Balint Bethlenfalvy

Zugzwang

from The Luzhin Defense *by Vladimir Nabokov*

for string quartet

Luzhin. His life and mind having been wholly consumed by the game since childhood, Nabokov's chess master suffers a breakdown when he cannot manage the pressure of finding a defence against his arch rival. With chess banned, instead, pieces of his fractured life appear to take on its design, and along with his past he discovers that elusive defence to complete the chess game. Yet it also seems to substantiate that he can live neither with, nor without the game.

Construction and Destruction. While the first half of the piece, until bar 63, is strictly constructed, with metric modulations structuring the rhythm, the second half, using arpeggiated harmonics requires some flexibility for the aural impressions to be clearly delineated and even more so where they come together, which may, e.g., also mean quicker more spaced-out events in a wet acoustic environment.

Strokes of the adjacent open string at bow changes in the first half outline and multiply the rhythmic layers established by the pulses modulating through the section, they do not need to be held for the duration of each note: they punctuate the phrases with light stress. The open string remains the same until bar 63 for all but the first violin and on one occasion the viola, who alternate open strings from bar 53 onwards. The dynamic diminuendo of the phrases also remain the same thoughout.

The arpeggiated **bariolage** of chords - made up of artificial or natural harmonics and stopped or open string notes - requires freedom, indicated by the ad libitum and dashed beam, but coordination as well to bring the events together. It needs to be handled freely (unevenly) both to balance the wildly differing volume of the more and less easily sounded harmonics and other notes, as well as to allow the performers to integrate the disparate material.

This piece is 5'40" at the tempi indicated.

Zugzwang

Balint Bethlenfalvy

♩=96

Violin 1

sul G

Violin 2

sul G

Viola

sul G

* stroke open D string on every phrased bow change, need not be held for full duration.

Violoncello

sul D

* stroke open A string on every phrased bow change, need not be held for full duration.

4

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

* stroke open D string on every phrased bow change, need not be held for full duration.

* stroke open D string on every phrased bow change, need not be held for full duration.

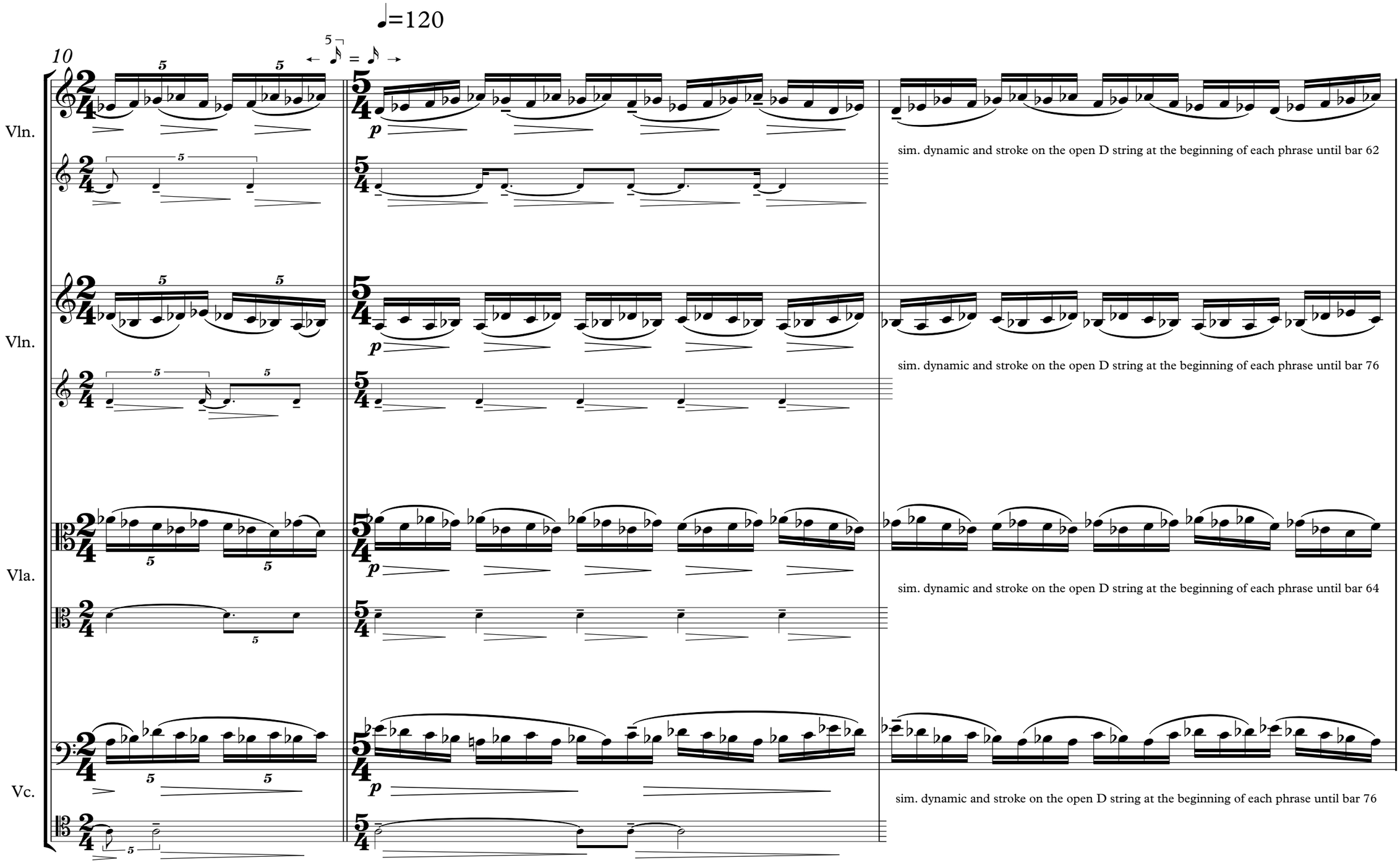
7

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.


♩=120
10
Vln.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
p
sim. dynamic and stroke on the open D string at the beginning of each phrase until bar 62
sim. dynamic and stroke on the open D string at the beginning of each phrase until bar 76
sim. dynamic and stroke on the open D string at the beginning of each phrase until bar 64
sim. dynamic and stroke on the open D string at the beginning of each phrase until bar 76

13

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

15

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

17

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

20

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

23

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

♩=72

26

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

29

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

32

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

35

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

♩=144

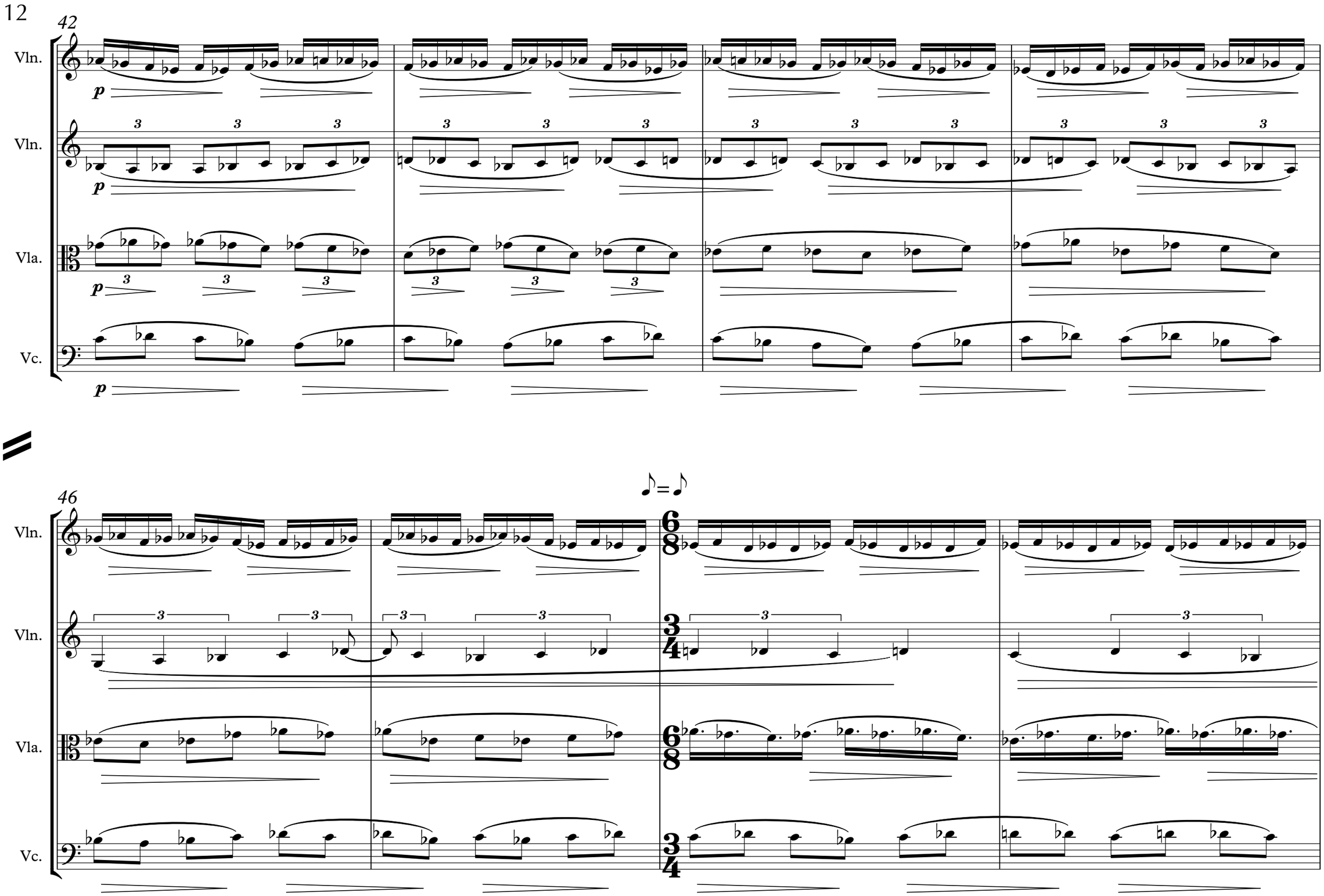
38

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.


12
42
Vln.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
p
46
Vln.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.

50

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

54

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

57

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

61

Vln.

sul D

sul G

sul D

sul G

Vln.

Vla.

sul D

sul G

Vc.

66

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

sul D

sul G

sul D

♩.=96 (𝅗𝅥=72)

mp

p

pp

sim. until bar 76

69

sul G

72

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

74

sul D

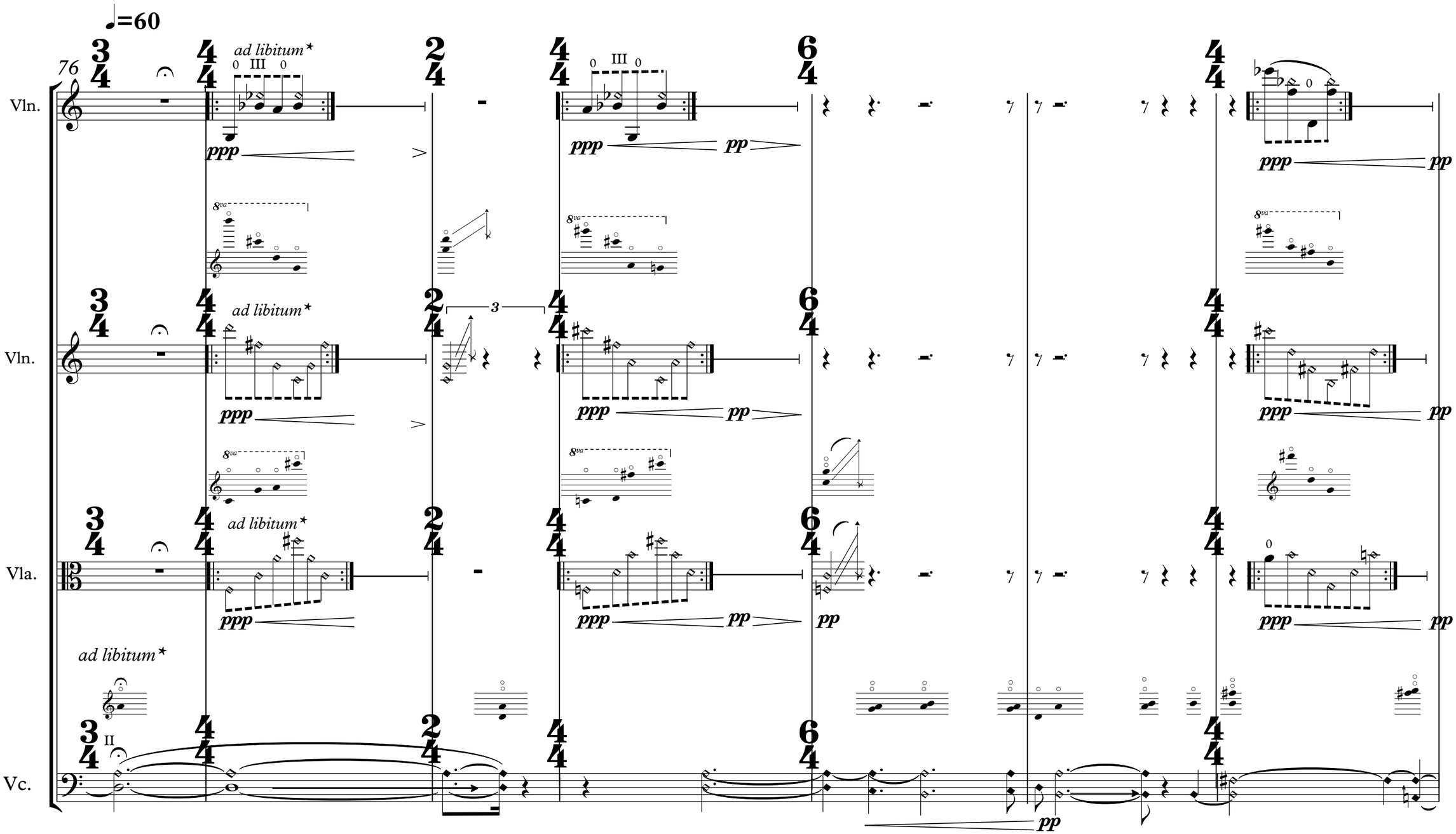
Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

III


♩=60
76
Vln.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
ad libitum*
ad libitum*
ad libitum*
ad libitum*
ppp
pp
8va
3
II

83

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

ppp

pp

p

89

Vln.

8va

legato

pp

Vln.

8va

legato

III IV

pp

I

8va

0

I

II III IV

Vla.

legato

più sul pont.

1 1 2 2

To Vla.

pp

poco a poco ord.

ord.

Vc.

pp

ppp

pp *ppp*

pp

93

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

detaché

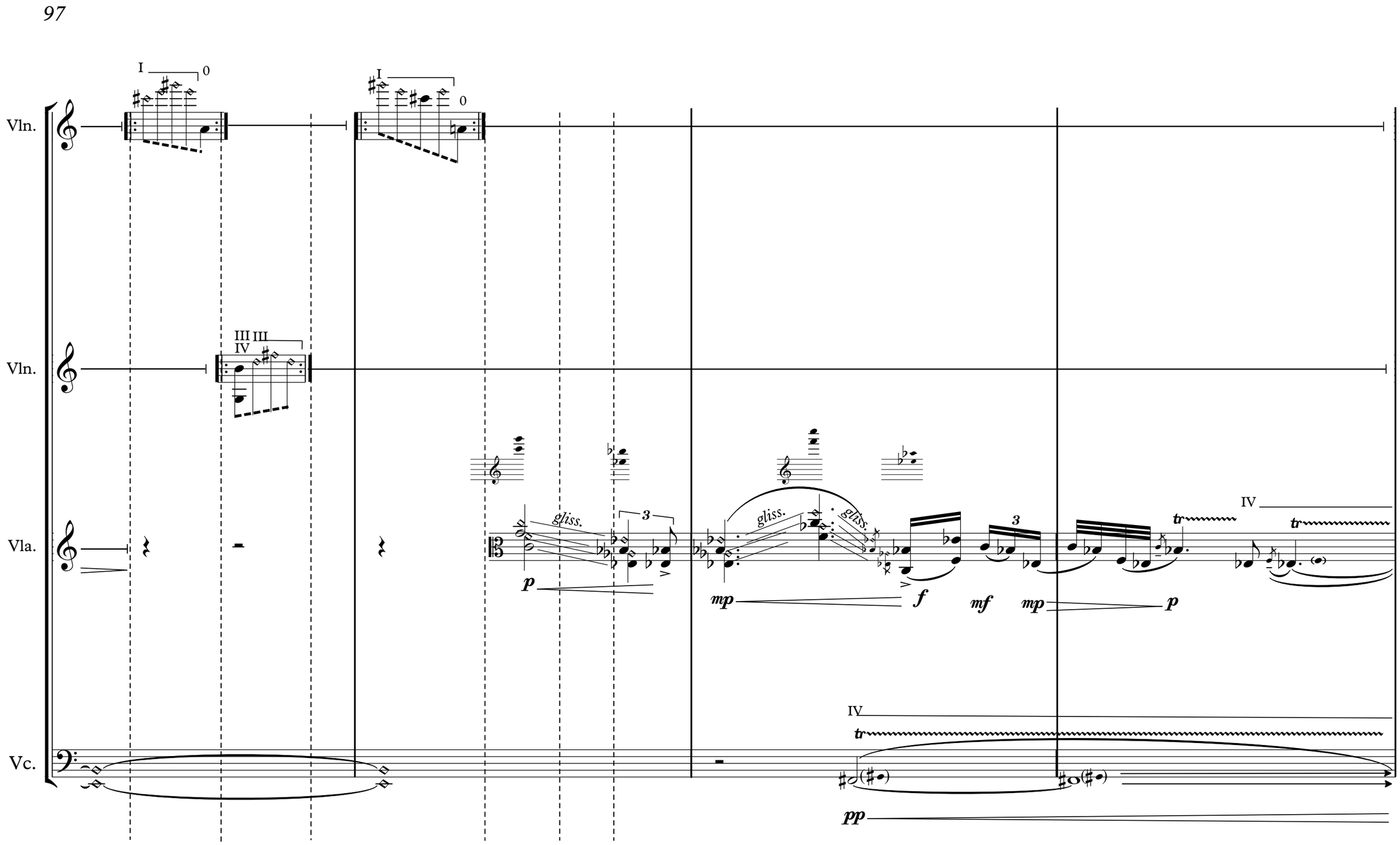
detaché

detaché

ppp

pp

ppp


97
Vln.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
I
0
III
IV
gliss.
3
p
mp
f
mf
tr
pp

101

Vln.

Vln.

alternate fingers

IV

pp

alternate fingers

Vla.

alternate fingers

Vc.

mp

pp

♩=60

alternate fingers

107

Flashback 1

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

pp

f

detaché

ord.

p

mp

112

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

rit. - - - - - - -

116

Flashback 2

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

♩=44

119

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

♩=120

♩=60

123

124

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

II
III

III
IV

8va

pp

pp

pp

f

p

pp

128

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

f

p

8va

15ma

3