siúil go ciúin

Piano

for Ben Smith

Eric Skytterholm Mac Aodhagáin

April 2021 - July 2023 | Tynemouth

around 40 minutes

Were other anapocryphal illustrious sons of the law
and children of a selected or rejected race mentioned?

Felix Bartholdy Mendelssohn (composer), Baruch Spinoza (philosopher),
Mendoza (pugilist), Ferdinand Lassalle (reformer, duellist).

What fragments of verse from the ancient Hebrew and ancient Irish languages
were cited with modulations of voice and translation of texts
by guest to host and by host to guest?

By Stephen: suil, suil, suil arun, suil go siocair agus suil go cuin
(walk, walk, walk your way, walk in safety, walk with care).

By Bloom: Kifeloch, harimon rakatejch m'baad l'zamatejch
(thy temple amid thy hair is as a slice of pomegranate).

James Joyce | Ulysses

siúil go ciúin

Piano Preparation

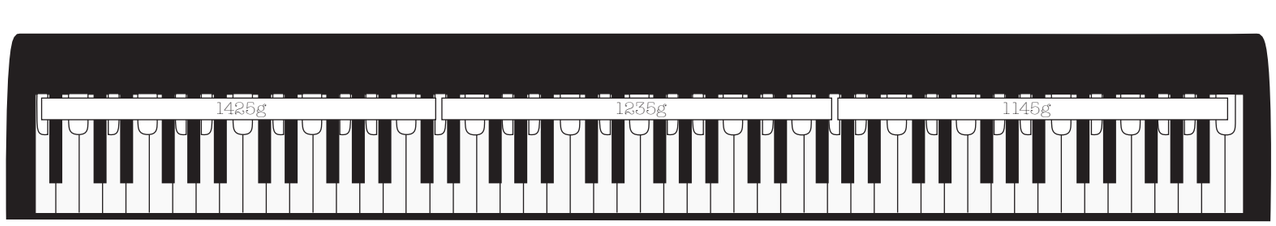
To perform this piece, the piano must be prepared in such a way that it each hammer rests in the **second position of the escapement mechanism** throughout. This can be achieved by any means; however, the suggested method is to use a combination of padded metal bars (dimensions outlined below), and soft rubber wedges.

Bars: The diagram below shows **three sets of bars**, one each for the low, middle, and high register of the instrument. I would strongly suggest using at least three sets to avoid bending, and becasue the weighting of the keys usually gets lighter towards the top of the instrument. The total weight of each set reflects this. Increasing the number of sets (say one set for each octave) also works well, but increases preparation time a little. The bars are used to prepare the **black keys**, and should be placed on top of each other.

It is important to note that the weighting of the keys varies from instrument to instrument. The **weights and dimensions** indicated here were tested on several Steinway D instruments, but different weights may be required on other pianos. Performers are therefore encouraged to carry **spare weights** (e.g. a quanitity of 120g bars) that can be used as well as, or in different combinations with, the sets outlined below:

3x [30mm x 6mm x 400mm] (570g)
2x [25mm x 6mm x 400mm] (475g)
4x [30mm x 3mm x 400mm] (285g)
6x [13mm x 3mm x 400mm] (120g) (spares)

The bars must be of **mild steel**. They can easily be cut to size and purchased at a reasonable cost from a steel supplier. However, these can often be roughly cut, so I suggest wrapping the narrow ends in single layers of **masking tape**, to cover any sharp edges. To avoid slippage and damage to the keys, **adhesive foam tape** should be attached to the bottom of the bars.



(30mm x 6mm x 400mm) x2 (25mm x 6mm x 400mm) x2 (30mm x 6mm x 400mm) x1
(30mm x 3mm x 400mm) x1 (30mm x 3mm x 400mm) x1 (30mm x 3mm x 400mm) x2

Many steel suppliers will be able to cut these to size. I have worked with August Knapman in the UK, who have a very straight forward ordering process and webiste.

Wedges: The **white keys** are prepared by placing soft rubber wedges between the frame and the end of the keys (**window wedges** are ideal but smaller tile wedges can also be used).
In order to prevent a clicking noise when the keys are released, and to increase the thickness of the wedge, adhesive **foam tape** should be attached to the bottom of each wedge.

For the original set of preparations, I used 20mm wide wedges for each set of two white keys, and sliced them in half lengthways for the single keys.
Star Pack, Onestopdiy, and ShieldUp soft rubber window wedges work very well, and can all easily be sliced in two.

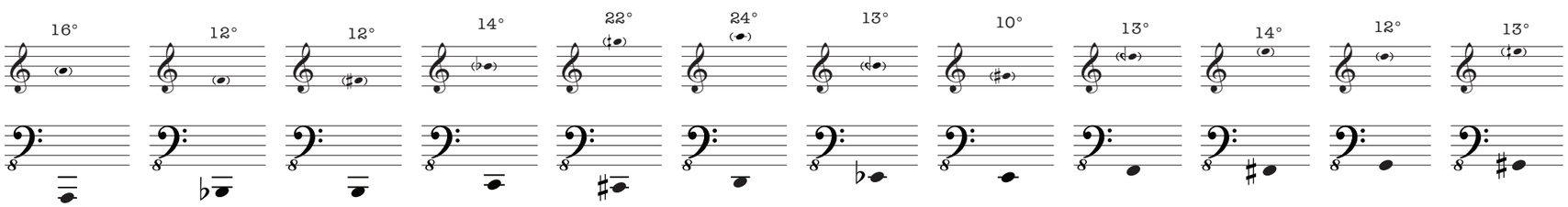
Tape: I suggest using light-weight 12x3mm adhesive weatherstripping foam tape (Fowong brand tape rolls work well).

When familiar with the system, total **preparation time** can be reduced to **6-7 minutes** or therabotus. This should allow for the piano to be prepared swiftly before a concert, or during an interval. However, as the process entails adjusting 37 separate wedges, it may be wise to avoid programming the piece in the middle of a set, unless multiple instruments are available.

siúil go ciúin

Harmonics

The harmonics in the piece should be prepared and marked as below:



Source Material

With the exception of the harmoncis, the material in this piece is all taken from the works of eight composers and one Irish song; Siúil a Rún.

The composers and works in question are:

1. Marie Bigot | Suite d'etudes
2. Felix Mendelssohn | three Venetianisches Gondellied from Lieder ohne Worte
3. François Couperin | Sarabandes: la Dangereuse, la Lugubre, la Prude, and la Majestueuse
4. Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre | two unmeasured Preludes
5. Ludwig van Beethoven | Sonate Op. 13 "Pathetique"
6. Louise Farrenc | Ethudes 3, 17, 22, 25
7. John Field | Nocturne 14
8. Lili Boulanger | Thème et Variations

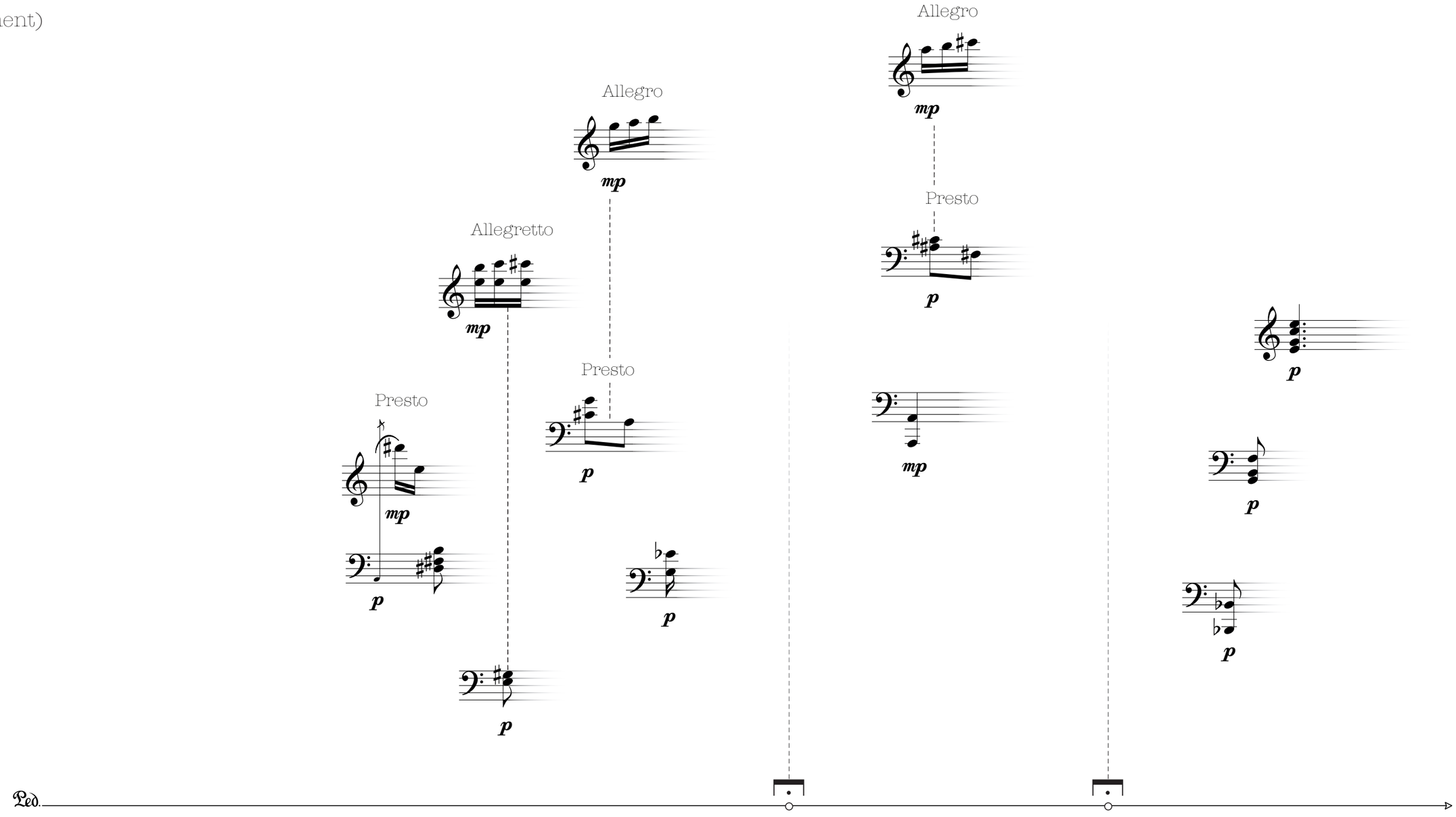
The performer should make an attempt to capture the character of the underlying works as part of their performance.

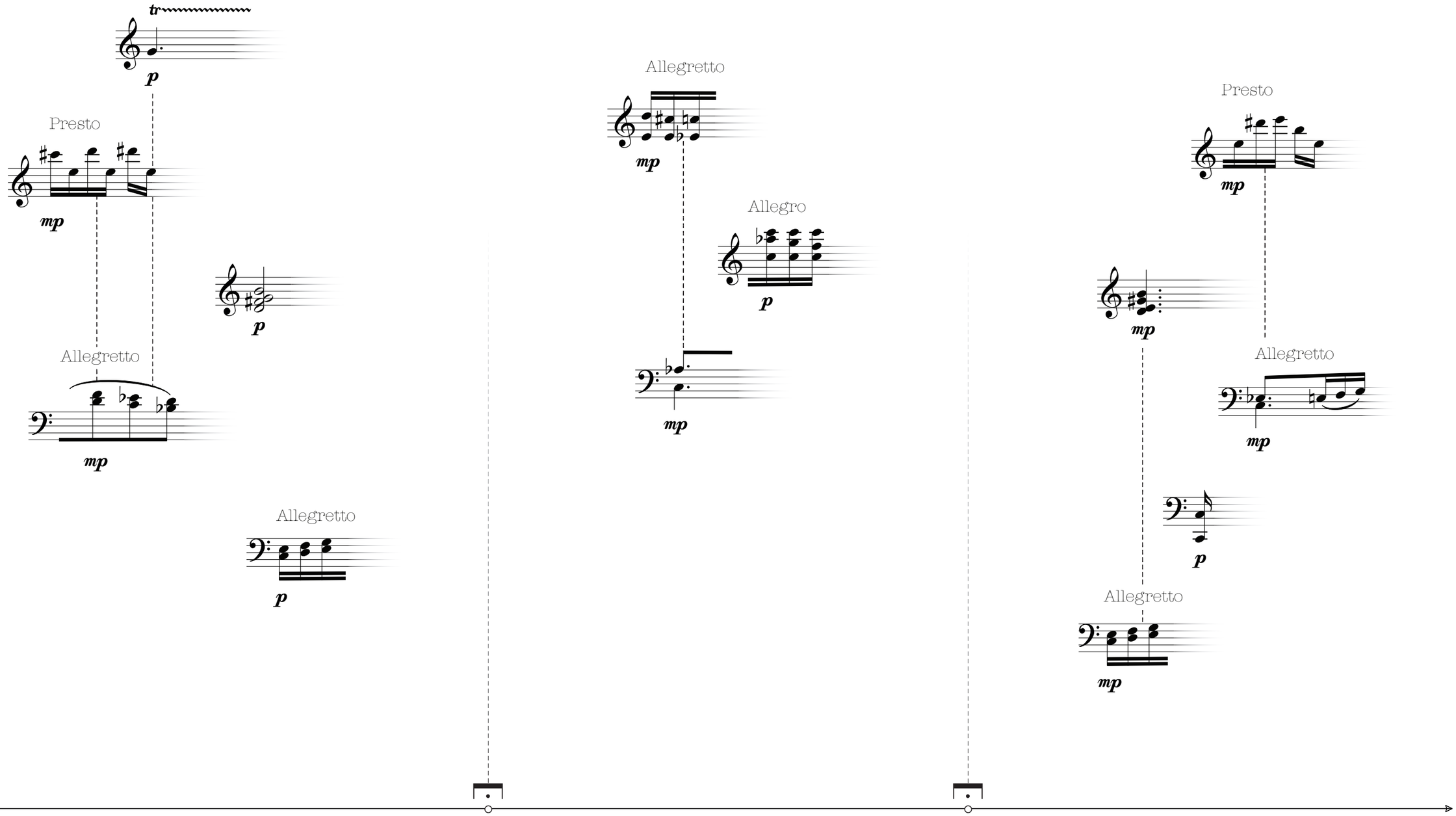
There are also numerous other, more and less obvious, quotations in the work. References to these should not be exaggerated musically.

siúil go ciúin

an chéad blúire

(first fragment)




tr
p
Presto
mp
p
Allegretto
mp
Allegretto
p
Allegretto
mp
Allegro
p
mp
Presto
mp
Allegretto
mp
p
Allegretto
mp

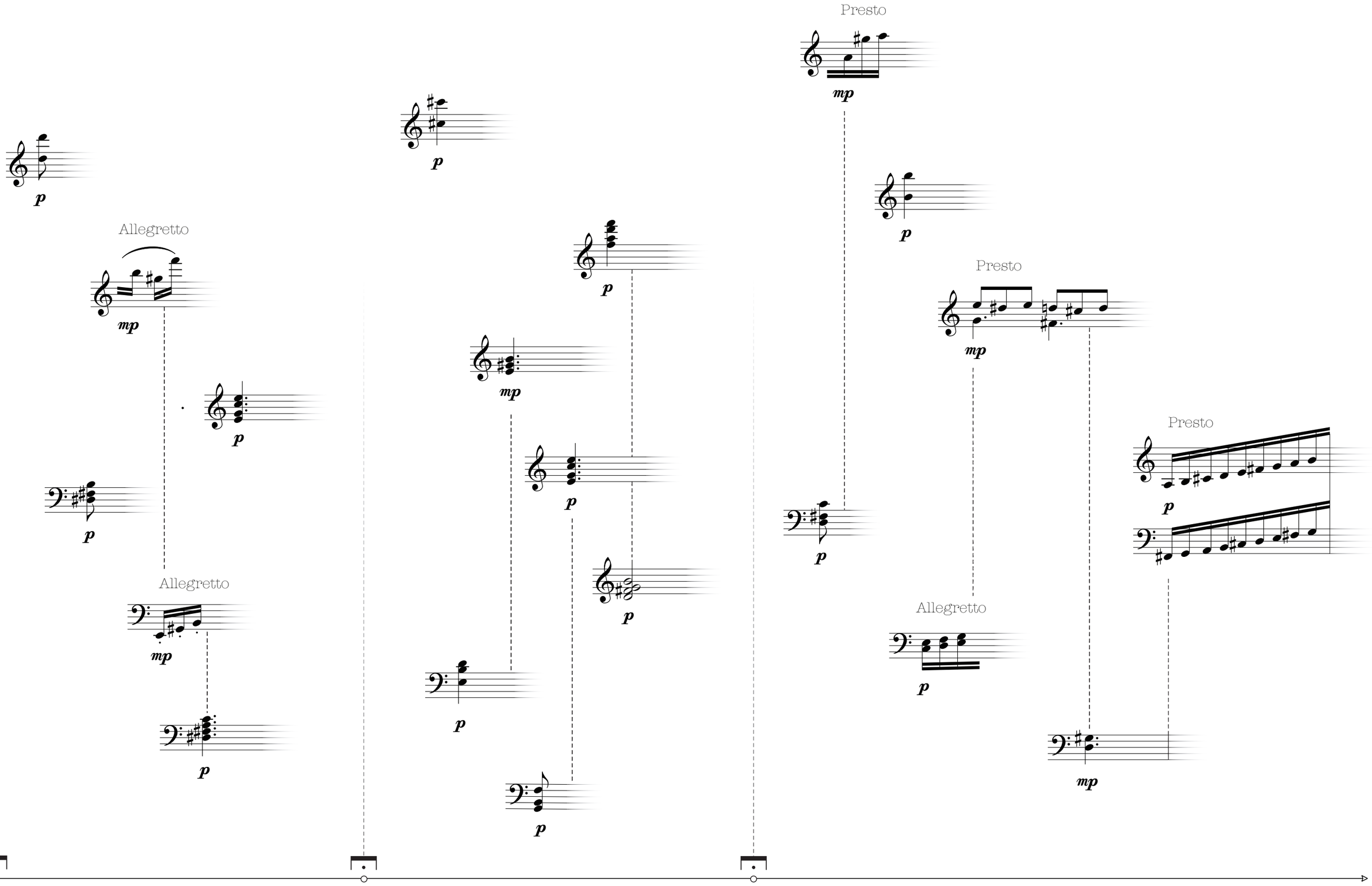
Allegro

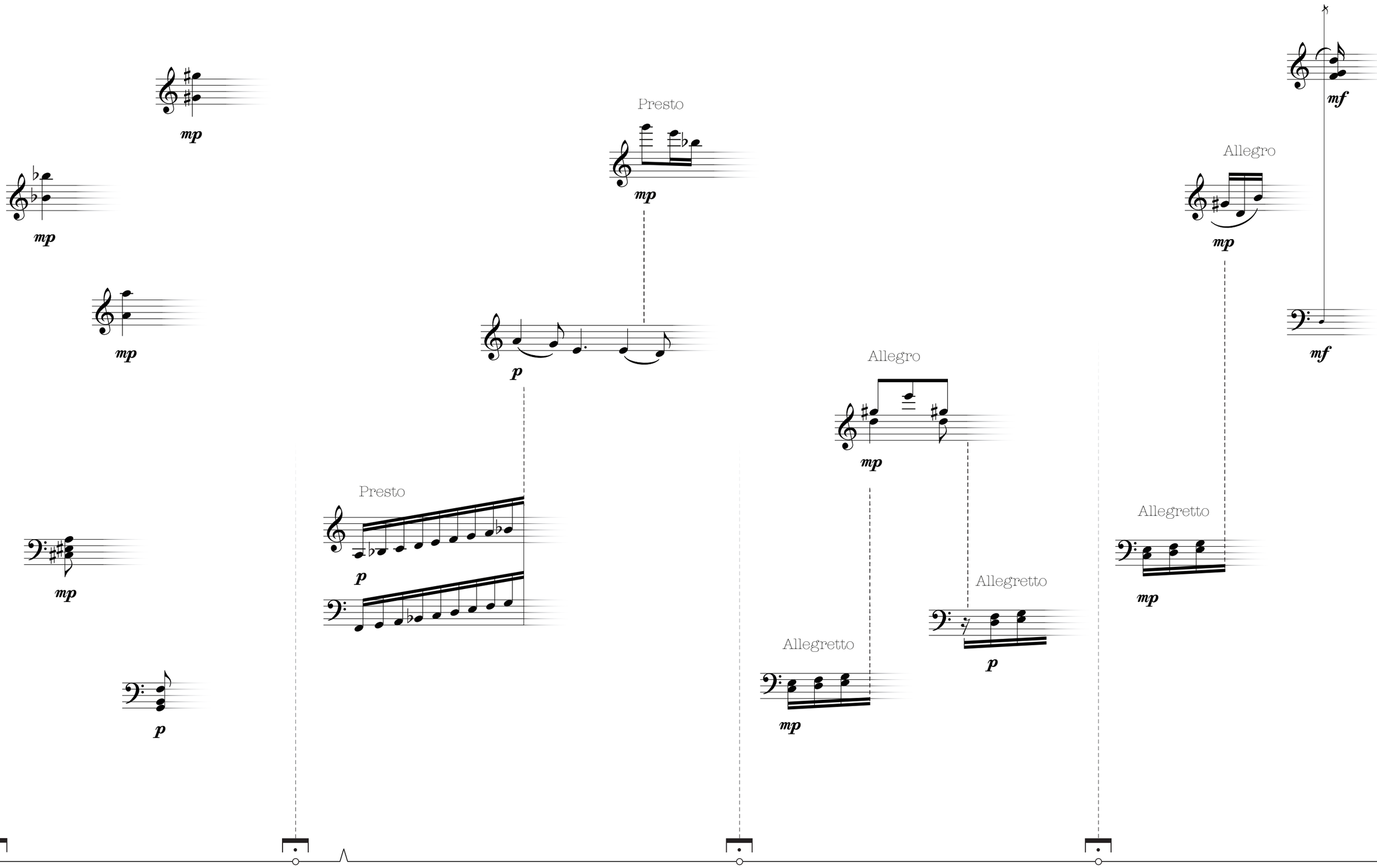
Presto

Allegro

Presto

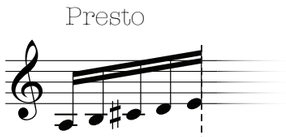
Allegretto


p
Allegretto
mp
p
p
p
Allegretto
mp
p
p
mp
p
p
p
p
Presto
mp
p
p
Presto
mp
Allegretto
p
Presto
p
mp

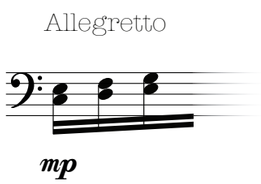

mp
mp
mp
Presto
mp
p
Allegro
mp
mf
mf
Allegro
mp
Presto
p
mp
Allegretto
mp
Allegretto
p
Allegretto
mp
p

Allegretto

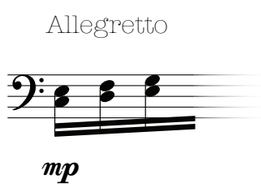
Presto



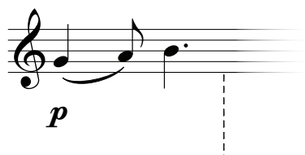
Allegretto



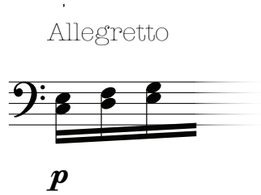
Allegretto



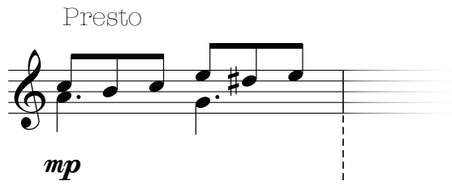
Presto



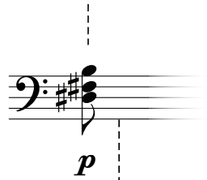
Allegretto



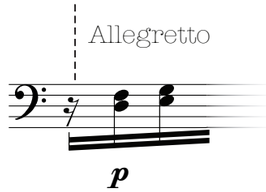
Presto



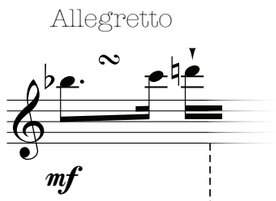
Presto



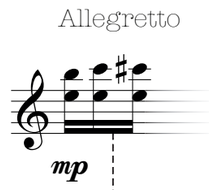
Allegretto



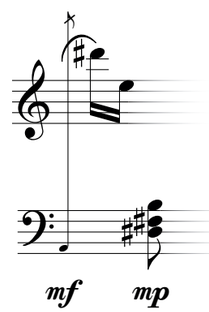
Allegretto

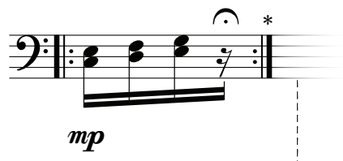


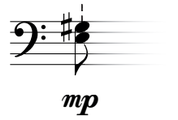
Allegretto



Presto







Ped.

* Repeat this bar many times, with long rests in between (potentially of varied length) and dynamics ranging from ***mp*** to ***p***. Pedal off after last repeat only.

Presto

mp

Allegro

mp

mp

Presto

mp

mp

Allegretto

mp

mp

Ped.

Presto

Allegro

Presto

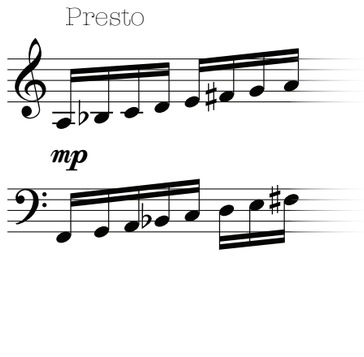
Allegretto

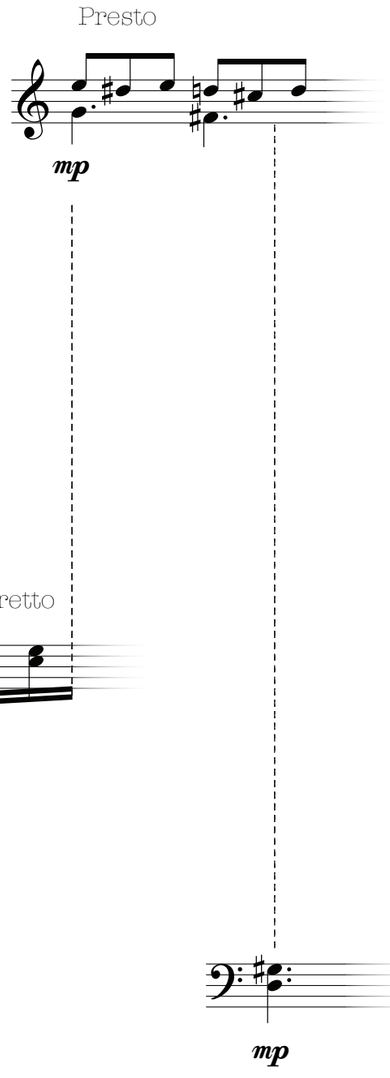
Allegro

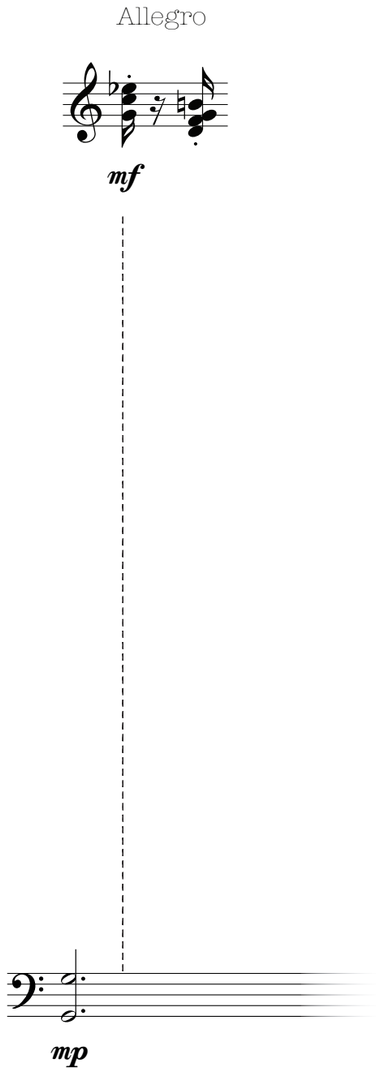
Allegretto

Allegretto

Allegretto


Presto
mp


Presto
mp
Allegretto
mp


Allegro
mf
mp

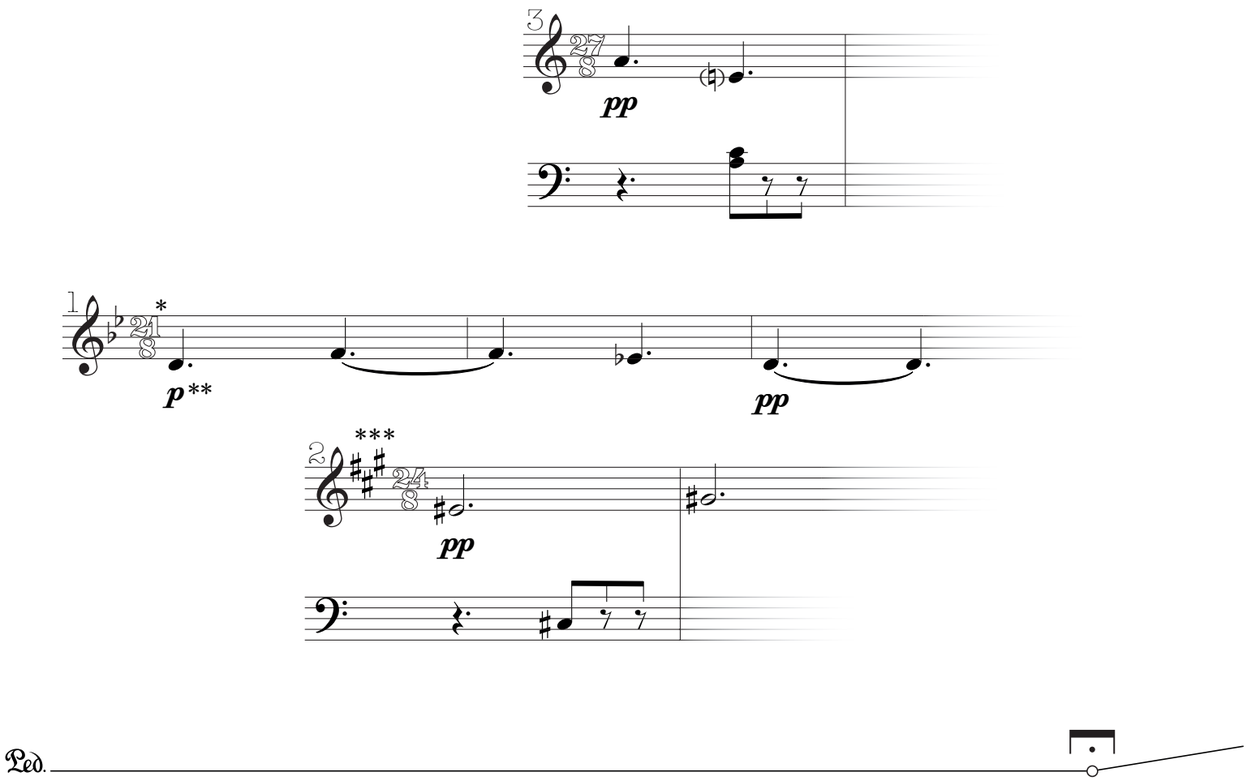
Allegretto
rit.
mp
Ped.

SLUTT

siúil go ciúin

dara blúire

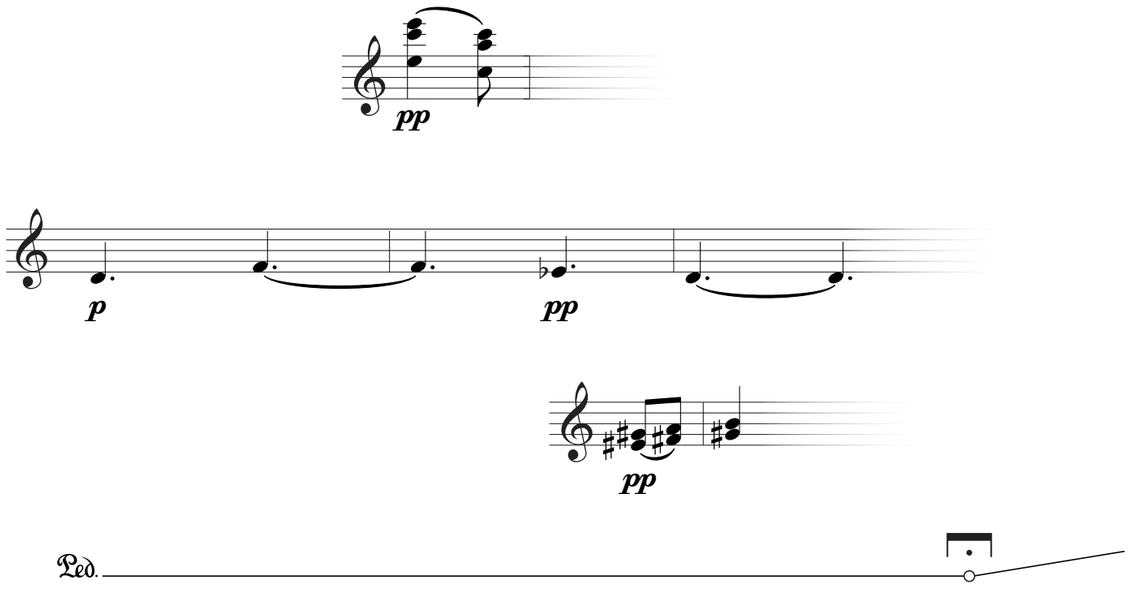
(second fragment)

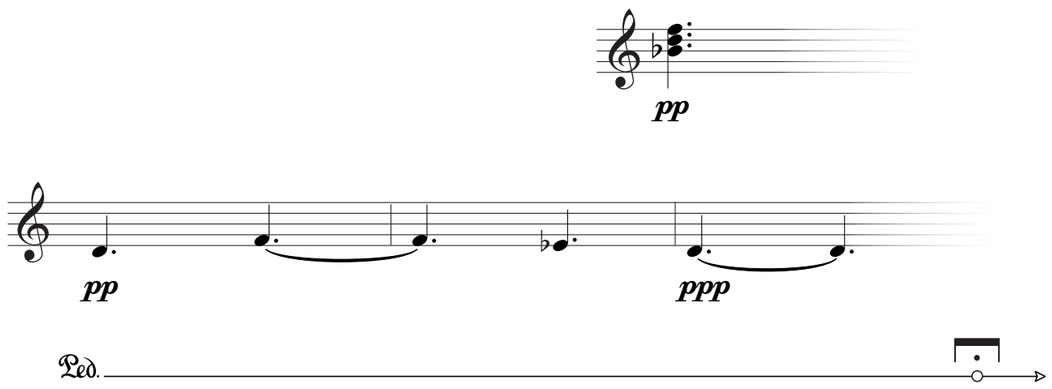


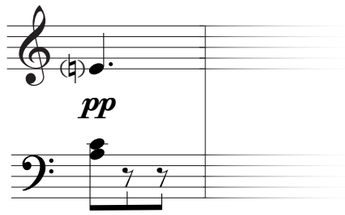
* Indication of relative tempi; the three parts (**1**/**2**/**3**) are in a 9/8/7 ratio. Aim to give each part its own line and melodic identity. Don't worry too much about minutae of precision. O

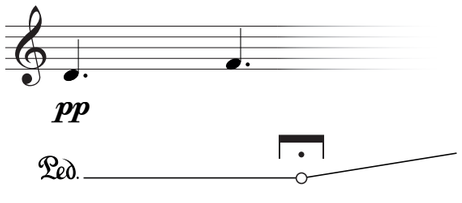
** All dynamics should be read as action dynamics. Due to the preparation of the instrument, the resulting sound will be much softer than indicated.

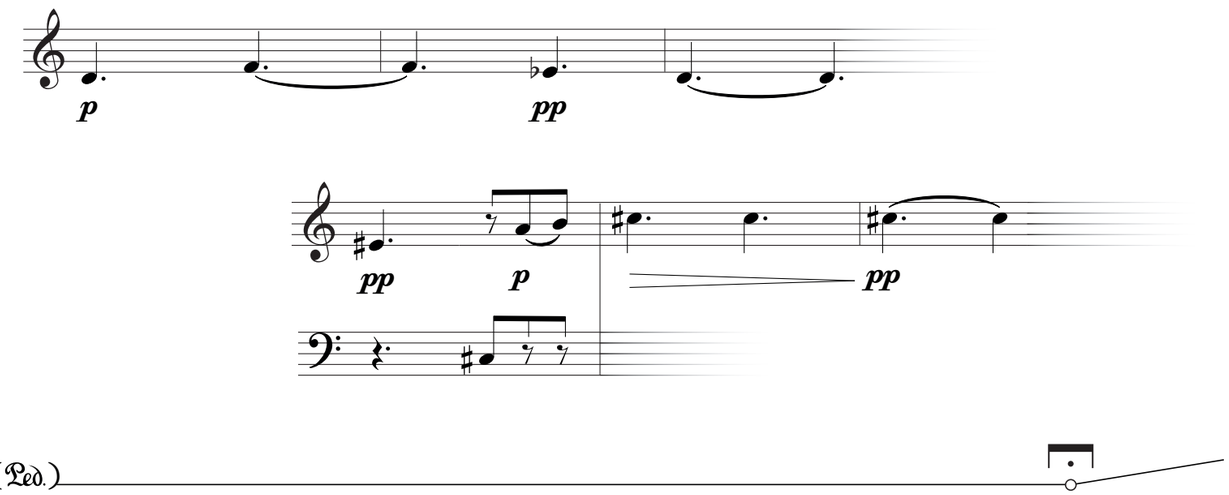
*** Key signiture for illustration only. Accidentals are notated throughout.

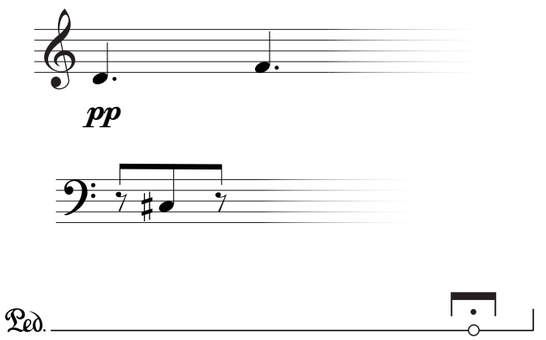

pp
p
pp
pp
Ped.

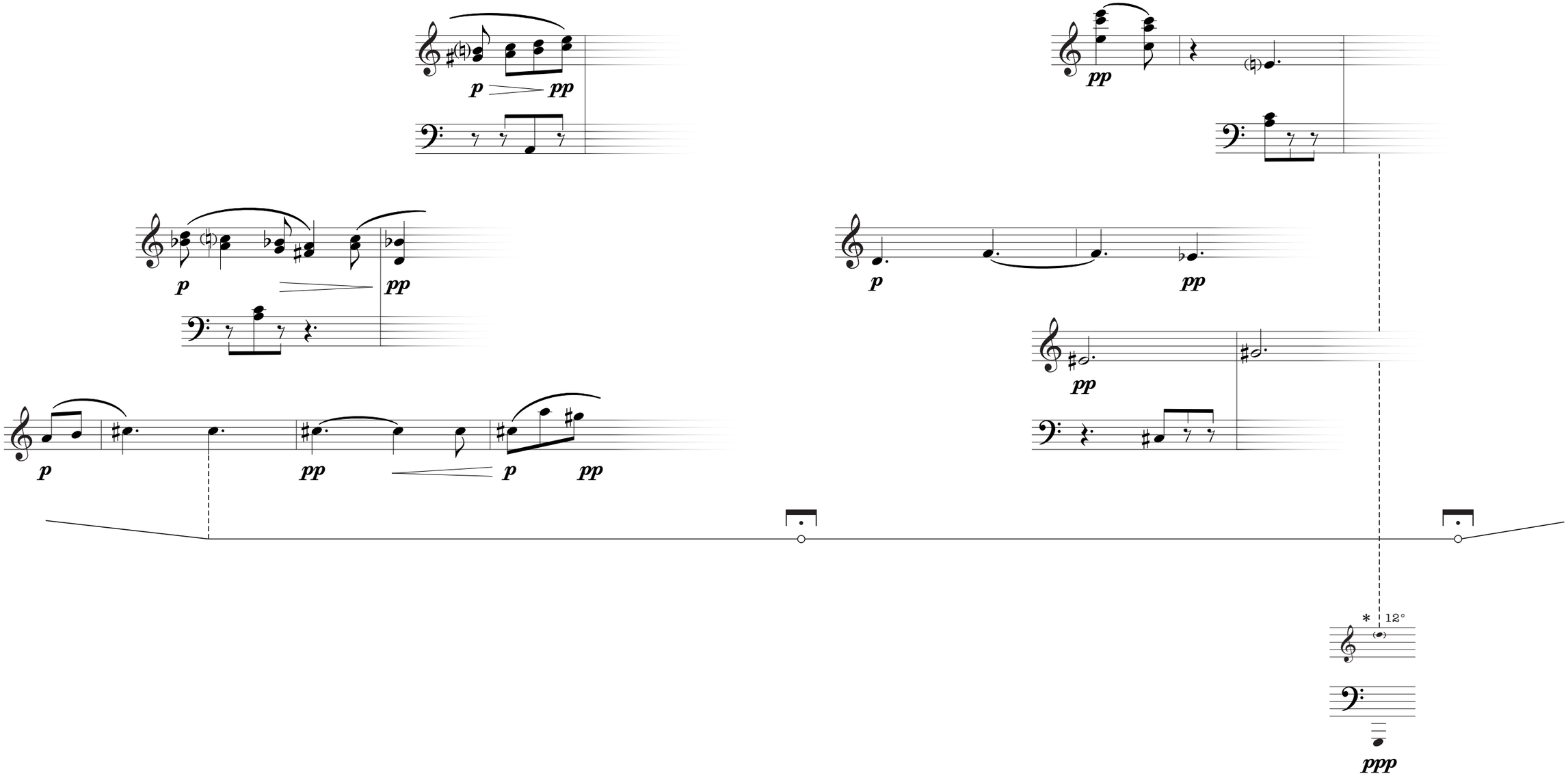

pp
pp
ppp
Ped.


pp

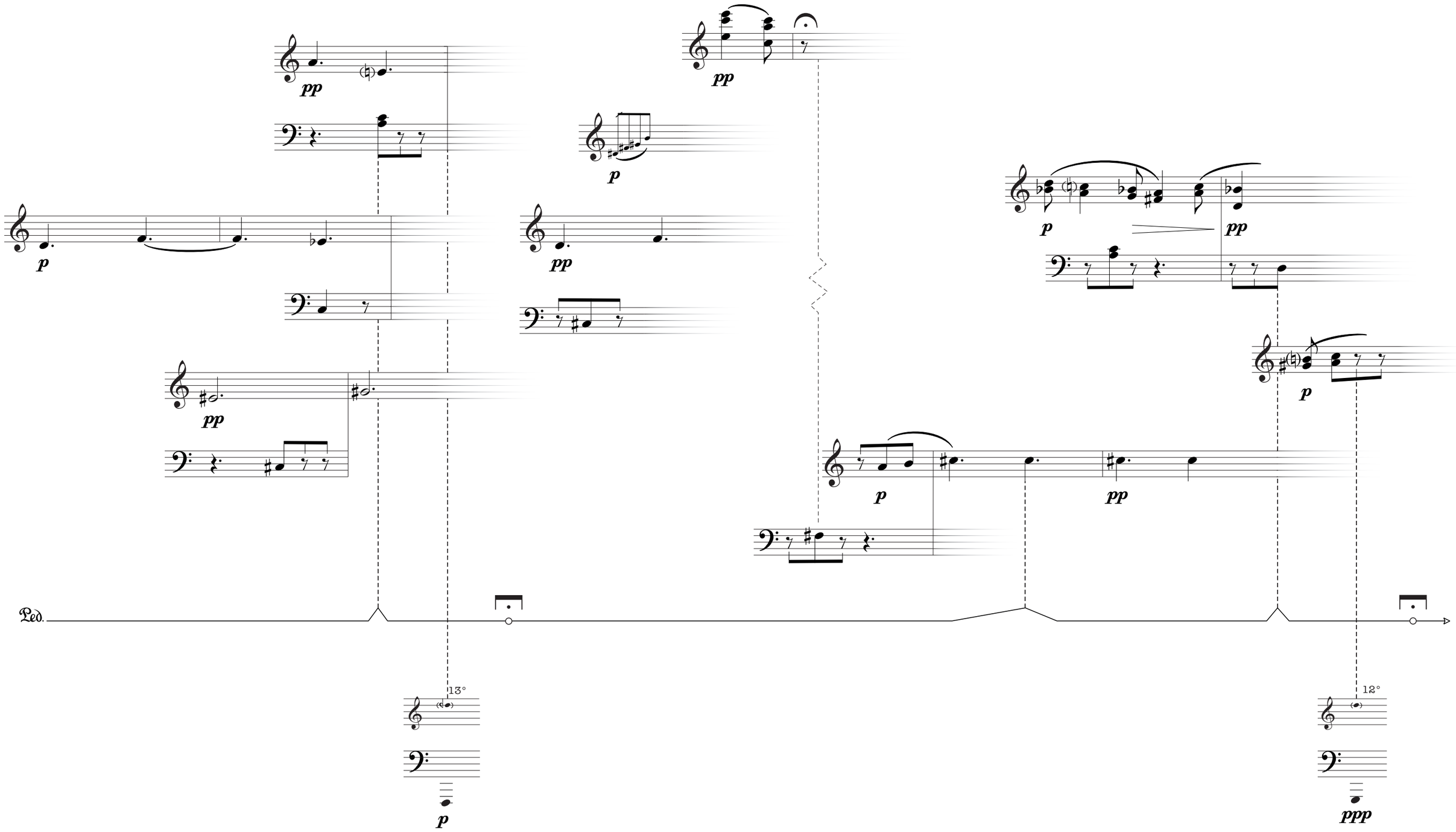

pp
Ped.


p
pp
pp
p
pp
(Ped.)


pp
Ped.



* All harmonics are notated below the pedal.
These should be played freely, in space time,
unless attached rhythmically to an upper layer.


pp
p
pp
pp
p
pp
p
pp
p
pp
p
pp
Ped.
13°
p
12°
ppp

pp p pp

pp p pp

pp

p

pp

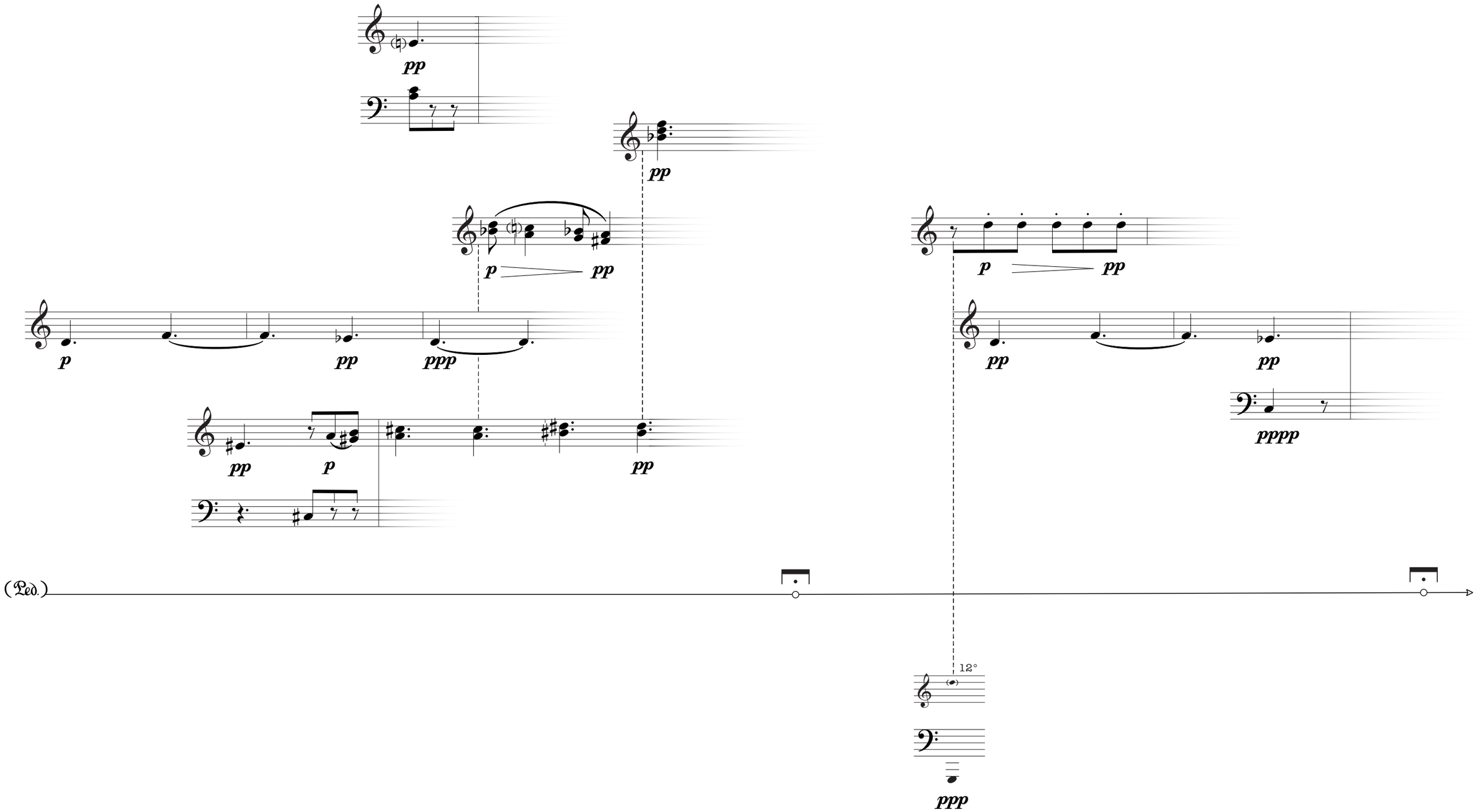
(Ped.)

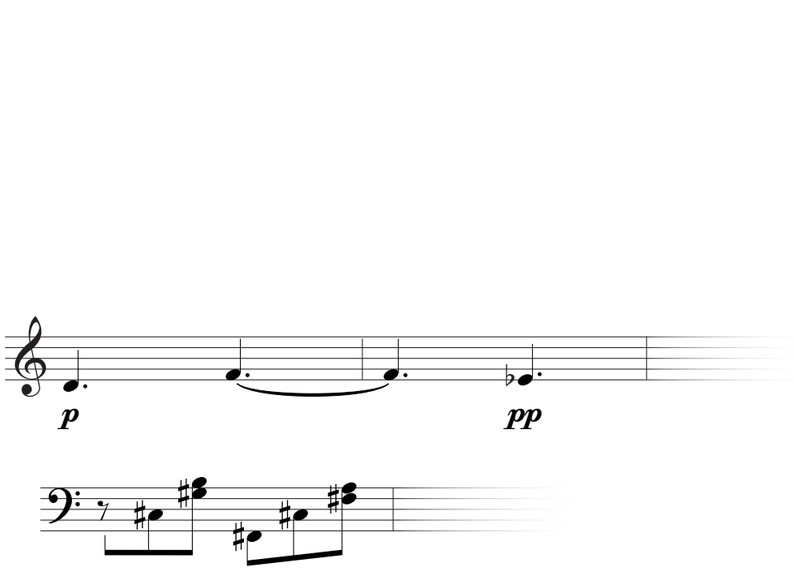
14°

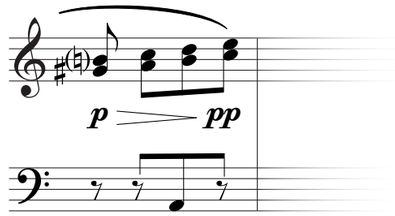
13°

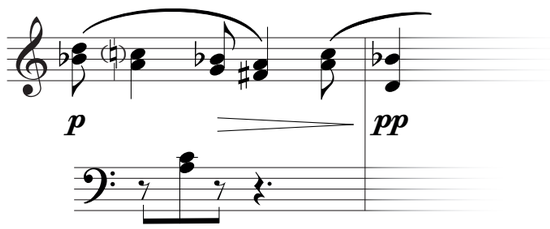
14°

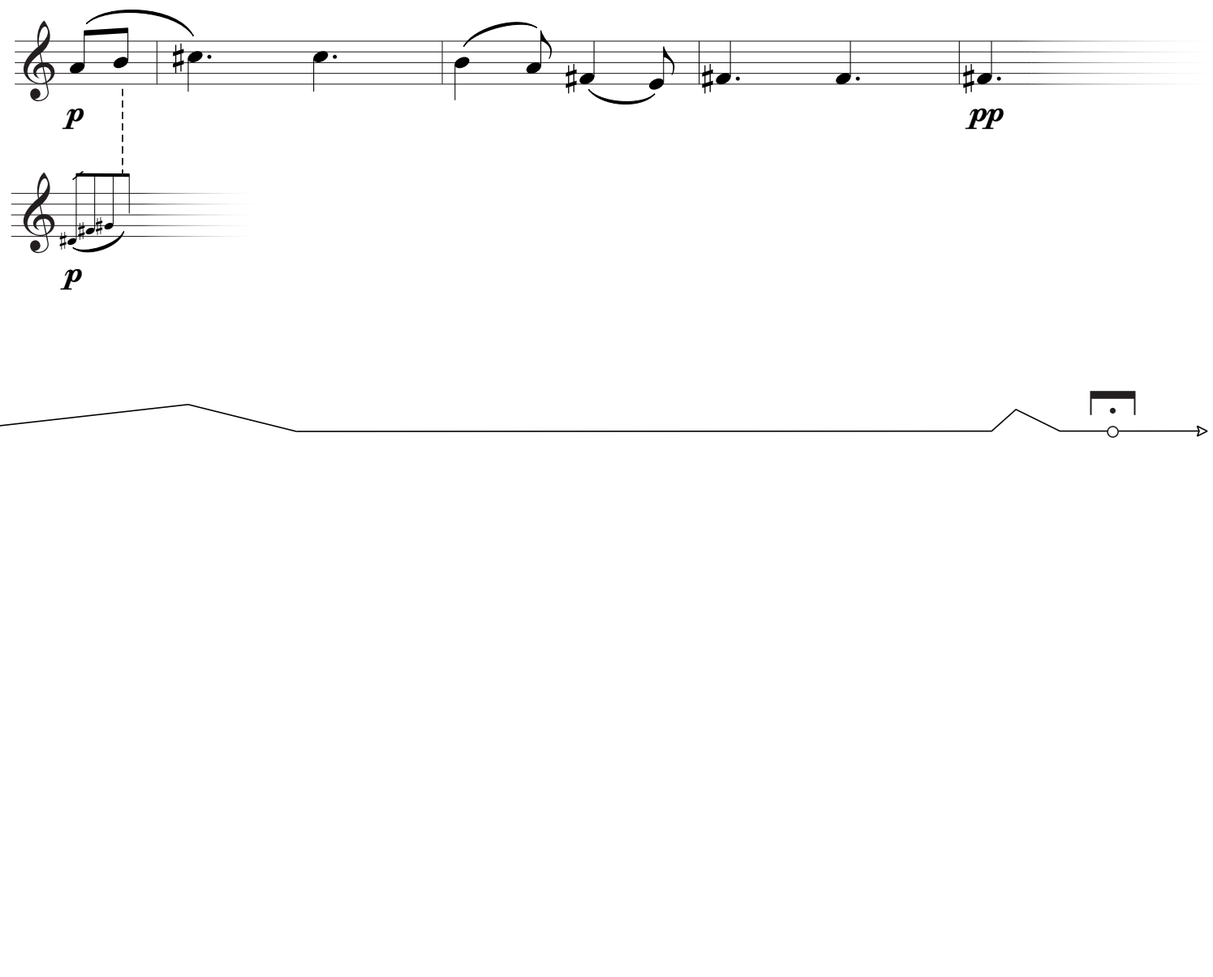
pp p pp

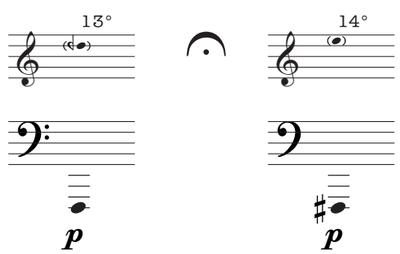

pp
pp
p
pp
p
pp
ppp
pp
p
pp
p
pp
pp
pp
pppp
(Ped.)
12°
ppp

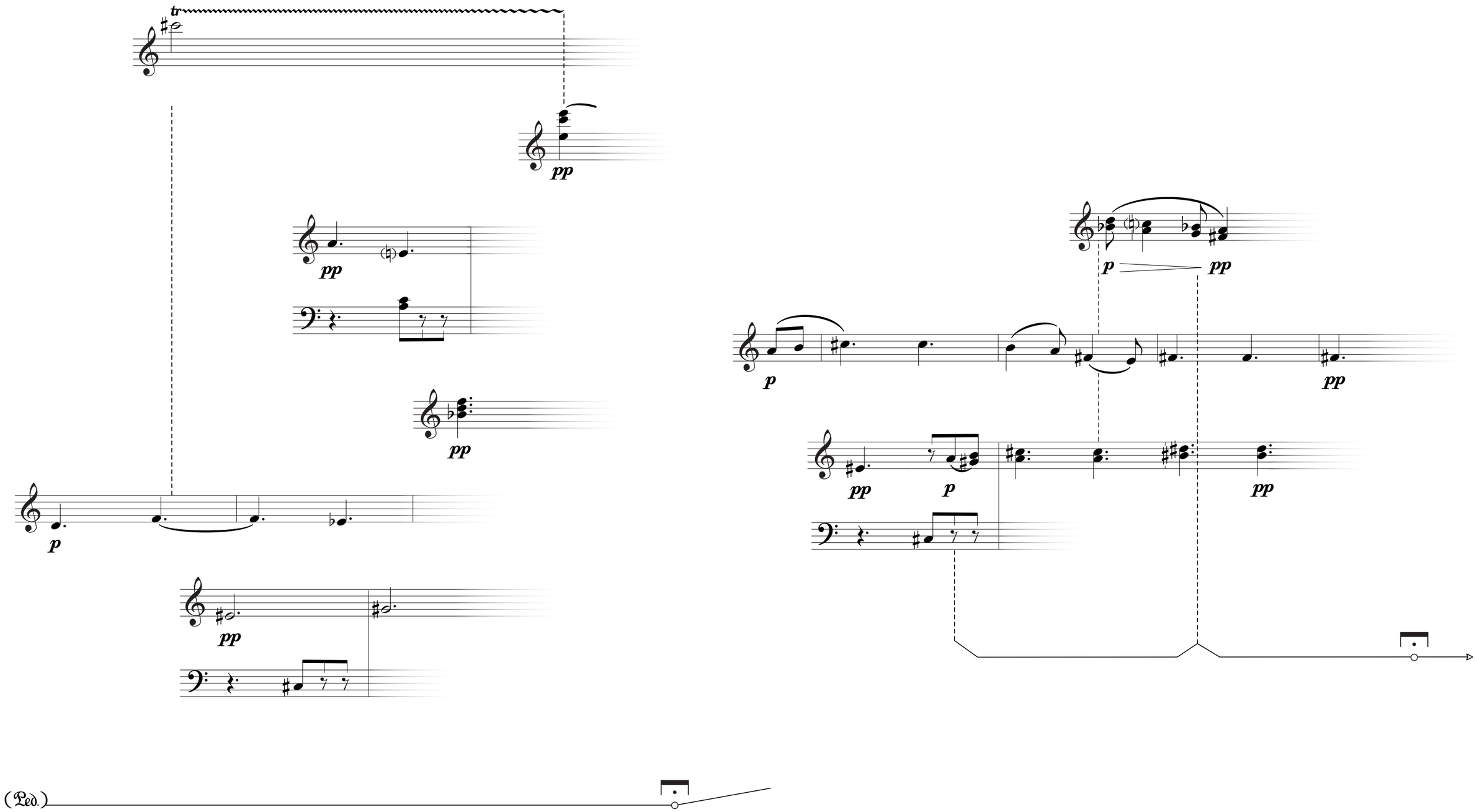

p
pp


p
pp


p
pp


p
pp
p
(Ped.)


13°
14°
p
p


tr
pp
pp
pp
p
pp
p
pp
p
pp
pp
p
pp
(Ped.)

(very long)

tr

p pp

pp

(Ped.)

SLUTT

12°

ppp

13°

ppp

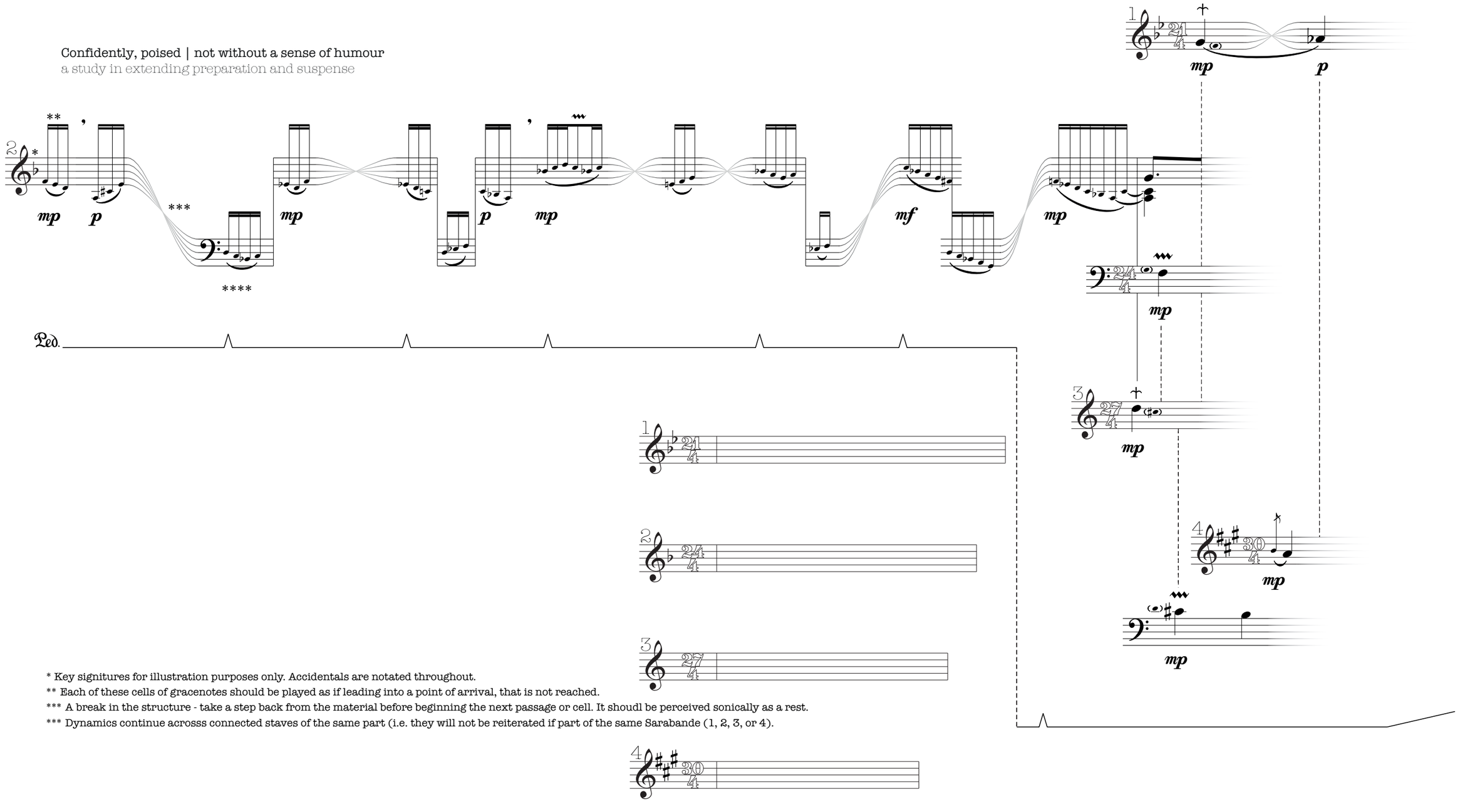
siúil go ciúin

tríú blúirín

(third fragment)

Confidently, poised | not without a sense of humour

a study in extending preparation and suspense

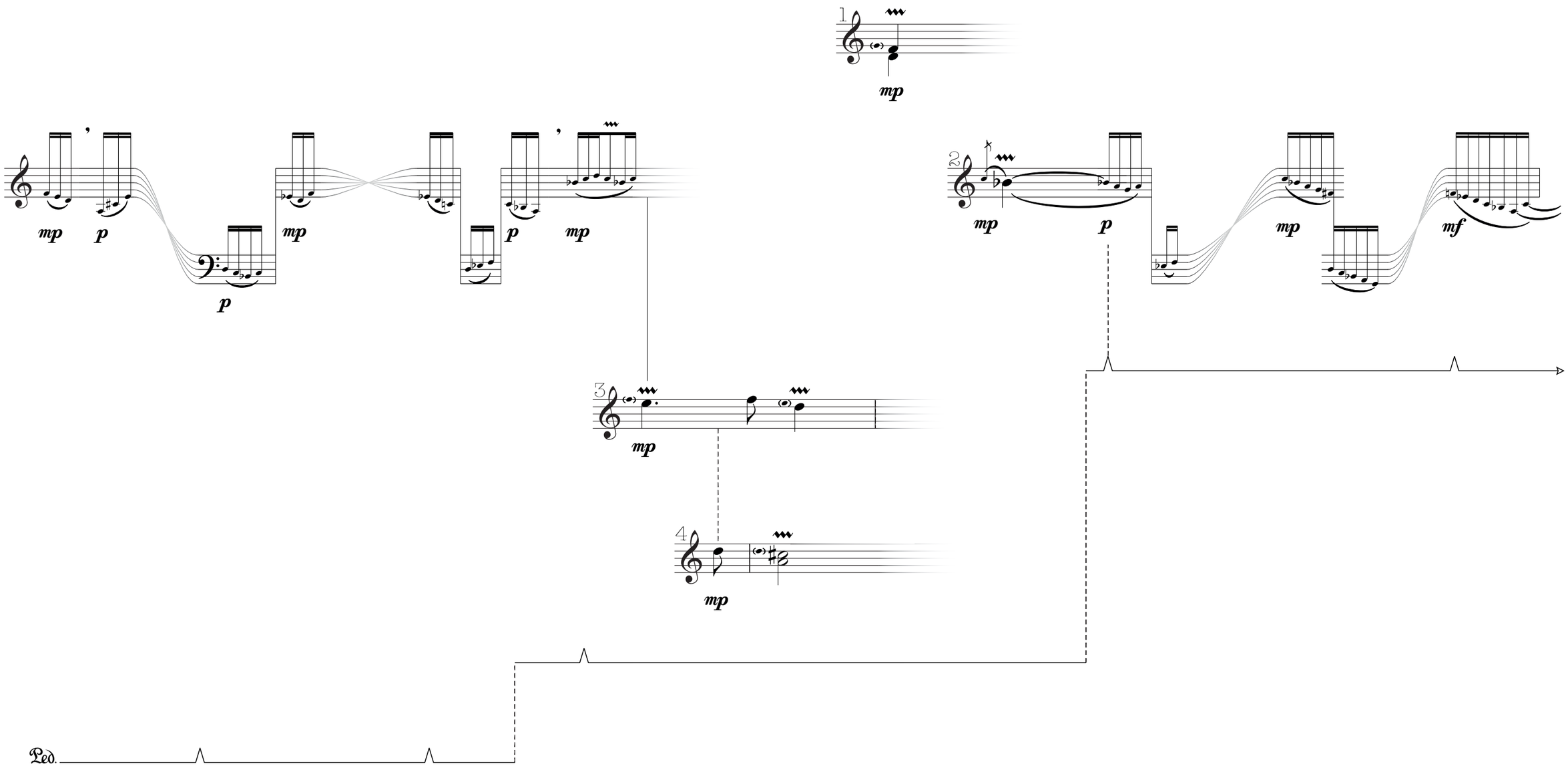


* Key signitures for illustration purposes only. Accidentals are notated throughout.

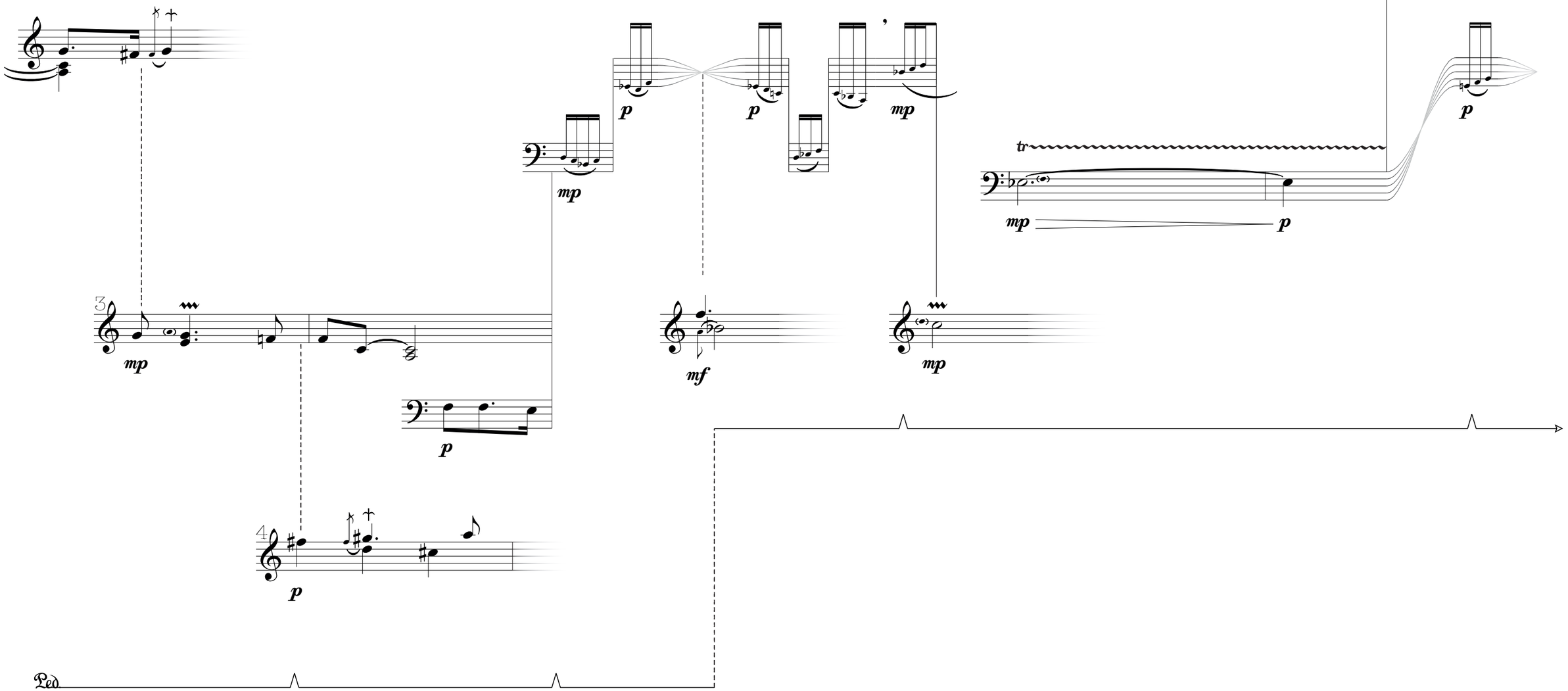
** Each of these cells of gracenotes should be played as if leading into a point of arrival, that is not reached.

*** A break in the structure - take a step back from the material before beginning the next passage or cell. It shoudl be perceived sonically as a rest.

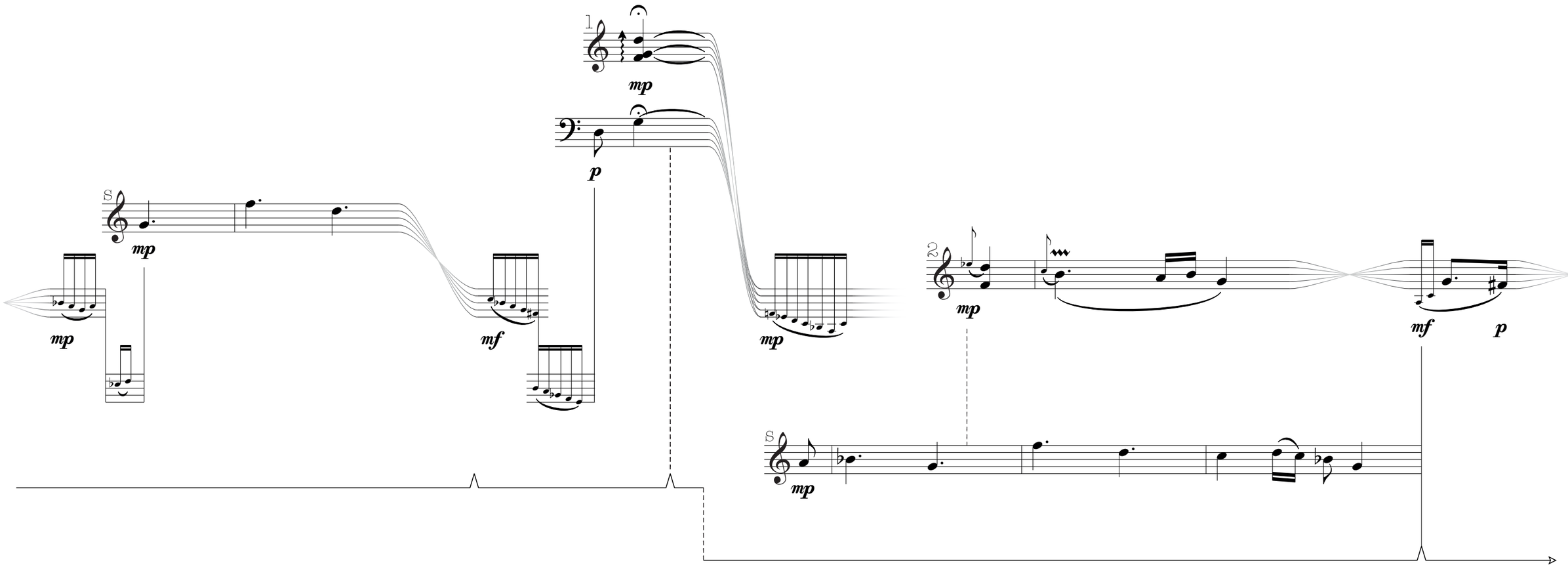
*** Dynamics continue acrosss connected staves of the same part (i.e. they will not be reiterated if part of the same Sarabande (1, 2, 3, or 4).



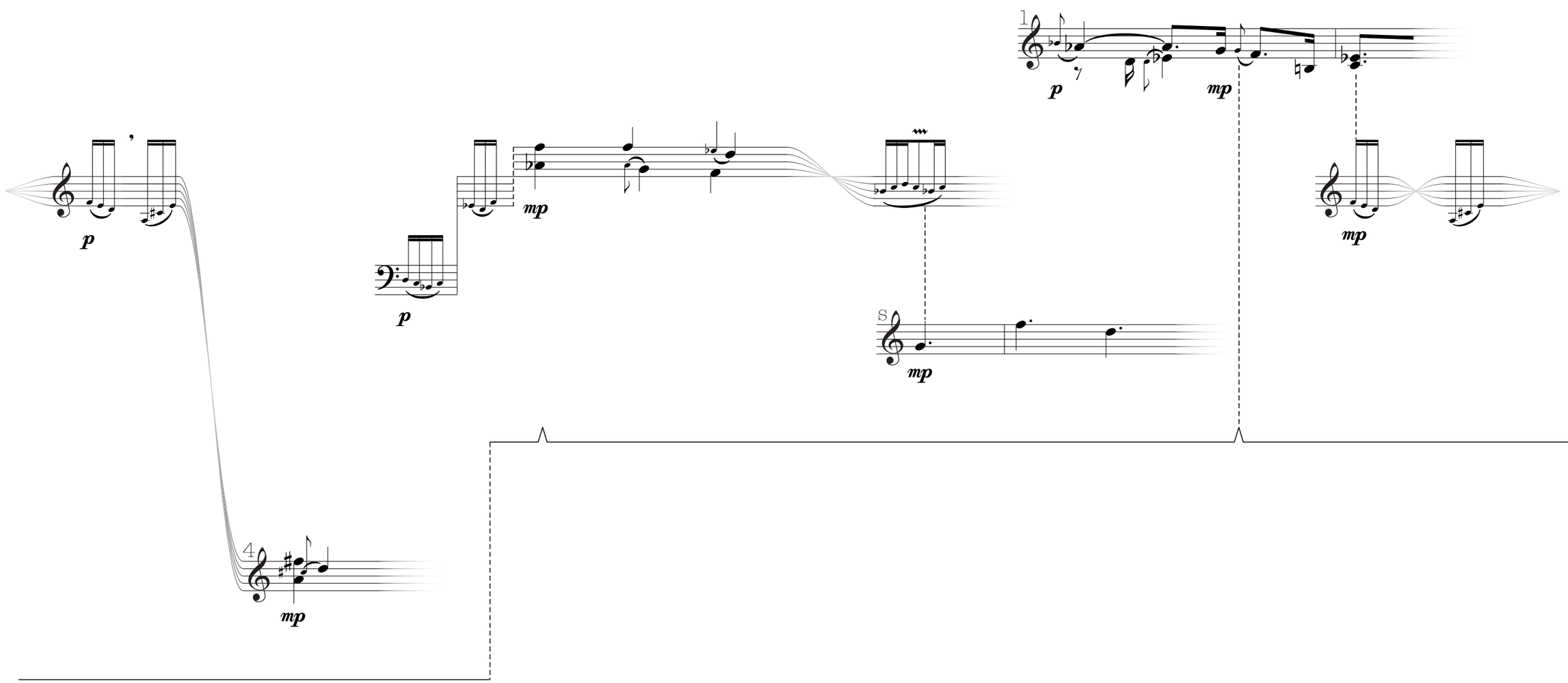
* Each of these cells of gracenotes should be played as if leading into a point of arrival, that is not reached.



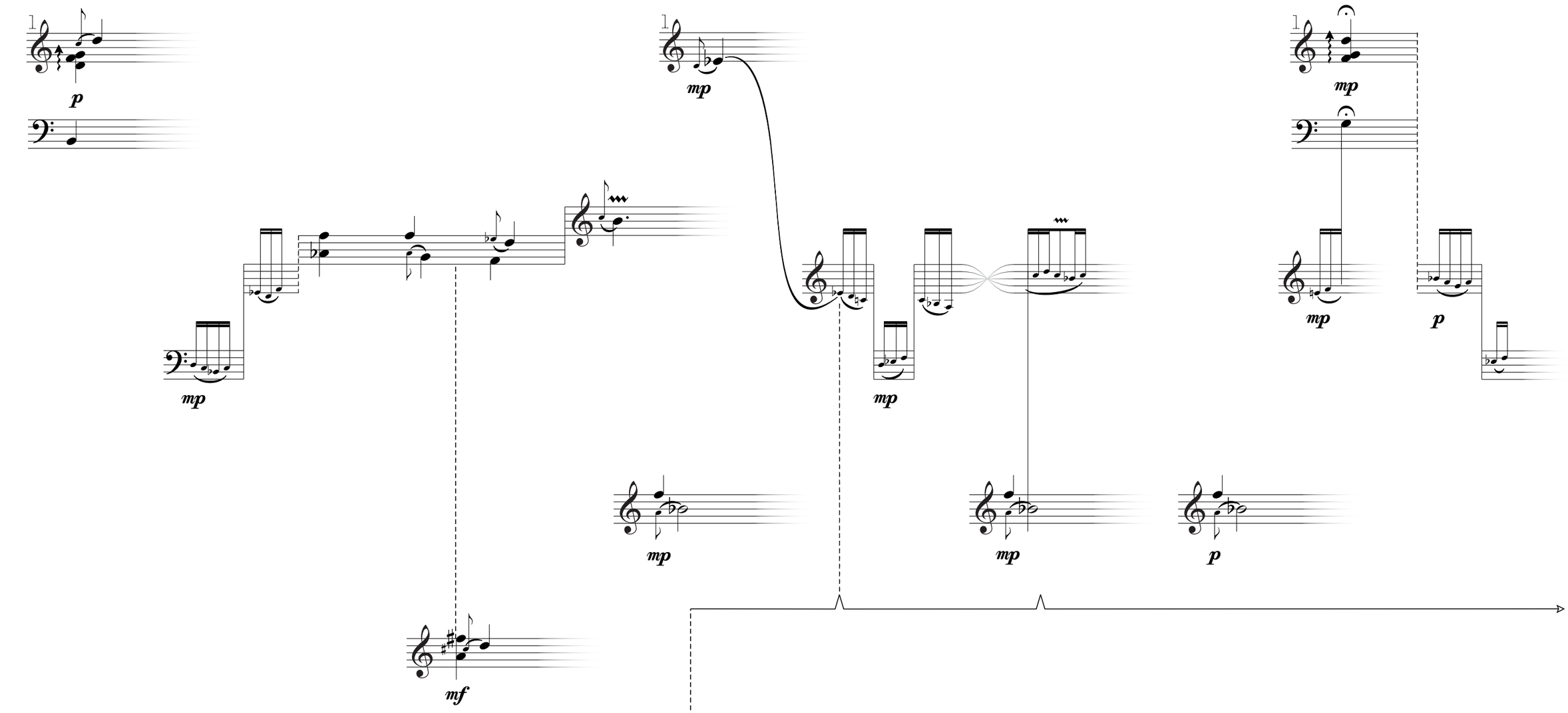
* Each of these cells of gracenotes should be played as if leading into a point of arrival, that is not reached.



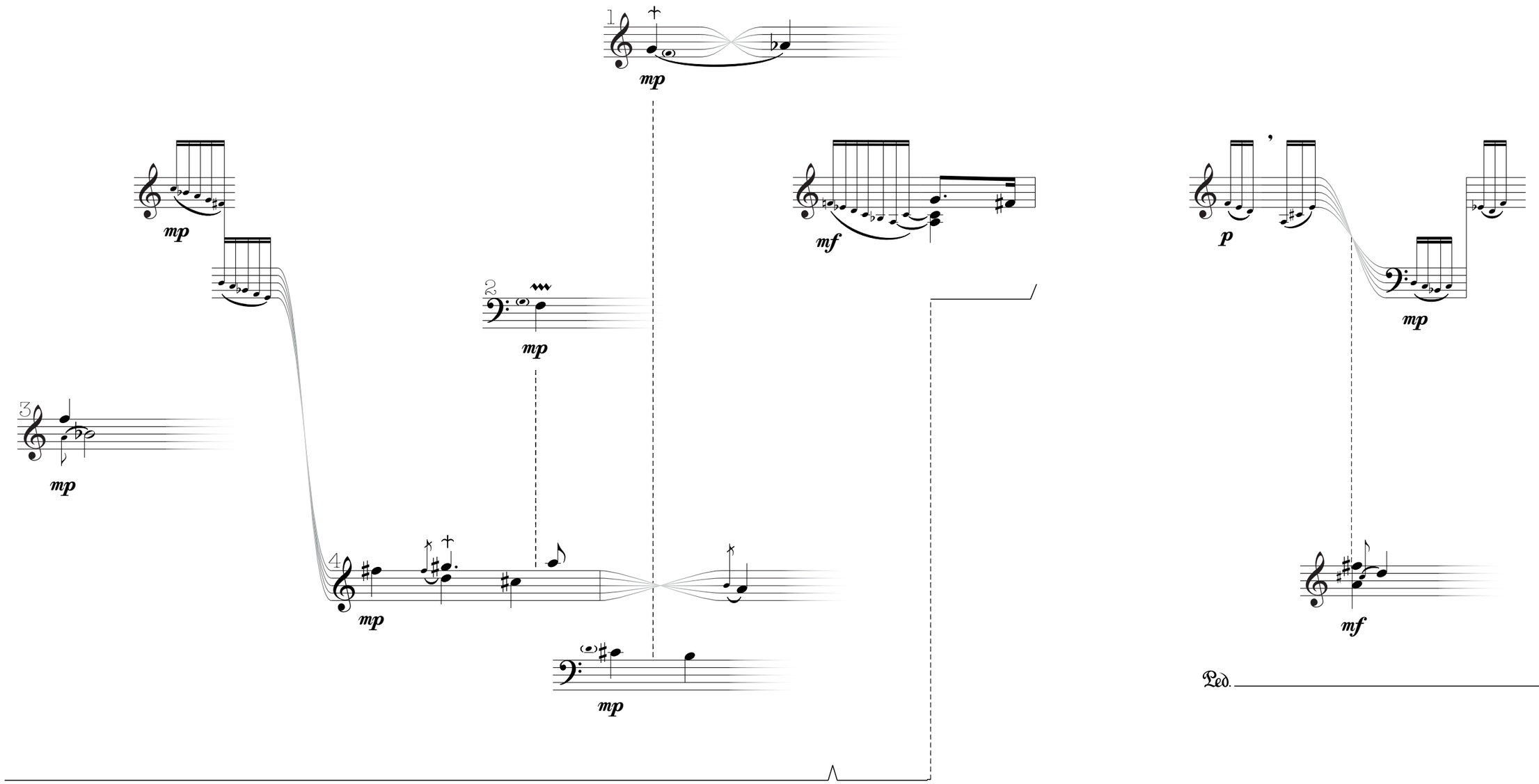
* Each of these cells of gracenotes should be played as if leading into a point of arrival, that is not reached.



* Each of these cells of gracenotes should be played as if leading into a point of arrival, that is not reached.



* Each of these cells of gracenotes should be played as if leading into a point of arrival, that is not reached.



* Each of these cells of gracenotes should be played as if leading into a point of arrival, that is not reached.

1

mp

mp

2

mp

S

mp

tr

3

mp *p*

4

mp

1

p

mp

S

mp

p

mf

4

mf

SLUTT

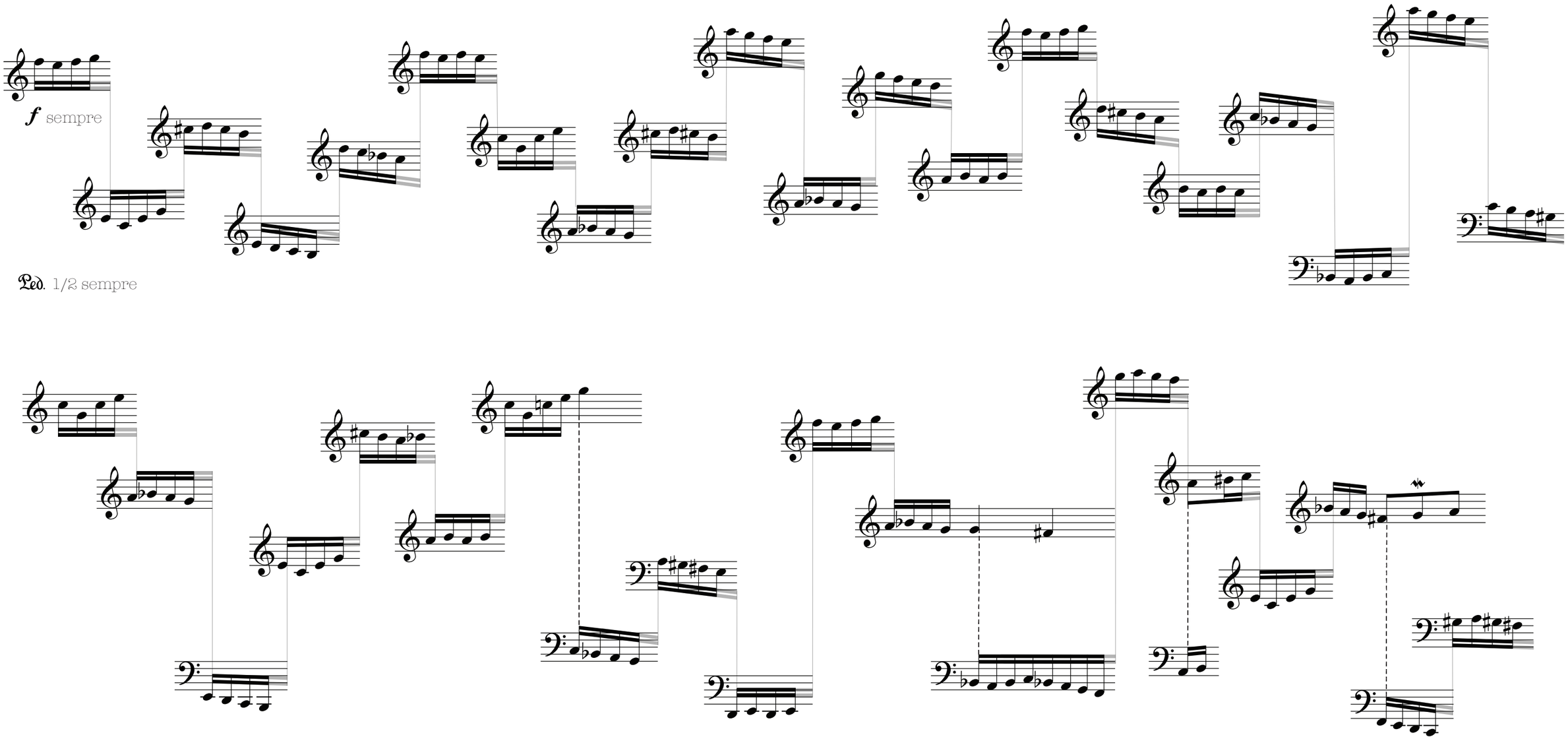
* Each of these cells of gracenotes should be played as if leading into a point of arrival, that is not reached.

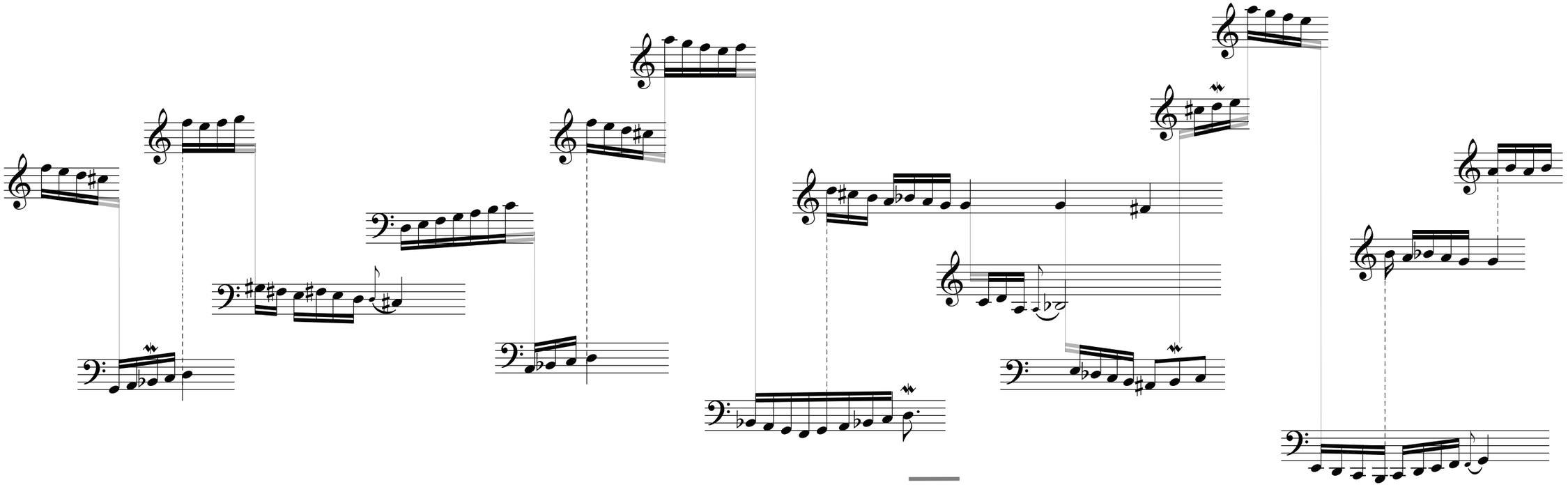
siúil go ciúin

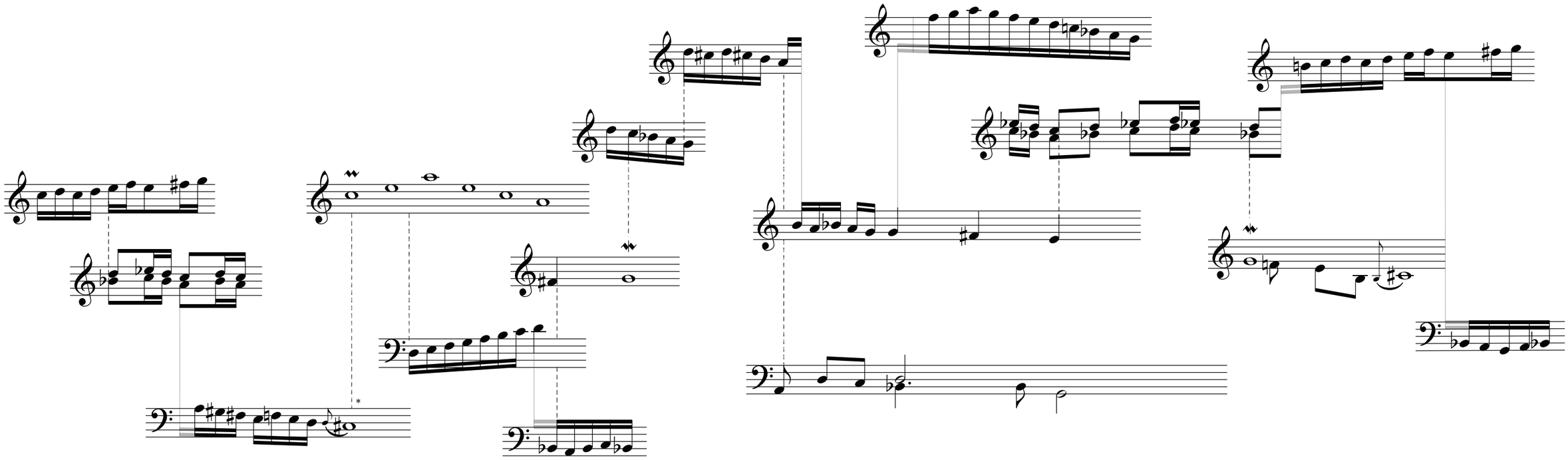
ceathrú blúire

(fourth fragment)

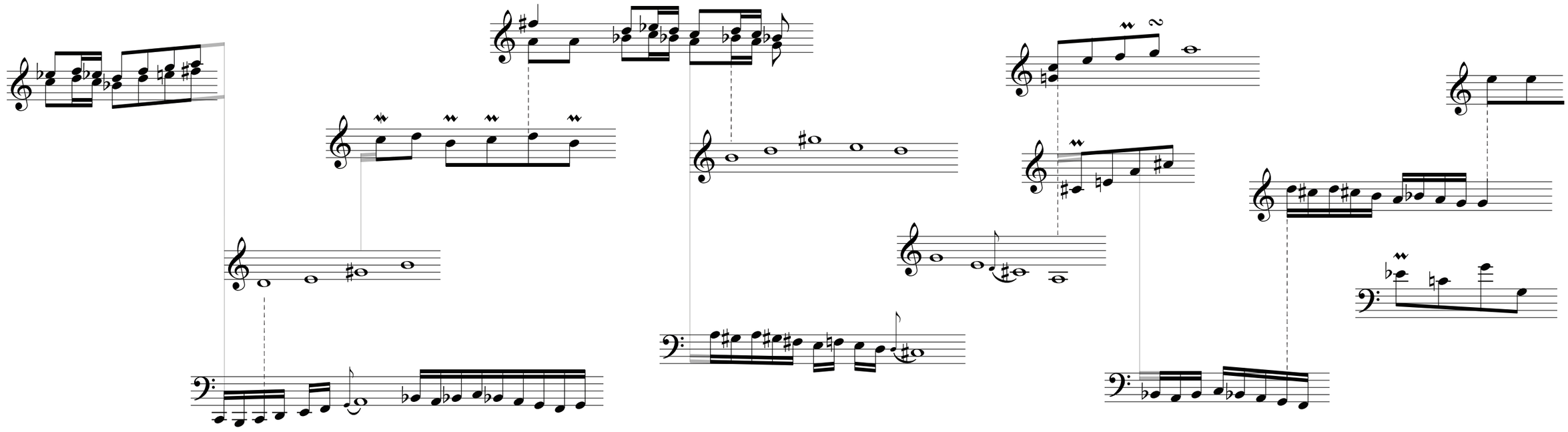
♩= c.112 An Elegant Perpetuum Mobile

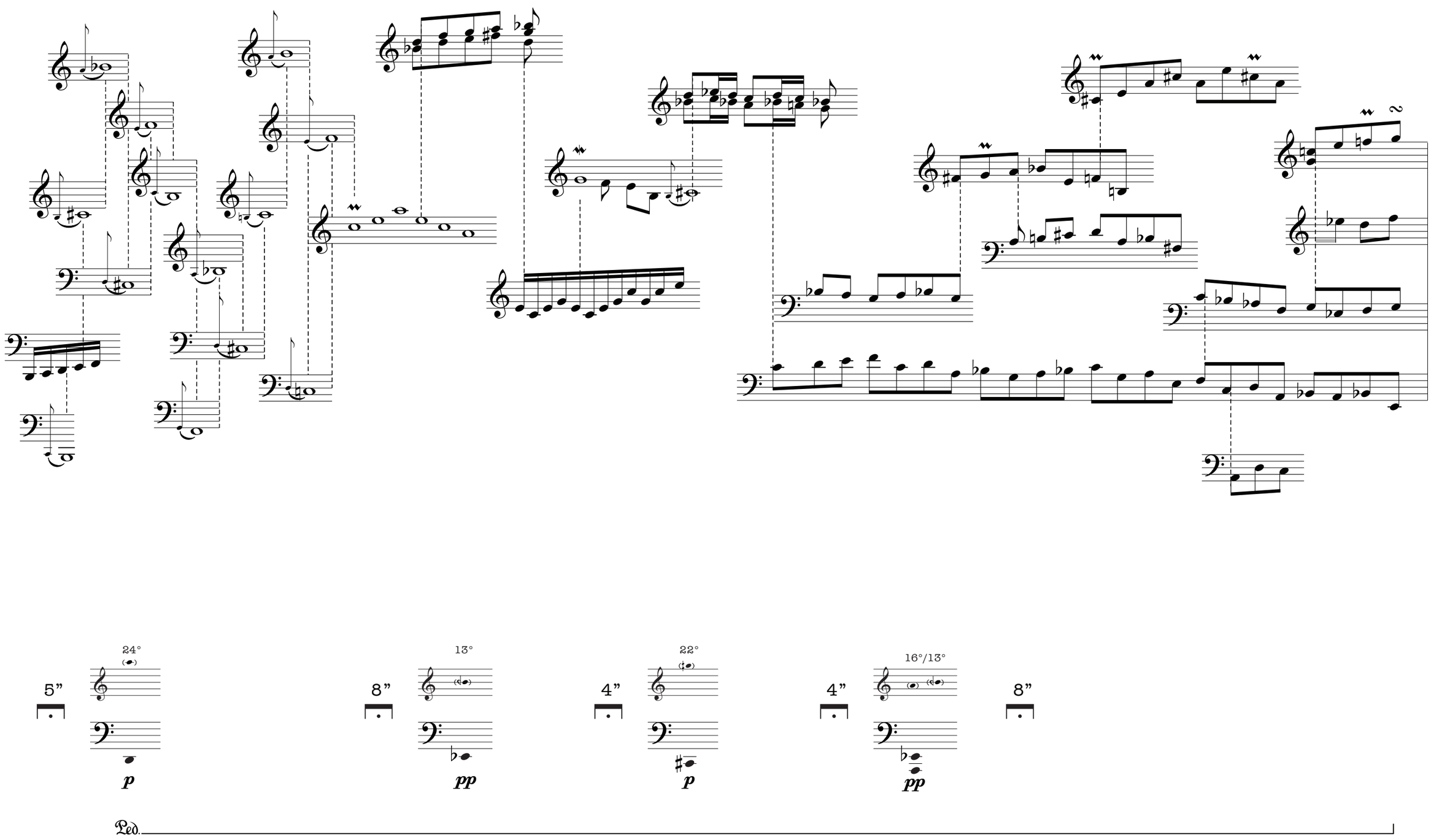






* Unlike other note lengths, Semibreves should be read as free durationally speaking.




5”
24°
p
8”
13°
pp
4”
22°
p
4”
16°/13°
pp
8”
Ped.

‖𝅝‖ = c.192

mf sempre

(1/2 Ped.)

2”

22°

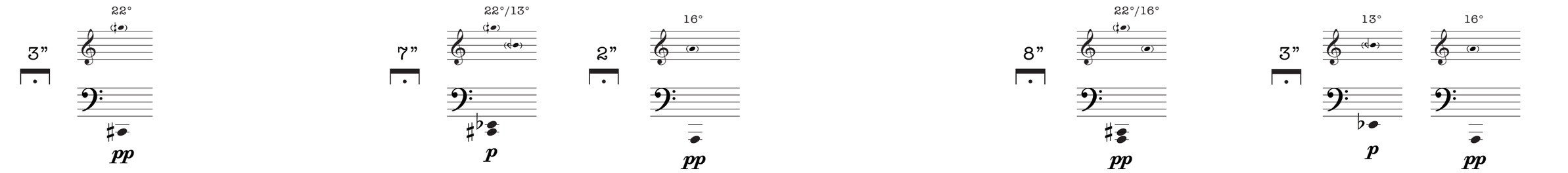
p

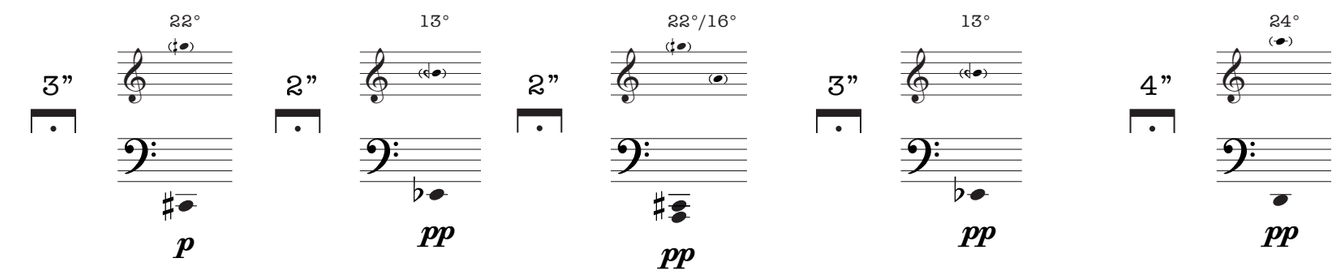
6”

16°/13°

pp

Ped.

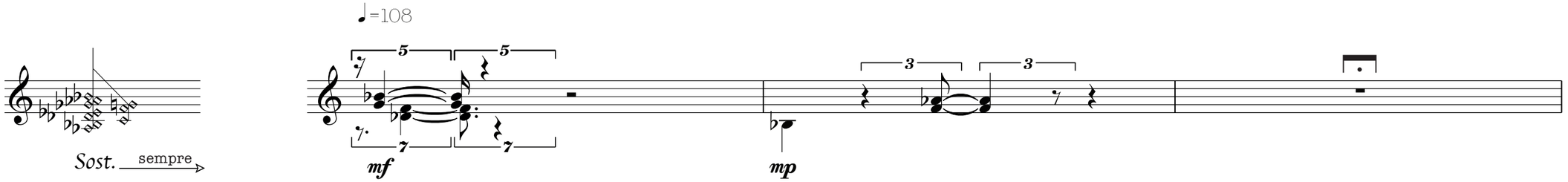

3”
22°
pp
7”
22°/13°
p
2”
16°
pp
8”
22°/16°
pp
3”
13°
p
16°
pp

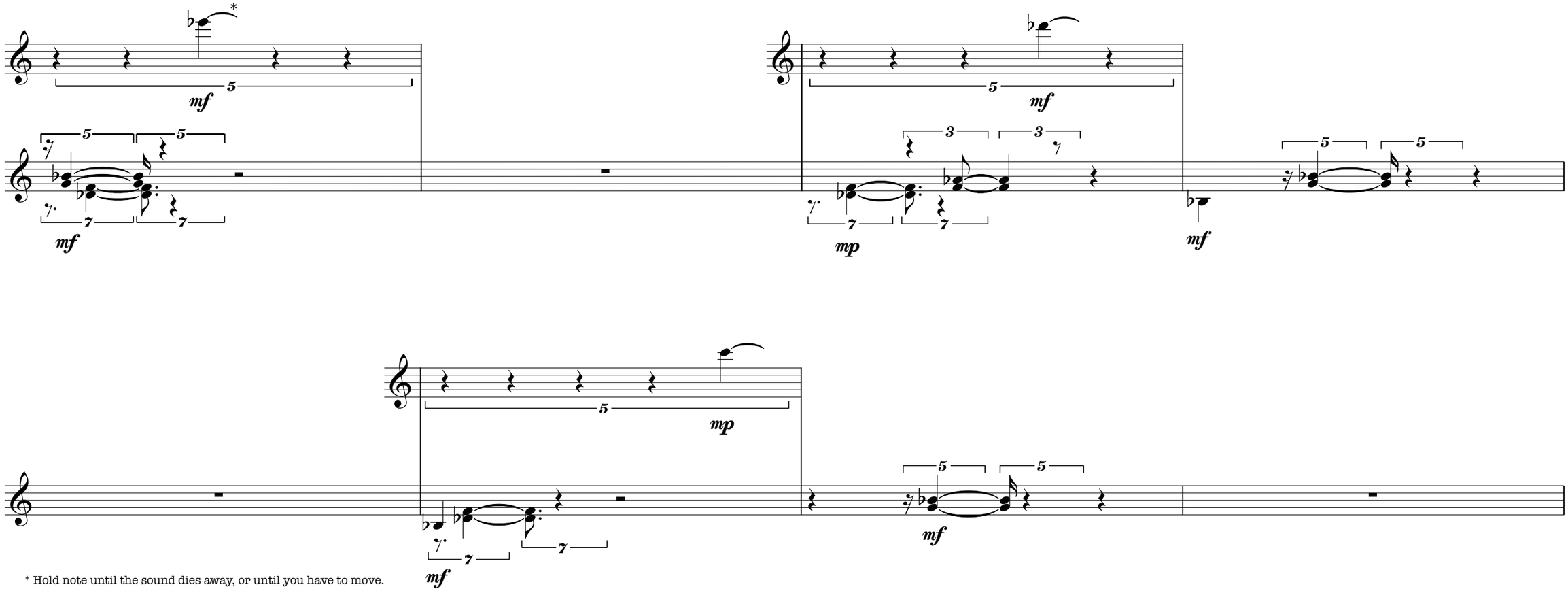

3”
22°
p
2”
13°
pp
2”
22°/16°
pp
3”
13°
pp
4”
24°
pp

siúil go ciúin

cúigiú blúire

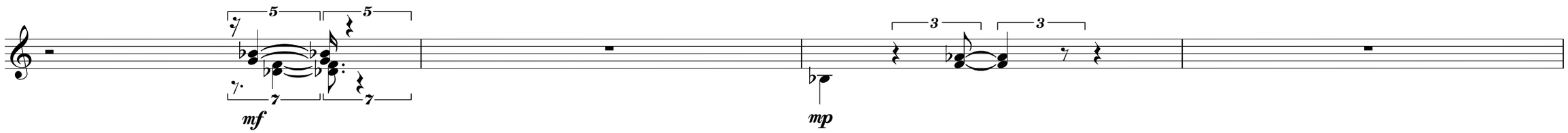
(fifth fragment)

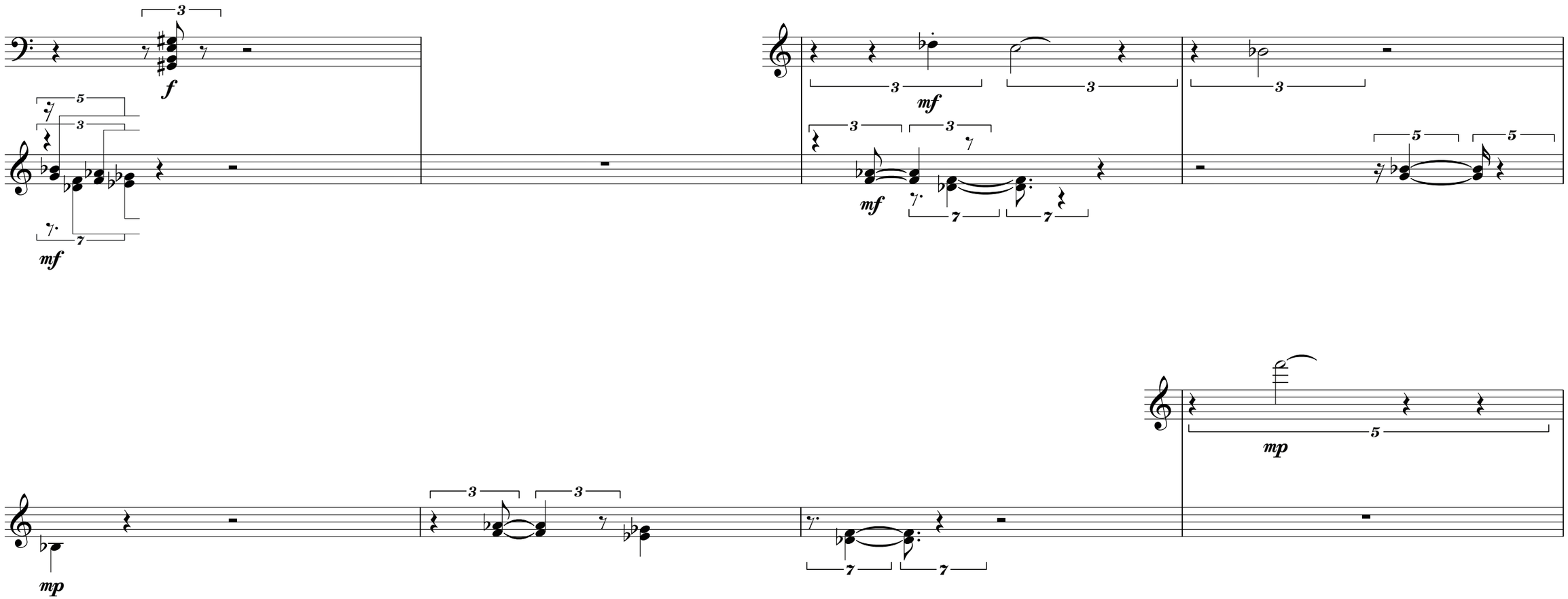


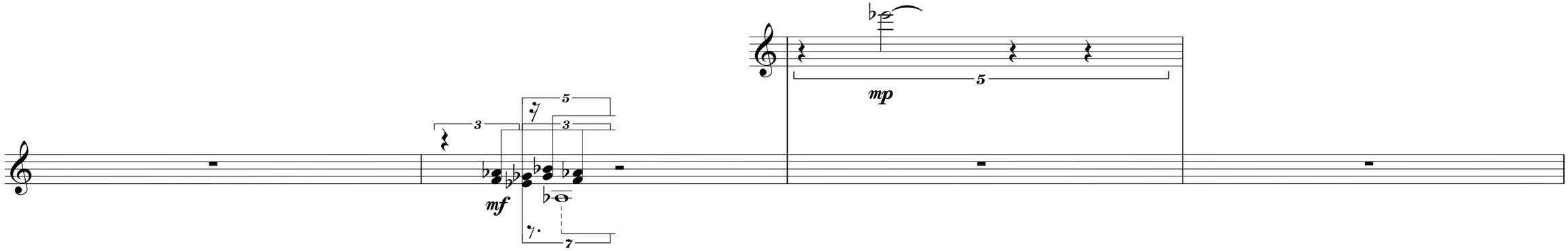


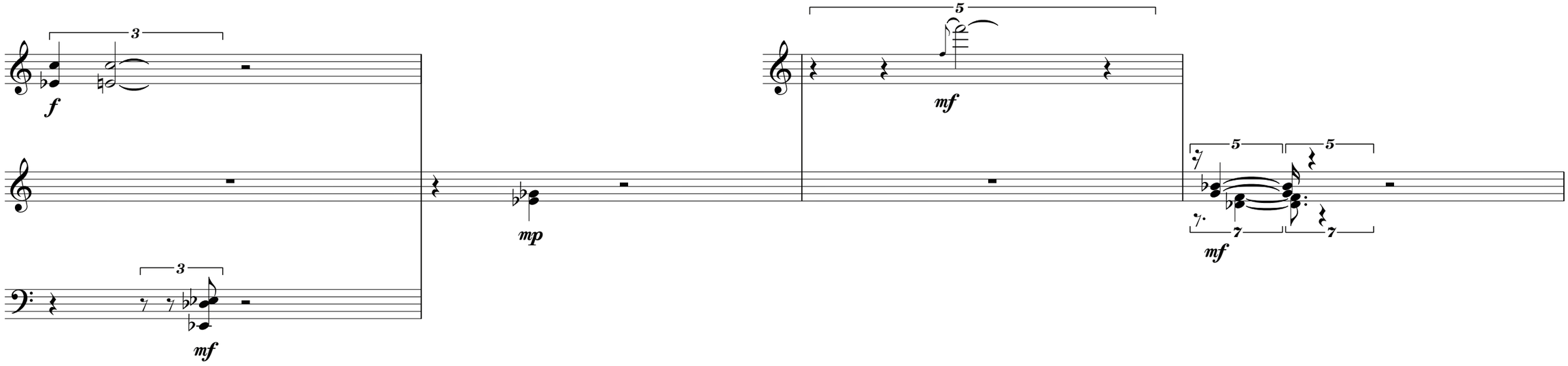
* Hold note until the sound dies away, or until you have to move.

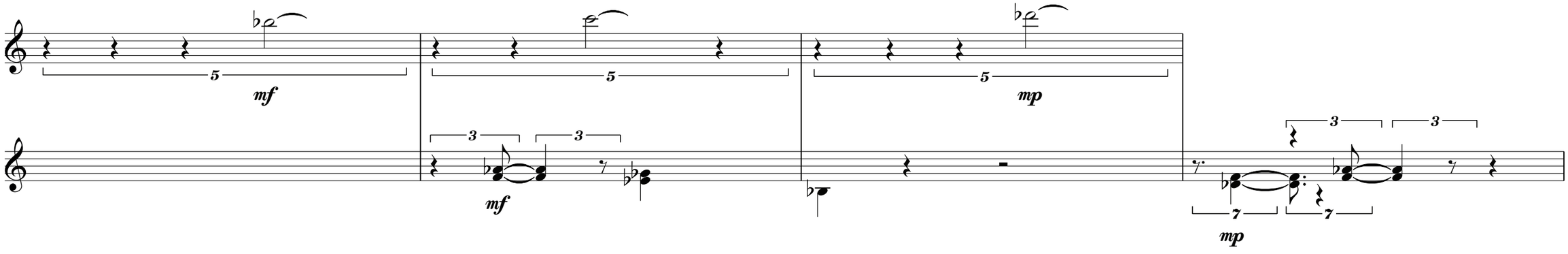
mf mf mf mp mp


5
5
7
7
mf
3
3
mp


3
f
5
3
7
mf
3
3
mf
3
3
3
5
5
mp
3
3
mp
7
7
5
mp


3
5
3
mf
7
mp
5


3
f
mp
3
mf
5
mf
5
5
7
7
mf


5
mf
5
mf
5
mp
3
3
mf
3
3
7
7
mp

5

mf

3

3

mp

mf

3

mf

5

5

5

3

3

3

7

7

7

mf

5

mp

14°

12°

5

5

8vb

8vb

mp

Ped.

♩=38

3/4

f

14°

12°

5

5

7

7

8vb

♩=108

4/4

5

5

7

7

mf

mp
mf
f
10°
8vb
mp
Ped.
mf
14°
12°
14°
12°
12°
10°
14°
8vb
8vb
8vb
f
mf
f
mp
mp
♩=38
mf

♩= 260

mf

♩= 108

3

f

3 3 3 3 3 3

f *mp* *mf*

mp

3

f

(attacca)

3 3

pp

♩= 38

mf

♩= 260

f

♩=108

5 5

7 7

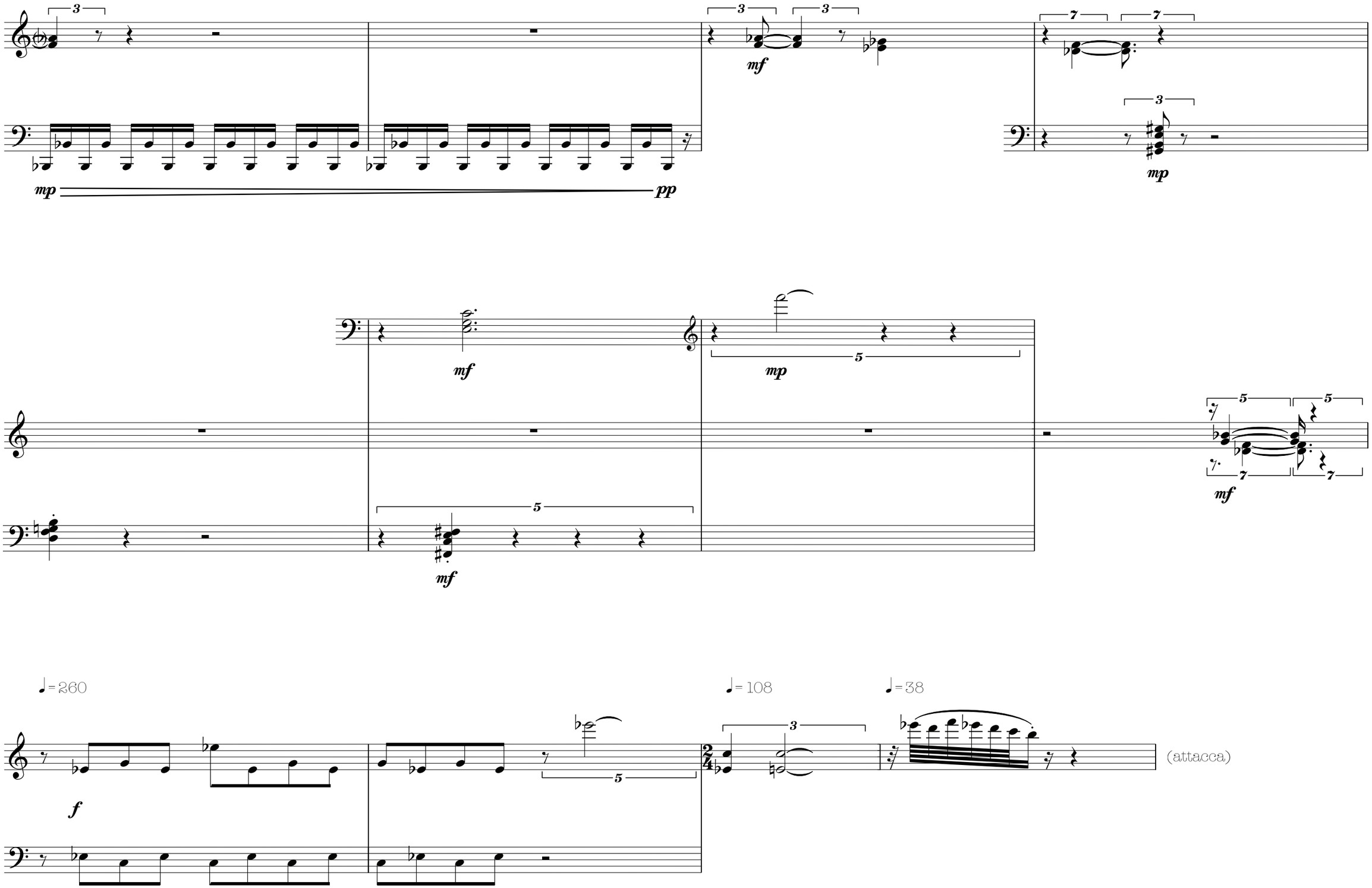
f

5

mf

3 3

mp


mp
pp
mf
mp
mf
mp
mf
mf
♩= 260
f
♩= 108
♩= 38
(attacca)

♩=260

mf

mp

♩=108

mf

f

mf

mp

f

mf

mf

mf

mf

♩=38

f

mf

♩=38

(attacca)

Ped.

♩=108

14° 12° 10° 12°

8vb

mp

mf

mf

♩= 38 ♩= 260 ♩= 108 ♩= 38 ♩= 108 ♩= 38

mf f f f f f

♩=108

14°

♩=260

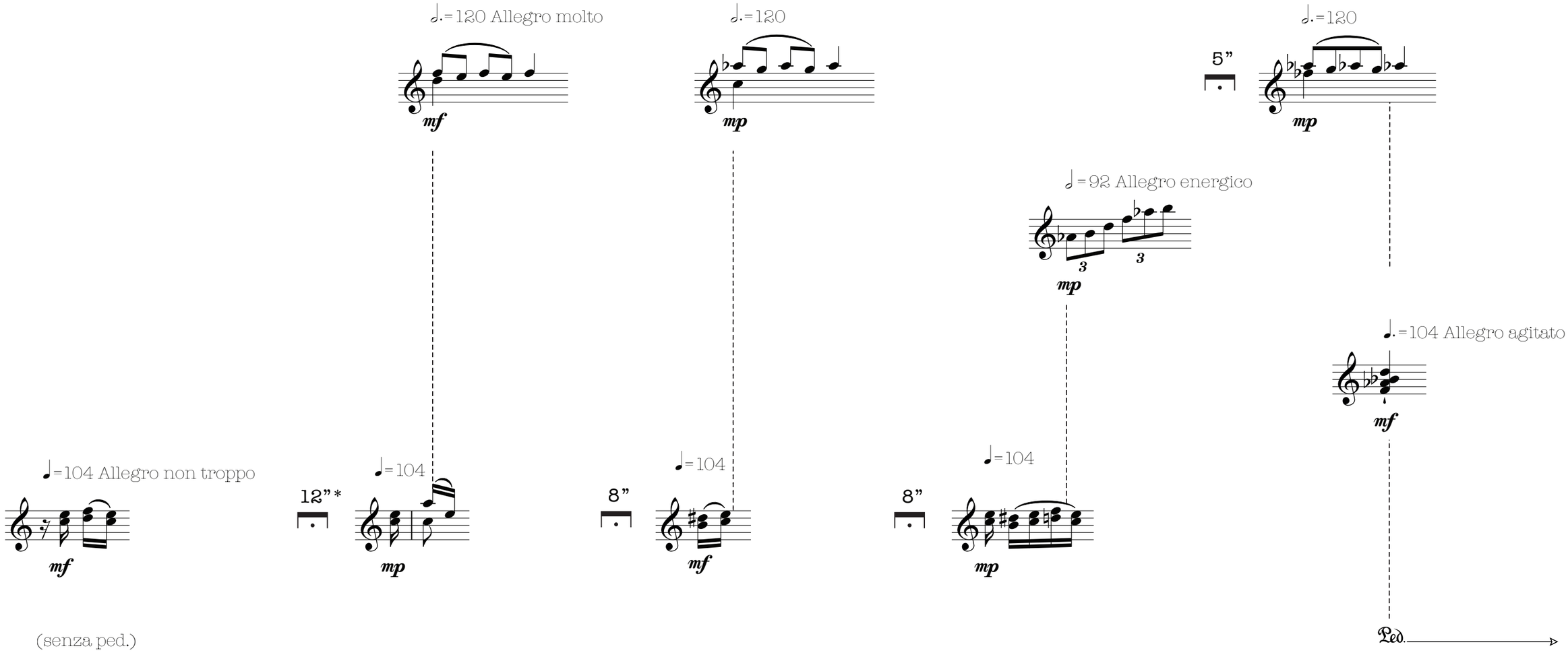
♩=38

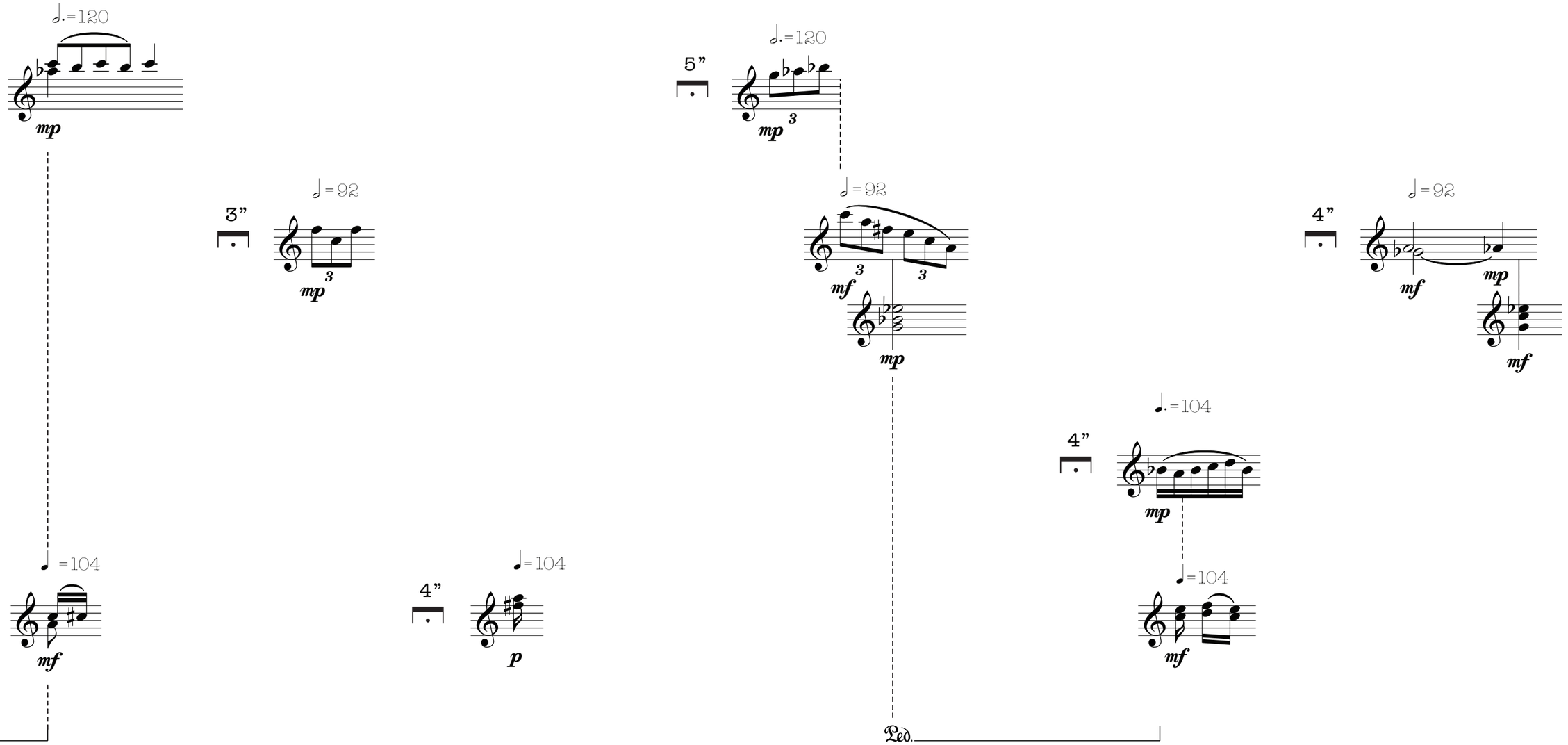
SLUTT

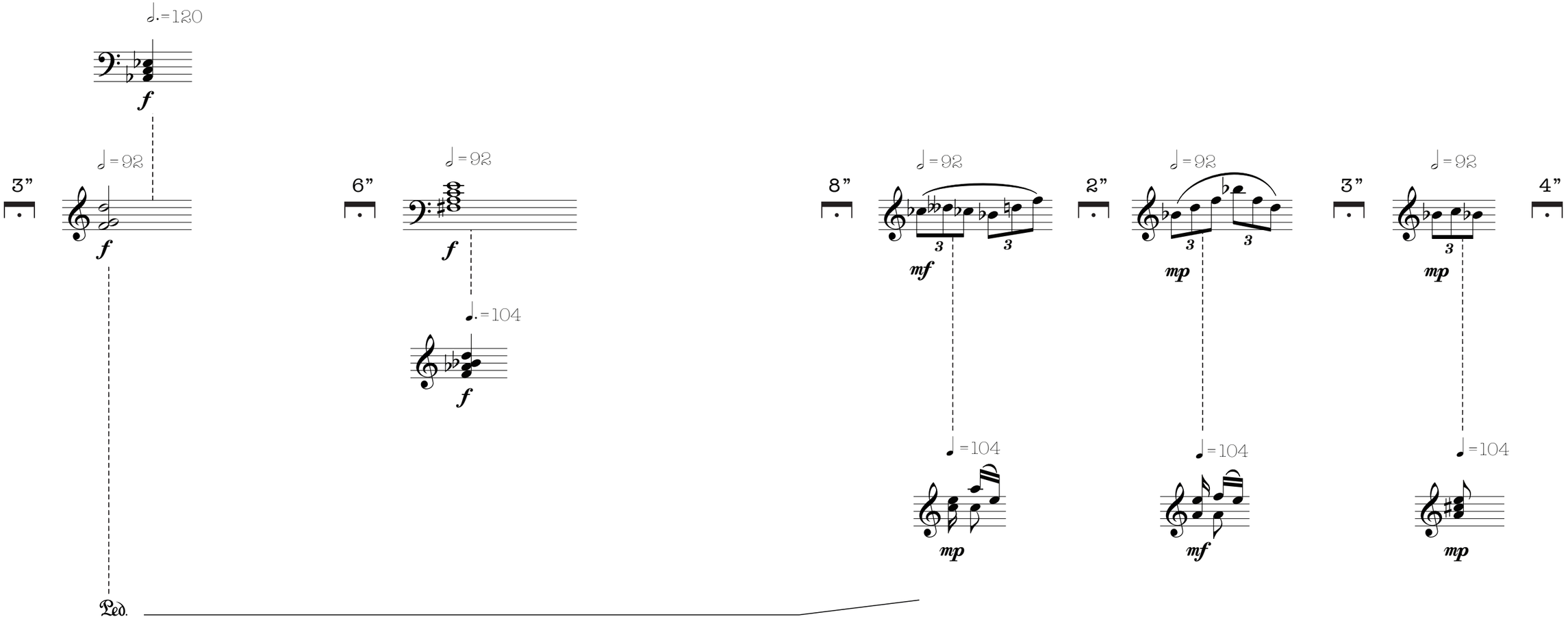
siúil go ciúin

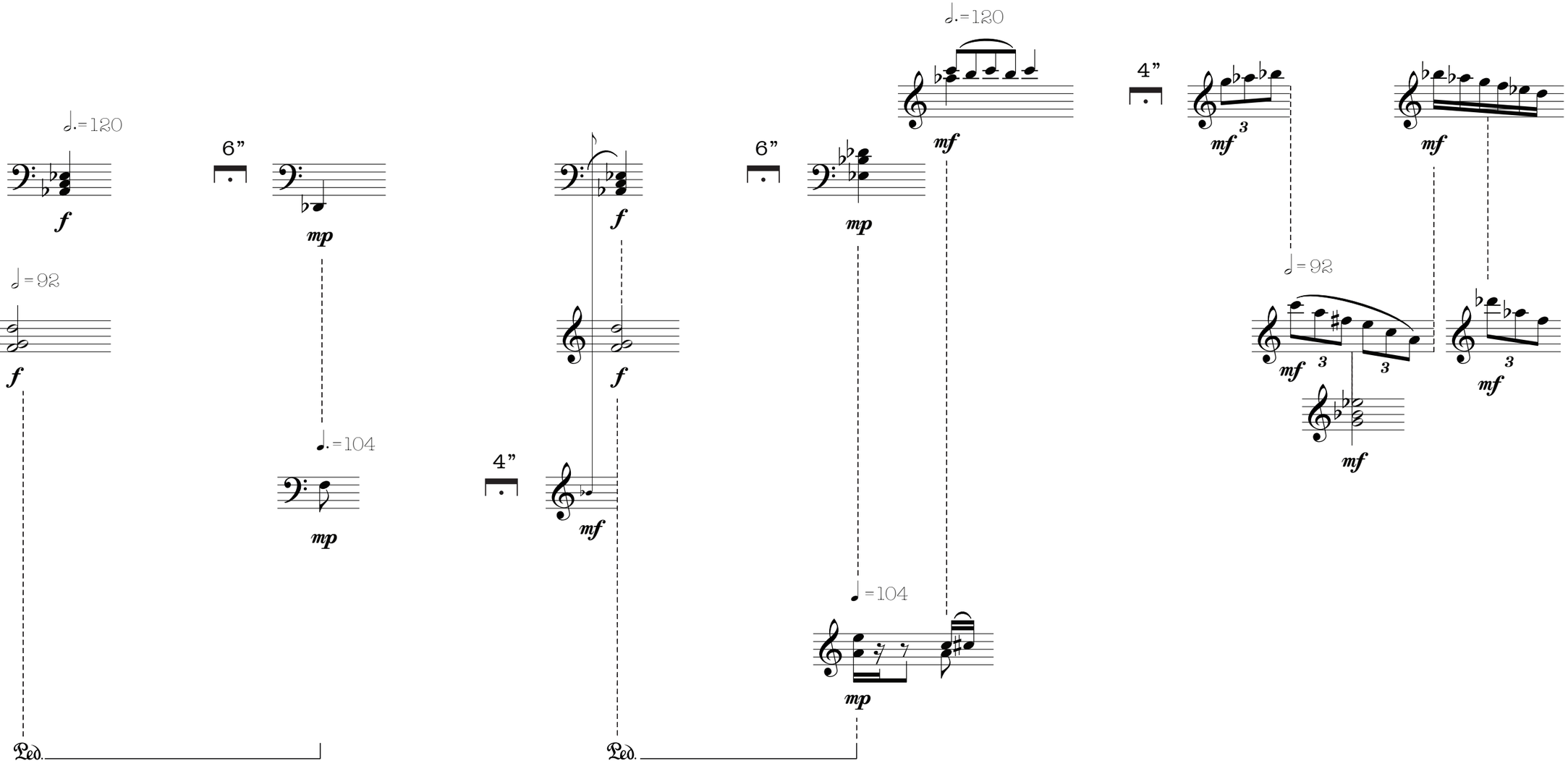
an séú blúirín

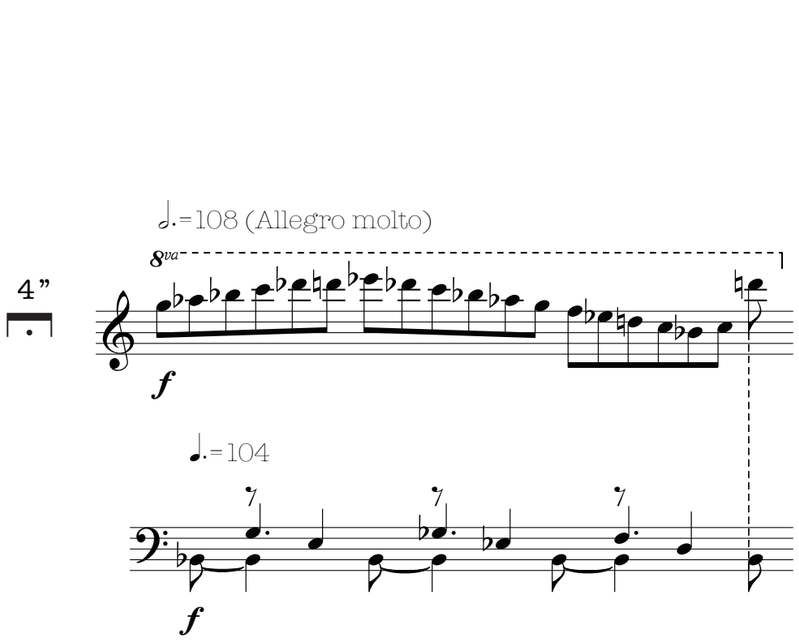
(sixth fragment)

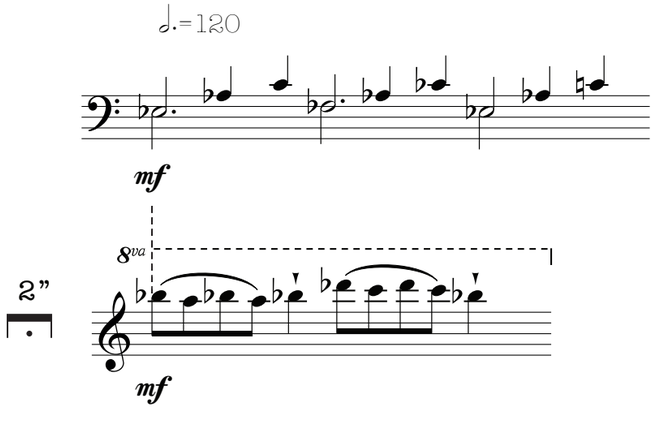


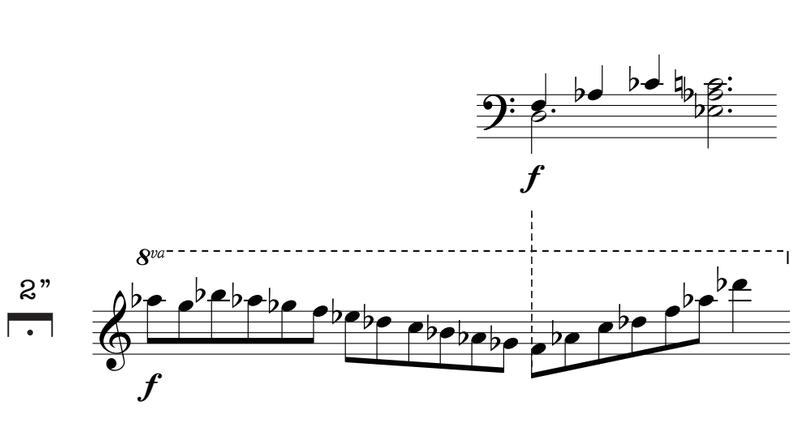

♩.=120
mp
3”
♩=92
3
mp
6”
♩=104
mf
4”
♩=104
p
5”
♩.=120
3
mp
♩=92
3
3
mf
mp
4”
♩.=104
mp
♩=104
mf
mf
Ped.

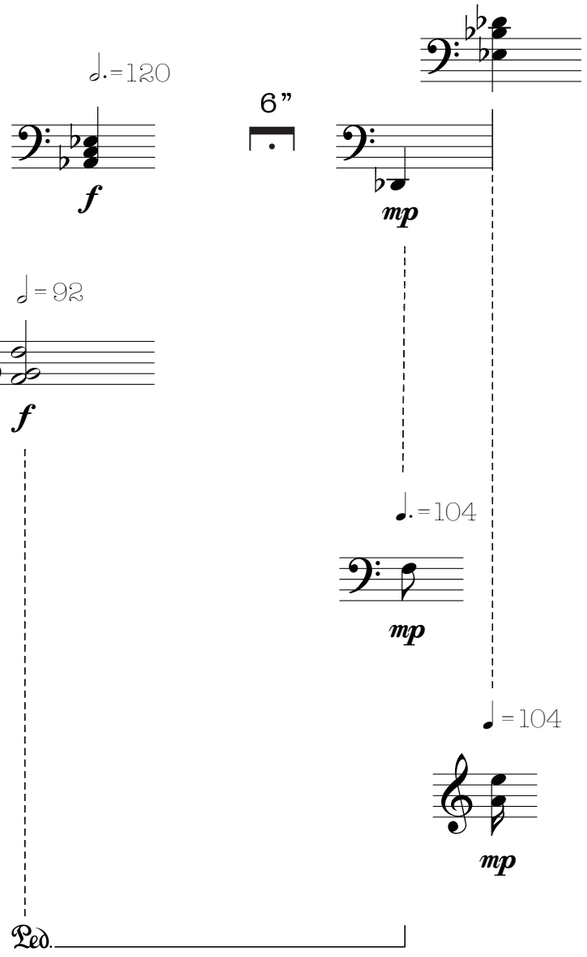

♩.=120
f
3”
♩=92
f
6”
♩=92
f
♩.=104
f
8”
♩=92
3
3
mf
♩=104
mp
2”
♩=92
3
3
mp
♩=104
mf
3”
♩=92
3
mp
♩=104
mp
4”
Ped.

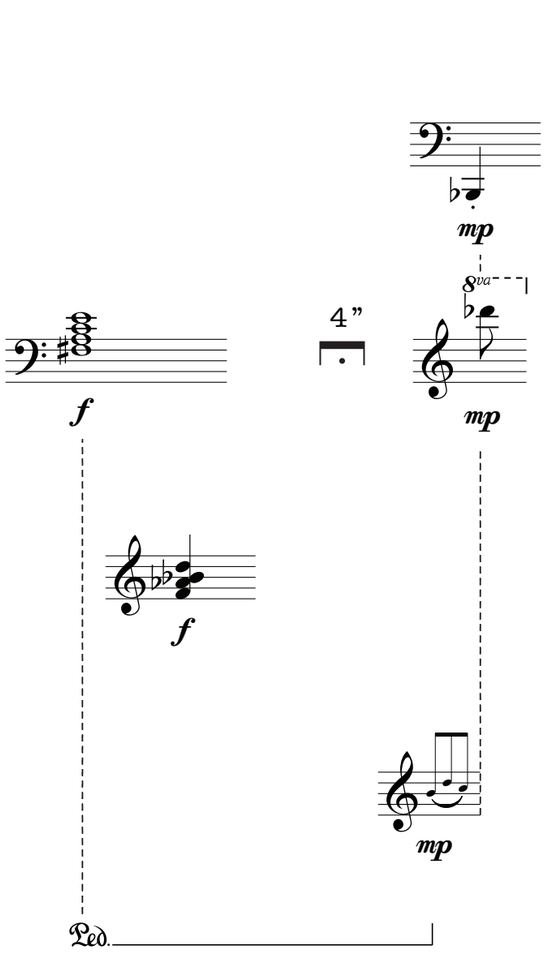

♩.=120
f
♩=92
f
Ped.
6”
mp
♩.=104
mp
4”
f
f
mf
Ped.
6”
mp
♩.=120
mf
♩=104
mp
Ped.
4”
mf 3
mf
mf 3 3
3
mf
mf

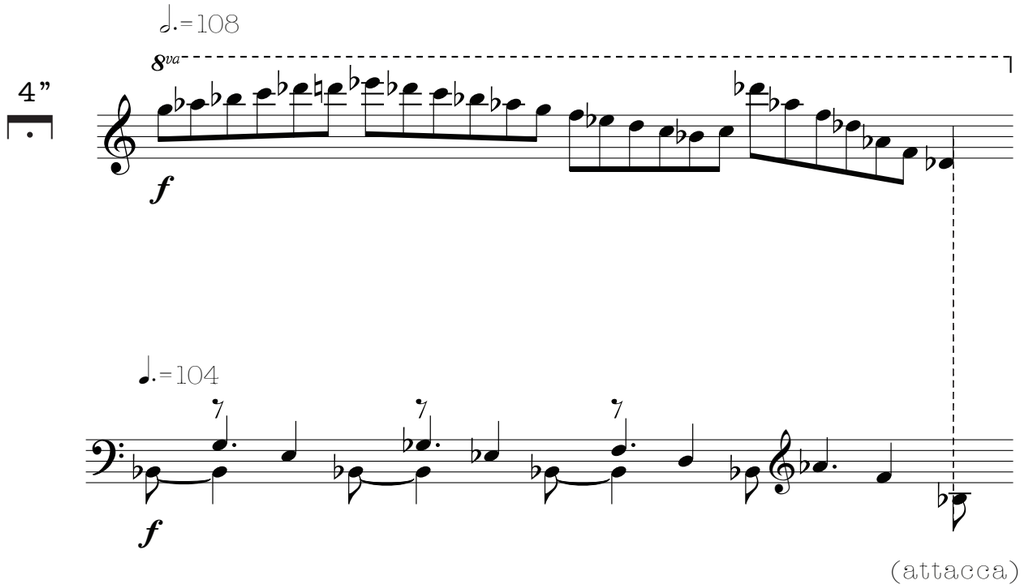

♩.=108 (Allegro molto)
8va
f
4”
♩.=104
f


♩.=120
mf
8va
mf
2”


f
8va
f
2”


♩.=120
f
6”
mp
♩=92
f
♩.=104
mp
♩=104
mp
Ped.


f
4”
mp
8va
f
mp
Ped.


4”
♩.=108
8va
f
♩.=104
f
(attacca)

Eb

mp

♩ =104

mp

8va

mp

f

♩ =92

fff

♩.=120

mf

♩.=104

5”

mp

4”

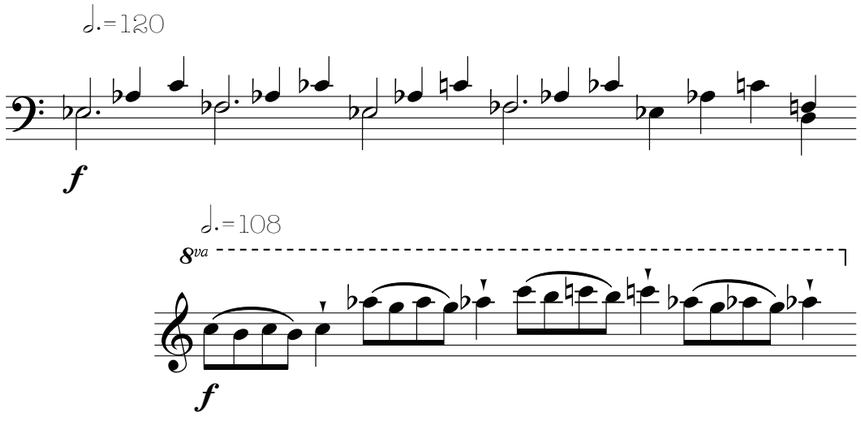
mp

5”

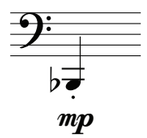
mp

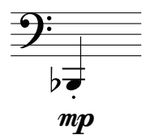
4”

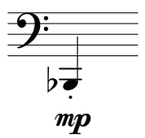
fff


♩.=120
f

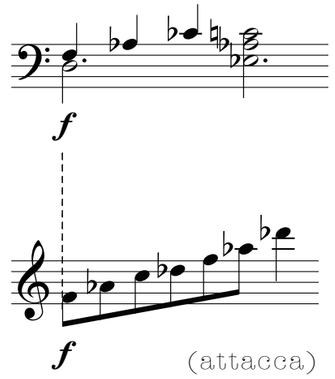
♩.=108
8va
f

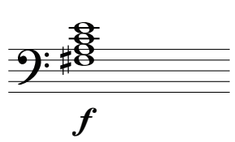

mp

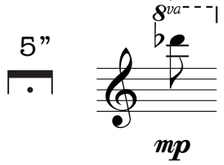

mp

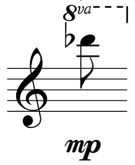

mp

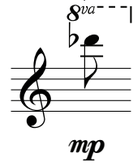
2”


f
f
(attacca)


♩=92
f

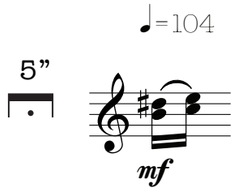

5”
8va
mp

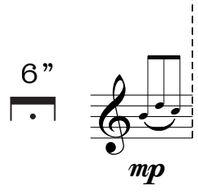

8va
mp

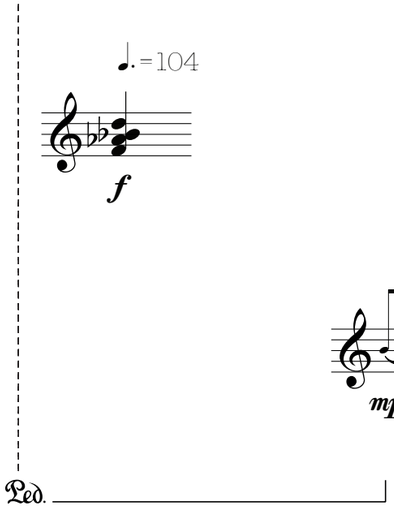

8va
mp

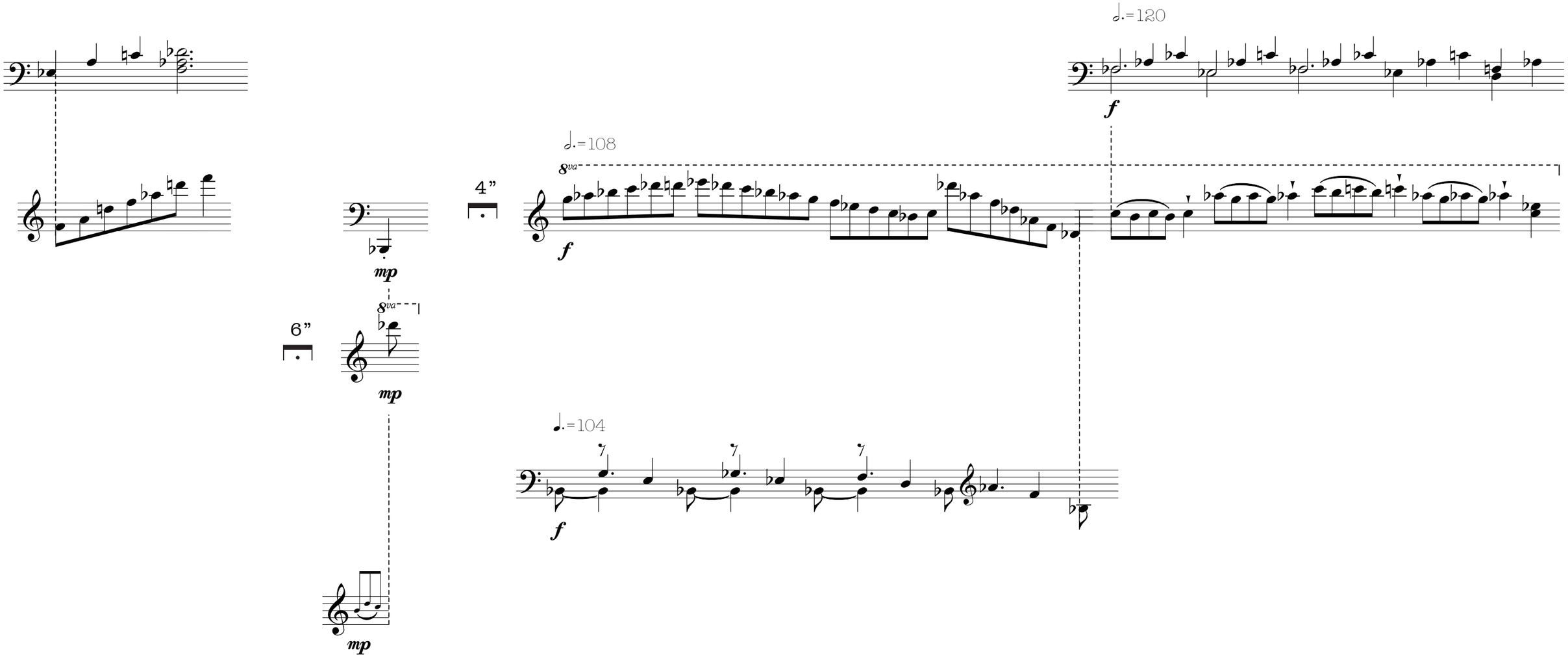
♩.=104
f

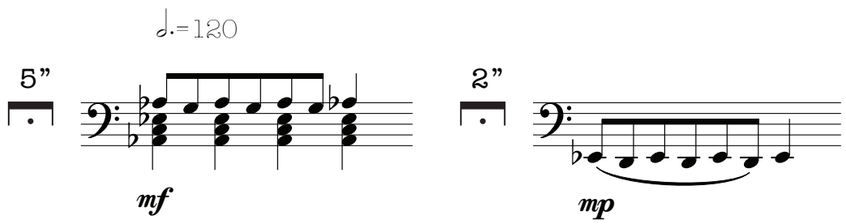
mp

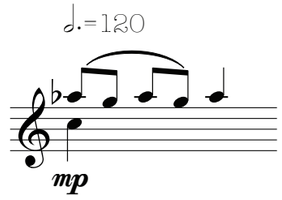

5”
♩=104
mf

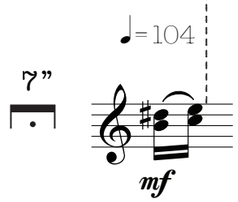

6”
mp

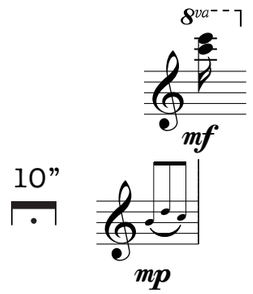

Ped.


♩.=120
f
♩.=108
8va
f
4”
mp
6”
8va
mp
♩.=104
f
mp


♩.=120
5”
mf
2”
mp


♩.=120
mp

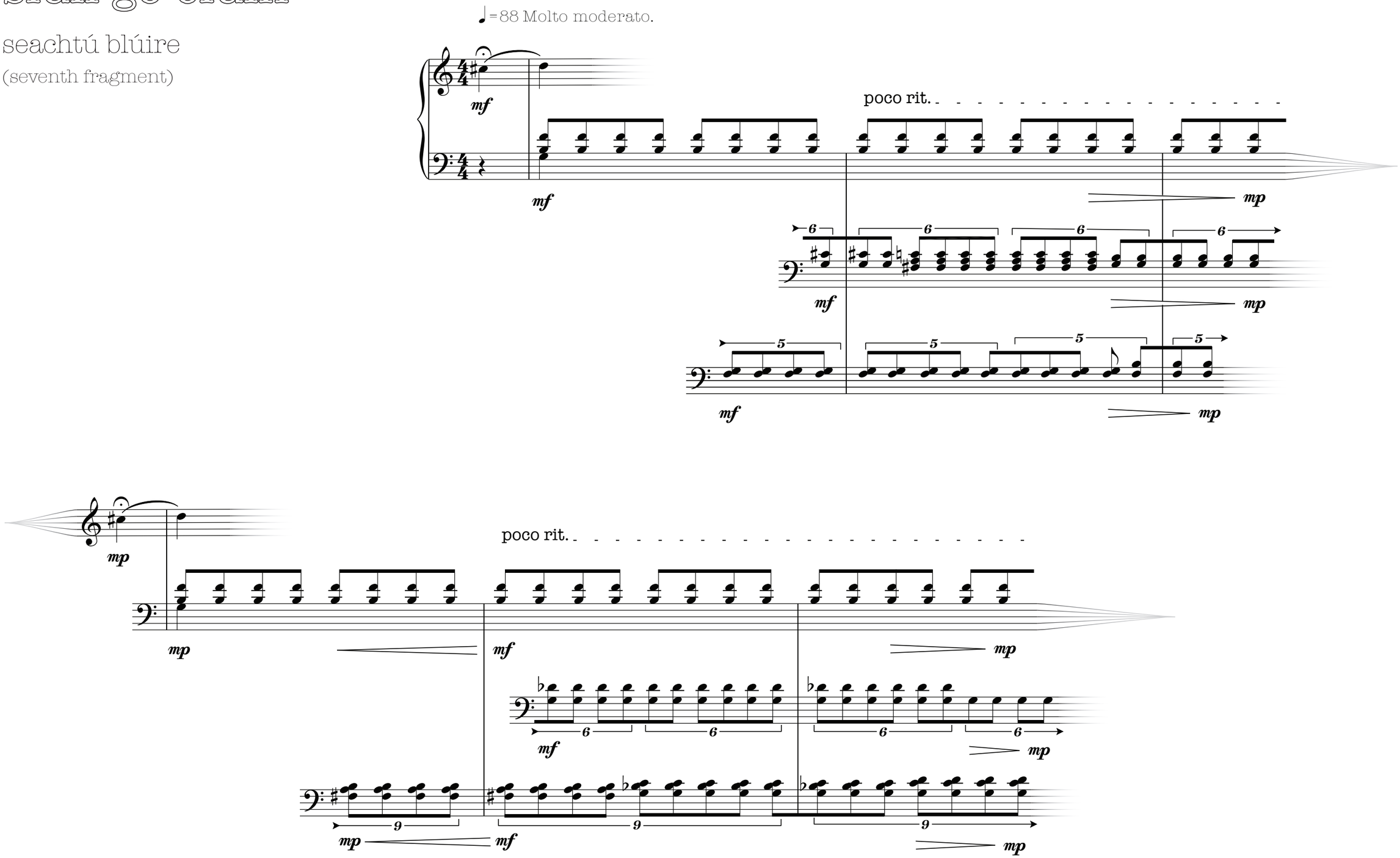

♩=104
7”
mf


8va
mf
10”
mp

siúil go ciúin

seachtú blúire

(seventh fragment)

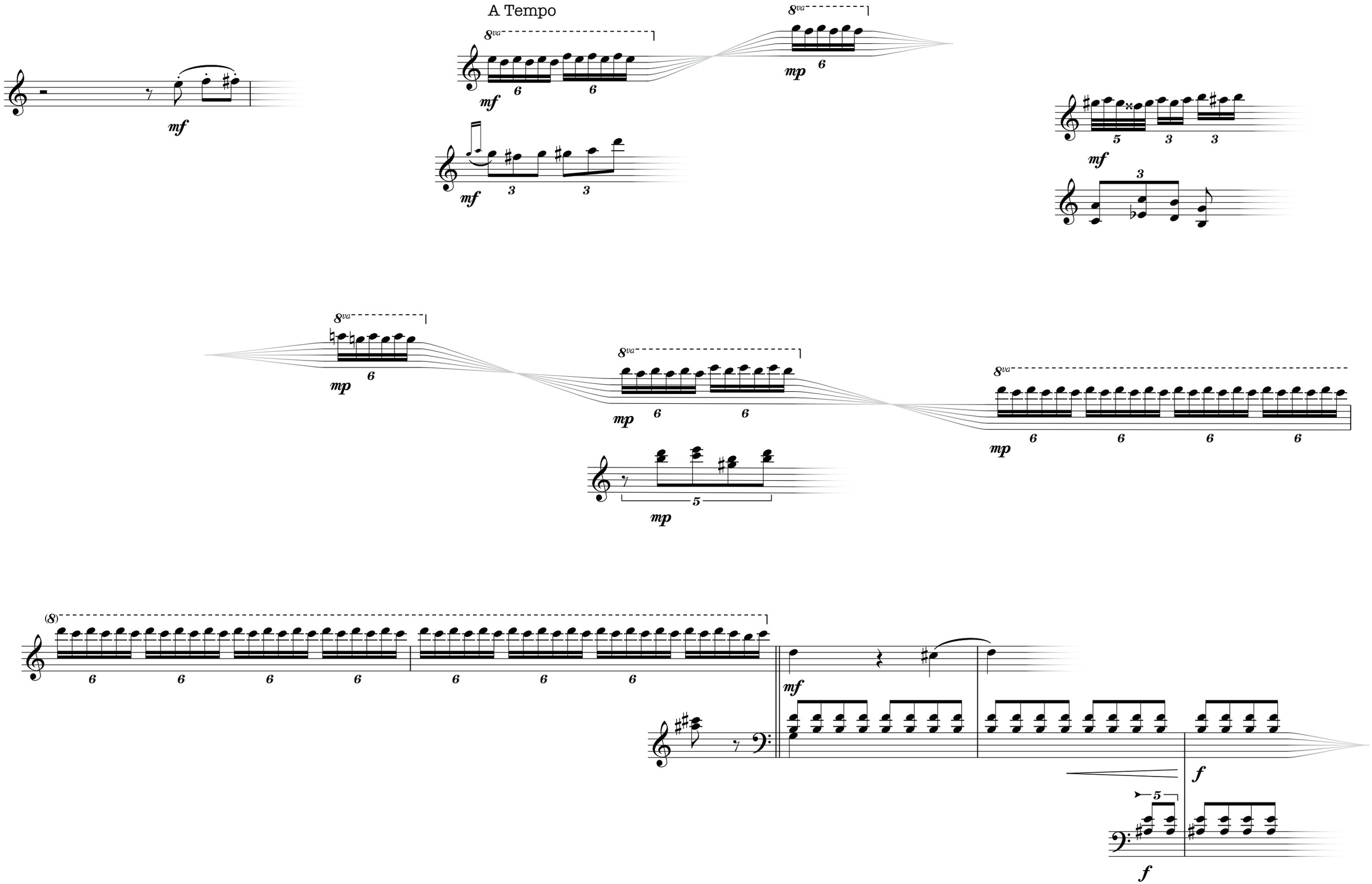


A Tempo

poco rit.

A Tempo

rit.


A Tempo
8va
mf
mp
f

f

f

5 5

f

5 5

mp

6 6 6 6

f

mp

rit.

mf

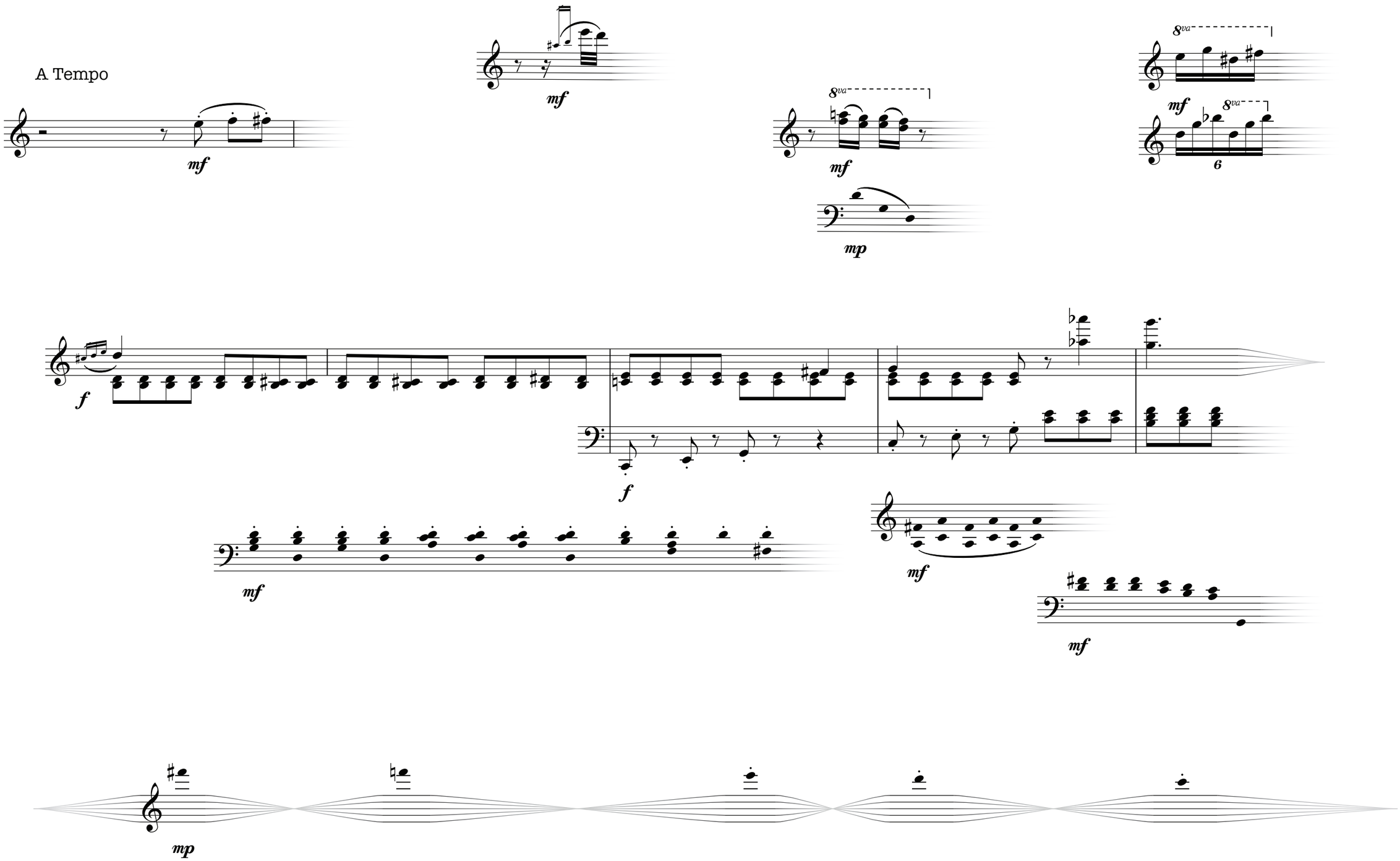
6 6 6 6

mf

5 5 5 5

mp mf

mf


A Tempo
mf
mf
8va
mf
mp
8va
mf
8va
6
f
f
mf
mf
mf
mp

mf

mf

5

5

mf

mf

mf

f

f

mf

3

3

3

3

f

mf

mf

mf

mf

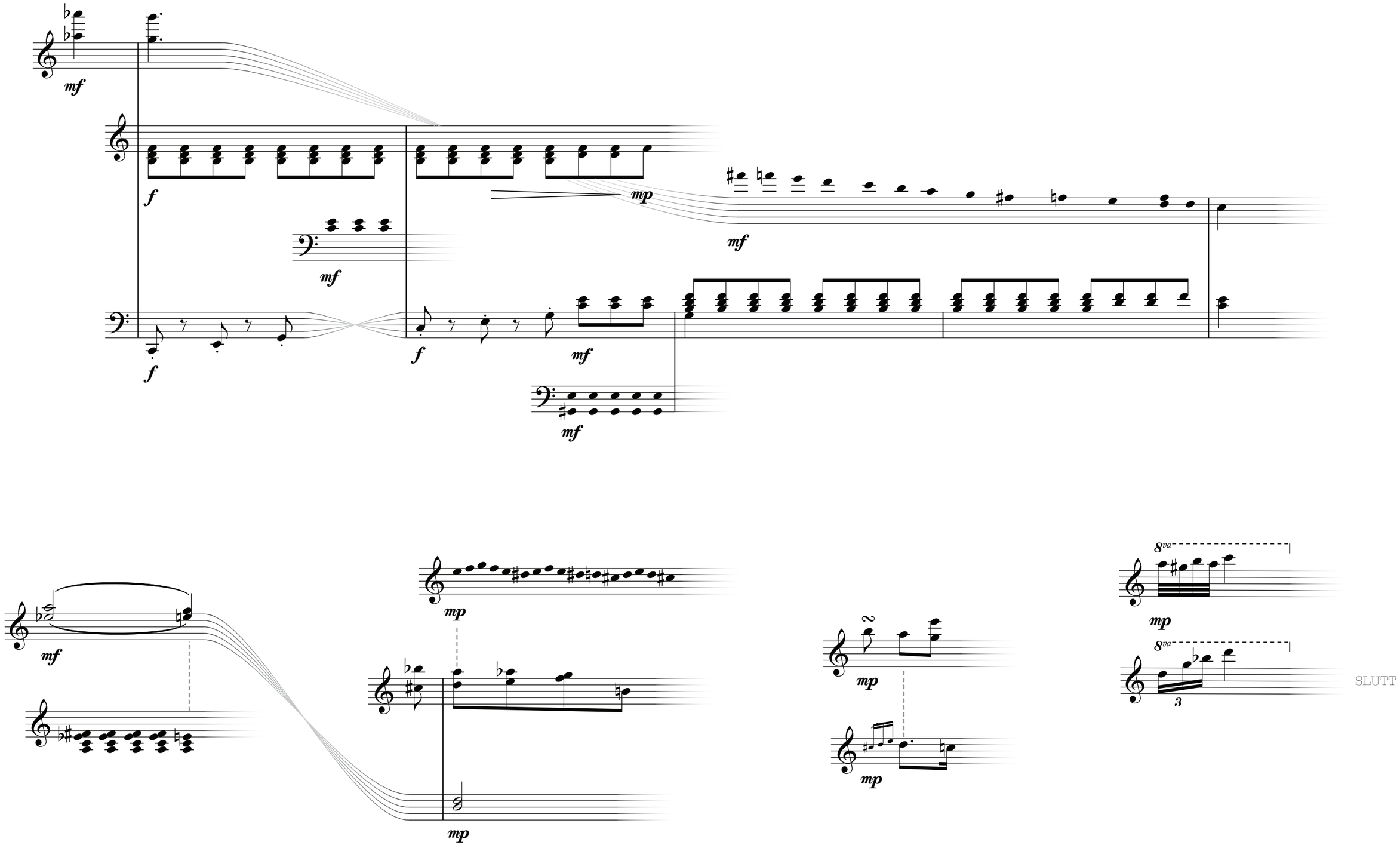
mf

mp

mf

mf

mp

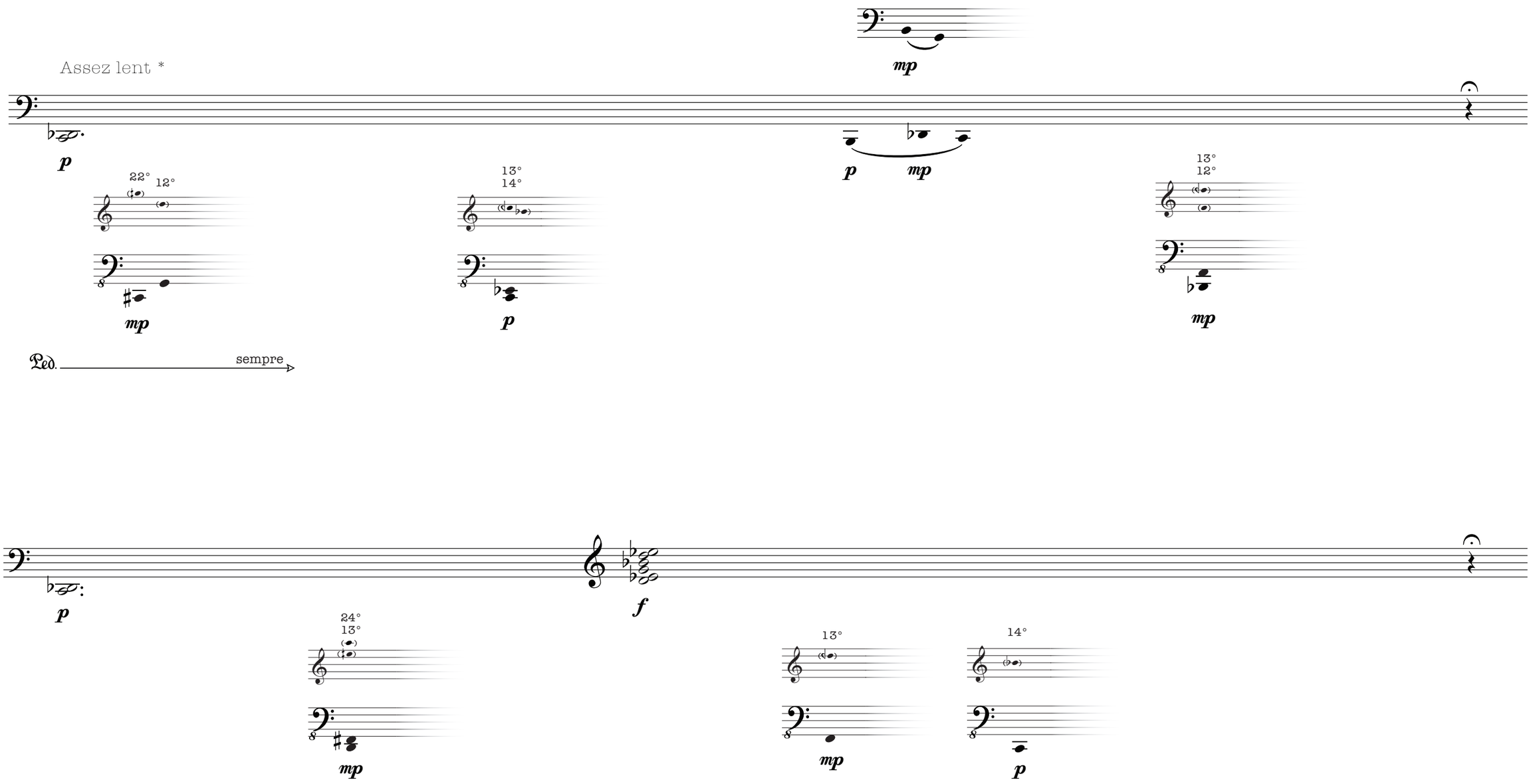

mf
f
mp
mf
mf
f
f
mf
mf
mf
mp
mp
mp
mp
8va
mp
8va
3
SLUTT

siúil go ciúin

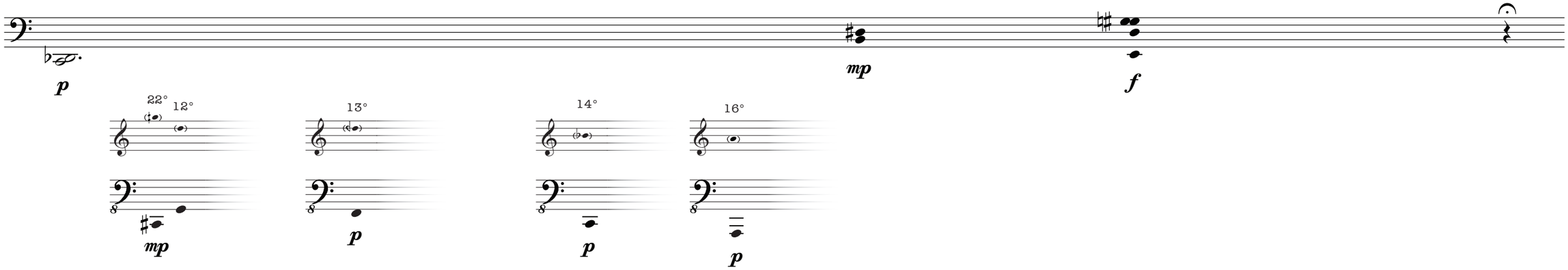
ochtú blúire

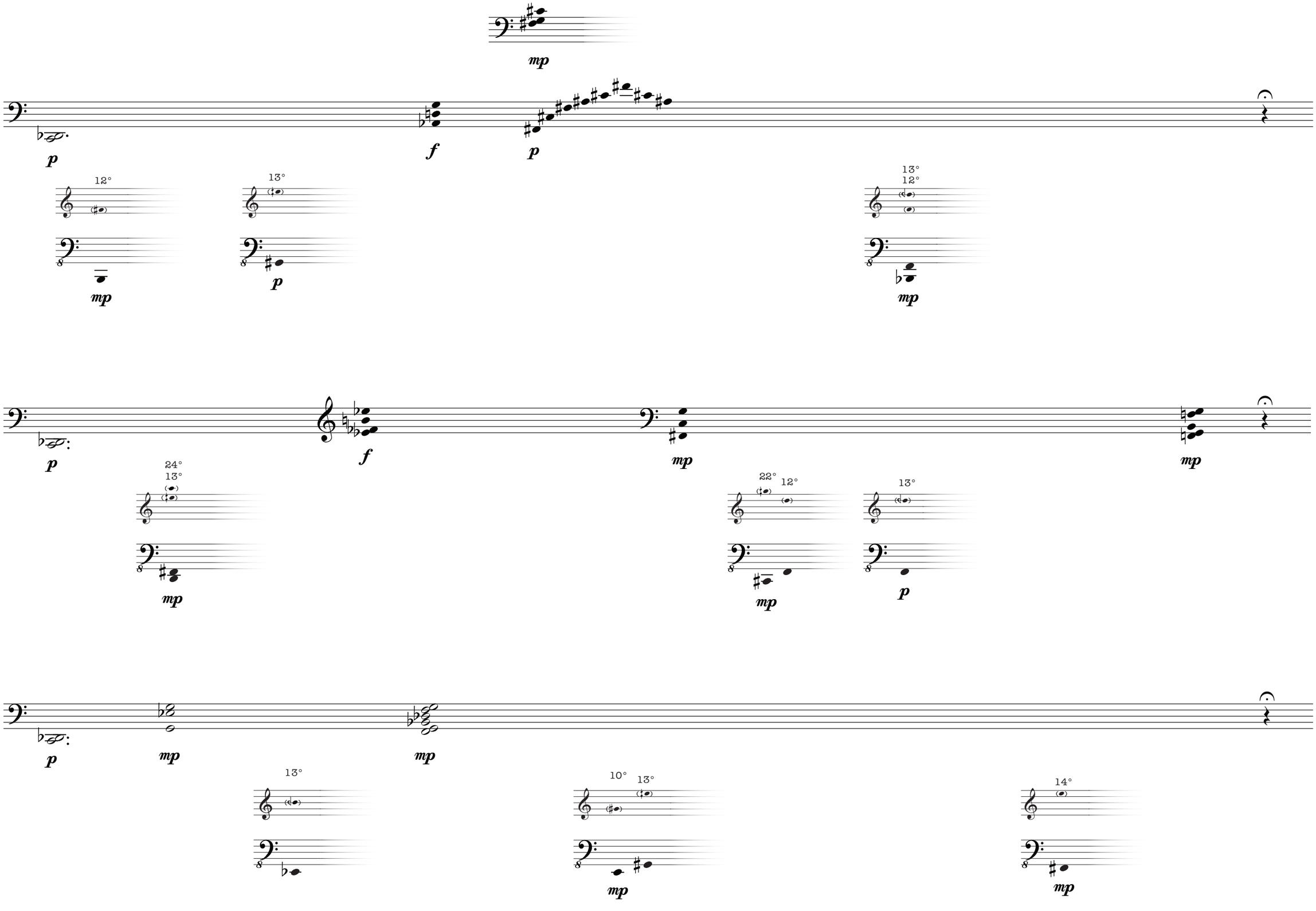
(eigth fragment)

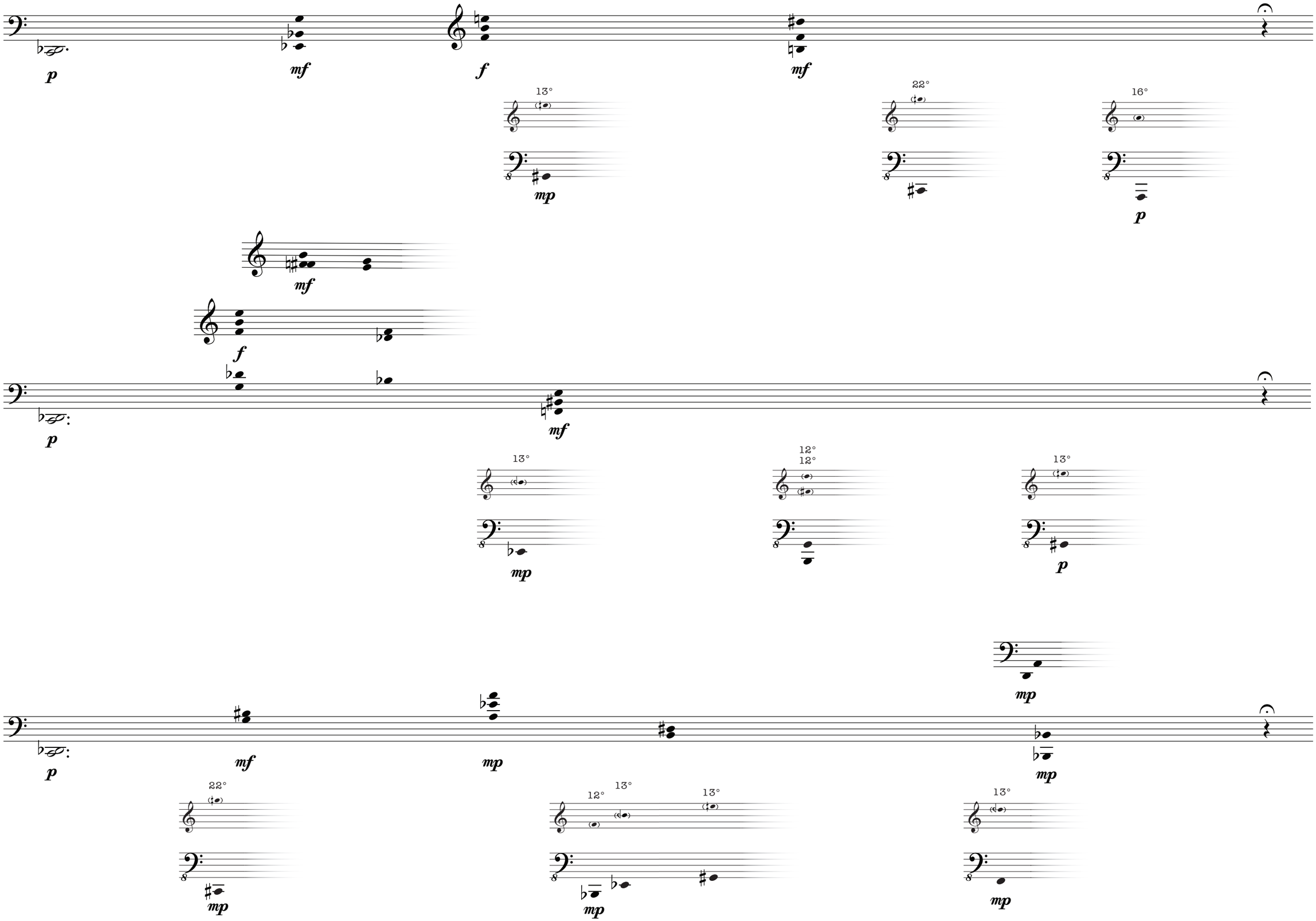
Assez lent *



* Loosely in proportional space time. Roughly 20 seconds per system, not including the fermata (stop watch not necessary).


p
22°
12°
mp
13°
p
14°
p
16°
p
mp
f
pp
p
mf
mp
22°
mp
24°
p
p
mp
p
14°
p
16°
p
10°
mp


mp
p
f
p
12°
13°
13°
12°
mp
p
mp
p
f
mp
mp
24°
13°
22°
12°
13°
mp
mp
p
p
mp
mp
13°
10°
13°
14°
mp
mp


p
mf
f
mf
13°
mp
22°
16°
p
mf
f
p
mf
13°
mp
12°
13°
p
mp
p
mf
mp
mp
22°
mp
12°
13°
13°
mp
13°
mp

p

mf

mp

p

mp

22° 12°

mp

24° 13°

mp

13° 12°

mp

p

mf

f

12°

mp

13°

mp

12°

p

p

mp

mf

(senza fermata)

13°

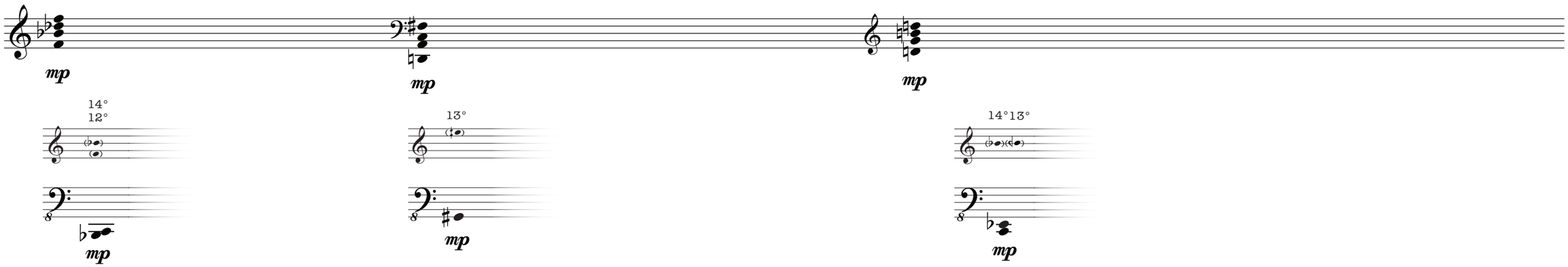
mp

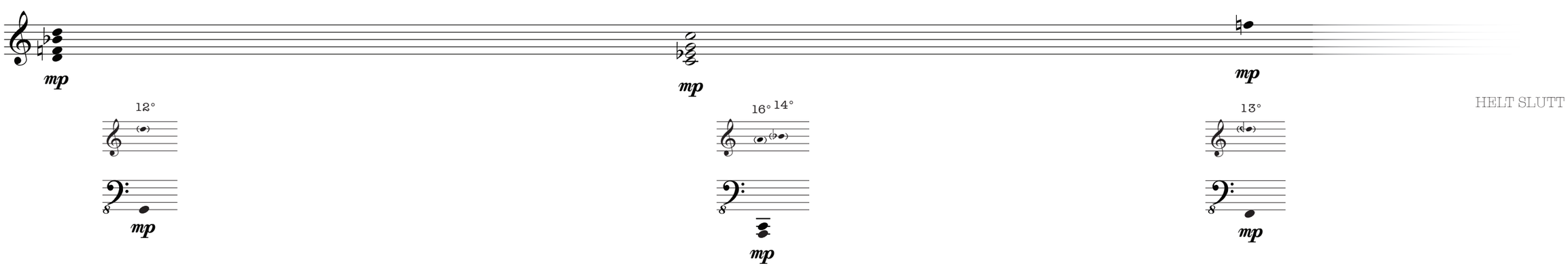
22°

mp

24°

mp


mp
mp
mp
14°
12°
mp
13°
mp
14°13°
mp


mp
12°
mp
mp
16° 14°
mp
mp
13°
mp