Renunciation

By Aidan Gold

Harp Requirements

This piece is written for a standard acoustic, 47 string, double action pedal harp. The harp should have the contra octave C and D strings (C1 and D1), which should be tuned to Cb and Db before the piece begins if they have no pedal mechanism. If the highest G string (G7) also does not have a pedal mechanism, it should be tuned to G# before the piece begins. The strings from C1 to G2 should be wire strings, as they speak much better when struck with yarn mallets than the gut/nylon strings.

It is recommended that the harp be amplified. One especially effective option for this piece is to position the microphone very low, near the pedals, because this will bring out the pedal sounds which are very important to the piece.

Accessories

The following accessories are required:

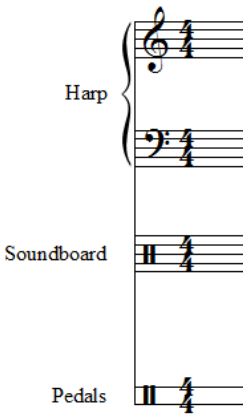
- Superball mallet (preferably on the large side)
- Two yarn mallets. Soft, yet small vibraphone mallets are ideal. These mallets should be small enough to be able to play individual strings, yet soft enough to produce a smooth, continuous sound when rolled and also must be soft enough to not damage the soundboard when the soundboard is struck with some (though not extreme) force.
- One soft rubber mallet. Again, must be small enough to strike a single string in isolation.
- Contrabass bow (French style). The bow should be thin enough to be inserted vertically between the strings, and then rotated at its midpoint to horizontal position to bow the lowest E string (E1). The D1 string may be pushed out of the way to help achieve this.

It is recommended that the harpist use two flat music stands, one on either side of the harp, within arm's reach, to store these accessories. The stands should have towels or some other muffling device on them that allows for silent and rapid picking up and setting down of the accessories.

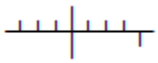
It is also recommended that the harpist place the harp on a surface that is not conducive to sliding, such as rough carpet. This is because throughout the piece, the pedals are kicked, and if

they are kicked in rapid succession on a smooth surface, this could lead to the harp sliding away from the harpist.

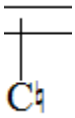
Notation and Special Techniques



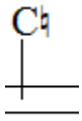
The music is organized into four staves. The upper two are for actions that take place on the strings of the harp (e.g. plucking, glissandos, using mallets on the strings). The next staff, “Soundboard”, indicates actions that take place on the soundboard, with the bottom of the staff corresponding (roughly) with the lowest part of the soundboard (furthest away from the player), and the top of the staff corresponding with the top of the soundboard (closest to the player). The lowest staff, “Pedals”, indicates actions that take place on the pedals of the harp using the feet. No action should be performed in either of these areas that is not explicitly notated (e.g. no extra pedal changes except where notated).



Pedal diagrams such as these are used only for reference and convenience of the harpist. All pedal changes should be only performed where notated on the “Pedals” staff.



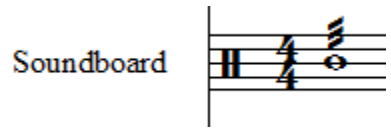
Move the indicated pedal downwards to the position given. In this case, it would mean moving the C pedal downward from Cb to C natural. This should always be done forcefully and quickly enough to produce audible sound (both the sound of the pedal hitting the new position and the sounds of the strings resonating when hit by the tuning discs). The intensity of this sound is given by the dynamics on the Pedal staff, but all pedal changes should be clearly audible.



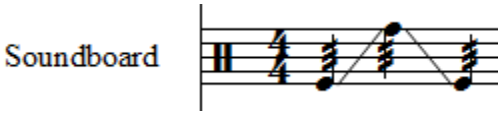
Move the indicated pedal upwards to the position given. In this case, it would mean moving the C pedal upward from C# to C natural. This should always be done to produce audible sound, and can be done in either of two ways depending on the speed at which the pedals have to be changed:

1. As a pedal knock, where the pedal is quickly released so it springs up into the upper position, knocking against the wood of the pedal slot.
2. As a pedal kick, where the pedal is kicked so that it jumps up to a higher position. Take care not to accidentally kick the pedal up two positions with a single kick.

The intensity of this sound is given by the dynamics on the Pedal staff, but all pedal changes should be clearly audible.



Roll on the soundboard with soft yarn mallets, in the most convenient location for the particular passage (but not moving up or down the soundboard). When the harpist is sitting at the harp in normal position, the hands would be rolling on either side of the strings.

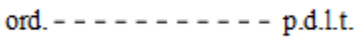


Roll on the soundboard with soft yarn mallets, moving from a point low on the soundboard to high and back. When the harpist is sitting at the harp in normal position, the hands would be rolling on either side of the strings.

Perform a *bisbigliando* effect on the given notes in random order as fast as possible for the duration of the following thick black line. This should be done with two hands when possible, but can be done with one hand when the other is occupied.

p.d.l.t: play the strings close to the soundboard.

ord.: play the strings in normal position.

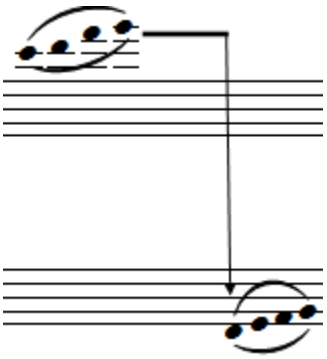


Move gradually from normal position to p.d.l.t., or vice versa.

quasi bisb.: perform the following passage with the same light finger technique as when performing a bisbigliando.

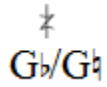
An octave harmonic. All harmonics are notated *where played, NOT where sounded.*

Play the note or passage with the fingernail.

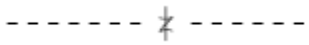


Shift abruptly and as rapidly as possible from one bisb. collection to another, with minimal pause in sound.

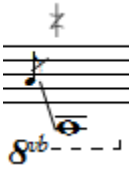
These lines simply indicate duration of the bisb. line (here, 3 quarter notes), and do not indicate any sort of emphasis or rearticulation.



Perform a pedal buzz by pushing the given pedal (in this case, the G pedal) into a position halfway between the two listed pedal positions. The note that will sound should be the lower of these two positions (in this case, Gb).

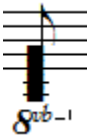


Move smoothly to a pedal buzz and back to the original pedal setting.

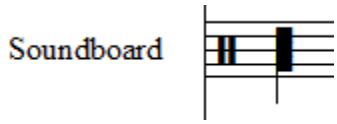


A “Thunder Glissando”: gliss. downwards on the lowest octave with so much force that the lowest strings collide with each other.

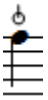
Perform fast, short, random glissandos with both hands cumulatively moving in the given direction.



Strike the palm flat against the lowest strings and quickly remove hand so the strings ring.

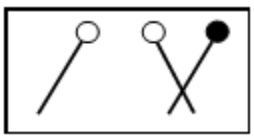


Strike the soundboard with the palm of the hand.



Bartok pizz.: pluck the string close to the soundboard and slide finger immediately off the string to hit the soundboard.

Xylophonic: mute the string at the base with the 3rd or 4th finger, and pluck it with the thumb.

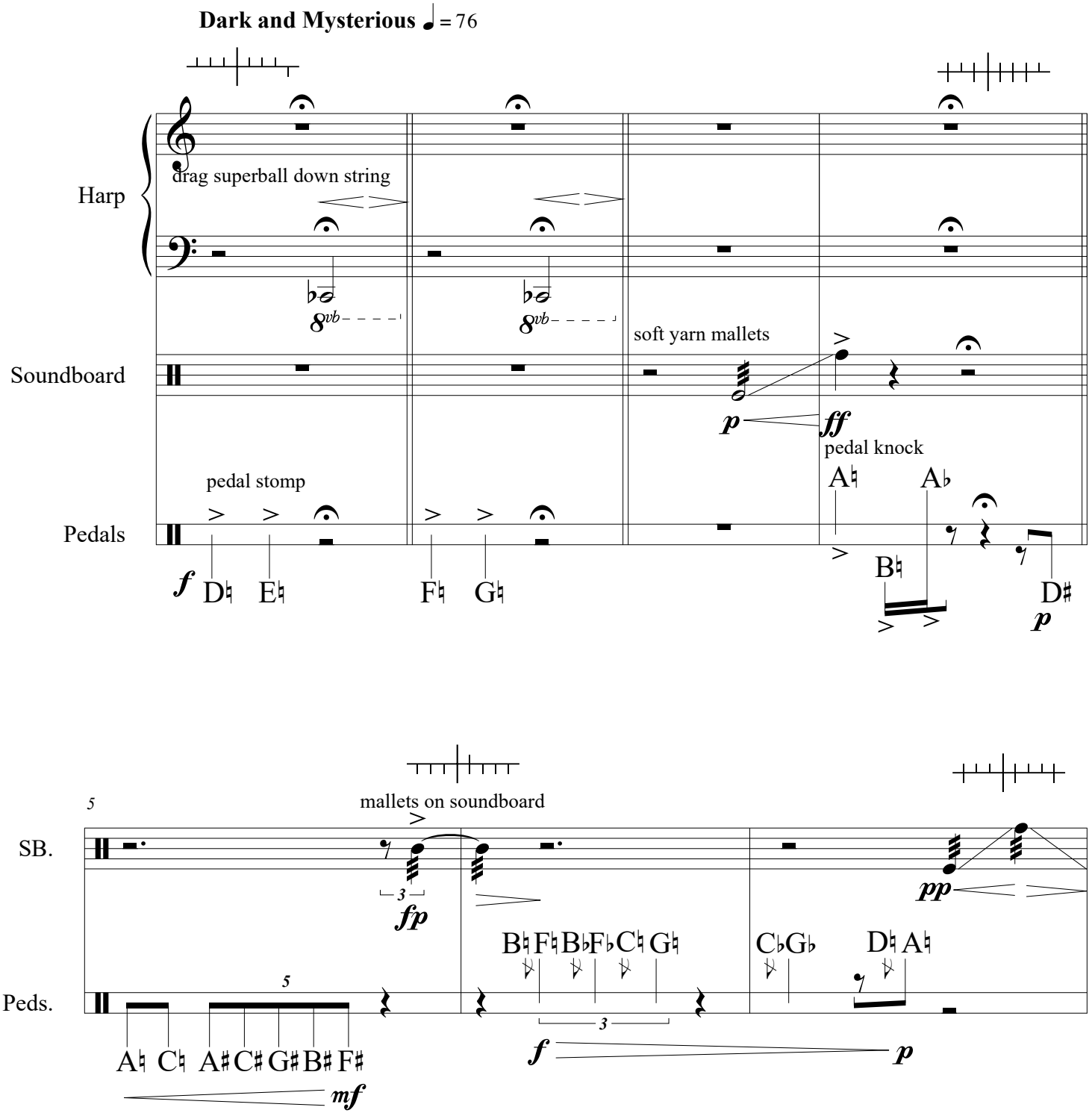


Pick up two soft yarn and one soft rubber mallet, which will be held and used for all sounds for the remainder of the piece. The left hand should hold one soft yarn mallet, and the right should hold both a soft yarn mallet and the rubber mallet. This can be done in several ways, but the composer recommends using Stevens Grip (a common 4-mallet percussion grip), as it will allow for the yarn mallets to be used for smooth rolls without the rubber mallet coming in contact with the harp until needed. When rolling with the mallets, the harpist should only roll fast enough to create the illusion of continuous sound on the strings, and may speed up the roll during crescendos and slow down during diminuendos for expressive purposes.

Score

Renunciation

Aidan Gold



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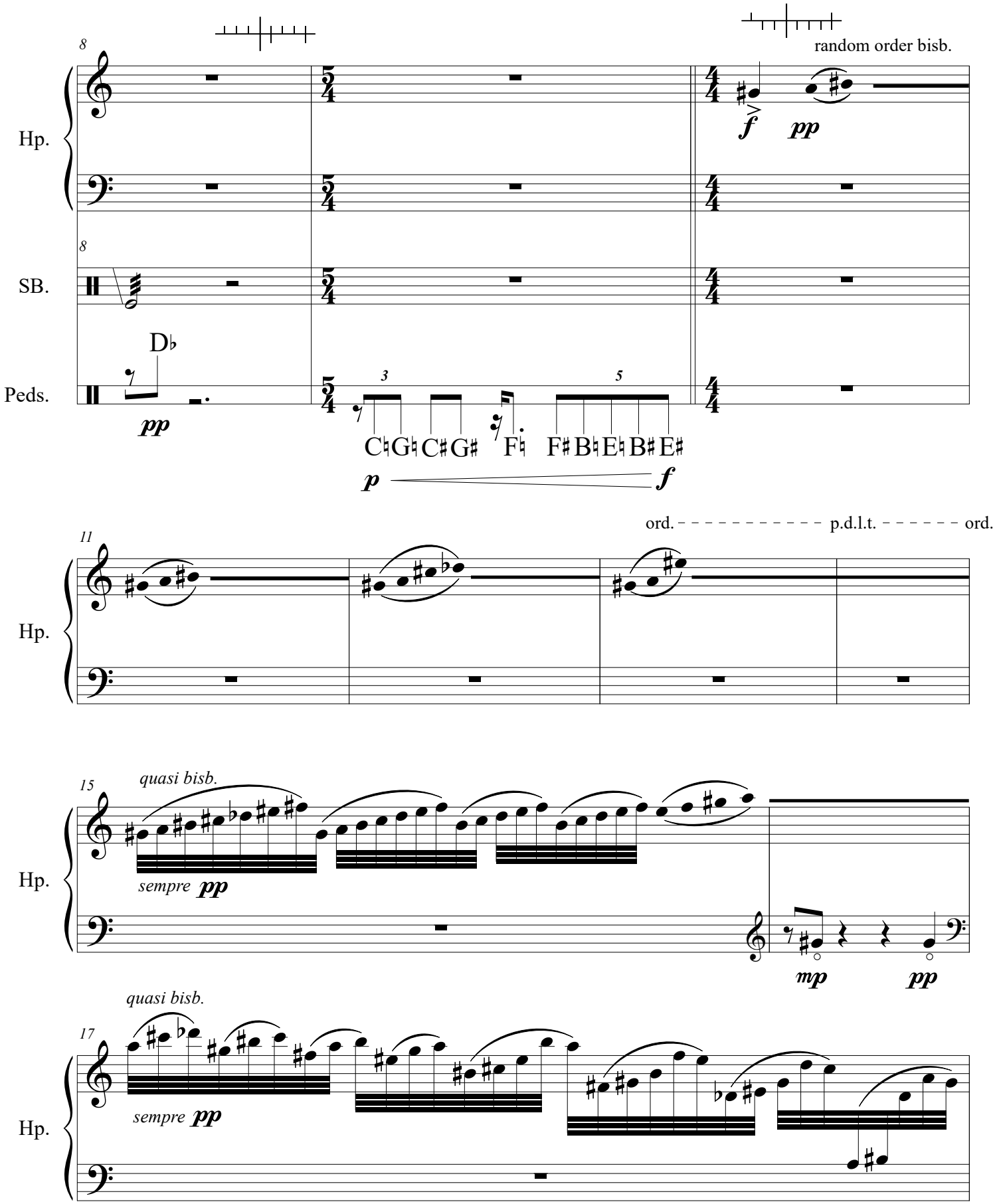
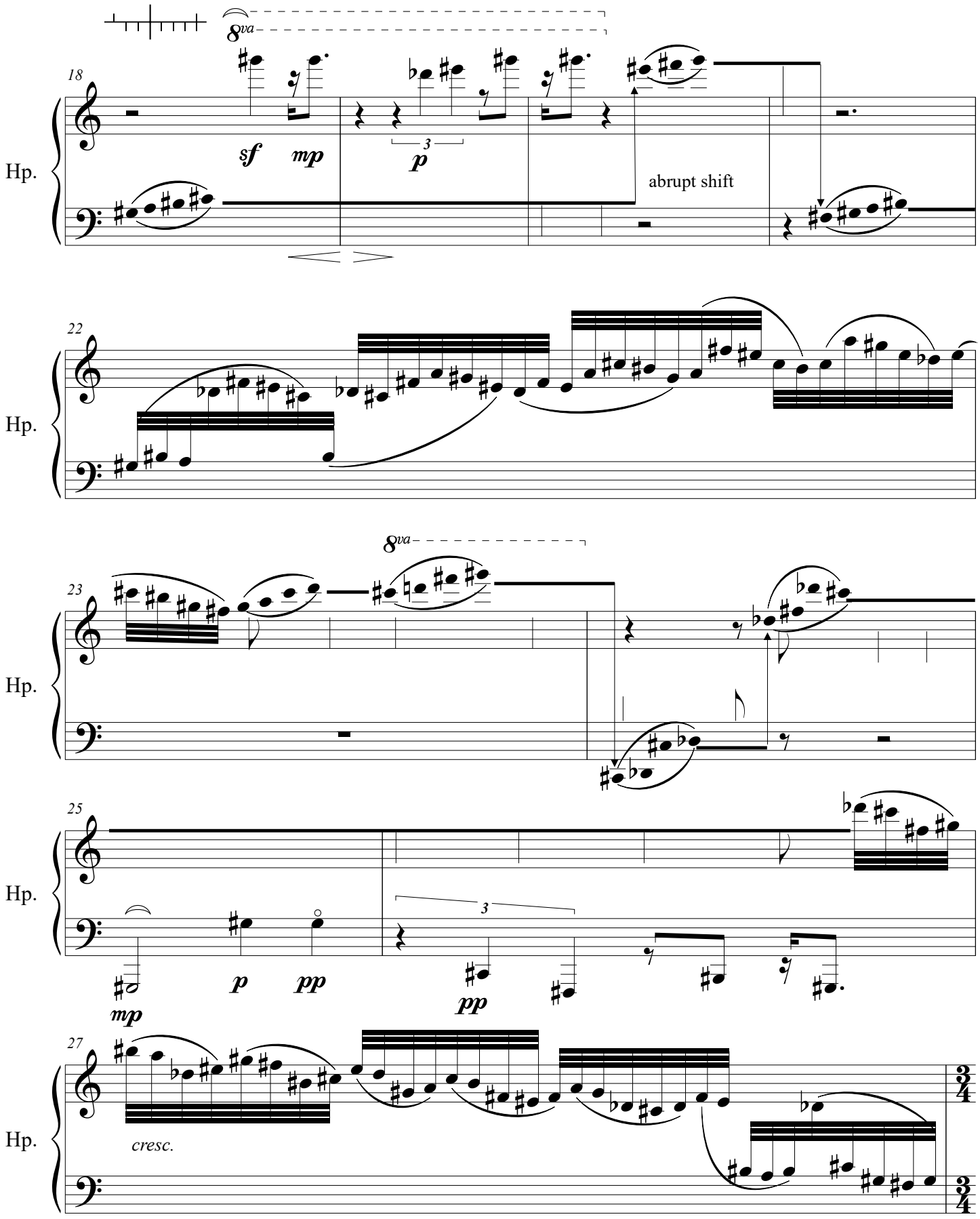
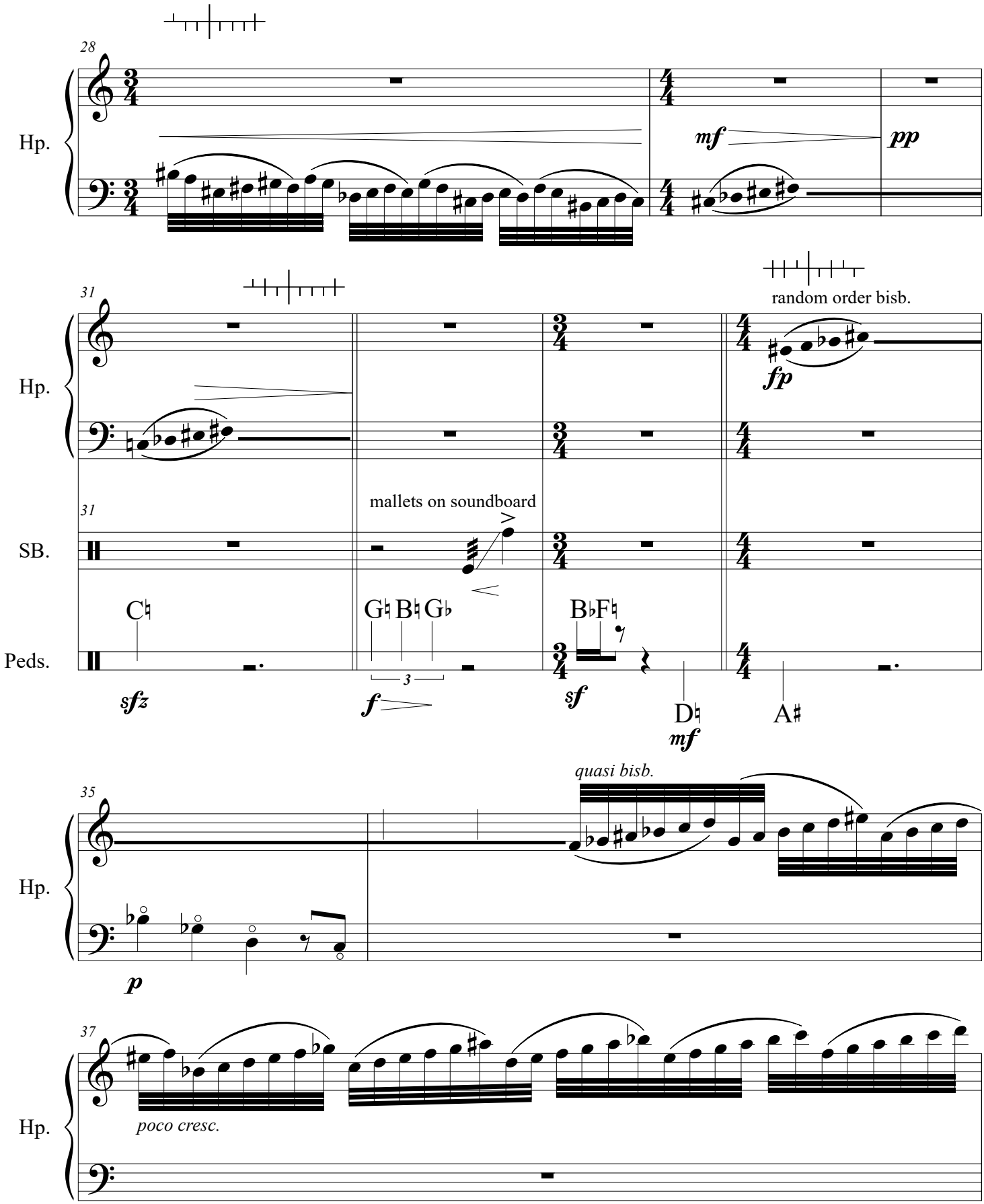
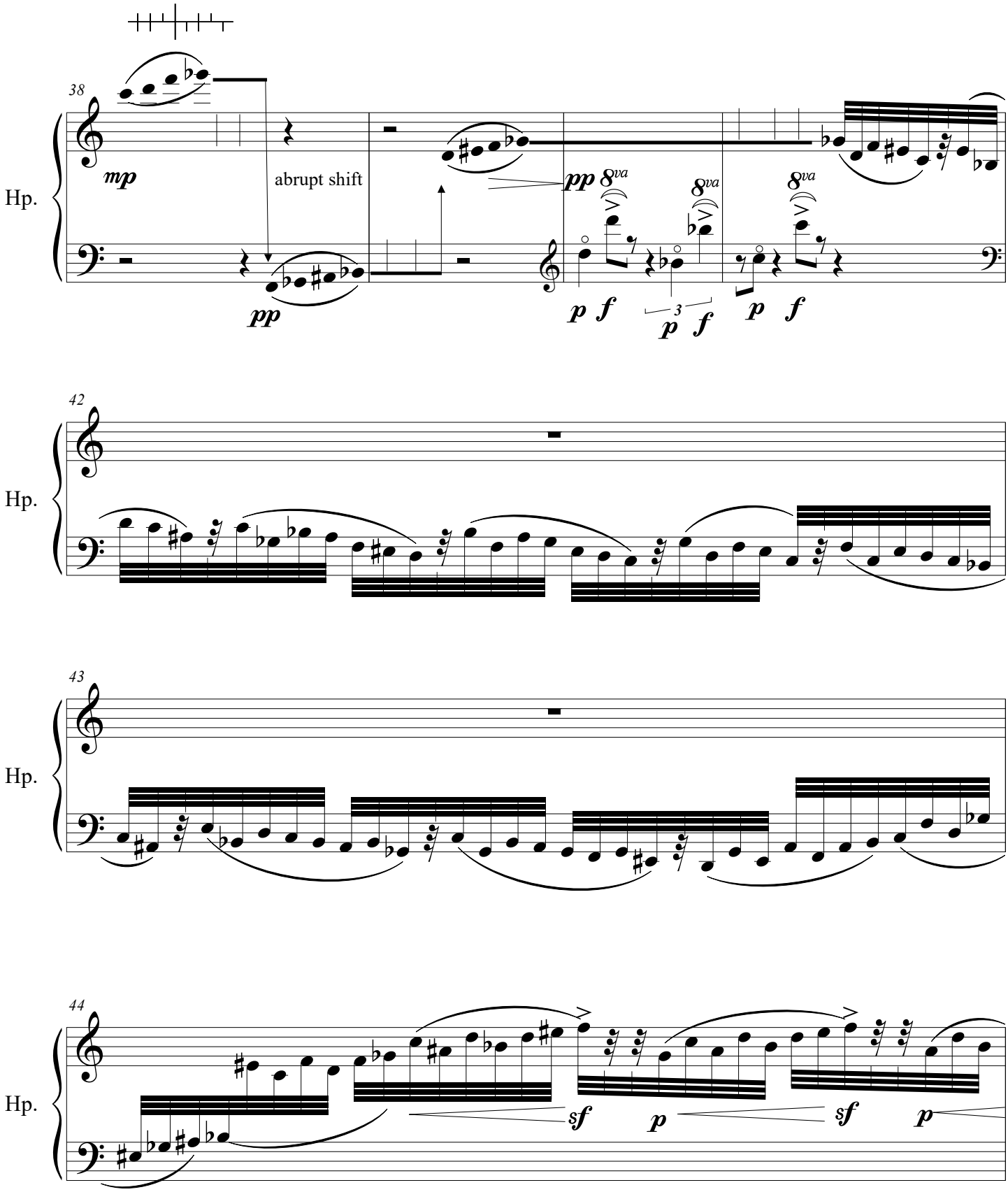
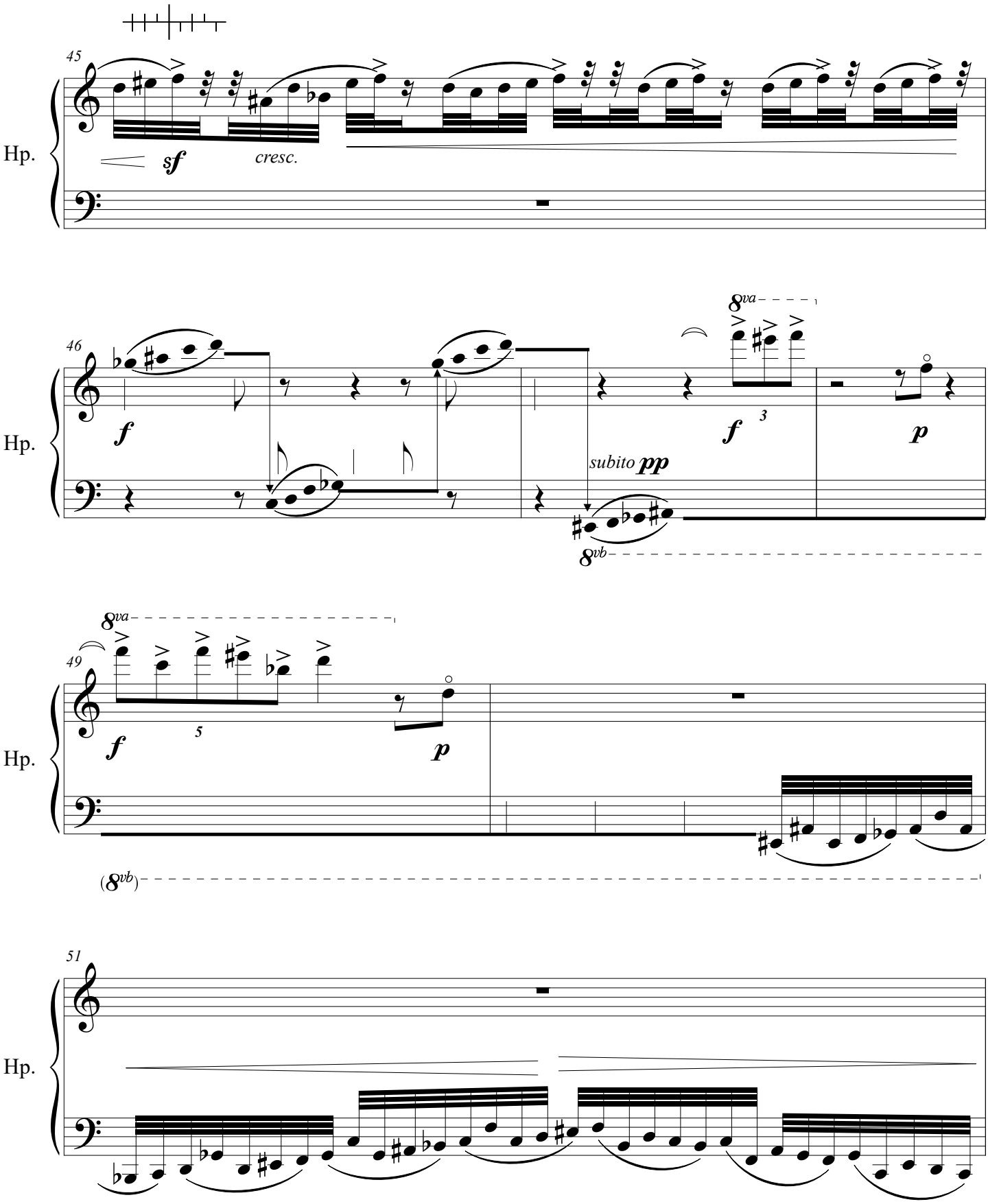
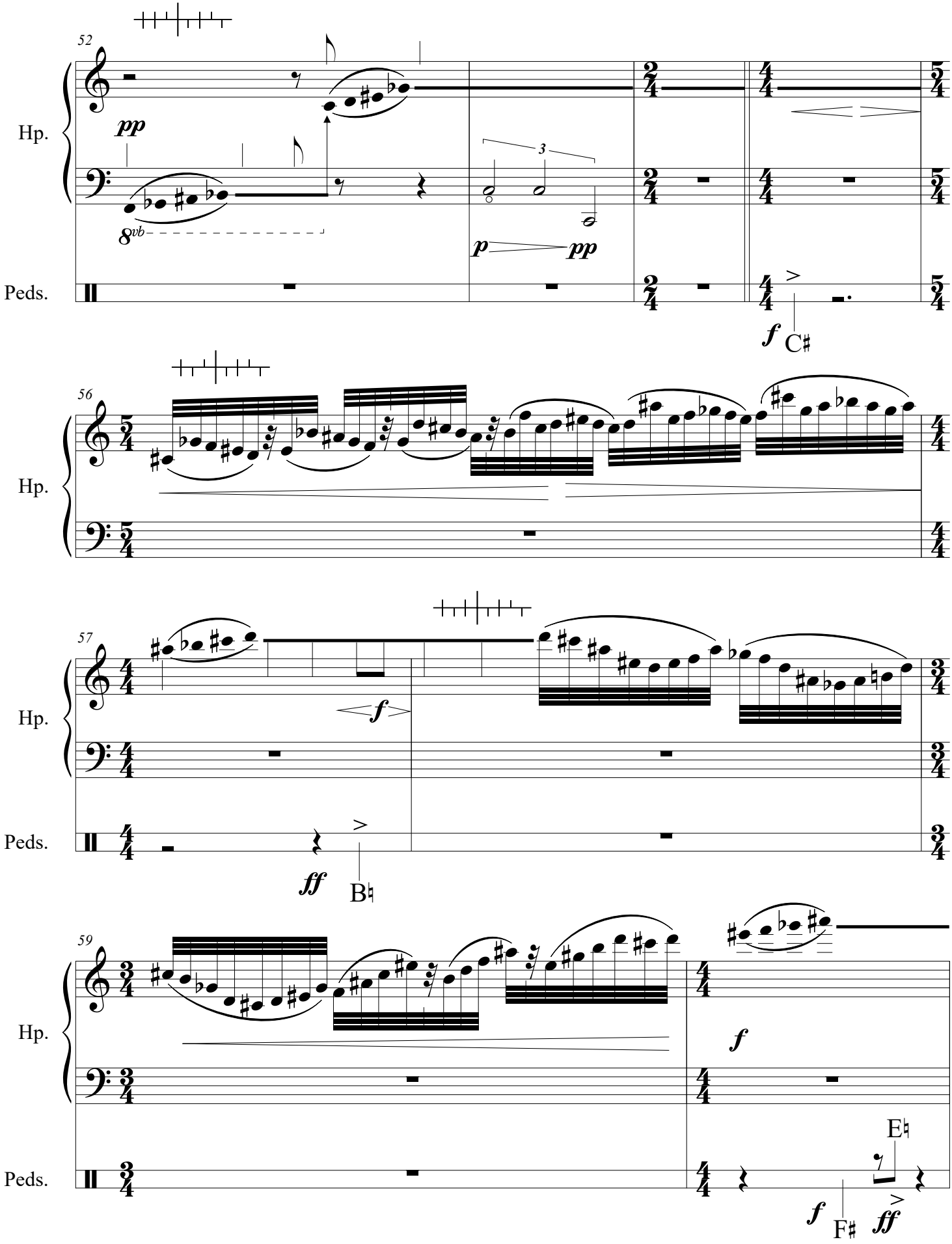

8
random order bisb.
Hp.
SB.
Peds.
D♭
pp
3
5
C♮G♮C♯G♯ F♮ F♯B♮E♮B♯E♯
p
f
ord. - - - - - - - - - - p.d.l.t. - - - - - - ord.
11
Hp.
15
quasi bisb.
sempre pp
mp
pp
17
quasi bisb.
sempre pp
Hp.

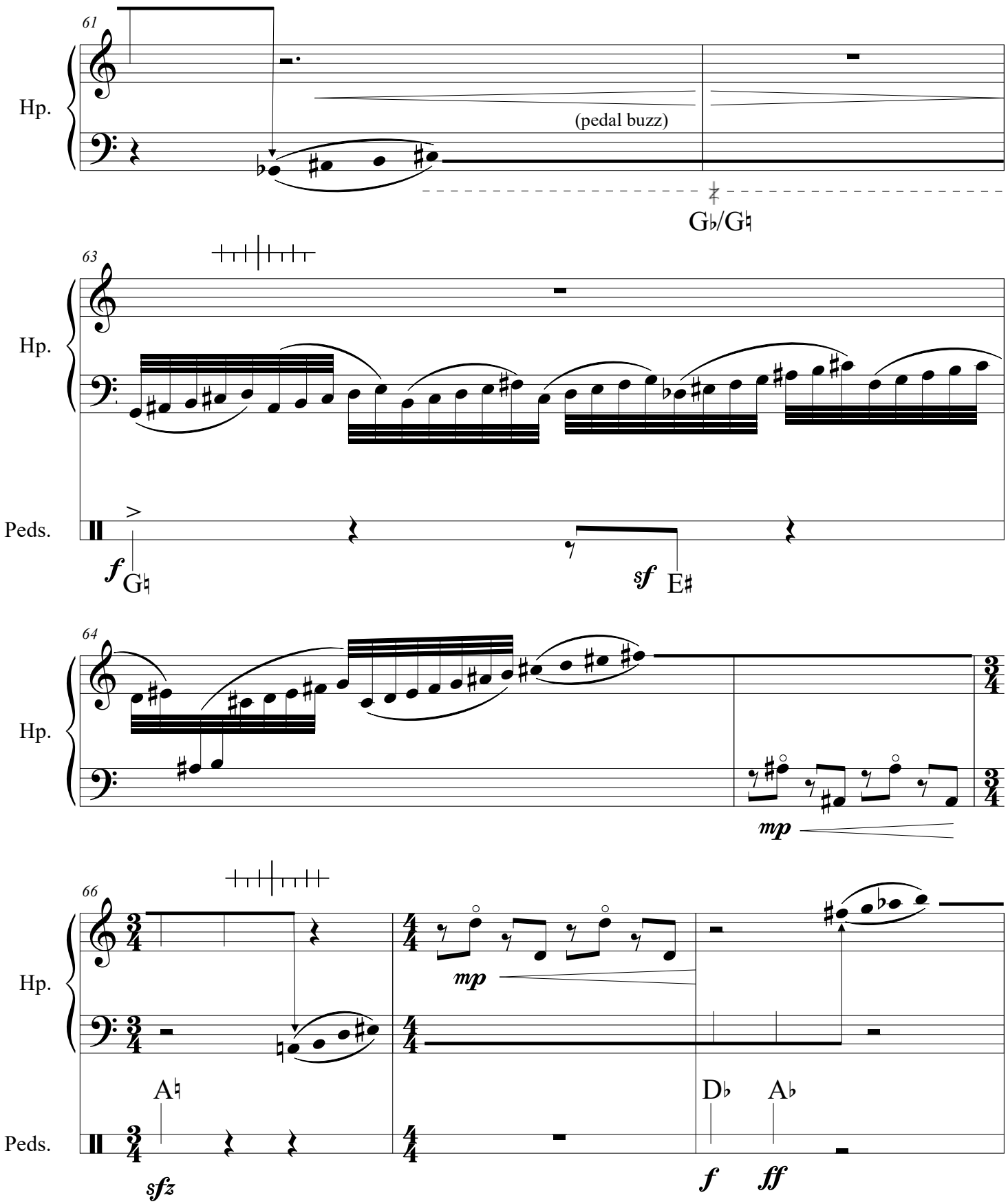

8va
18
Hp.
sf
mp
3
p
abrupt shift
22
Hp.
8va
23
Hp.
25
Hp.
mp
p
pp
3
pp
27
Hp.
cresc.
3/4
3/4

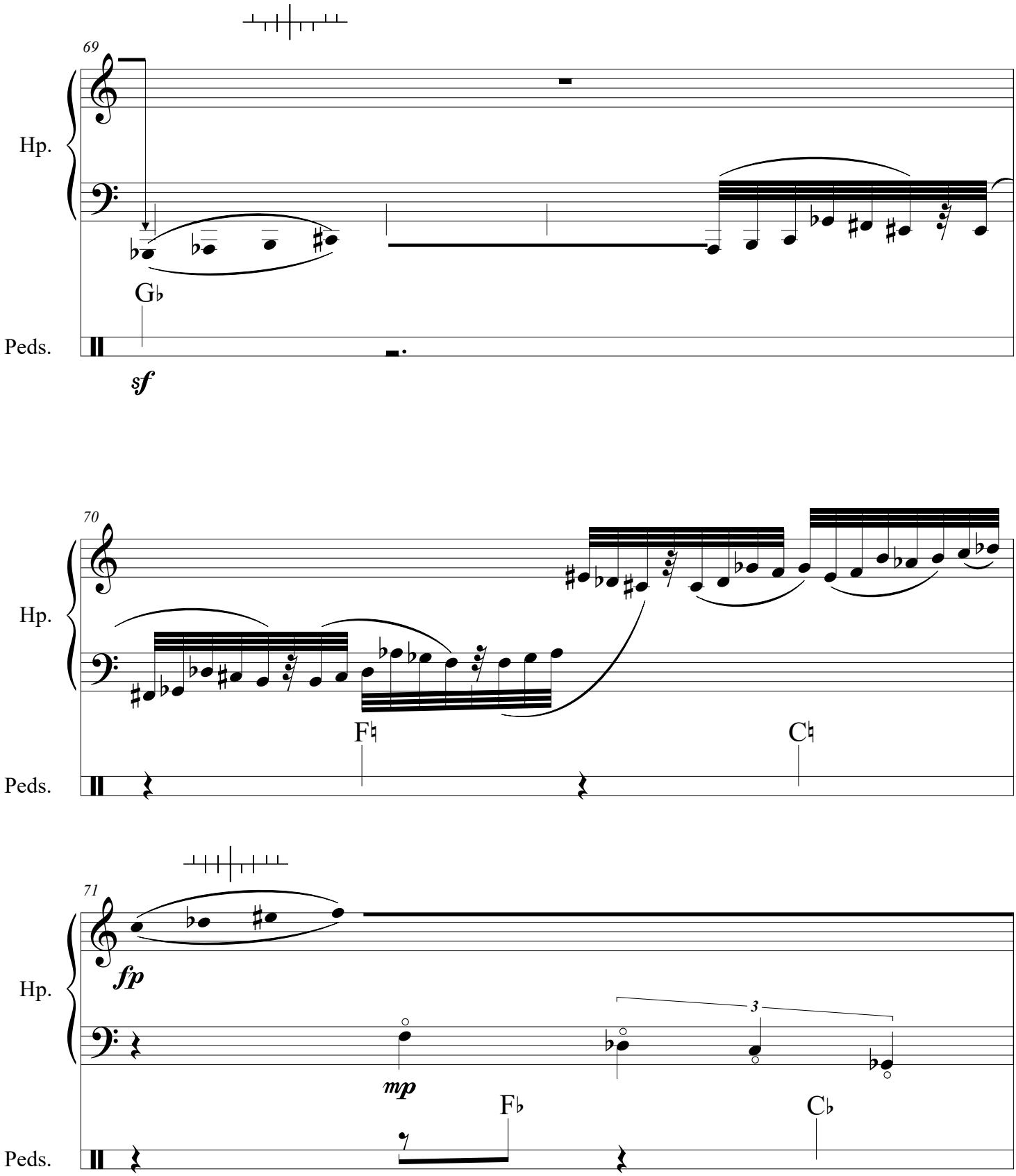

28
Hp.
mf
pp
31
random order bisb.
Hp.
fp
31
mallets on soundboard
SB.
C♮
G♮ B♮ G♭
B♭F♮
Peds.
sfz
f
sf
D♮
mf
A♯
35
quasi bisb.
Hp.
p
37
Hp.
poco cresc.

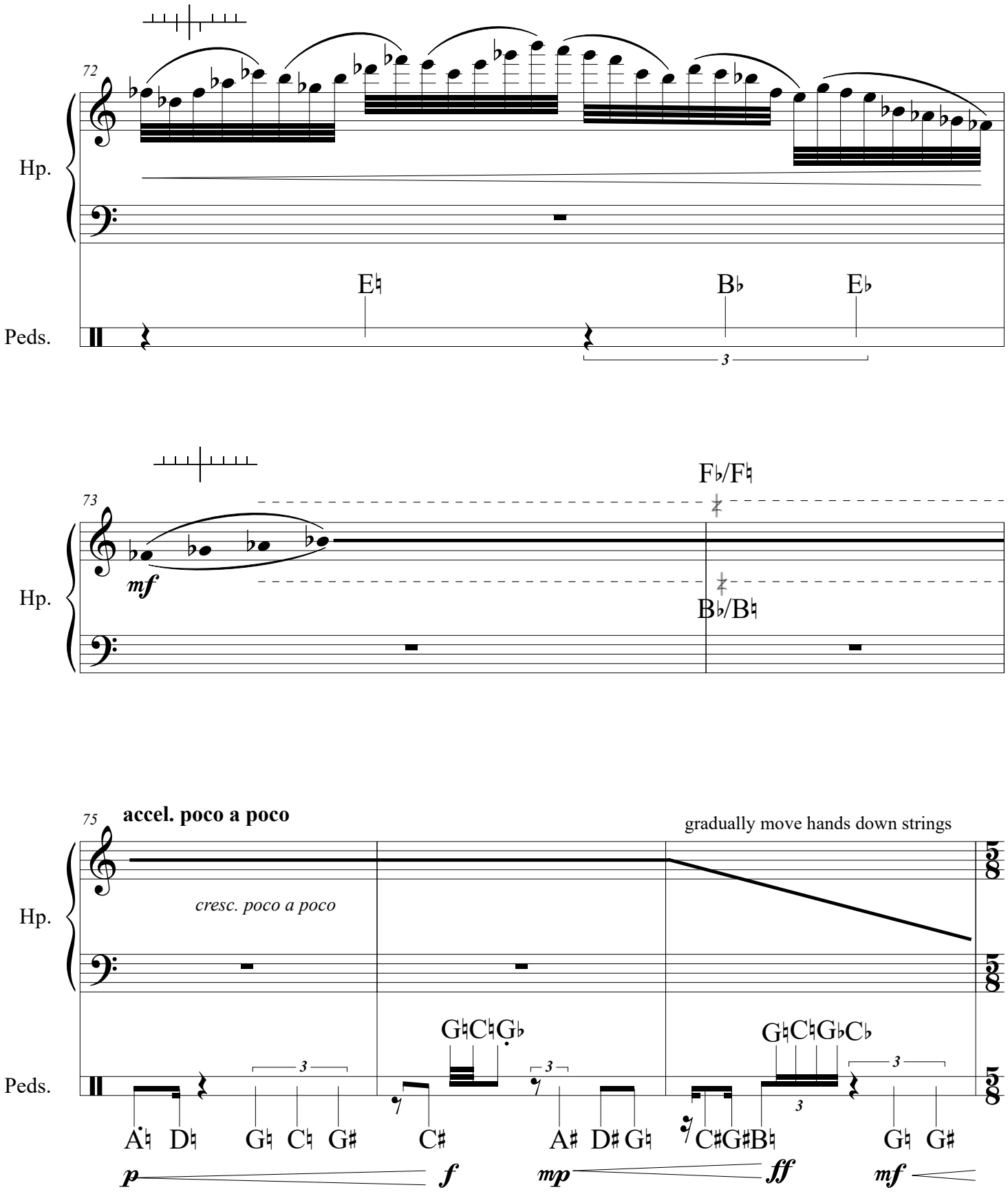

38
Hp.
mp
abrupt shift
pp
pp 8va
8va
8va
p f
3
p f
p f
42
Hp.
43
Hp.
44
Hp.
sf
p
sf
p

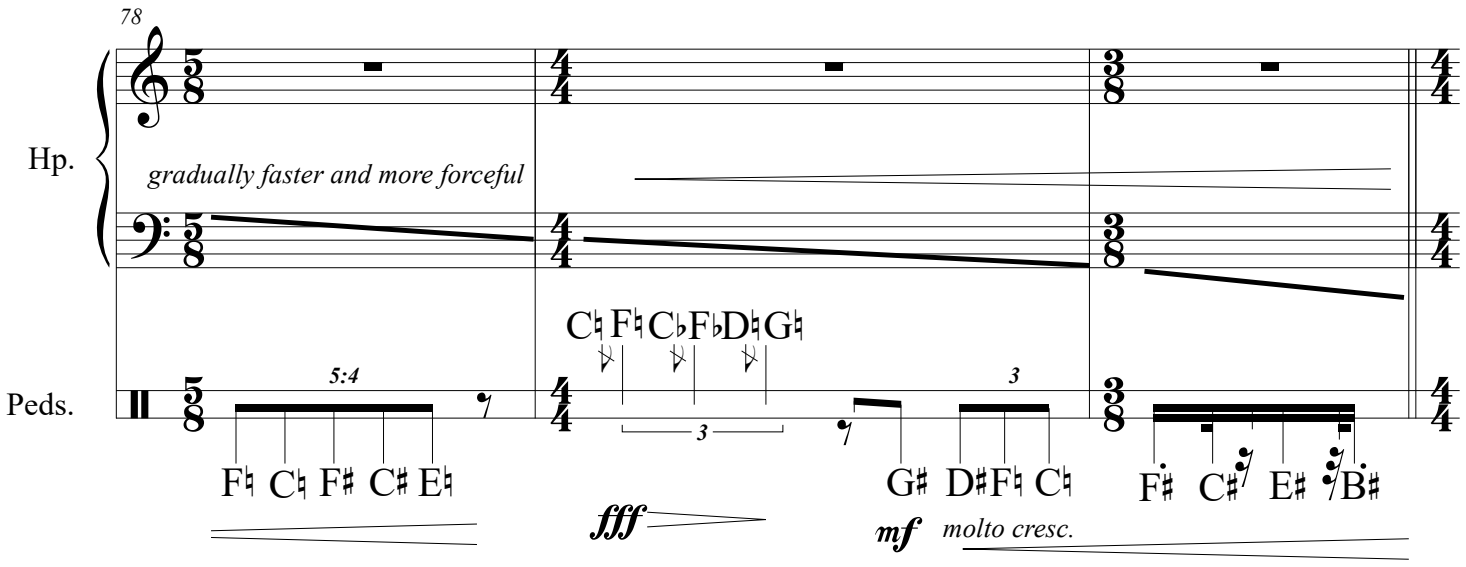

45
Hp.
sf
cresc.
46
Hp.
f
8va
f
3
p
subito pp
8vb
49
Hp.
8va
f
5
p
(8vb)
51
Hp.

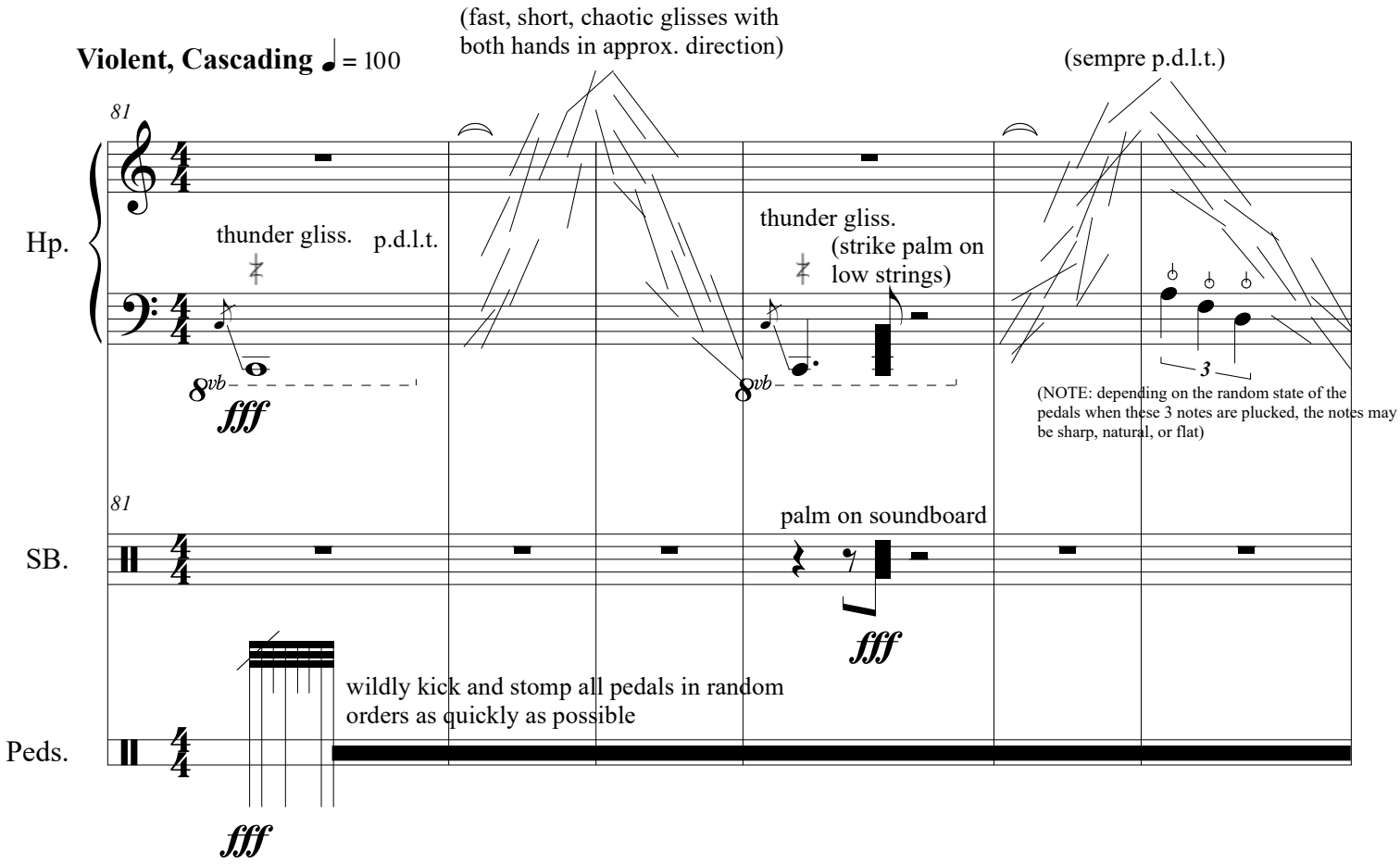

52
Hp.
pp
8vb
3
p
pp
Peds.
f
C♯
56
Hp.
57
Hp.
f
Peds.
ff
B♮
59
Hp.
f
Peds.
E♮
f
F♯
ff


61
Hp.
(pedal buzz)
G♭/G♮
63
Hp.
Peds.
f G♮
sf E♯
64
Hp.
mp
66
Hp.
mp
A♮
D♭ A♭
Peds.
sfz
f ff

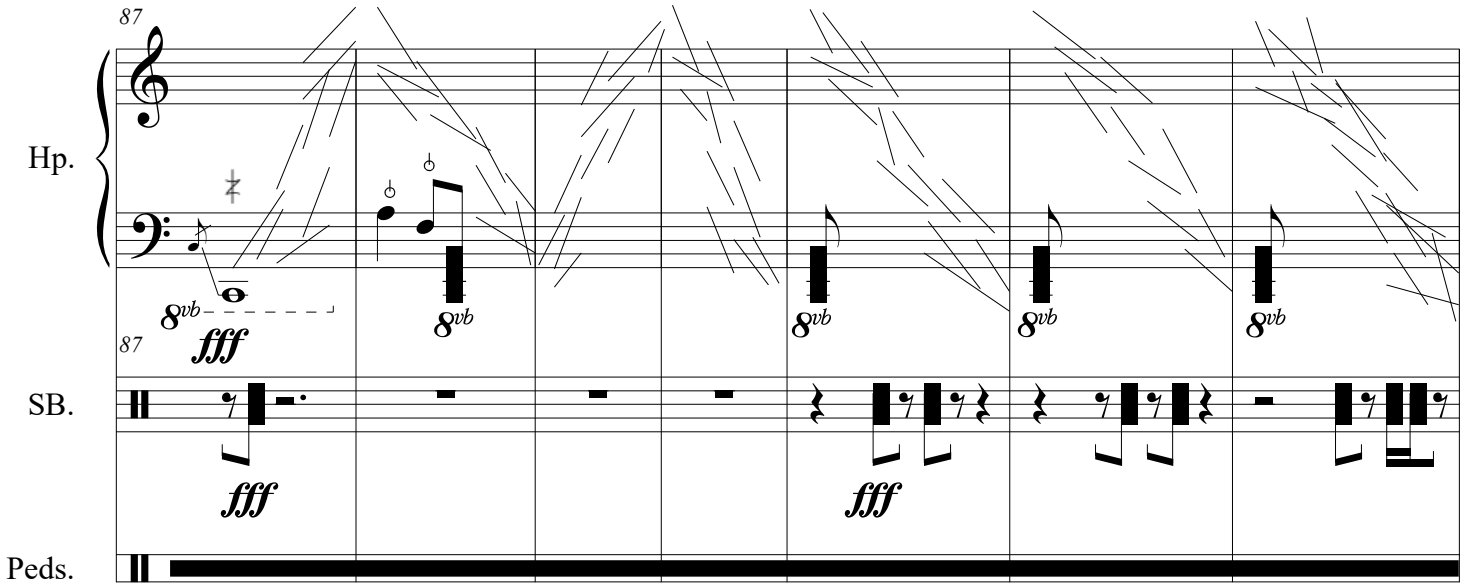

69
Hp.
G♭
Peds.
sf
70
Hp.
F♮
C♮
Peds.
71
fp
Hp.
3
mp
F♭
C♭
Peds.


72
Hp.
Peds.
E♮
B♭
E♭
3
73
F♭/F♮
mf
B♭/B♮
75
accel. poco a poco
gradually move hands down strings
cresc. poco a poco
G♮C♮G♭
G♮C♮G♭C♭
A♮ D♮ G♮ C♮ G♯ C♯ A♯ D♯ G♮ C♯G♯B♮ G♮ G♯
p
f
mp
ff
mf

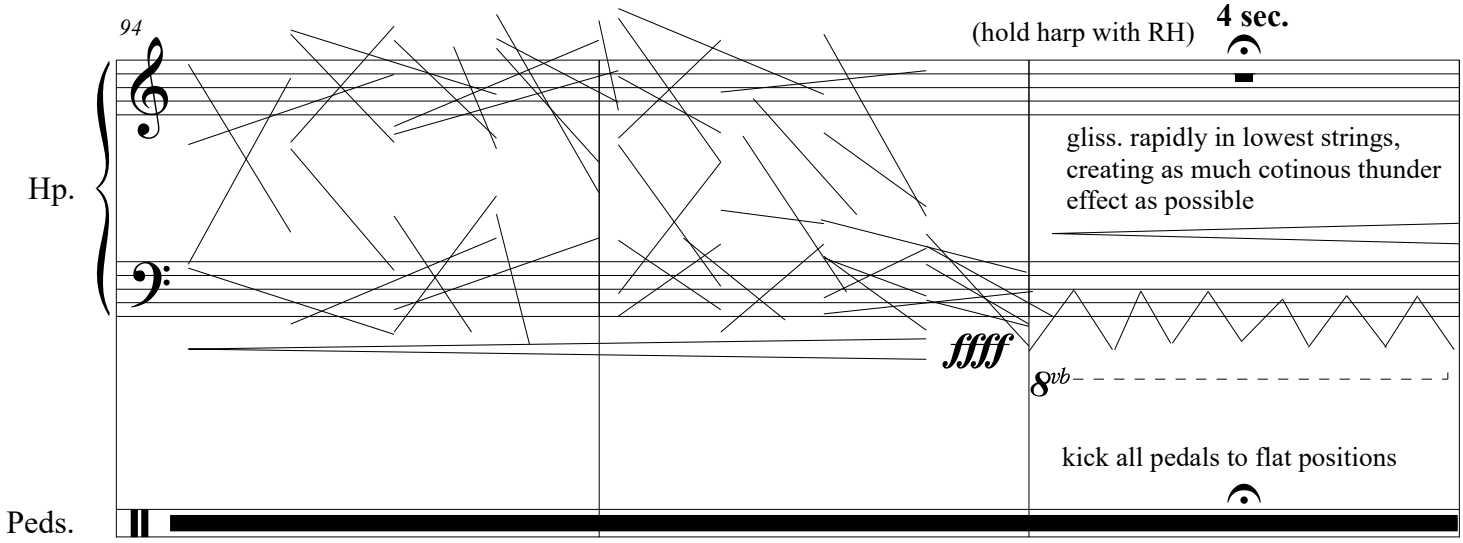

78
Hp.
gradually faster and more forceful
Peds.
5:4
3
3
F♮ C♮ F♯ C♯ E♮
fff
G♯ D♯F♮ C♮
F♯ C♯ E♯ B♯
mf
molto cresc.


Violent, Cascading ♩ = 100
(fast, short, chaotic glisses with both hands in approx. direction)
(sempre p.d.l.t.)
81
Hp.
thunder gliss.
p.d.l.t.
8vb
fff
thunder gliss.
(strike palm on low strings)
8vb
3
(NOTE: depending on the random state of the pedals when these 3 notes are plucked, the notes may be sharp, natural, or flat)
81
SB.
palm on soundboard
fff
Peds.
wildly kick and stomp all pedals in random orders as quickly as possible
fff

accel.

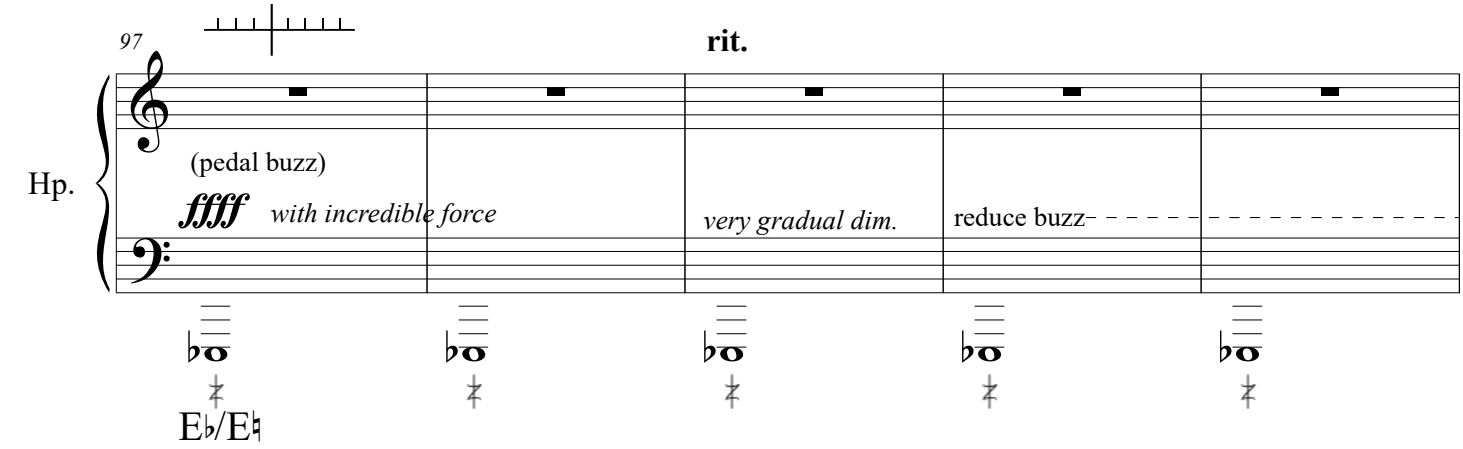


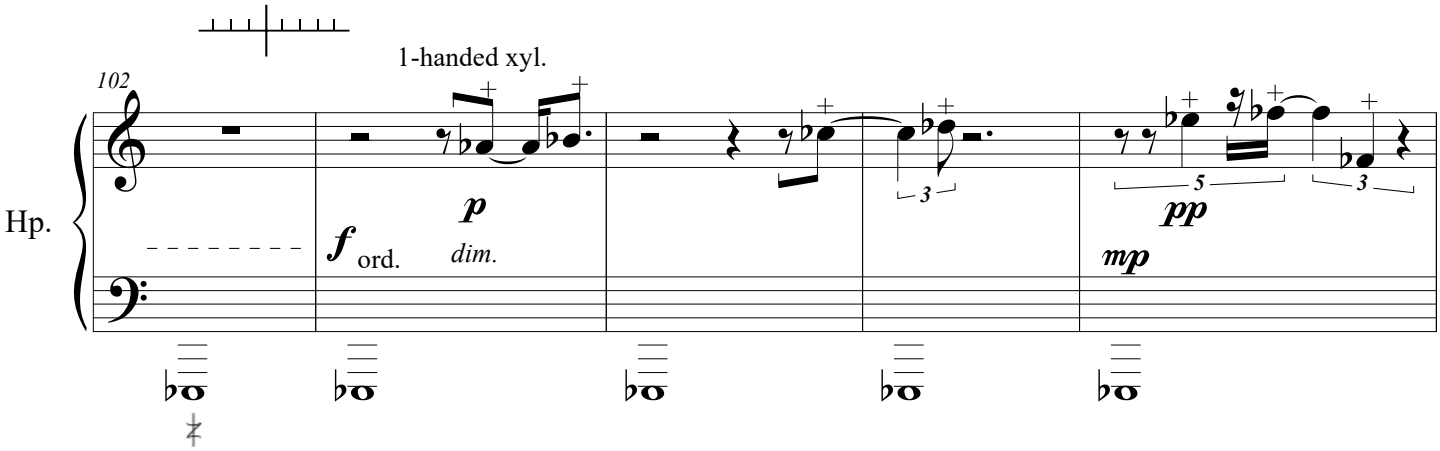
(wildly gliss. across whole harp)

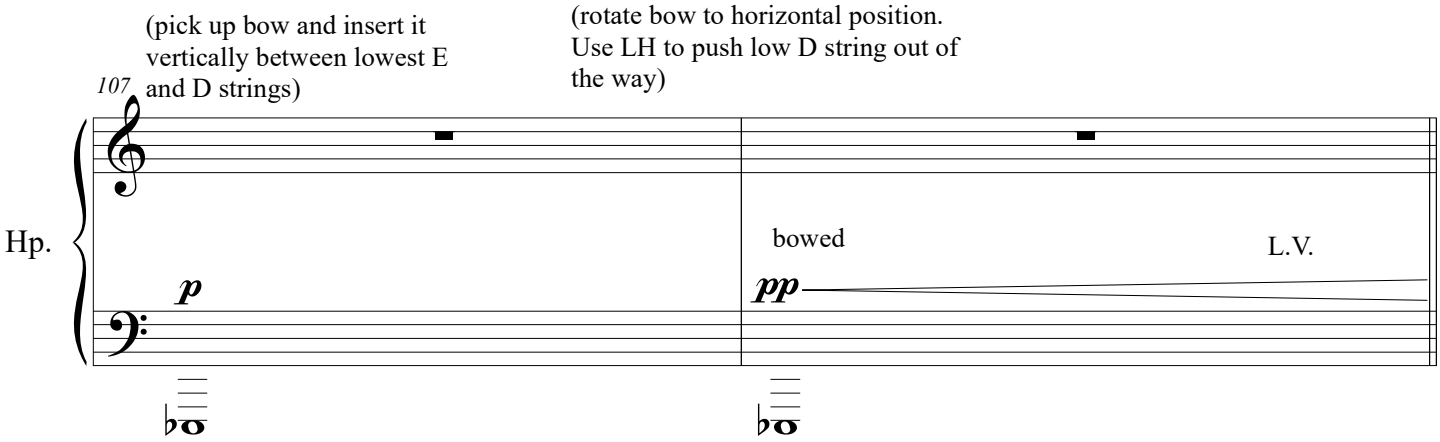


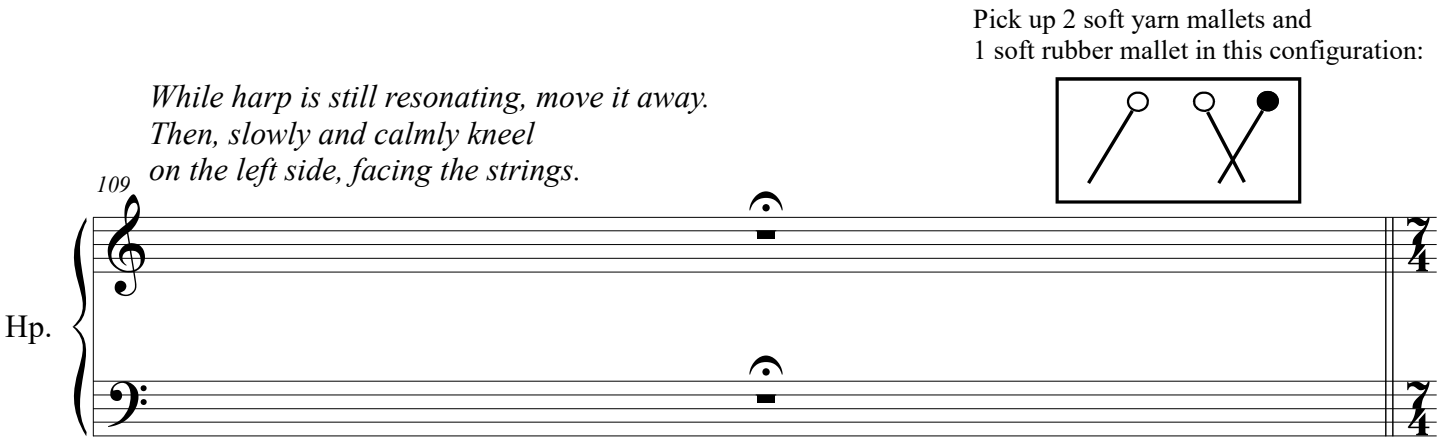
Slowly losing energy ♩ = 80

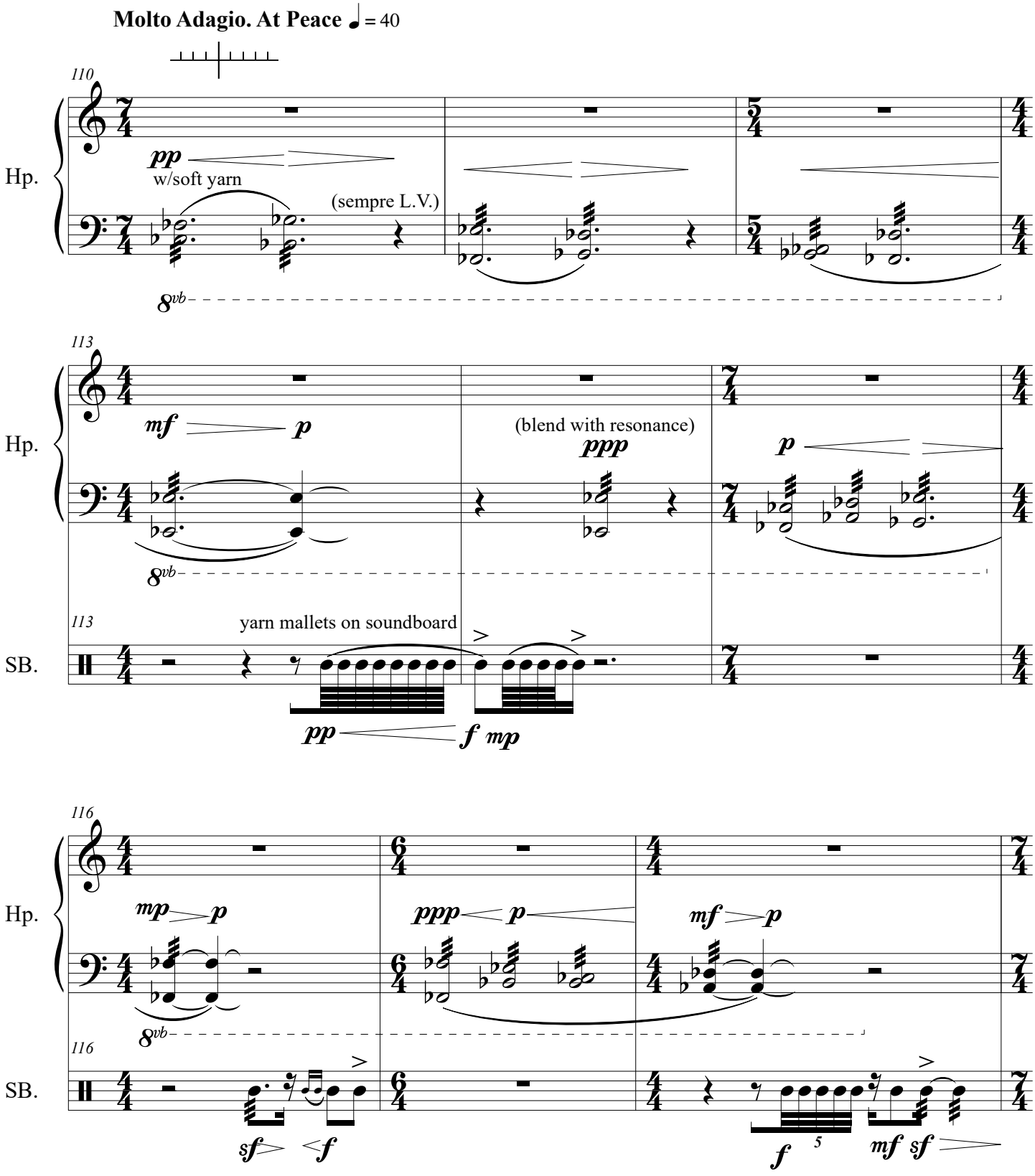
rit.

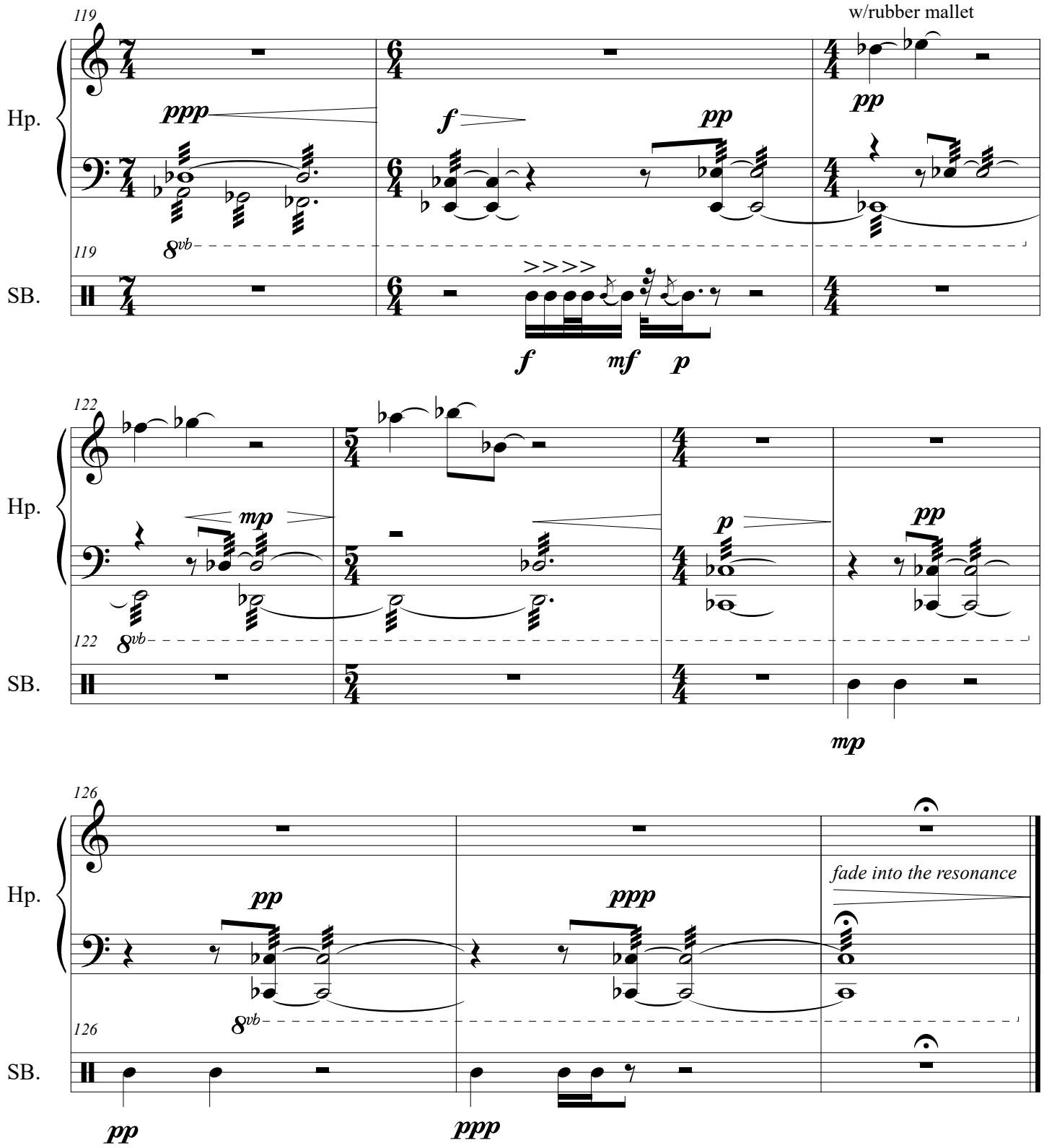



1-handed xyl.
102
Hp.
f ord.
p
dim.
pp
mp


(pick up bow and insert it vertically between lowest E and D strings)
(rotate bow to horizontal position. Use LH to push low D string out of the way)
107
Hp.
p
bowed
pp
L.V.


Pick up 2 soft yarn mallets and 1 soft rubber mallet in this configuration:
While harp is still resonating, move it away.
Then, slowly and calmly kneel
on the left side, facing the strings.
109
Hp.


Molto Adagio. At Peace ♩ = 40
110
Hp.
pp
w/soft yarn
(sempre L.V.)
8vb
113
Hp.
mf
p
(blend with resonance)
ppp
p
8vb
113
SB.
yarn mallets on soundboard
pp
f mp
116
Hp.
mp p
ppp p
mf p
8vb
116
SB.
sf f
f
5
mf sf


119
w/rubber mallet
Hp.
ppp
f
pp
pp
8vb
119
SB.
f
mf
p
122
Hp.
mp
p
pp
8vb
122
SB.
mp
126
Hp.
pp
ppp
fade into the resonance
8vb
126
SB.
pp
ppp