Mathew Fuerst

The Drift of Things

for solo piano

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for solo piano(2009)

The Drift of Things was written for pianist Vicky Chow during the winter of 2008-2009 in Hillsdale, MI and was premiered in New York City in May, 2009. That first year at Hillsdale was a difficult one. As much as I was enjoying my new job and teaching college students, I had a very hard transition leaving my home in New York City and moving to a small, rural town like Hillsdale. When Vicky approached me about writing a piece for her, I felt this was a great opportunity to try to capture some of the difficulties and anxieties I had as I was adjusting to my new life.

I was introduced to Miles Davis' album *Bitches Brew* around the same time as my move to Hillsdale and was impressed by the improvisatory power and raw energy of the music. At that time, I was also attracted to the paintings of Jackson Pollack for many of the same reasons. I wanted to write a work that would be similarly raw, and strove to create a piece that was more spontaneous. This required me to compose something that was not as formally planned out or motivically controlled. For example, there are many passages in which the rhythm, direction, and range of a gesture are given, but not the specific pitches. However, I still wanted to try to create balance structurally. To achieve this, I calculated the climax to happen at the Golden Section of the work by writing the ending first, counting the number of eighth-notes used, then figuring out how many eighth-note beats I would need in the piece to make it work.

The title comes from an excerpt from Robert Frost's poem *Reluctance*, which I felt expressed my frame of mind at the time of composing this work:

Ah, when to the heart of man
Was it ever less than a treason
To go with the drift of things,
To yield with a grace to reason,
And bow and accept the end
Of a love or a season?

Excerpt from “Reluctance,” from the book THE POETRY OF ROBERT FROST edited by Edward Connery Lathem. Copyright © 1934, 1969 by Henry Holt and Company, copyright © 1962 by Robert Frost .
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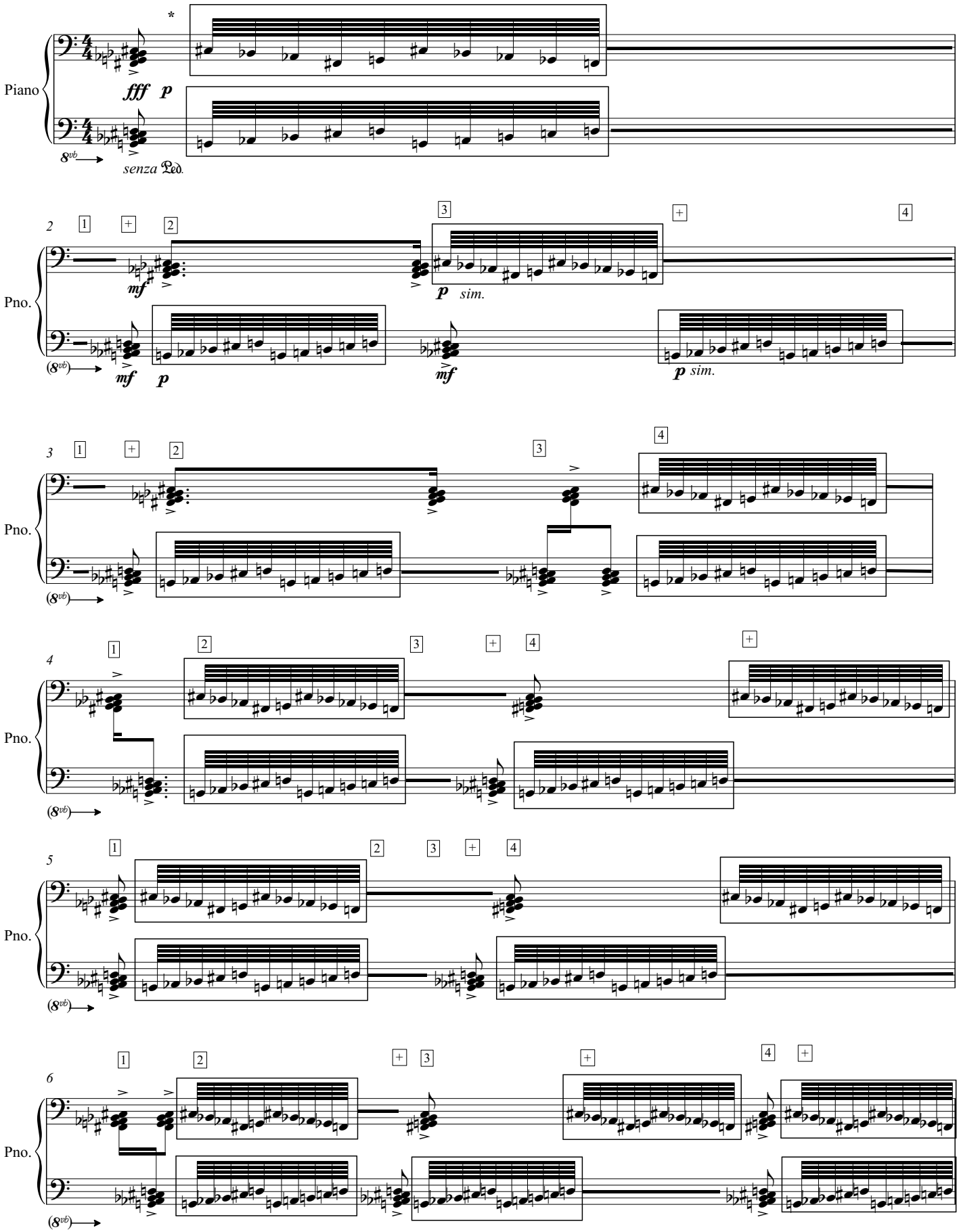
for Vicky Chow

The Drift of Things

Allegro molto ritmico e fuoco ♩ = 124

Mathew Fuerst



* All music in boxes should be played as quickly as possible and the hands should not be coordinated with each other.
The boxed numbers represent the beat numbers and off-beats per measure.

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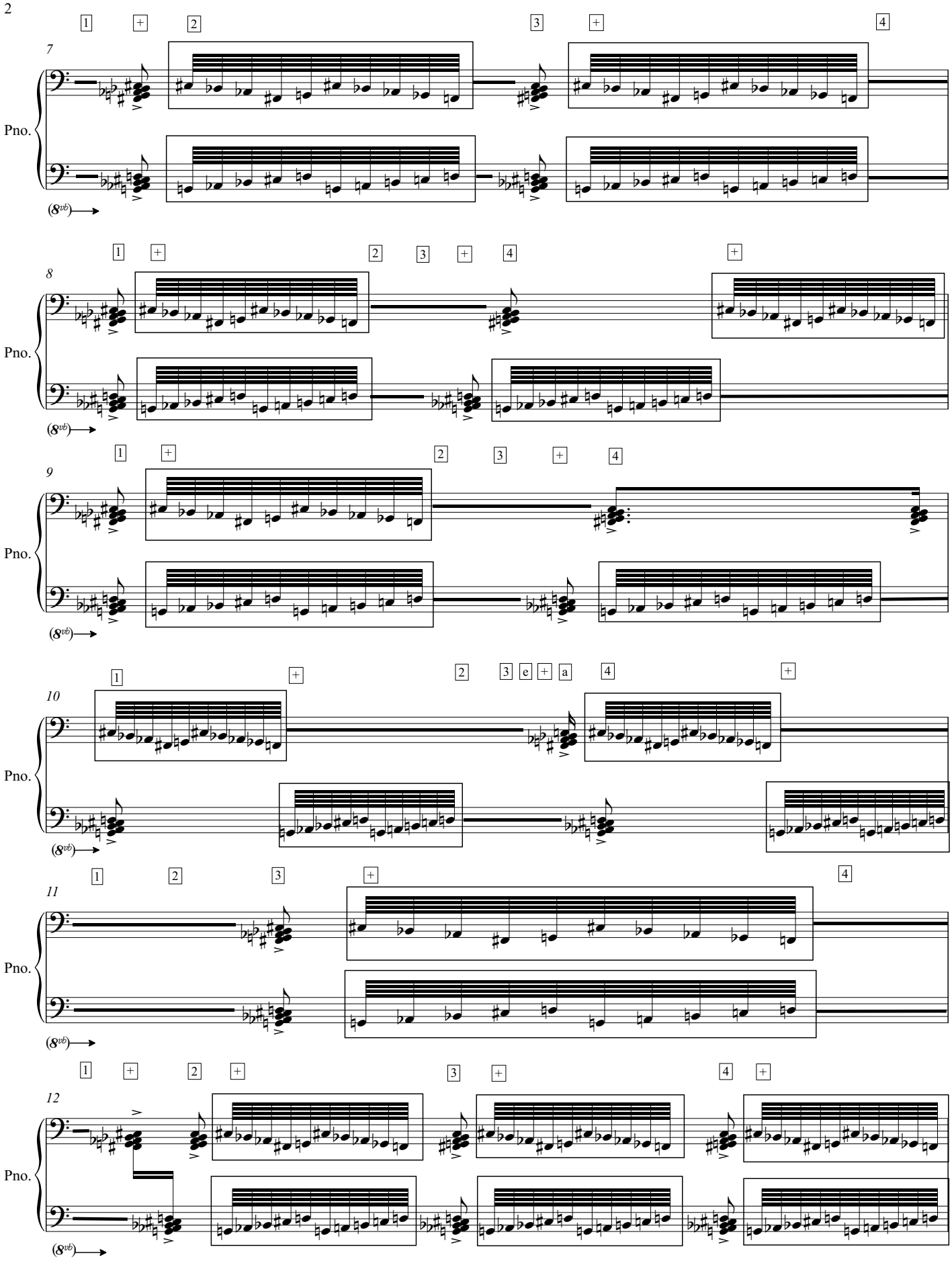
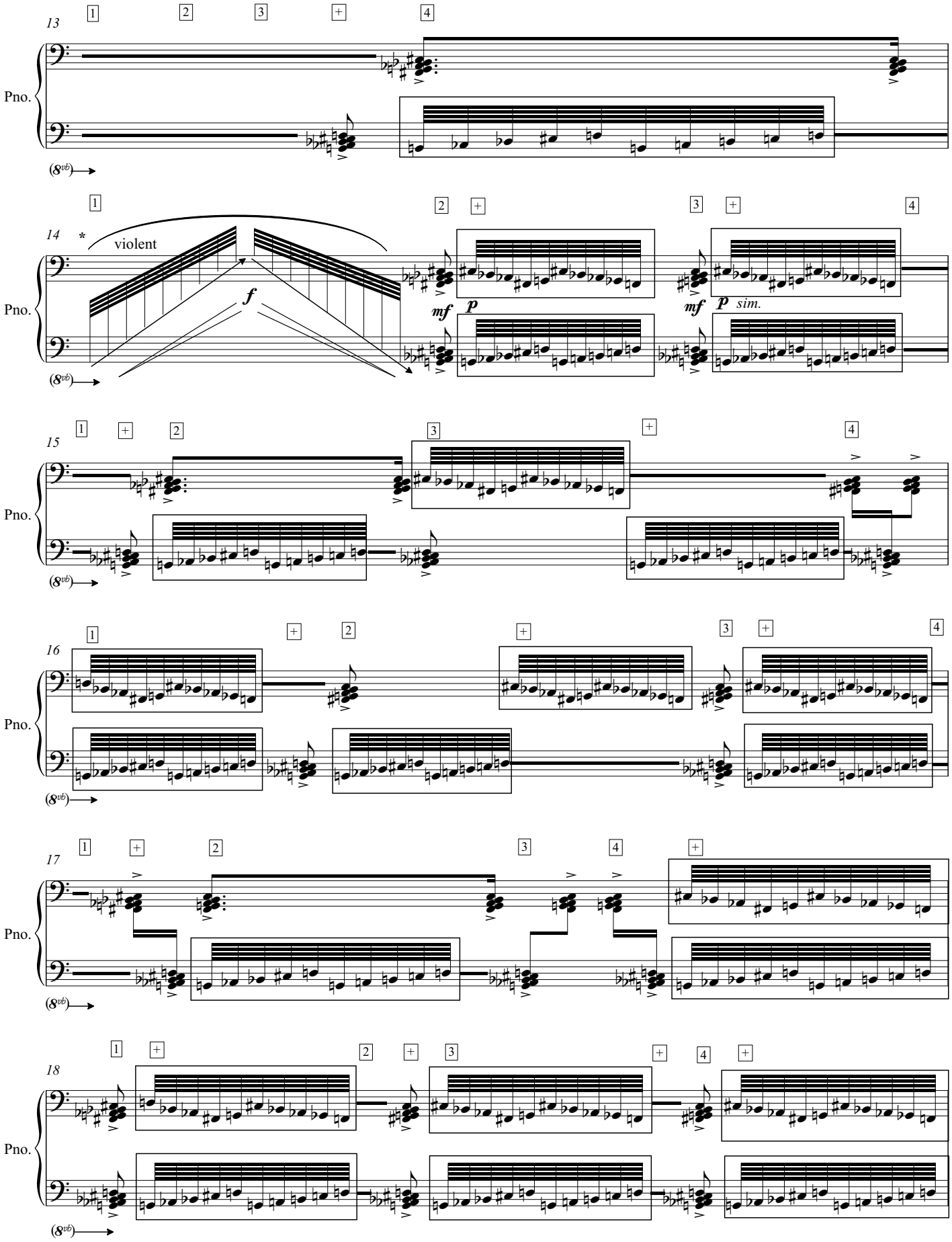
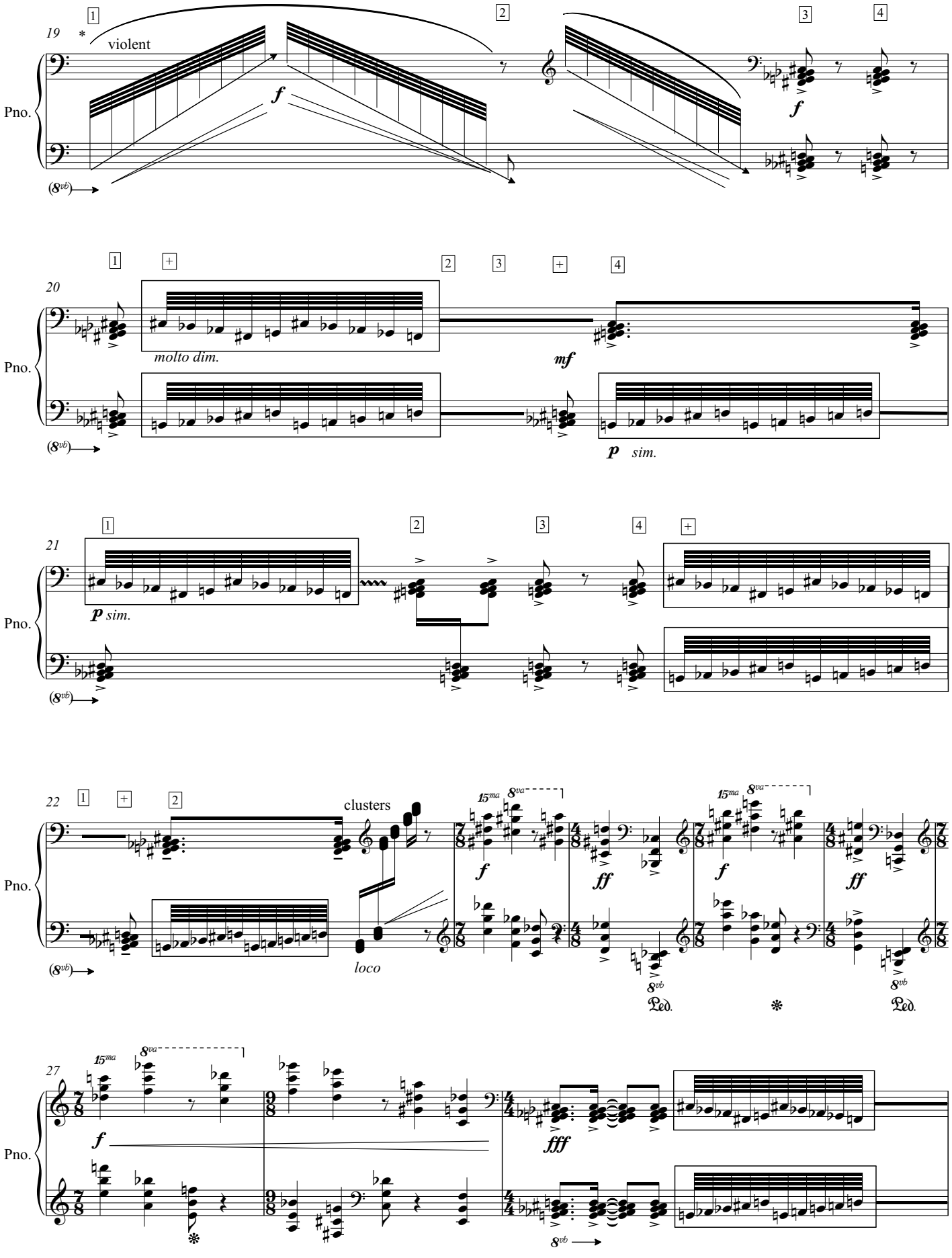
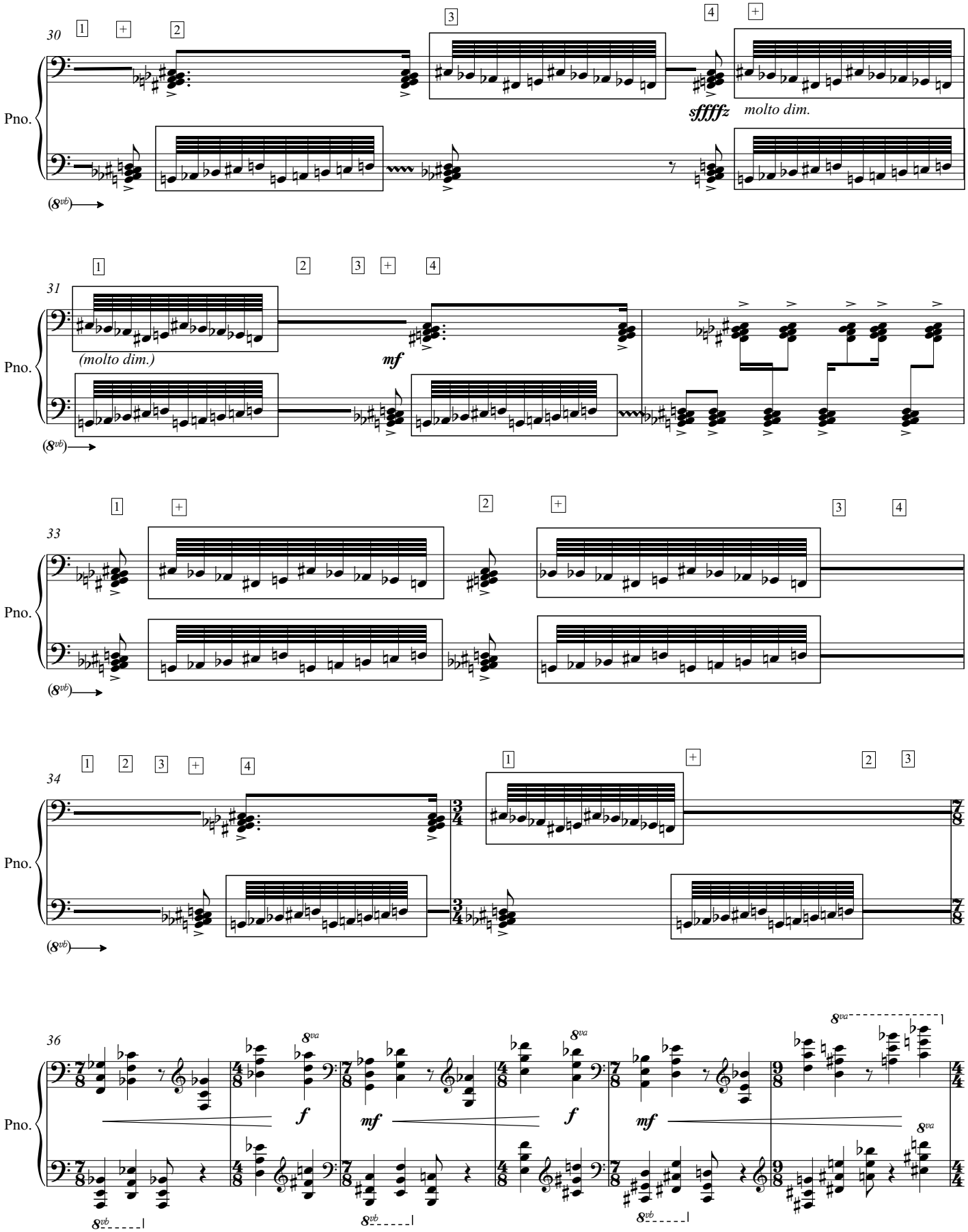

7
Pno.
(8vb)
8
Pno.
(8vb)
9
Pno.
(8vb)
10
Pno.
(8vb)
11
Pno.
(8vb)
12
Pno.
(8vb)

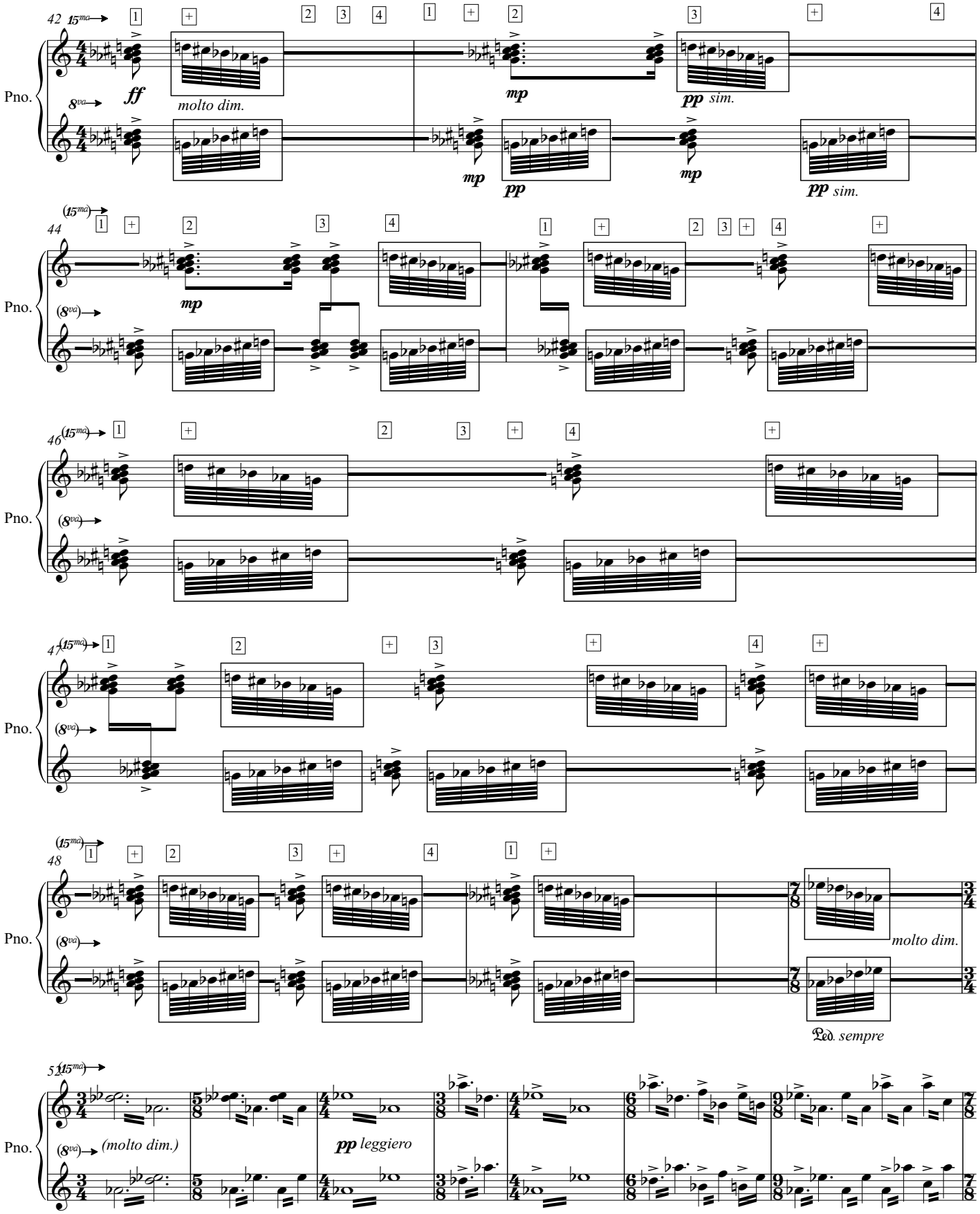


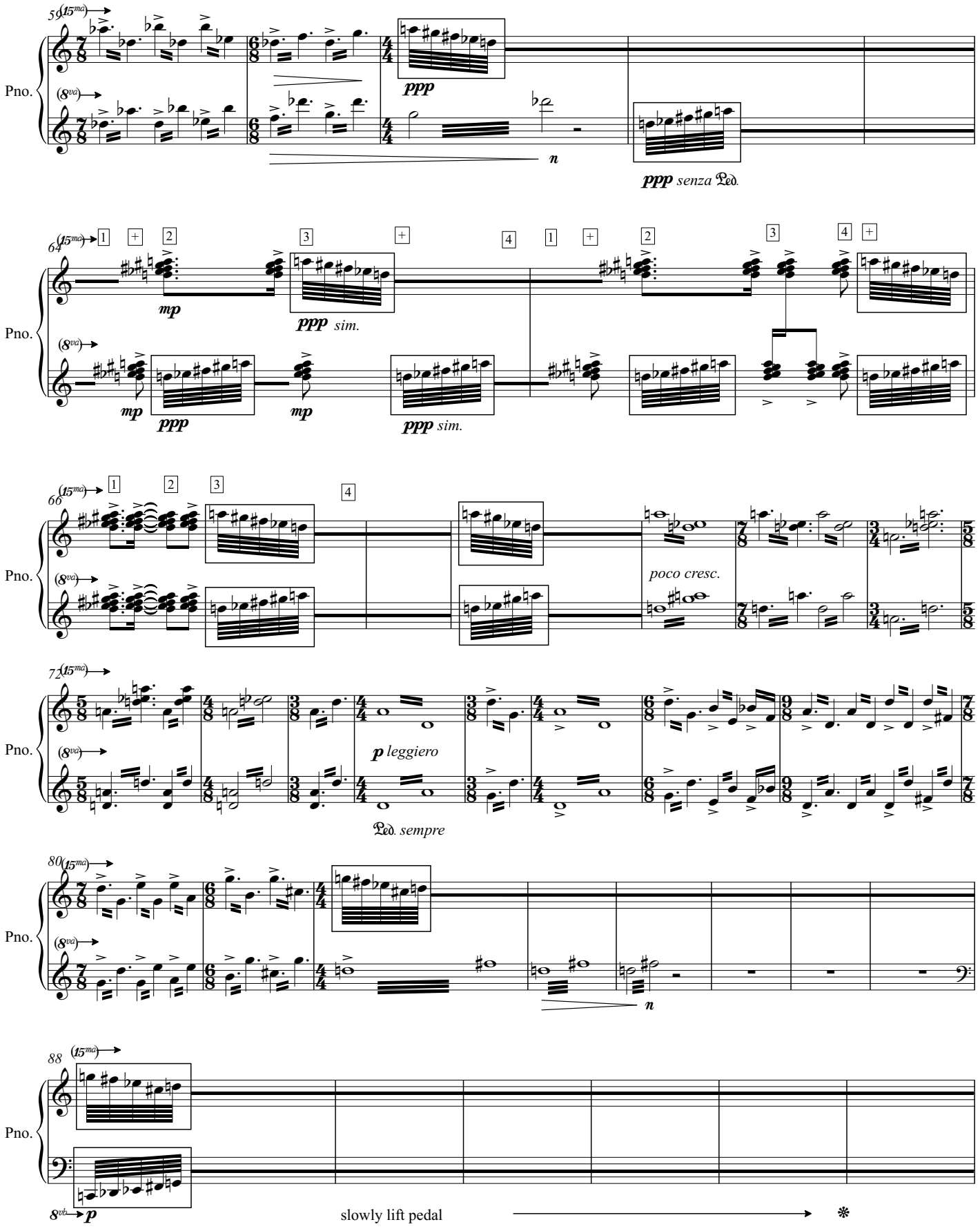
* The performer can play any note as long as it mirrors the gesture written and remains within the general range written.

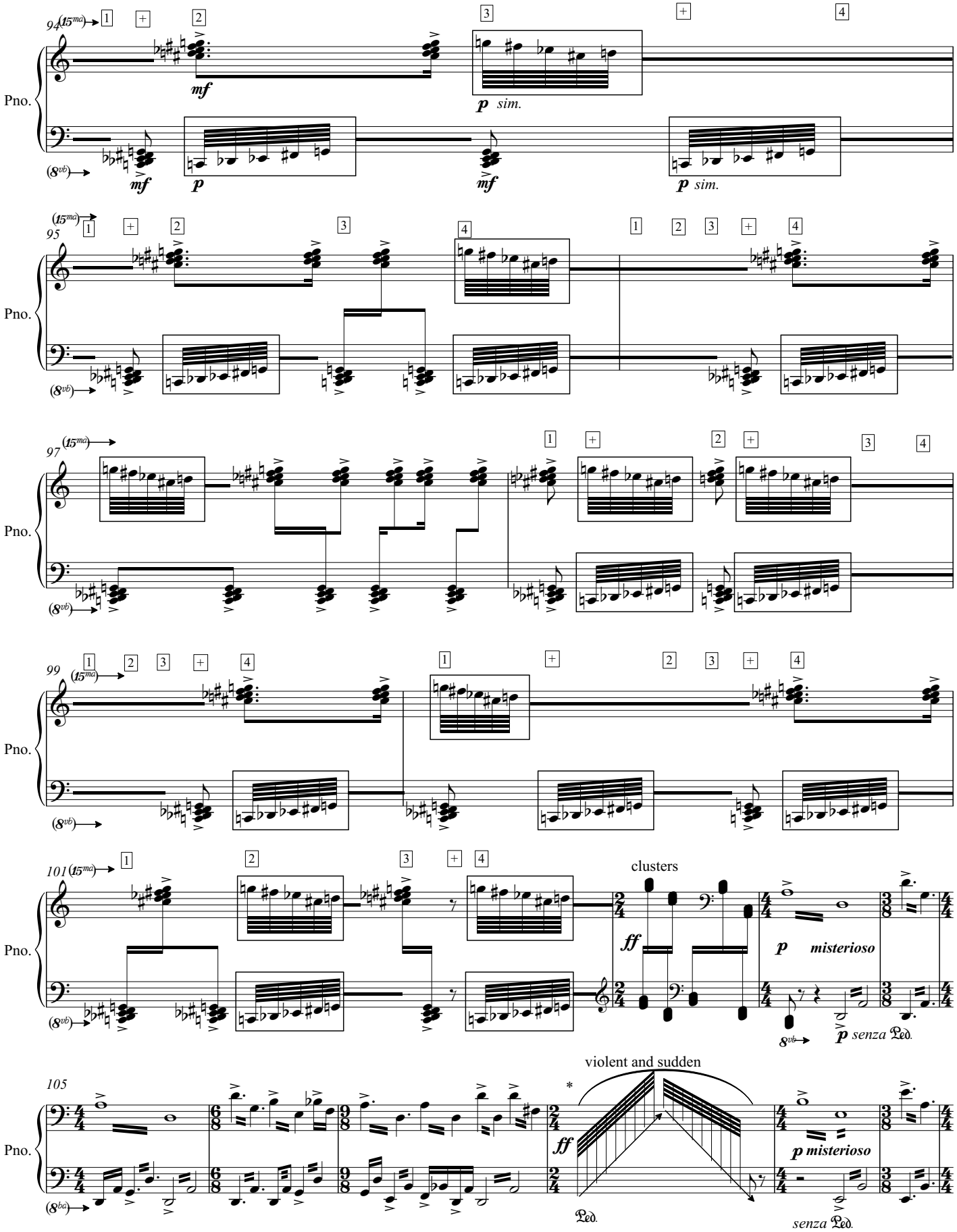


* See note page 3.

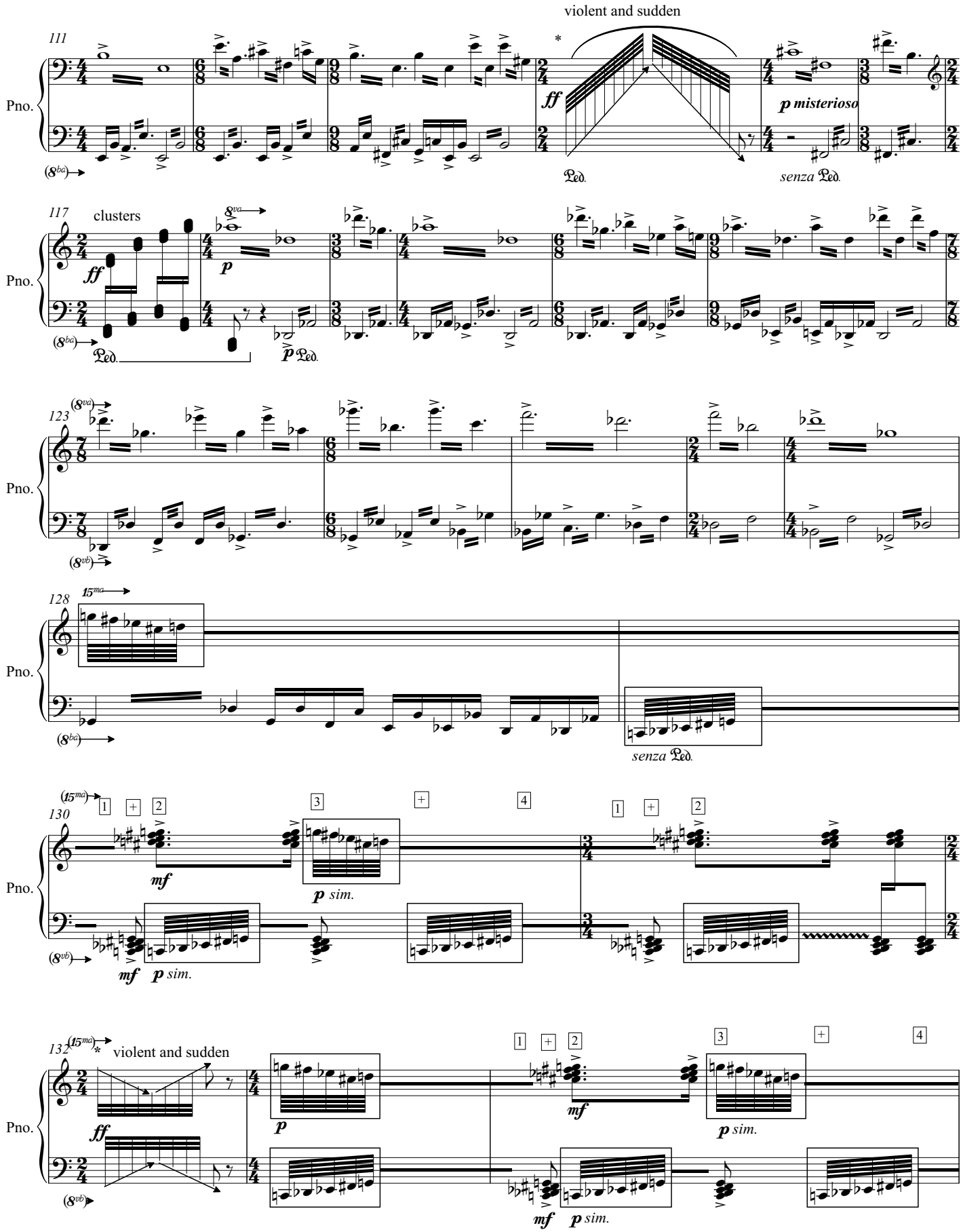

30
Pno.
sffffz
molto dim.
(8vb)
31
Pno.
(molto dim.)
mf
(8vb)
33
Pno.
(8vb)
34
Pno.
(8vb)
36
Pno.
f
mf
f
mf
8va
8vb


42
15ma
Pno.
8va
ff
molto dim.
mp
pp sim.
44
(15ma)
(8va)
46
47
48
molto dim.
Ped. sempre
52
(molto dim.)
pp leggiero

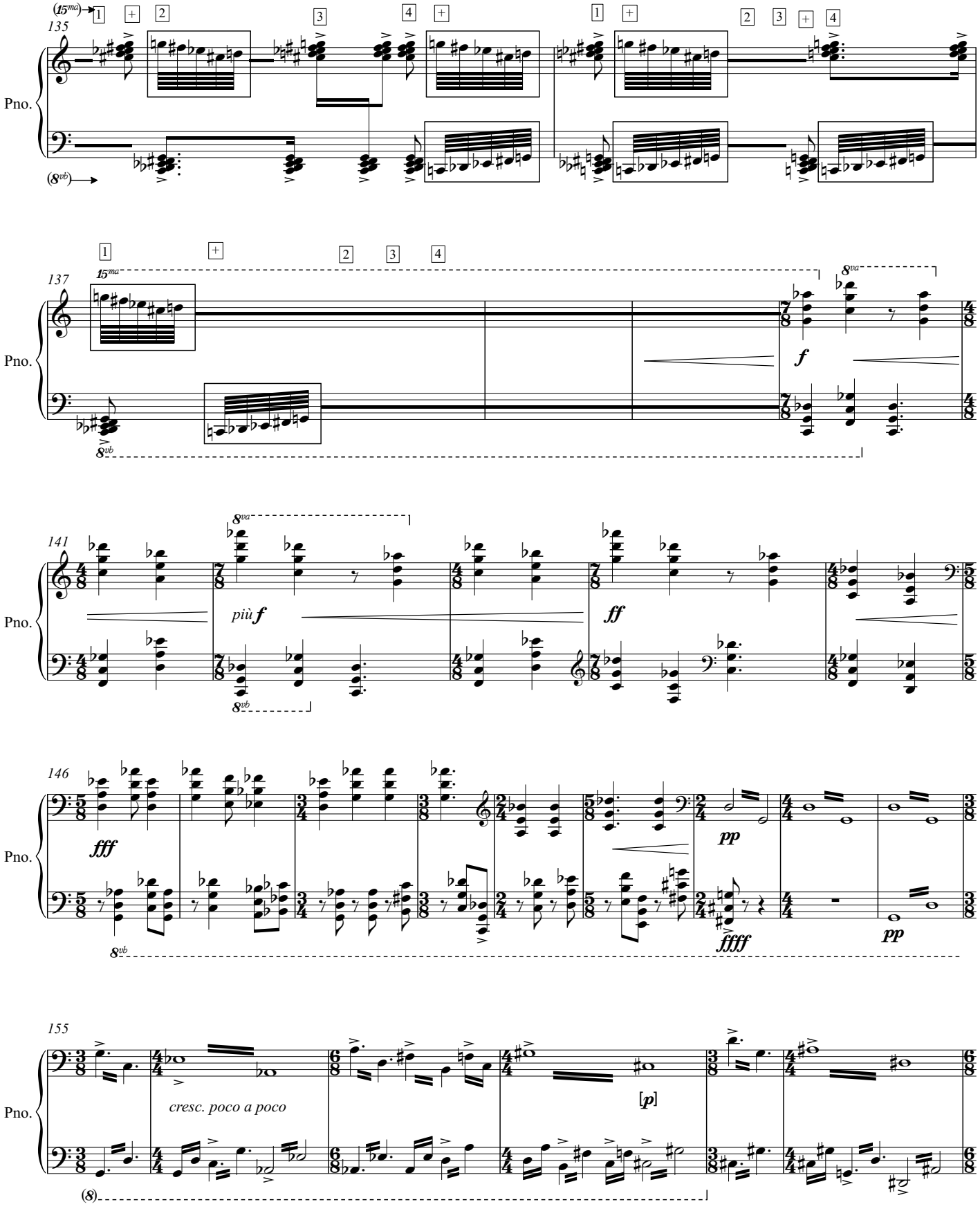

59
(15ma)
(8va)
Pno.
ppp
n
ppp senza Ped.
64
mp
ppp sim.
poco cresc.
72
p leggiero
Ped. sempre
80
88
8vb
p
slowly lift pedal

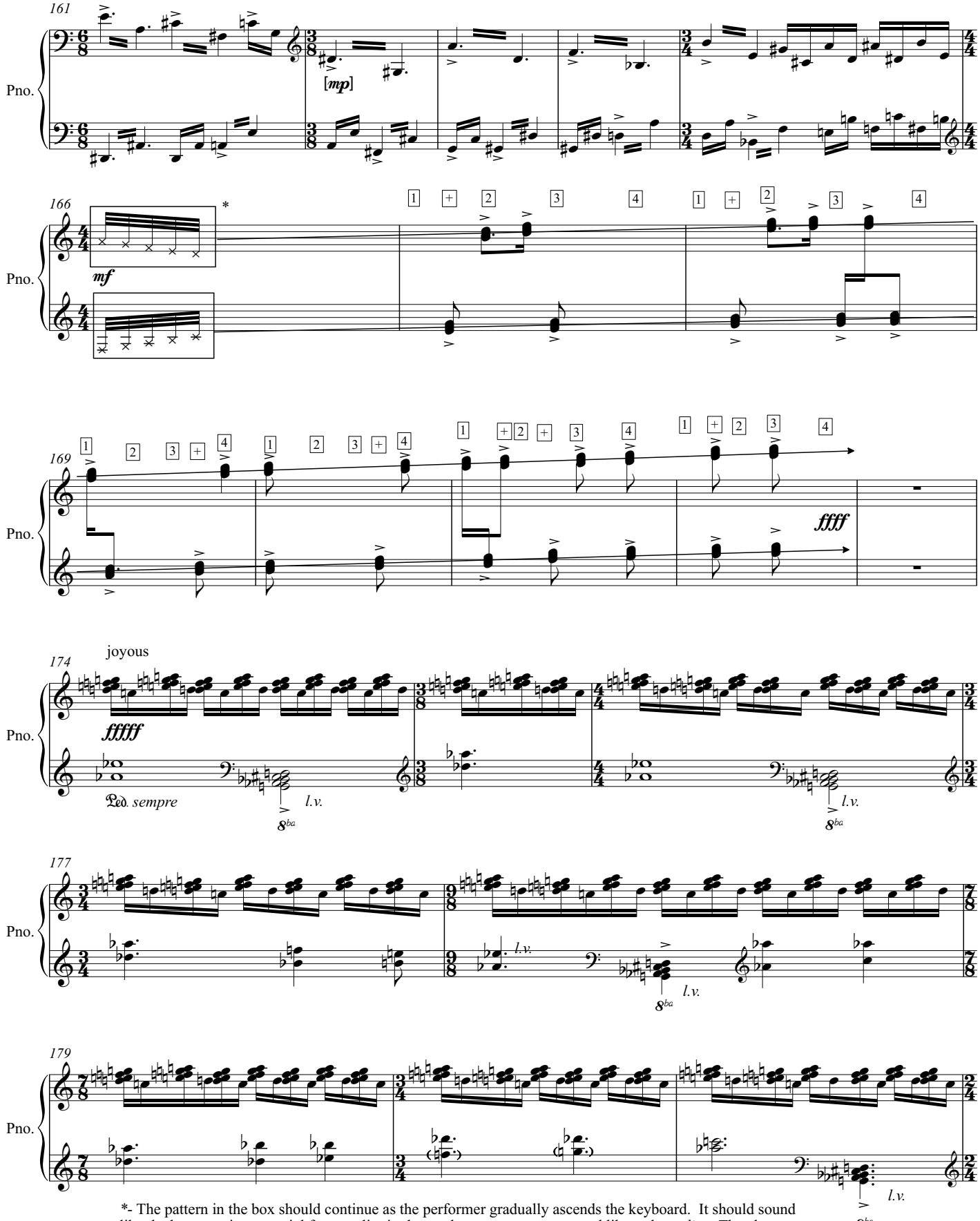


* See note on page 3

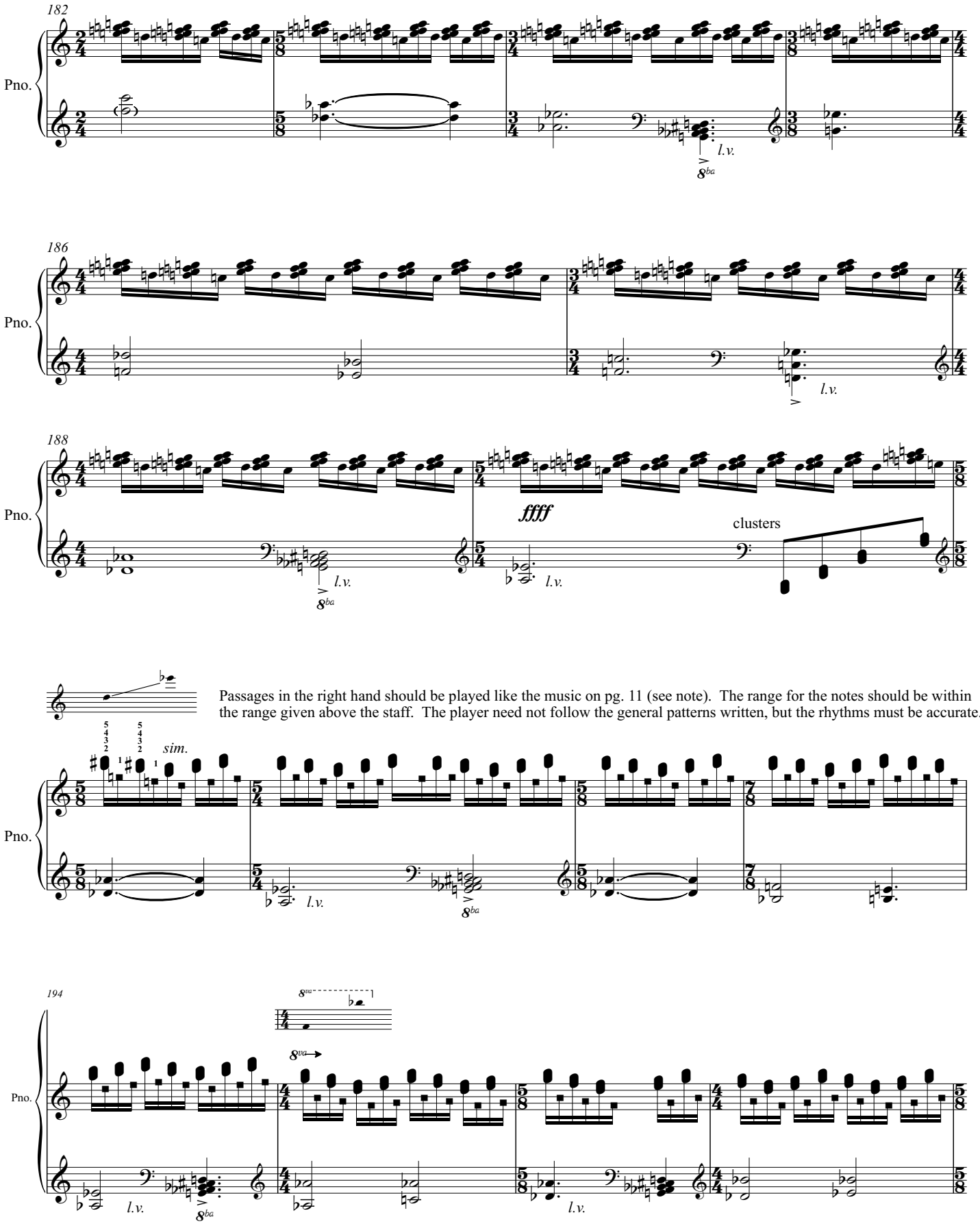


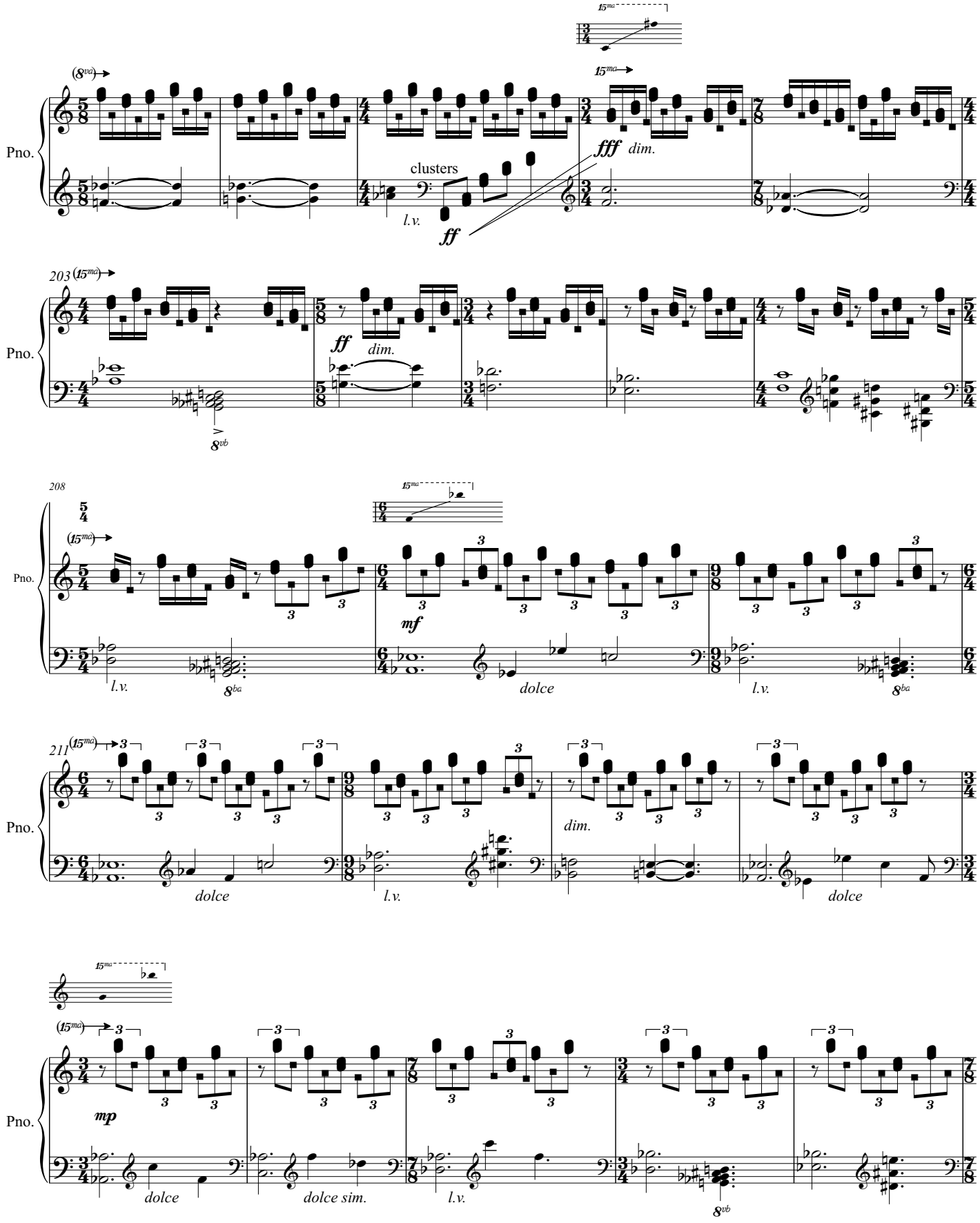
* See note on page 3

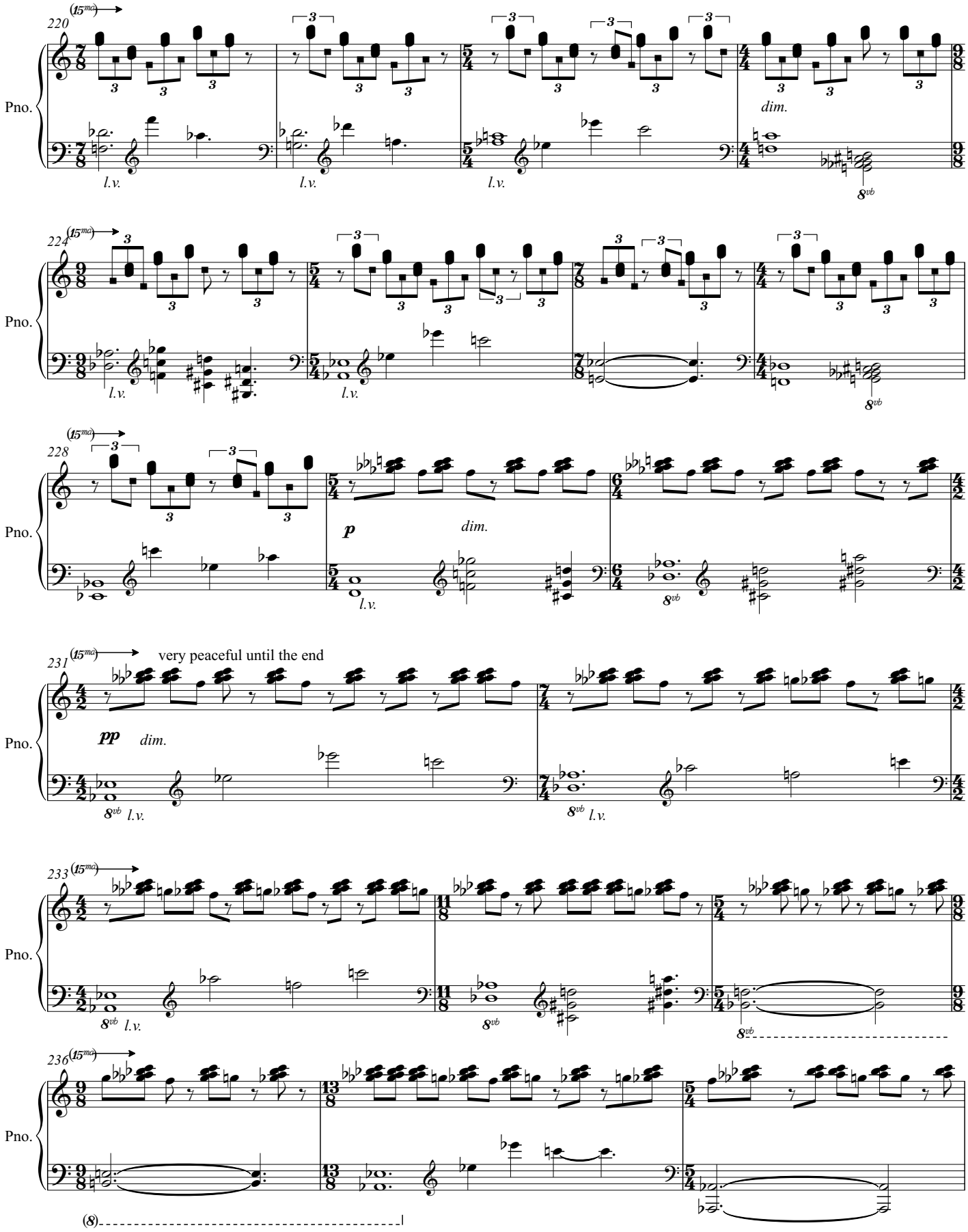

135
Pno.
137
Pno.
141
Pno.
più f
ff
146
Pno.
fff
pp
ffff
pp
155
Pno.
cresc. poco a poco
[p]

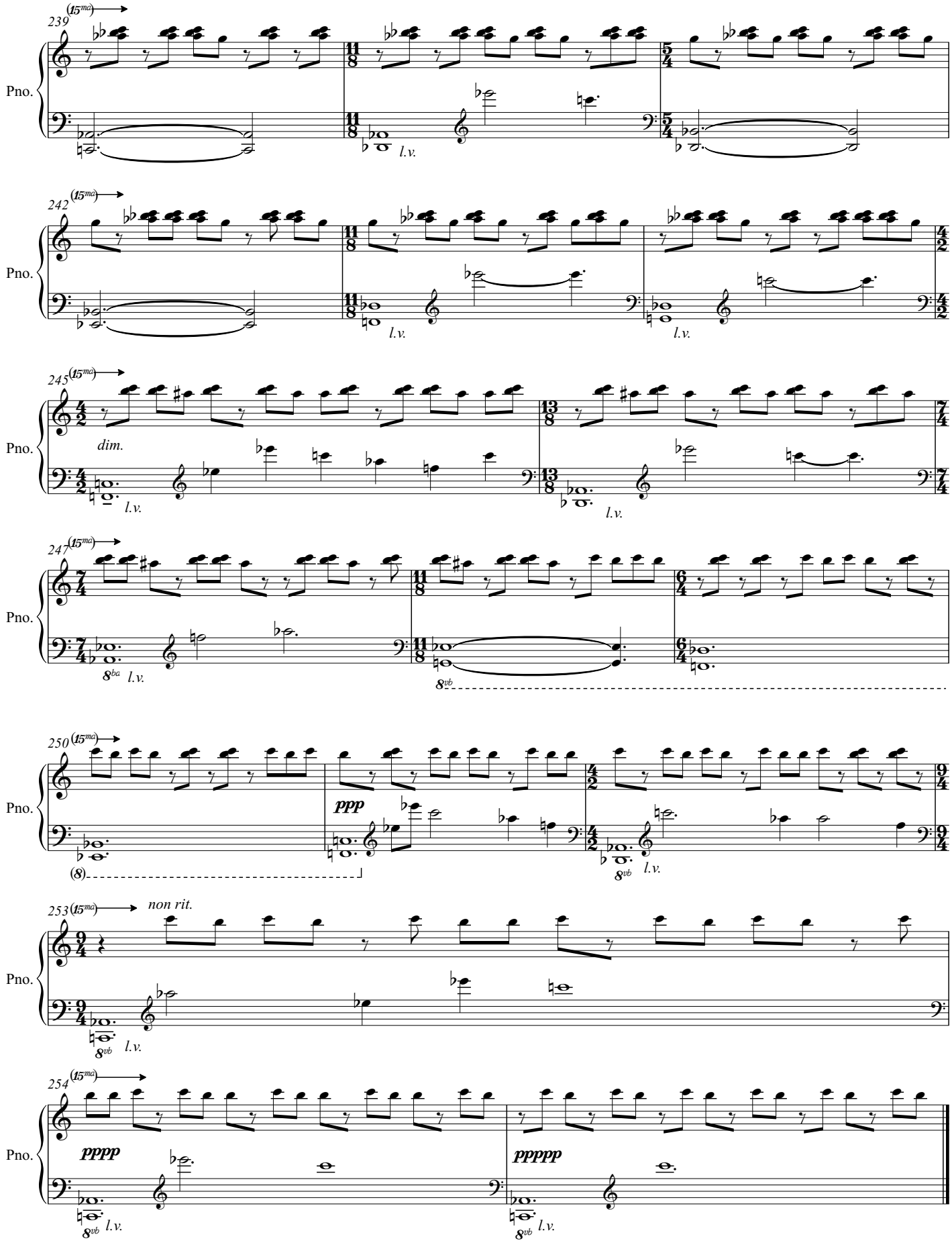


*- The pattern in the box should continue as the performer gradually ascends the keyboard. It should sound like the box notation material from earlier in the work, except now presented like a slow *gliss*. The clusters should be played as the cluster chords before, and the performer should make sure to continue the box notation material when not playing the clusters. The gesture should ascend all the way up the keyboard.


182
Pno.
l.v.
8ba
186
Pno.
l.v.
188
Pno.
l.v.
8ba
ffff
l.v.
clusters
Passages in the right hand should be played like the music on pg. 11 (see note). The range for the notes should be within the range given above the staff. The player need not follow the general patterns written, but the rhythms must be accurate.
sim.
Pno.
l.v.
8ba
194
8va
Pno.
l.v.
8ba
l.v.


Pno.
clusters
l.v.
fff
dim.
ff
203
dim.
208
mf
dolce
211
dim.
mp
dolce sim.


220
224
228
231
233
236
Pno.
(15ma)
l.v.
8vb
dim.
p
pp
very peaceful until the end
(8)


239
(15ma)
Pno.
l.v.
242
(15ma)
Pno.
l.v.
l.v.
245
(15ma)
Pno.
dim.
l.v.
l.v.
247
(15ma)
Pno.
8ba
l.v.
8vb
250
(15ma)
Pno.
ppp
(8)
8vb
l.v.
253
(15ma)
non rit.
Pno.
8vb
l.v.
254
(15ma)
Pno.
pppp
8vb
l.v.
ppppp
8vb
l.v.