Steven Snowden

Profiles

For Horn and Percussion

Profiles

Commissioned by the
Moreau | VanTuinen Duo

Approximate duration: 9 min.

Program Notes

I've always had a bit of a fascination with old portrait photographs. Whether I find them in a library archive, museum, or at a thrift store, I like to wonder what the lives of these people were like. I imagine their careers, their hobbies, their temperament, or even what they might have eaten for breakfast that morning. One specific category of portraits that I find particularly intriguing is old mugshots. These are some of the only photos that come in pairs, one showing the subject face-forward, and one in profile. The original purpose of this was to provide the police or witnesses with a better understanding how this person would look from different angles. However, extraneous information, such as clothing, posture, and setting are intentionally placed out of frame. Without those clues, these pictures become more of a blank slate for my imagination.

I was recently looking through a set of mugshots from the early 1920's and found myself thinking mostly of character types found in old dime store crime novels. While the main hero and villain are often portrayed with a lot of detail and depth, secondary characters tend to be quite one dimensional. Petty thieves, con men, and getaway drivers simply serve to further the plot of the protagonist and are often just a short-lived caricature of their profession. Though not ontologically related, that made me think of the more common modern usage of the word profile. At its most basic level, this is the act of reducing a complex human being down to basic stereotypes. Profiling is certainly a heated and complicated topic to approach for any artist and I felt that it wasn't something that I wanted to tackle in this piece. Rather, I decided to go in the opposite direction by writing a set of character pieces based upon four types of criminals often found old crime novels. Sometimes poignant, sometimes comical, each one was written with that character's perspective in mind.

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Profiles

I. The Wheelman

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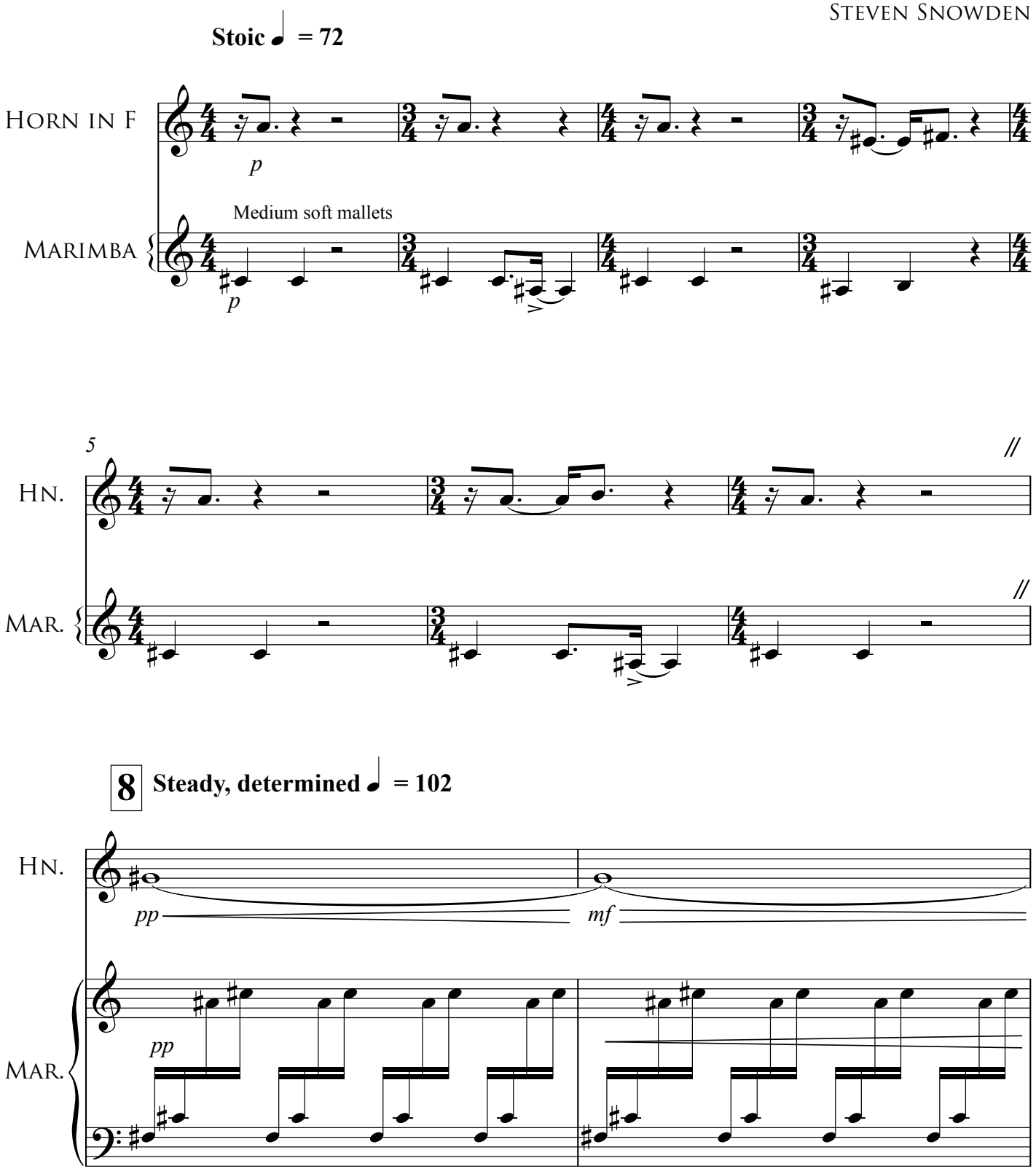

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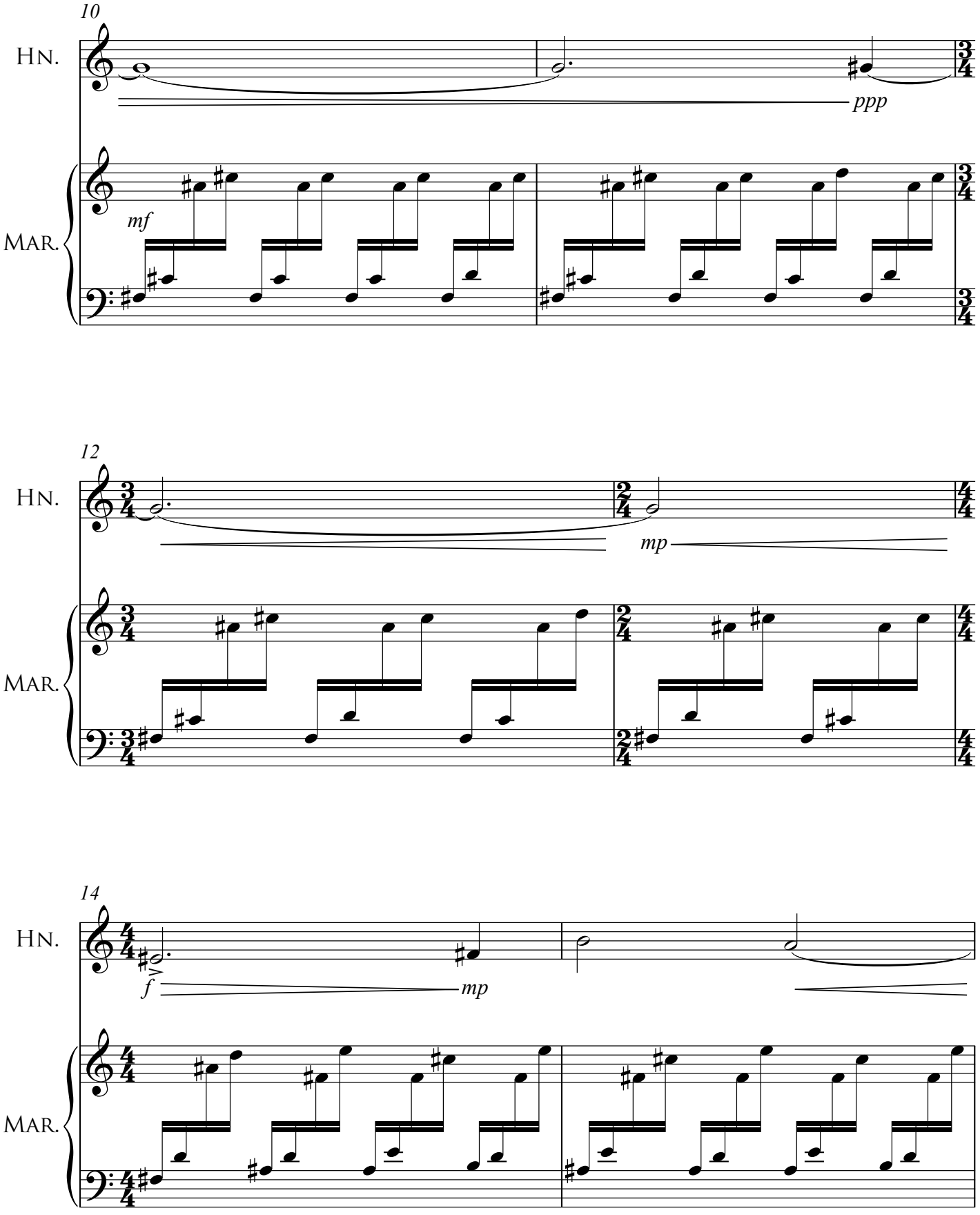
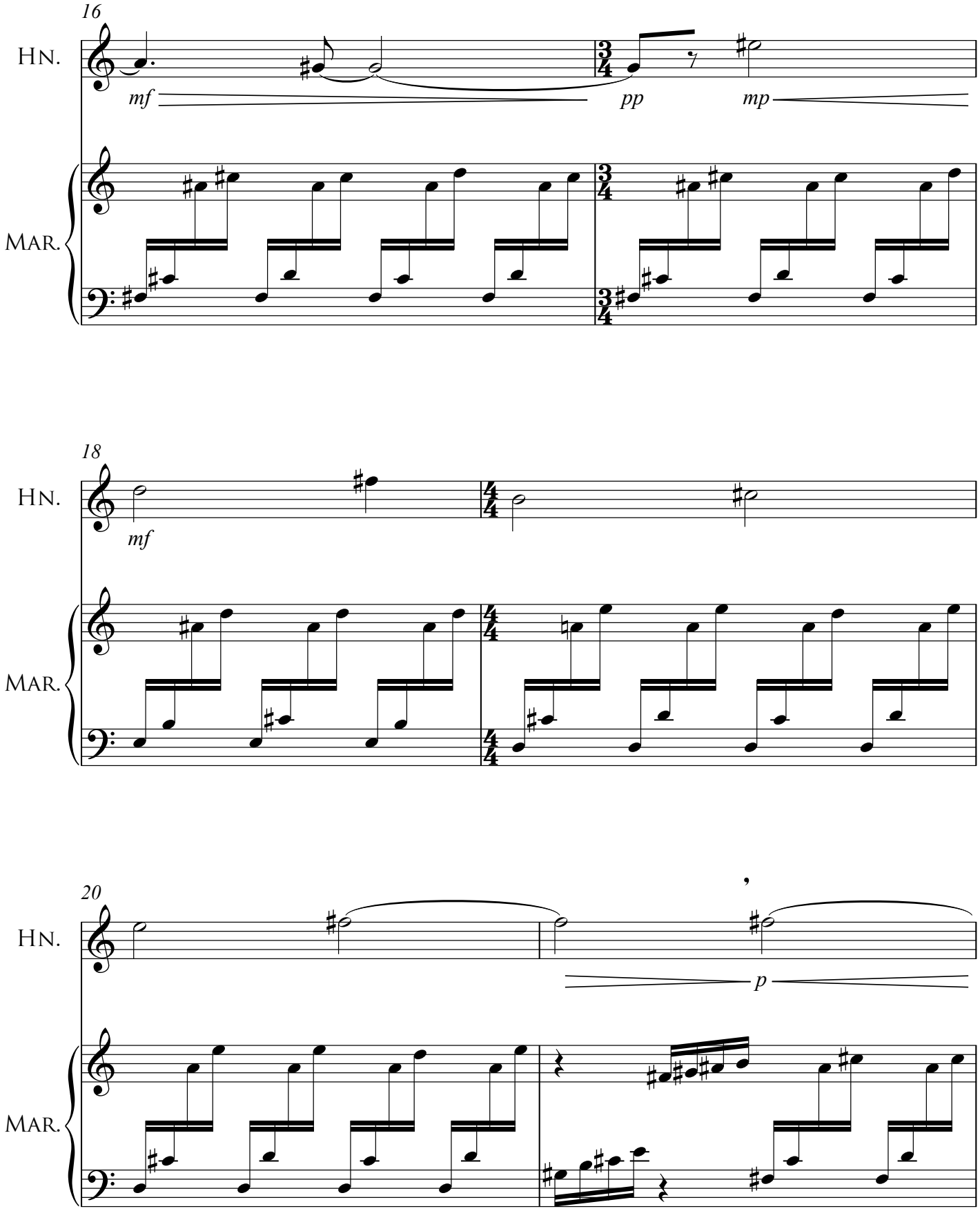
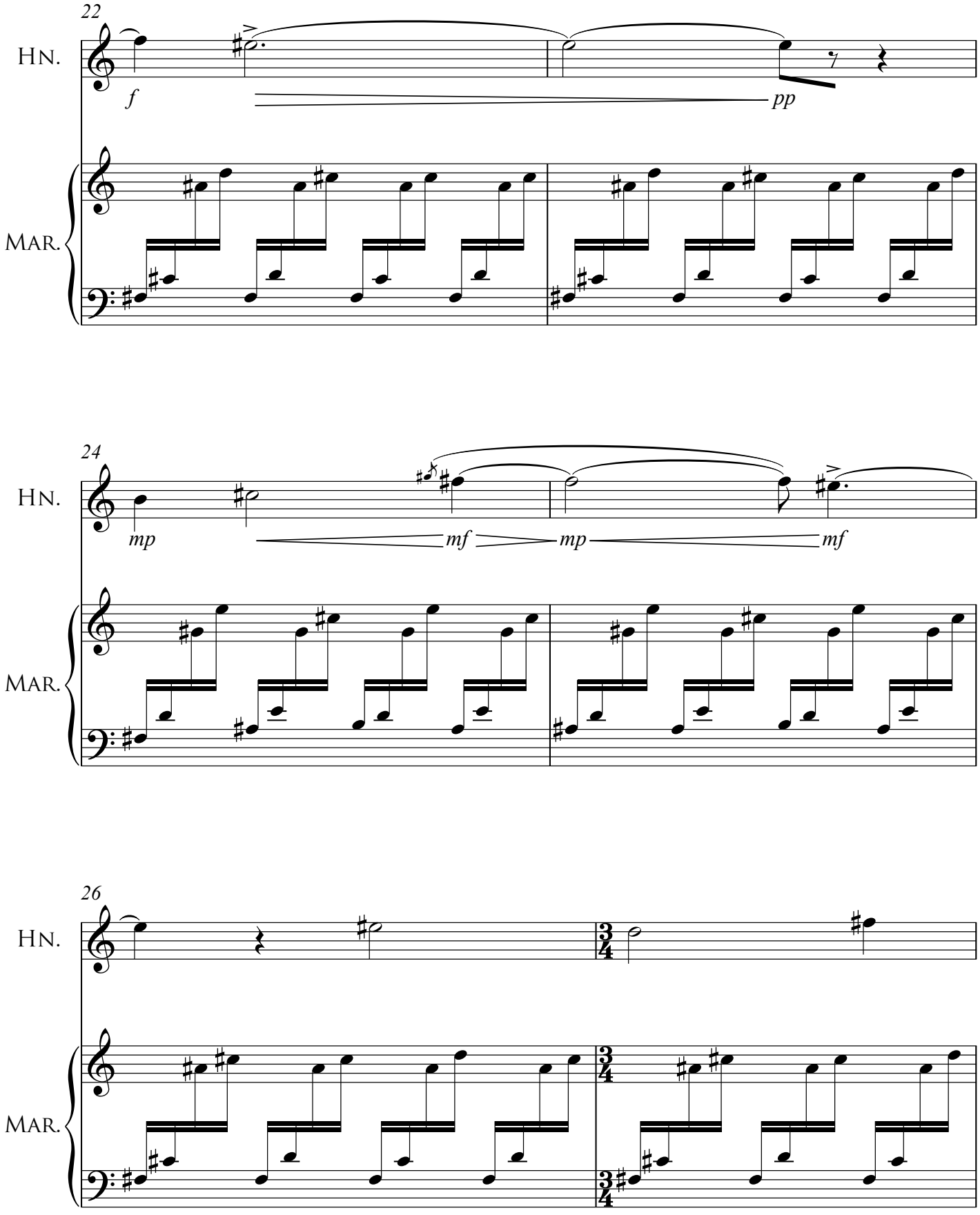
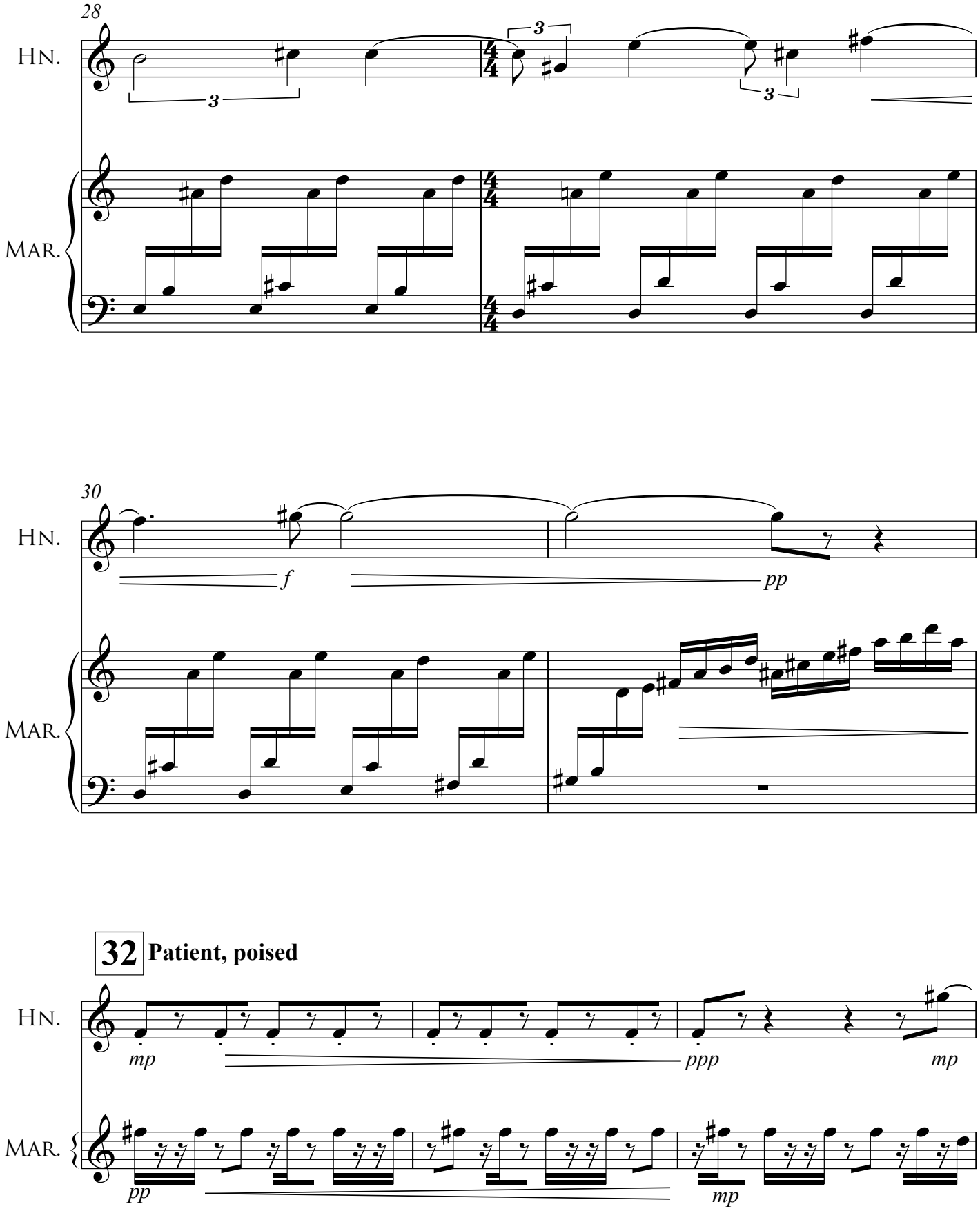
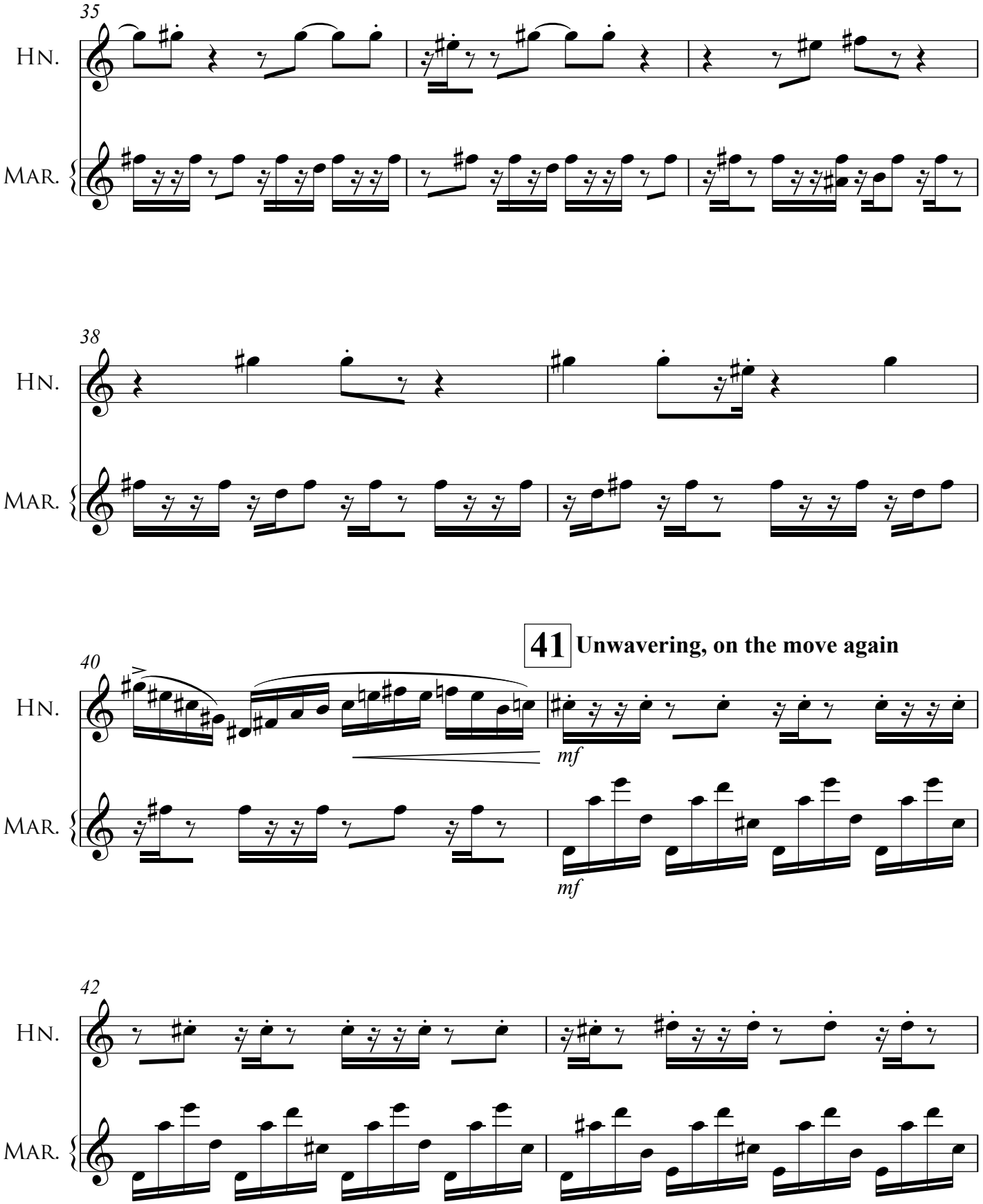
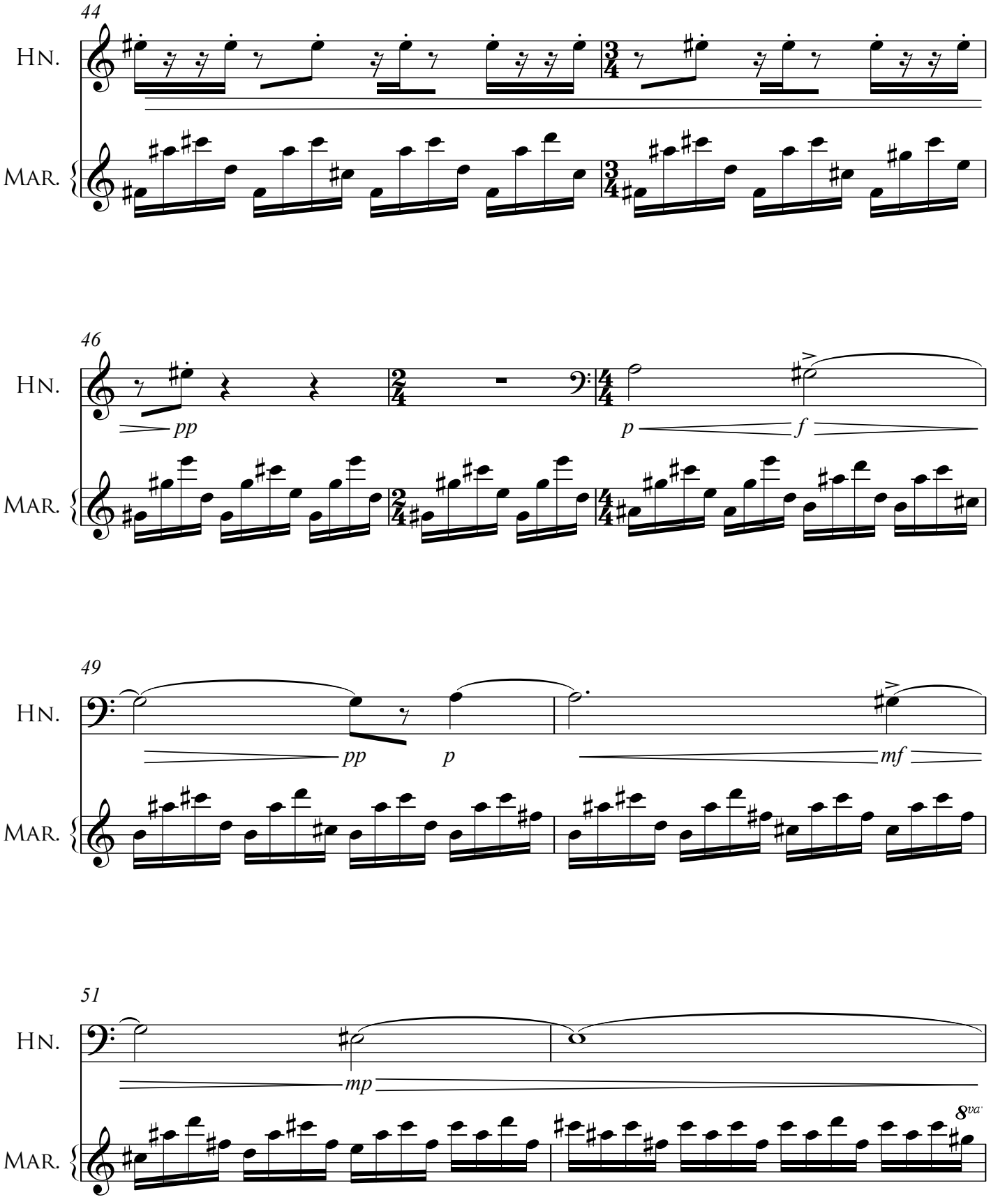

10
Hn.
ppp
Mar.
mf
12
Hn.
mp
Mar.
14
Hn.
f
mp
Mar.

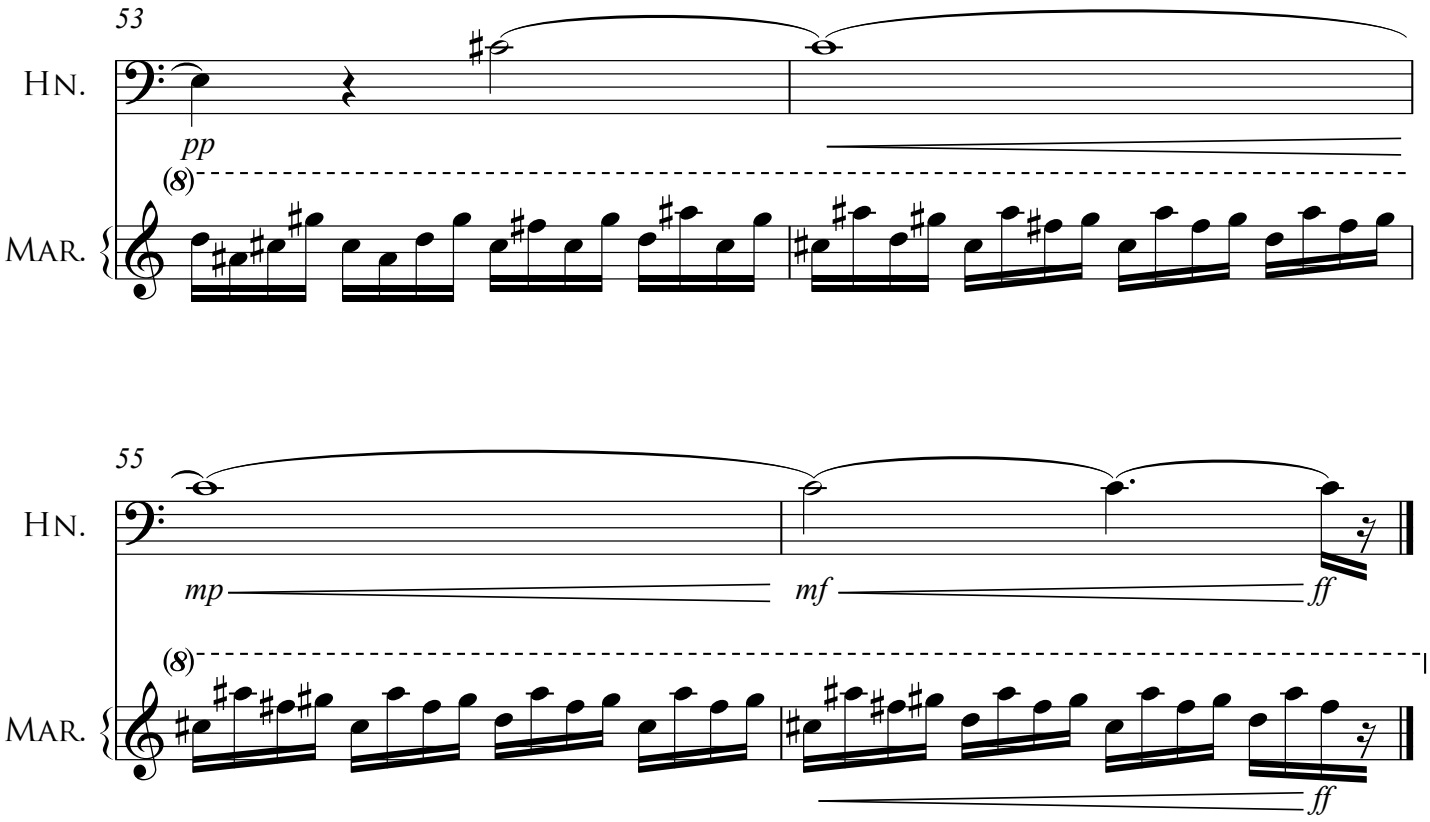

16
Hn.
mf
pp
mp
Mar.
18
Hn.
mf
Mar.
20
Hn.
p
Mar.


22
Hn.
f
pp
Mar.
24
Hn.
mp
mf
mp
mf
Mar.
26
Hn.
Mar.


28
Hn.
Mar.
30
Hn.
Mar.
32
Patient, poised
Hn.
Mar.
f
pp
mp
ppp
mp
pp
mp


35
Hn.
Mar.
38
Hn.
Mar.
41 Unwavering, on the move again
40
Hn.
mf
Mar.
mf
42
Hn.
Mar.


44
Hn.
Mar.
46
Hn.
pp
p
f
Mar.
49
Hn.
pp
p
mf
Mar.
51
Hn.
mp
Mar.
8va

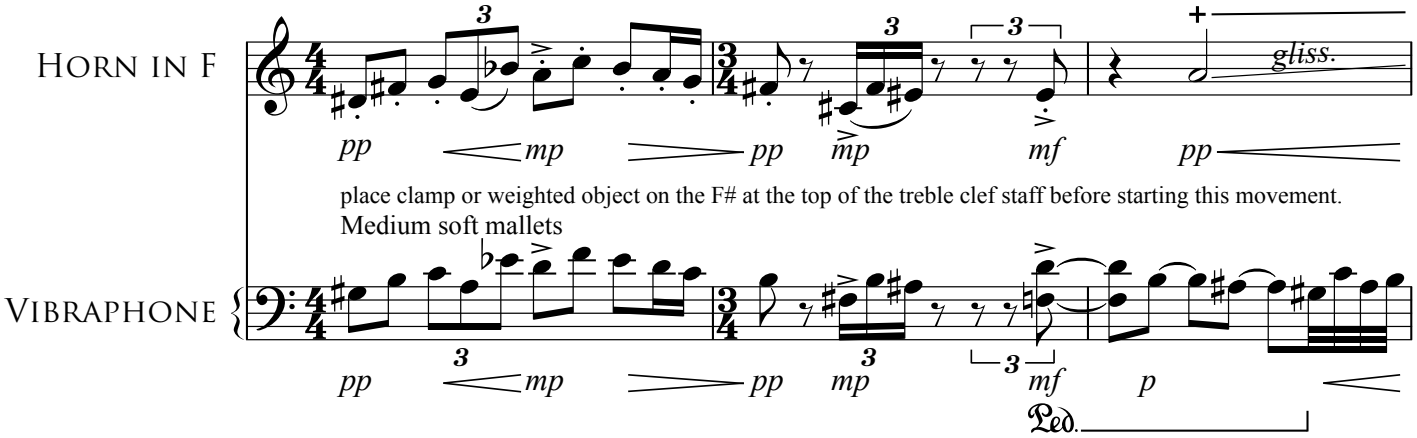

53
Hn.
pp
(8)
Mar.
55
Hn.
mp
mf
ff
(8)
Mar.
ff

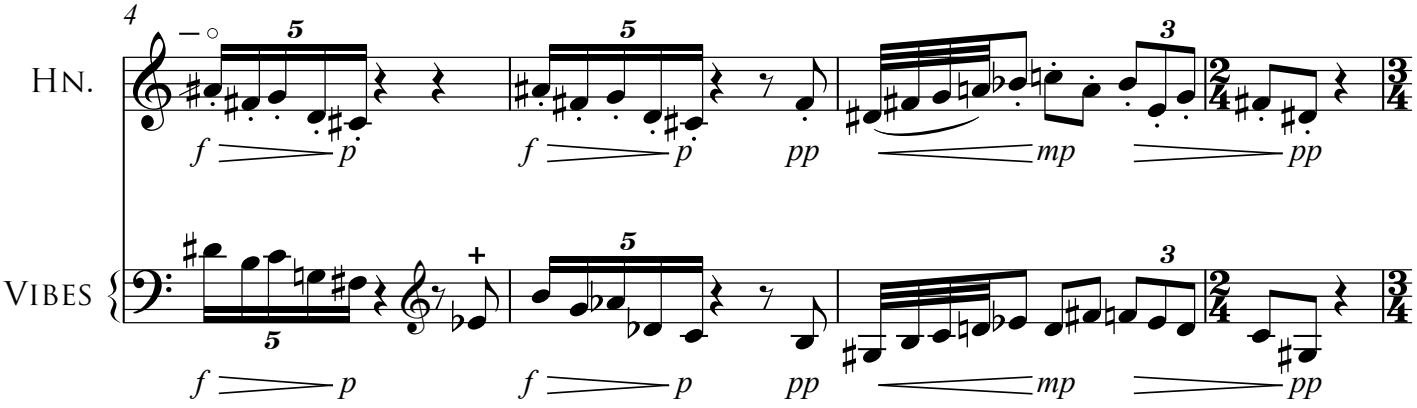
Profiles

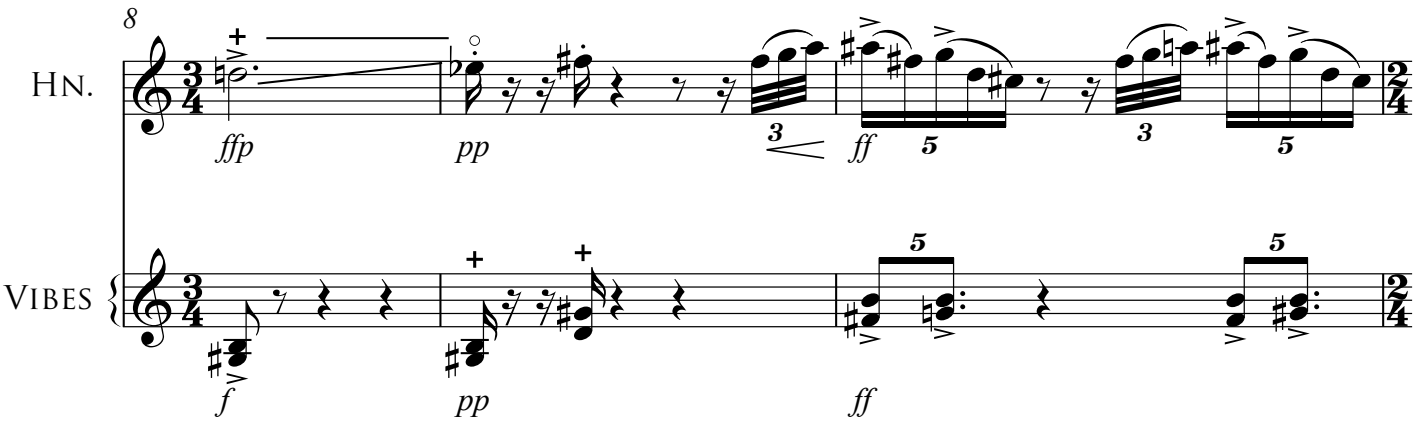
II. The Thief

Sly, devious ♩ **= 76**

Steven Snowden







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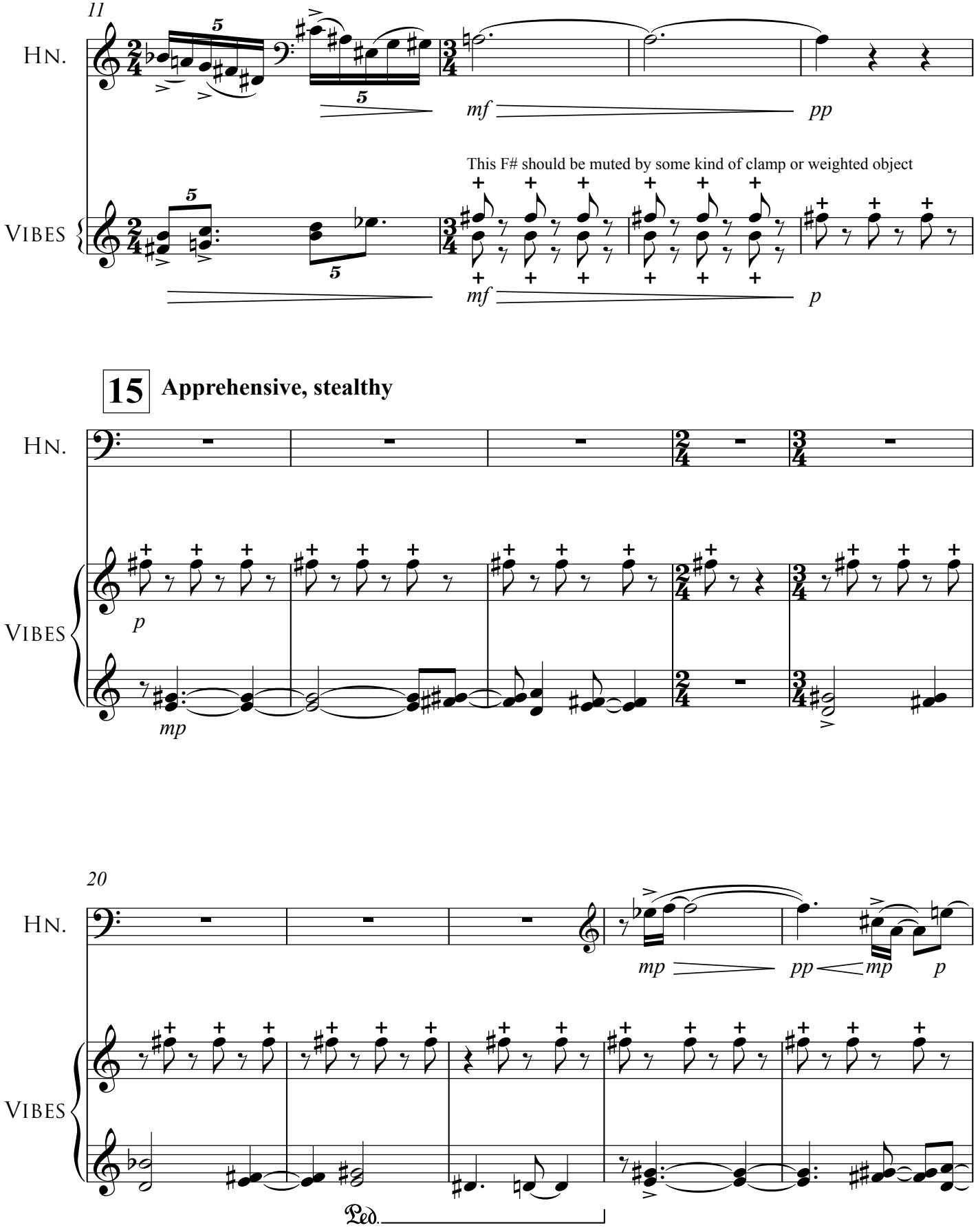
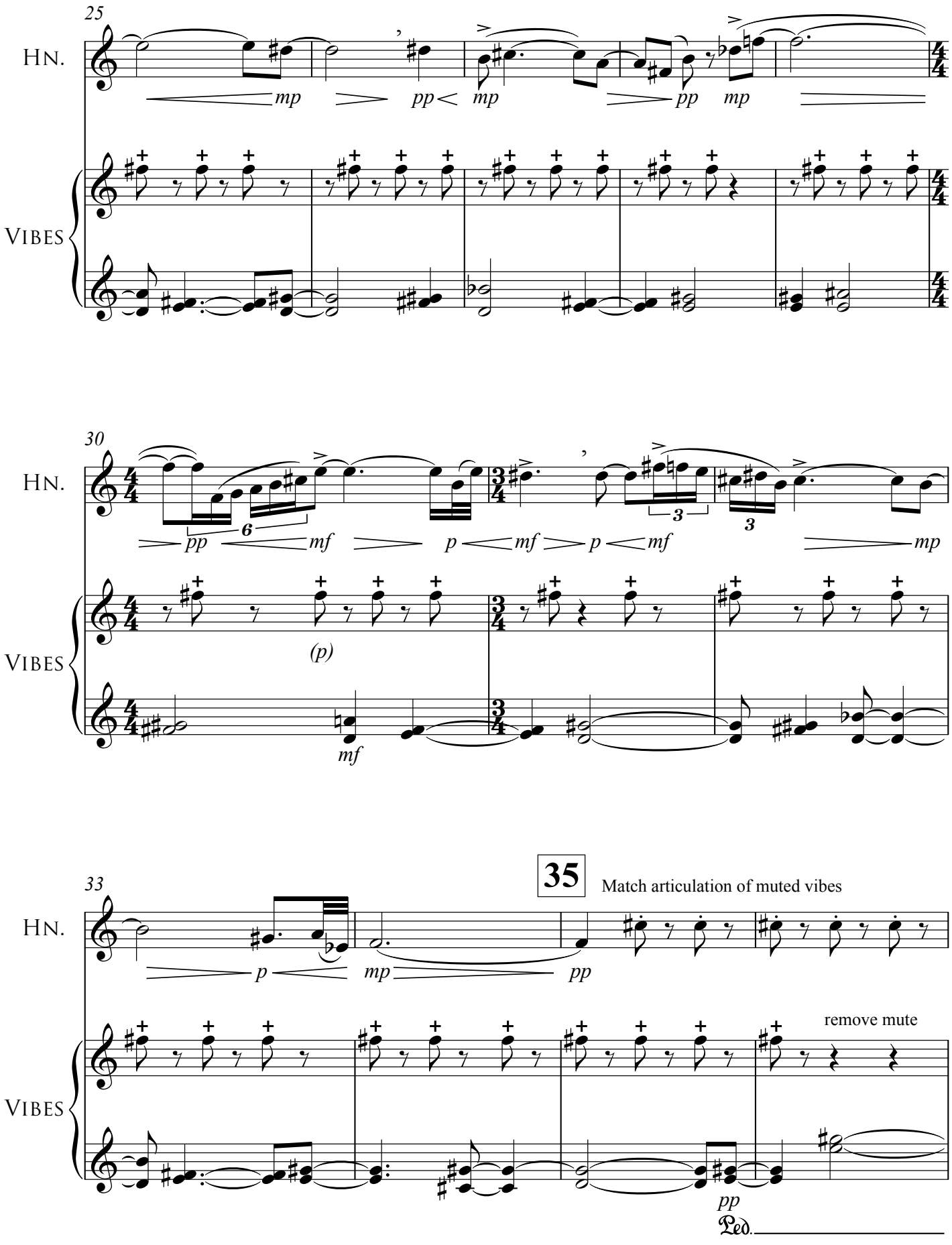
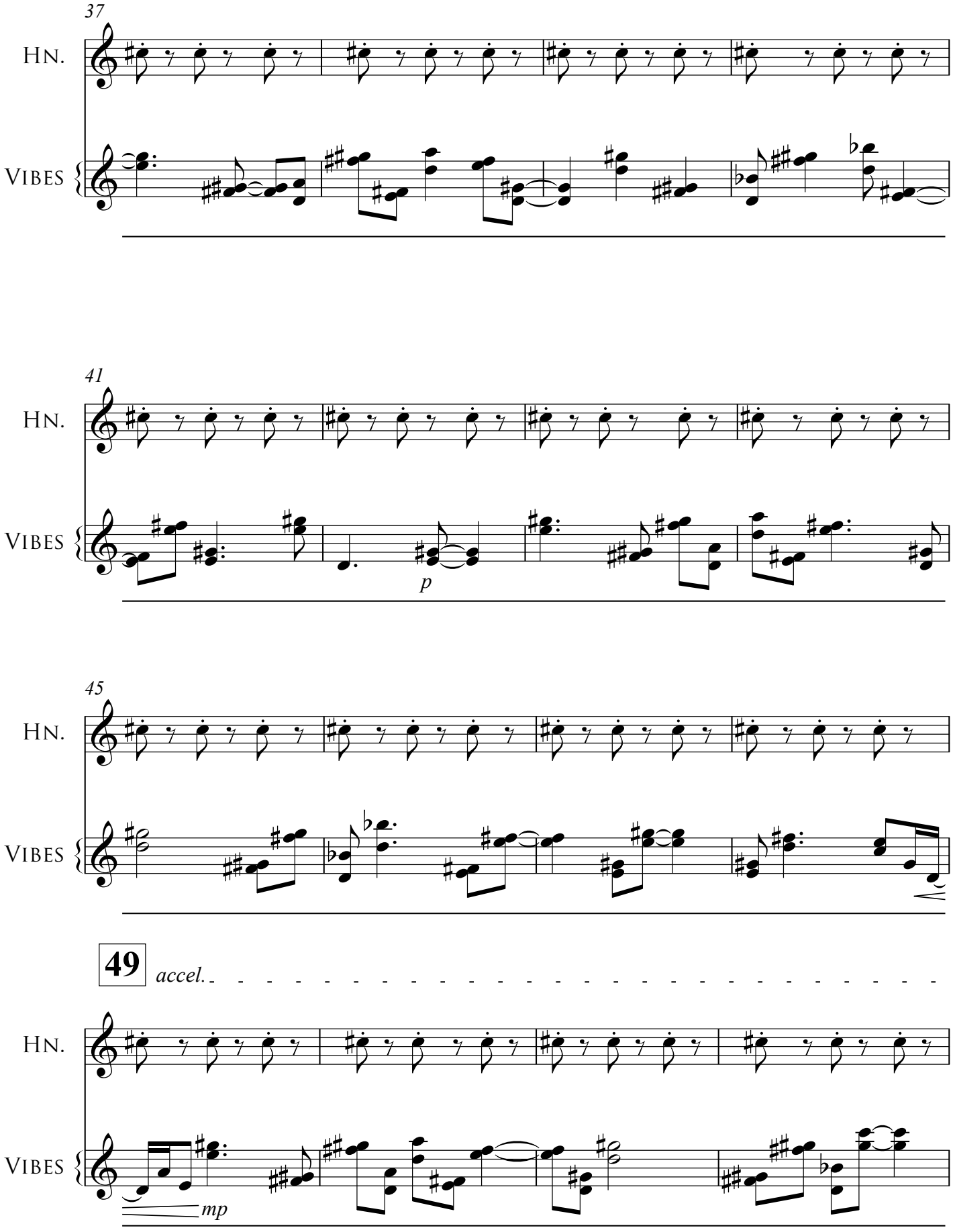
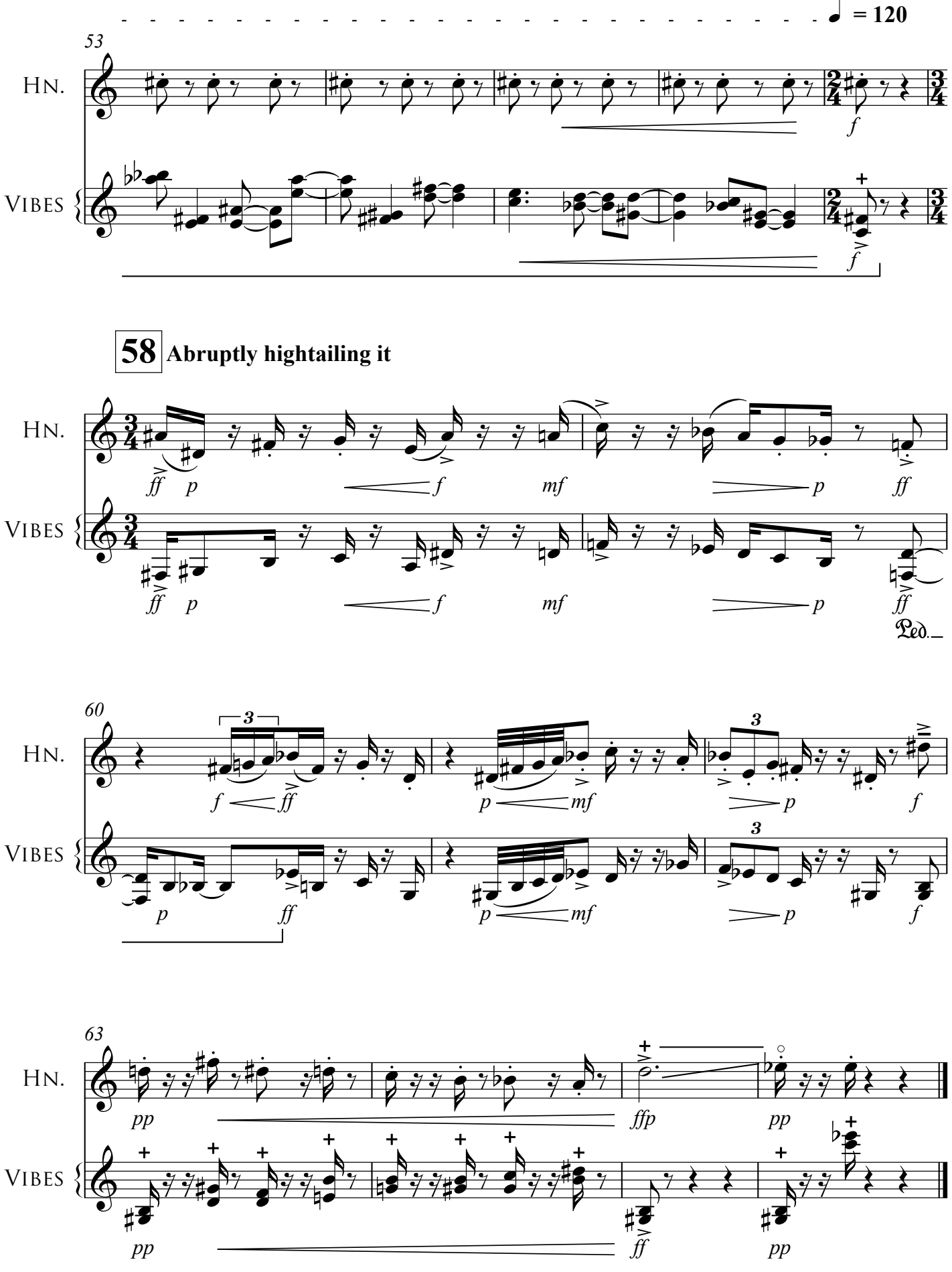

11
Hn.
Vibes
mf
pp
This F# should be muted by some kind of clamp or weighted object
mf
p
15
Apprehensive, stealthy
Hn.
Vibes
p
mp
20
Hn.
Vibes
mp
pp
mp
p
Ped.

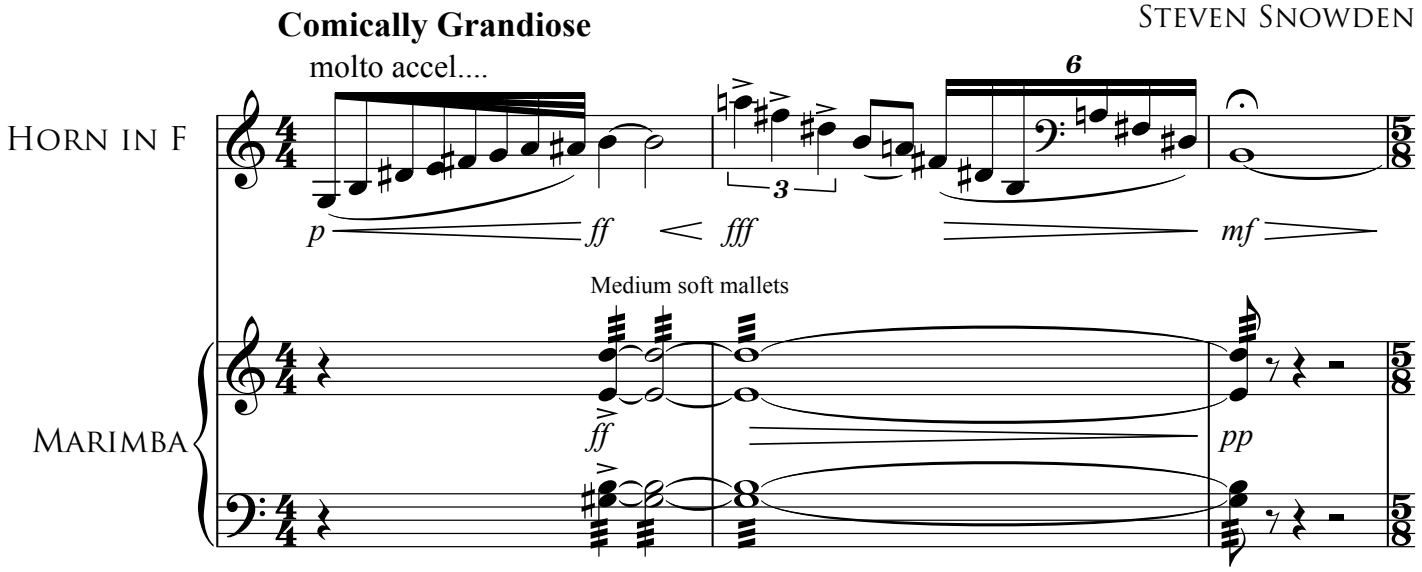

25
Hn.
Vibes
mp
pp
mp
pp
mp
30
Hn.
Vibes
pp
6
mf
p
mf
p
mf
3
3
mp
(p)
mf
33
35
Match articulation of muted vibes
Hn.
Vibes
p
mp
pp
remove mute
pp
Ped.

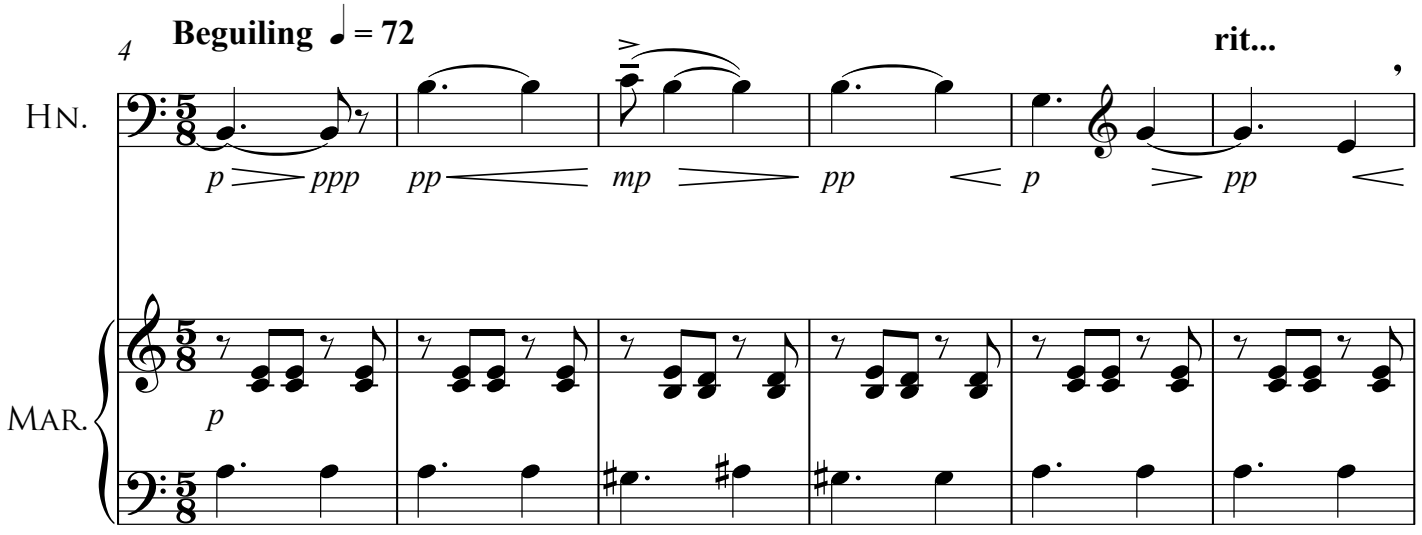

37
Hn.
Vibes
41
Hn.
Vibes
p
45
Hn.
Vibes
49
accel.
Hn.
Vibes
mp


= 120
53
Hn.
Vibes
58 Abruptly hightailing it
Hn.
Vibes
Ped.
60
Hn.
Vibes
63
Hn.
Vibes

Profiles

III. The Grifter





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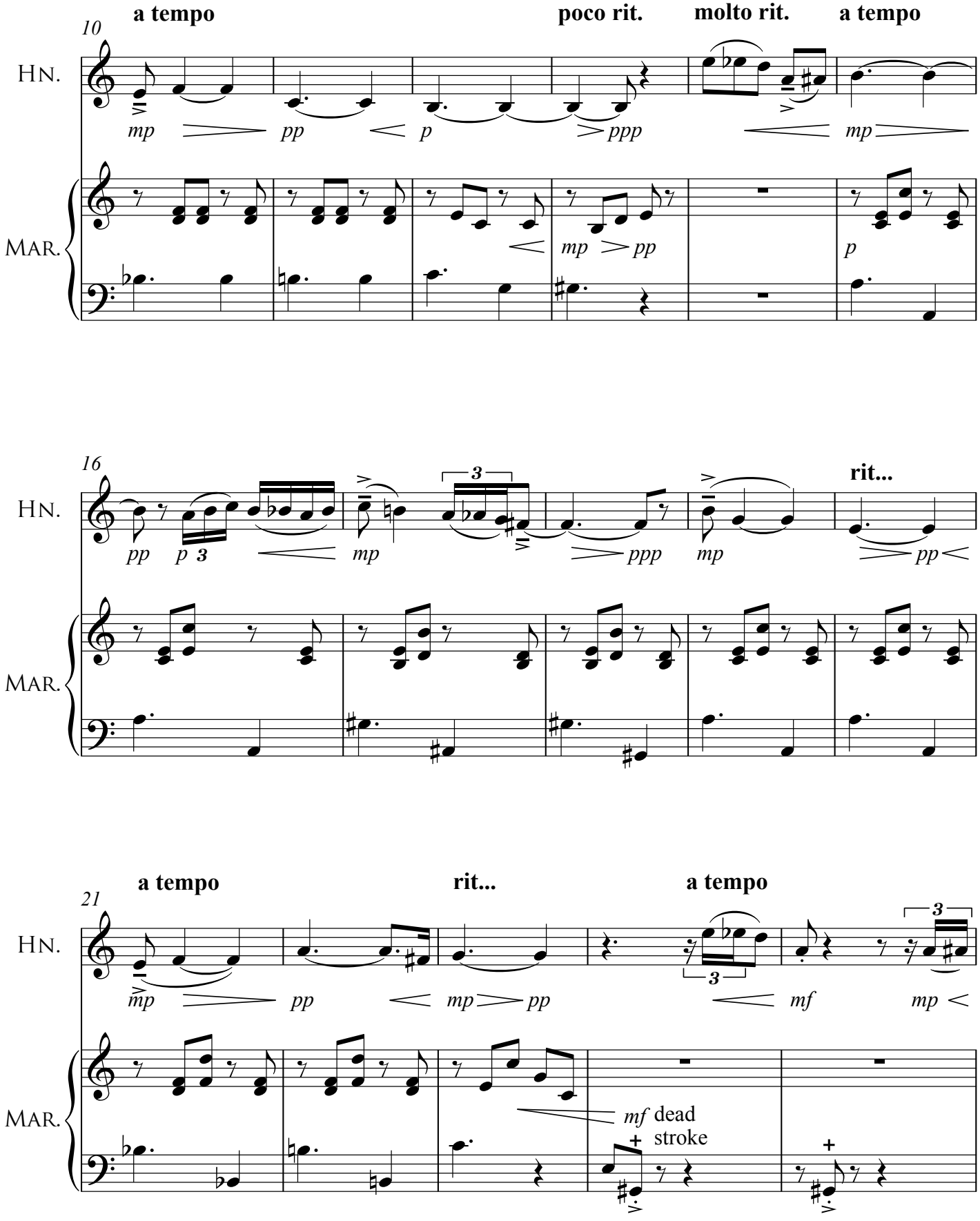
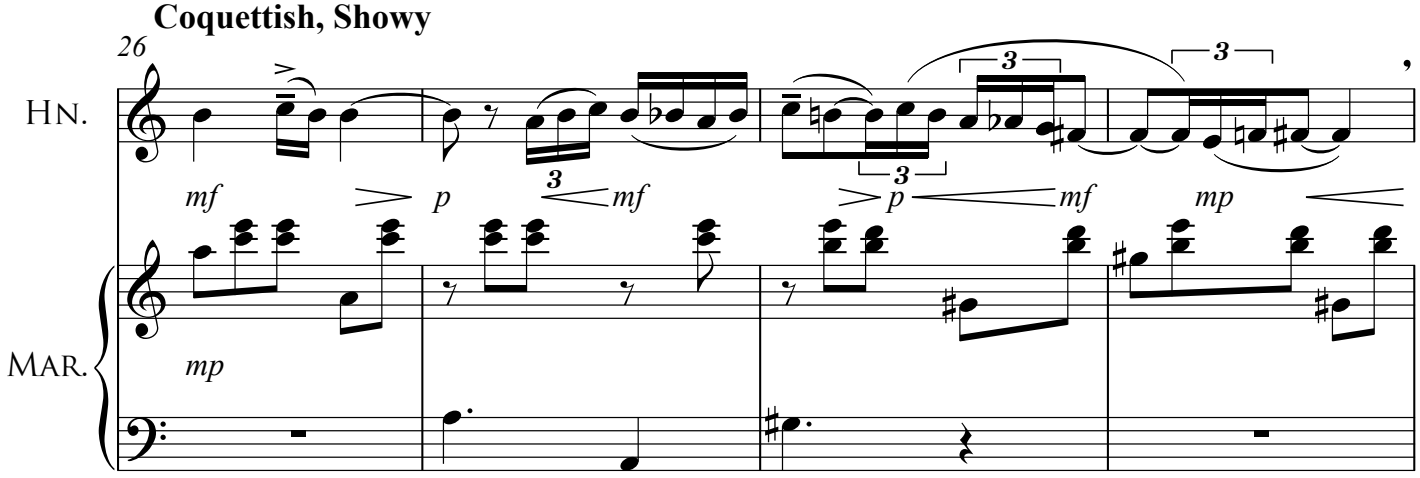
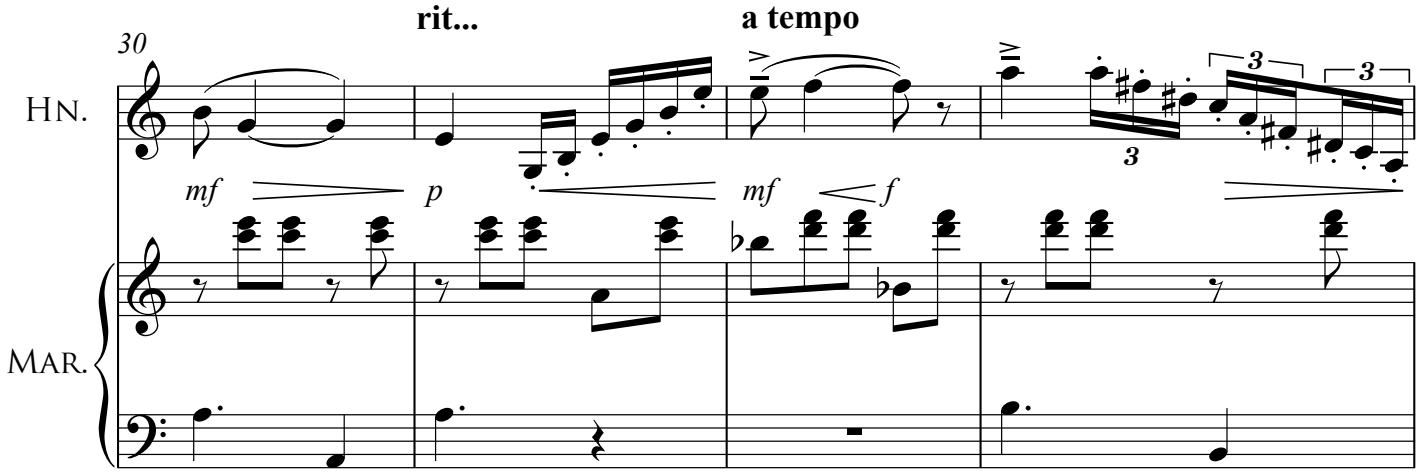
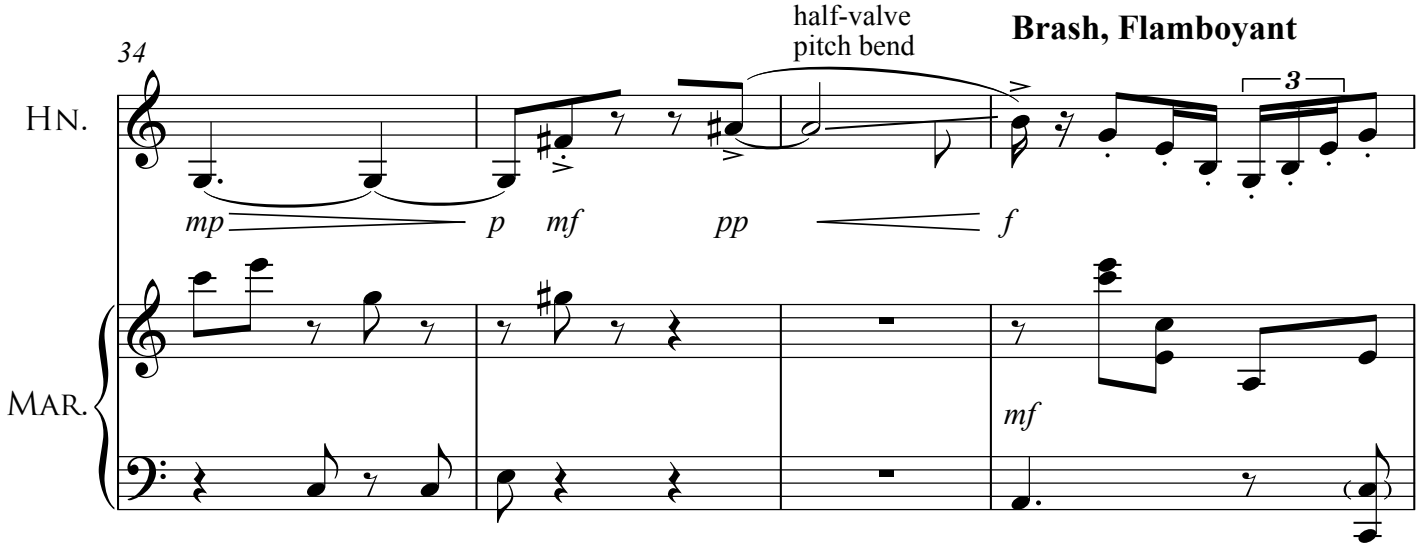
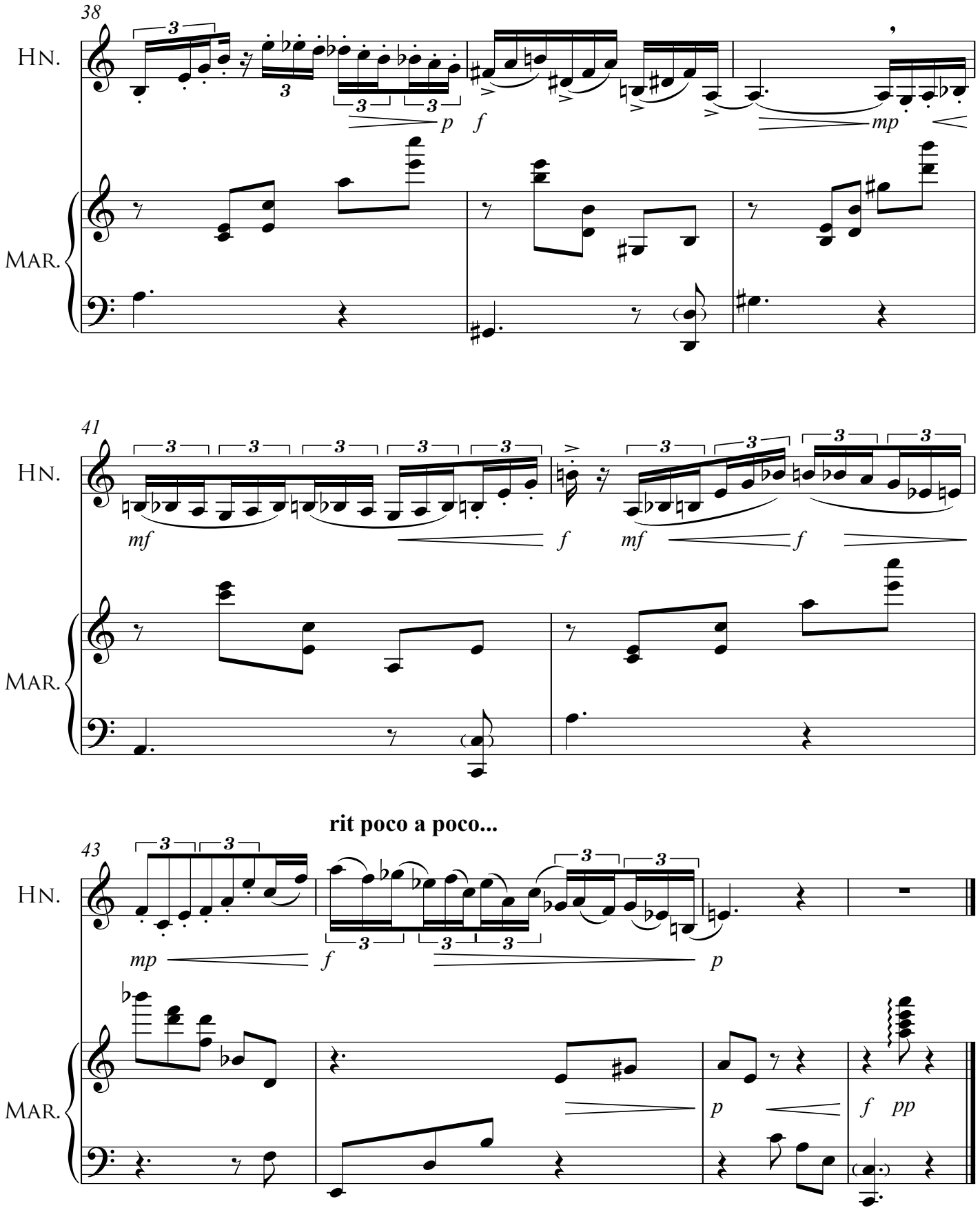

10
a tempo
poco rit.
molto rit.
a tempo
Hn.
Mar.
mp
pp
p
ppp
mp
mp
pp
p
16
rit...
Hn.
Mar.
pp
p
mp
ppp
mp
pp
21
a tempo
rit...
a tempo
Hn.
Mar.
mp
pp
mp
pp
mf
mp
mf dead stroke


Coquettish, Showy
26
Hn.
Mar.
mf
p
mf
p
mf
mp
mp


rit...
a tempo
30
Hn.
Mar.
mf
p
mf
f


half-valve
pitch bend
Brash, Flamboyant
34
Hn.
Mar.
mp
p
mf
pp
f
mf

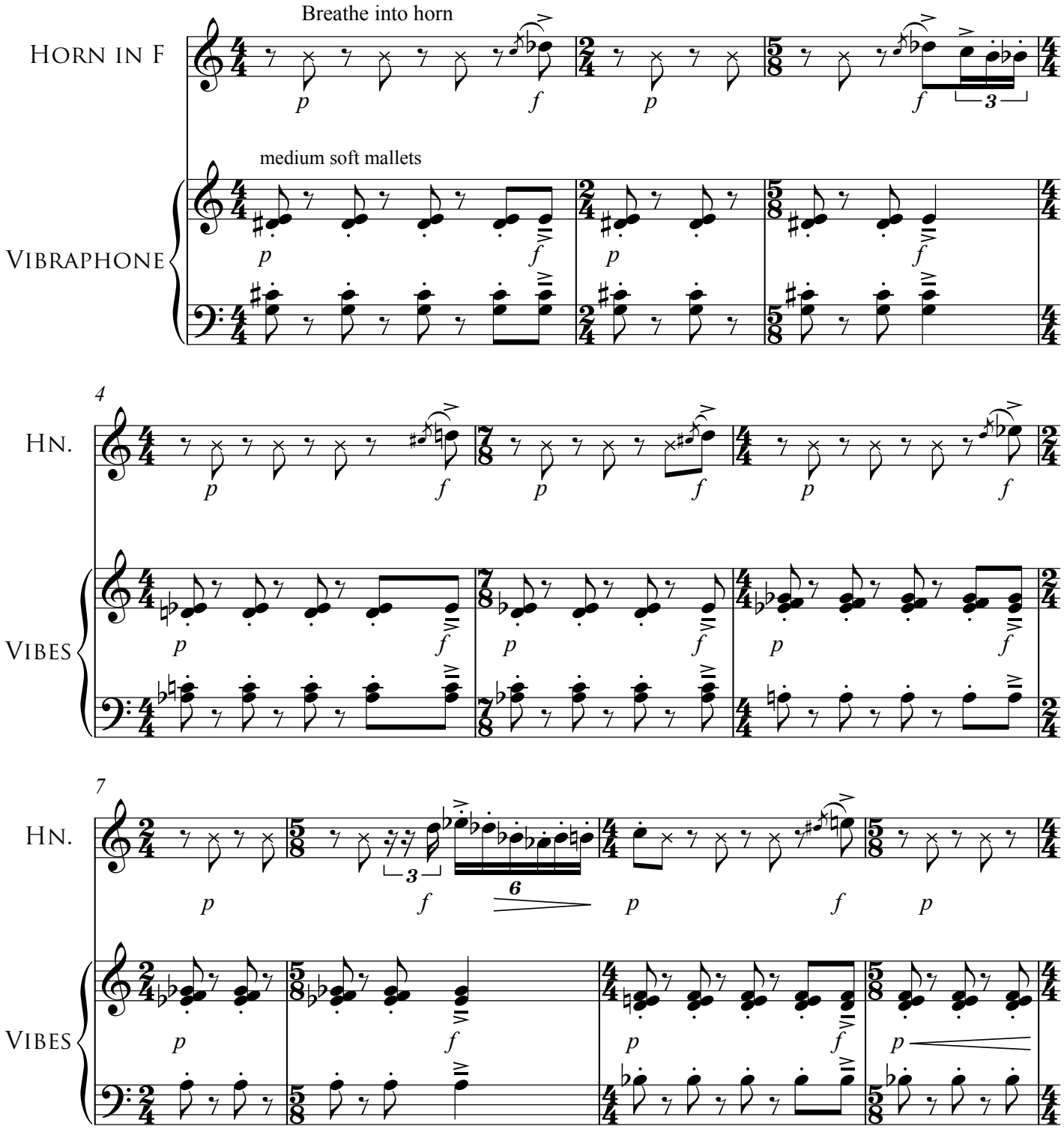

38
Hn.
Mar.
p
f
mp
41
Hn.
Mar.
mf
f
mf
f
rit poco a poco...
43
Hn.
Mar.
mp
f
p
p
f
pp

Profiles

IV. The Brute

Steven Snowden

Restless, agitated ♩ = 72



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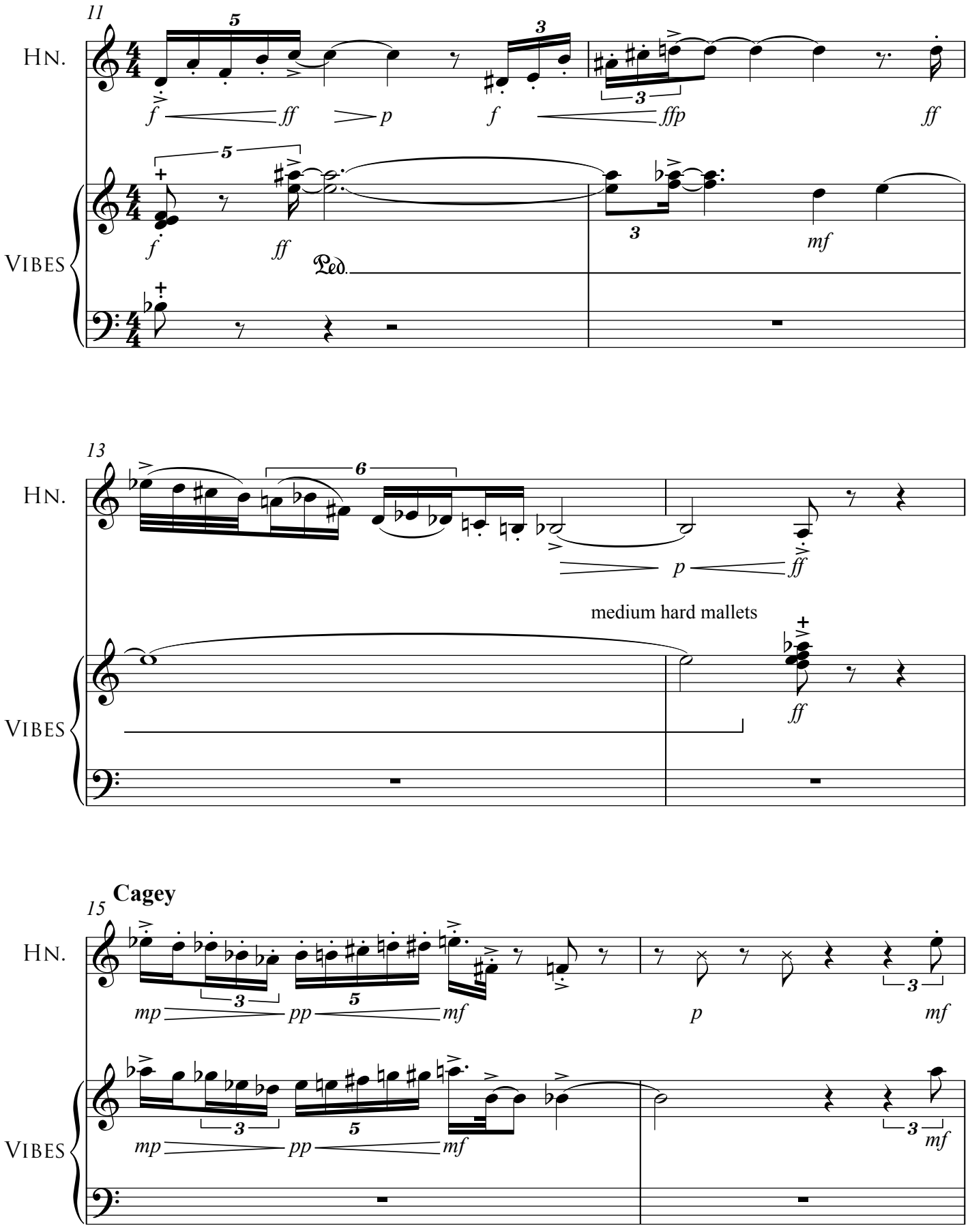
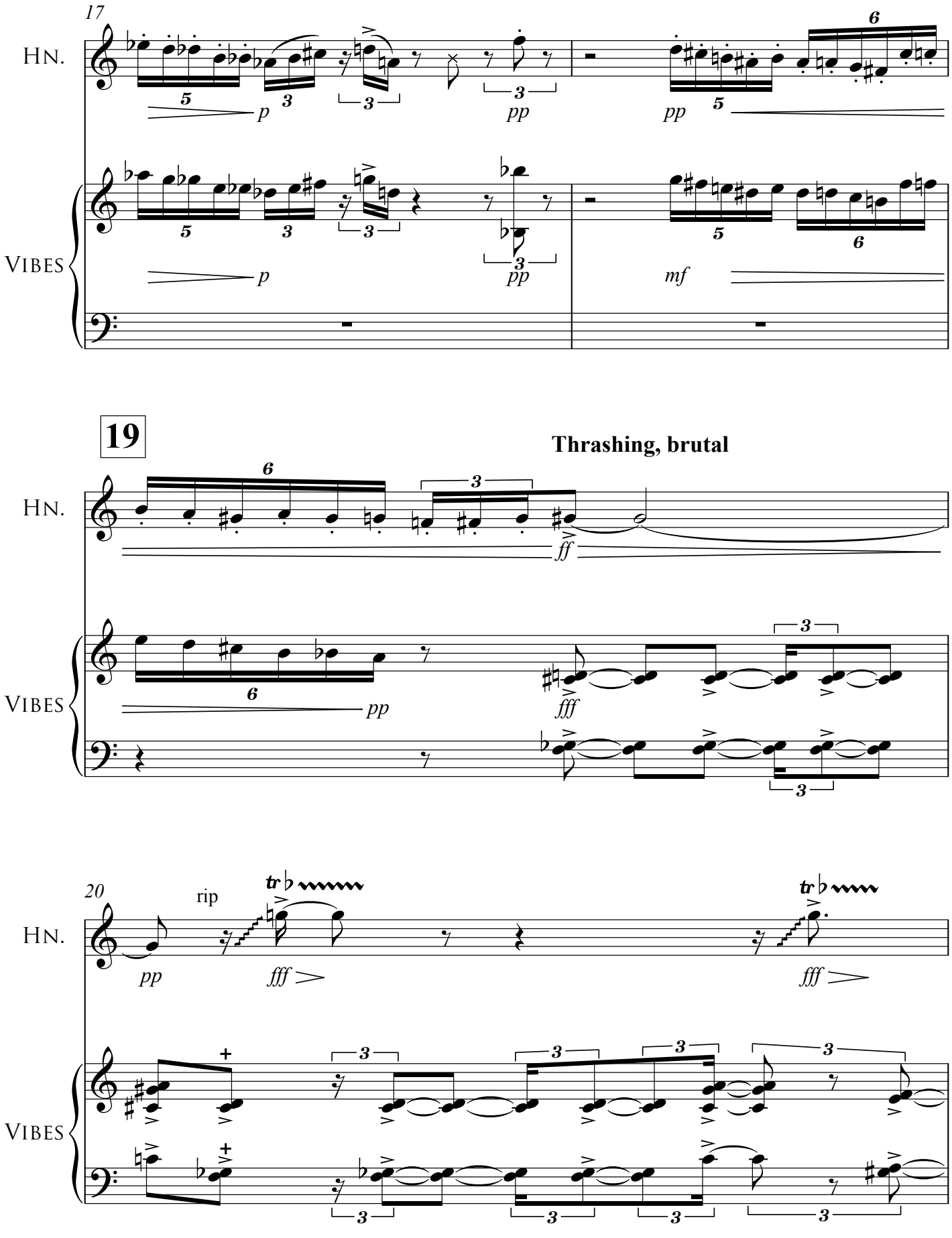
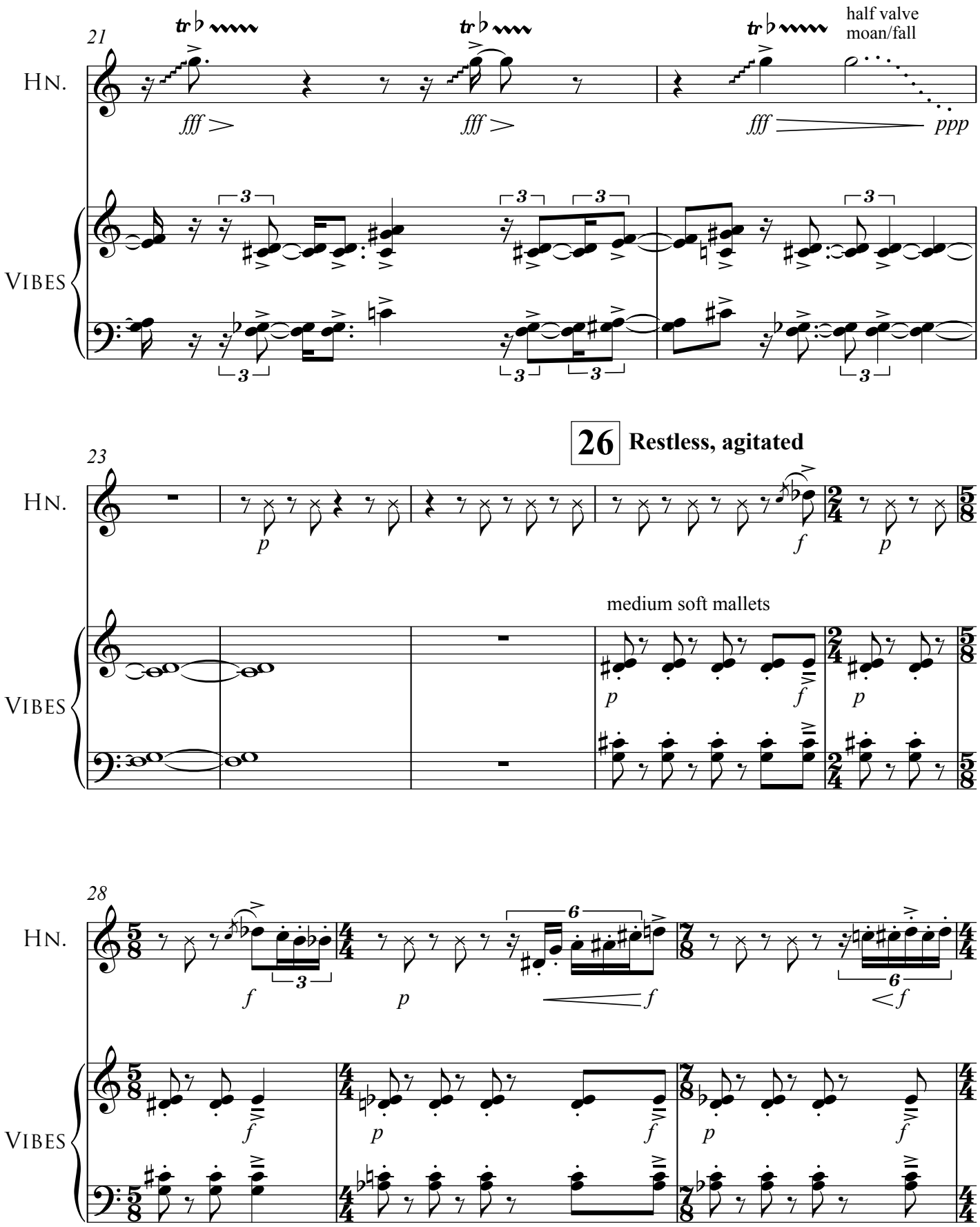
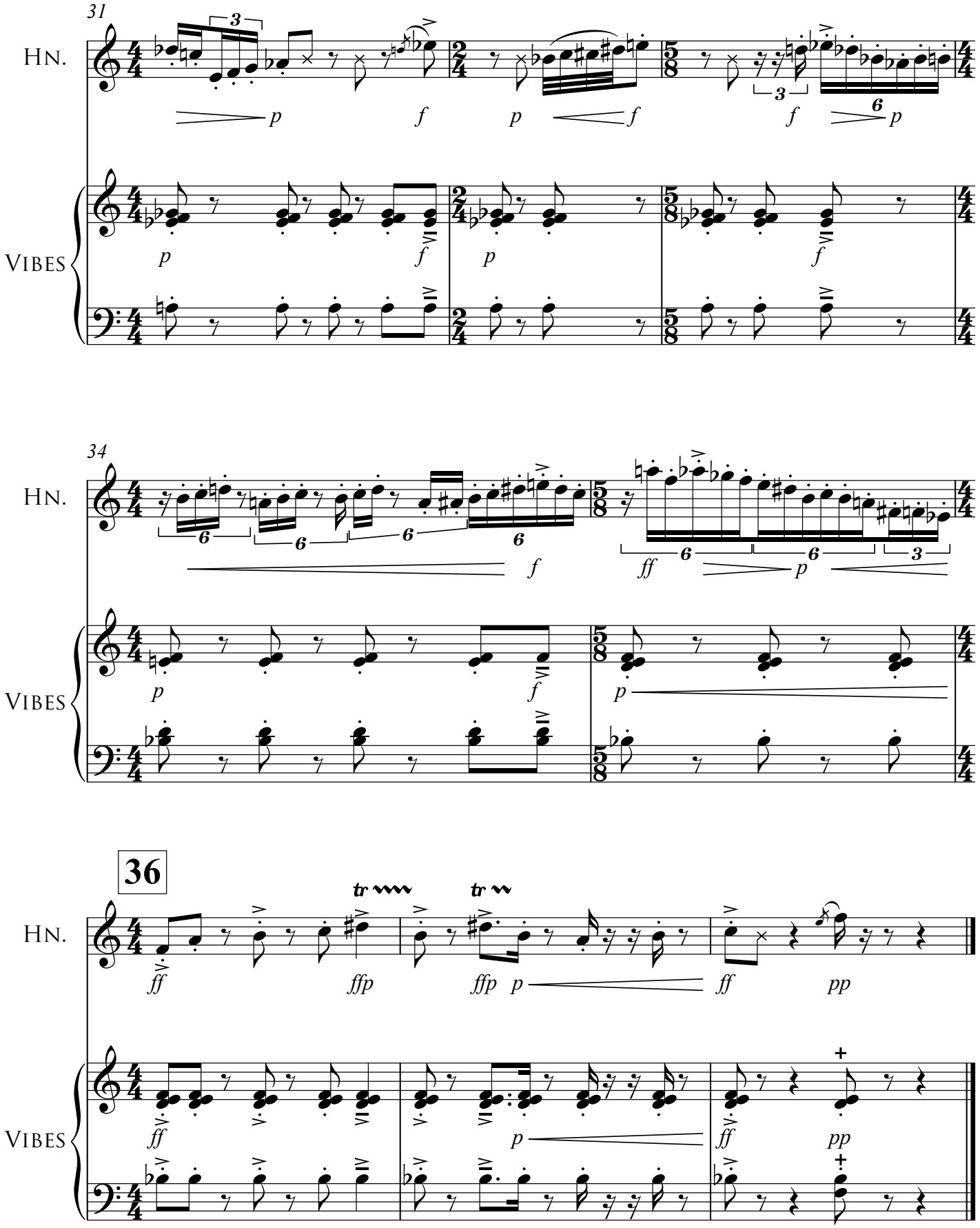
IV. The Brute


11
Hn.
Vibes
Ped.
13
Hn.
Vibes
medium hard mallets
15
Cagey
Hn.
Vibes


17
Hn.
Vibes
p
pp
pp
p
pp
mf
19
Thrashing, brutal
Hn.
Vibes
pp
ff
fff
20
rip
Hn.
Vibes
pp
fff
fff
fff


21
Hn.
Vibes
half valve
moan/fall
fff
ppp
23
26 Restless, agitated
medium soft mallets
28


31
Hn.
Vibes
34
Hn.
Vibes
36
Hn.
Vibes