UN JOUR À ROUEN

michael berkowitz

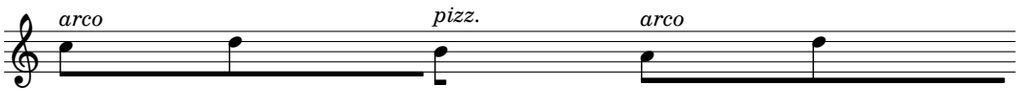
for string quartet

(2019)

Performance Notes

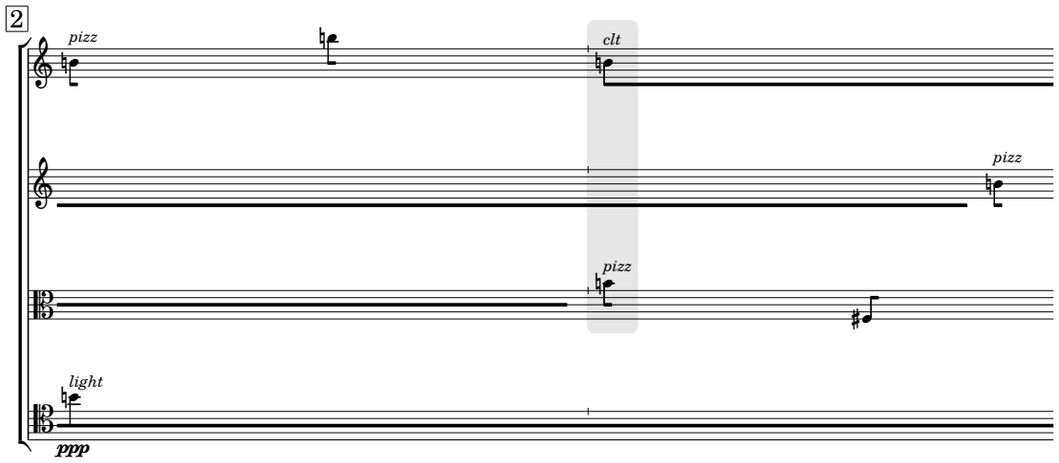
Temporality

The score of *Un Jour à Rouen* is notated proportionally. Beams indicate duration of sound, and notes that share a beam should be played as legato as possible. In fact, except for moment of pizzicato and col legno battuto, the entirety of the piece should be played in this way.



Each system lasts for 16 seconds, as denoted by the increasing time count at the right edge of each system. A tick mark on each staff indicates the halfway point (8 seconds).

While for most of the piece, each player is following their own part score, there are moments throughout where one or more players must play in unison. These are outlined in grey, as shown below, and can provide a method of synchronizing the ensemble.



Keeping Time

The ensemble is welcome to set a stopwatch on a phone or tablet, positioned so that the quartet can see it; or each use their own; or simply internalize the passage of timing, using the moments described below to remain synchronized. I leave this it to the performers to keep time in whatever manner they prefer.

Notation

Dynamics

Each instrument follows a linear dynamic shape from ***niente*** to ***f*** and back to ***niente***. Each notated increase is only a single dynamic degree (i.e. ***pp*** to ***p***, or ***mf*** to ***mp***). After their original statement, dynamics are restated, as necessary, in the first system of each page, and at the beginning of hairpins.

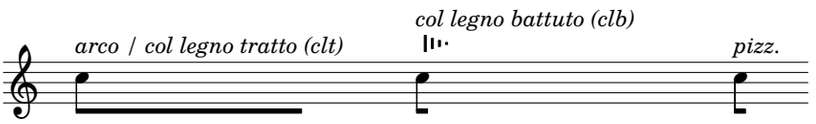
At some points, instruments may be playing at greatly different dynamic levels. In these instances, every voice should be heard, with the notated dynamics understood as relative to one another, rather than absolute. Adjustments should be made, to whatever degree possible, while still maintaining the overall shape of each individual voice. Where adjustments must be made between the players, I would prefer that louder dynamics be softened, rather than softer dynamics increased.

Techniques

In *Un Jour à Rouen*, there are 7 notated methods of producing sound from the instruments:

- 4 degrees of *arco*
- *col legno tratto*
- *col legno battuto*
- *pizzicato*

These are notated in the score as



and are defined as follows:

The degrees of *arco* are notated as *light*, *ord*, *mid* and *heavy*:

- *light* - *flautando* bow pressure, but with the left hand applying normal pressure on the string
- *ord* - your ordinary, everyday, garden variety bow pressure
- *mid* - somewhere between *ord* and *heavy*
- *heavy* - a bit of overpressure, such that the sound is slightly distorted, but still predominantly pitched. This might be more easily and acceptably achieved via a slight overpressure combined with a drastic slowing of the bow, rather than a large adjustment in bow pressure.

pizzicato - normal pizzicato

col legno battuto - as indicated by the notation, allow the wood of the bow to bounce a few times in quick succession before coming to rest on the string. This is indicated by *clb* in the score.

col legno tratto - notated as *clt* in the score, this is meant to produce a thinner, *lontano* quality of sound.

Each player should perform each technique at a different point along the string. These points are given in the table below

	clt	*light*	*ord*	*mid*	*heavy*	*pizz*	*clb*
Violin I	sul tasto (st)	norm	sul ponticello (sp)	norm	molto sul tasto (mst)	norm	molto sul ponticello (msp)
Violin II	norm	sp	norm	mst	norm	msp	st
Viola	sp	norm	mst	norm	msp	st	norm
'Cello	norm	mst	norm	msp	st	norm	st

Where one degree of bow pressure is followed by another, the transition should be made gradually, rather than suddenly. The notation of a changed pressure indicates the point at which the player should arrive at this new pressure, not when the transition should begin. To whatever degree is possible, the transition to the new point along the string, in the table above, should be made gradual as well, though priority should be given to the change in technique.

For the purposes of these transitions, *col legno tratto* should also be treated as *arco*. To whatever extent possible, when transitioning into or out of *col legno tratto*, the player should rotate the bow to create a smooth shift in sound.

Transitions to or from *pizz* and *col legno battuto* will by necessity be immediate.

Accidentals

Un Jour à Rouen is notated in equal temperament.

In addition to the standard chromatic accidentals ♭, ♯, and ♮, the following accidentals are used:

𝄲 three quarters sharp

𝄰 one quarter sharp

𝄳 one quarter flat

𝄫 three quarters flat

one 1/8 tone higher

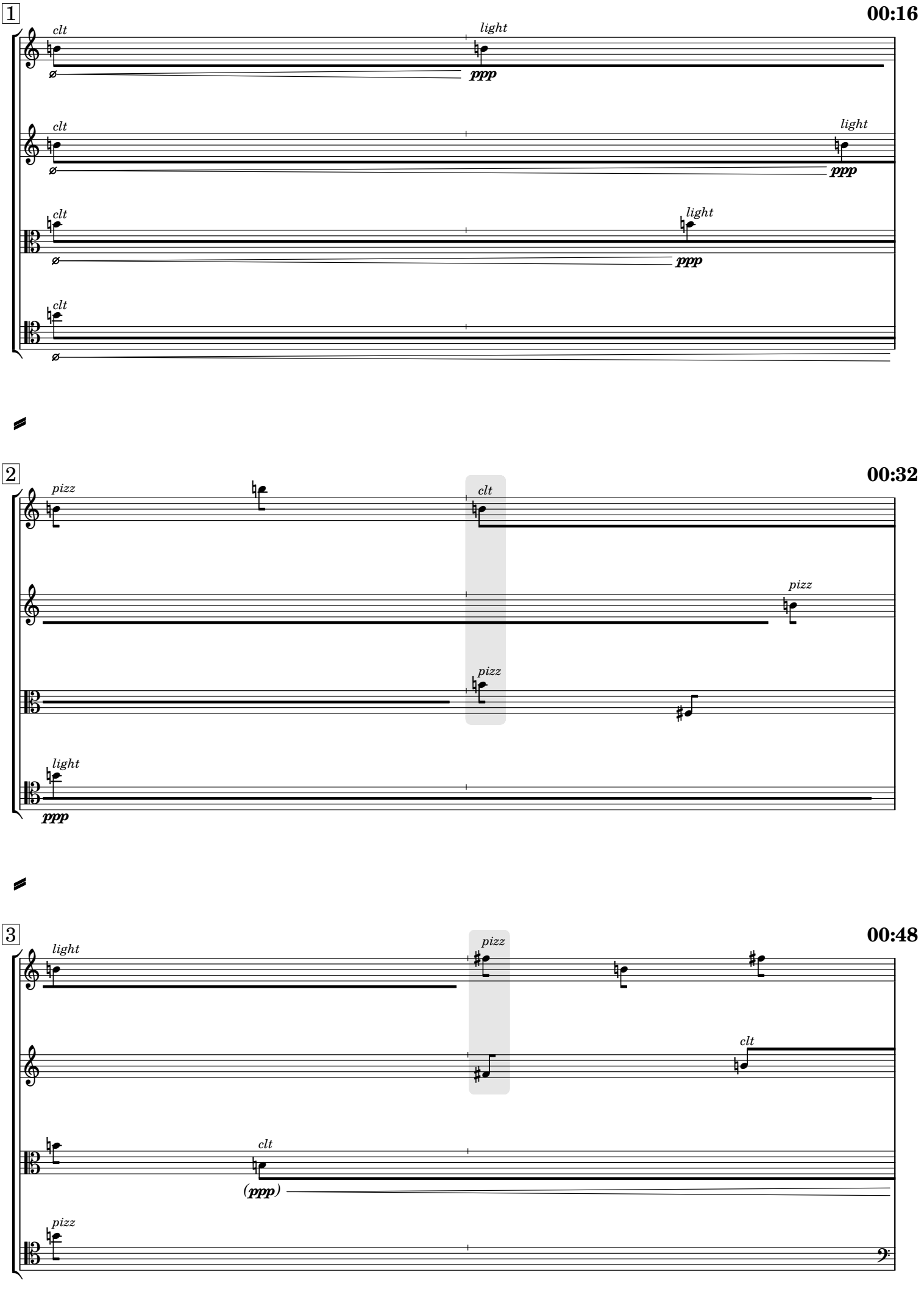
one 1/8 tone lower

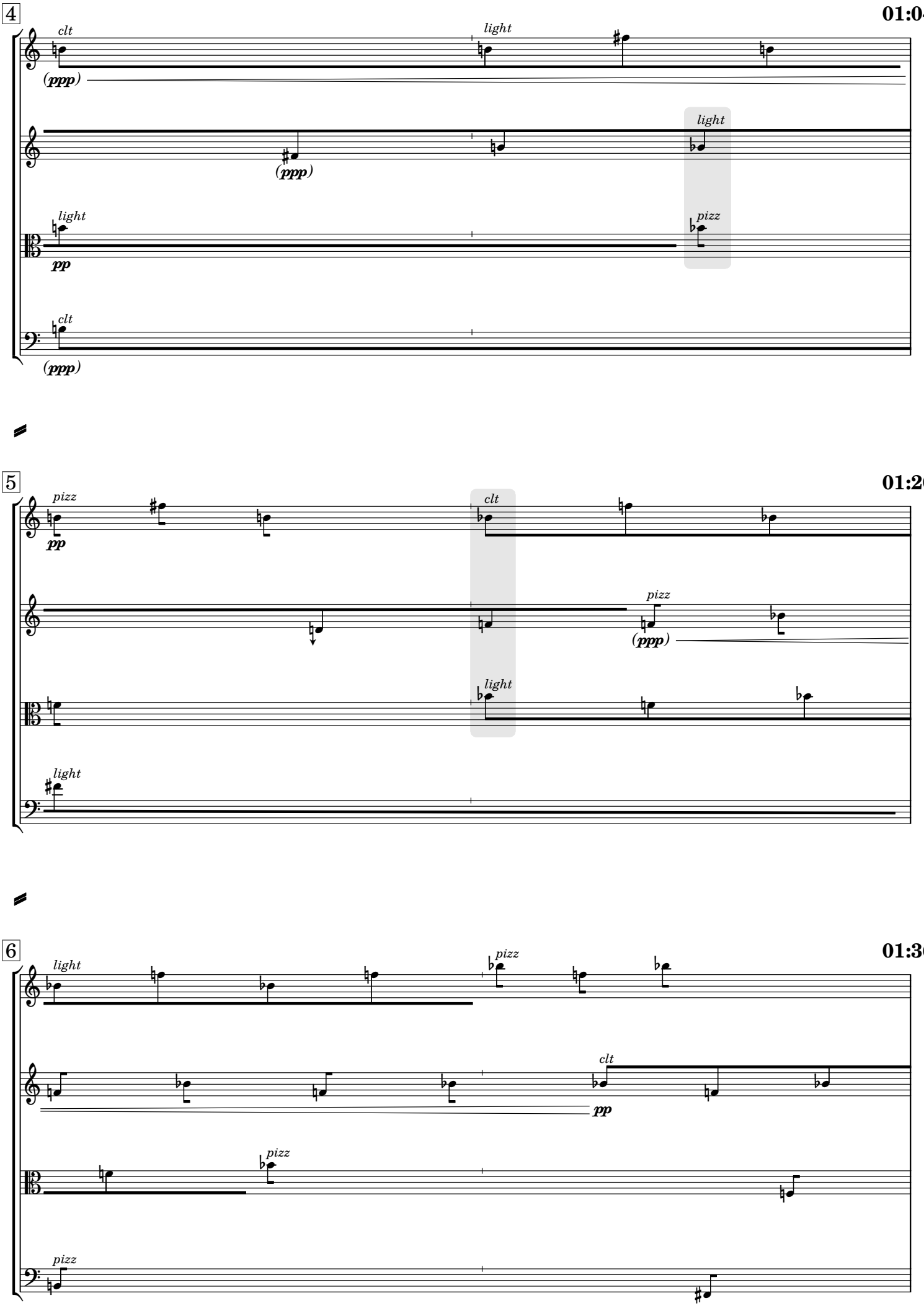
These 1/8 tones do not need to be exactly tuned in every case. They function ultimately as a shading of a pitch, and thus should be noticeably different from, but not necessarily exactly between, the chromatic pitch and its neighboring quarter tone.

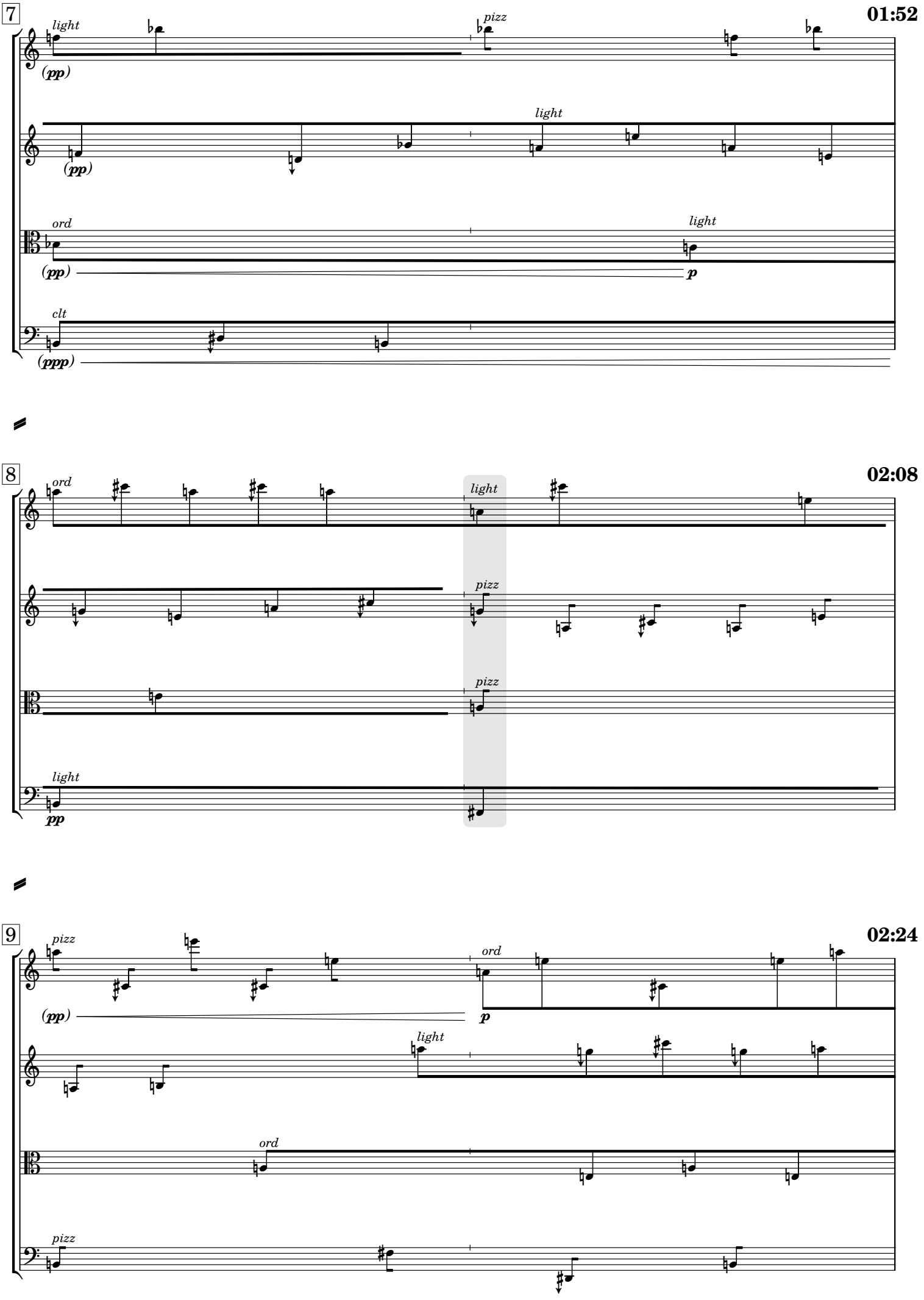
Throughout, accidentals apply only to the note to which they are attached.

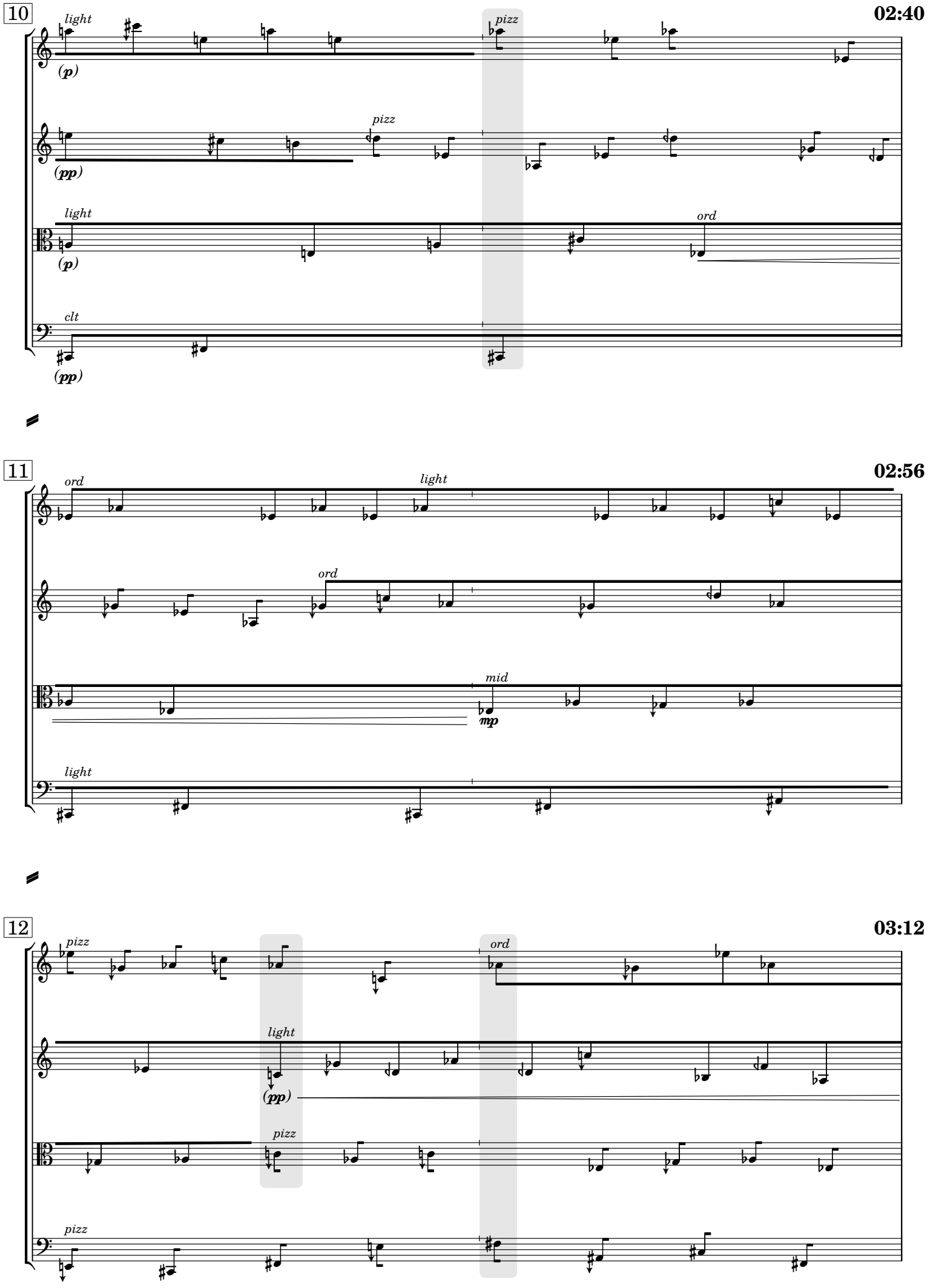
Between 1892 and 1893, Claude Monet made a series of more than two dozen paintings of the Rouen Cathedral, each capturing its façade at a different time of day and year. Although the architecture of the cathedral fills each canvas, Monet's true subject was the light; as it changed from day to day, hour to hour, and even minute to minute, in the course of a single painting.

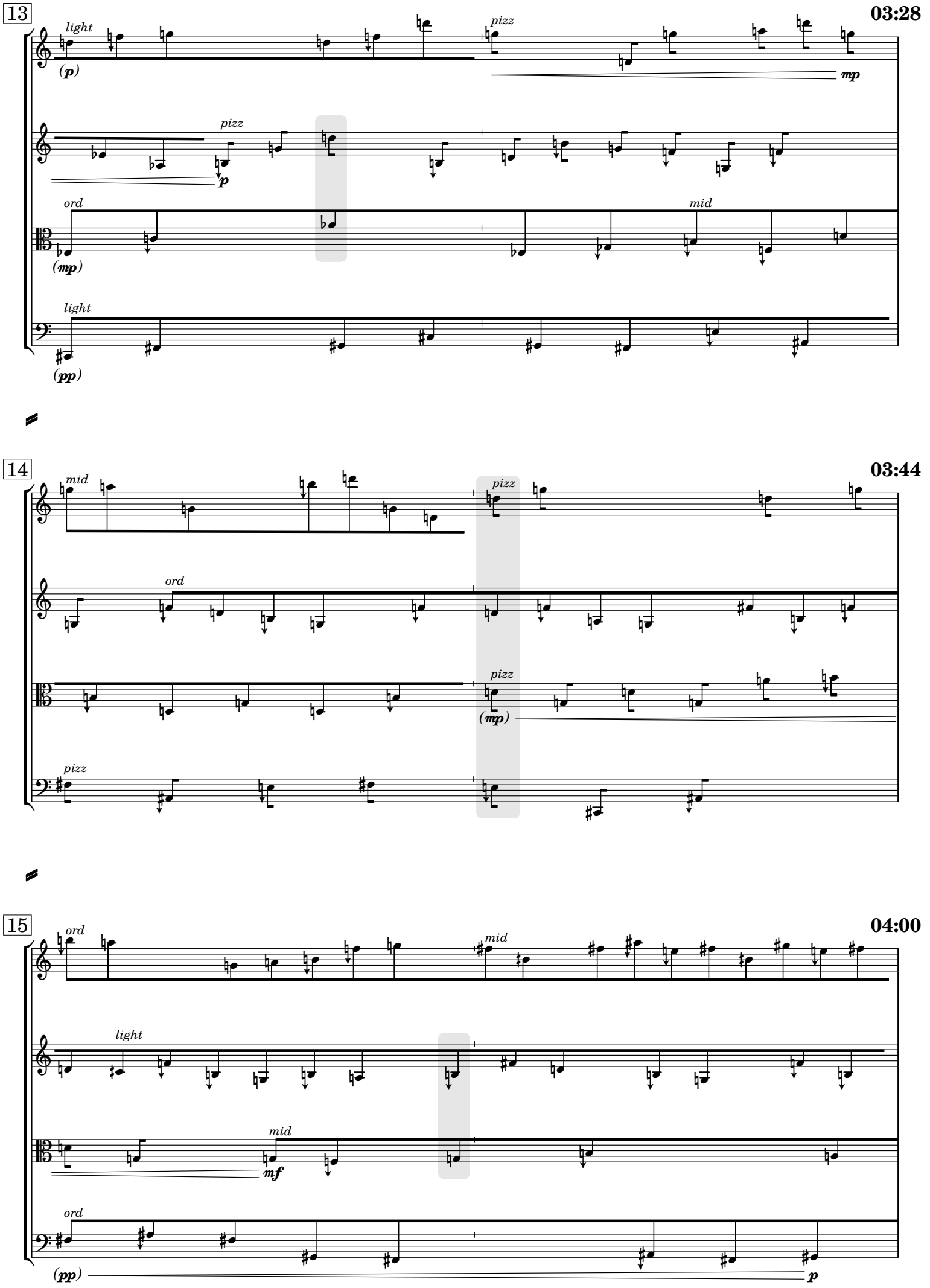
This piece uses four of these paintings, spanning a full day of light on Rouen Cathedral, as its source material. Four lines begin from a single point and each follow an identical harmonic development before re-converging on a single, but different, point. Like the light in Monet's paintings, it is the ever-shifting variations in bowing technique that gives each line its distinct timbre.

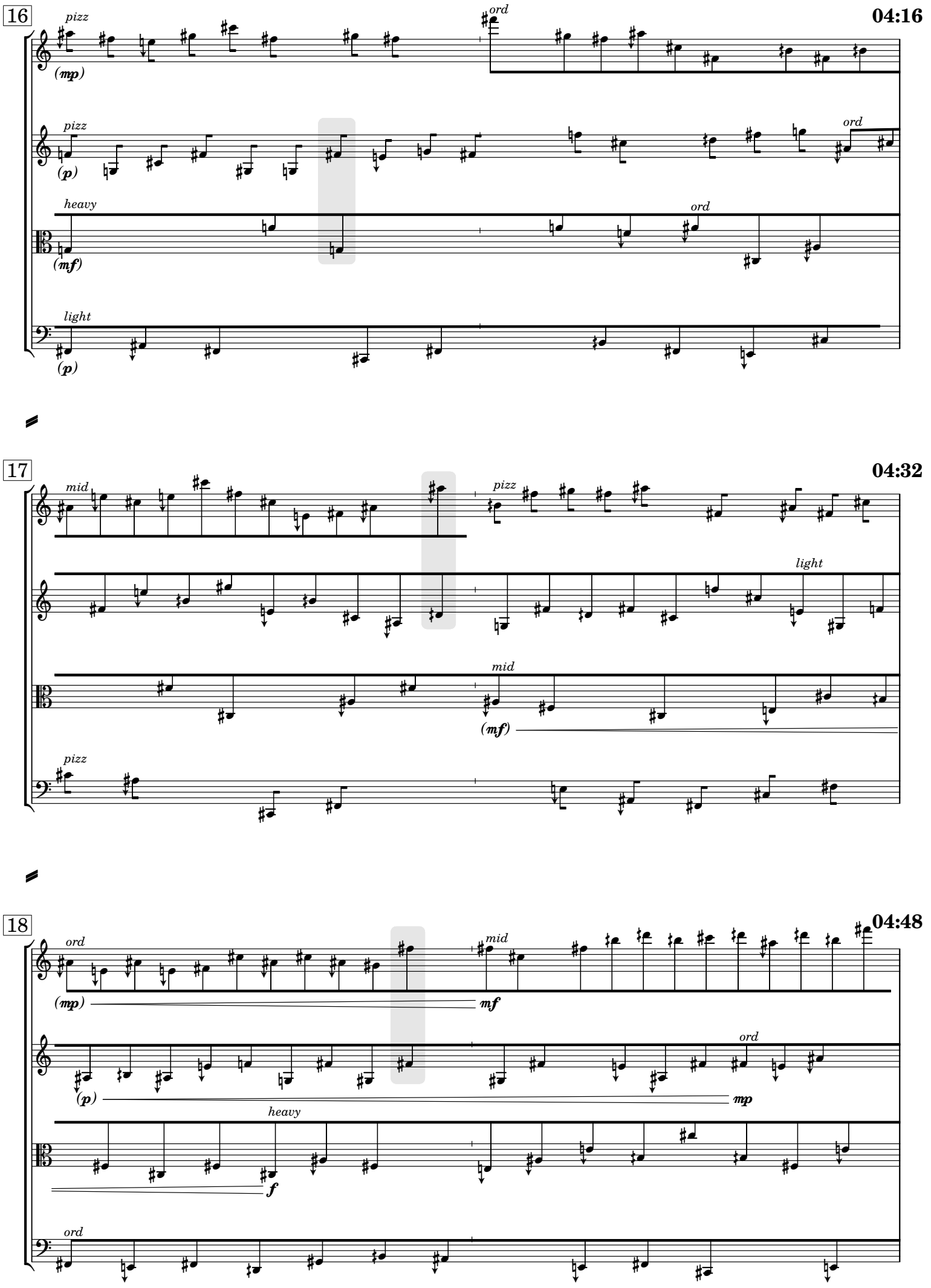

1
00:16
clt
light
ppp
clt
light
ppp
clt
light
ppp
clt
2
00:32
pizz
clt
pizz
pizz
light
ppp
3
00:48
light
pizz
clt
clt
(ppp)
pizz

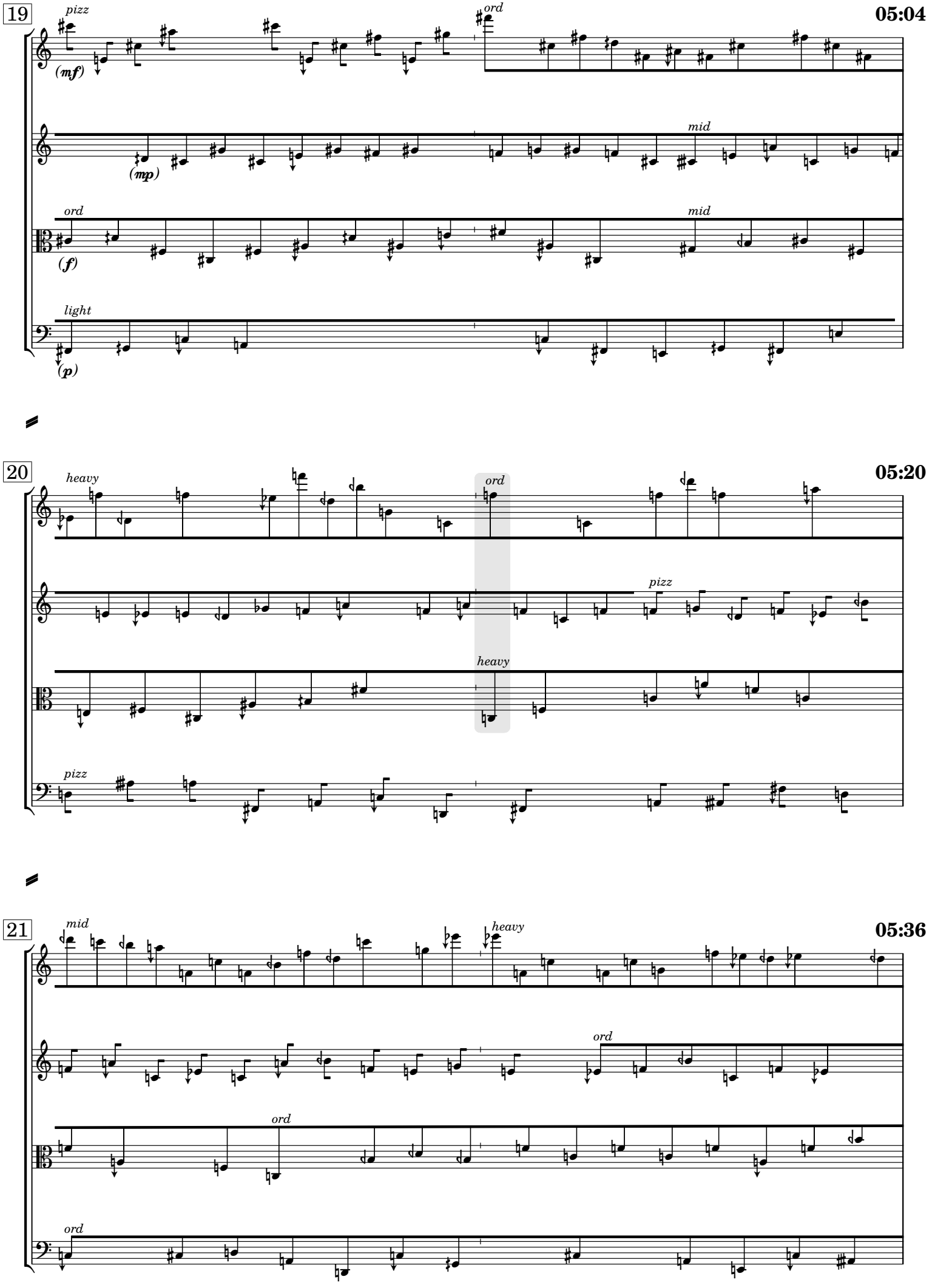

4
01:04
clt
light
(ppp)
light
(ppp)
light
pizz
pp
clt
(ppp)
5
01:20
pizz
clt
pp
pizz
(ppp)
light
light
6
01:36
light
pizz
clt
pp
pizz
pizz

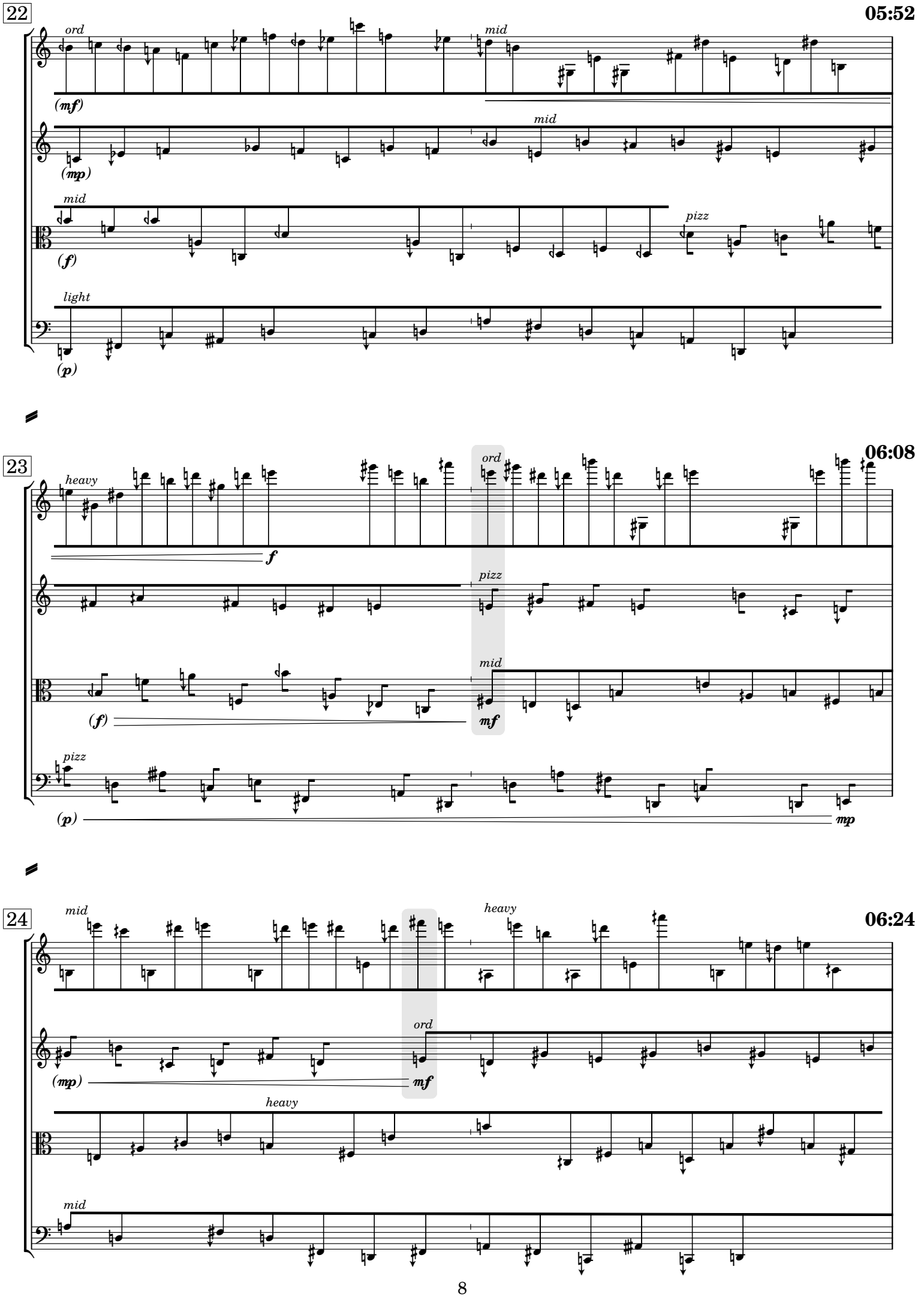

7
01:52
light
pizz
(pp)
light
(pp)
ord
light
(pp)
p
clt
(ppp)
8
02:08
ord
light
pizz
pizz
light
pp
9
02:24
pizz
ord
(pp)
p
light
ord
pizz

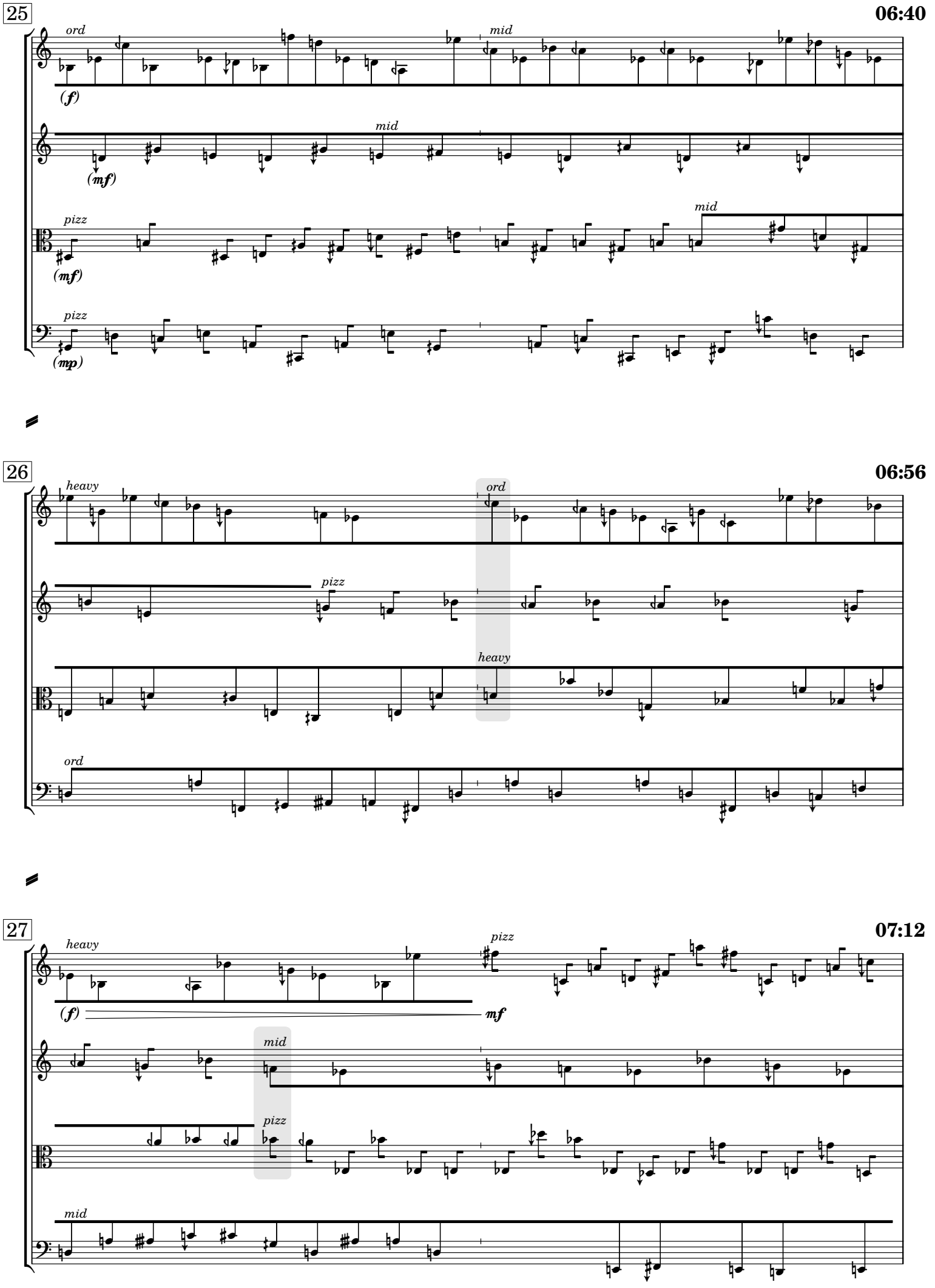

10
02:40
light
(p)
pizz
(pp)
light
(p)
ord
clt
(pp)
11
02:56
ord
light
ord
mid
mp
light
12
03:12
pizz
ord
light
(pp)
pizz
pizz

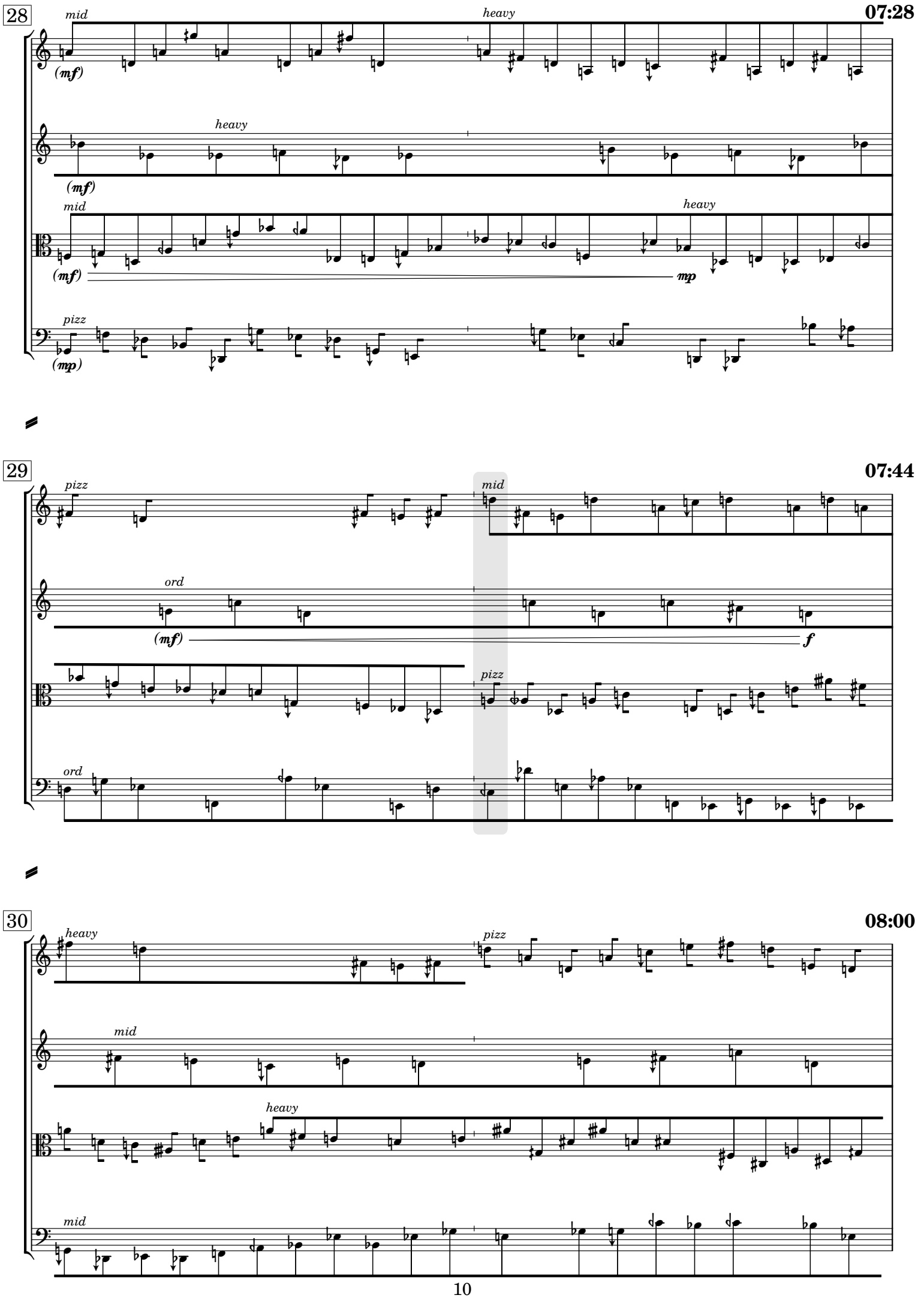

13
03:28
light
(p)
pizz
mp
pizz
p
ord
mid
(mp)
light
(pp)
14
03:44
mid
pizz
ord
pizz
(mp)
pizz
15
04:00
ord
mid
light
mid
mf
ord
(pp)
p

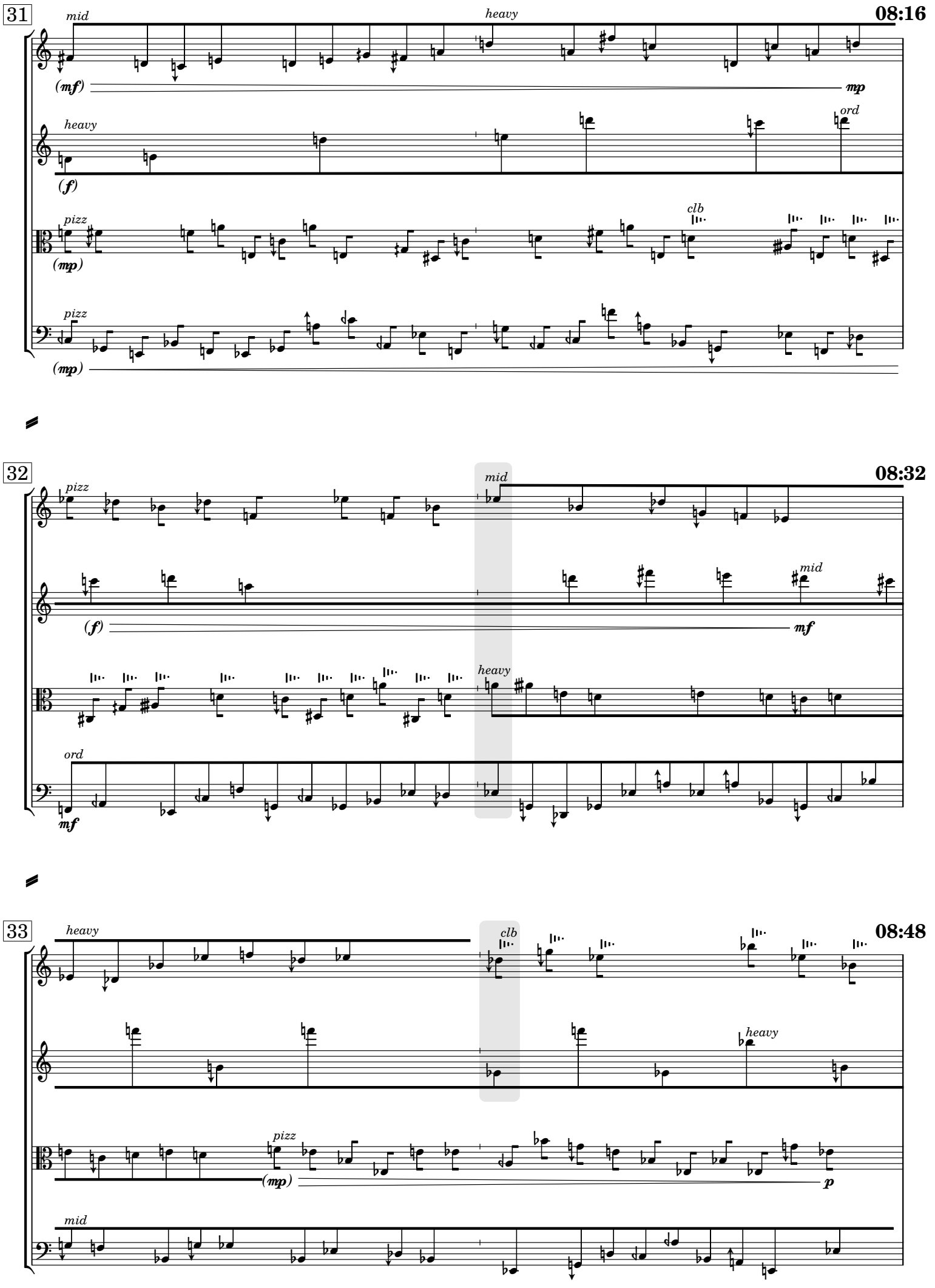

16
04:16
pizz
ord
(mp)
pizz
ord
(p)
heavy
ord
(mf)
light
(p)
17
04:32
mid
pizz
light
mid
(mf)
pizz
18
04:48
ord
mid
(mp)
mf
ord
(p)
mp
heavy
f
ord

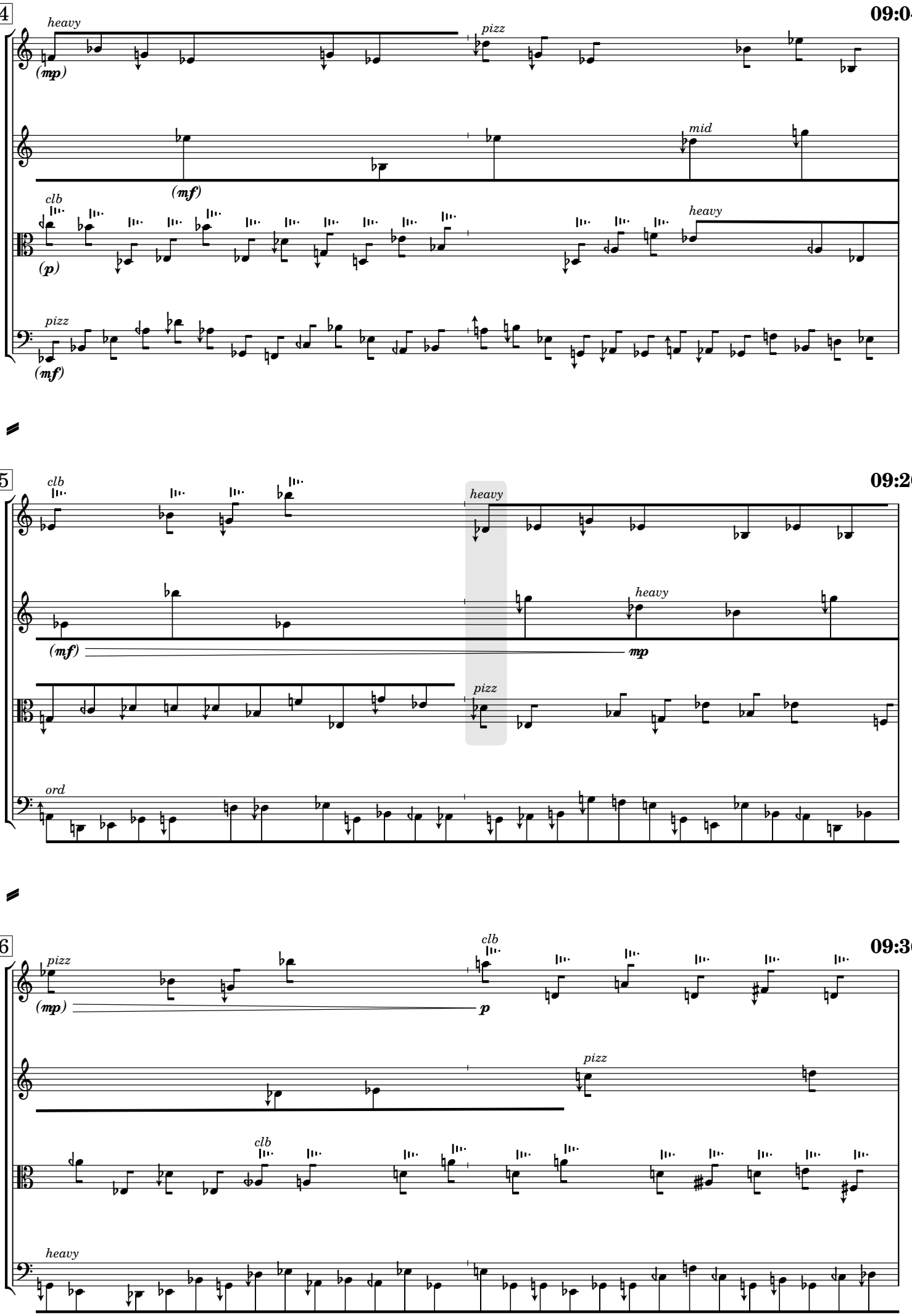

19
05:04
pizz
(mf)
ord
(mp)
mid
ord
(f)
mid
light
(p)
20
05:20
heavy
ord
pizz
heavy
pizz
21
05:36
mid
heavy
ord
ord
ord

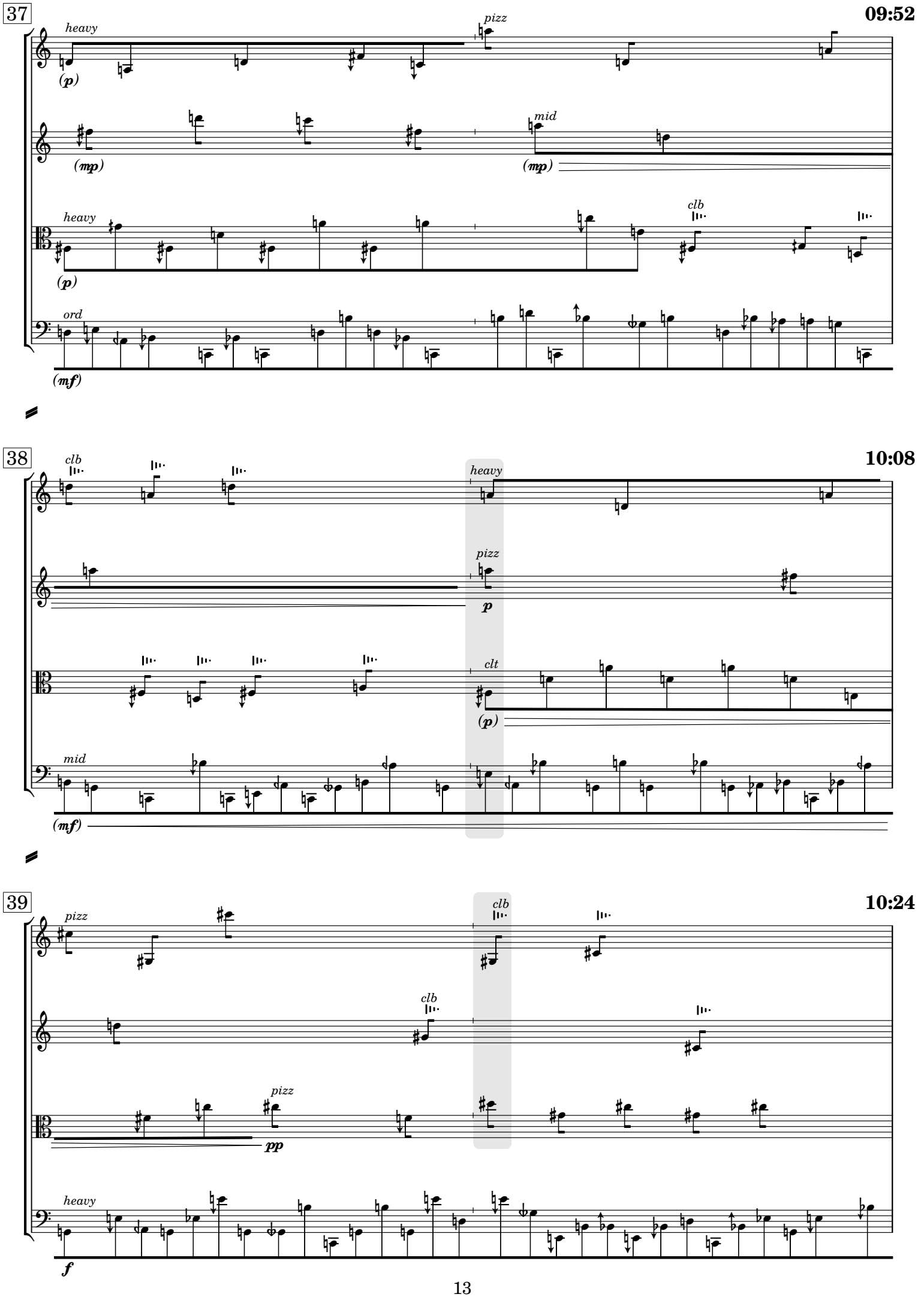

22
05:52
ord
mid
(mf)
mid
(mp)
mid
pizz
(f)
light
(p)
23
06:08
heavy
ord
f
pizz
mid
(f)
mf
pizz
(p)
mp
24
06:24
mid
heavy
ord
(mp)
mf
heavy
mid

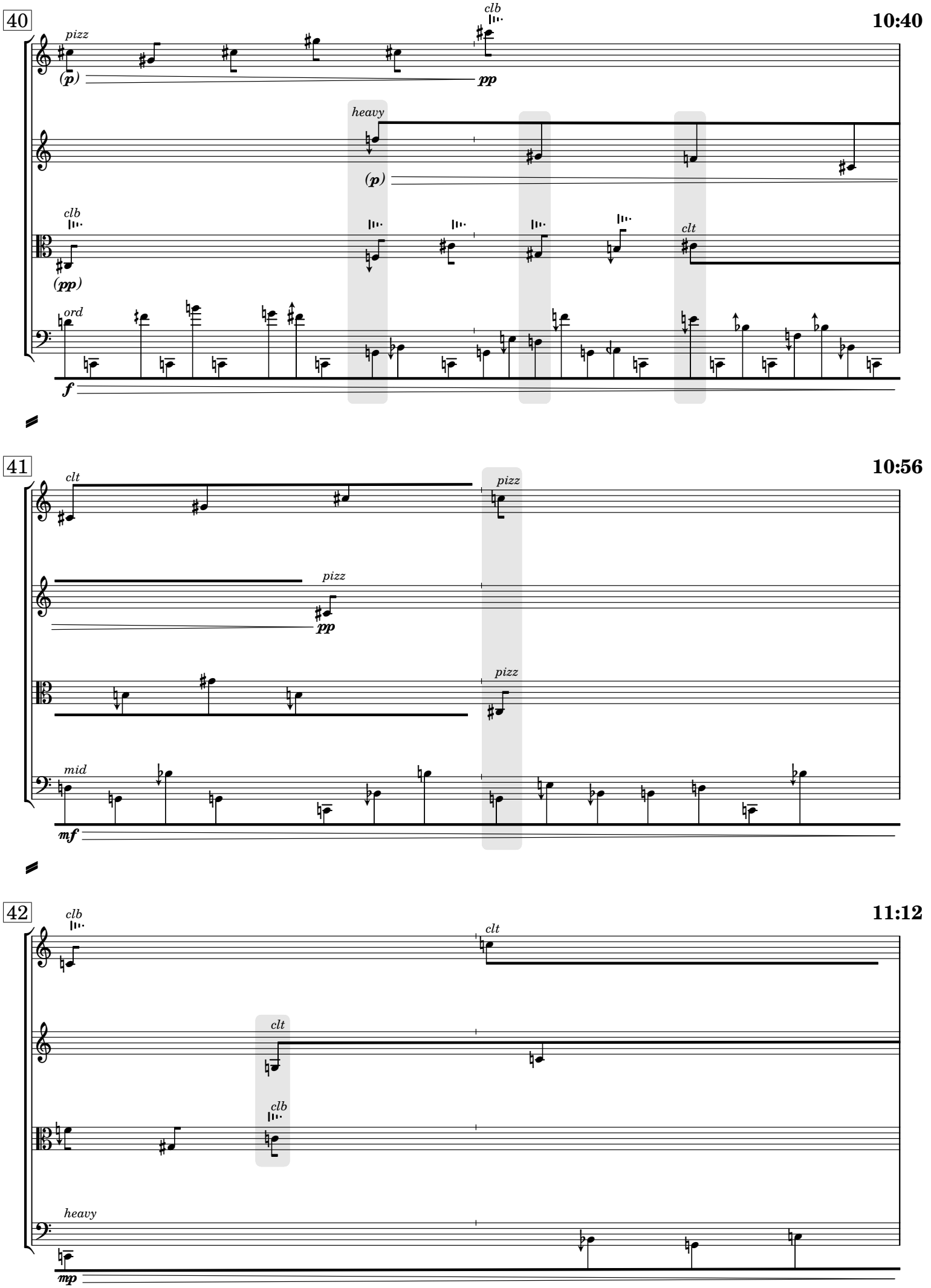

25
06:40
ord
mid
(f)
mid
(mf)
pizz
mid
(mf)
pizz
(mp)
26
06:56
heavy
ord
pizz
heavy
ord
27
07:12
heavy
pizz
(f)
mf
mid
pizz
mid

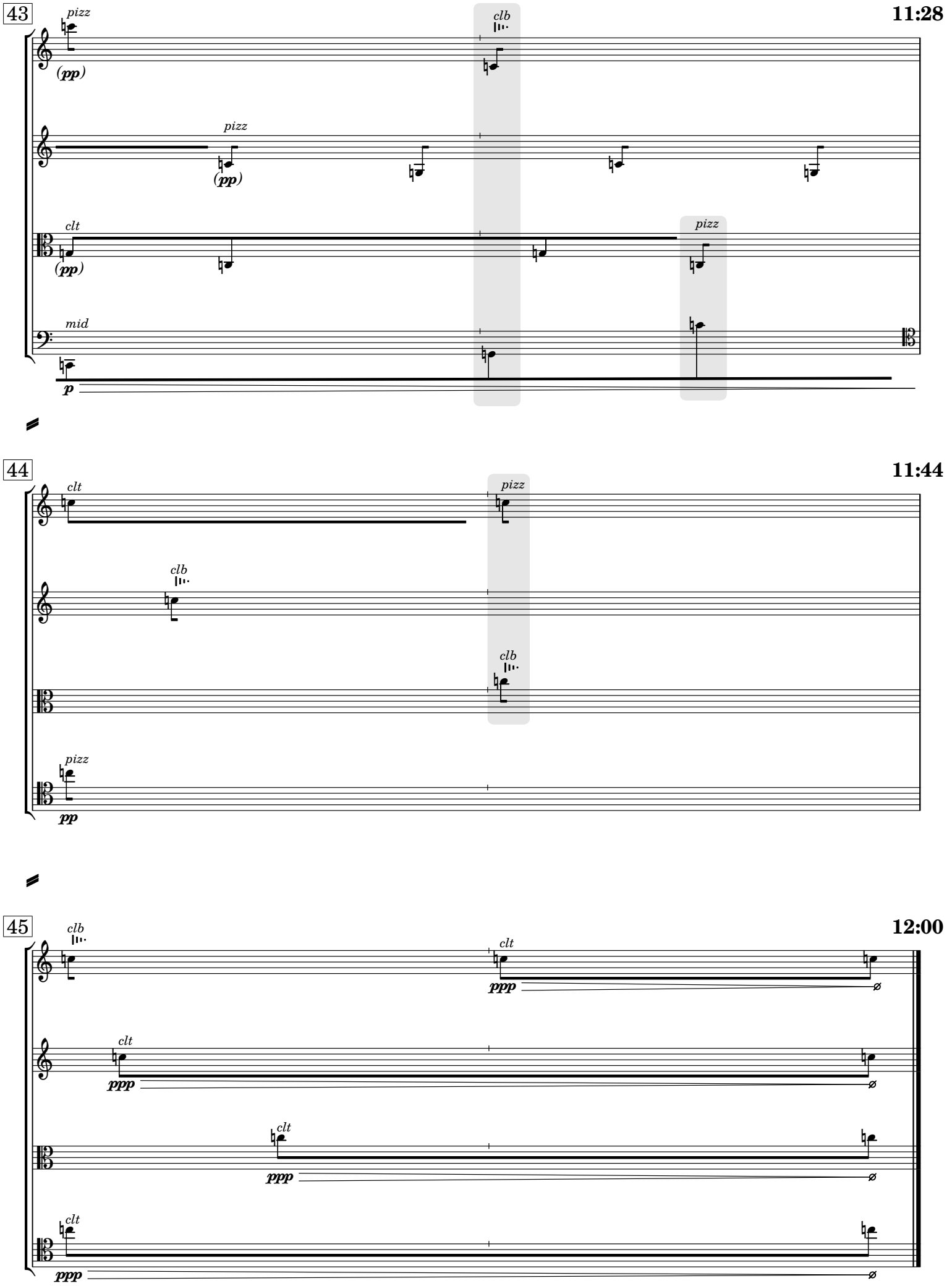

28
07:28
mid
heavy
(mf)
heavy
(mf)
mid
heavy
(mf)
mp
pizz
(mp)
29
07:44
pizz
mid
ord
(mf)
f
pizz
ord
30
08:00
heavy
pizz
mid
heavy
mid


31
08:16
mid
heavy
(mf)
mp
heavy
ord
(f)
pizz
clb
(mp)
pizz
(mp)
32
08:32
pizz
mid
(f)
mid
mf
heavy
ord
mf
33
08:48
heavy
clb
heavy
pizz
(mp)
p
mid


34
09:04
heavy
(mp)
pizz
mid
(mf)
clb
(p)
heavy
pizz
(mf)
35
09:20
clb
heavy
heavy
(mf)
mp
pizz
ord
36
09:36
pizz
(mp)
clb
p
pizz
clb
heavy


37
09:52
heavy
(p)
pizz
(mp)
mid
(mp)
heavy
(p)
clb
ord
(mf)
38
10:08
clb
heavy
pizz
p
clt
(p)
mid
(mf)
39
10:24
pizz
clb
clb
pizz
pp
heavy
f


40
10:40
pizz
clb
(p)
pp
heavy
(p)
clb
(pp)
clt
ord
f
41
10:56
clt
pizz
pizz
pp
pizz
mid
mf
42
11:12
clb
clt
clt
clb
heavy
mp


43
11:28
pizz
(pp)
clb
pizz
(pp)
clt
(pp)
pizz
mid
p
44
11:44
clt
pizz
clb
clb
pizz
pp
45
12:00
clb
clt
ppp
clt
ppp
clt
ppp
clt
ppp