Lamberto Coccioli

river teach me

mezzo-soprano and string quartet

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River__hourglass of water metaphor of eternity
I enter you more and more changed
so I could be a cloud a fish a rock
while you are the same like a clock that measures
the metamorphoses of the body and descents of the spirit
slow disintegration of tissues and love

I who am born of clay
want to be your pupil
and learn the spring the Olympian heart
o cool torch rustling column
bedrock of my faith and my despair

river teach me stubbornness and endurance
so in the last hour I become worthy
of rest in the shade of the great delta
in the holy triangle of the beginning and of the end

Zbigniew Herbert, 'To the river' from *Report from the Besieged City* © 1987
English translation © 1987 John Carpenter and Bogdana Carpenter
Oxford University Press

Programme notes

river teach me, for mezzo-soprano and string quartet, sets to music the English version of 'To the river', a poem by Zbigniew Herbert (1924-1998), from the collection *Report from the Besieged City*, first published in Warsaw in 1983, and translated into English by John and Bogdana Carpenter in 1985.

I discovered Herbert's poems while reading a beautiful collection of poetry essays by Seamus Heaney, *The Government of the Tongue*. Since then I've been fascinated by the particular way in which Herbert pitches his voice, pursuing the truth with a language both simple and profound. Before writing *river teach me* I set to music another poem by the same collection, 'The Divine Claudius', for narrator and small ensemble.

Herbert concluded one of his sketches with these words: *We are the ones who are poor, very poor. The great majority of contemporary art comes out in favour of chaos, gesticulating in vacuity or recounting the history of its own sterile spirit. All the Old Masters, without exception, could say with Racine: 'We work in order to please the public', which means that they believed in the sense of their work, and in the possibility of inter-human understanding... Praise be to such naiveté.*

Performance Notes

In the vocal part please refer to the International Phonetic Alphabet conventions for the correct pronunciation of the phonemes between square brackets.

en memoria de Josia

river teach me

Lamberto Coccioli

Tempo libero, rubato naturale
♩ = 116 ca.

Mezzo-soprano
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello

accel. **Tempo** **accel.** **rit.** **Tempo** **poco rall.**

espress. *con la voce* *con la voce*

ri - ver end [me] [ju] [wç] [;aI] [bI] [rÅ] [maI] [gre] [l√v] [sÅ] [fl] [mç] [S´n] [bç] [sIs] [D´] [I´] [r´] who learn my you

sord. III c. 1/2 Pont. Ord. 1/2 Pont. Ord.

sord. Ord. 1/2 Pont. Ord.

5

accel. **cresc.** **Tempo** **accel.** **rit.** **più lento** **ancora più lento**

Inner 1

♩ = 50 Senza rubato

[IIN] [ra] your bed the spring [feI] cool [tç] [pI´n] clay and me the[SeI] come [t´] [r´n] [de] [aI] be so [lA] the end and I [U]

Pont. Ord. via sord. III c.

Pont. Ord. via sord.

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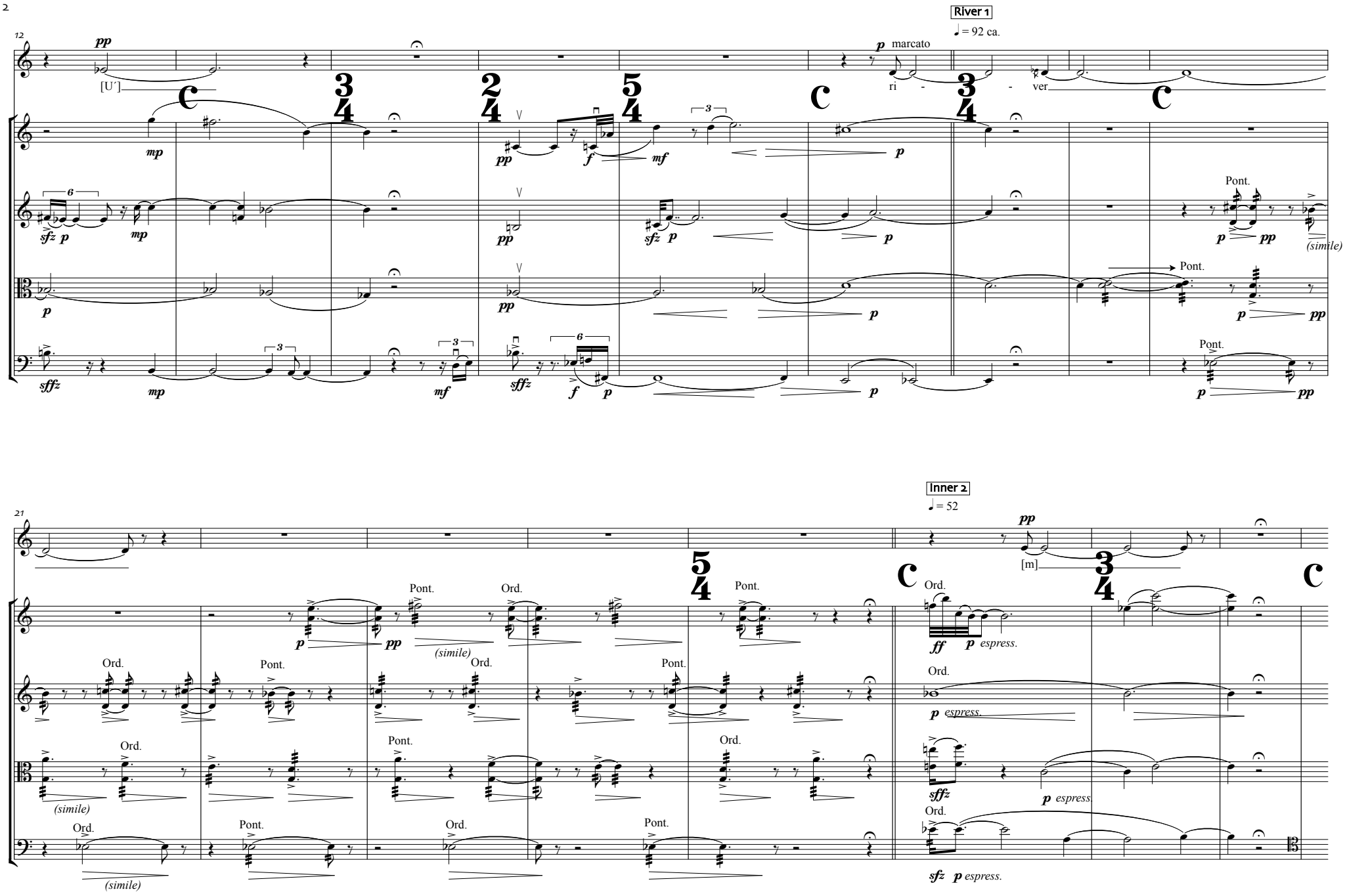
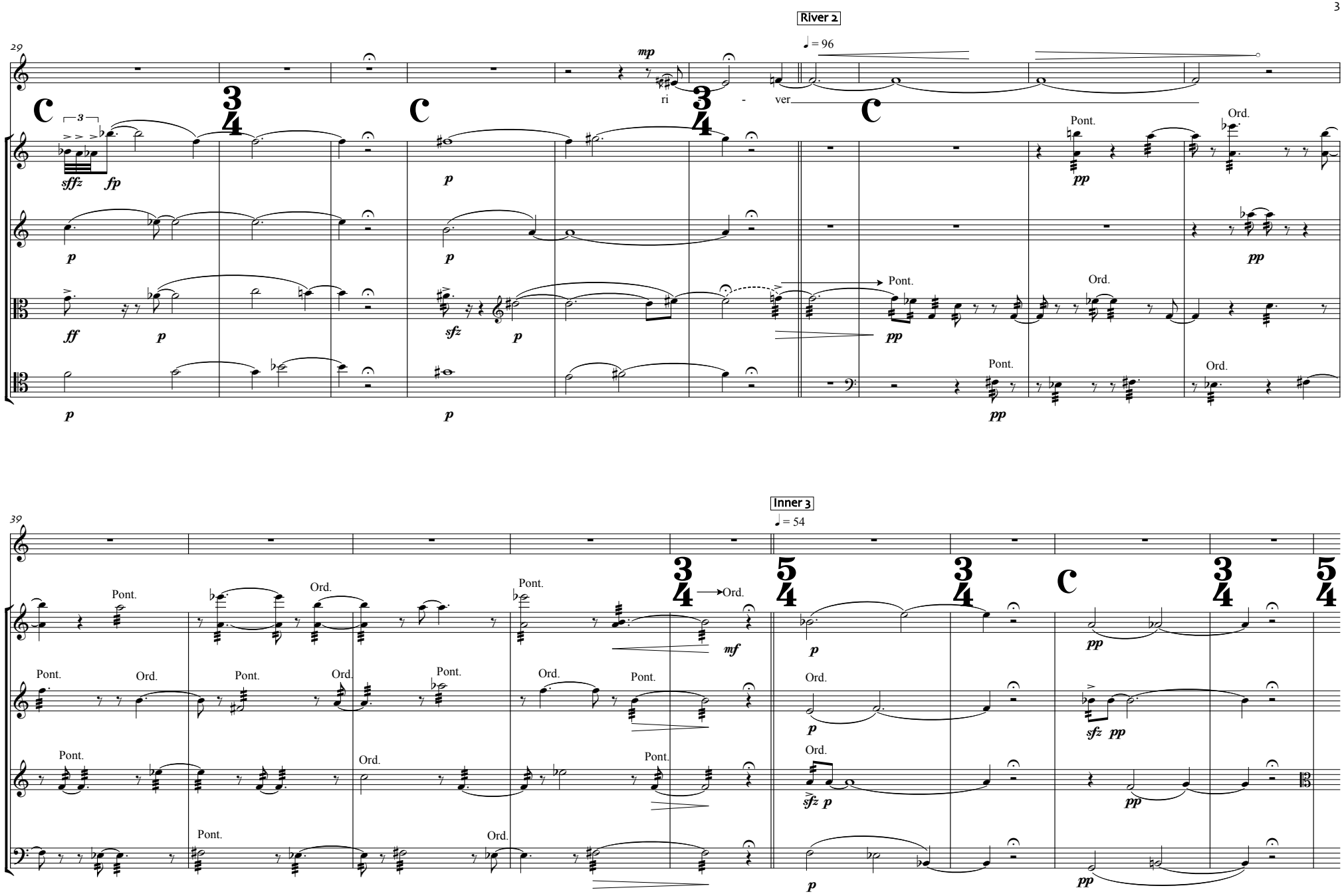
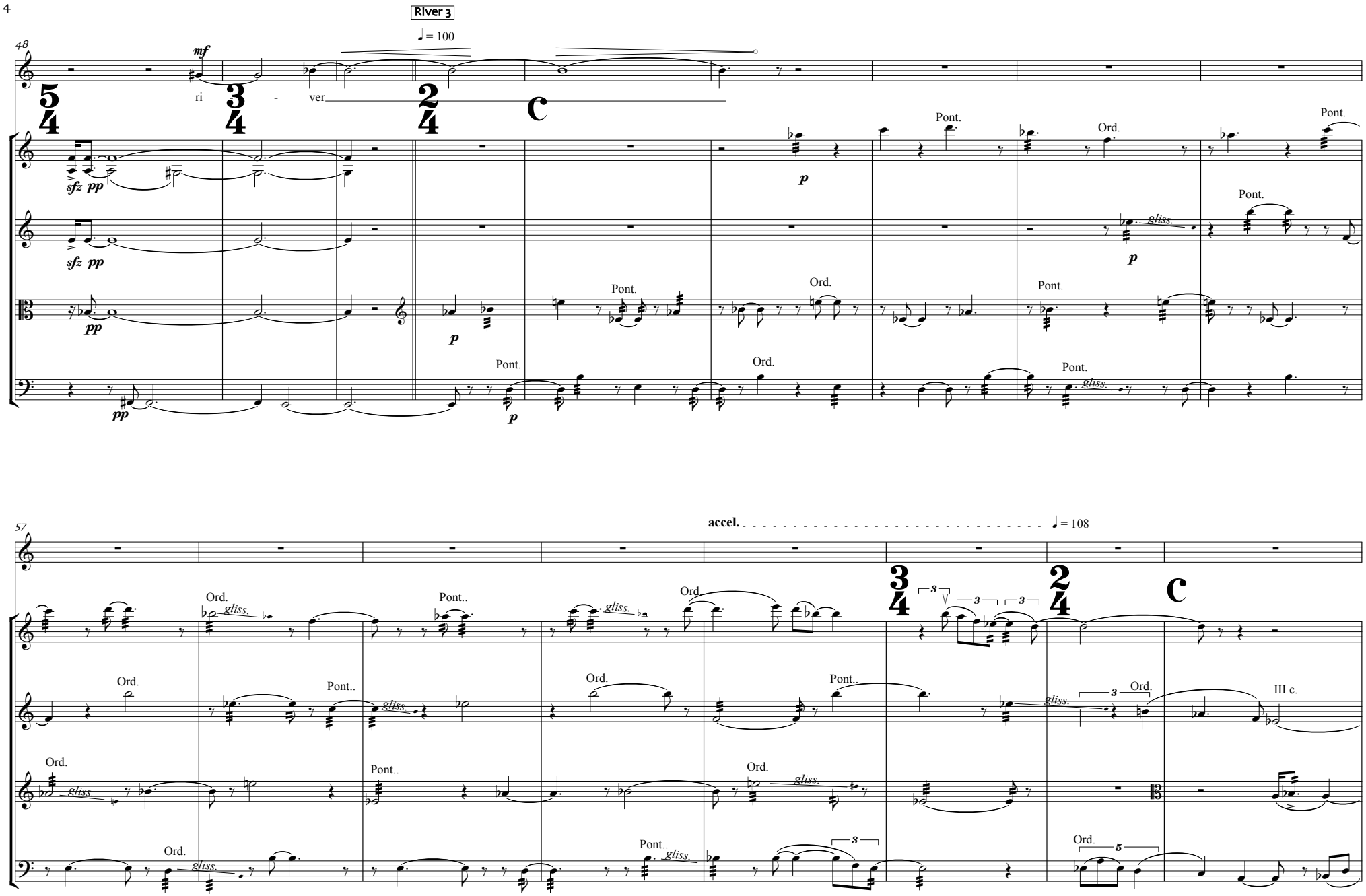
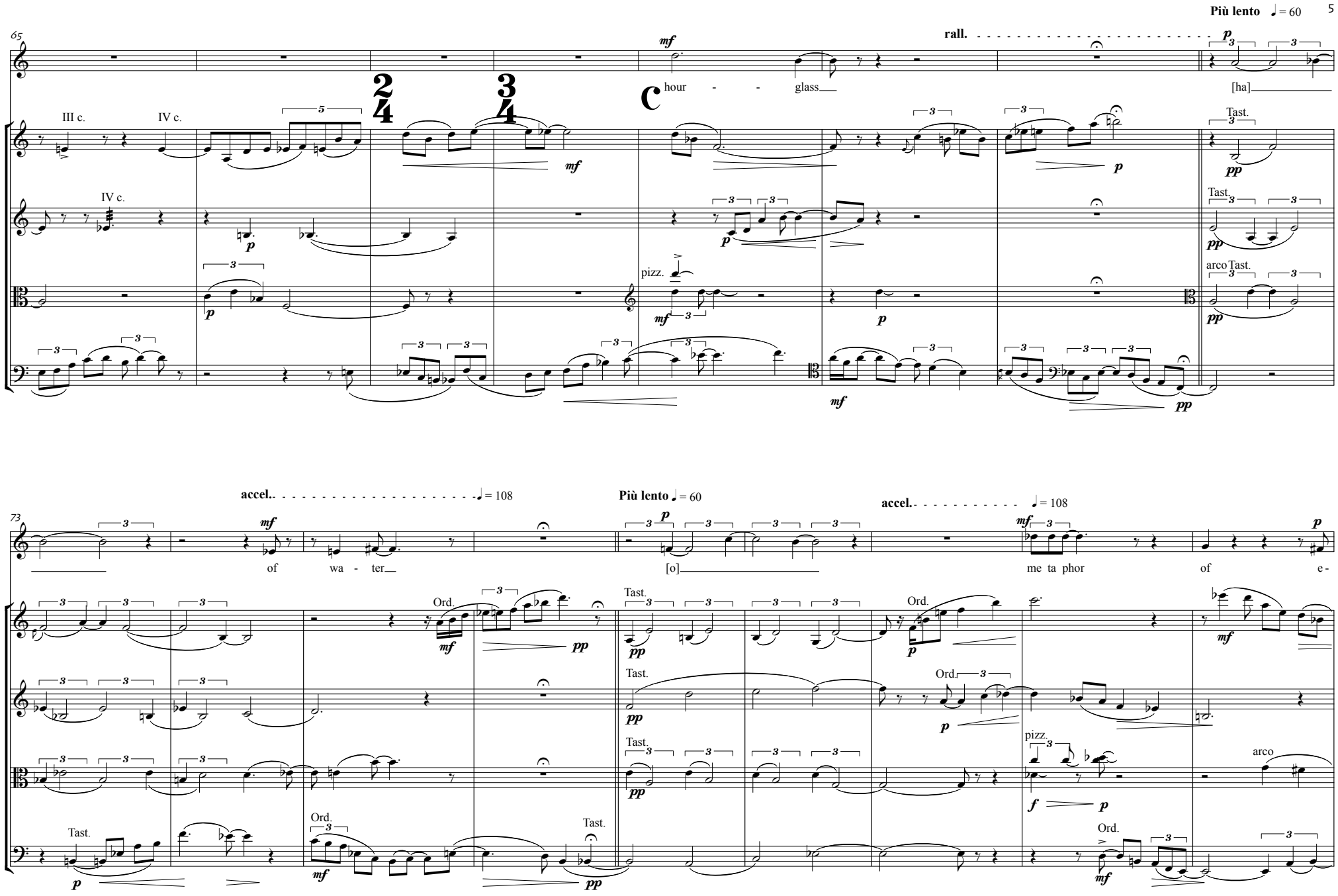
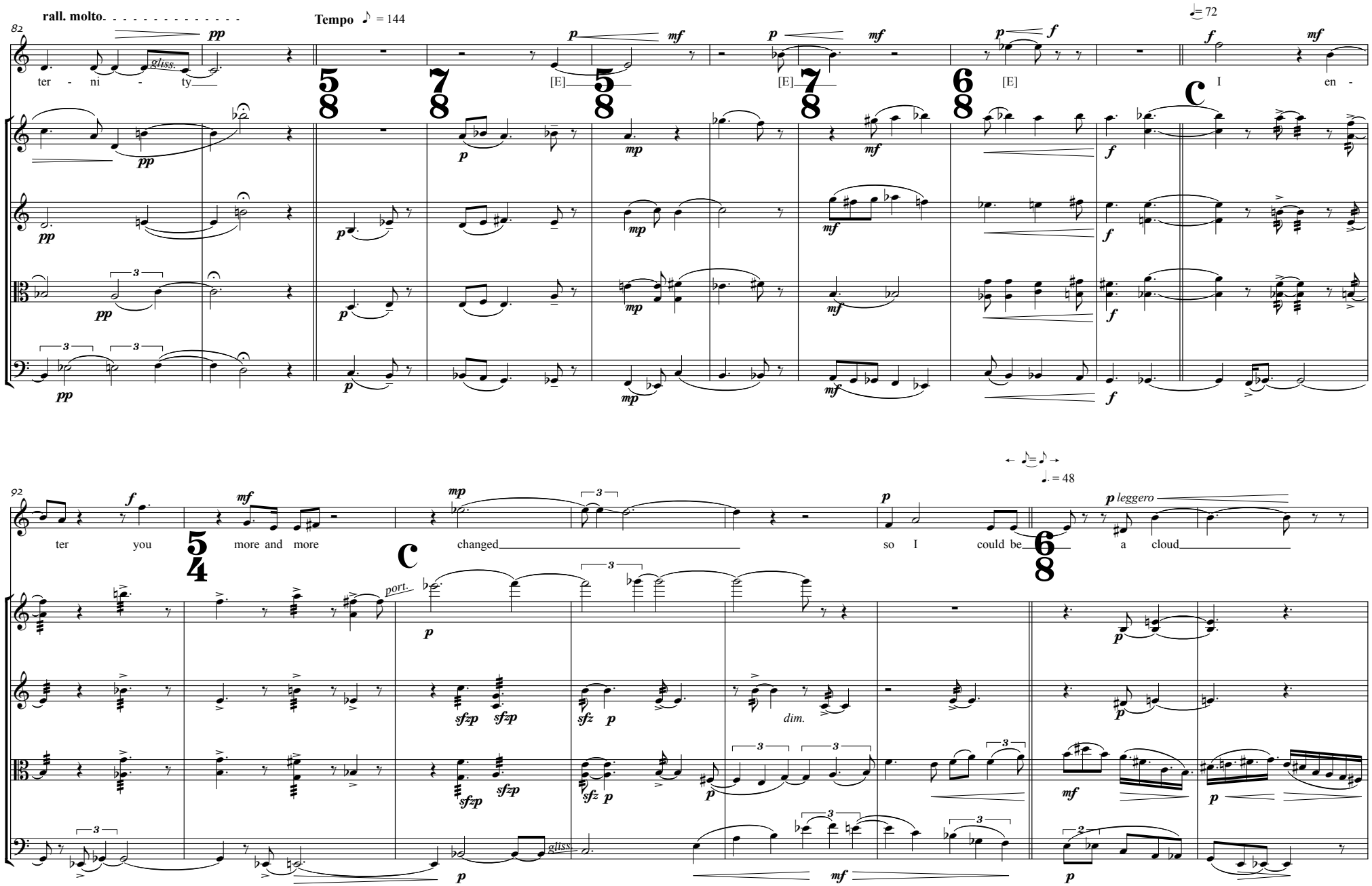
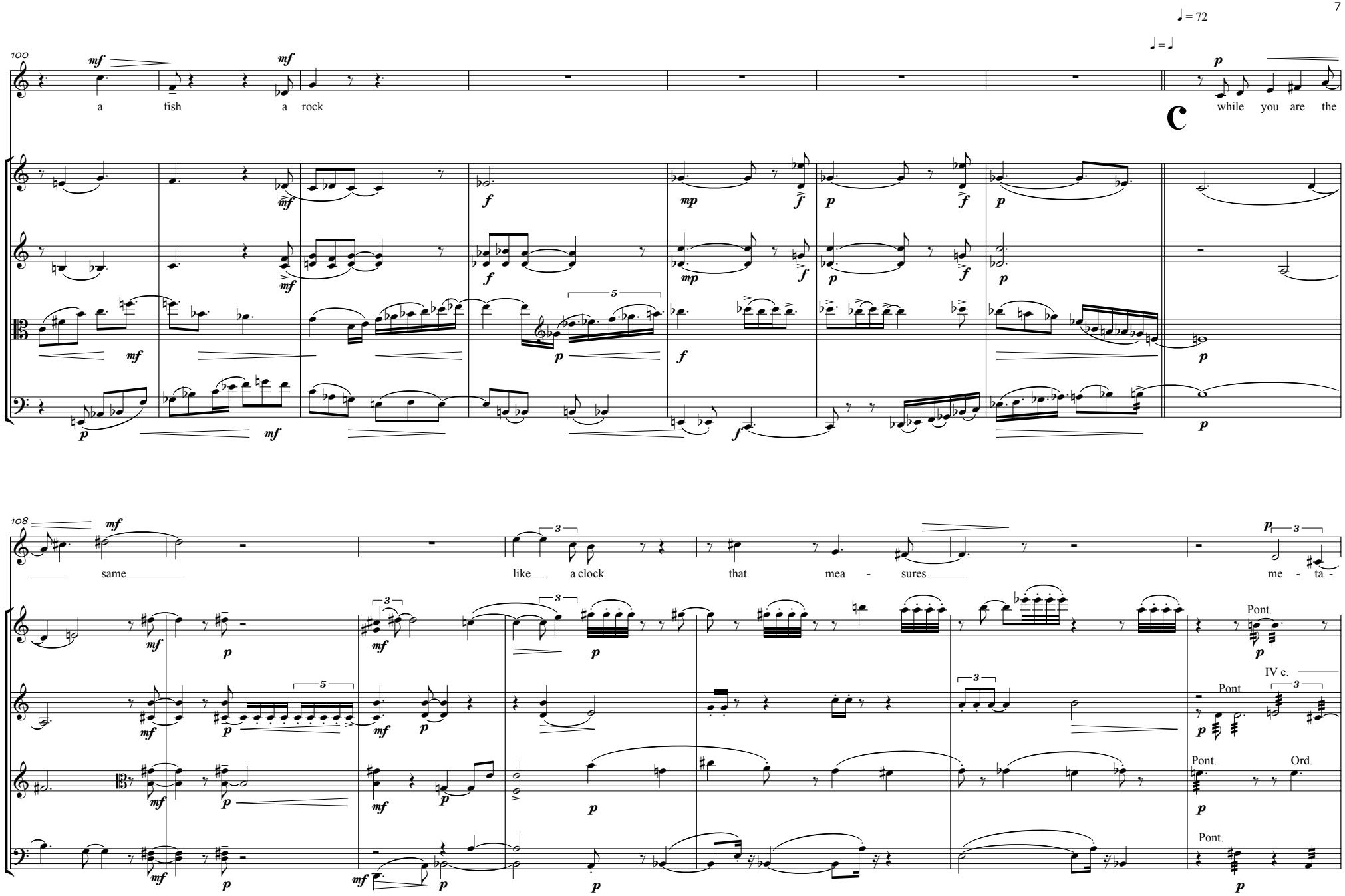

River 1
♩ = 92 ca.
12
21
Inner 2
♩ = 52
marcato
ri - - ver
[U´]
[m]
Pont.
Ord.
(simile)
espress.

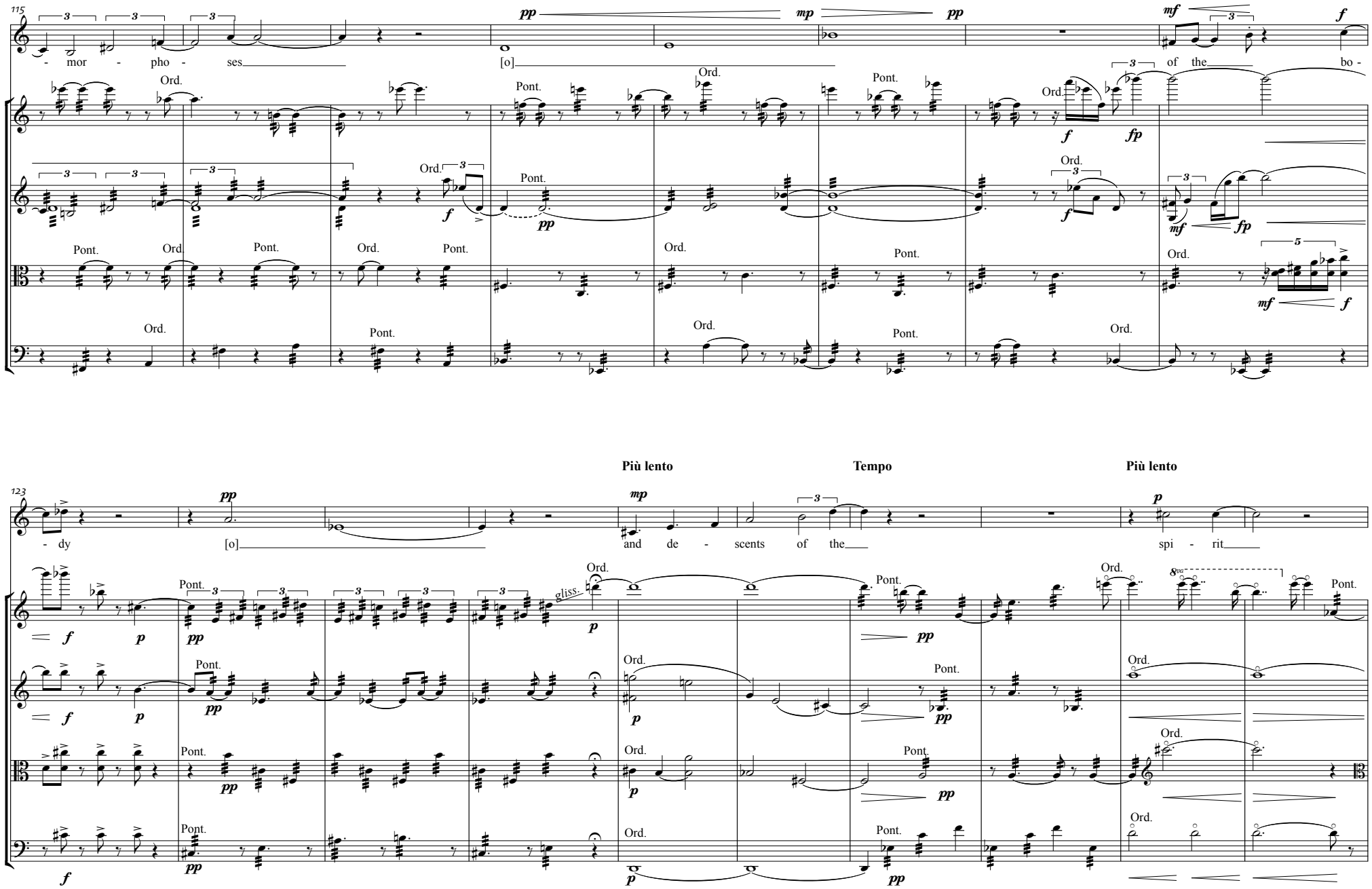

River 2
♩ = 96
29
mp
ri - ver
sffz
fp
p
ff
sfz
Pont.
Ord.
pp
39
Inner 3
♩ = 54
mf
sfz

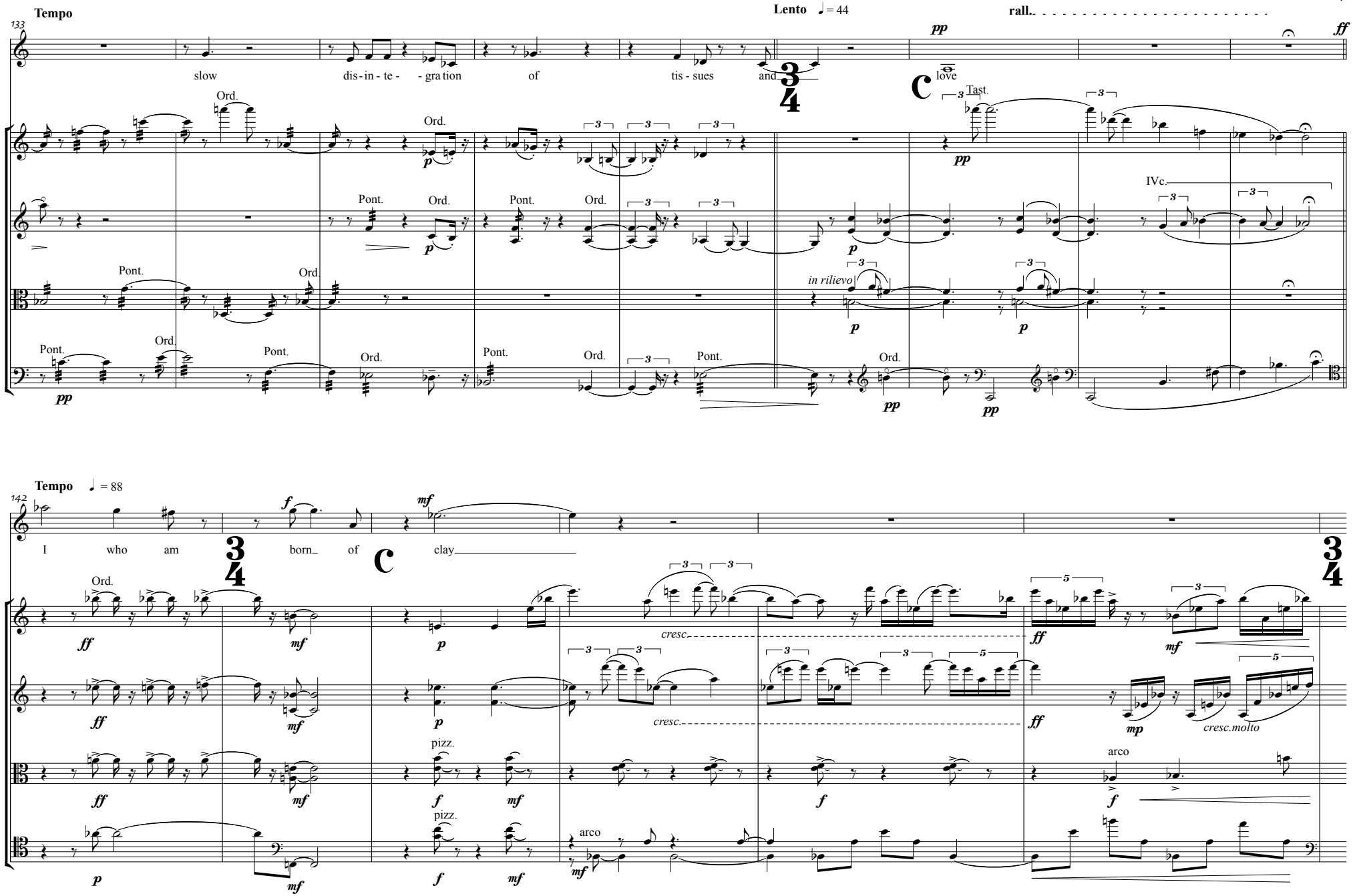

River 3
48
♩ = 100
mf
ri - ver
sfz pp
pp
p
Pont.
Ord.
gliss.
57
accel.
♩ = 108
III c.

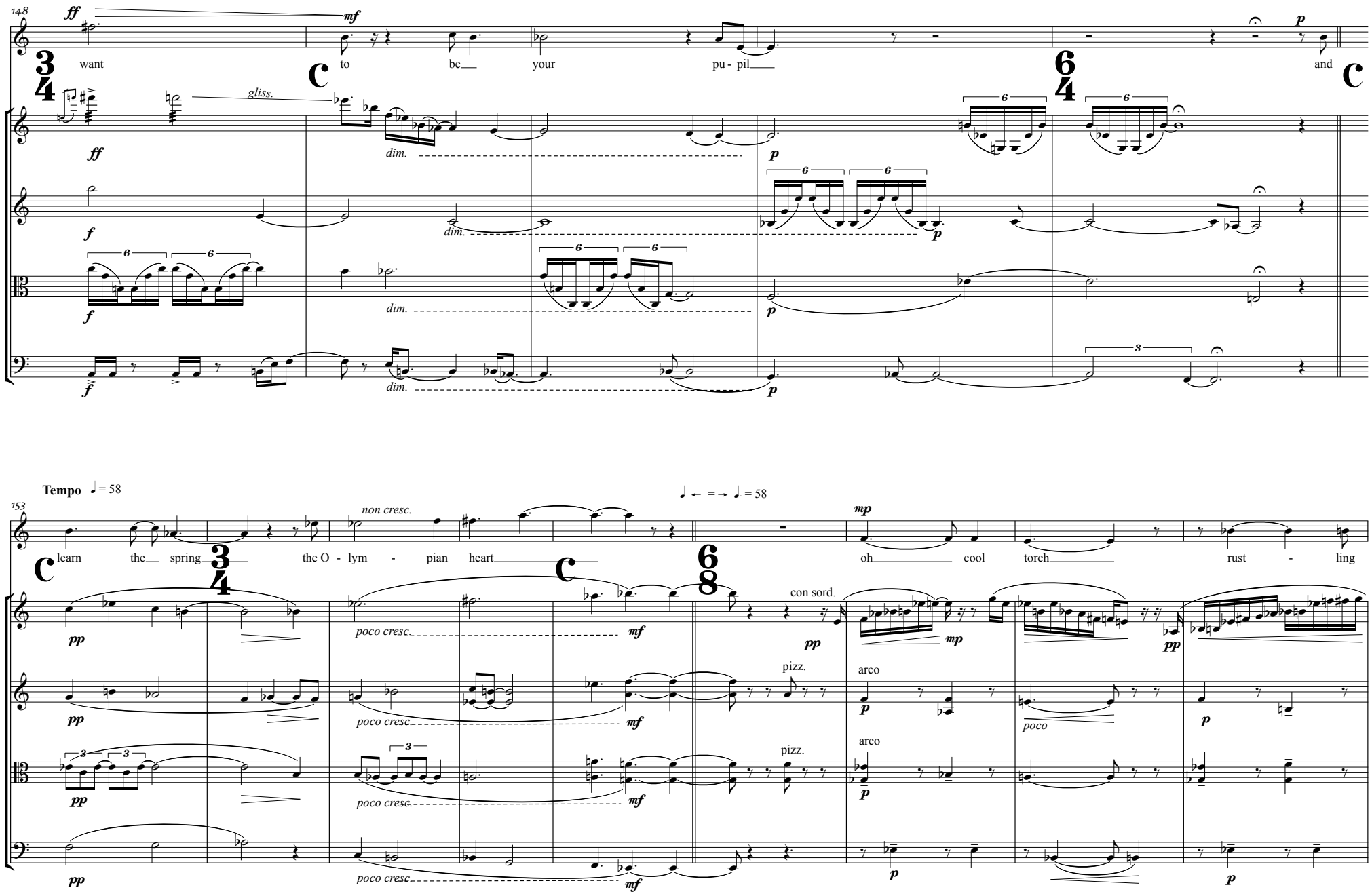

Più lento ♩ = 60
65
rall.
mf
p
hour - - glass
[ha]
III c.
IV c.
2/4
3/4
C
Tast.
pizz.
arco
accel. ♩ = 108
Più lento ♩ = 60
accel. ♩ = 108
73
of wa - ter
[o]
me ta phor of e-
Ord.
Tast.
pizz.
arco

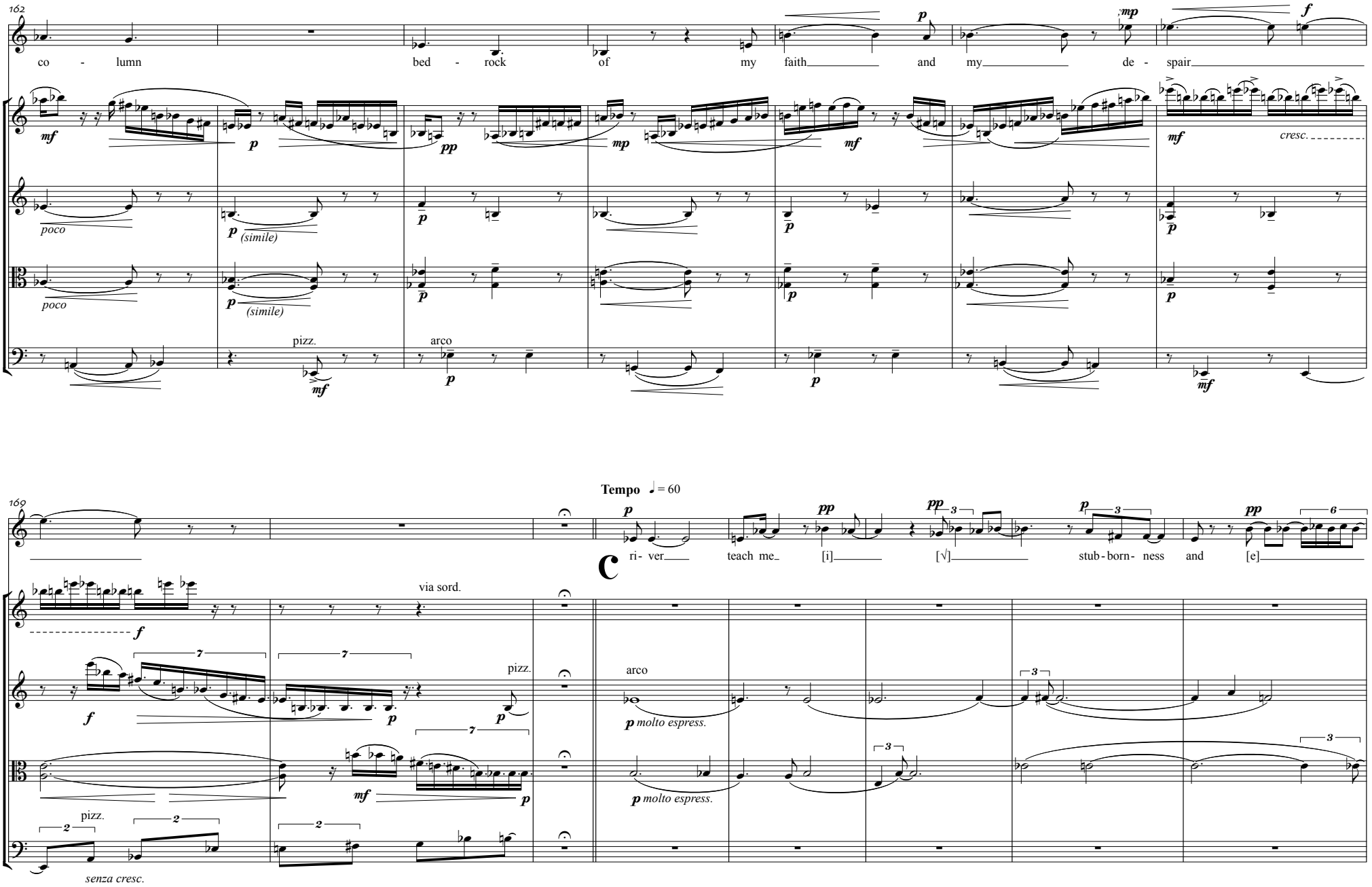

rall. molto.
Tempo ♪ = 144
82
ter - ni - ty
gliss.
[E]
[E]
[E]
I en -
92
ter you
more and more
changed
so I could be
a cloud
port.
sfzp
sfz
dim.
gliss.
leggero
♩. = 48

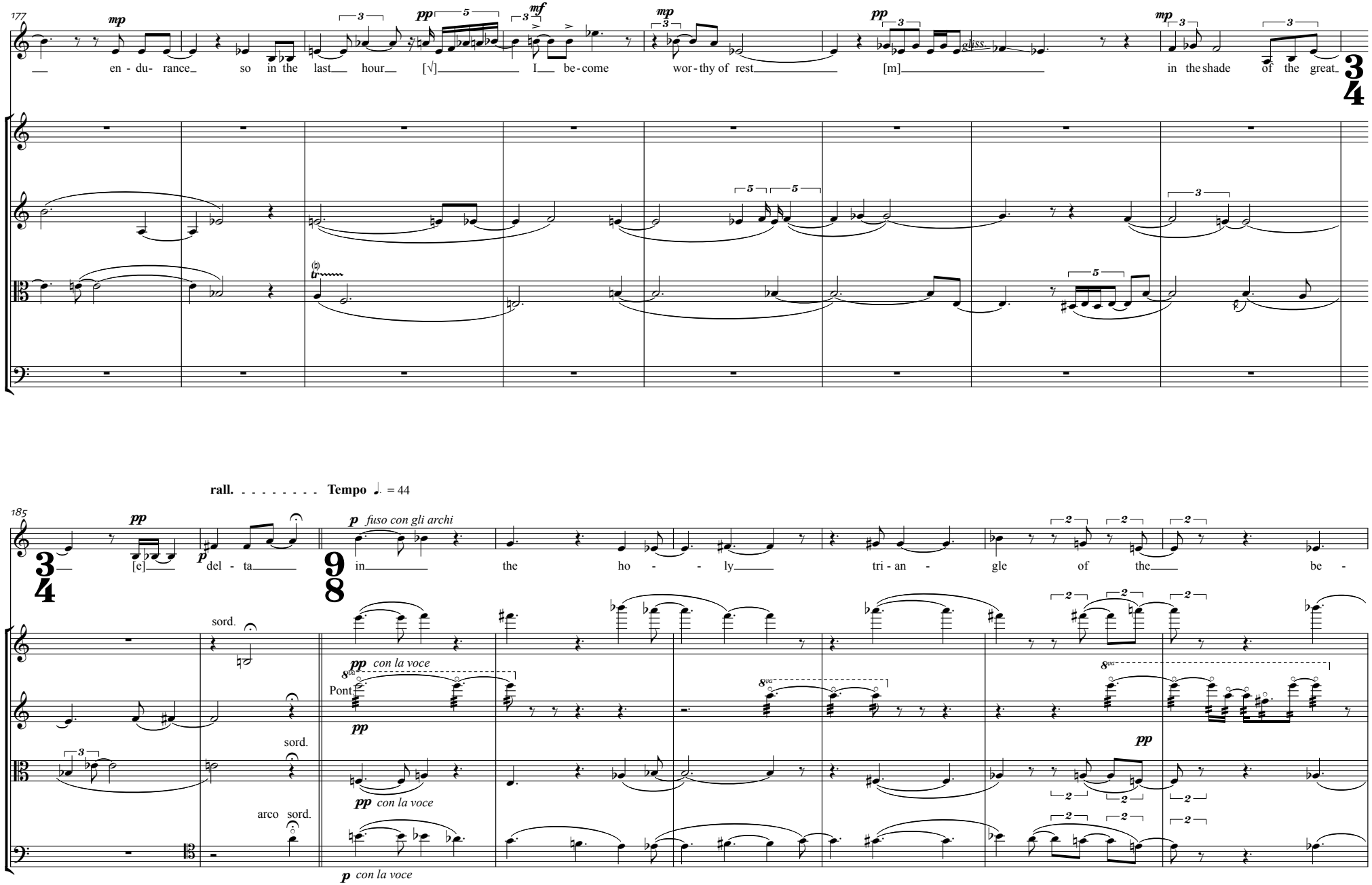

♩ = 72
100
a fish a rock
while you are the
C
108
same like a clock that mea - sures me - ta -
Pont.
IV c.
Ord.

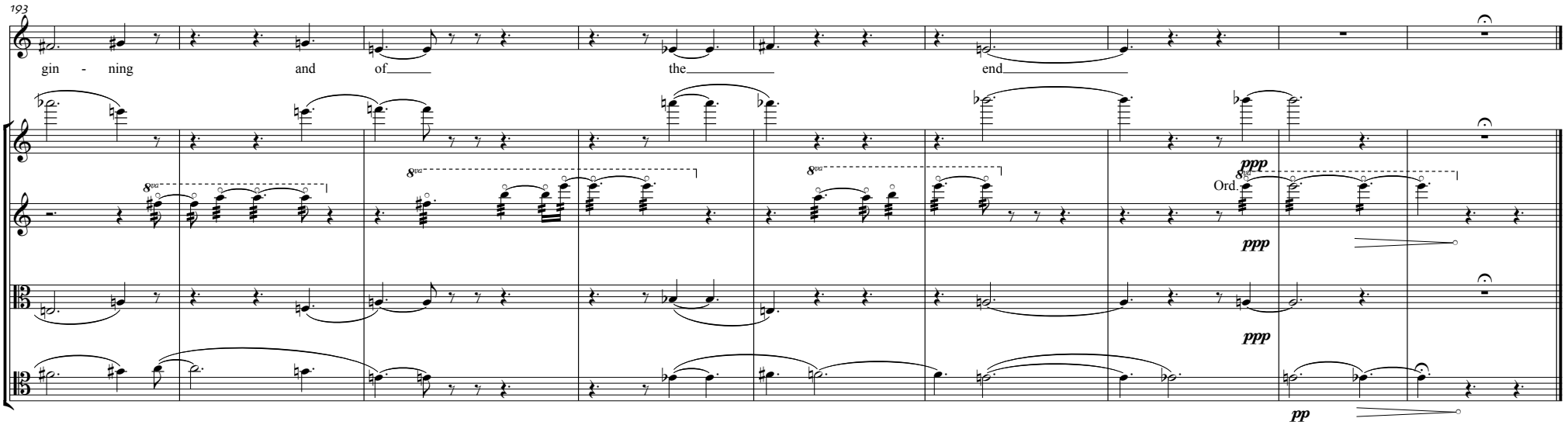

115
- mor - pho - ses
[o]
of the
bo -
123
- dy
[o]
and de - scents of the
spi - rit
Più lento
Tempo
Più lento
Ord.
Pont.
gliss.
8va


Tempo
133
Lento ♩= 44
rall.
slow dis-in-te- -gra tion of tis-sues and love
Ord.
Pont.
Tast.
IVc.
in rilievo
Tempo ♩= 88
142
I who am born of clay
pizz.
arco
cresc.
cresc.molto


148
rall.
want
to
be
your
pu - pil
and
gliss.
dim.
153
Tempo ♩= 58
learn
the
spring
non cresc.
the O - lym - pian
heart
oh
cool
torch
rust - ling
con sord.
pizz.
arco
poco cresc.
poco


162
co - lumn
bed - rock
of my faith
and my
de - spair
mf
p
mp
f
pp
cresc.
poco
(simile)
pizz.
arco
169
Tempo ♩= 60
ri- ver
teach me
[i]
[√]
stub- born- ness
and
[e]
C
via sord.
molto espress.
senza cresc.


177
mp
en - du- rance so in the last hour [√] I be-come
pp
mf
mp
wor-thy of rest [m]
pp
gliss
mp
in the shade of the great
3
4
rall. . . . . Tempo ♩. = 44
185
pp
[e] del - ta
p fuso con gli archi
in the ho - - ly tri - an - gle of the be -
9
8
sord.
pp con la voce
Pont.
pp
sord.
pp con la voce
arco sord.
p con la voce
pp


193
gin - ning and of the end
8va
ppp
Ord.
ppp
ppp
pp