Steven Snowden

Long Distance

For Solo Percussion and Electronics

Long Distance

Atlanta, GA – 1972
Vibes or Marimba + Electronics (4 min)

Brooklyn, NY – 1975
Marimba + Electronics (6 min.)

Monroe, NC – 1977
For Marimba or Vibes + Electronics (4 min.)

Panorama, VA – 1976
Vibes + Electronics (6 min.)

Total duration – 20 min.

This piece was commissioned by an international consortium led by

Mike Truesdell and **Tim Briones**

Consortium members:

Mike Truesdell
Tim Briones
Aaron Butler
Josh Spaulding
Thad Anderson
Megan Arns
Alexv Rolfe
Adam Groh
Nancy Zeltsman
George Nickson
Benjamin Fraley
Jeff Sass
Joe Millea
Chris Jones
John Corkhill
Pedro Carneiro
Ryan Truesdell
Lucas Garner
Aaron Ragsdale
Abby Fisher
Sean Connors
Logan Ball
Omar Carmenates
Colin Walker
Oliver Molina
Neil Sisauyhoat
Tyson Voigt
William Moersch
David Stevens
Andy Bliss
Michael Ptacin
Joint Venture Percussion Duo
(Laurent Warnier
and Xi Zhang)

Program Notes:

"Once upon a time, in the days before the ubiquitous and invisible internet, there was only one network. It was made of long-distance lines — actual wires — and it was ruled by an absolute monarch, Ma Bell. Most people traveled the network along conventional channels. But there were also explorers, a small group of curious misfits eager to map the darkest, most obscure corners of this evolving global net. Harvard students, blind teenagers, budding engineers — eventually they came together and formed a subculture. They became *phone phreaks*." - Jesse Hicks

I first learned about phone phreaks a couple of years ago and was immediately fascinated by their tenacity and boundless curiosity. By hacking the inner workings of payphones, building small electrical devices, or even whistling repeated tones at specific frequencies, they were able to manipulate this analog technology to connect with others in far away places or simply listen in on the pops, clicks, and hums produced by the machinery of distant networks. These sonic identifiers were unique to each of the thousands of long distance networks and (luckily for me) it was quite common for phreaks to make high quality reel-to-reel recordings of what they heard. All electronic sounds used in this piece come from these recordings and each movement is based upon the unique sonic qualities of calls from payphones in various locations in the US in the 1970's. – Steven Snowden

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Get technical info about running the electronics for this piece at
http://www.stevensnowden.com/ld_tech/

Performance Notes:

Movement selection and order:

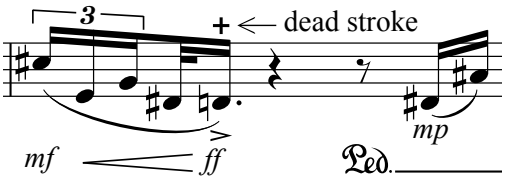
These movements can be played in any combination and in any order and it's up to the performer to decide what will work best for his or her program. (It would even work to separate these movements with other pieces if desired) Additionally, any of these movements can be performed individually, in pairs, threes, or as a complete suite. If three or more movements are performed, it would probably be best to separate the two slow movements. (*Brooklyn* and *Panorama*)

Instrumentation:

Brooklyn and *Monroe* were originally written for marimba while *Atlanta* and *Panorama* were originally written for vibes. However, I have written an optional vibes part for *Monroe* and an optional marimba part for *Atlanta*. With that in mind, it would be possible to program a performance of *Monroe, Brooklyn,* and *Atlanta* with only marimba. Likewise, it would be possible to program a performance of *Monroe*, *Panorama*, and *Atlanta* with only vibes. Finally, *Atlanta* was originally written for 3.5 vibes, but it can be performed on a 3-octave instrument. Optional notes for 3-octave vibes are give in parentheses except for measures 49-52 where the optional passage is shown in floating ossia measures in the part.

Notation:

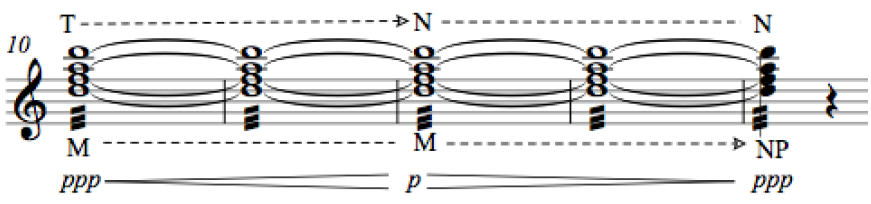
Dead Stroke: (Monroe and Atlanta)



Notes with a + sign over them are to played as dead strokes.

Mallet angle and placement: (Brooklyn)

In several sections of *Brooklyn*, I have specified the angle at which the mallets are to be used as well as where their placement on the bars of the marimba. The letter *T* indicates when the thicker top part of the mallet should be used and *N* indicates when they should be at normal playing position. (with the shafts more parallel to the bars of the marimba) Likewise, the letter *M* indicates when the bars should be struck toward the middle and *NP* indicates when they should be struck at the nodal point near the string.

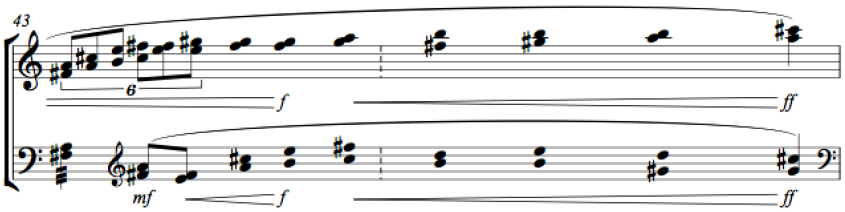


In this example, the roll begins near the middle of the marimba bars and gradually moves to the nodal point from measure 12-14. Also, the roll begins at the top of the mallets and gradually shifts to normal position from bar 10-12.

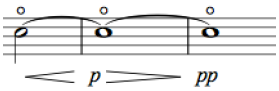
Spatial notation: (Brooklyn)

In a few sections of this movement, spatial notation (indicated by stemless noteheads) is used to allow for more rhythmic freedom and increased dramatic intensity. Horizontal placement of the noteheads gives a rough indication of duration between notes, however it is up to the player to decide what is musically most effective.

In this example, the player should adhere to the notated rhythm for the first two beats of measure 43. Though the next two beats correlate roughly with triplets, there should be a bit more space between the penultimate and final chords of that measure. That same sort of freedom applies to the following measure. You could think of this a bit like a written out ritard, though the clicktrack will continue with the same tempo.



Harmonics: (Panorama)

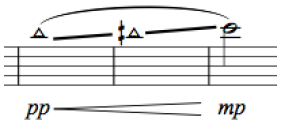


Harmonics are indicated by an open circle over the note. All harmonics are excecuted by touching the "center-node" with your finger, producing a sounding pitch that is two octaves above the written pitch.

Pitch bend: (Panorama)

Pitch bends play a prominent role in *Panorama* and should be executed applying pressure to a given bar with a hard mallet. However, because some of the pitch bends occur in very soft passages, it may be necessary to attach a small piece of moleskin to the head of the hard mallet to ensure that its contact with the bar isn't audible.

In this example, pressure is placed towards the middle of the bar before it is bowed. The hard mallet is then pulled very slowly towards the player to facilitate a very gradual rise in pitch over eight beats. The quarter sharp in the second bar merely indicates that the sounding pitch should not have yet reached the natural pitch of the bar.



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Marimba

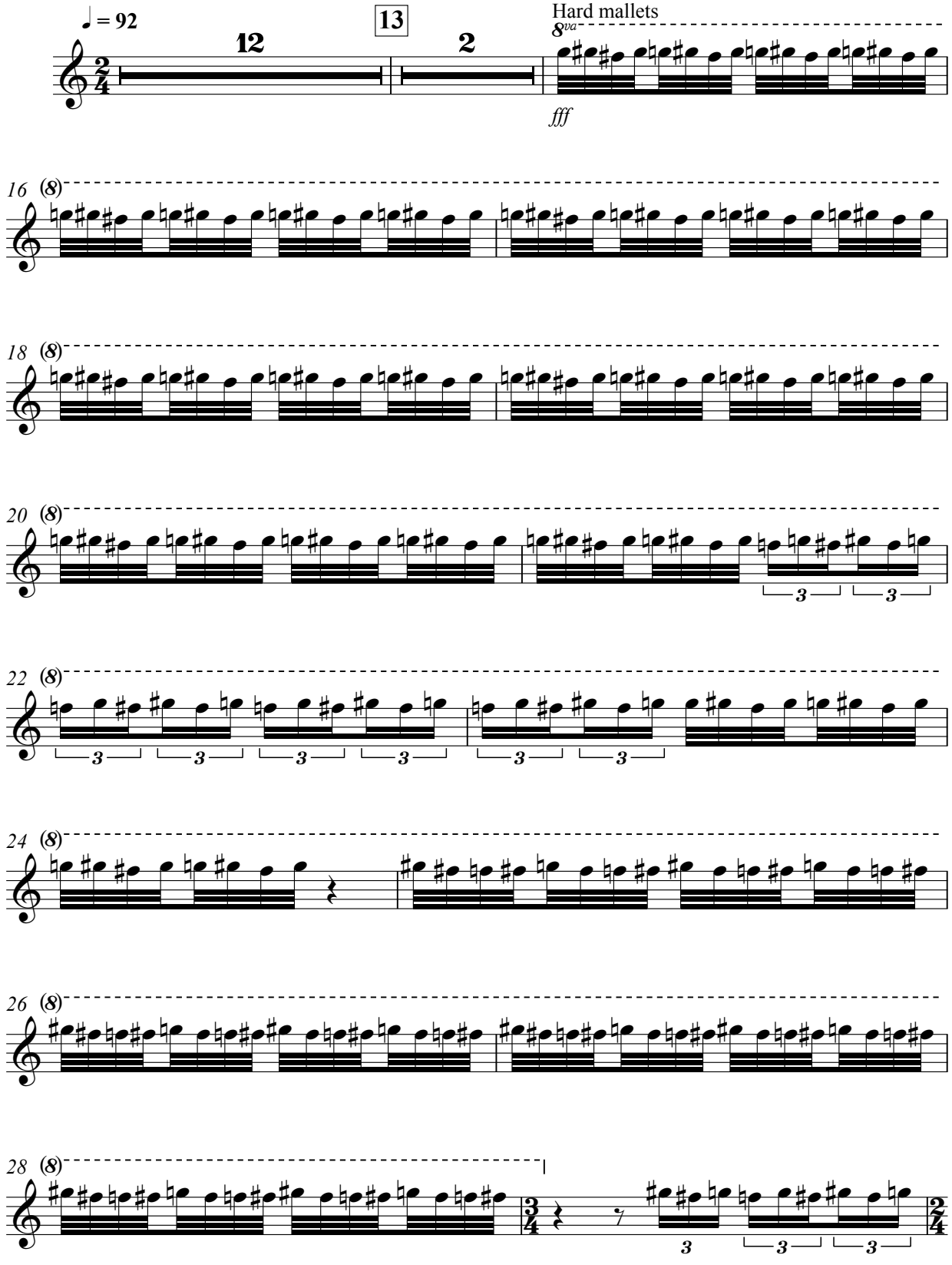
Long Distance

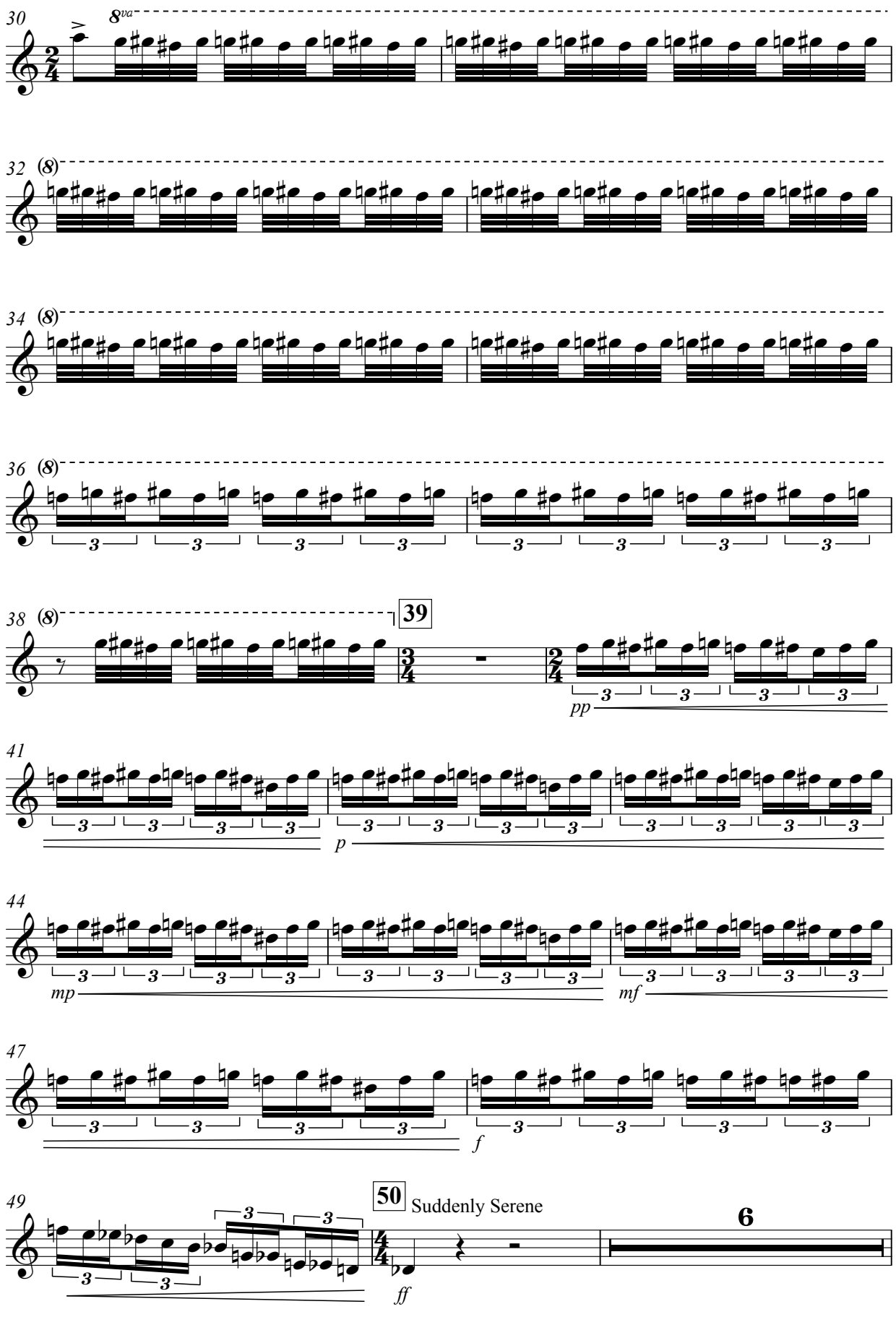
Monroe, NC - 1977

Steven Snowden

Startling, Incessant

Hard mallets




30
8va
32
(8)
34
(8)
36
(8)
38
(8)
39
pp
41
p
44
mp
mf
47
f
49
50
Suddenly Serene
6
ff

57 Medium soft mallets

ppp p ppp

61

ppp p

65 Abrupt, Exclamatory dead stroke

pp ppp ff

69 **70**

f mf

72

pp

74

p mf

77

pp p

79

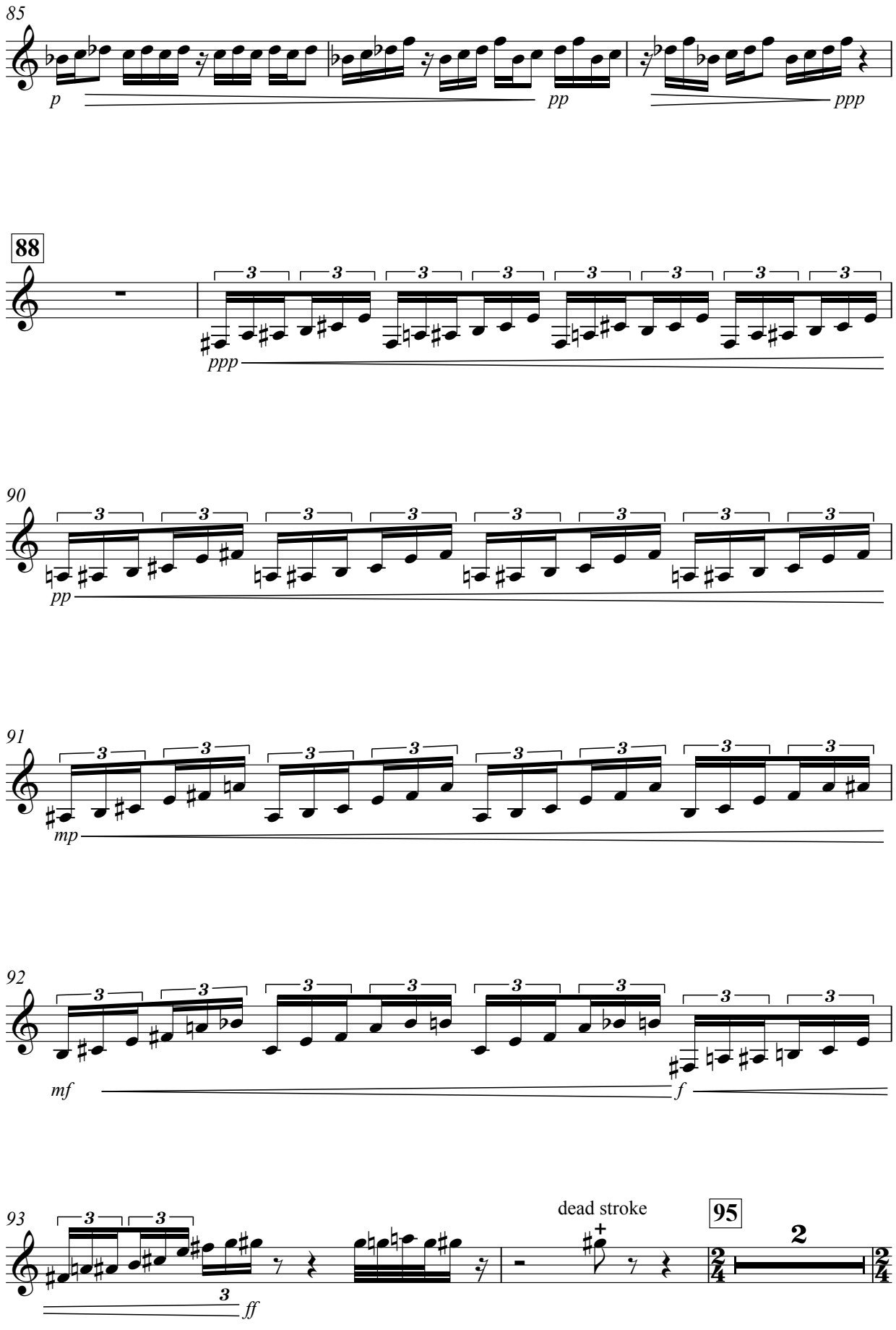
mp

81

pp

83

mp


85
p
pp
ppp
88
ppp
90
pp
91
mp
92
mf
f
93
ff
dead stroke
95
2

Becoming Volatile

Hard mallets

97

pp

99

p

101

mp

103

mf f

Incessant

fff

106

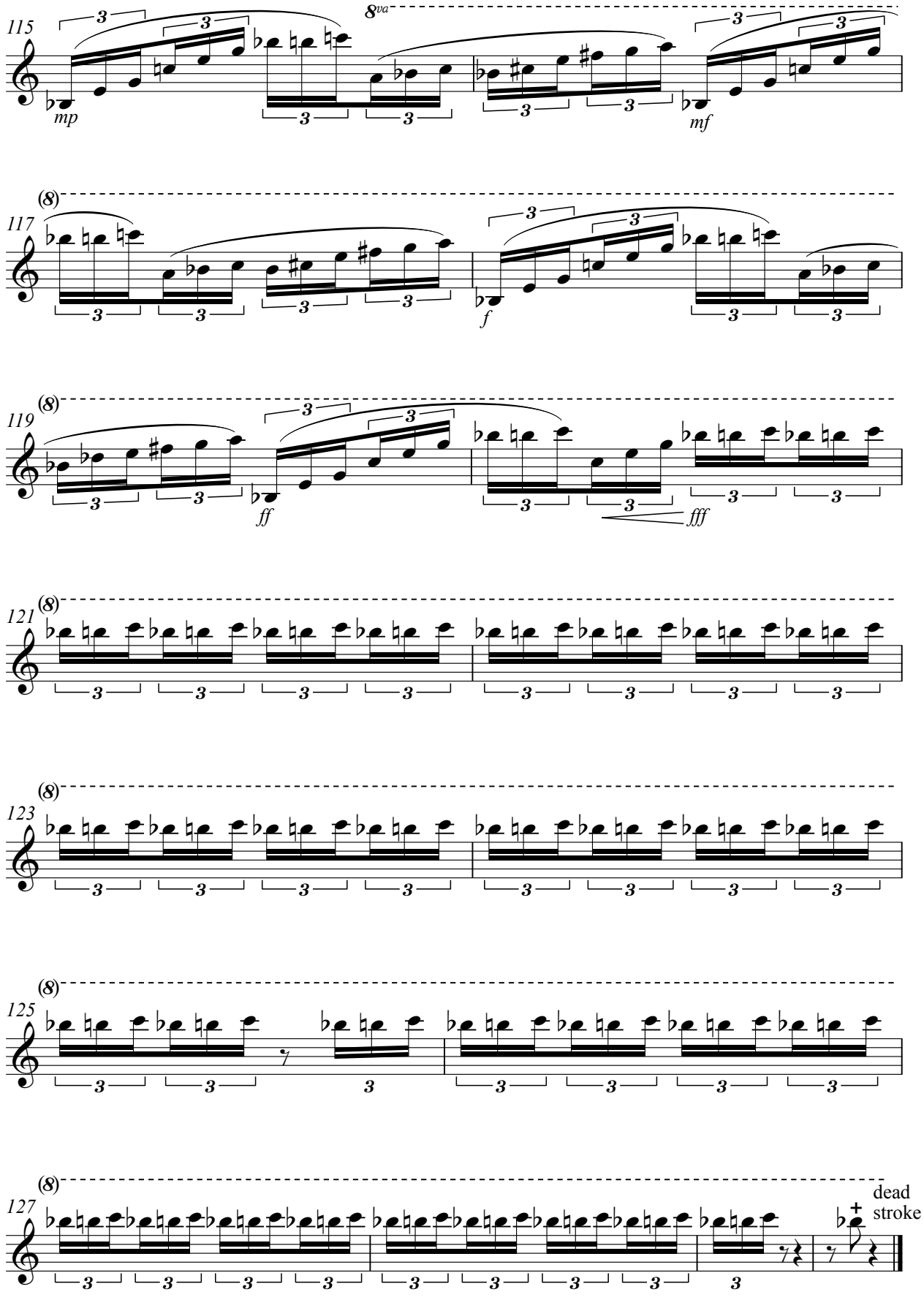
108

110

111

p

113


115
8va
mp
mf
117
f
119
ff
fff
121
123
125
127
dead
stroke

Marimba

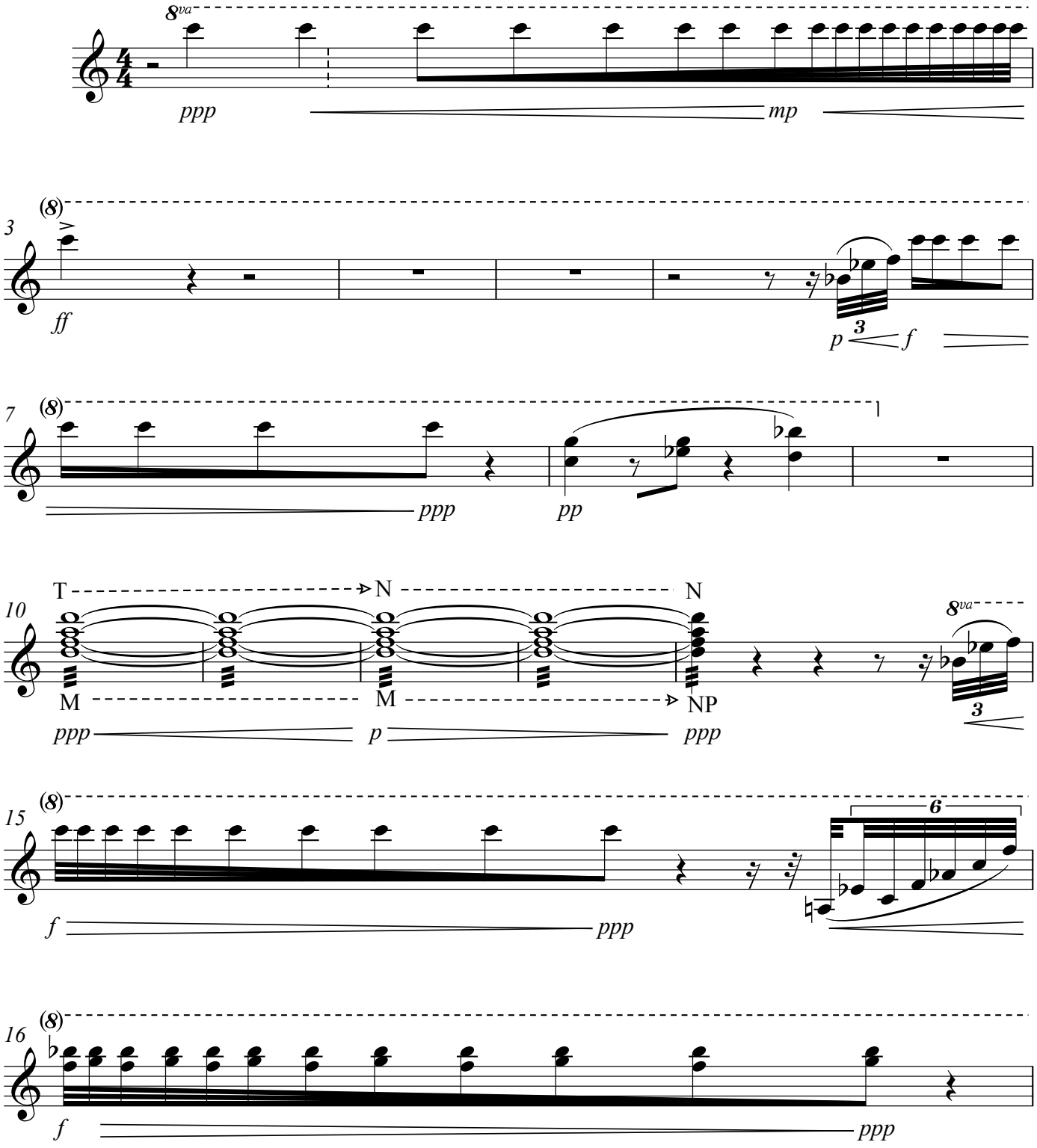
Long Distance

Brooklyn, NY - 1975

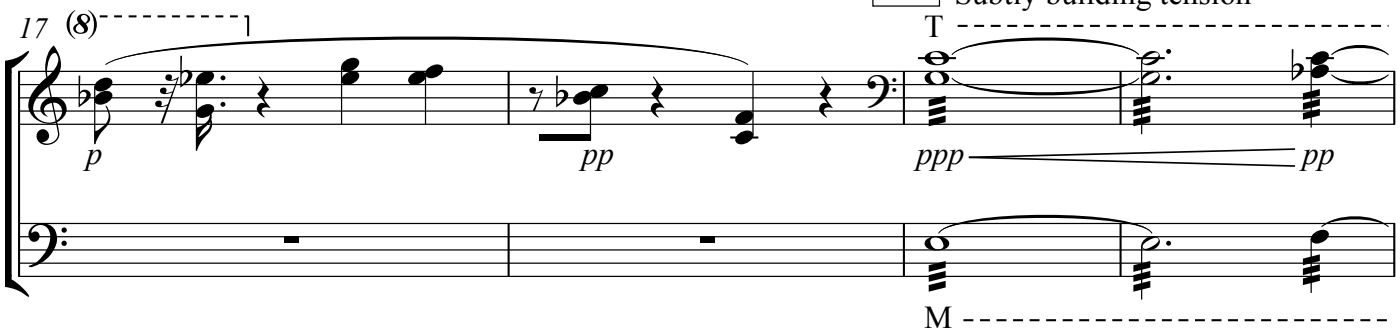
With Focused Curiosity ♩ = 58

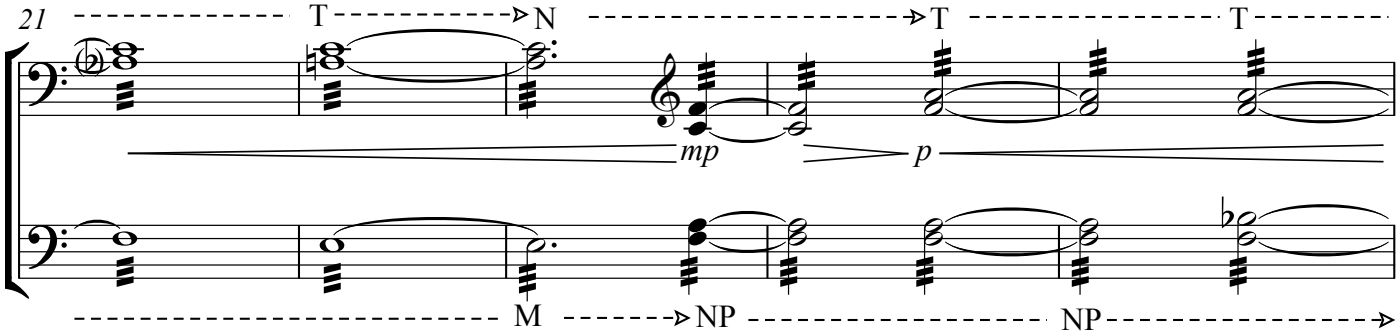
Steven Snowden

soft mallets

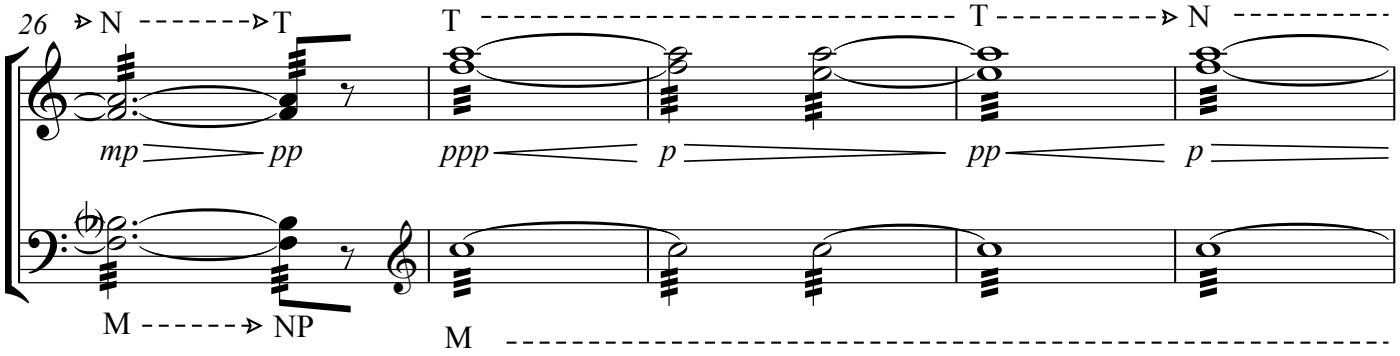


19 Subtly building tension

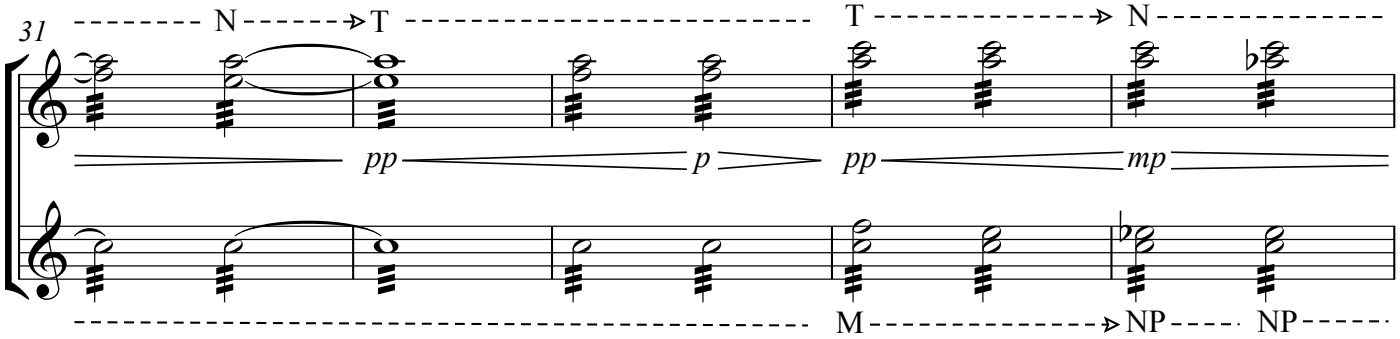


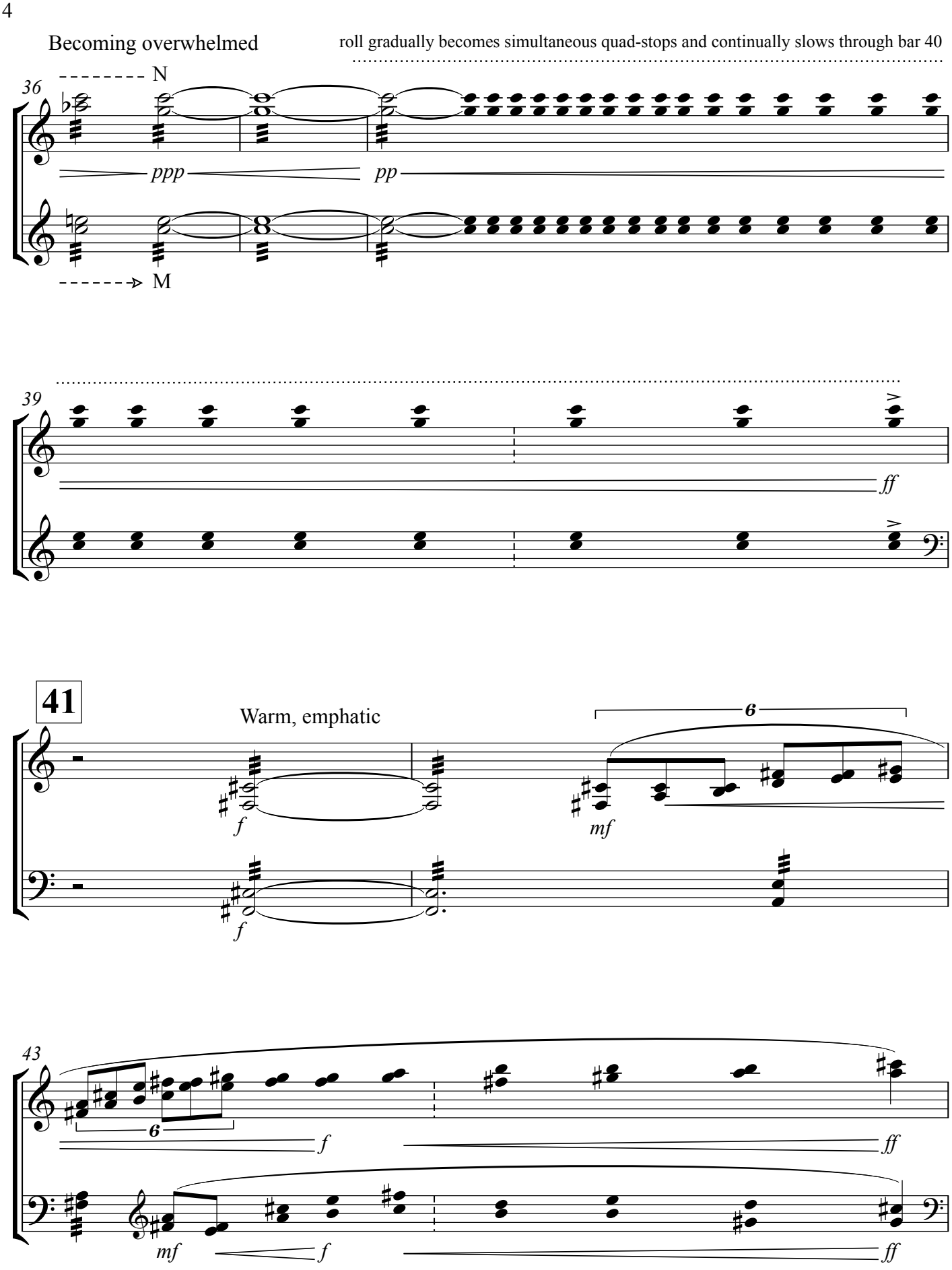


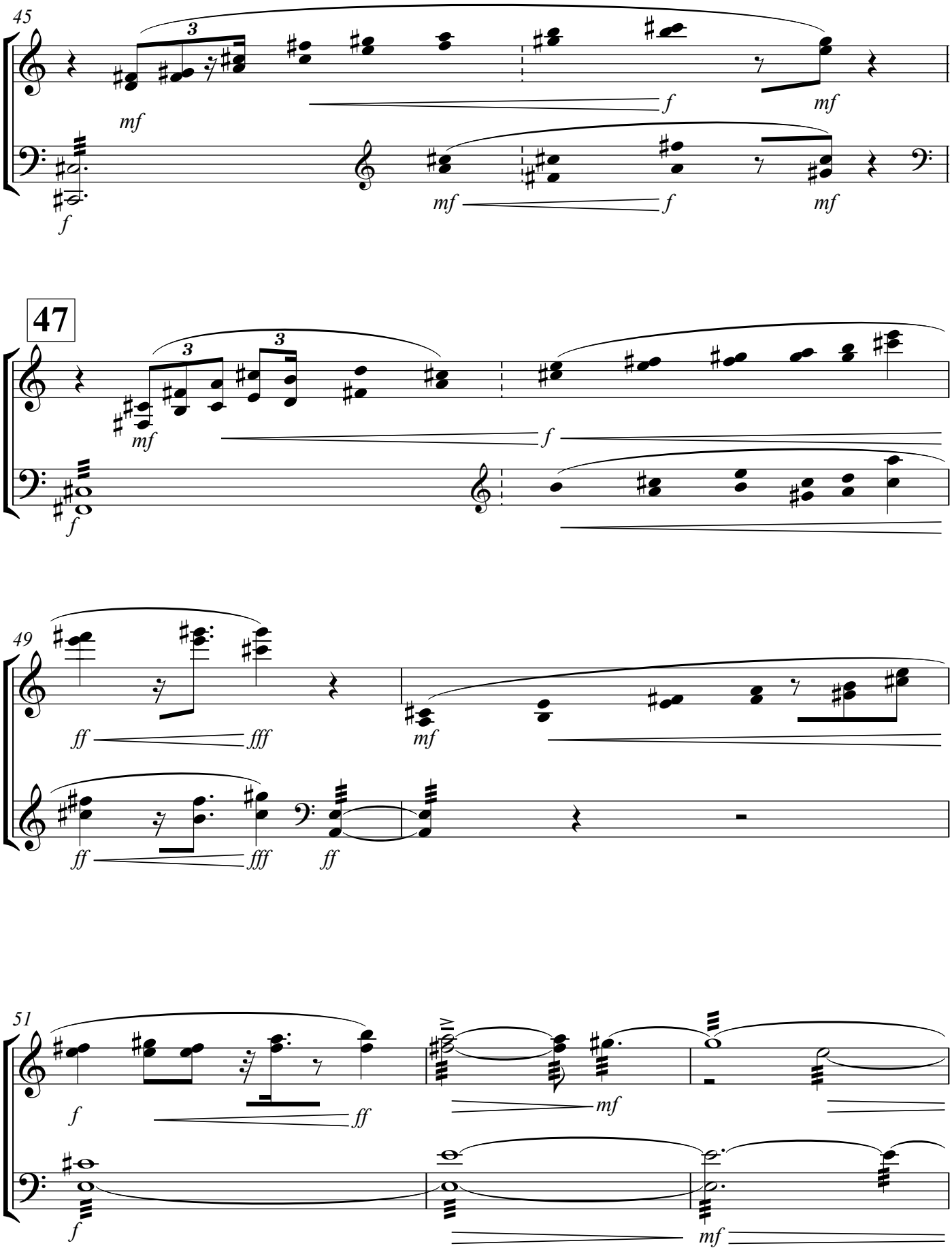
Delicate, with a sense of awe



34




Becoming overwhelmed
roll gradually becomes simultaneous quad-stops and continually slows through bar 40
N
M
36
ppp
pp
39
ff
41
Warm, emphatic
6
f
mf
f
43
6
f
ff
mf
f
ff


45
47
49
51

Delicate, slowly drifting

54 N T T N

ppp pp ppp

59

p

bass drum mallet

pppp

roll gradually becomes simultaneous attacks and continually slows through bar 69

64

pp p pp

67

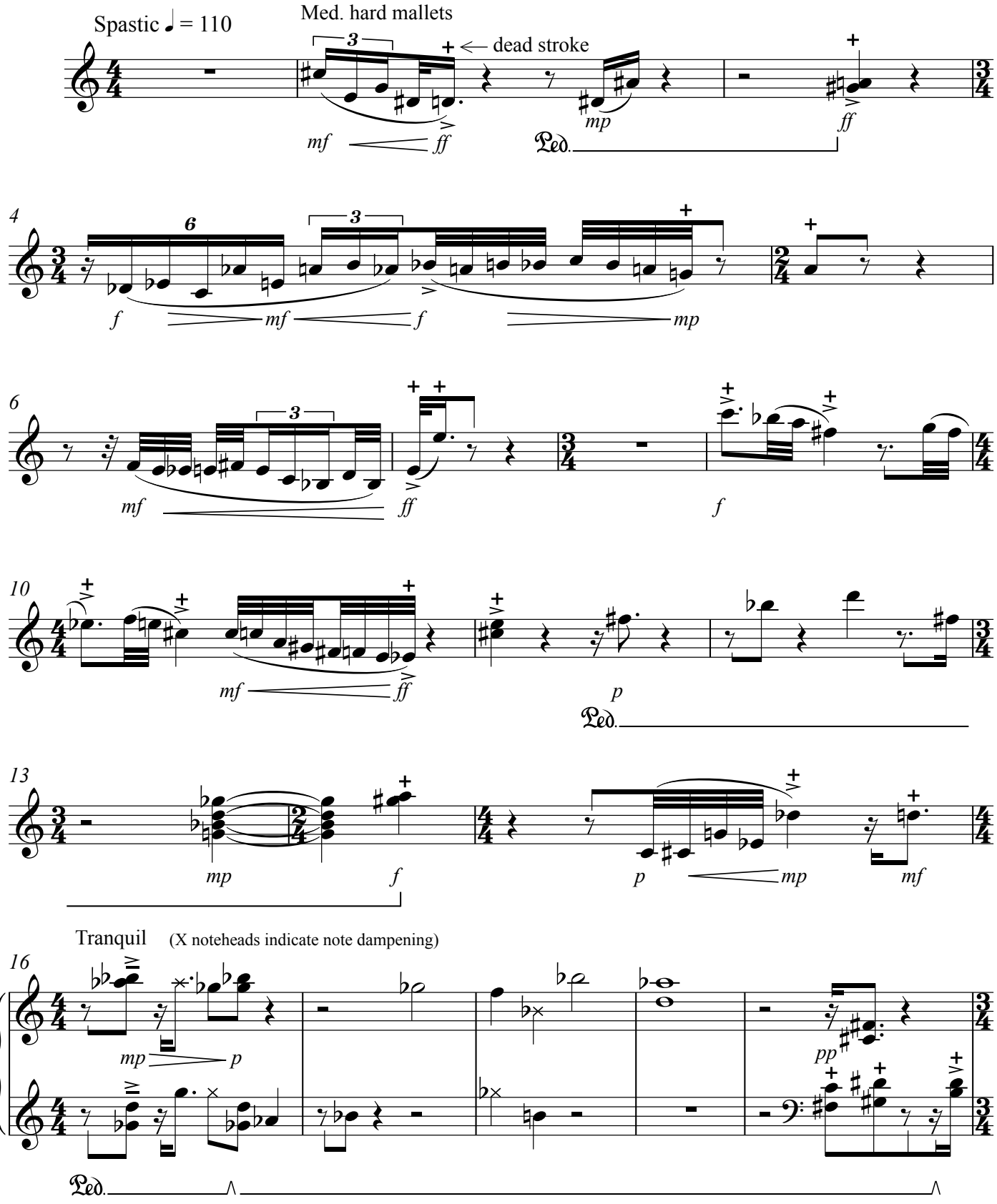
pp ppp pppp

VIBRAPHONE

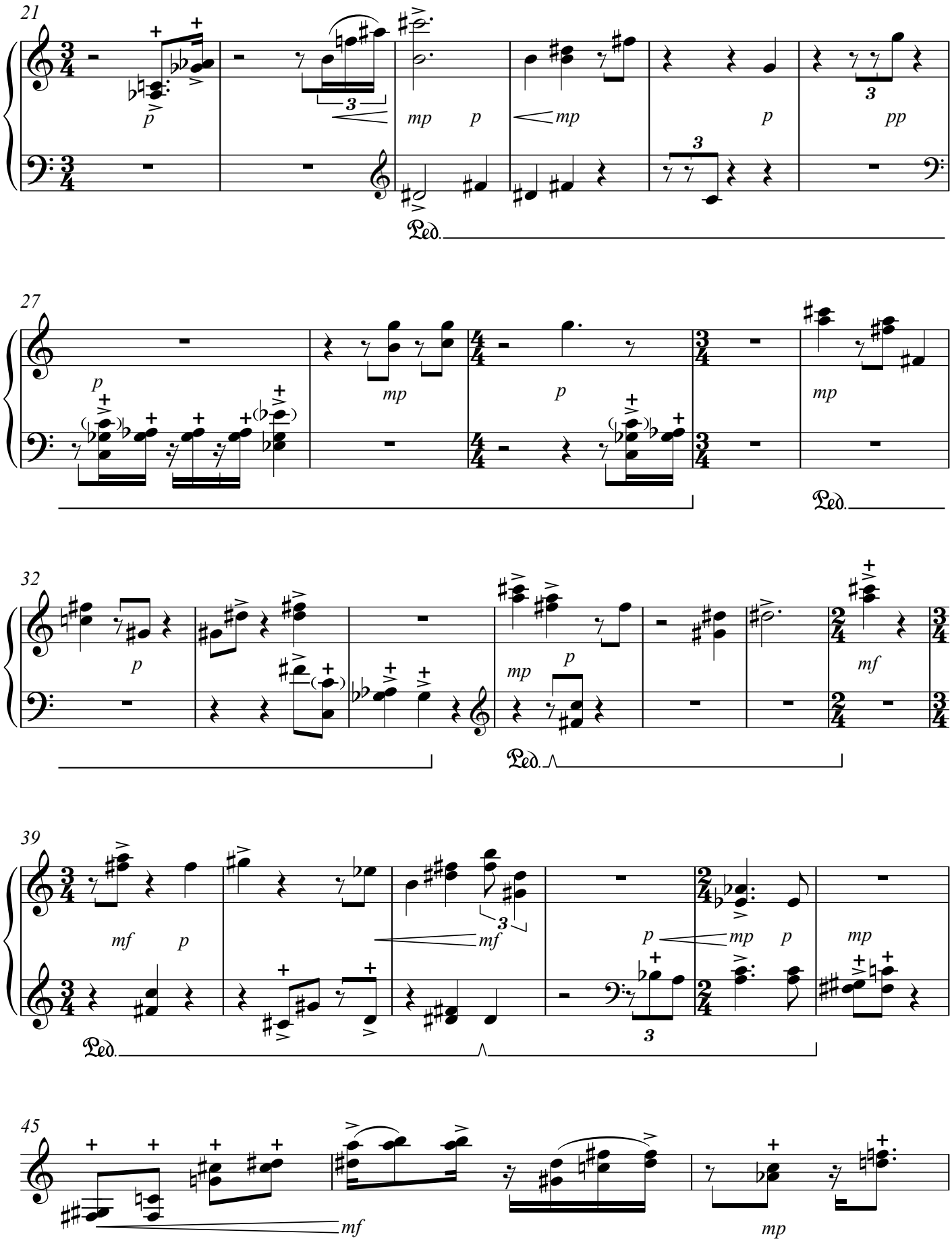
LONG DISTANCE

ATLANTA, GA - 1972

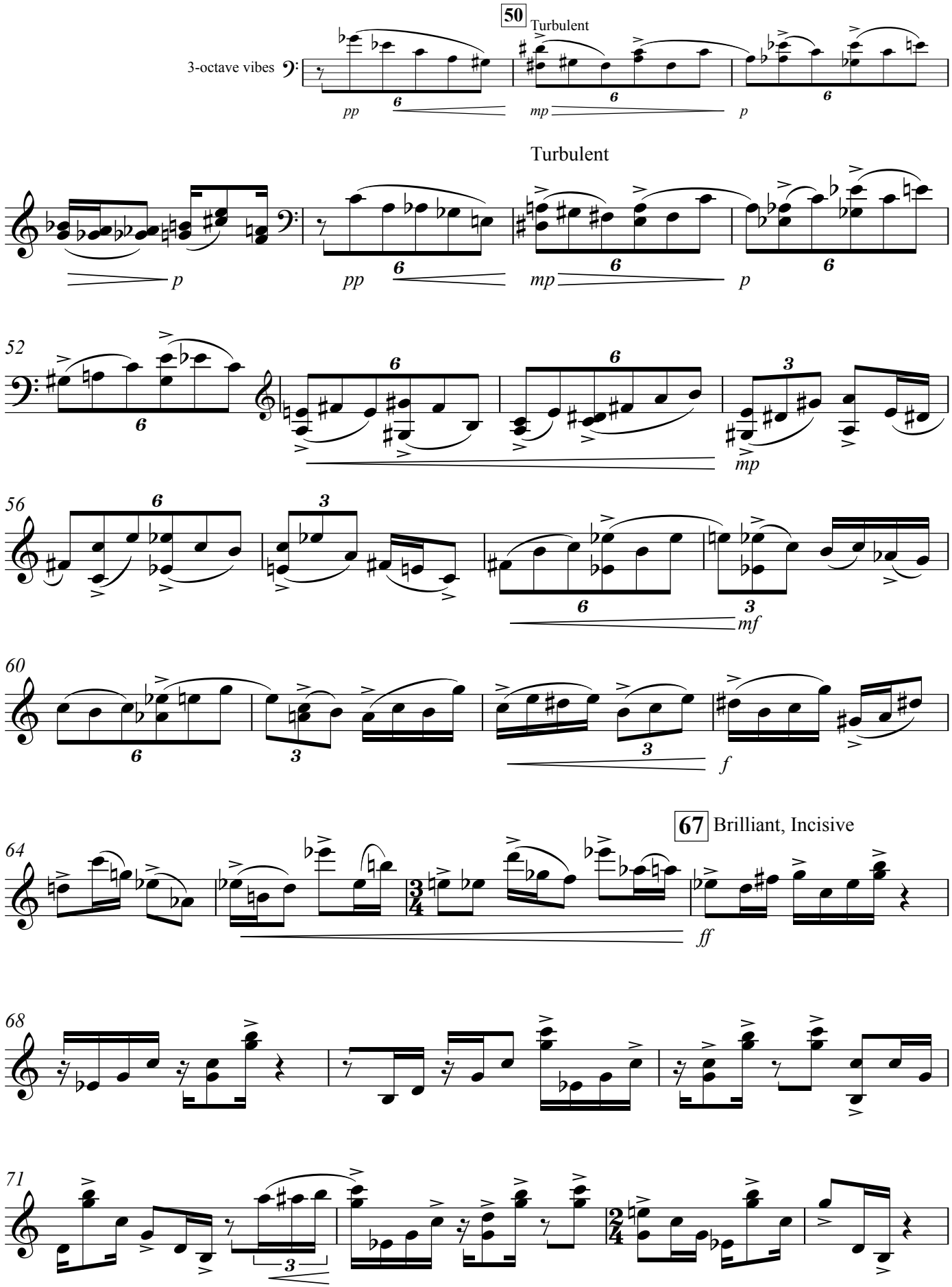
STEVEN SNOWDEN



23


21
p
mp
p
mp
p
pp
Ped.
27
p
mp
p
mp
Ped.
32
p
mp
p
mf
Ped.
39
mf
p
mf
p
mp
p
mp
Ped.
45
mf
mp

Atlanta, GA - 1972



Angular Disco

75

79

83

87

3

6

p

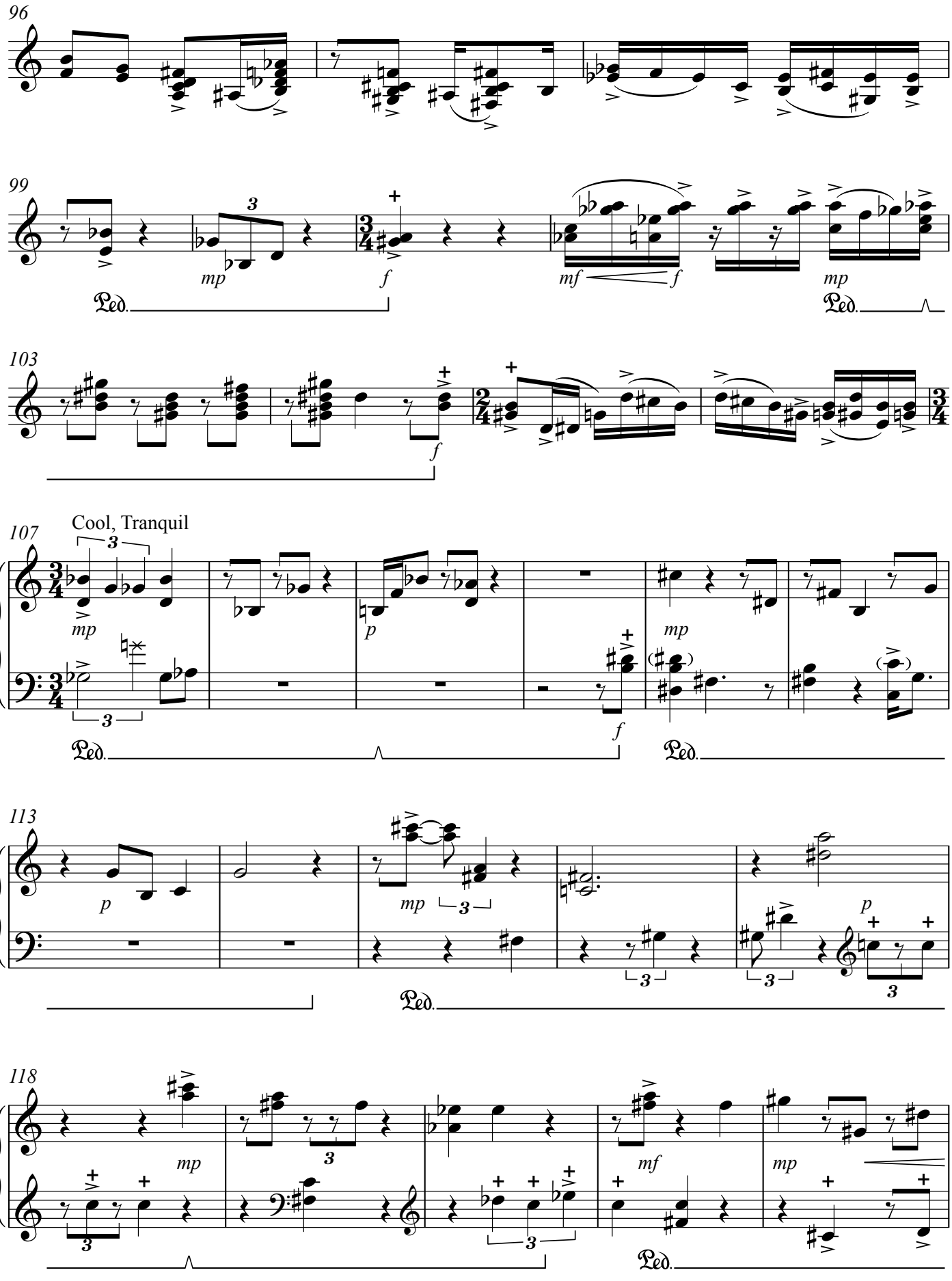
3

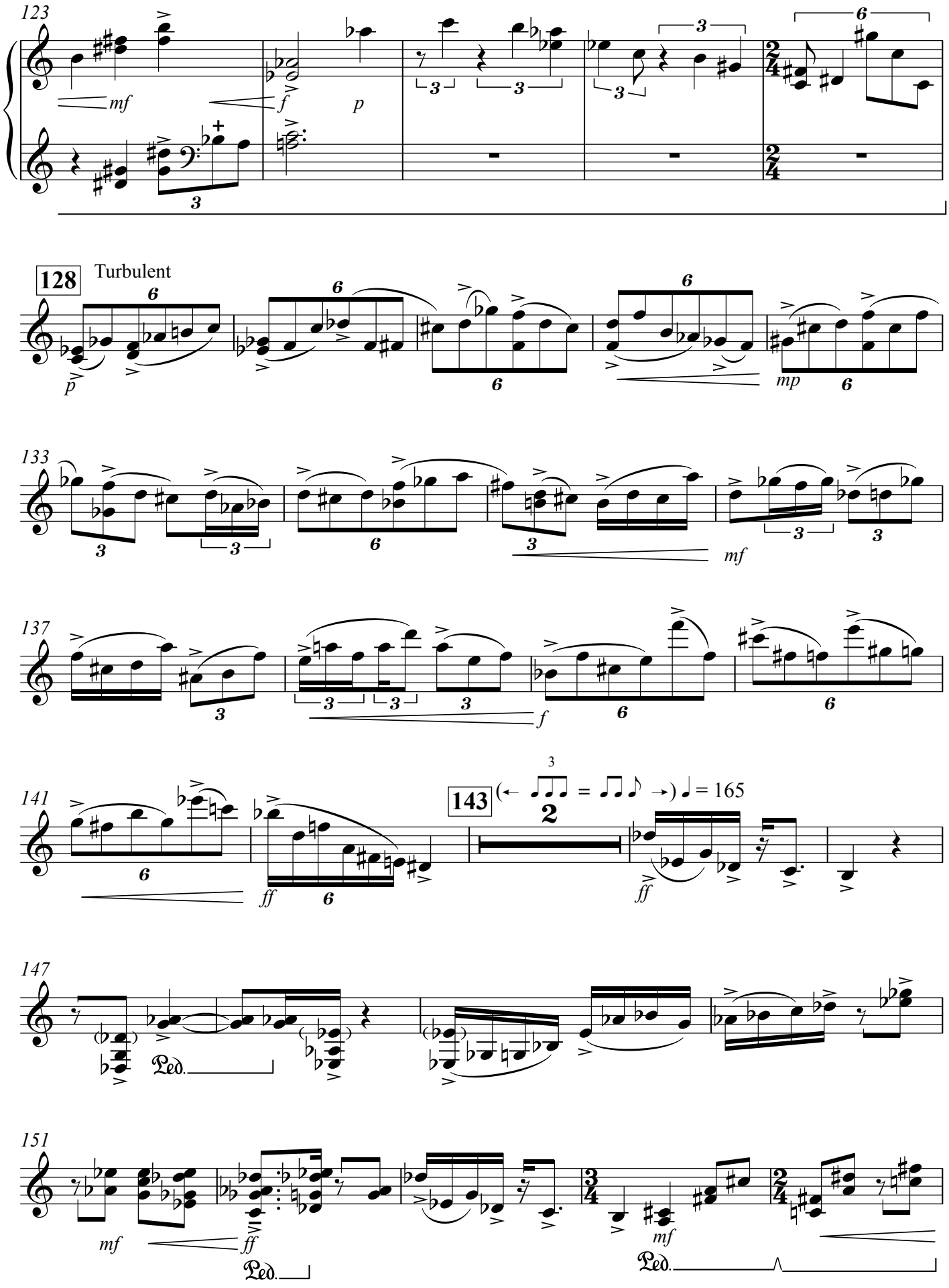
90 Funky, Energetic

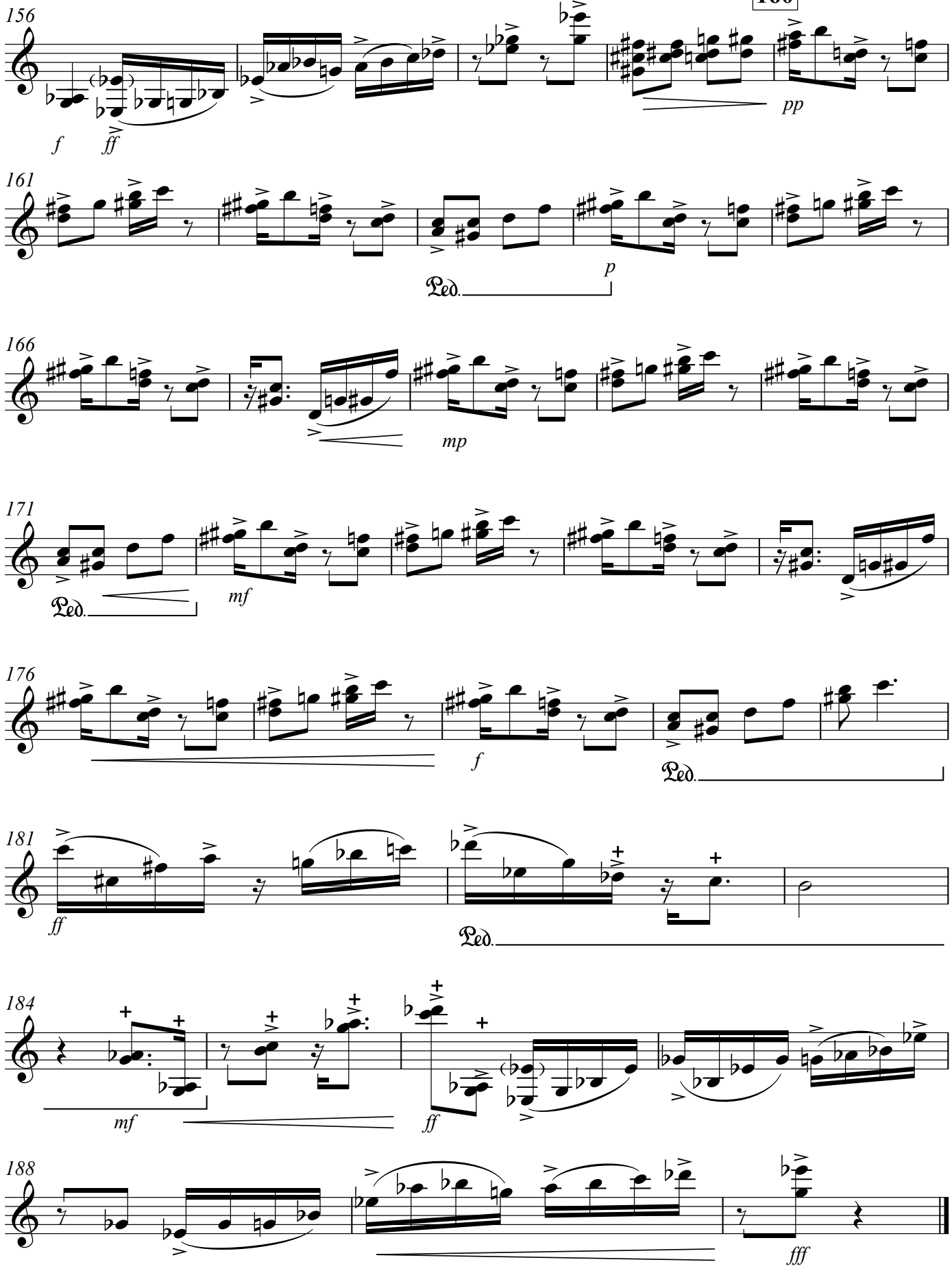
f

mf *f*

93


96
99
mp
f
mf
f
mp
Ped.
103
f
107
Cool, Tranquil
mp
p
mp
f
Ped.
113
p
mp
p
Ped.
118
mp
mf
mp
Ped.


123
mf
f
p
128
Turbulent
p
mp
133
mf
137
f
141
ff
143
2
ff
147
Ped.
151
mf
ff
Ped.
mf
Ped.

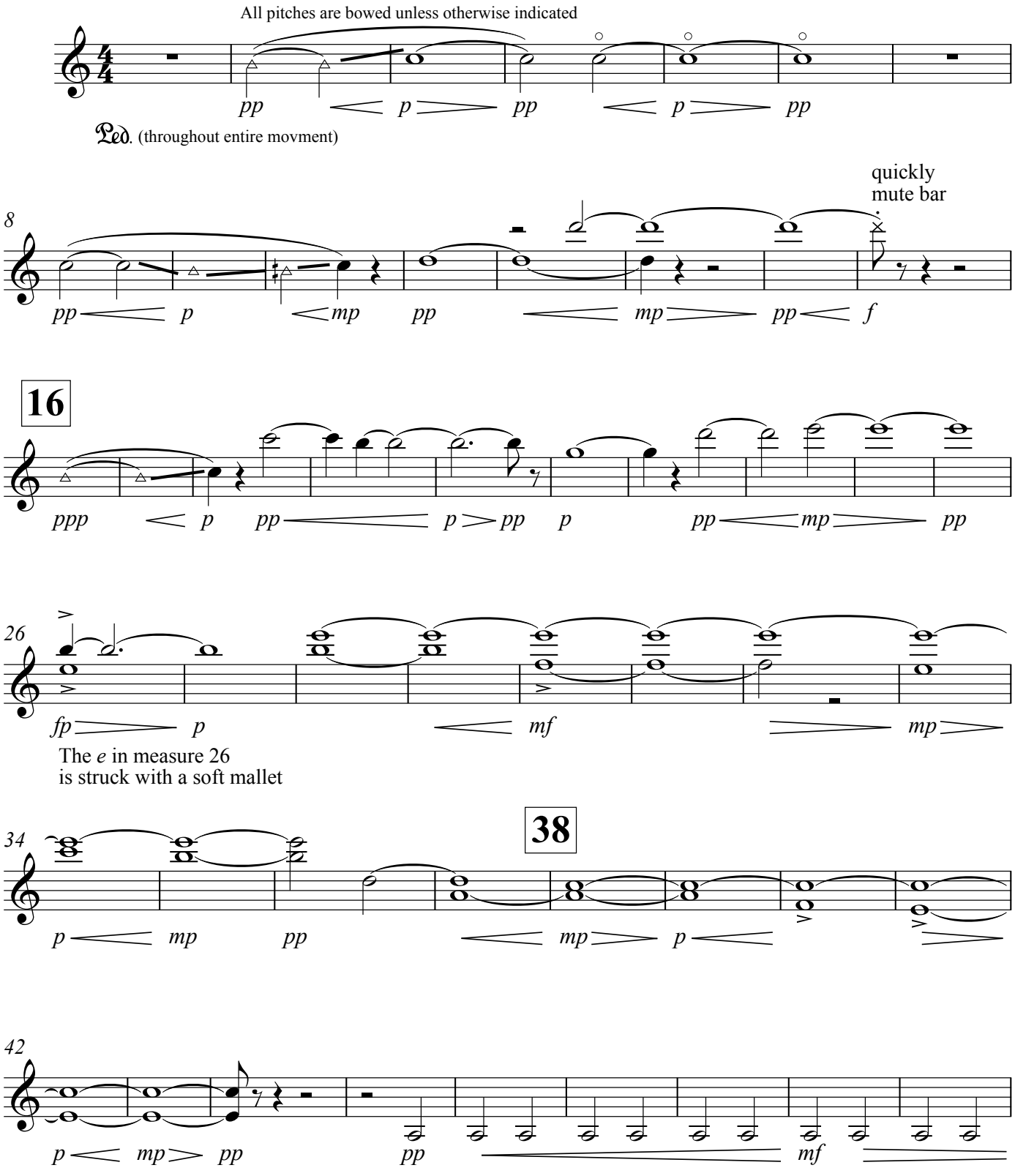

160
156
f
ff
pp
161
Ped.
p
166
mp
171
Ped.
mf
176
f
Ped.
181
ff
Ped.
184
mf
ff
188
fff

VIBRAPHONE

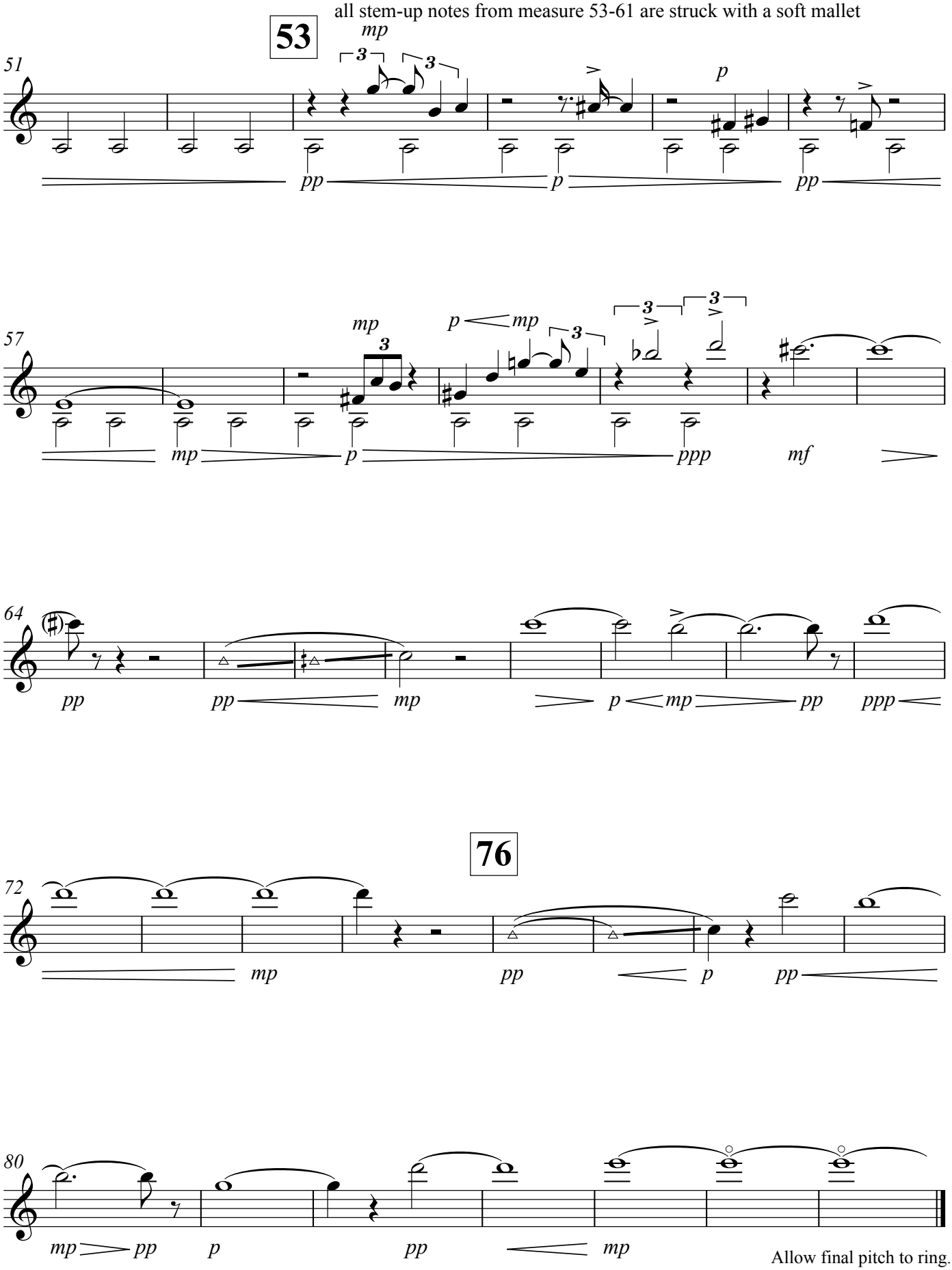
LONG DISTANCE

PANORAMA, VA - 1976

STEVEN SNOWDEN



all stem-up notes from measure 53-61 are struck with a soft mallet



Allow final pitch to ring.
Movment ends once it
has died away completely.