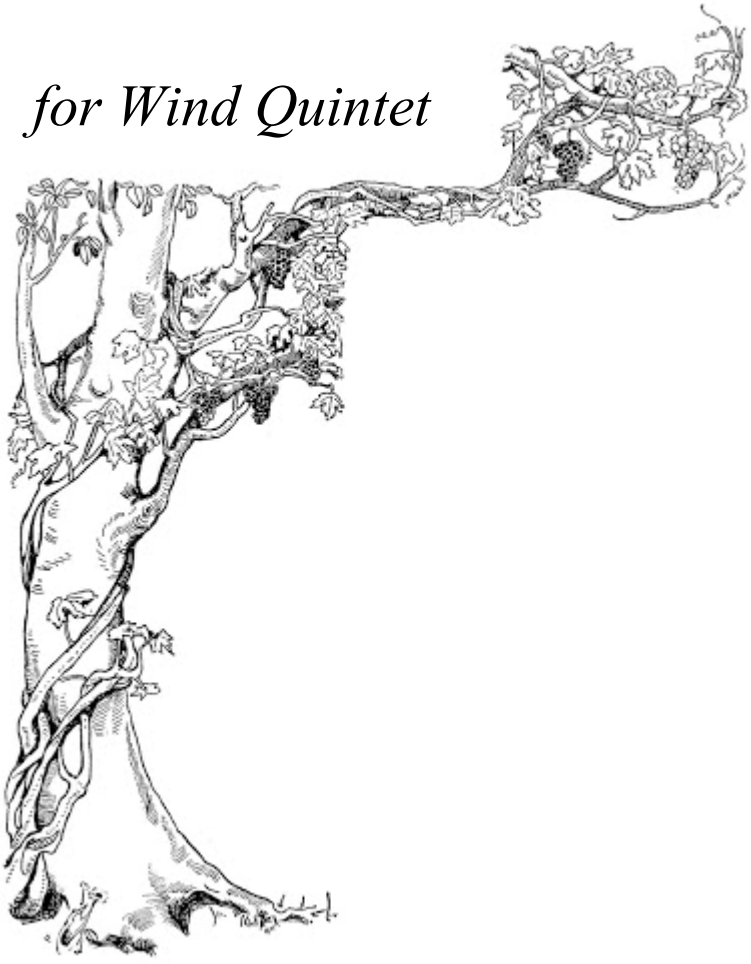
Gwyneth Walker

All Nature Sings

for Wind Quintet



All Nature Sings

Composed in celebration of the Centennial of the Helen and Alice Bristow Bird Sanctuary and Wildwood Preserve, New Canaan, Connecticut – 1924-2024

duration circa 11 minutes (without readings)

I. "In Flight"	1
II. "Quiet Paths, a Pond"	9
III. "Something Underfoot! (scurrying)"	16
IV. "Interlude – This Stillness"	23
V. "Celebration – The Music of the Spheres"	25

All Nature Sings is a suite of five movements for woodwind quintet inspired by the Bristow Bird Sanctuary and Wildwood Preserve, located near the composer's CT home. This beloved refuge has been visited and enjoyed by the composer since her childhood. Much of the woodland beauty and peace have remained the same over the years.

Each movement of the suite speaks to a different aspect of the sanctuary life. "In Flight" are the birds, flying and singing overhead, or hopping playfully on the ground. Often they sing individually. But here they join together in chorus!

The pond in the sanctuary is hidden away near the edge of the property. Surrounded by trees, the surface of the water is extremely peaceful, offering an ideal home for a pair of mallard ducks. First one duck (the Oboe) and then two ducks (Oboe and Flute) glide across the pond. Motion is gentle and graceful.

And then…one's tranquility is interrupted by the sounds of scurrying. There is "Something Underfoot!" Creatures large and small rustle in the underbrush. Some move quickly, some move deliberately. What joy and energy they have in exploring their home!

In "This Stillness" of nature, the traveler escapes to be alone. And yet, in the moments of solitude, one may encounter an infinite (divine) companion. "We walked together as one." [The French Horn portrays the solitary traveler, with the Bassoon as the *companion*. In the meantime, the upper woodwinds form a canopy of trees overhead, as the spirit protecting and encompassing the traveler.]

The lyrics to the hymn "This is my Father's World" inspire the last movement "Celebration – the Music of the Spheres." Of special relevance are the words *And to my listening ears all nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.* When one visits the Bird Sanctuary, and takes a moment to listen, one hears a grand symphony of sound, the celebration of the natural world.

The Poems

The composer has selected favorite poems which might be read aloud before the playing of each movement of music. The woodwind players or audience may contribute their own choices.

I. "In Flight"

"Hope" is the thing with feathers
Emily Dickinson

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all –

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm –

I've heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul.

The Windhover
Gerard Manley Hopkins

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn
Falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air,
and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a
dimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend:
the hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird, – the achieve of, the mastery
of the thing!

II. "Quiet Paths, a Pond"

Acquaintance with Nature
Henry David Thoreau

I want to go soon and live away by the pond,
where I shall hear only the wind whispering
among the reeds.
It will be enough if I shall leave myself behind.

I seek acquaintance with Nature,
to know her moods and her manners.
I wish to know an entire heaven
and an entire earth!

III. "Something Underfoot! (scurrying)"

All Things Bright and Beautiful
Cecil F. Alexander (G. Walker alt.)

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful:
The Lord has made them all.

Each flower that opens,
Each bird that sings,
With their glowing colors,
And their tiny wings.

All things bright and beautiful,
The Lord has made them all.

The freezing wind in winter,
The baking summer sun,
The golden leaves in autumn,
God made them all – bright and beautiful…
wise and wonderful…
great and small.

IV. "Interlude – This Stillness"

This Stillness
Henry David Thoreau

This stillness, solitude, wildness of Nature
Is like an herb,
or food to my intellect.
This is what I go out to seek.
It is as if I always met in those places
Some grand, serene, immortal,
Infinitely encouraging, though invisible,
companion.
We walked together as one.

V. "Celebration – The Music of the Spheres"

The Music of the Spheres
(adapted by Gwyneth Walker from the hymn text
"This is My Father's World" by Maltbie D. Babcock)

This is my beloved world,
And to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.

In my beloved world,
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas –
The gifts that Nature wrought.

In our beloved world,
Where birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white,
Declare our Maker's praise…
Declare our Maker's praise.

And to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.

The Composer

Widely performed throughout the country, the music of American composer **Gwyneth Walker** is beloved by performers and audiences alike for its energy, beauty, reverence, drama, and humor. Dr. Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) is a graduate of Brown University and the Hartt School of Music. She holds B.A., M.M. and D.M.A. degrees in Music Composition. A former faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, she resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. For nearly 30 years, she lived on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont before returning to live in her childhood hometown of New Canaan, Connecticut.

Further information concerning Gwyneth Walker and her works is available at:
www.gwynethwalker.com

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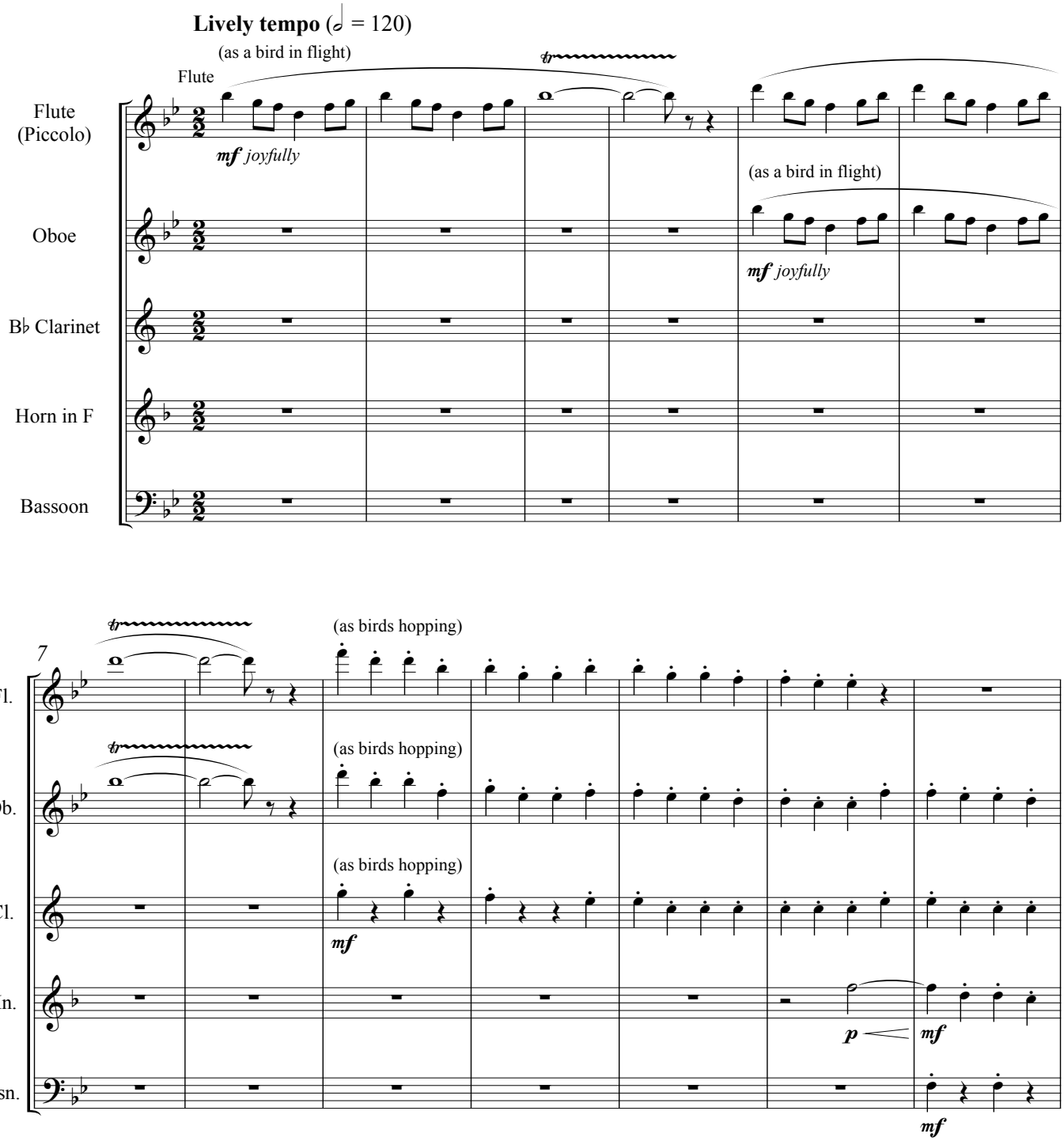
All Nature Sings

for Wind Quintet

Gwyneth Walker

1. "In Flight"



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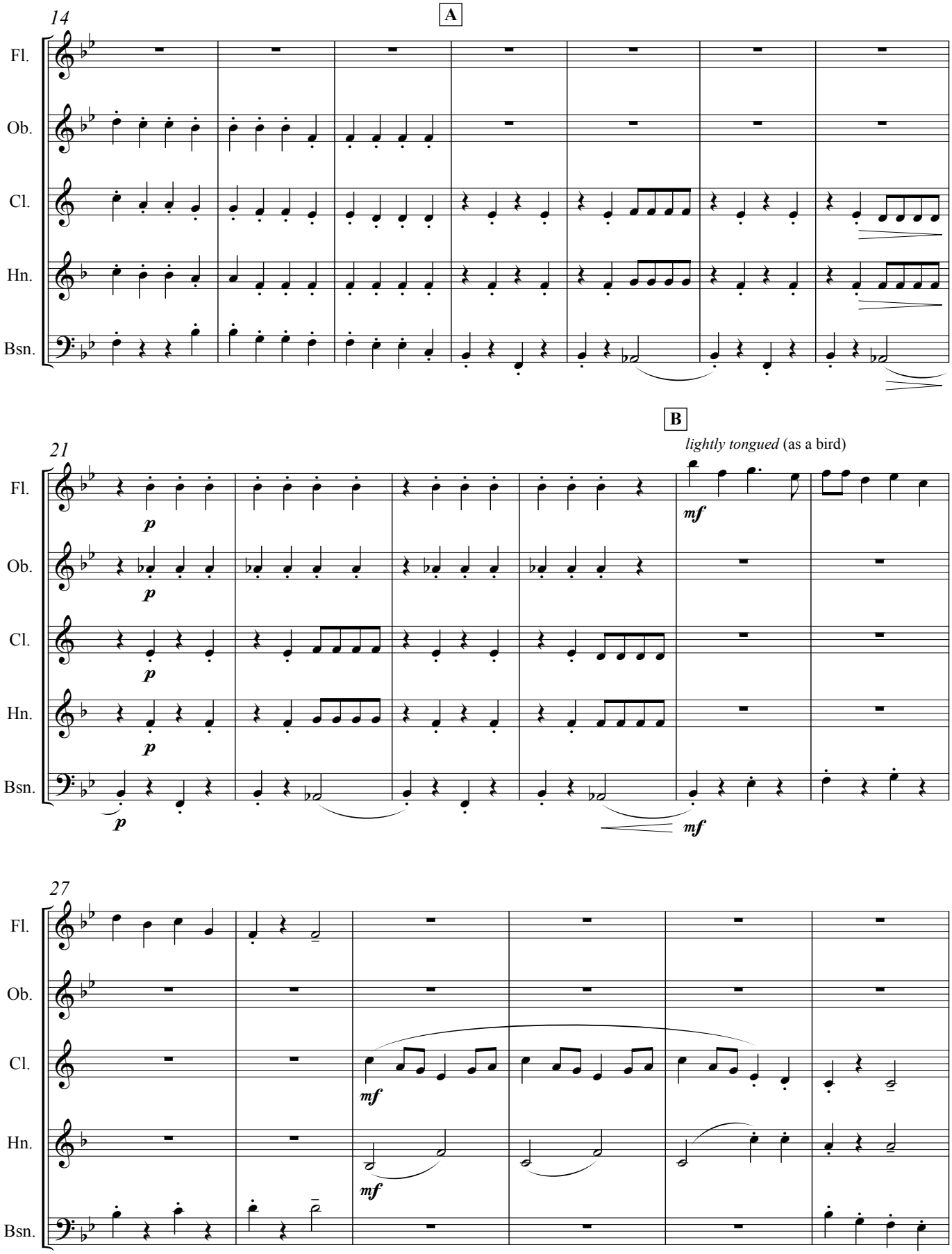
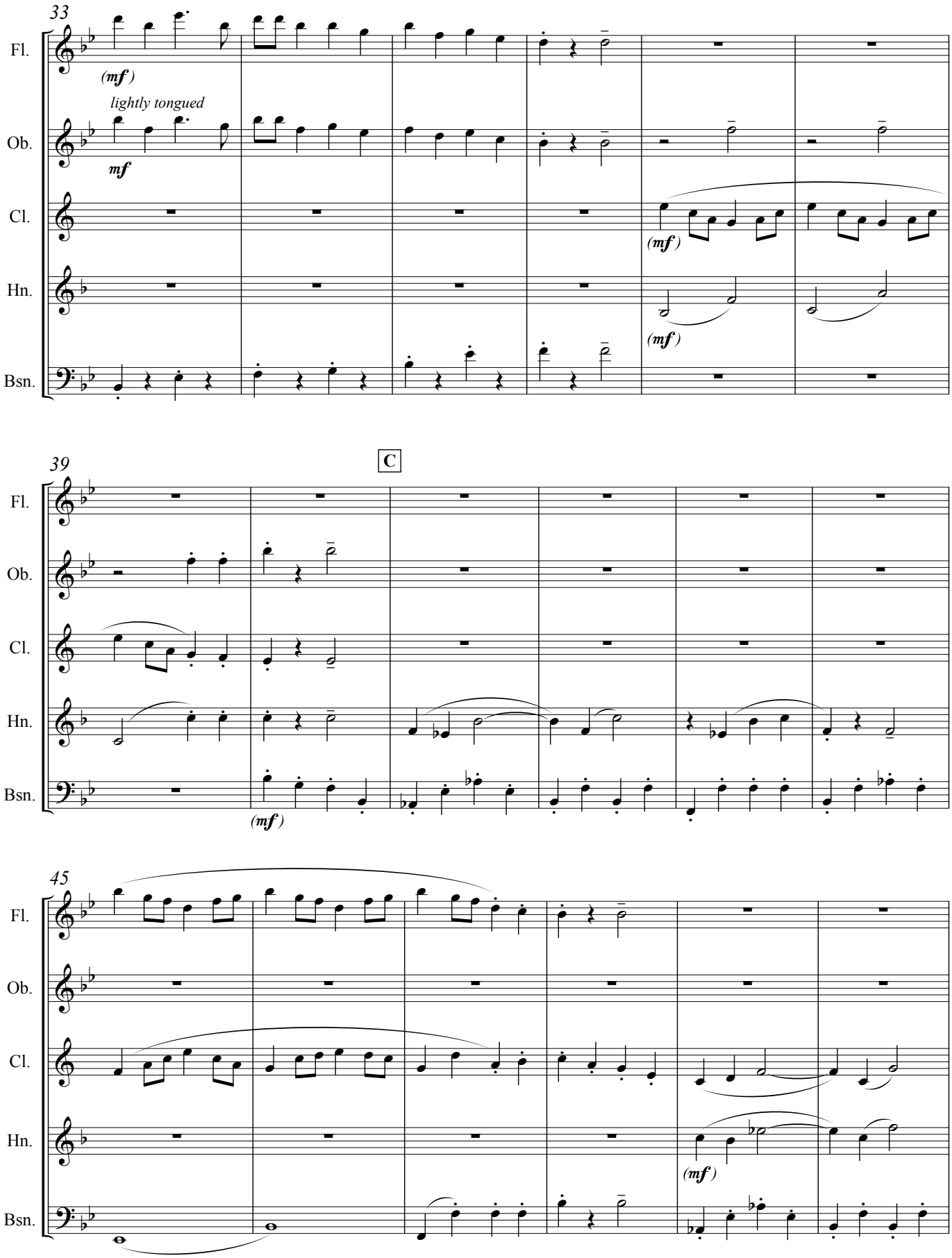
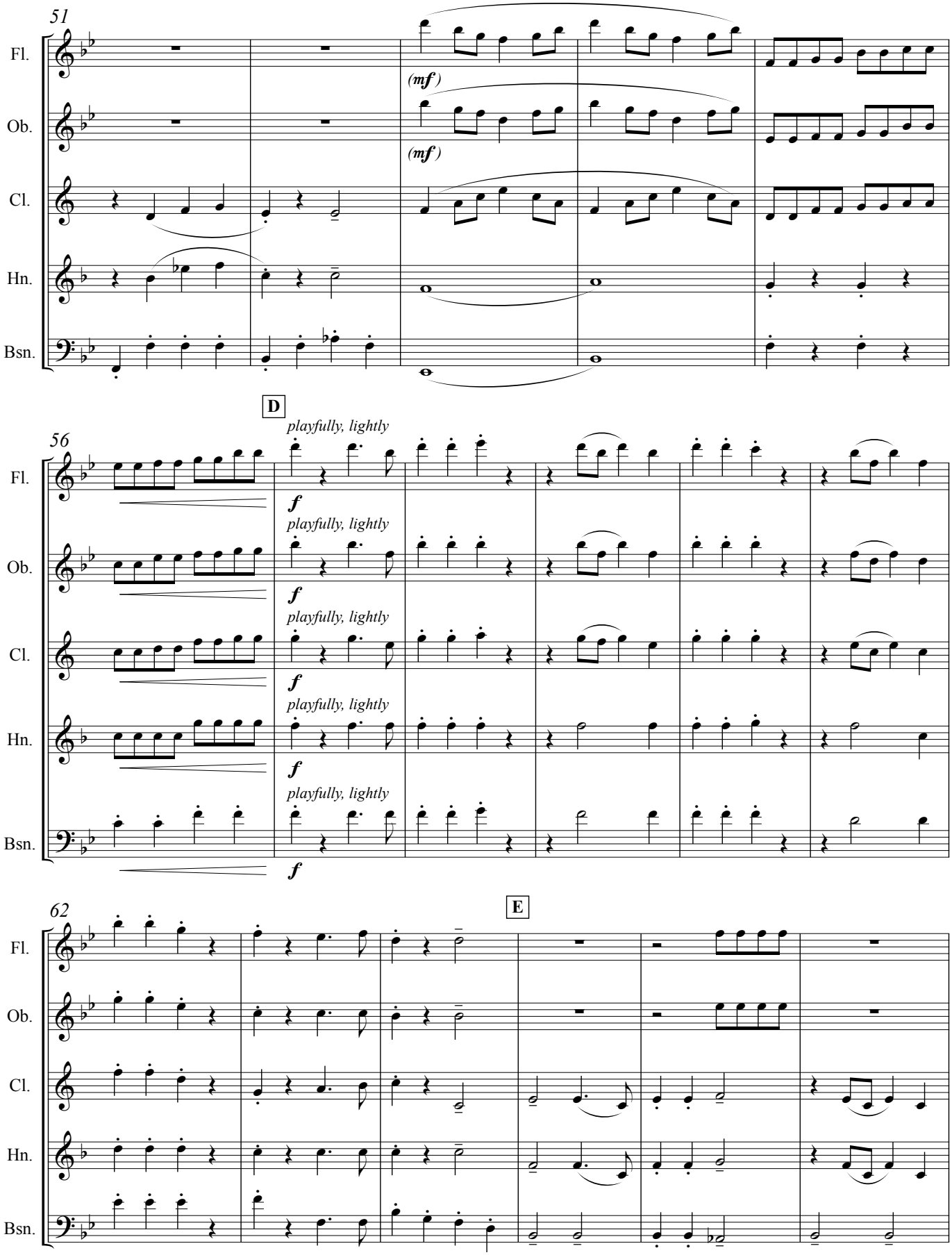
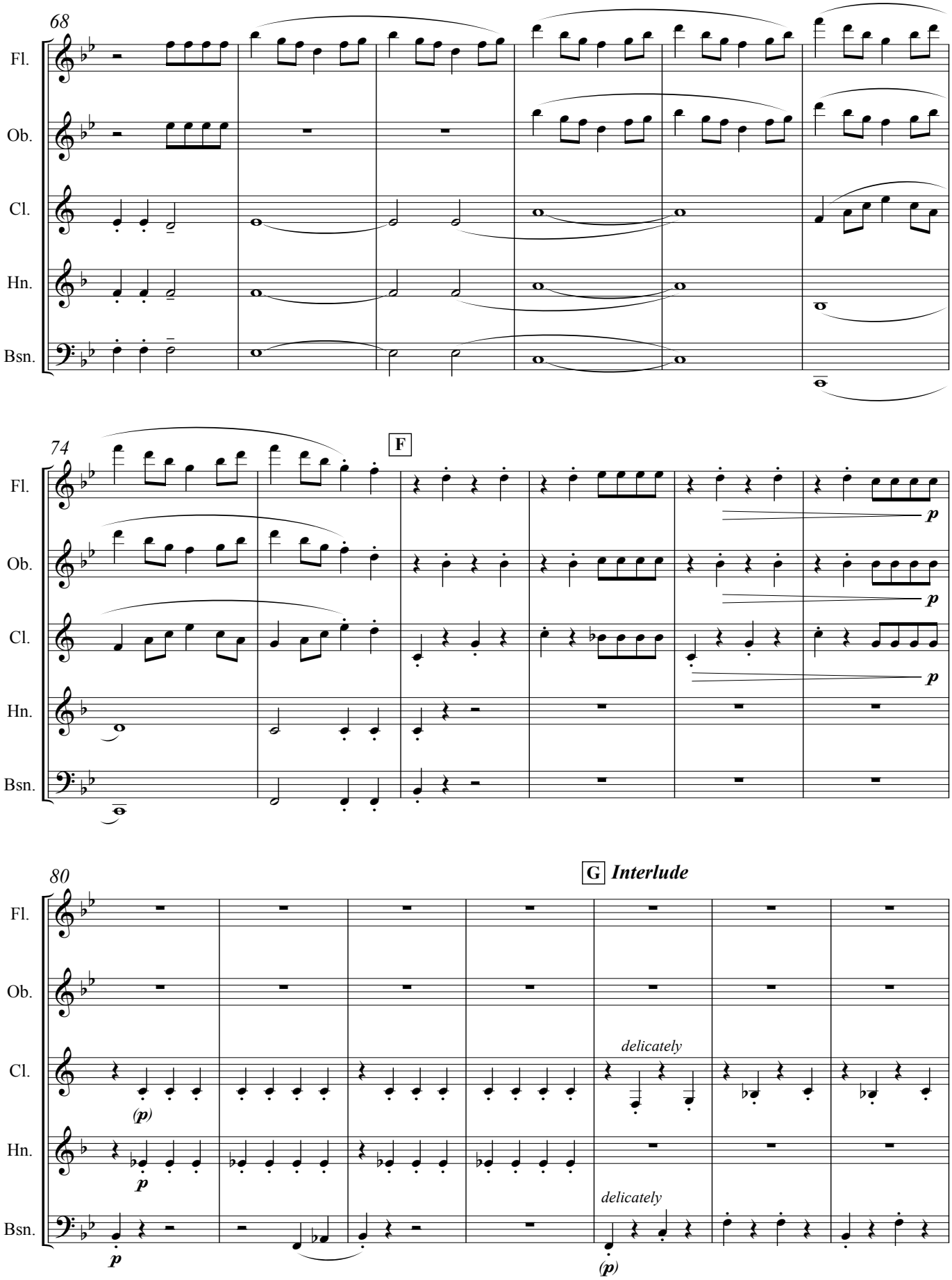
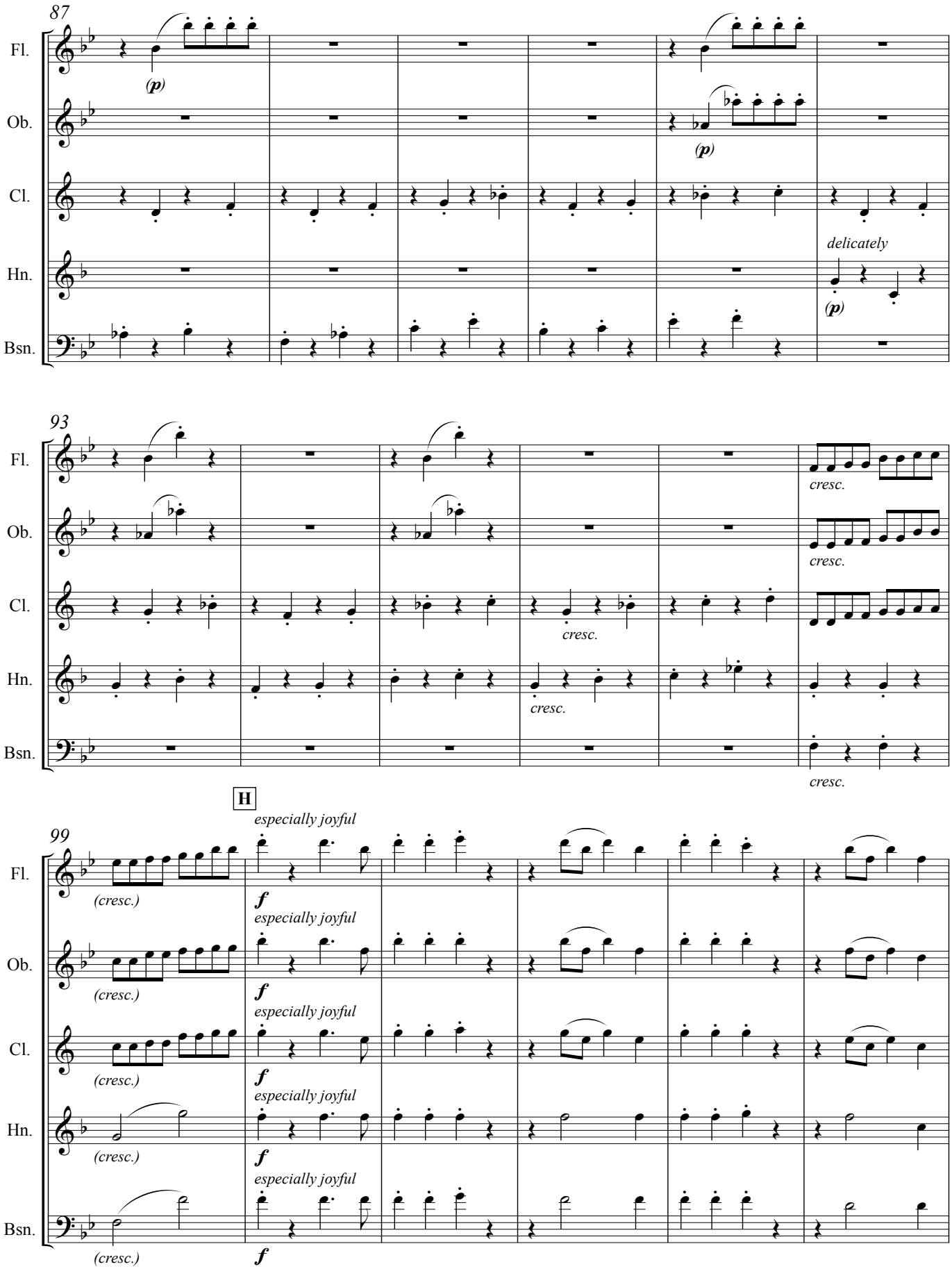
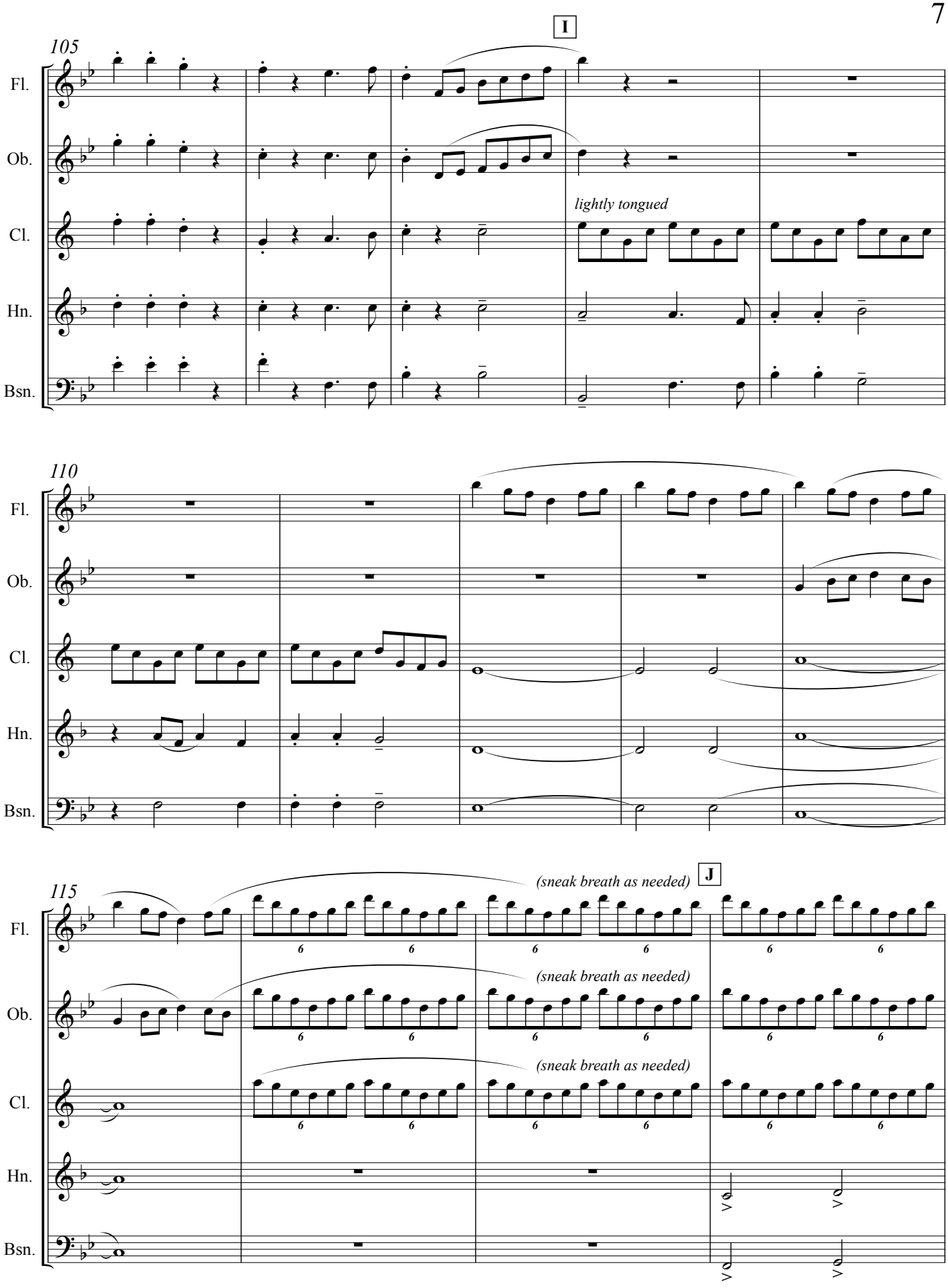

14
A
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
21
B
lightly tongued (as a bird)
p
mf
27

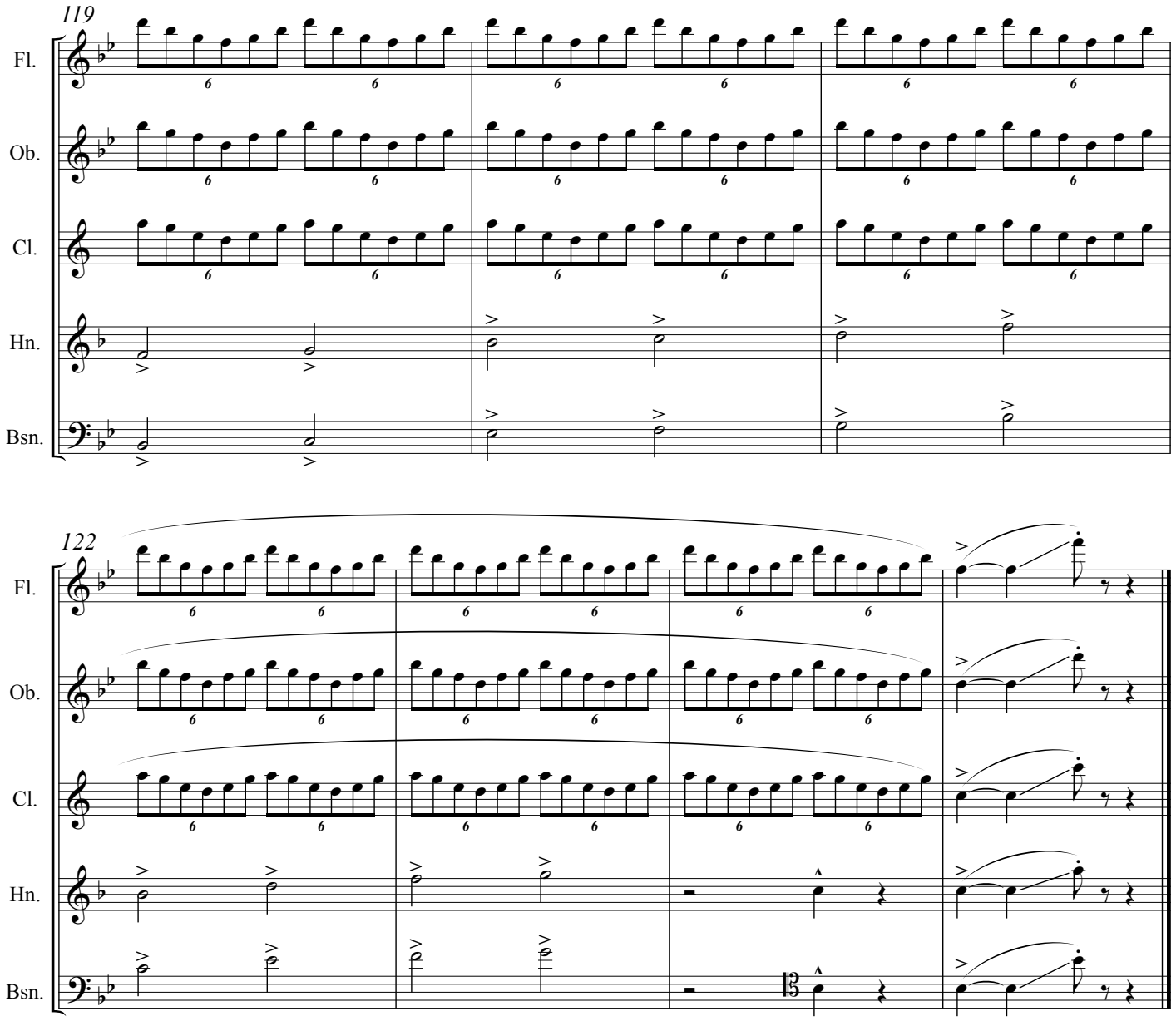

33
Fl.
(mf)
lightly tongued
Ob.
mf
Cl.
(mf)
Hn.
(mf)
Bsn.
39
C
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
(mf)
45
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
(mf)
Bsn.


51
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
(mf)
(mf)
D
56
playfully, lightly
f
62
E


68
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
74
F
p
80
G Interlude
delicately
(p)
p

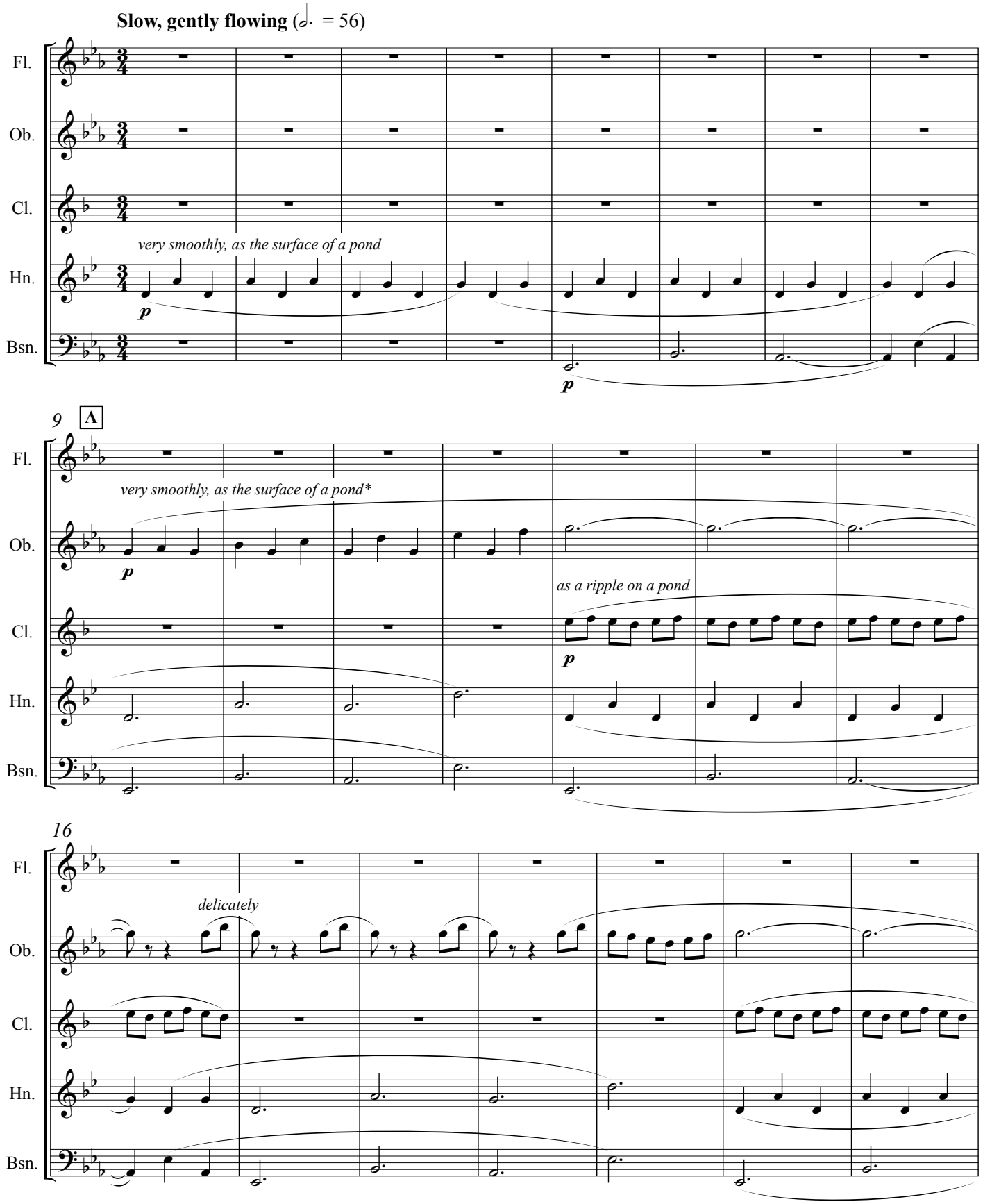

87
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
(p)
(p)
delicately
(p)
93
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
H
99
especially joyful
(cresc.)
f
especially joyful


I
105
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
lightly tongued
Hn.
Bsn.
110
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
115
J
(sneak breath as needed)
Fl.
(sneak breath as needed)
Ob.
(sneak breath as needed)
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.

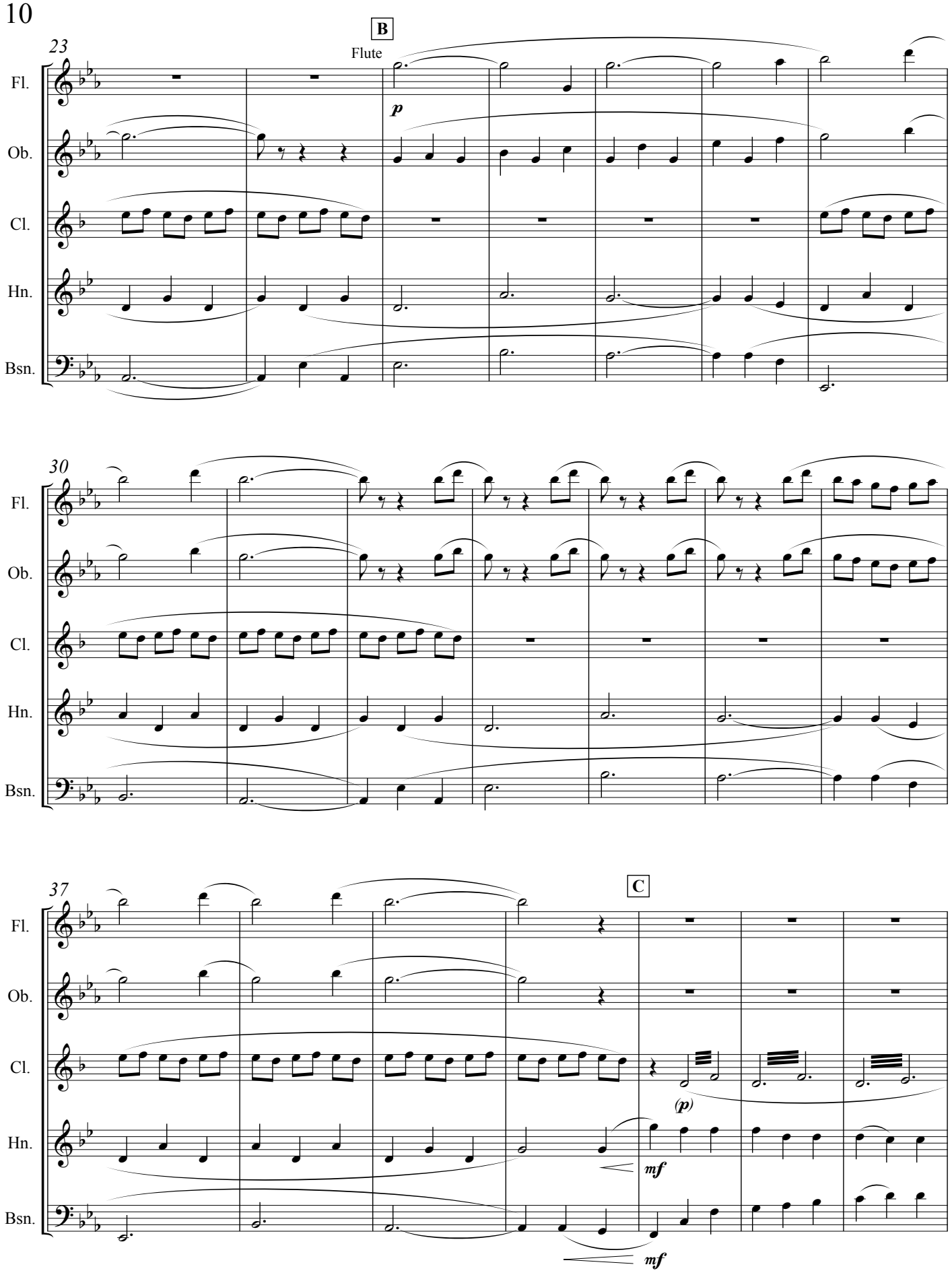


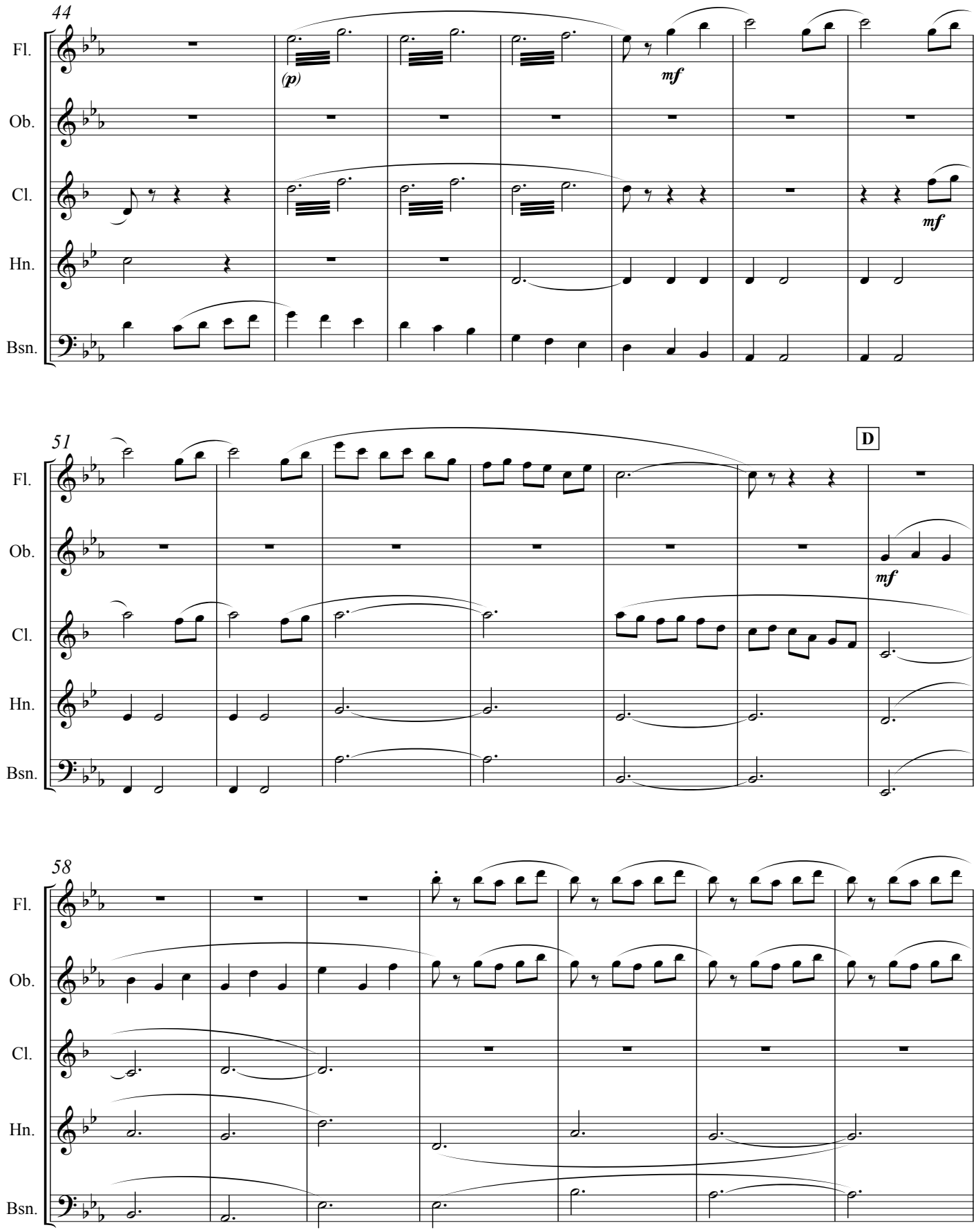
2:00

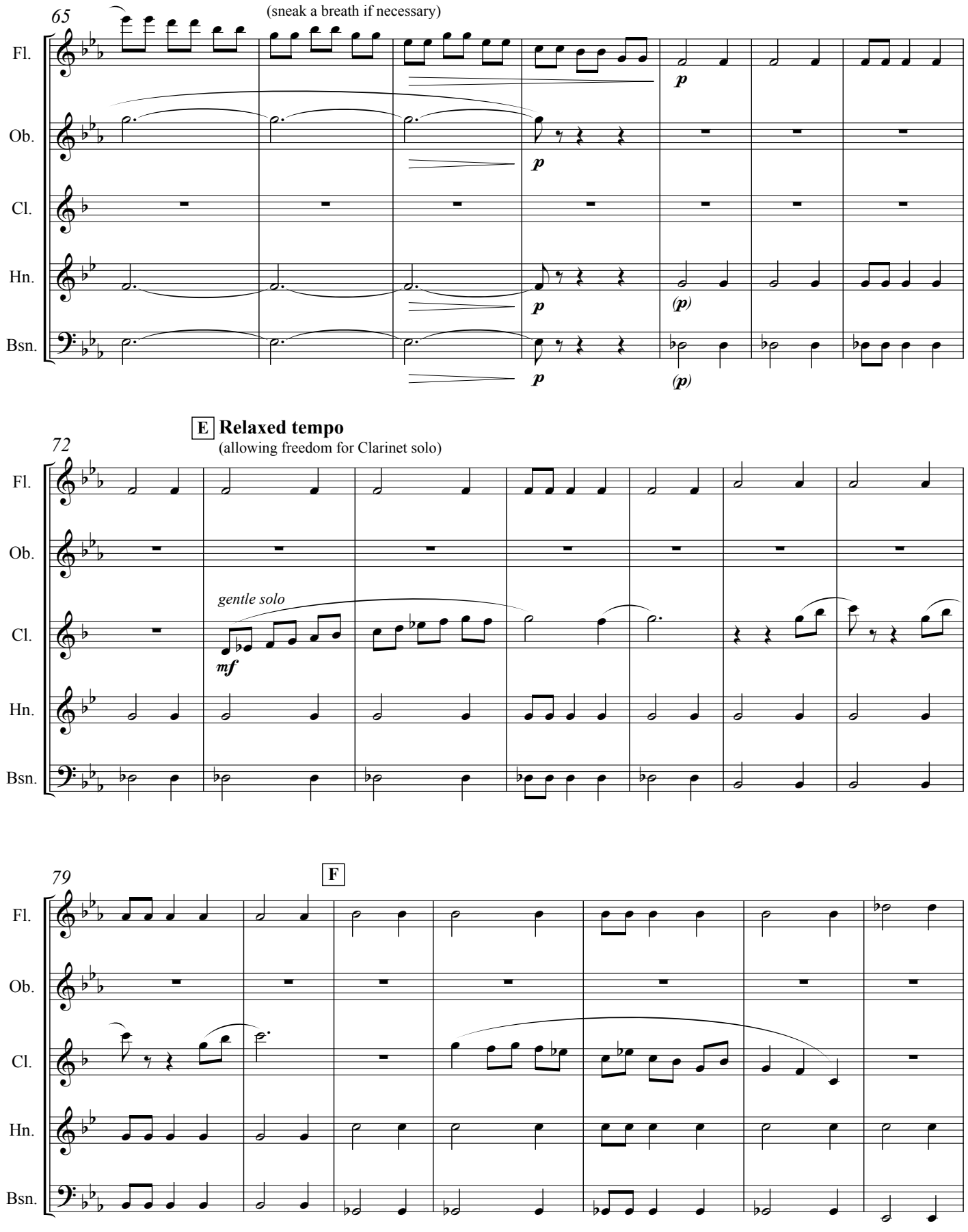
2. “Quiet Paths, a Pond”

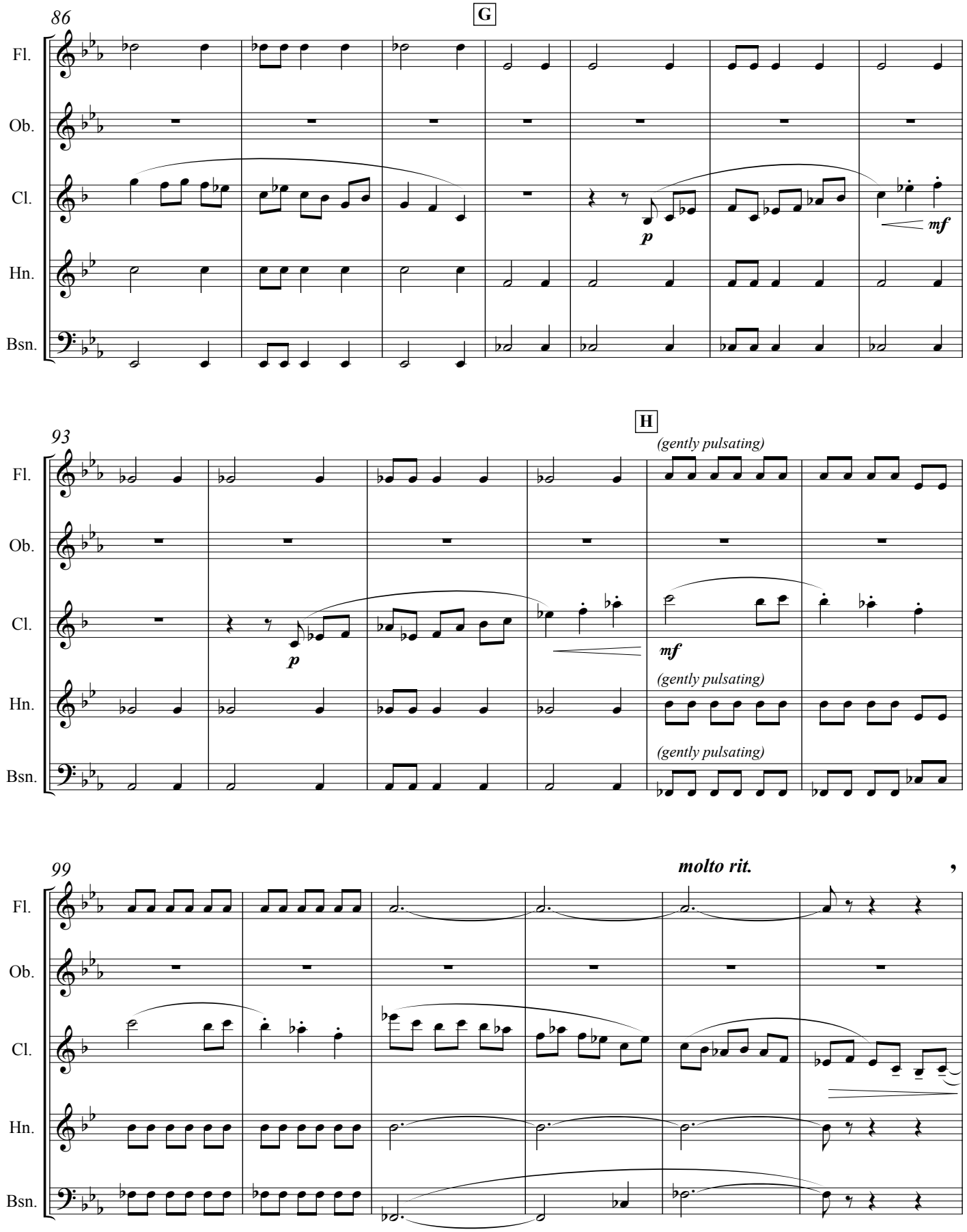


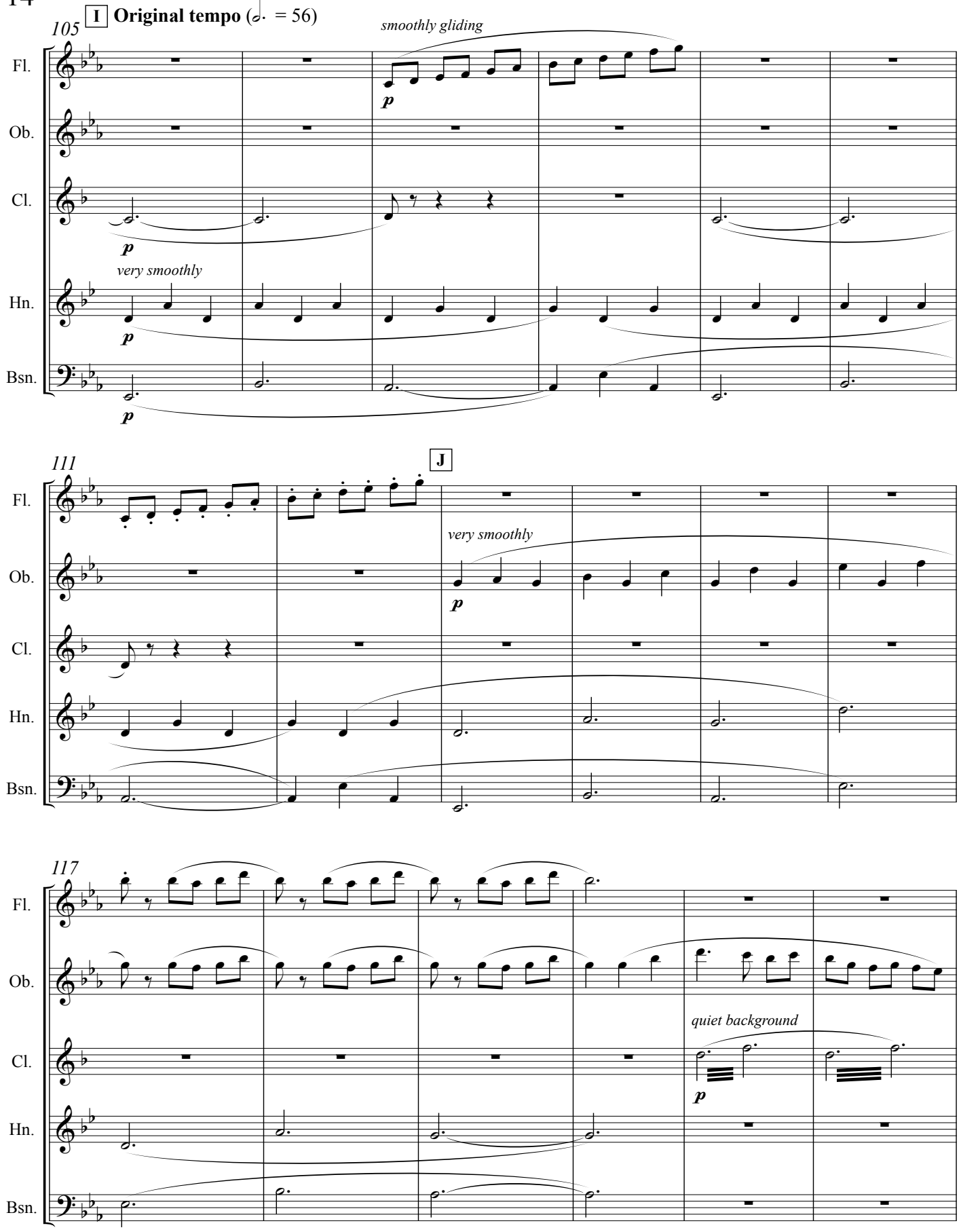
*Picturing a pair of mallard ducks swimming across the pond.

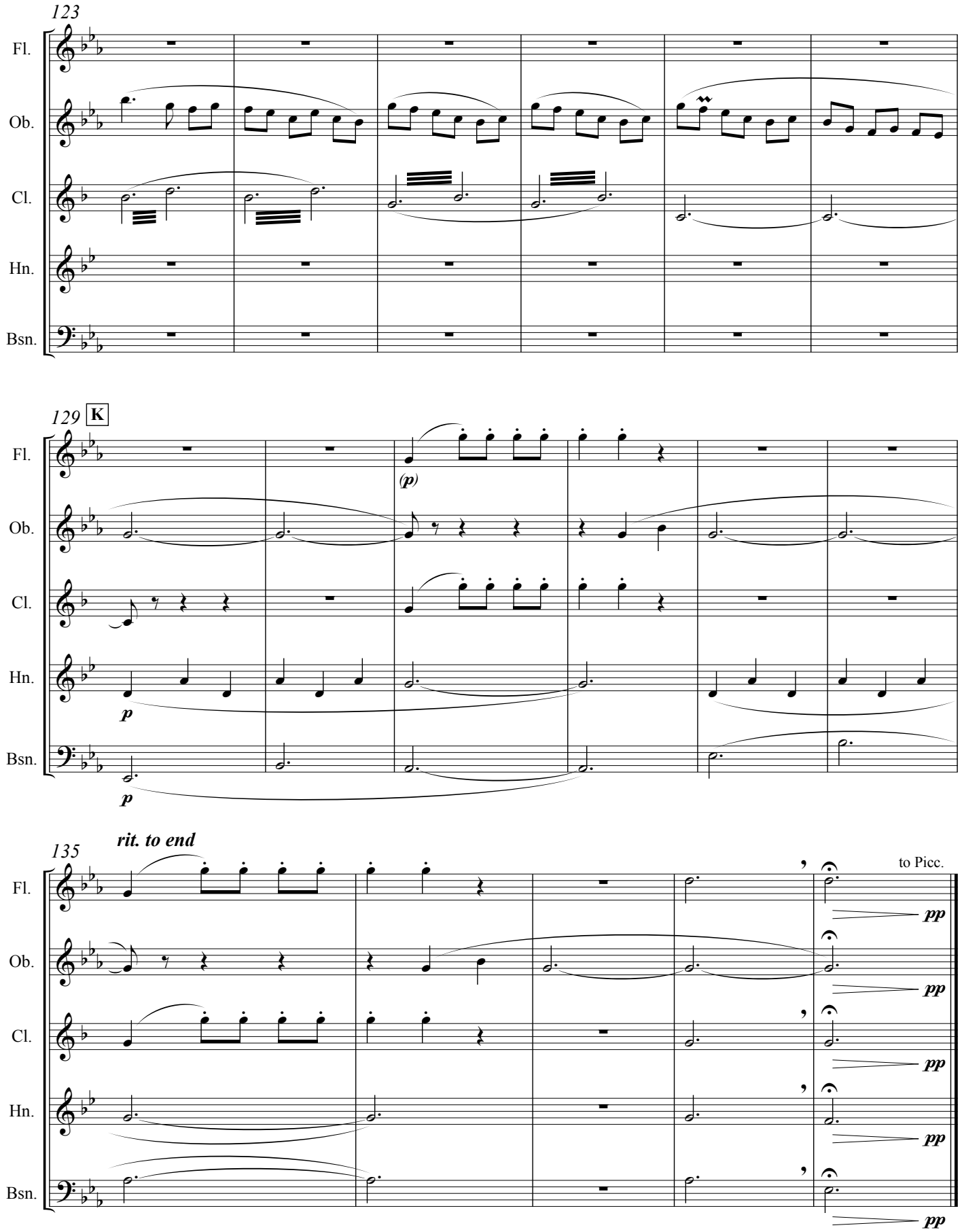

B
Flute
23
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
p
30
C
37
(p)
mf
mf


44
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
(p)
mf
mf
51
D
mf
58

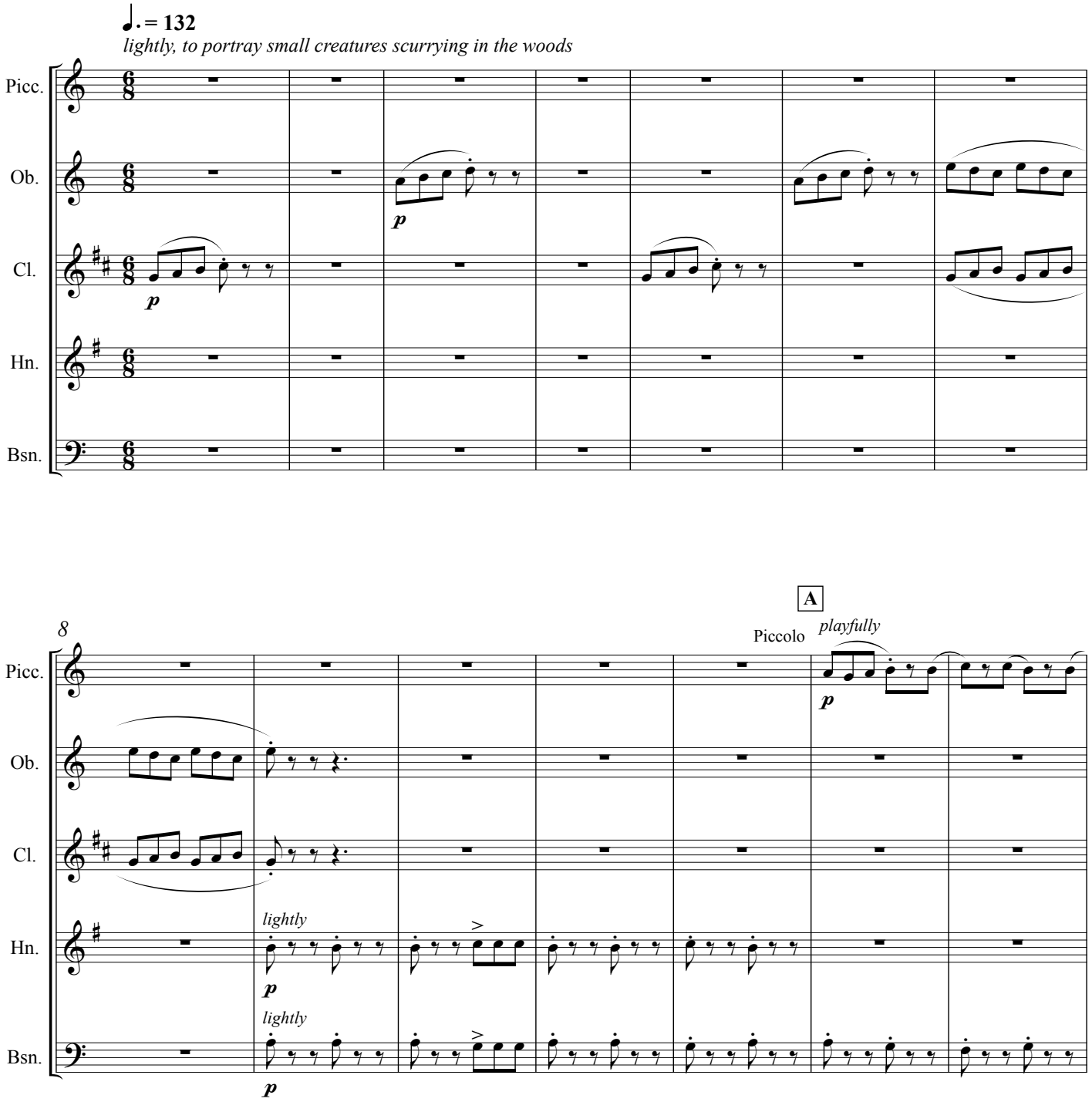

65
(sneak a breath if necessary)
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
p
(p)
E Relaxed tempo
(allowing freedom for Clarinet solo)
72
gentle solo
mf
79
F

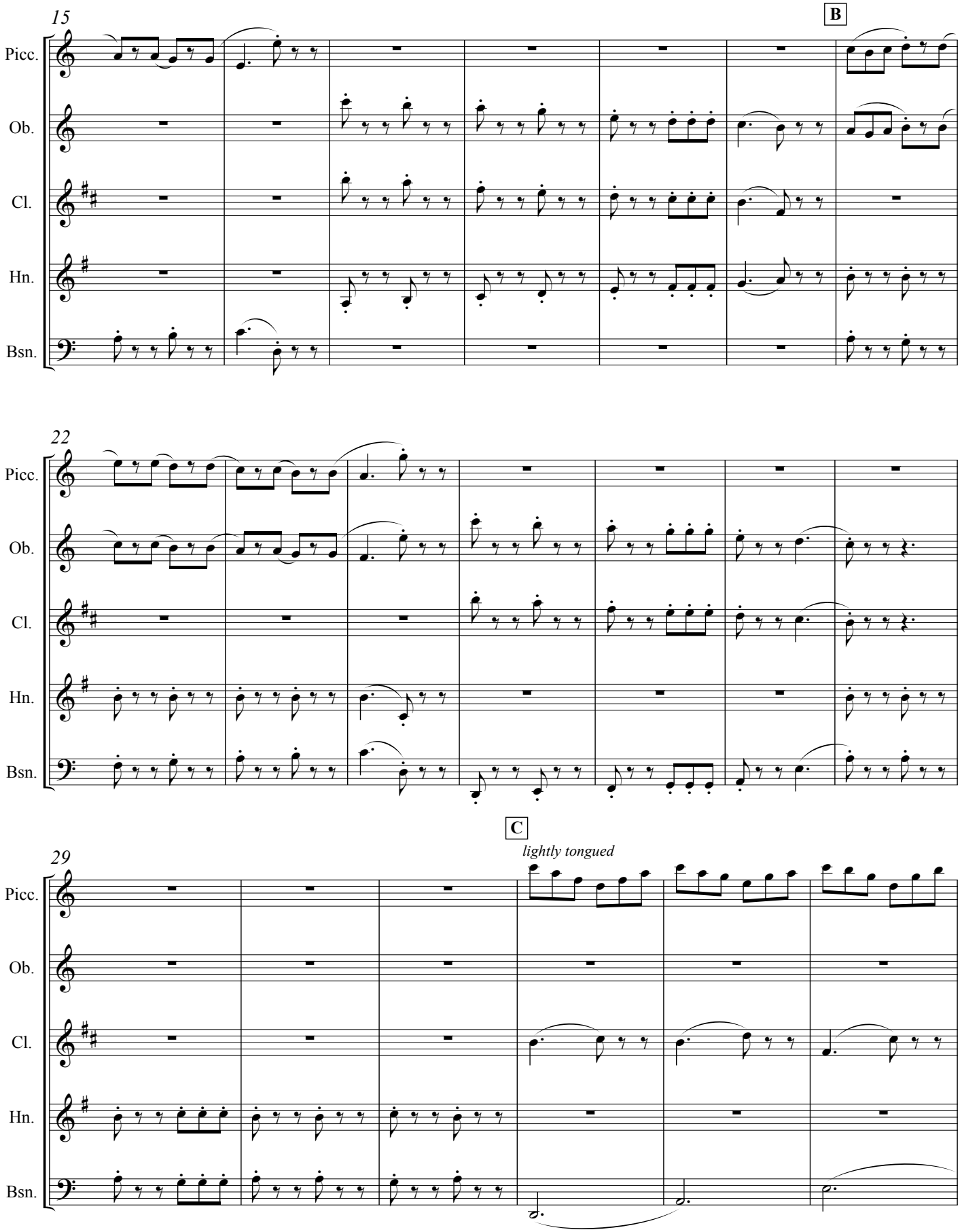

86
G
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
p
mf
93
H
(gently pulsating)
p
mf
(gently pulsating)
(gently pulsating)
99
molto rit.

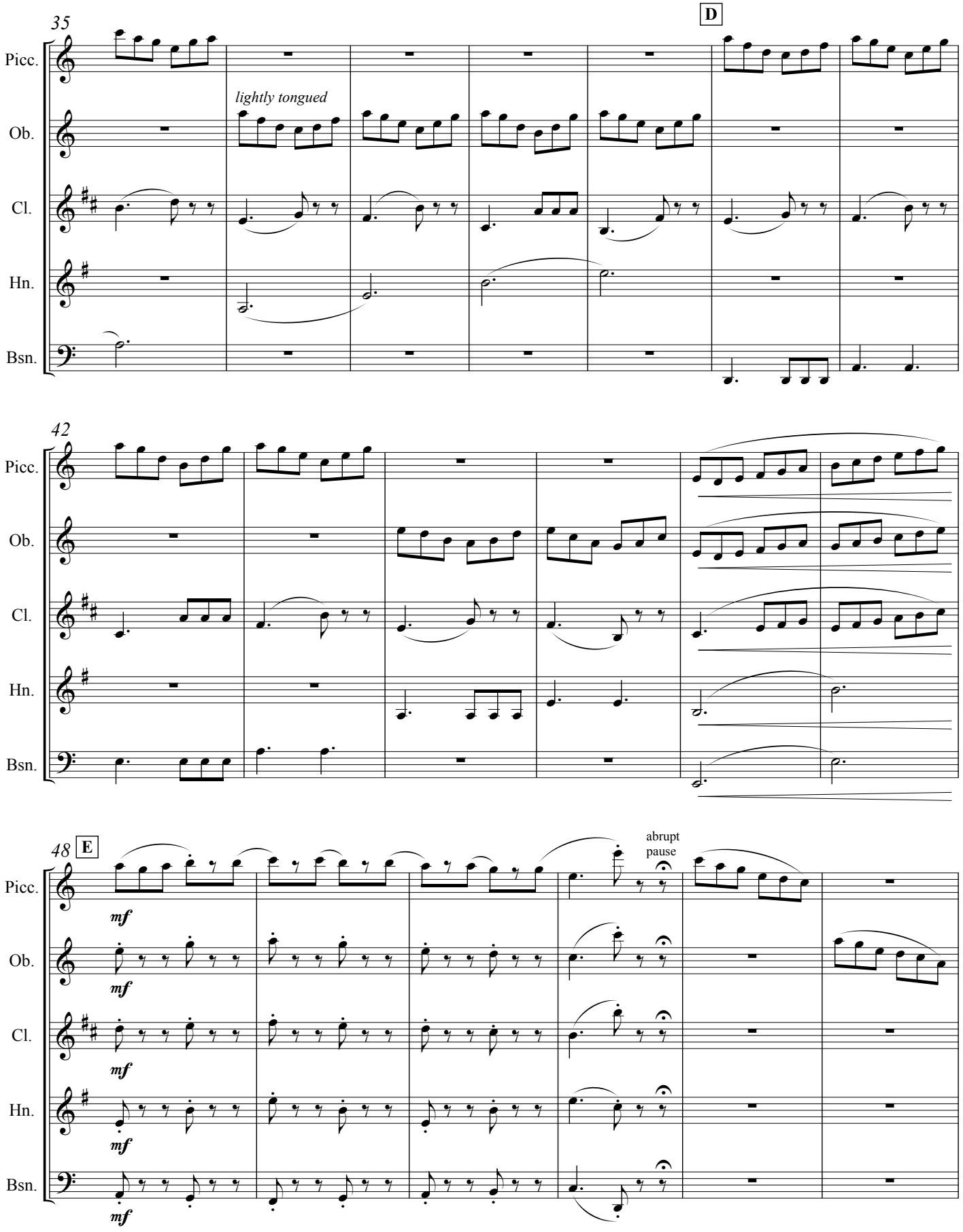

I Original tempo (𝅗𝅥. = 56)
105
smoothly gliding
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
very smoothly
Hn.
Bsn.
p
111
J
very smoothly
117
quiet background

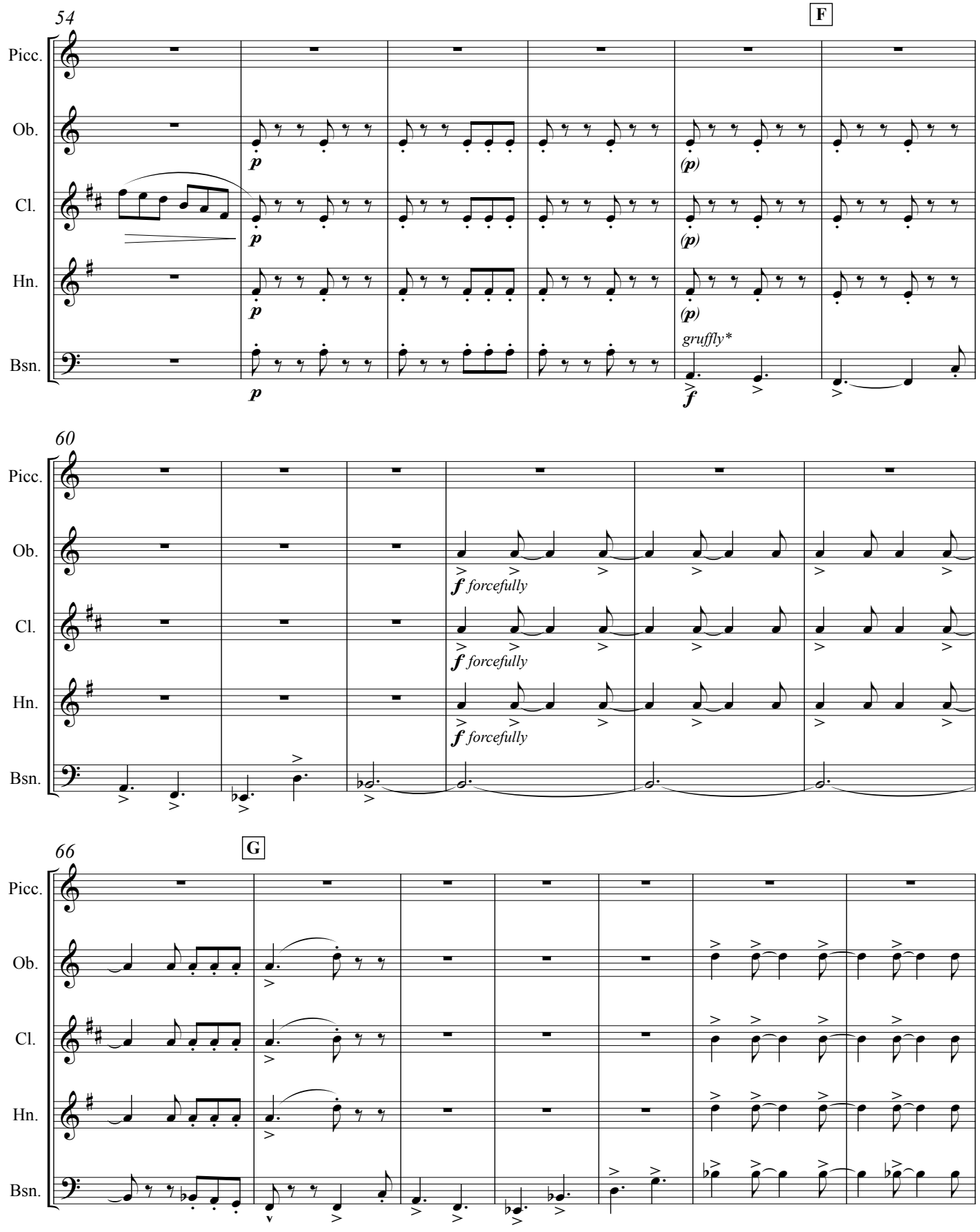

123
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
129
K
(p)
p
p
rit. to end
135
to Picc.
pp

3. “Something Underfoot (scurrying)”

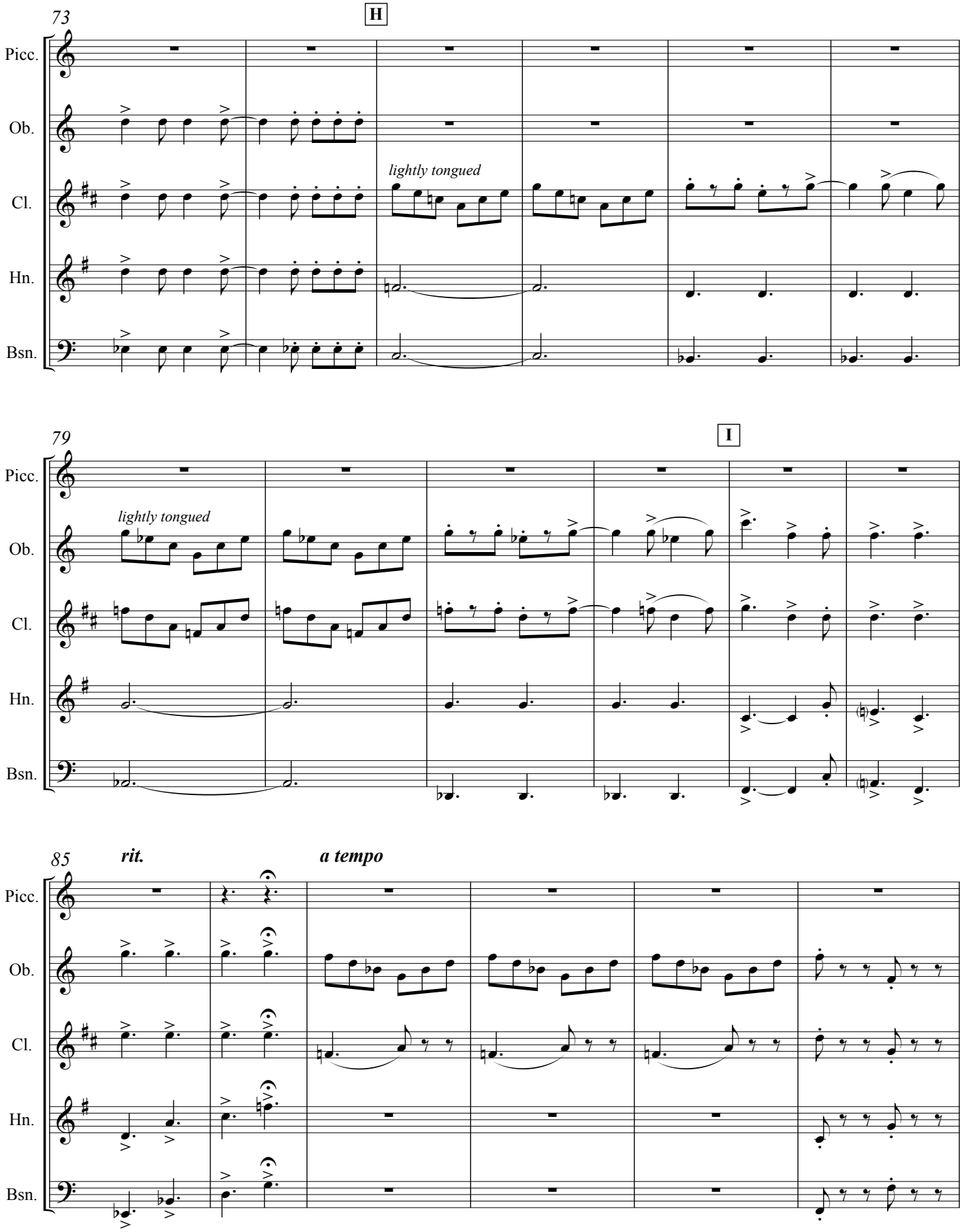


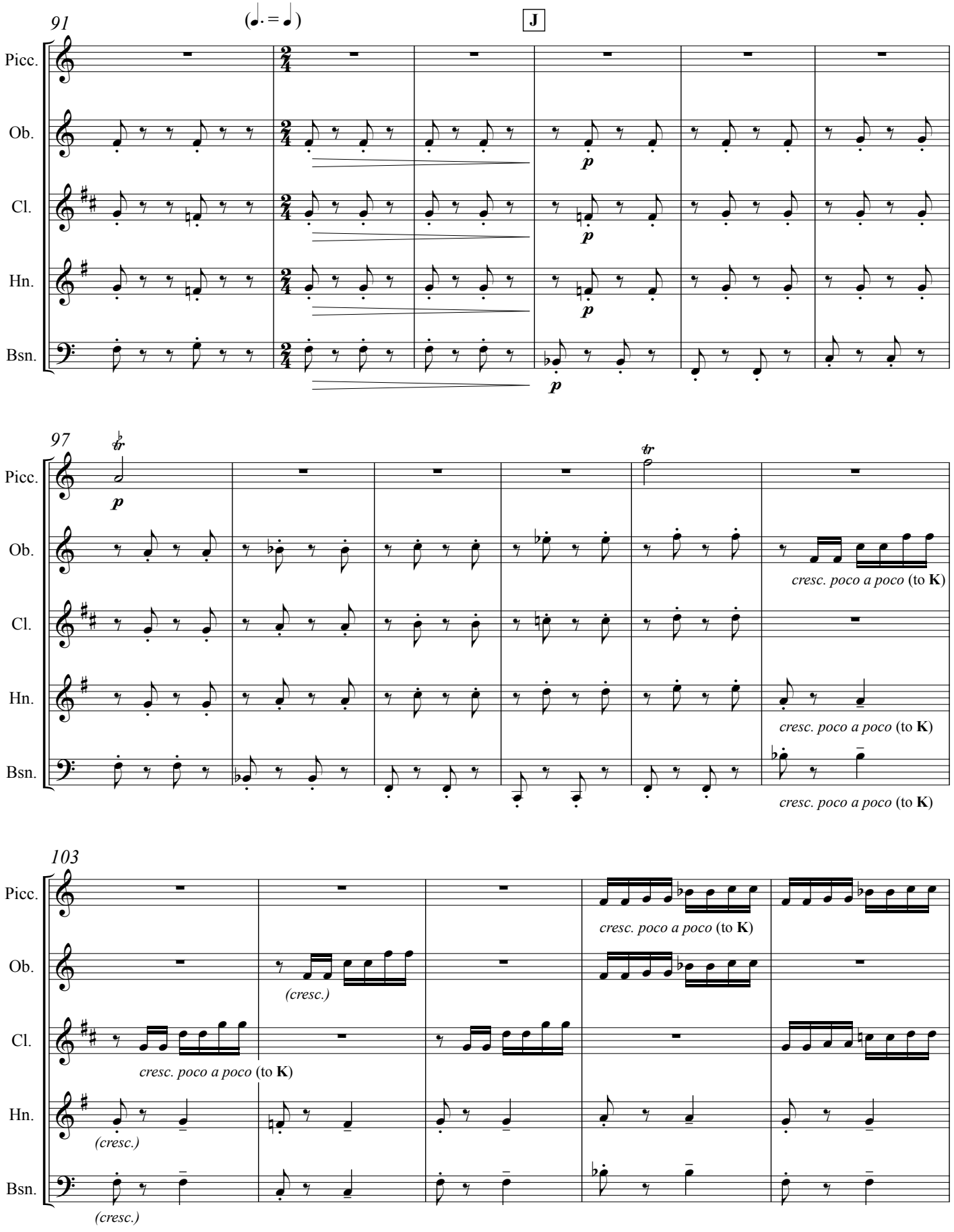

15
B
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
22
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
C
lightly tongued
29
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.

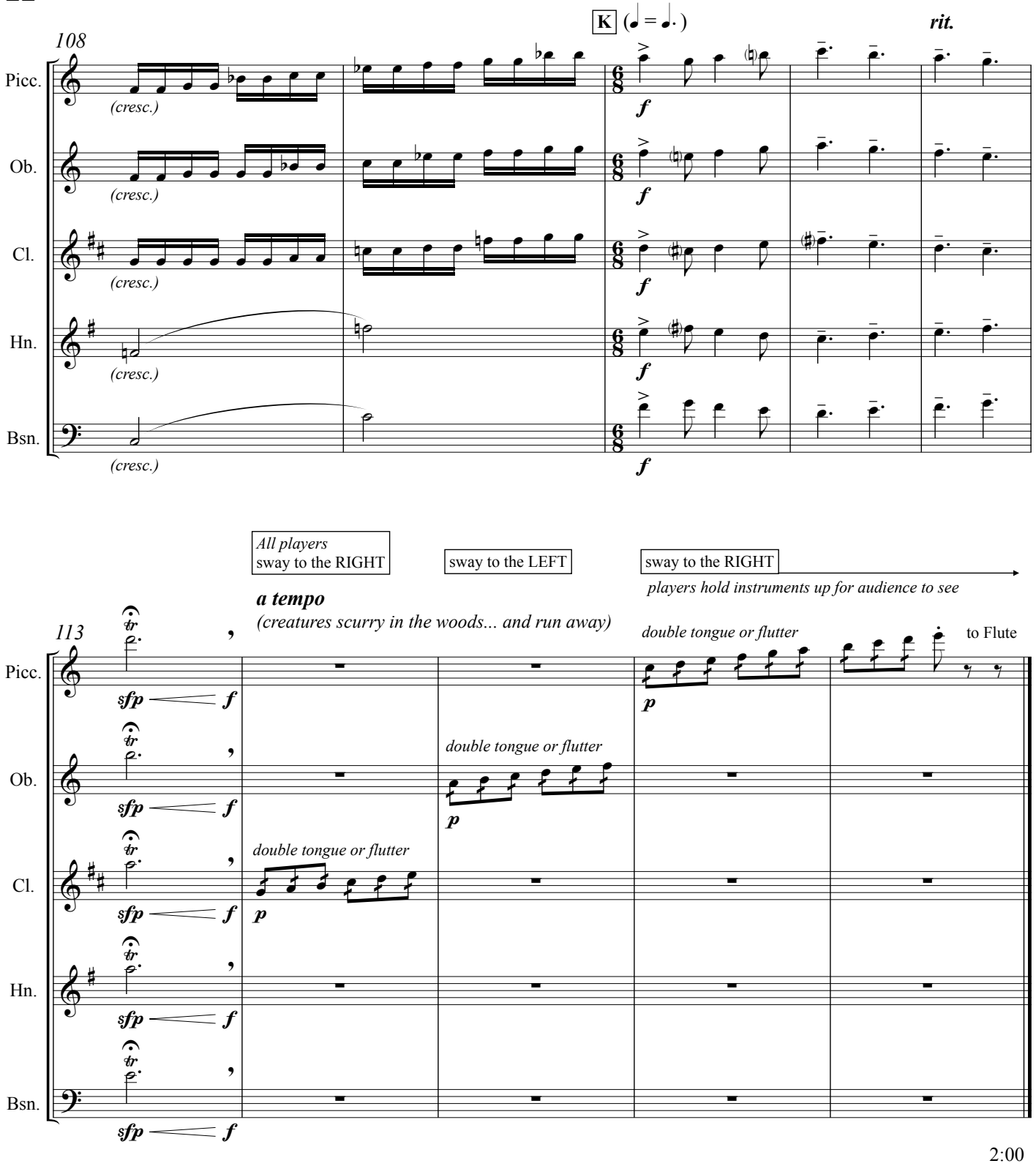

35
D
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
lightly tongued
42
48
E
abrupt
pause
mf



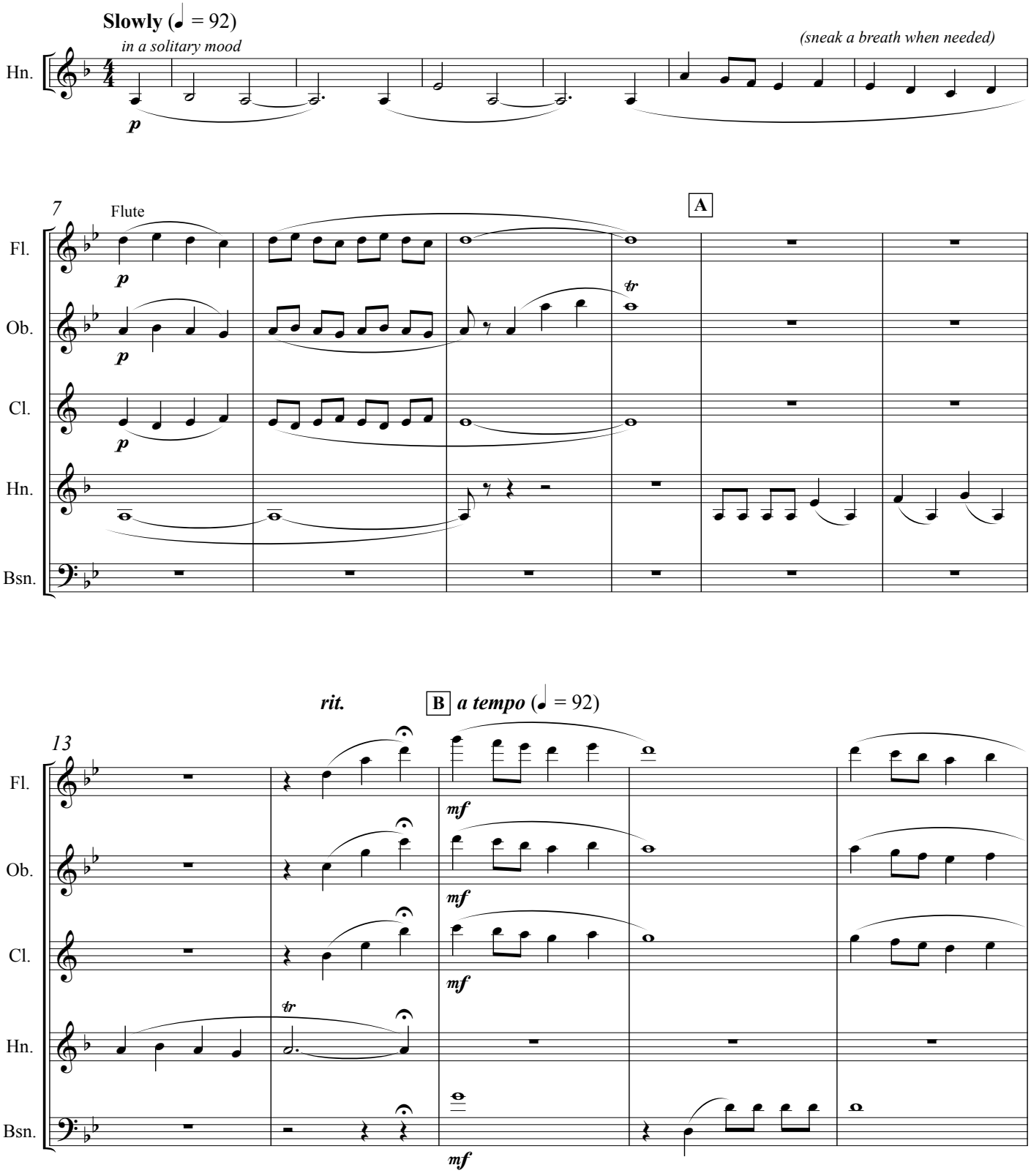
*Bassoon is a large, "great" creature.

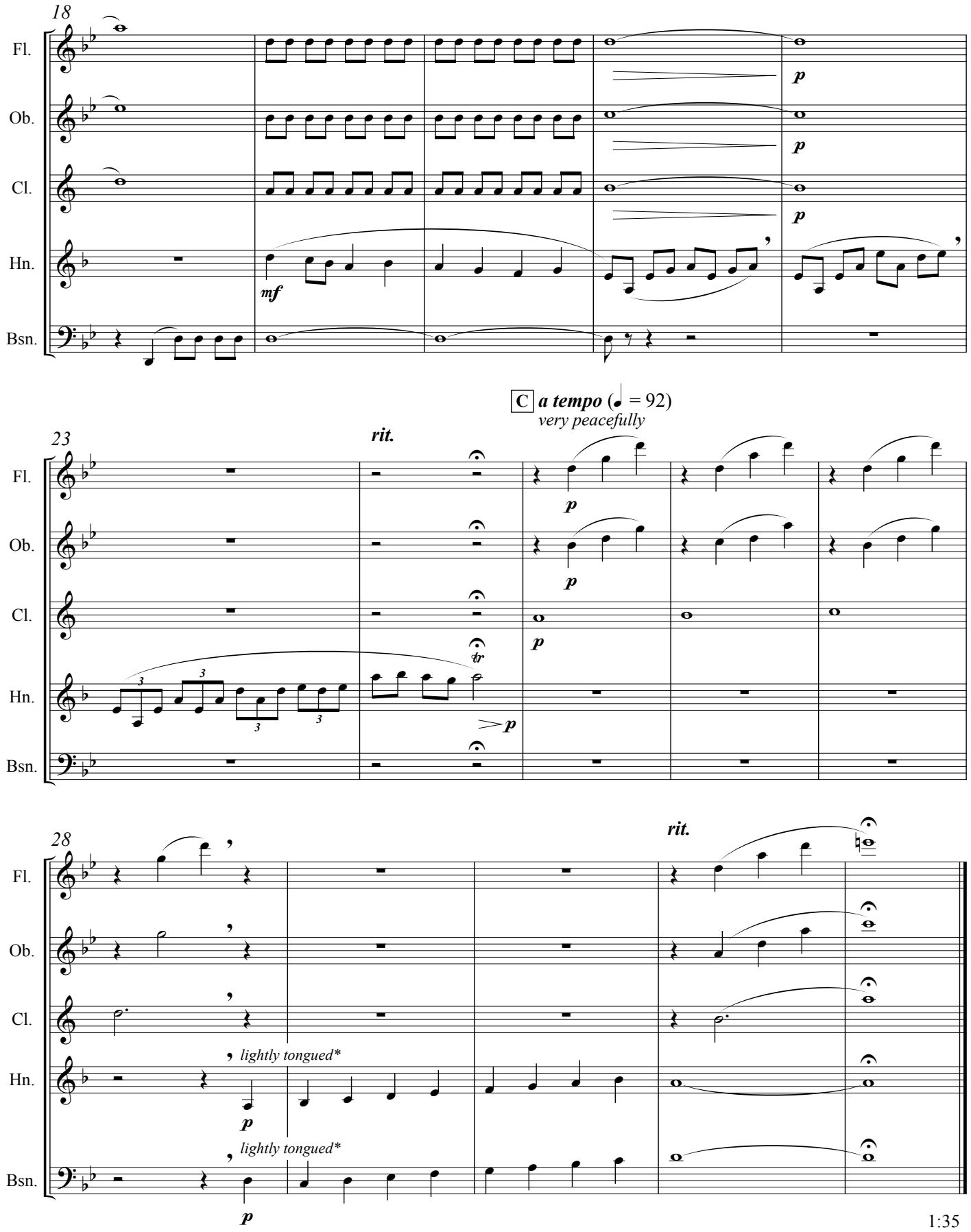

73
H
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
lightly tongued
Hn.
Bsn.
79
I
Picc.
lightly tongued
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
85
rit.
a tempo
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.


91
(♩. = ♩)
J
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
p
97
tr
cresc. poco a poco (to K)
103
(cresc.)


K (♩ = ♩.)
rit.
108
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
(cresc.)
f
All players
sway to the RIGHT
sway to the LEFT
sway to the RIGHT
players hold instruments up for audience to see
a tempo
(creatures scurry in the woods... and run away)
113
double tongue or flutter
to Flute
sfp
p
2:00

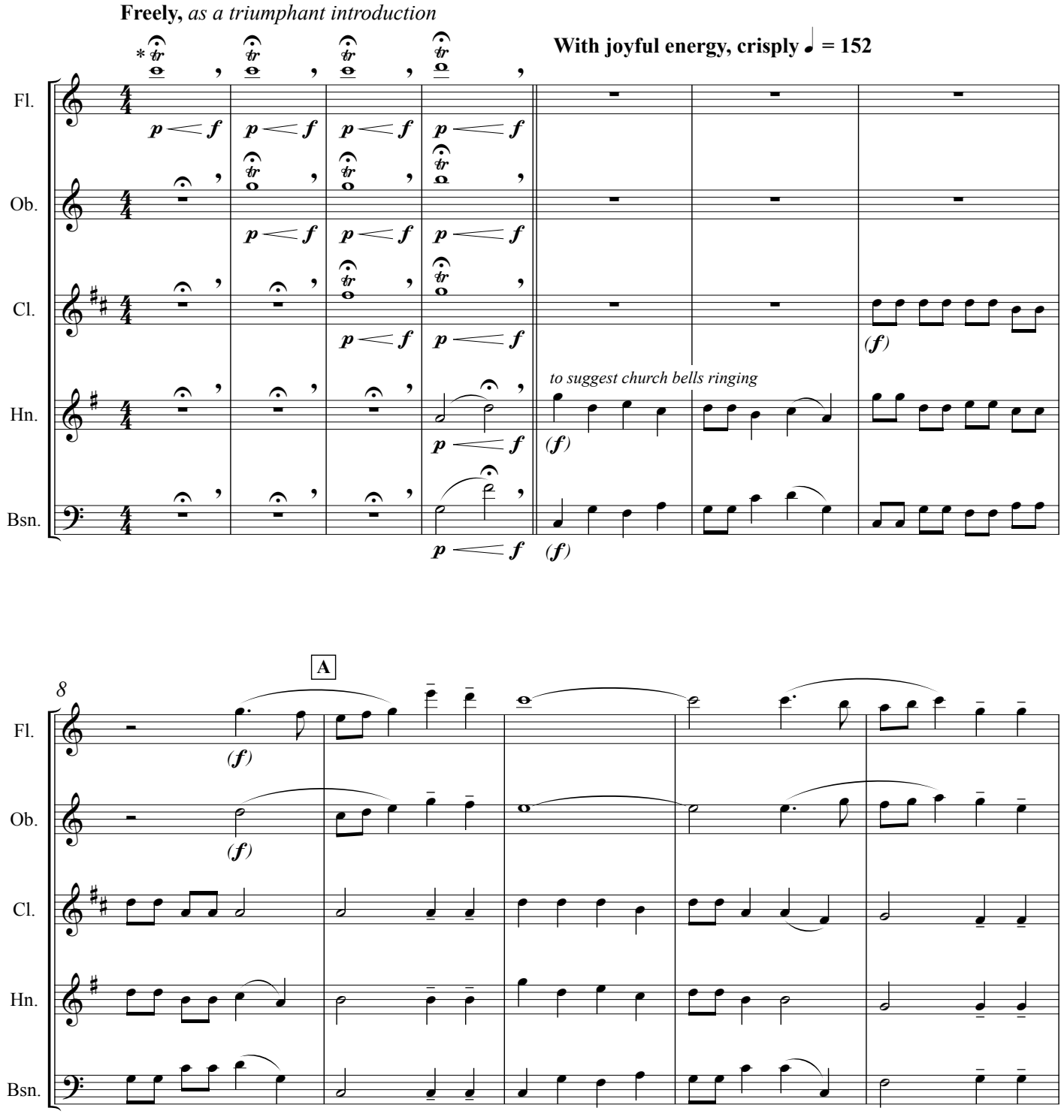
4. “Interlude – This Stillness ”



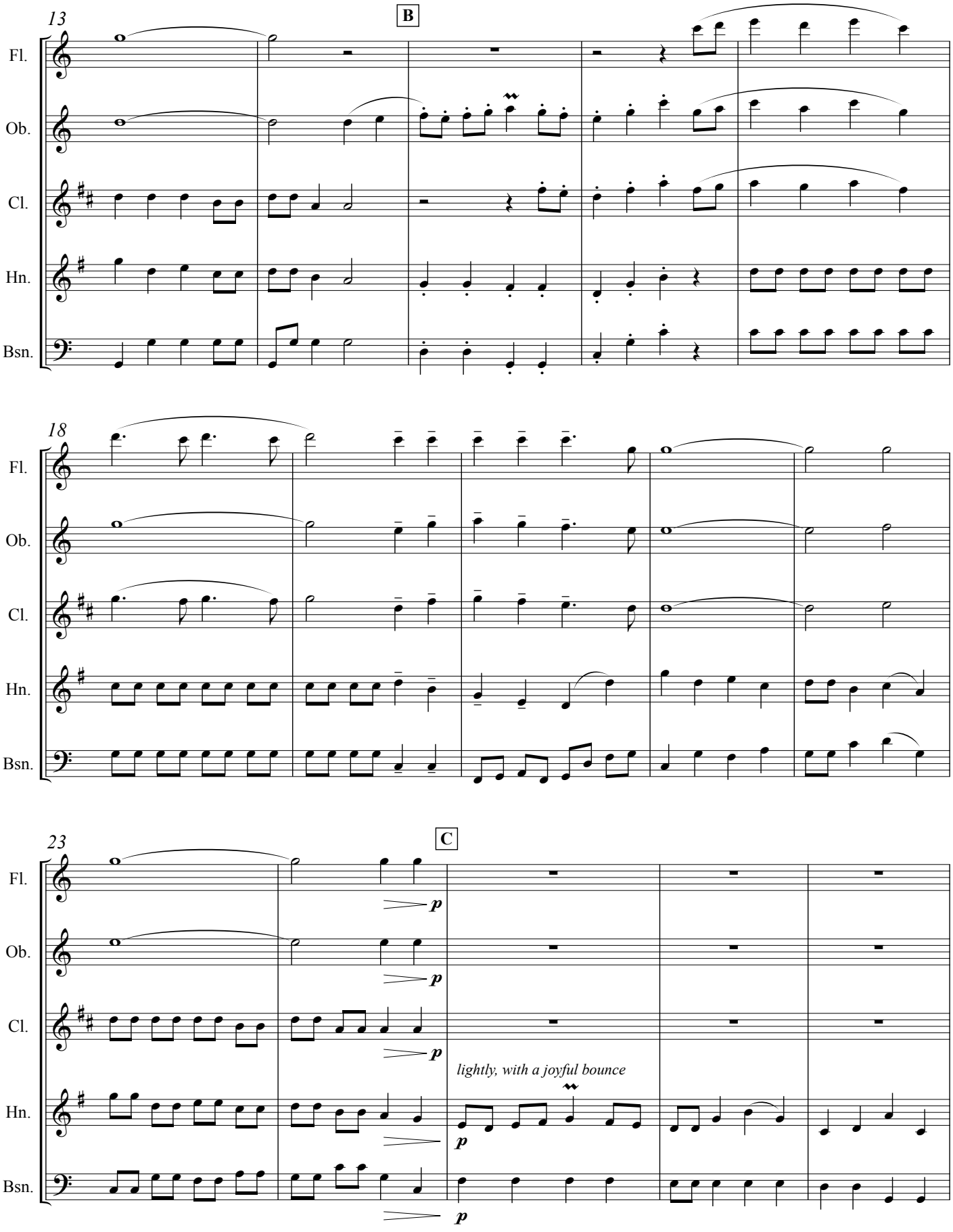


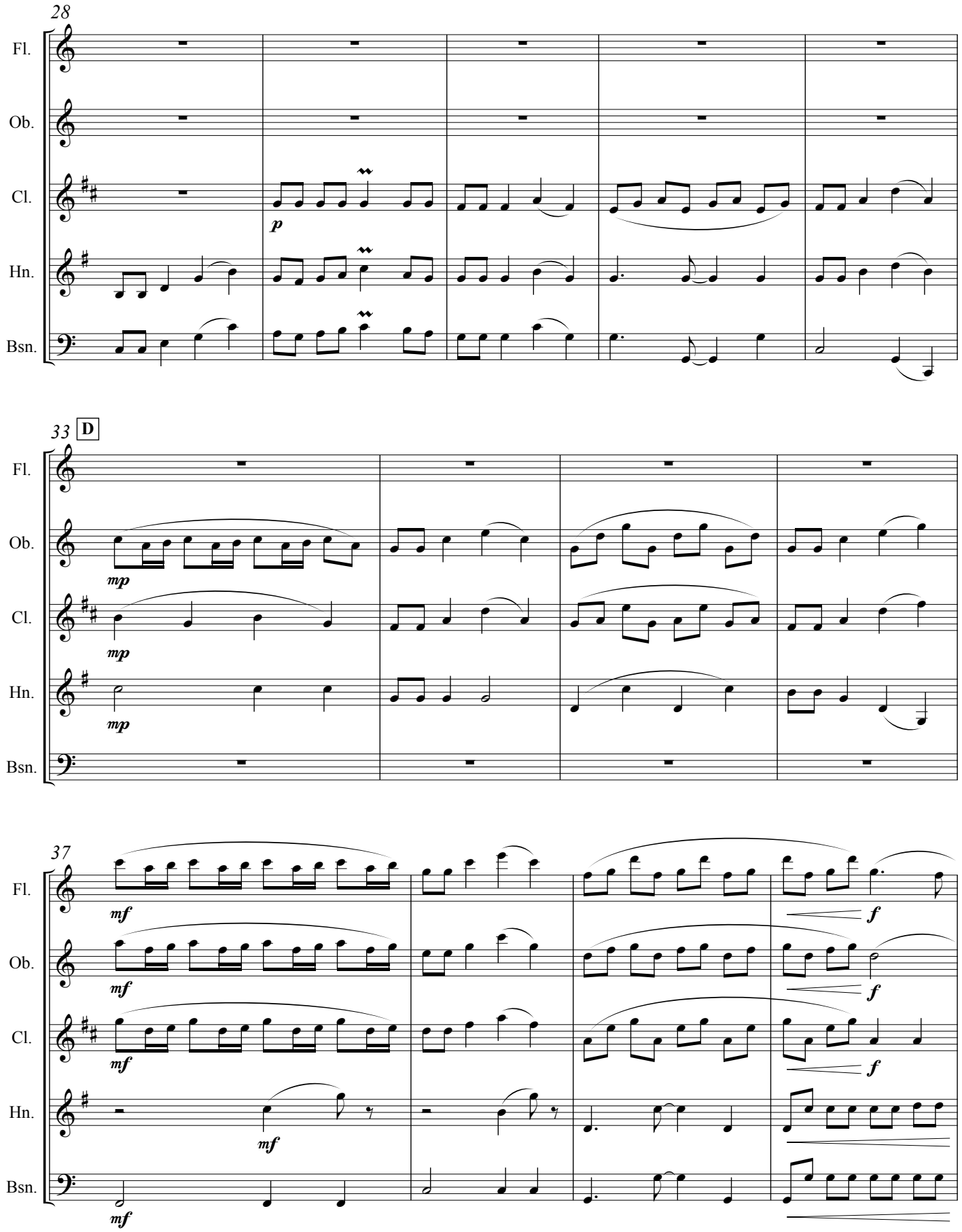
*Horn and Bassoon portray the line: *"we walked together as one."*

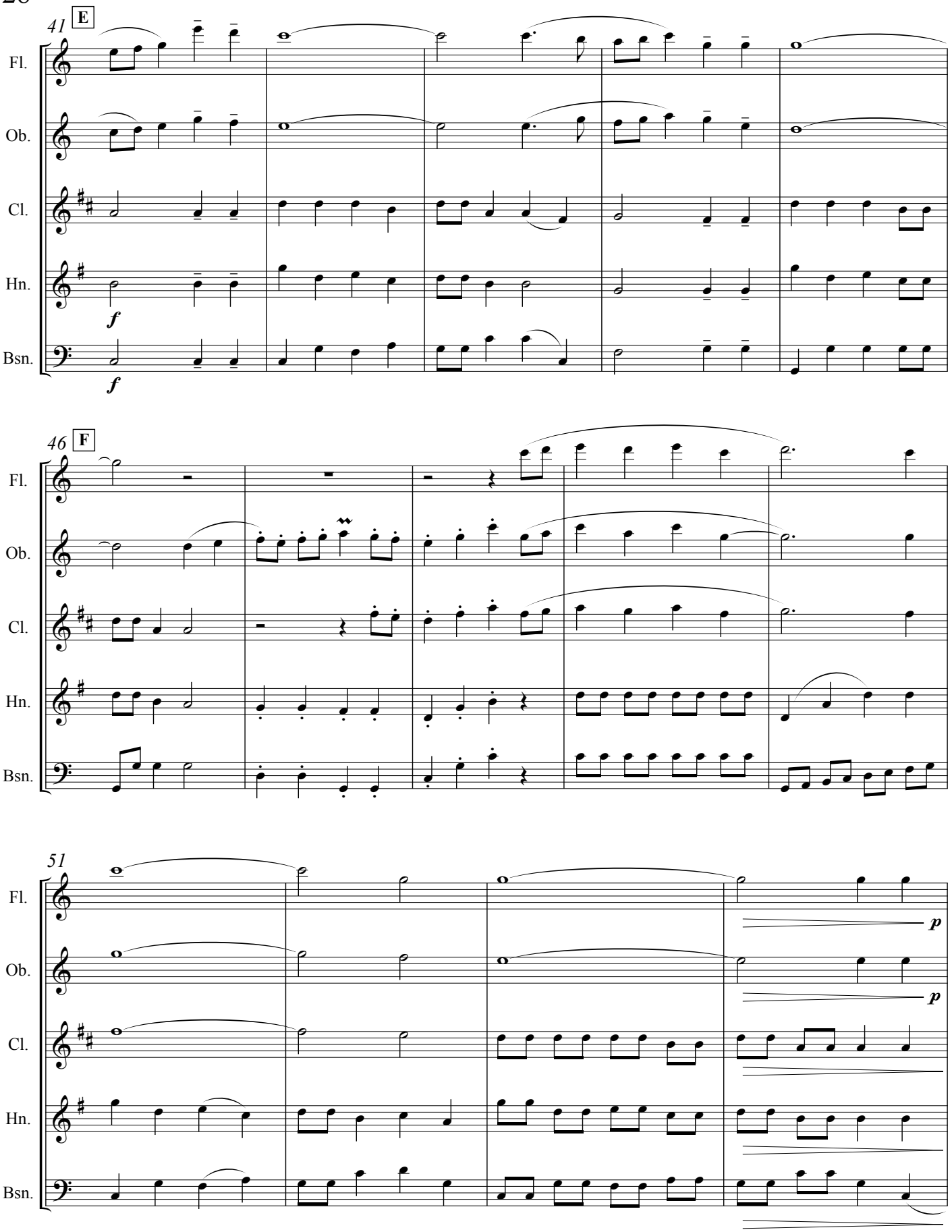
5. “Celebration – The Music of the Spheres”

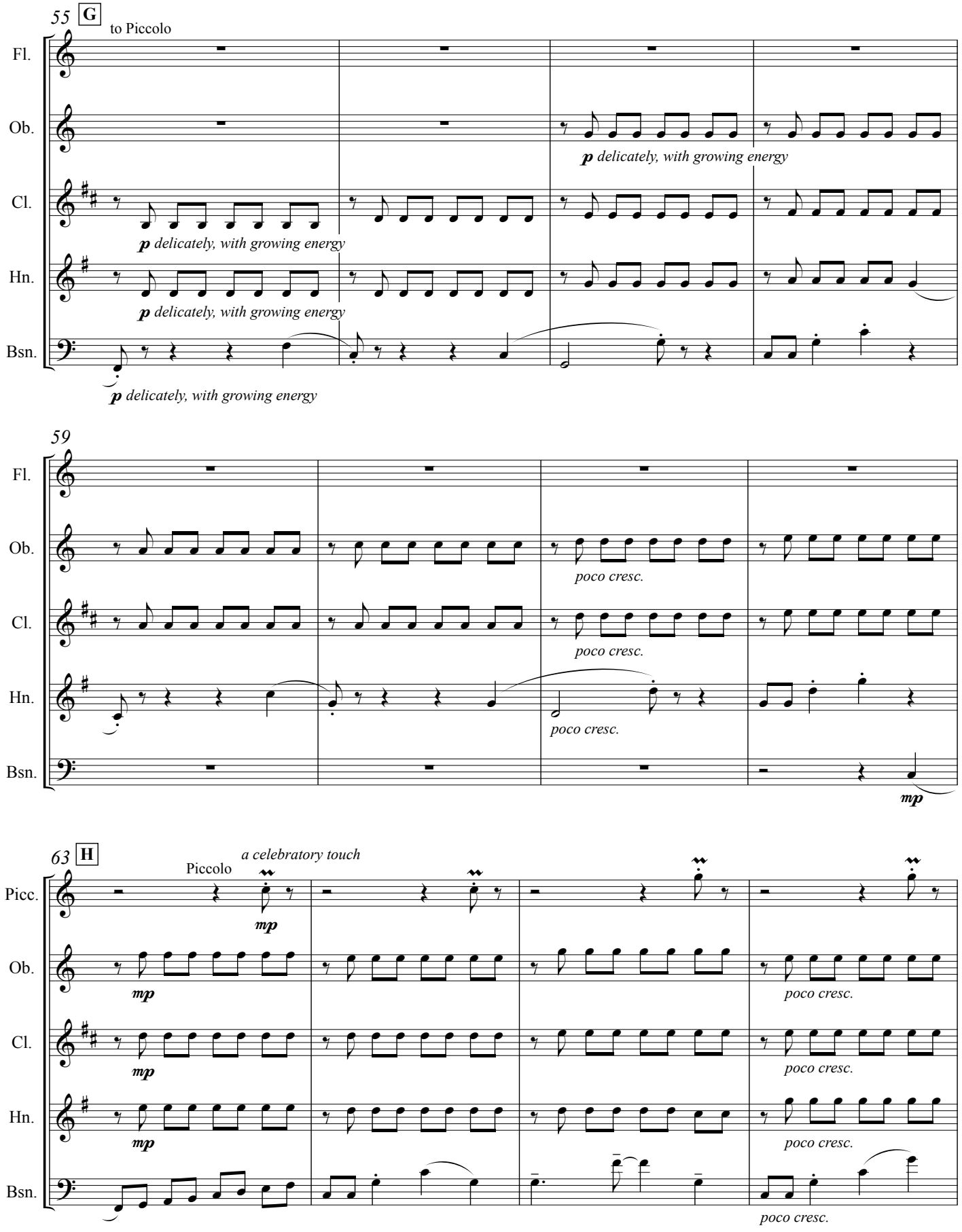


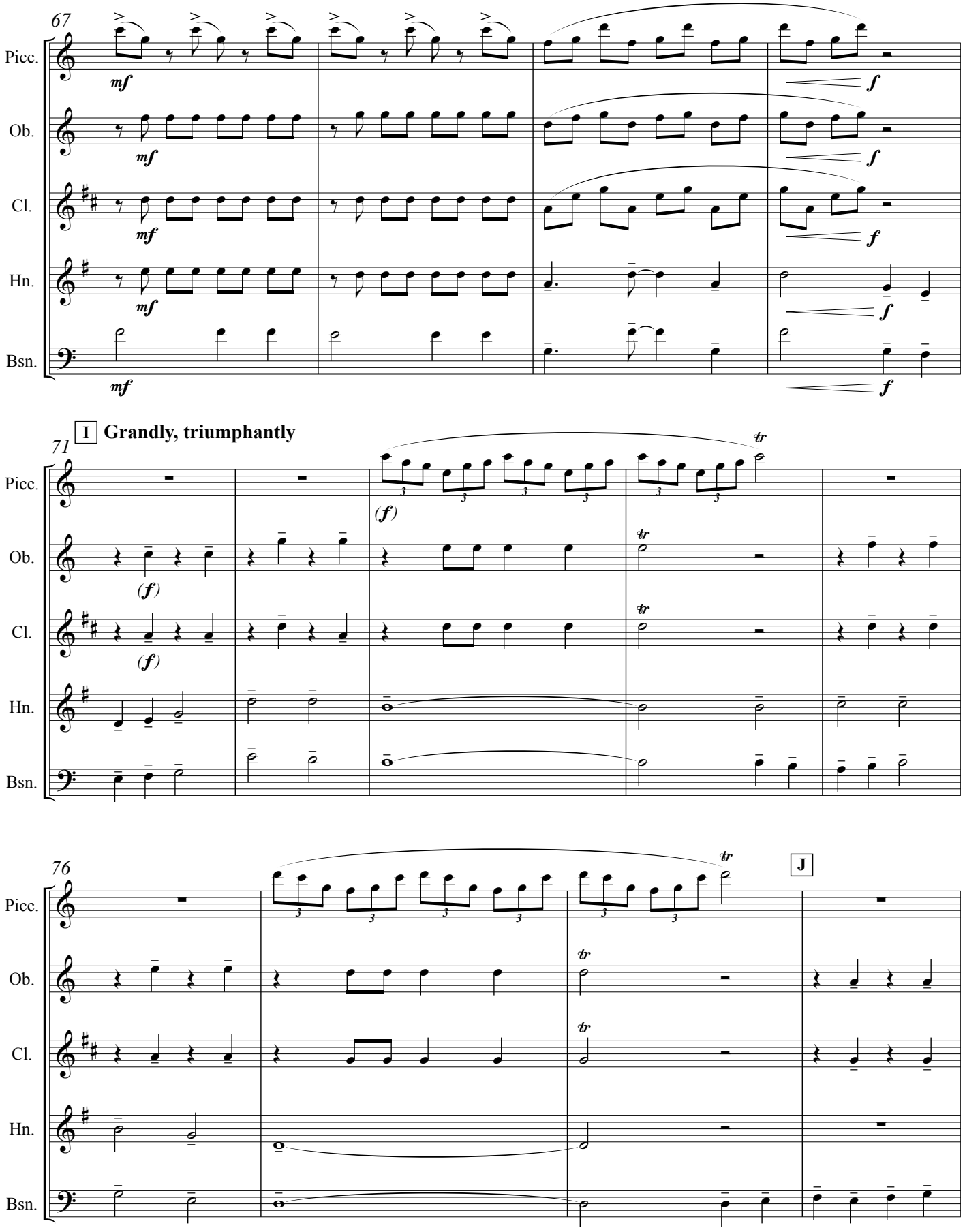
*The fermatas in m. 1-4 (trilled notes) should last approximately 4 seconds.

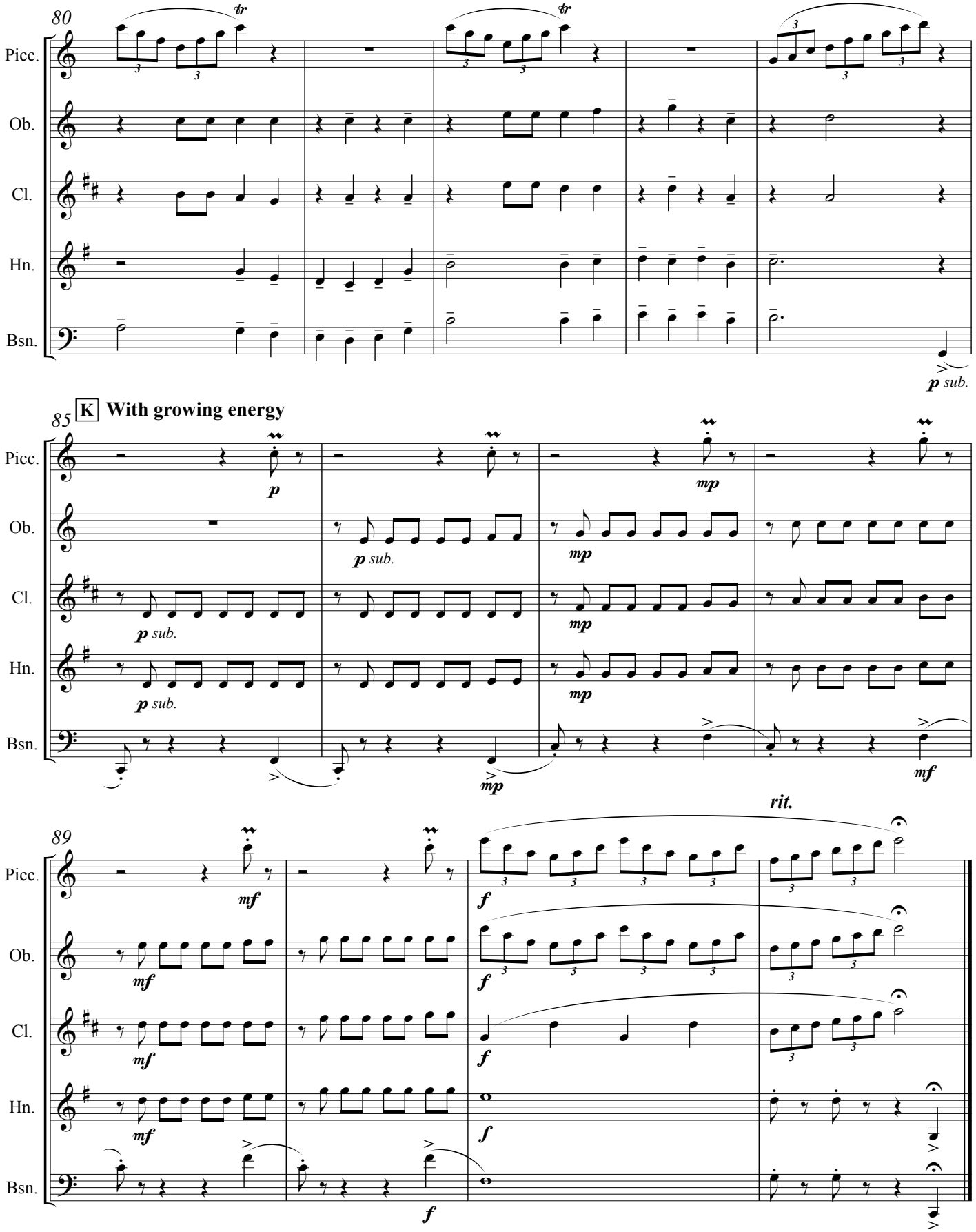

13
B
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
18
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
23
C
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
p
lightly, with a joyful bounce


28
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
p
33
D
mp
37
mf
f


41
E
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
f
f
46
F
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
51
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
p
p


55 G
to Piccolo
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
p delicately, with growing energy
59
poco cresc.
mp
63 H
Piccolo
a celebratory touch
Picc.
mp


67
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
mf
f
71
I
Grandly, triumphantly
(f)
tr
76
J



2:30 | Total: *circa* 11:00
August 11, 2021
New Canaan, Connecticut