Full score

Music Speech Music

for String Quartet

by Aidan Gold

Duration: 6 min.

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Instrumentation

2 Violins
Viola
Cello

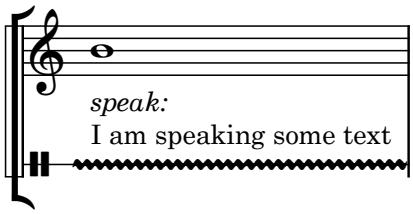
Program Note

A lot goes through our heads when we perform music. We constantly make interpretive decisions – asking and answering questions such as: How do we phrase this? What color do we want here? What is our role in the texture at this moment? We also think strategically, counting and subdiving in different places and listening to reference points for intonation. Lots of logistical thoughts also go through our heads, like is our music stand too far away, are we facing the correct way on stage, is the microphone actually picking up our sound, etc.

But what does that *sound like*?

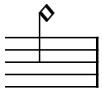
Notation and Performance Information

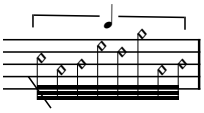
Speaking:
At several points in this piece, the performers must speak various phrases. Speaking is notated on a one-line staff. When playing and speaking, the speaking staff is placed below the player's music staff:

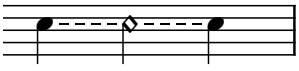


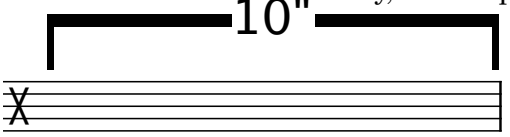
Sometimes the performers must repeatedly speak a section of text until the end of a line, which is indicated using 𝄆 around a phrase of text 𝄇

The speaking will not always be audible/understandable – sometimes it is just meant to be a textural layer underneath the rest of the music.

= aggressive, scratchy downbow; + = left hand pizz.  = unspecified high harmonic

 = play very fast random harmonics during the duration specified (does not need to be the exact number of notes or contour written)

 = shift gradually between ord. and light finger pressure (in some cases the diamond notehead will not be on the location of a harmonic, in which case an airy, almost pitchless sound is produced)



= no meter, duration is measured in seconds (10 second bar)

Abbreviations:
sp = sul ponticello; msp = molto sul ponticello
st = sul tasto; mst = molto sul tasto
clb = col legno battuto; clt = col legno tratto
sv = senza vibrato; mv = molto vibrato
(at all other points vibrato use is up to the performers)

Music Speech Music

Aidan Gold

(begin all at the same time)

3"

(no pause on barline –
enter suddnely with instruments
as if cutting off the text)

Violin 1

Normal speaking voice, very fast:
I really hope I have the correct version of the score on my Ipad

Violin 2

Normal speaking voice, very fast:
Can we tune – My A string is about one septimal comma flat.

Viola

Normal speaking voice, very fast:
Did I forget to turn on my foot pedal again? Is my Bluetooth on?

Cello

Normal speaking voice, very fast:
Wait are we starting from the top or from measure 74 again?

A **Quartet Unsion** ♪ = 80

2

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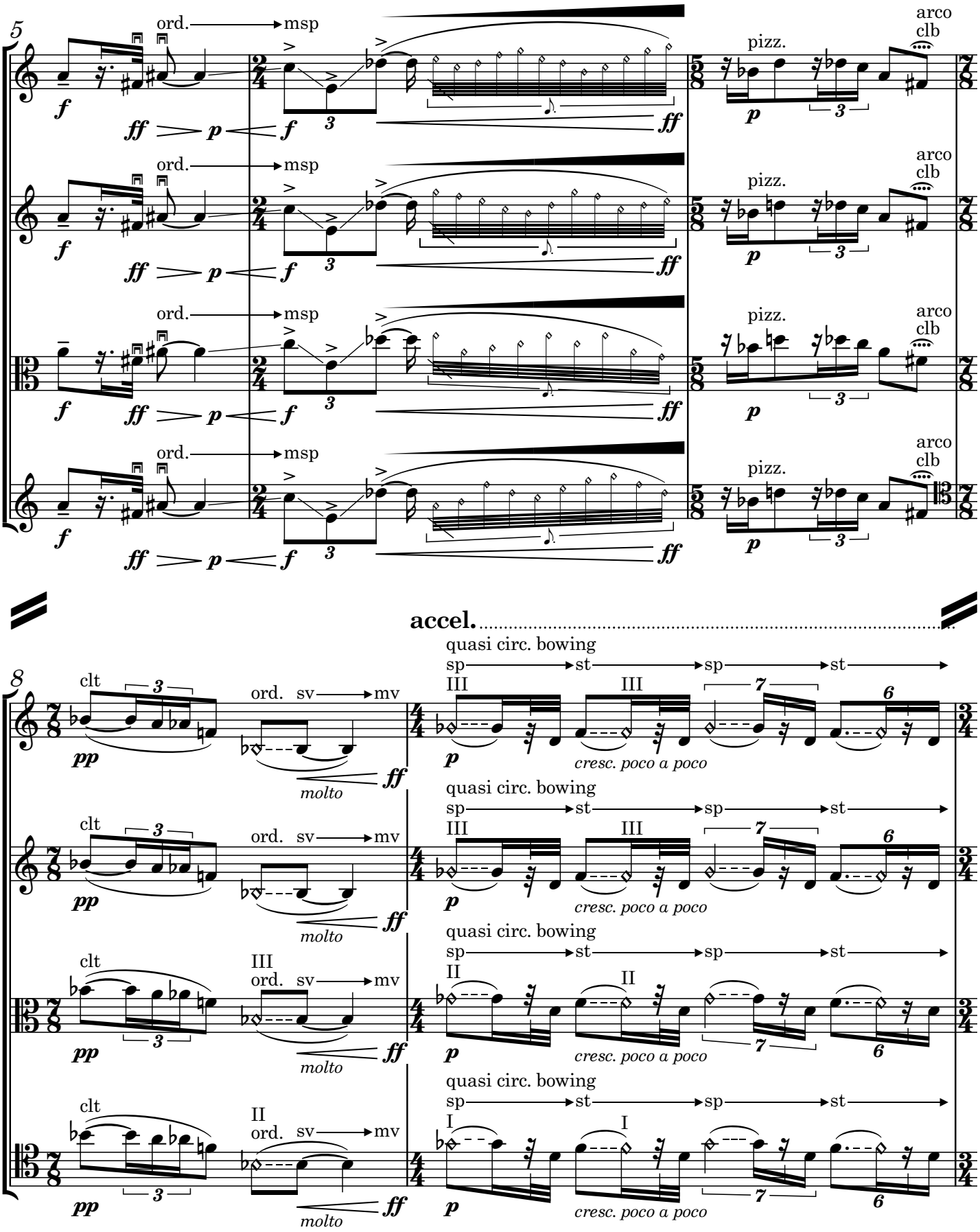
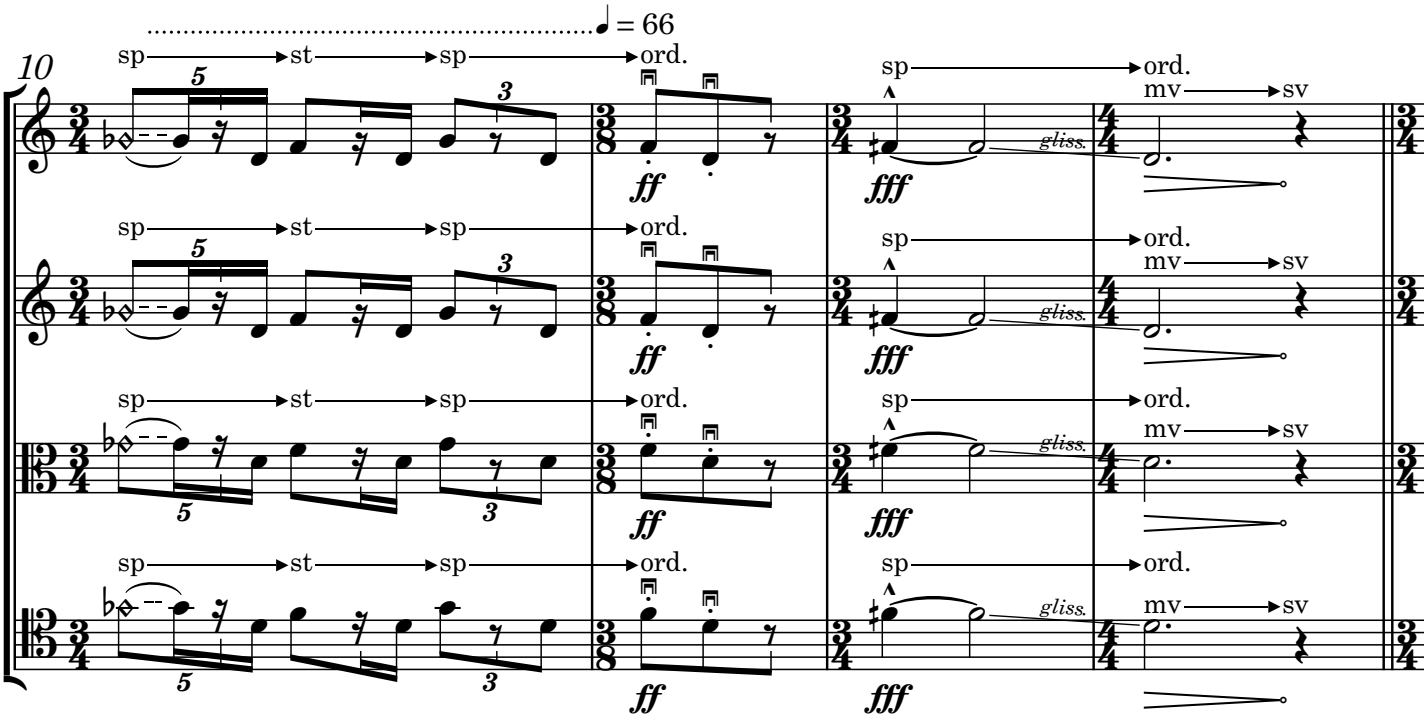
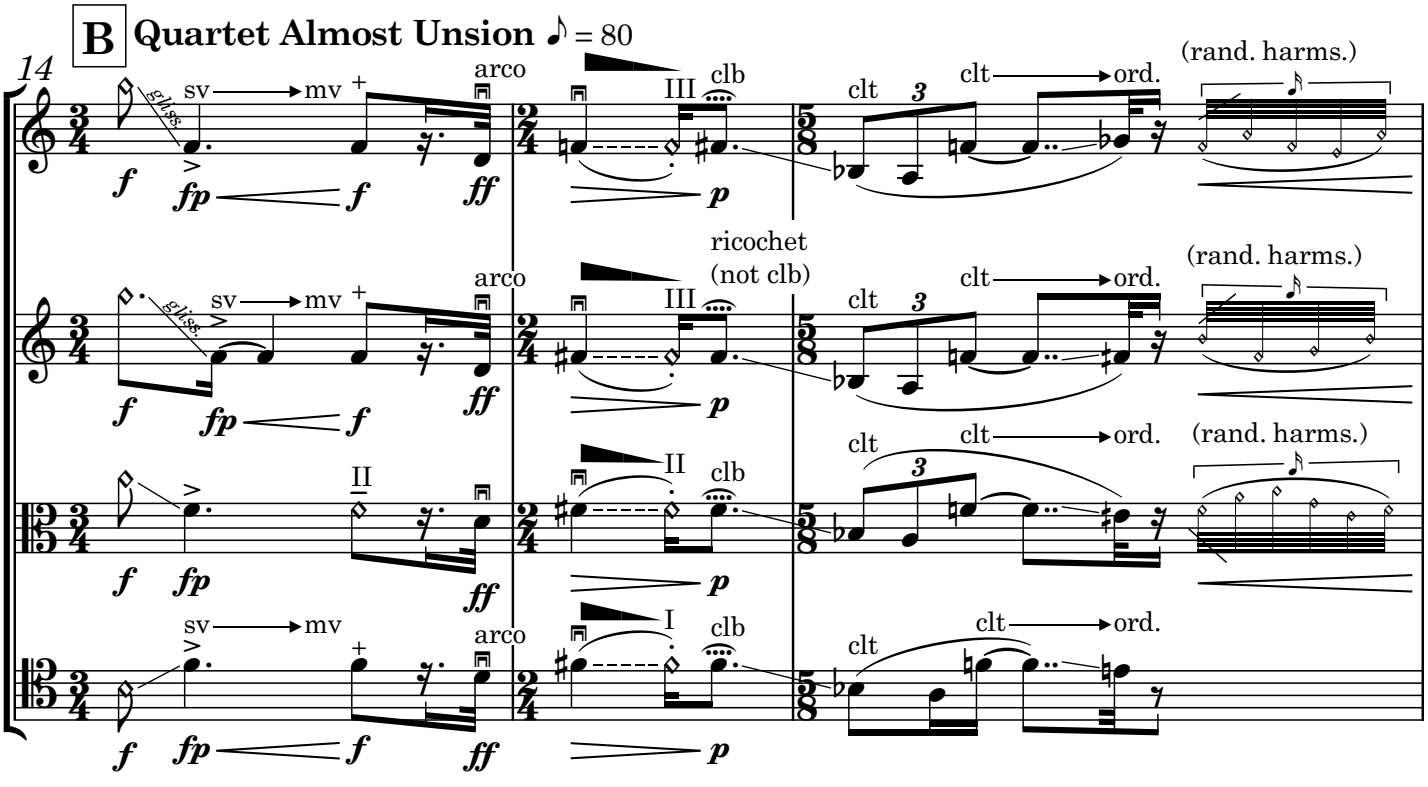
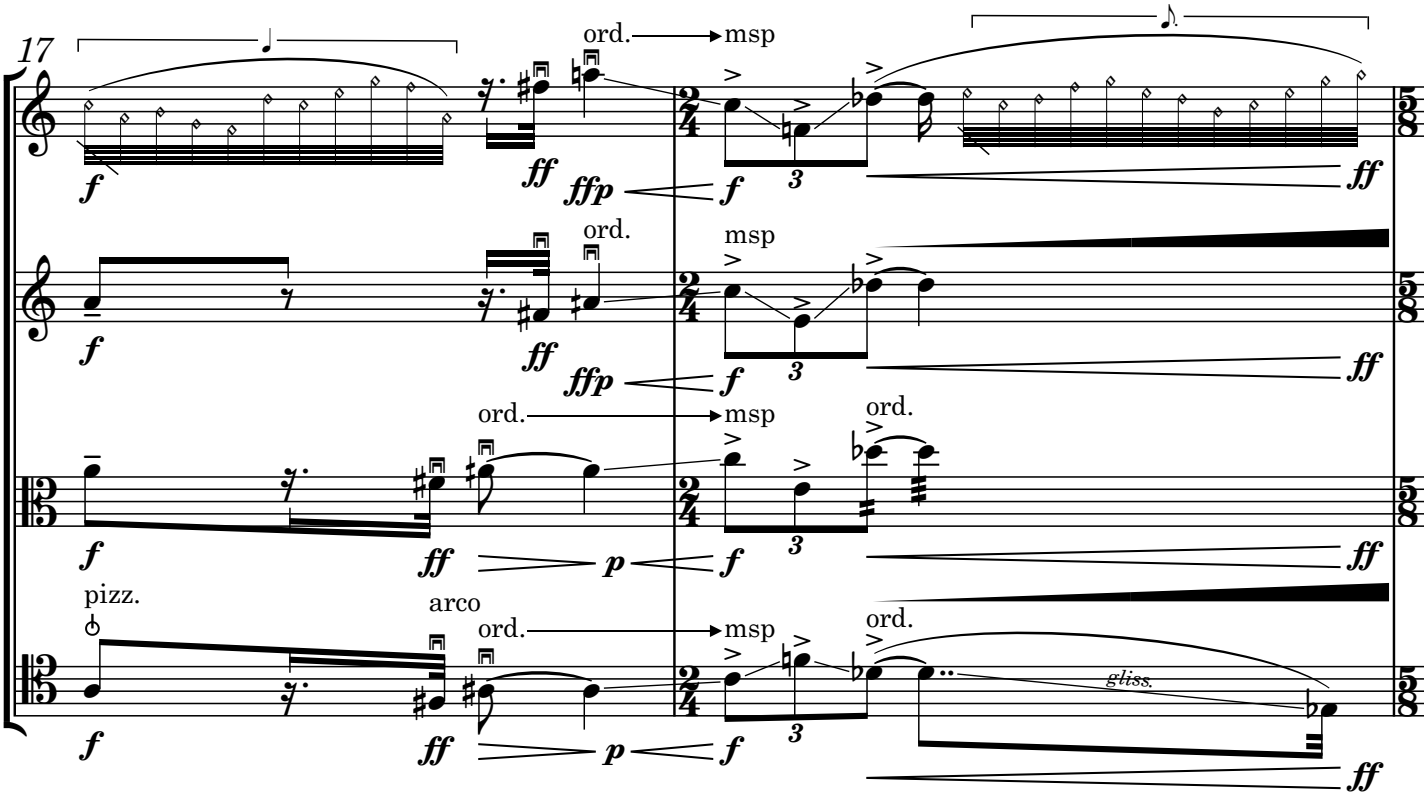
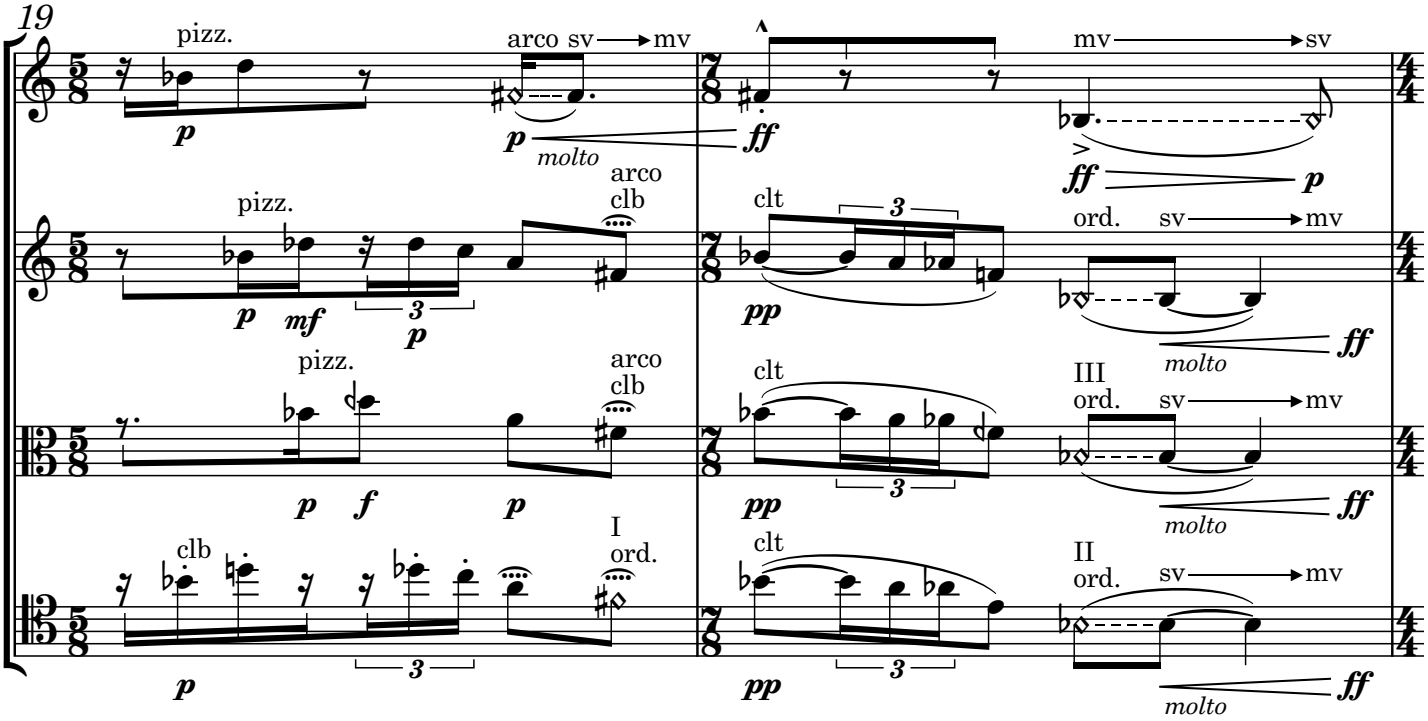
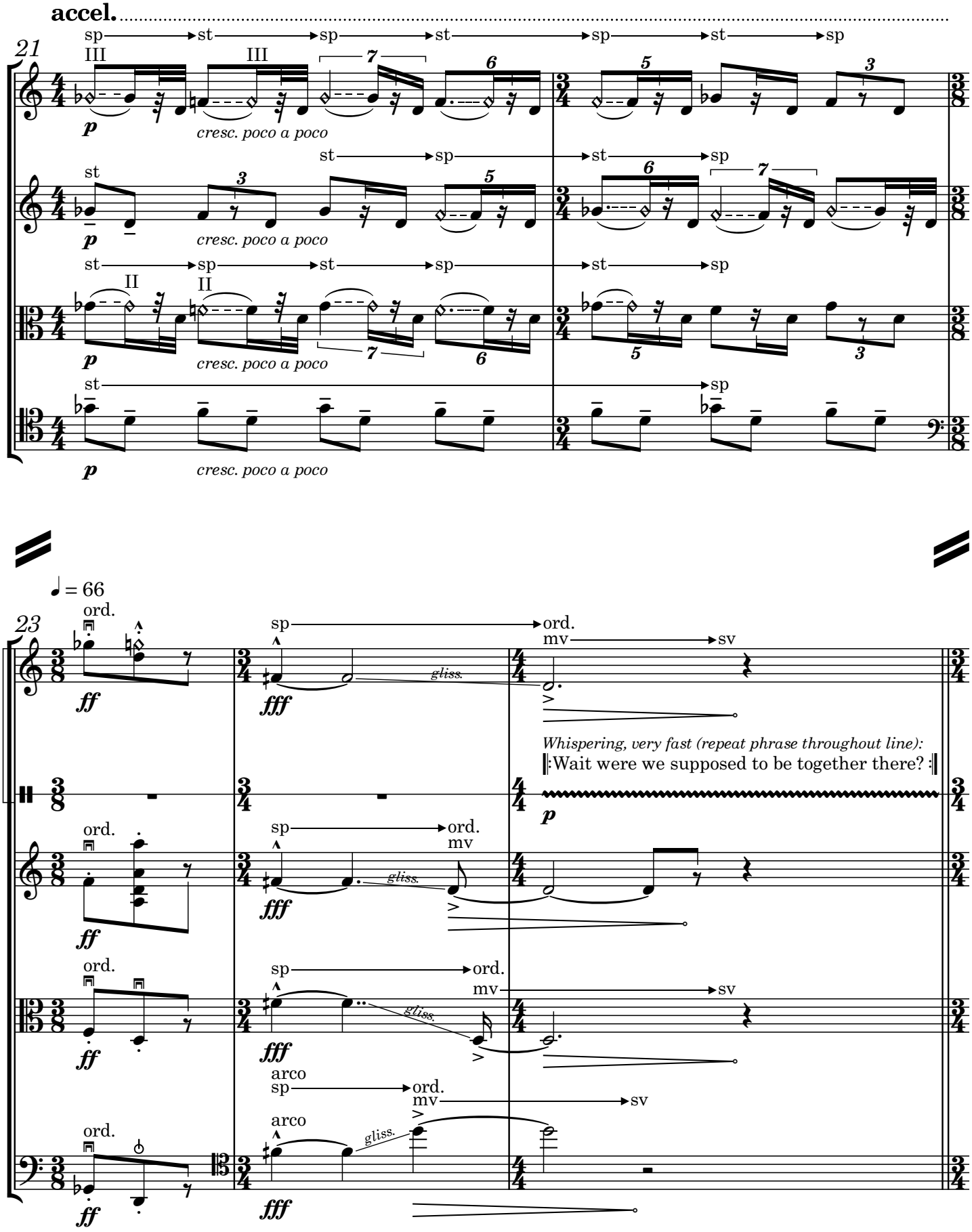

5
ord.
msp
pizz.
arco
clb
accel.
8
clt
ord. sv
mv
quasi circ. bowing
sp
st
cresc. poco a poco
molto

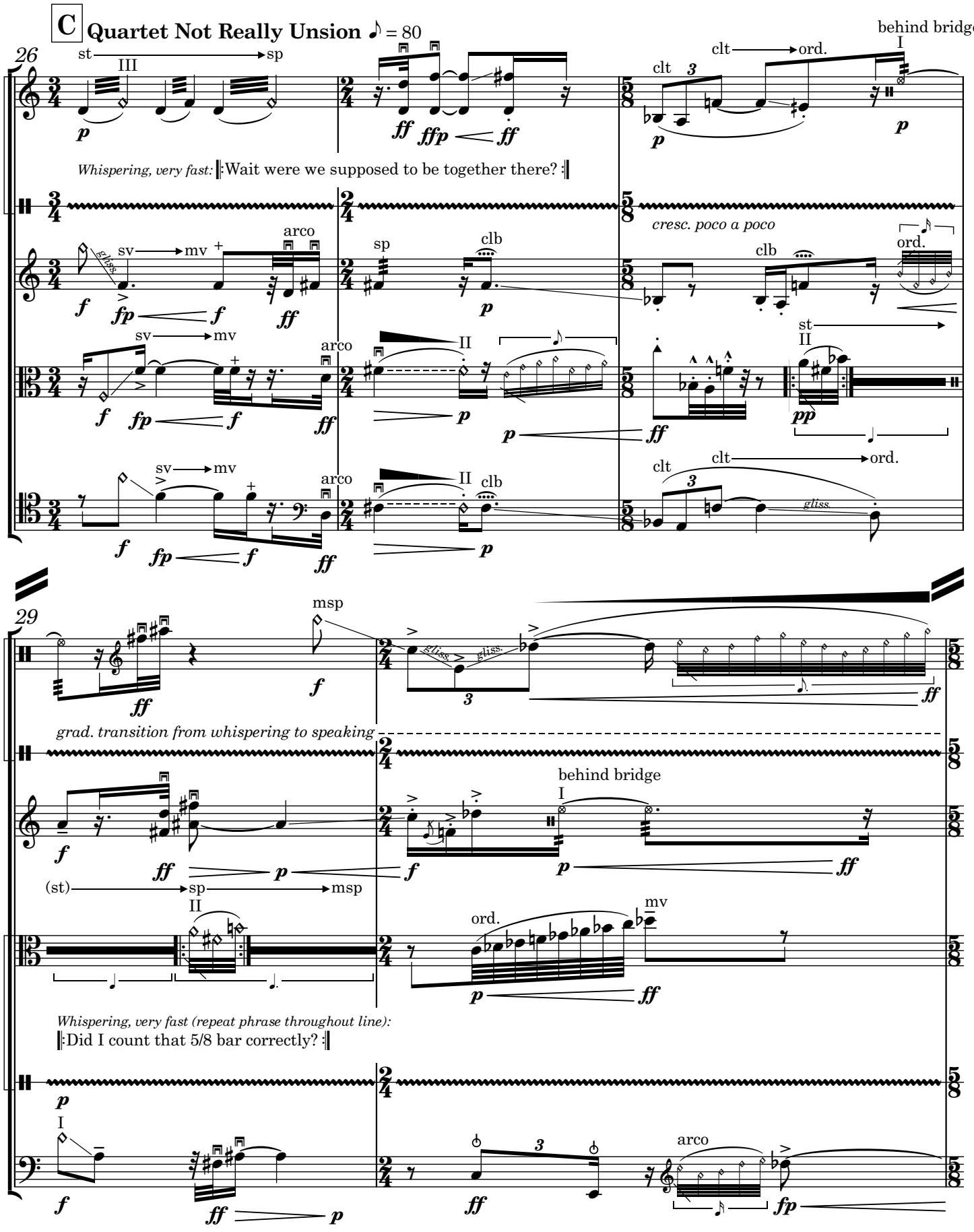

♩ = 66
10
sp
st
sp
ord.
mv
sv
gliss.
ff
fff

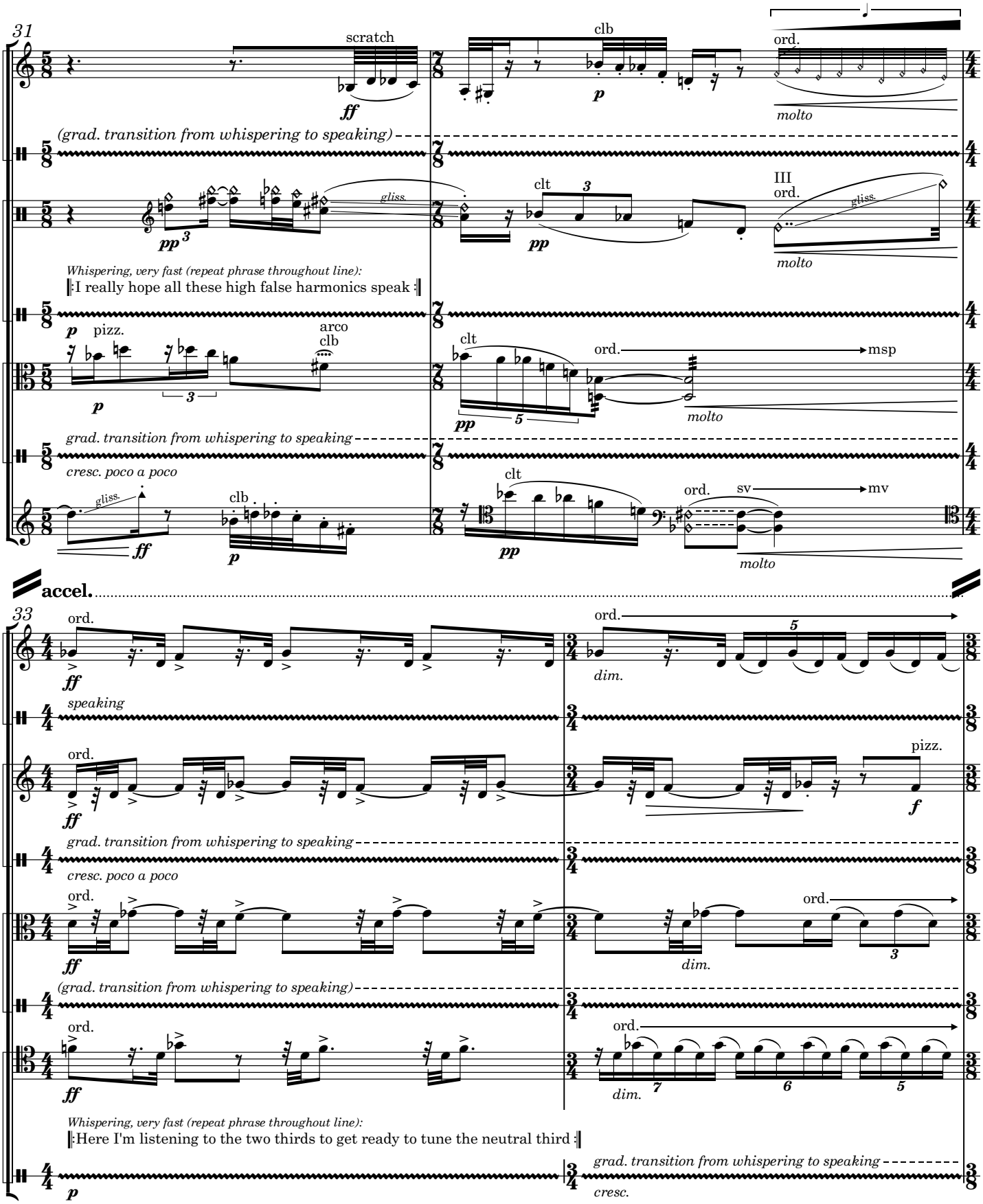

B
Quartet Almost Unsion
♪ = 80
14
sv
mv
arco
clb
ricochet
(not clb)
clt
ord.
(rand. harms.)
gliss.
f
fp
ff
p

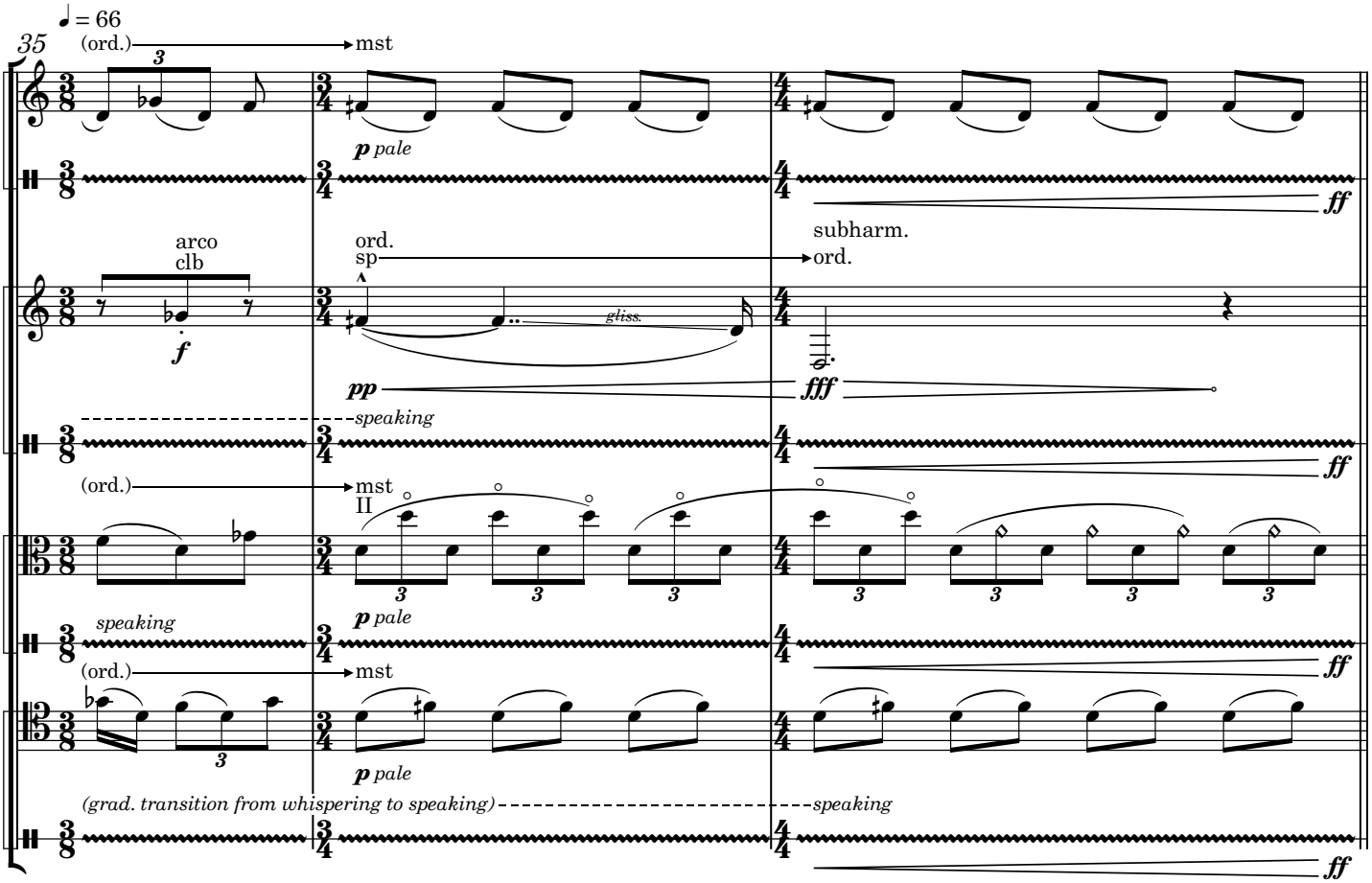

17
ord.
msp
pizz.
arco
gliss.

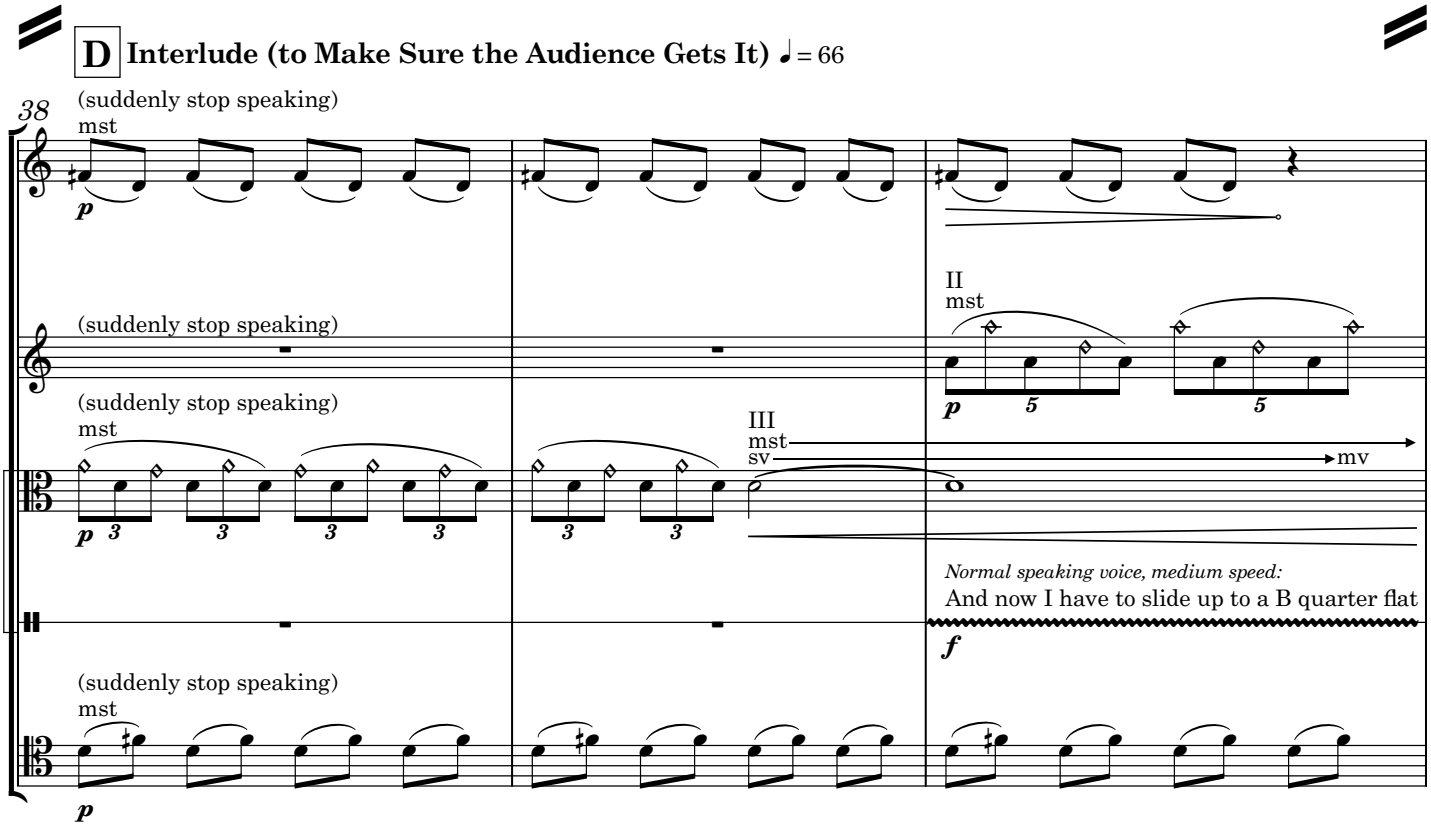

19
pizz.
arco sv
mv
arco
clb
clt
ord.
III
II
I
molto

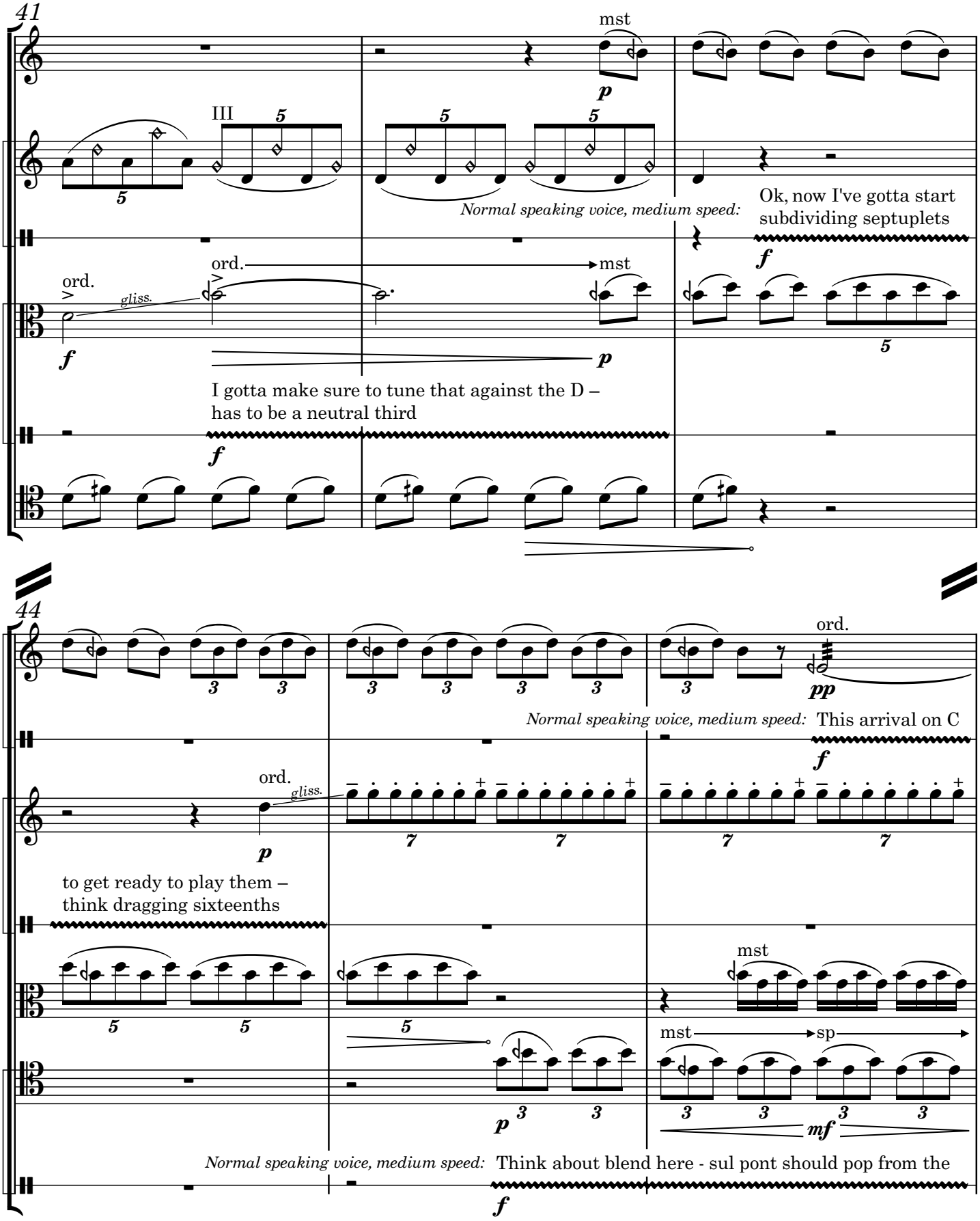

accel.
21
sp
st
III
II
p
cresc. poco a poco
23
♩ = 66
ord.
ff
fff
gliss.
mv
sv
arco
Whispering, very fast (repeat phrase throughout line):
Wait were we supposed to be together there?

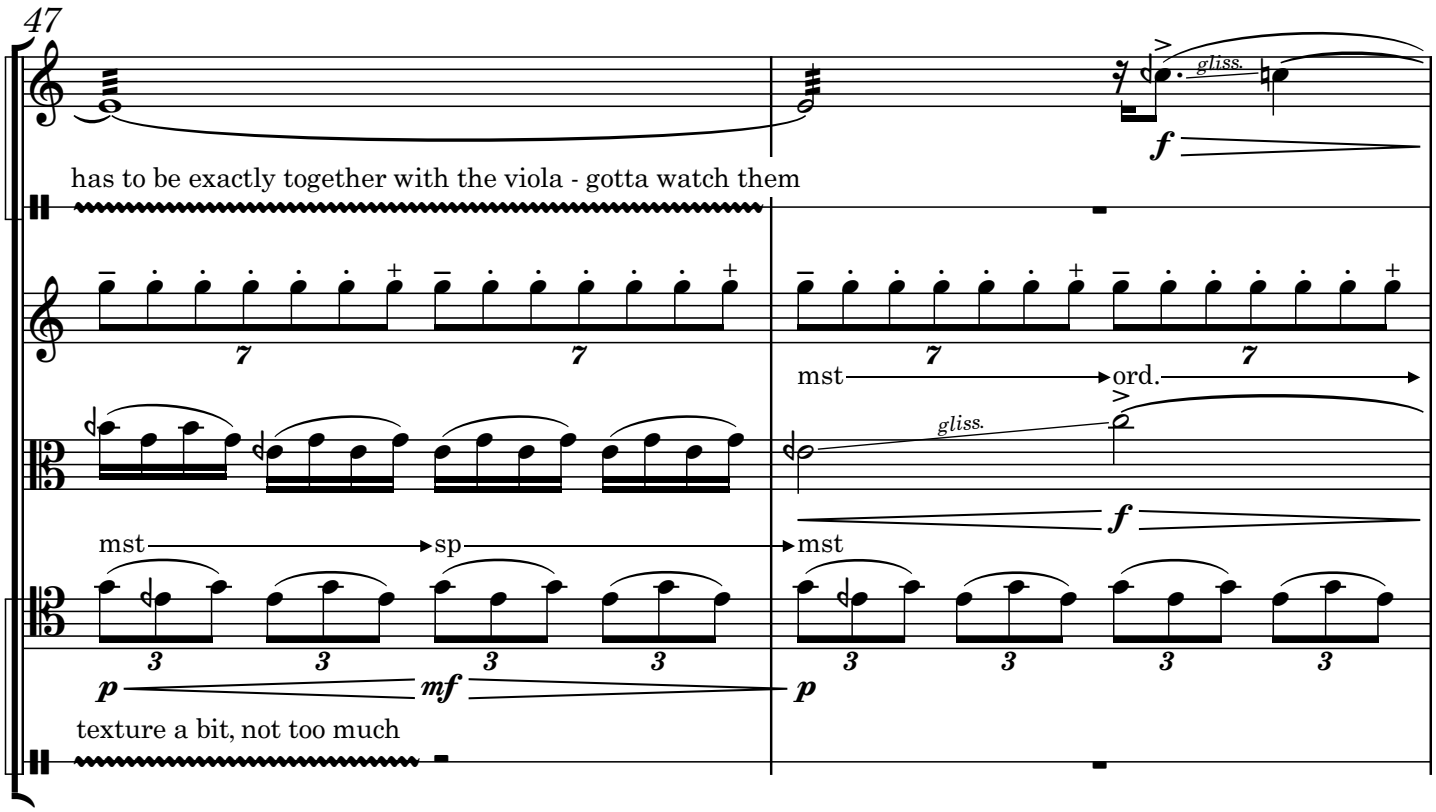

C
Quartet Not Really Unsion ♪ = 80
26
st
III
sp
behind bridge
I
clt
clt → ord.
Whispering, very fast: Wait were we supposed to be together there?
sv → mv
arco
sp
clb
cresc. poco a poco
ord.
II
29
msp
grad. transition from whispering to speaking
(st) → sp → msp
Whispering, very fast (repeat phrase throughout line):
Did I count that 5/8 bar correctly?

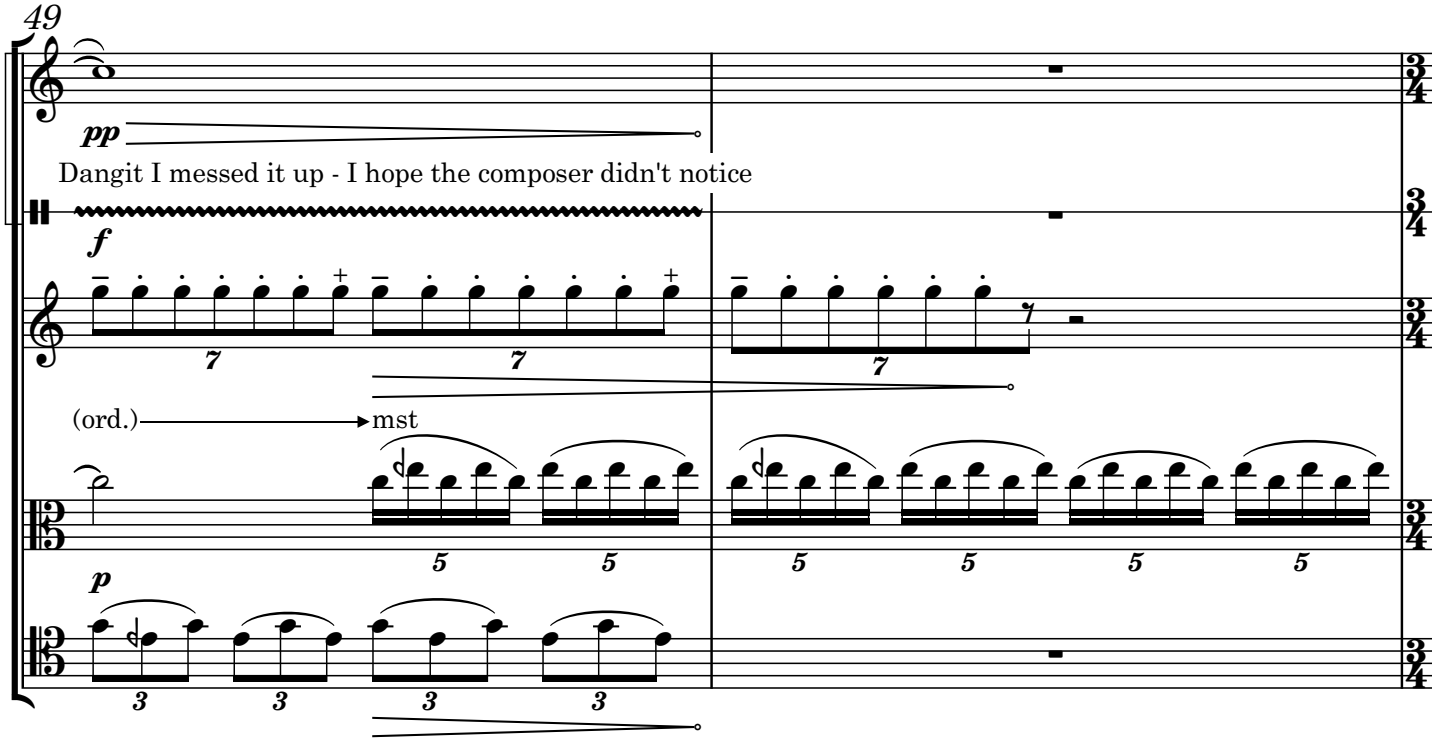

31
scratch
clb
ord.
molto
(grad. transition from whispering to speaking)
gliss.
clt
III
ord.
Whispering, very fast (repeat phrase throughout line):
I really hope all these high false harmonics speak
pizz.
arco
clb
msp
cresc. poco a poco
sv
mv
accel.
33
speaking
dim.
Here I'm listening to the two thirds to get ready to tune the neutral third
cresc.

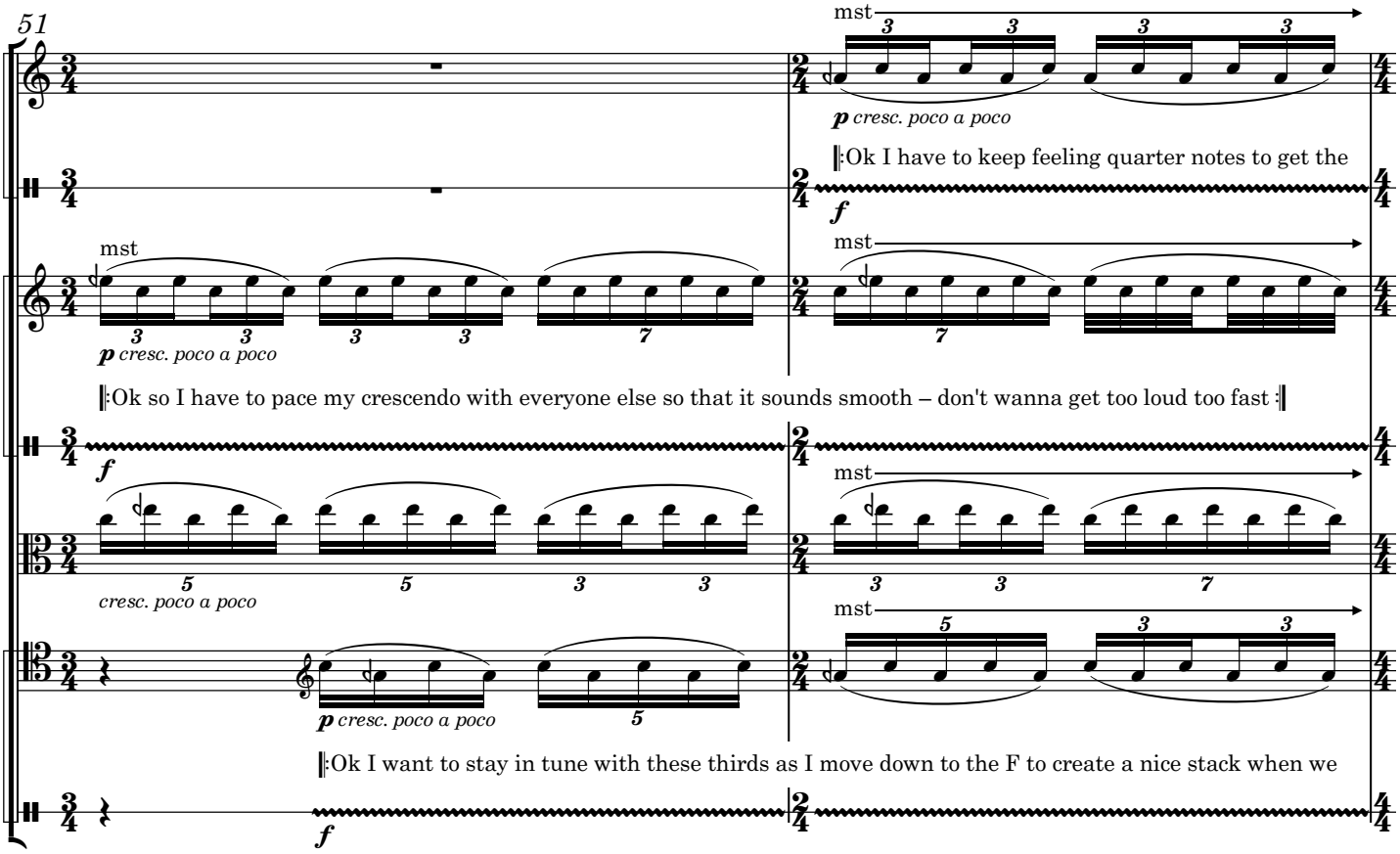

35
♩ = 66
(ord.)
mst
p pale
ff
arco
clb
f
ord.
sp
gliss.
subharm.
ord.
pp
fff
speaking
(ord.)
mst
II
p pale
ff
speaking
(ord.)
mst
p pale
ff
(grad. transition from whispering to speaking)
speaking
ff

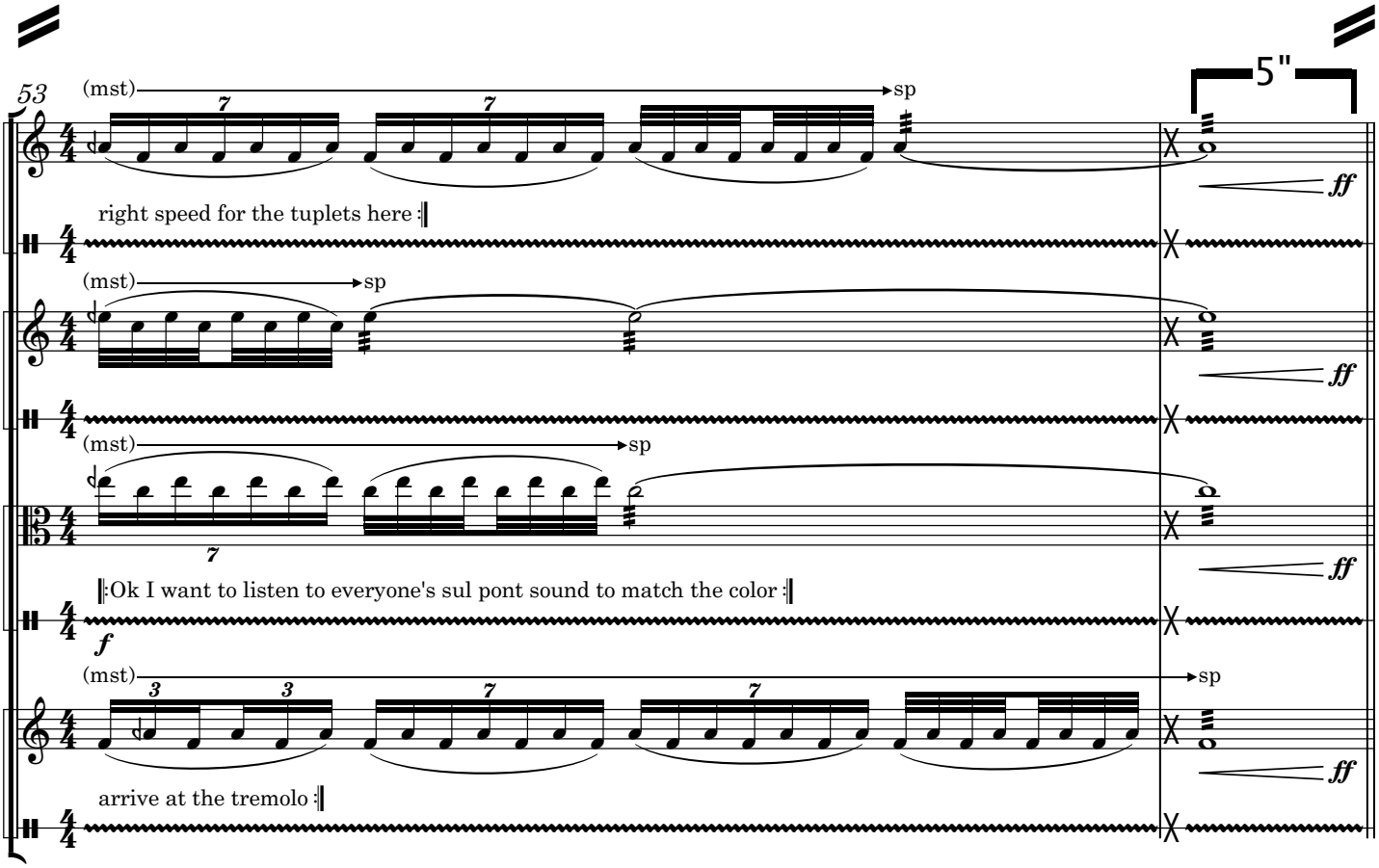

D Interlude (to Make Sure the Audience Gets It) ♩ = 66
38
(suddenly stop speaking)
mst
p
(suddenly stop speaking)
II
mst
p
(suddenly stop speaking)
mst
III
mst
sv
mv
Normal speaking voice, medium speed:
And now I have to slide up to a B quarter flat
f
(suddenly stop speaking)
mst
p


41
mst
III
Normal speaking voice, medium speed:
Ok, now I've gotta start subdividing septuplets
ord.
gliss.
mst
I gotta make sure to tune that against the D – has to be a neutral third
44
ord.
Normal speaking voice, medium speed:
This arrival on C
ord.
gliss.
to get ready to play them – think dragging sixteenths
mst
mst
sp
Normal speaking voice, medium speed:
Think about blend here - sul pont should pop from the


47
has to be exactly together with the viola - gotta watch them
gliss.
f
mst
ord.
gliss.
f
mst
sp
mst
p
mf
p
texture a bit, not too much


49
pp
Dangit I messed it up - I hope the composer didn't notice
f
(ord.)
mst
p


51
mst
p cresc. poco a poco
Ok I have to keep feeling quarter notes to get the
f
Ok so I have to pace my crescendo with everyone else so that it sounds smooth – don't wanna get too loud too fast
cresc. poco a poco
Ok I want to stay in tune with these thirds as I move down to the F to create a nice stack when we

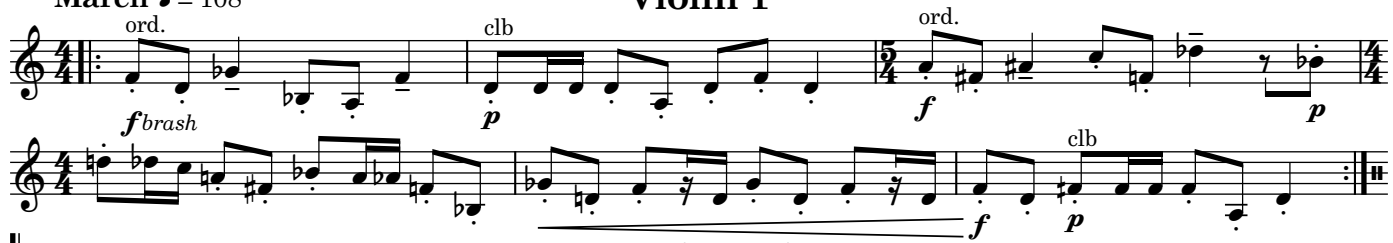

53
(mst)
sp
5"
ff
right speed for the tuplets here
Ok I want to listen to everyone's sul pont sound to match the color
arrive at the tremolo

E Quartet The Opposite of Unison 45"

Everyone: Play your musical cell while speaking (in normal speaking voice) your speech cell. Repeat both throughout the 45" (no need to synchronize). Begin with both at full volume, then gradually fade out your playing throughout the 45 seconds until it is inaudible, and you are just speaking.

Violin 1

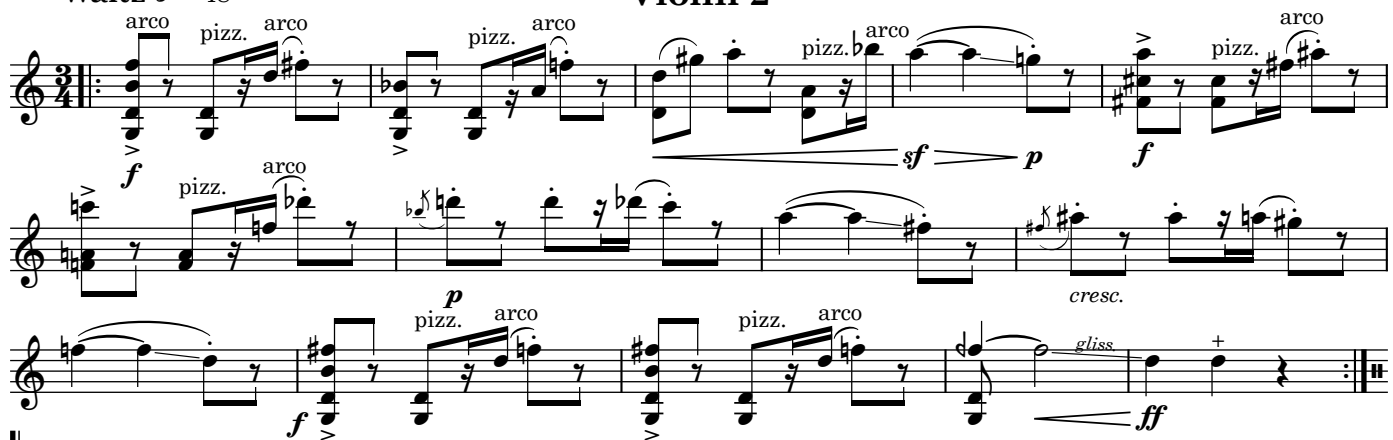
March ♩ = 108



I'm trying to get a nice, rough and heavy sound for all of these staccato eighth notes. Then I want to push to the peak of the phrase on the Db, but then make the sudden piano seem like a big musical surprise – wait what is everyone else doing? I thought they were supposed to be with me!

Violin 2

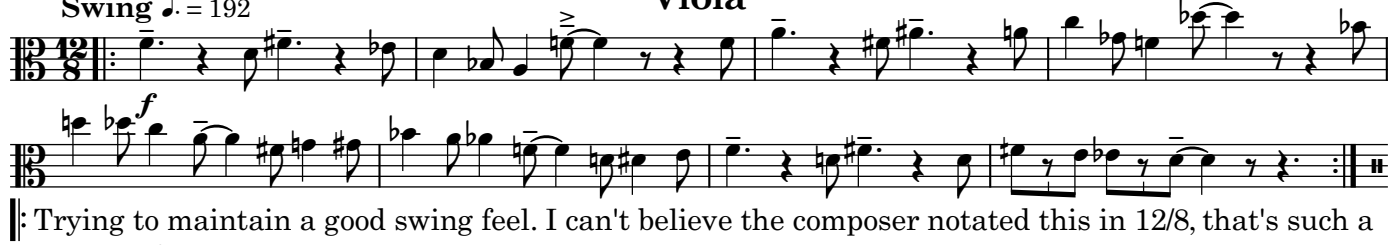
Waltz 𝅗𝅥. = 48



I'm focusing on getting the open string pizzes to ring out while not disrupting the melodic line. Gotta time these glisses well - want to make sure people can hear them when we play together – wait what is everyone else doing? Aren't they supposed to be playing a waltz like me?

Viola

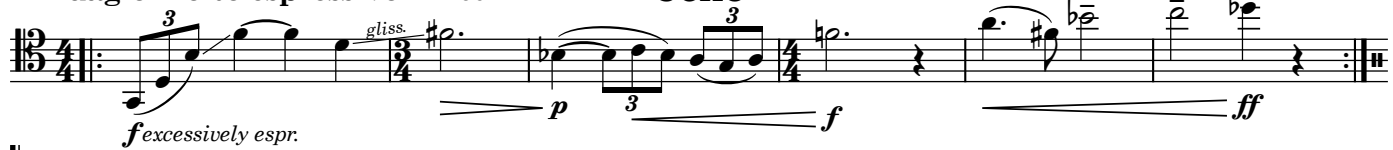
Swing ♩. = 192



Trying to maintain a good swing feel. I can't believe the composer notated this in 12/8, that's such a silly way of notating swing. I wonder how much weight I should put on the tenuto notes – wait what is everyone else doing? I thought they were going to be playing with me!

Cello

Adagio molto espressivo ♩ = 60



Oh wow so expressive I better vibrato the hell out of this since that is what makes music emotional. Man I sound so good, only thing left to do is get even louder since this is clearly the primary line – wait what is everyone else doing? Aren't they supposed to be accompanying me?

F Quartet Just Speaking

10"

Everyone: during these 10 seconds, while speaking, put away your bow and place your instrument in your lap (scroll facing left)

56

Normal speaking voice, medium speed (repeat phrase throughout line):

𝄆 I'm trying to get a nice, rough and heavy sound for all of these staccato eighth notes. Then I want to push to the peak of the phrase on the Db, but then make the sudden piano seem like a big musical surprise – wait what is everyone else doing? I thought they were supposed to be with me! 𝄇

f

Normal speaking voice, medium speed (repeat phrase throughout line):

𝄆 I'm focusing on getting the open string pizzes to ring out while not disrupting the melodic line. Gotta time these glisses well - want to make sure people can hear them when we play together – wait what is everyone else doing? Aren't they supposed to be playing a waltz like me? 𝄇

f

Normal speaking voice, medium speed (repeat phrase throughout line):

𝄆 Trying to maintain a good swing feel. I can't believe the composer notated this in 12/8, that's such a silly way of notating swing. I wonder how much weight I should put on the tenuto notes – wait what is everyone else doing? I thought they were going to be playing with me! 𝄇

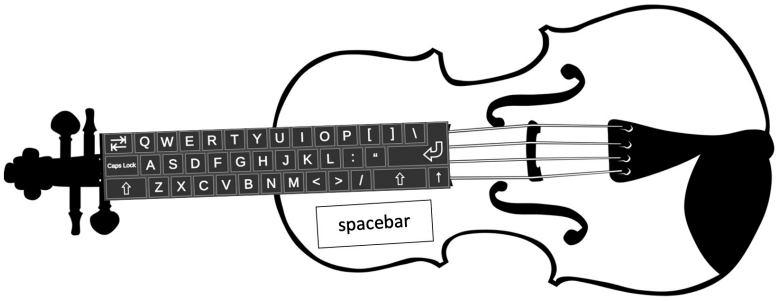
f

Normal speaking voice, medium speed (repeat phrase throughout line):

𝄆 Oh wow so expressive I better vibrato the hell out of this since that is what makes music emotional. Man I sound so good, only thing left to do is get even louder since this is clearly the primary line – wait what is everyone else doing? Aren't they supposed to be accompanying me? 𝄇

f

This diagram is related to the following page but placed here because of space.
It shows how to "type" the words you are saying on your instrument.



G

Everyone: "type" what you are saying on your instrument in your lap by tapping the strings with your fingers. Imagine that each string on your instrument is a row on your keyboard and spacebar is on the body of your instrument (See diagram on previous page). Slow down your speech so that you can type in unison with your speech – type as fast as you can.

20"

57

tap body of inst. ("spacebar")

sim. "typing" on instrument

I ‘ m t r y i n g t o

f

:I'm trying to get a nice, rough and heavy sound for all of these staccato eighth notes. Then I want to push to the peak of the phrase on the Db, but then make the sudden piano seem like a big musical surprise – wait what is everyone else doing? I thought they were supposed to be with me! :

grad. transition from speaking to whispering ---------- *whispering*

tap body of inst. ("spacebar")

sim. "typing" on instrument

I ‘ m f o c u s i n g o n

f

:I'm focusing on getting the open string pizzes to ring out while not disrupting the melodic line. Gotta time these glisses well - want to make sure people can hear them when we play together – wait what is everyone else doing? Aren't they supposed to be playing a waltz like me? :

grad. transition from speaking to whispering ---------- *whispering*

p

tap body of inst. ("spacebar")

sim. "typing" on instrument

T r y i n g t o m a i n t a i n

f

:Trying to maintain a good swing feel. I can't believe the composer notated this in 12/8, that's such a silly way of notating swing. I wonder how much weight I should put on the tenuto notes – wait what is everyone else doing? I thought they were going to be playing with me! :

grad. transition from speaking to whispering ---------- *whispering*

tap body of inst. ("spacebar")

sim. "typing" on instrument

O h w o w s o e x p r e s s i v e

f

:Oh wow so expressive I better vibrato the hell out of this since that is what makes music emotional. Man I sound so good, only thing left to do is get even louder since this is clearly the primary line – wait what is everyone else doing? Aren't they supposed to be accompanying me? :

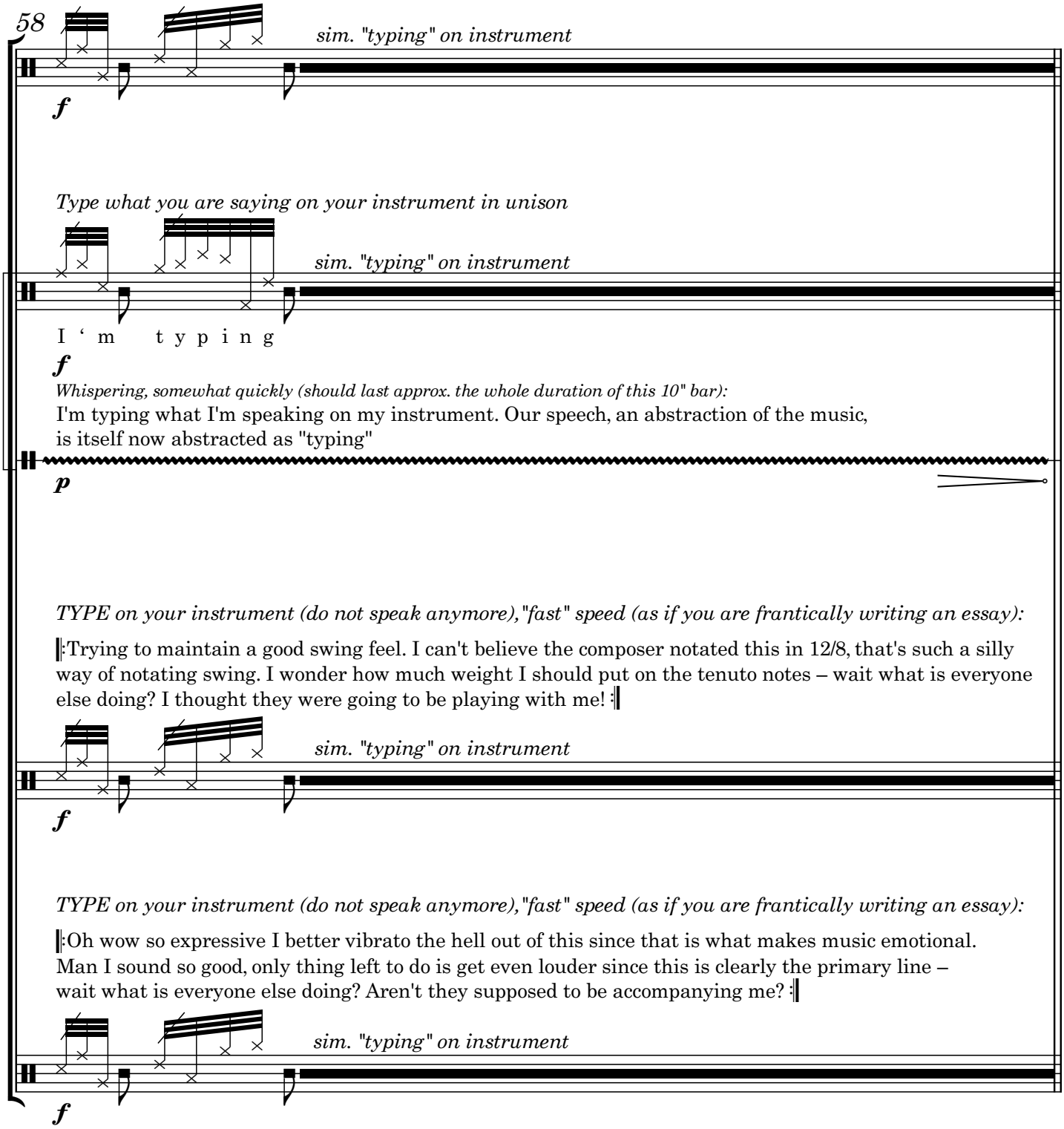
grad. transition from speaking to whispering ---------- *whispering*

H

10"

TYPE on your instrument (do not speak anymore),"fast" speed (as if you are frantically writing an essay):

‖:I'm trying to get a nice, rough and heavy sound for all of these staccato eighth notes. Then I want to push to the peak of the phrase on the Db, but then make the sudden piano seem like a big musical surprise – wait what is everyone else doing? I thought they were supposed to be with me! :‖



TYPE on your instrument (do not speak anymore),"fast" speed (as if you are frantically writing an essay):

‖:Trying to maintain a good swing feel. I can't believe the composer notated this in 12/8, that's such a silly way of notating swing. I wonder how much weight I should put on the tenuto notes – wait what is everyone else doing? I thought they were going to be playing with me! :‖

TYPE on your instrument (do not speak anymore),"fast" speed (as if you are frantically writing an essay):

‖:Oh wow so expressive I better vibrato the hell out of this since that is what makes music emotional. Man I sound so good, only thing left to do is get even louder since this is clearly the primary line – wait what is everyone else doing? Aren't they supposed to be accompanying me? :‖

10"

Type on your instrument, fast speed:

𝄆: I'm trying to get a nice, rough and heavy sound for all of these staccato eighth notes. Then I want to push to the peak of the phrase on the Db, but then make the sudden piano seem like a big musical surprise – wait what is everyone else doing? I thought they were supposed to be with me! :𝄇

59

f ——— ***p***

TYPE on your instrument (do not speak anymore),"fast" speed (as if you are frantically writing an essay):

𝄆: I'm typing what I'm speaking on my instrument. Our speech, an abstraction of the music, is itself now abstracted as "typing" :𝄇

f ——— ***p***

TYPE on your instrument, fast speed:

𝄆: Trying to maintain a good swing feel. I can't believe the composer notated this in 12/8, that's such a silly way of notating swing. I wonder how much weight I should put on the tenuto notes – wait what is everyone else doing? I thought they were going to be playing with me! :𝄇

f ——— ***p***

TYPE on your instrument, fast speed:

𝄆: Oh wow so expressive I better vibrato the hell out of this since that is what makes music emotional. Man I sound so good, only thing left to do is get even louder since this is clearly the primary line – wait what is everyone else doing? Aren't they supposed to be accompanying me? :𝄇

f ——— ***p***

J

Everyone: throughout this system, shift between "fast" typing speed (as if frantically writing an essay) and "slow" typing speed (approx. 2 letters per second, slow enough to clearly hear the resulting pitches) as indicated.

4" 4" 4" 4" 3" 3" 3"

60

sim. typing fast → slow → fast fast → slow

p ——— ***f*** ——— ***p*** *sim. typing* fast → slow slow → fast → slow

p *sim. typing* ——— ***f*** fast → slow → fast → slow

p *sim. typing* ——— ***f*** ——— ***p*** fast → slow → fast → slow

p ——— ***f*** ——— ***p***

Everyone: grad. synchronize typing over the course of this bar until everyone is "typing" eighth notes at ♩ = 66.

Everyone: type in synchronized rhythm (at whatever place in the text you are currently at)

K ♩ = 66

67

8"

sim. typing (slow speed)

(this sequence of letter/spacebar taps is just an example – your spacebar hits will be in different places based on where you are in your text)

p

sim. typing (slow speed)

(this sequence of letter/spacebar taps is just an example – your spacebar hits will be in different places based on where you are in your text)

p

sim. typing (slow speed)

(this sequence of letter/spacebar taps is just an example – your spacebar hits will be in different places based on where you are in your text)

p

sim. typing (slow speed)

(this sequence of letter/spacebar taps is just an example – your spacebar hits will be in different places based on where you are in your text)

p

Everyone: stop typing text, switch to tapping at two random high spots on the fingerboard, alternating between hands (L and R here refer to hands, not typed letters)...

...then gradually shift from tapping at a random point on the fingerboard to tapping the specific pitches notated

70

L R L R

f

tap on inst. body

p

R L R L

f

tap on inst. body

p

L R L R

f

tap on inst. body

p

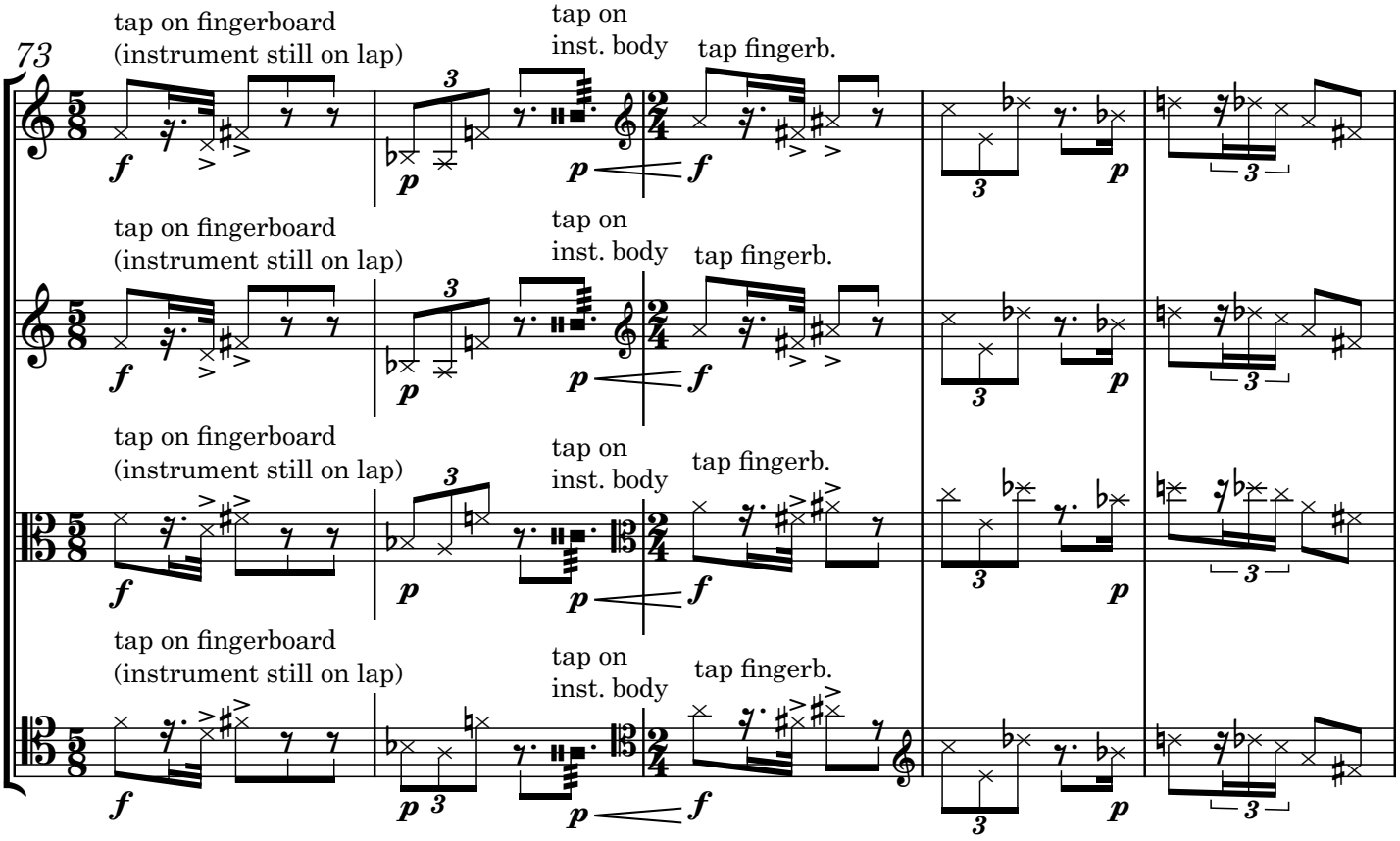
R L R L

f

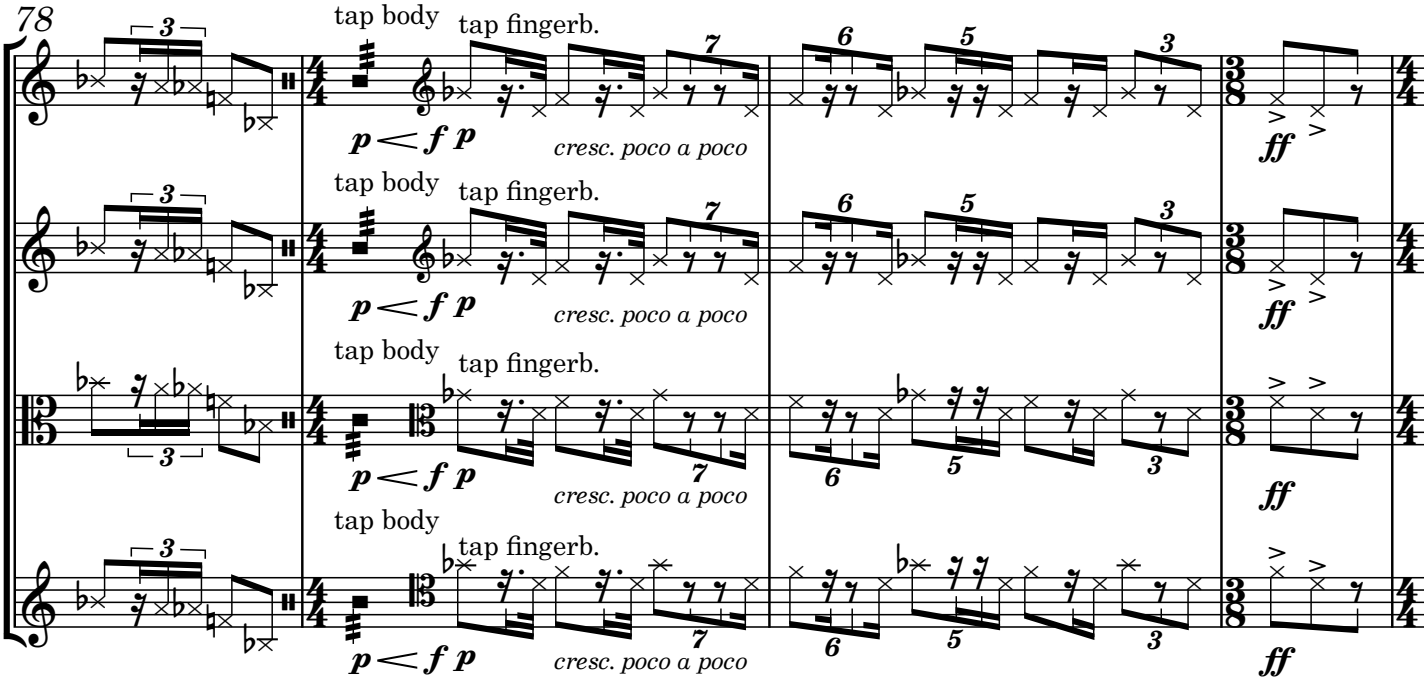
tap on inst. body

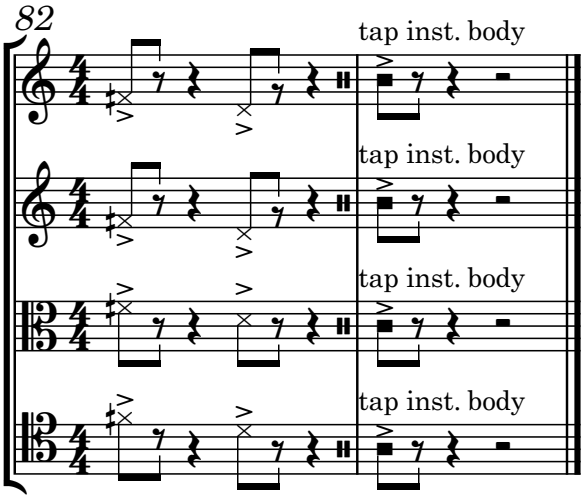
p

L I Guess Quartet Is Unison Again ♪ = 80



accel. ..... ♩ = 66




82
tap inst. body
tap inst. body
tap inst. body
tap inst. body