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Duet for Viola and Piano

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Author
Moss, Julia

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Duet for Viola and Piano

Julia Moss

November, 2019

Program Notes:

This is the tale of a land once inhabited by ancient spirits, who still haunt the land for hundreds of years to come. Measure by measure, the story unfolds...

The piano introduction gives the listener a glimpse of a time in the past when spirits ruled among darkness, until the first trace of sixteenth notes (measure 11) clears the air, flashes us forward hundreds of years, and brings in the viola as a beacon of light. The streets are now filled with people and livelihoods, and the land of the past is completely unrecognizable, with no traces of the ancient spirits.

A: A man strolls through the streets alone at night, whistling the tune that the viola comes in with as he takes in the surrounding beauty. As the piano's sixteenth note figure creeps back in and becomes more prominent, he gradually begins to feel uneasy and realizes that he is not alone—spirits are lurking in the shadows and lunging at him from all angles! After a brief build up of intensity, he retreats into a hiding place to catch his breath.

B: The chase continues as a fugue, conducted with a dignity that seems rather humorous, and before it spins too out of control the man retreats once again.

C: This time, he gives in to his exhaustion and melts into a wondrous, fanciful dream, which begins the first and only section of the piece that offers the listeners a break from the grotesque and panicked character of the piece, and instead invites them into a brief state of euphoria.

D: The spirits' gruesome theme, recognizable from the very beginning of the piano introduction and now heard in the viola, brings the man back to reality and leads us into a short cadenza.

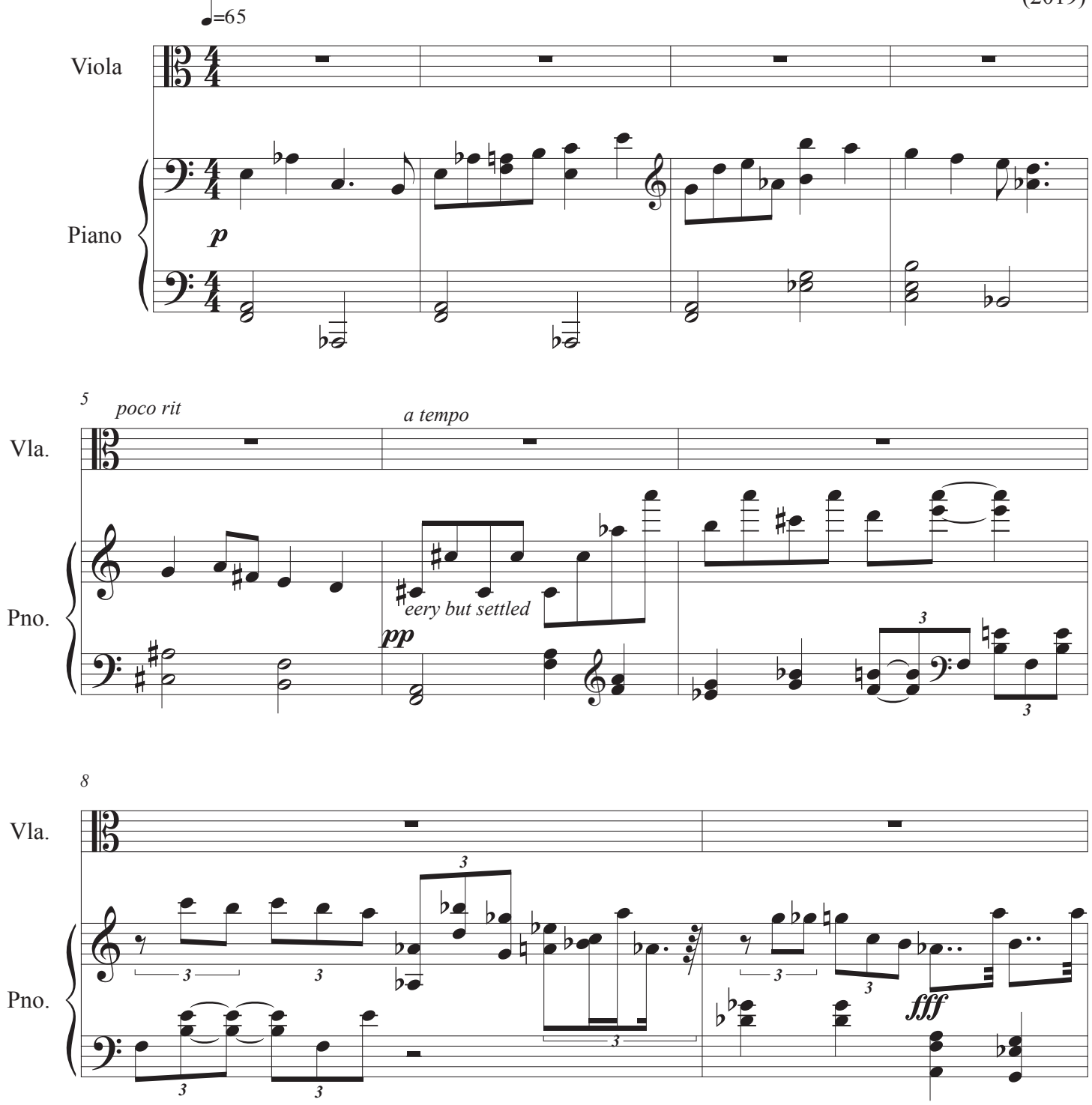
E: The return of the piano then sparks a relentless chase between the man and the spirits—rather, a back-and forth routine of complacent sauntering followed by abrupt, nimble attacks— dictated by startling accents, impetuous runs, and conniving trickery.

F: The madness builds to a climax of fiercely dreadful chords in the viola with a low rumbling accompaniment in the piano, erupting in a final shriek that scares the spirits away.

G: Finally, the man walks alone once again. He whistles a tune that is reminiscent of the viola's initial entrance, but now burdened with a heaviness and wariness from his newfound knowledge of the land. The tune fades from a wistful rumination to an unsettling whisper of dread, indicating that he knows that the spirits will never truly leave.

Duet for Viola and Piano

Julia Moss
(2019)



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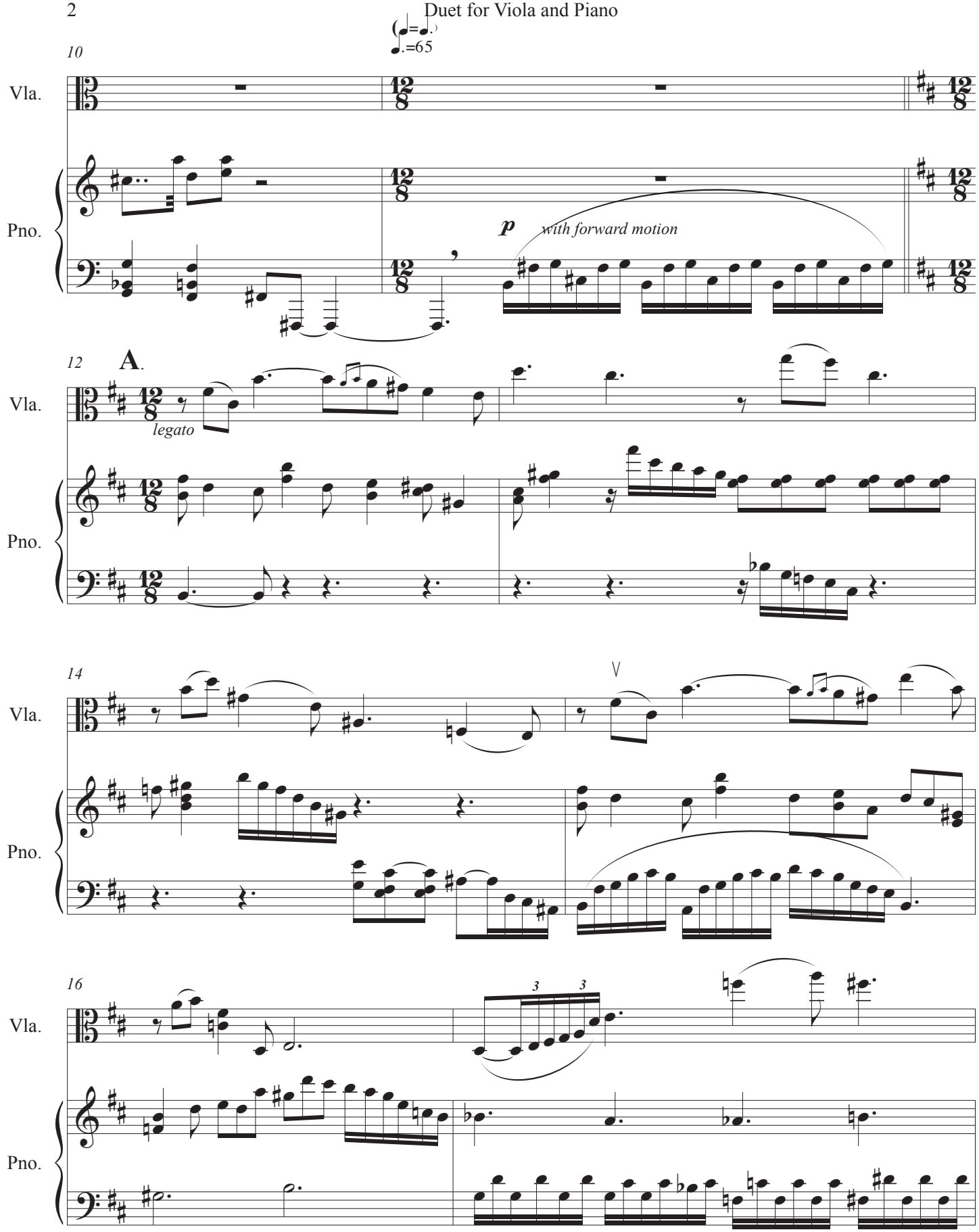
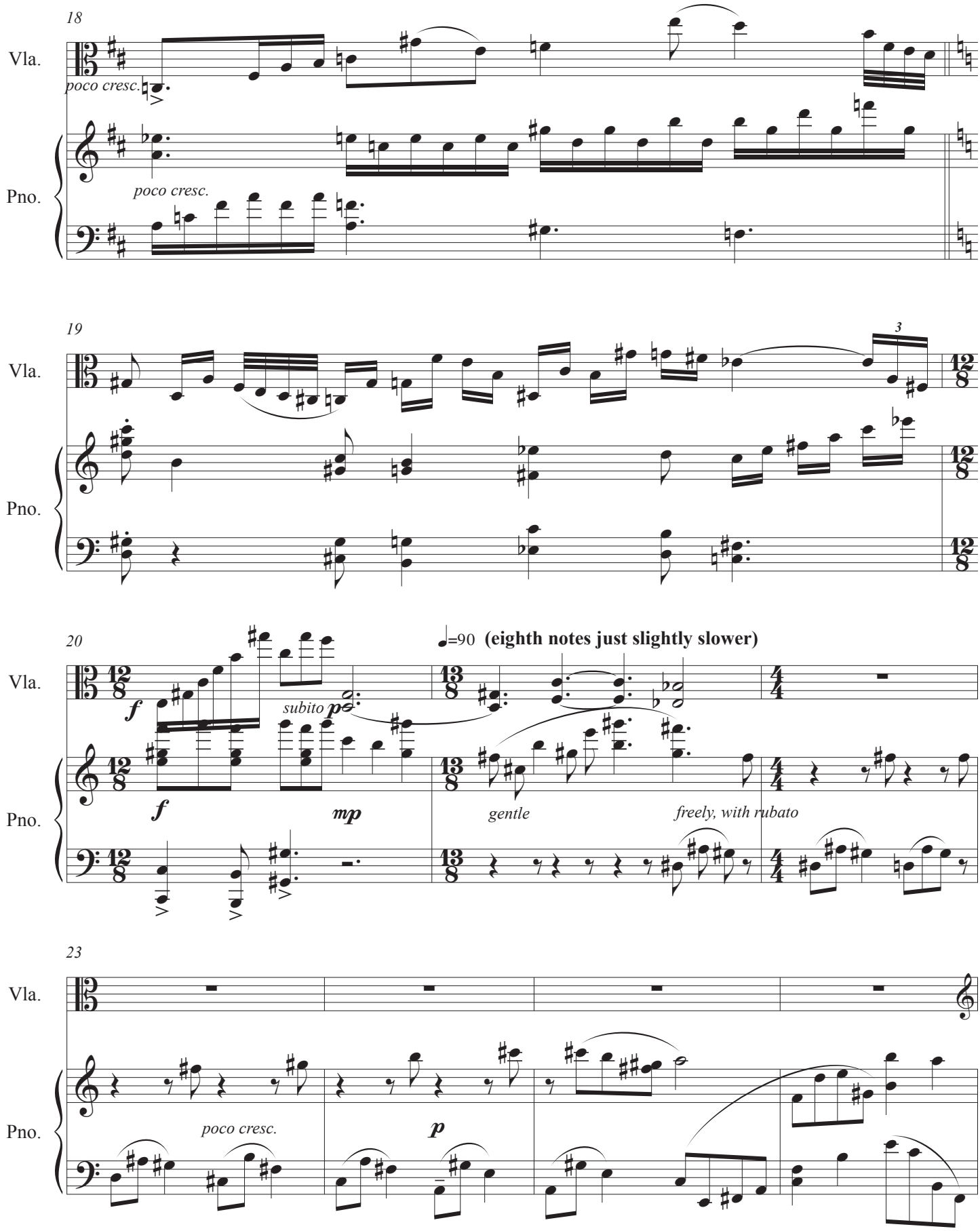
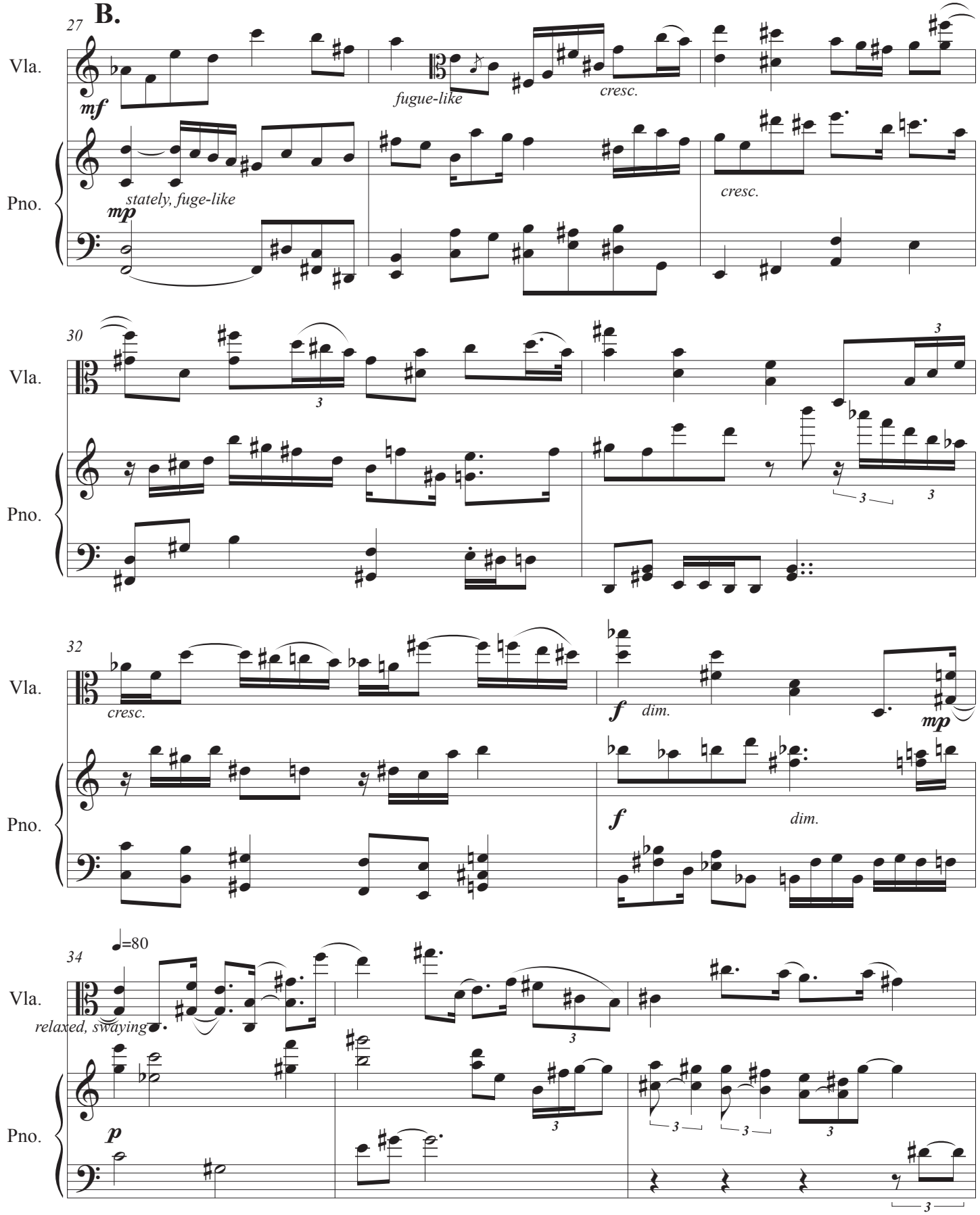
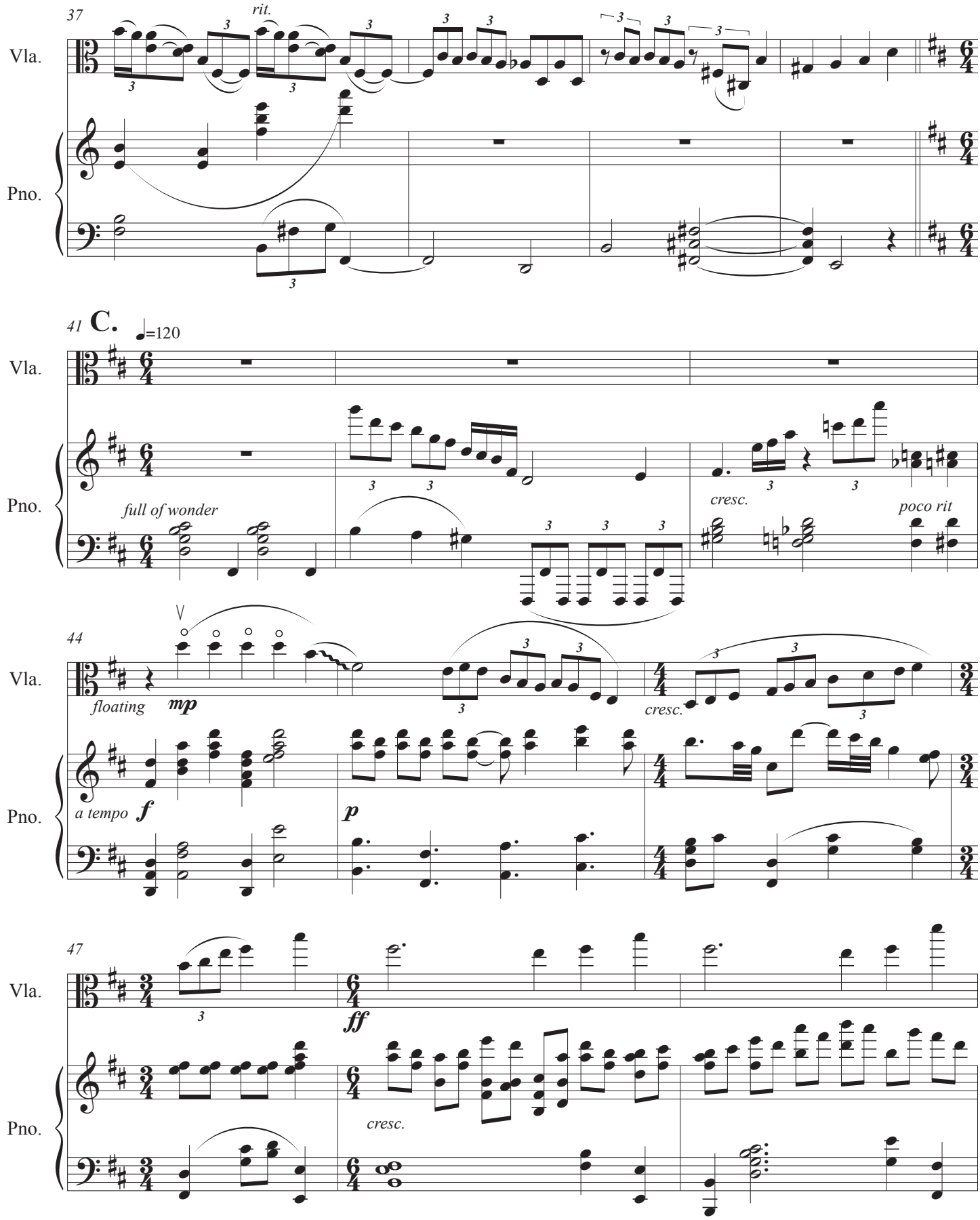
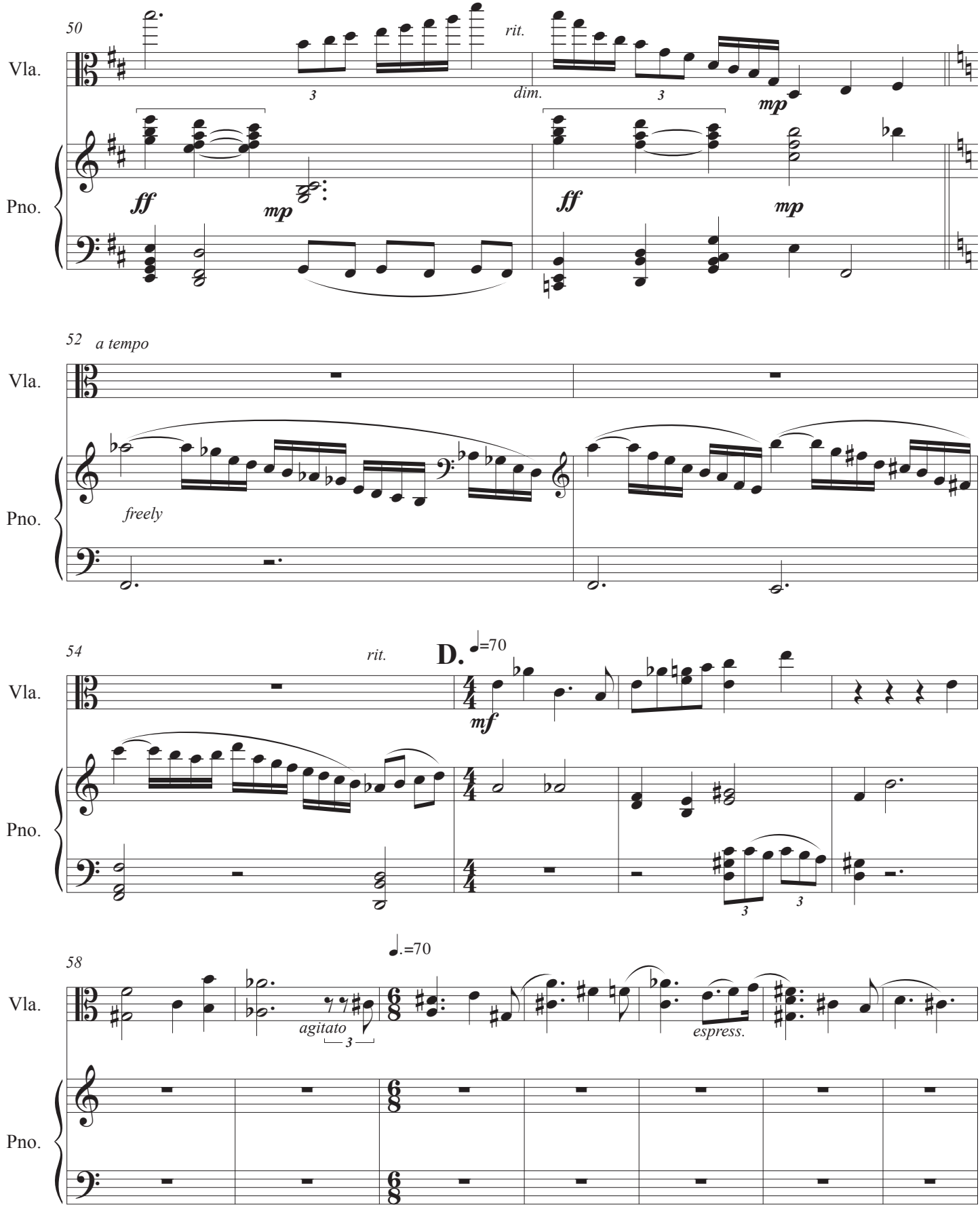
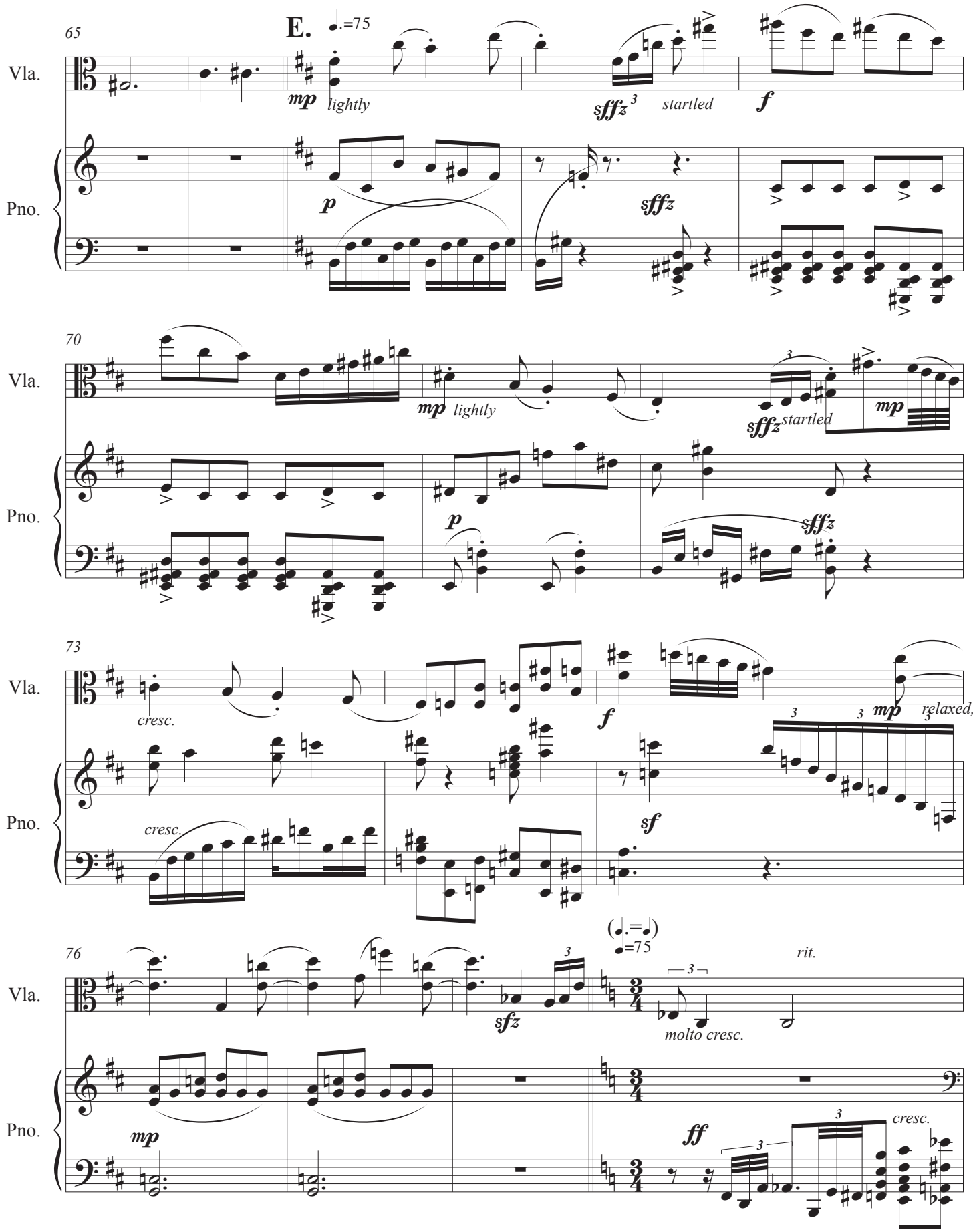

10
Vla.
Pno.
p
with forward motion
12
A.
Vla.
legato
Pno.
14
Vla.
Pno.
16
Vla.
Pno.

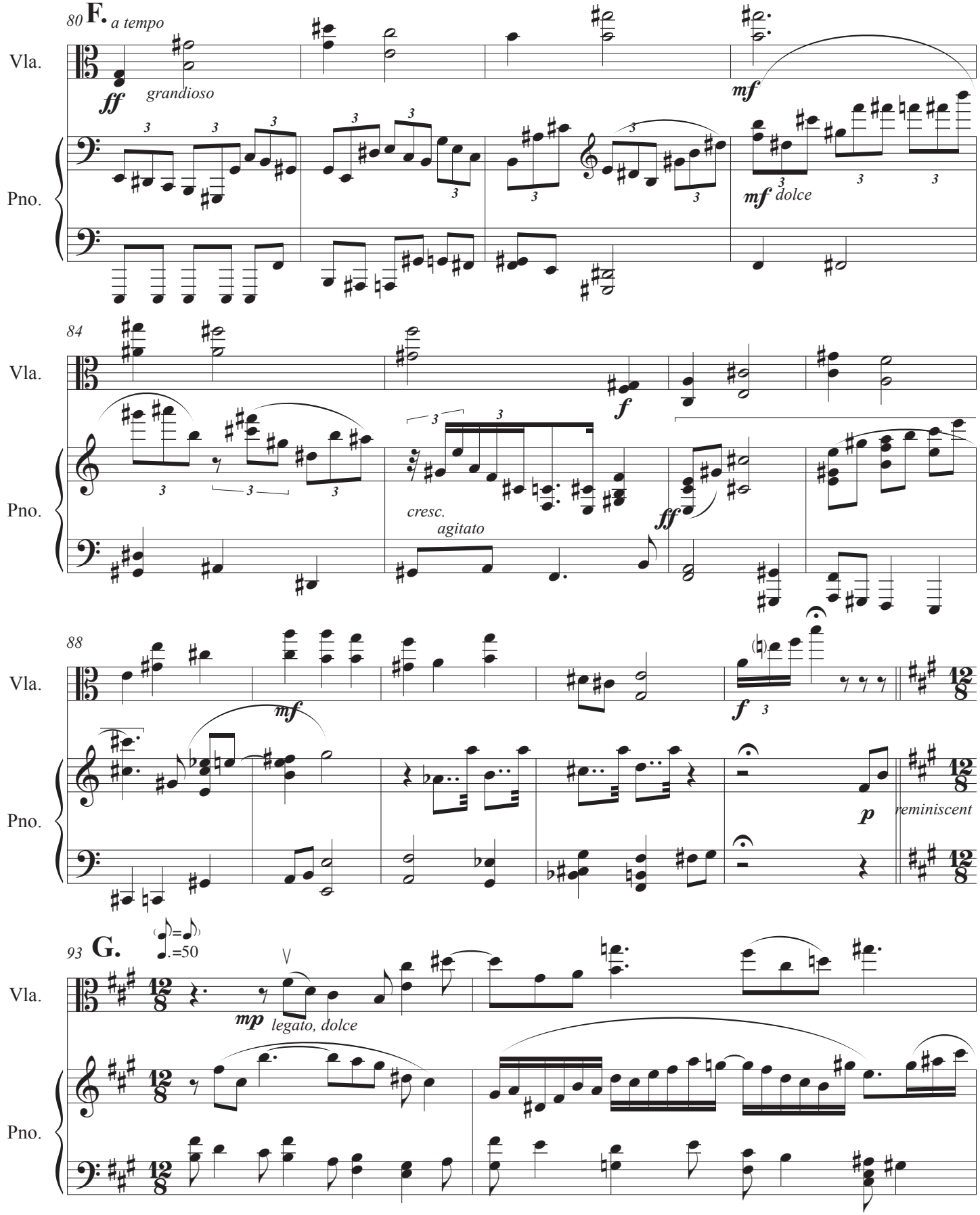

18
Vla.
poco cresc.
Pno.
poco cresc.
19
Vla.
3
Pno.
20
Vla.
f
subito p
Pno.
f
mp
♩=90 (eighth notes just slightly slower)
gentle
freely, with rubato
23
Vla.
Pno.
poco cresc.
p

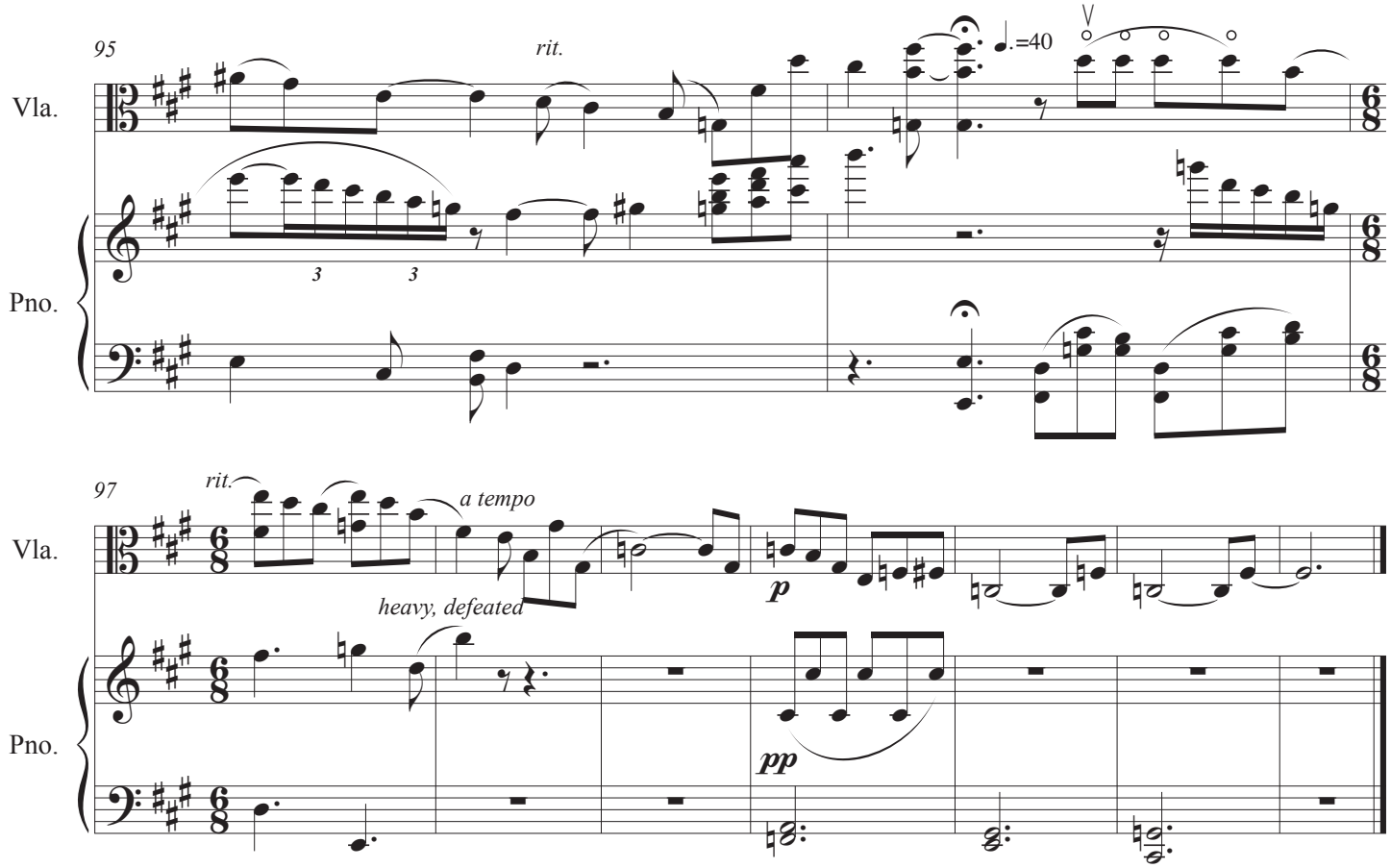

B.
27
Vla.
mf
fugue-like
cresc.
Pno.
stately, fuge-like
mp
cresc.
30
Vla.
3
Pno.
3
3
32
Vla.
cresc.
f
dim.
mp
Pno.
f
dim.
34
♩=80
Vla.
relaxed, swaying
Pno.
p
3
3
3
3
3


37
rit.
Vla.
Pno.
41 C.
♩=120
full of wonder
cresc.
poco rit
44
floating
mp
cresc.
a tempo
f
p
47
ff
cresc.


50
rit.
dim.
Vla.
Pno.
ff
mp
ff
mp
mp
52
a tempo
freely
54
rit.
D.
♩=70
mf
58
♩.=70
agitato
espress.


65
E.
♩.=75
Vla.
Pno.
mp
lightly
sffz
startled
f
p
sffz
70
Vla.
Pno.
mp
lightly
sffz
startled
mp
p
sffz
73
Vla.
Pno.
cresc.
f
mp
relaxed, swaying
cresc.
sf
(♩.=♩)
♩=75
76
Vla.
Pno.
sfz
rit.
molto cresc.
mp
ff
cresc.


80 F. a tempo
Vla.
ff grandioso
mf
Pno.
mf dolce
84
Vla.
f
Pno.
cresc.
agitato
ff
88
Vla.
mf
f
Pno.
p
reminiscent
93 G.
♪.=50
Vla.
mp legato, dolce
Pno.


95
rit.
♩.=40
Vla.
Pno.
3
3
97
rit.
a tempo
heavy, defeated
p
pp
Vla.
Pno.