Gwyneth Walker

Of Cliffs and Sacred Spaces

for Violoncello Duet

1. Looking Up
2. As a Team – Where Two Can Go
3. Prayer
4. Beyond Time and Space

This Stillness

This stillness, solitude, wildness of Nature
Is like an herb,
or food to my intellect.
This is what I go out to seek.
It is as if I always met in those places
Some grand, serene, immortal,
Infinitely encouraging, though invisible,
companion.
We walked together as one.

– *Henry David Thoreau*

Of Cliffs and Sacred Spaces

duration: 9:45

Of Cliffs and Sacred Spaces is inspired by the Vedauwoo rock formations in Eastern Wyoming. These spectacular outcroppings are considered to be sacred places. The Arapaho Indians refer to this as the *Land of the Earthborn Spirit*. Native Americans have come here on their vision quests.

The four movements of this cello duet reflect the various ways that visitors might experience Vedauwoo:
from the base, one looks up in wonderment at the magnificent rocks
adventurers, in teams of two, may climb the rock faces
prayer is always part of the sacred rocks
and, at the height of the summit, one has reached a place beyond time and space

Commissioned by Cellists Beth Vanderborgh
(University of Wyoming, Laramie) and
Amy Frost Baumgarten
(Kennedy Center Opera Orchestra)

Premiered at Bethany Lutheran Church in Denver, CO
on September 8, 2023

Of Cliffs and Sacred Spaces

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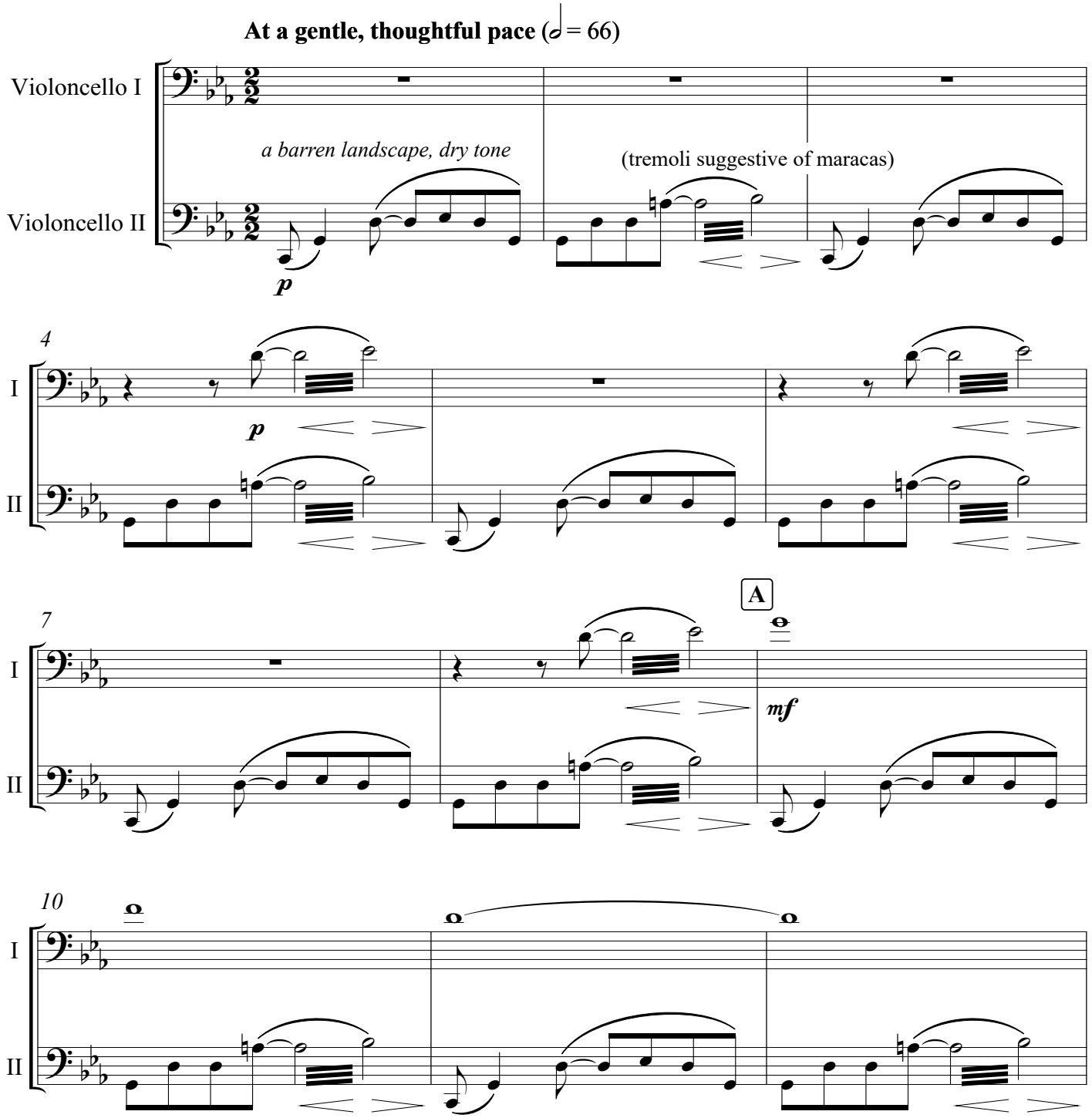
1. Looking Up



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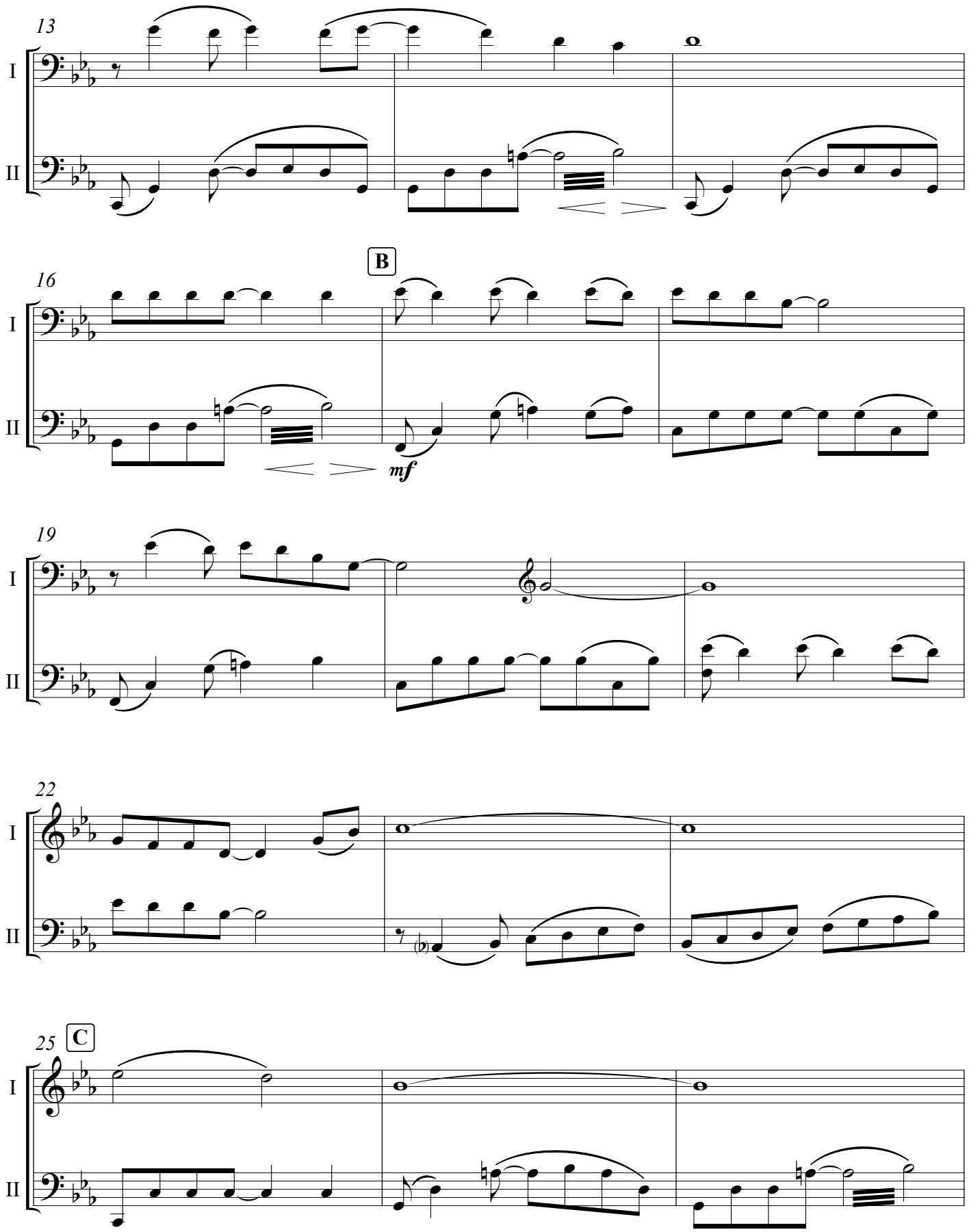
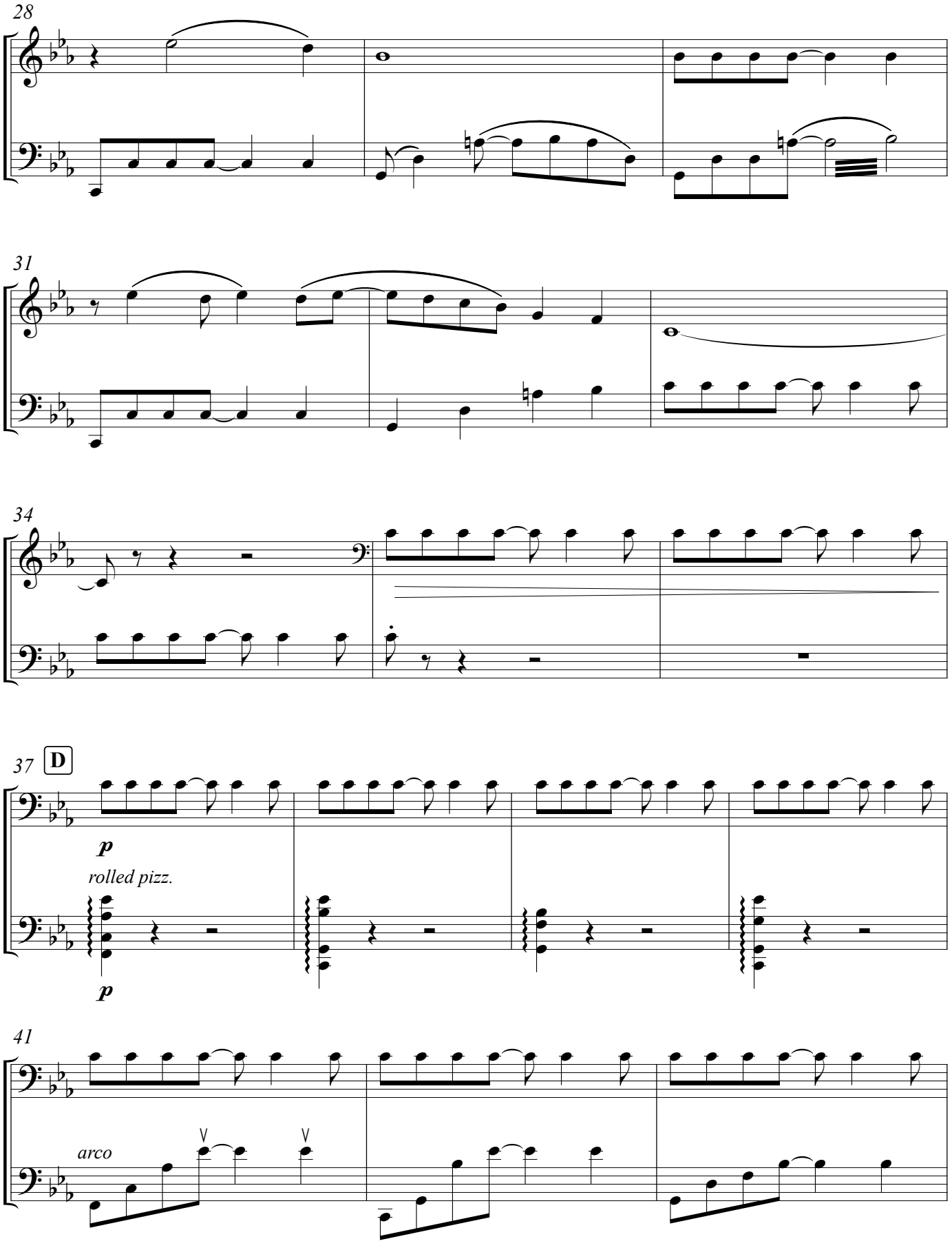
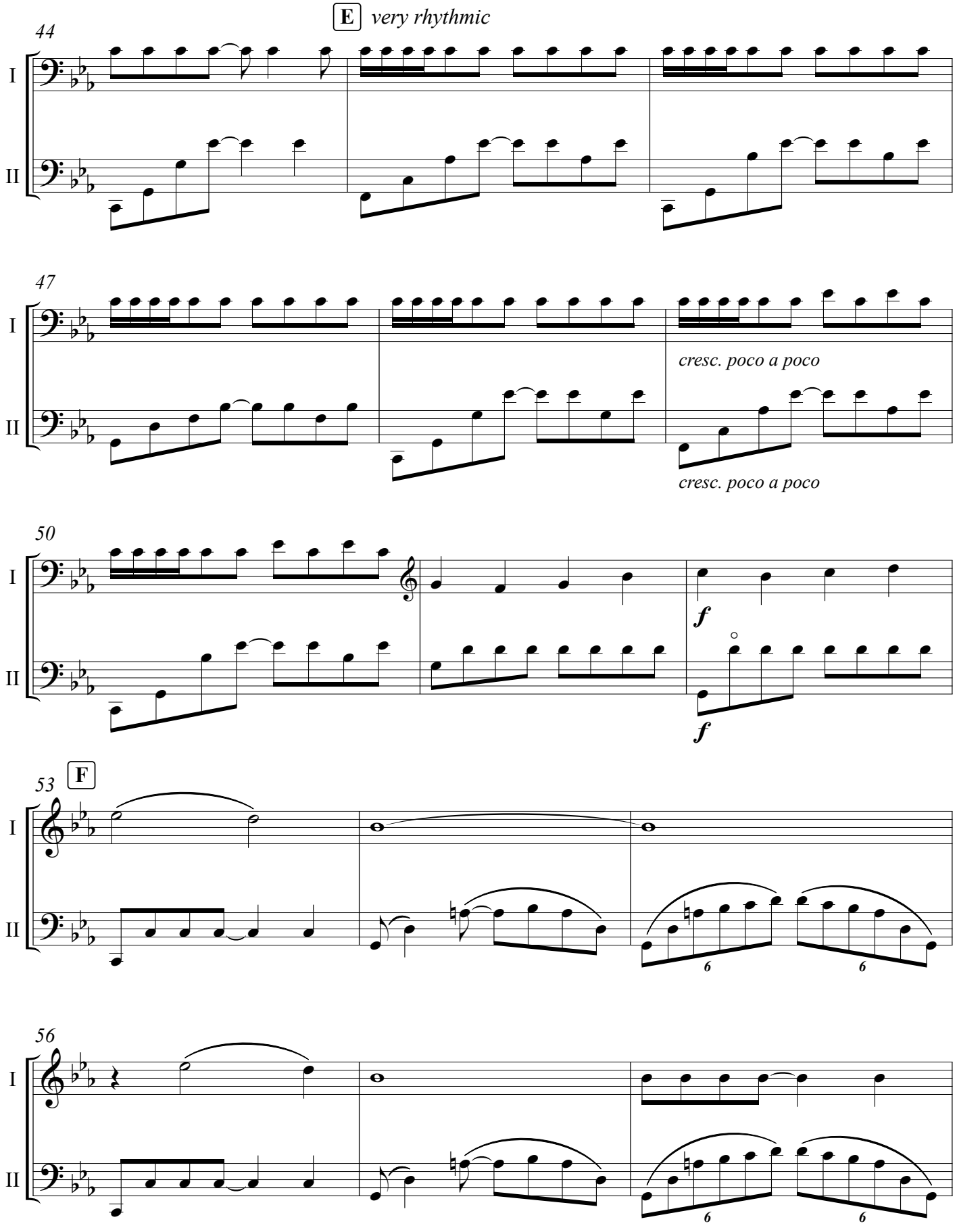
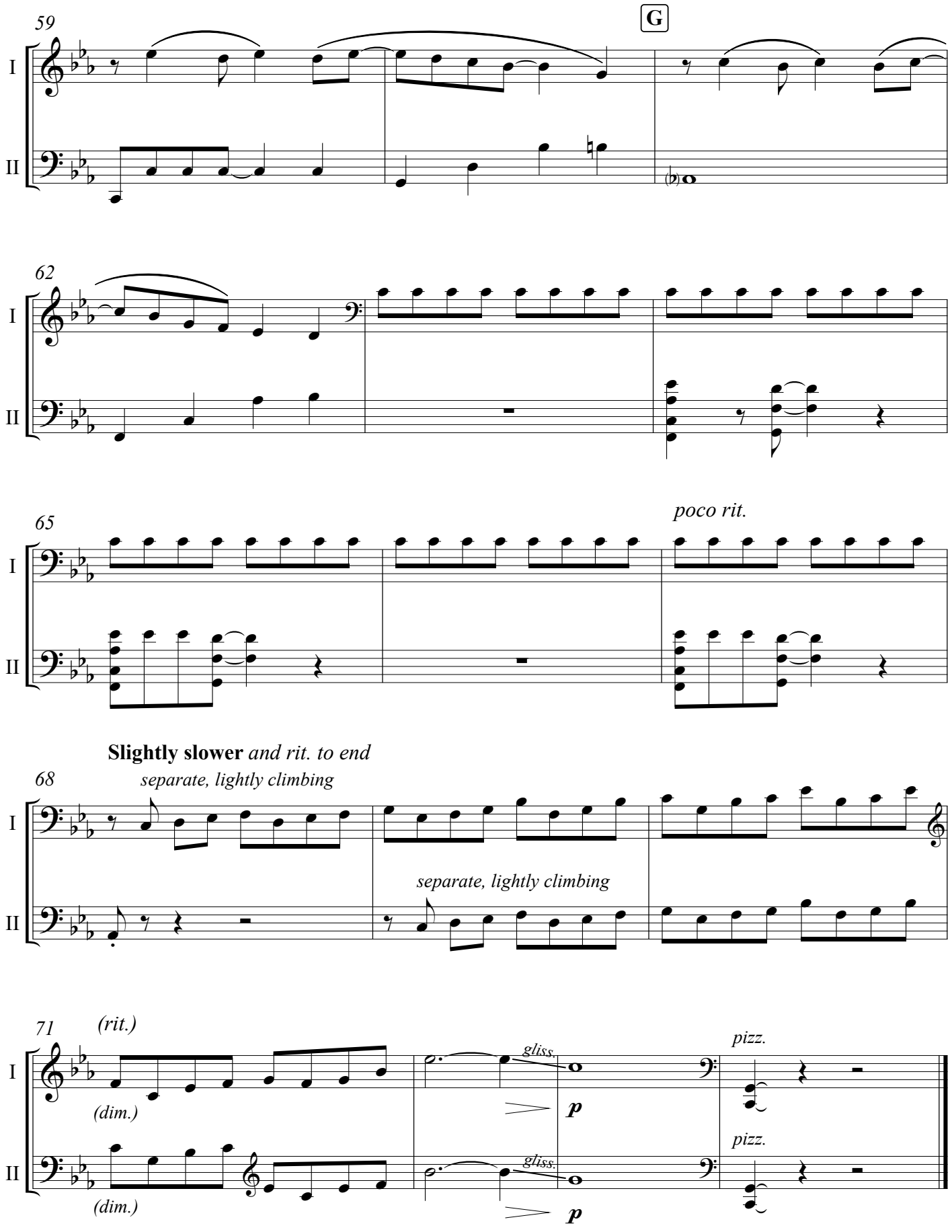
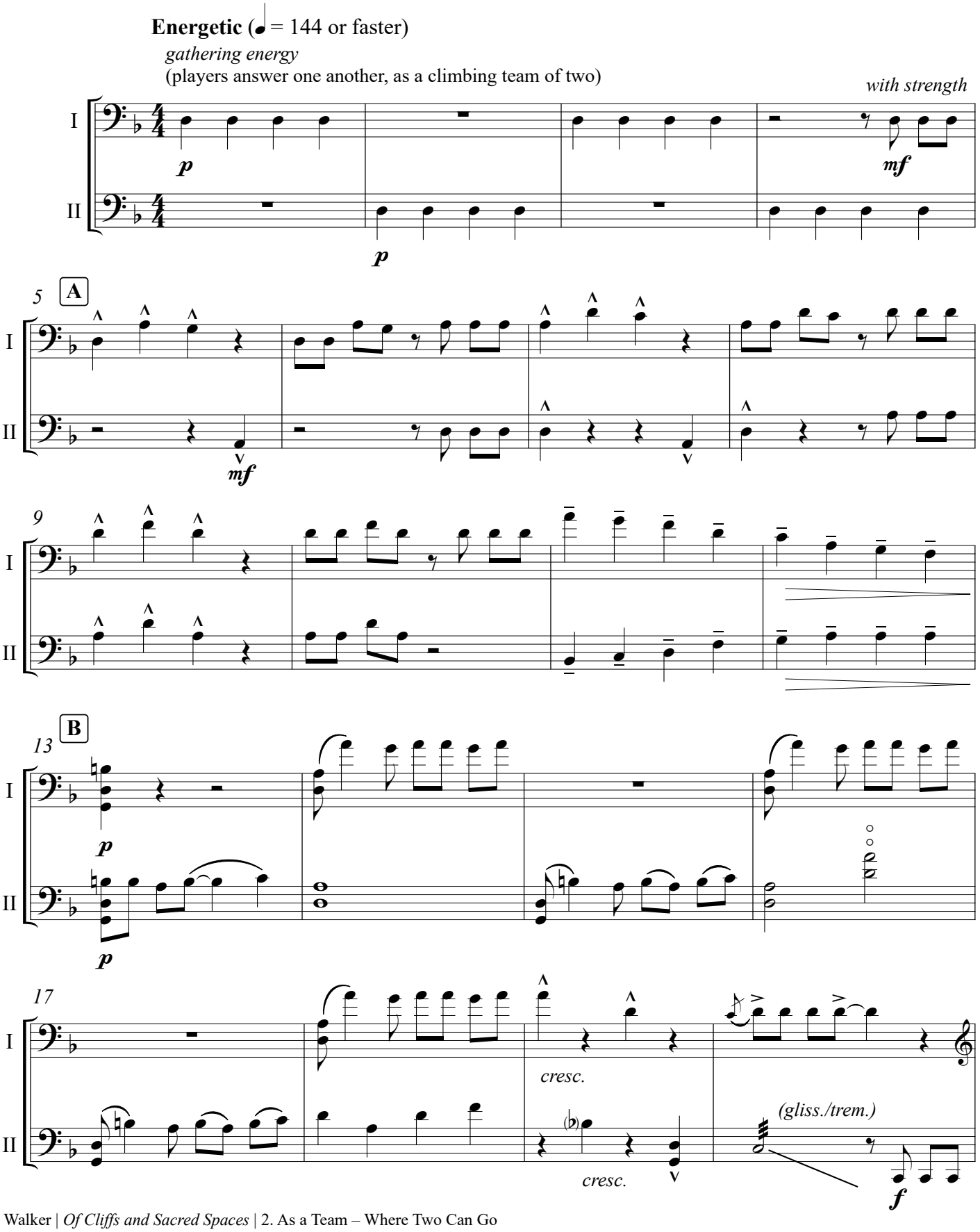

13
I
II
B
16
mf
19
22
25
C

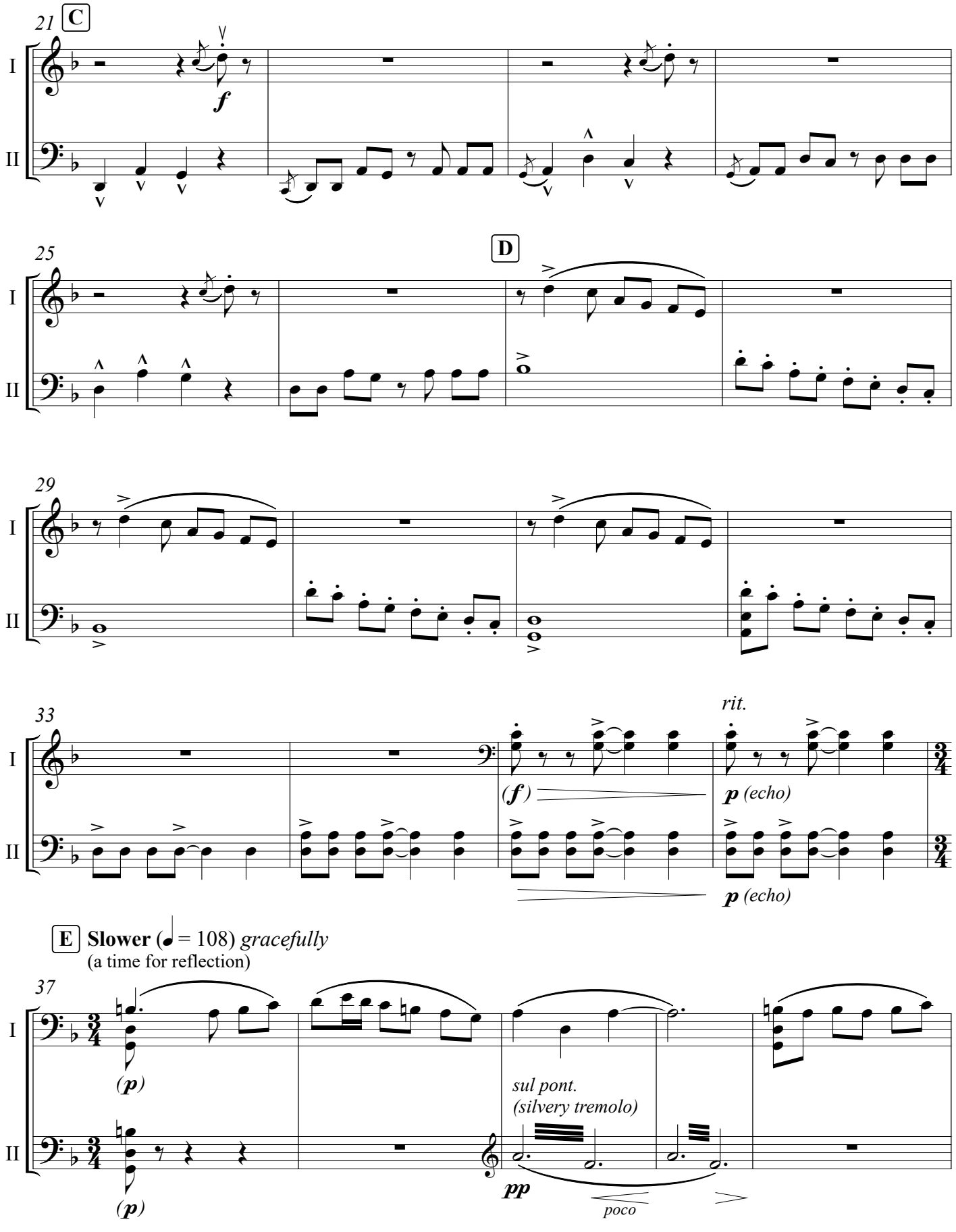

28
I
II
31
I
II
34
I
II
37
D
I
p
rolled pizz.
II
p
41
I
arco
II

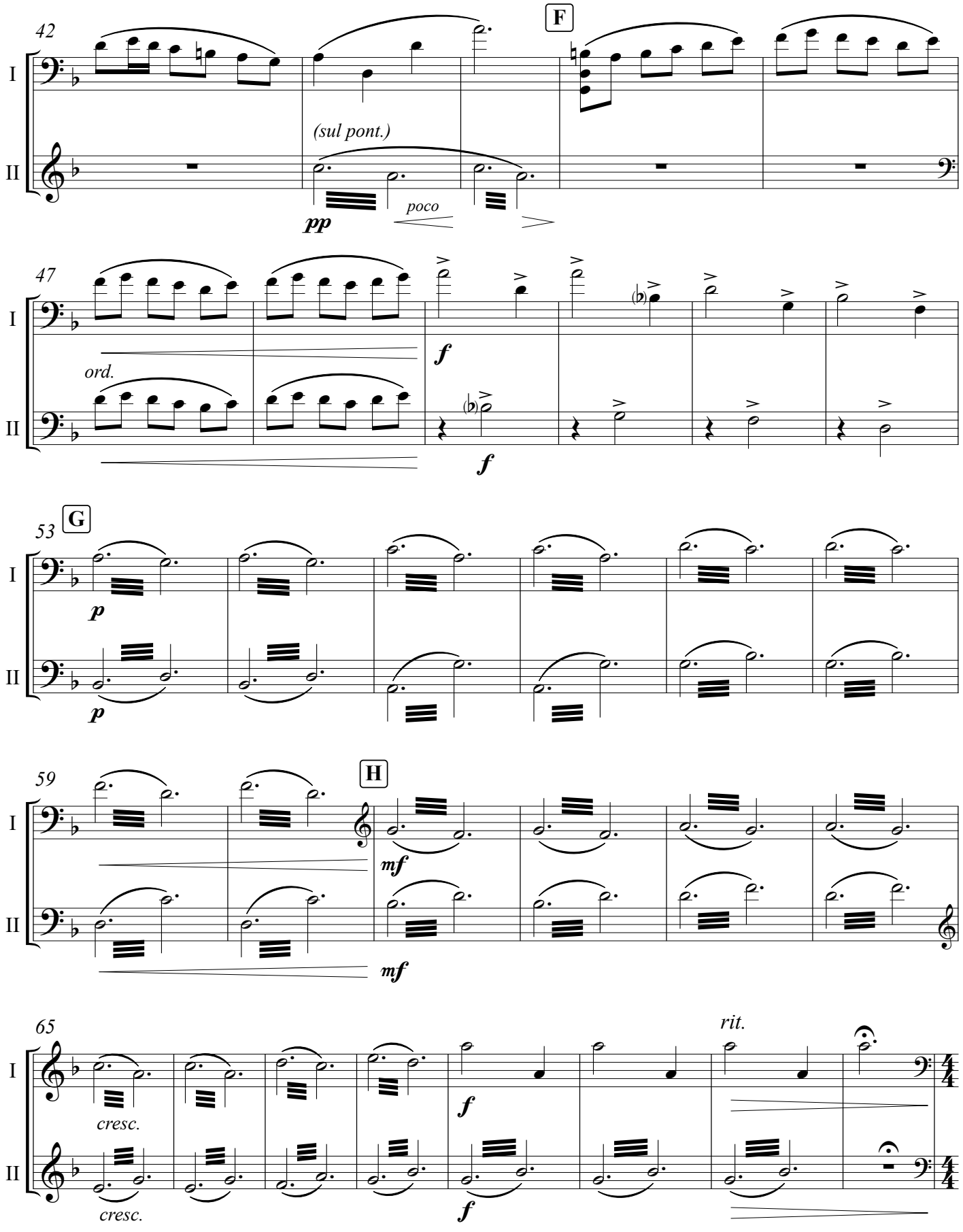

E very rhythmic
44
I
II
47
cresc. poco a poco
cresc. poco a poco
50
f
f
53
F
56
6
6
6
6

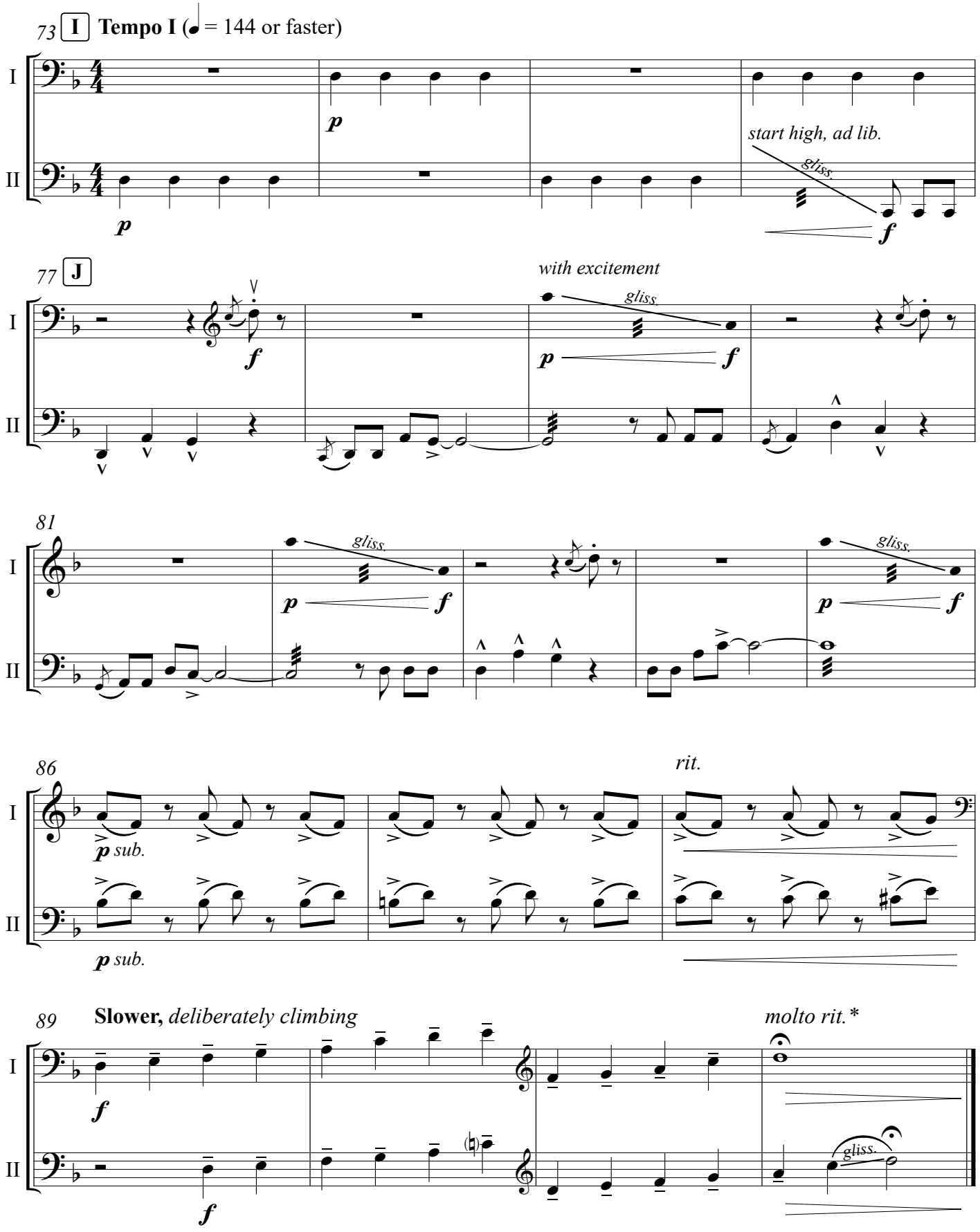

59
G
I
II
62
I
II
65
poco rit.
I
II
Slightly slower and rit. to end
68
separate, lightly climbing
I
separate, lightly climbing
II
71
(rit.)
I
(dim.)
gliss.
p
pizz.
II
(dim.)
gliss.
p
pizz.

2. As a Team – Where Two Can Go



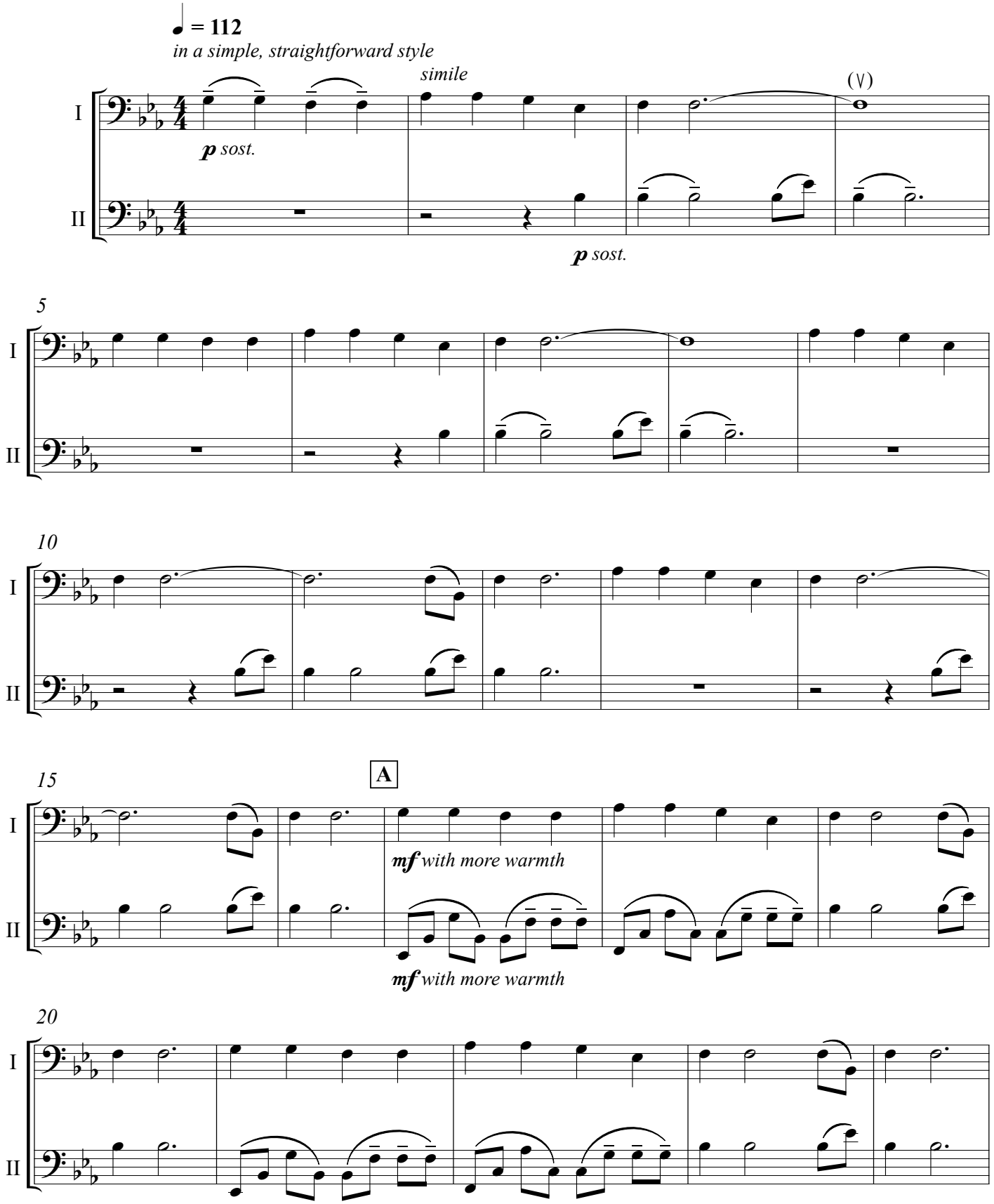

21
C
I
II
f
25
D
29
33
rit.
(f)
p (echo)
p (echo)
E
Slower (♩ = 108) gracefully
(a time for reflection)
37
(p)
(p)
sul pont.
(silvery tremolo)
pp
poco

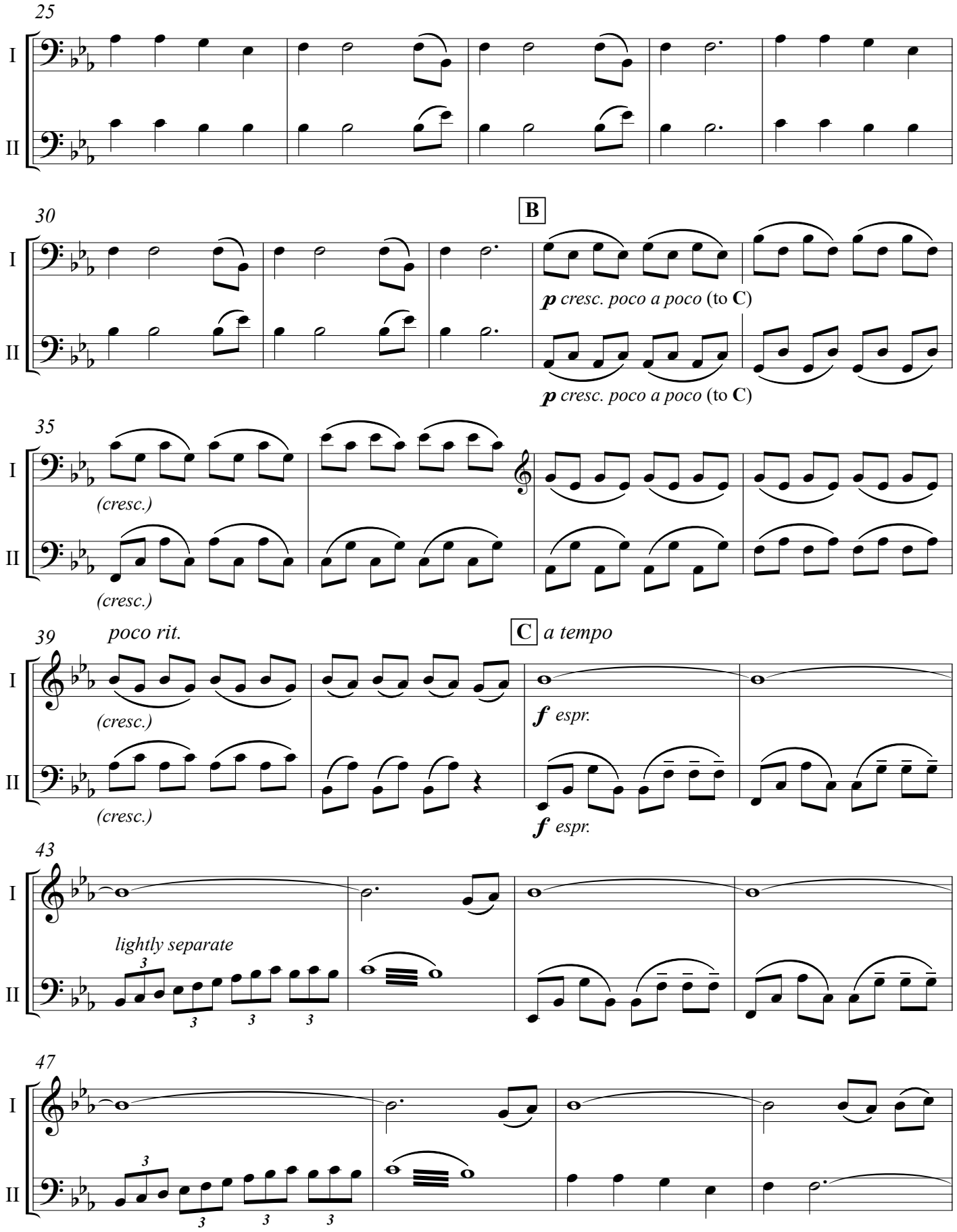

42
F
I
II
(sul pont.)
pp
poco
47
ord.
f
53
G
p
59
H
mf
65
cresc.
rit.

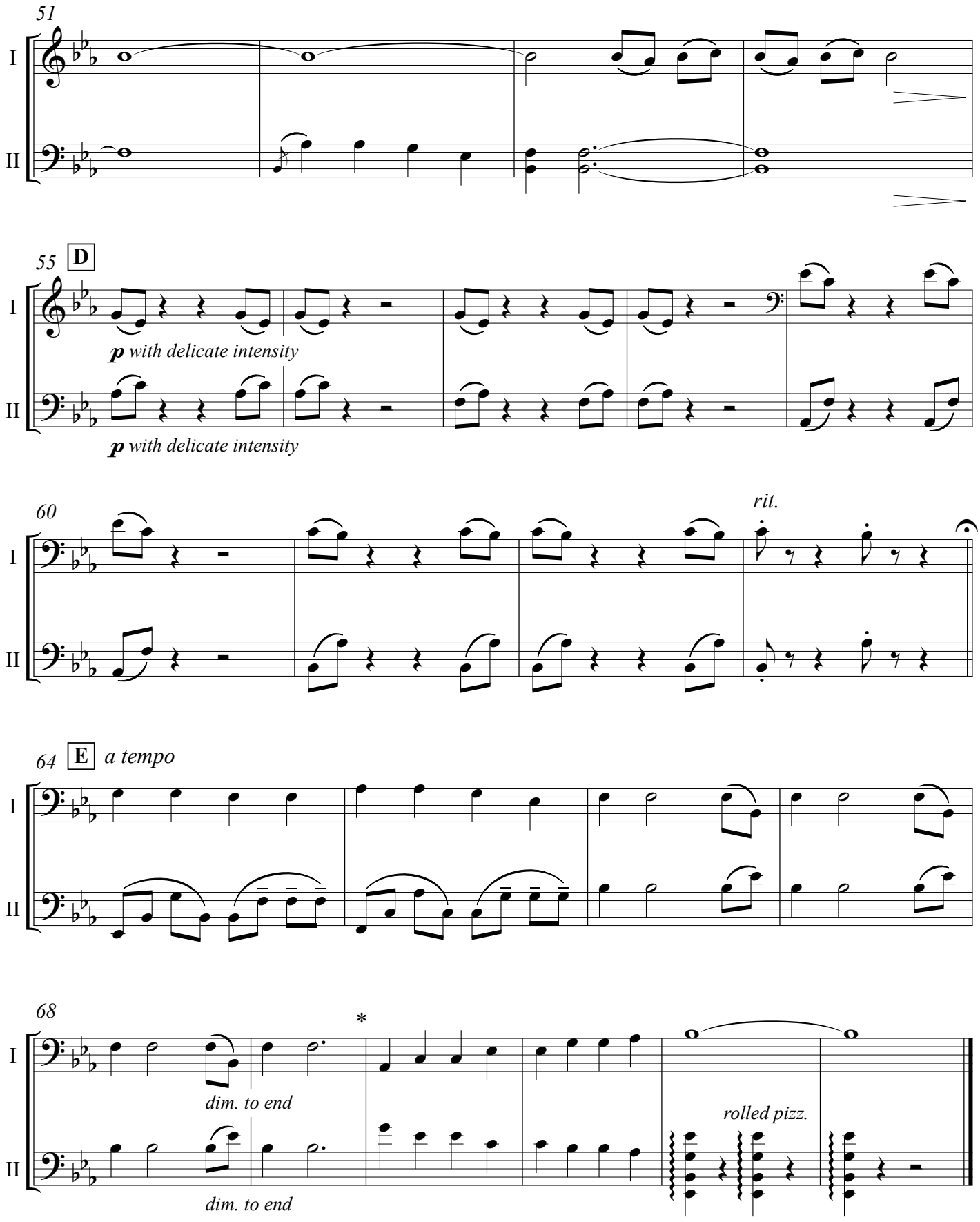


*The final step as the climbing team joins together at the summit.

3. Prayer

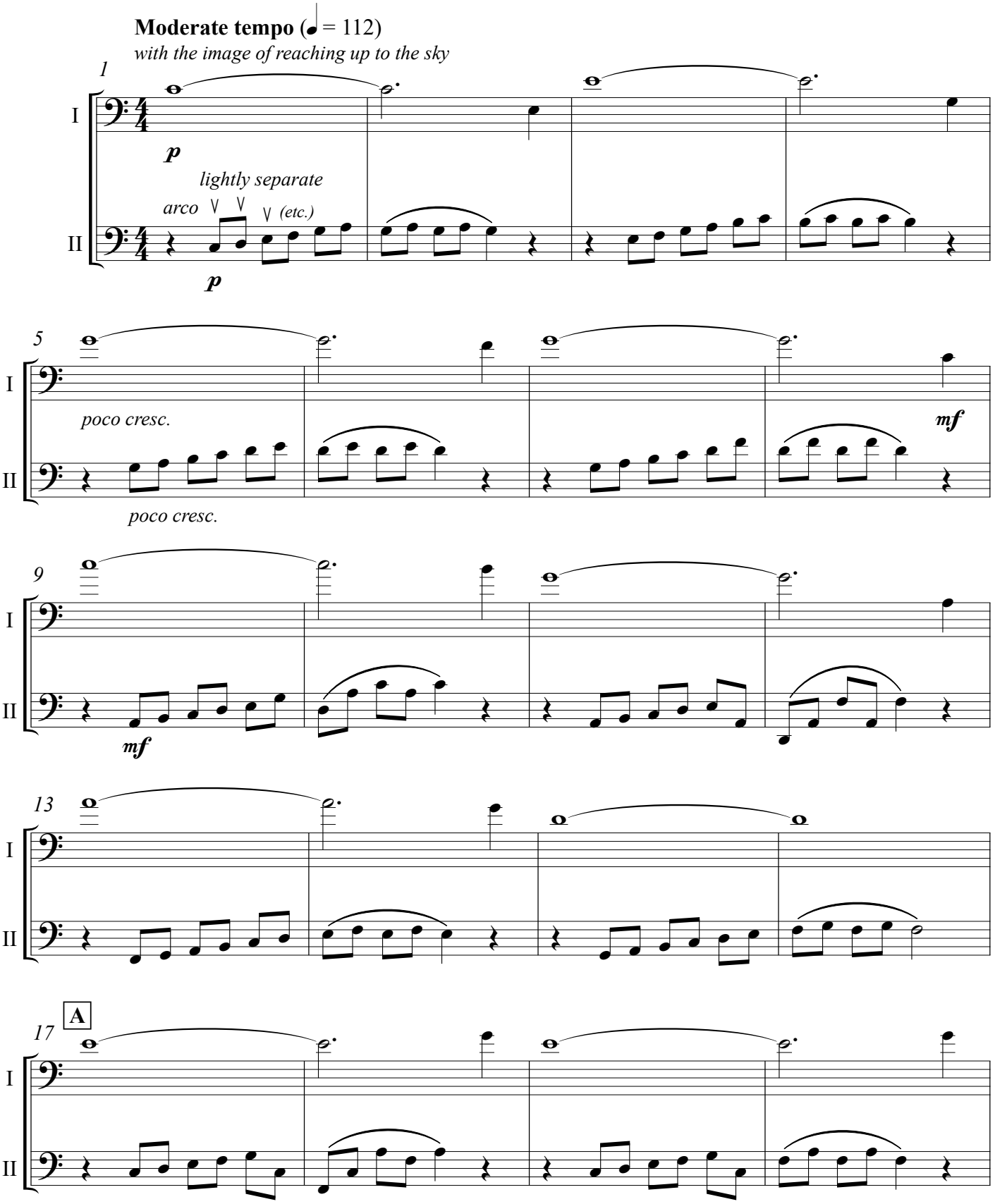

♩ = 112
in a simple, straightforward style
simile
(∨)
I
II
p sost.
p sost.
5
10
15
A
mf with more warmth
mf with more warmth
20

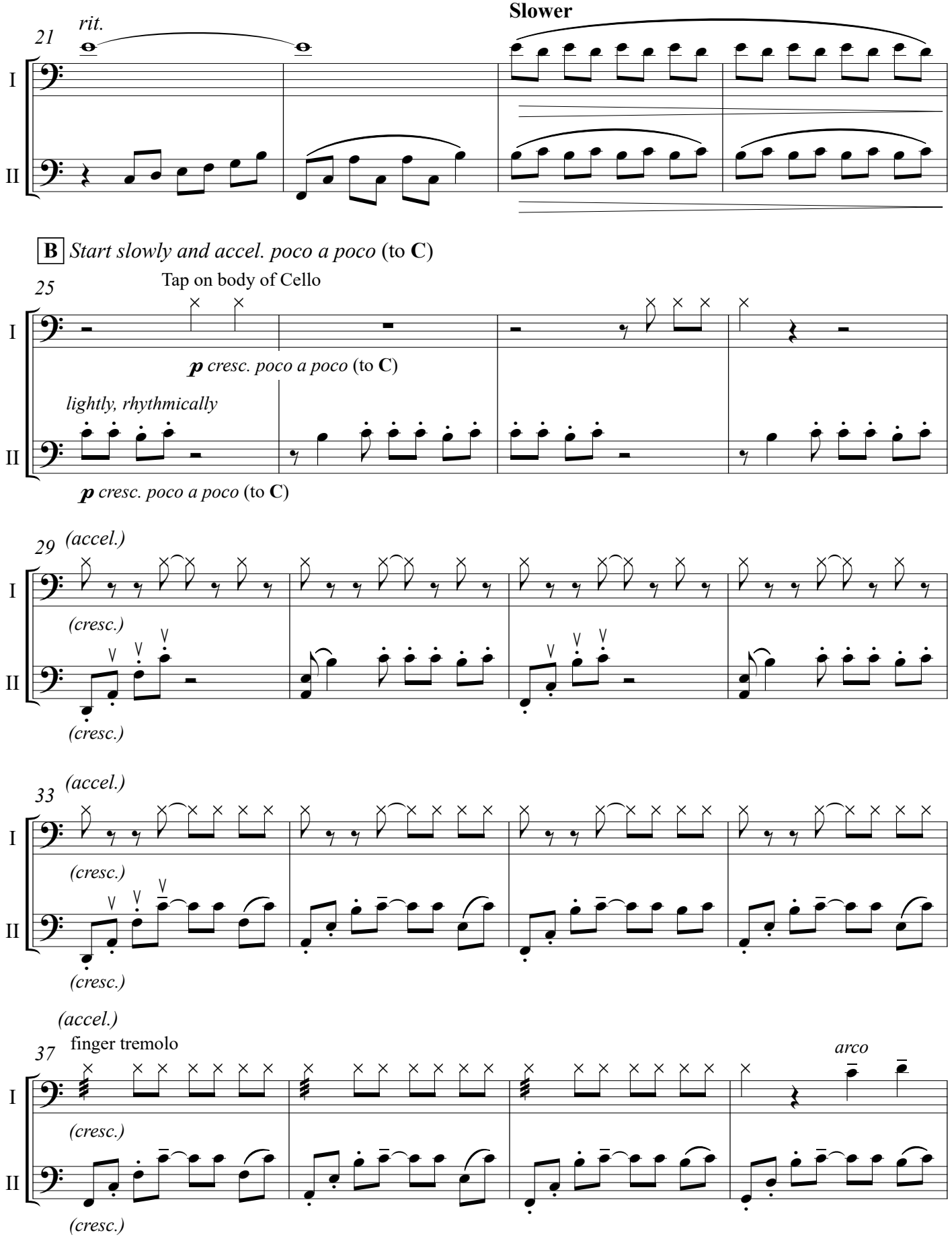

25
I
II
30
B
I
II
p cresc. poco a poco (to C)
p cresc. poco a poco (to C)
35
I
(cresc.)
II
(cresc.)
39
poco rit.
C a tempo
I
(cresc.)
II
(cresc.)
f espr.
f espr.
43
I
lightly separate
II
3
3
3
3
47
I
II
3
3
3
3

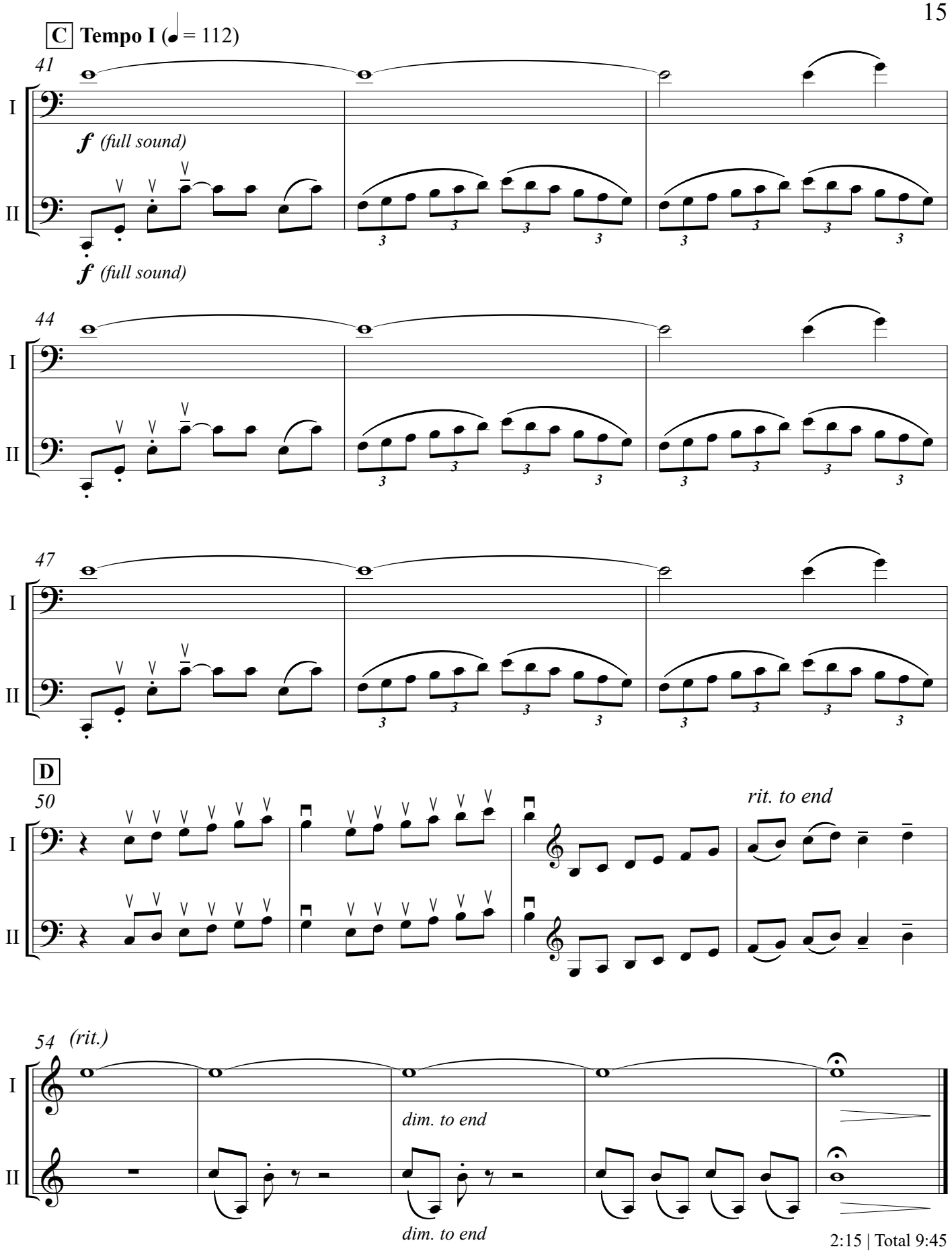


*One could end here (with a complete fade out)

4. Beyond Time and Space




21
rit.
Slower
I
II
B Start slowly and accel. poco a poco (to C)
25
Tap on body of Cello
p cresc. poco a poco (to C)
lightly, rhythmically
p cresc. poco a poco (to C)
29
(accel.)
(cresc.)
(cresc.)
33
(accel.)
(cresc.)
(cresc.)
(accel.)
37
finger tremolo
arco
(cresc.)
(cresc.)



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July 22, 2023
New Canaan, Connecticut