Partita

for tenor saxophone

Thomas J. Dempster (BMI)

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Visit the composer's website at www.thomasdempster.com

Partita

for tenor saxophone

Thomas J. Dempster

Hot Springs, AR

October-November 2024

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Partita (2024) – Duration: ca. 10:00

I.	Impreza-Mazurka	(1′55″)
II.	Song	(1′30″)
III.	Scherzo-Tanz	(1′30″)
IV.	Poem	(2′30″)
V.	Toccata	(2′15″)

Program Notes

Partita for tenor saxophone is a hybrid outgrowth of both teaching a lot of intermediate saxophonists and and some various meandering improvisations on the instrument. The five movements in this work, variably etude-like yet still compelling and challenging for developing and developed players alike, are taken from improvisations I recorded in October 2024 (with another thirty minutes or so of material that went to the cutting-room floor, awaiting use in other pieces). After twenty years of teaching, I've not yet found The Holy Grail for the tenor saxophone specifically, particularly as it comes to unaccompanied works. It's not easy finding works purposefully written for unaccompanied tenor that are not otherwise adaptations or simply just the same pieces for alto or soprano (key centers, timbre, and response be damned!). The tenor is quirky; it is moody; it can be a little threatening and a little fuzzy or deceptively slow. It's a brown bear. It's not a quirky black bear or a dangerous and fearsome grizzly – it's somewhere in the middle. And I mean to exploit that as much as I can. Not to say that this is a Holy Grail, of course. But it is *a* grail.

For the *Partita*, every movement is inspired by some sort of dance or dance rhythm, usually more ancient than not – as is customary in a lot of my music. The movements should be played in the above order, though what connects them all are passing motivic and key-relation glances: there is a subdued unity in the motivic/harmonic world throughout, and some of the quirks – articulations, steering away from the altissimo too much, laying low from the unpredictability of some multiphonics – are outgrowths of both my playing ability as well as trying to thread the needle between the demands and skill levels of an adventurous intermediate player and well-oiled-machine of a veteran player (the anodyne, polar worlds that exist in the UIL list, for instance – we go from deliriously difficult to not difficult enough with not much in between), The piece begs for lots of tongue-in-cheek humor and I have no problem with many of the movements, the more technical ones, being taken ten to twenty clicks faster than marked, just to keep things interesting for the pros.

Composed in Hot Springs, Arkansas, in October and November of 2024

Partita

for solo tenor saxophone

Thomas J. Dempster

2024

Partita

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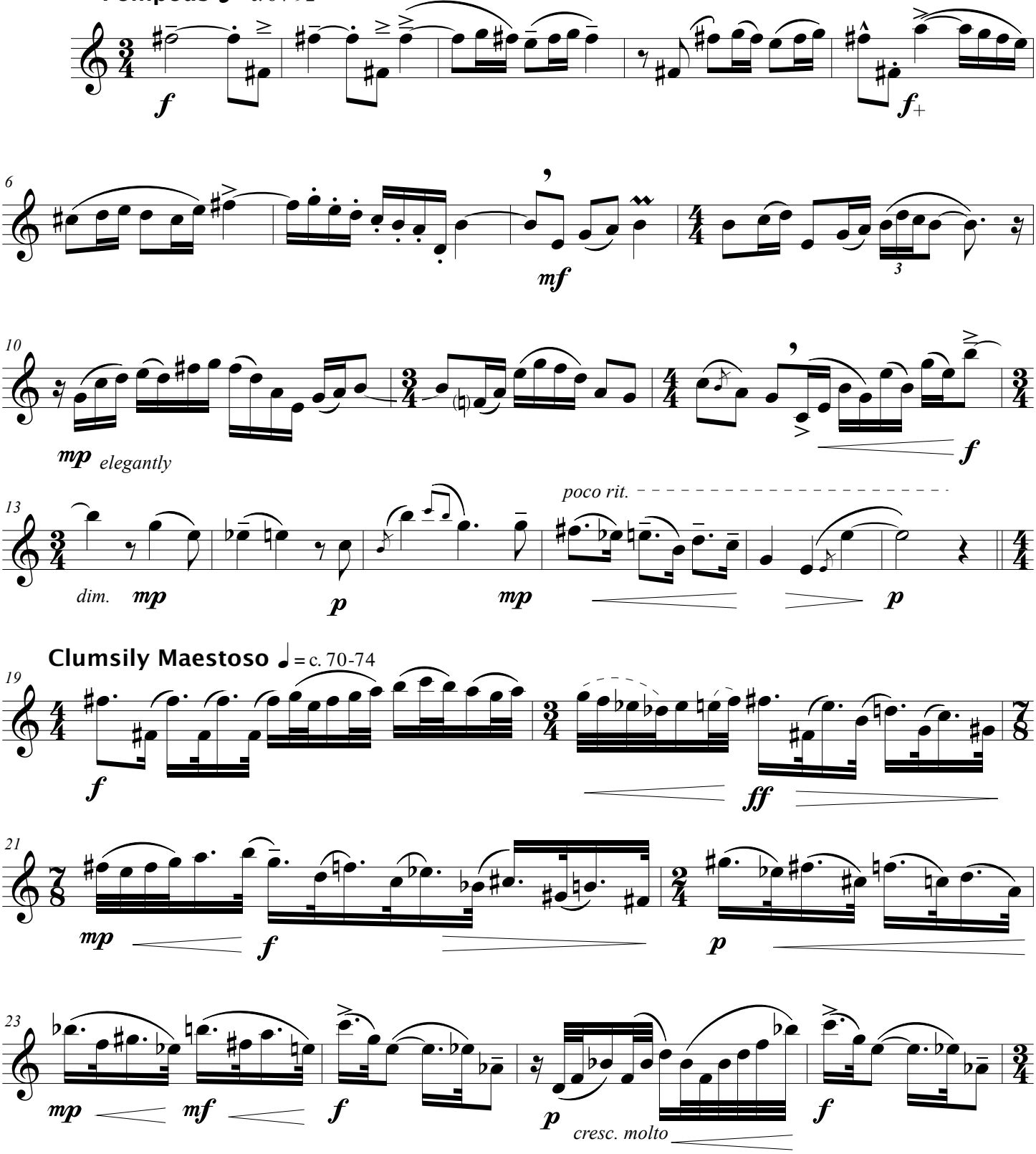
I: Impreza-Mazurka

Pompous ♩ = c. 84-92



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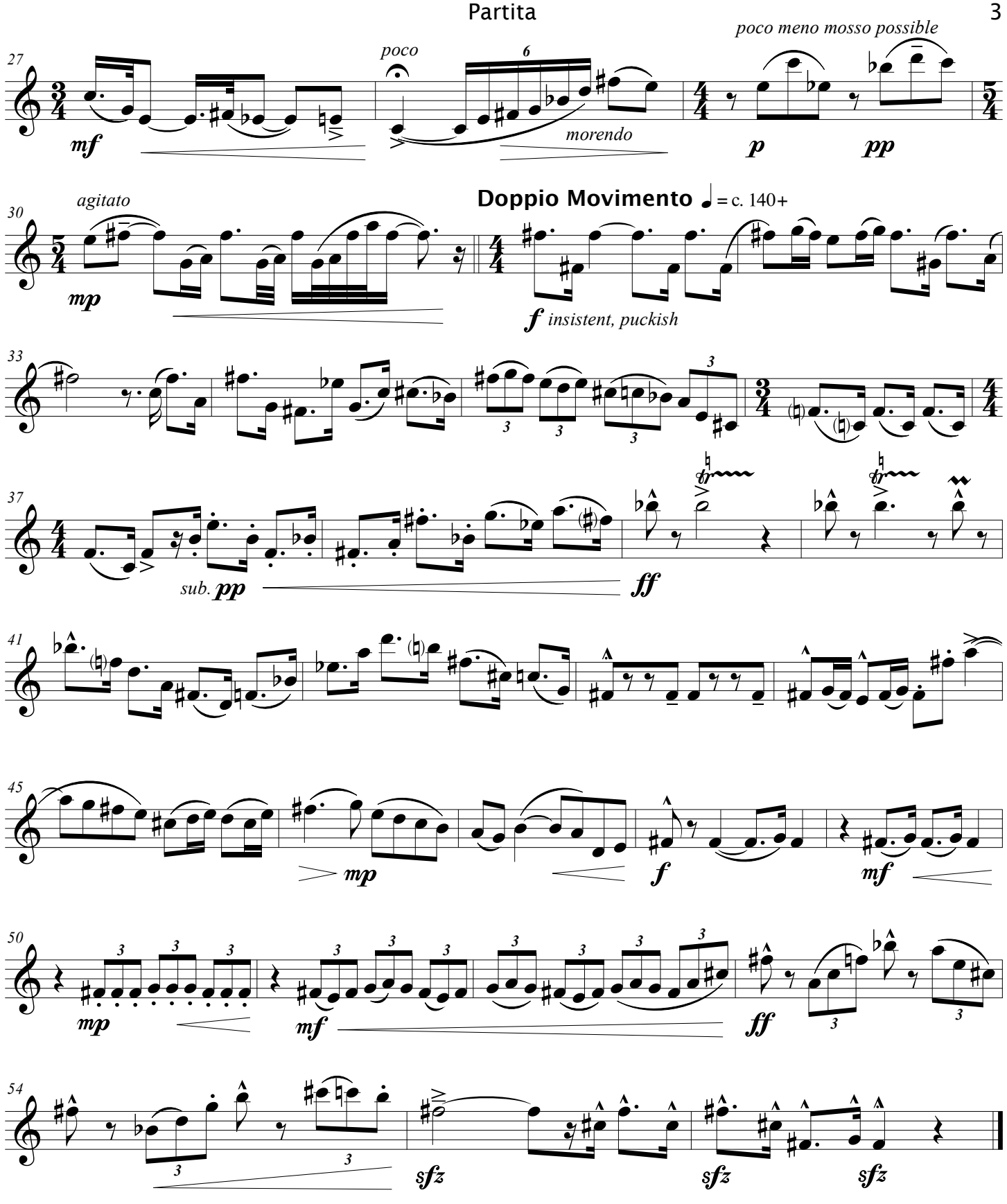
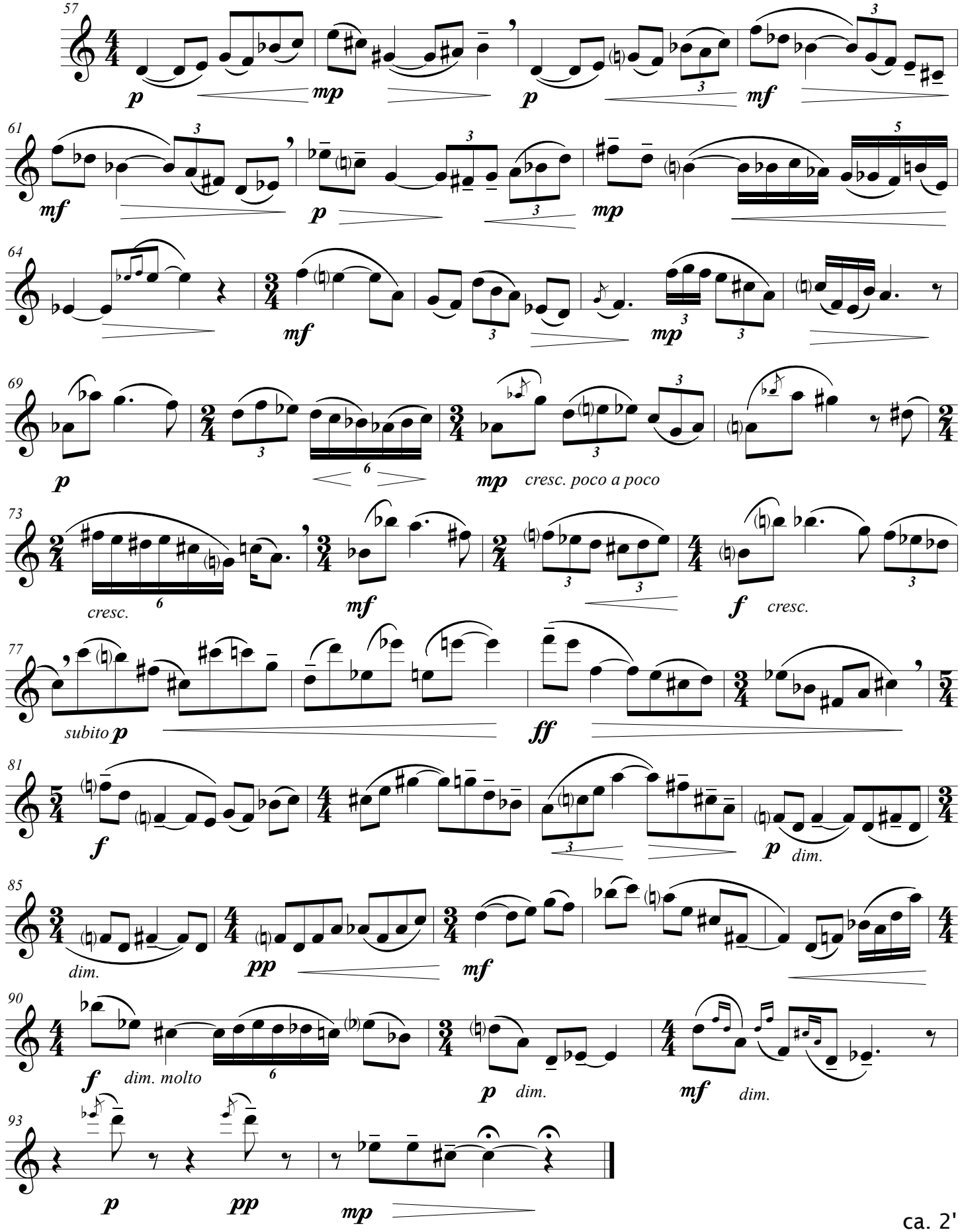

27
mf
poco
morendo
poco meno mosso possible
p
pp
30
agitato
mp
Doppio Movimento ♩ = c. 140+
f insistent, puckish
33
37
sub. pp
ff
41
45
mp
f
mf
50
mp
mf
ff
54
sfz
sfz
sfz

ca. 1'55"

II: Song

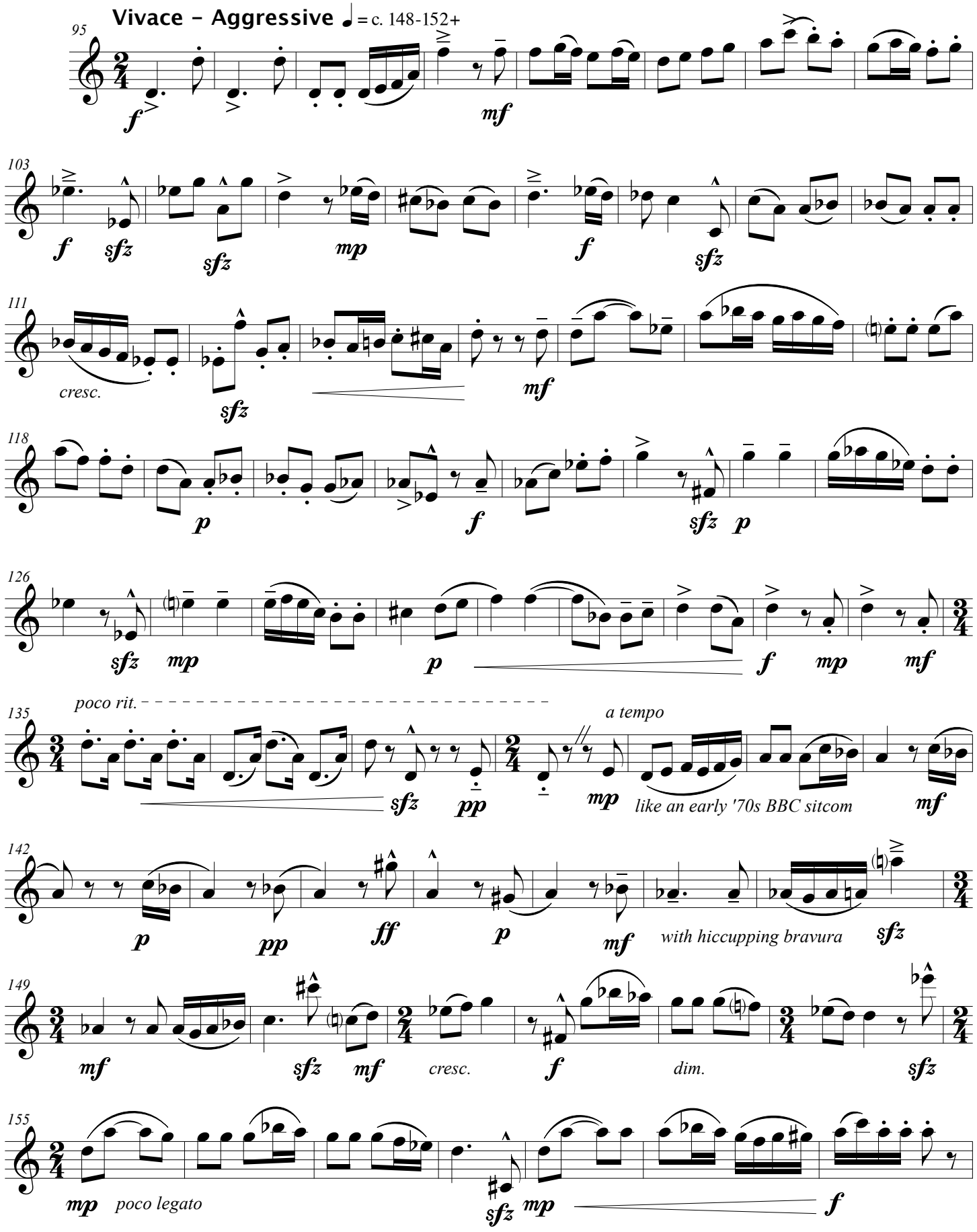
Poco Rubato ♩ = c. 66-70

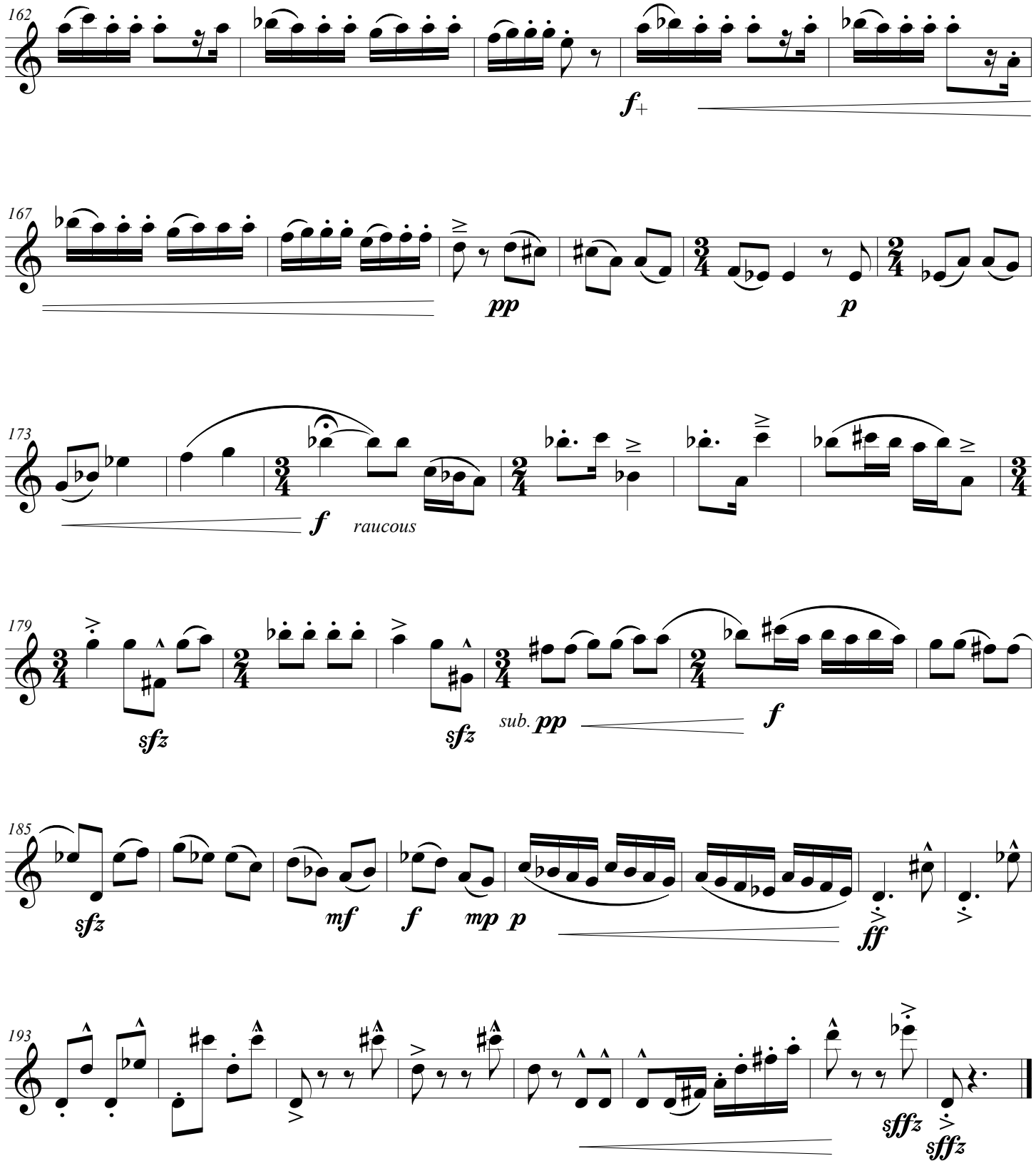


ca. 2'

III: Scherzo-Tanz

Vivace - Aggressive ♩ = c. 148-152+

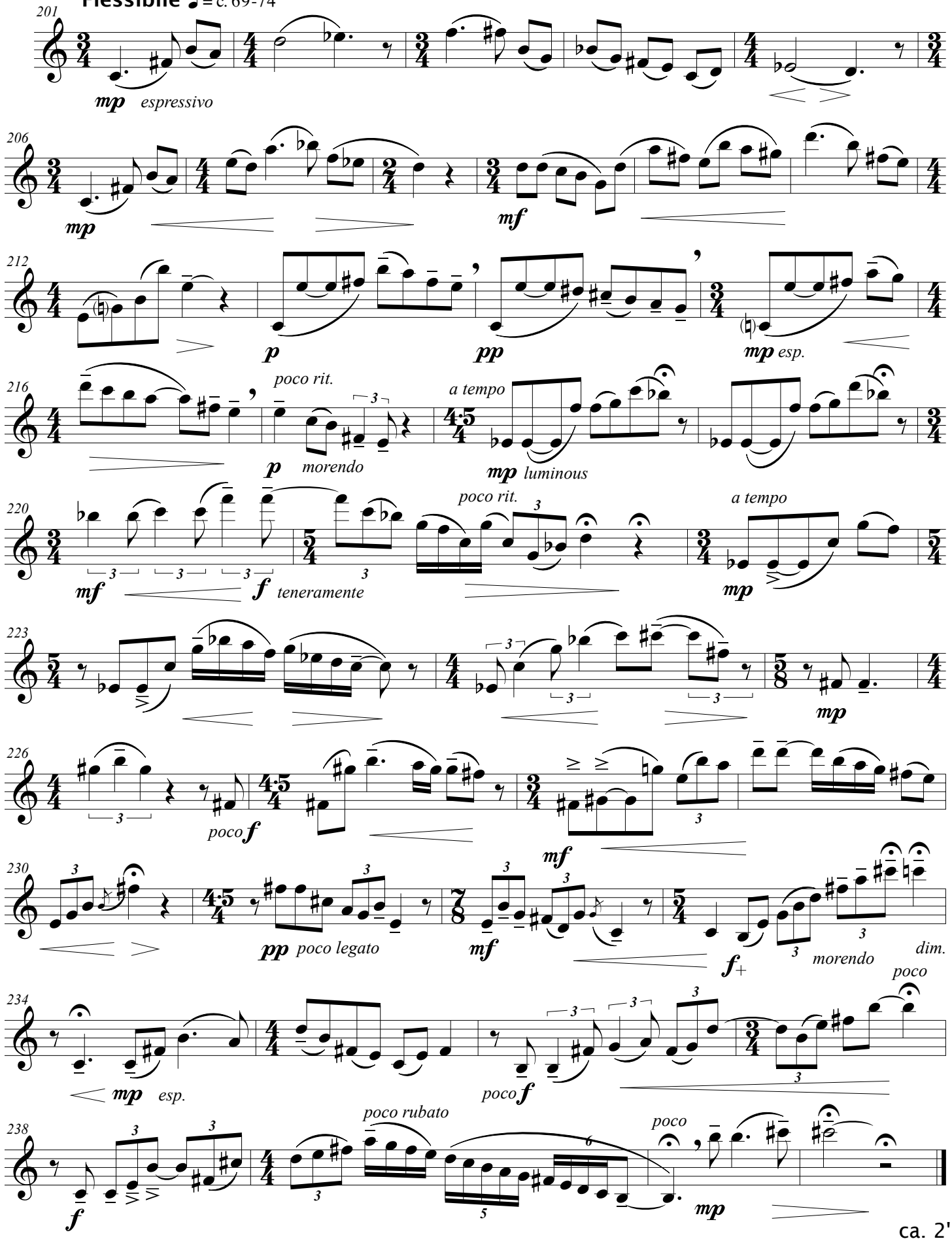



162
f+
167
pp
p
173
f
raucous
179
sfz
sfz
sub. pp
f
185
sfz
mf
f
mp
p
ff
193
sffz
sffz

ca. 1'30"

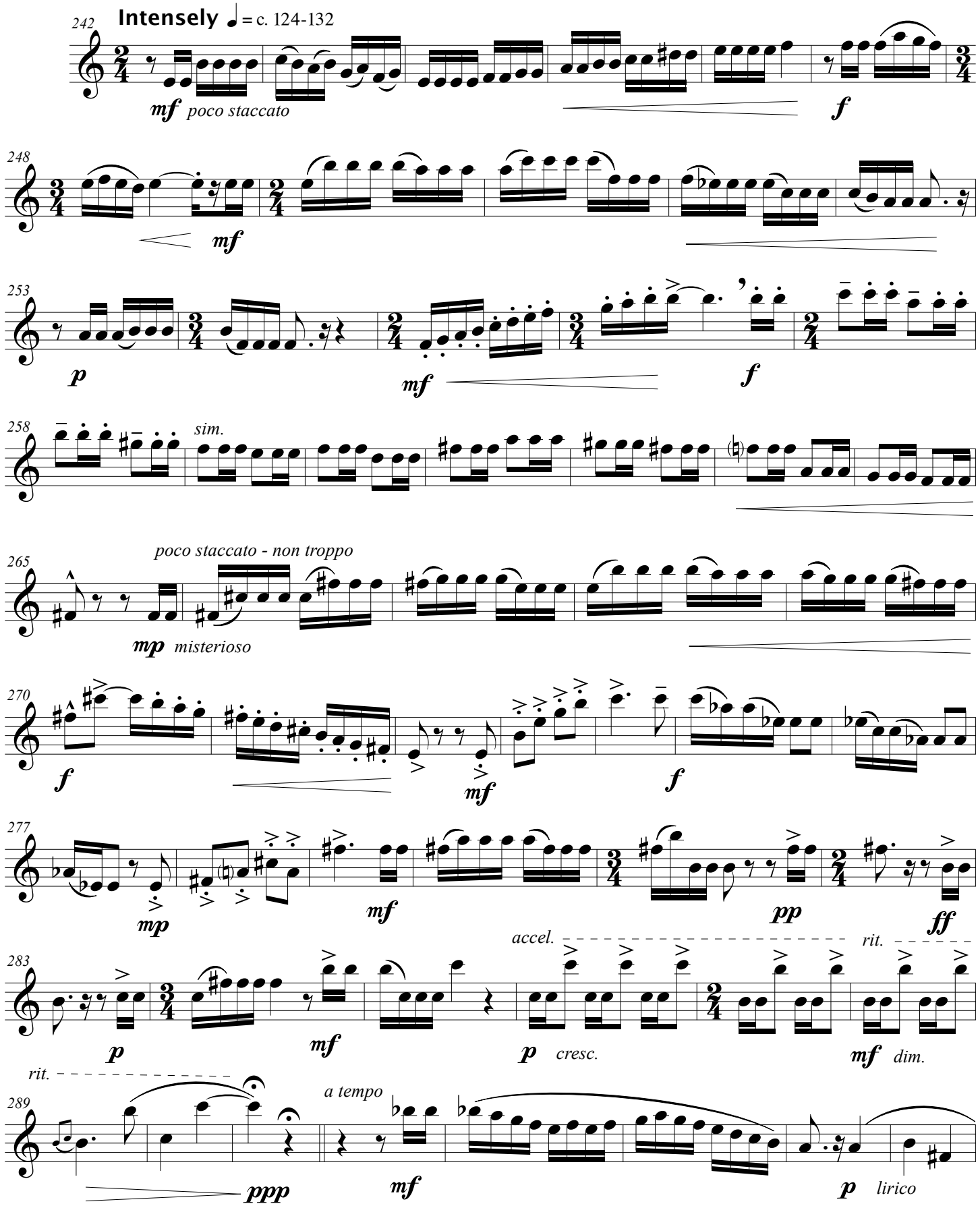
IV: Poem

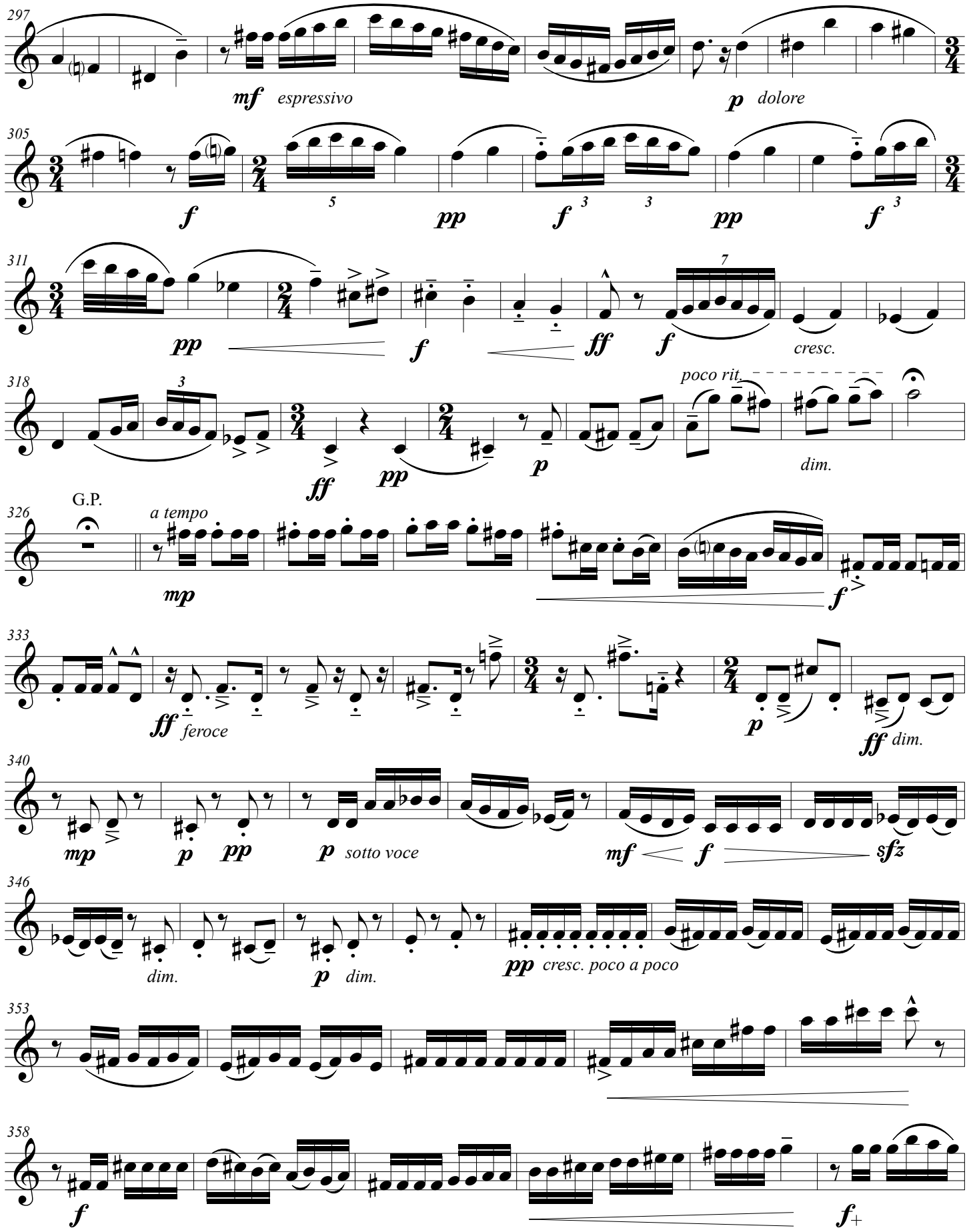
Flessibile ♩ = c. 69-74

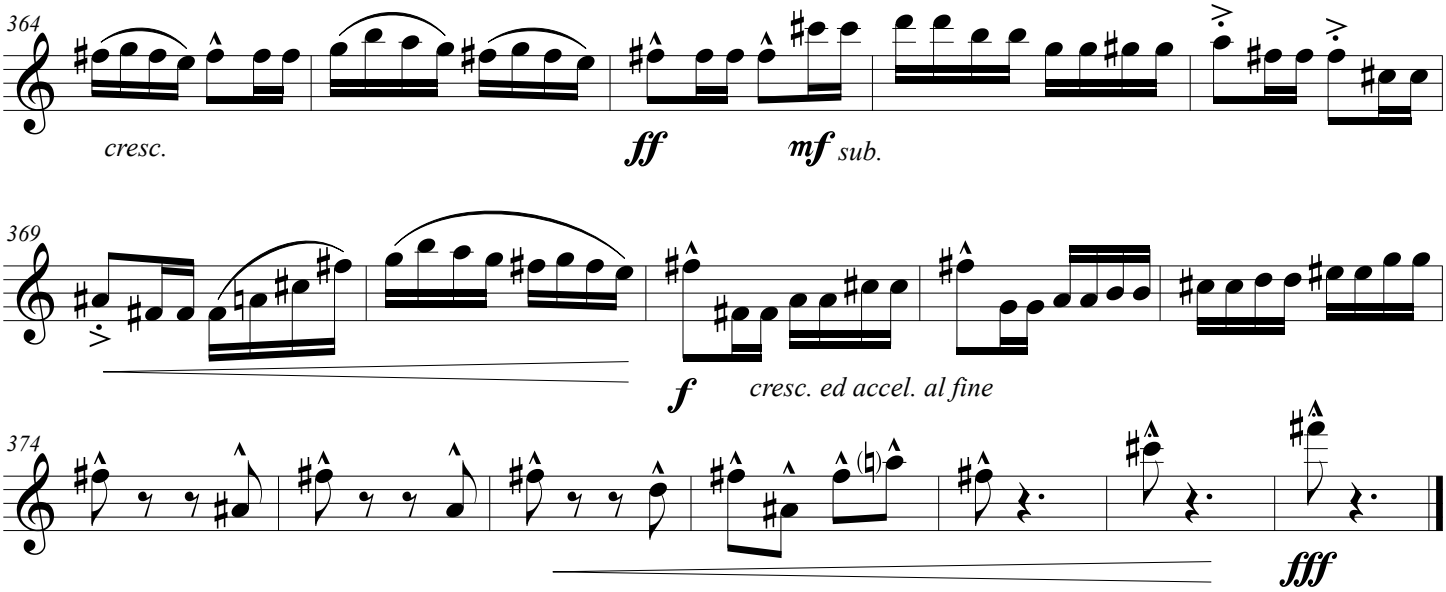


ca. 2'15"

V: Toccata


242
Intensely ♩ = c. 124-132
mf poco staccato
f
248
mf
253
p
mf
f
258
sim.
265
poco staccato - non troppo
mp misterioso
270
f
mf
f
277
mp
mf
pp
ff
283
accel.
rit.
p
mf
p cresc.
mf dim.
rit.
289
a tempo
ppp
mf
p lirico


297
mf espressivo
p dolore
305
f
pp
f
pp
f
311
pp
f
ff
f
cresc.
318
poco rit.
ff
pp
p
dim.
326
G.P.
a tempo
mp
f
333
ff feroce
p
ff dim.
340
mp
p
pp
p sotto voce
mf
f
sfz
346
dim.
p dim.
pp cresc. poco a poco
353
358
f
f+



ca. 2'30"

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