IOWA

for alto saxophone, marimba, and piano

Brooke Joyce (2008)

Commissioned by the Iowa Music Teachers Association

Program Note

IOWA is a suite of pieces, each of which is based on one of Iowa's state emblems: the state tree (Oak), bird (Eastern Goldfinch), rock (Geode), flower (Wild Rose), motto ("Our liberties we prize, and our rights we will maintain"), and flag. Each movement has a distinct character and utilizes particular compositional techniques from a variety of sources. In some instances, quotations of other music also appear; for example, the "Eastern Goldfinch" movement incorporates birdsongs transcribed by Olivier Messiaen as well as a traditional Irish fiddle tune. The final movement is a re-harmonization of Fannie R. Buchanan's song, "Iowa," published in Grinnell in 1923. IOWA was commissioned by the Iowa Federation of Music Teachers and premiered in 2008.

Composer Biography

Born and raised in East Lansing, Michigan, Brooke Joyce holds degrees in theory and composition from Princeton University, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and Lawrence University. He attended summer courses with Joan Tower and Magnus Lindberg, and in 1997, he traveled to Wales on a Kittredge Educational Grant to study with Alun Hoddinott. His music has been performed by such ensembles as the Indianapolis Symphony, the Cincinnati Symphony, the San Francisco Youth Symphony, the Brentano Quartet, the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, the Nash Ensemble, and the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic. In addition to his concert music, Brooke has collaborated on several musical theater works with playwright Frederick Gaines, including *Unbekannt*, a musical based on the life of the famous Anastasia pretender Anna Anderson, and *An Imaginary* Line, based on the book *Into the* Wild by Jon Krakauer. Brooke is the recipient of the Joseph Bearns Prize, the Wayne Peterson Prize, the Darius Milhaud Award, and many citations from the National Federation of Music Clubs and ASCAP. Brooke teaches theory, history and composition at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, and is a faculty member at The Walden School, a summer music festival for young composers in New Hampshire.

Performance Notes

- The pianist reads from a full score; the saxophone is notated in concert pitch in the score. The saxophone and marimba parts sometimes include cue lines.
- The marimba player needs 3 pairs of mallets: hard, medium, and soft; mallet changes are indicated in both the score and part. All of the music is playable with 2 mallets, though 4 may be utilized if desired.
- While the movements are arranged in the optimal order, they may be played separately or in a smaller group.

Following are some specific notes related to the composition and performance of each movement. Performers are encouraged to read these notes to better understand how the music was put together and how to best interpret and perform the music. Notice also that additional directions are given in the score and parts.

OAK – The music of Claude Debussy, especially the late piano preludes and chamber music, was the inspiration for this movement. In the final section, the repetitive figures are also reminiscent of the more recent music of John Adams.

EASTERN GOLDFINCH– The music for this movement comes from three sources: in the first part, the saxophone gesture is my own transcription of a goldfinch call; the marimba is Olivier Messiaen's transcription of a blackcap; the piano is Messiaen's thrush. In the middle section, the saxophone and piano play a traditional Irish fiddle tune called "The Goldfinch." The way in which the individual parts work together is suggested by Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* and *Réveil des Oiseaux*. The trills in mm. 22-37 are all whole step: play the given note first, and trill to the note a whole step above. The trills in mm. 38-44 are diatonic: play the given note first, and trill to the note above that fits in the key signature.

GEODE – A geode is a beautiful and mysterious rock, for its plain outer surface conceals a hidden world of sparkling mineral crystals. The beginning and end of this movement represent the outside, while the middle part suggests the percolating and shimmering world inside. This movement also pays homage to Debussy and Messiaen, both through the use of the octatonic scale (alternating whole and half steps) and isorhythm (notice the recurring patterns in the piano part in the middle section of the piece). In m. 23, the marimba player needs to quickly switch from soft to hard mallets—it might work best to create a "double mallet" by attaching a hard and soft mallet together, end to end, so that the player can simply flip the mallets around. In m. 24, the marimba and piano players should play fast, loud, and high notes (like a violent thunderstorm) while the saxophone plays directly into the strings of the piano. In m. 25, the pianist should hold the pedal so that the resonance from the saxophone continues to sustain. Beginning in m. 26, the saxophonist uses an alternate fingering on every other note to create a timbral effect.

WILD ROSE – Many young piano students learn the famous short piano piece by Edward MacDowell, "To a Wild Rose," and that gem provided the starting point for this movement. The MacDowell tune is mostly reduced to a few notes, sometimes spun into a kind of dance rhythm.

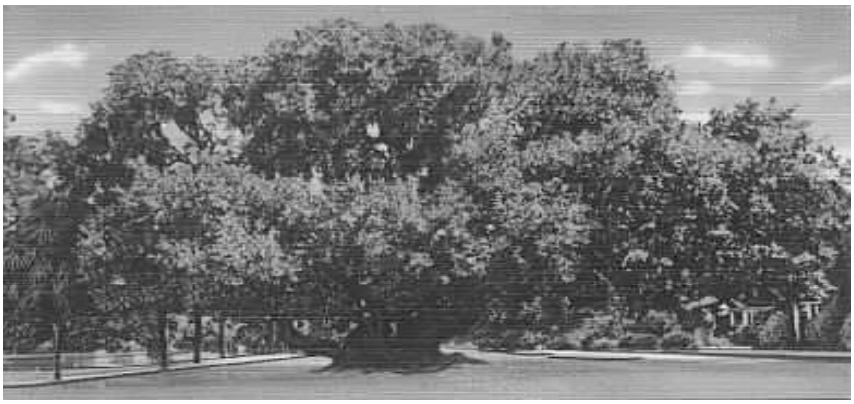
MOTTO – If you look on the cover of this music, you'll find the state motto: "Our liberties we prize, and our rights we will maintain." The opening piano music is a rhythmic transcription of these words, and the resulting melody forms the basis for the movement. Beginning in m. 31, the marimba and piano are in canon, while the saxophone enters in quarter-note triplets; a strong sense of the quarter note pulse must be felt and maintained by all three players in this passage. Notice also that there are two separate tempi in this piece—when the faster music begins in m. 17, it is slowly introduced by an *accelerando* in the marimba; when the original tempo returns in m. 37, it happens suddenly (*subito*).

FLAG – This movement follows without a pause after MOTTO; the piano should sustain its final chord through the opening of FLAG. If FLAG is played out of order or on its own, the piano does not start playing until m. 5. M. 10 is the first instance of a "feathered beam" gesture which recurs throughout the piece: play exactly the number of notes indicated, begin slightly slower and then accelerate; the overall tempo should not change. When both the piano and marimba have this gesture, they should try to play together. The tune you hear in this movement (mainly in the saxophone) was written in 1923 by Fannie R. Buchanan, a member of the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame who contributed greatly to the musical culture of the state. The style of accompaniment and harmonization is suggested by William Schuman's piano solo *Chester Variations*.

IOWA

I. Tree: Oak

Brooke Joyce (2008)



Expansive ♩= 66

Alto Saxophone
(concert pitch)

Marimba

Piano

medium

pp

p

p

pedal each measure

8vb

4

mp *espr.*

mp

(8vb)

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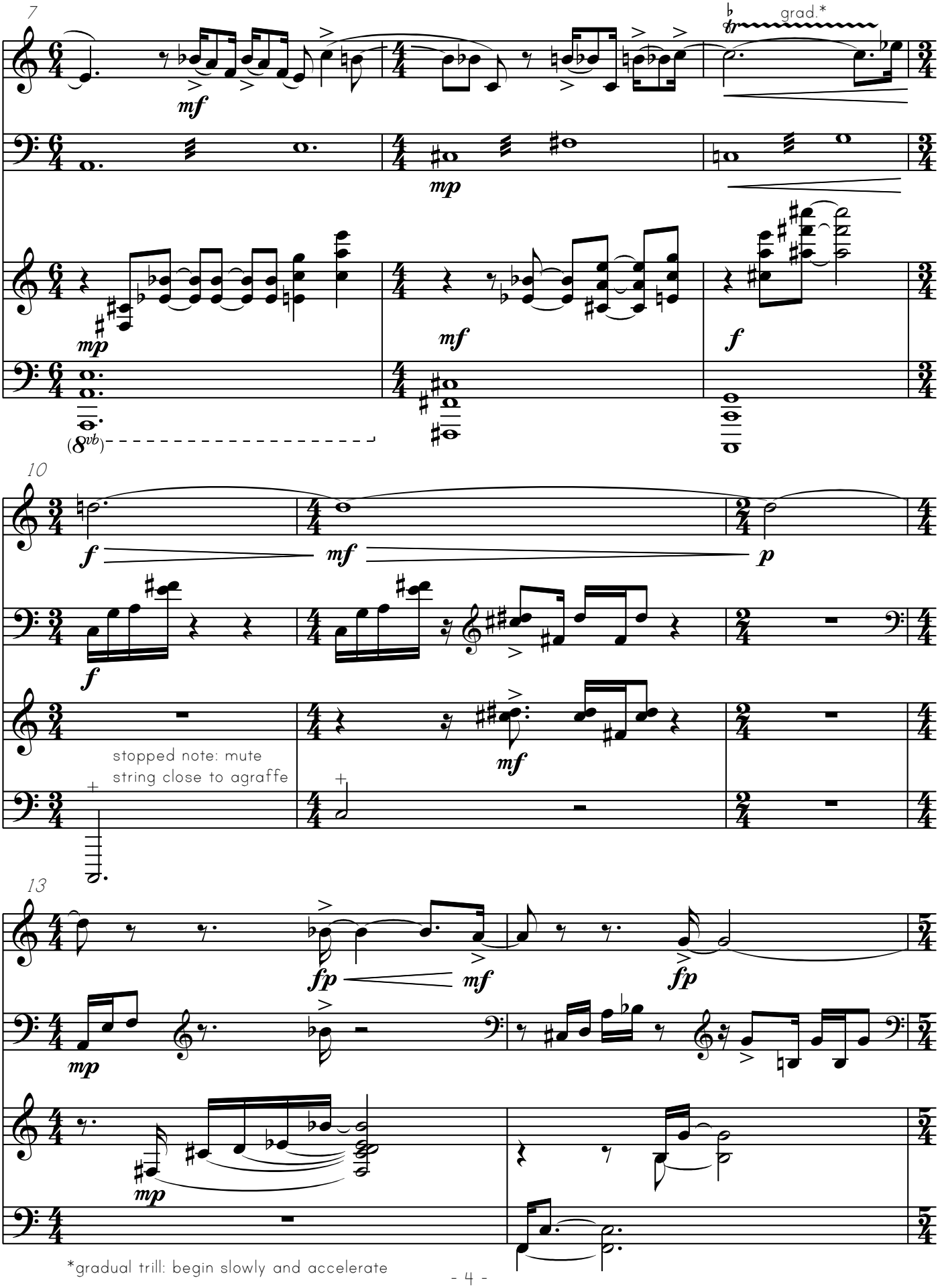
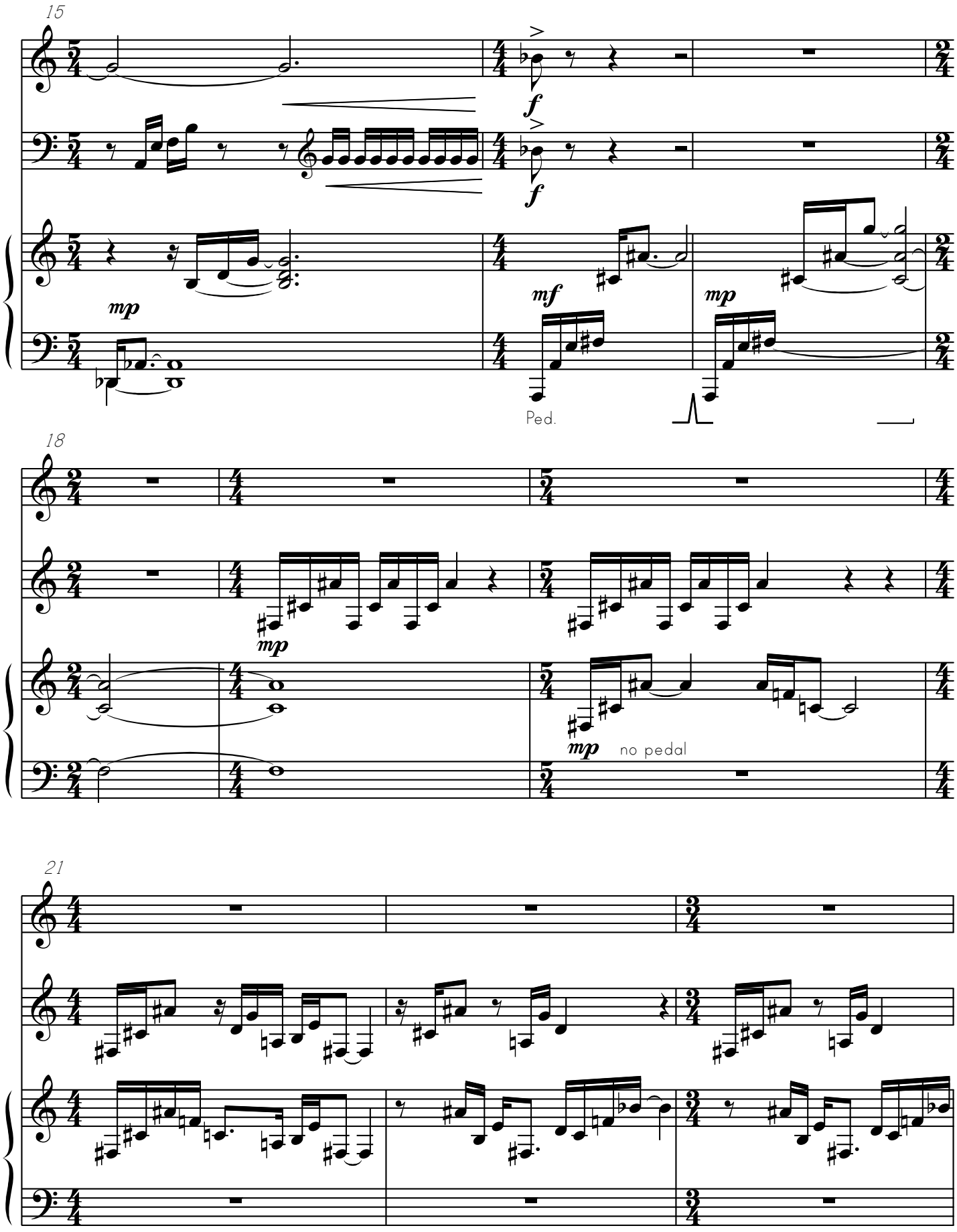
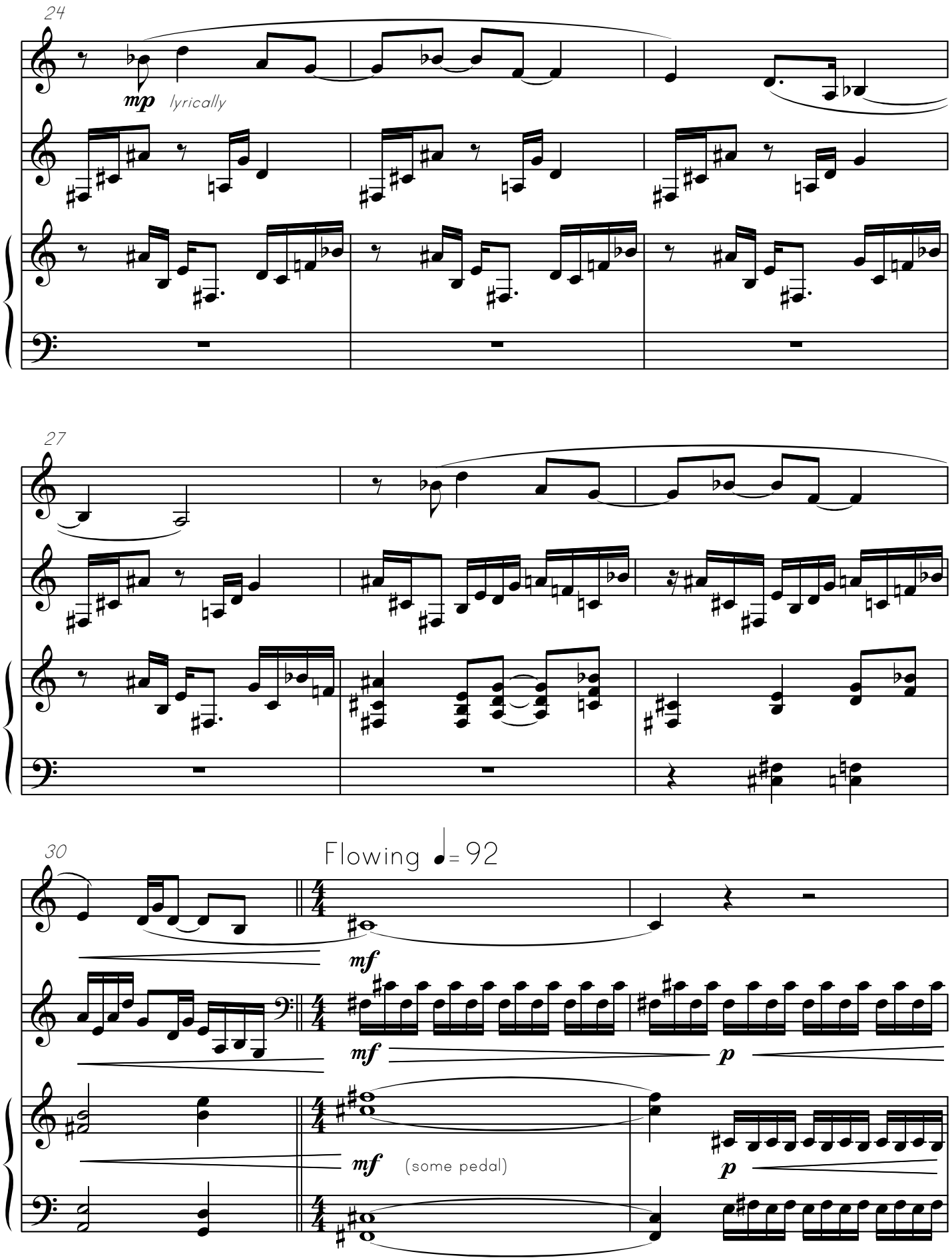
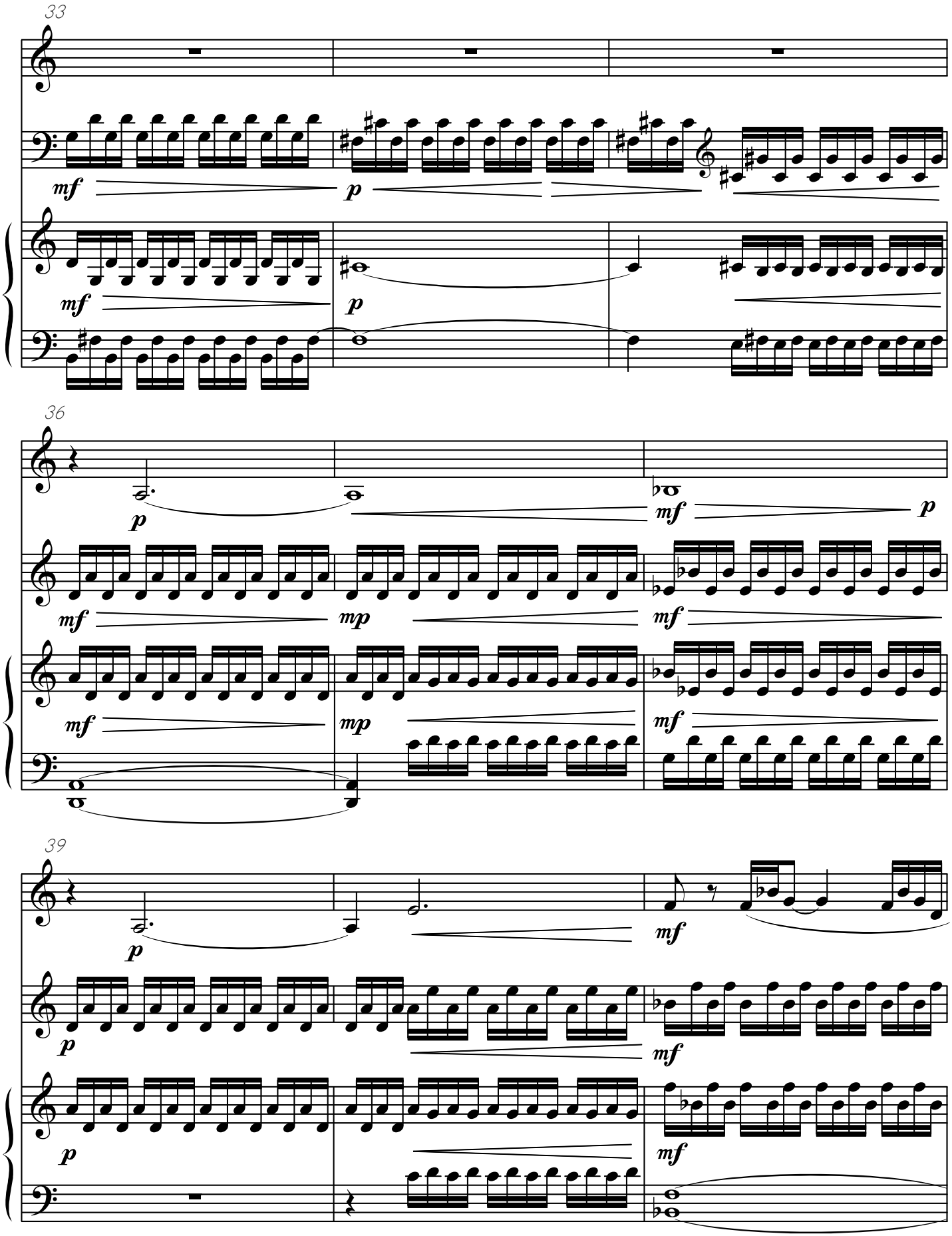
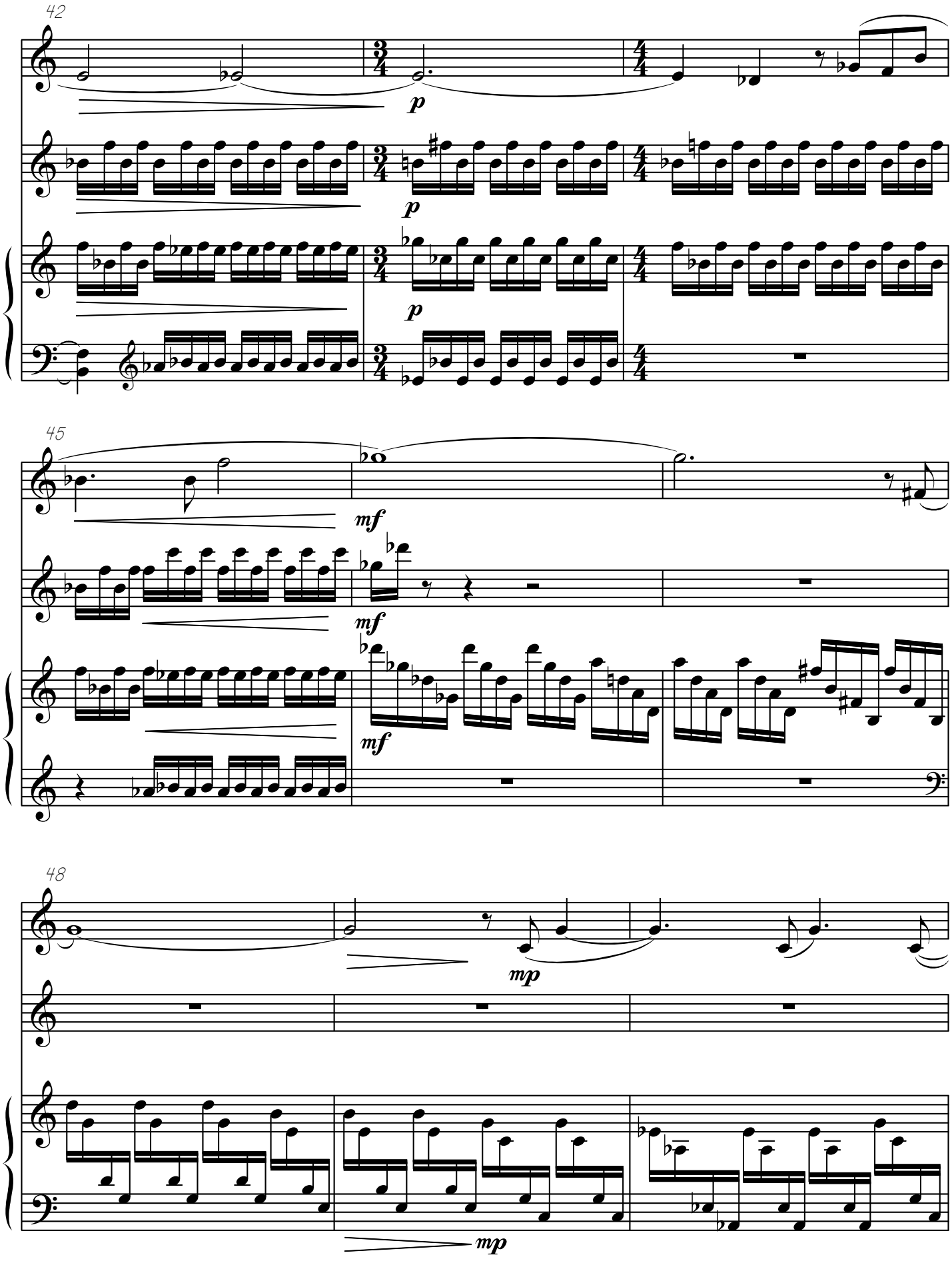
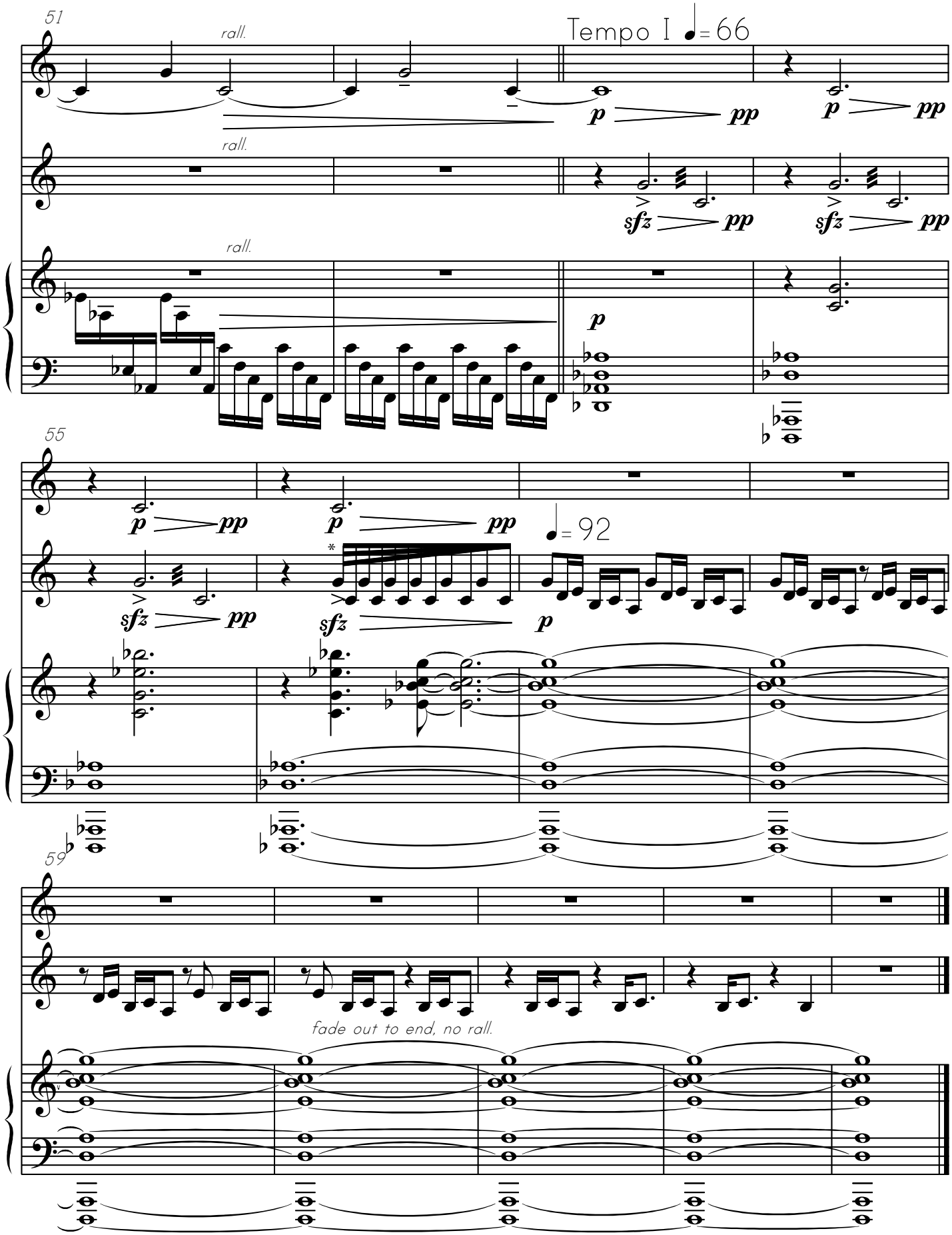

7
grad.*
mf
mp
mp
mf
f
(8vb)
10
f
mf
p
f
stopped note: mute
string close to agraffe
mf
13
fp
mf
fp
mp
mp
*gradual trill: begin slowly and accelerate


15
f
f
mp
mf
mp
Ped.
18
mp
mp
no pedal
21


24
mp lyrically
27
30
Flowing ♩= 92
mf
mf
p
mf (some pedal)
p


33
mf
p
mf
p
36
p
mf
p
mf
mp
mf
mf
mp
mf
39
p
p
mf
p
mf
p
mf


42
p
p
p
45
mf
mf
mf
48
mp
mp



* begin with a tremolo and gradually ritard over three beats