Thomas Metcalf

DISSOLUTION

for organ

2020

Composer's Note

DISSOLUTION is a musical exploration of the visual process of pixelation on a map of the River Thames. The pixel size of the original image, used in the first piece, is gradually increased over the course of the next 11. This is reflected in the pitch material of each piece, which uses an 'averaging' process similar to that of a pixelation algorithm. A tone row was generated using the River Thames as a pitch–time graph, then adjacent pitches/chords are 'averaged' by taking their midpoint and, in this case, rounding up if it results in a microtone.

The pixelated graphics determine many aspects of composition, and pieces become increasingly dependent upon them. By XII, there is a single pixel as an input, resulting in the relegation of certain sonic aspects to the organist to reflect the culmination of data–loss in the image.

Part One (I–III) **| Representation**
The image is clear; it sounds its music with detail and excitement.

Part Two (IV–VIII) **| Pixelation**
The image is pixelated; its music begins to rely on its own failed representation, and empty spaces.

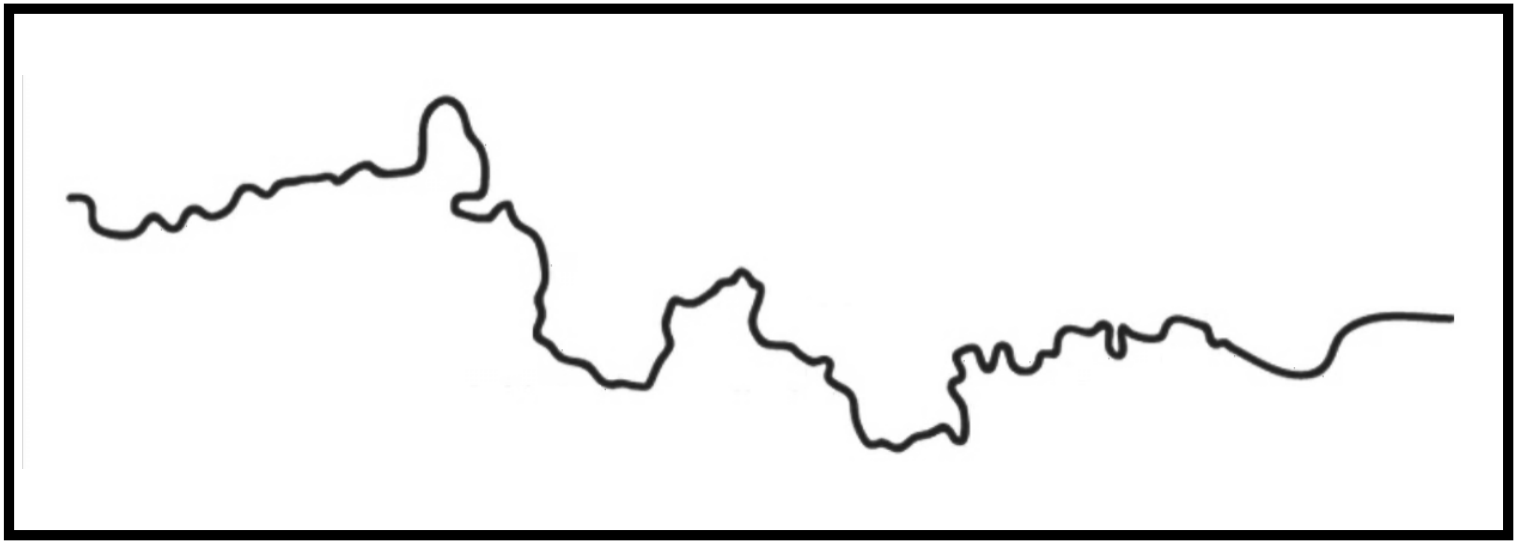
Part Three (IX–XII) **| Obfuscation**
The image no longer exists; its music becomes filled with glitches as total failure becomes inevitable.

The performer is encouraged to find the most creative approach to registration possible with their instrument with respect to the above; descriptive indications are given as prompts. A collaborative recording, made by the composer and organist, is avaiable to demonstrate the rich possibilities: www.thomasmkmetcalf.com/dissolution

–

This piece was written for, and is dedicated to, Daniel Mathieson whose insights throughout were invaluable.

Duration: c. 26'





DISSOLUTION

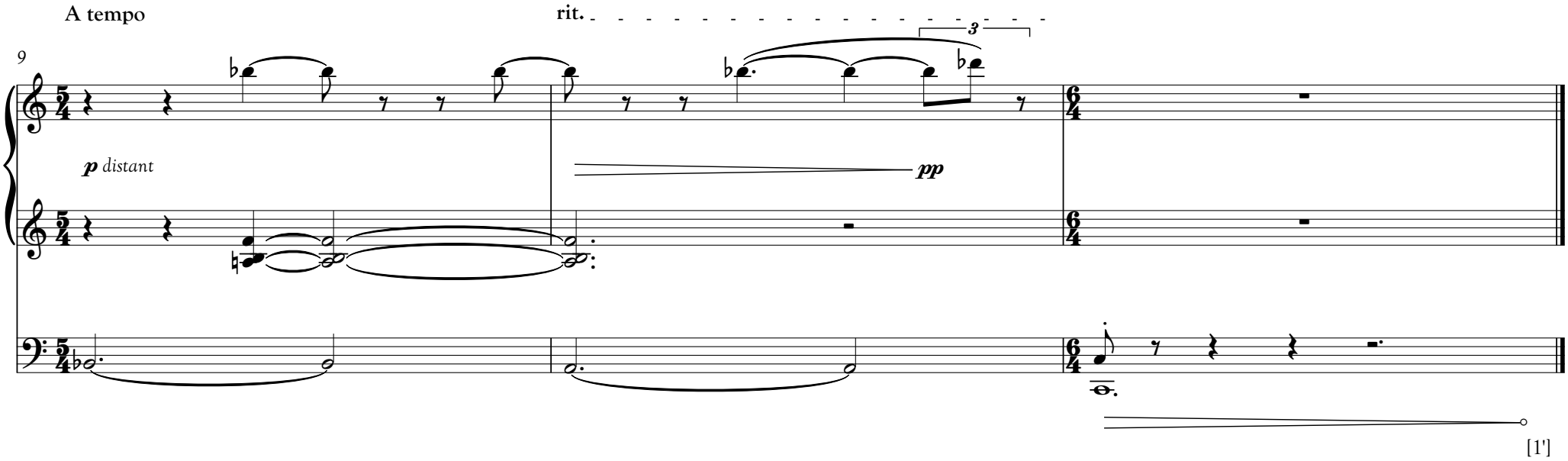
Part One | Representation

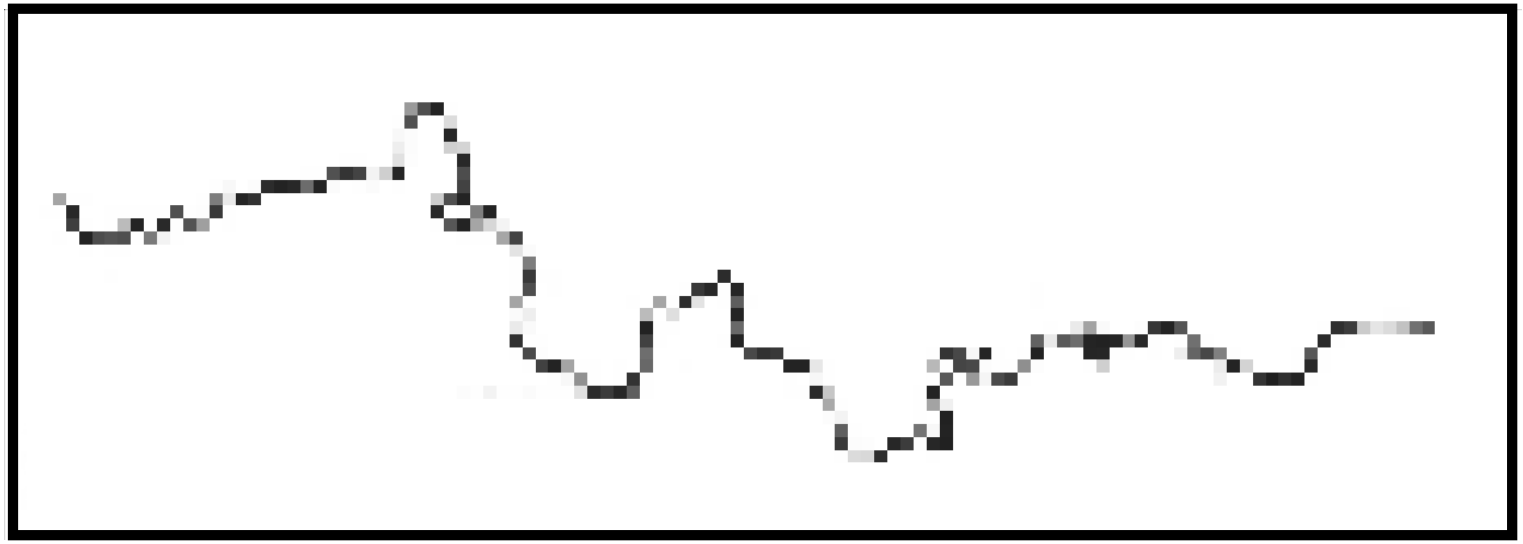
I

Thomas Metcalf (b. 1996)



© 2020, Thomas Metcalf


A tempo
rit.
3
9
p distant
pp
[1']

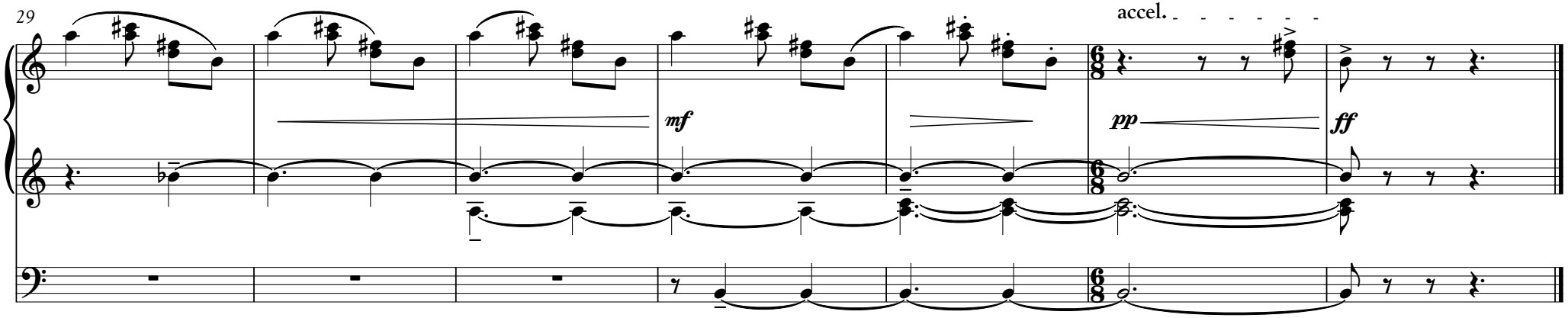




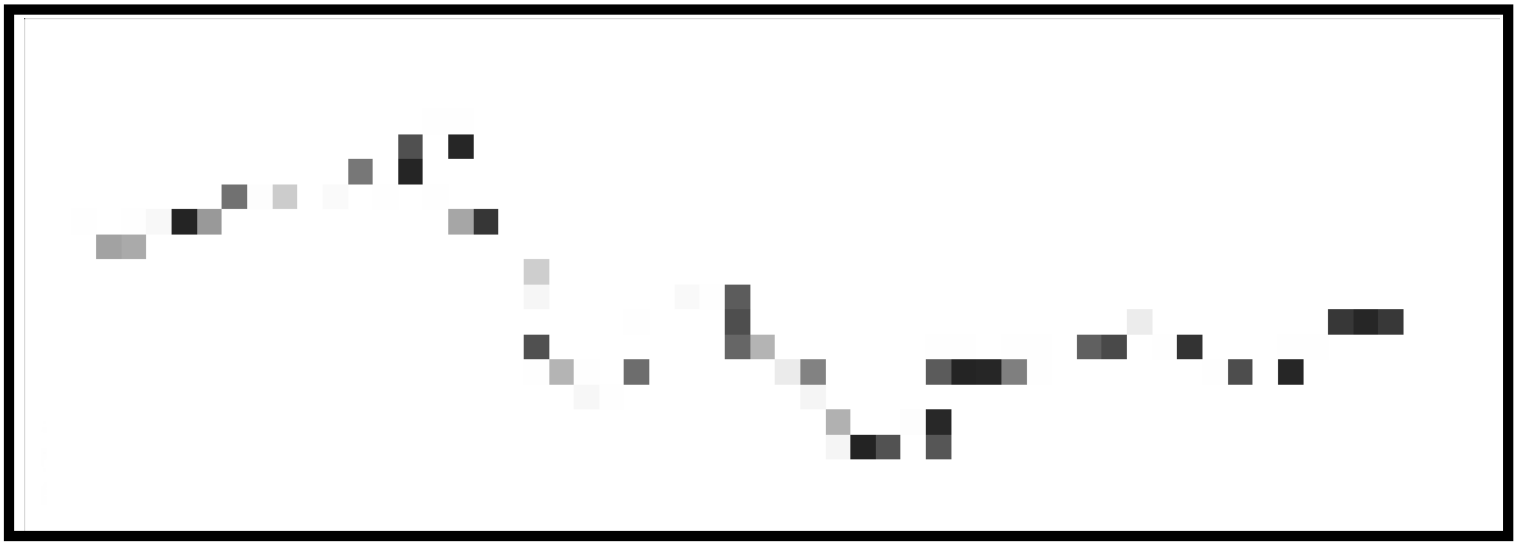
II




18
sf sf
mp
sf
ppp
Meno mosso ♩ = 50
23
3
ppp sempre, dark
A tempo ♪ =116
p uneasy



[2']



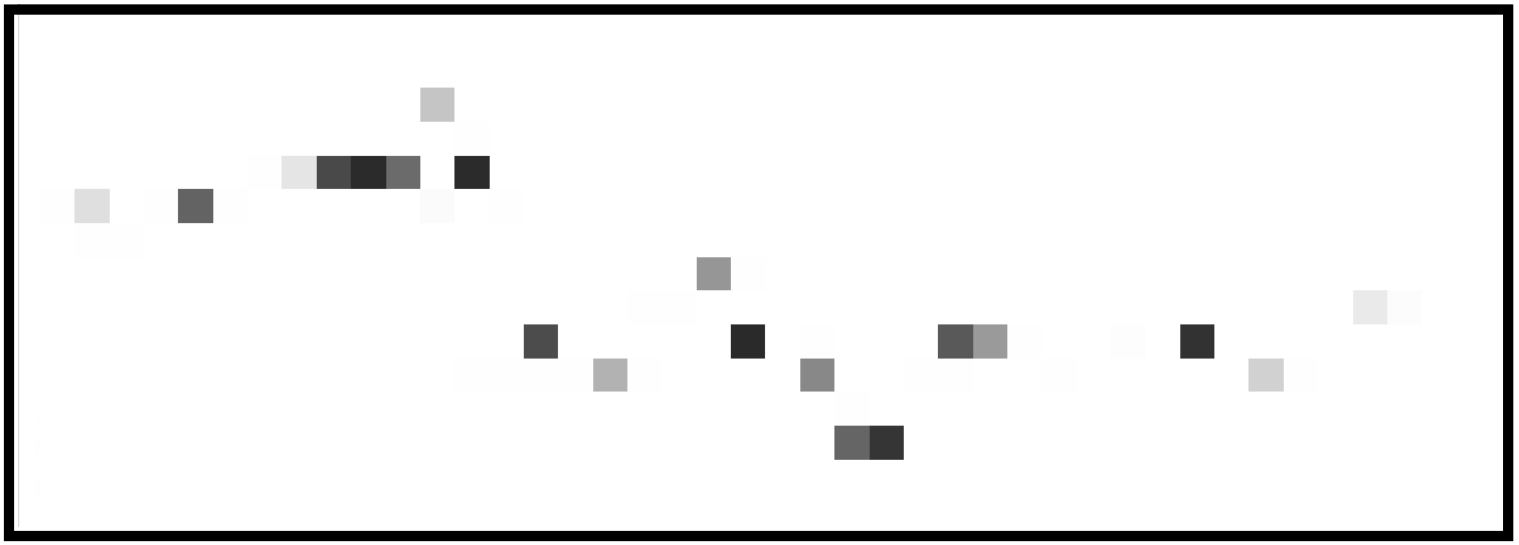


III


Lento ♩= 40
p dolce
mf
p
mp
p
mf
7
Più mosso ♩= 60
ff sub.
p steady, warm
mp
pp


(♩= 75)
12
mf
fp
fp
pp
18
f
sub. p
ppp


23
molto rit.
A tempo (♩= 75)
ppp
mf
pp
ppp
[c.8"]
29
cresc.
fff
ffpp bright, shimmering
[2'30"]
End of Part One





Part Two | Pixelation

IV



*accidentals apply to duration of beamed groups


f
pp
f
mp sub.
pp
f



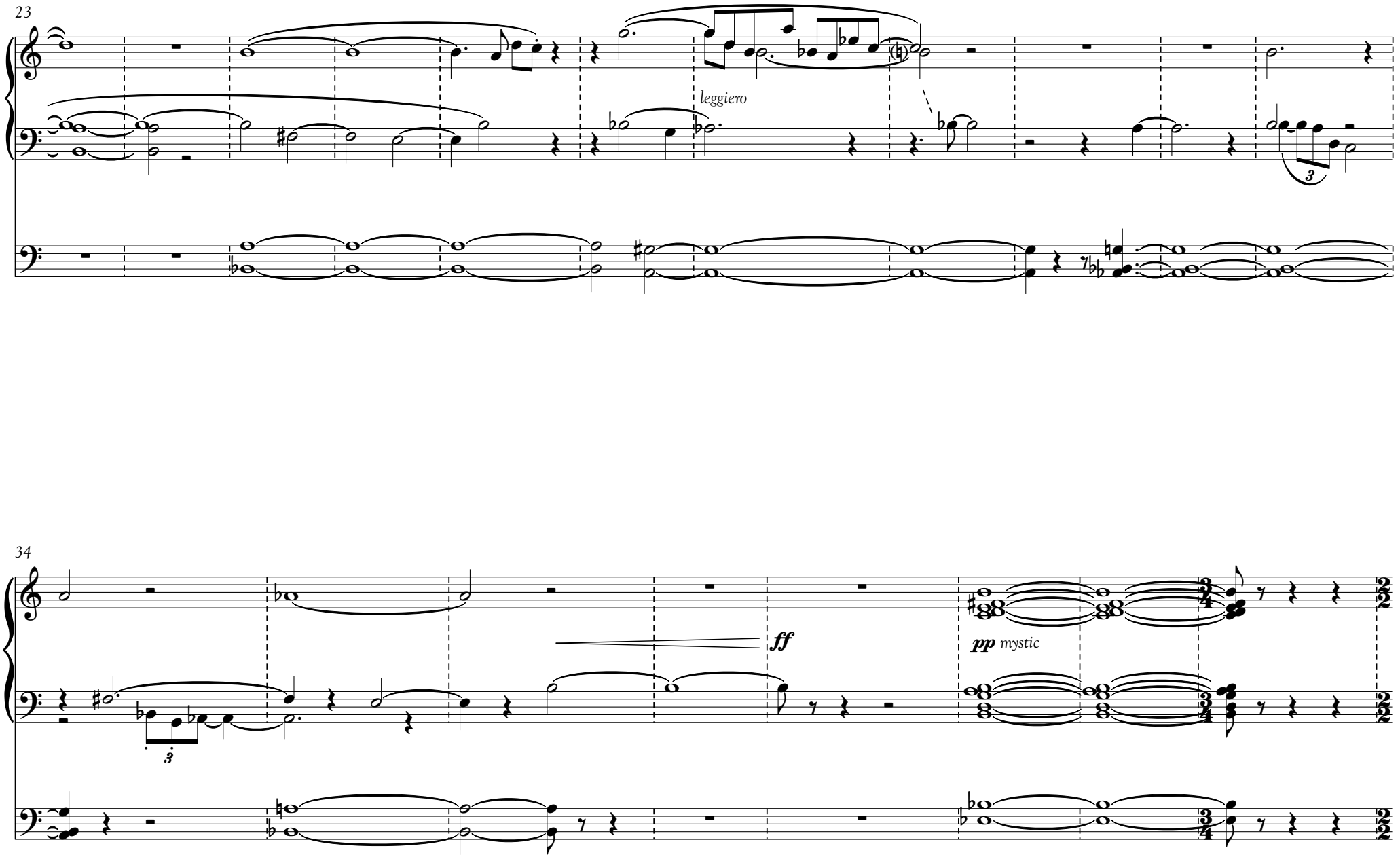
[1'20"]

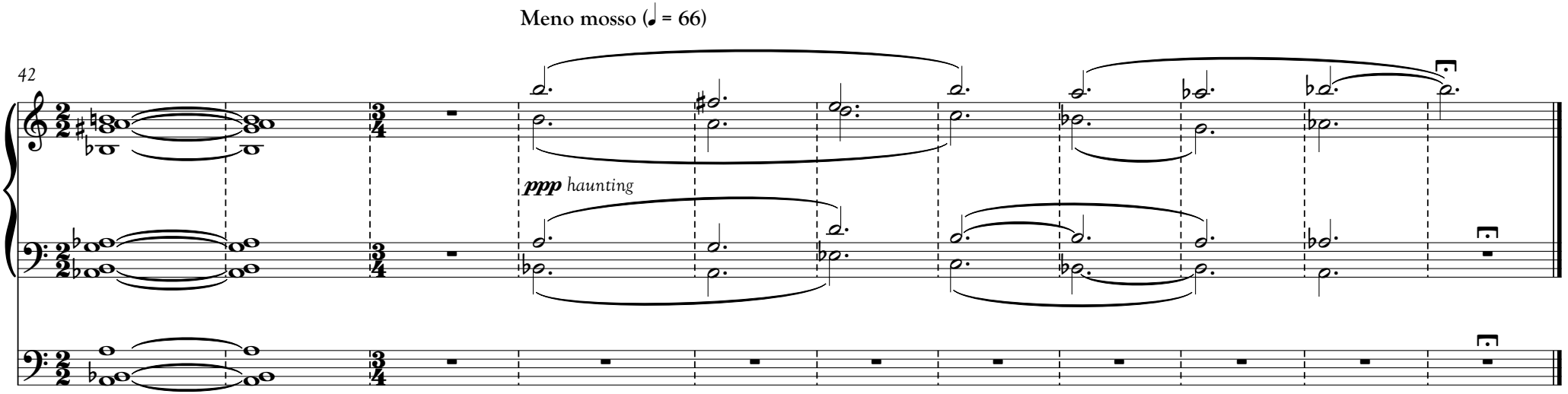




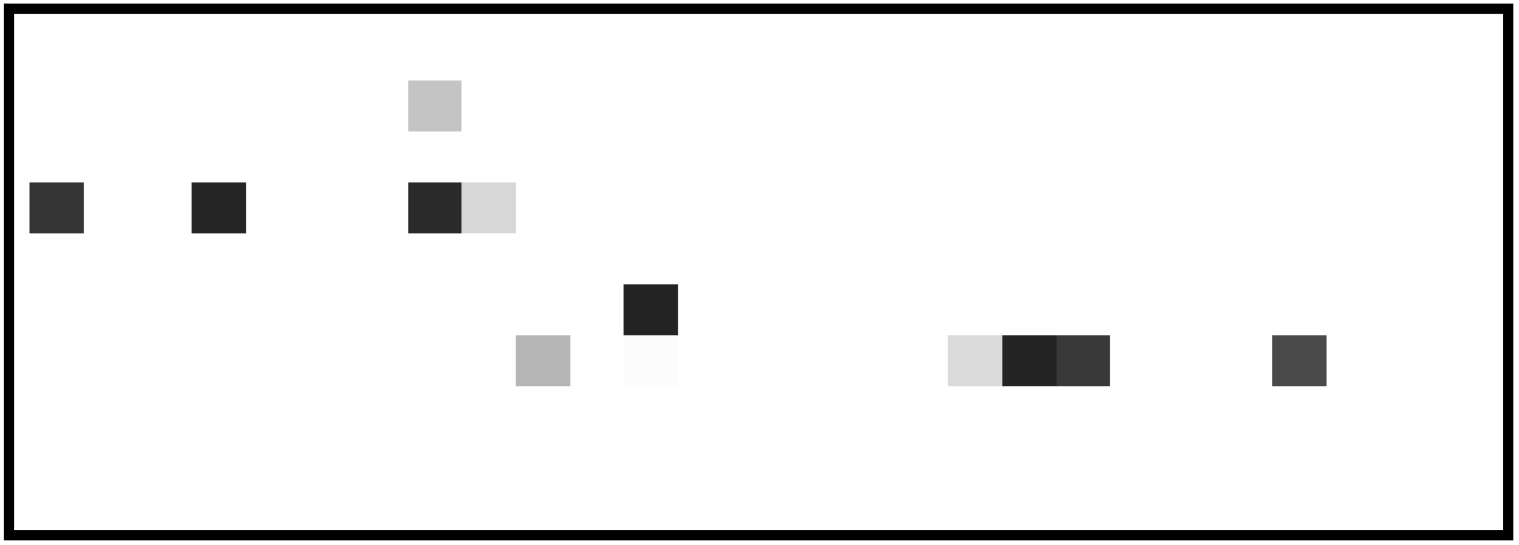
V


Liberamente [𝅗𝅥 = 30 ca]
Solemn 𝅗𝅥 = 42
pp restrained
quasi ppp, malevolant
10


23
leggiero
34
ff
pp mystic



[3'20"]

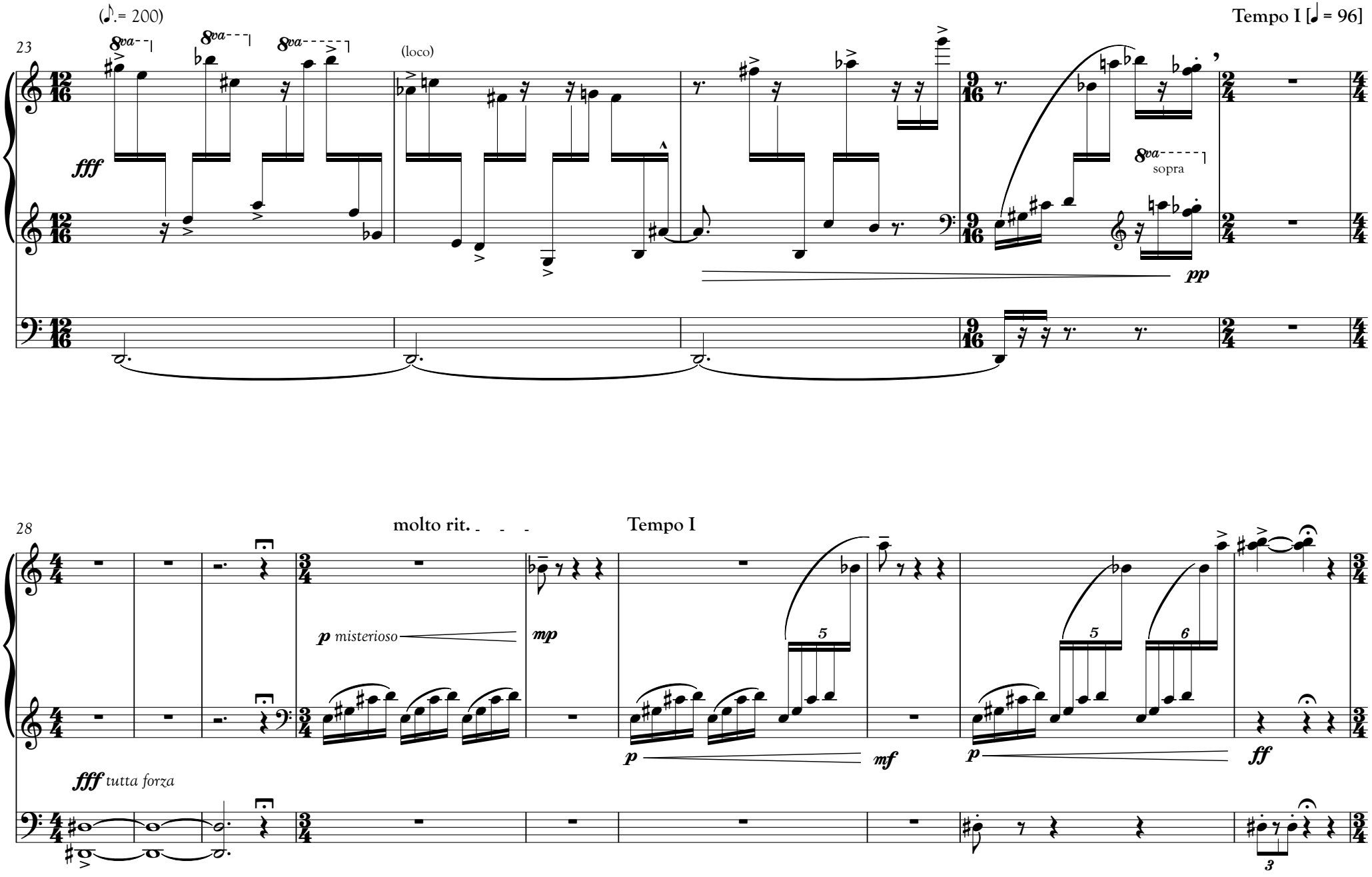




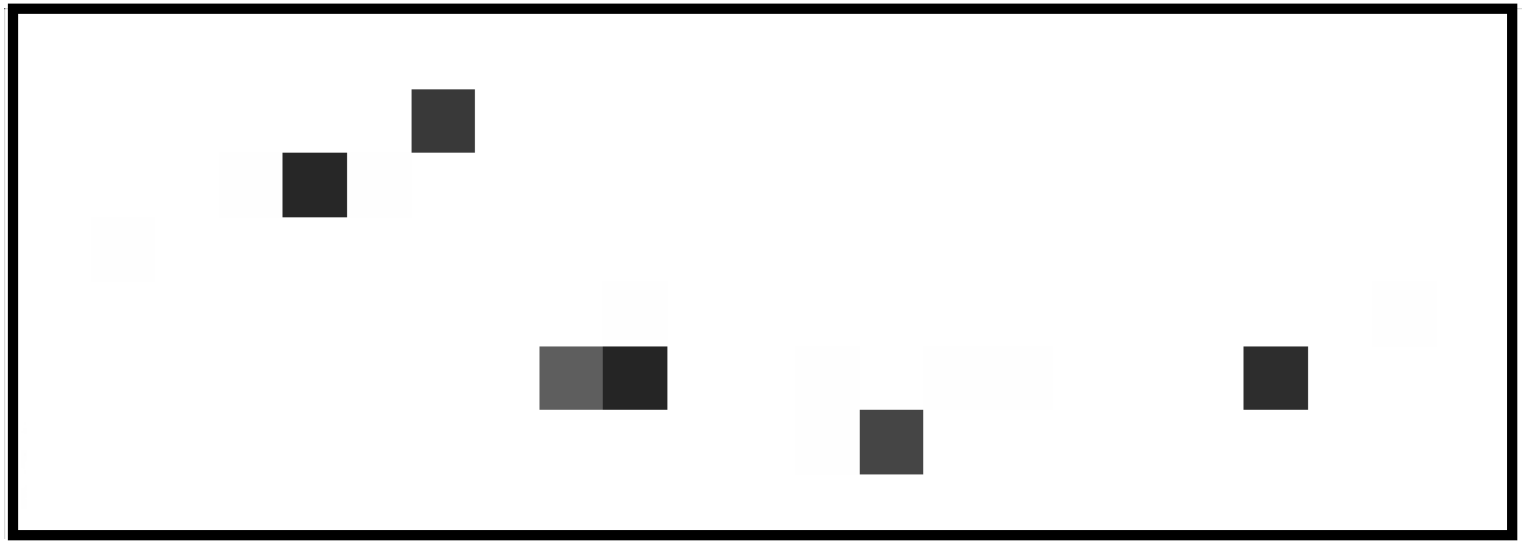
VI


Moderato ♩ = 96
f heavy
p blurred, echo
Vivo, scherzo ♪.=160, ♩ = 120
f
6
p cresc.
Tempo I
mf


Tempo II [♪.=160]
legatissimo
Tempo I [♩ = 96]
12
mp
p
mf
(loco)
p
Tempo II
molto accel.
Tempo I
Frenzied (at least ♩ = 150)
17
f
p
(loco)
(loco)
pp


(♪.= 200)
Tempo I [♩ = 96]
23
8va
(loco)
fff
8va
sopra
pp
28
molto rit.
Tempo I
p misterioso
mp
p
mf
p
ff
fff tutta forza


37
pp
mf
Poco meno mosso (♩= 84)
molto rit.
41
ff
pp



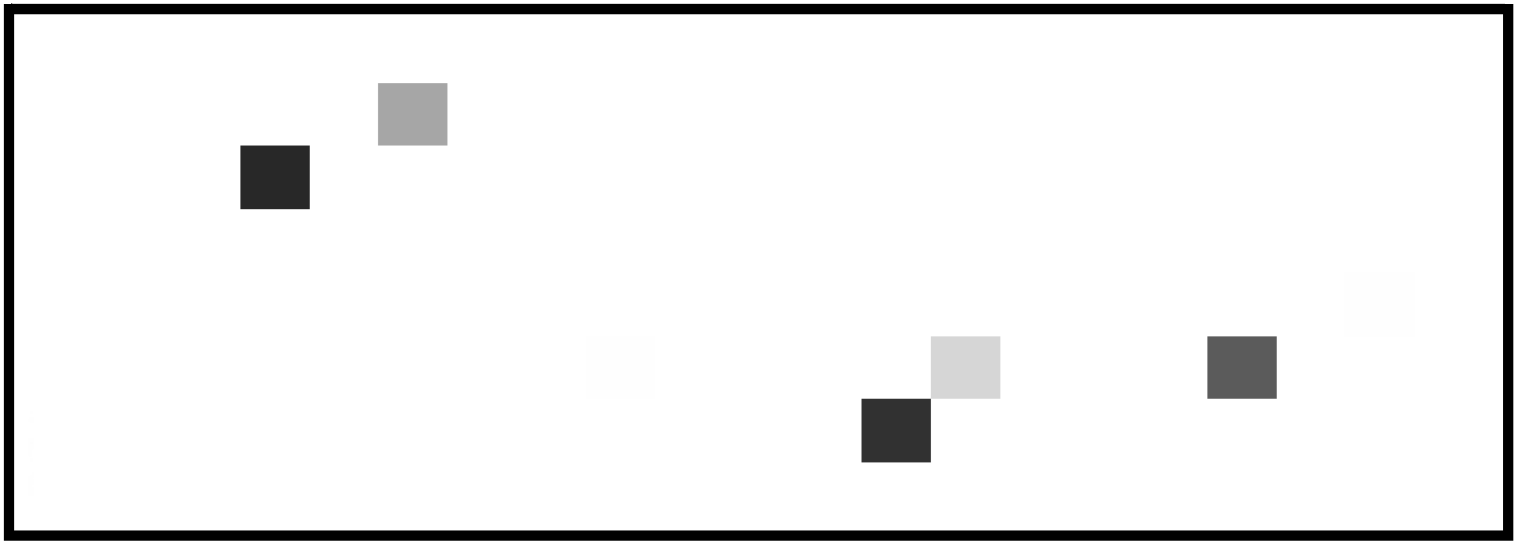


VII


Steady ♩= 72
accel.
pp chiaro
mf
mp
f
p sluggish
♩= 82
9
mp
leggiero e energico
mf

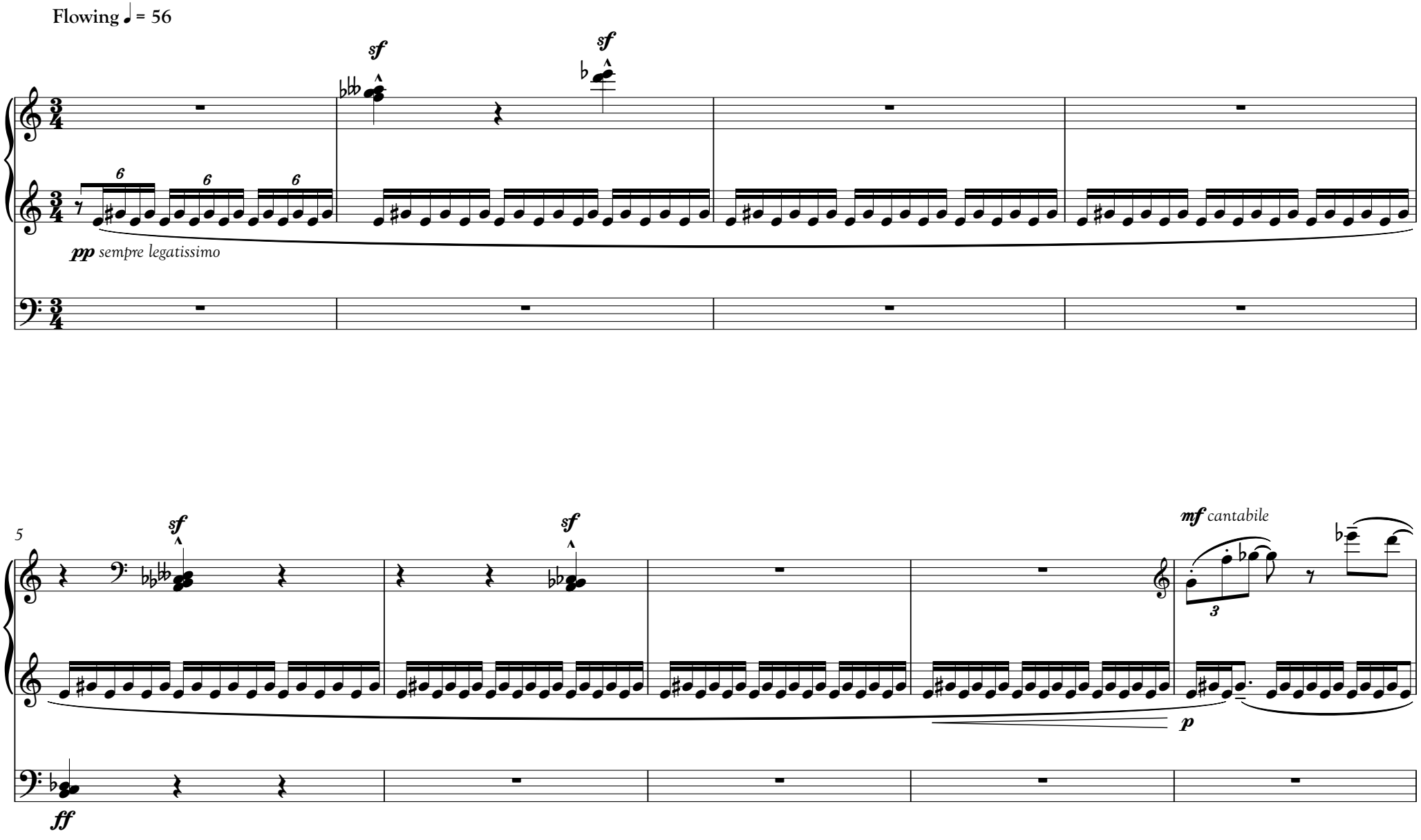

16
[2+3]
ff
p
mp energico
ff
f
23
mp
fff
mp mischevious
f


Tempo I ♩= 72
30
pp sparse
p
35
pppp
mp
pppp
[2']

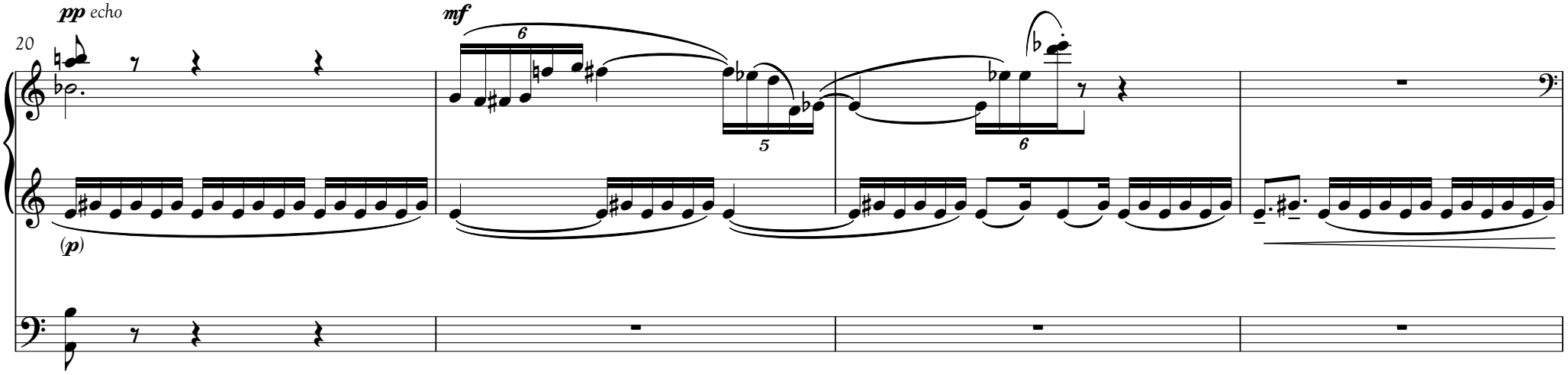


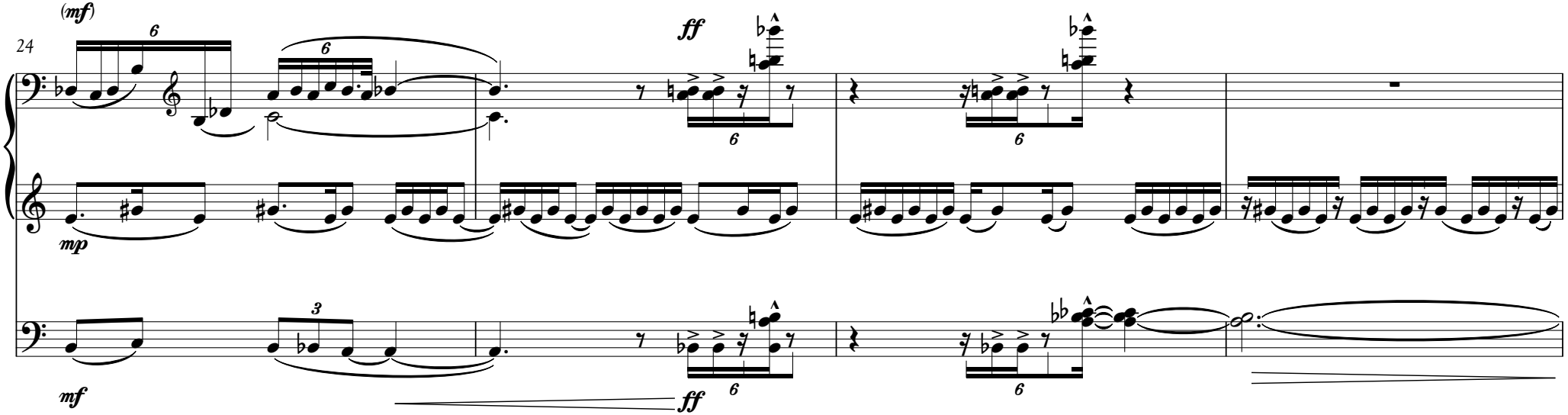


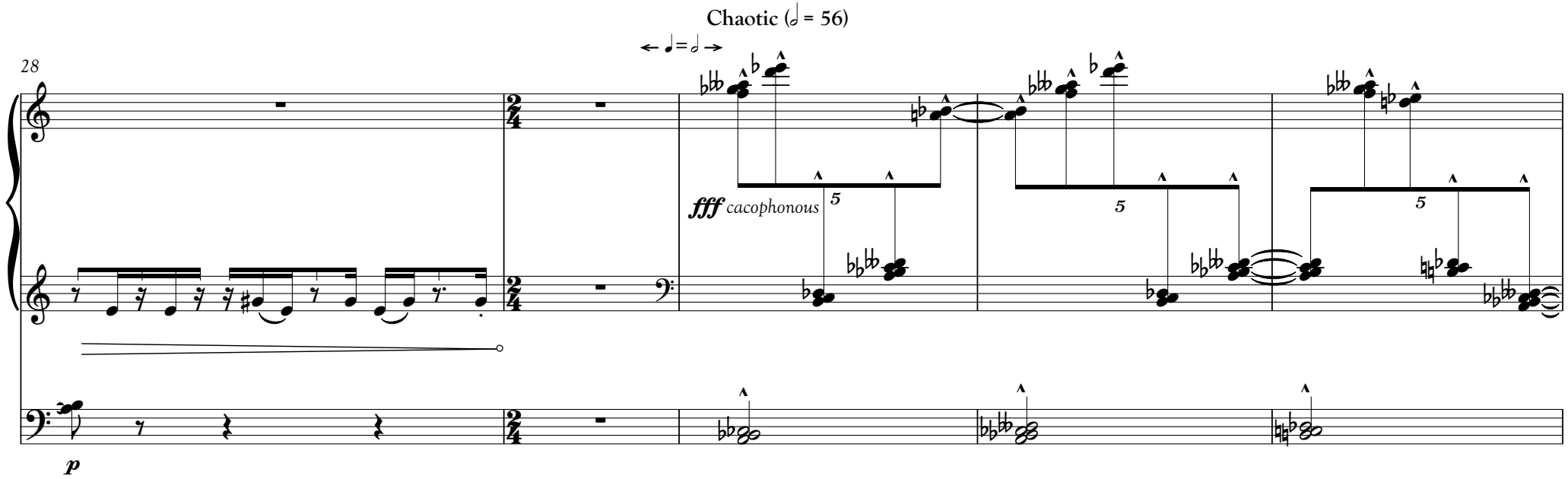
VIII

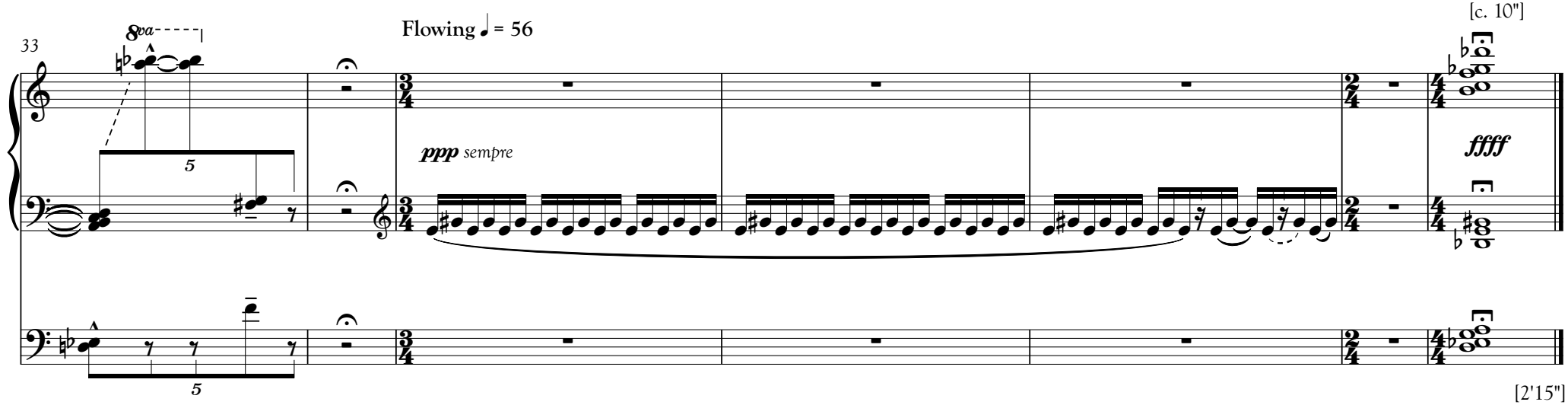

Flowing ♩ = 56
sf
sf
pp sempre legatissimo
5
sf
sf
mf cantabile
p
ff

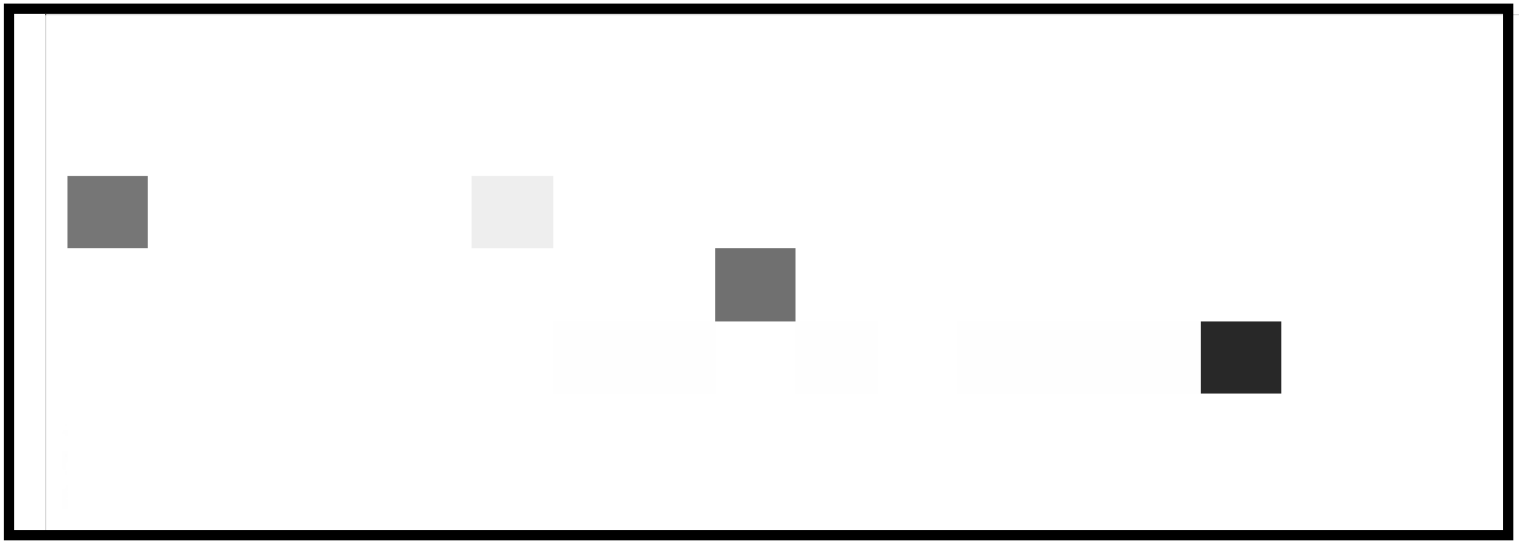

10
mp
3
3
f melancholic, wandering
15
5
p
mp


pp echo
20
mf
6
5
6
(p)


(mf)
24
6
6
ff
6
6
mp
3
mf
ff
6
6


Chaotic (𝅗𝅥 = 56)
28
fff cacophonous
5
5
5
p

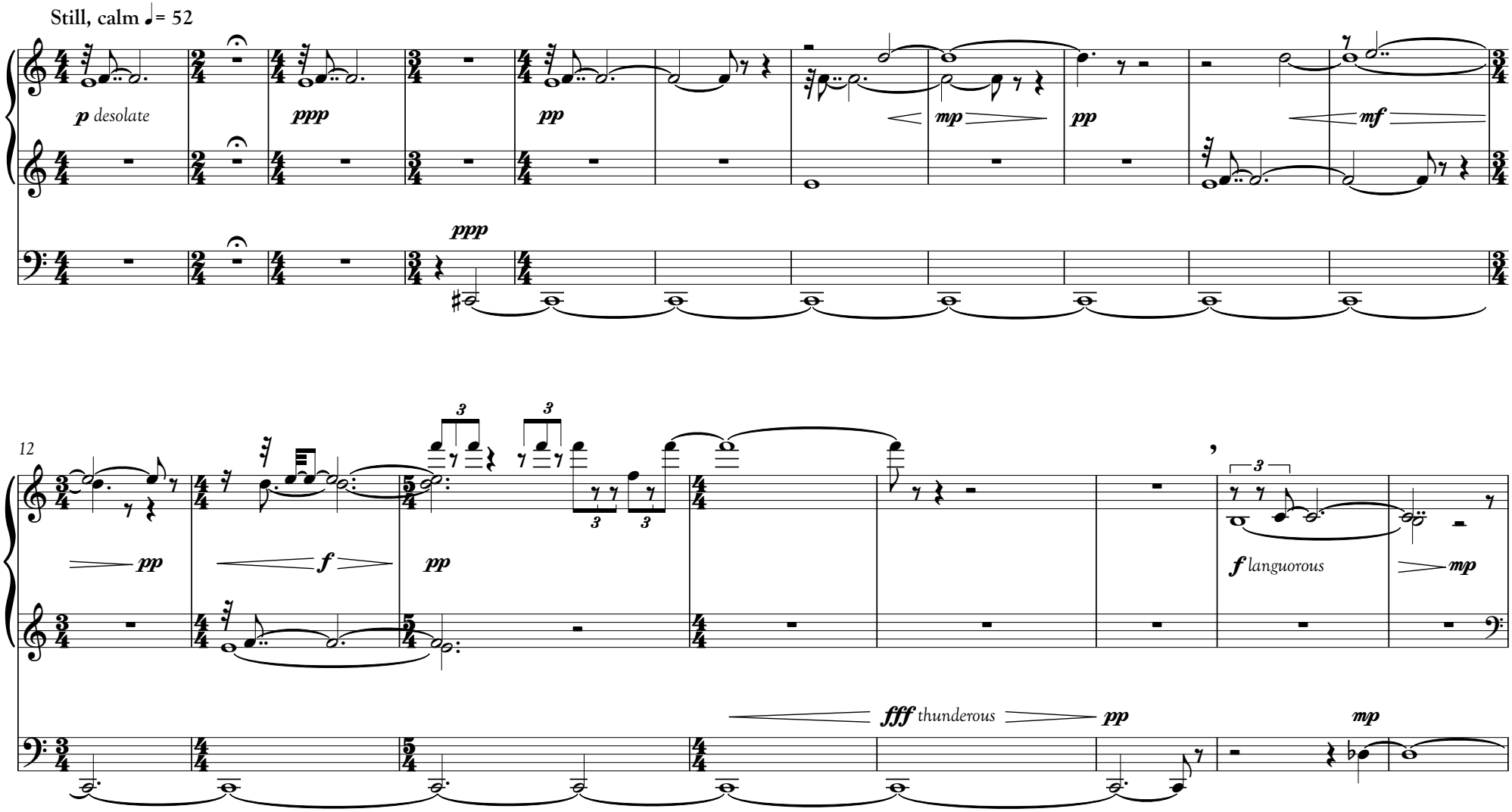

[c. 10"]
33
8va
5
Flowing ♩ = 56
ppp sempre
ffff
5
[2'15"]
End of Part Two



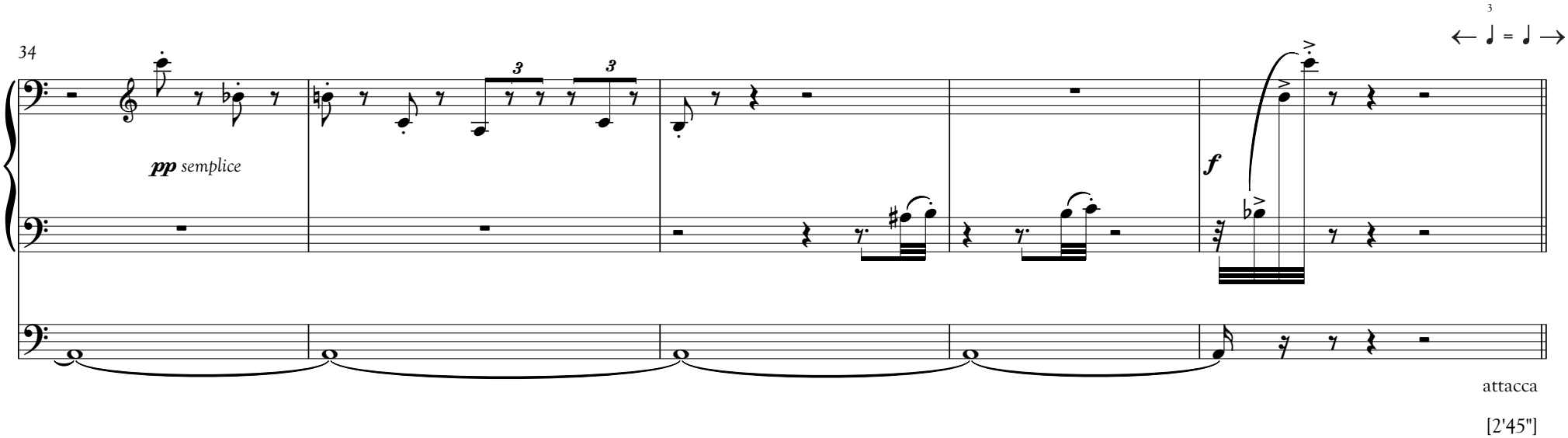


Part Three | Obfuscation

IX




20
pp
ff
mf
pp
29
p dark
ppp



attacca

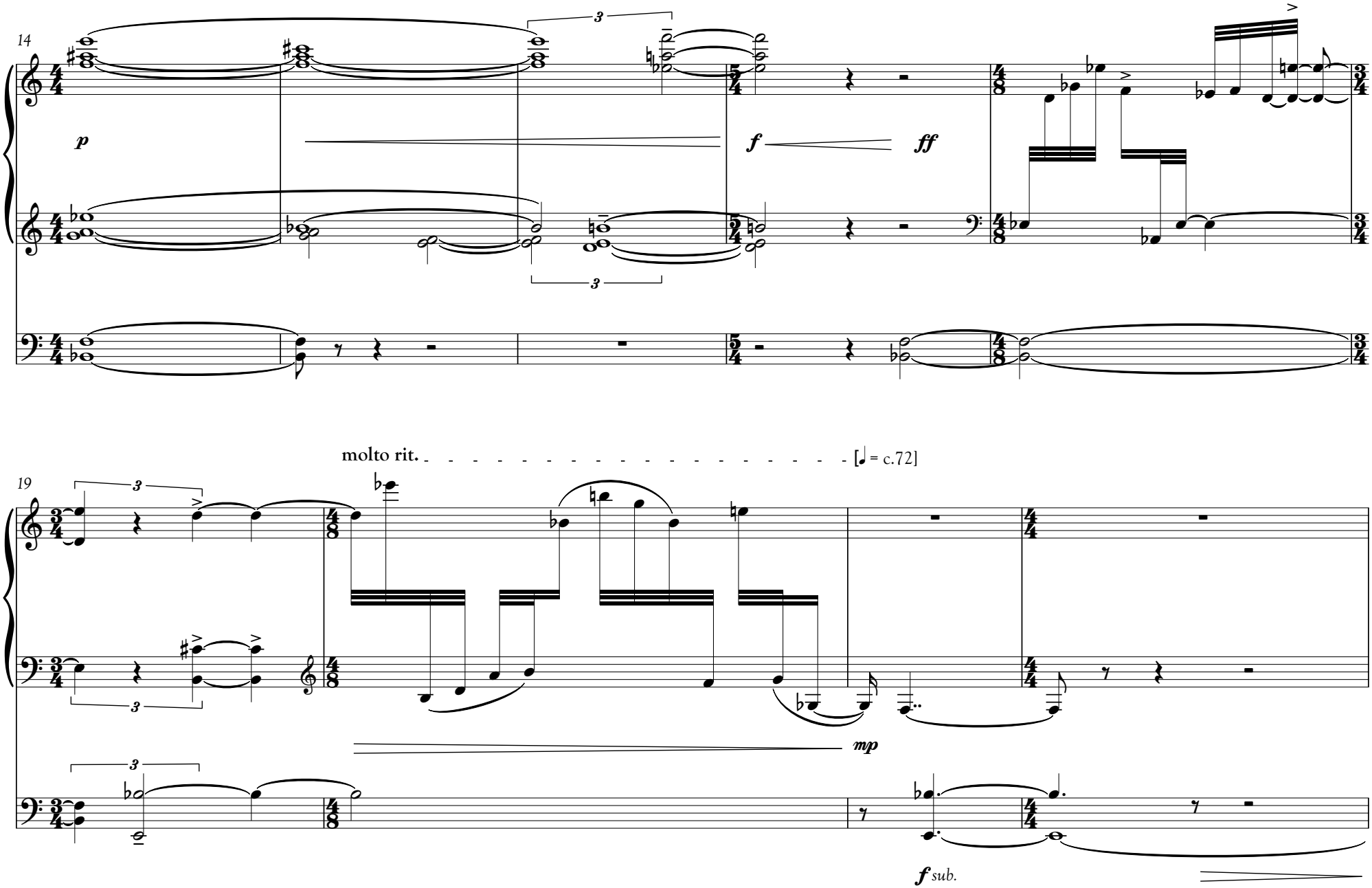
[2'45"]

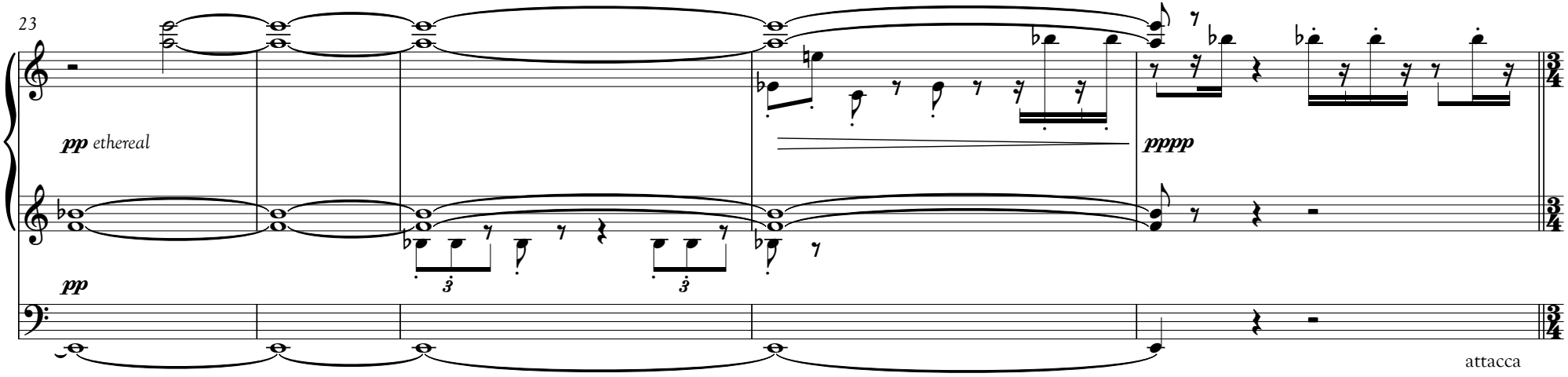




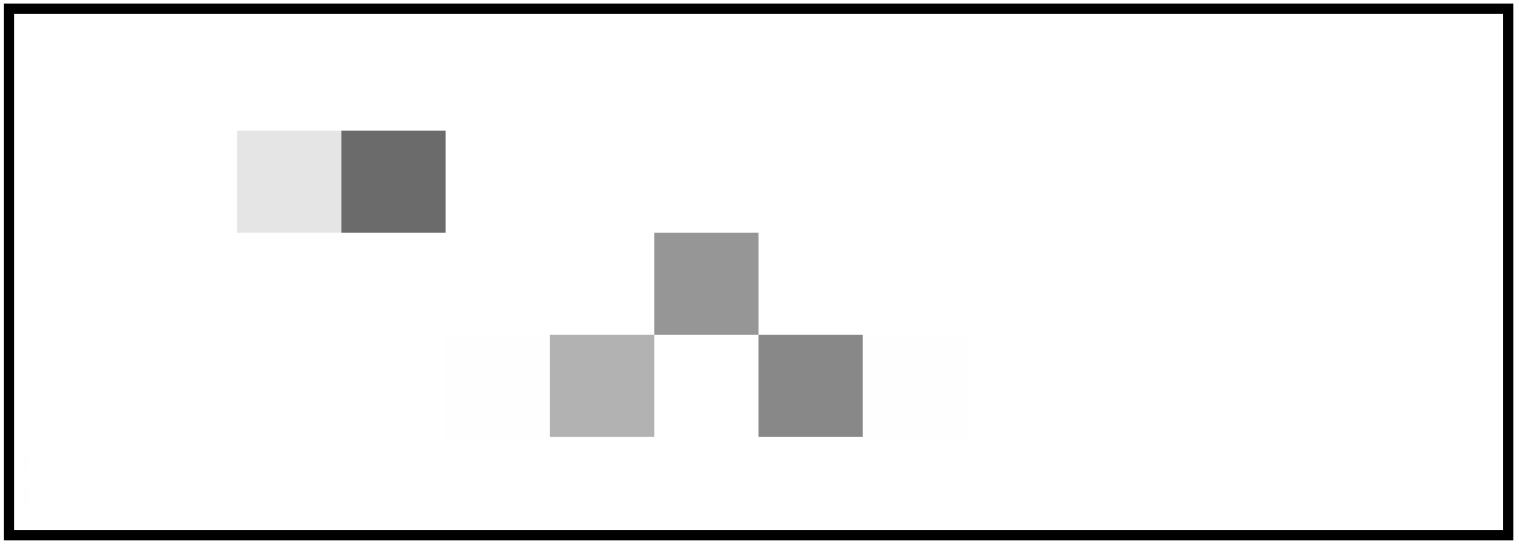
X




14
p
f
ff
molto rit.
[♩ = c.72]
19
mp
f sub.



[1'10"]





XI


Timid ♩ = c. 72
rit.
♩= 60
Molto liberamente
8va
ppp
f
p
ff obnoxious
7
Tempo giusto [♩ = c. 72]
mp
p
ff violent
p sempre


13
17
ppp fragile
ff brash
pp


20
mp
f
pppp
p
23
ff


25
pppp almost inaudible
ff wailing
molto rit.
28
mf
fff apocalyptic
attacca
[2']





Performance instructions

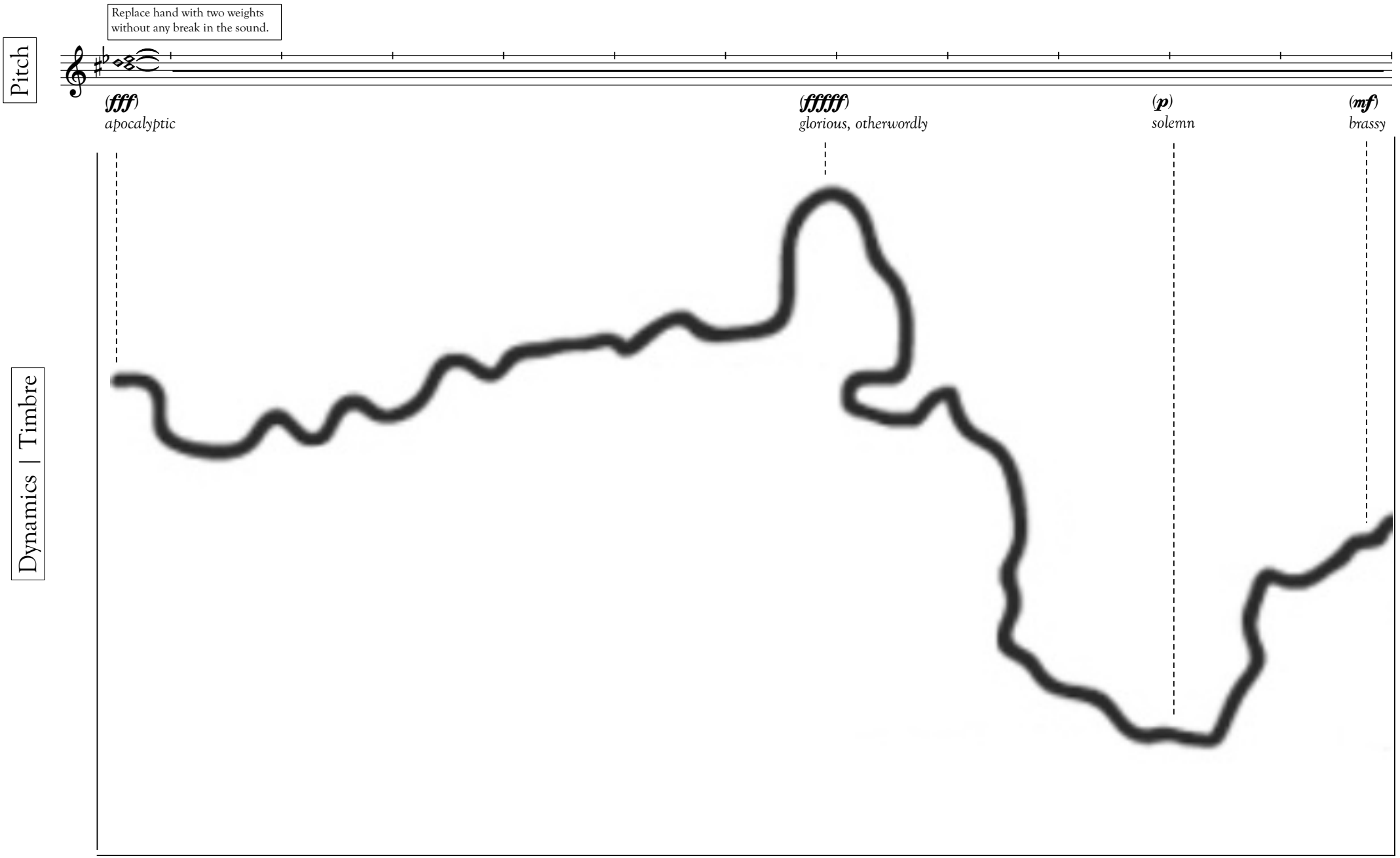
The hand must be replaced by weights, which maintain the cluster for the entirety of the piece.

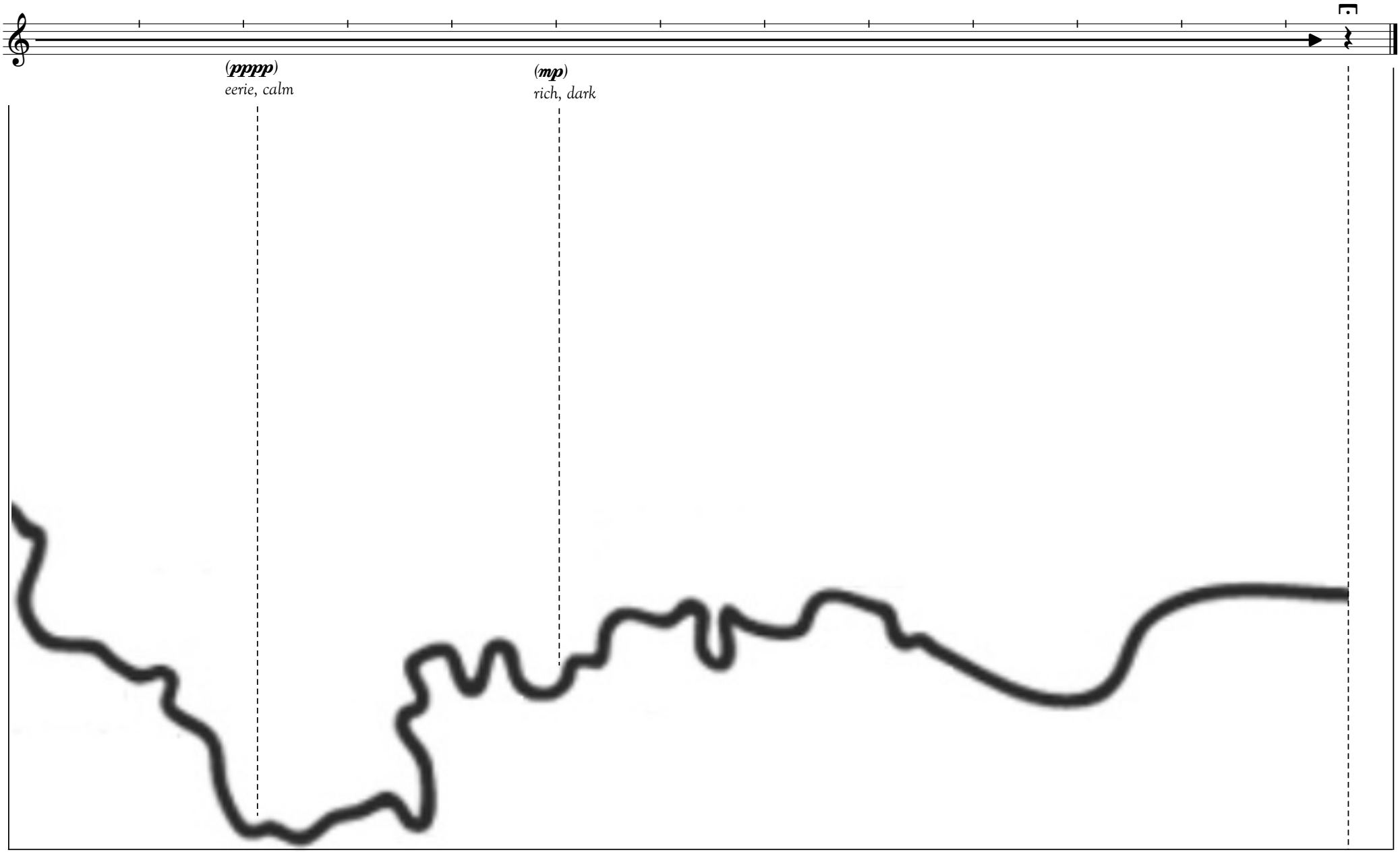
The dynamic and timbre of the instrument should be adjusted according to the graphic below the stave. Referential expression markings have been provided to allow for a general structure using the graphic, and to assist the performer in their own interpretation.

The minimum suggested performance time is 2', which gives each 'bar' a duration of around 5 seconds. Liberties can be taken to reflect the specifics of the acoustic and the instrument, but the upper durational limit should be no more than 3'.

The focus of this piece is to explore the sonic possibilities of the organ whilst reflecting the instructions of the graphic. The performer is encouraged to be creative with registration, and to exploit unusual sound combinations (e.g. pulling stops halfway).

XII


Pitch
Replace hand with two weights without any break in the sound.
(fff)
apocalyptic
(fffff)
glorious, otherwordly
(p)
solemn
(mf)
brassy
Dynamics | Timbre



[c. 2']