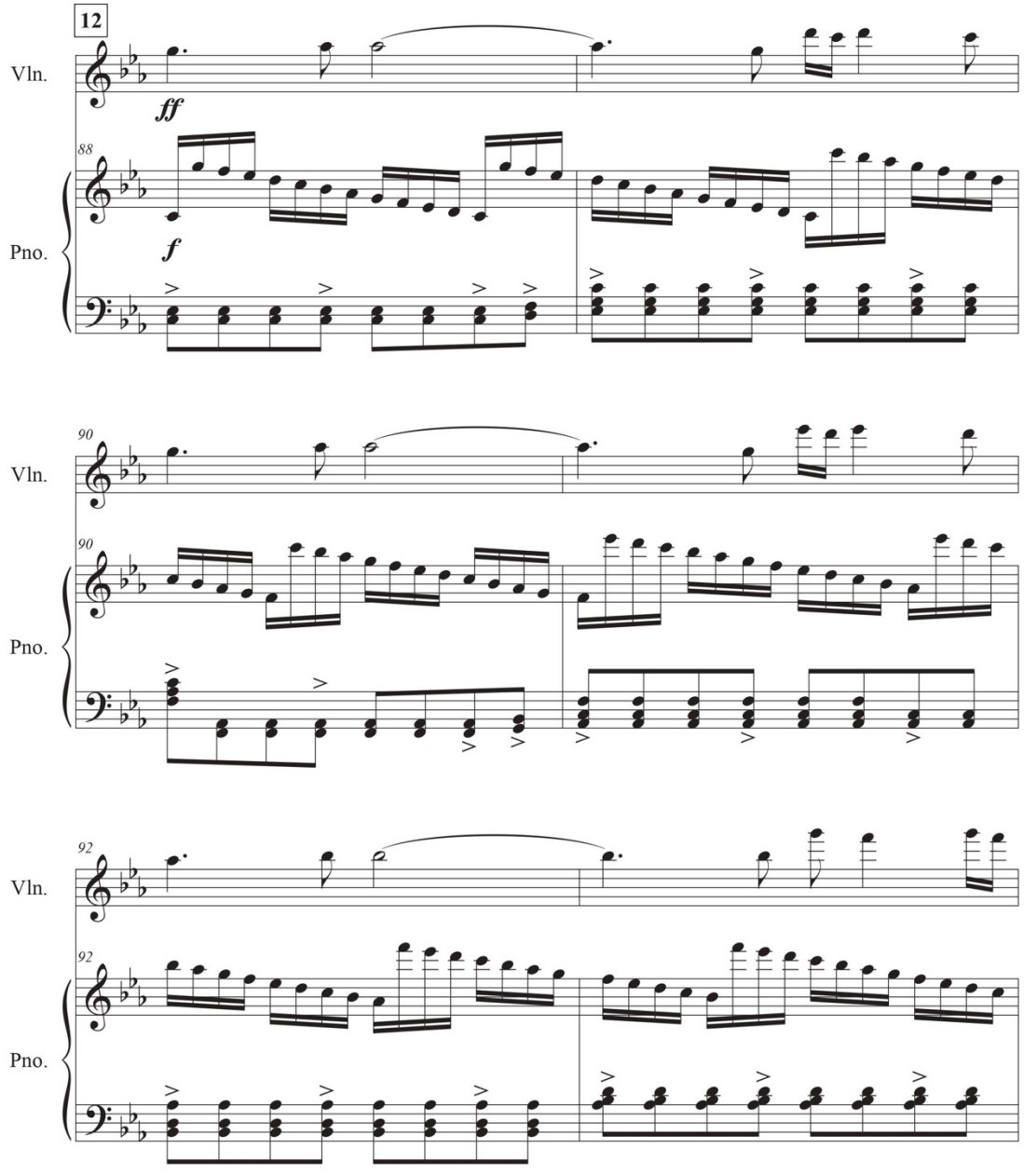

6
Vln.
f
8va
43
Pno.
45
Vln.
8va
45
Pno.
47
Vln.
47
Pno.

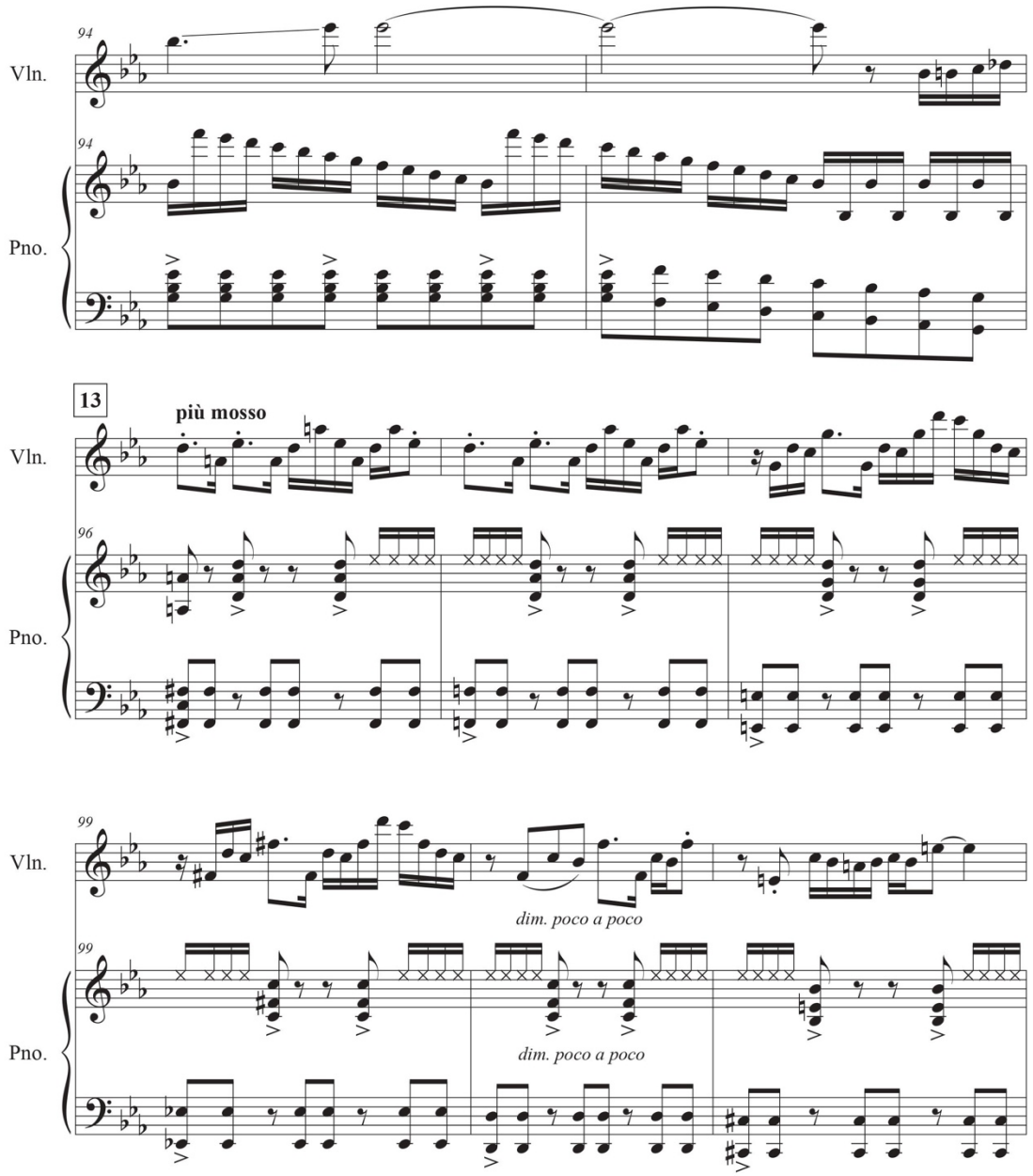

Vln.
Pno.
49
49
7
dim.
51
dim.
ritenuto
53
quasi eco
8
Tempo I
53
p
p
pp

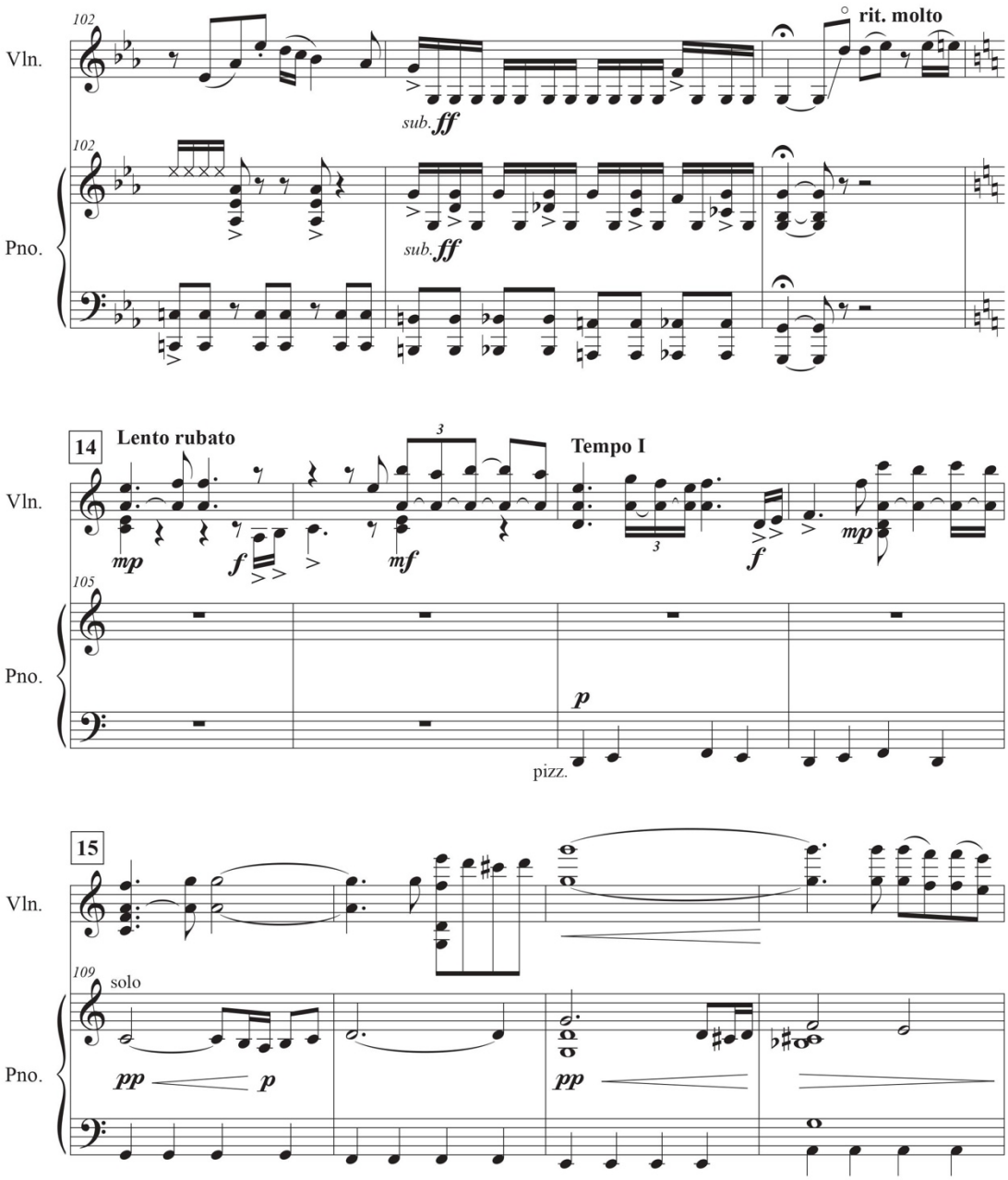

57
Vln.
57
Pno.
61
Vln.
9
61
Pno.
pp
pp
65
Vln.
65
Pno.
pp
pp
pp

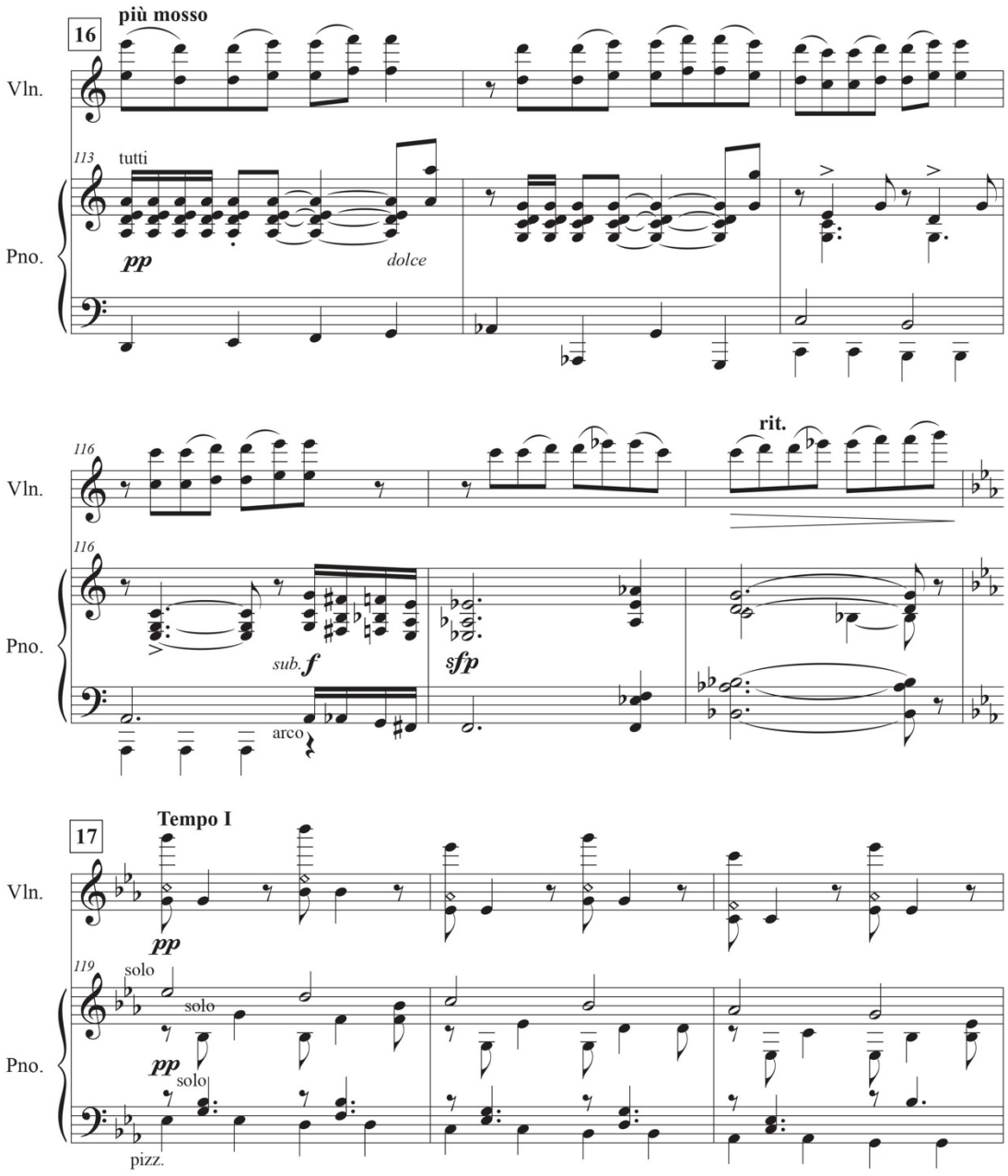

Vln.
Pno.
68
f
arco
10
Tempo primo ma risoluto
71
75

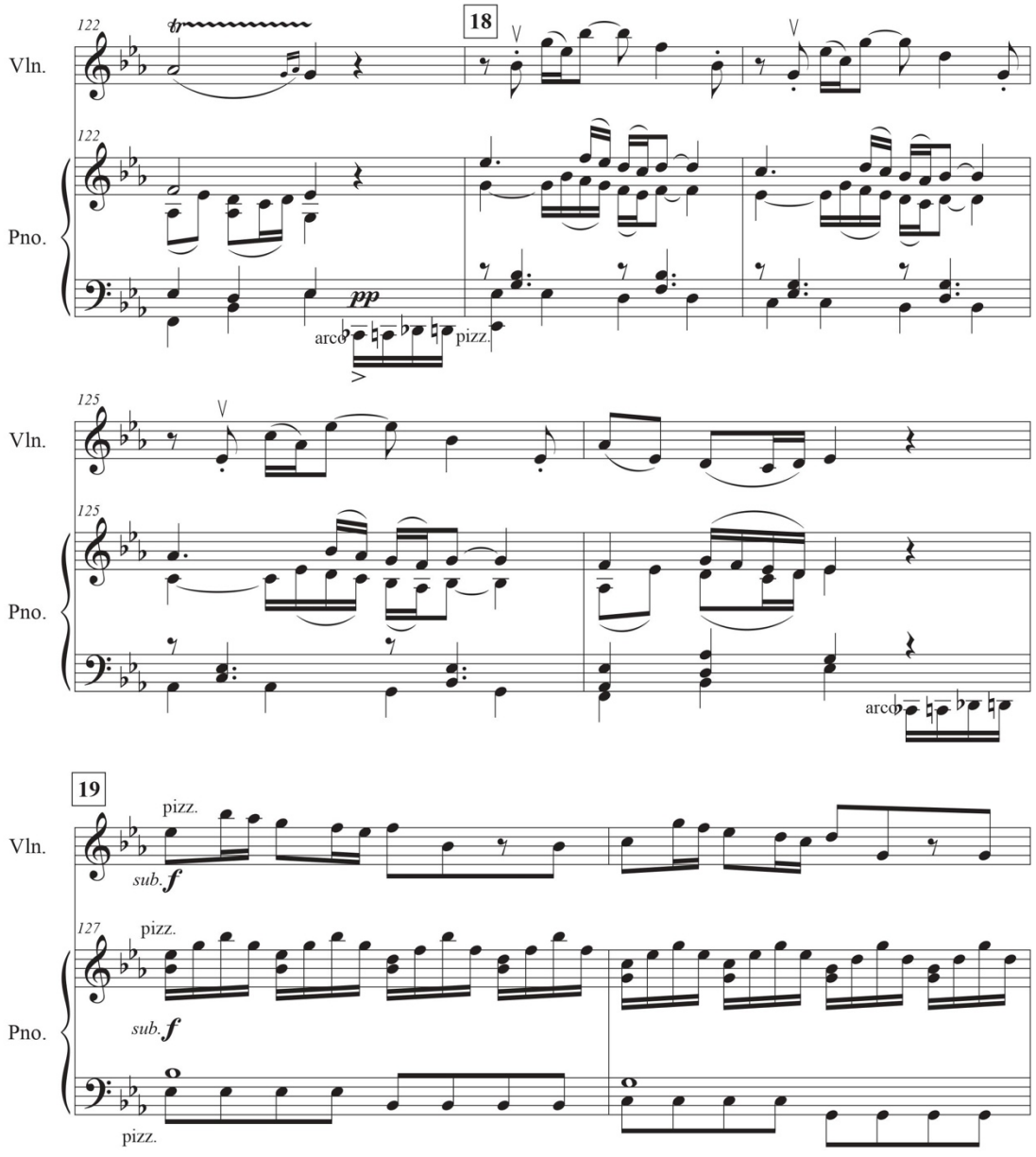

11
meno mosso
Vln.
79
Pno.
mp
p
82
Vln.
3
82
Pno.
più mosso, con energico
85
Vln.
p
cresc.
85
Pno.
p

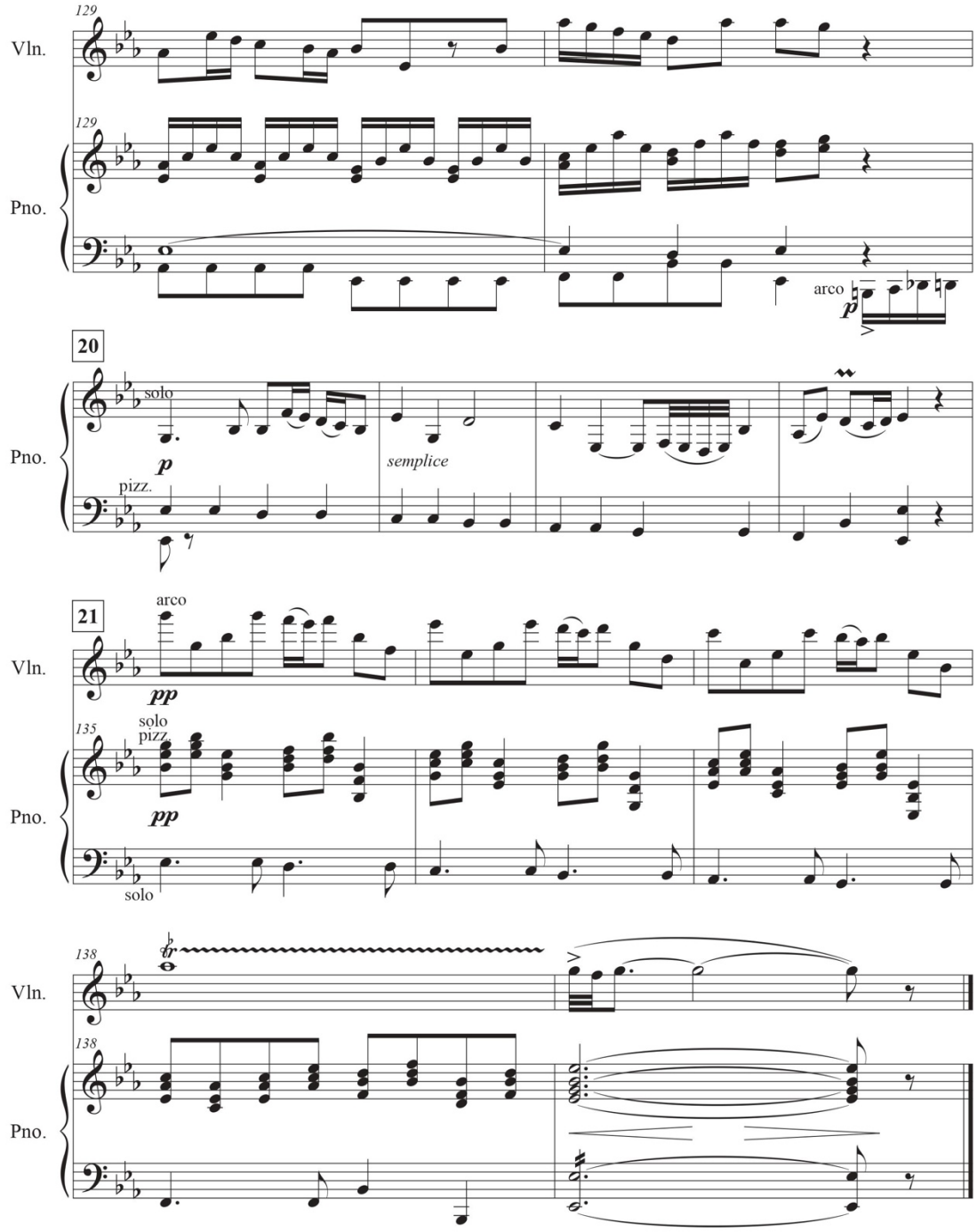

12
Vln.
ff
88
Pno.
f
90
Vln.
90
Pno.
92
Vln.
92
Pno.


94
Vln.
94
Pno.
13
più mosso
Vln.
96
Pno.
99
Vln.
dim. poco a poco
99
Pno.
dim. poco a poco


102
Vln.
sub. ff
rit. molto
102
Pno.
sub. ff
14
Lento rubato
Tempo I
Vln.
mp
f
mf
f
mp
105
Pno.
p
pizz.
15
Vln.
109
solo
Pno.
pp
p
pp


16
più mosso
Vln.
113
tutti
Pno.
pp
dolce
116
rit.
Vln.
116
Pno.
sub. f
sfp
arco
17
Tempo I
Vln.
pp
119
solo
solo
Pno.
pp
solo
pizz.

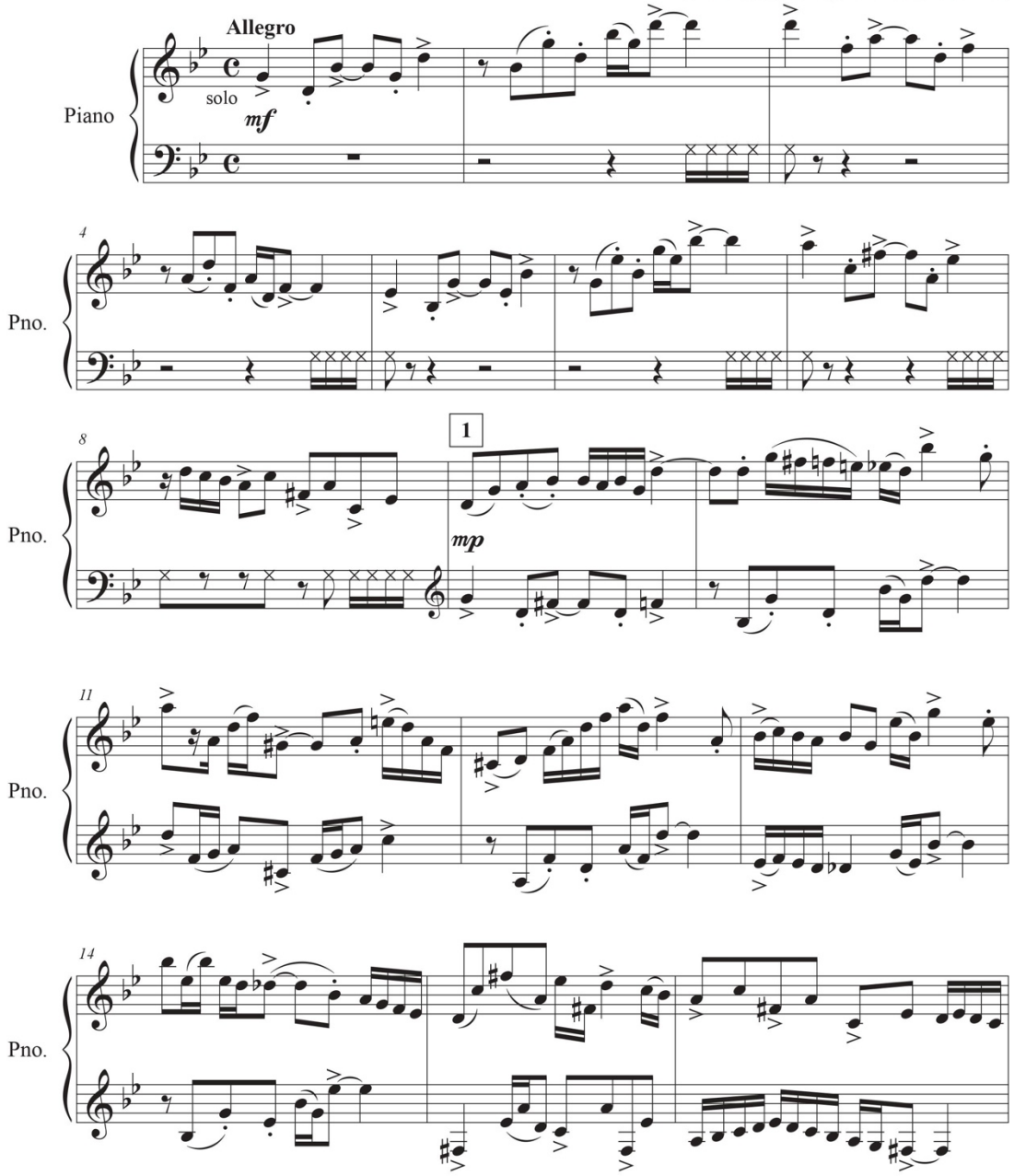

122
18
Vln.
122
Pno.
pp
arco
pizz.
125
Vln.
125
Pno.
arco
19
pizz.
Vln.
sub. f
127
pizz.
Pno.
sub. f
pizz.

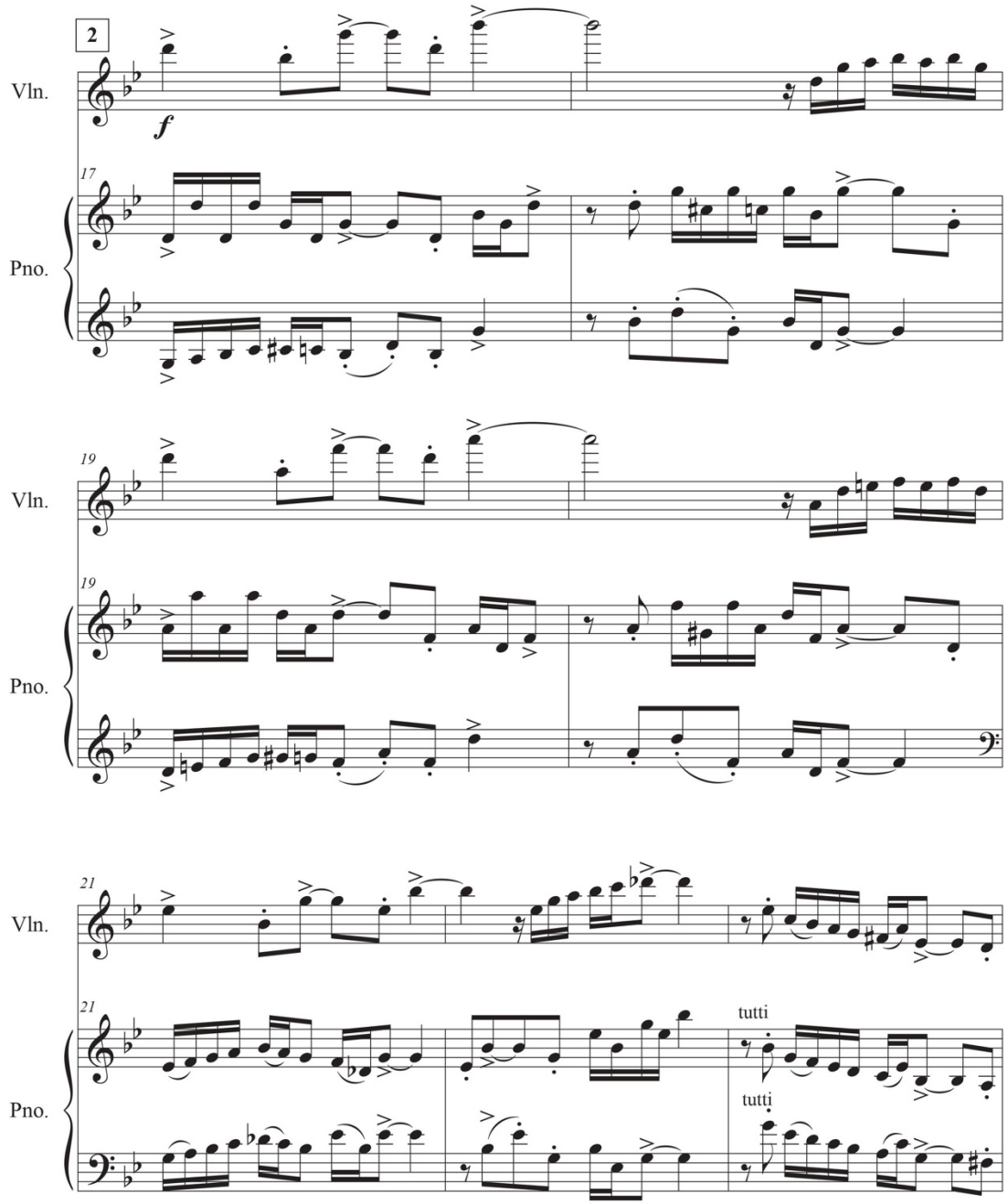

129
Vln.
129
Pno.
arco
p
20
solo
p
pizz.
semplice
21
arco
pp
Vln.
135
solo
pizz.
pp
Pno.
solo
138
Vln.
138
Pno.

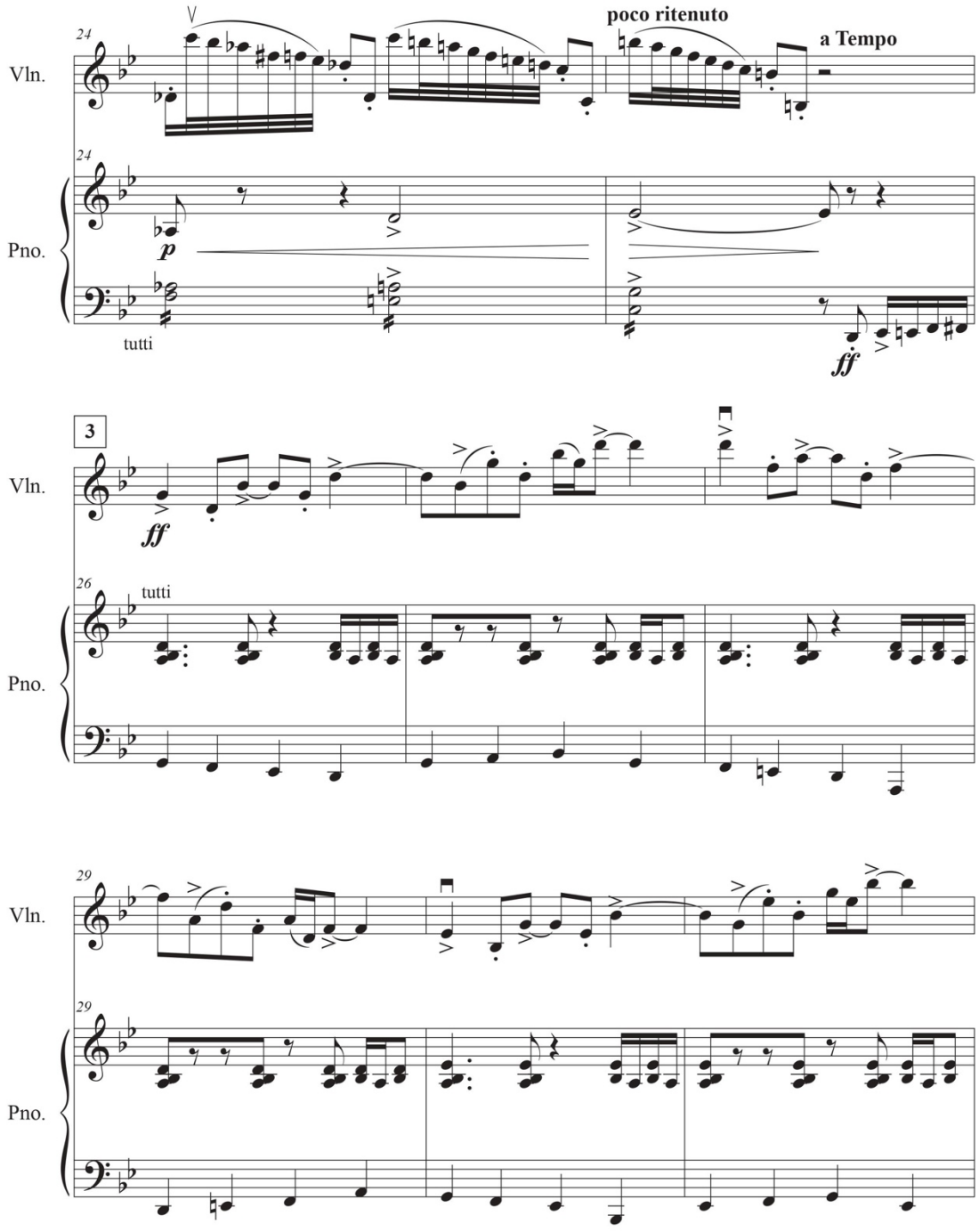
Score

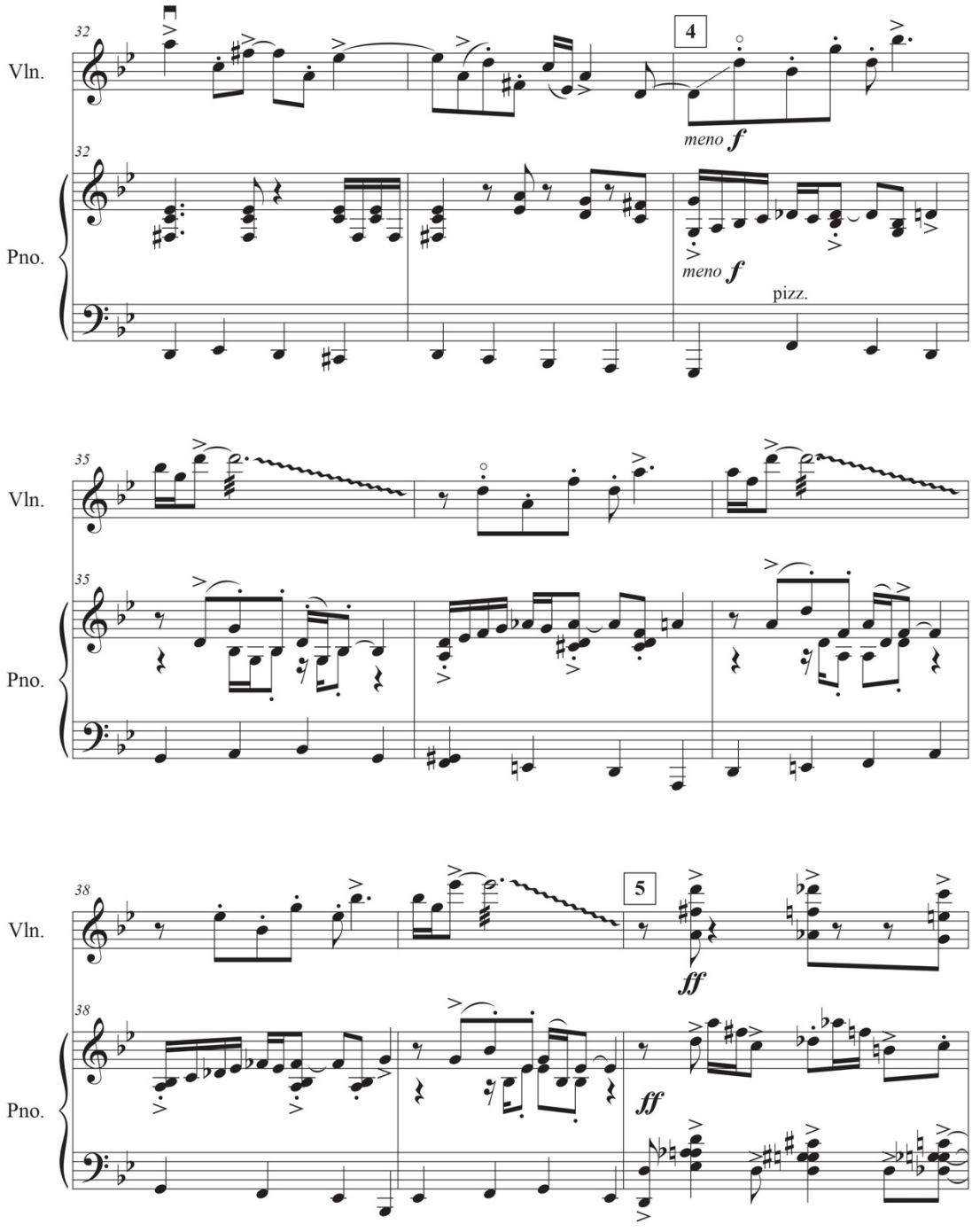
PRIMAVERA PORTEÑO

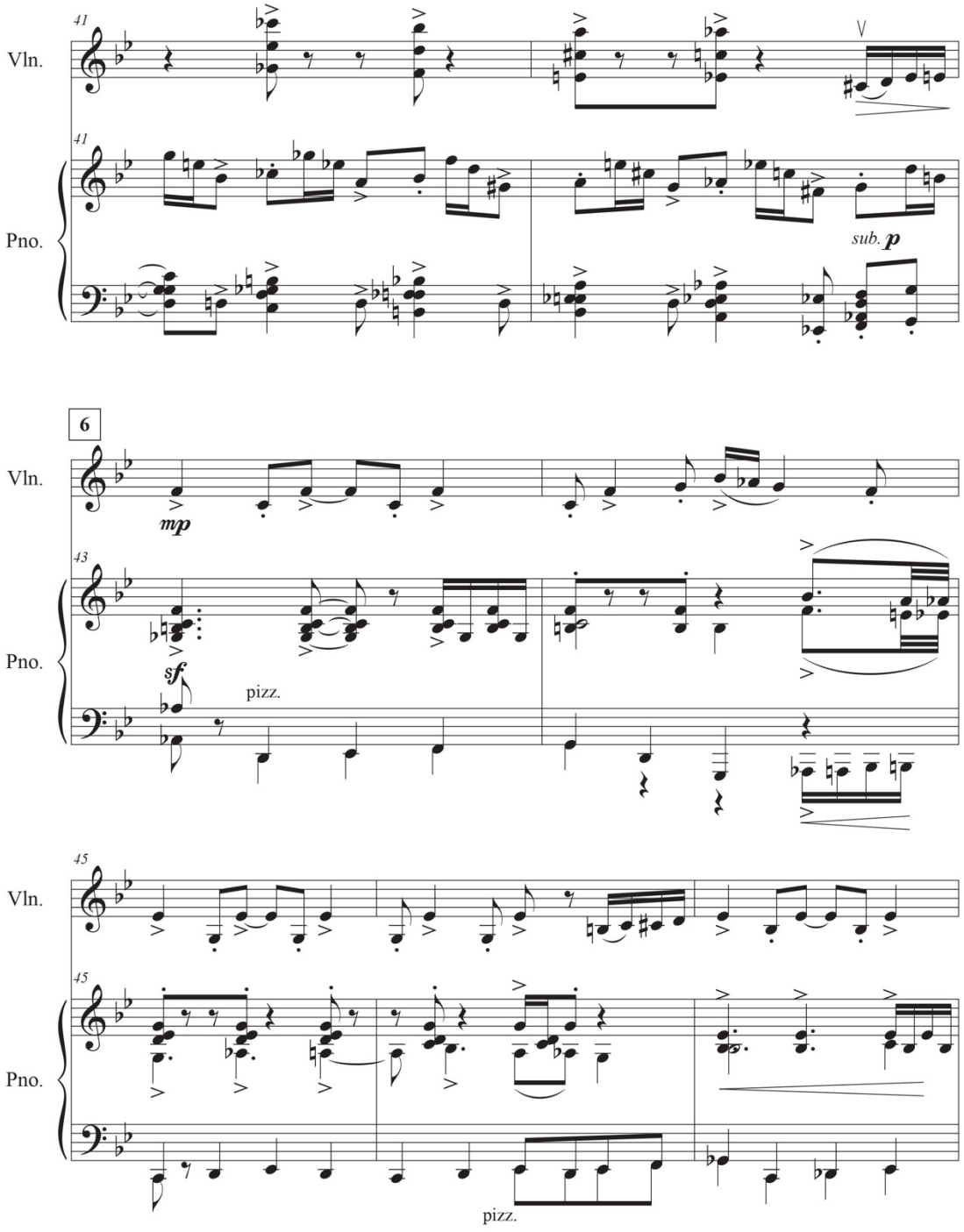
ASTOR PIAZZOLLA
String Orchestra by LEONID DESYATNIKOV
Piano Reduction by NEILSON CHEN

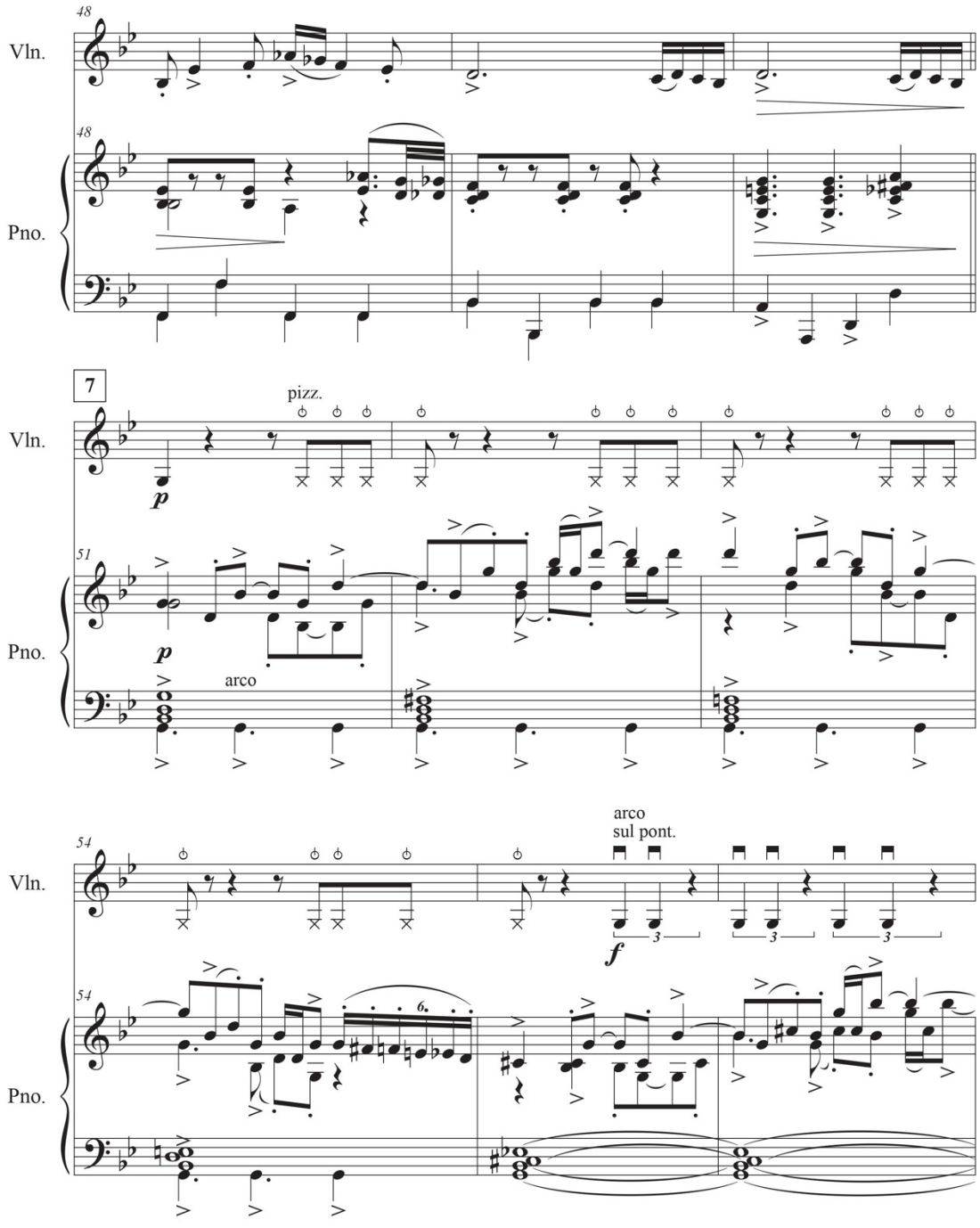


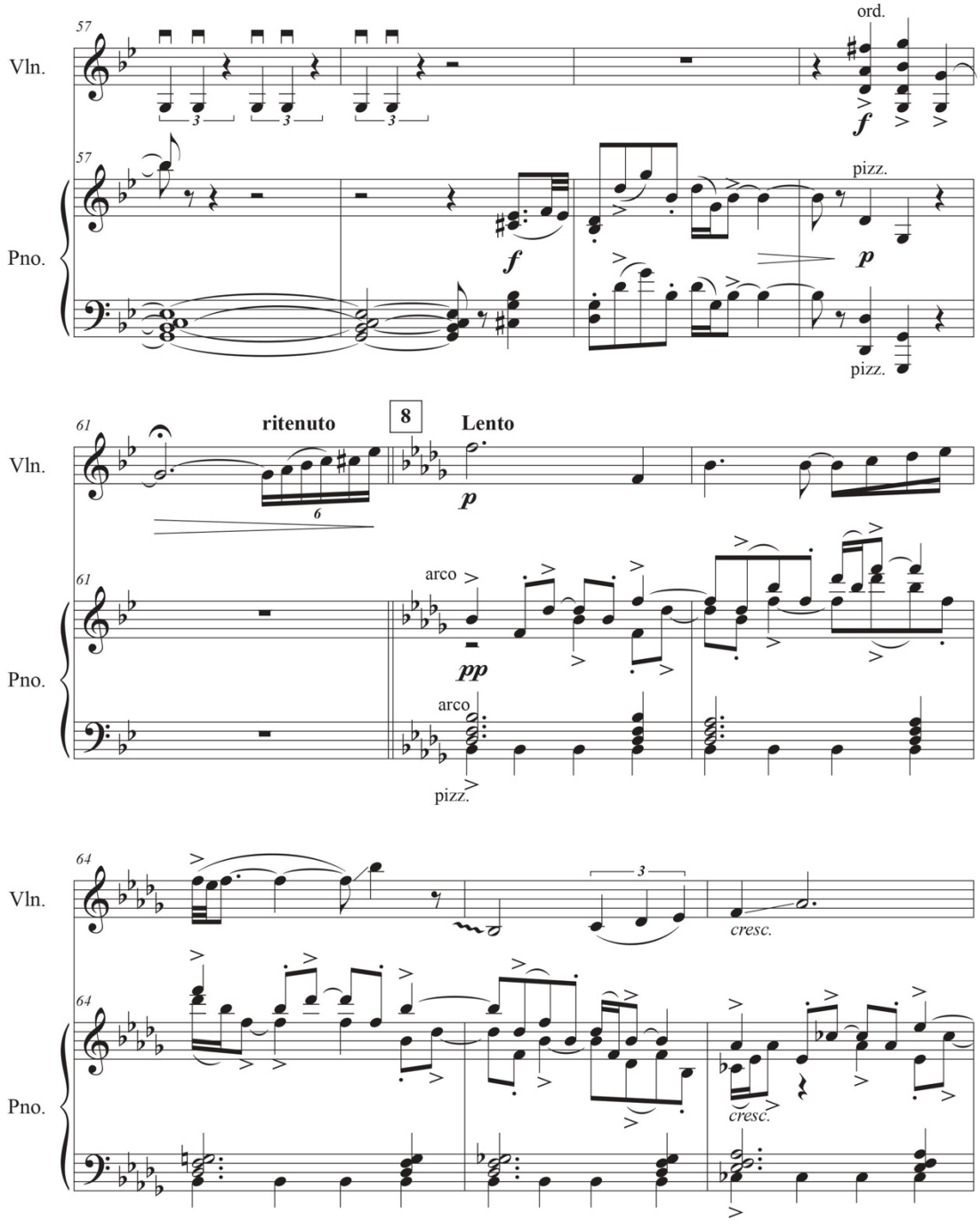

2
Vln.
f
17
Pno.
19
Vln.
19
Pno.
21
Vln.
21
tutti
tutti
Pno.

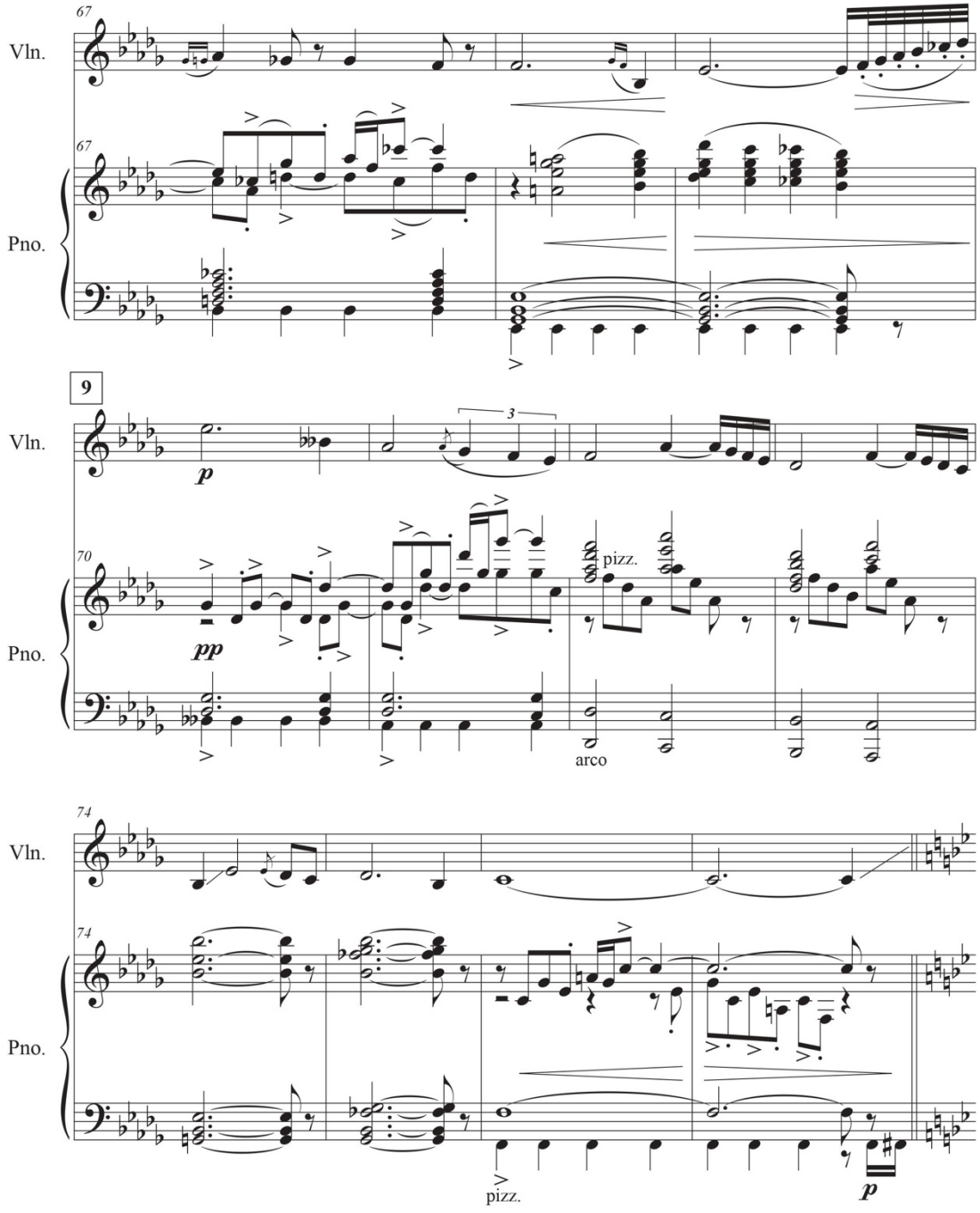

poco ritenuto
a Tempo
Vln.
Pno.
24
p
tutti
ff
3
26
29

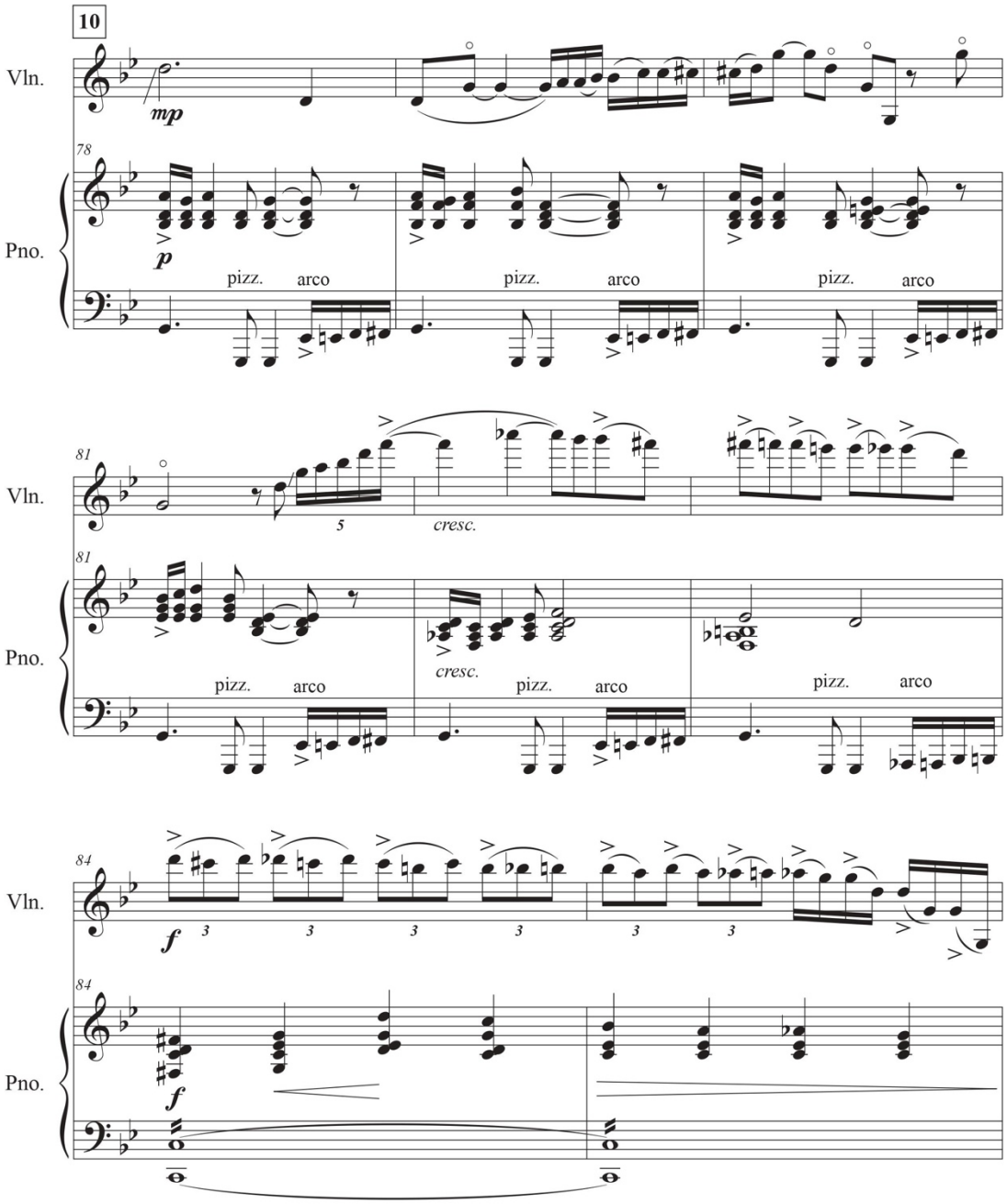

Vln.
Pno.
32
4
meno f
meno f
pizz.
35
38
5
ff
ff

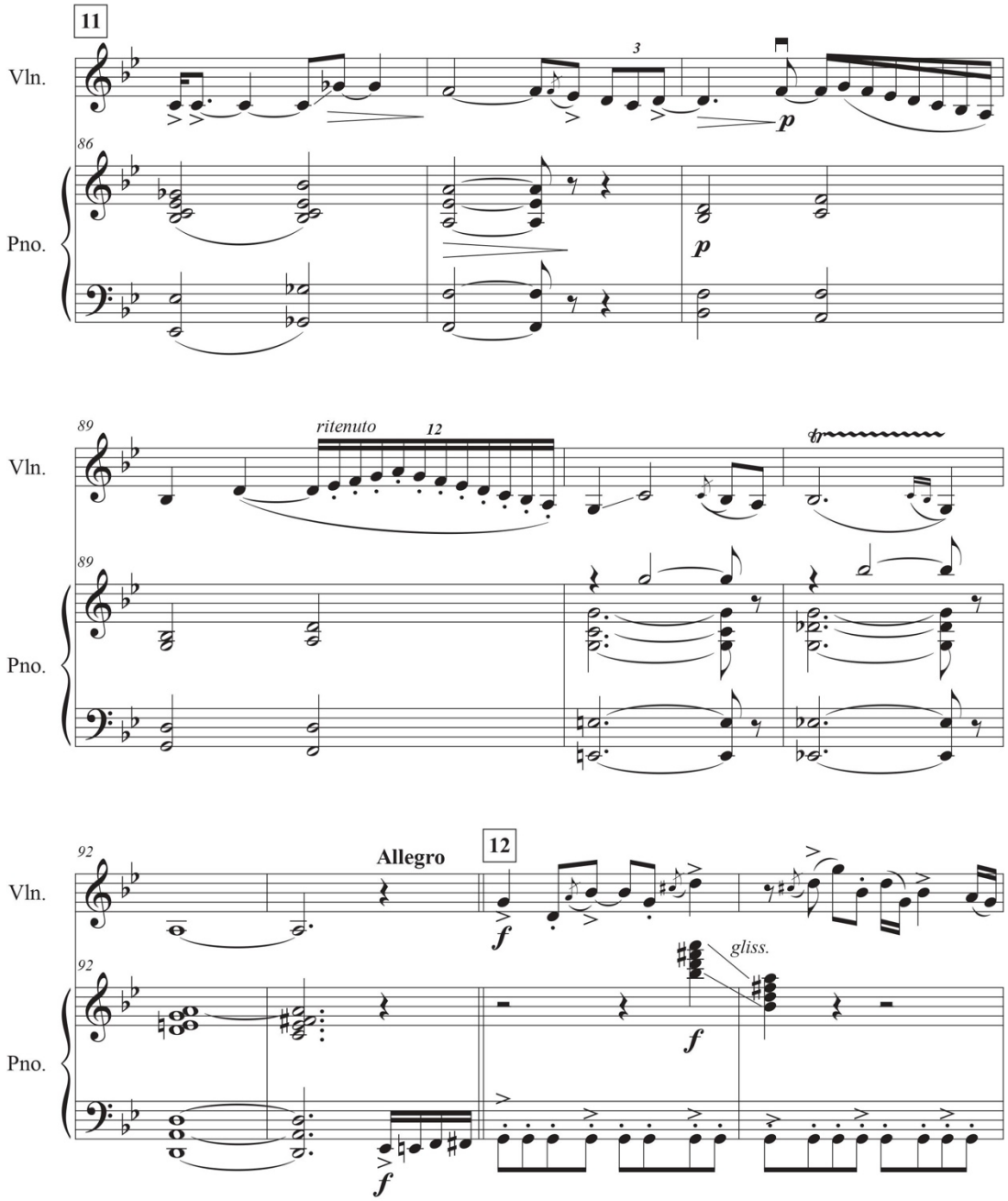

41
Vln.
41
Pno.
sub. p
6
Vln.
mp
43
Pno.
sf
pizz.
45
Vln.
45
Pno.
pizz.

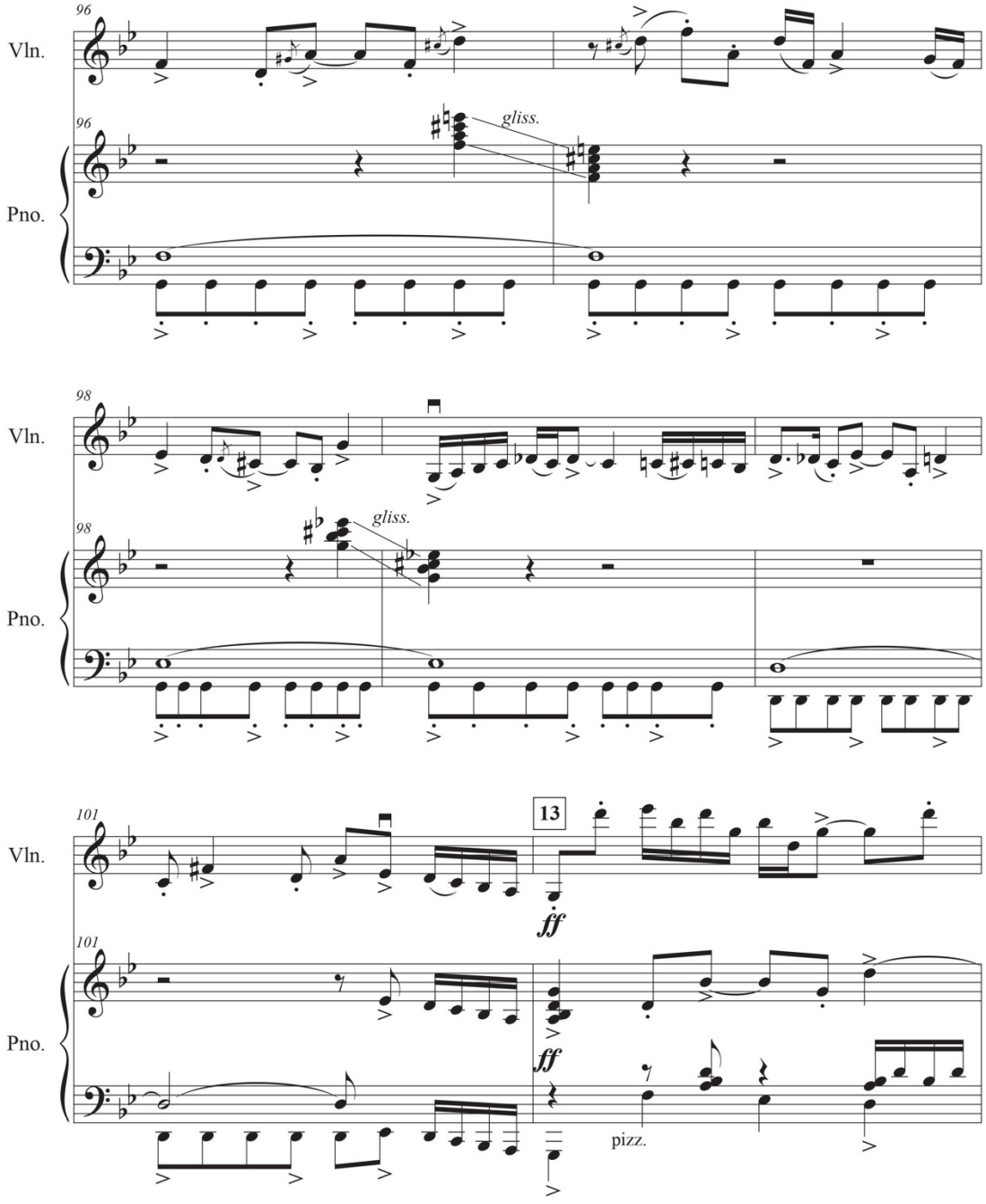

48
Vln.
48
Pno.
7
pizz.
Vln.
p
51
Pno.
p
arco
arco
sul pont.
54
Vln.
f
54
Pno.

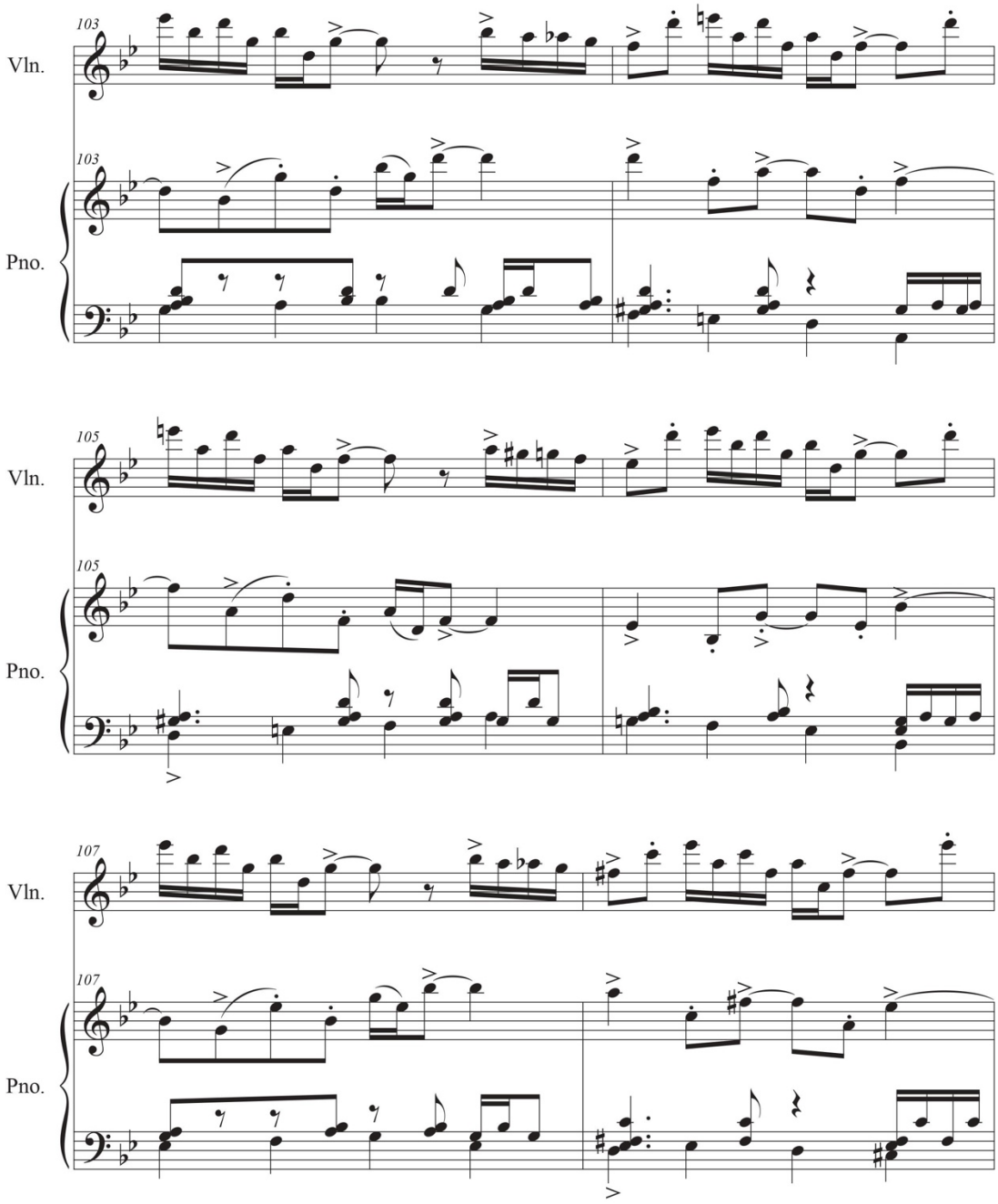

57
Vln.
ord.
f
57
Pno.
f
pizz.
p
pizz.
61
ritenuto
8
Lento
Vln.
p
61
Pno.
arco
pp
arco
pizz.
64
Vln.
cresc.
64
Pno.
cresc.

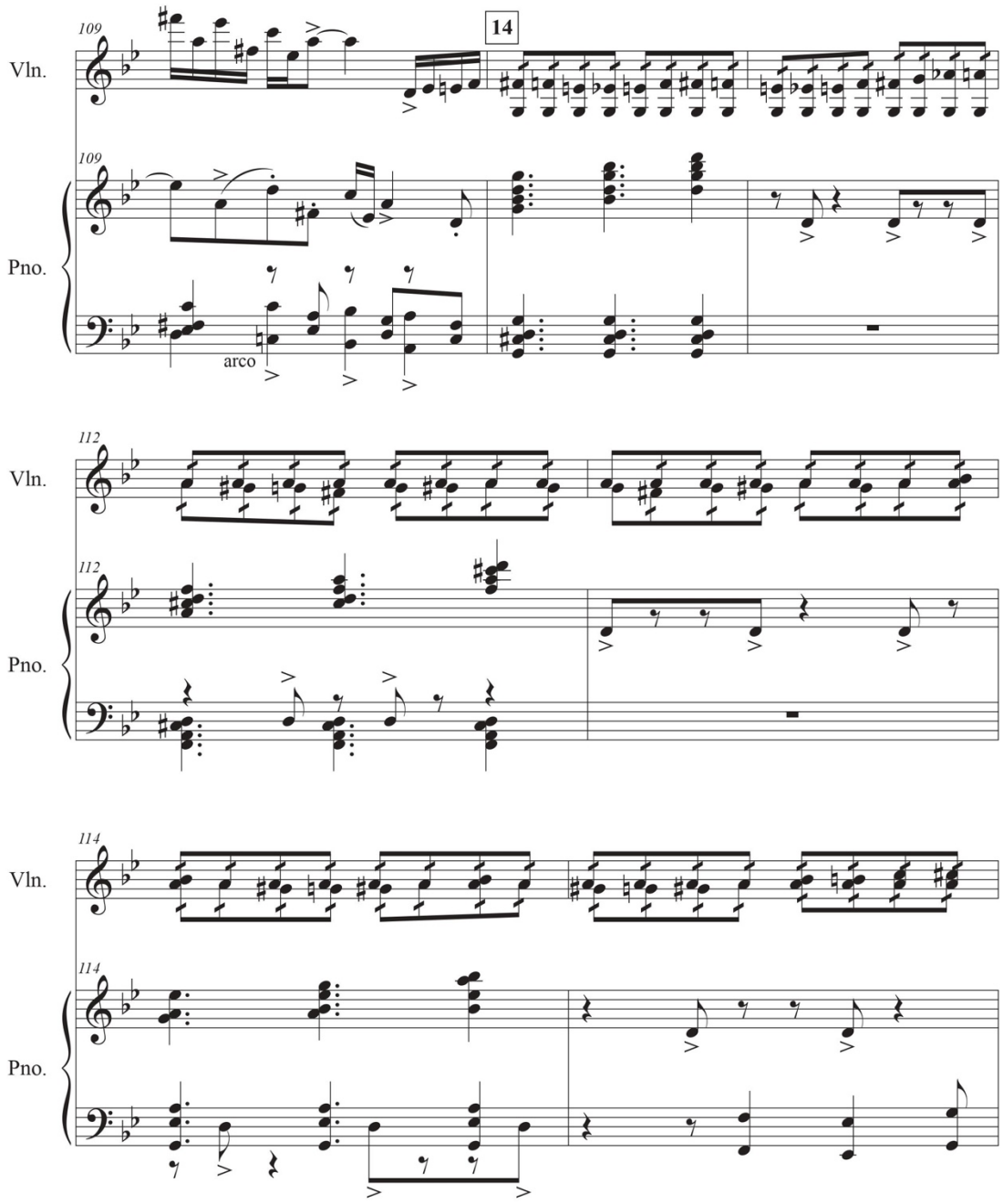

67
Vln.
67
Pno.
9
Vln.
p
3
70
Pno.
pp
pizz.
arco
74
Vln.
74
Pno.
pizz.
p

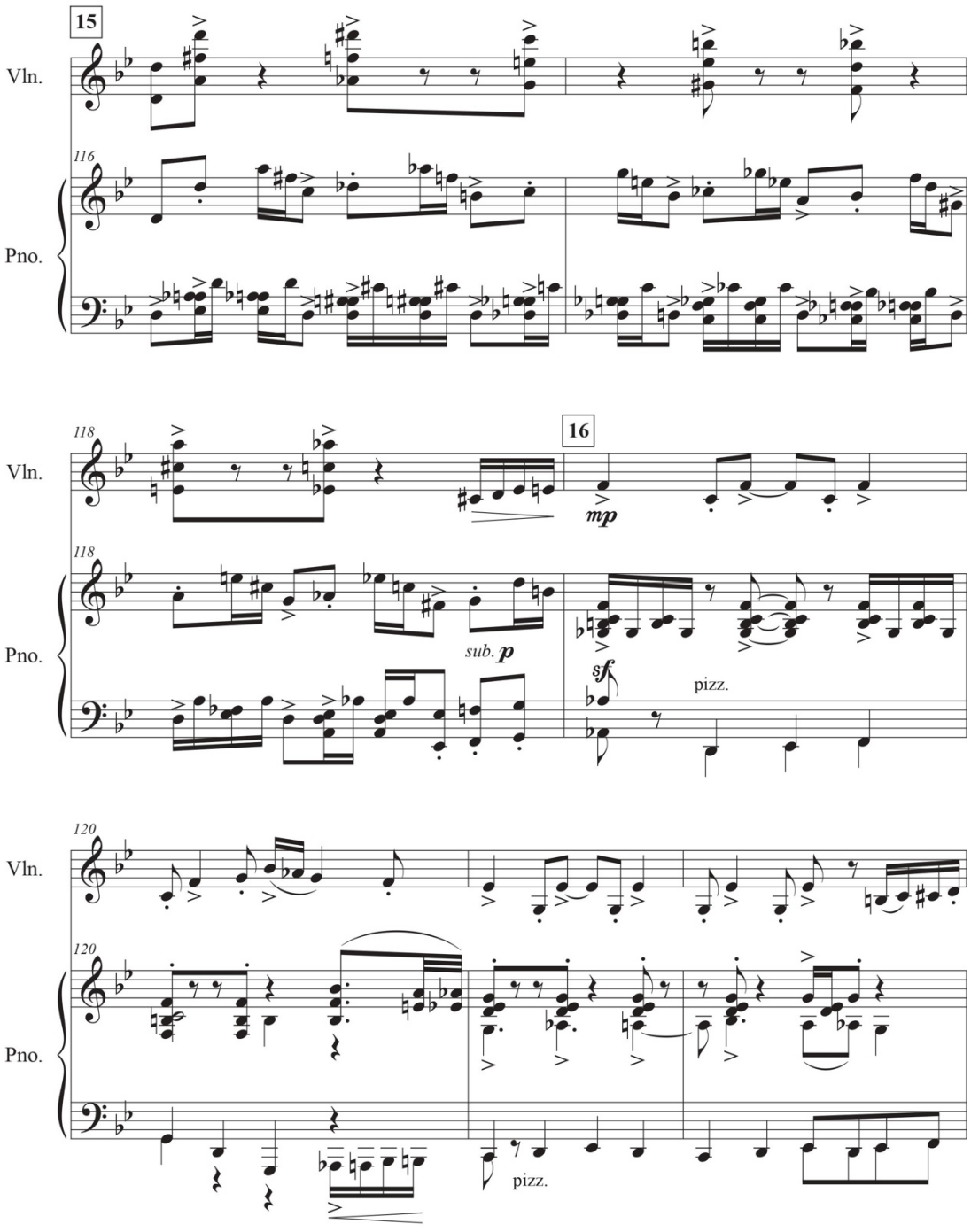

10
Vln.
mp
78
Pno.
p
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
81
Vln.
5
cresc.
81
Pno.
cresc.
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
84
Vln.
f
3
84
Pno.
f

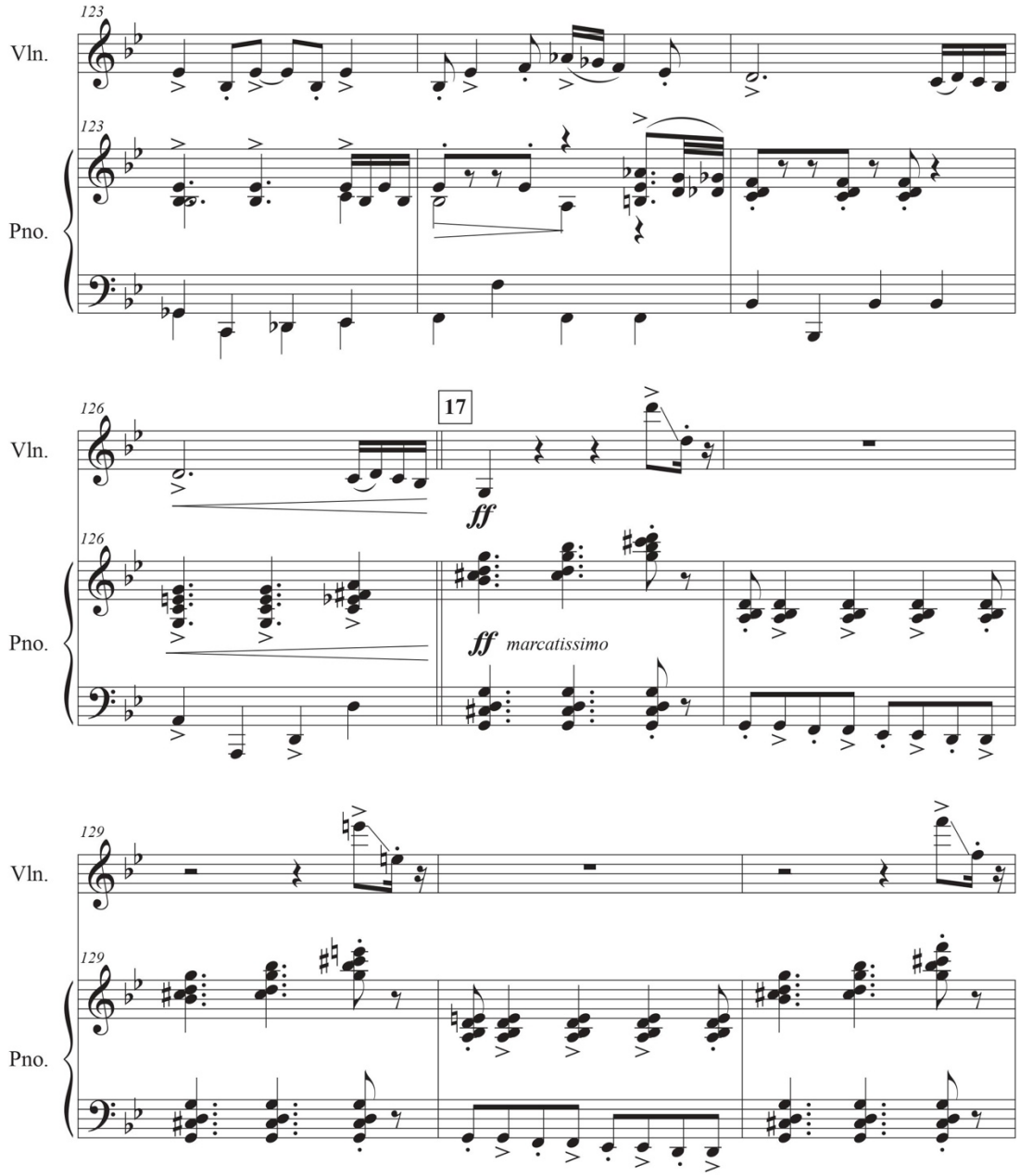

11
Vln.
86
Pno.
3
p
p
89
Vln.
89
Pno.
ritenuto
12
tr
92
Vln.
92
Pno.
Allegro
12
f
f
gliss.
f
f

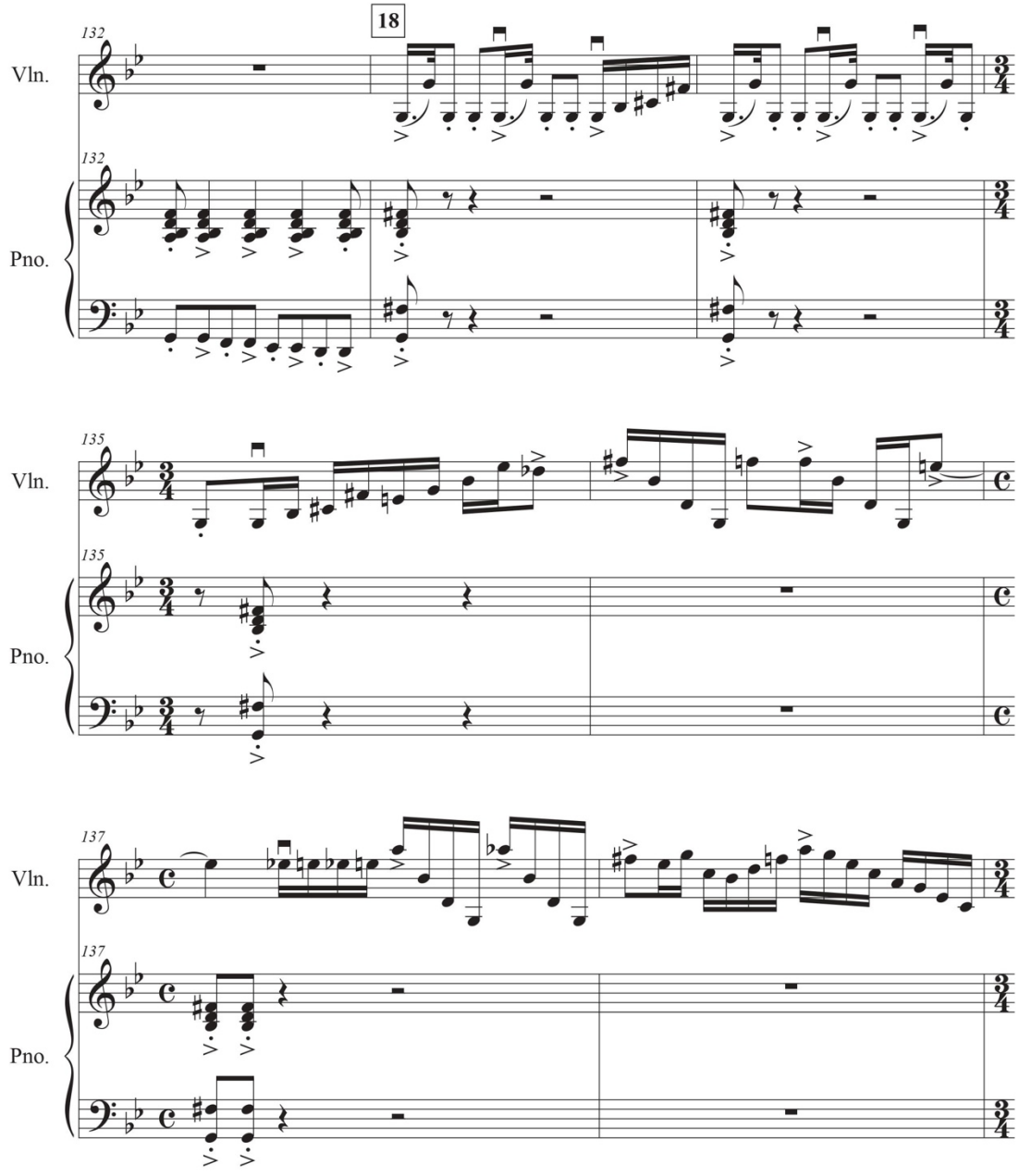

96
Vln.
96
gliss.
Pno.
98
Vln.
98
gliss.
Pno.
101
13
Vln.
ff
101
ff
Pno.
pizz.

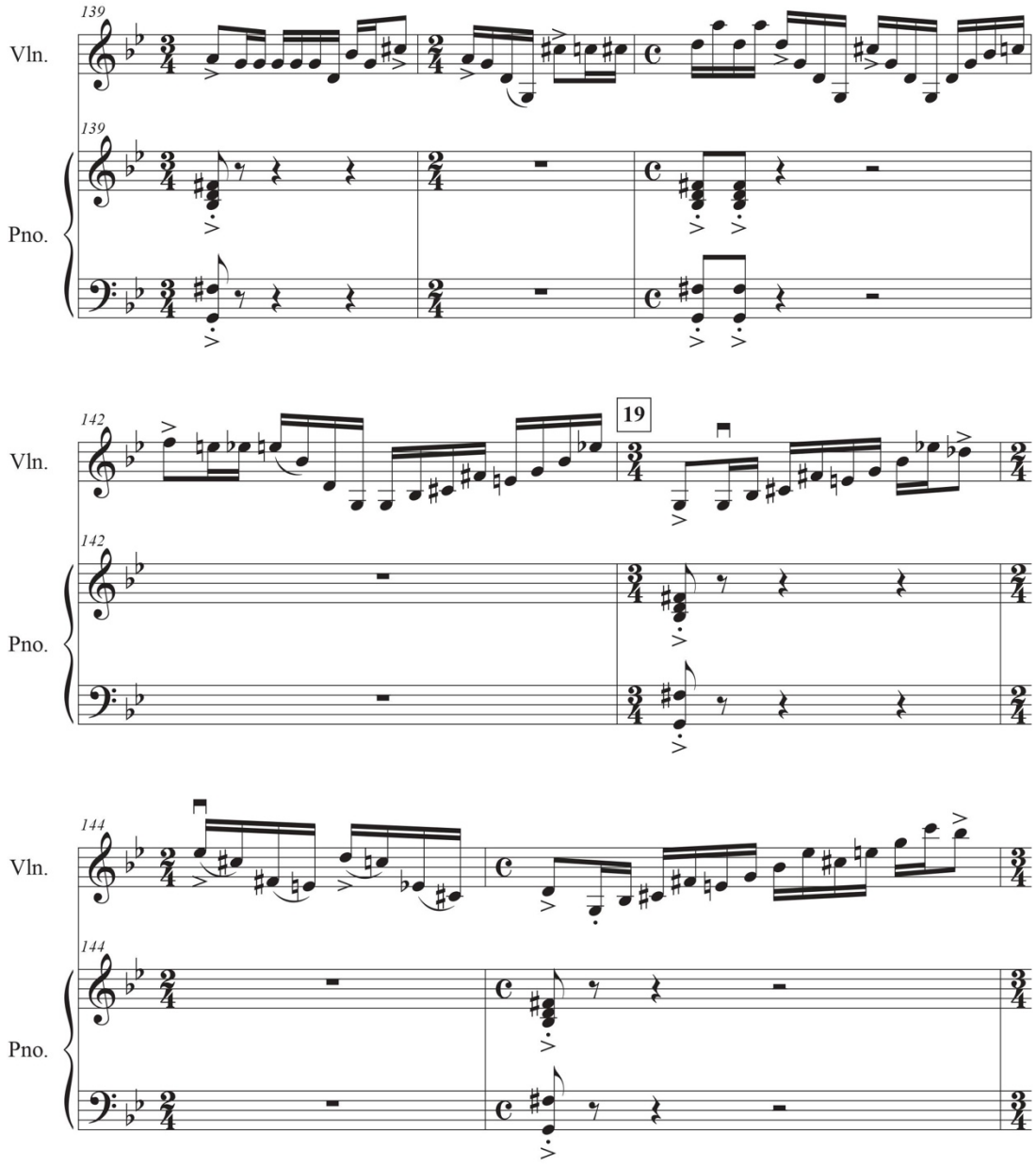

103
Vln.
103
Pno.
105
Vln.
105
Pno.
107
Vln.
107
Pno.

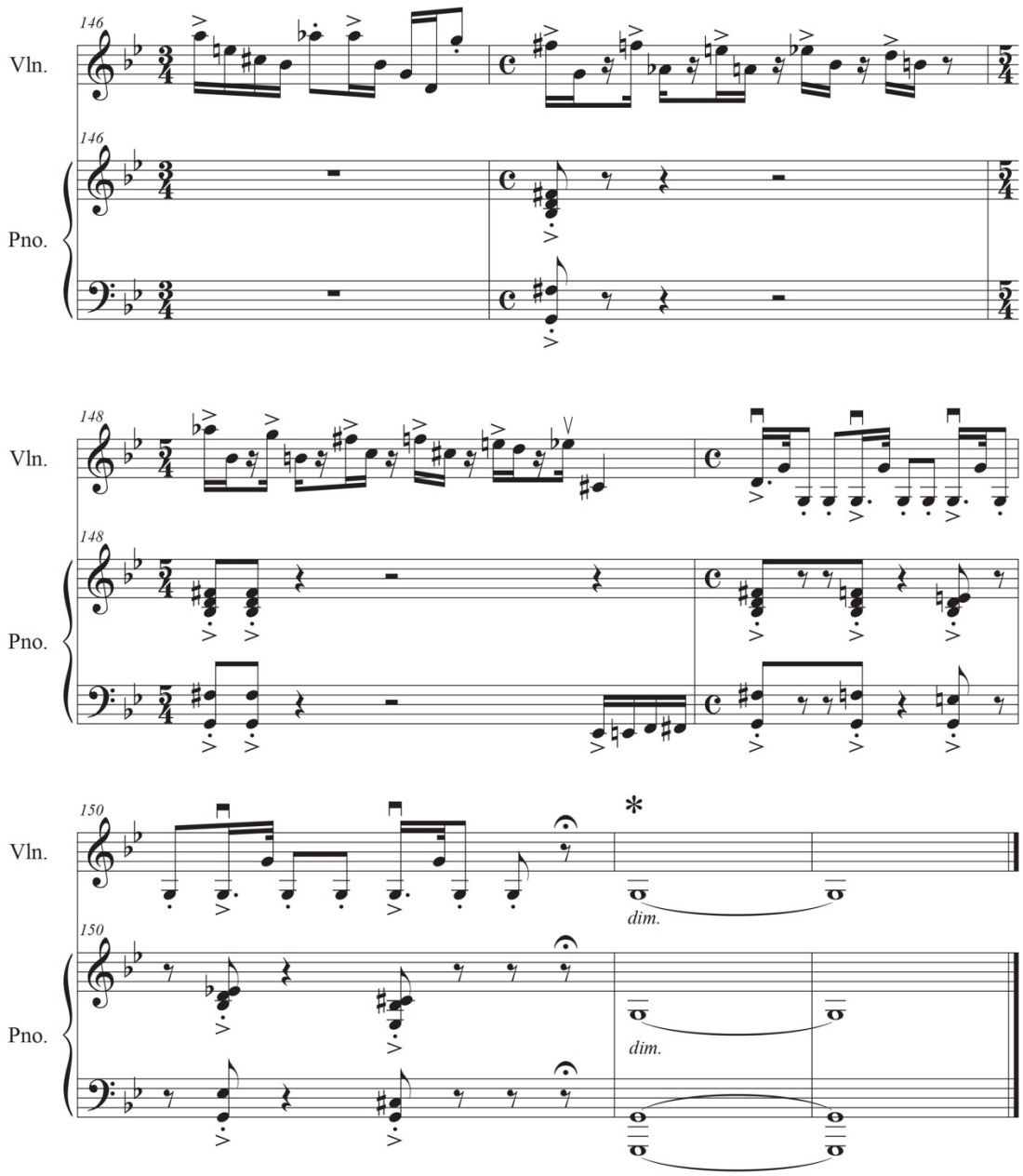

109
Vln.
14
109
Pno.
arco
112
Vln.
112
Pno.
114
Vln.
114
Pno.


15
Vln.
116
Pno.
118
16
Vln.
mp
118
Pno.
sub. p
sf
pizz.
120
Vln.
120
Pno.
pizz.

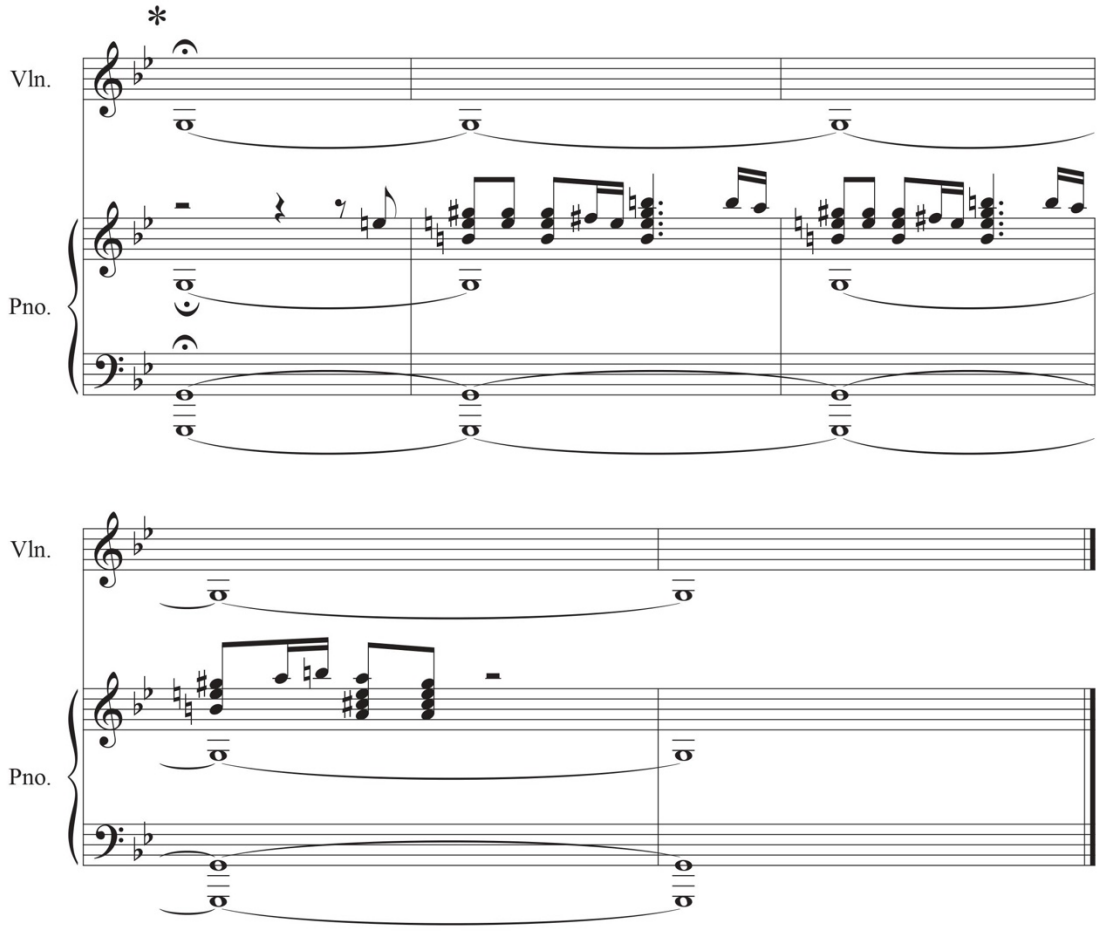

123
Vln.
123
Pno.
126
Vln.
17
ff
126
Pno.
ff marcatissimo
129
Vln.
129
Pno.


18
132
Vln.
132
Pno.
135
Vln.
135
Pno.
137
Vln.
137
Pno.


139
Vln.
139
Pno.
142
Vln.
19
142
Pno.
144
Vln.
144
Pno.


146
Vln.
146
Pno.
148
Vln.
148
Pno.
150
Vln.
dim.
150
Pno.
dim.

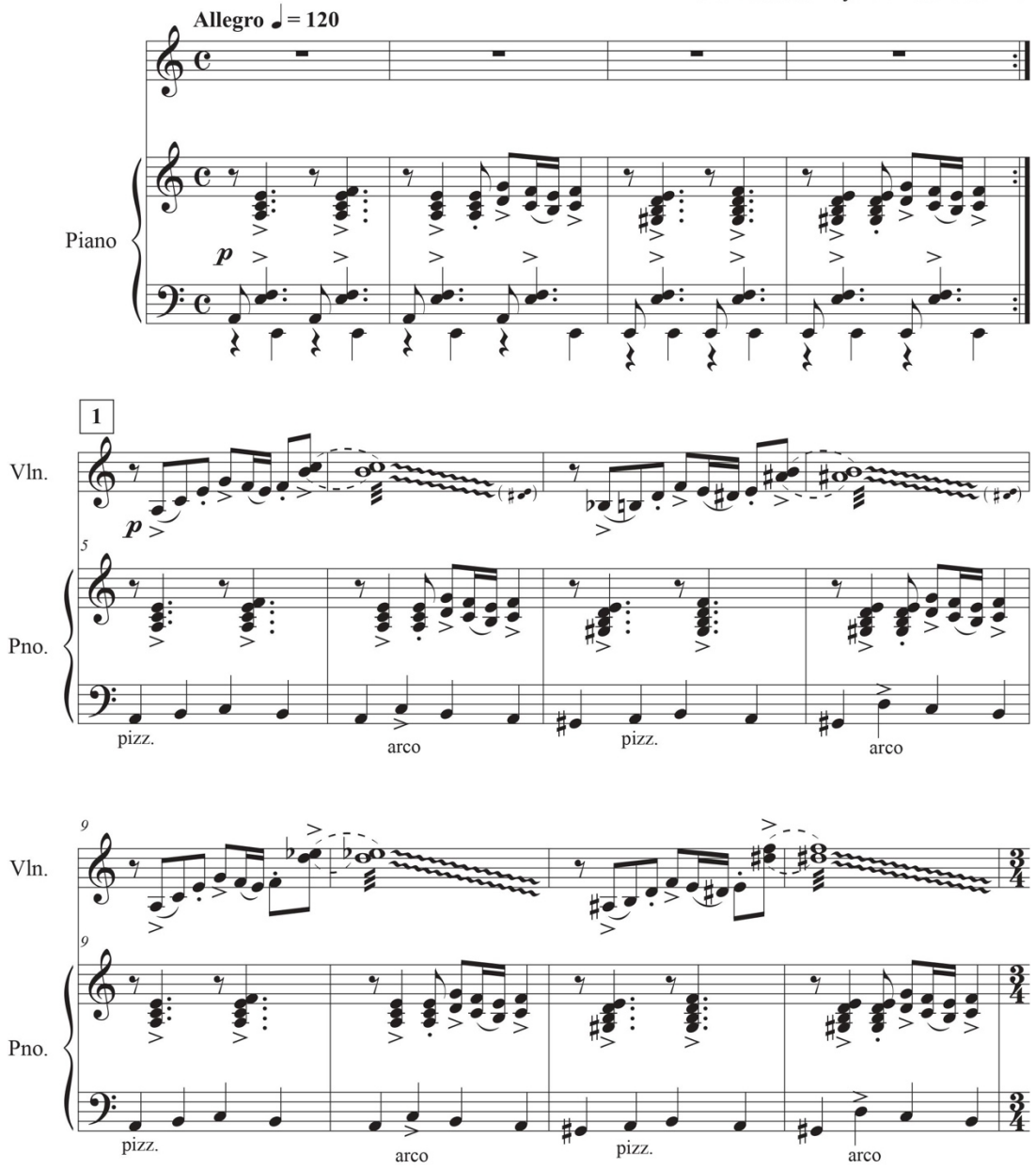
If the cycle is performed whole and the succession is the same, though without Vivaldi, then the following termination variant is possible:

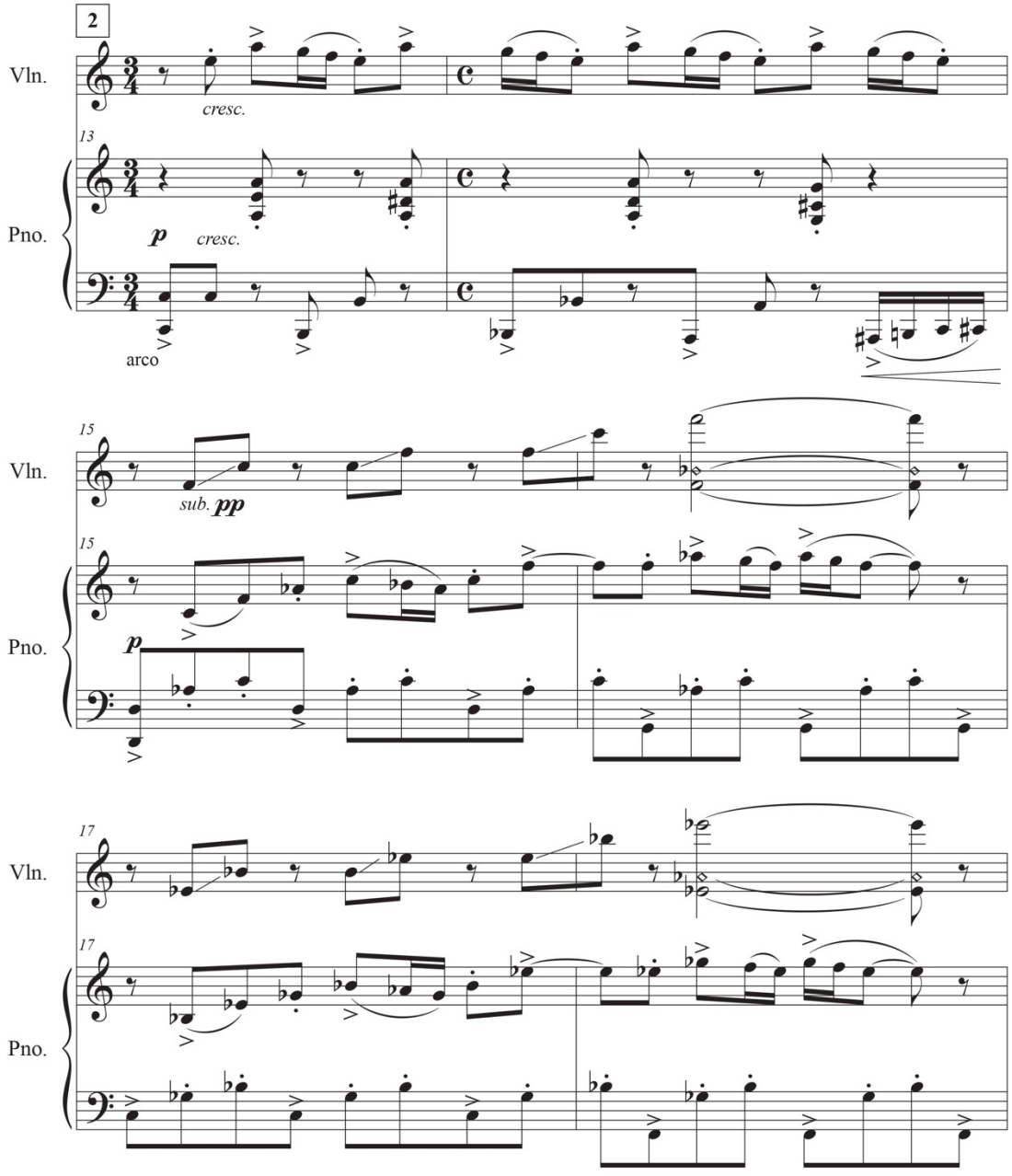


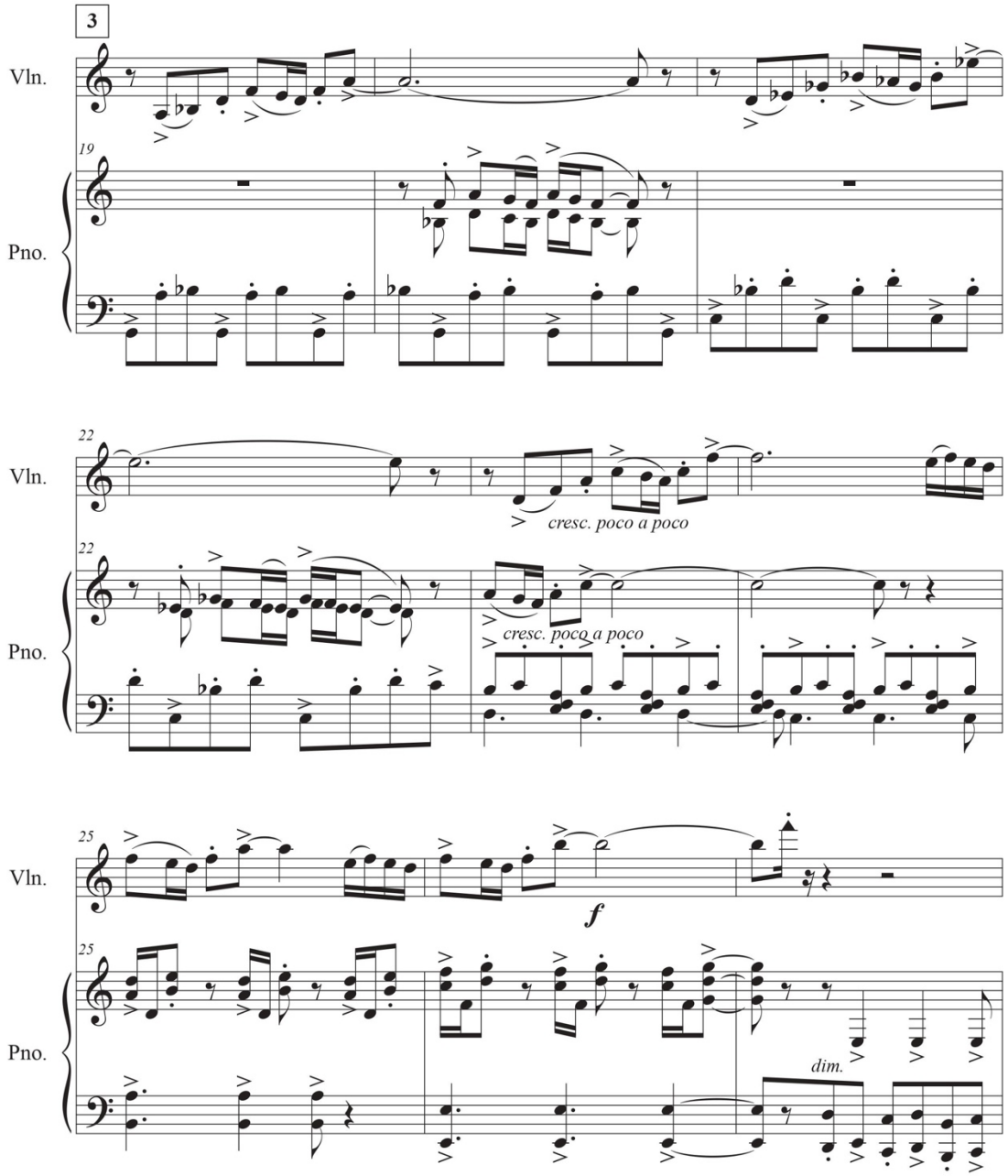
Score

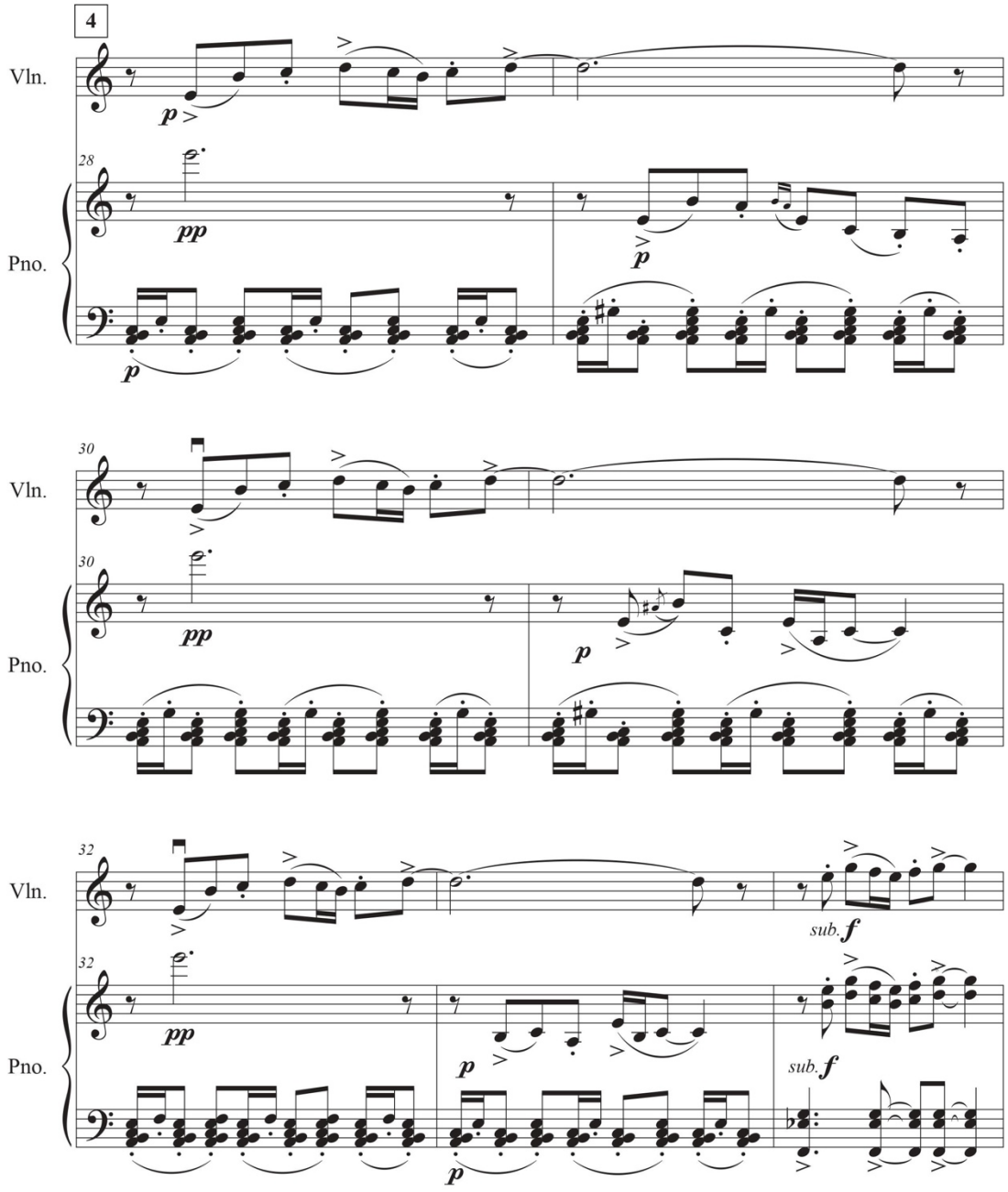
VERANO PORTEÑO

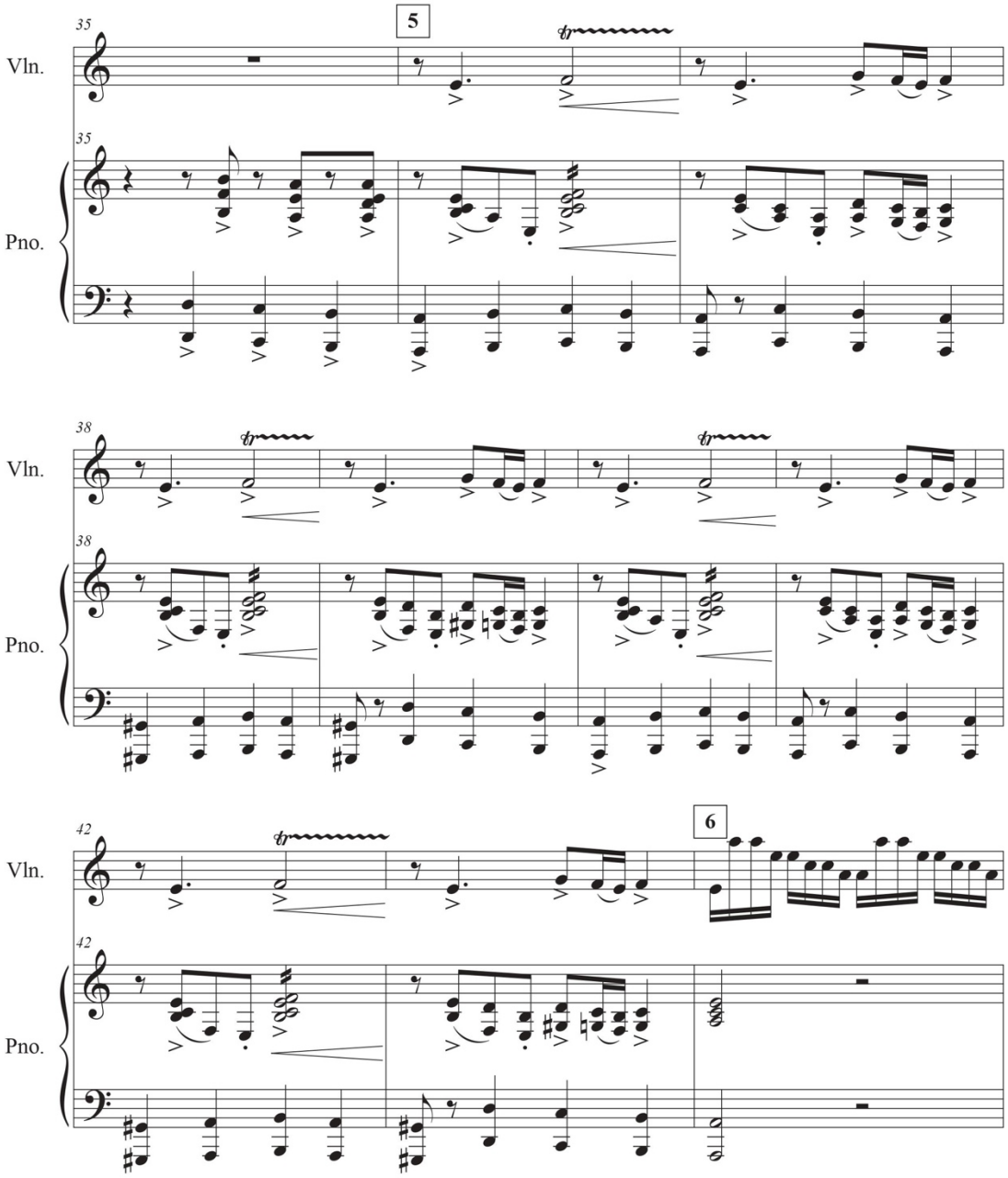
ASTOR PIAZZOLLA
String Orchestra by LEONID DESYATNIKOV
Piano Reduction by NEILSON CHEN

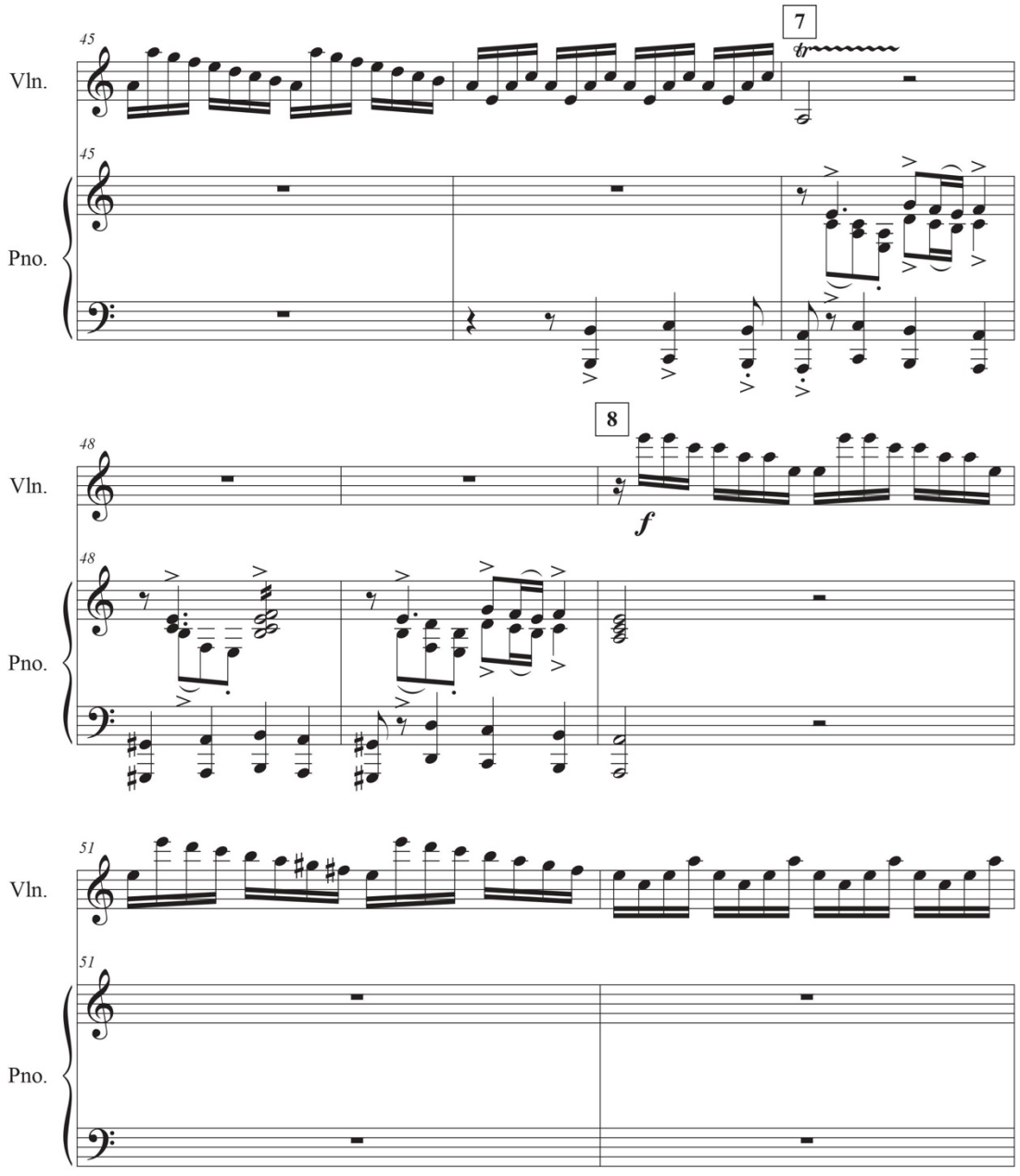


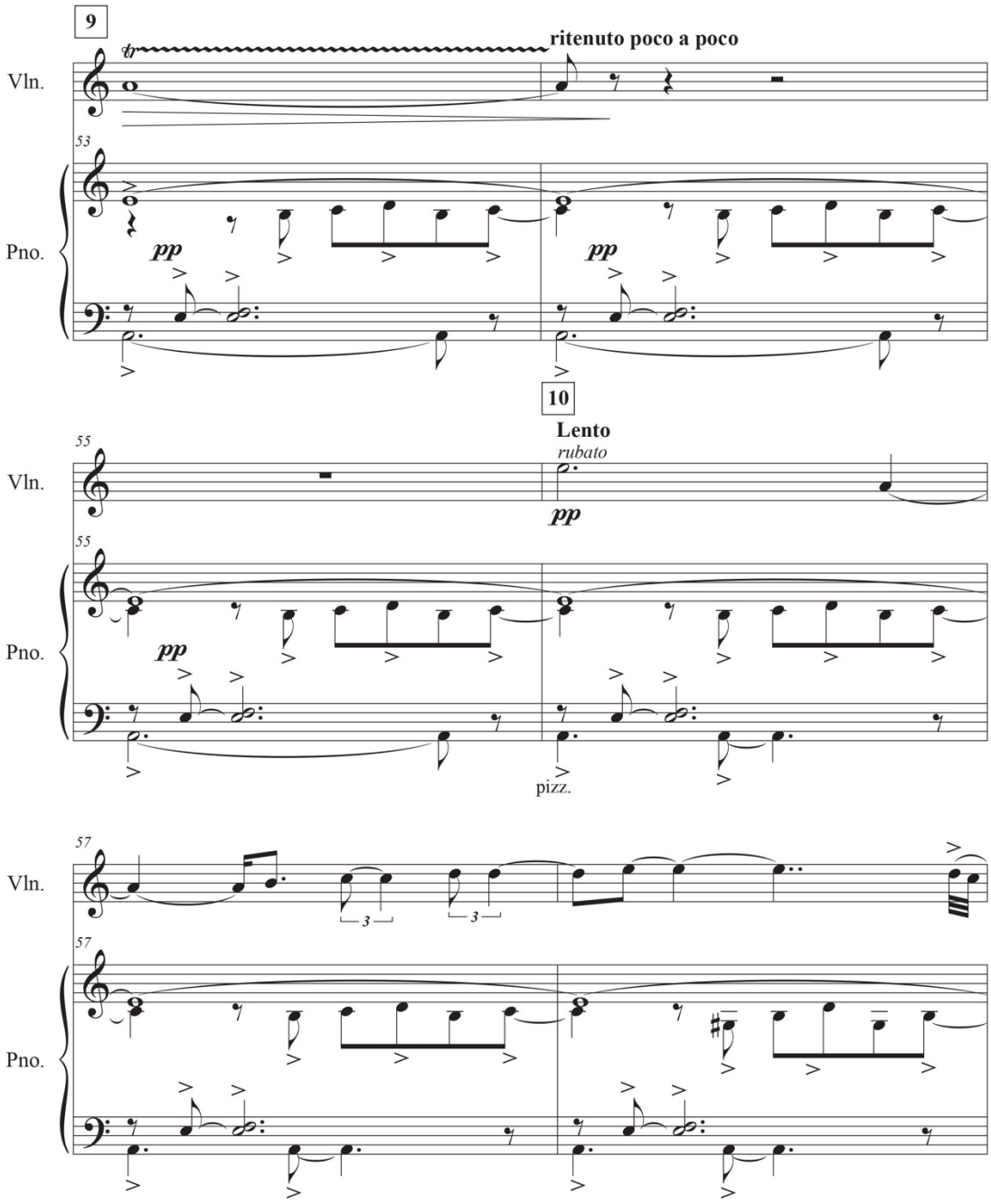

2
Vln.
cresc.
13
Pno.
p
cresc.
arco
15
Vln.
sub. pp
15
Pno.
p
17
Vln.
17
Pno.

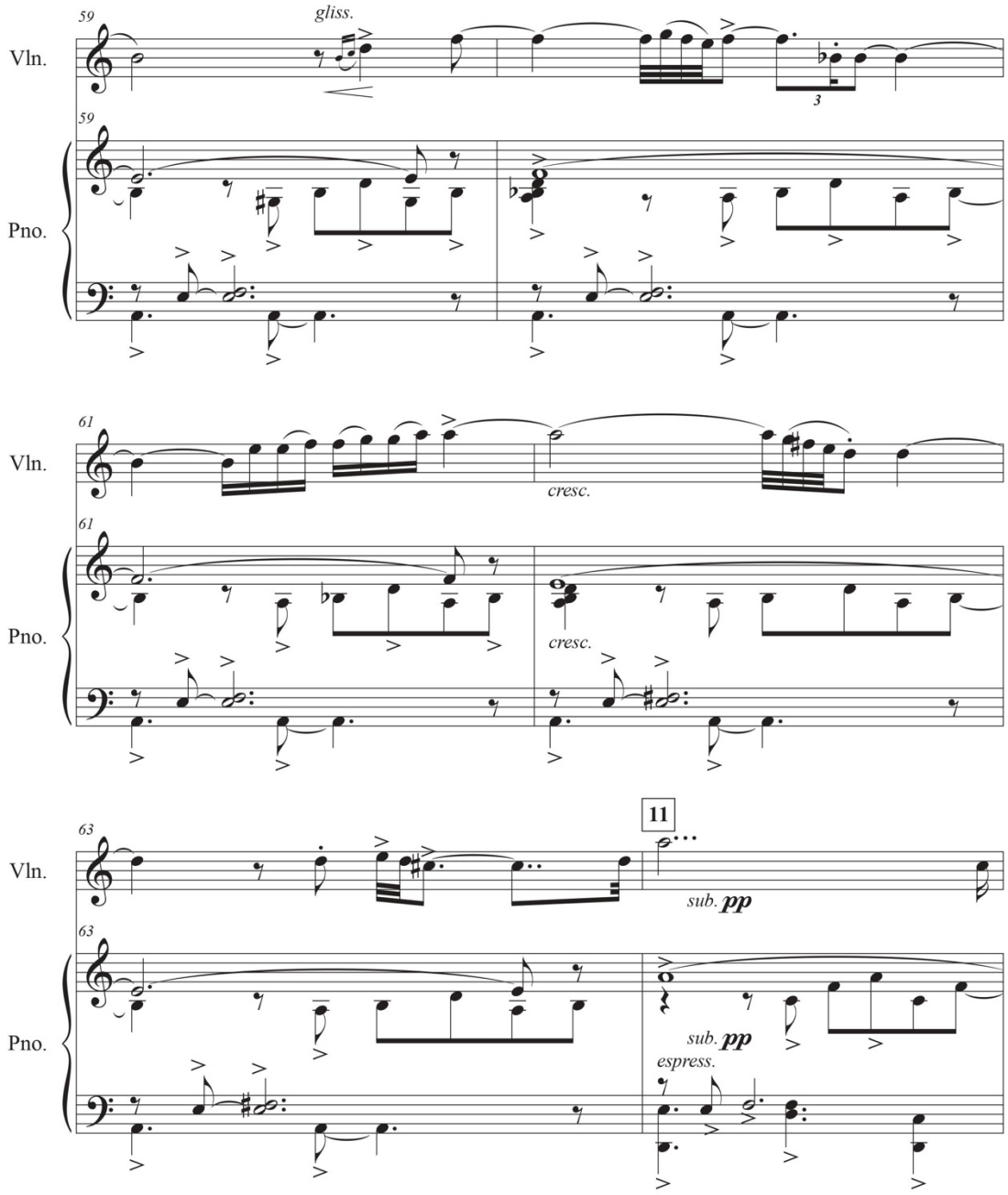

3
Vln.
19
Pno.
22
Vln.
cresc. poco a poco
22
Pno.
cresc. poco a poco
25
Vln.
f
25
Pno.
dim.

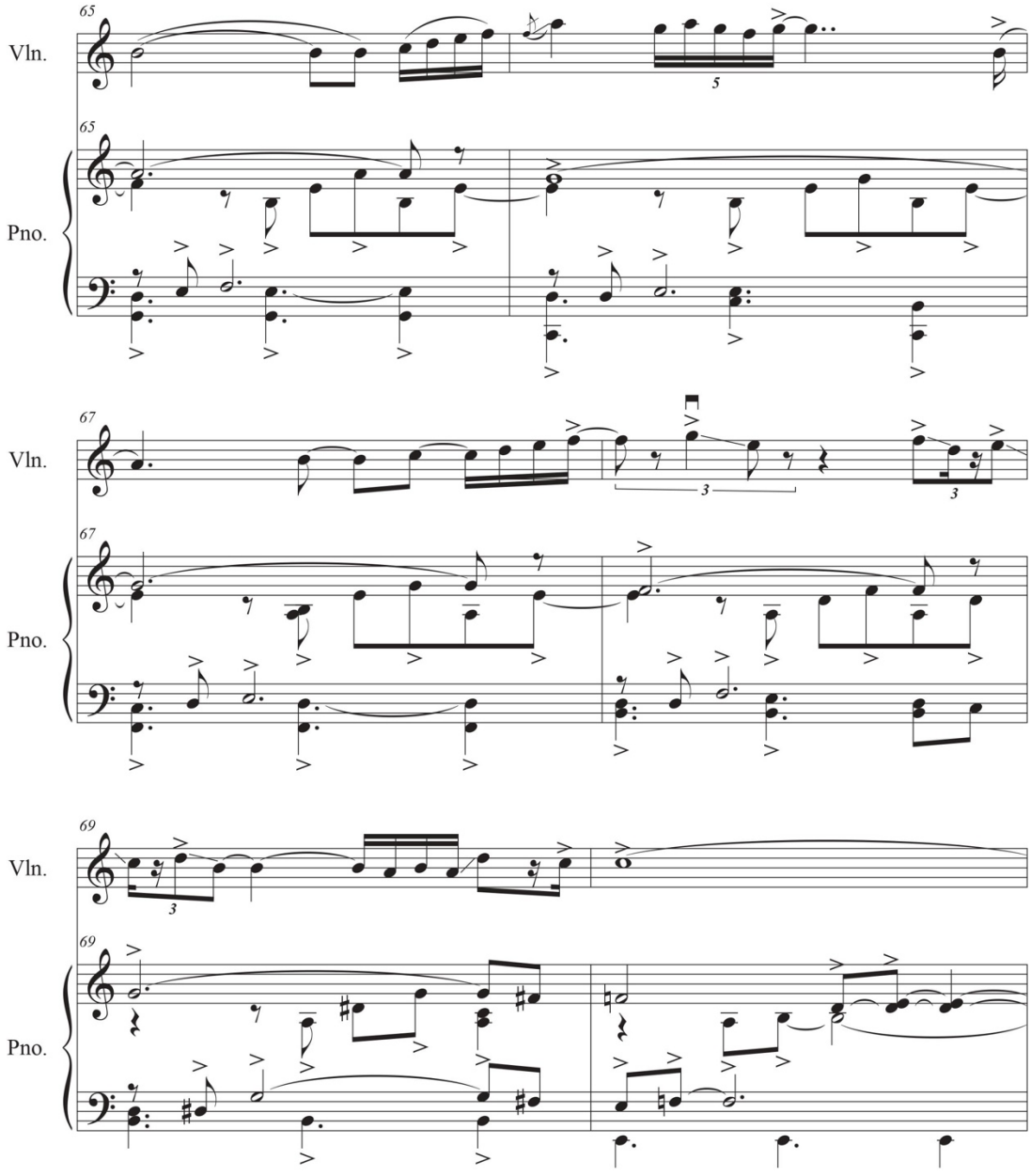

4
Vln.
Pno.
28
pp
p
30
32
sub. f

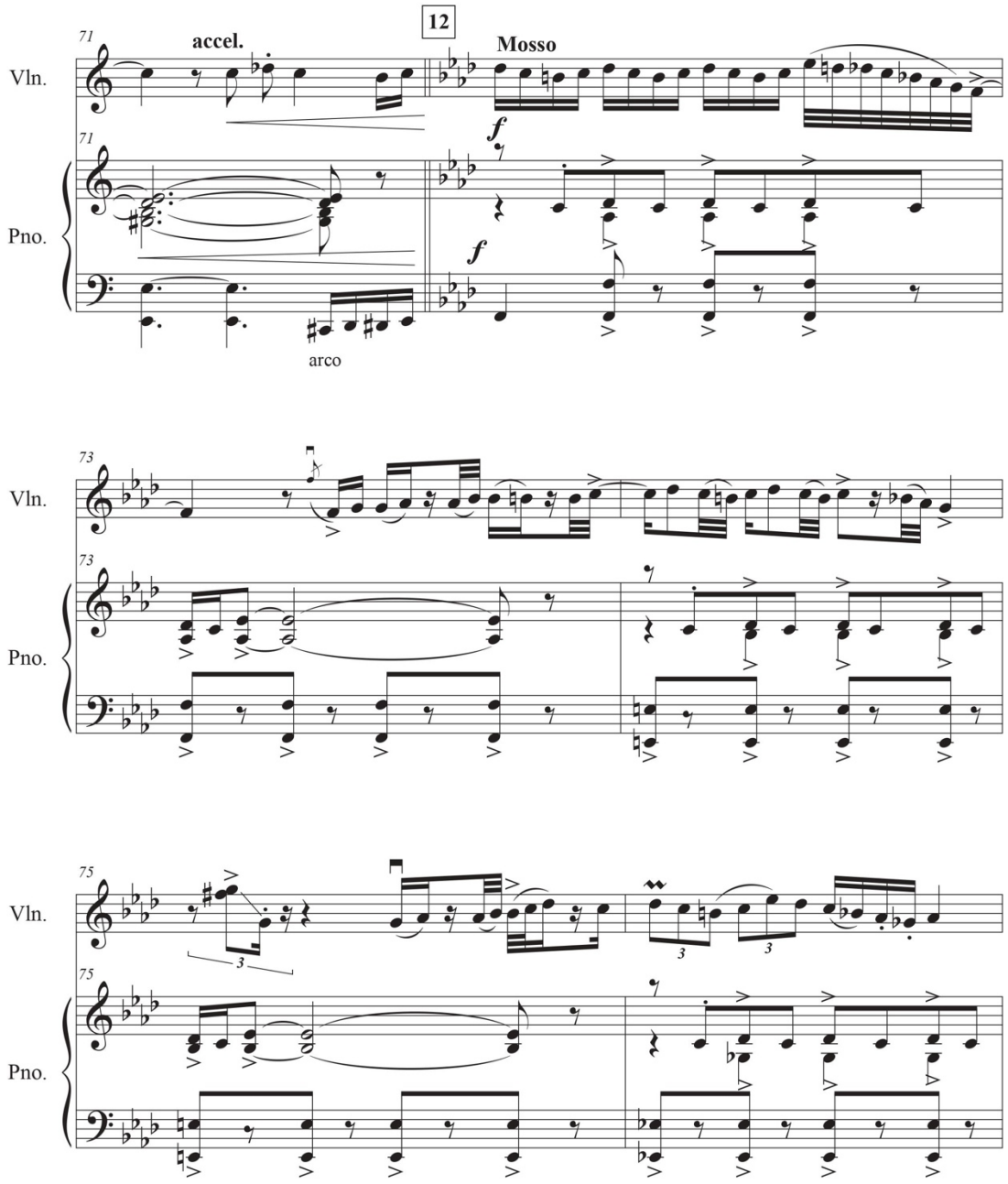

35
5
Vln.
35
Pno.
38
Vln.
38
Pno.
42
6
Vln.
42
Pno.

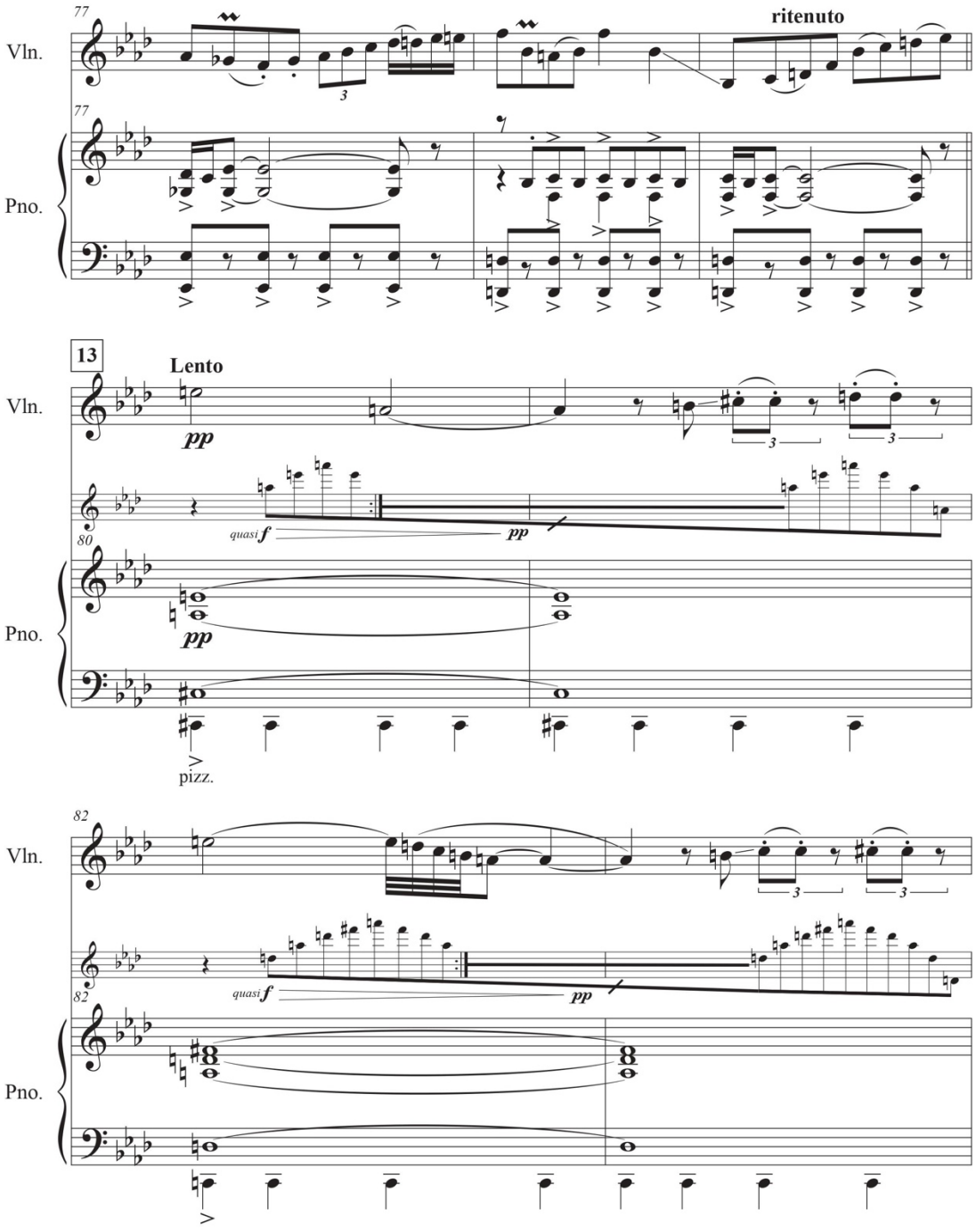

45
Vln.
45
Pno.
7
tr
48
Vln.
48
Pno.
8
f
51
Vln.
51
Pno.

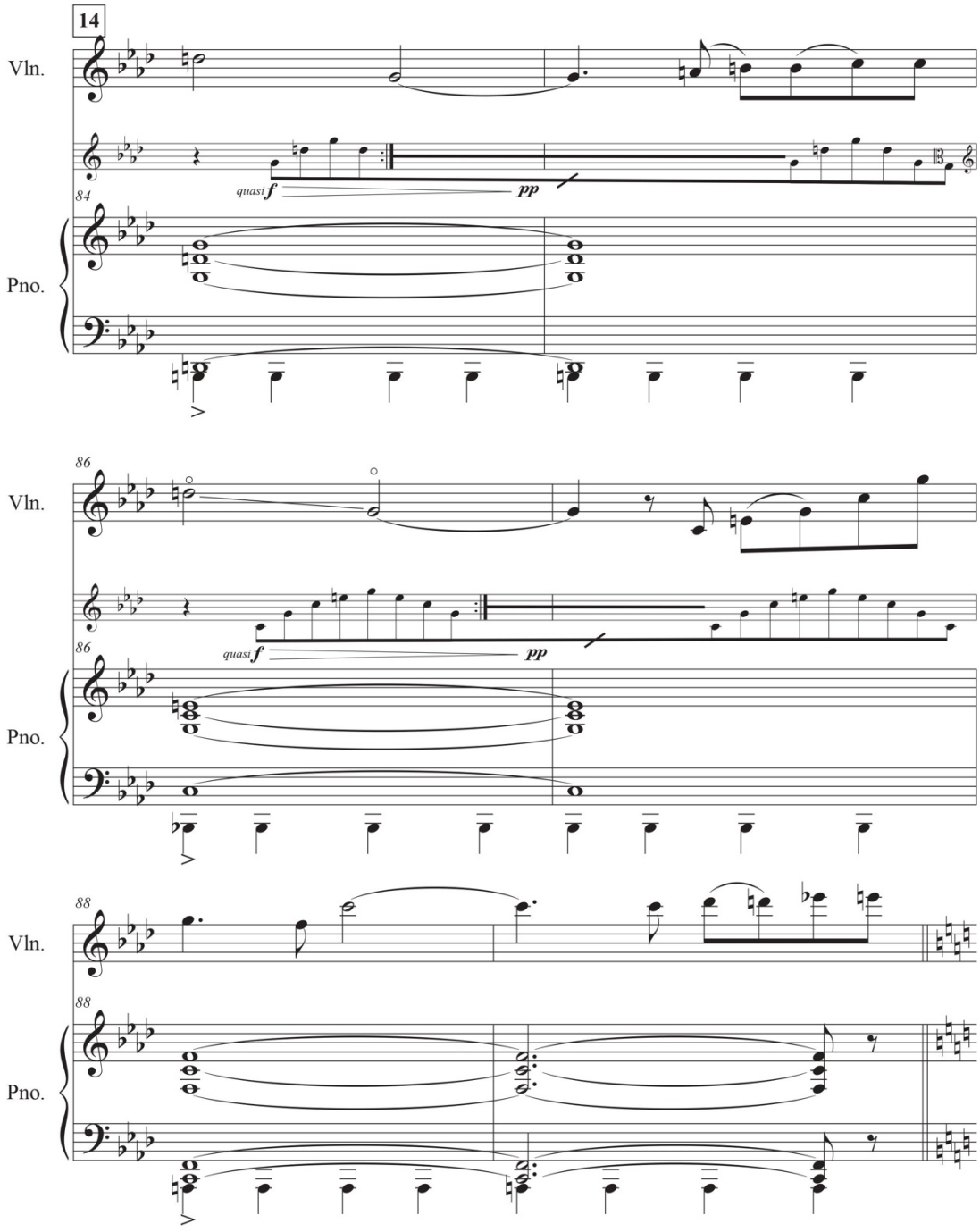

9
ritenuto poco a poco
Vln.
53
Pno.
pp
pp
10
Lento
rubato
55
Vln.
55
Pno.
pp
pizz.
57
Vln.
3
3
57
Pno.

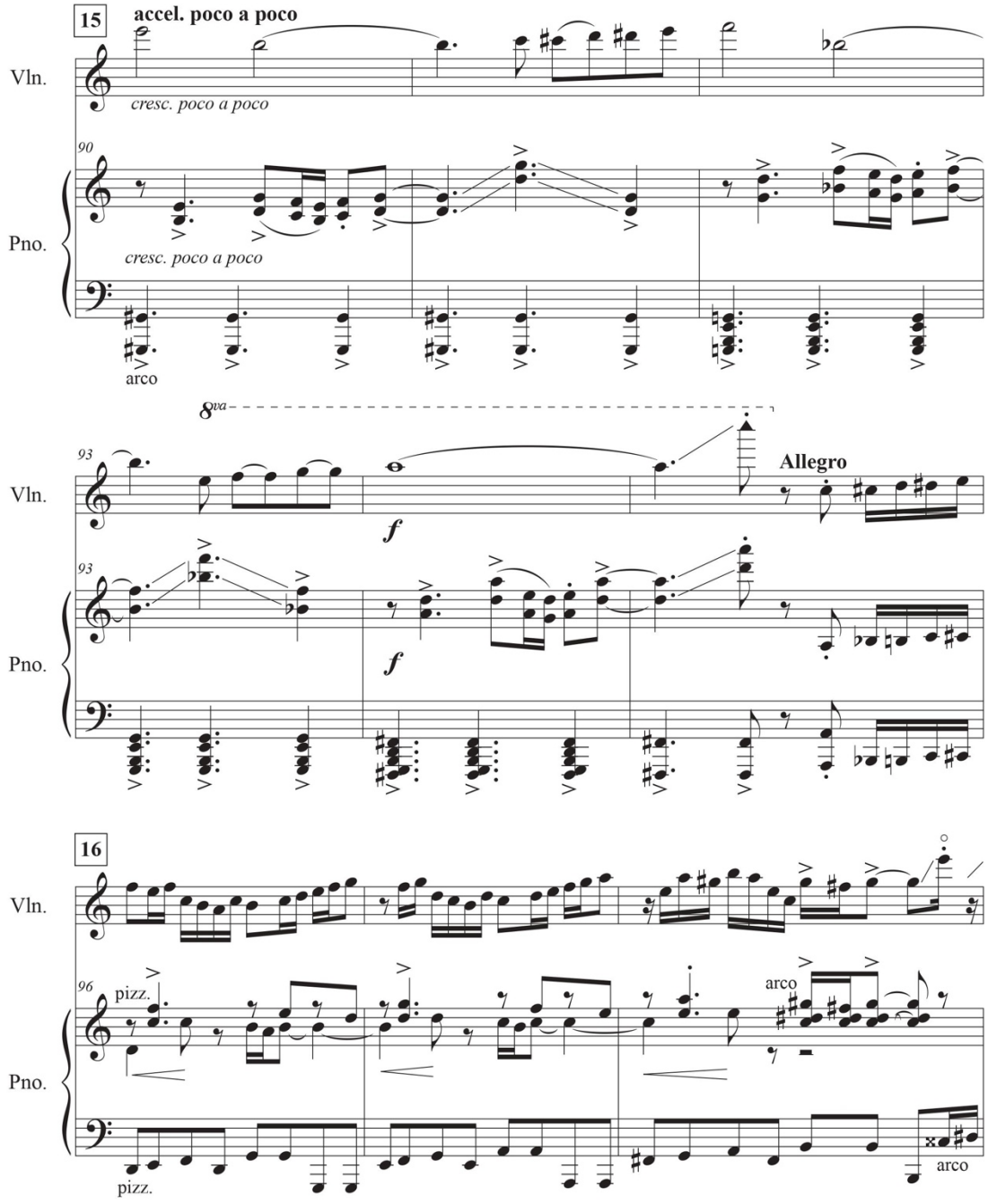

59
gliss.
Vln.
59
Pno.
3
61
Vln.
cresc.
61
Pno.
cresc.
63
11
Vln.
sub. pp
63
Pno.
sub. pp
espress.

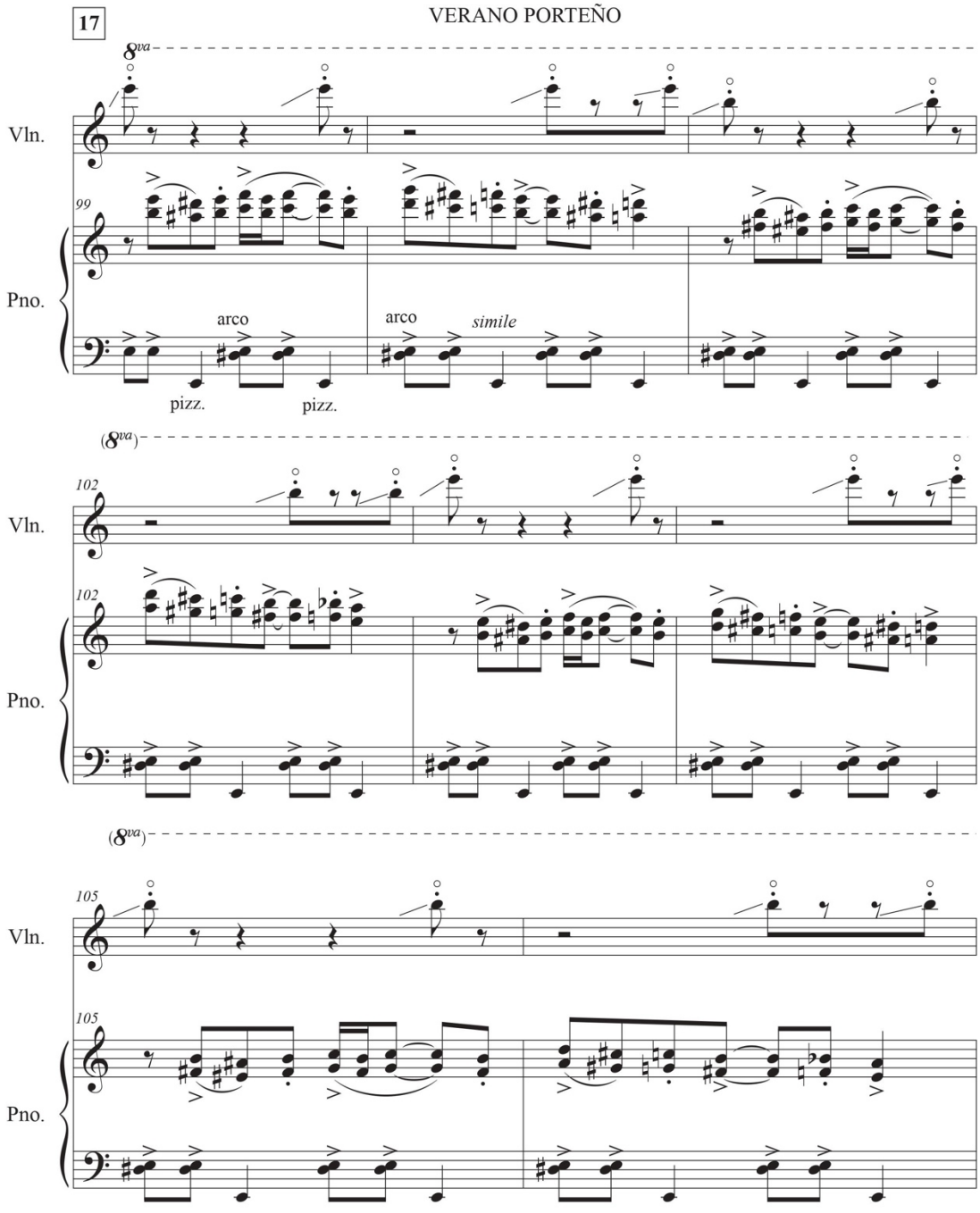

65
Vln.
65
Pno.
67
Vln.
67
Pno.
69
Vln.
69
Pno.

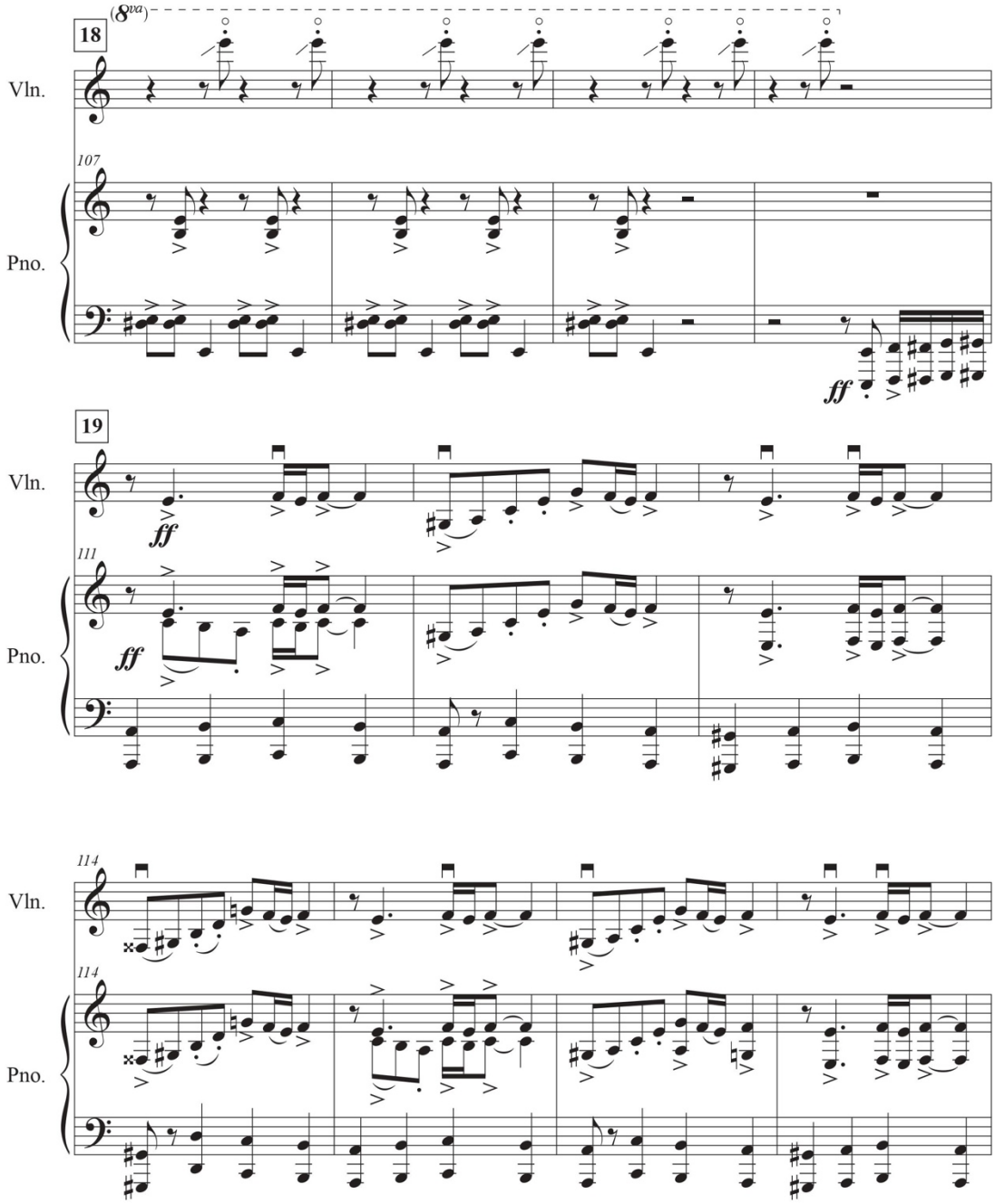

71
accel.
12
Mosso
Vln.
Pno.
f
arco
73
75
3

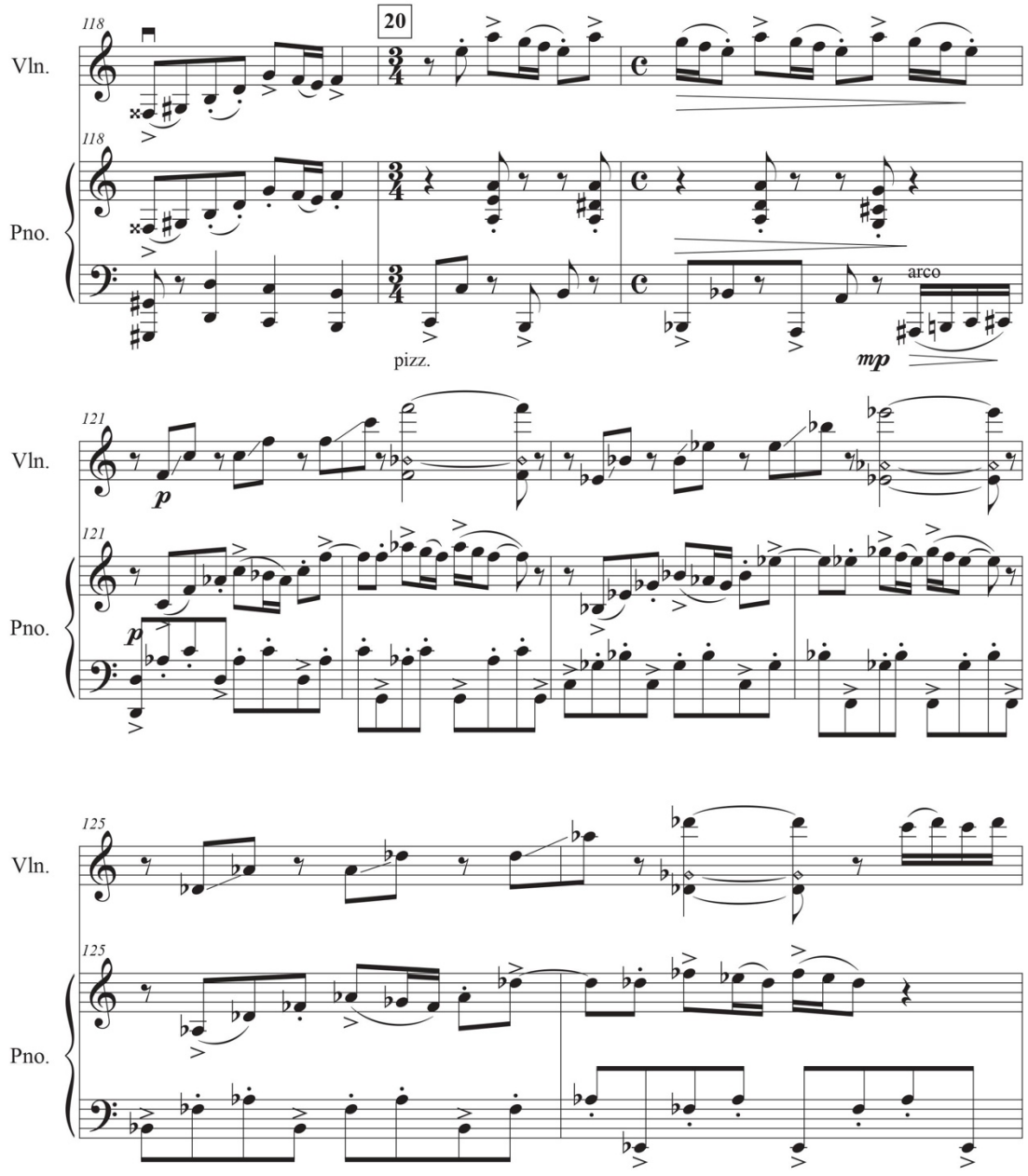

77
Vln.
77
Pno.
ritenuto
13
Lento
pp
quasi f
pp
80
Pno.
pp
pizz.
82
Vln.
quasi f
pp
82
Pno.

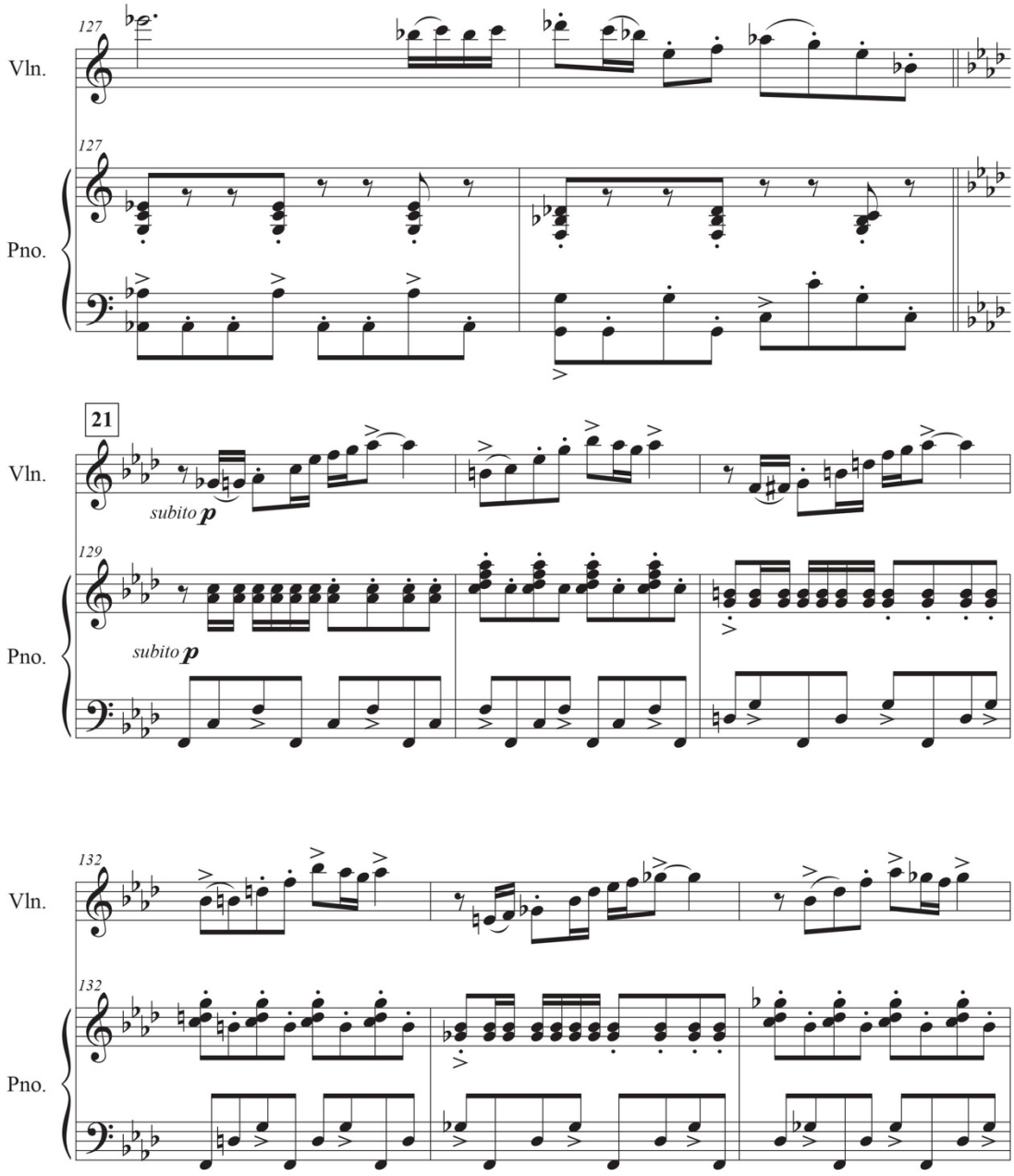

14
Vln.
quasi f
pp
84
Pno.
86
Vln.
quasi f
pp
86
Pno.
88
Vln.
88
Pno.

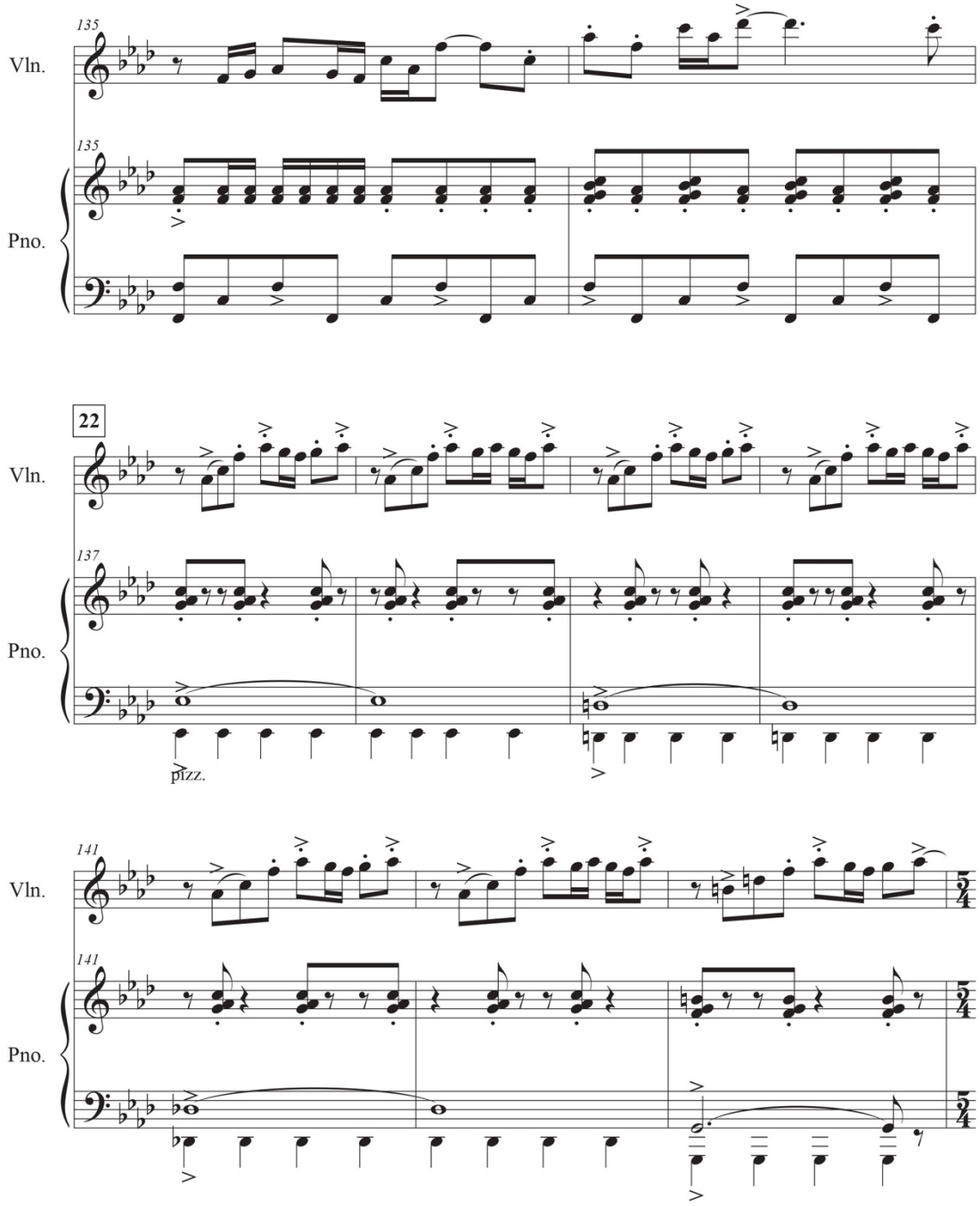

15
accel. poco a poco
Vln.
cresc. poco a poco
90
Pno.
cresc. poco a poco
arco
8va
93
Vln.
f
Allegro
93
Pno.
f
16
Vln.
96
pizz.
Pno.
arco
pizz.
arco

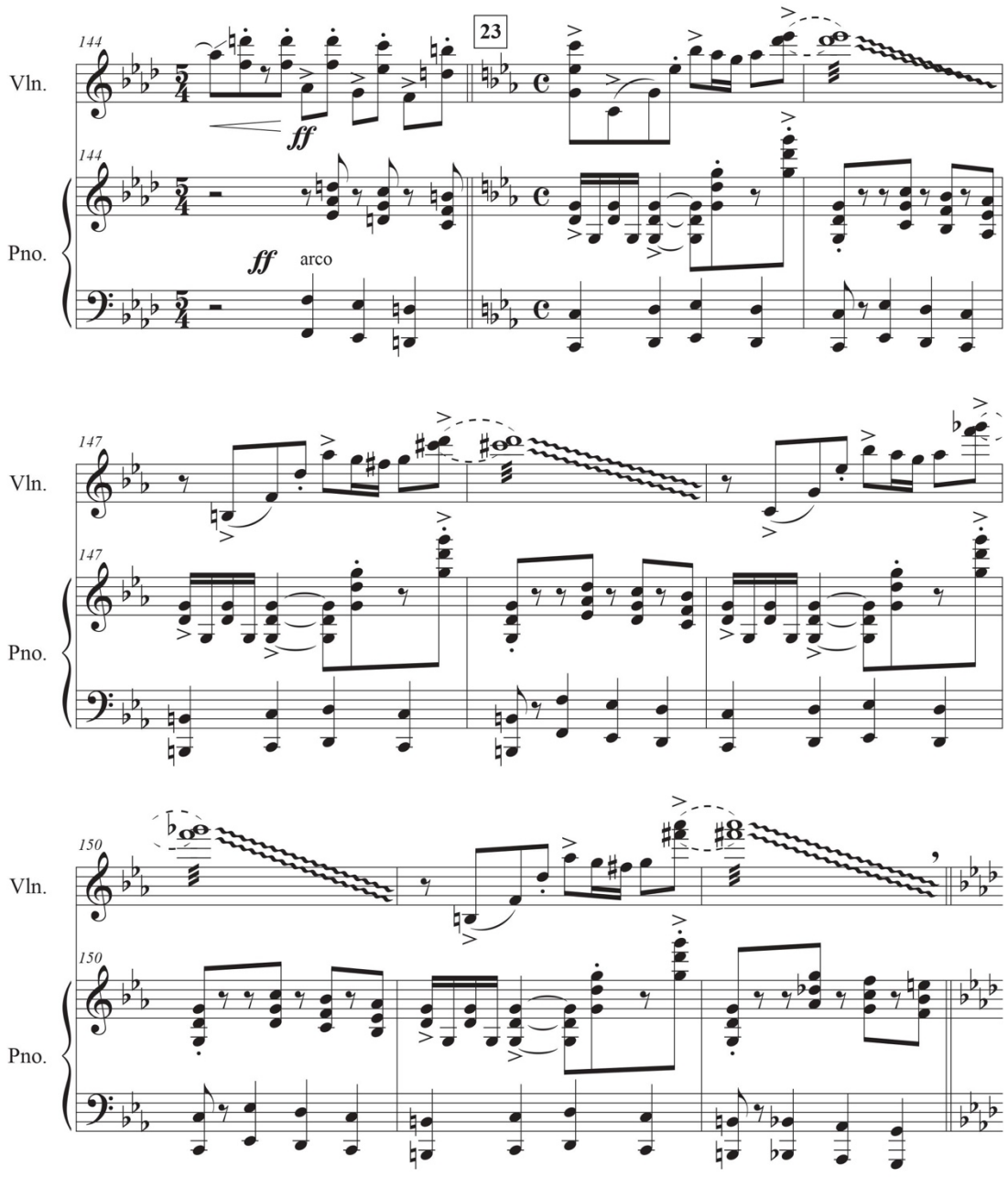

17
8va
Vln.
99
Pno.
arco
pizz.
arco
simile
pizz.
(8va)
102
Vln.
102
Pno.
(8va)
105
Vln.
105
Pno.

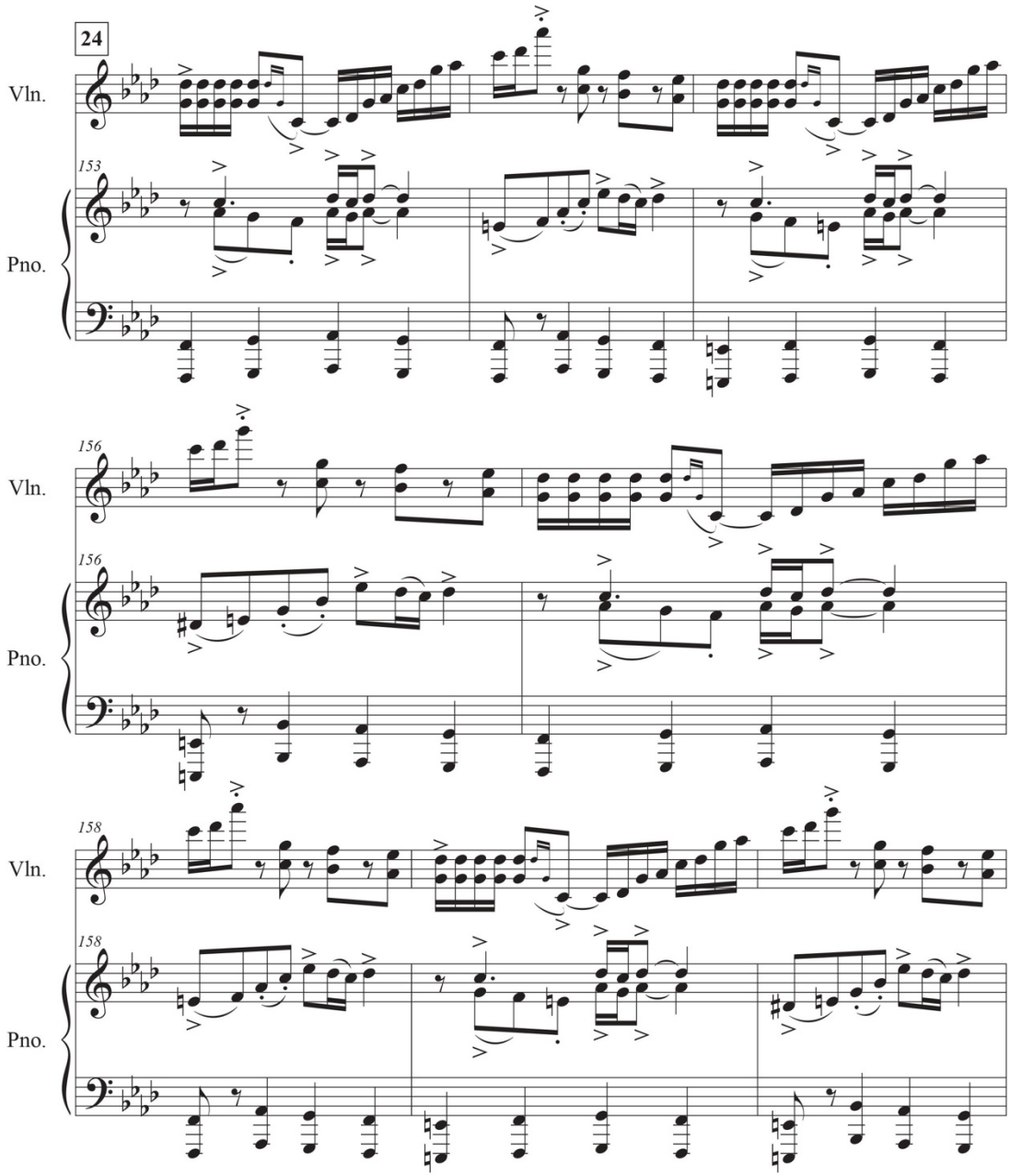

(8va)
18
Vln.
107
Pno.
ff
19
Vln.
ff
111
Pno.
ff
114
Vln.
114
Pno.

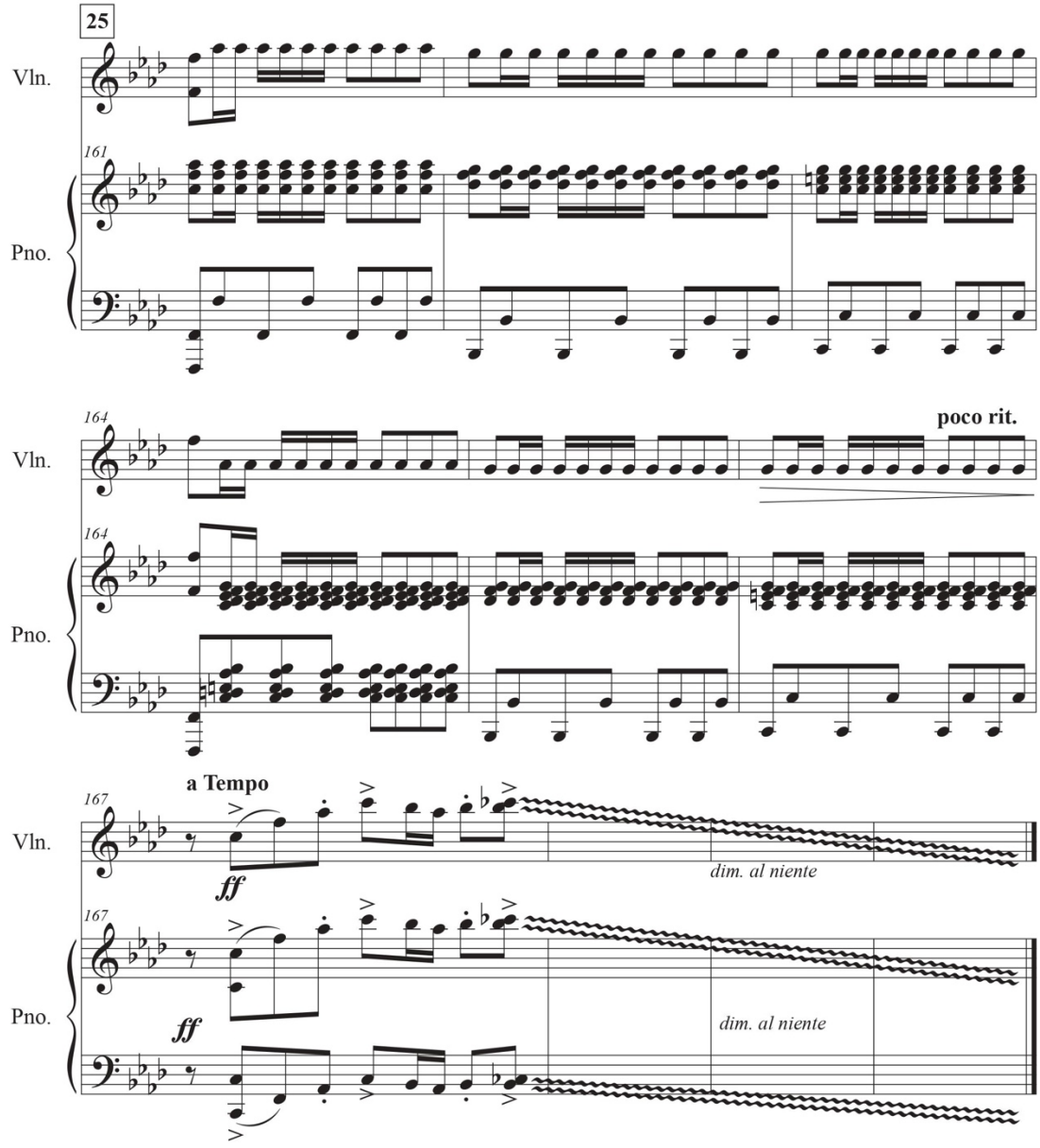

118
20
Vln.
118
Pno.
pizz.
arco
mp
121
Vln.
p
121
Pno.
p
125
Vln.
125
Pno.


127
Vln.
127
Pno.
21
Vln.
subito p
129
Pno.
subito p
132
Vln.
132
Pno.


135
Vln.
135
Pno.
22
Vln.
137
Pno.
pizz.
141
Vln.
141
Pno.
5/4
5/4


144
Vln.
144
Pno.
23
ff
ff
arco
147
Vln.
147
Pno.
150
Vln.
150
Pno.


24
Vln.
153
Pno.
156
Vln.
156
Pno.
158
Vln.
158
Pno.


25
Vln.
161
Pno.
164
poco rit.
Vln.
164
Pno.
a Tempo
167
Vln.
ff
dim. al niente
167
Pno.
ff
dim. al niente