First violin part

Dave Soldier

String Quartet #1 opus 3
with percussion

original version for amplified string quartet and trap drums
or alternate version for acoustic quartet and hand percussion

"The Impossible"

1. Open Hydrant
2. Walking on the Third Rail
3. Ron visits the Polymer Lounge
4. For His Bad Self
5. She put my head under the water

composed in 1987, premiered 1988
this transcription April 16, 2011 version

about 25 minutes

Dave Soldier
davesoldier.com
ds43@columbia.edu

Performance notes for "The Impossible Quartet"

This can be performed either by an amplified quartet with an American style "trap" drum set – i.e., rock or rhythm & blues style drums; or by a normal acoustic string quartet with quieter hand percussion.

The piece is highly influenced by rhythm and blues, and directly quotes James Brown's *Papa's Got a Brand New Bag* in the 4th movement, as well as hip hop, the sounds of the New York City subways, and children's street games.

The guitarist, cellist, and drummer *must* know the James Brown original – the cellist can deviate from it at will, but must know the overall structure of the melody, and can quote from it or not. There is an untimed "cadenza" for the cello on the last phrase.

Each player has *improvised solos*, and these are marked by "hatches". The improvisations must relate to the surrounding material, but you have otherwise freedom to play what you would like. In some cases I place some advice on the approach to the solo. One overall piece of advice is to leave breaths, i.e. silences between phrases, or it will be hard to build in more tensions. Consider that leaving breath is natural for wind instruments that developed the rhythm and blues solo traditions – for inspiration you may like to listen to saxophone players like Maceo Parker and Hank Crawford. In some cases I write chord changes above the improvised sections.

For open repeat solos, just know who cues and make sure they don't go on too long. Depending on context, the other players can make impromptu variations on their repeated parts, particularly if the soloist is going on a little too long.

The 1st and 5th movement can both use a recording of kids playing street games in the background. This is a good excuse for someone in the quartet to go outside and record them.

String techniques

There are numerous unusual techniques in this piece, and here are some guidelines. When in doubt, use my 1992 recording by the Soldier String Quartet on *Sojourner Truth* as a guide – but don't feel trapped by that recording if you have ideas on how to improve on it or add your own personality.

Lines without noteheads are used to indicated microtonal glisses between the pitches that are shown. Don't worry much about making these exact, they can be expressive sounding glisses that sound satisfying to you.

Speech pitch is indicated by square boxes on the noteheads. Speech pitch imitates spoken inflections, and hence is made of microtonal glissandos. It is played by stopping the string with the left hand over rather than under the instrument, to

enforce intonation that is only approximate. Pinch the string between your thumb and index finger and slide it around the notes indicated to help you to sound like someone speaking or rapping. It helps to think of spoken phrases and to emulate the intonation of them.

The cello has notes in pizzicato sections marked with an "x" notehead. These are percussive and made by *slaps* by the left hand on the neck. They should imitate a snare drum backbeat or a handclap. In pizzicato areas, consider where a "*slap bass*" approach should be used, a classic jazz technique where the strings are plucked hard enough to bounce a bit on the neck.

The second violin and viola also use *slaps* on the neck as marked by an x notehead, which are meant to emulate handclaps. These can be pretty loud and should be, especially for amplified instruments.

Wavy lines over a note means to make a large wobble in the pitch.

The violas's siren imitates a police or ambulance, and use whatever approach you would like including electronics.

"*Squealy noise*" means imitate the squeak sounds of bad subway brakes.

The end of the first movement and first section of the second imitate a subway. They should be differentiated sounds, with the end of the first out of phase with each other and very ponticello, choosing different notes. The top of the second is everyone together in time, and the amplified strings can use distortion if a "fuzz box" is available.

The guitar chord

The fourth movement has the second violinist playing a single chord (an E9) on the guitar for the James Brown number. For amplified quartet it should be an electric guitar, for the acoustic quartet, an acoustic guitar is fine. Of course this can be played by the percussionist instead, or by the other violinist if the second takes the first's part. It could even be played by a guest who plays the guitar, who in this case sits on stage of the entire piece to play about 3 measures of music of one chord.

Drums and percussion

The drum kit uses the snare on the middle line, bass drum on lowest line, cymbals on space above upper line and toms in lower line. The cowbell near the end is indicated. My experience is that drummers prefer this kind of notation more than writing out every note. Essentially any kind of drum kit with any drums can work so long as the drummer has worked on the parts.

For the acoustic quartet, quieter hand percussion is used. At this time and place, the best preference for a basic drum is probably the flamenco style cajon, which has developed as an instrument over the past twenty years and can hold all of

the patterns of the drum kit. This is based on the Cuban cajon used in rumba, but they have added a snare to the inside of the box. Nevertheless, the instrument is not known universally and it is impossible to predict if it will continue to be well established, and if so, where. Thus percussionists can choose there own instruments, but simply must be aware of the different patterns required, and for that listening to the original recording is a good guide.

In addition to the cajon, a hand percussionist requires cymbals and a cowbell for the last movement. A hi-hat may be useful, and a boxing ring bell is nice. Bongos are useful as long as they can be played quietly to not obscure the strings.

-Dave Soldier NYC April 18, 2011

Violin 1
1987
version April 16, 2011

String Quartet #1
The Impossible

Dave Soldier

#1 Open Hydrant

♩=80

3

19

cello strums cue in

♩=96

26

27

28

31

sounds of kids playing outside

35

kids out

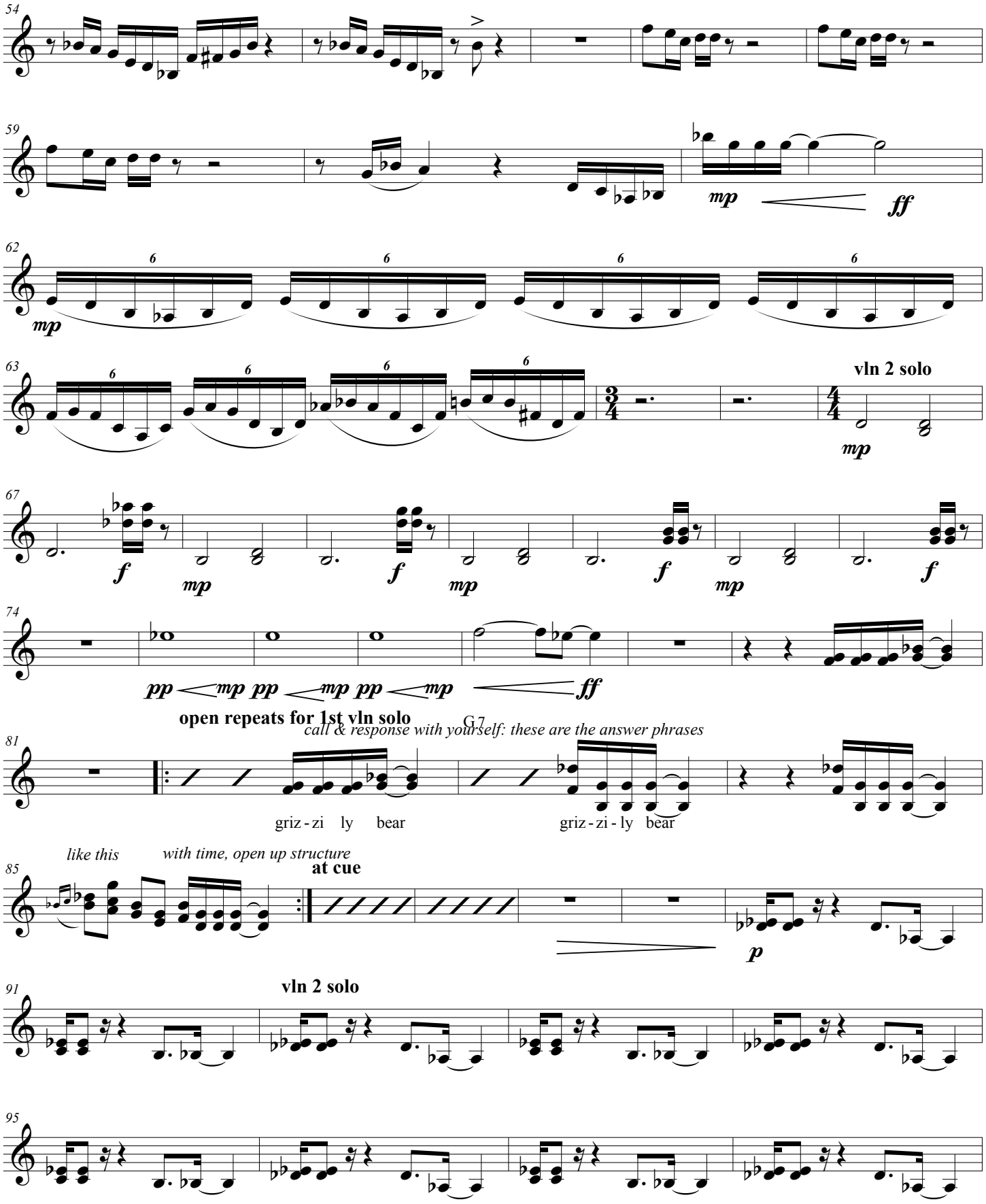
vln 2 solo

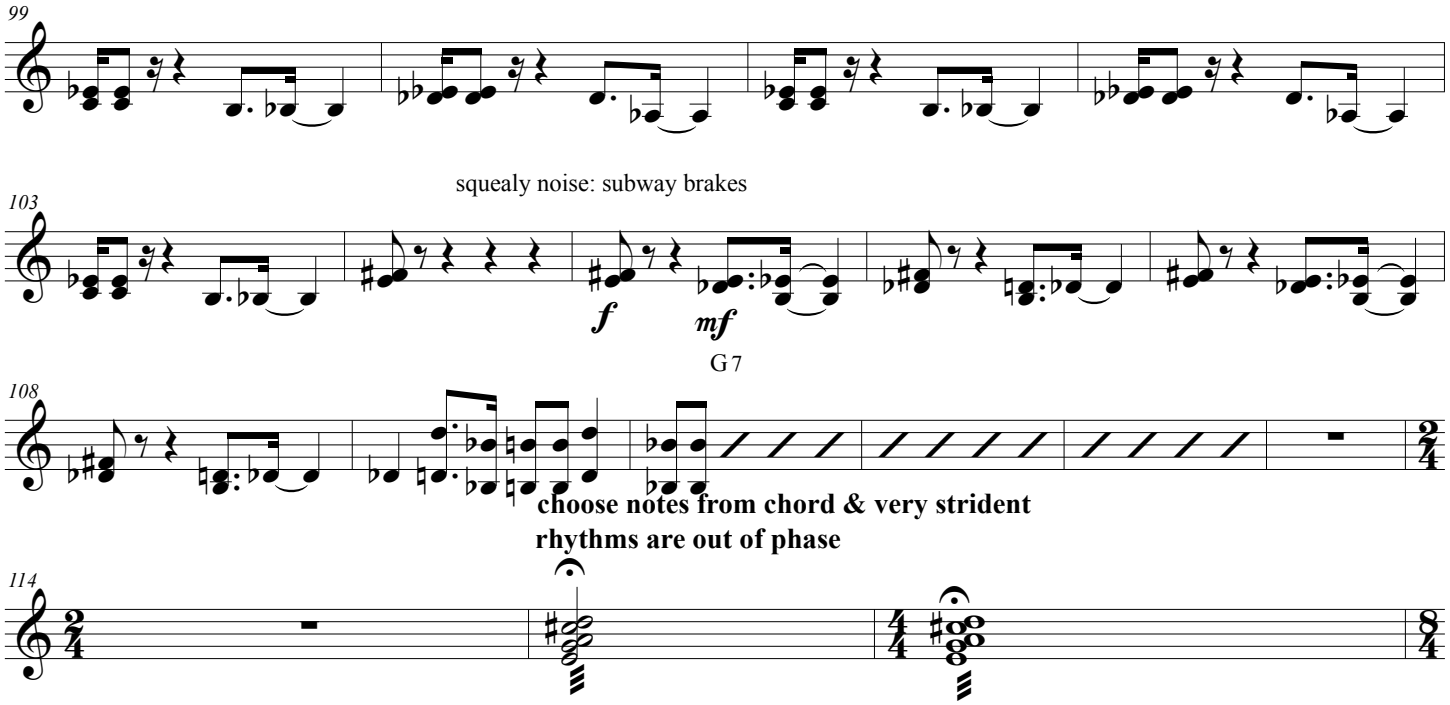
41

45

speech pitch

50


54
59
mp
ff
62
mp
63
vln 2 solo
mp
67
f
mp
74
pp
mp pp
mp pp
mp
ff
open repeats for 1st vln solo
G7
call & response with yourself: these are the answer phrases
81
griz - zi ly bear
griz - zi - ly bear
like this
with time, open up structure
85
at cue
p
91
vln 2 solo
95

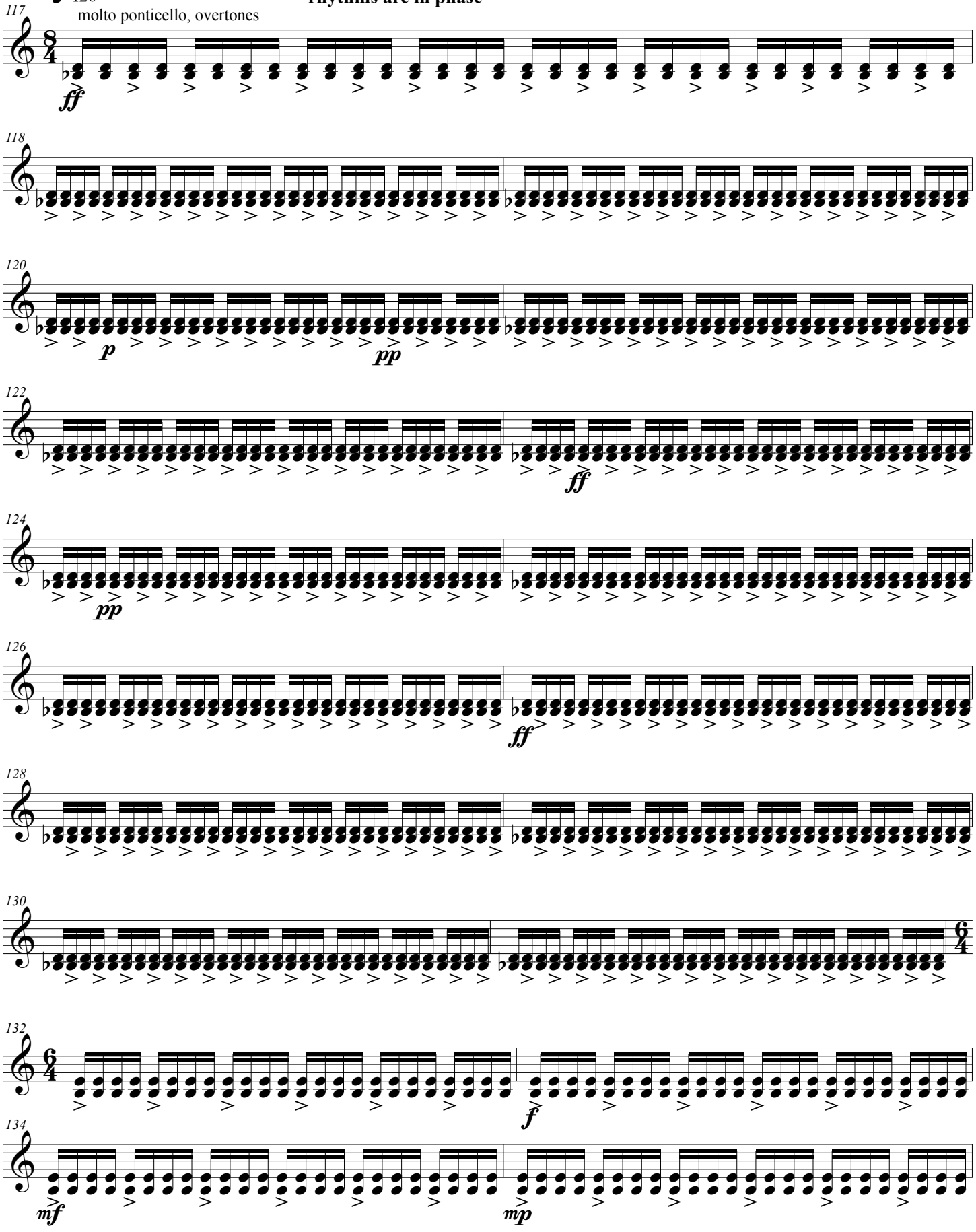

99
squealy noise: subway brakes
103
f
mf
G 7
108
choose notes from chord & very strident
rhythms are out of phase
114

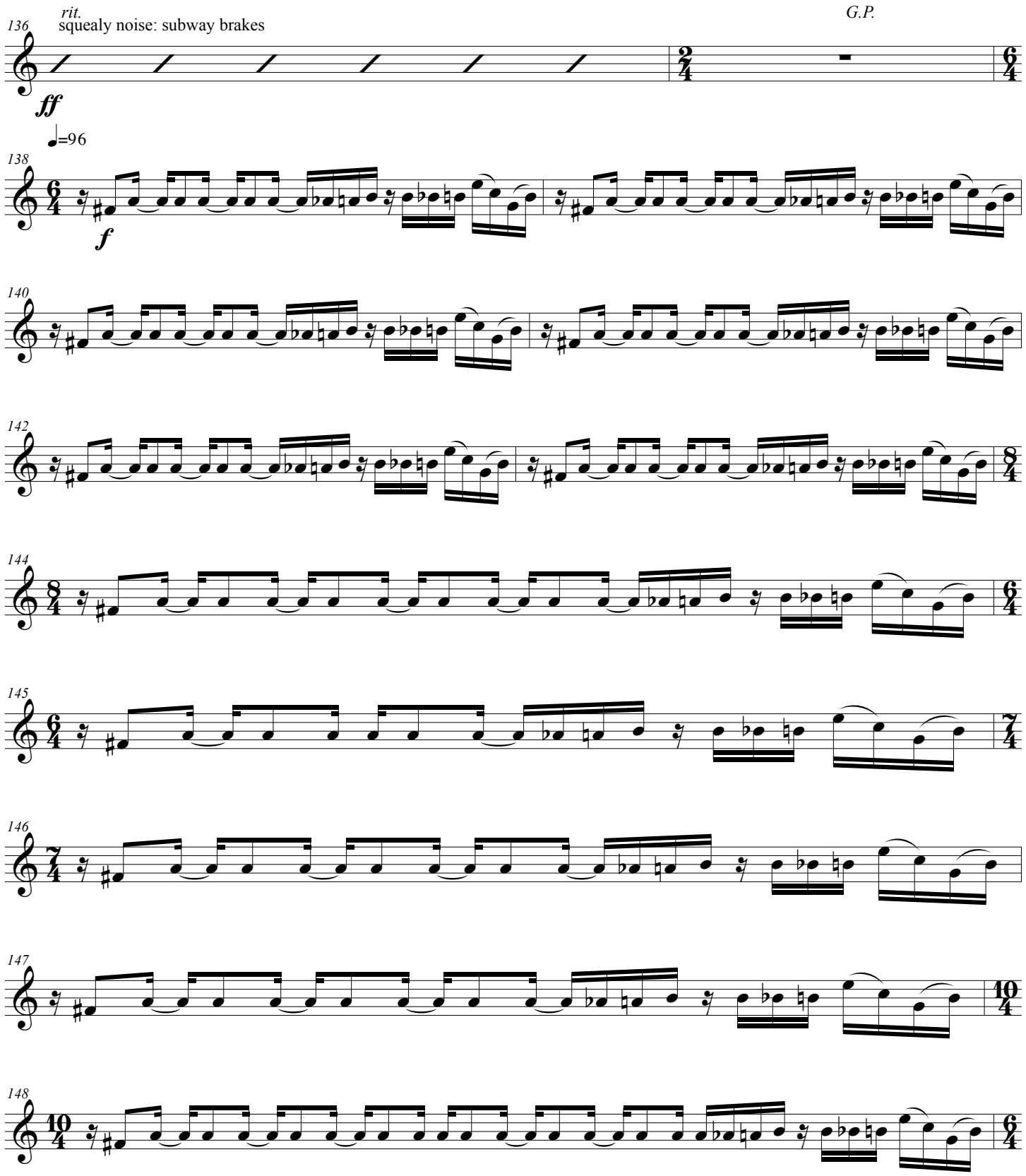
4 **#2 Walking on the Third Rail**

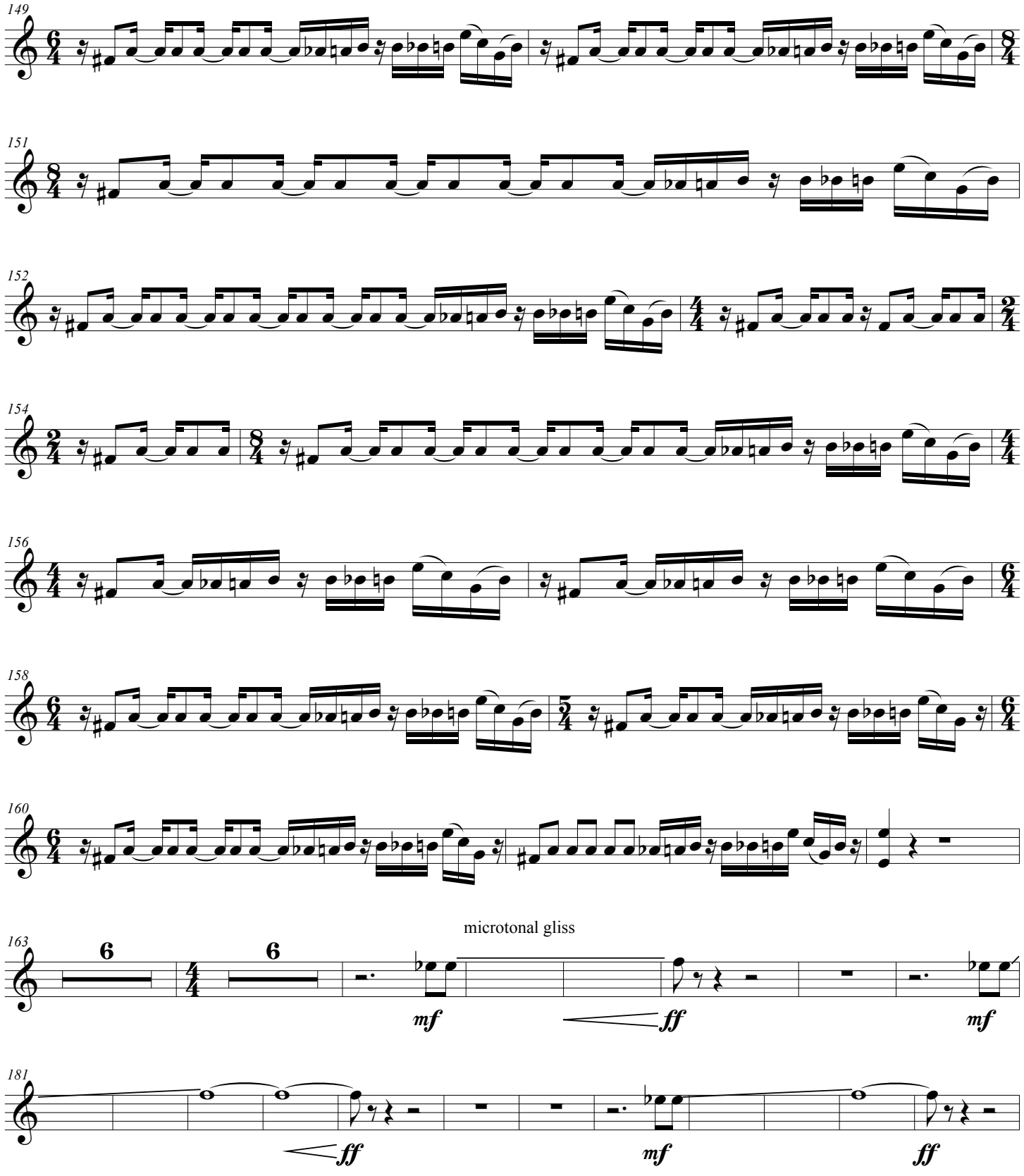
♩=120

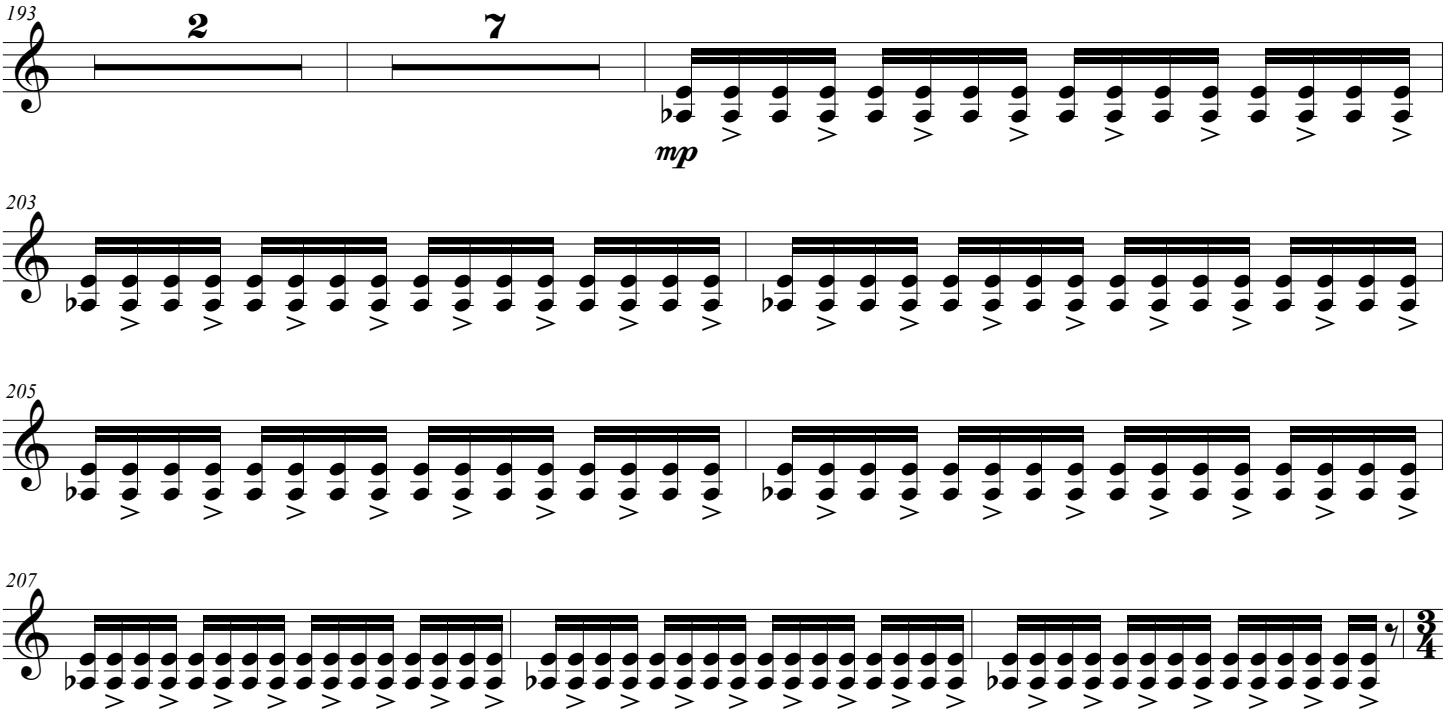
molto ponticello, overtones

rhythms are in phase

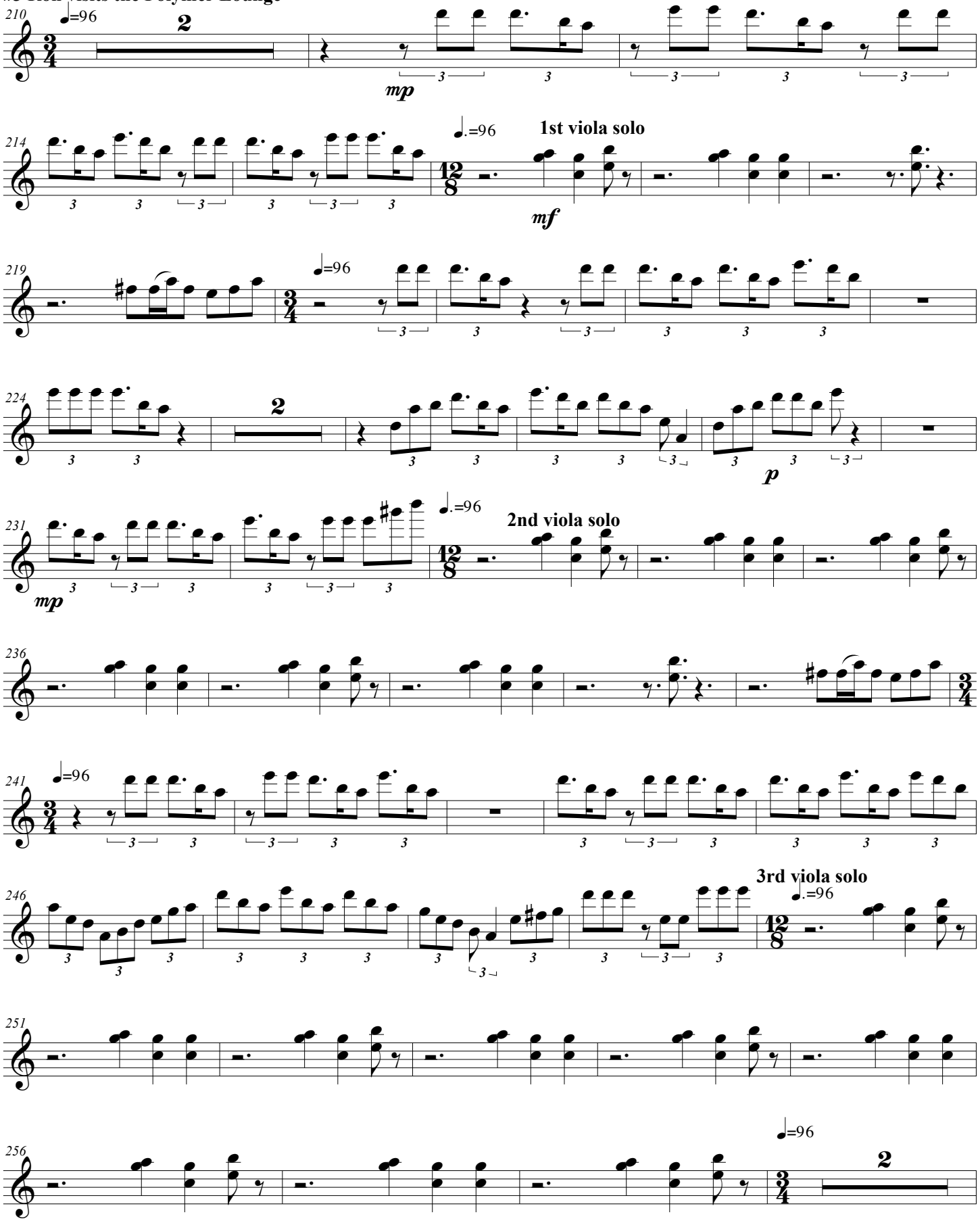


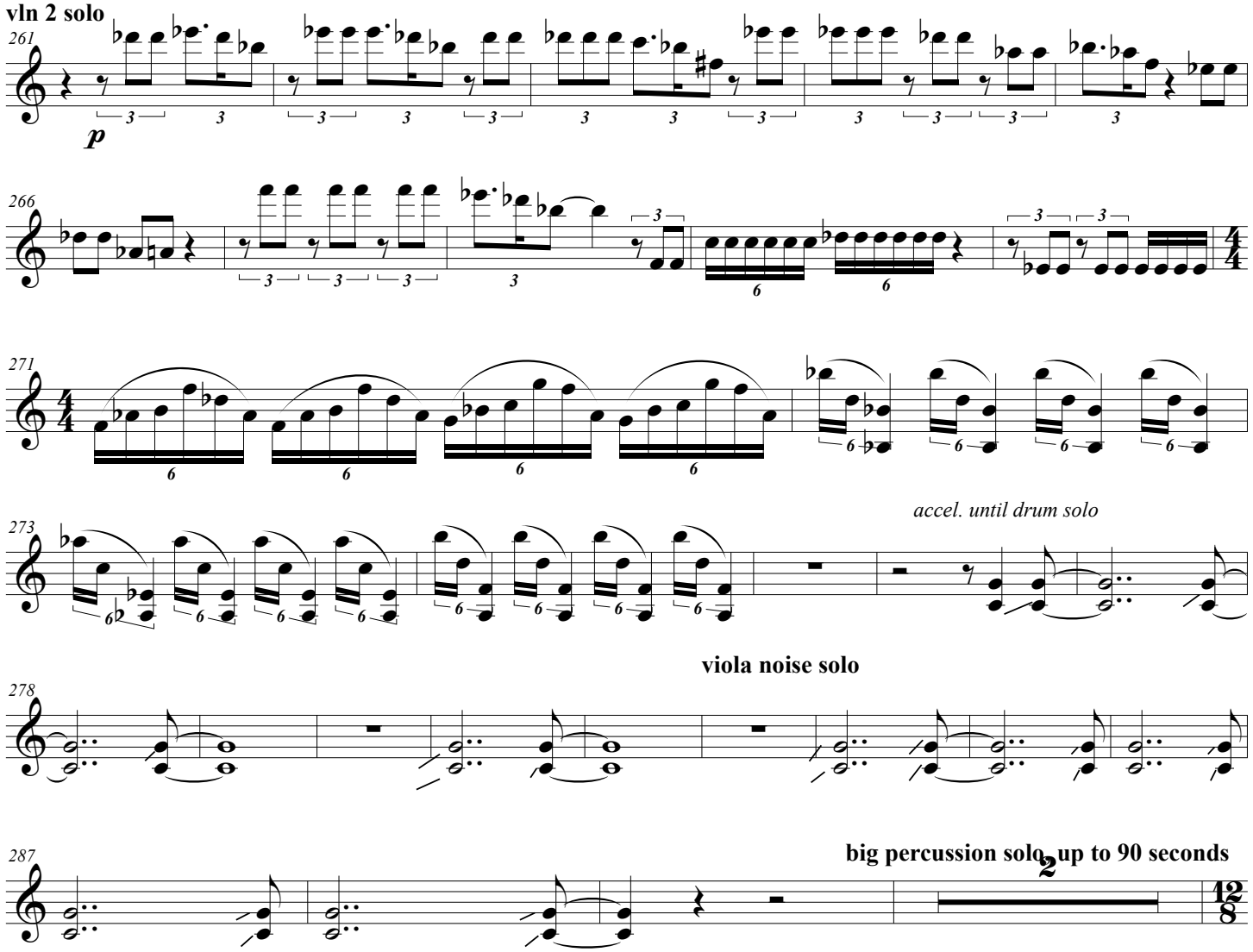

136
rit.
squealy noise: subway brakes
G.P.
ff
♩=96
138
f
140
142
144
145
146
147
148


149
151
152
154
156
158
160
163
181
microtonal gliss
mf
ff
mf
ff
mf
ff


193
2
7
mp
203
205
207
3/4

#3 Ron visits the Polymer Lounge




vln 2 solo
261
p
266
271
4/4
273
accel. until drum solo
viola noise solo
278
287
big percussion solo up to 90 seconds
2
12/8

#4 For His Bad Self

292 12/8 ♩.=112 *f*

296 3

300 ♩=96 4/4 *mf*

1st cello solo

304

310

2nd cello solo

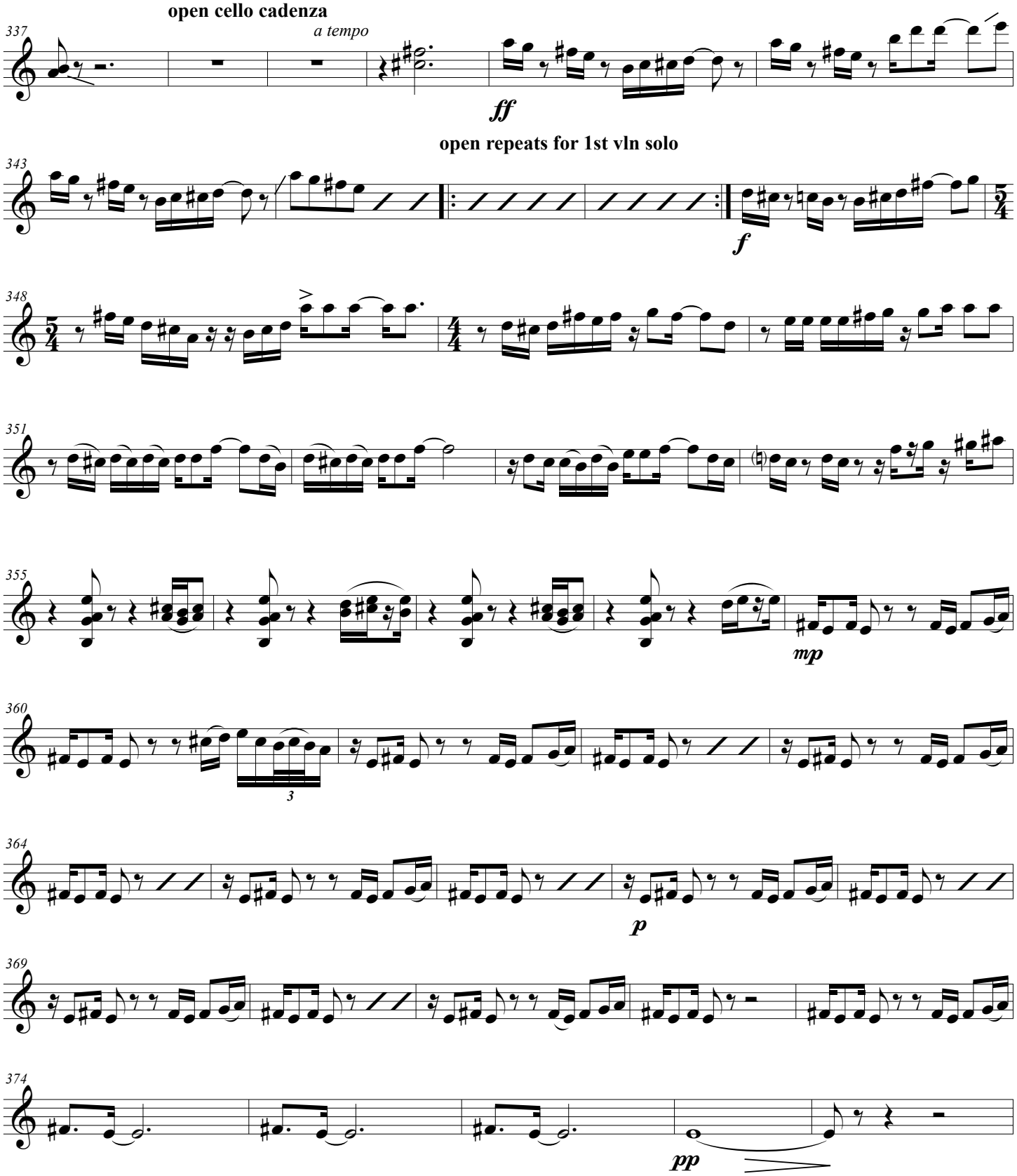
316

321

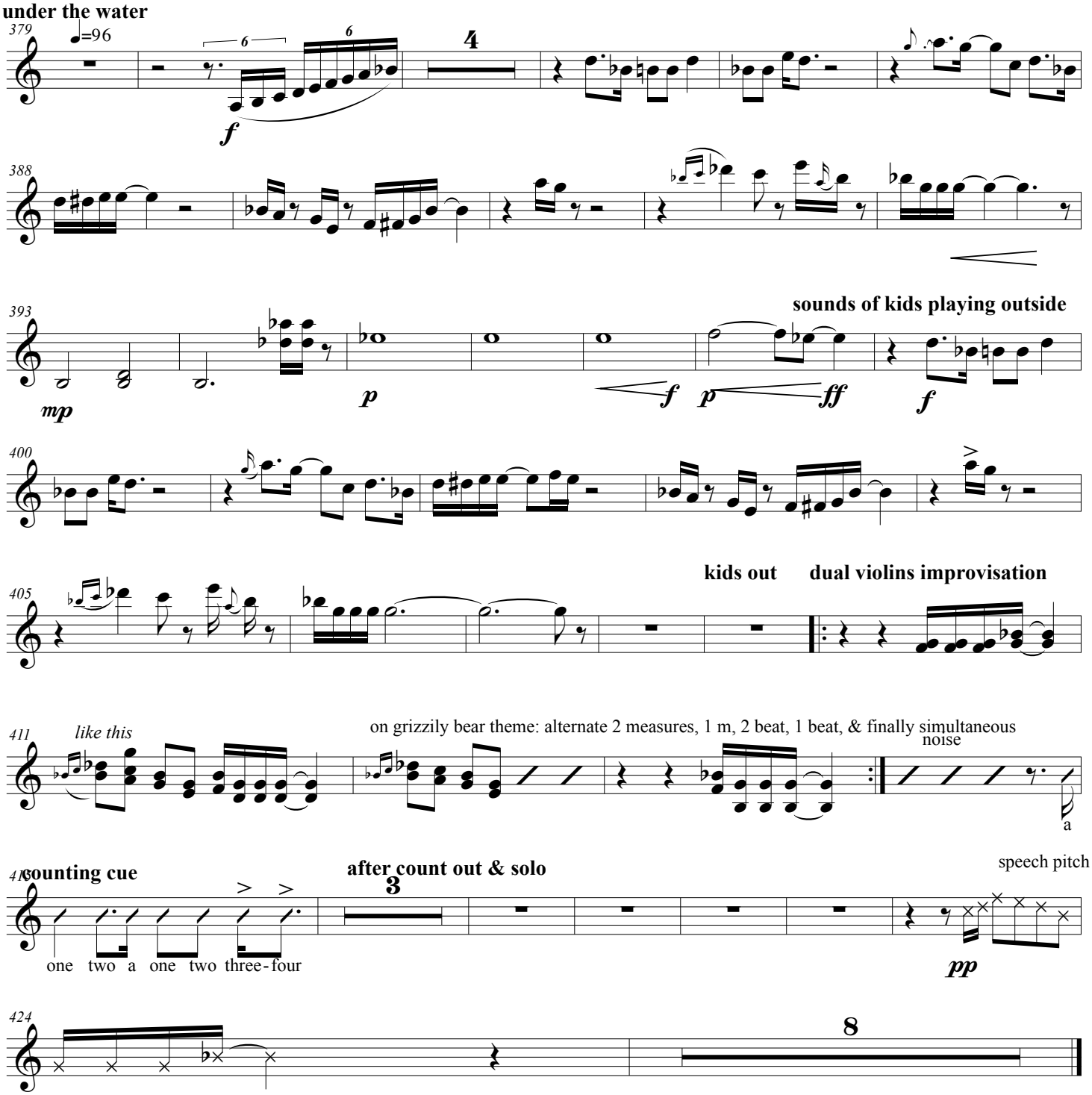
3rd cello solo

326

332


open cello cadenza
337
a tempo
ff
open repeats for 1st vln solo
343
f
348
351
355
mp
360
3
364
p
369
374
pp

#5 She put my head under the water



Second violin part

Dave Soldier

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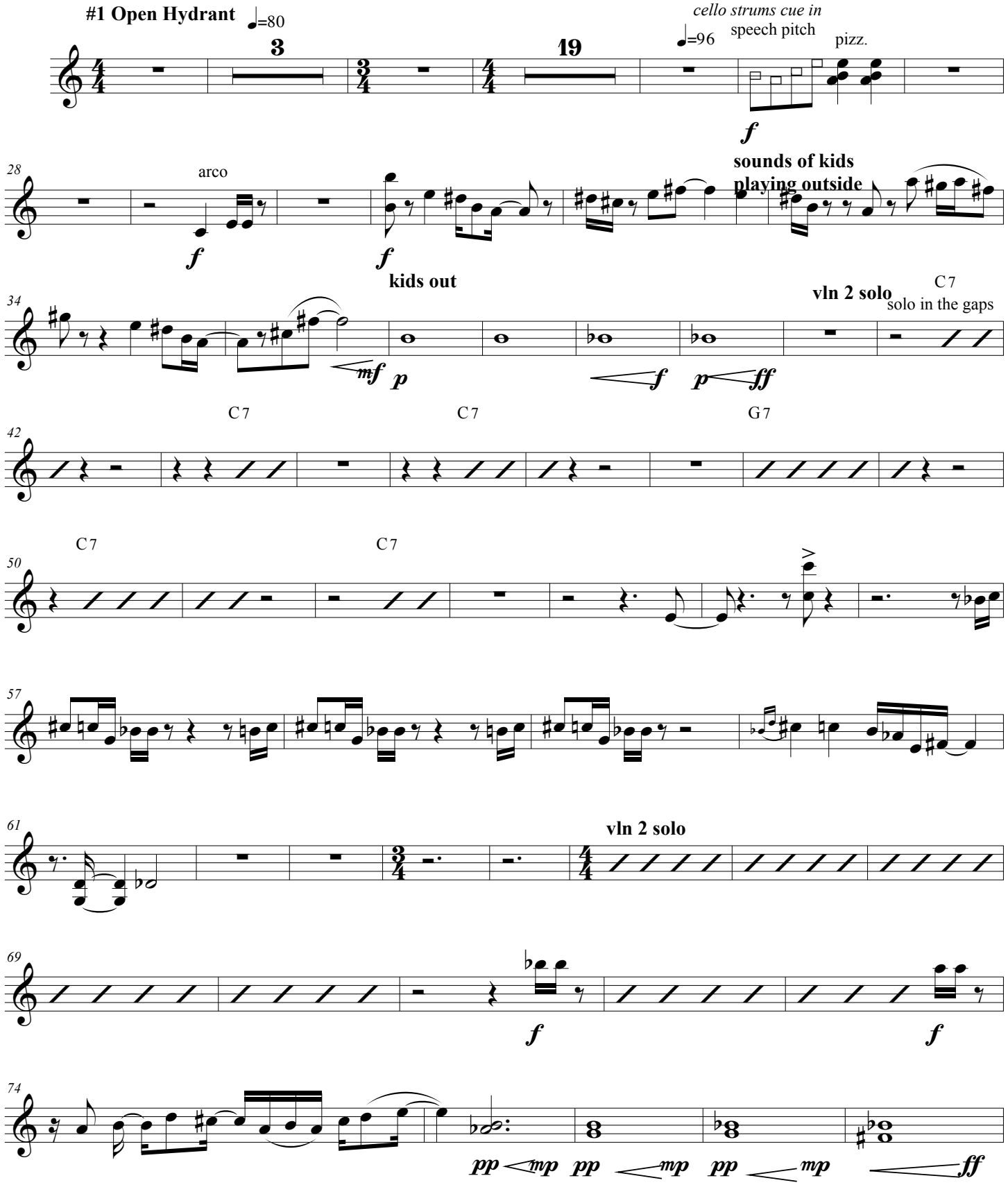
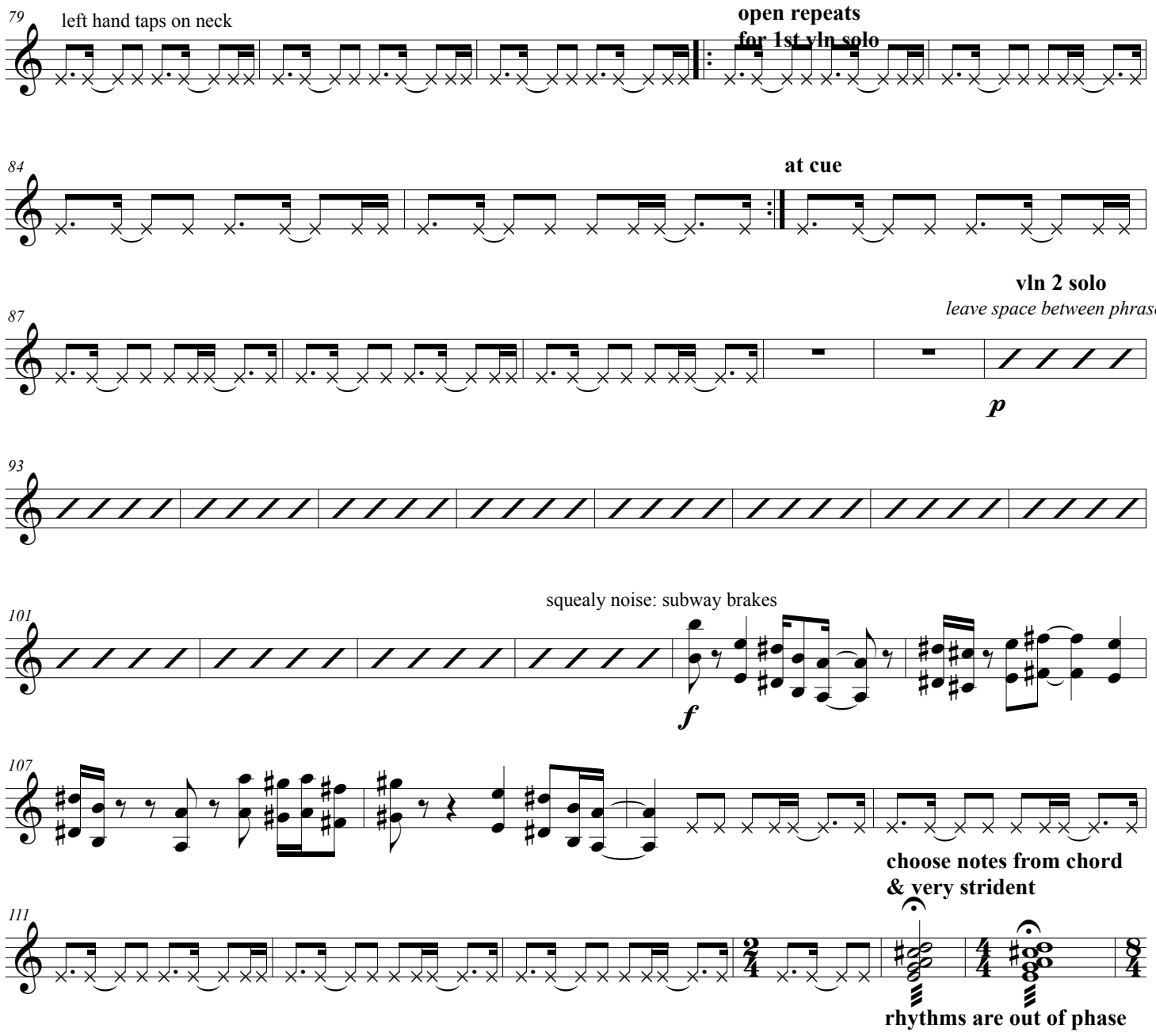
-Dave Soldier NYC April 18, 2011

Violin 2
1987
version April 16, 2011

String Quartet #1
The Impossible

Dave Soldier



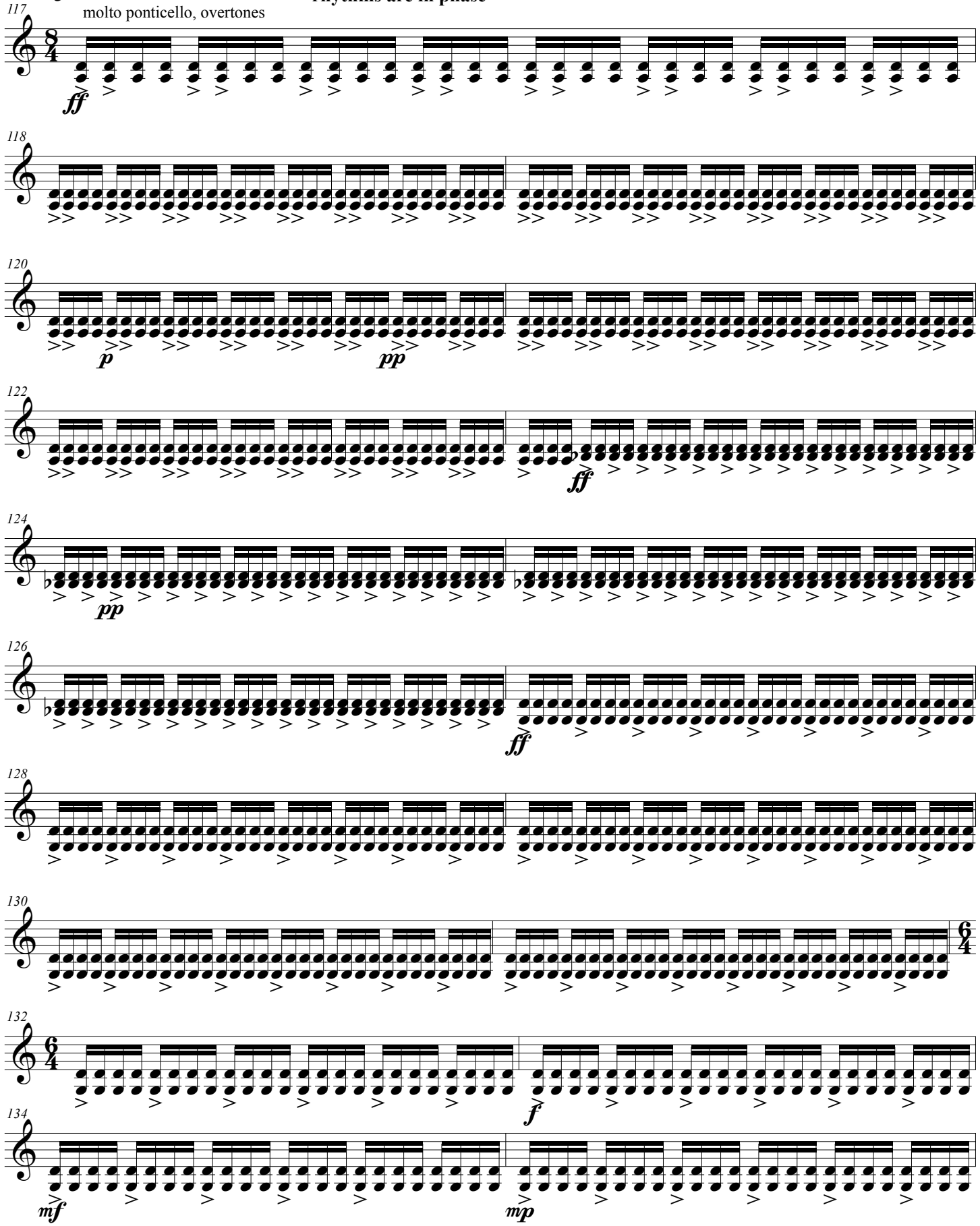

79
left hand taps on neck
open repeats
for 1st vln solo
84
at cue
87
vln 2 solo
leave space between phrases
p
93
101
squealy noise: subway brakes
f
107
choose notes from chord
& very strident
111
rhythms are out of phase

#2 Walking on the Third Rail

♩=120

molto ponticello, overtones

rhythms are in phase



squealy noise: subway brakes

G.P.

♩=96

136

ff

these phrases with snare drum

139

ff

142

144

146

148

150

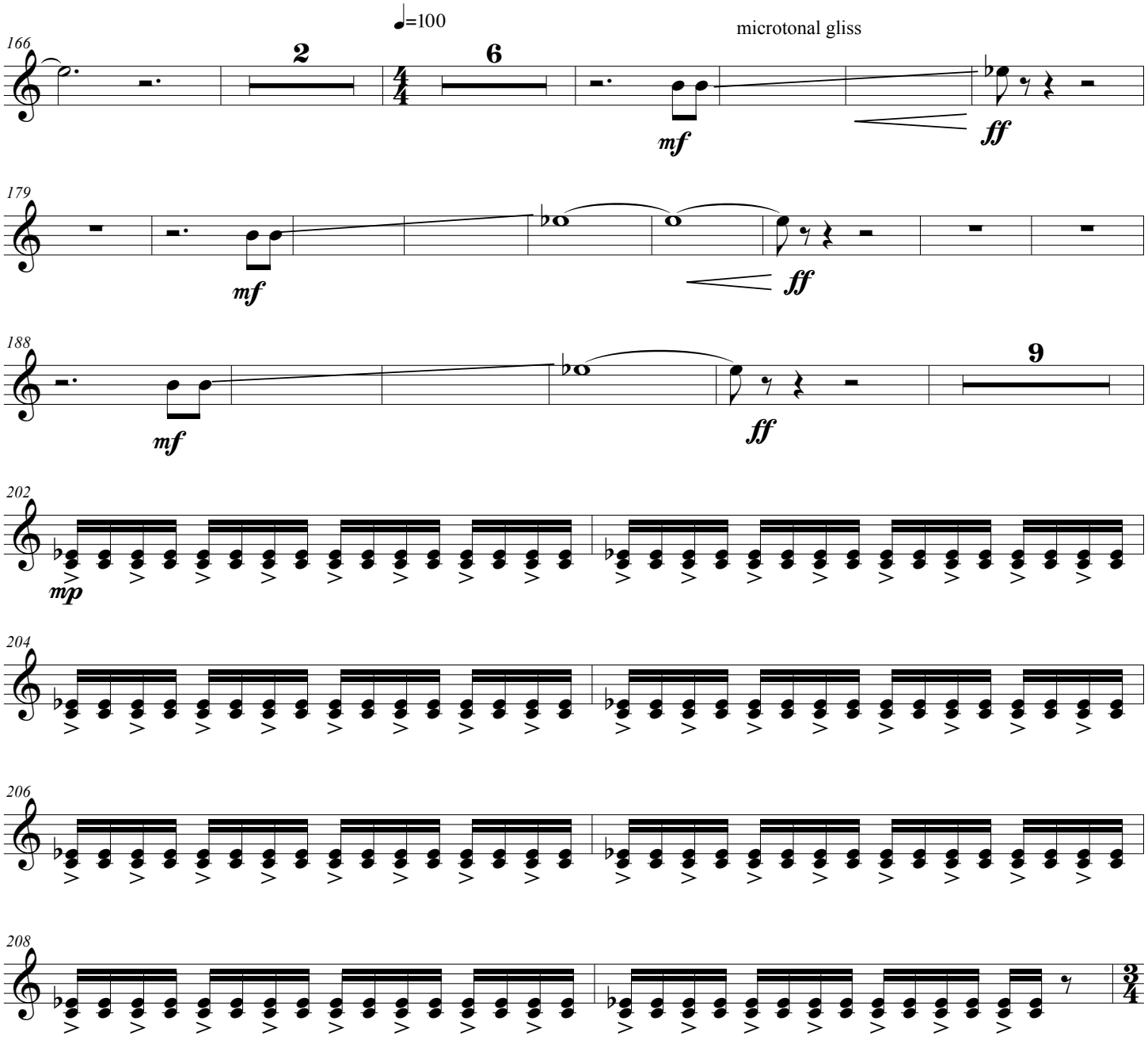
152

155

158

160

162


166
♩=100
2
6
microtonal gliss
mf
ff
179
mf
ff
188
mf
ff
9
202
mp
204
206
208

#3 Ron visits the Polymer Lounge

210 ♩=96 *mp*

♩.=96 **1st viola solo** *mf*

217 improv with lots of glissandos, don't stand out

♩=96

224 *f*

230 ♩.=96 **2nd viola solo**

236

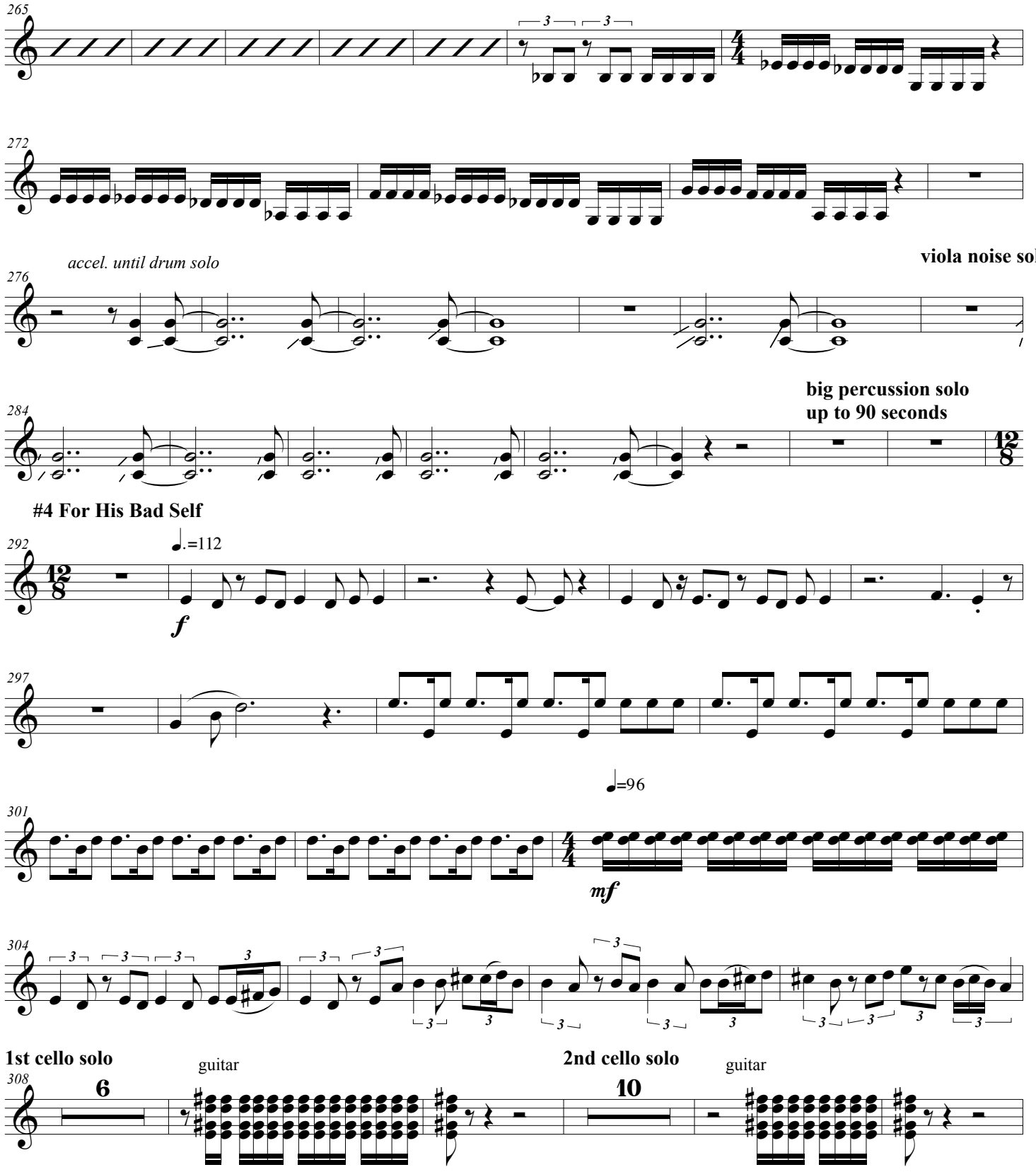
241 ♩=96

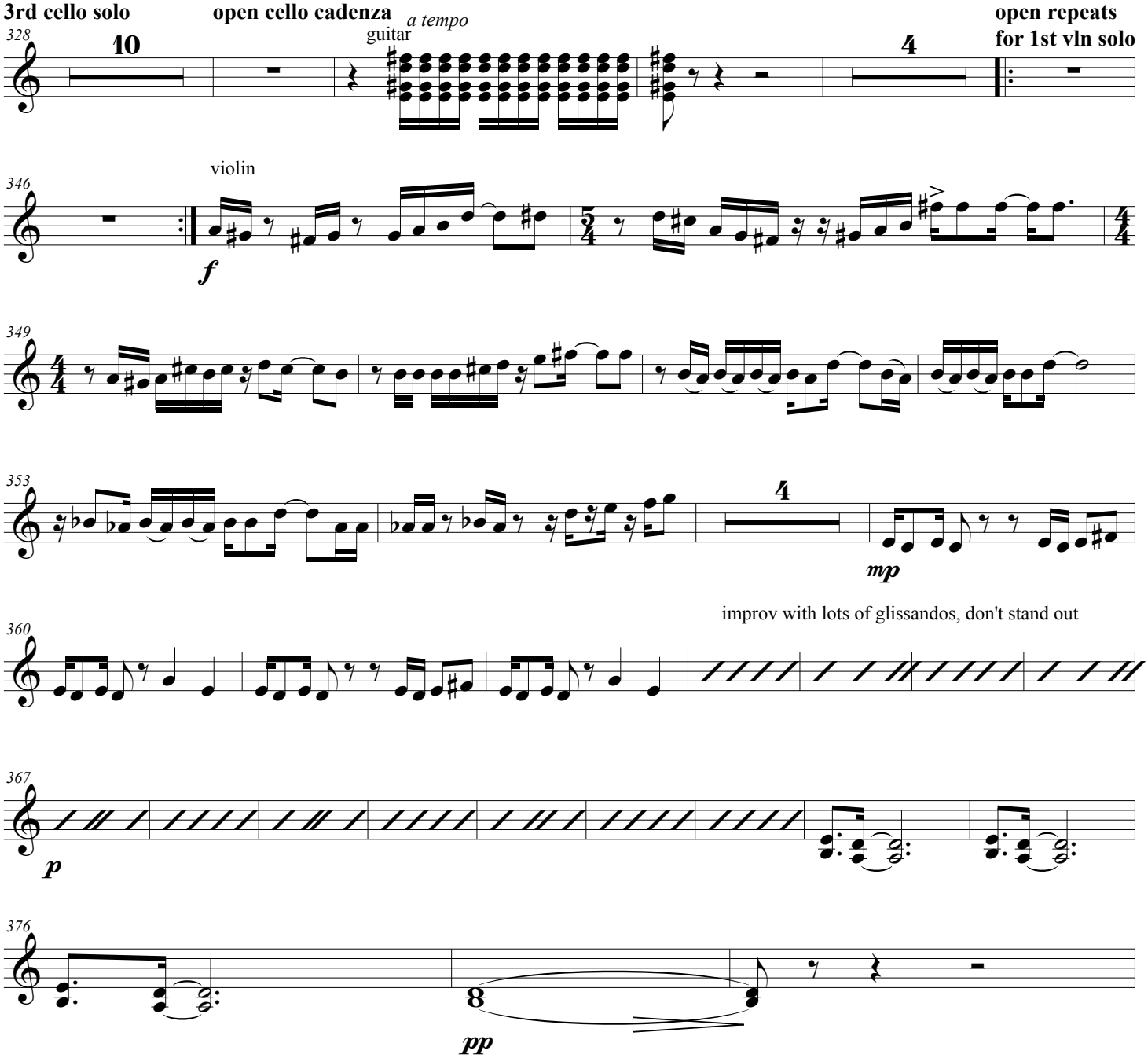
247 **3rd viola solo** ♩.=96

252

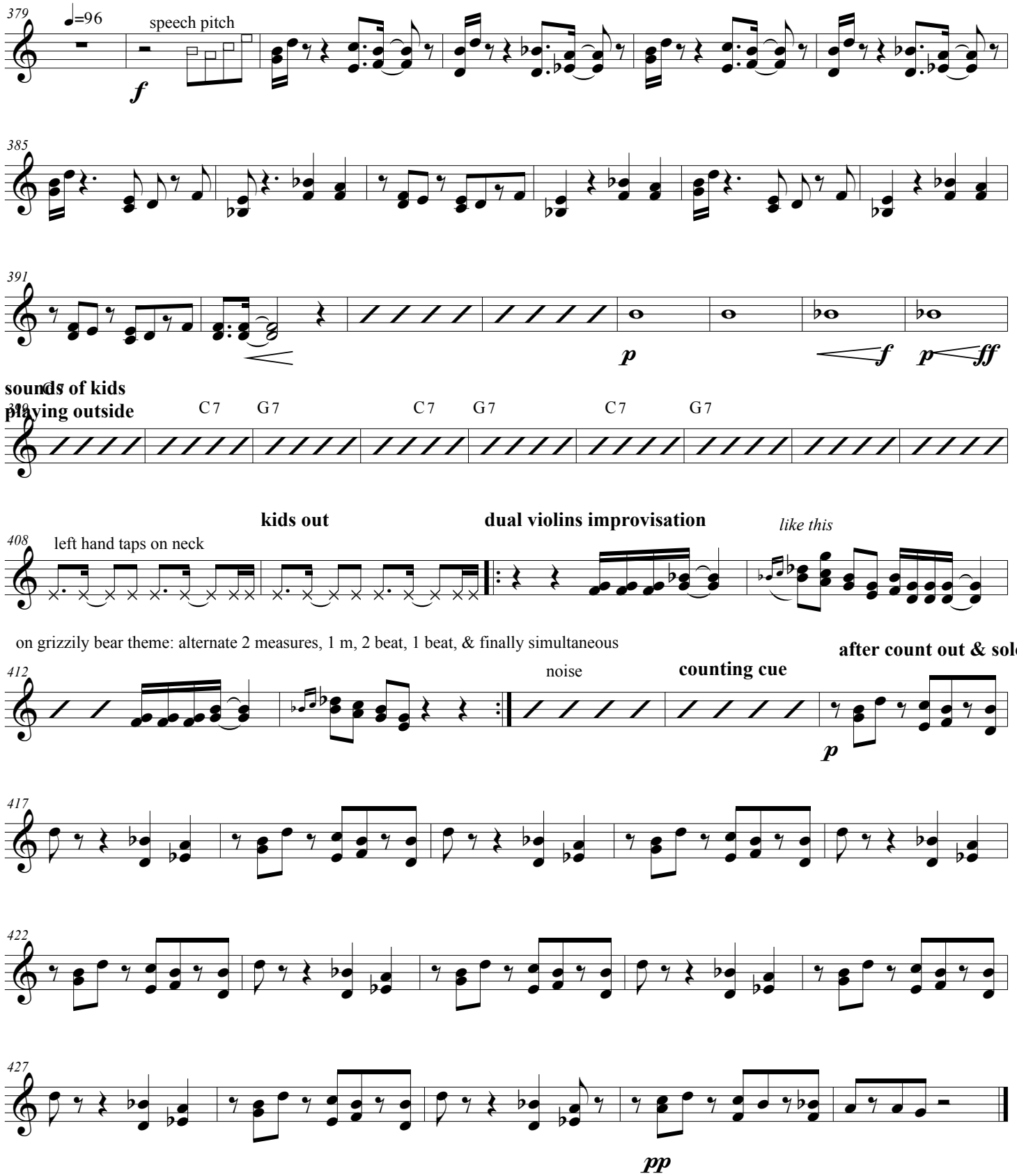
257 ♩=96 **vln 2 solo**

ad lib gentle melismas


265
272
accel. until drum solo
276
viola noise solo
284
big percussion solo
up to 90 seconds
#4 For His Bad Self
292
♩.=112
f
297
♩=96
301
mf
304
1st cello solo
308
6
guitar
2nd cello solo
10
guitar


3rd cello solo
open cello cadenza
a tempo
guitar
open repeats
for 1st vln solo
328
10
4
346
violin
f
349
353
4
mp
improv with lots of glissandos, don't stand out
360
367
p
376
pp

#5 She put my head under the water



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-Dave Soldier NYC April 18, 2011

Viola
1987
version April 16, 2011

String Quartet #1
The Impossible

Dave Soldier

#1 Open Hydrant ♩=80

3

19

cello strums cue in ♩=96

26

p *mf*

29

sounds of kids playing outside

f *p*

34

kids out *cantabile*

mf *mf*

38

vln 2 solo

pp

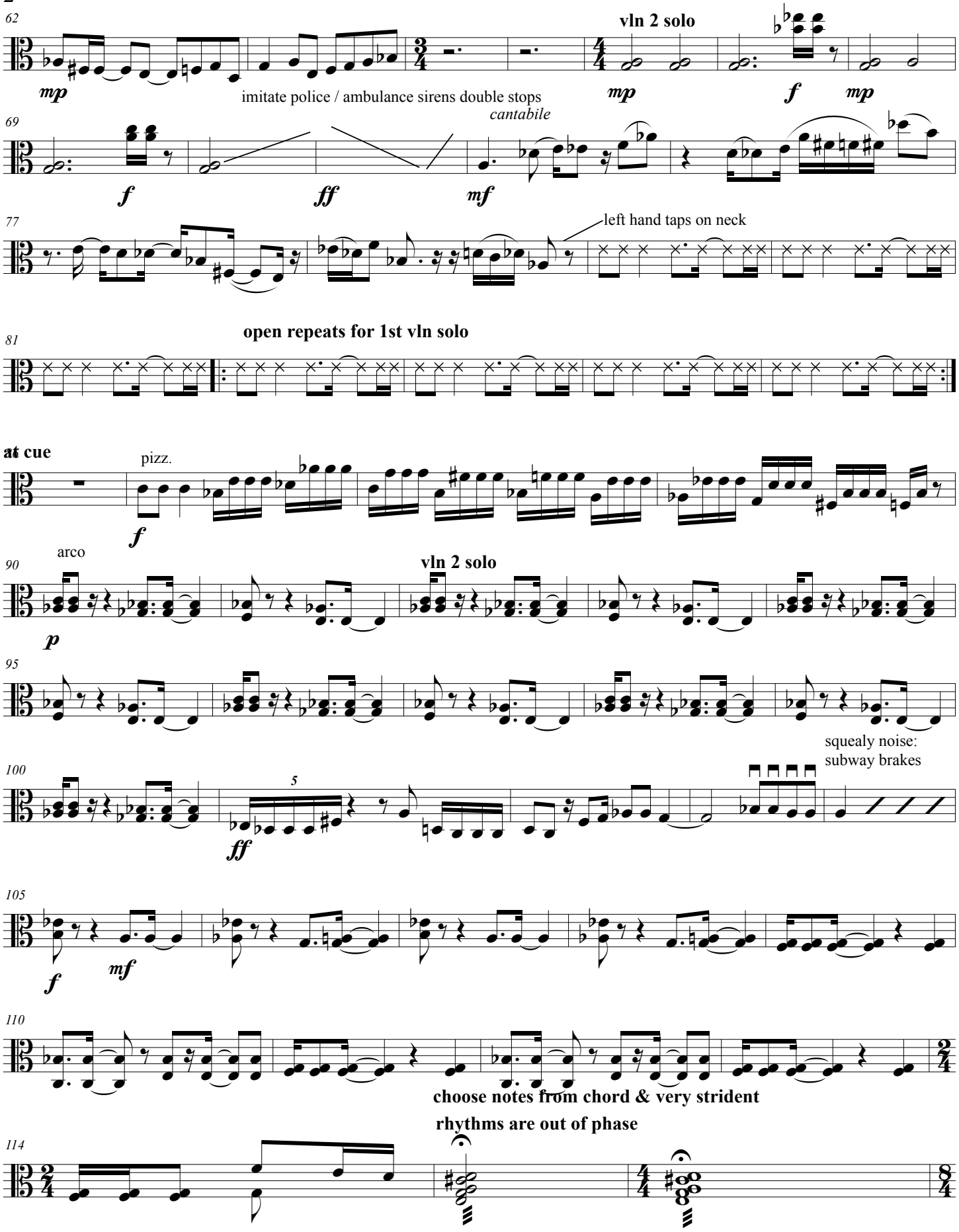
42

46

50

54

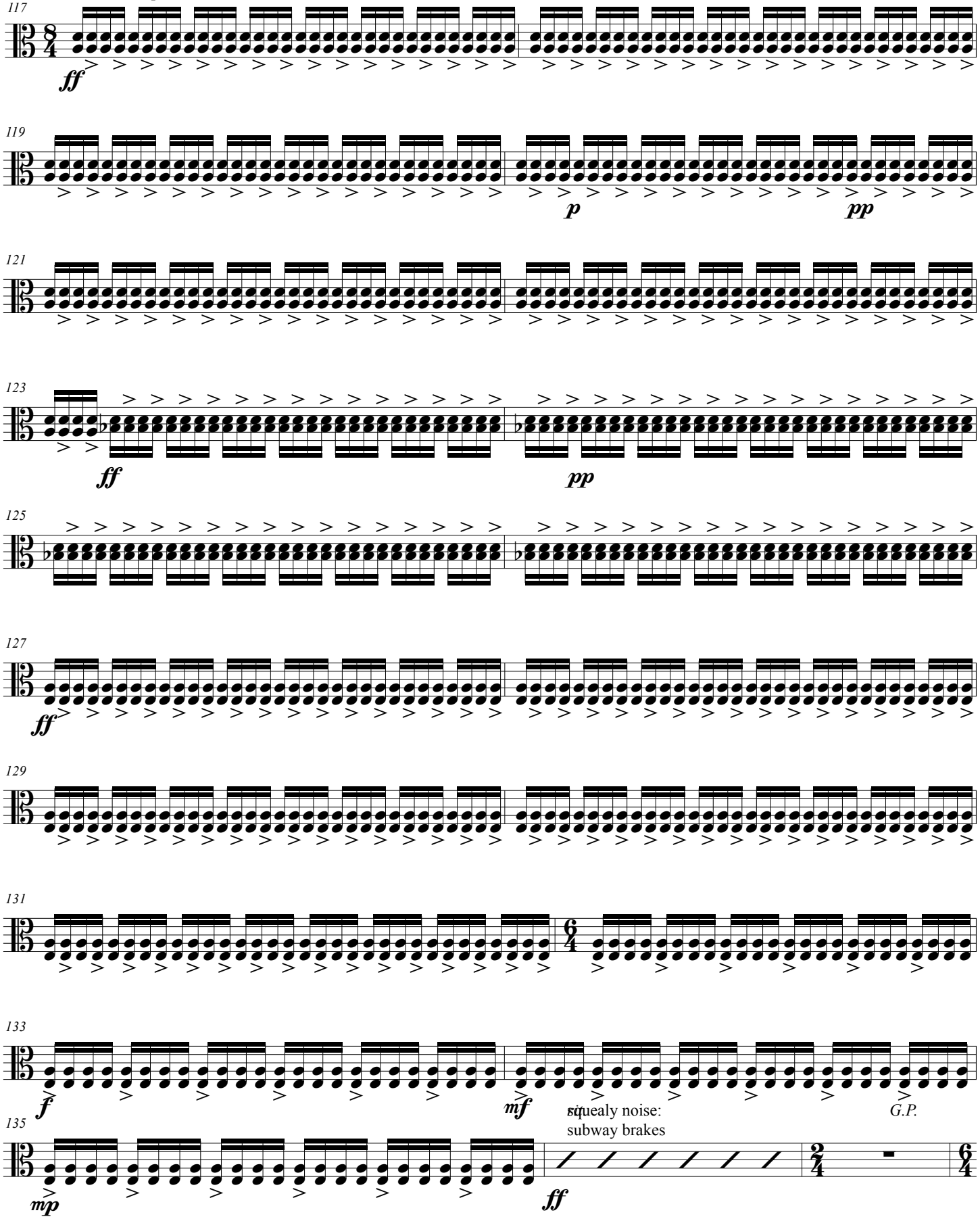
58

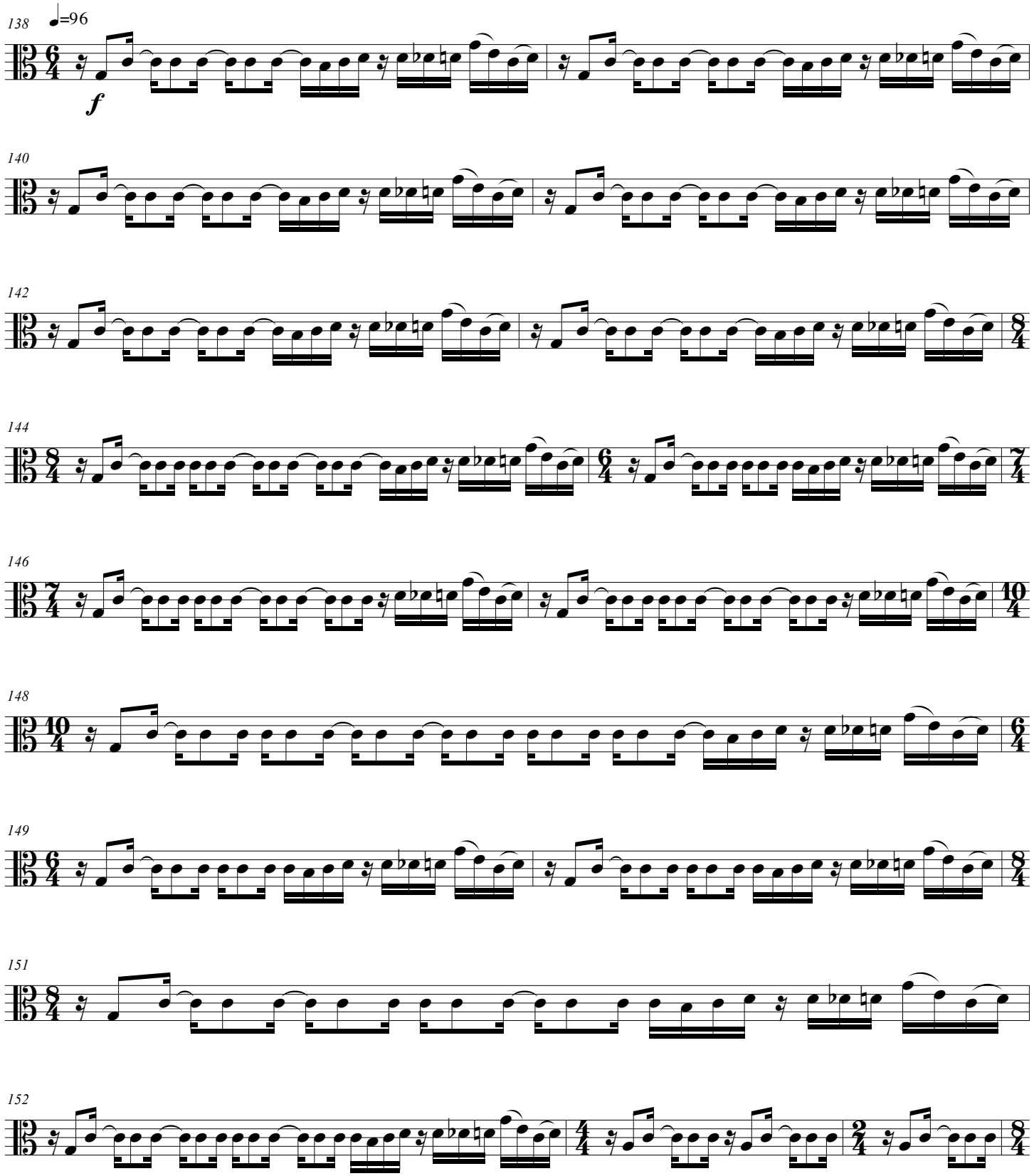

62
vln 2 solo
mp
imitate police / ambulance sirens double stops
mp
f
mp
69
cantabile
f
ff
mf
77
left hand taps on neck
81
open repeats for 1st vln solo
at cue
pizz.
f
90
arco
vln 2 solo
p
95
squealy noise:
subway brakes
100
5
ff
105
f
mf
110
choose notes from chord & very strident
rhythms are out of phase
114

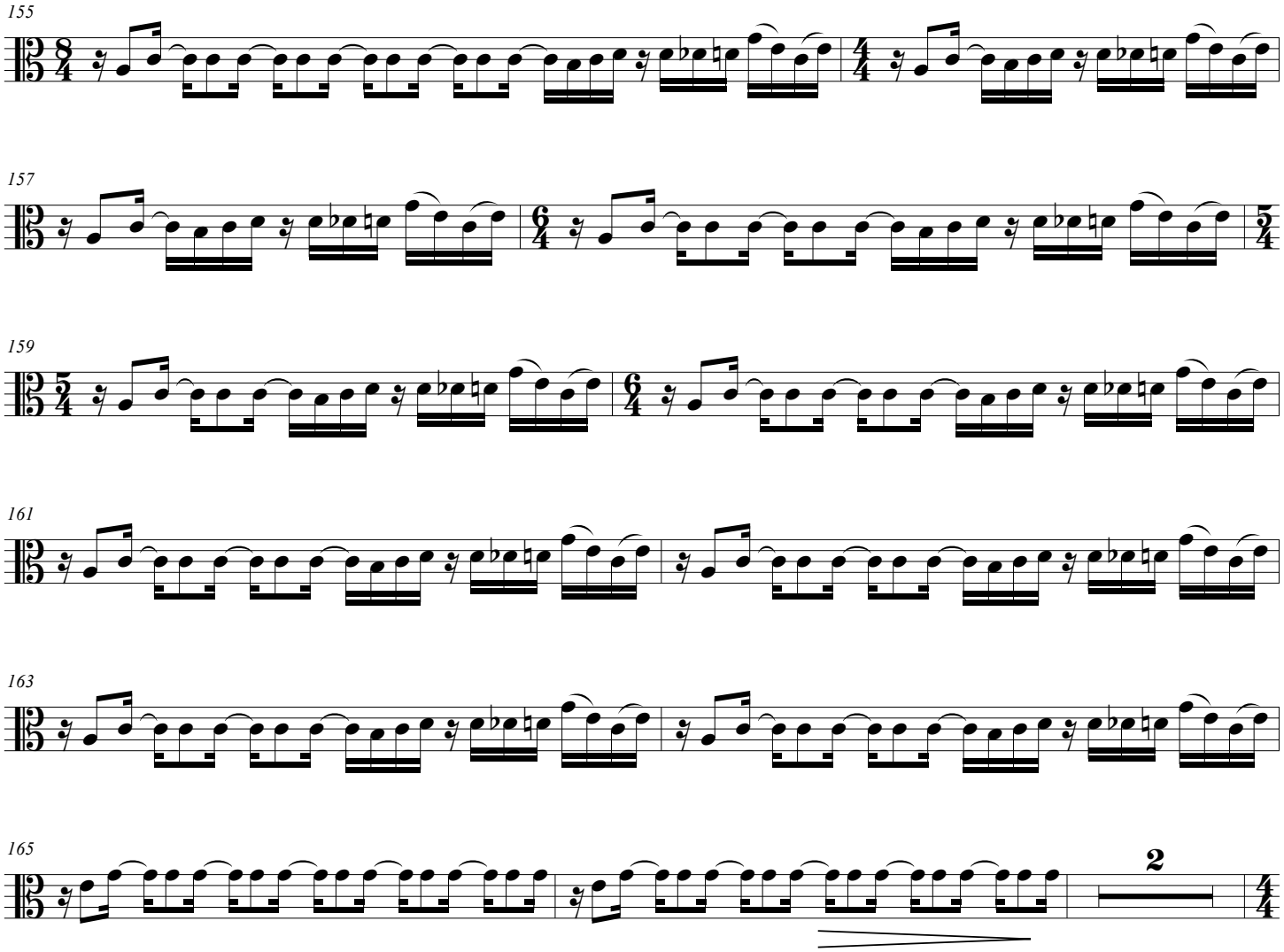
#2 Walking on the Third Rail

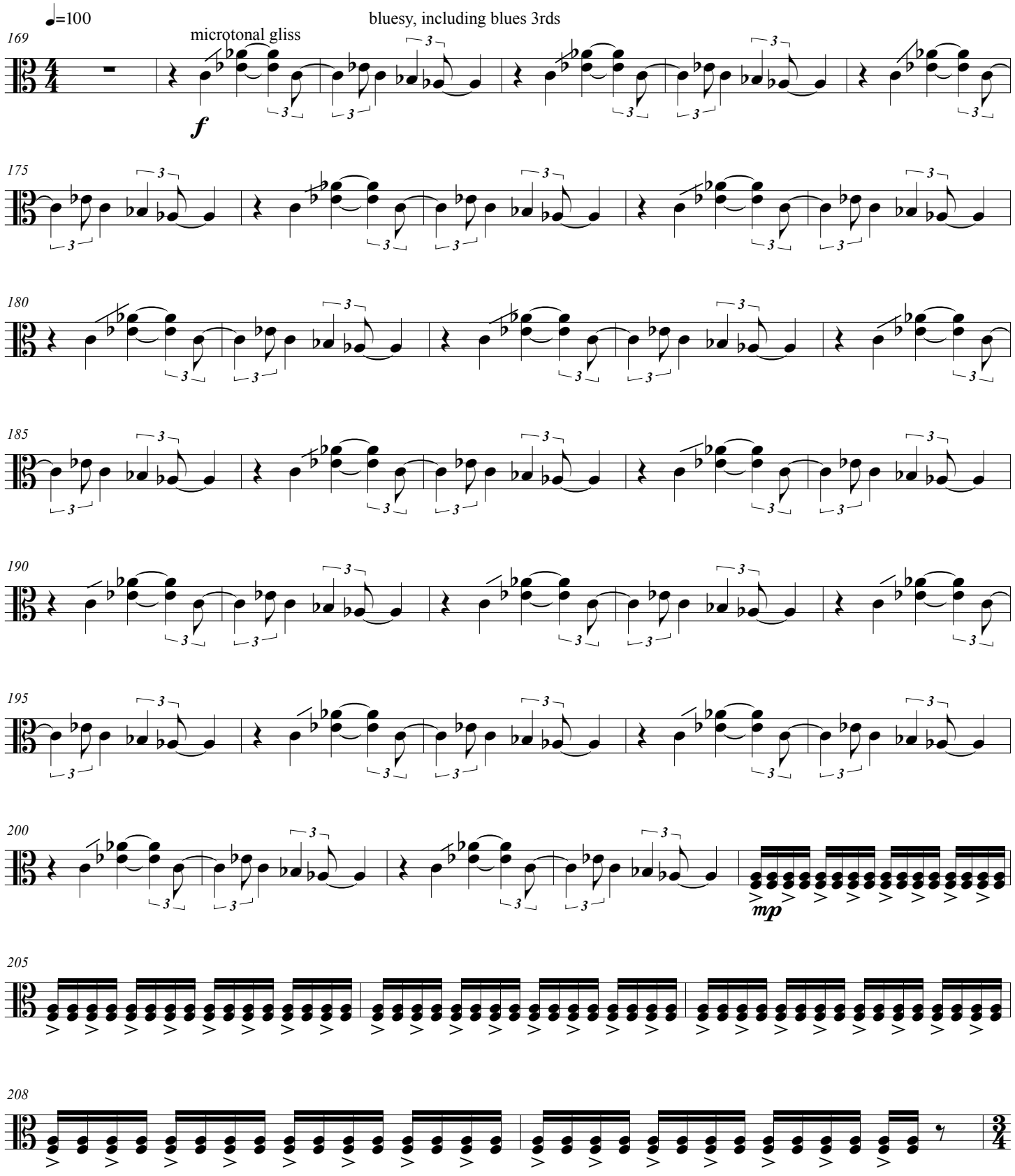
♩=120 molto ponticello, overtones

rhythms are in phase

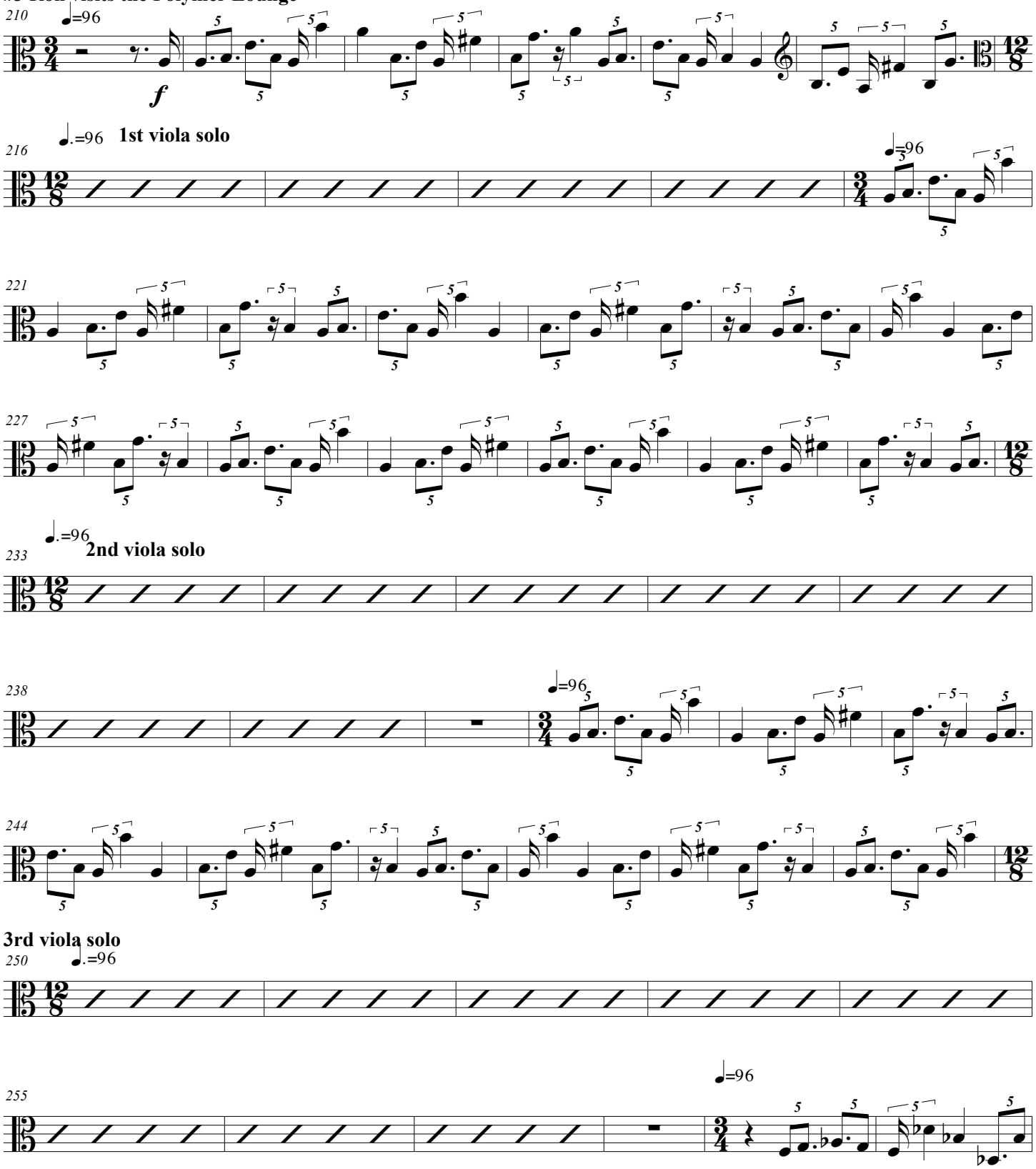



138
♩=96
f
140
142
144
146
148
149
151
152


155
157
159
161
163
165
2

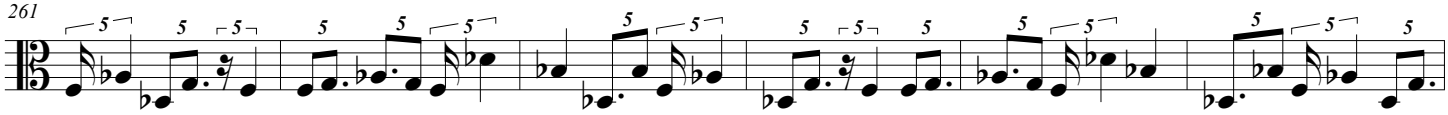

♩=100
bluesy, including blues 3rds
169
microtonal gliss
f
175
180
185
190
195
200
mp
205
208

#3 Ron visits the Polymer Lounge



vln 2 solo

261



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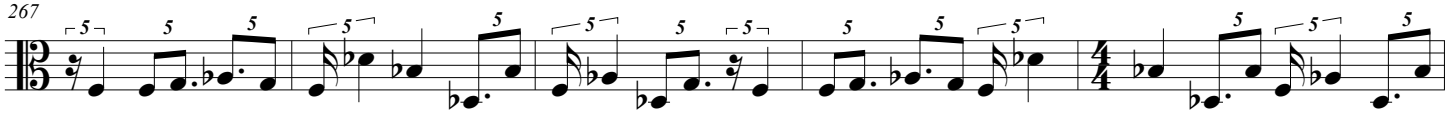

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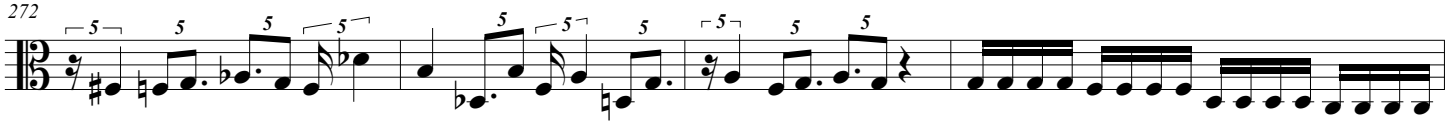
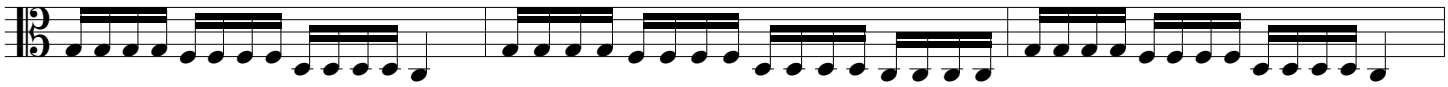


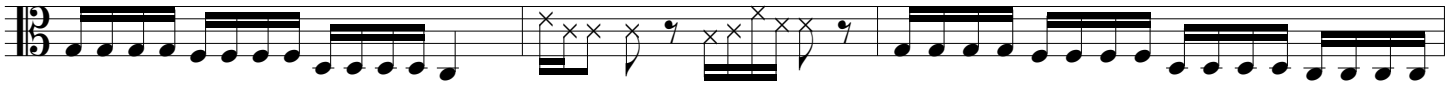
accel. until drum solo

276



speech pitch solo

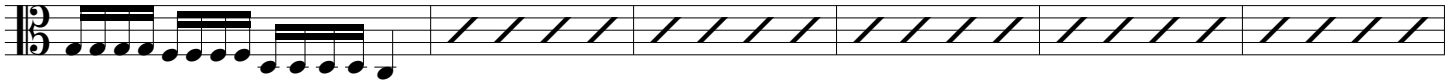
279



viola noise solo

an agressive out-of-tune hard core singer

282



big percussion solo
up to 90 seconds **#4 For His Bad Self**

288 continue noise solo, eventually drop out to drum solo

♩.=112

f

294

298

3

f

♩=96

1st cello solo

305

310

2nd cello solo

316

321

3rd cello solo

326

332

open cello cadenza

337 *a tempo*

f

open repeats for 1st vln solo

343

347

f

352

357

mp

361

365

p

369

373

pp

#5 She put my head under the water

379 ♩=96

f

385

391

cantabile

mp *mf*

397

sounds of kids playing outside

pp

400

404

left hand taps on neck **kids out** **dual violins improvisation**

408

413

counting cue **after count out & solo**

p

418

424

429

pp *ppp*

Cello part

Dave Soldier

String Quartet #1 opus 3
with percussion

original version for amplified string quartet and trap drums
or alternate version for acoustic quartet and hand percussion

"The Impossible"

1. Open Hydrant
2. Walking on the Third Rail
3. Ron visits the Polymer Lounge
4. For His Bad Self
5. She put my head under the water

composed in 1987, premiered 1988
this transcription April 16, 2011 version

about 25 minutes

Dave Soldier
davesoldier.com
ds43@columbia.edu

Performance notes for "The Impossible Quartet"

This can be performed either by an amplified quartet with an American style "trap" drum set – i.e., rock or rhythm & blues style drums; or by a normal acoustic string quartet with quieter hand percussion.

The piece is highly influenced by rhythm and blues, and directly quotes James Brown's *Papa's Got a Brand New Bag* in the 4th movement, as well as hip hop, the sounds of the New York City subways, and children's street games.

The guitarist, cellist, and drummer *must* know the James Brown original – the cellist can deviate from it at will, but must know the overall structure of the melody, and can quote from it or not. There is an untimed "cadenza" for the cello on the last phrase.

Each player has *improvised solos*, and these are marked by "hatches". The improvisations must relate to the surrounding material, but you have otherwise freedom to play what you would like. In some cases I place some advice on the approach to the solo. One overall piece of advice is to leave breaths, i.e. silences between phrases, or it will be hard to build in more tensions. Consider that leaving breath is natural for wind instruments that developed the rhythm and blues solo traditions – for inspiration you may like to listen to saxophone players like Maceo Parker and Hank Crawford. In some cases I write chord changes above the improvised sections.

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The 1st and 5th movement can both use a recording of kids playing street games in the background. This is a good excuse for someone in the quartet to go outside and record them.

String techniques

There are numerous unusual techniques in this piece, and here are some guidelines. When in doubt, use my 1992 recording by the Soldier String Quartet on *Sojourner Truth* as a guide – but don't feel trapped by that recording if you have ideas on how to improve on it or add your own personality.

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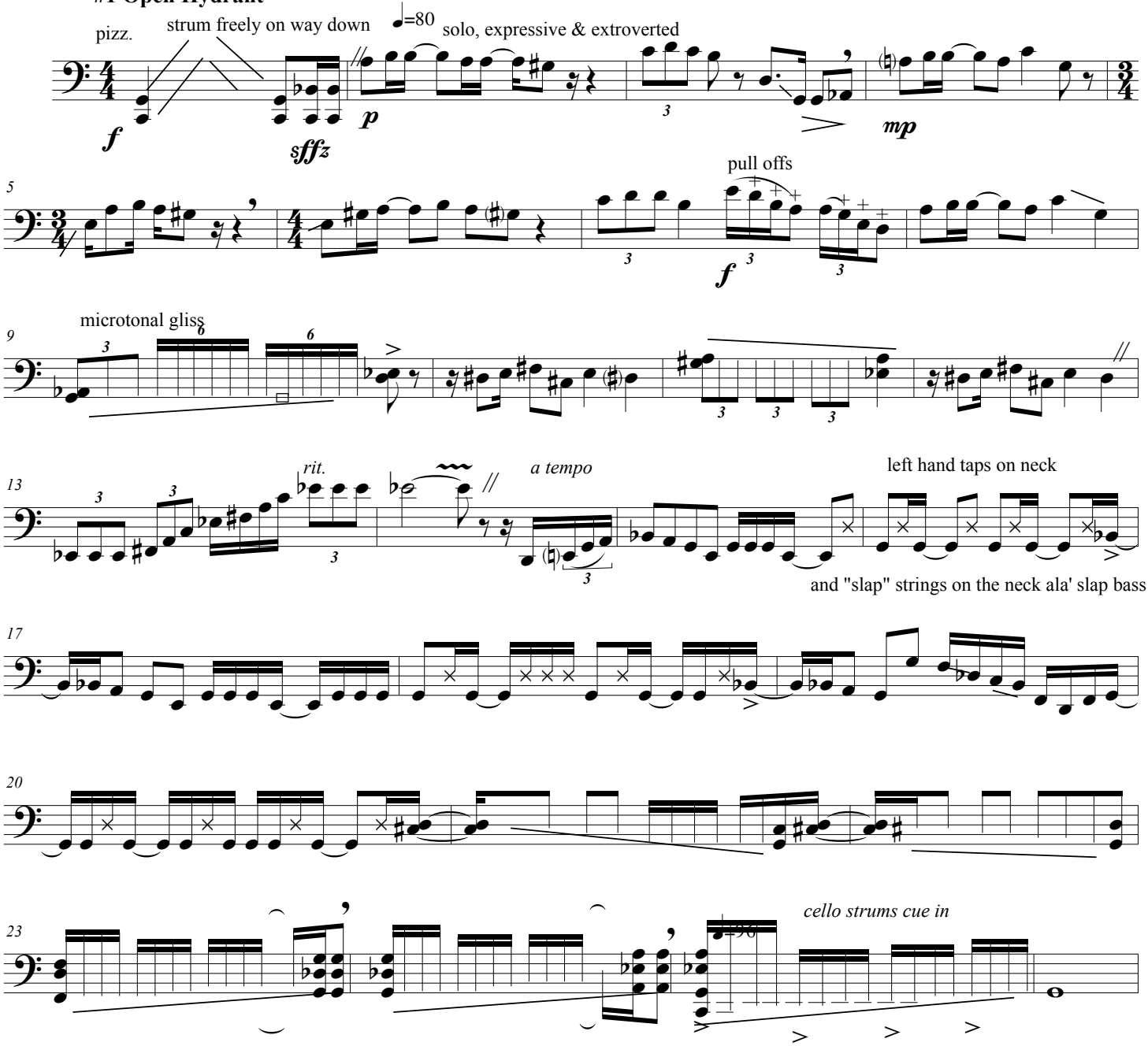
-Dave Soldier NYC April 18, 2011

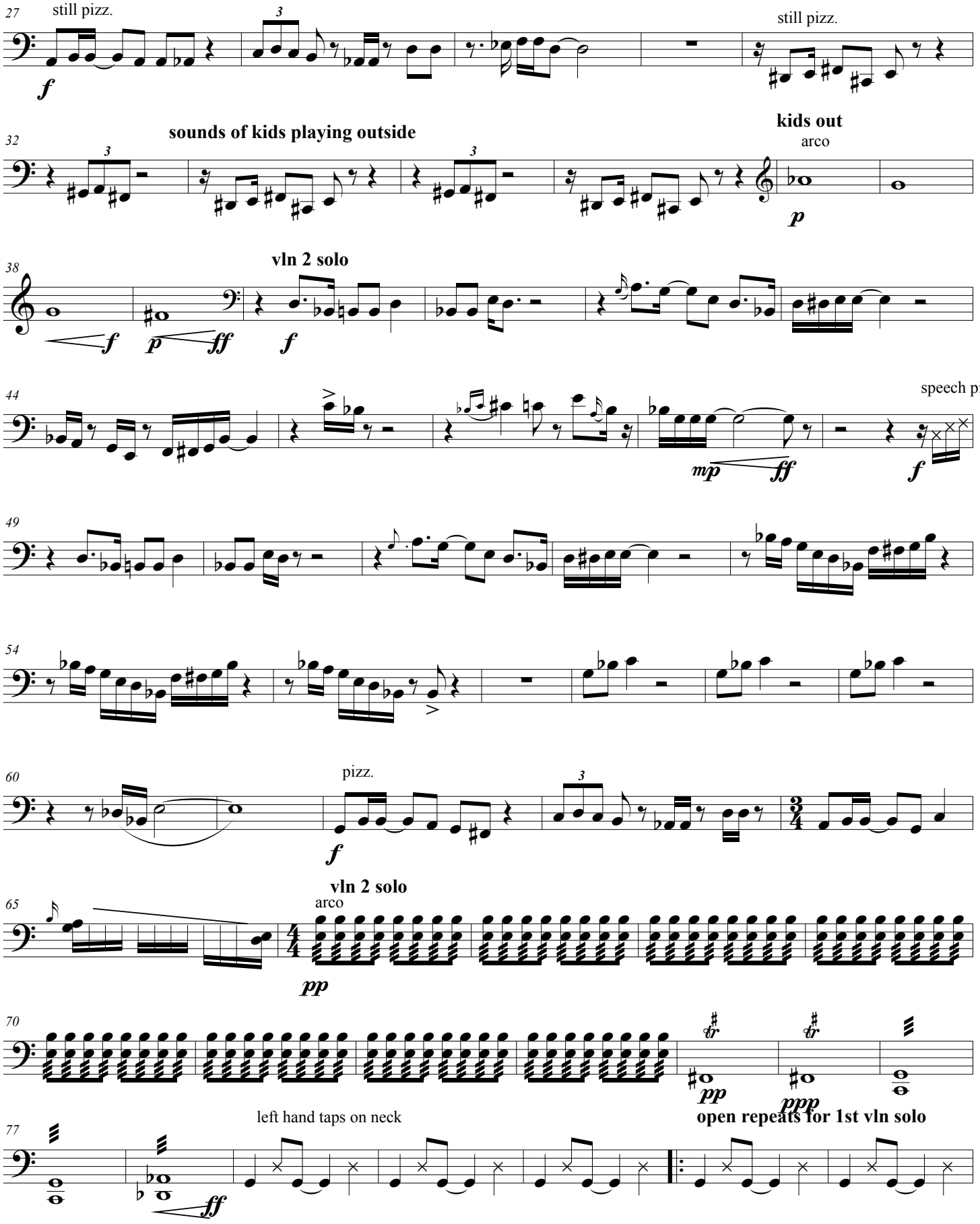
Cello
1987
version April 16, 2011

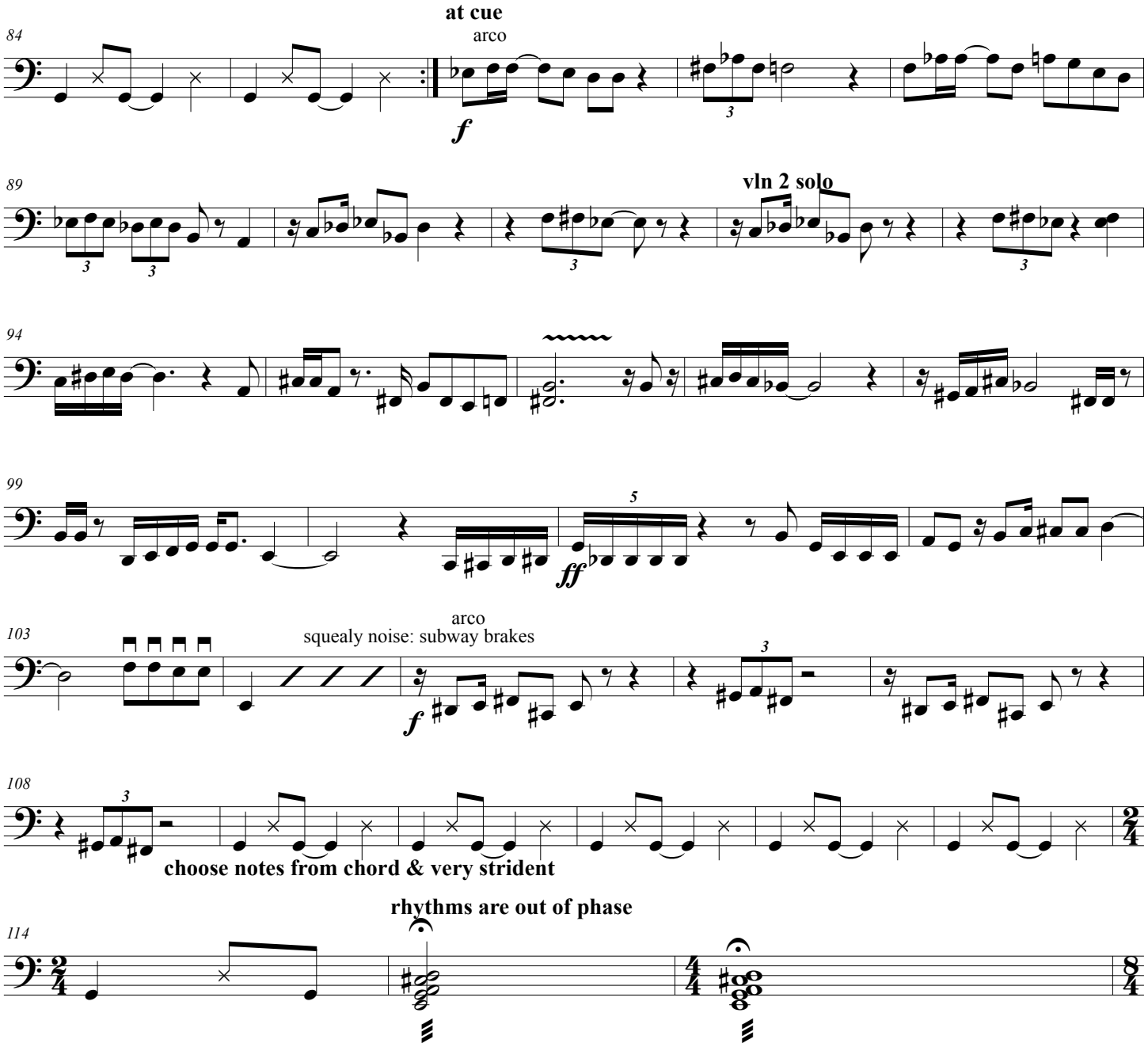
String Quartet #1
The Impossible

Dave Soldier

#1 Open Hydrant



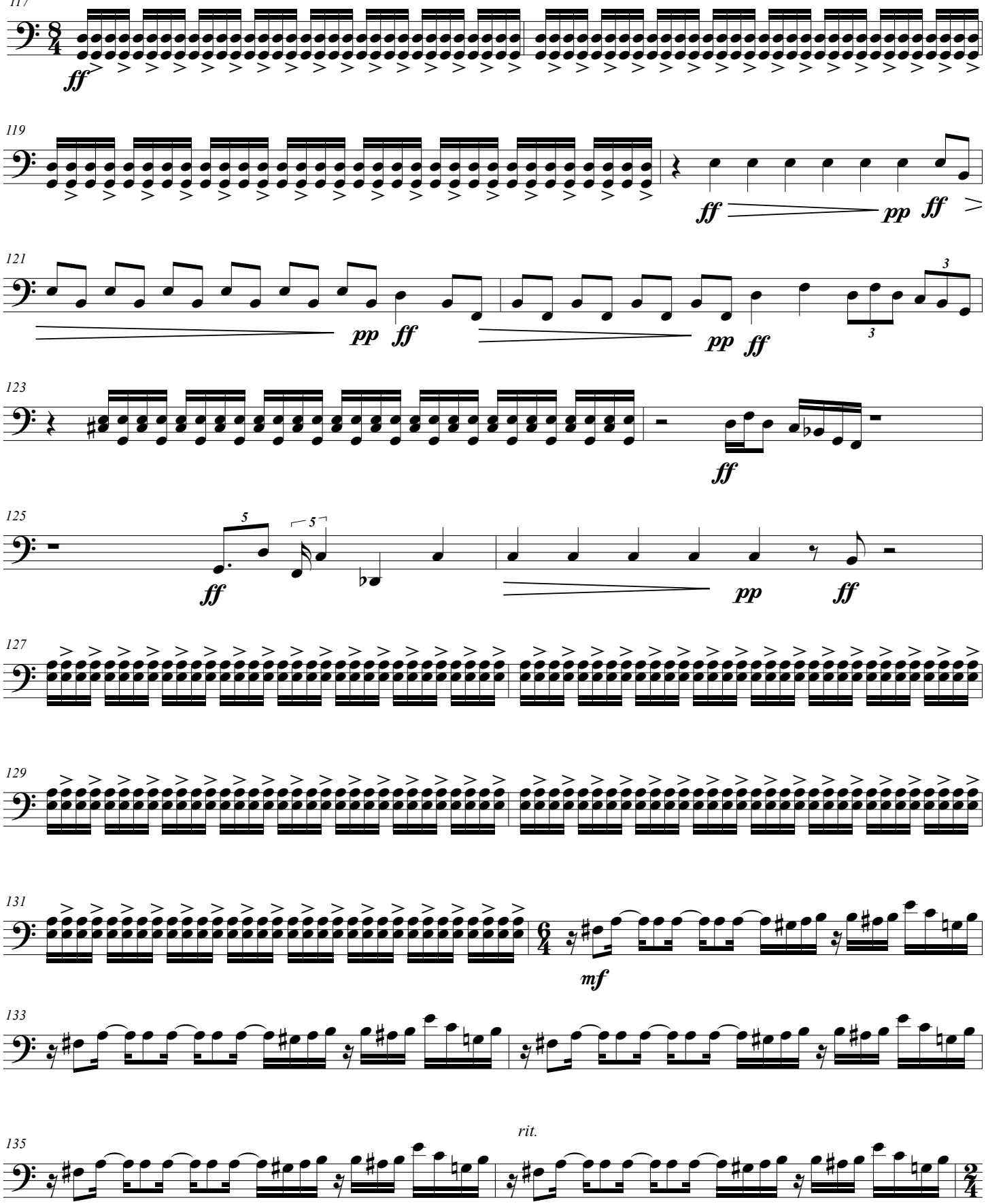

27
still pizz.
f
still pizz.
32
sounds of kids playing outside
kids out
arco
p
38
vln 2 solo
f
p
ff
f
44
speech pitch
mp
ff
f
49
54
60
pizz.
f
65
vln 2 solo
arco
pp
70
pp
ppp
77
left hand taps on neck
open repeats for 1st vln solo
ff

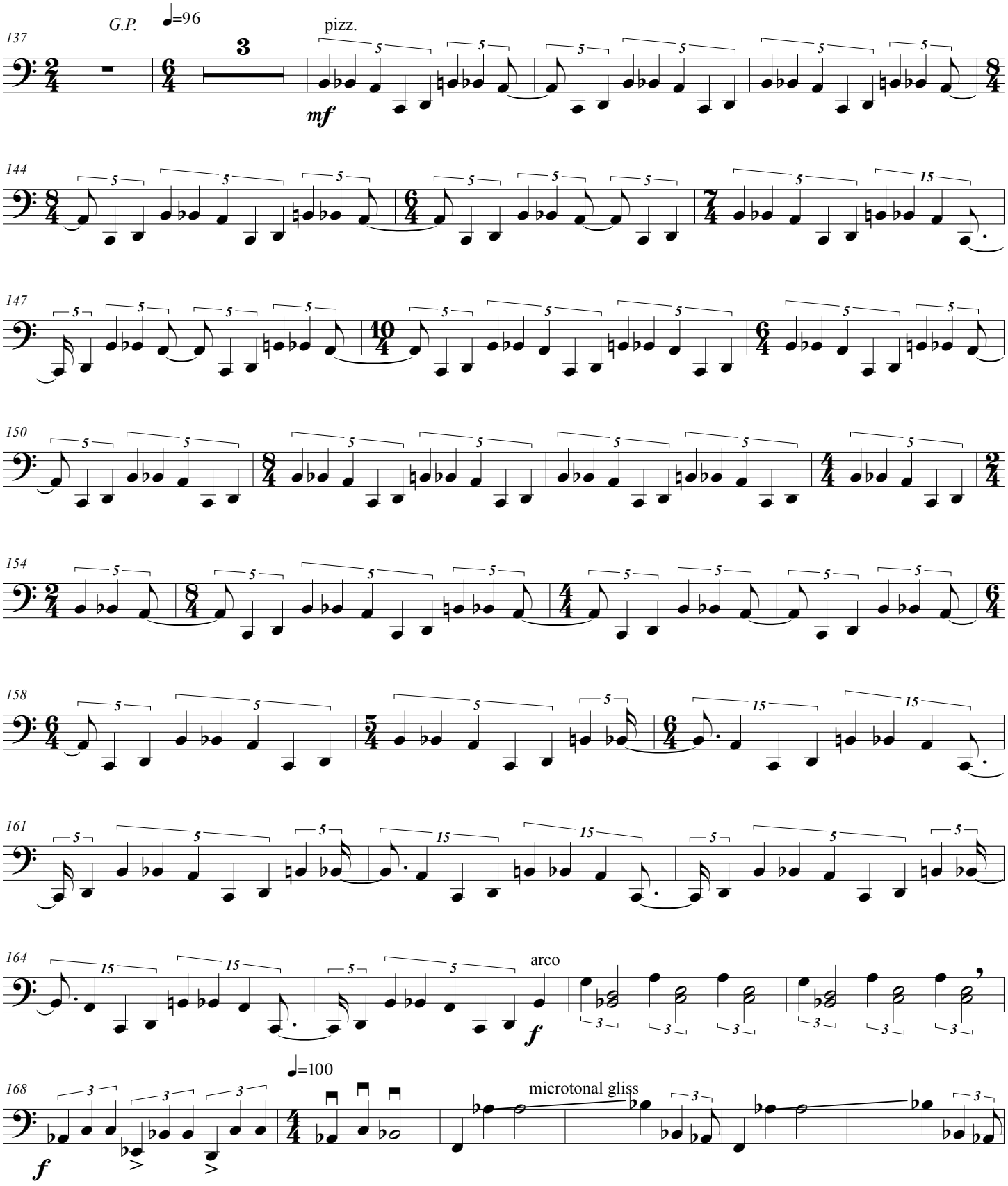

at cue
arco
84
f
89
vln 2 solo
94
99
ff
arco
103
squealy noise: subway brakes
f
108
choose notes from chord & very strident
rhythms are out of phase
114

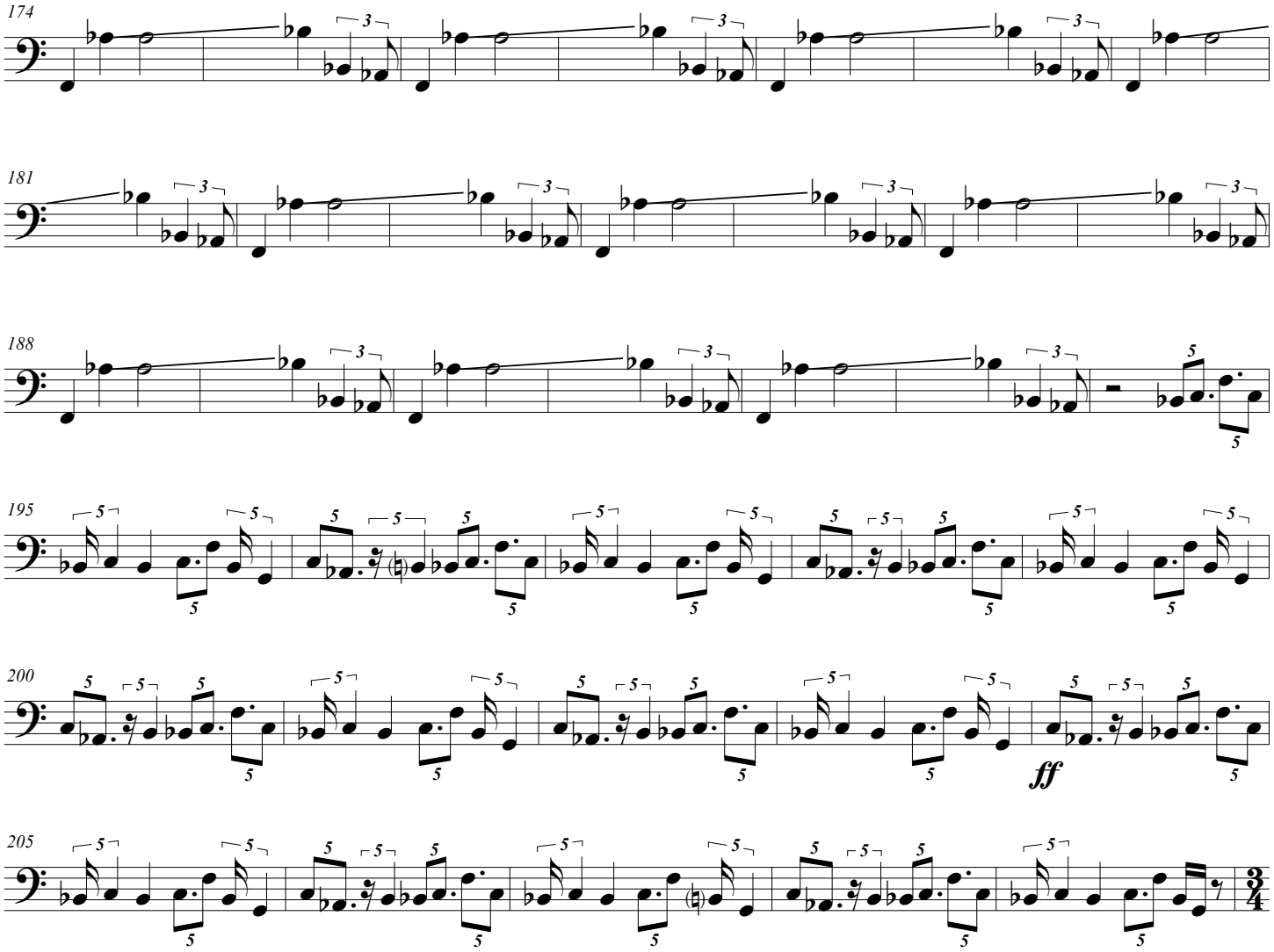
#2 Walking on the Third Rail

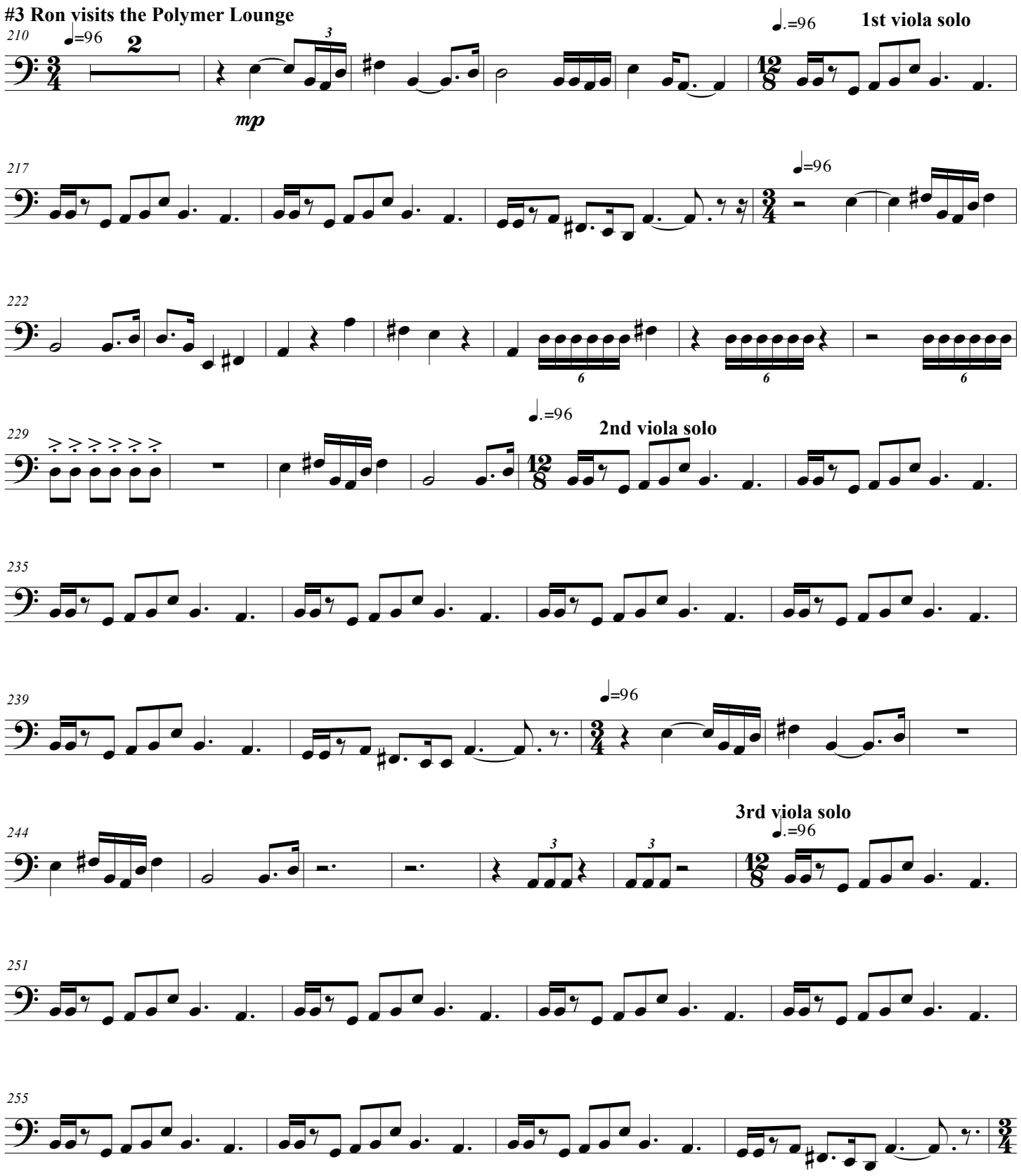
rhythms are in phase

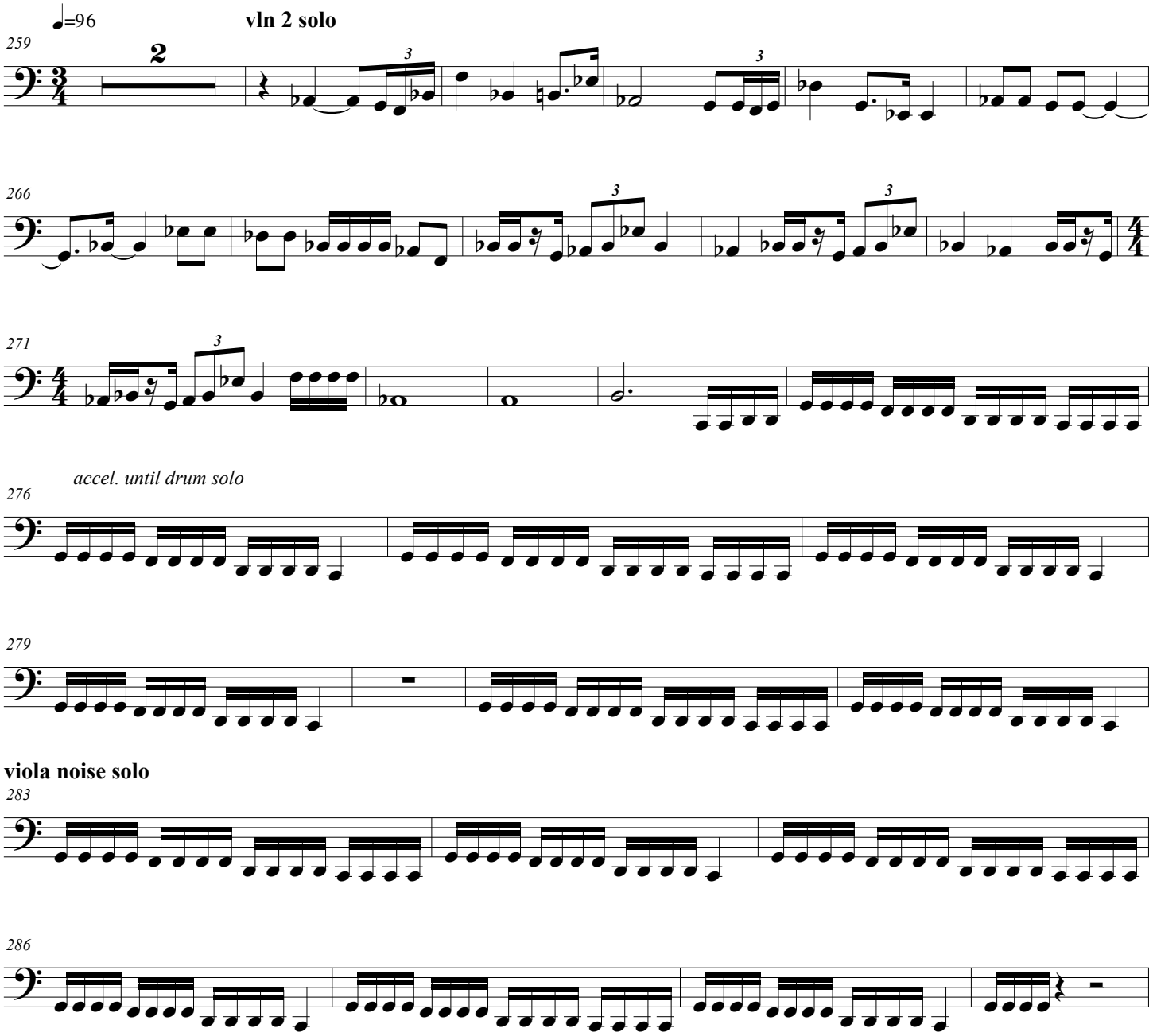
♩=120 molto ponticello, overtones




137
G.P.
♩=96
3
pizz.
mf
144
147
150
154
158
161
164
arco
f
168
♩=100
f
microtonal gliss

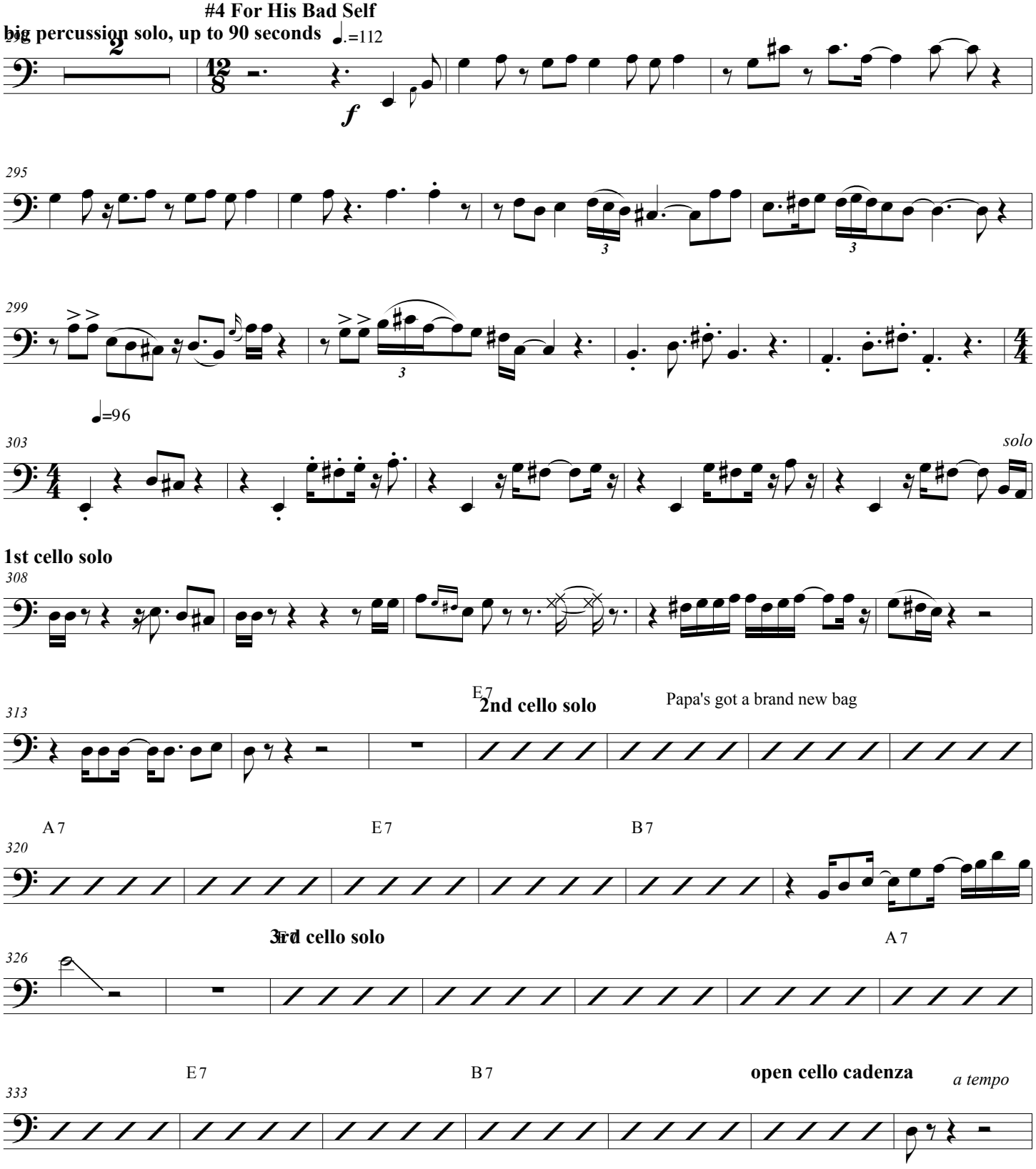

174
181
188
195
200
ff
205

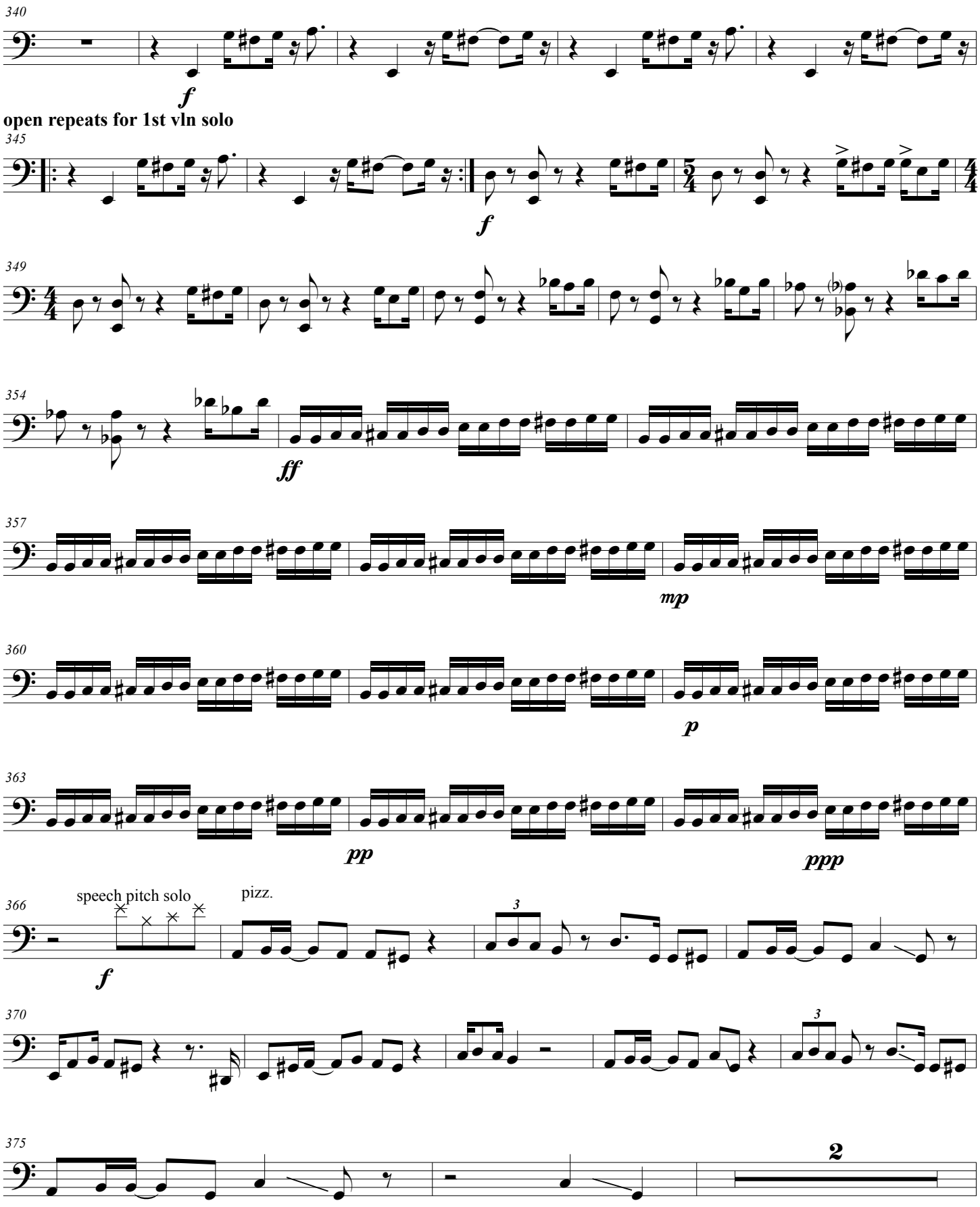

#3 Ron visits the Polymer Lounge
210
♩=96
2
3
mp
♩.=96
1st viola solo
217
♩=96
222
6
6
6
229
♩.=96
2nd viola solo
235
239
♩=96
244
3
3
3rd viola solo
♩.=96
251
255


♩=96
vln 2 solo
259
2
3
266
3
3
271
3
accel. until drum solo
276
279
viola noise solo
283
286

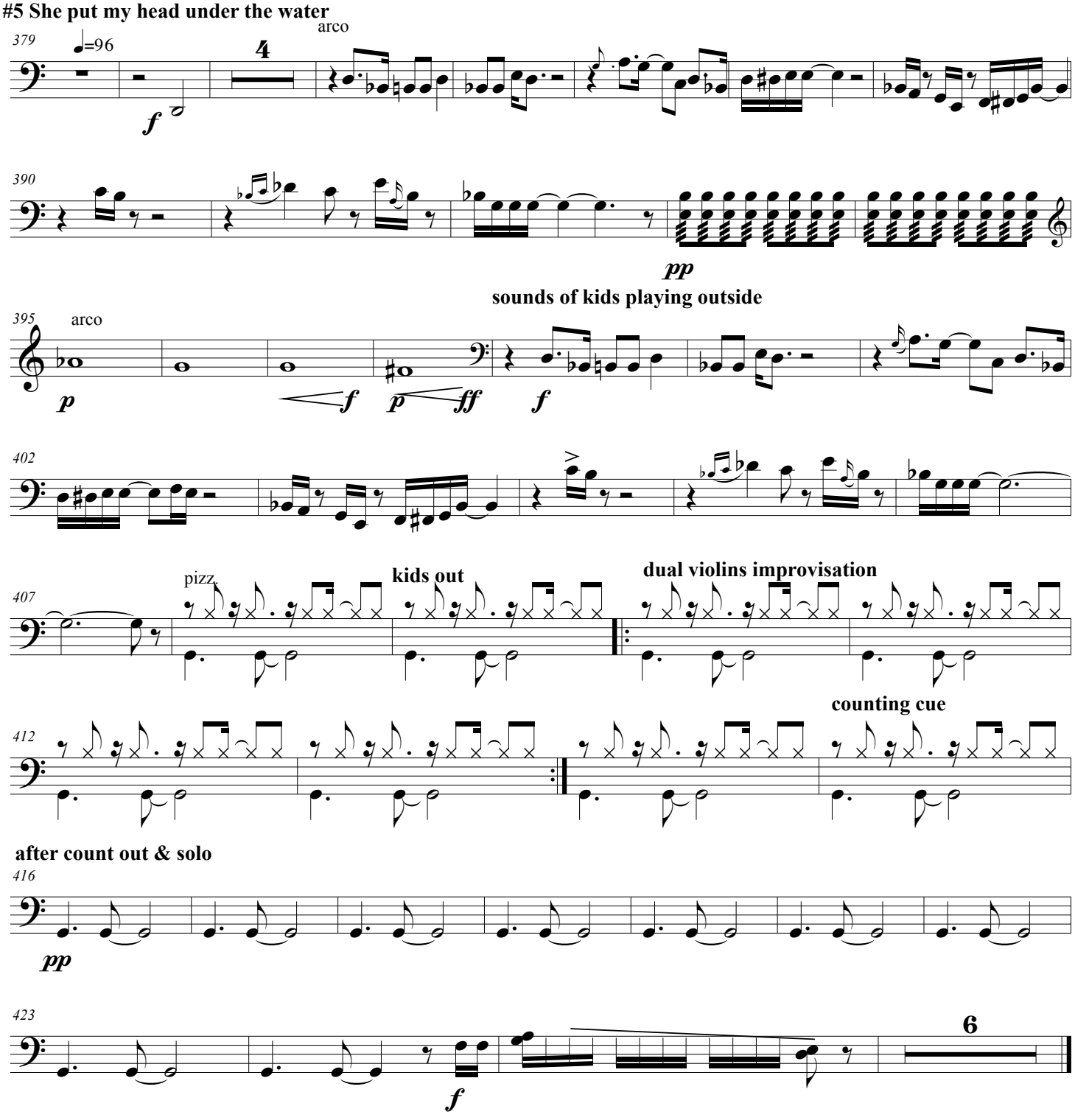
#4 For His Bad Self

big percussion solo, up to 90 seconds




340
f
open repeats for 1st vln solo
345
f
349
354
ff
357
mp
360
p
363
pp
ppp
366
speech pitch solo
pizz.
f
3
370
3
375
2

#5 She put my head under the water



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Dave Soldier

String Quartet #1 opus 3
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or alternate version for acoustic quartet and hand percussion

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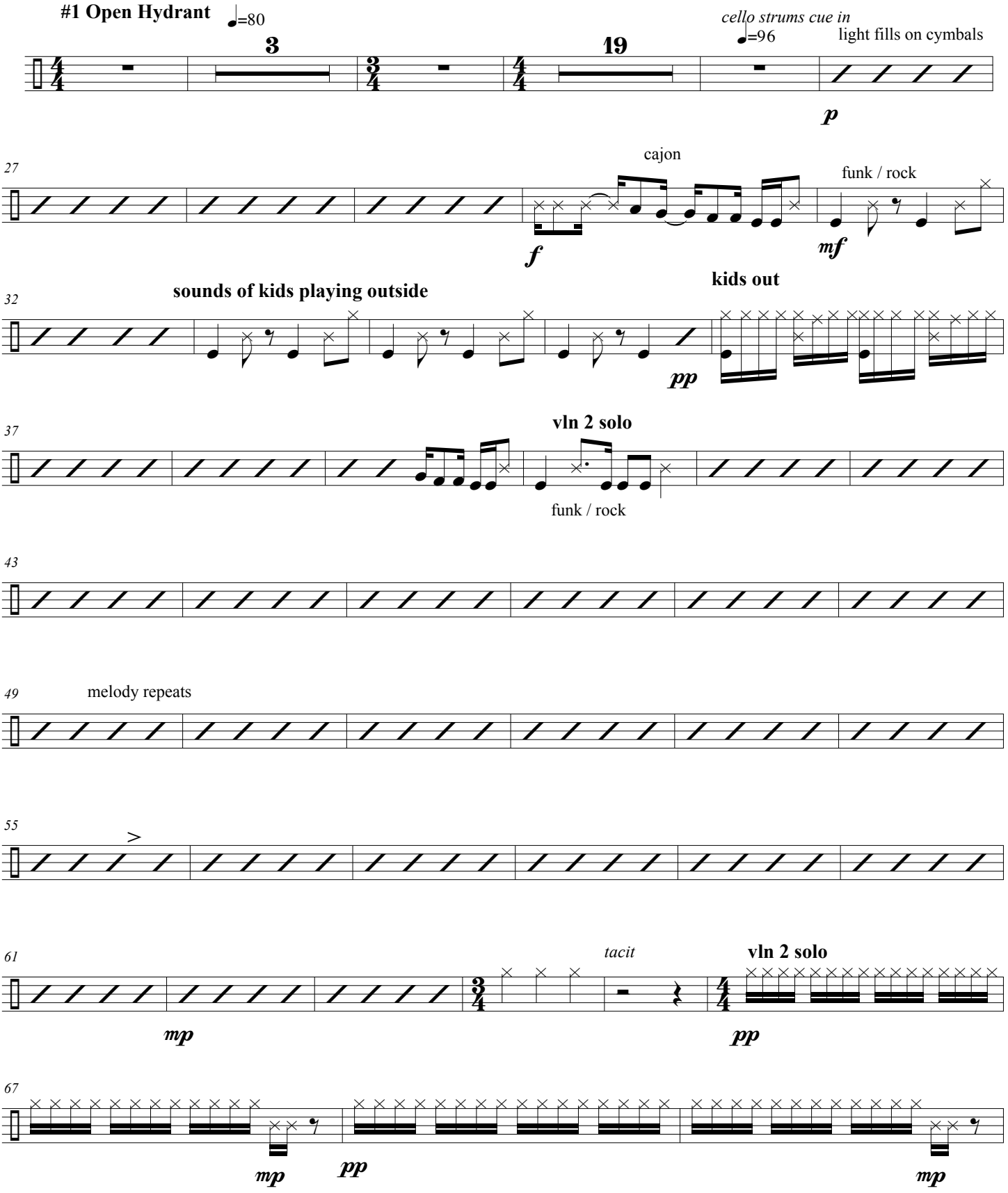
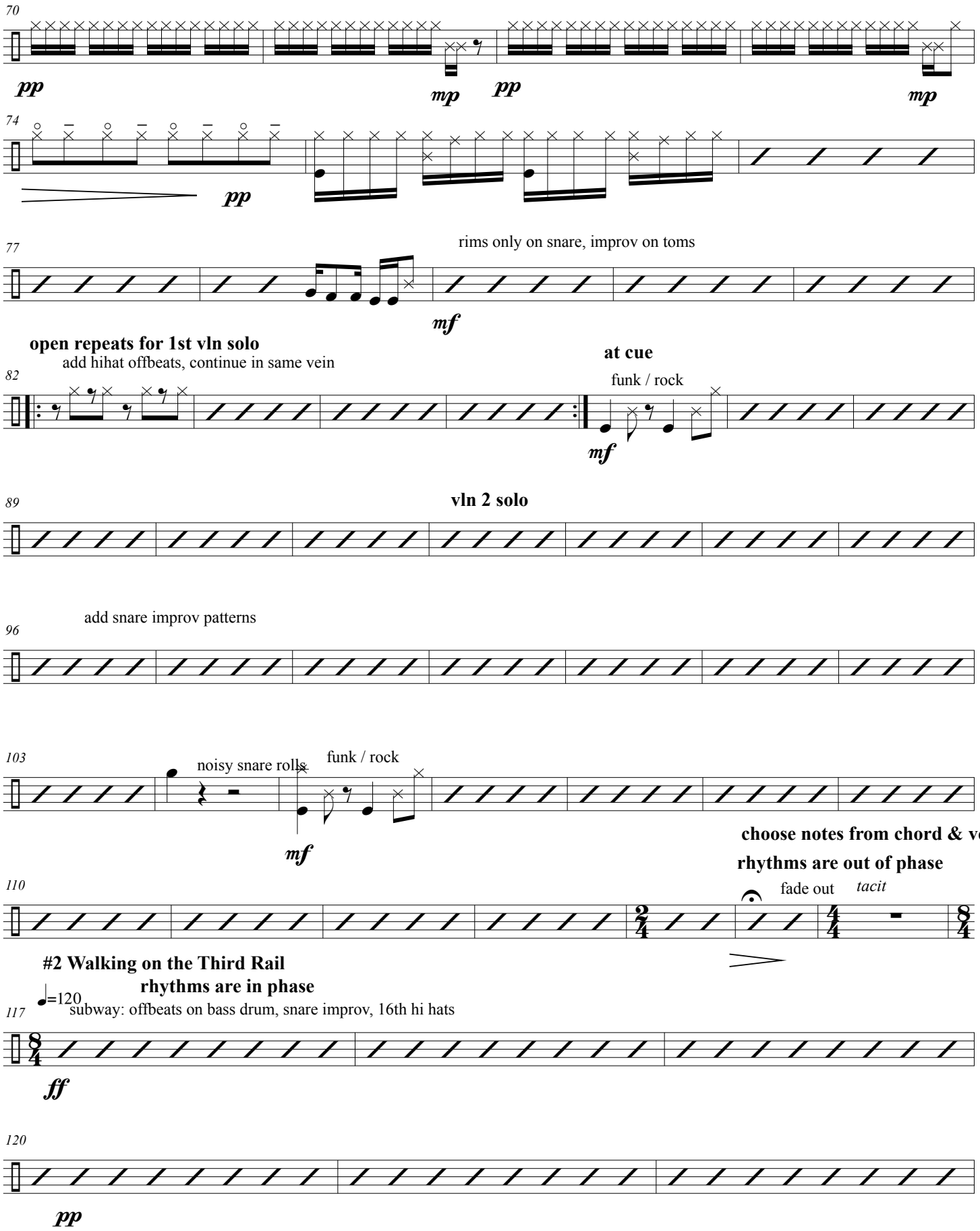
-Dave Soldier NYC April 18, 2011

Hand Percussion
1987
version April 17, 2011

String Quartet #1
The Impossible

Dave Soldier




70
pp
mp
pp
mp
74
pp
77
rims only on snare, improv on toms
mf
open repeats for 1st vln solo
add hihat offbeats, continue in same vein
82
at cue
funk / rock
mf
89
vln 2 solo
add snare improv patterns
96
103
noisy snare rolls
funk / rock
mf
choose notes from chord & very stri
rhythms are out of phase
110
fade out
tacit
#2 Walking on the Third Rail
rhythms are in phase
=120
117
subway: offbeats on bass drum, snare improv, 16th hi hats
ff
120
pp

123

ff *pp*

126 snare drum solos over same basic pattern

ff

129 subway continues

mf

133 *rit.* subway breaks *G.P.*

138 ♩=96 *tacit* these phrases with 2nd violin

f

141 inprov on toms between phrases

143 add hi hat (foot) on beats, continue toms

145

147

149

151

153

156

159

161

light fills on cymbals

subito *p*

164

ppp

169 ♩=100 *tacit*

improv on snare rolls and crash cymbals

177

add other drums but remain unstable, leave spaces

184

191

198

subway continues

mf

#3 Ron visits the Polymer Lounge

205

♩=96

1st viola solo

213

sticks (claves) & rattles

♩.=96

can add bass drum

218

tacit

♩=96

sticks (claves) & rattles

223

230 *tacit*

♩.=96

can add bass drum

2nd viola solo

235

239

♩=96

tacit

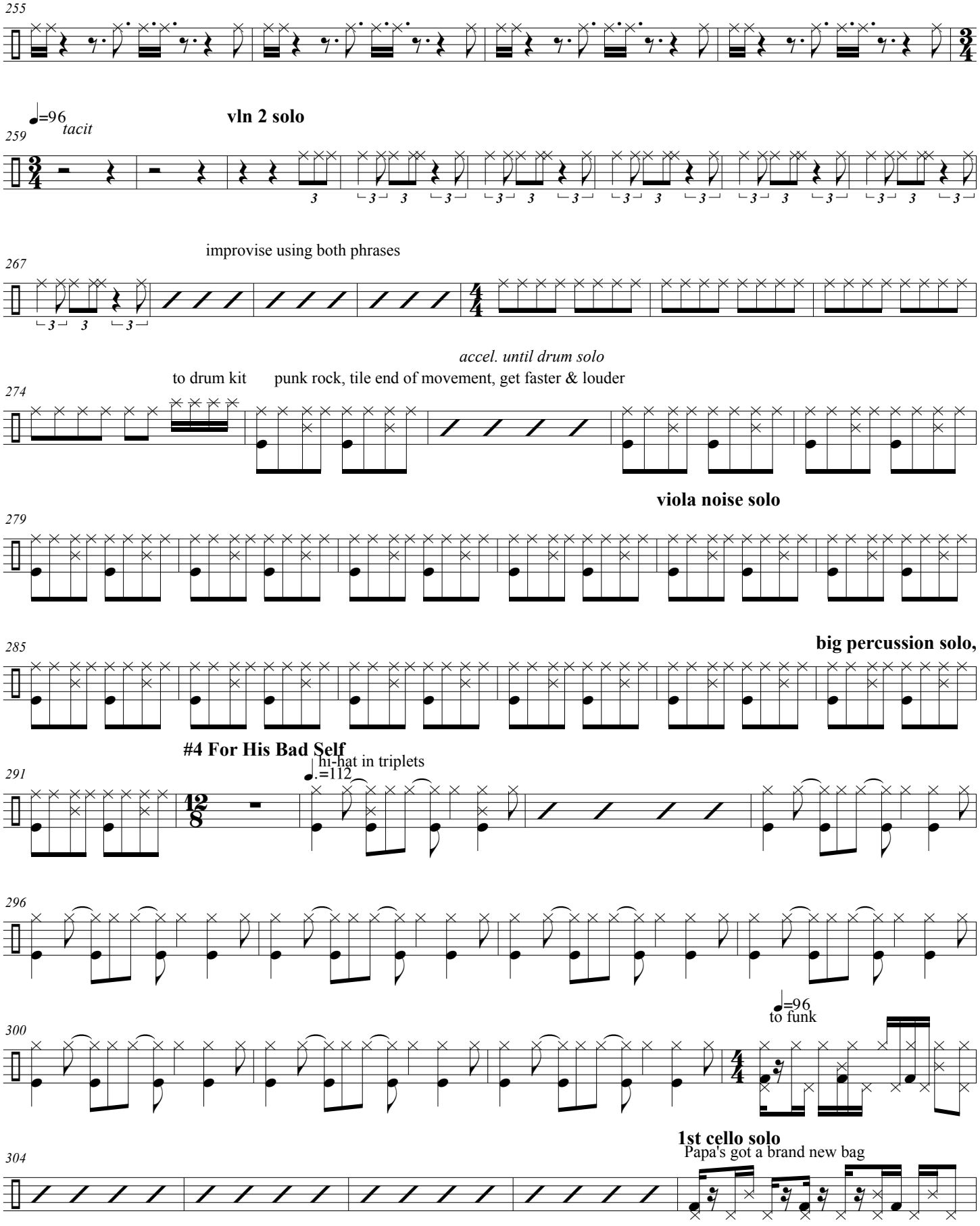
3rd viola solo

245

can add bass drum

♩.=96

251


255
259
♩=96
tacit
vln 2 solo
267
improvise using both phrases
274
accel. until drum solo
to drum kit
punk rock, tile end of movement, get faster & louder
279
viola noise solo
285
big percussion solo, up to 9
#4 For His Bad Self
291
hi-hat in triplets
♩.=112
296
300
♩=96
to funk
304
1st cello solo
Papa's got a brand new bag

309

tacit

2nd cello solo

315

Papa's got a brand new bag

320

tacit

3rd cello solo

327

Papa's got a brand new bag

open cello cadenza

a tempo

332

tacit

340

Papa's got a brand new bag

open repeats for 1st vln solo

345

350

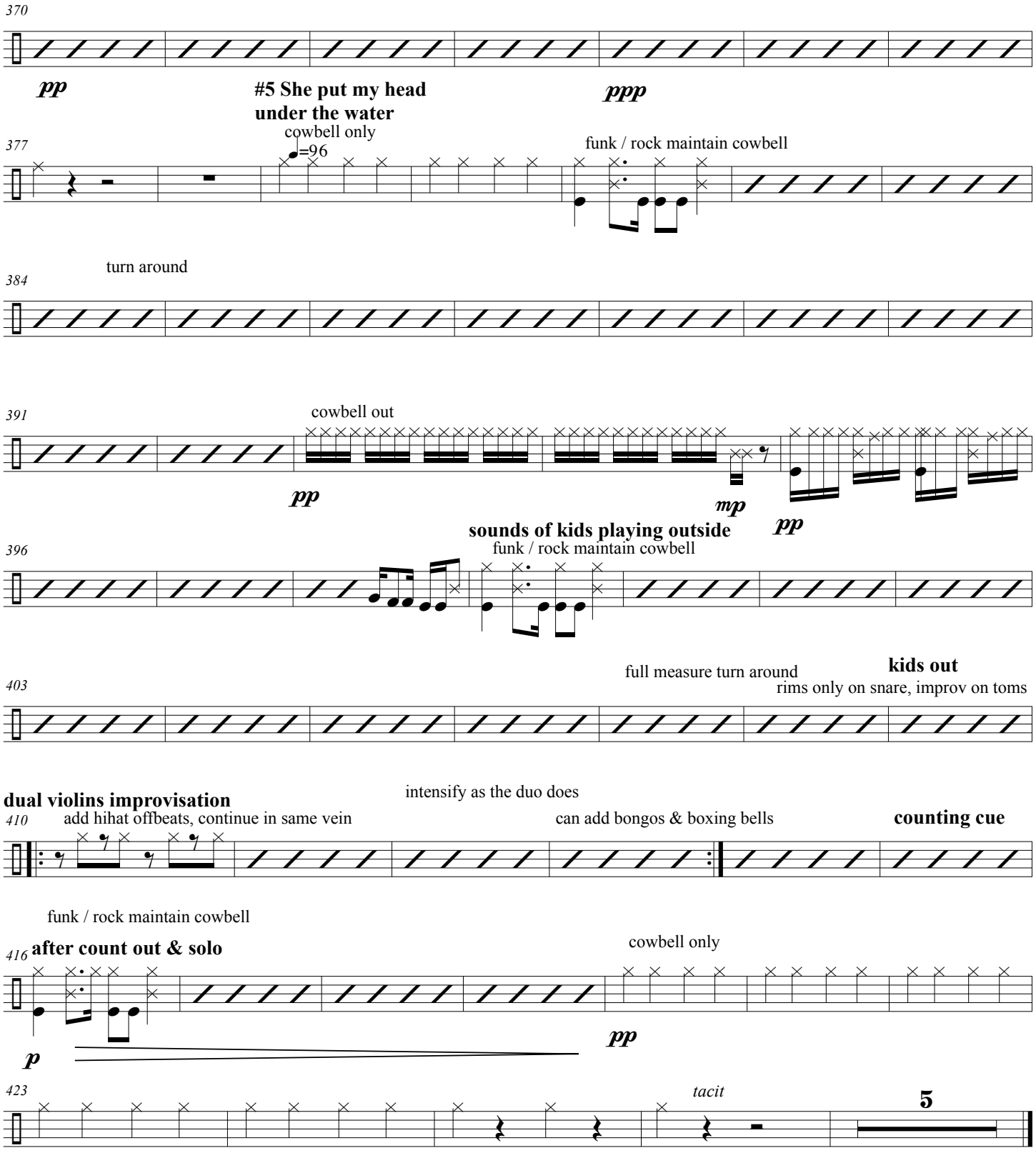
improvise on snare

356

mp

363

p


370
pp
#5 She put my head
under the water
ppp
377
cowbell only
♩=96
funk / rock maintain cowbell
turn around
384
391
cowbell out
pp
mp
pp
sounds of kids playing outside
396
funk / rock maintain cowbell
full measure turn around
kids out
403
rims only on snare, improv on toms
dual violins improvisation
intensify as the duo does
410
add hihat offbeats, continue in same vein
can add bongos & boxing bells
counting cue
funk / rock maintain cowbell
416
after count out & solo
cowbell only
p
pp
423
tacit
5

Drum part

Dave Soldier

String Quartet #1 opus 3
with percussion

original version for amplified string quartet and trap drums
or alternate version for acoustic quartet and hand percussion

"The Impossible"

1. Open Hydrant
2. Walking on the Third Rail
3. Ron visits the Polymer Lounge
4. For His Bad Self
5. She put my head under the water

composed in 1987, premiered 1988
this transcription April 16, 2011 version

about 25 minutes

Dave Soldier
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Performance notes for "The Impossible Quartet"

This can be performed either by an amplified quartet with an American style "trap" drum set – i.e., rock or rhythm & blues style drums; or by a normal acoustic string quartet with quieter hand percussion.

The piece is highly influenced by rhythm and blues, and directly quotes James Brown's *Papa's Got a Brand New Bag* in the 4th movement, as well as hip hop, the sounds of the New York City subways, and children's street games.

The guitarist, cellist, and drummer *must* know the James Brown original – the cellist can deviate from it at will, but must know the overall structure of the melody, and can quote from it or not. There is an untimed "cadenza" for the cello on the last phrase.

Each player has *improvised solos*, and these are marked by "hatches". The improvisations must relate to the surrounding material, but you have otherwise freedom to play what you would like. In some cases I place some advice on the approach to the solo. One overall piece of advice is to leave breaths, i.e. silences between phrases, or it will be hard to build in more tensions. Consider that leaving breath is natural for wind instruments that developed the rhythm and blues solo traditions – for inspiration you may like to listen to saxophone players like Maceo Parker and Hank Crawford. In some cases I write chord changes above the improvised sections.

For open repeat solos, just know who cues and make sure they don't go on too long. Depending on context, the other players can make impromptu variations on their repeated parts, particularly if the soloist is going on a little too long.

The 1st and 5th movement can both use a recording of kids playing street games in the background. This is a good excuse for someone in the quartet to go outside and record them.

String techniques

There are numerous unusual techniques in this piece, and here are some guidelines. When in doubt, use my 1992 recording by the Soldier String Quartet on *Sojourner Truth* as a guide – but don't feel trapped by that recording if you have ideas on how to improve on it or add your own personality.

Lines without noteheads are used to indicated microtonal glisses between the pitches that are shown. Don't worry much about making these exact, they can be expressive sounding glisses that sound satisfying to you.

Speech pitch is indicated by square boxes on the noteheads. Speech pitch imitates spoken inflections, and hence is made of microtonal glissandos. It is played by stopping the string with the left hand over rather than under the instrument, to

enforce intonation that is only approximate. Pinch the string between your thumb and index finger and slide it around the notes indicated to help you to sound like someone speaking or rapping. It helps to think of spoken phrases and to emulate the intonation of them.

The cello has notes in pizzicato sections marked with an "x" notehead. These are percussive and made by *slaps* by the left hand on the neck. They should imitate a snare drum backbeat or a handclap. In pizzicato areas, consider where a "*slap bass*" approach should be used, a classic jazz technique where the strings are plucked hard enough to bounce a bit on the neck.

The second violin and viola also use *slaps* on the neck as marked by an x notehead, which are meant to emulate handclaps. These can be pretty loud and should be, especially for amplified instruments.

Wavy lines over a note means to make a large wobble in the pitch.

The violas's siren imitates a police or ambulance, and use whatever approach you would like including electronics.

"*Squealy noise*" means imitate the squeak sounds of bad subway brakes.

The end of the first movement and first section of the second imitate a subway. They should be differentiated sounds, with the end of the first out of phase with each other and very ponticello, choosing different notes. The top of the second is everyone together in time, and the amplified strings can use distortion if a "fuzz box" is available.

The guitar chord

The fourth movement has the second violinist playing a single chord (an E9) on the guitar for the James Brown number. For amplified quartet it should be an electric guitar, for the acoustic quartet, an acoustic guitar is fine. Of course this can be played by the percussionist instead, or by the other violinist if the second takes the first's part. It could even be played by a guest who plays the guitar, who in this case sits on stage of the entire piece to play about 3 measures of music of one chord.

Drums and percussion

The drum kit uses the snare on the middle line, bass drum on lowest line, cymbals on space above upper line and toms in lower line. The cowbell near the end is indicated. My experience is that drummers prefer this kind of notation more than writing out every note. Essentially any kind of drum kit with any drums can work so long as the drummer has worked on the parts.

For the acoustic quartet, quieter hand percussion is used. At this time and place, the best preference for a basic drum is probably the flamenco style cajon, which has developed as an instrument over the past twenty years and can hold all of

the patterns of the drum kit. This is based on the Cuban cajon used in rumba, but they have added a snare to the inside of the box. Nevertheless, the instrument is not known universally and it is impossible to predict if it will continue to be well established, and if so, where. Thus percussionists can choose there own instruments, but simply must be aware of the different patterns required, and for that listening to the original recording is a good guide.

In addition to the cajon, a hand percussionist requires cymbals and a cowbell for the last movement. A hi-hat may be useful, and a boxing ring bell is nice. Bongos are useful as long as they can be played quietly to not obscure the strings.

-Dave Soldier NYC April 18, 2011

Drum Set
1987
version April 16, 2011

String Quartet #1
The Impossible

Dave Soldier

#1 Open Hydrant ♩=80

3

19

cello strums cue in ♩=96

light fills on cymbals

p

27

funk / rock

f *mf*

32

sounds of kids playing outside

kids out

pp

37

vln 2 solo

funk / rock

43

49

melody repeats

55

61

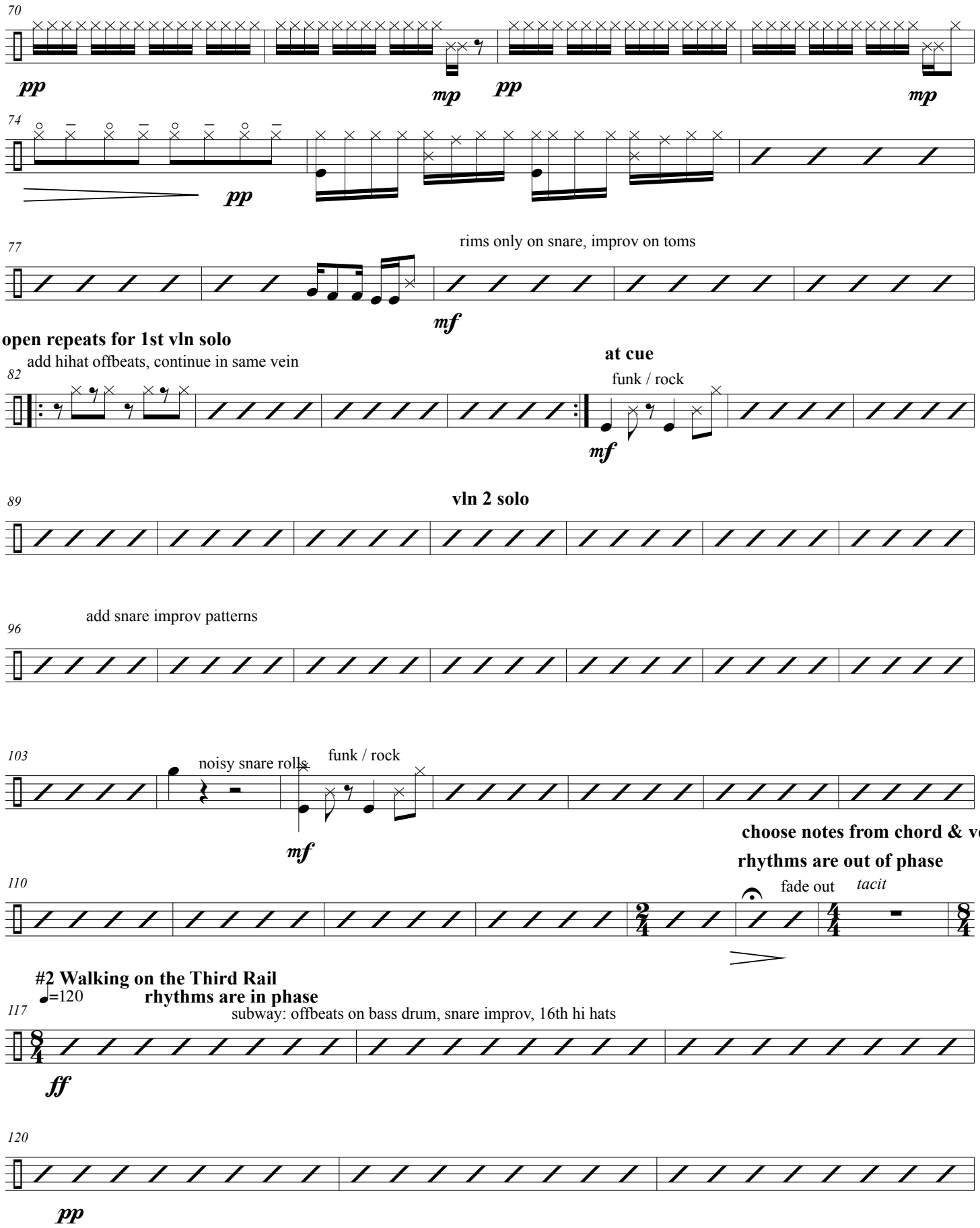
tacit

vln 2 solo

mp *pp*

67

mp *pp* *mp*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choose notes from chord & very stri
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fade out
tacit
#2 Walking on the Third Rail
♩=120
rhythms are in phase
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subway: offbeats on bass drum, snare improv, 16th hi hats
ff
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123

ff *pp*

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light fills on cymbals

subito *p*

164

ppp

169 ♩=100 *tacit*

improv on snare rolls and crash cymbals

177

add other drums but remain unstable, leave spaces

184

191

198

subway continues

mf

205

#3 Ron visits the Polymer Lounge

♩=96

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sticks (claves) & rattles

can add bass drum

♩.=96

1st viola solo

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tacit

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♩=96

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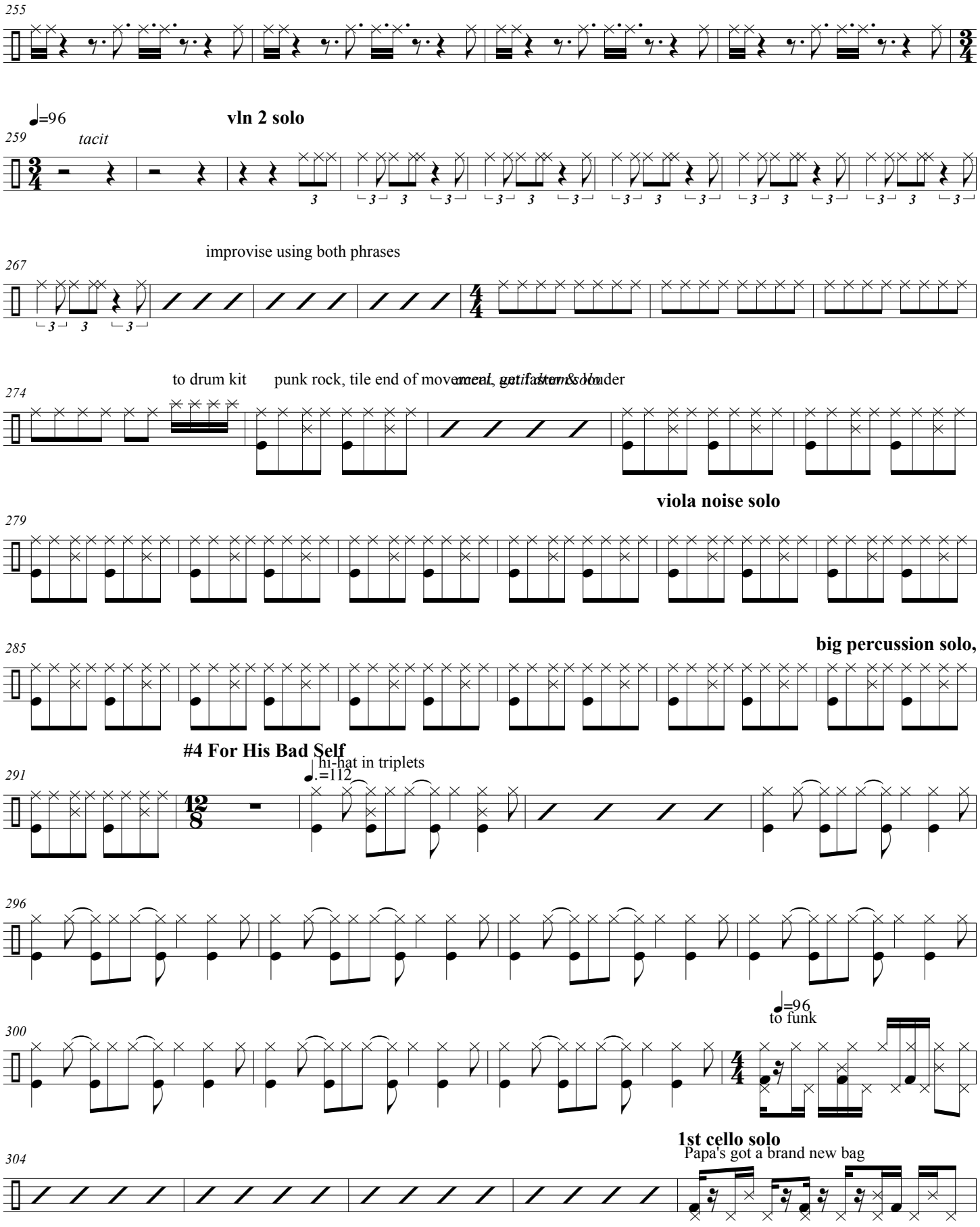
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vln 2 solo
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big percussion solo, up to 90
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1st cello solo
Papa's got a brand new bag
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tacit

3rd cello solo
Papa's got a brand new bag

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open cello cadenza
a tempo

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tacit

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Papa's got a brand new bag

open repeats for 1st vln solo

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350

improvise on snare

356

mp

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pp

#5 She put my head under the water

ppp

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tacit

cowbell only

♩=96

funk / rock maintain cowbell

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turn around

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cowbell out

pp

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counting cue

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after count out & solo

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cowbell only

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pp

423

tacit

5