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JAB

PIANO

(2021)

ALEX TAY

Jab is dedicated to Adam Łukawski, a gifted composer who radically changed how I regard Shepard tones. He himself is carrying out important research which implements both Shepard tone principles and Artificial Intelligence technologies. This piece would have taken a very different course if not for many of our perspective-altering conversations. *Jab* is directly influenced by many of Adam's ideas.

Jab is a simultaneous expression of turmoil and joy. At the time of composing *Jab.* I experienced frustration, anger, fear, rejection and loss. At the same time, there was laughter, exhilaration, discovery and rebirth. While sketching, composing and extensively recomposing, I constantly questioned what exactly I wanted to deliver. Was it a joke or swear? A punch line or a sucker punch? Ultimately, I couldn't decide.

The piece is built on six contrasting gestures. The first, at bar 1, is a cluster that peels away to reveal diatonic harmonies and then a scale (such gestures are found in Dutilleux, Nielsen and Schumann). The second, at bar 5, is a twinkling two part counterpoint. The third, at bar 8, is a bulldozer in a China shop, a spectacle which misdirects. The fourth, at bar 23, is a slow, ornamental, Finnisy-an melody with morphs into two. The fifth, at bar 33, is a Shepard tone texture. The Shepard tone textures in particular are inspired by Adam's research. While formulating his theories and ideas, he showed me Shepard tones built on parallel chords and what he described to me as "gravity lines". On hearing these "gravity lines", I realised that a descending tone suspended in the air by piano resonance could be answered either immediately with a downward scale and/or its next descending tone in its downward trajectory could arrive much later. When both of the above are implemented, two scales descending in different timescales are heard, such is the power of pitch-proximate stream segregation. This way of increasing the scalic potential of each tone in a Shepard tone texture only enhances the illusion's effect. The sixth and last gesture, at bar 51, consists of lithe arpeggiations which excite ghostly harmonics from strings sustained in the sostenuto pedal. These seemingly appear from nowhere. Across the piece I combine and recombine these gestures; push them through Risset accelerations and decelerations; throw and muddy them.

Jab was commissioned by John Woolf through the Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust. Initially, Dominic Degavino, a Park Lane Group young artist, was due to premier the piece. However, because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Park Lane Group were unable to mount a premier of the piece. Instead, Ben Smith premiered the piece in November 2021 at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

The tempi marked in this piece are ideals: although they cannot be fully realised by a human pianist, they should be strived for. In the fastest passages, pianists should decide their own maximum tempi and scale the tempi in the rest of the piece accordingly. Where certain composed details prevent performers from realising the full effect which they interpret that any given passage of *Jab* should have, performers may edit or even omit any of those aforementioned details.

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JAB

Alex Tay

♩ = ca. 104 rit. ♩ = ca. 88

Strike keys, left hand gradually releases over the indicated duration

Piano

***f**, vicious*

♩ = ca. 92, con rubato — rit. — ♩ = 80 — Subito ♩ = 96 — ♪³ = ♪⁵ ♩ = 116 — ♪⁵ = ♪ ♩ = 144

5

Pno.

***pp** molto leggiero, starlight*

***f**, boisterous*

*sub. **p**, wraith*

*sub. **mp** **mf***

f ***mf*** ***p*** ***fp*** ***mf*** ***f*** ***sf***

Ped.

♪⁵⁻⁶ = ♪ ♩ = 120 — ♪⁵ = ♪ ♩ = 150 rit. — ♩ = 96 — ♪⁵ = ♪⁷ ♩ = 68 rit. — ♩ = 48 — **molto rit.** ♪³ = ♪ ♪ = 144 — ♪ = 116

13

Pno.

*più **f*** ***mf*** ***p*** ***ff*** *sub. **p**, cresc.* ***mp**, cresc.* ***f*** ***pp*** *molto cresc.* ***mf**, molto cresc.*

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A

19

♪ = 88 ♪ = 60 ♪ = ♪ ♩ = 60 **poco rit.** ♩ = 48 **molto accel.** ♩ = 92 **molto rit.**

Pno.

ff sonoro *p* *f* *mp* *ff* *sub. p leggiero* *pp* *sf* *sf* *p* *f*

Ped.

B

23

♩ = ca. 48, con molto rubato

Pno.

ppp sotto voce ma cantabile

Una Corda

(Ped.) (1/4) (1/4) (1/2) (full) (1/2) (full)

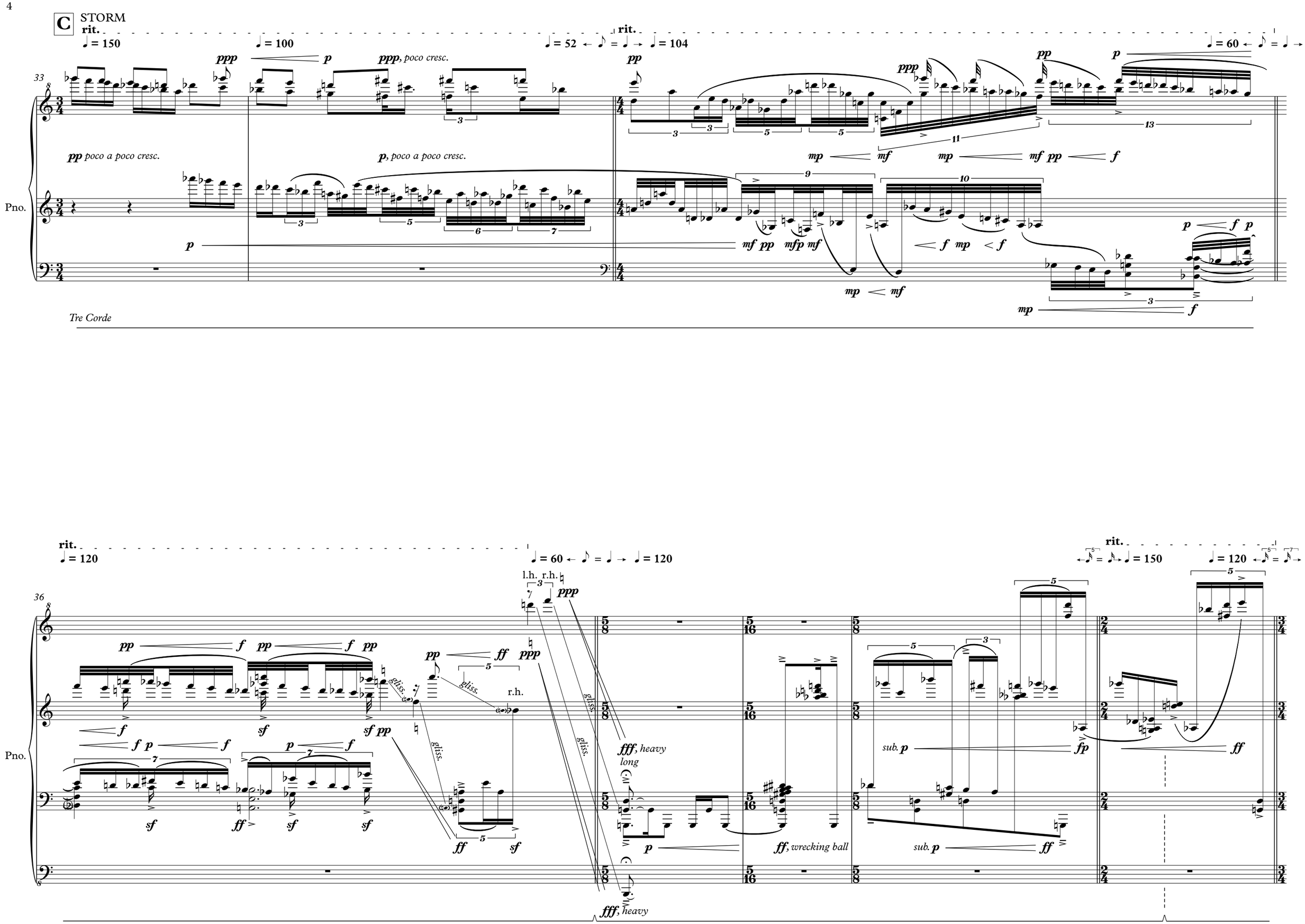
poco accel. ♩ = 60

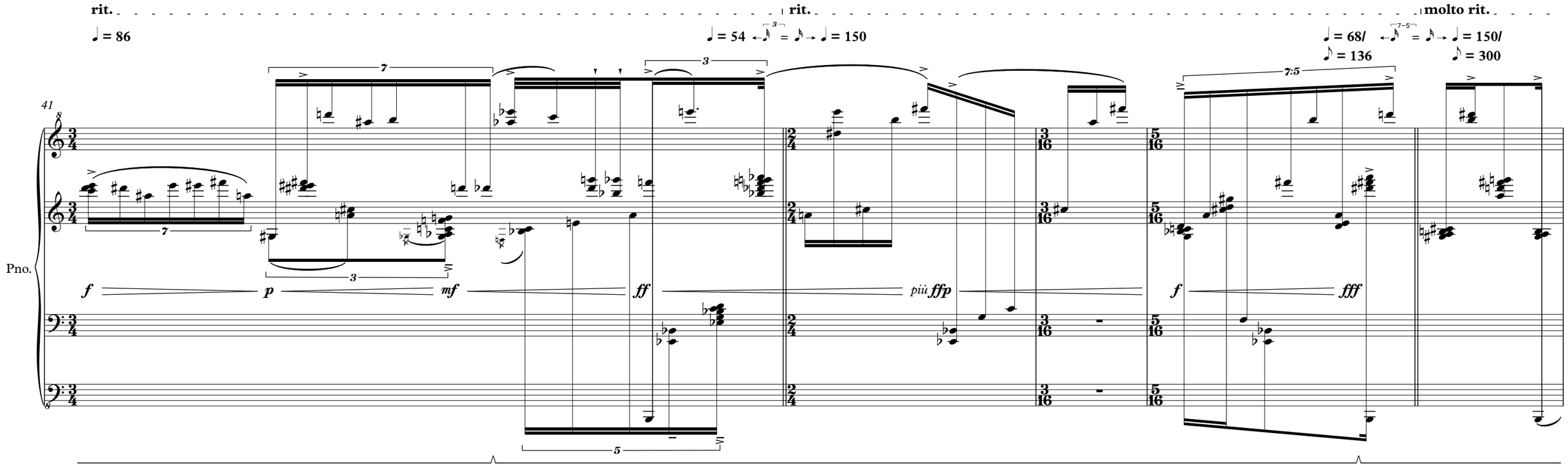
30

Pno.

poco a poco cresc. *mp* *f*

(1/2)


C STORM
rit.
♩ = 150
♩ = 100
♩ = 52
♩ = 104
♩ = 60
33
Pno.
pp poco a poco cresc.
p, poco a poco cresc.
ppp, poco cresc.
Tre Corde
36
♩ = 120
♩ = 60
♩ = 120
♩ = 150
l.h.
r.h.
gliss.
fff, heavy
long
ff, wrecking ball
sub. p
fp


rit.
rit.
molto rit.
♩ = 86
♩ = 54
♩ = 150
♩ = 68/
♪ = 136
♩ = 150/
♪ = 300
41
Pno.
f
p
mf
ff
più ffp
f
fff
7
3
5
7:5
7:6
46
♩ = 47/
♪ = 94
rit.
♩ = 94
♩ = 80
♩ = 64
♩ = 54
fp
ff
sub. p
ff
mp
ff
f
p
ff
ppp
mf
p
ff

D 𝅗𝅥 = 54/♩ = 108

51

Pno.

p, nervous

Sost. Ped. sempre

Ped.

p

Ped.

accel. ♩ = 120

mp *pp*

1/2 Ped. *(full)*

f

rit. ♩ = 108

57

sub. mp (Sost. Ped. sempre cont.) *sff*

p

Ped.

accel. ♩ = 120 **molto rit.**

f *sf*

Ped.

♩ = 54 ← 𝅘𝅥𝅯 = 𝅘𝅥𝅯 → ♩ = 90 **accel.** ♩ = 120 ← 𝅘𝅥𝅯 = 𝅘𝅥𝅯 → ♩ = 180 **rit.** ♩ = 108

62

sub. p cresc. *f*

sub. mp (Sost. Ped. sempre cont.) *mf*

pp

ff

Ped.

pp

Ped.

accel.

pp

Ped.

♩ = 120 **rit.** ♩ = 80 ← 3 = ♪ → ♩ = 120 **molto rit.** ♩ = 72

67

Pno.

f, cresc. *sub. p* *ff* *sf* *p, cresc.* *mf, molto cresc.* *mp, molto cresc.*

(Ped.)
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

poco rit. ♩ = 32 ← 3 5 = ♪ → ♪. = 160 **poco accel.**

72

Pno.

ff *più ff* *sub. p* *ff* *più ff* *mf* *sf* *pp* *p* *pp* *mp* *pp*

(Ped.)
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)
Ped.

E

♪. = 180 (♩ = 120) **accel.** ♩ = 144 **molto rit.** ♩ = ca. 48, con molto rubato

79

Pno.

pp *ff* *sub. f* *fff* *mf* *sub. ppp, sotto voce ma cantabile*

(Ped.)
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)
(1/2) *(full)* *(1/2)* *(full)* *(1/4)* *(full)*

87

Pno.

p *pp* *mp* > *p* *mf* > *p* *mp* *mf*

(Ped.) (1/2) (1/4) (full) (1/4) (full) (1/2)

91

Pno.

F

mp, poco cresc. *mf, poco marcato, cresc.* *f, marcato* *sf* *f* *mp*

(Ped.) (1/2) (1/2) (full) (sim.)

95

Pno.

p *mf* *mf* *sf* *p* *mf* *sf* *sub. mp* *f* *sub. mp* *f* *p* *f*

(Ped.)

99

Pno.

poco accel.

p *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

(Ped.)

102

Pno.

poco a poco cresc.

ff

8vb

poco a poco cresc.

(Ped.)

G **Subito Meno Mosso ♩ = 48**

poco accel.

105

ff

sub. ppp

pppp

ff

sub. pp

8va

Una Corda

Sost. Ped. sempre

109

ppp

ppp

pp

p

pp

f

pp < ff

pp

pp < f

(Una Corda)

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

H WINDING, TIGHTENING

accel.

112

Pno.

♩ = 60 ♩ = 70 ♩ = 80

p *mp* *ppp* *p* *pp* *mp* *pp*

p, poco a poco cresc.

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

Ped.

mp *sub. mf* *sub. p* *mf*

115

Pno.

♩ = 90 ♩ = 100 ♩ = 110 ♩ = 120 ← ♩ = ♪ →

sub. p *sub. pp* *sub. p* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *pp* *p* *sub. pp* *mf* *pp* *mf*

mp, poco a poco cresc.

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

mf, poco a poco cresc.

I **più accel.**

118

Pno.

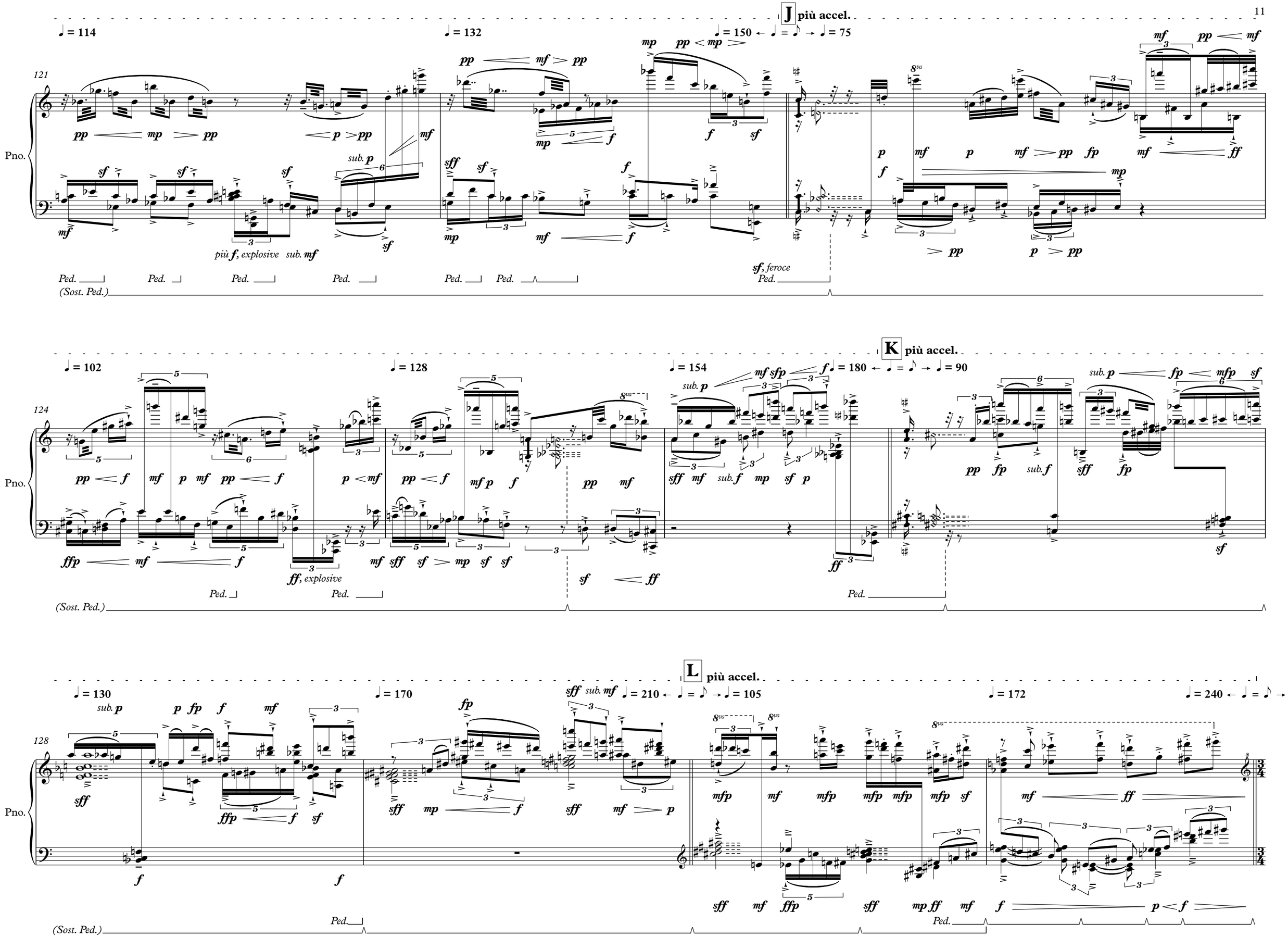
♩ = 60 ♩ = 78 ♩ = 96

ff *pp, leggiero* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *p* *pp* *mp* *pp* *p* *pp* *mp*

ff *sf* *mp* *sf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mp* *mp* *smf* *sf* *smf* *smf* *mp* *mf*

Ped. *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

(Sost. Ped. cont.)


J più accel.
♩ = 114
♩ = 132
♩ = 150 ← ♩ = ♪ → ♩ = 75
121
Pno.
più f, explosive
sub. mf
sf, feroce
Ped.
(Sost. Ped.)
K più accel.
♩ = 102
♩ = 128
♩ = 154
♩ = 180 ← ♩ = ♪ → ♩ = 90
124
ff, explosive
L più accel.
♩ = 130
♩ = 170
♩ = 210 ← ♩ = ♪ → ♩ = 105
♩ = 172
♩ = 240
128

M MAELSTROM

rit.

♩ = 120 ♩ = 80 ♩ = 54 ← ♪ = ♪ → ♩ = 108 rit.

132

Pno.

ppp, *cresc.* *p*, *cresc.* *ppp* *pp* *mp* *smf* *mp* *mf* *p* *gliss.*

Ped.

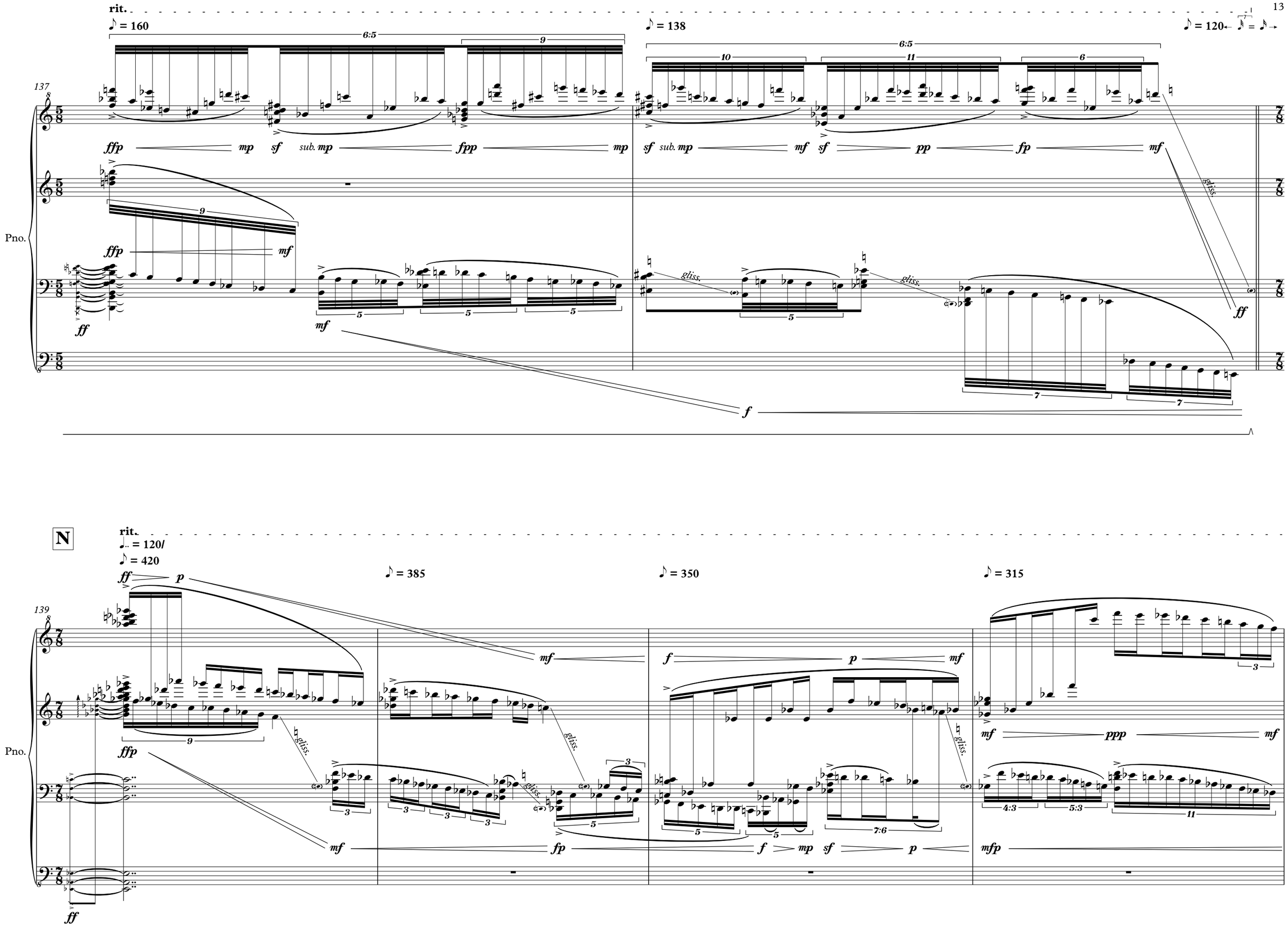
rit.

♩ = 68 ♩ = 26 ← ³♪ = ♩ → ♩ = 80 ♩ = 40 ← ♪ = ♪ →

135

Pno.

mf *pp* *f* *pp* *ff* *gliss.* *mf* *sub. mp* *mf* *f* *fp* *ff* *pp* *mf* *sub. ppp* *ff* *ffp* *mfp* *f* *p*


rit.
♪ = 160
♪ = 138
♪ = 120
137
Pno.
ffp
mp
sf
sub. mp
fpp
mf
pp
fp
ff
gliss.
f
N
rit.
♩. = 120/
♪ = 420
♪ = 385
♪ = 350
♪ = 315
139
ppp
mfp

O rit.

♩.. = 60/ ← ♩.. = 𝅗𝅥 → ♩ = 120

♪ = 280 | ♪ = 245 | ♪ = 210 | ♩ = 112

143

Pno.

mf p | f pp | fffpp mp | sf p ff pp

marcato

gliss.

f mp | f | sub. pp f | sfmp ff pp

fff

♩ = 102 | ♩ = 94 | ♩ = 85 | ♩ = 77

147

Pno.

sfp mf | f pp | fp f | fp ff mp

gliss.

sfp | f mp | fp più f mp mf | sf f | ff mf

P **rit.**

♩ = 68 ♩ = 60 ← ♪ = ♩ → ♩ = 120 ♩ = 104 ♩ = 90

151

Pno.

marcato

sfp *f* *gliss.* *ff* *gliss.* *gliss.* *ffp* *sf* *sub.* *mf* *fff* *fff*

fffppp *fffppp* *p* *sub.* *ppp* *p* *sub.* *pp* *pp* *sub.* *ppp* *pp* *p*

Sost. Ped. sempre

rit.

♩ = 76 ♩ = 60 ← ♩ = 𝅗𝅥 → ♩ = 120 ♩ = 104

155

Pno.

p *sub.* *pp* *mp* *sub.* *pp* *p* *gliss.* *mp* *sub.* *p* *mp* *sub.* *mf* *sub.* *p* *mf* *f* *mp* *mf* *pp* *sfp* *ff* *p* *gliss.* *gliss.* *mp* *sub.* *p* *mp* *sub.* *mf* *sub.* *mp* *mf* *sub.* *mp* *f* *sub.* *mf* *f* *sf* *ff* *p*

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

♩ = 88

sfp ff mp fp ffp

♩ = 72

sfp fff mp ff fff sub. mf ff pp

158

Pno.

gliss.

sfp ff mf sfp ff sub. mf ff fff f ff fff sub. f fff f

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

Q

♩ = 56

sff fff sub. mf f pp ff fff p ff

♩ = 40 ← ♩ = 𝅗𝅥 → 𝅗𝅥 = 40

sub. p mfp f fff

160

Pno.

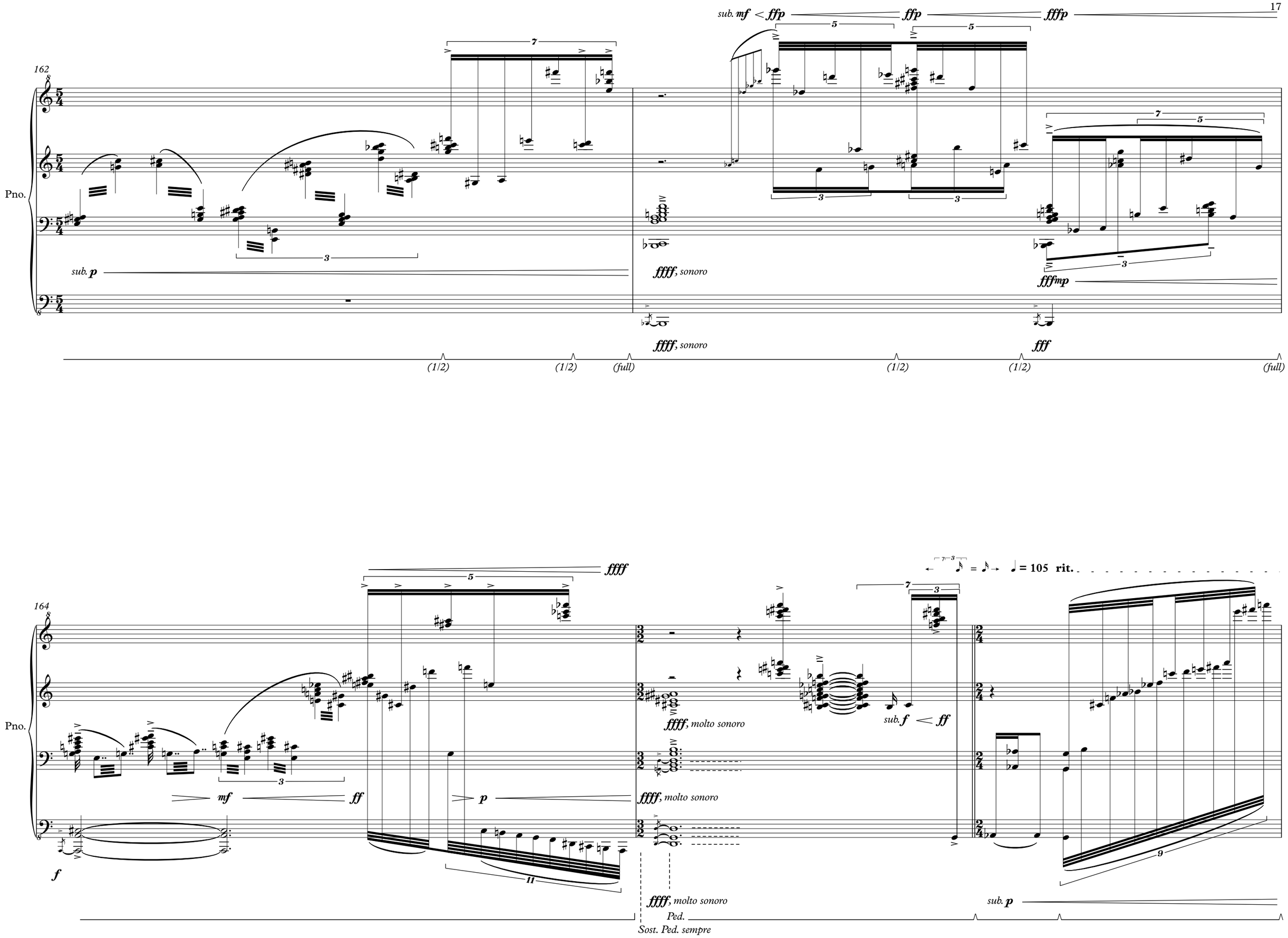
gliss.

ffff

più fff, sonoro sub. mf < f ff sub. mp, cantabile fff=

sff fff sub. f fff più fff, sonoro

(Sost. Ped.)


162
Pno.
sub. mf < ffp
ffp
fffp
sub. p
ffff, sonoro
fffmp
fff
(1/2)
(full)
164
ffff
mf
ff
p
f
ffff, molto sonoro
sub. f < ff
= 105 rit.
sub. p
Ped.
Sost. Ped. sempre

♩ = 68 **poco rit.** ♩ = 60

167

Pno.

ff *fffp* *ff* *fff* *pp* *ff* *pp*

(Ped.)
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

poco accel. ♩ = 68 **rit.** ♩ = 40

170

Pno.

f *mp* *ff* *fff* *ffff*

(Ped.)
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

R **Subito** ♩ = 60 **rit.** ♩ = 40/♪ = 80, **con rubato** **accel.** ♩ = 60 **rit.**

173

Pno.

p *pp* *sub. mp* *f* *mp*

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)
Ped. *Ped.* *Ped.*

178

Pno.

pp *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp*

Una Corda
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

accel. ♩ = 72 **rit.** ♩ = 60 **accel.** ♩ = 80 ← 𝅗𝅥 = ♪ → ♩ = 160 **rall.** ♩ = 126

183

Pno.

mf *p* *f* *p* *mf* *ppp, gentle* *sim.* *sempre ppp*

Tre Corde
Ped.
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

♩ = 92 ♩ = 60 ♩ = 40 **accel.** ♩ = 72 **rit.**

187

Pno.

(ppp) *mp* *mf* *ppp* *ppp* *mp* *mf* *p* *f* *p*

(Ped.)
(Sost. Ped.)
Ped.
Sost. Ped. sempre

♩ = 40

sub. pp p pp mp pp accel. mp > p sub. ppp

190

Pno.

mf

sub. pp p pp p mp >

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

Ped.

♩ = 80 ← 𝅘𝅥𝅯 = ♪ → ♩ = 160 rit. ♩ = 112 ← 𝅘𝅥𝅯 = ♪

193

Pno.

sim. sempre ppp

ppp

8va

mp mf

(Ped.)

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

♩ = 80 rall. ♩ = 40

196

Pno.

p mp p mp pp mp ppp mf ppp mf

mf mp p ppp

(Ped.)

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

♩ = 60 accel.

♩ = 80 rit.

199

Pno.

16:15

18

5

3

3

5

7

3

8vb

ppp

mp

mf

sub. p

f

p

mp

Ped.

(Sost. Ped. cont.)

Sost. Ped. sempre

Subito ♩ = 40

poco accel.

ppp

mp

♩ = 72 rit.

202

Pno.

3

5

pp

p

3

5

mp

16:10

3

p

5

6

5

5

mf

Ped.

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

♩ = 60 poco accel.

205

Pno.

marcato

sim.

With Palms

ppp

pp

ppp

p

ppp

mp

ppp

mp

pp

mp

p

5

5

5

7

7

7

ppp, poco cresc.

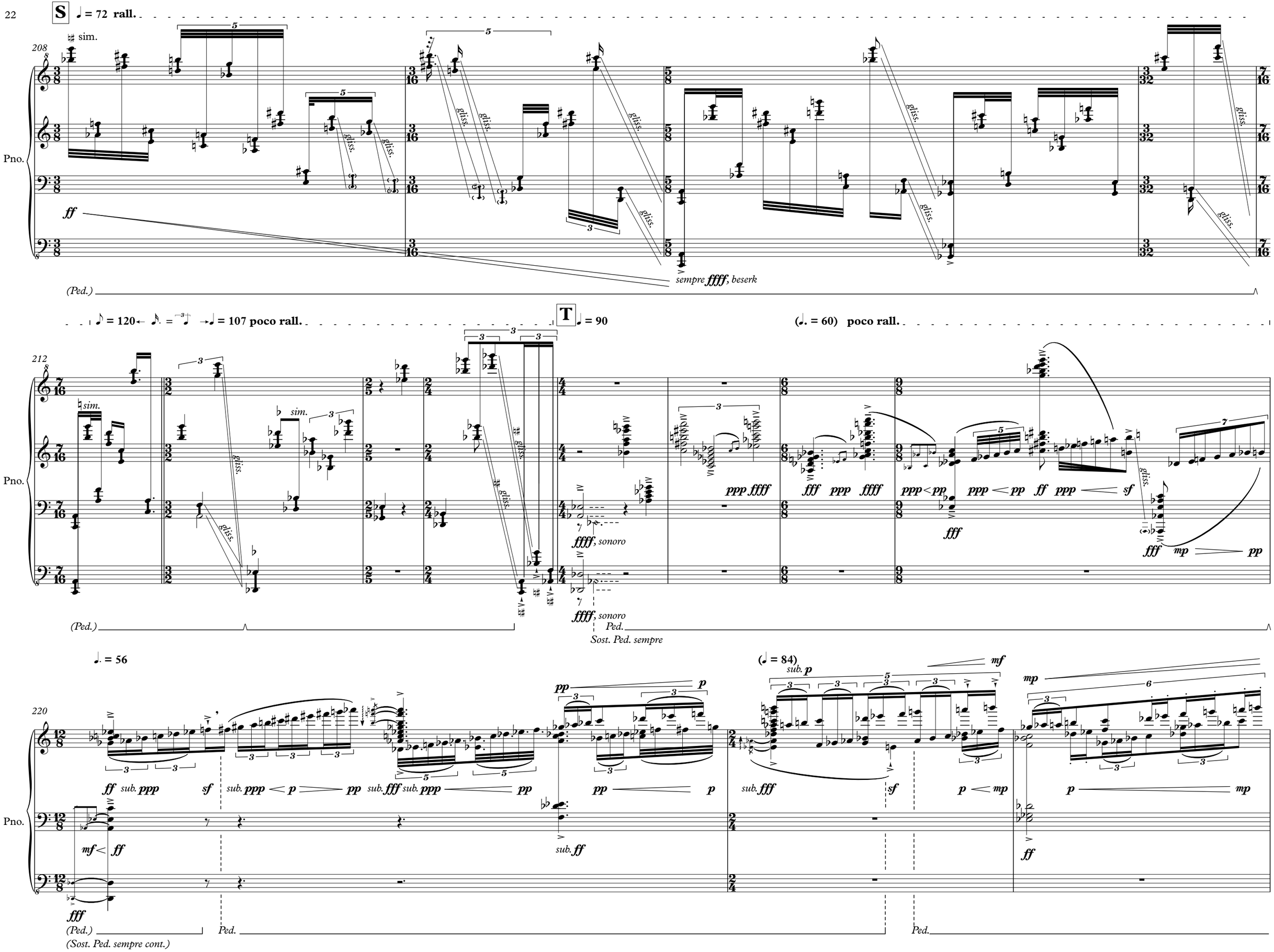
pp

mp

mf

5

(Ped.)


S
♩ = 72 rall.
sim.
208
Pno.
ff
gliss.
sempre ffff, beserk
(Ped.)
♪ = 120
♪. = 3
♩ = 107 poco rall.
T
♩ = 90
(♩. = 60) poco rall.
212
sim.
ffff, sonoro
ppp ffff
fff ppp ffff
ppp < pp
ppp < pp
ff ppp
sf
fff
mp
pp
Ped.
Sost. Ped. sempre
♩. = 56
(♩ = 84)
220
sub. p
mf
mp
ff sub. ppp
sf
sub. ppp < p > pp
sub. fff sub. ppp
pp
p
sub. fff
sf
p < mp
p
mp
mf < ff
sub. ff
fff
(Ped.)
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

223

Pno.

fff fffmp mf sub. mp mf
fff mp mfp mp sfp
ff mf p mp p mf
pp p pp mp ppp
sf p mp pp mf pp mf pp mf pp
mf mp
fff ppp
fff p
p mp p
pp p
mp mp mf
ppp pp p
(Ped.)
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)
Ped.
mp

226

Pno.

ff mfp sf pp mp p mf p
mf pp mf pp f pp f ppp
fff ppp mf
fff pp mp pp sf sfp
mp pp fp pp mp pp
ffp mf sub. p
mf p pp mf p mp pp mf pp
f
f ppp
p
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)
Ped.
Ped.

228

rit.

Pno.

(Ped.)
(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

233

♩ = 56 poco a poco accel.

Pno.

Una Corda *Tre Corde*

239

♩ = 63

♩ = 76

Pno.

Ped. *(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)*

più accel.

♩ = 84 ♩ = 96 ♩ = 108 ♩ = 120 ♩ = 144 ← 𝅘𝅥𝅯 = 𝅘𝅥𝅯 →

245

Pno.

Ped. *(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)*

250 **U** **Subito Presto Possibile**

Pno.

pp, *molto leggiero* ***mp*** *sub.* ***pp*** *sub.* ***mp*** *sub.* ***pp*** *sub.* ***mp*** ***pp*** *sub.* ***mf*** ***mp*** ***pp*** *sub.* ***mp*** *sub.* ***pp*** ***sf***

(Ped.) *(Ped. off)*

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

252

Pno.

mf ***pp*** ***mp*** ***pp*** ***mf*** *sub.* ***pp*** ***sf*** *sub,* ***f*** ***pp*** *sub.* ***mf*** *sub.* ***pp*** *sub.* ***mf*** ***pp*** *sub.* ***mp*** ***mf*** *sub.* ***pp*** ***mp*** *sub.* ***pp*** ***mf*** ***p*** ***mf***

(Sost. Ped. sempre cont.)

Repeat this staccato passage more than twice. The performer should decide where it is most fitting to end. The final repeat of this passage may be partial. Once the performer finishes, the bass tones held by the sostenuto pedal should have long died out and only a haze of harmonics should remain.

254

Pno.

sub. ***pp*** ***mf*** *sub.* ***pp*** ***sf*** ***pp*** *sub.* ***mp*** ***f***

(Sost. Ped.)

Hold the sostenuto pedal at least until the harmonics die out.

FIN