Filthy Machines

for vibraphone, marimba (doubling crotales), and two pianos

Ryan Carter

(2007)

This work was composed while in residence at Copland House,
Cortlandt Manor, New York, as a recipient of the Aaron Copland Award.

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Performance notes:

This piece employs conventional metered notation and proportional notation. During metered passages with solid barlines (e.g. m. 1), parts are synchronized; they should align as written. During metered passages with dashed barlines (e.g. m. 38), parts are free to shift; they may NOT align as written. Proportional notation is sometimes used locally to override the meter (e.g. m. 51). Entirely proportional passages are indicated by tick mark barlines (e.g. m. 91). During these passages, parts need NOT align as written.

Pianists should note the extensive use of octave-transposing clefs, which may transpose a staff one octave higher (e.g. piano 1 in m. 1), one octave lower (e.g. piano 2 in m. 1), or two octaves higher (e.g. piano 2 in m. 71) than written.

Octava signs are also used locally to transpose a staff; they never affect more than one staff.

In the vibraphone and crotale parts, diamond noteheads are used to indicate bowing the instrument (e.g. m. 91).

Accidentals apply until the end of the measure. Cautionary accidentals appear frequently without parentheses.

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Program notes:

I began writing *Filthy Machines* while in residence at Copland House, the former home of Aaron Copland. The rustic, sylvan setting is surely intended to provide composers with the peace and quiet they need to work, but it also forced me to face my technology addiction.

I compose instrumental, vocal, electronic, and electroacoustic music. I am delighted by the new musical possibilities afforded by technological advancements, but I also think we should be aware of how technology is fundamentally transforming the way we experience and create music.

I observe three trends that seem to be merging toward each other. First, the capacity of computers to emulate instruments and human performance is improving. Second, the willingness of listeners to accept spurious representations of instruments and human performance is expanding. Third, the tendency of composers to write music that is better suited for computer performance than human performance is becoming increasingly common. At some point in the distant future, could these trends meet and obviate the need for human performers entirely?

I doubt it. I think humans will continue to play music because humans want to. Besides, technology still has some major shortcomings, two of which I address in this piece. First, a MIDI "performance" of a piece for multiple instruments neglects the intangible nuances of human interaction that define artistic excellence. Second, multiple parts mixed digitally will not interact in the same manner as sounds produced mechanically by instruments in a single physical space.

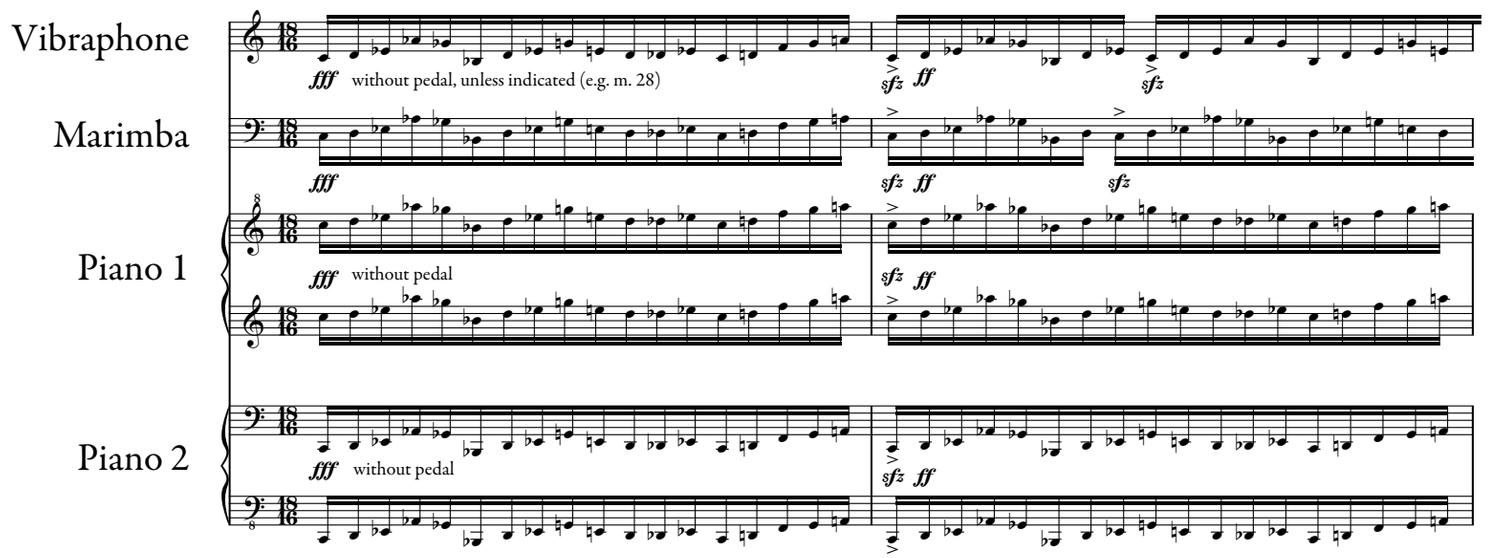
The opening pitches of *Filthy Machines* are derived from a patch I programmed in Max/MSP. A rigid, mechanical opening gradually transforms into a musical setting in which both the flexible relationships among performers and the acoustic interactions among instruments are inextricable from the musical material itself.

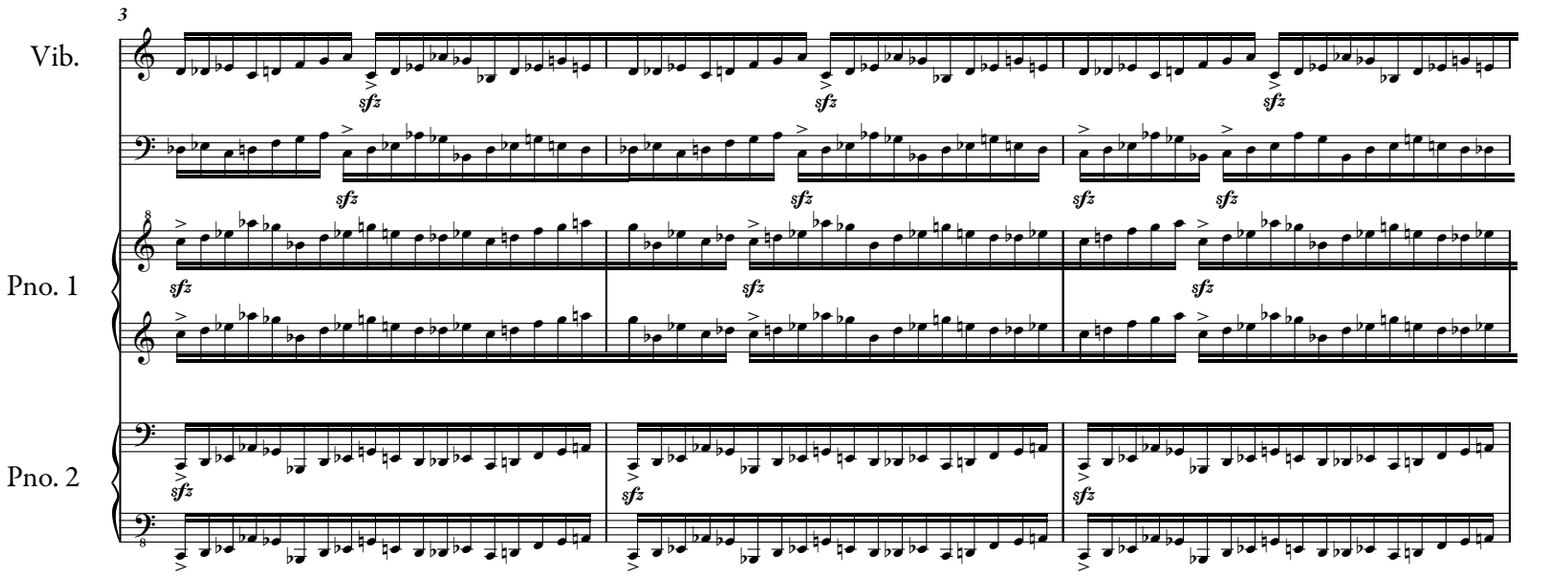
Filthy Machines

written for Yarn/Wire

Ryan Carter

Fast, but in complete control (like a machine gun) ♩ = 120 (𝅘𝅥𝅯 = 480)





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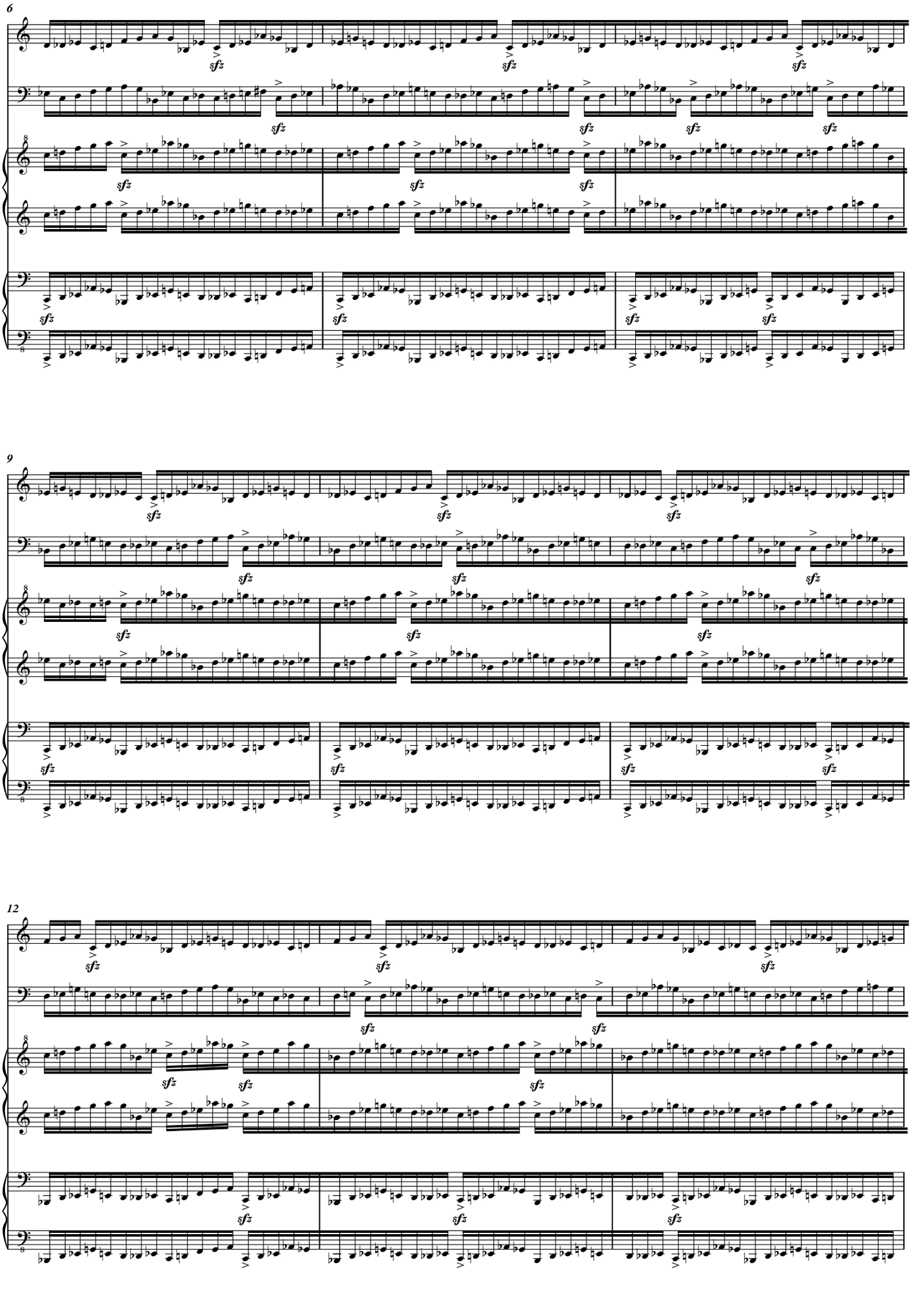
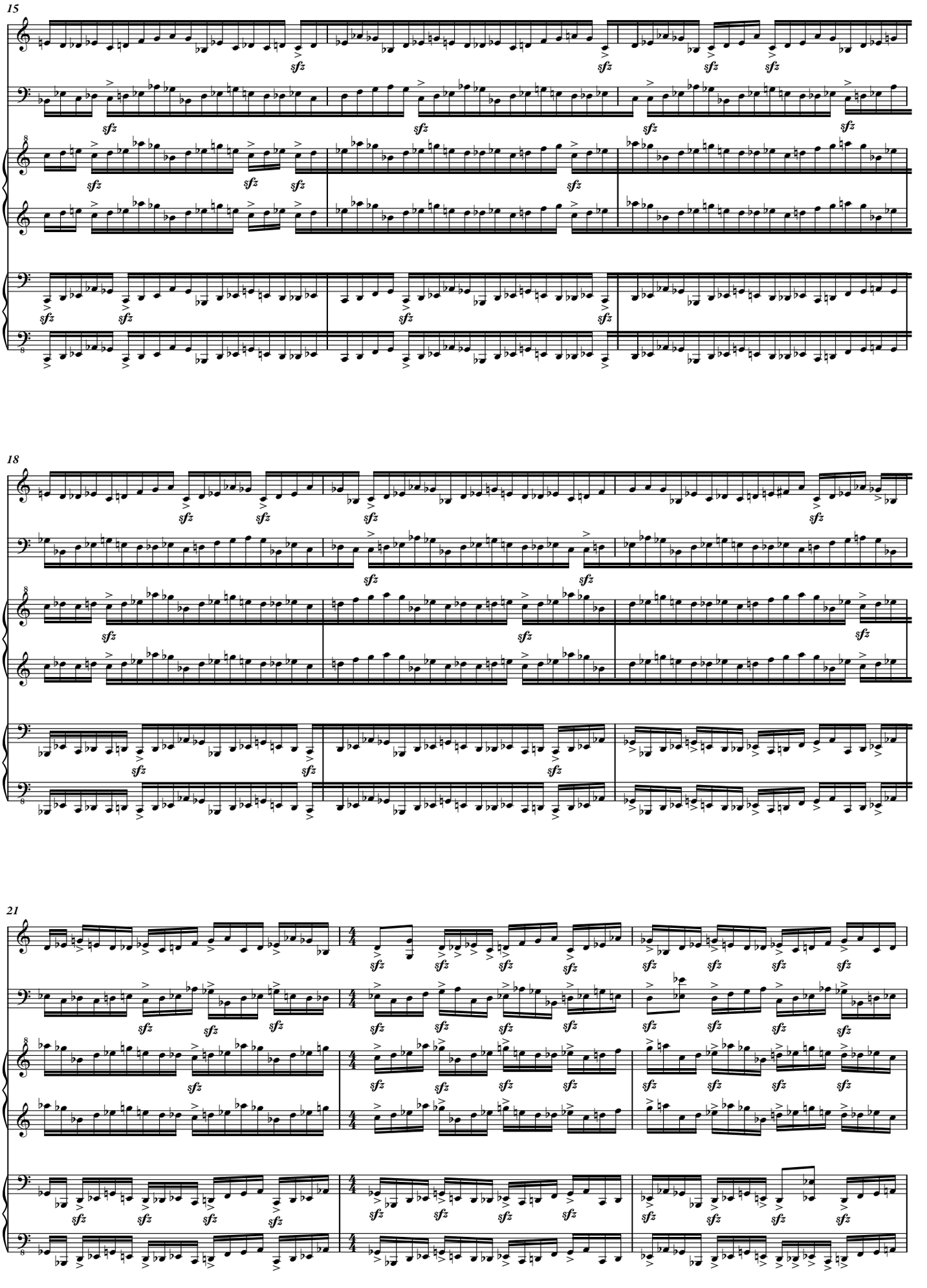
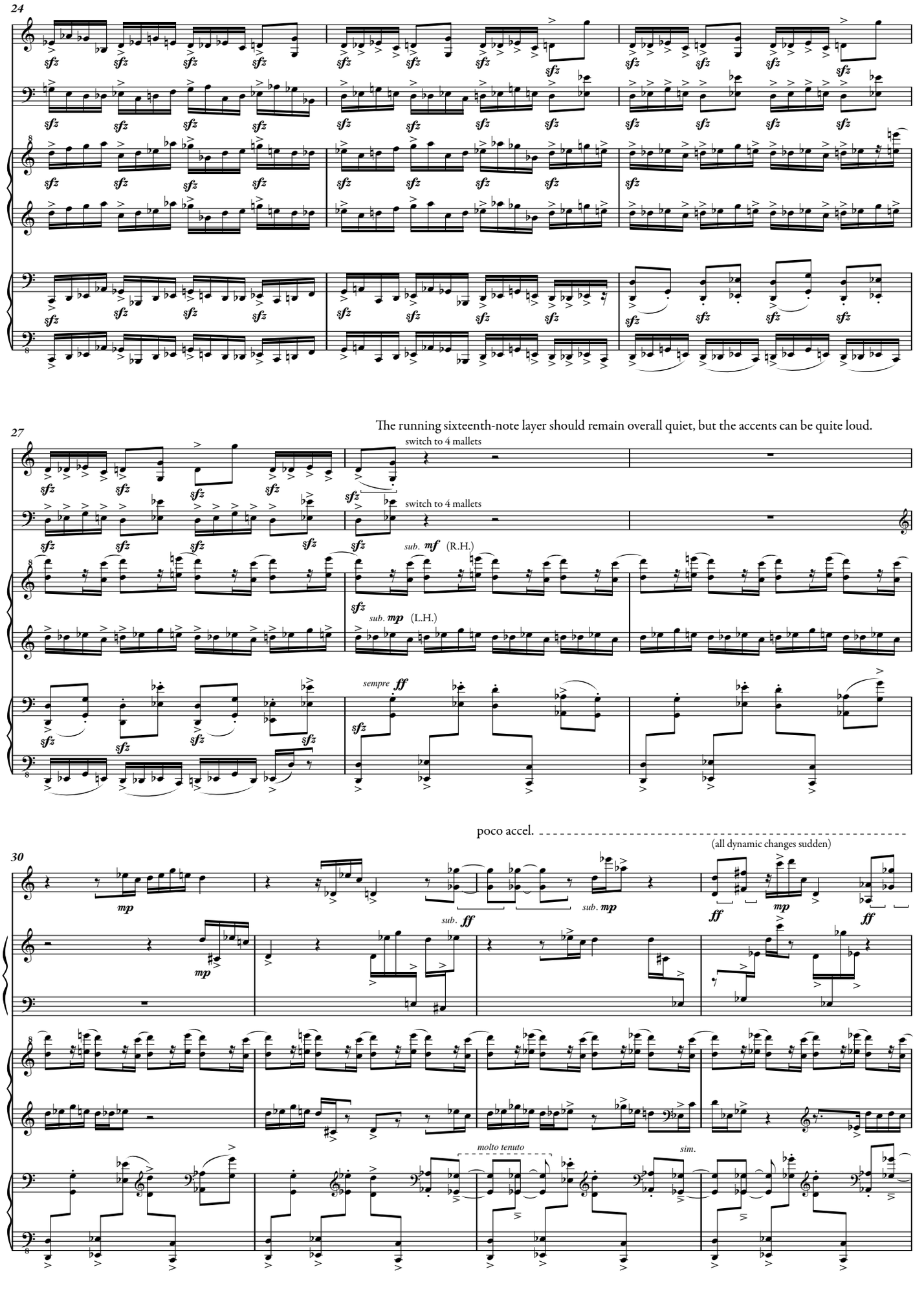
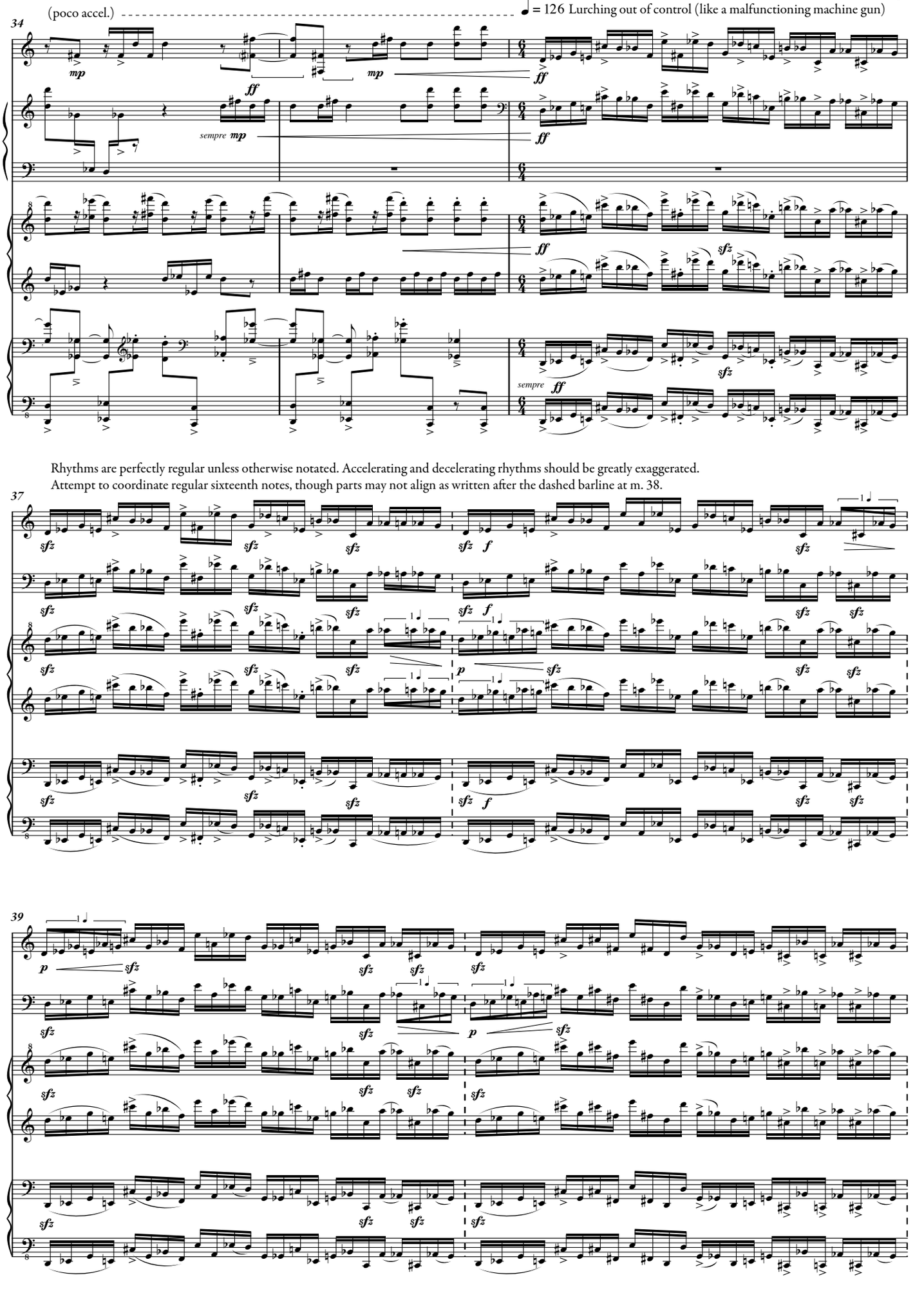
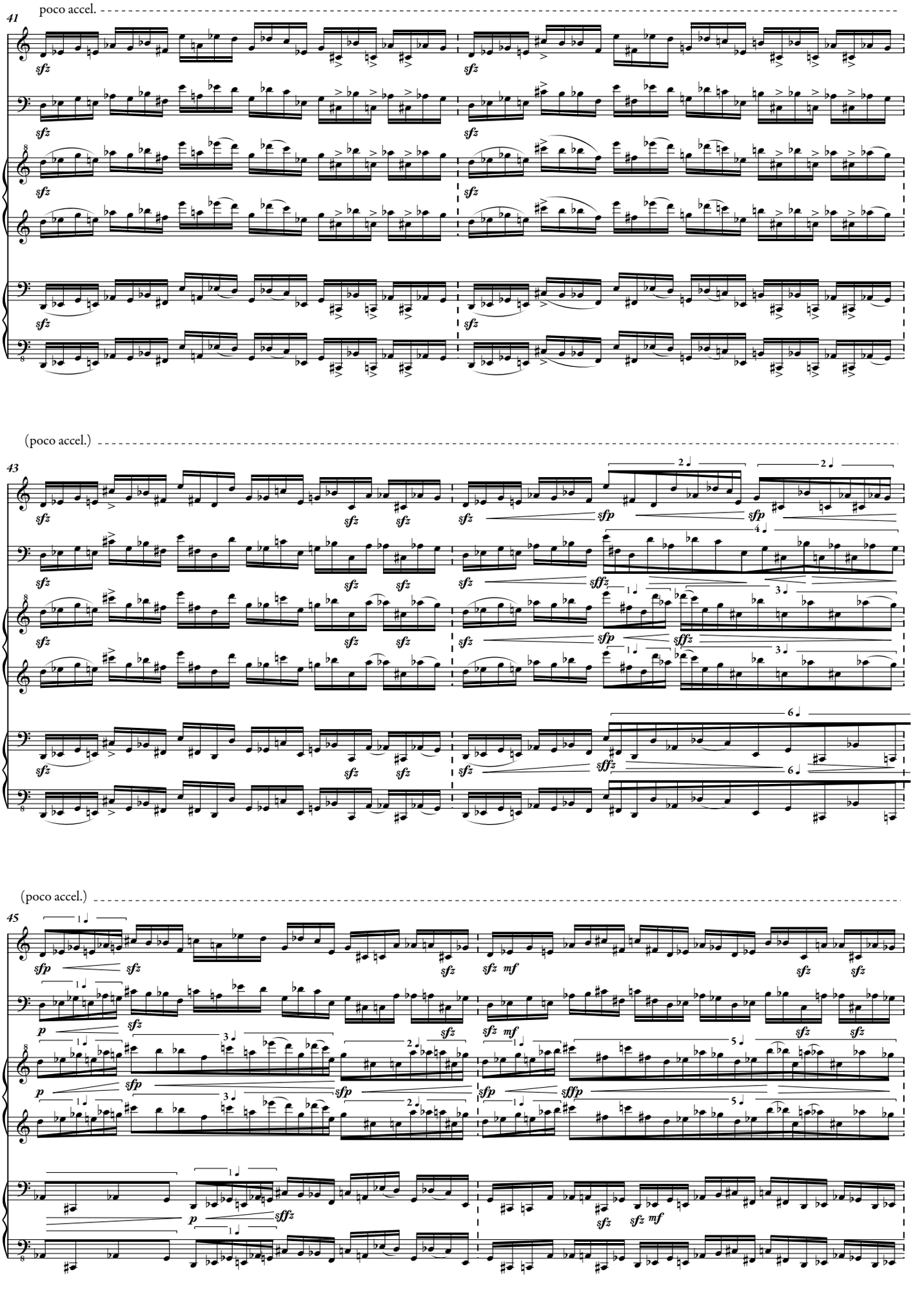

6
Vib.
Pno. 1
Pno. 2
9
Vib.
Pno. 1
Pno. 2
12
Vib.
Pno. 1
Pno. 2


15
Vib.
Pno. 1
Pno. 2
18
Vib.
Pno. 1
Pno. 2
21
Vib.
Pno. 1
Pno. 2


24
Vib.
Pno. 1
Pno. 2
27
The running sixteenth-note layer should remain overall quiet, but the accents can be quite loud.
switch to 4 mallets
switch to 4 mallets
sub. mf (R.H.)
sub. mp (L.H.)
sempre ff
30
poco accel.
(all dynamic changes sudden)
sub. ff
sub. mp
molto tenuto
sim.


(poco accel.)
♩ = 126 Lurching out of control (like a malfunctioning machine gun)
34
Vib.
Pno. 1
Pno. 2
mp
ff
sempre mp
sempre ff
sfz
Rhythms are perfectly regular unless otherwise notated. Accelerating and decelerating rhythms should be greatly exaggerated.
Attempt to coordinate regular sixteenth notes, though parts may not align as written after the dashed barline at m. 38.
37
39
sfz
f
p


41
poco accel.
Vib.
Pno. 1
Pno. 2
43
(poco accel.)
Vib.
Pno. 1
Pno. 2
45
(poco accel.)
Vib.
Pno. 1
Pno. 2