Lucy McKnight

plunge

for two violas, cello, and two basses

2018

Program Notes:

This piece explores the feelings and imagery of my experiences in sauna and ice plunging culture in Finland. The first section, Sauna, is meant to convey slow warm breaths, gradually becoming more difficult or painful as the heat becomes overwhelming.

Escaping the heat, the sauna bather jumps into a hole carved into the ice-covered bay. The Ice Plunge section's overlapping shifting subdivisions are meant to convey the delightful yet frantic sensation of the freezing water surrounding the human. The interruptions of low "melting" moments are a sort of panicked attempt to calm down and combat the overwhelming iciness. As the ice water takes over the "melting" moments, it conquers the human and she gives in, climbing out onto land again.

From intense heat to intense cold, the human body, once out of water, achieves a strange feeling of equilibrium, a feeling of power against the cold air, a peaceful compromise of temperatures. In the Equilibrium section, the violas bring back the sauna material and the basses are a calmer continuation of the ice water. The cello is the human, in the midst of those two feelings and temperatures, combining low notes and harmonics and eventually finding peace.

Performance Notes:

General:

ST = sul tasto

SP = sul ponticello

----------→ = gradually change from one technique to the next

Sauna:

The first two notes of this section should arrive together, the remaining should be determined by each player's individual slow bow length, and should not necessarily land together.

= soft scratch tone created by moving bow vertically up or down fingerboard while still moving slightly horizontally to maintain bow direction

SP = hold last note on sul pont until everyone has arrived, then cue the next entrance

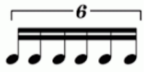
ST to SP

= quick vertical scratch, either from bow position ST to SP or SP to ST, on muted strings

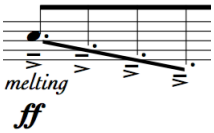
Ice Plunge:

slow = approximately

medium = approximately

fast = approximately 

Playing within and between these approximate tremolos/subdivisions should be very free.



= initial pitch should be exact, but the headless notes after should be careless and out of tune, slightly pitch bending to move from one indeterminate pitch to the next

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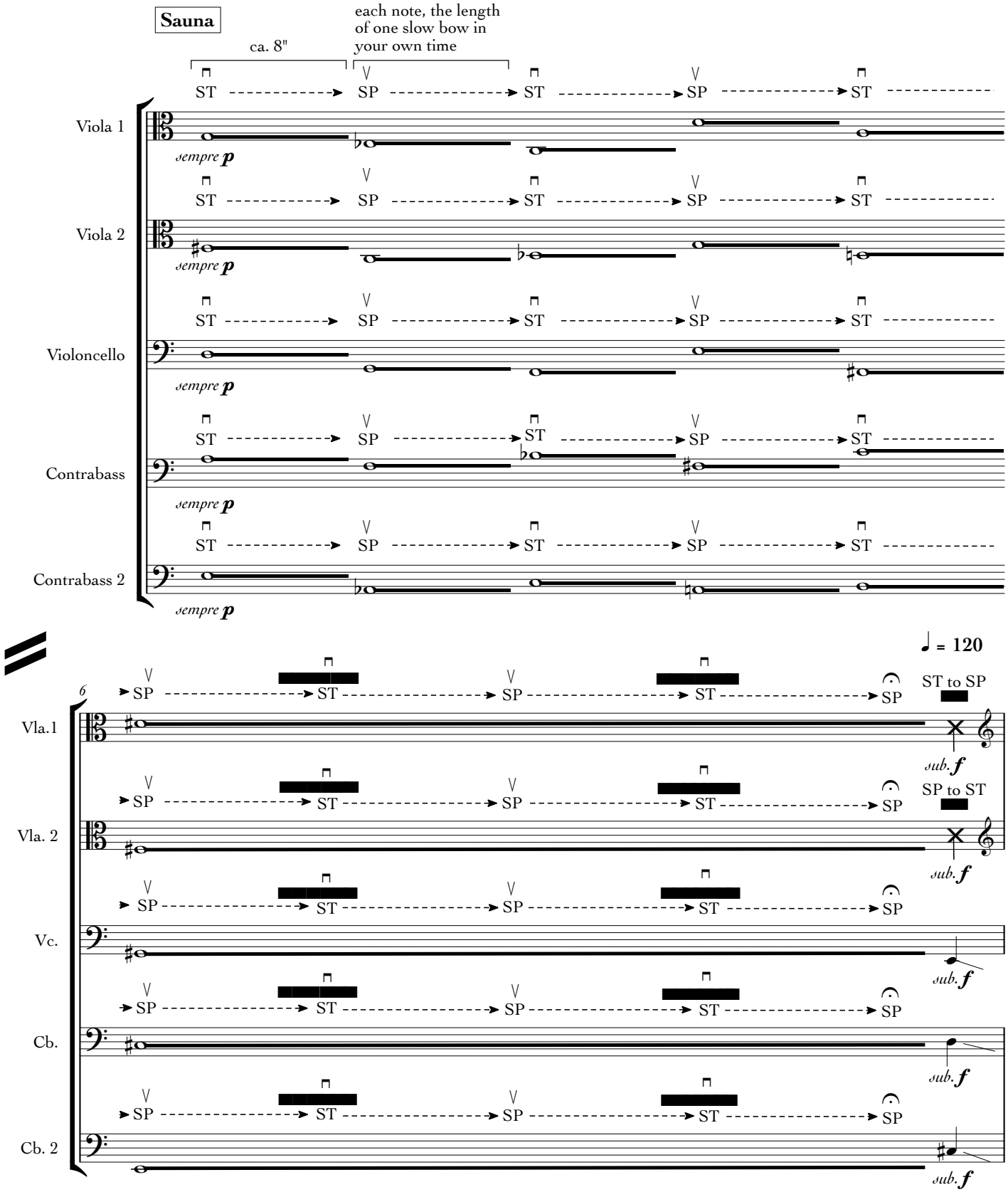
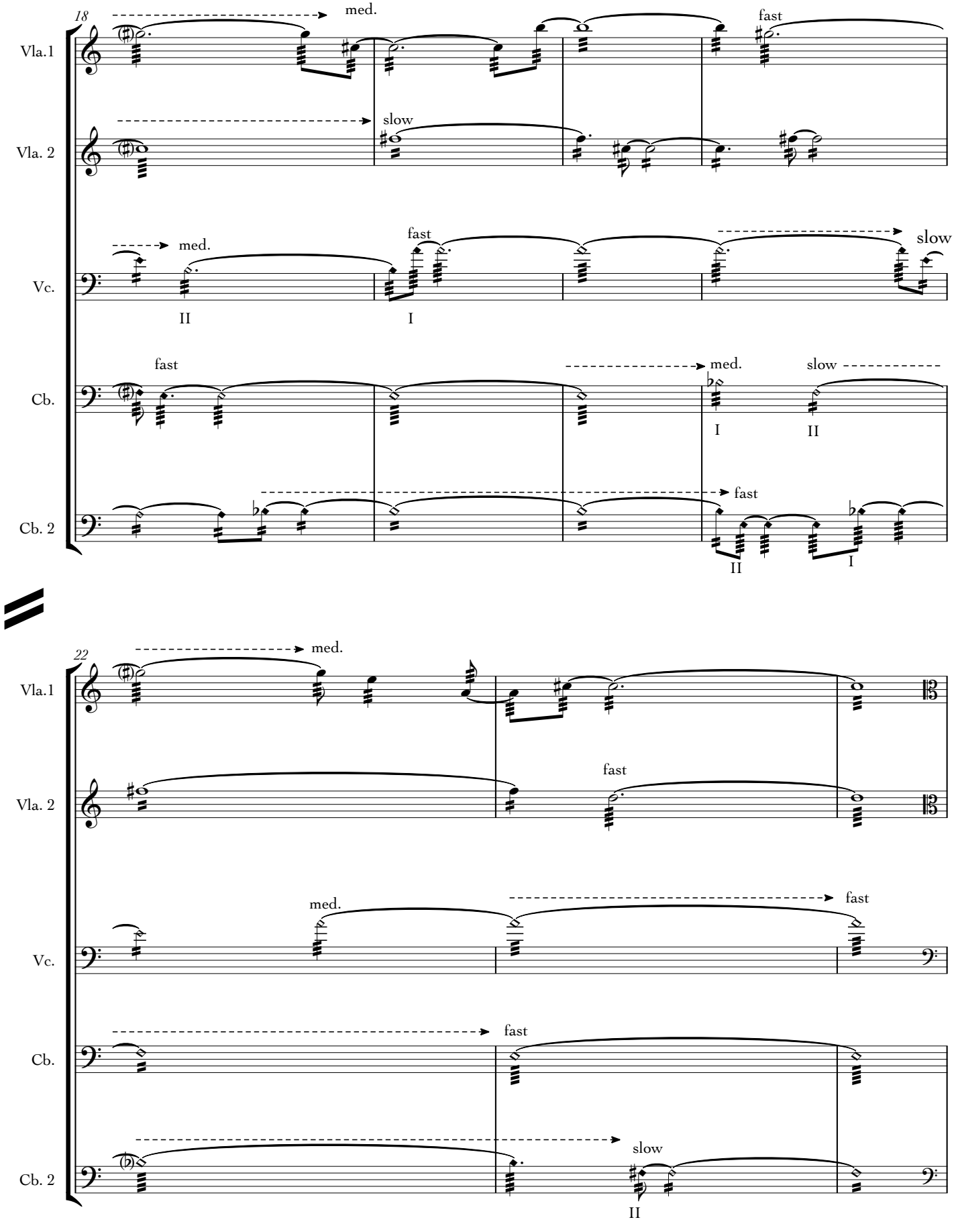
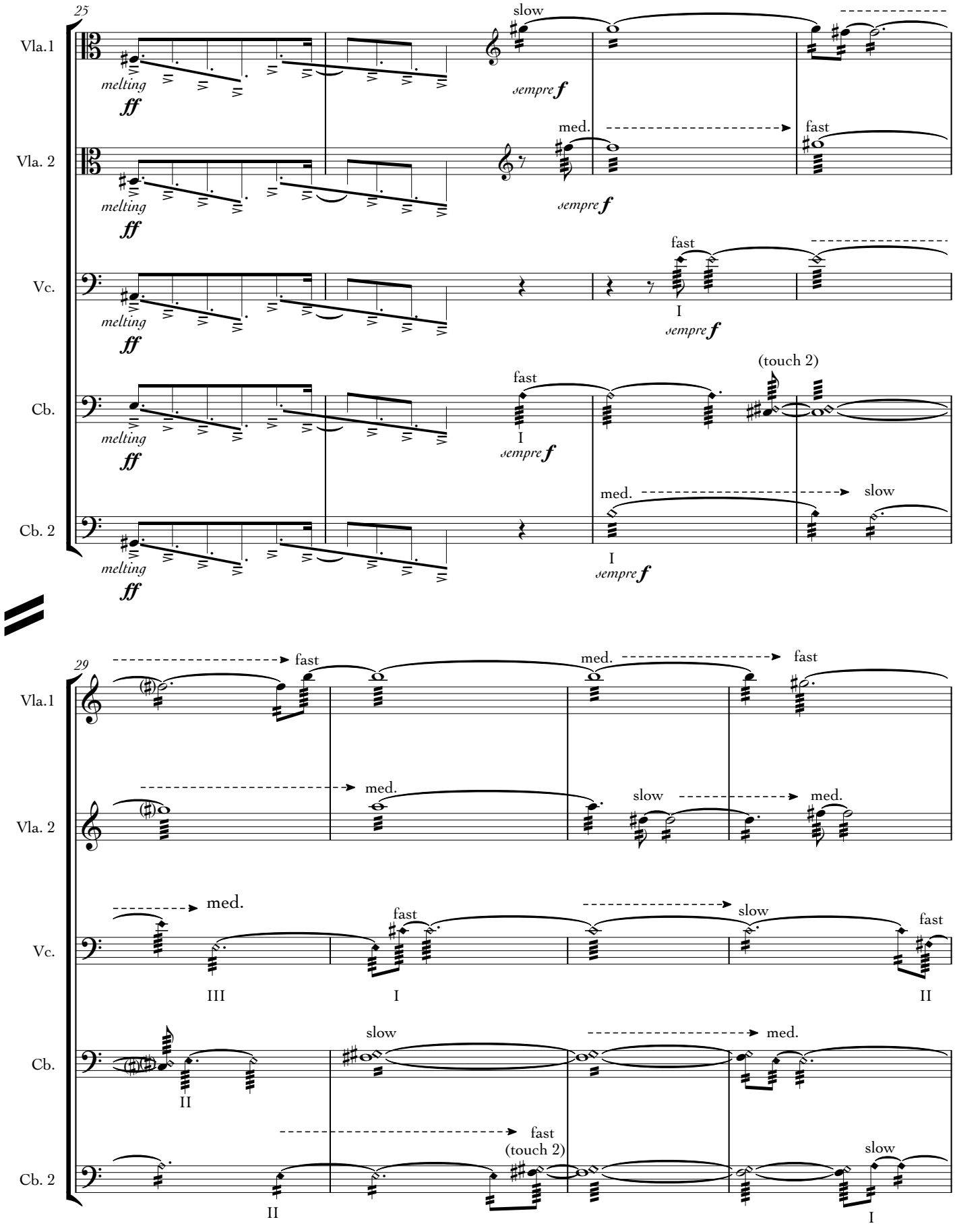
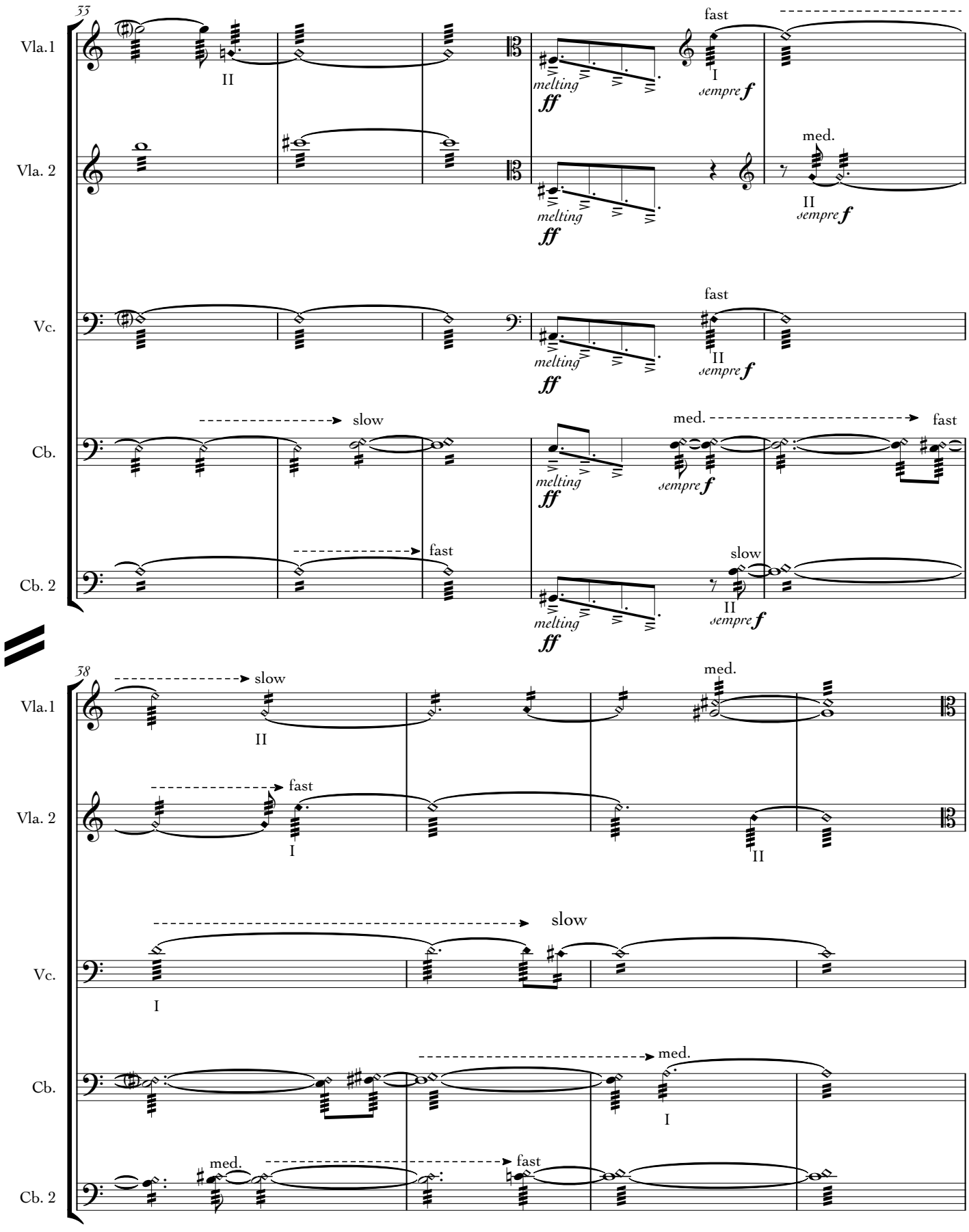
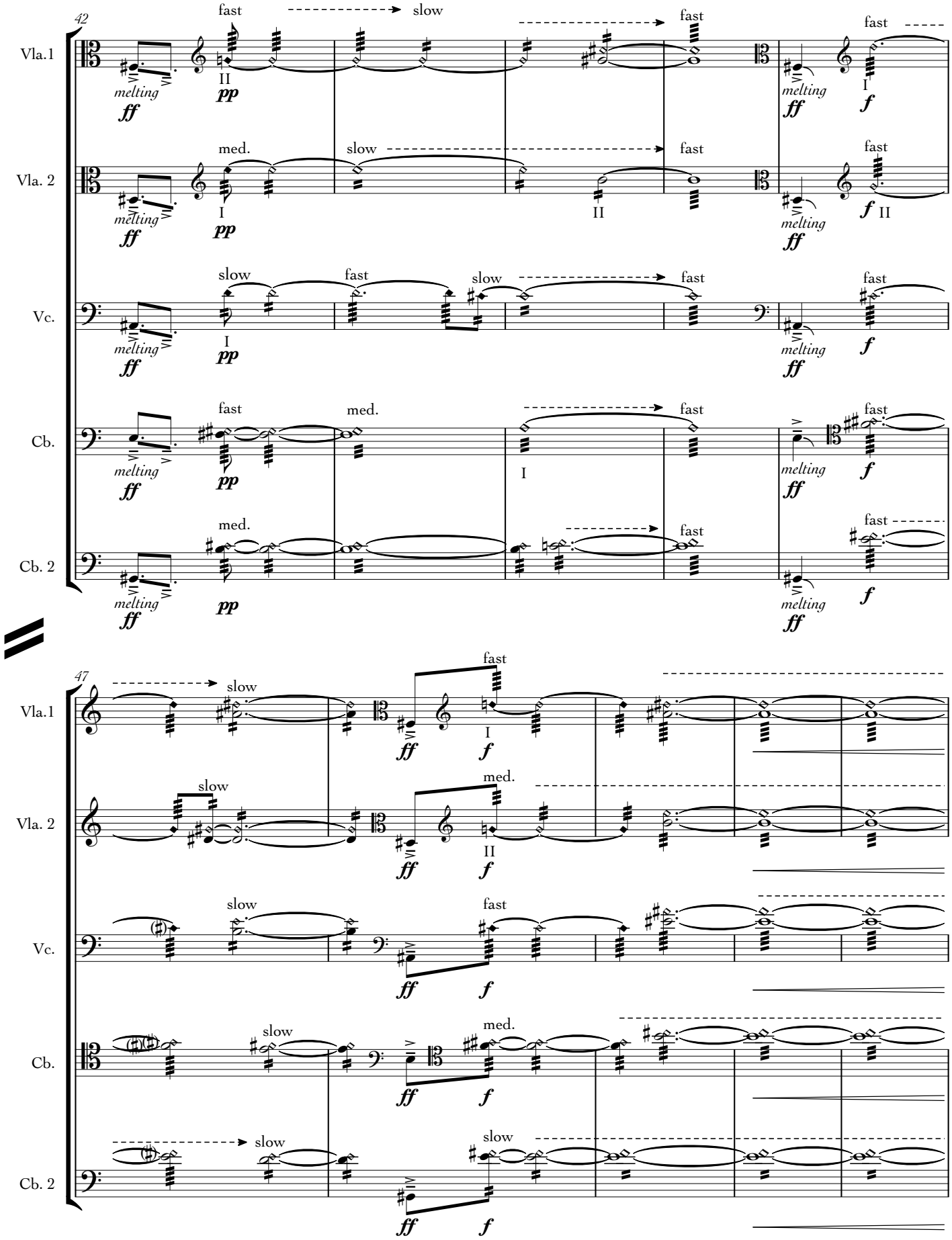


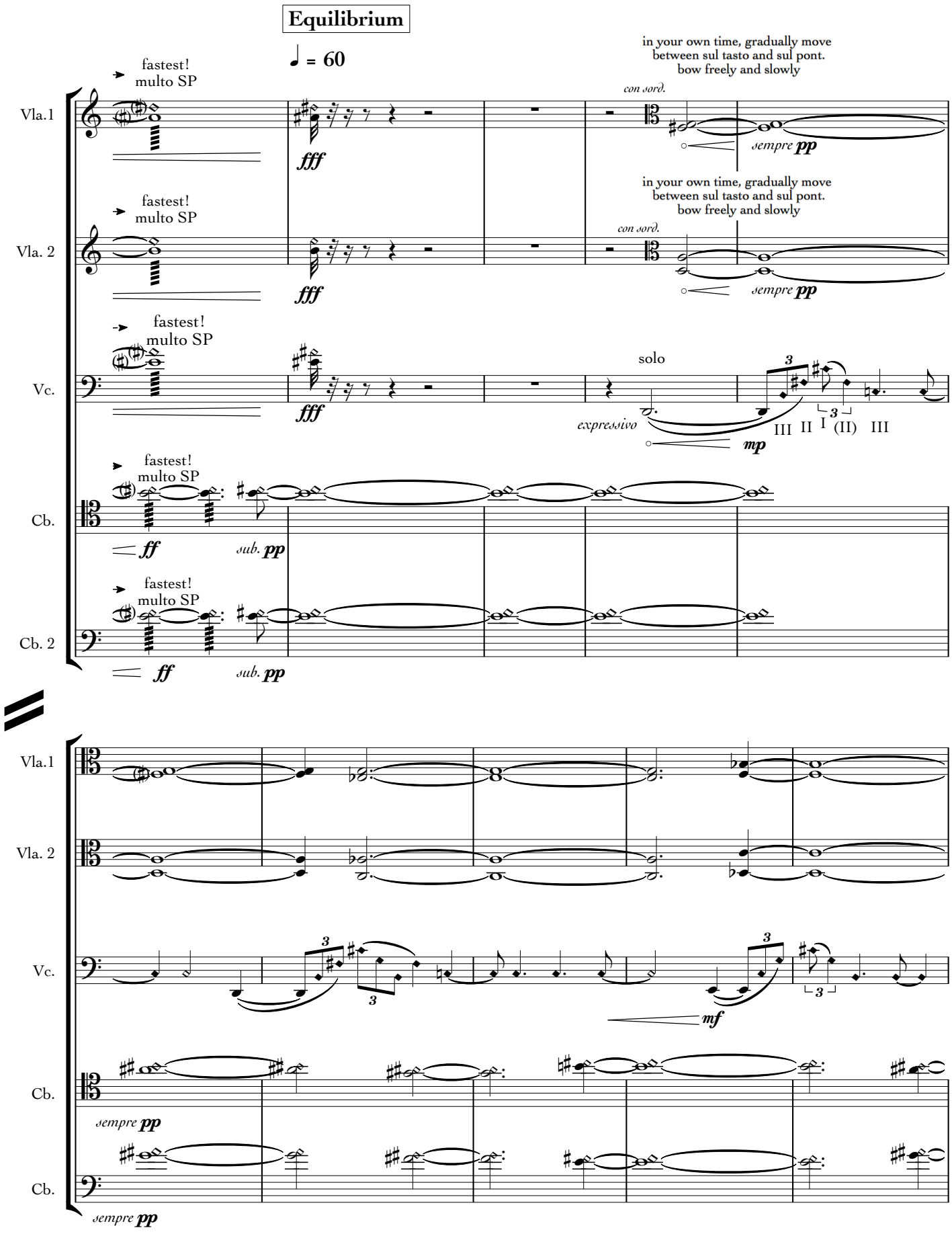
♩ = 120 exhilirating, tingly


18
Vla.1
Vla. 2
Vc.
Cb.
Cb. 2
med.
fast
slow
med.
fast
slow
II
I
fast
med.
slow
I
II
fast
II
I
22
Vla.1
Vla. 2
Vc.
Cb.
Cb. 2
med.
fast
med.
fast
fast
slow
II


25
Vla.1
Vla. 2
Vc.
Cb.
Cb. 2
melting
ff
slow
sempre f
med.
fast
I
(touch 2)
29
III
II


33
Vla.1
Vla. 2
Vc.
Cb.
Cb. 2
II
melting
ff
fast
I
sempre f
med.
slow
38
I

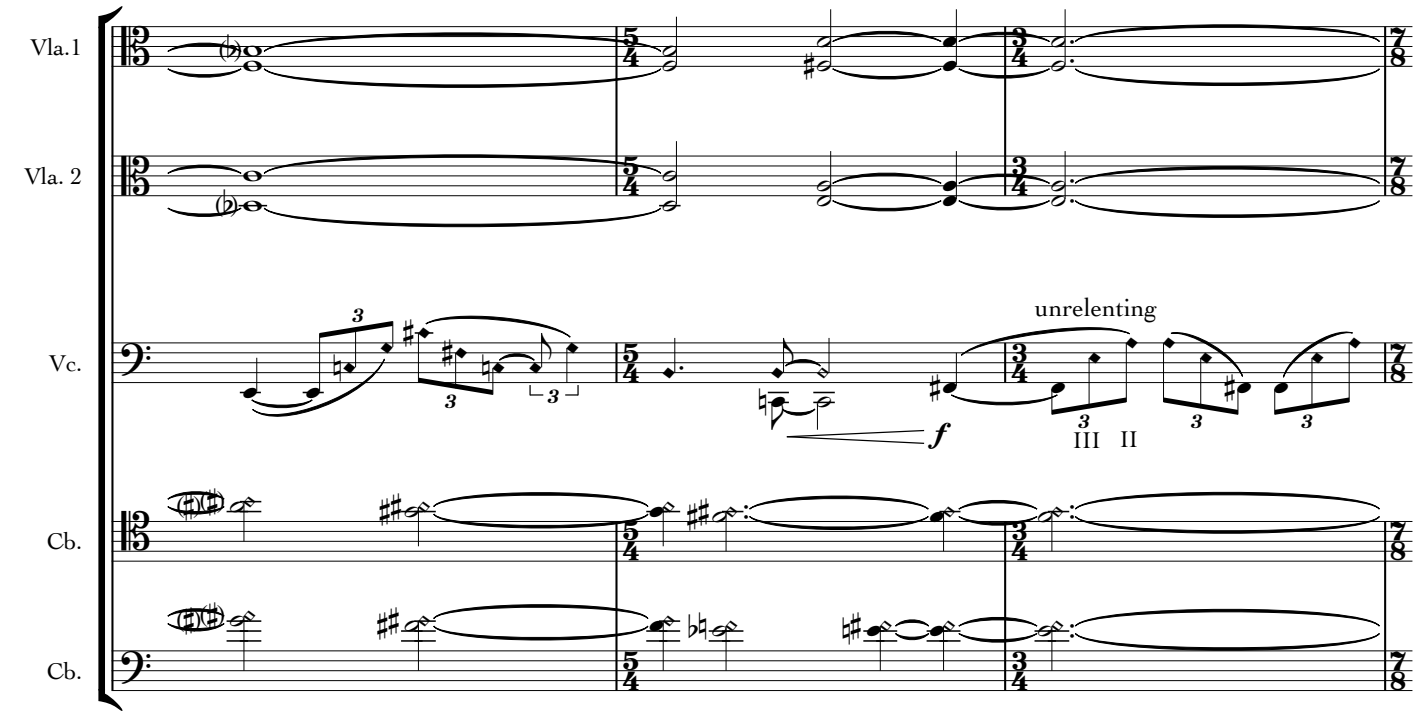

42
Vla.1
Vla. 2
Vc.
Cb.
Cb. 2
fast
slow
med.
melting
ff
pp
f
I
II
47

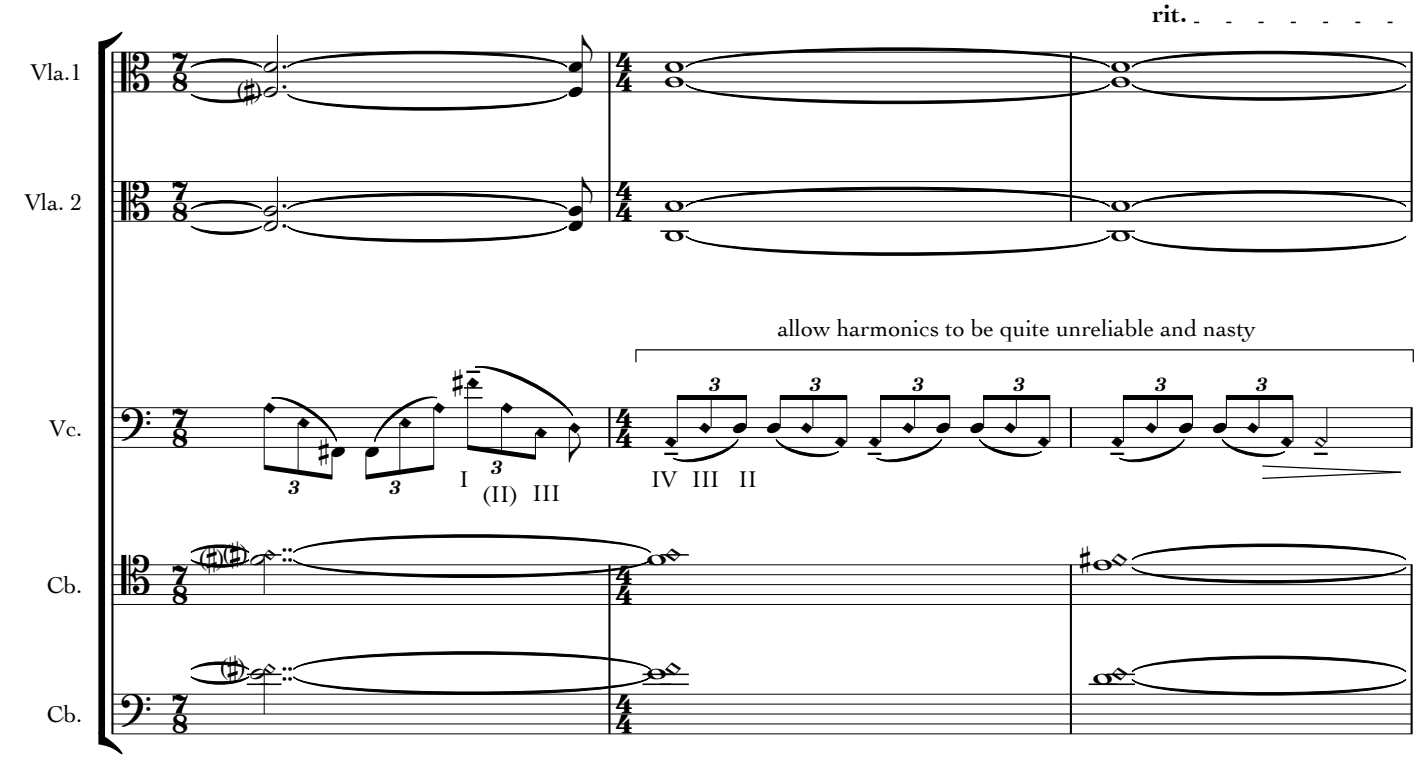

Equilibrium
♩ = 60
Vla.1
Vla. 2
Vc.
Cb.
Cb. 2
fastest!
multo SP
fff
in your own time, gradually move
between sul tasto and sul pont.
bow freely and slowly
con sord.
sempre pp
solo
expressivo
mp
III II I (II) III
ff
sub. pp
mf
sempre pp

Faster

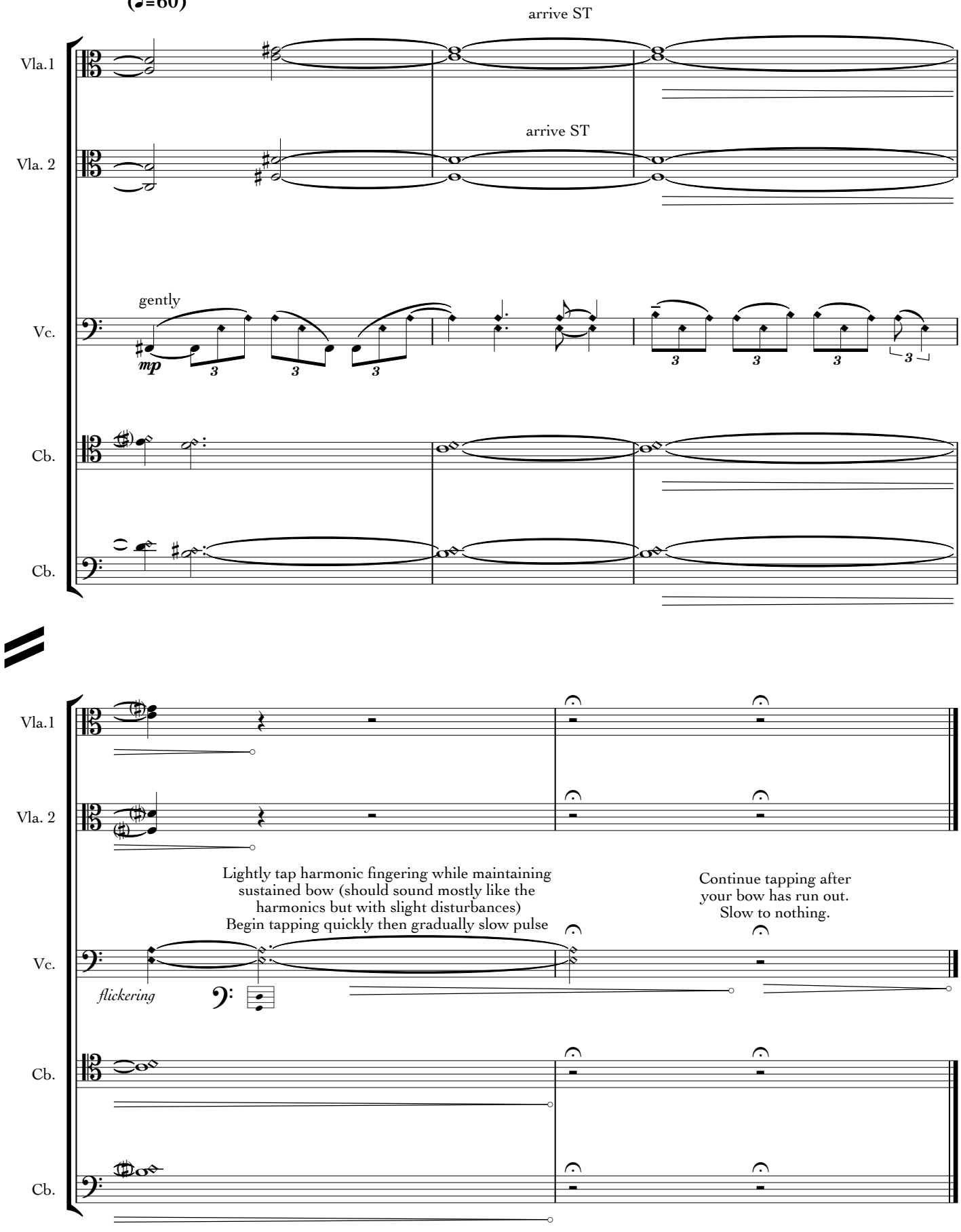
(♩=ca. 80)

accel.





Slow
(♩=60)


arrive ST
Vla.1
arrive ST
Vla. 2
gently
mp
Vc.
Cb.
Cb.
Vla.1
Vla. 2
Lightly tap harmonic fingering while maintaining
sustained bow (should sound mostly like the
harmonics but with slight disturbances)
Begin tapping quickly then gradually slow pulse
Continue tapping after
your bow has run out.
Slow to nothing.
Vc.
flickering
Cb.
Cb.