FOUR TUNES FOR CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

By

Nathaniel Thomas Bliton

A THESIS

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

Music Composition

2011

Four Tunes

Blito-Slip-Jig
Measured Rain
Resting on a Stair
Anucar

Program Notes

These four tunes are written as virtual folk music. They are written as though they were native idioms from imaginary cultures, borrowing from Irish, Bulgarian, Latin American and North American musical styles. I mean for them to be played as if the performing musicians were in a band together and had grown up listening to this type of music, and could improvise and embellish in the style of these tunes. The tunes' rhythmic frameworks are pulse-oriented, and should feel intuitive. The original tunes, written as to appear in a songbook, are included at the end of this document.

"Blito-Slip-Jig" mixes ideas from Afro-Cuban music and traditional Celtic music. While the rhythm is similar to a Slip-Jig (an Irish music style usually notated in 9/8 meter), the syncopated melody and diatonic harmonic structure relate more closely to some styles of Latin music, like Cuban son or salsa. This tune in particular should feel natural to dance to.

"Measured Rain" has a constant pulse that never changes throughout the piece, but sub-divisions of that pulse constantly shift and layer in different ways. I am interested in the way rain is the combination of many different drops of water falling in different

conflicting patterns, but still feels so constant and so steady as a whole. In this tune, I try to communicate something of that paradox of measuring rain.

The original tune for "Resting on a Stair" is closely related to a traditional Irish Jig fiddle-tune (which normally appear in notation with a 6/8 meter). Its comparatively simple rhythmic structure made it the prime candidate for the most lush arrangement of this set of tunes. However, this tune can be heard and played in a couple of different rhythmical contexts. After it gains momentum, it segues directly into the following piece.

"Auncar" has the most energy and drive of the four tunes, but its groove is uneven. While the tune should be danced to, the accompanying dance would be an odd one indeed! The name comes from an intuitive process of applying nonsense syllables to the melody of this tune ("A-nu-car" seems to fit well over the first three pitched notes). The melodic, harmonic and rhythmic content is borrowed from some Bulgarian and Eastern-European folk music – music that feels as natural as it is challenging to play.

Performance Notes

"Blito-Slip-Jig" is a piece that melds rhythmic ideas from the Irish 9/8 Slip Jig, Cuban son and Mexican son styles of music. Similarly to some Latin melodic styles, this melody fits with the rhythm presented in measures one and two of the Percussion I part in a way similar to a Salsa melody's relationship to the Son Clave. So, like in those styles, alignment of the eighth-notes between the different instruments is crucial. The performers should pay attention to the pulse implied by the syncopated percussion parts, while aligning with the eighth-note grid of their composite rhythm. The performers should also play this tune as they might in a jazz combo or rock band, where the "rhythm section" (percussion, bass and cello in this case) should feel free to improvise within the established rhythmic and tonal framework. There is a solo section where the accordion or oboe player should improvise freely to the chord changes provided in their parts. In some places, the bass player and percussionists have chord symbols, indicated "fills," and slash marks, borrowed from jazz and pop notation. I encourage the players to improvise, embellishing on the rhythmic and melodic ideas presented in the score. At specific points, I wrote in suggested "fills" to deviate from the established patterns, and those are indicated in the score and parts. Alternate fills are welcome when "fill" is written in the measure.

In "Measured Rain," a very clear pulse runs throughout, with layers of different sub-divisions of that pulse occurring simultaneously. These different sub-divisions move between the timbres of the different instruments, so it is important to practice playing each of the instruments' parts in combination with each of the others, to make clear how the rhythms lock together in the ensemble.

"Resting on a Stair" is close to a traditional Slip-Jig, but with a strong grouping of four eighth-notes, giving it a 3/2 metric feel over the written 12/8 meter. This arrangement of the tune spends most of its time in 12/8, but I encourage the performers to feel it with a stronger half-note pulse. The transition into Anucar should happen seamlessly, carefully maintaining the eighth-note synchronicity between the different instruments.

"Anucar" has a regular rhythmic scheme over an irregular metric framework. For this tune, the performers should practice feeling the pulse by dancing (or walking around town) in four beats with a short first step/beat (2-3-3-3 is the grouping of eighth-notes in the notation). There are four sections to the tune, and the first section repeats between each of the following sections, following the pattern of a Rondo form (ABACADA). I encourage the performers to embellish their parts to bring out the 2-3-3-3 metric rhythm, or even to syncopate against it. Notes in the melody written in parentheses should be "ghosted," or played with less force or pressure (like the opposite of an accent).

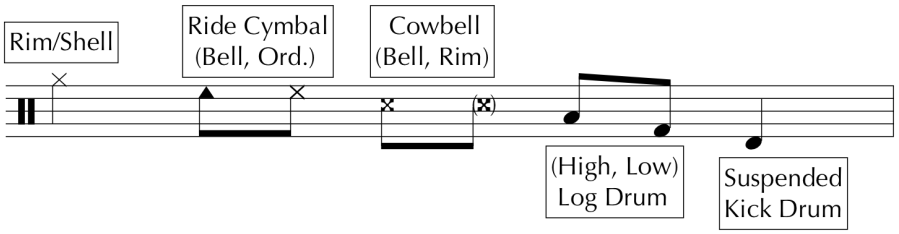
Additional notes for Percussion:

Percussion I should play a higher-pitched cowbell than Percussion II. Notes on the cowbell line with ⤫ note-heads should be played on the open end of the cowbell with the side of the stick, to get the open full tone of the cowbell. Notes written on the cowbell line with (⤫) note-heads should be played further up the cowbell with the tip of the stick, to get a more muffled tone. Notes written on the ride cymbal line with ▲ note-heads should be accented and played on the bell of the cymbal, while notes written with × note-heads should be played normally.

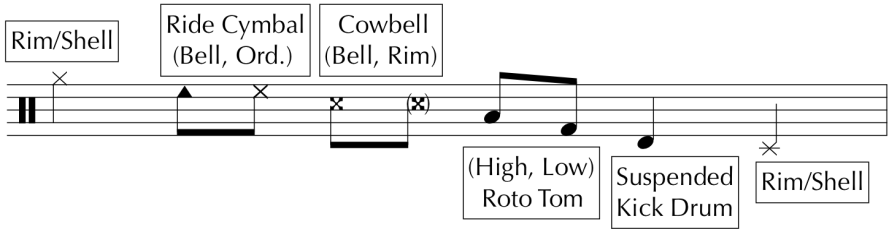
Bring out notes on the kick drum and cowbell in the overall texture. They are used for metric accents, and should be considered like a kick drum and snare in a drum set, where the high log drum and high roto-tom are like a clave player in a group: clear, but sometimes only implied.

For Percussion II the "rim/shell" sound works well on the rim of the low roto-tom, while Percussion I should hit the side of the kick drum, or a non-pitched part of the log drum. The Percussion II part has two lines for "rim/shell," implying that the lower line might work better with the left hand, and the higher line might work better with the right hand.

Percussion I Staff Layout



Percussion II Staff Layout



Four Tunes
for Chamber Ensemble

2011

Oboe

(or optional Bb Soprano Saxophone)

Accordion

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

Two Percussion Players:

I: Suspended Ride Cymbal

Cowbell

Log Drum (two tones)

Suspended Kick Drum

II: Suspended Ride Cymbal

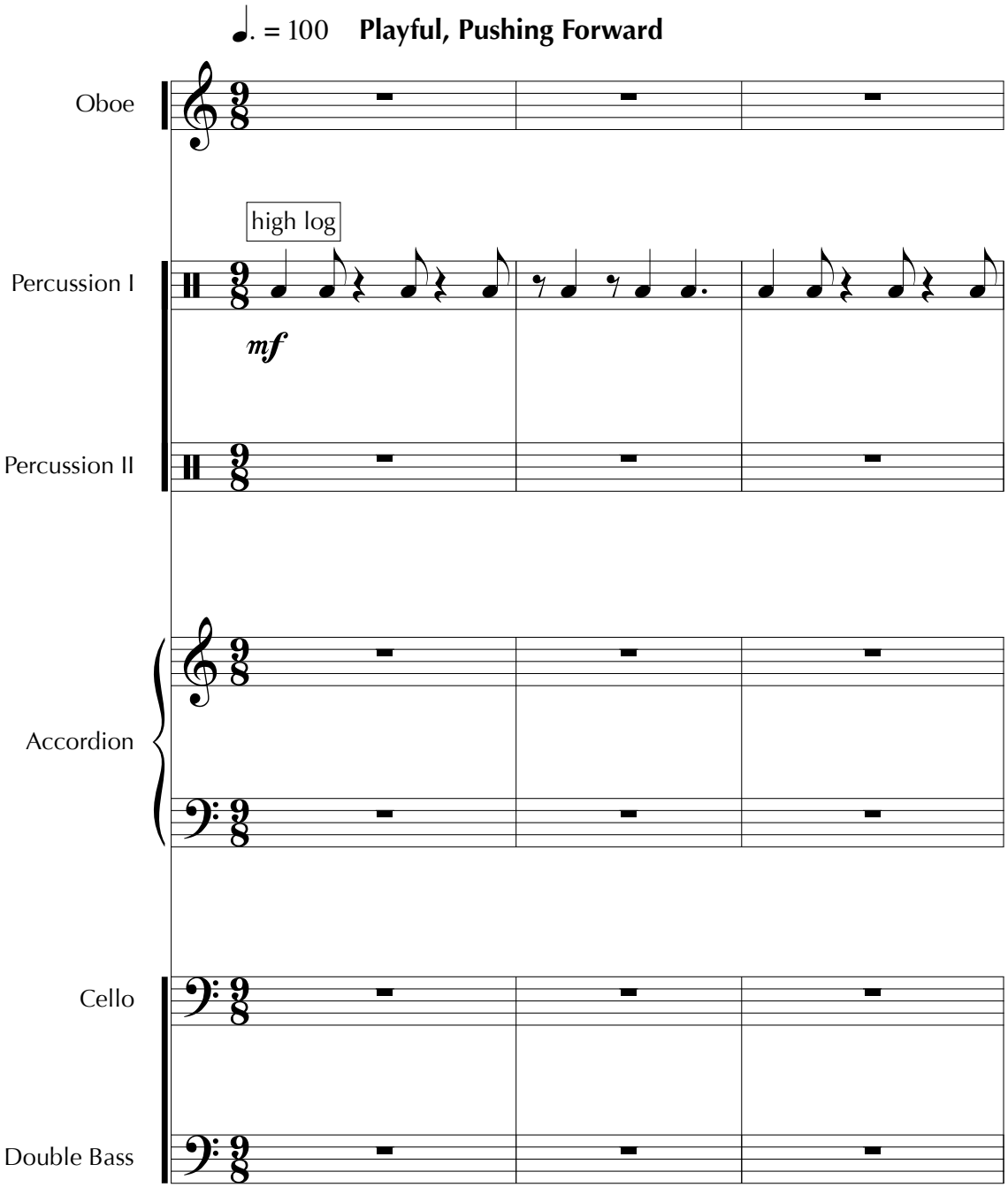
Cowbell

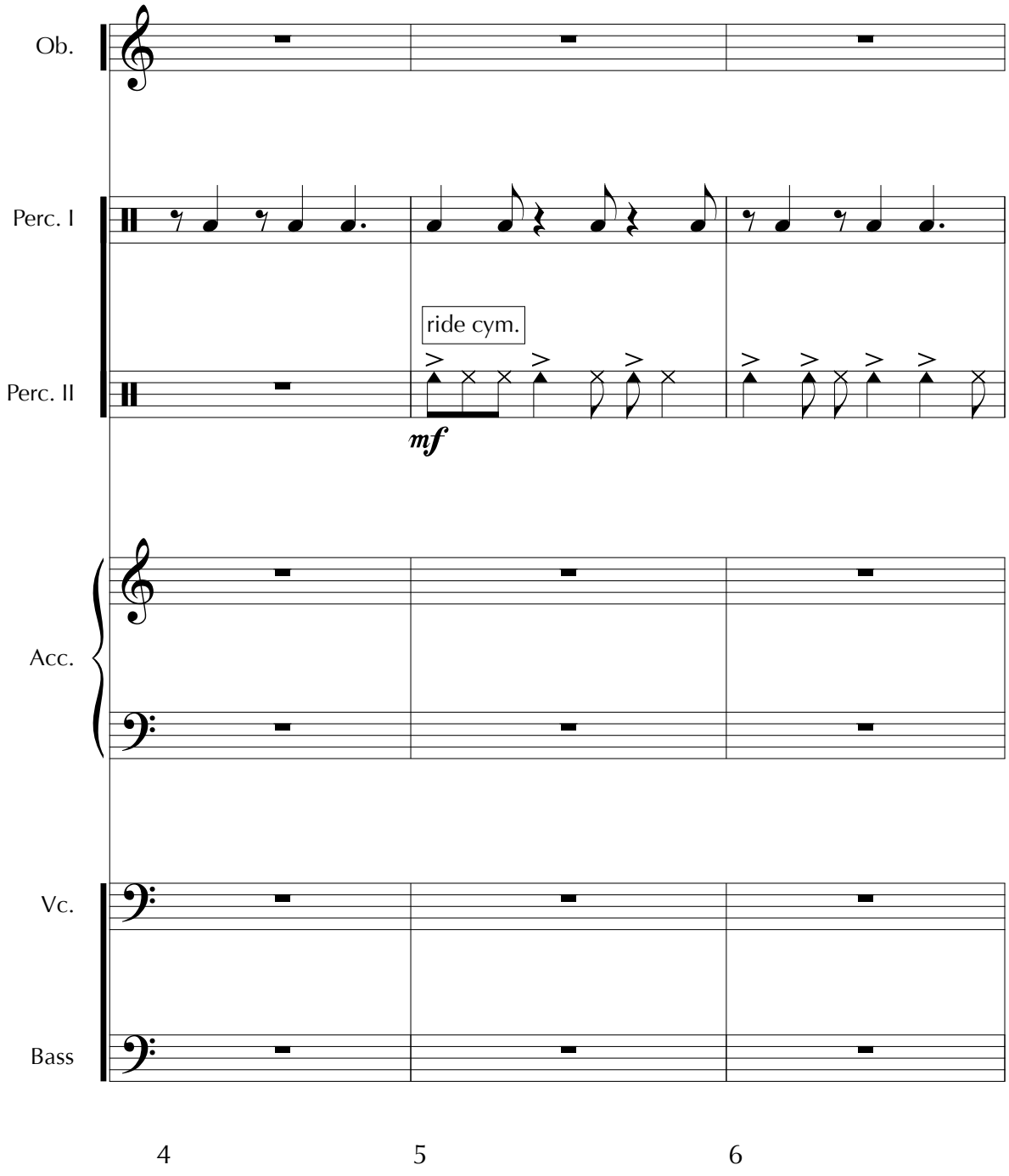
Roto-Tom (two tones)

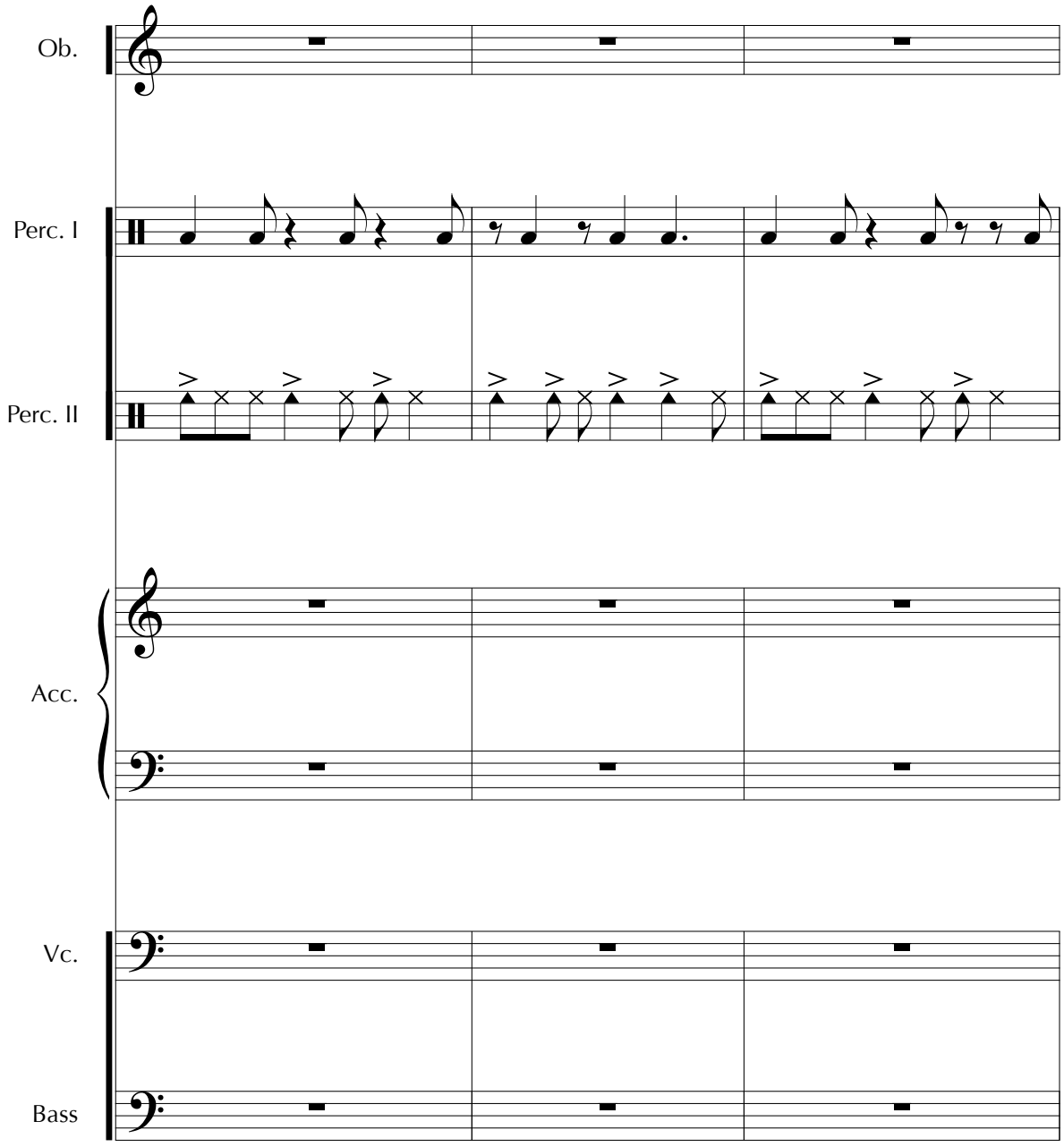
Suspended Kick Drum

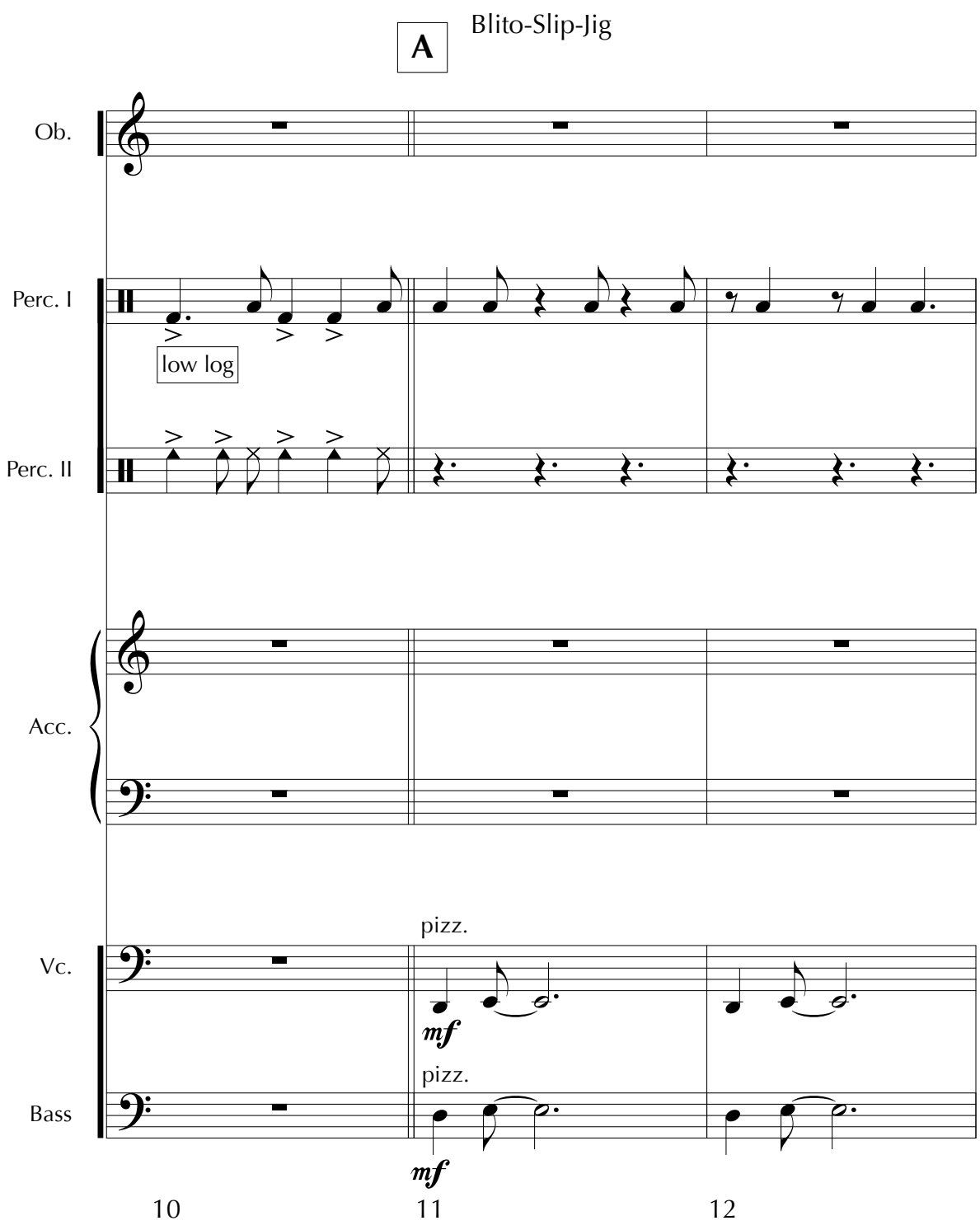
Blito-Slip-Jig

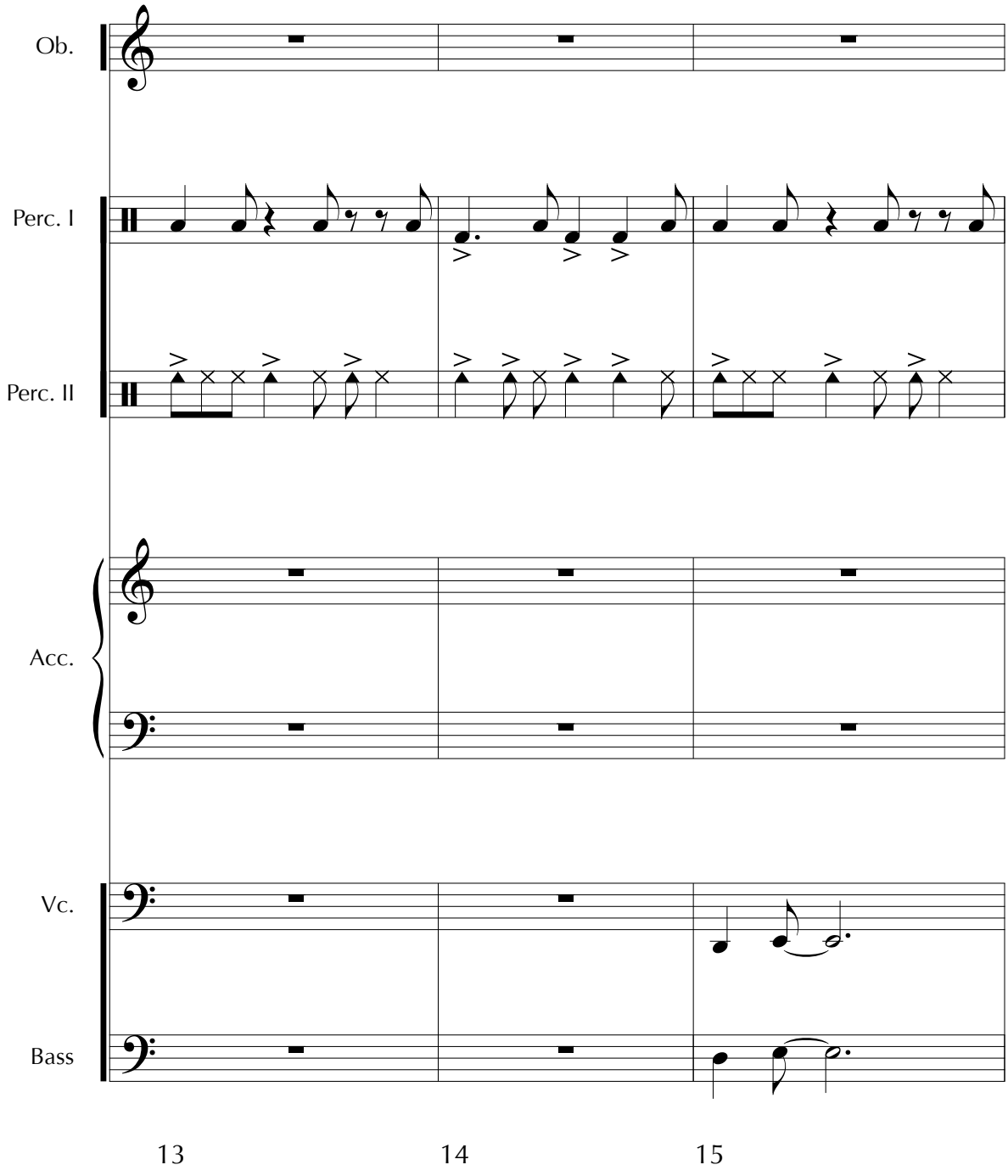
Nate Bliton

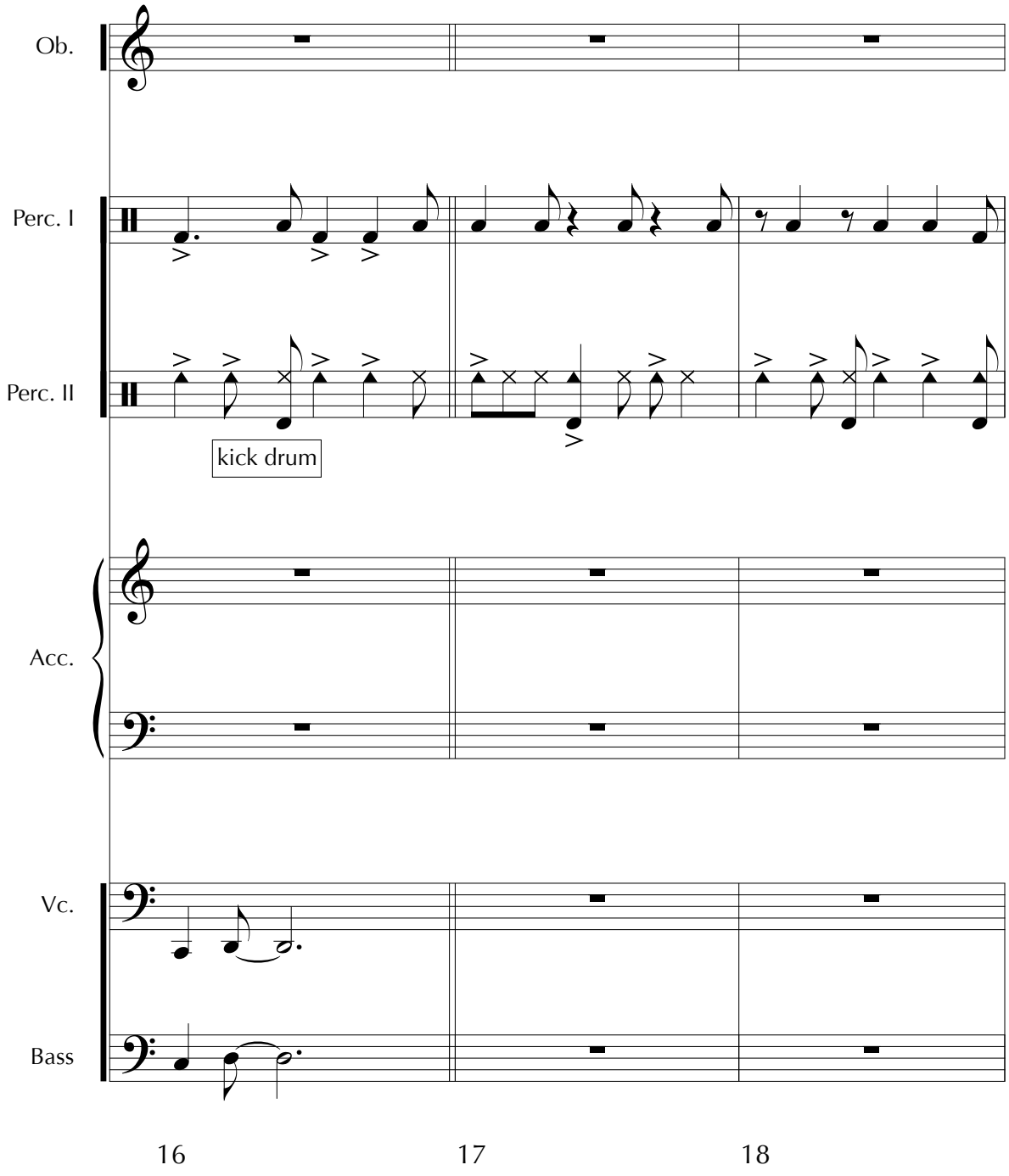


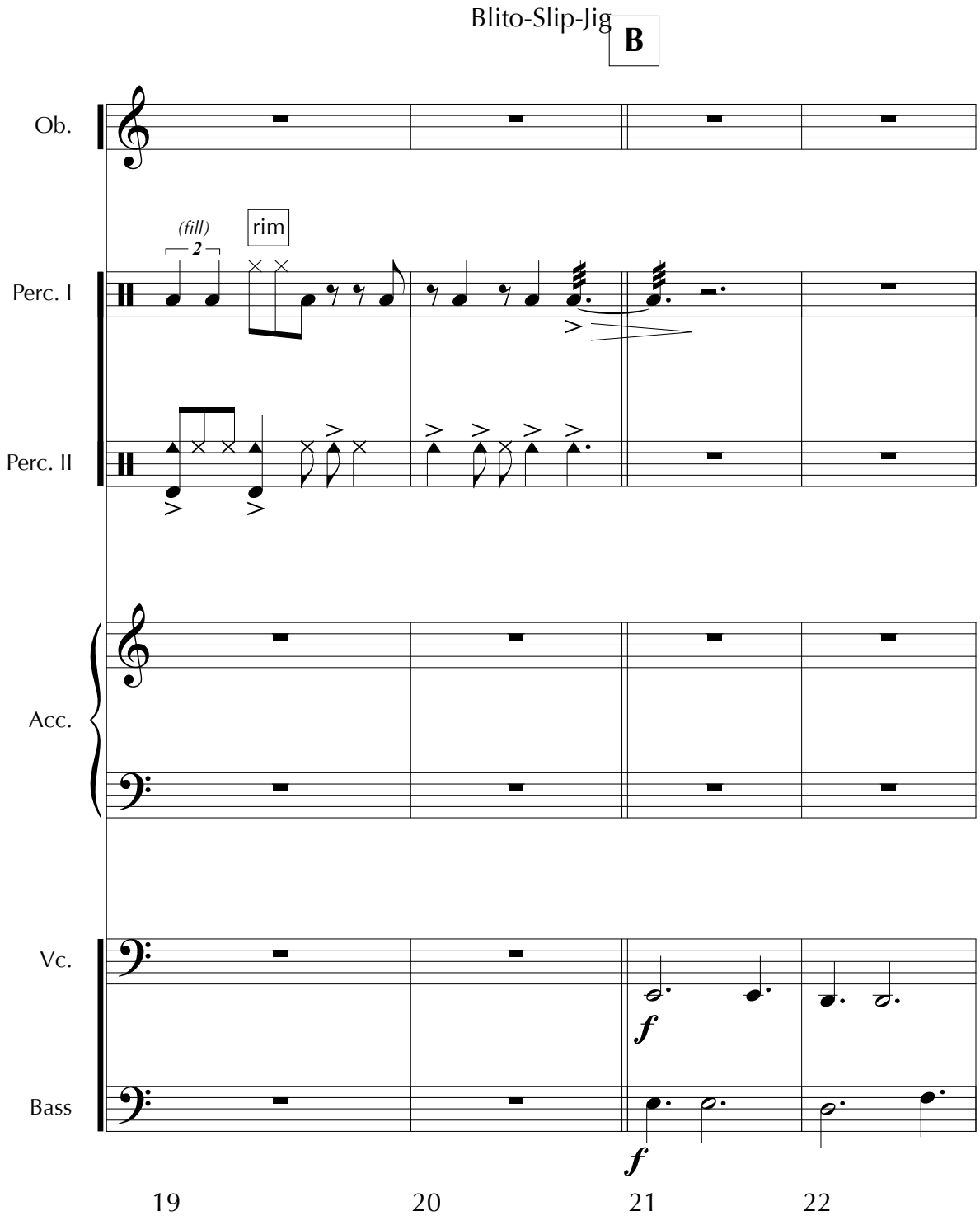

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
ride cym.
mf
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
4
5
6

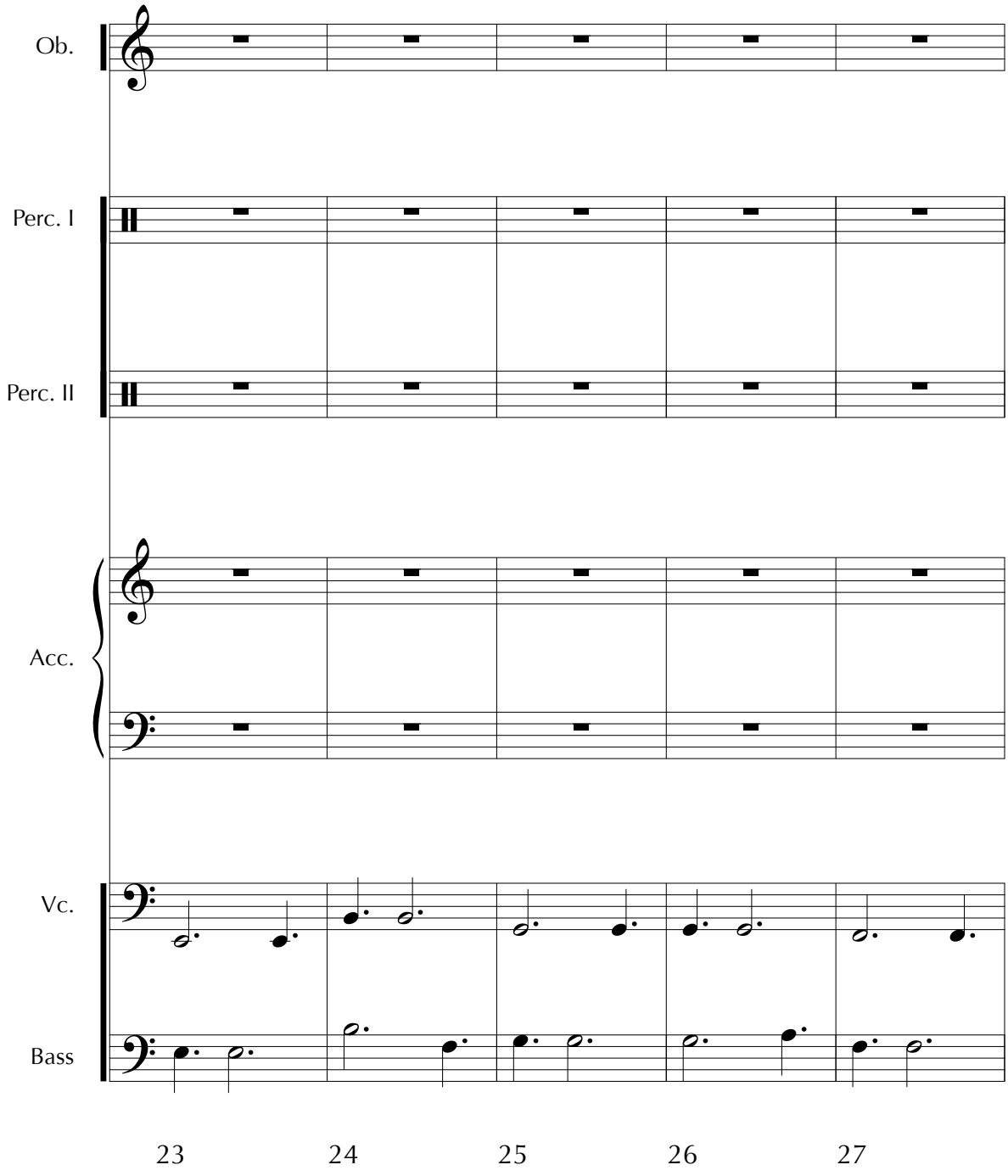

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
7
8
9

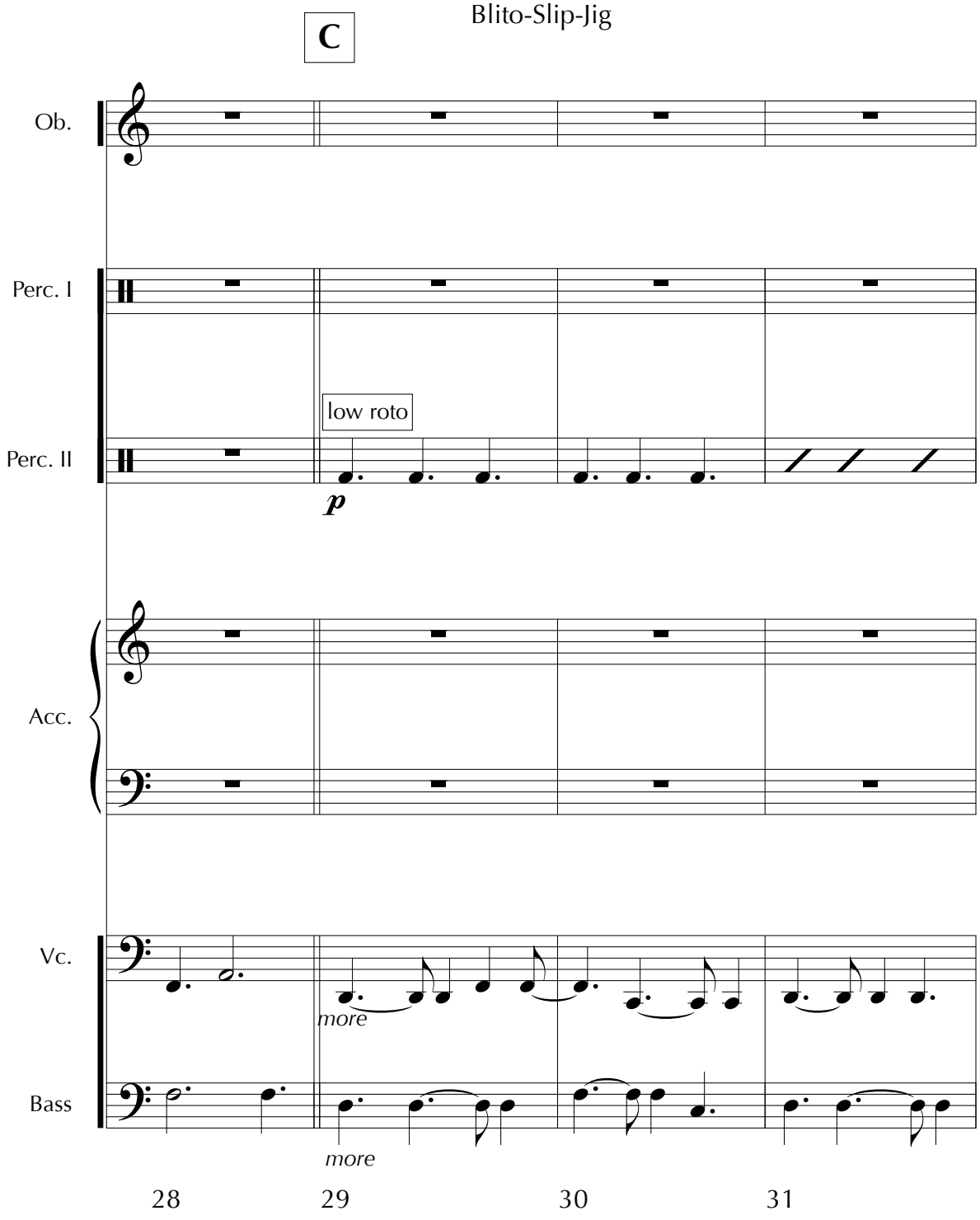

A
Blito-Slip-Jig
Ob.
Perc. I
low log
Perc. II
Acc.
Vc.
pizz.
mf
Bass
pizz.
mf
10
11
12

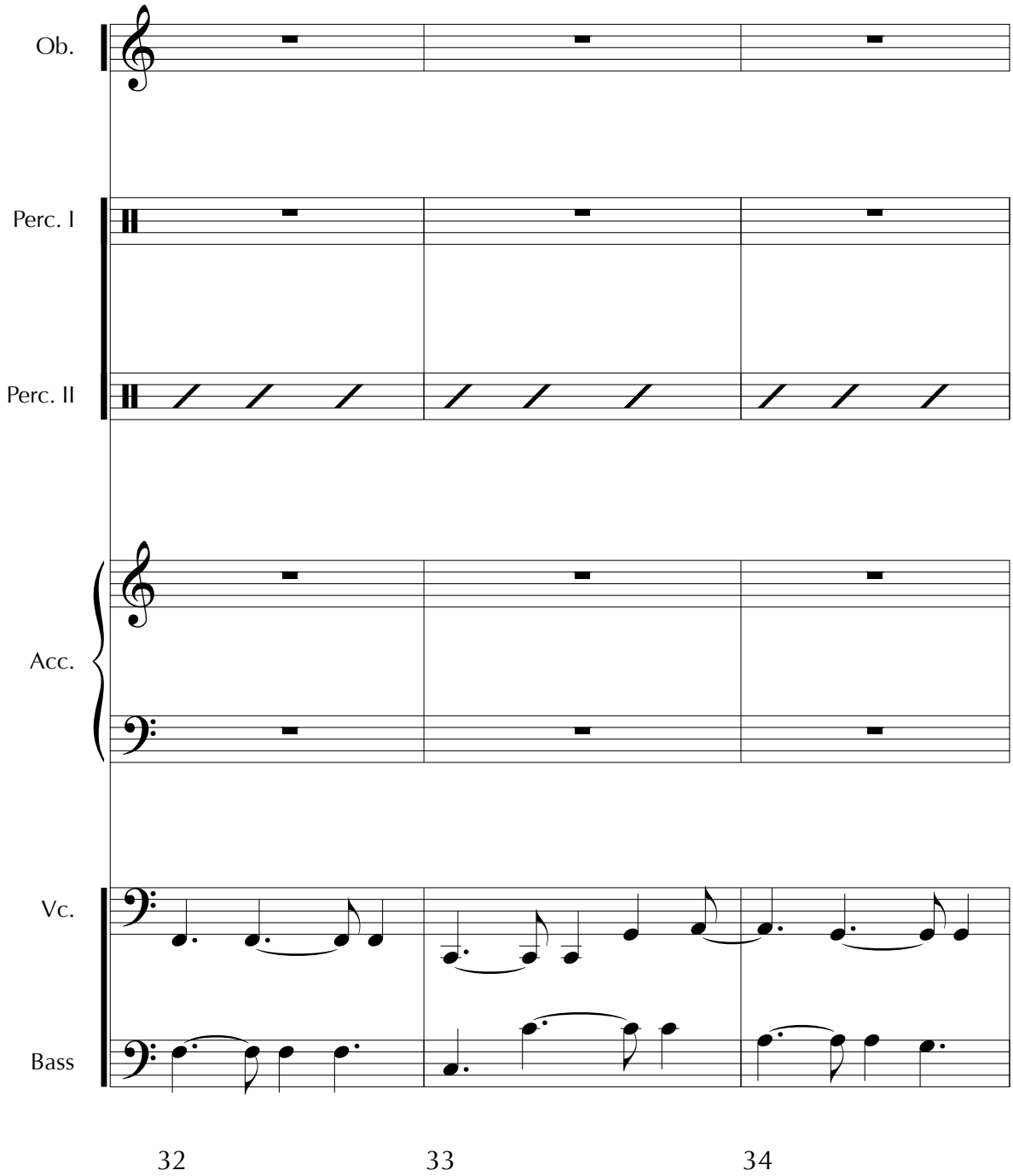

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
13
14
15

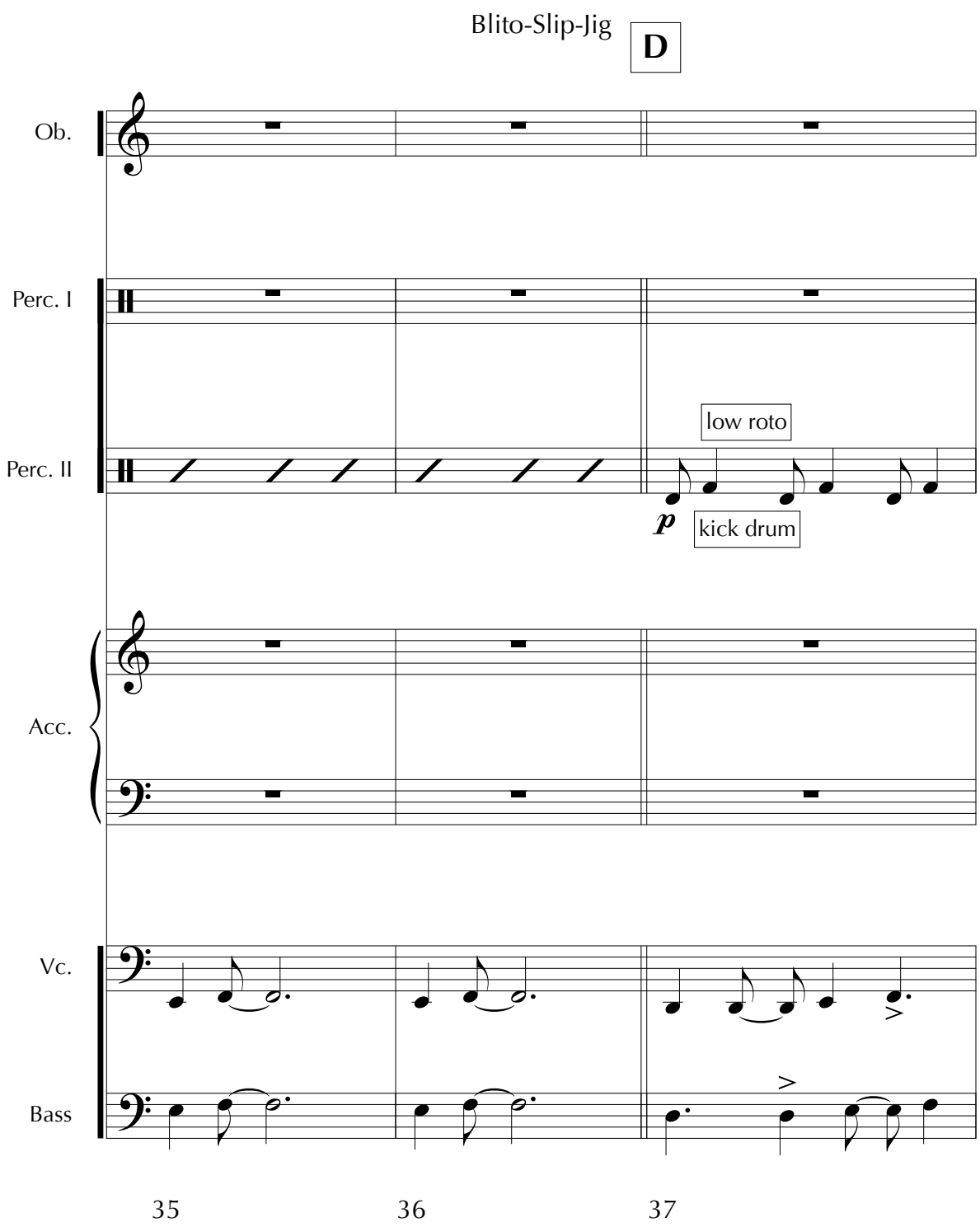

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
kick drum
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
16
17
18

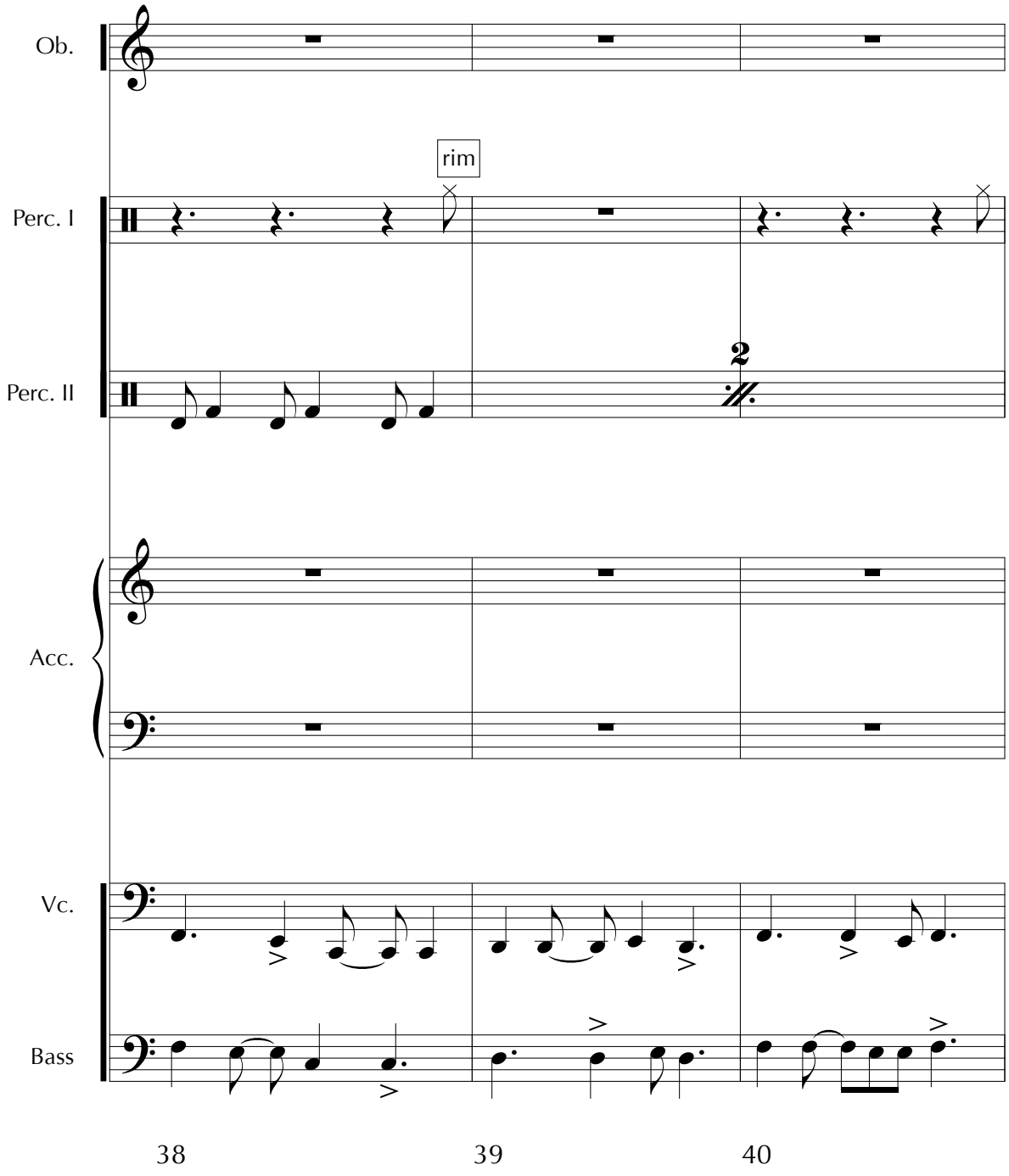

Blito-Slip-Jig
B
Ob.
(fill)
2
rim
Perc. I
Perc. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
f
f
19
20
21
22

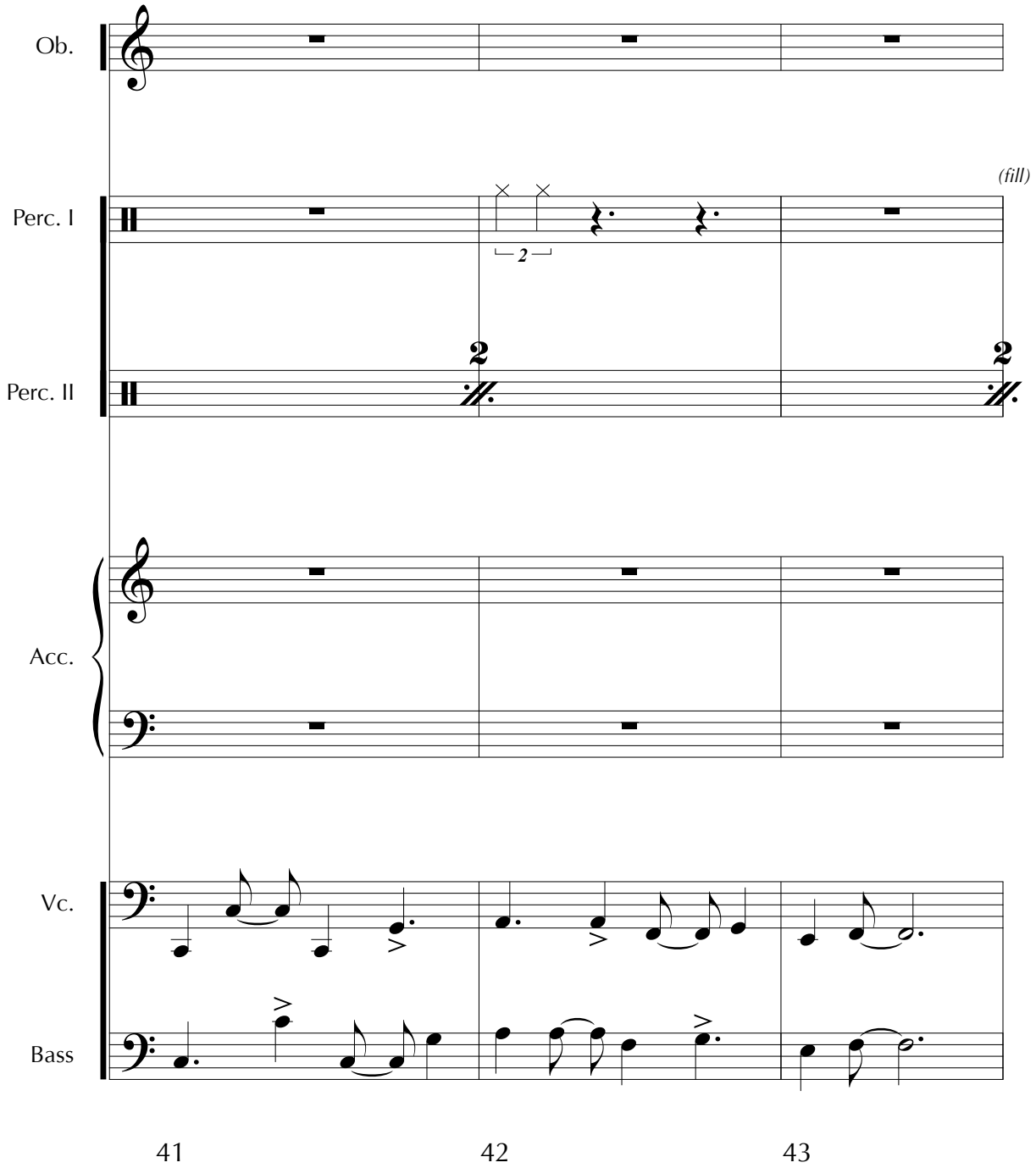

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
23
24
25
26
27

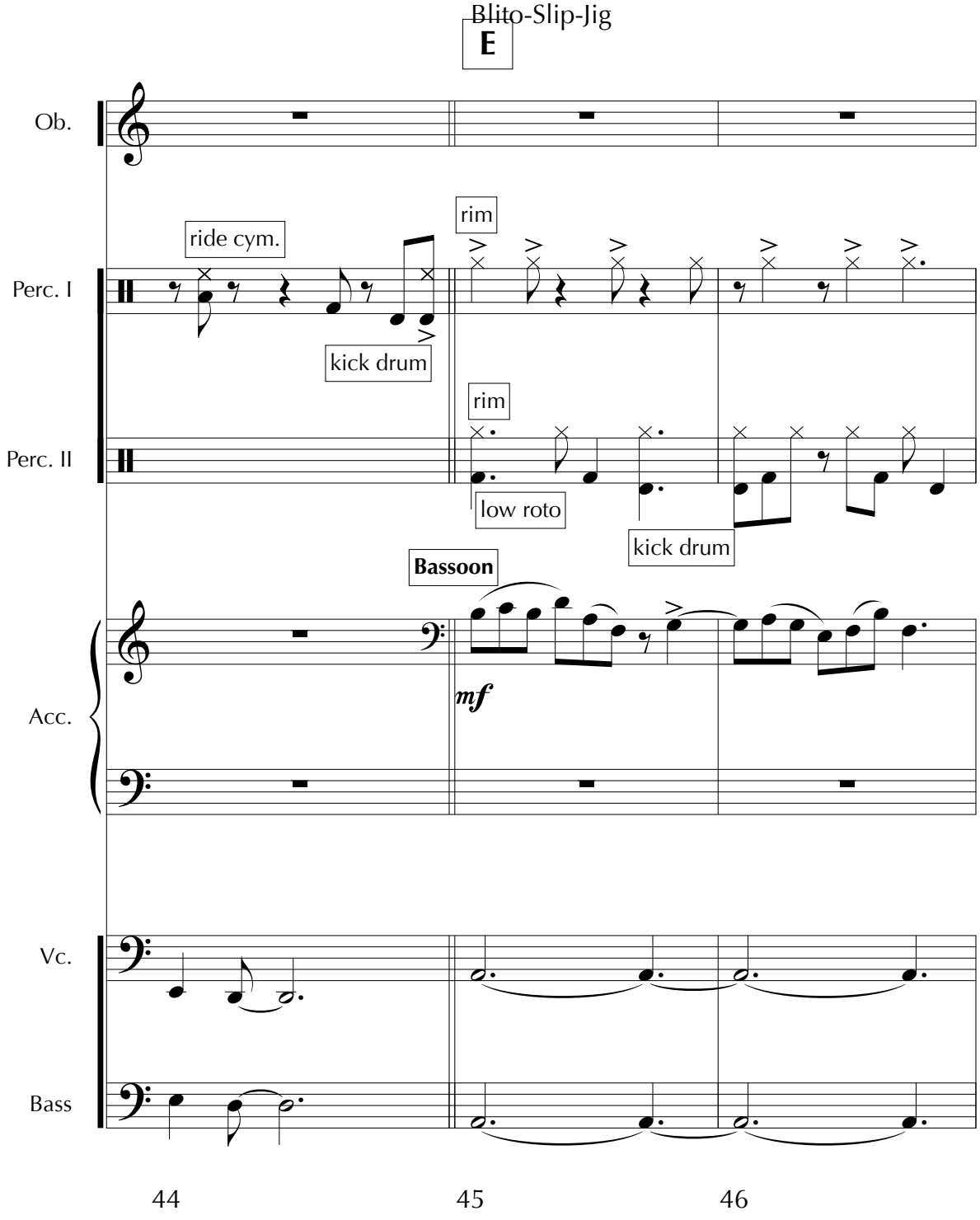

C
Ob.
Perc. I
low roto
Perc. II
p
Acc.
Vc.
more
Bass
more
28
29
30
31

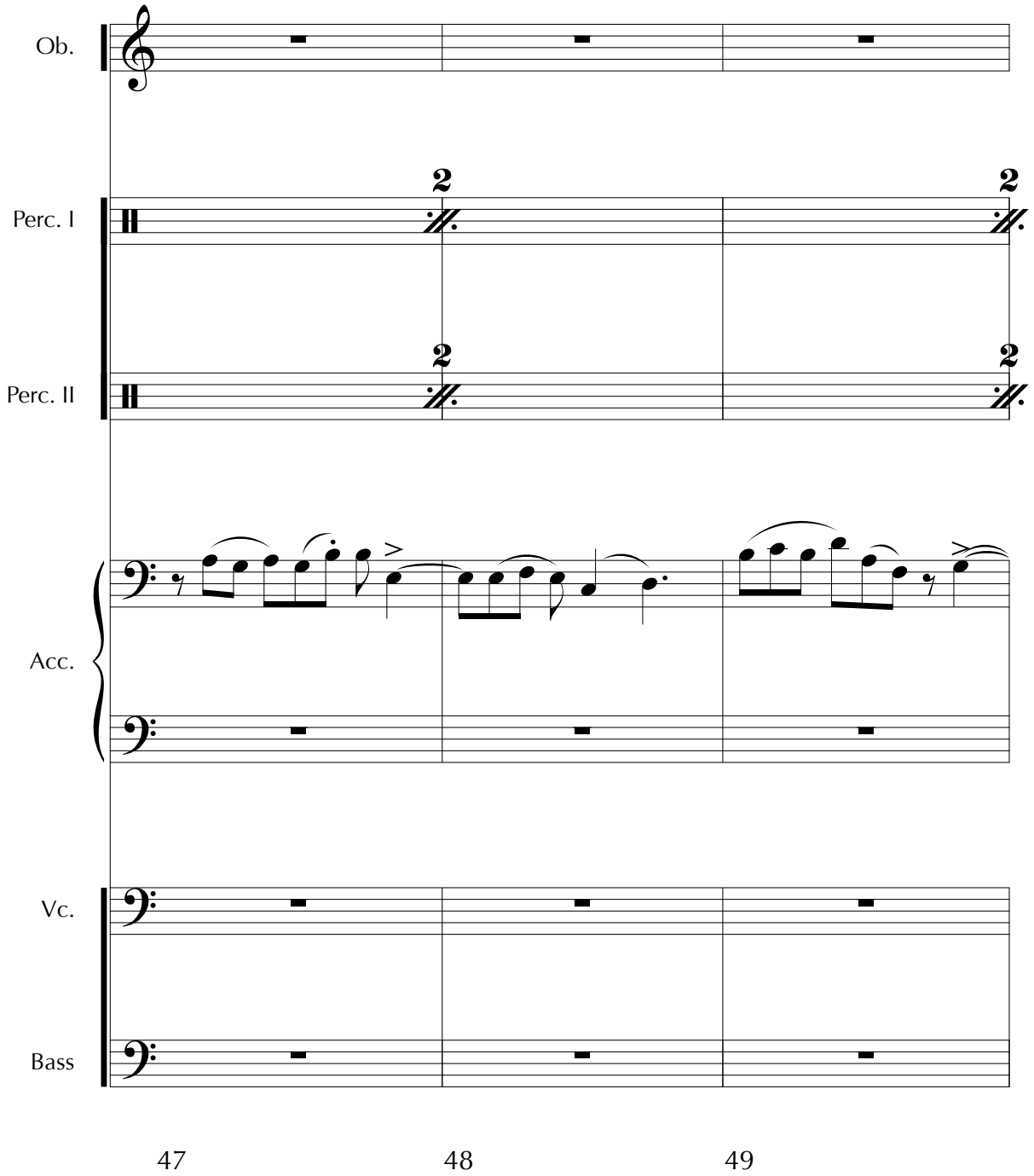

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
32
33
34

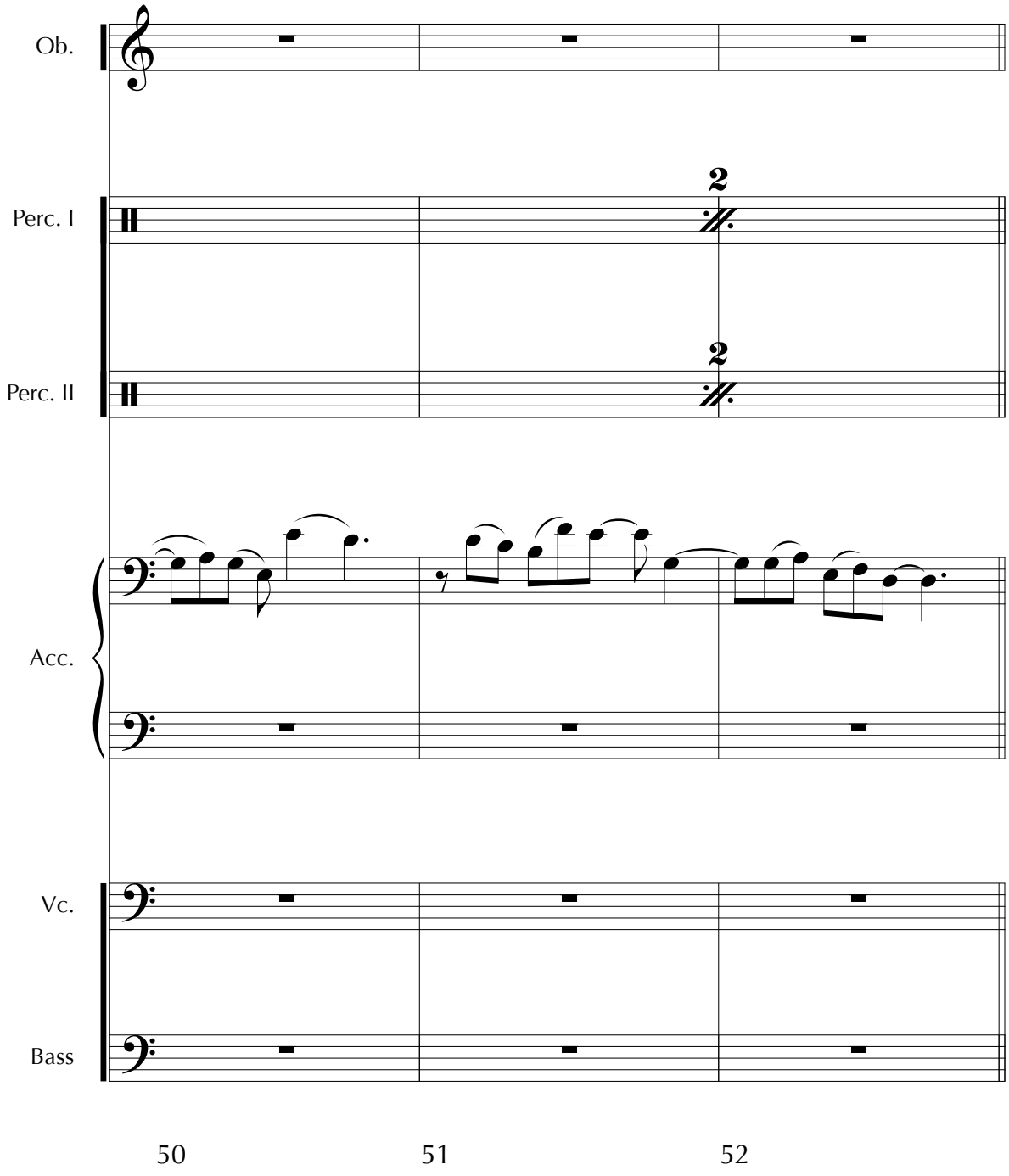

Blito-Slip-Jig
D
Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
low roto
p
kick drum
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
35
36
37

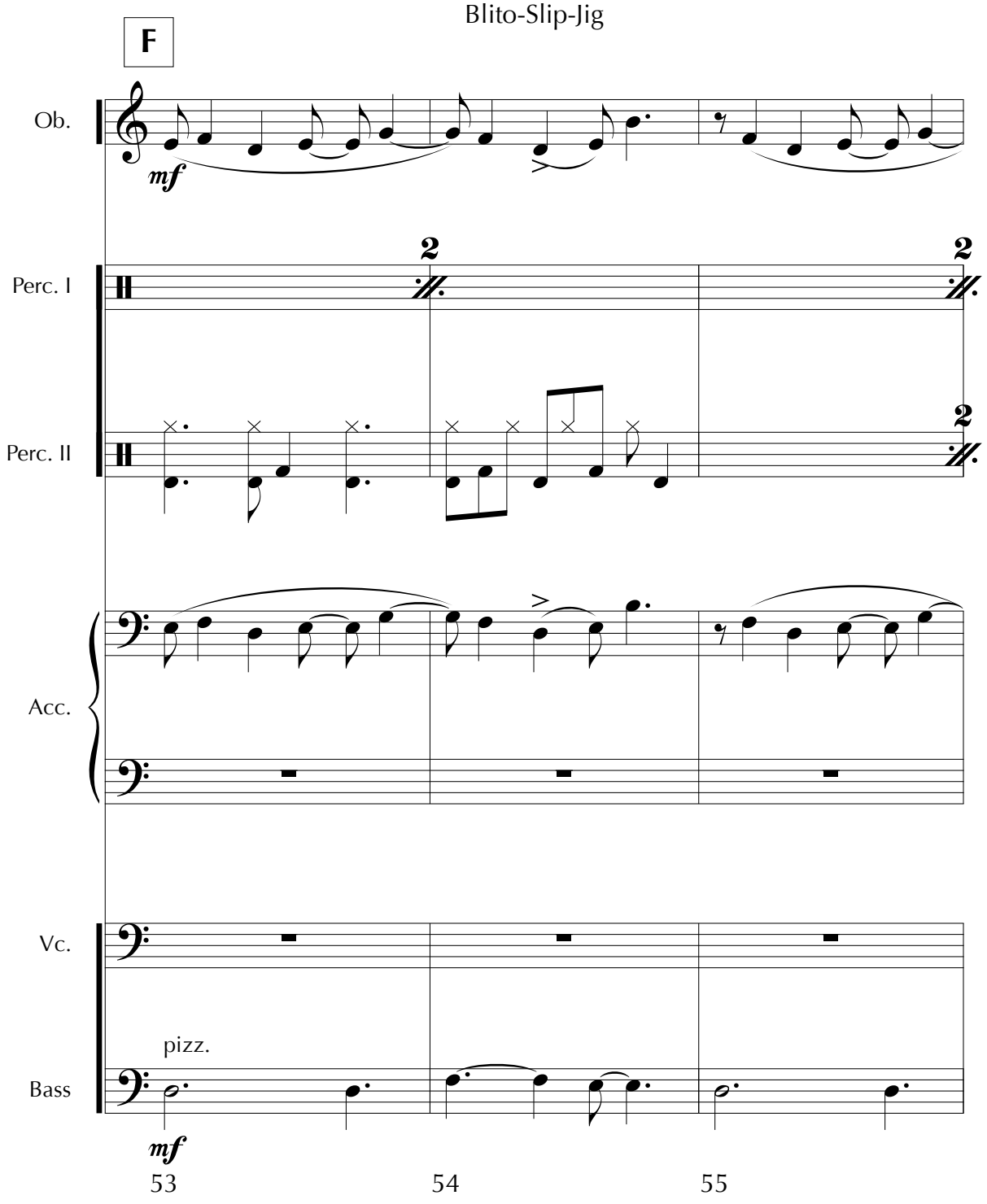

Ob.
rim
Perc. I
Perc. II
2
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
38
39
40

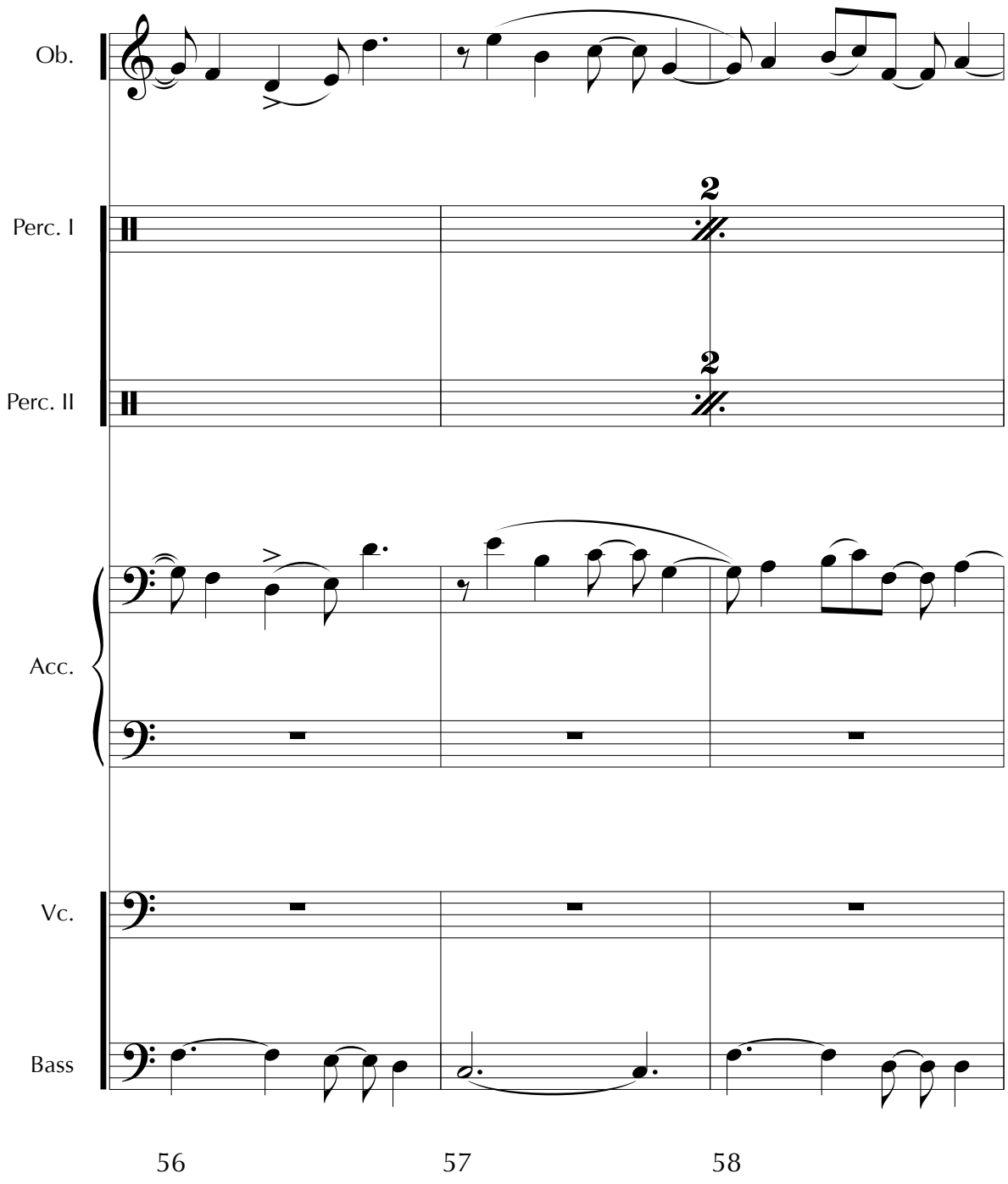

Ob.
Perc. I
(fill)
2
Perc. II
2
2
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
41
42
43

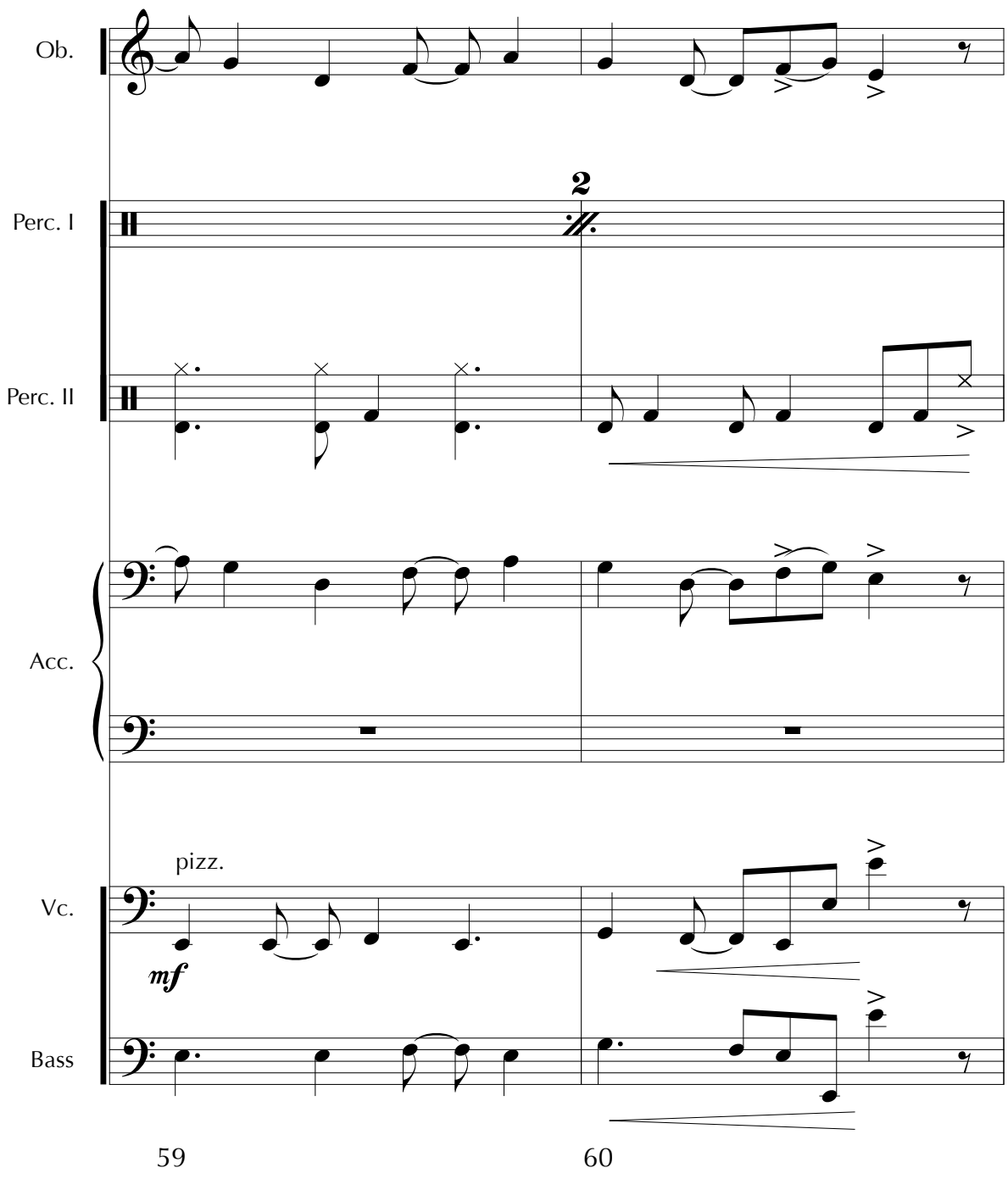

E
Ob.
Perc. I
ride cym.
kick drum
rim
Perc. II
rim
low roto
kick drum
Bassoon
mf
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
44
45
46

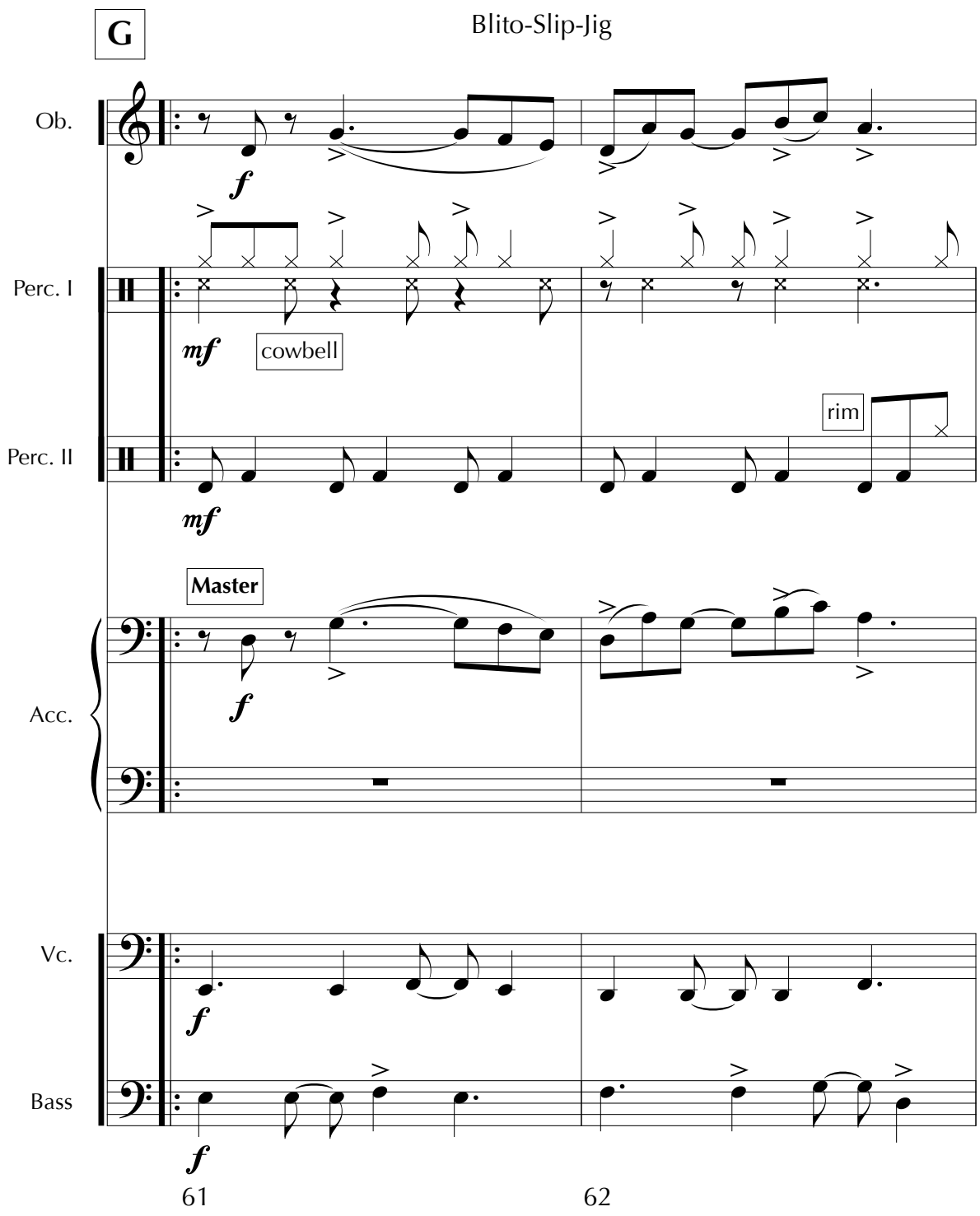

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
2
2
2
2
47
48
49

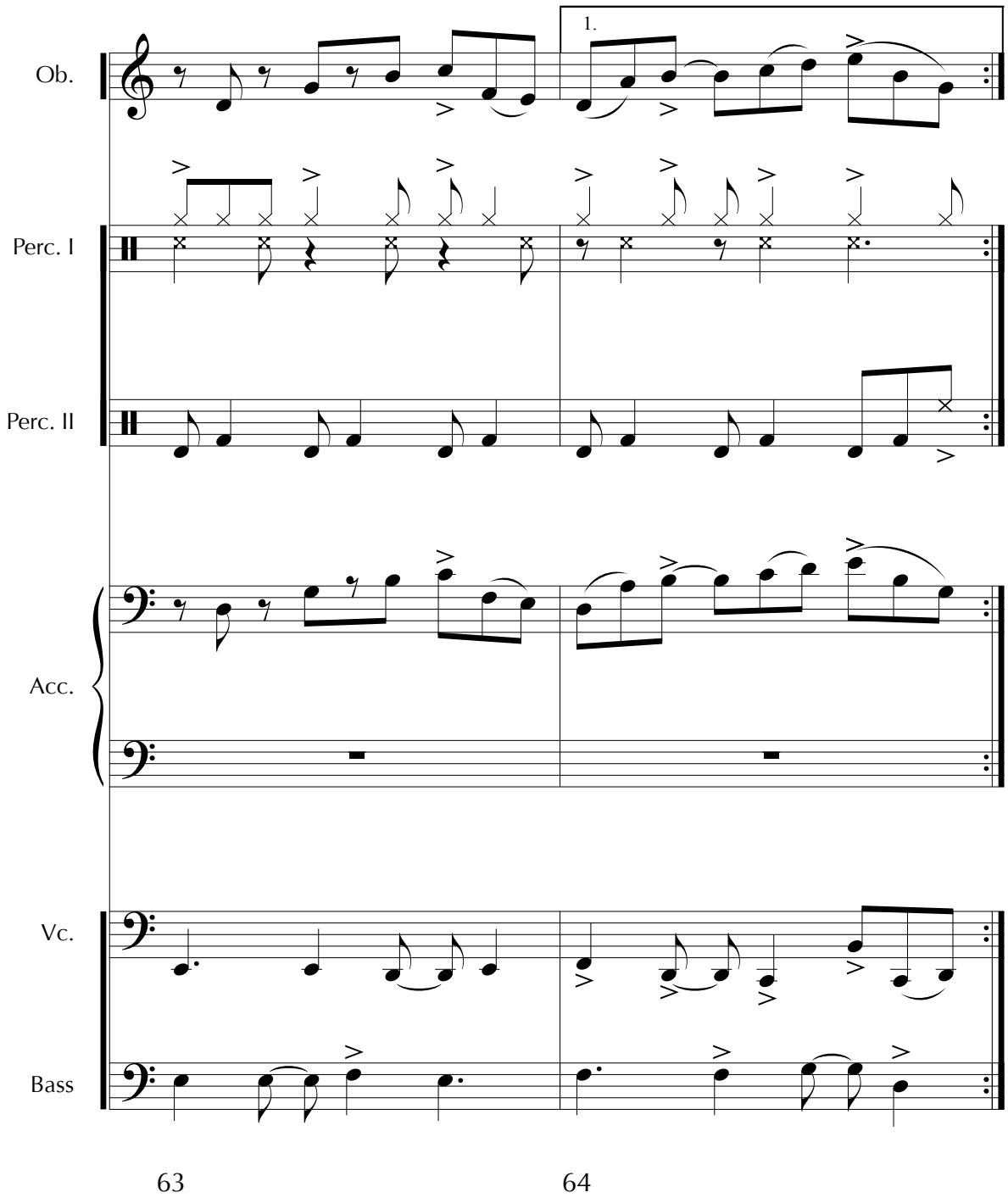

Ob.
Perc. I
2
Perc. II
2
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
50
51
52

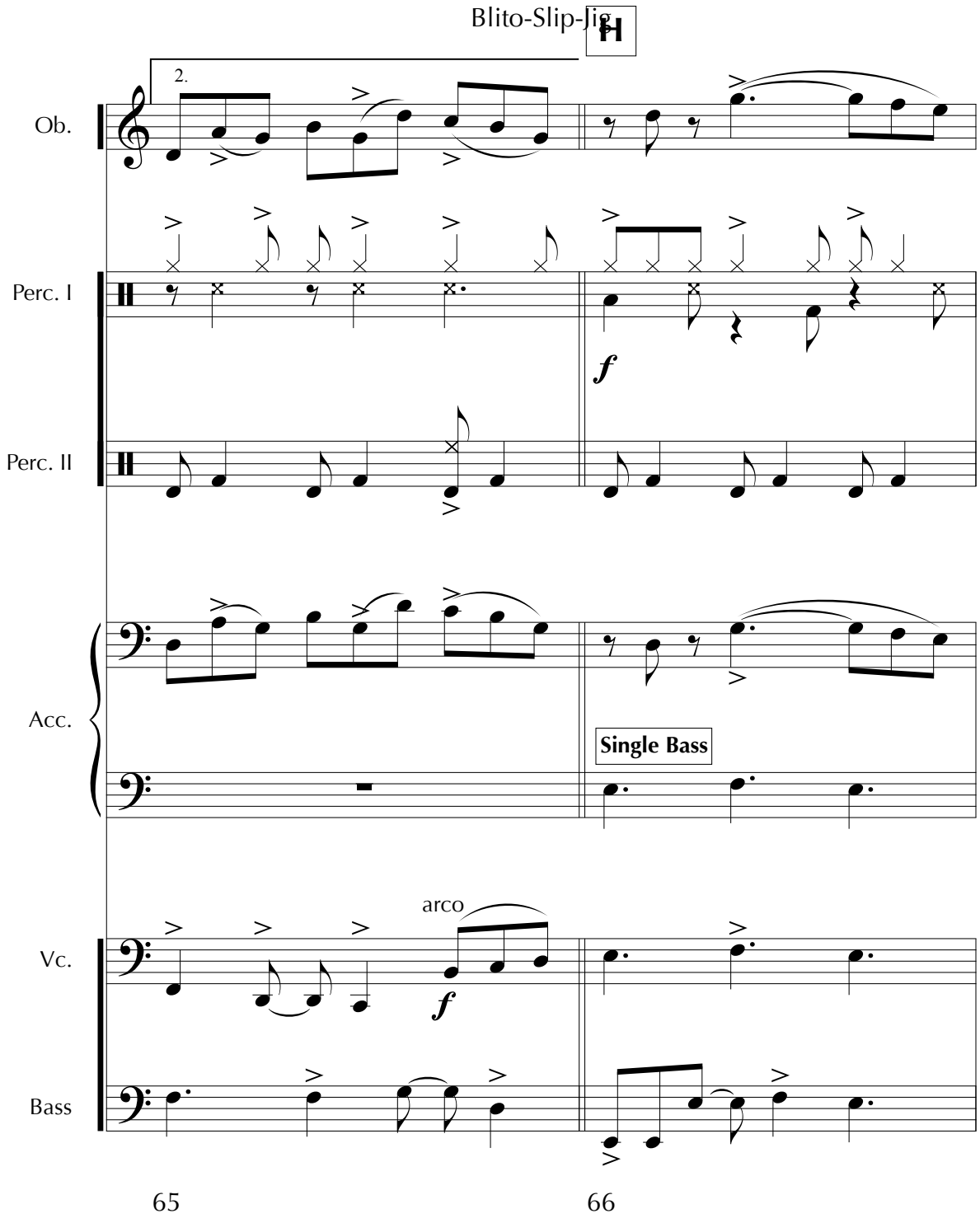

F
Ob.
mf
Perc. I
2
2
Perc. II
2
Acc.
Vc.
pizz.
Bass
mf
53
54
55

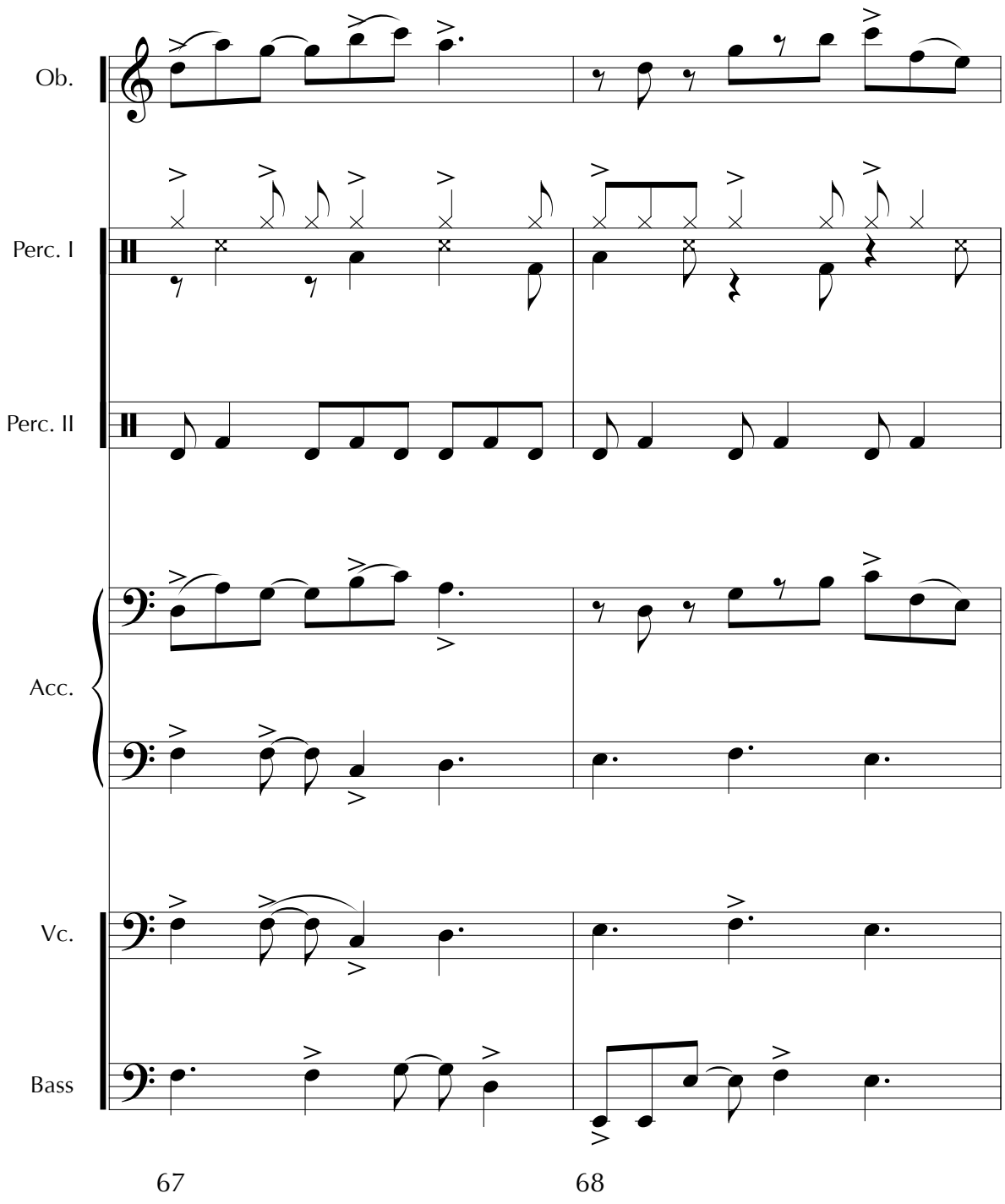

Ob.
Perc. I
2
Perc. II
2
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
56
57
58

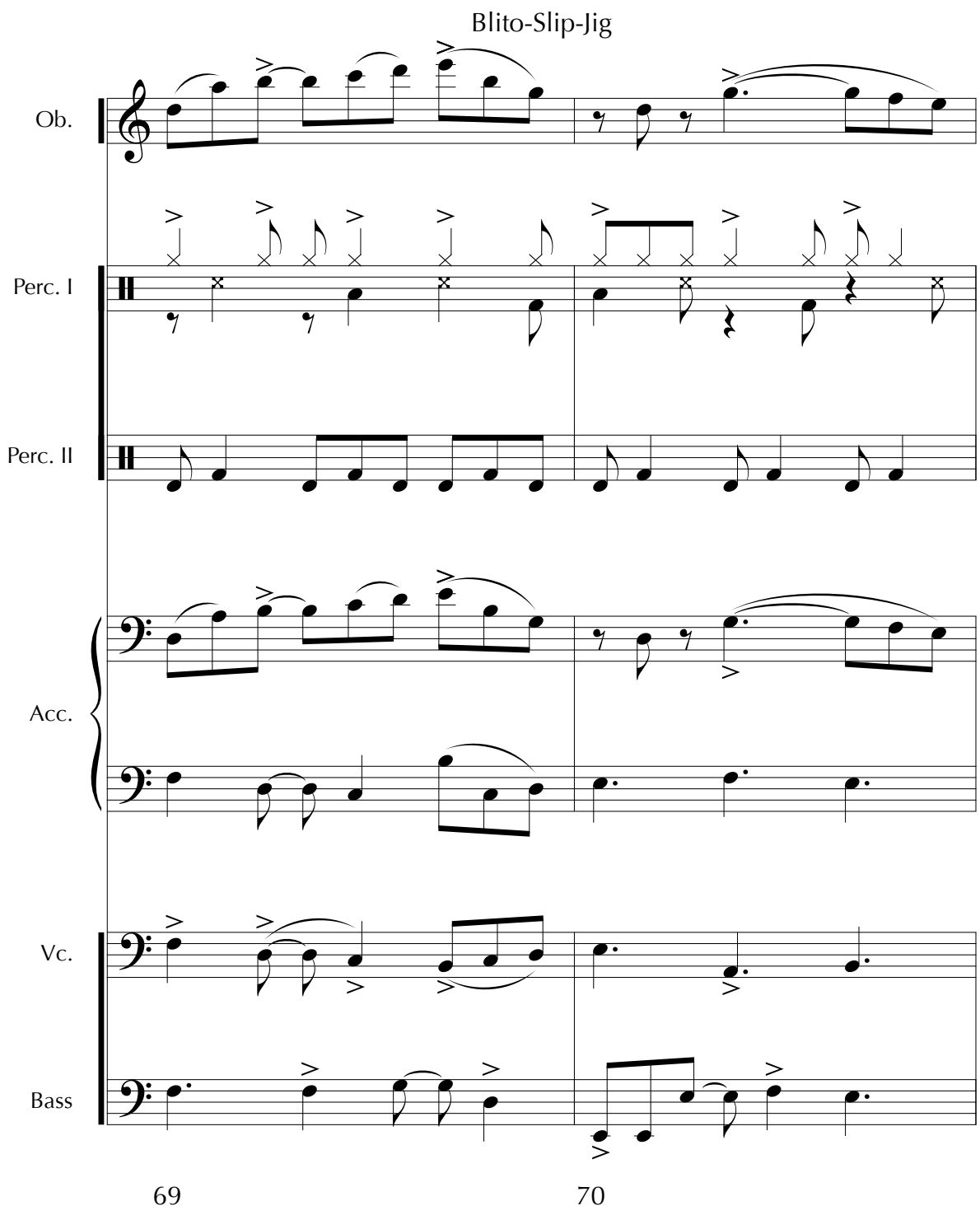

Ob.
Perc. I
2
Perc. II
Acc.
pizz.
Vc.
mf
Bass
59
60

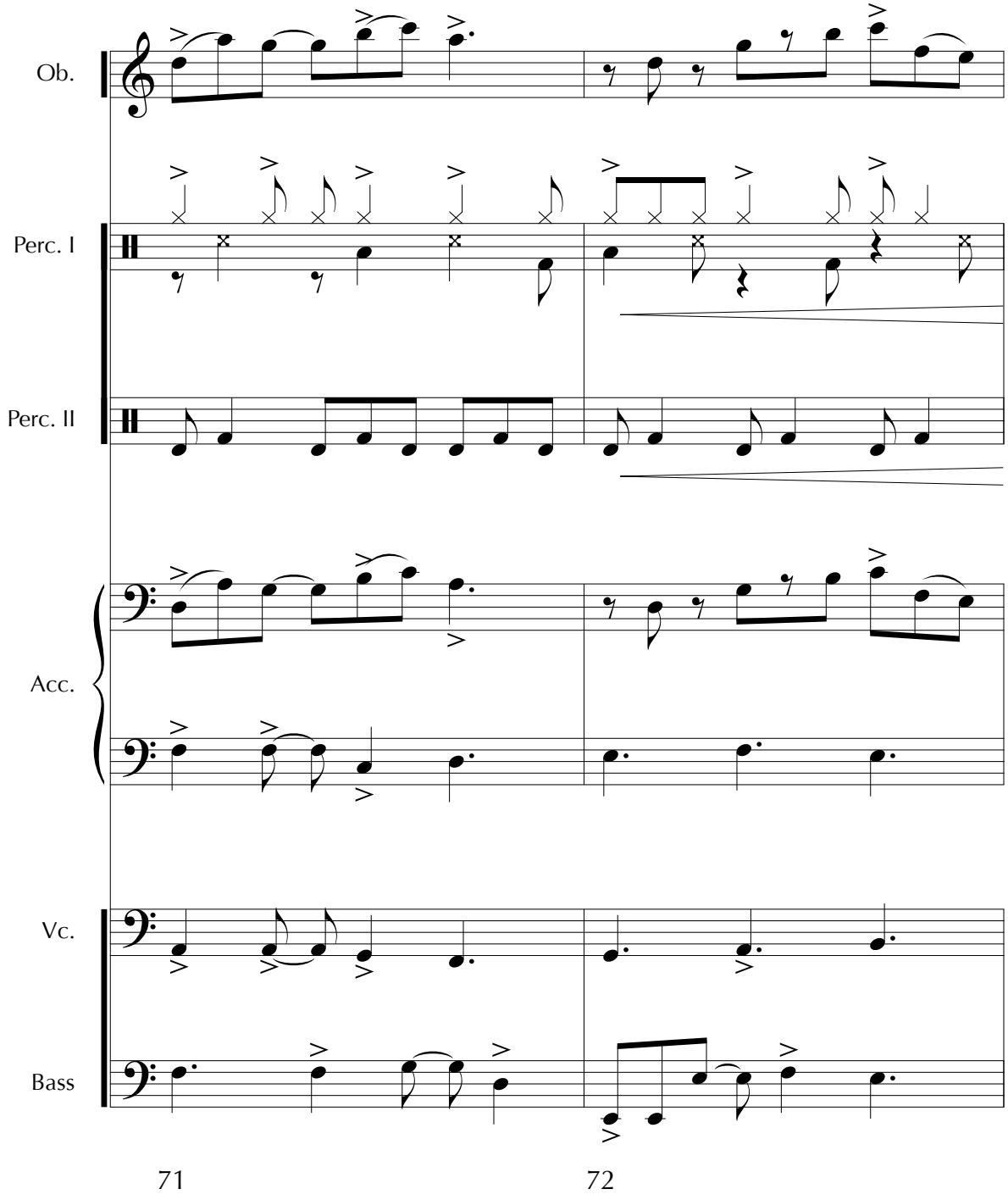

G
Blito-Slip-Jig
Ob.
f
Perc. I
mf
cowbell
rim
Perc. II
mf
Master
Acc.
f
Vc.
f
Bass
f
61
62

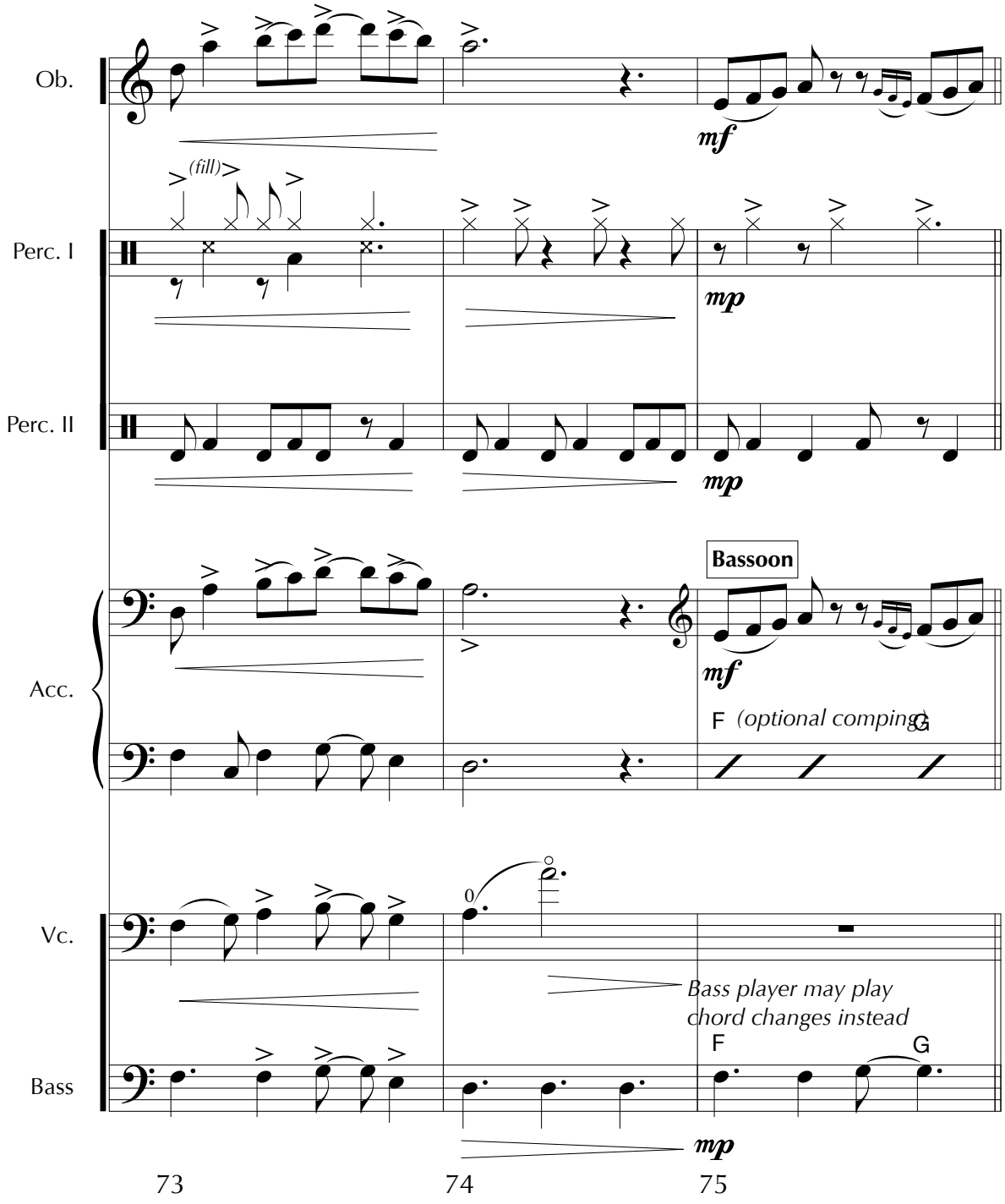

1.
Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
63
64

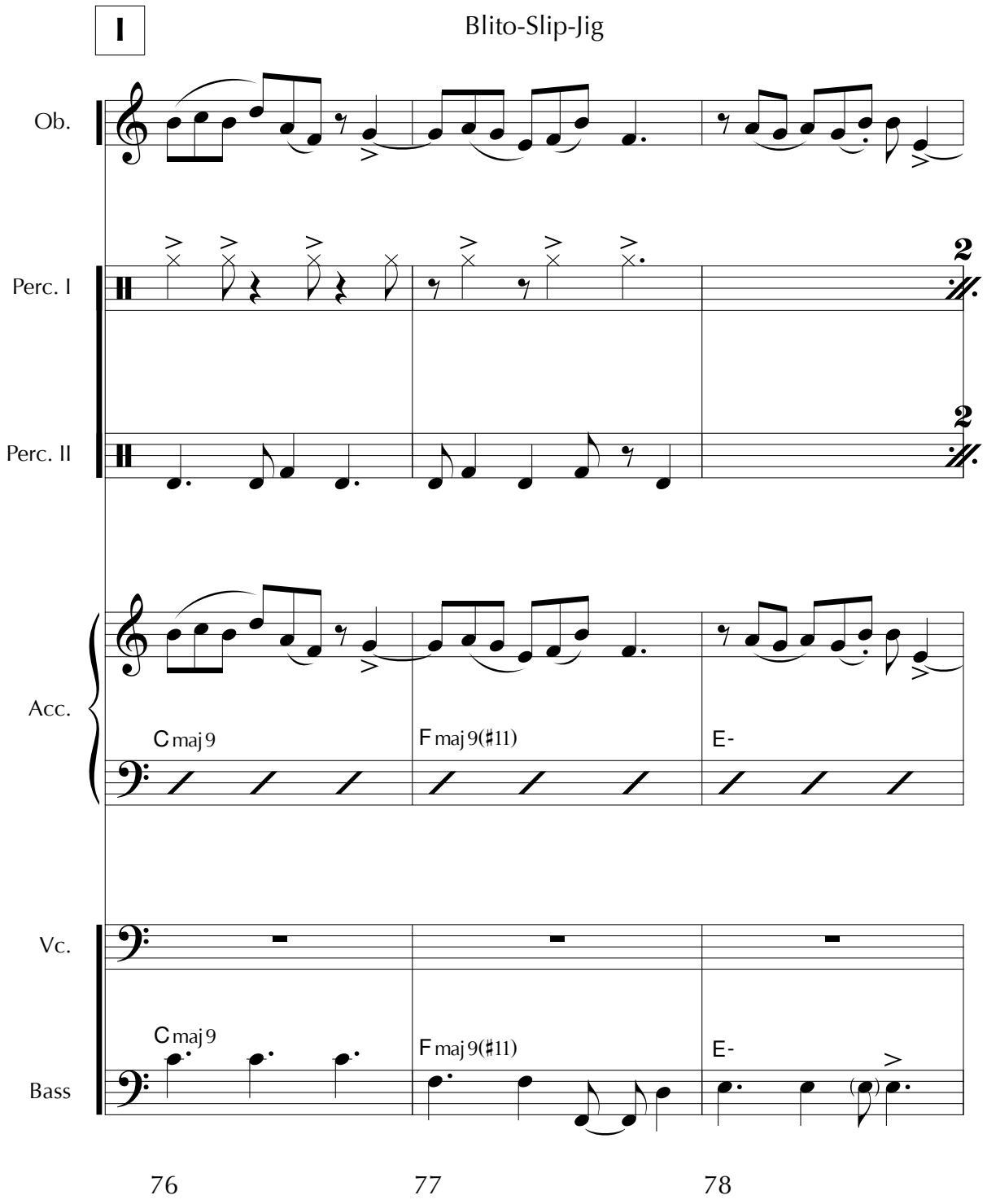

Blito-Slip-Jig
H
2.
Ob.
Perc. I
f
Perc. II
Acc.
Single Bass
arco
Vc.
f
Bass
65
66

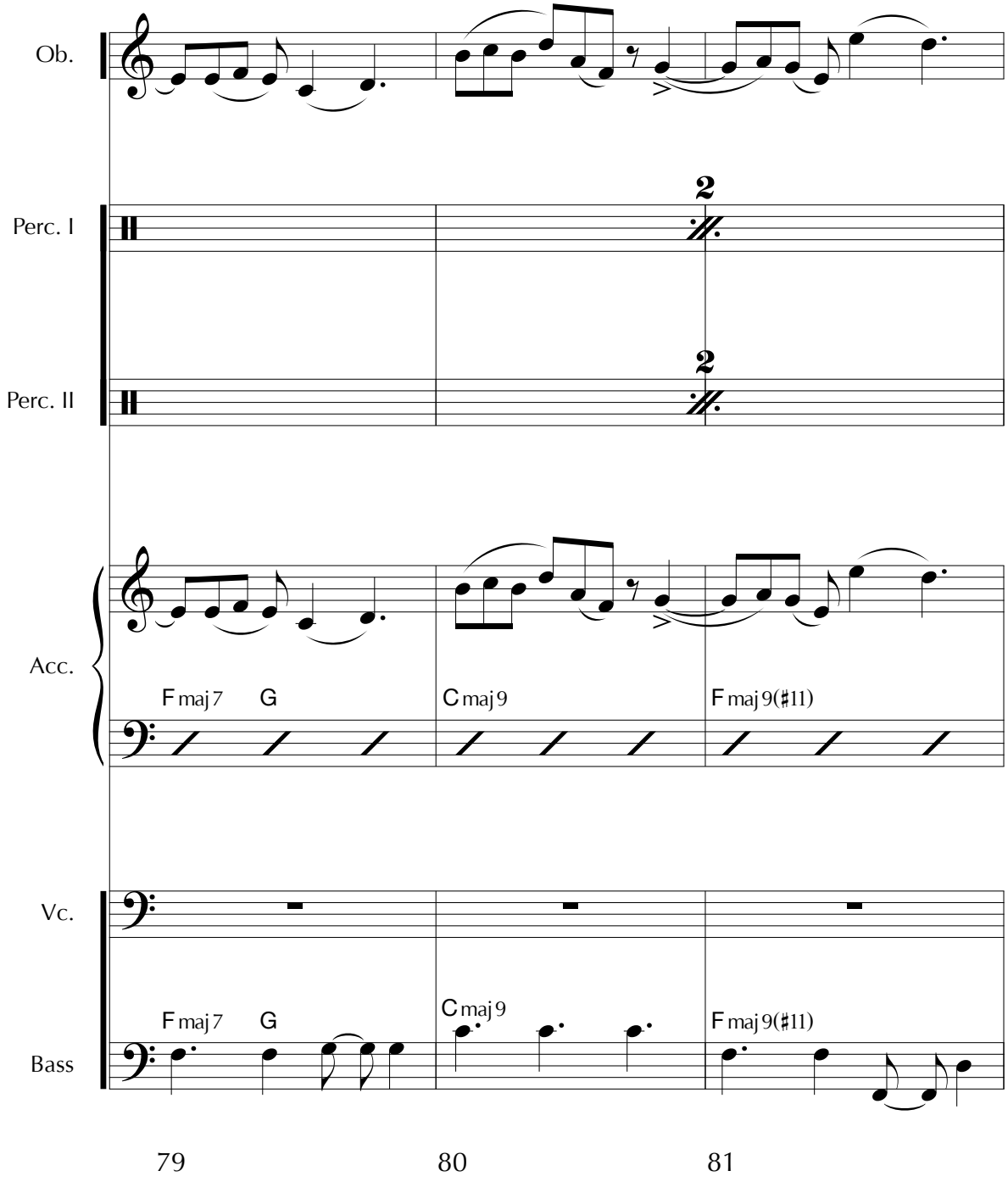

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
67
68

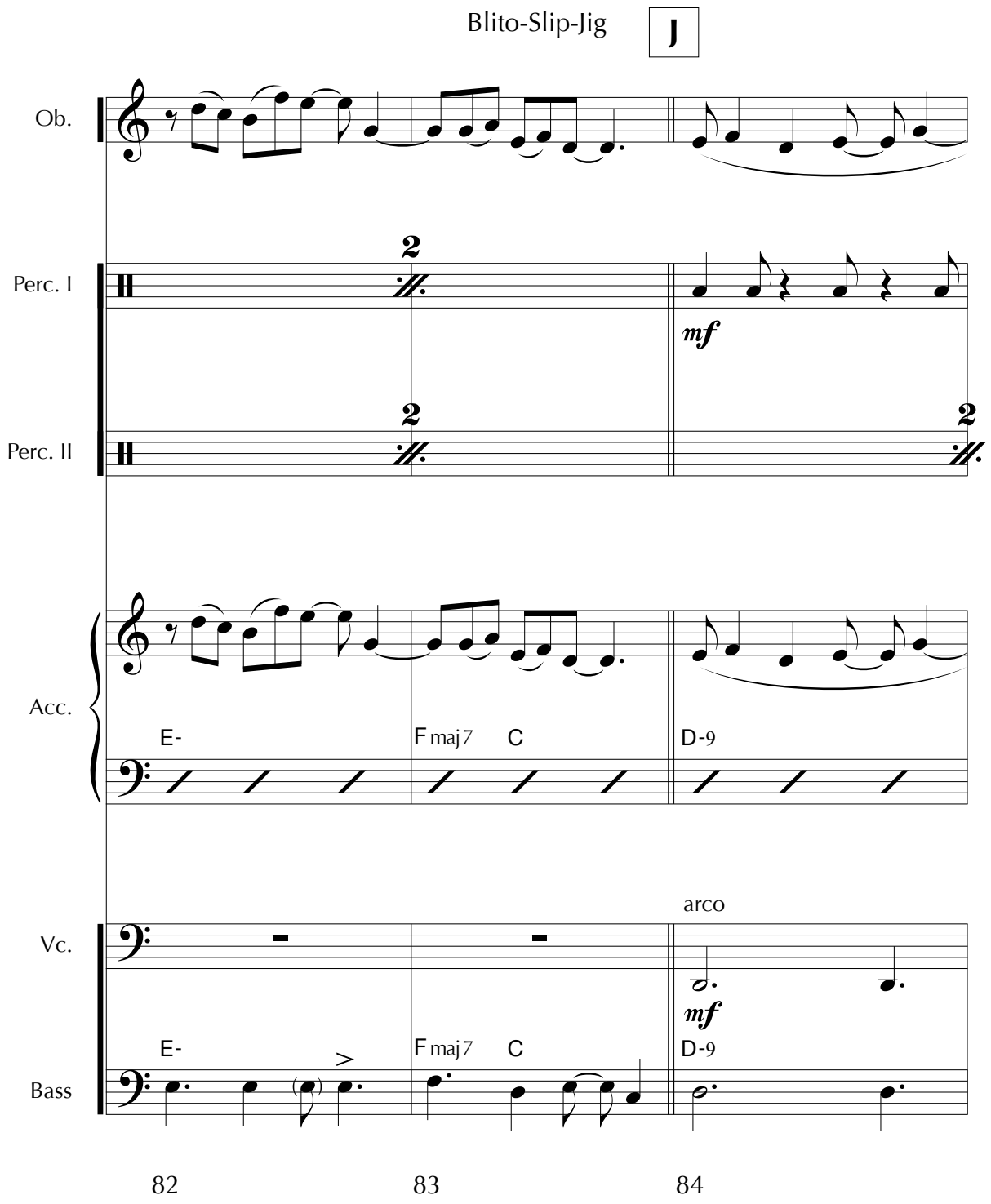

Blito-Slip-Jig
Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
69
70

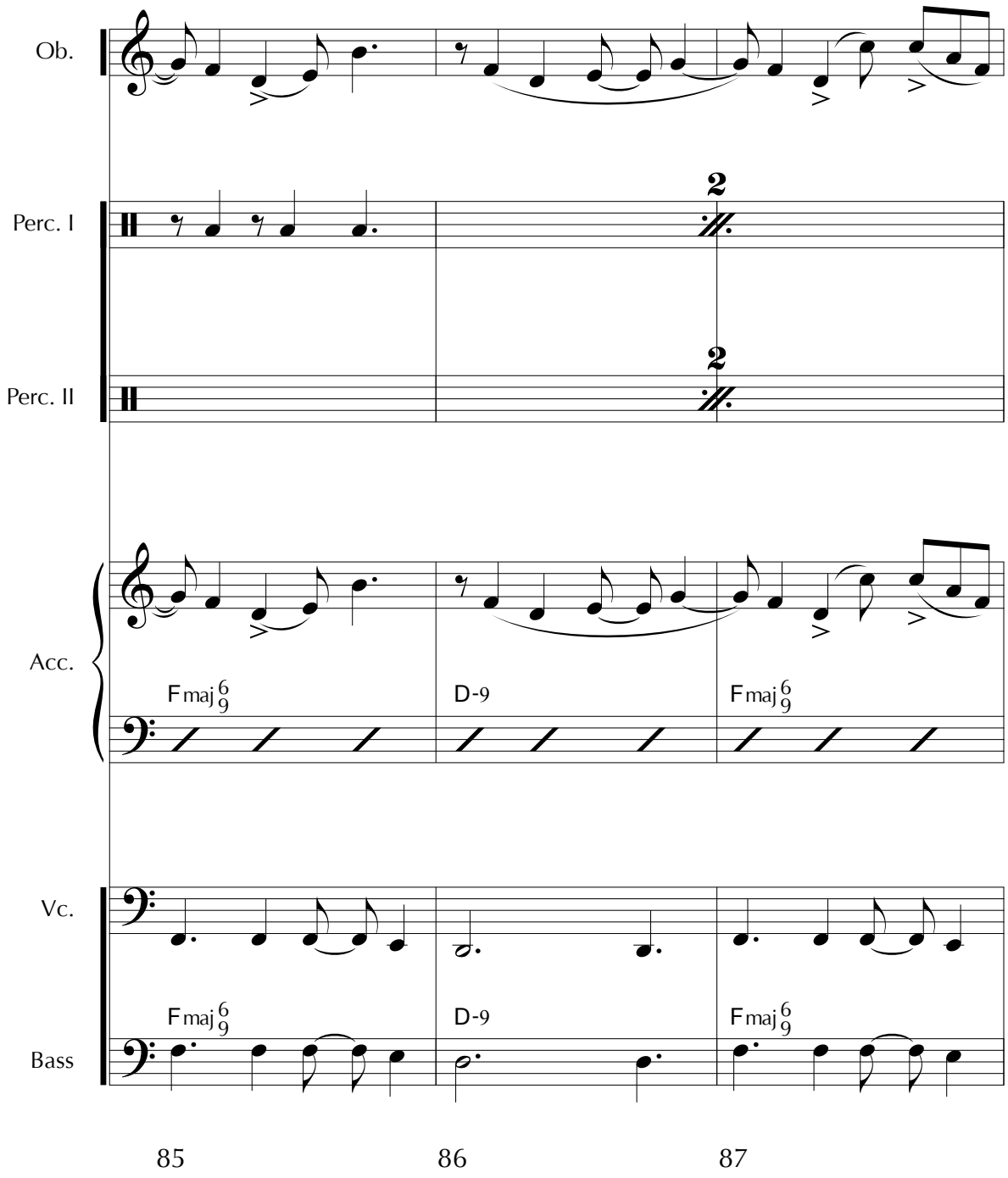

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
71
72

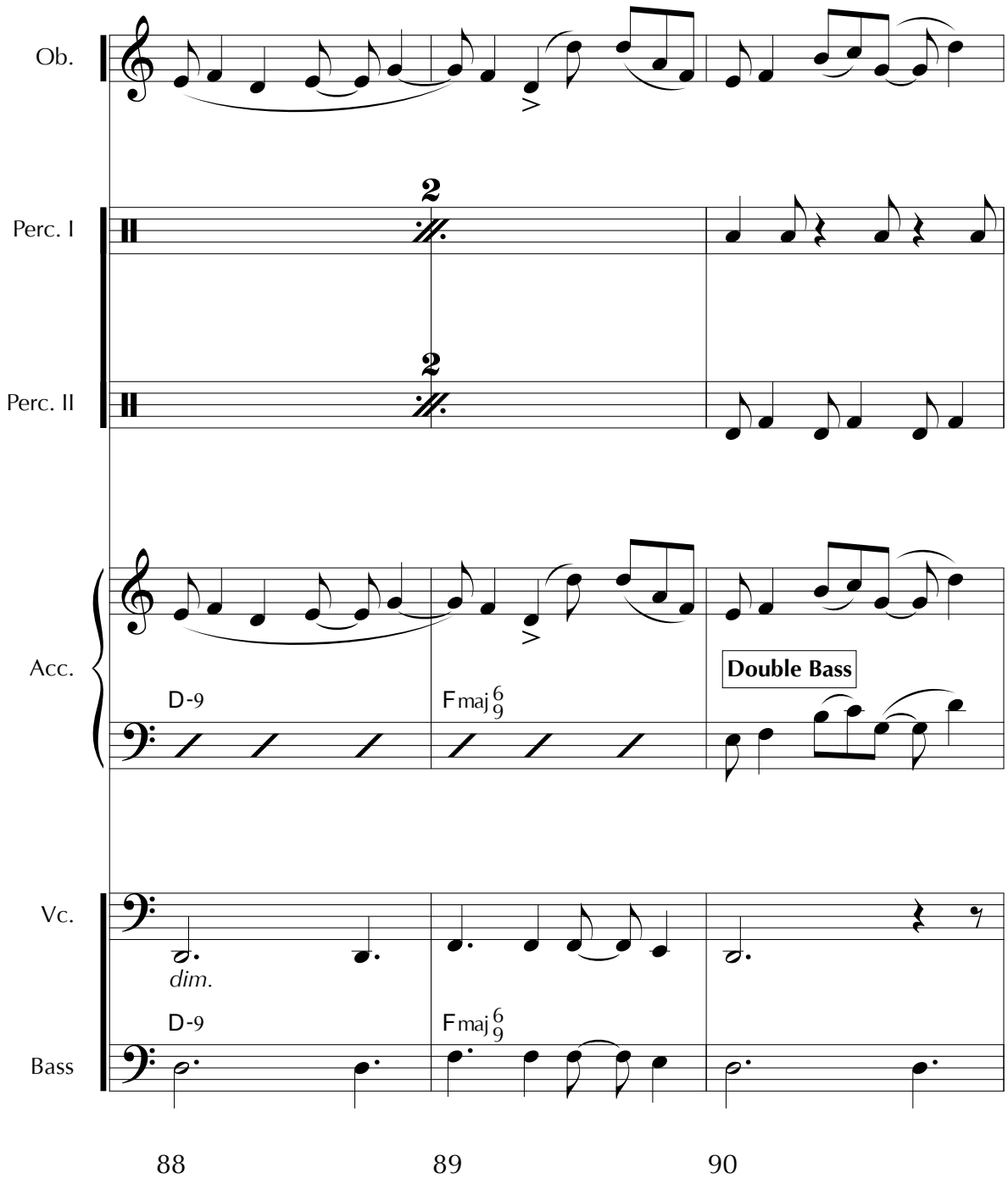

Ob.
Perc. I
(fill)
Perc. II
Acc.
Bassoon
F (optional comping) G
Vc.
Bass player may play
chord changes instead
F
G
Bass
mf
mp
73
74
75

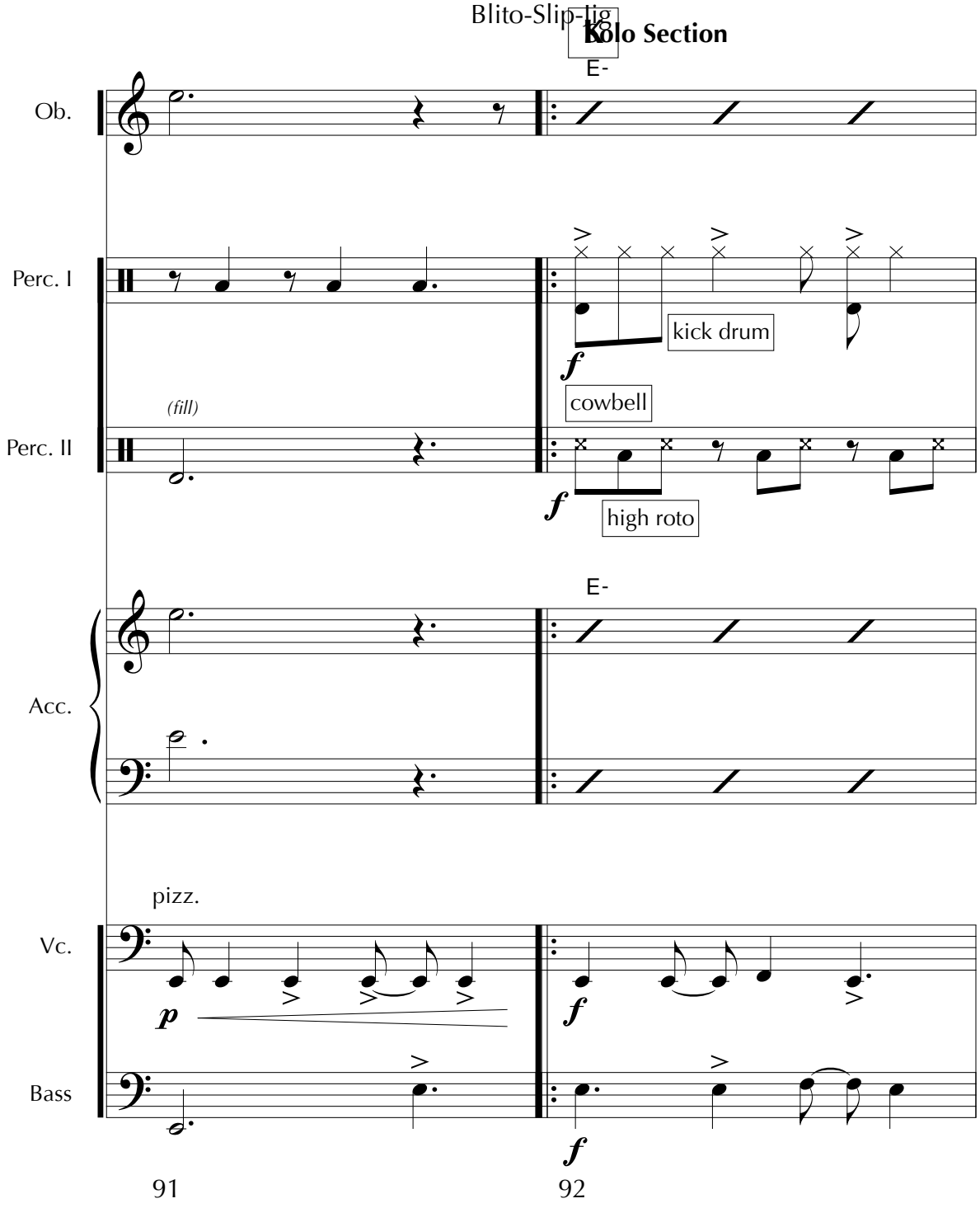

I
Blito-Slip-Jig
Ob.
Perc. I
2
Perc. II
2
Acc.
C maj 9
F maj 9(♯11)
E-
Vc.
C maj 9
F maj 9(♯11)
E-
Bass
76
77
78

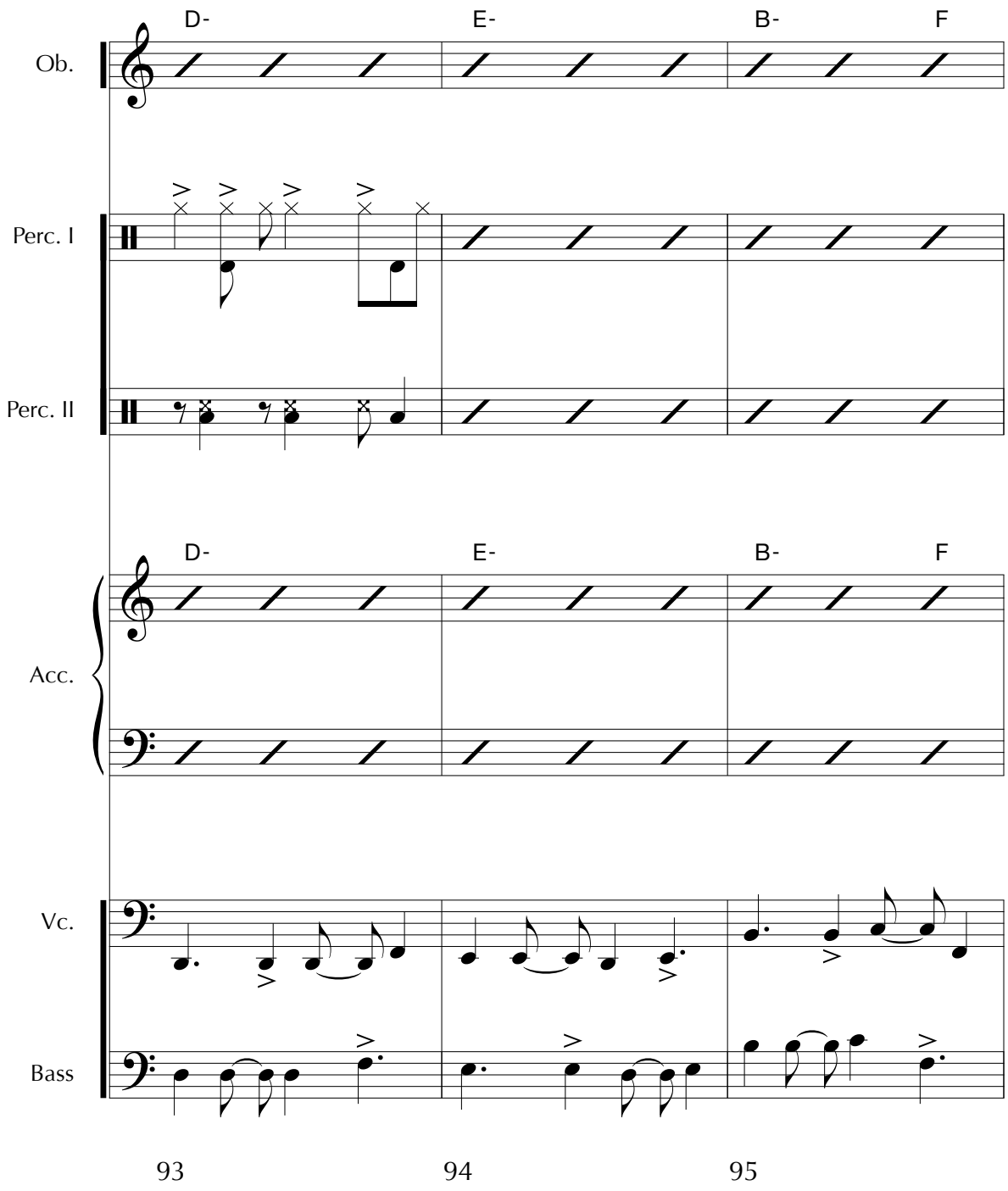

Ob.
Perc. I
2
Perc. II
2
Acc.
F maj 7
G
C maj 9
F maj 9(♯11)
Vc.
Bass
F maj 7
G
C maj 9
F maj 9(♯11)
79
80
81


Blito-Slip-Jig
J
Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
2
mf
E-
F maj 7
C
D-9
arco
82
83
84

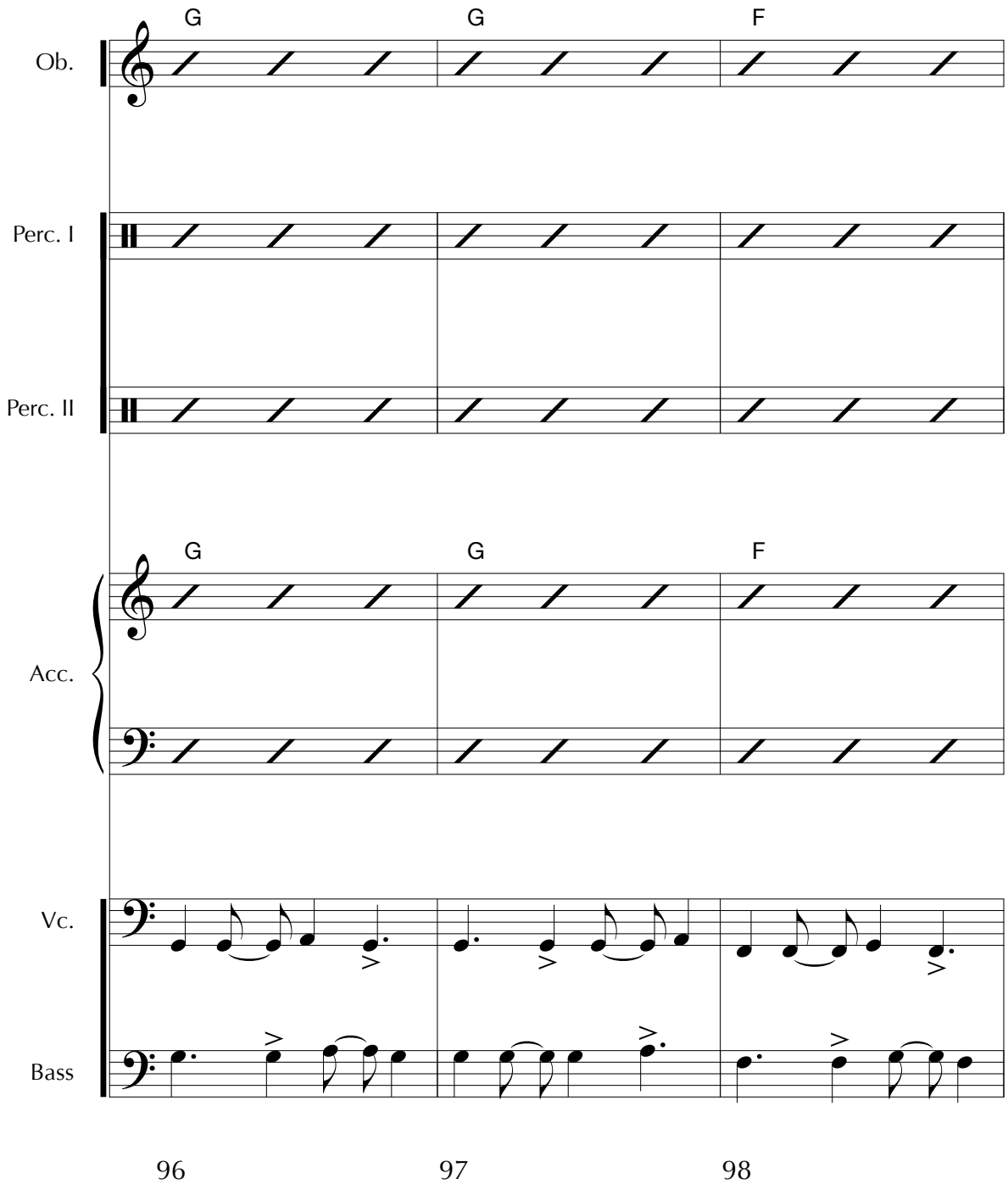

Ob.
Perc. I
2
Perc. II
2
Acc.
Fmaj 6 9
D-9
Fmaj 6 9
Vc.
Fmaj 6 9
D-9
Fmaj 6 9
Bass
85
86
87

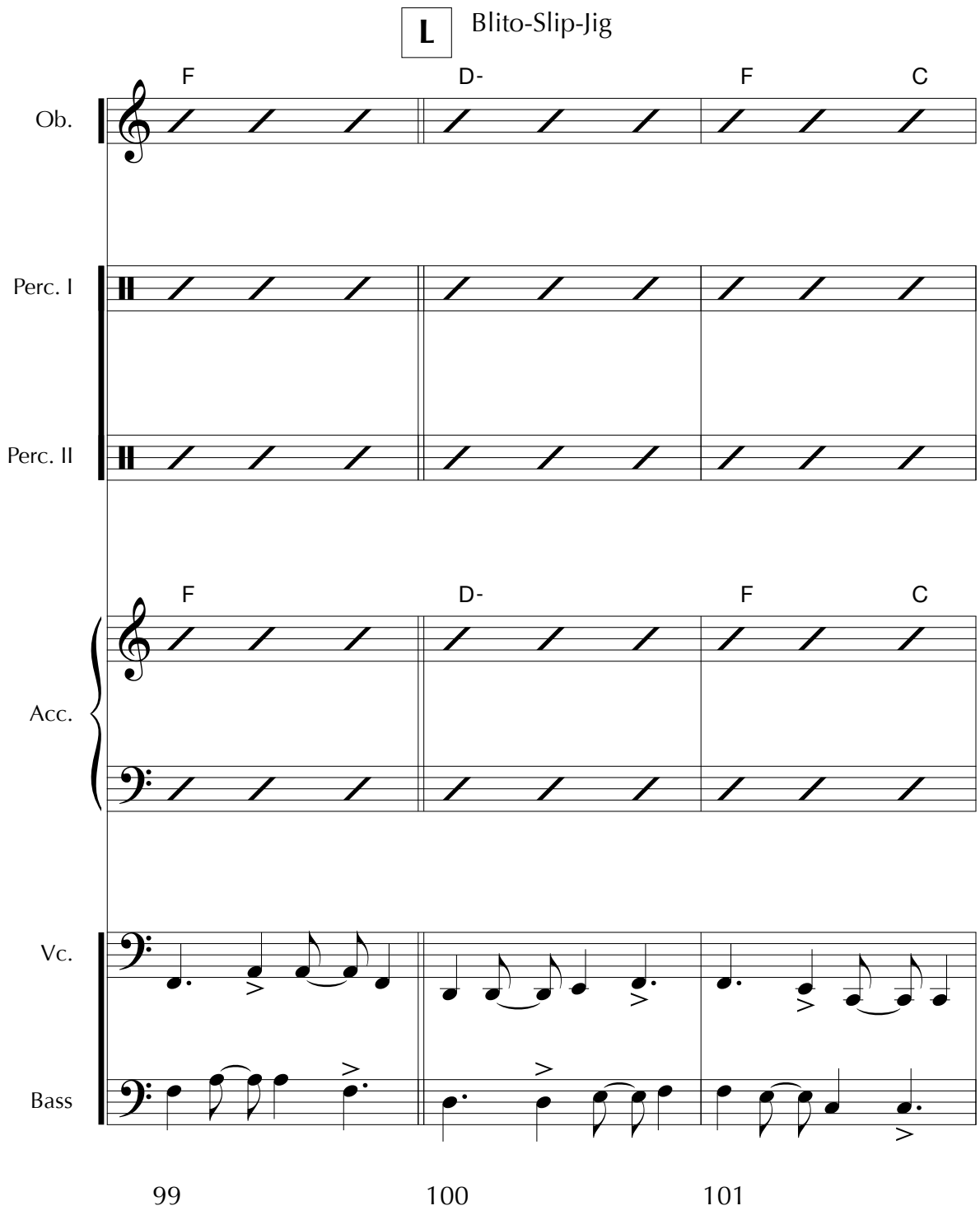

Ob.
Perc. I
2
Perc. II
2
Acc.
D-9
Fmaj 6/9
Double Bass
Vc.
dim.
D-9
Fmaj 6/9
Bass
88
89
90


18
Solo Section
E-
Ob.
Perc. I
kick drum
f
cowbell
(fill)
Perc. II
f
high roto
E-
Acc.
pizz.
Vc.
p
f
Bass
f
91
92

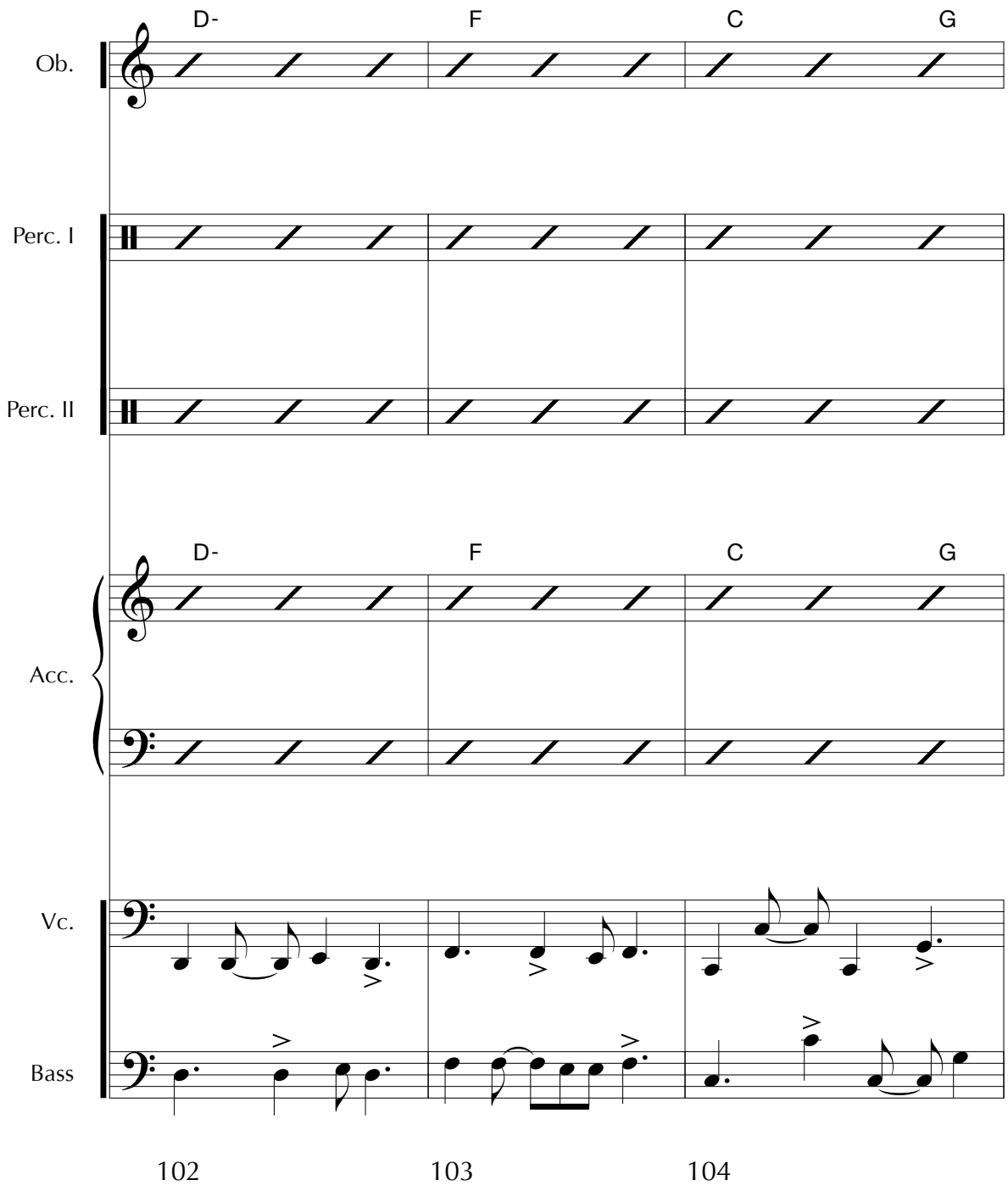

D-
E-
B-
F
Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
D-
E-
B-
F
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
93
94
95

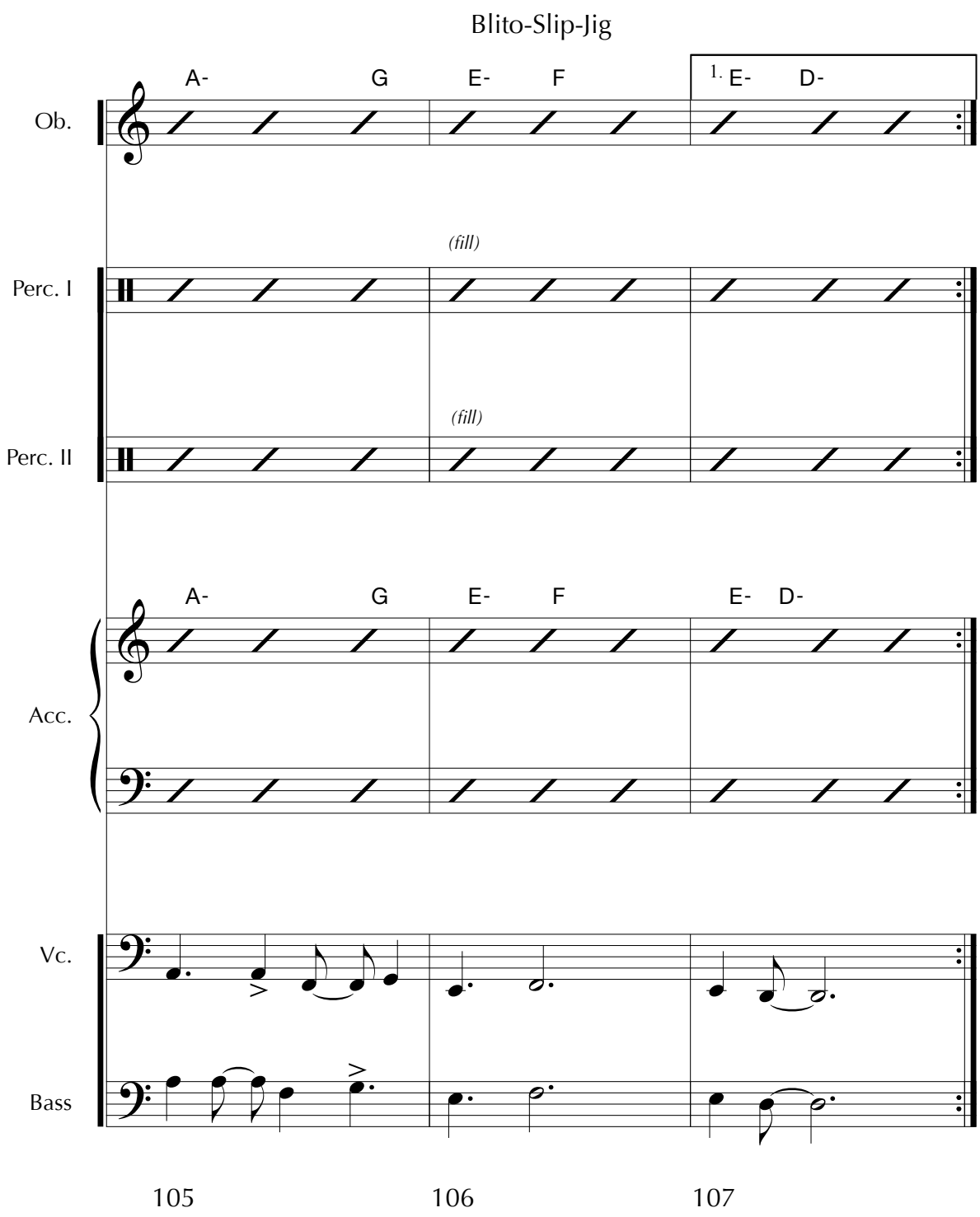
Blito-Slip-Jig

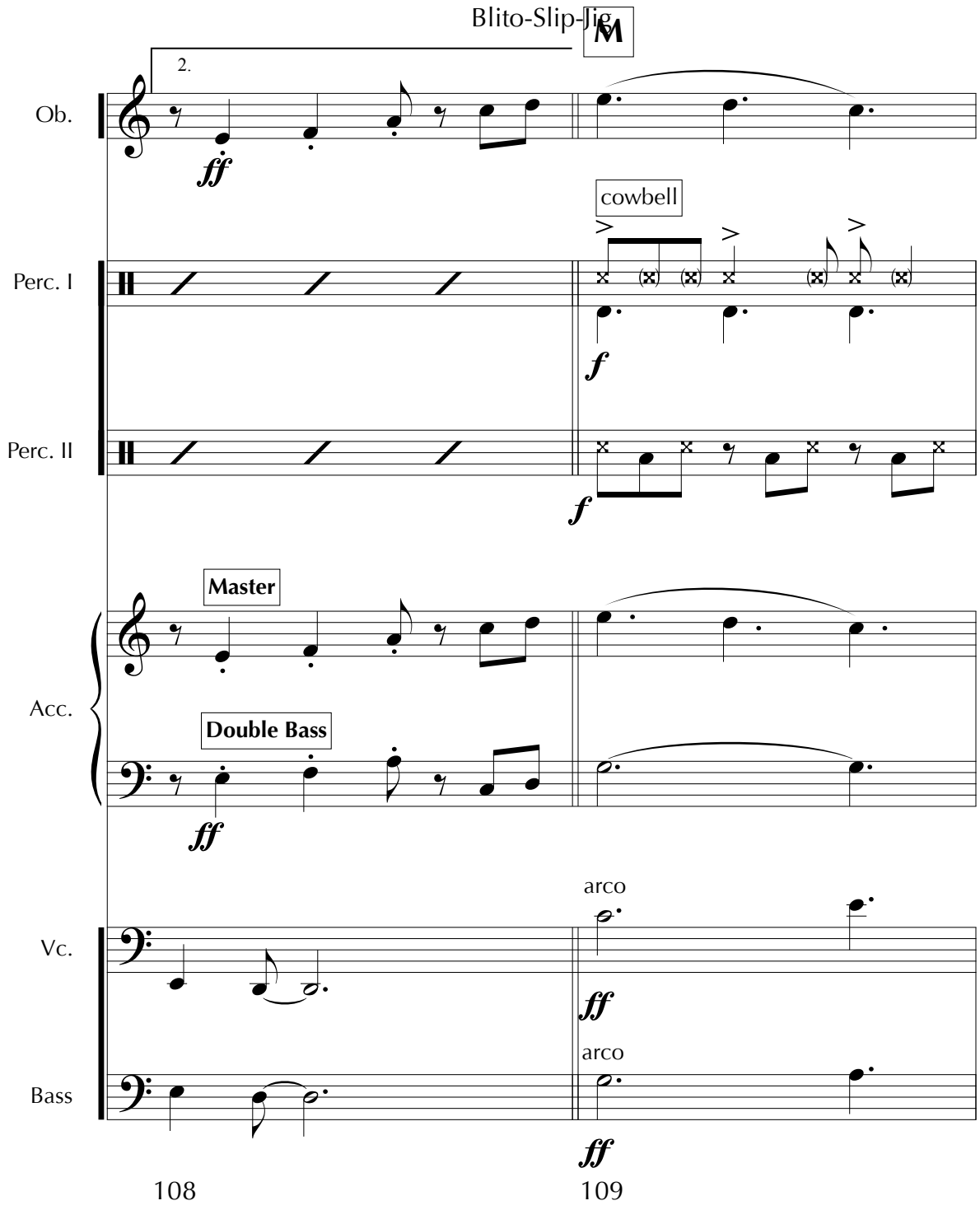


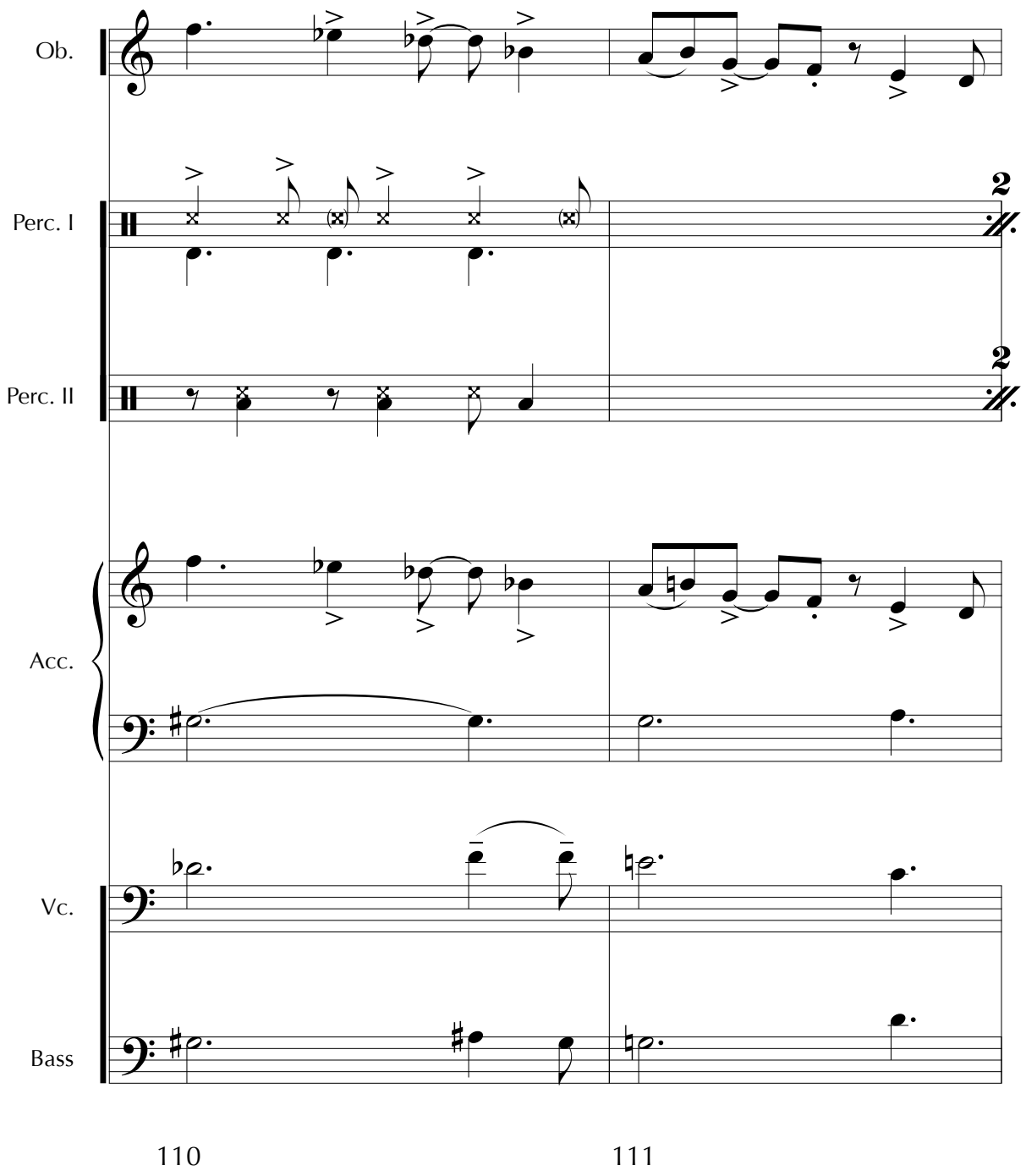

L
Blito-Slip-Jig
F
D-
F
C
Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
F
D-
F
C
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
99
100
101

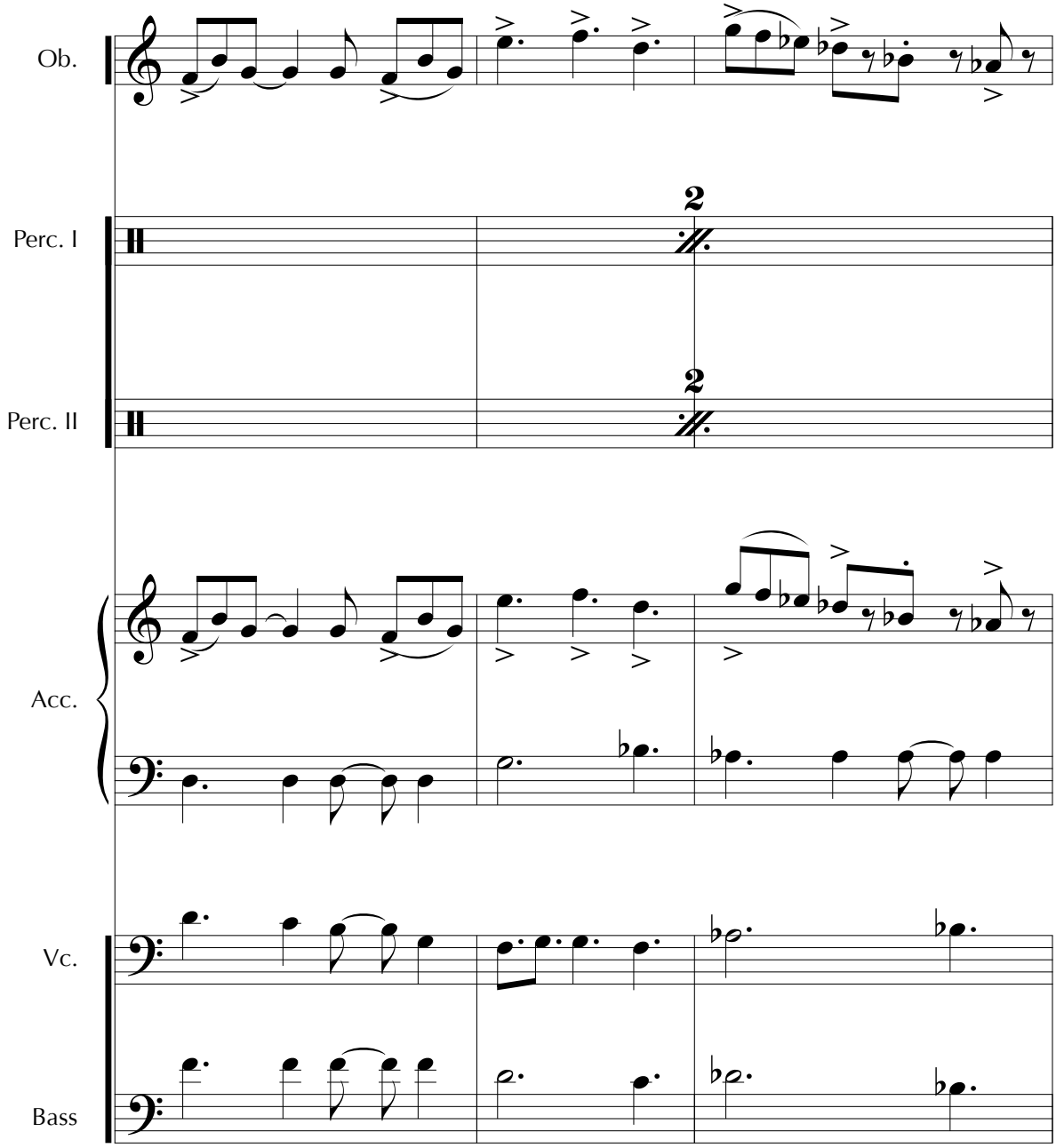
Blito-Slip-Jig

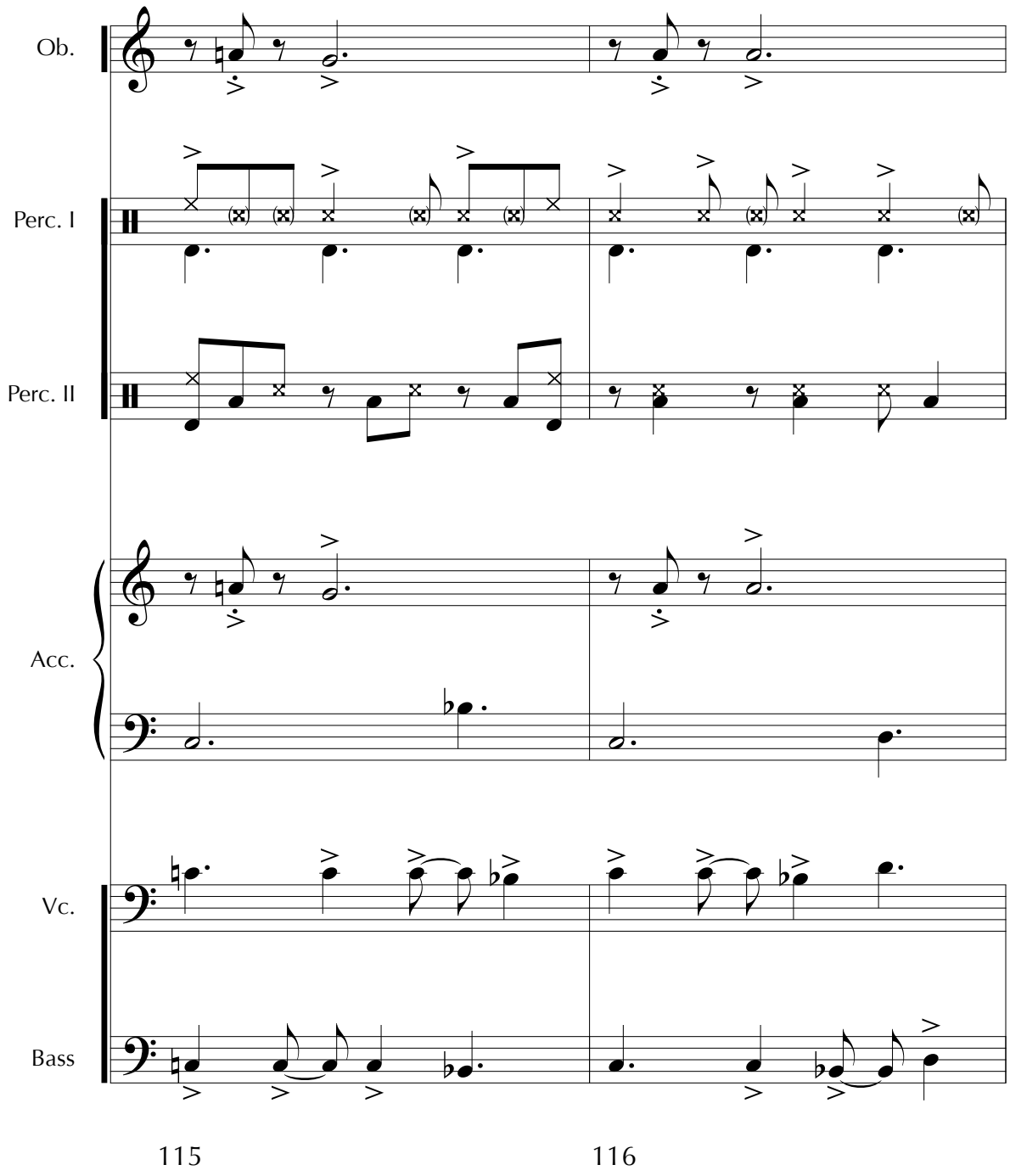


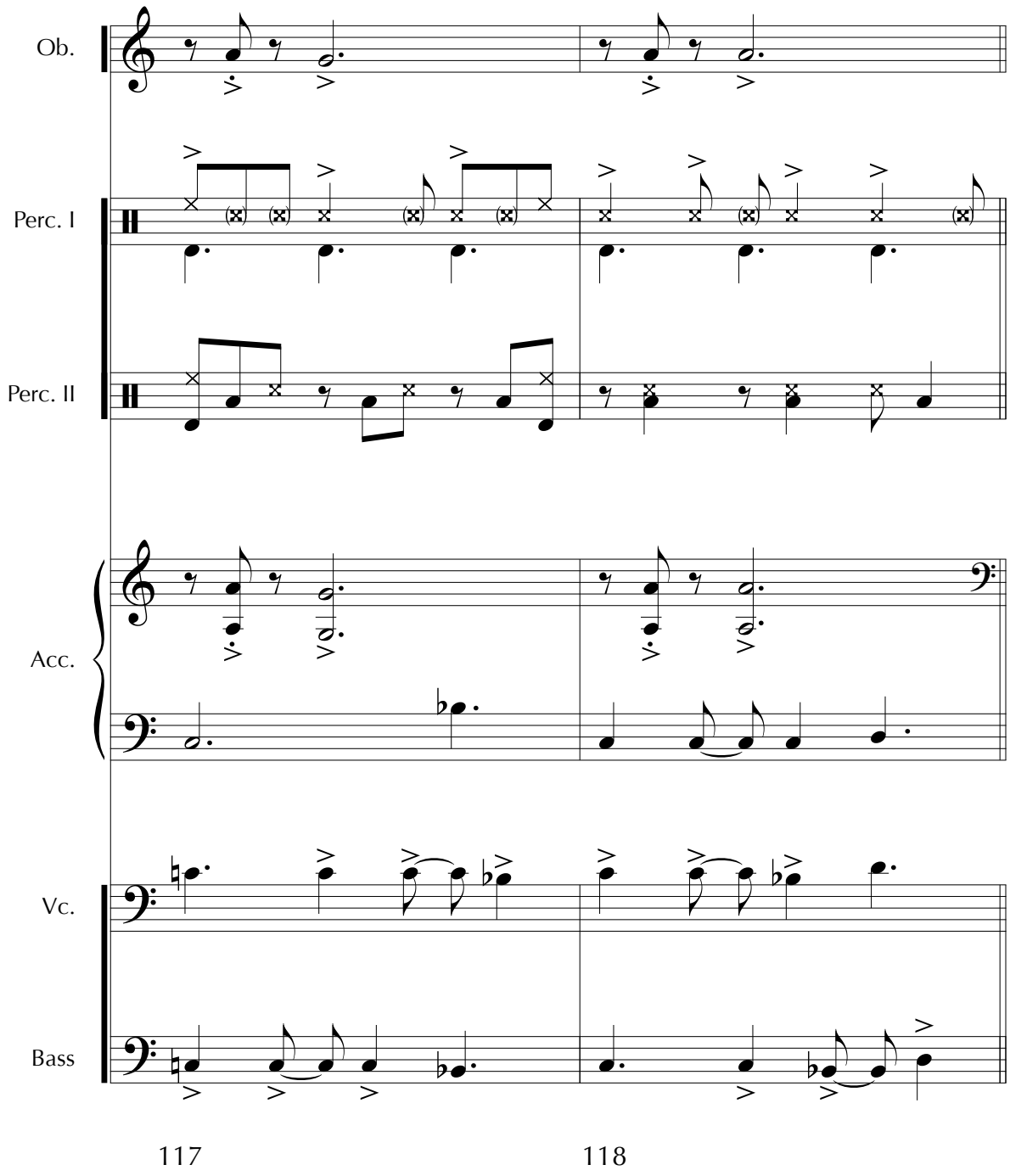

Blito-Slip-Jig
A- G E- F
1. E- D-
Ob.
(fill)
Perc. I
(fill)
Perc. II
A- G E- F E- D-
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
105
106
107

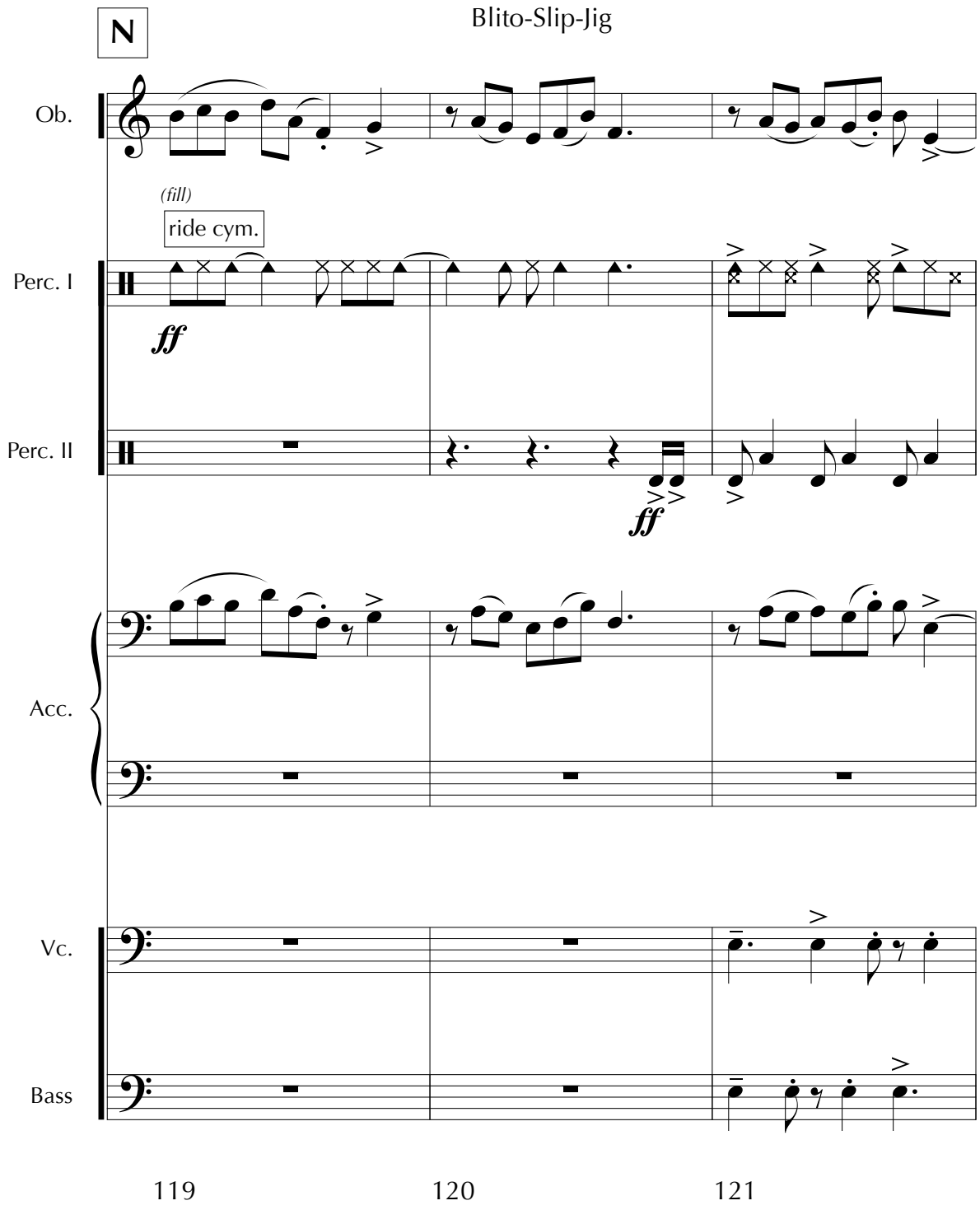

Blito-Slip-Jig
M
2.
Ob.
ff
cowbell
Perc. I
f
Perc. II
f
Master
Acc.
Double Bass
ff
arco
Vc.
ff
arco
Bass
ff
108
109

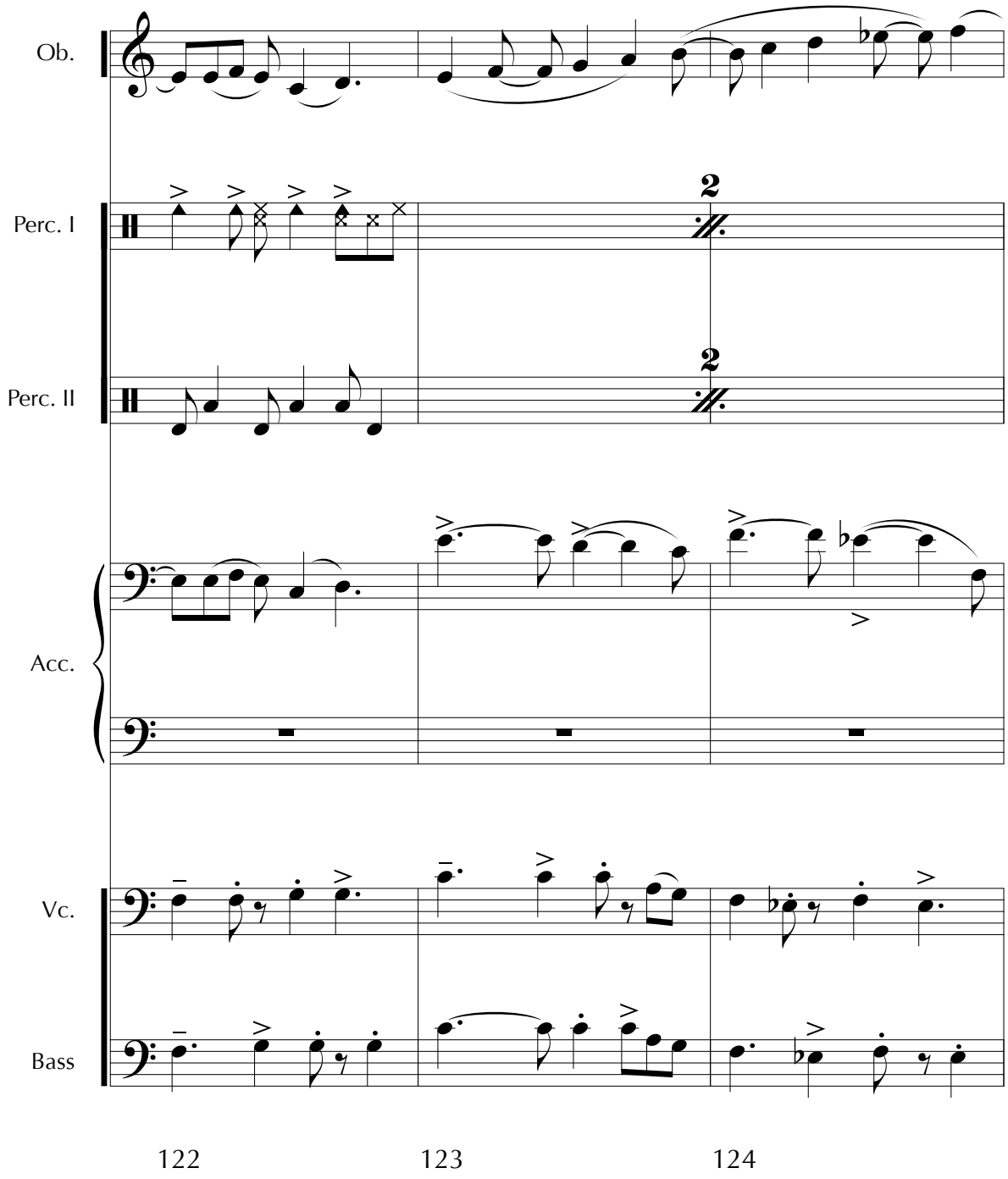

Ob.
Perc. I
2
Perc. II
2
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
110
111

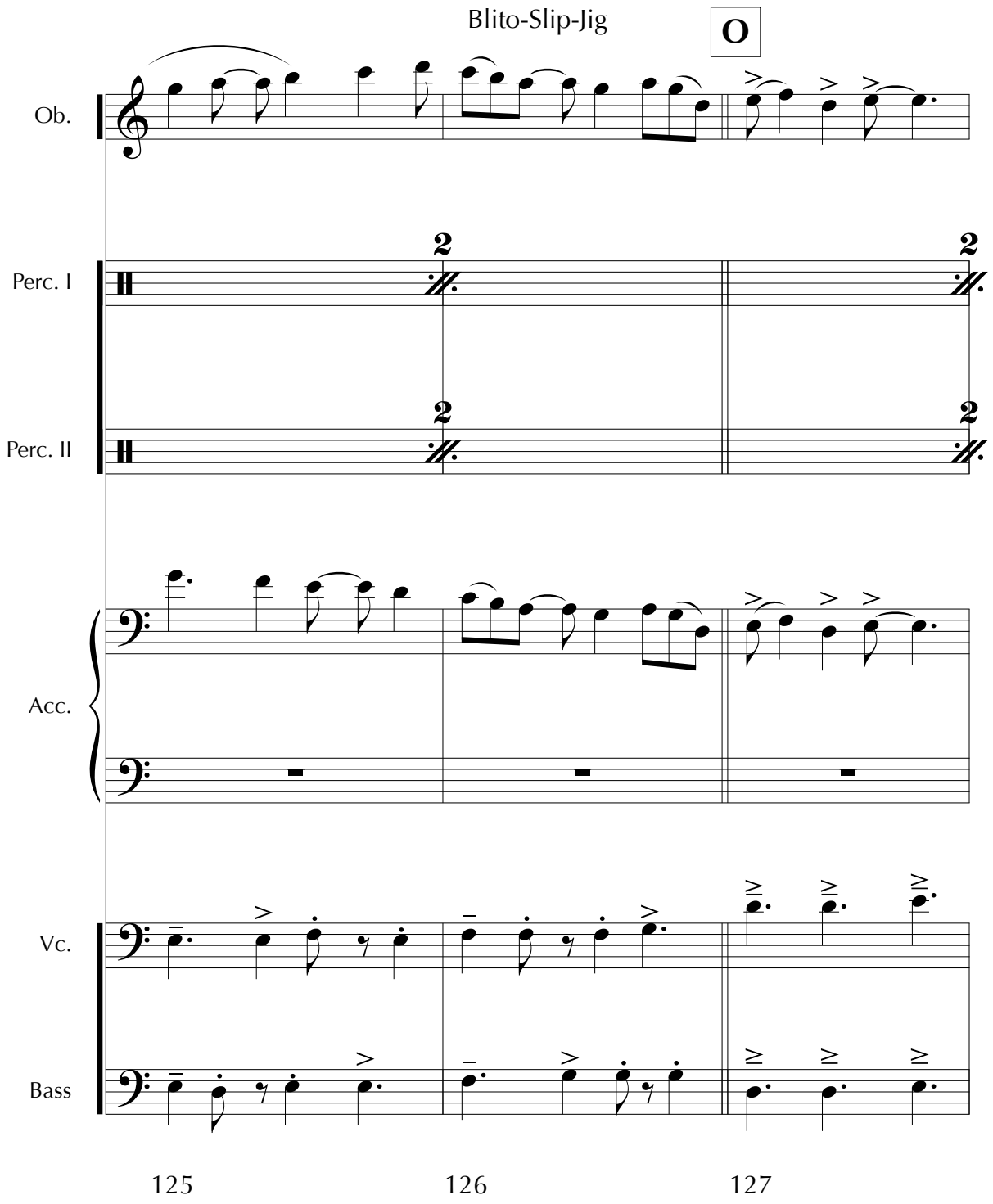

Ob.
Perc. I
2
Perc. II
2
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
112
113
114

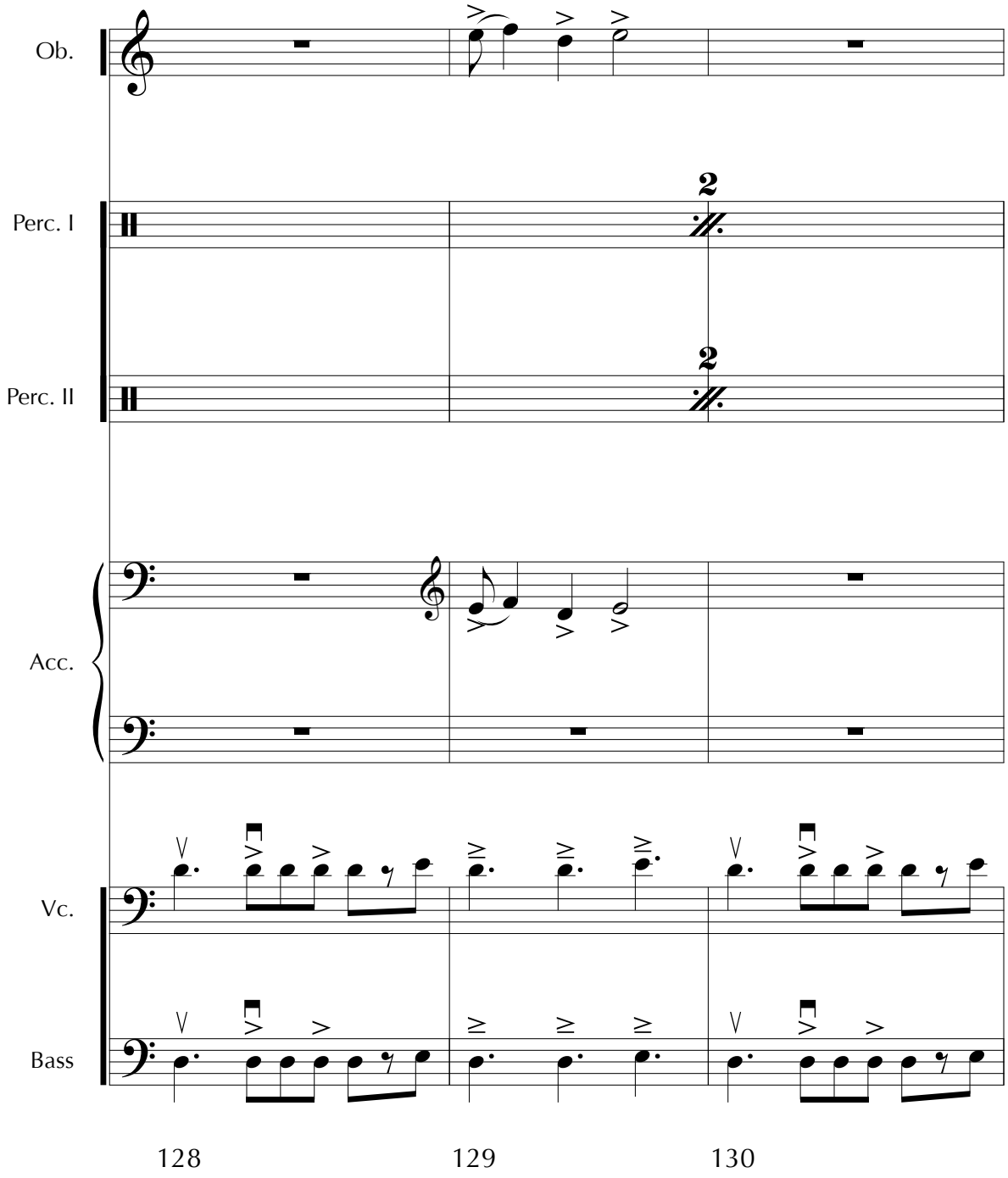

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
115
116

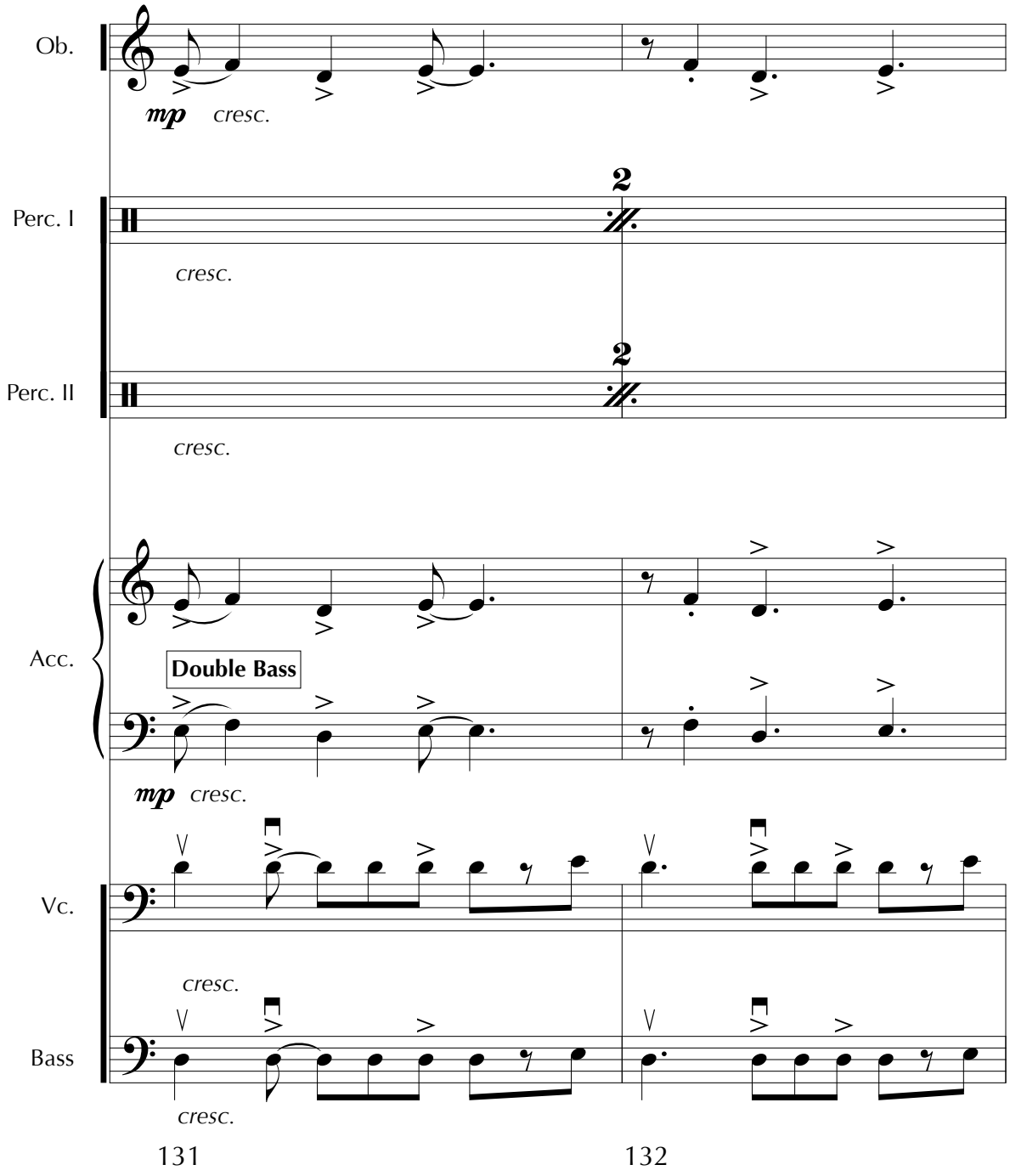

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
117
118

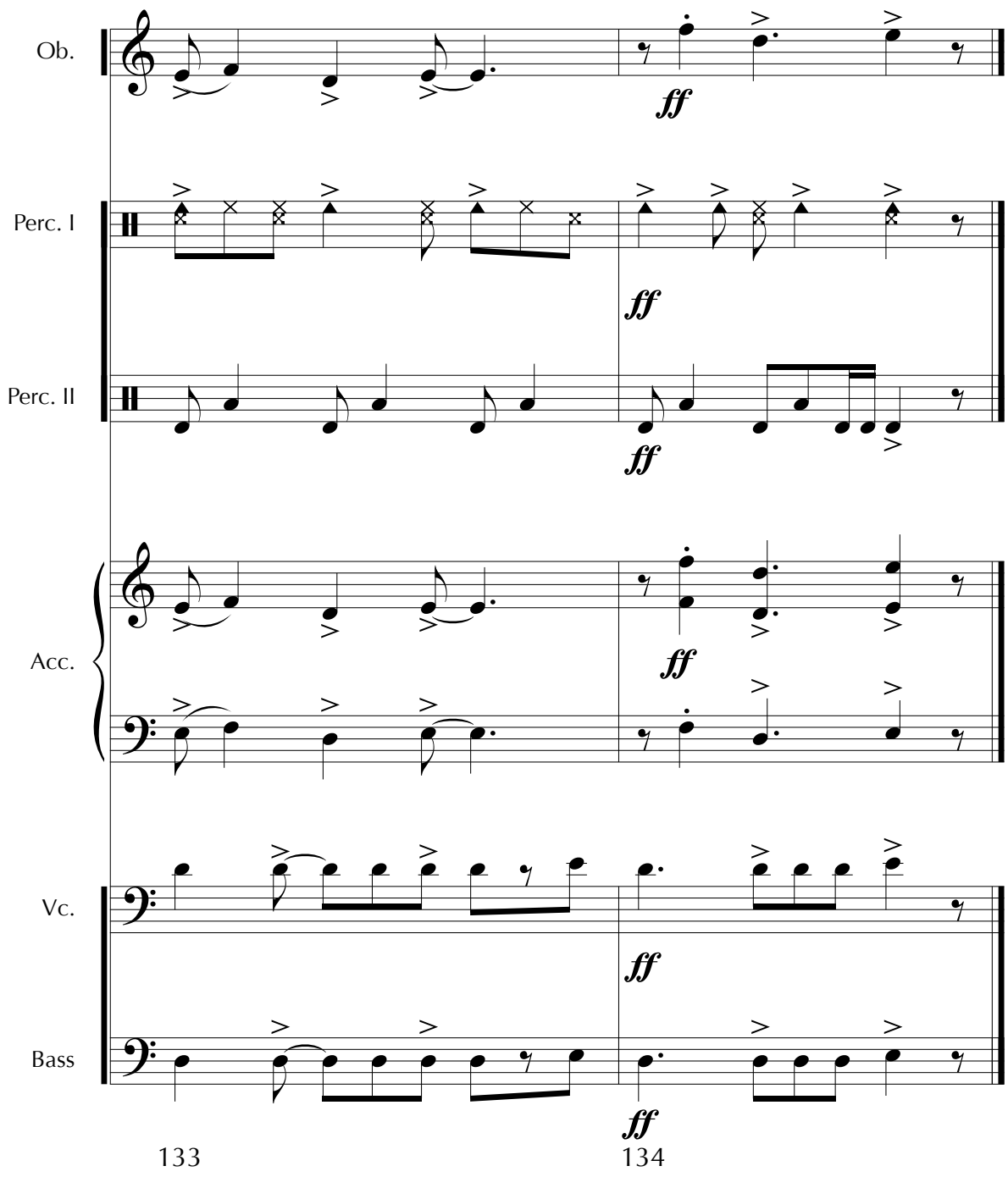

N
Blito-Slip-Jig
Ob.
(fill)
ride cym.
Perc. I
ff
Perc. II
ff
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
119
120
121

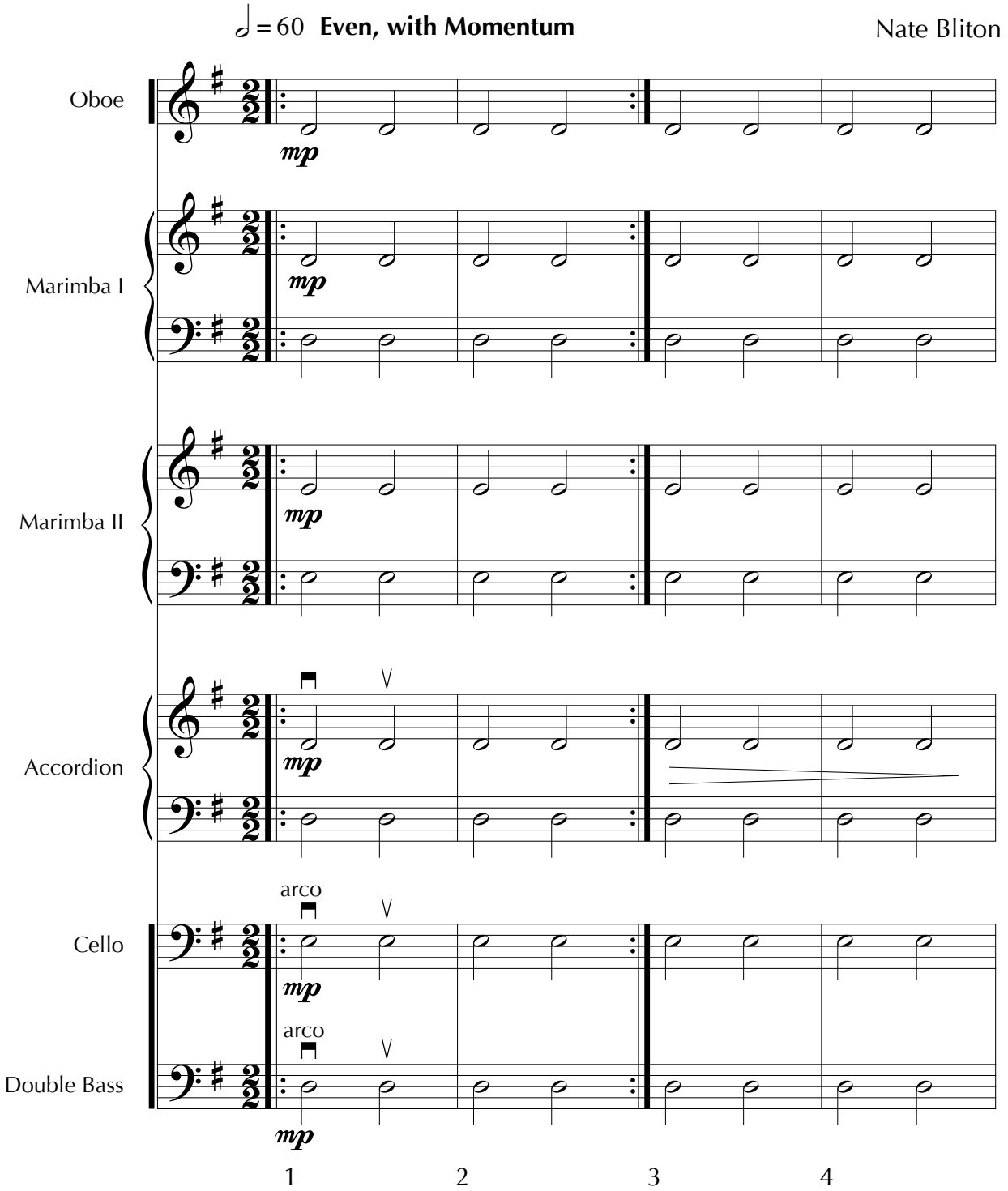

Ob.
Perc. I
2
Perc. II
2
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
122
123
124


Blito-Slip-Jig
O
Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
125
126
127


Ob.
Perc. I
2
Perc. II
2
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
128
129
130

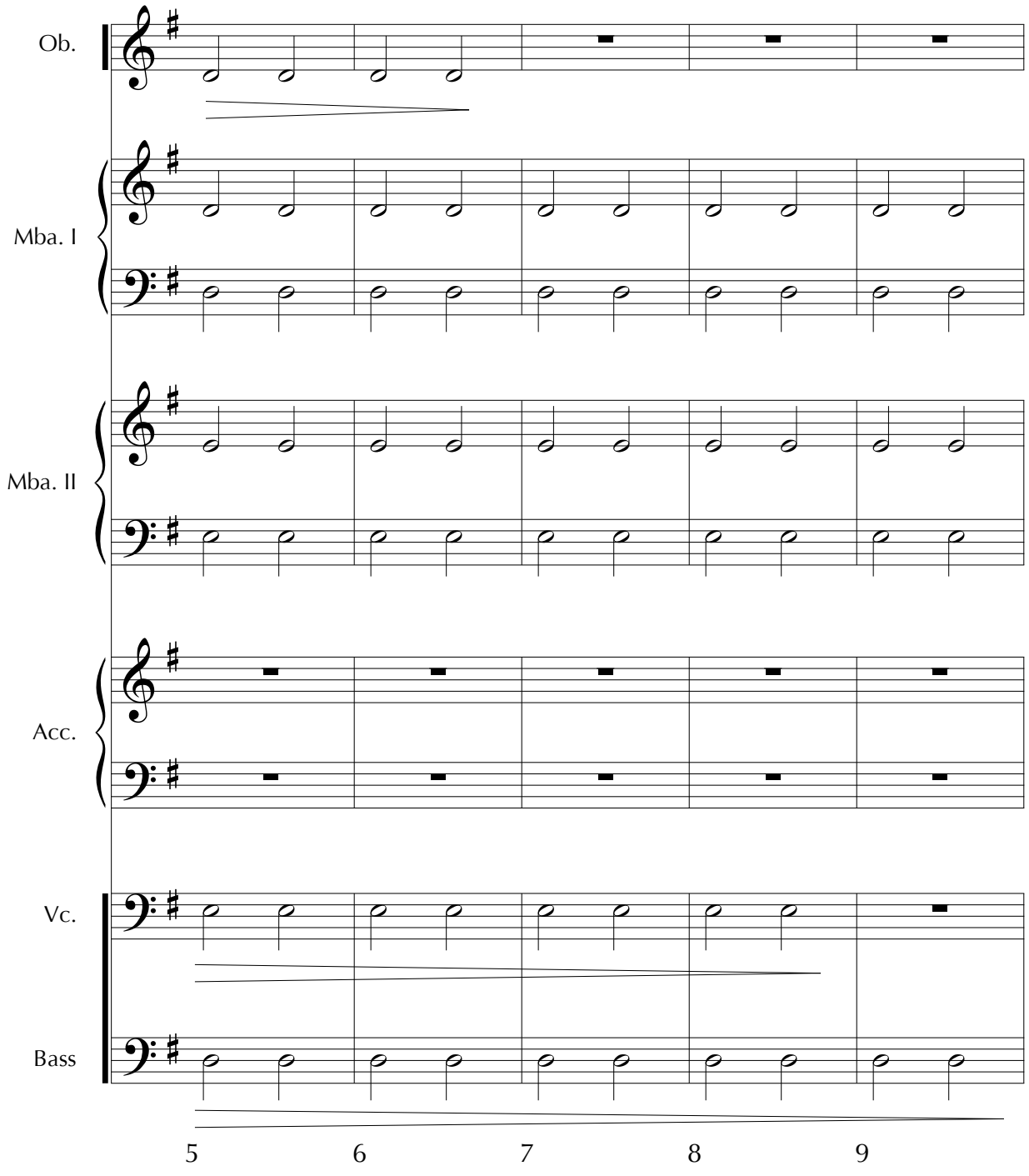

Ob.
mp cresc.
Perc. I
2
cresc.
Perc. II
2
cresc.
Acc.
Double Bass
mp cresc.
Vc.
cresc.
Bass
cresc.
131
132


Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
ff
133
134

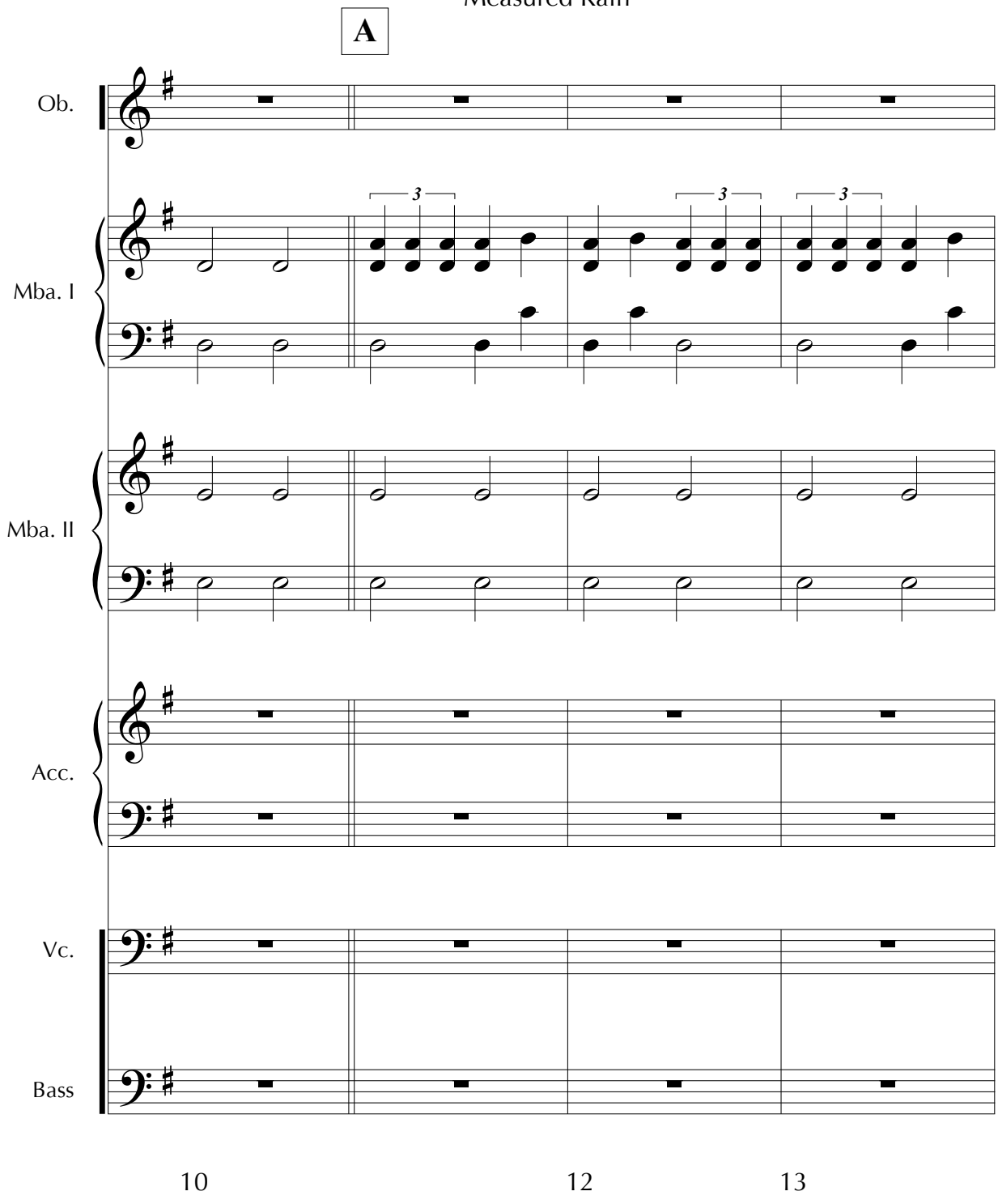

♩ = 60 Even, with Momentum
Nate Bliton
Oboe
Marimba I
Marimba II
Accordion
Cello
Double Bass
arco
arco
mp
1
2
3
4

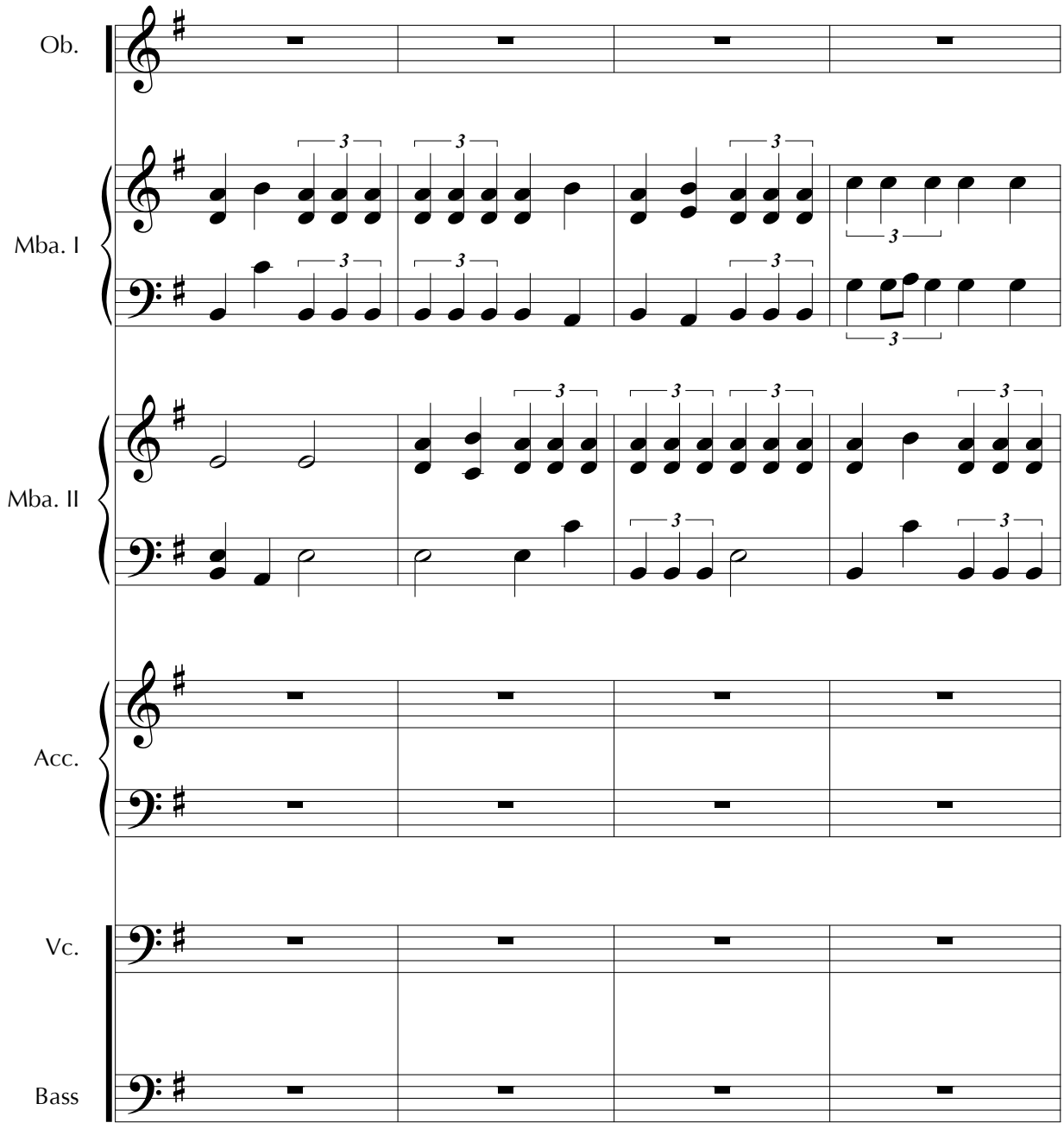
© Nate Bliton

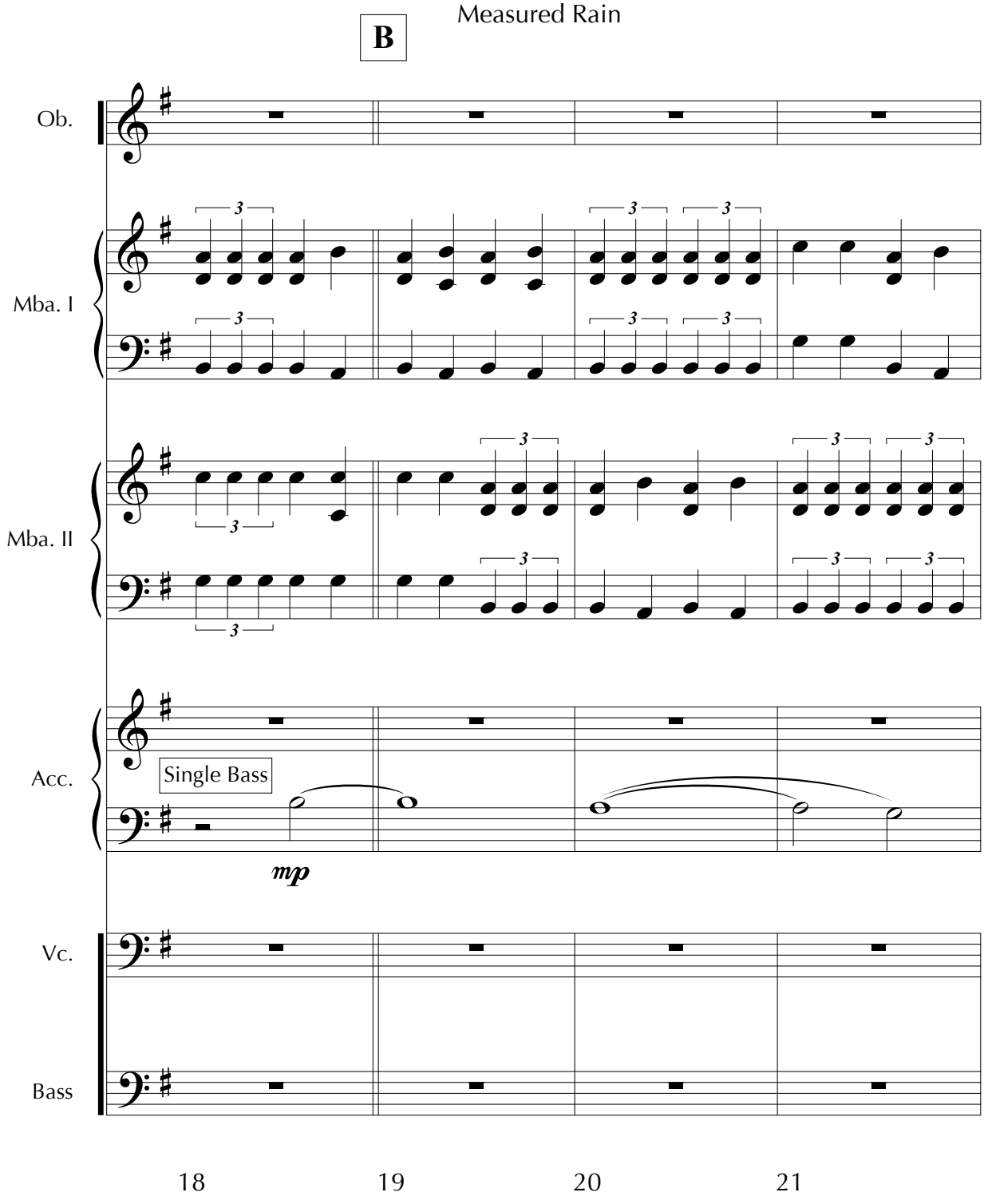
Measured Rain

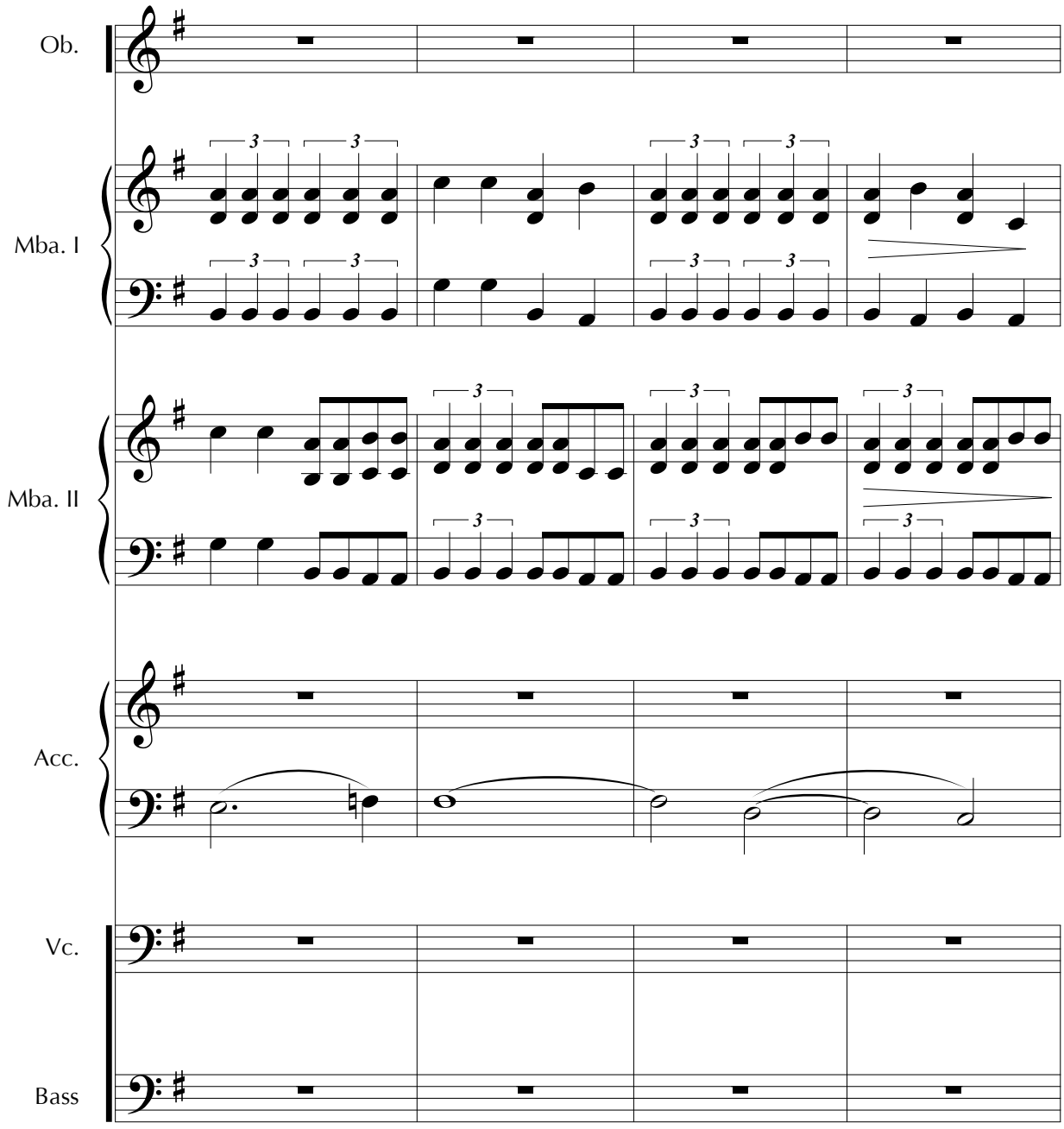


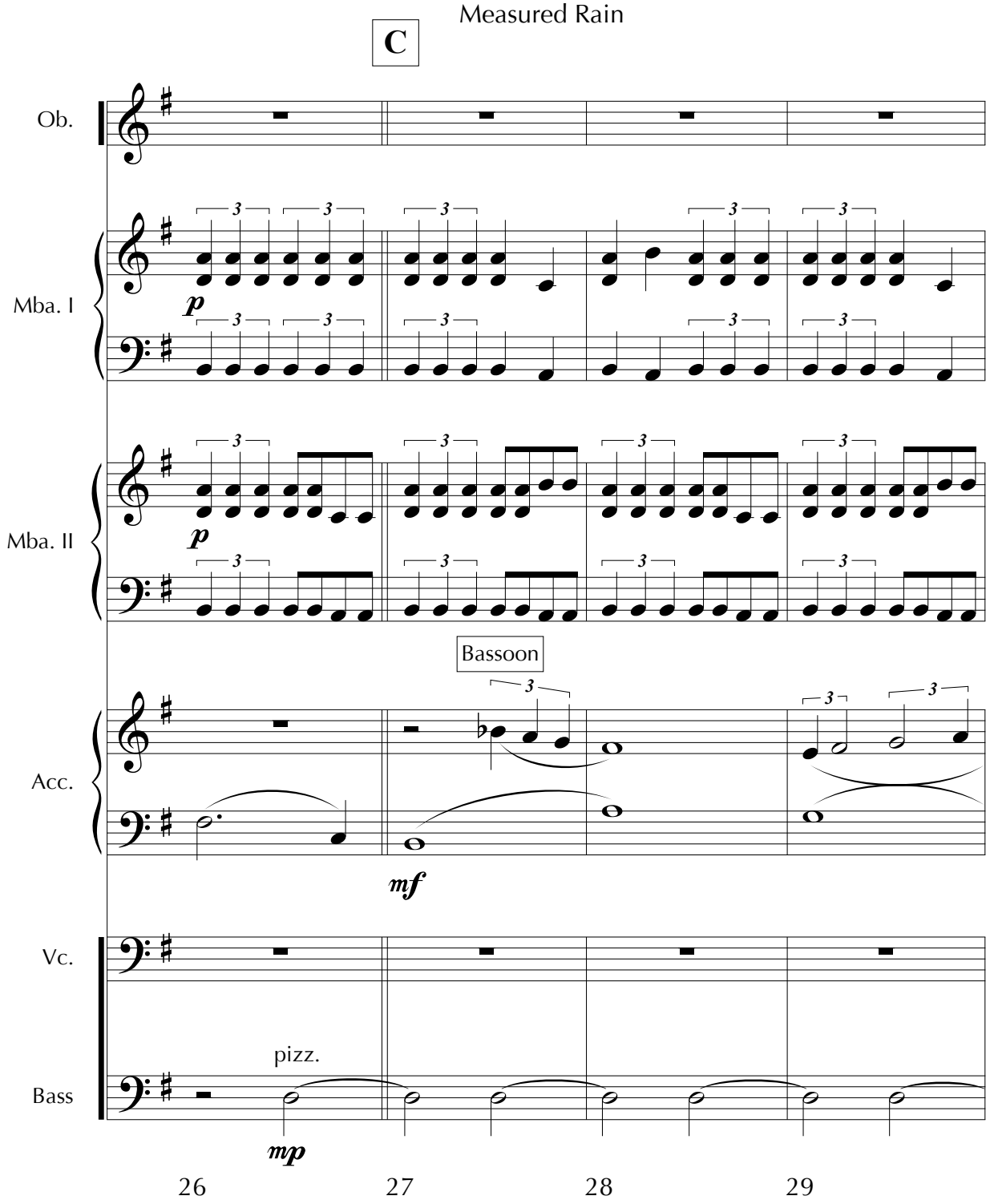
Measured Rain

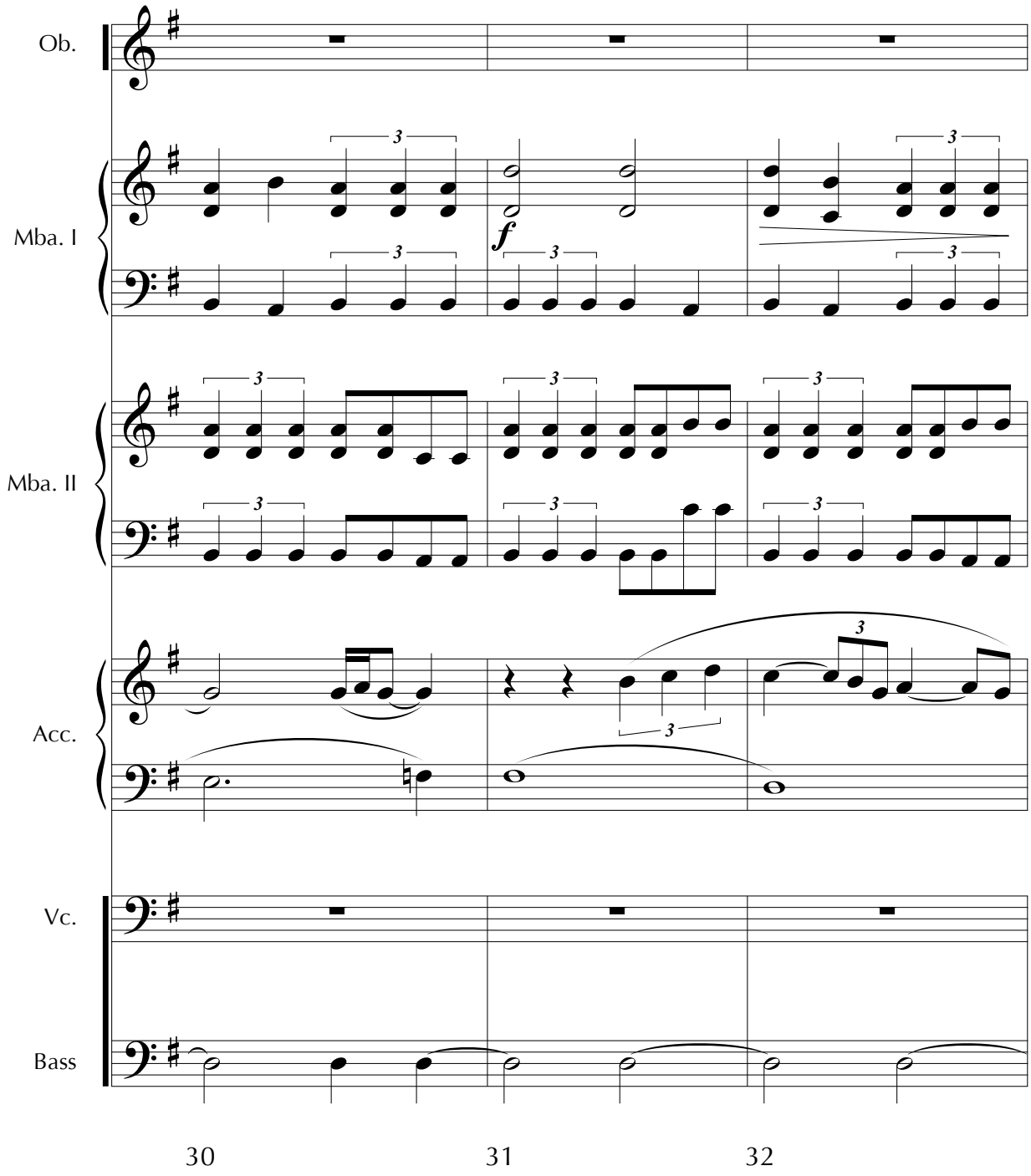


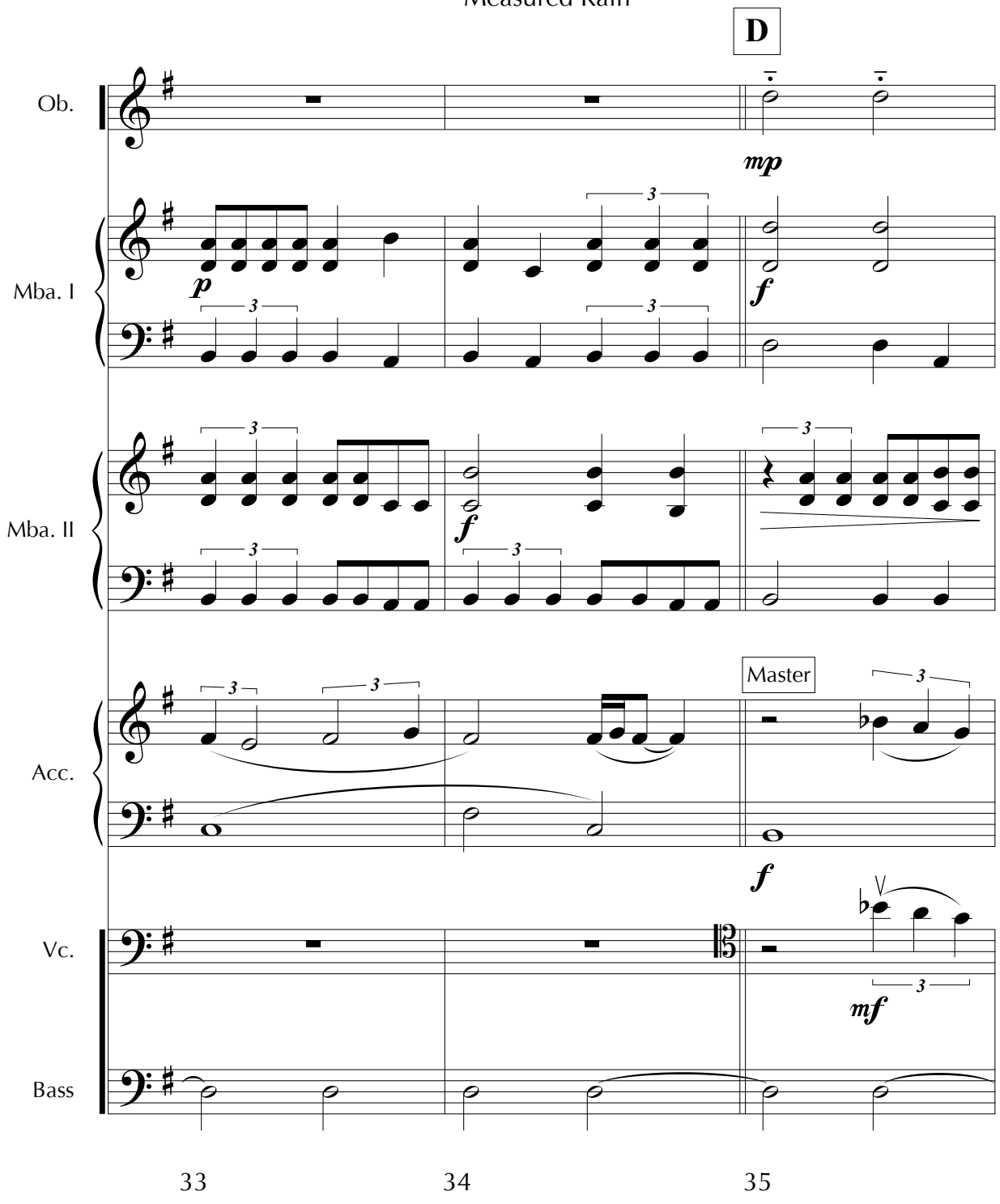

Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
14
15
16
17

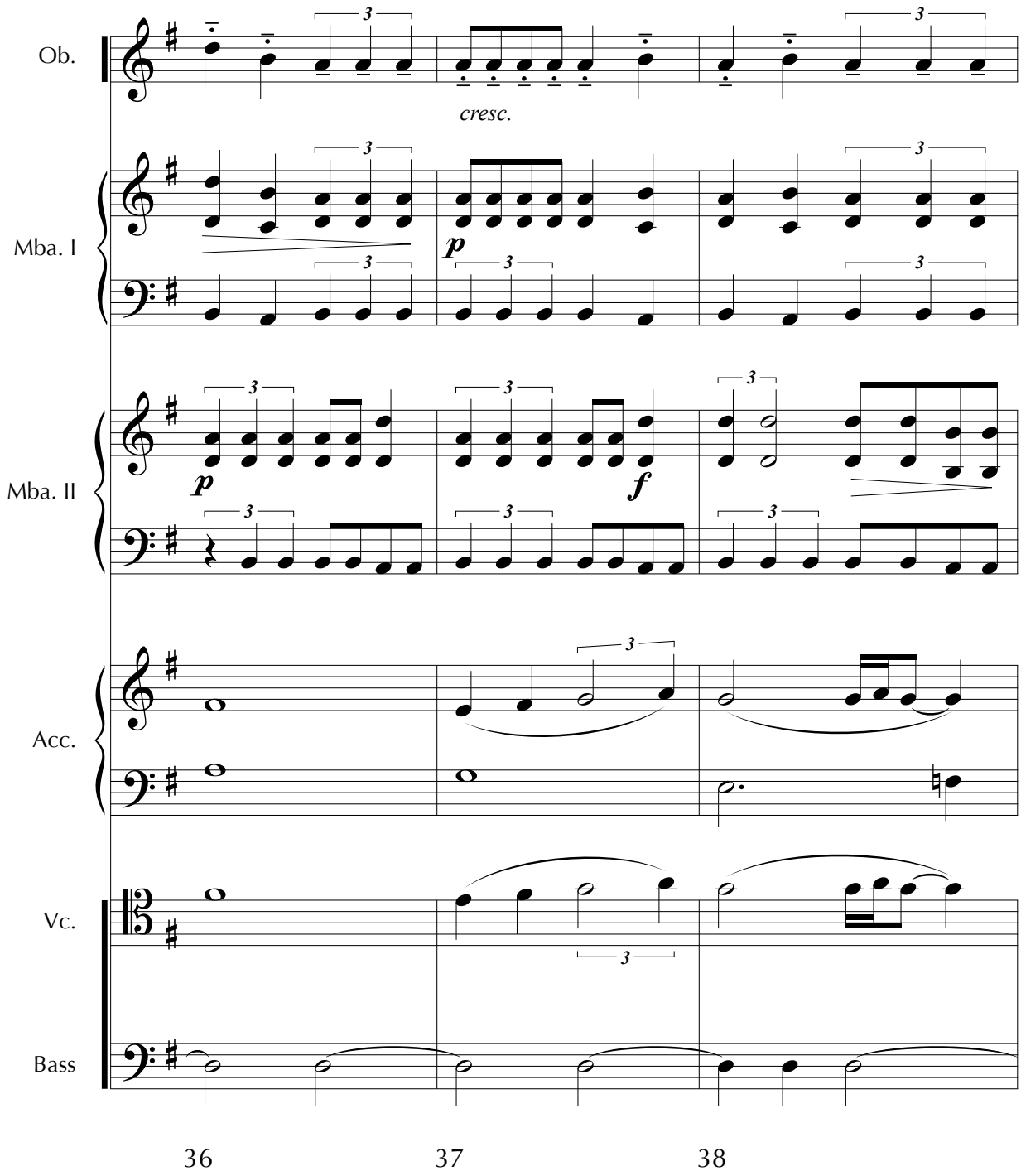

B
Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Acc.
Single Bass
mp
Vc.
Bass
18
19
20
21

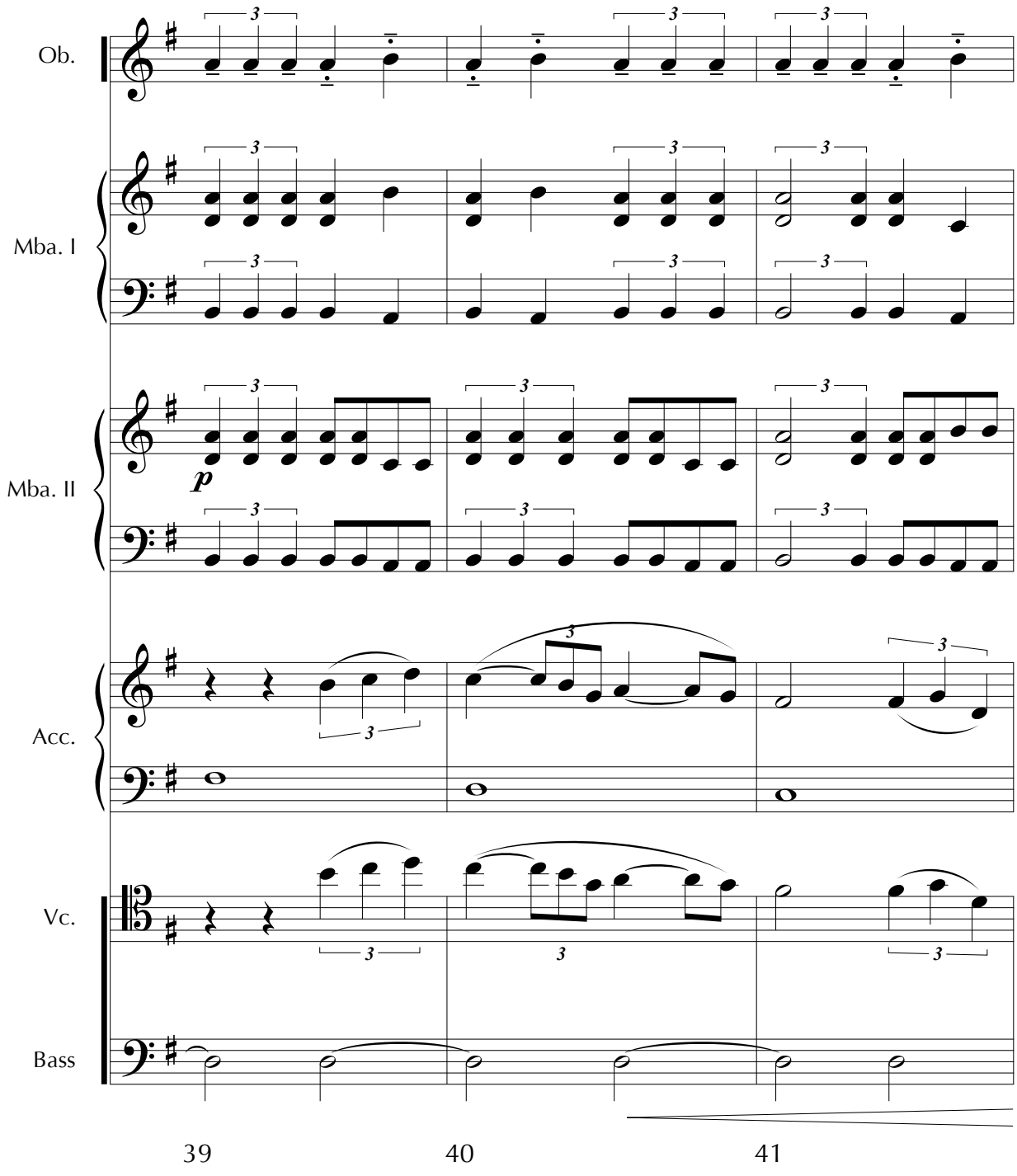

Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
22
23
24
25

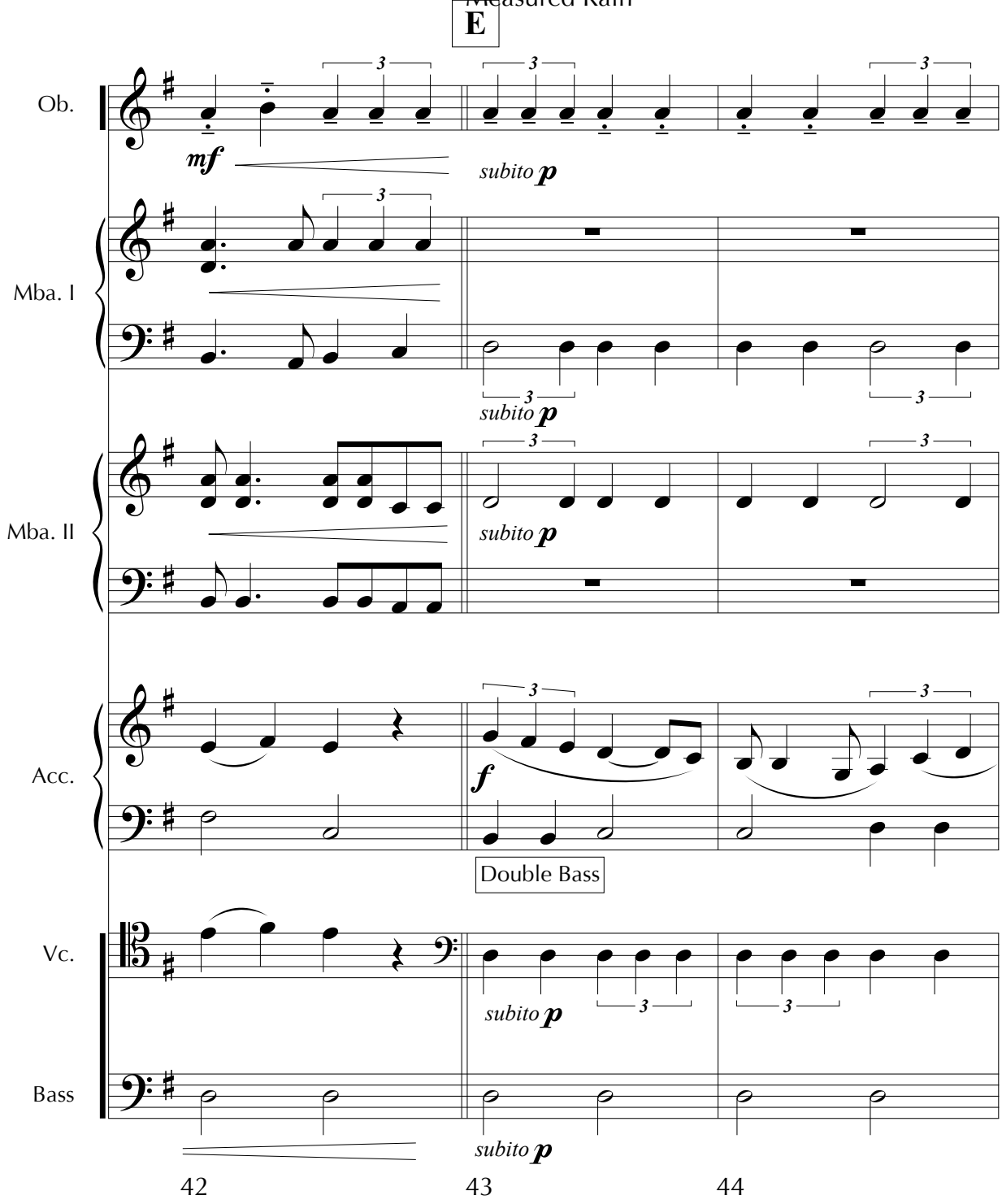

C
Ob.
Mba. I
p
Mba. II
p
Bassoon
Acc.
mf
Vc.
pizz.
Bass
mp
26
27
28
29

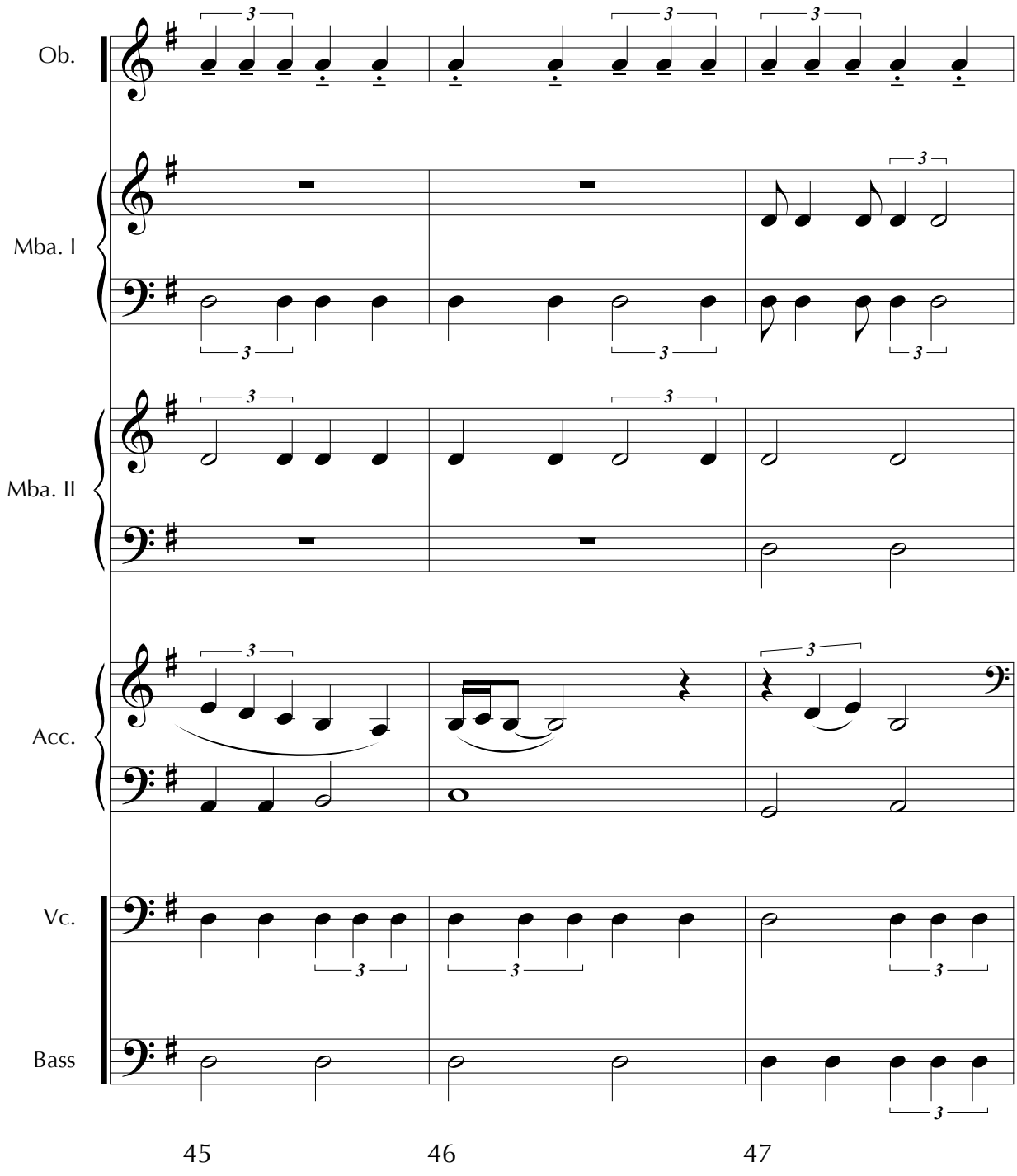

Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
f
3
30
31
32

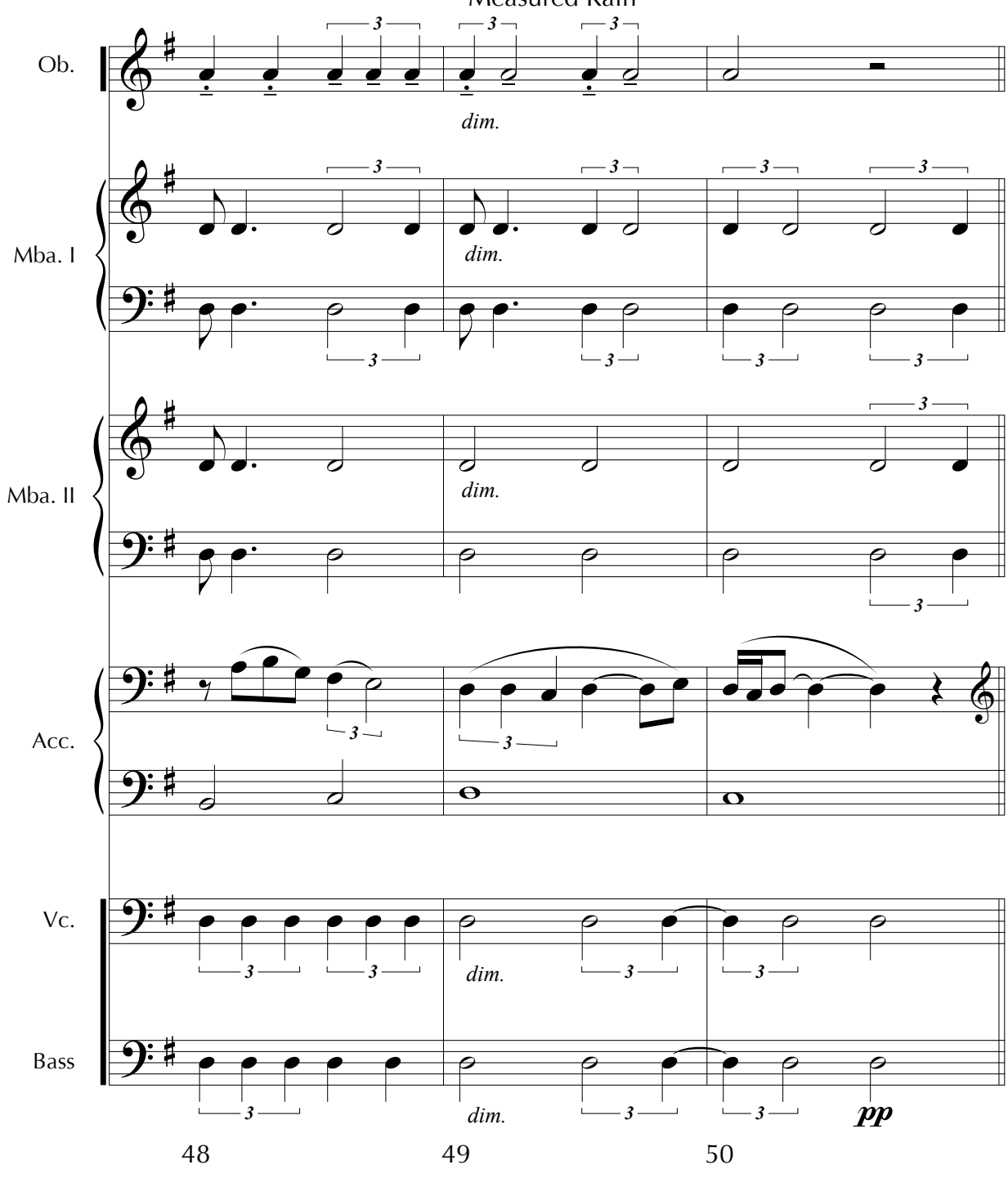

D
Ob.
mp
Mba. I
p
f
Mba. II
f
Acc.
Master
f
Vc.
mf
Bass
33
34
35

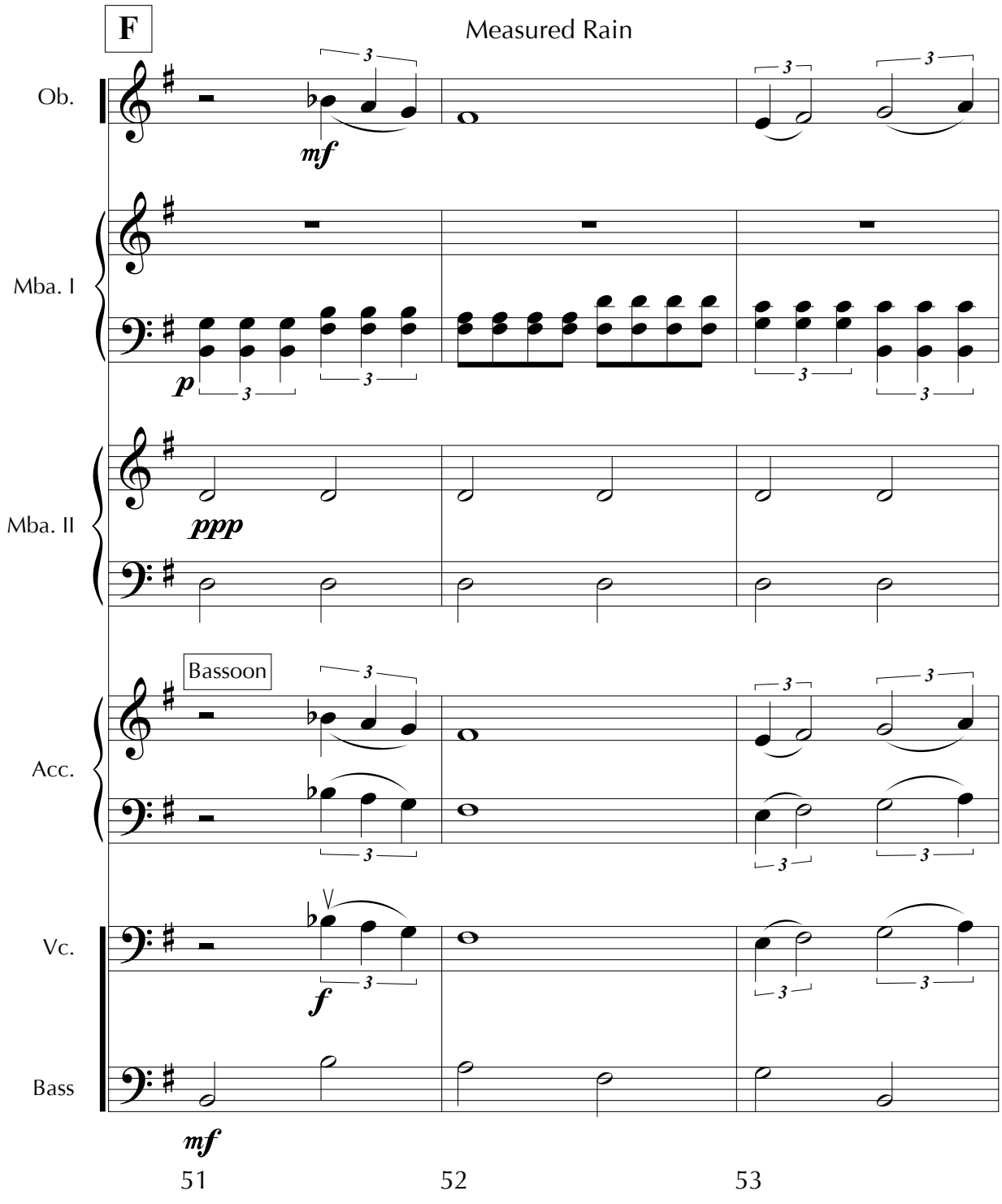

Ob.
cresc.
Mba. I
p
Mba. II
p
f
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
36
37
38

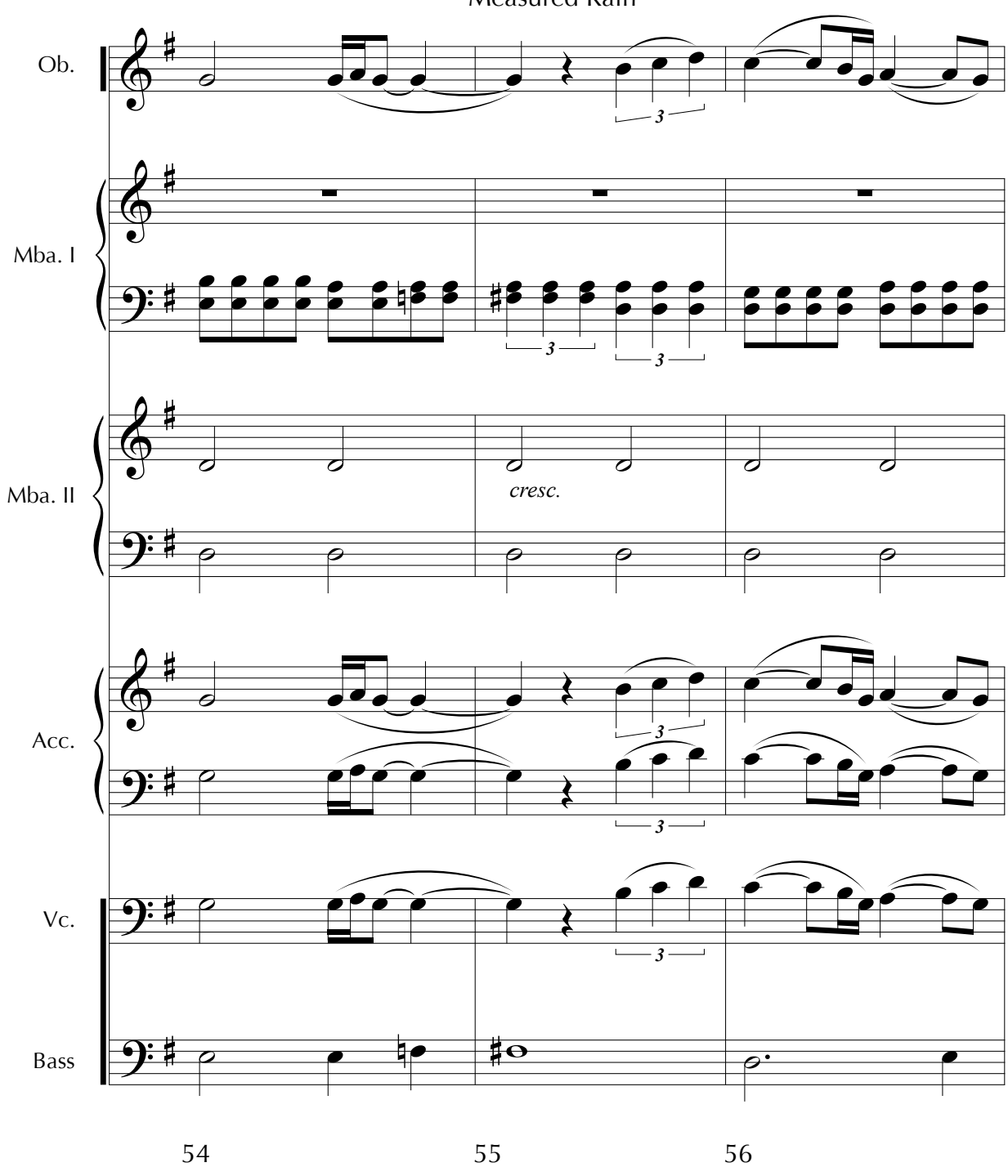

Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
p
39
40
41

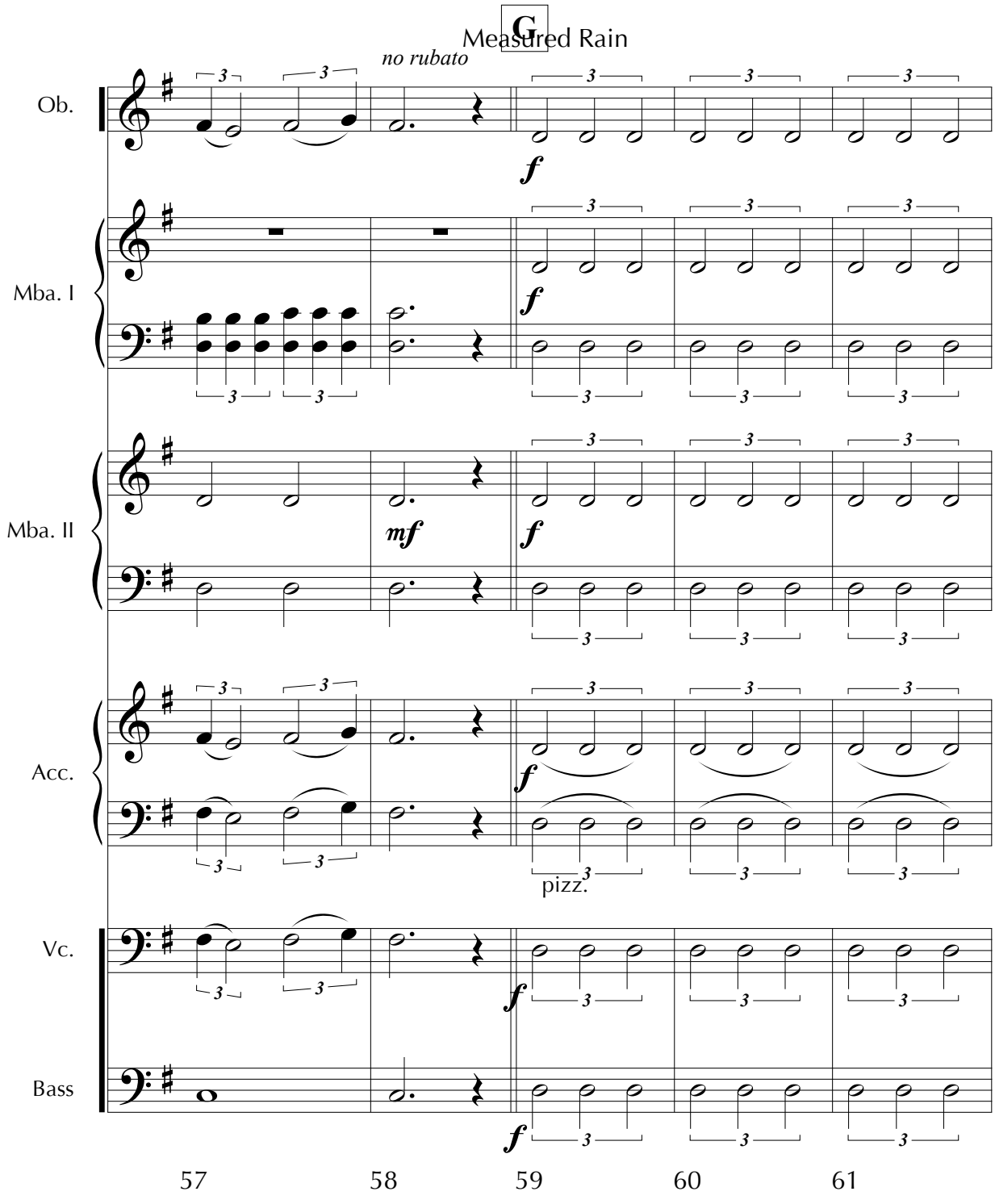

Measured Rain
E
Ob.
mf
subito p
Mba. I
subito p
Mba. II
subito p
Acc.
f
Double Bass
Vc.
subito p
Bass
subito p
42
43
44

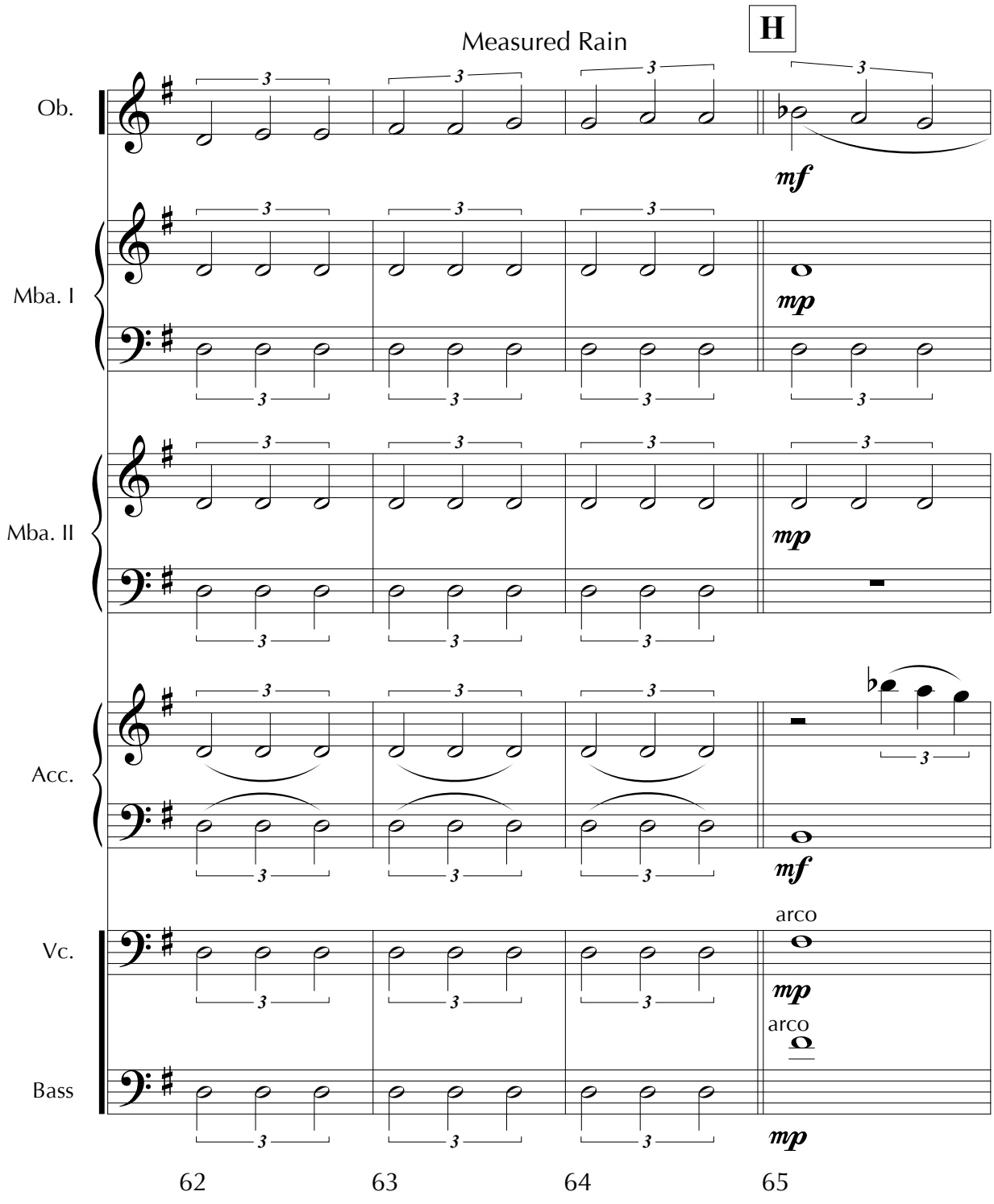

Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
45
46
47

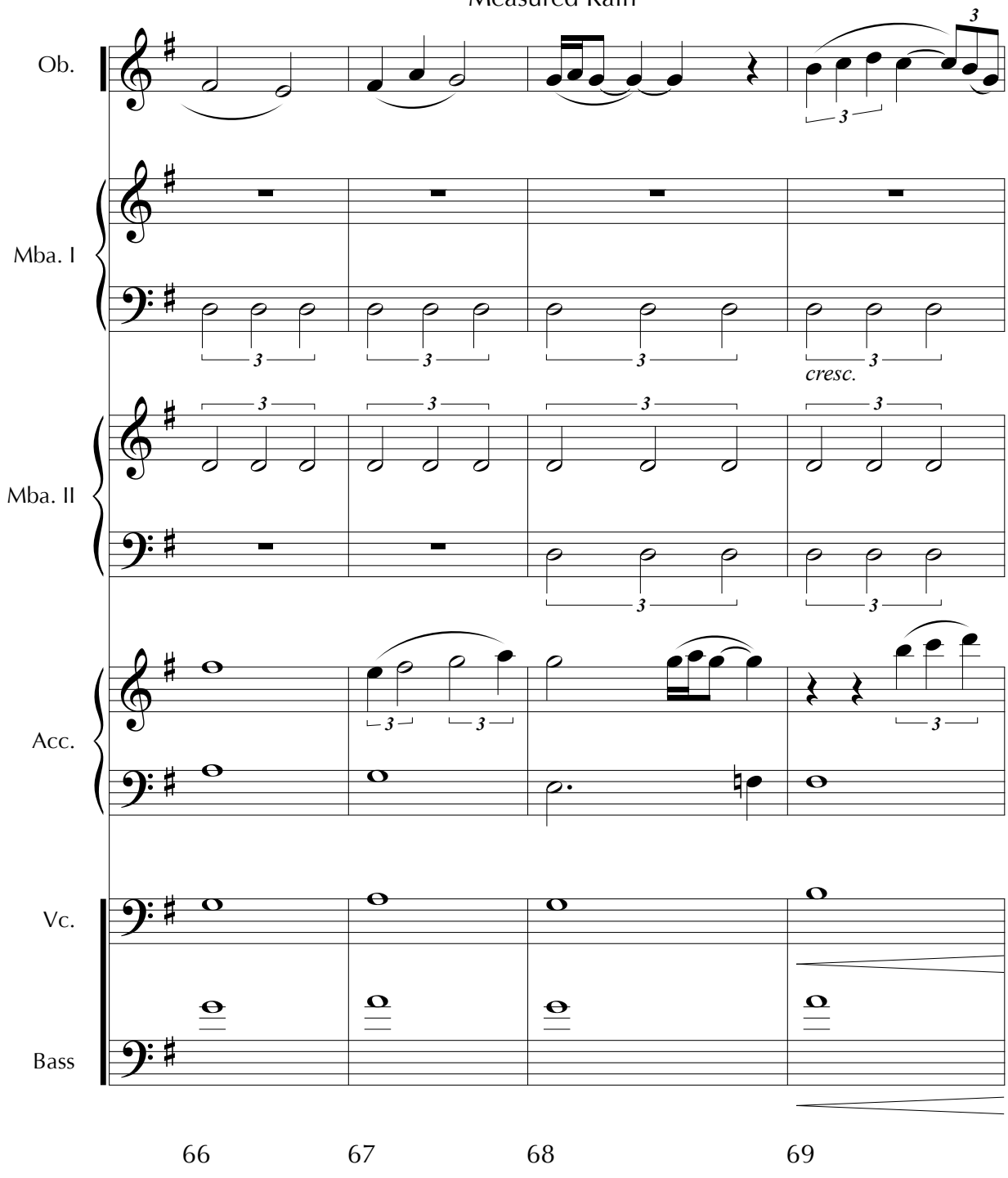

Measured Rain
Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
dim.
pp
48
49
50

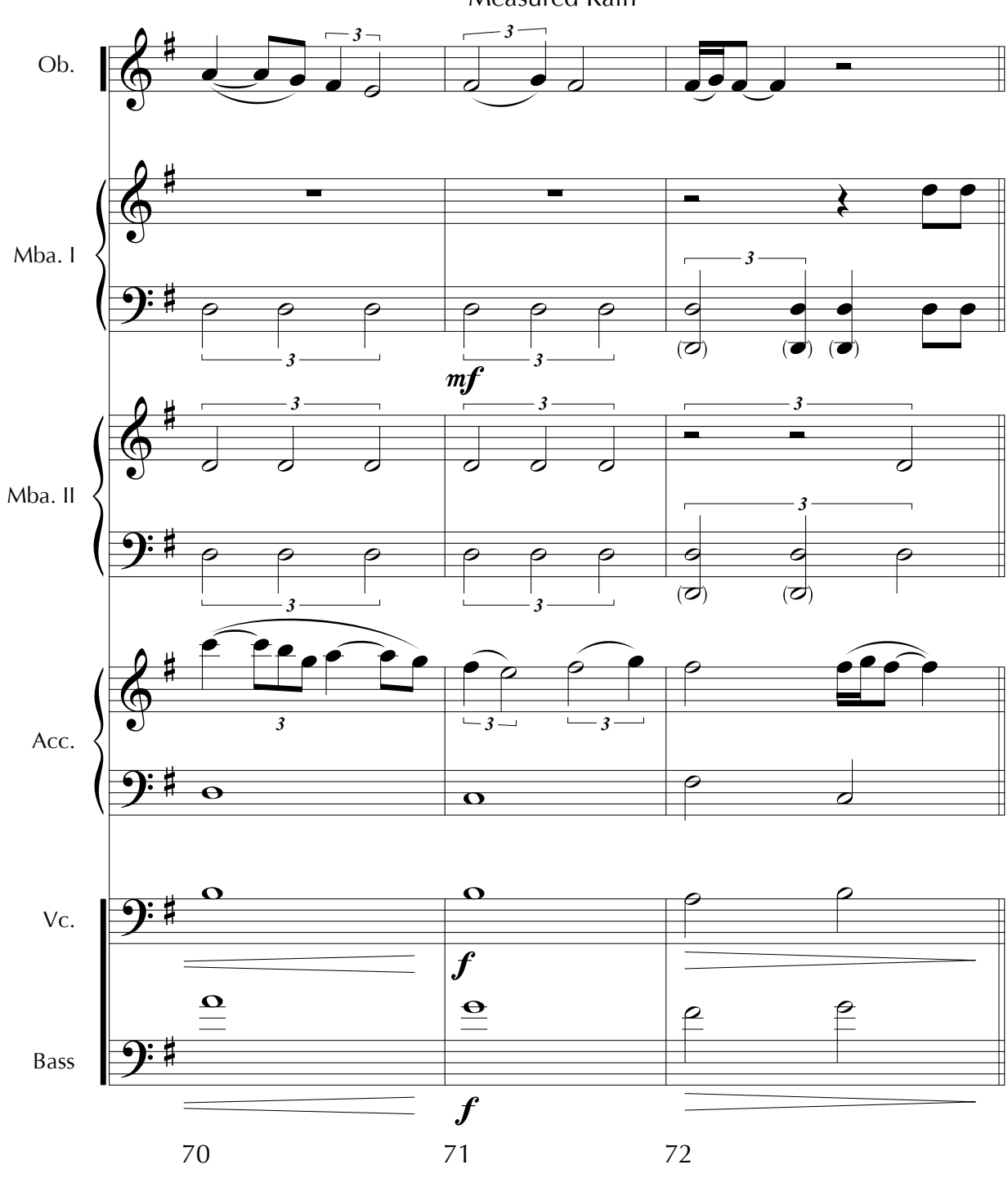

F
Measured Rain
Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
Bassoon
mf
p
ppp
f
mf
3
51
52
53

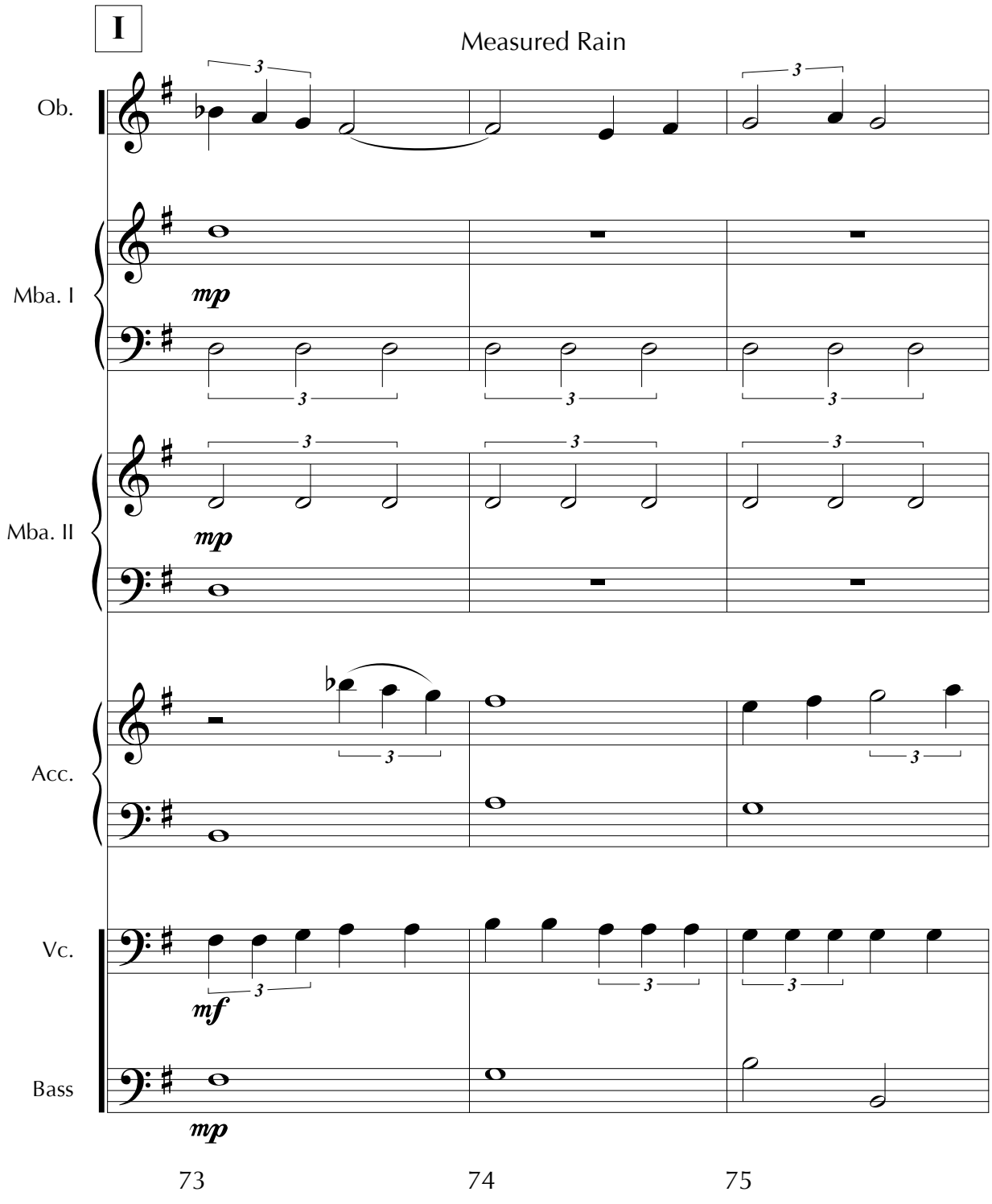

Measured Rain
Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
cresc.
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
3
54
55
56

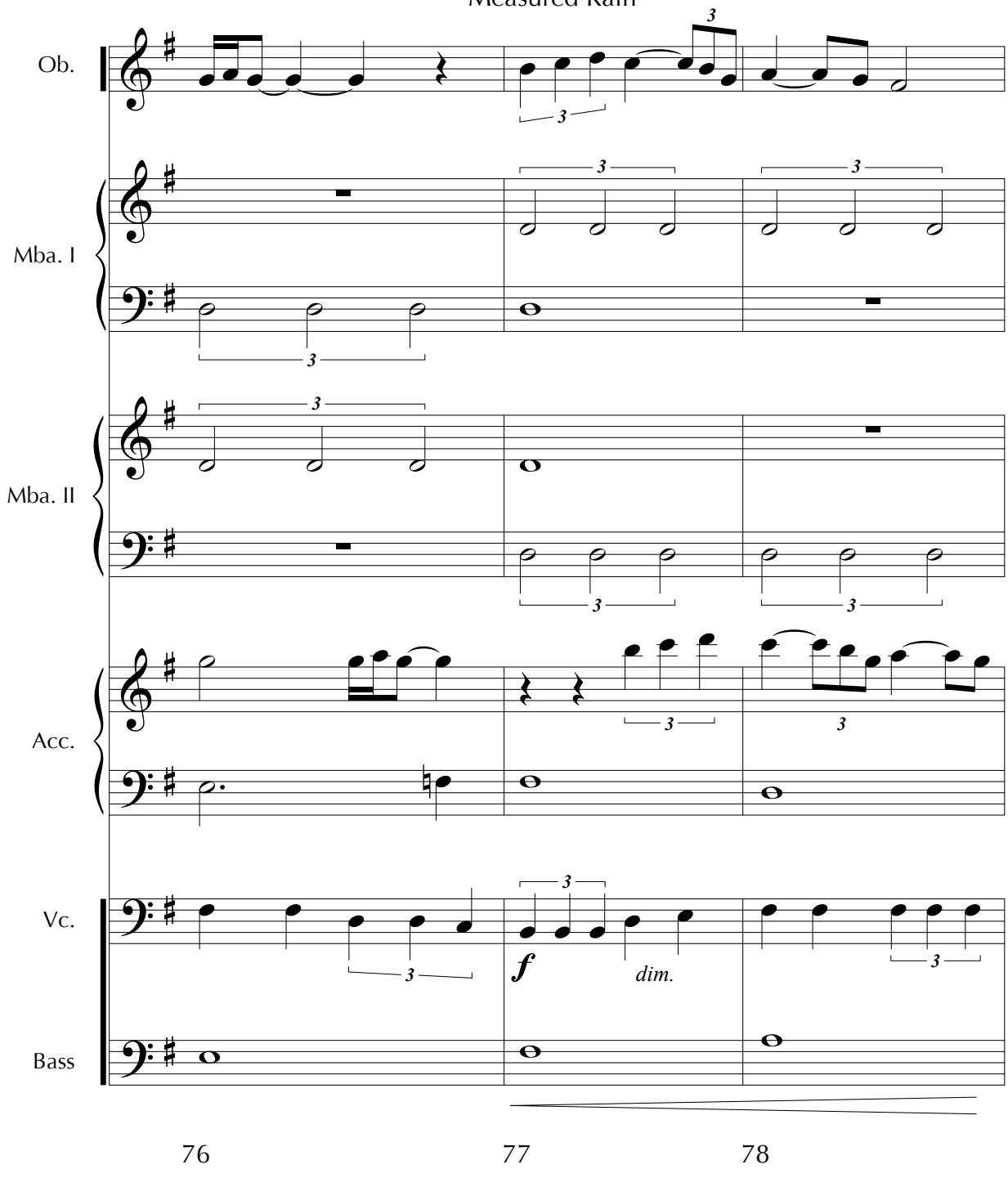

G
Measured Rain
no rubato
Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
pizz.
57
58
59
60
61

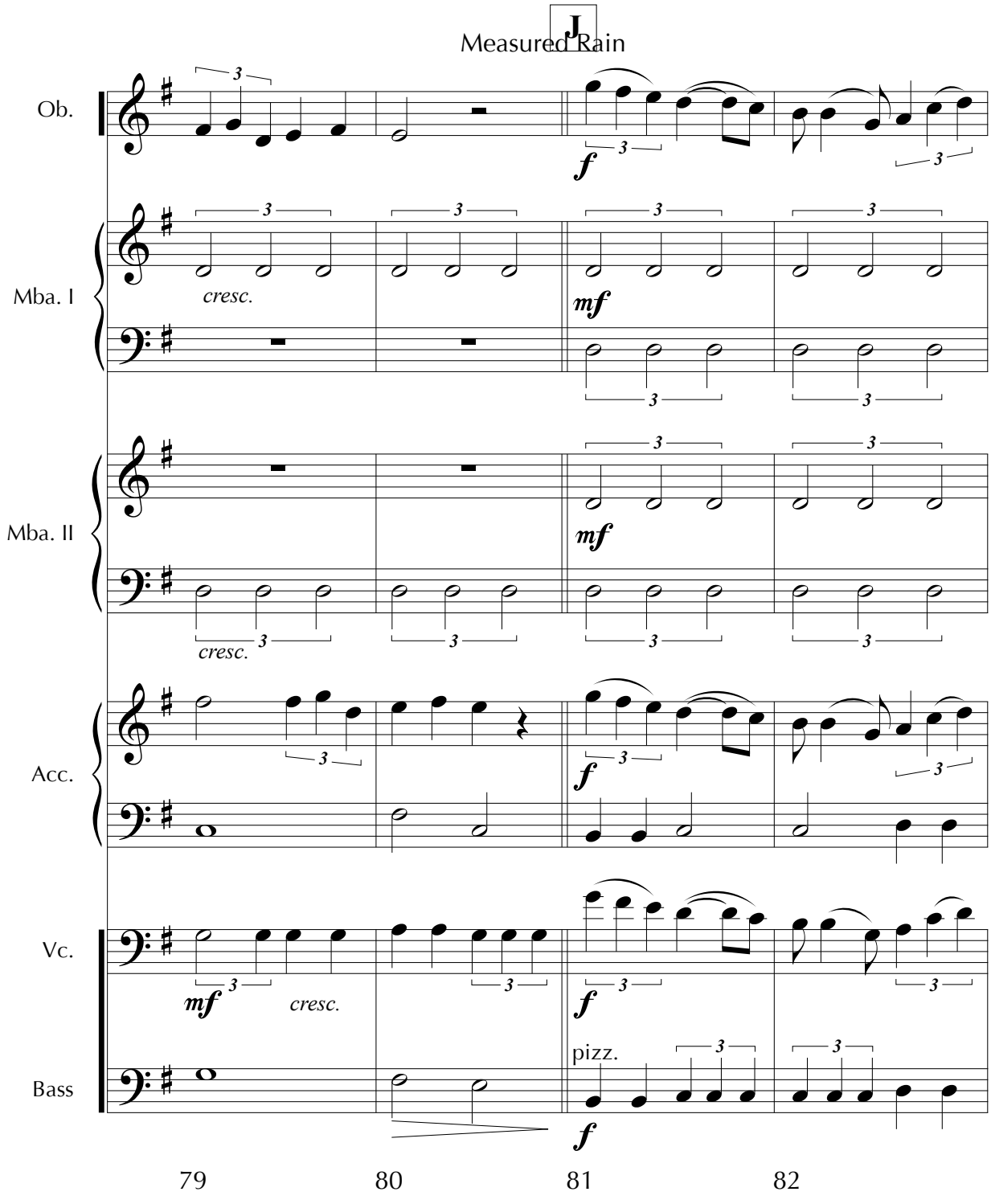

Measured Rain
H
Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
mf
mp
arco
62
63
64
65

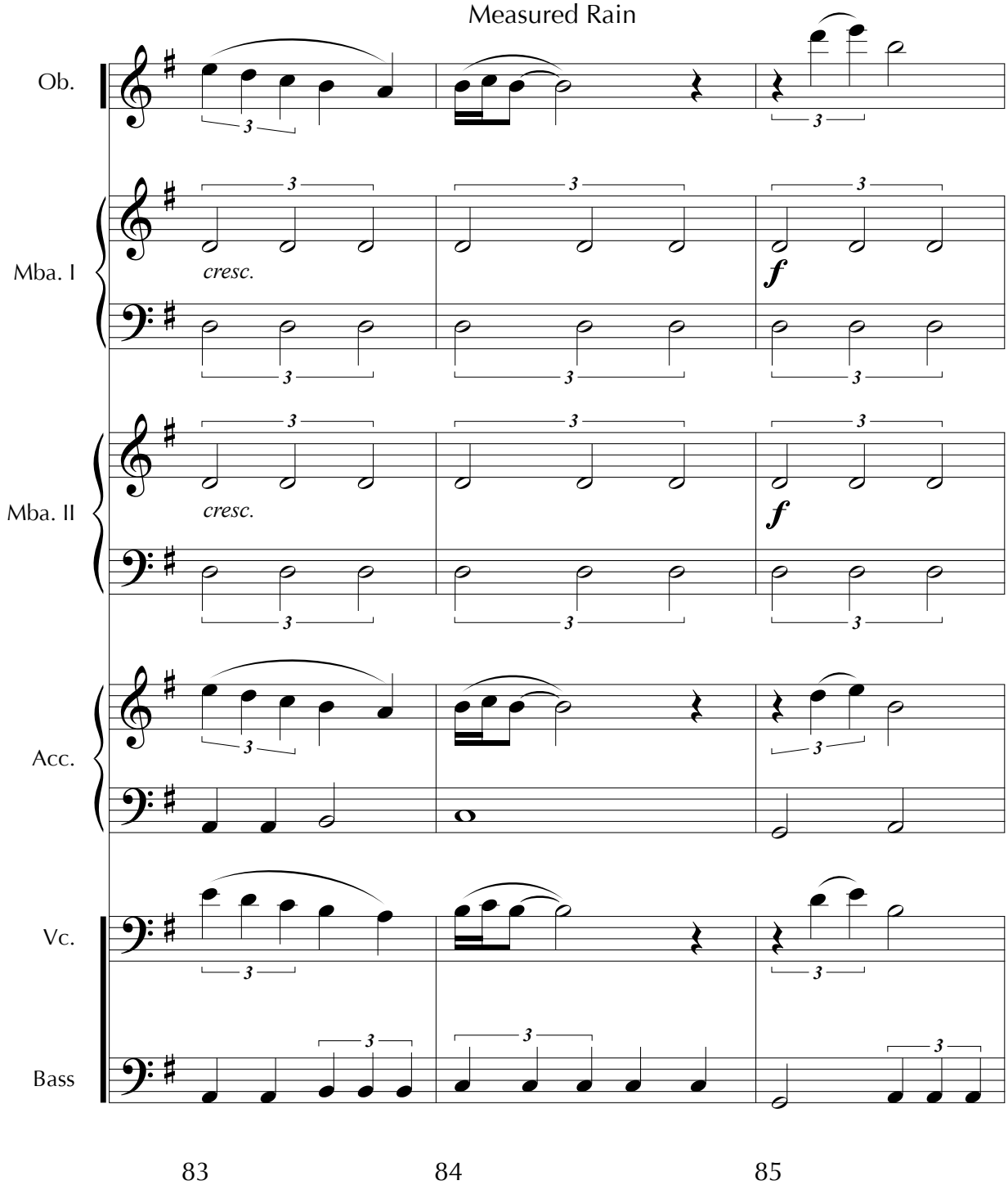

Measured Rain
Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
cresc.
66
67
68
69

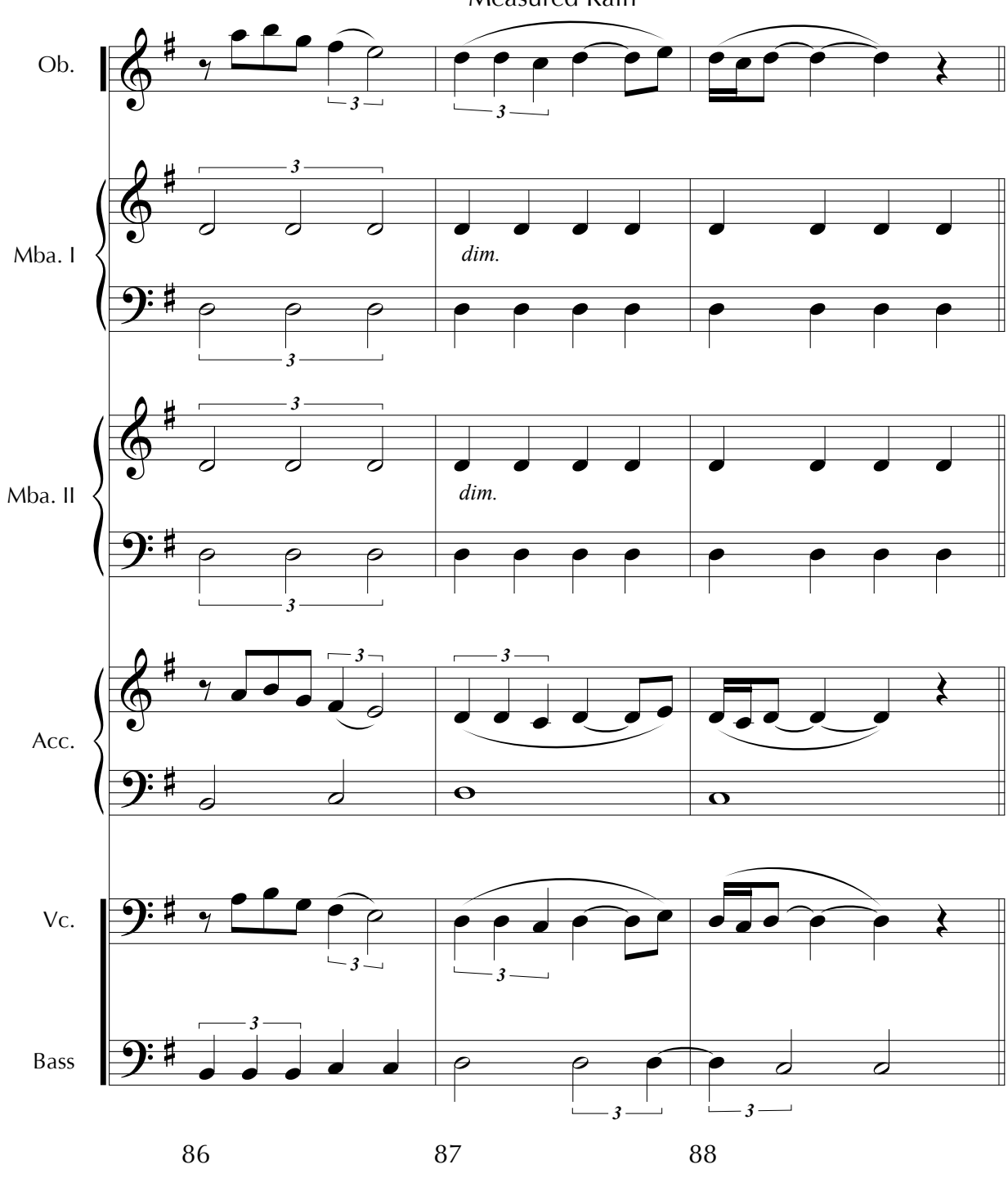

Measured Rain
Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
mf
f
f
70
71
72

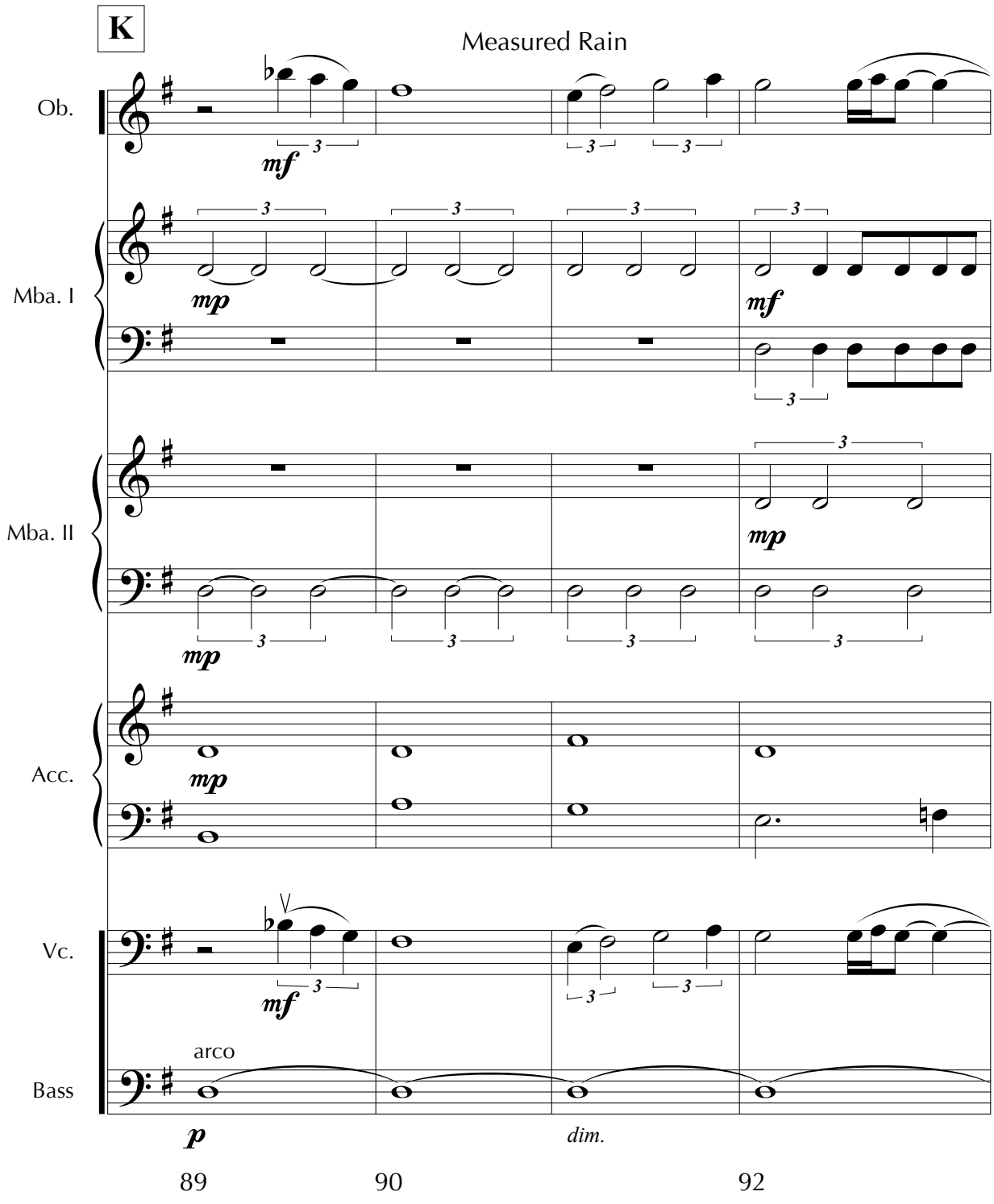

I
Measured Rain
Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
mp
mf
3
73
74
75

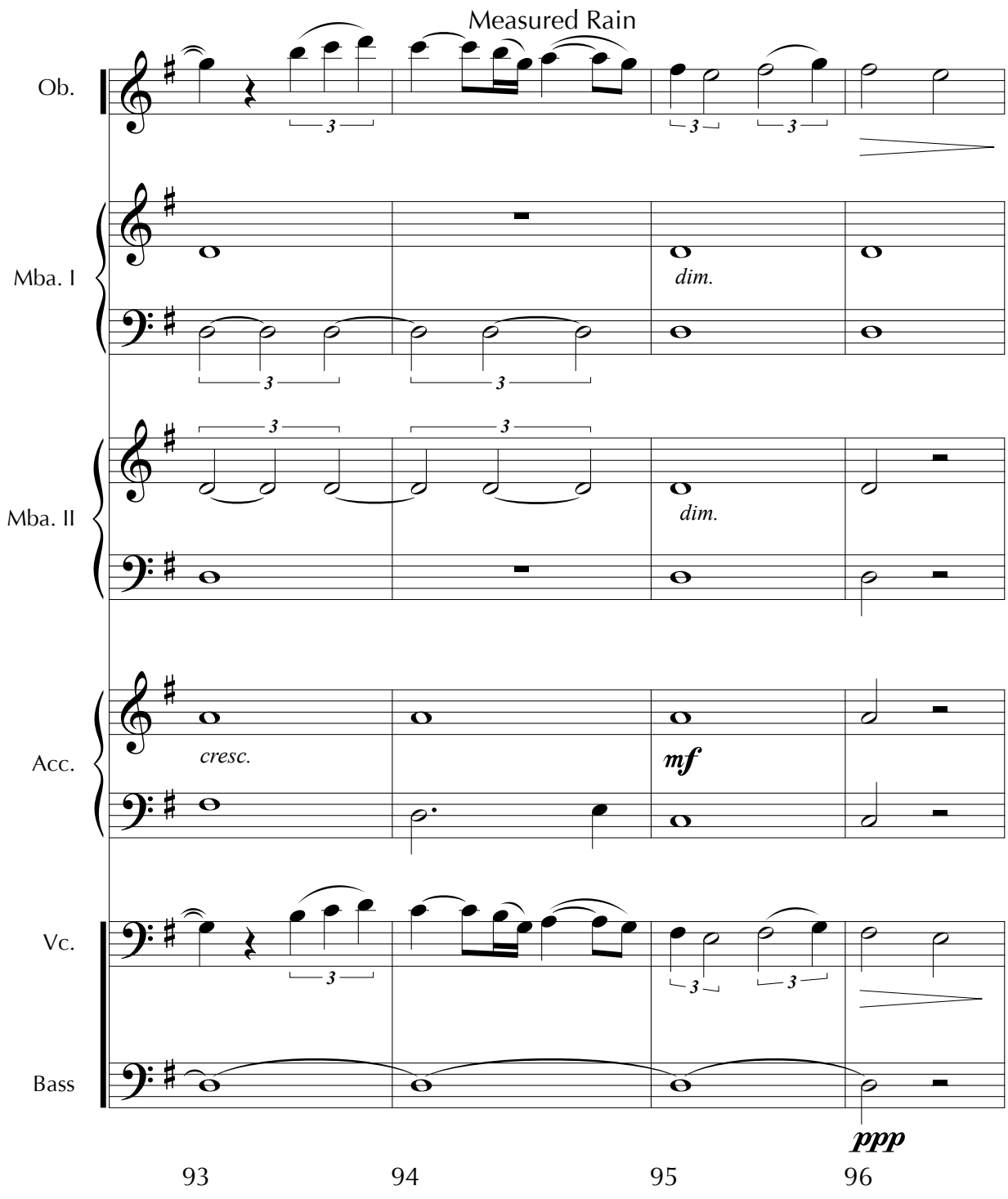

Measured Rain
Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
f
dim.
76
77
78

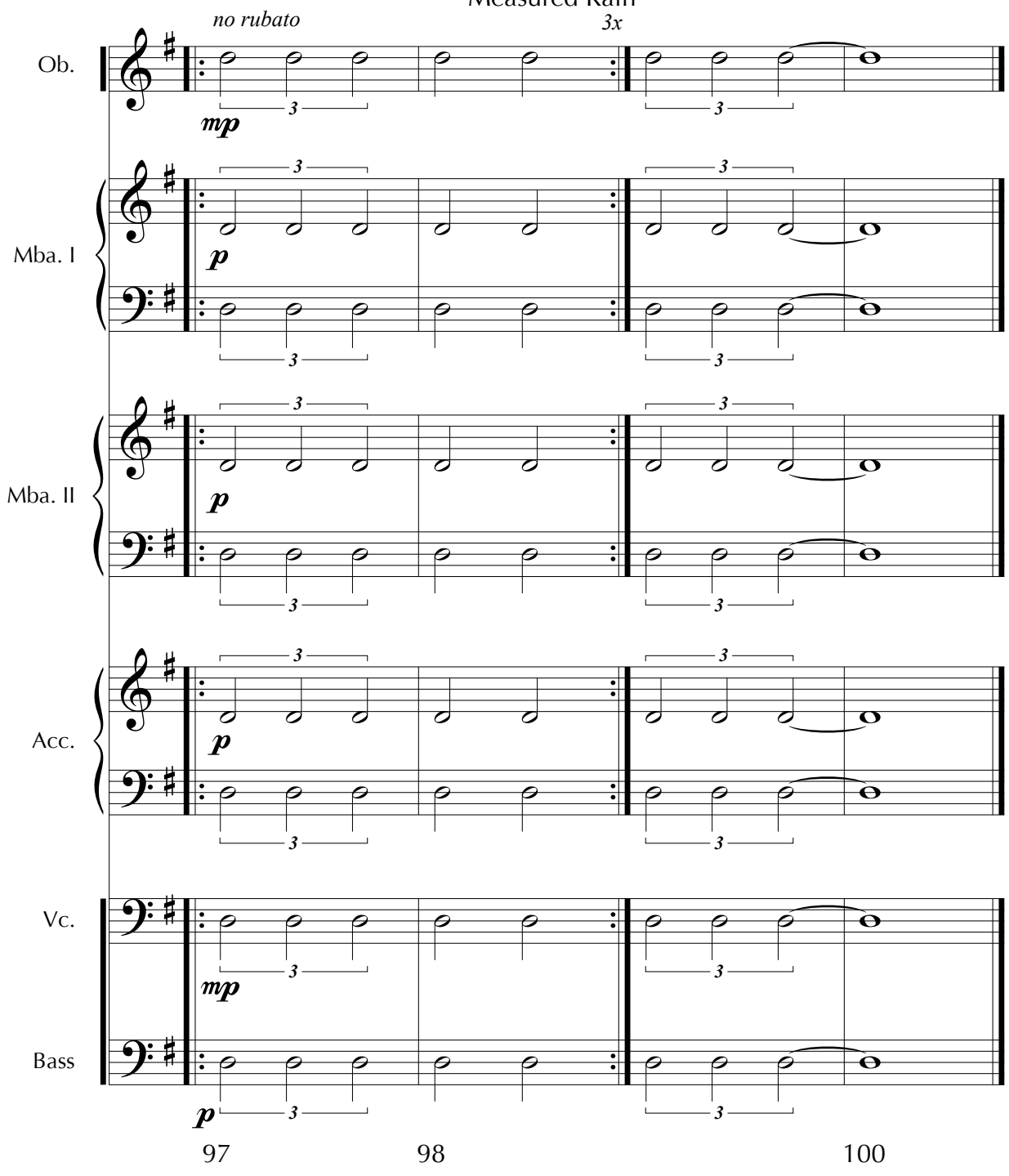

J
Measured Rain
Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
cresc.
mf
f
pizz.
79
80
81
82

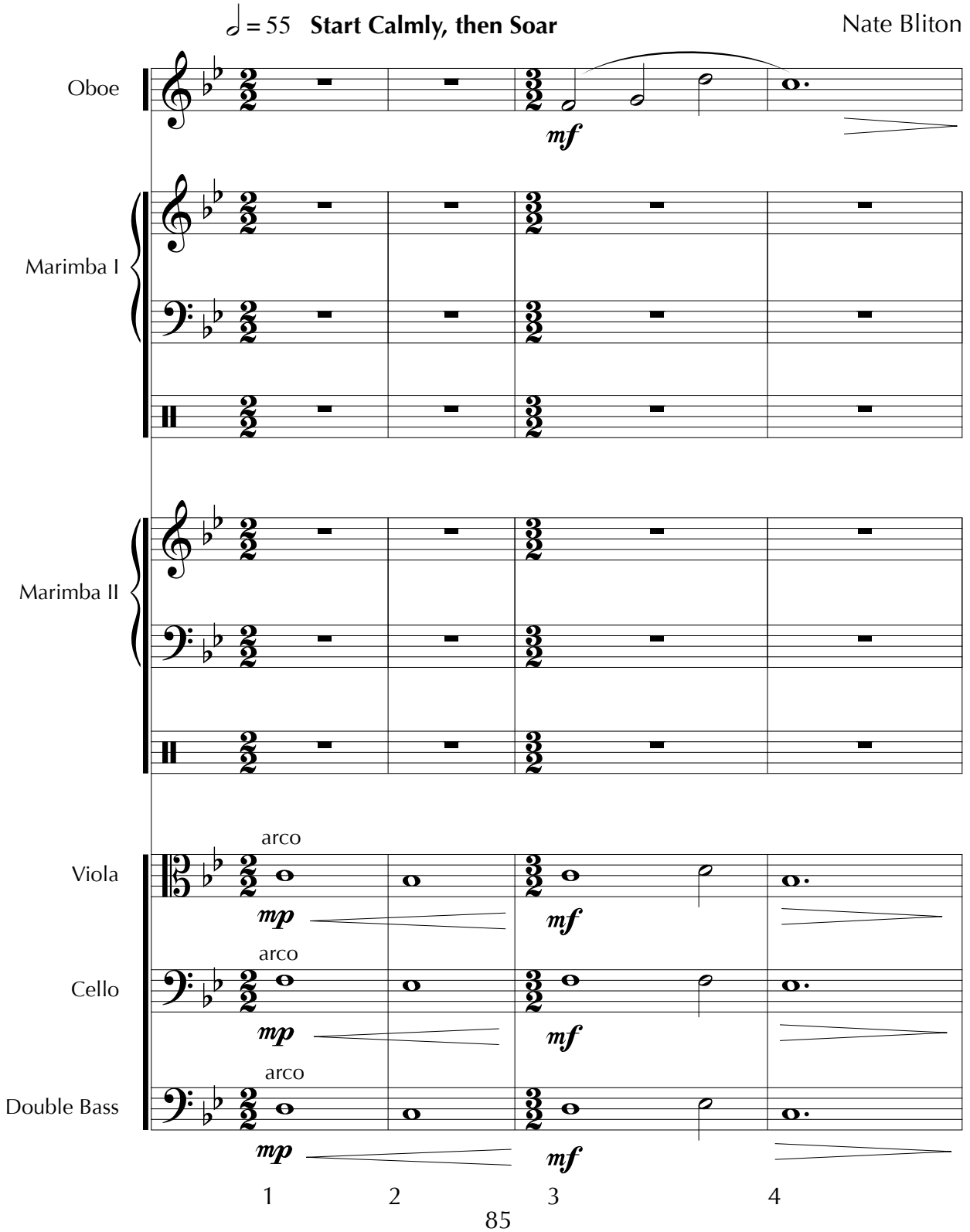

Measured Rain
Ob.
Mba. I
cresc.
f
Mba. II
cresc.
f
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
83
84
85

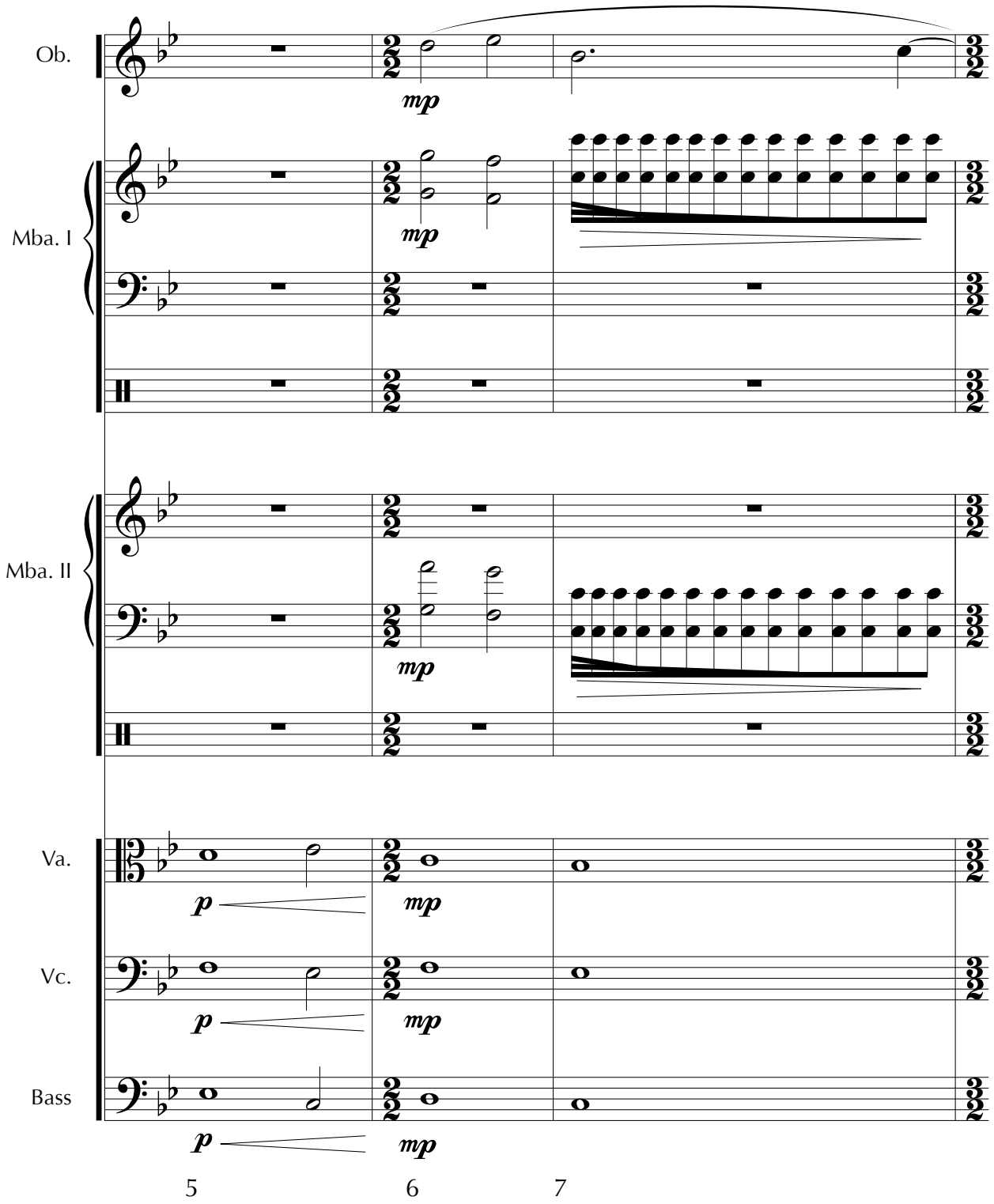

Measured Rain
Ob.
Mba. I
dim.
Mba. II
dim.
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
86
87
88

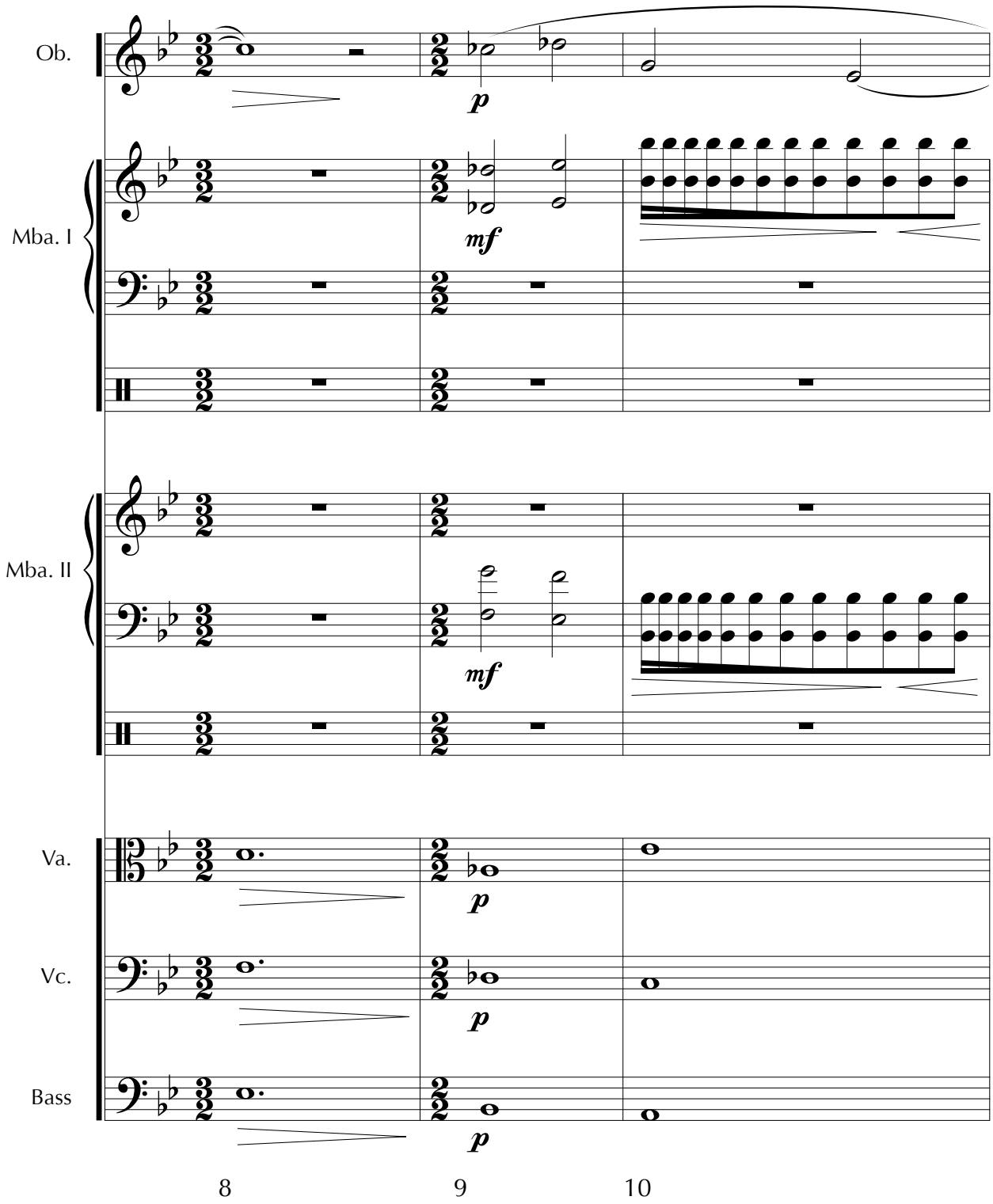

K
Measured Rain
Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
arco
mf
mp
p
dim.
89
90
92

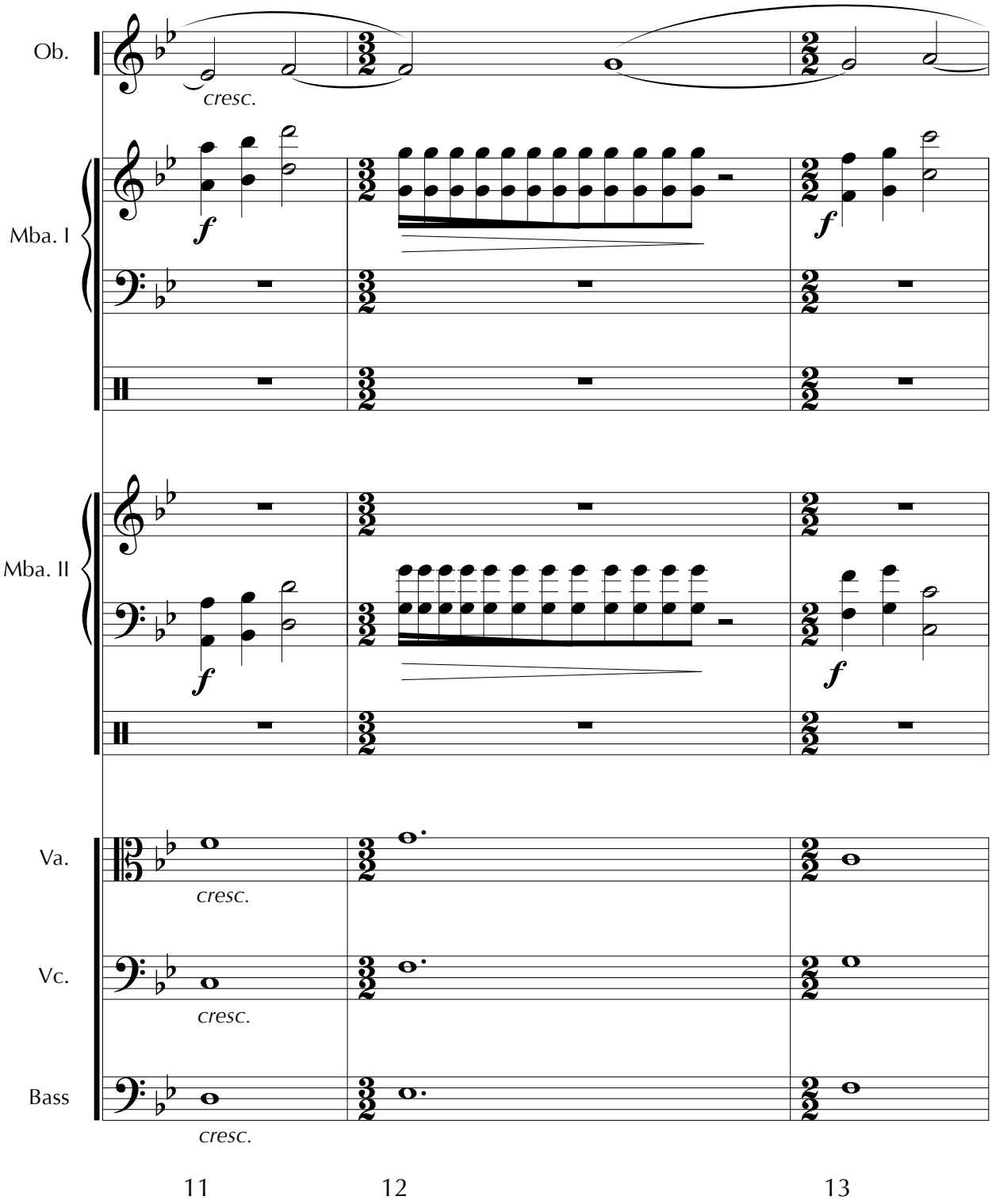

Measured Rain
Ob.
Mba. I
dim.
Mba. II
dim.
Acc.
cresc.
mf
Vc.
Bass
ppp
93
94
95
96

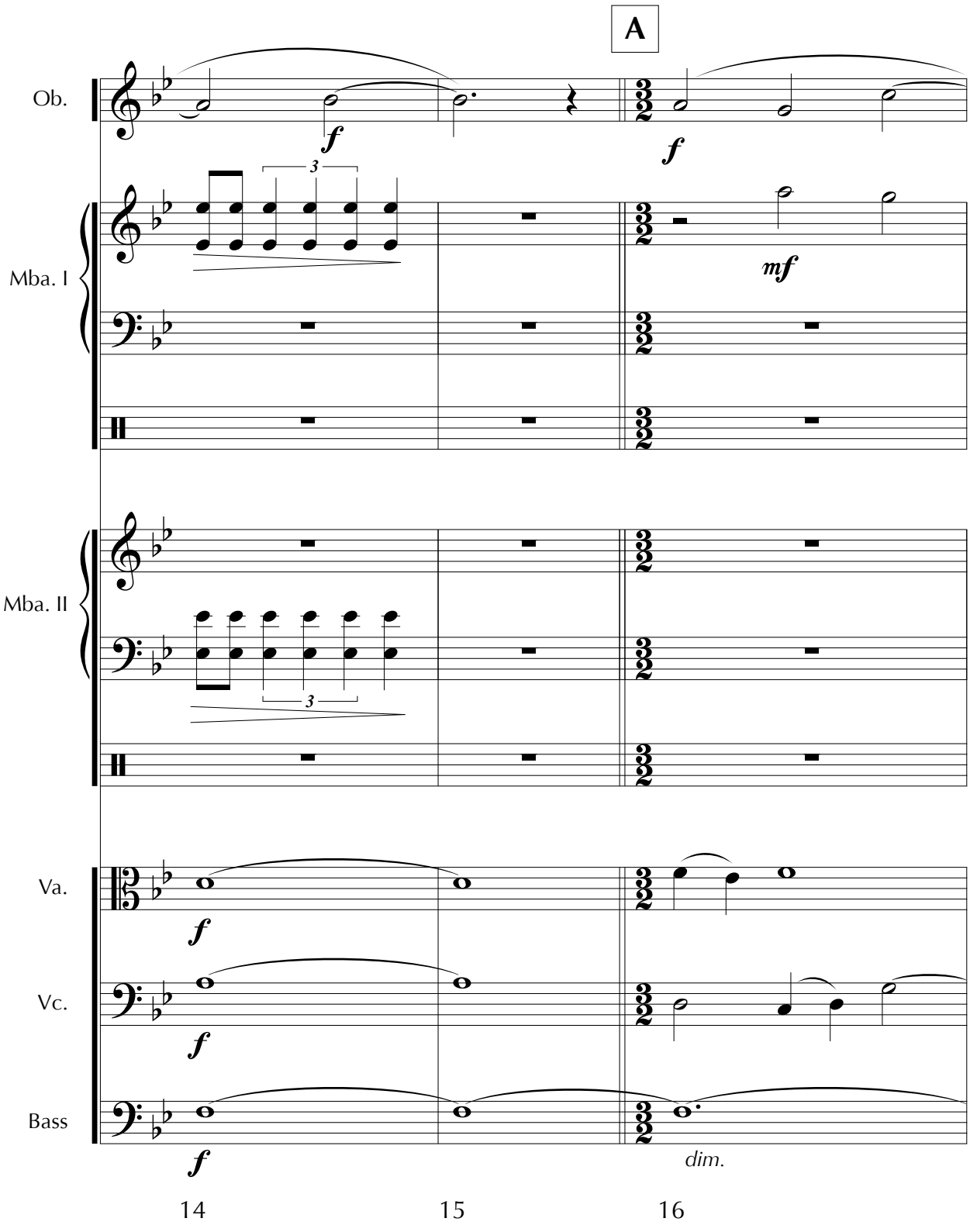

Measured Rain
no rubato
3x
Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Acc.
Vc.
Bass
mp
p
3
97
98
100

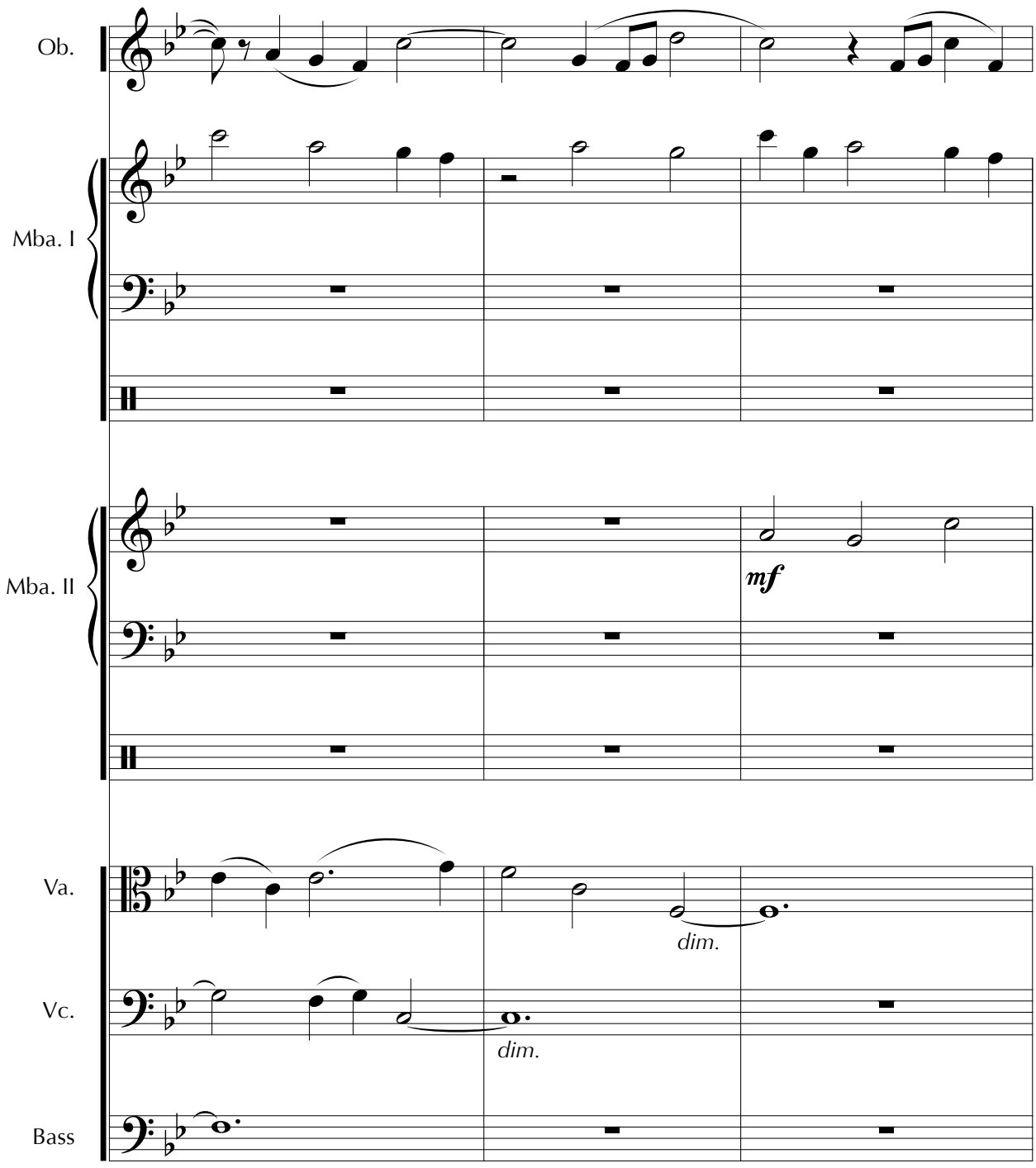

♩ = 55 Start Calmly, then Soar
Nate Bliton
Oboe
mf
Marimba I
Marimba II
arco
Viola
mp
mf
arco
Cello
mp
mf
arco
Double Bass
mp
mf
1
2
3
4

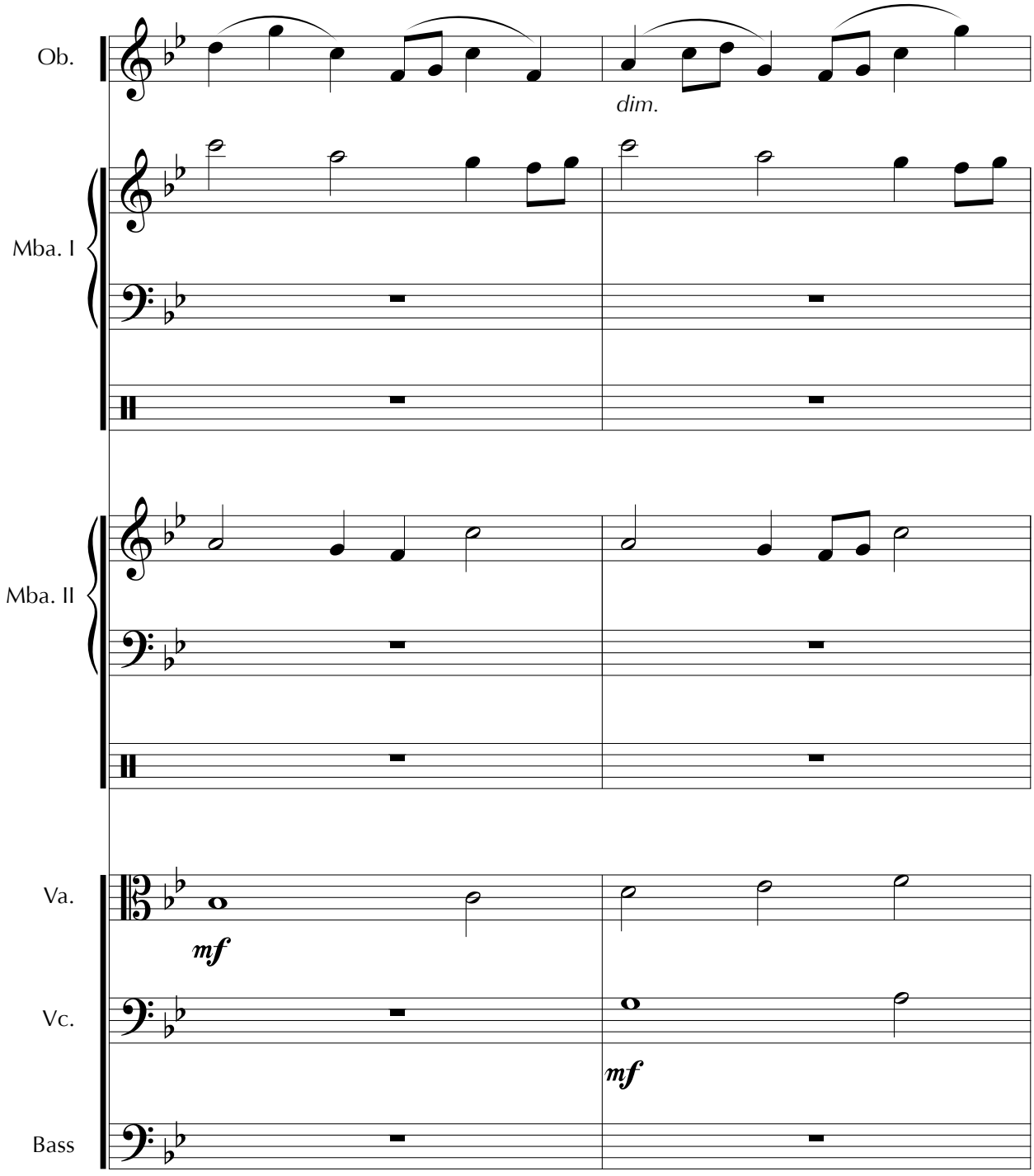

Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
mp
p
5
6
7

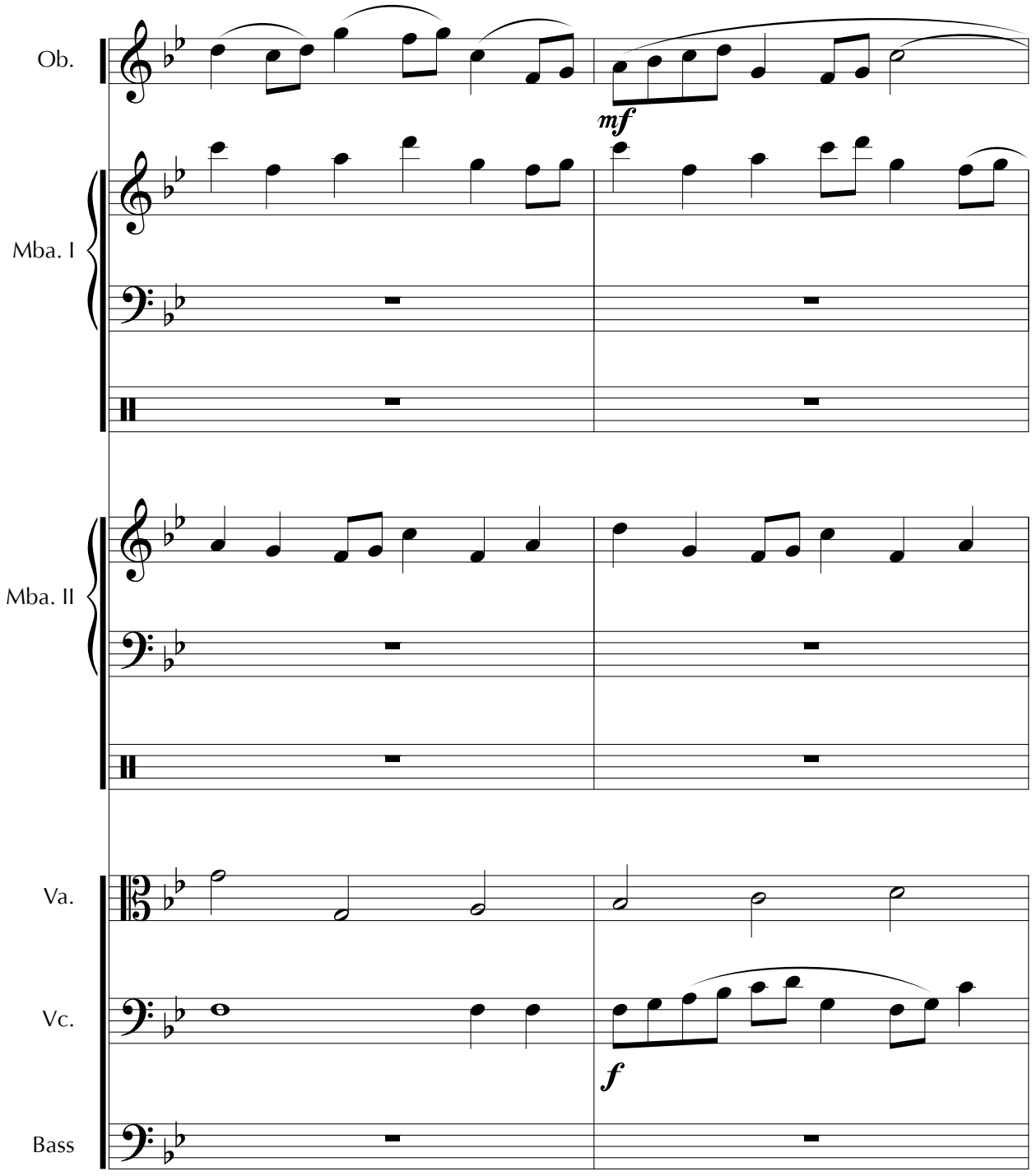

Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
p
mf
mf
p
p
p
8
9
10

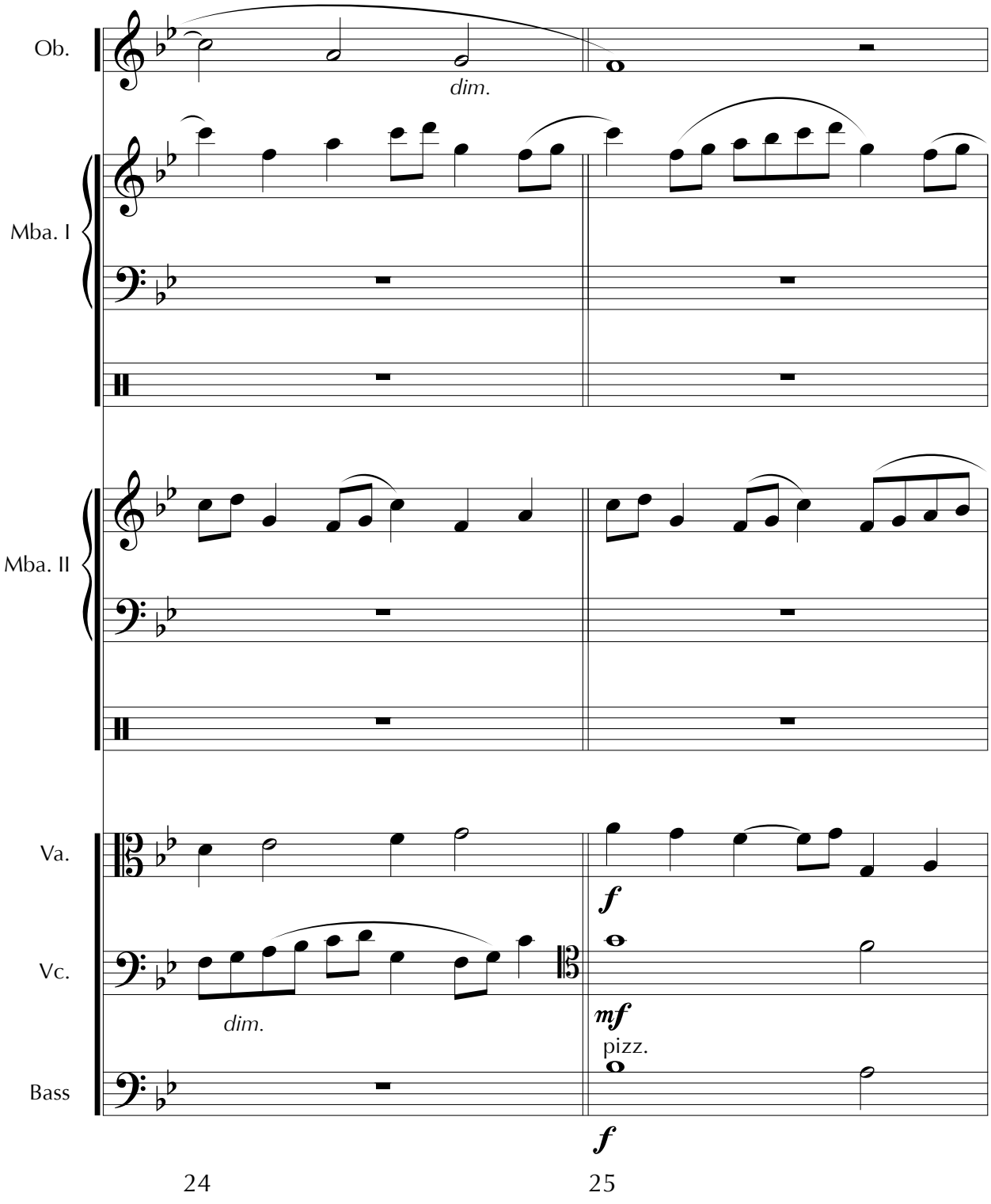

Ob.
cresc.
Mba. I
f
f
Mba. II
f
f
Va.
cresc.
Vc.
cresc.
Bass
cresc.
11
12
13

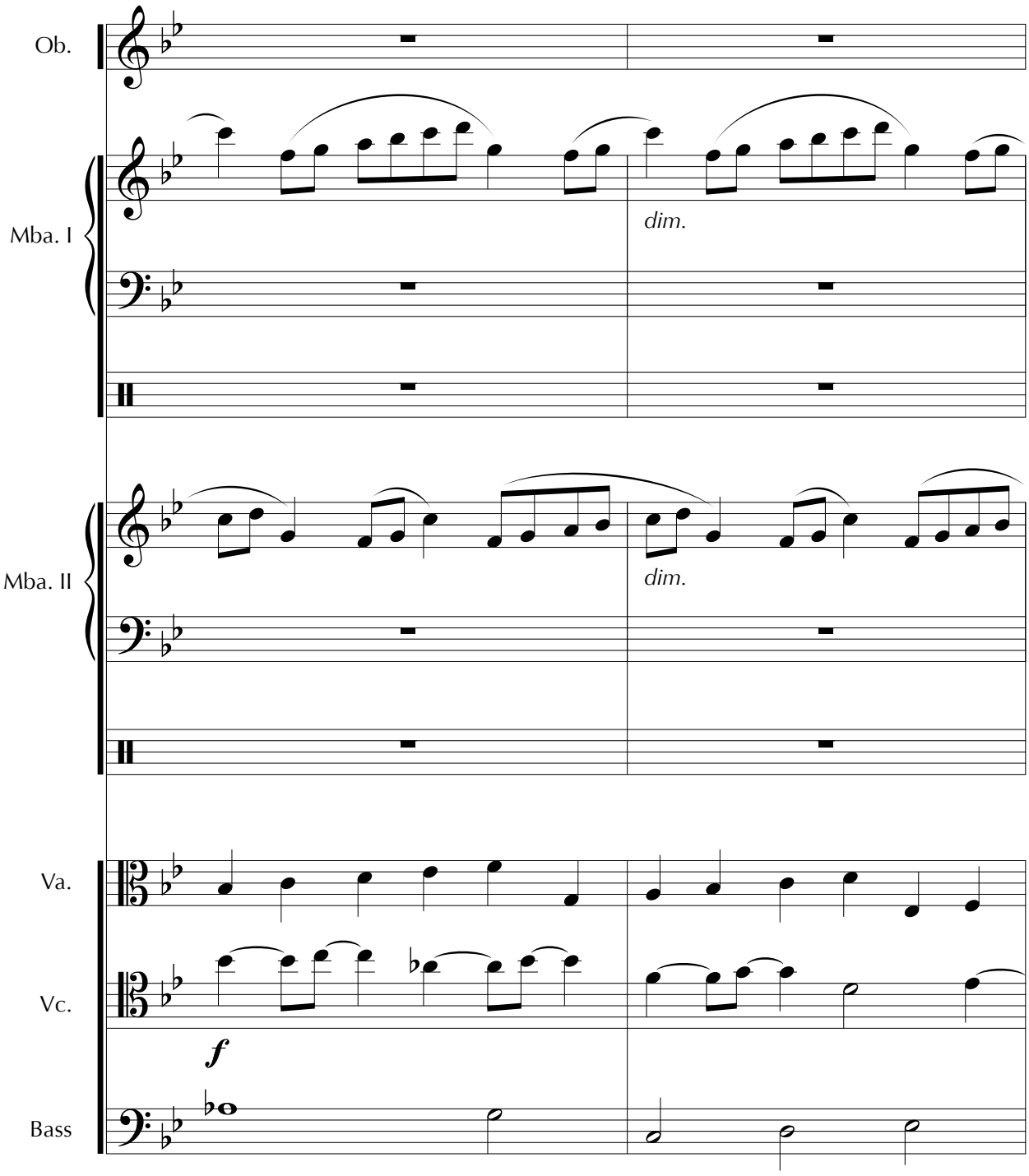

A
Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
f
mf
dim.
3
14
15
16

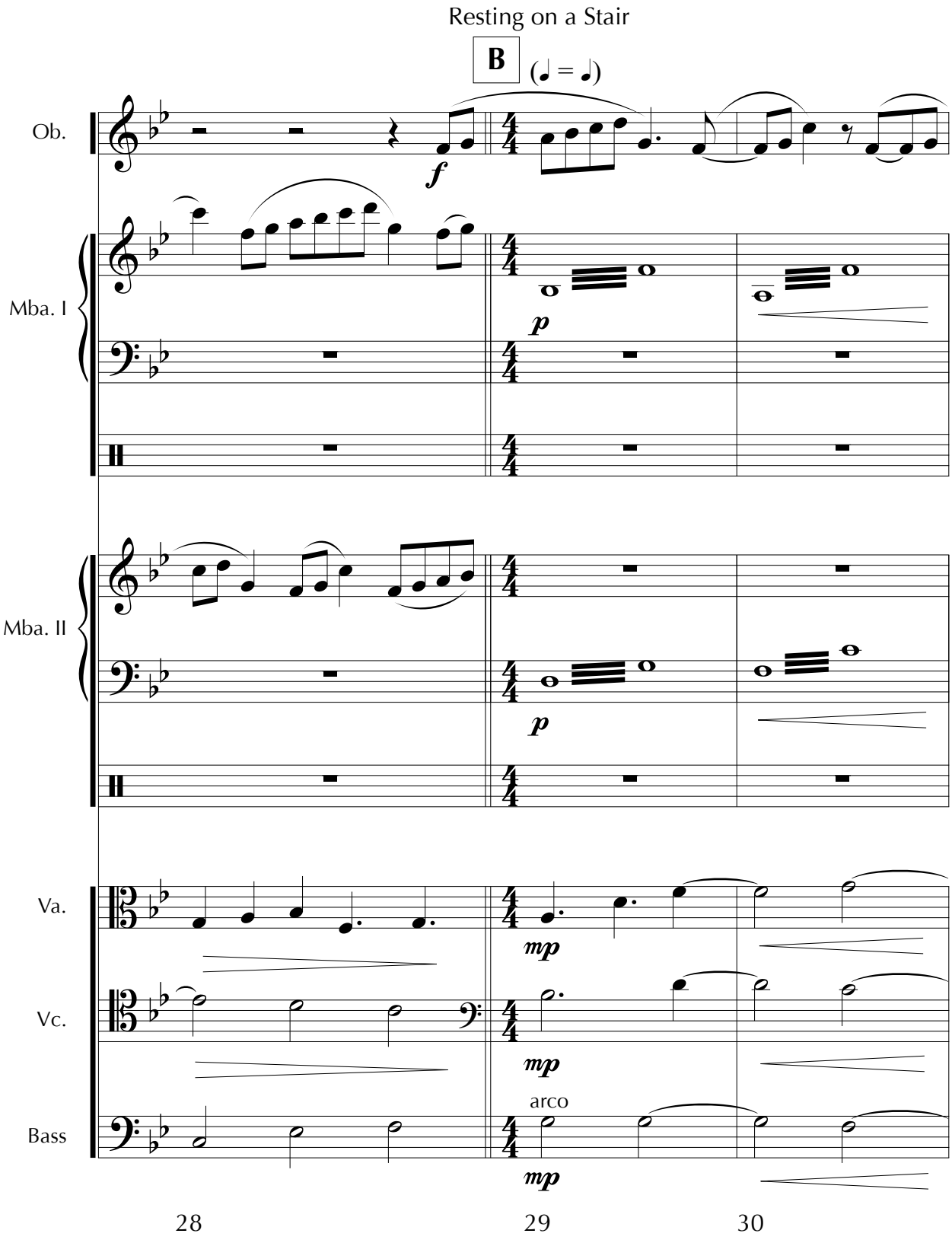

Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
mf
Va.
dim.
Vc.
dim.
Bass
17
18
19

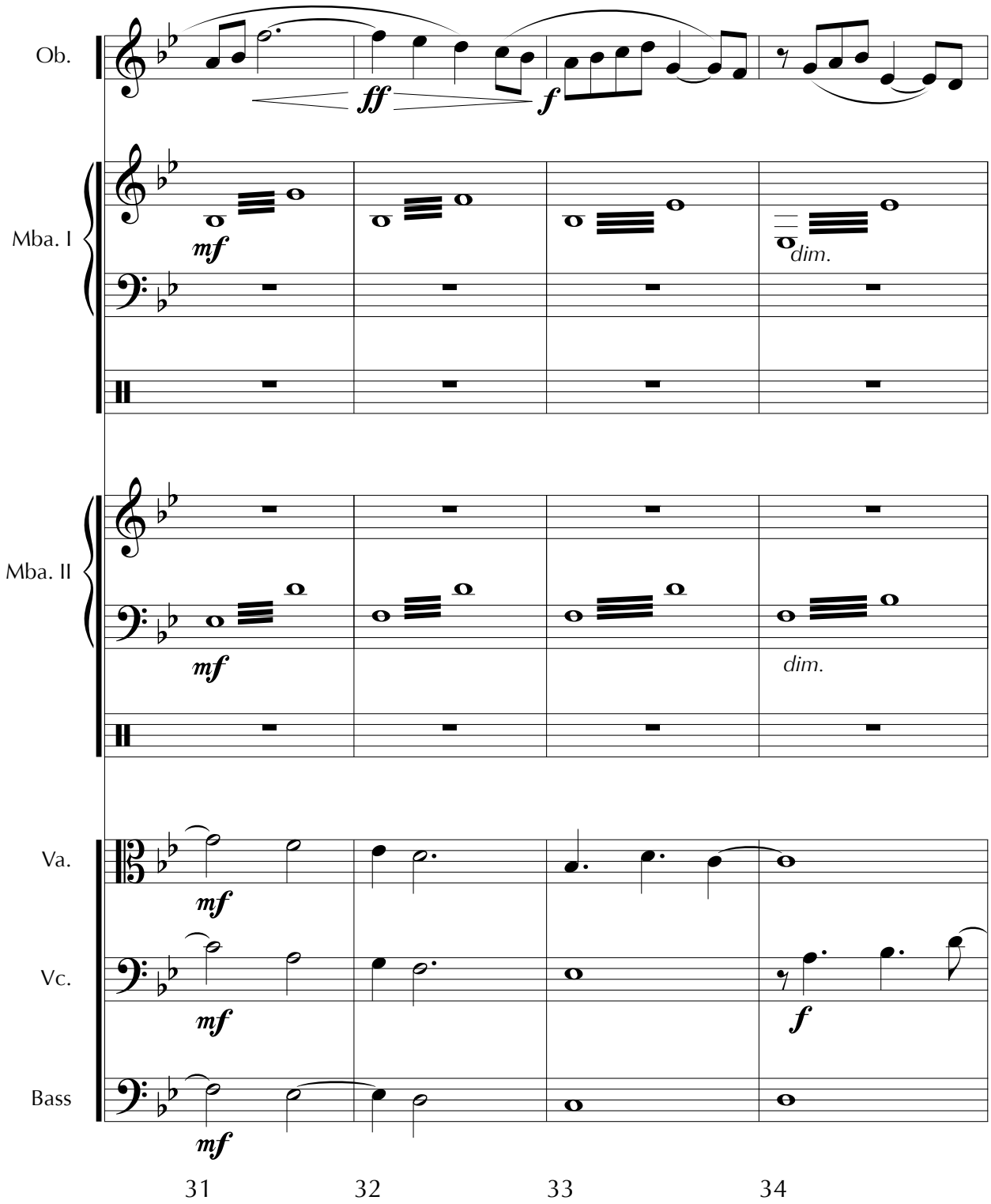

Ob.
dim.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Va.
mf
Vc.
mf
Bass
20
21

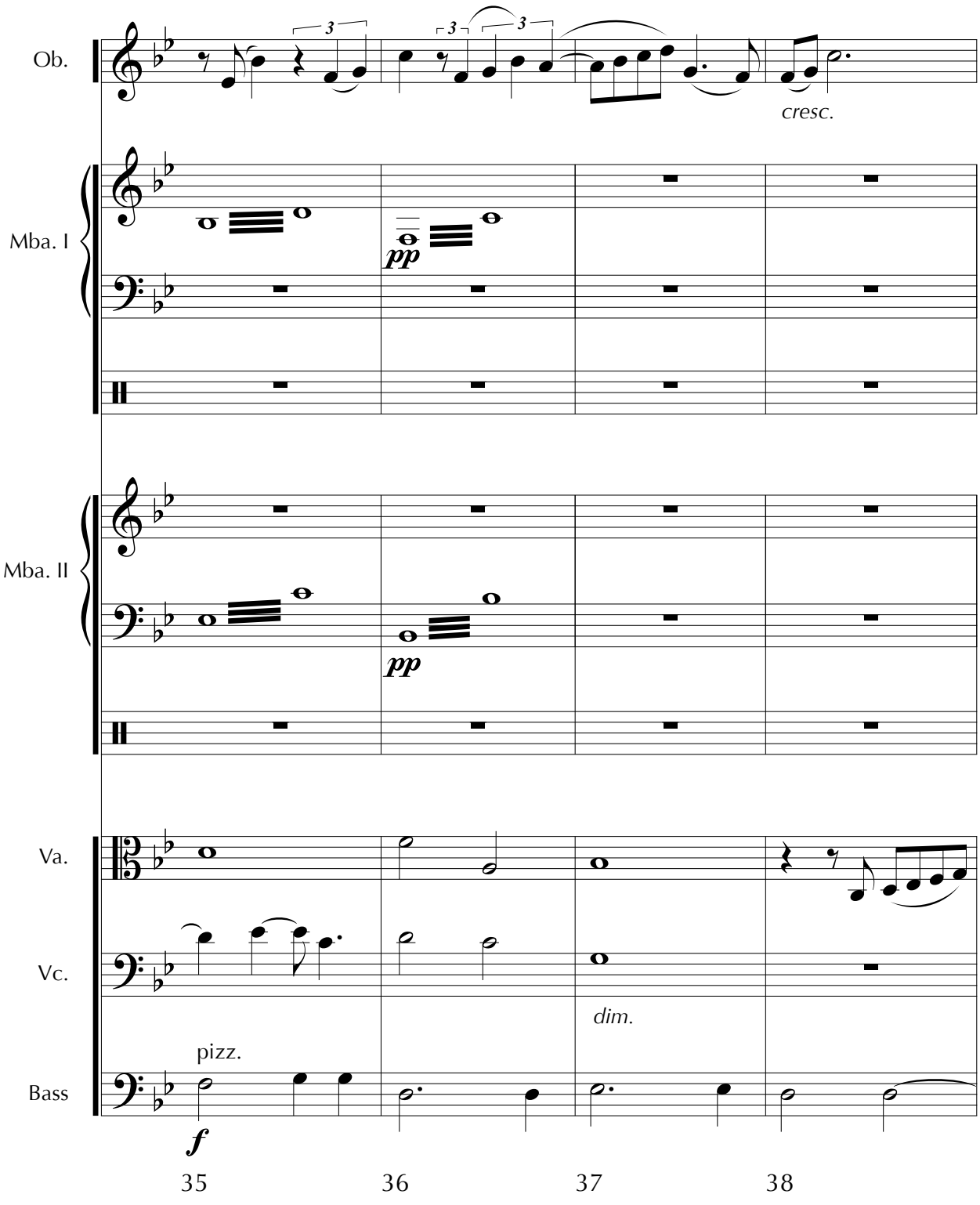

Ob.
mf
Mba. I
Mba. II
Va.
Vc.
f
Bass
22
23

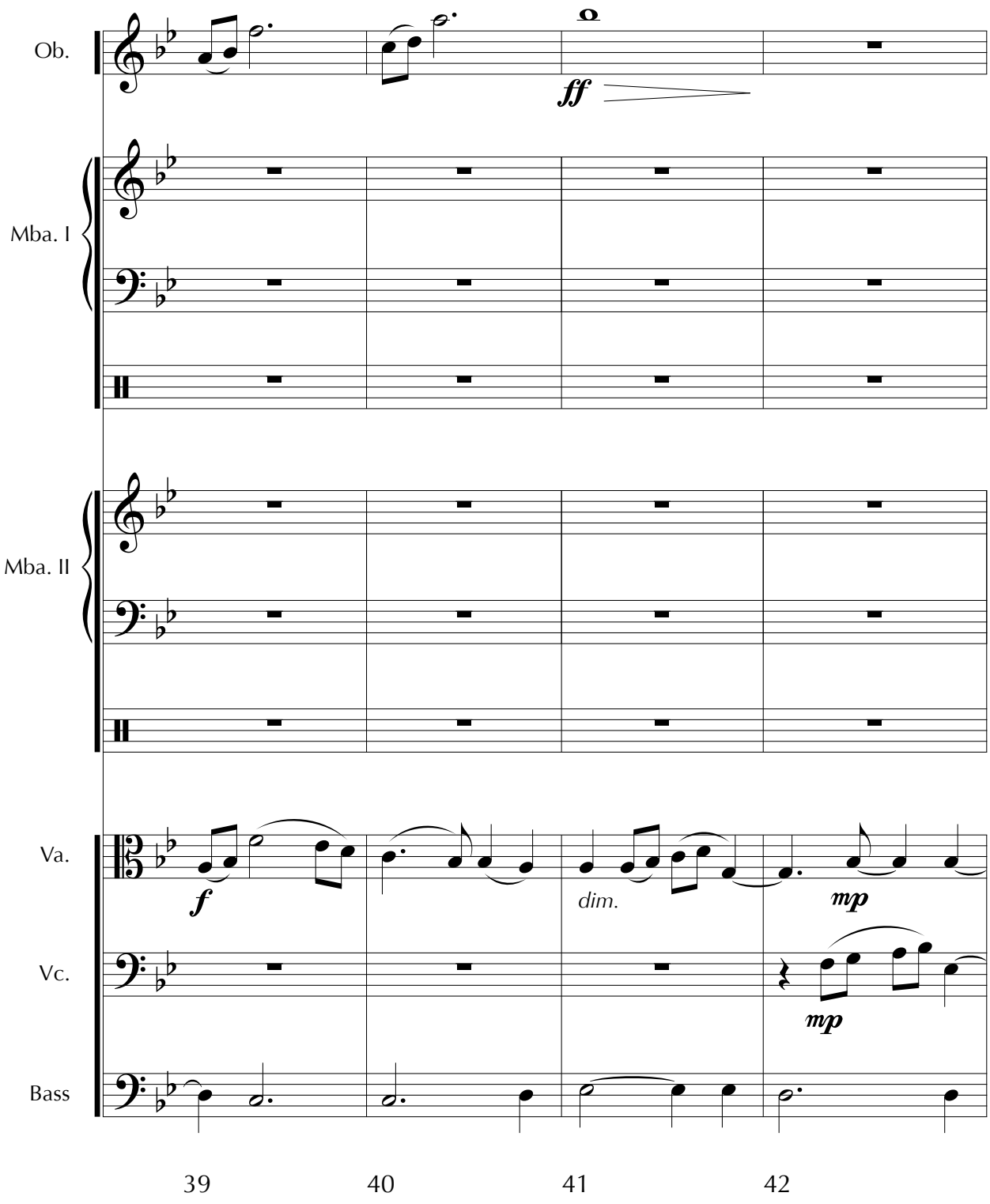

Ob.
dim.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Va.
Vc.
dim.
Bass
f
mf
pizz.
f
24
25

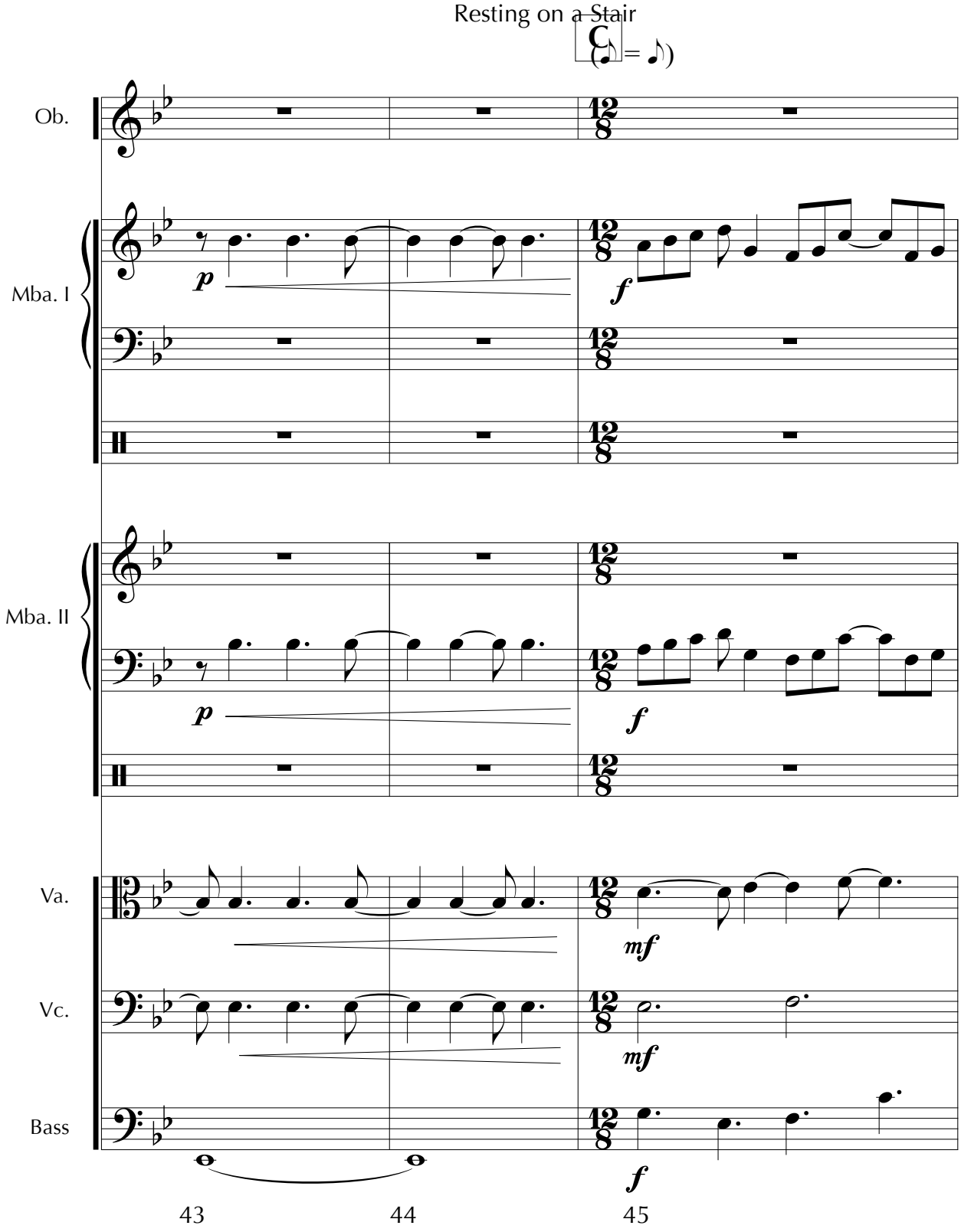

Ob.
Mba. I
dim.
Mba. II
dim.
Va.
Vc.
f
Bass
26
27

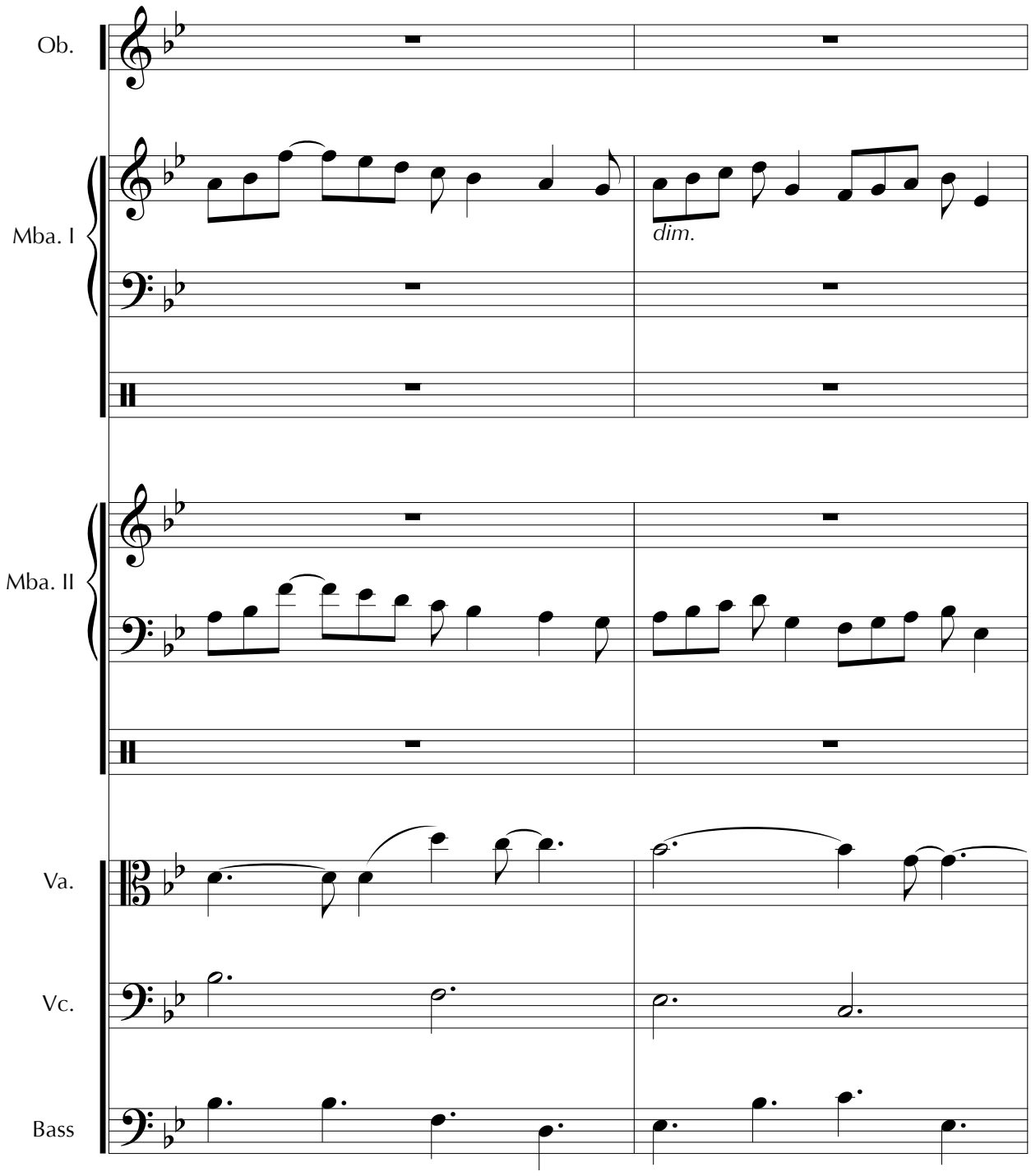

Resting on a Stair
B
(♩ = ♩)
Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
arco
28
29
30

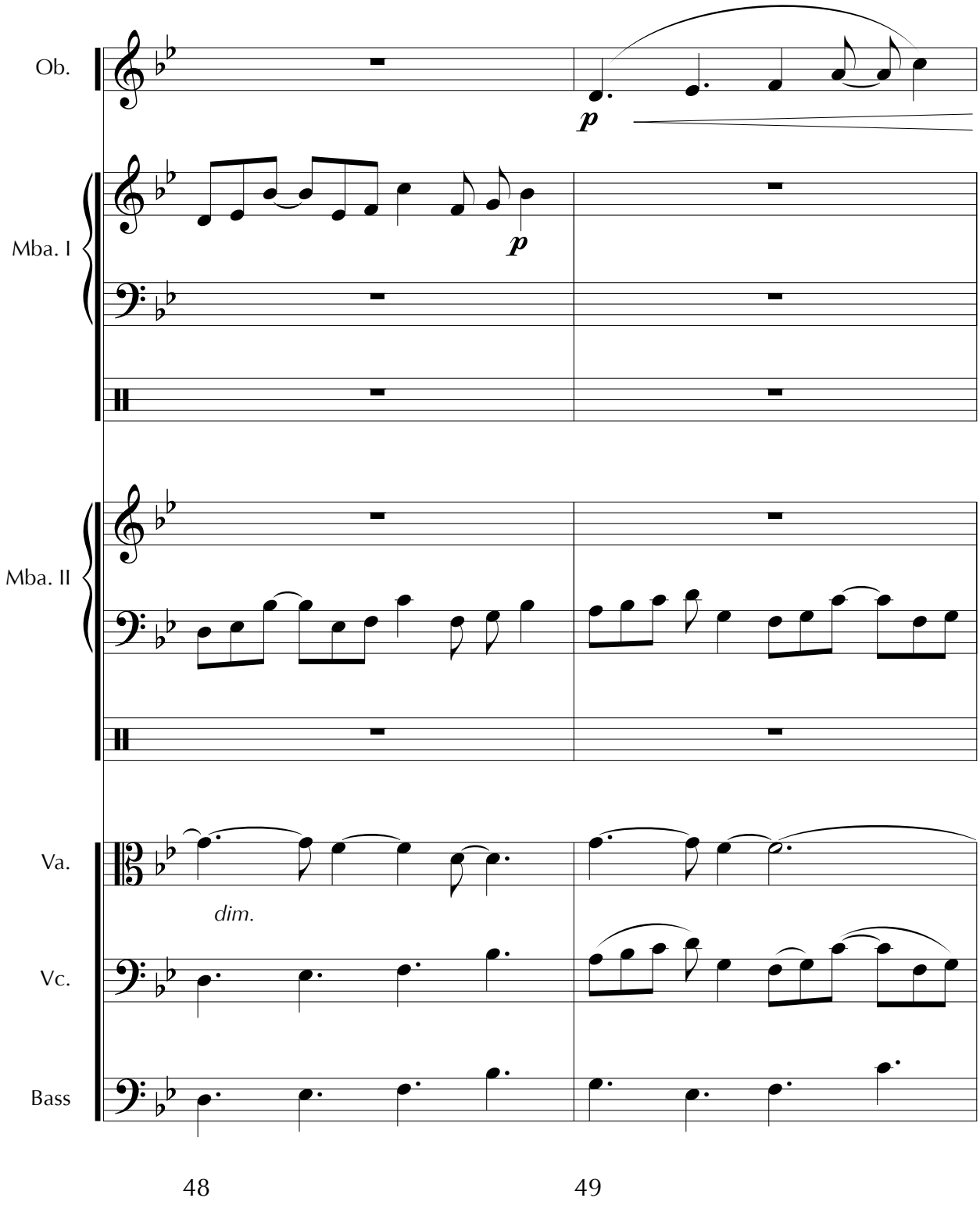

Ob.
ff
f
Mba. I
mf
dim.
Mba. II
mf
dim.
Va.
mf
Vc.
mf
f
Bass
mf
31
32
33
34

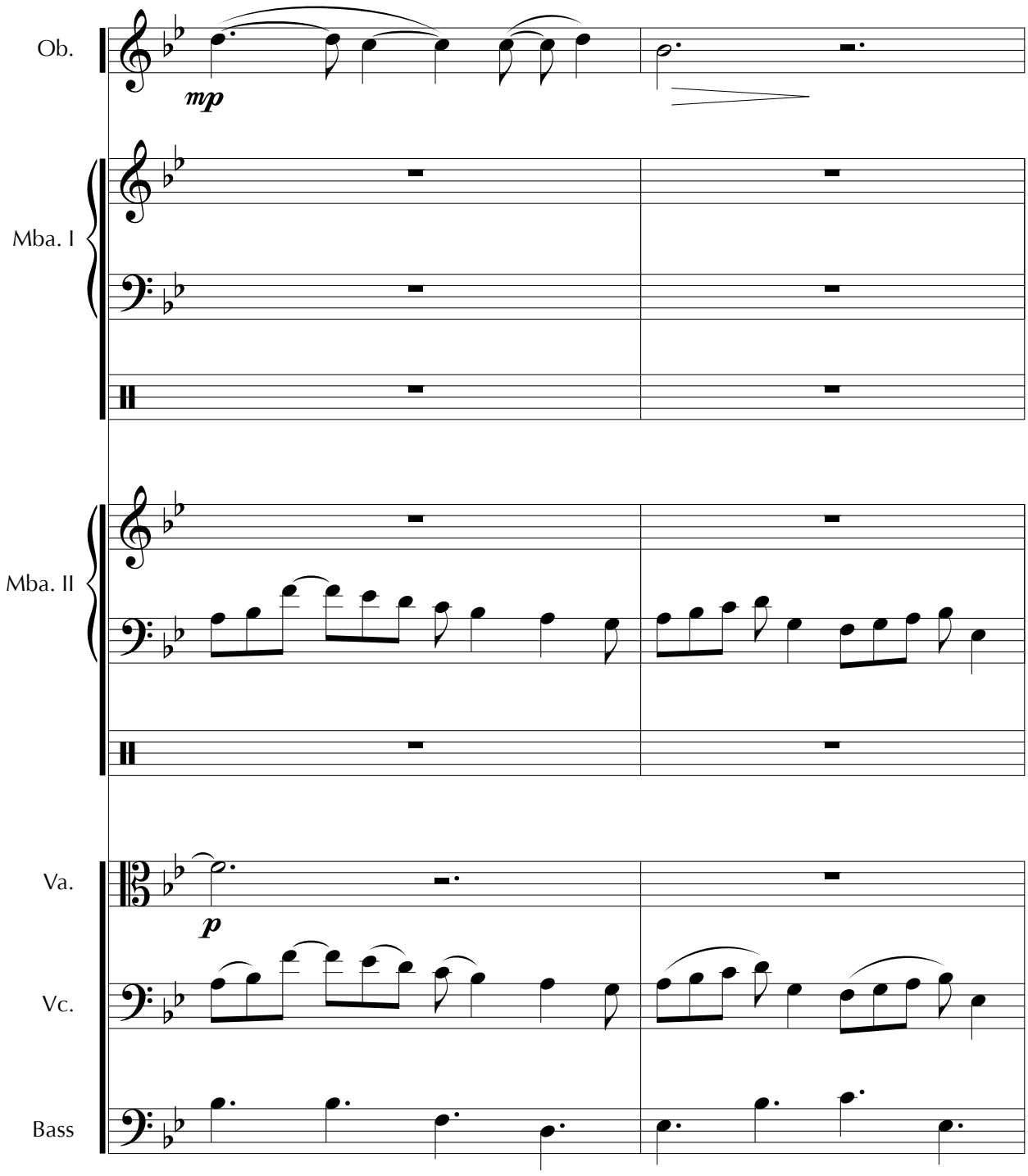

Ob.
cresc.
Mba. I
pp
Mba. II
pp
Va.
Vc.
dim.
pizz.
Bass
f
35
36
37
38

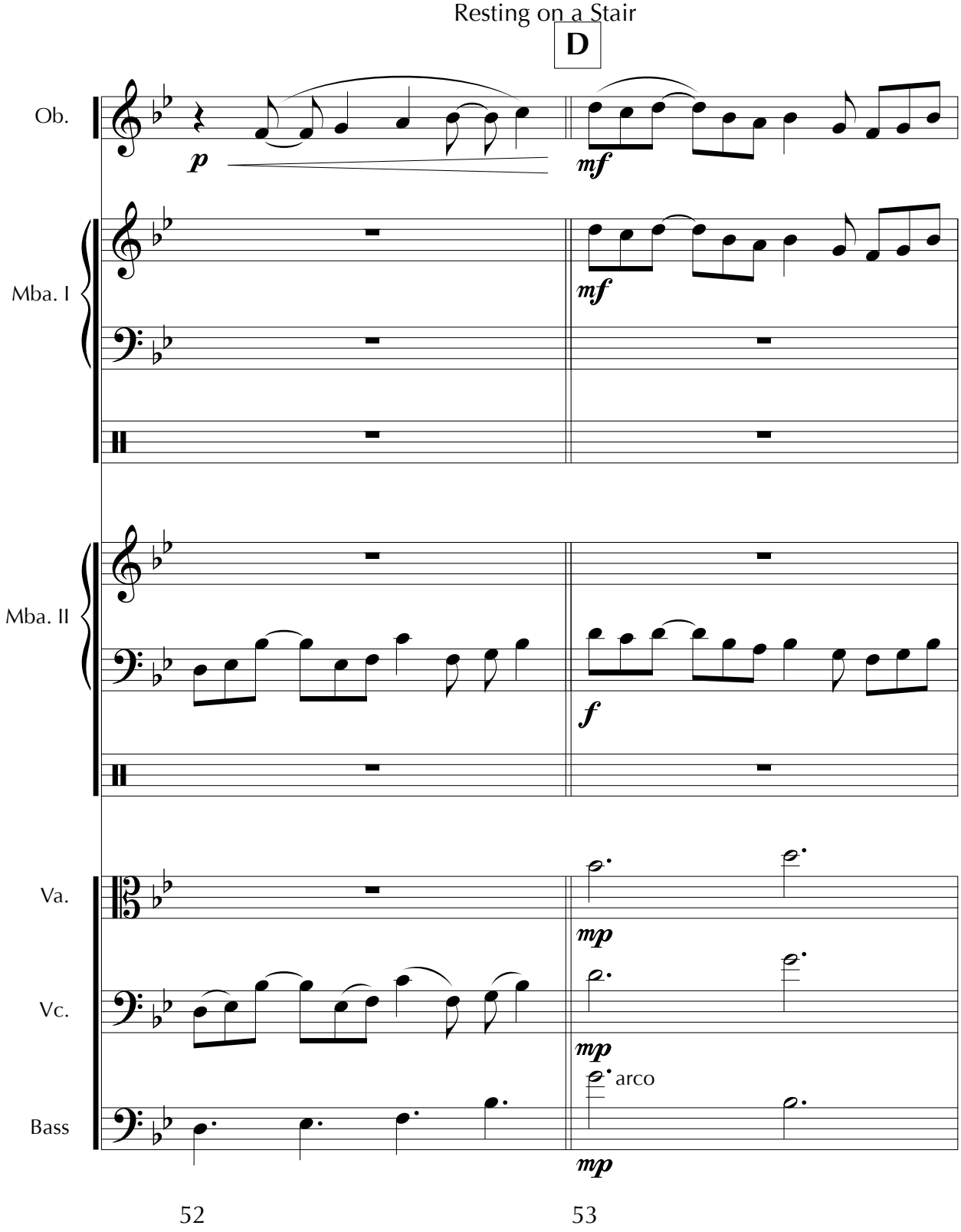

Ob.
ff
Mba. I
Mba. II
Va.
f
dim.
mp
Vc.
mp
Bass
39
40
41
42

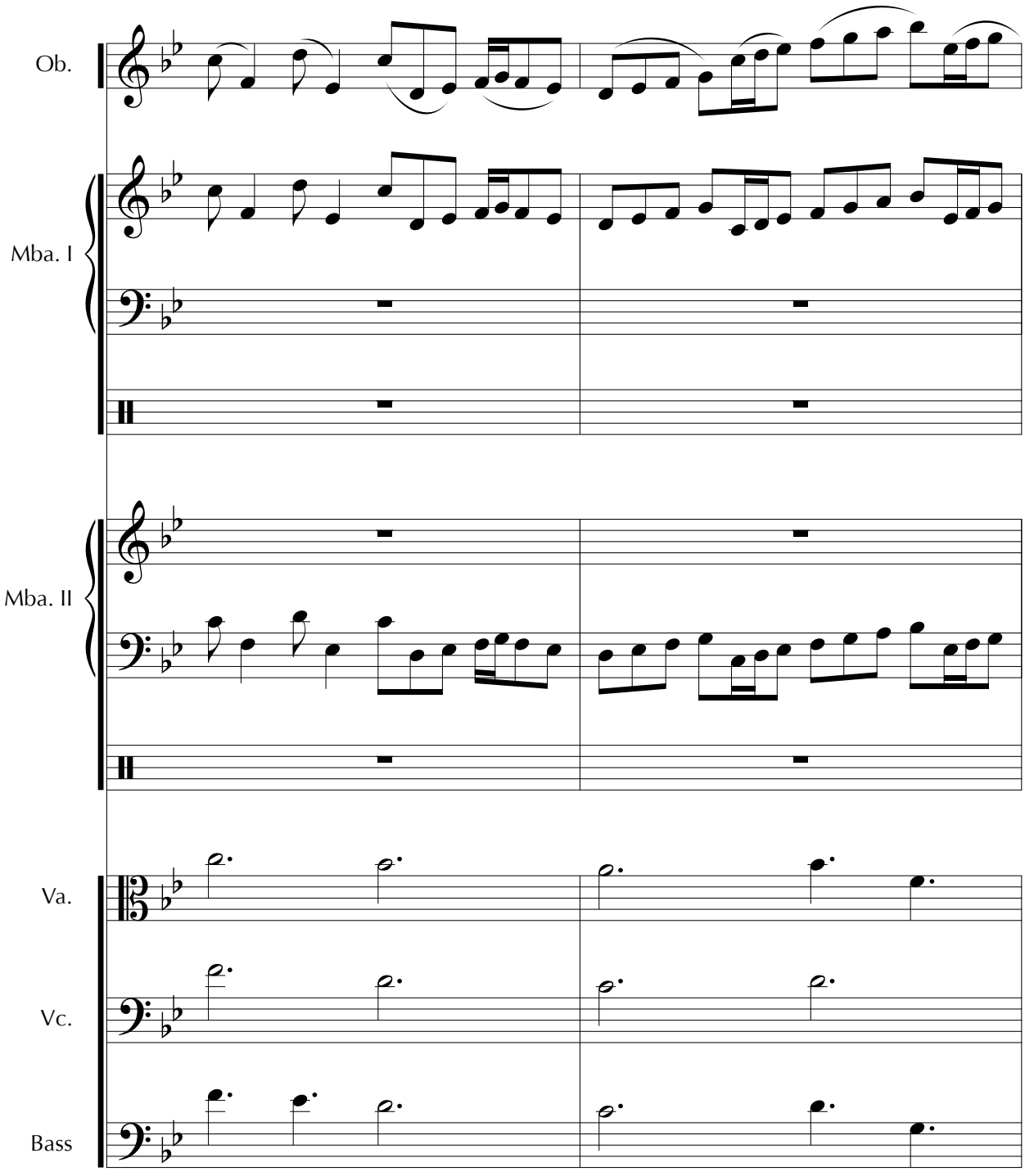

Resting on a Stair
C
(♪ = ♪)
Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
p
f
mf
43
44
45

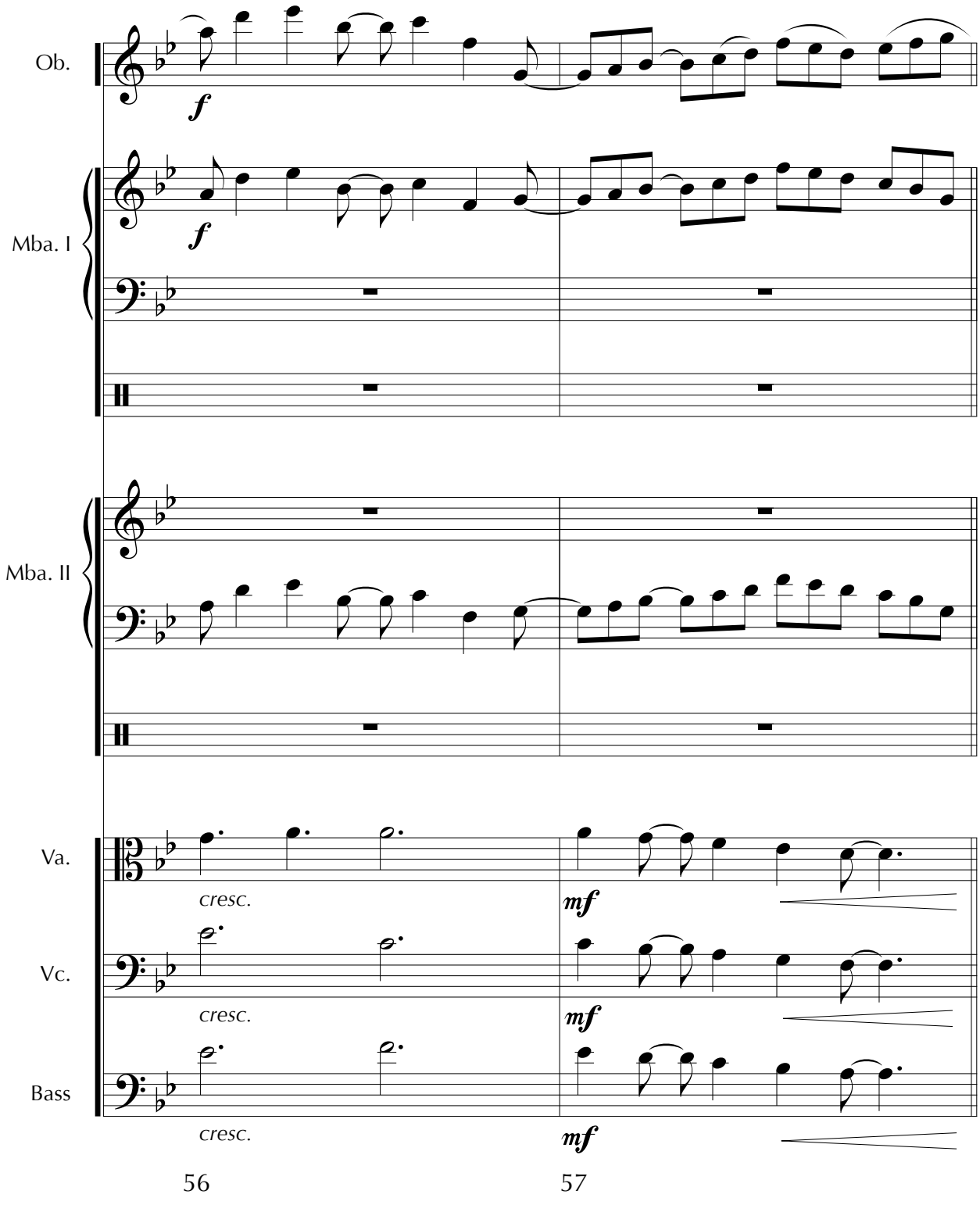

Ob.
Mba. I
dim.
Mba. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
46
47

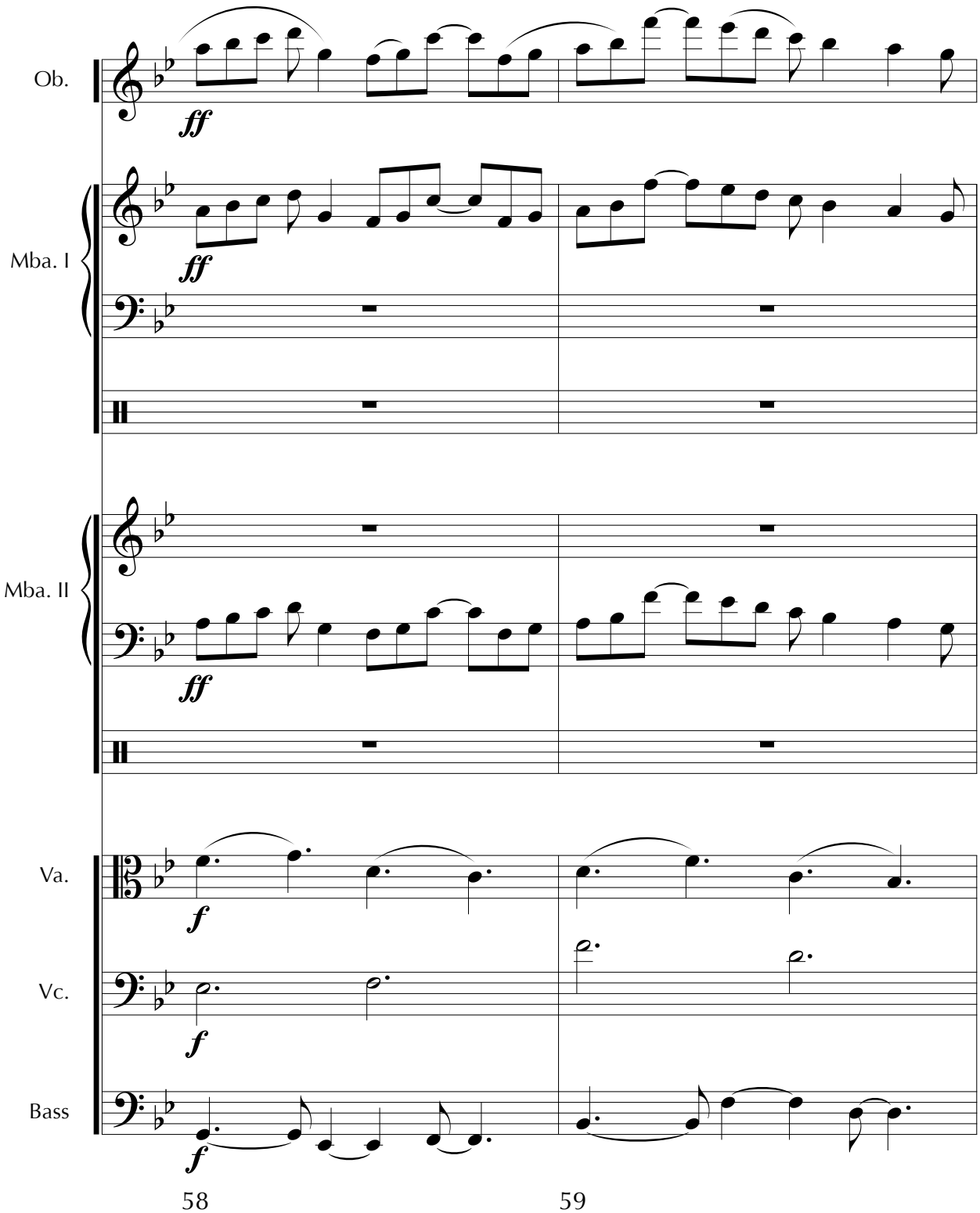

Ob.
p
Mba. I
p
Mba. II
Va.
dim.
Vc.
Bass
48
49

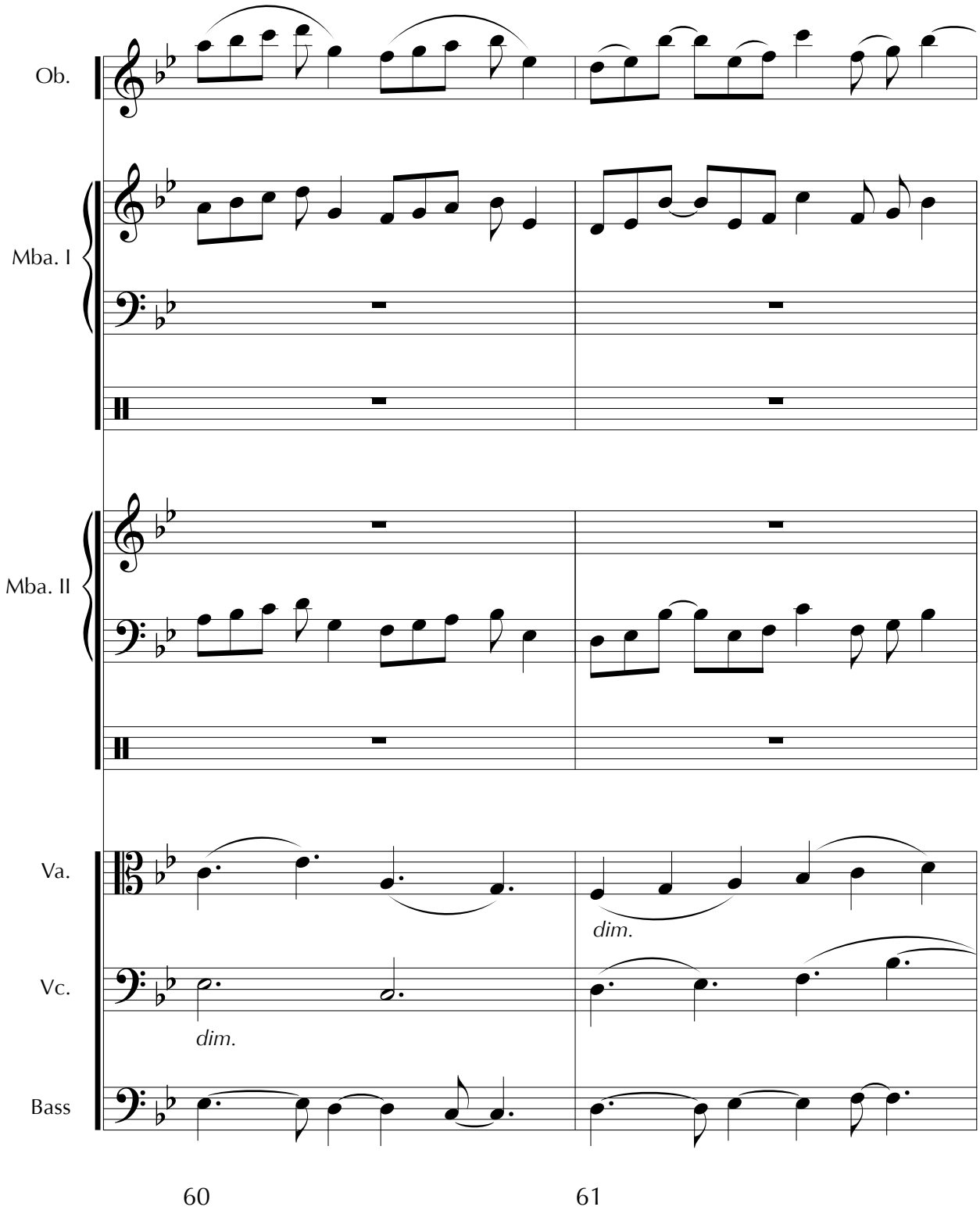

Ob.
mp
Mba. I
Mba. II
Va.
p
Vc.
Bass
50
51

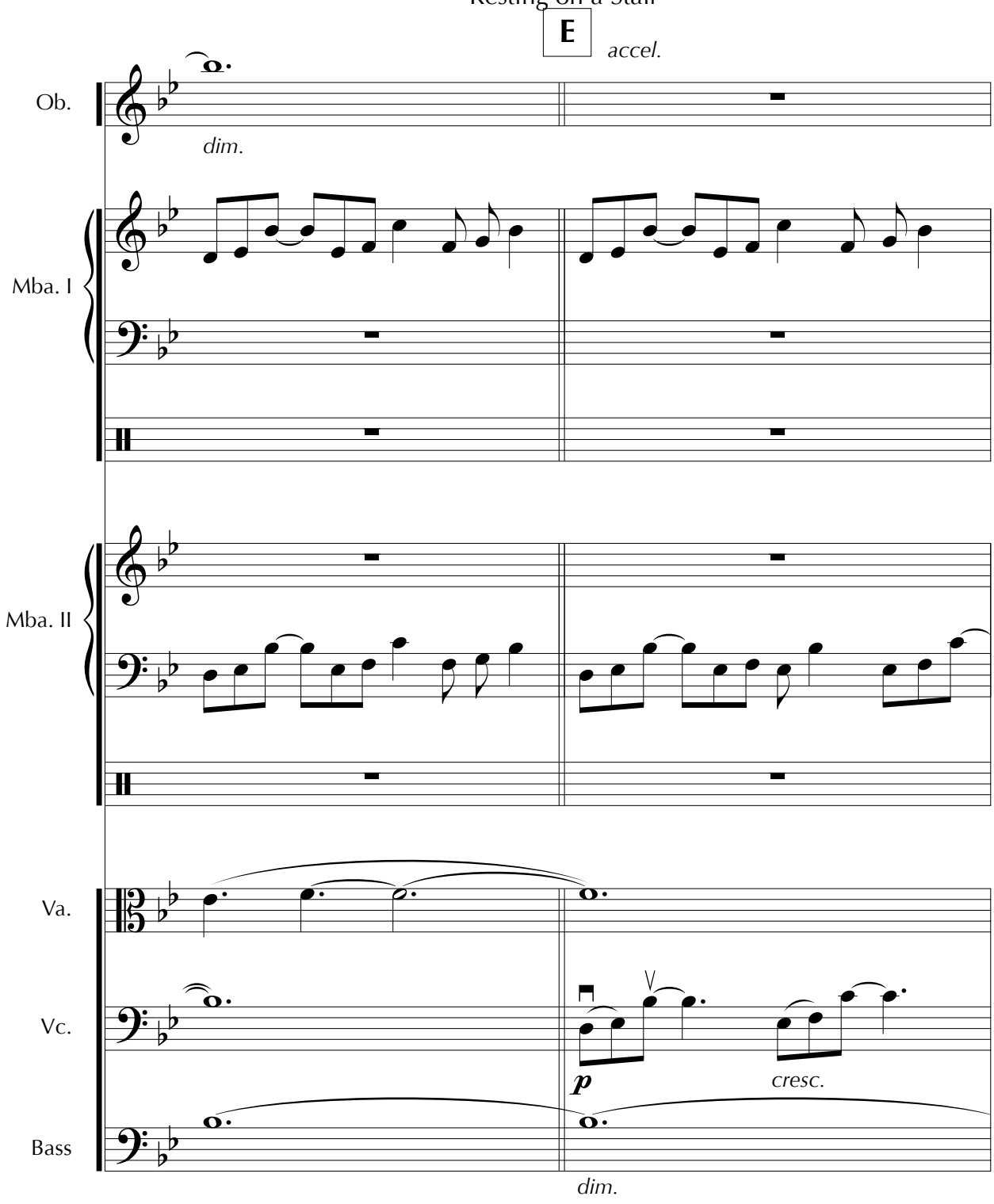

D
Ob.
p
mf
Mba. I
mf
Mba. II
f
Va.
mp
Vc.
mp
arco
Bass
mp
52
53

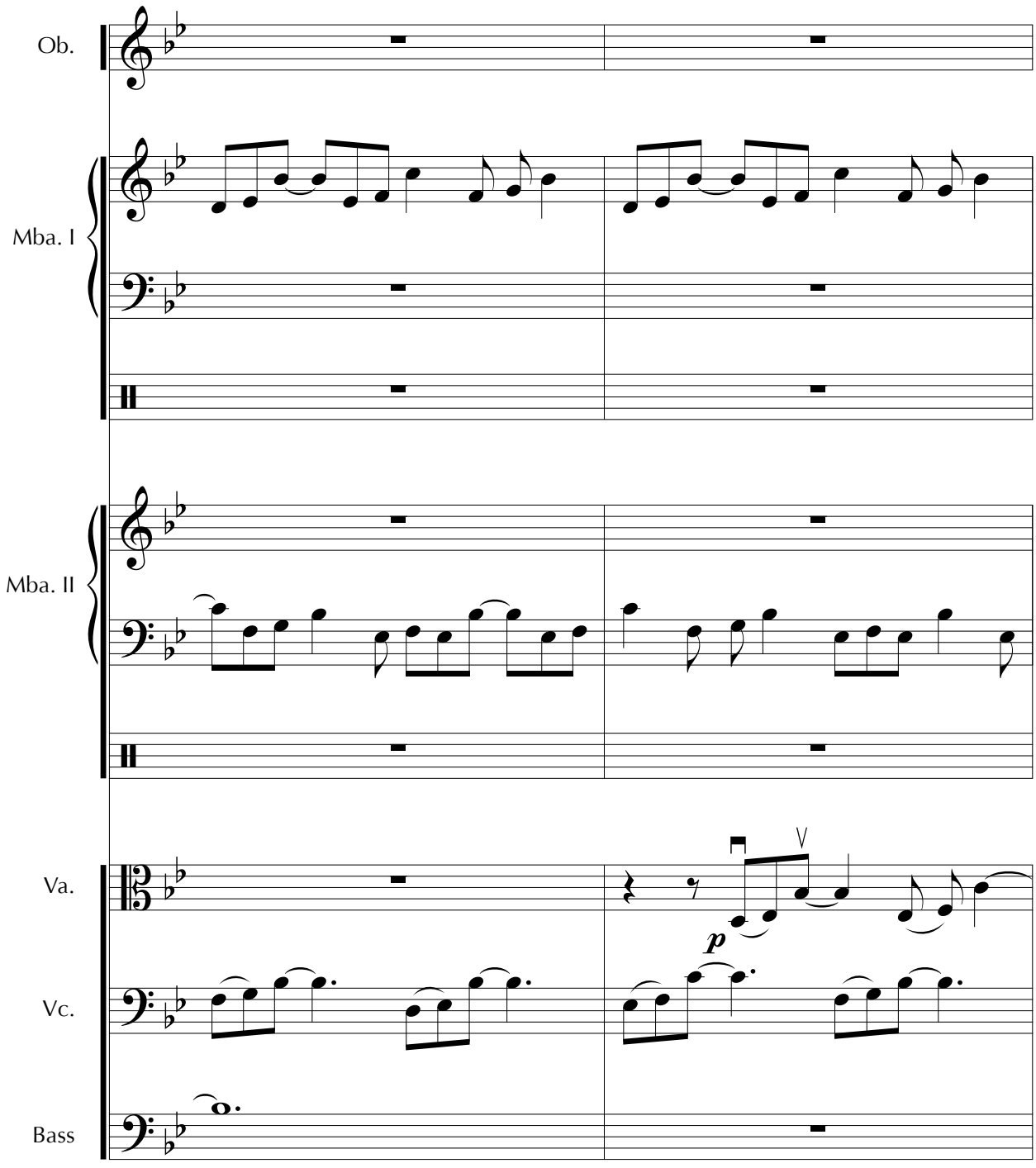

Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
54
55

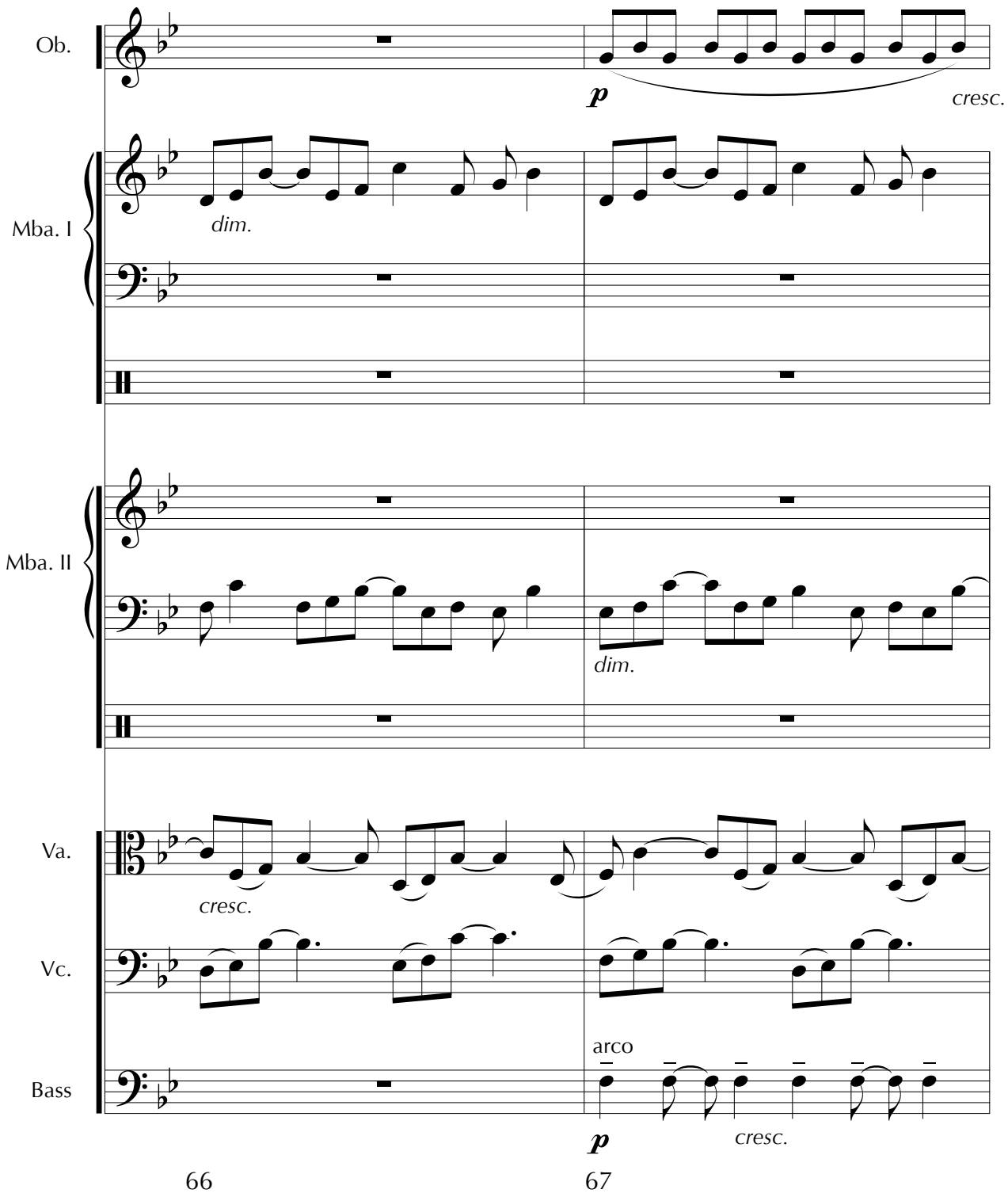

Ob.
f
Mba. I
f
Mba. II
Va.
cresc.
mf
Vc.
cresc.
mf
Bass
cresc.
mf
56
57

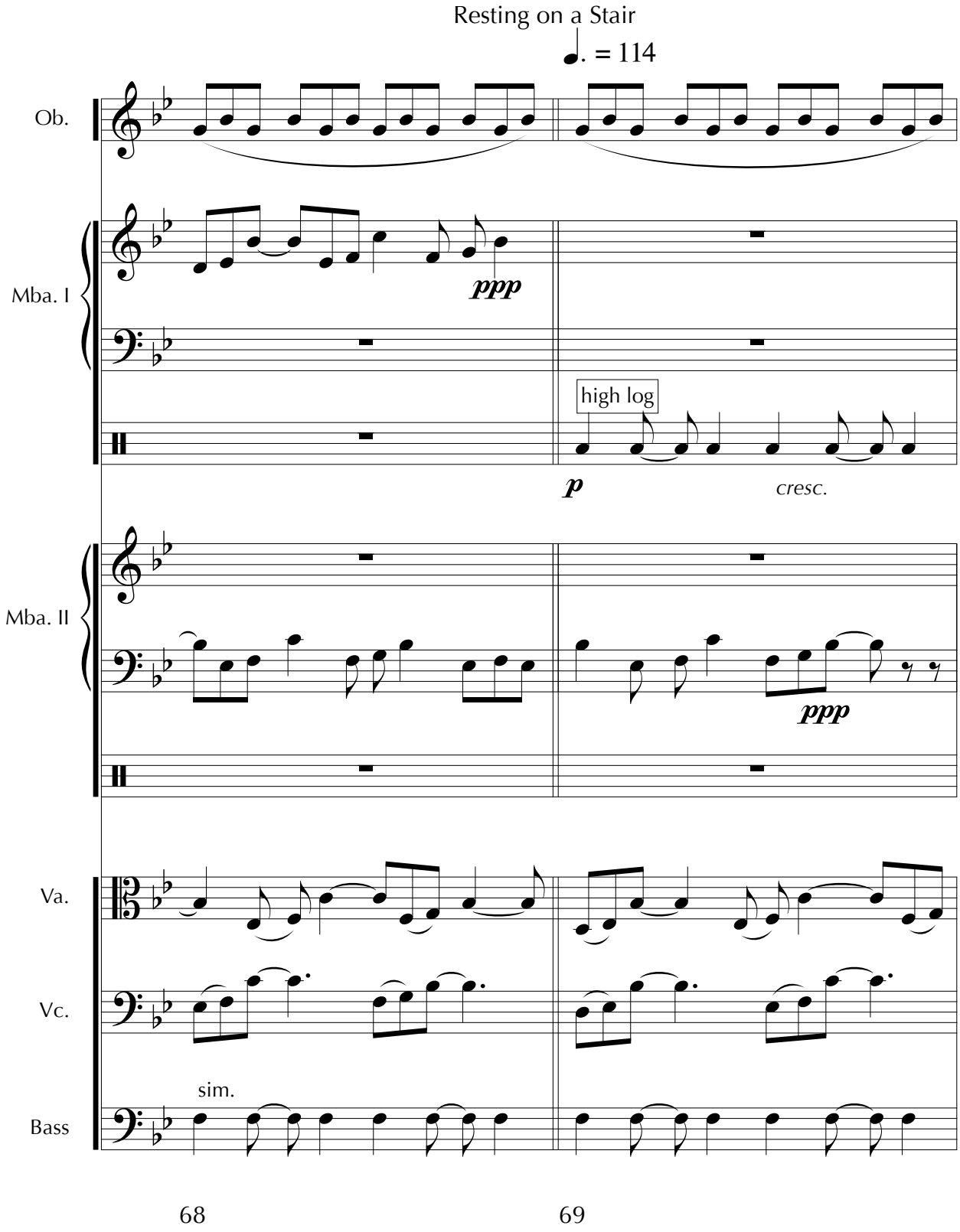

Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
ff
ff
ff
f
f
f
58
59

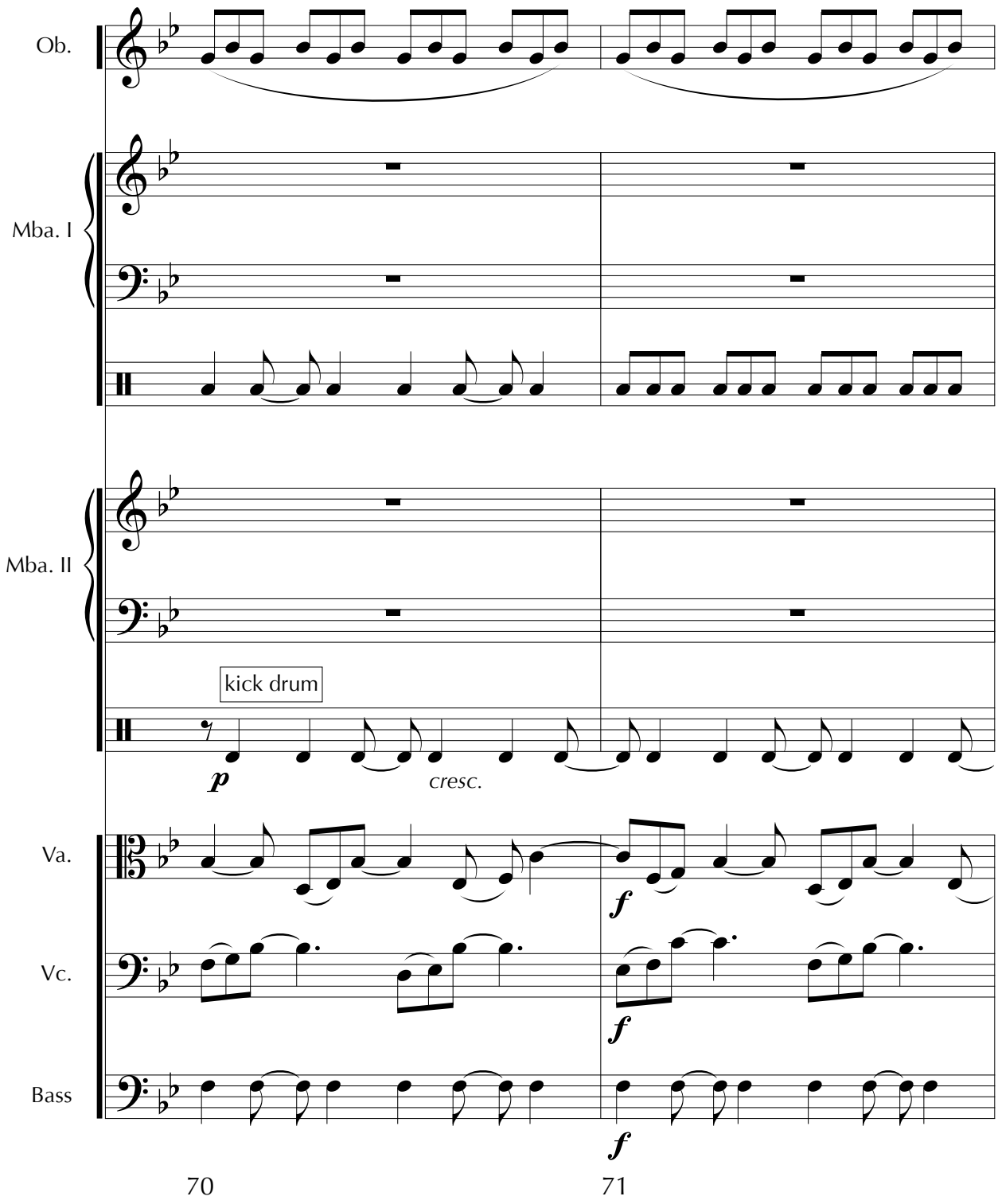

Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Va.
dim.
Vc.
dim.
Bass
60
61

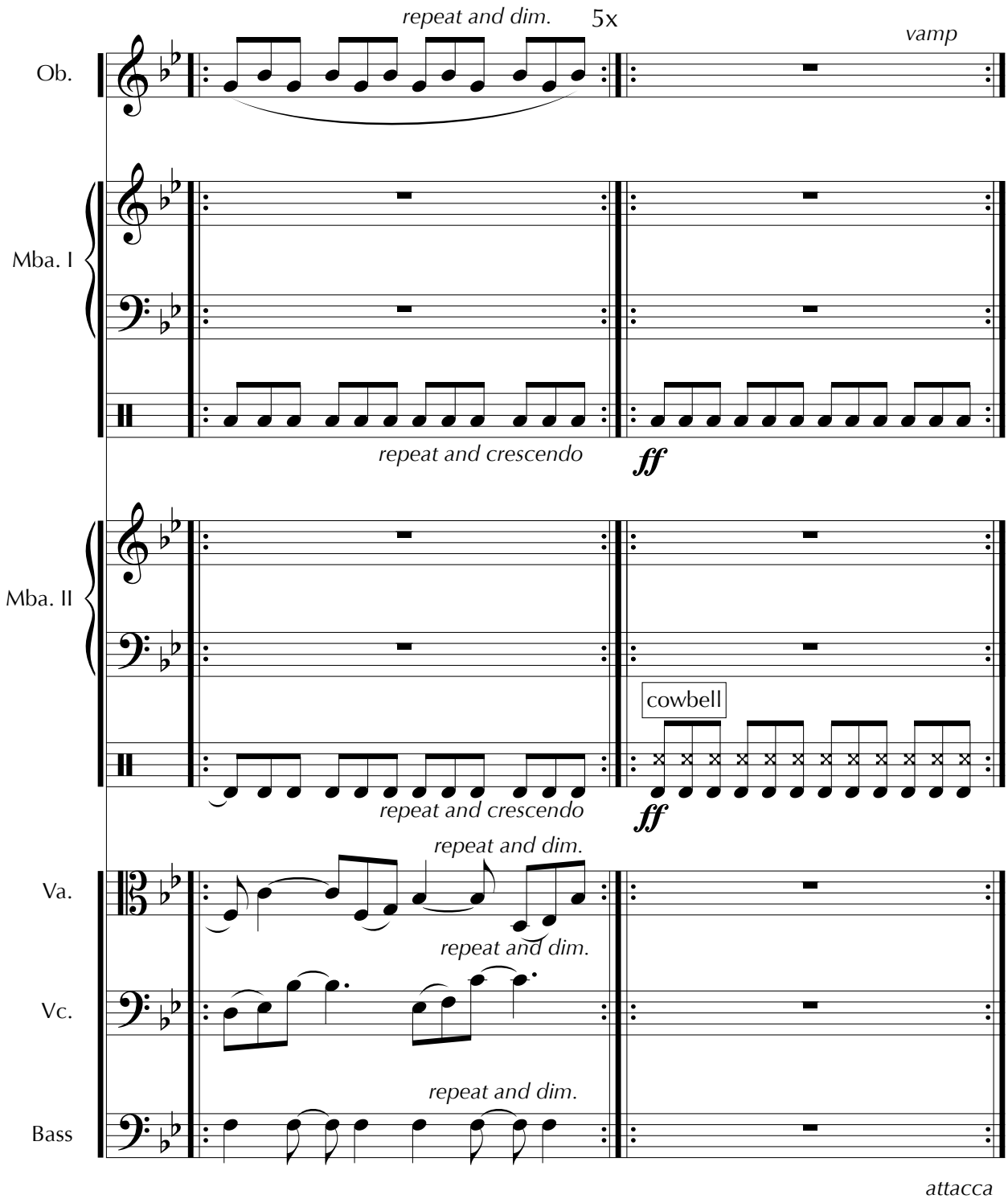

E
accel.
Ob.
dim.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
p
cresc.
dim.
62
63


Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
p
64
65


Ob.
p
cresc.
Mba. I
dim.
Mba. II
dim.
Va.
cresc.
Vc.
arco
Bass
p
cresc.
66
67

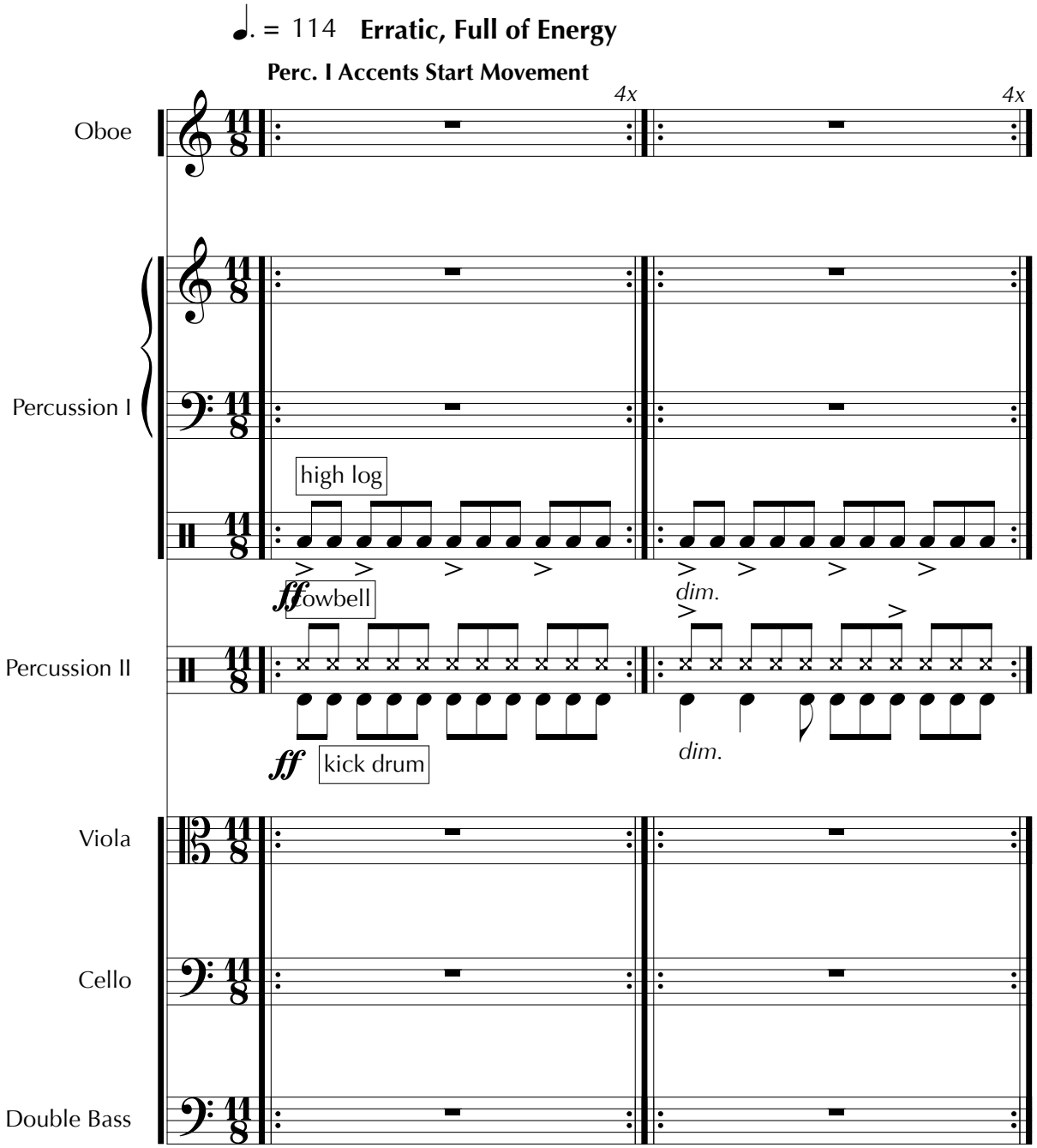

Resting on a Stair
♩. = 114
Ob.
Mba. I
ppp
high log
p
cresc.
Mba. II
ppp
Va.
Vc.
sim.
Bass
68
69

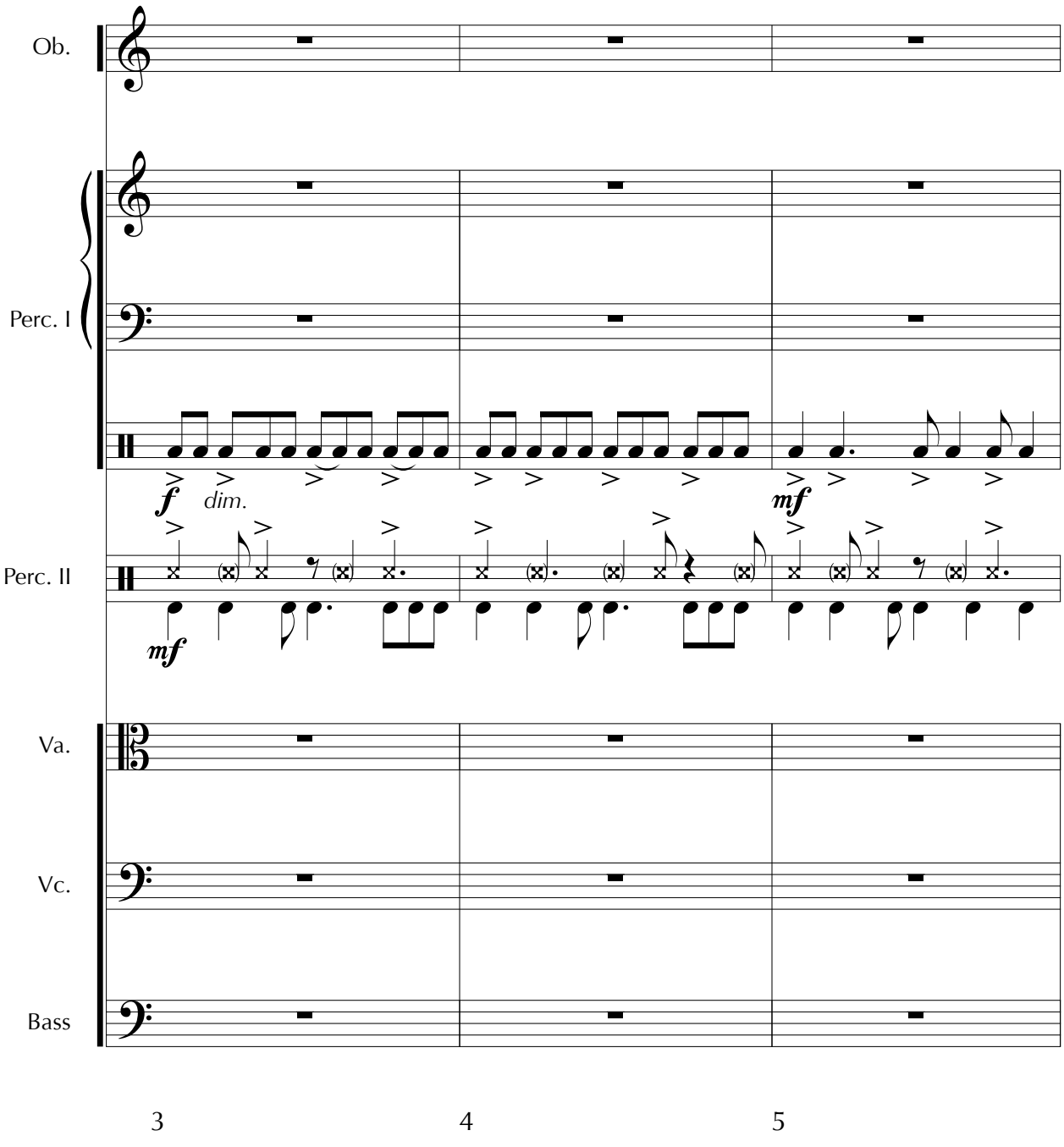

Ob.
Mba. I
Mba. II
kick drum
p
cresc.
Va.
Vc.
Bass
f
f
f
70
71

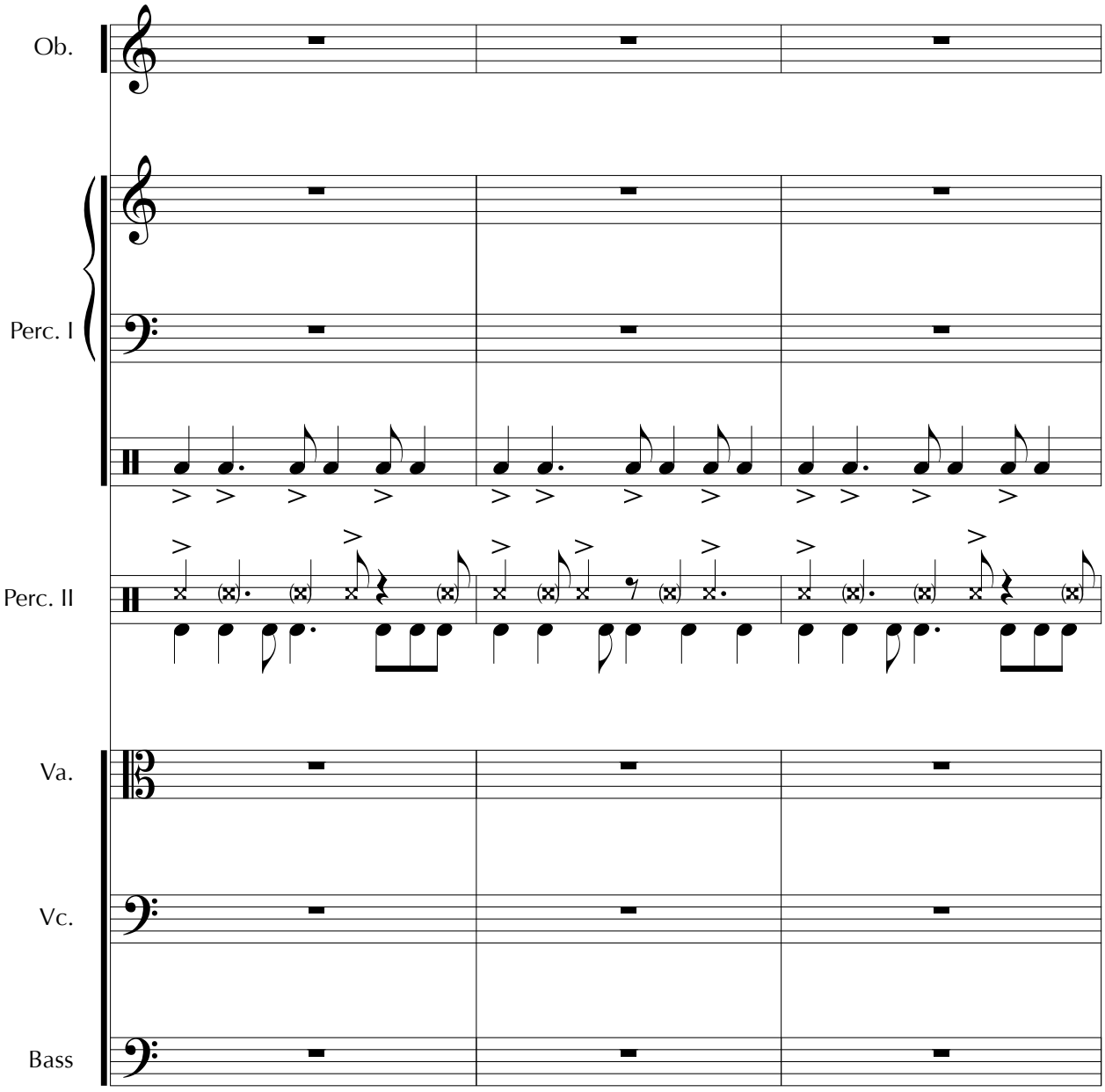

repeat and dim.
5x
vamp
Ob.
Mba. I
repeat and crescendo
ff
Mba. II
cowbell
repeat and crescendo
ff
repeat and dim.
Va.
repeat and dim.
Vc.
repeat and dim.
Bass
attacca
72
73

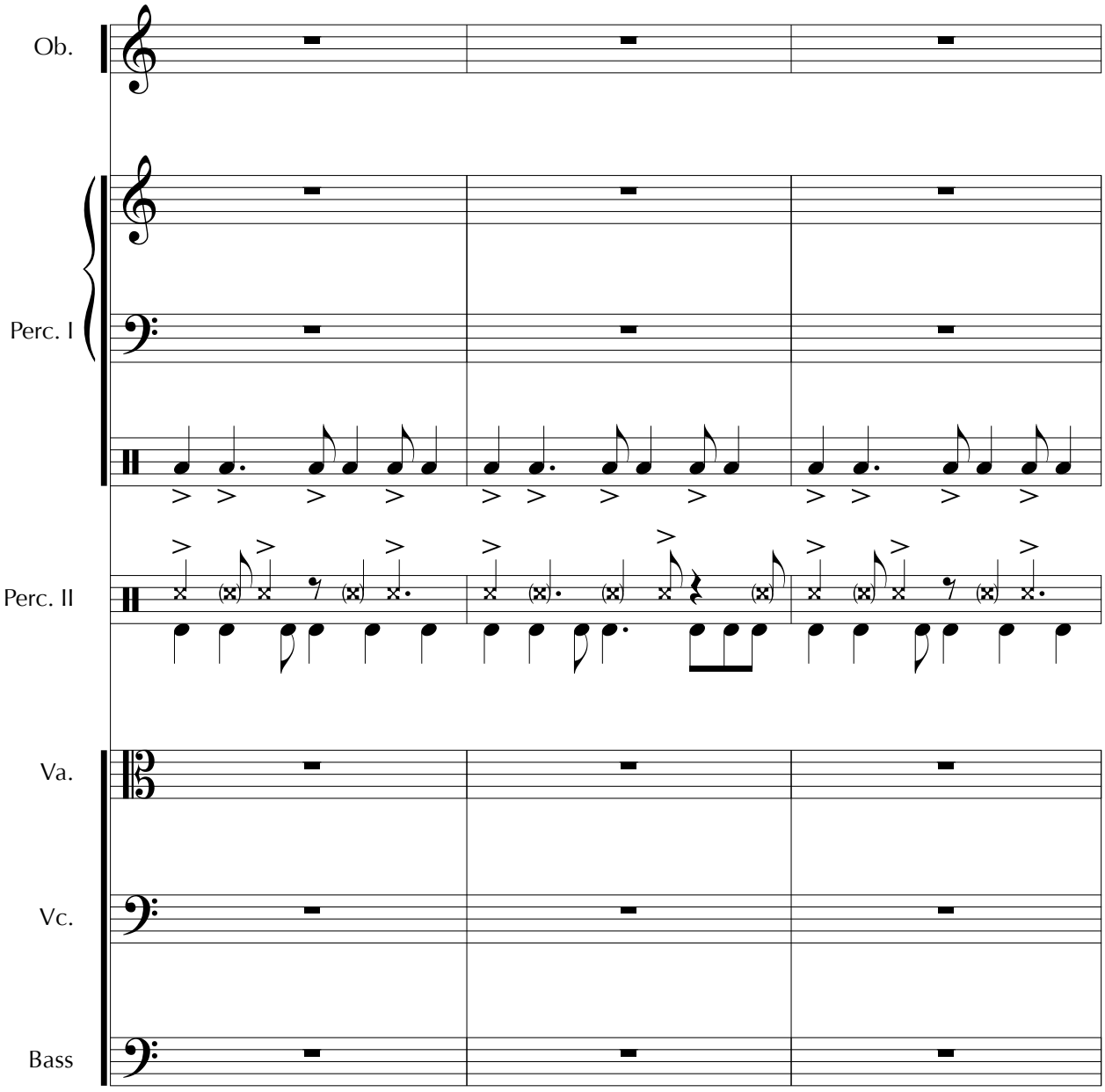
Anucar

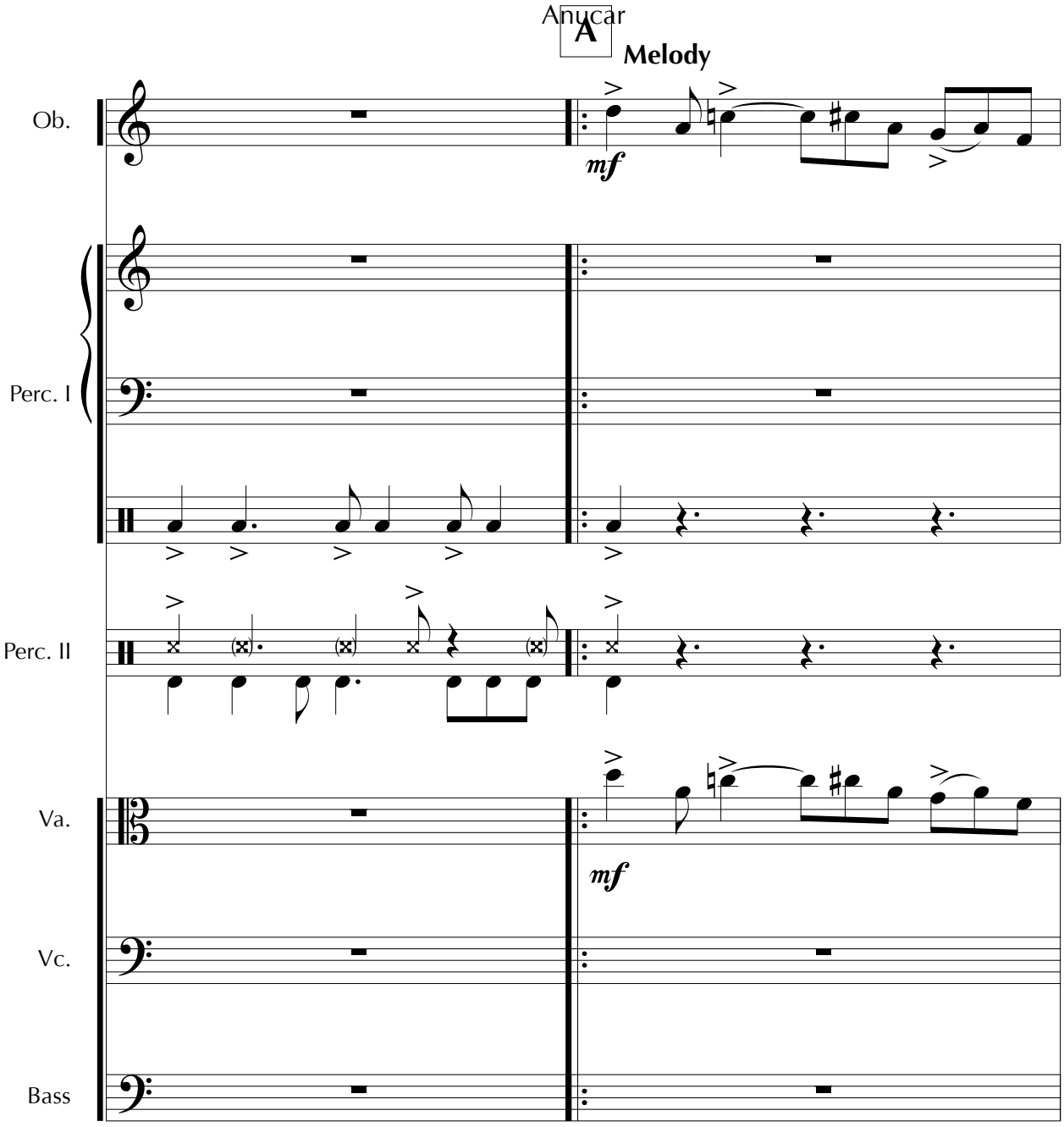
Nate Bliton

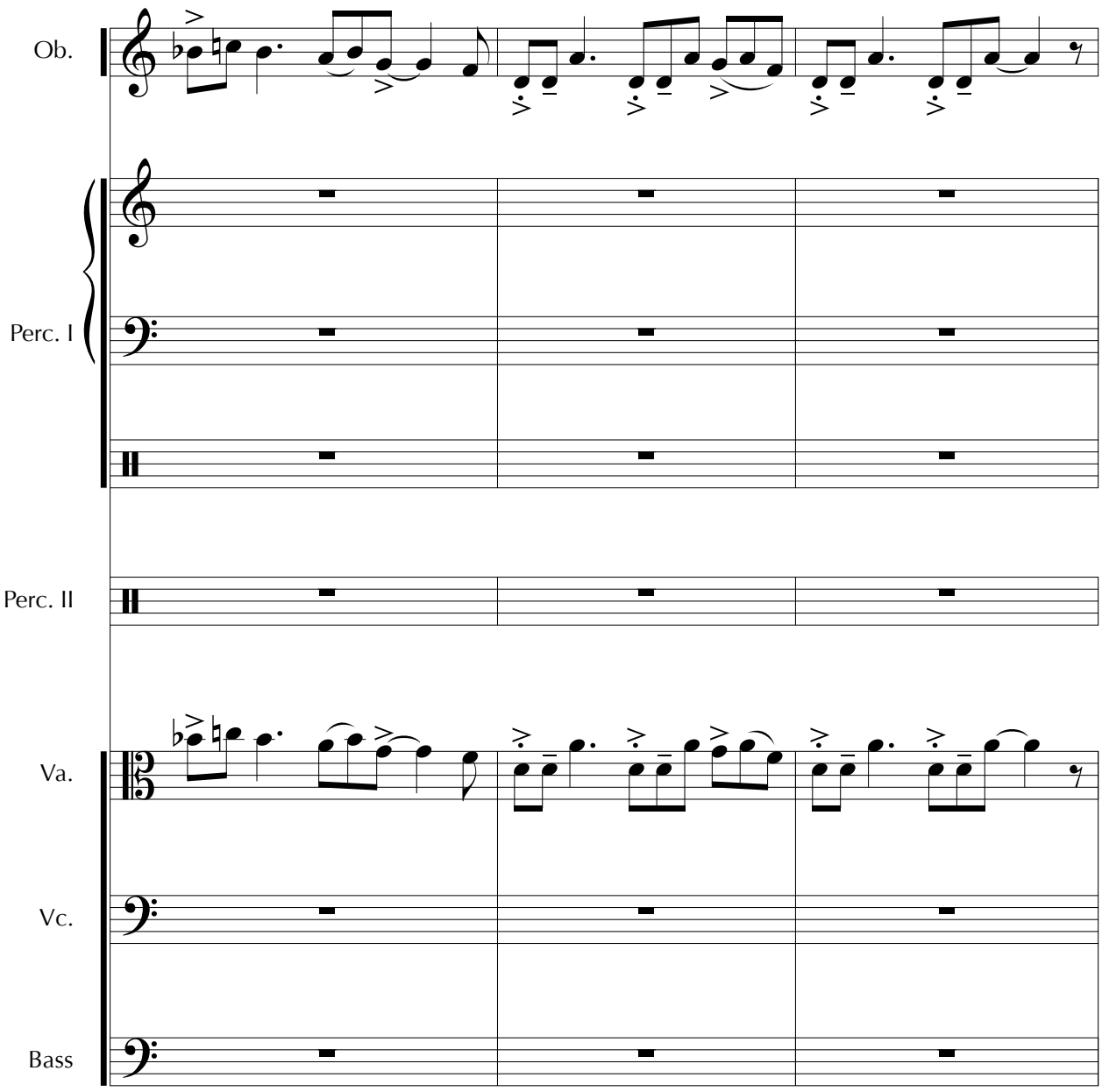


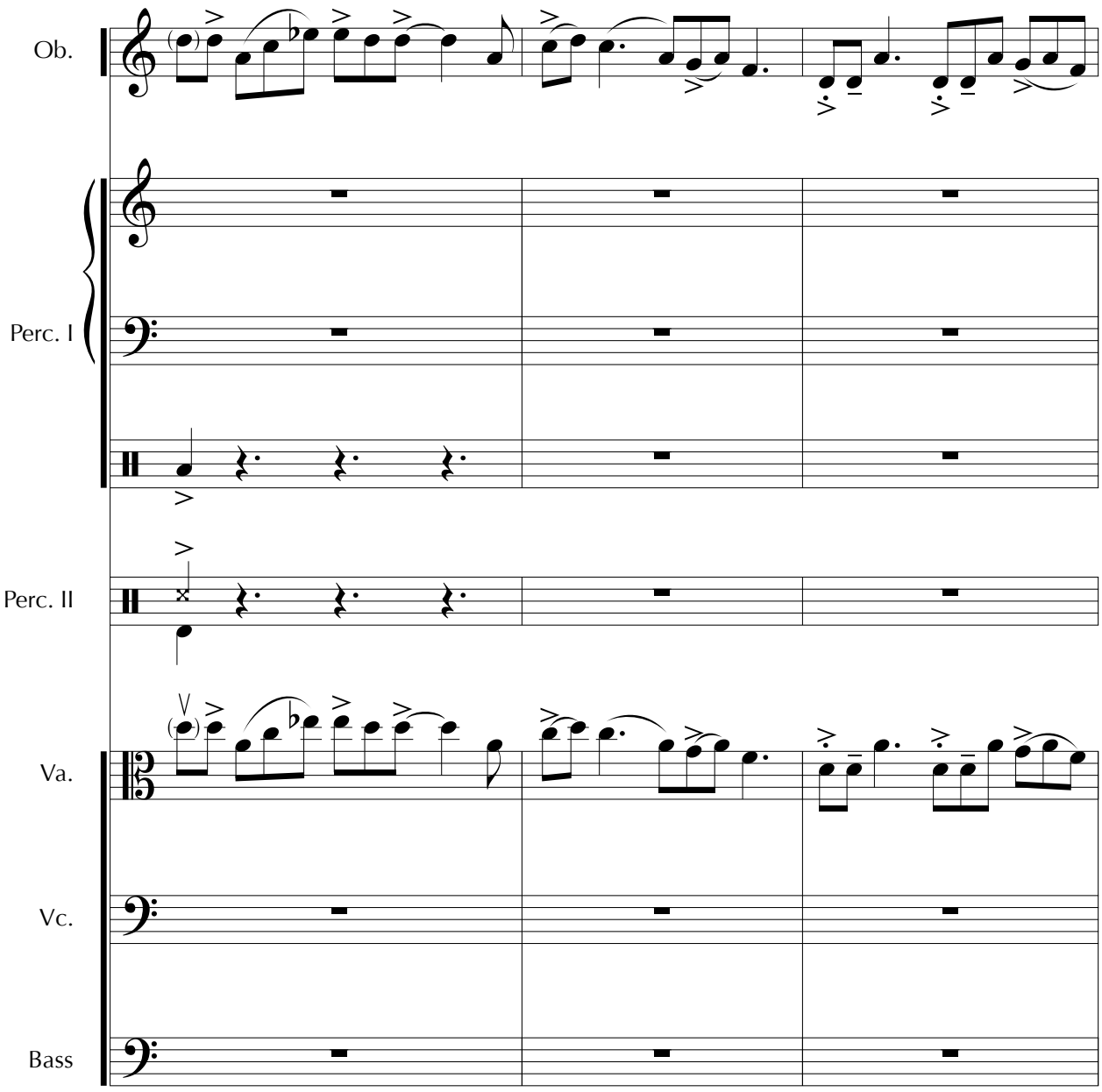

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
f
dim.
mf
mf
3
4
5

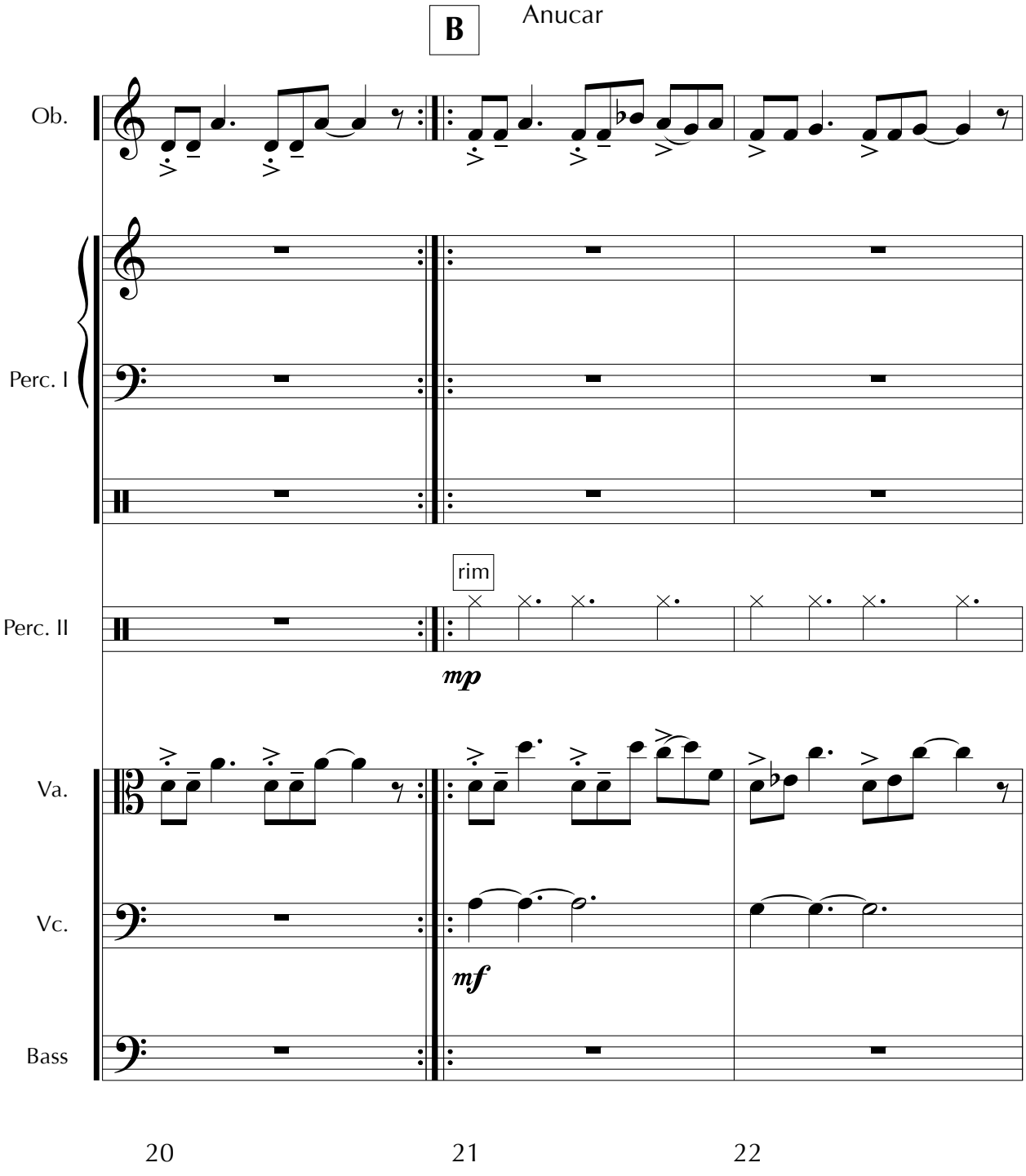

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
6
7
8

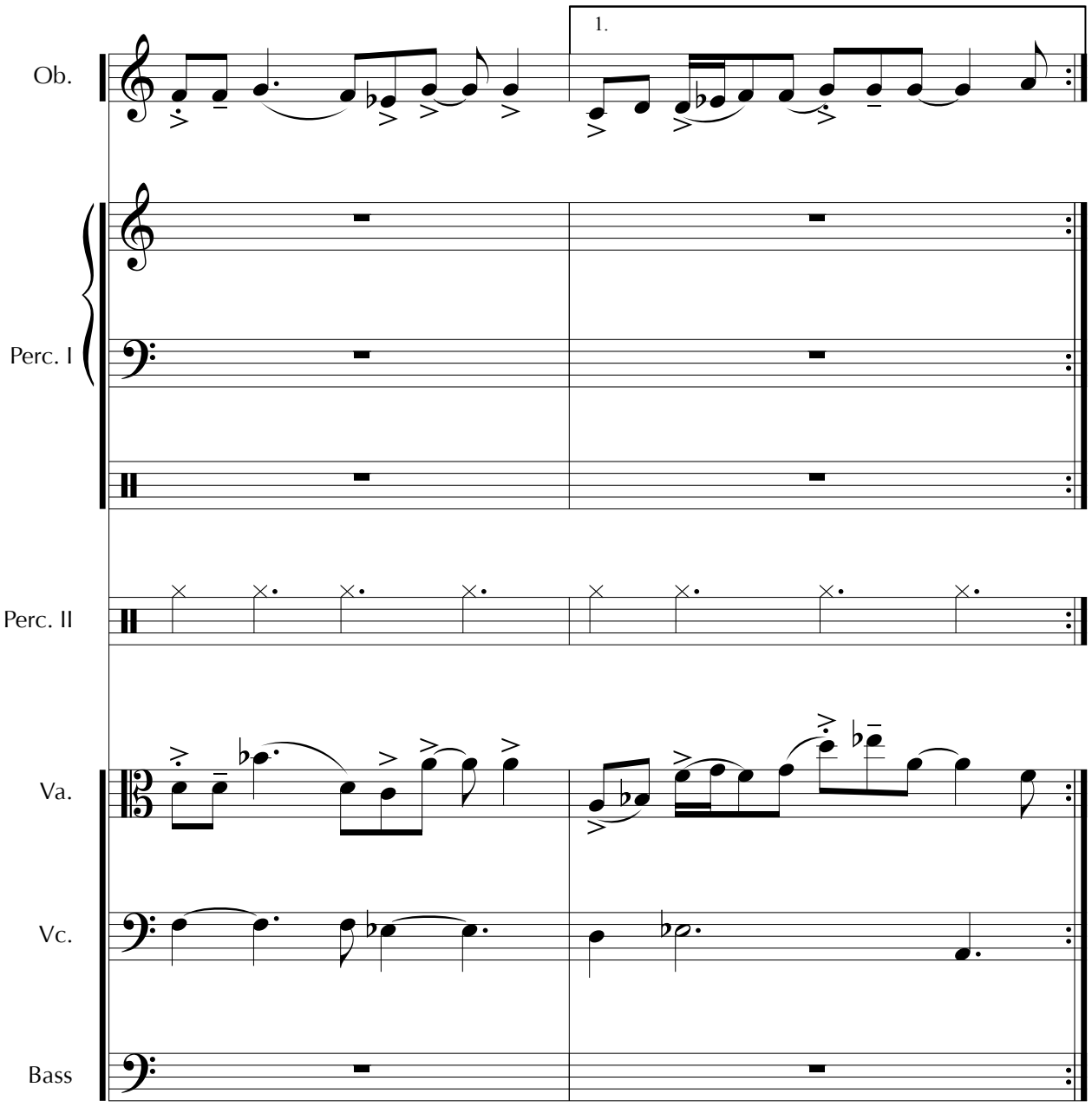

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
9
10
11

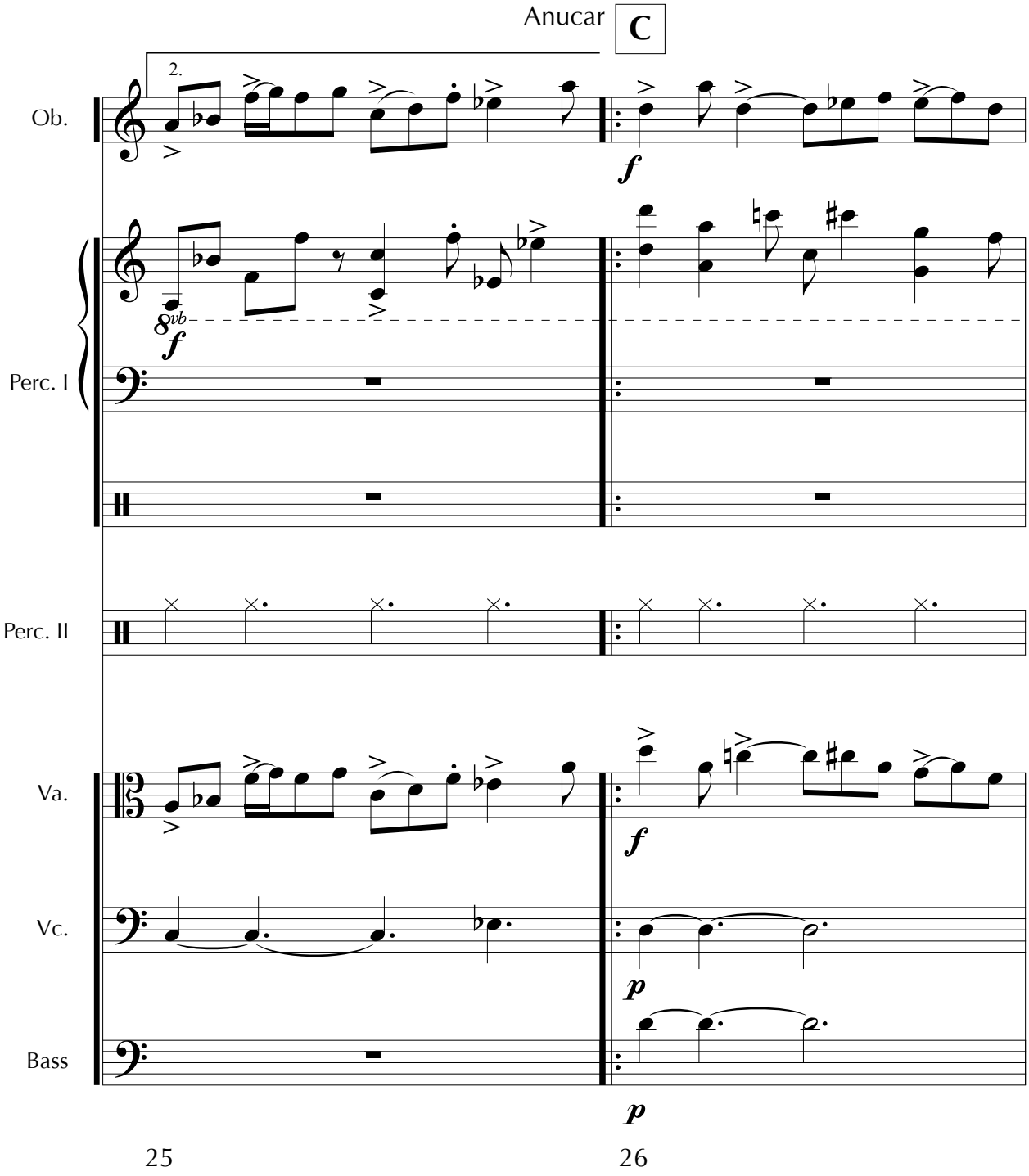

Anucar
A
Melody
Ob.
mf
Perc. I
Perc. II
Va.
mf
Vc.
Bass
12
13

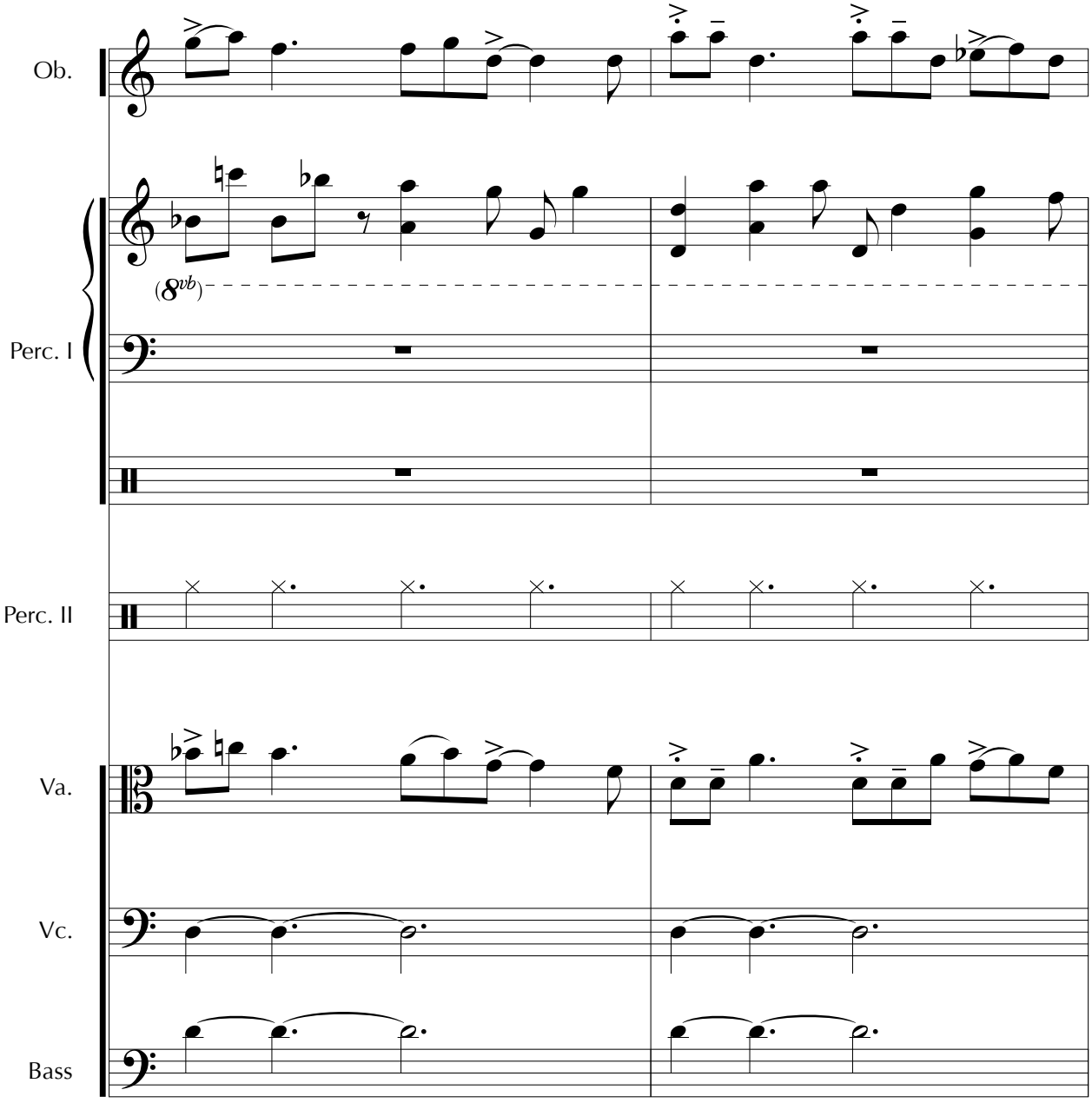

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
14
15
16

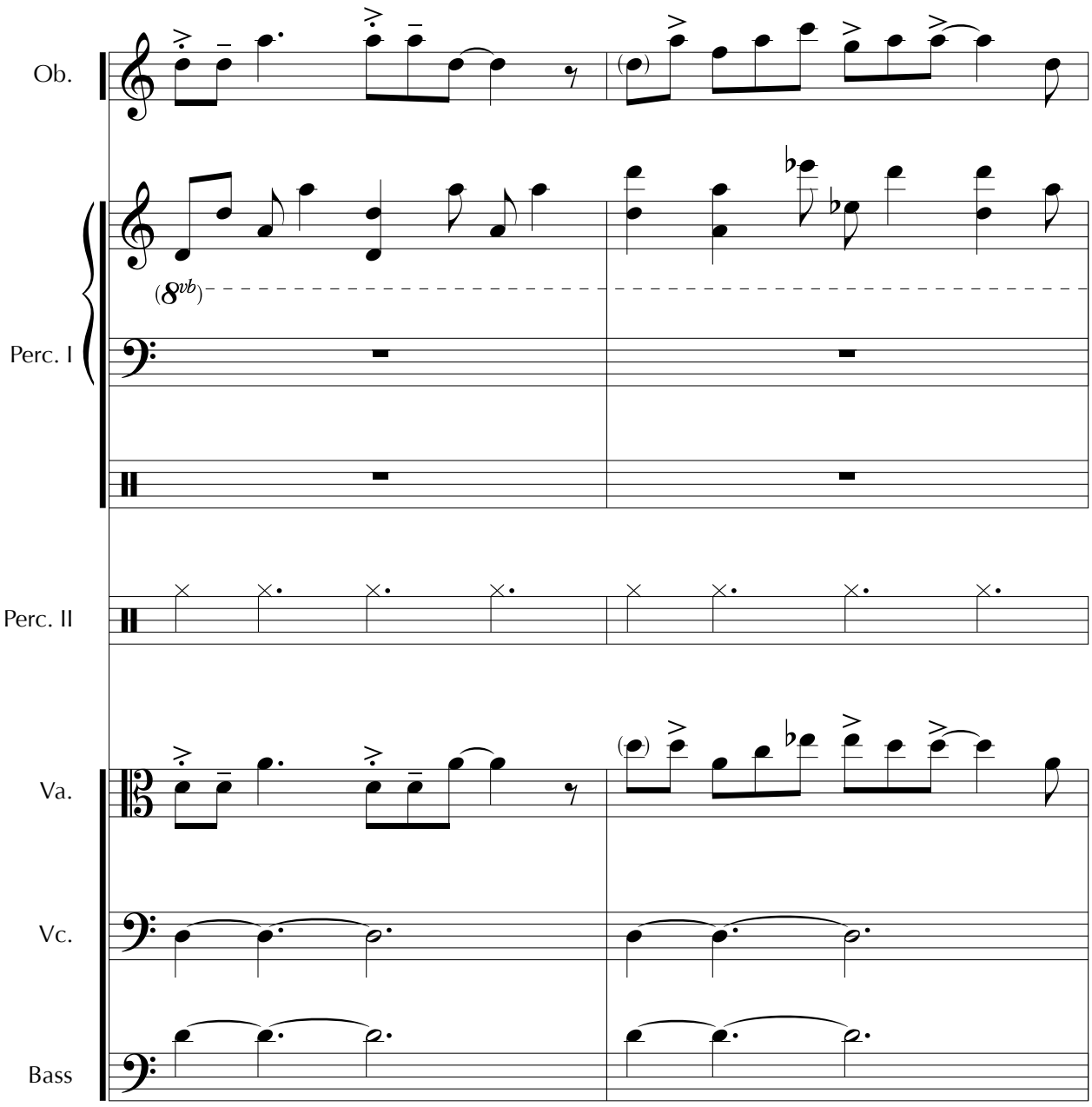

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
17
18
19

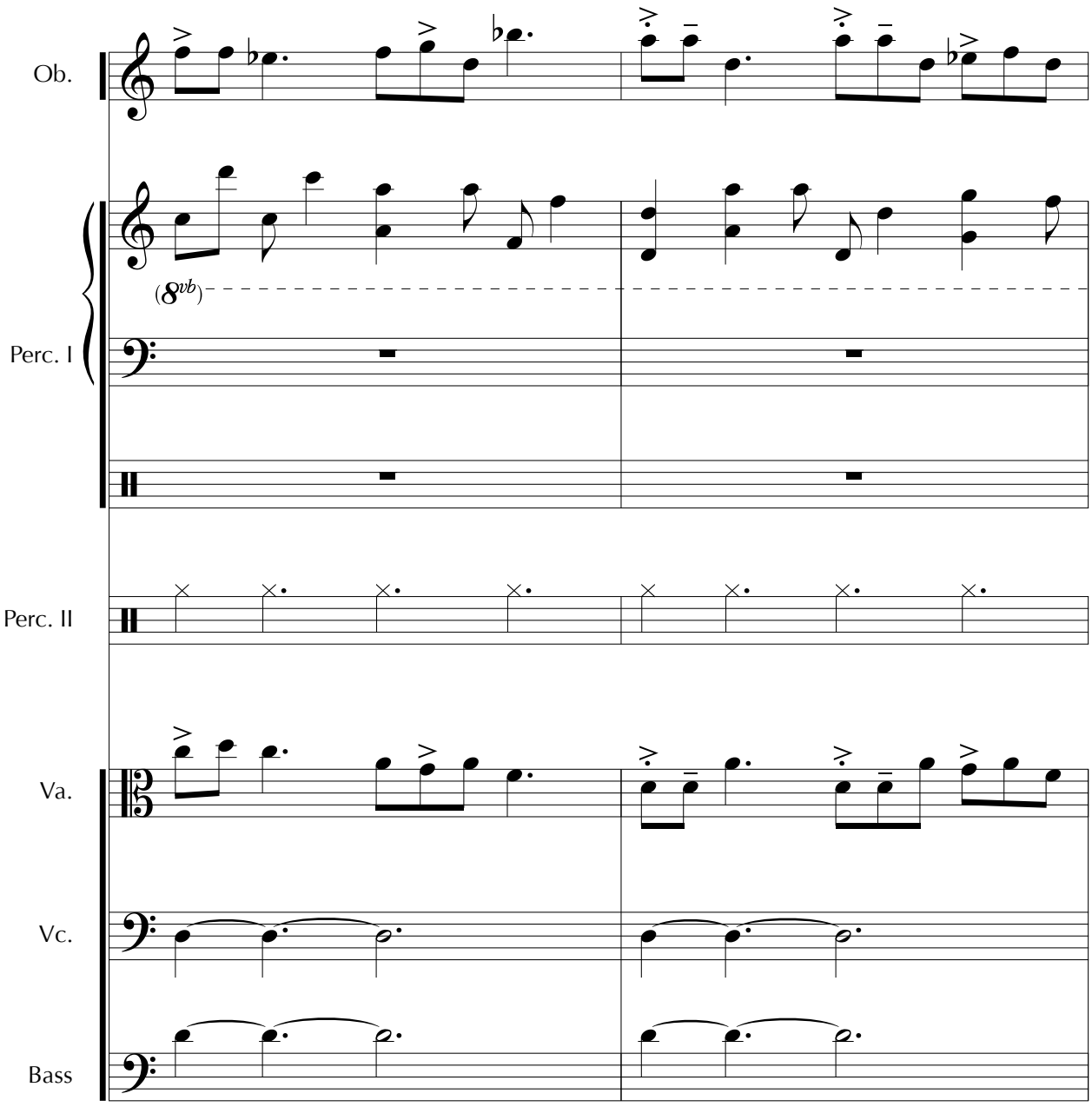

B
Anucar
Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
rim
mp
Va.
Vc.
mf
Bass
20
21
22

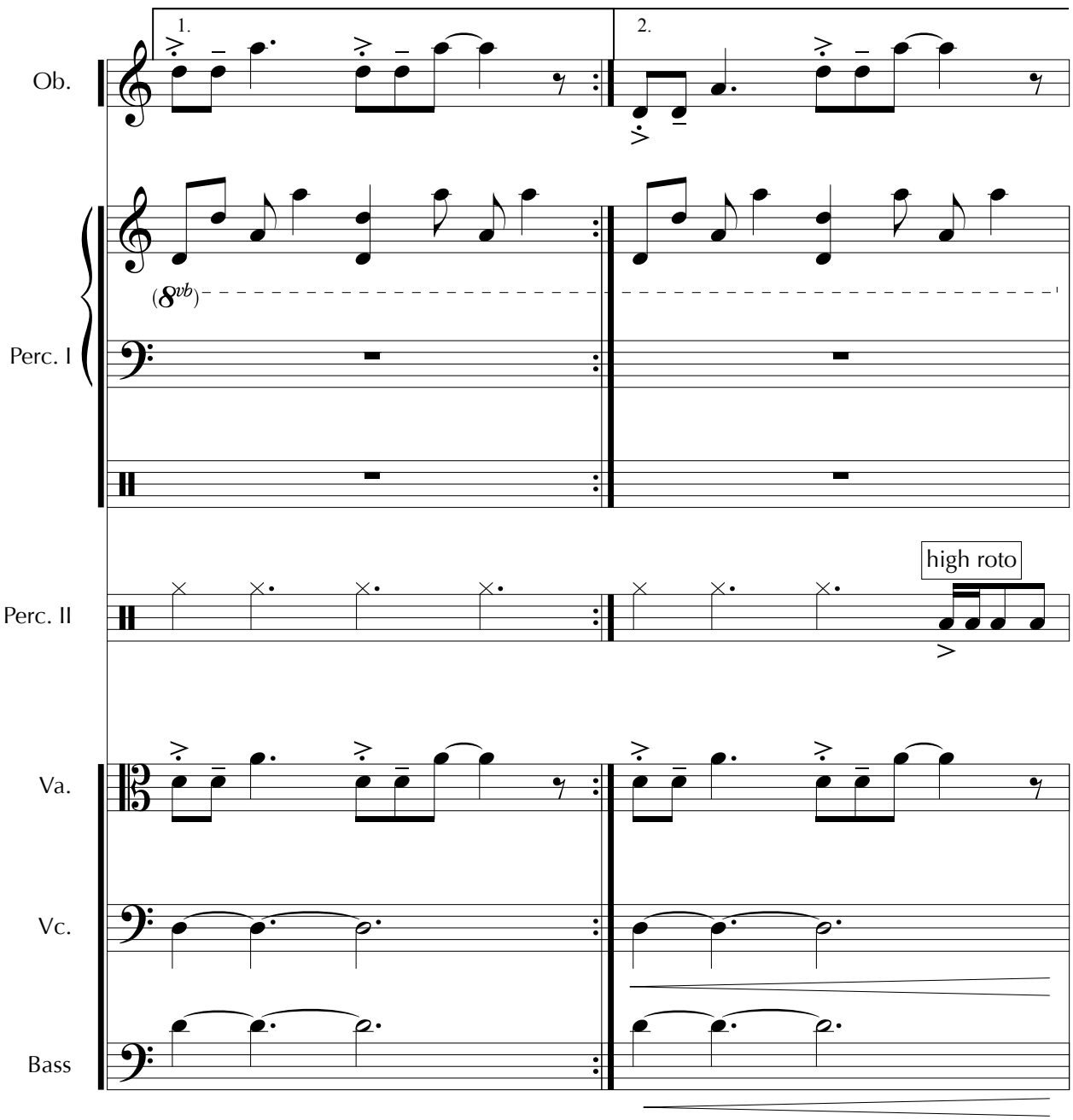

1.
Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
23
24

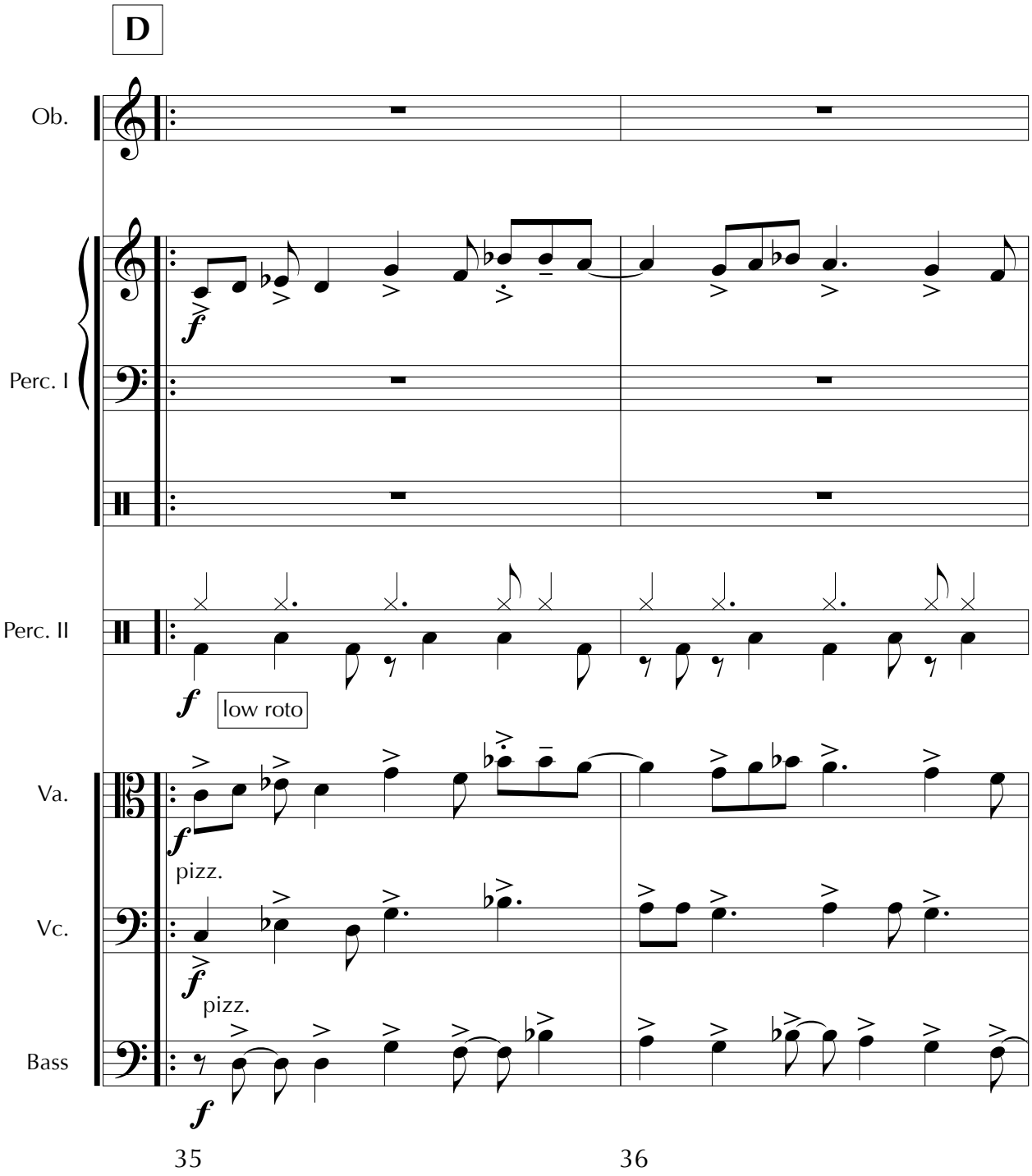

Anucar
C
2.
Ob.
f
Perc. I
8vb
f
Perc. II
Va.
f
Vc.
p
Bass
p
25
26

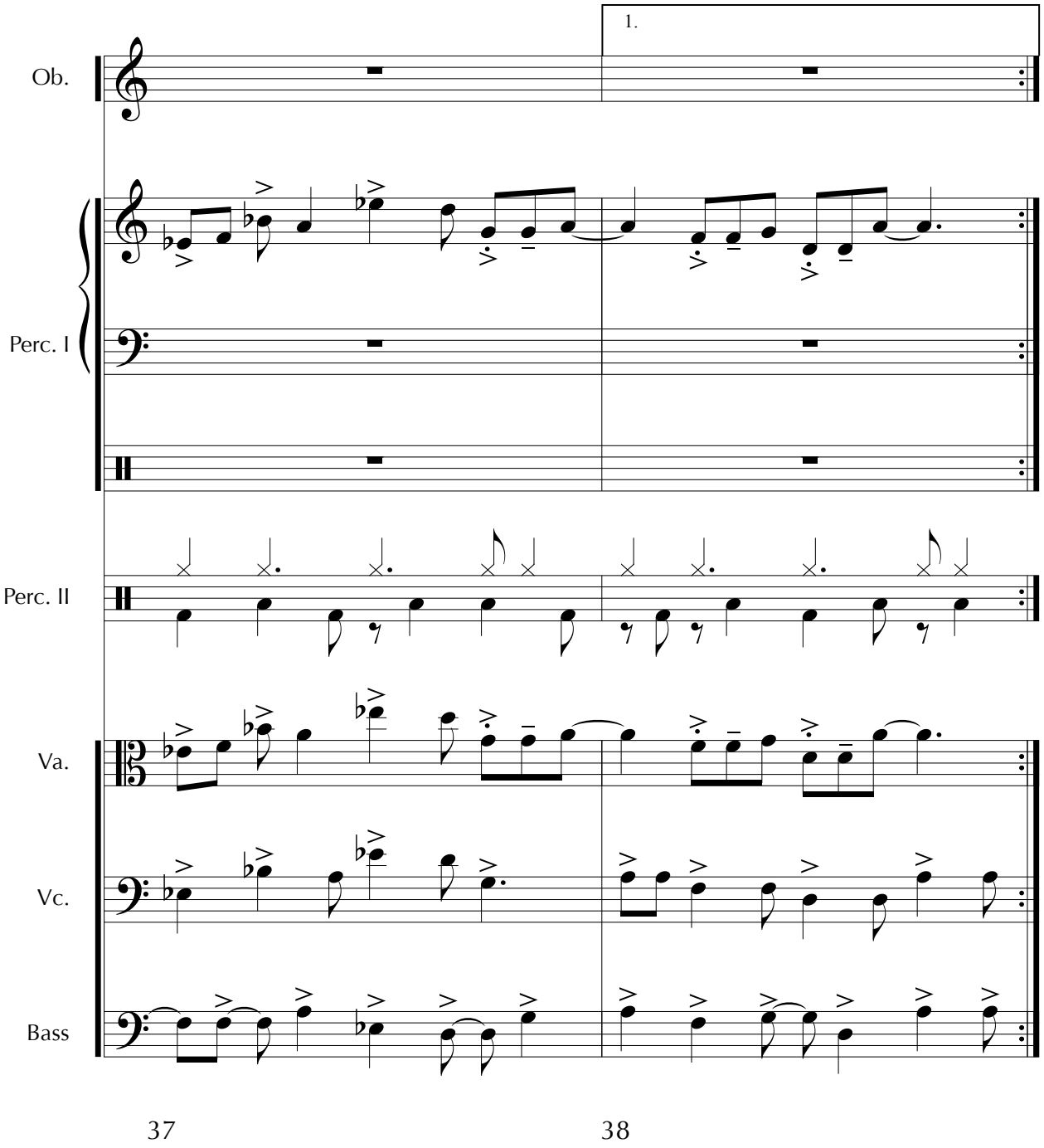

Ob.
Perc. I
(8vb)
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
27
28

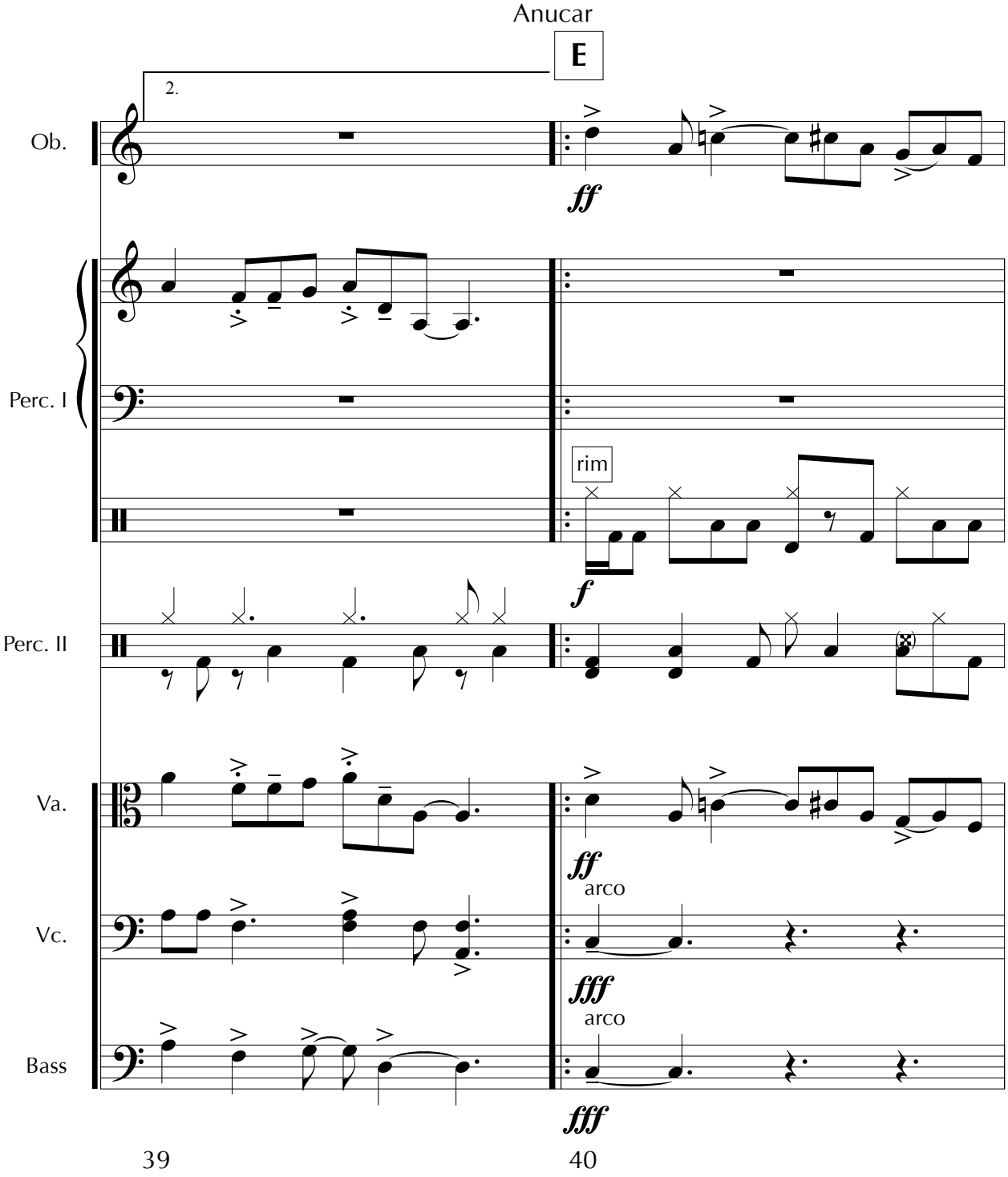

Ob.
Perc. I
(8vb)
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
29
30

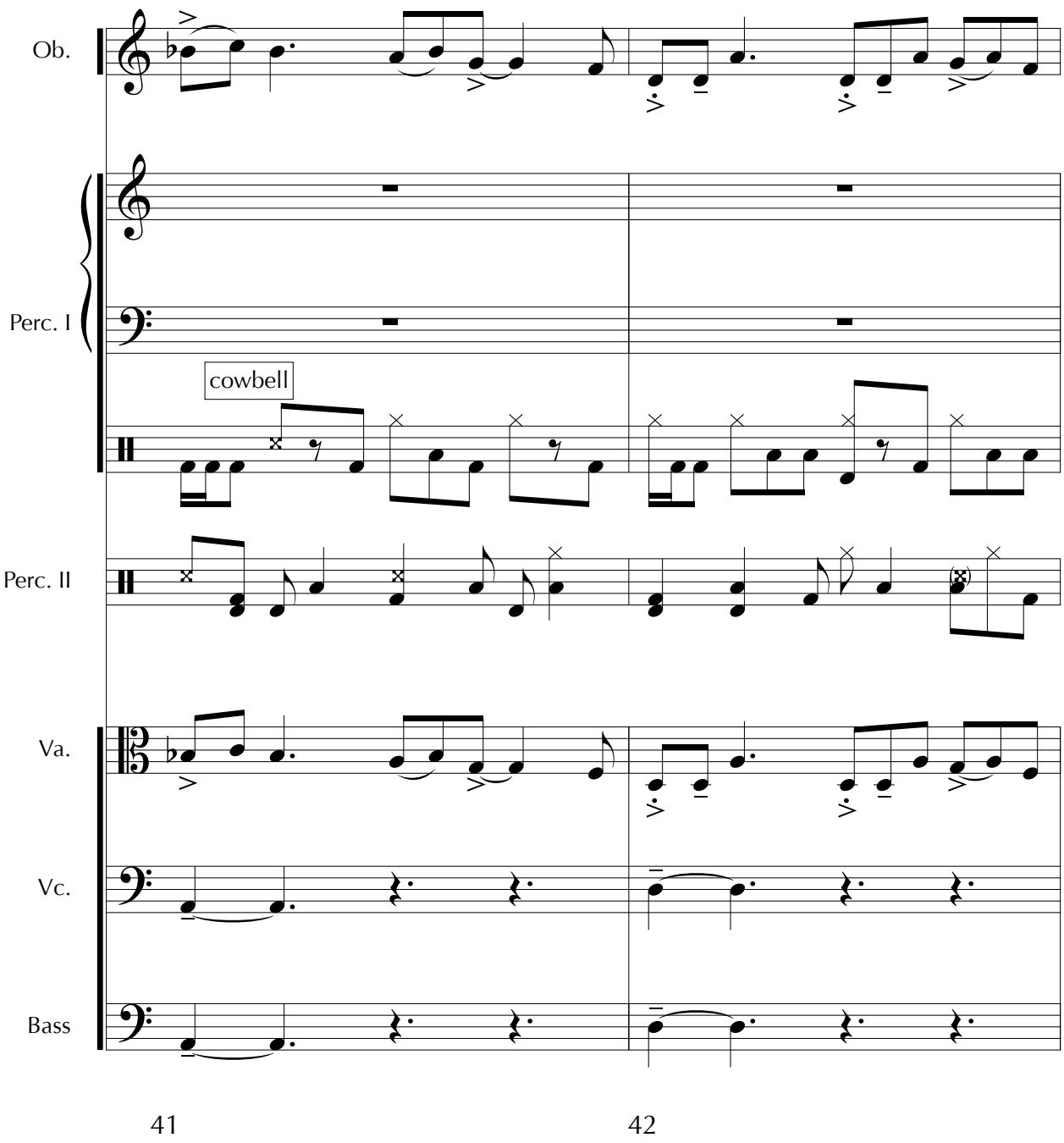

Ob.
Perc. I
(8vb)
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
31
32

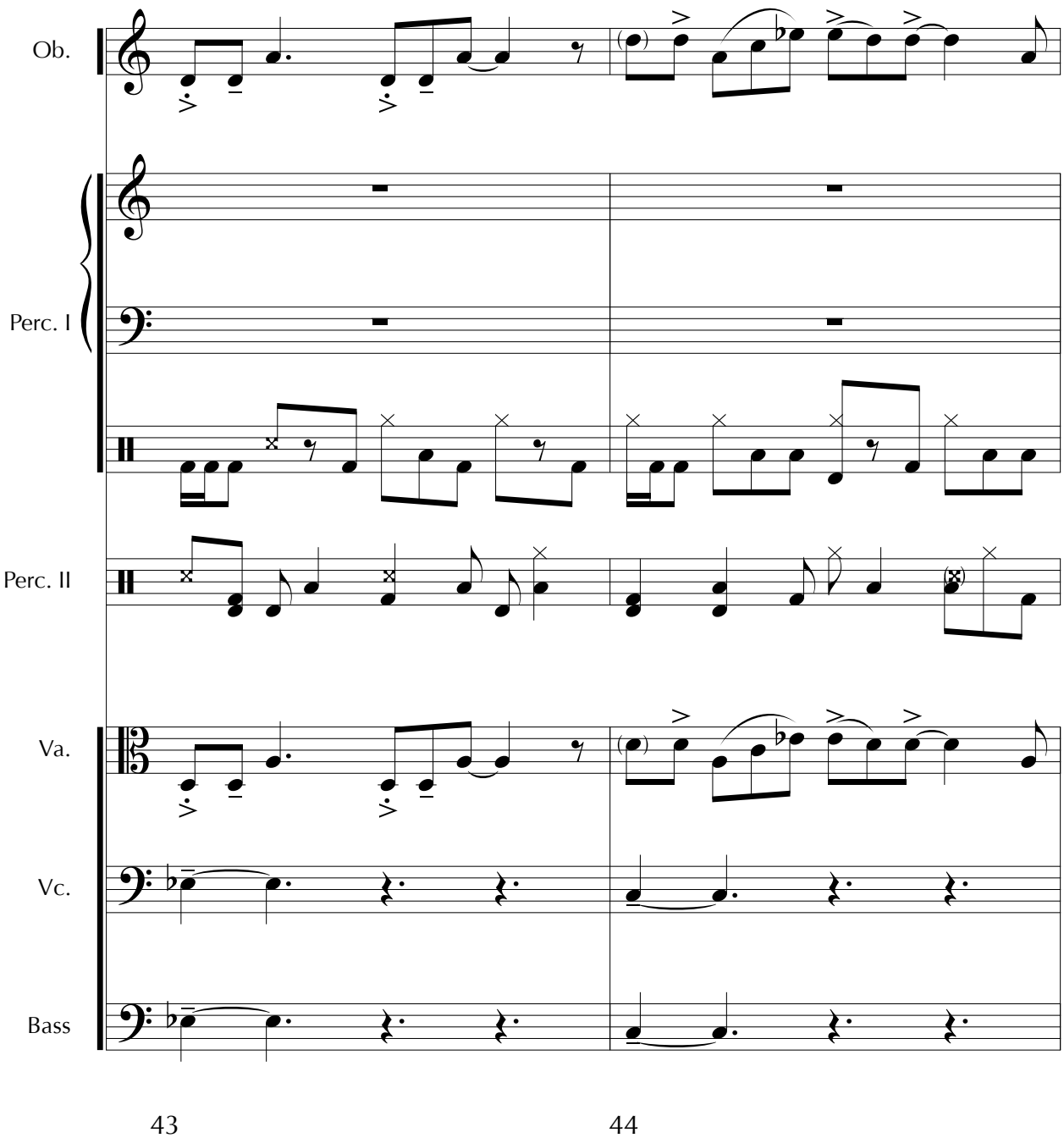

1.
2.
Ob.
(8vb)
Perc. I
high roto
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
33
34

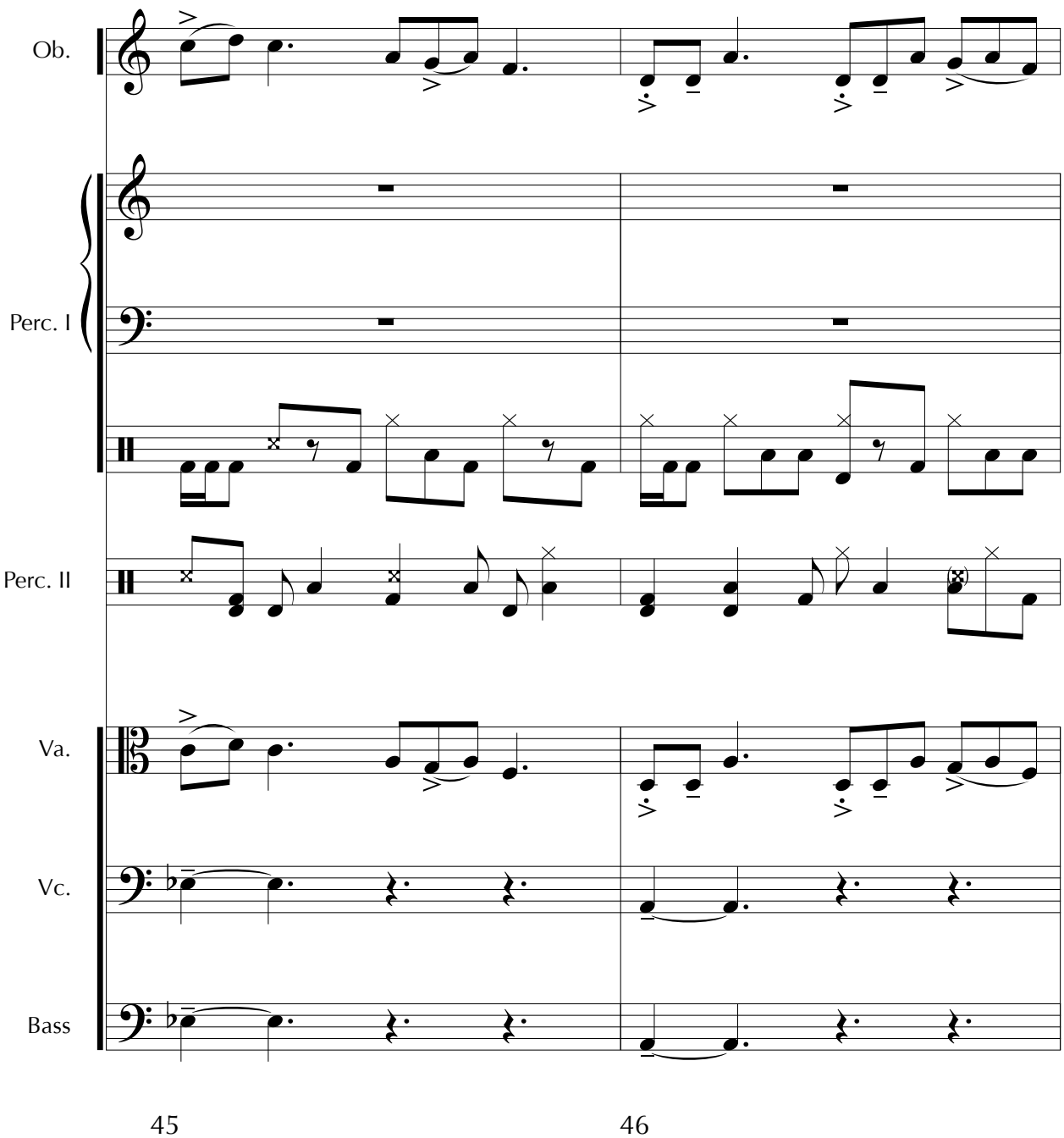

D
Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
f
low roto
Va.
f
pizz.
Vc.
f
pizz.
Bass
f
35
36

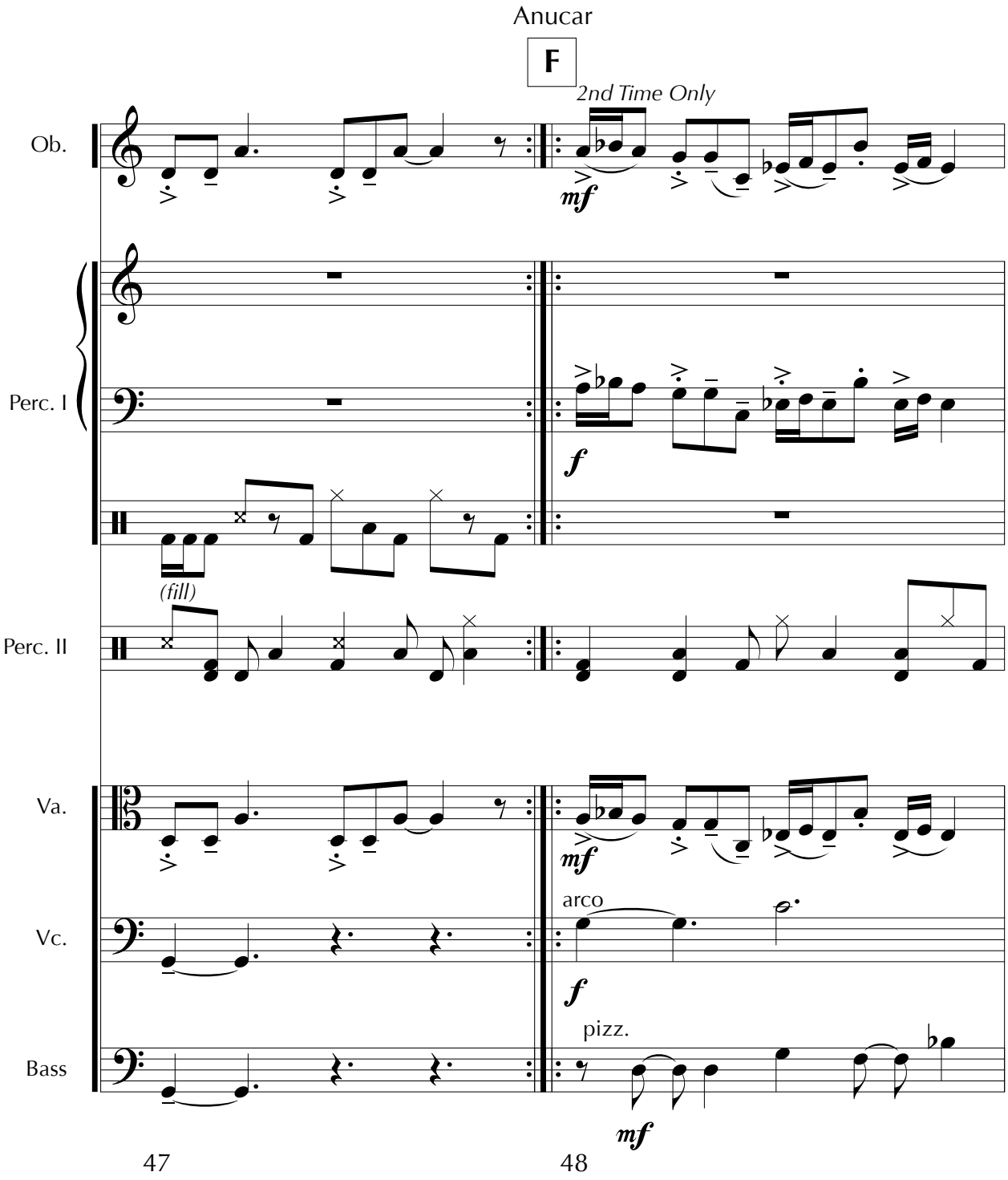

1.
Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
37
38

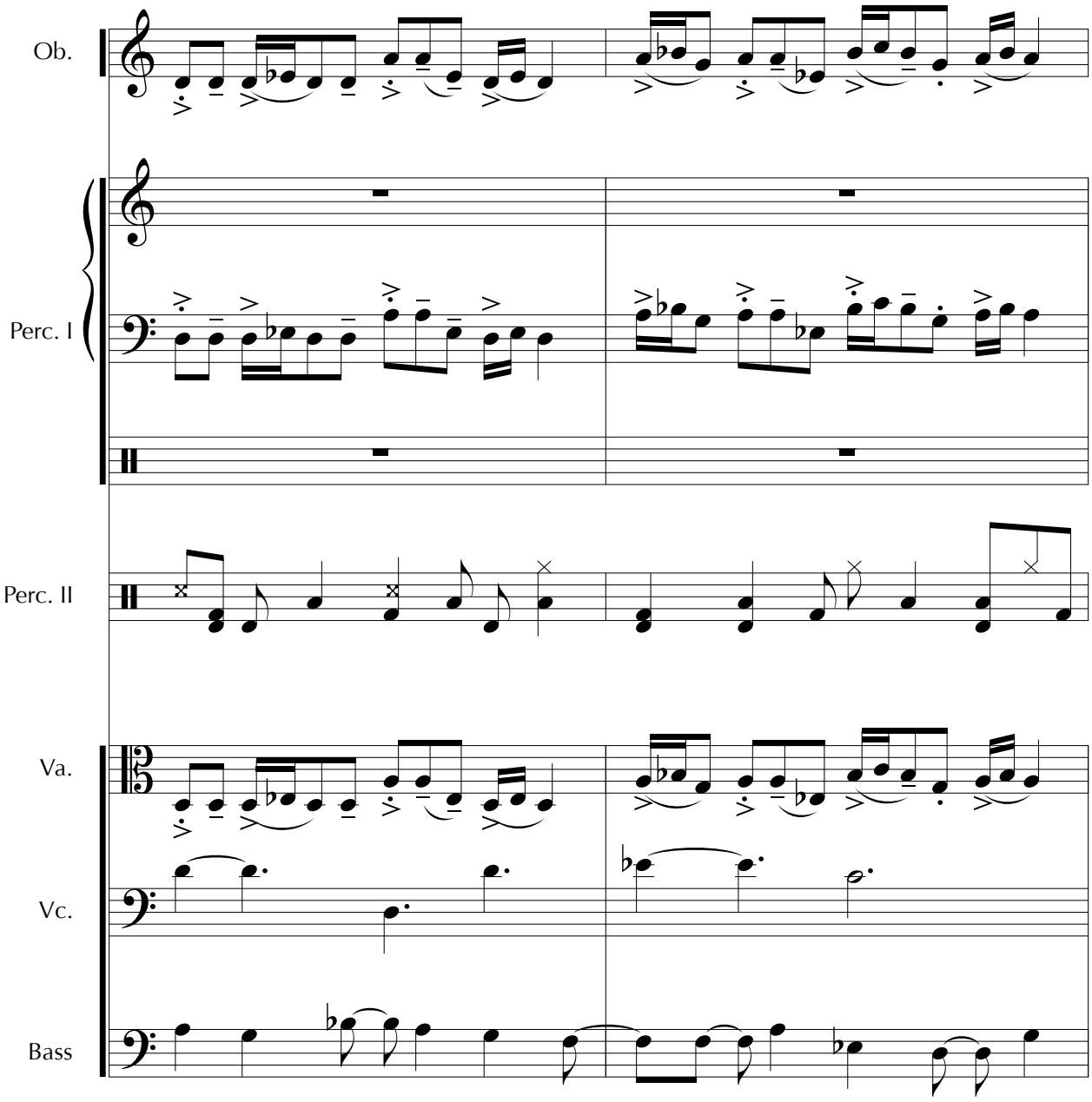

Anucar
E
2.
Ob.
ff
Perc. I
rim
f
Perc. II
Va.
ff
arco
Vc.
fff
arco
Bass
fff
39
40

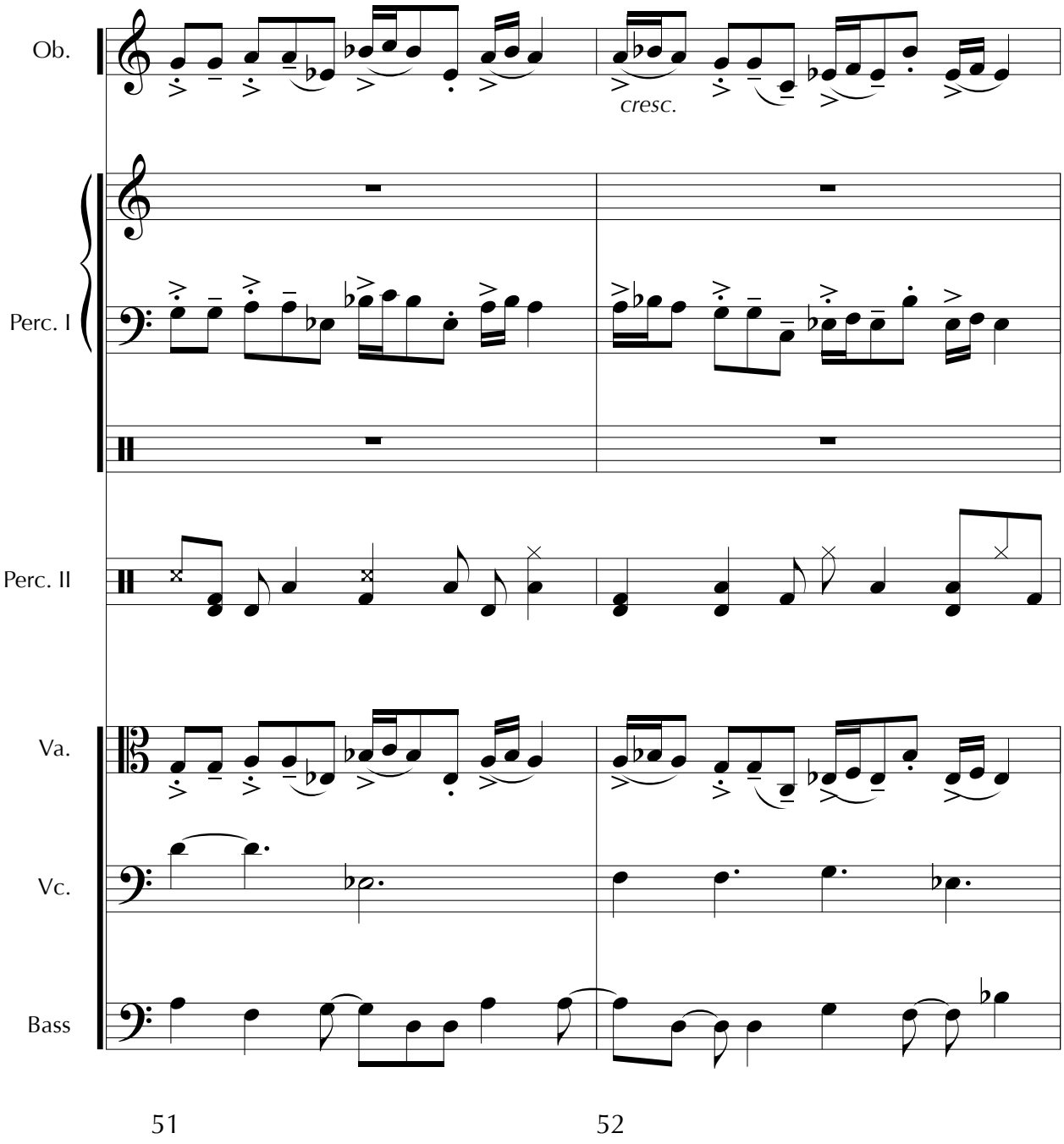

Ob.
Perc. I
cowbell
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
41
42

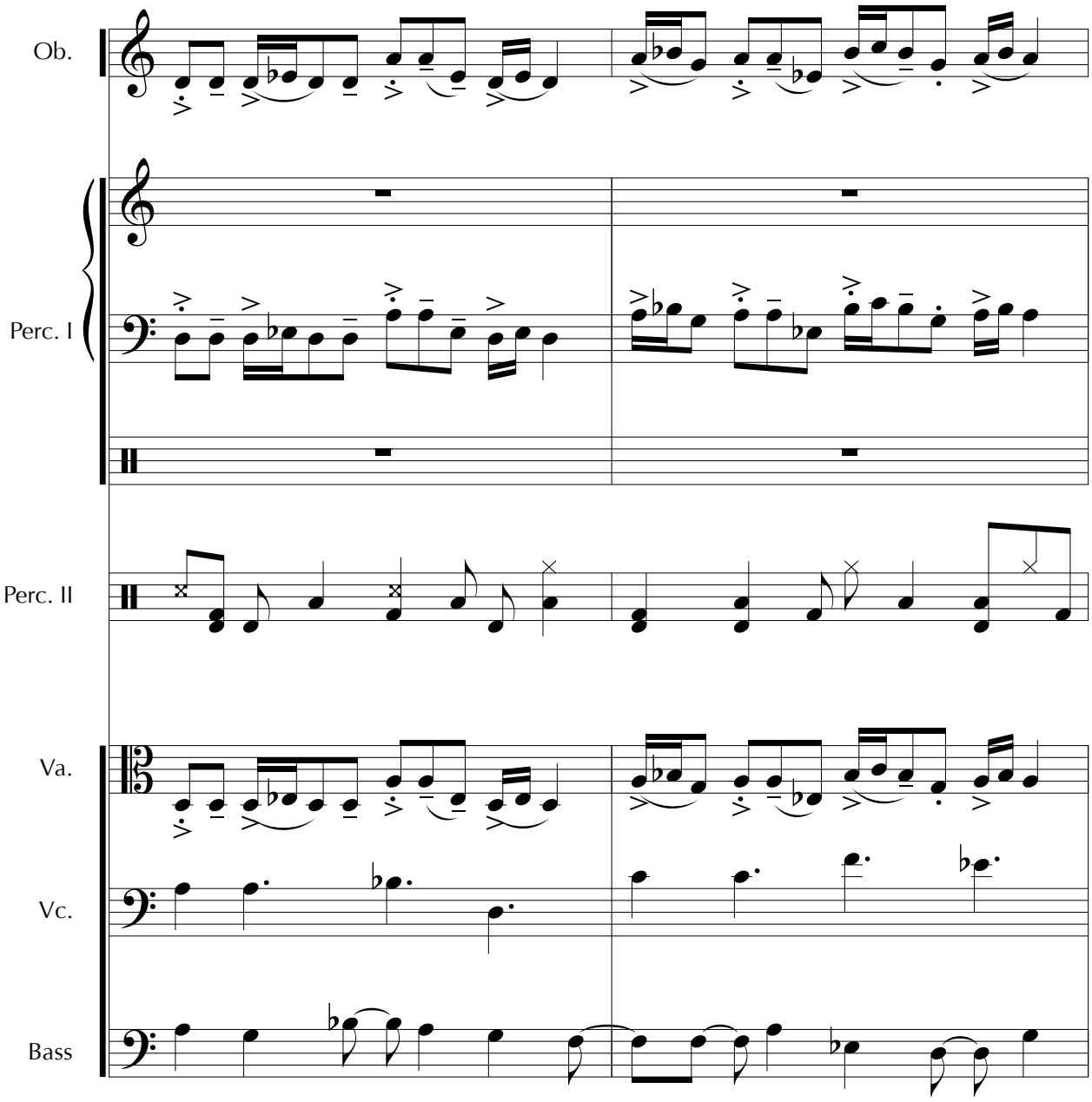

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
43
44

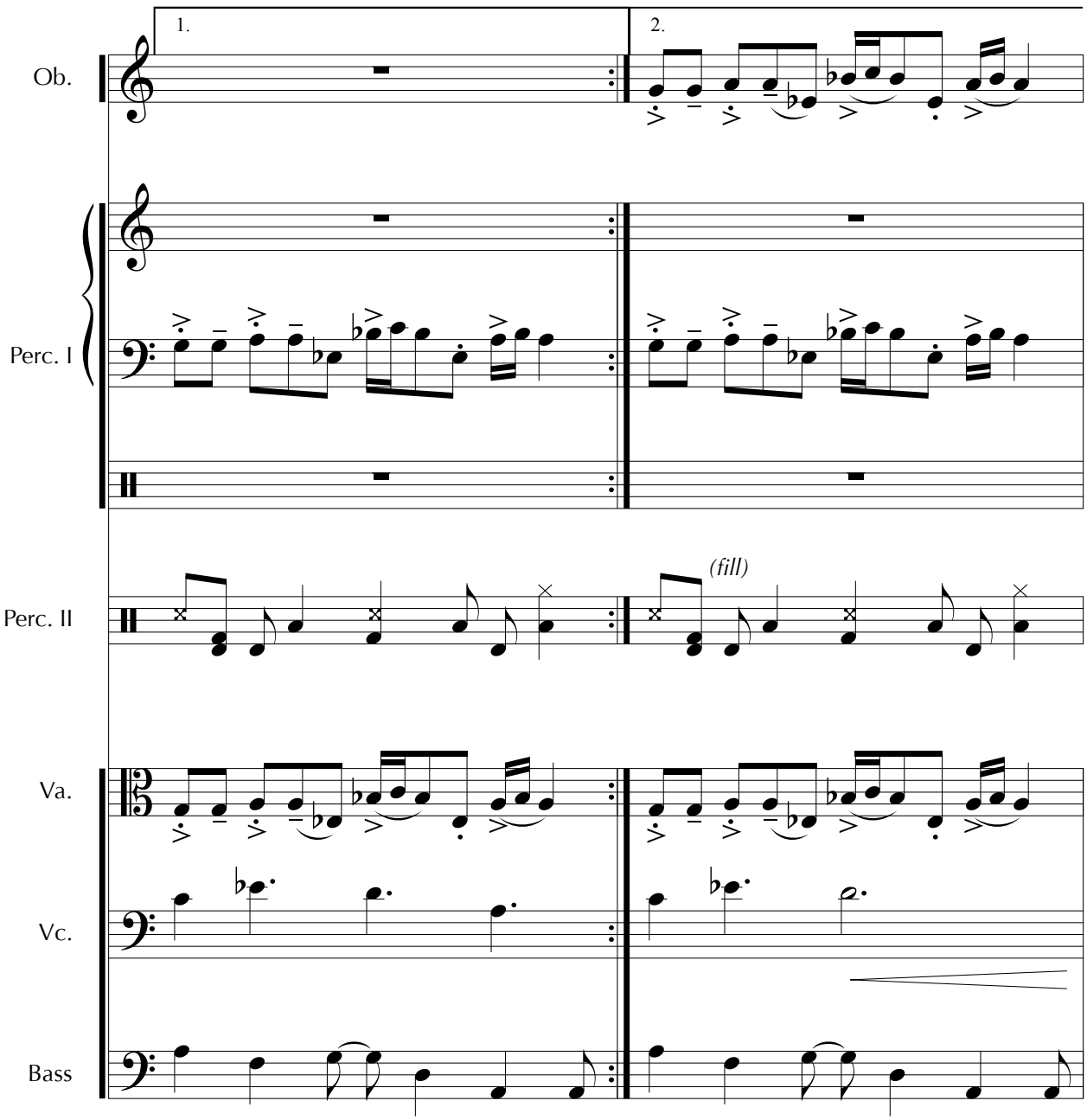

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
45
46

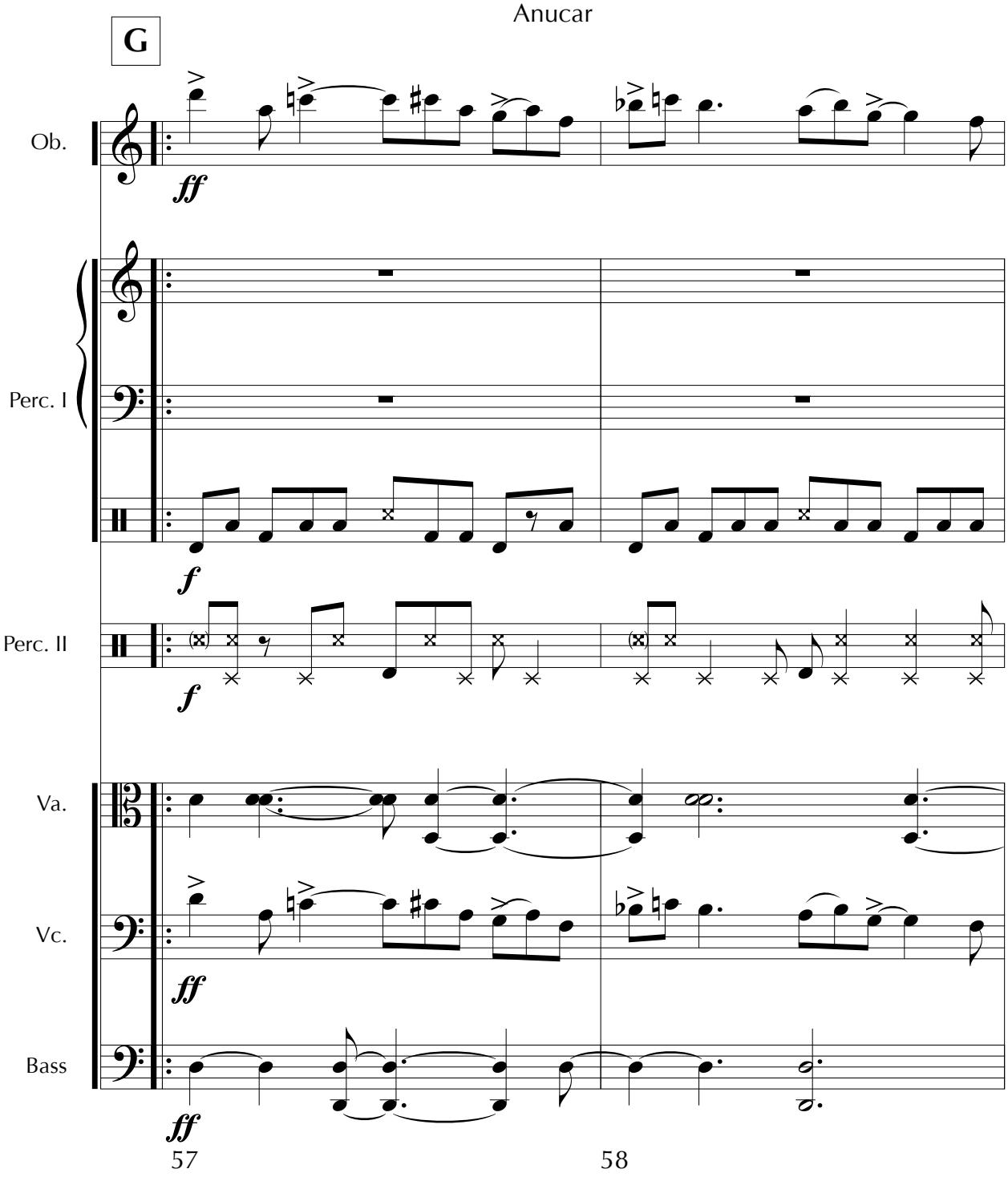

Anucar
F
2nd Time Only
Ob.
Perc. I
(fill)
Perc. II
Va.
arco
Vc.
pizz.
Bass
47
48

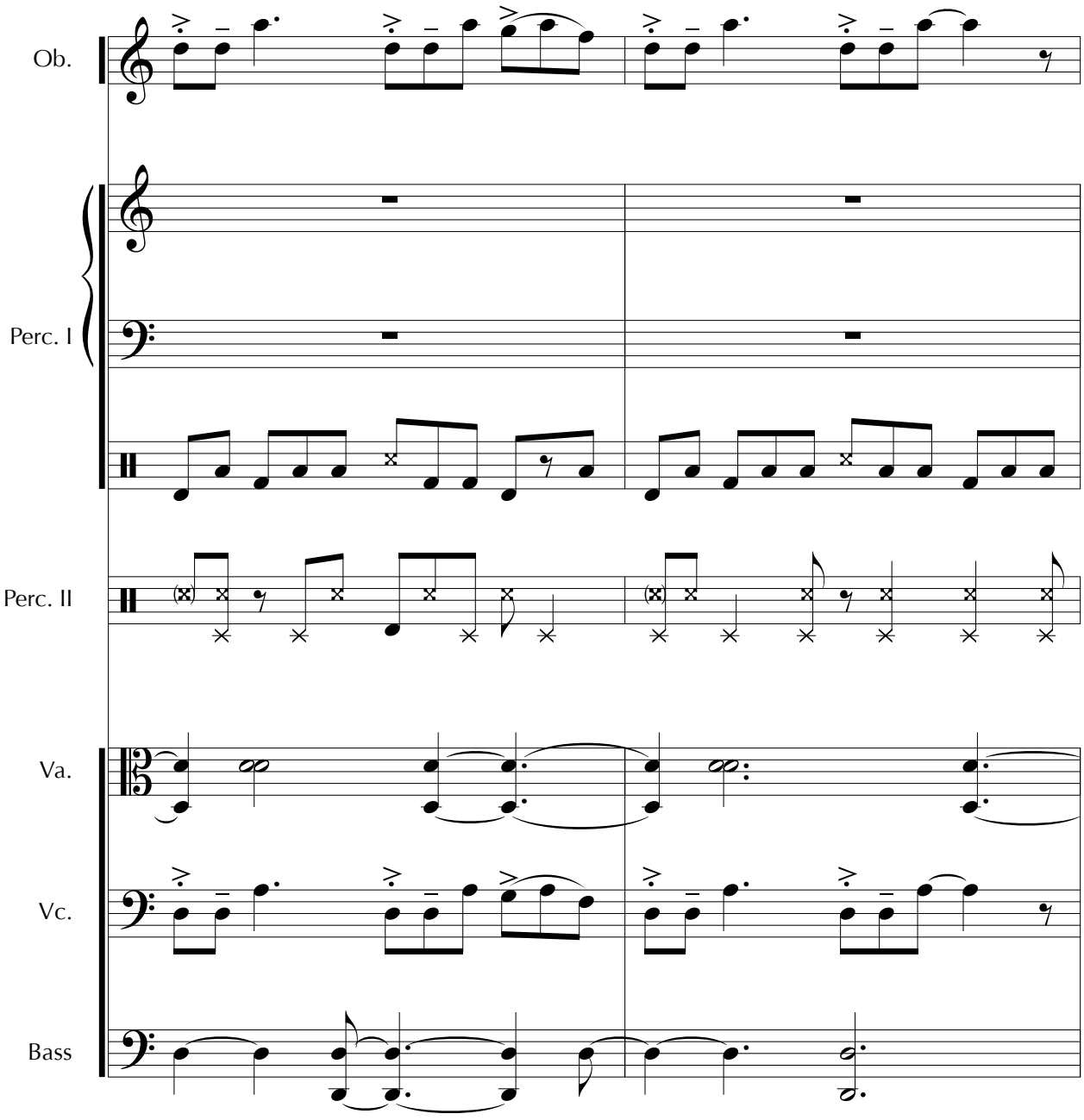

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
49
50

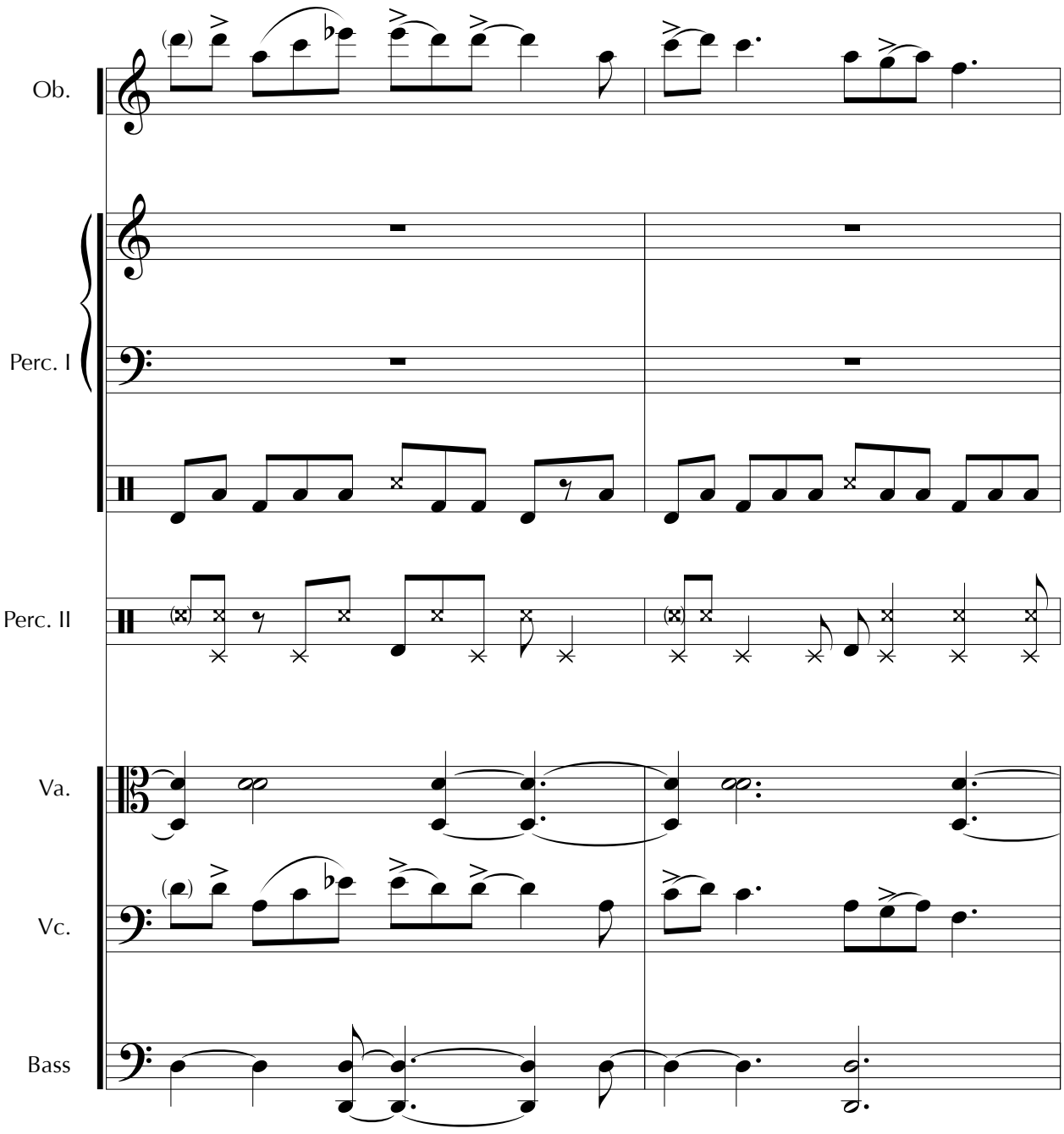

Ob.
cresc.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
51
52

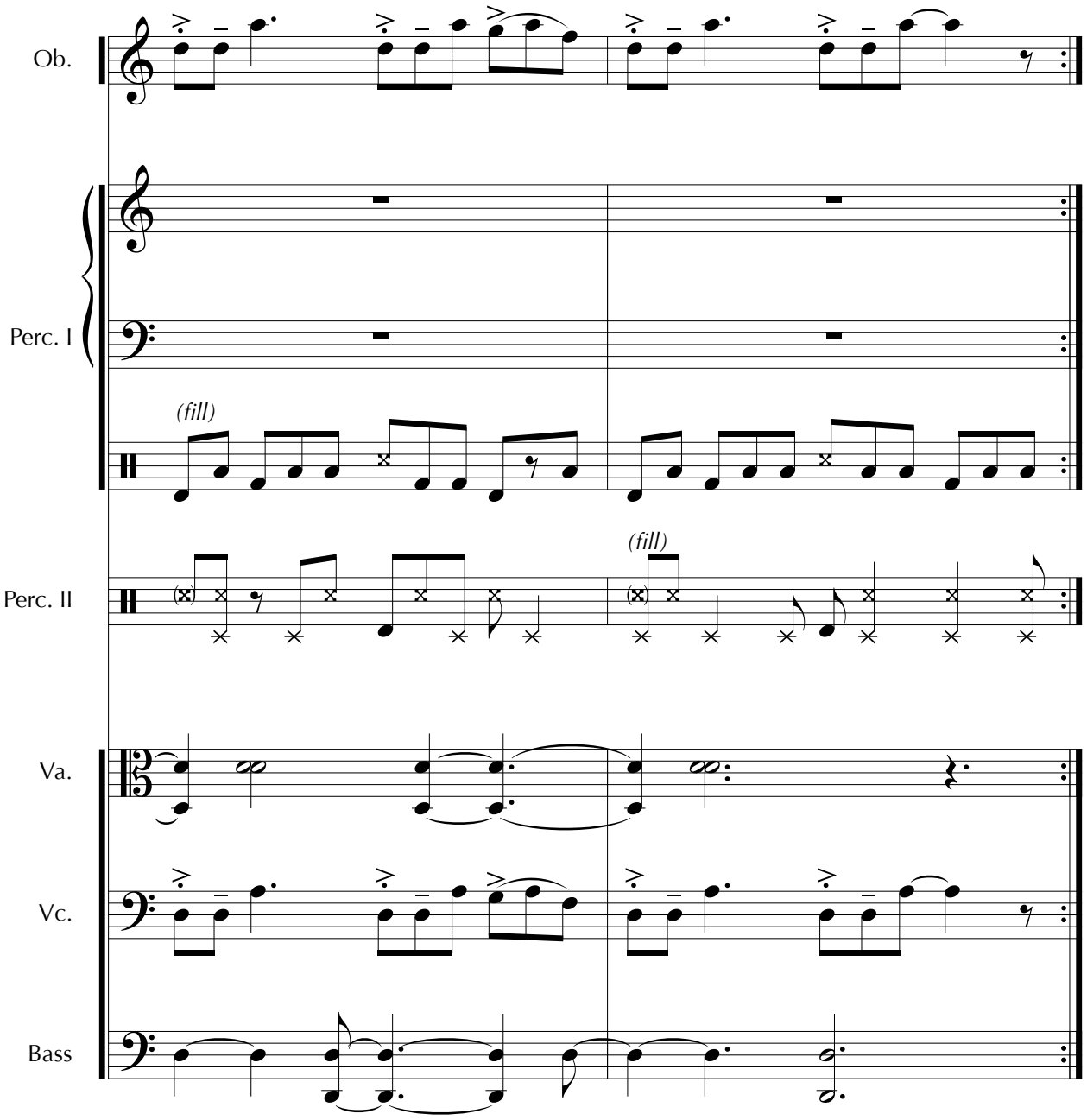

Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
53
54

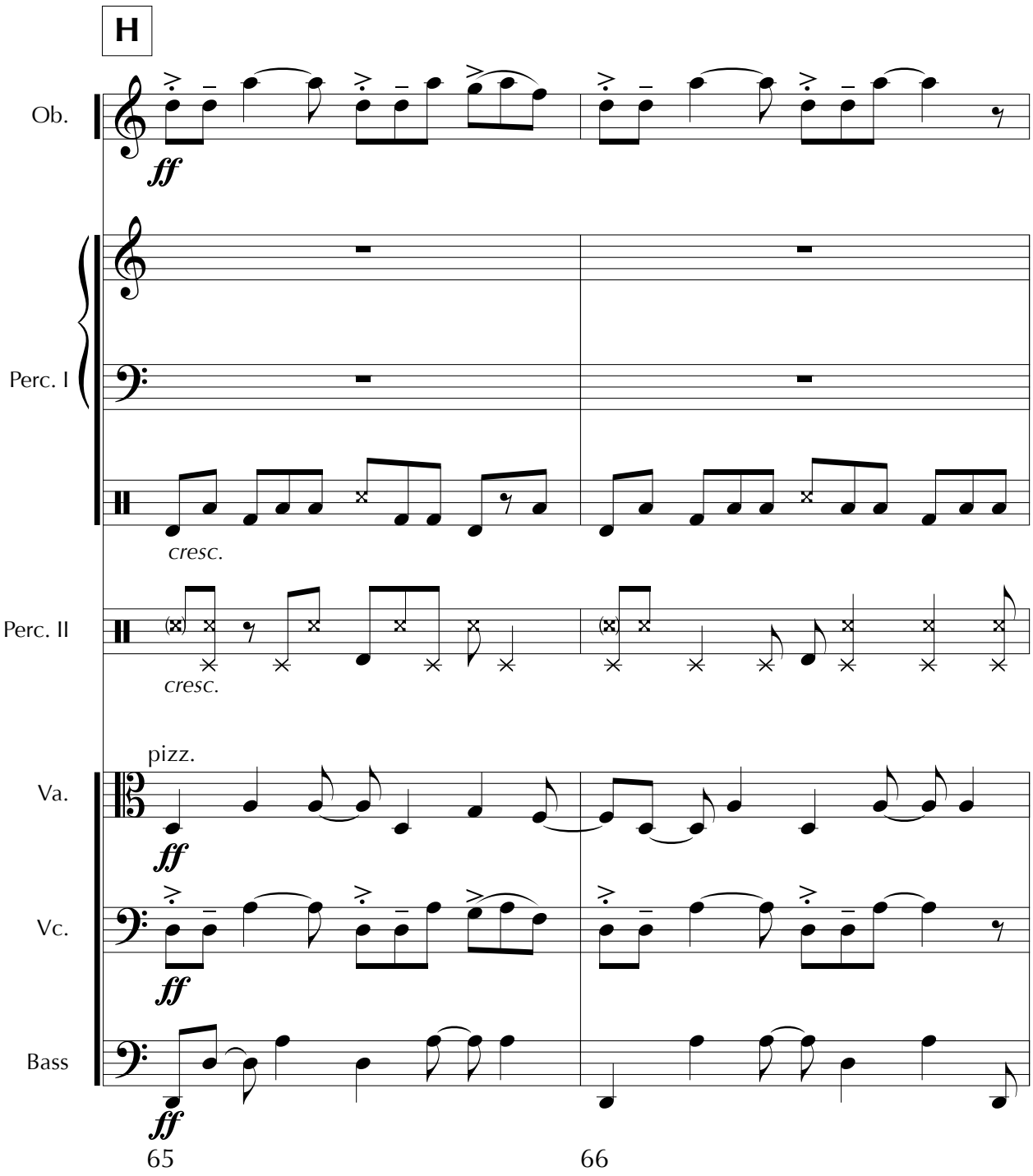

1.
2.
Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
(fill)
Va.
Vc.
Bass
55
56

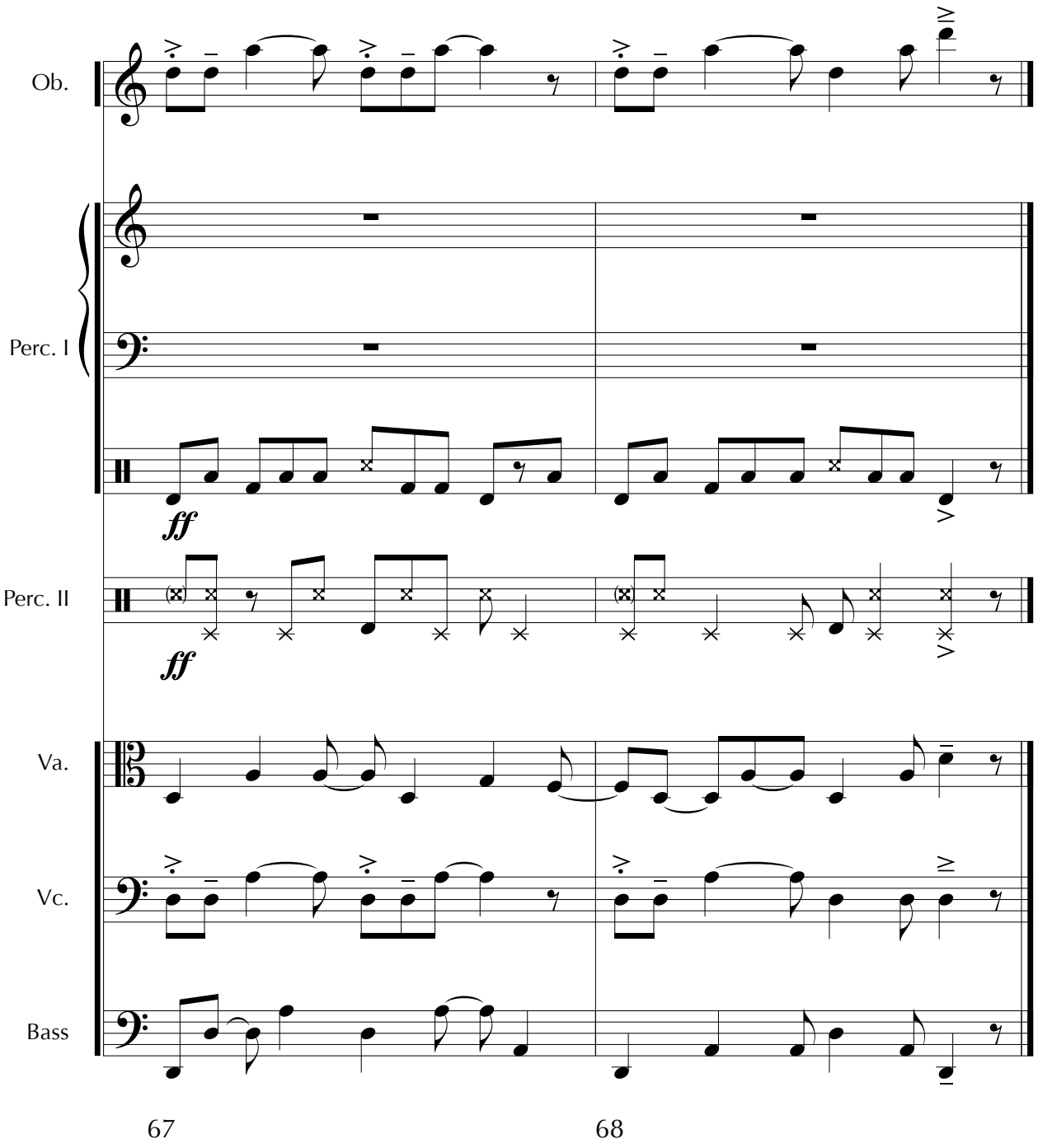

G
Ob.
ff
Perc. I
f
Perc. II
f
Va.
Vc.
ff
Bass
ff
57
58


Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
59
60


Ob.
Perc. I
Perc. II
Va.
Vc.
Bass
61
62


Ob.
Perc. I
(fill)
Perc. II
(fill)
Va.
Vc.
Bass
63
64


H
Ob.
ff
Perc. I
cresc.
Perc. II
cresc.
pizz.
Va.
ff
Vc.
ff
Bass
ff
65
66

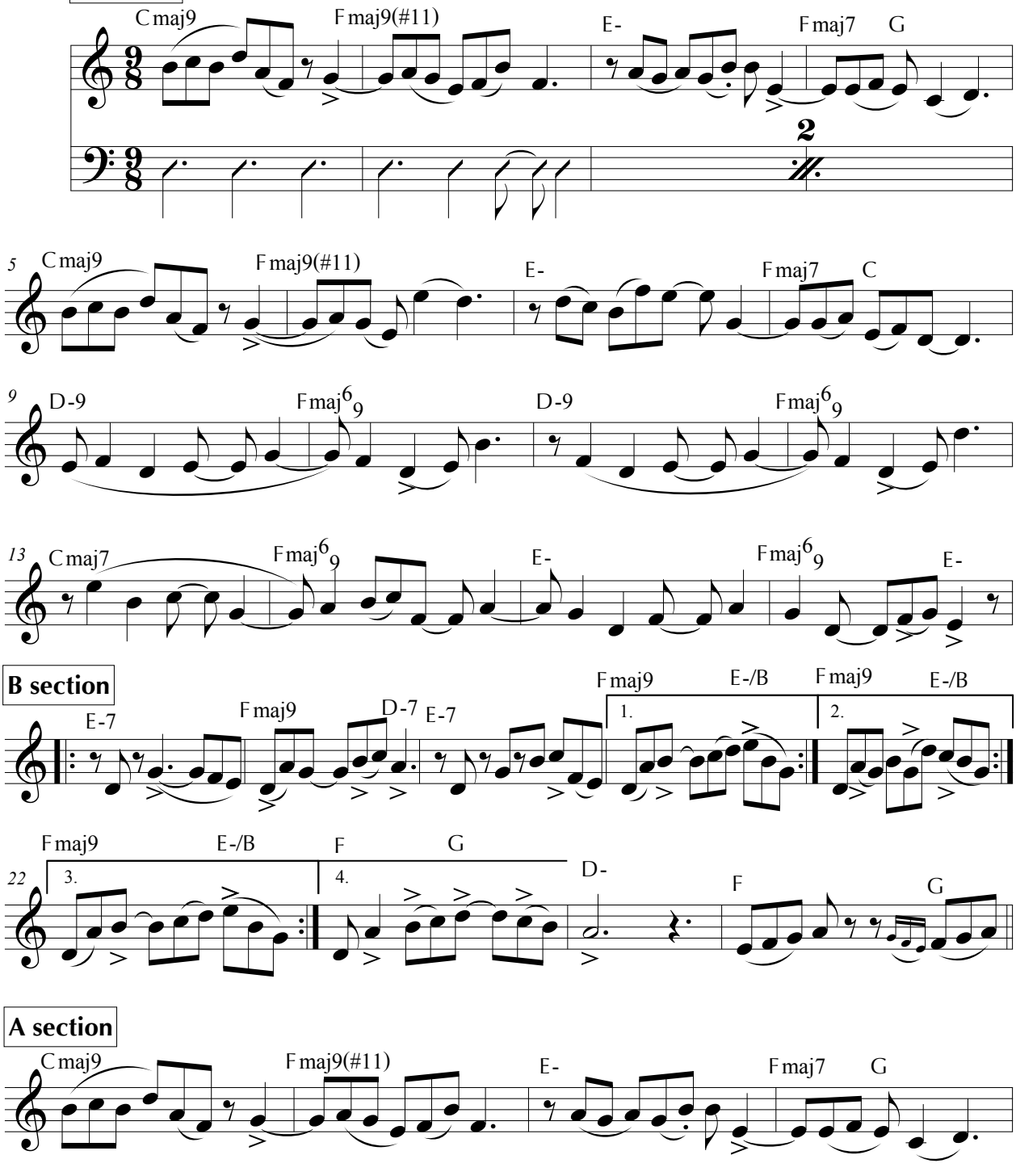

Ob.
Perc. I
ff
Perc. II
ff
Va.
Vc.
Bass
67
68

Chart

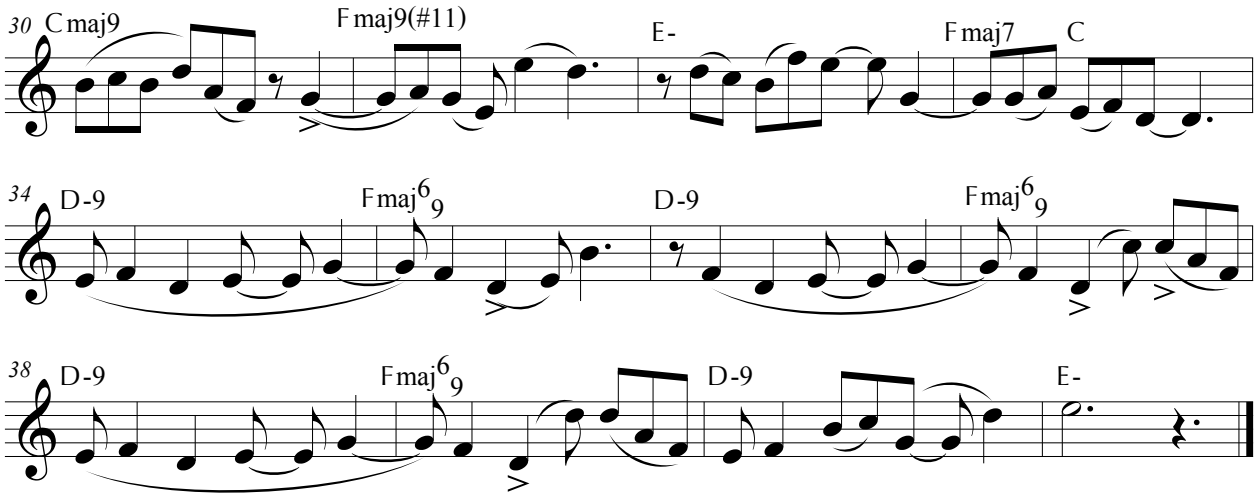
Blito-Slip-Jig

Nate Bliton

A section ♩. = 100



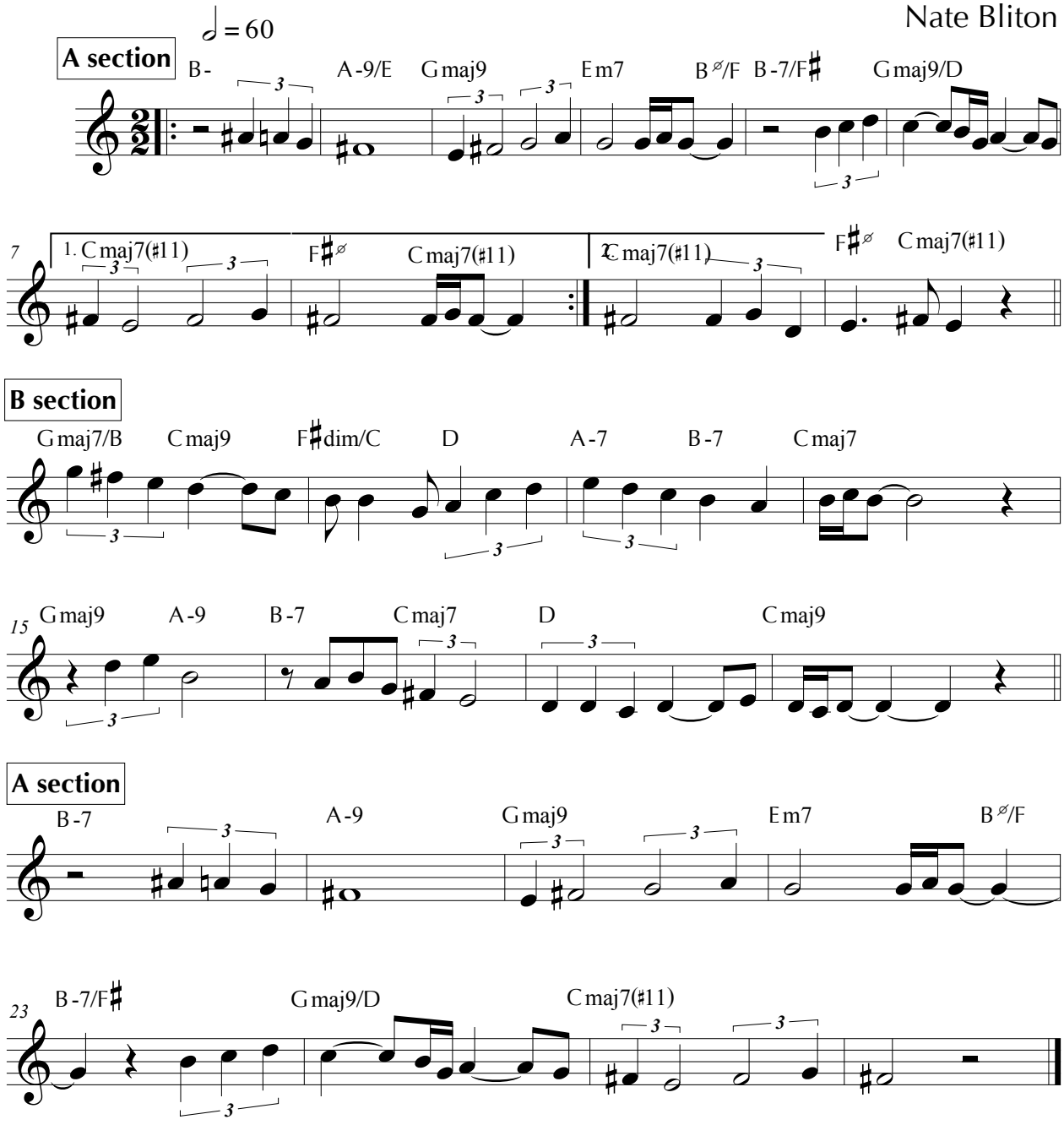
Blito-Slip-Jig



Chart

Measured Rain

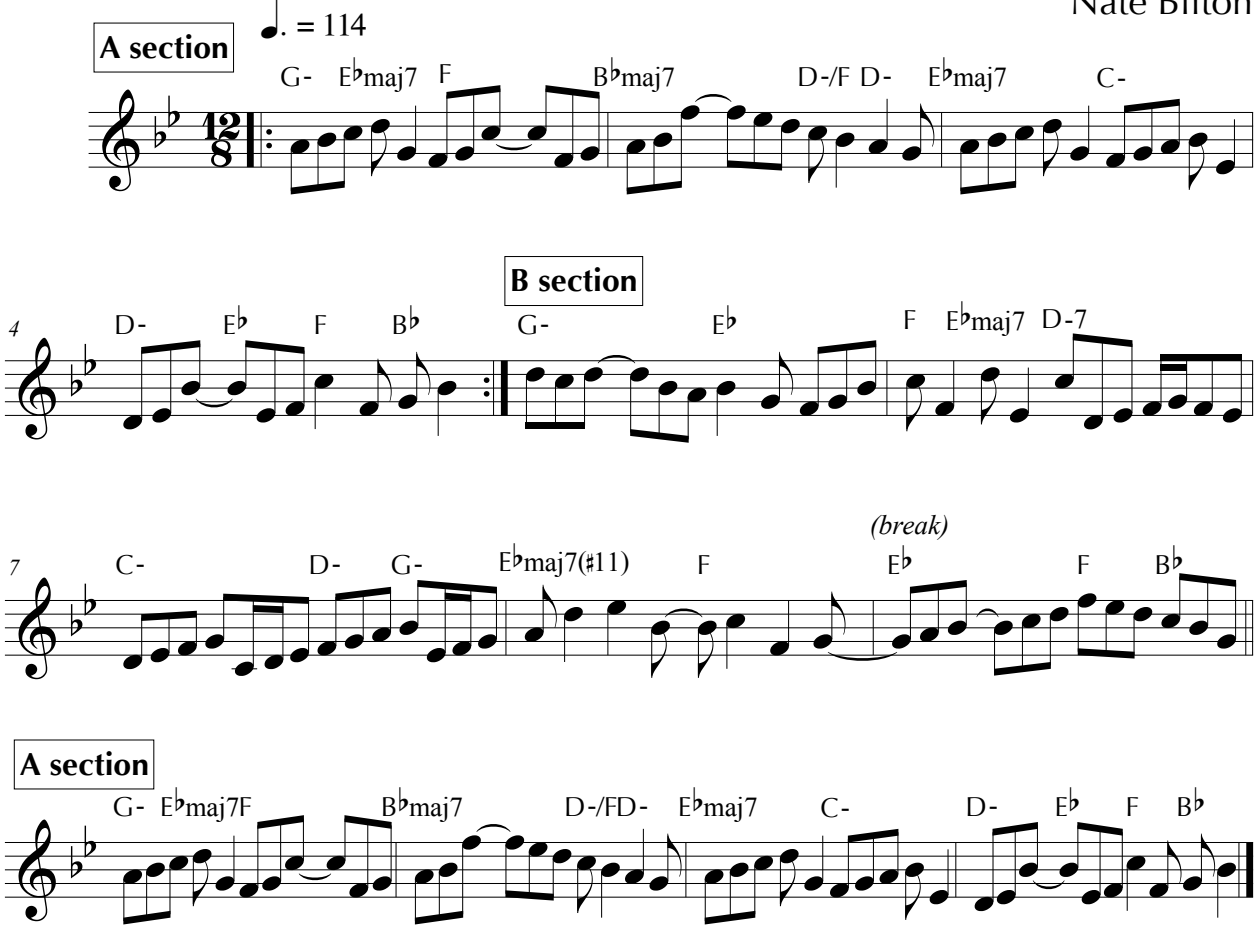
Nate Bliton



Chart

Resting on a Stair

Nate Bliton



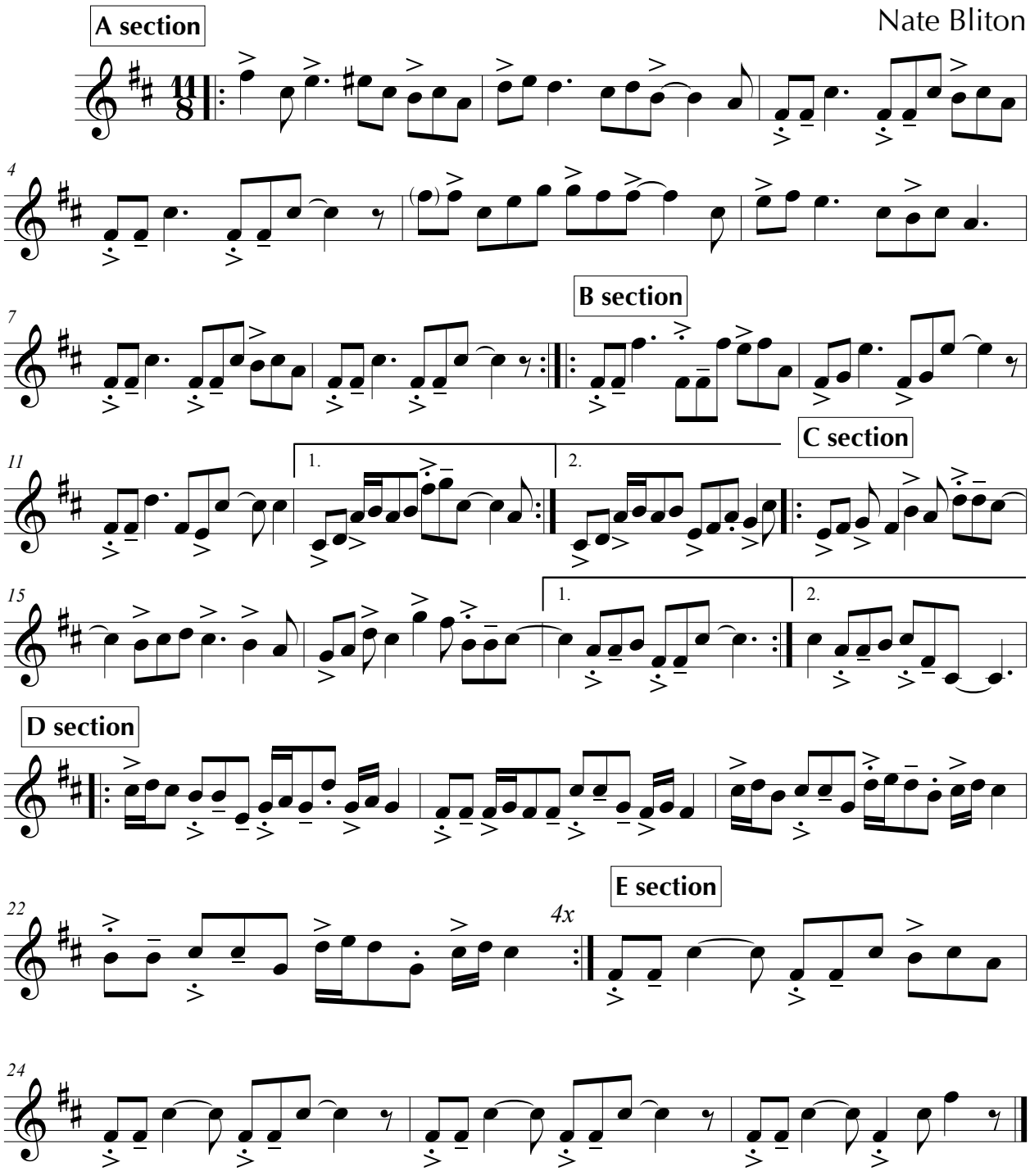
These are the original four tunes, written as to appear in a songbook. To varying degrees, the full scores of the four tunes could be thought of as transcriptions of performances of traditional arrangements of these four charts.

Chart

♩. = 114

Anucar

Nate Bliton



Form: A - B - A - C - A - D - A - E