Three Family Photos

for brass quintet

Matthew Chamberlain | April 2015 | Buffalo, NY

Notational Idiosyncrasies

(Dynamics) The majority of this piece works within a rather confined dynamic range of ***p*** to ***mf***, often with little or no dynamic coordination between the parts. As such, it is very important that each perfomer seeks to render their dynamic instructions precisely, and understands exactly how their dynamic compares with that of the other ensemble members at any given moment. Beyond these issues, special attention must be paid to the dyanmic contour of each sound's onset and ending. To describe these details, I use the following symbols:

[*and* ***]*** Applied to dynamics, an opening bracket — ***[p***, for example — indicates that a sound should begin *immediately* at the given dynamic. Closing brackets are always applied to rests that end sounds, and indicate that a rest's silence should be sudden, that the preceding sound should be played with a strict *non diminuendo.* In other words, like on an organ, the dynamic must be totally even for the sound's duration, especially at its end. This should both feel and sound somewhat tense.

<p Applied to dynamics, a < indicates that a player should sneak into a texture, beginning as softly as possible and then very quickly crescendoing to the given dynamic, masking the entrance as much as possible. When a sound should fade out at its end, I have used the customary harpin.

pp-mf When two dynamics are separated by a dash, the player should sustain the first dynamic for just long enough to make clear the difference between it and the subsequent dynamic. The change between the two dynamics must be as sudden as possible, avoiding the sensation of crescendo or diminuendo.

Occasionally, articulation marks will imply a dynamic contour for the entire duration of a sound, especially for short sounds. In such cases, I have omitted the otherwise ubiquitous brackets and <'s.

(De-tuned pitches) Accidentals with downwards- or upwards-pointing arrows should be understood as indicating a pitch that is 'a bit flatter' (or sharper) than the normal form of the accidental would describe. This detuning needn't be precise, but should be less than or equal to 20¢. In the

horn and tuba parts there are also quarter-tones, which are notated in the standard fashion. Whenever feasible, these detunings should be achieved by alternate fingerings, or adjustments of tuning slides.

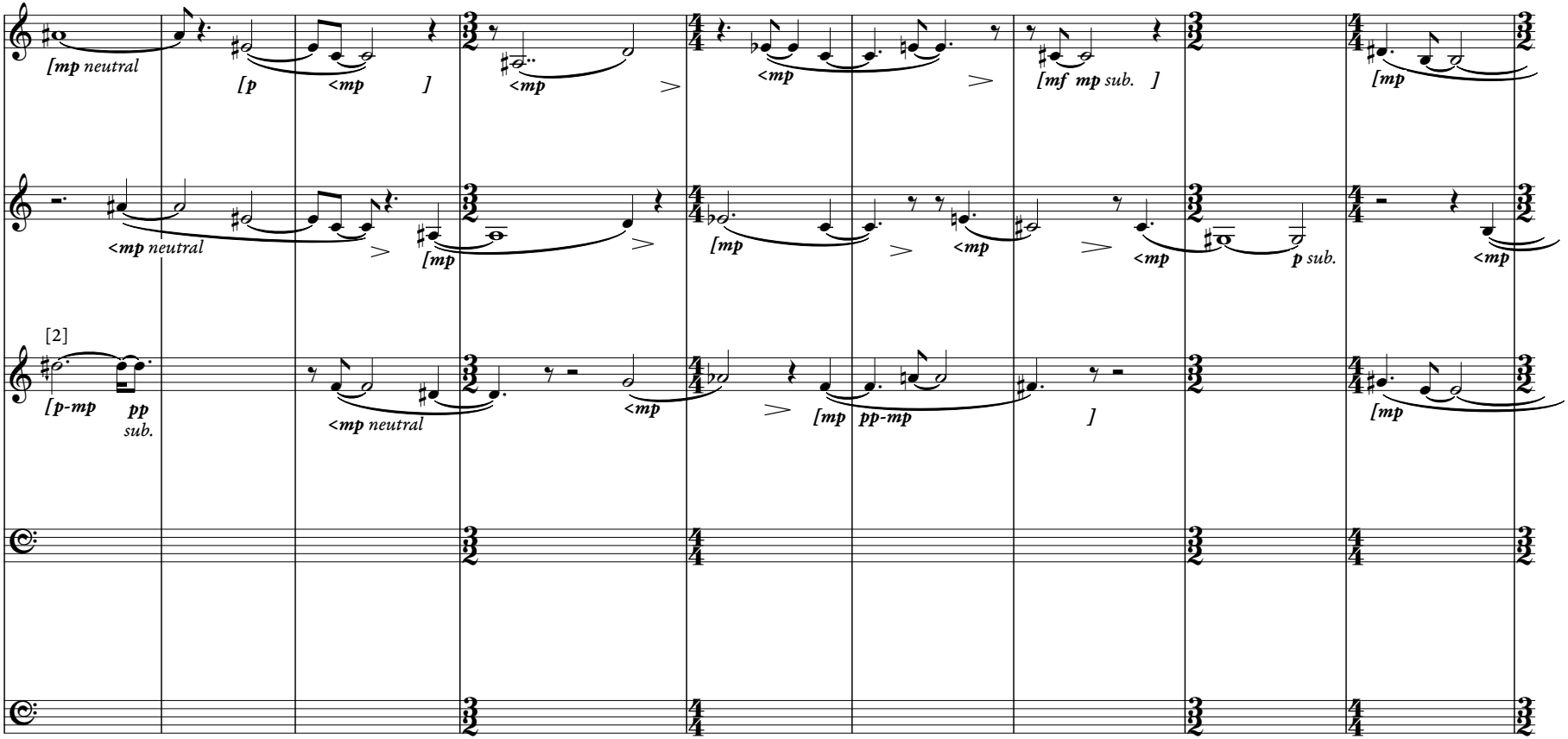
(Specified fingerings) Where possible in the horn and tuba parts, I have included fingerings that should produce the desired pitch. These fingerings are notated above the staff, in brackets. For example, [T23] in the horn part indicates that a pitch may be played by depressing the trigger as well as the second and third valves. These fingerings should always be understood as nothing more or less than suggestions. In the case of quarter-tones, however, the provided fingerings should be used to precisely render the extreme detuning. Such instances always make use of the 11º partial of one of the instrument's fundamentals.

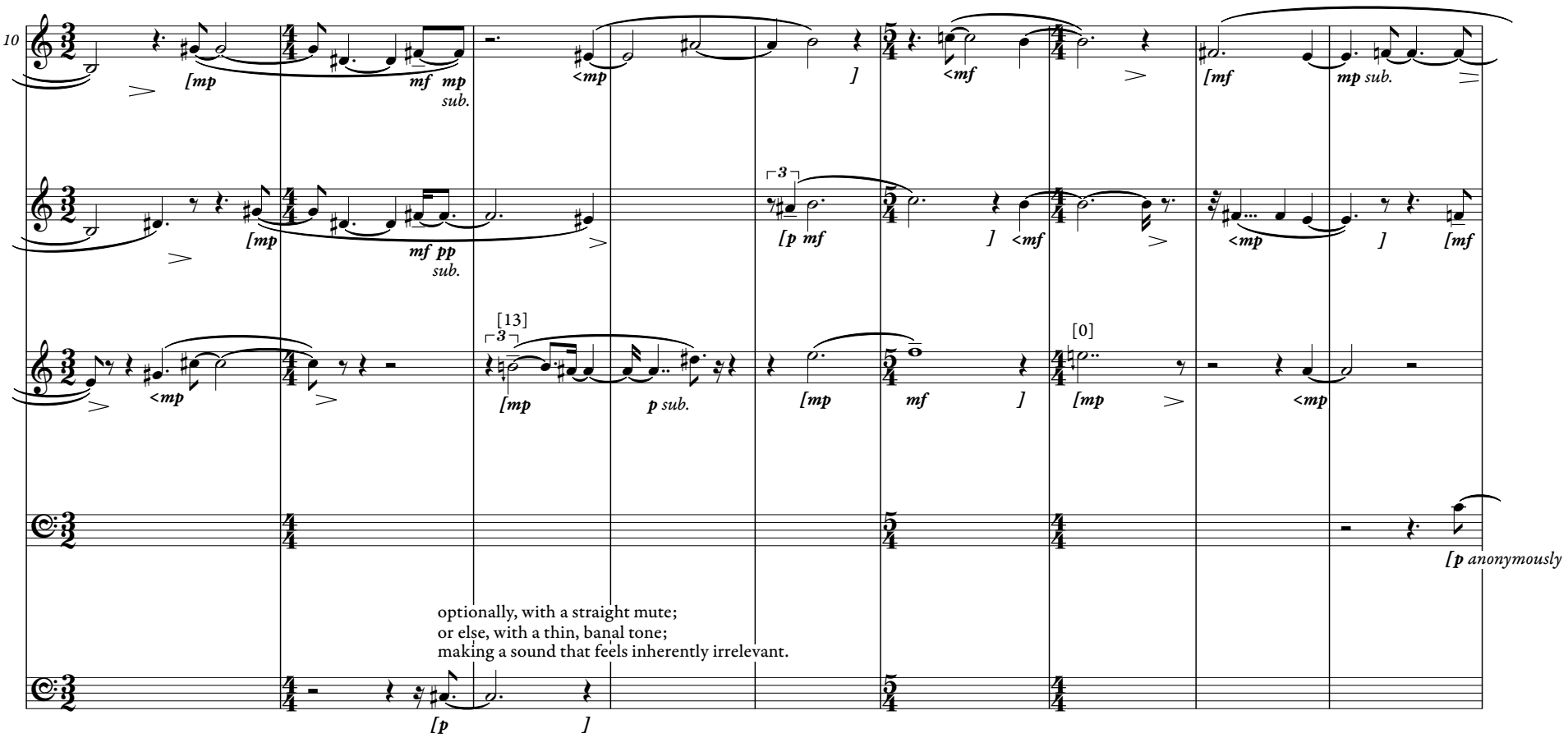
(duration) ca. 8 minutes.

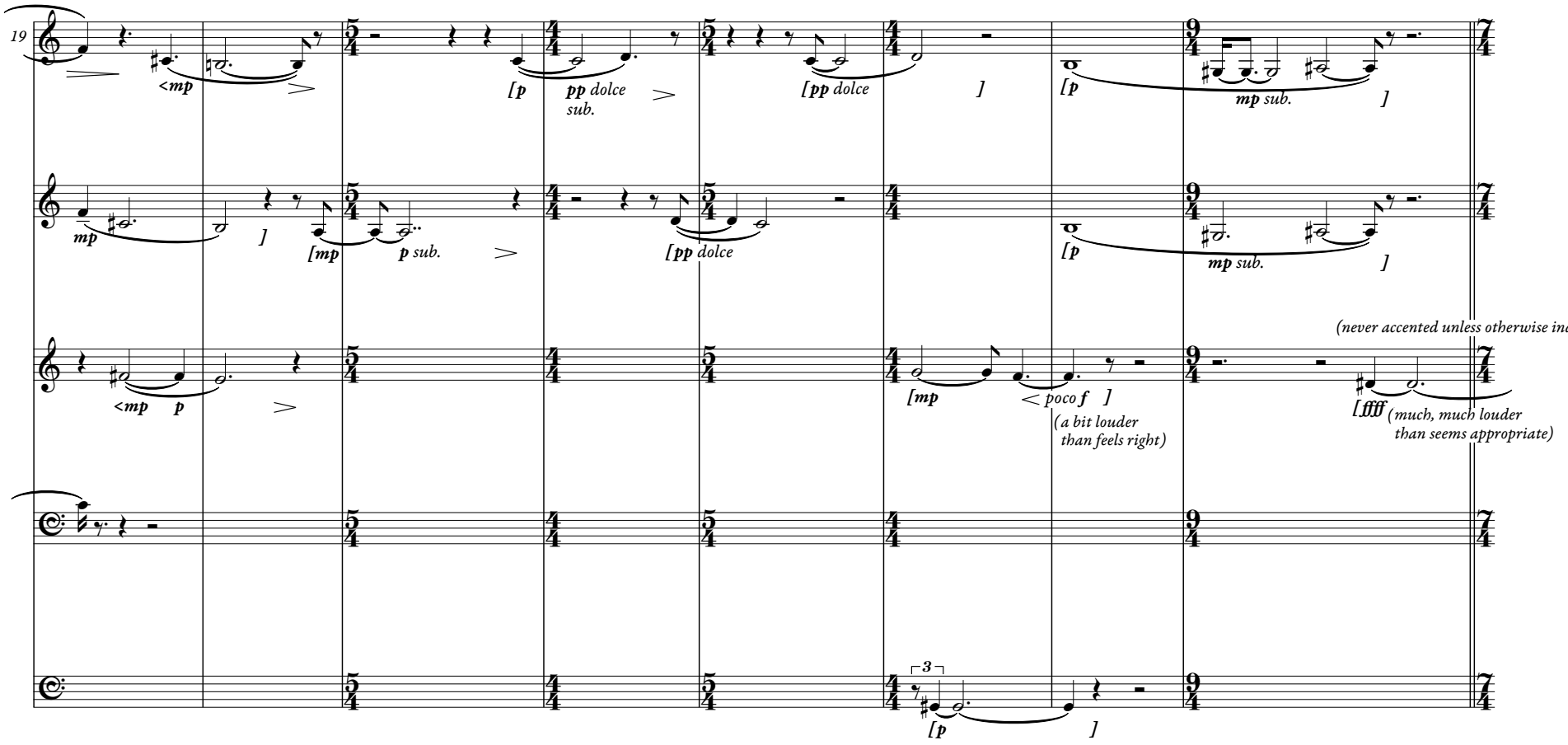
for the Meridian Arts Ensemble

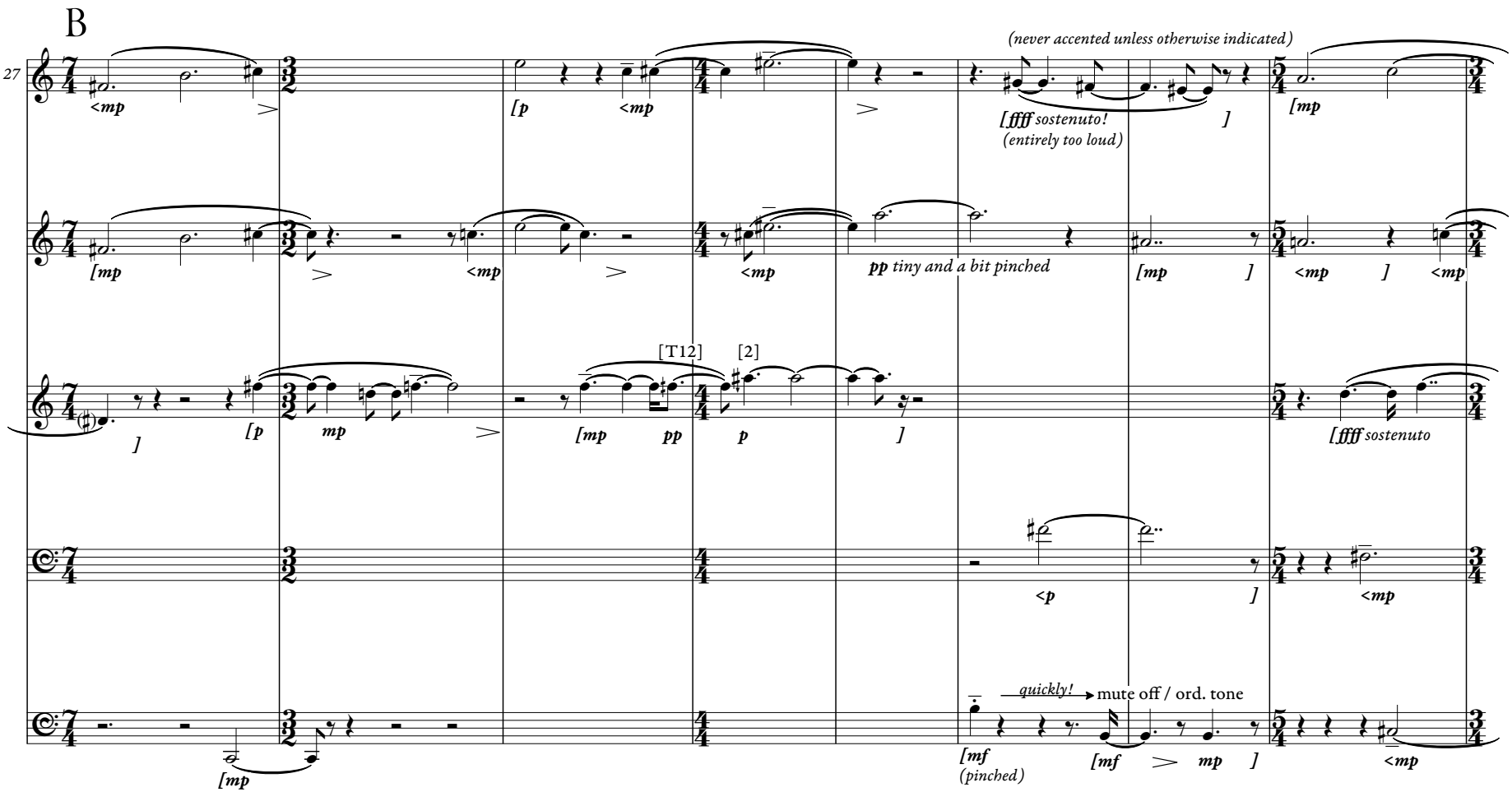
I

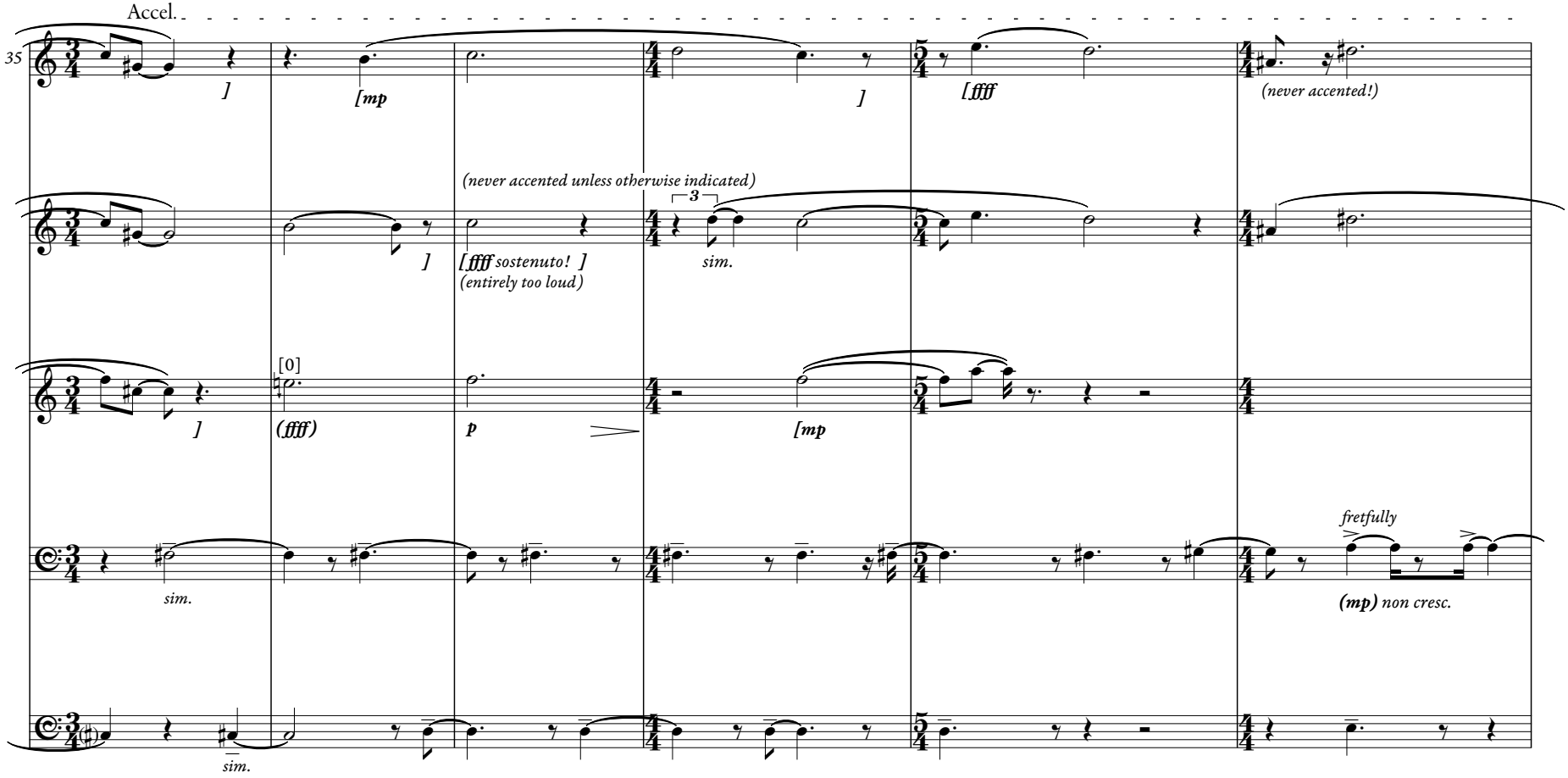
A ♩ = ca. 60

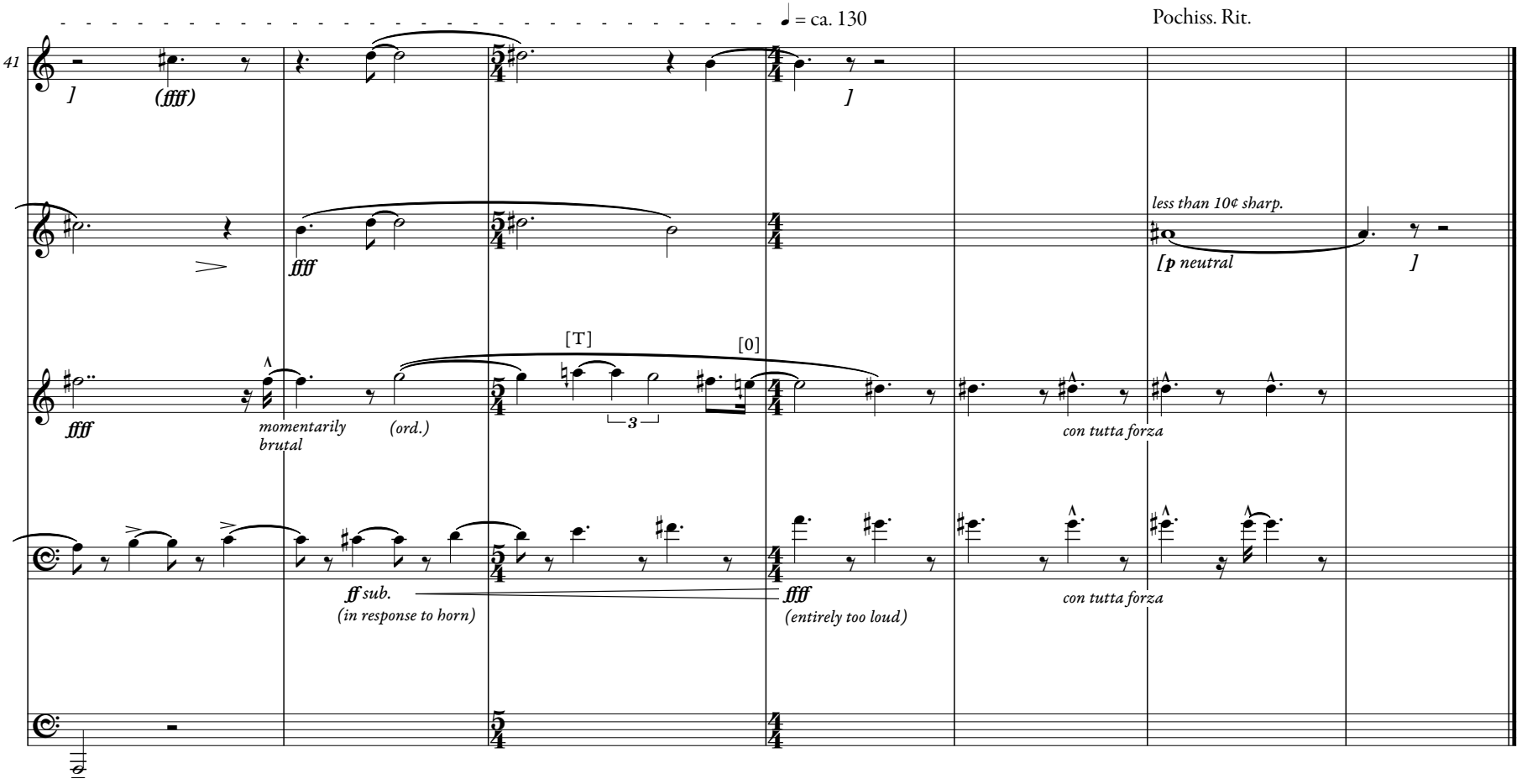

[mp neutral
[p
<mp
]
<mp
<mp
[mf mp sub.
]
[mp
<mp neutral
[mp
[mp
<mp
<mp
p sub.
<mp
[2]
[p-mp
pp
sub.
<mp neutral
<mp
[mp
pp-mp
]
[mp


10
[mp
mf mp
sub.
<mp
<mf
[mf
mp sub.
[mp
mf pp
sub.
3
[p mf
<mf
<mp
[mf
[13]
3
<mp
[mp
p sub.
[mp
mf
[0]
[mp
<mp
[p anonymously
optionally, with a straight mute;
or else, with a thin, banal tone;
making a sound that feels inherently irrelevant.
[p

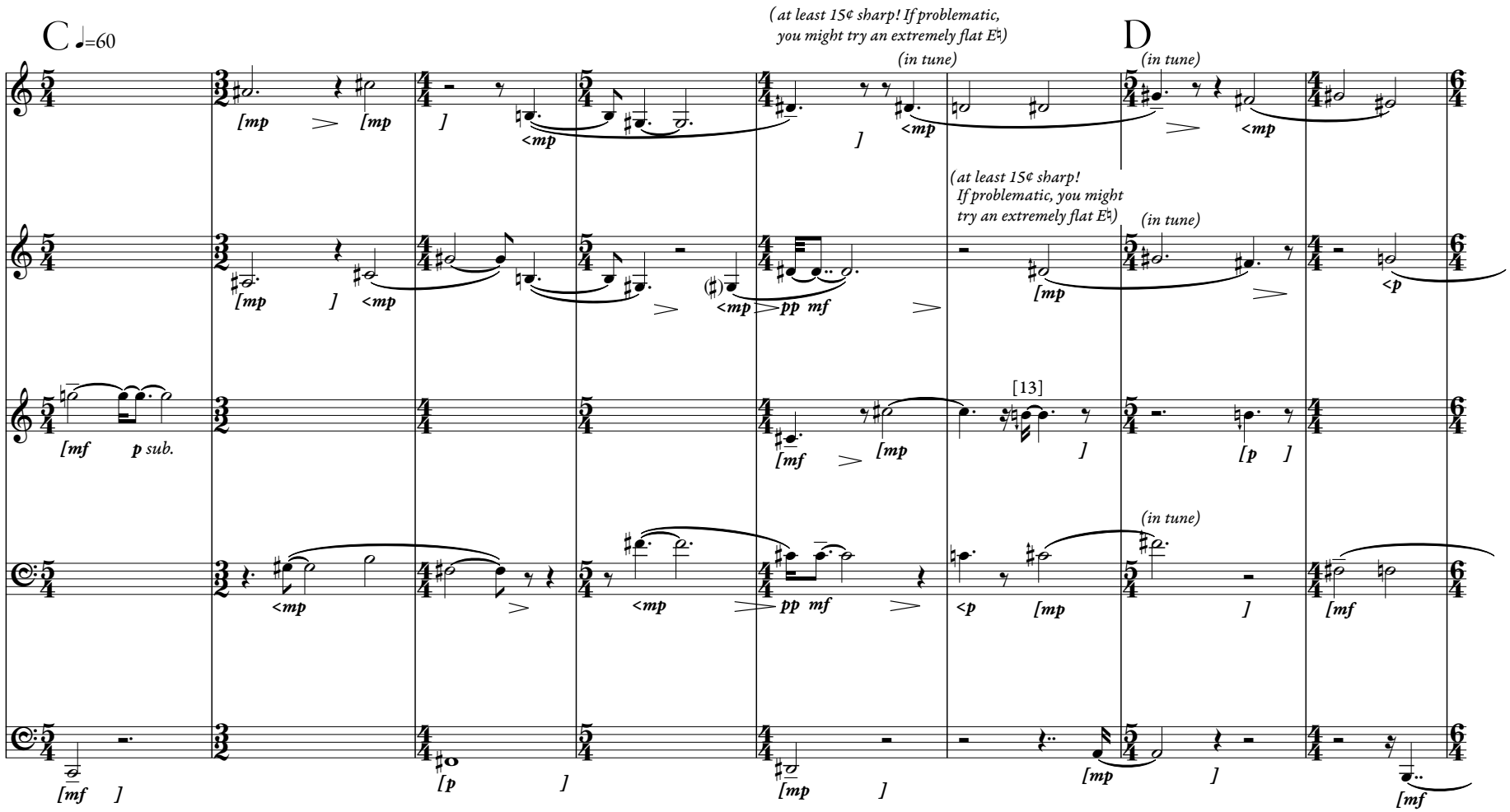

19
<mp
[p
pp dolce
sub.
[pp dolce
mp sub.
mp
[mp
p sub.
(never accented unless otherwise indicated)
poco f
(a bit louder
than feels right)
[fff
(much, much louder
than seems appropriate)
3

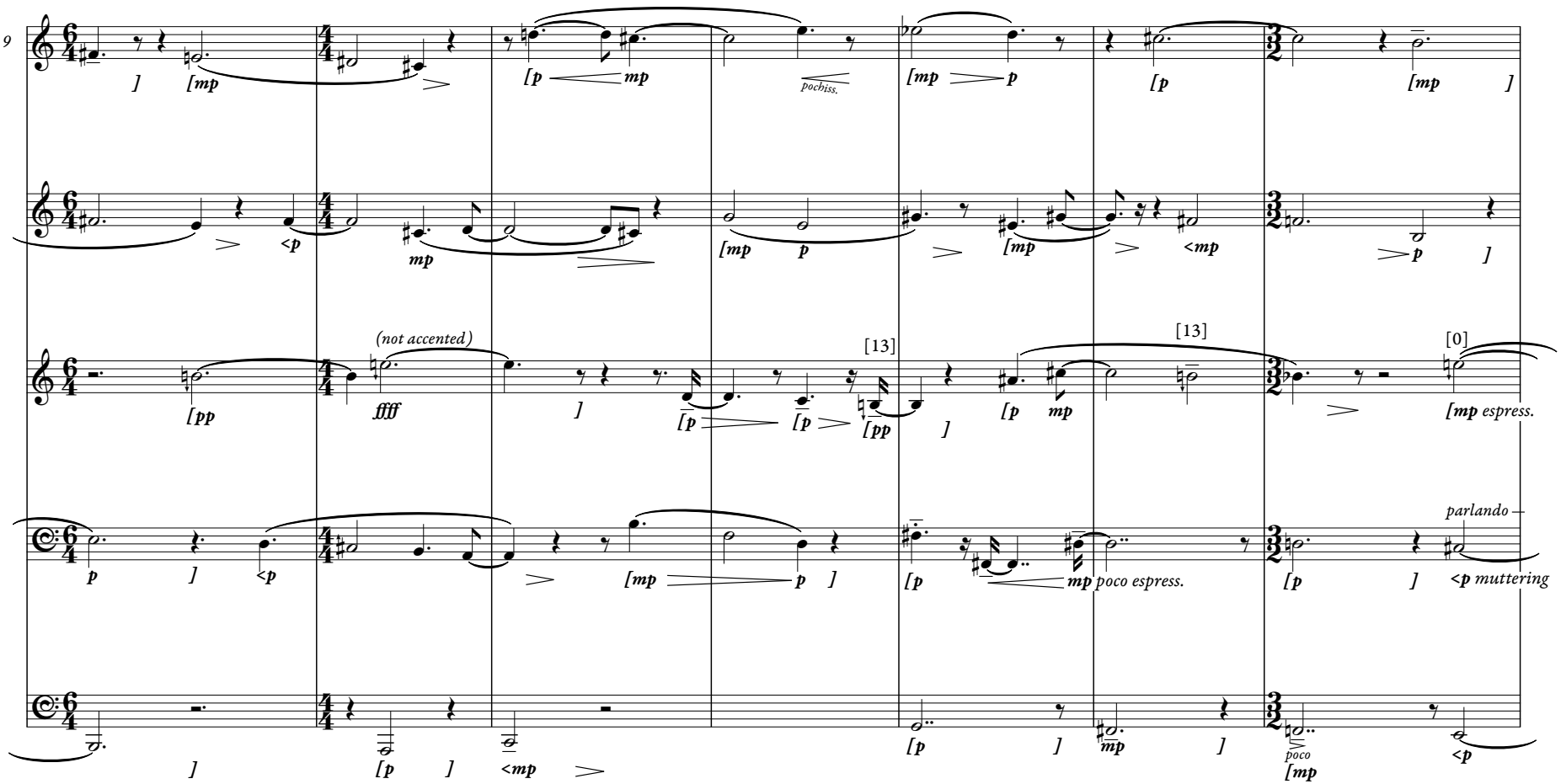

B
27
(never accented unless otherwise indicated)
[ffff sostenuto!
(entirely too loud)
pp tiny and a bit pinched
[T12]
[2]
[ffff sostenuto
quickly!
mute off / ord. tone
(pinched)

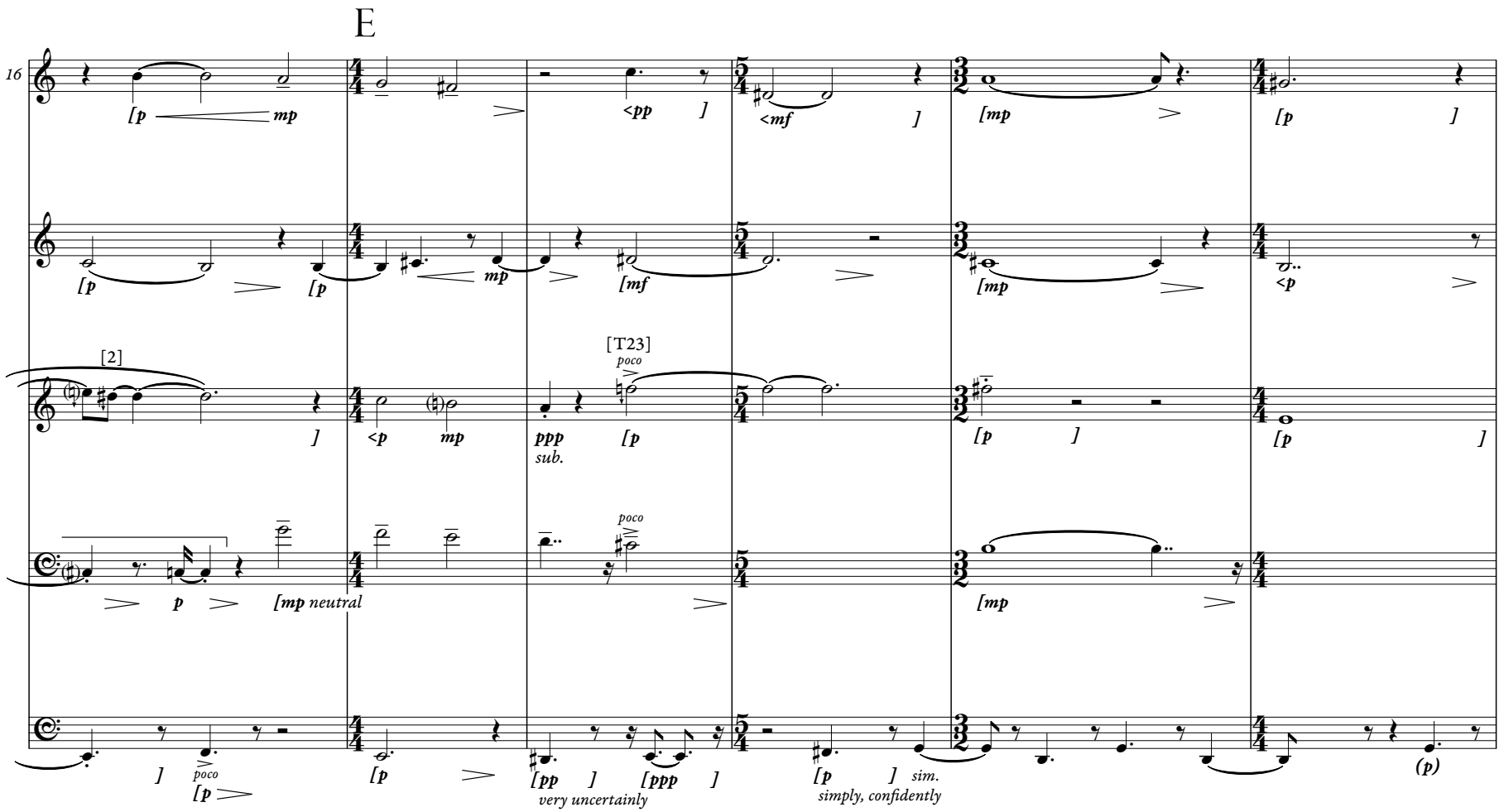

Accel.
35
[mp
(never accented!)
(never accented unless otherwise indicated)
[ffff sostenuto!
(entirely too loud)
sim.
[0]
(ffff)
p
[mp
fretfully
(mp) non cresc.
sim.
sim.

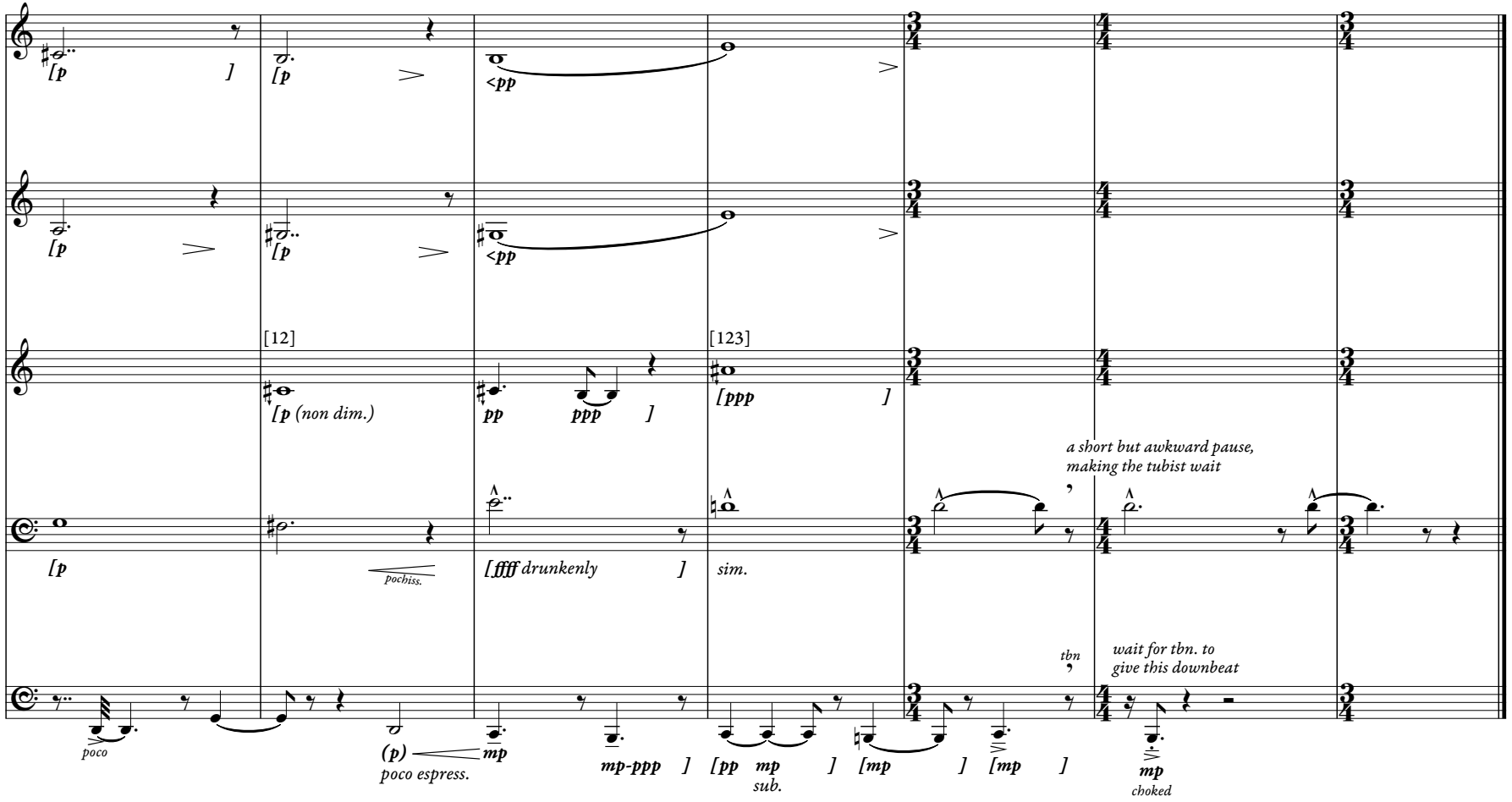

41
♩ = ca. 130
Pochiss. Rit.
(fff)
fff
less than 10¢ sharp.
[p neutral
[T]
[0]
3
fff
momentarily brutal
(ord.)
con tutta forza
ff sub.
(in response to horn)
fff
(entirely too loud)
con tutta forza

II

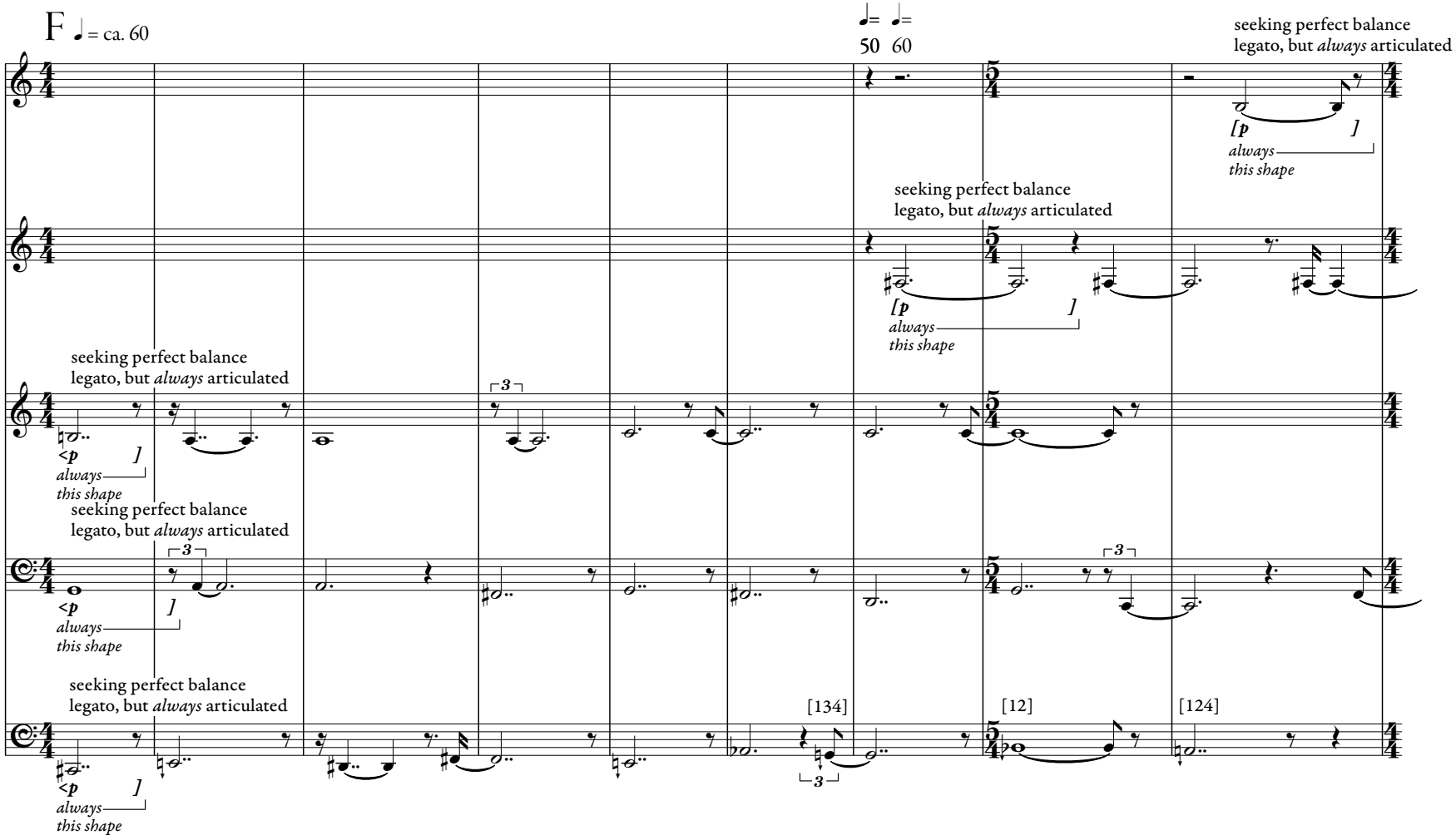

C ♩=60
(at least 15¢ sharp! If problematic, you might try an extremely flat E♮)
(in tune)
D
(in tune)
(at least 15¢ sharp! If problematic, you might try an extremely flat E♮)
(in tune)
[13]
(in tune)
[mf p sub.
[mp
<mp
pp mf
<p
[p
[mf


9
(not accented)
[13]
[13]
[0]
parlando
poco espress.
muttering
poco

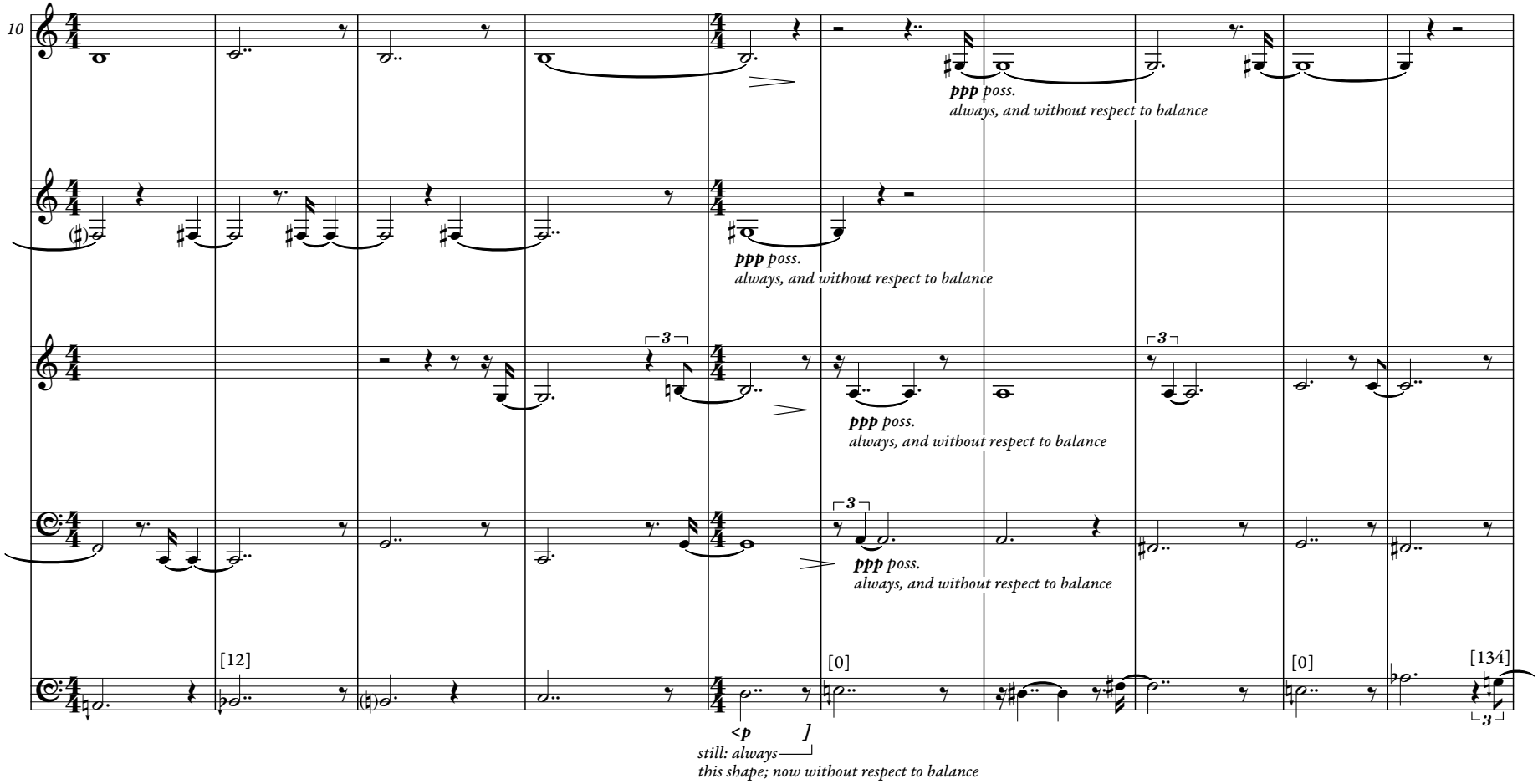

E
16
[2]
[T23]
poco
sub.
neutral
very uncertainly
simply, confidently
sim.

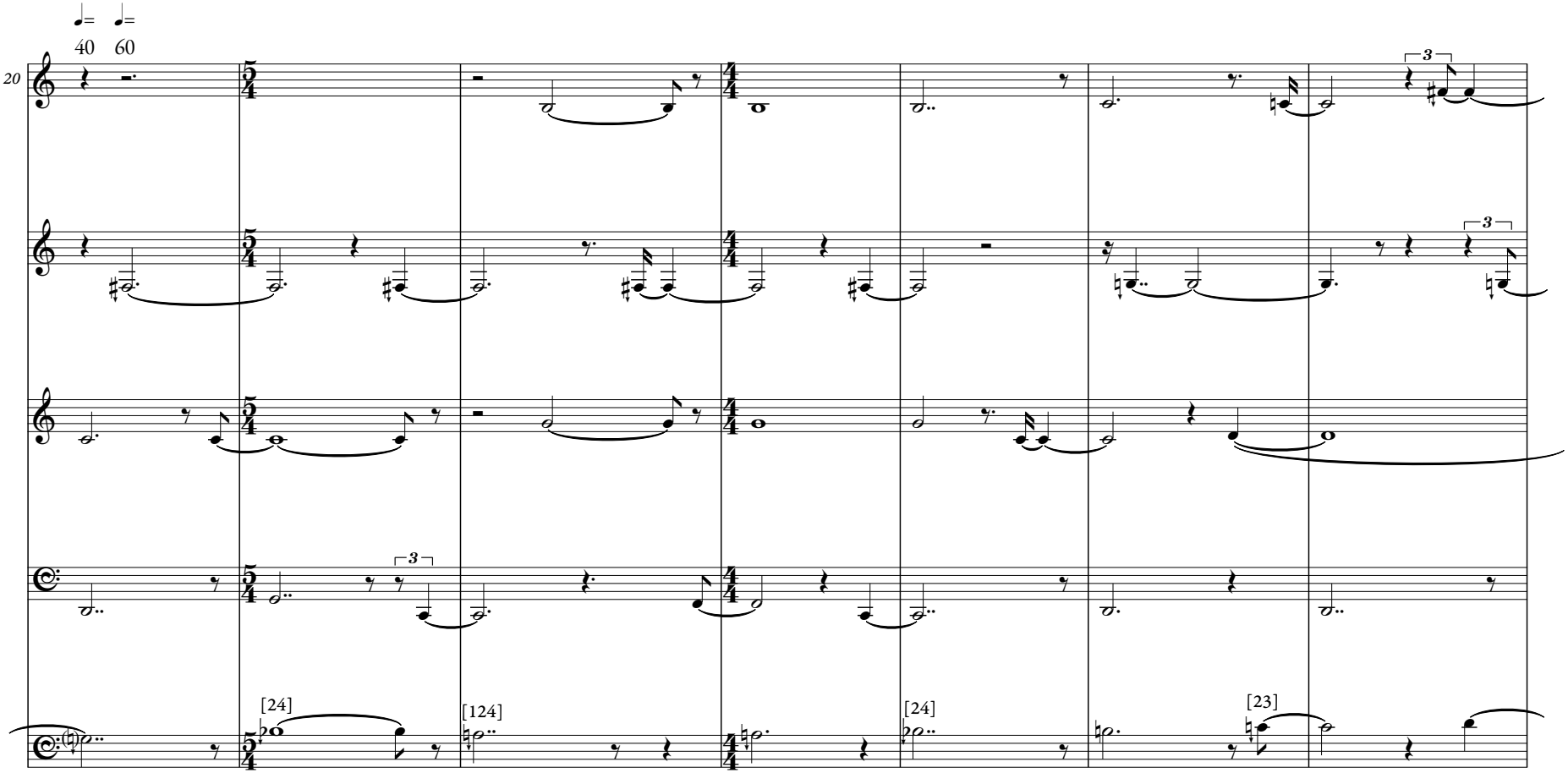

22
[p
[p
<pp
[p
[p
<pp
[12]
[p (non dim.)
pp
ppp
[123]
[ppp
[p
pochiss.
[ffff drunkenly
sim.
a short but awkward pause,
making the tubist wait
tbn
wait for tbn. to
give this downbeat
poco
(p)
poco espress.
mp
mp-ppp
[pp
mp
sub.
[mp
[mp
mp
choked

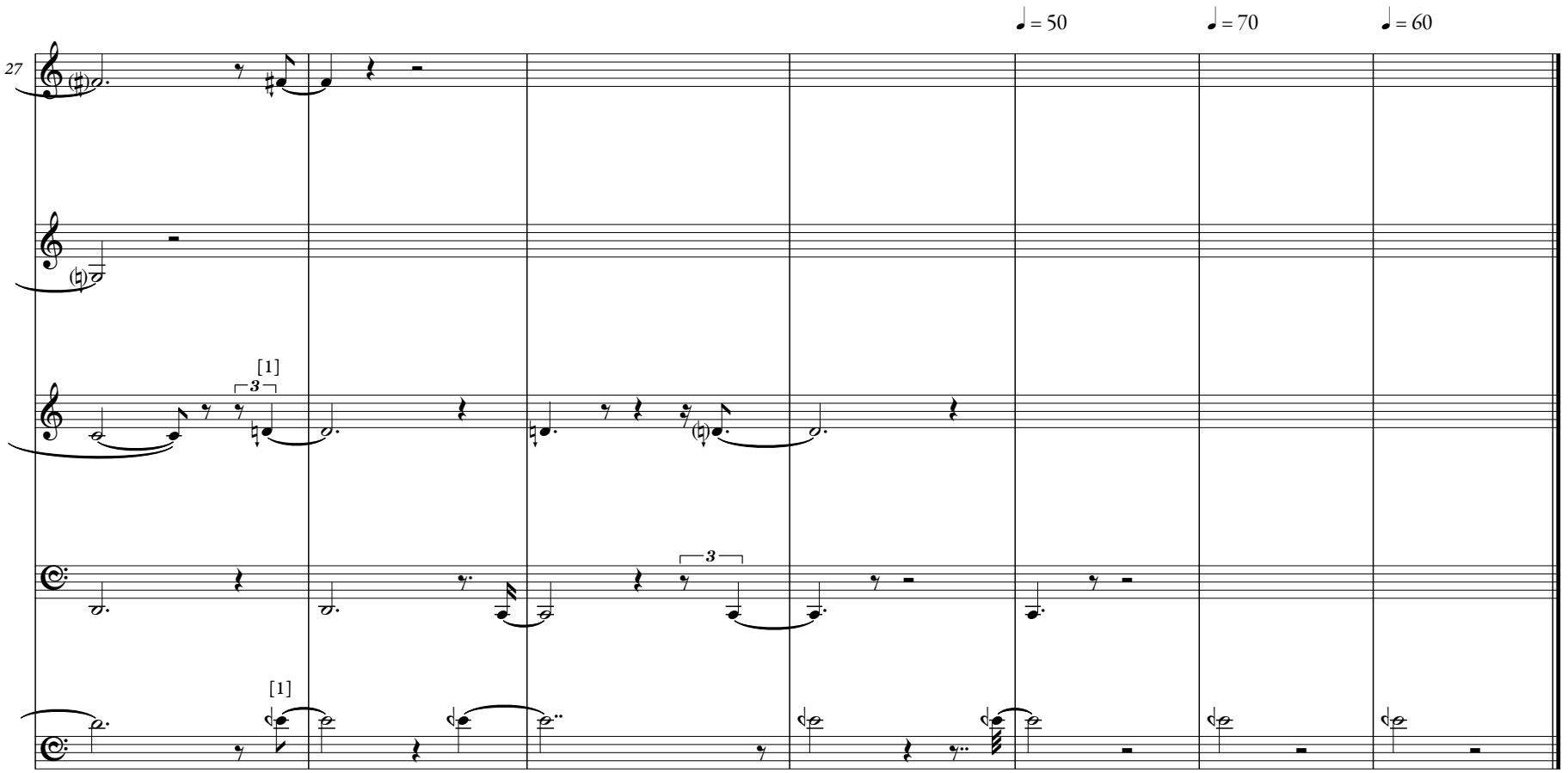
III


F ♩ = ca. 60
♩= ♩=
50 60
seeking perfect balance
legato, but *always* articulated
[p]
always
this shape
seeking perfect balance
legato, but *always* articulated
[p]
always
this shape
seeking perfect balance
legato, but *always* articulated
<p]
always
this shape
seeking perfect balance
legato, but *always* articulated
<p]
always
this shape
seeking perfect balance
legato, but *always* articulated
<p]
always
this shape
3
3
3
3
[134]
[12]
[124]

G


10
ppp poss.
always, and without respect to balance
ppp poss.
always, and without respect to balance
ppp poss.
always, and without respect to balance
ppp poss.
always, and without respect to balance
[12]
[0]
[0]
[134]
<p
still: always
this shape; now without respect to balance


♩= ♩=
40 60
20
[24]
[124]
[24]
[23]


♩ = 50
♩ = 70
♩ = 60
27
[1]
3
3
[1]