James Chan

Being Sisyphus

after Camus

2019

for sextet

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Instrumentation

Flute
B♭ Clarinet

Percussion (1)
- Vibraphone (w/bow)
- Suspended Cymbal

Piano

Violin
Violoncello

for sextet

Performance Notes

Transposed score

Dynamic markings in quotation marks indicate the force with which certain techniques are to be executed, and does not necessarily reflect the actual dynamic.

T before a trill indicates a tone-colour trill

Duration: ca. 4'30"

Programme Note

In Albert Camus's seminal work on existentialism *The Myth of Sisyphus*, he described the notion of the absurd as the paradox between the meaninglessness of the universe and the human need for unity, posing the question of whether this necessarily leads to suicide. Camus concludes that we must accept the condition of the absurd and thereby revolt against it, as Sisyphus must accept the futility of the task that he has been condemned to.

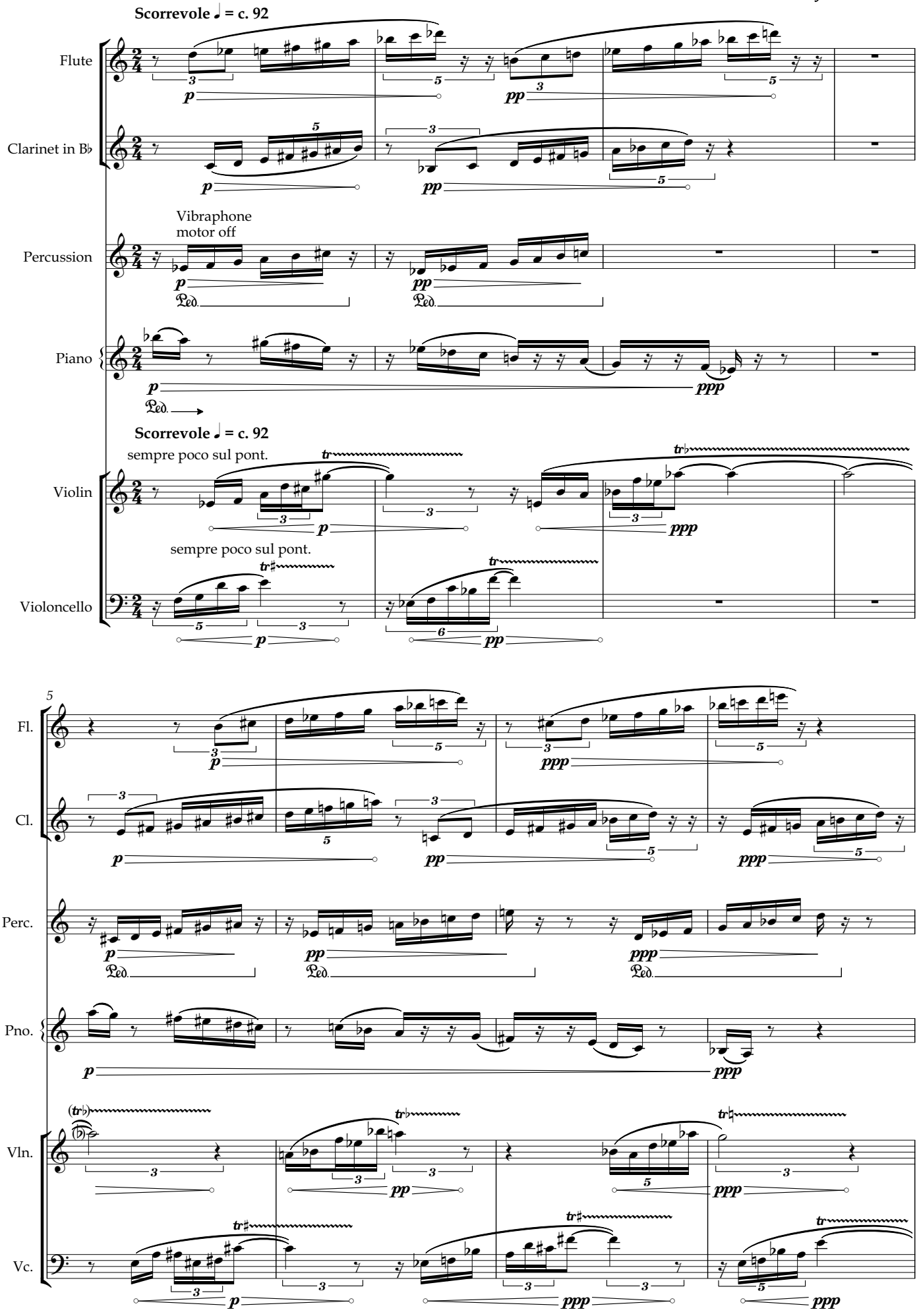
My piece, perhaps quite expectedly, begins with repetitive upward gestures. A more pulse driven section tries to assert itself in the middle, but is eventually assimilated into the other materials. To borrow a phrase used by Morton Feldman, the way in which my piece unfolds can perhaps be described as a 'rondo of everything'. What I wish to achieve ultimately is to construct an engaging trajectory in what is ultimately a non-teleological and cyclical piece.

J.C.

Being Sisyphus

after Camus

James Chan



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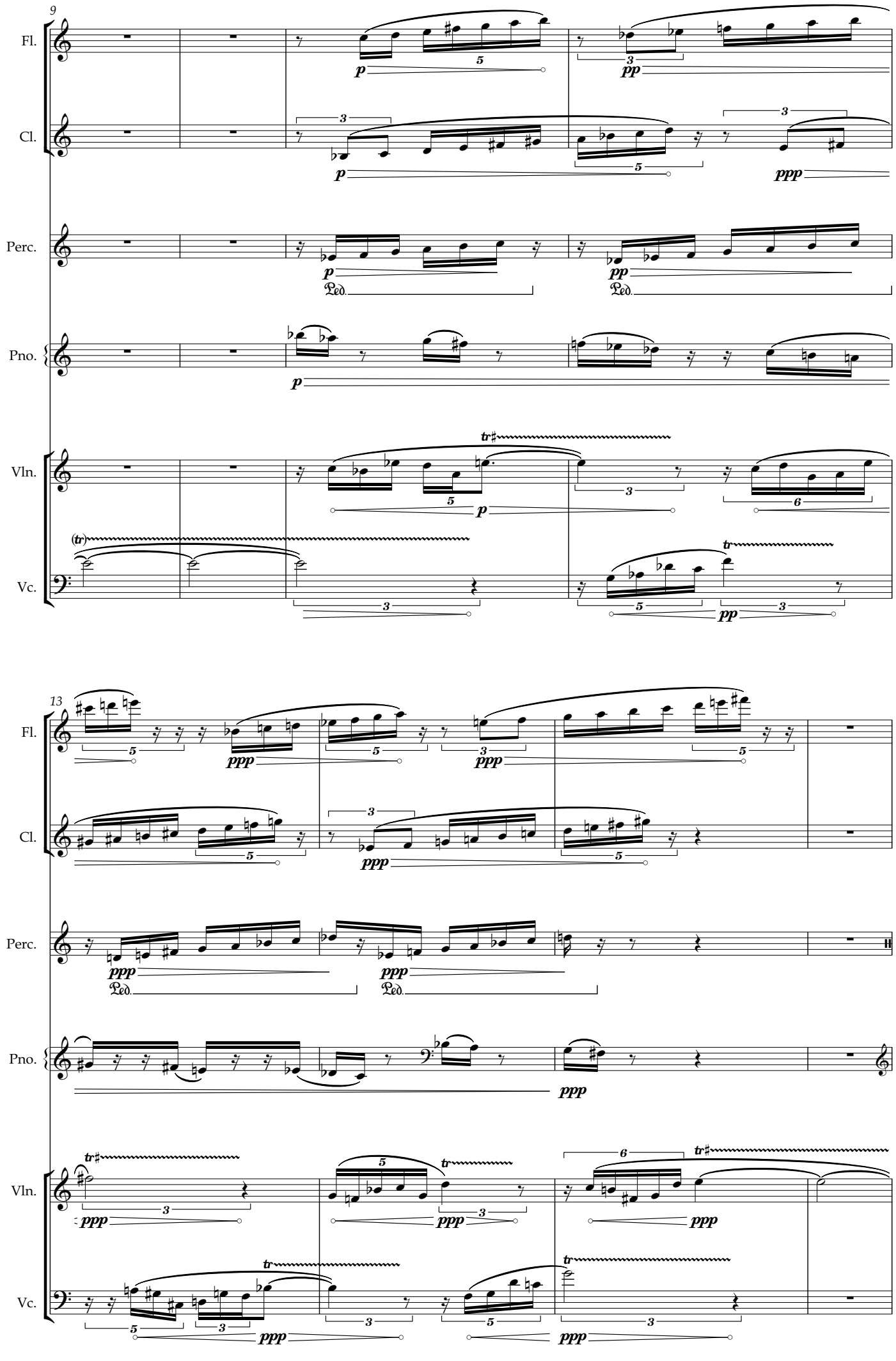
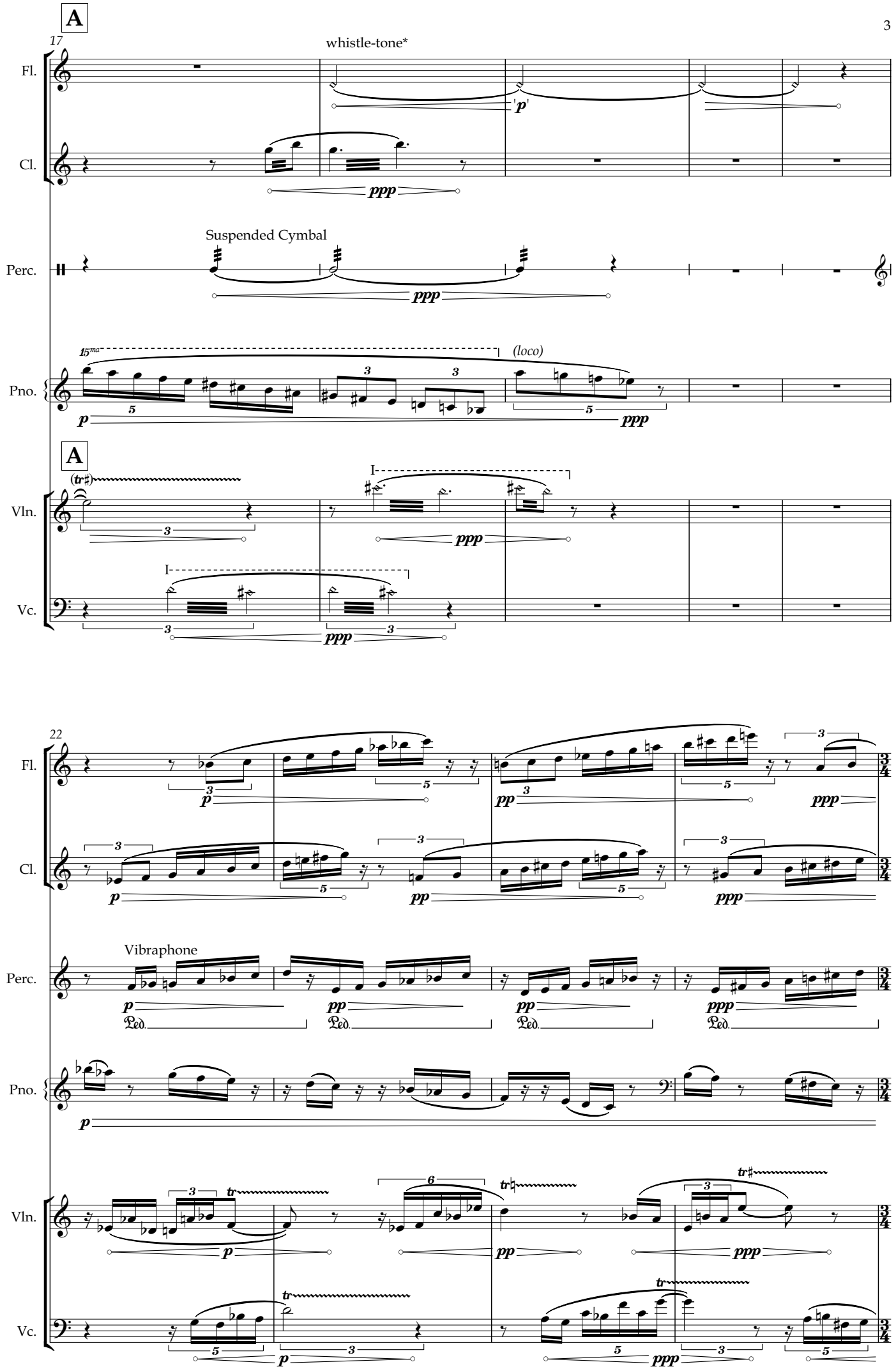
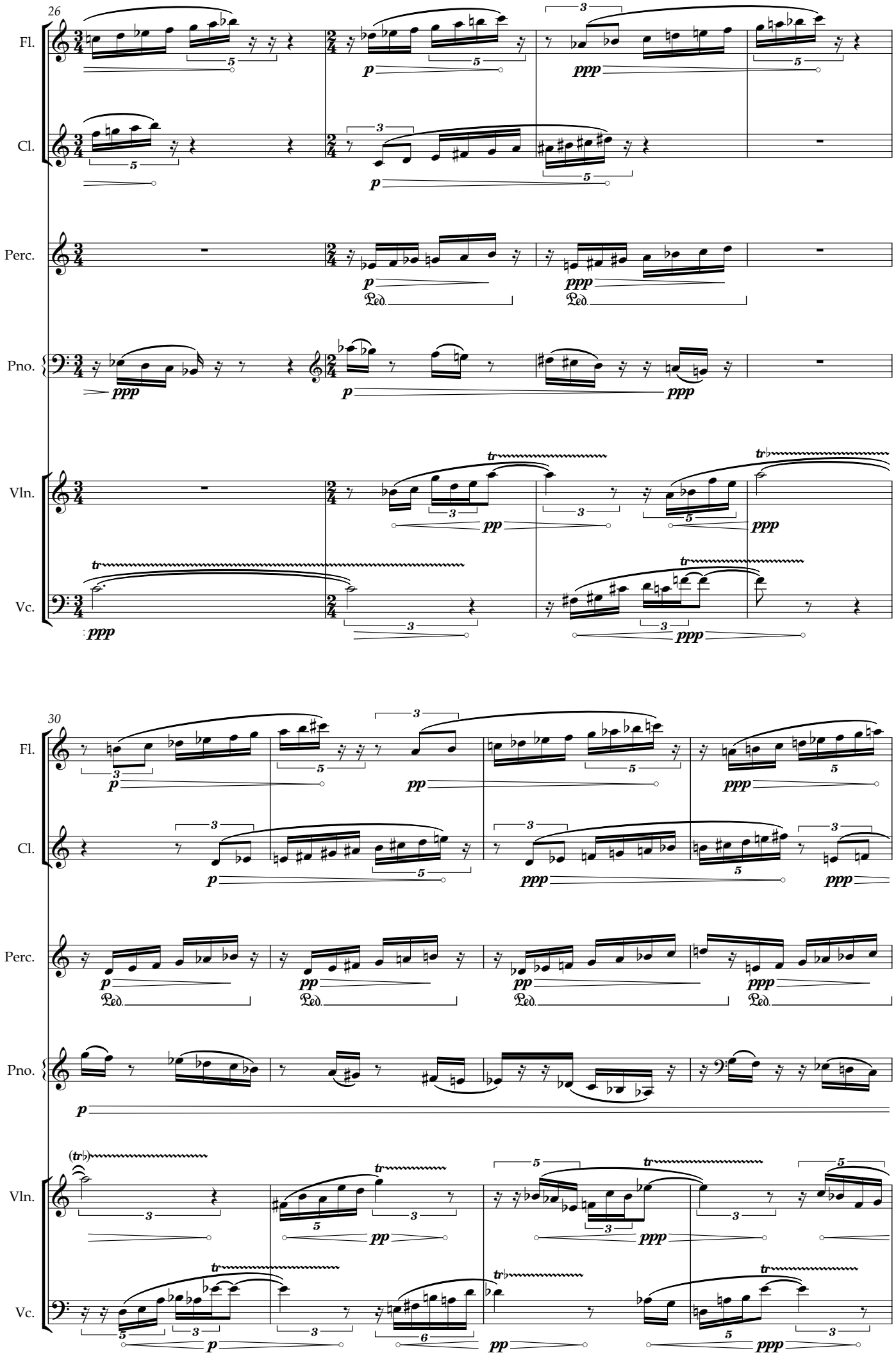
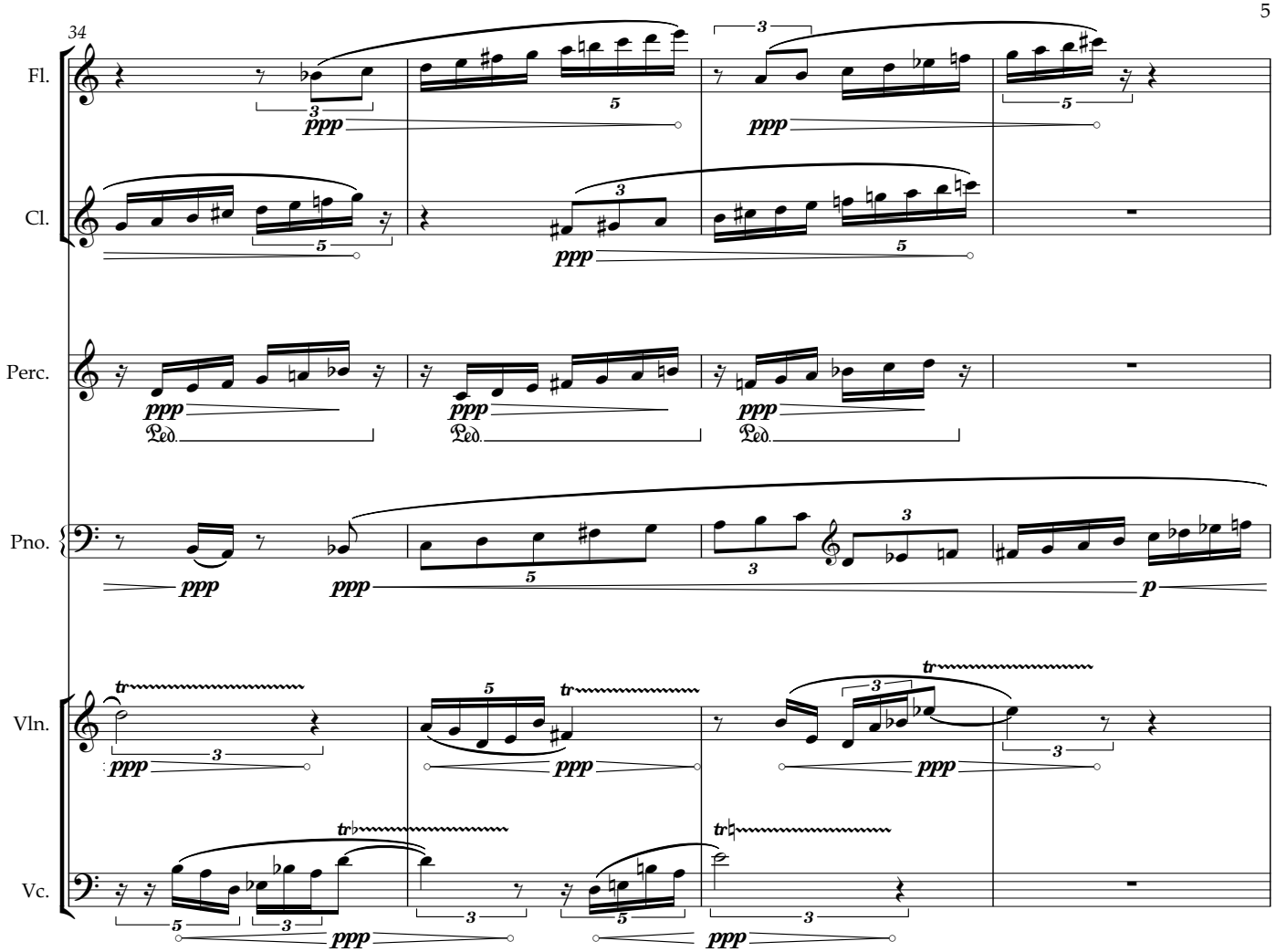
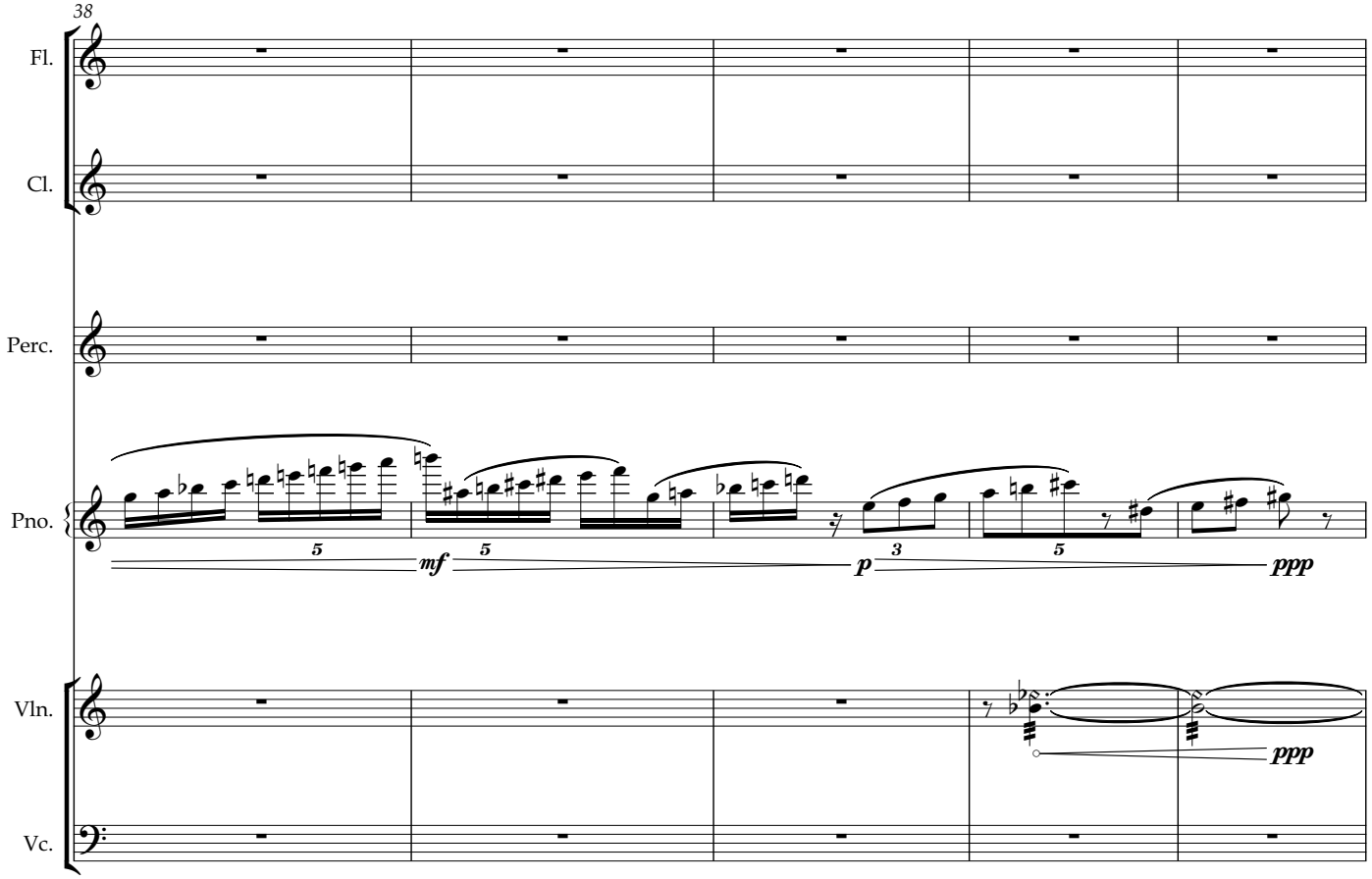

9
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
13
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.

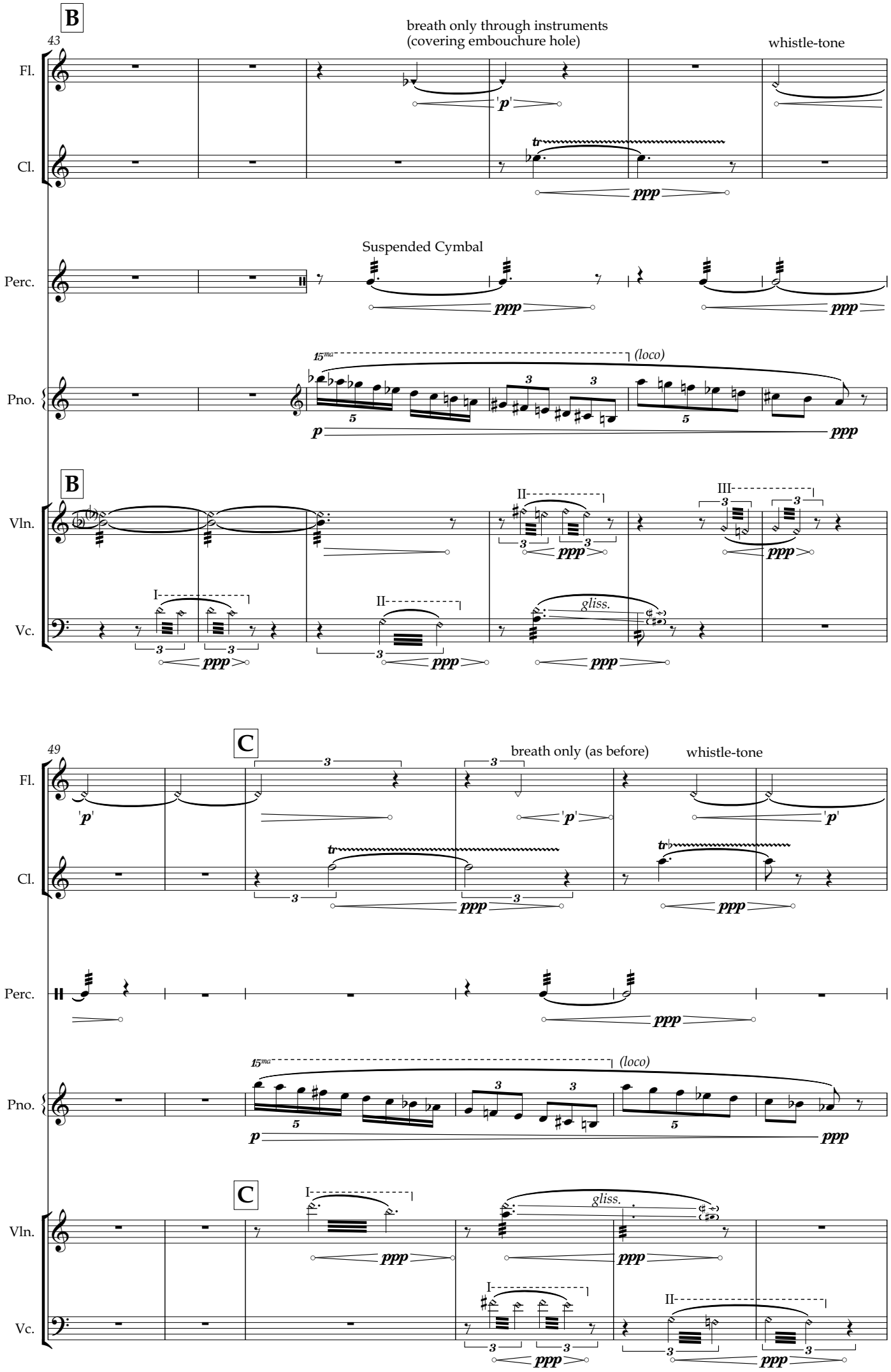


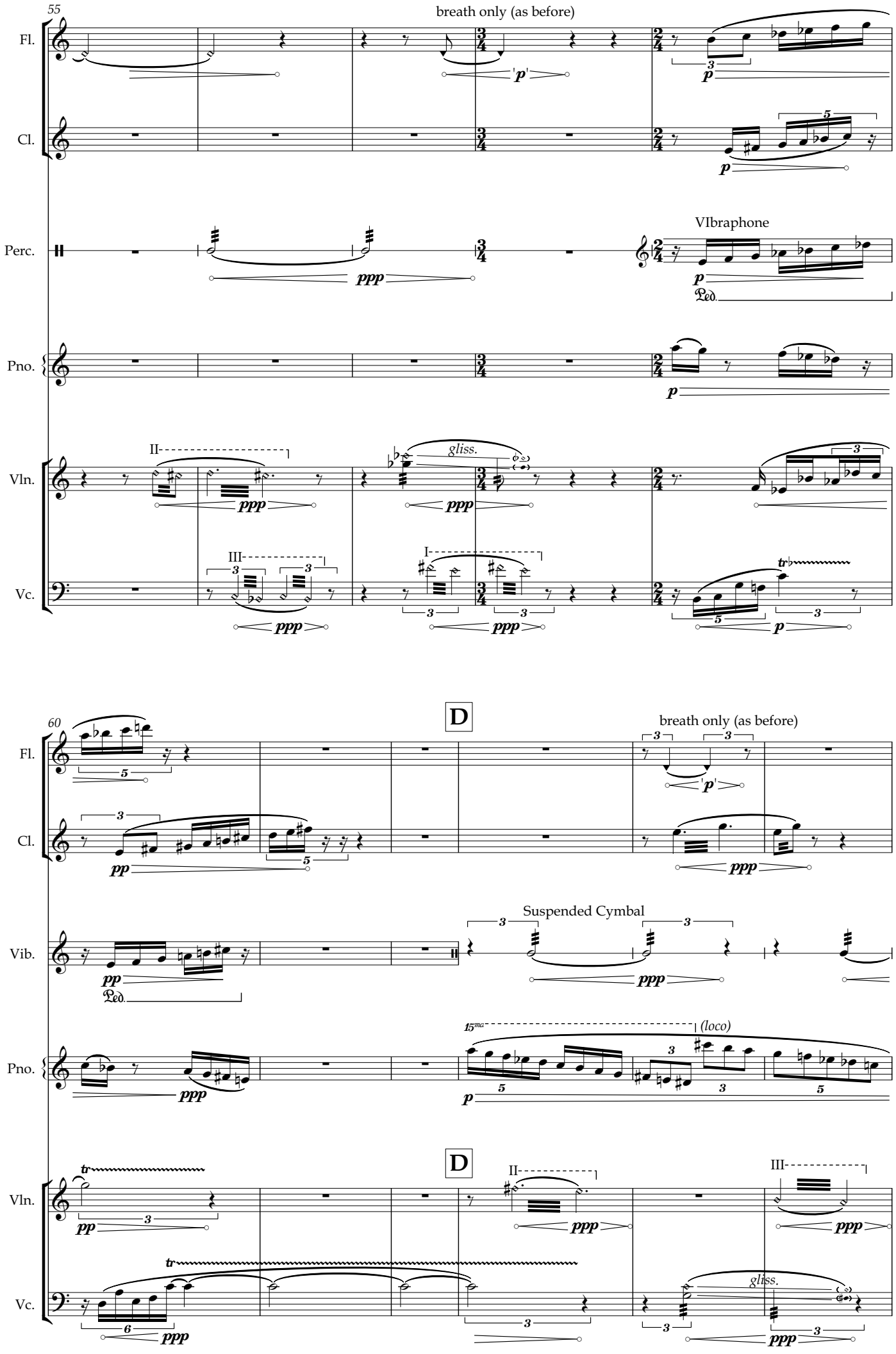
* Roll out with very loose embouchure, fluctuate pitches freely.

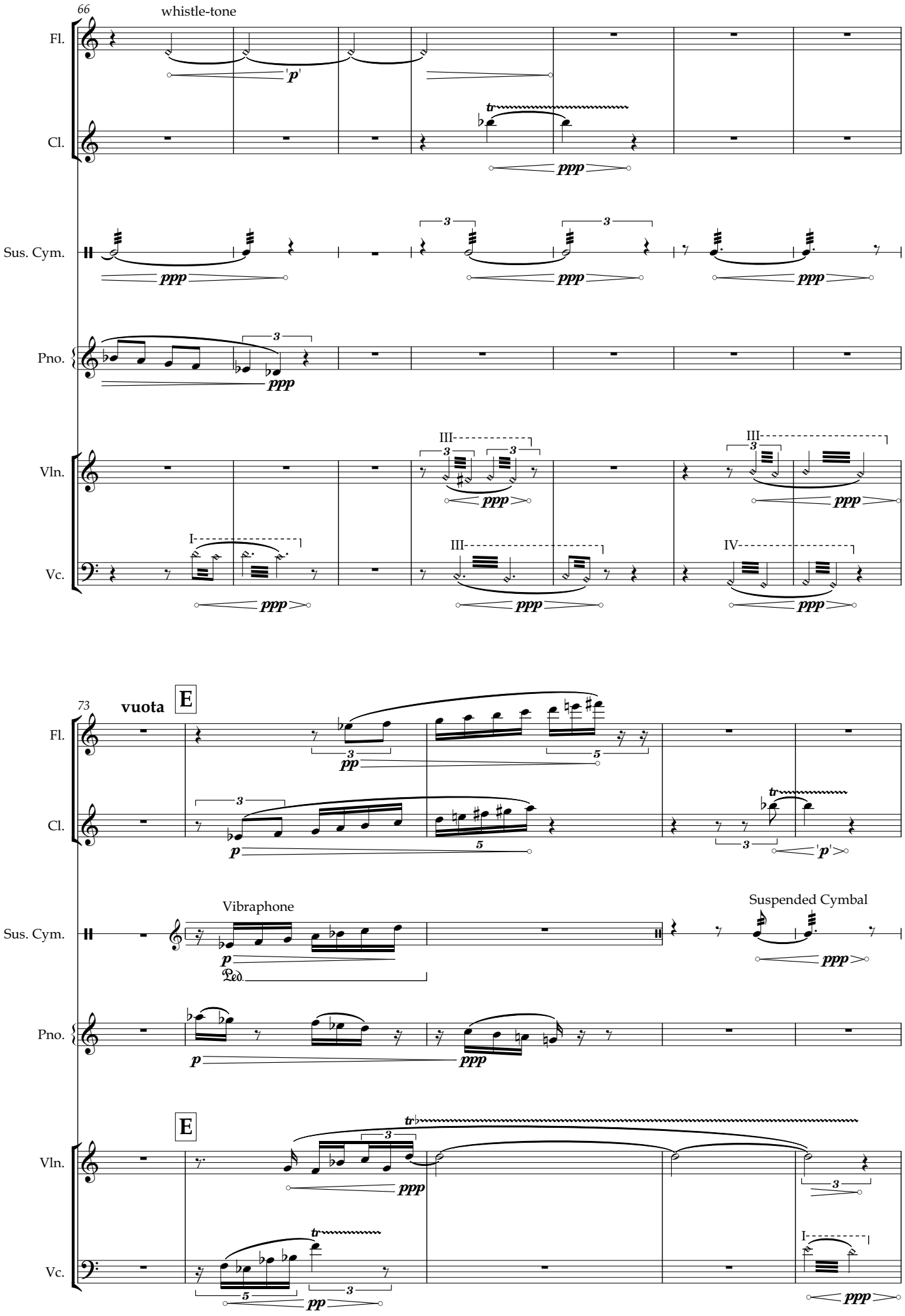

26
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
30
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.

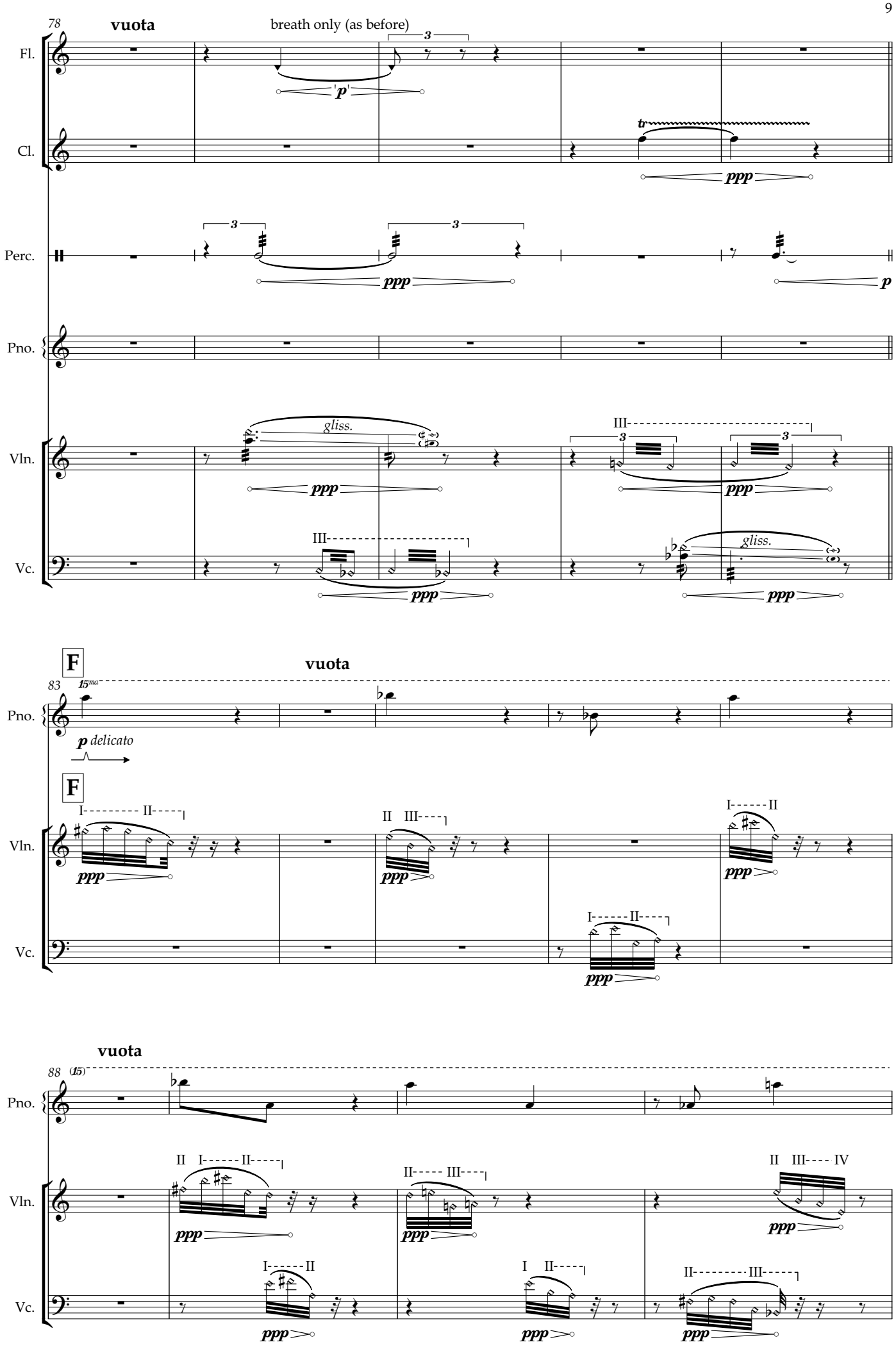

34
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
ppp
Ped.
p
tr

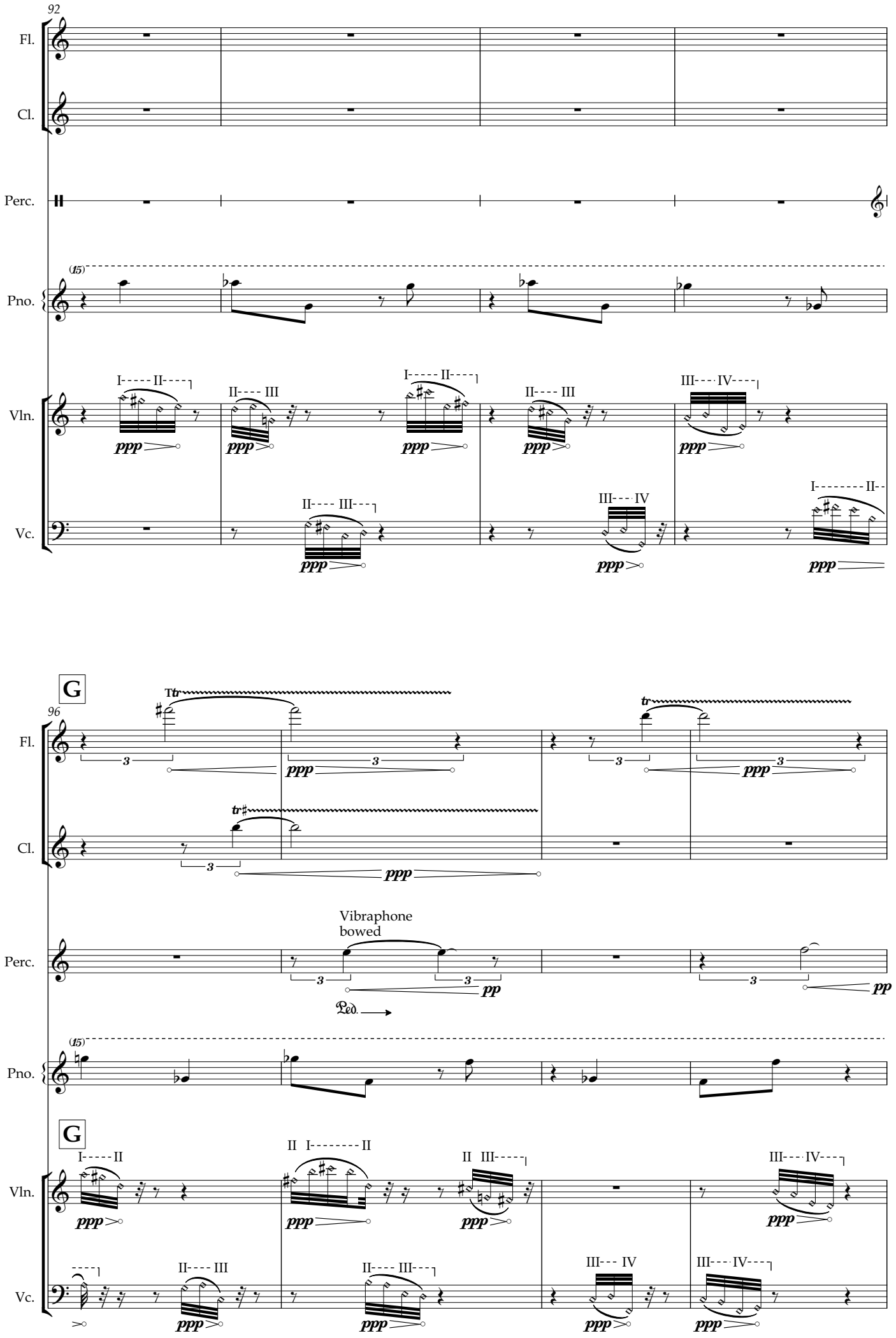

38
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
mf
p
ppp

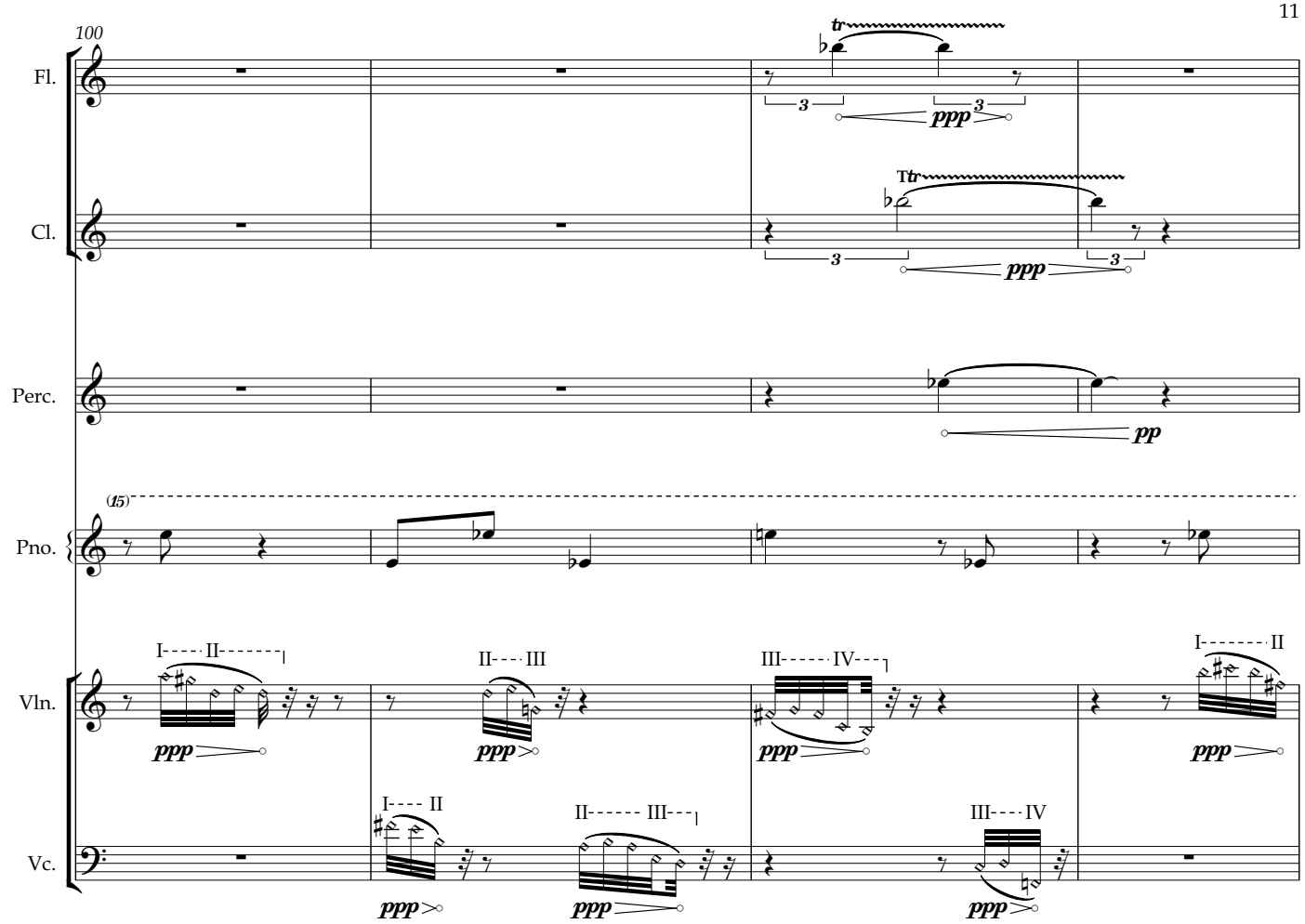

B
43
breath only through instruments
(covering embouchure hole)
whistle-tone
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Suspended Cymbal
Pno.
(loco)
B
Vln.
Vc.
I-
II-
III-
gliss.
C
49
breath only (as before)
whistle-tone
C
ppp
p

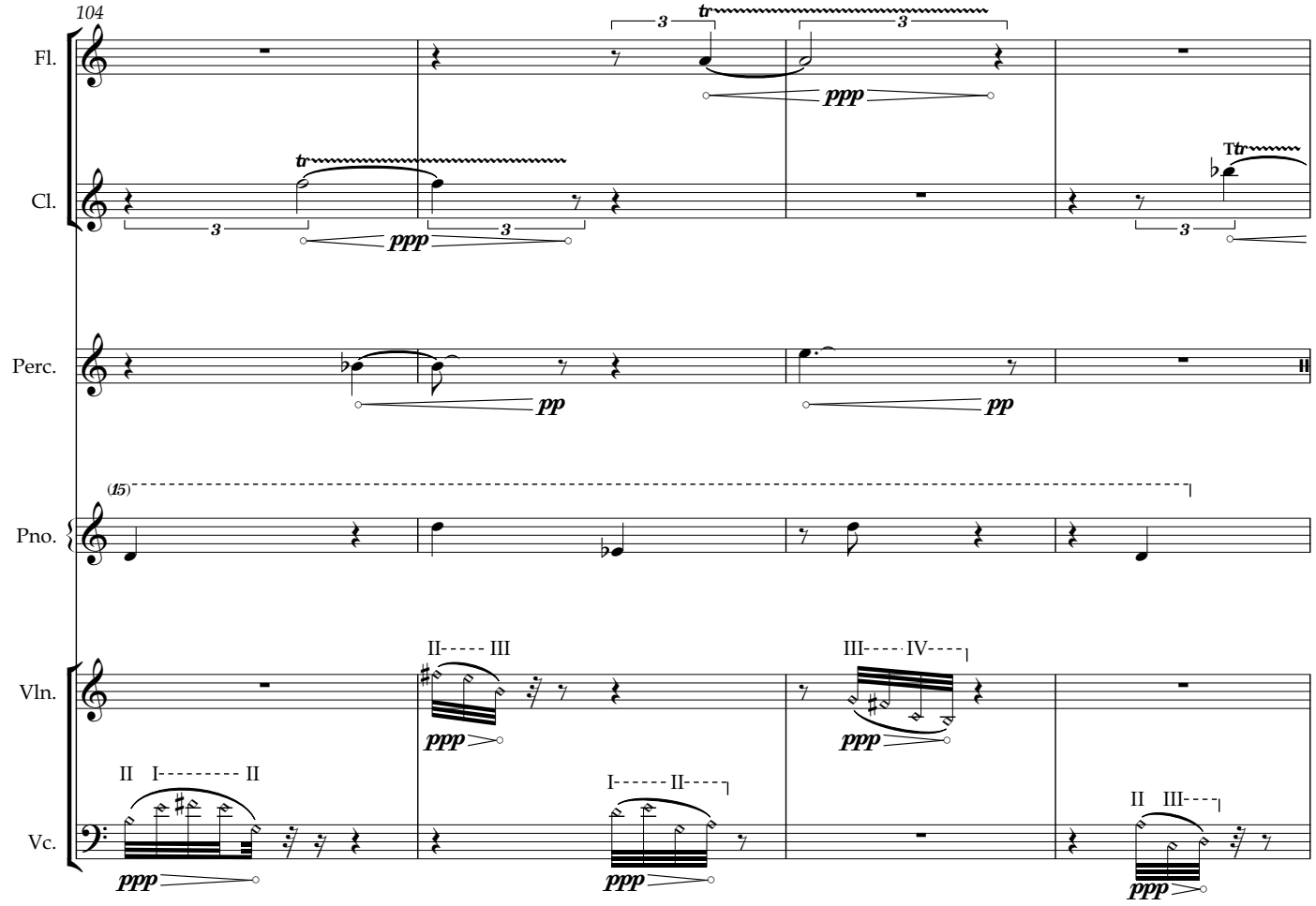

55
breath only (as before)
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
VIbraphone
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
II-
gliss.
III-
I-
60
D
breath only (as before)
Suspended Cymbal
15ma
(loco)
D
II-
III-
gliss.

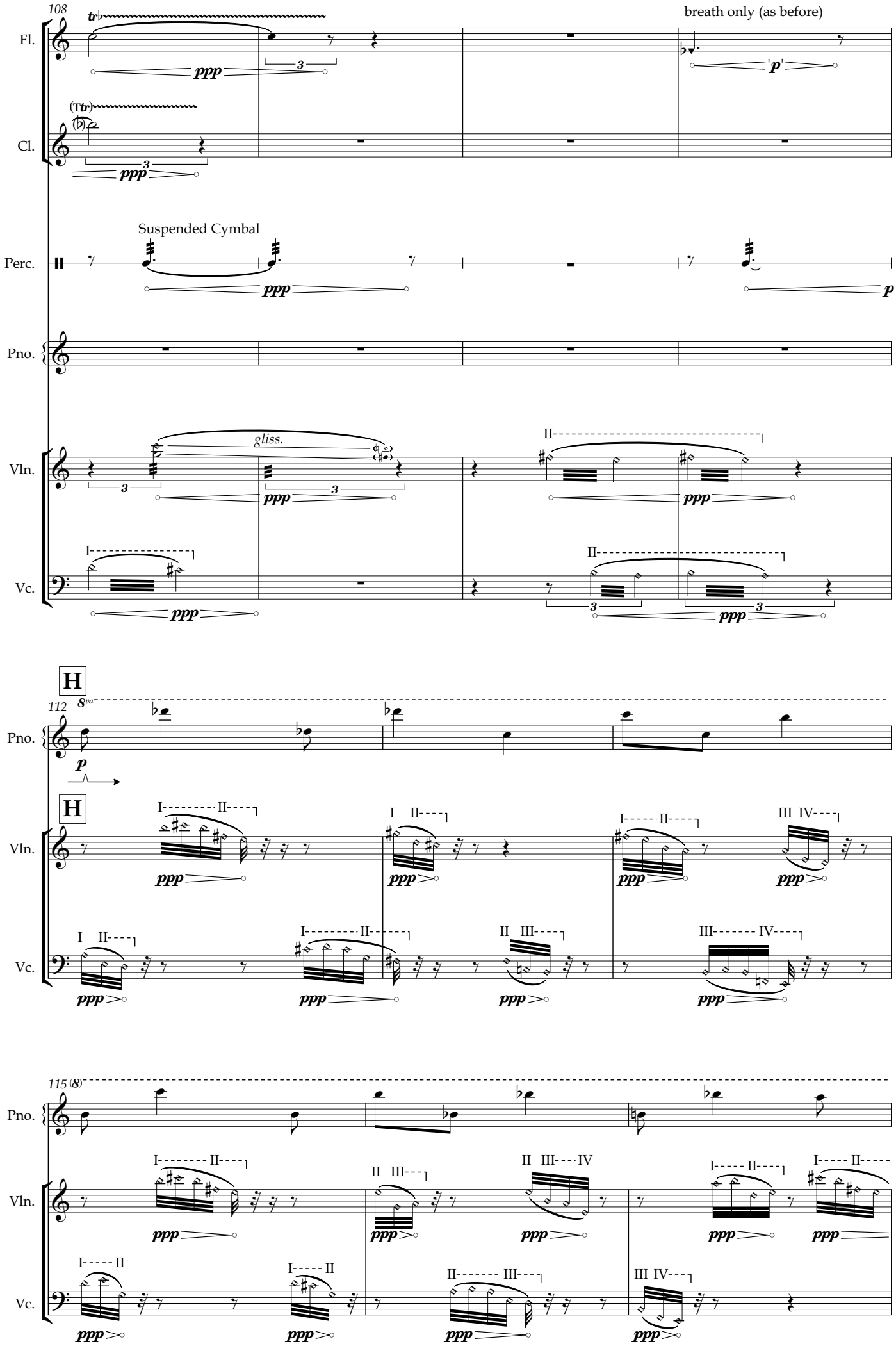

66
whistle-tone
Fl.
Cl.
Sus. Cym.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
73
vuota
E
Vibraphone
Suspended Cymbal
Ped.

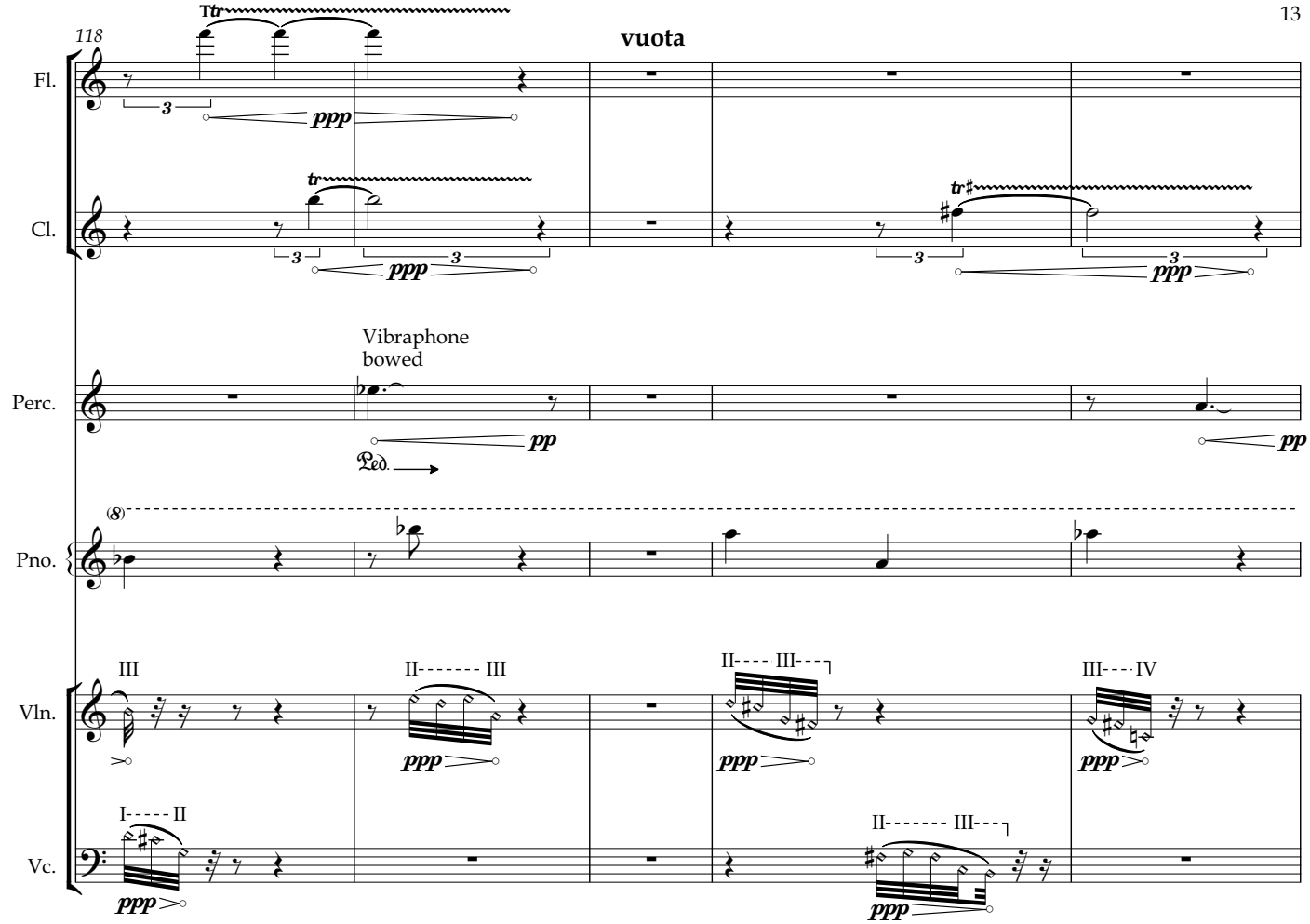

78
vuota
breath only (as before)
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
gliss.
F
vuota
83
15ma
p delicato
F
vuota
88
(15)

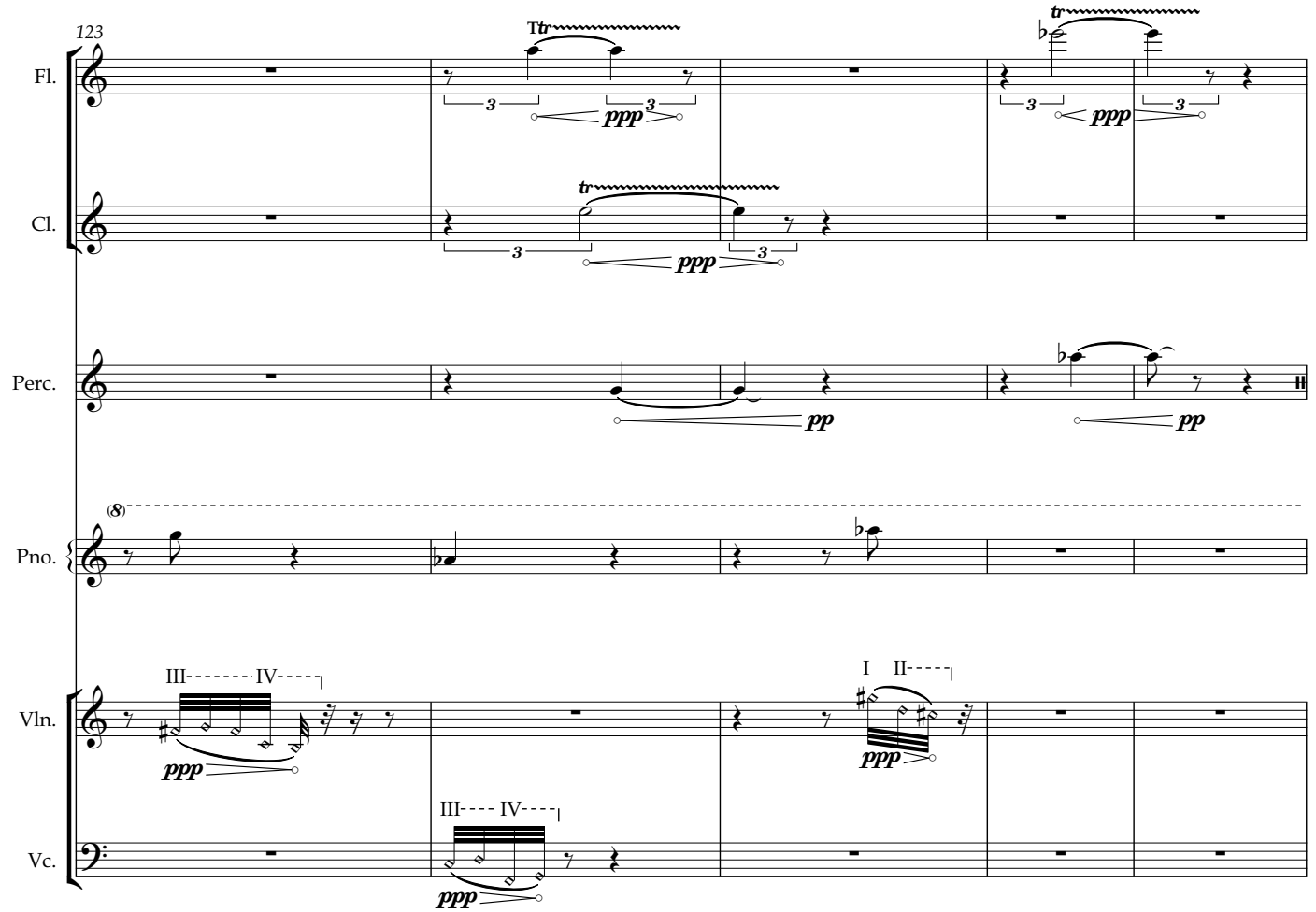

92
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
(15)
I----- II----
II---- III
III---- IV----
II---- III---
III---- IV
I-------- II--
ppp
G
96
Ttr
tr
tr♯
3
pp
Vibraphone
bowed
Ped.
II I-------- II
II III-----

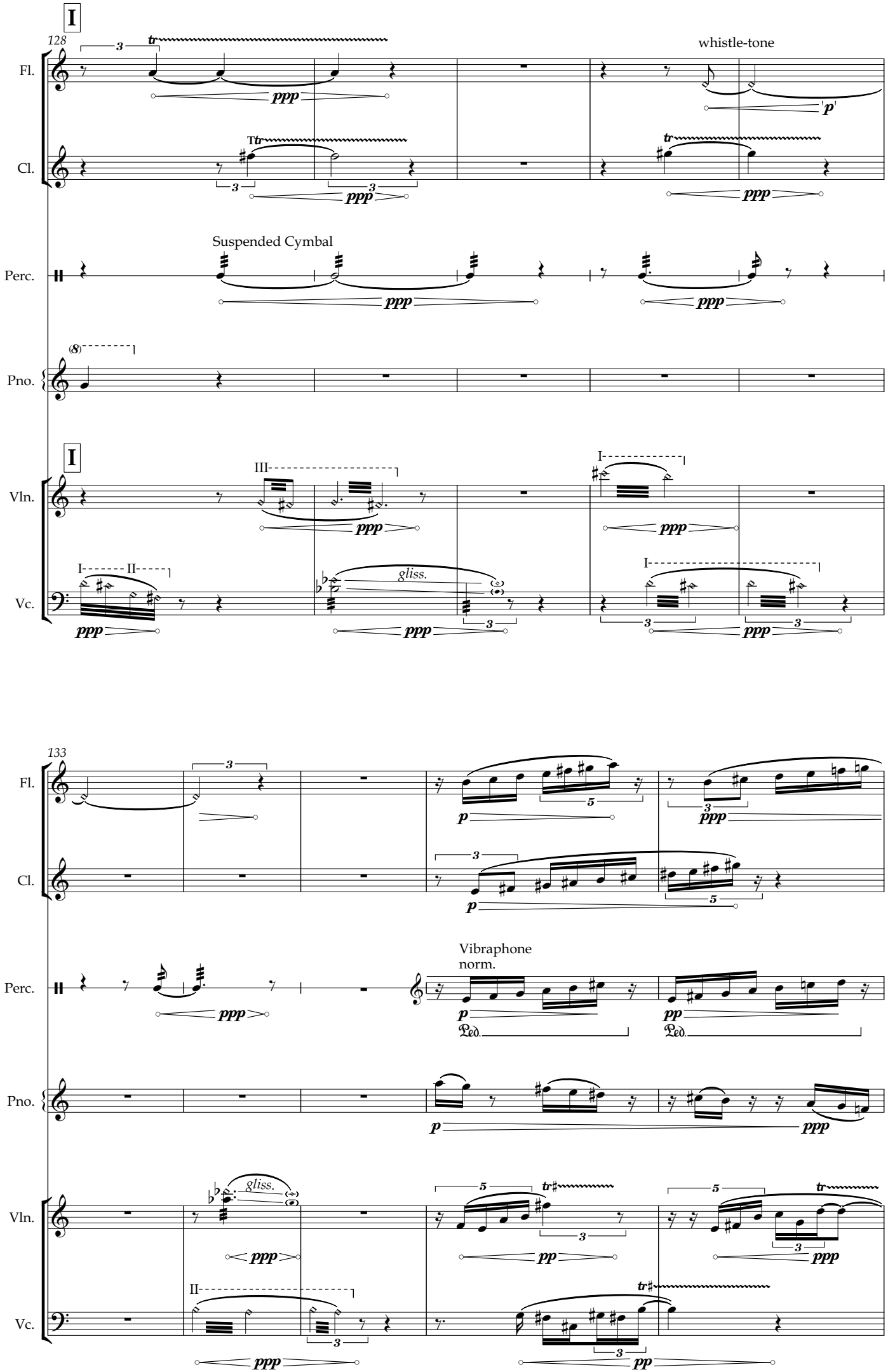

100
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
ppp
pp

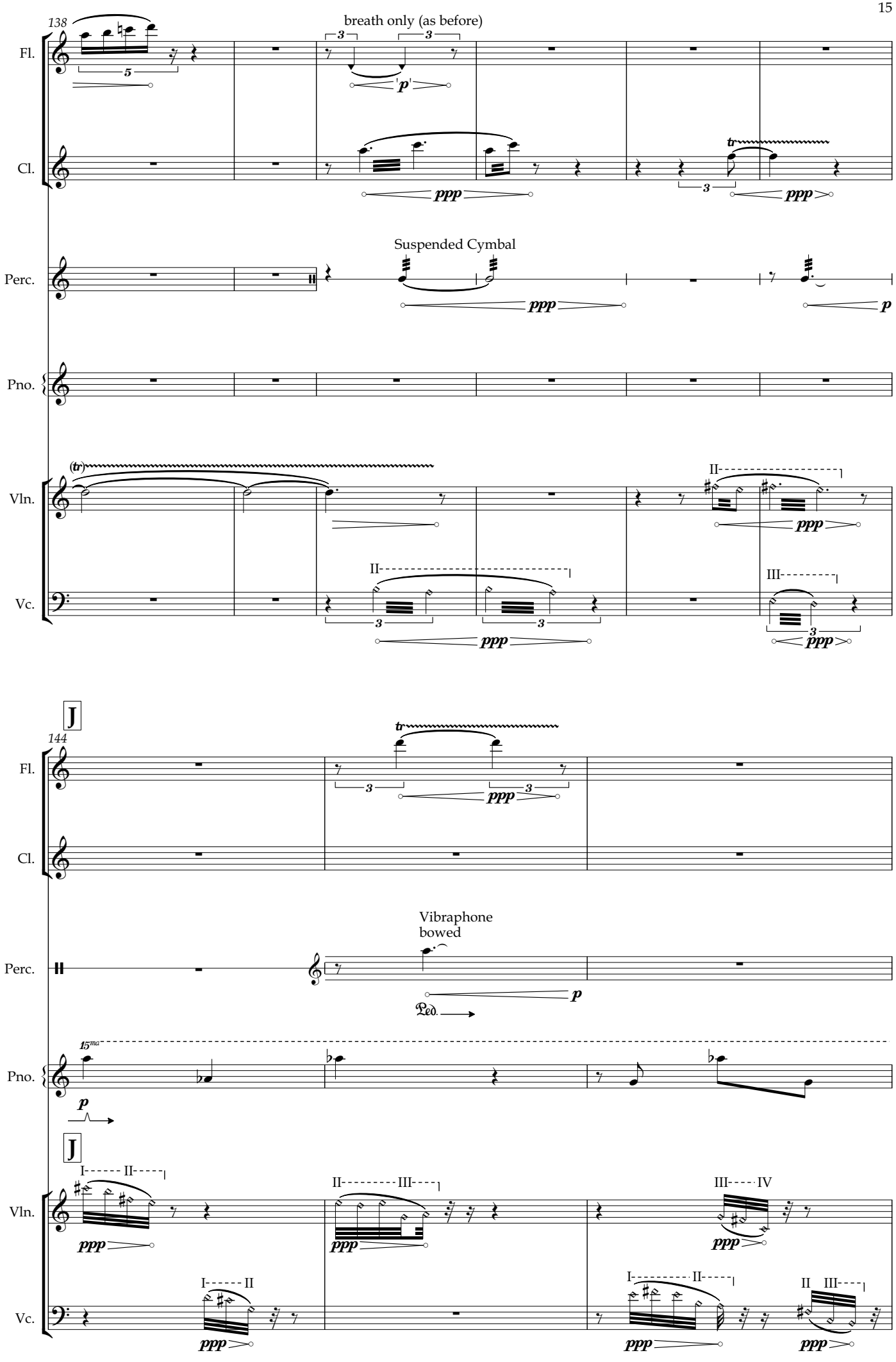

104
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
ppp
pp

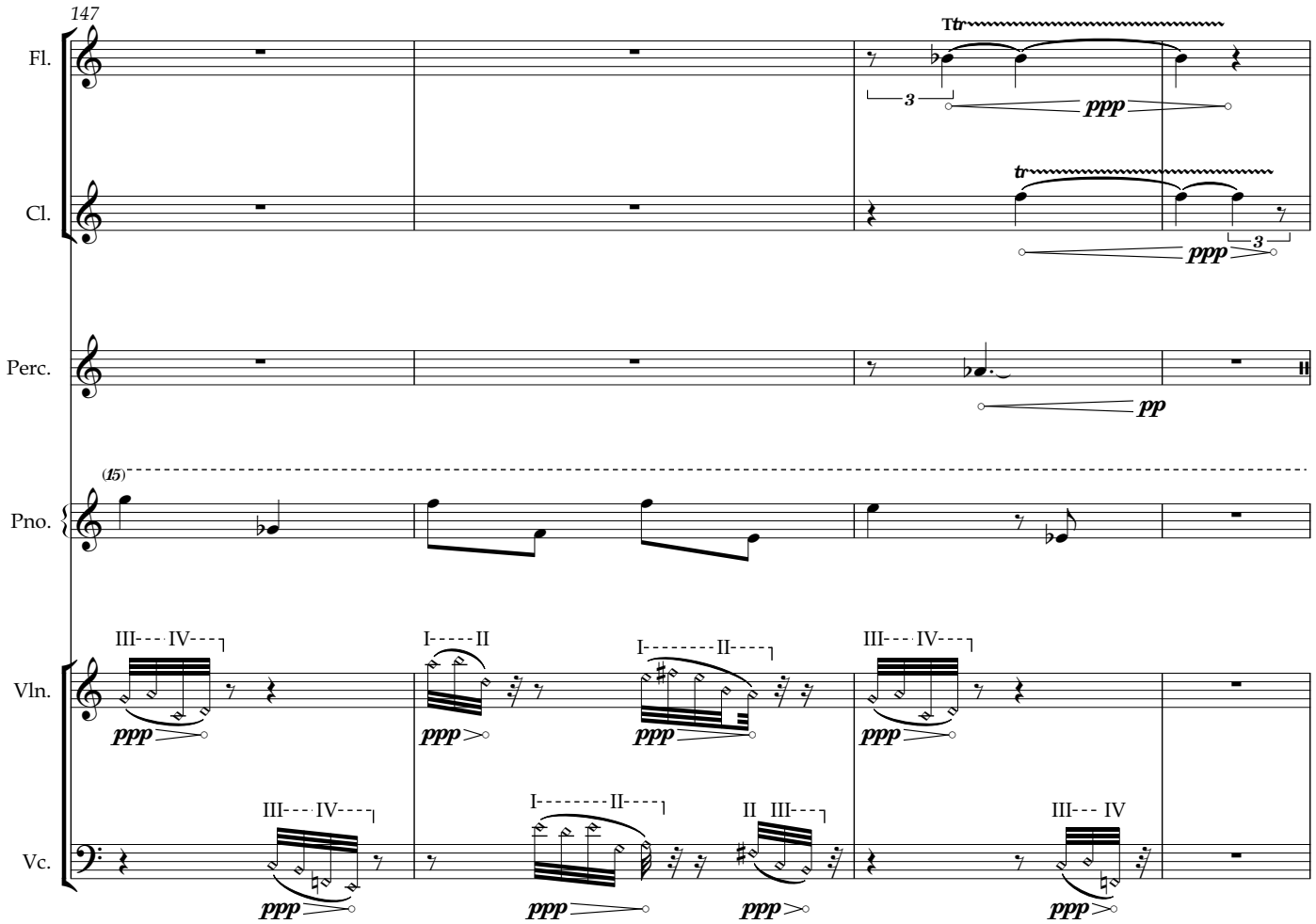

108
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
breath only (as before)
Suspended Cymbal
gliss.
H
112
8va
115 (8)

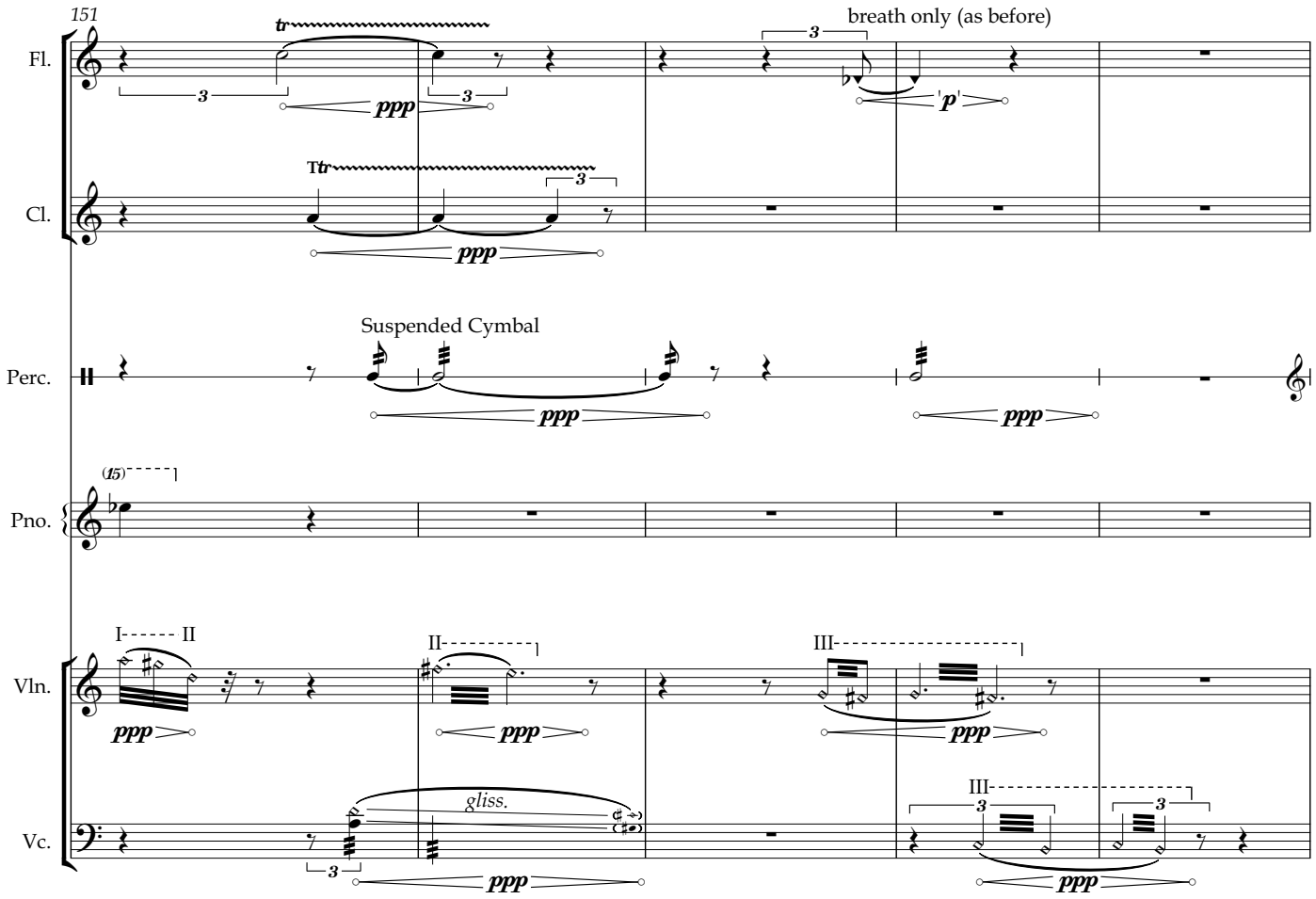

118
vuota
Fl.
Cl.
Vibraphone
bowed
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
III
II------- III
II---- III---
III---- IV
I----- II
II------- III---
ppp
pp
Ped.

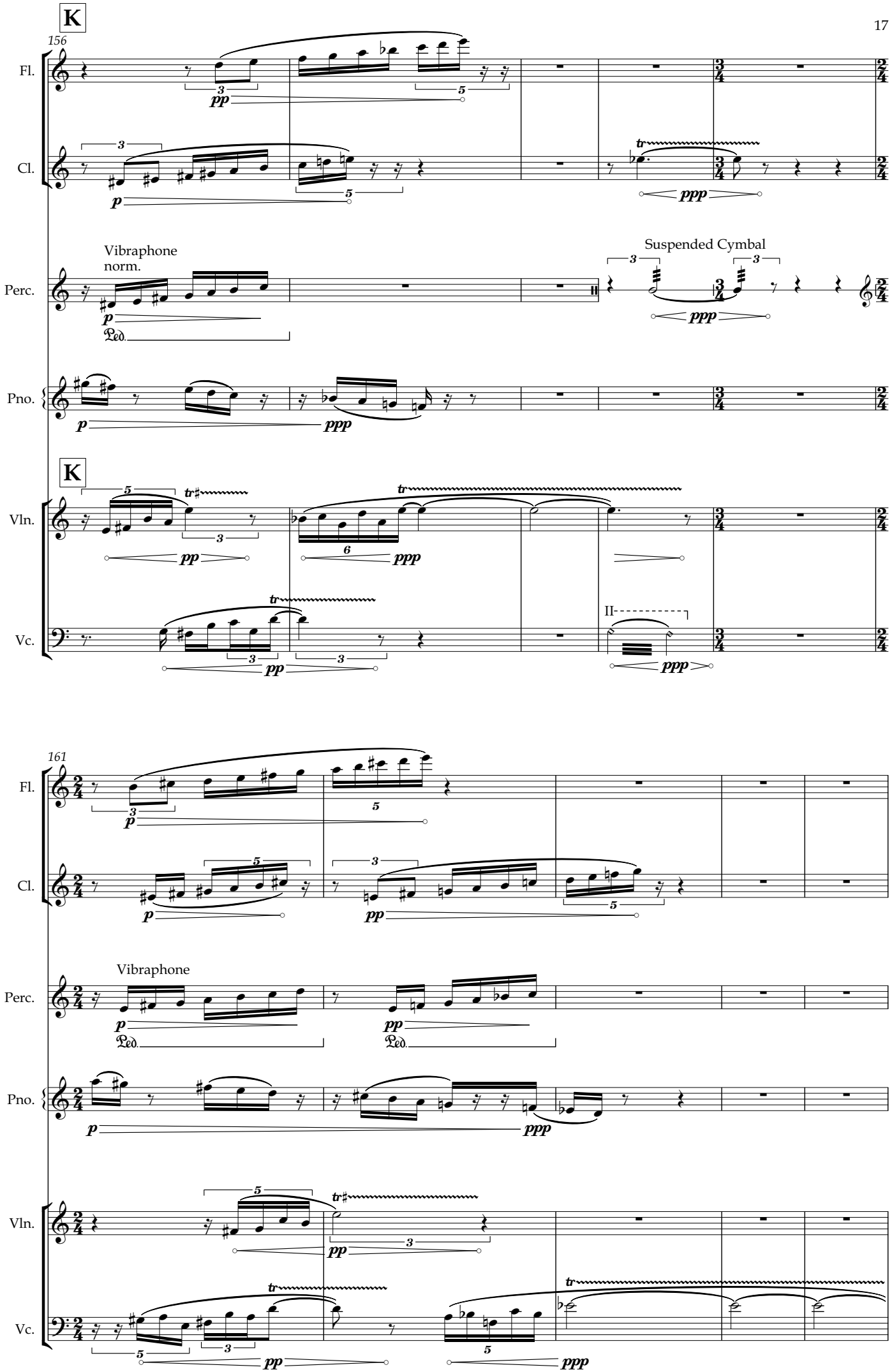

123
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
III------- IV----
I II----
III---- IV----
ppp
pp

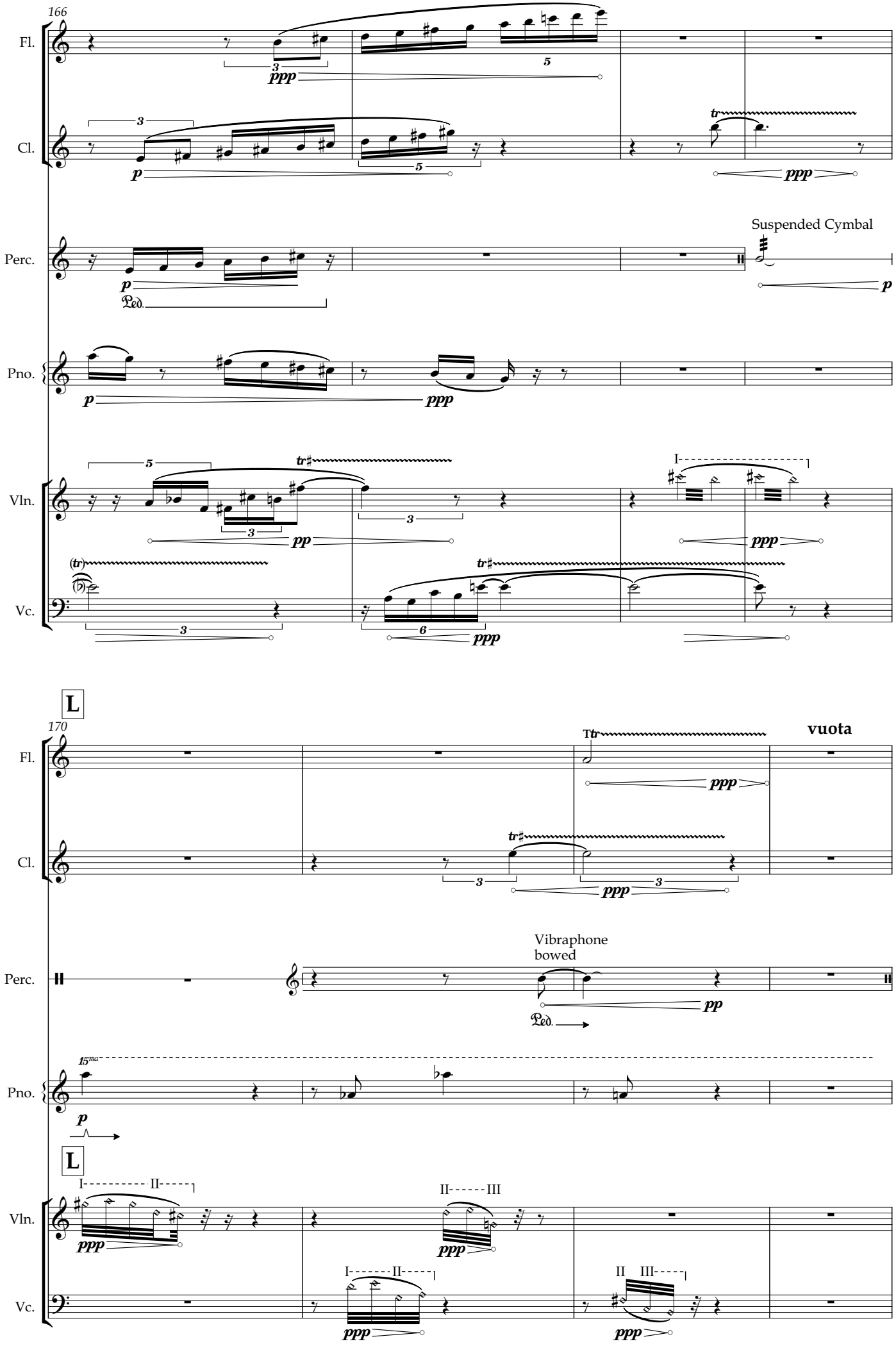

I
128
Fl.
Cl.
whistle-tone
Suspended Cymbal
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
III
I
II
gliss.
133
Vibraphone
norm.
Ped.

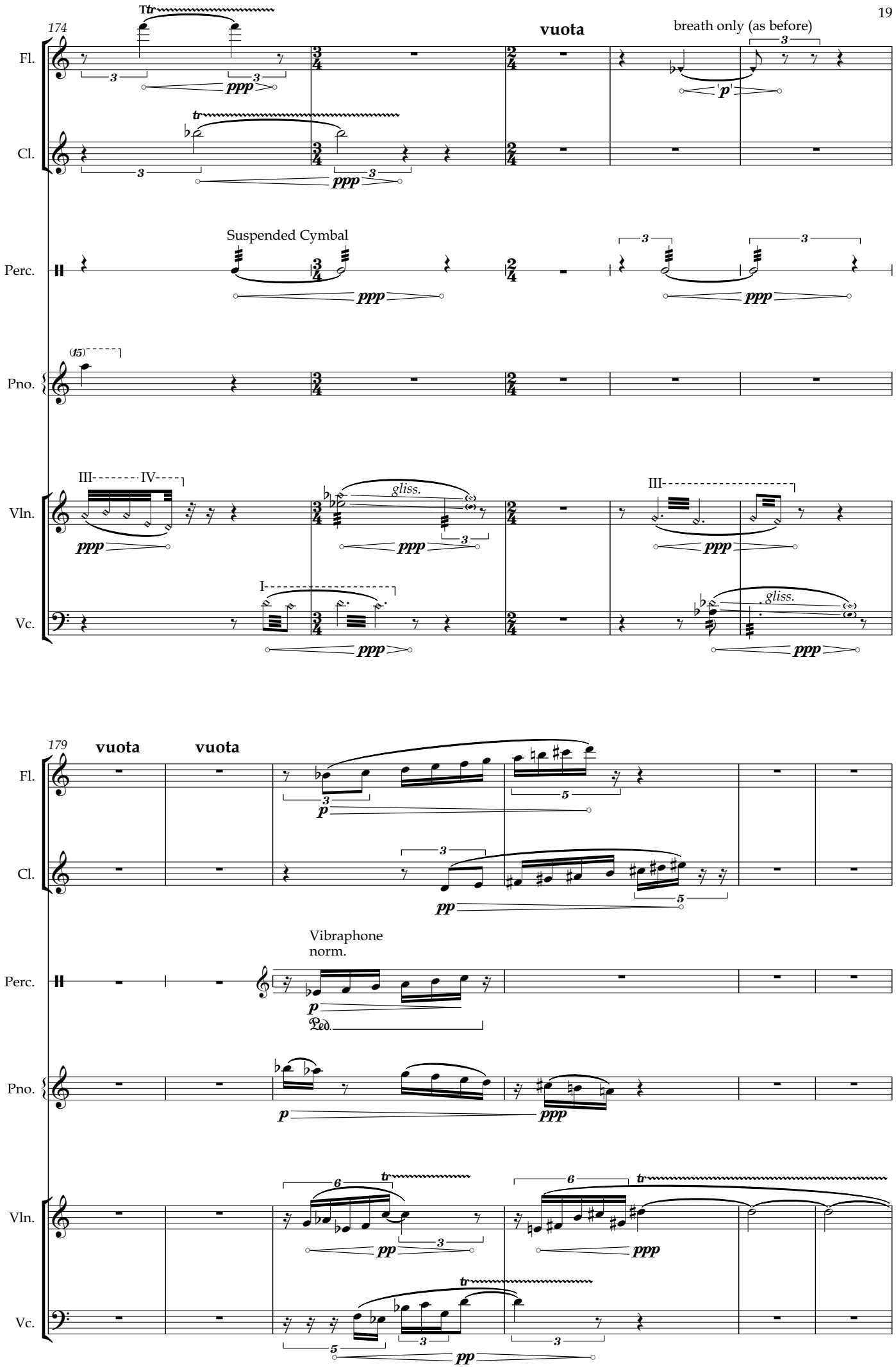

138
breath only (as before)
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Suspended Cymbal
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
J
144
Vibraphone
bowed
15ma
Ped.

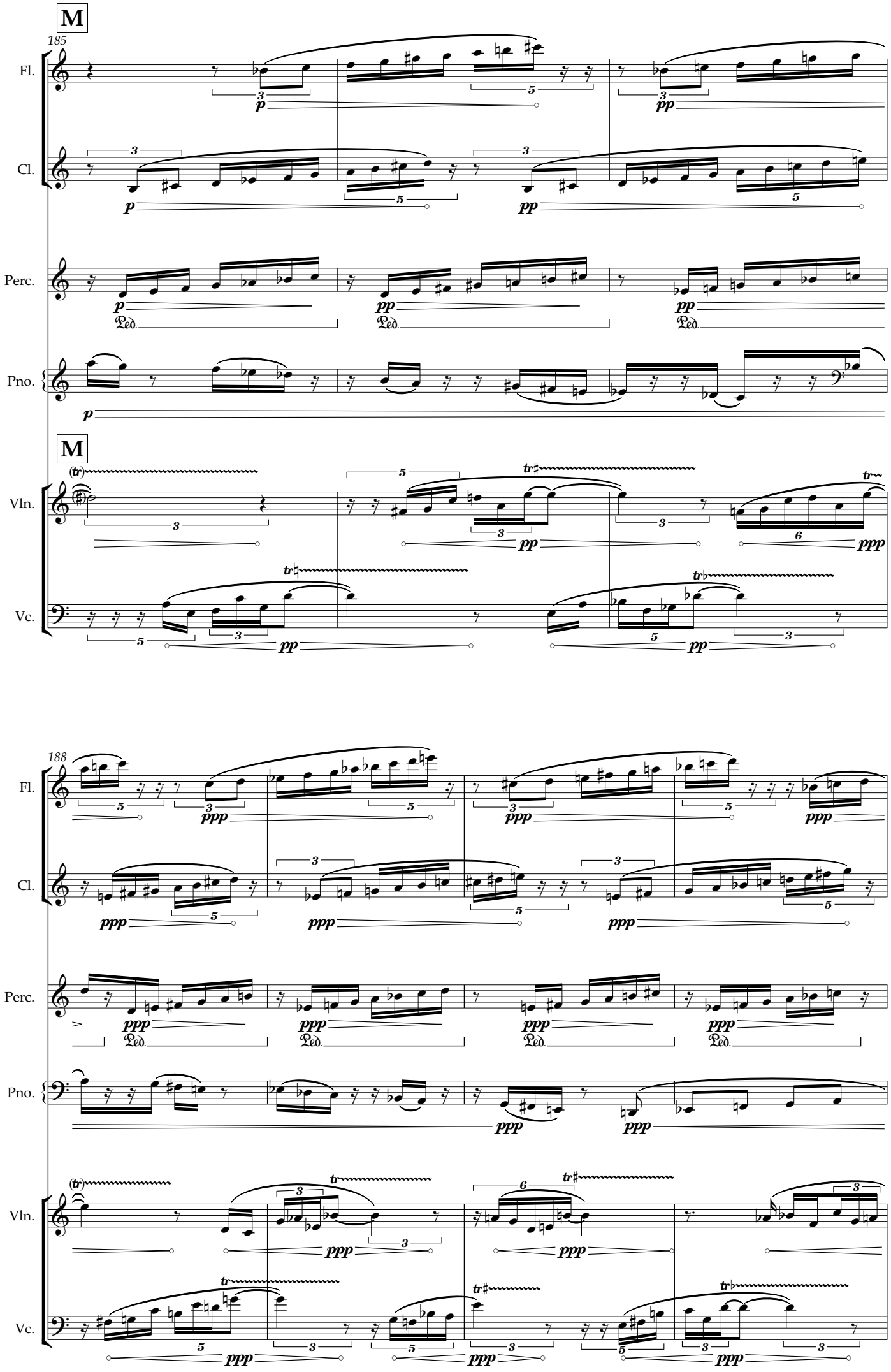

147
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
Ttr
ppp
pp
(15)
III IV
I II
I II
III IV
III IV
I II
II III
III IV

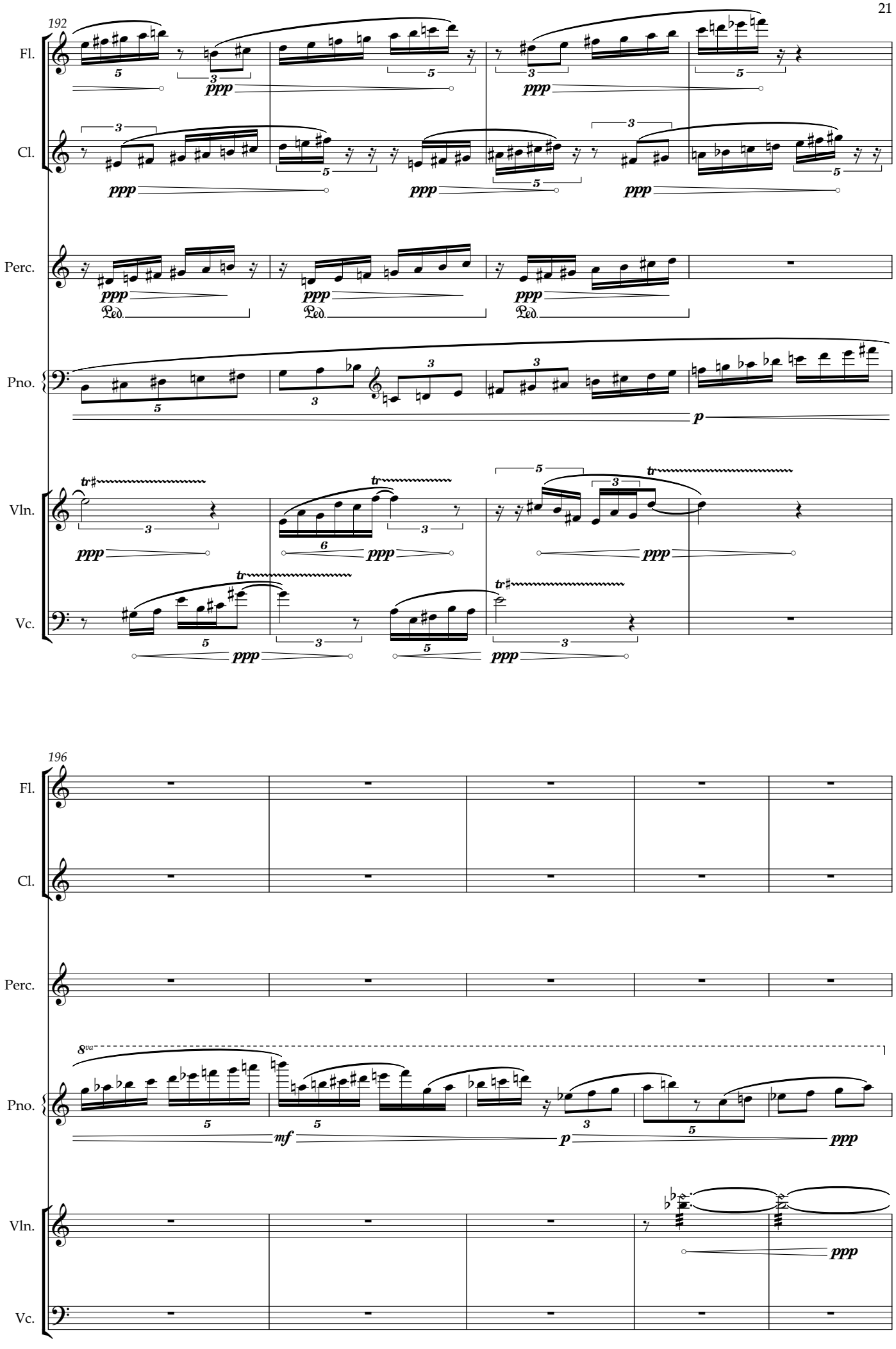

151
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
breath only (as before)
Suspended Cymbal
gliss.
ppp
p
(15)
I II
II
III
III


K
156
Fl.
Cl.
Vibraphone
norm.
Perc.
Suspended Cymbal
Pno.
K
Vln.
Vc.
II
161
Fl.
Cl.
Vibraphone
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.


166
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
Suspended Cymbal
L
170
vuota
Vibraphone
bowed
15ma


174
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
vuota
breath only (as before)
Suspended Cymbal
gliss.
179
vuota
vuota
Vibraphone
norm.
Ped.


M
185
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
M
Vln.
Vc.
188
Fl.
Cl.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.


192
Fl.
Cl.
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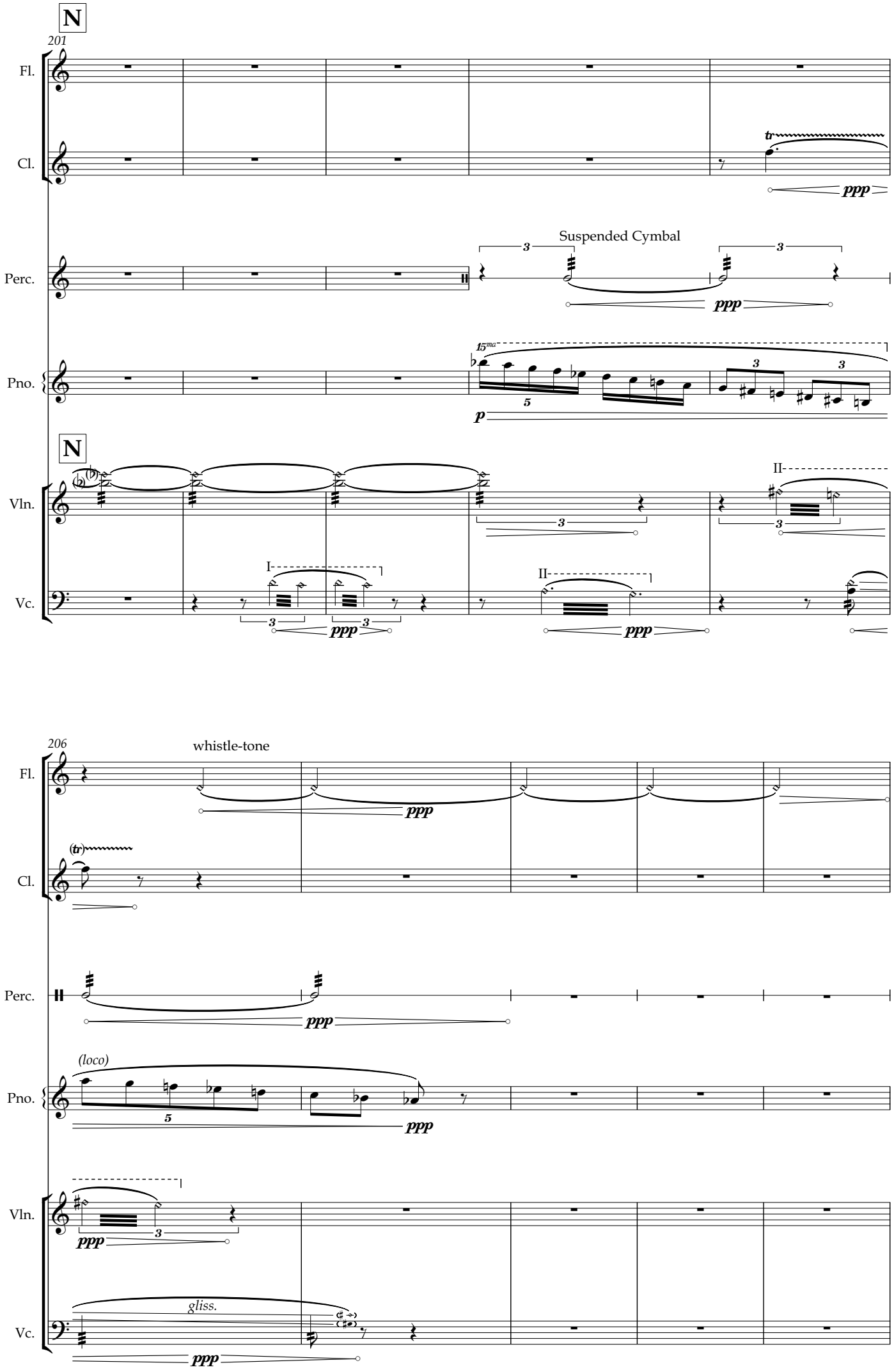
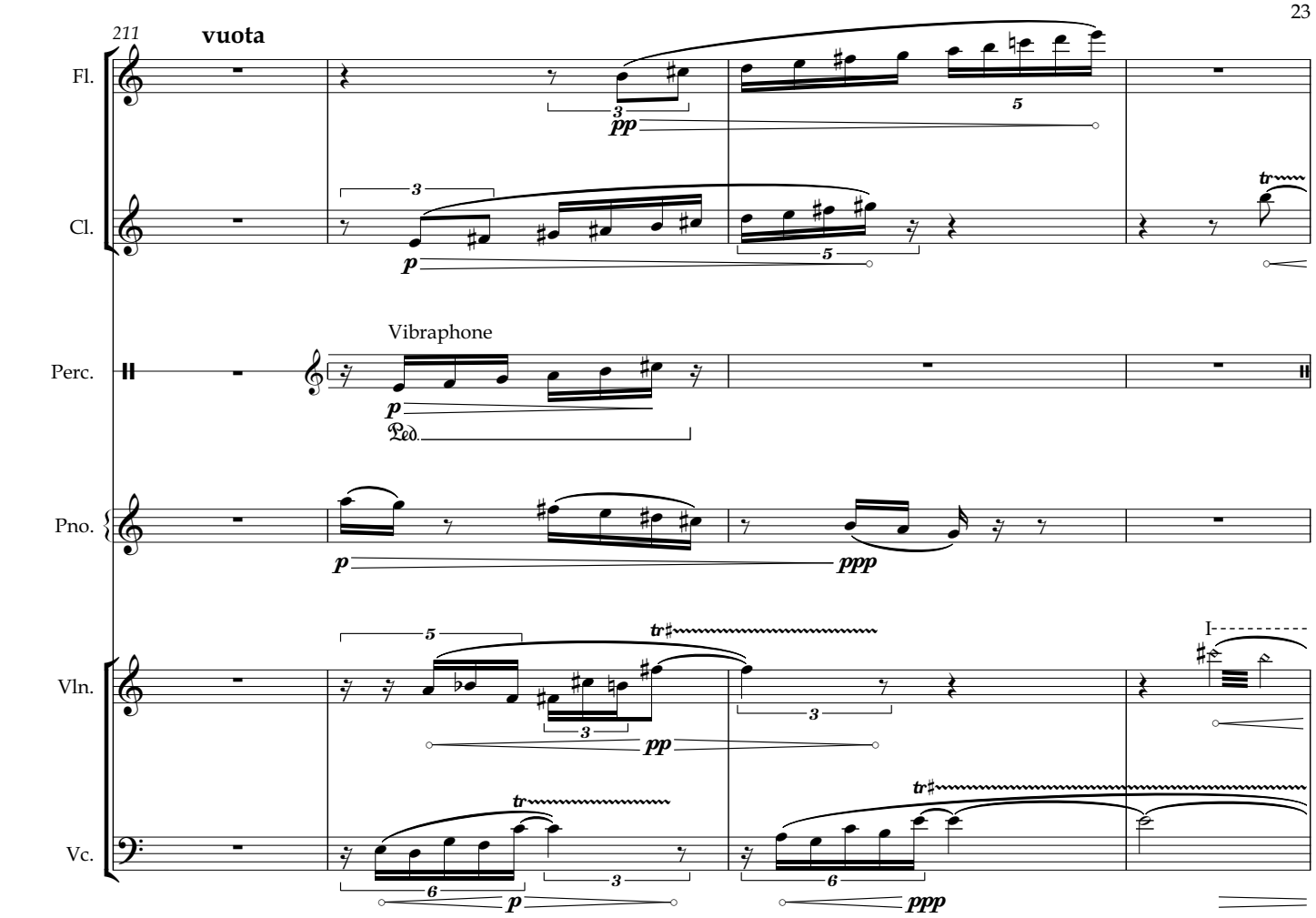
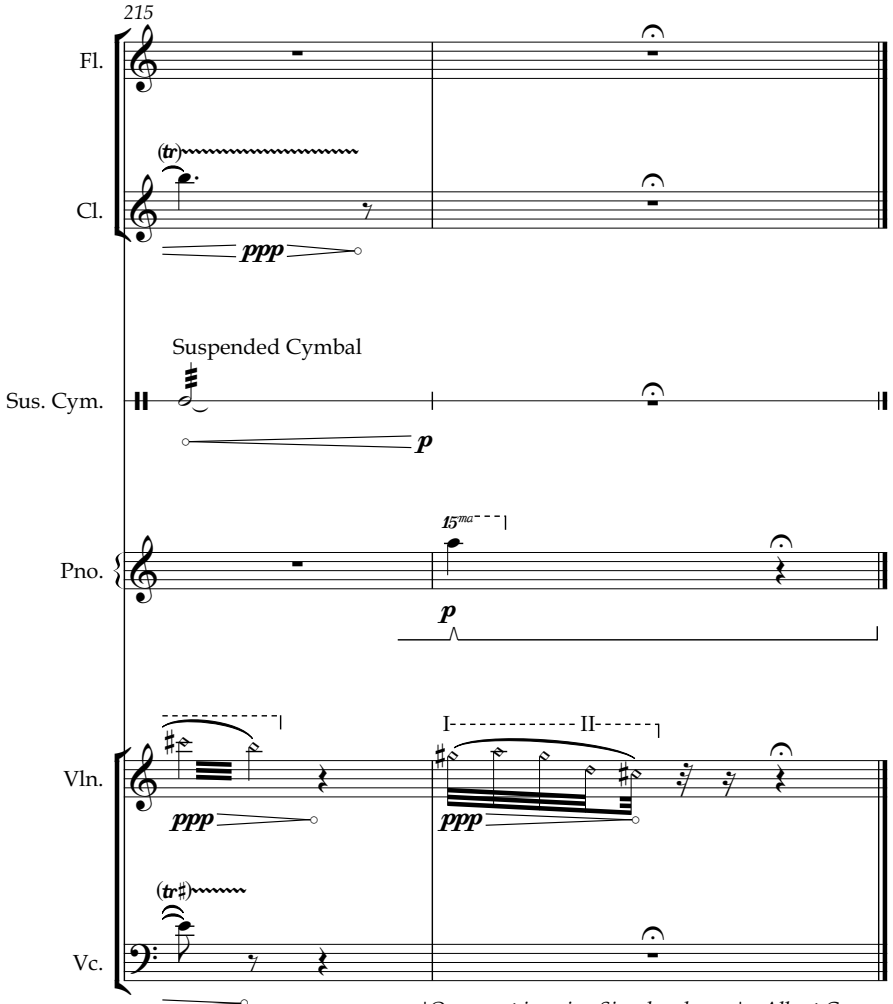
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
ppp
Ped.
p
196
8va
mf


N
201
Fl.
Cl.
tr
ppp
Suspended Cymbal
Perc.
ppp
15ma
Pno.
p
N
Vln.
II
Vc.
I
ppp
II
ppp
206
whistle-tone
Fl.
ppp
(tr)
Cl.
Perc.
ppp
(loco)
Pno.
ppp
Vln.
ppp
gliss.
Vc.
ppp





'One must imagine Sisyphus happy' - Albert Camus

Manchester, February 2019