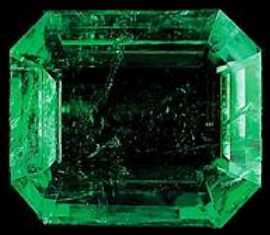
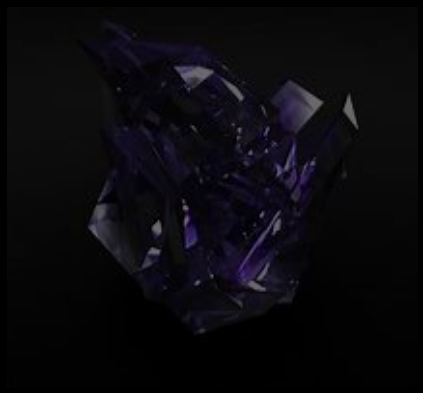
James M. Stephenson

James Stephenson
Stephenson Music
ComposerJim.com

Jewels

for flute, string trio, and piano





Jewels

for Flute, String Trio and Piano

Commissioned by and written for Julia Scolnik and the Andover Chamber Music Series

Program Notes by James Stephenson

Premiere performance: March 19, 2006 at Naples United Church of Christ, Naples, Florida
Instrumentation: Flute, Violin, Viola, Cello and Piano
Duration: ca. 15 minutes

I met Julie Scolnik in Boston while premiering an adaptation of my *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* with the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra. Her interest in my music and mine in her playing eventually led to a collaborative effort to bring her chamber ensemble to Florida to premiere a new work I would compose for her group. The subsequent *Jewels* was a perfect fit, as the gems evoke many interesting images and myths, and the word itself is a take off on her first name.

The music:

Ruby

This stone represents devotion, desire and passion. I chose to aim for the desire and passionate qualities. A soft opening with a hint of middle-Eastern nuance eventually erupts into a wild and pulsing fantasy.

Amethyst

The legend of this stone pits an angry god of wine against an unsuspecting young maiden, named Amethyst. The maiden is set to stone (quartz) by the goddess Diana to protect her from his wrath. Overwhelmed by her beauty, he (the god Dionysus) sheds a tear into his wine. This eventually spills on to the quartz to create the purple color we associate with Amethyst.

I chose to create an almost angry flirtation that might have occurred between Dionysus and Amethyst. There is not a long tune to grasp onto; instead there are many short fragments and jagged interplay back and forth amongst the musicians. The music builds and builds only to conclude quietly with the single teardrop.

This stone happens to be my birth stone.

Sapphire

Sometimes referred to as “of the heavens”, I envisioned an almost mystic quality to this beautiful blue stone. After a mysterious introduction, this movement relaxes into a straightforward and calm tune, featuring the solo flute.

Emerald

I originally intended to ignore the obvious implications of this stone and color, but in the end, an unmistakable Irish tune forced its way out! When I realized that the premiere was to take place two days after St. Patrick’s Day, it became clear to me that the reel that was dancing in my head should be heard.

I chose to present this tune in a very Percy Grainger-esque way, slightly bending the rules of the traditional Irish harmonies (especially in the composed solos for the various instruments), yet keeping close to the standard form.

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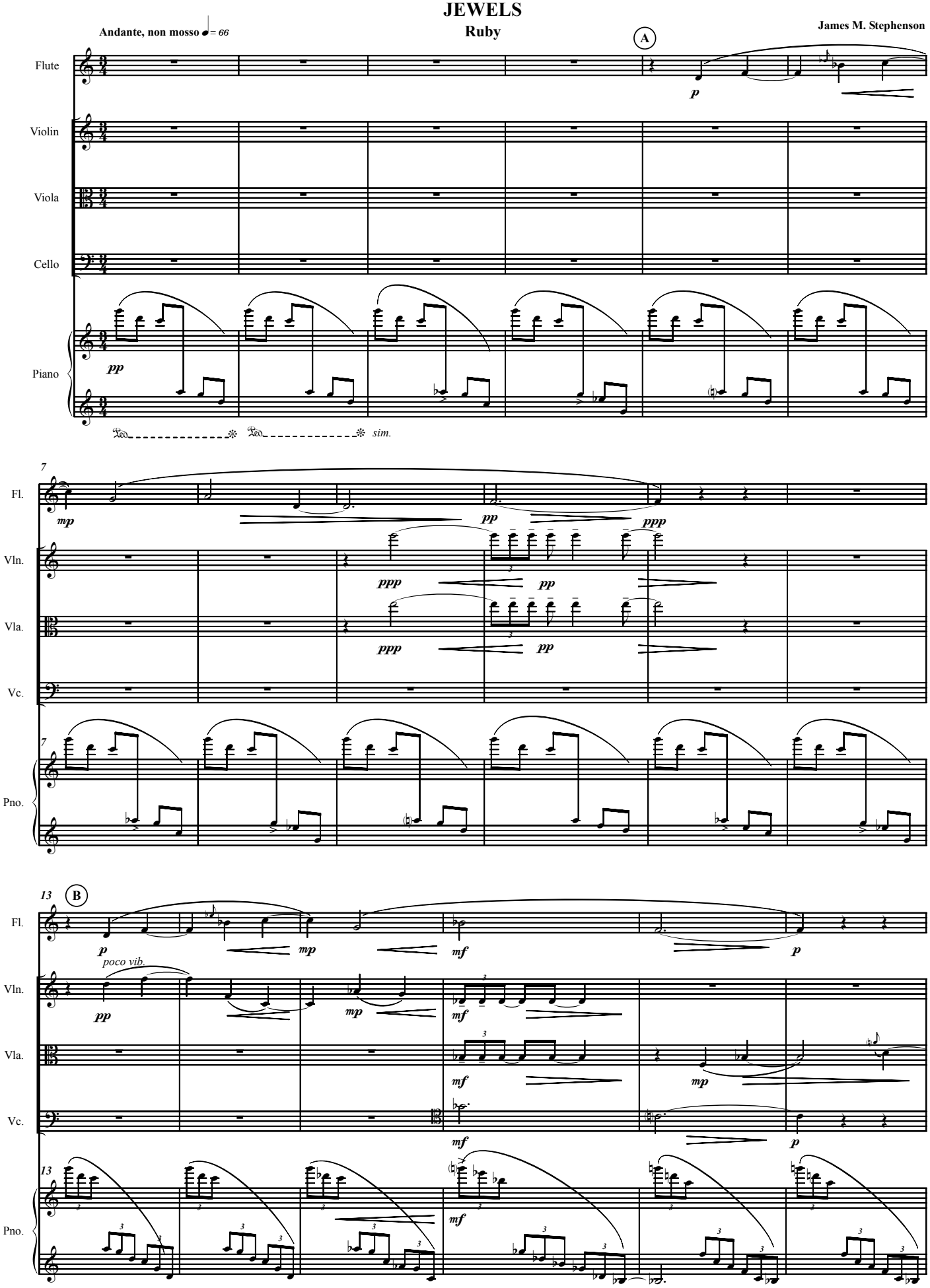
JEWELS

Ruby

James M. Stephenson



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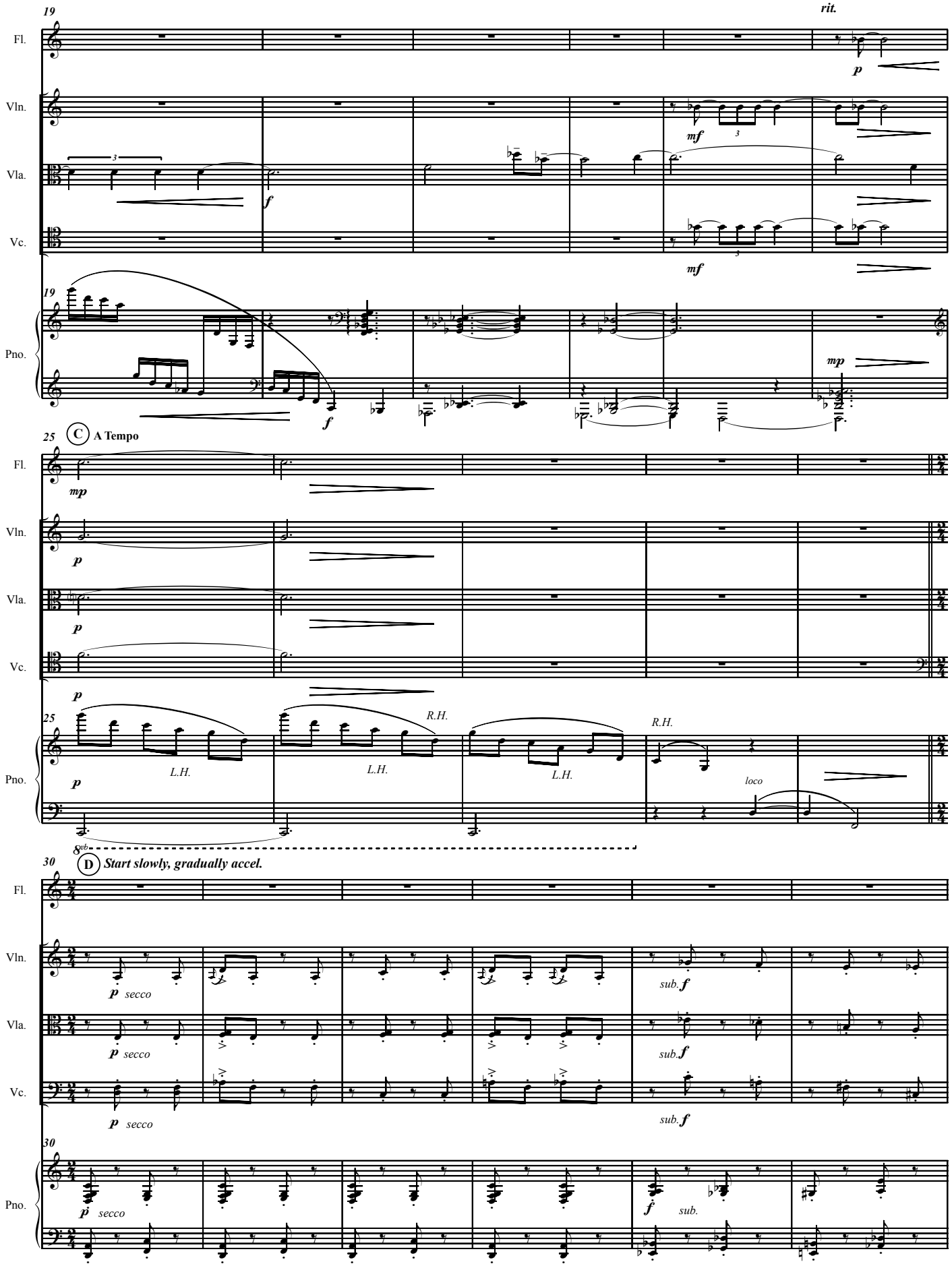
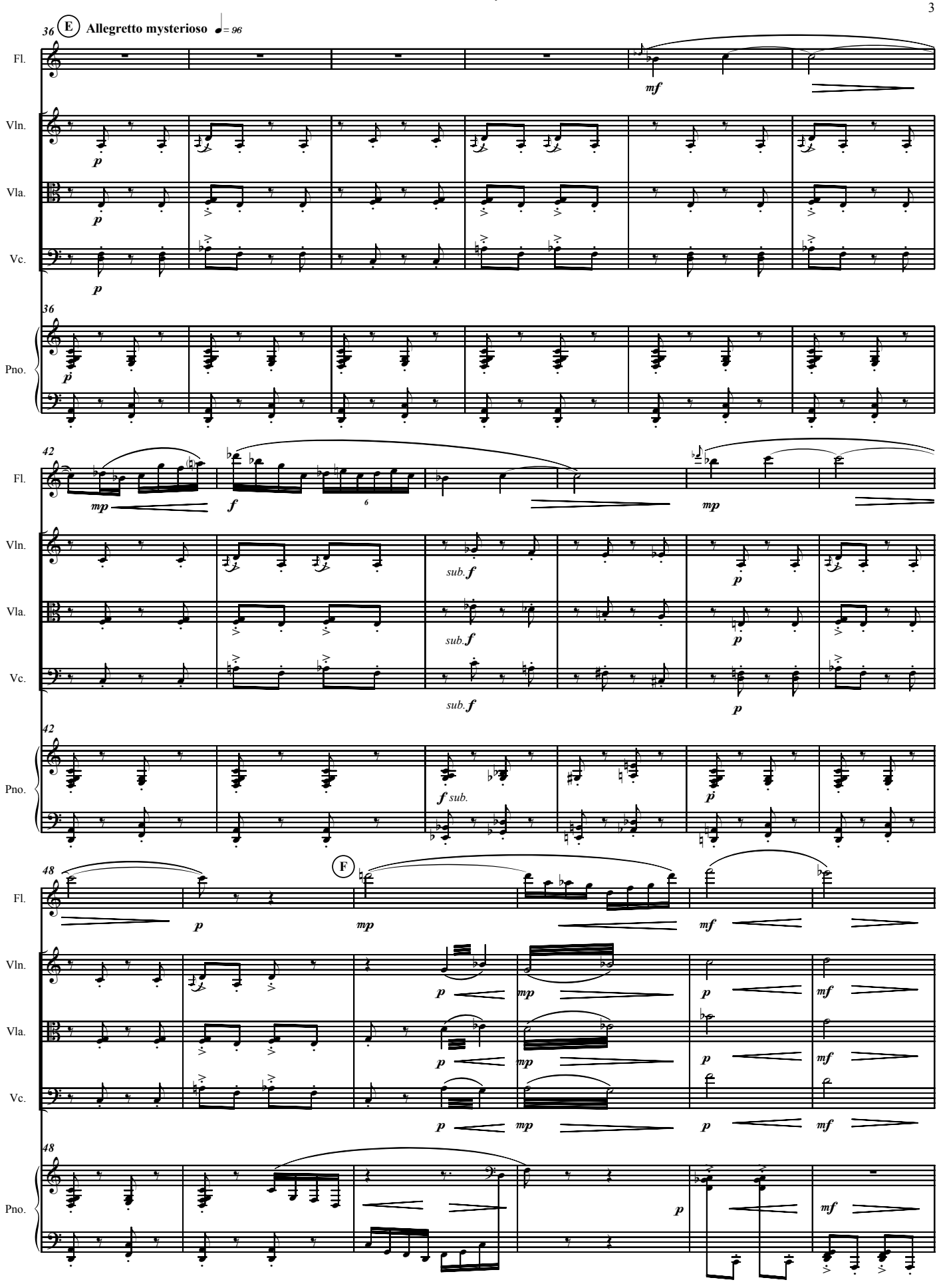
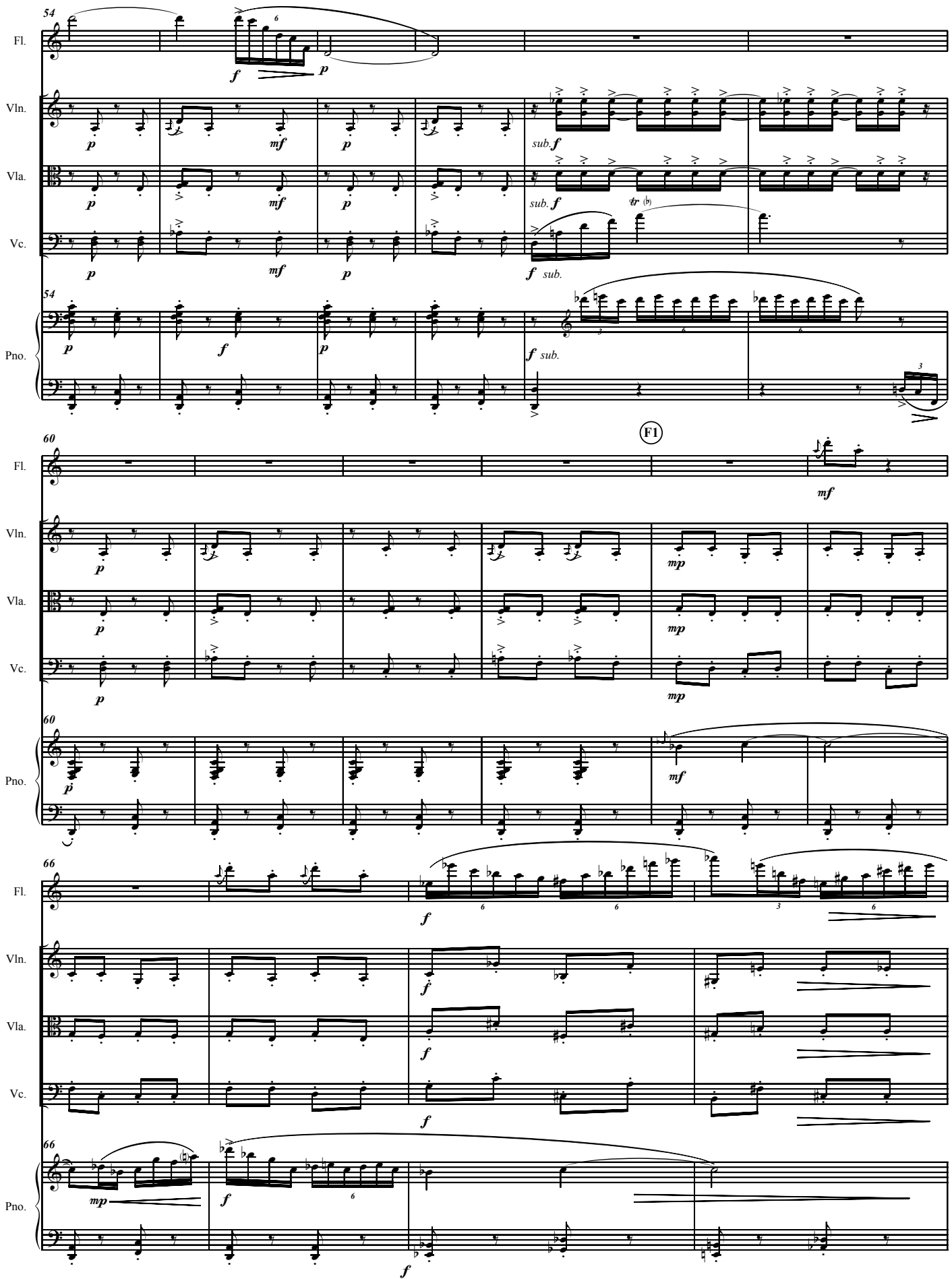
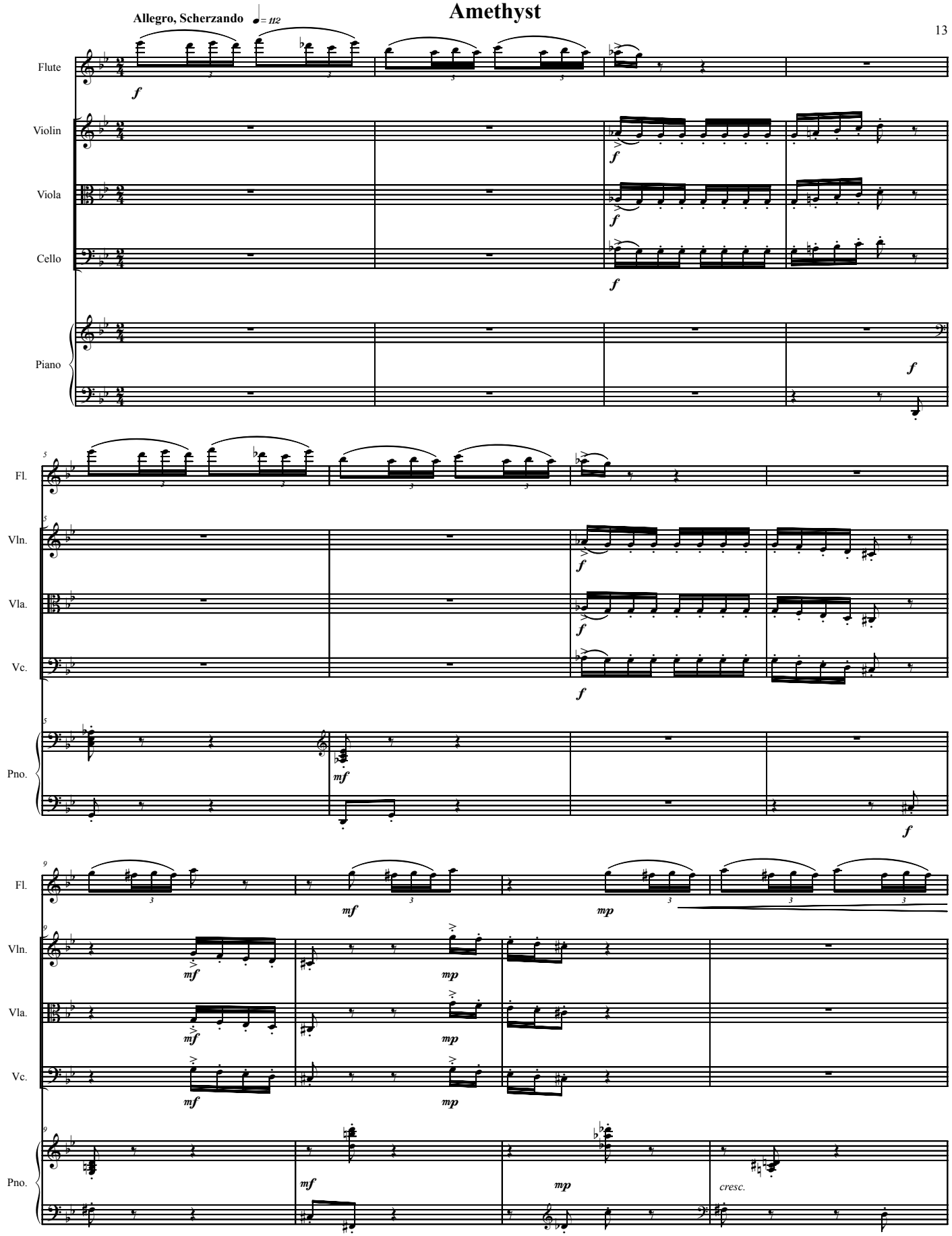
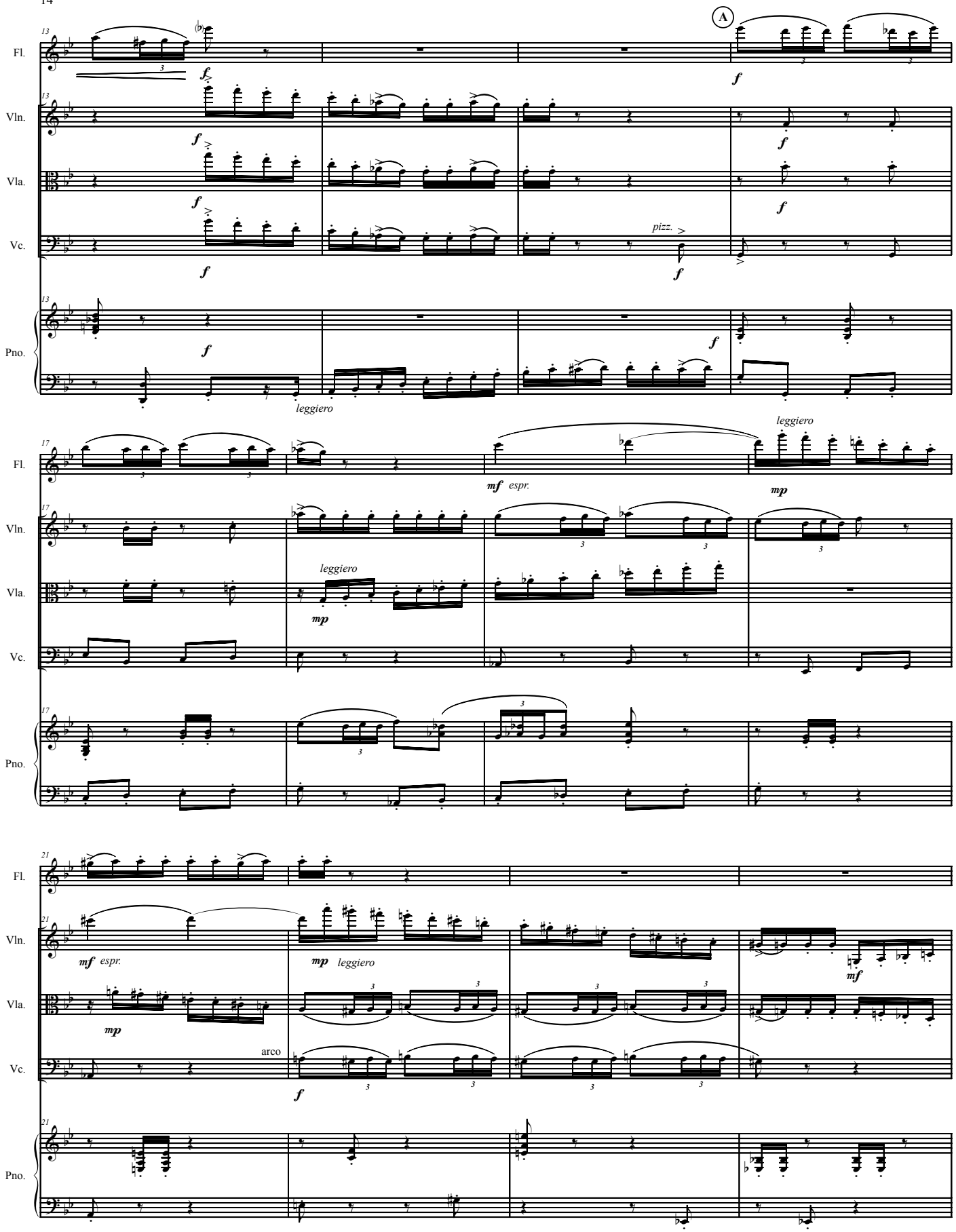

19
rit.
Fl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
p
mf
f
mp
25
C A Tempo
L.H.
R.H.
loco
8vb
30
D Start slowly, gradually accel.
p secco
sub. f
sub.

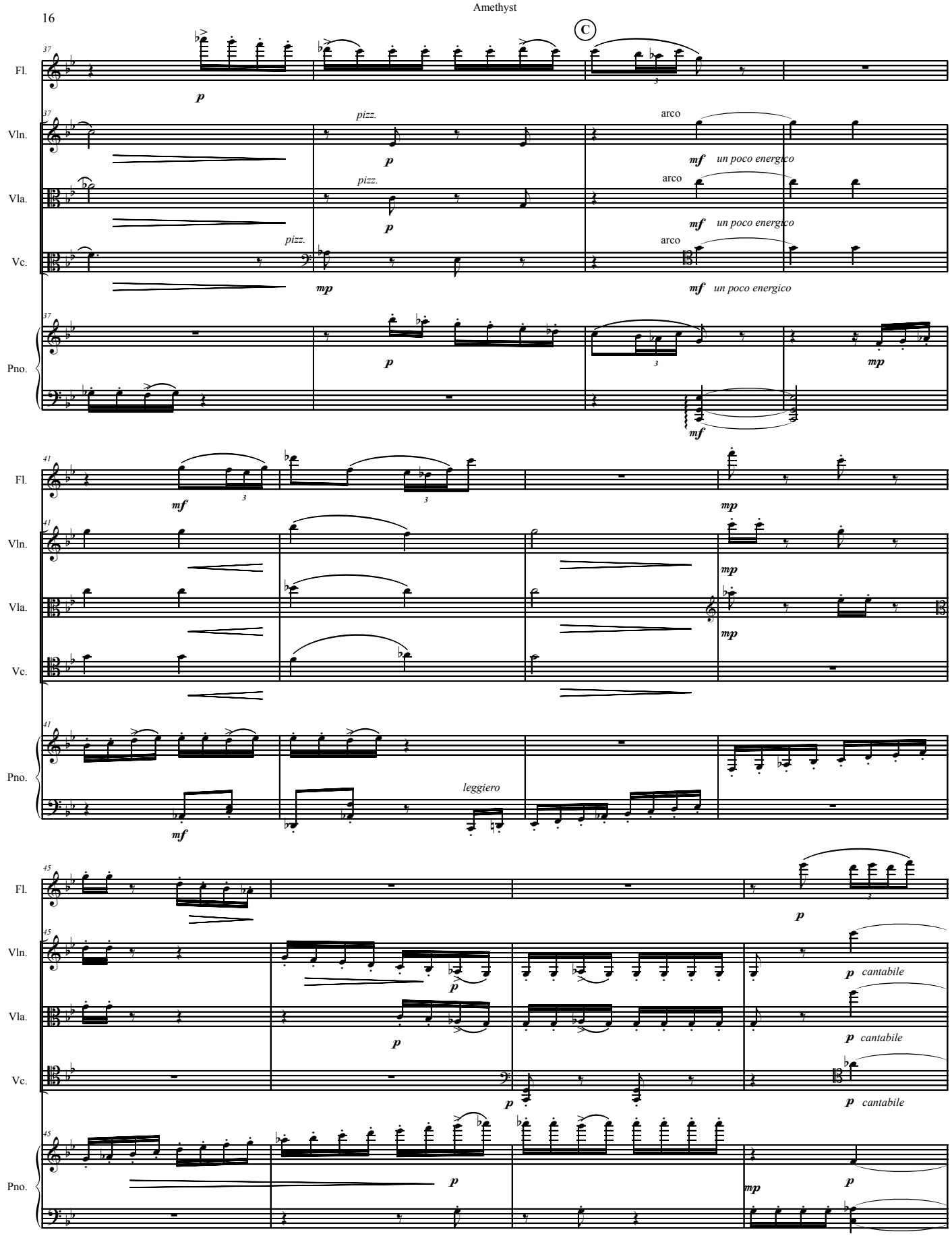

36
E
Allegretto mysterioso
♩= 96
Fl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
mf
p
36
42
mp
f
6
sub. f
42
f sub.
48
F
48

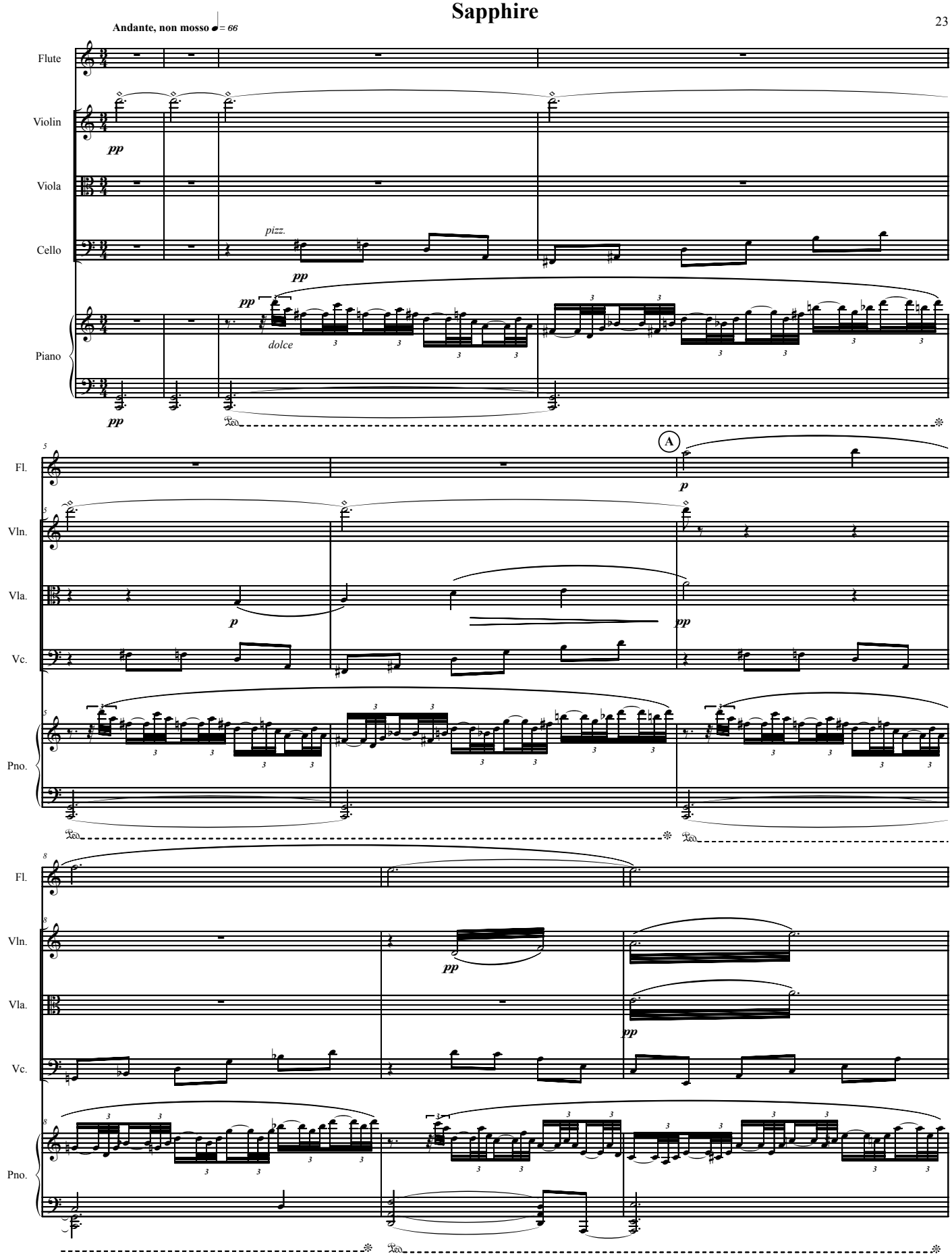

54
Fl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
sub.
tr
60
F1
66

Amethyst

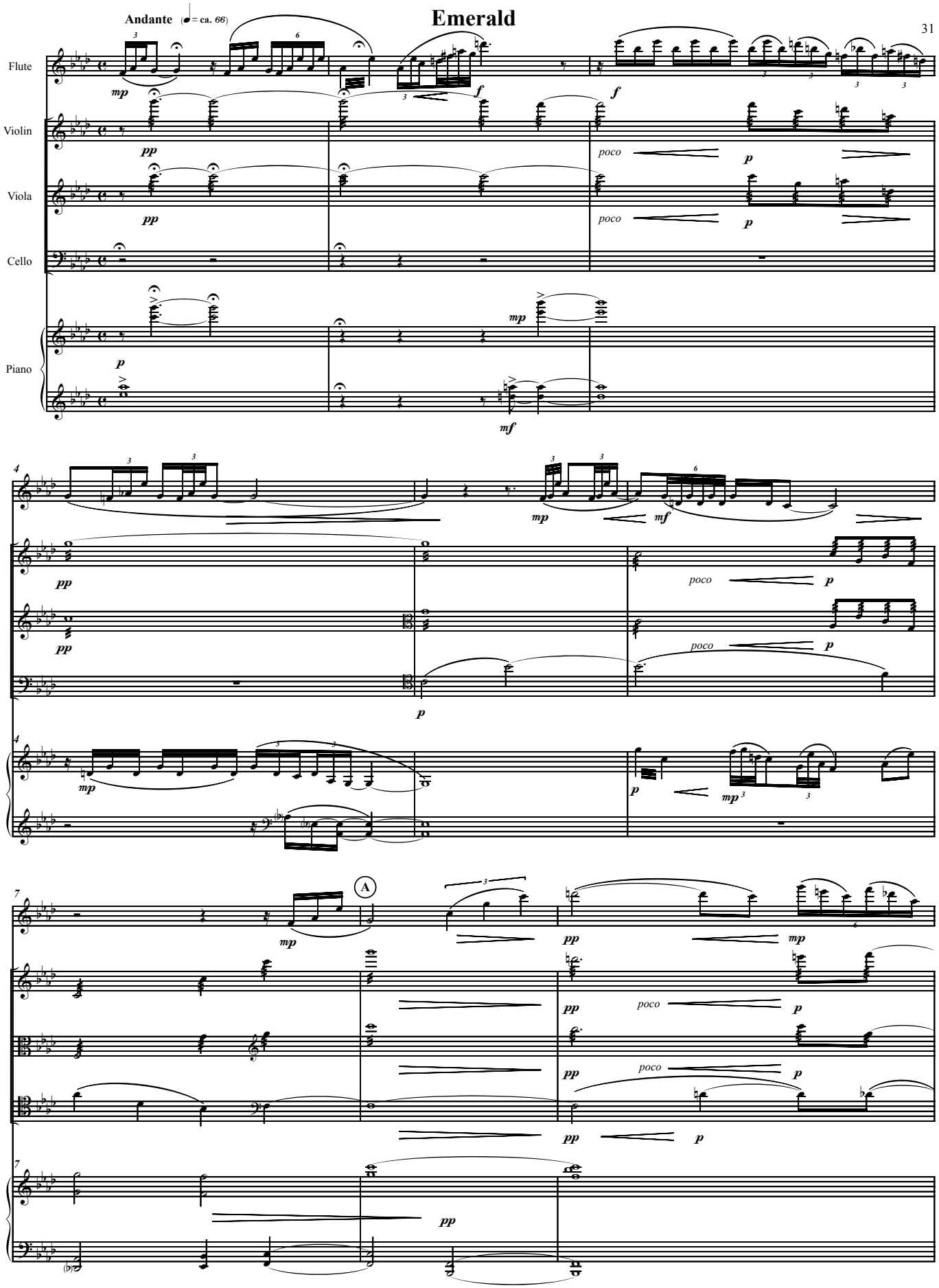

Allegro, Scherzando
♩= 112
Flute
Violin
Viola
Cello
Piano
Fl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
cresc.


A
Fl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
pizz.
leggiero
mf espr.
mp
arco


C
37
Fl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
p
pizz.
arco
mf
un poco energico
mp
41
leggiero
45
cantabile


Andante, non mosso ♩= 66
Flute
Violin
Viola
Cello
Piano
pizz.
dolce
A
Fl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.

Emerald


Andante (♩= ca. 66)
Flute
Violin
Viola
Cello
Piano
Fl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
poco
A