Transposed Score

Tohu Va-Vohu

A Tone Poem for Orchestra

Ethan Isaac

2023

V.2025-09-15

Program Note:

The Zohar, the key text of Jewish Kabblah, in the simplest terms is a review of the text of the Torah in poetic language that with significant study would provide one with the knowledge to understand and control existence.

Selections from The Zohar

The earth was תהו ובהו (tohu va-vohu), chaos and void (Genesis 1:2)—dregs of an inkwell in seepage. For at first it existed but did not endure: was already later enduring. In forty-two letters the world was engraved and endured, all of them crowning the holy name.

The enlightened will shine like the זהר (zohar), radiance, of the sky (Daniel 12:3)—like musical intonations, whose melody is followed by the letters and vowels, undulating after them like troops behind their king. The letters are body; the vowels, spirit. All of them range in motion after the intonations and halt with them. When the melody of the intonation moves, letters and vowels follow; when it stops, they do not move but stand in place

The enlightened will shine—letters and vowels. Like the זהר (zohar), radiance—melody of the notes. Of the sky—extension of the melody, like those extending, prolonging the melody. And those who lead many to righteousness—pausal notes, halting their movement, as a result of which the word is heard. Will shine—letters and vowels shining as one on their journey into a mystery of concealment, a journey on concealed paths. From this all expands.

Isaac, Ethan. *Tohu Va-Vohu*
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ethanisaac.org

Tohu Va-Vohu (2023)

Ethan Isaac (b.1996)

For the 2025 PSO Call for Scores

Instrumentation:

2 Flutes (2 dbls. Piccolo)
2 Oboes
2 Clarinets in B♭ (2 dbls. Bass Clarinet)
2 Bassoons (2 dbls. Contrabassoon)

4 Horns in F
2 Trumpets in B♭
Tenor Trombone
Bass Trombone
Tuba

Timpani
3 Percussionists

Percussion 1:
Tubular Bells
Suspended Cymbal
Bass Drum
Tam-Tam

Percussion 2:
Crotales (Bowed, Struck)

Percussion 3:
Vibraphone (Bowed, Struck)

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass* (with C Extension)

***Optional Electronics*:**
Seaboard (Electronic Instrument, provided and performed by the composer)
Fixed Media, provided and performed by the composer

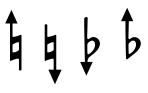
Approximate Duration: 6'

***Technical Requirements (Optional)*:**
Stereo PA system that is powerful enough to stand equal to the orchestra.
The person performing (the composer) on the Seaboard will also have control over the mix for the fixed media aspects of the score.

Notation Guide:

m.s.p. & m.s.t = Molto Sul Ponticello and Molto Sul Tasto

---> = Progressive change between techniques

 = Quarter Tone Accidentals (Approx. 50 cent difference)

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Transposed Score

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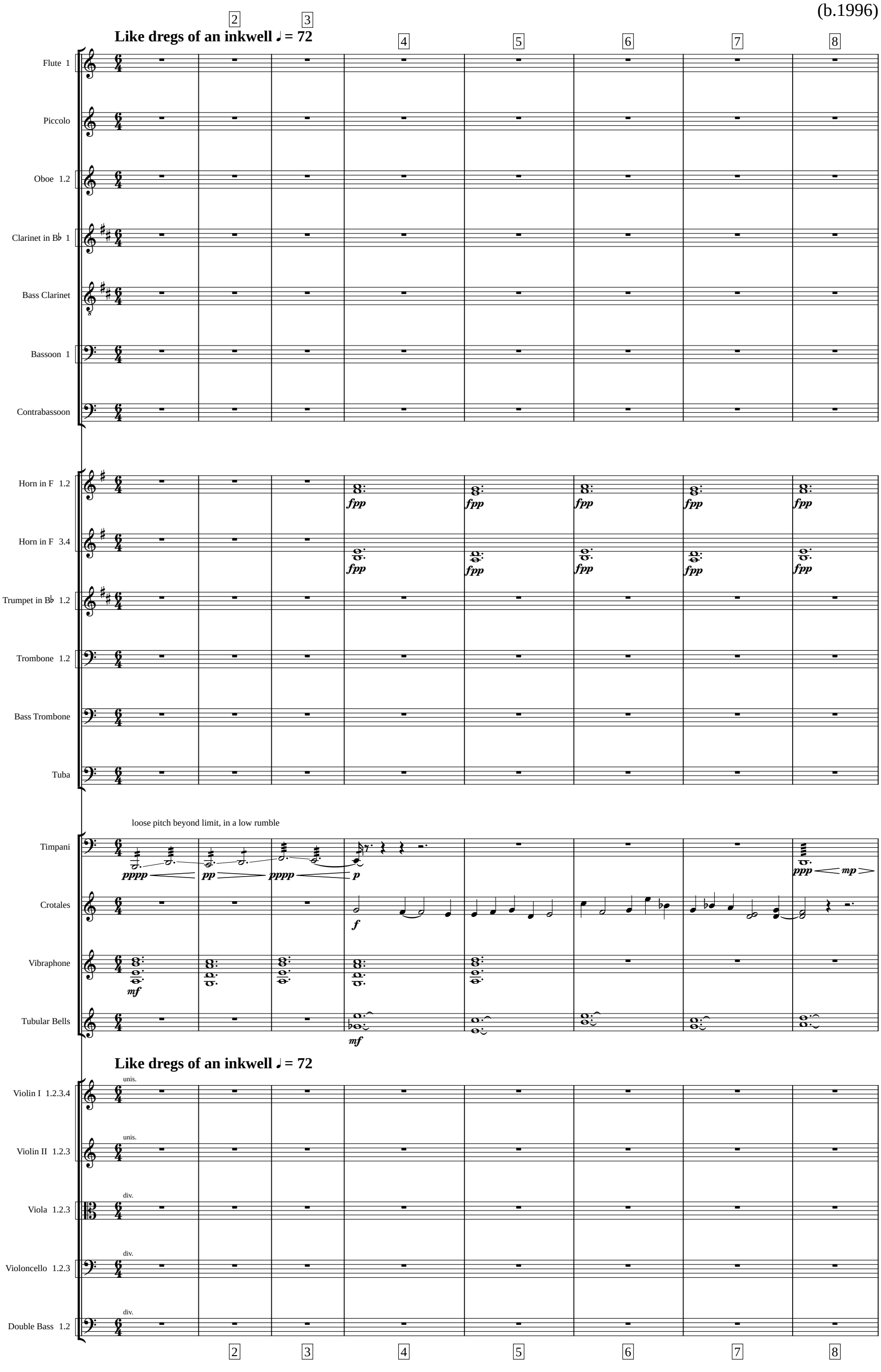
Ethan Isaac
(b.1996)



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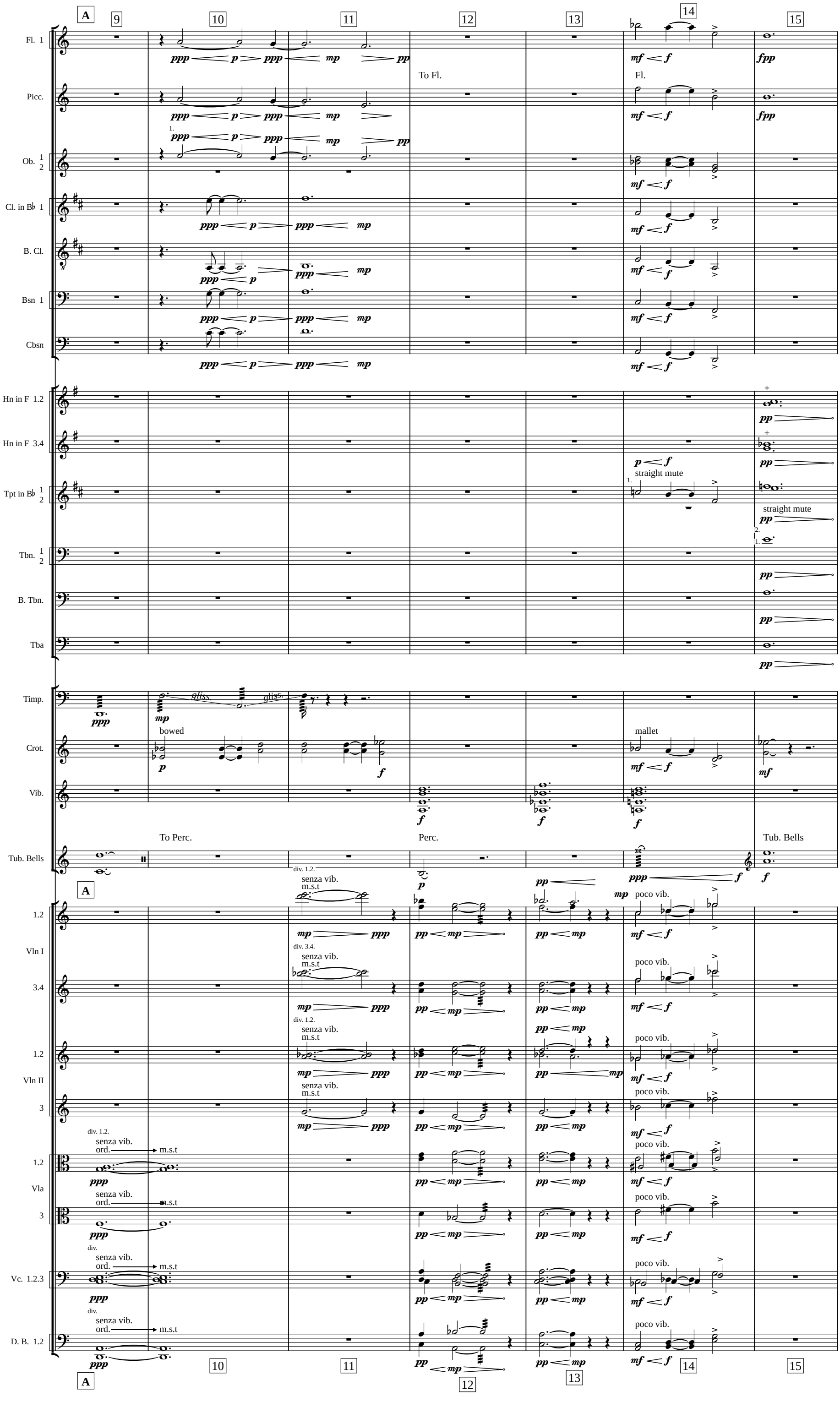

A
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
Fl. 1
Picc.
Ob. 1 2
Cl. in B♭ 1
B. Cl.
Bsn 1
Cbsn
Hn in F 1.2
Hn in F 3.4
Tpt in B♭ 1 2
Tbn. 1 2
B. Tbn.
Tba
Timp.
Crot.
Vib.
Tub. Bells
1.2
Vln I
3.4
1.2
Vln II
3
1.2
Vla
3
Vc. 1.2.3
D. B. 1.2
To Fl.
Fl.
straight mute
gliss.
bowed
mallet
To Perc.
Perc.
Tub. Bells
senza vib.
m.s.t
poco vib.
div. 1.2.
div. 3.4.
ord.
div.

16 B 17 18 19 20 21 22

poco accel. ♩ = 80

Fl. 1.2 — fpp — fpp — a 2 — f

Ob. 1 2 — 1. — f

Cl. in B♭ 1 — f

B. Cl. — p — f

Bsn 1 — p — f — f

Cbsn — p — f — f

Hn in F 1 2 — mp — pp — p — f — pp — ff — p — f — pp

Hn in F 3 4 — mp — pp — p — f — pp — ff — p — f — pp — pp — open

Tpt in B♭ 1 2 — mp — pp

Tbn. 1 2 — 1. — mp — pp — p — f — p — ff — p — f — pp

B. Tbn. — mp — pp — p — f — p — ff — p — f — pp

Tba — mp — pp — p — f — p — ff — 8ba — p — f — p

Timp.

Crot.

Vib.

Tub. Bells — To Perc. — Perc. — p — f

poco accel. ♩ = 80

B — senza vib. — div. 1.2. m.s.t — gliss. — unis. — ff — pp — p

Vln I 1 2 — senza vib. — div. 3.4. m.s.t — ppp — gliss. — unis. — ff — pp — p

Vln I 3 4 — senza vib. — m.s.t — ppp — gliss. — unis. — ff — pp — p

Vln II 1 2 — senza vib. — div. 1.2. m.s.t — gliss. — unis. — ff — pp — p

Vln II 3 — senza vib. — m.s.t — ppp — gliss. — 3 — unis. — ff — pp — p

Vla 1 2 — senza vib. — div. 1.2. m.s.t — ppp — gliss. — unis. — ff — pp — p

Vla 3 — senza vib. — m.s.t — gliss. — 3 — unis. — ff — pp — p

Vc. 1.2 — unis. — senza vib. — div. 1.2. m.s.t — ppp — gliss. — unis. — ff — pp — p

Vc. 3 — senza vib. — m.s.t — ppp — gliss. — 3 — unis. — ff — pp — p

D. B. 1.2 — div. — senza vib. — m.s.t — ppp — gliss. — unis. — ff — pp — vib. — p — ff — p — f — pp

16 B 18 19 20 21 22

23 24 25 26 C 27 28

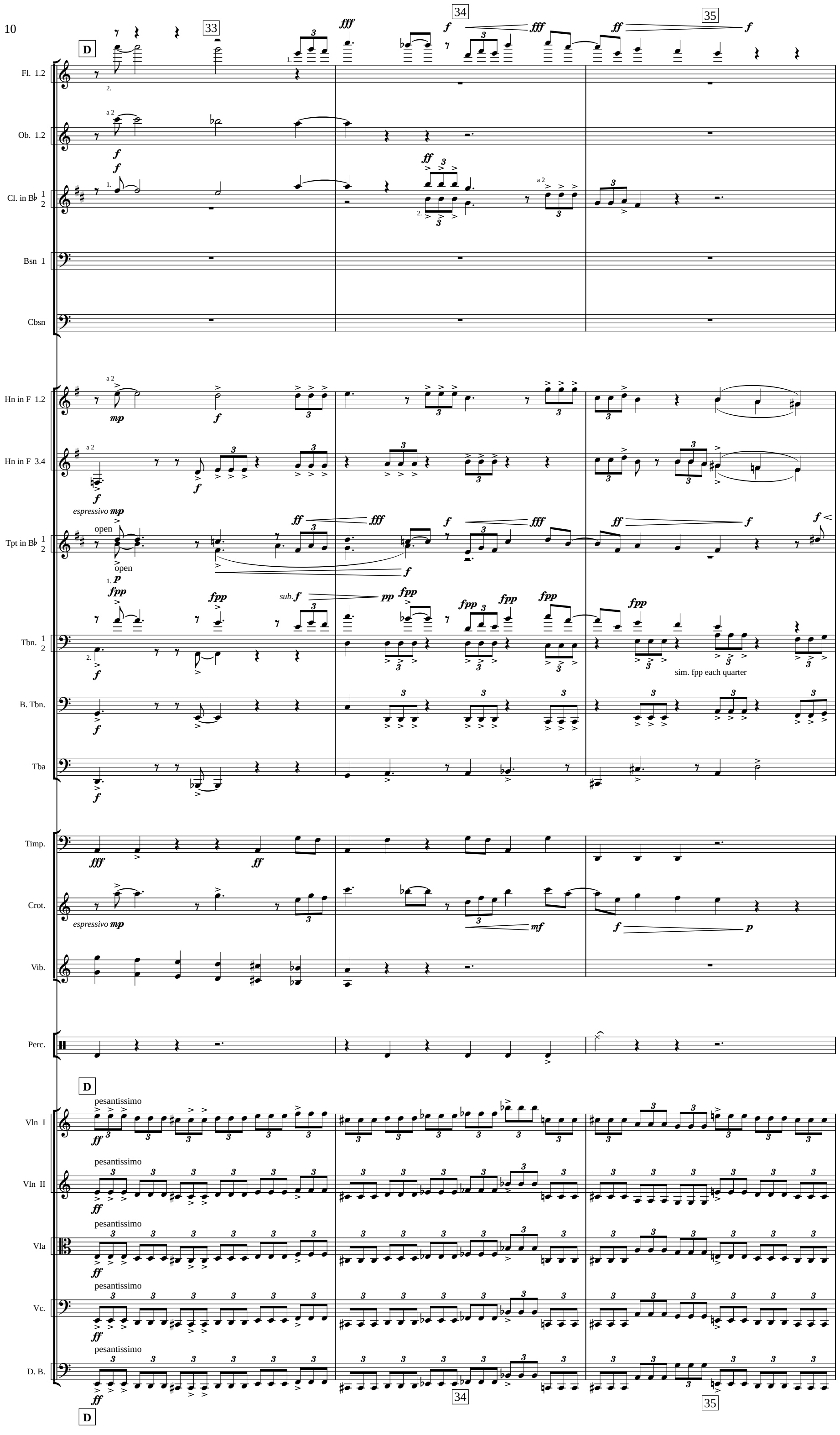
Fl. 1.2
Ob. 1 2
Cl. in B♭ 1
B. Cl.
Bsn 1
Cbsn
Hn in F 1.2
Hn in F 3.4
Tpt in B♭ 1 2
Tbn. 1 2
B. Tbn.
Tba
Timp.
Crot.
Vib.
Perc.
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.

a 2
sempre f
straight mute
m.s.t
m.s.p.
ord.
sub. mf
sub. pp

29 30 31 32

Fl. 1 2
Ob. 1 2
Cl. in B♭ 1
B. Cl.
Bsn 1
Cbsn
Hn in F 1.2
Hn in F 3.4
Tpt in B♭ 1 2
Tbn. 1 2
B. Tbn.
Tba
Timp.
Crot.
Vib.
Perc.
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.

a 2
straight mute
1.
expressivo
sub.
m.s.t pesante


D
33
34
35
Fl. 1.2
Ob. 1.2
Cl. in B♭ 1 2
Bsn 1
Cbsn
Hn in F 1.2
Hn in F 3.4
Tpt in B♭ 1 2
Tbn. 1 2
B. Tbn.
Tba
Timp.
Crot.
Vib.
Perc.
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
a 2
espressivo mp
open
sub. f
sim. fpp each quarter
pesantissimo

36 37 38 E rall. 39 40

Fl. 1
f possibile

Fl. 2
f possibile

To Picc.

Ob. 1.2

Cl. in B♭ 1
ff

Cl. in B♭ 2
ff

To B. Cl.

Bsn 1
ff

Cbsn
ff

Hn in F 1 2
1. *f* — *ff*
2. *f* — *ff*

Hn in F 3 4
3. *f* — *ff*
4. *f* — *ff*
fff — *f*

Tpt in B♭ 1 2
f — *ff*

Tbn. 1 2
f — *ff*

B. Tbn.
f — *ff*

Tba
f — *ff*

Timp.
f *mf* *p*

Crot.
bowed
f

Vib.
bowed
p
mallet

Tub. Bells

Perc.
mp — *fff*
ff

E rall.

Vln I
ord.
sub. fff

Vln II
ord.
sub. fff

Vla
ord.
sub. fff

Vc.
ord.
sub. fff

D. B.
ord.
sub. fff

36 37 38 E 40

♩ = 72

41 42 43 44

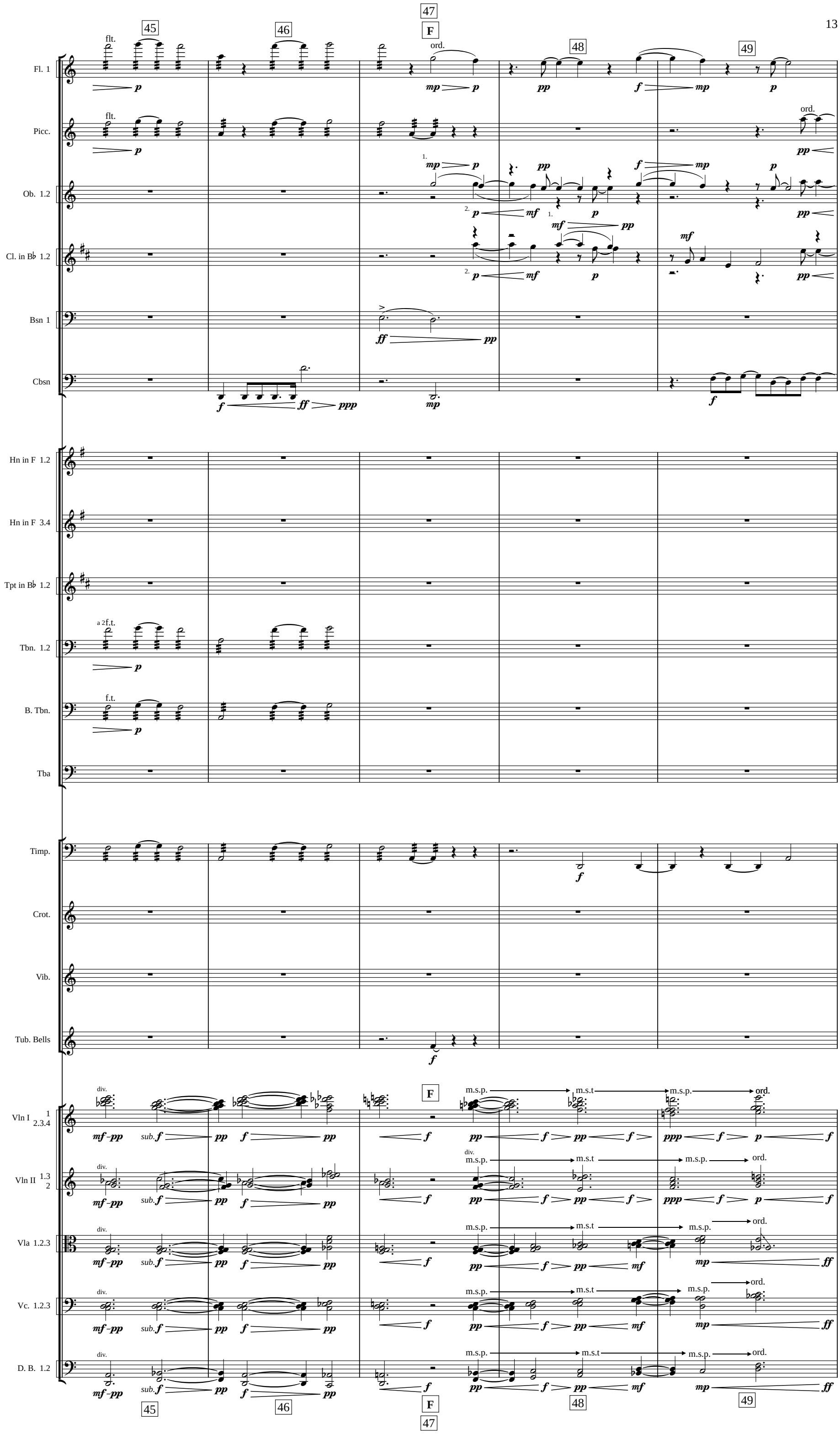
Fl. 1
Picc.
Picc.
Ob. 1.2
Cl. in B♭ 1
B. Cl.
B. Cl.
Bsn 1
Cbsn
Hn in F 1.2
Hn in F 3.4
Tpt in B♭ 1.2
Tbn. 1 2
B. Tbn.
Tba
Timp.
Crot.
Vib.
Tub. Bells

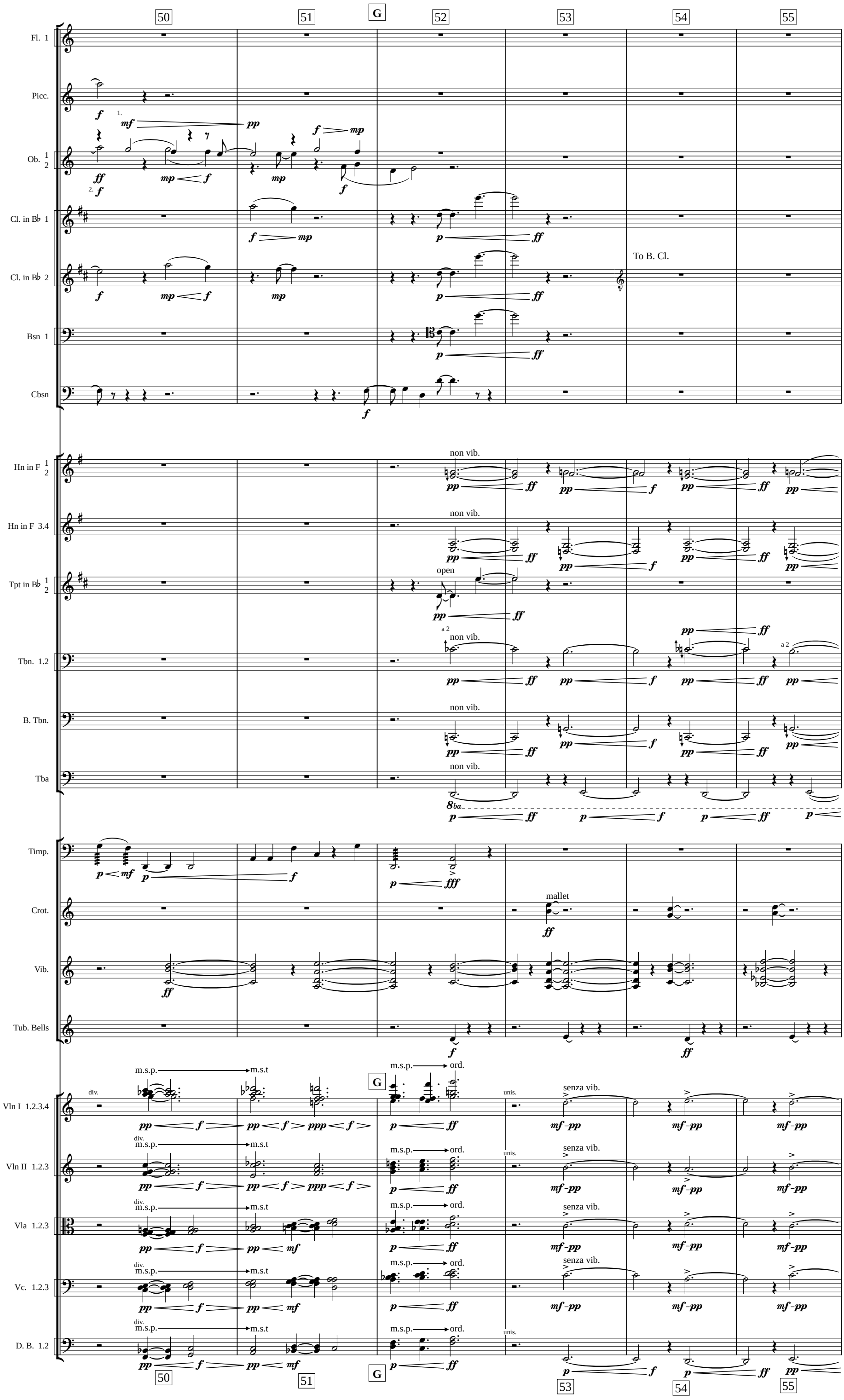
♩ = 72

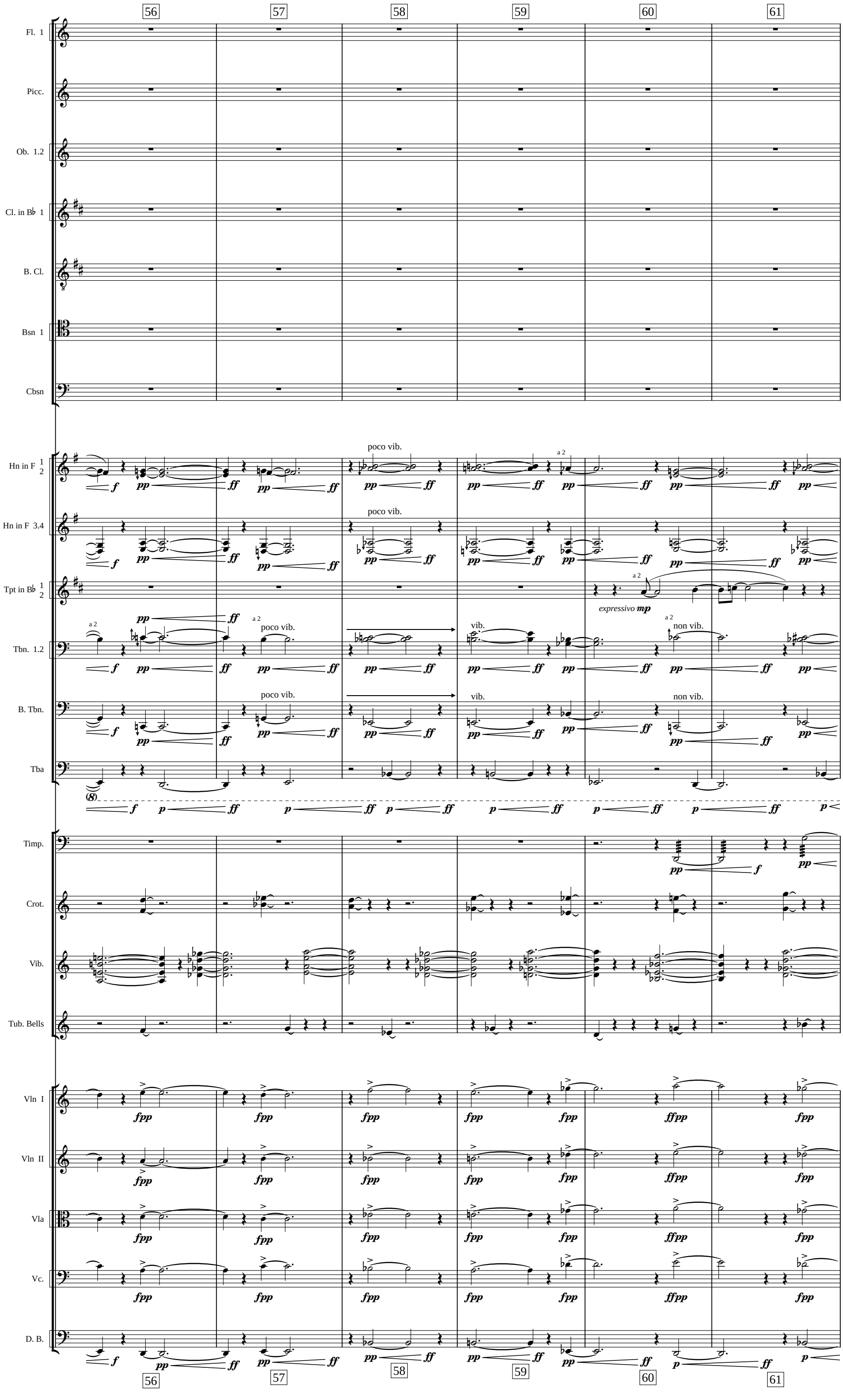
Vln I 1.2.3 4
Vln II 1.2.3
Vla 1.2.3
Vc. 1.2 3
D. B. 1.2

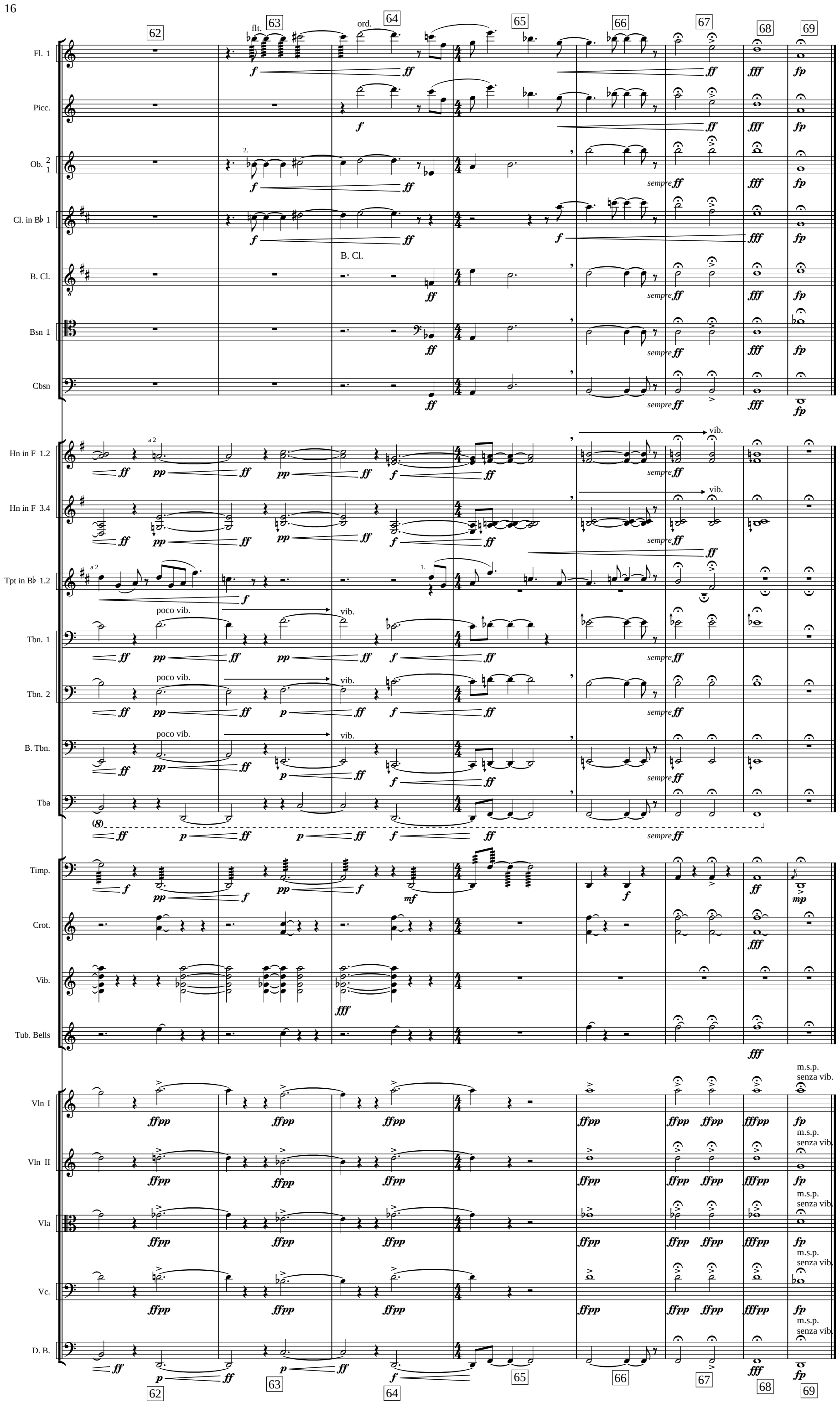
senza vib. m.s.p. → m.s.t
pizz.
m.s.t arco → m.s.p. vib.
div.

41 42 43 44


45
46
47
F
48
49
Fl. 1
Picc.
Ob. 1.2
Cl. in B♭ 1.2
Bsn 1
Cbsn
Hn in F 1.2
Hn in F 3.4
Tpt in B♭ 1.2
Tbn. 1.2
B. Tbn.
Tba
Timp.
Crot.
Vib.
Tub. Bells
Vln I 1 2.3.4
Vln II 1.3 2
Vla 1.2.3
Vc. 1.2.3
D. B. 1.2
flt.
ord.
f.t.
a 2
div.
sub.
m.s.p.
m.s.t


50
51
G
52
53
54
55
Fl. 1
Picc.
Ob. 1 2
Cl. in B♭ 1
Cl. in B♭ 2
To B. Cl.
Bsn 1
Cbsn
Hn in F 1 2
Hn in F 3.4
non vib.
Tpt in B♭ 1 2
open
Tbn. 1.2
a 2
B. Tbn.
Tba
Timp.
Crot.
mallet
Vib.
Tub. Bells
Vln I 1.2.3.4
Vln II 1.2.3
Vla 1.2.3
Vc. 1.2.3
D. B. 1.2
div.
unis.
senza vib.
m.s.p.
m.s.t
ord.


56
57
58
59
60
61
Fl. 1
Picc.
Ob. 1.2
Cl. in B♭ 1
B. Cl.
Bsn 1
Cbsn
Hn in F 1 2
Hn in F 3.4
Tpt in B♭ 1 2
Tbn. 1.2
B. Tbn.
Tba
Timp.
Crot.
Vib.
Tub. Bells
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
poco vib.
a 2
vib.
non vib.
expressivo mp


62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
Fl. 1
Picc.
Ob. 2 1
Cl. in B♭ 1
B. Cl.
Bsn 1
Cbsn
Hn in F 1.2
Hn in F 3.4
Tpt in B♭ 1.2
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
B. Tbn.
Tba
Timp.
Crot.
Vib.
Tub. Bells
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
flt.
ord.
a 2
poco vib.
vib.
sempre
B. Cl.
m.s.p.
senza vib.