THREE DANCES

for string orchestra

KILE SMITH

TAU.IMPRINTS

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Three Dances was originally commissioned by the Lehigh Valley Chamber Orchestra, Donald Spieth, Music Director, and premiered by them on March 9th, 10th, and 11th, 1995. That version is for double winds (2nd flute alternating with piccolo), pairs of horns and trumpets, one percussionist, and strings.

I then reorchestrated it for string orchestra with one percussionist; that version was premiered by the Concerto Soloists (now the Chamber Orchestra) of Philadelphia on November 8th, 1998. Both versions have been performed multiple times.

I was dissatisfied with the string orchestra version, however, and rewrote it again, at the end of 2012, eliminating the percussion altogether, and simplifying the string writing. I even got rid of the foot-stomping in the Country Dance, not because it displeased me so much, but more to see if I could retain the character of the work while transforming it into a traditional string ensemble.

The melody in the Introduction is the first half of the Lutheran chorale "Eins ist Not, ach Herr, dies Eine." In the Country Dance, the recurring melody, carried mostly by the lower voices, is a variant on an early American fuguing tune called "Eternal Day."

The Waltz is actually a passacaglia employing six pitches: D, F#, G, G#, A, C#. Every note in the movement is from this group. Whether the pitches create a scale or give the impression of the outline of a scale is debatable, but the large gaps and the reliance on the tritone abet the feeling of absence and longing.

The beginning of the Fuguing Tune repeats the truncated chorale of the Introduction, leaving the 6/8 section as the fuguing part. The melody here is a variant of the English carol "A Virgin Most Pure." The second half of the Lutheran chorale appears as the repeating bass line in this movement at, for example, measures 21-25.

The duration is about 11 minutes.

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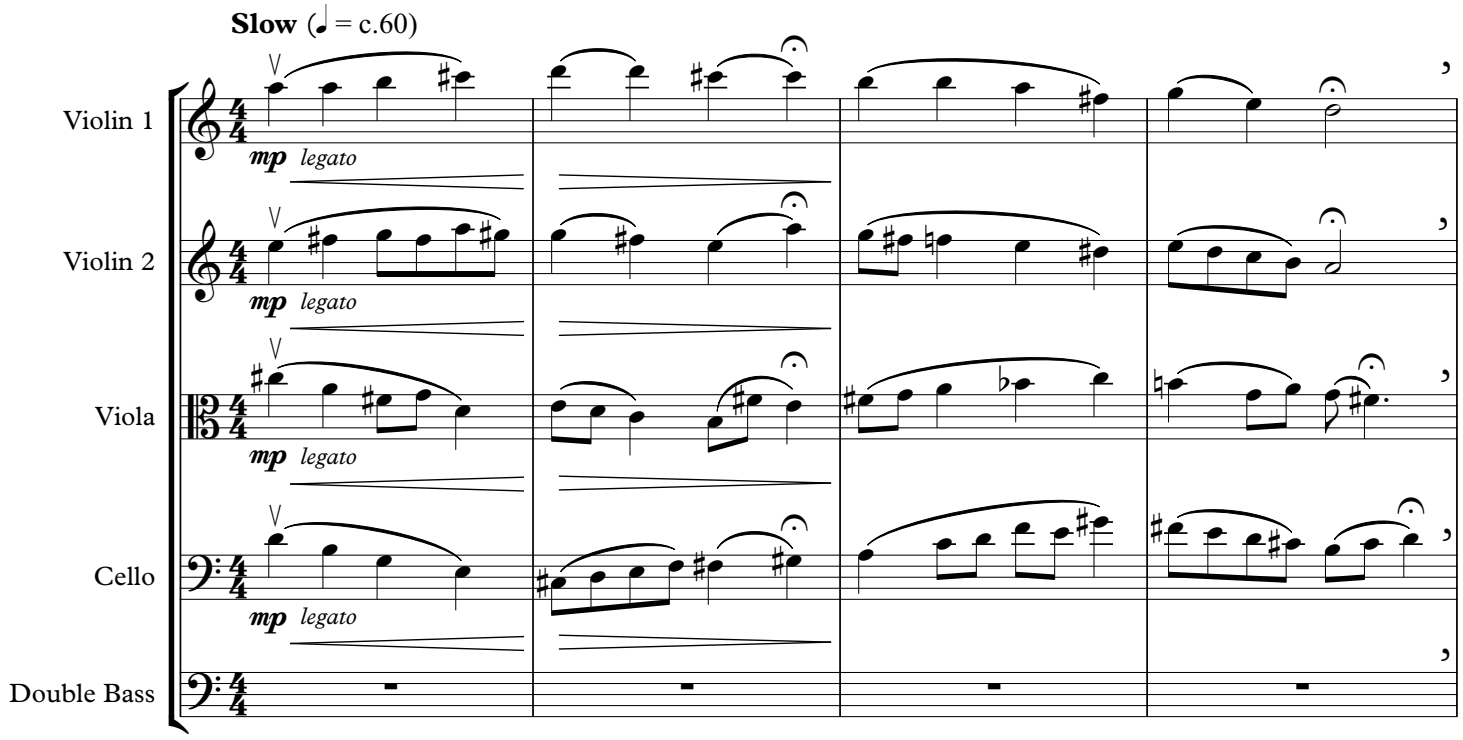
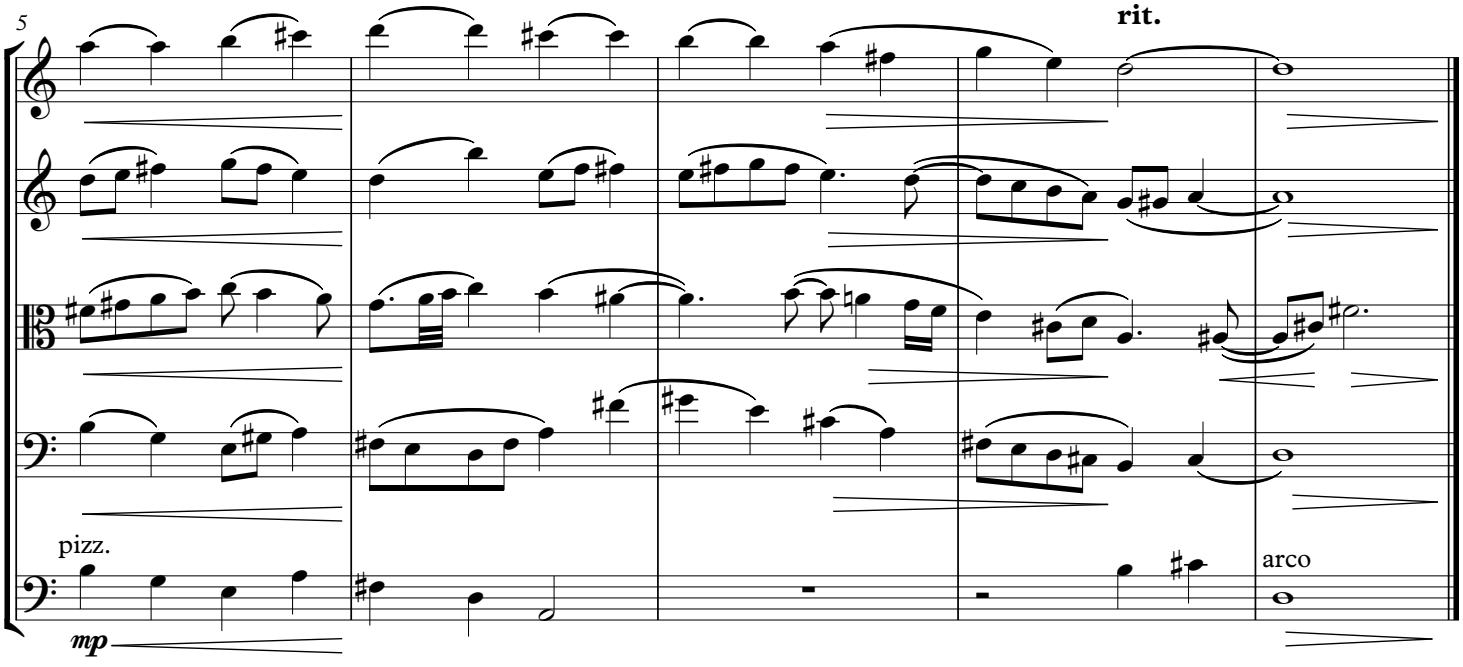
Introduction





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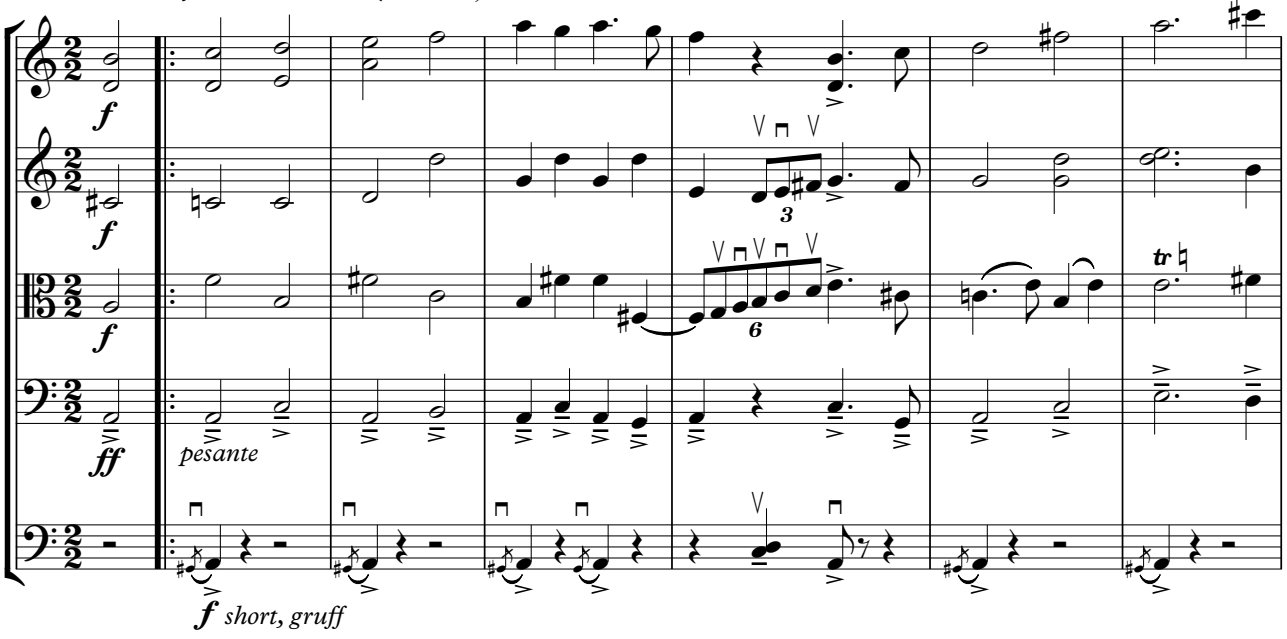
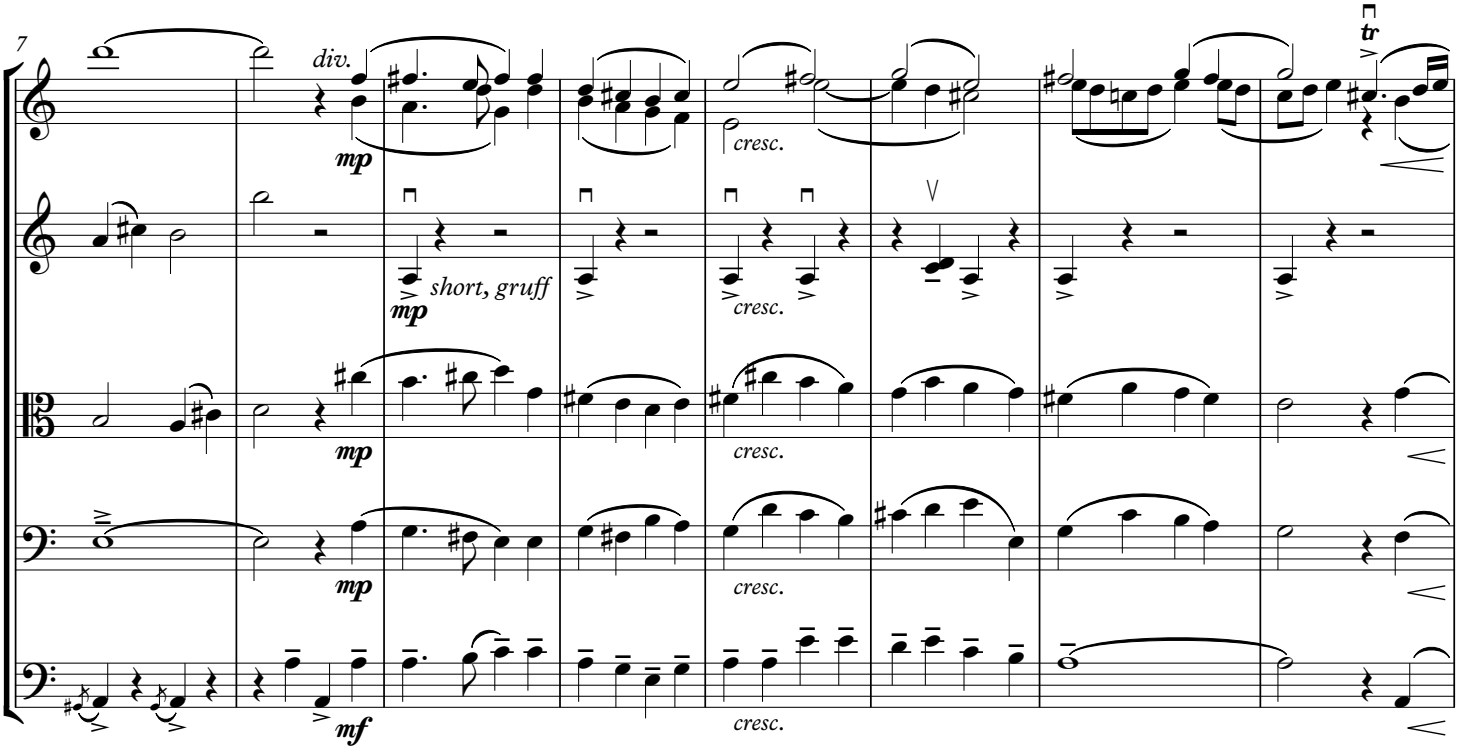
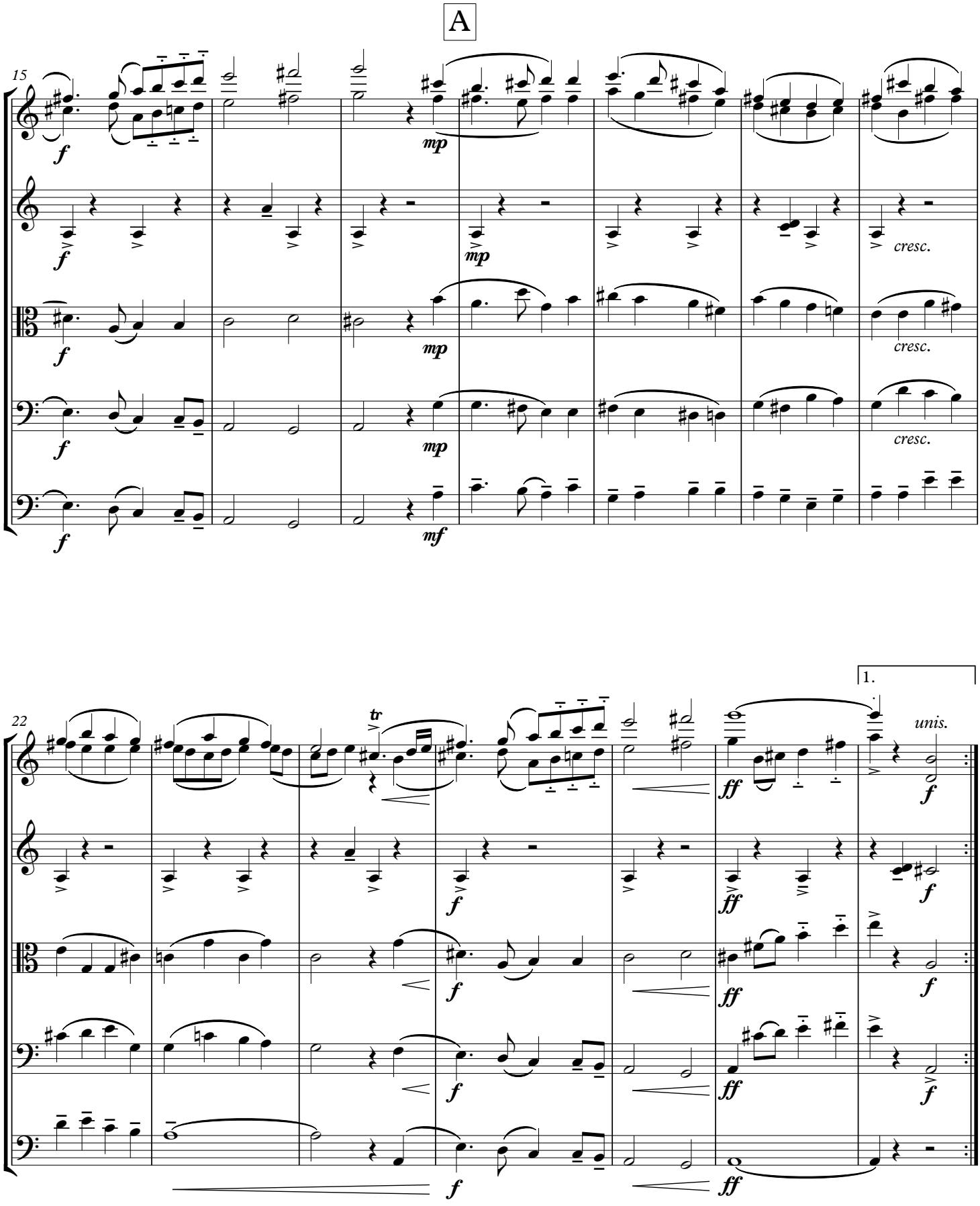
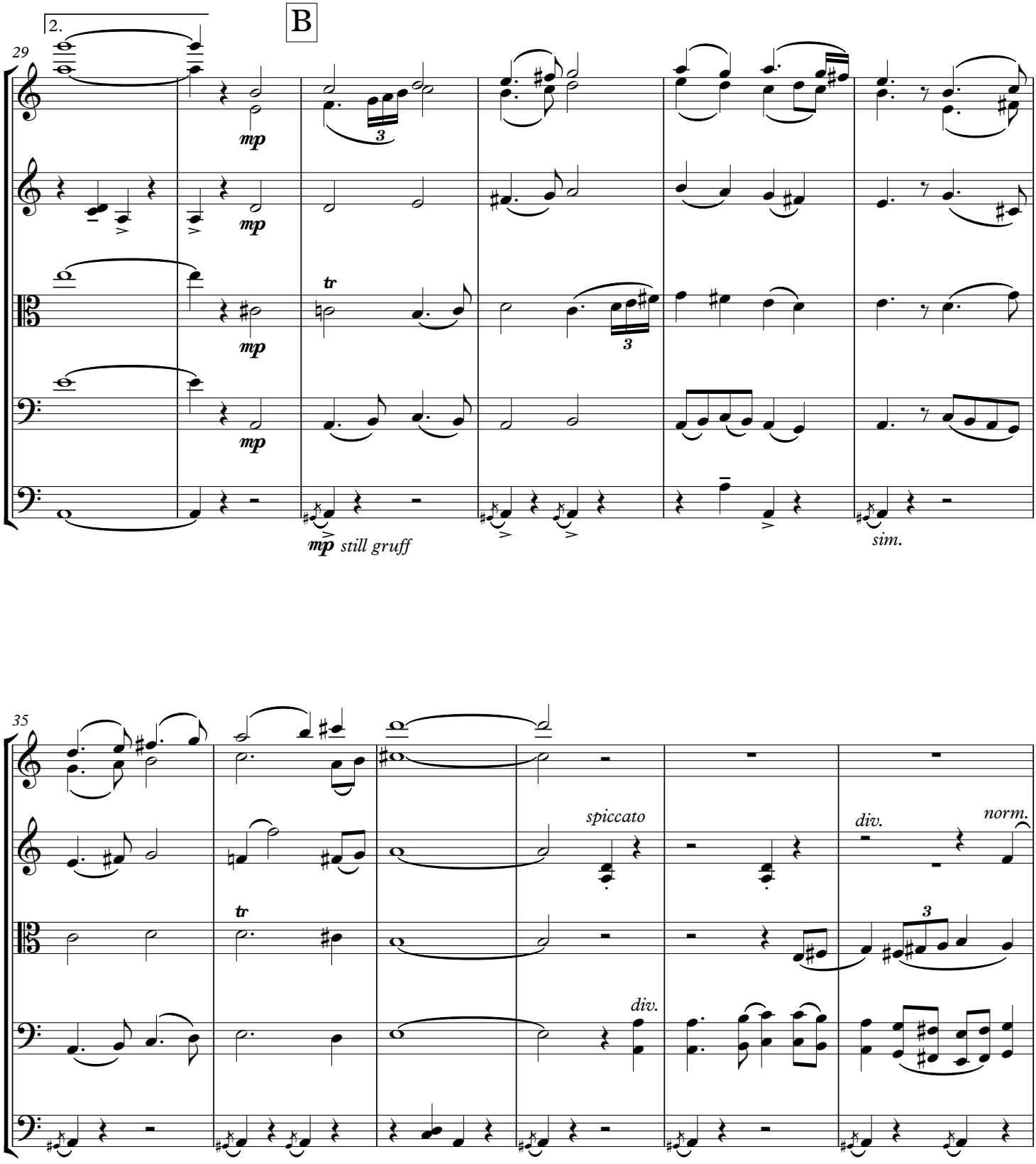
1. Country Dance

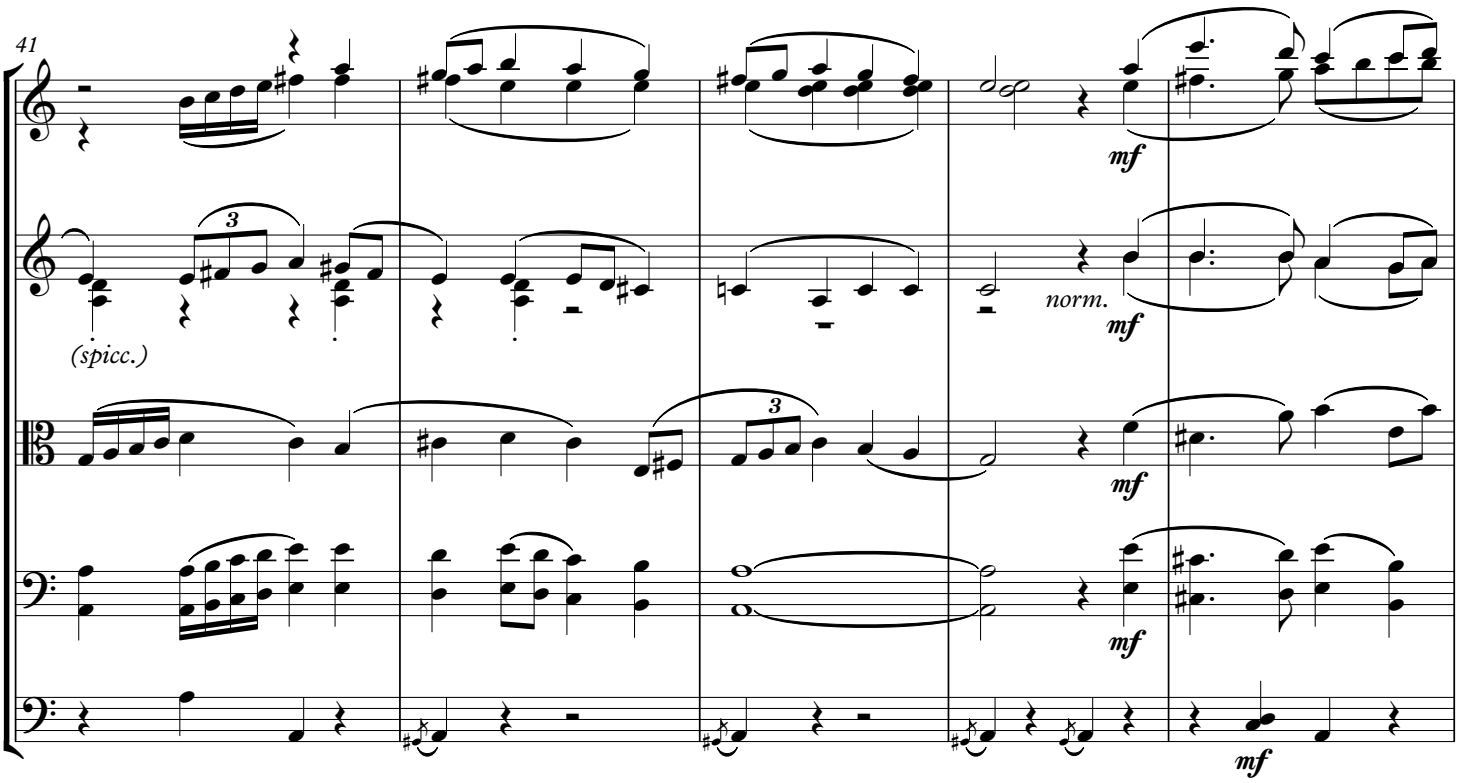
Forceful, not too slow (𝅗𝅥 = c.88)

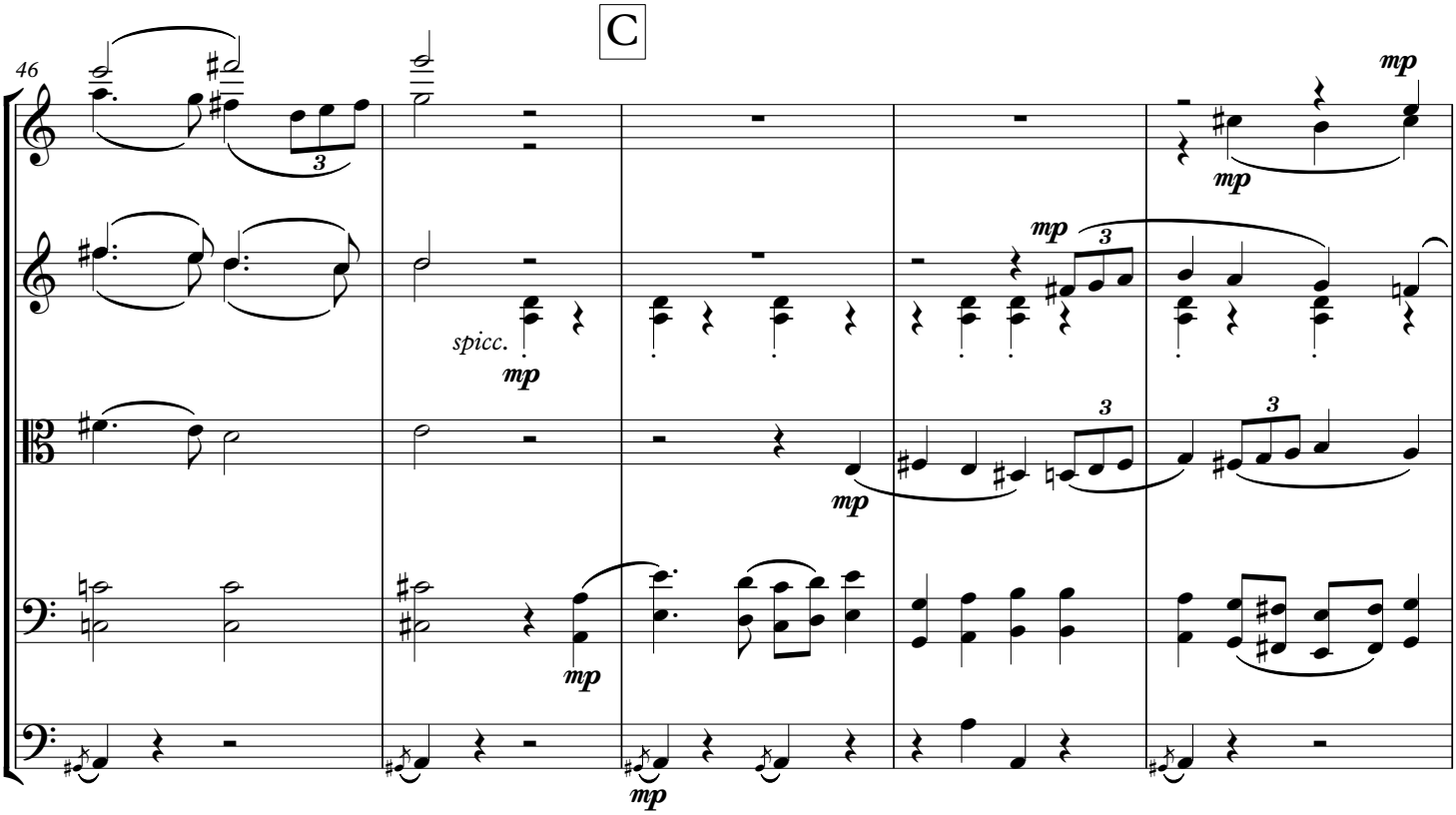


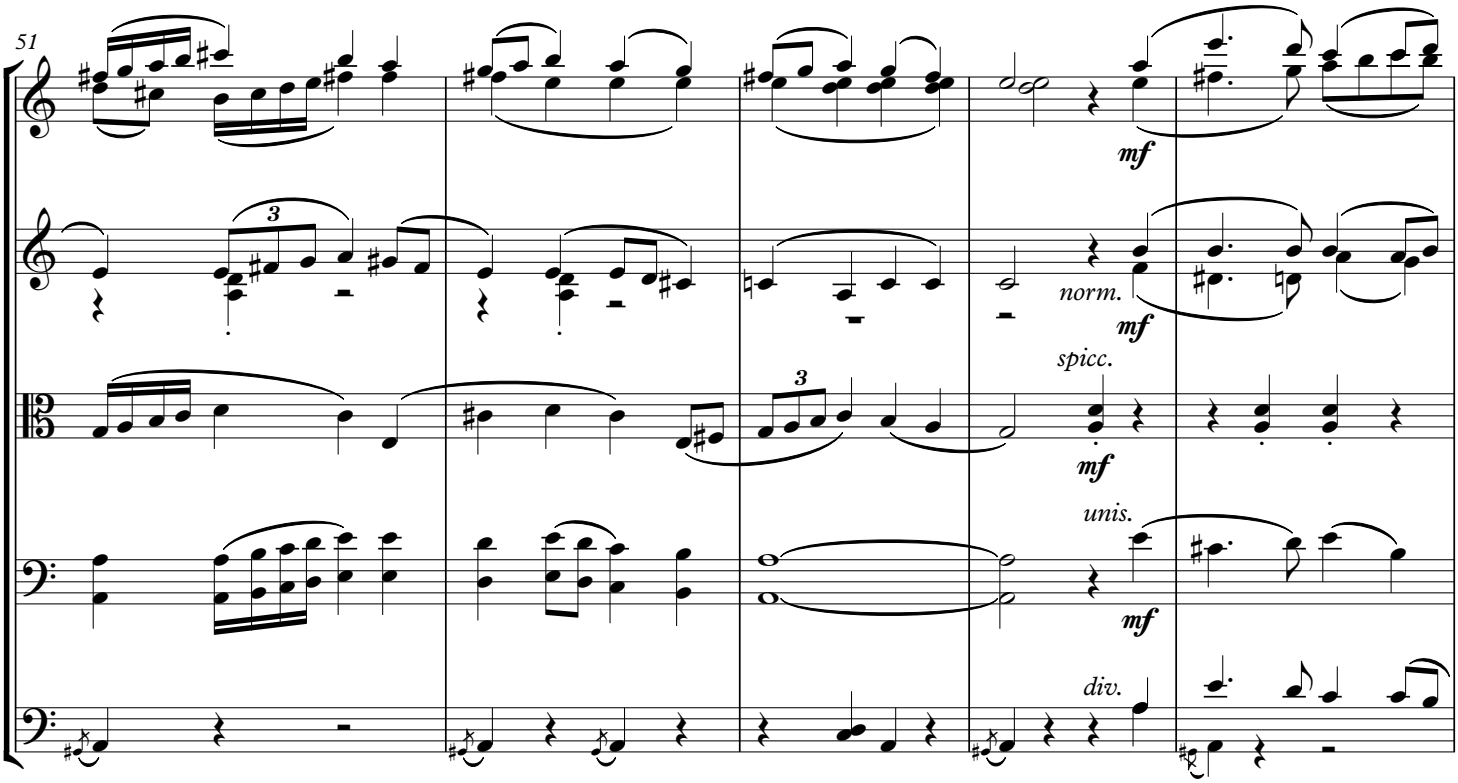


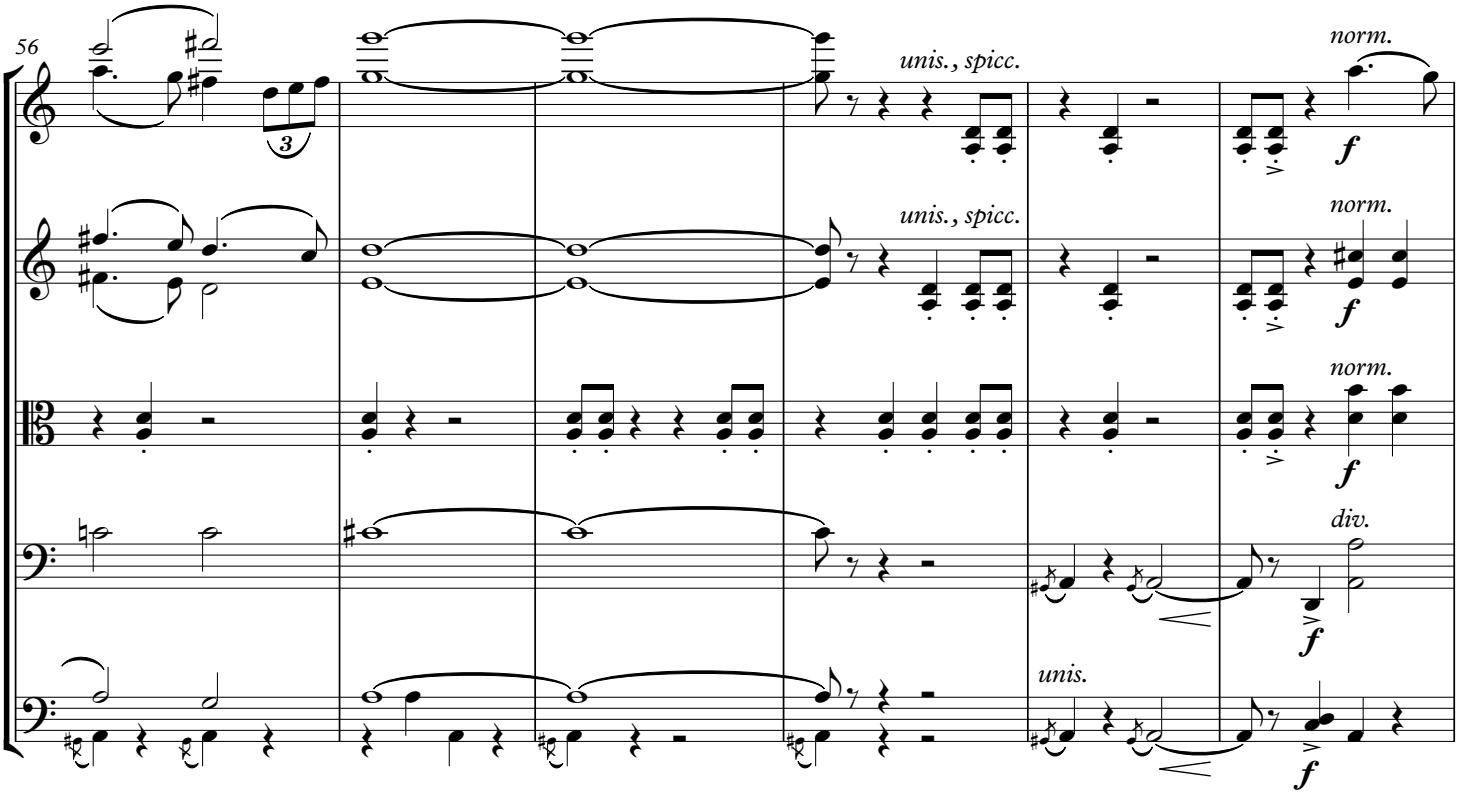

A
15
f
mp
cresc.
mf
1.
22
tr
ff
unis.

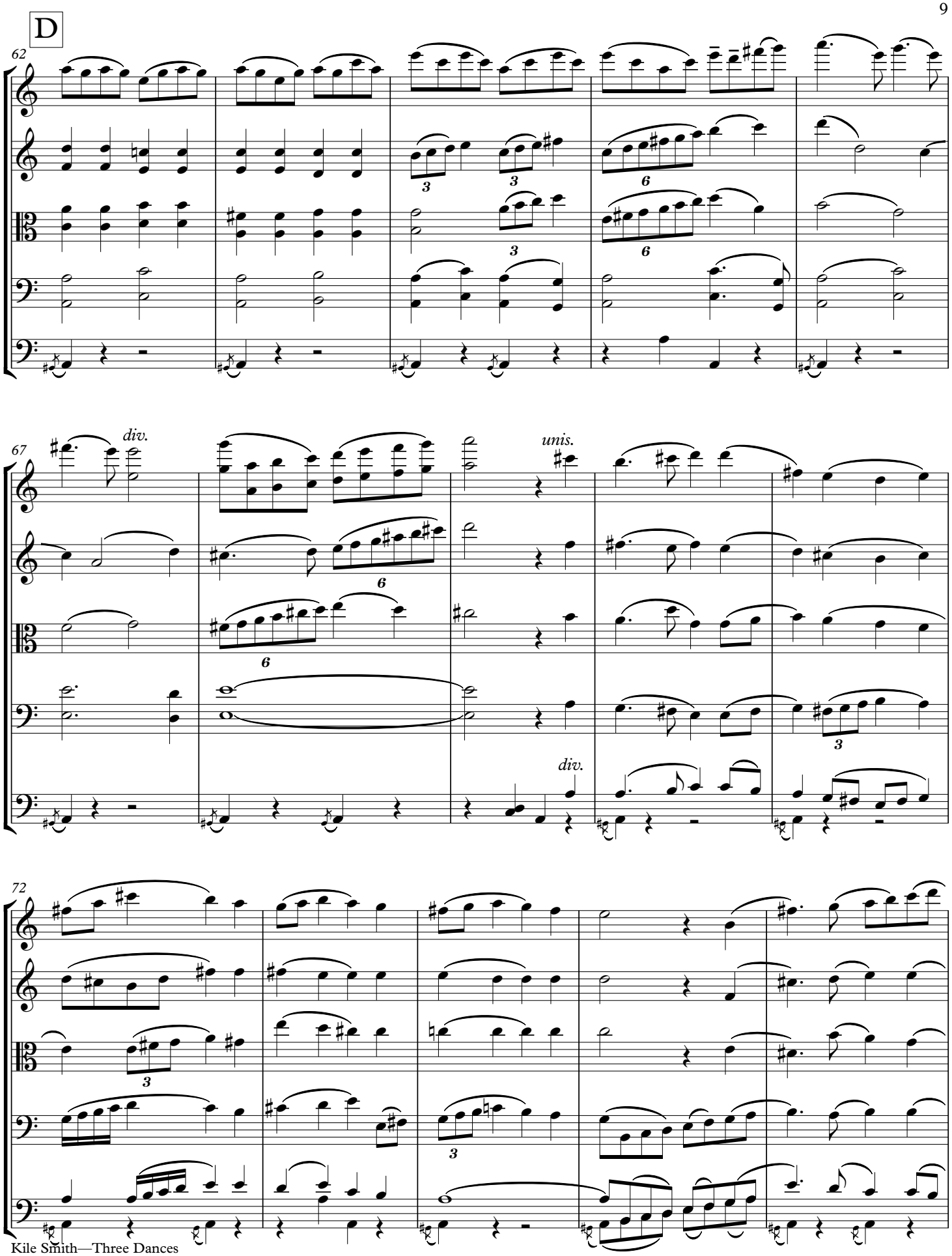

2.
B
29
mp
mp
mp
mp
tr
3
3
mp still gruff
sim.
35
tr
spiccato
div.
div.
norm.
3

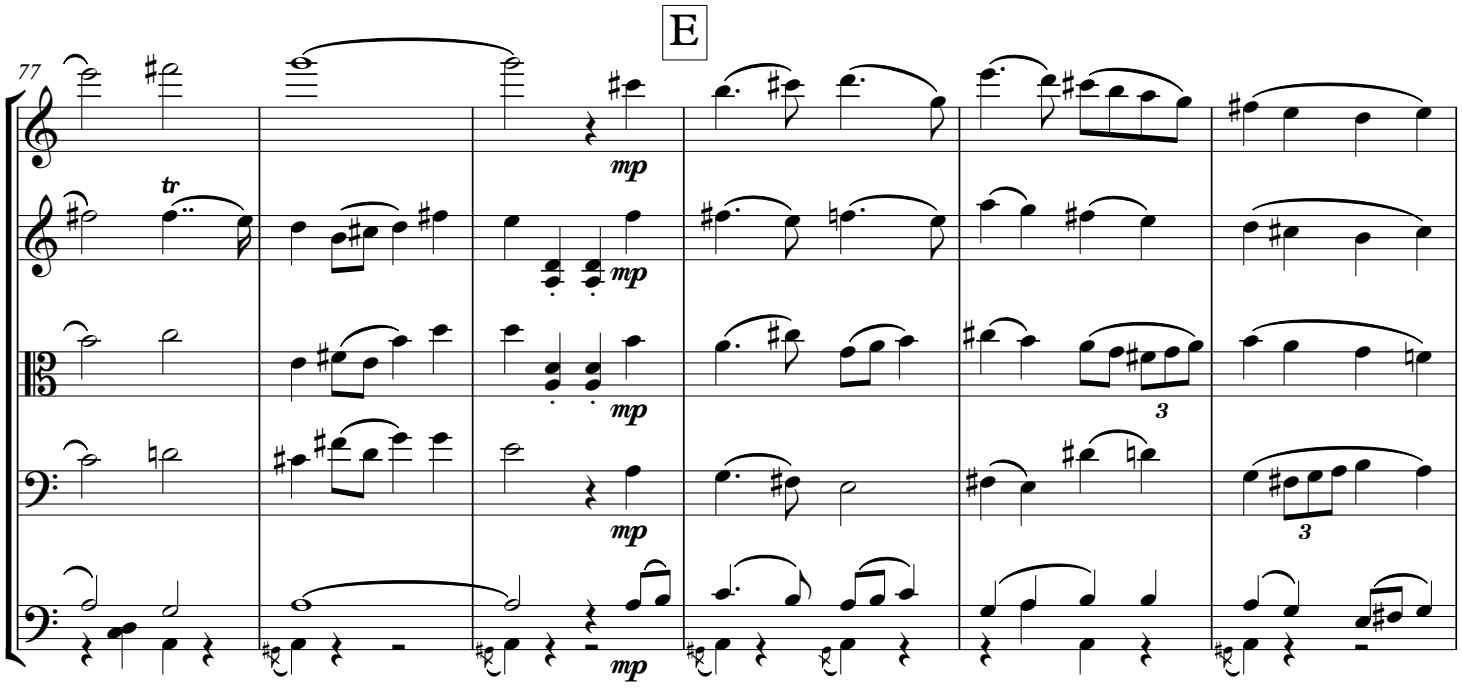

41
(spicc.)
norm.
mf

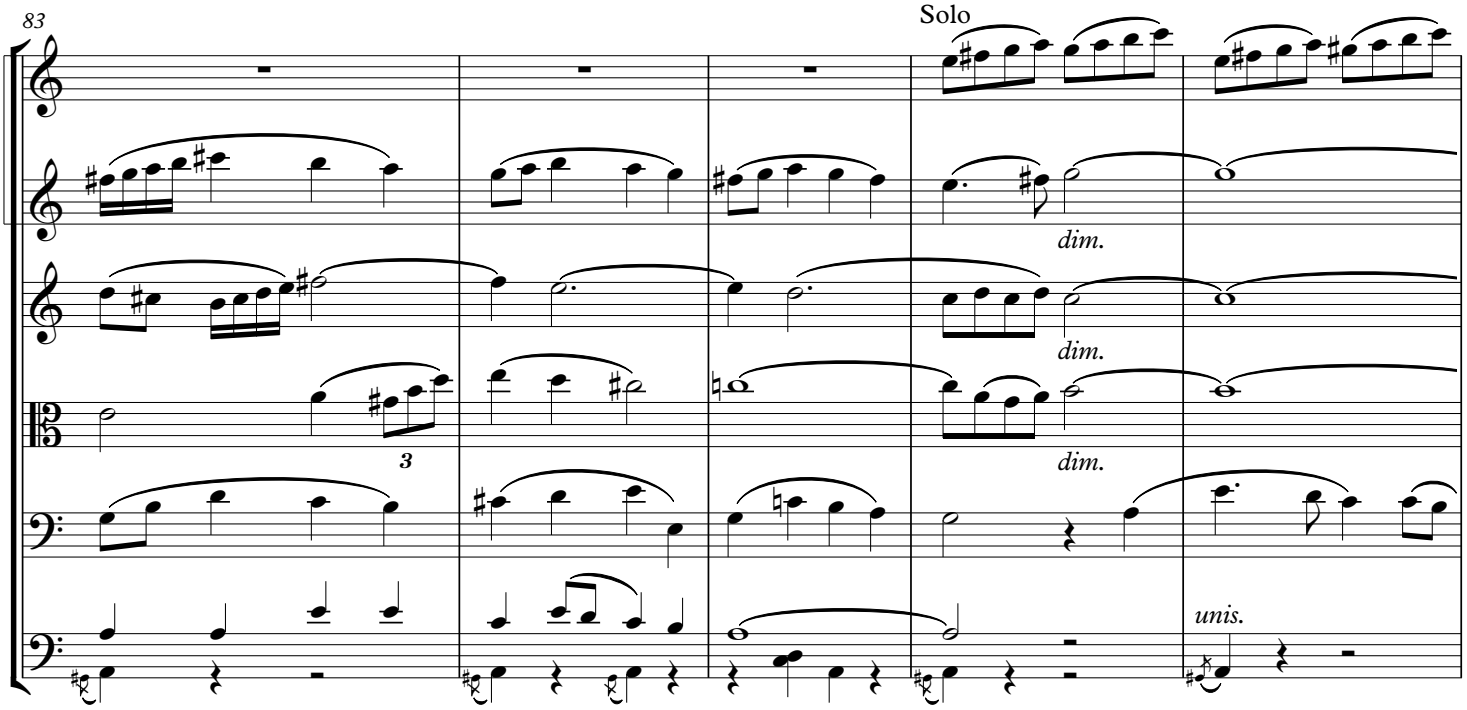

C
46
spicc.
mp

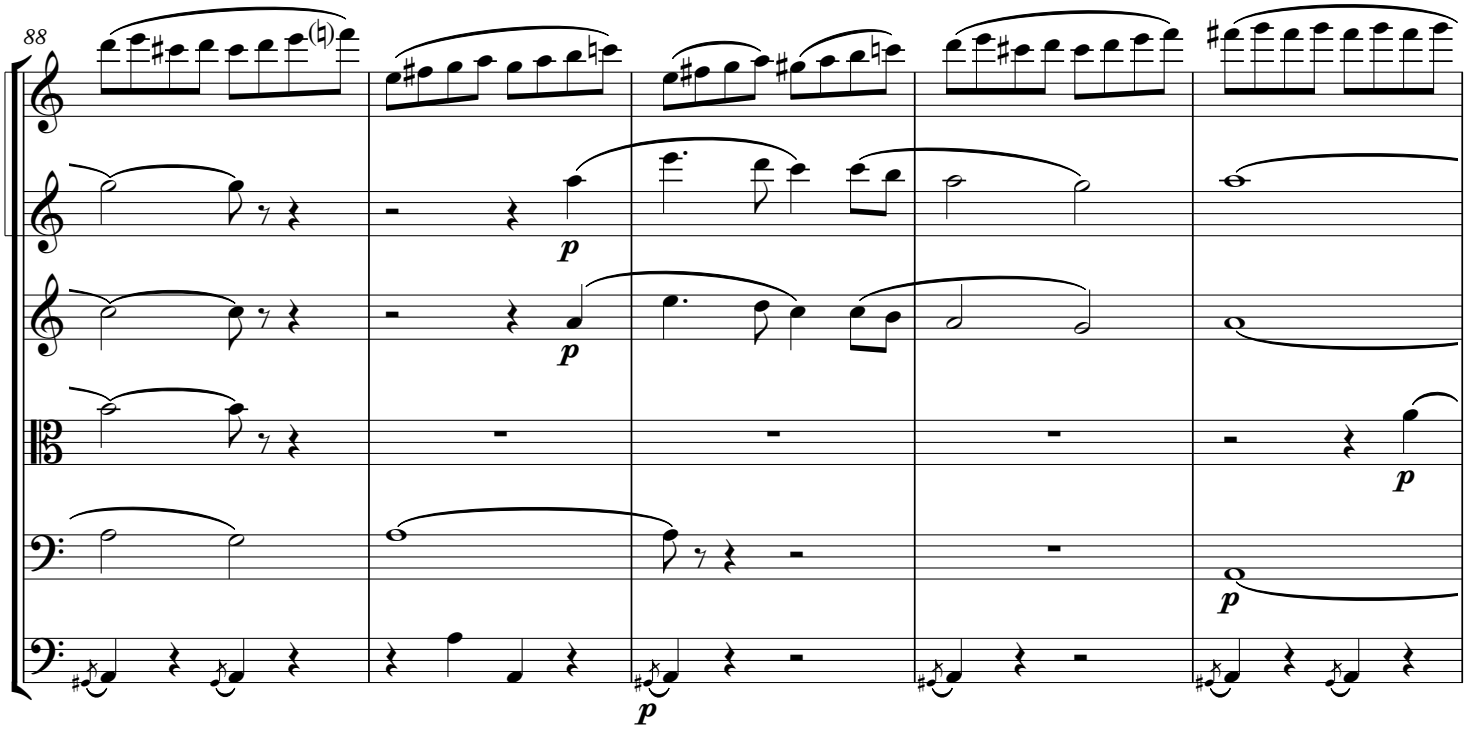

51
mf
norm.
mf
spicc.
mf
unis.
mf
div.

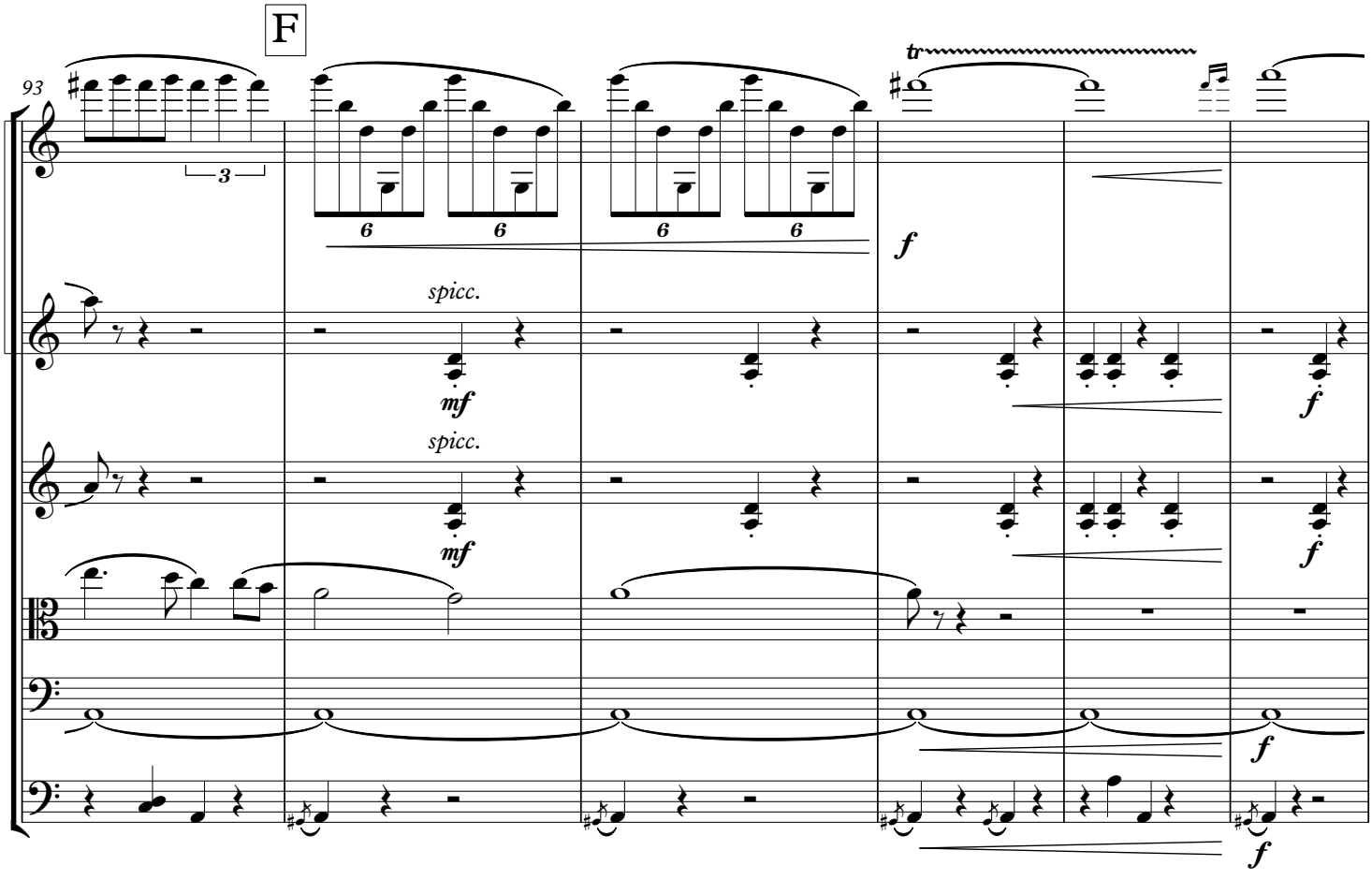

56
unis., spicc.
norm.
f
unis., spicc.
norm.
f
norm.
f
div.
f
unis.
f

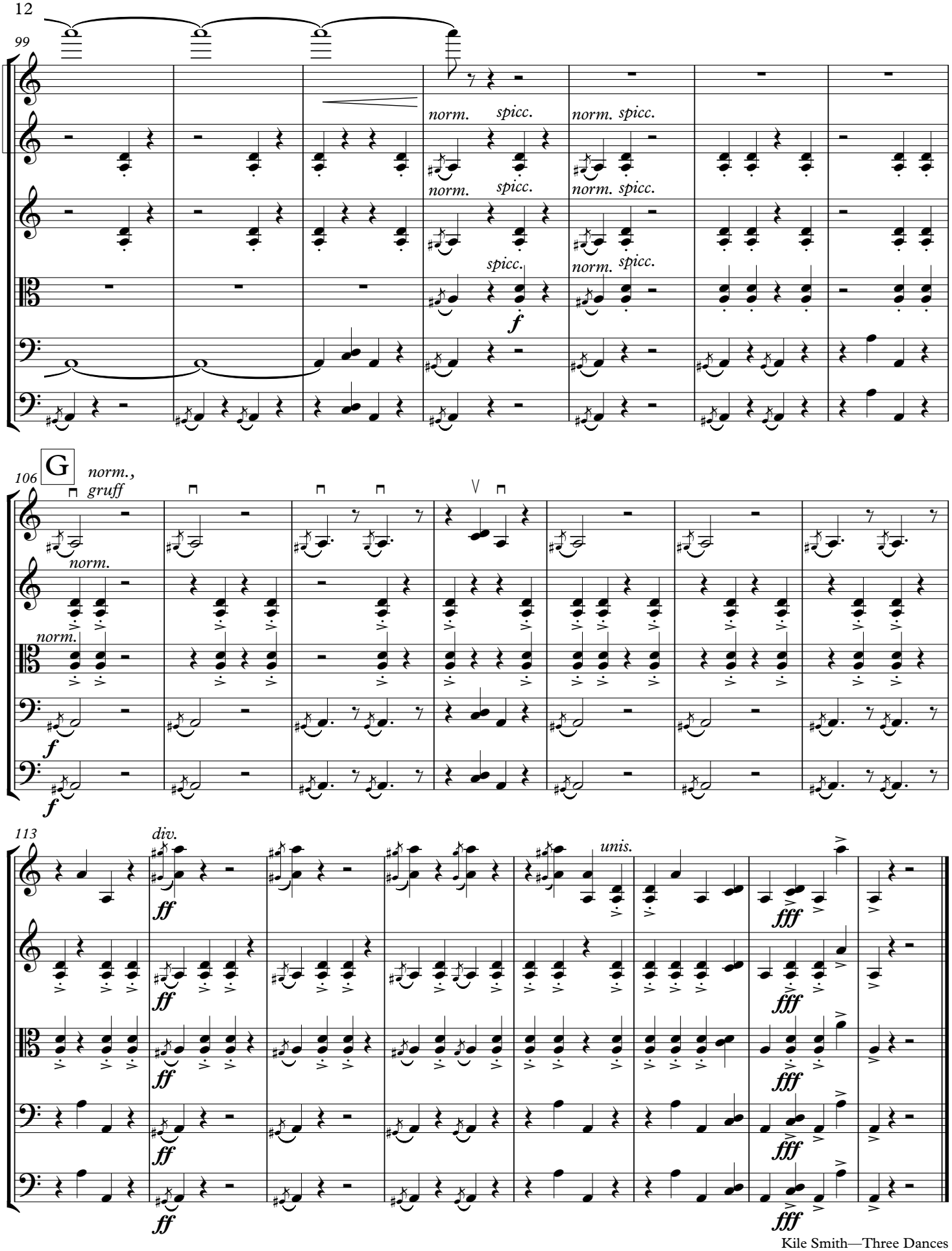

D
62
67
div.
unis.
div.
72


E
77
tr
mp
mp
mp
mp
3
3


83
Solo
dim.
dim.
dim.
3
unis.

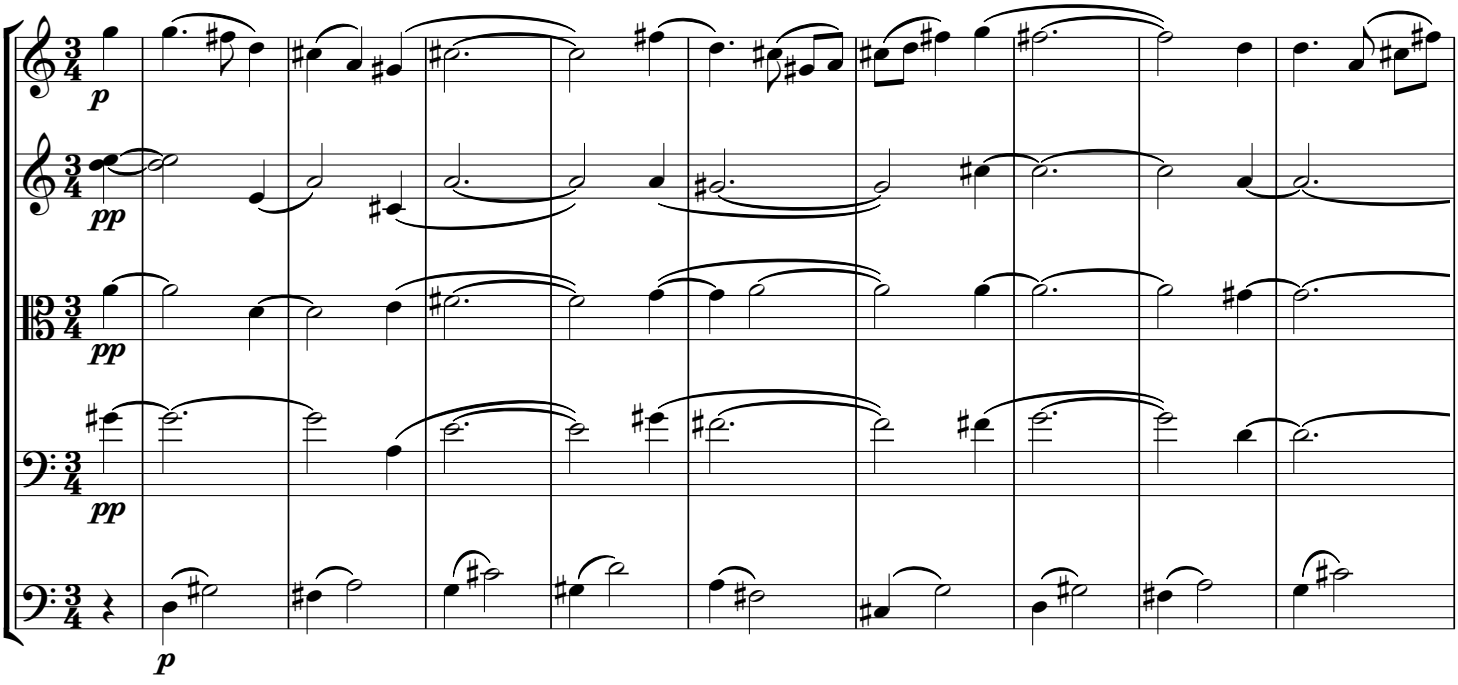

88
p
p
p
p

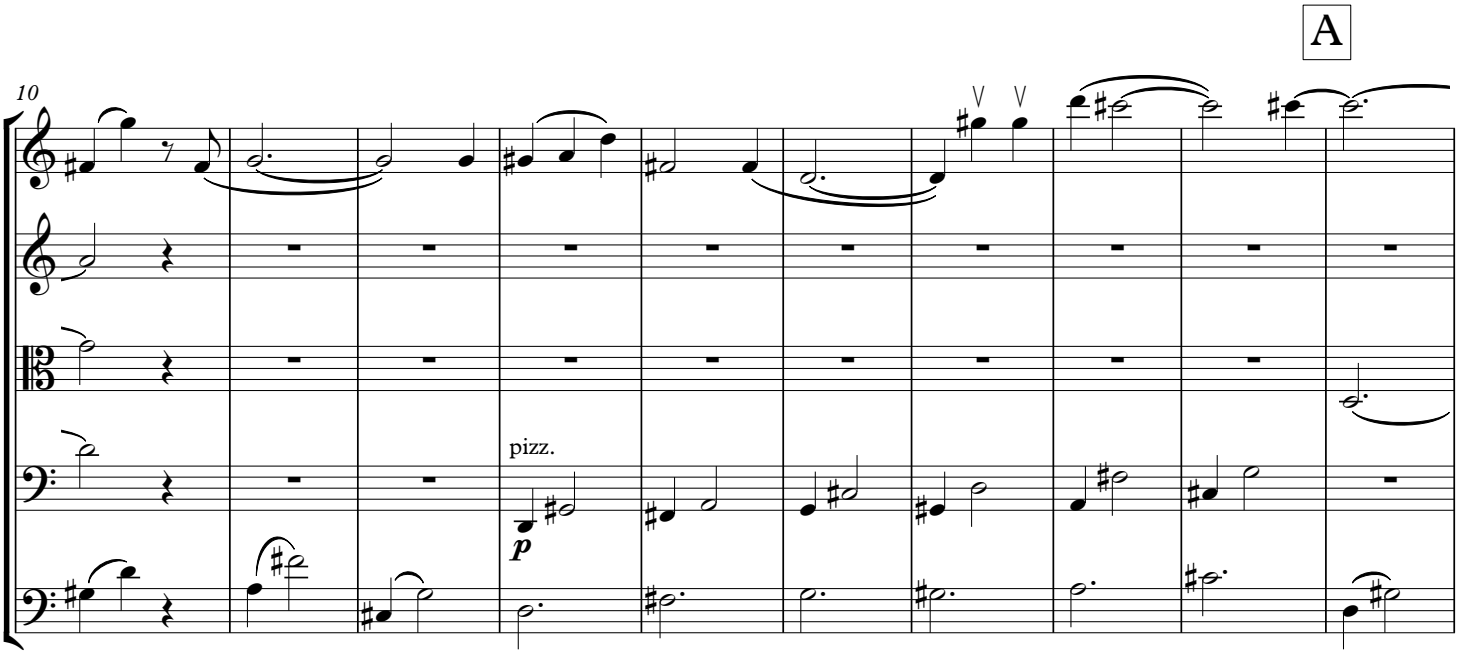

F
93
3
6
6
6
6
f
tr
spicc.
mf
spicc.
mf
f
f
f
f

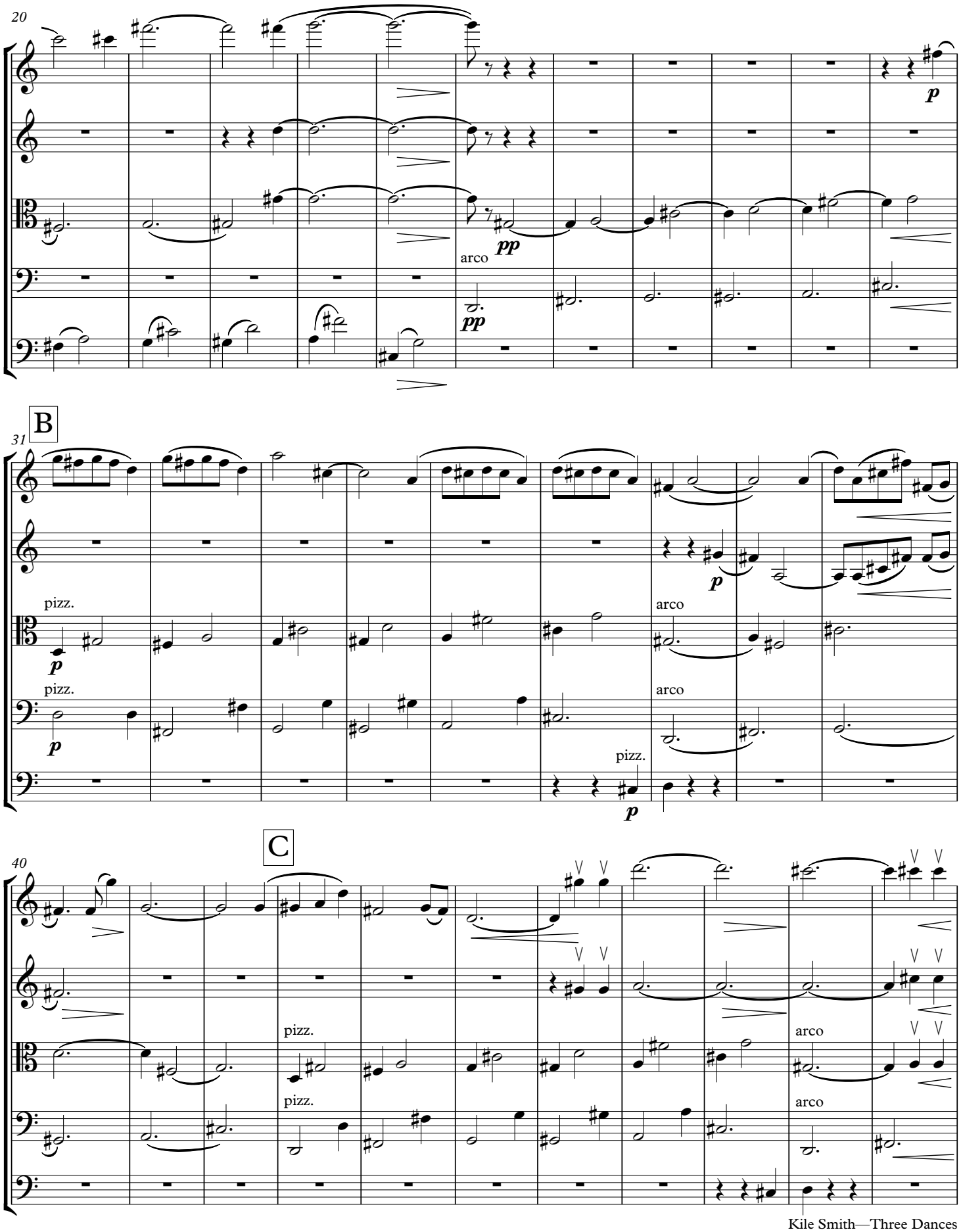

99
norm.
spicc.
norm. spicc.
norm.
spicc.
norm. spicc.
spicc.
norm. spicc.
f
106
G
norm.,
gruff
norm.
norm.
f
f
113
div.
unis.
ff
fff

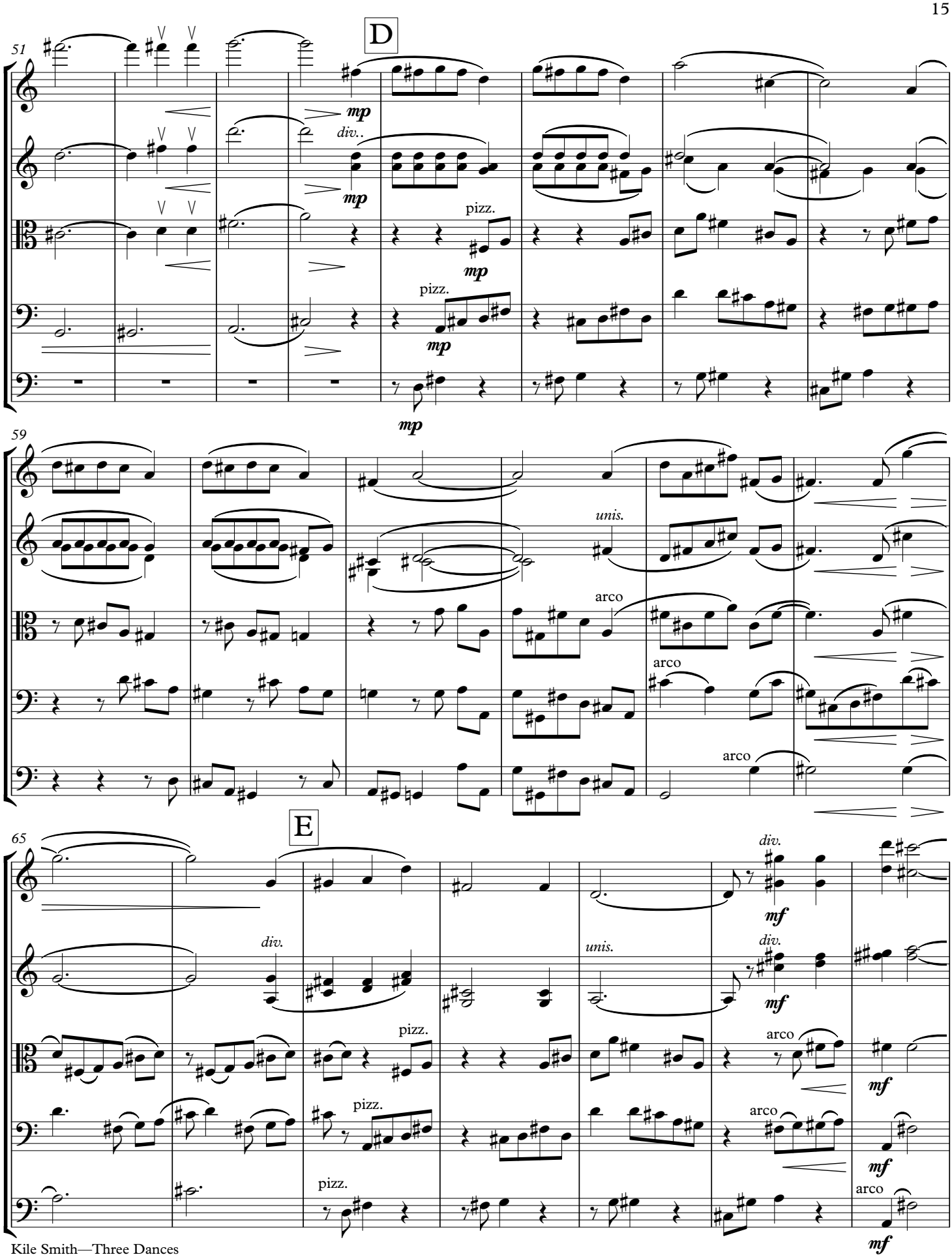
2. Waltz

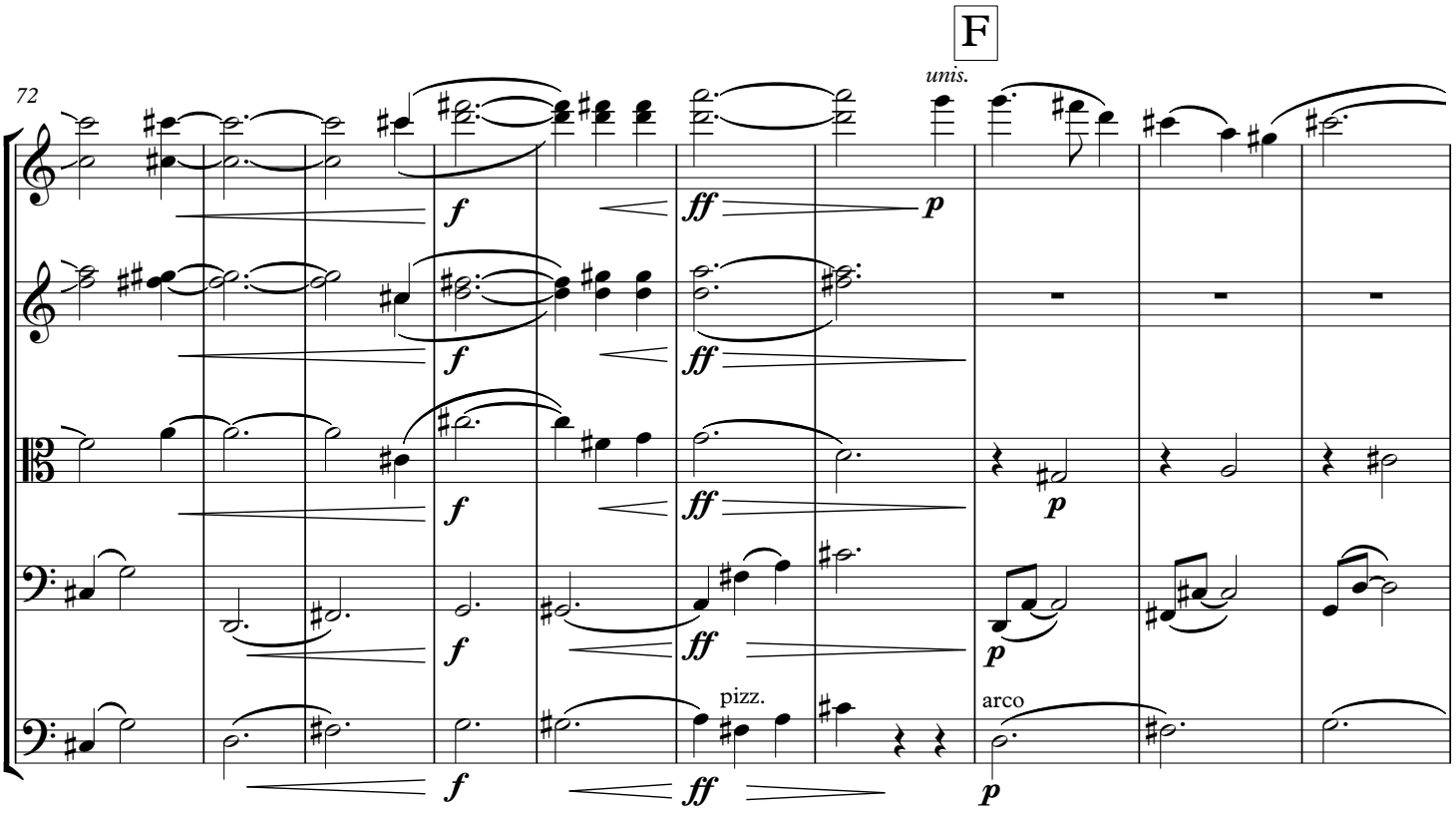
Moderate (♩ = c.86)

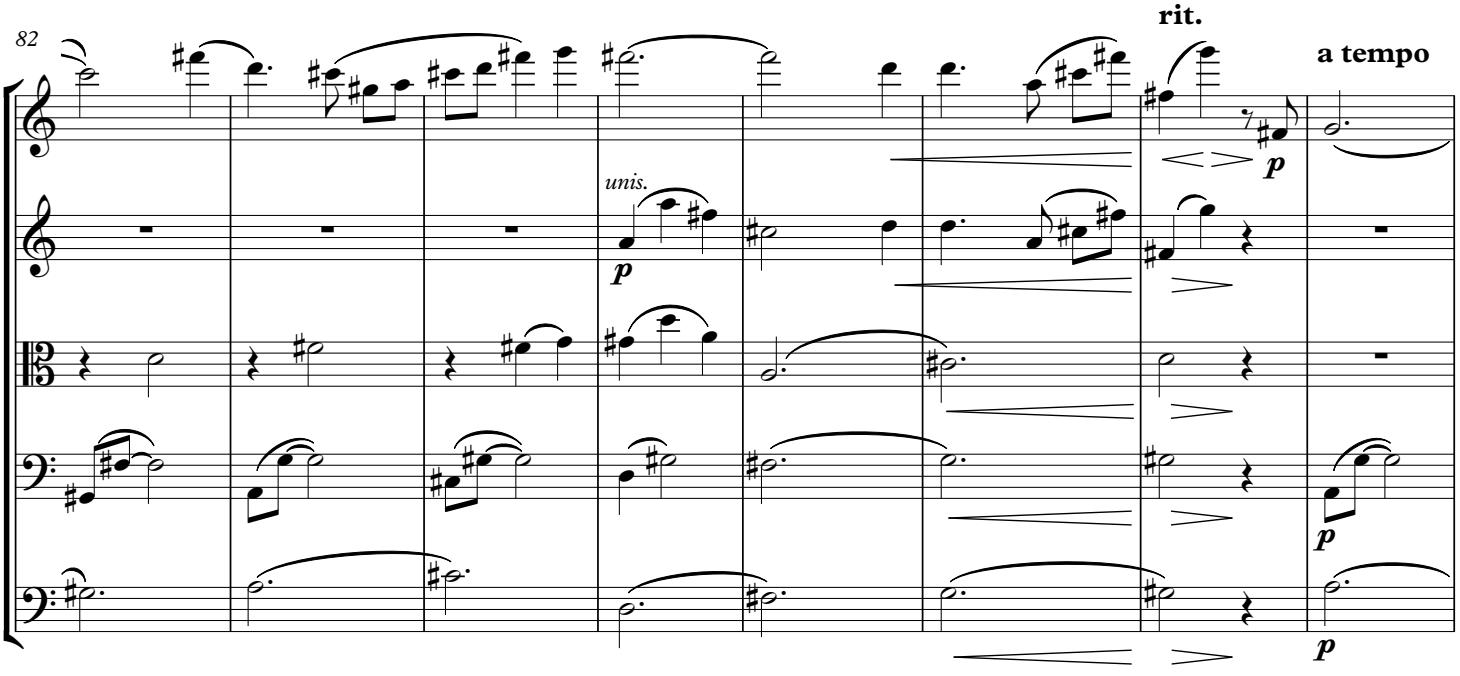


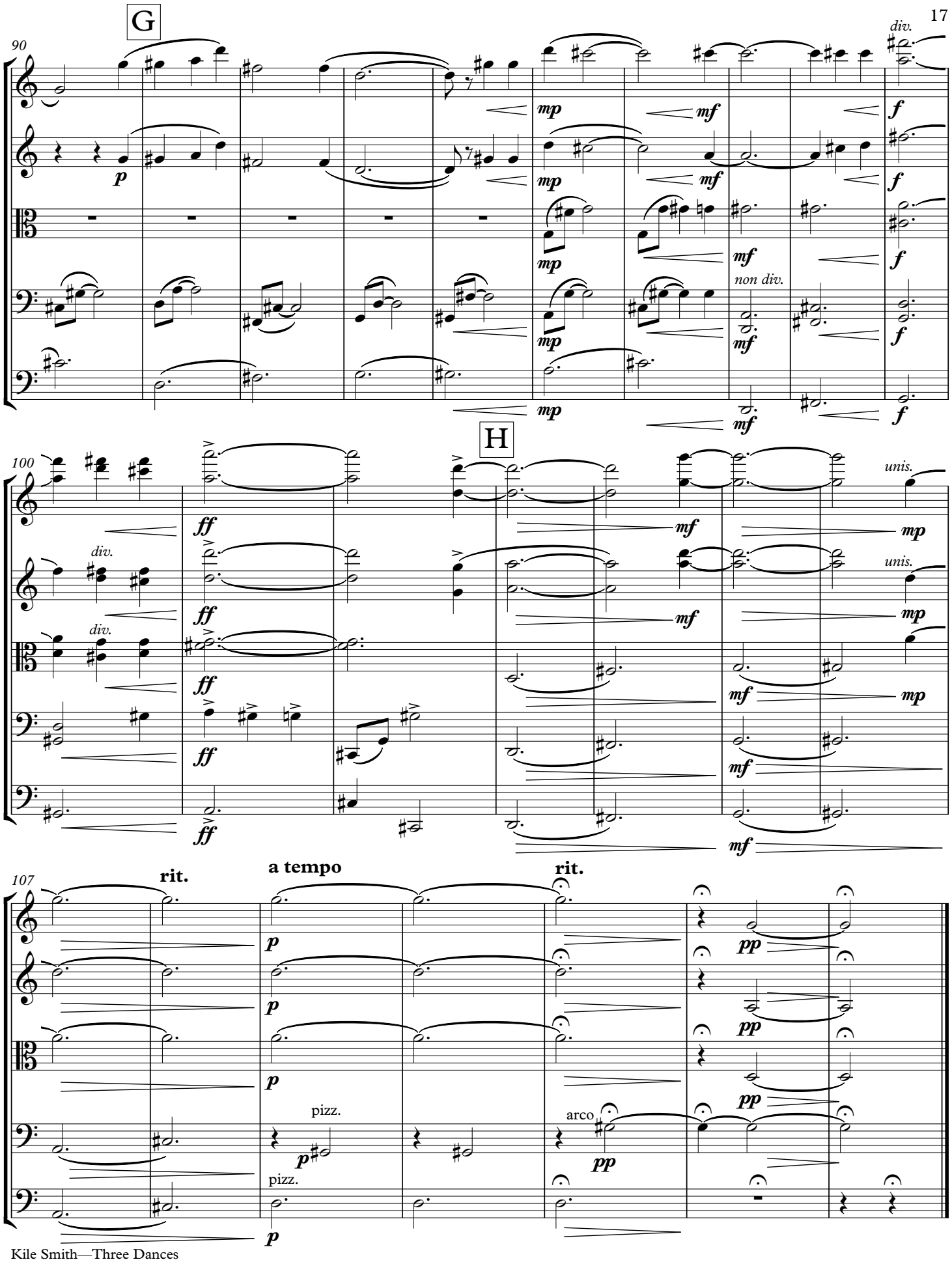



20
p
pp
arco
pp
B
31
pizz.
p
pizz.
p
p
arco
arco
pizz.
p
C
40
pizz.
pizz.
arco
arco

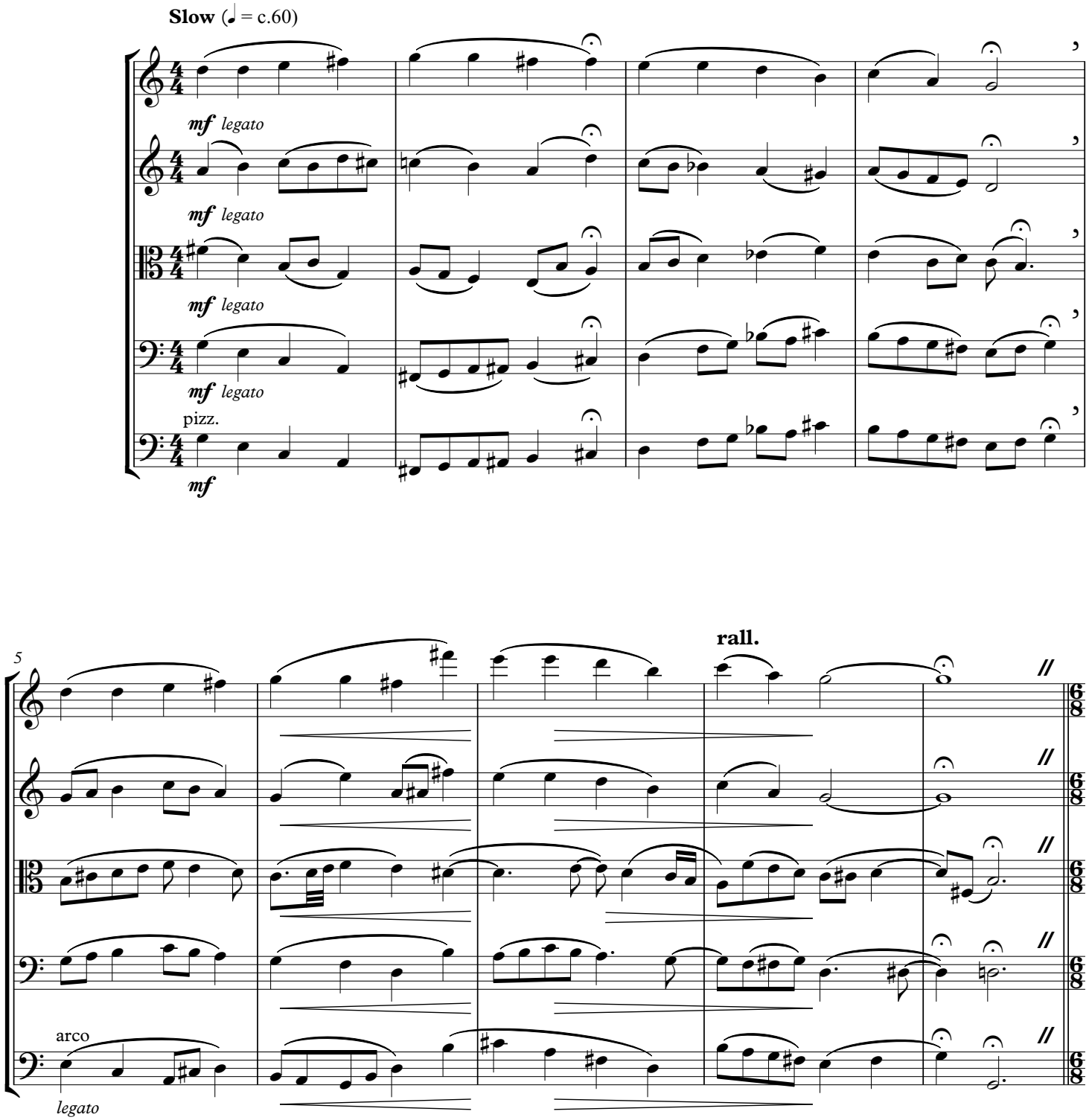

51
D
mp
div..
mp
pizz.
mp
pizz.
mp
mp
59
unis.
arco
arco
arco
65
E
div.
mf
div.
unis.
div.
mf
pizz.
arco
mf
pizz.
arco
mf
pizz.
arco
mf

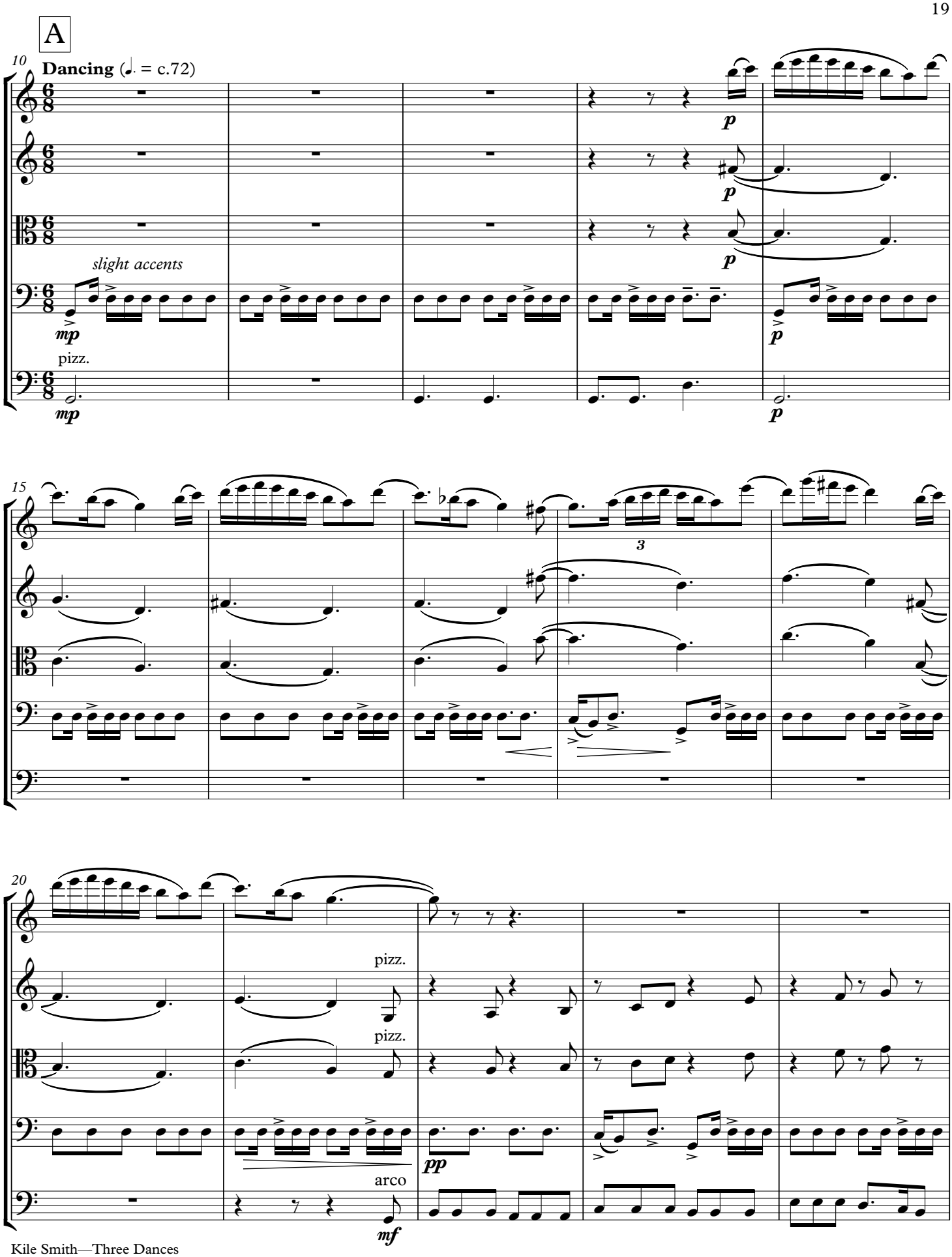

F
72
unis.
pizz.
arco

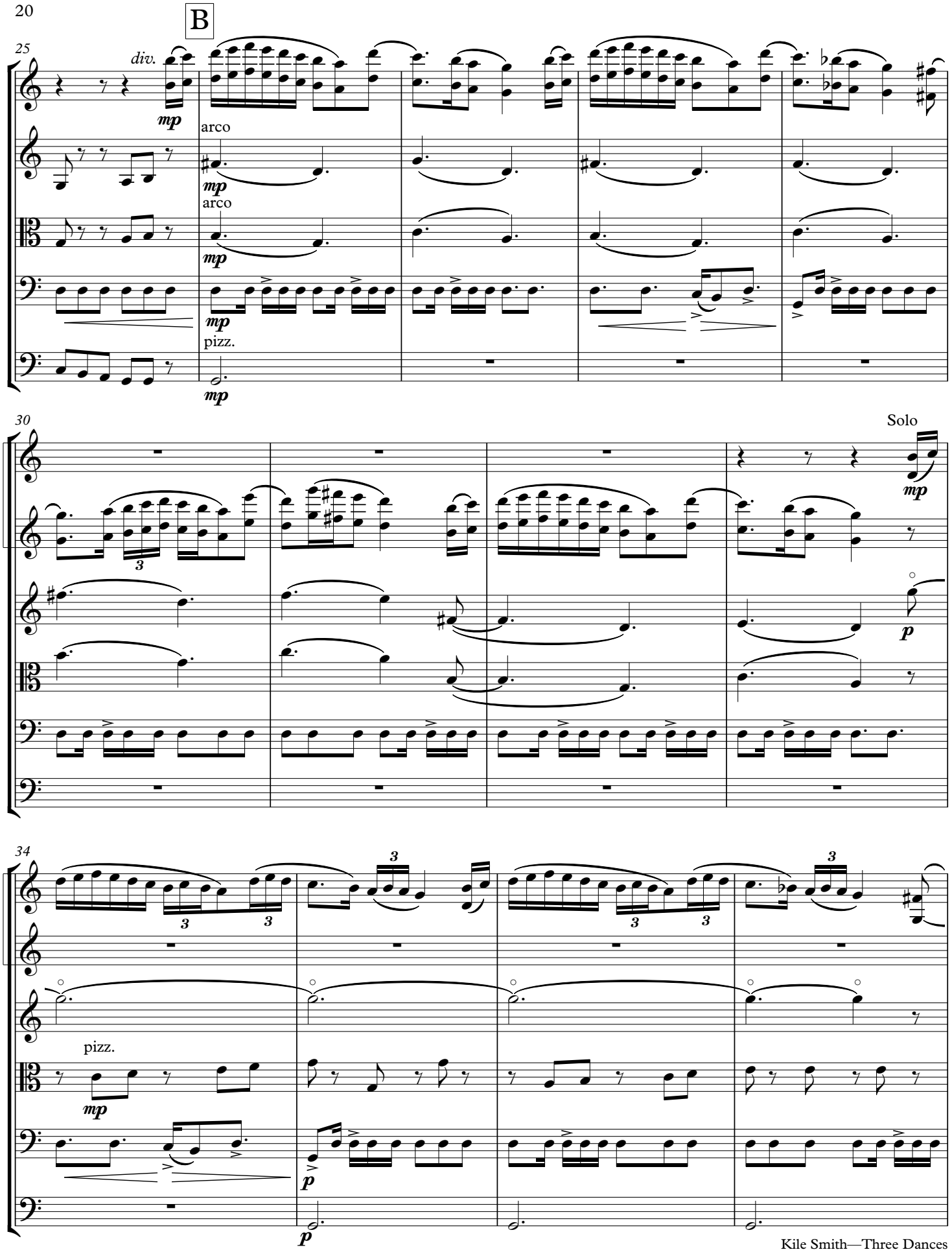

82
rit.
a tempo
unis.

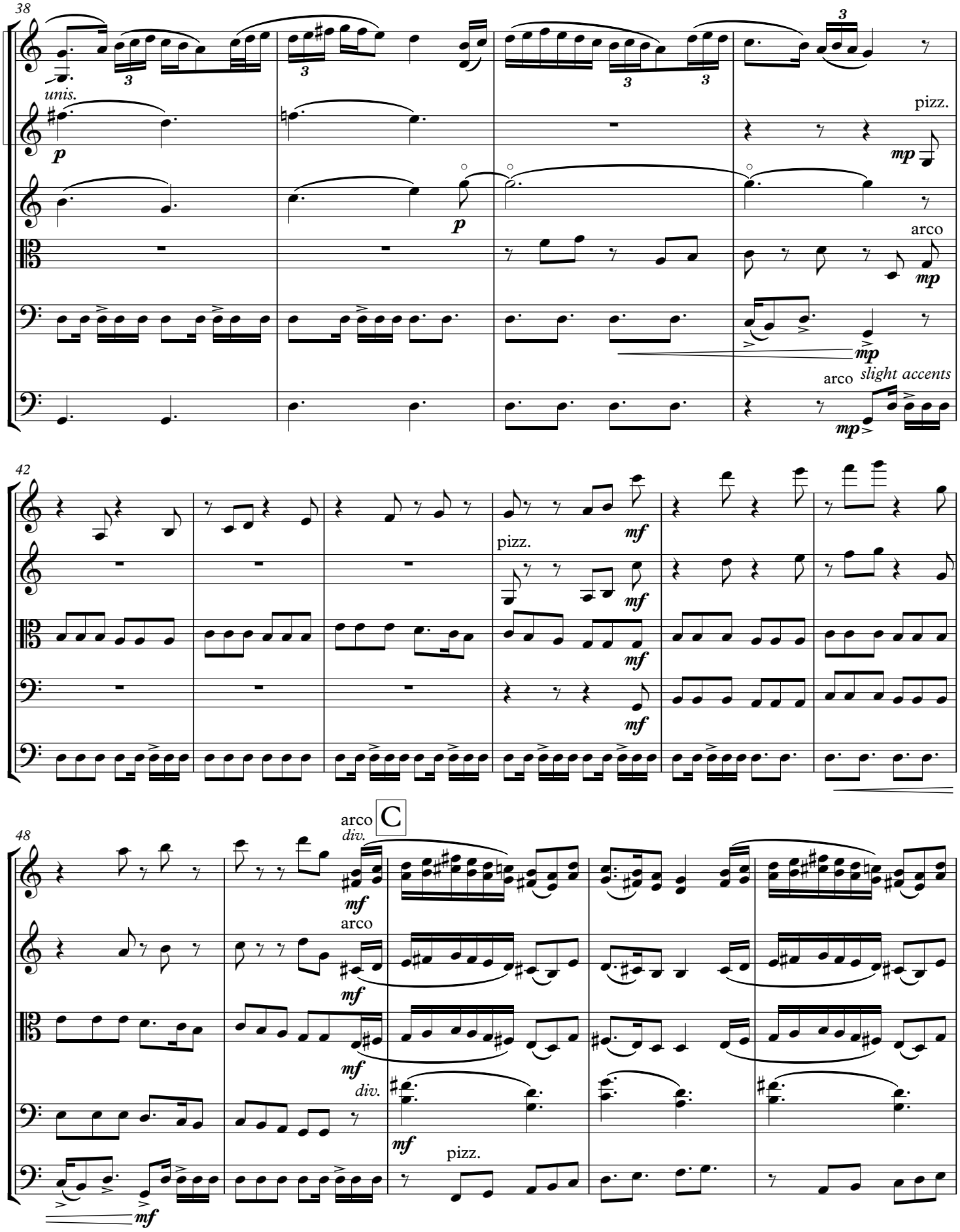

G
90
div.
non div.
H
100
unis.
div.
107
rit.
a tempo
rit.
pizz.
arco

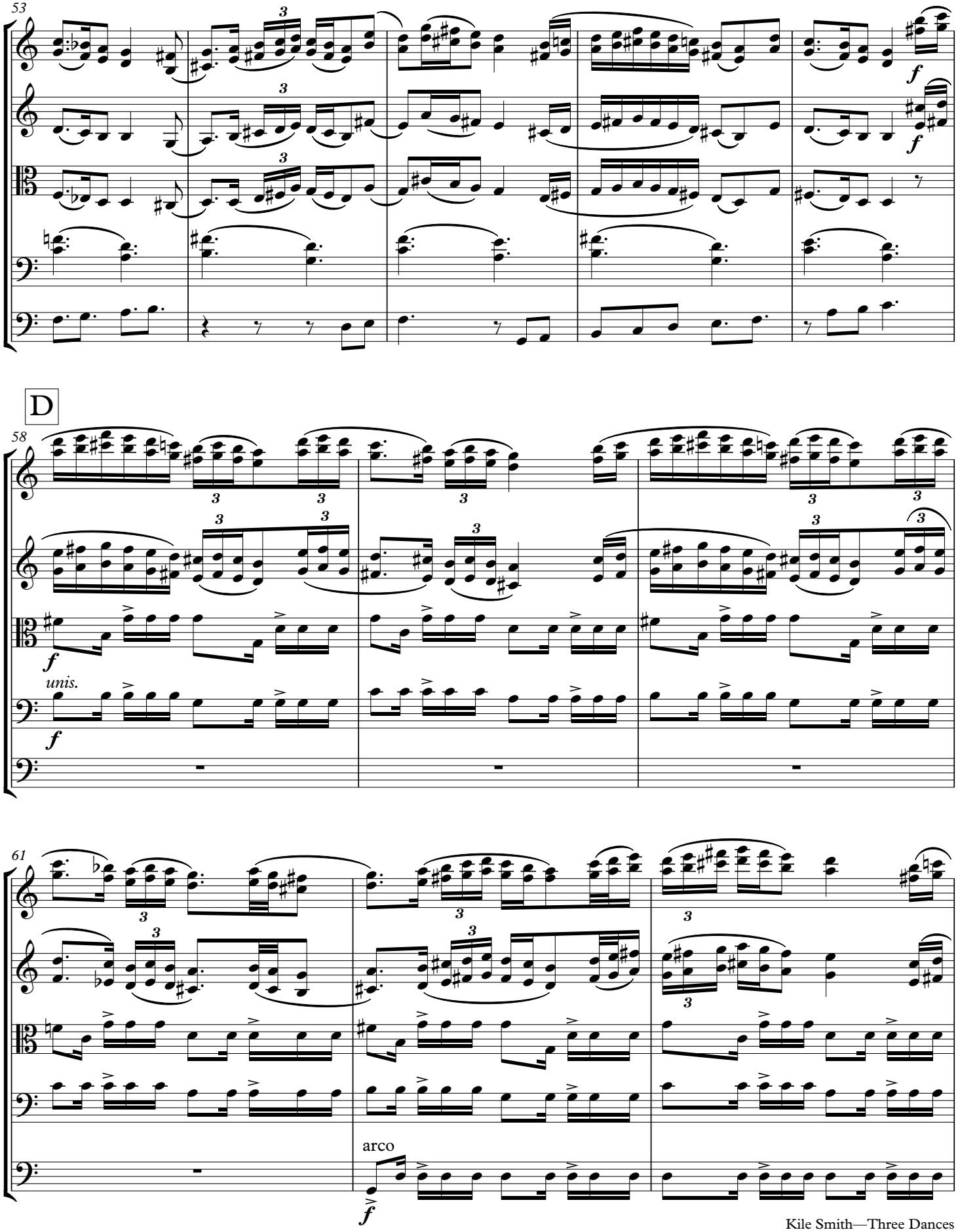
3. Fuguing tune

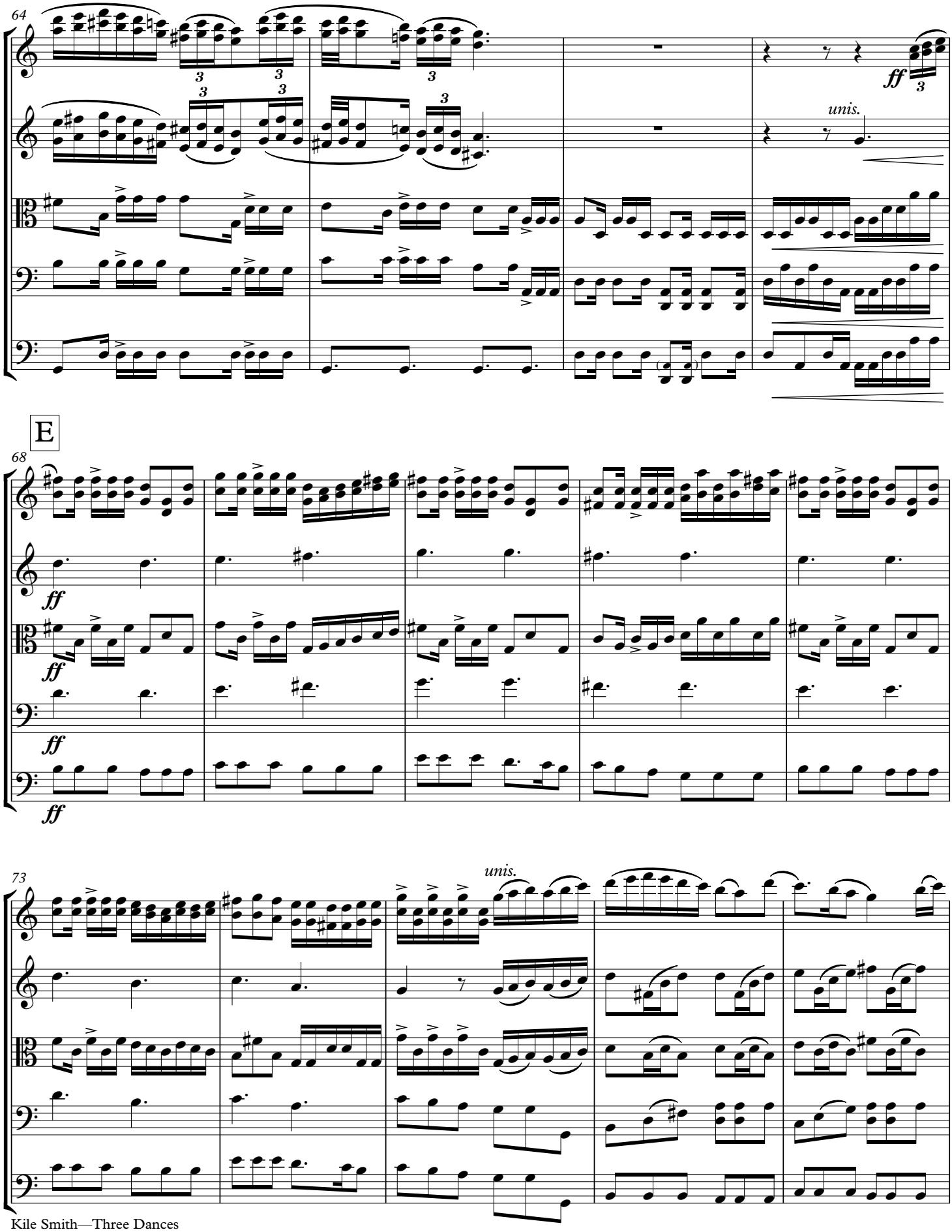


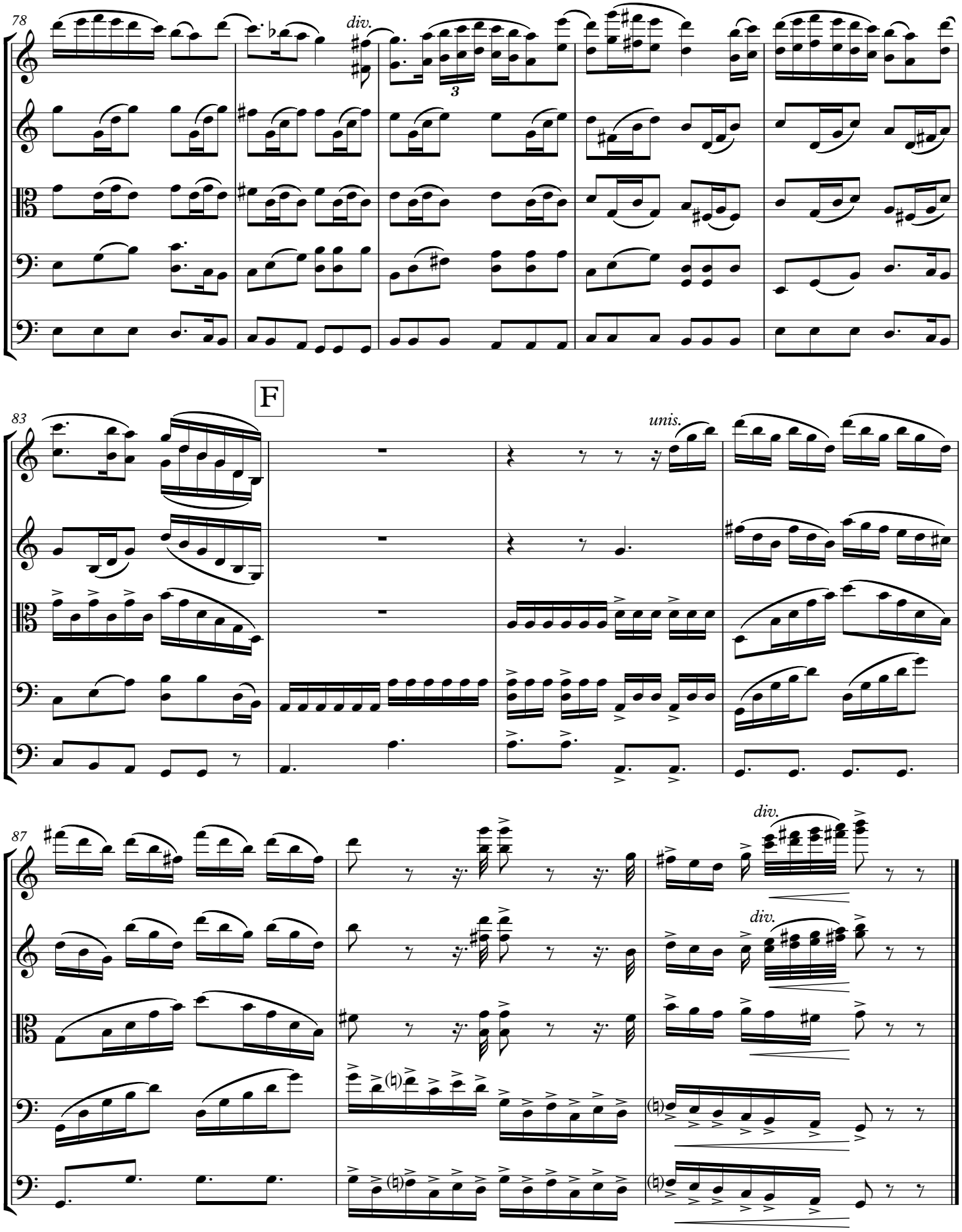

A
10
Dancing (♩. = c.72)
slight accents
mp
pizz.
mp
p
p
p
p
15
3
20
pizz.
pizz.
pp
arco
mf


B
25
div.
mp
arco
mp
arco
mp
mp
pizz.
mp
30
Solo
3
mp
p
34
3
3
3
3
pizz.
mp
p
p


38
unis.
p
pizz.
mp
arco
slight accents
42
mf
48
arco
div.
C


53
D
58
unis.
61
arco


64
unis.
E
68
73
unis.


78
div.
3
F
83
unis.
87
div.
div.