The Pompous Pocket Orchestra

one or more instruments & playback

version for viola, cello, double bass
for catinblack ensemble

Simon Bahr
2025

Preface

The Pompous Pocket Orchestra slowly evolves from concert to concert by accumulating fragments of all previous performances in the playback. It is open in instrumentation and includes space for each musician to leave their own fingerprint.

Important note: Please reach out to me before each performance of this piece to obtain the current playback. Each performance must be recorded and the recording must be send back to me.

General Remarks

This piece can be performed by any number and combination of instruments. There are solo, duo and trio versions of the score. For more than three instruments, use the trio version and distribute the instruments as evenly across the parts as possible. If you need a version for a specific instrumentation, don't hesitate to reach out.

Generally speaking, any instrument can play any of the parts. Each part can be transposed in octaves to match the range of the respective instrument. To the extend possible with the chosen instrumentation, each instrument should play the part that requires the least transposition. In addition, there are some special parts available, e. g. for unpitched percussion or piano, that can be played as solo versions or in combination with any other score version.

Notation & Sound

Accidentals apply for the rest of the respective bar and for the same octave position only.

Dynamic markings are relative, meaning the same dynamic marking should result in a similar loudness for each instrument.

Staccatissimo indicates that a note is to be played as short as possible, regardless of its rhythmic value.

Standard noteheads indicate ordinario playing. The other types of noteheads used in the piece indicate the option to play with a different playing technique. If you find no convincing way to realize the indicated type of sound on your instrument, any note may be played ordinario. If you find multiple ways to produce the indicated type of sound, you are encouraged to vary these techniques intuitively.

a percussive sound, e. g. a pizz. or col legno battuto on a string instrument, a slap tongue on a wind instrument, etc.

a distorted, grainy sound, e. g. overpressure on a string instrument, a flutter tongue on flute, a growl on a clarinet, etc.

a noisy sound, e. g. a noisy flautando on a string instrument, an airy tone on a wind instrument, etc.

Interpretation & Variation

An important feature of this piece is the use of material open to various ways of interpretation. Generally speaking, any material with a dashed line above may be varied according to the given instruction. In most cases, this includes replacing notes by rests to vary the density of the notated material. In some cases, it also includes more open forms of notation, where the pitches or rhythms of a passage are to be chosen or altered freely. Accidentals, dynamics and any other kinds of markings that refer to multiple notes will still take effect even if the note they are attached to is not played. The instructions translate as follows:

1st: 50% / 2nd: 75%, etc.	Play about 50% of the notes in the 1st cycle and about 75% in the 2nd cycle.
1st, **2nd**, etc.	Play all notes in the 1st / the 2nd cycle. Never play in any other cycle.
1st upper / 2nd lower	Play the upper voice in the 1st cycle and the lower voice in the 2nd cycle.
single notes only	Play one note at a time. (= Don't play chords.)
50% → 100%, etc.	Start with about 50% of the written notes and play all notes by the end of the passage.
vary density	Vary the amount of notes you play freely.
25%, **50%**, etc.	Play about 25% / 50% of the written notes.
ad lib.	Passages marked with "ad lib." can be treated with an extra portion of freedom and inventiveness in interpretation.
increasingly add micro deviations	Start adding micro-tonal and micro-rhythmic deviations from the written material over the course of the passage.
with micro / significant deviations (in pitch)	Add subtle / clearly audible deviations in pitch (and rhythm) during the entire passage.
one instrument only	If the part is played by multiple instruments, only one instrument should play this passage as a solo.
vary playing techniques	Play the notated pitches using a wide range of sonic variations (to the extend possible on your instrument).

Playback & Technical Requirements

The playback consists of a pre-produced track ("Virtual Orchestra") and superimposed excerpts of the recordings of all previous performances, repositioned according to the score ("Recorded Orchestra"). I will send you the current version of the playback before each performance, so please reach out to me when planing to perform the piece. It is a strict requirement to record each performance and send me the recording, so I can prepare the playback for the next performance.

The piece can be played along with the playback without a click. A click is still provided and may be used for rehearsals or concerts if desired. The technical requirements include: a stereo PA & playback device (always required), microphones & a mixer for amplification (optional, but recommended), monitoring for all musicians (optional, depending on the concert space) and in-ear monitoring for click-track (optional).

Simon Bahr, 2025
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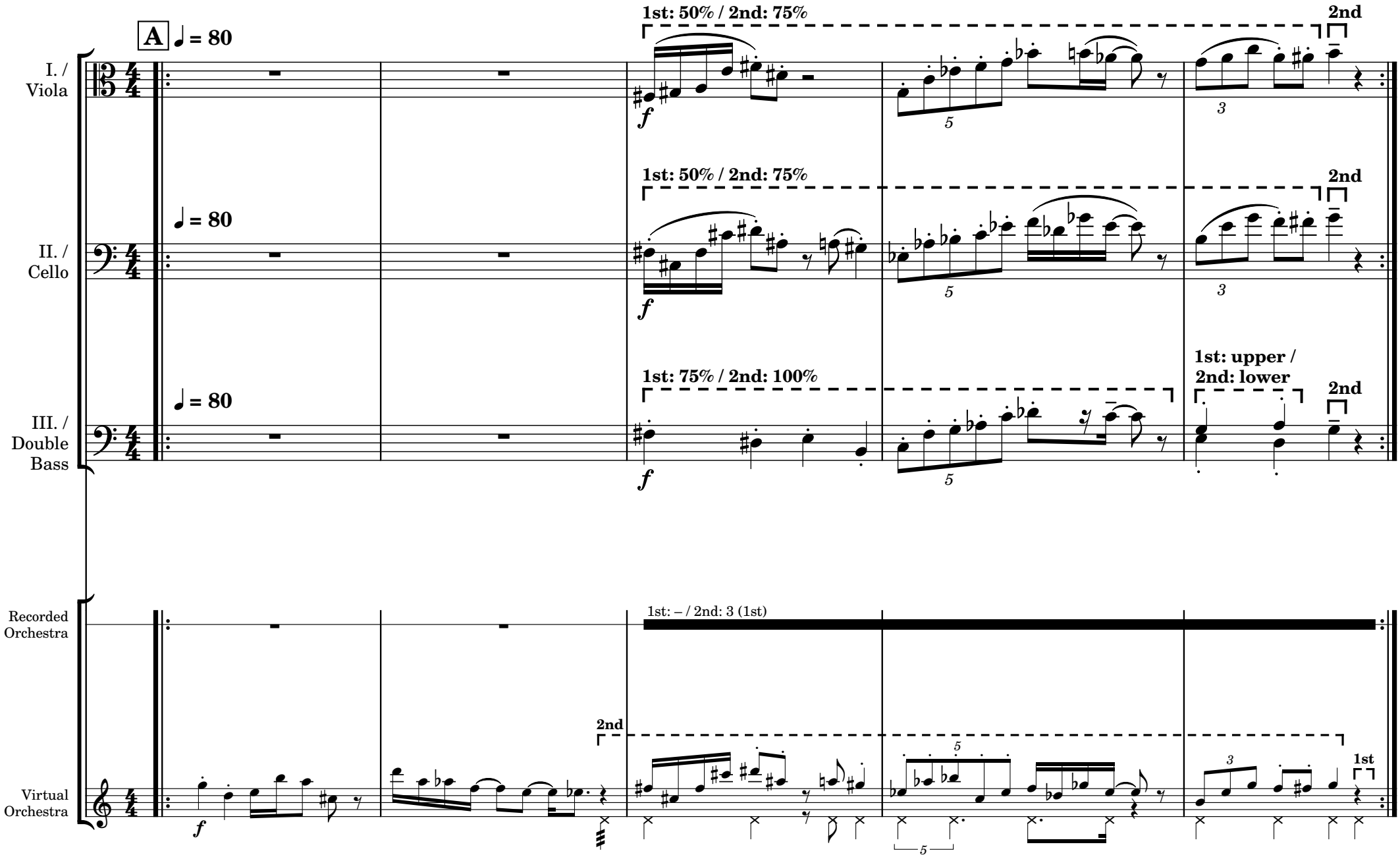
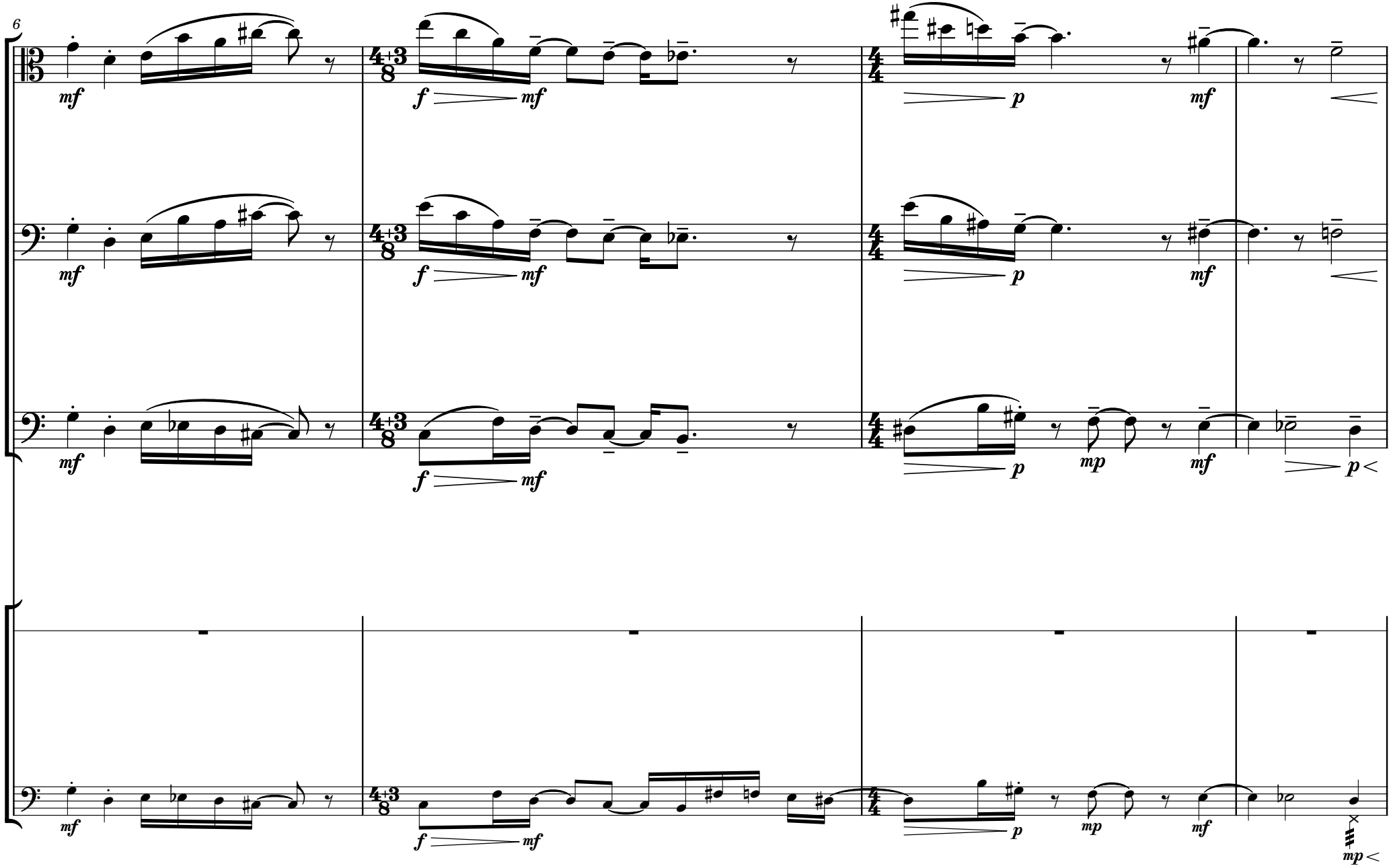
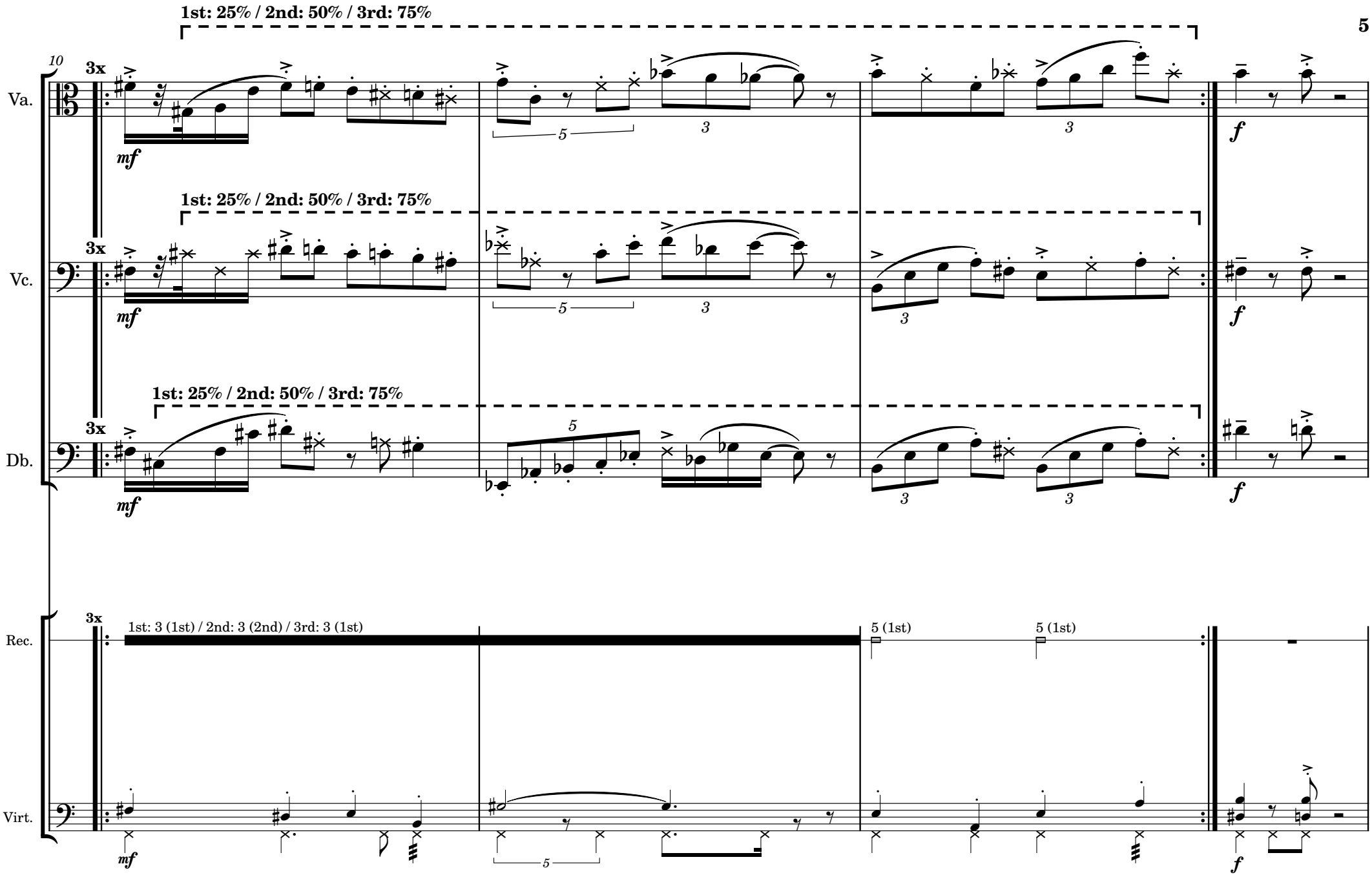
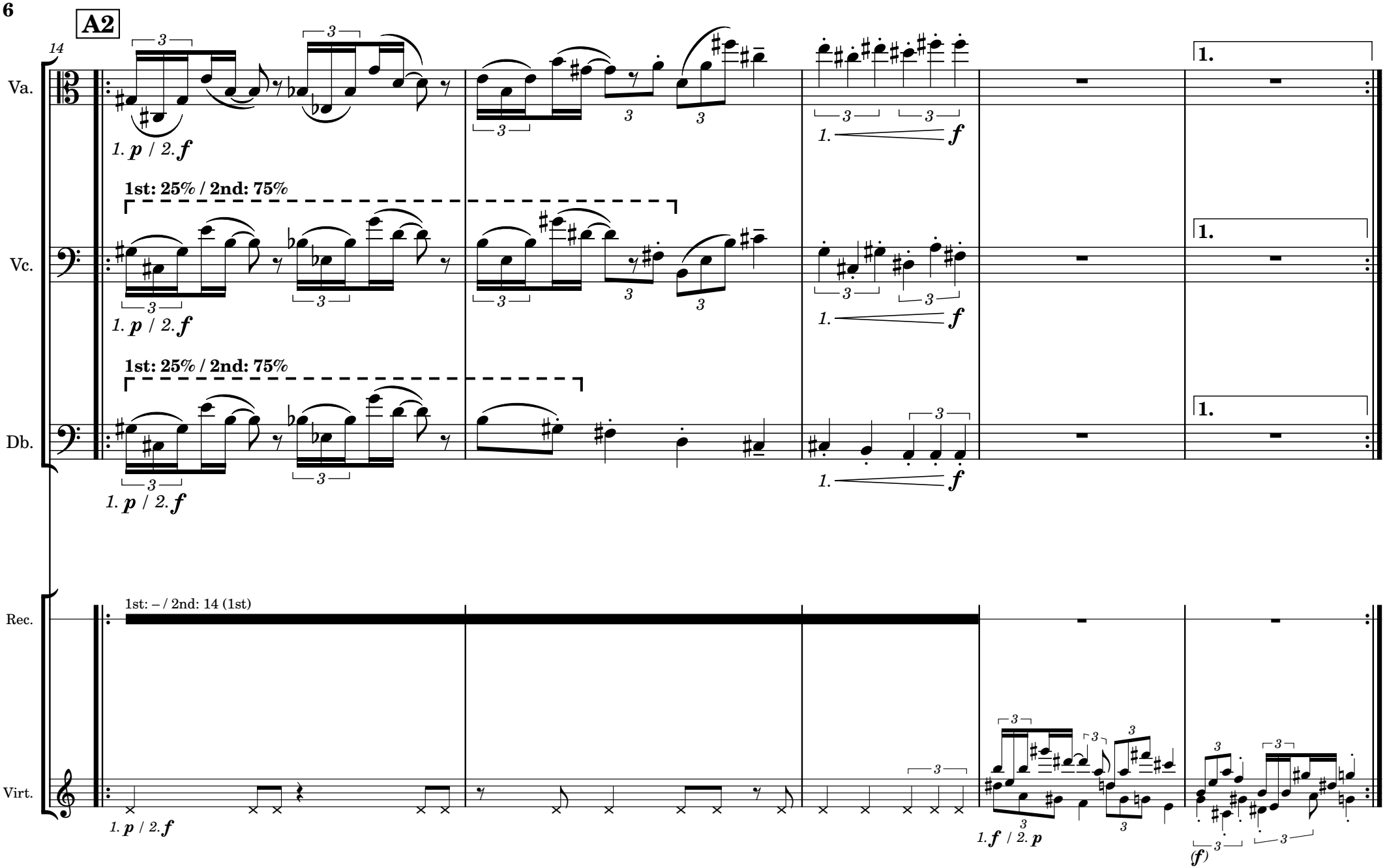
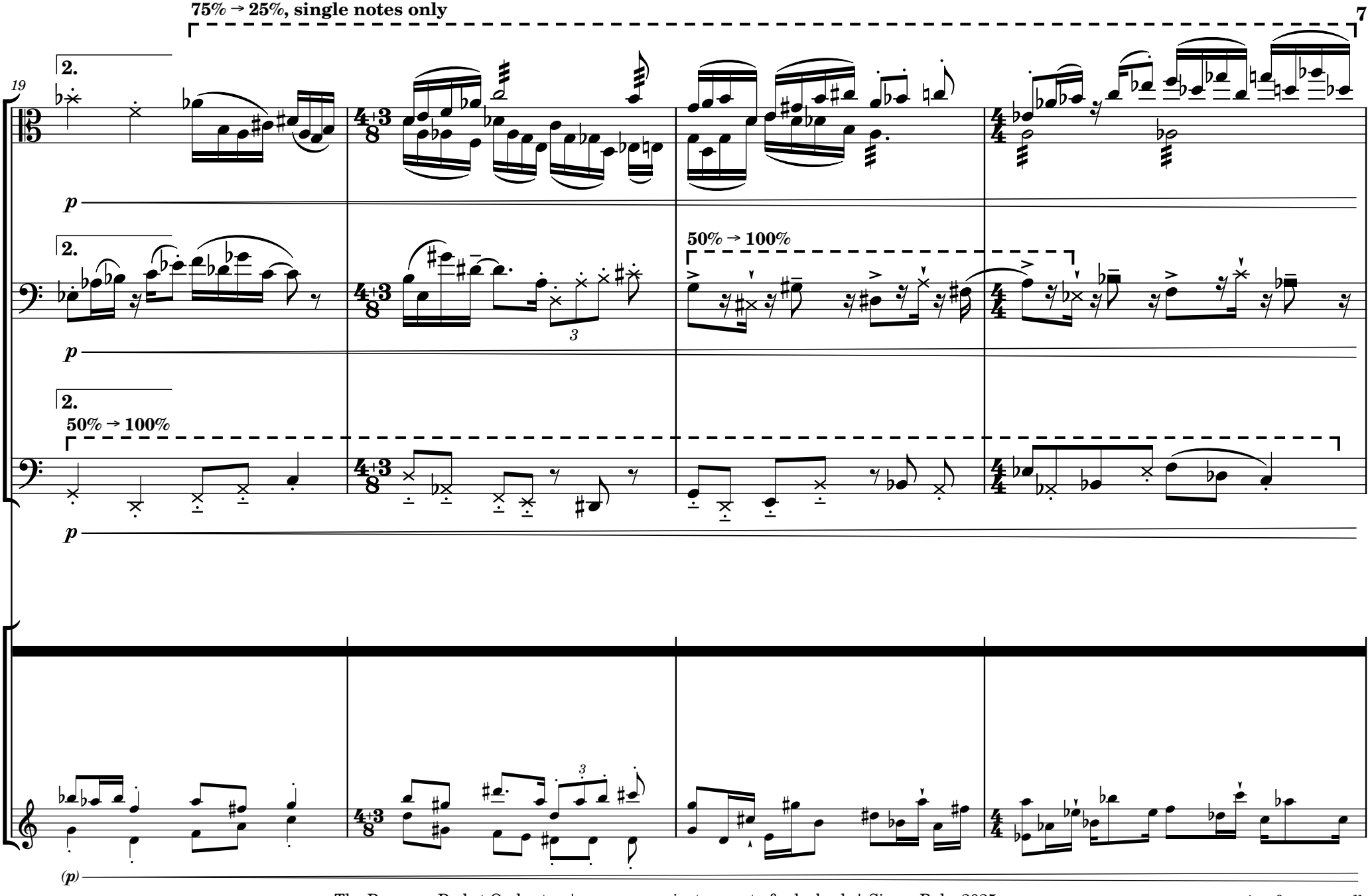
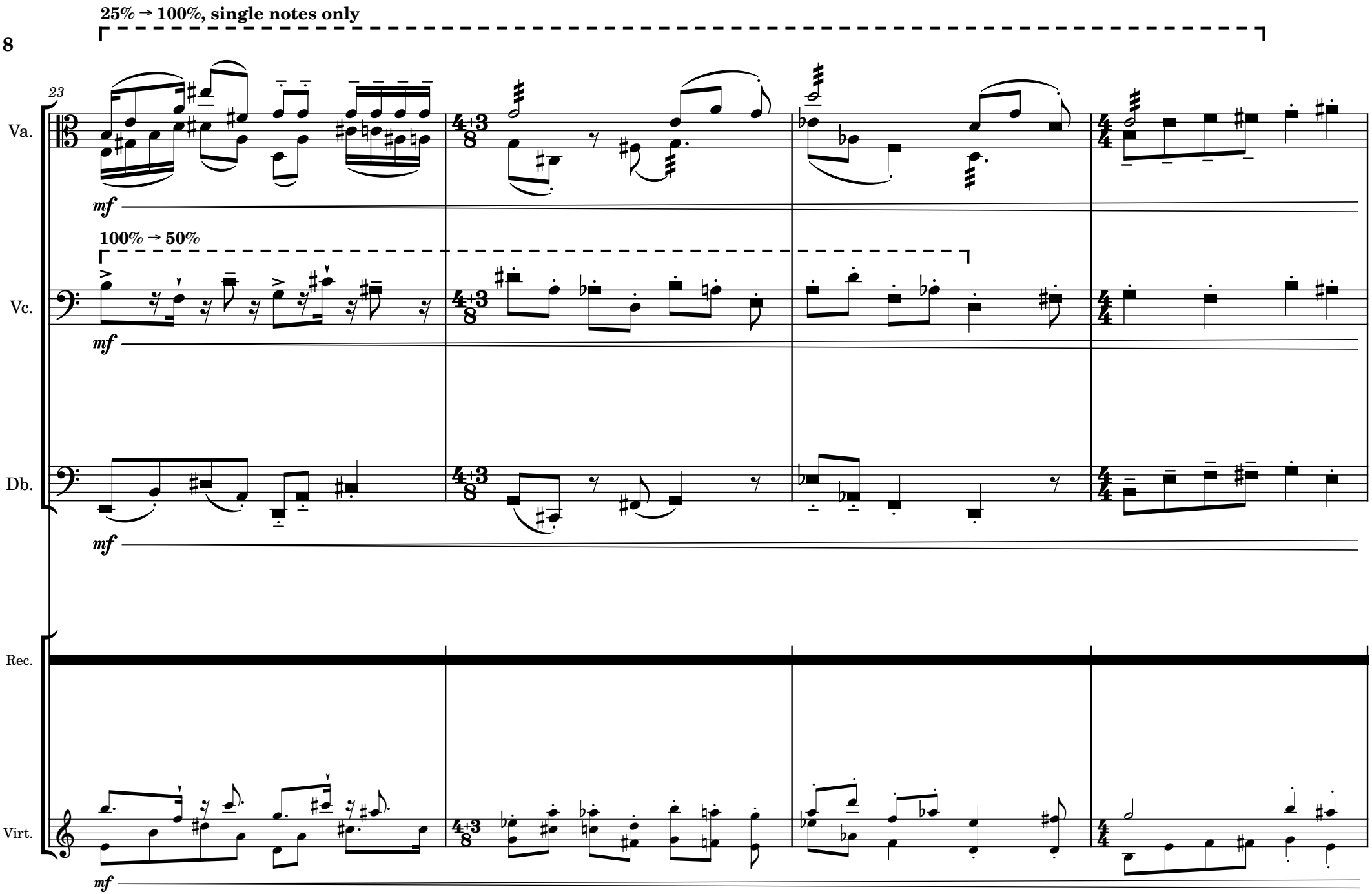

A
♩ = 80
I. / Viola
II. / Cello
III. / Double Bass
Recorded Orchestra
Virtual Orchestra
1st: 50% / 2nd: 75%
2nd
1st: 75% / 2nd: 100%
1st: upper / 2nd: lower
1st: – / 2nd: 3 (1st)
1st
f

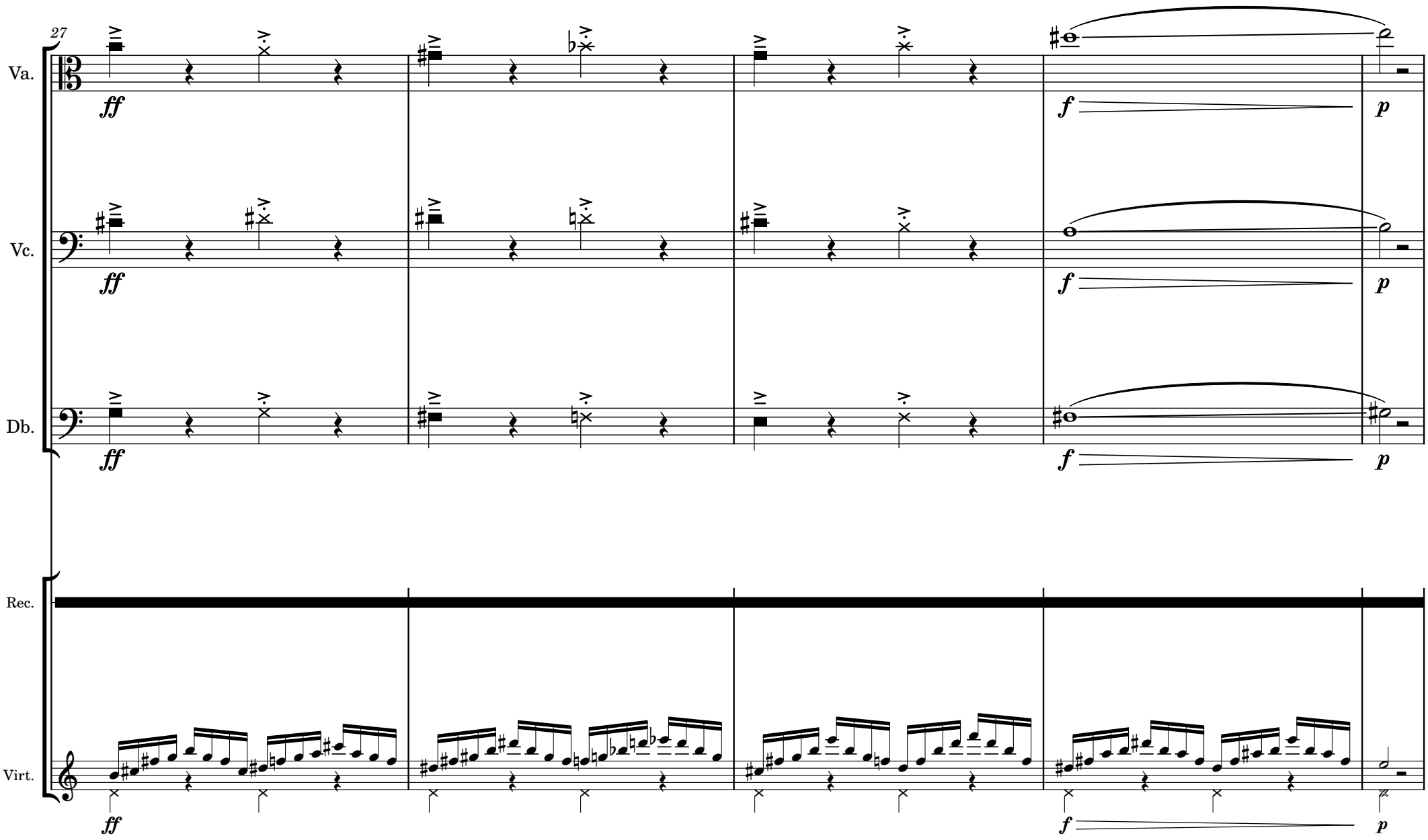

6
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
mf
f
mf
p
mf
mp
mf
p
mp

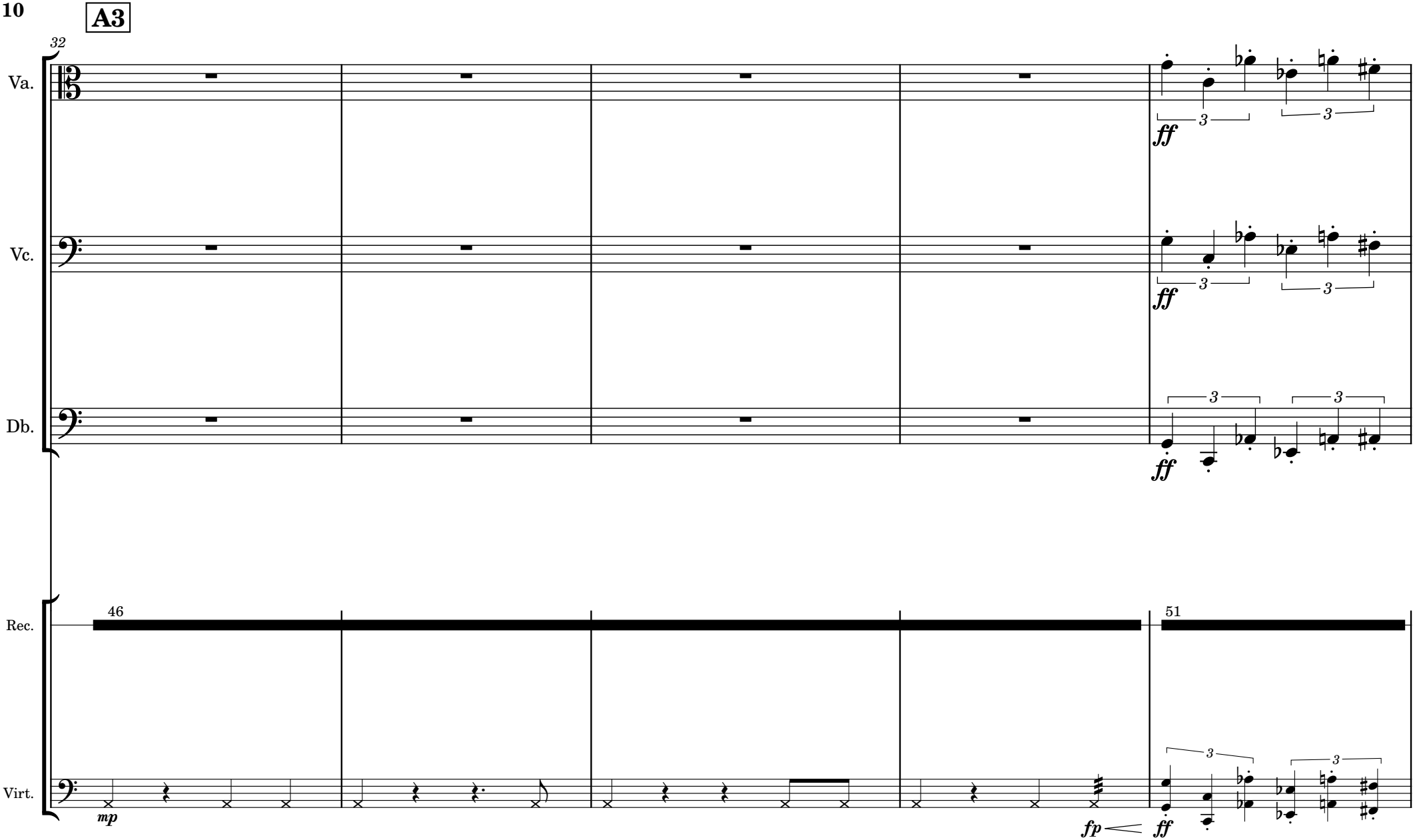

1st: 25% / 2nd: 50% / 3rd: 75%
10
3x
Va.
mf
1st: 25% / 2nd: 50% / 3rd: 75%
3x
Vc.
mf
1st: 25% / 2nd: 50% / 3rd: 75%
3x
Db.
mf
3x
Rec.
1st: 3 (1st) / 2nd: 3 (2nd) / 3rd: 3 (1st)
5 (1st)
5 (1st)
Virt.
mf
f

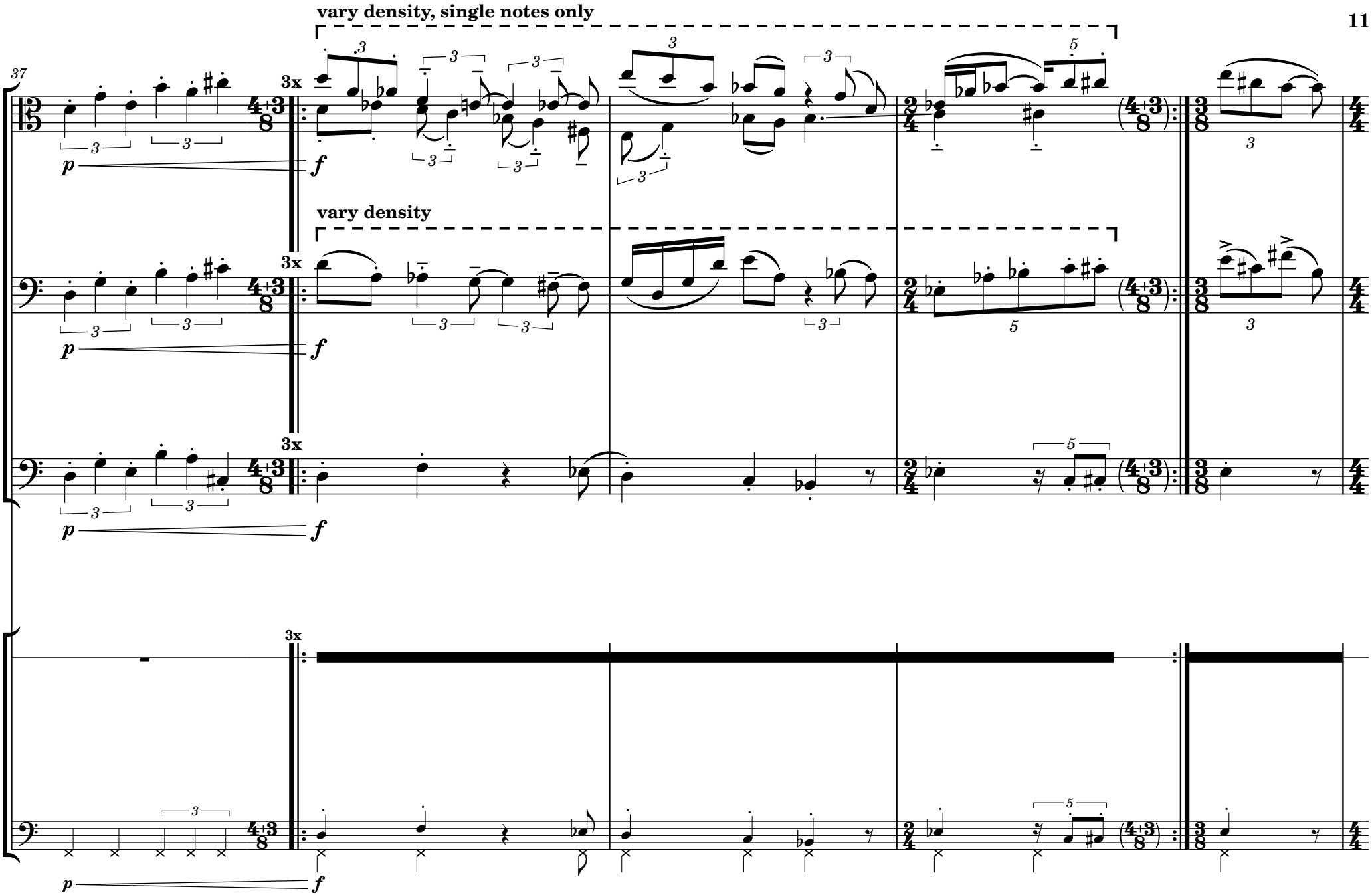

A2
14
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
1. p / 2. f
1st: 25% / 2nd: 75%
1st: 25% / 2nd: 75%
1st: – / 2nd: 14 (1st)
1.
1. f
1. f / 2. p
(f)

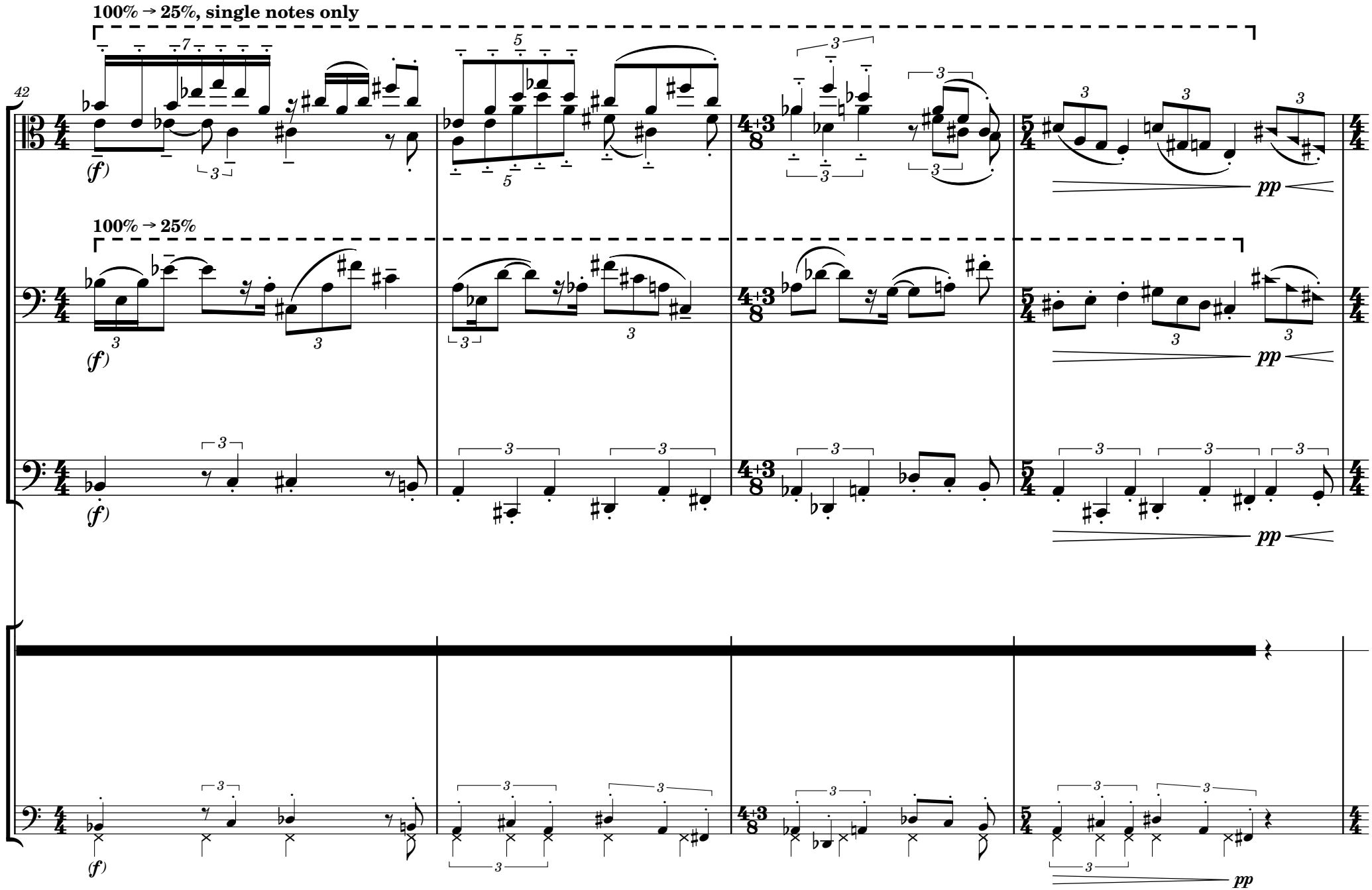

75% → 25%, single notes only
7
19
2.
Va.
p
Vc.
50% → 100%
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
(p)

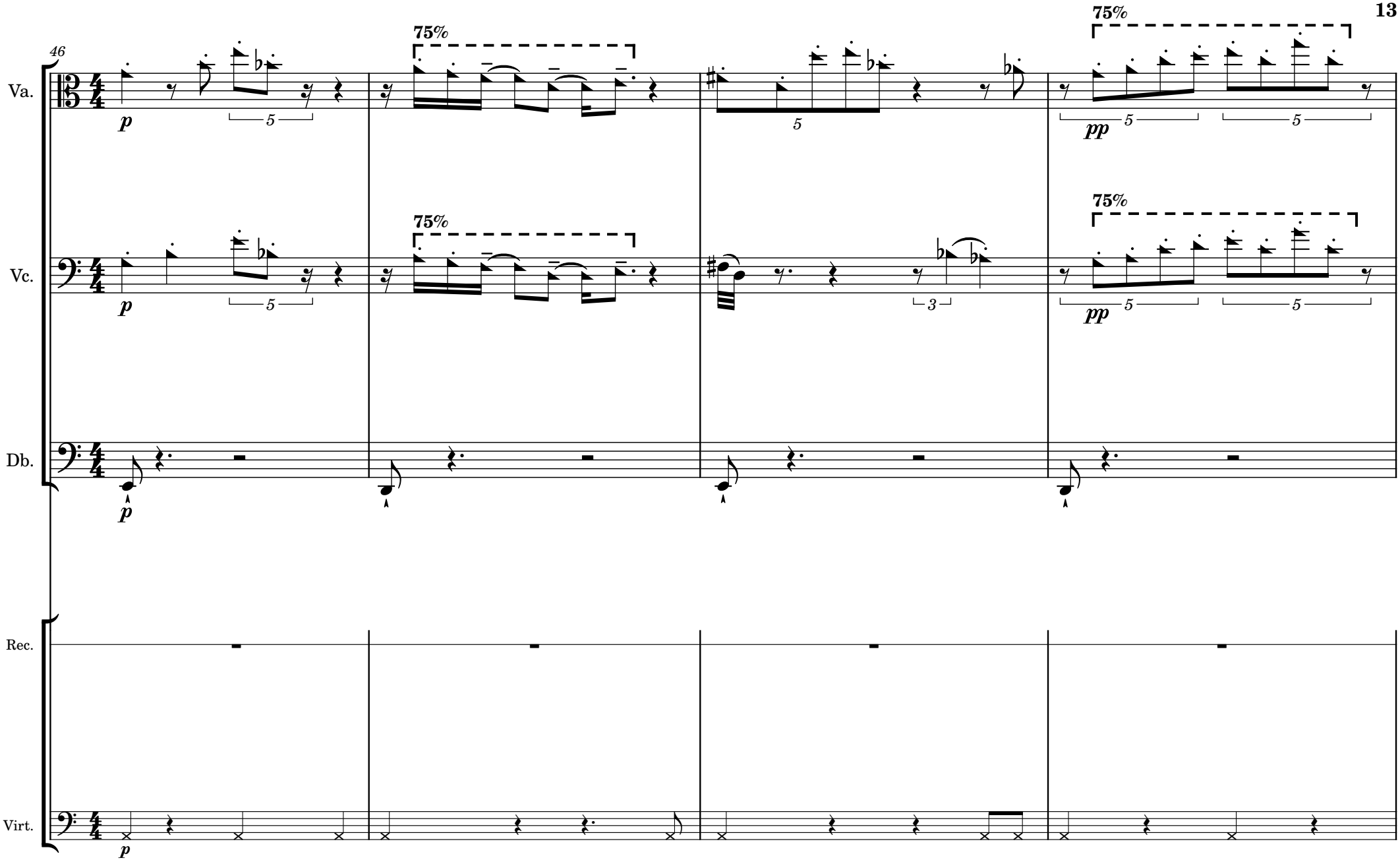

25% → 100%, single notes only
23
Va.
mf
100% → 50%
Vc.
mf
Db.
mf
Rec.
Virt.
mf

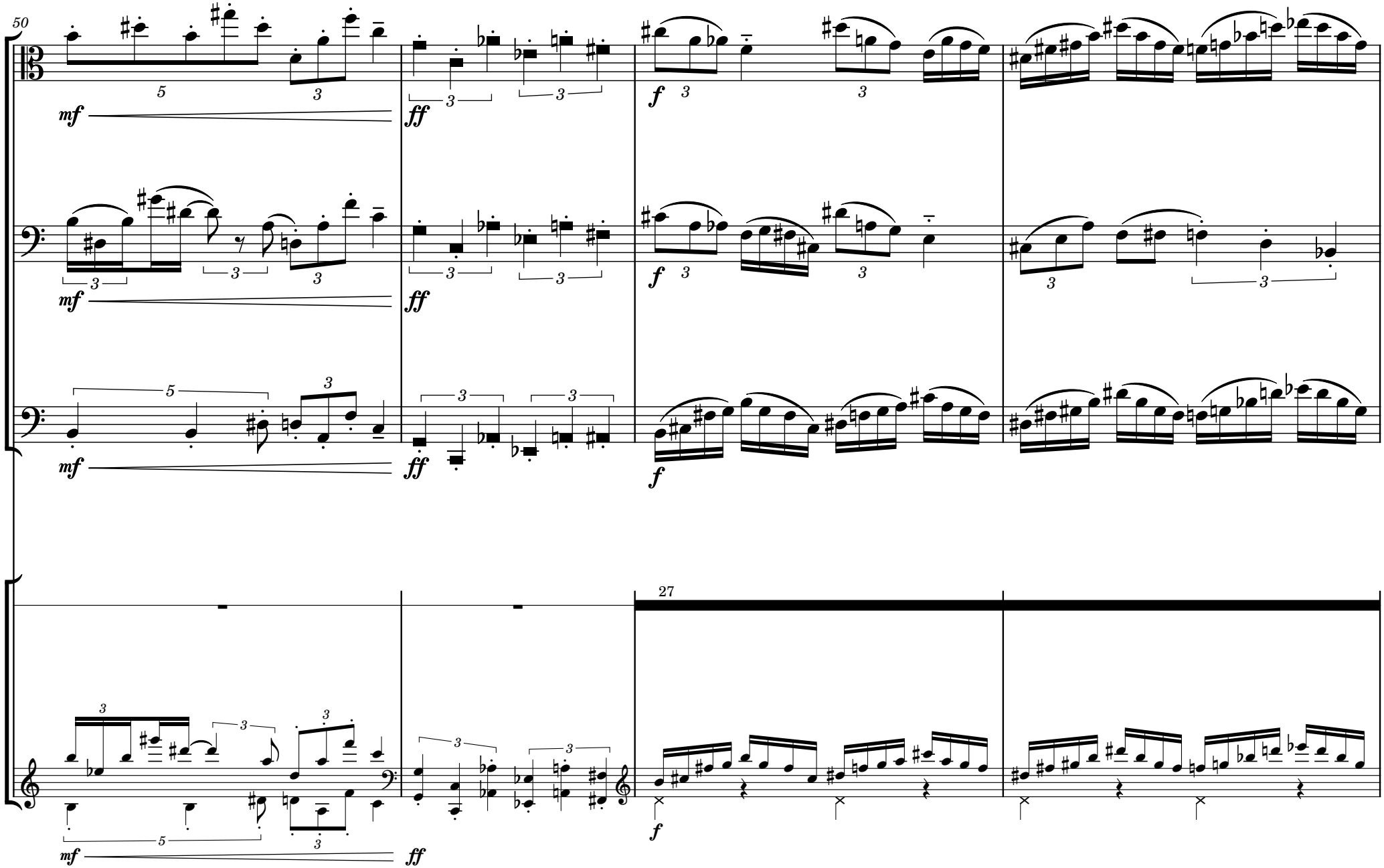

27
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
ff
f
p

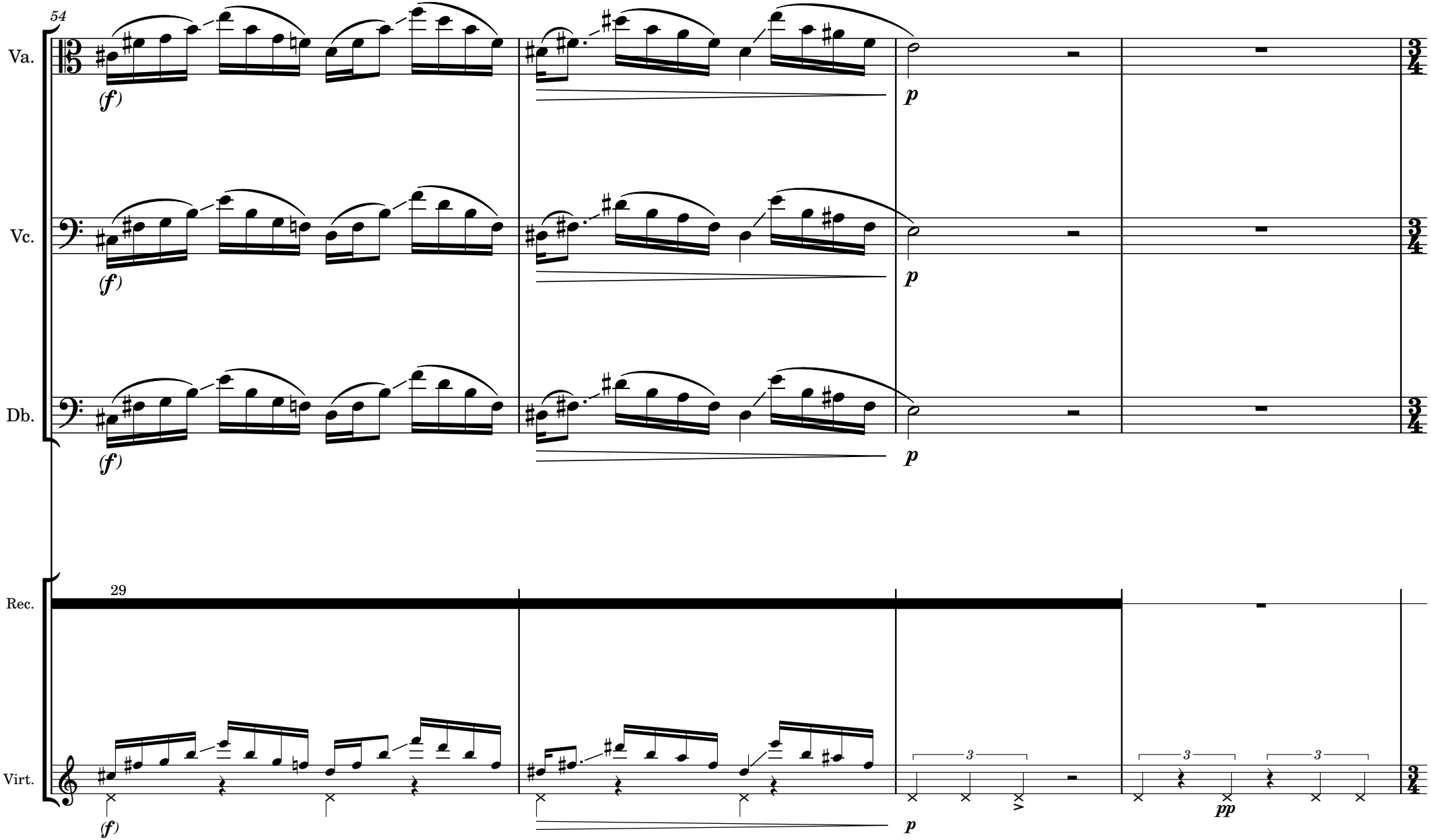

A3
32
Va.
Vc.
Db.
ff
3
Rec.
46
51
Virt.
mp
fp

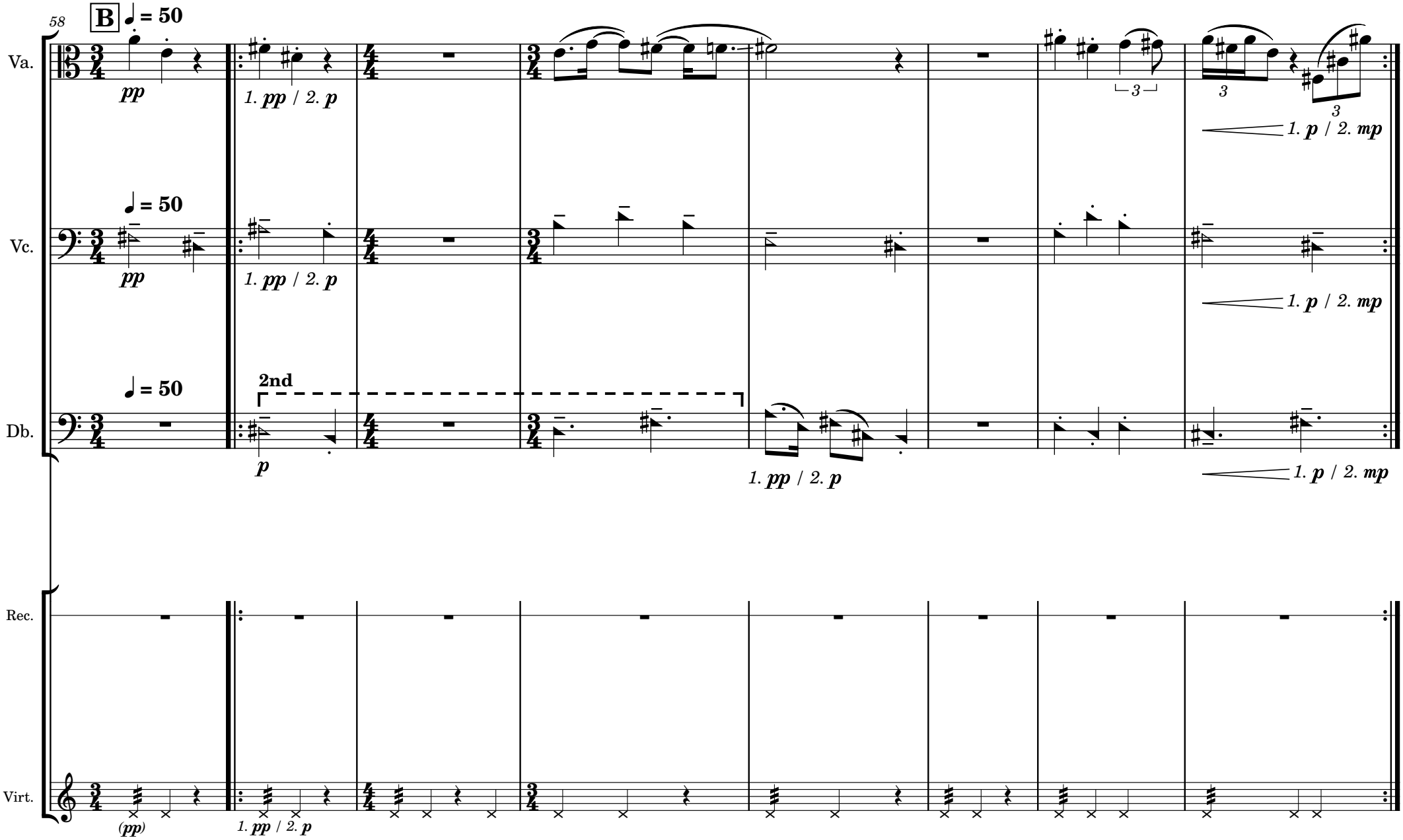

vary density, single notes only
37
3x
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
vary density
p
f

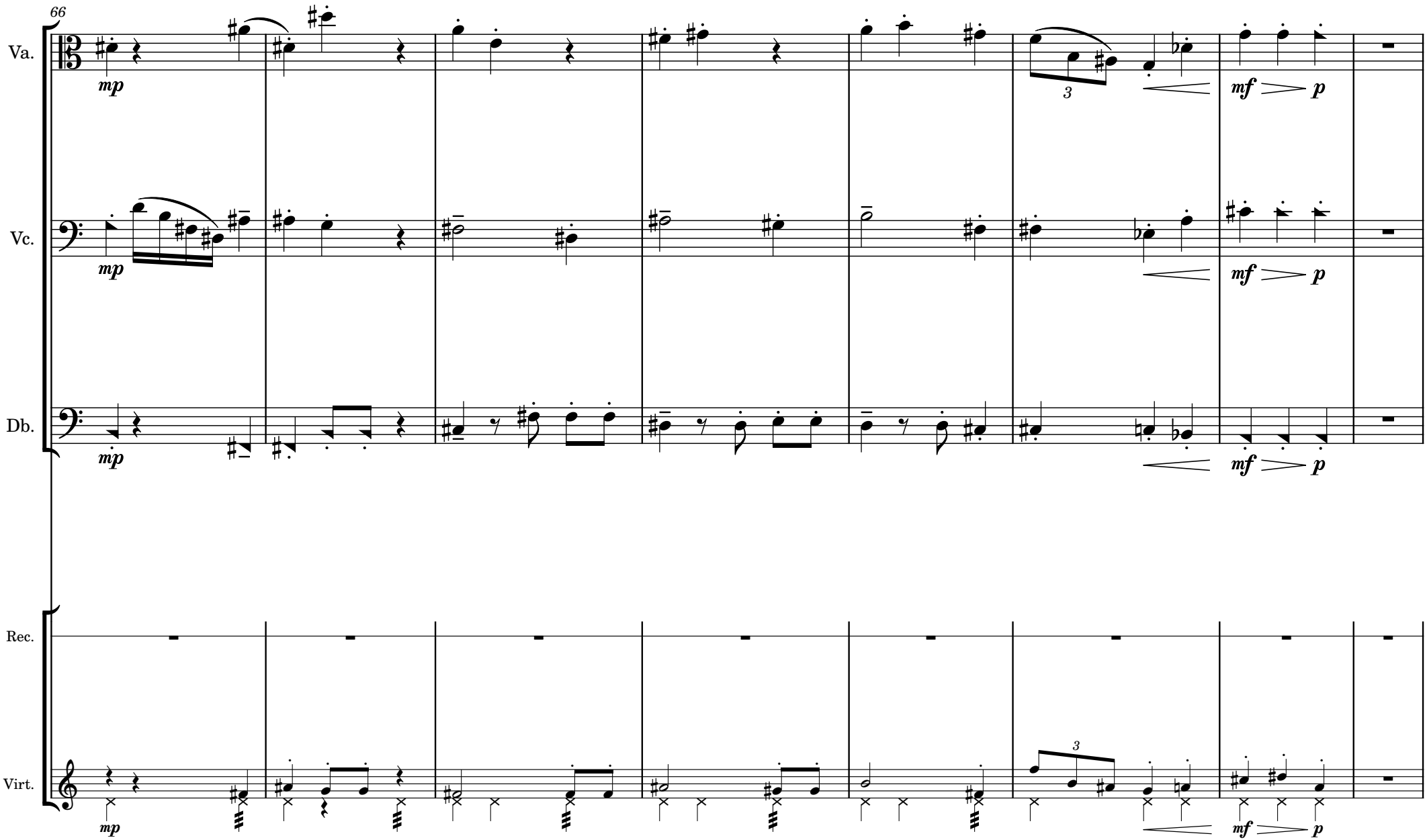

100% → 25%, single notes only
42
Va.
(f)
pp
100% → 25%
Vc.
(f)
pp
Db.
(f)
pp
Rec.
Virt.
(f)
pp

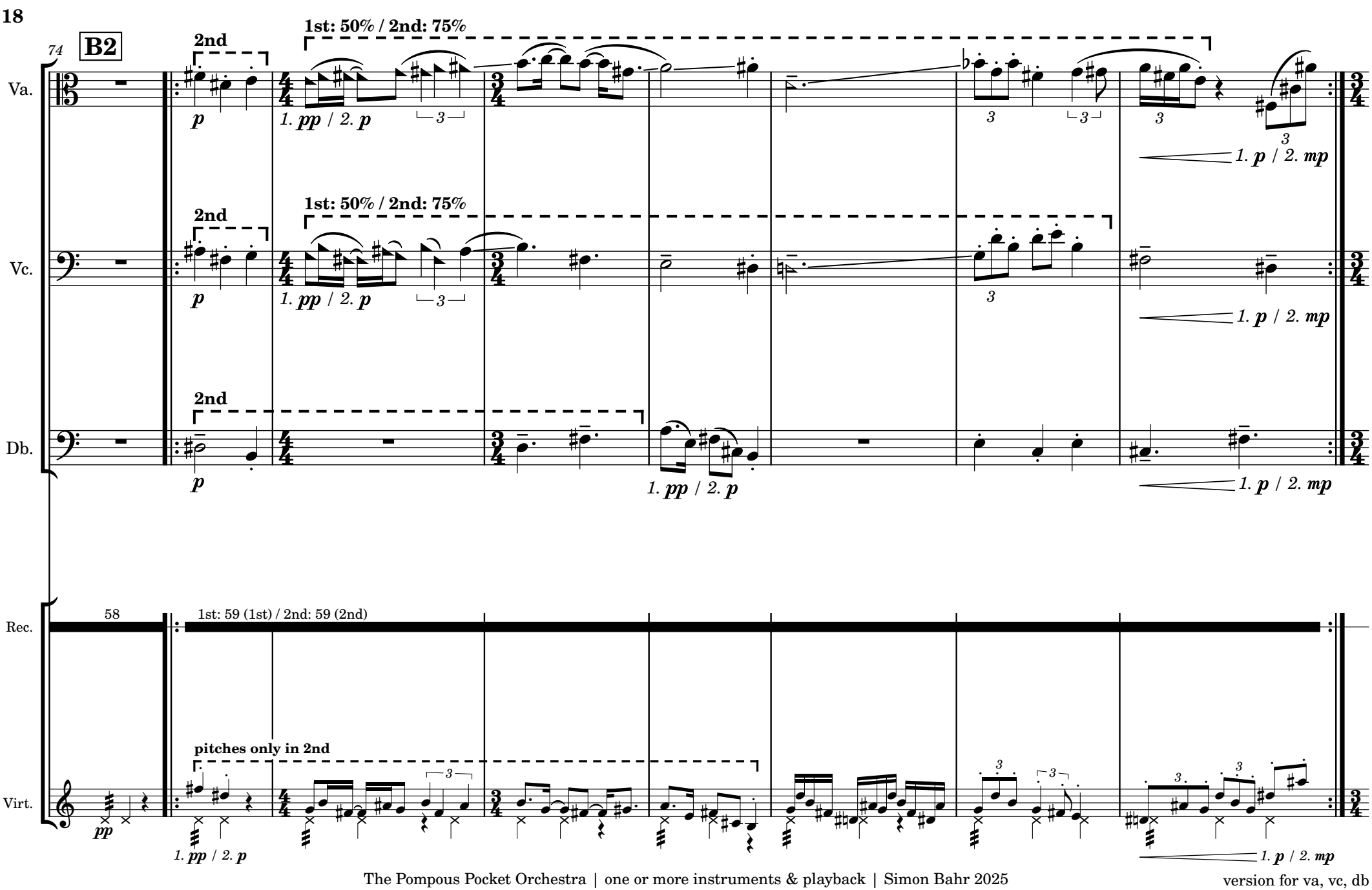

46
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
75%
75%
75%
75%
p
pp
5
3

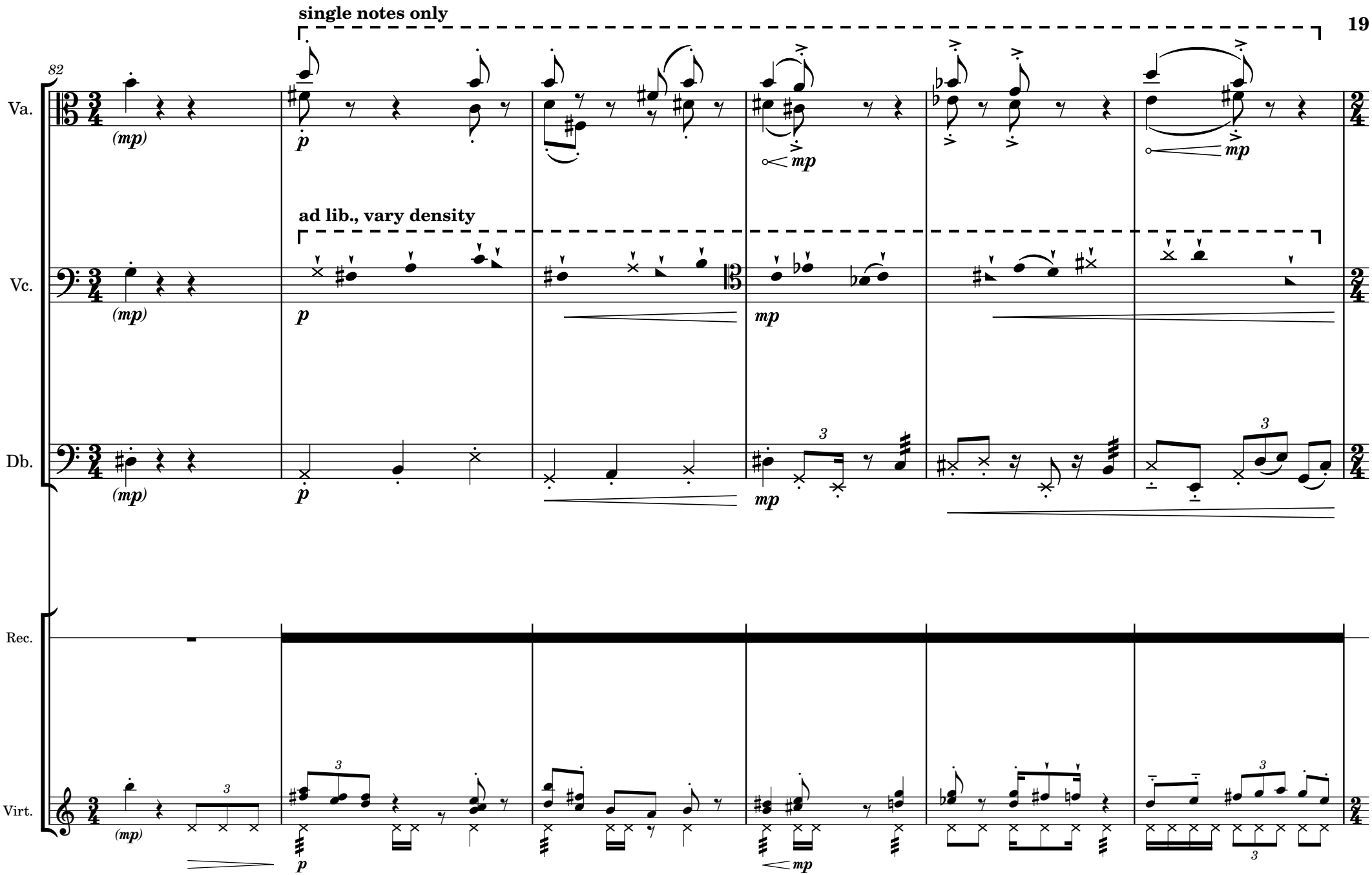

50
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
27
mf
ff
f

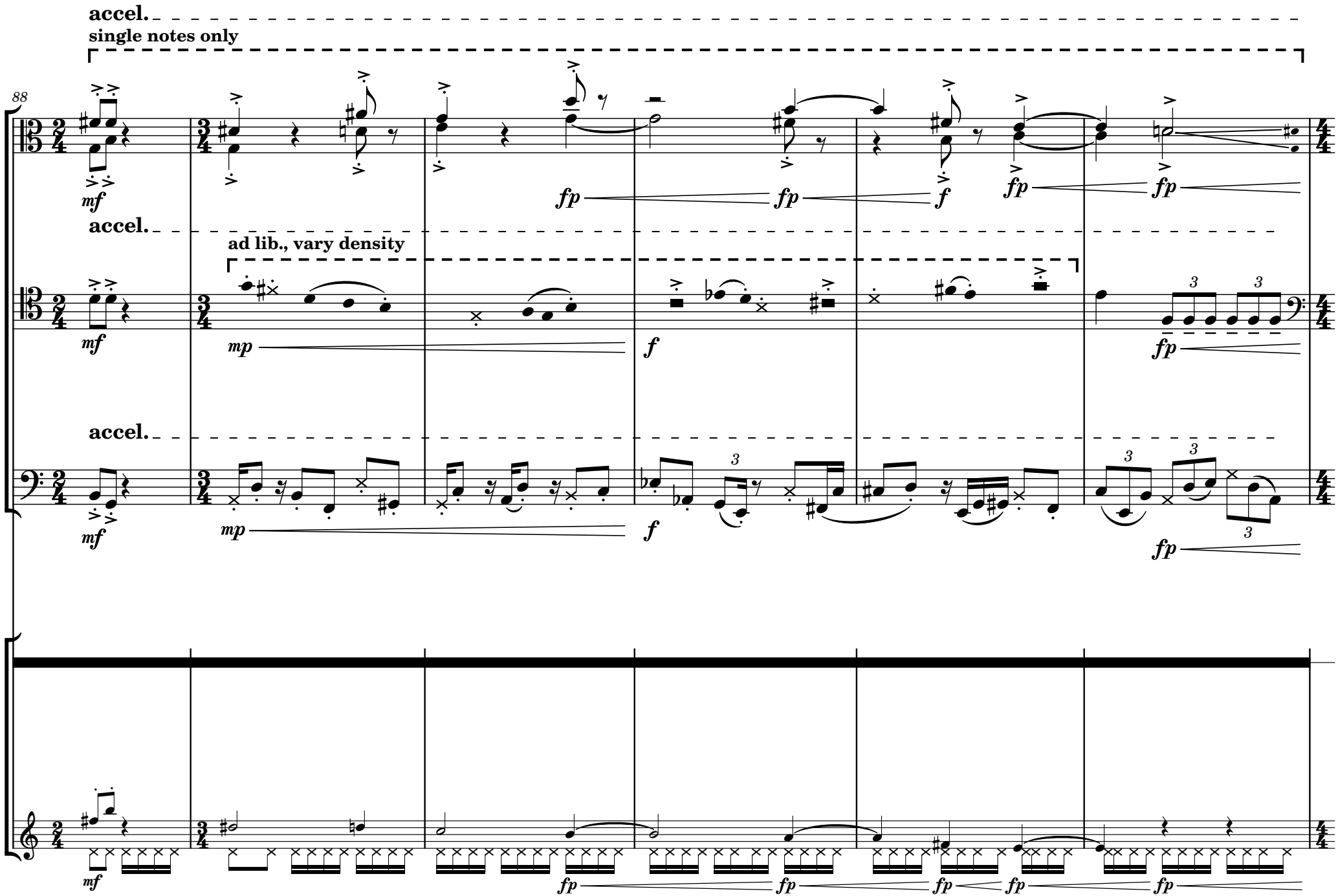

54
Va.
Vc.
Db.
29
Rec.
Virt.
(f)
p
pp
3

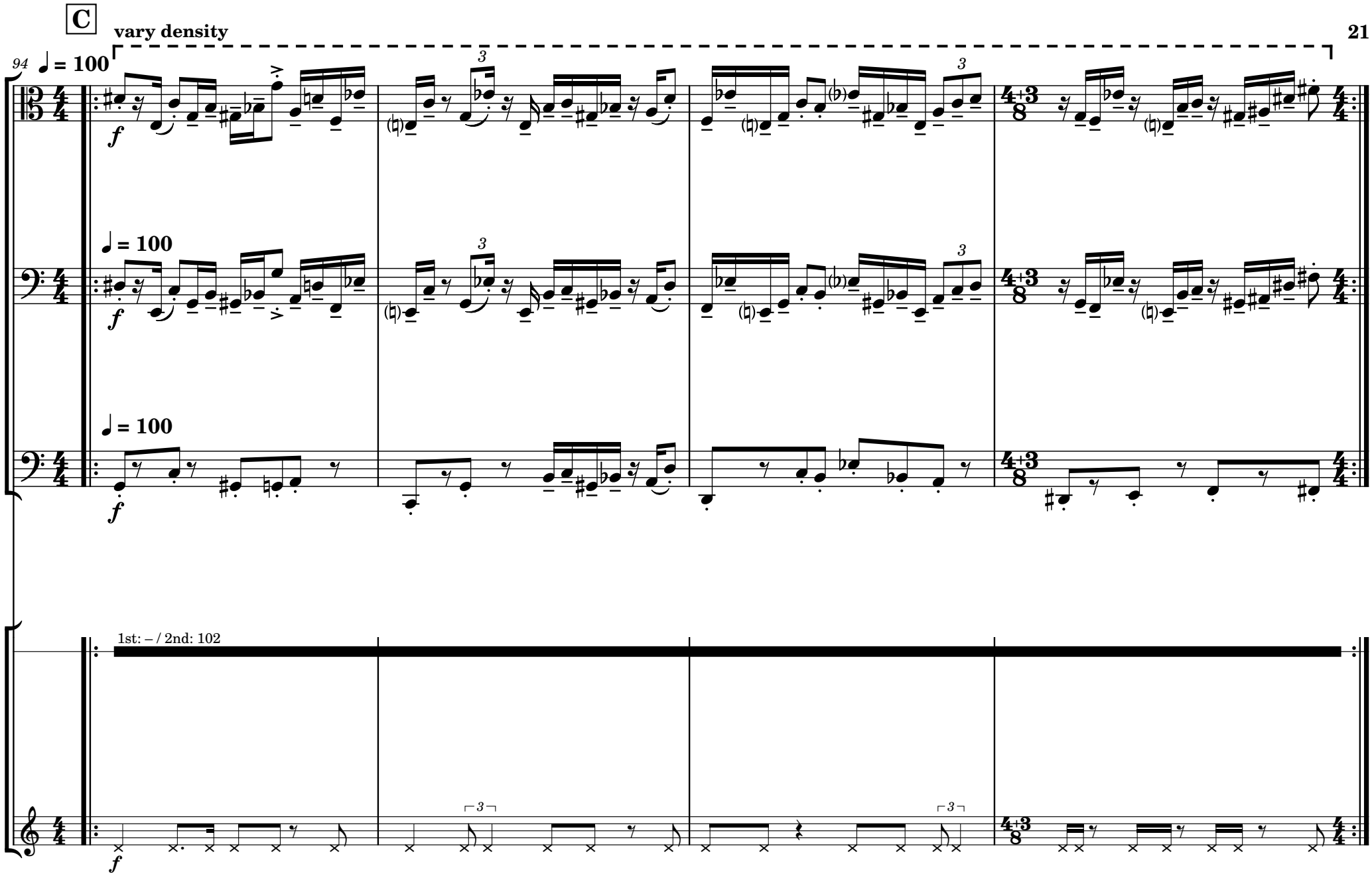

58
B
♩ = 50
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
pp
1. pp / 2. p
p
2nd
1. p / 2. mp
(pp)

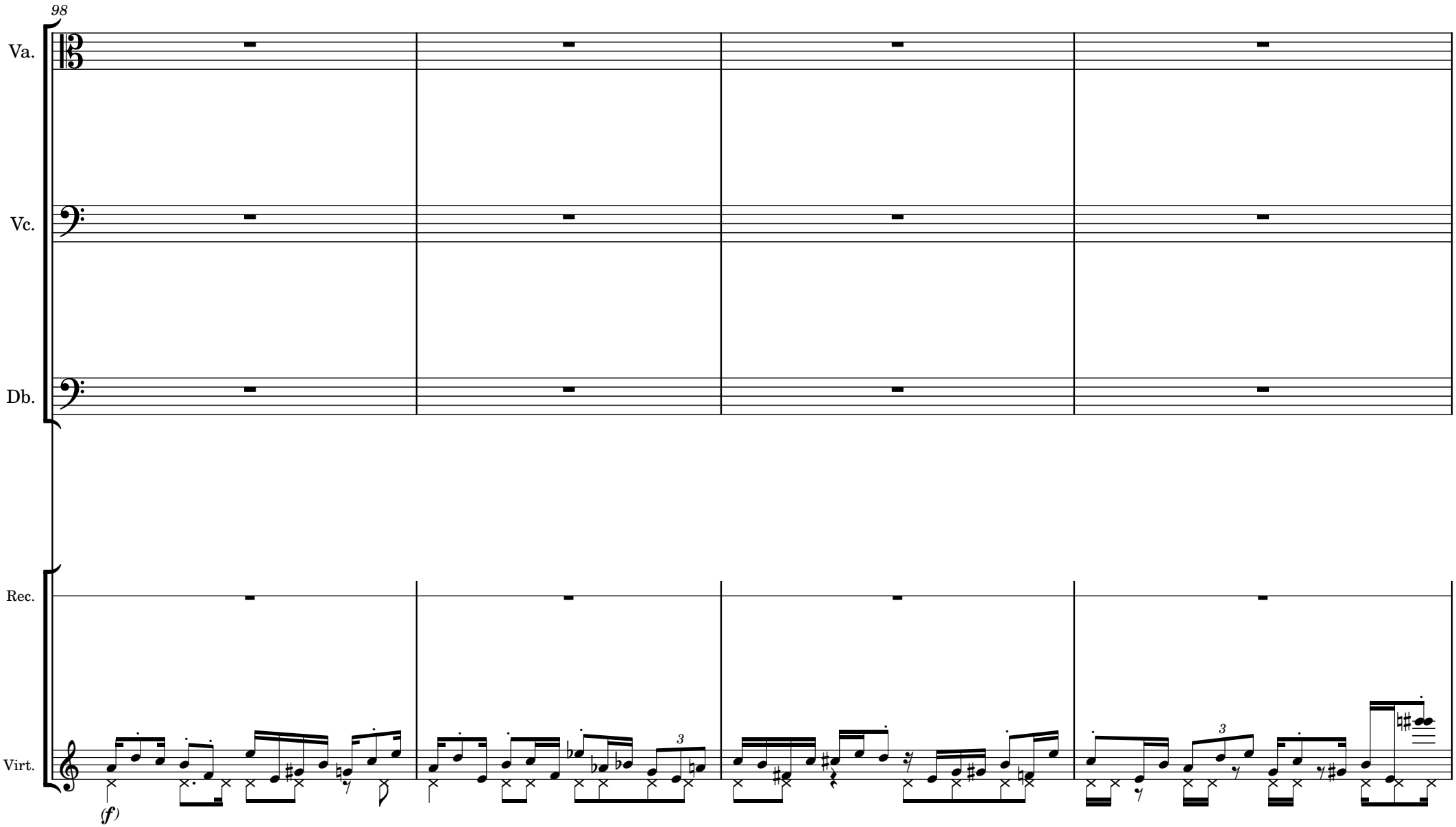

66
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
mp
mf
p
3

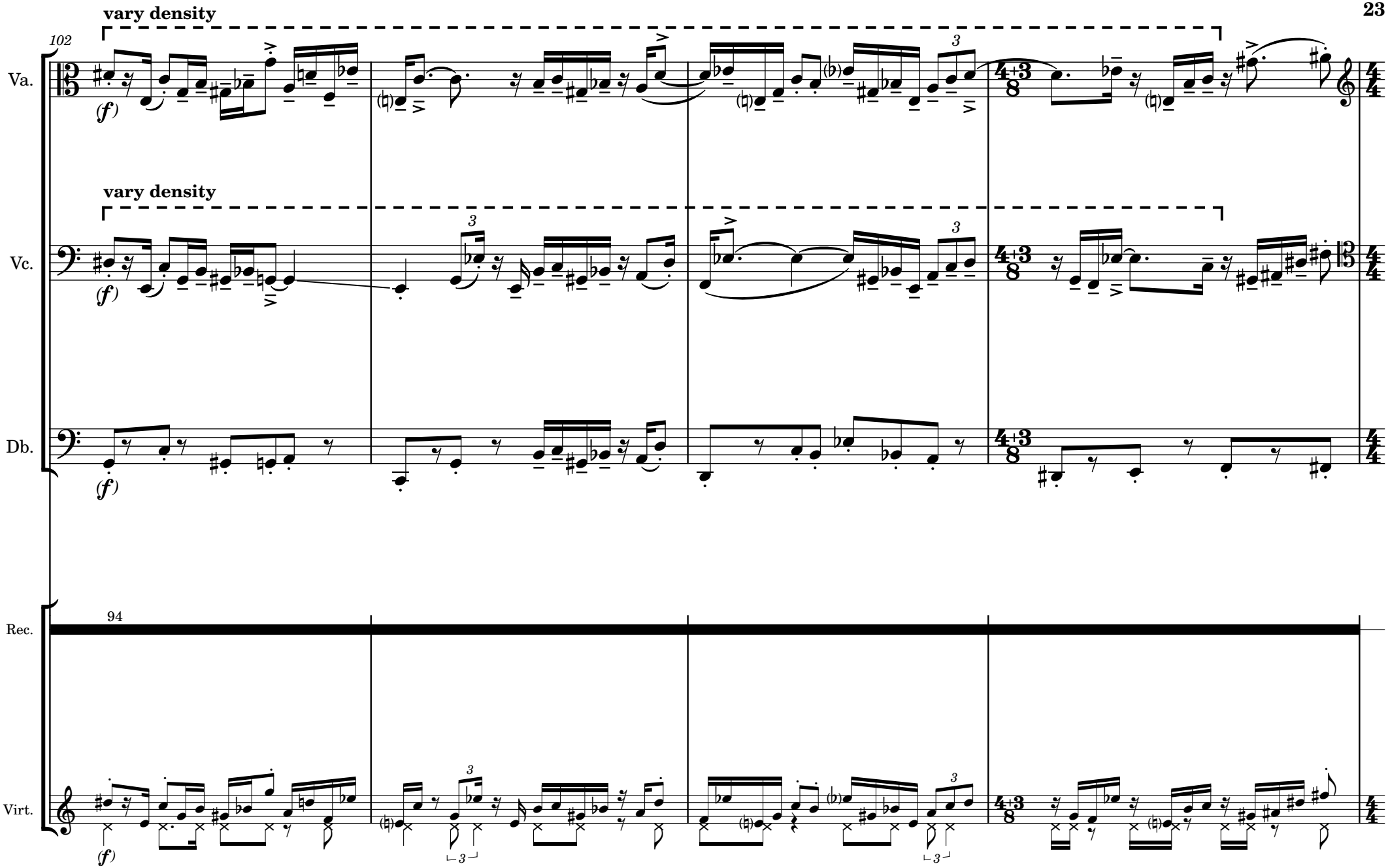

74
B2
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
2nd
1st: 50% / 2nd: 75%
p
1. pp / 2. p
1. p / 2. mp
58
1st: 59 (1st) / 2nd: 59 (2nd)
pitches only in 2nd
pp

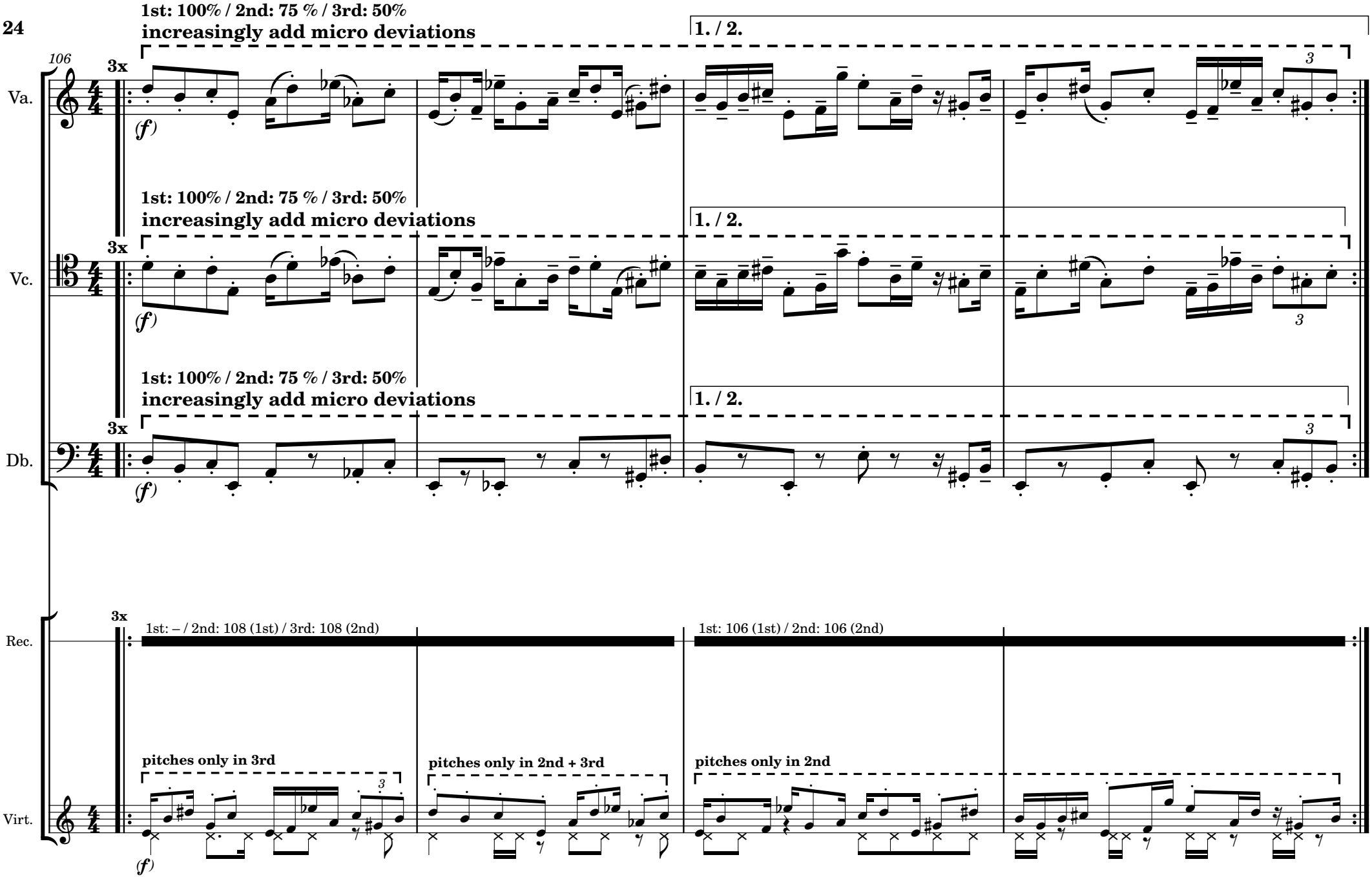

single notes only
ad lib., vary density
82
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
(mp)
p
mp

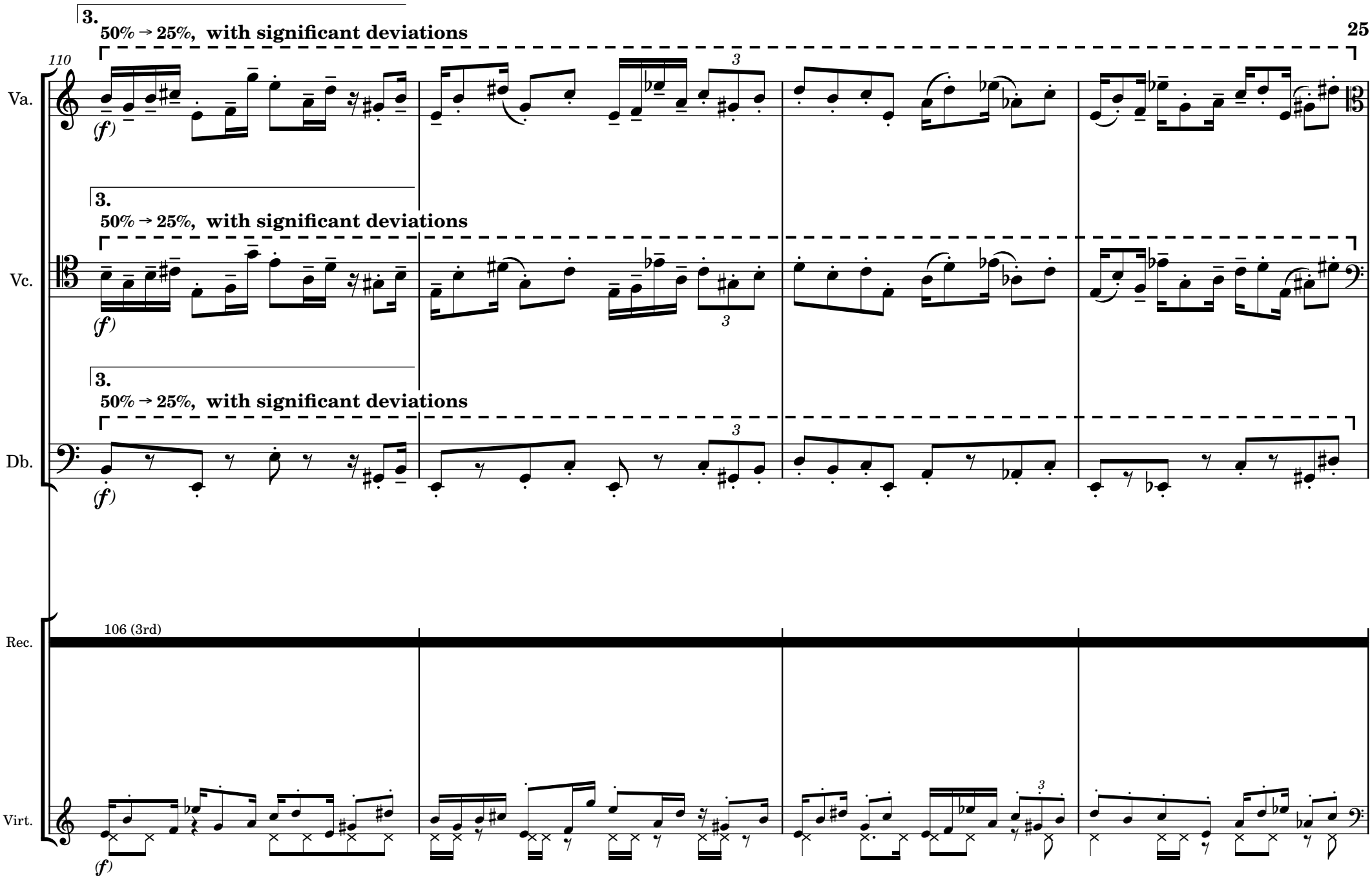

accel.
single notes only
88
Va.
mf
fp
fp
f
fp
fp
accel.
ad lib., vary density
Vc.
mf
mp
f
3
3
fp
accel.
Db.
mf
mp
f
3
3
3
3
fp
Rec.
Virt.
mf
fp
fp
fp
fp
fp

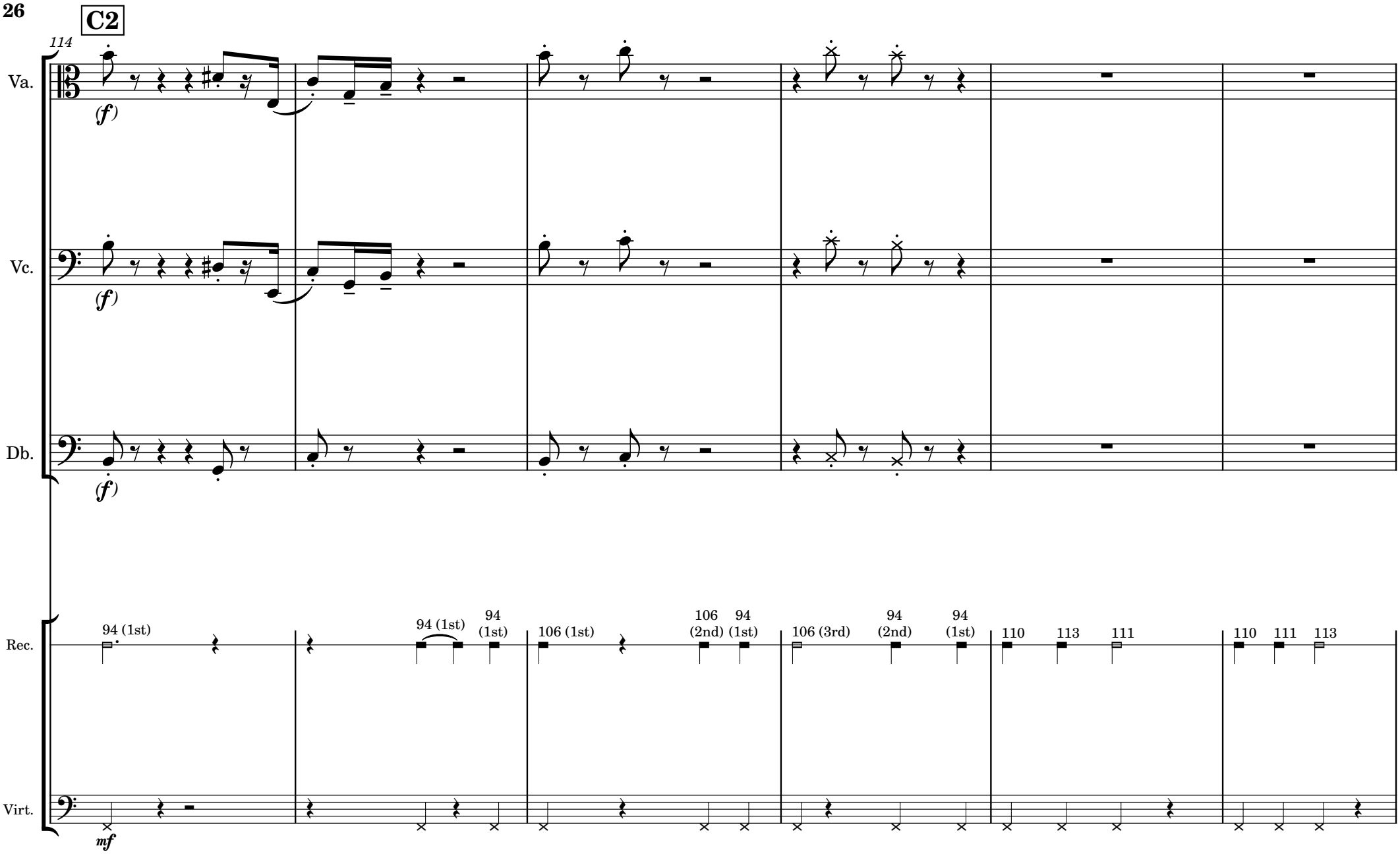

C
vary density
94
♩ = 100
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
1st: – / 2nd: 102
Virt.
f
3

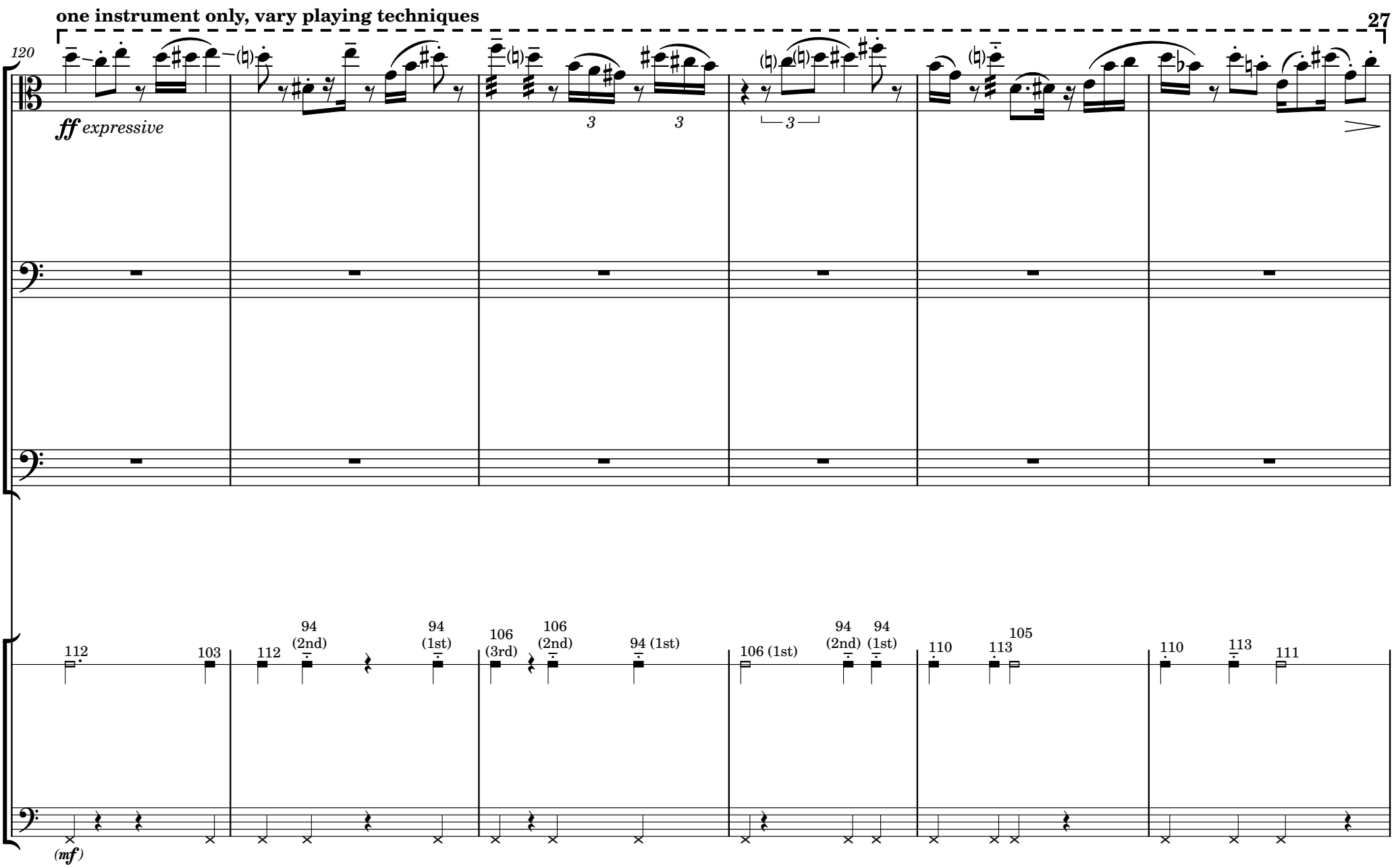

98
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
(f)
3
3

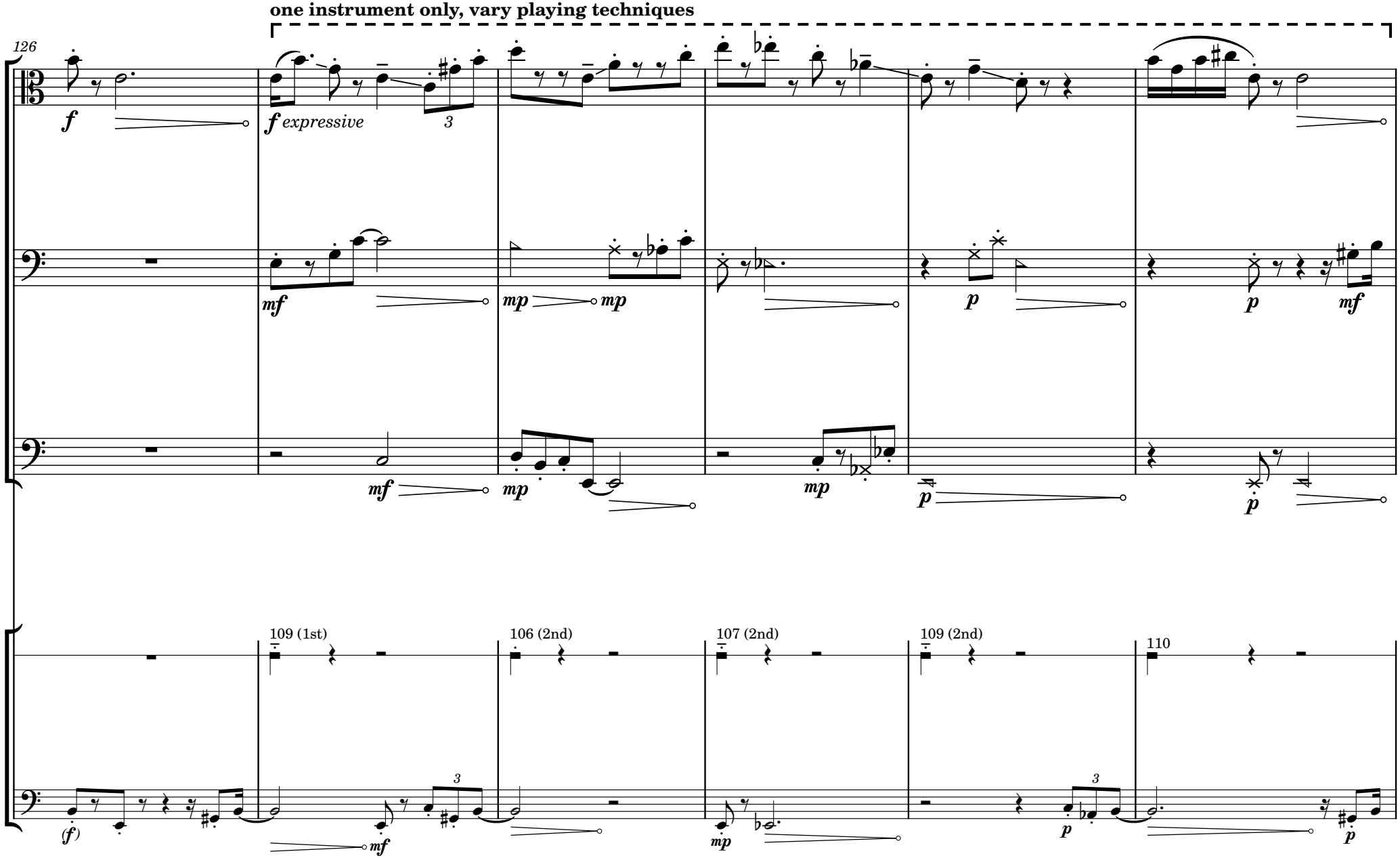

vary density
102
Va.
(f)
vary density
Vc.
(f)
Db.
(f)
94
Rec.
Virt.
(f)

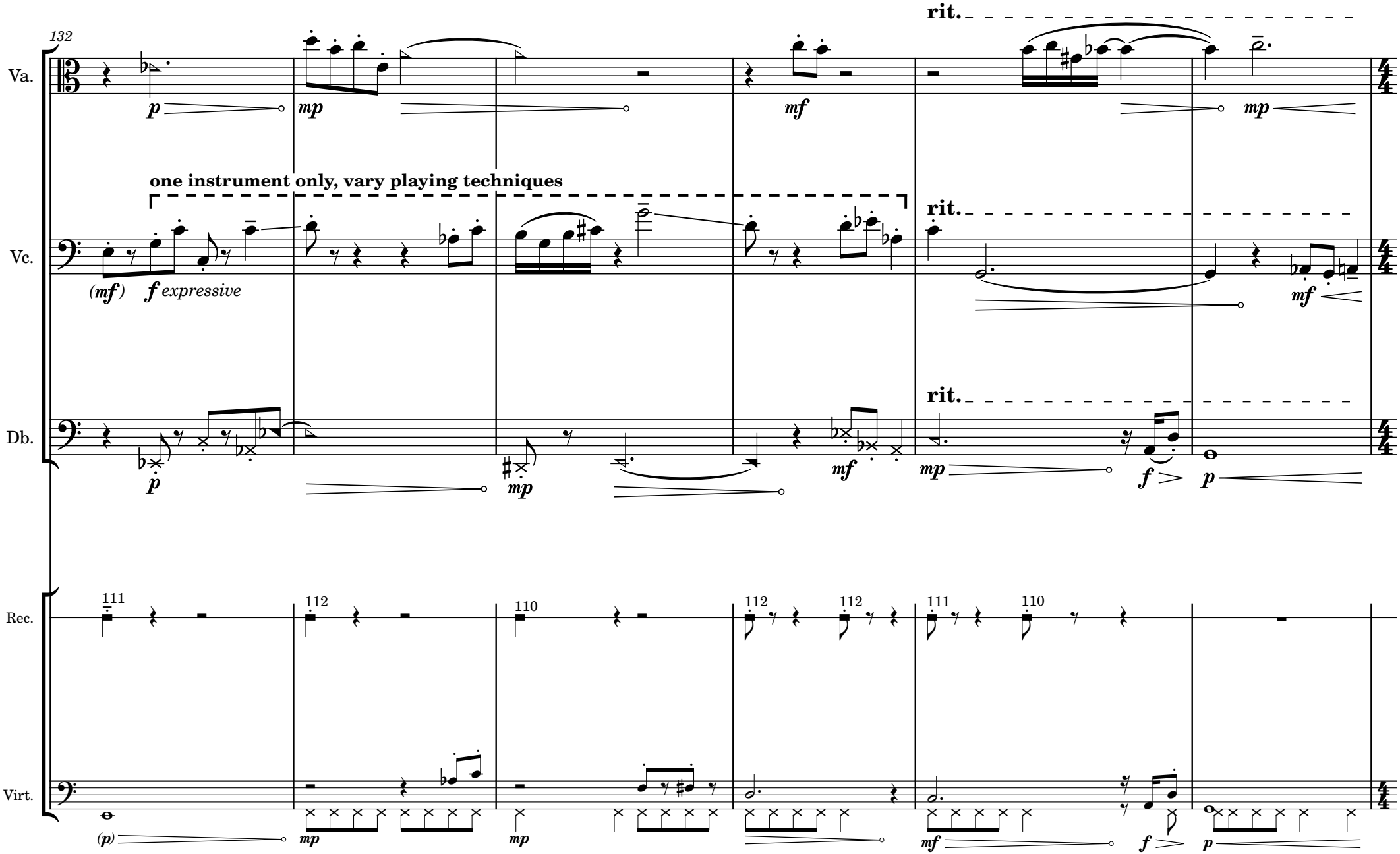

106
Va.
3x
1st: 100% / 2nd: 75 % / 3rd: 50%
increasingly add micro deviations
1. / 2.
(f)
Vc.
3x
1st: 100% / 2nd: 75 % / 3rd: 50%
increasingly add micro deviations
1. / 2.
(f)
Db.
3x
1st: 100% / 2nd: 75 % / 3rd: 50%
increasingly add micro deviations
1. / 2.
(f)
Rec.
3x
1st: – / 2nd: 108 (1st) / 3rd: 108 (2nd)
1st: 106 (1st) / 2nd: 106 (2nd)
Virt.
pitches only in 3rd
pitches only in 2nd + 3rd
pitches only in 2nd
(f)

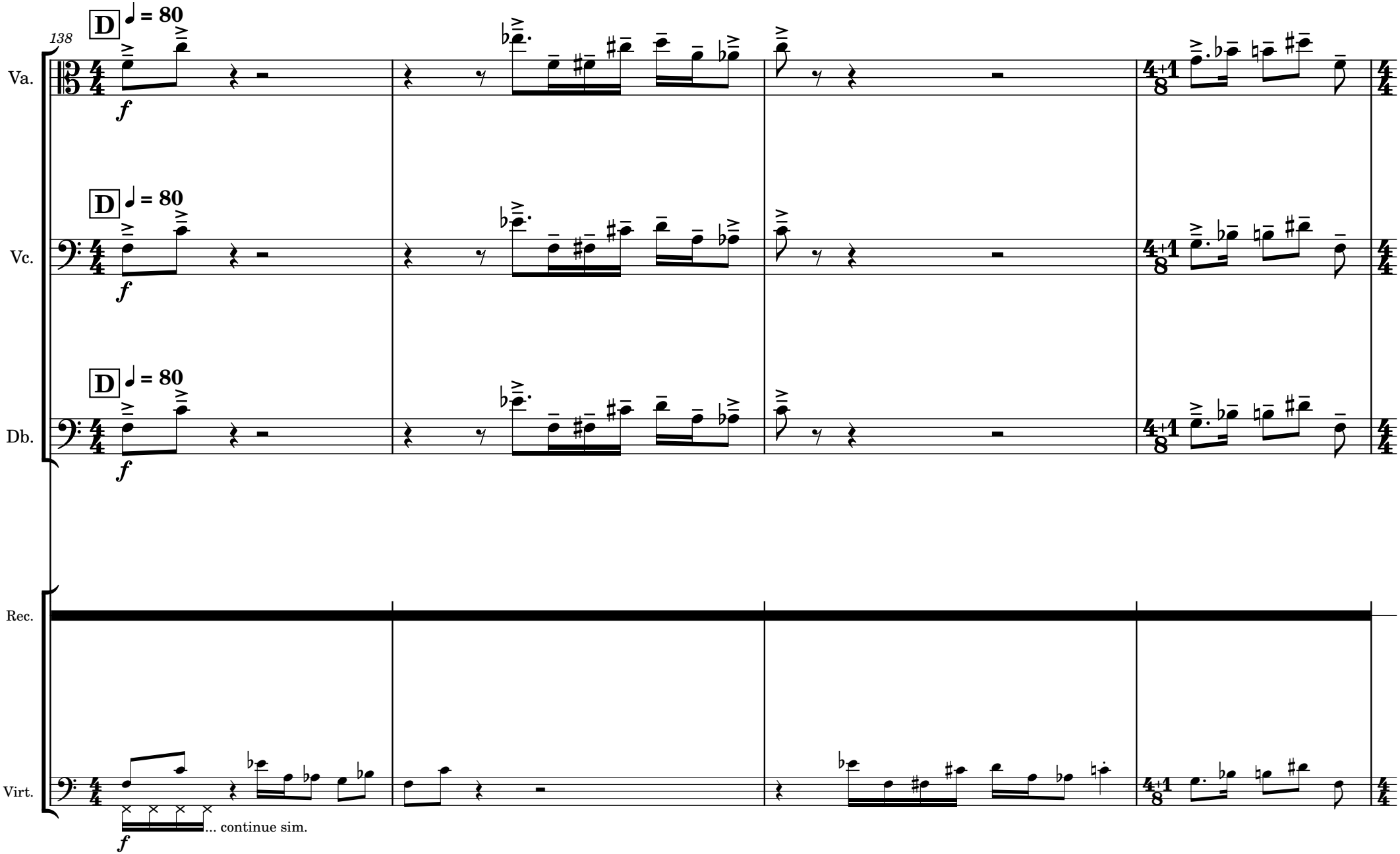

3.
50% → 25%, with significant deviations
110
Va.
(f)
3.
50% → 25%, with significant deviations
Vc.
(f)
3.
50% → 25%, with significant deviations
Db.
(f)
Rec.
106 (3rd)
Virt.
(f)

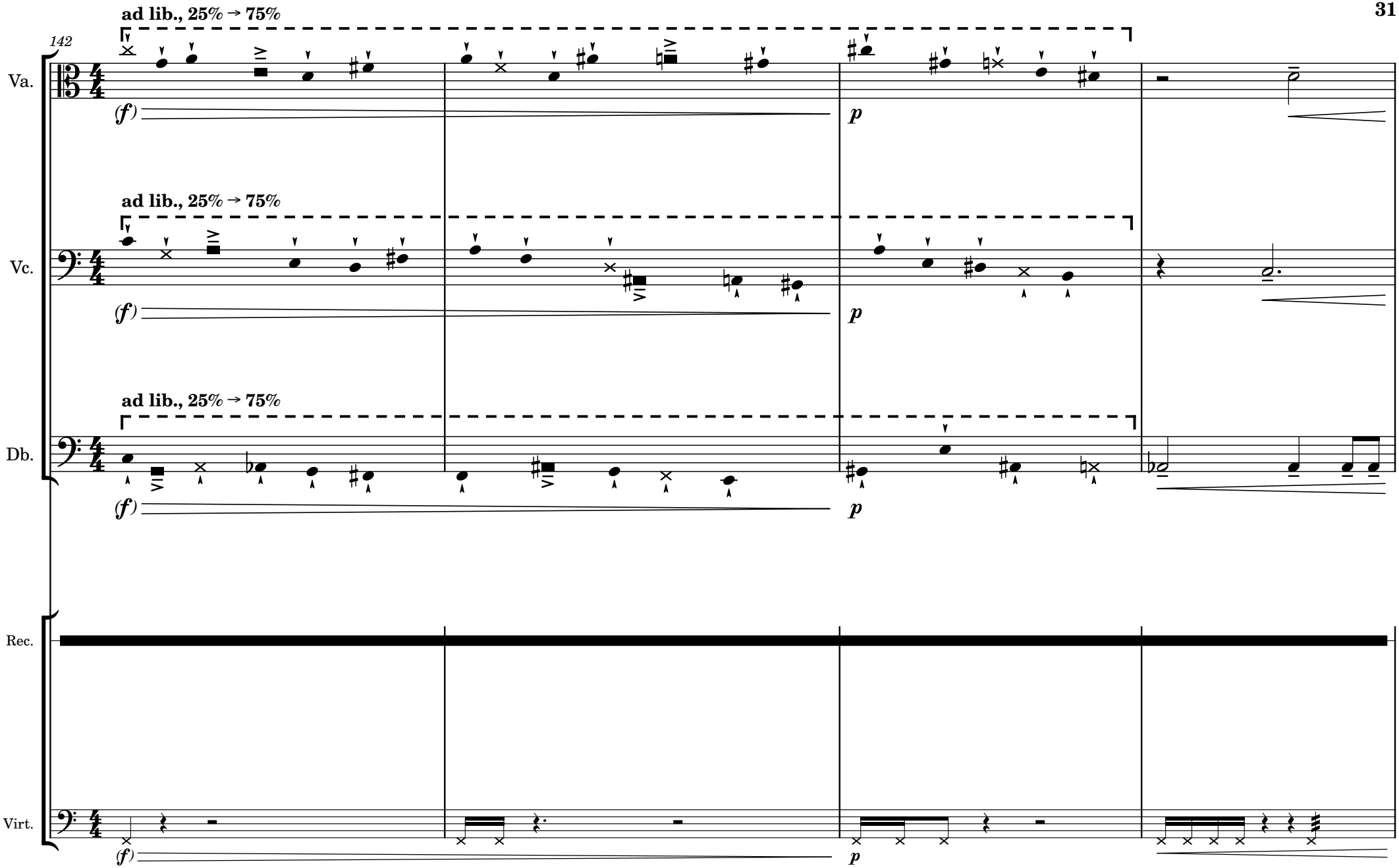

C2
114
Va.
(f)
Vc.
(f)
Db.
(f)
Rec.
94 (1st)
94 (1st)
94 (1st)
106 (1st)
106 (2nd)
94 (1st)
106 (3rd)
94 (2nd)
94 (1st)
110
113
111
110
111
113
Virt.
mf

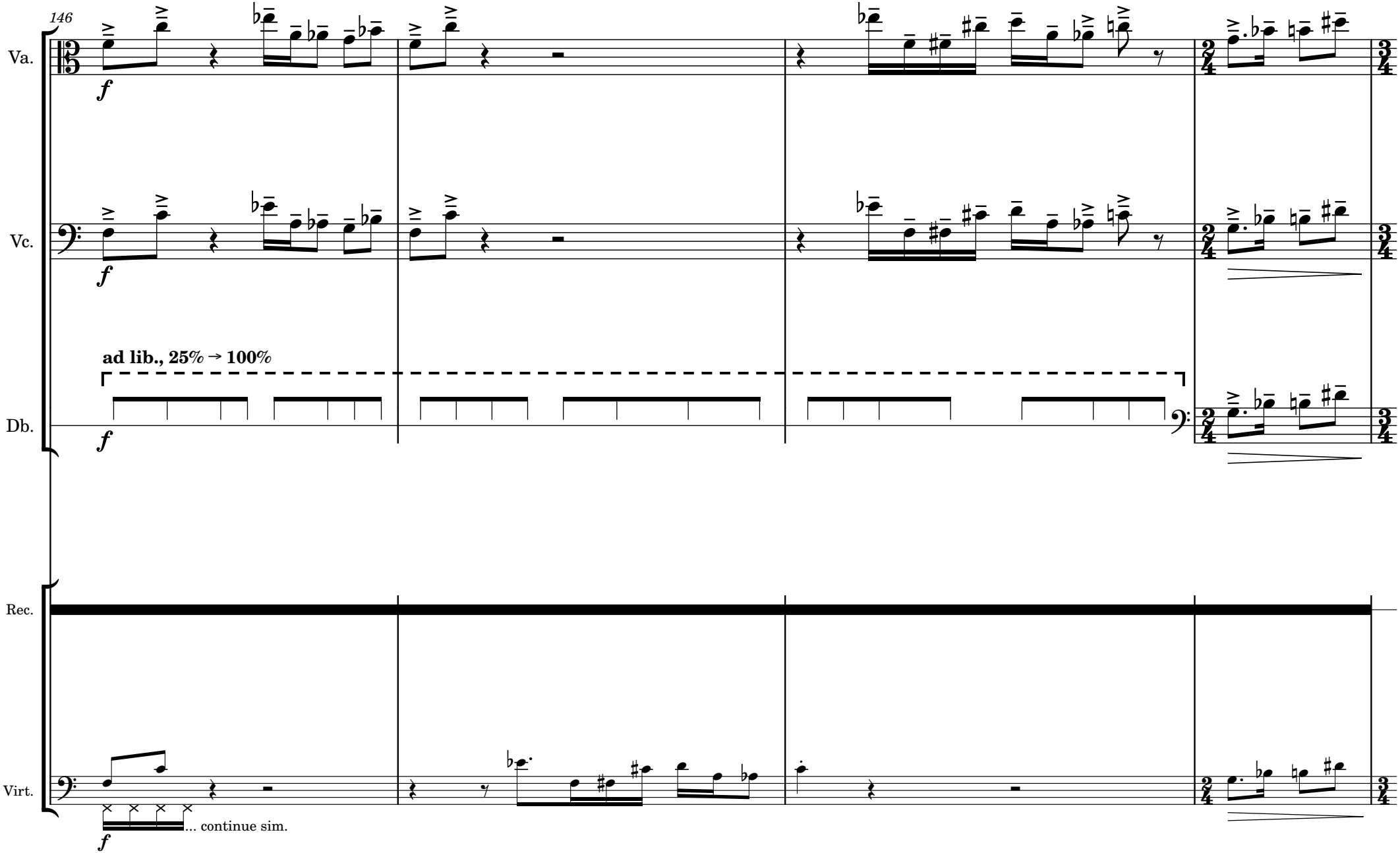

one instrument only, vary playing techniques
120
Va.
ff expressive
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
112
103
112
94 (2nd)
94 (1st)
106 (3rd)
106 (2nd)
94 (1st)
106 (1st)
94 (2nd)
94 (1st)
110
113
105
110
113
111
Virt.
(mf)

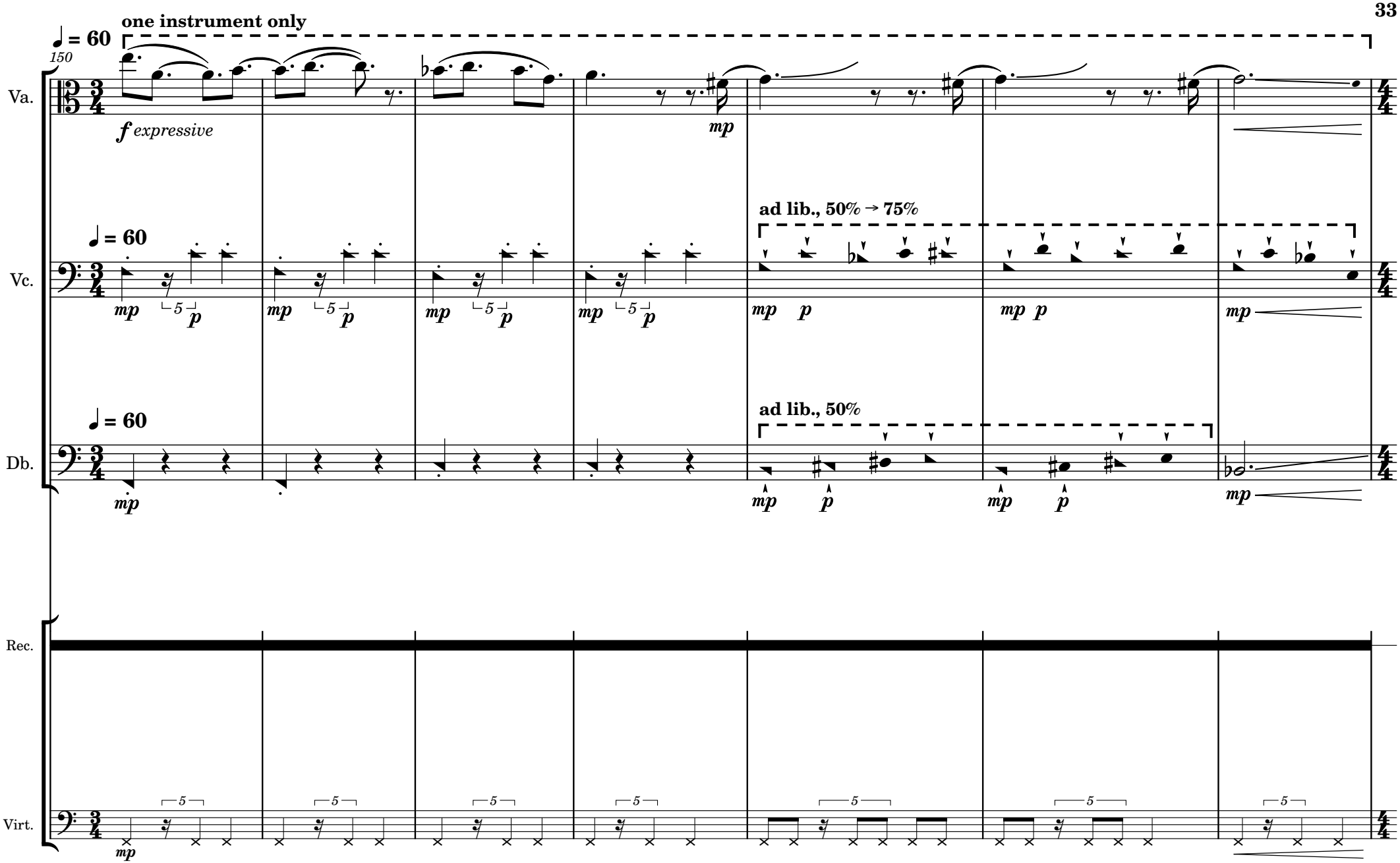

one instrument only, vary playing techniques
126
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
f
f expressive
3
mf
mp
p
109 (1st)
106 (2nd)
107 (2nd)
109 (2nd)
110
(f)

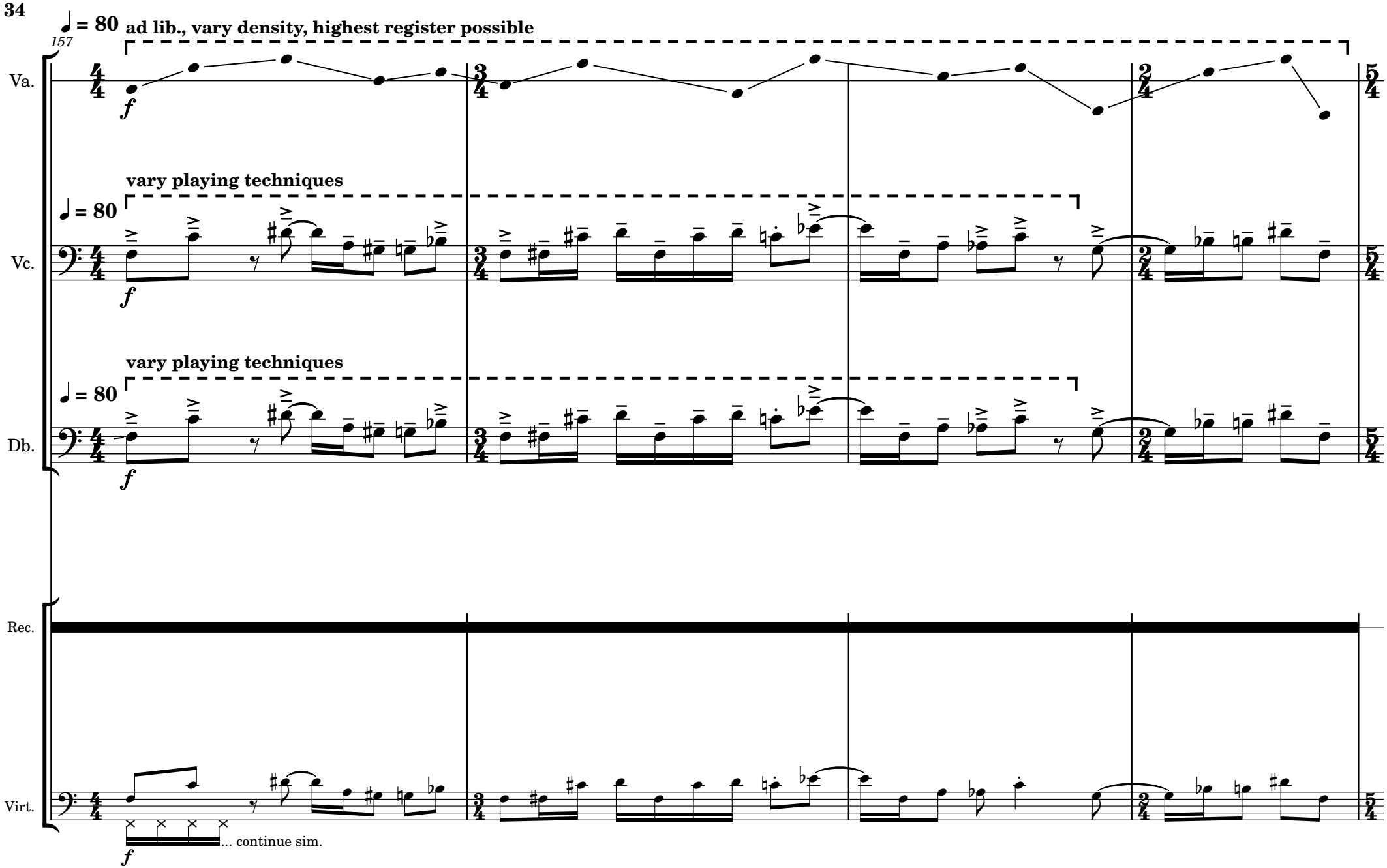

132
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
rit.
one instrument only, vary playing techniques
(mf)
f expressive
p
mp
mf
111
112
110

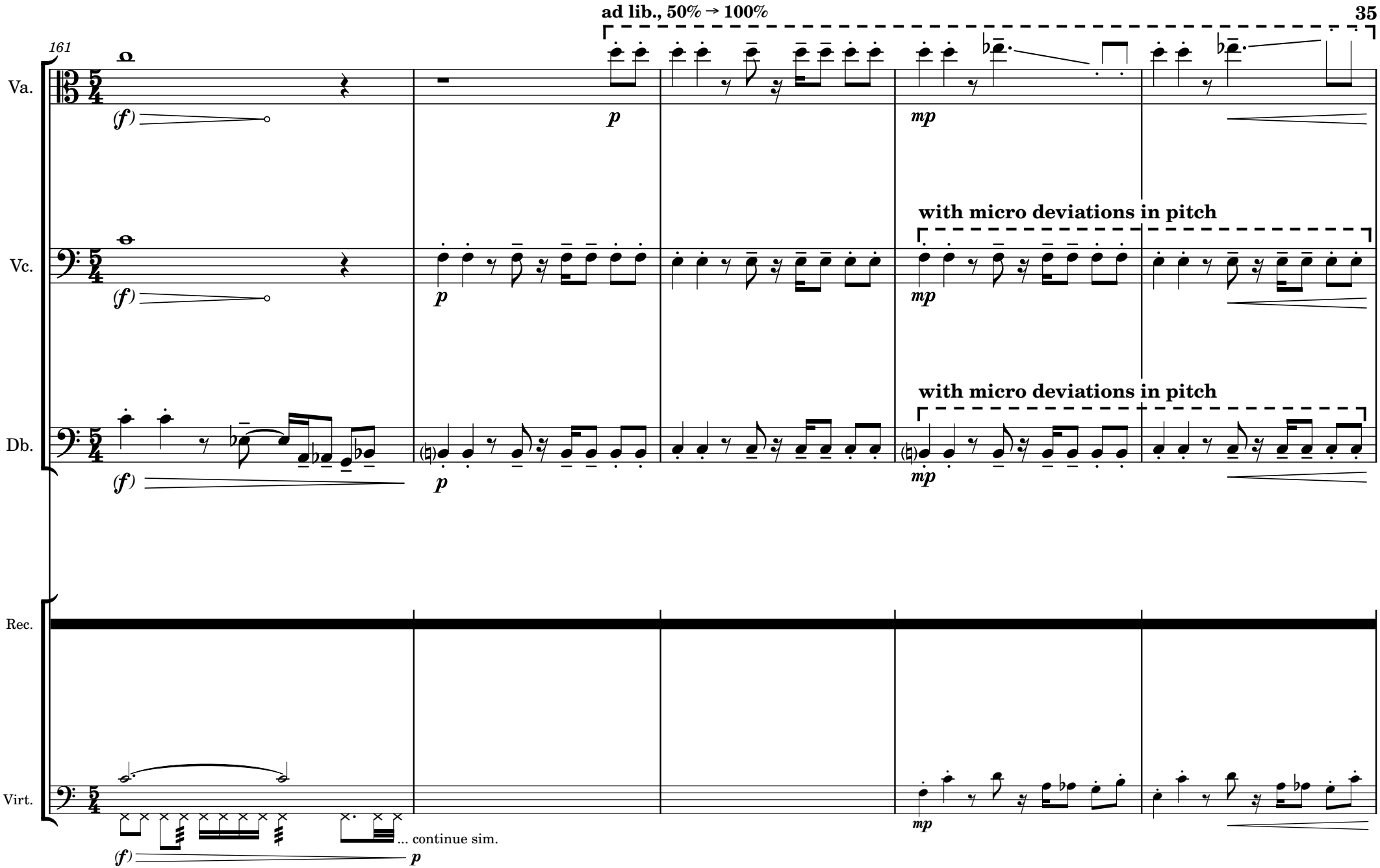

138
D
♩ = 80
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
f
... continue sim.

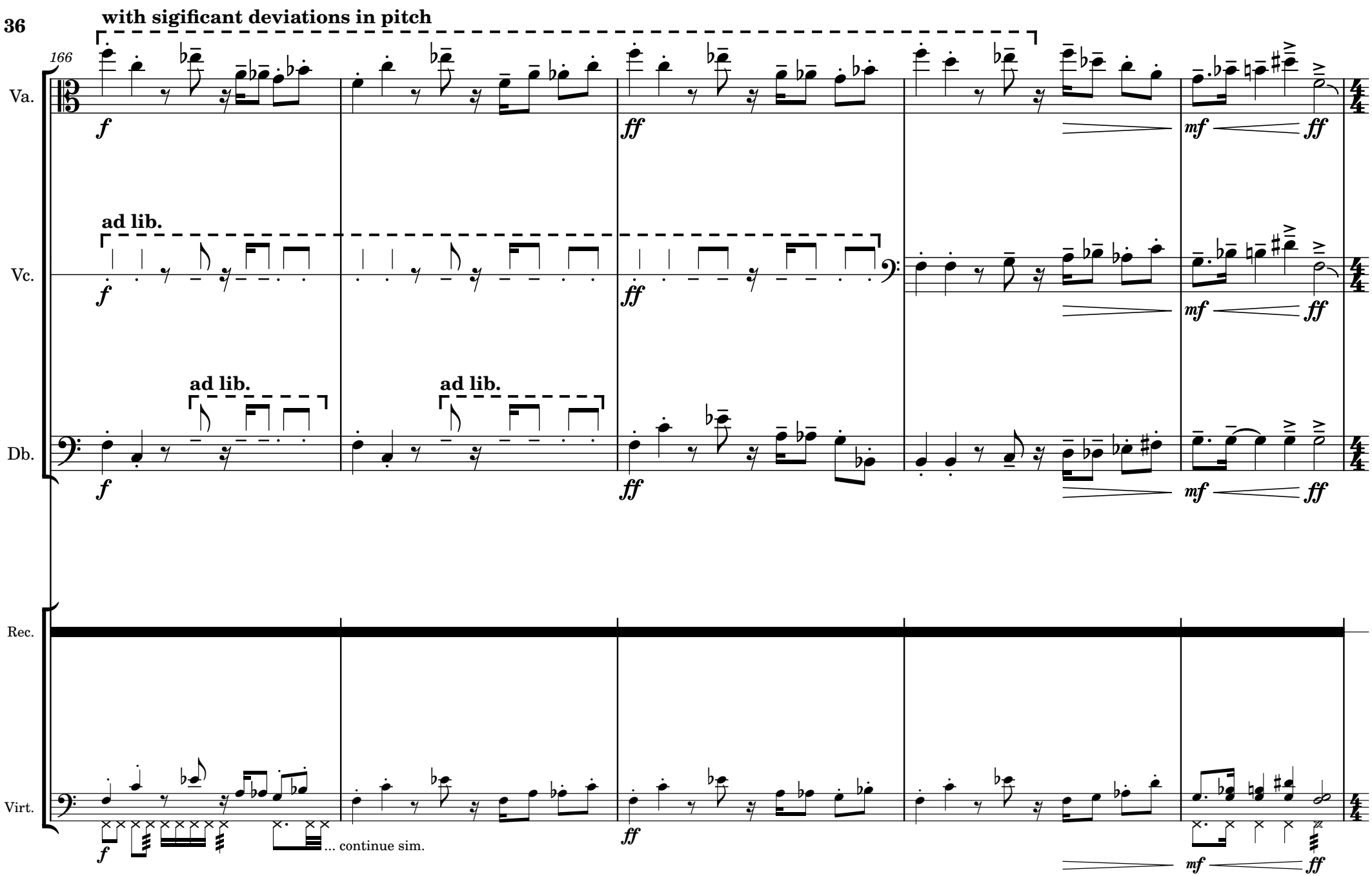

142
ad lib., 25% → 75%
Va.
(f)
p
ad lib., 25% → 75%
Vc.
(f)
p
ad lib., 25% → 75%
Db.
(f)
p
Rec.
Virt.
(f)
p

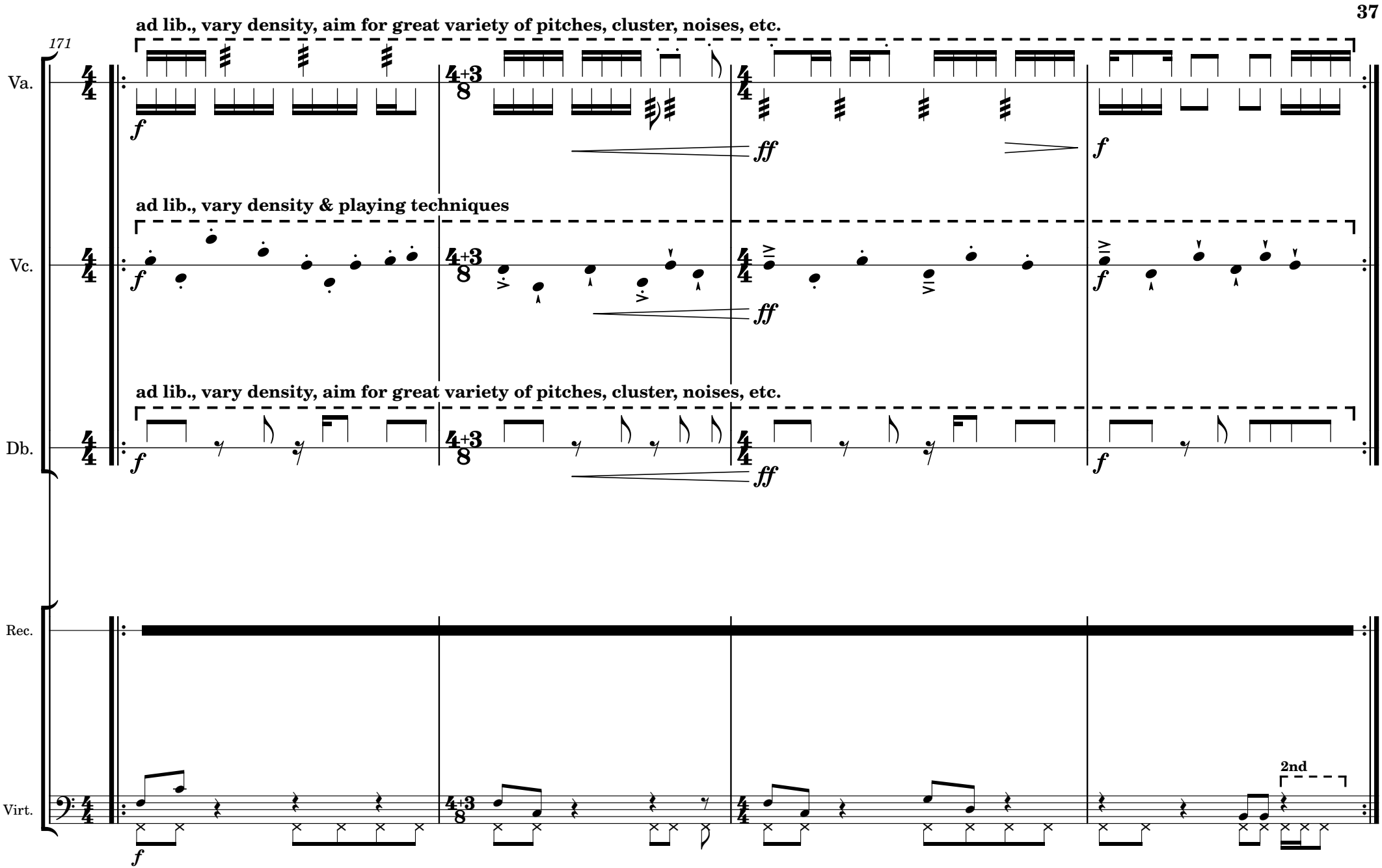

146
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
f
ad lib., 25% → 100%
... continue sim.

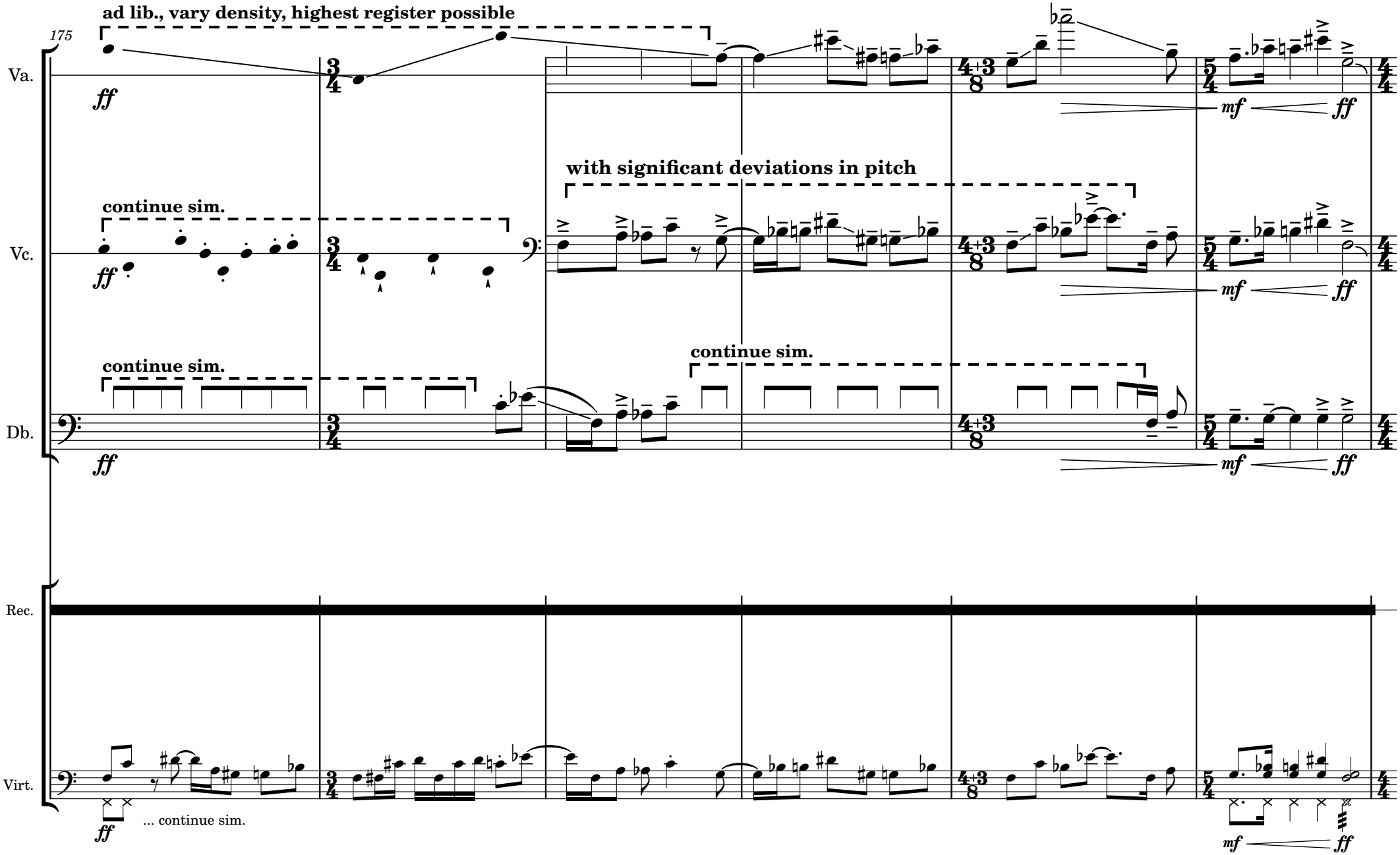

one instrument only
♩ = 60
150
Va.
f expressive
mp
Vc.
ad lib., 50% → 75%
Db.
ad lib., 50%
Rec.
Virt.

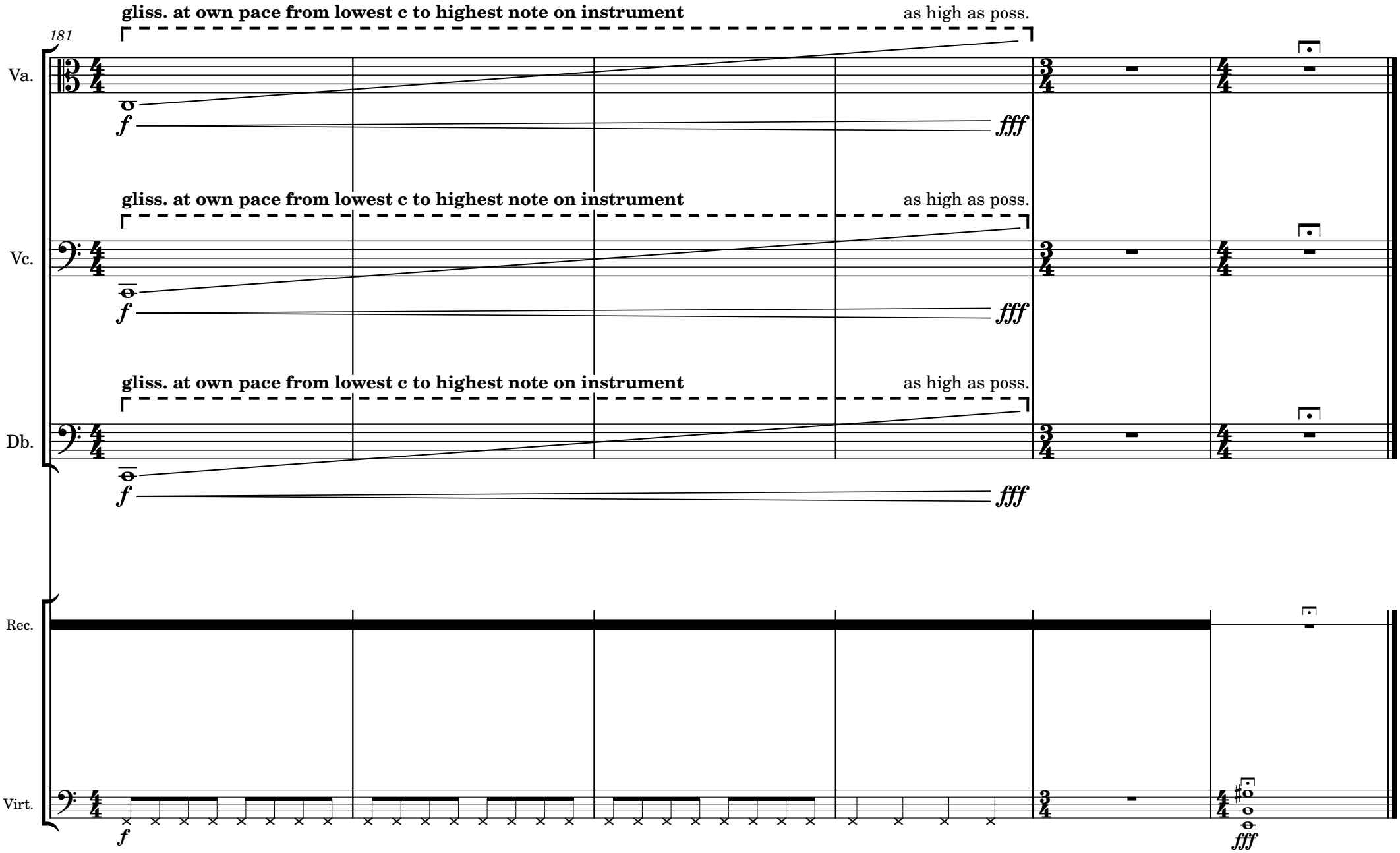

♩ = 80
ad lib., vary density, highest register possible
157
Va.
f
vary playing techniques
♩ = 80
Vc.
f
vary playing techniques
♩ = 80
Db.
f
Rec.
Virt.
f
... continue sim.


ad lib., 50% → 100%
35
161
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
(f)
p
mp
with micro deviations in pitch
with micro deviations in pitch
... continue sim.


with sigificant deviations in pitch
166
Va.
Vc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
ad lib.
ad lib.
ad lib.
... continue sim.


171
ad lib., vary density, aim for great variety of pitches, cluster, noises, etc.
Va.
ad lib., vary density & playing techniques
Vc.
ad lib., vary density, aim for great variety of pitches, cluster, noises, etc.
Db.
Rec.
Virt.
2nd


175
ad lib., vary density, highest register possible
Va.
ff
mf
ff
with significant deviations in pitch
continue sim.
Vc.
ff
mf
ff
continue sim.
continue sim.
Db.
ff
mf
ff
Rec.
Virt.
ff
... continue sim.
mf
ff


181
Va.
gliss. at own pace from lowest c to highest note on instrument
as high as poss.
f
fff
Vc.
gliss. at own pace from lowest c to highest note on instrument
as high as poss.
f
fff
Db.
gliss. at own pace from lowest c to highest note on instrument
as high as poss.
f
fff
Rec.
Virt.
f
fff