st275.1.69

sumtone

:

michael edwards

altogether disproportionate

for piano and computer

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programme note

> "We are not a young people with an innocent record and a scanty inheritance. We have engrossed to ourselves - an altogether disproportionate share of wealth and traffic of the world. We have got all we want in territory, and our claim to be left in the unmolested enjoyment of vast and splendid possessions, mainly acquired by violence, largely maintained by force, often seems less reasonable to others than to us." (Winston Churchill, 1914)

It is simultaneously satisfying and disturbing to read that such a powerful man as Churchill clearly understood the nature and causes of the staggering disparity of wealth between his country and those from whom it stole. At the same time, and like most of our leaders, it is to our shame that he did so little to redress the imbalance. In fact, writing only five years later about possible solutions to the Iraq problem of his time, Churchill would appear to be quite a different man from the one we might imagine--more related to Saddam Hussein, perhaps: "I am strongly in favour of using poisoned gas against uncivilised tribes", he wrote in 1919.

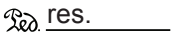
Altogether disproportionate, no? At the time of writing (October 2010), the proposed cuts to the UK military budget are 8%; those to the higher education teaching budget, 80%. The widely broadcast US military deaths since the invasion of Iraq in 2003 number more than 4300; the almost always ignored Iraqi civilian deaths caused by the war, circa 100,000. The cost to US tax payers of each Taliban fighter's death in Afghanistan? $50 million, according to one estimate. Such depressing statistics were taxing me whilst writing this piece, along with a Diane Arbus image of one of the 'patriots' she photographed during the Vietnam War. Not the more famous one, with the maniacal expression on his face, but the stiff boater wearer, sporting the almost illegible lapel badge which implores "Bomb Hanoi." Pleasant young man. Proportionate? Hardly.

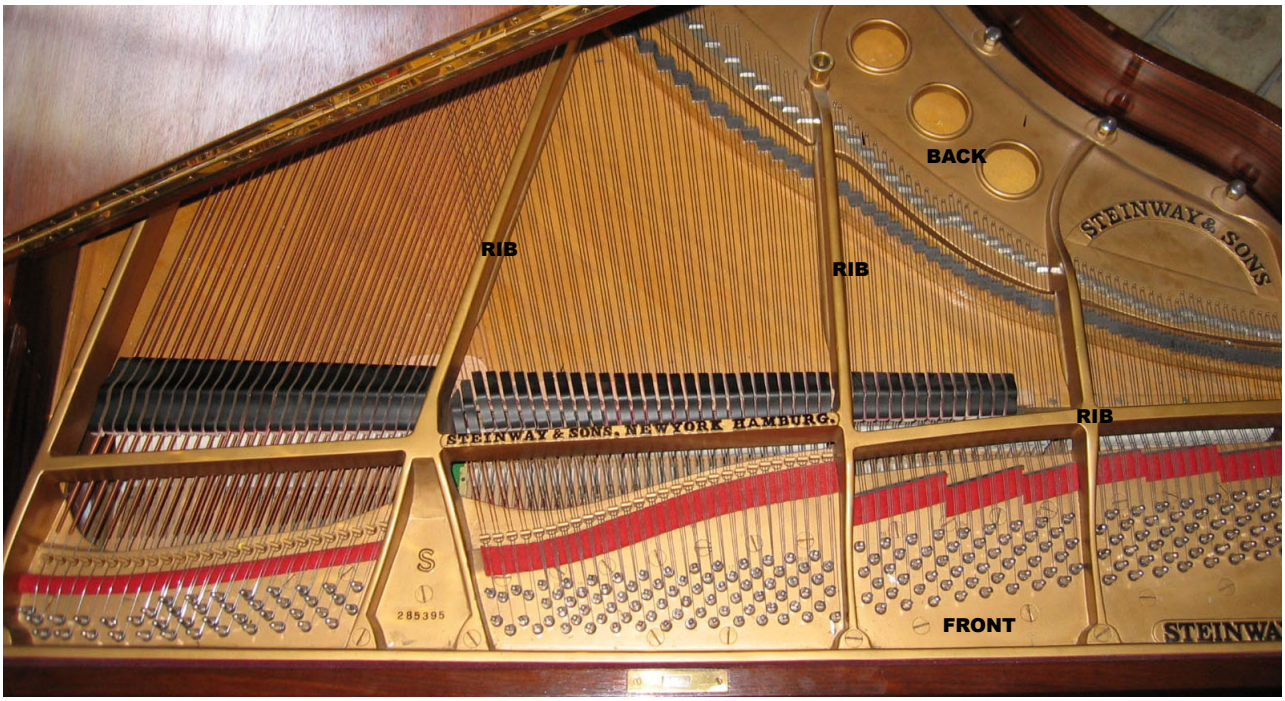
As for the music: Per Rundberg asked for it. He told me he wanted something similar to my ensemble piece, cheat sheet, that he co-premiered in Austria in 2007. He enjoyed--or so he said at least--the very fast tempi that drove the performers to almost skim through the vast array of notes--16000 odd in that piece I believe; only 3000 or so here--careering into each other and into all sorts of unplannable serendipities that are usually found only in free improvisations. He also expressed a desire for music with political content, something that was abundant in cheat sheet. So here we are.

I was further mindful of various conversations Per and I have had over the last thirteen years about works for piano and electronics. It was Per who pointed out to me that one of the difficulties of using amplification is that musicians perform not just in, but with the architectural space of a concert hall; that they learn to project their instrument's sound into that space, and loudspeakers disturb this relationship. So although I nevertheless wanted to write for piano and computer, this time I didn't want to make a piece which demanded amplification through a PA system. My solution was to use loudspeakers under the piano. This allows me to excite the piano's sound board with electronics; mix the instrumental and electronic sources acoustically, in situ, rather than electronically, in a mixing desk; and allows Per to perform without microphones, balancing sound levels according to both the acoustic properties of the piano and the hall he plays in.

I can't resist ending with a quotation from the composer Helmut Lachenmann. His inspiring writings go some way towards explaining the presence here of so much political comment in what should be a simple concert programme note: "The experience of the beautiful is indissolubly connected with making perceptible the social contradictions in our reality; because to make them perceptible is to make them surmountable."

key to symbols

	finger nail pluck (or use plectrum if preferred)
+	damp notes(s) with finger(s) near the beginning of the string(s)
	damp notes with the crotale on the strings
	crotale strike on indicated strings (approx.)
	crotale turn on indicated strings (approx.; no strike implied)
	strike metal body of piano with object: front always metal; rib always knuckle; back always wood; see inside piano graphic for attack points
	half-depress keys before playing (result always very quiet)
	slap strings with open palm at the approx. position indicated
tc	tre corde
uc	una corda
	catch the resonance of the previous attack with the pedal
	indicates the 3/8 (dotted) portion of a meter such as 7/8
+whooping!	(optional): call out excited screeches of delight (!) at appropriate moments of an indicated passage (ad lib)
	trigger point at arrow: the numbers indicate trigger number (bar number): sound file
	beginning of computer-piano synchronisation zone: rhythm/tempo precision essential for synchronisation of the two parts, e.g. letter L: sound file starts with silence but has loud accents in the next bar.



performance requirements

- laptop computer with the performance software (unless Macintosh, this will need MaxMSP 5; 'runtime' version acceptable)
- good quality sound card (stereo output)
- one or two powered speakers positioned under the piano and angled towards the sound board and audience
- stereo analogue volume control knob (optional)
- crotale or finger cymbal with strap for holding, preferably c#, c. 10cm diameter
- megaphone of sufficient power to sound ***fff*** with loud speech
- wooden implement/block to strike metal piano frame at back

computer setup

A computer is used during the performance to trigger overlapping sound files played on two speakers mounted underneath the piano. These should be angled so that direct sound will reach both the audience and the piano sound board. The concept is to have more of an extended piano than a piece for piano and electronics. Both acoustic and electronic sounds should be localised by the listener as emanating from the same source, rather than from piano and speakers, as is usual in pieces of this sort.

The sound files have been mixed so that they balance well with the live piano at the point in which they are playing. No gain adjustment should be necessary during performance, i.e., no sound engineer (and no PA) is required. There is however provision for setting level curves in each of the sound files. See the readme.txt file that comes with the software for more details about this and other aspects of the playback system.

Overall gain should be set during rehearsal using either the gain slider on the software provided, or, preferably a stereo analogue level control knob (this will offer instant and secure control over levels should the computer or sound card crash). The levels should be set so that the loud sound files at letter O are the same level as the ***fff*** piano and megaphone voice.

Trigger point arrows (and some cue details: see below) are indicated in the score in blue. The trigger number, bar number, and sound file to be triggered are also indicated for reference (e.g. 36 (666): 1.21 refers to trigger 36 which occurs at bar 666 and starts sound file altogether1.21.wav). Triggering is done by pressing the space bar with the left hand (hence all triggers are at a point where the left hand is free, and the computer should be just to the left of the piano) but a pedal or some other triggering device could be used. Note that some sounds start several beats after the trigger so may not be immediately audible.

Sound file rhythm cues indicated in blue are for orientation purposes only and encompass only the most audible events.

notes

Accidentals carry throughout the bar but are repeated in parentheses as deemed necessary.

Accidentals do not repeat at octaves in either chords or melodic lines.

Bar numbers include repeats e.g. a two-bar phrase repeated three times will increment the bar count by six, not two.

The score presents a mixture of rest bars and pause signs. Rest bars should be counted through with a sense of liveliness, as if the performance is continuing silently. Pauses should be interpreted in the traditional manner, with the actual length determined by the player's taste and the acoustic environment.

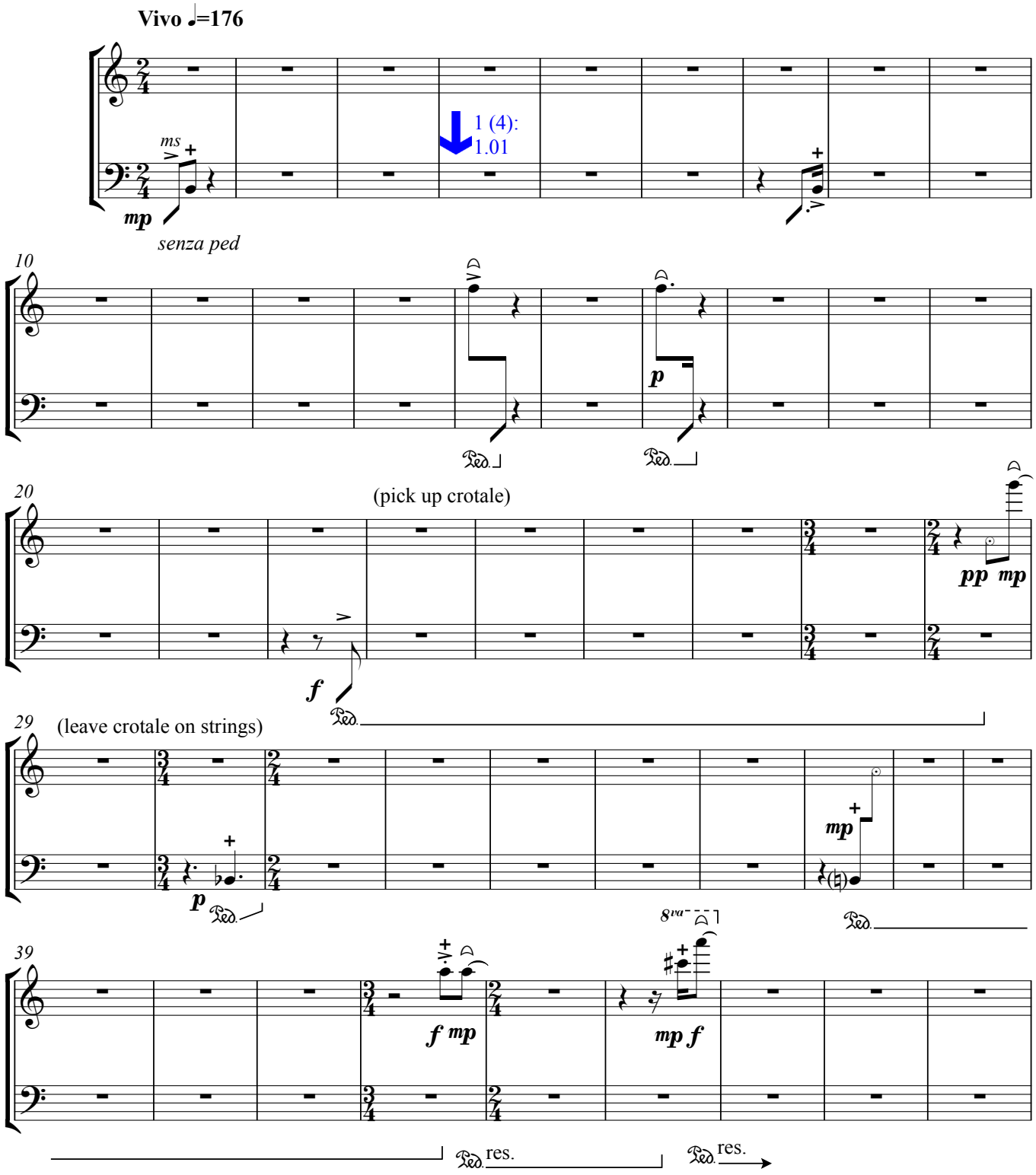
The megaphone is used only once (page 23) but should be 'interacted with' during the long pause on page 17 (and at other rest points before page 23 should the performer wish to). 'Interacted with' means something along the lines of picking it up, stroking it, making it visible/showing it to the audience (perhaps with a menacing grin) etc. etc.

Duration c. 18 minutes.

altogether disproportionate

michael edwards 2010

We begin with some silent theatre: Exaggerate piano stool adjustments; when it becomes clear to the audience that this is no longer normal, start moving up and down--only slightly at first i.e. just inches up from stool, then more and more--from sitting normally to reaching inside the piano to strike the strings (first event of score). Be quite fast and energetic about this and the ensuing events of the score, but at the same time nonchalent and 'businesslike' (as if everything were completely normal behaviour). Up to letter E the rests may be filled ad lib with lengthwise string rubbing, either with the fingers/nails or the wooden or metal object. NB If some event combinations prove impossible with the given rhythms/ tempo, move as quickly and fluently as possible (with panache).



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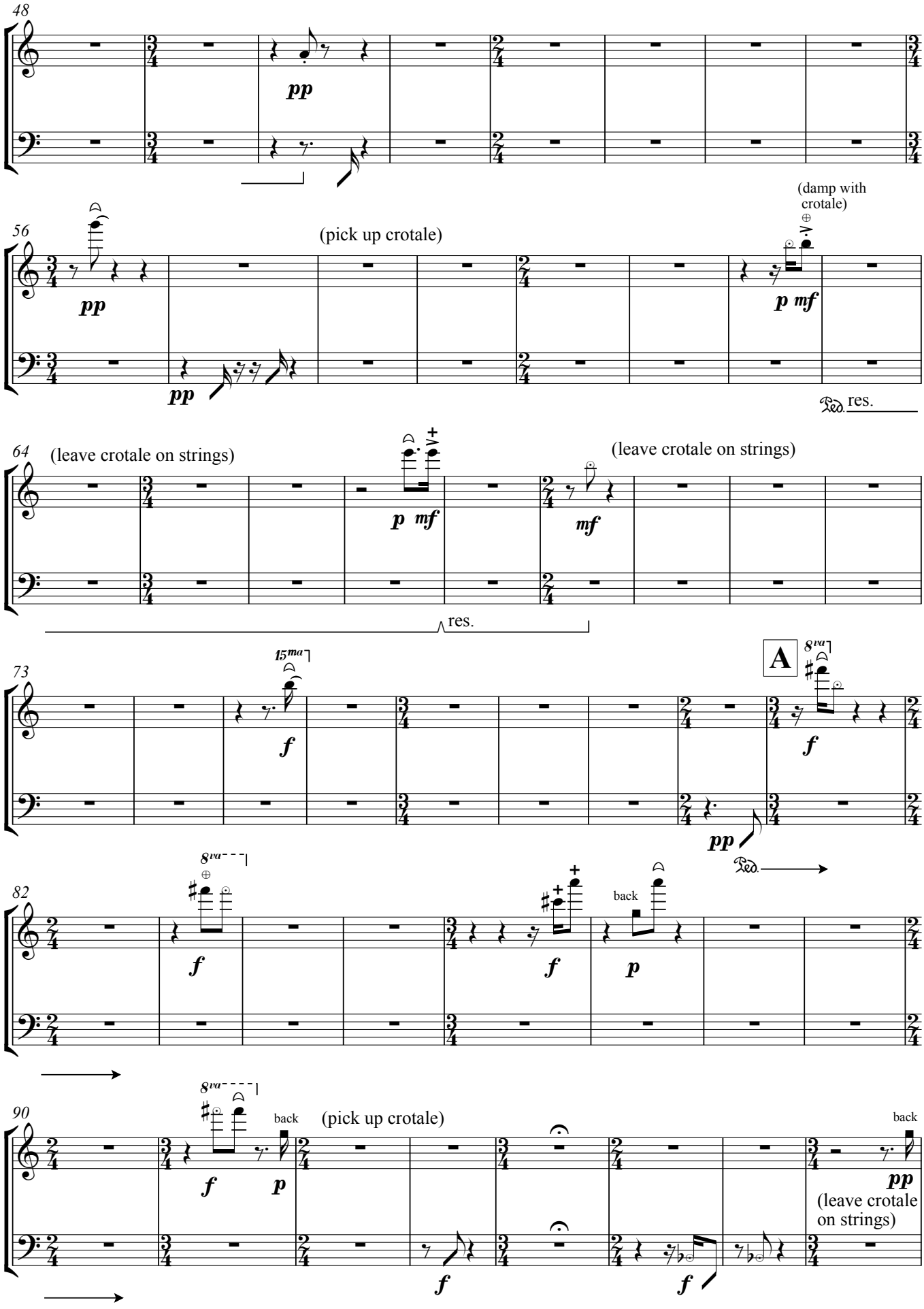
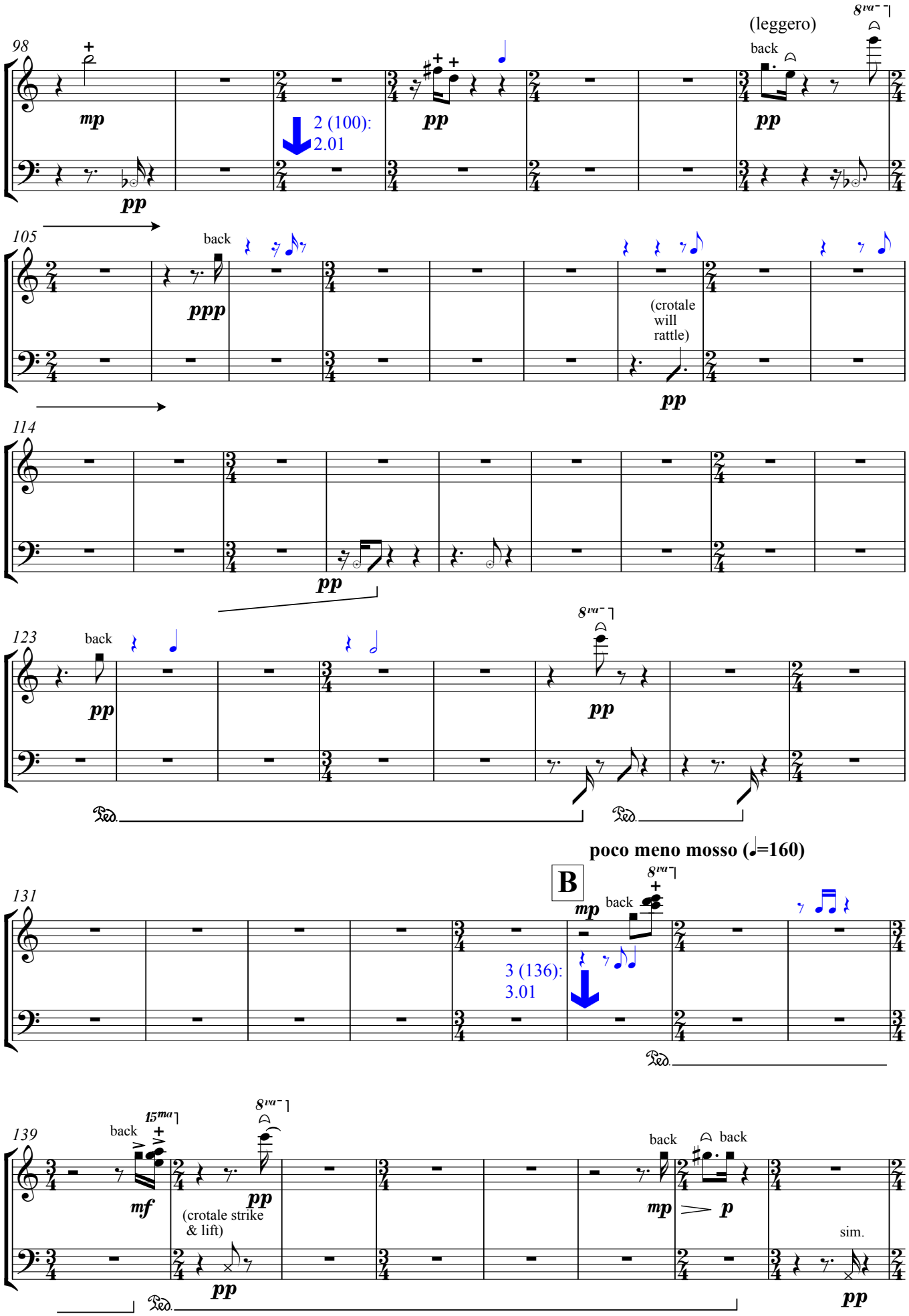
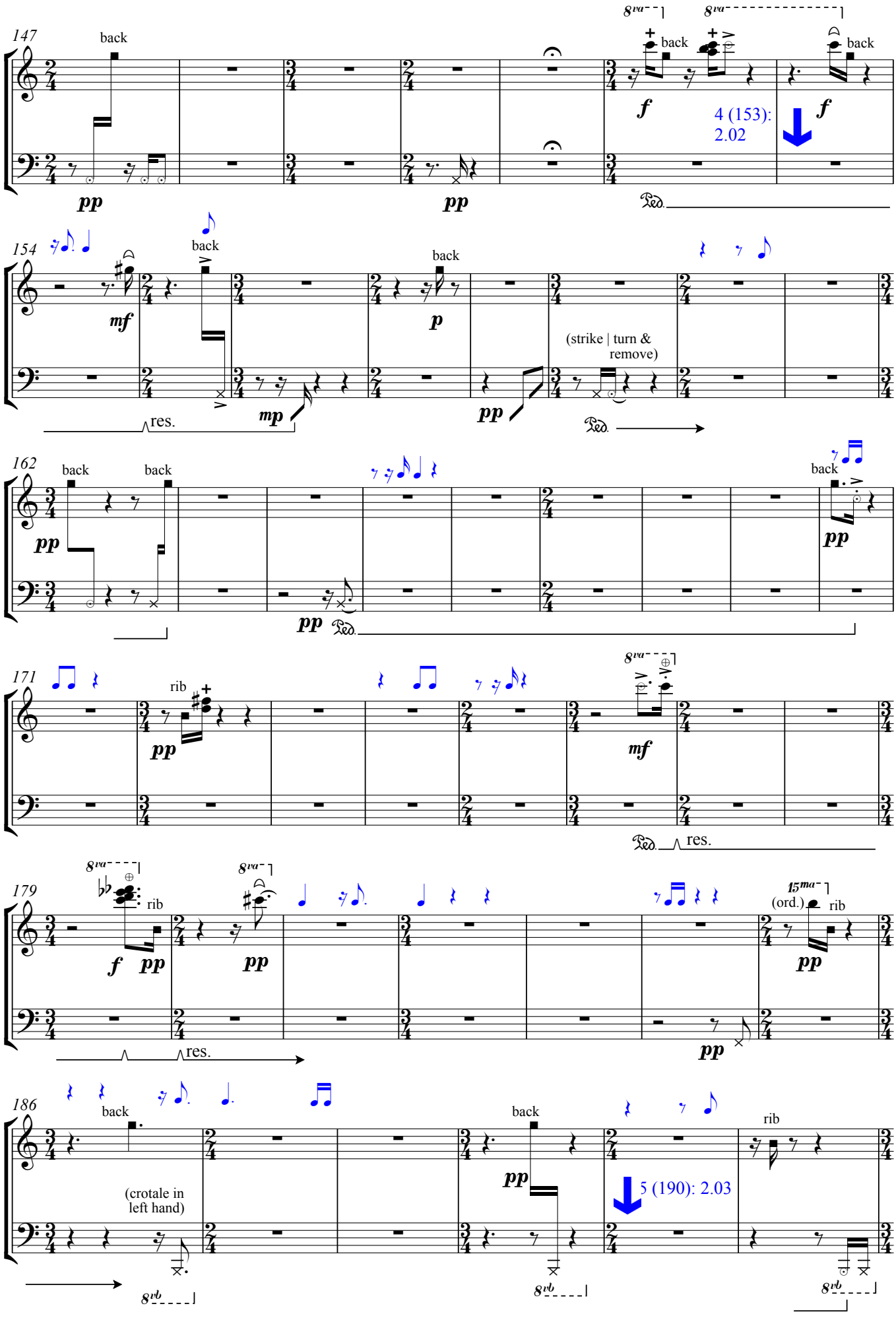
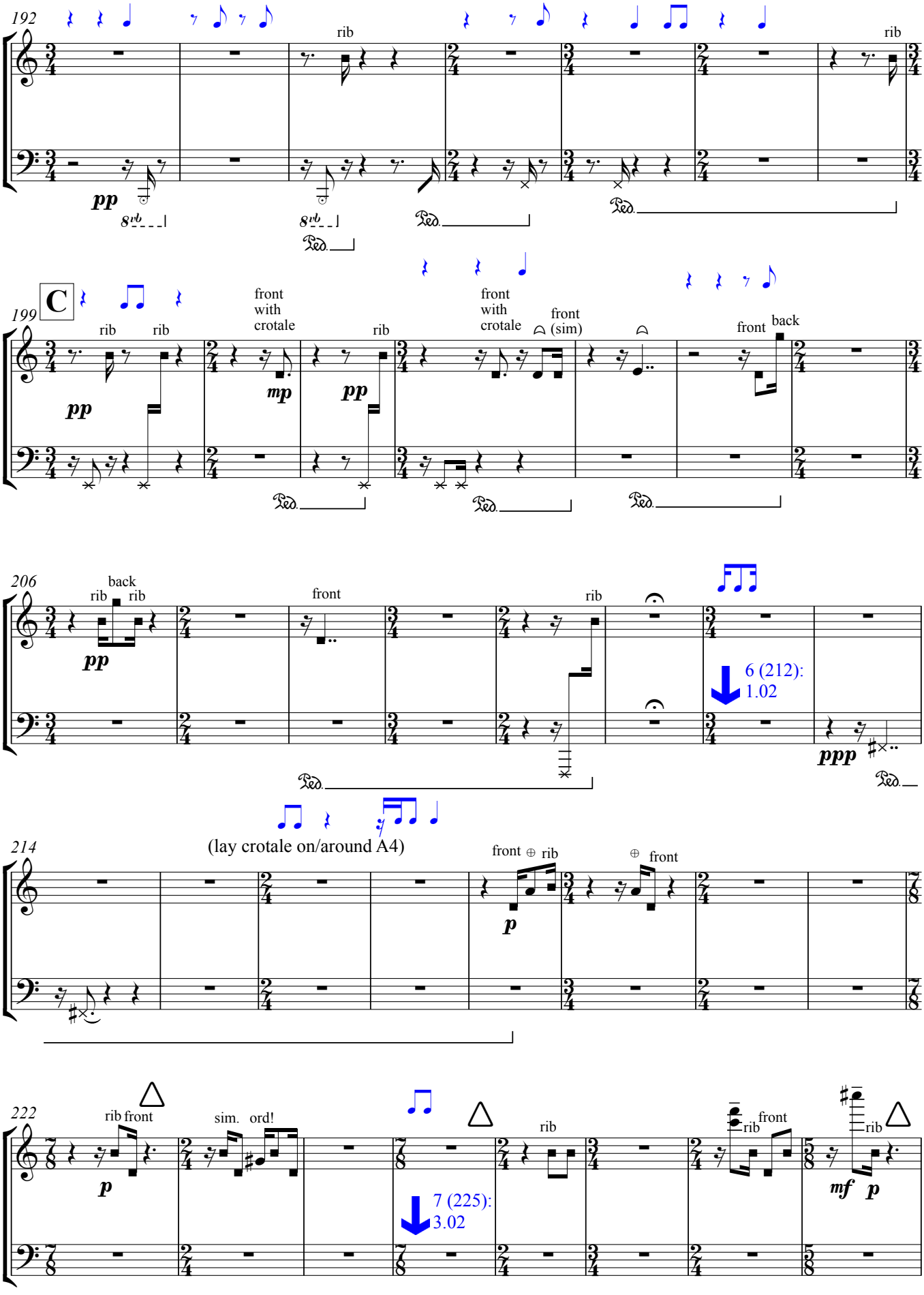
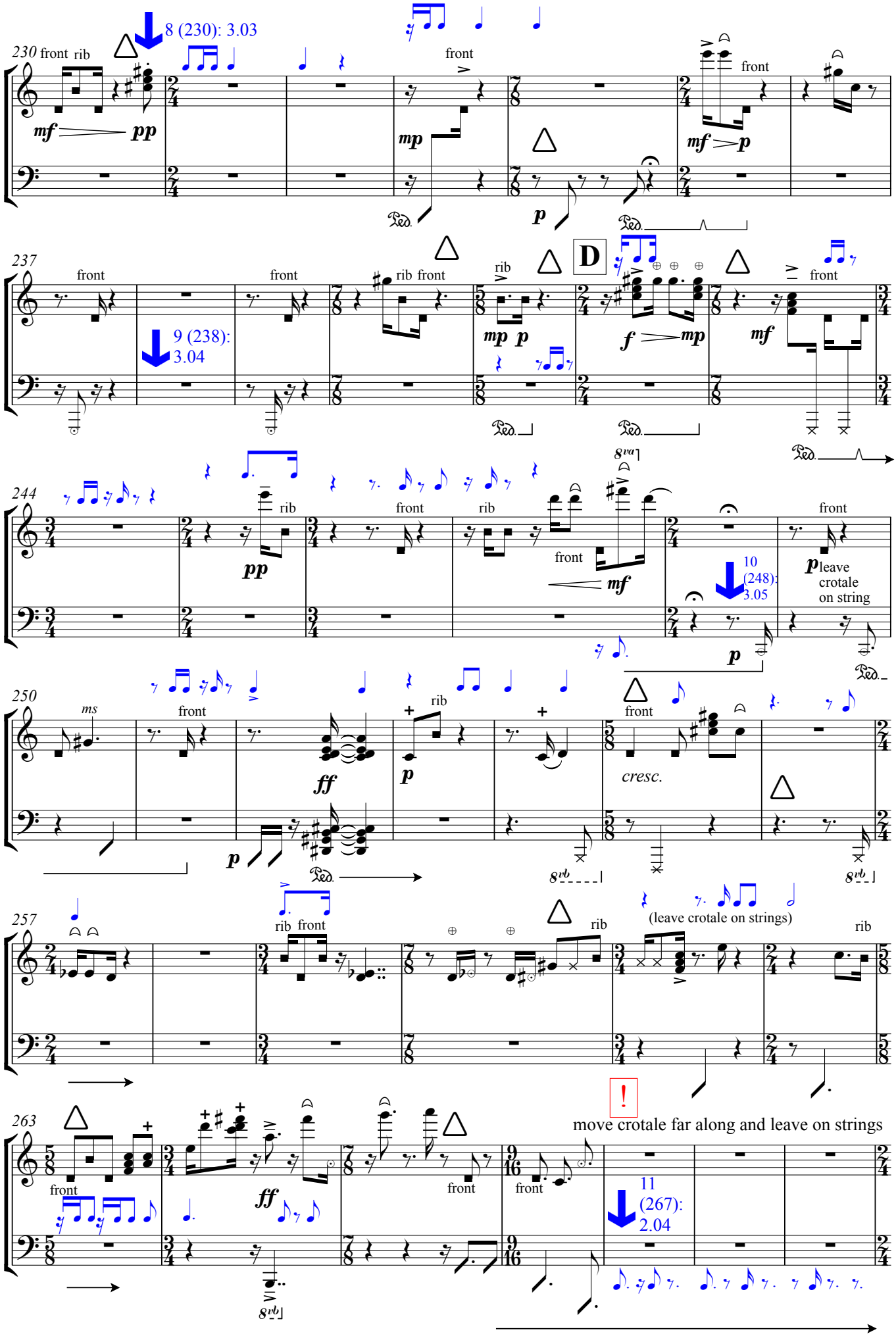
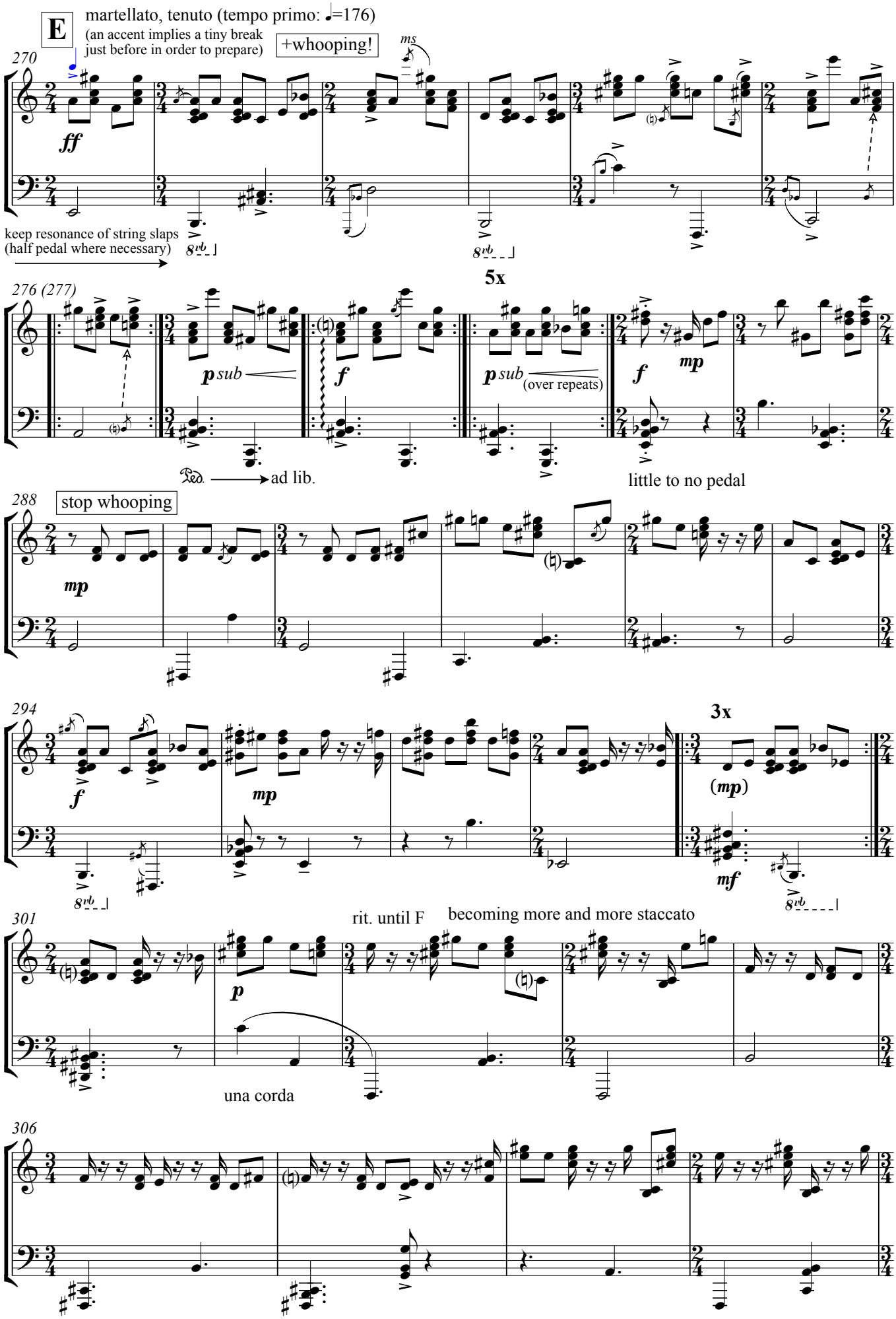

48
pp
56
(pick up crotale)
(damp with crotale)
pp
pp
p mf
Ped. res.
64
(leave crotale on strings)
p mf
(leave crotale on strings)
mf
res.
73
15ma
f
A
8va
f
pp
Ped.
82
8va
f
f
back
p
8va
f
back
(pick up crotale)
90
back
pp
(leave crotale on strings)
f
f

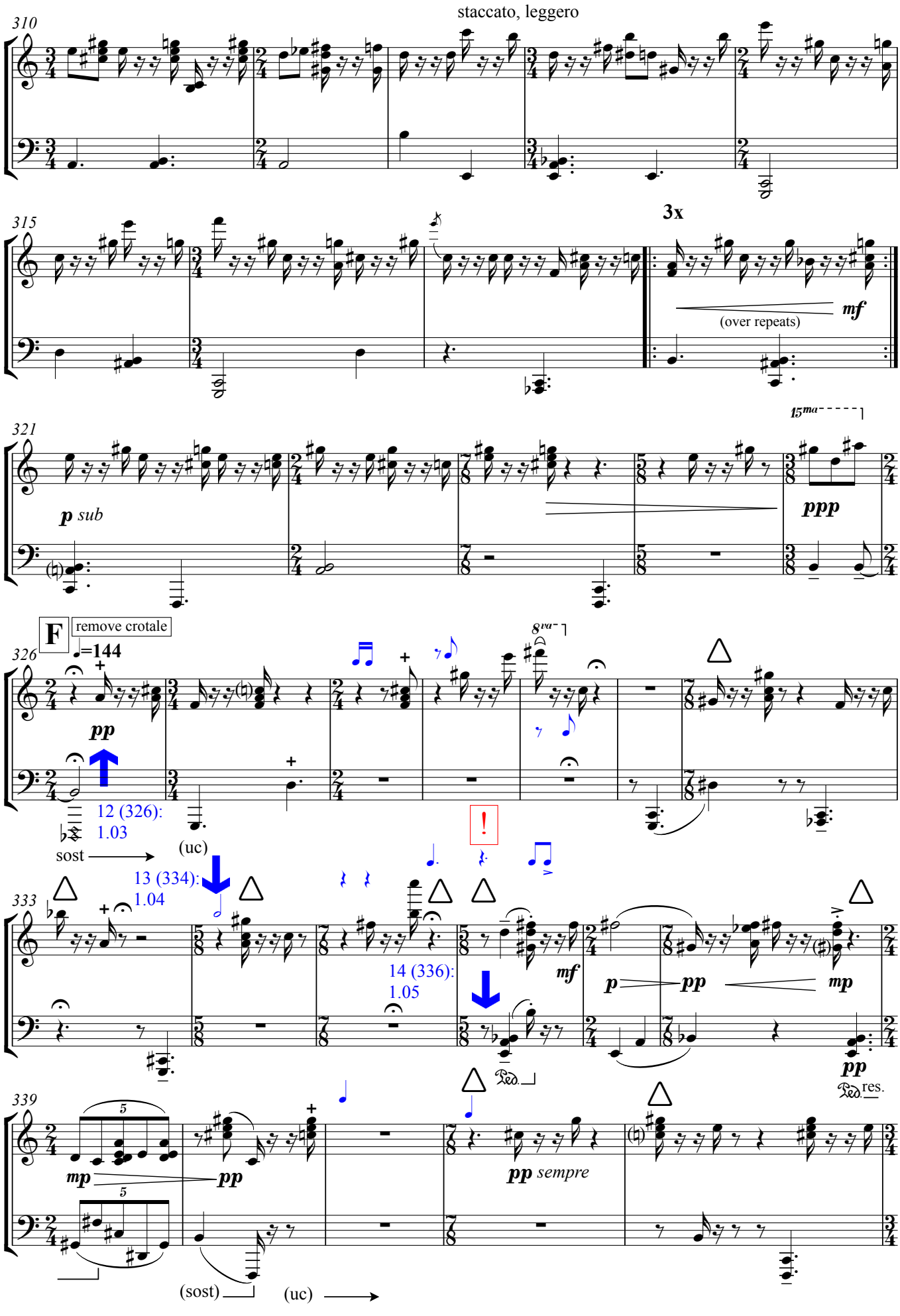

98
mp
pp
2 (100):
2.01
pp
(leggero)
back
pp
8va
105
back
ppp
(crotale
will
rattle)
pp
114
pp
123
back
pp
pp
8va
Ped.
Ped.
poco meno mosso (♩=160)
131
B
mp
back
8va
3 (136):
3.01
Ped.
139
15ma
back
mf
8va
pp
(crotale strike
& lift)
pp
back
back
mp
p
sim.
pp
Ped.

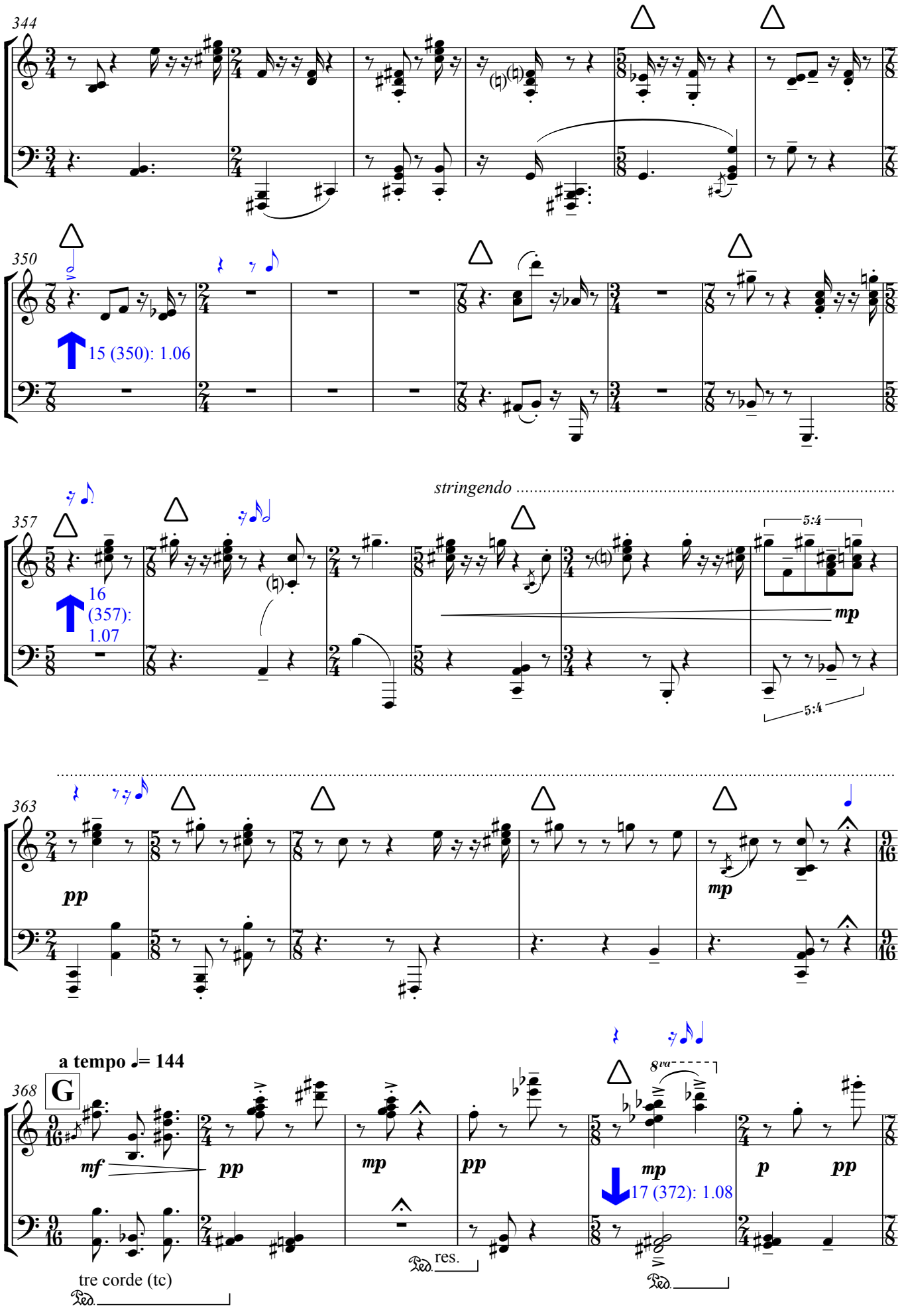

147
back
8va
back
back
f
4 (153): 2.02
f
pp
pp
Ped.
154
back
back
mf
p
(strike | turn & remove)
res.
mp
pp
Ped.
162
back
back
back
pp
pp
pp
Ped.
171
rib
pp
8va
mf
Ped.
res.
179
8va
8va
rib
f
pp
pp
res.
15ma
(ord.)
rib
pp
pp
186
back
back
rib
(crotale in left hand)
pp
5 (190): 2.03
8vb
8vb
8vb

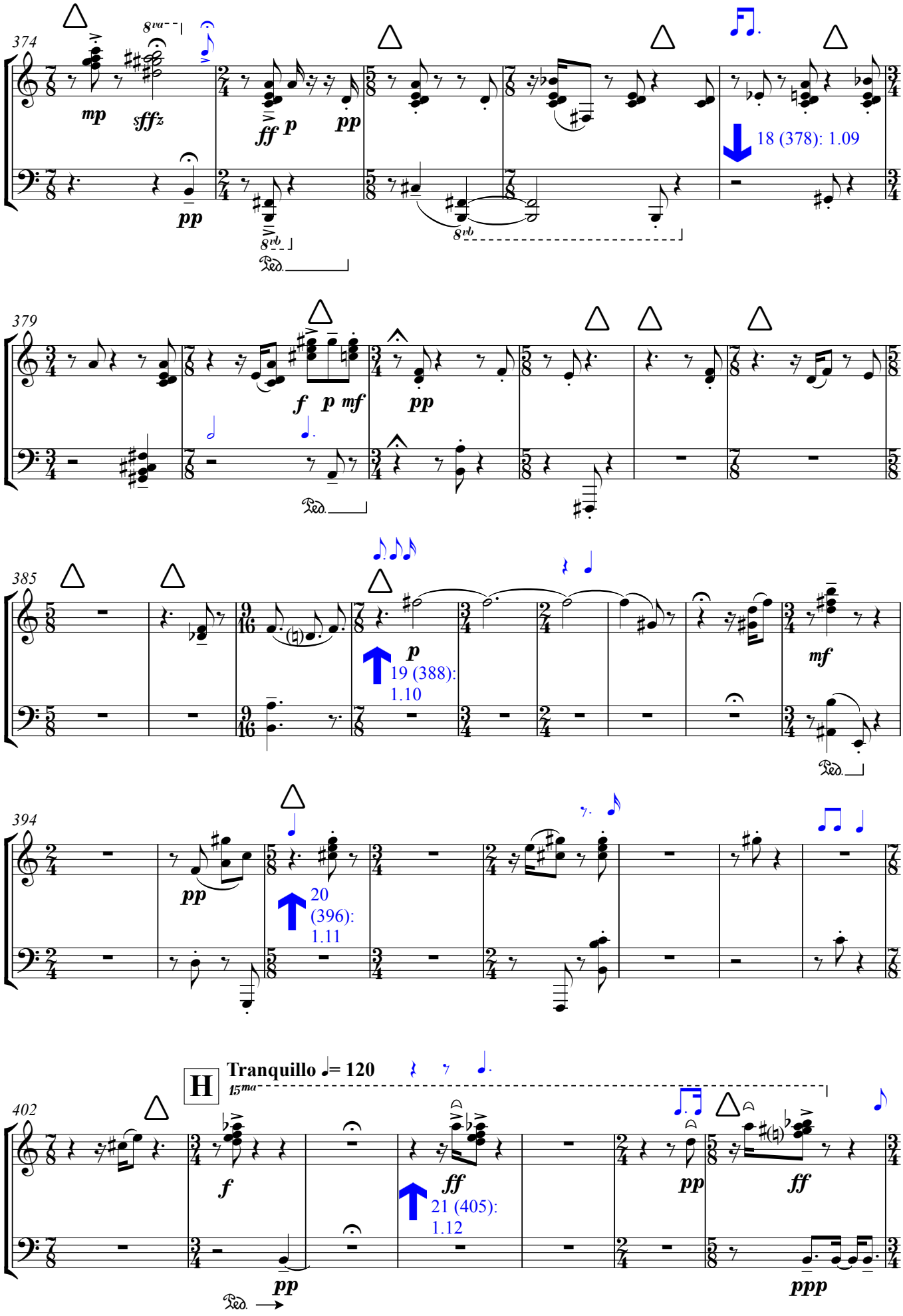

192
rib
rib
pp
8vb
199
C
rib
rib
front with crotale
front with crotale
front (sim)
front
back
pp
mp
pp
206
back
rib
rib
front
rib
pp
6 (212): 1.02
ppp
(lay crotale on/around A4)
214
front
rib
front
p
222
rib
front
sim.
ord!
p
7 (225): 3.02
rib
rib
front
rib
mf
p

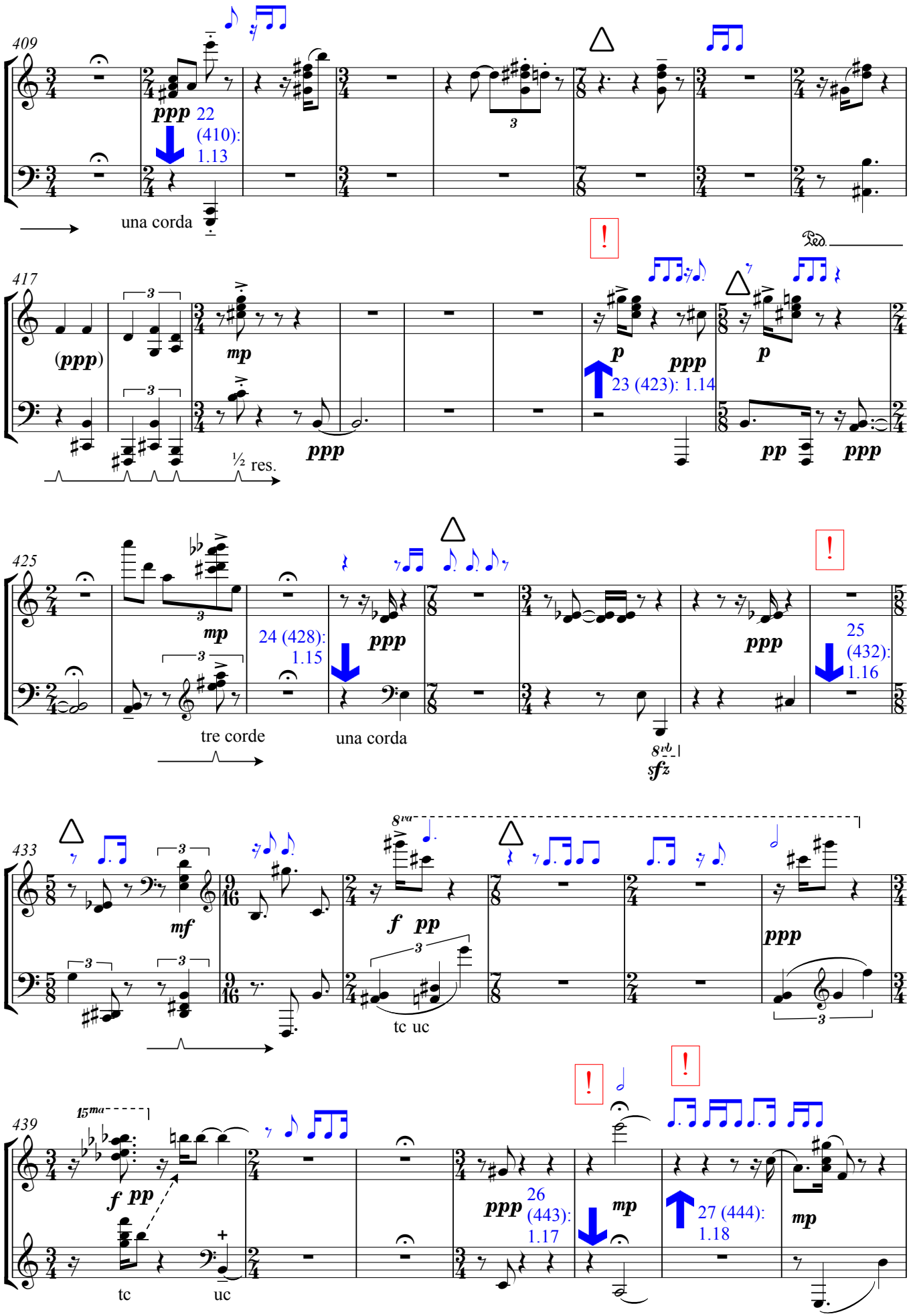

8 (230): 3.03
230 front rib
mf pp
front
mp
front
mf p
p
237
front
front
rib front
rib
D
front
9 (238): 3.04
mp p
f mp
mf
244
rib
front
rib
front
pp
mf
10 (248): 3.05
p leave crotale on string
p
250
ms
front
rib
front
ff
p
p
cresc.
257
rib front
rib
(leave crotale on strings)
rib
!
move crotale far along and leave on strings
263
front
front
front
ff
11 (267): 2.04

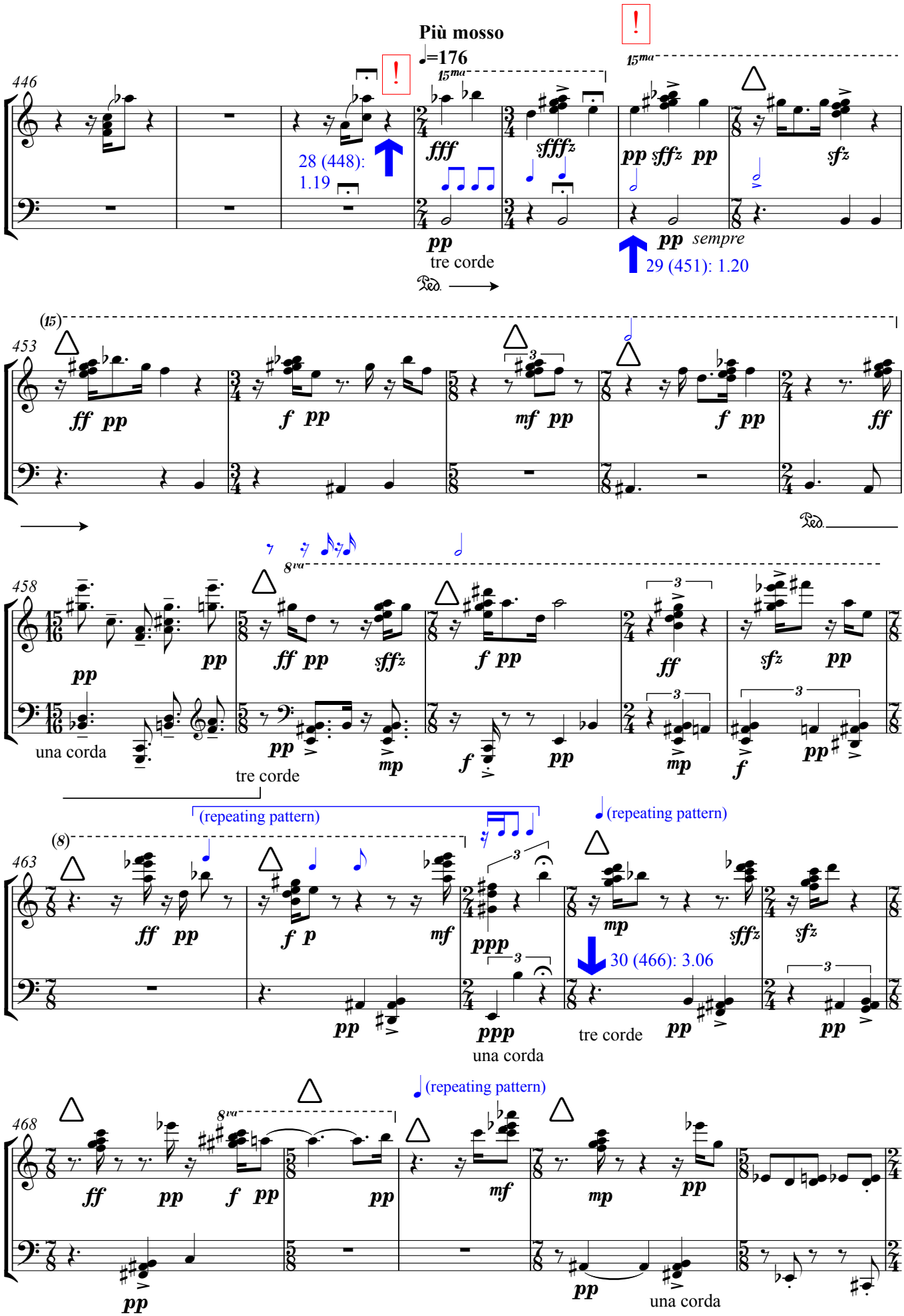

E
martellato, tenuto (tempo primo: ♩=176)
(an accent implies a tiny break just before in order to prepare)
+whooping!
ms
270
ff
keep resonance of string slaps (half pedal where necessary)
8vb
5x
276 (277)
p sub
f
p sub (over repeats)
f
mp
Ped.
ad lib.
little to no pedal
288
stop whooping
mp
294
3x
f
mp
(mp)
mf
8vb
301
rit. until F
becoming more and more staccato
p
una corda
306

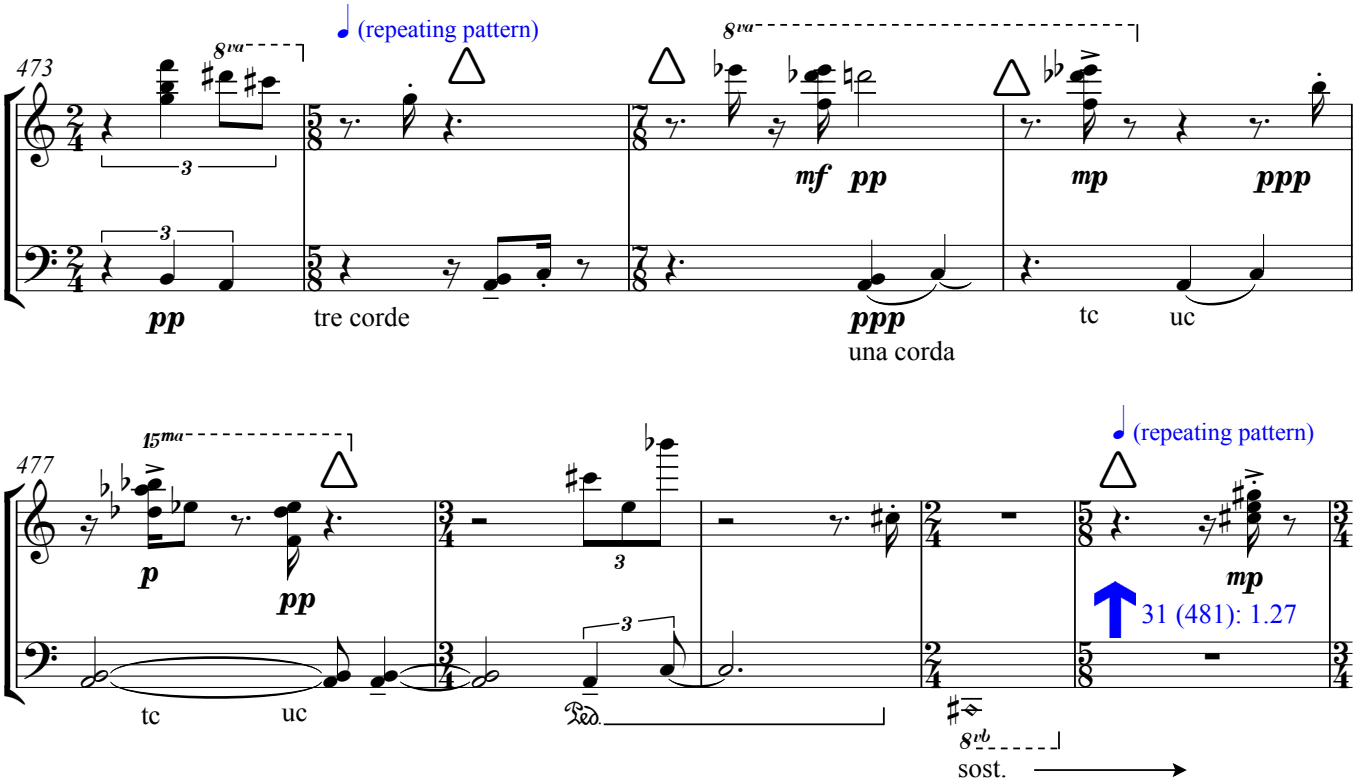

staccato, leggero
310
315
3x
mf
(over repeats)
321
p sub
15ma
ppp
F
remove crotale
♩=144
326
pp
8va
12 (326):
1.03
sost
(uc)
13 (334):
1.04
!
333
14 (336):
1.05
mf
p
pp
mp
pp
Ped.
Ped. res.
339
mp
pp
pp sempre
(sost)
(uc)


344
350
15 (350): 1.06
357
stringendo
16 (357): 1.07
5:4
5:4
mp
363
pp
mp
a tempo ♩= 144
368
G
mf
pp
mp
pp
8va
mp
17 (372): 1.08
p
pp
tre corde (tc)
Ped.
Ped. res.
Ped.

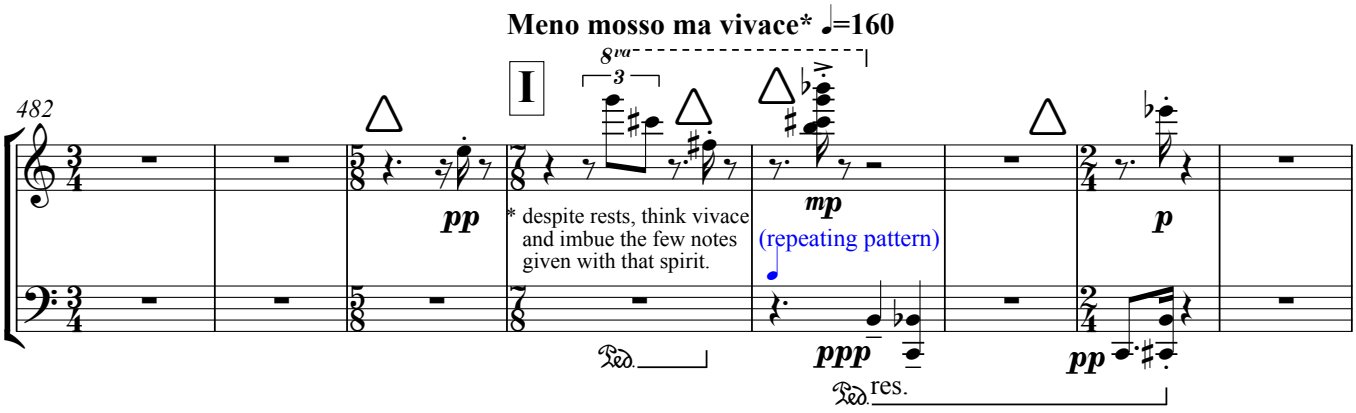

374
mp
sfffz
pp
ff p
pp
8va
8vb
Ped.
18 (378): 1.09
379
f p mf
pp
Ped.
385
p
19 (388): 1.10
mf
Ped.
394
pp
20 (396): 1.11
H
Tranquillo ♩= 120
15ma
402
f
ff
21 (405): 1.12
pp
ff
pp
Ped.
ppp

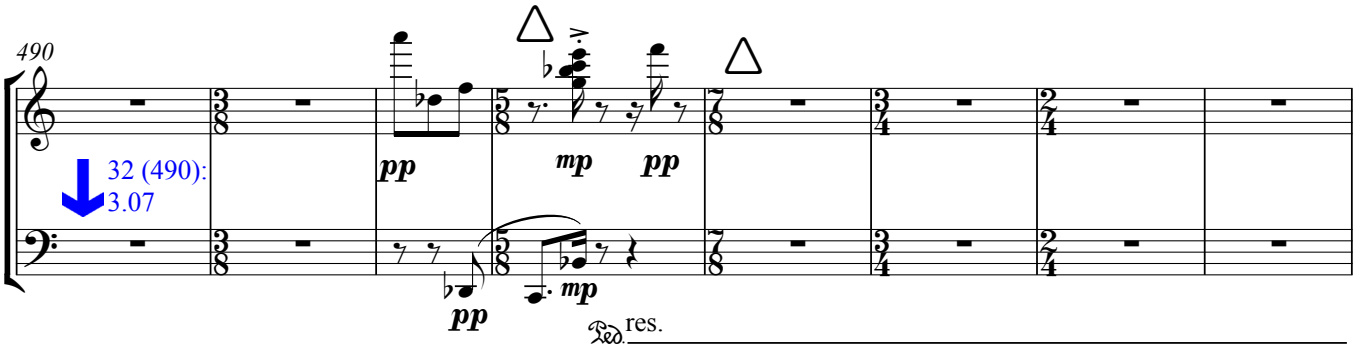

409
ppp
22 (410): 1.13
una corda
417
(ppp)
mp
ppp
½ res.
p
ppp
23 (423): 1.14
p
pp
ppp
Ped.
425
mp
24 (428): 1.15
ppp
tre corde
una corda
ppp
25 (432): 1.16
8va
sfz
433
mf
f pp
tc uc
ppp
439
15ma
f pp
tc
uc
ppp
26 (443): 1.17
mp
27 (444): 1.18
mp

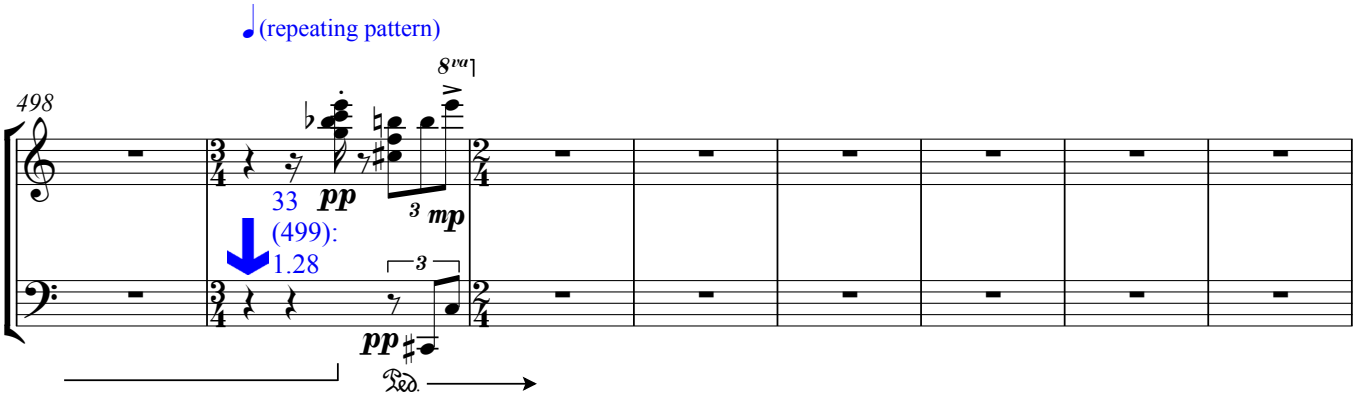

Più mosso
♩=176
446
15ma
fff
sfffz
pp sffz pp
sfz
pp
tre corde
pp sempre
28 (448): 1.19
29 (451): 1.20
453
(15)
ff pp
f pp
mf pp
f pp
ff
Ped.
458
8va
pp
ff pp
sffz
f pp
ff
sfz pp
una corda
tre corde
mp
463
(8)
(repeating pattern)
ff pp
f p
mf
ppp
mp
sffz
sfz
30 (466): 3.06
una corda
tre corde
468
ff pp f pp
pp
mf
mp
pp
una corda

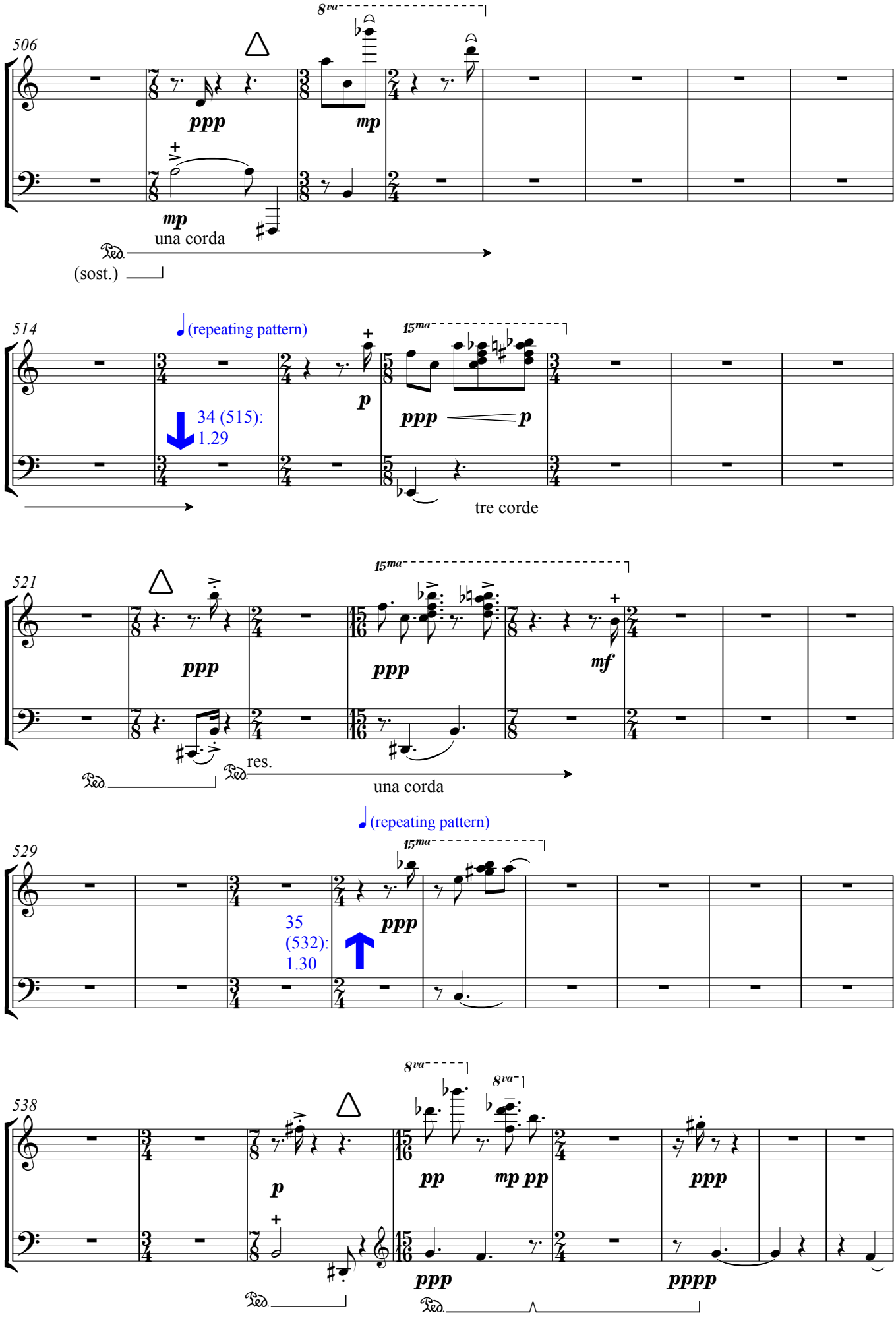

473
8va
(repeating pattern)
pp
tre corde
mf pp
ppp
una corda
mp
ppp
tc
uc

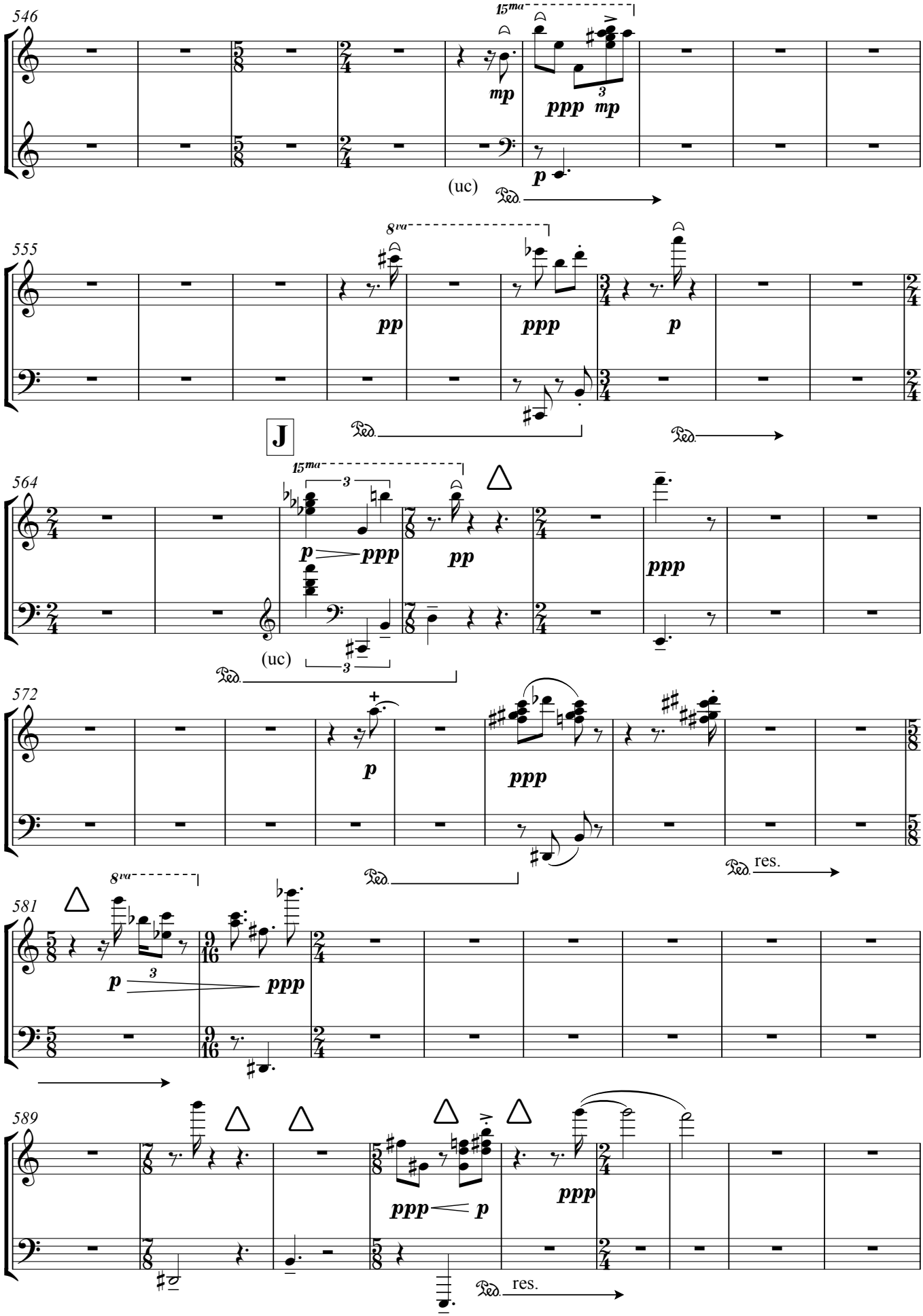
477
15ma
p
pp
tc
uc
(repeating pattern)
mp
31 (481): 1.27
8vb
sost.

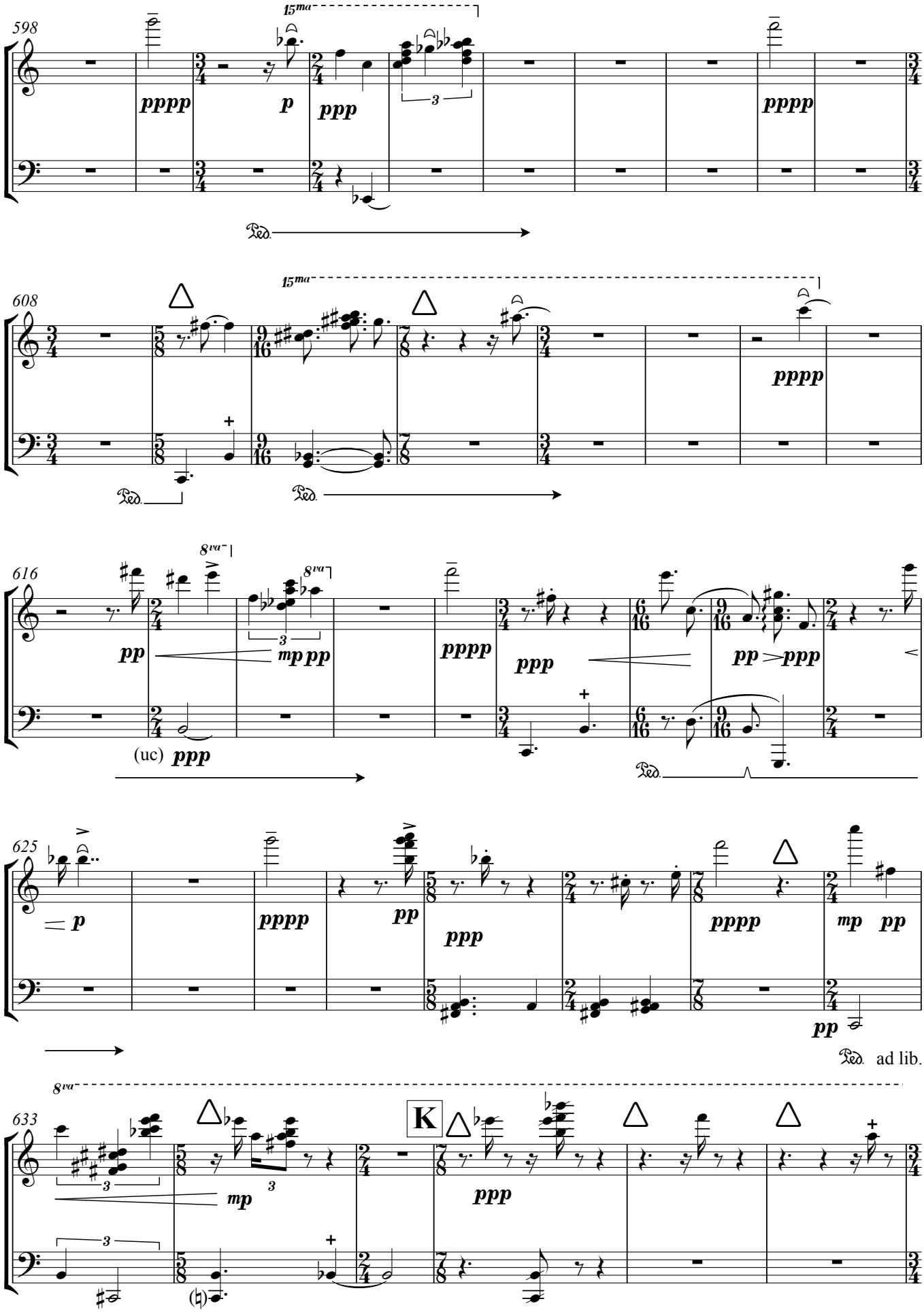

Meno mosso ma vivace* ♩=160
482
I
8va
pp
* despite rests, think vivace and imbue the few notes given with that spirit.
mp
(repeating pattern)
ppp
pp
p
res.

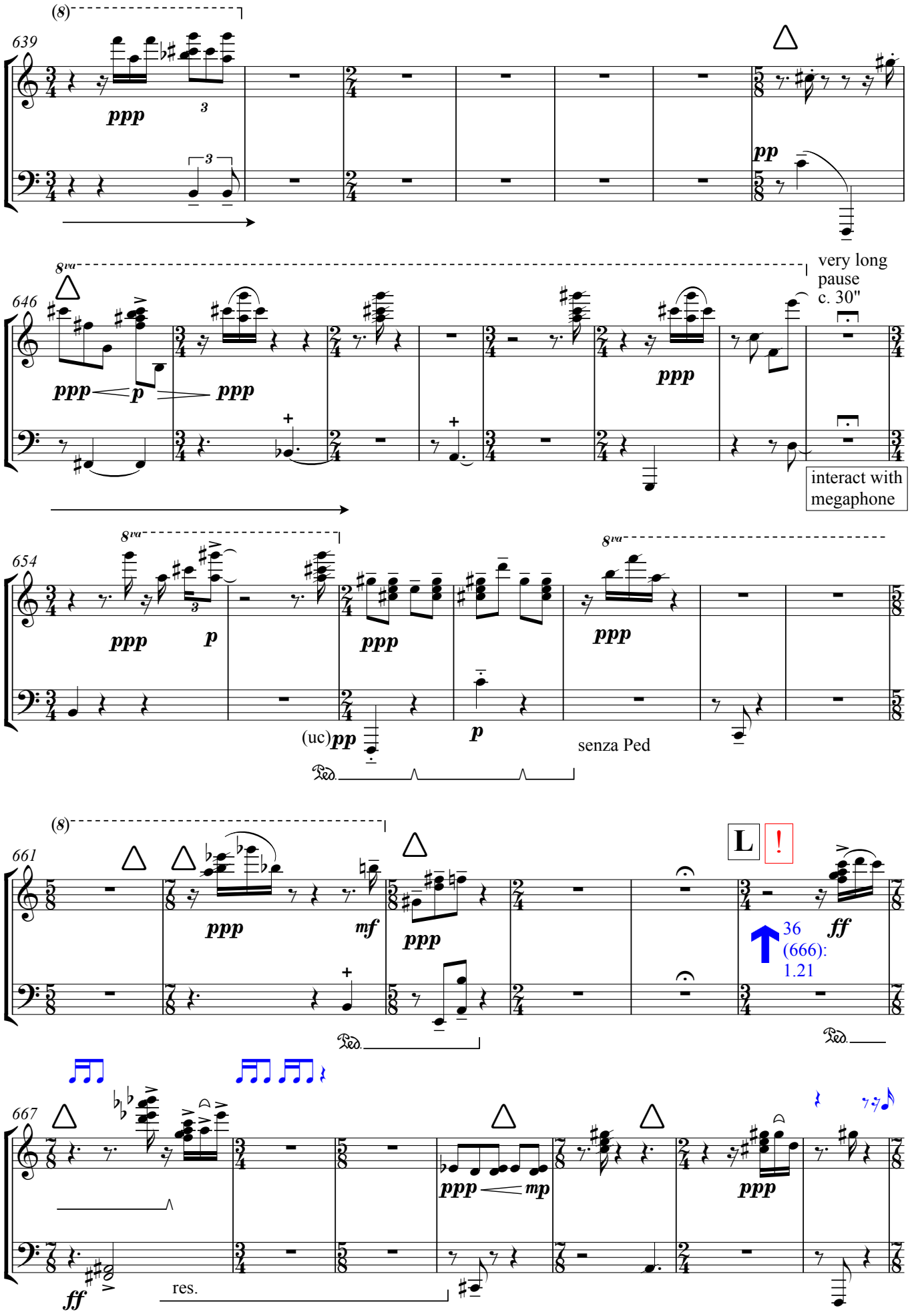

490
32 (490): 3.07
pp
mp
pp
mp
res.

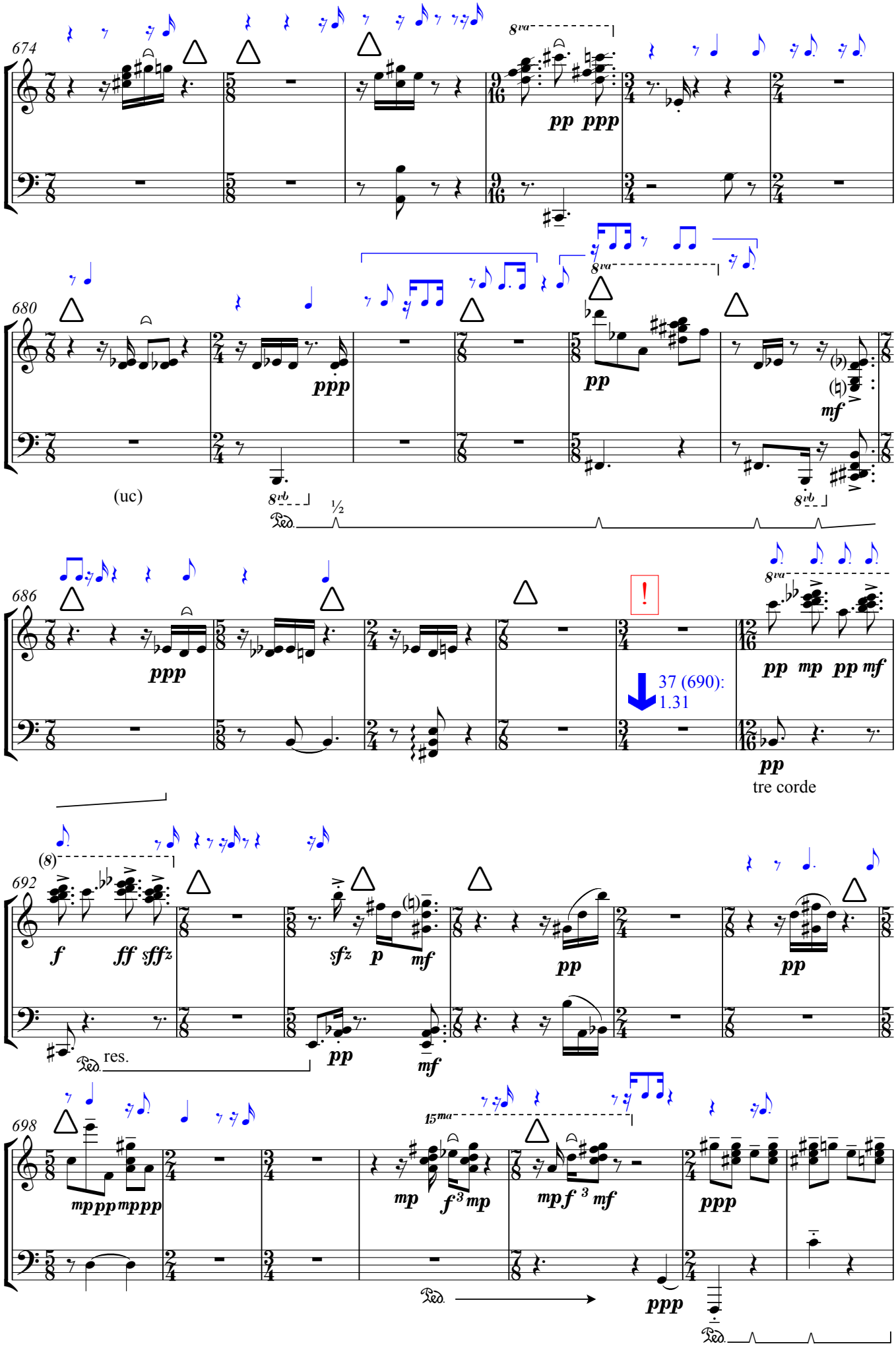

(repeating pattern)
498
8va
33 (499): 1.28
pp
mp
pp

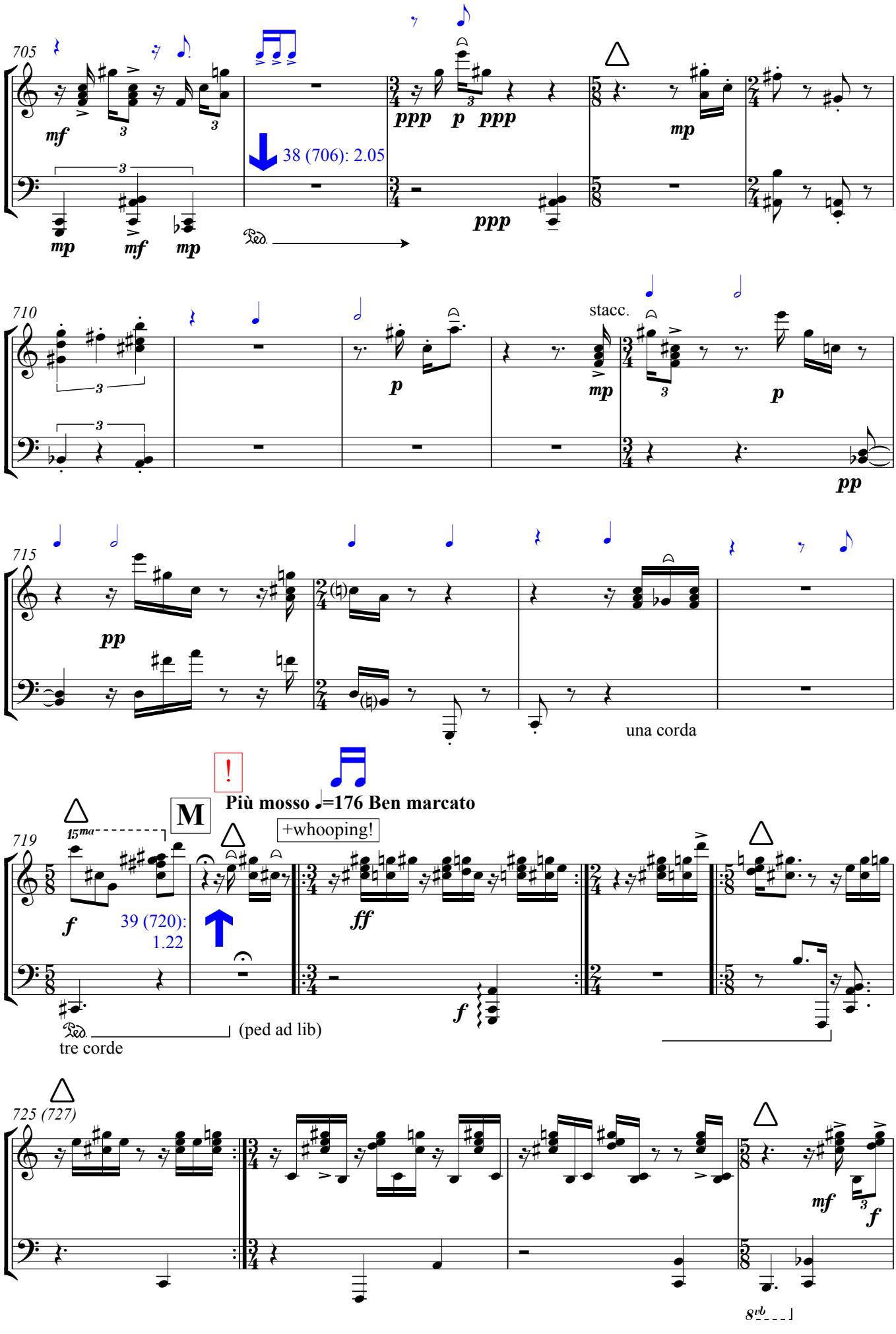

506
8va
ppp
mp
mp
una corda
Ped.
(sost.)
514
(repeating pattern)
15ma
p
34 (515): 1.29
ppp
p
tre corde
521
15ma
ppp
ppp
mf
res.
Ped.
una corda
(repeating pattern)
529
15ma
35 (532): 1.30
ppp
538
8va
8va
p
pp
mp pp
ppp
ppp
pppp
Ped.
Ped.

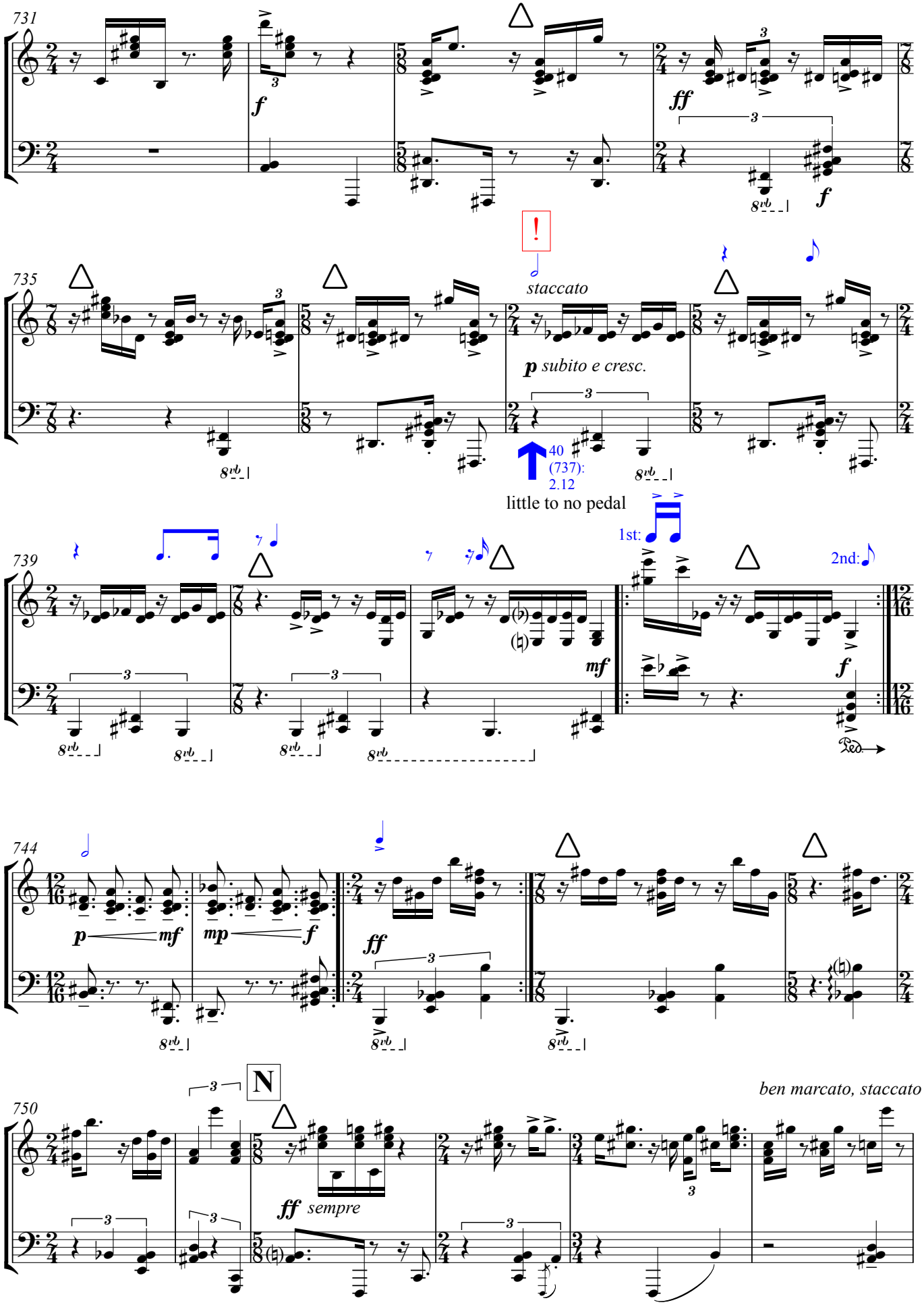

546
15ma
mp
ppp
mp
3
p
(uc)
Ped.
555
8va
pp
ppp
p
J
Ped.
Ped.
564
15ma
3
p
ppp
pp
ppp
(uc)
3
Ped.
572
p
ppp
Ped.
res.
581
8va
p
3
ppp
589
ppp
p
ppp
Ped.
res.

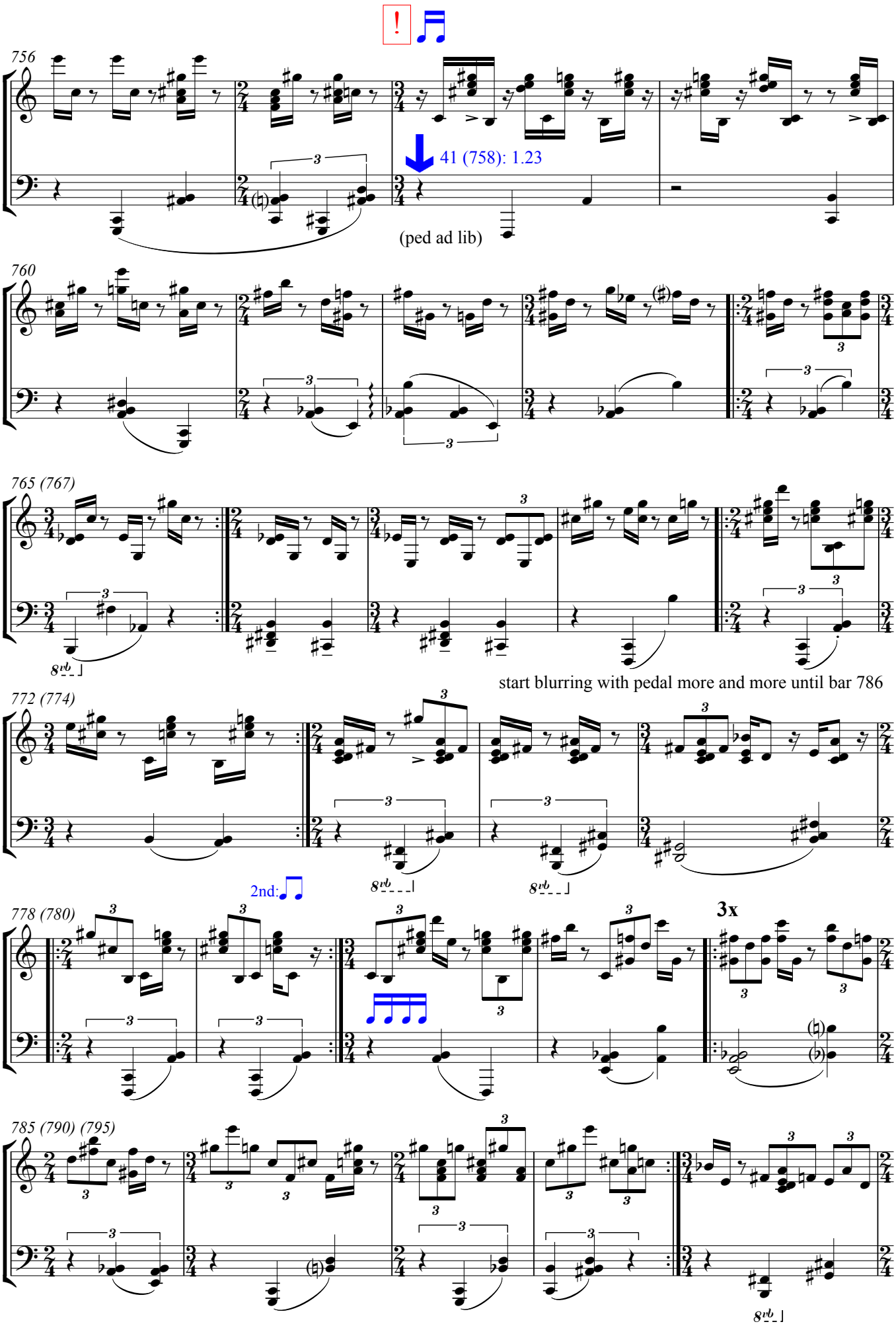

598
15ma
pppp
p
ppp
pppp
608
15ma
pppp
616
8va
8va
pp
mp pp
pppp
ppp
pp ppp
(uc) ppp
625
p
pppp
pp
ppp
pppp
mp pp
pp
ad lib.
633
8va
K
mp
ppp

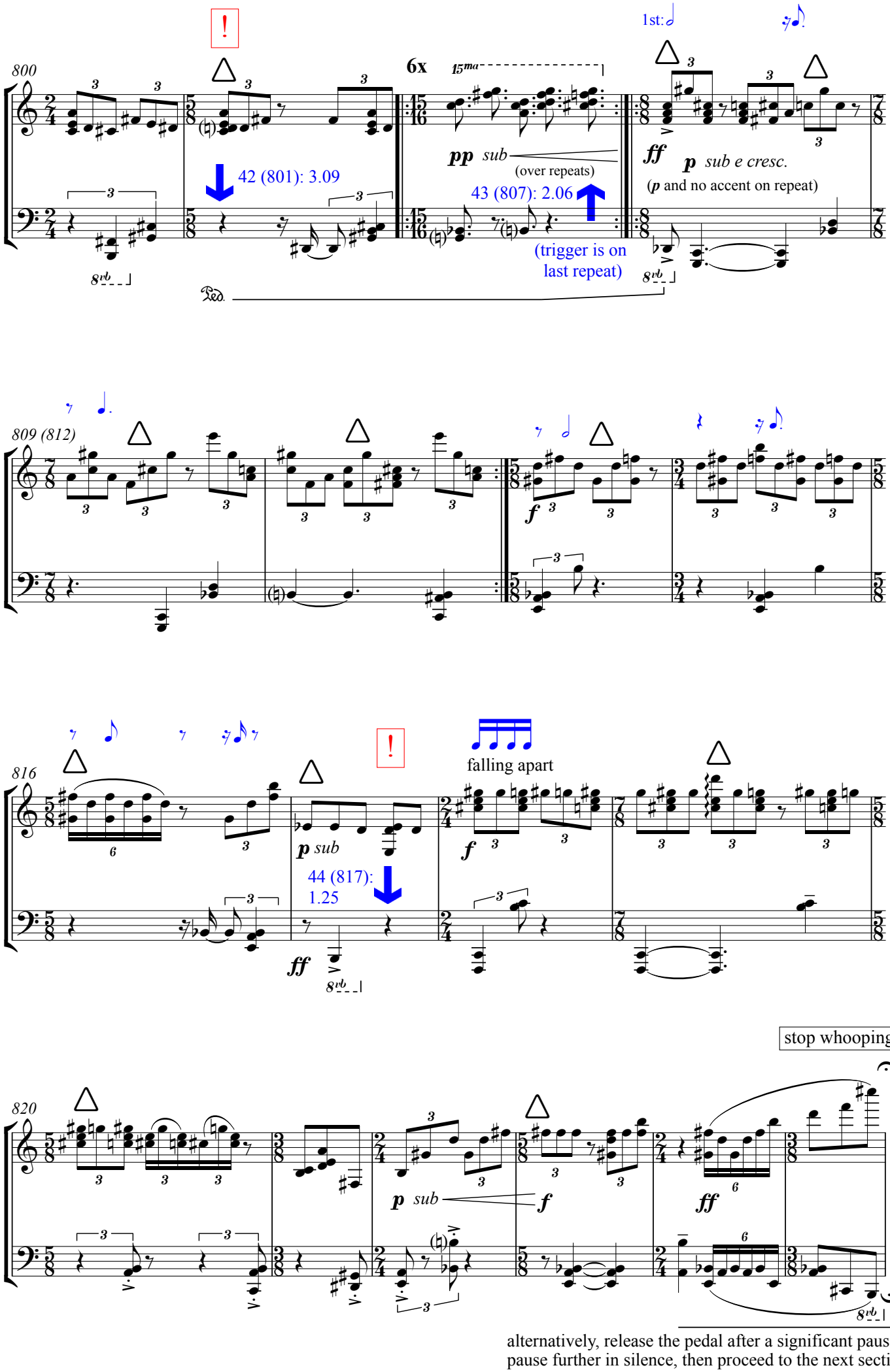

(8)
639
ppp
3
pp
8va
646
ppp
p
ppp
ppp
very long pause c. 30"
interact with megaphone
8va
654
ppp
p
ppp
8va
ppp
(uc)pp
p
senza Ped
(8)
661
ppp
mf
ppp
L
!
36 (666): 1.21
ff
667
ppp
mp
ppp
ff
res.


674
8va
pp ppp
680
ppp
pp
mf
(uc)
8vb
Ped.
½
686
ppp
!
37 (690):
1.31
pp mp pp mf
pp
tre corde
692
(8)
f ff sffz
sfz p mf
pp
pp
Ped.
res.
pp
mf
698
15ma
mp pp mp pp
mp f mp
mp f mf
ppp
Ped.
ppp
Ped.


705
mf
mp
mf
mp
38 (706): 2.05
ppp
p
ppp
ppp
mp
710
stacc.
p
mp
p
pp
715
pp
una corda
!
Più mosso ♩=176 Ben marcato
M
719
15ma
+whooping!
f
39 (720): 1.22
ff
f
(ped ad lib)
tre corde
725 (727)
mf
f
8vb


731
735
staccato
p subito e cresc.
40 (737): 2.12
little to no pedal
739
1st:
2nd:
744
N
ben marcato, staccato
750
ff sempre


!
756
41 (758): 1.23
(ped ad lib)
760
765 (767)
8vb
start blurring with pedal more and more until bar 786
772 (774)
8vb
8vb
2nd:
778 (780)
3x
785 (790) (795)
8vb


800
!
6x
15ma
1st:
pp sub
(over repeats)
42 (801): 3.09
43 (807): 2.06
(trigger is on last repeat)
ff
p sub e cresc.
(p and no accent on repeat)
8vb
Ped.
809 (812)
f
816
!
falling apart
p sub
44 (817): 1.25
ff
820
p sub
f
ff
stop whooping
alternatively, release the pedal after a significant pause, pause further in silence, then proceed to the next section

45 (826): 1.26

Free time

O **Megaphone**

Hold pedal down and point megaphone into piano to create resonances (or out towards audience, ad lib.). Speak given text loudly (fff with the aid of the megaphone) but without shouting. Aim to have text last as long as the two accompanying sound files (but certainly not longer).

826

"We are not a young peo-ple with an inn-o-cent record and a scanty inhe-ri-tance. We have engrossed

fff *sempre*

half-pedalling over chords ad lib

832

to ourselves an al-to - ge - ther dis - pro-por - tio - nate share of wealth and traffic of the world."

838

We have got all we want in territory, and our claim to be left in the unmolested enjoyment of vast

46 (838): 1.24

843

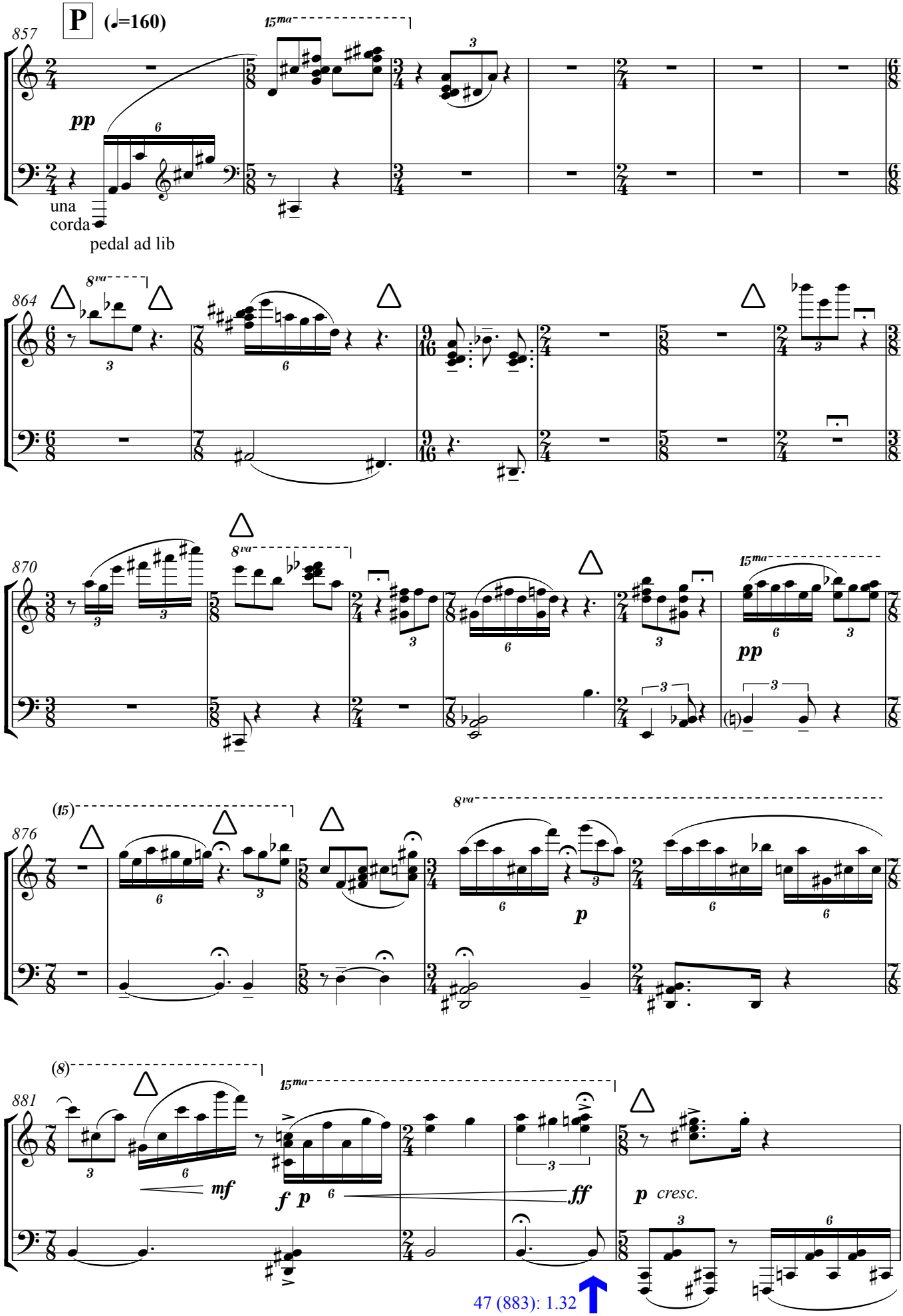
and splendid possessions, mainly acquired by vi-o-lence, largely maintained by force, often seem

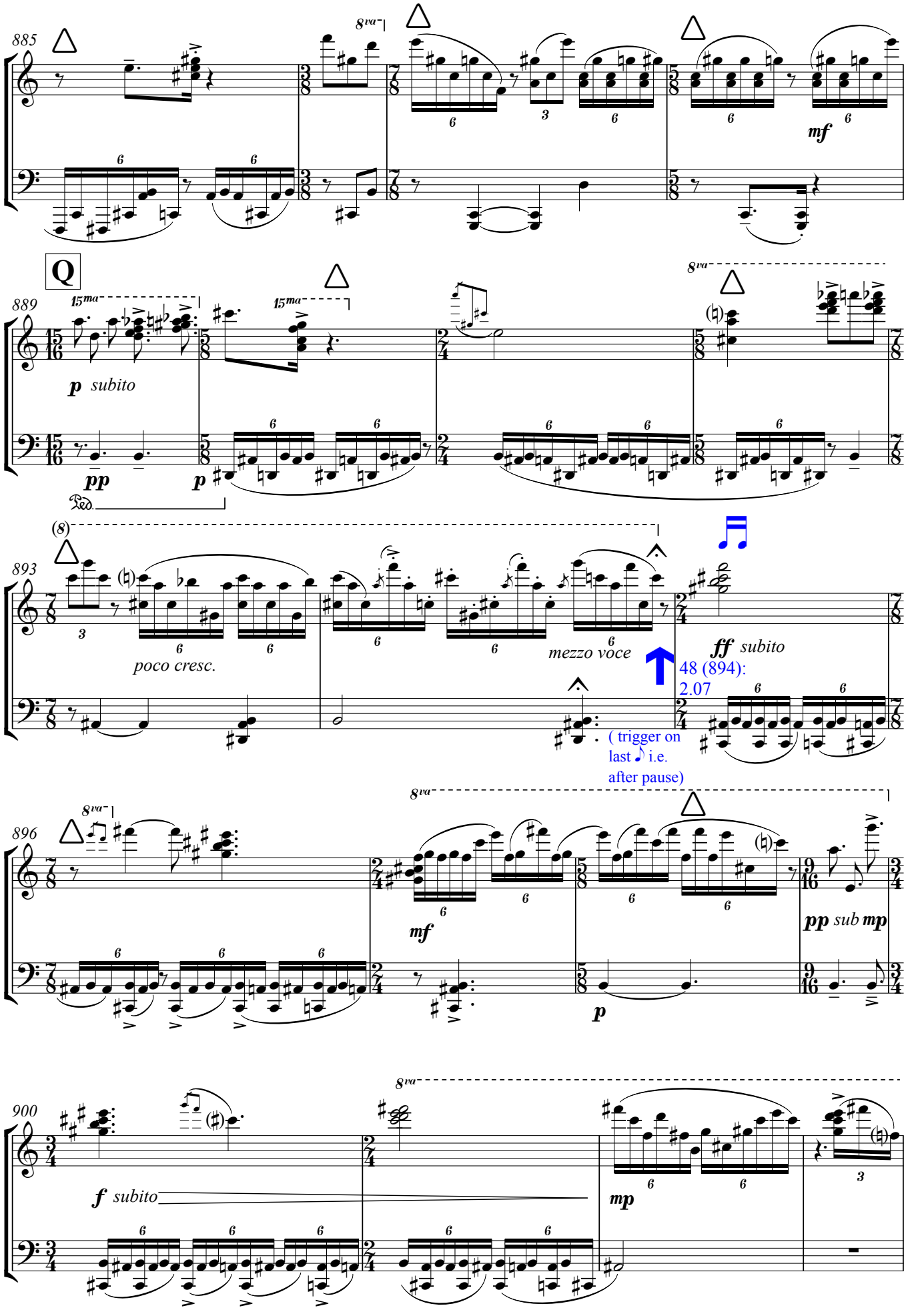
8vb

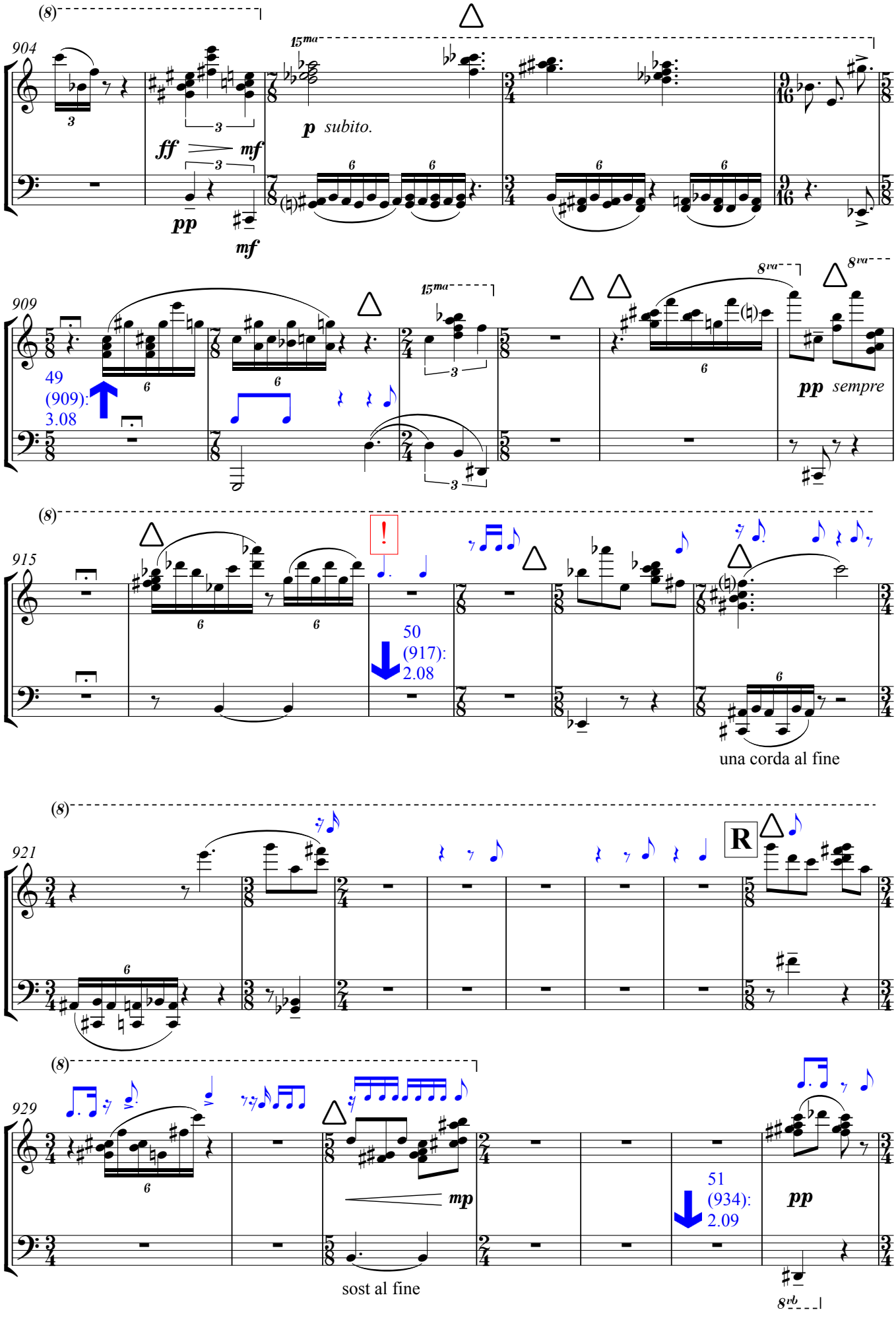
850

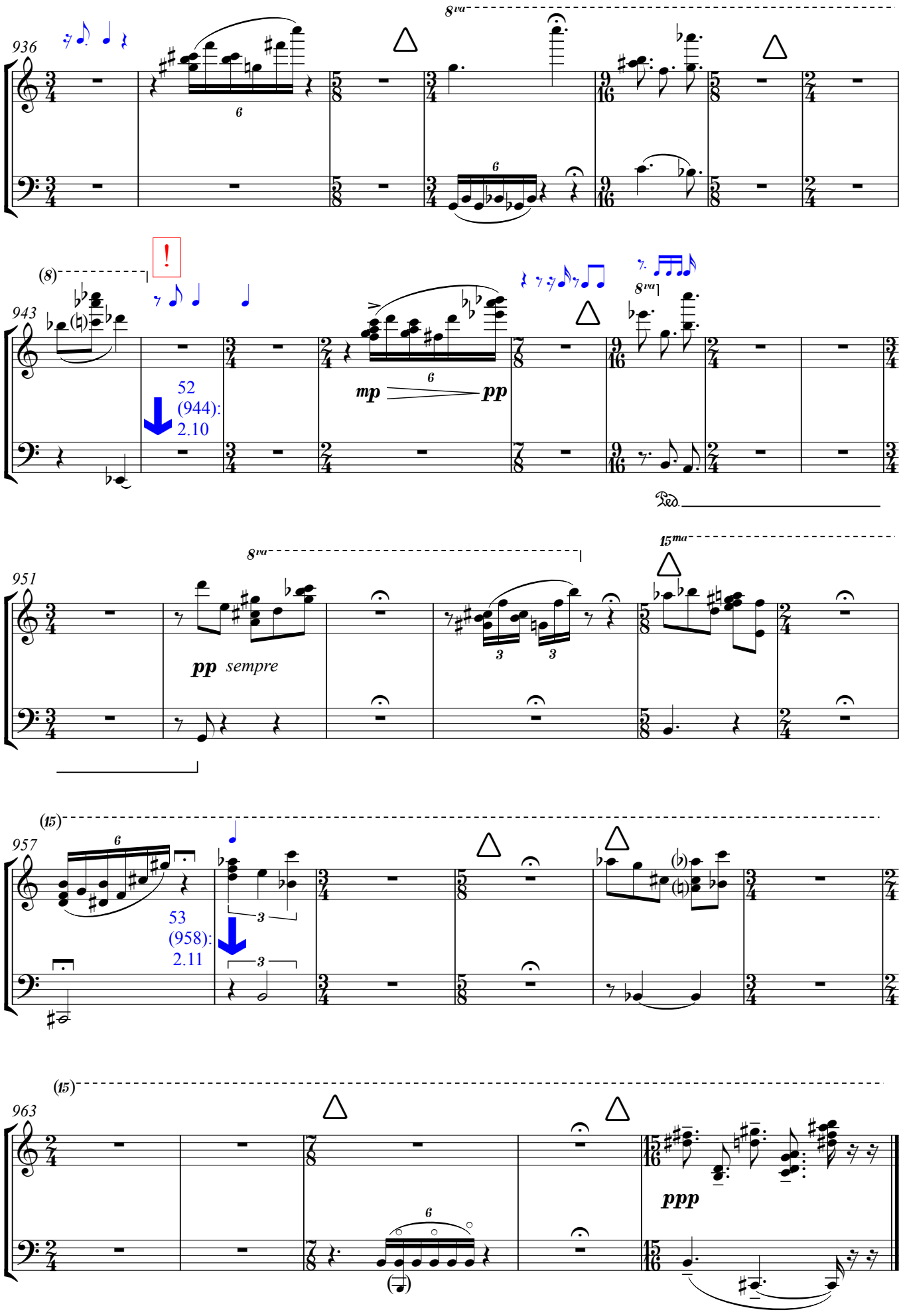
less reasonable to others than to us."

[long pause after the sound file has ended; just before resonance has died, let pedal off with a thud and move immediately to the next section as if nothing had happened.]


P
(♩=160)
857
15ma
pp
una
corda
pedal ad lib
864
8va
870
8va
15ma
pp
876
(15)
8va
p
881
(8)
15ma
mf
f p
ff
p cresc.
47 (883): 1.32


885
8va
mf
Q
889
15ma
15ma
8va
p subito
pp
p
Ped.
(8)
893
poco cresc.
mezzo voce
ff subito
48 (894):
2.07
(trigger on
last ♪ i.e.
after pause)
896
8va
8va
mf
pp sub mp
p
900
8va
f subito
mp


904
ff
mf
pp
mf
p subito.
909
49
(909):
3.08
pp sempre
915
50
(917):
2.08
una corda al fine
921
R
929
mp
sost al fine
51
(934):
2.09
pp


936
8va
943
(8)
!
52
(944):
2.10
mp
pp
8va
951
8va
15ma
pp sempre
957
(15)
53
(958):
2.11
963
(15)
ppp