Matt Browne

Great Danger, Keep Out

for String Quartet

2013

Copyright © 2013 Maestoso Music

Program Note

This piece was written for my good friends of the Tesla Quartet. And (not coincidentally) it is meant to be a musical portrait of the famed scientist, Nikola Tesla. Tesla was famous for many inventions and discoveries, including alternating current, wireless radio transmission, and even a fabled death ray. The title "Great Danger, Keep Out" is a variation on a sign that was posted outside of his Colorado Springs laboratory, which housed an fifty-seven-foot *tesla coil* (one of Tesla's more famous inventions) that reportedly generated the largest manmade lightning bolts to this day (and was also the cause of a citywide blackout). The music is greatly inspired by the following account of the phenomenon by Tesla biographers, Hunt and Draper:

> "The crackling and snap repeated and then came a tremendous upsurge of sound as the power built up. There was a crescendo of vicious snaps above. The noises became machine-gun staccato, then roared to artillery intensity. Ghostly sparks danced a macabre routine all over the laboratory. There was a smell of sulfur that might be coming from hell itself. A weird blue light spread all over the room. Flames began to jump from the ball at the top of the mast- first a few feet long- then longer and brighter- thicker, bluer. More emanations until they reached rod like proportions thick as an arm and with a length of over 130 feet. The heavens reverberated with a terrific thunder that could be heard 15 miles over the ridge to Cripple Creek."

While the programmatic "electrifying" essence of the work is clearly evident, I also wanted to include a few "easter eggs" about Tesla's life, in order to more faithfully represent the famous inventor. These include things like his lifelong obsession with the number three (many of the melodies are based off of thirds; the tritone features prominently in harmonic and melodic material) and the opening tempo indication ("With vigor and vitality"), which is a direct quote spoken by Samuel Clemens upon experiencing some of the therapeutic vibrations caused by one of Tesla's oscillators.

This piece was written for and is dedicated to the Tesla Quartet.

Duration: c. 4 minutes

www.mattbrownecomposer.com

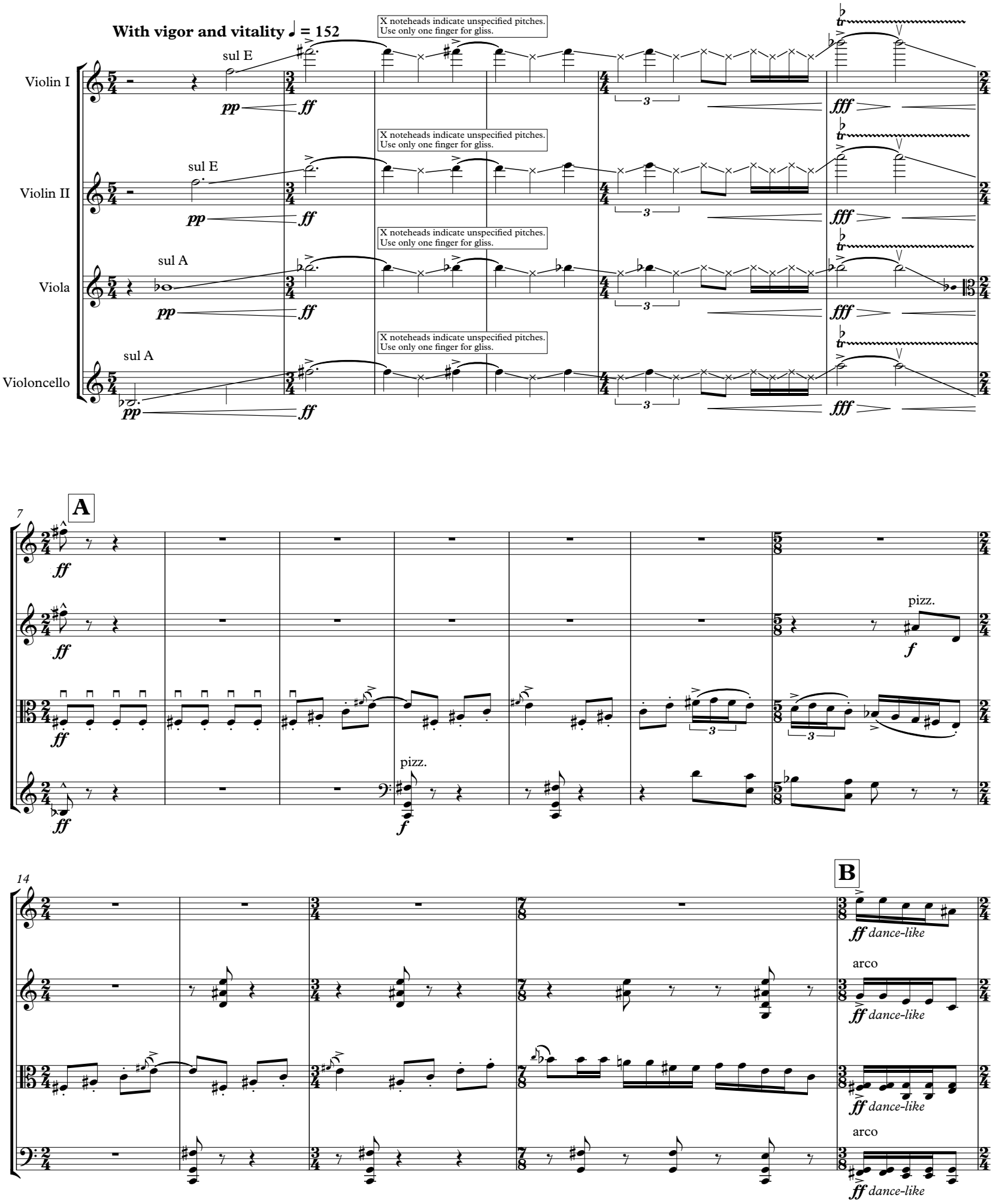
FULL SCORE

Written for the Tesla Quartet

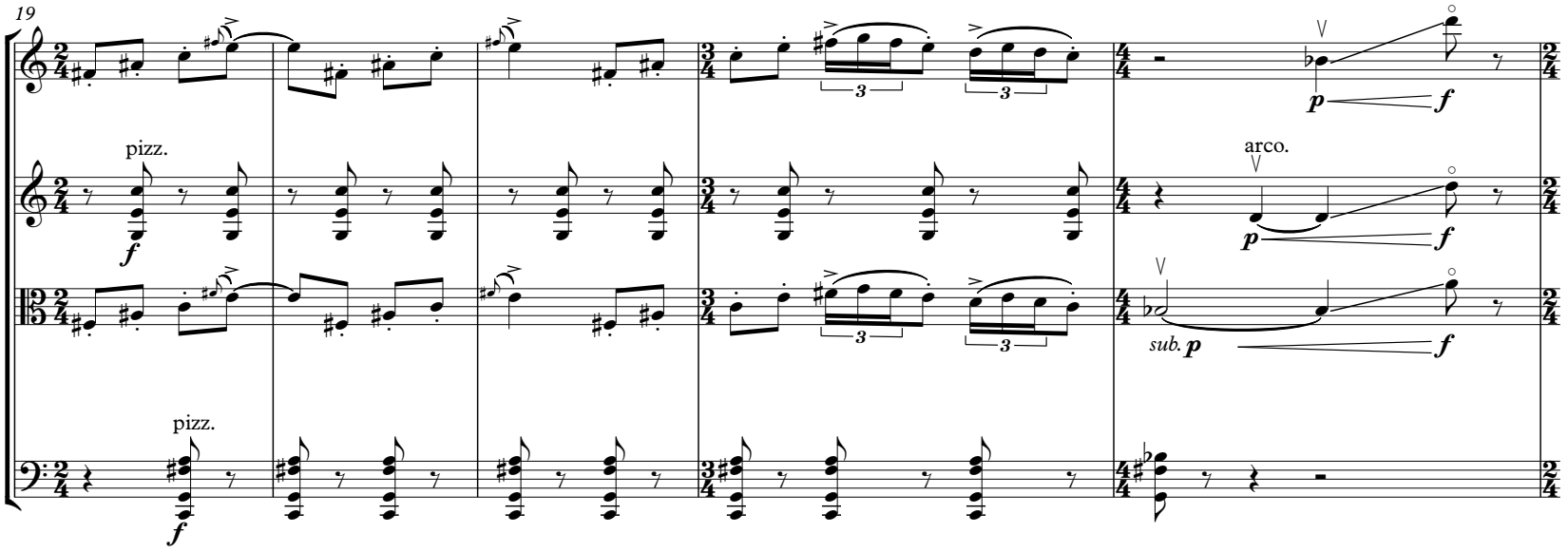
Great Danger, Keep Out

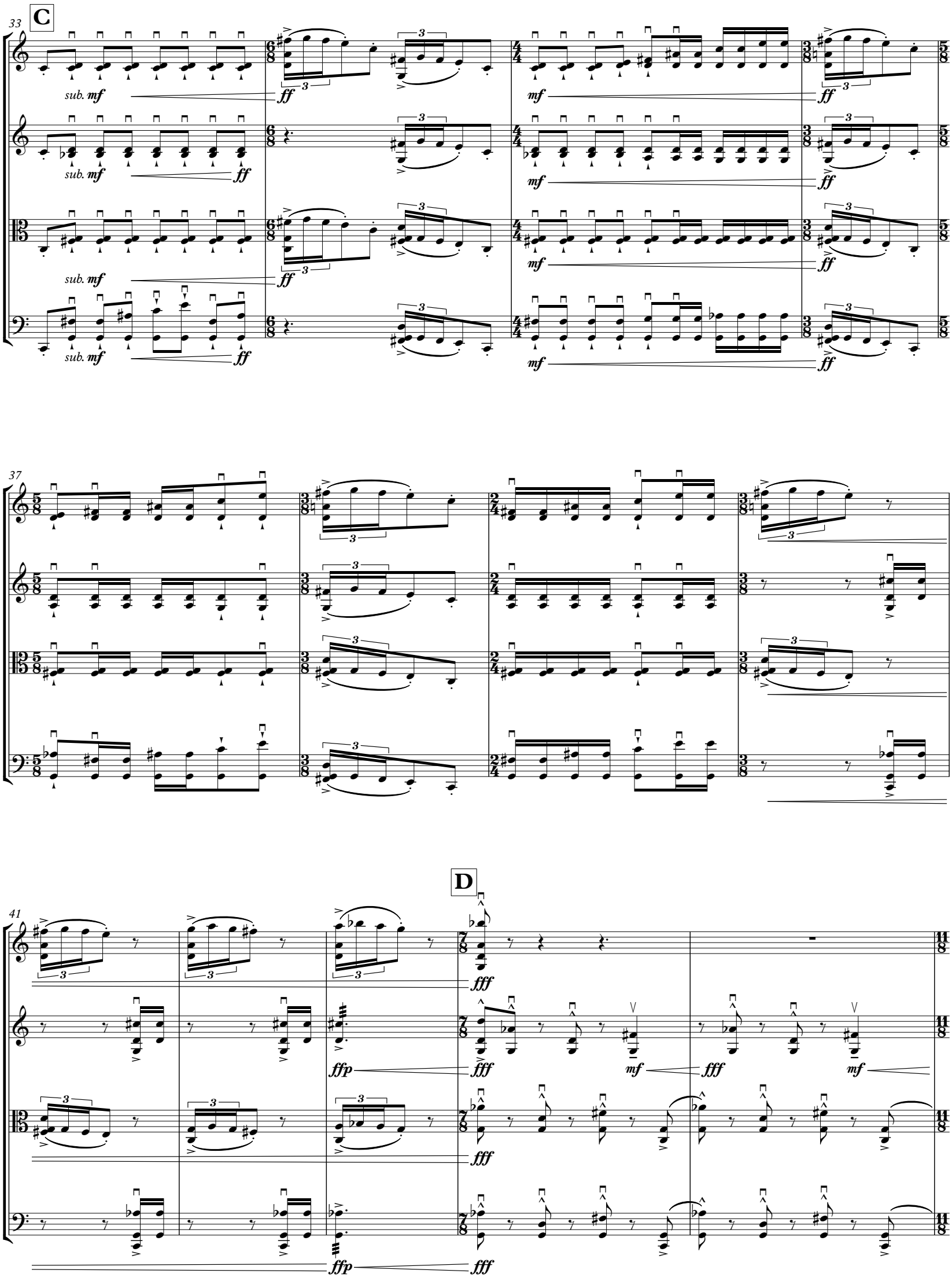
for String Quartet

Matt Browne



Copyright © 2013 Maestoso Music


19
pizz.
arco.
sub.
pizz.
p
f
ff
24
pizz.
arco
arco
29
sul pont.
ord.
sub.
pp


C
33
sub. mf
ff
mf
37
D
41
fff
ffp
mf

46

E

sub. **p**

sub. **fff**

mf

fff

pizz.

sub. **mf**

sub. **p**

sub. **mf**

mf

mp

pizz.

mf

arco

sub. **p**

accel.

52

arco

mp

cresc. poco a poco

ord.

mp

cresc. poco a poco

cresc. poco a poco

ord.

mp

F **Wild** ♩ = 168

58

ff

fff

ff

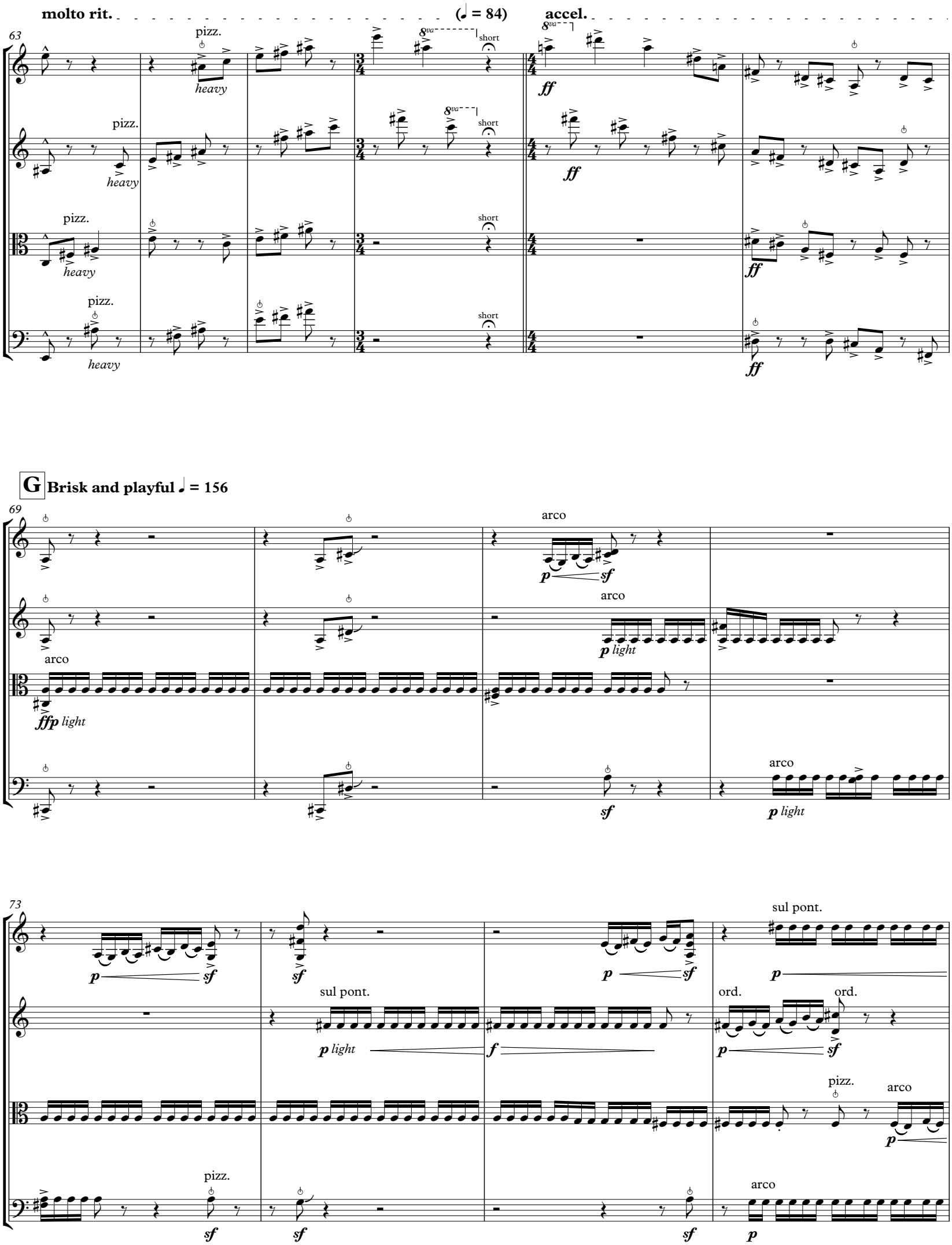
fff

ff

fff

ff

fff


molto rit.
(♩ = 84)
accel.
63
pizz.
heavy
short
8va
ff
G
Brisk and playful ♩ = 156
69
arco
p
sf
ffp light
p light
73
sul pont.
ord.
f
pizz.

77

ord.

pizz.

arco, sul pont.

ord.

81

sul pont.

sul pont.

sul pont.

84

H

ord.

ord.

pizz.

pizz.

88

spicc.

3

fp

mf

sf

91

f

spicc.

95

I

ord.

col leg.

arco

ff p

99

col leg. ord.

ff mf

col leg. ord.

ff mf

col leg. ord.

ff mf ff mf mf ff

col leg. ord.

ff mf ff mf mf ff

J

103

As before.

fff

As before.

fff

As before.

fff

sub. p sf

sub. p sf

107

sf

sf

sf

sf

f ff

f ff

110

113

116

K

119

Gliss. with "shaky" vibrato

sul. E

fff *violent*

Gliss. with "shaky" vibrato

sul. A

fff *violent*

(C#)

fff *violent*

(D#)

fff *violent*

122

sub. ***p***

ff

fff

sub. ***p***

ff

fff

p

sub. ***ff***

fff

p

sub. ***ff***

fff

L

125

Long, slow gliss.

p

sub. ***p***

p

128

f *sub.* ***p***

f

ff

133

M

short

>***mp***

sub. ***ff***

f *dance-like*
pizz.

mf *dance-like*

138

3

arco

f

mf

143

ff

mf

arco

ff

mf

ff

arco

mf

147

p sweetly

pizz.

p sweetly

p

p

N

152

f

cresc. poco a poco

arco

f

cresc. poco a poco

f

cresc. poco a poco

f

cresc. poco a poco

157

161

accel.

ff

ff

ff

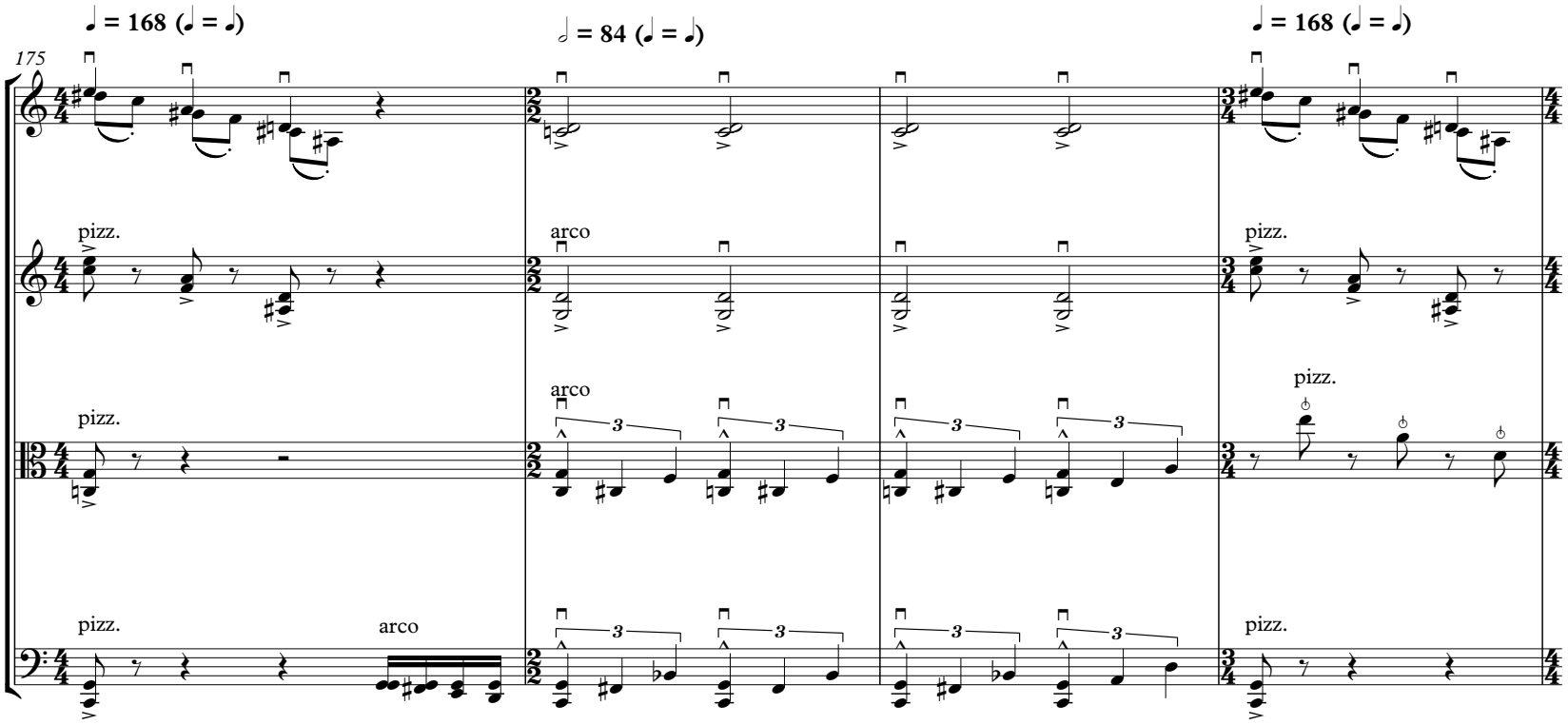
165

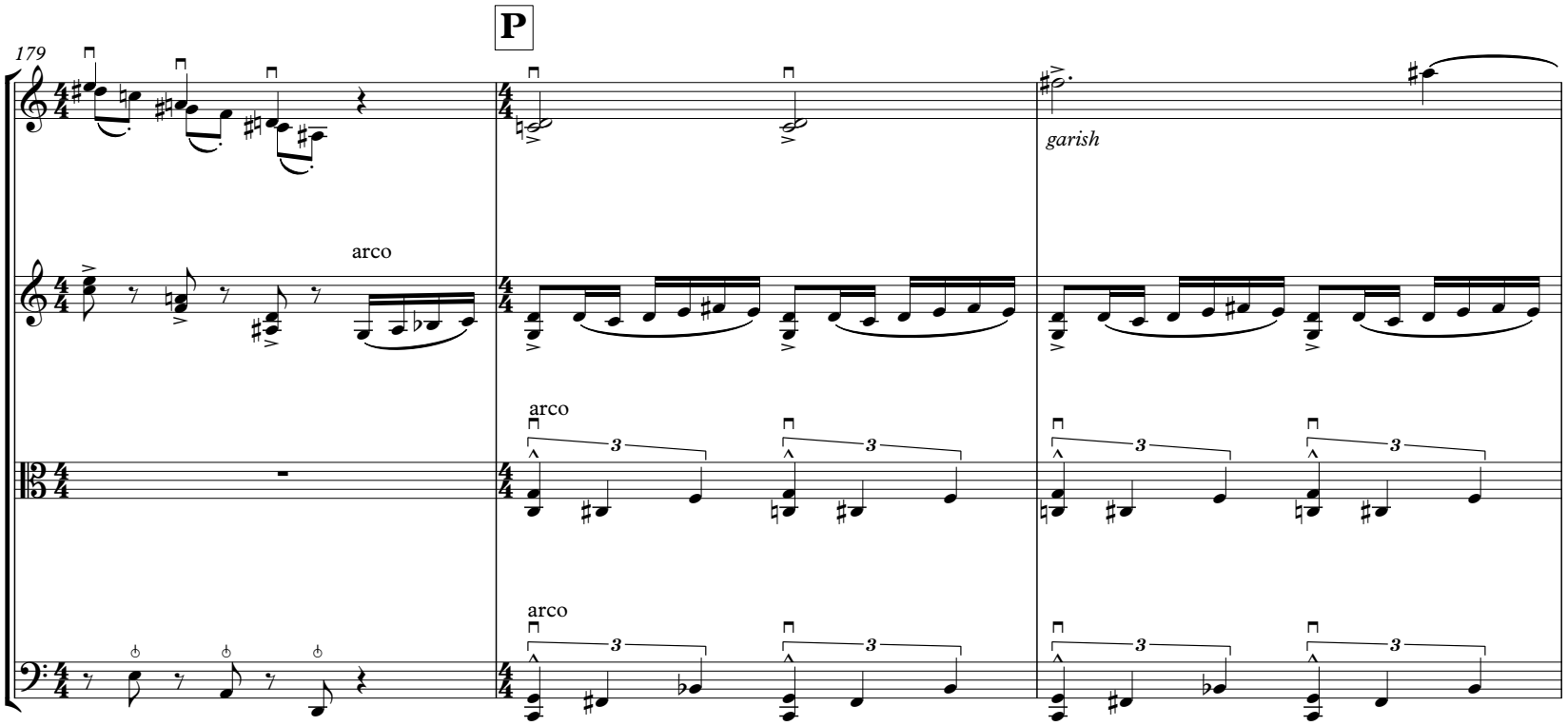
168

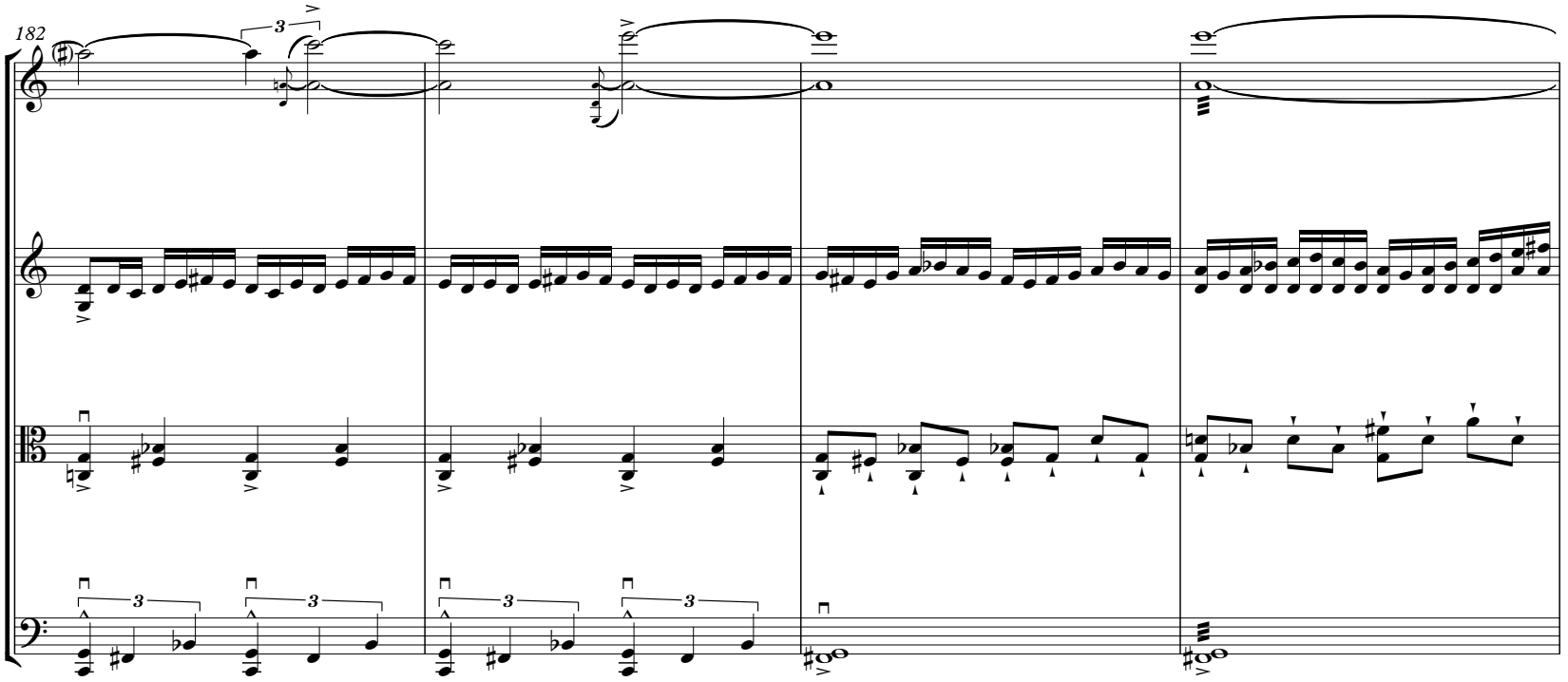
171

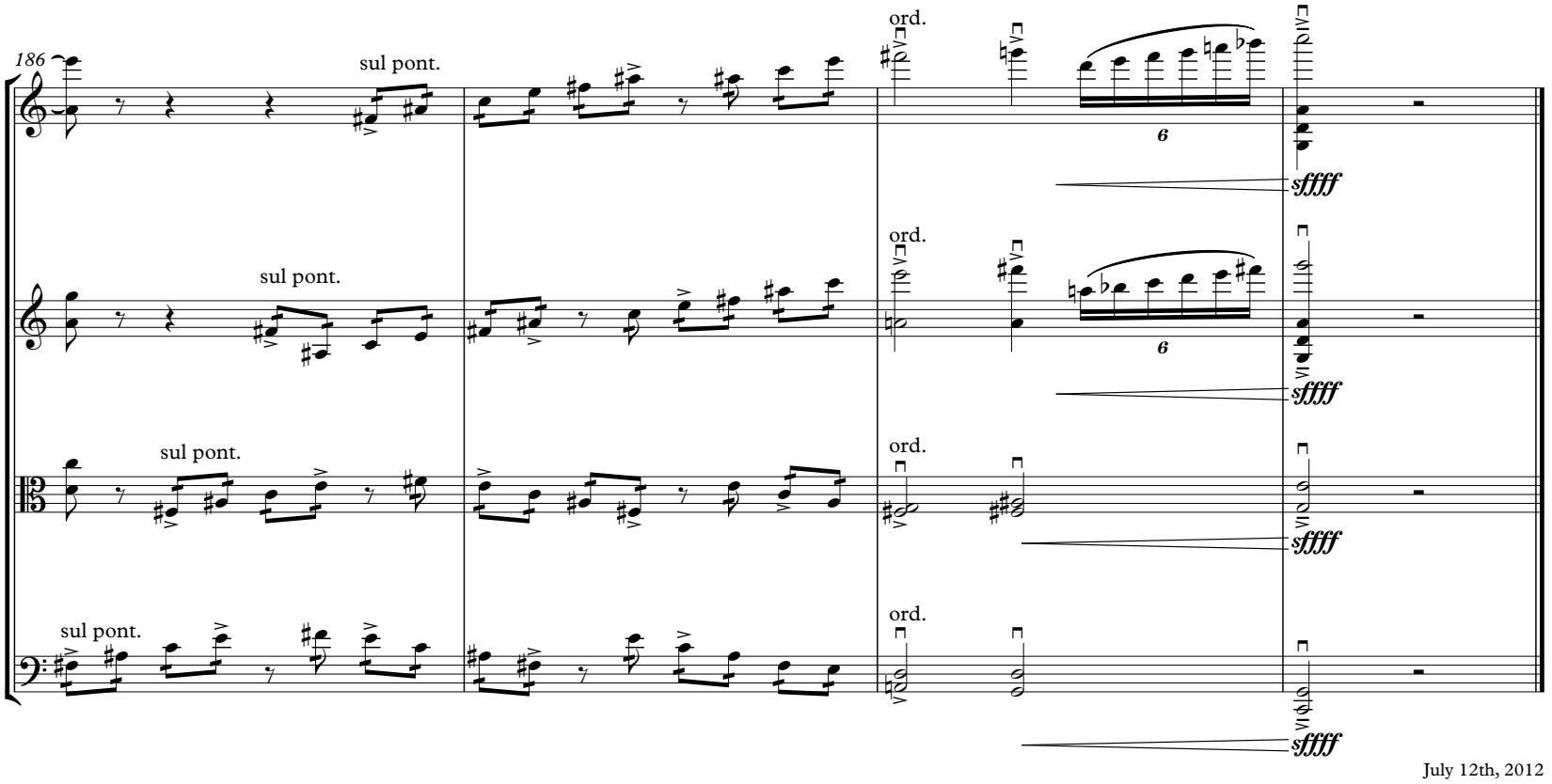
O = 84 (♩ = 168) Driving

ff fff brutal


♩ = 168 (♩ = ♩)
175
pizz.
pizz.
pizz.
arco
♩ = 84 (♩ = ♩)
arco
arco
arco
3
♩ = 168 (♩ = ♩)
pizz.
pizz.
pizz.


P
179
arco
garish
arco
arco
3





July 12th, 2012
Ann Arbor, MI