The Fabricator of Joy

quintet for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and piano

Op. 17

commissioned by Ensemble Fioritura

Lance Mok

London: January 2023

ca. 8 mins

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For various reasons from publicity needs to political pressure, there seems to be a compulsive obsession in our world today for the display of joy and positivity regardless of realistic circumstances. *The Fabricator of Joy* is a portrait of such a social structure that systematically tames its subjects into numbness, into truly believing that the images of joy they repetitively produce is joy itself. The subjects are conditioned by the mighty system to deny all suggestions of a flawed reality and carry out their mechanical duty to rejoice.

The quintet is written in two movements. The first is essentially a motet for the four wind instruments based entirely on the grievous theme stated by the solitary bassoon. An episode of relatively tonal sequences gives the piece its only instance of fleeting warmth before plunging back into rigorous polyphony and almost being coerced by the piano into settling into a cadence. The second movement is the *pièce de résistance* of the work. The theme of apparent joy is set against sounds imitative of machineries after its unison statement opening the movement. As it develops, it becomes clear that such joy is diluted by forces almost malign: the towering manufacturer of supposed happiness is clouded by growing ominosity and its products, laughter, are forced and acerbic. Towards the end, the subjects desperately pull out all stops to convince themselves their life is 'Joy. Joy. Joy.'

The work was commissioned by Ensemble Fioritura, who gave the premiere in Lee Hysan Concert Hall at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong on 21st June 2023.

Instrumentation: flute, oboe, B♭ clarinet, bassoon, and piano

Score

The Fabricator of Joy

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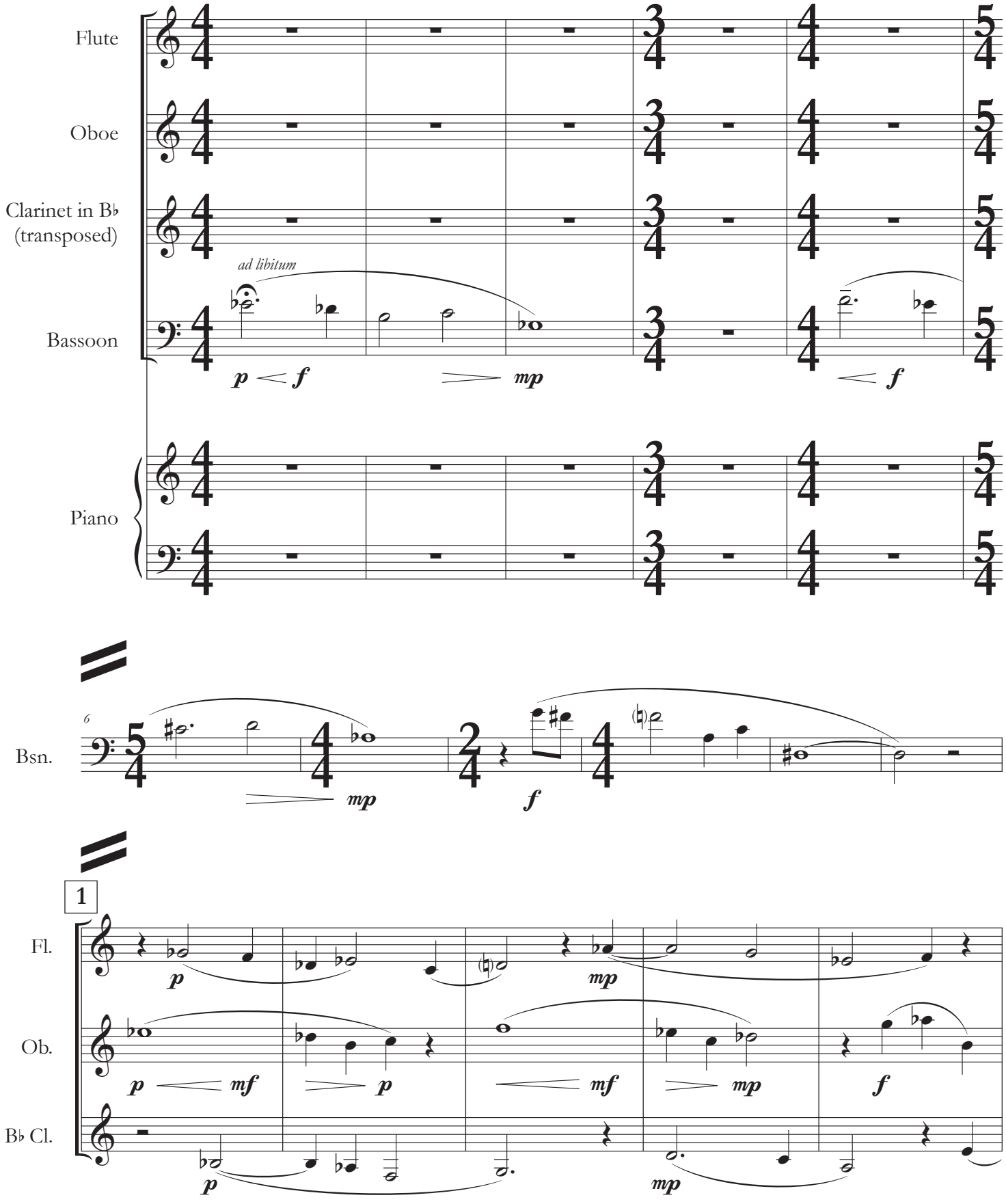
I.

Grave, molto doloroso ♩ = 66



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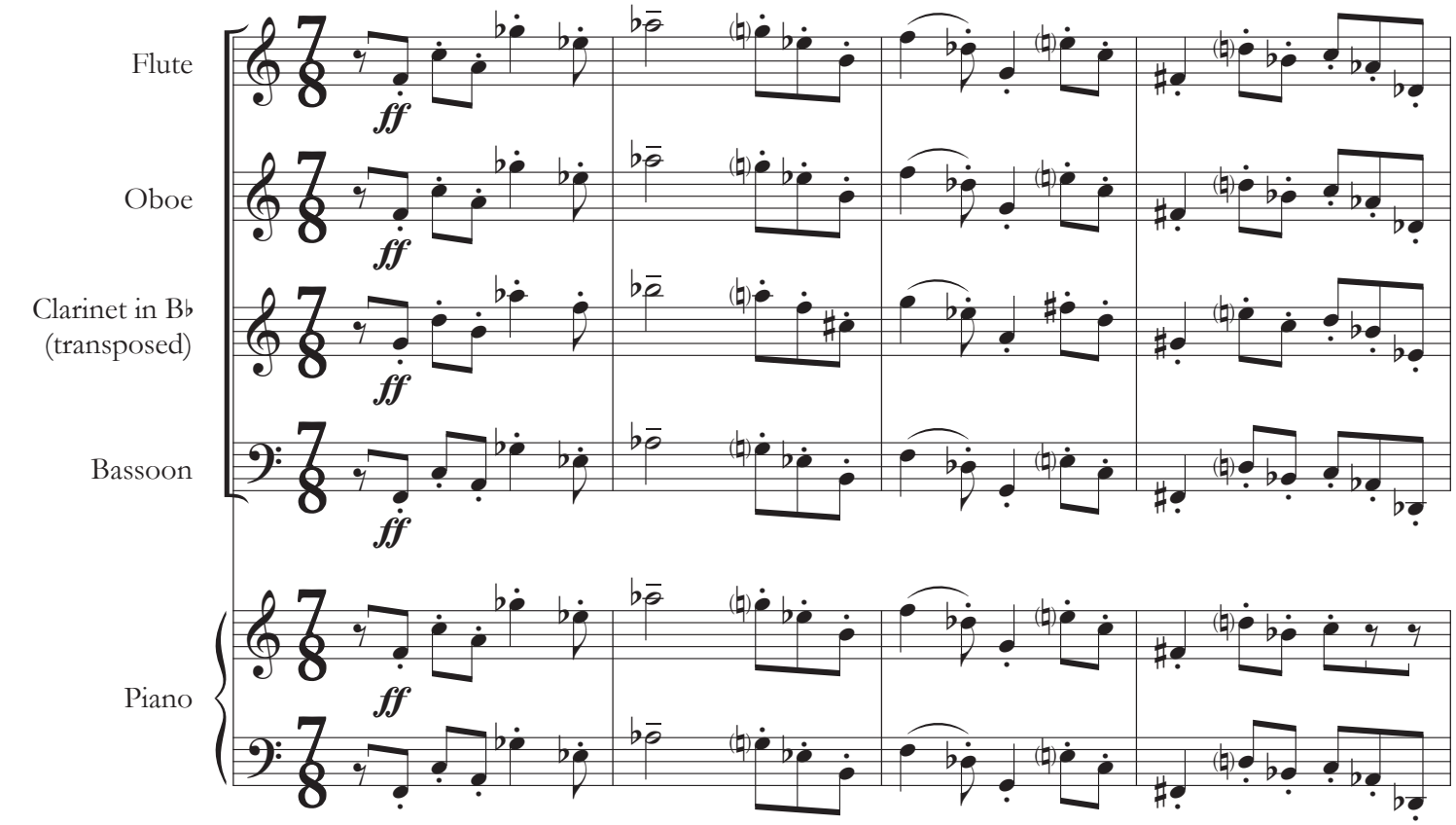
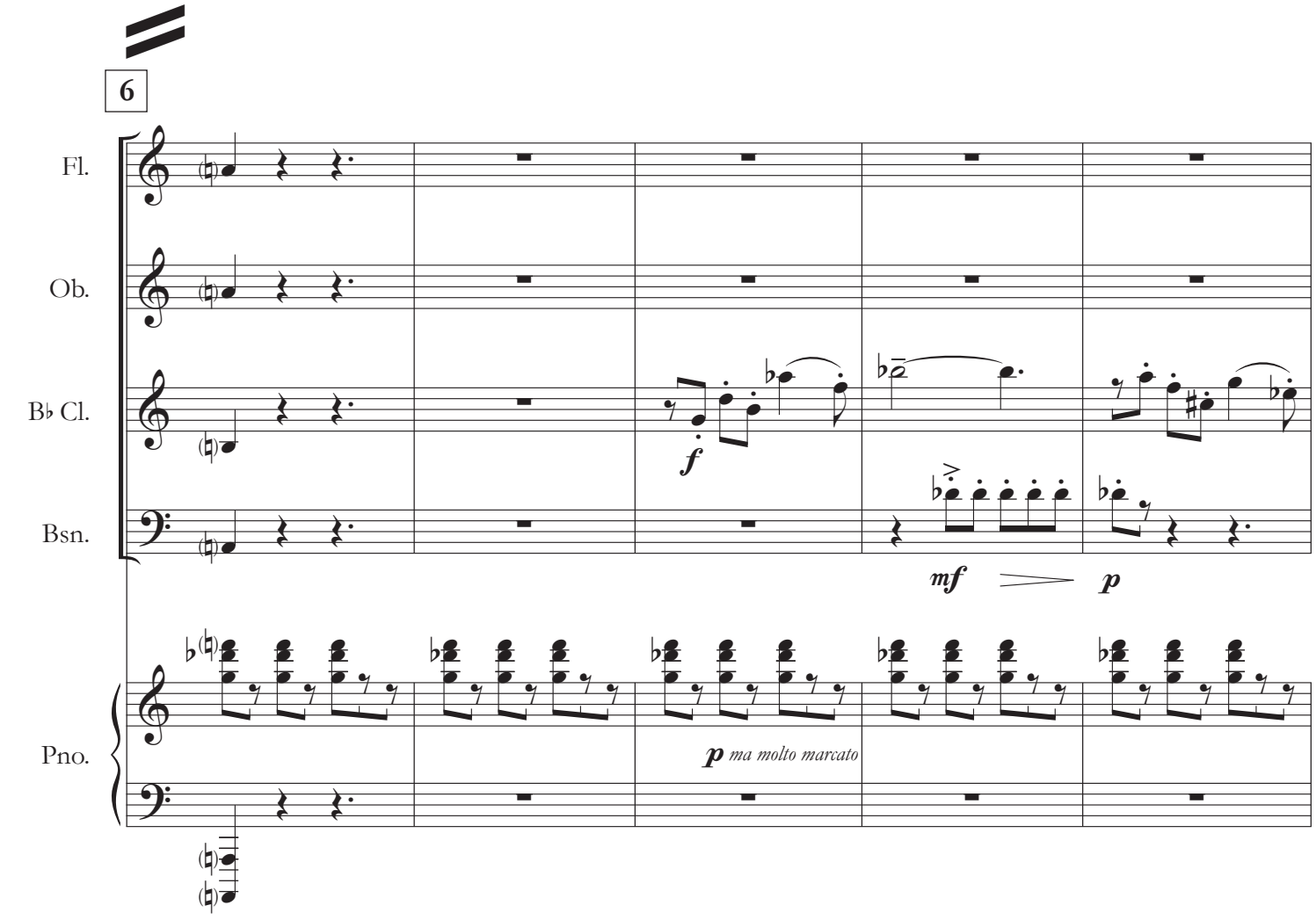
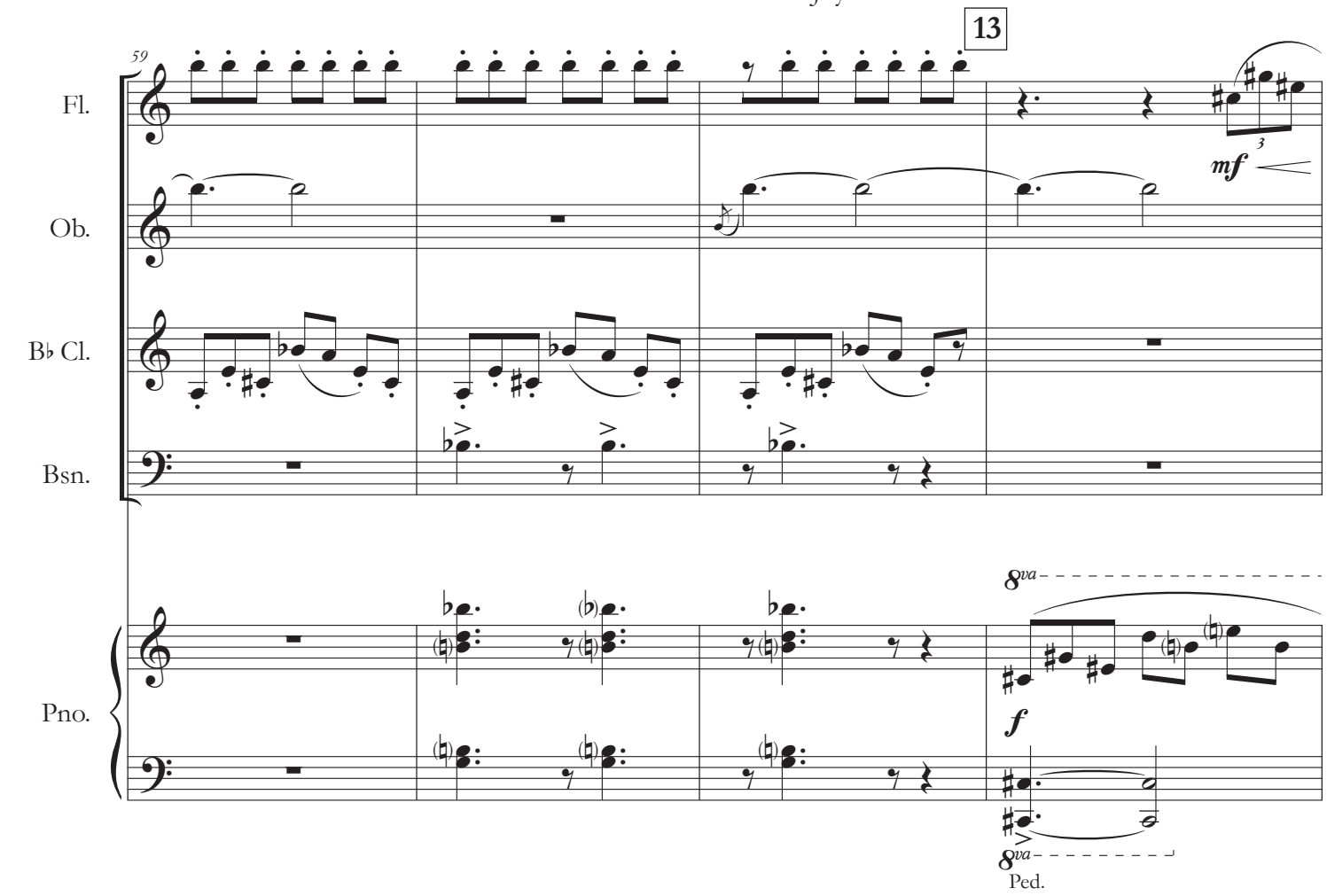
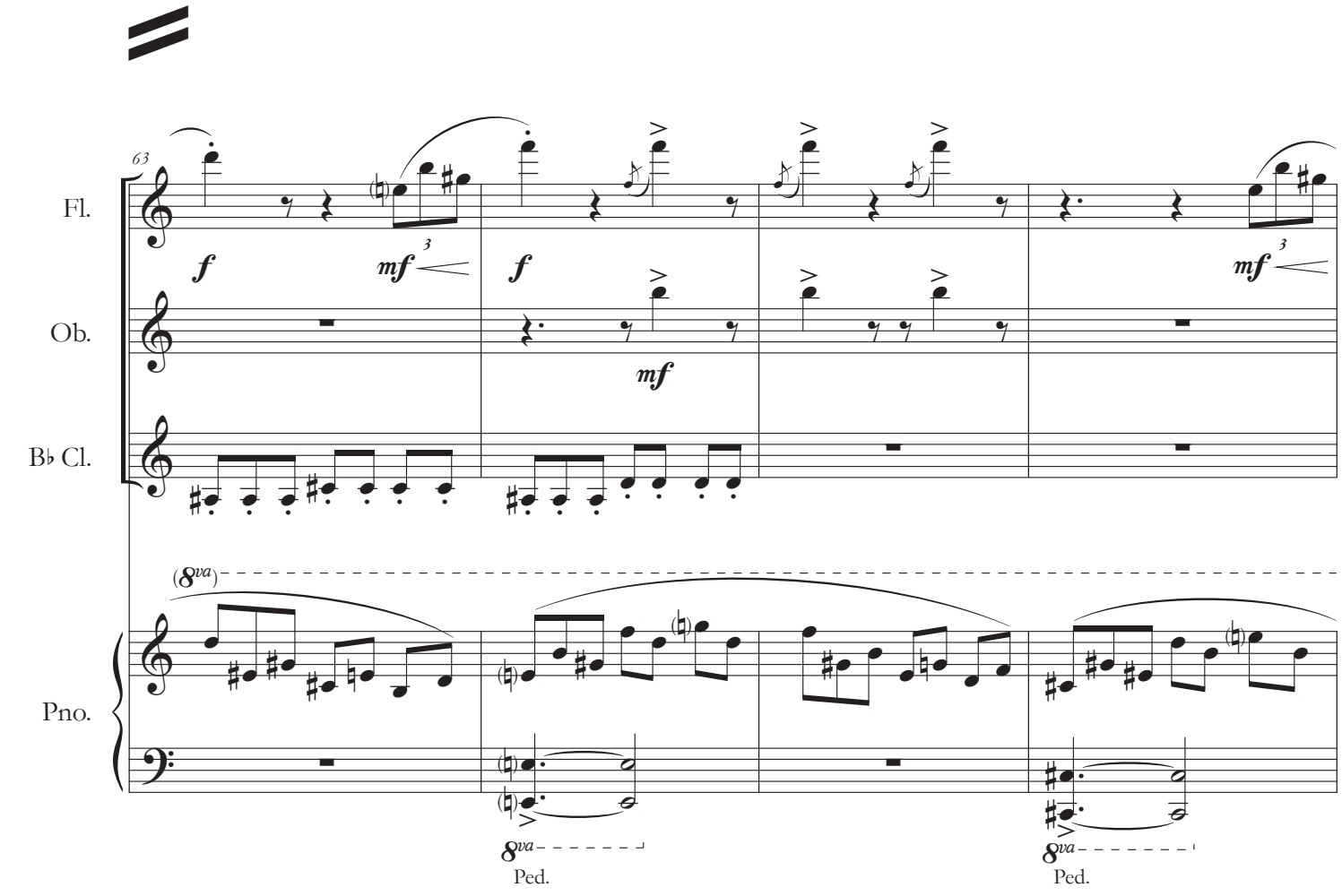
II. Joy. Joy. Joy.

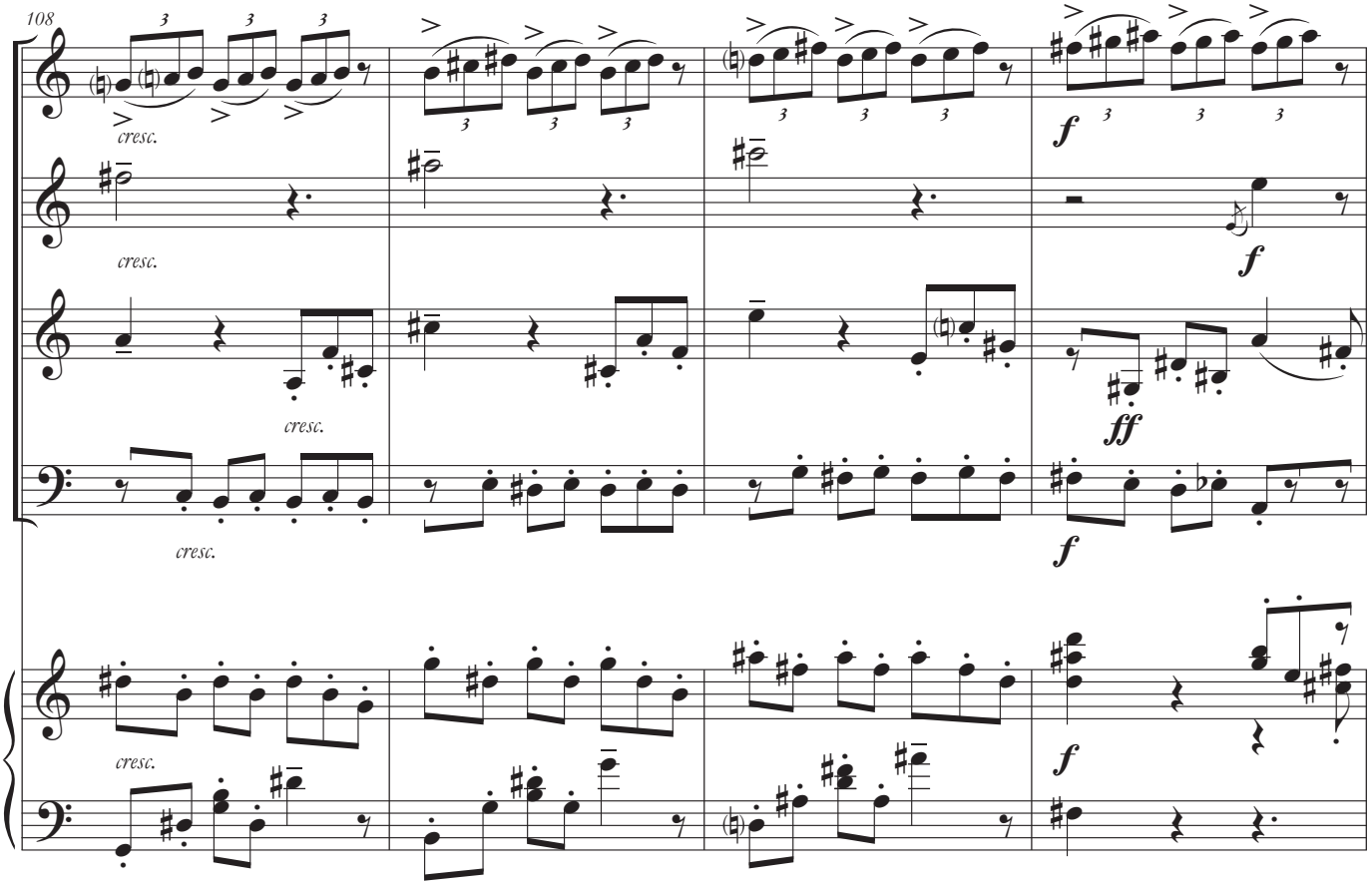
Presto ♩ = 208

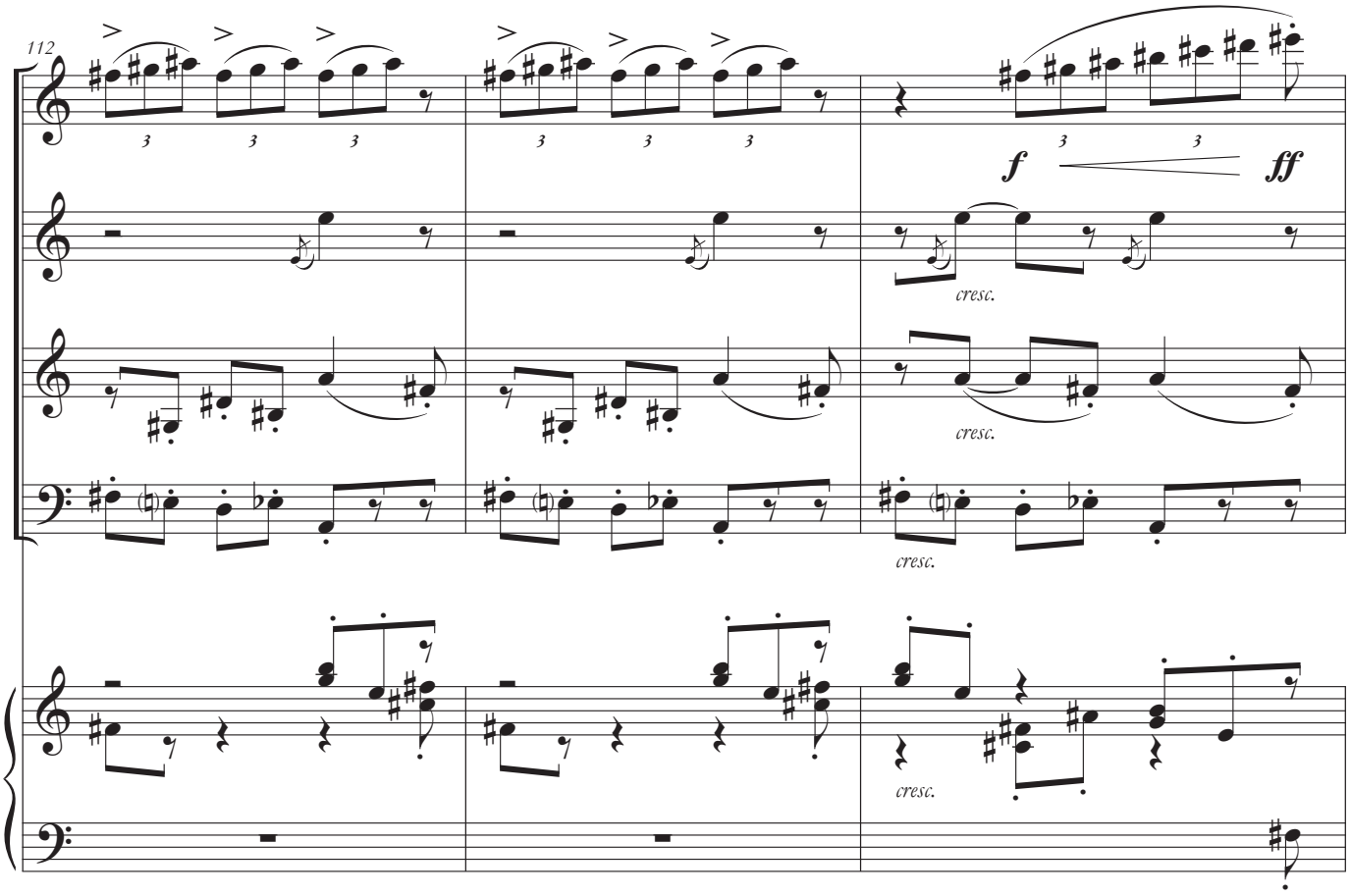


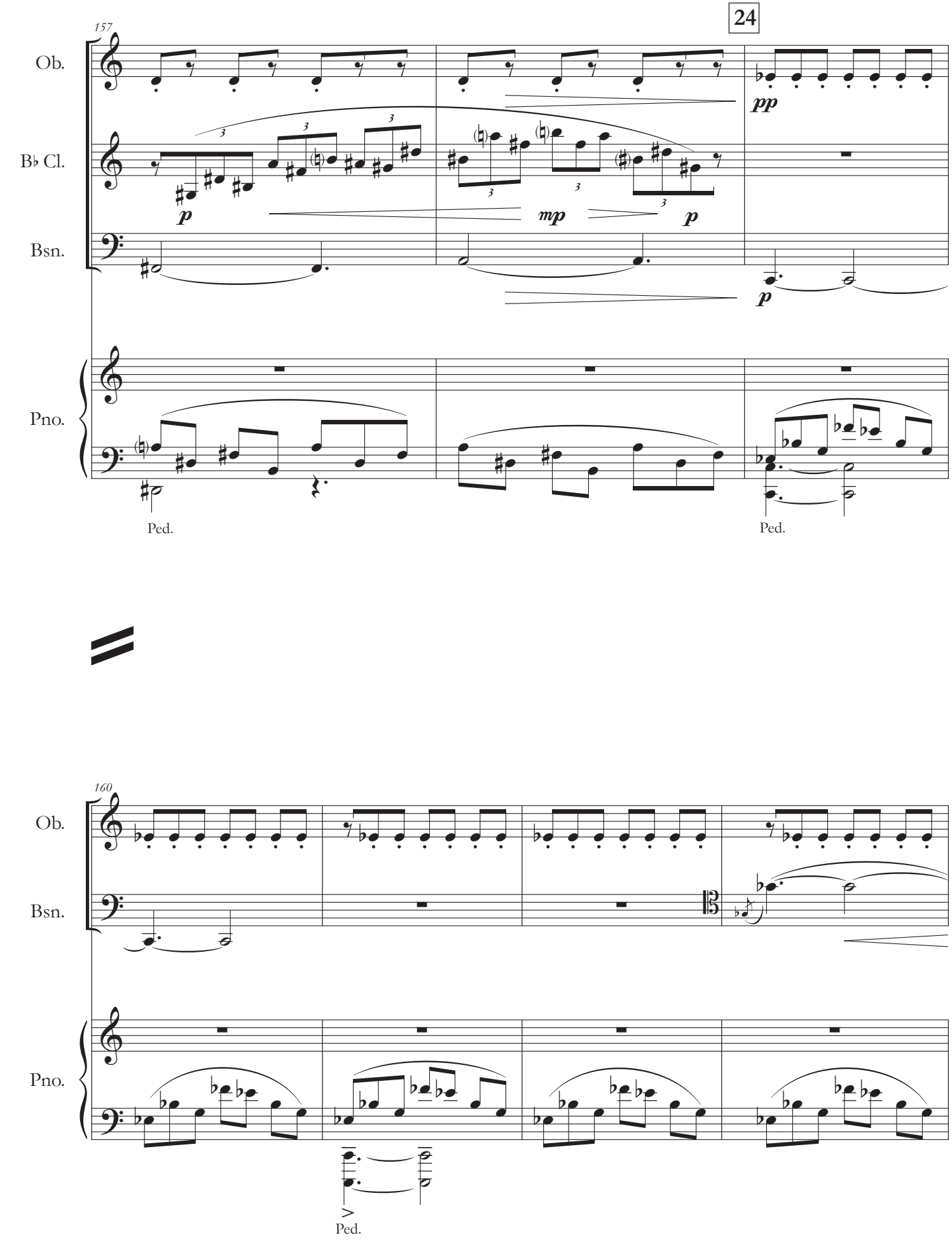


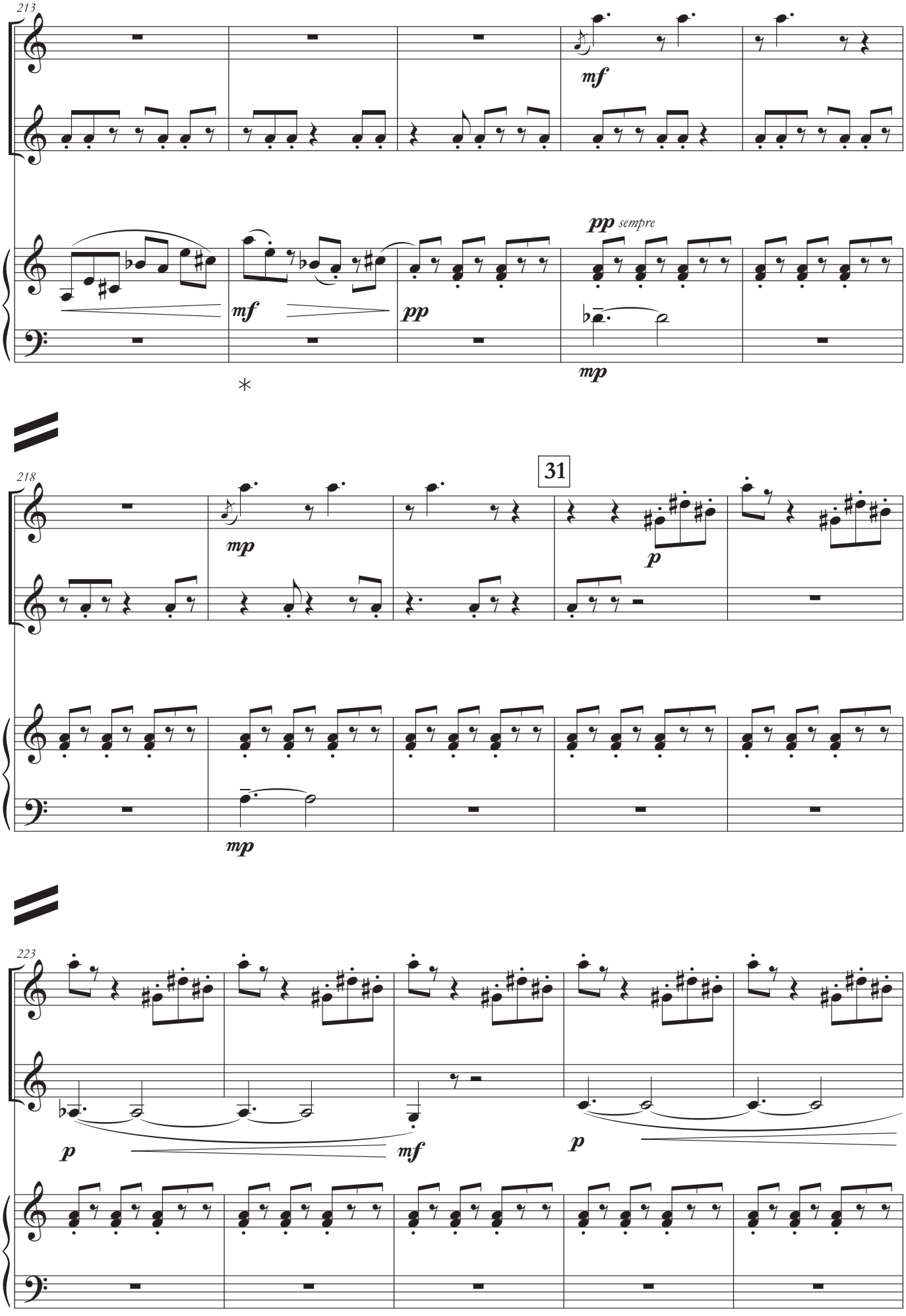

13
59
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Pno.
mf
f
8va
Ped.

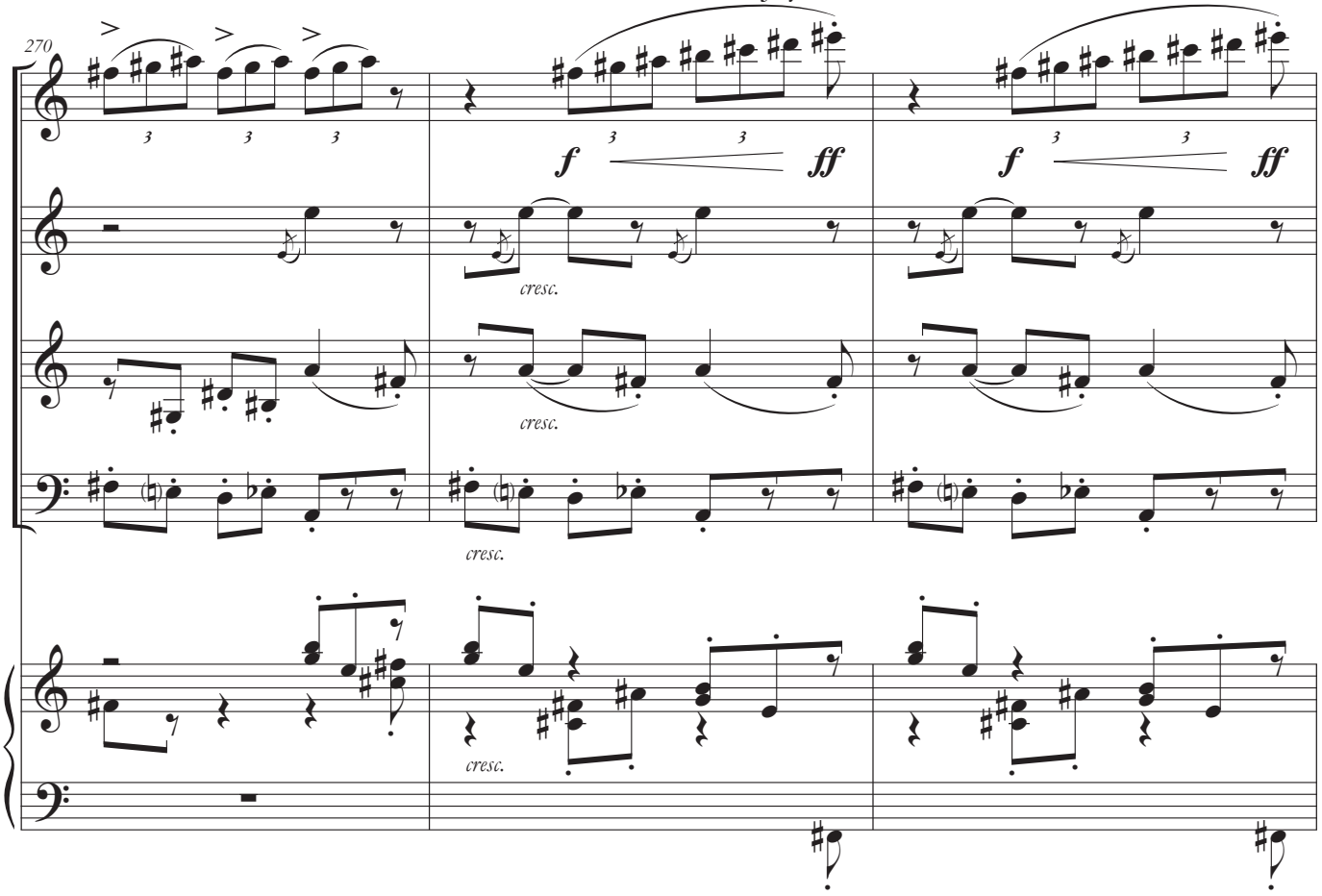

63
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Pno.
f
mf
(8va)
8va
Ped.

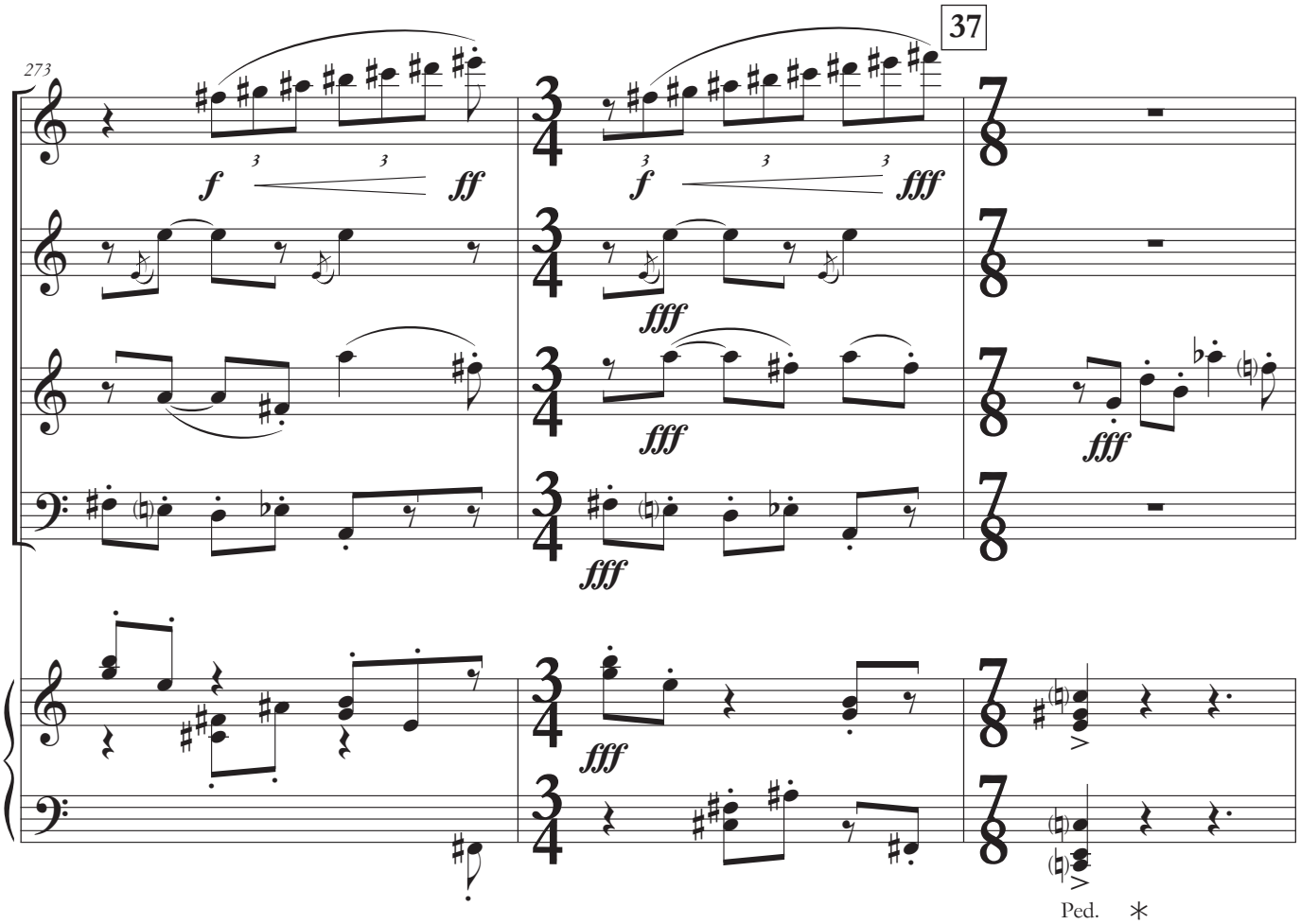

108
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Pno.
cresc.
f
ff


112
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Pno.
cresc.
f
ff


24
157
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Pno.
p
mp
p
pp
p
Ped.
Ped.
160
Ob.
Bsn.
Pno.
Ped.


213
Fl.
Ob.
Pno.
mf
pp sempre
mf
pp
mp
*
218
31
Fl.
Ob.
Pno.
mp
p
mp
223
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Pno.
p
mf
p


270
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Pno.
f
ff
cresc.


273
37
Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Pno.
f
ff
fff
Ped.