icaro no. 1

for telos consort

flute + soprano sax
alto sax + tenor sax
violin
cello
piano

2024
15-30 min

Nicholas A. Batina

icaro no. 1
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-instrumentation-

flute + soprano sax
alto sax + tenor sax
violin
cello
piano

Program Note:

An icaro is a type of magic song derived from a Quechua word “icarai”, which means “to blow”. This piece, tonight, has almost zero relation to actual icaros, as this style of music-making is deeply engrained in a culture far divorced from my own, with a particular performative focus on vegetal ceremonies and visionary states, both of which have little intersection with my own life. This piece does not function like an icaro, nor does it contain musical features found in those ceremonial procedures. Nonetheless, learning about this musical world has had a tremendous impact on my compositional output, and I would be remiss to vaguely allude to the incredible reconfiguration that has taken place in my musical voice as a result of my awareness of the subject. When I say “magic song”, I really mean it. The intention behind these songs is seemingly to guide participants of these ceremonies through challenging and ecstatic visions—anecdotes pointing to the idea that many, sometimes all, share these visions and their physiological or spiritual impact together. As such, an icaro is understandably a secret of the trade and hot commodity, developing into a sort of musical economy wherein melodies and lyrics are passed from teacher to student and master to master, the latter often for a price, or as an exchange of tunes and special “carrier” items. If such material falls in the wrong hands, bad things are surely to happen... though I’ll let you, my wise listener, go right ahead down that rabbit hole.

Notably, these songs are obscured during these ceremonies through whispering and whistling, taking great precaution to avoid exposing the full-breadth of the song in hopes that any “infiltrators”—wizards and witches, spies, “brujas”— secretly participating in these ceremonies walk away with only part of the music, thus protecting the song from more-evil applications. This aspect of the icaros is the only real intersection with the piece you will hear shortly. All performing members of Telos have their own unique metronome, each with a different tempo (e.g. 60 bpm, 61 bpm, 62 bpm etc.), repeating ad libitum cyclical chunks of music in an organizational style called Polytempo. What I hide from you is the beauty found in differing configurations of the metronomes, tighter or wider divisions. You will need to return and hear icaro no. 2 to experience another configuration first-hand, and you will never know the full extent of Polytempo, as I do now, until this comes to pass. See you at the next show.

Performance Note:

In this particular iteration of the *icaro* series, each performer will use a visual metronome on their phone, synced roughly via a simple cue. Since this iteration will likely be the most melodic of any in the collection, absolute precision will not be absolutely necessary (unlike “sub-beat tempo flux”, tempo divisions as minute as 1/10th of a click). This will also lend itself to a shorter runtime, as full cycles will occur quicker and more audibly. *Each new cell will be coordinated via a cue mid-performance, which should be well rehearsed as material will often remain identical in the part on subsequent cells, making the change almost inaudible at times. This can cause a pain-point of losing track of the bar, where one is at in the score!*

icaro no. 1 uses a 5-click “tempo flux”, with flute+sop at 108 BPM, alto+tenor at 109 BPM, violin at 110 BPM, cello at 111 BPM, and, naturally, piano at 112 BPM. I use the app, *flashy metronome*, on iOS, to synchronize this music, with future versions implementing Philippe Kocher’s computer applications, *Polytempo Composer & Polytempo Network*. All things considered, any alternative flashing, visual metronome will do for icaro no. 1.

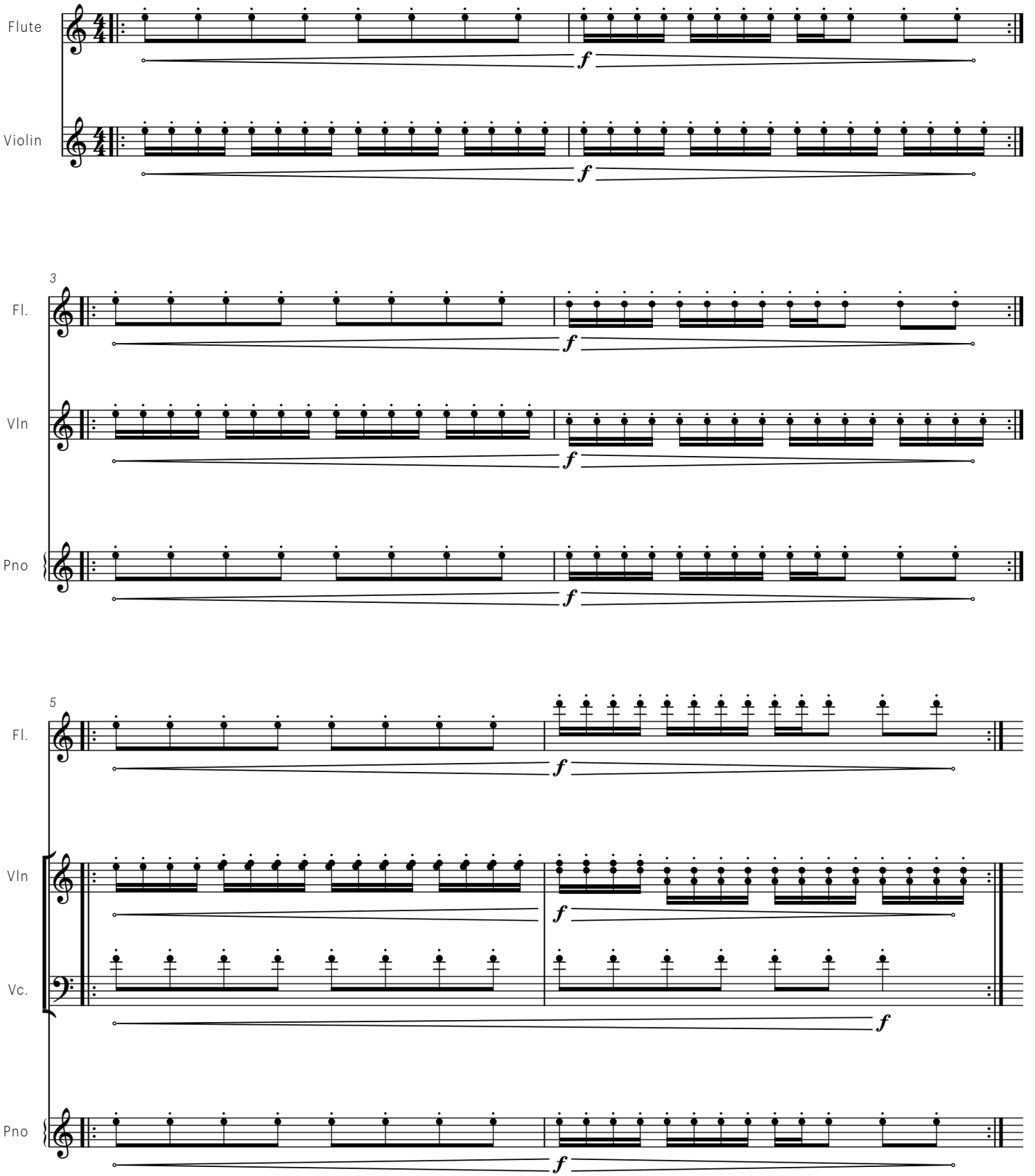
It should be noted that all instances of noteheads shaped like this,  , or this, , indicate that the music is subject to the influence of “tempo flux”, with the only deviation in this score being the final three bars of the piece in strict, unified time to cast off the performance. Bars 126-128 will continue at the mercy of tempo flux, but the fermata will cease the tempo flux to transition into the ending. Aside from the temporal oddities, all other notations are conventional, without extended technique of any kind.

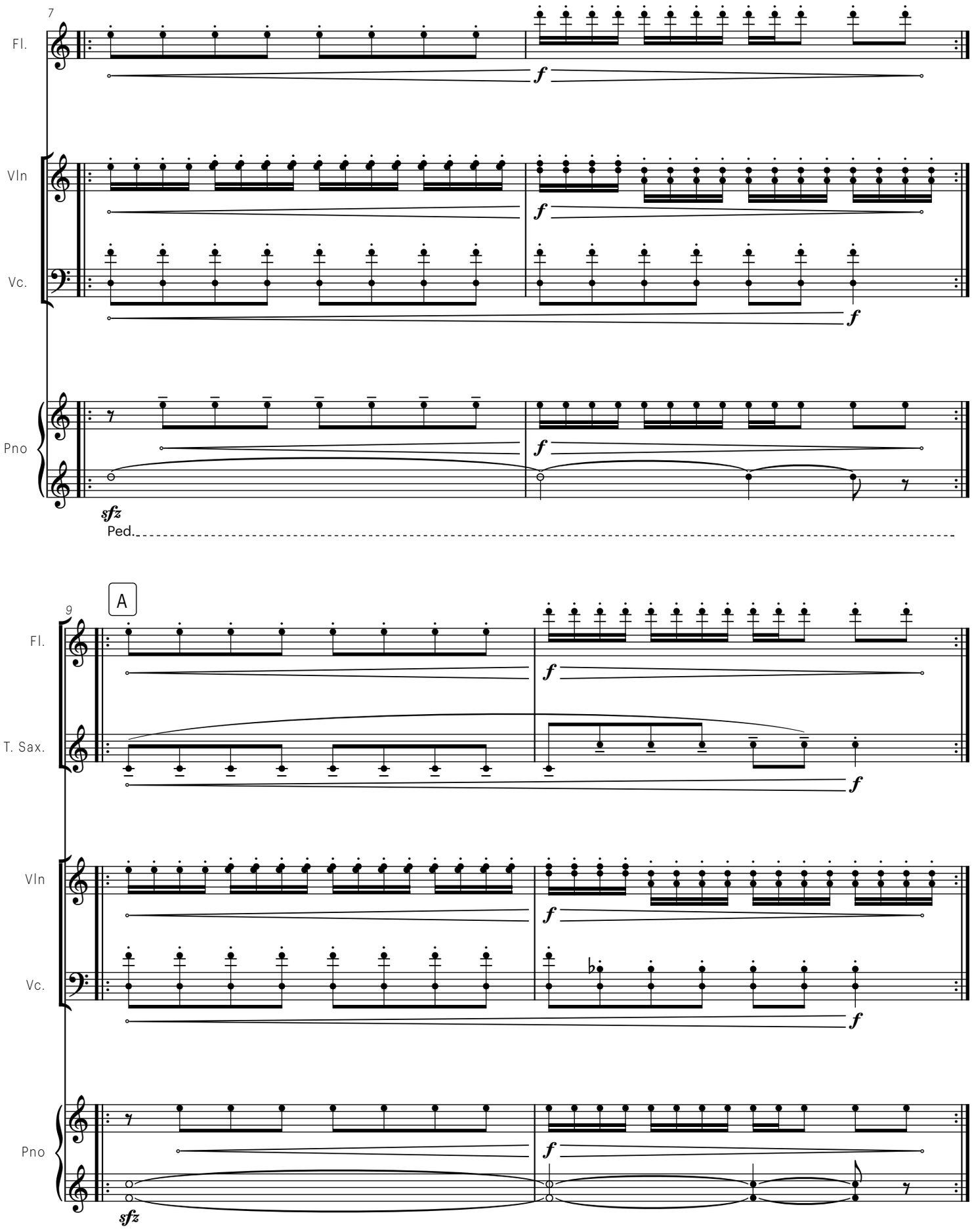
icaro no. 1

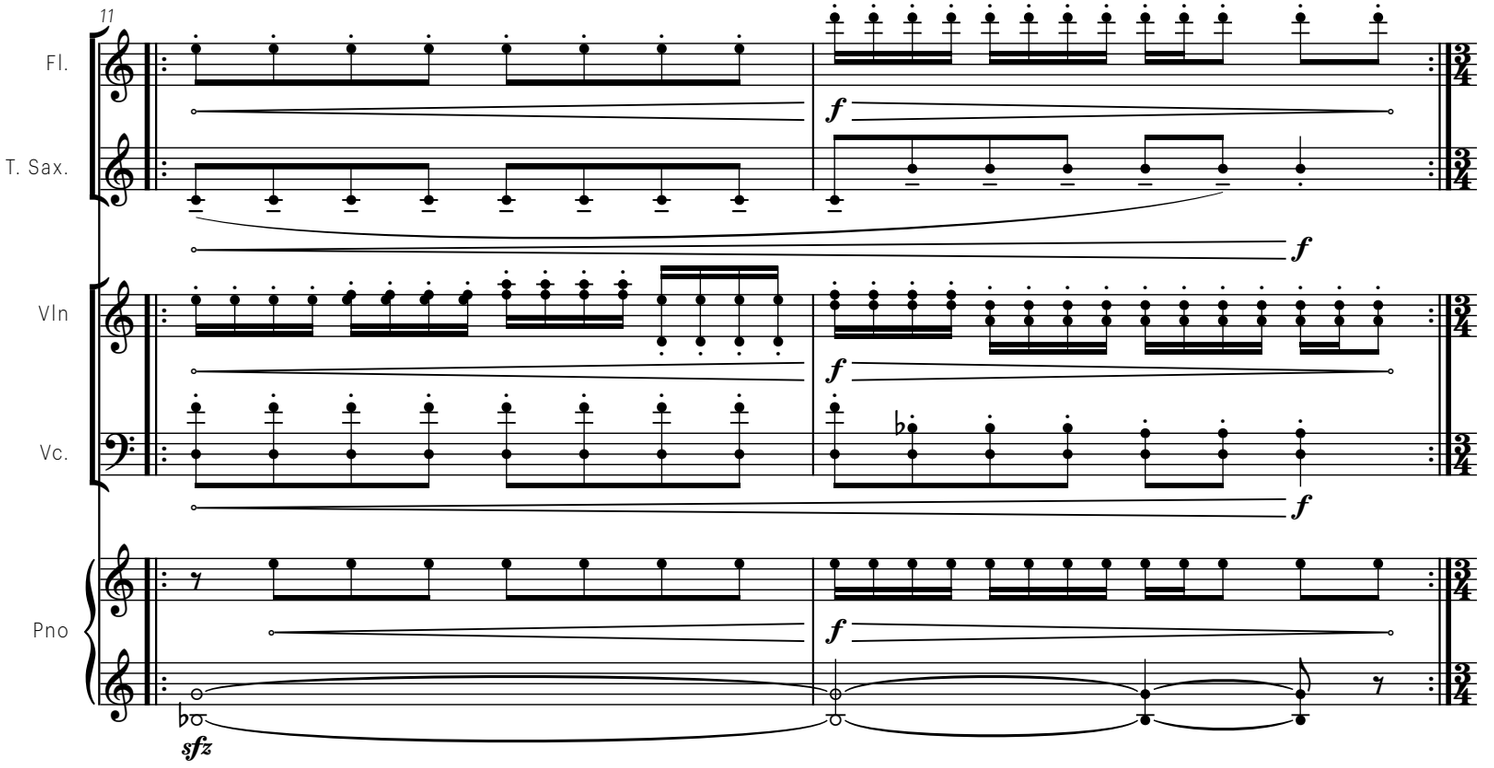
Nicholas A. Batina (1998)

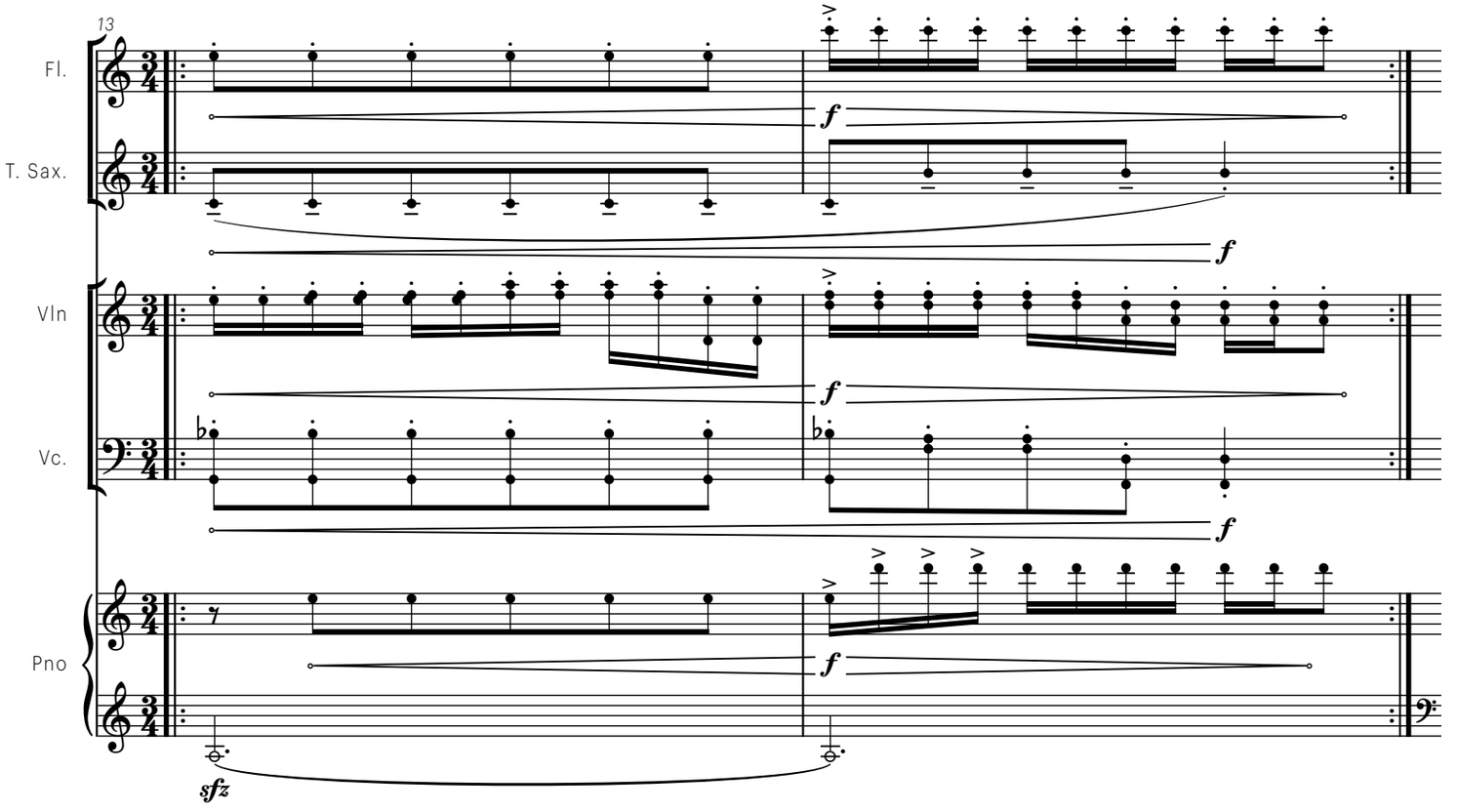
for Telos Consort [transposed score]

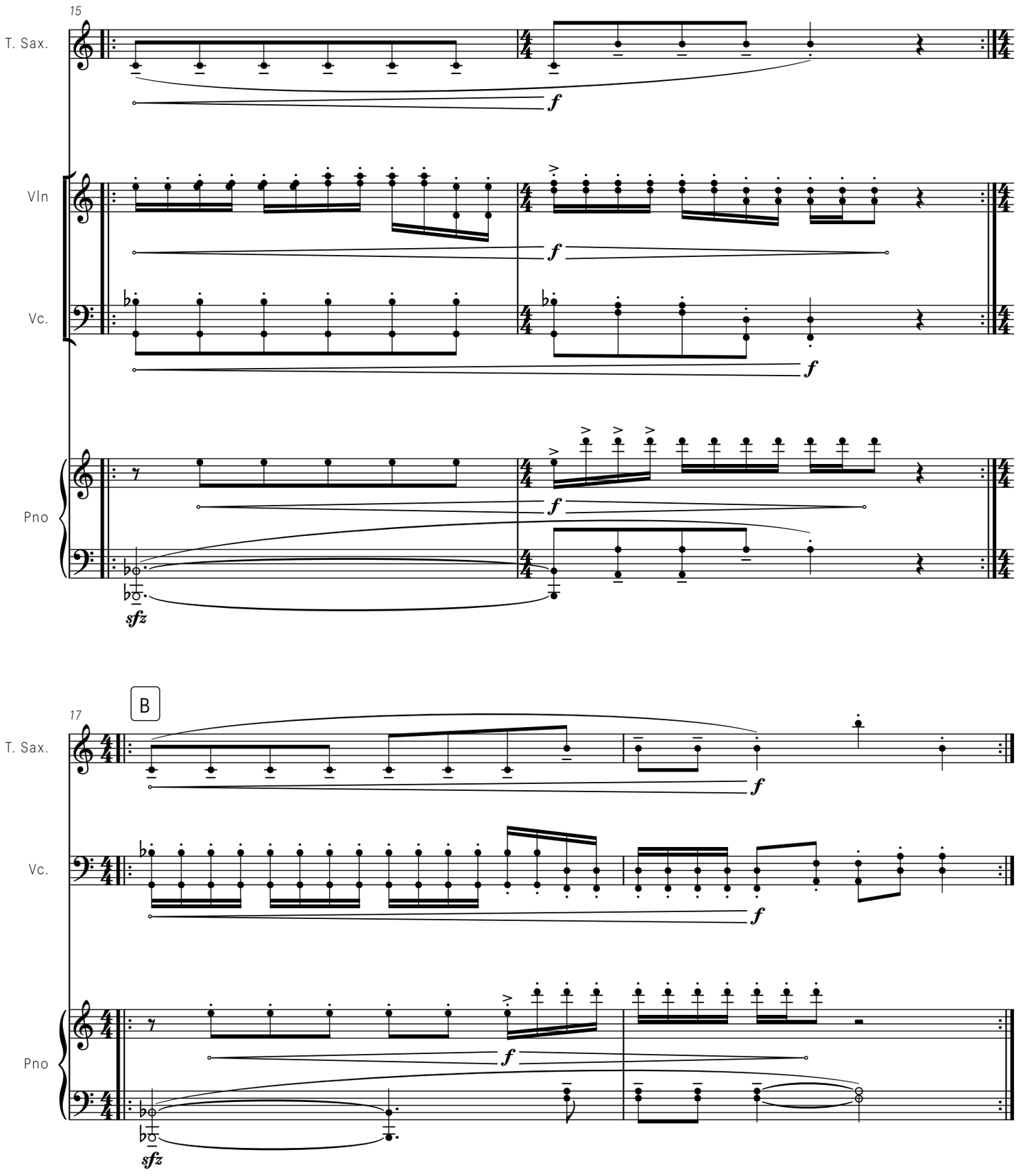
beam of light, opening [5 BPM Polytempo] (♩= 108–112)

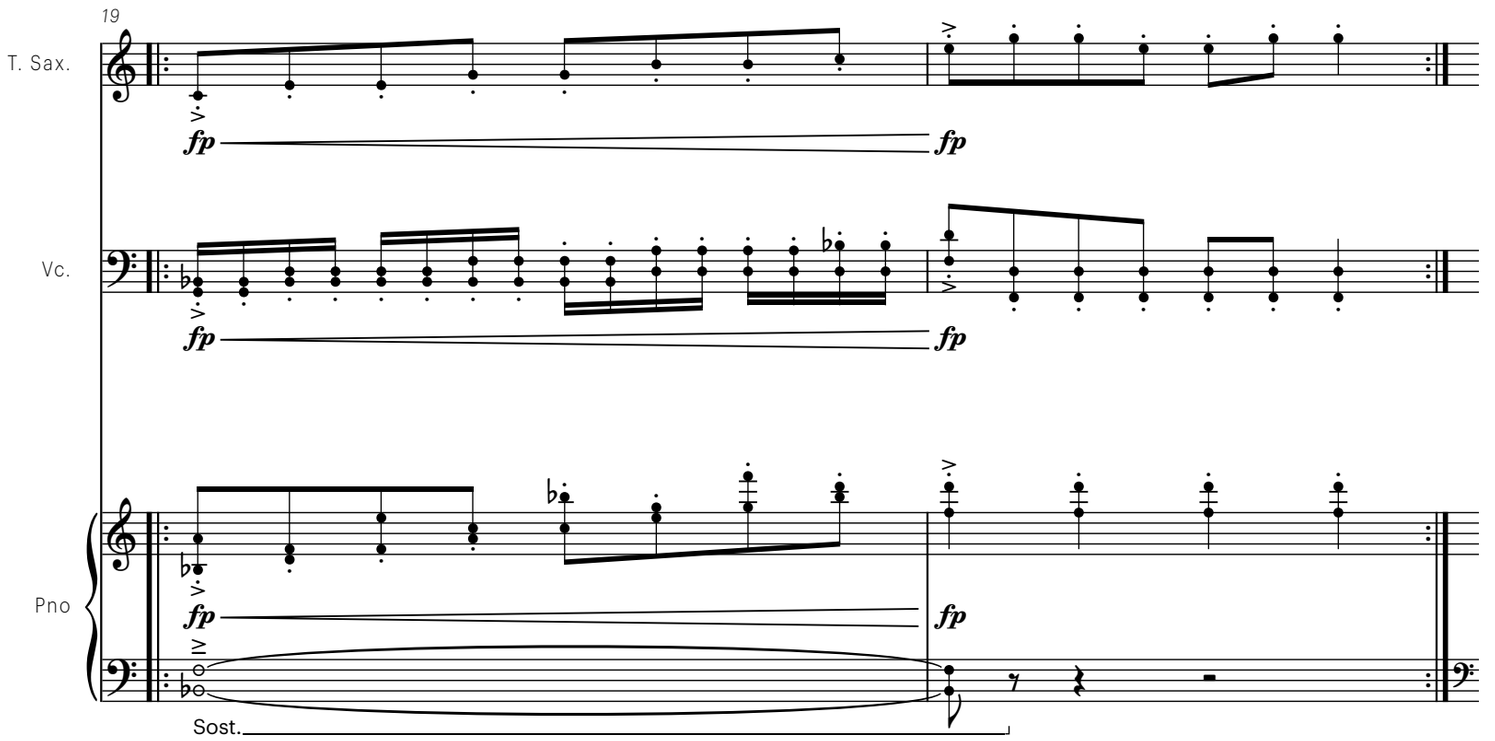


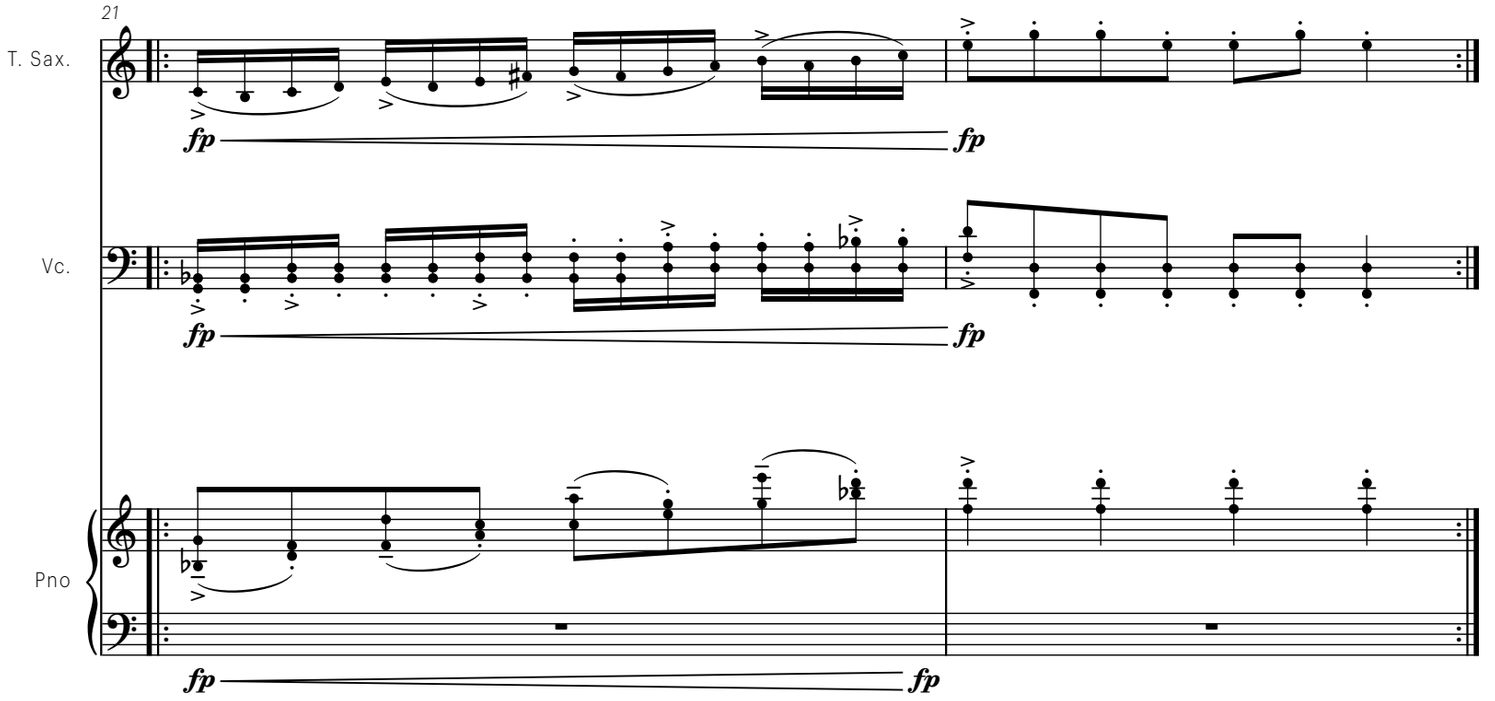

7
Fl.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
f
sfz
Ped.
A
9
T. Sax.

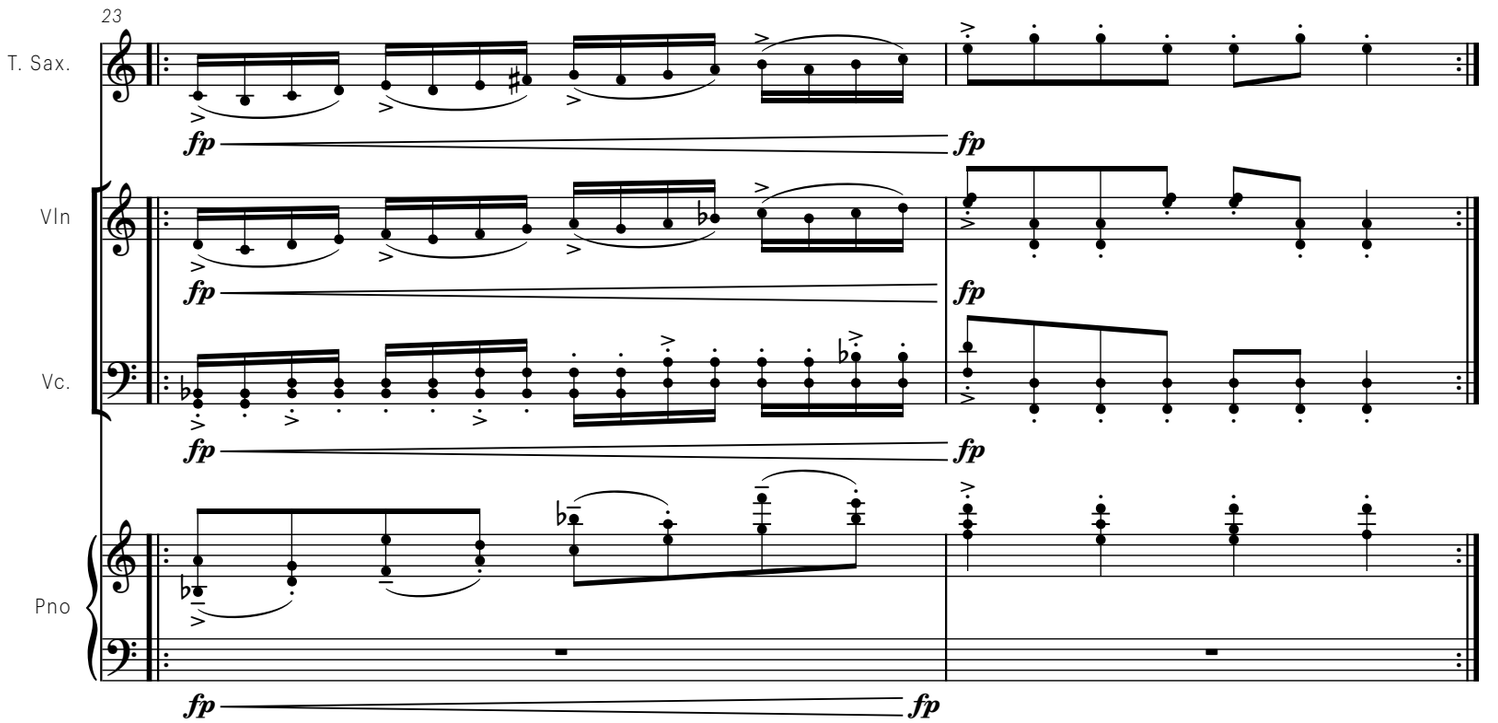

11
Fl.
T. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
f
sfz

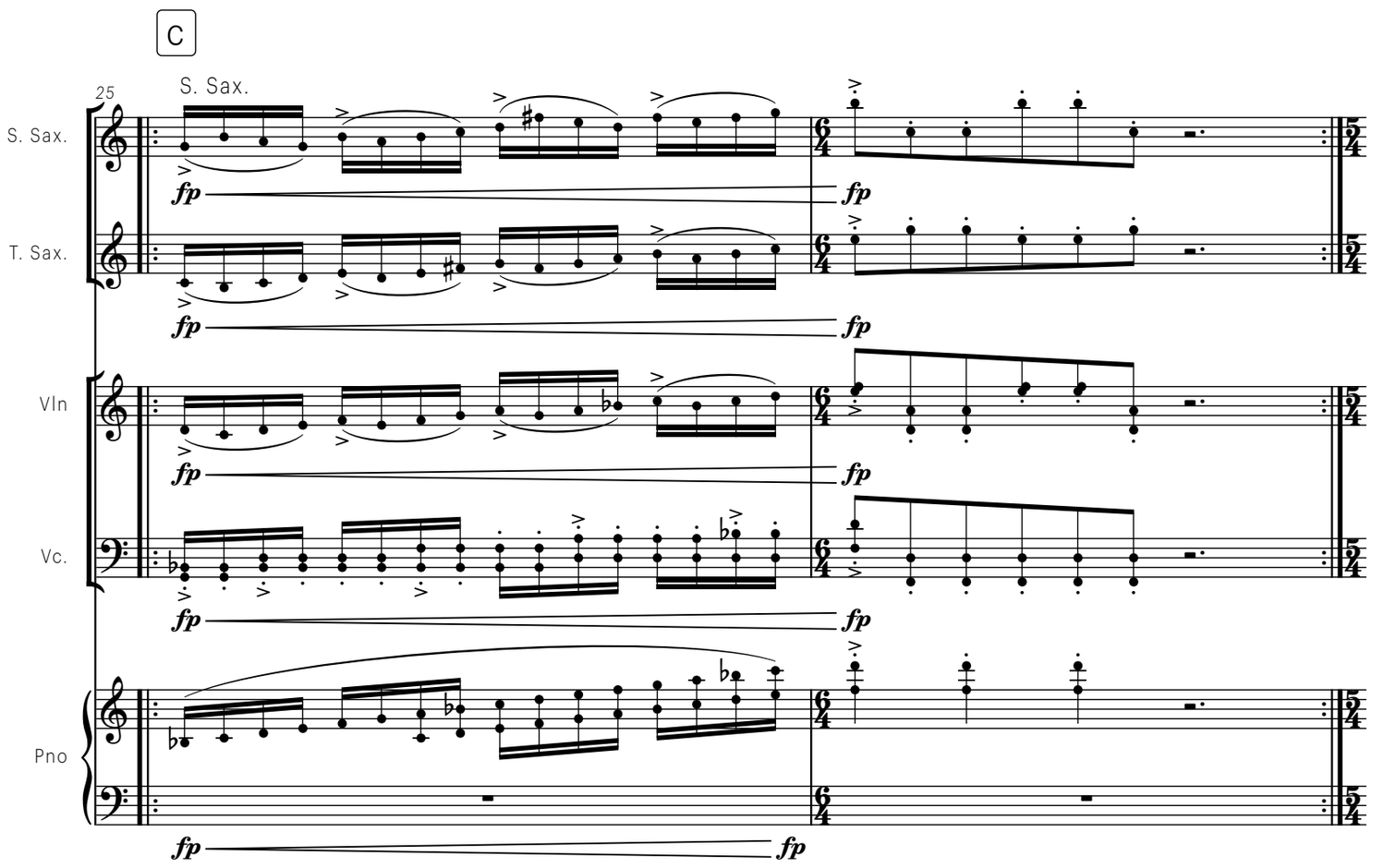

13
Fl.
T. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
f
sfz

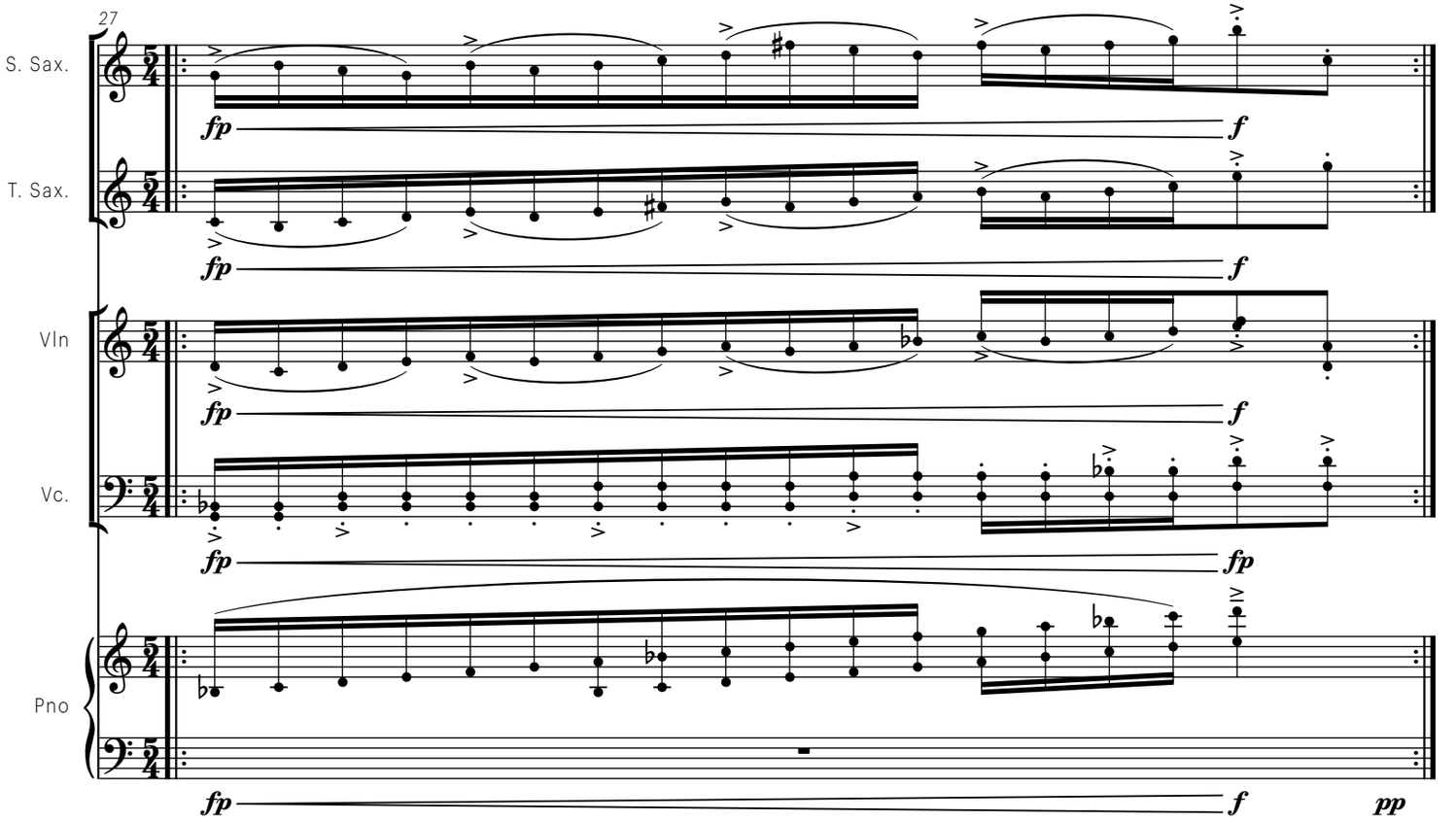

15
T. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
f
sfz
17
B

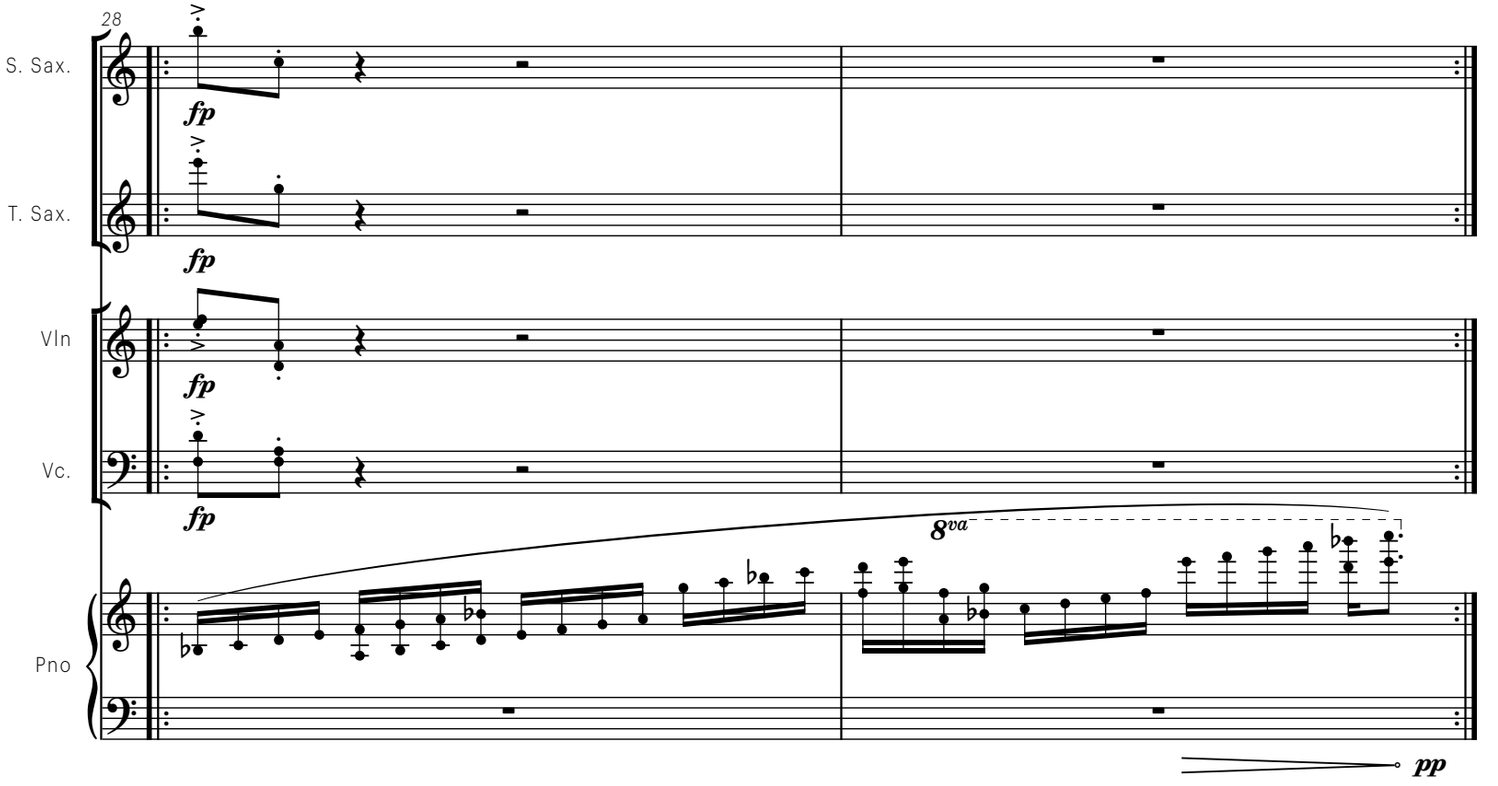

19
T. Sax.
Vc.
Pno
fp
Sost.

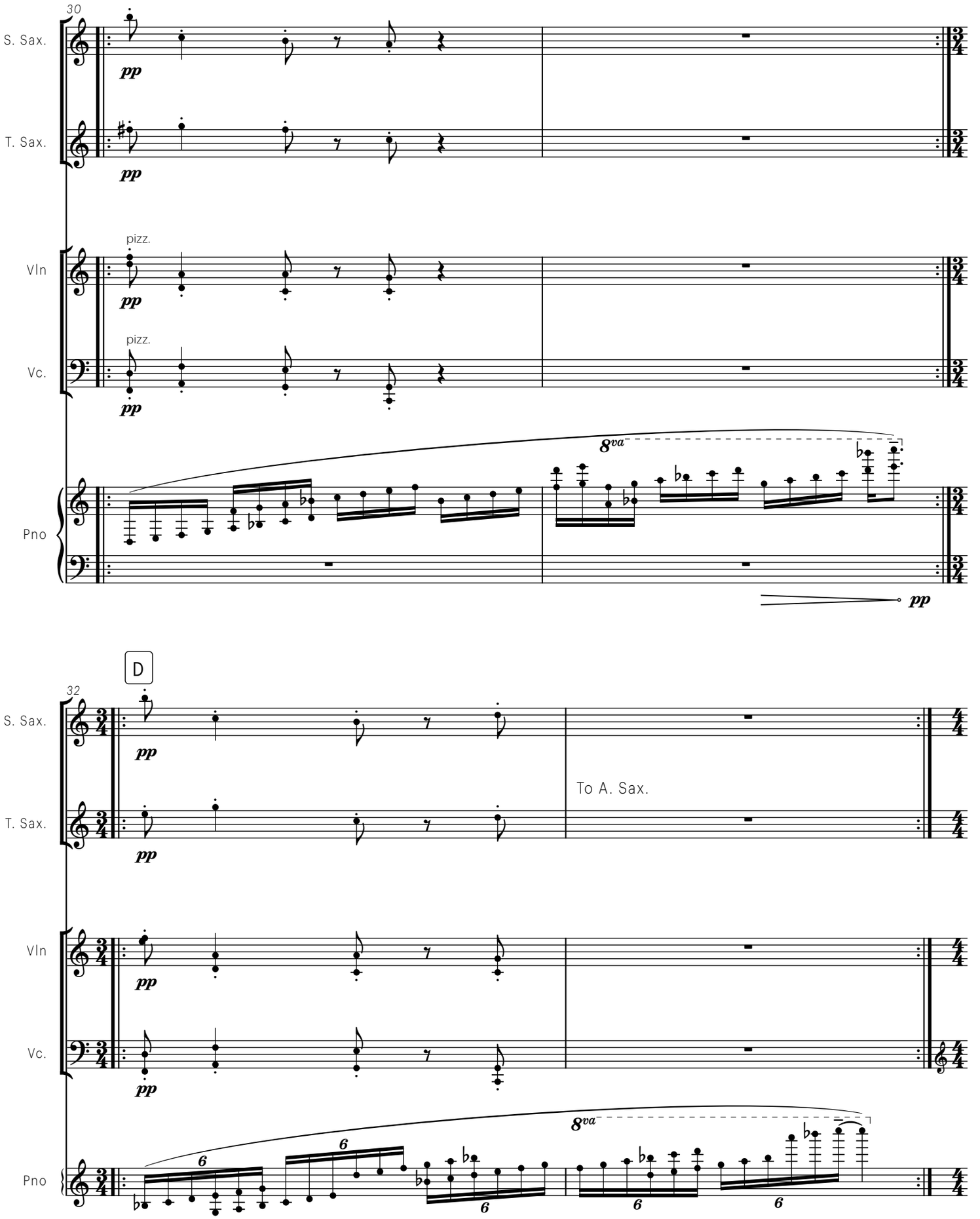

21
T. Sax.
Vc.
Pno
fp

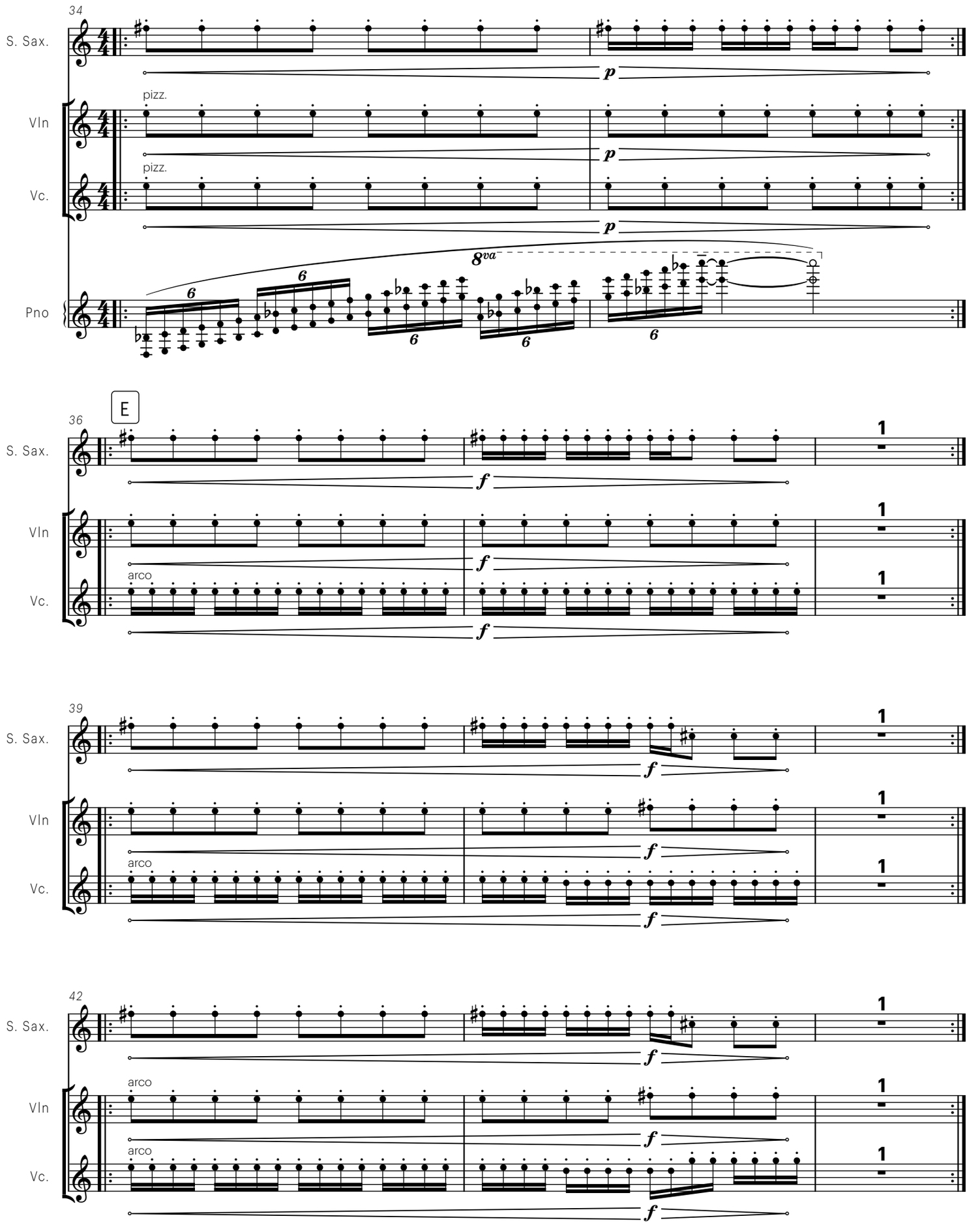

23
T. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
fp

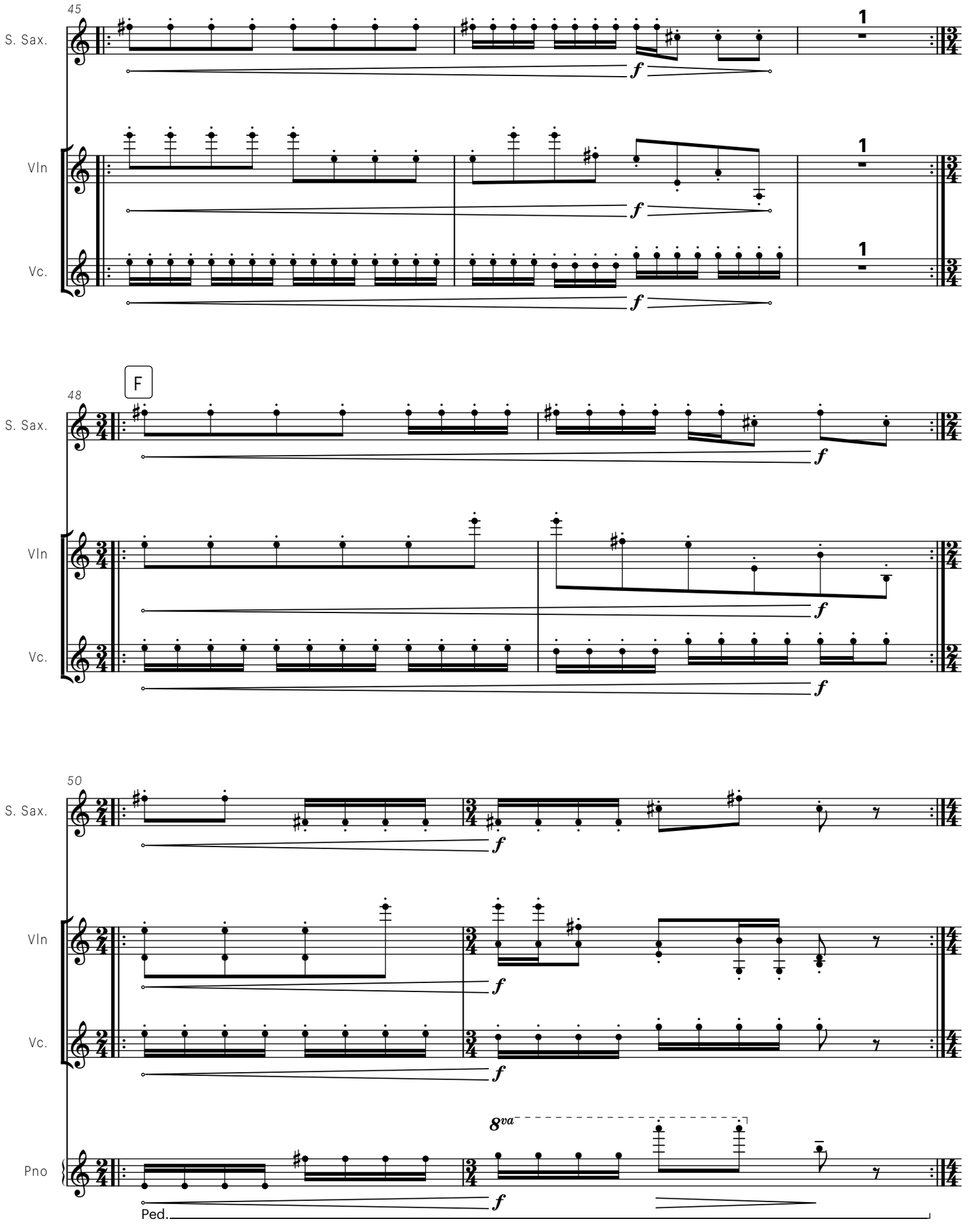

C
25
S. Sax.
S. Sax.
T. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
fp

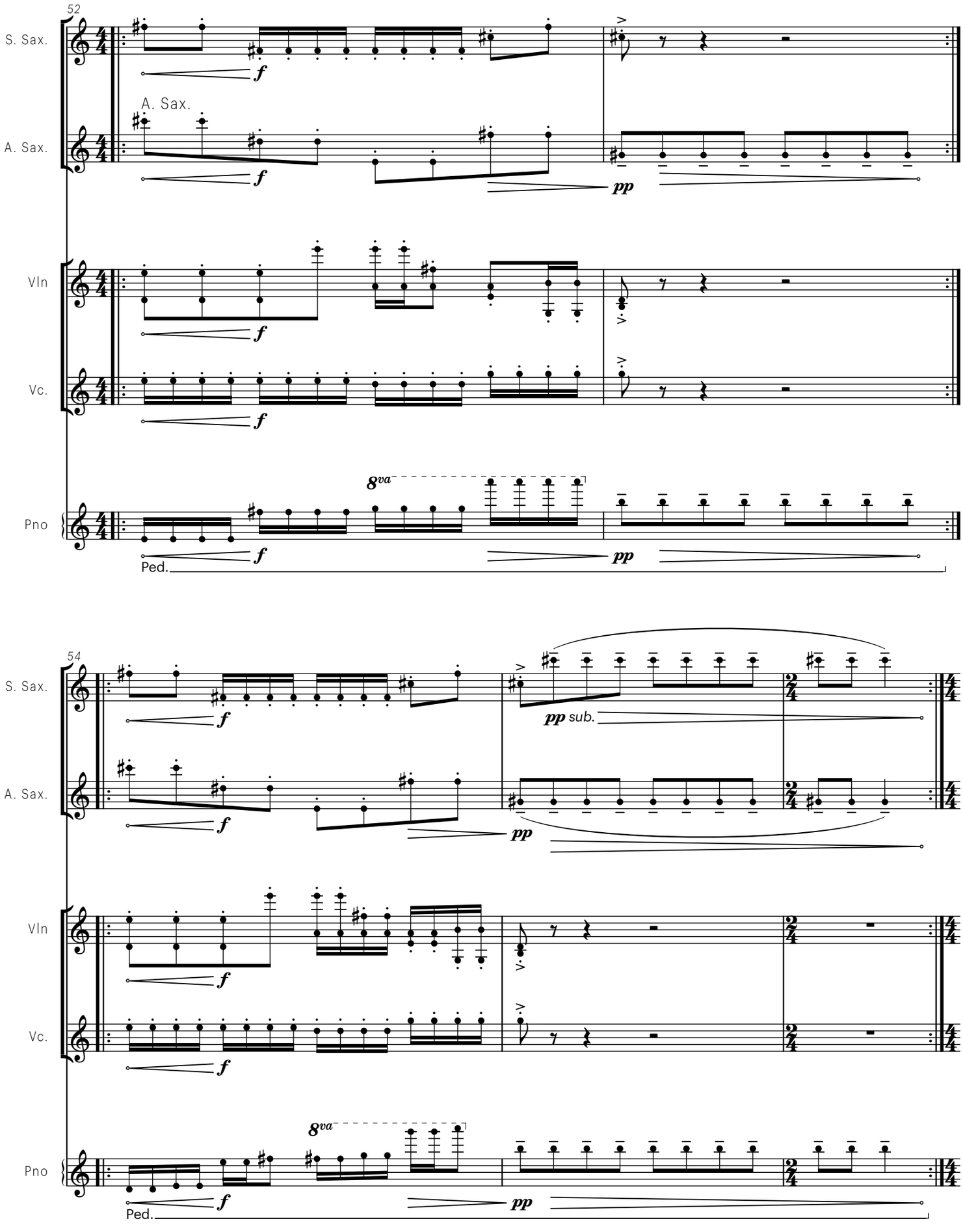

27
S. Sax.
T. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
fp
f
fp
f
fp
f
fp
fp
f
pp

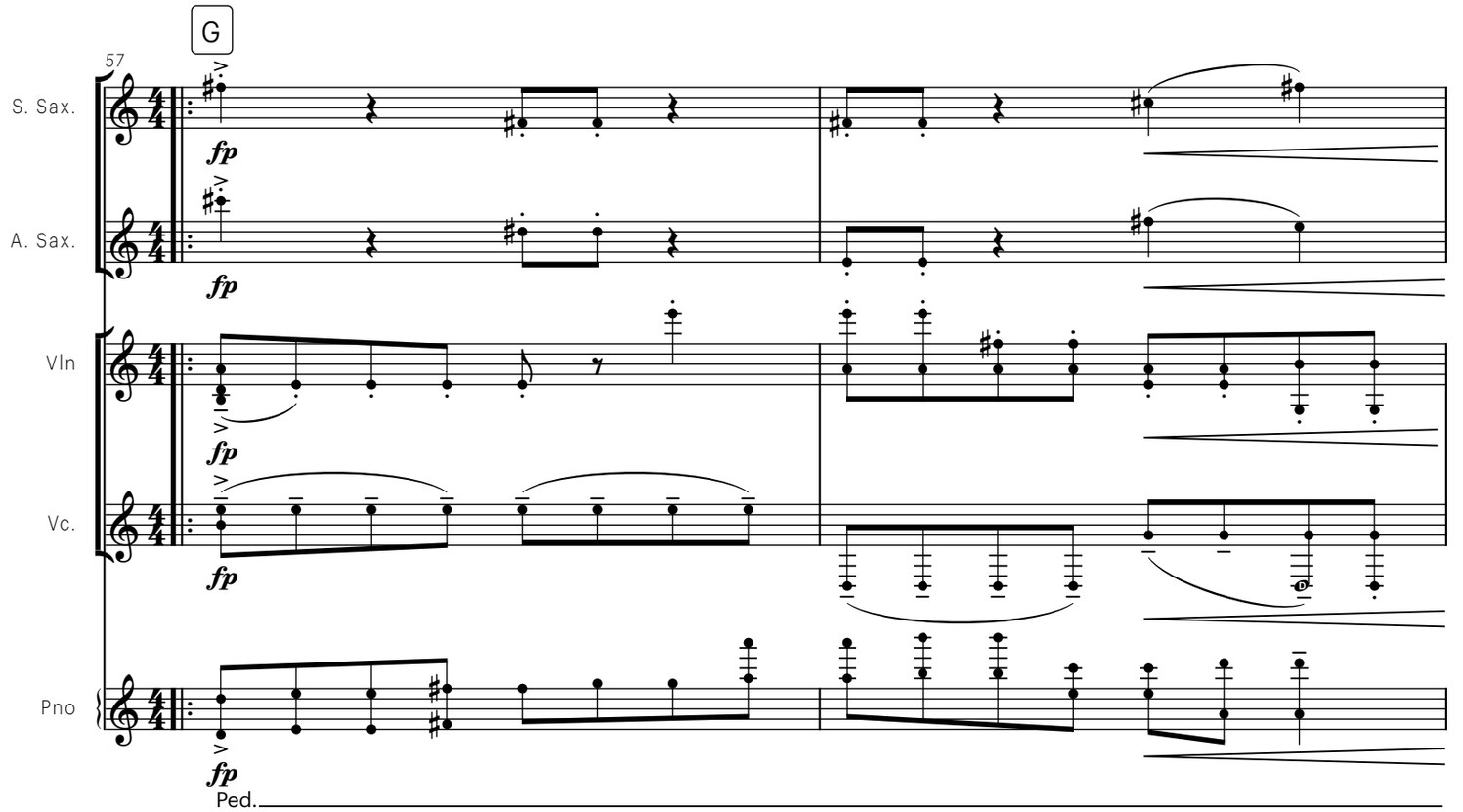

28
S. Sax.
T. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
fp
fp
fp
fp
8va
pp

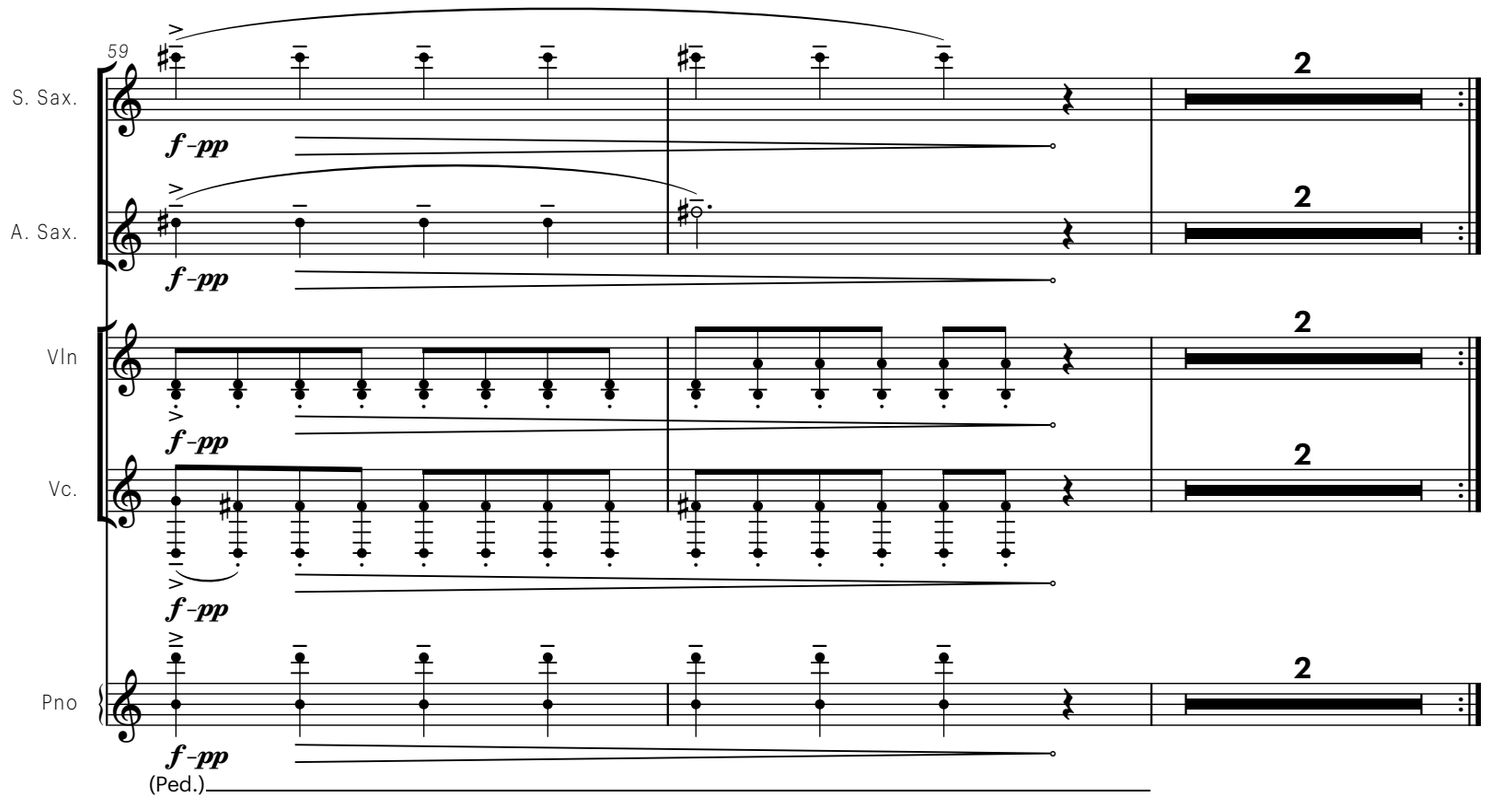

30
S. Sax.
T. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
pizz.
pizz.
pp
8va
D
32
To A. Sax.
6

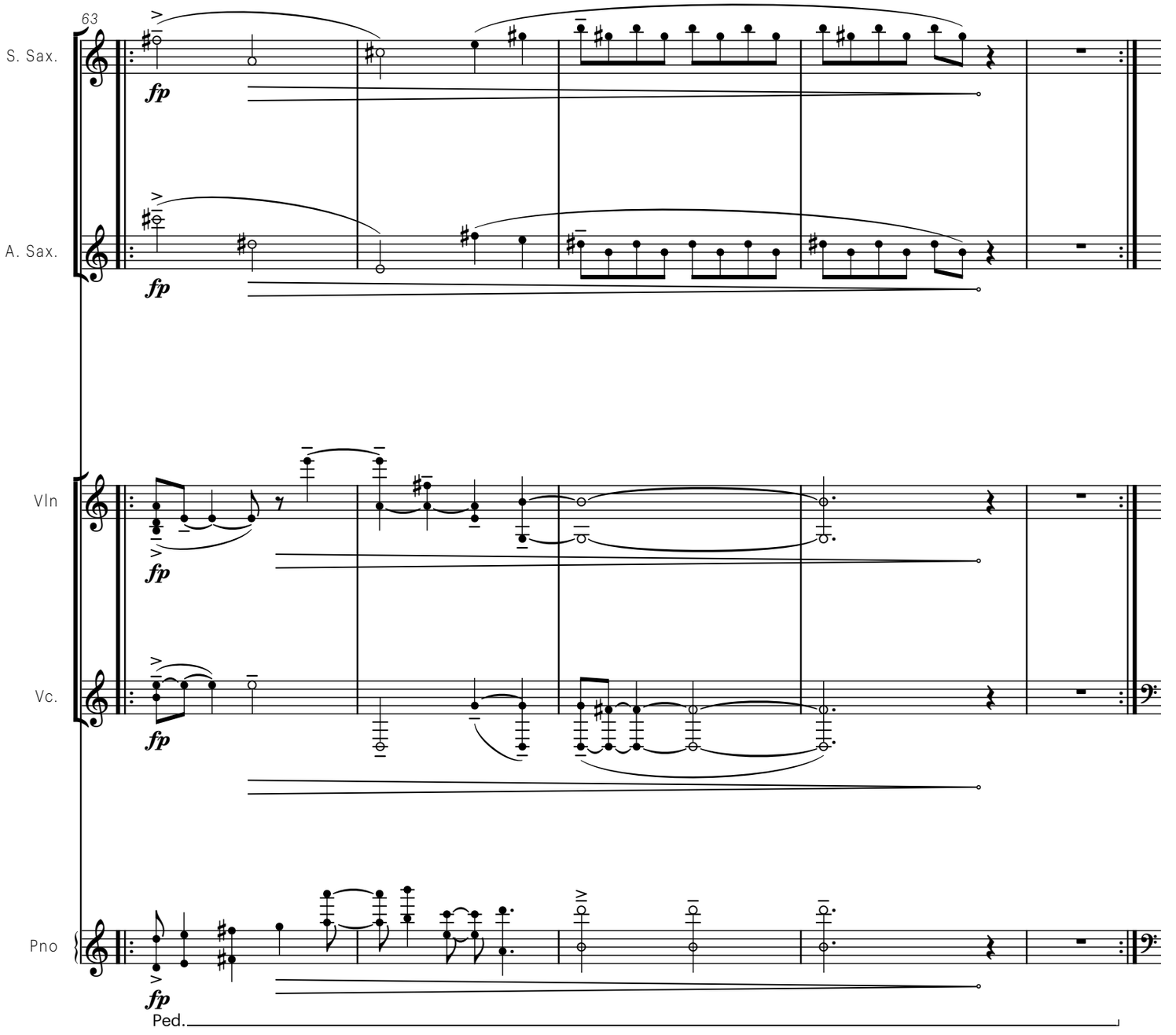

34
S. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
pizz.
pizz.
p
8va
6
E
36
f
arco
1
39
42

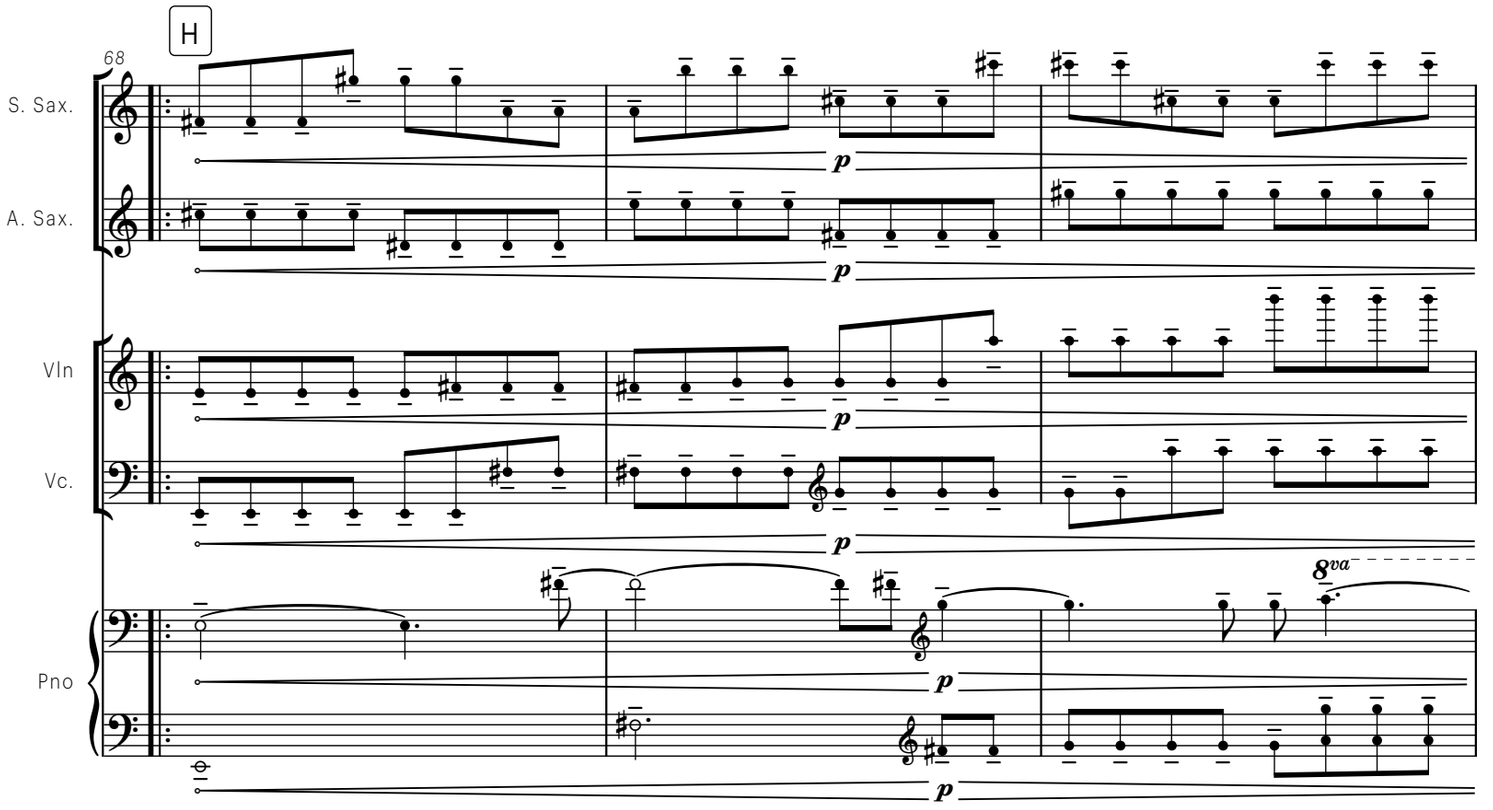

45
S. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
1
f
F
48
50
Pno
8va
Ped.

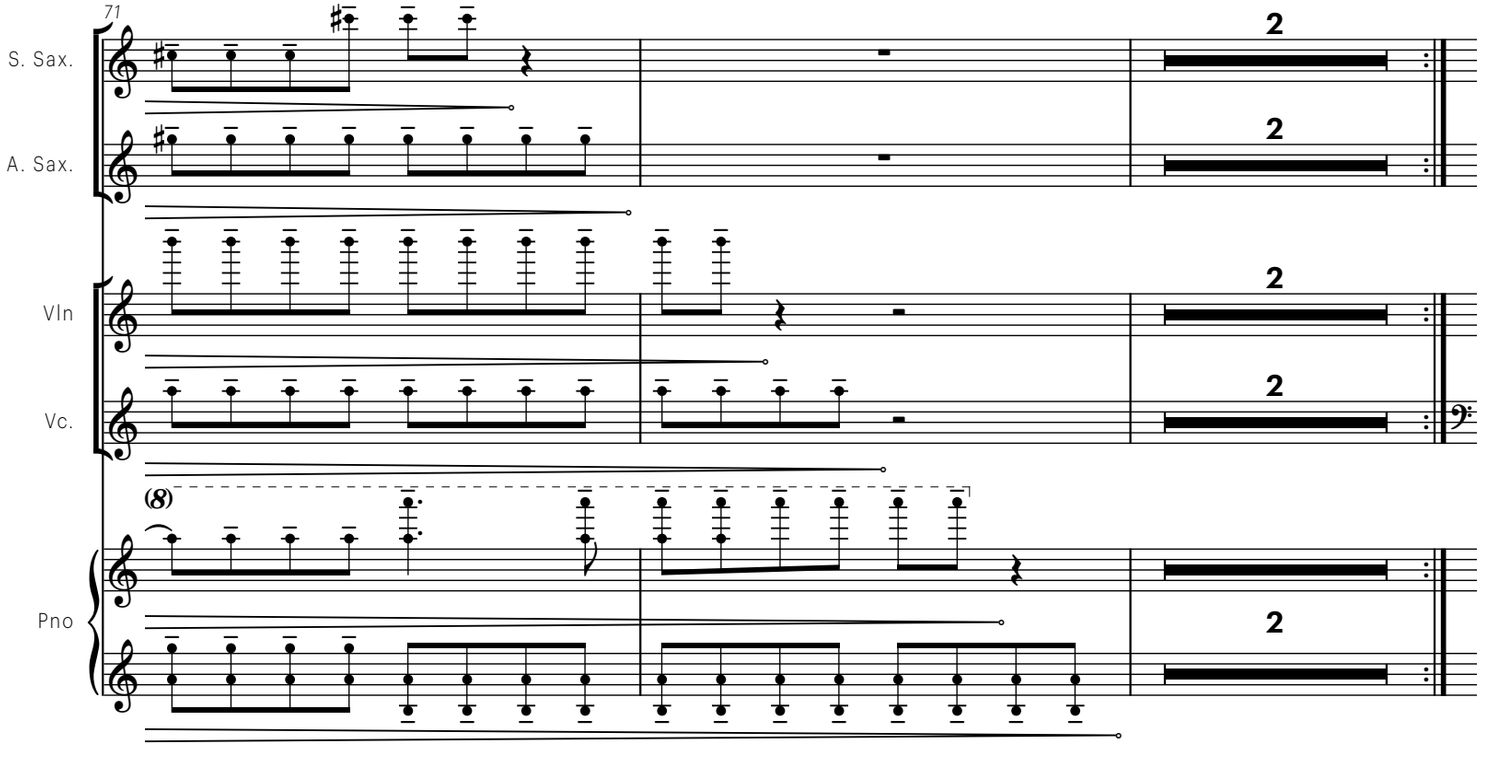

52
S. Sax.
A. Sax.
A. Sax.
f
pp
Vln
Vc.
Pno
8va
Ped.
54
pp sub.

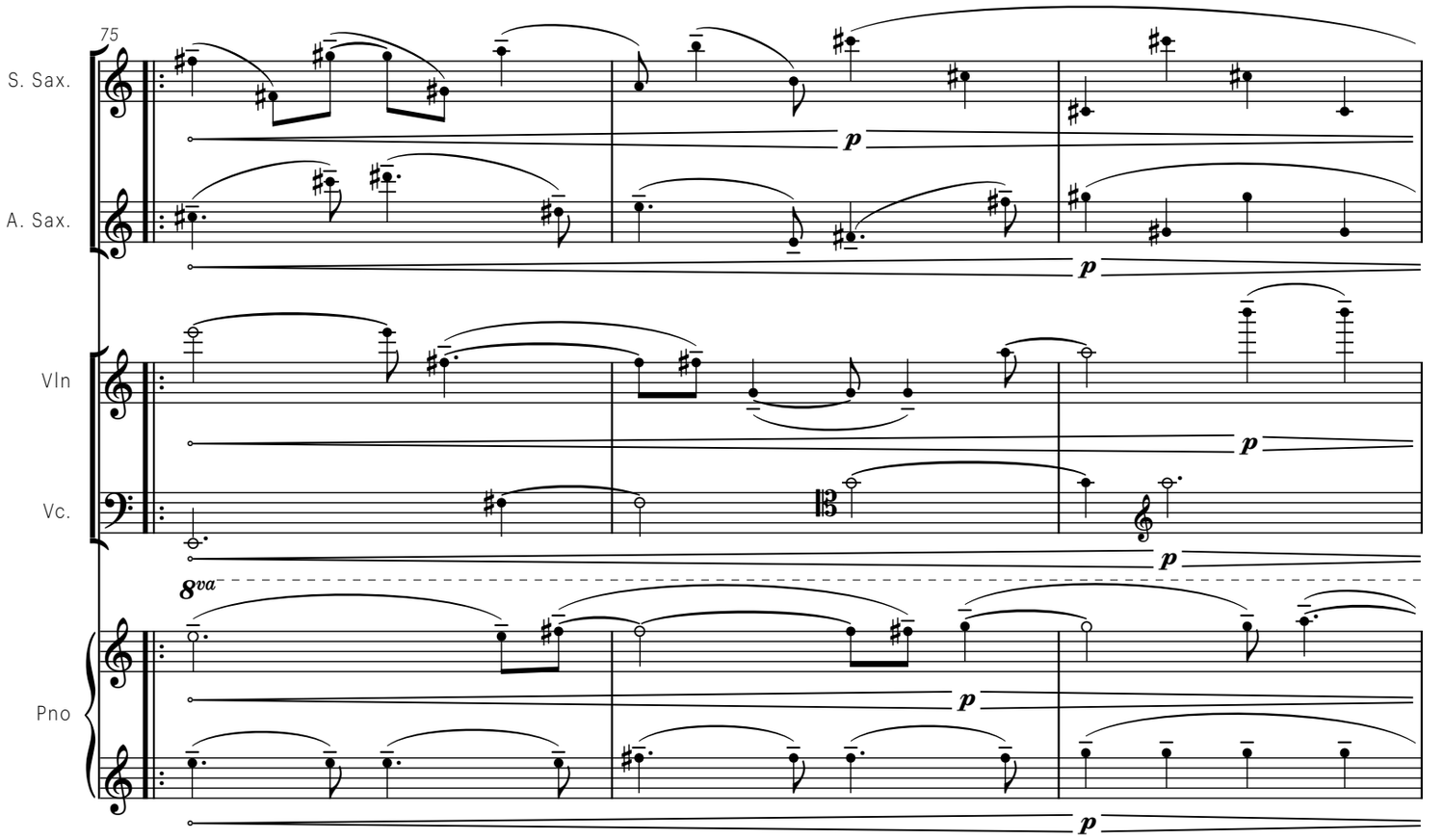

G
57
S. Sax.
A. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
fp
Ped.

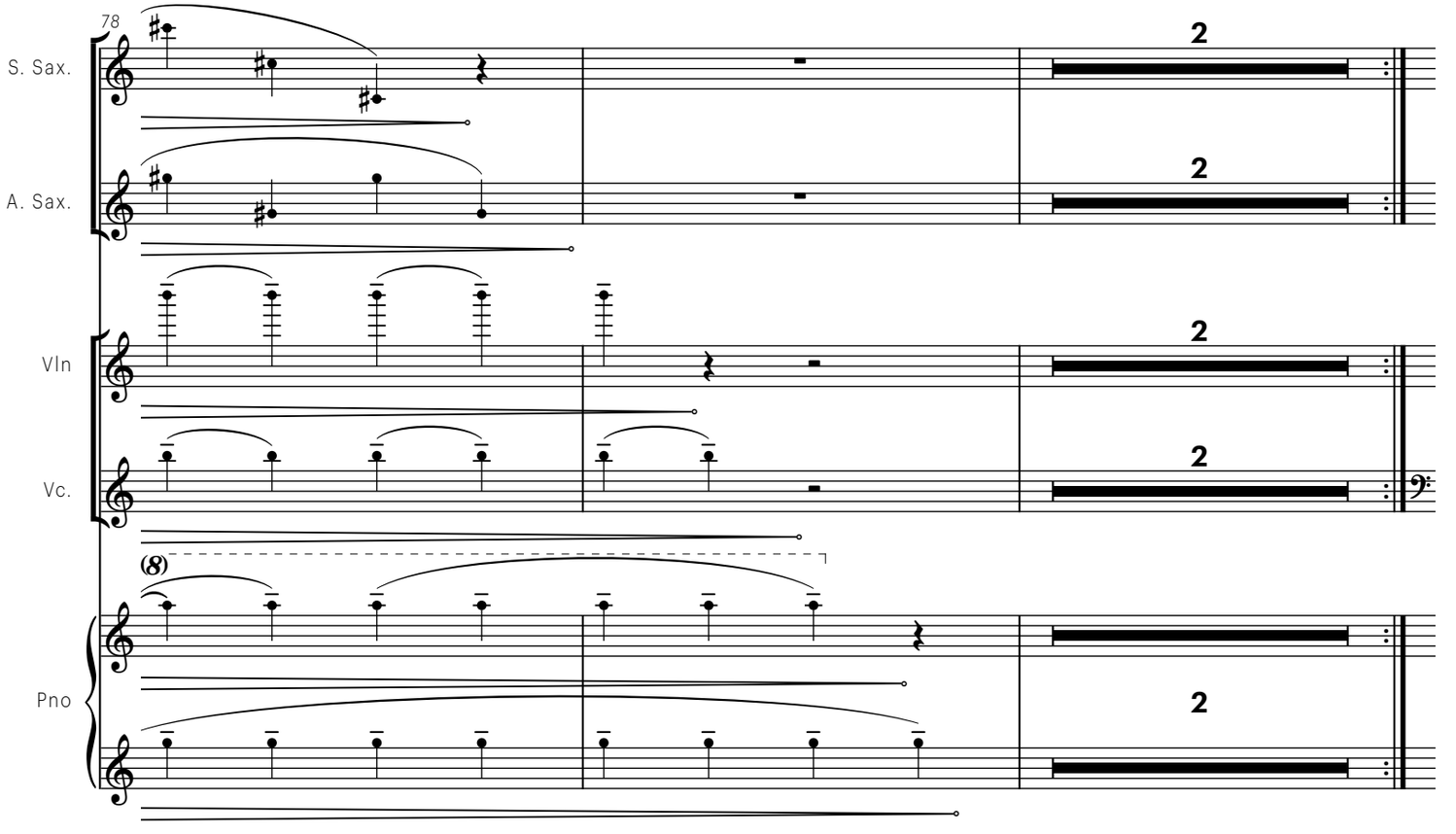

59
S. Sax.
A. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
f-pp
2
(Ped.)

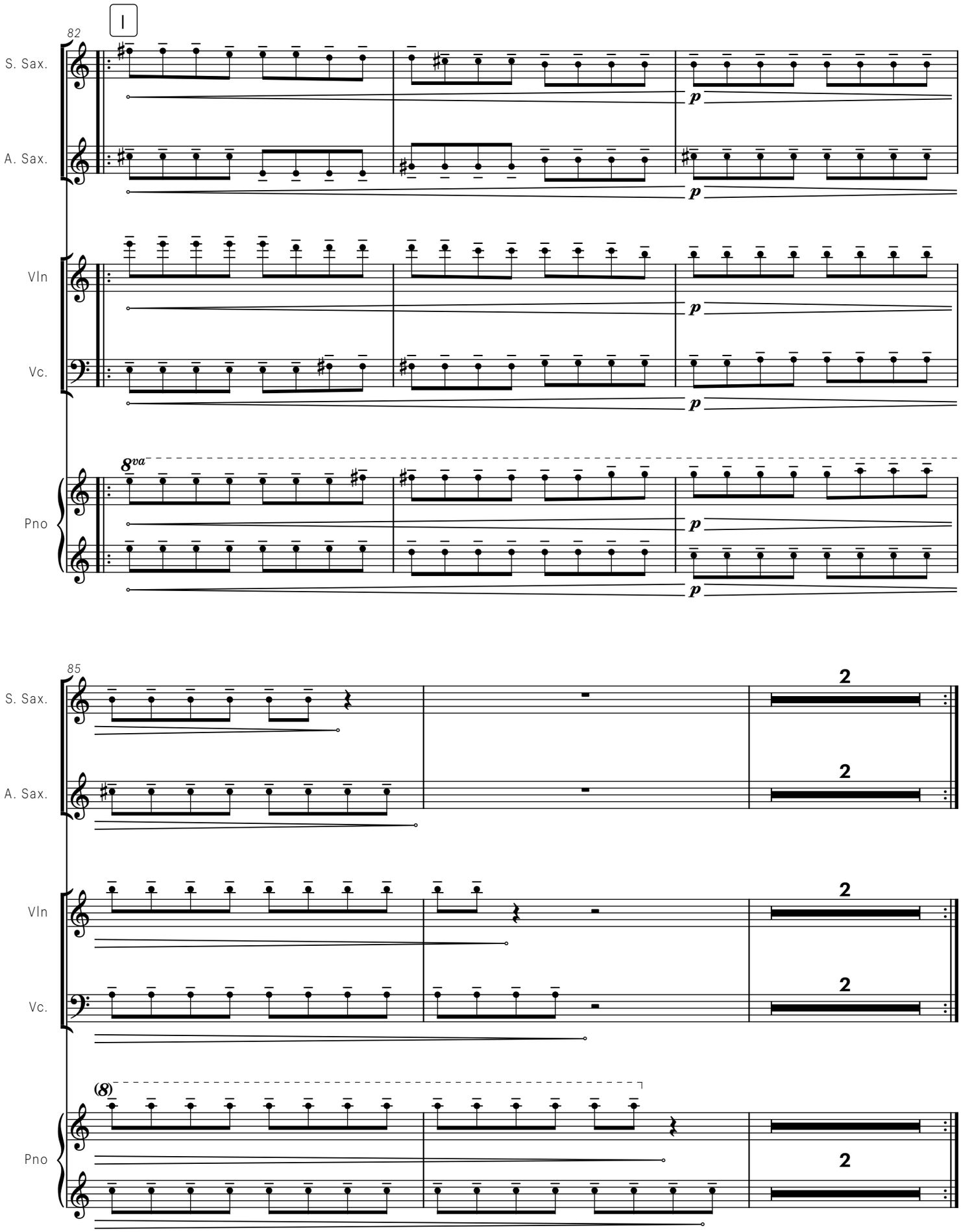

63
S. Sax.
A. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
fp
Ped.

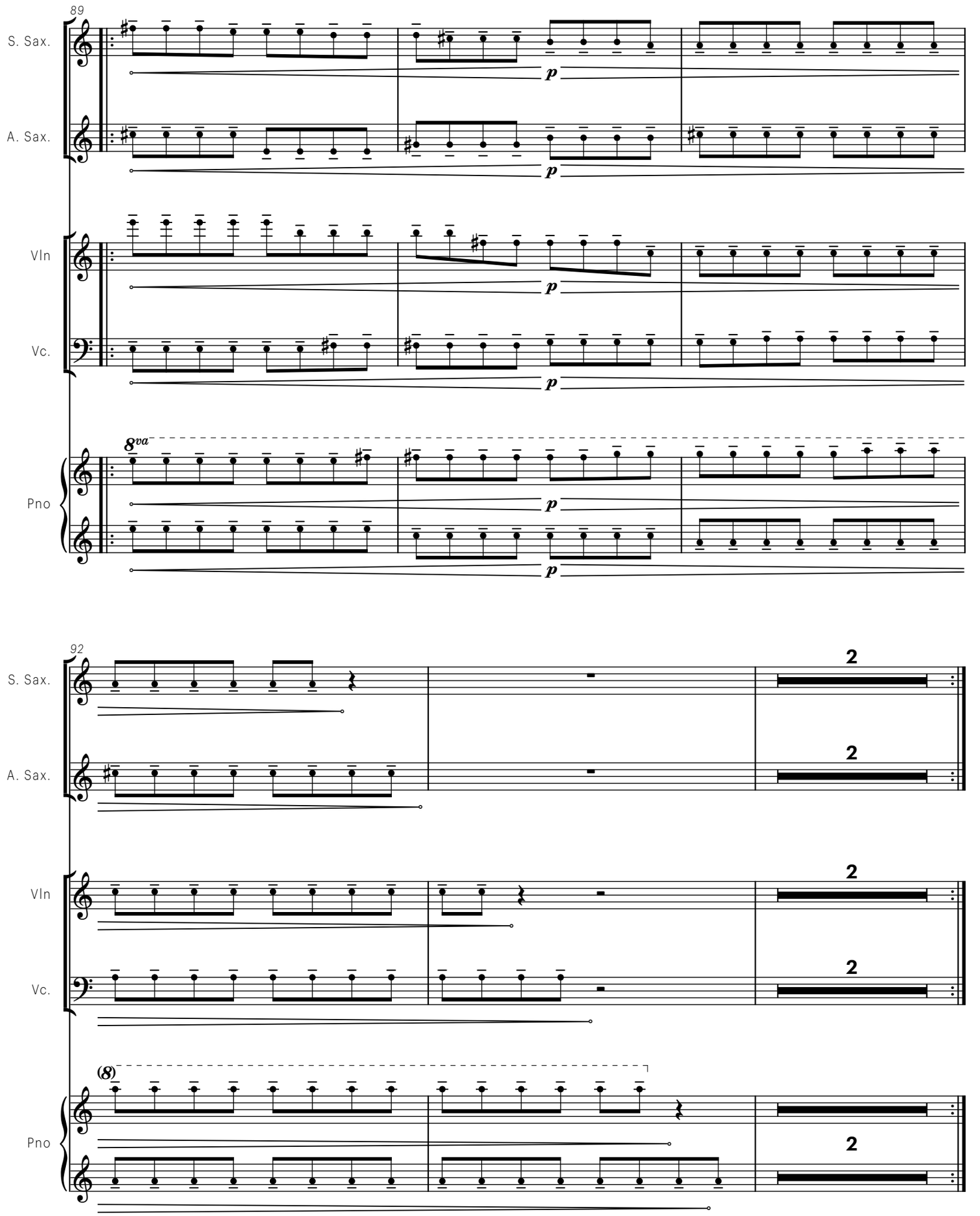

H
68
S. Sax.
A. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
p
8va

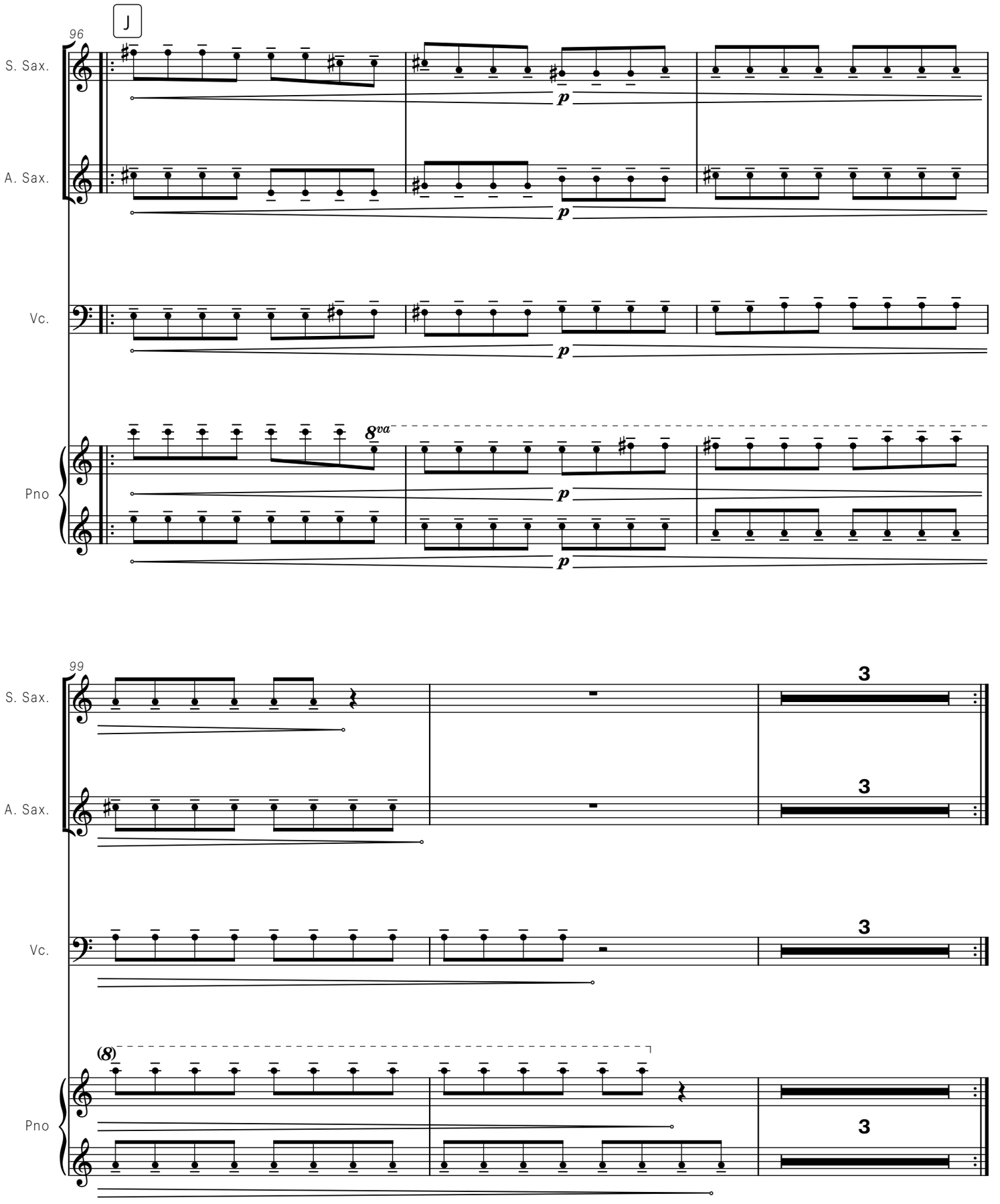

71
S. Sax.
A. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
2
(8)

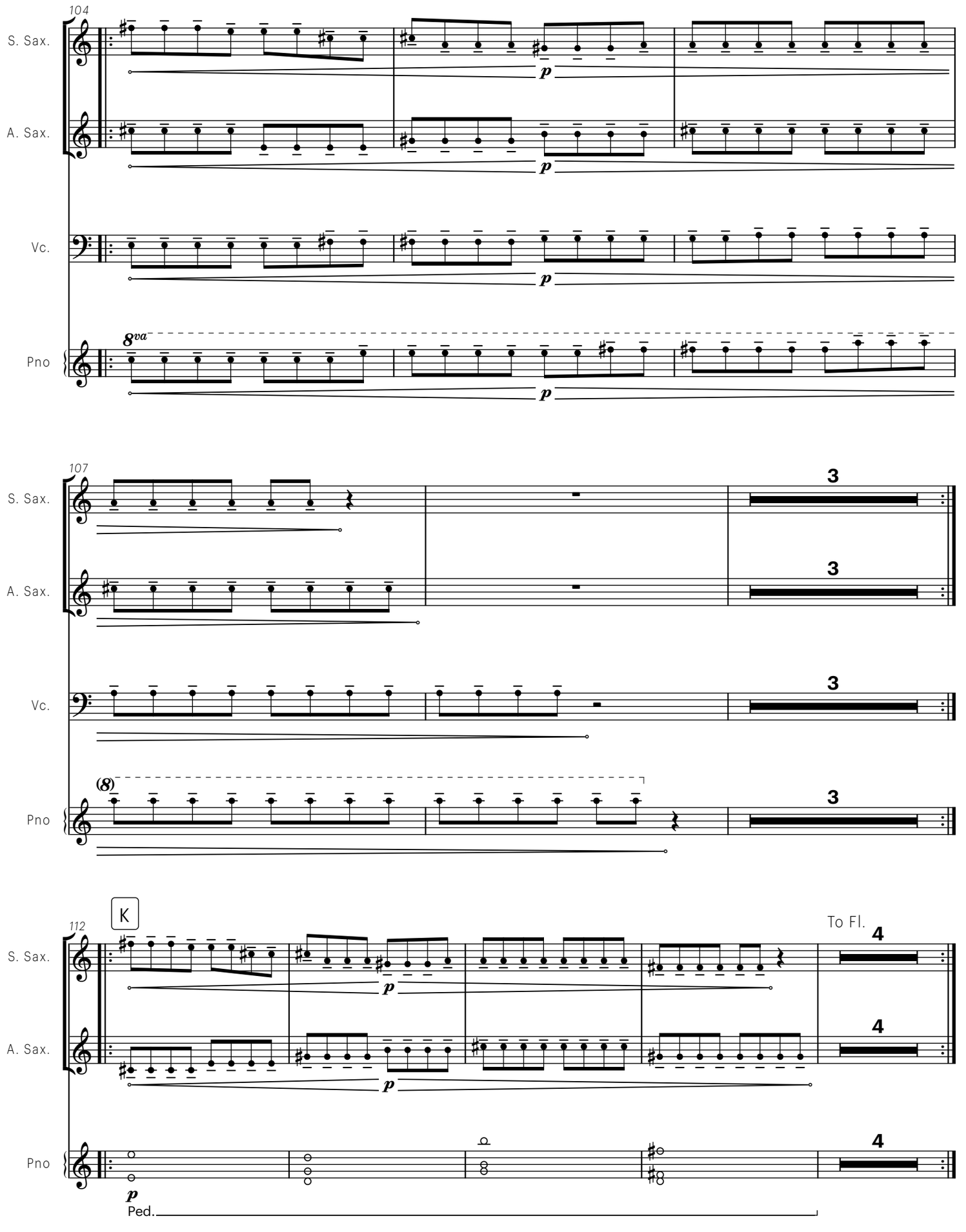

75
S. Sax.
A. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
p
8va

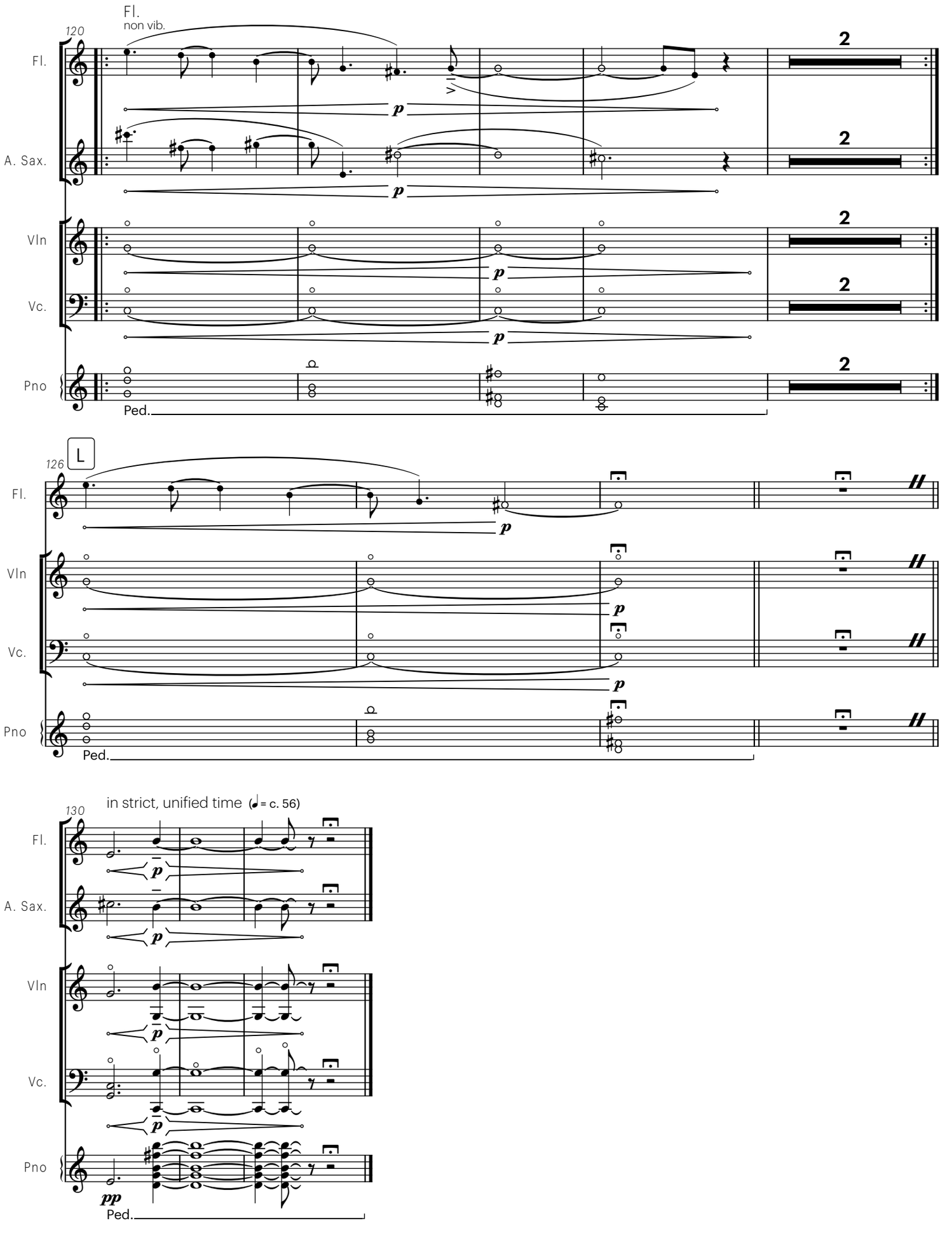

78
S. Sax.
A. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
2
(8)


I
82
S. Sax.
A. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
8va
p
85
2
(8)


89
S. Sax.
A. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
8va
p
92
2
(8)


J
96
S. Sax.
A. Sax.
Vc.
Pno
p
8va
99
3
(8)


104
S. Sax.
A. Sax.
Vc.
Pno
8va
p
107
3
112
K
To Fl.
4
Ped.


Fl.
non vib.
120
Fl.
A. Sax.
Vln
Vc.
Pno
Ped.
2
p
126
L
in strict, unified time (♩ = c. 56)
130
pp