Seven Lies Regarding the Nature of Existence

by J. Simon van der Walt
for Saxophone Quartet (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Baritone)
Duration 4'40

Performance directions

- The way in which this piece is presented by the players is extremely important. The audience may choose to find it amusing; *the performers must not*, at least for the duration of the performance.
- Players should stand to speak, but not for handclaps & whistle.
- The statements are to be read in a confident & authoritative manner, like a TV presenter on a popular science program. Be sure to project your voice well so as to be heard, particularly when speaking over the music.
- The handclaps in bb86-96 of the baritone part are to be performed loudly & enthusiastically, as if really getting into the groove.
- Try not to have the siren whistle on view until it is used, so it comes as a surprise.
- In the event that the four saxophonists do not feel able to execute the non-musical part of the proceedings, it will be necessary to employ a narrator instead, reading from the score. He or she should perform *either* the handclaps *or* the siren whistle; not both.
- If the baritone saxophonist is completely unable to produce the C harmonic in b157-8 it may be omitted. It should *not* be left out merely on the grounds that it is difficult, unreliable & generally gross!
- The notation in bb123-126 means that the players are holding long notes with a measured, synchronised vibrato in crotchet triplets. This effect should be quite subtle. 'Free vibrato' means that the players are no longer synchronising their vibrato, if any.

Composer's note

It may be of interest to know that much of the material in 'Seven Lies...' was generated algorithmically; pseudo-random numbers were subject to a first-order Markov process and some simple grammatical rules, after Hiller & Isaacson (see refs). However, the aim of the piece is not to demonstrate the rigorous working out of algorithmic processes; these are formal techniques which guide & assist me, in the same way that all composers are guided by a knowledge of harmony, form and so on.

References & further reading

Perle, G. *The Right Notes* N.Y. 1995 p 290
Hutchings *Tribology* London 1992 p. 98
Huizenga *Cold Fusion* Oxford 1993 p.289
James Callaghan, speech, House of Commons 1972
Hofstadter, Douglas R. *Gödel, Escher, Bach: an Eternal Golden Braid* Penguin 1979
Loy, Gareth *Composing with Computers: A Survey of Some Compositional Formalisms and Music Programming Languages* in Mathews & Pierce *Current Directions in Computer Music Research* MIT 1989
Hiller, L. & Isaacson, L. *Experimental Music* NY 1959

Seven Lies Regarding the Nature of Existence

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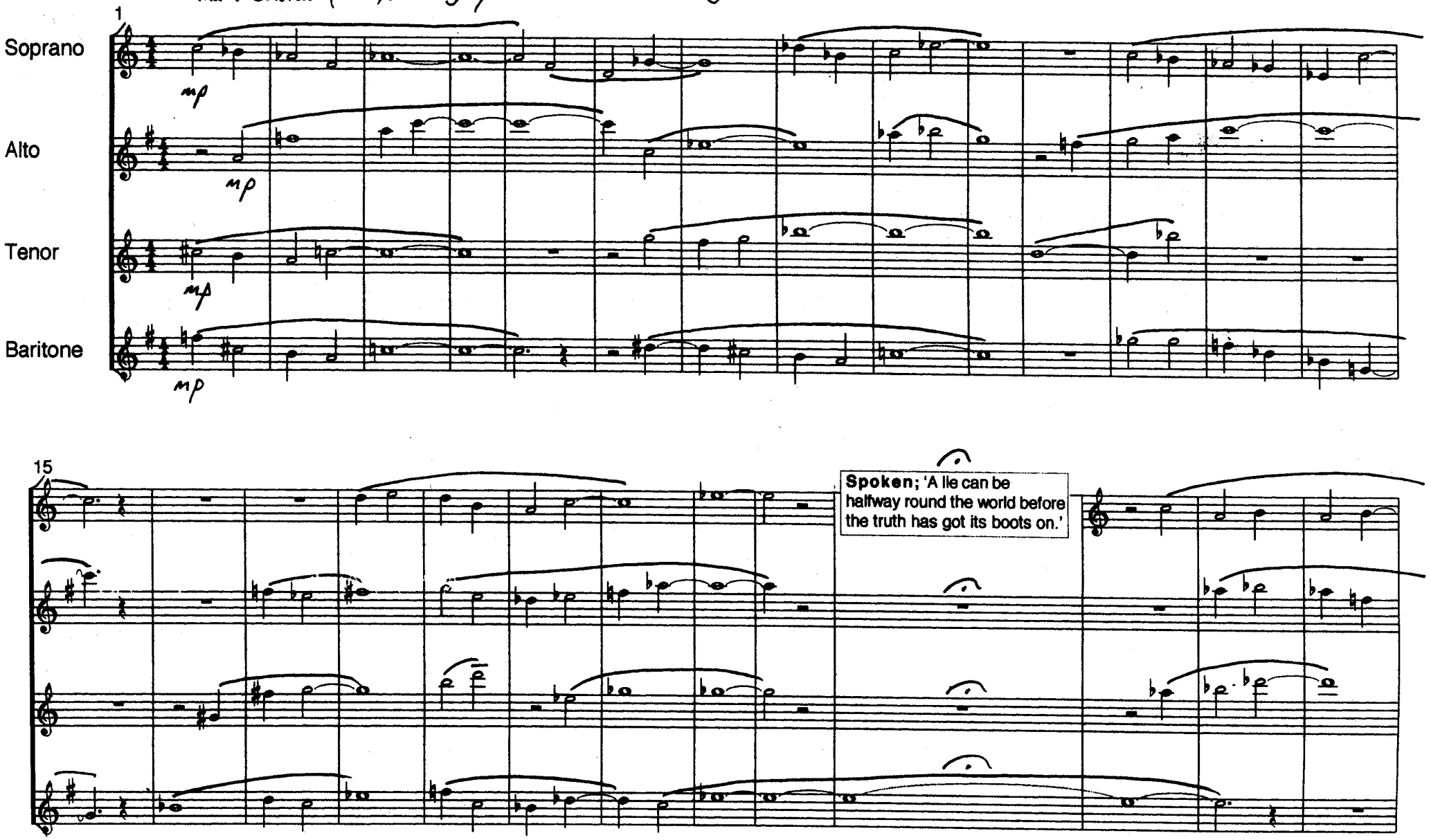

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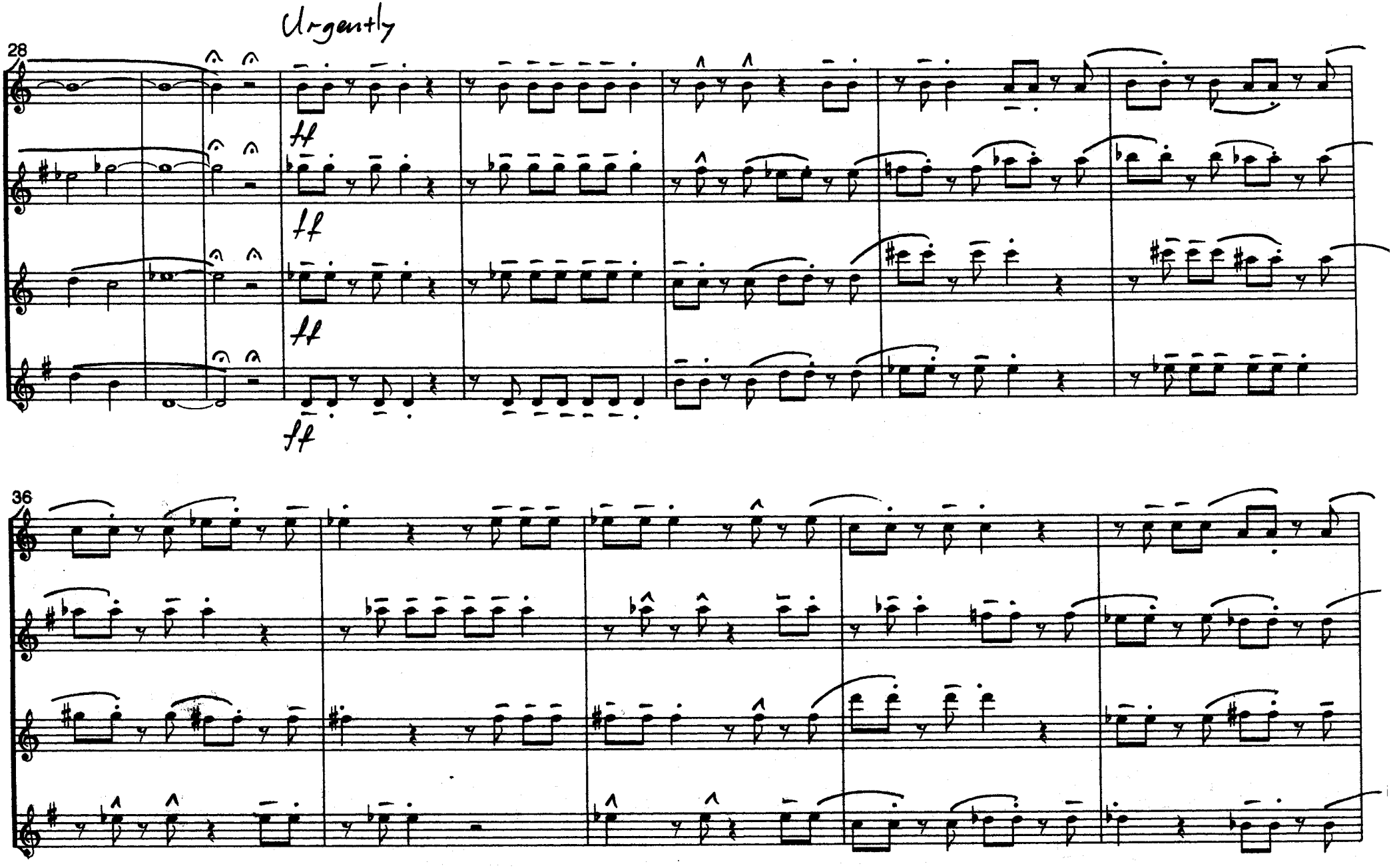
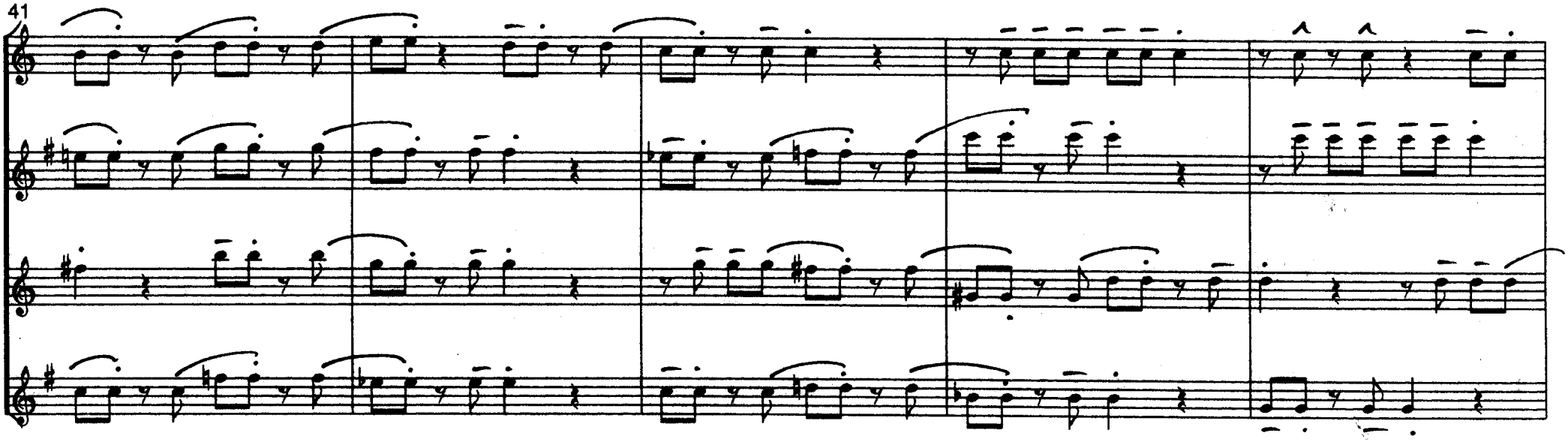
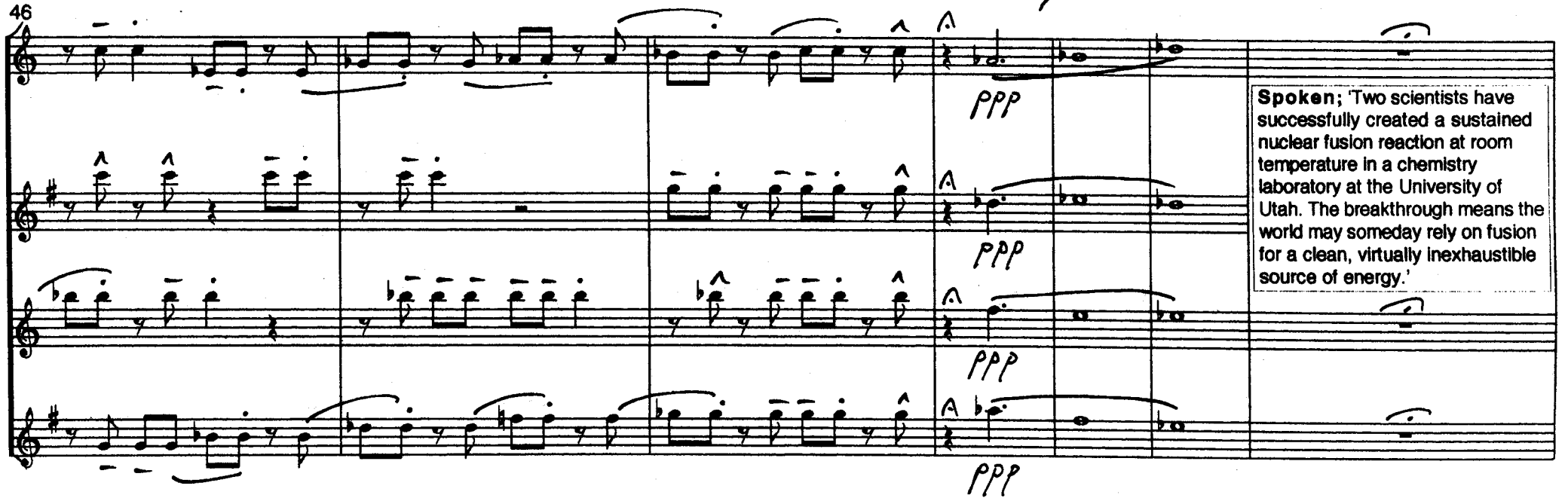

Urgently
28
ff
ff
ff
ff
36

41

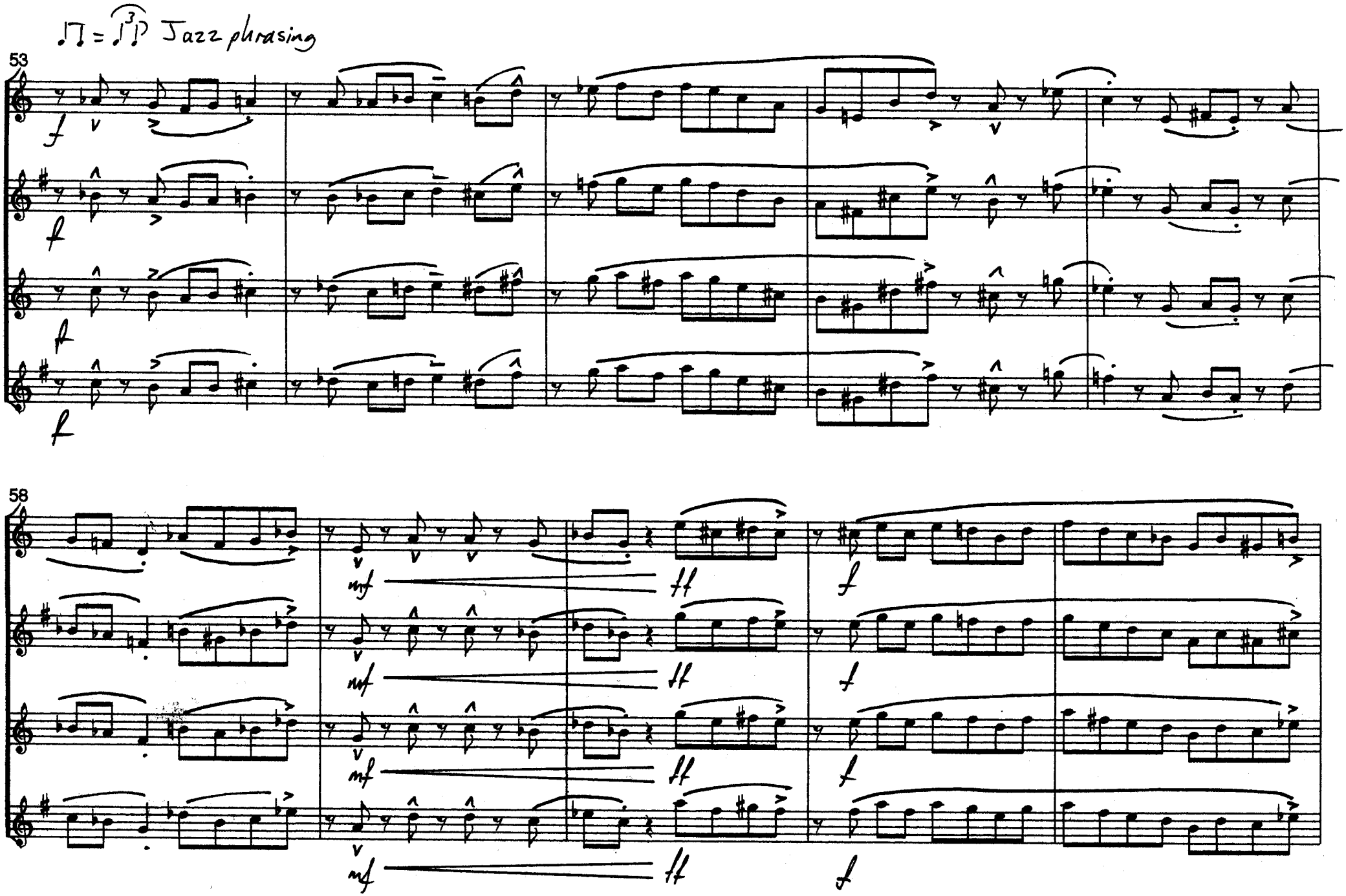


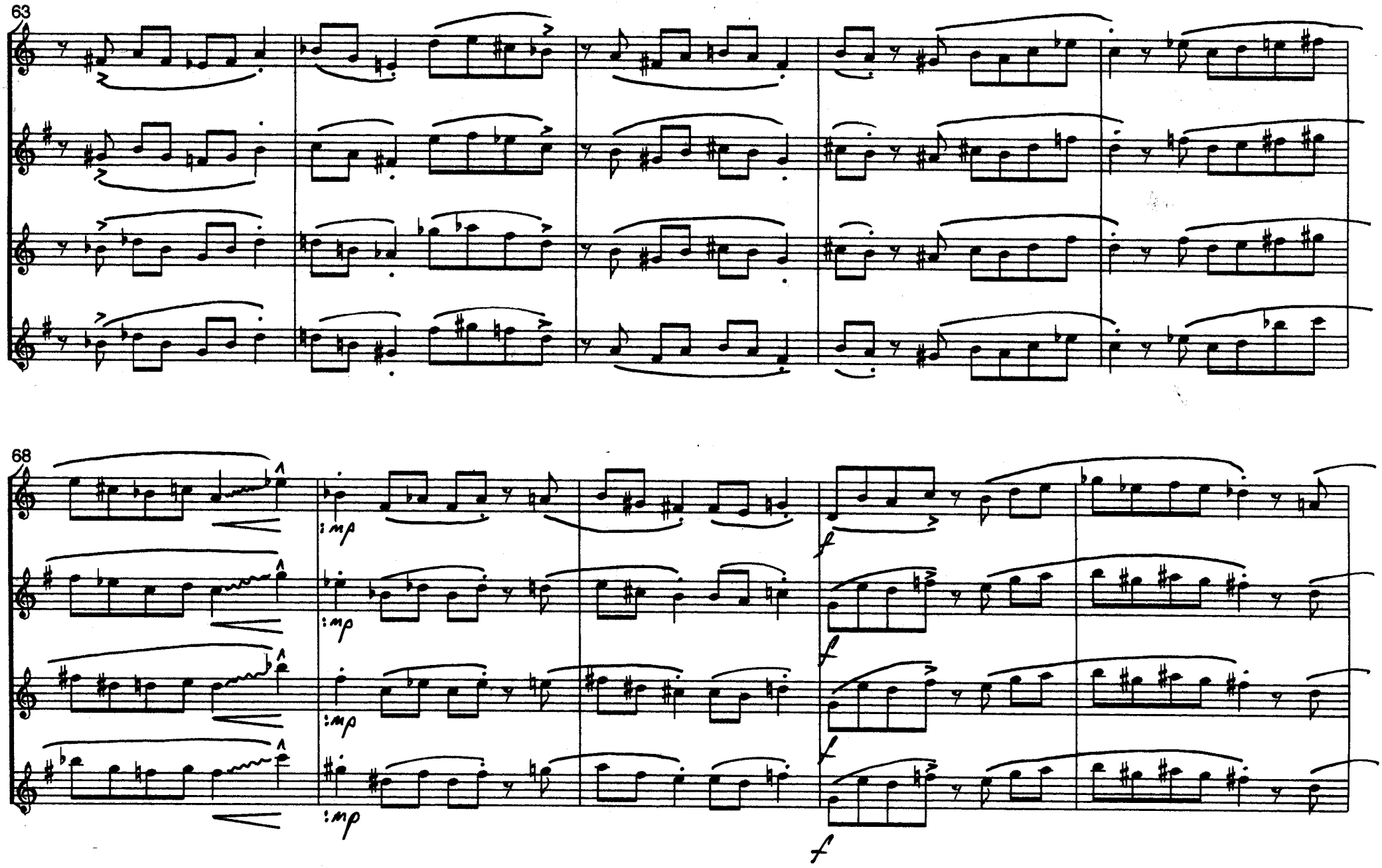
46

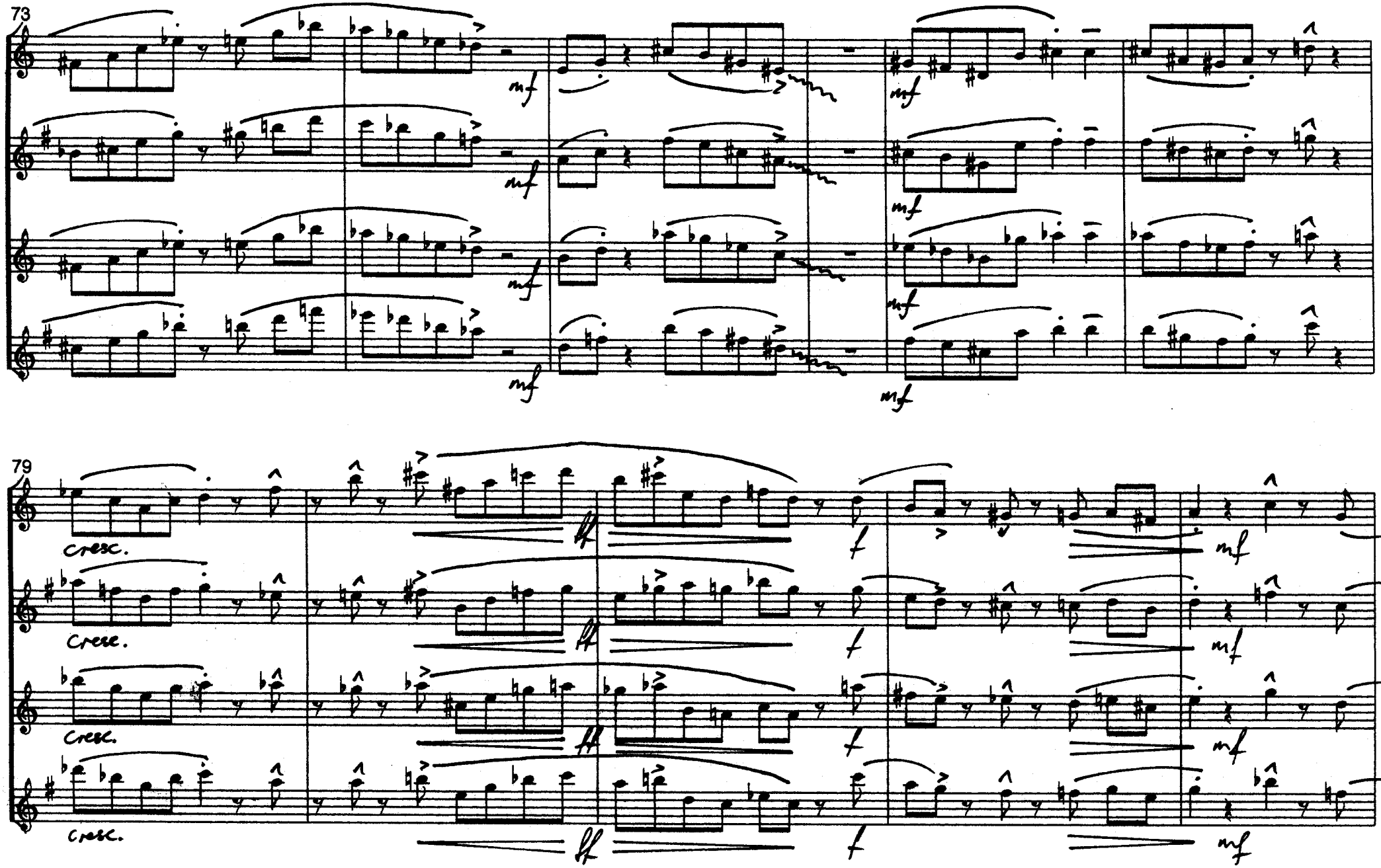
Tranquillo

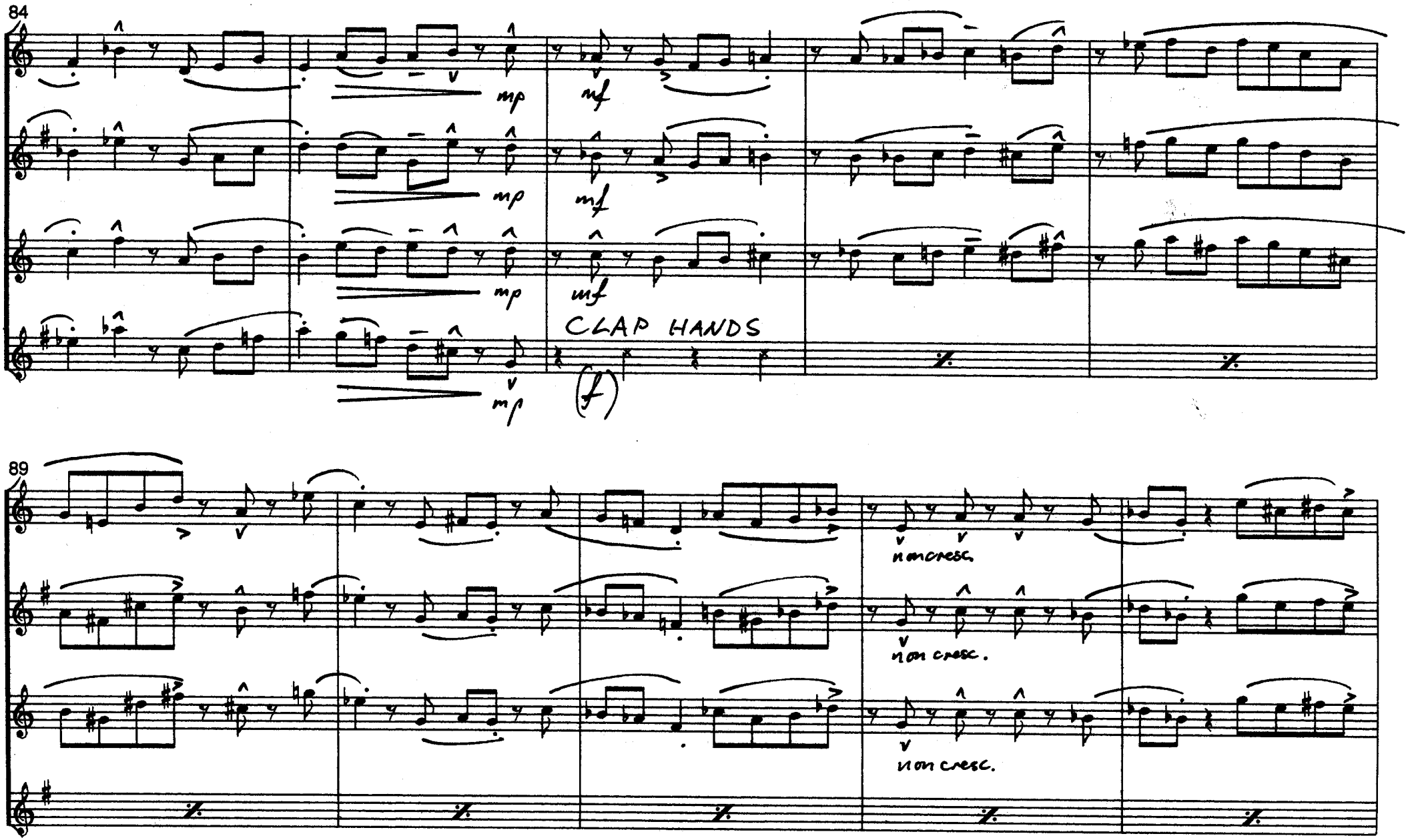


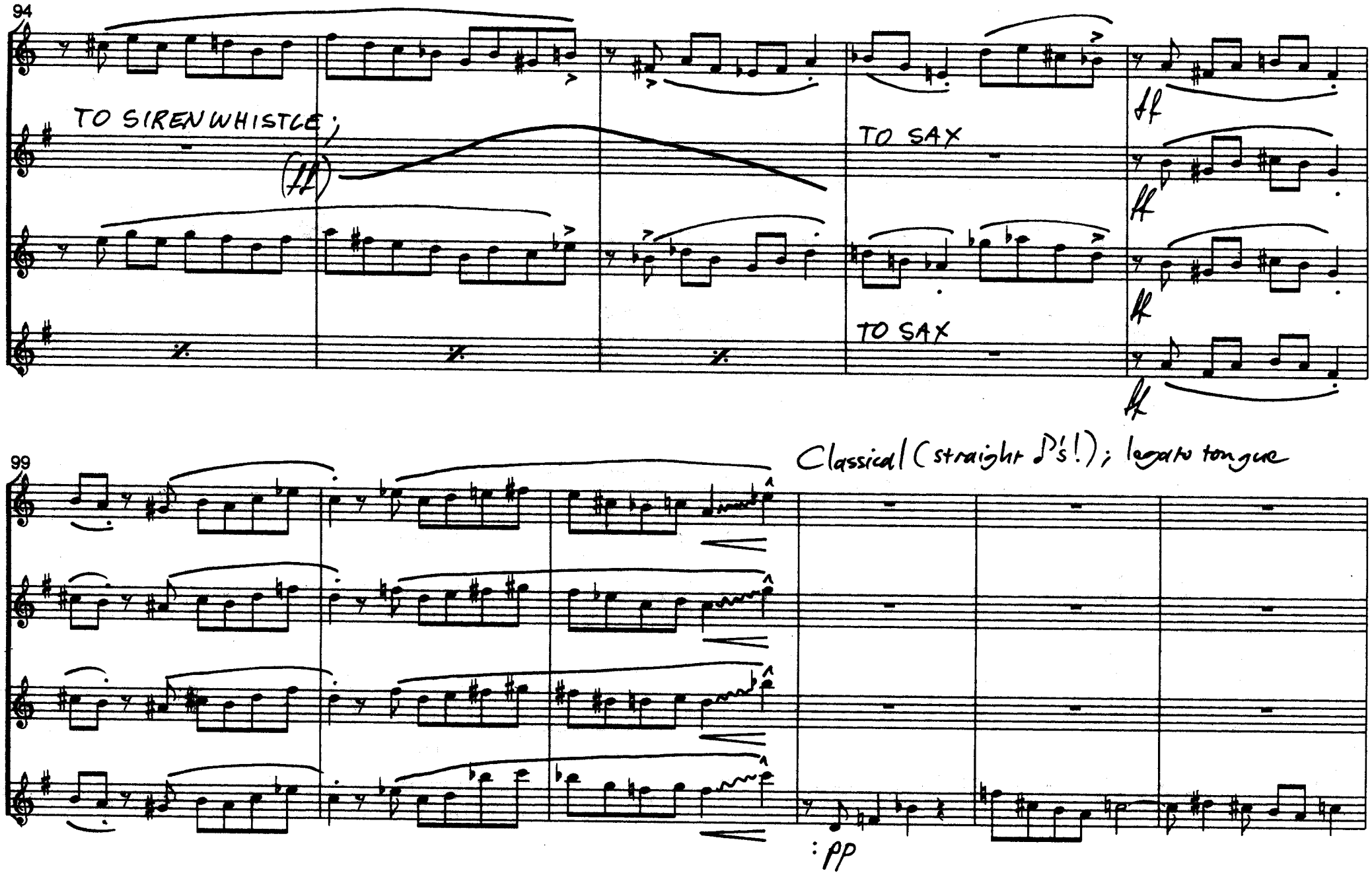
Spoken; 'Two scientists have successfully created a sustained nuclear fusion reaction at room temperature in a chemistry laboratory at the University of Utah. The breakthrough means the world may someday rely on fusion for a clean, virtually inexhaustible source of energy.'

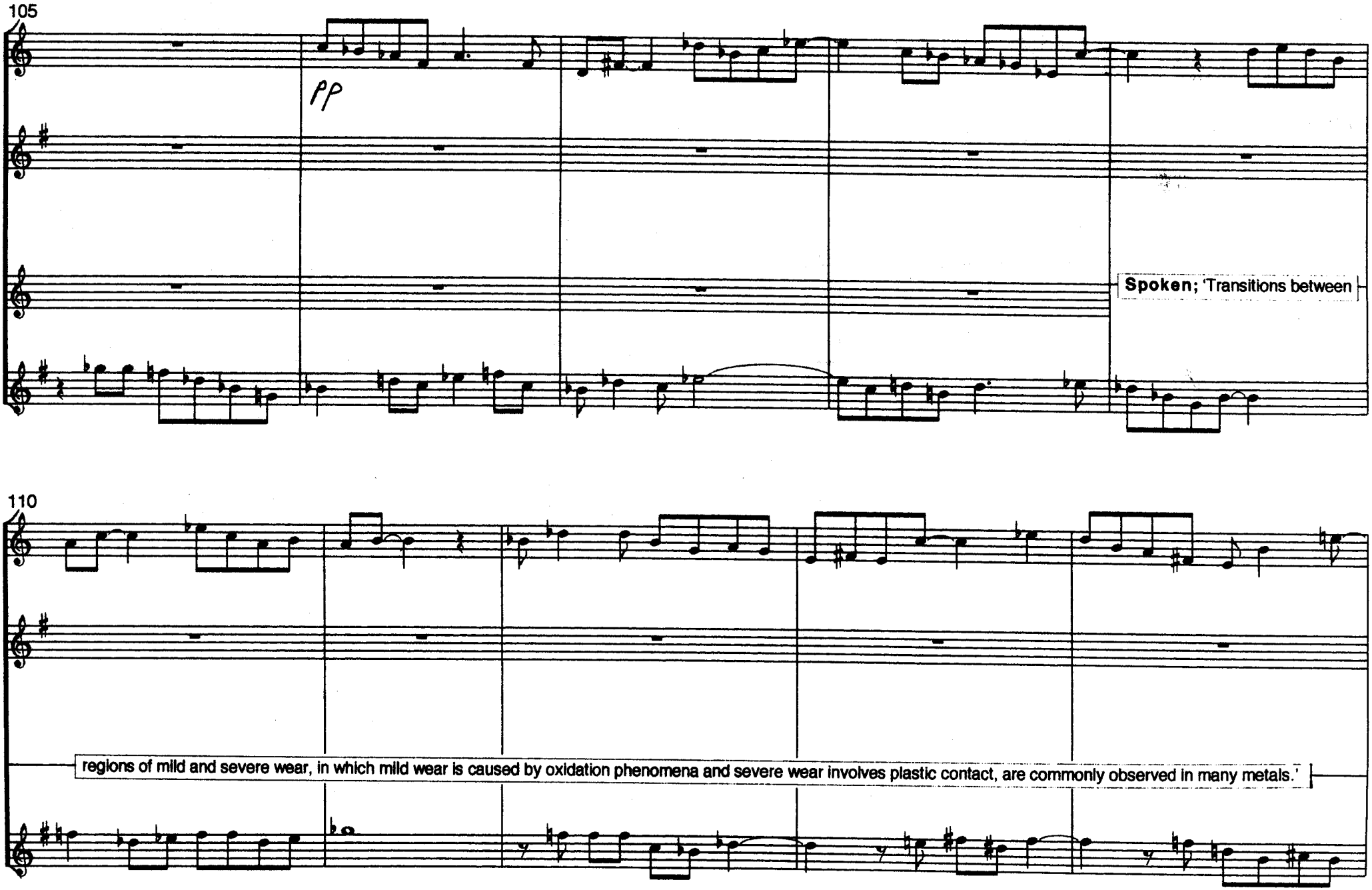

♫ = ♫³♪ Jazz phrasing
53
58

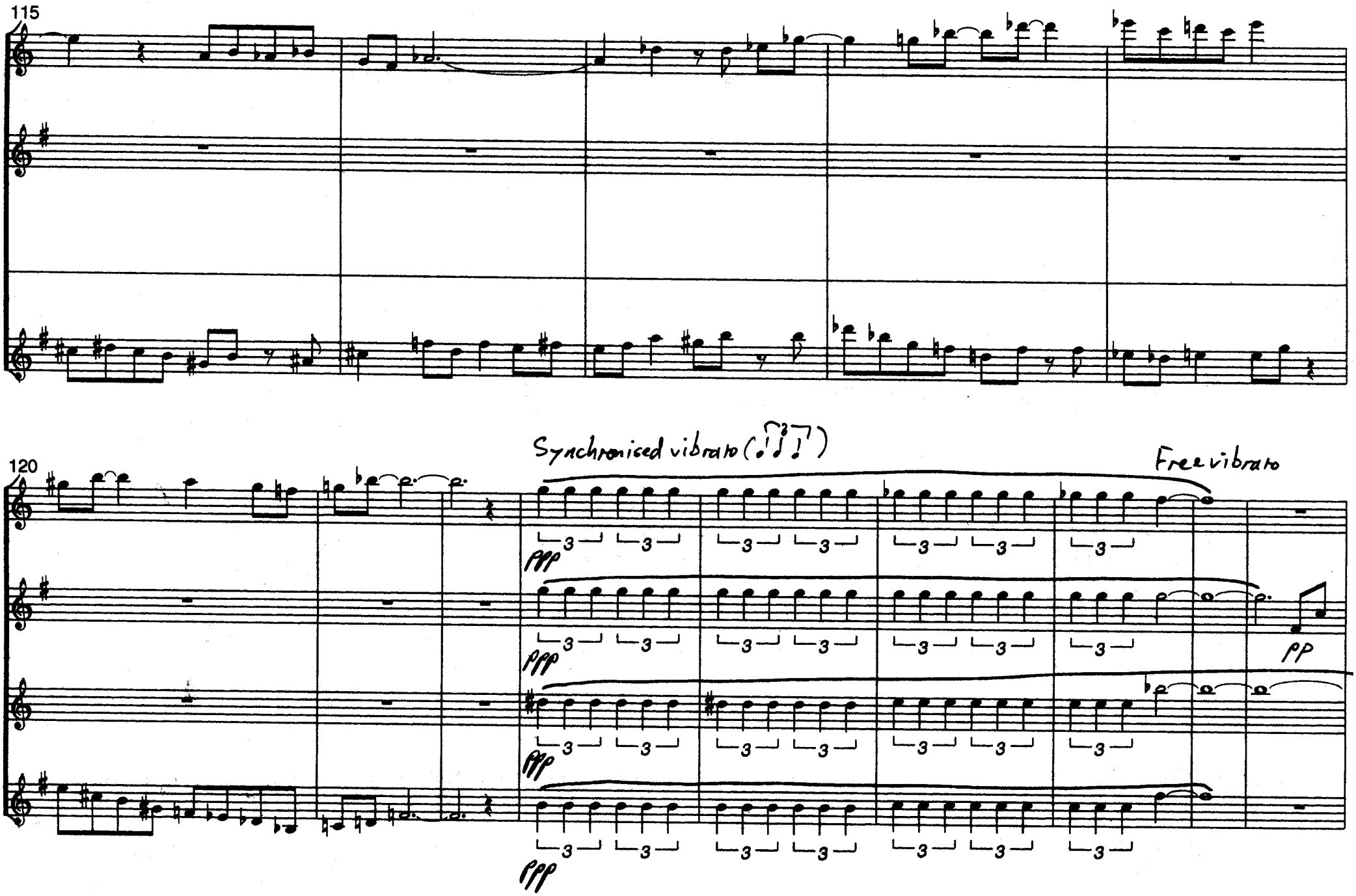

63
68
mp
mp
mp
mp
f
f
f
f

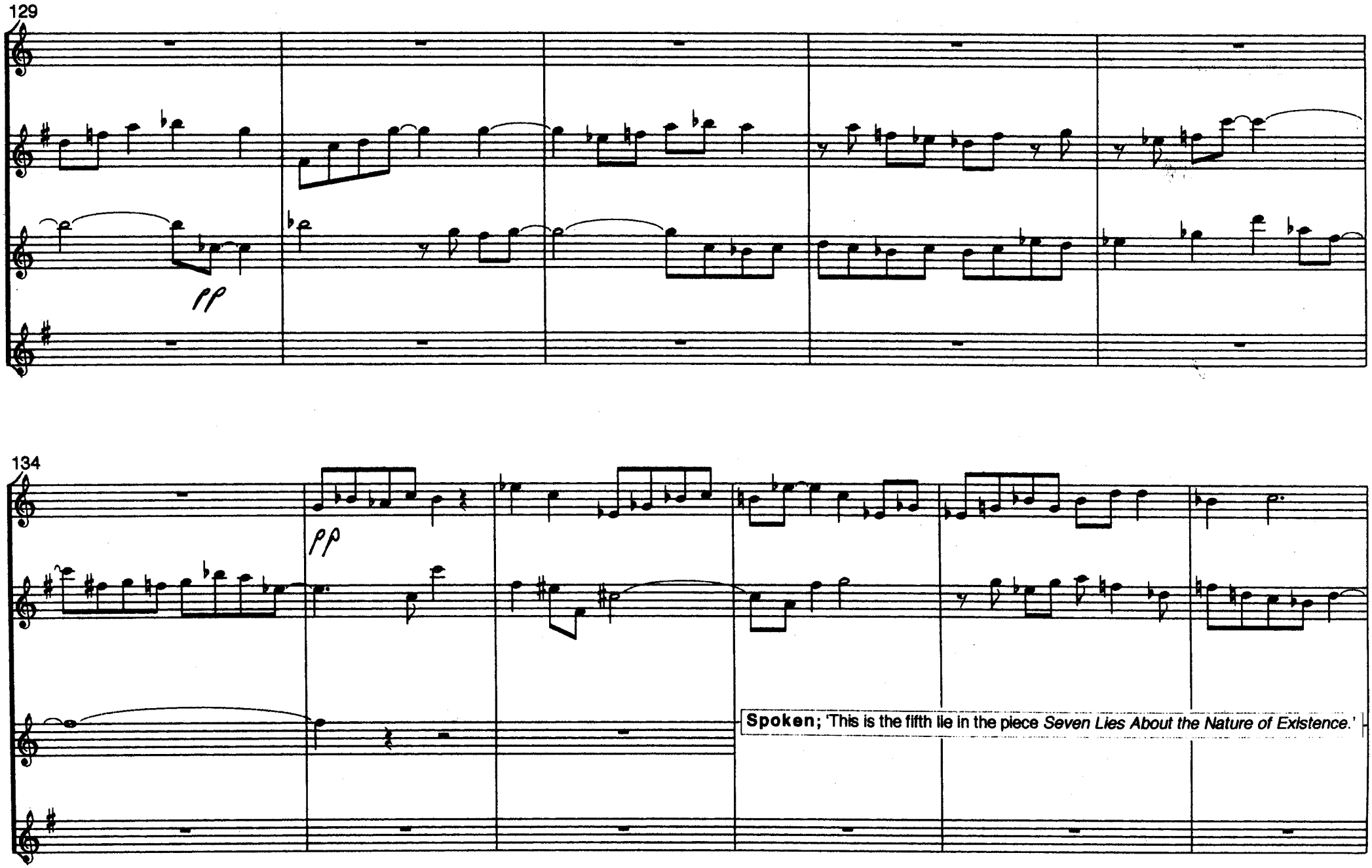

73
mf
79
cresc.
ff
f
mf

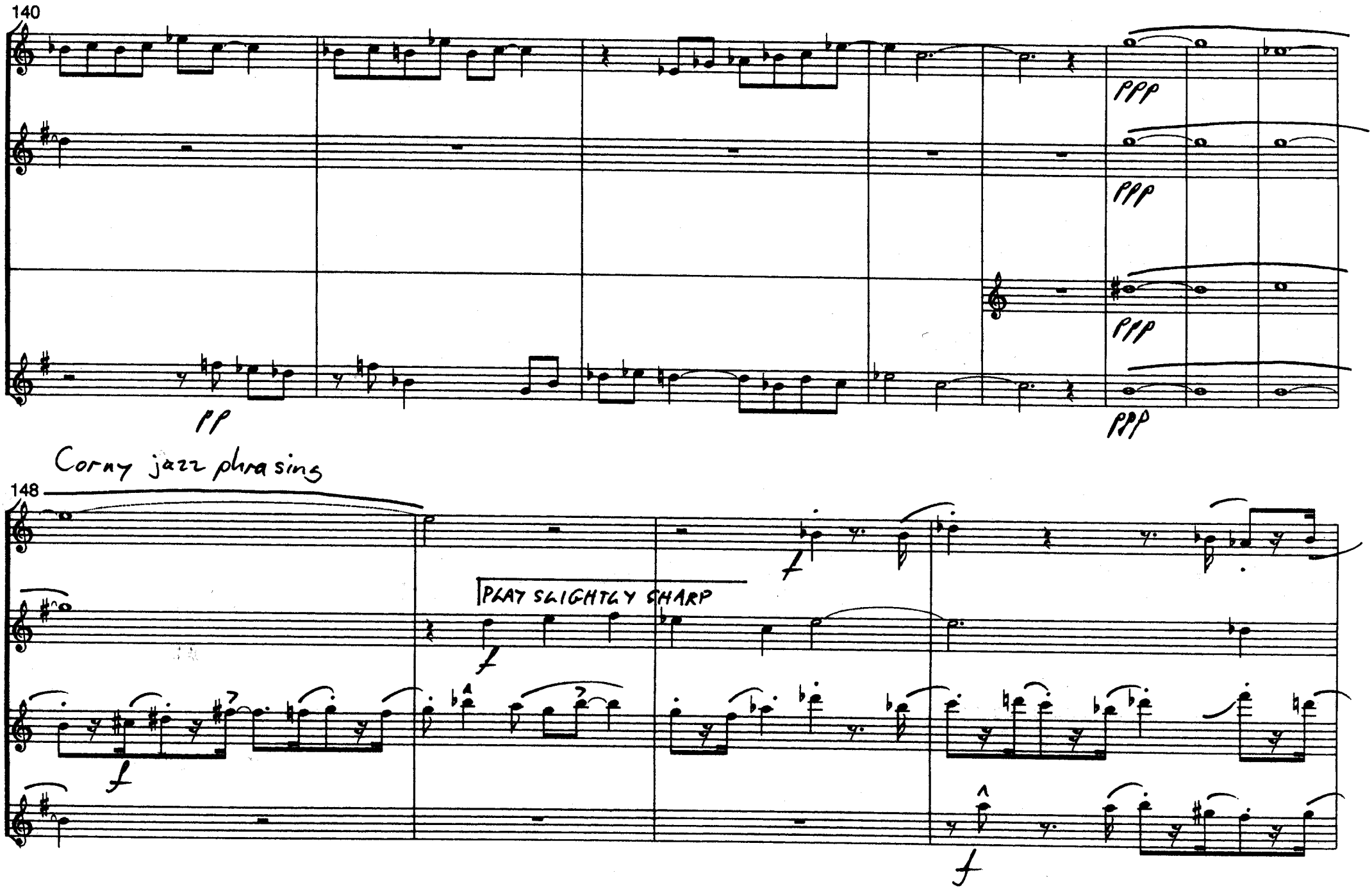

84
mp
mf
CLAP HANDS
(f)
89
non cresc.

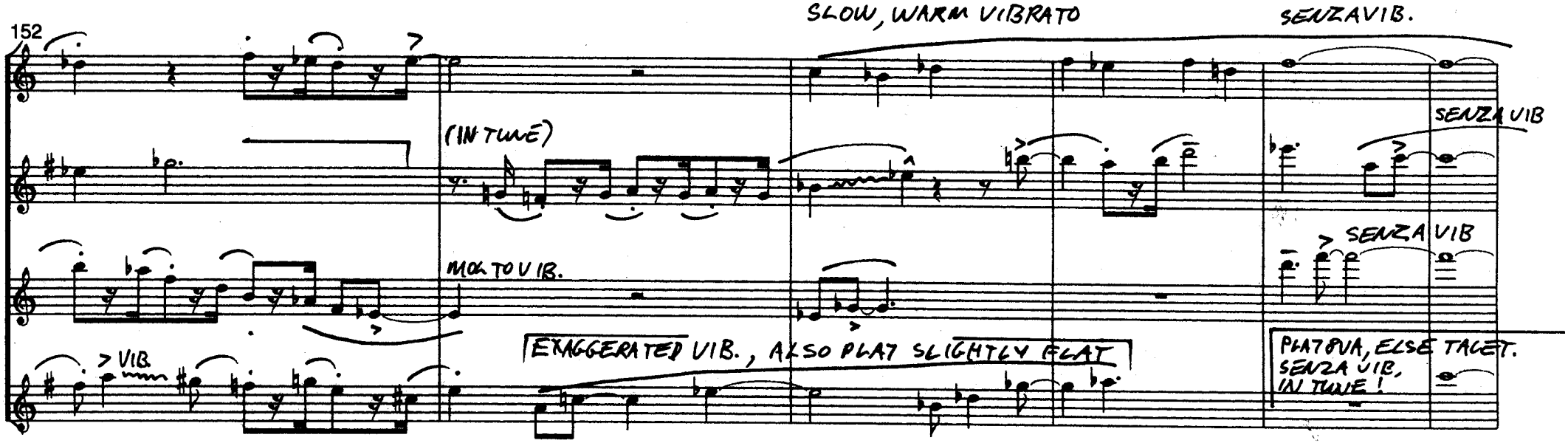

94
TO SIREN WHISTLE;
(ff)
TO SAX
TO SAX
ff
ff
ff
ff
99
Classical (straight ♪'s!); legato tongue
:pp

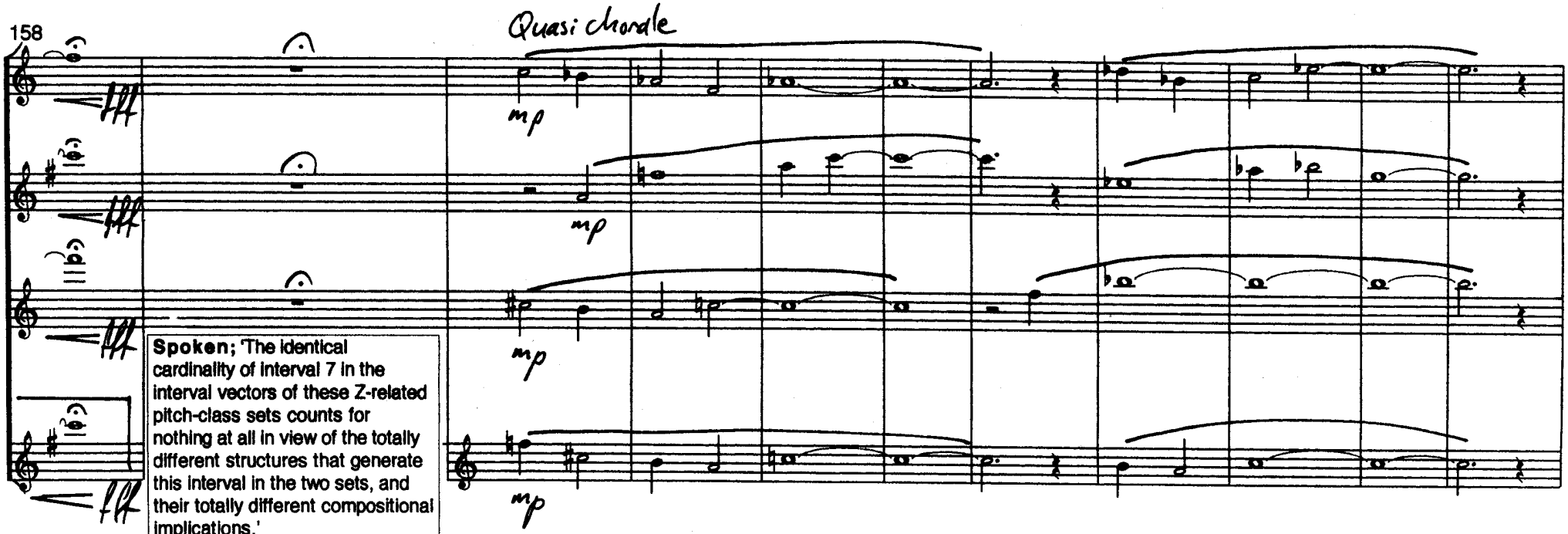

105
pp
Spoken; 'Transitions between
110
regions of mild and severe wear, in which mild wear is caused by oxidation phenomena and severe wear involves plastic contact, are commonly observed in many metals.'


115
120
Synchronised vibrato
Free vibrato
ppp
pp

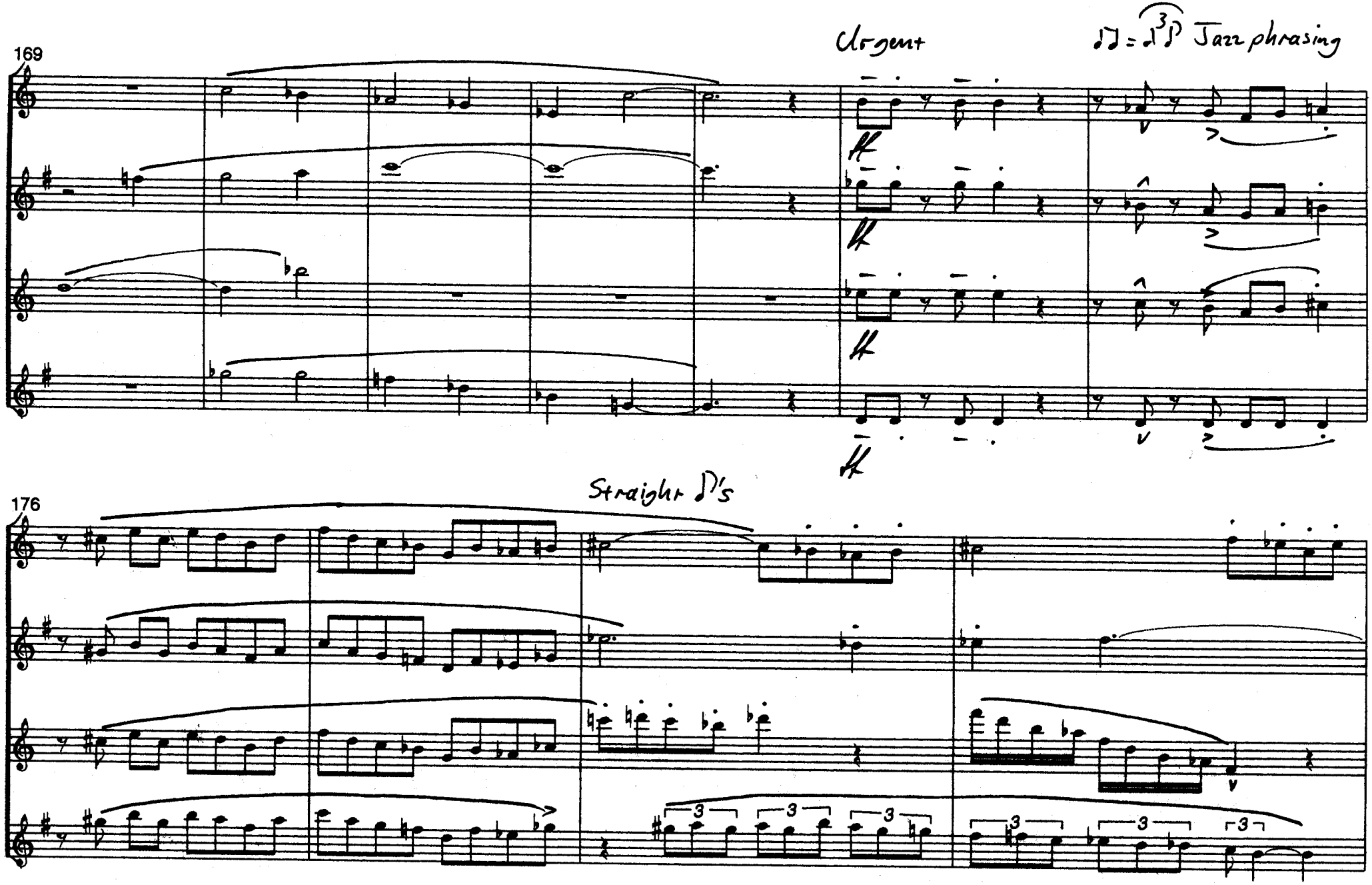

129
pp
134
pp
Spoken; 'This is the fifth lie in the piece Seven Lies About the Nature of Existence.'

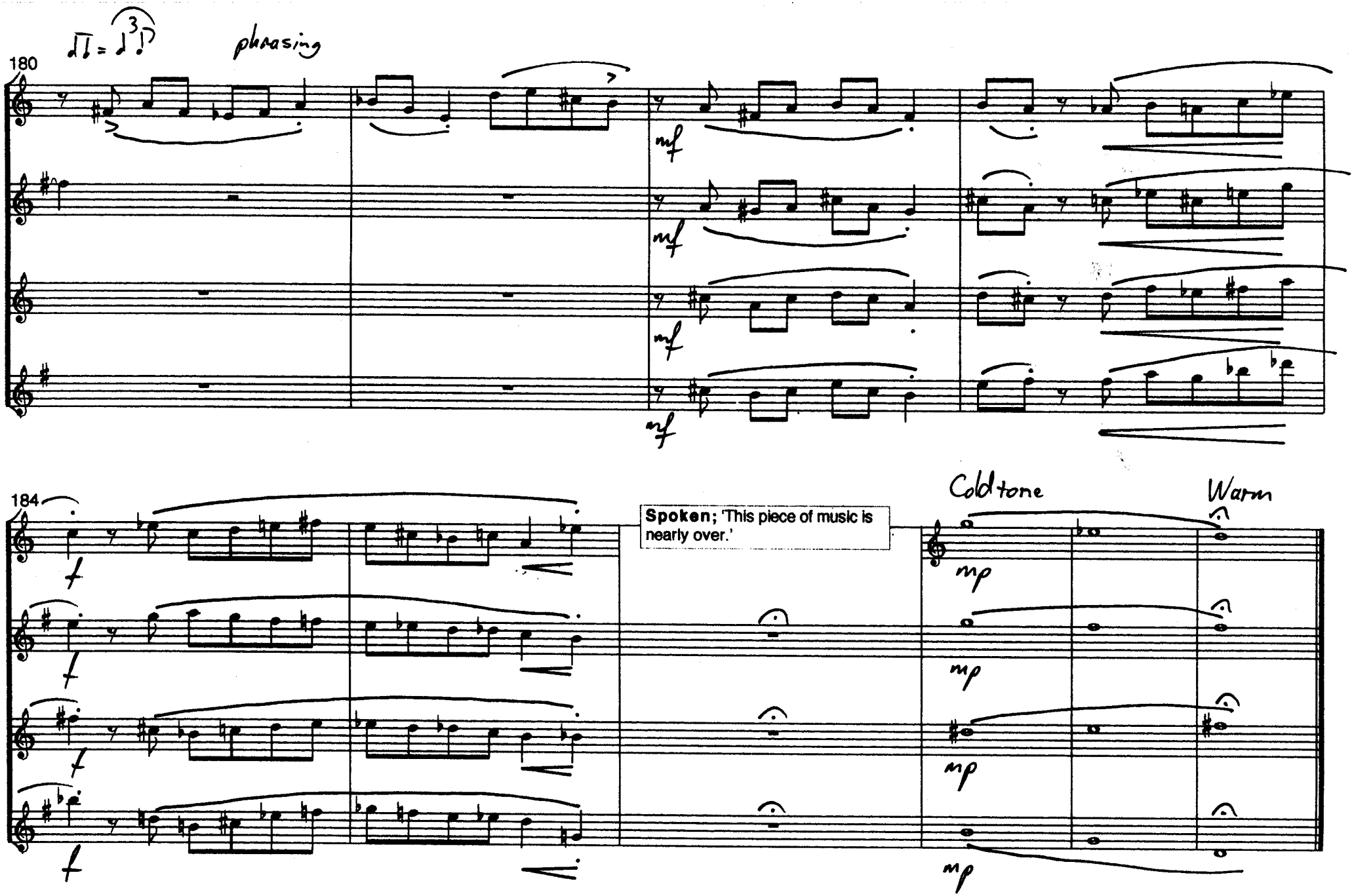

140
ppp
ppp
ppp
pp
ppp
Corny jazz phrasing
148
PLAY SLIGHTLY SHARP
f
f
f
f





Spoken; 'The identical cardinality of interval 7 in the interval vectors of these Z-related pitch-class sets counts for nothing at all in view of the totally different structures that generate this interval in the two sets, and their totally different compositional implications.'


169
Urgent
Jazz phrasing
176
Straight ♪'s



JSUDW Glasgow 8/11/96