valencia & 19th dissolving[1]

a compositional note

Dylan Neely[2]

Composer, Brooklyn, New York

Abstract: A brief presentation of concepts latent in the composition *valencia & 19th dissolving*, as well as an exploration of the context surrounding its creation. The compositional note is followed by the work's score.

Keywords: Acoustic Composition, Composer's Note, Chamber Ensemble, Musical Score

There is an inevitable chasm between the aspirations of a musical work and its circumstance of creation. In the case of *valencia & 19th dissolving*, it was this tension that became its genesis. I composed the work during June of 2014, at a time when I had recently completed my Master's degree and found myself working for a friend selling his t-shirts on the street in San Francisco at the eponymous corner address. Each Saturday and Sunday morning, I would bike the three miles from my room in a house of musicians to the closest Oakland BART (metro) stop, take the train under the San Francisco Bay and arise in the contentiously chic, rapidly gentrified Mission neighborhood. From there, I cycled to the artist Amos Goldbaum rented's garage, where I would load up a three-wheel road-weary Go-4 Interceptor (a decommissioned parking patroller, or meter-maid car) with boxes of shirts and display mannequins. I would strap the wares on to the vehicle's back with bungee

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cords and drive the mile to my vending corner over San Francisco's hills hoping to avoid the sound of merchandise rolling off the back tumbling into the cars behind. Then, I would spend the days reading and composing this piece, occasionally interrupted by a customer or a houseless eccentric who wanted to chat and share a drink.

I was reading Richard Power's novel *The Gold Bug Variations*, which concerns itself with evolutionary mutation and the lives of those enveloped in information, whether librarian, geneticist, or data programmer. Bach's nominal musical cryptogram is cast as a symbol of data's transcendent possibilities (in intriguing contrast to how, in William Vollmann's *Europe Central*, an equally ambitious novel of 20th-century extremes, Shostakovich's D-S-C-H becomes a symbol of the individual's fallible yet persistent ego in the face of totalitarianism's dehumanizing scope). The work's overriding theme, before which the humble reader has no choice but to submit or to abandon the novel, is the ambiguous and disturbing epiphany that DNA's very method of genesis and continuing evolution – mutation – is also the way in which ourselves as organism are struck down. Cancer is a reordering of information, and old age is the accumulation of microcellular distortions on a macrocellular level. Time begets change and allows life to evolve in complexity, and it carries within it our expiration dates; DNA is life and life precedes and succeeds us – the very mechanism that brought us about ensures we will not survive. As Gaston Bachelard writes (1964, p. 184), "Immensity is within ourselves . . . As soon as we become motionless, we are elsewhere; we are dreaming in a world that is immense."

So what does this have to do with my composition? These are the conditions of its creation. When not composing at my street corner, I would sometimes drink iced coffee and work on the music by Oakland's Lake Merritt. I limited myself to four pitch classes and thought about how life and death, beauty and chaos, community and greed arise from the same elements. I relished how, in the middle of a beautiful and vibrant but self-obsessed and smug city, I could disappear into the abstract. To travel is to confront this same paradox. Travel allows time for introspection and consideration of one's self – how do I appear to strangers from different cultures? – and the possibility for transcendent experience; it also means visa applications and airport security lines and vague irritation with the complexities of currency exchange rates. And thus, this work was read in Brazil as part of the wonderful SiMN 2014 festival; for that, I would like to thank Ensemble Móbile, Felipe de Almeida Ribeiro, and Márcio Steuernagel.

REFERENCES

BACHELARD, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space* trans. Maria Jolas. Boston; The Orion Press, 1964.

POWERS, Richard. *The Gold Bug Variations*. New York; Atlantic Press, 1991.

VOLLMANN, William. *Europe Central*. New York; Viking Press, 2005.

valencia & 19th dissolving

Dylan Neely

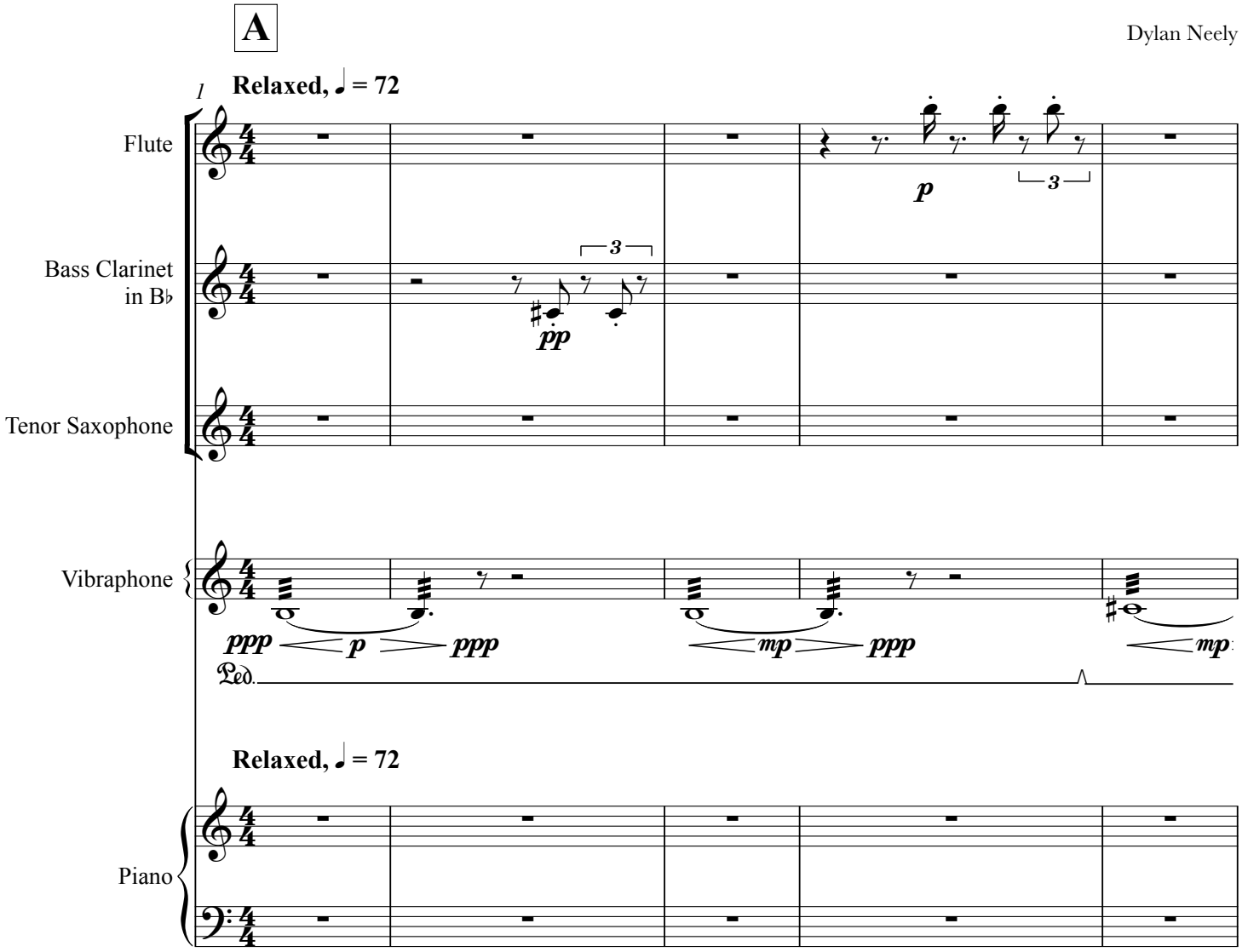
2014

Flute
Bass Clarinet
Tenor Saxophone
Vibraphone
Bass Drum
Piano

Transposed Score

valencia & 19th dissolving

Dylan Neely



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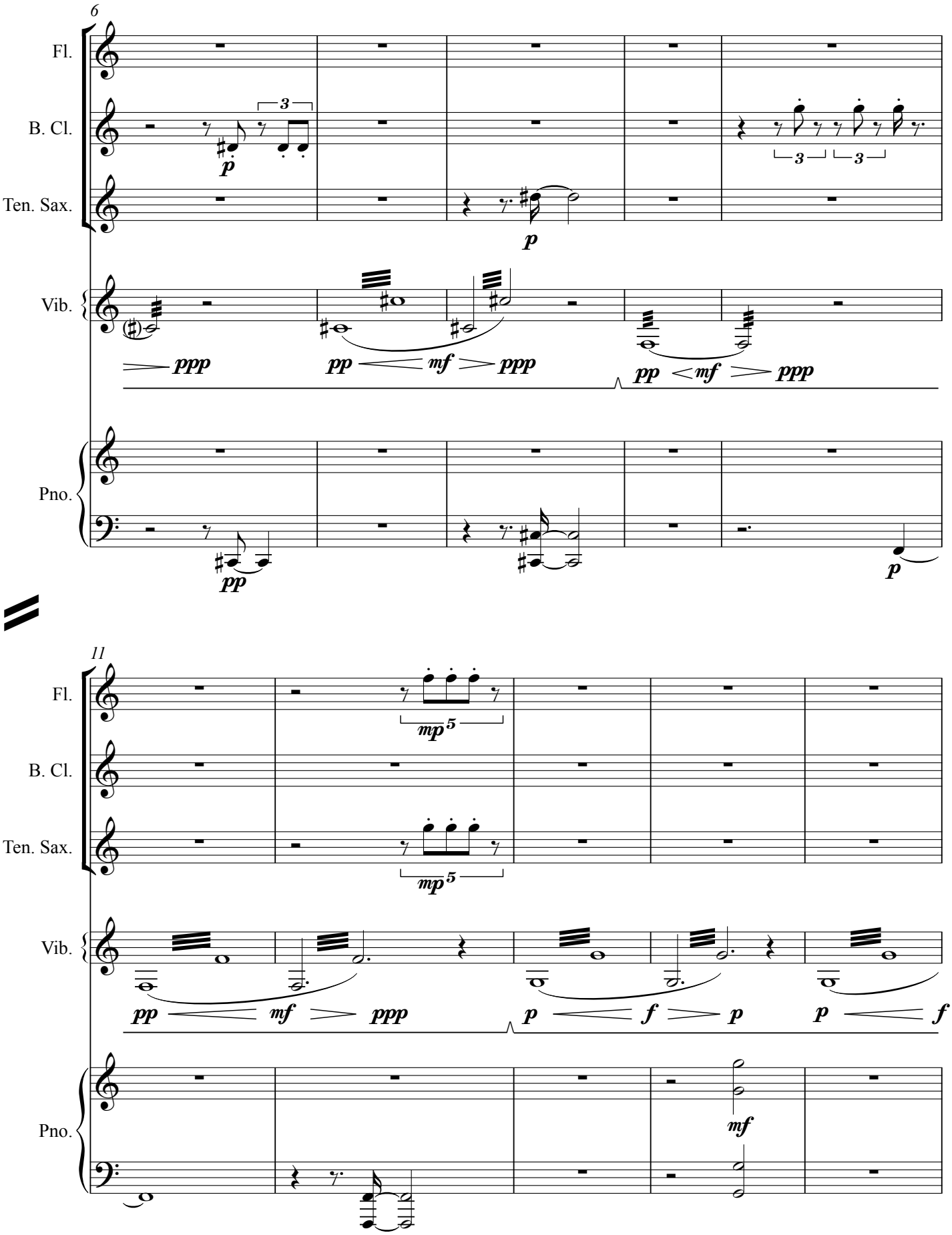
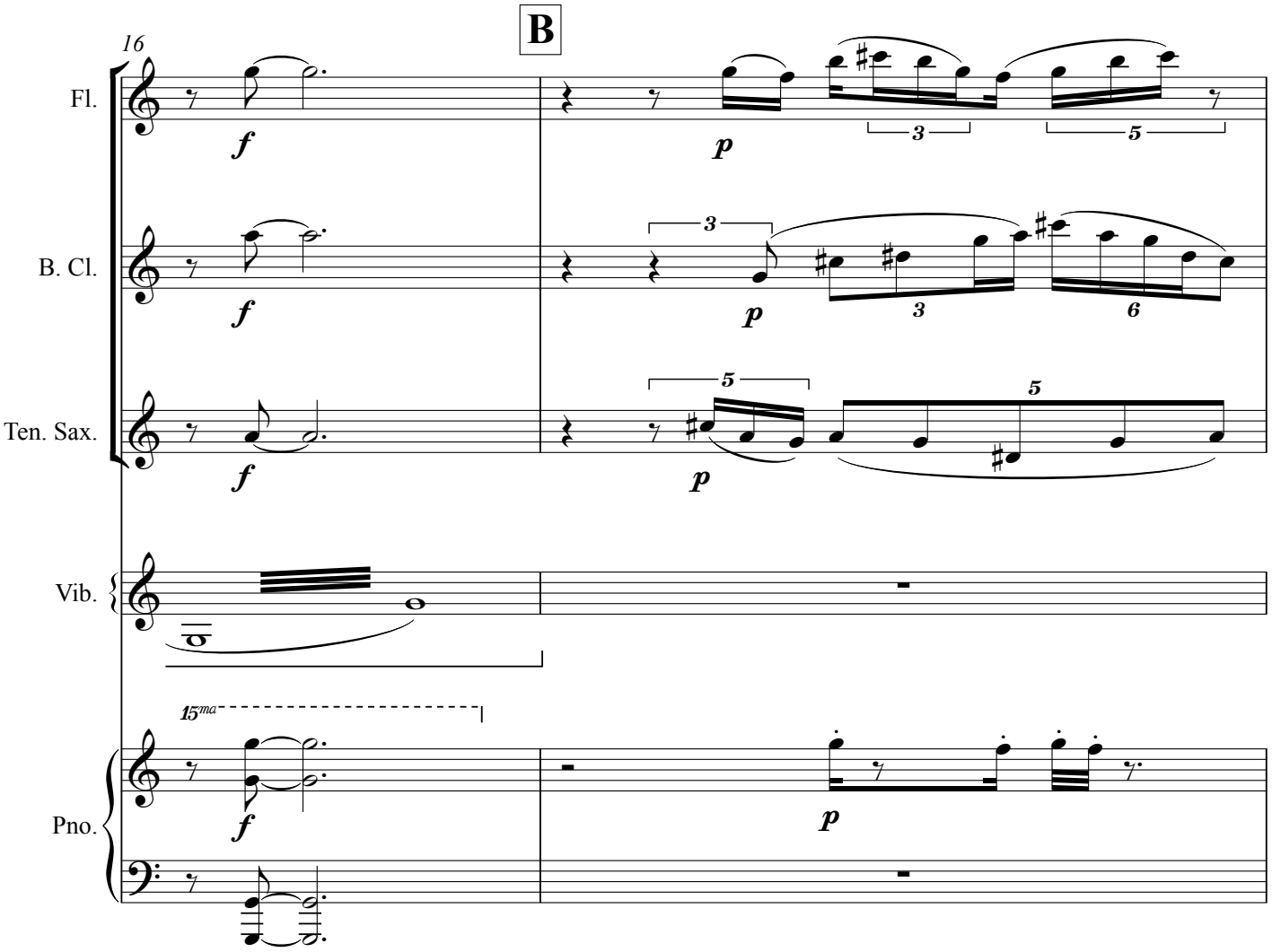
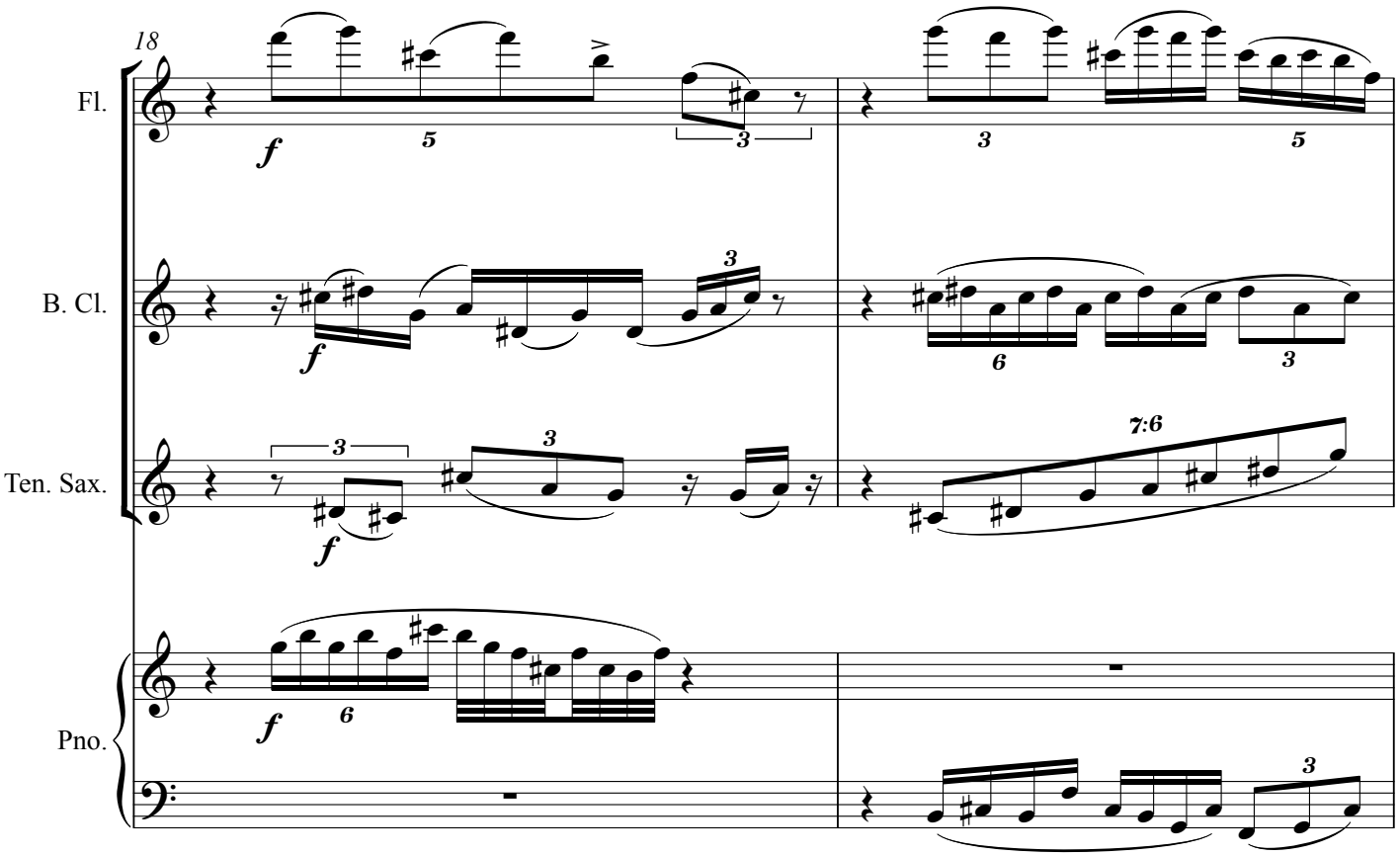
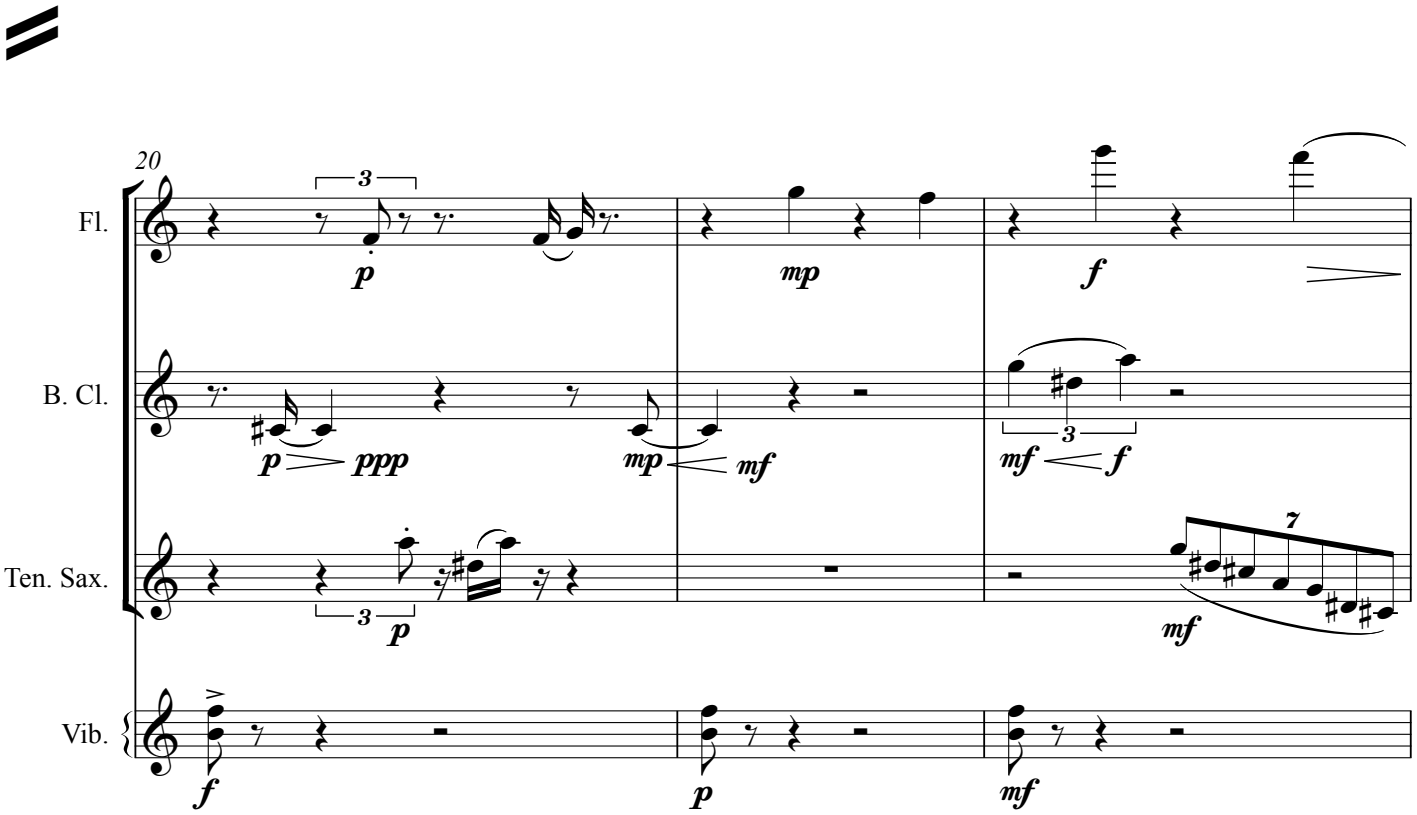
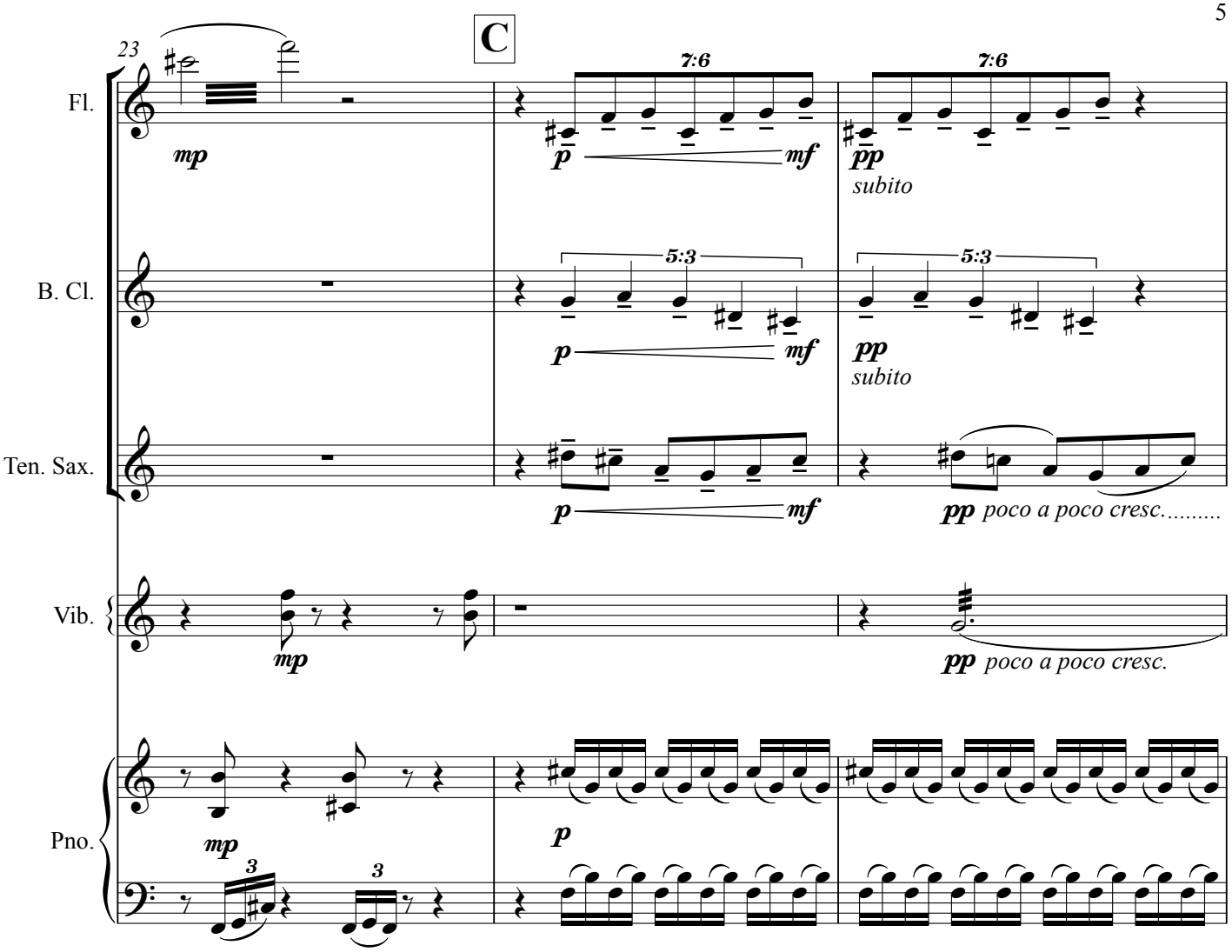
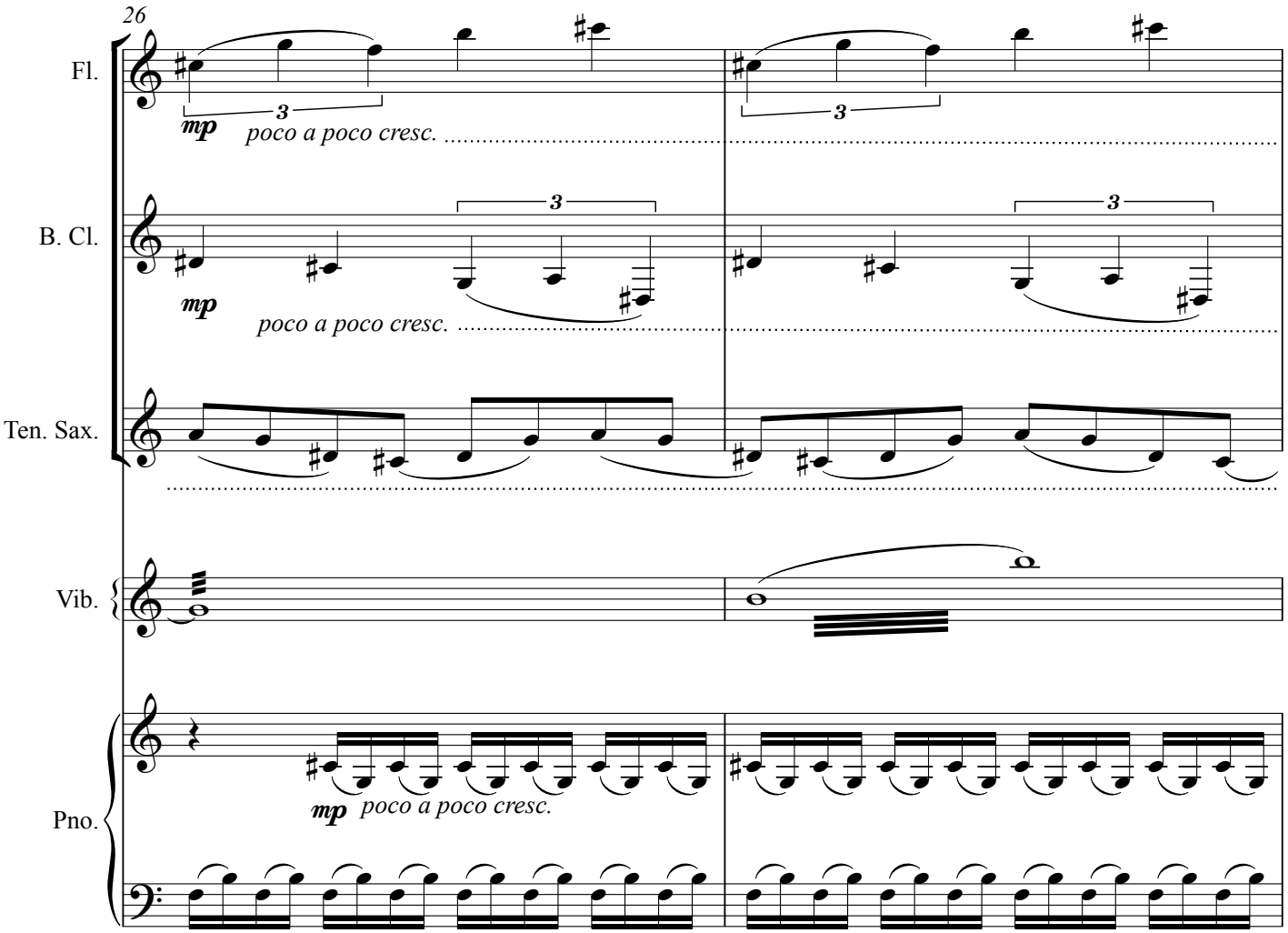

6
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Vib.
Pno.
p
3
ppp
pp
mf
11
mp 5
f
mf

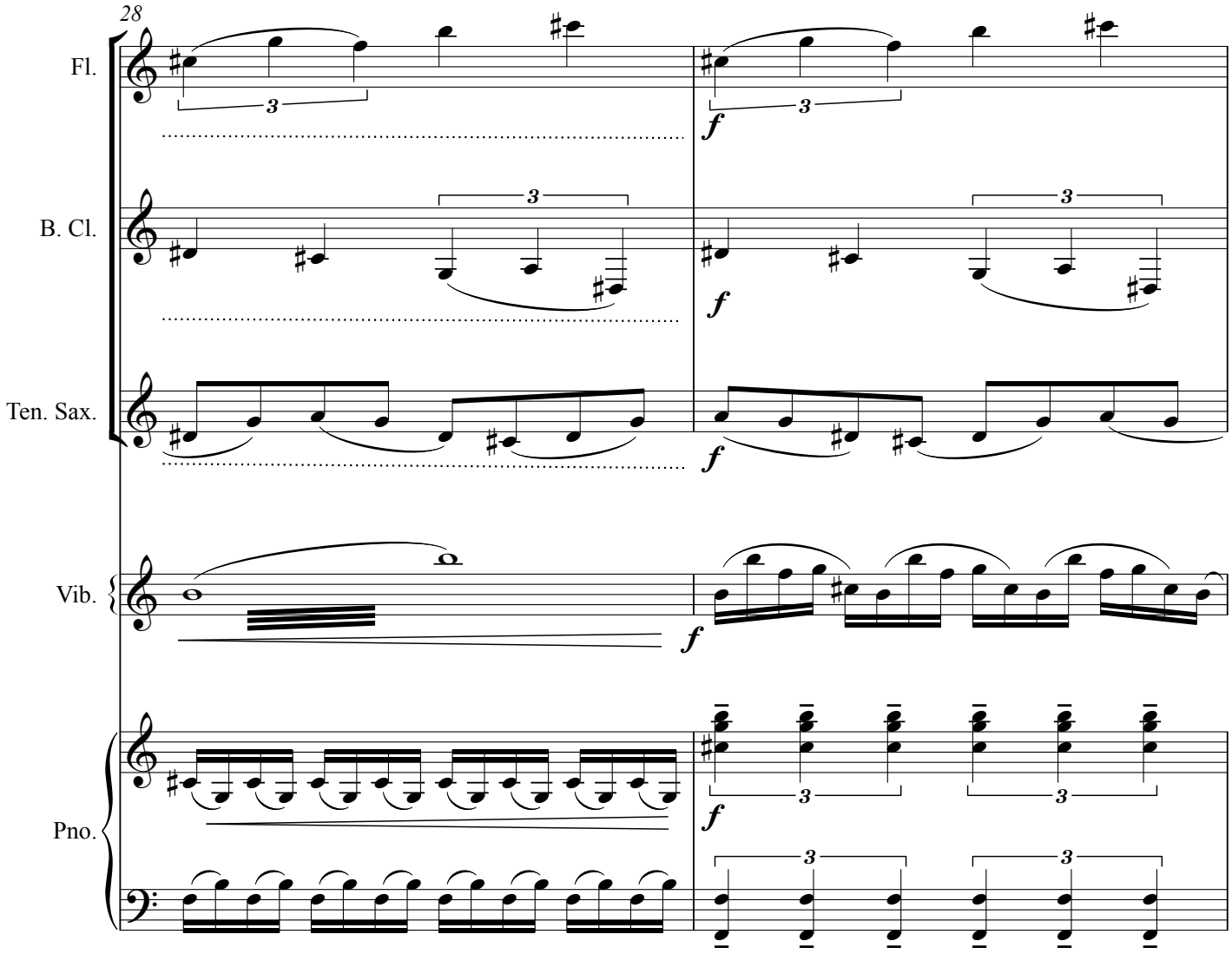

B
16
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Vib.
Pno.
15ma
f
p
3
5
6

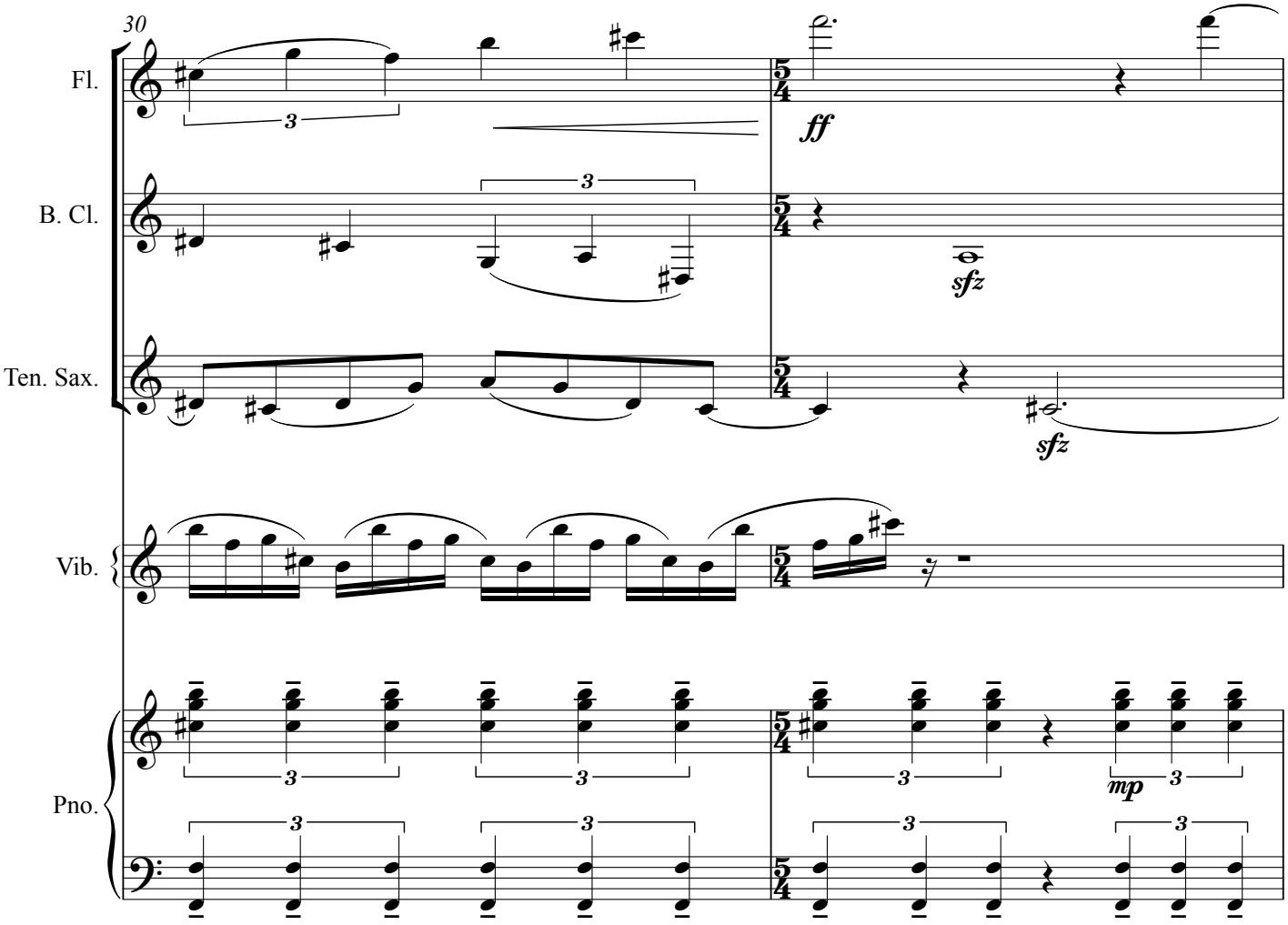

18
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Pno.
f
7:6

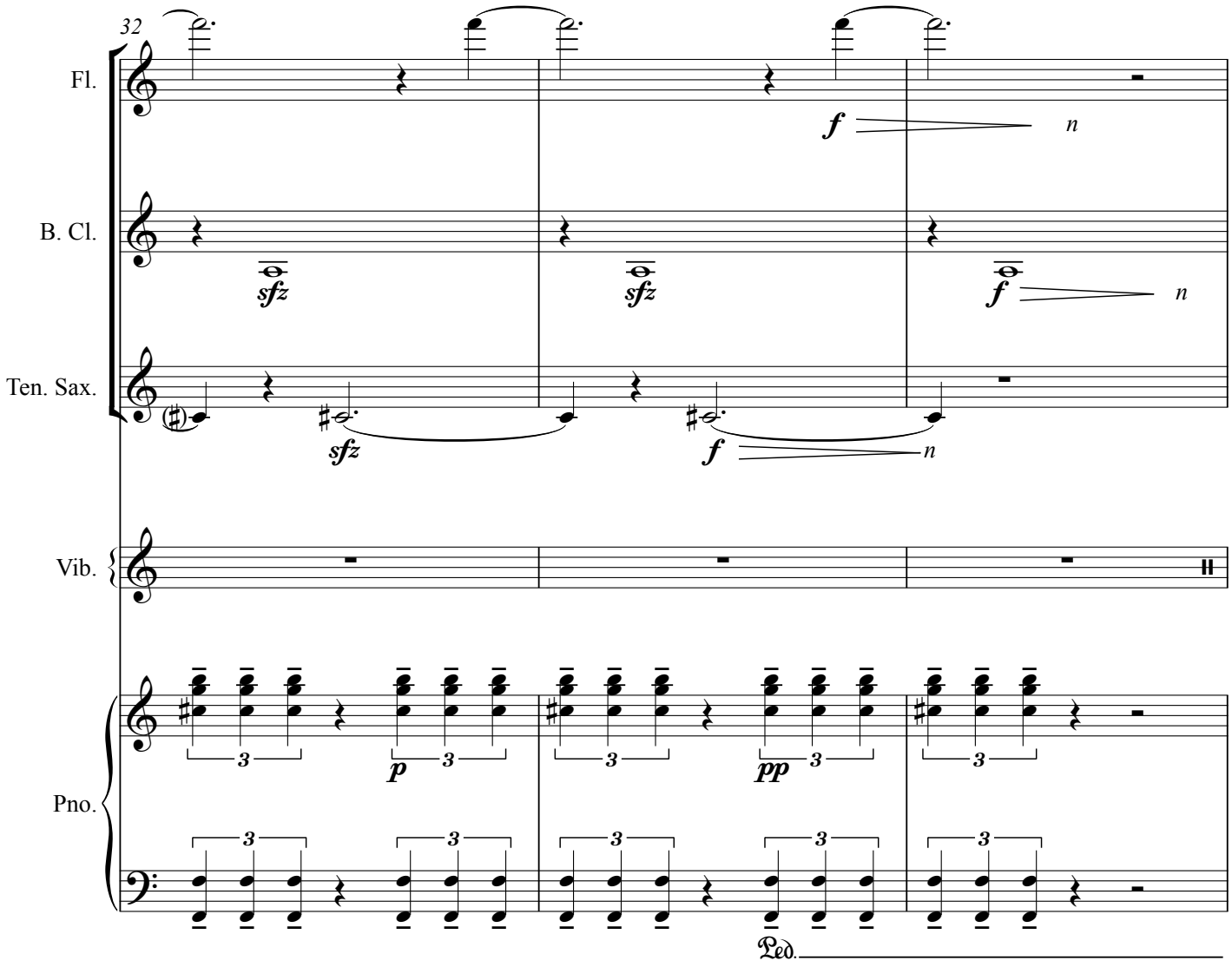

20
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Vib.
p
ppp
mp
mf
f

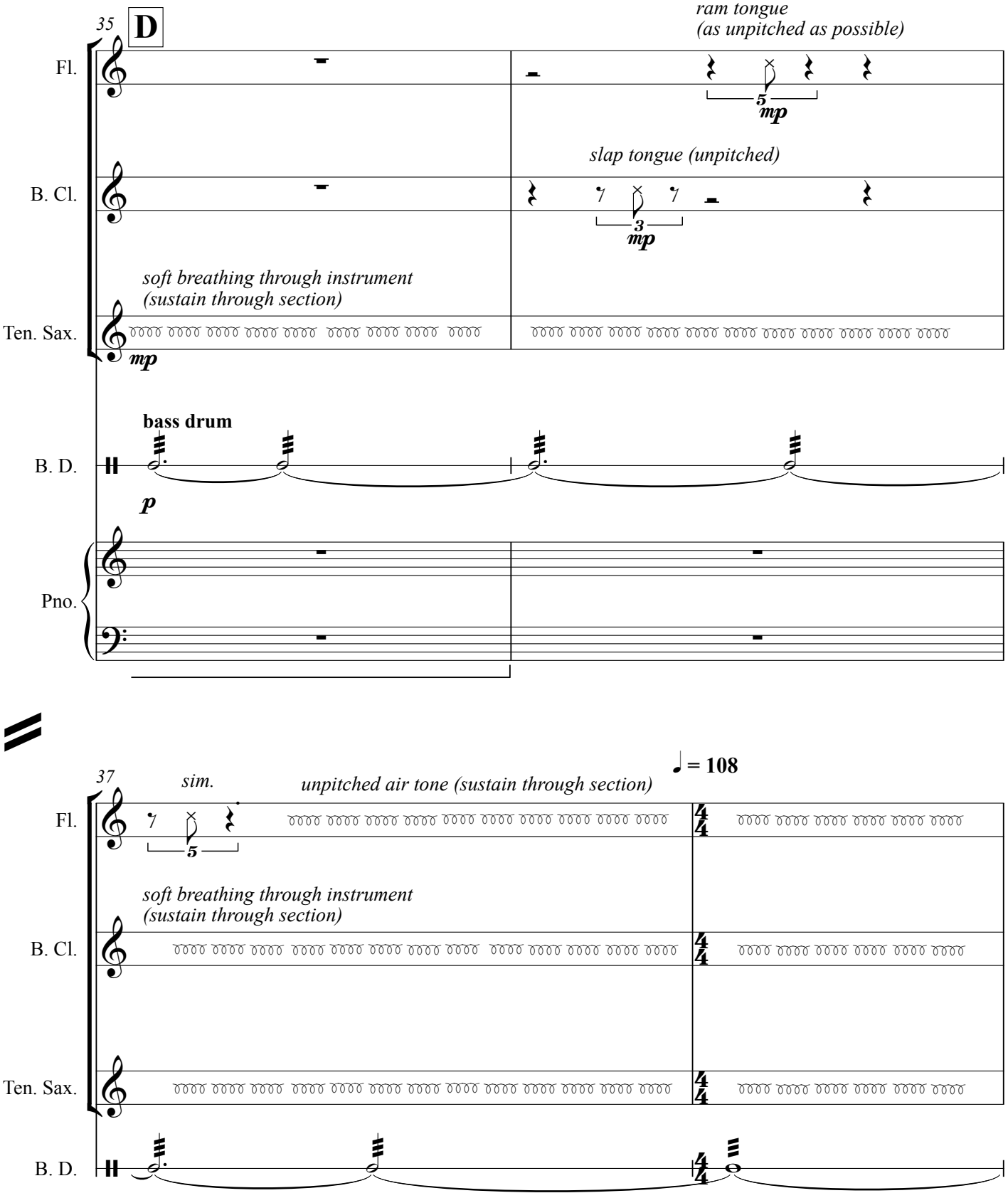

C
23
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Vib.
Pno.
mp
p
mf
7:6
pp
subito
5:3
poco a poco cresc.
3

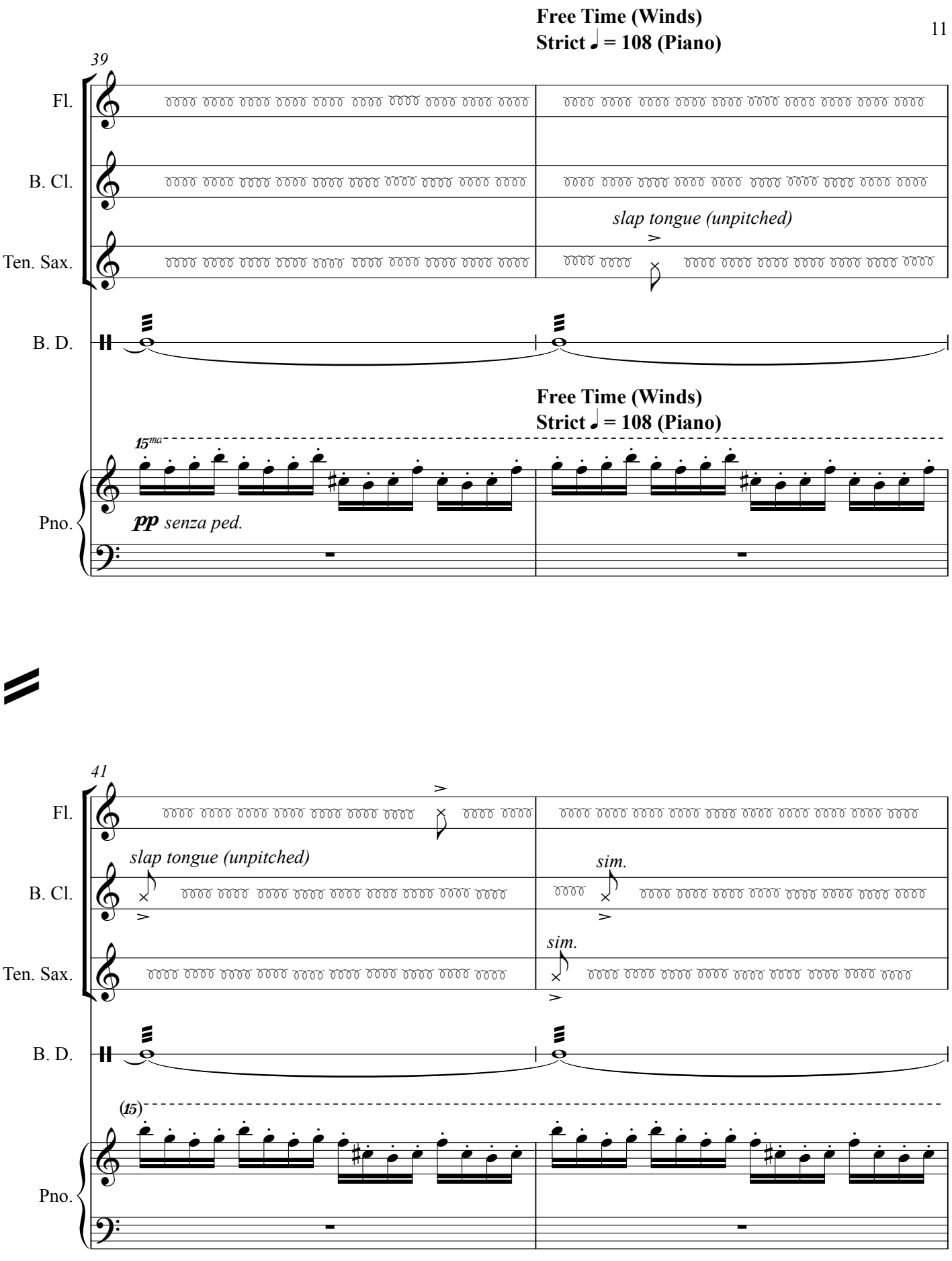

26
Fl.
mp
poco a poco cresc.
B. Cl.
mp
poco a poco cresc.
Ten. Sax.
Vib.
Pno.
mp
poco a poco cresc.

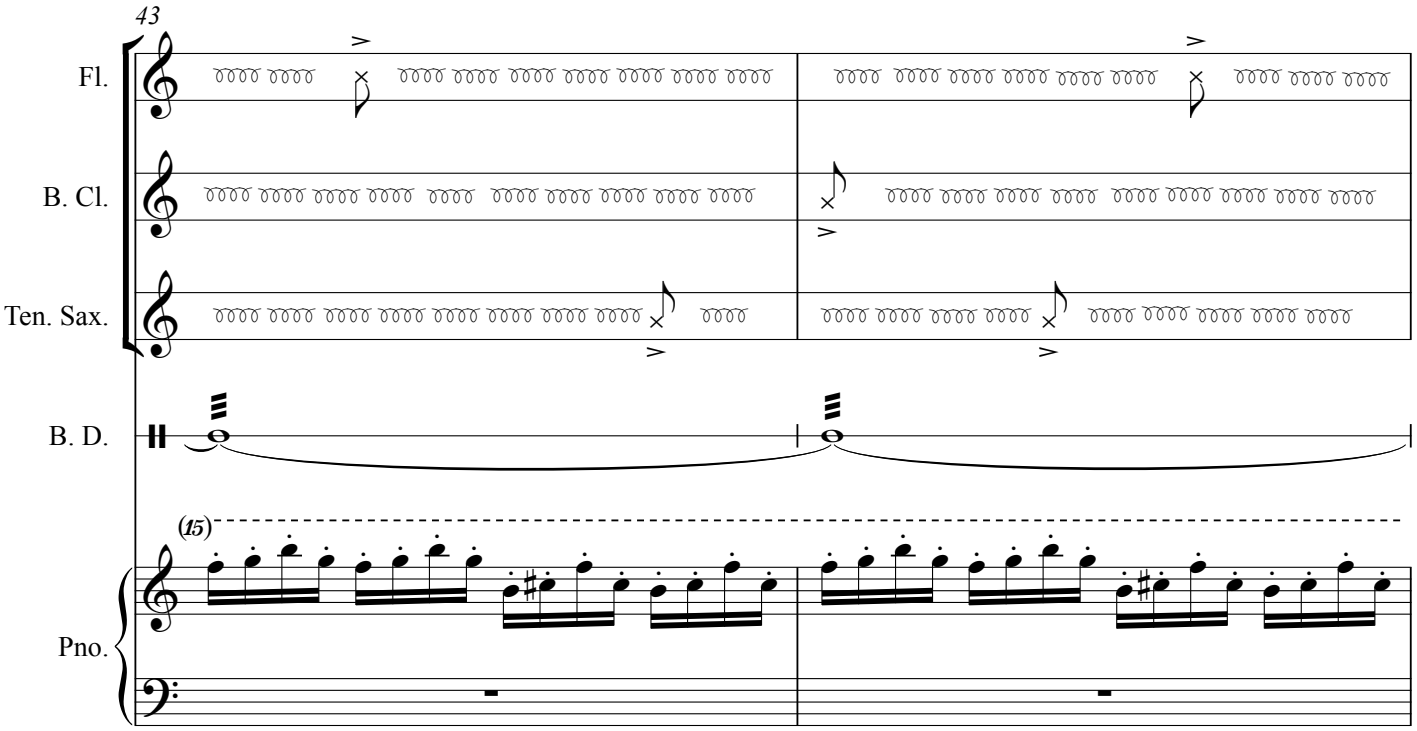

28
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Vib.
Pno.
f
3

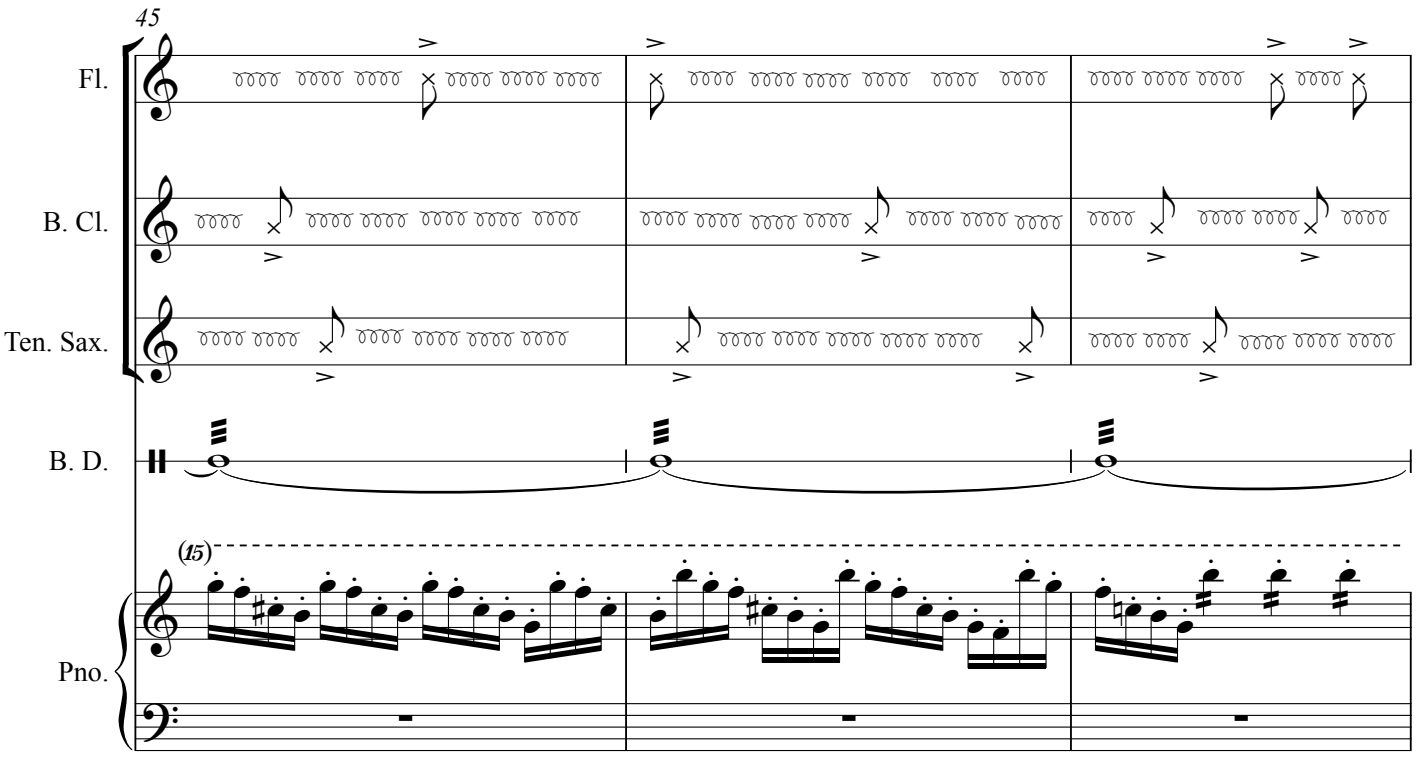

30
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Vib.
Pno.
ff
sfz
sfz
mp
3

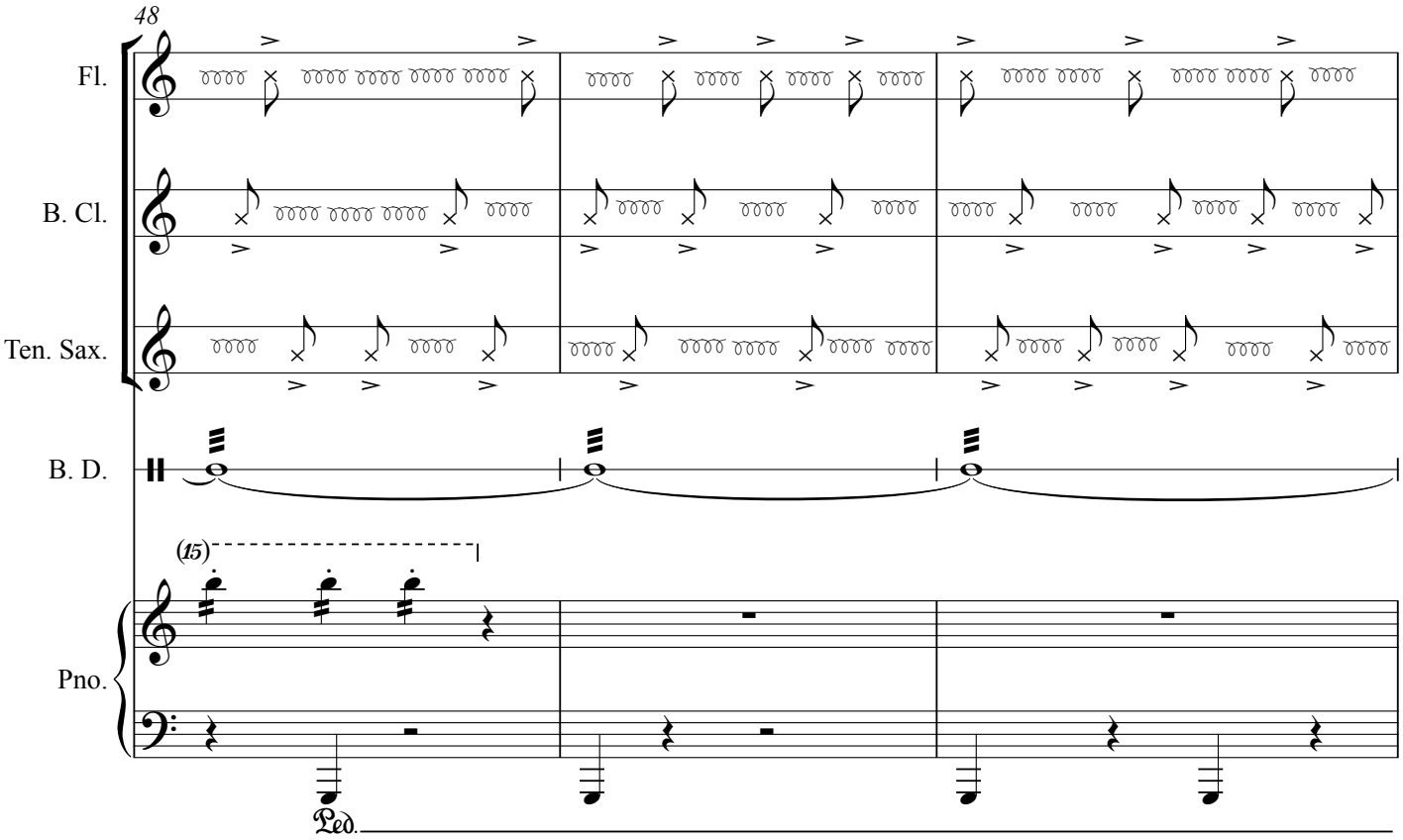

32
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Vib.
Pno.
sfz
f
n
p
pp
3
Ped.

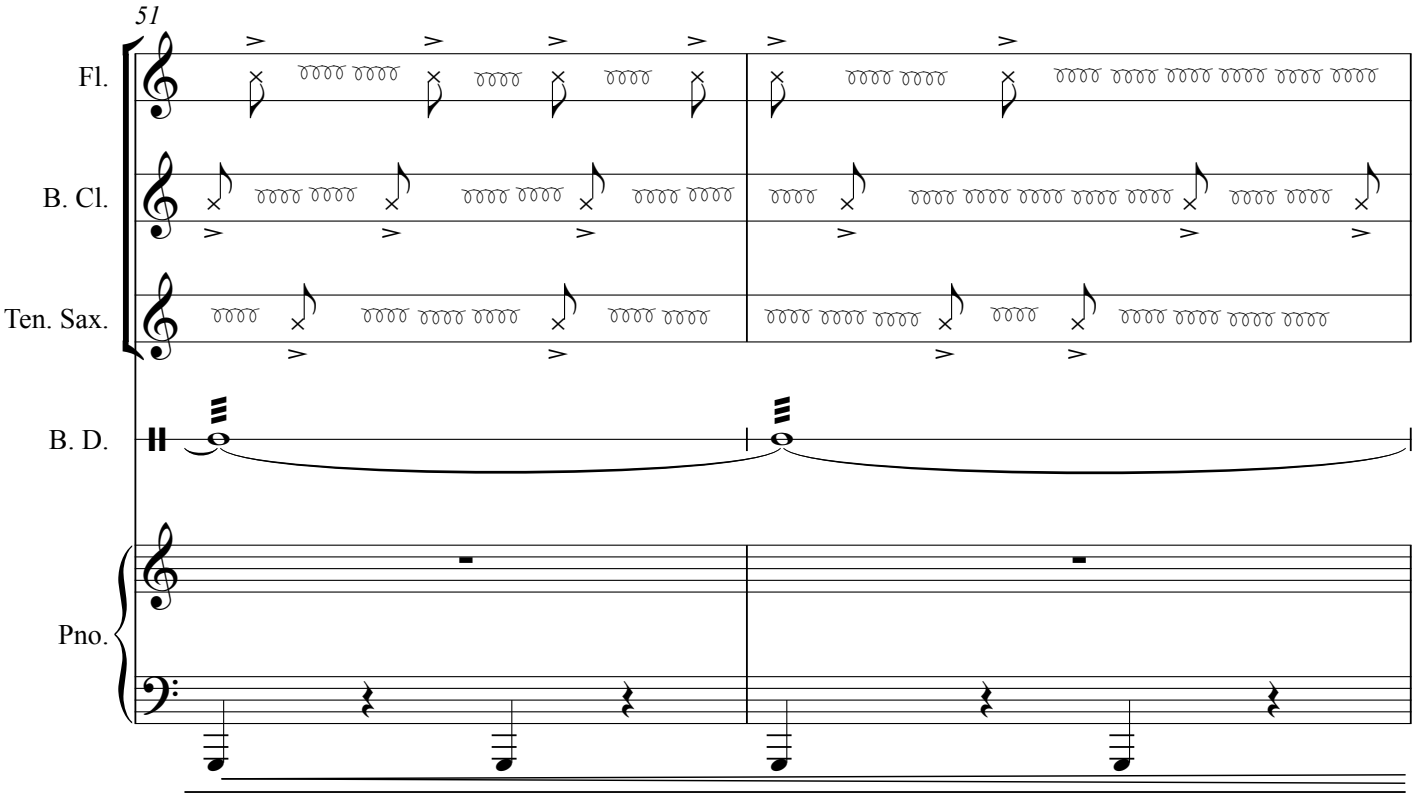

35
D
ram tongue
(as unpitched as possible)
Fl.
5
mp
slap tongue (unpitched)
B. Cl.
3
mp
soft breathing through instrument
(sustain through section)
Ten. Sax.
mp
bass drum
B. D.
p
Pno.
37
sim.
unpitched air tone (sustain through section)
♩ = 108
Fl.
5
soft breathing through instrument
(sustain through section)
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
B. D.

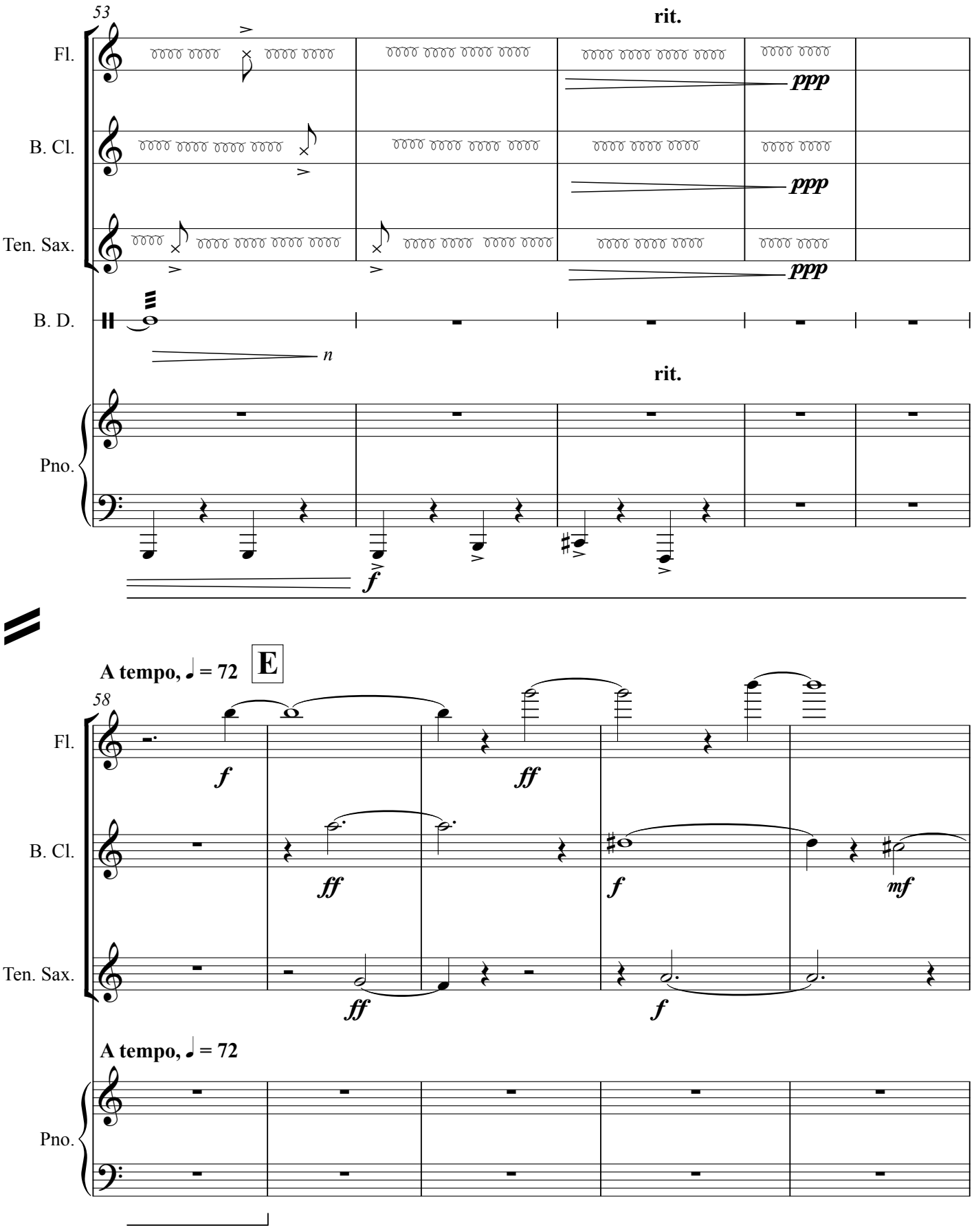

Free Time (Winds)
Strict ♩ = 108 (Piano)
39
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
B. D.
slap tongue (unpitched)
Free Time (Winds)
Strict ♩ = 108 (Piano)
15ma
Pno.
pp senza ped.
41
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
B. D.
Pno.
slap tongue (unpitched)
sim.
sim.
(15)

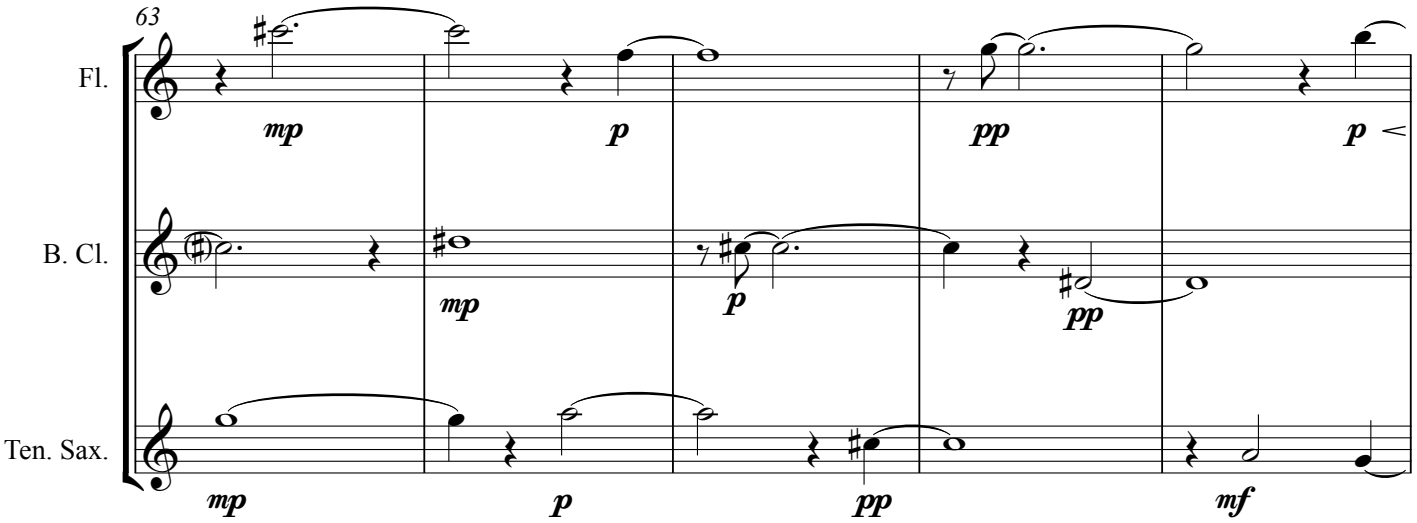

43
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
B. D.
(15)
Pno.

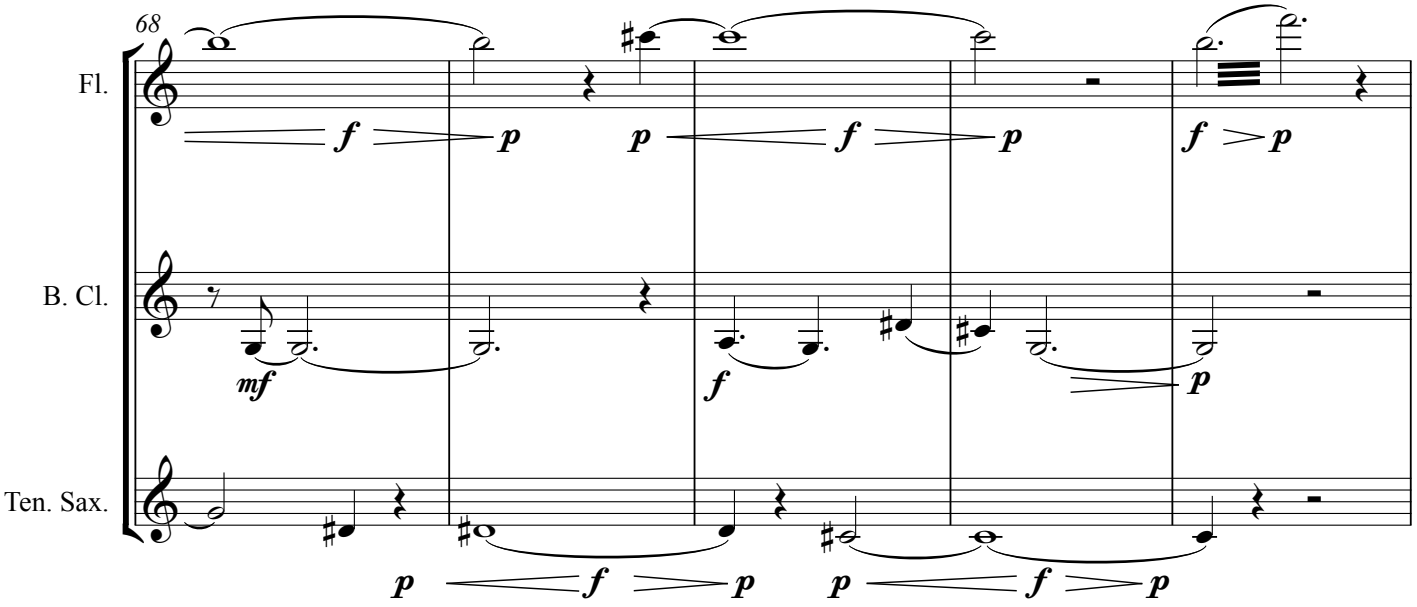

45
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
B. D.
(15)
Pno.

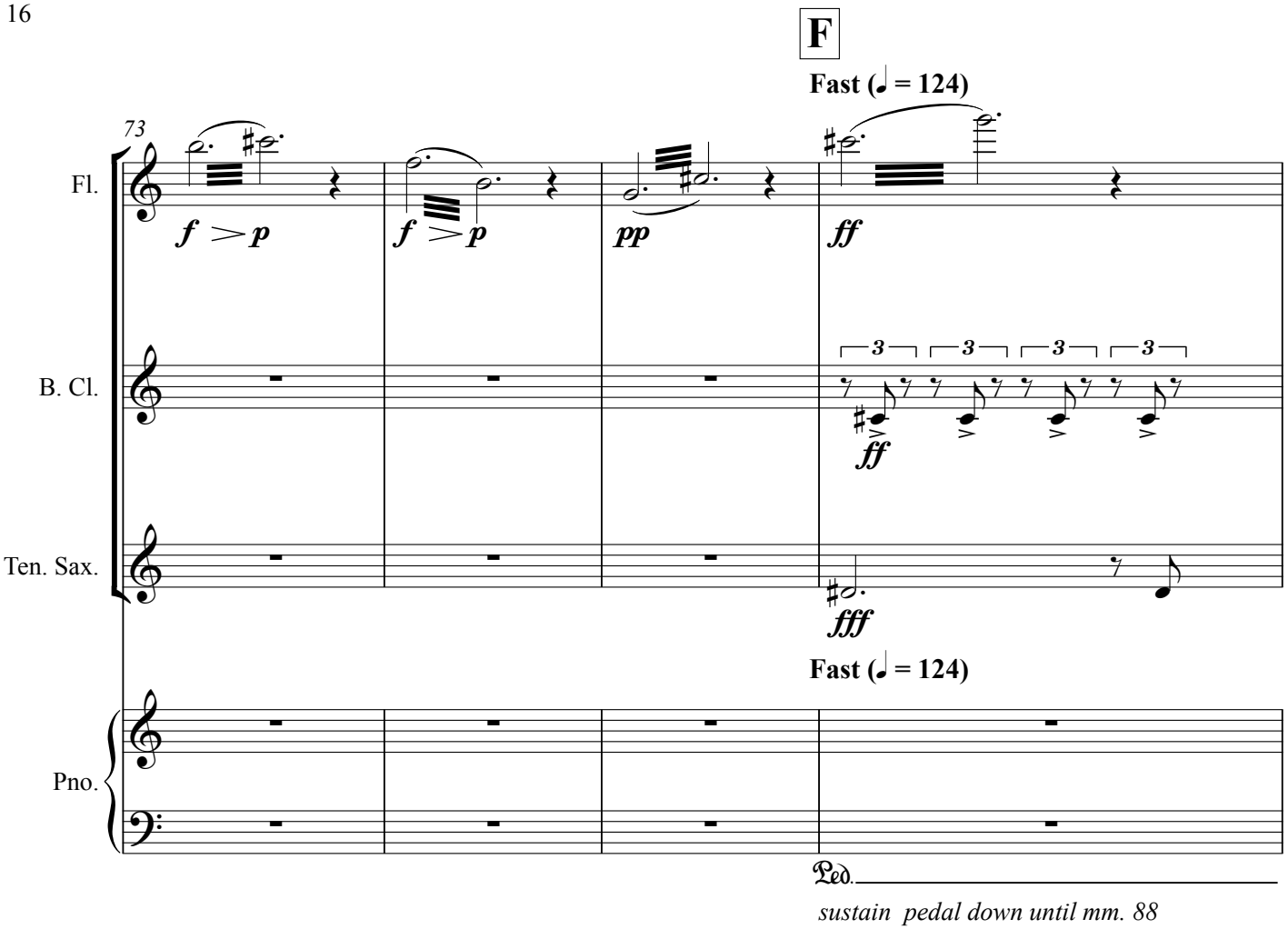

48
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
B. D.
(15)
Pno.
Ped.

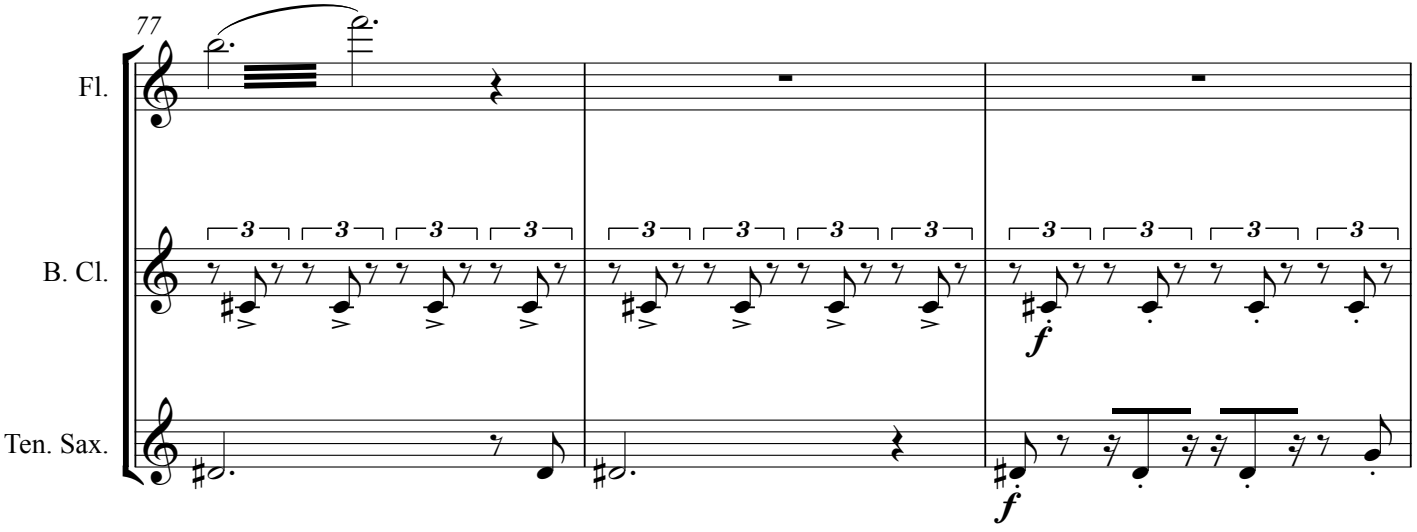

51
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
B. D.
Pno.

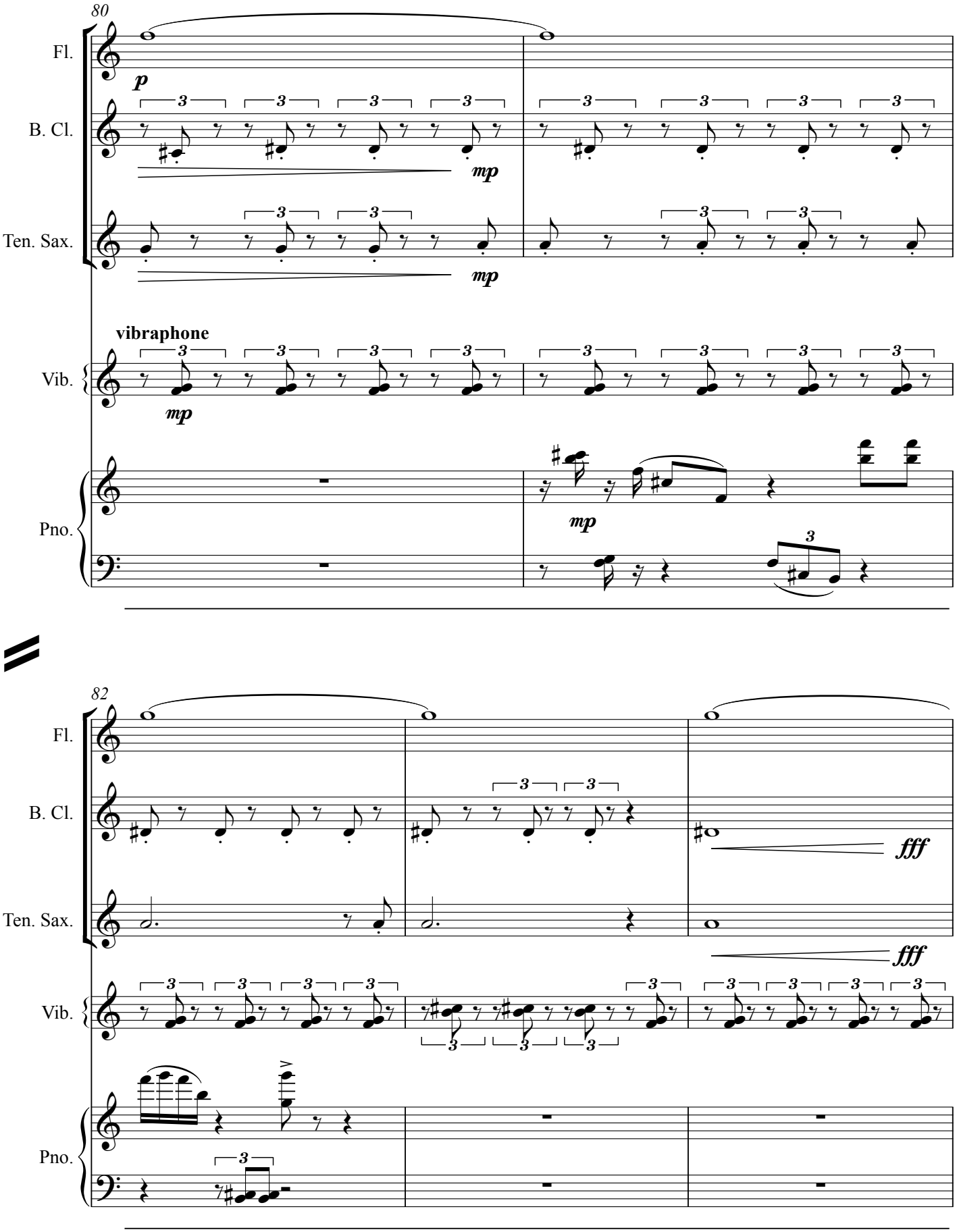

53
rit.
Fl.
ppp
B. Cl.
ppp
Ten. Sax.
ppp
B. D.
n
rit.
Pno.
f
A tempo, ♩ = 72
E
58
Fl.
f
ff
B. Cl.
ff
f
mf
Ten. Sax.
ff
f
A tempo, ♩ = 72
Pno.

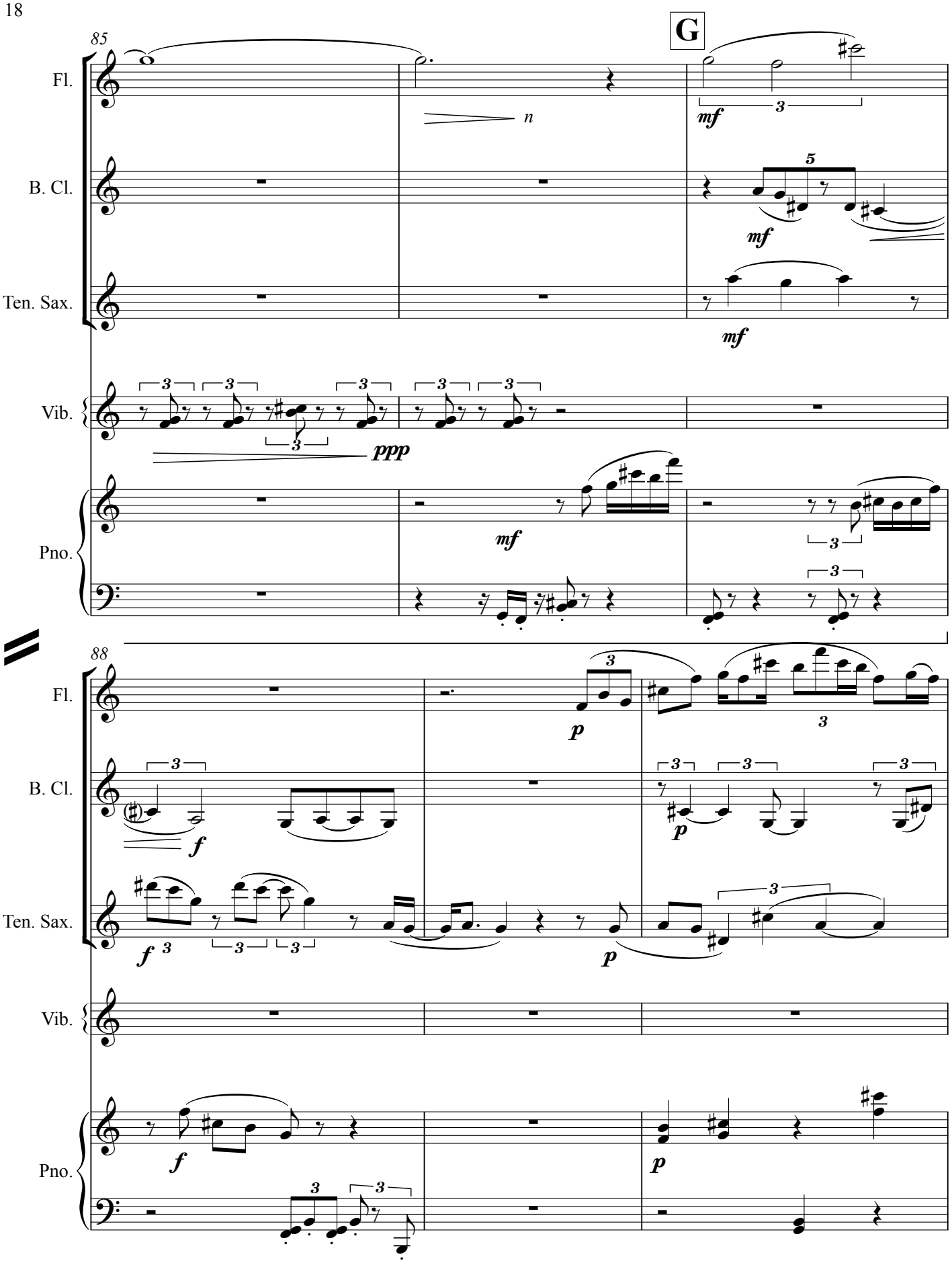

63
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
mp
p
pp
mf

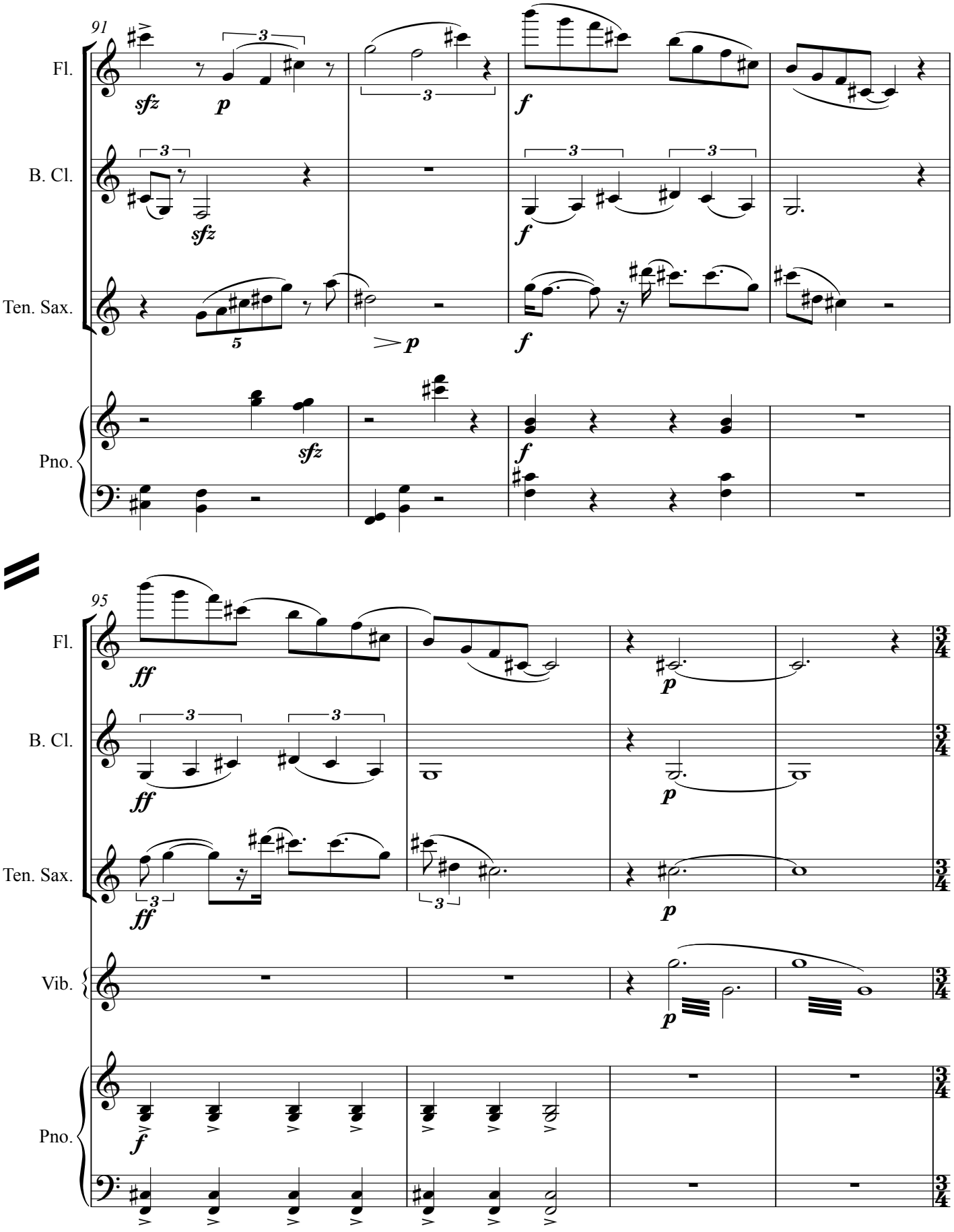

68
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
mf
f
p

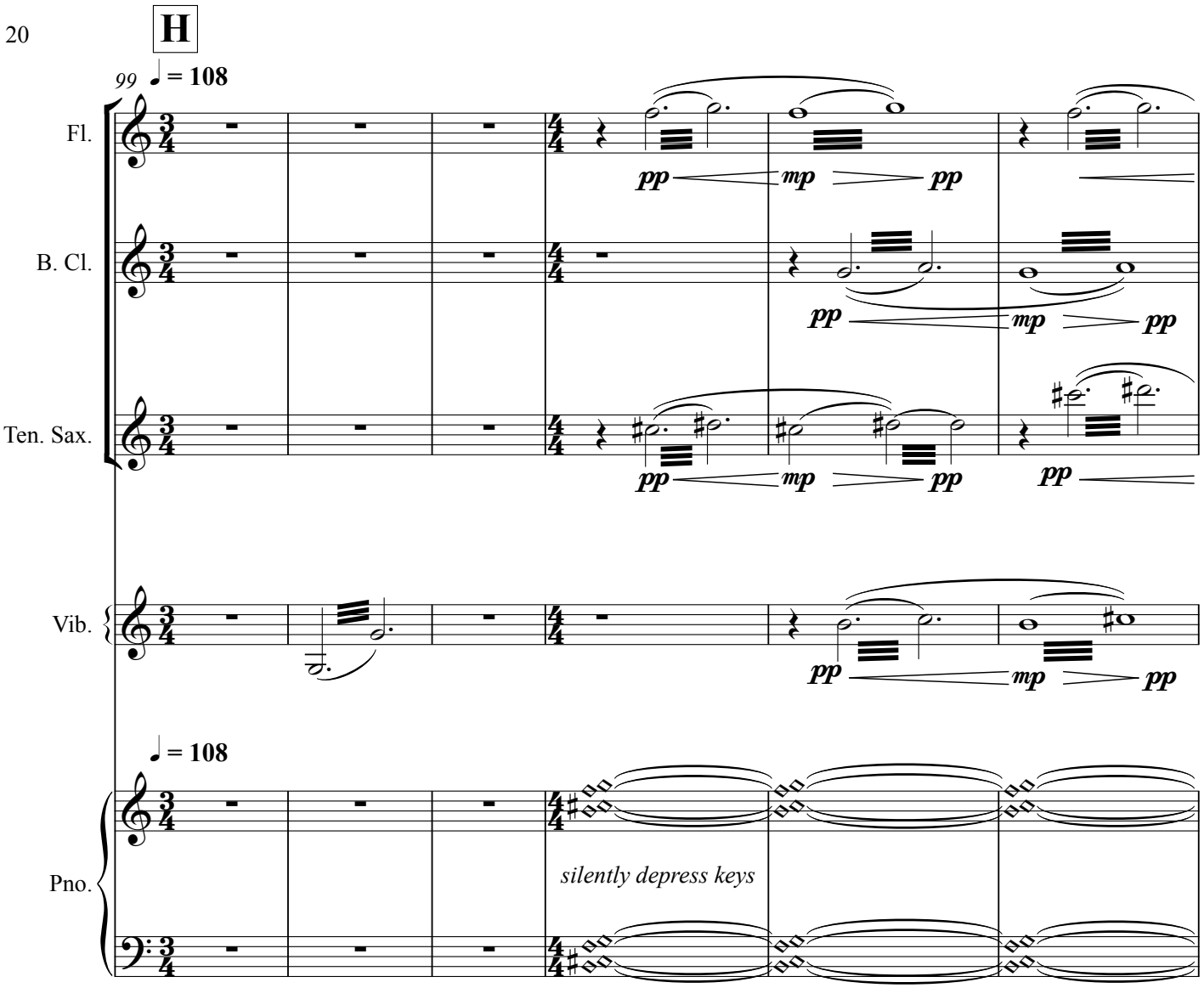

F
Fast (♩ = 124)
73
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Pno.
f > p
f > p
pp
ff
ff
fff
Fast (♩ = 124)
Ped.
sustain pedal down until mm. 88

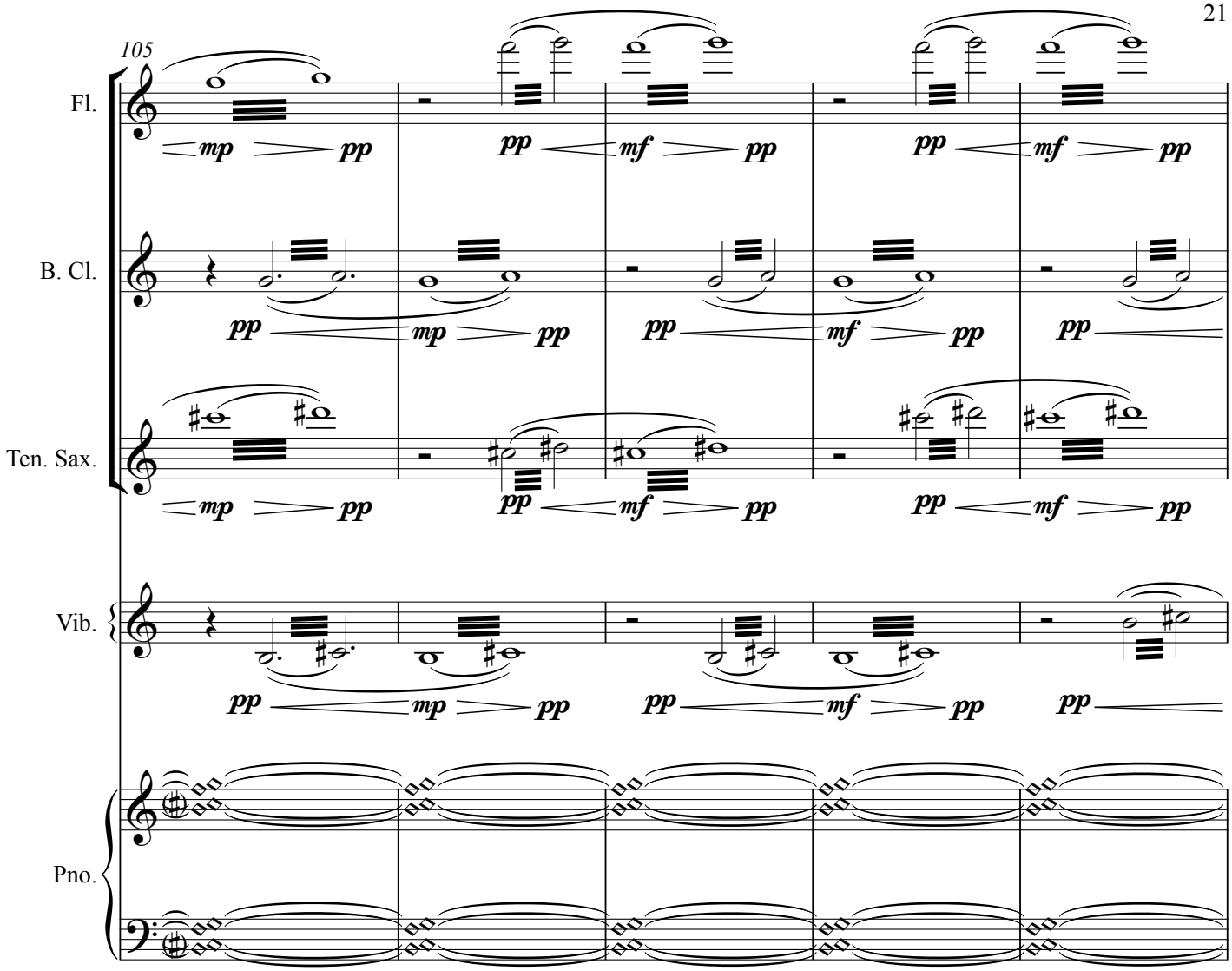

77
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
f
f

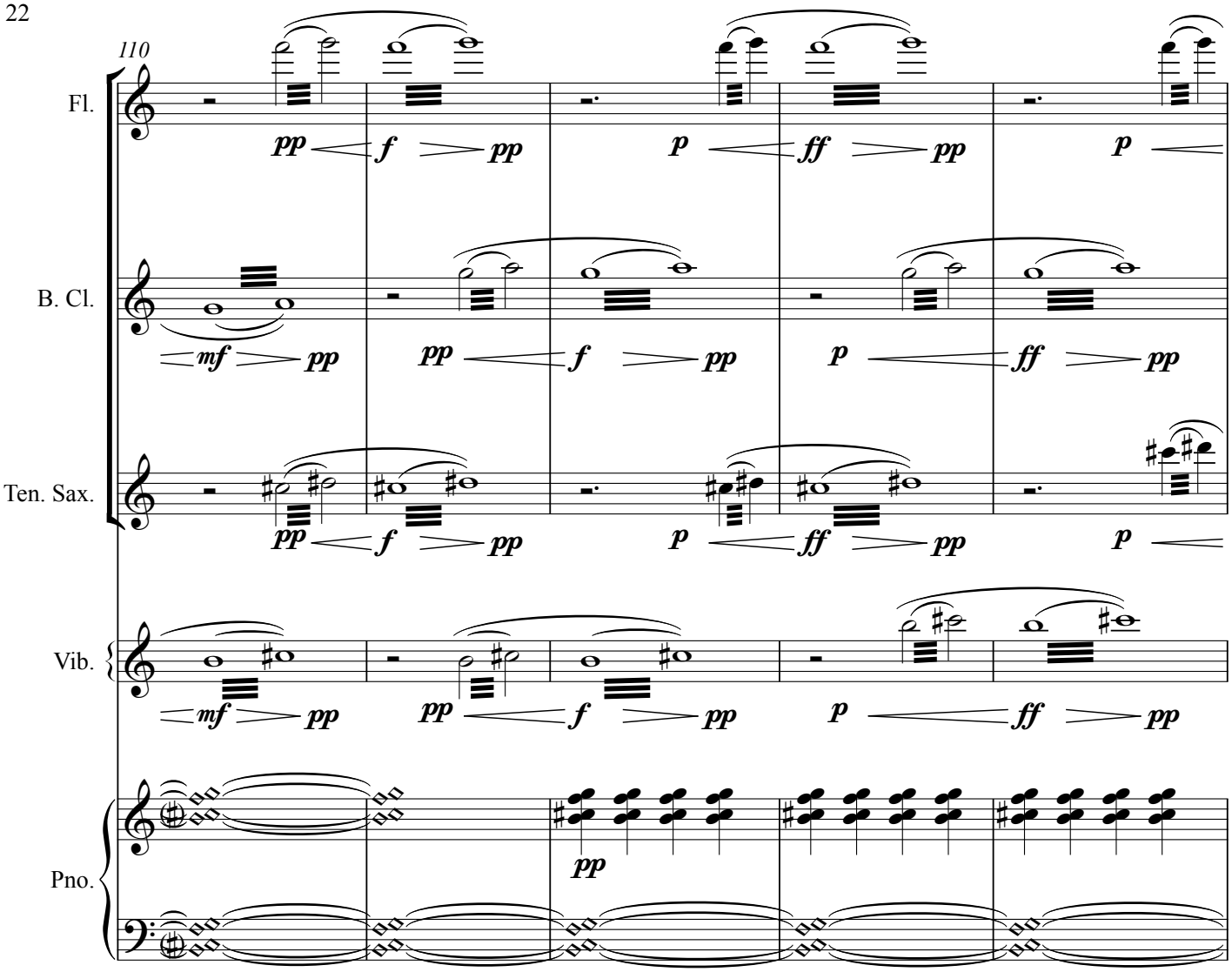

80
Fl.
p
B. Cl.
mp
Ten. Sax.
mp
vibraphone
Vib.
mp
Pno.
mp
82
Fl.
B. Cl.
fff
Ten. Sax.
fff
Vib.
Pno.

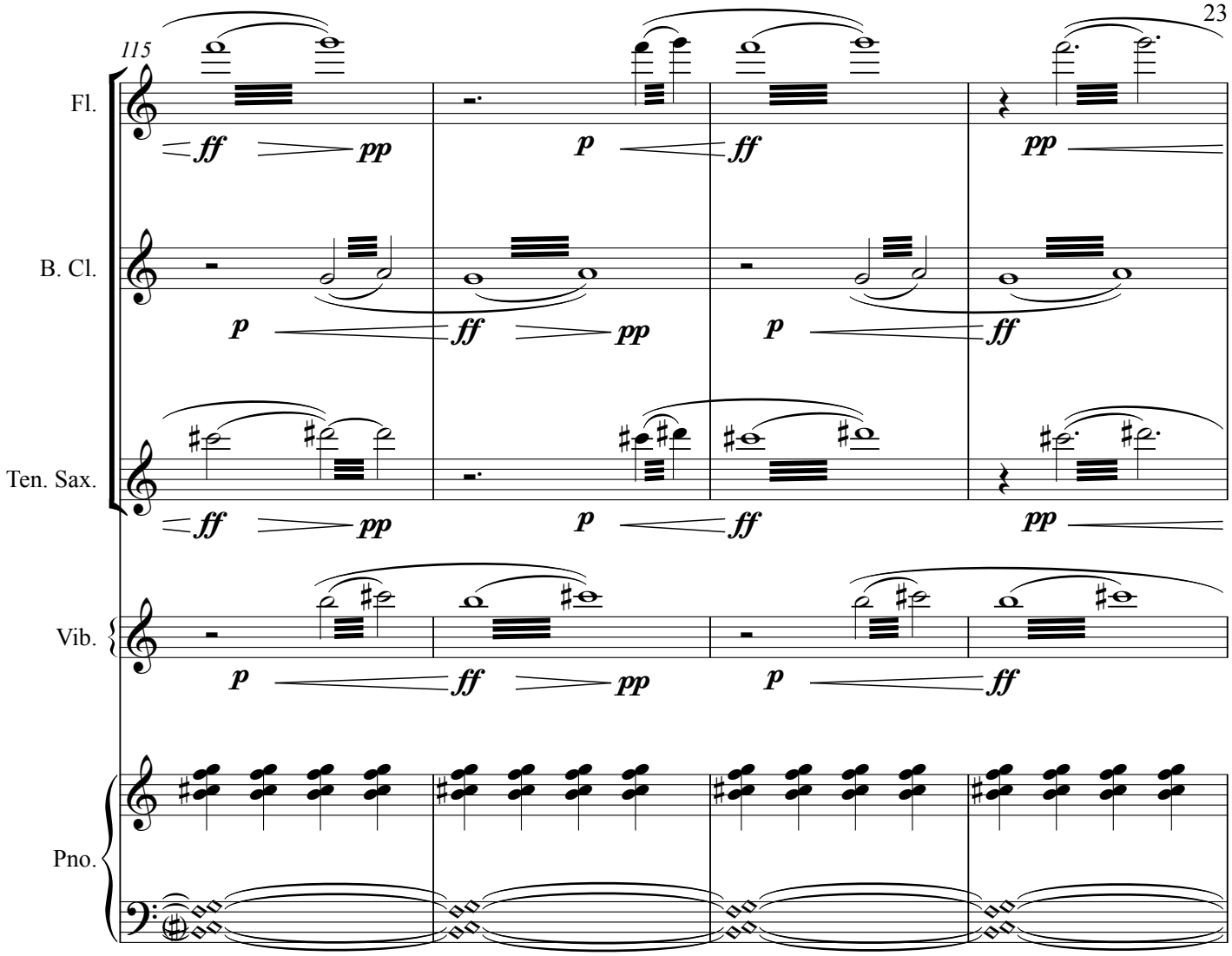

G
85
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Vib.
Pno.
n
mf
ppp
88
f
p

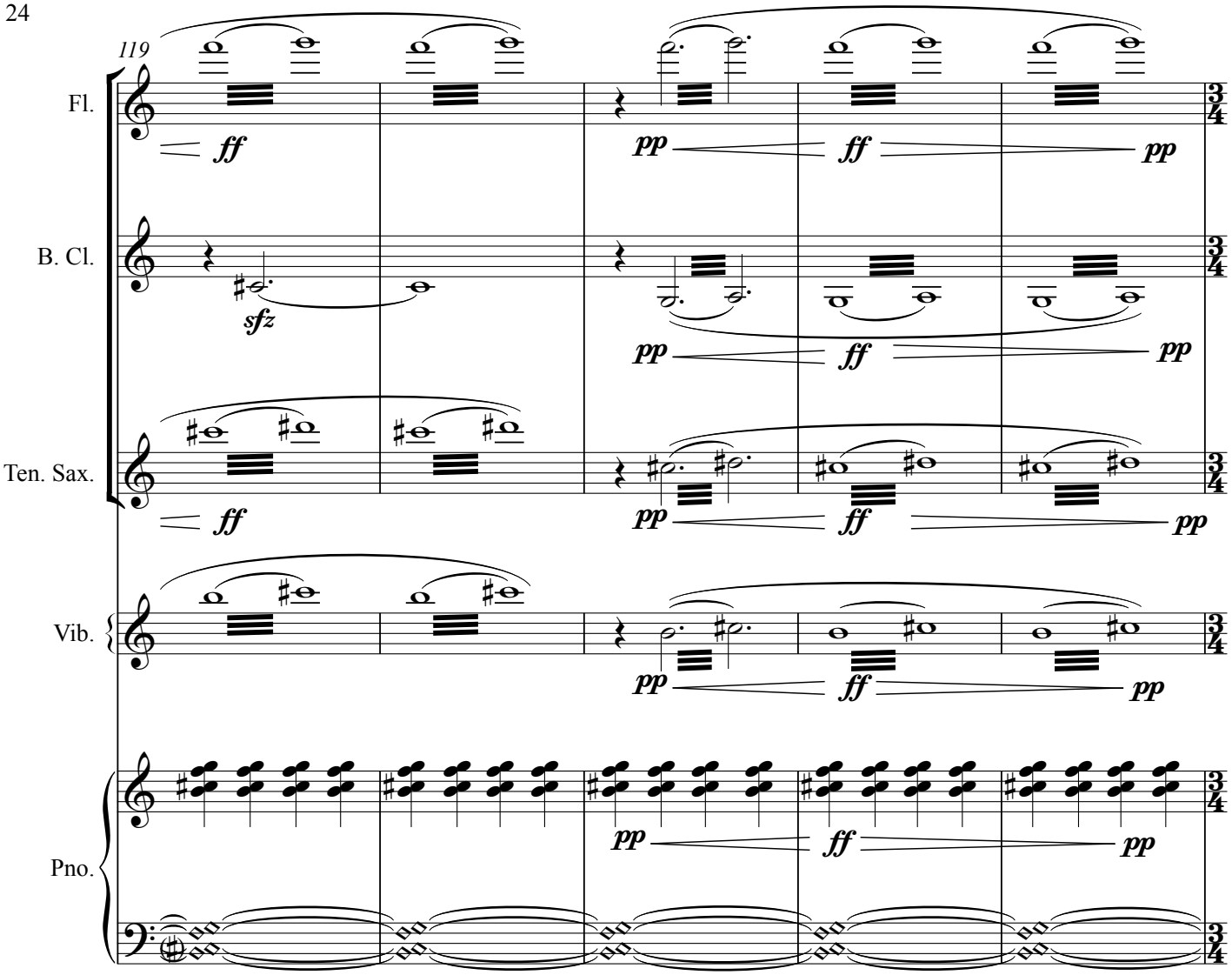

91
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Pno.
sfz
p
f
95
ff
Vib.

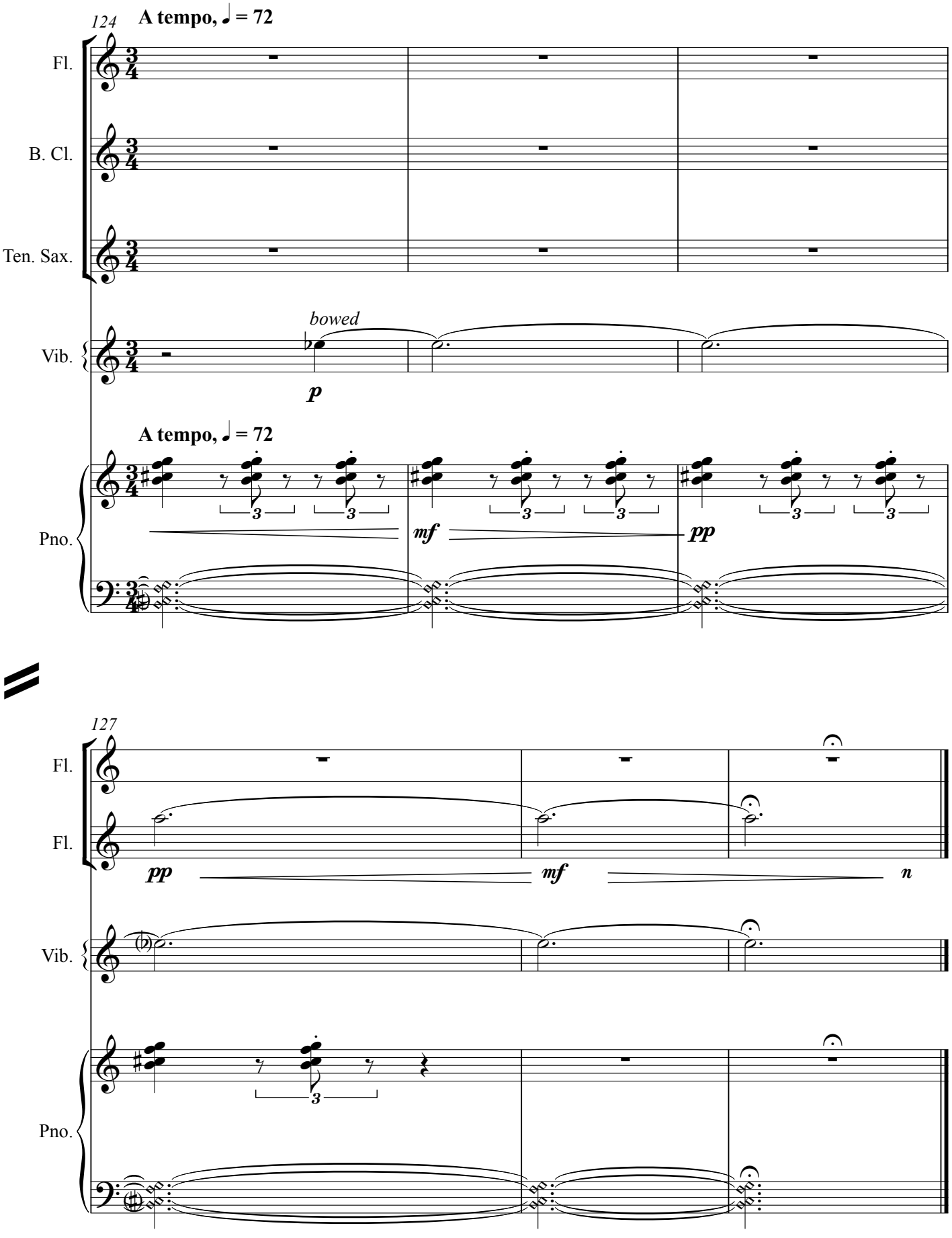

H
99
♩ = 108
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Vib.
Pno.
pp
mp
pp
♩ = 108
silently depress keys


105
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Vib.
Pno.
mp
pp
mf


110
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Vib.
Pno.
pp f pp p ff pp p
mf pp pp f pp p ff pp
pp


115
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Vib.
Pno.
ff
pp
p
ff
pp
p
ff
pp
p
ff
pp
p
ff
pp
p
ff
pp
p
ff
pp
p
ff


119
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Vib.
Pno.
ff
sfz
pp
ff
pp
3/4


124
A tempo, ♩ = 72
Fl.
B. Cl.
Ten. Sax.
Vib.
bowed
p
A tempo, ♩ = 72
Pno.
mf
pp
127
Fl.
Fl.
pp
mf
n
Vib.
Pno.