Still Motion

for vibraphone, 5-octave marimba, harp, and piano

Boyce Jeffries, Jr.

2018

still

adj. - not moving or making a sound
noun - 1) deep silence and calm, stillness
2) an ordinary static photograph as opposed to a motion picture, especially a single shot from a movie.

motion

noun - 1) the action or process of moving or being moved
2) a gesture

Still Motion - an oxymoron, contradiciton. For me, the combined term can be thought of in a vast number of ways.

Spending many summers in Alaska on a commercial fishing boat provided me with both periods of stagnance and growth. The rest of the world seemed to keep moving, and I felt stuck and motionless. But yet, when I reflect back, those periods of stillness were filled with growth beneath the surface - deep inward reflection, and pondering deep questions of life. Looking up at the Alaskan night sky filled with stars can seem static and unchanging, but still moving ever so slightly. Or was it my perspective, my perception that changed?

Musically speaking, the stillness of the work is rooted in the consistent pulse throughout and the static tonality of Ab Lydian inspired from one of my favorite John Cage works, *Dream* for solo piano. The motion is expressed as the various motivic cells of rhythm that are permutated amongst the quartet, the slight alterations of recurring melodies, and the timbral
possibilities of the four instruments.

What we may see, hear, observe, etc. might be more than just the initial perception. Or perhaps it can show how shallow/deep we are only going/willing to go.

- Boyce Jeffries, Jr.

Performance Notes

Instrumentation - 3.0 octave vibraphone (with motor)
5.0 octave marimba
Harp
Piano

Vibraphone - Four medium mallets, two metal rods (with small-sized threads), two bows, thin triangle beaters
Motor - speed of vibrato should best emulate the rate of 16th notes @ q = 62.

Marimba - One very soft mallet, Four medium/medium-soft mallets, two bows.

Measures 32 - 34 : Play rhythmic passage with two mallets in the right hand. Use left hand to acheive harmonic on G naturals (sounding 16va). If playing at or near the nodal point on the bar produces best sound, play the Abs where written in similar area and possibly softer in order to blend the gesture as one cohesive phrase.

Piano and Harp - 1) Plastic guitar picks needed (Harp measures 50 - 53, Piano measures 23 - 25). If pianist acheives similar timbre with fingernails, then picks are not necessary
2) Strands of hair from bass/cello bows knotted or secured tightly (perhaps tied in a knot) at both ends to "bow" strings of the instruments. Pianist will need to "floss" the bow hair between the two adjacent strings of the G and Ab above middle C prior to beginning of performance, and place the excess length on the frame of the instrument so as not to create noticably audible vibration and not impede the ability to play the indicated harmonics inside the instrument.

Dampening (Rehearsal IV) - The two percussionists shall play the initial attacks on the indicated beats/syncopations then immediately dampening by pressing the mallet heads into the bar on the next 16th subdivision (emulating the Balinese gamelan technique of dampening). As for the harpist, the strings are to be muted in the same rhythmic context, one sixteenth value after the indicated attack. The pianist simply will strike the staccato eighth notes in the left hand, and lift the subsequent 16th note subdivision, but while maintaining the legato melody above in the right hand (Use pedal as necessary)

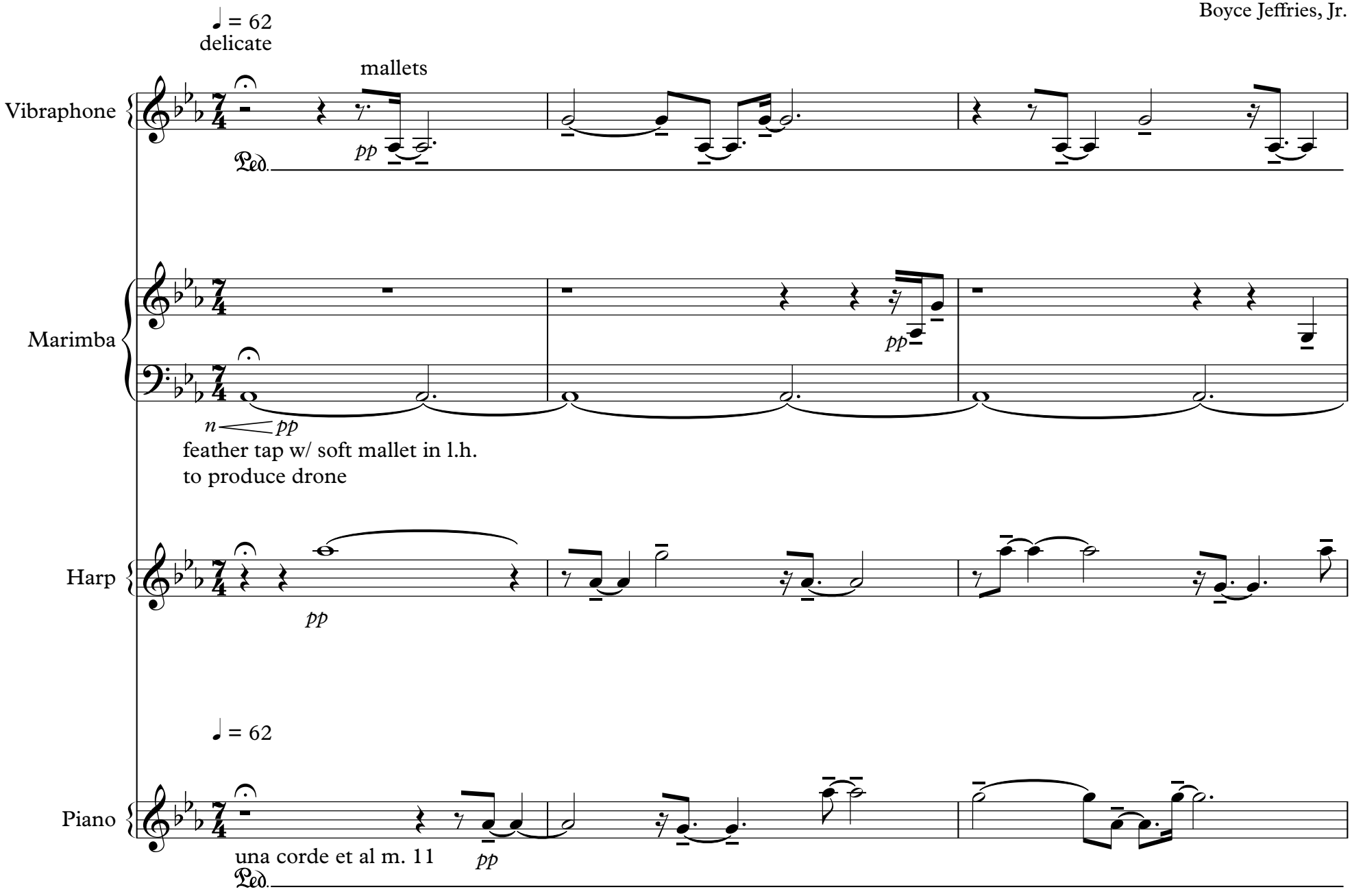
The premiere of *Still Motion* was done February 1st, 2019
in Toronto, Canada.

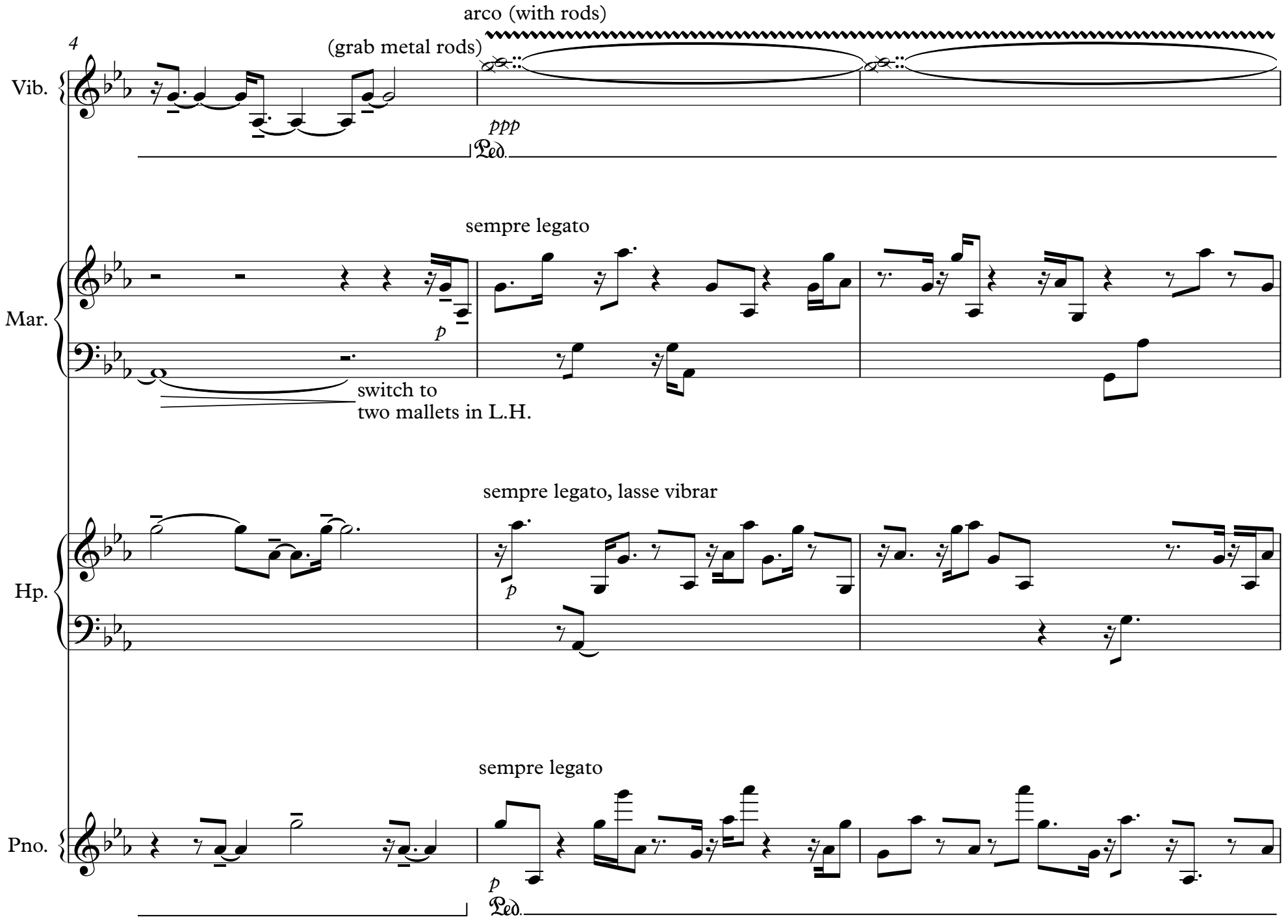
Performed by: Myriam Blardone (harp), Geoffrey Conquer (Piano), Adam Kaleta (Vibraphone)
and Boyce Jeffries, Jr. (Marimba)

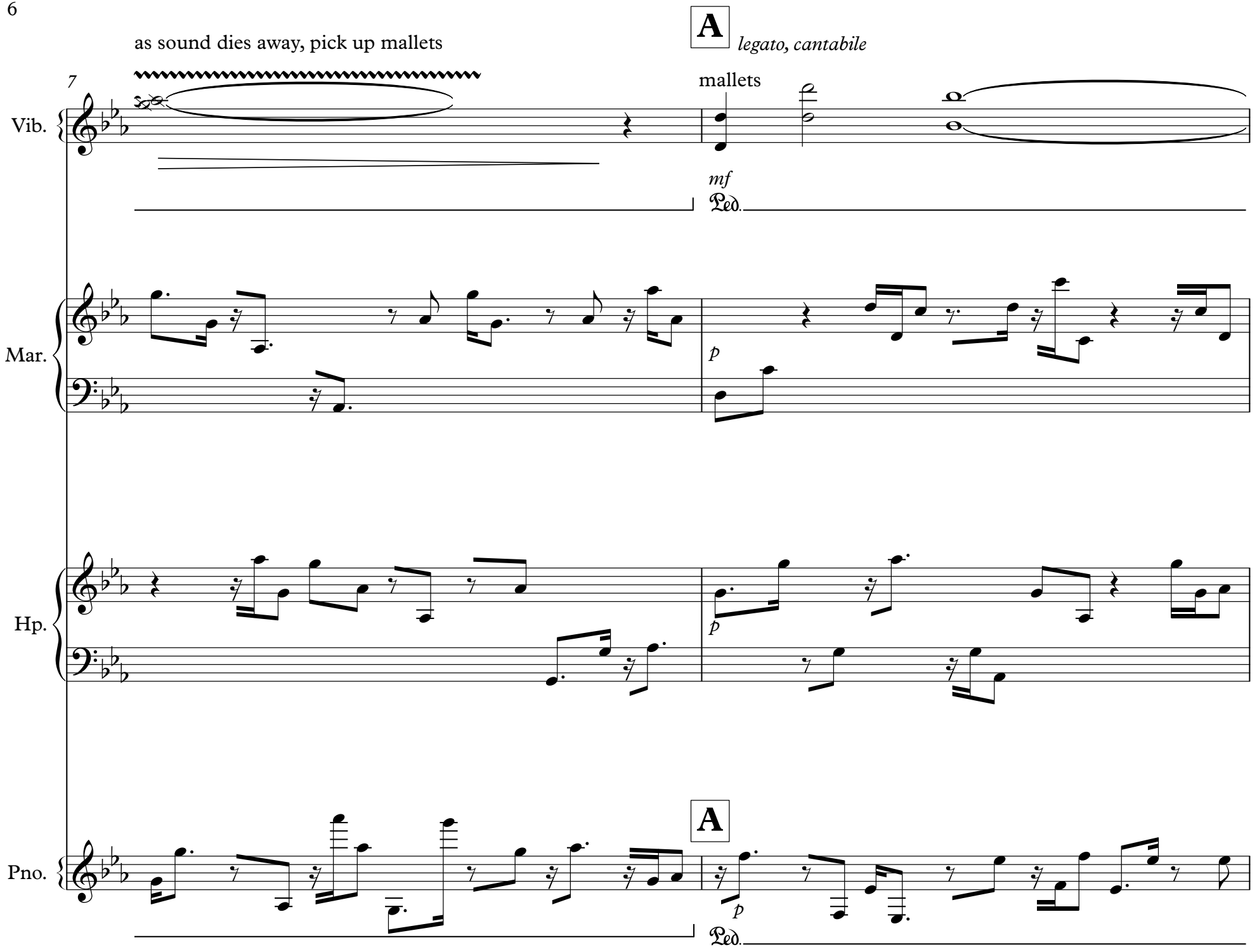
for Karen Sorenson

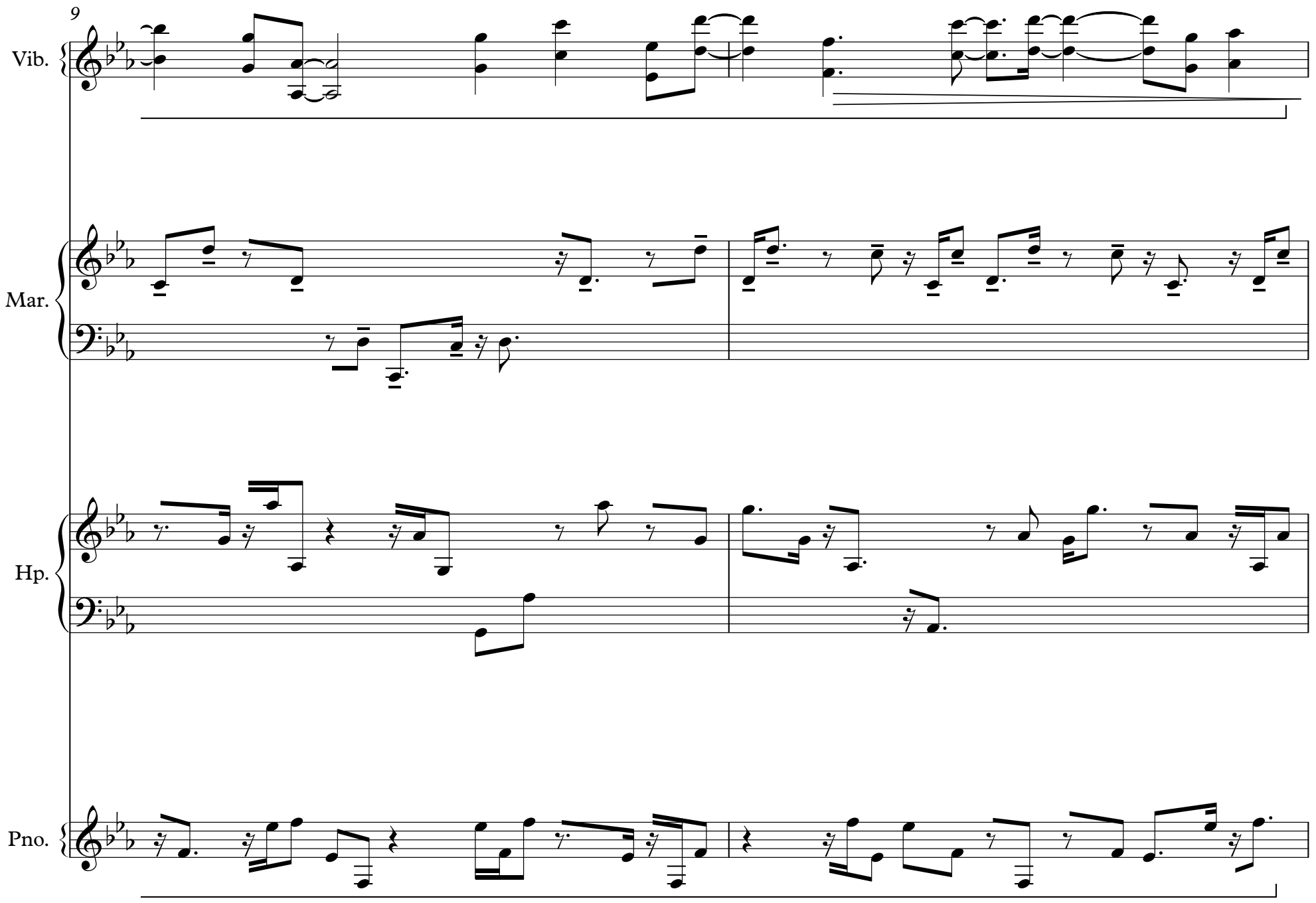
Still Motion

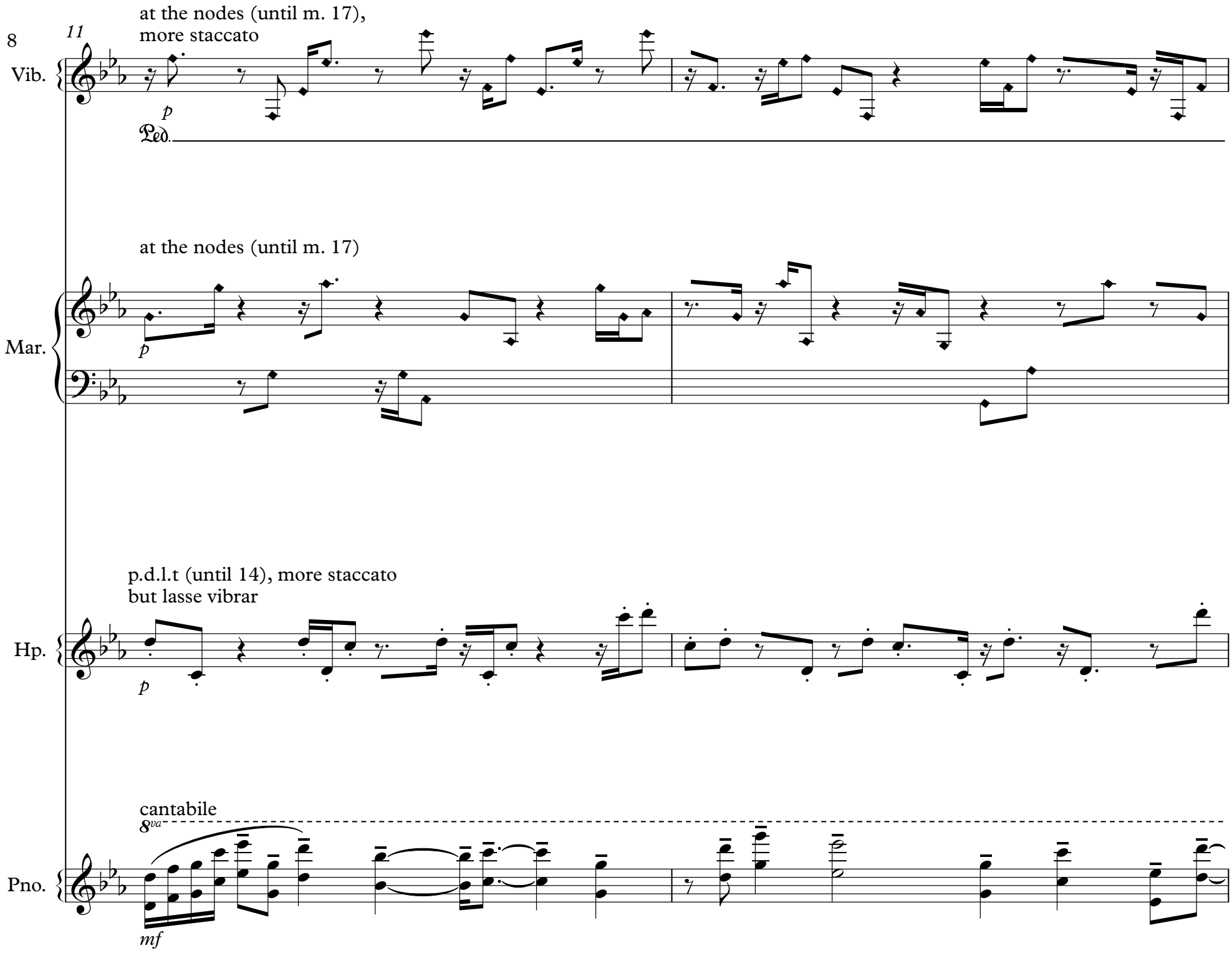
Boyce Jeffries, Jr.



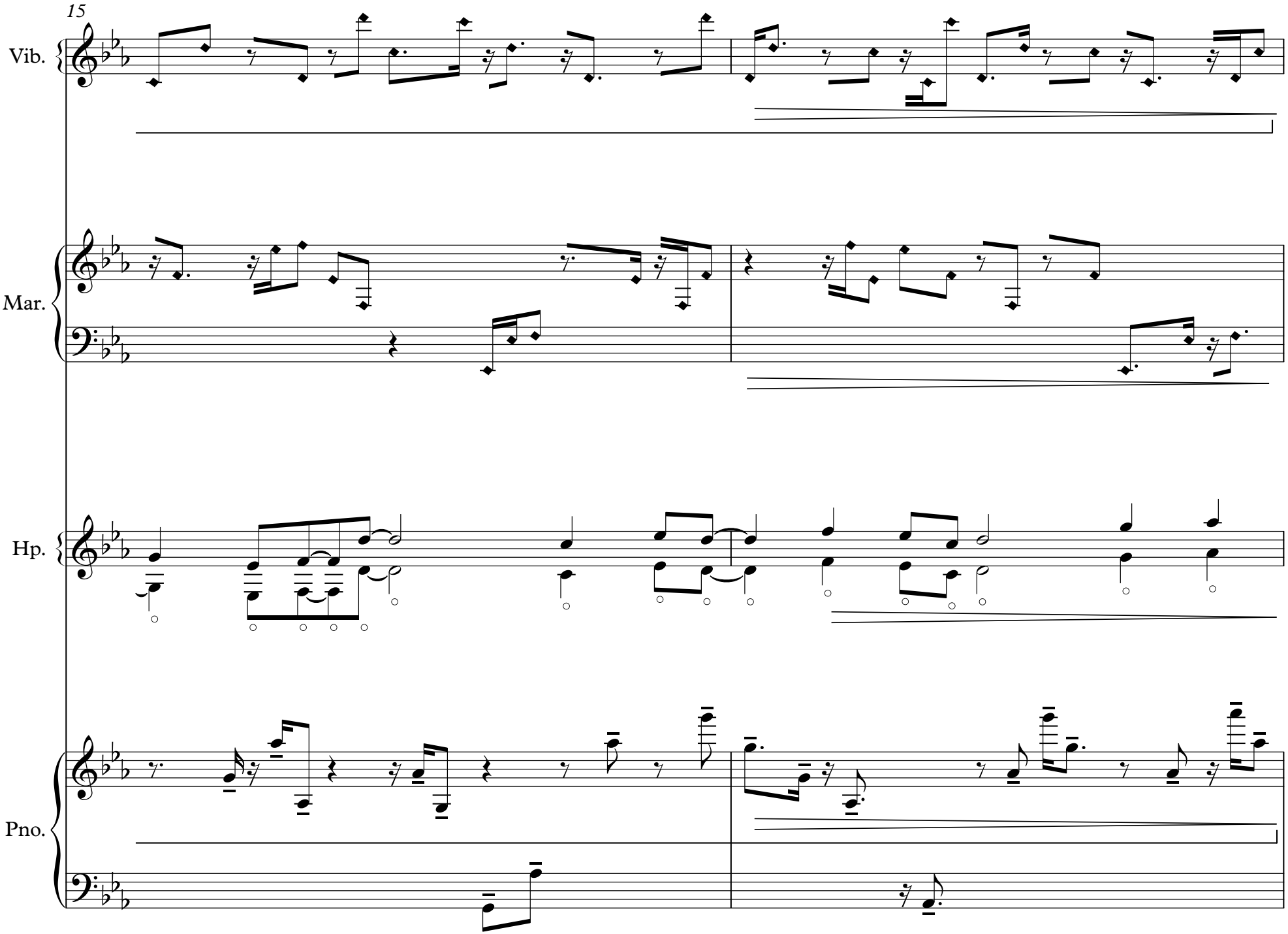

4
Vib.
(grab metal rods)
arco (with rods)
ppp
Ped.
Mar.
sempre legato
p
switch to
two mallets in L.H.
Hp.
sempre legato, lasse vibrar
p
Pno.
sempre legato
p
Ped.

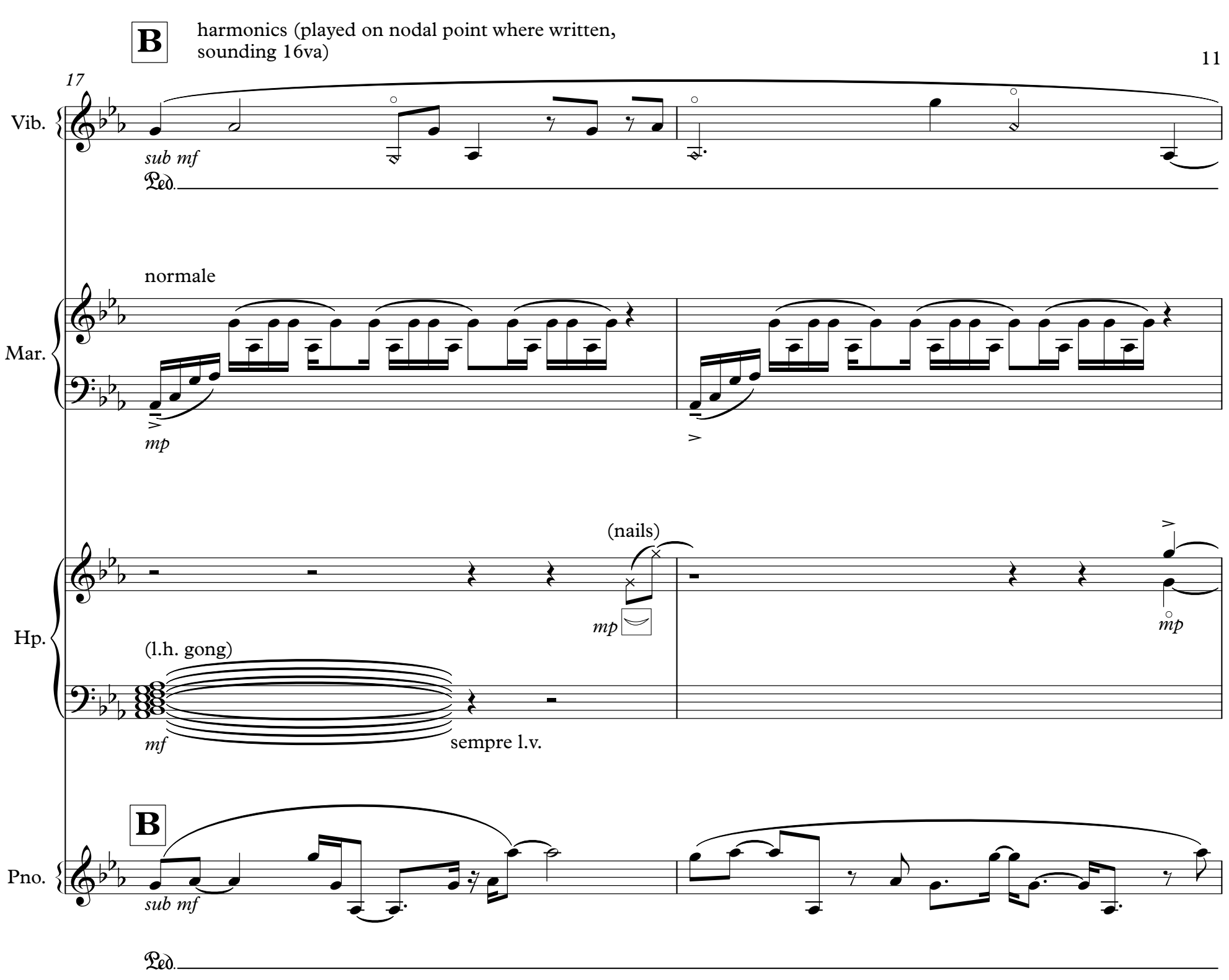

as sound dies away, pick up mallets
A
legato, cantabile
7
mallets
Vib.
mf
Ped.
Mar.
p
Hp.
p
A
Pno.
p
Ped.

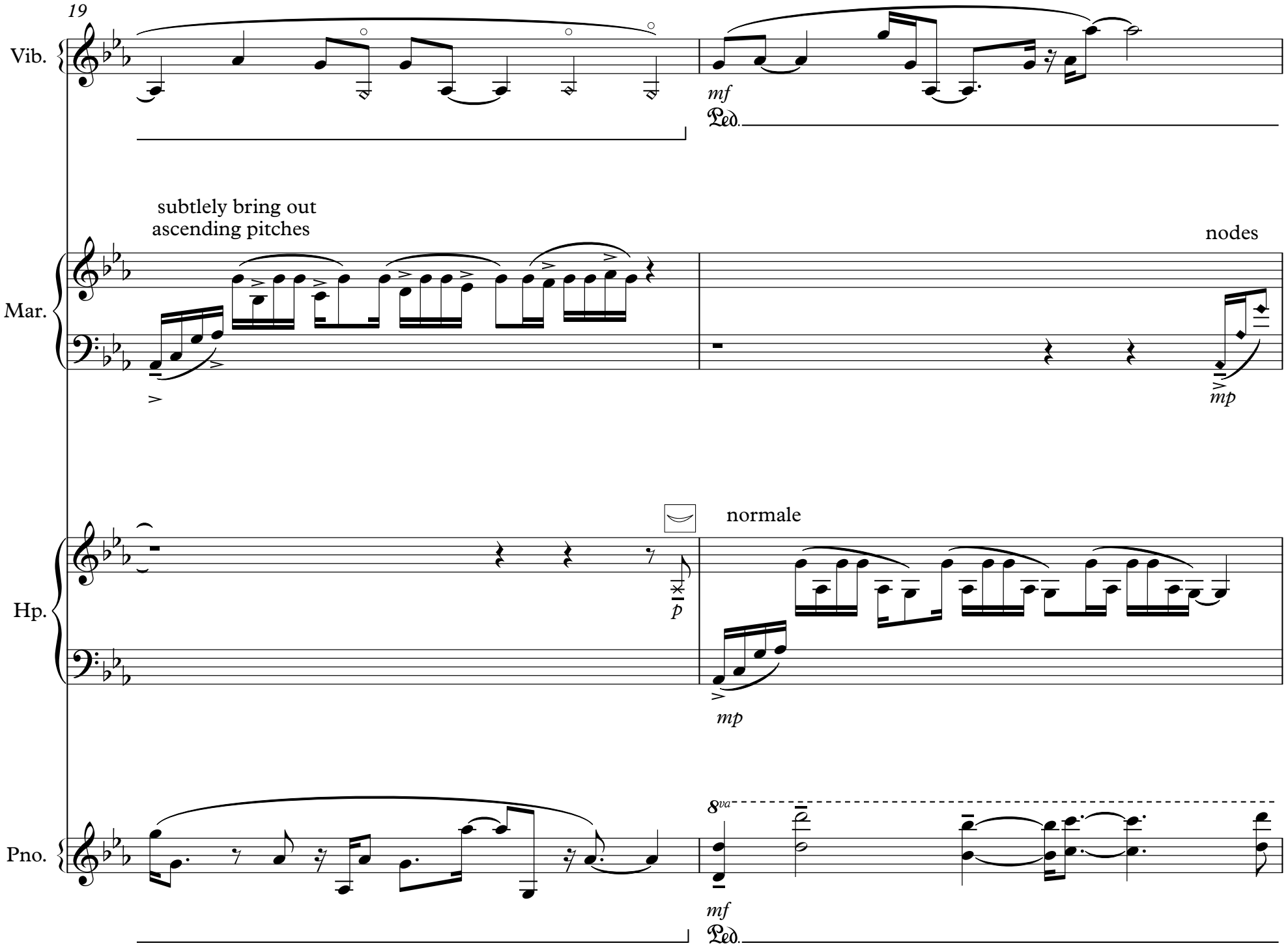

9
Vib.
Mar.
Hp.
Pno.

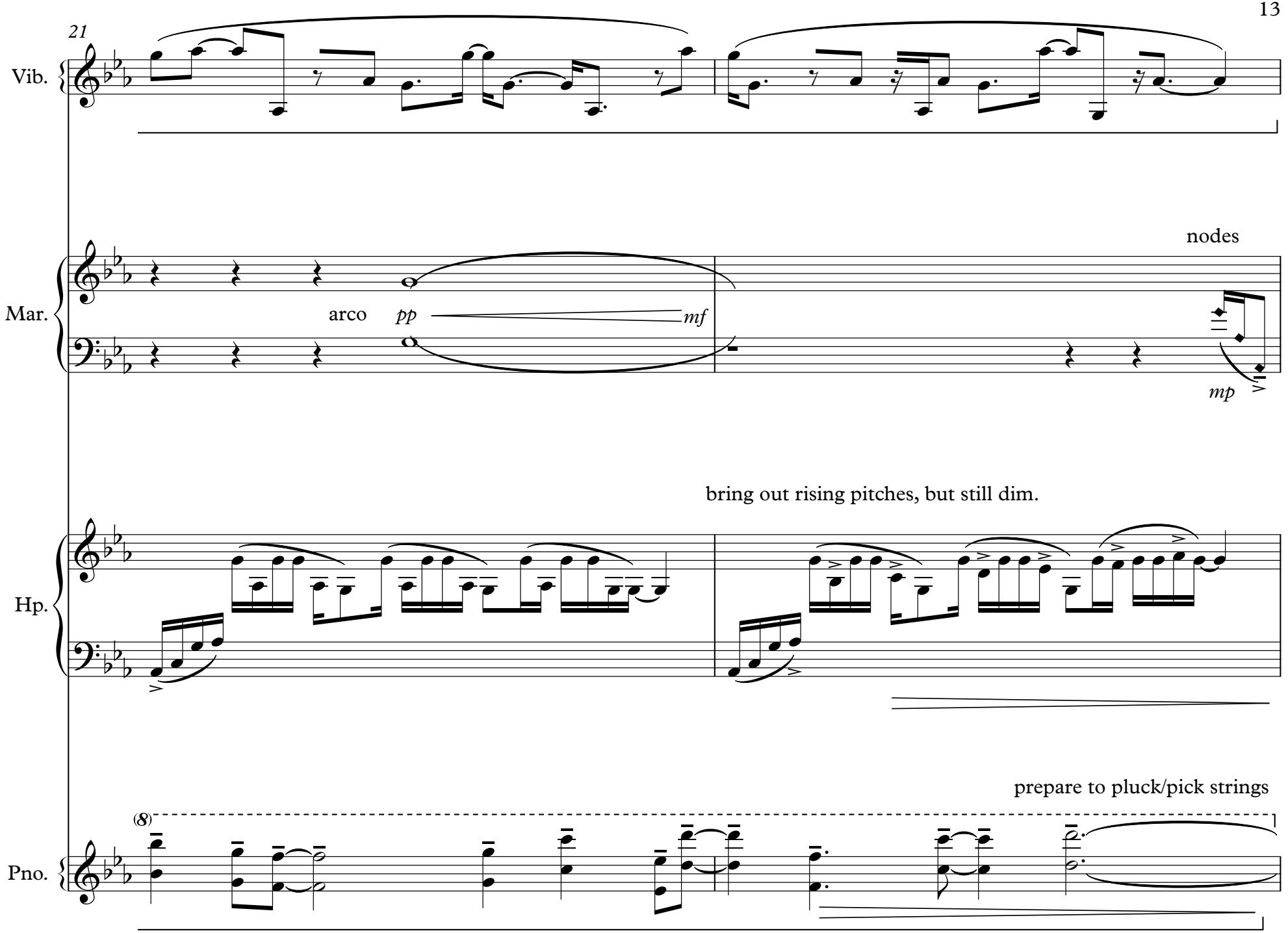

11
at the nodes (until m. 17),
more staccato
Vib.
p
Ped.
at the nodes (until m. 17)
Mar.
p
p.d.l.t (until 14), more staccato
but lasse vibrar
Hp.
p
cantabile
8va
Pno.
mf

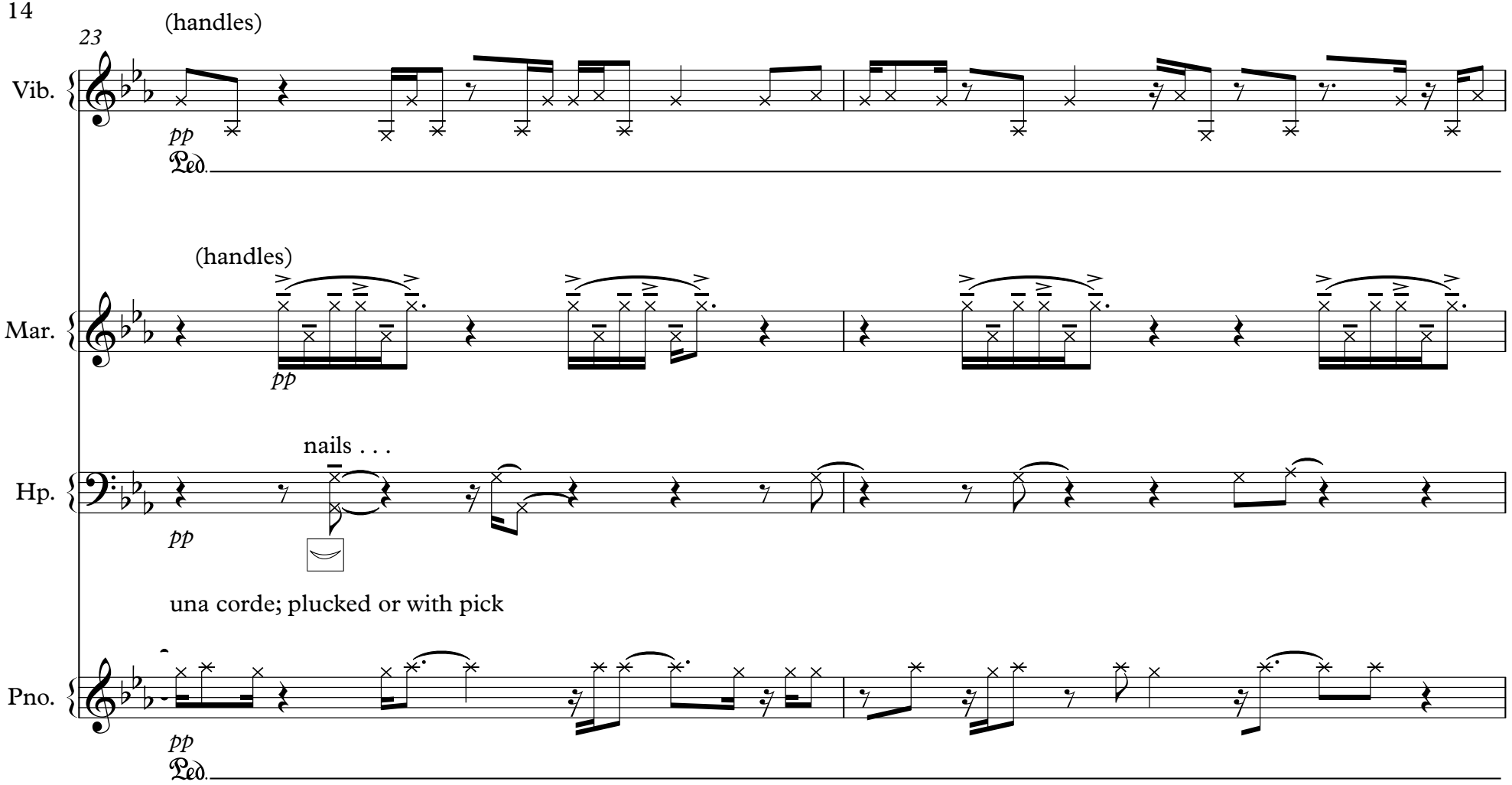
13
9
Vib.
p
Ped.
Mar.
p
Hp.
mf
harmonics in lower voice
(8)
Pno.
p
Ped.
una corde

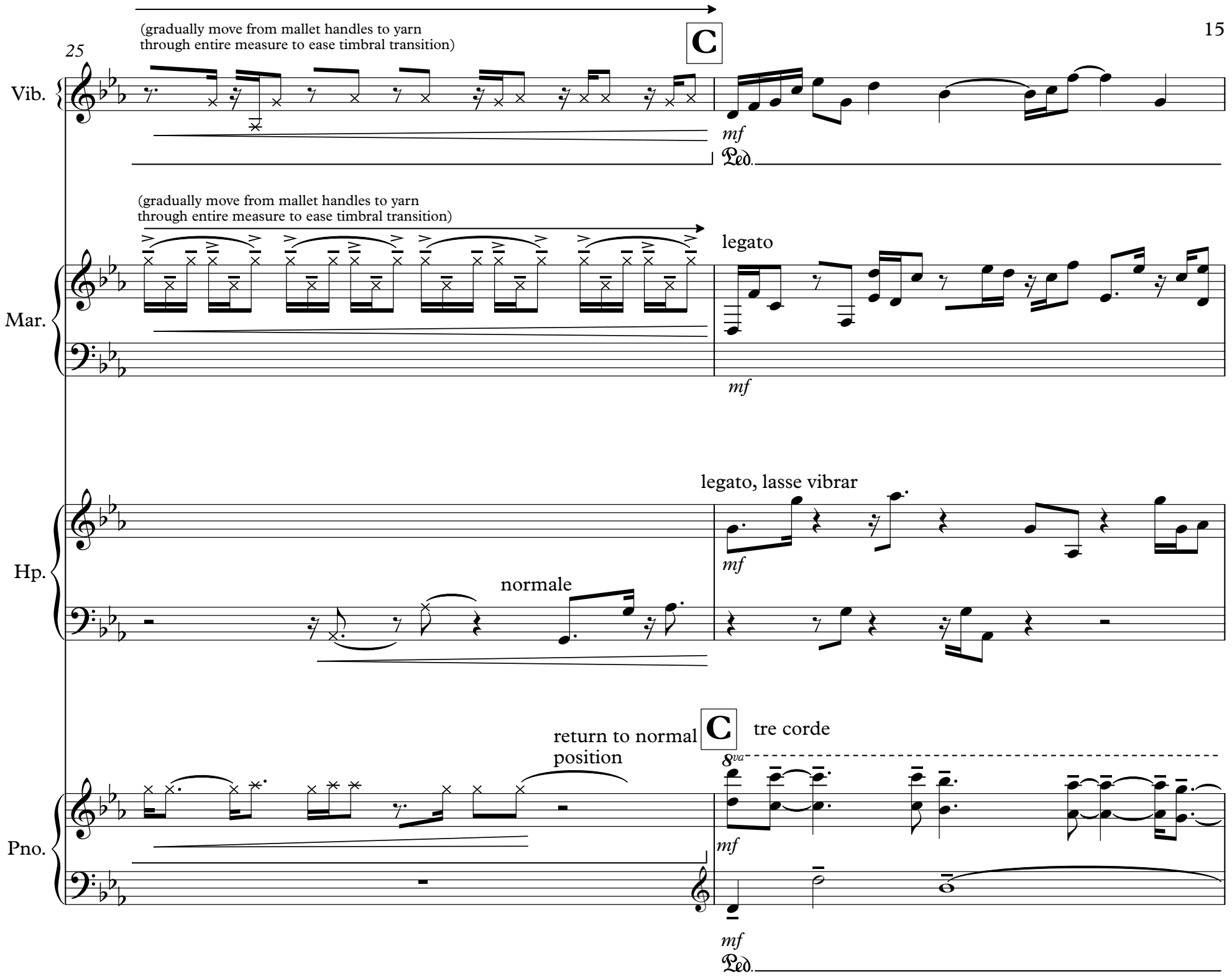

15
Vib.
Mar.
Hp.
Pno.

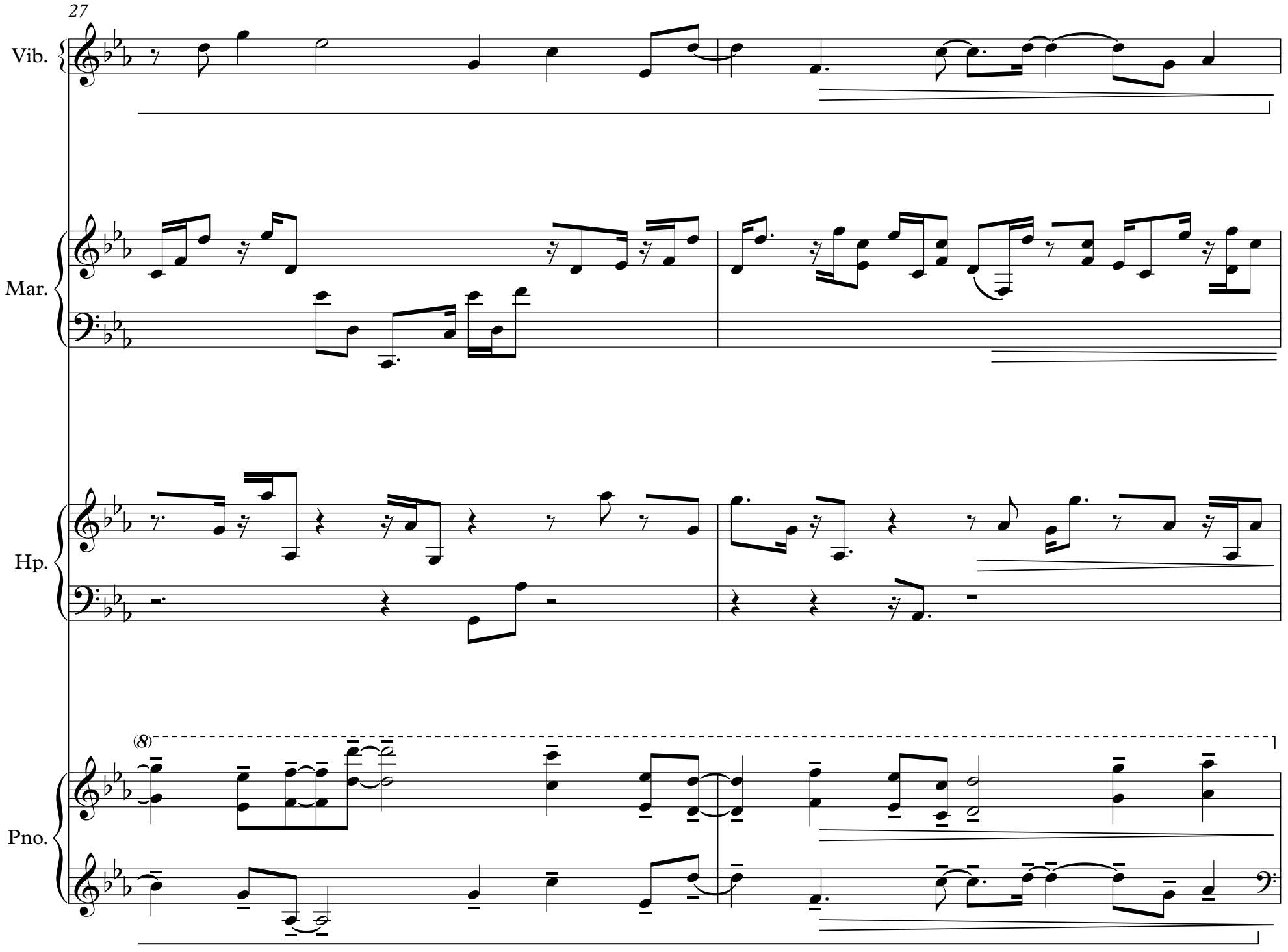

B
harmonics (played on nodal point where written,
sounding 16va)
17
Vib.
sub mf
Ped.
normale
Mar.
mp
(nails)
mp
mp
Hp.
(l.h. gong)
mf
sempre l.v.
B
Pno.
sub mf
Ped.

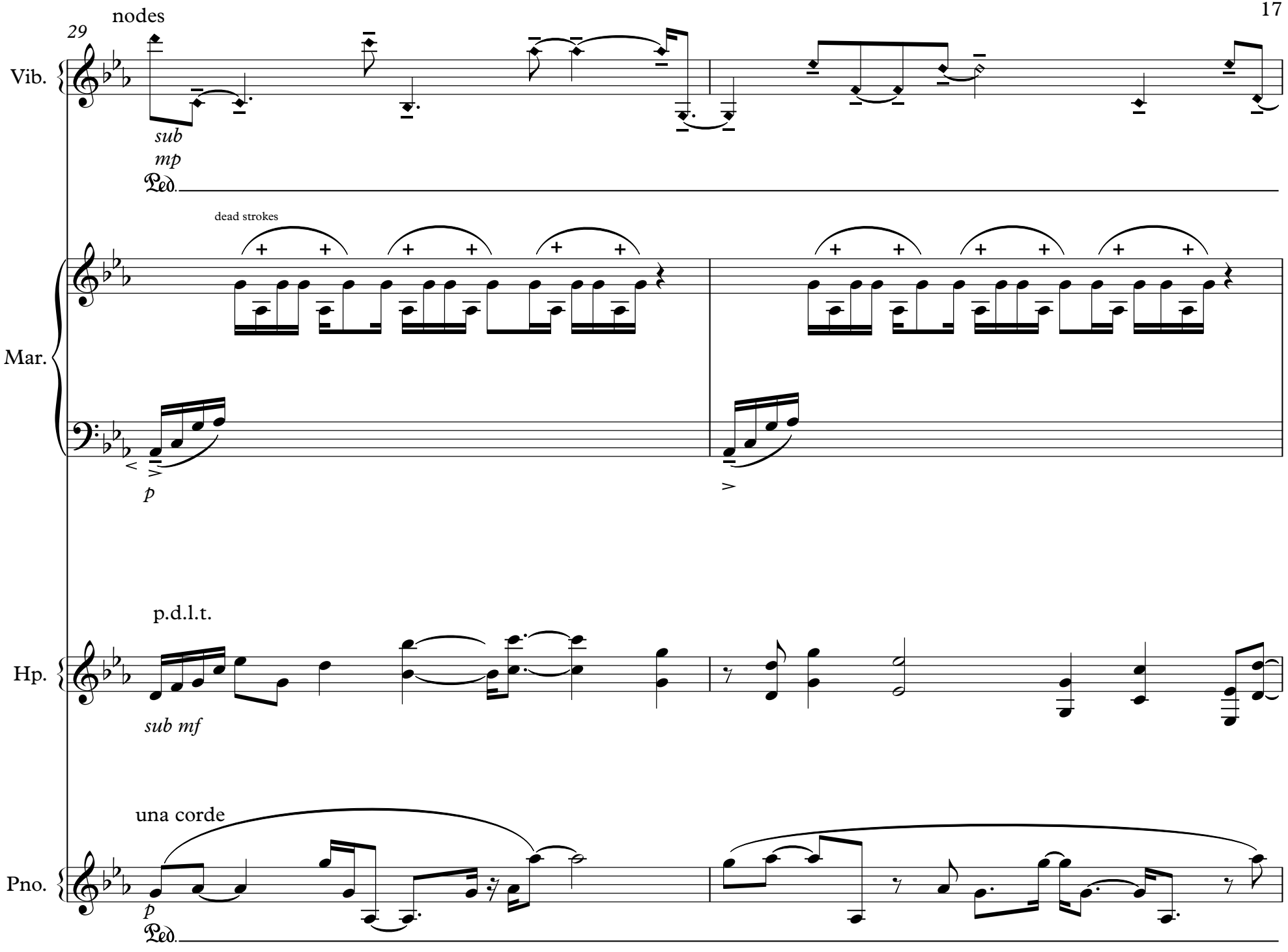

19
Vib.
mf
Ped.
subtlely bring out
ascending pitches
Mar.
nodes
mp
Hp.
p
normale
mp
Pno.
8va
mf
Ped.

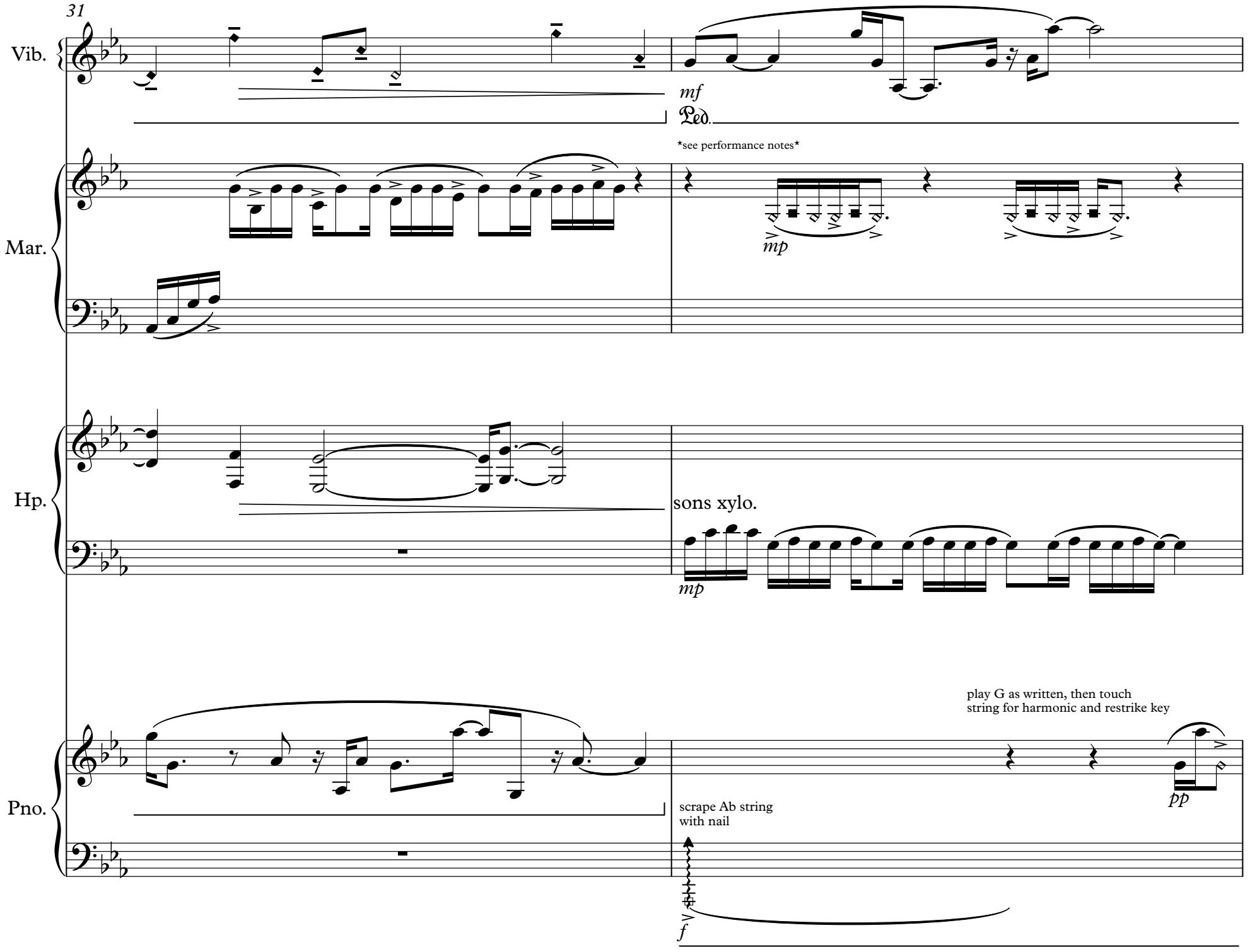

21
Vib.
Mar.
arco
pp
mf
nodes
mp
Hp.
bring out rising pitches, but still dim.
Pno.
(8)
prepare to pluck/pick strings

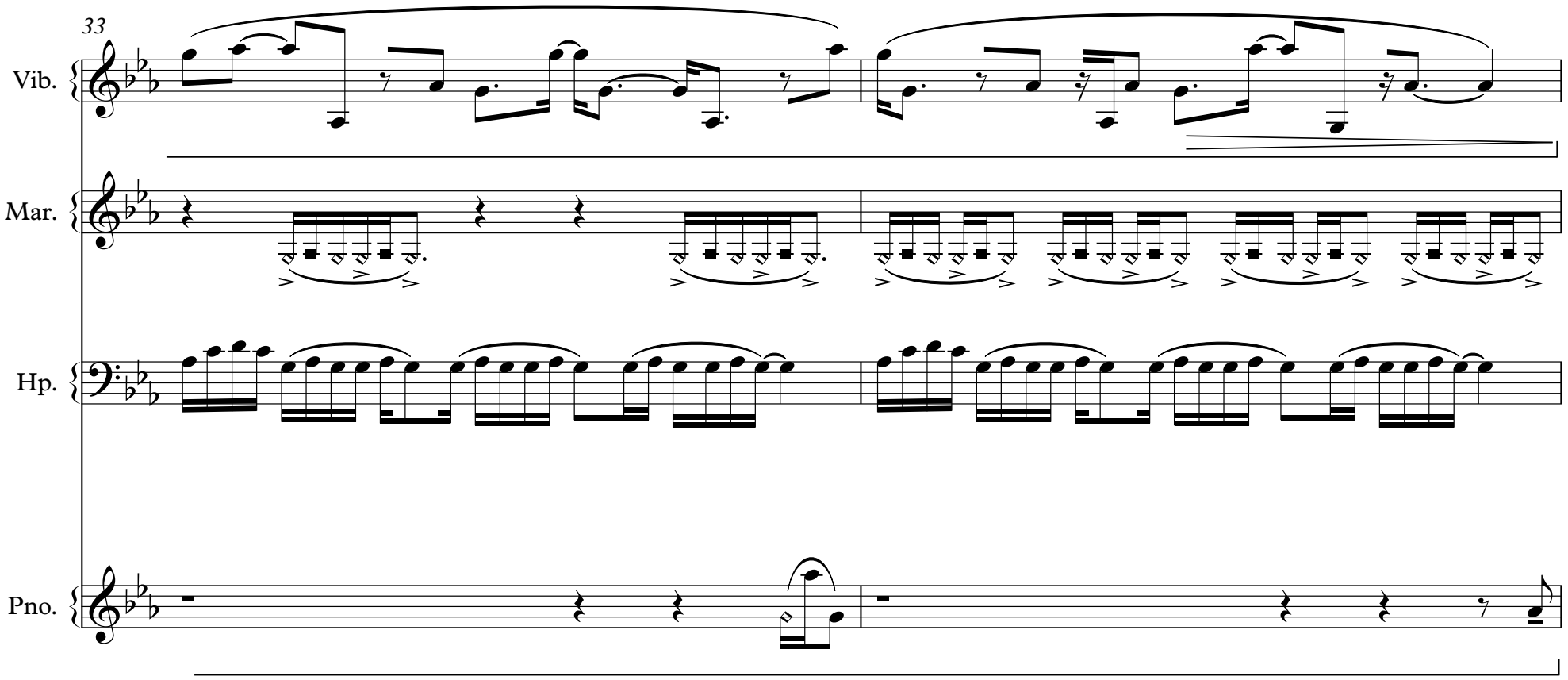

23
(handles)
Vib.
pp
Ped.
(handles)
Mar.
pp
nails . . .
Hp.
pp
una corde; plucked or with pick
Pno.
pp
Ped.

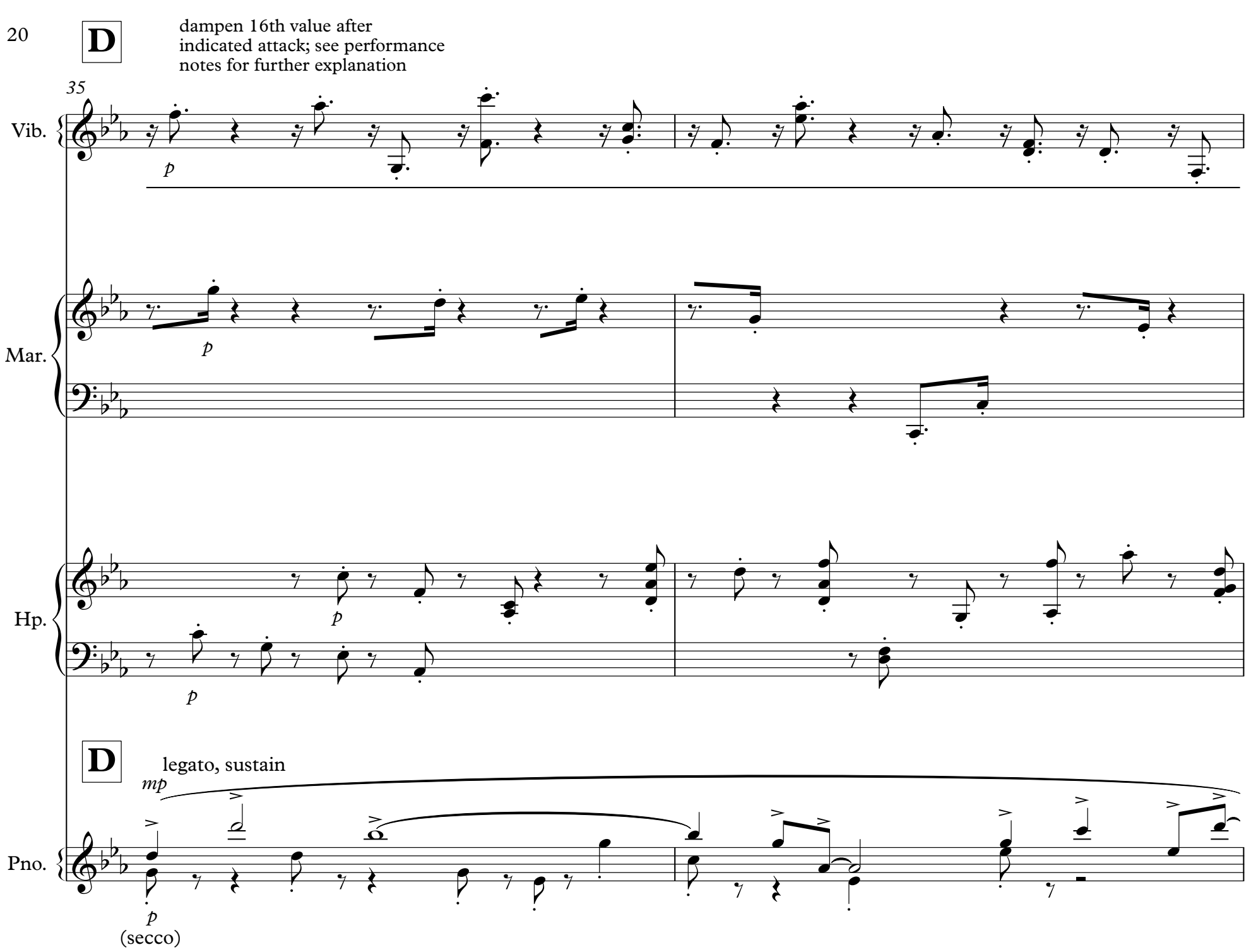

25
(gradually move from mallet handles to yarn through entire measure to ease timbral transition)
C
Vib.
mf
Ped.
(gradually move from mallet handles to yarn through entire measure to ease timbral transition)
legato
Mar.
mf
legato, lasse vibrar
Hp.
mf
normale
return to normal position
C
tre corde
8va
Pno.
mf
mf
Ped.


27
Vib.
Mar.
Hp.
(8)
Pno.


29
nodes
Vib.
sub
mp
Ped.
dead strokes
Mar.
p
p.d.l.t.
Hp.
sub mf
una corde
Pno.
p
Ped.


31
Vib.
mf
Ped.
see performance notes
Mar.
mp
Hp.
sons xylo.
mp
play G as written, then touch
string for harmonic and restrike key
Pno.
scrape Ab string
with nail
pp
f


33
Vib.
Mar.
Hp.
Pno.


D
dampen 16th value after
indicated attack; see performance
notes for further explanation
35
Vib.
p
Mar.
p
Hp.
p
p
D
legato, sustain
mp
Pno.
p
(secco)

Vib.

p

Ped.

Mar.

p

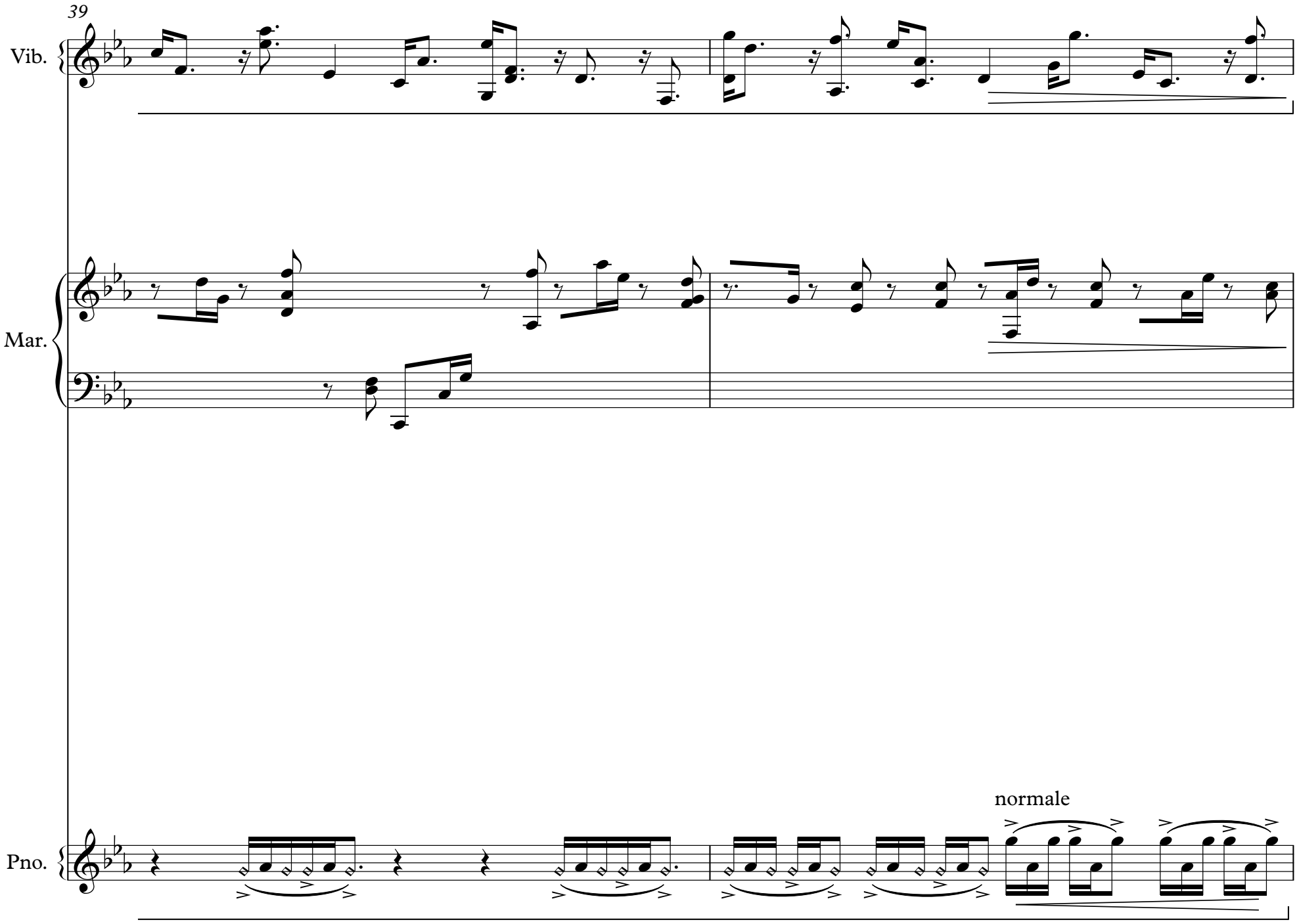
Hp.

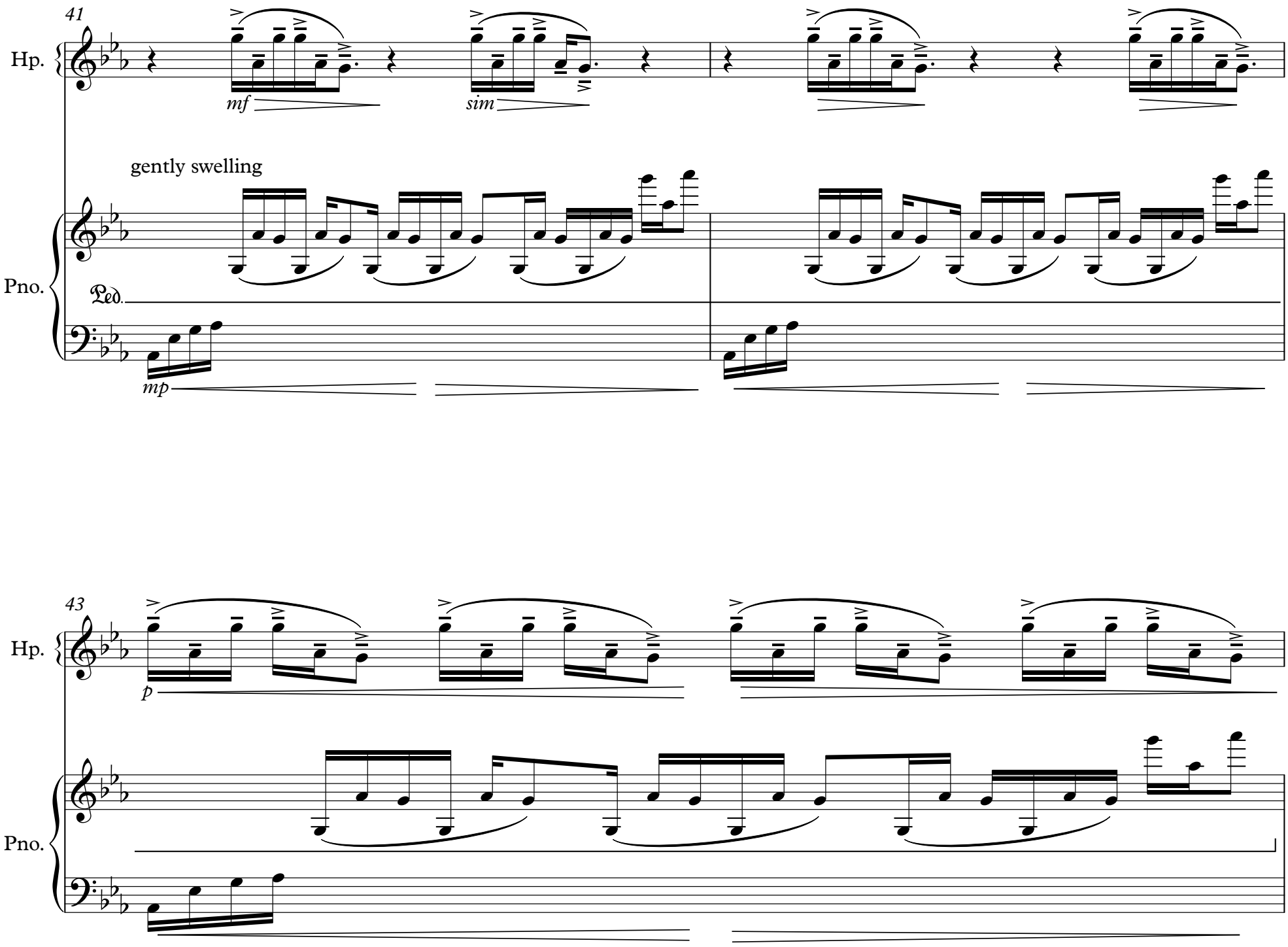
Pno.

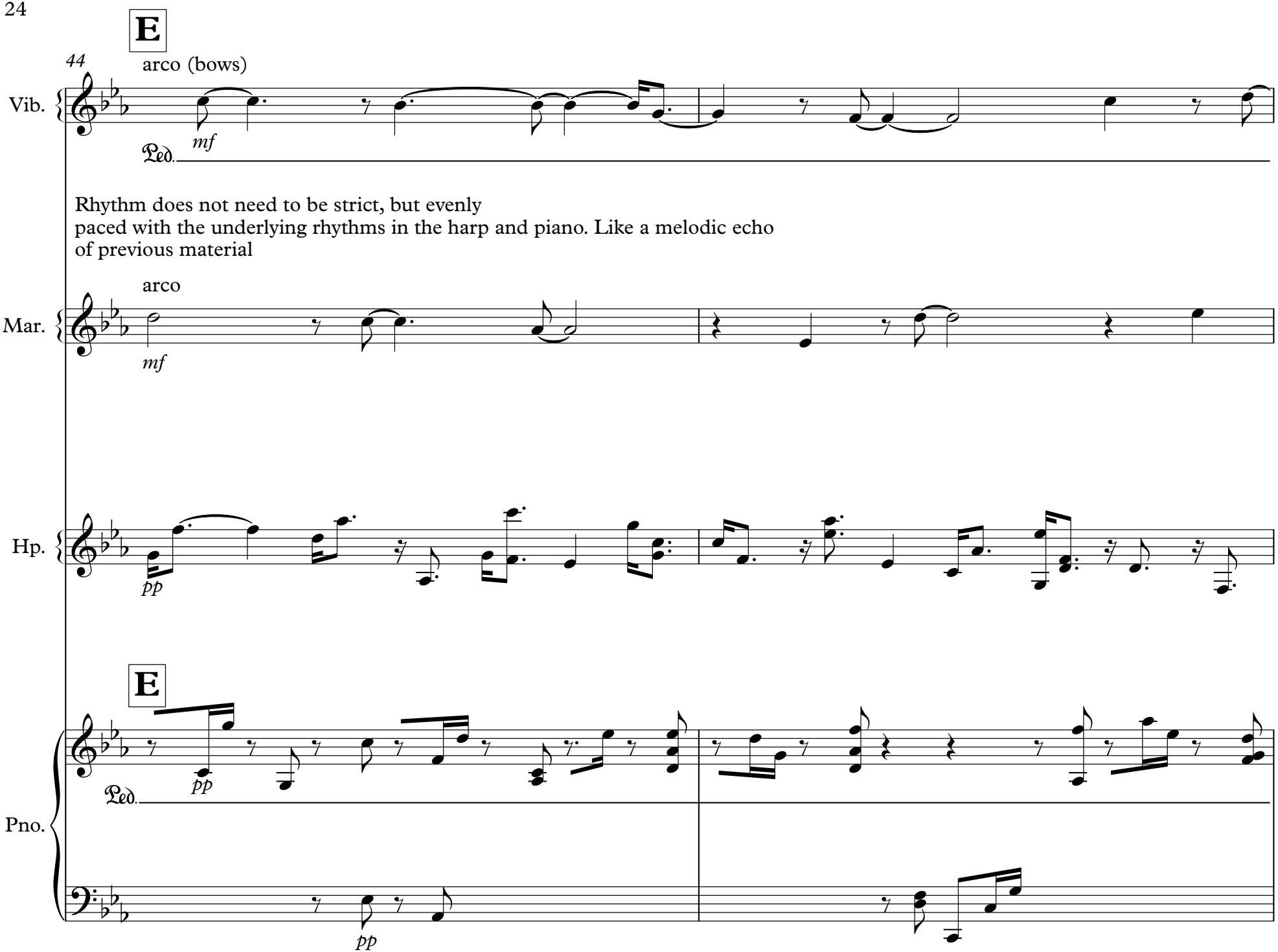
(harmonics with left hand,
strike keys with right hand)

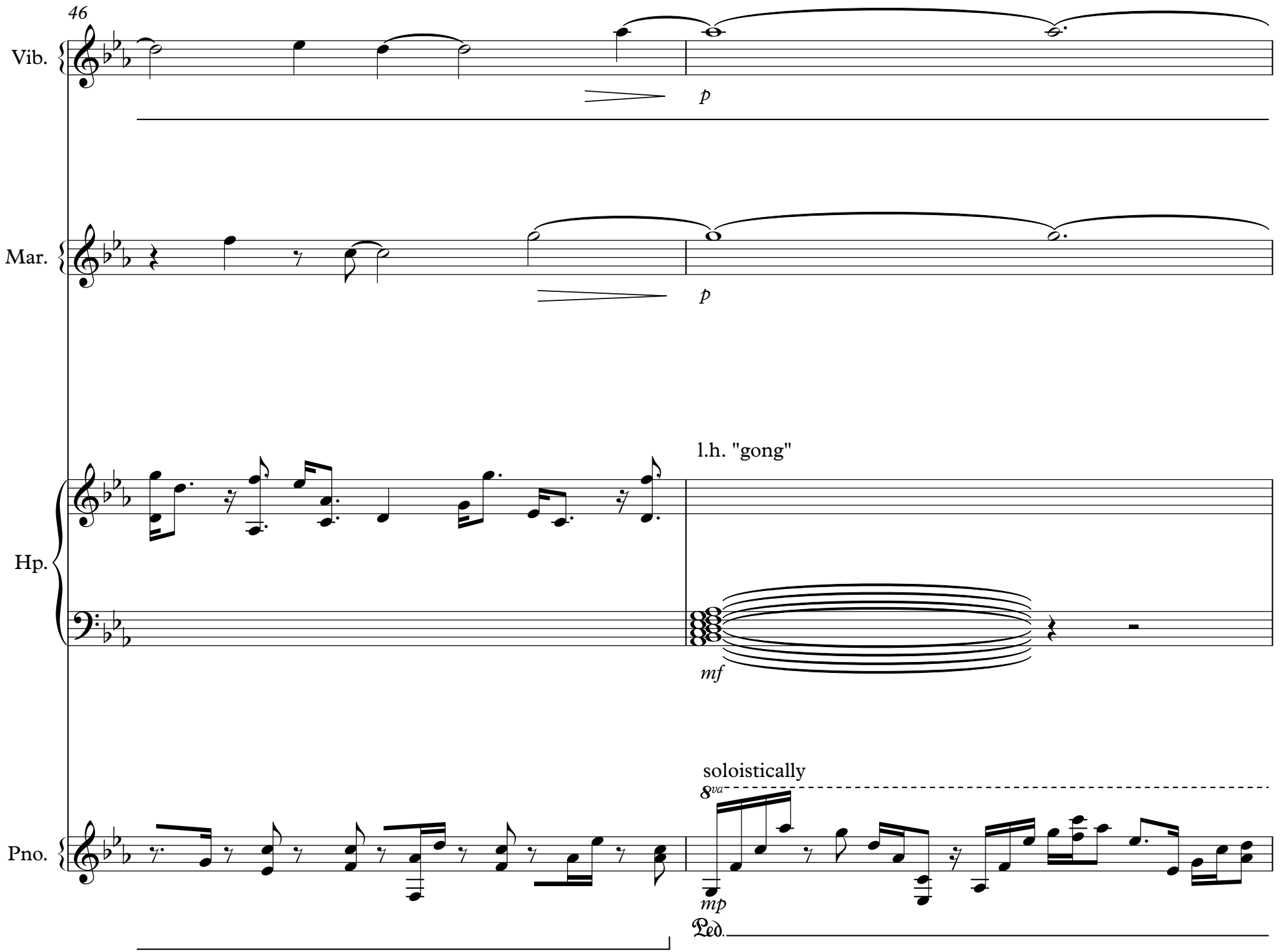
pp

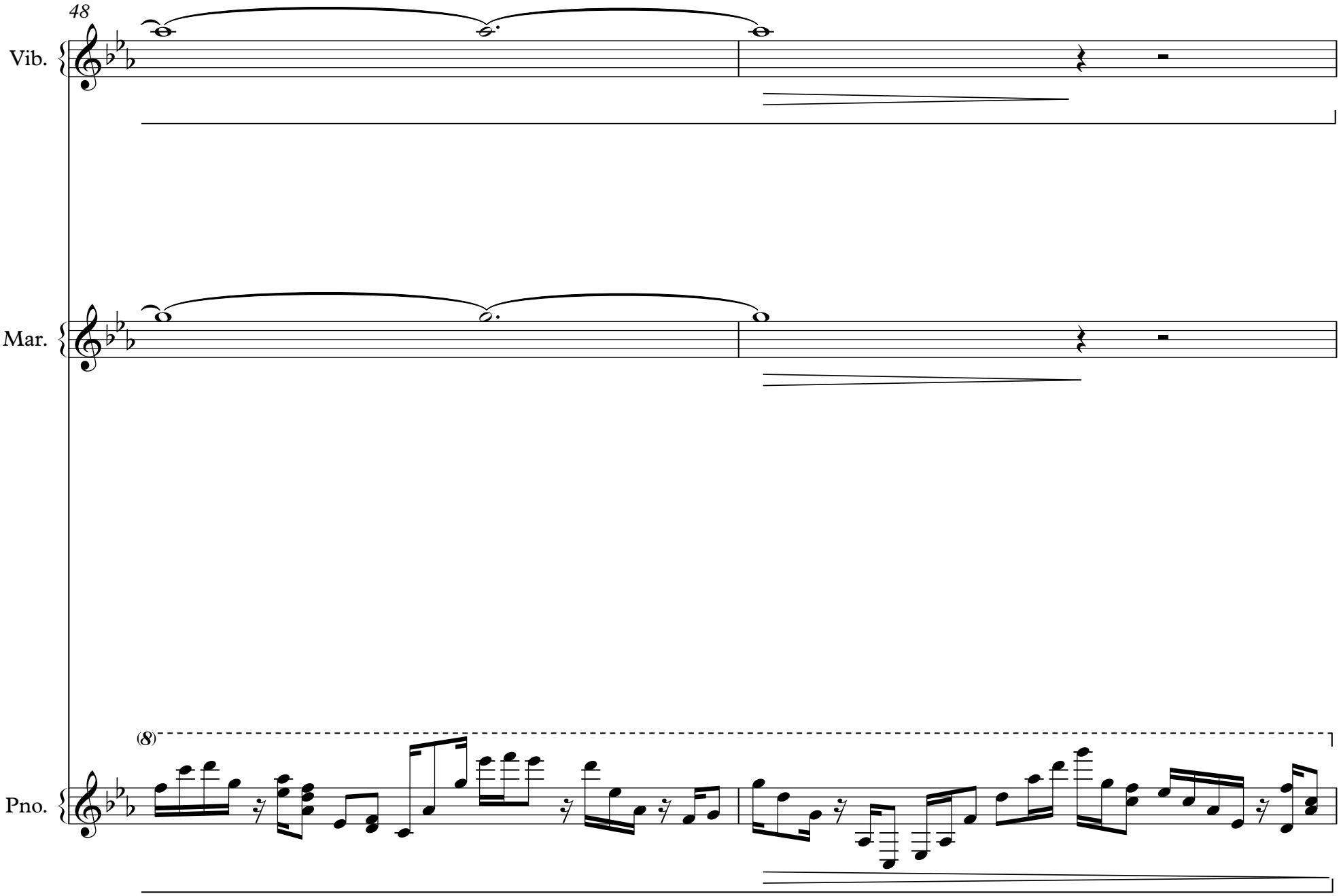
Ped.

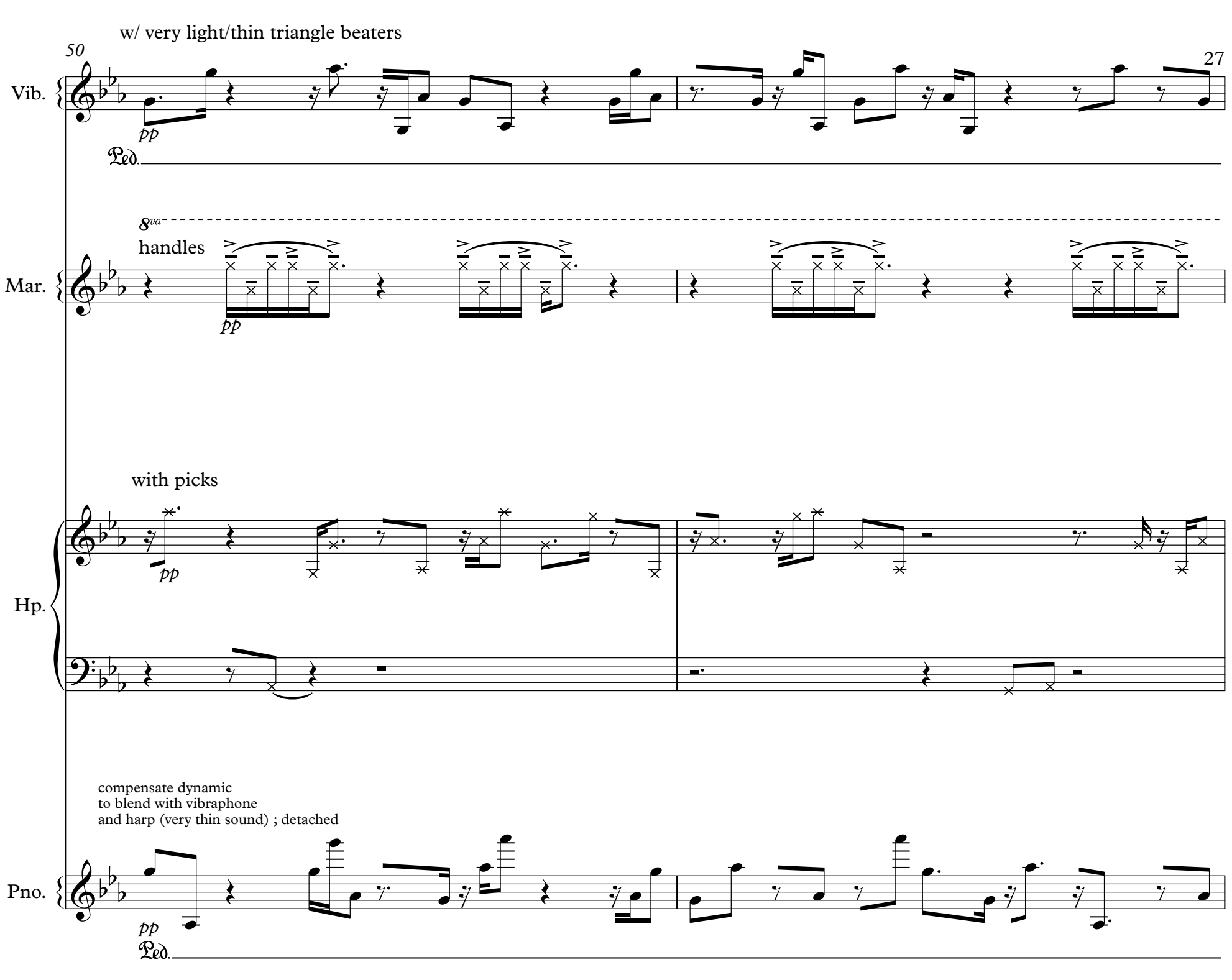

39
Vib.
Mar.
Pno.
normale

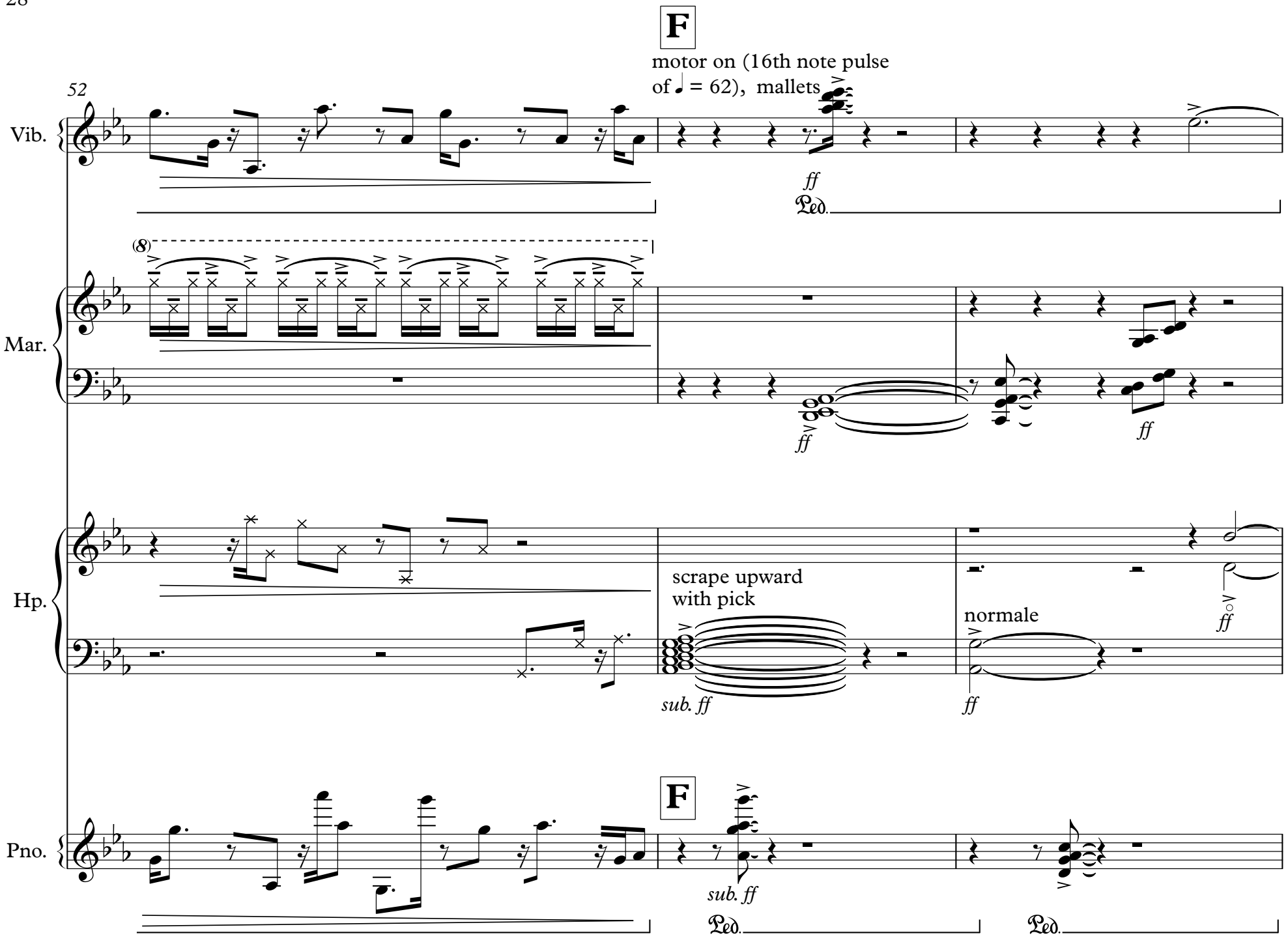

41
Hp.
mf
sim
gently swelling
Pno.
Ped.
mp
43
Hp.
p
Pno.

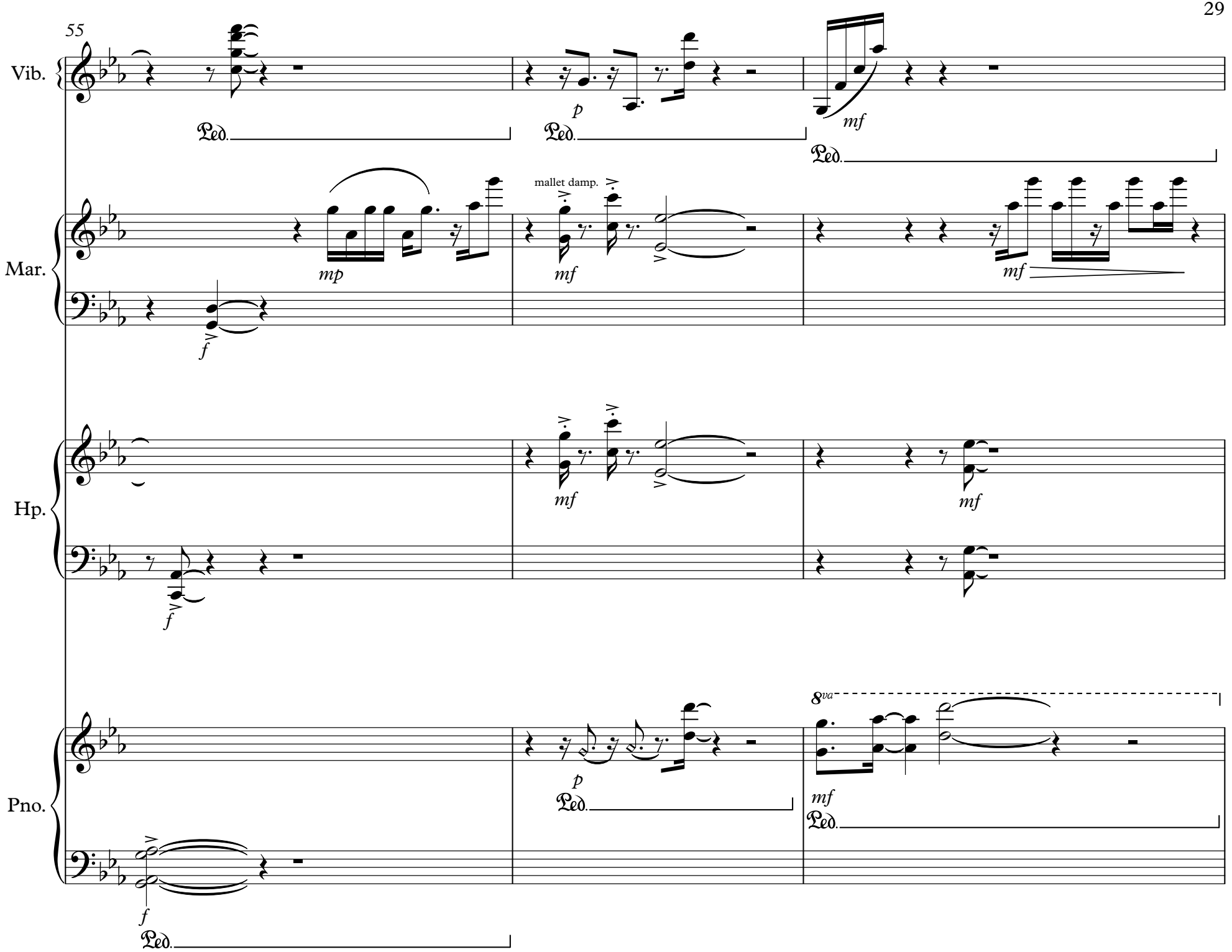

E
44
arco (bows)
Vib.
mf
Ped.
Rhythm does not need to be strict, but evenly
paced with the underlying rhythms in the harp and piano. Like a melodic echo
of previous material
arco
Mar.
mf
Hp.
pp
E
Pno.
pp
Ped.
pp


46
Vib.
p
Mar.
p
l.h. "gong"
Hp.
mf
soloistically
8va
Pno.
mp
Ped.


48
Vib.
Mar.
Pno.
(8)


w/ very light/thin triangle beaters
50
27
Vib.
pp
Ped.
8va
handles
Mar.
pp
with picks
Hp.
pp
compensate dynamic
to blend with vibraphone
and harp (very thin sound) ; detached
Pno.
pp
Ped.


F
motor on (16th note pulse
of ♩ = 62), mallets
52
Vib.
ff
Ped.
(8)
Mar.
ff
ff
Hp.
scrape upward
with pick
sub. ff
normale
ff
ff
F
Pno.
sub. ff
Ped.
Ped.


55
Vib.
Mar.
Hp.
Pno.
Ped.
p
mf
mp
f
mallet damp.
8va

58

Vib.

mf pp

Ped.

mp pp

Ped.

Mar.

mf pp

mp pp

Hp.

(knocking with finger tips)

mf

R L R R L R

mf

circa 10- 15"

mf

with bow hair

Pno.

mf pp

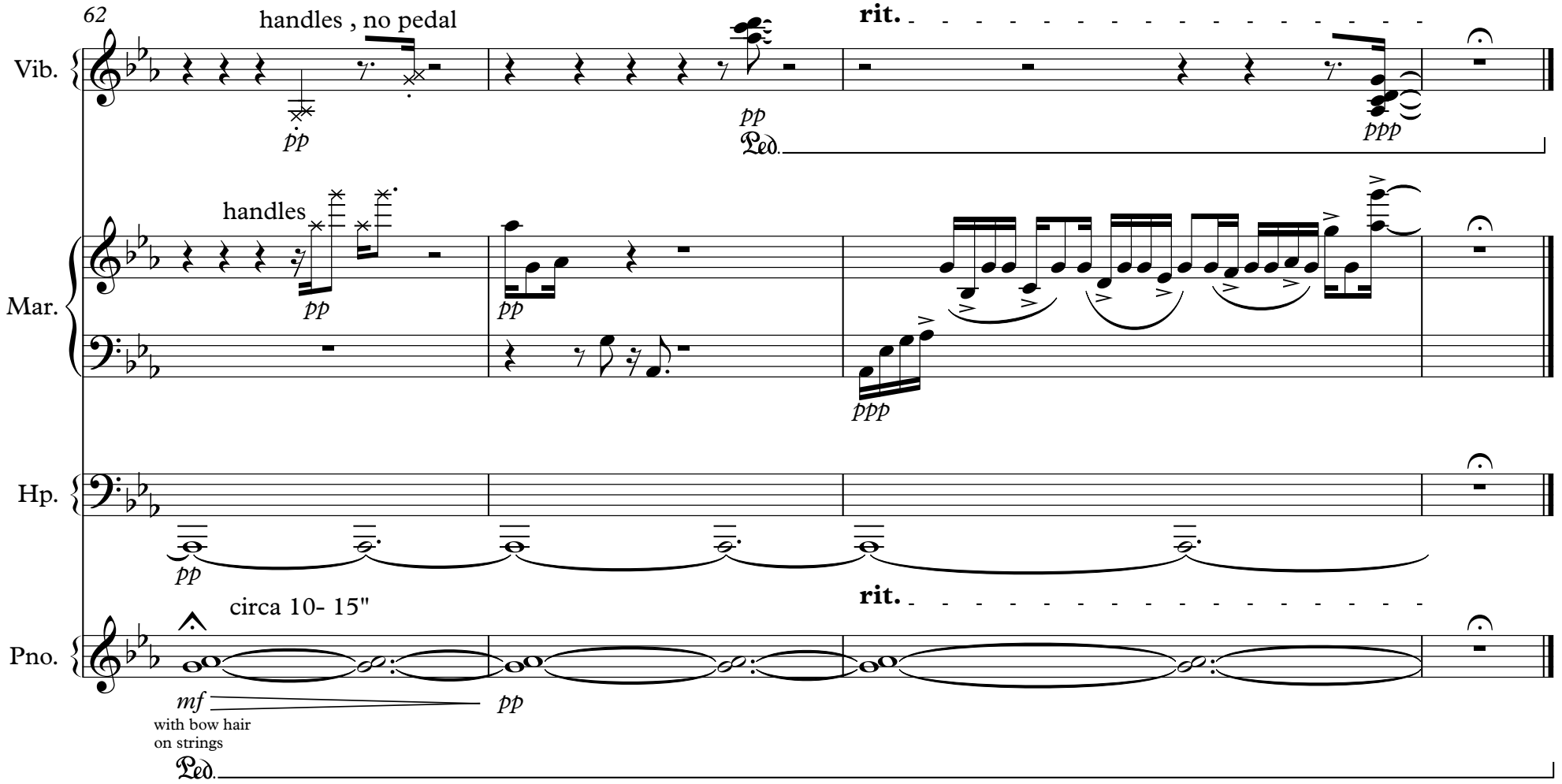
Ped.

tapping with fingers on internal frame

R L R R L R R L R R L R

mp pp

Ped.


62
handles , no pedal
rit.
Vib.
pp
pp
Ped.
ppp
handles
Mar.
pp
pp
ppp
Hp.
pp
circa 10- 15"
rit.
Pno.
mf
with bow hair
on strings
pp
Ped.