BIG SHOW

for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, French Horn (F) and Bassoon

CONCERT SCORE

ASHER TOBIN CHODOS

Big Show is in three movements:

1. Accord in the Corral
2. Mellerdrammer
3. The Cows Come Home

There are no special techniques and no doublings in this piece.

Comment

We can think of polyphony as the type of musical accord that emerges from dissenting voices. One of Elliott Carter's most important contributions was to increase the degree of diversity in a polyphonic texture, and to develop a harmonic palate robust enough to accommodate the resultant complexity. He has a million ways of construing musical individuality and as many strategies for keeping simultaneous individualities coherent. In its commitment to authentic dissent, Carter's music exudes integrity and feels inviting in spite of its remoteness from traditional chords and melodies.

The idea of an American composer protecting individual freedoms and representing individuals in a state of graceful coexistence is an alluring one, and many have seen Carter's music as quintessentially American in exactly this way. There is no doubt that his music is a national treasure. Less clear is the relationship it bears to American democracy as actually practiced today.

Our democracy is a big show, which should not be a controversial statement for anyone. If Carter's infinitely subtle filigree stands in for an idealized version of democracy, this piece attempts to reckon with the version we live with every day. These voices are corralled, their choices are proscribed, their dissent is attenuated and abortive. The music, in other words, inhabits a difficult world, one modeled after the present political moment. Big Show is an attempt to discover beauty and humor there.

Unisons

This is an occasionally humorous piece, but it is also a piece about the perils of unison. Make the whole thing rhythmically punchy and the unisons (of which there are very many) as clean and puritanical as possible.

Fermatas

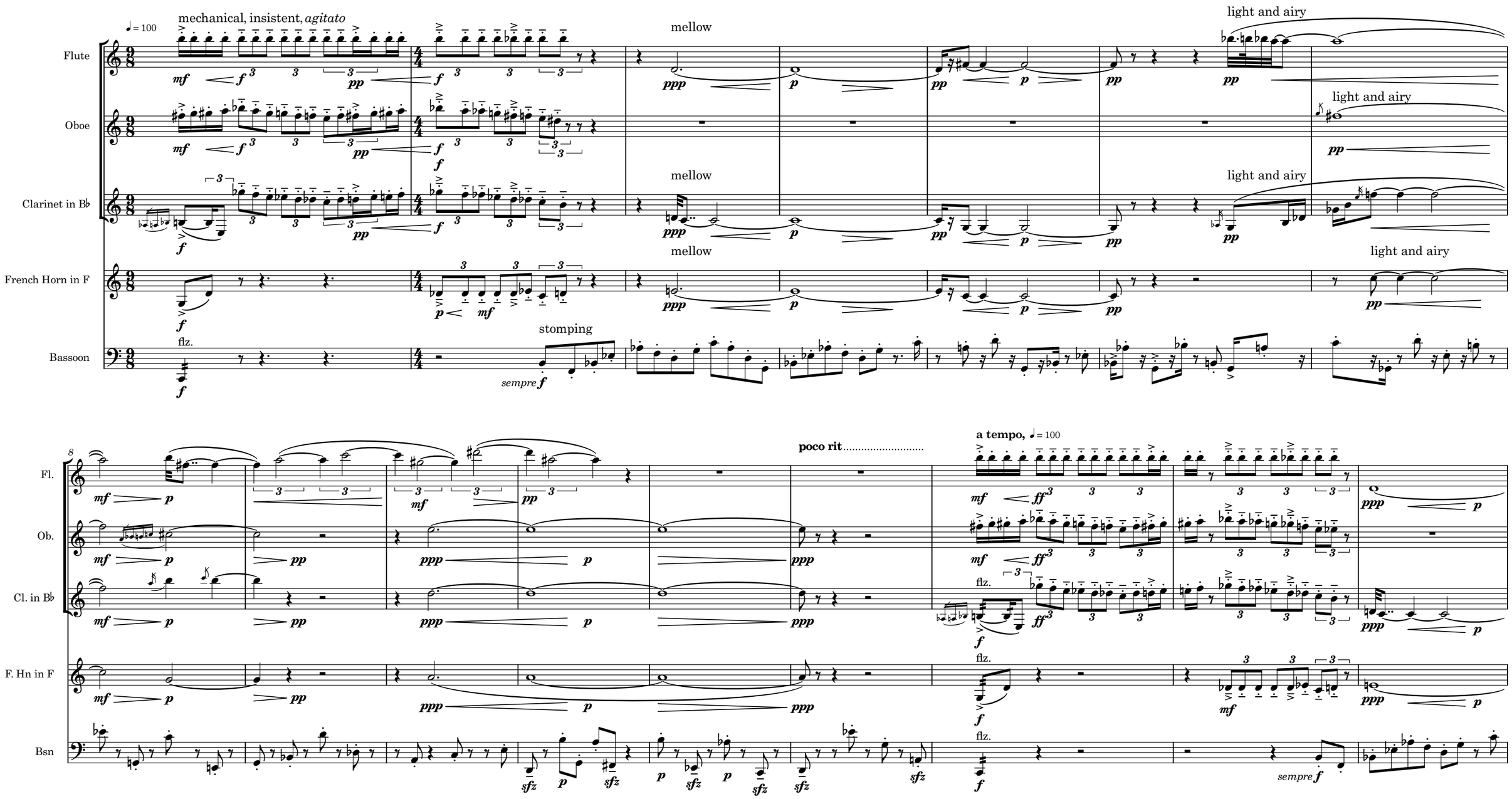
This piece uses two kinds of fermata. Pointed fermatas are brief; these should be 1.5" to 4", whatever feels musical to the ensemble. Rounded fermatas indicate true cadences and should be somewhat longer.

Tempo ad lib

There are a handful of solo sections marked *tempo ad lib*. Liberties within these sections should be really extreme. Take a lot of time.

I. Accord in the Corral

Concert Score



17

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

light and airy

play accents *forte*

27

36

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

blank, non vib

blank

blank

blank

A

more determined

sempre *forte* and *staccato*

45

bend

don't attack

decisive

legato poss

dolce

54

B **a tempo,** ♩ = 100

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

63

stand out

blend

stand out

72

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

blend

stand out

C

poco piu mosso

whispering, *staccato poss.*

solo

81

tempo ad lib, clarinet solo

as if improvised; take liberties

91

a tempo, ♩ = 110

D sly and smooth

quiet but lean heavily into accents

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

growl growl

F. Hn in F

Bsn

102

ritard.....

♩ = 110

poco agitato

113

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

stand out

molto rit

solo

E

♩ = 80

airy, raspy, pale, dry

123

♩ = 130

sub. molto agitato

♩ = 80

airy, raspy, pale, dry

132

accelerando poco a poco

non crescendo

♩ = 100

F playful, poco agitato

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

141

regal, proud

regal, proud

regal, proud

regal, proud

decisive

151

G

poco marcato, detaché, stubborn

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

flz.

161

H

♩ = 120

quasi march

174

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

growl

flz.

solo

184

stand out

stand out

espress

193

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

♩ = 100

stand out

dim. poco a poco

solo

rall

increasingly fragile

204

♩ = 50

I

♩ = 100

subito a tempo

flz.

212

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

stand out

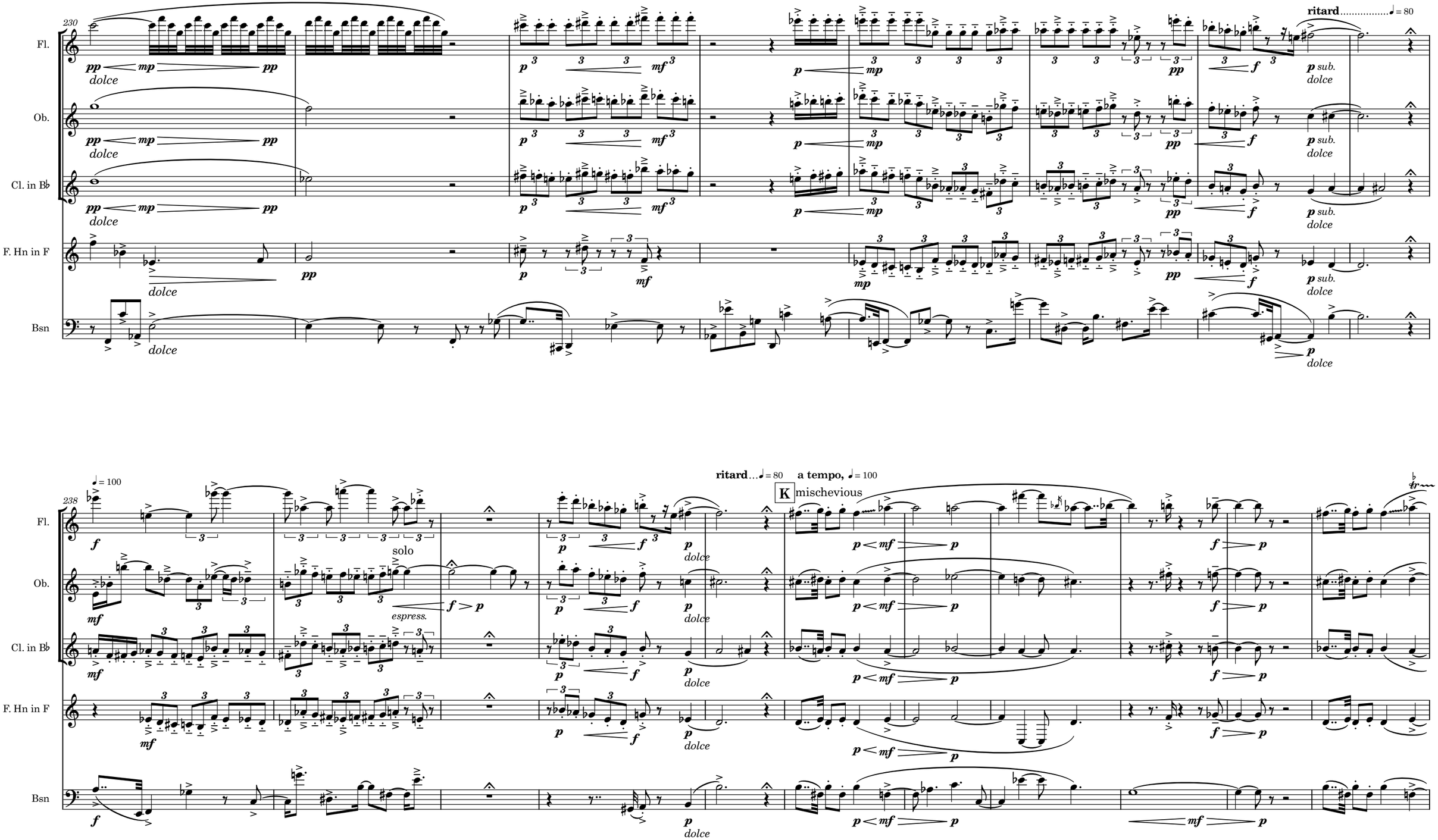
tempo ad lib, flute solo

far off

J a tempo, ♩= 100

222

assertive


230
Fl.
Ob.
Cl. in B♭
F. Hn in F
Bsn
dolce
ritard ♩ = 80
p sub.
238
♩ = 100
solo
espress.
ritard ♩ = 80
a tempo, ♩ = 100
K
mischevious

249

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

solo; very decisive

259

♩ = 120

L

calmly but expectant

271

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

281

flz.

289

poco rubato, bassoon solo

M **a tempo**

assertive, almost rigid

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

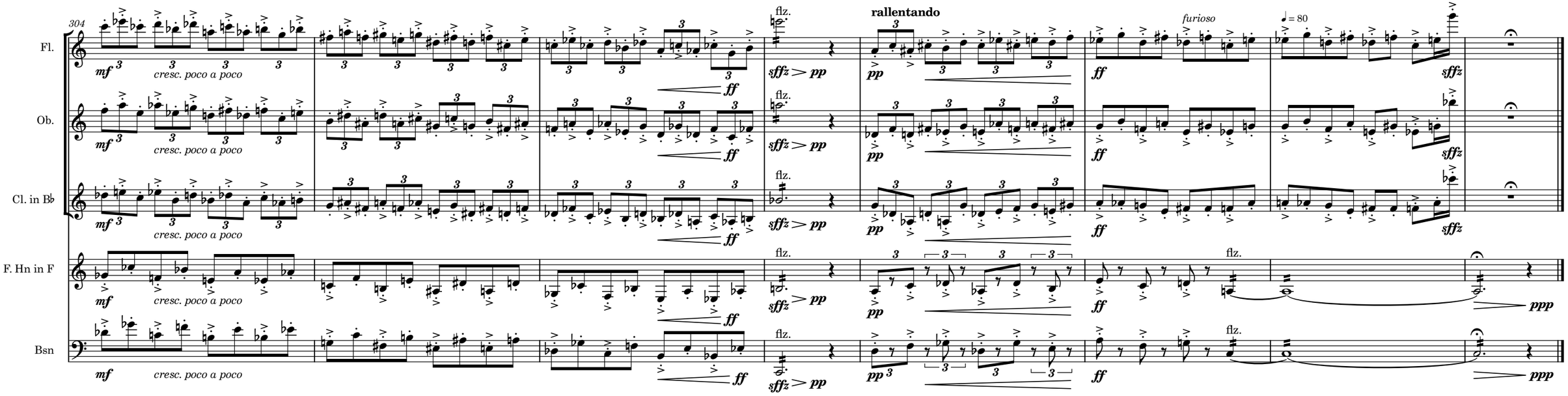
F. Hn in F

Bsn

distant

297

flz.


304
Fl.
Ob.
Cl. in B♭
F. Hn in F
Bsn
mf
cresc. poco a poco
ff
sffz > pp
flz.
rallentando
pp
furioso
ff
♩ = 80
sffz
ppp

II. Mellerdrammer

♩ = 70

bold, almost bluesy, always full sound
not exactly swung but buoyant

a tempo

lean in to downbeats

poco ritard.....

A

a tempo, ♩ = 70

Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in B♭
French Horn in F
Bassoon

bend don't attack

bend don't attack

quasi walking bass

quasi ride cymbal

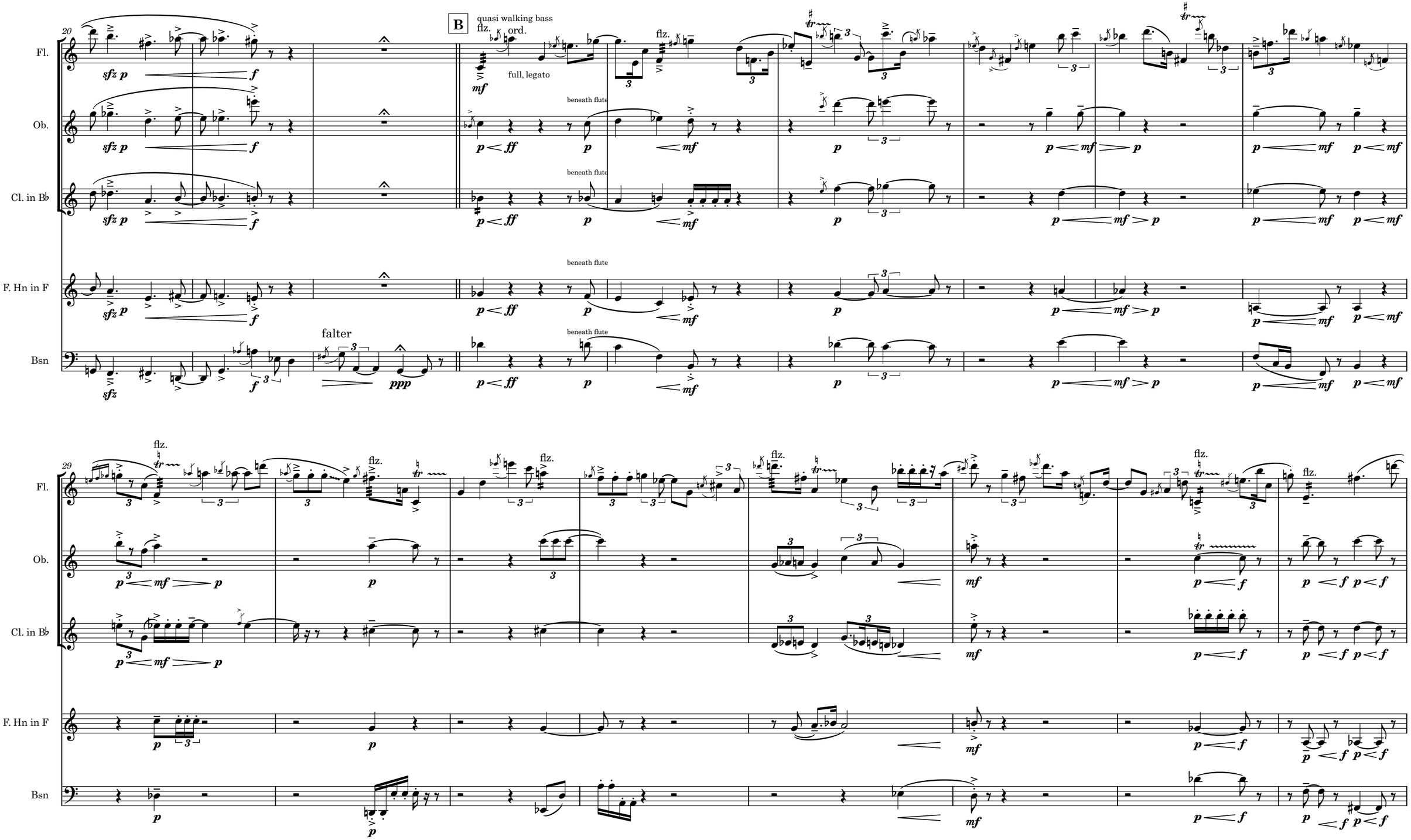
growl

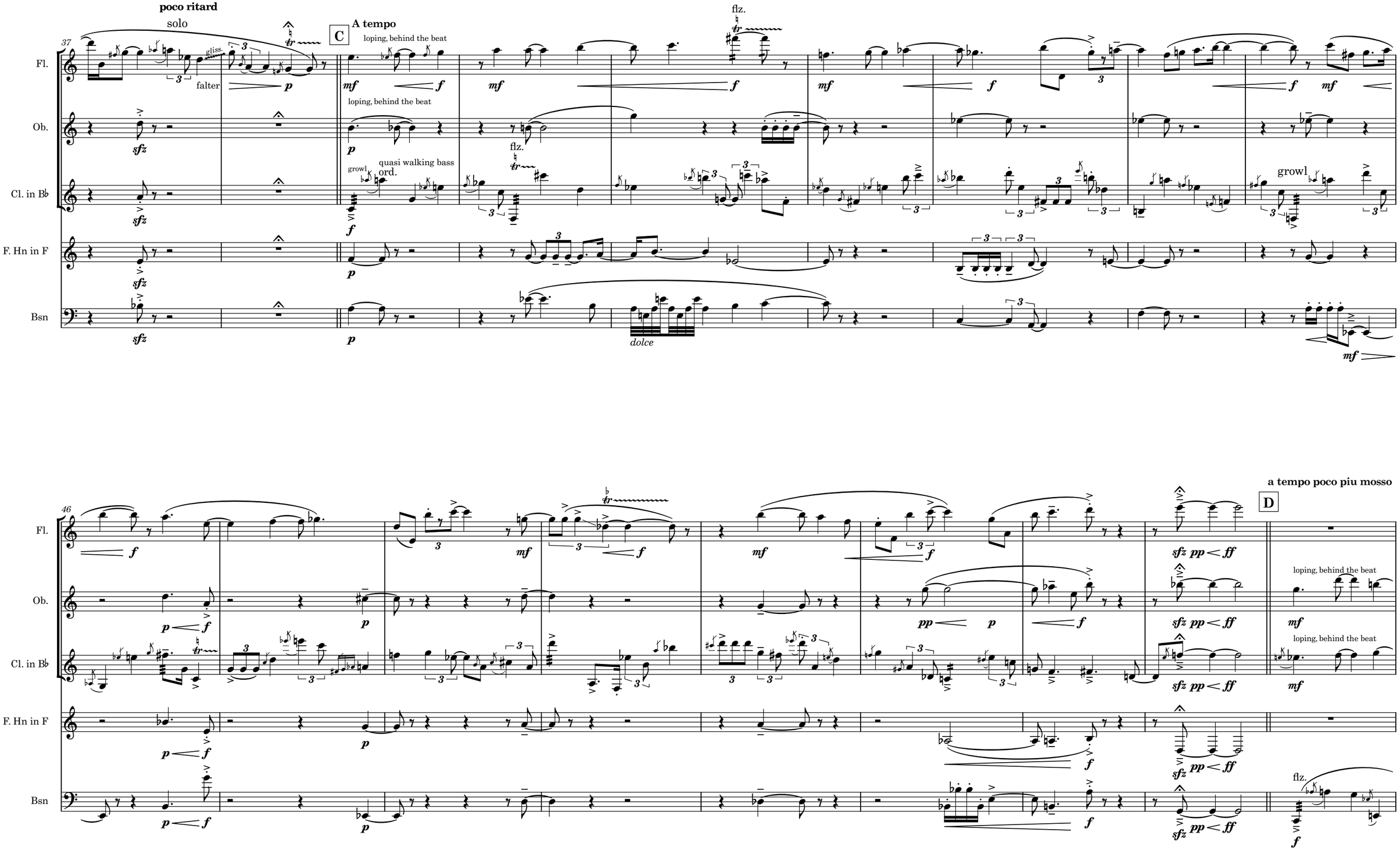
gliss.

flz.

11

Fl.
Ob.
Cl. in B♭
F. Hn in F
Bsn


20
Fl.
Ob.
Cl. in B♭
F. Hn in F
Bsn
B
quasi walking bass
flz.
ord.
full, legato
beneath flute
falter
29
flz.


poco ritard
solo
gliss.
falter
C
A tempo
loping, behind the beat
flz.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl. in B♭
F. Hn in F
Bsn
growl
quasi walking bass
ord.
dolce
a tempo poco piu mosso
D

55

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

dolce

quasi walking bass

flz.

64

poco rit.....

E ♩ = 90

more frenetic

falter

74

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

solo

83

non vib.

poco rit.....

F ♩ = 90

with renewed energy

quasi walking bass

sempre legato

falter

93

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

flz.

falter

103

G

solo, *agitato*

answer oboe, gently

answer oboe

111

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

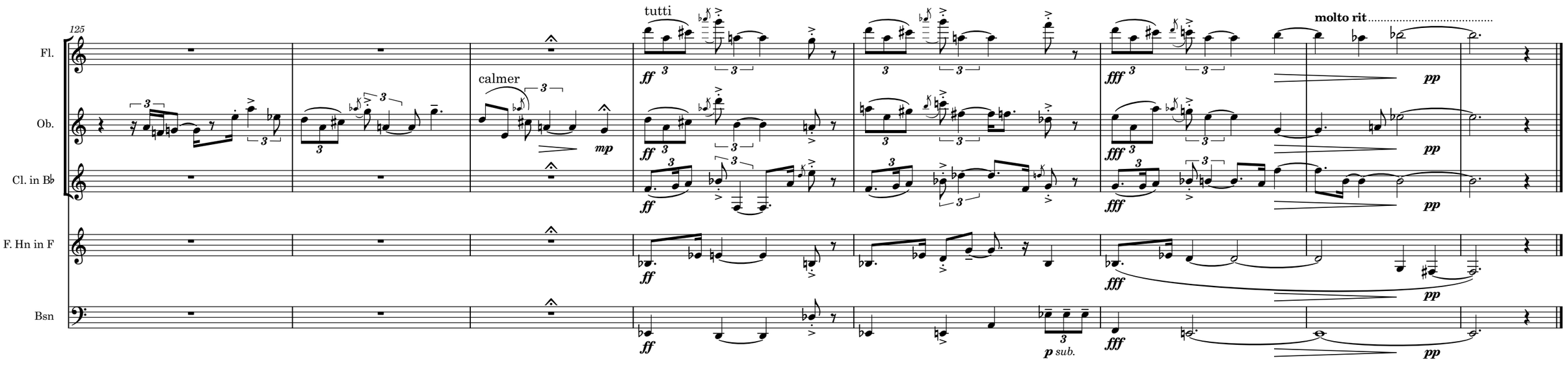
as if improvised solo

119

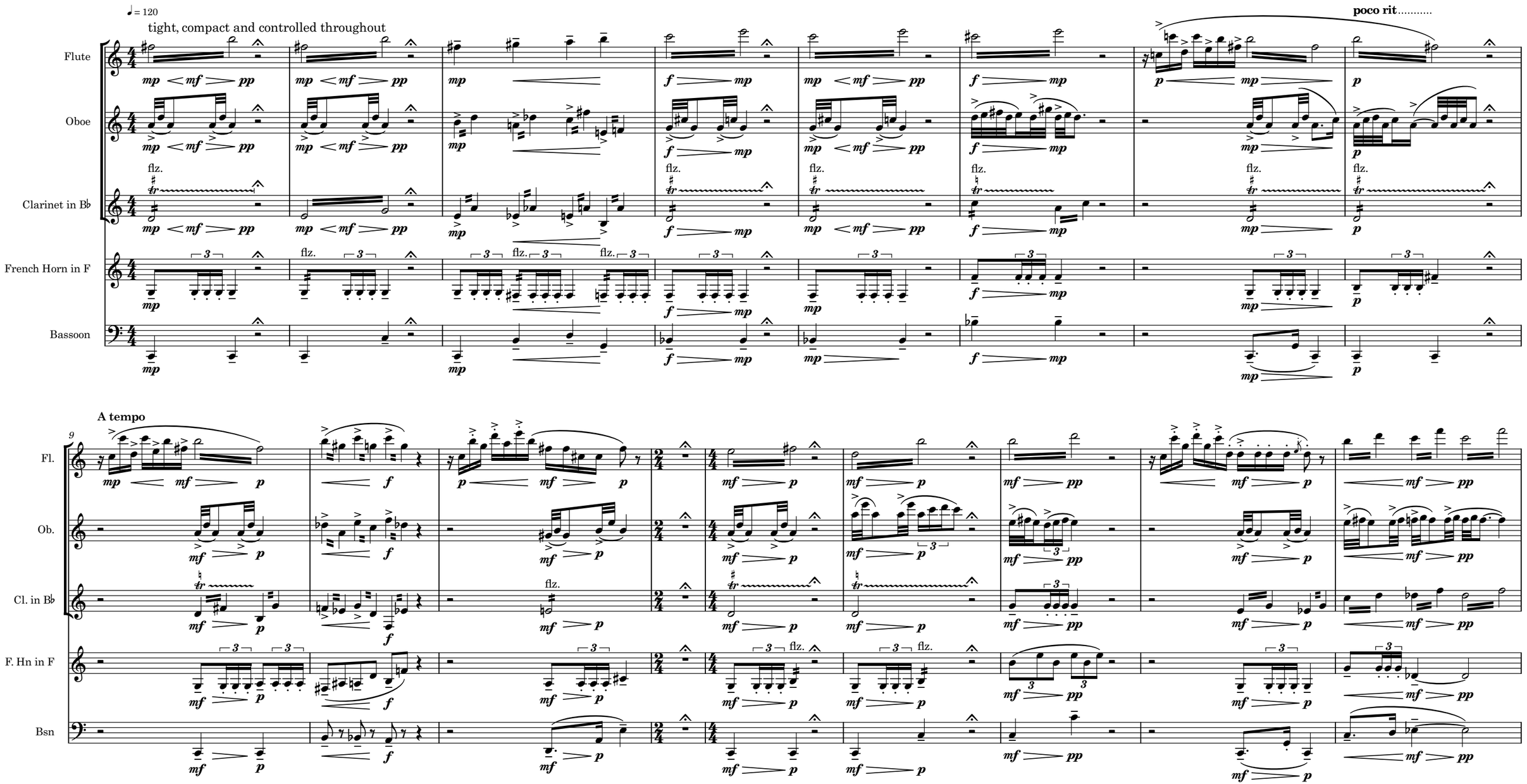
(bassoon joins)

duet with oboe

solo


125
Fl.
Ob.
Cl. in B♭
F. Hn in F
Bsn
calmer
mp
tutti
ff
fff
molto rit
pp
p sub.

III. The Cows Come Home



18

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

flz.

flz.

flz.

27

A

more decisive

35

smooth

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

43

flz.

flz.

51

smooth

B

more coarse

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

58

smooth again

coarse again

flz.

65

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

Bsn

dolce

73

C **accelerando poco a poco**

very percussive, agressive

80

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B♭

F. Hn in F

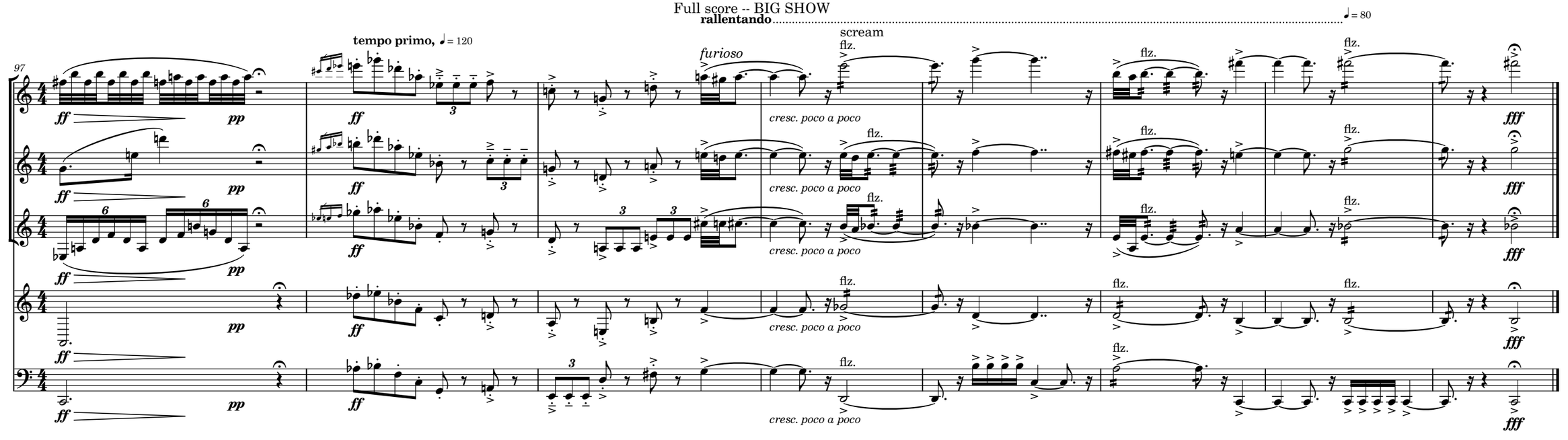
Bsn

dolce

p sub.

87

♩ = 144



Los Angeles, August 2018