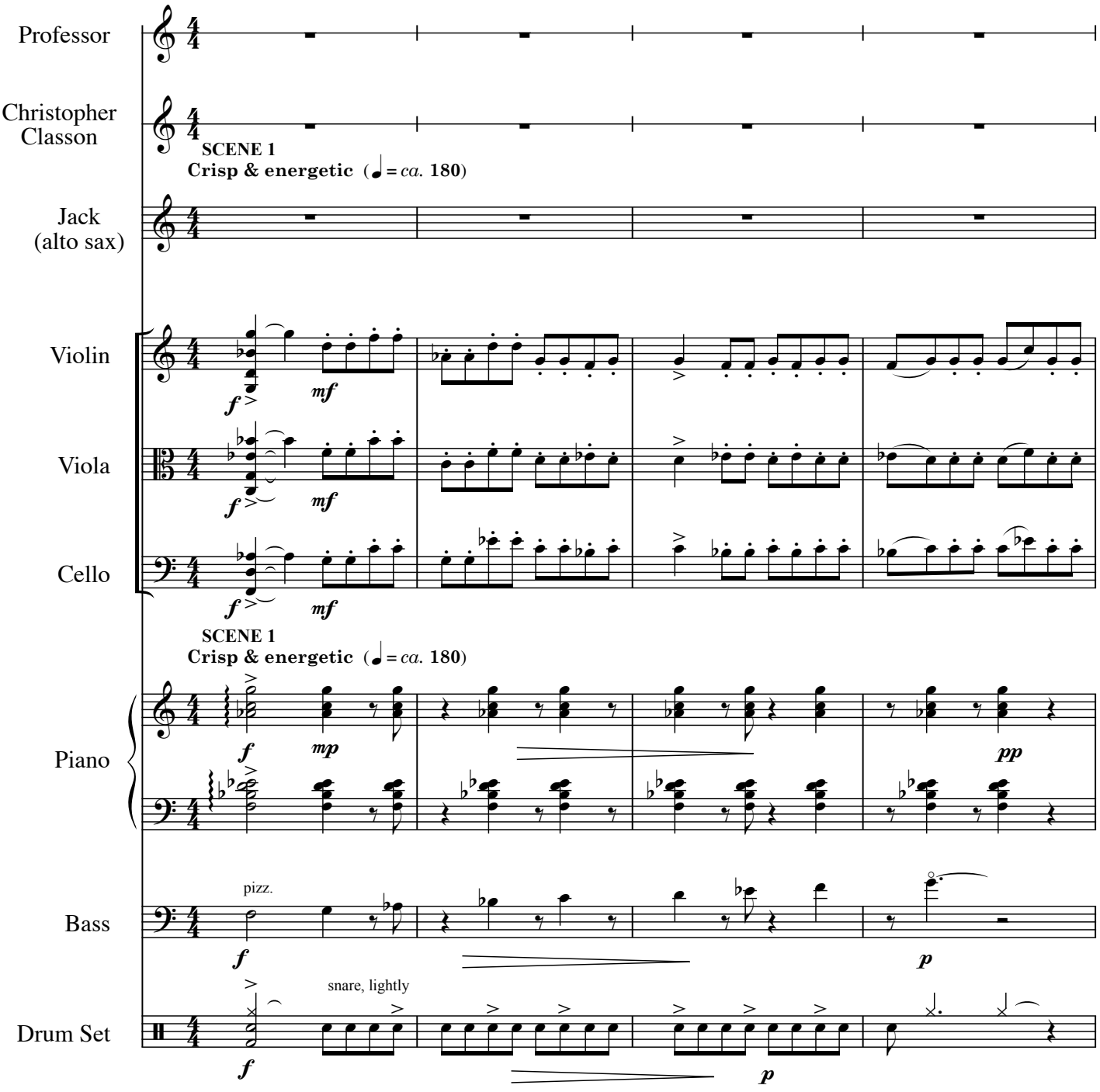
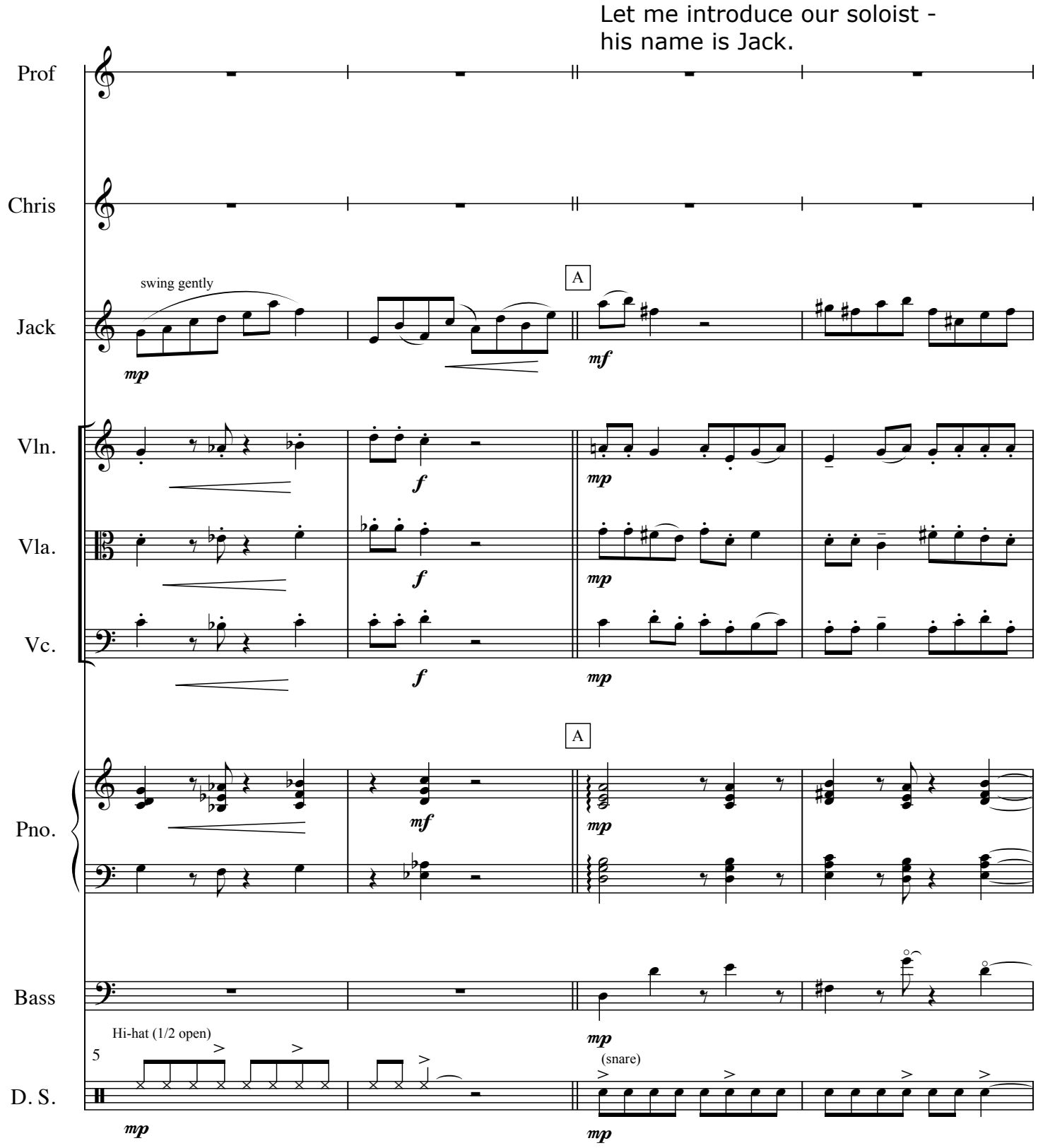
Full Frontal Lobes

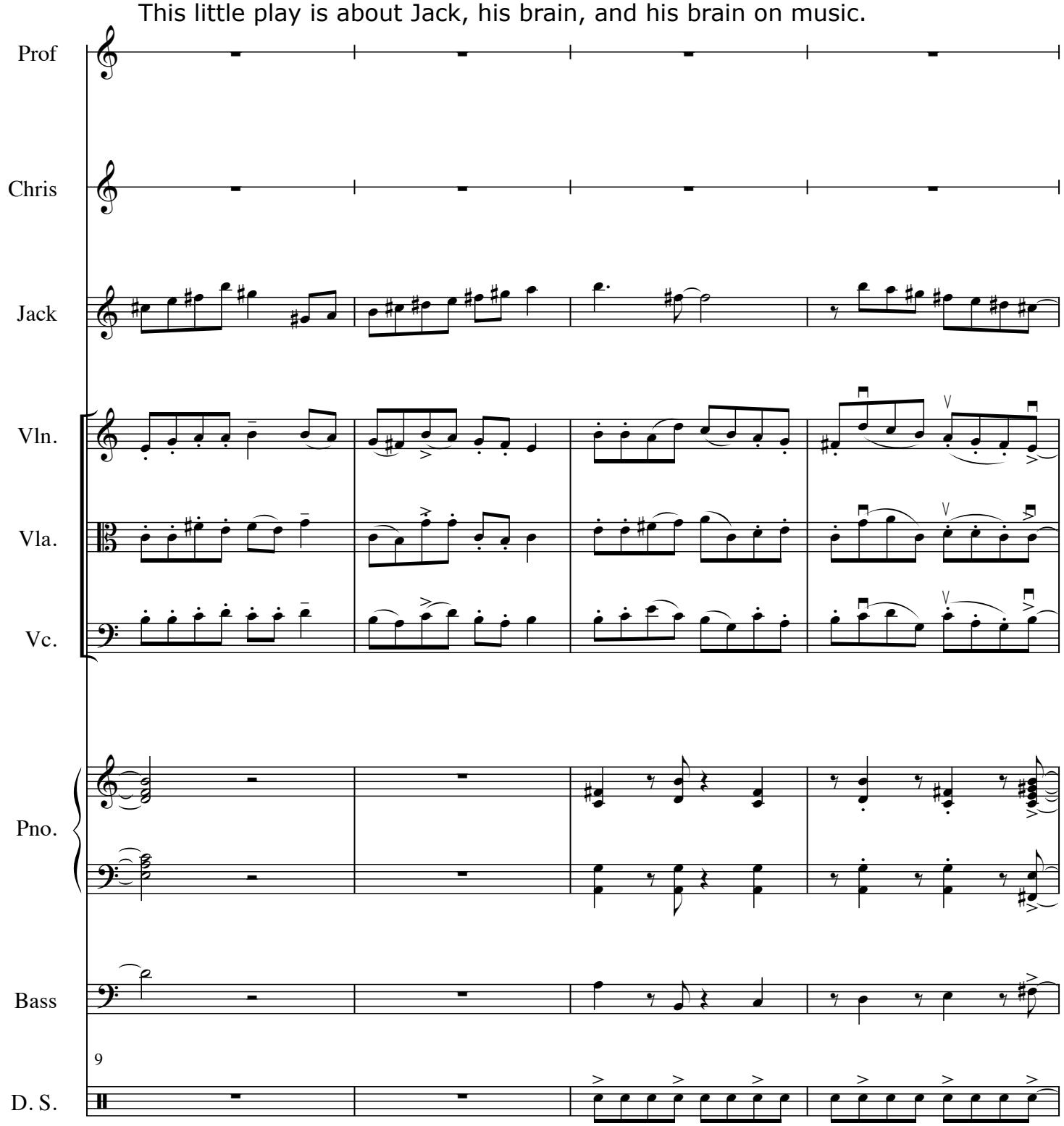
Score

a musical lecture for narrator and chamber ensemble

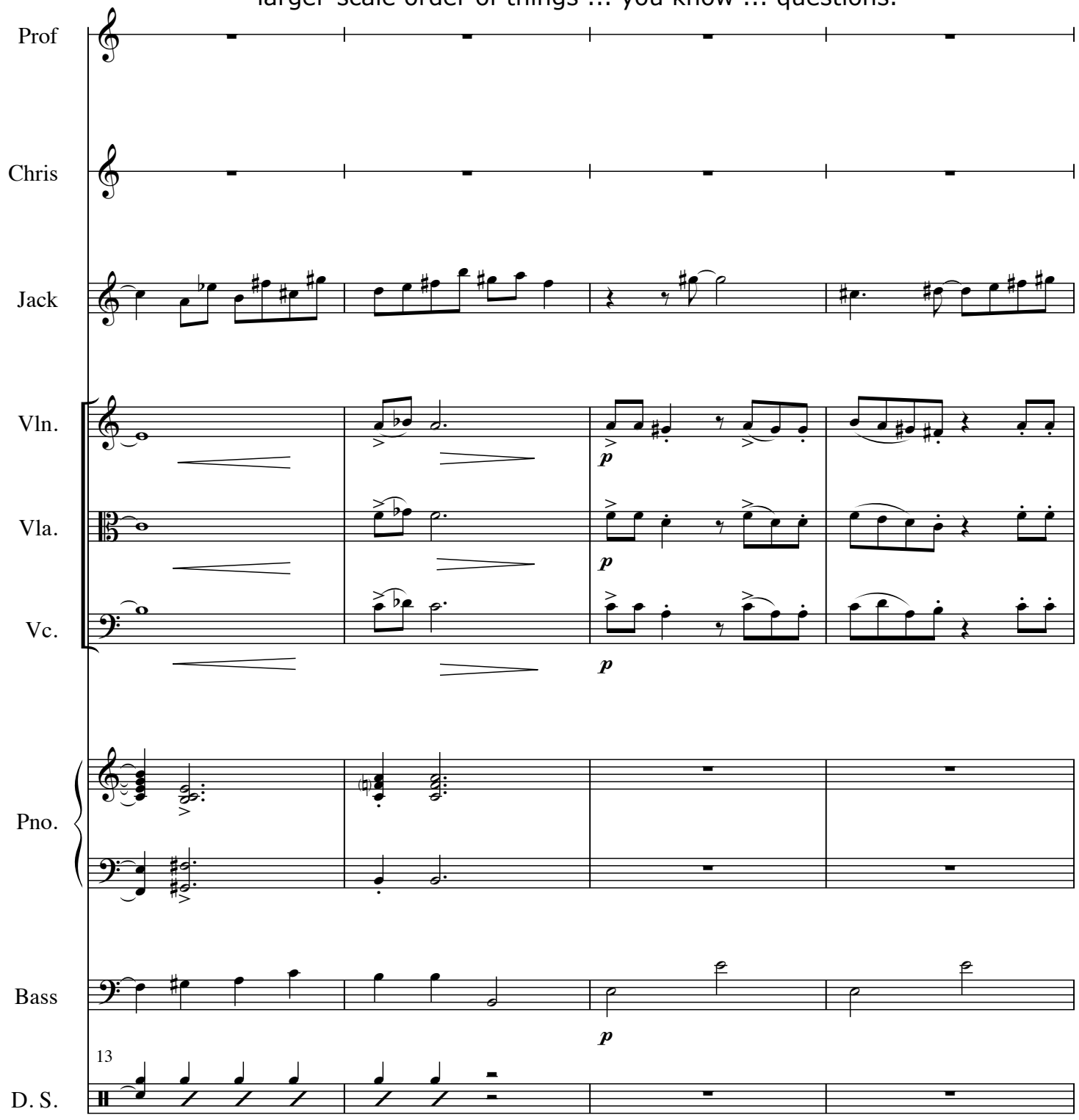
Music by James Scott Balentine
Story & libretto by Bruce Balentine



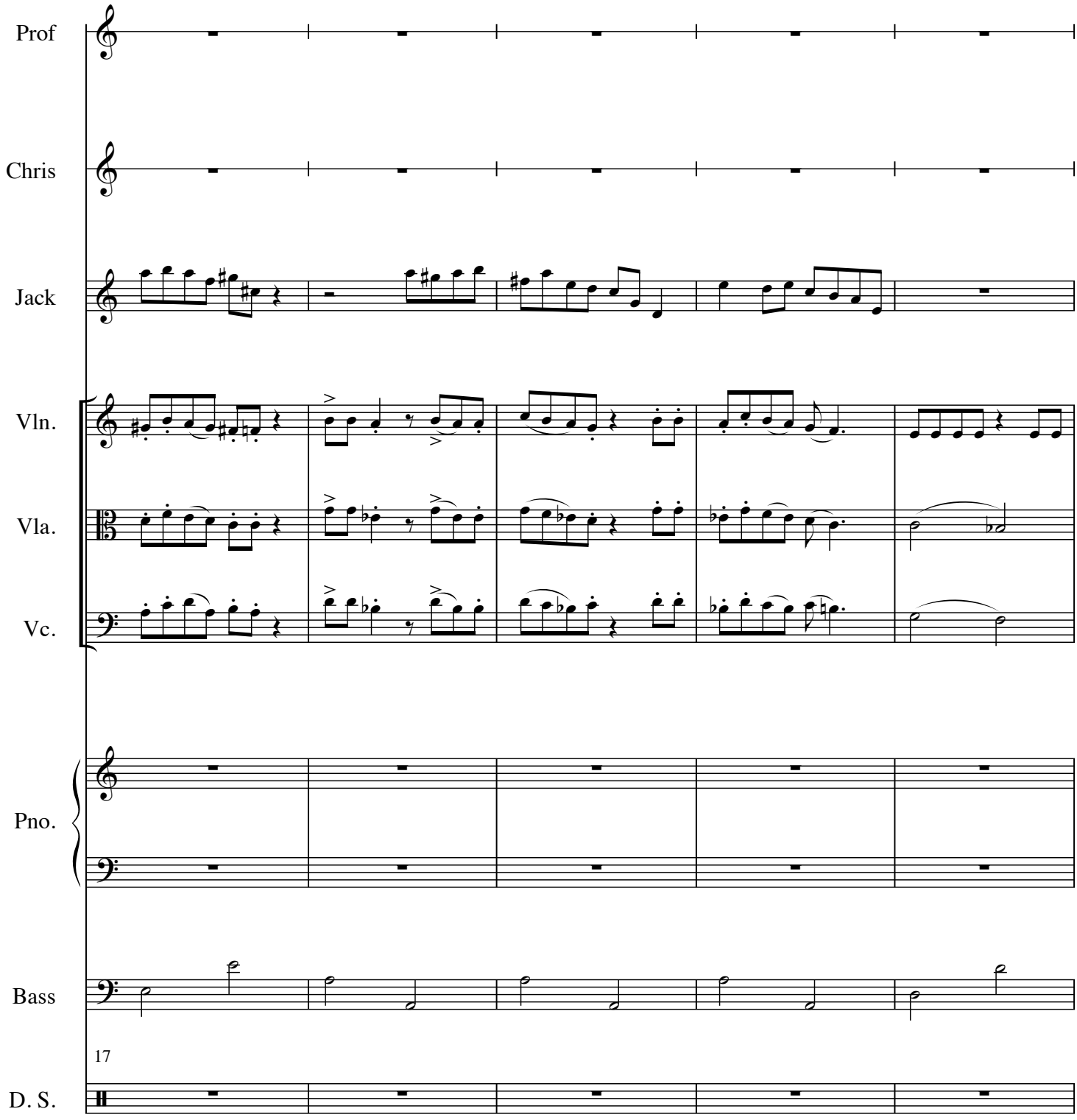

Let me introduce our soloist -
his name is Jack.
Prof
Chris
swing gently
Jack
A
mp
mf
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
f
mp
A
Pno.
mf
mp
Bass
mp
Hi-hat (1/2 open)
5
(snare)
D. S.
mp
mp


This little play is about Jack, his brain, and his brain on music.
Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
9
D. S.

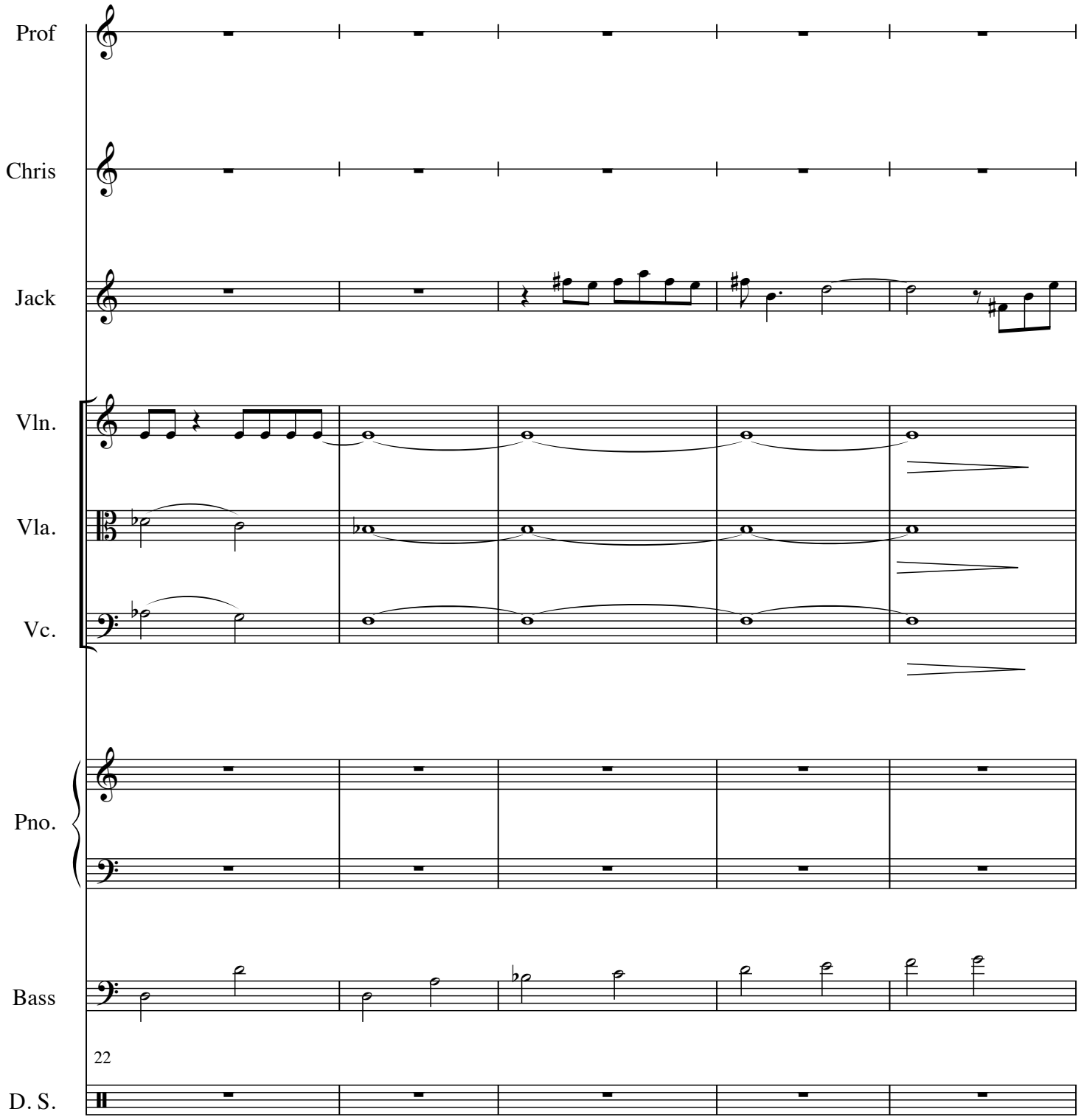
Like all of us, Jack is struggling with some basic ques-tions ... questions about relationships, questions about communication ... fundamental questions about his own identity and its relevance to the larger-scale order of things ... you know ... questions.



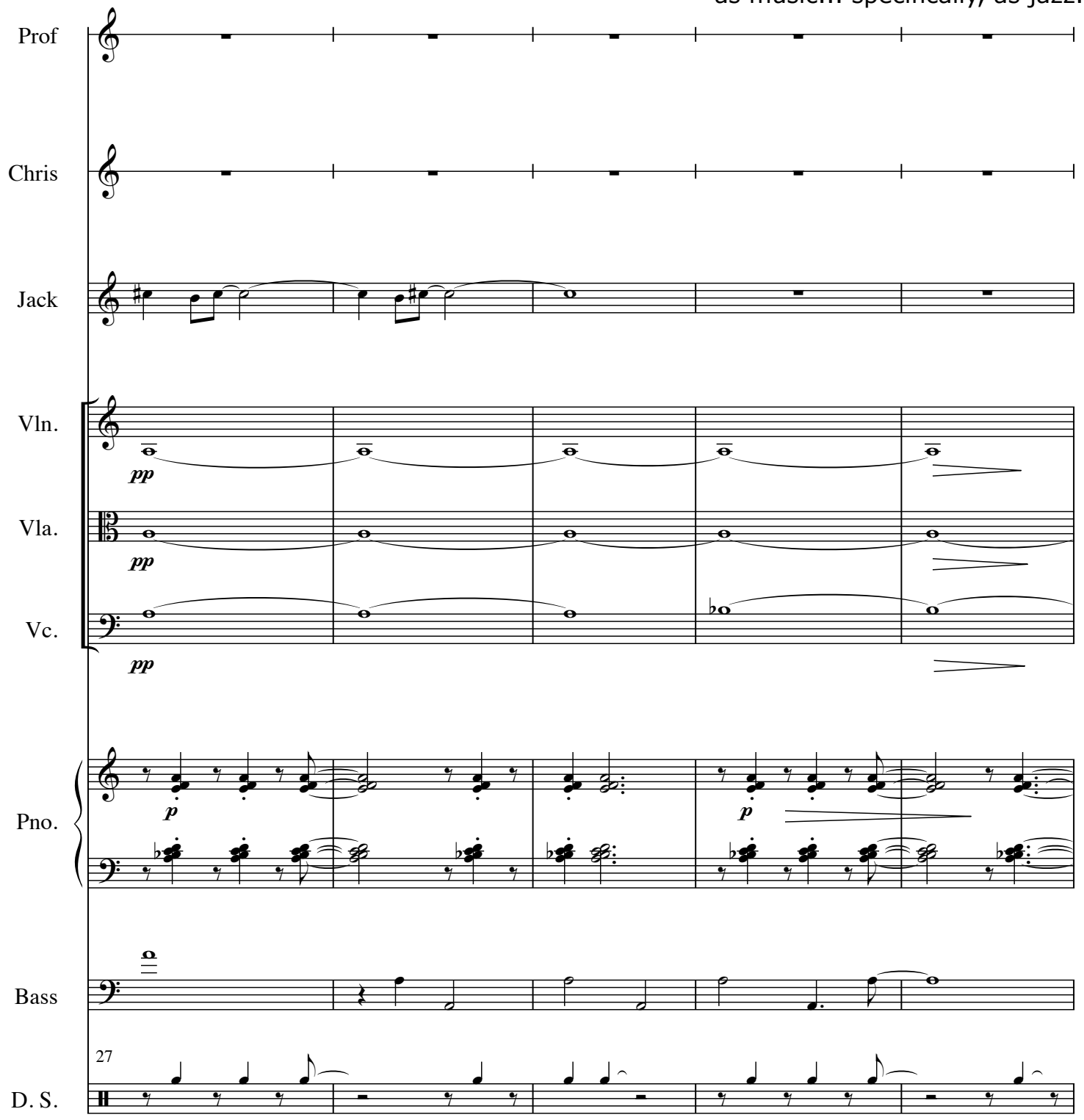
And Jack has chosen to express these questions ...

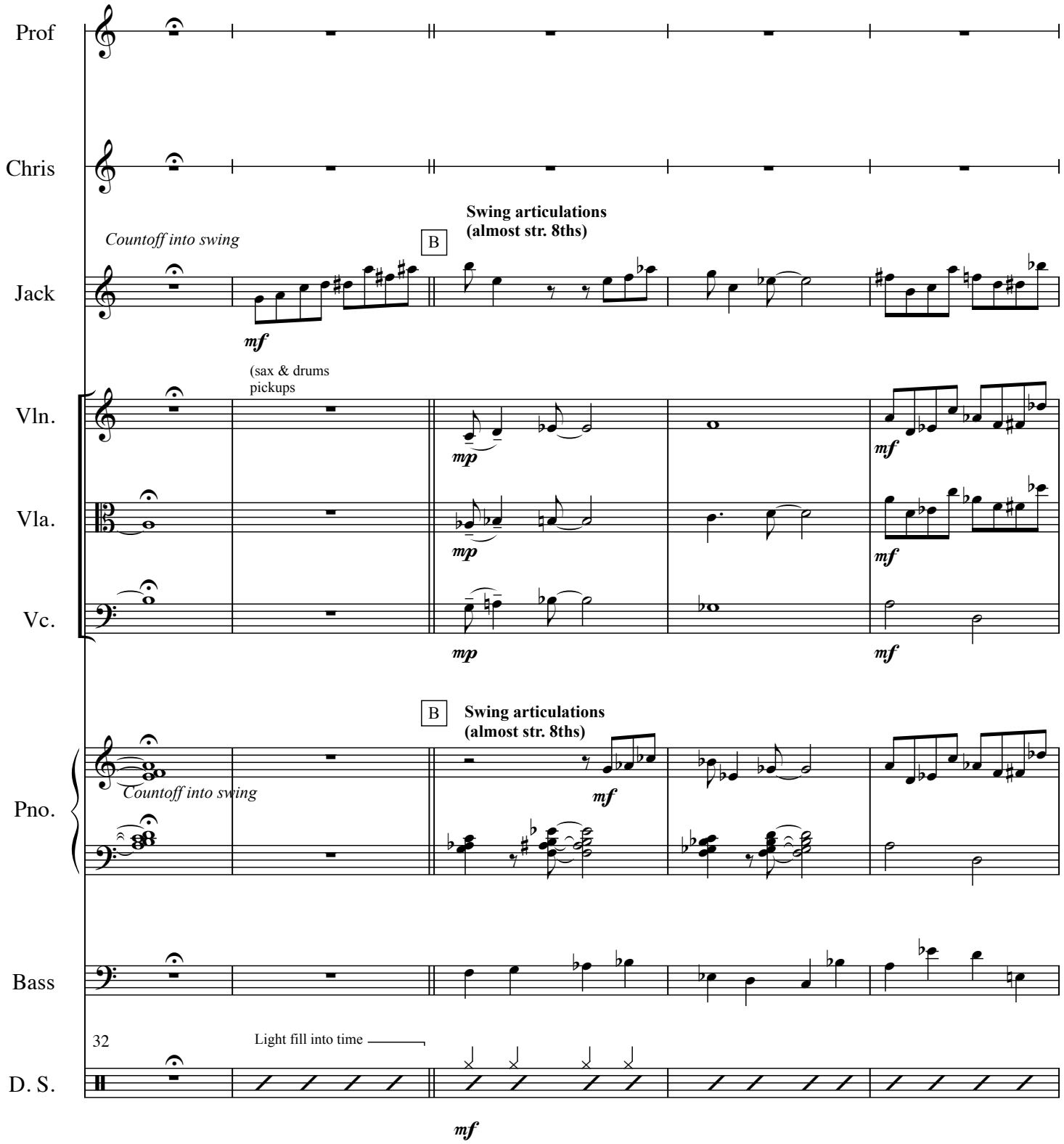


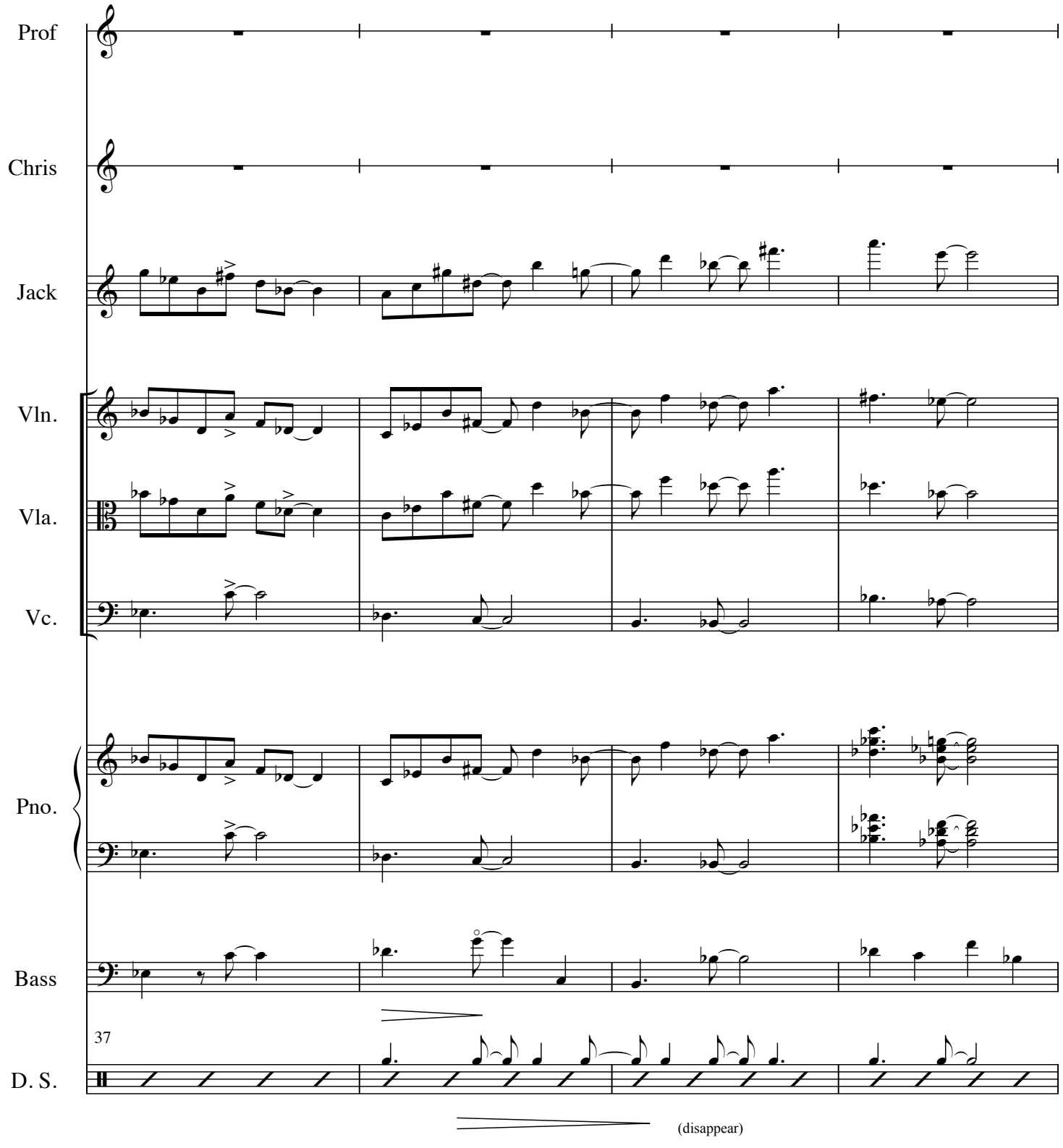
along with the intricate thinking process that he uses to work them through ...

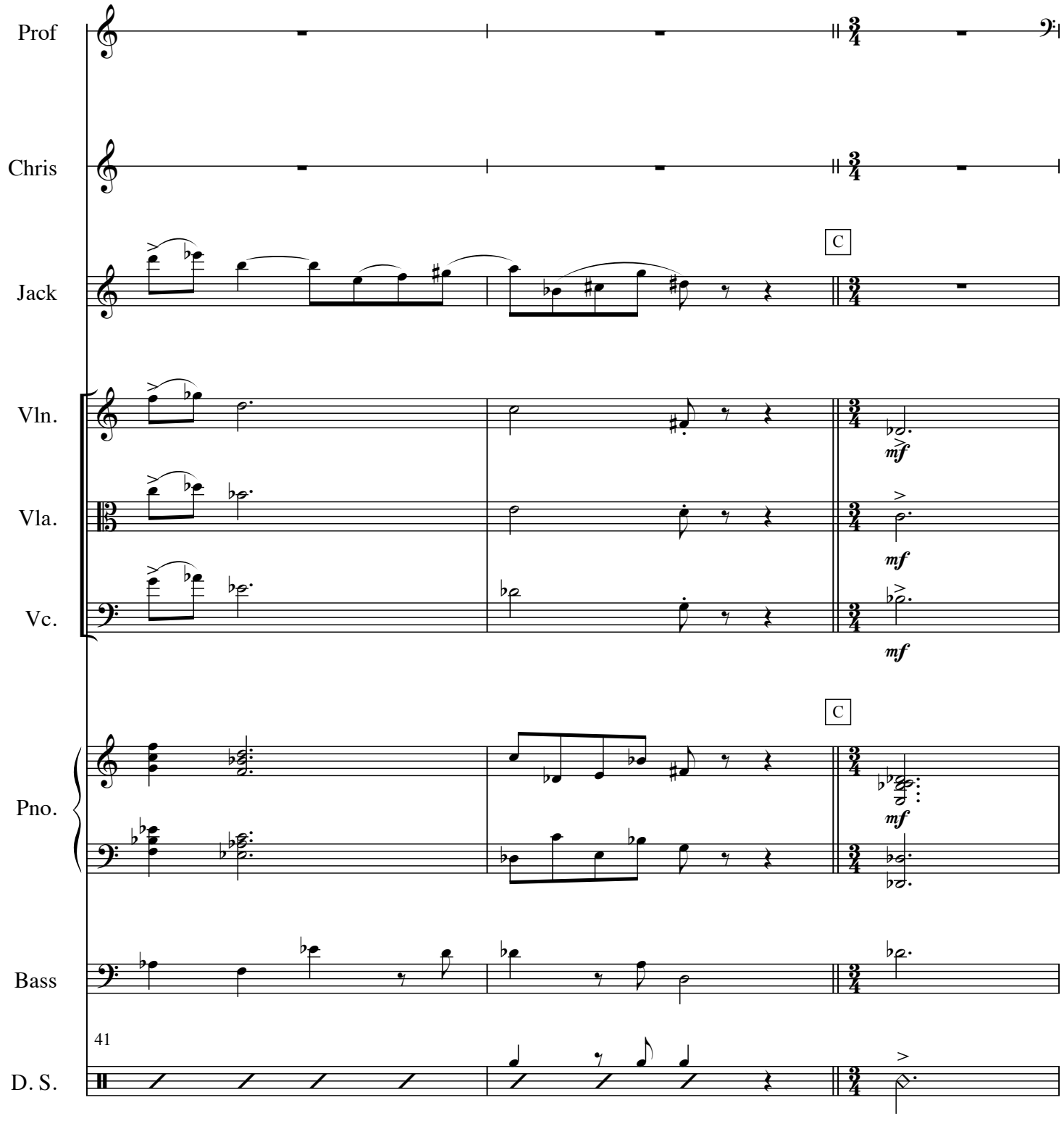


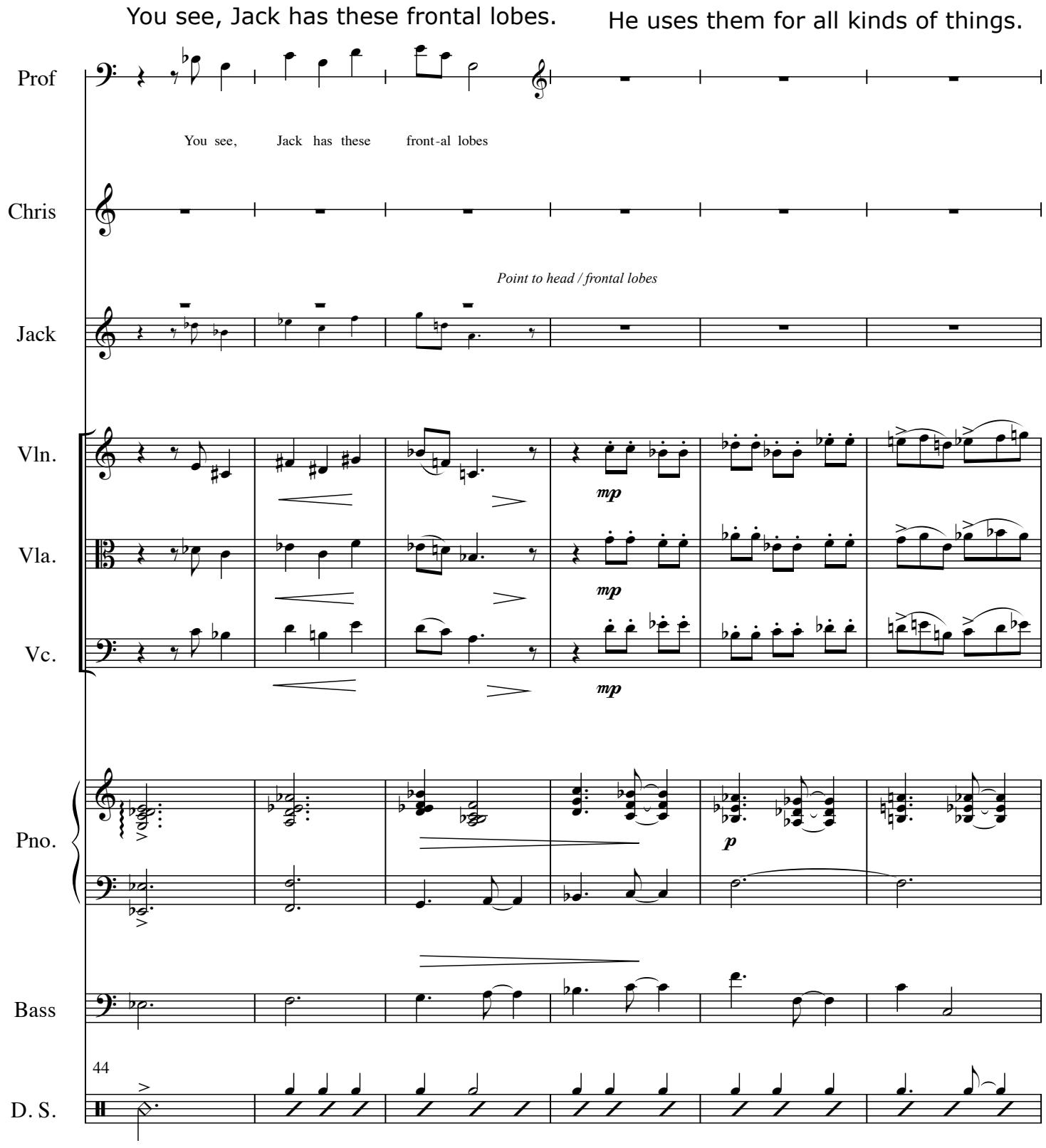
as music... specifically, as jazz.

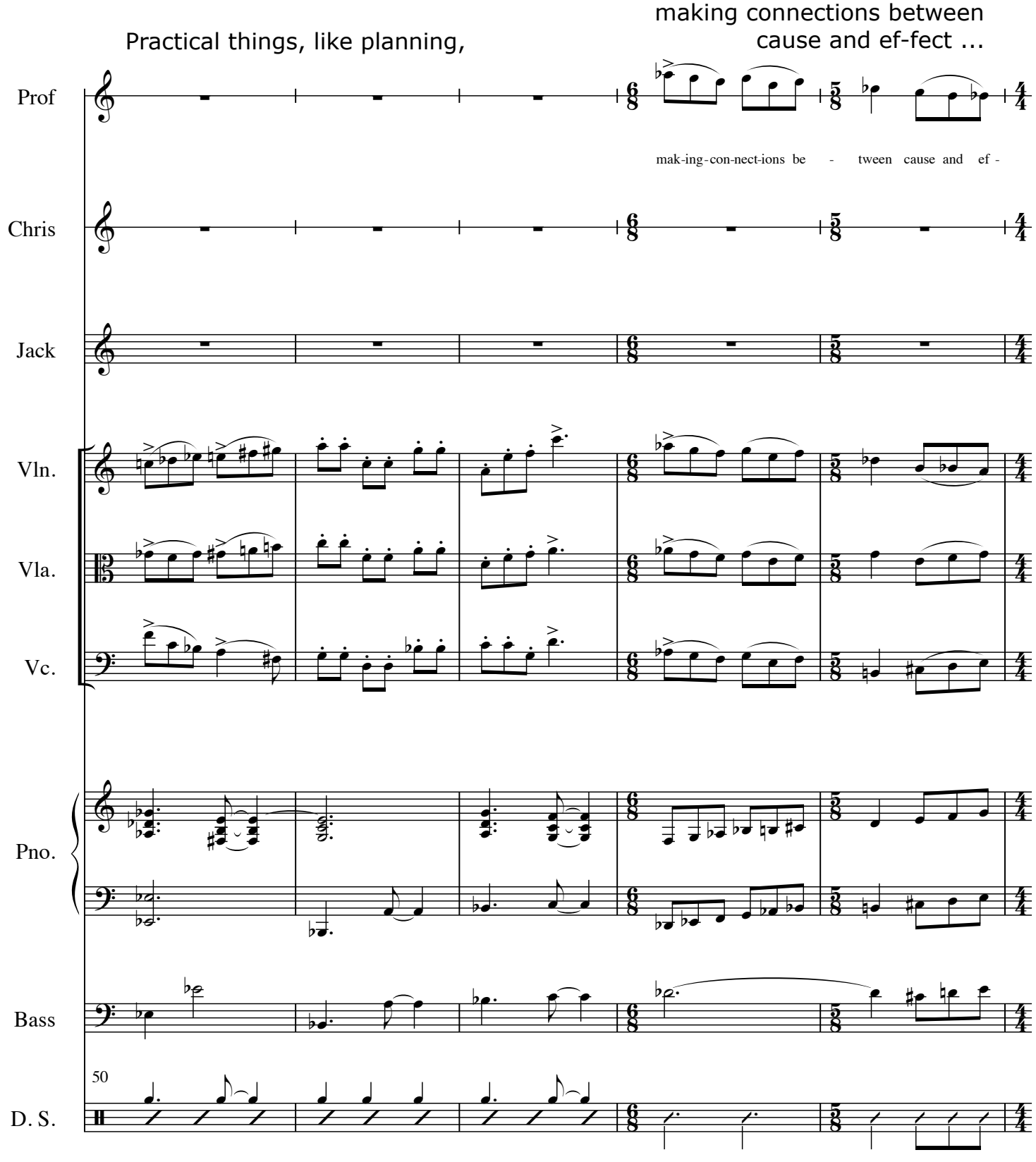


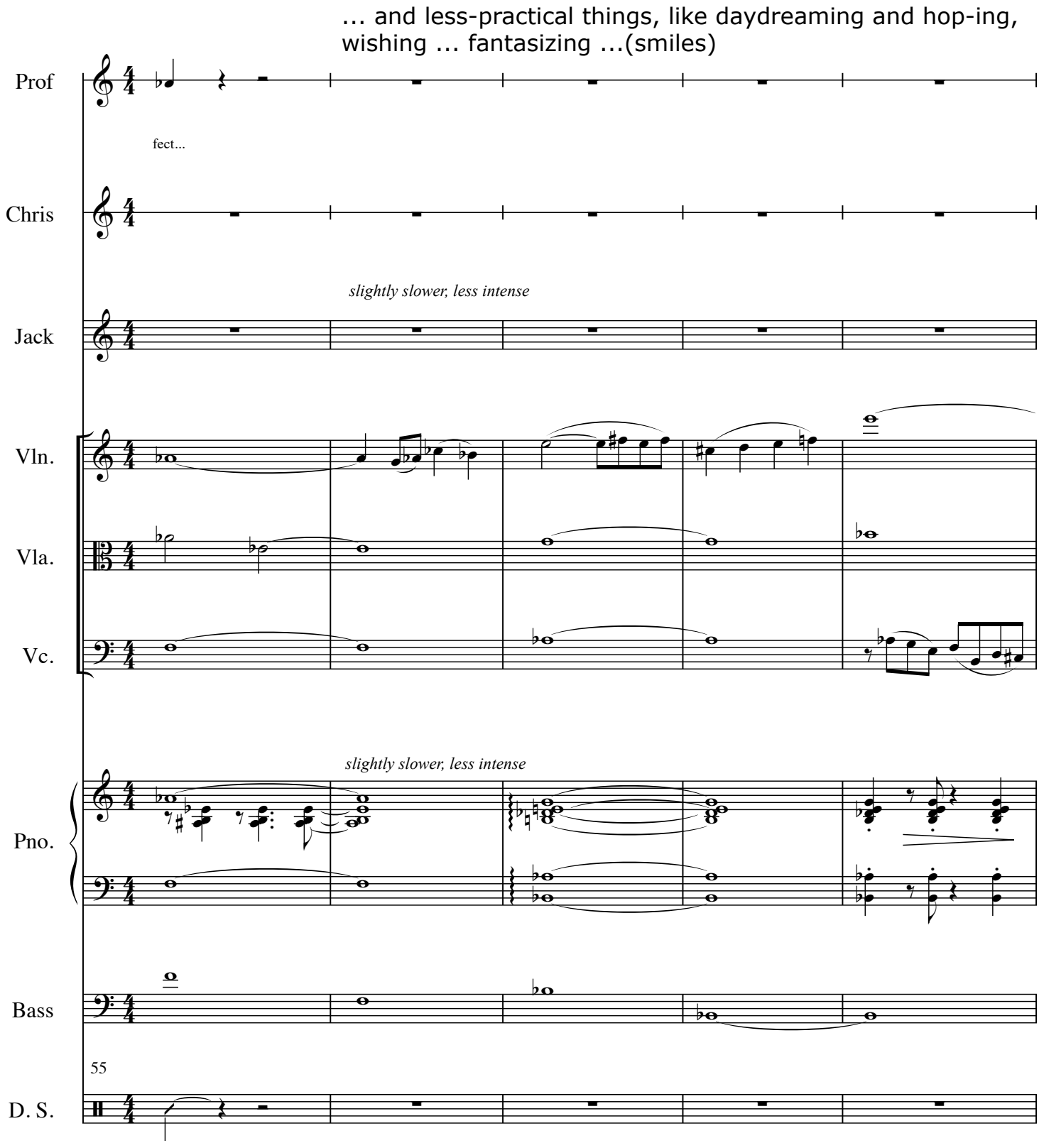

Prof
Chris
Countoff into swing
Jack
mf
B
Swing articulations
(almost str. 8ths)
(sax & drums
pickups
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
mp
mf
B
Swing articulations
(almost str. 8ths)
Pno.
Countoff into swing
mf
Bass
32
Light fill into time
D. S.
mf


Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
37
D. S.
(disappear)

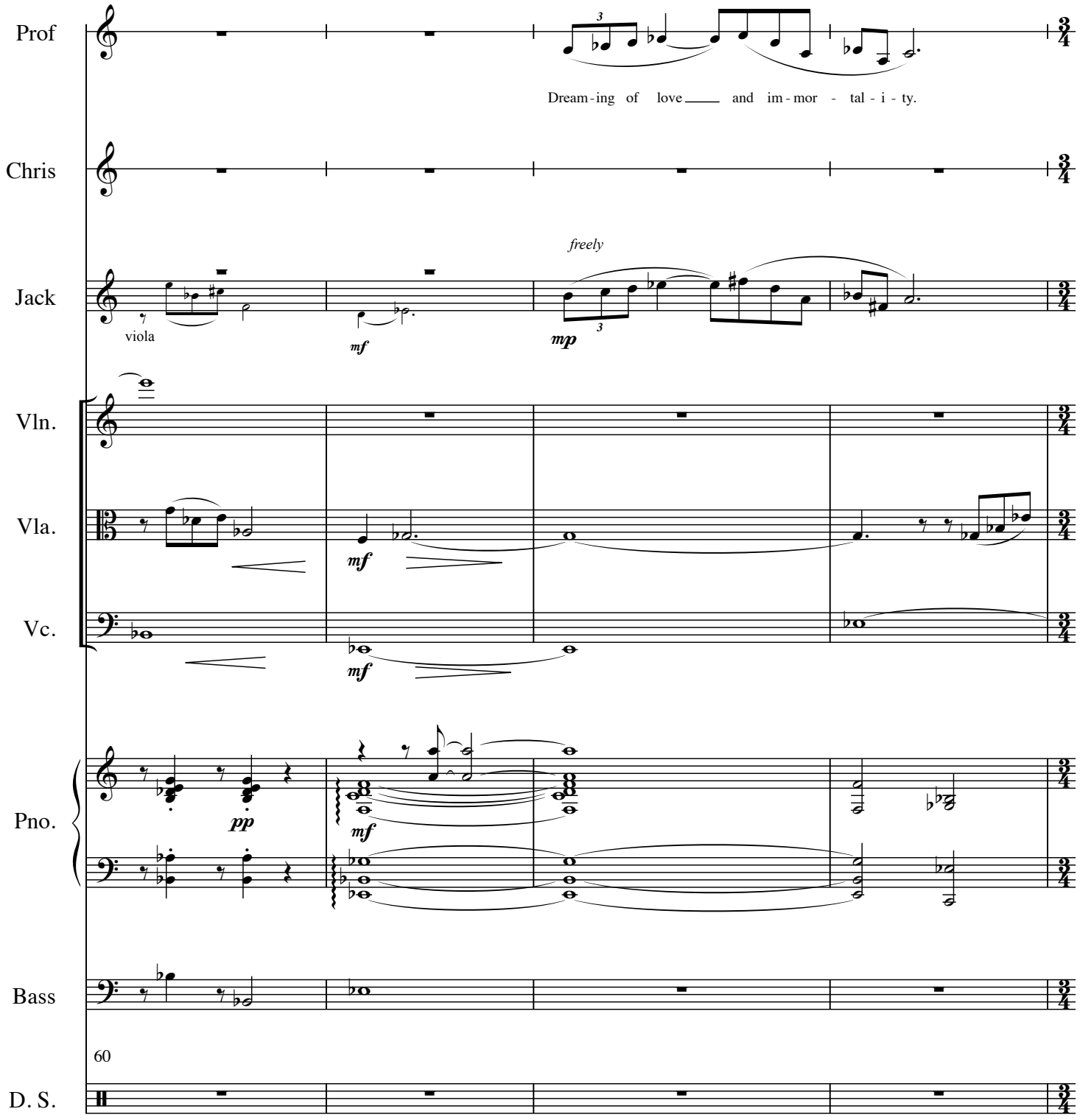

Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
D. S.
C
C
mf
mf
mf
mf
41

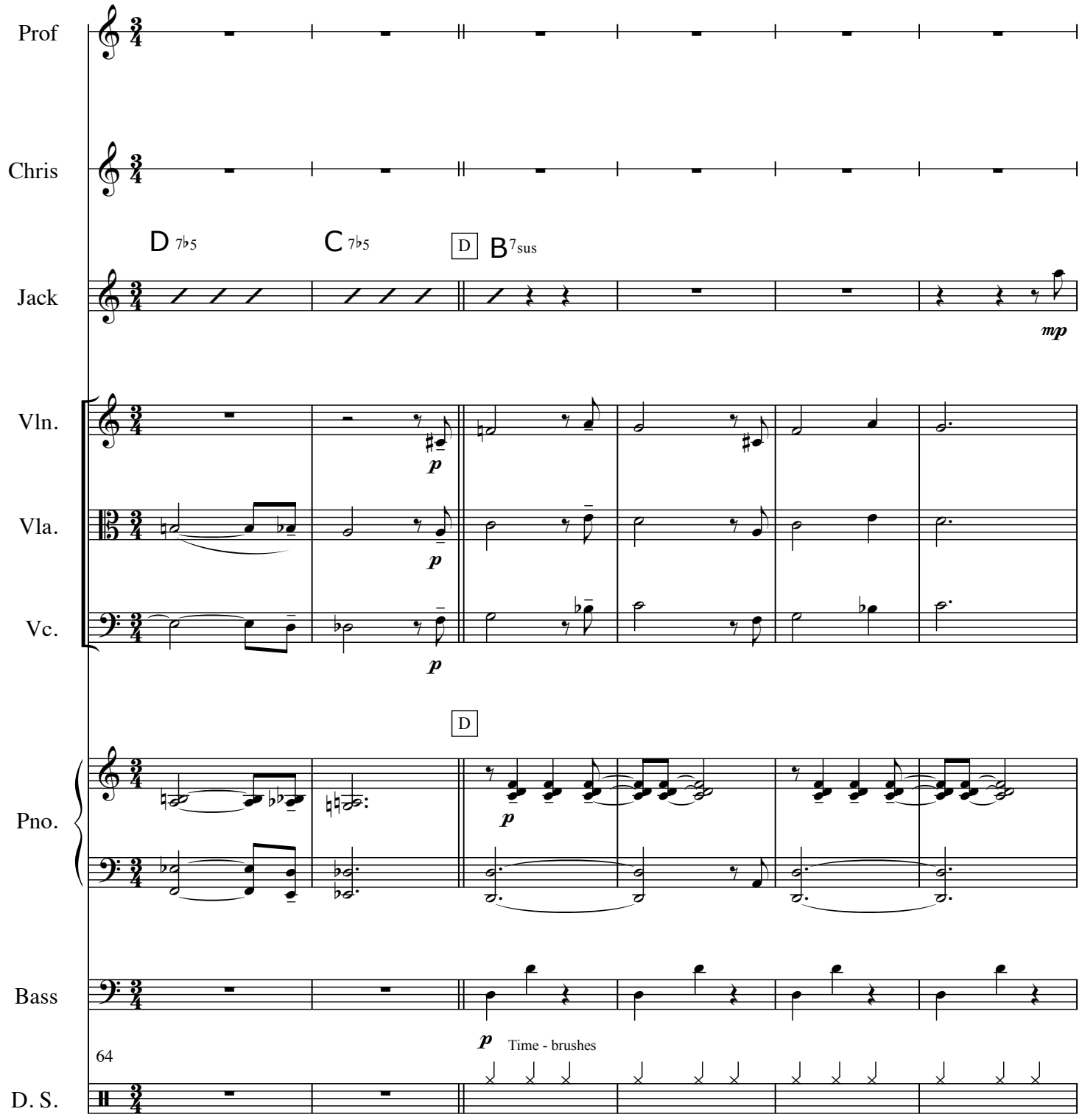

You see, Jack has these frontal lobes.
He uses them for all kinds of things.
Prof
You see, Jack has these front-al lobes
Chris
Point to head / frontal lobes
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
mp
mp
mp
Pno.
p
Bass
44
D. S.

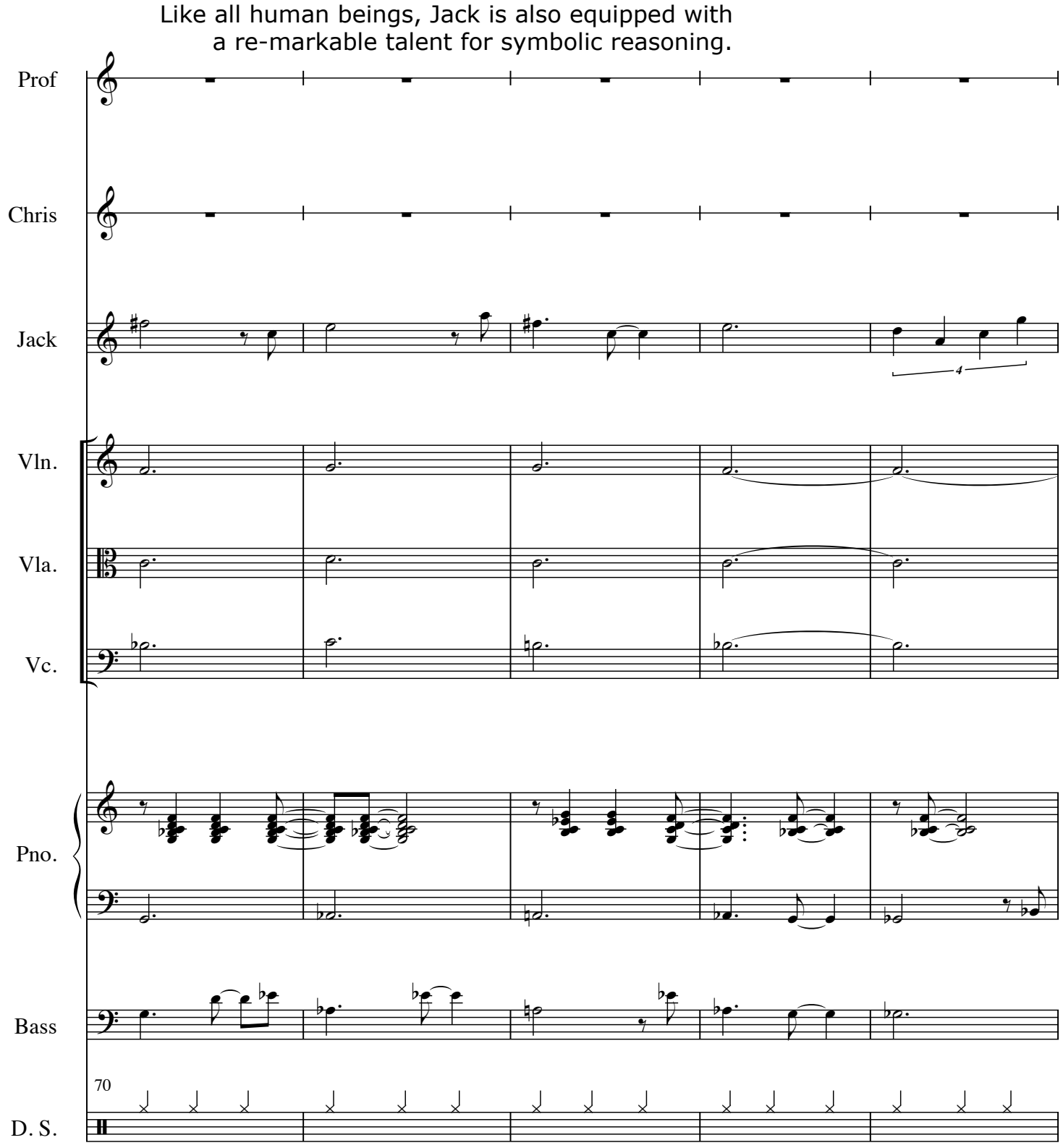

Practical things, like planning,
making connections between
cause and ef-fect ...
Prof
mak-ing-con-nect-ions be - tween cause and ef -
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
50
D. S.

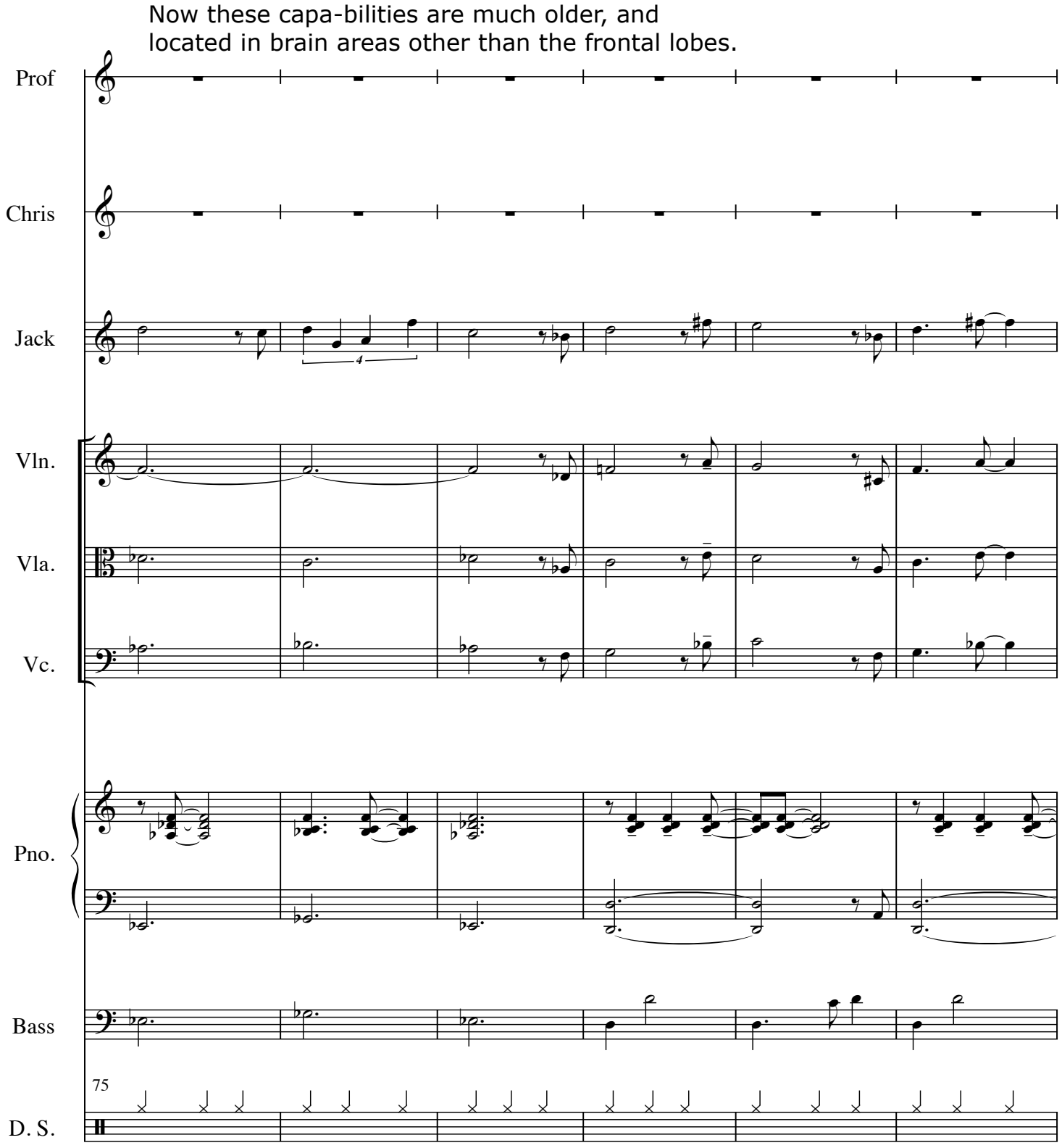

... and less-practical things, like daydreaming and hop-ing,
wishing ... fantasizing ...(smiles)
Prof
fect...
Chris
slightly slower, less intense
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
slightly slower, less intense
Pno.
Bass
55
D. S.

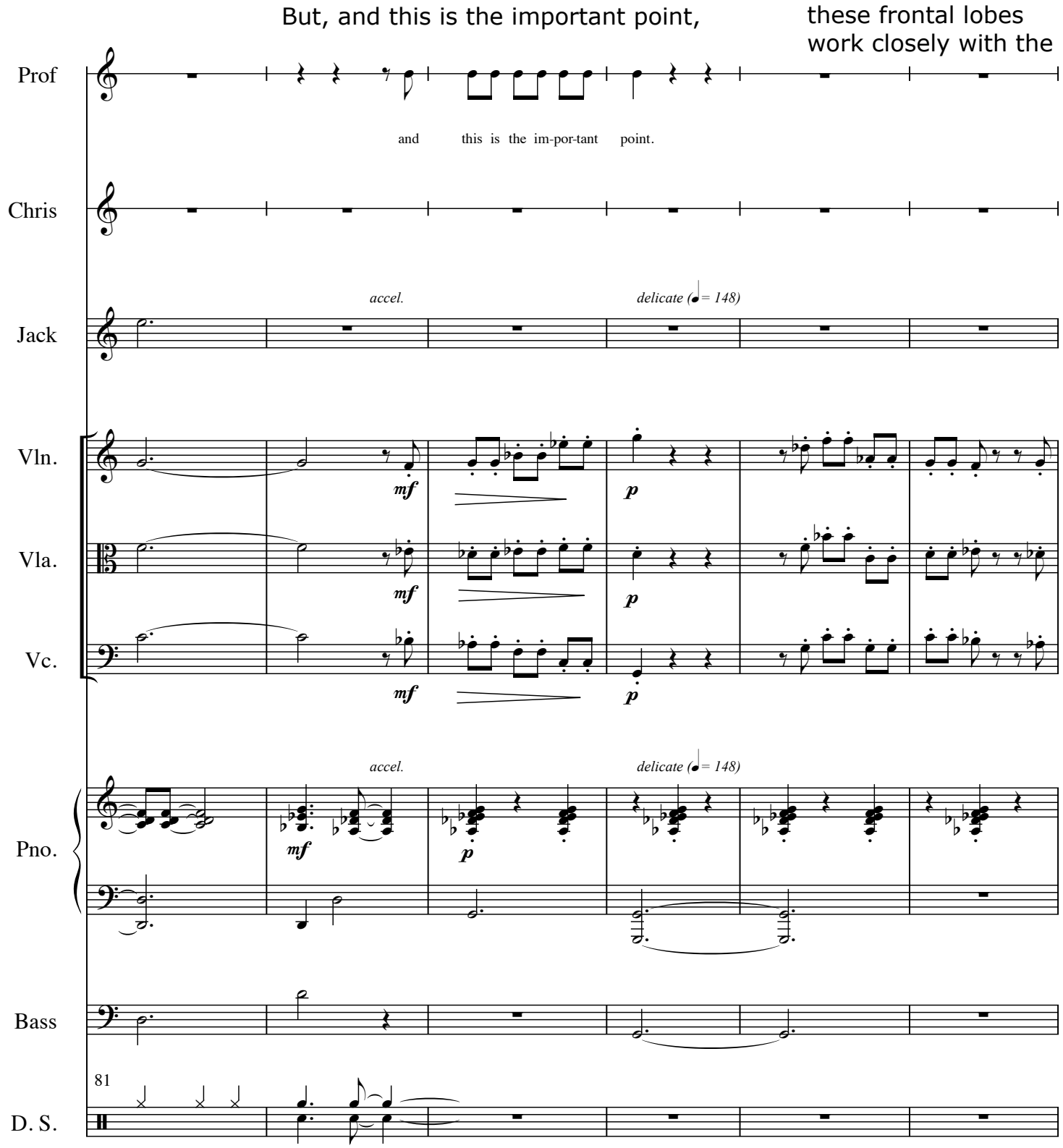
... dreaming of love and immortality.

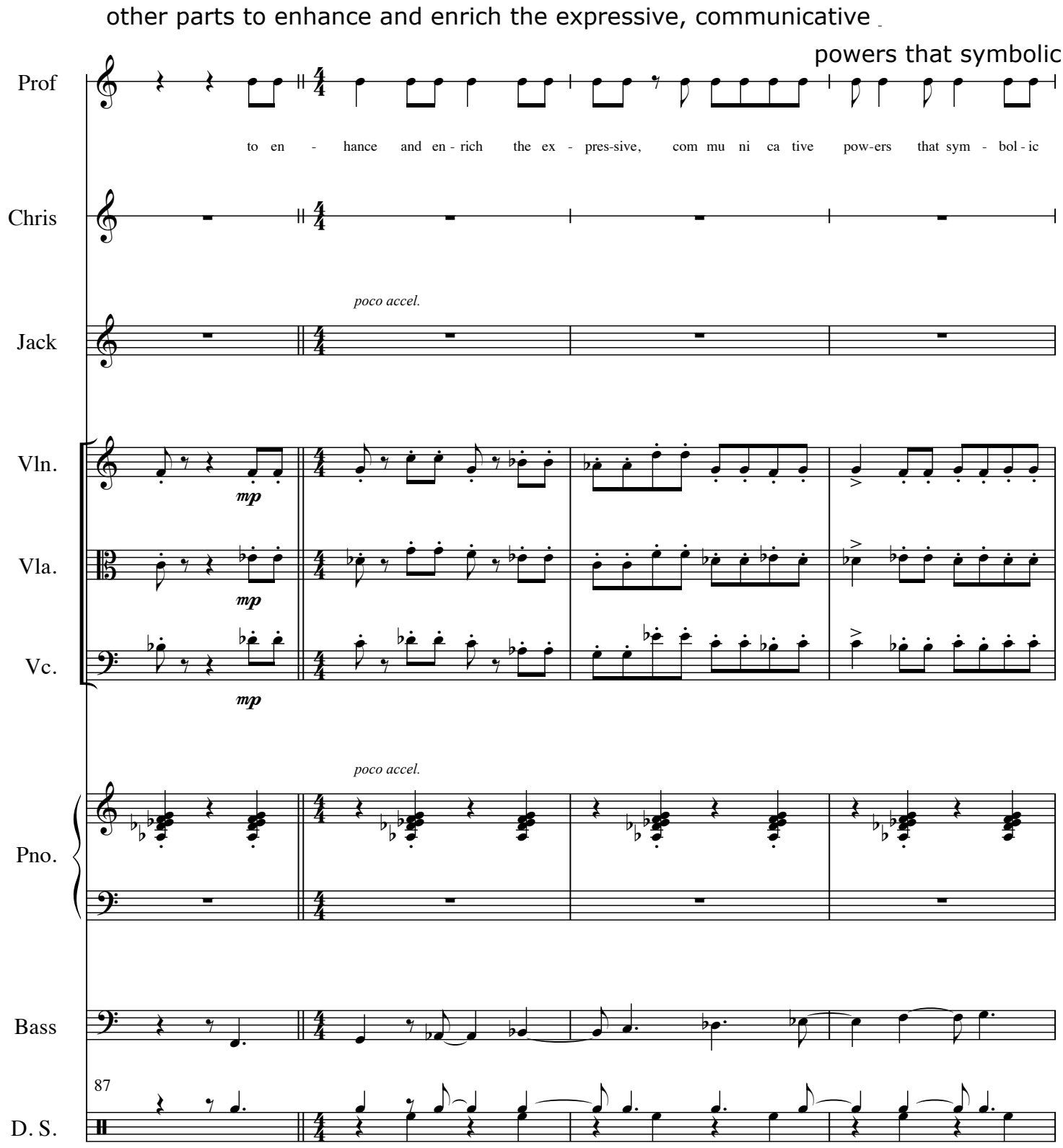


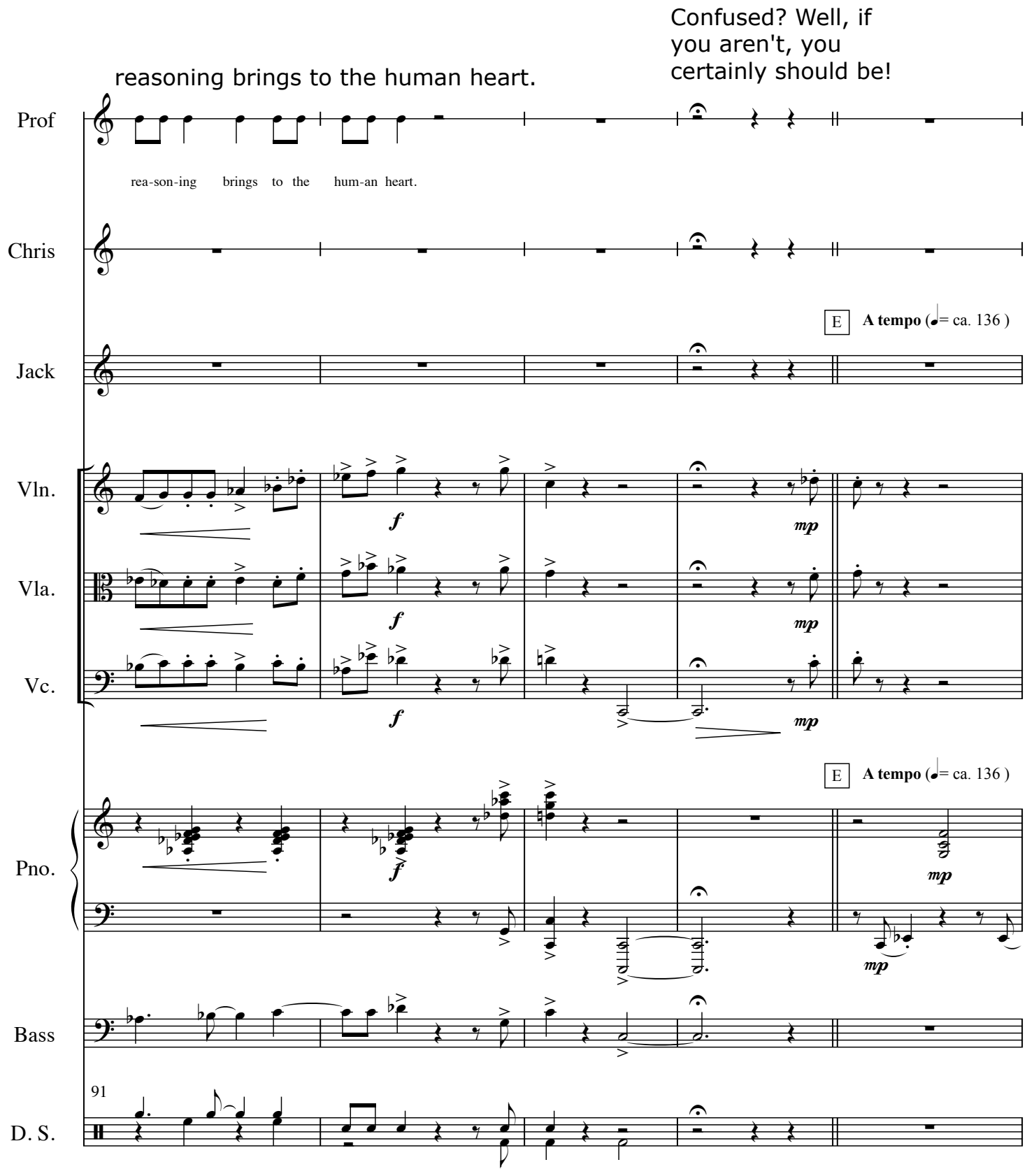

Prof
Chris
D 7♭5
C 7♭5
D
B7sus
Jack
mp
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
p
p
p
D
Pno.
p
Bass
p
Time - brushes
64
D. S.


Like all human beings, Jack is also equipped with
a re-markable talent for symbolic reasoning.
Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
70
D. S.

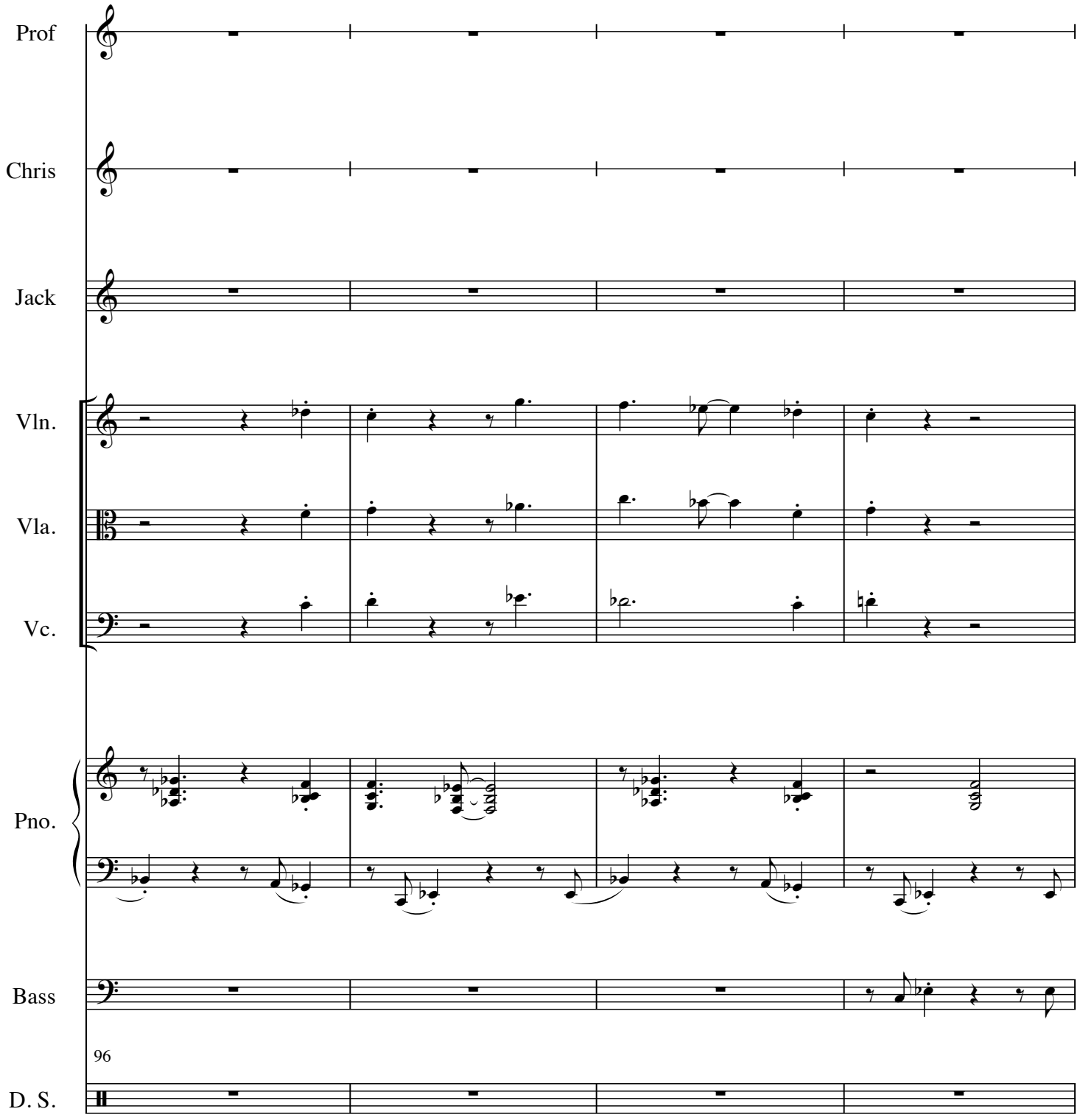

Now these capa-bilities are much older, and
located in brain areas other than the frontal lobes.
Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
75
D. S.

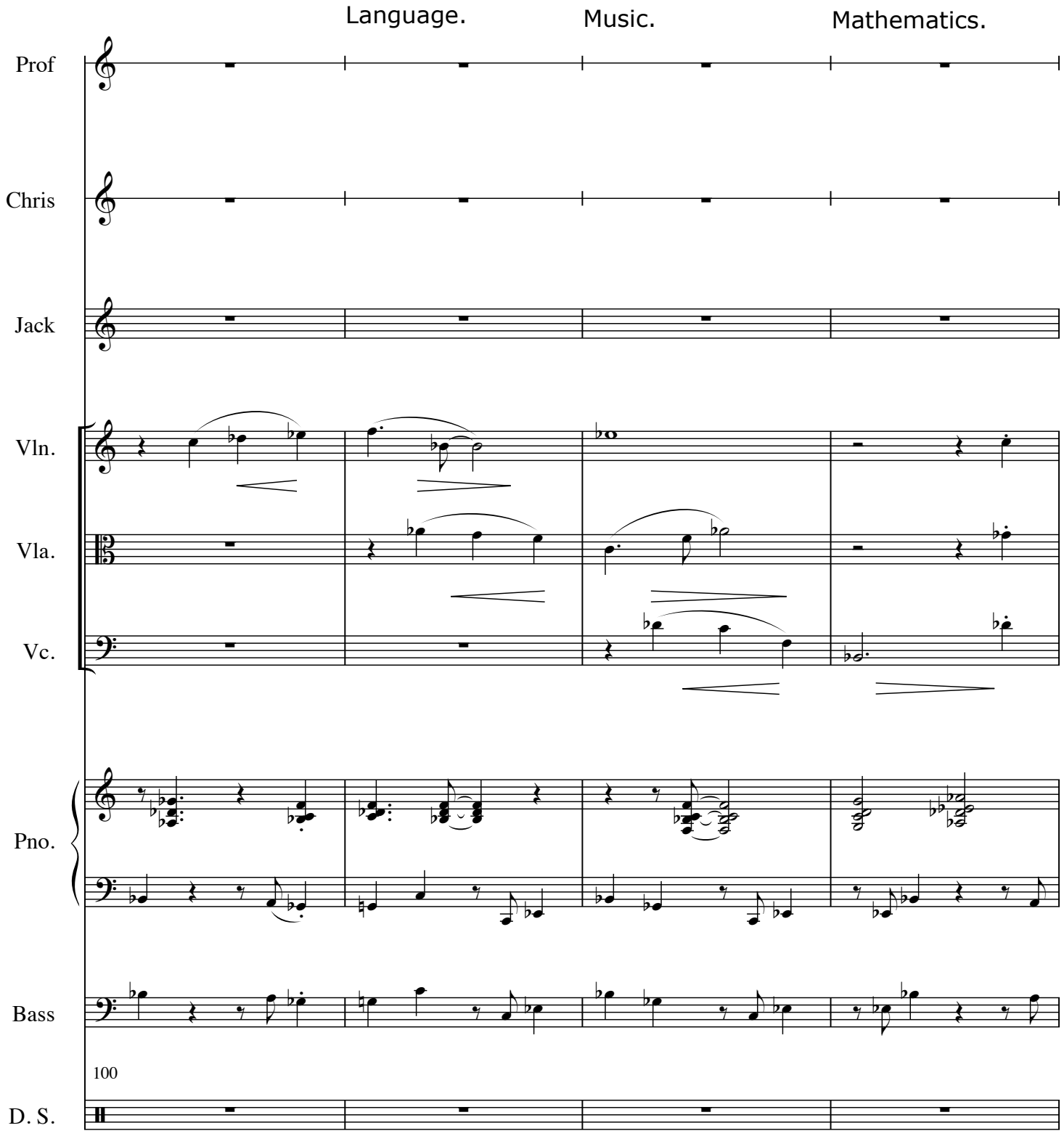

But, and this is the important point,
these frontal lobes
work closely with the
Prof
and this is the im-por-tant point.
Chris
Jack
accel.
delicate (♩= 148)
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
mf
p
Pno.
Bass
81
D. S.


other parts to enhance and enrich the expressive, communicative
powers that symbolic
Prof
to en - hance and en - rich the ex - pres-sive, com mu ni ca tive pow-ers that sym - bol - ic
Chris
poco accel.
Jack
Vln.
mp
Vla.
mp
Vc.
mp
poco accel.
Pno.
Bass
87
D. S.


reasoning brings to the human heart.
Confused? Well, if you aren't, you certainly should be!
Prof
rea-son-ing brings to the hum-an heart.
Chris
E
A tempo (♩= ca. 136)
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
f
mp
E
A tempo (♩= ca. 136)
Pno.
Bass
91
D. S.

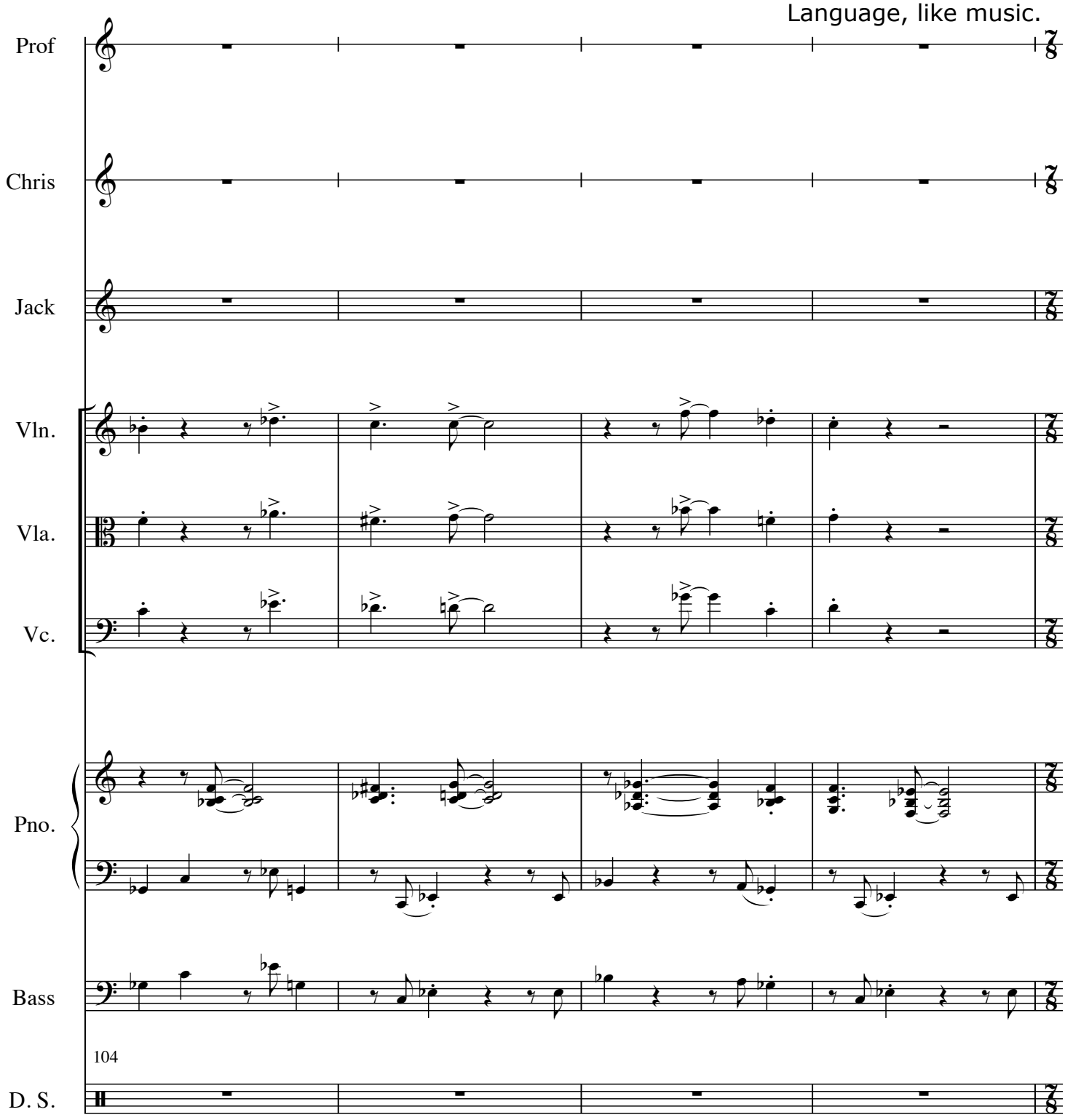
So let me clarify. We'll start with the three great symbolic systems of human civilization.

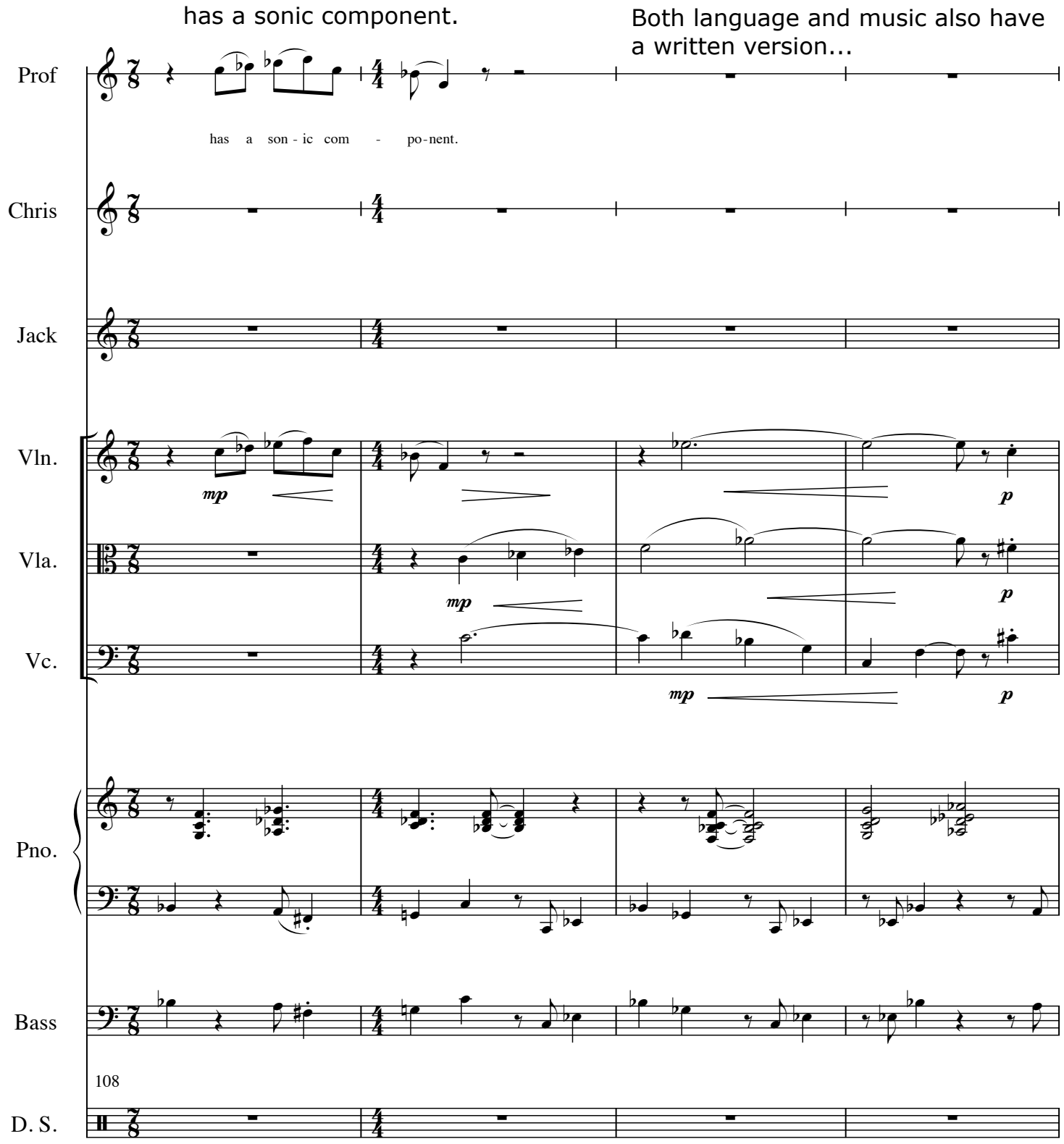



Language.
Music.
Mathematics.
Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
100
D. S.

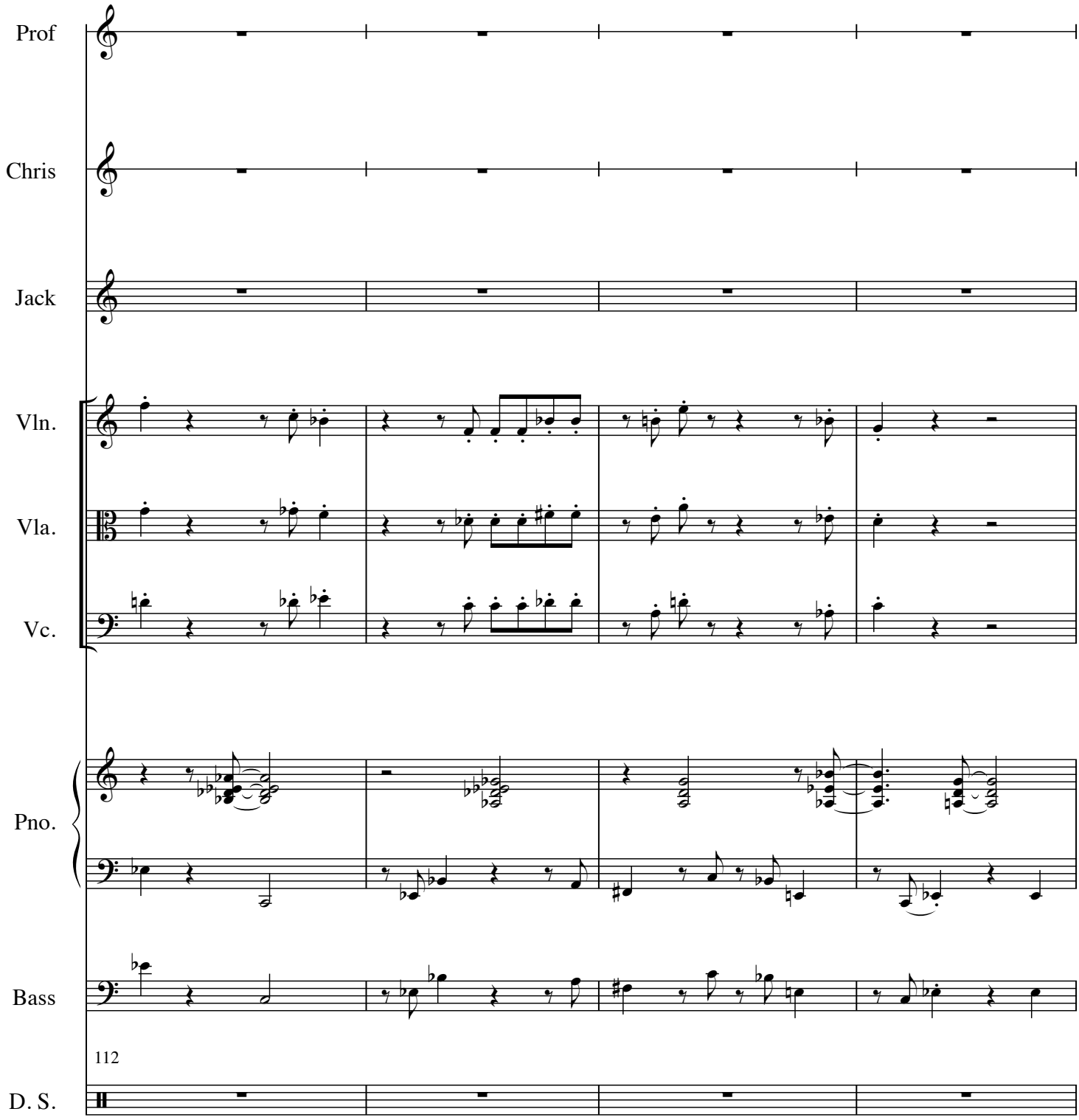
All of these systems have more in common than in opposition.

Language, like music.

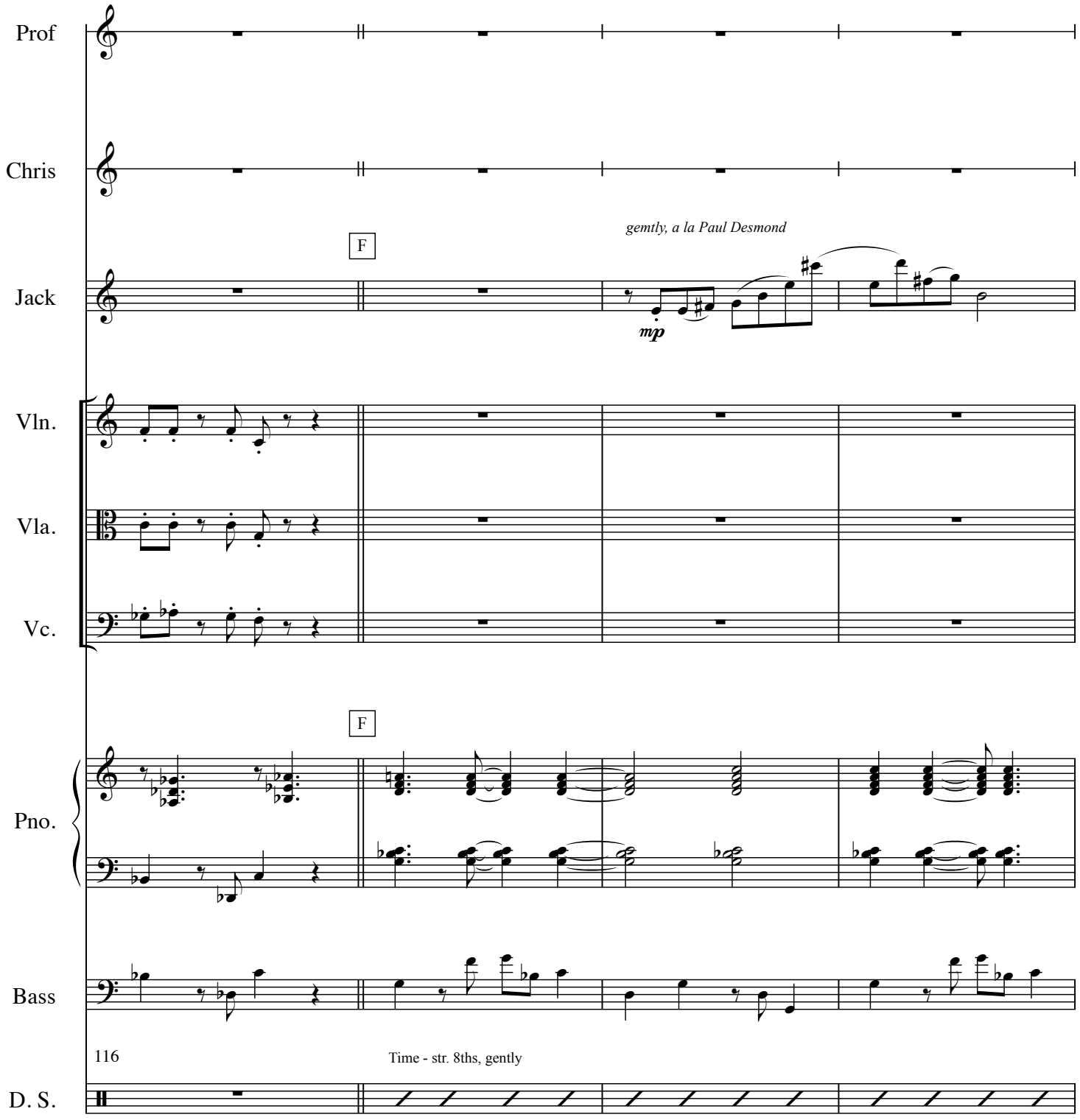


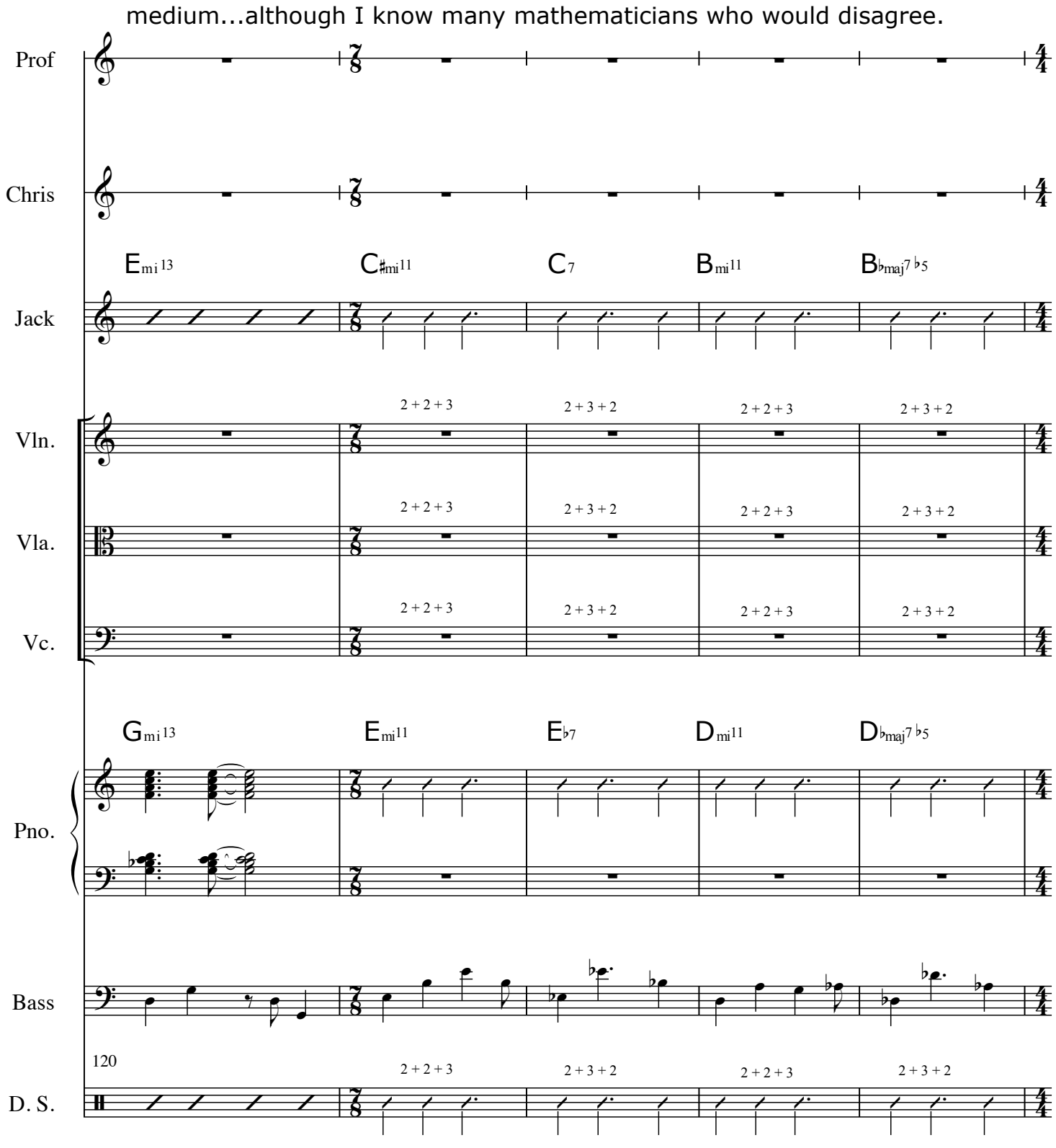

has a sonic component.
Both language and music also have a written version...
Prof
has a son - ic com - po - nent.
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
108
D. S.
mp
p

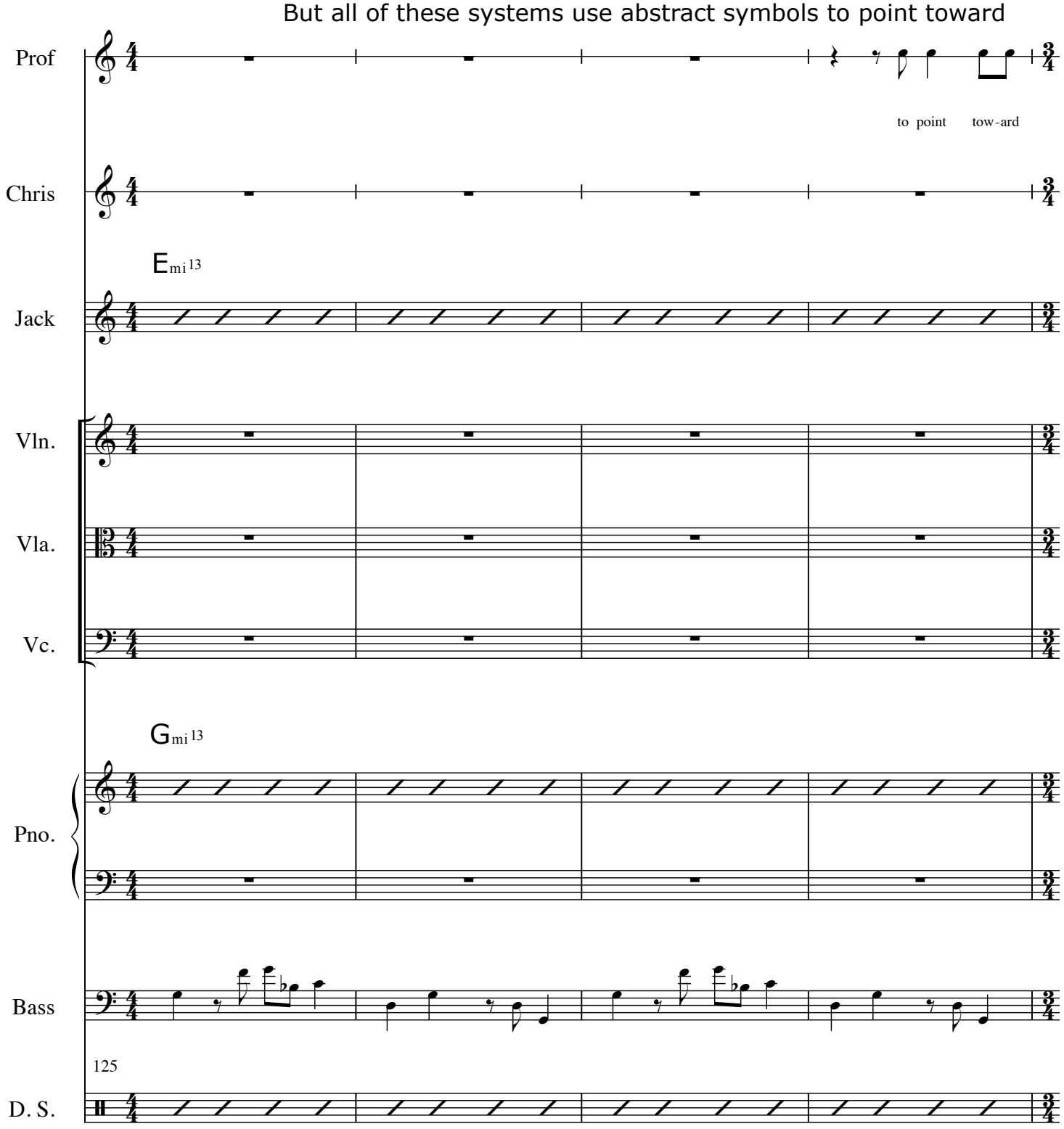
distinct from but representative of their sounds. Mathematics,

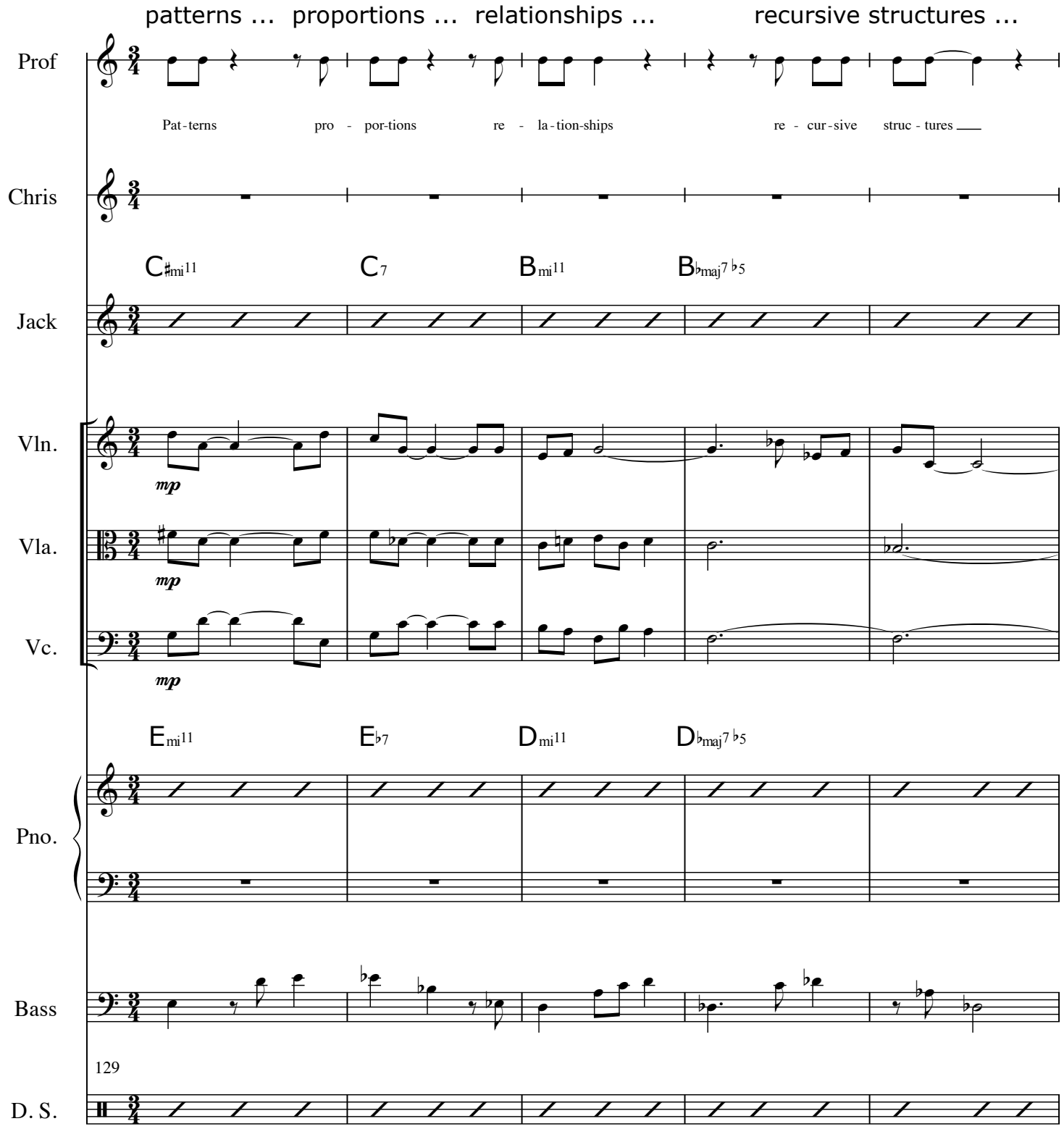


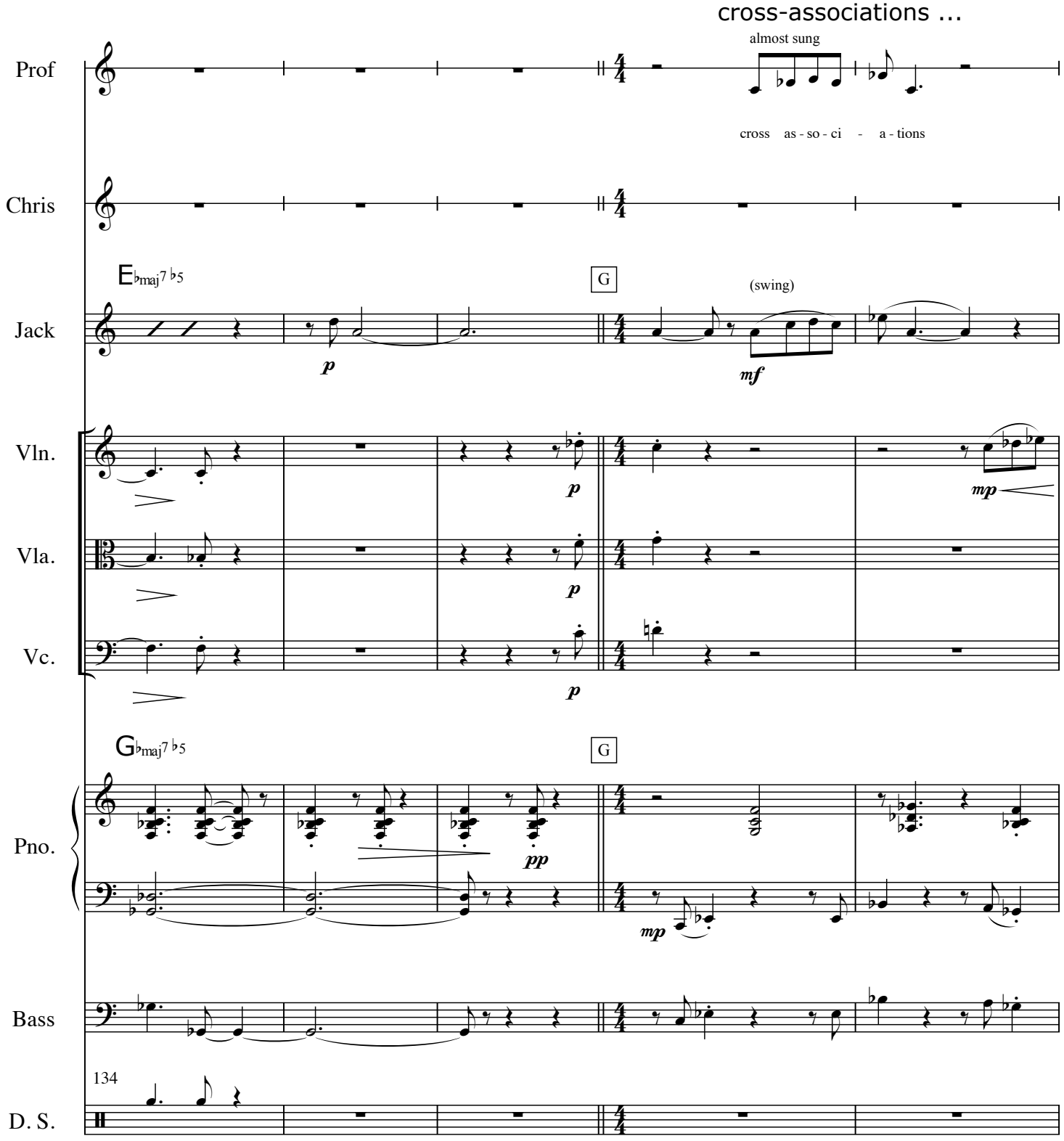
although descriptive, is not usually thought of as an expressive or aesthetic




medium...although I know many mathematicians who would disagree.
Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
D. S.
120
Emi13
C♯mi11
C7
Bmi11
B♭maj7♭5
Gmi13
Emi11
E♭7
Dmi11
D♭maj7♭5
2 + 2 + 3
2 + 3 + 2

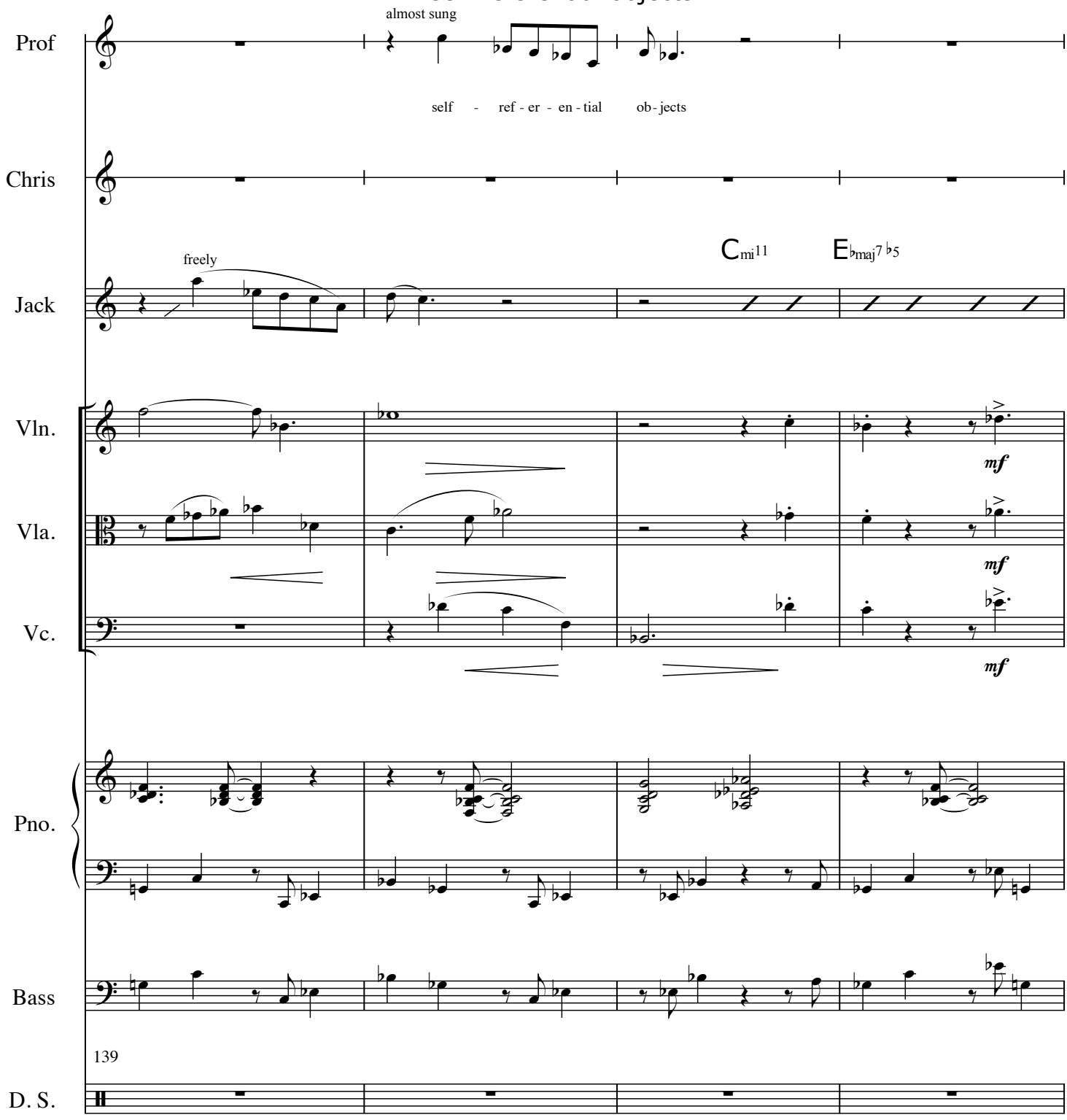

But all of these systems use abstract symbols to point toward
Prof
to point tow-ard
Chris
Emi13
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Gmi13
Pno.
Bass
125
D. S.

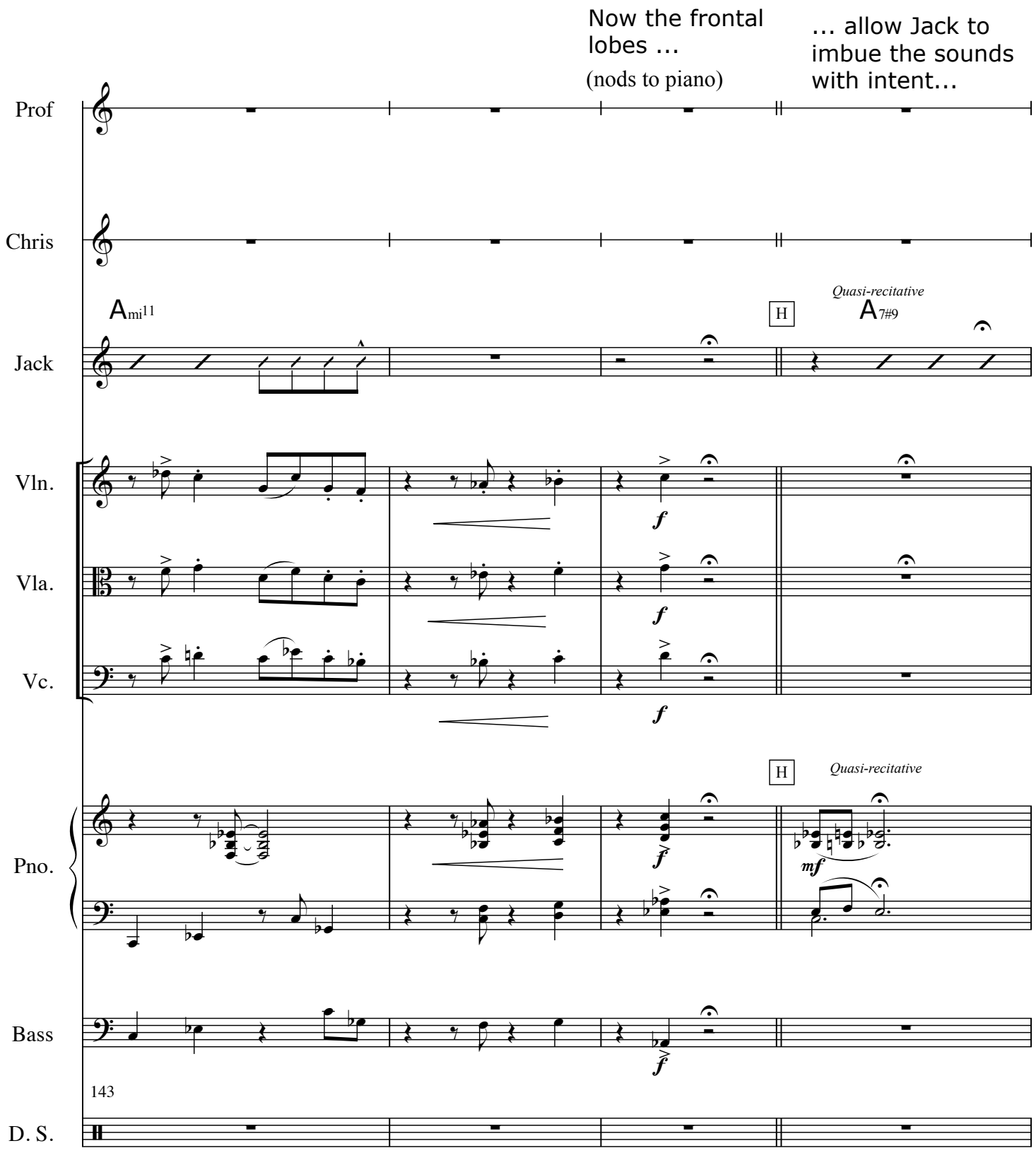

patterns ... proportions ... relationships ... recursive structures ...
Prof
Pat-terns pro - por-tions re - la-tion-ships re - cur-sive struc - tures
Chris
C♯mi11 C7 Bmi11 B♭maj7♭5
Jack
Vln.
mp
Vla.
mp
Vc.
mp
Emi11 E♭7 Dmi11 D♭maj7♭5
Pno.
Bass
129
D. S.

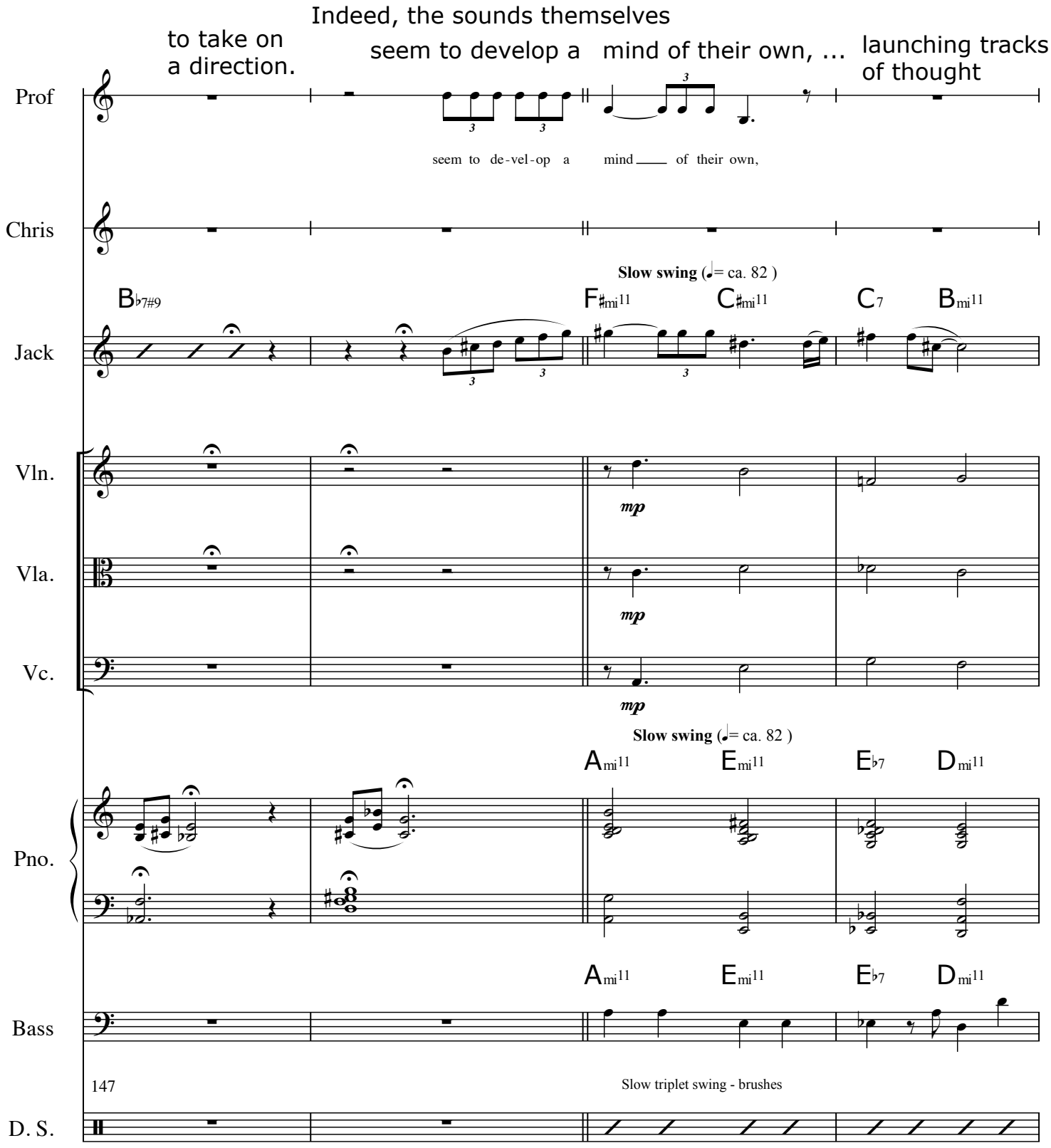

cross-associations ...
almost sung
Prof
cross as - so - ci - a - tions
Chris
E♭maj7♭5
G
(swing)
Jack
p
mf
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
p
mp
G♭maj7♭5
G
Pno.
pp
mp
Bass
134
D. S.

(points with thumb toward Jack...)

self-referential objects

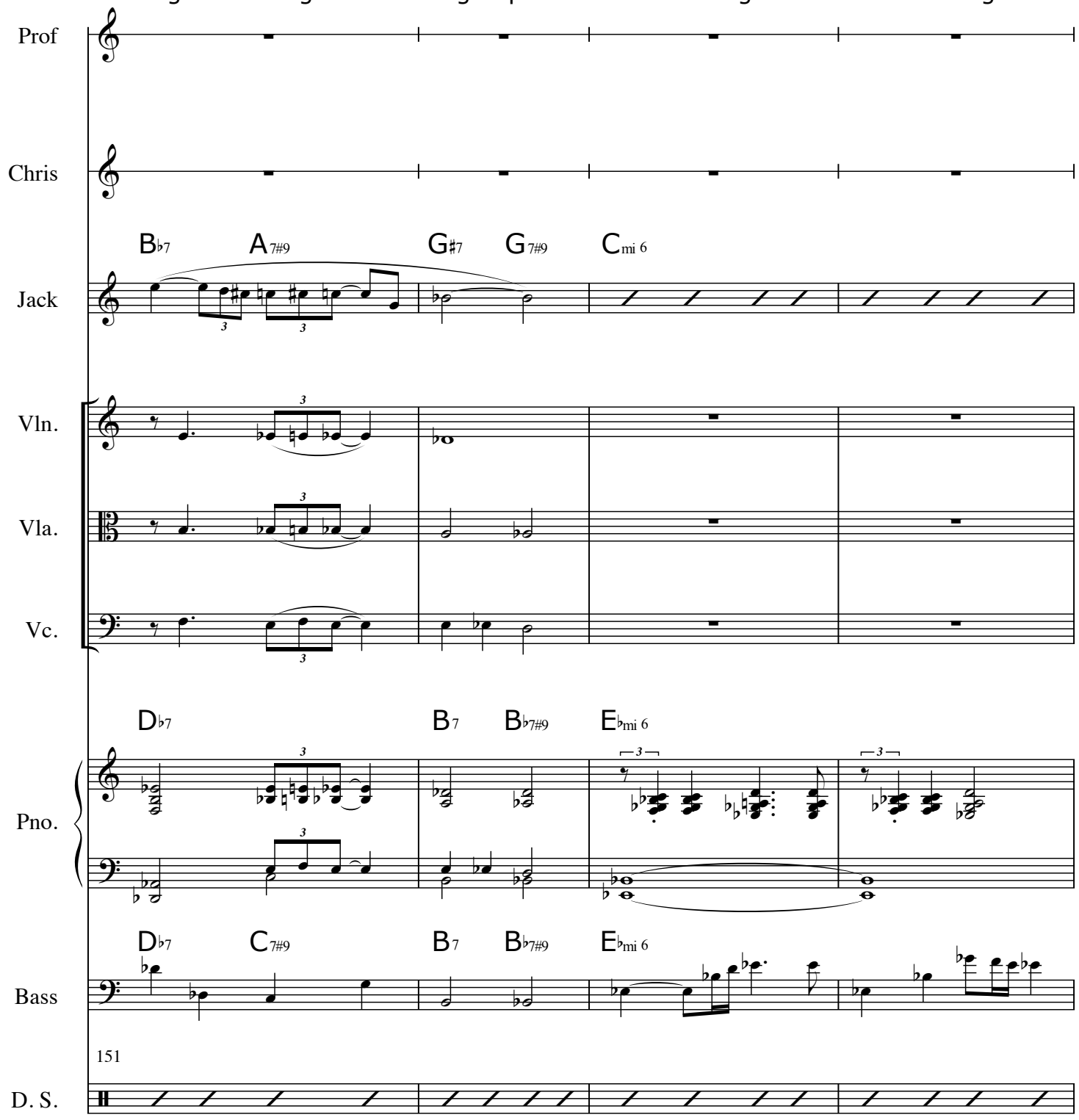


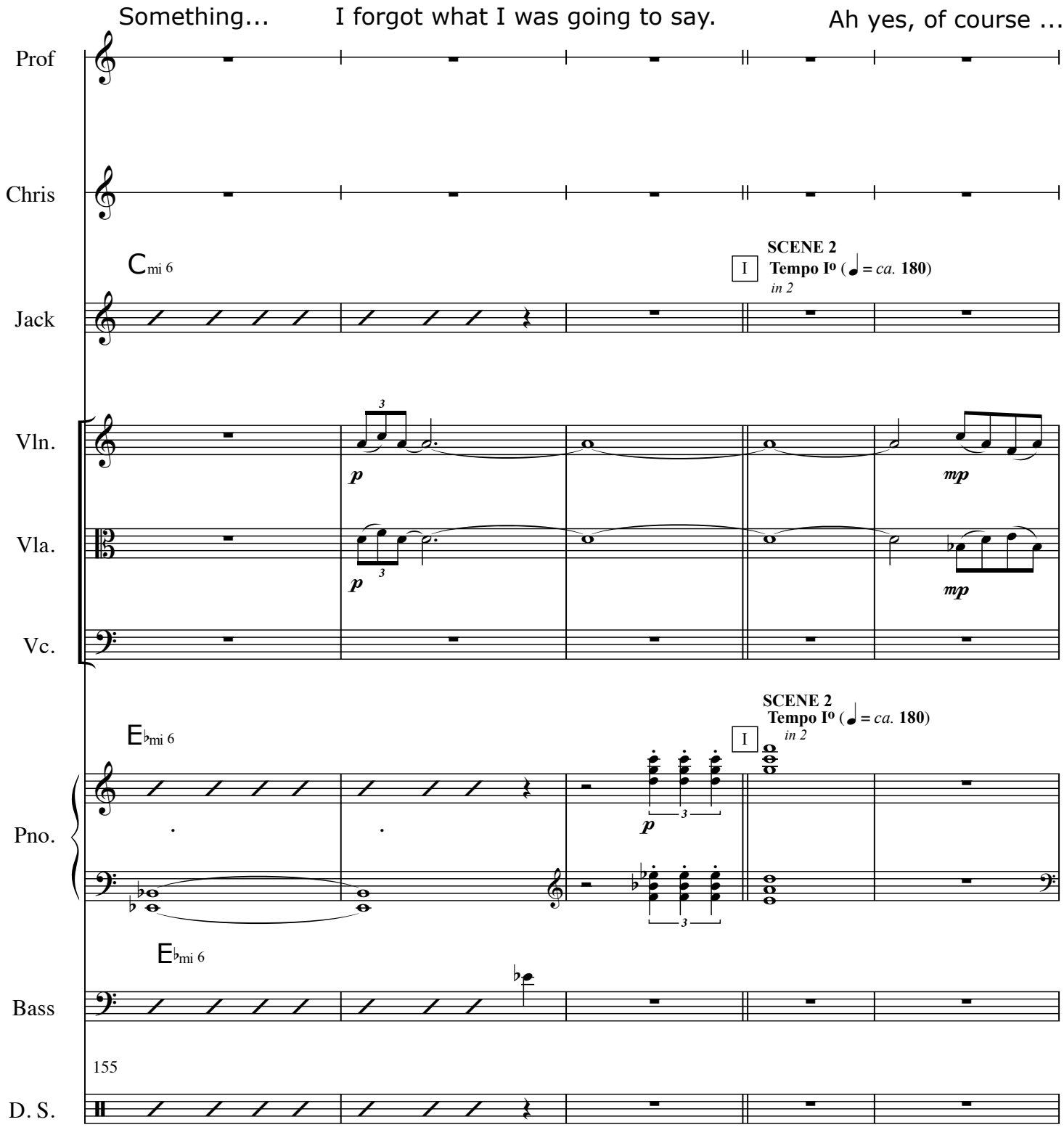

Now the frontal lobes ...
(nods to piano)
... allow Jack to imbue the sounds with intent...
Prof
Chris
Ami11
H
Quasi-recitative
A7#9
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
f
H
Quasi-recitative
Pno.
mf
Bass
143
D. S.

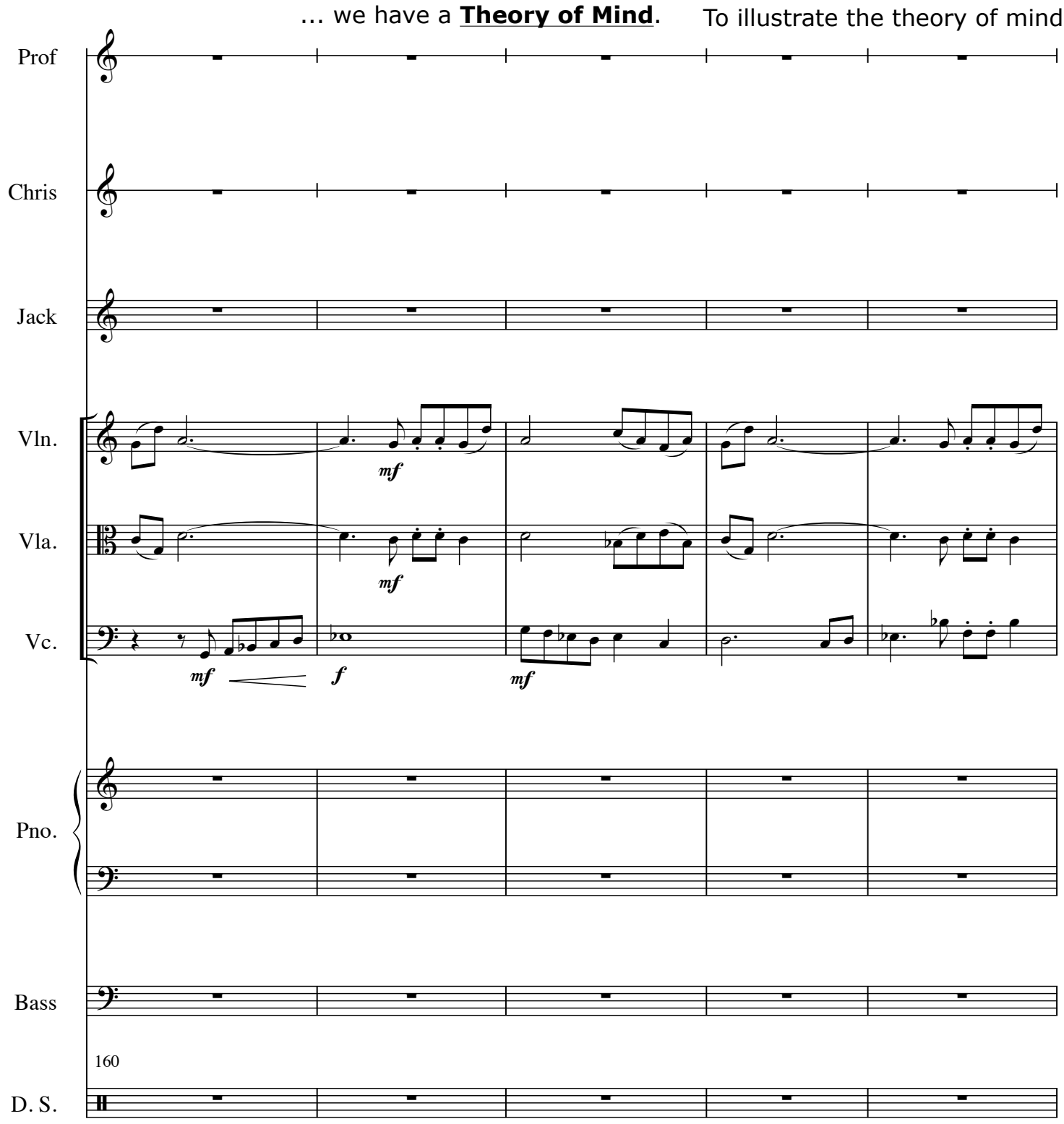

to take on
a direction.
Indeed, the sounds themselves
seem to develop a
mind of their own, ...
launching tracks
of thought
Prof
seem to de-vel-op a
mind
of their own,
Chris
Slow swing (♩= ca. 82)
B♭7#9
F♯mi11
C♯mi11
C7
Bmi11
Jack
Vln.
mp
Vla.
mp
Vc.
mp
Slow swing (♩= ca. 82)
Ami11
Emi11
E♭7
Dmi11
Pno.
Ami11
Emi11
E♭7
Dmi11
Bass
147
Slow triplet swing - brushes
D. S.

SCENE 2

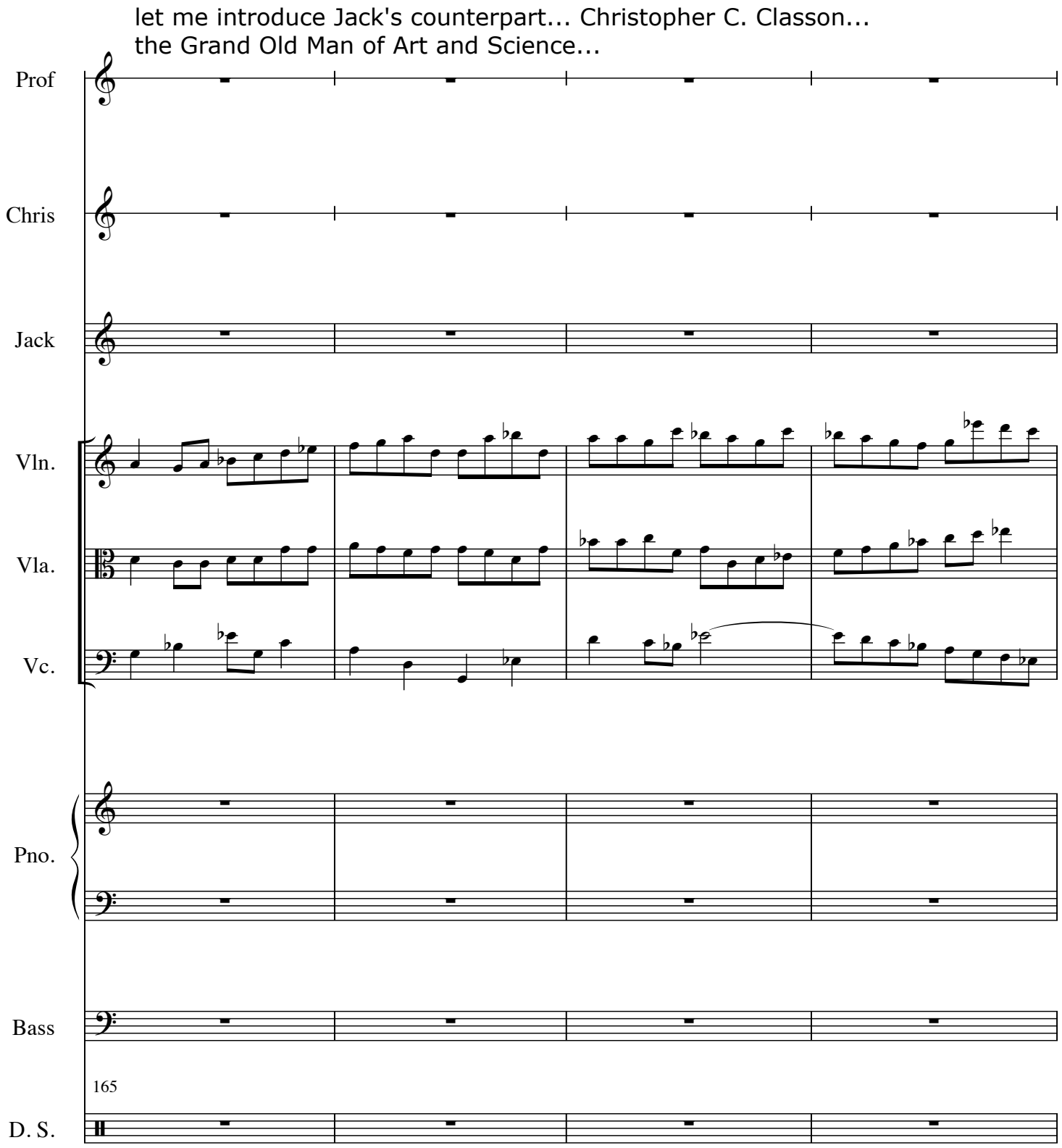
... leaving trails of recollection... an afterglow of concepts. feelings,
stirring something... something important ...something ancient...something dark ...




Something...
I forgot what I was going to say.
Ah yes, of course ...
Prof
Chris
Cmi 6
SCENE 2
I
Tempo Io (= ca. 180)
in 2
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
p
mp
Ebmi 6
Pno.
Bass
155
D. S.

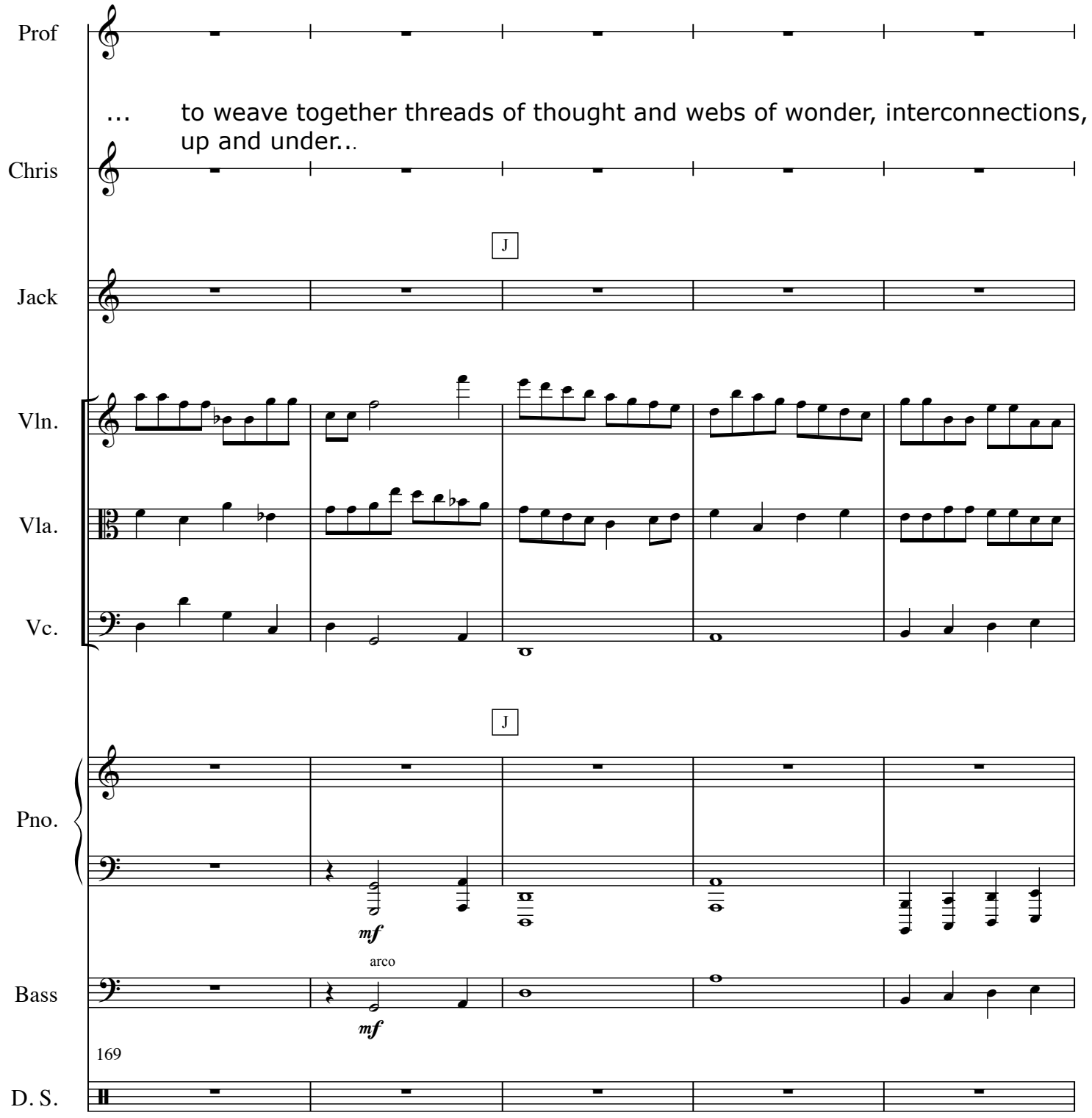

... we have a **Theory of Mind**.
To illustrate the theory of mind,
Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
D. S.
160
mf
mf
mf
f
mf

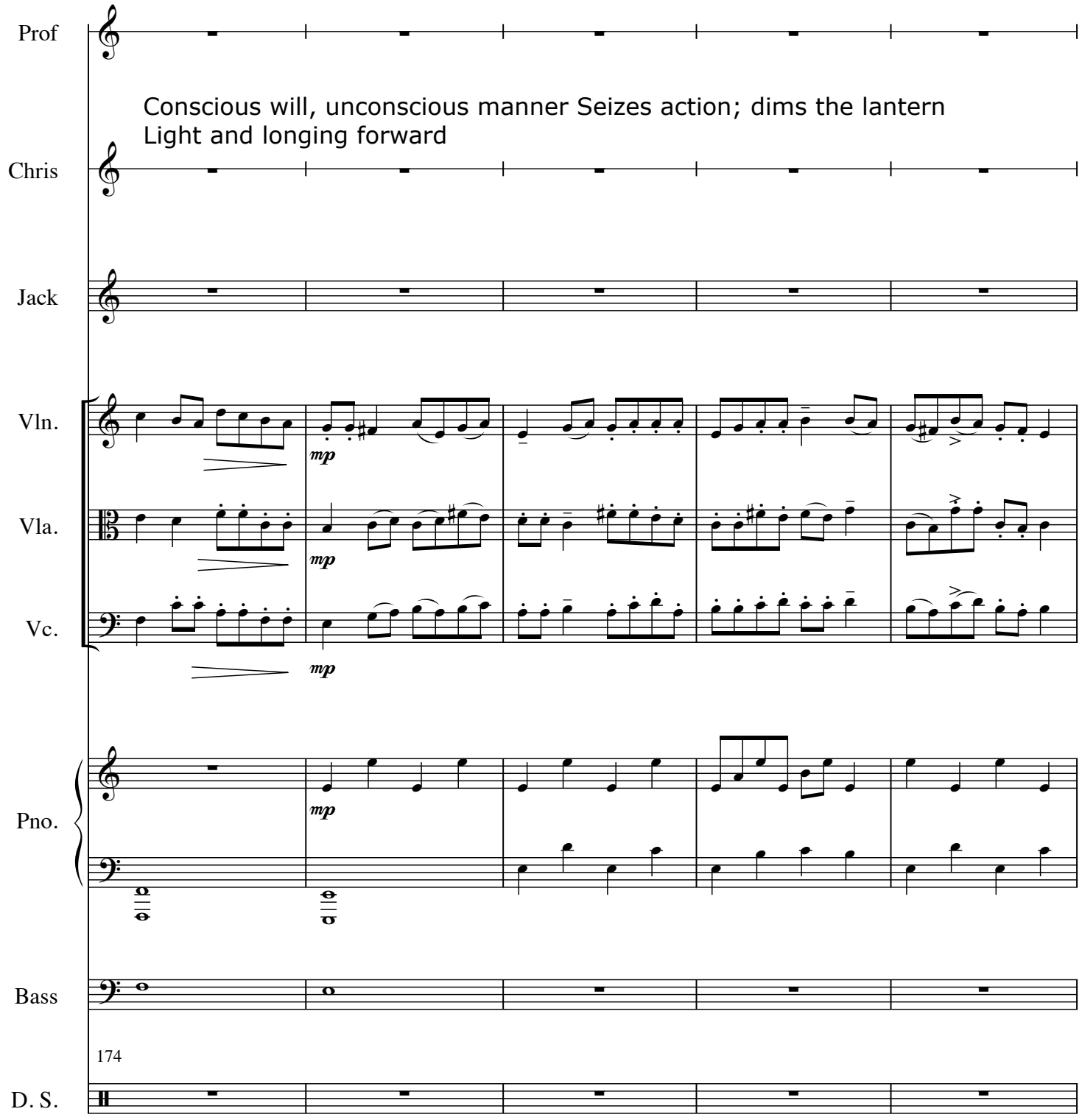
Classon turns and bows, handing the baton to the Professor.

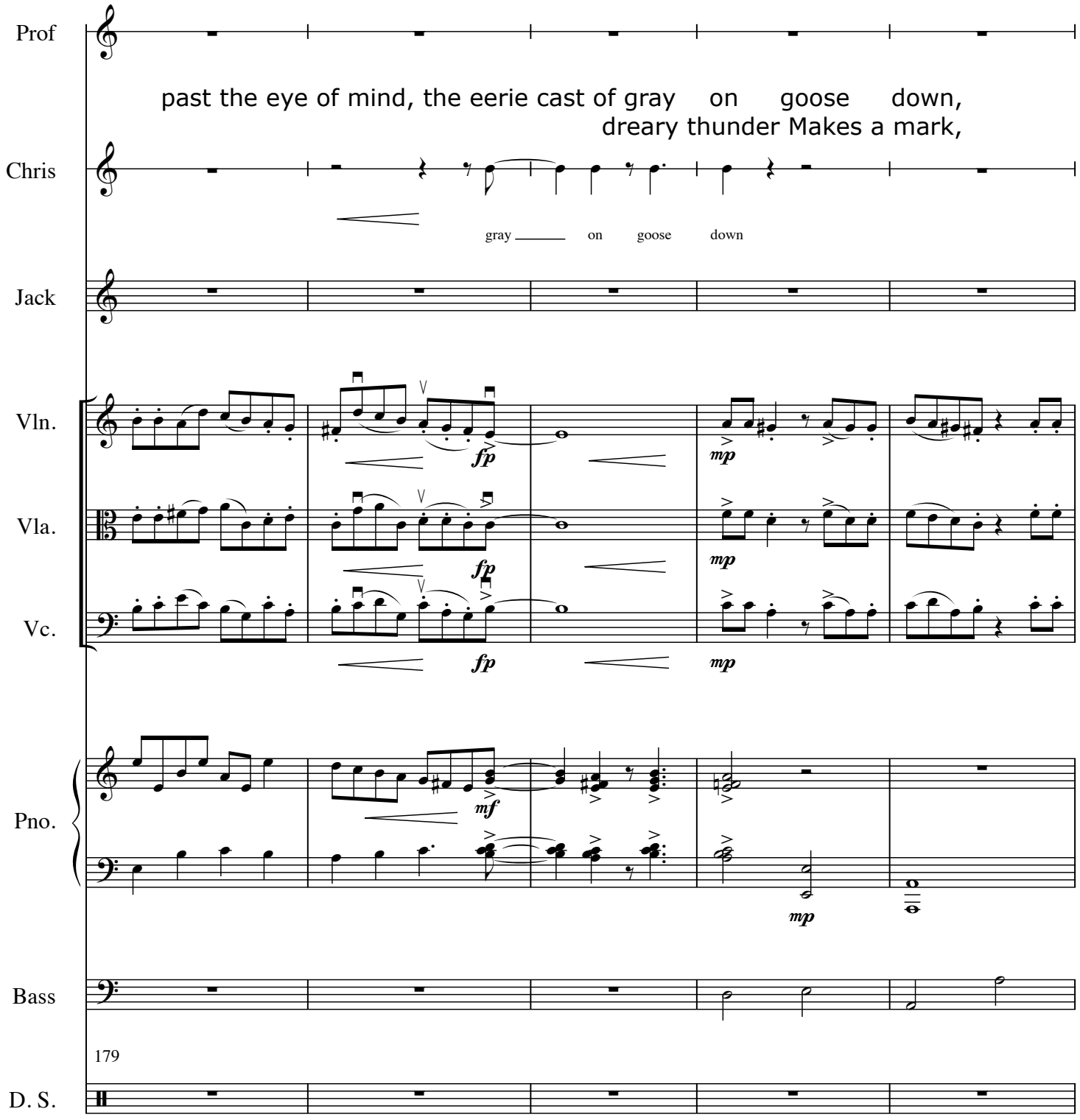


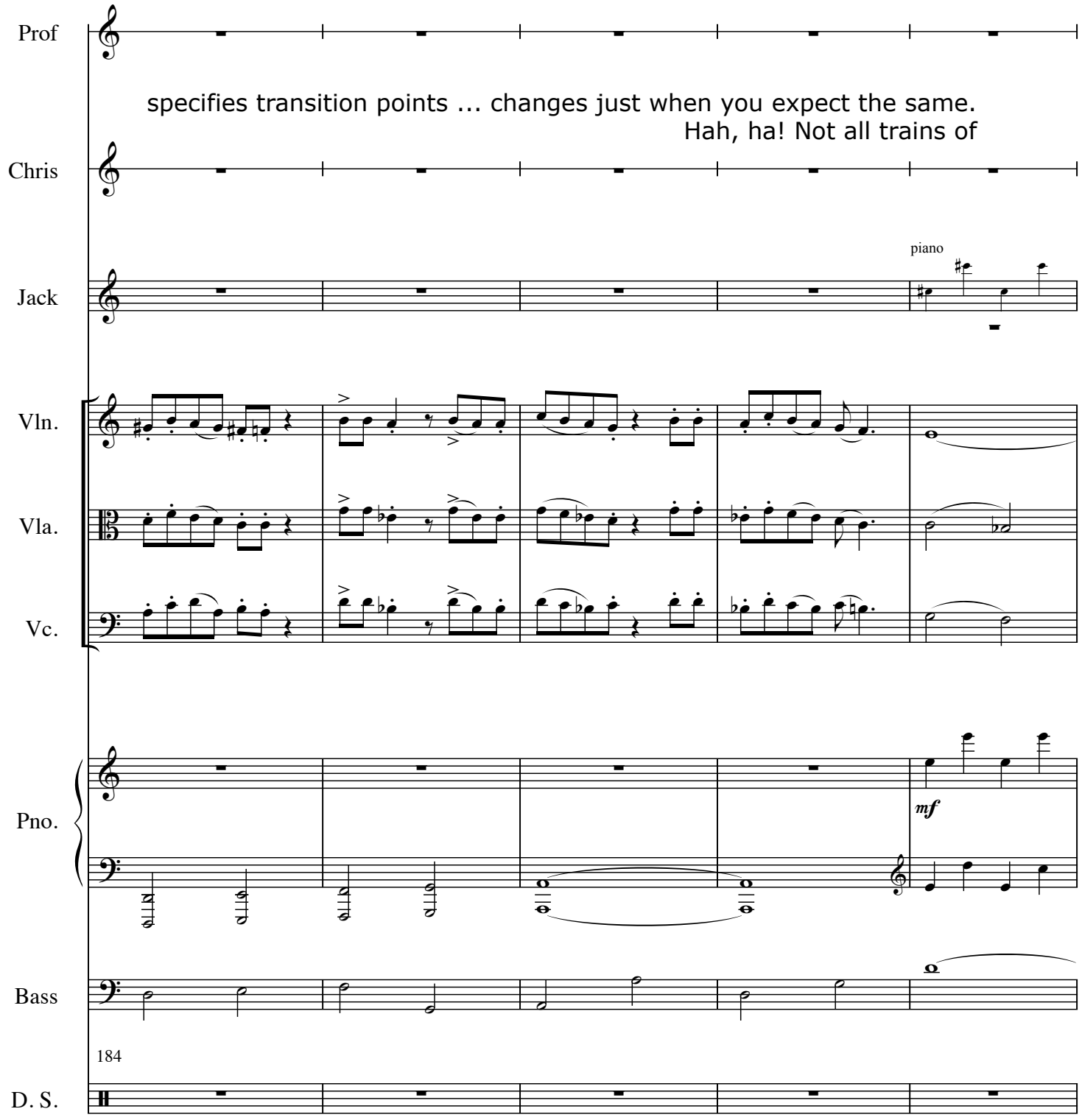
The Professor and Classon speak in unison, as the Professor trails off, Classon continues, as the Professor returns to conducting duties.

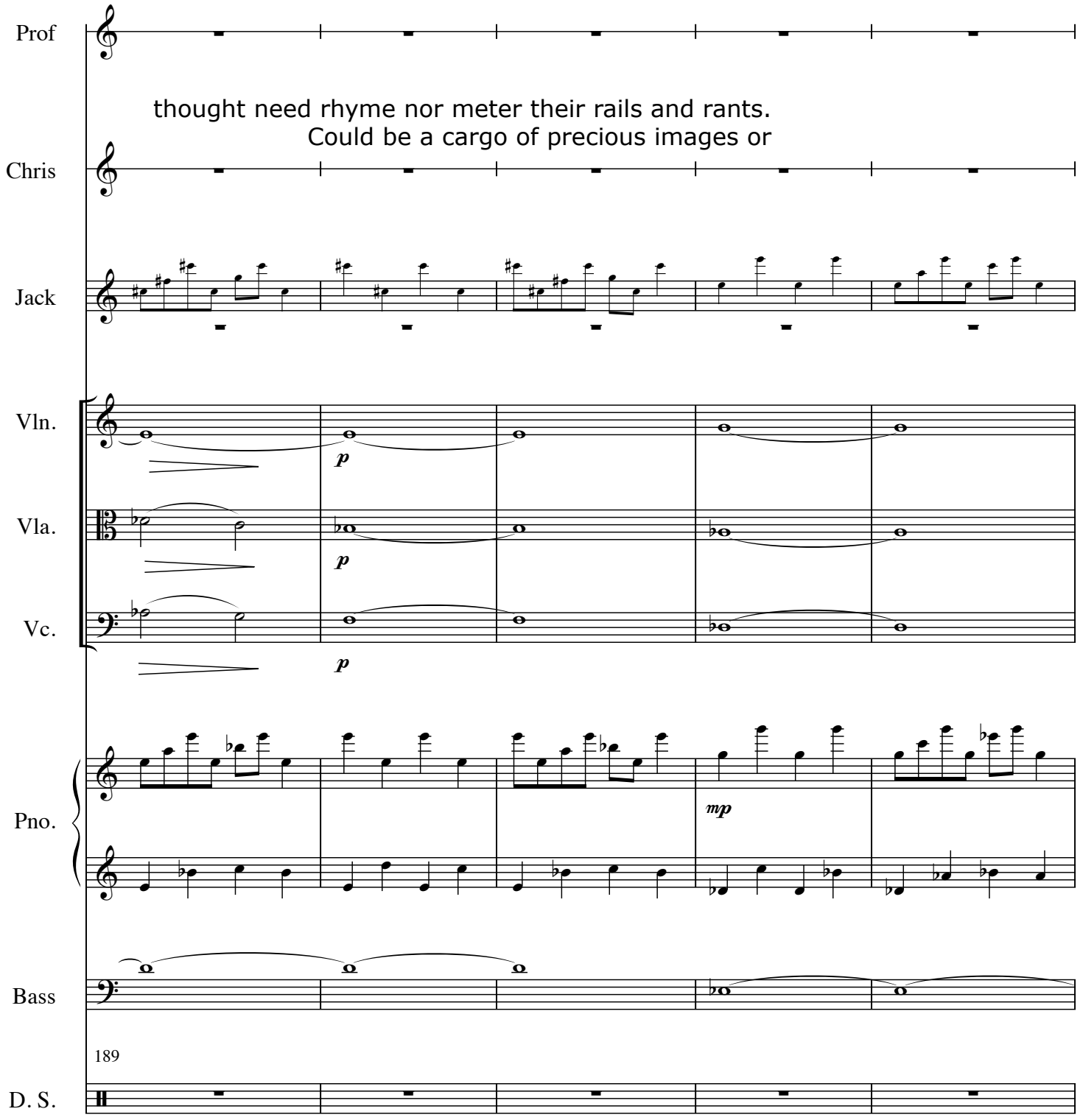
... here to weave together threads of thought and webs of wonder, interconnections, up and under...

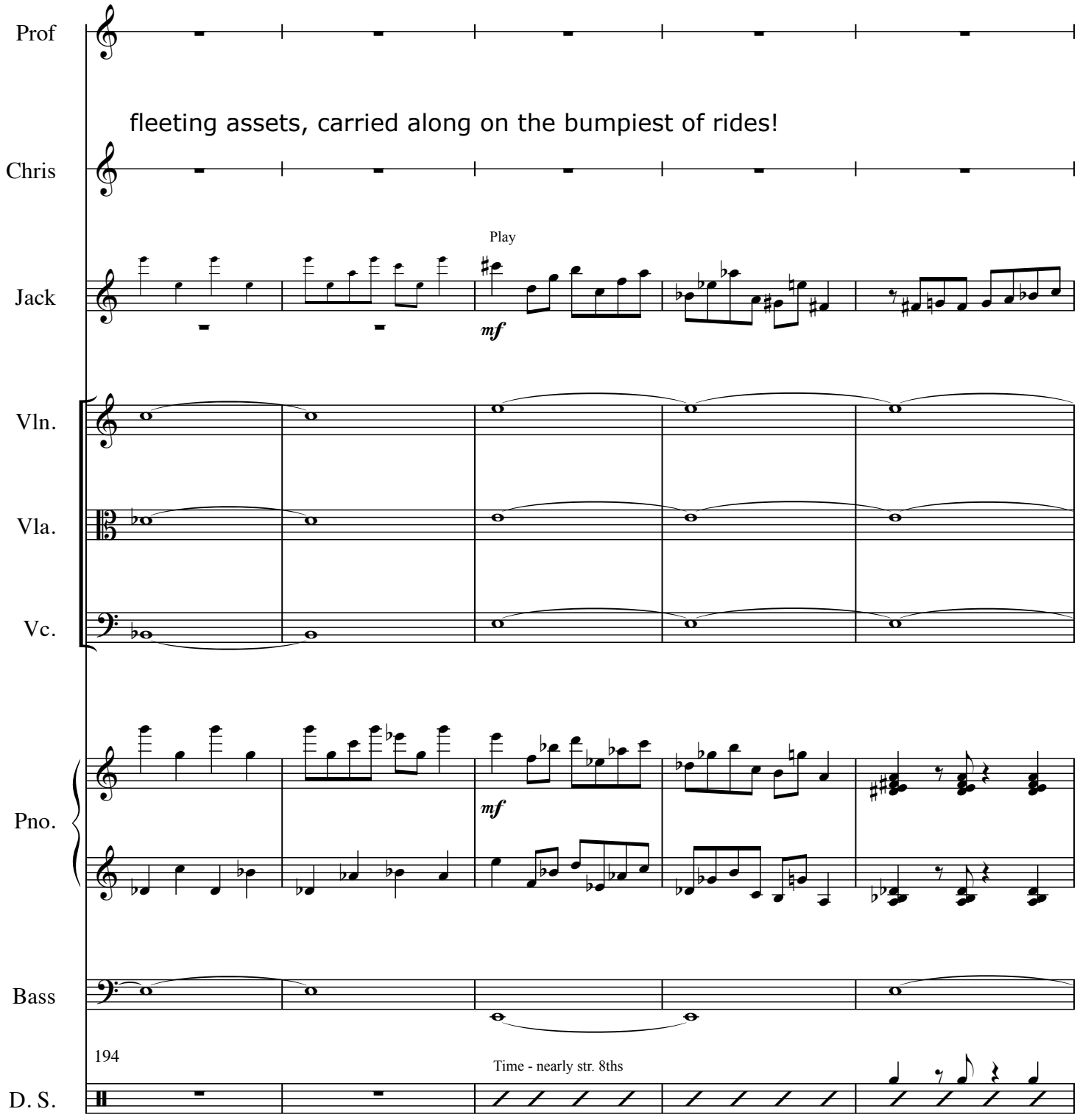


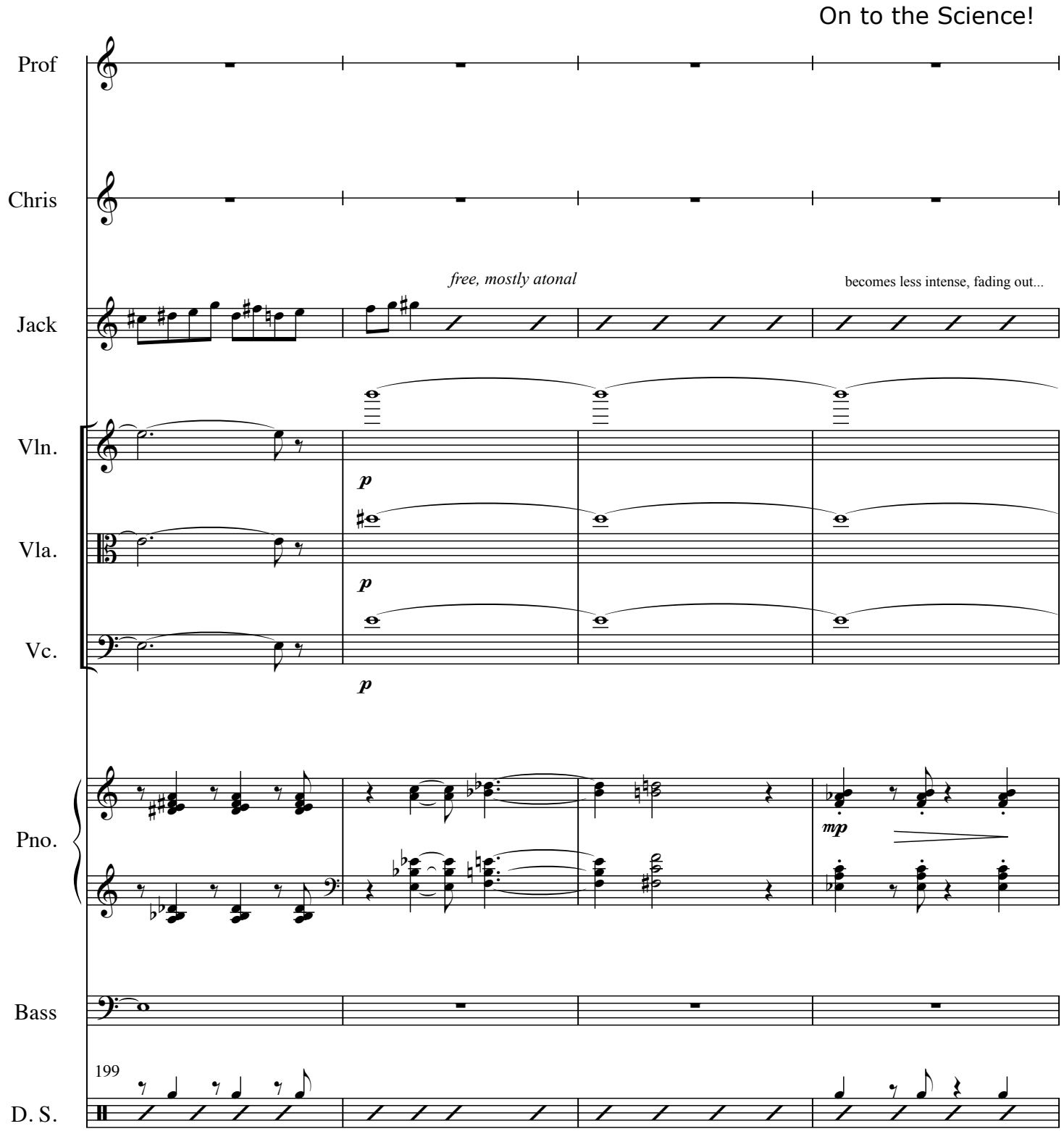

Prof
Conscious will, unconscious manner Seizes action; dims the lantern
Light and longing forward
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
mp
mp
mp
Pno.
mp
Bass
174
D. S.


Prof
past the eye of mind, the eerie cast of gray on goose down,
dreary thunder Makes a mark,
Chris
gray on goose down
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
fp
mp
Pno.
mf
Bass
179
D. S.

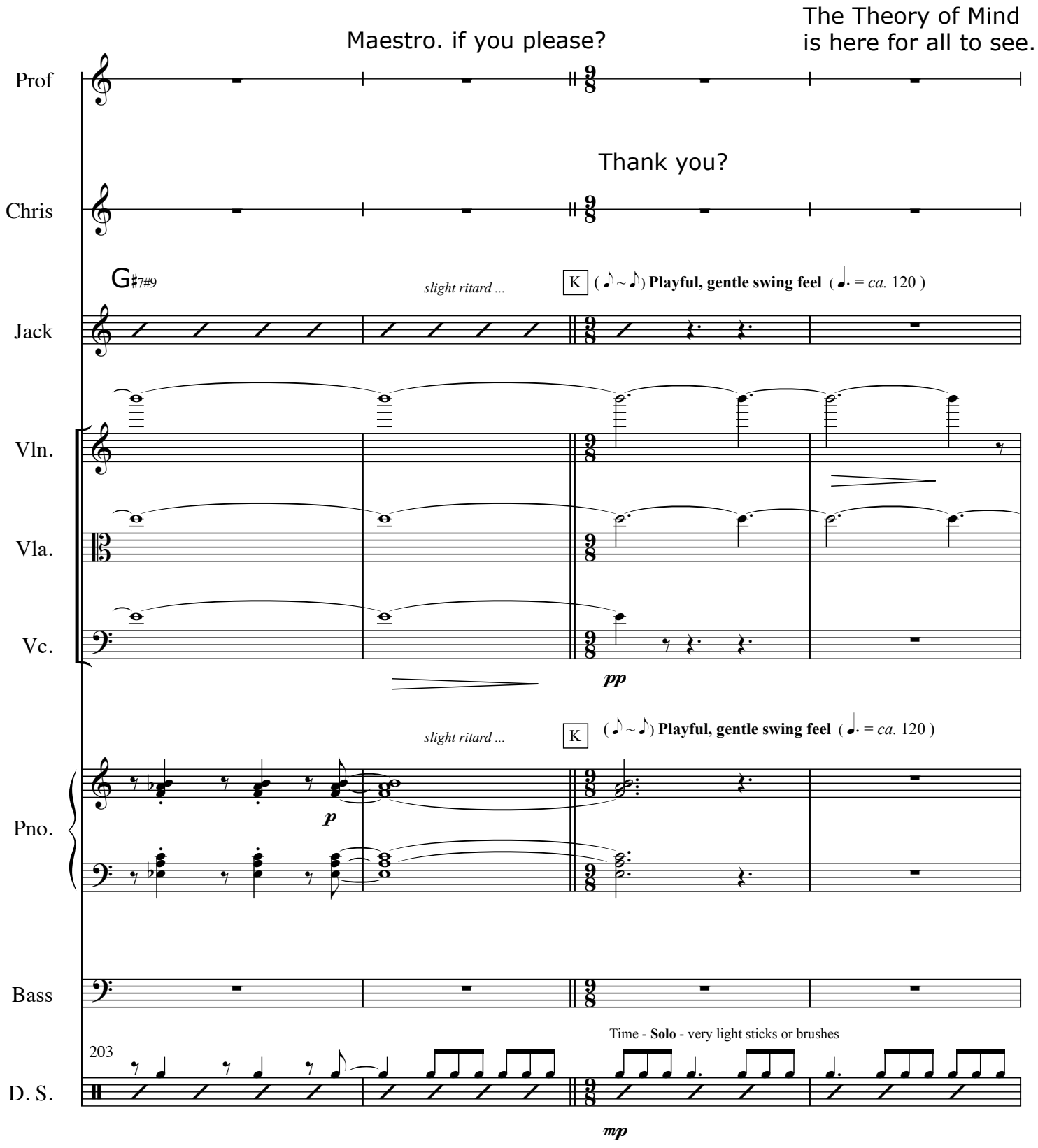

Prof
specifies transition points ... changes just when you expect the same.
Hah, ha! Not all trains of
Chris
piano
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
mf
Bass
184
D. S.


Prof
thought need rhyme nor meter their rails and rants.
Could be a cargo of precious images or
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
p
p
p
Pno.
mp
Bass
189
D. S.

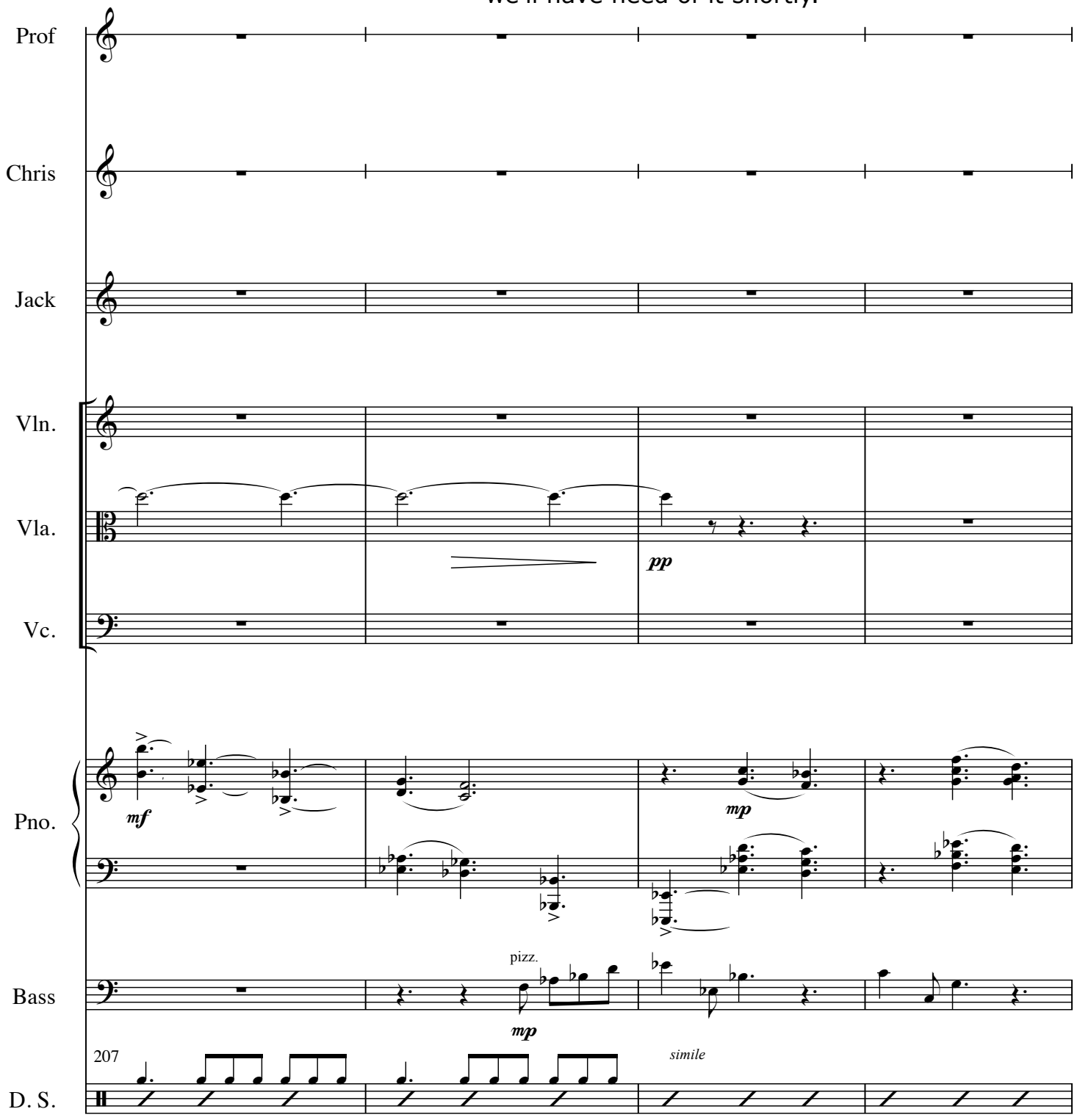

Prof
fleeting assets, carried along on the bumpiest of rides!
Chris
Play
Jack
mf
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
mf
Bass
194
Time - nearly str. 8ths
D. S.


On to the Science!
Prof
Chris
Jack
free, mostly atonal
becomes less intense, fading out...
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
p
p
p
Pno.
mp
Bass
199
D. S.

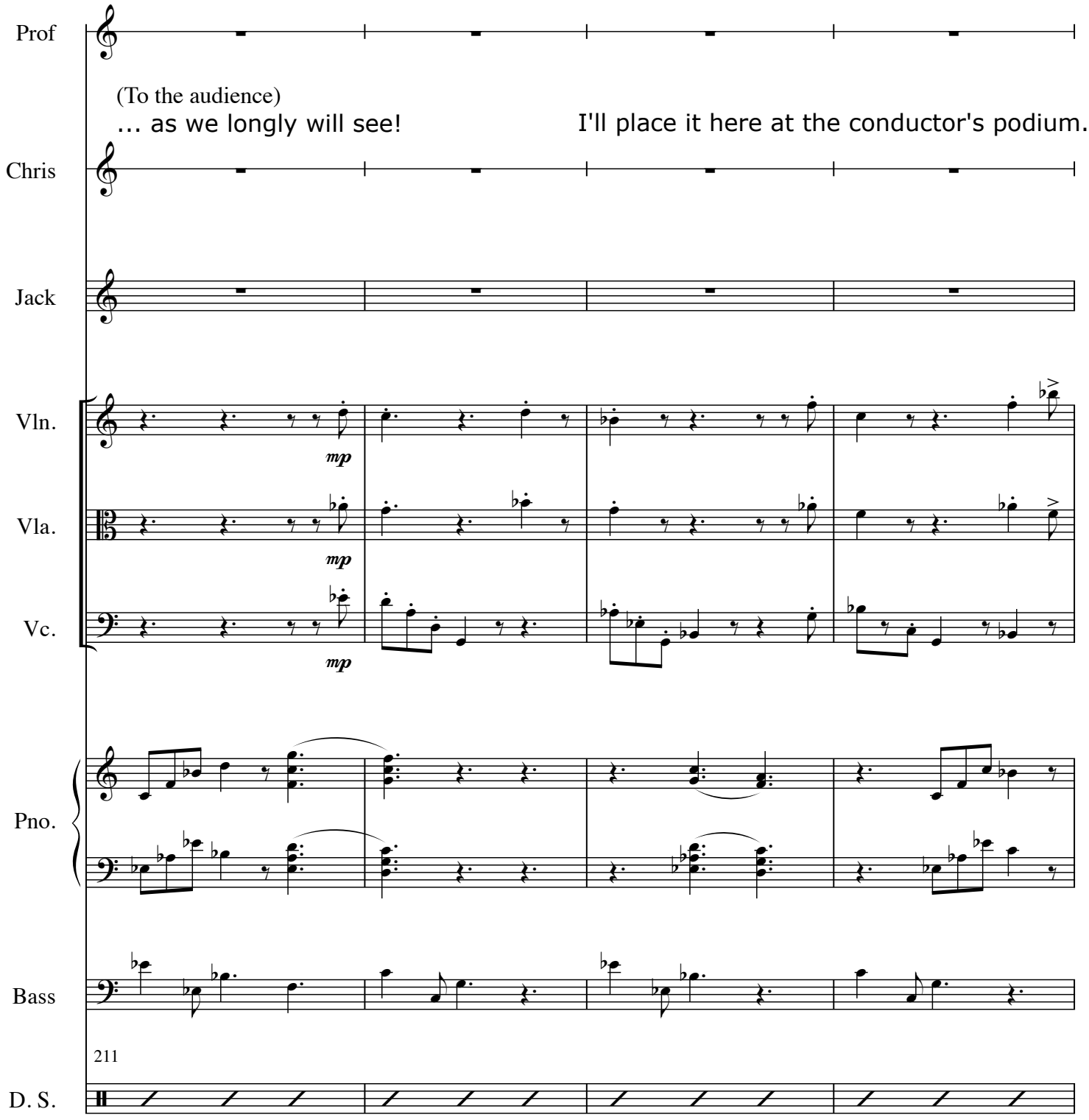
(The Professor hands the conducting baton to Chris who takes it, somewhat quizzically, then turns to conduct the 9/8 section)



Maestro Classon, please place the baton where you will ...
we'll have need of it shortly.

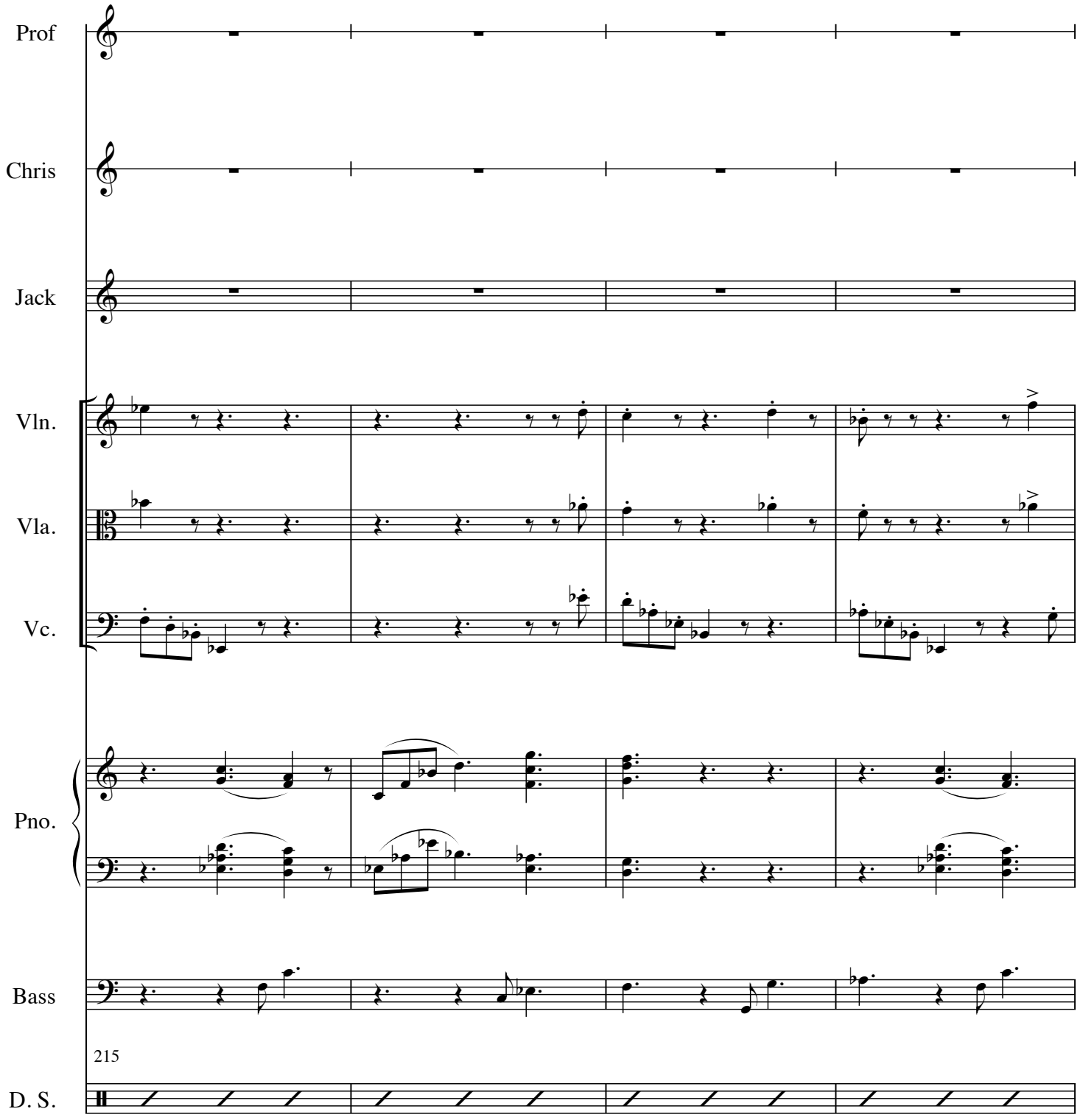


Classon places the baton on the conductor's podium,
and the Professor covers it with a handkerchief



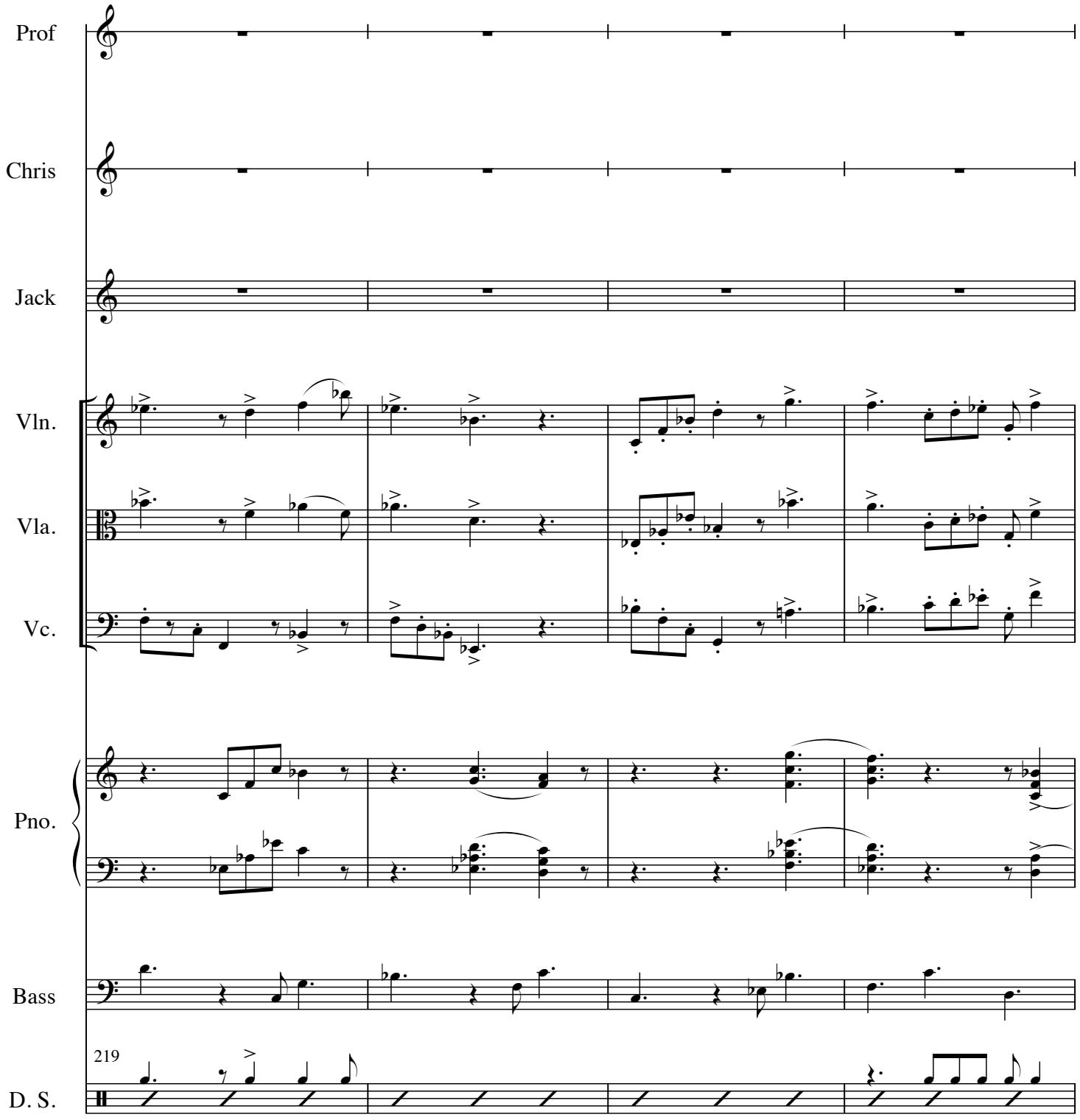
Classon bows, and leaves the stage.

And now, Maestro, will you kindly leave the stage for a moment?

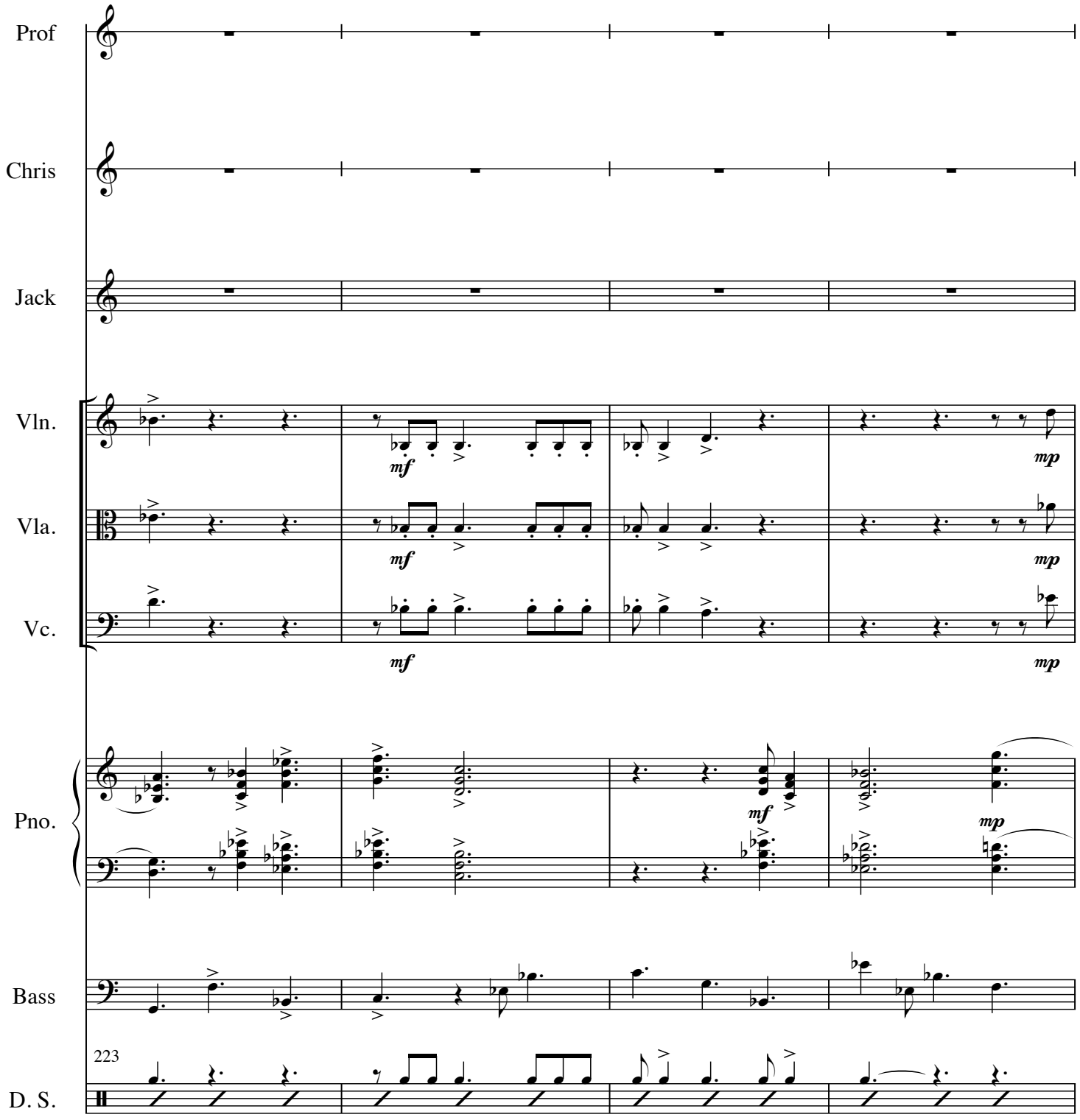


The Professor walks to the podium, removes the baton, and replaces the handkerchief. He then takes the baton and places it on Jack's music stand.

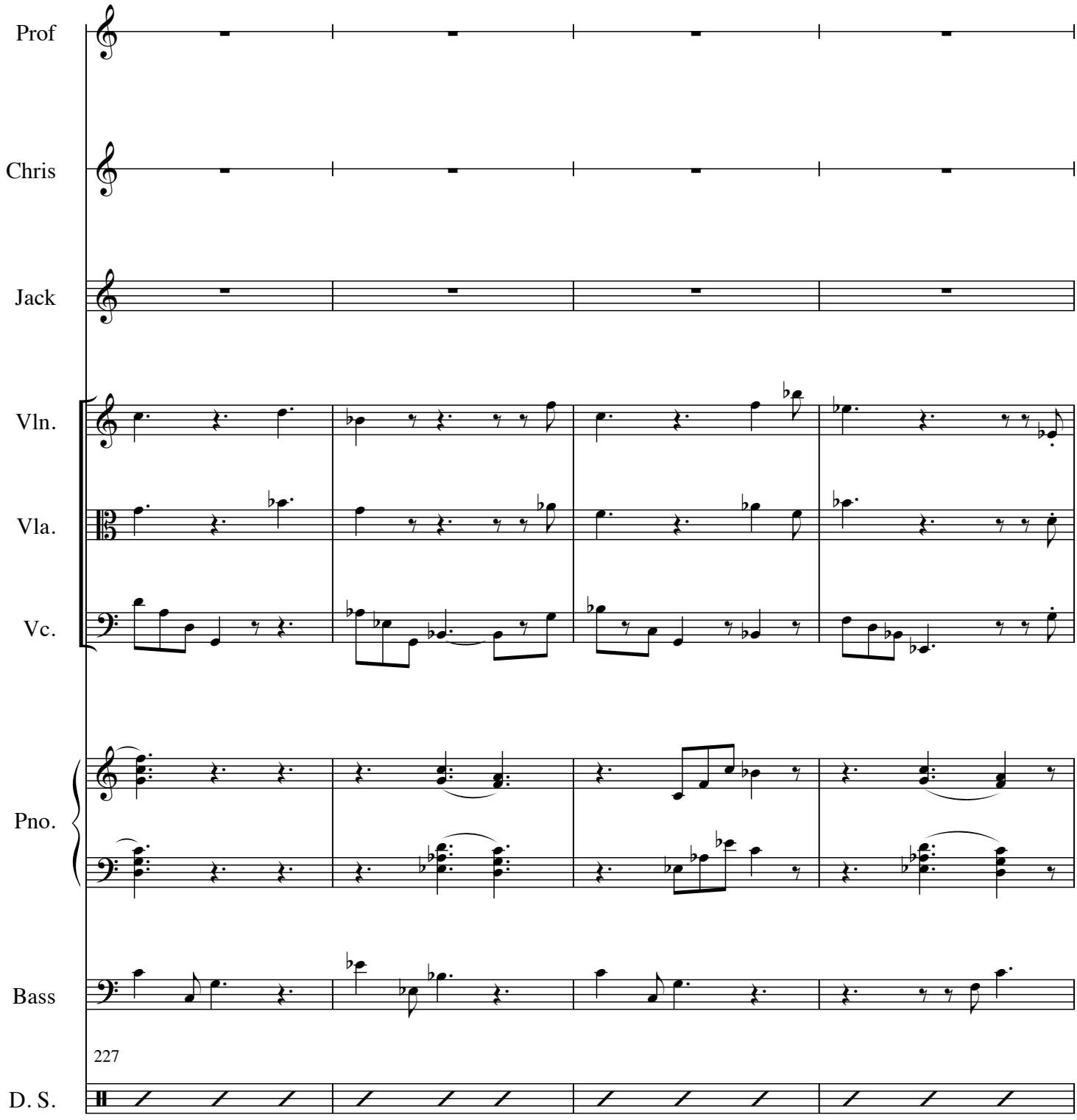
Our subject must be absent if our little experiment is to succeed.

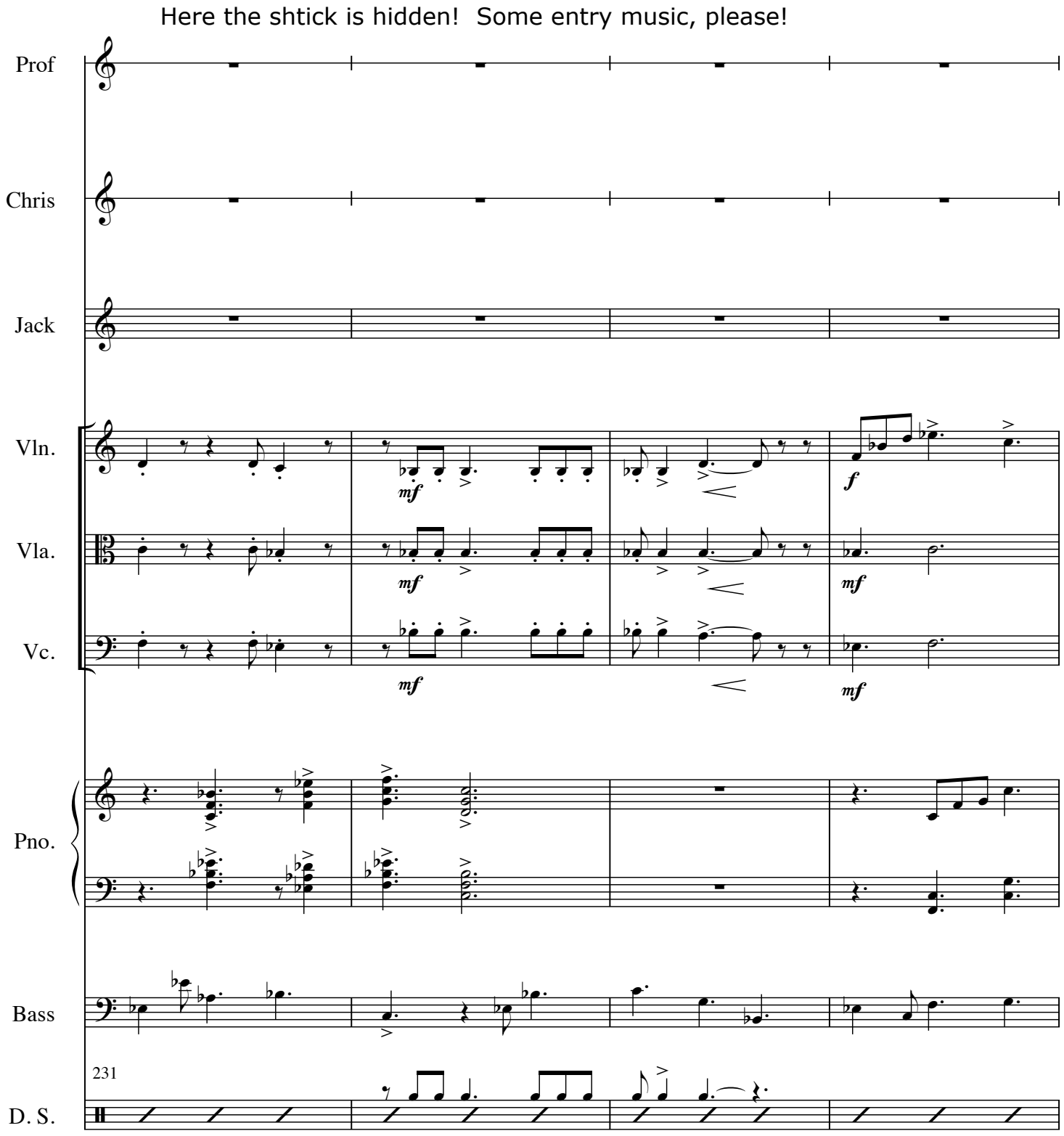


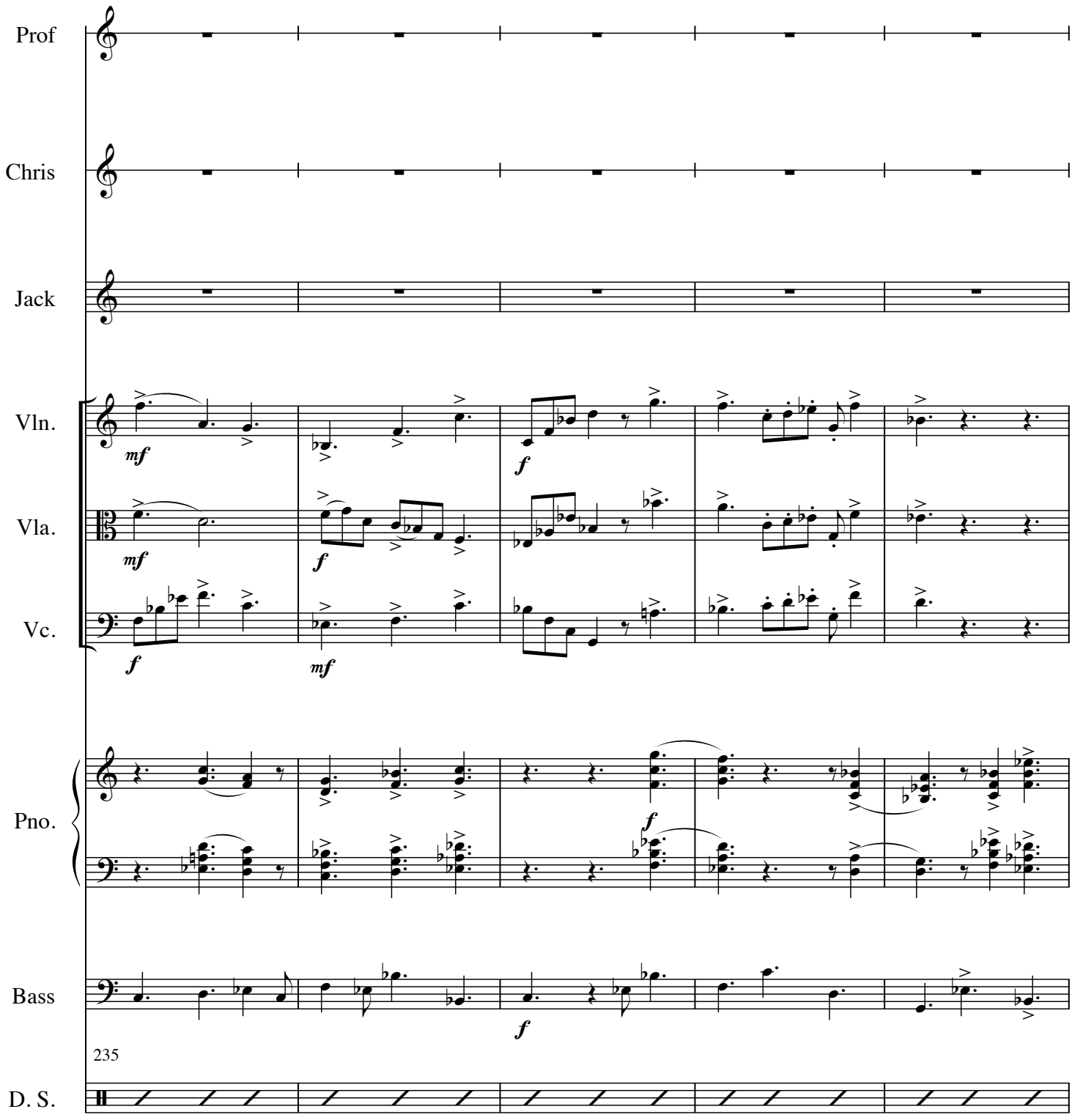
Unbeknownst to Maestro Classon, we shall conceal his artifact in a different place -
Here! At Jack's locale.

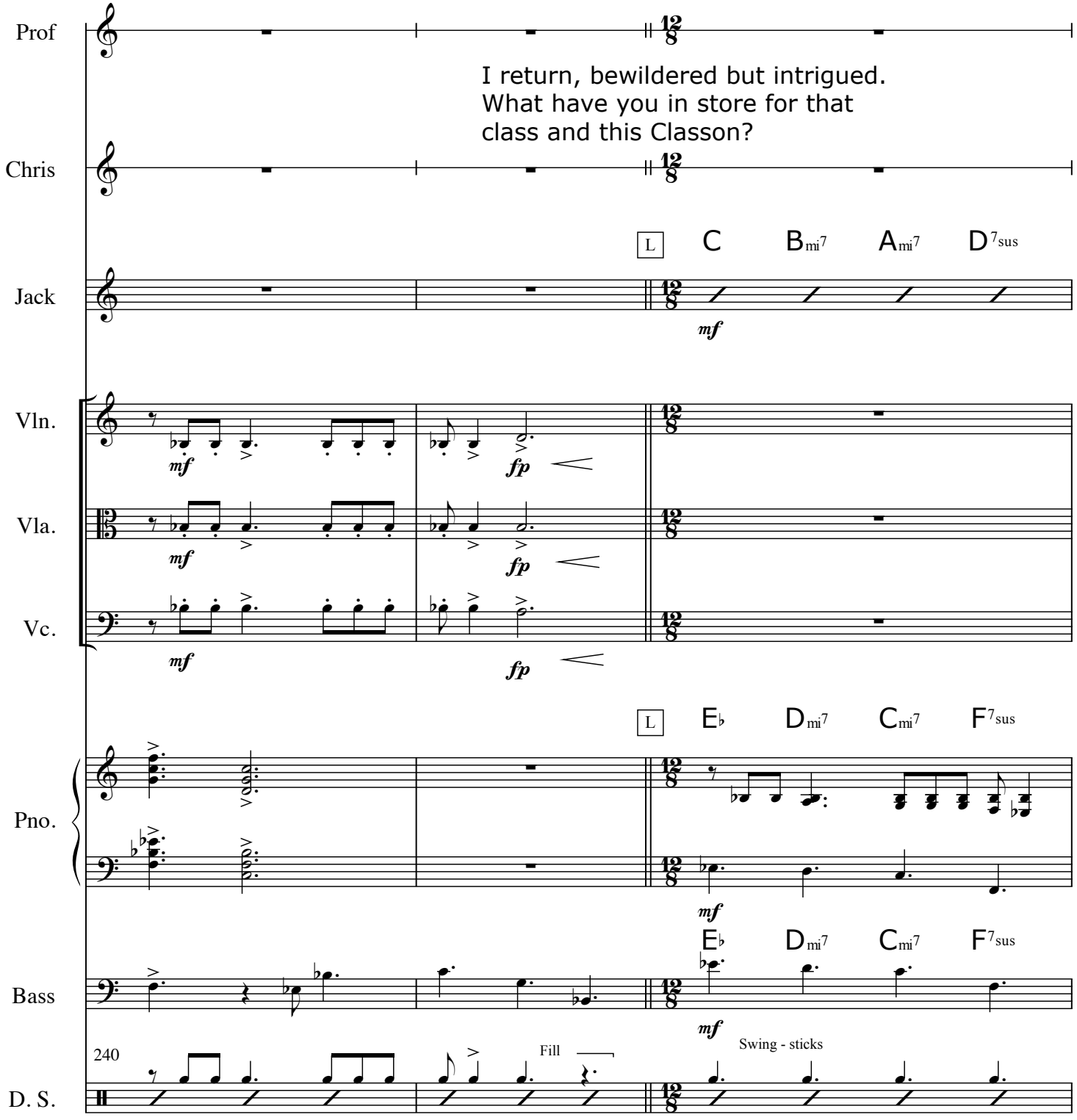


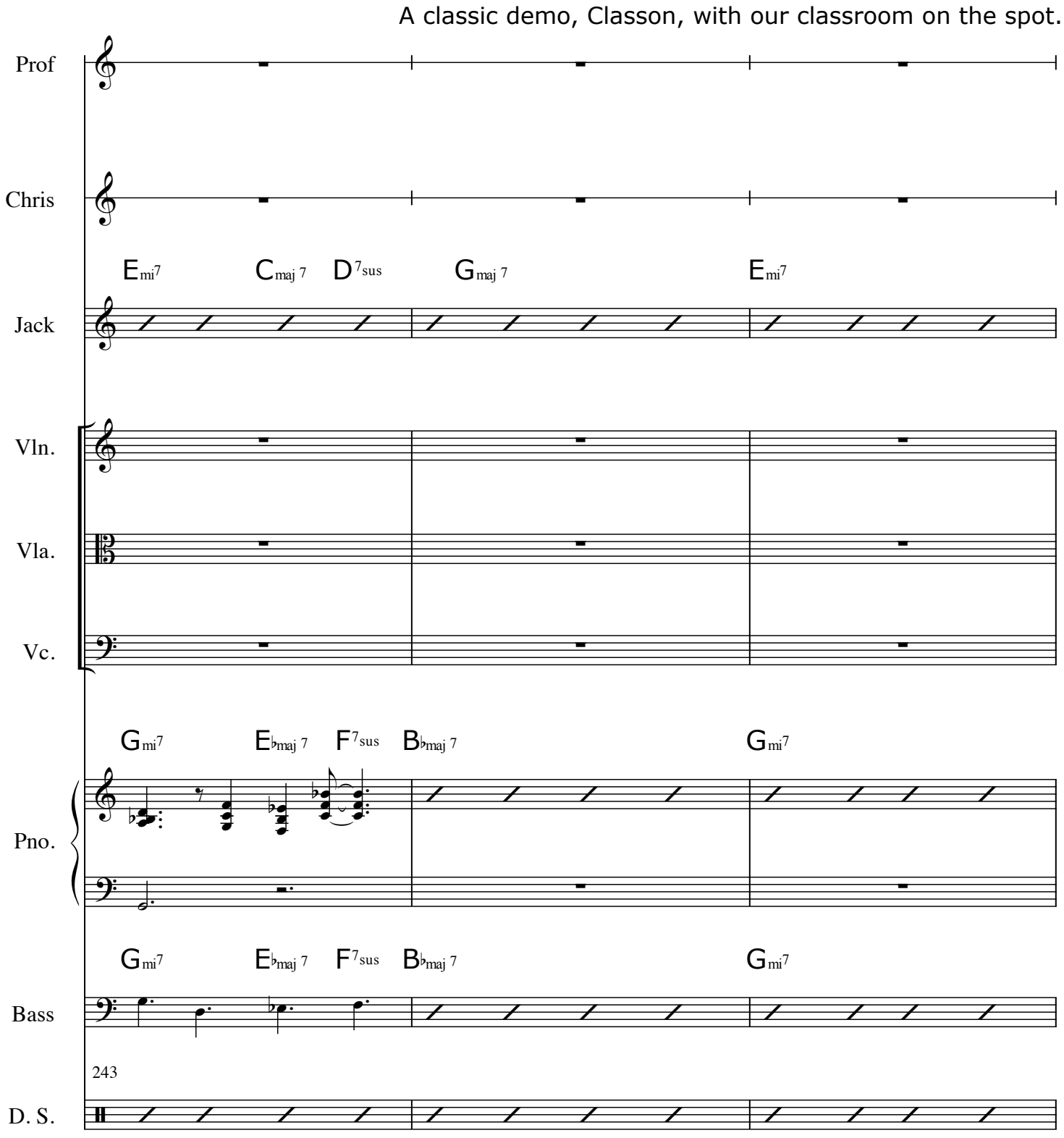
Our subject can have no knowledge of this change,
and that should make our point with no shenanigans.



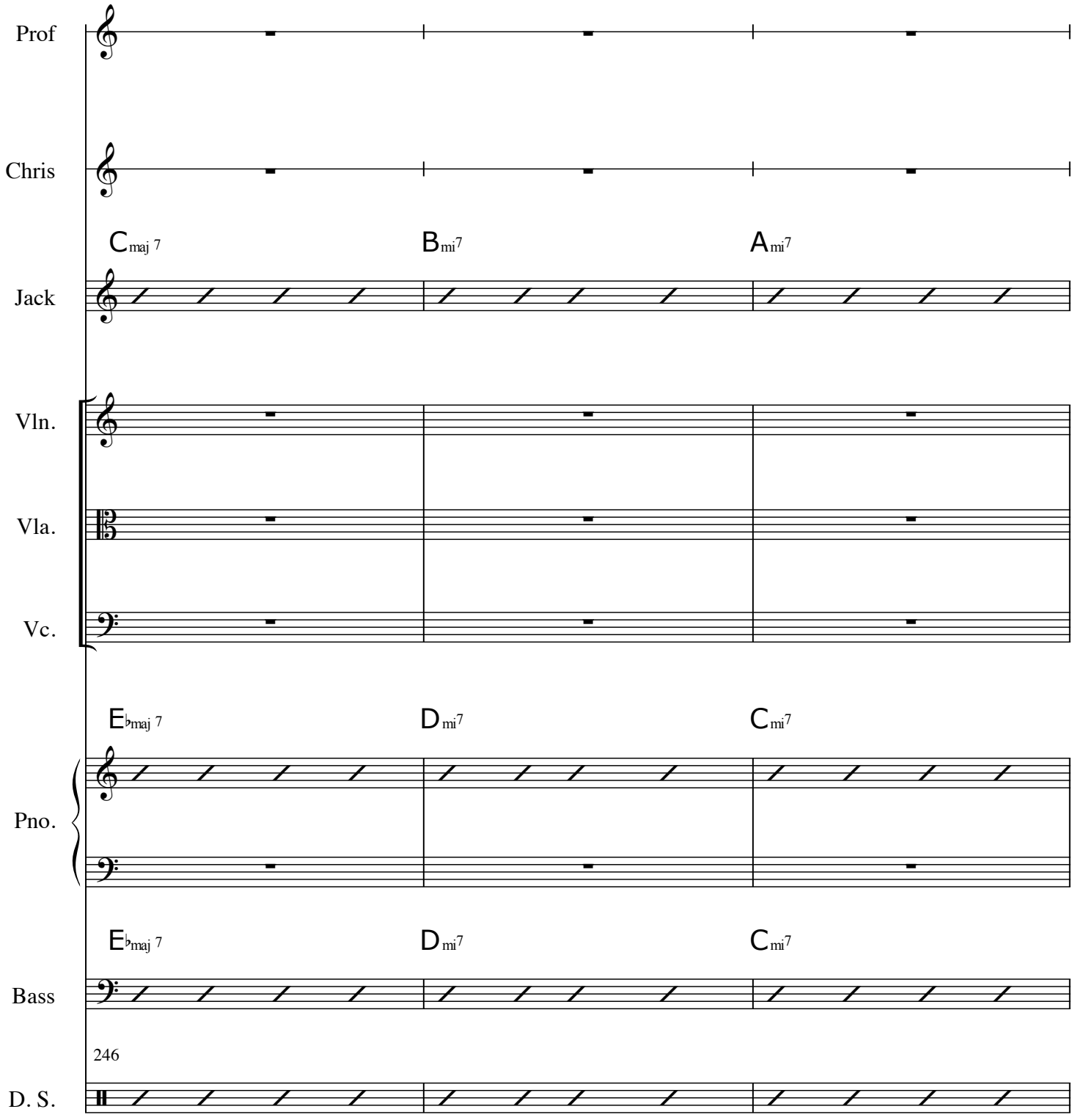

Here the shtick is hidden! Some entry music, please!
Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
231
D. S.
mf
f

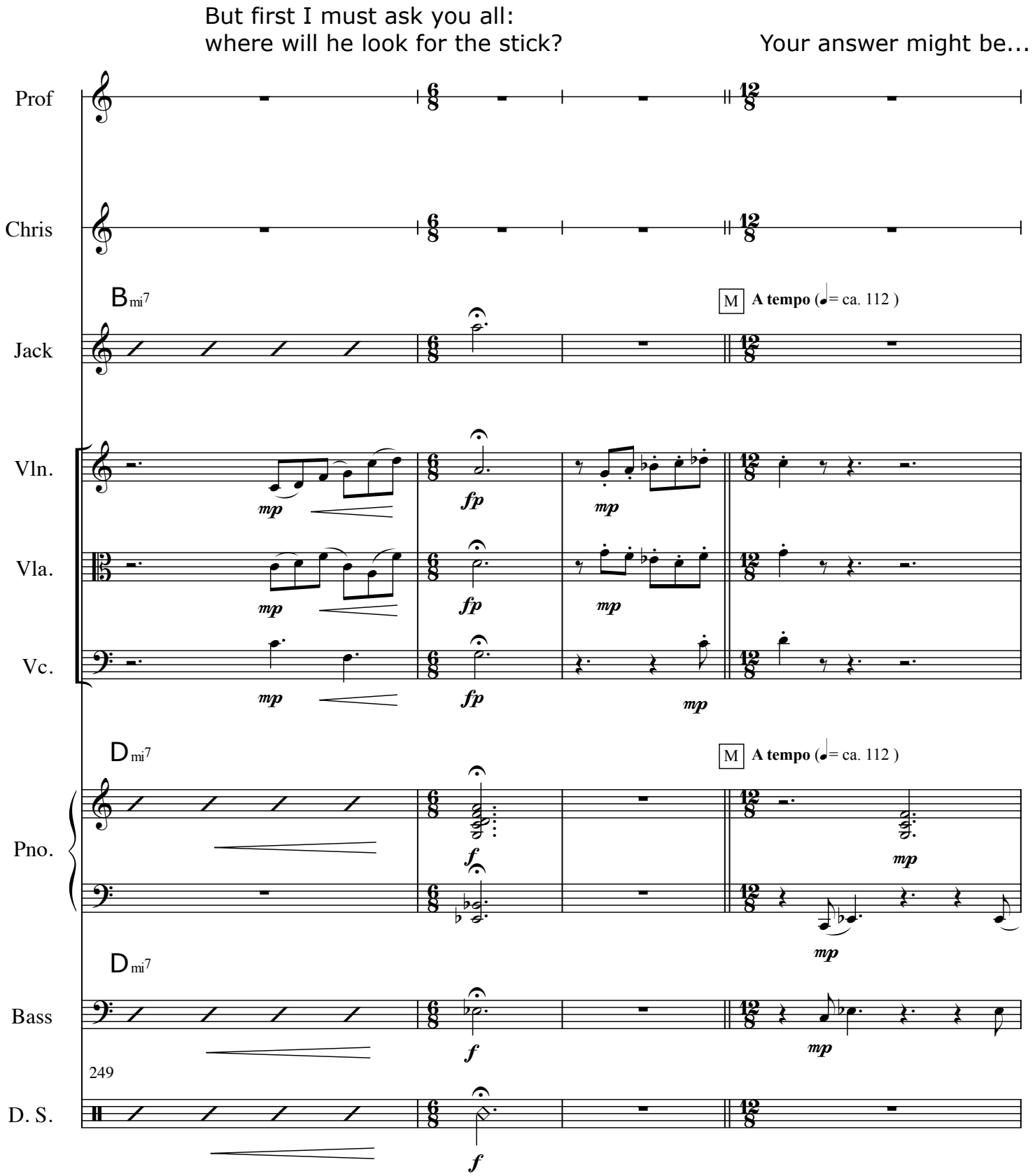

Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
D. S.
mf
f
mf
f
mf
f
f
235


Prof
I return, bewildered but intrigued.
What have you in store for that
class and this Classon?
Chris
L
C
Bmi7
Ami7
D7sus
Jack
mf
Vln.
mf
fp
Vla.
mf
fp
Vc.
mf
fp
L
E♭
Dmi7
Cmi7
F7sus
Pno.
mf
E♭
Dmi7
Cmi7
F7sus
Bass
mf
240
Fill
Swing - sticks
D. S.

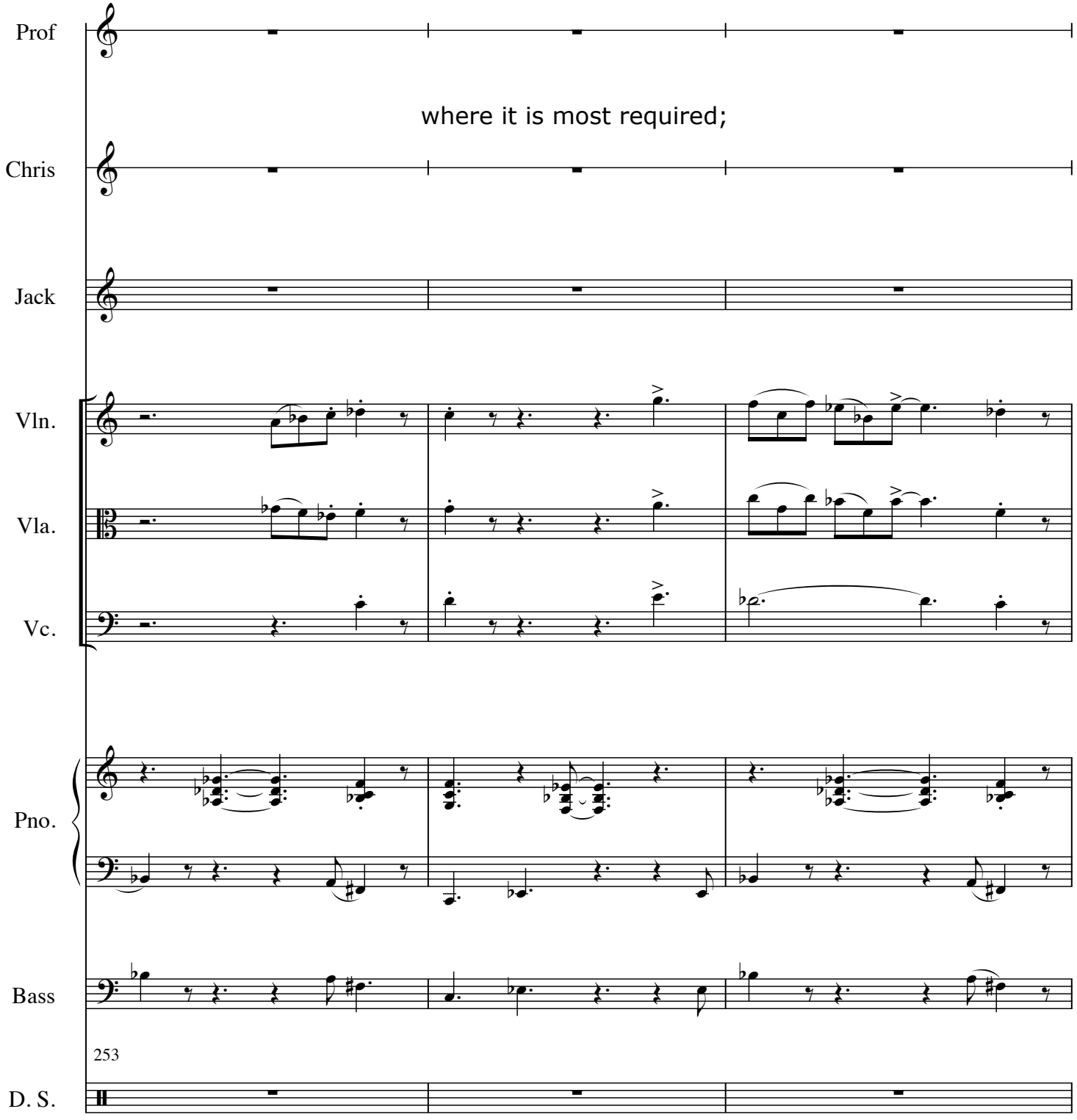

A classic demo, Classon, with our classroom on the spot.
Prof
Chris
Emi7
Cmaj 7
D7sus
Gmaj 7
Emi7
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Gmi7
E♭maj 7
F7sus
B♭maj 7
Gmi7
Pno.
Gmi7
E♭maj 7
F7sus
B♭maj 7
Gmi7
Bass
243
D. S.

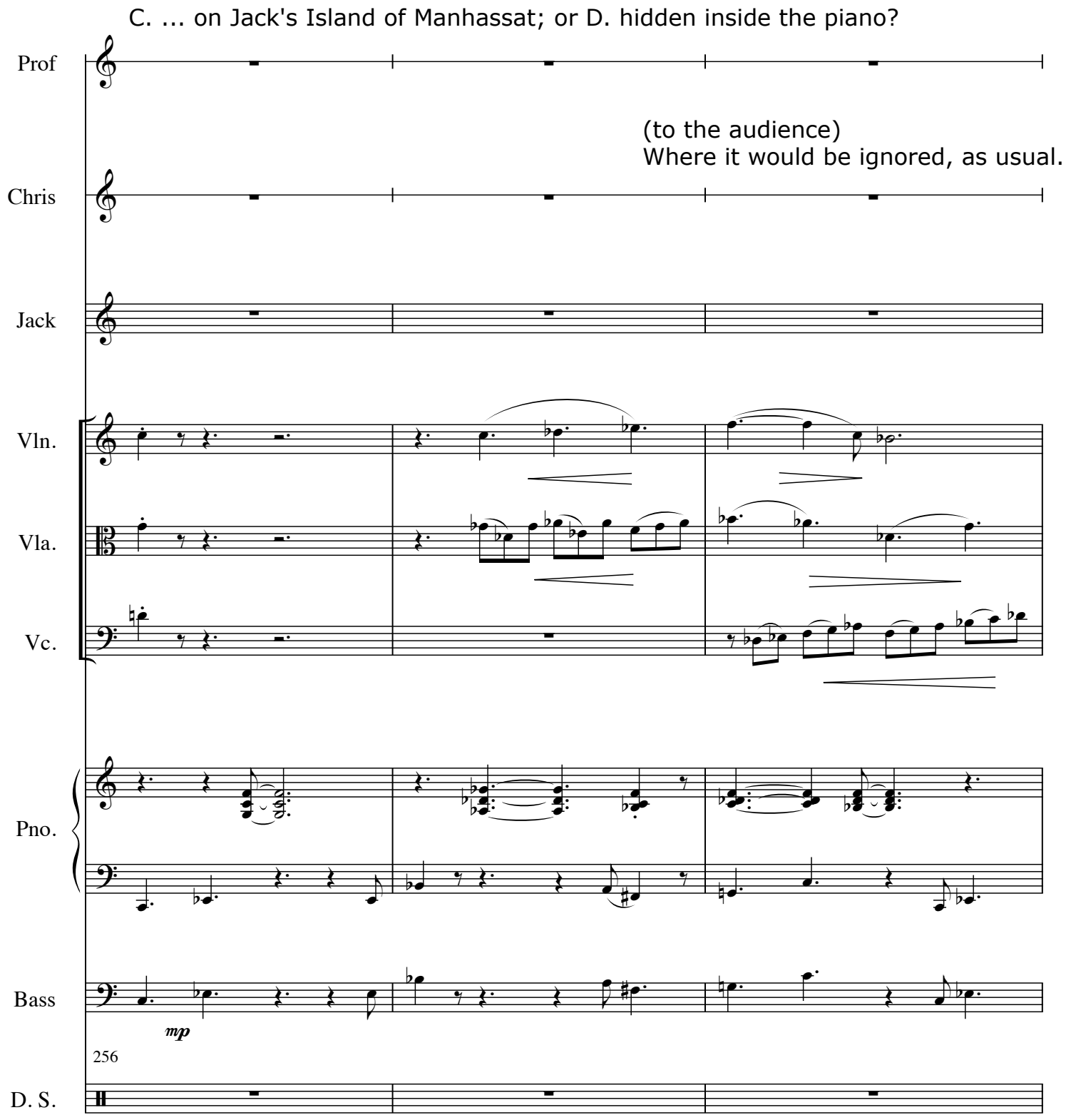
(To the audience)
Our subject is back... and I commend him now to fetch the baton.

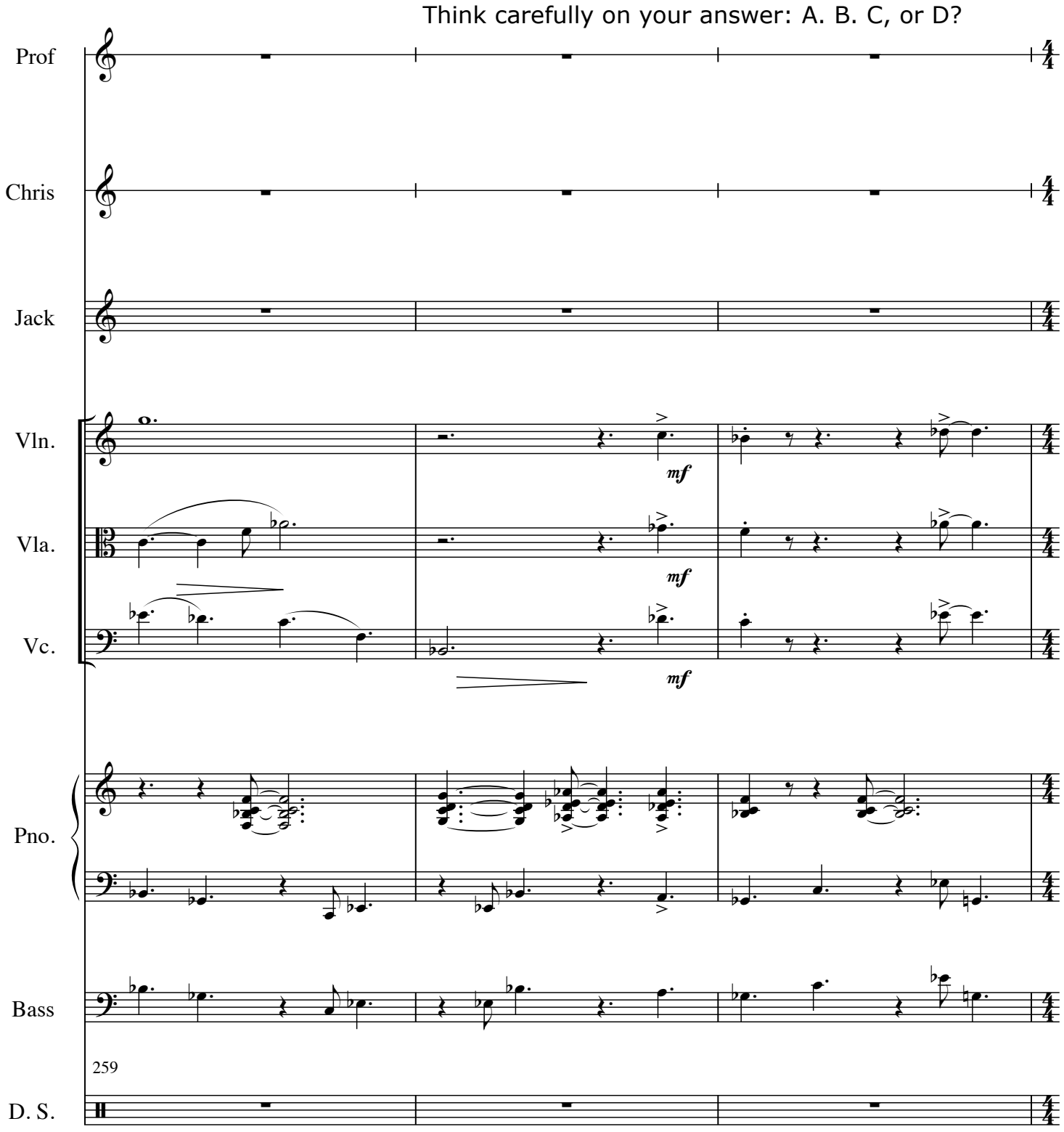


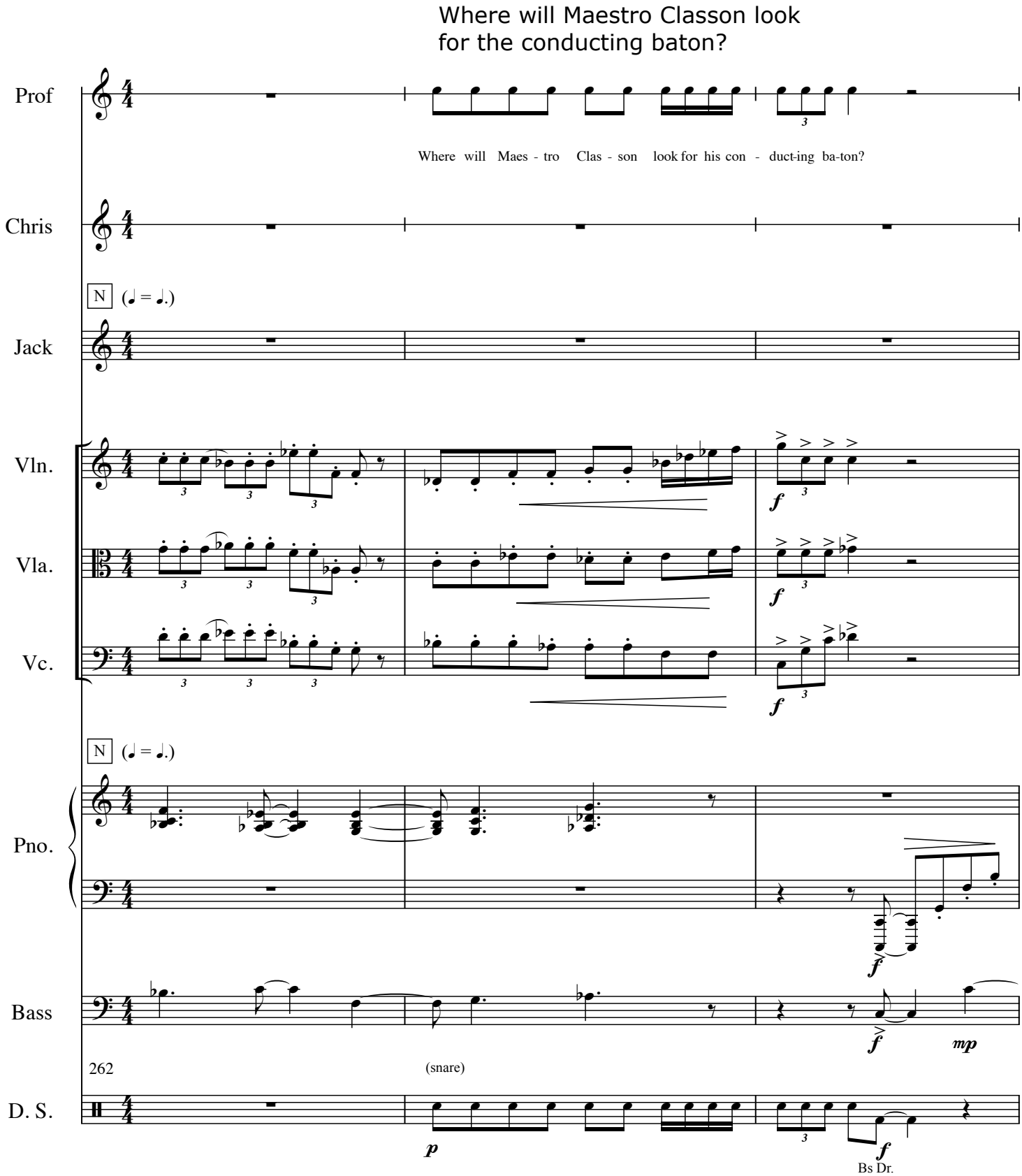

But first I must ask you all:
where will he look for the stick?
Your answer might be...
Prof
Chris
Bmi7
Jack
M A tempo (♩= ca. 112)
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Dmi7
Pno.
Bass
249
D. S.

A. near the string section, B. at the conductor's podium where he left it;

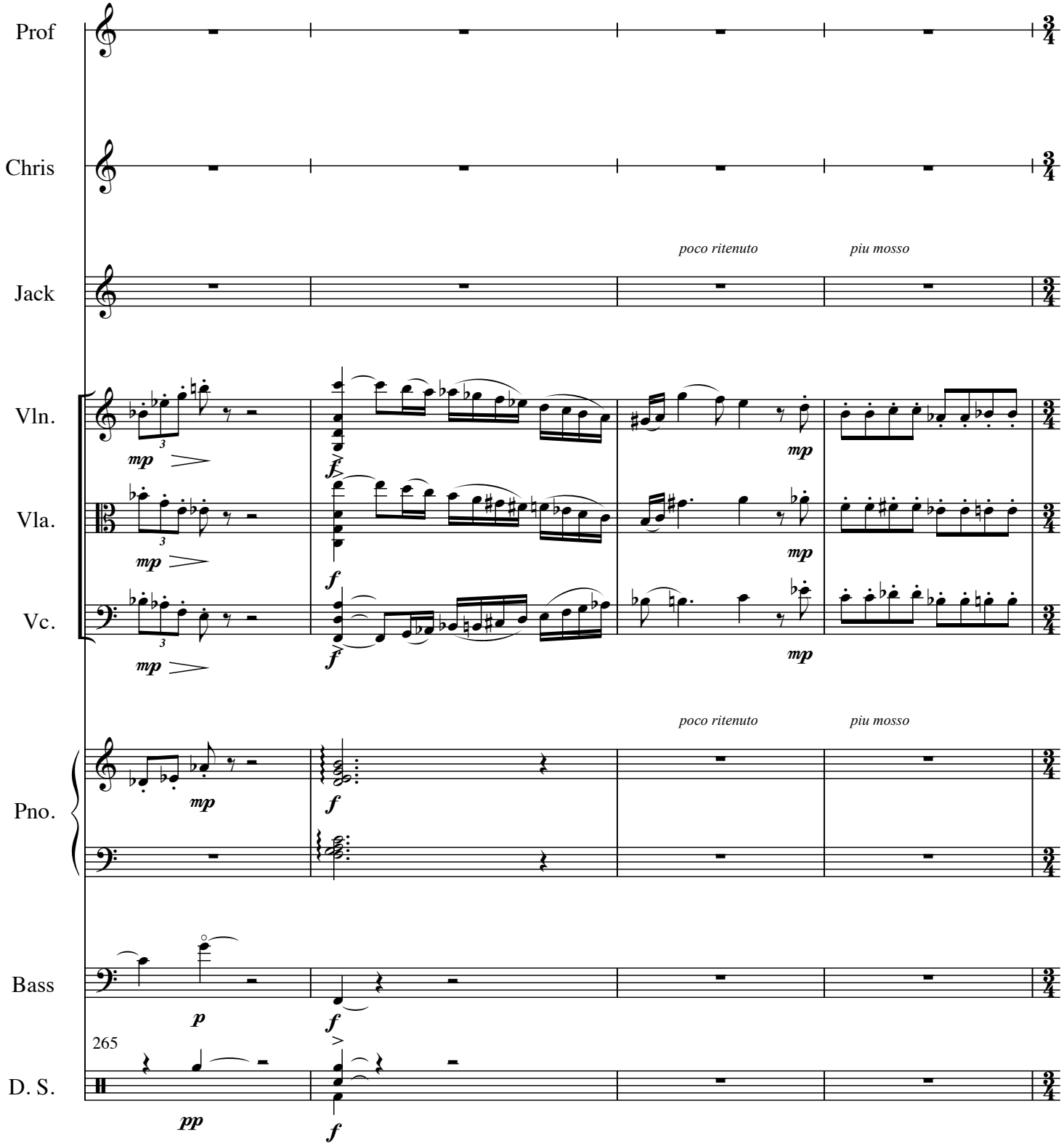


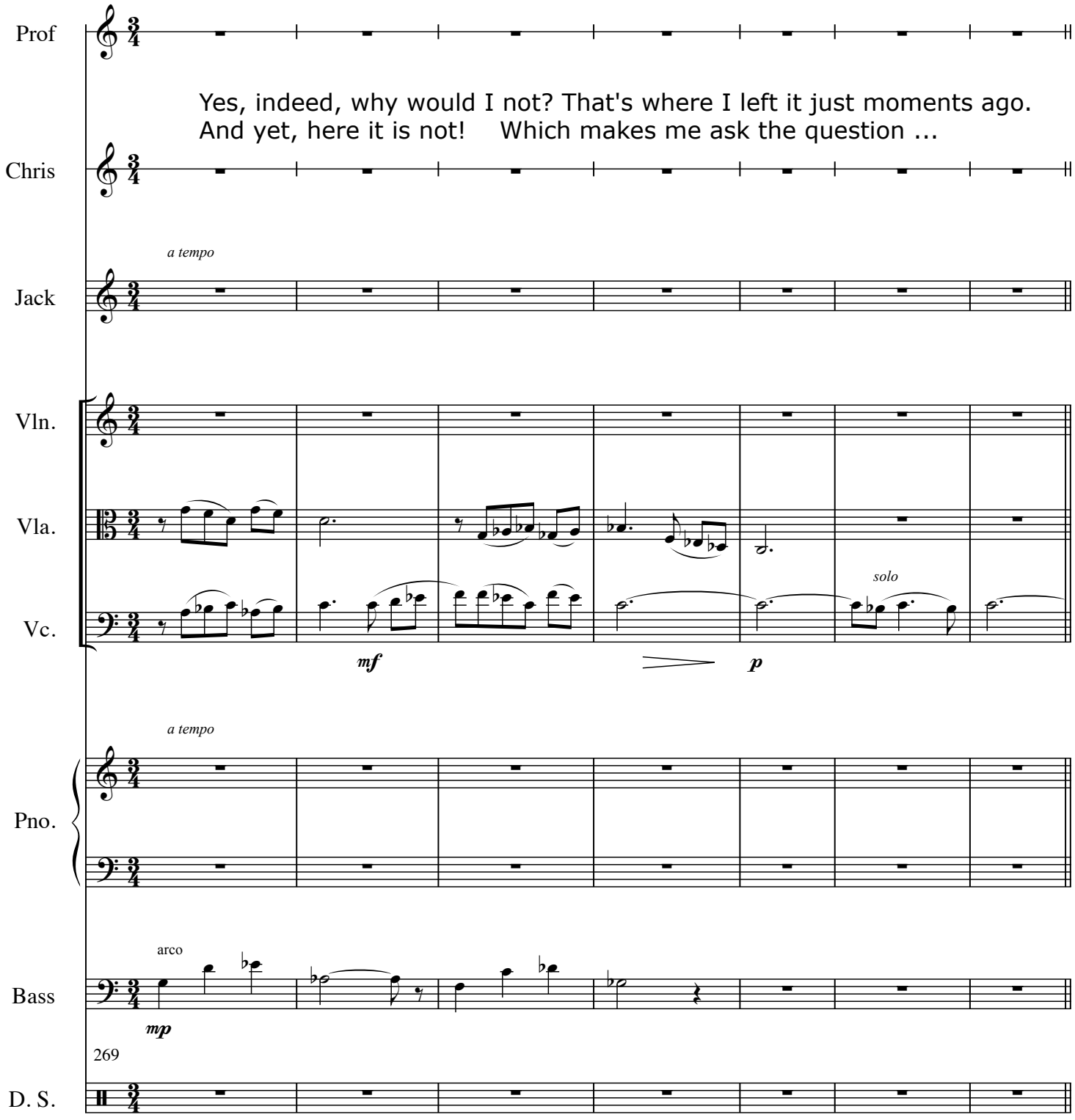

C. ... on Jack's Island of Manhassat; or D. hidden inside the piano?
Prof
(to the audience)
Where it would be ignored, as usual.
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
mp
256
D. S.

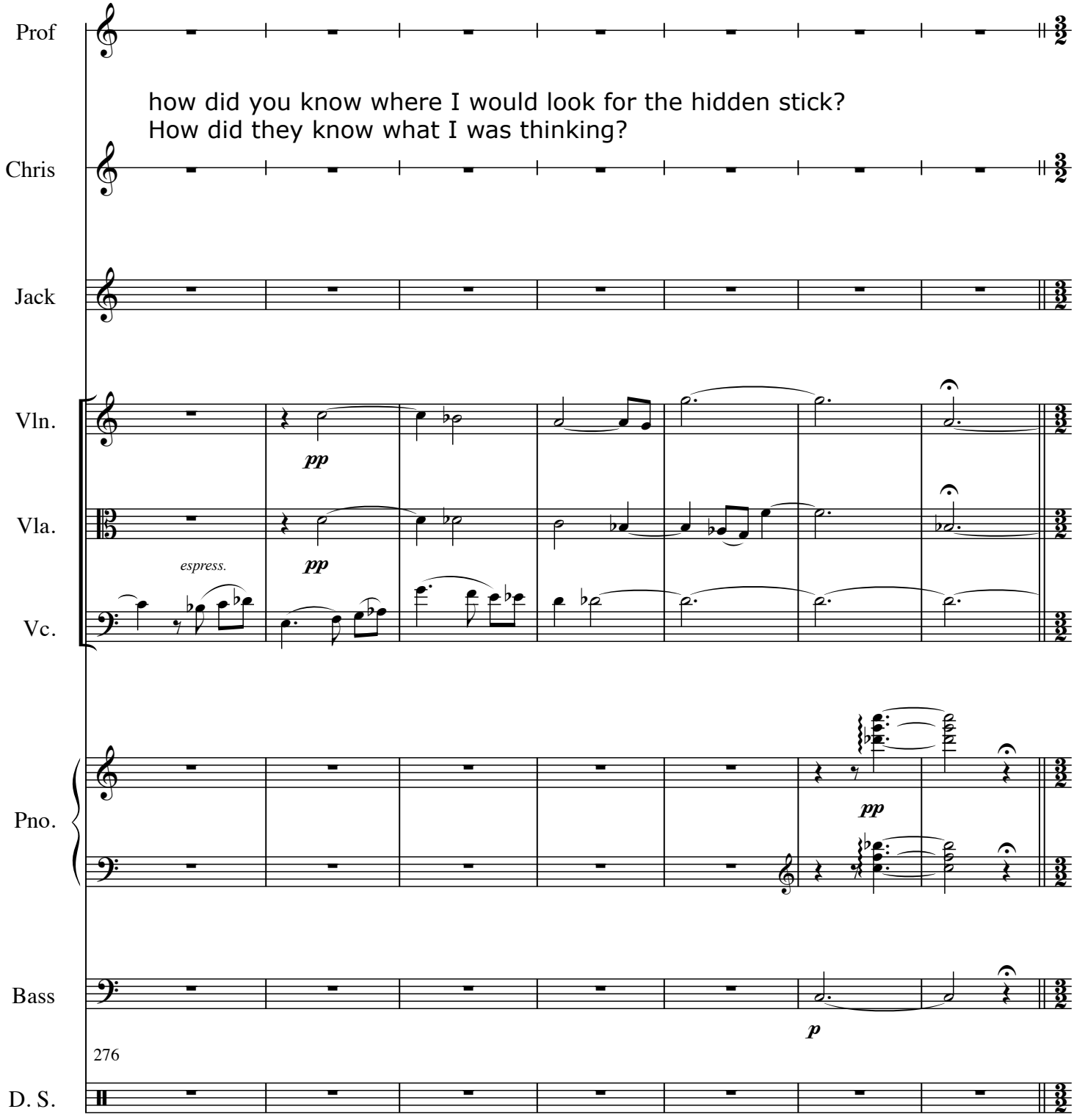

Think carefully on your answer: A. B. C, or D?
Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
259
D. S.
mf
mf
mf

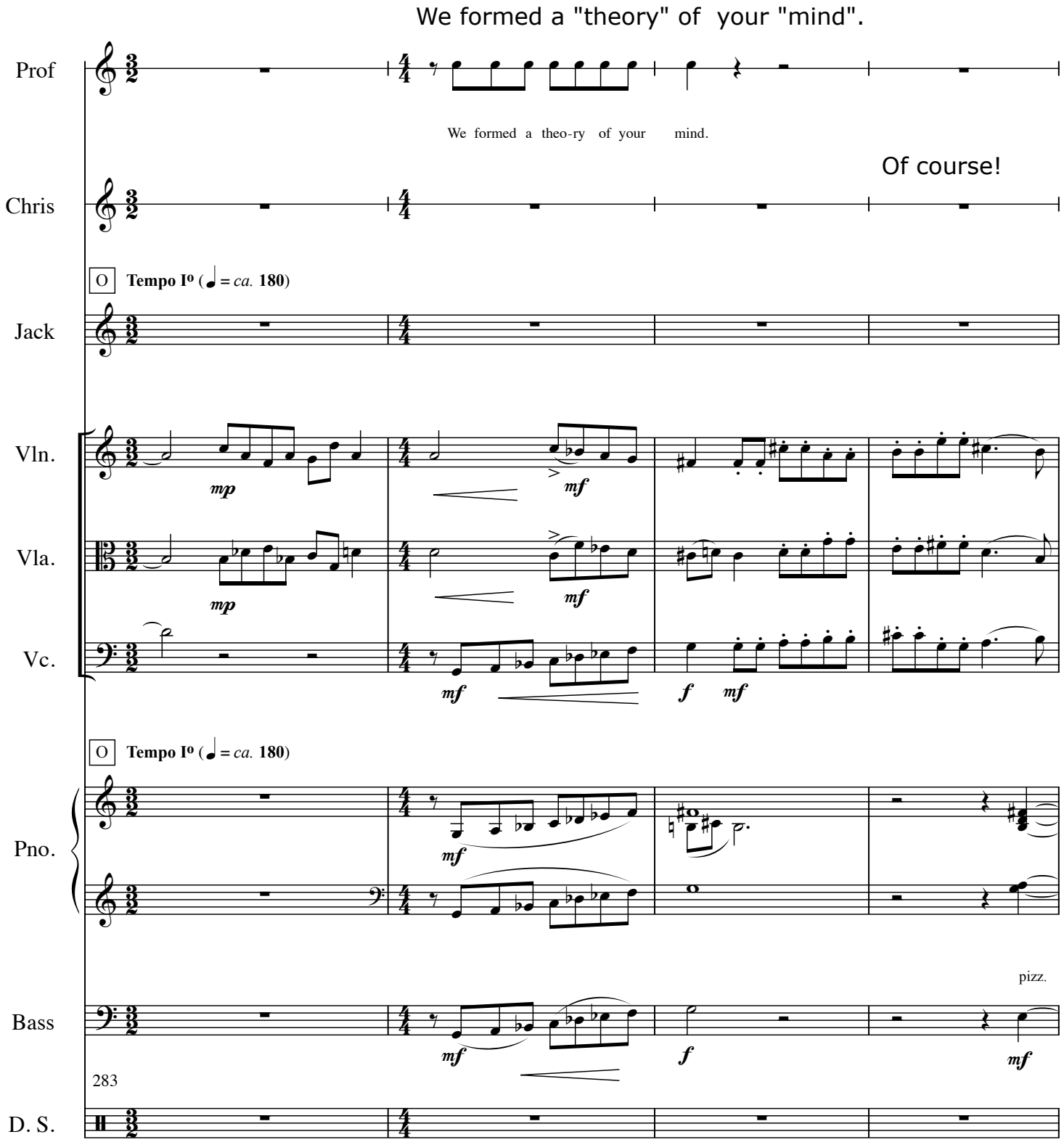

Where will Maestro Classon look
for the conducting baton?
Prof
Where will Maes - tro Clas - son look for his con - duct-ing ba-ton?
Chris
N (♩ = ♩.)
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
N (♩ = ♩.)
Pno.
Bass
262
(snare)
D. S.
Bs Dr.

Yes, of course... B is correct! And why is that so obvious?
Because that's where he thinks it is!



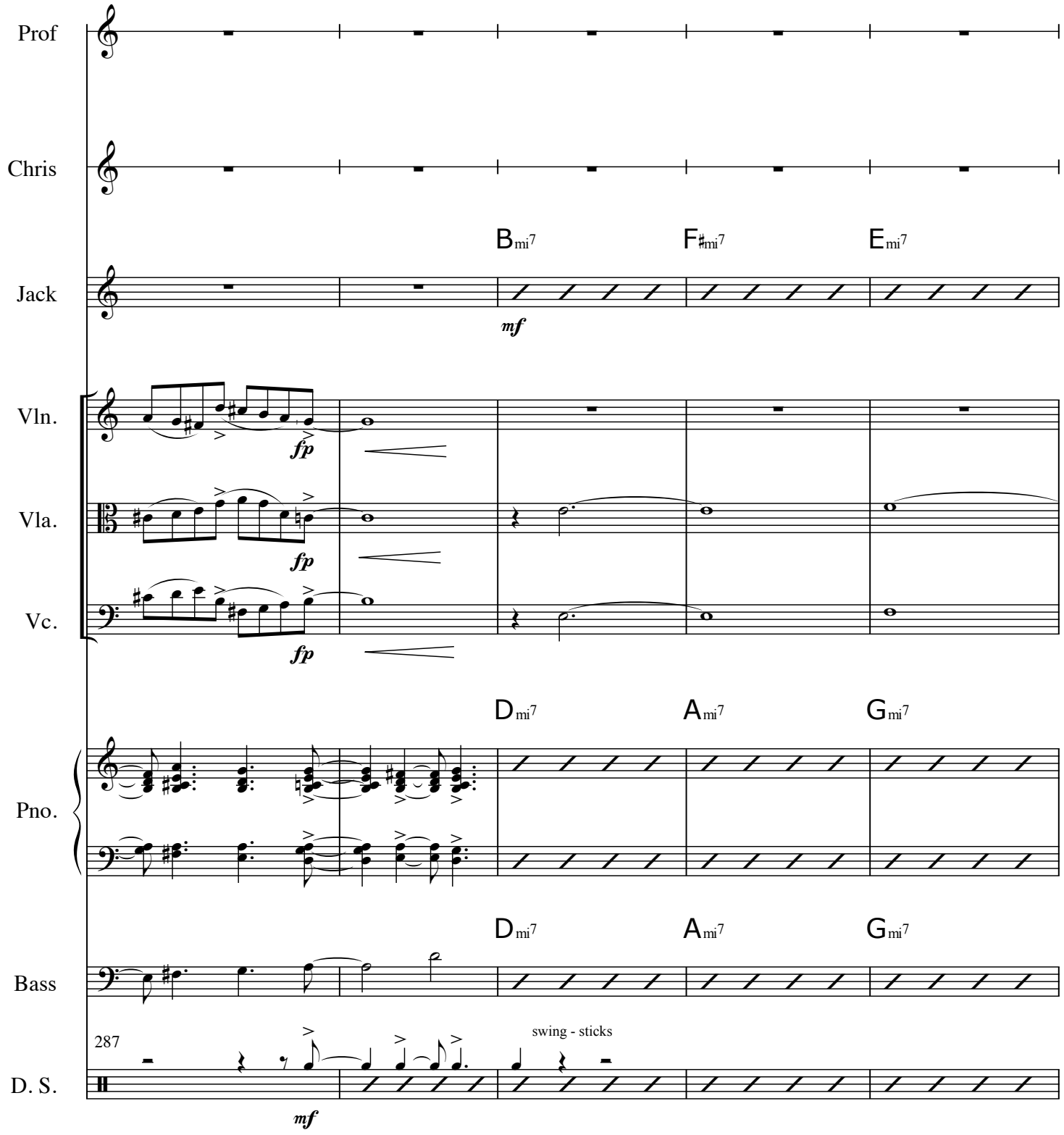

Prof
Yes, indeed, why would I not? That's where I left it just moments ago.
And yet, here it is not! Which makes me ask the question ...
Chris
a tempo
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
mf
p
solo
a tempo
Pno.
arco
Bass
mp
269
D. S.


Prof
how did you know where I would look for the hidden stick?
How did they know what I was thinking?
Chris
Jack
Vln.
pp
Vla.
pp
espress.
Vc.
Pno.
pp
Bass
p
276
D. S.

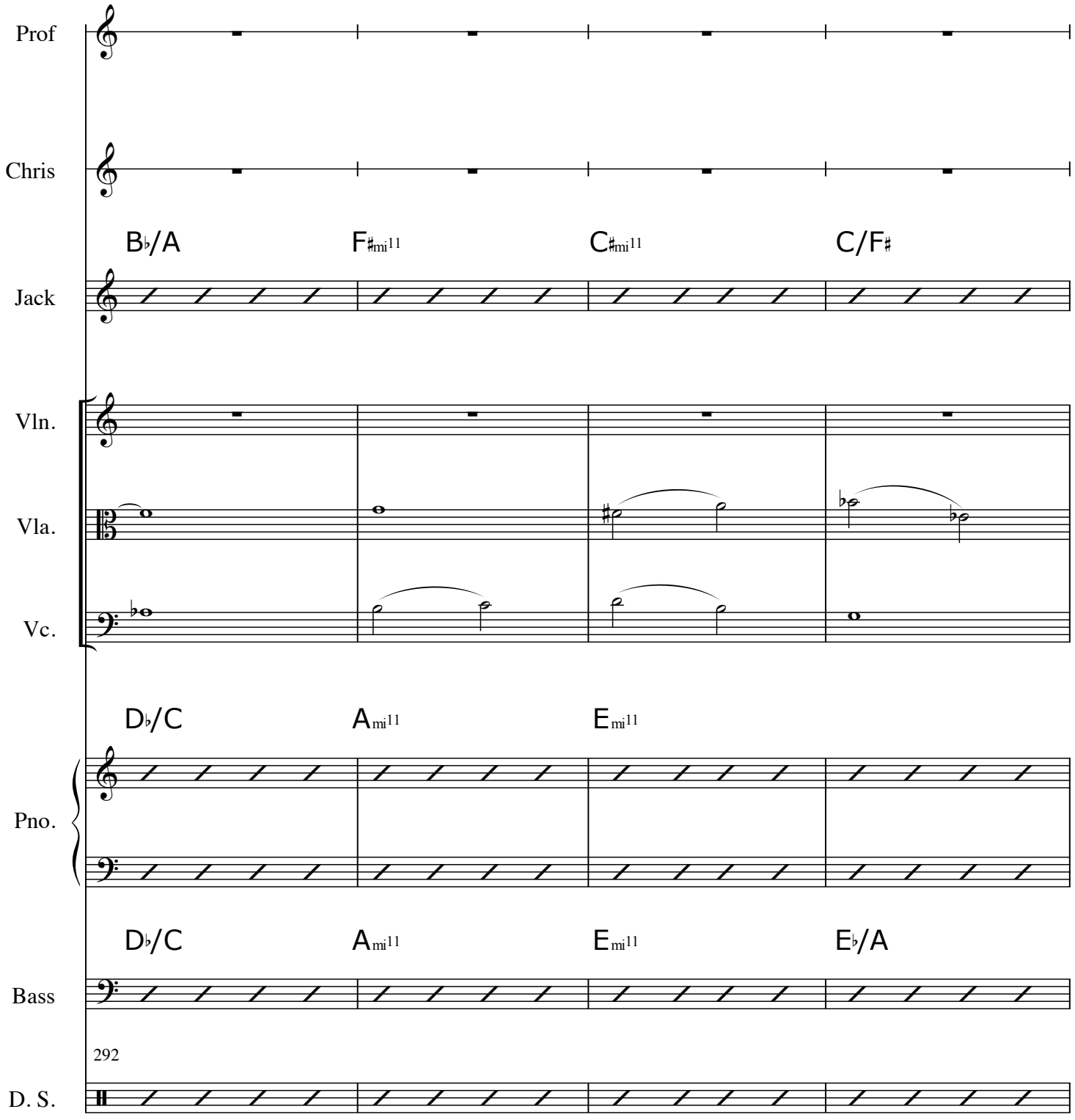

We formed a "theory" of your "mind".
Prof
We formed a theo-ry of your mind.
Of course!
Chris
O Tempo Io (♩ = ca. 180)
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
mp
mf
f
O Tempo Io (♩ = ca. 180)
Pno.
pizz.
Bass
283
D. S.

(walks back over to his seat
next to Jack and then gestures
to Jack with his thumb)

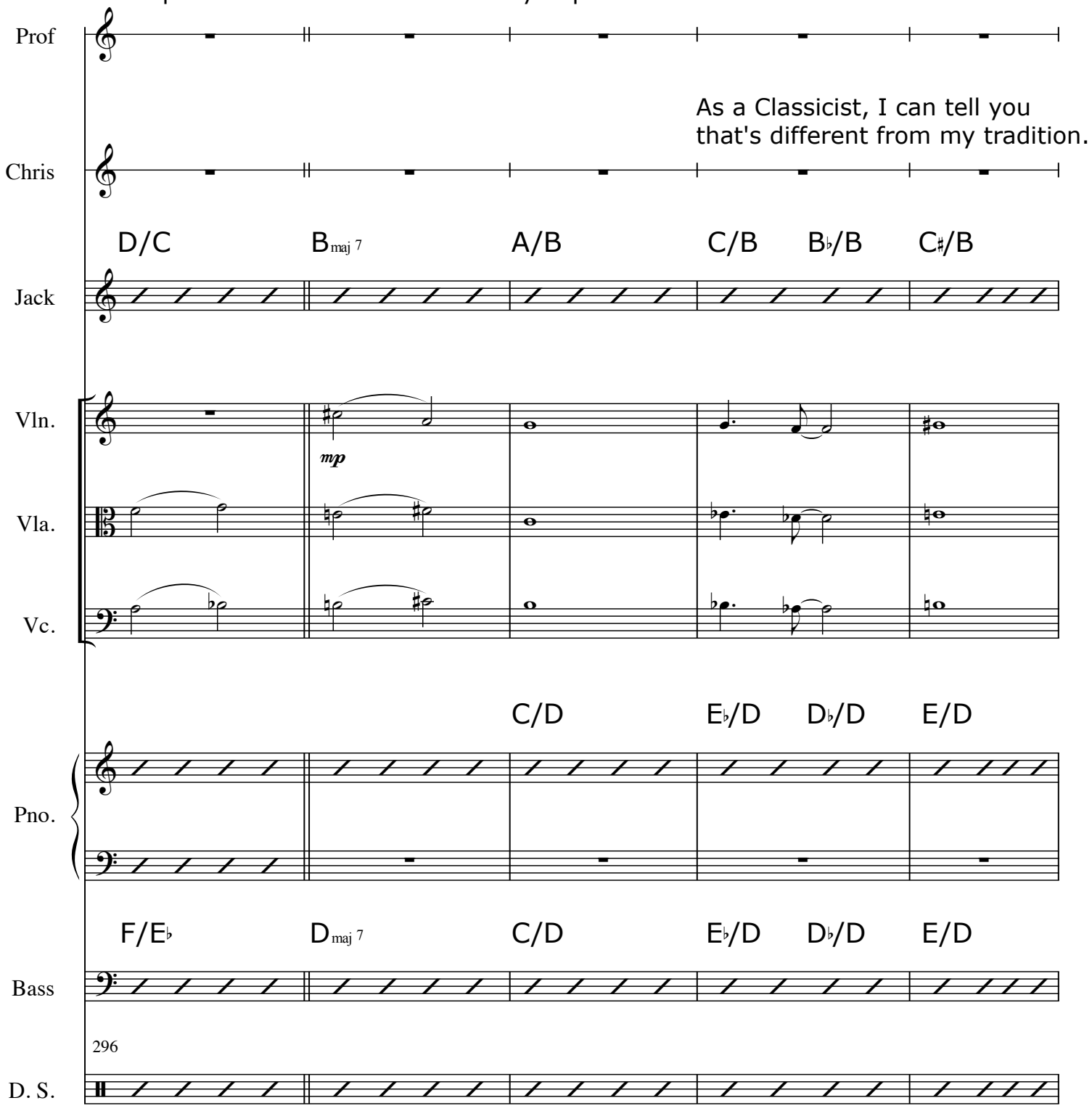
And that, ladies and gentlemen, gets us back to Jack!



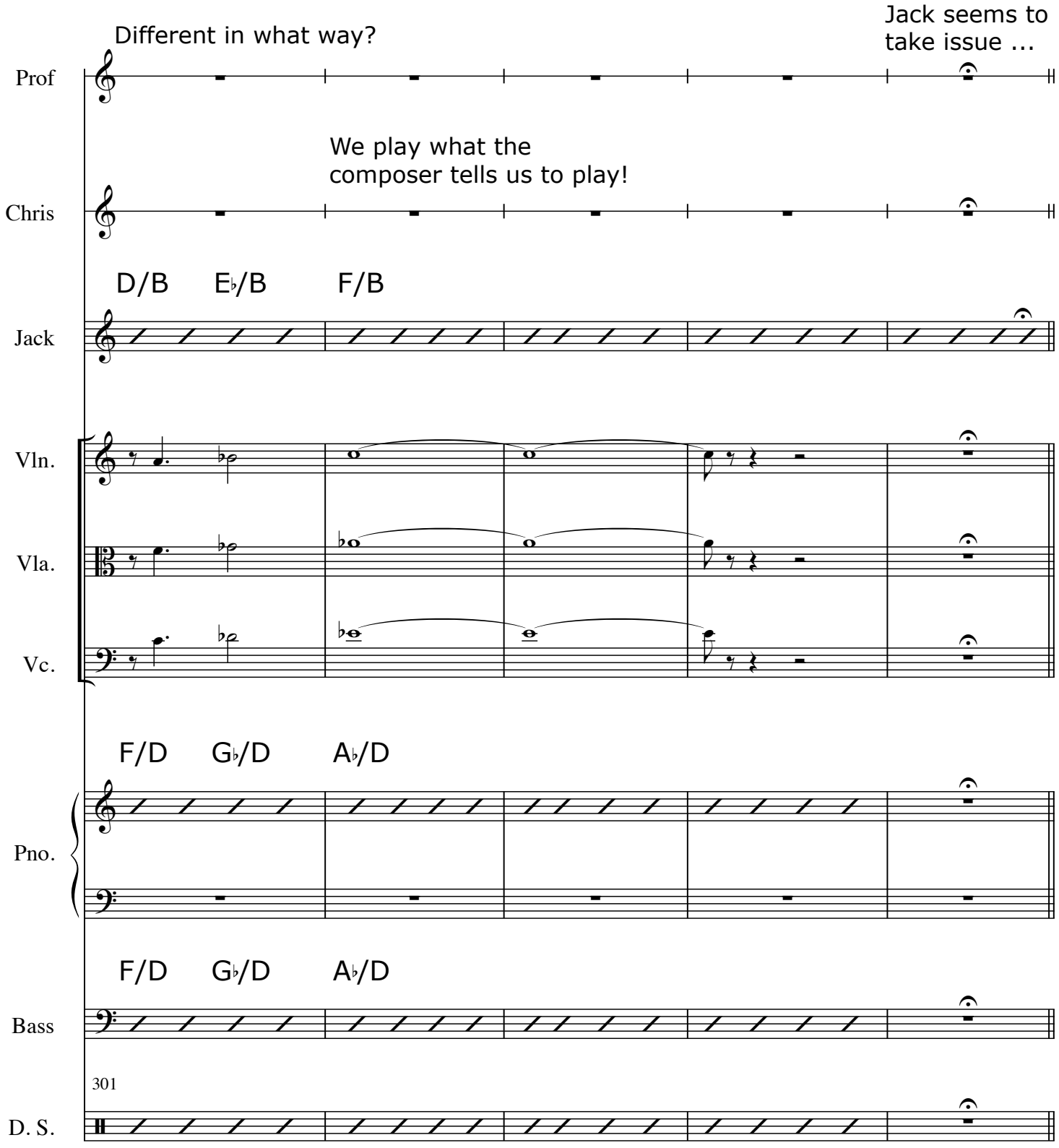
When Jack plays jazz, he also applies a theory of mind.



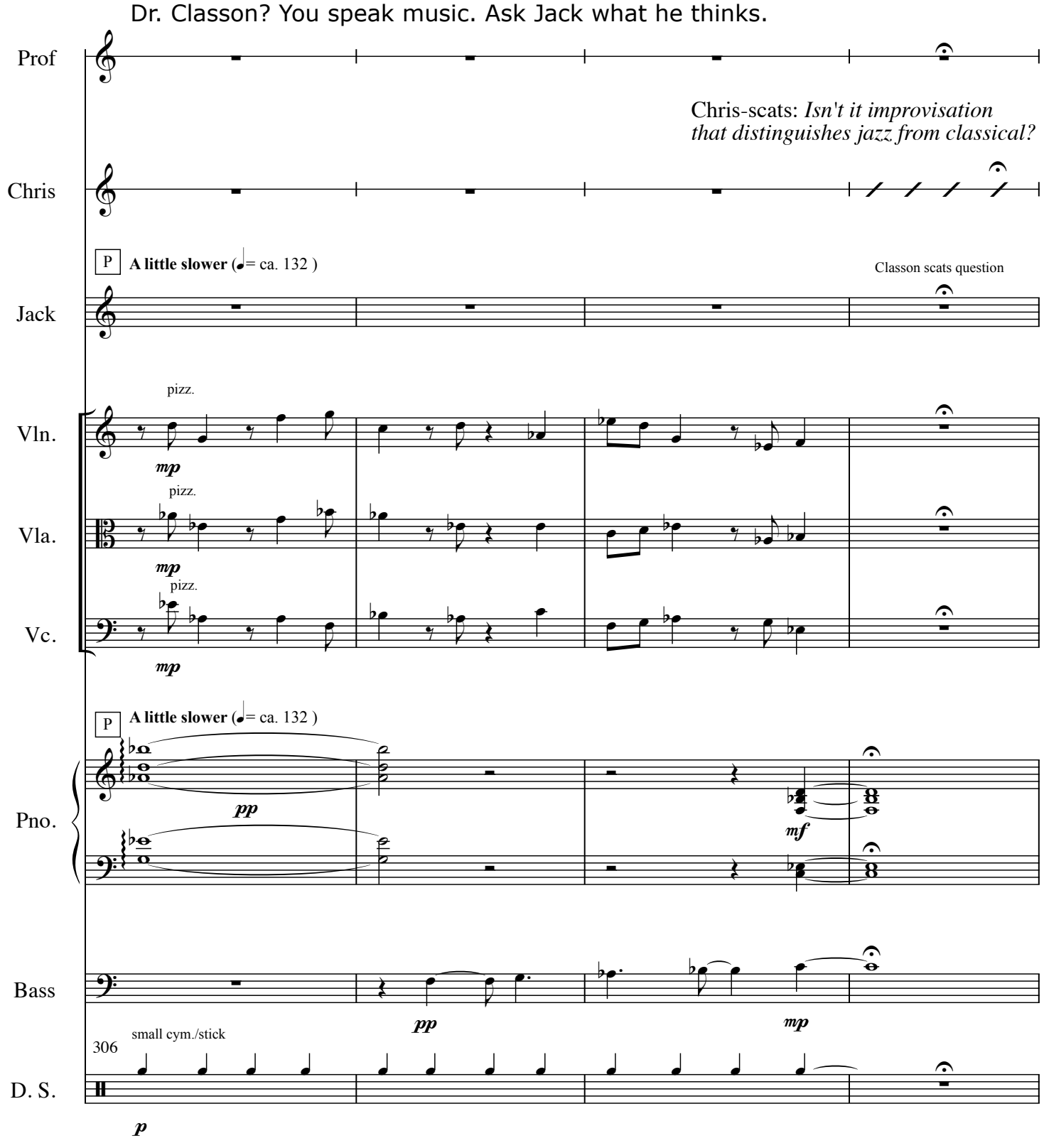
In this case, Jack uses his frontal lobes
to predict the musical behaviors of his colleagues,
to plan and intersect ideas as they improvise with him.



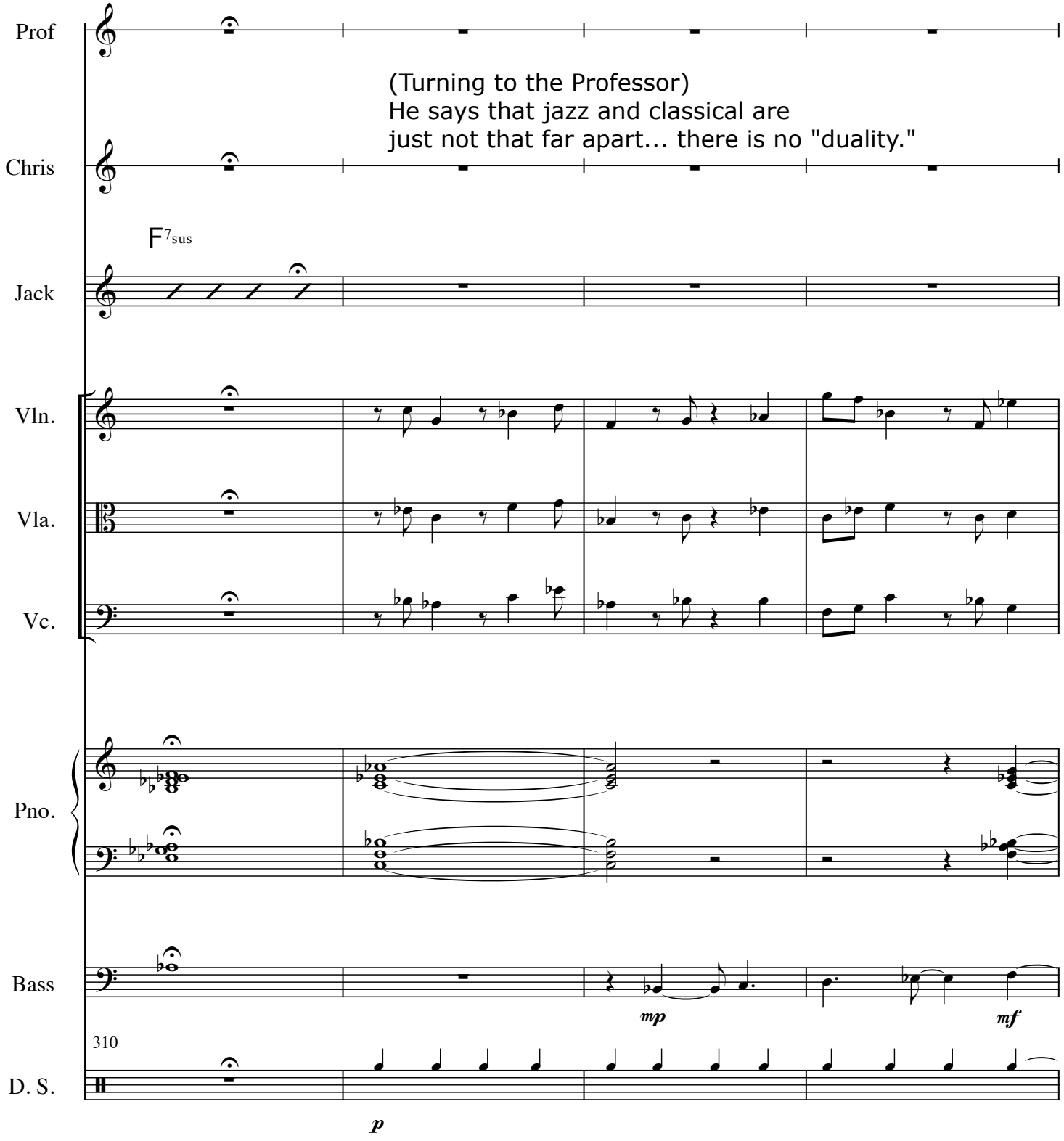
(Jack begins playing music that indicates his disagreement with Chris. His comment appears on the screen as he plays it.)
No, you play what the music demands, just like I do.



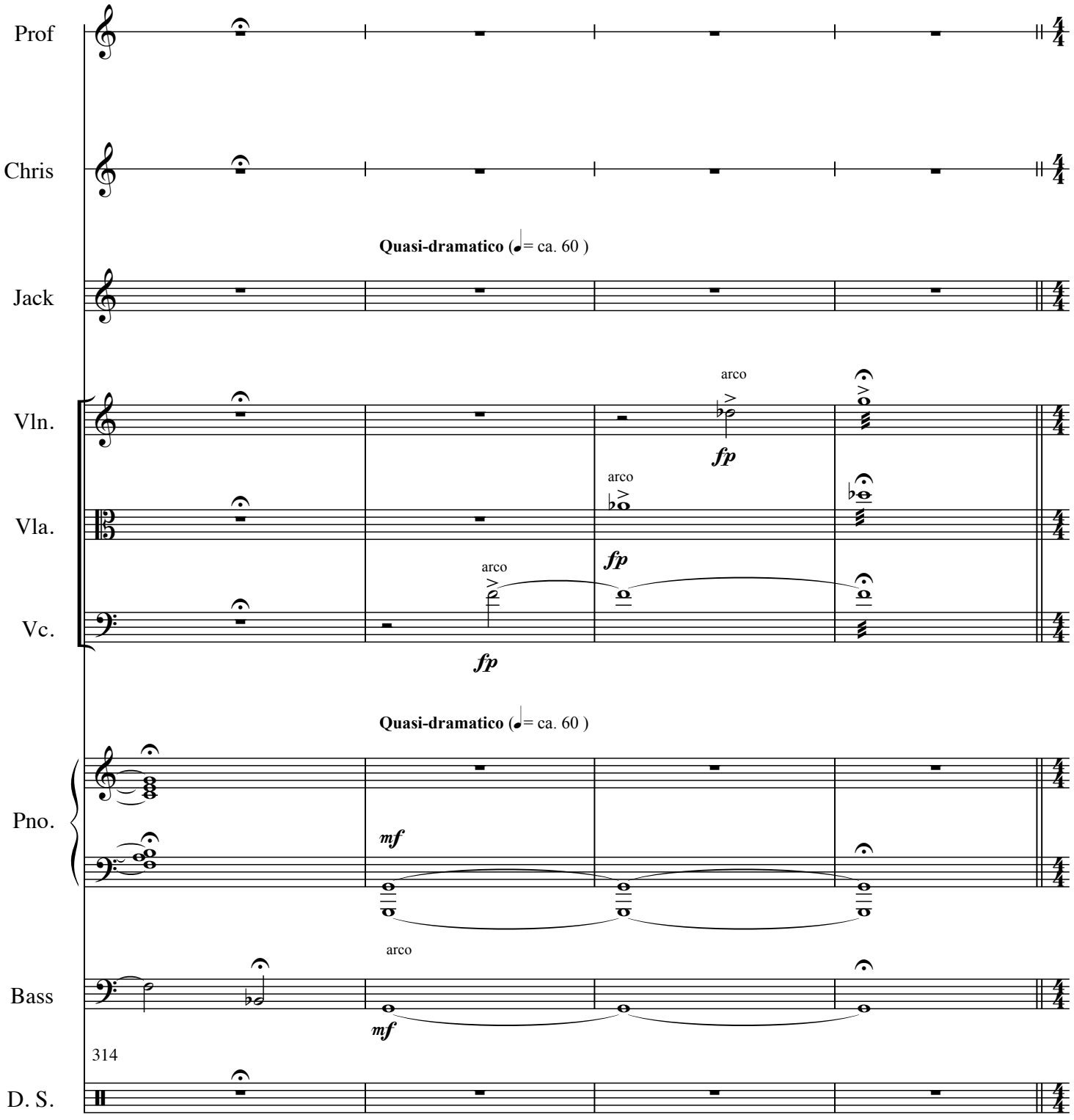
(Turns and addresses Jack. To “speak music,” Chris uses some kind of jazz scat-singing with finger snaps to convey his question.)



(Jack's answer appears on the screen as Jack plays.)
No. There is no "duality" that can describe
the difference between jazz and classical.

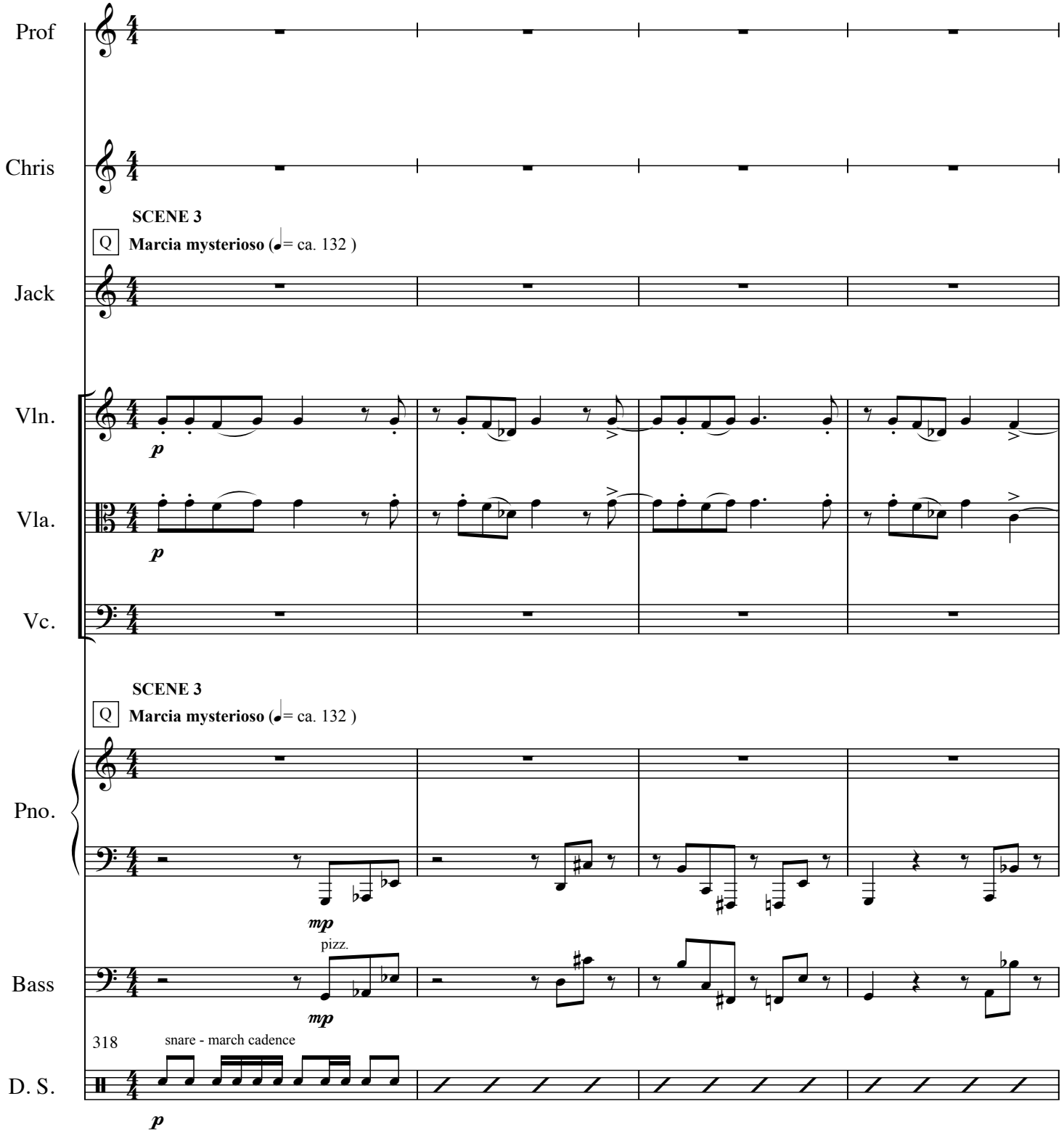


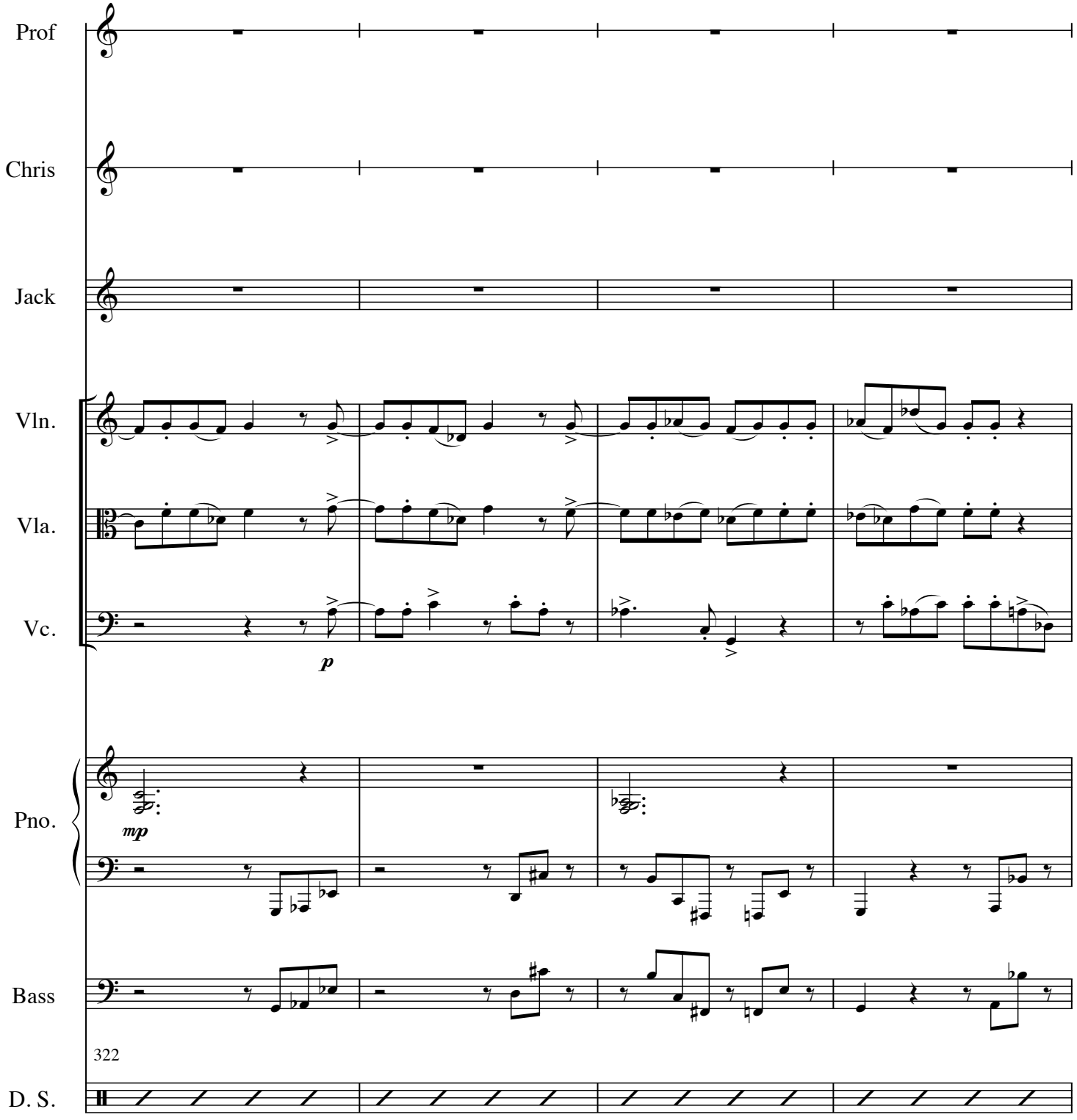
Well-played, Jack!
Perhaps we should
pursue this
misunderstanding ... head-to-head - toe-to-toe - Mano-a-mano - Saxo-a-phono?

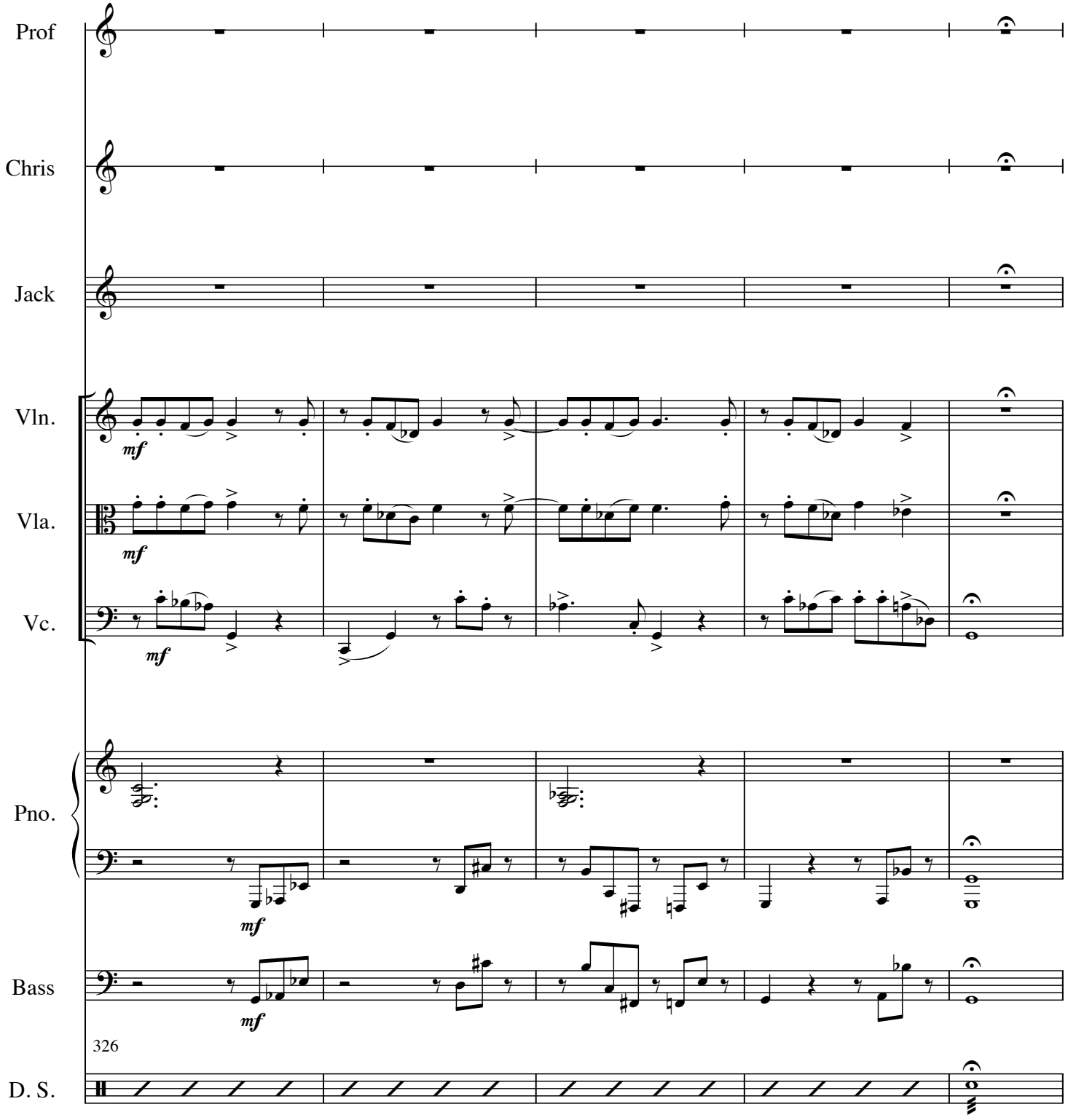


SCENE 3

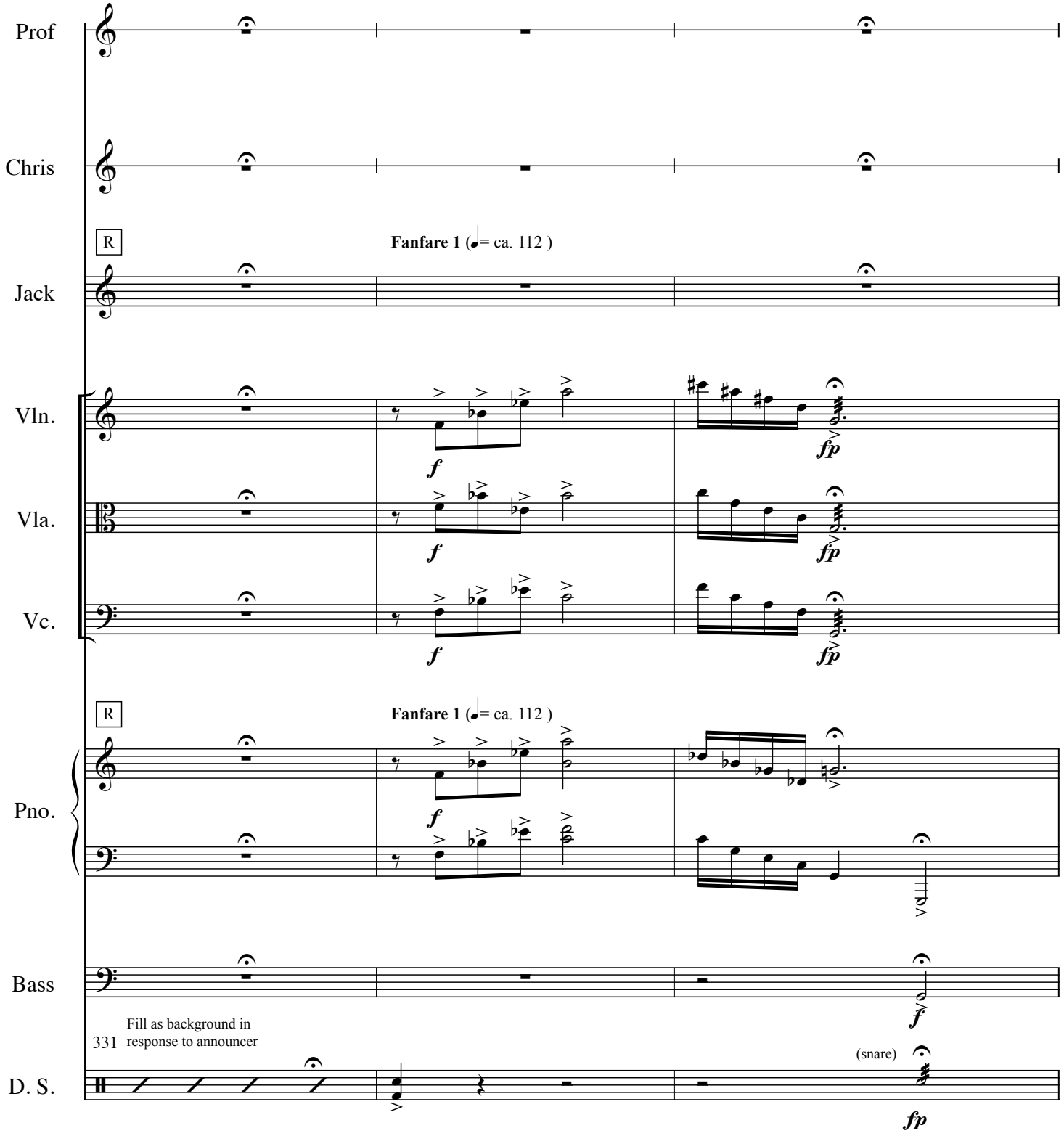
POWERPOINT: *Once upon a time, "folk" music ... especially jazz ... seemed to be at war with "serious" music. The latter was the more sophisticated, refined music of the concert hall. This war carried on across many generations of warriors ... even to the point of (shudder) physical fracas or metaphysical fisticuffs. The battle you are about to see is but one instance of this great war.*



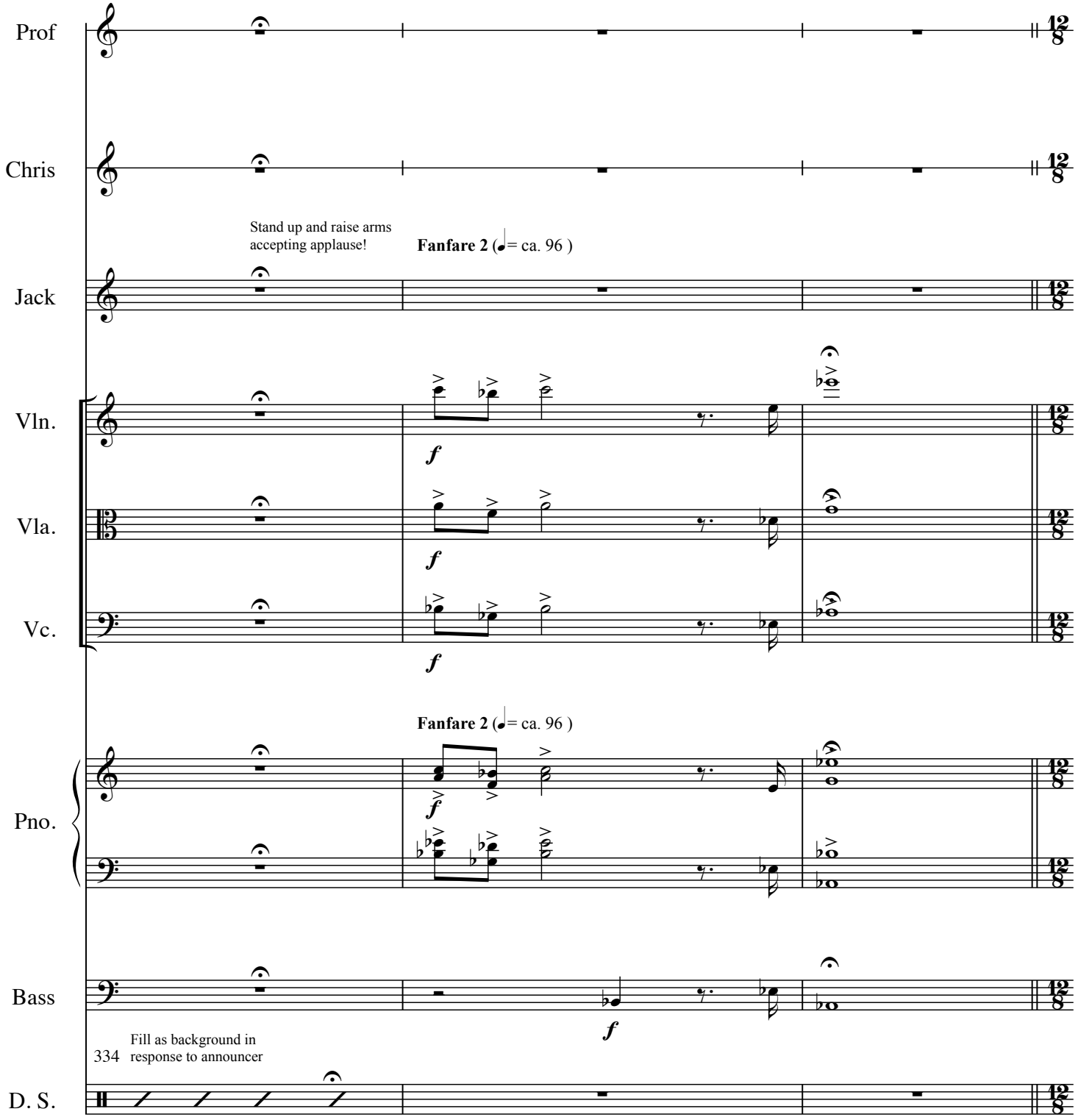

Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
p
Pno.
mp
Bass
322
D. S.


Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
D. S.
mf
326

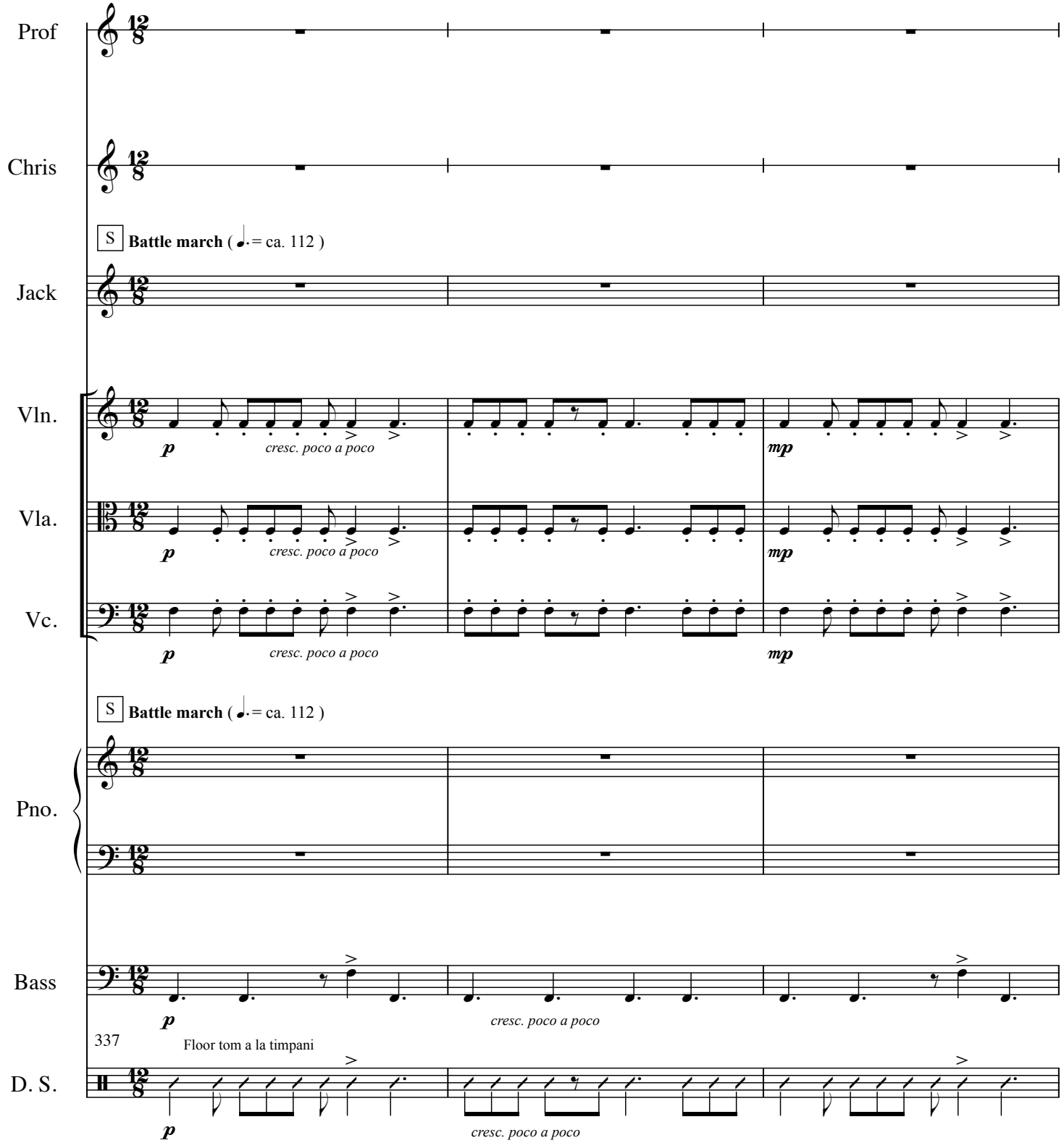
Ladies and Gentlemen! In this corner ... specializing in language ... fighting on behalf of Classicism, and funded by the social institutions of church, state, aristocracy and academia ... weighing more than written history itself ... The Heavyweight Studied Music Champeeeeen of the world ... Christopher C. Classon!

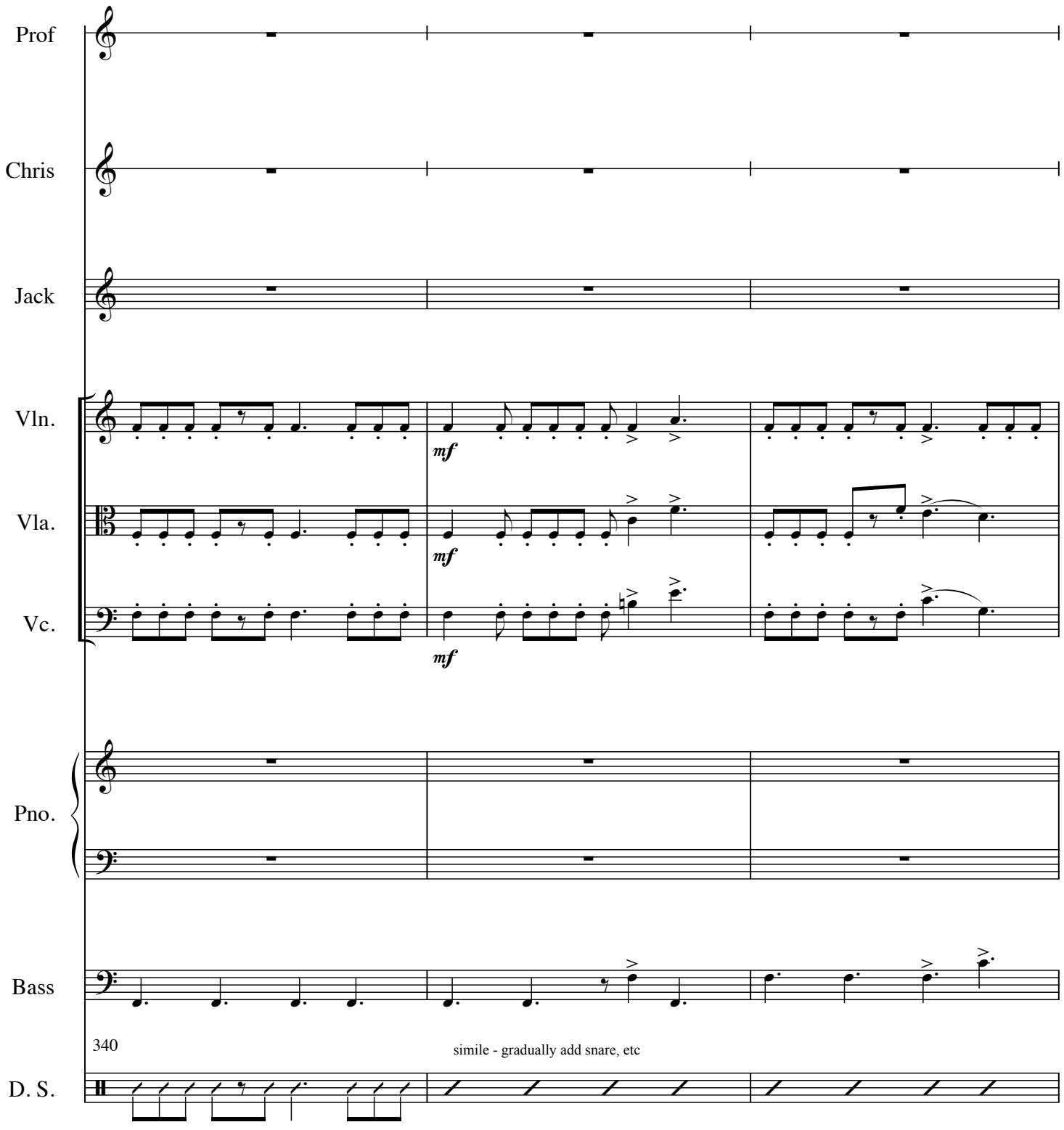


And in this corner ... specializing in improvisational instrumental music ... fighting on behalf of Romanticism, and funded by the social institutions of capitalism, populist groundswell, new media and folk tradition ... weighing in at nearly a quarter-million years of human existence ... The Heavyweight People's Music Challenger ... Jack Jazz-Jones!



Now remember, fellas, it's a no-holds-barred every man for himself catch-as-catch cancan. No grandstand, no bandstand, no hitting above the belt, sandals, spit valves or ligature grabs, if you understand the rules, say, "what?"




Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
mf
mf
mf
Pno.
Bass
340
simile - gradually add snare, etc
D. S.

Professor gives Bb on pitch pipe; conducts cutoff of fermata and beat 4 into Letter T

OK, boys... let's get out there and give it everything we got. Here's your pitch

Prof

What?

Chris

What?

Jack

Vln.

Vla.

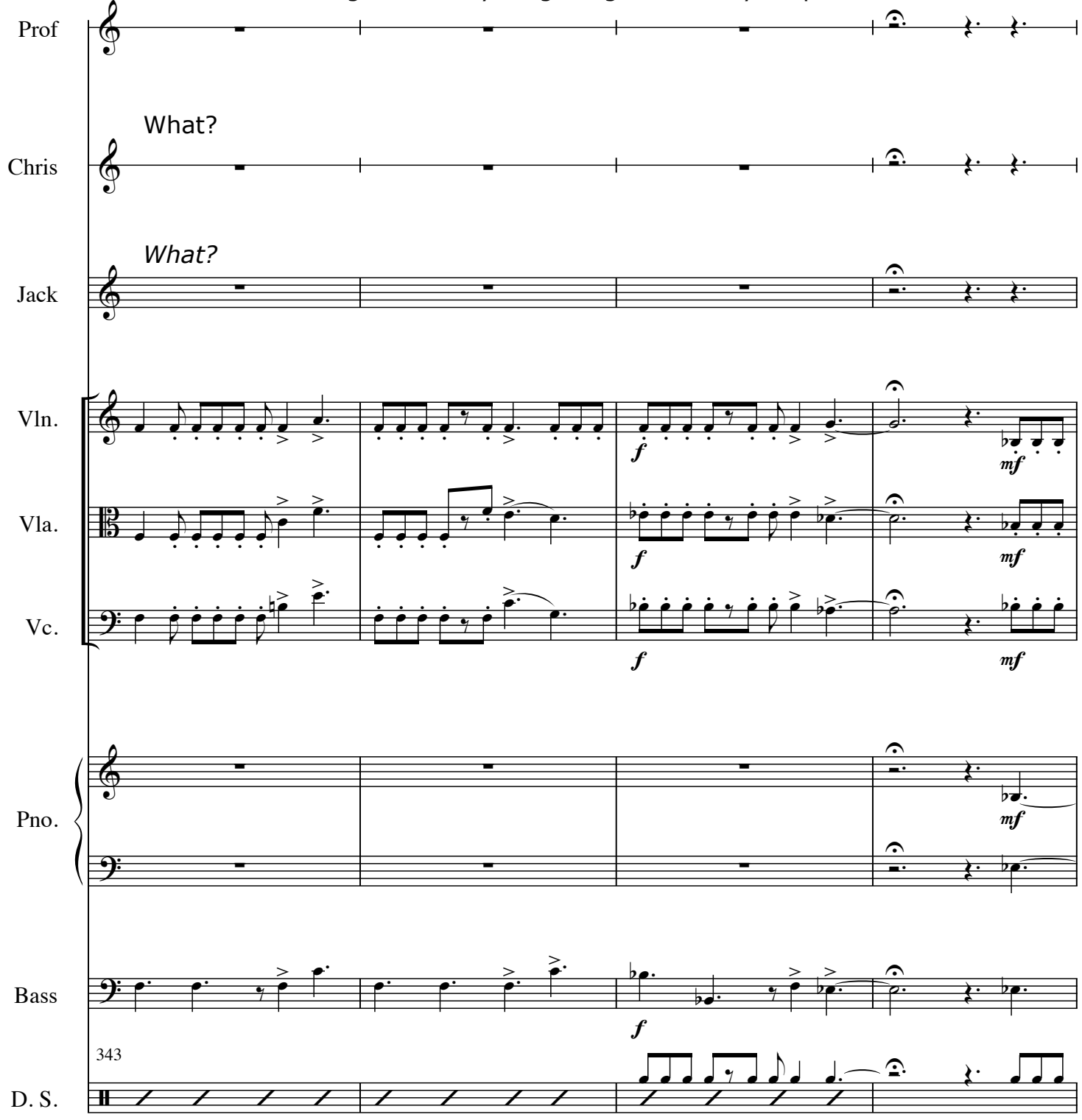
Vc.

Pno.

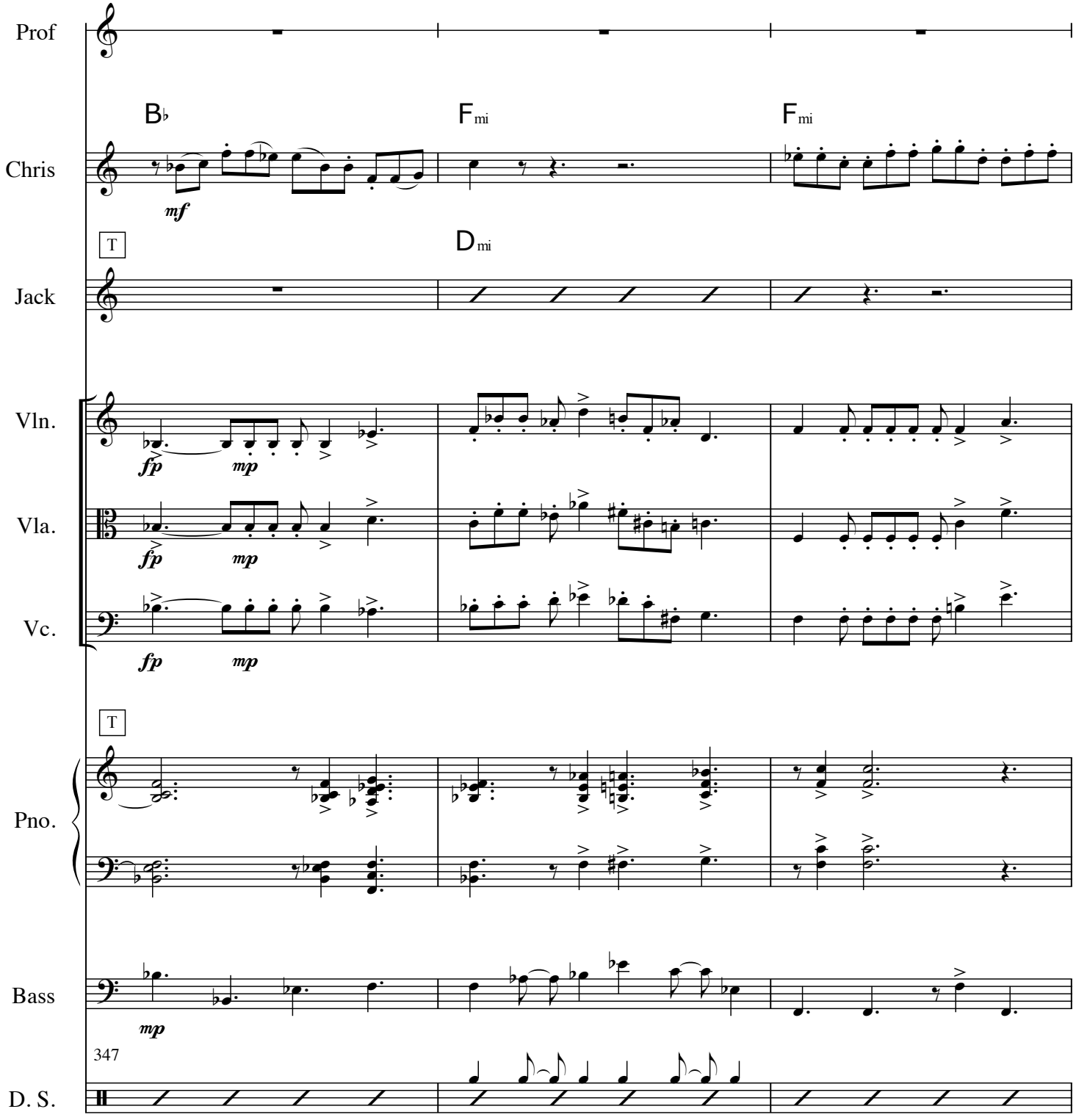
Bass

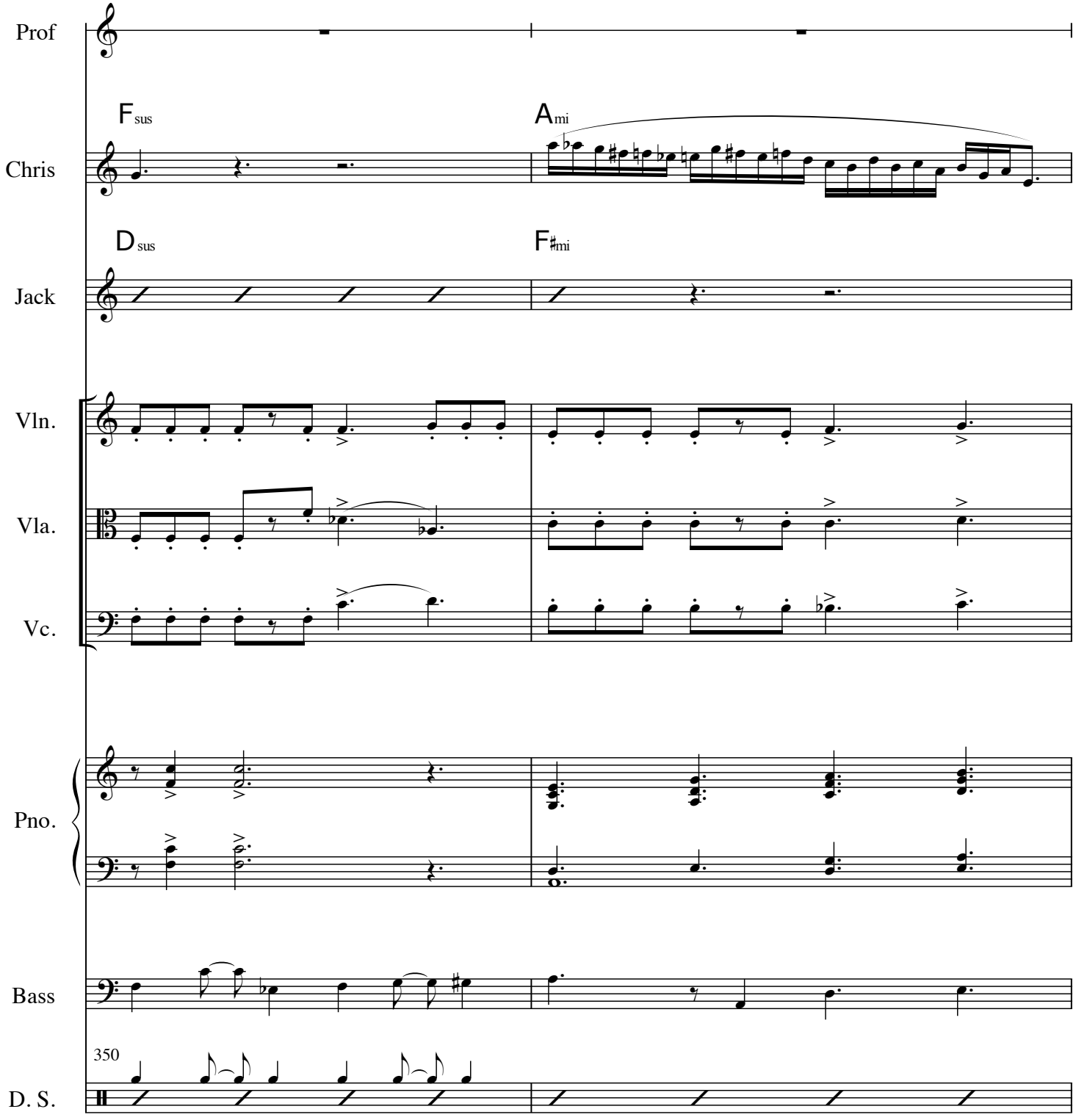
343

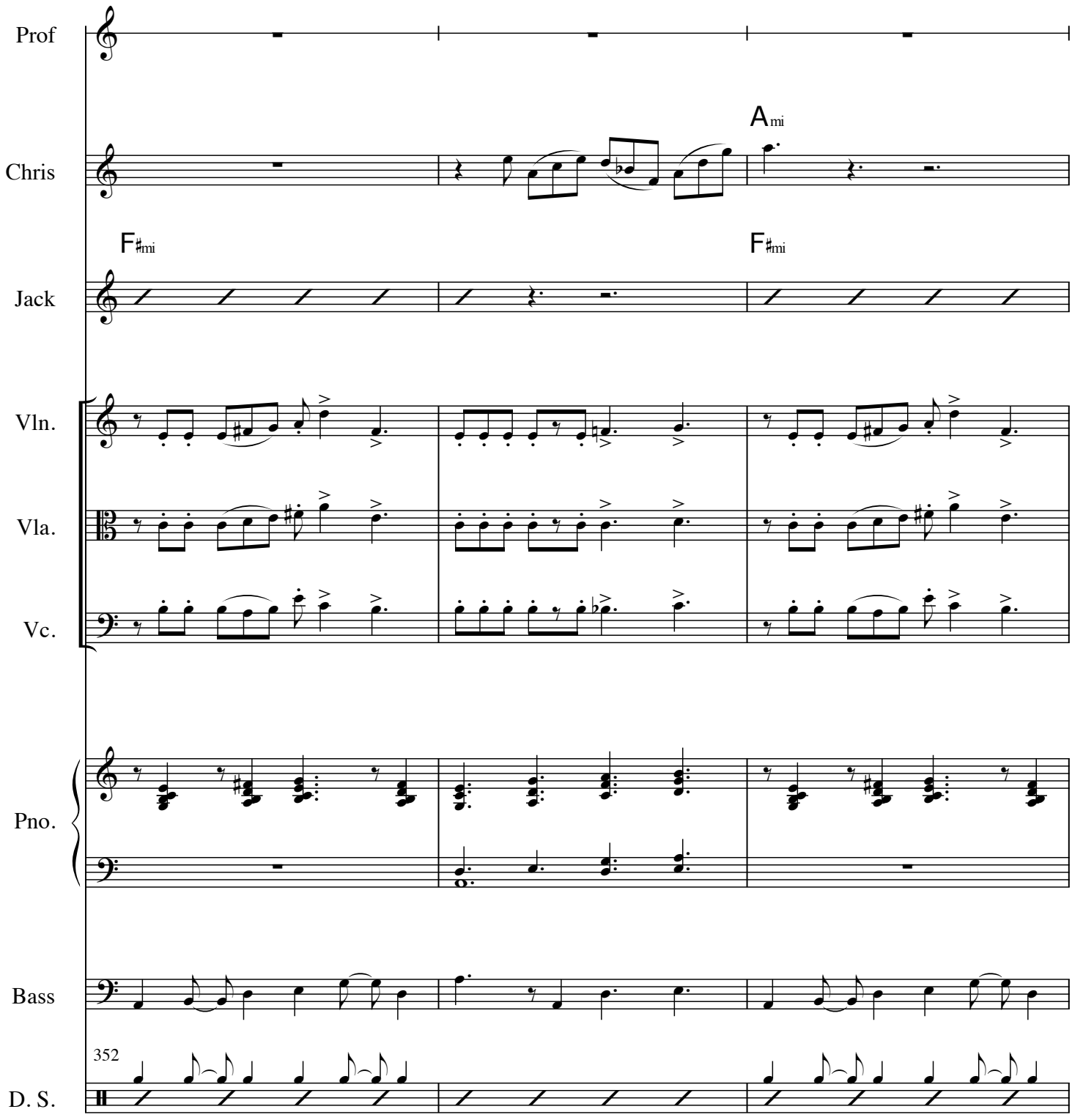
D. S.

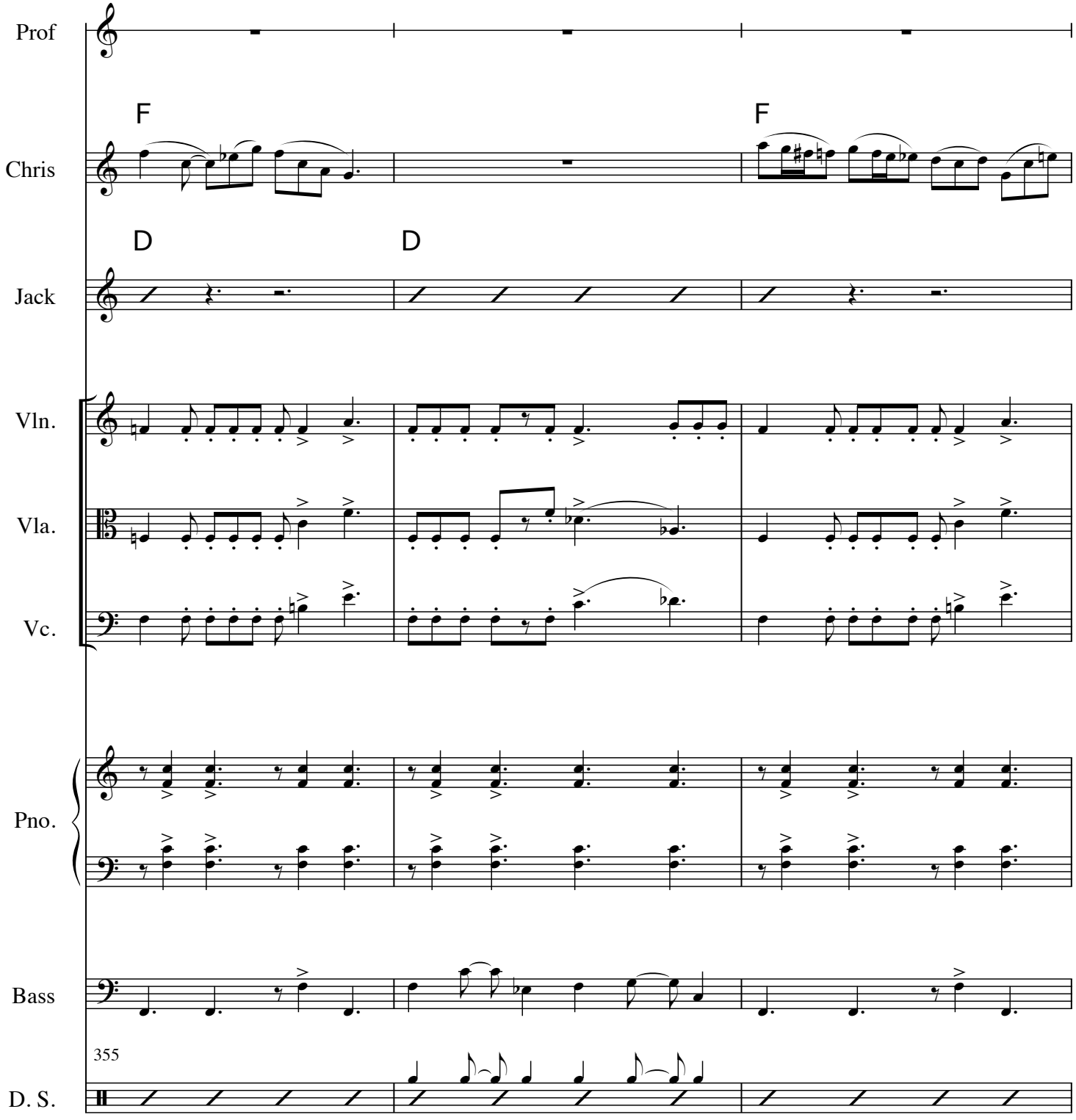


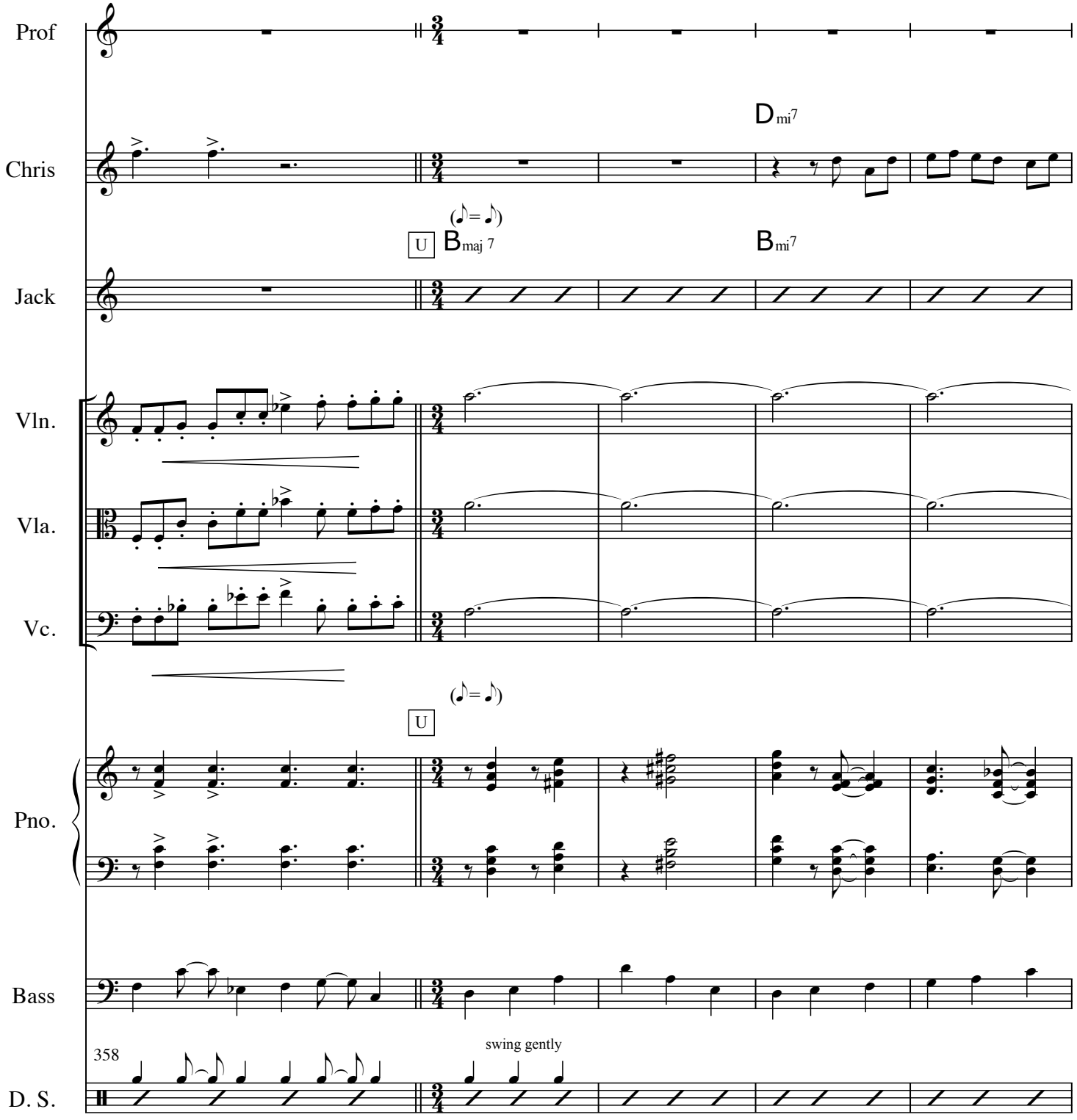
Dialogue between Jack and Chris appears on screen.

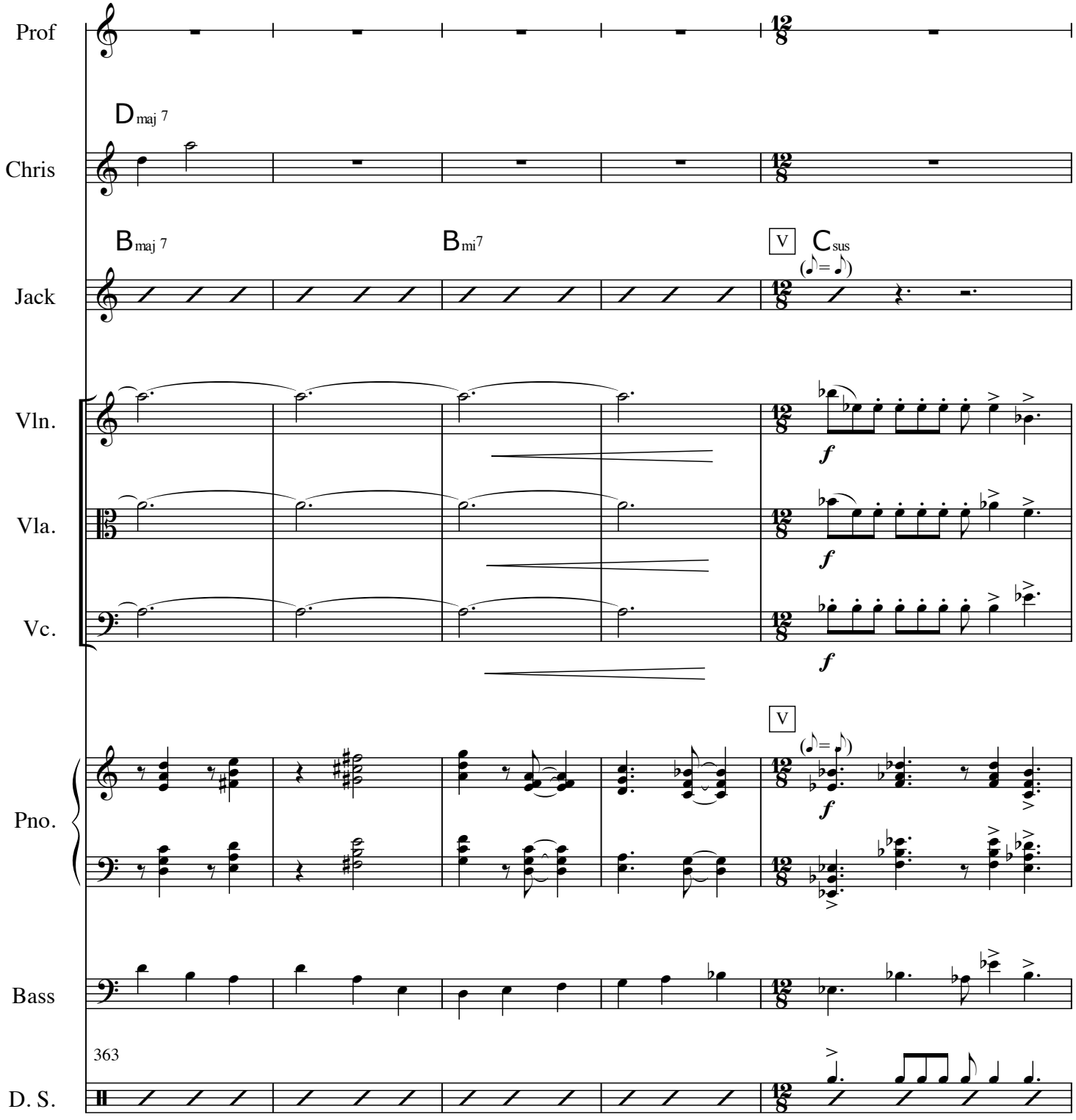


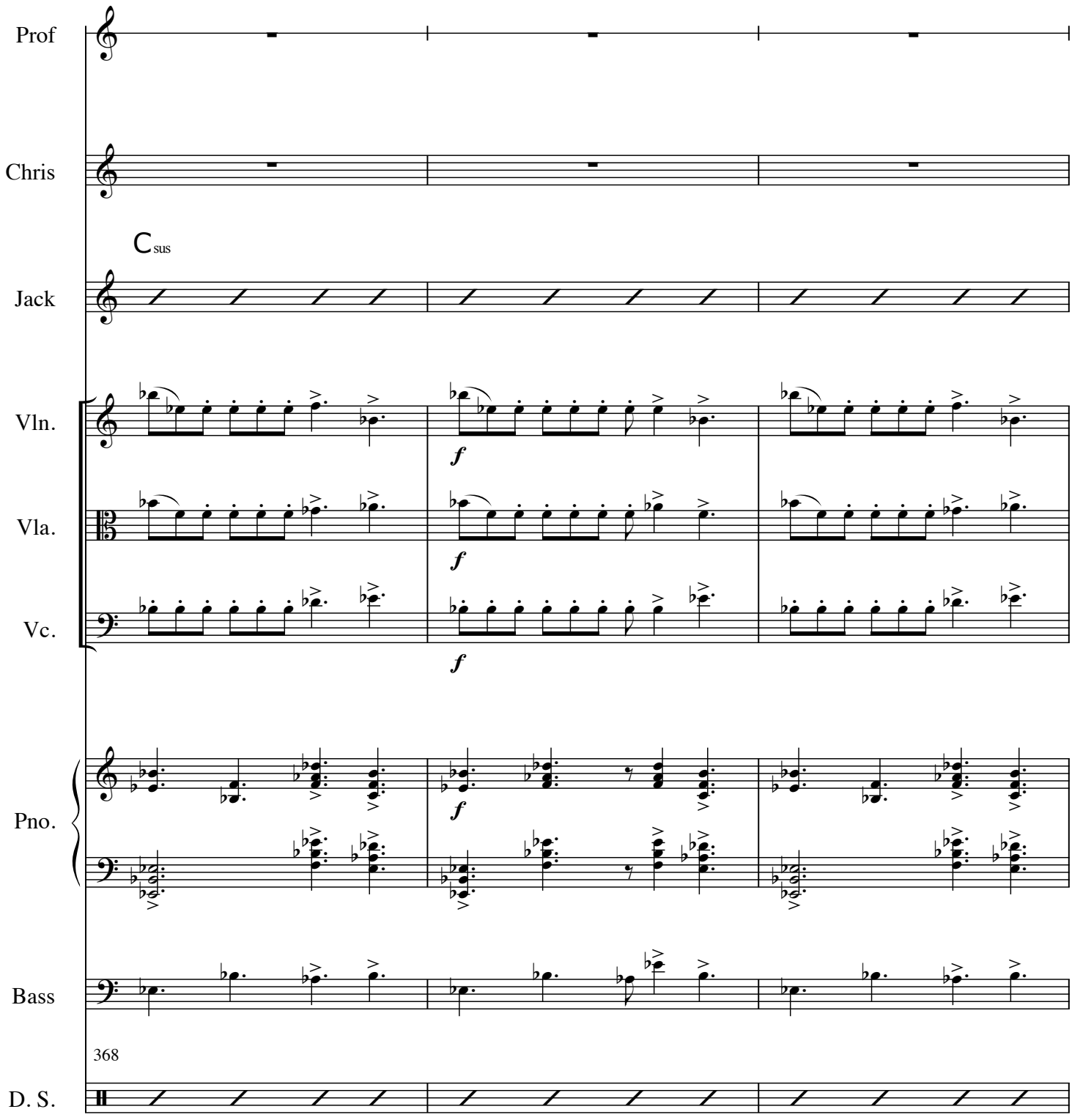

Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
D. S.
F sus
A mi
D sus
F♯mi
350

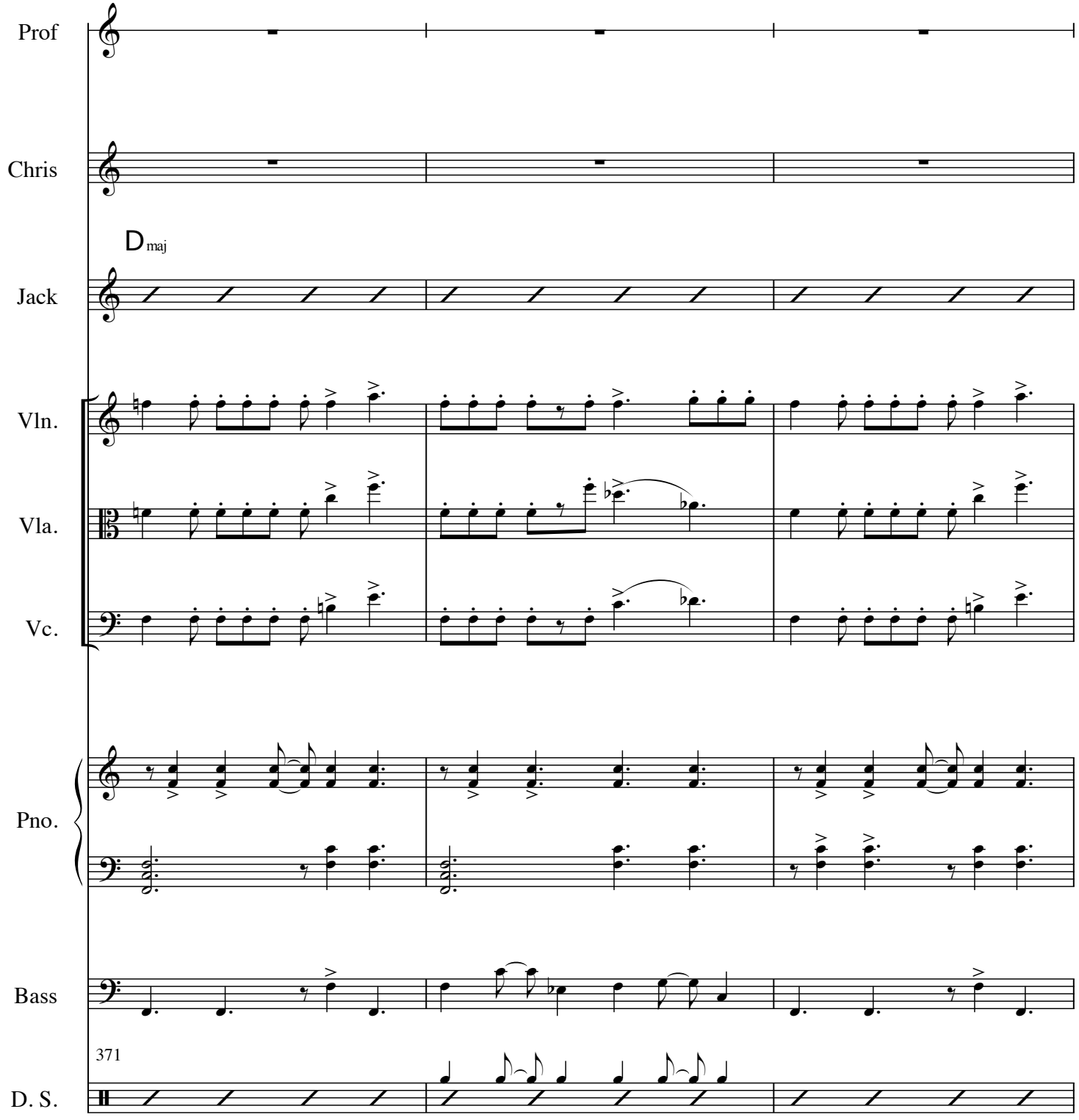

Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
D. S.
A mi
F♯mi
F♯mi
352

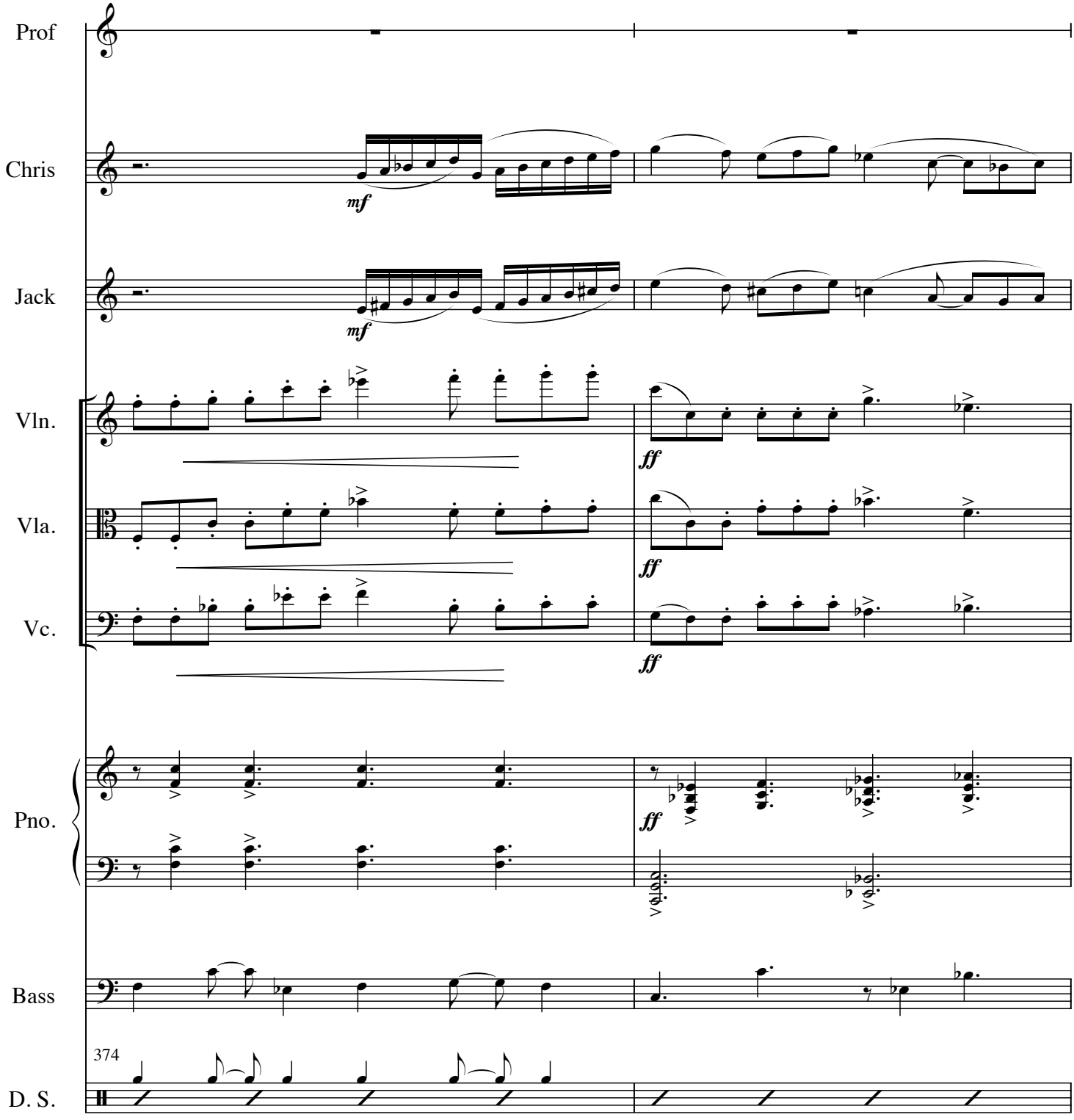

Prof
F
F
Chris
D
D
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
355
D. S.

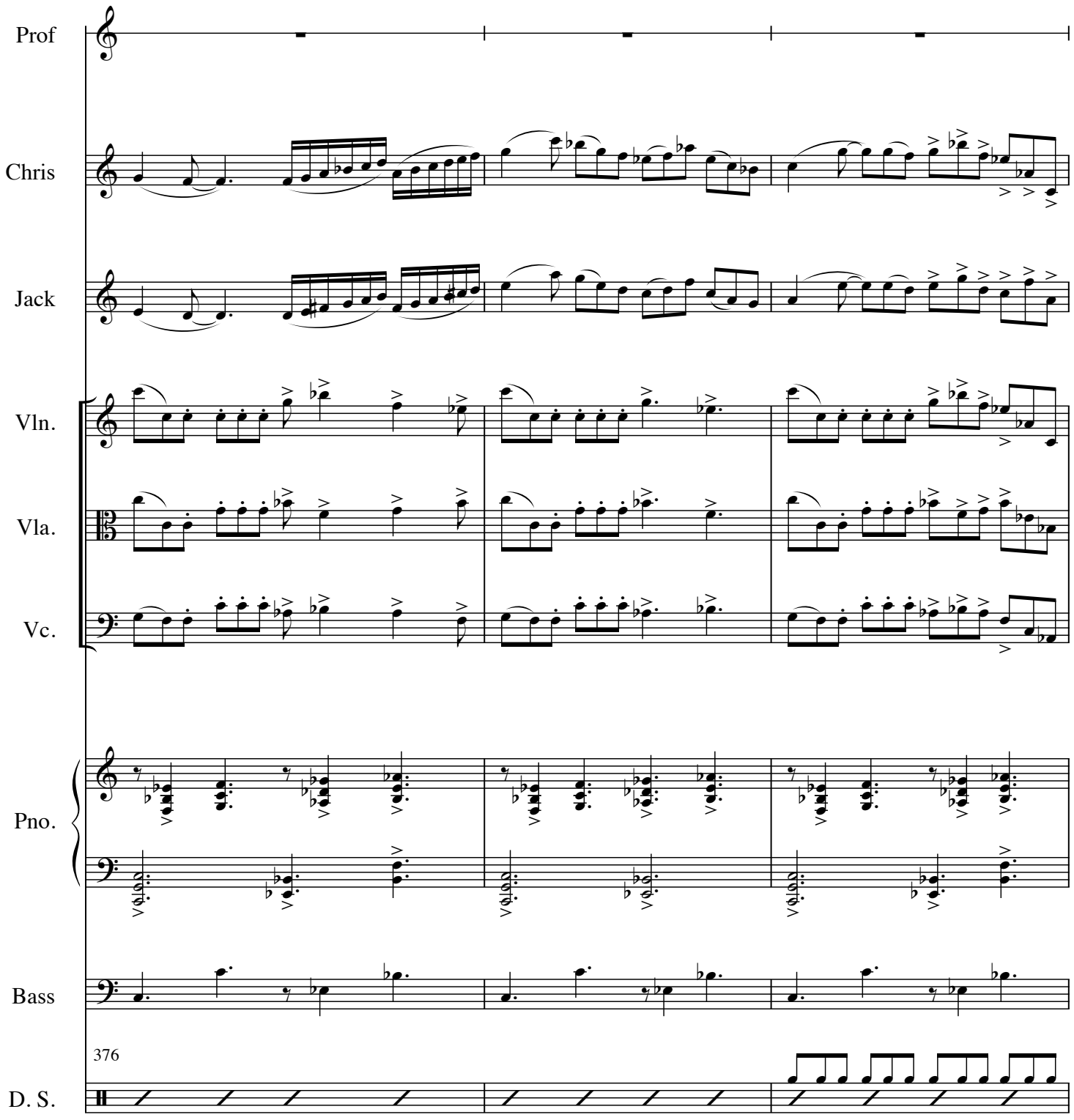

Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
D. S.
D mi7
(♪= ♪)
U
B maj 7
B mi7
(♪= ♪)
U
358
swing gently


Prof
Chris
D maj 7
Jack
B maj 7
B mi7
V
C sus
(♪= ♪)
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
f
Pno.
Bass
363
D. S.

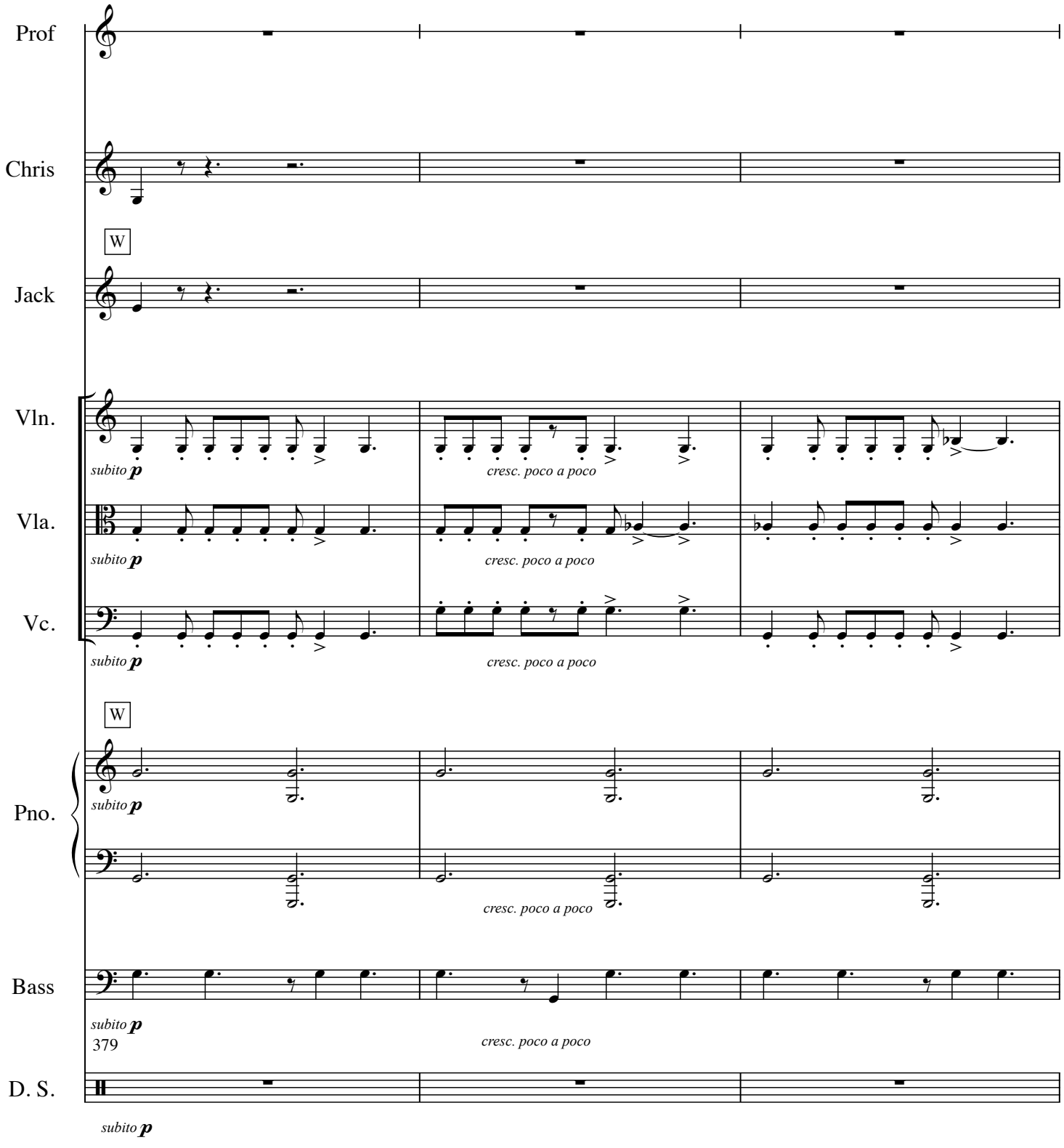

Prof
Chris
C sus
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
f
f
f
Pno.
f
Bass
368
D. S.


Prof
Chris
D maj
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
371
D. S.

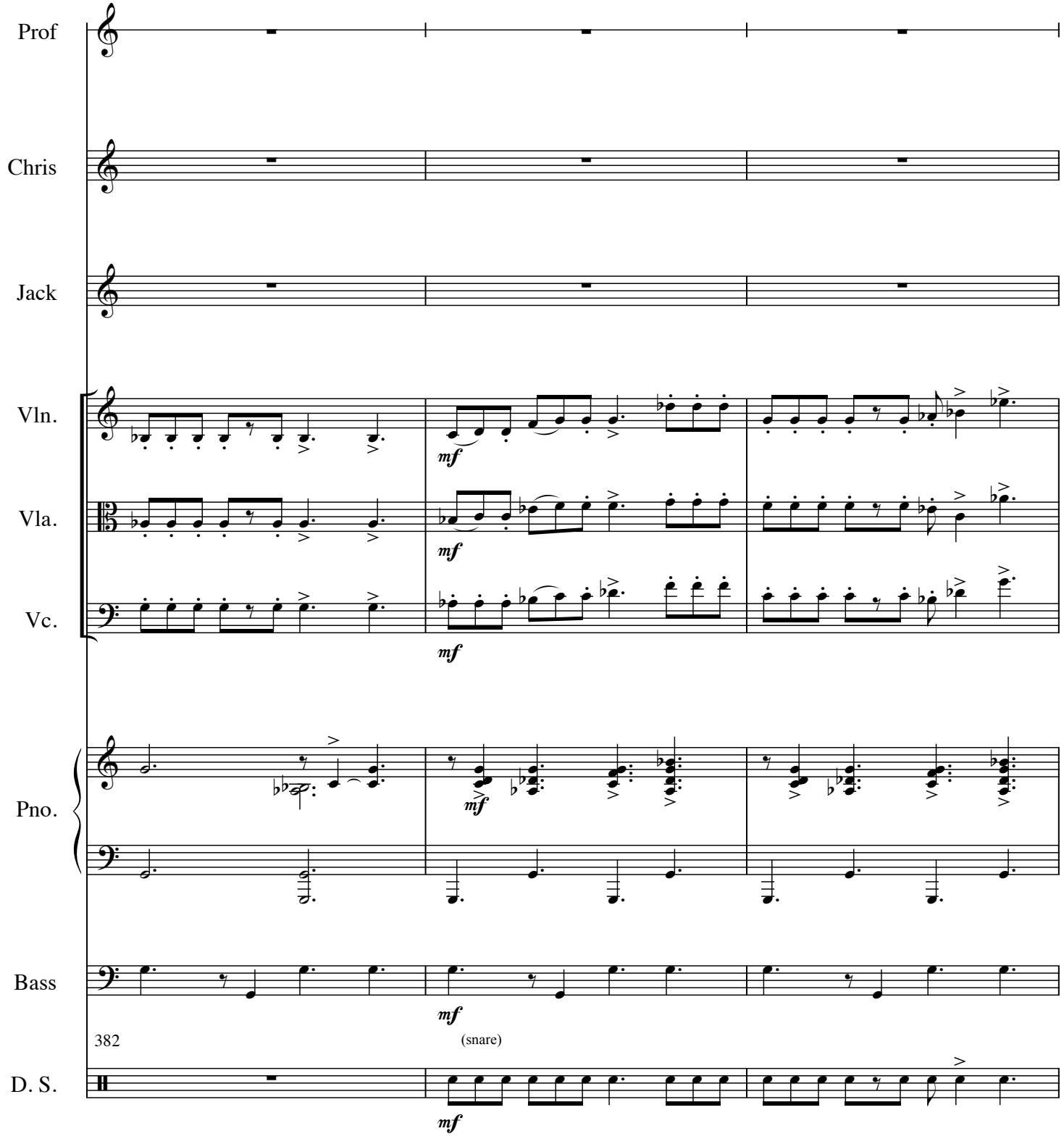

Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
D. S.
374
mf
mf
ff
ff
ff
ff


Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
376
D. S.

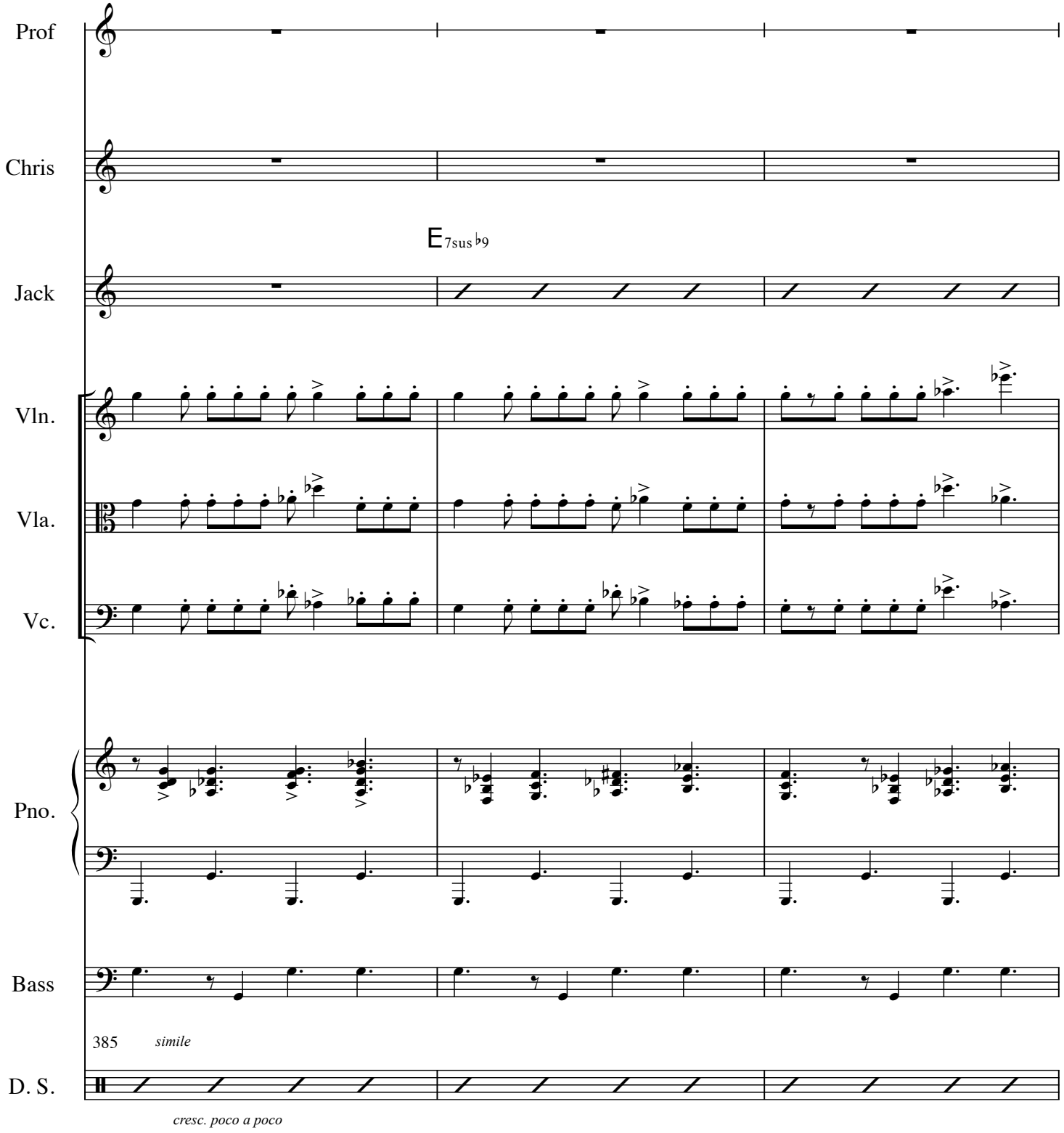
As you can see, our parties agree; Frontal lobility's easy to see.
Another perspective, the Theory of Mind,

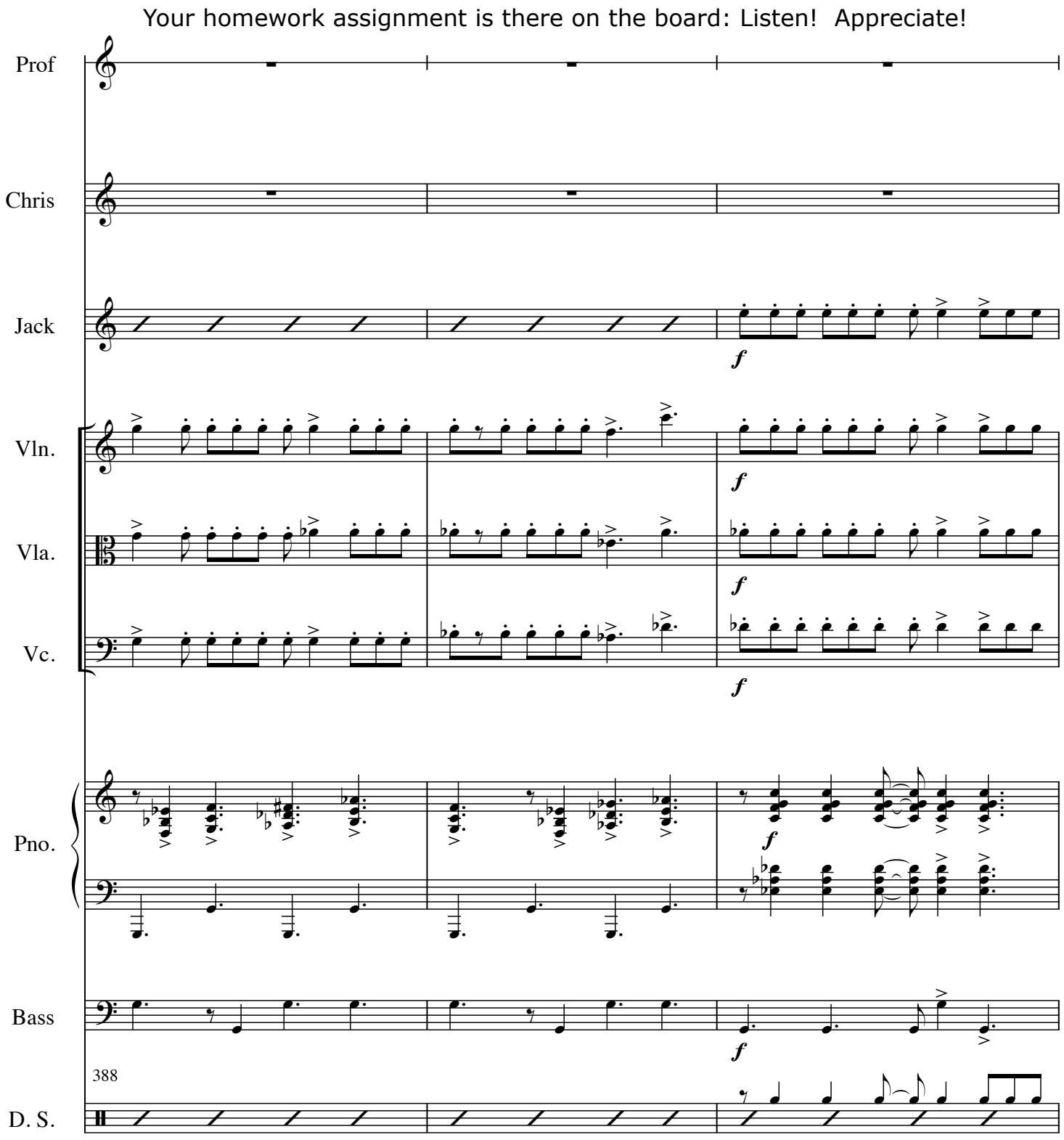


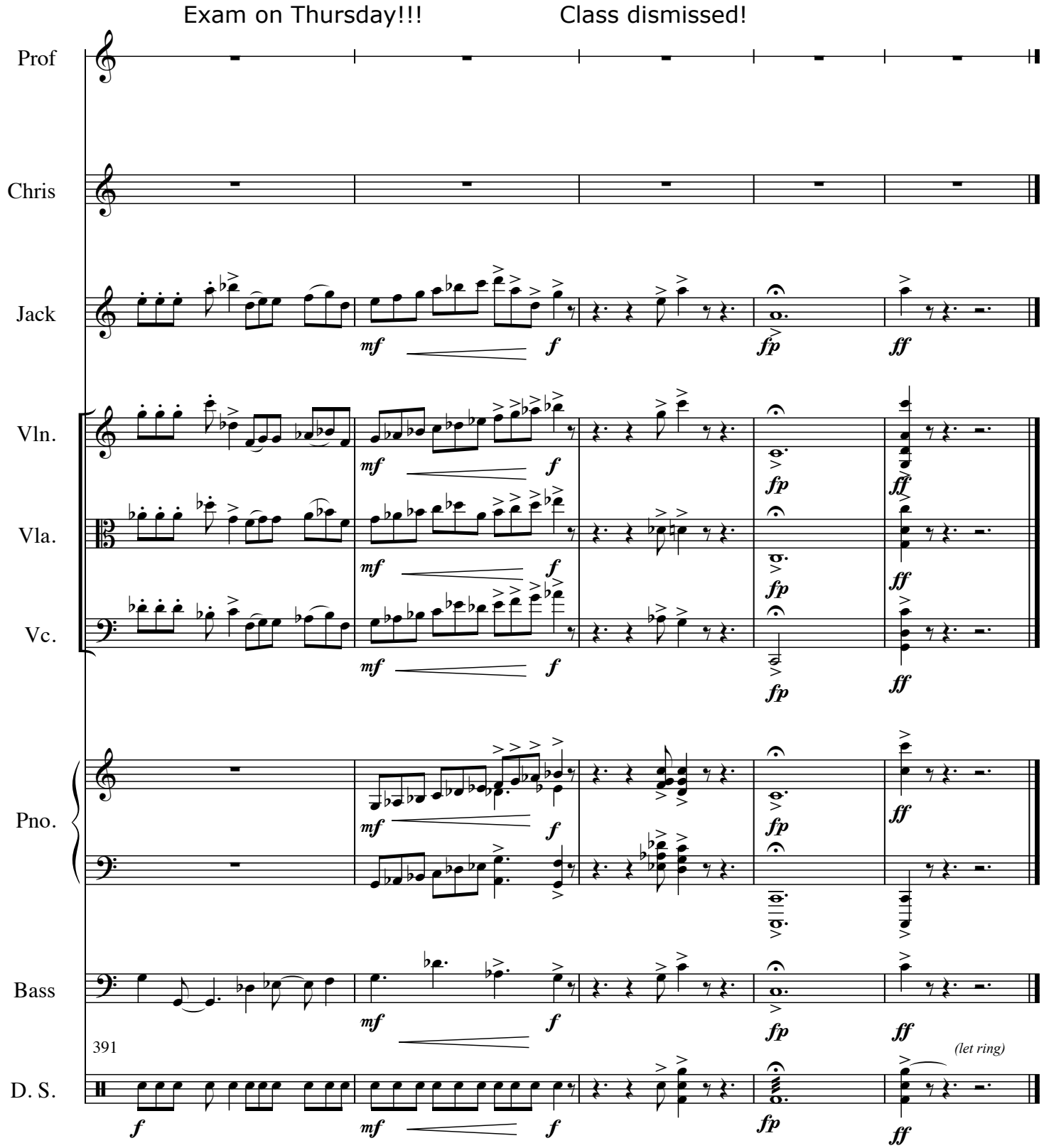
Can underscore music for all humankind! Without it ... we are all doomed
(falls out of rhythm)
to endlessly squabble ... and I mean endlessly ... to squabble over false dualities ...



phony pluralities ... bogus banalities! With it ... perhaps we can all learn to MAKE music rather than to FIGHT over it! (back in precise rhythm)




Your homework assignment is there on the board: Listen! Appreciate!
Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
388
D. S.
f


Exam on Thursday!!!
Class dismissed!
Prof
Chris
Jack
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Pno.
Bass
D. S.
391
(let ring)