Niki Zohdi

Flumina

2025

for violin, cello, percussion & piano (with e-bows)

Niki Zohdi

Flumina

(2025)

for
violin, cello, percussion & piano (with e-bows)

c. 6 minutes

Flumina is the Latin word for 'rivers'. This piece does not necessarily attempt to evoke the sounds or imagery of a river, but, otherwise, refers to the compositional style of 16th century Franco-Flemish composer, Nicolas Gombert. For most of my life as a musician, I have been drawn to Franco-Flemish polyphony, especially the music of Gombert, whose fluid yet dense style is, to my eyes, very unique for the time. Seminal recordings of Gombert's works by ensembles such as *Beauty Farm*, always seem to develop my interest in Gombert's music more and more and I seem to continually find deeper nuances in his music.

Gombert's lack of extended homophony, high amount of false relations, deceptive cadential points, and lower-voice textures are all points from which *Flumina* is based upon. I find similarities between the complexity and constant continuity of flowing river networks and Gombert's compositional style and approach. This piece, therefore, uses the material of Gombert's motet, *Super flumina Babylonis* (tr. by the rivers of Babylon) with the original source material continually flowing in and out of focus and obscuration as the piece progresses. Gombert's preference for lower voice textures is shown, in *Flumina*, through the de-tuned strings and reluctance to use extended passages of higher registers, creating that sense of dense homogeneity within complex polyphony as exhibited in Gombert's music.

This piece was completed in May 2025 and premiered in Bled, Slovenia in June 2025 as part of the Bled Contemporary Music Festival.

Percussion

Instruments	Mallets/objects
Bass drum	Superball
Tibetan Bells (C-sharp & E)	2x Soft mallets
China Cymbal	2x medium mallets
Vibraphone	Crumpled newspaper

General

Arrows signify a gradual change between states

All **grace notes**, **tremolandi** & **trills** are as fast as possible

Grace notes always on the beat, not before

ord. - cancels previous direction

Dotted slurs between noteheads are to be assumed as gradual changes between states
Changes without dotted slurs are to be assumed as sudden changes between states

All other directions are noted on the score

Accidentals are valid only for the note they precede unless that note is immediately repeated

Score is **untransposed** and in C

Strings

BB: behind bridge

: bow on the bridge

MSP: molto sul pont.

SP: sul pont.

ord.: bow in normal position

ST: sul tasto

MST: molto sul tasto

SFin: bow as close to fingers as possible (sul finger)

CLT: col legno tratto

1/2 CLT: 1/2 col legno tratto

a.ord: arco ordinario (cancels col legno indications)

: heavy bow pressure (between normal and extreme); 1/2 scratch tone (little pitch)

: extreme heavy bow pressure; scratch tone (no pitch)

: normal bow pressure (cancels previous pressure indication)

: harmonic pressure (left hand)

: 1/2 harmonic pressure (left hand)

: vibrato

: uneaven vibrato

: non-linear glissando

: violin scordatura (tuning changes in b. 32)

: cello scordatura

Piano

Objects

2x e-bows
2x soft mallets
Any heavy object that will fit on top of low register coil strings

Directions

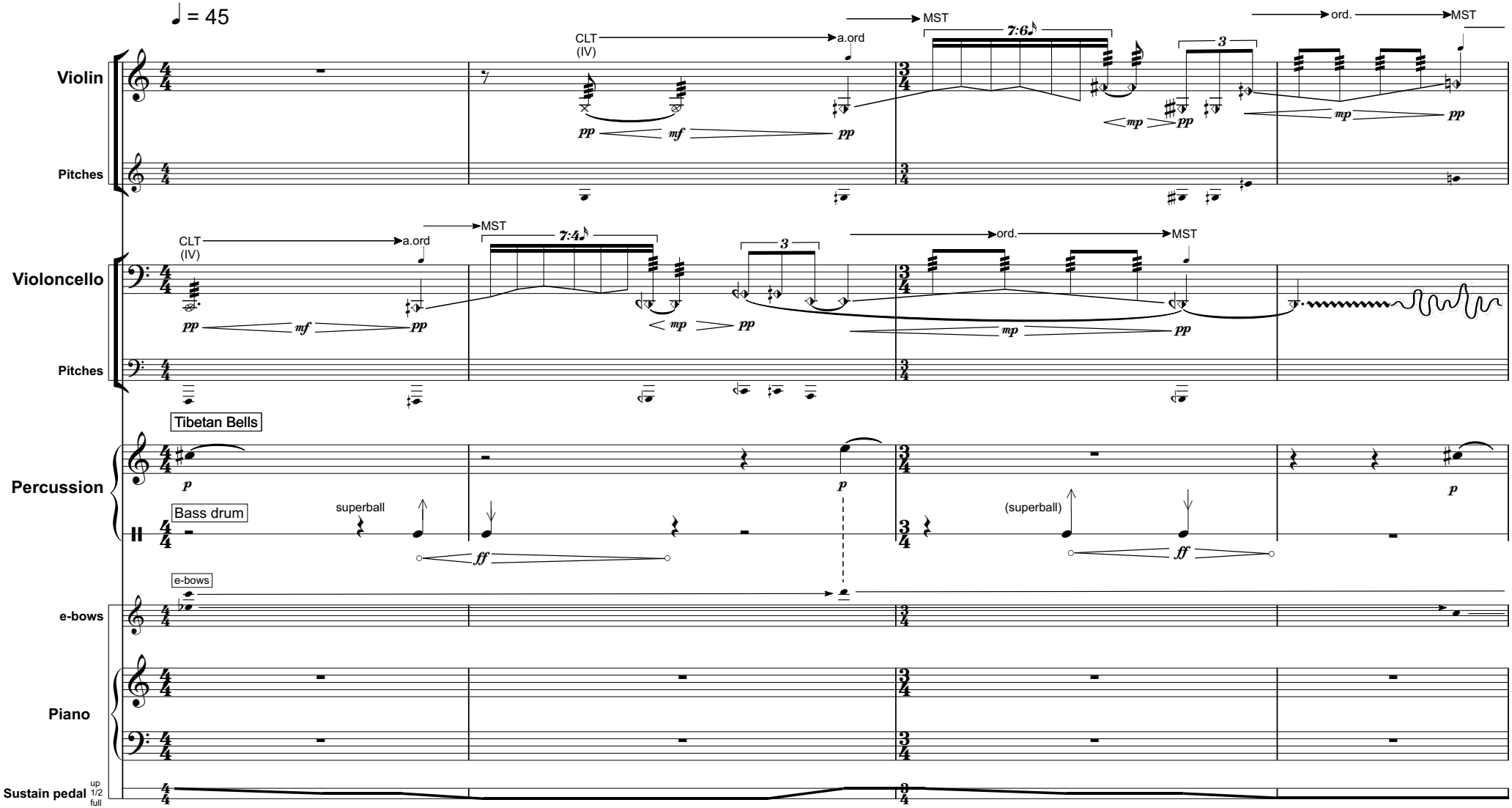
Pedal stave: pedalling is to follow the contour of the line on the stave.
Top line = sustain pedal up
Bottom line = sustain pedal down
Middle space = 1/4, 1/2 & 3/4 pedal

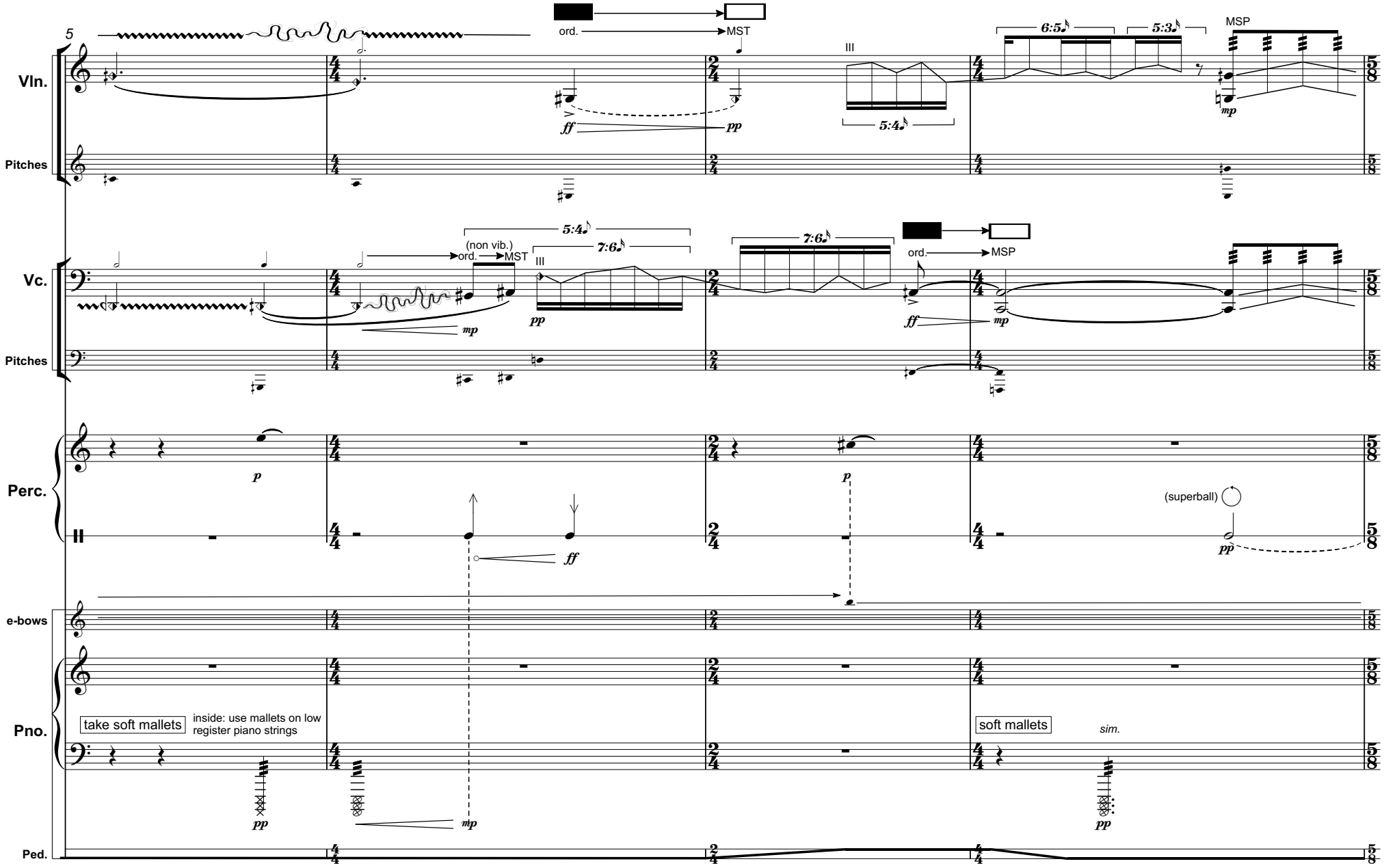
E-bows (x2) are to be used on the strings signified by the pitches on the upper ossia staff

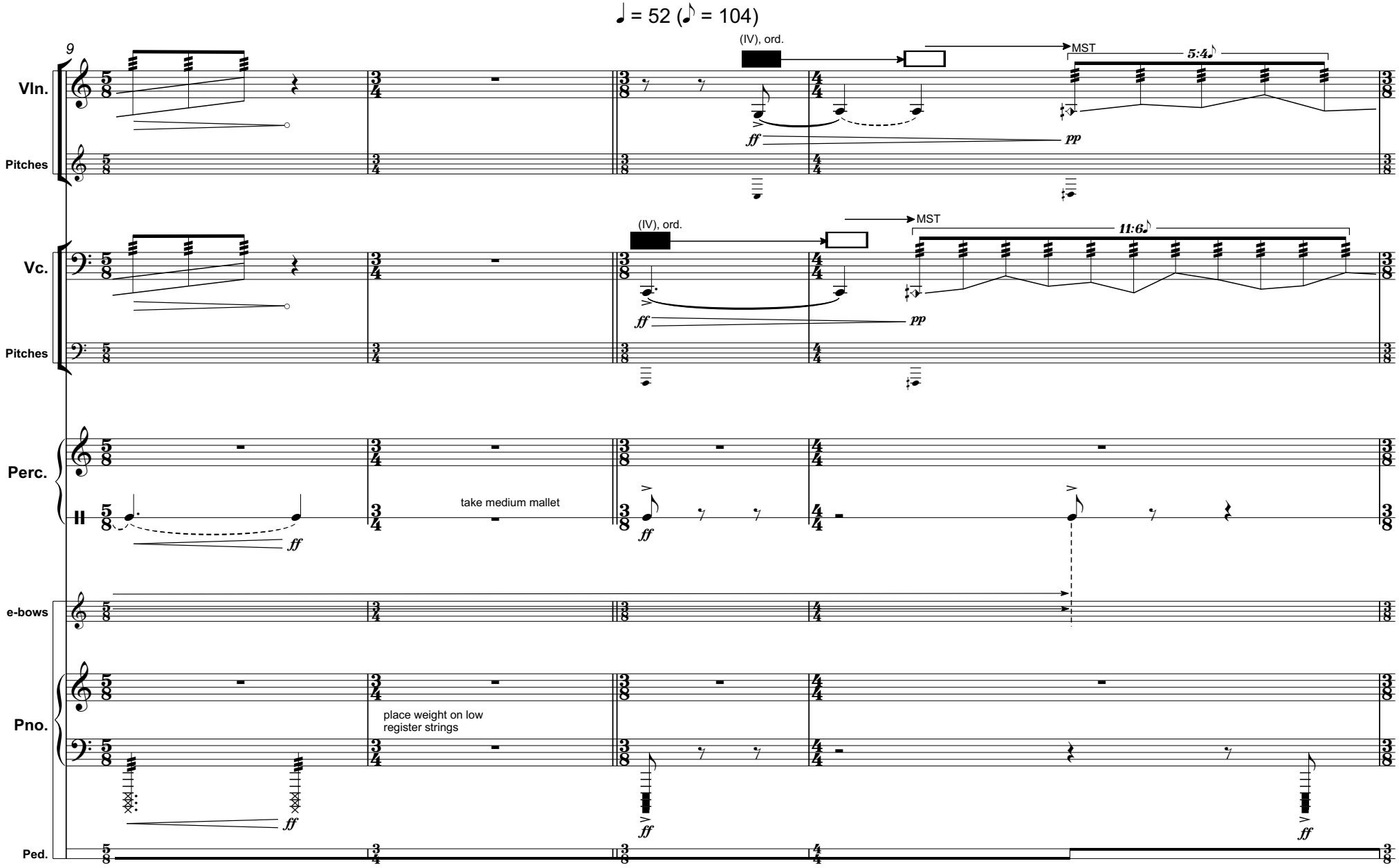
Square noteheads signify a cluster using palm of hand

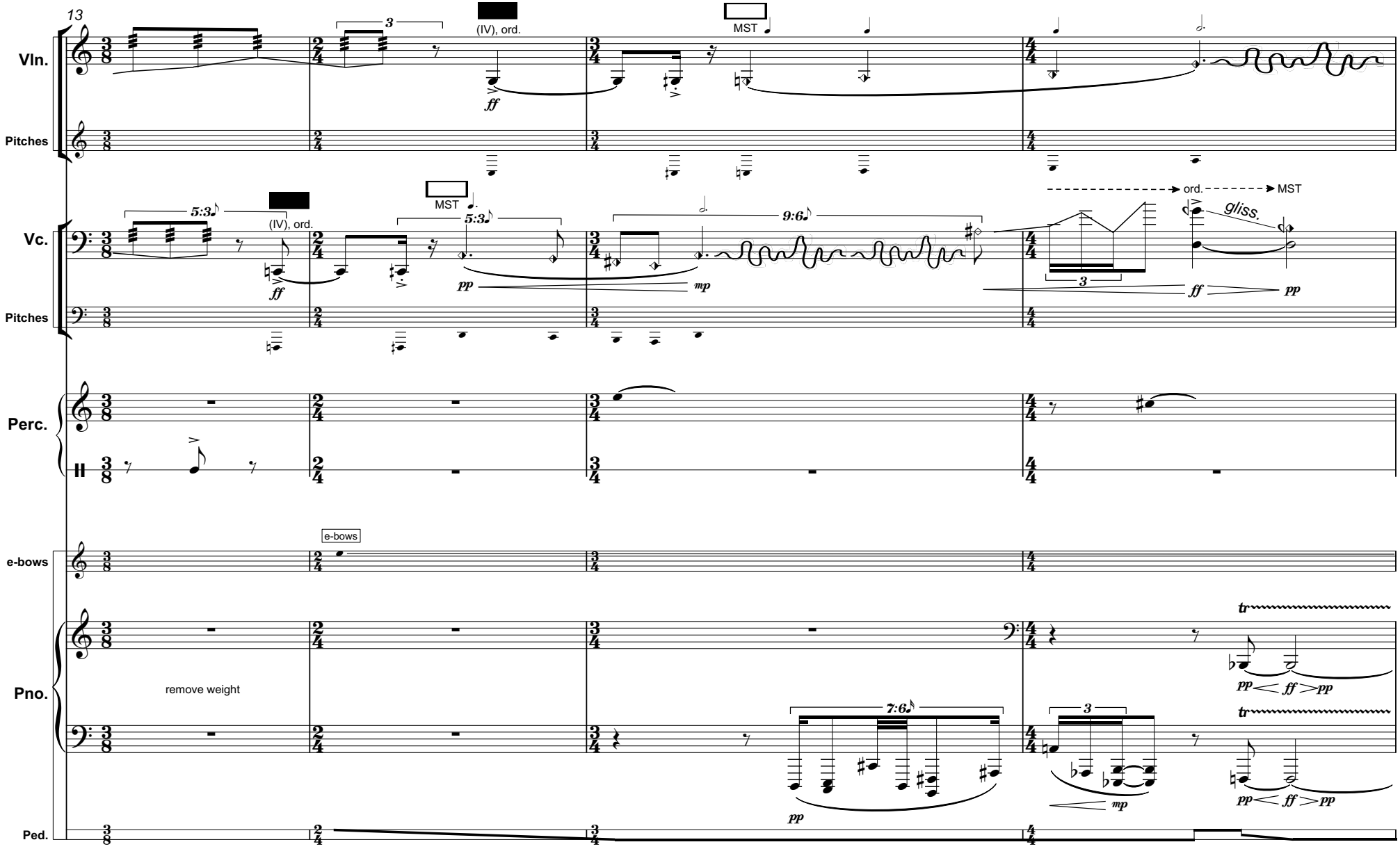
Flumina

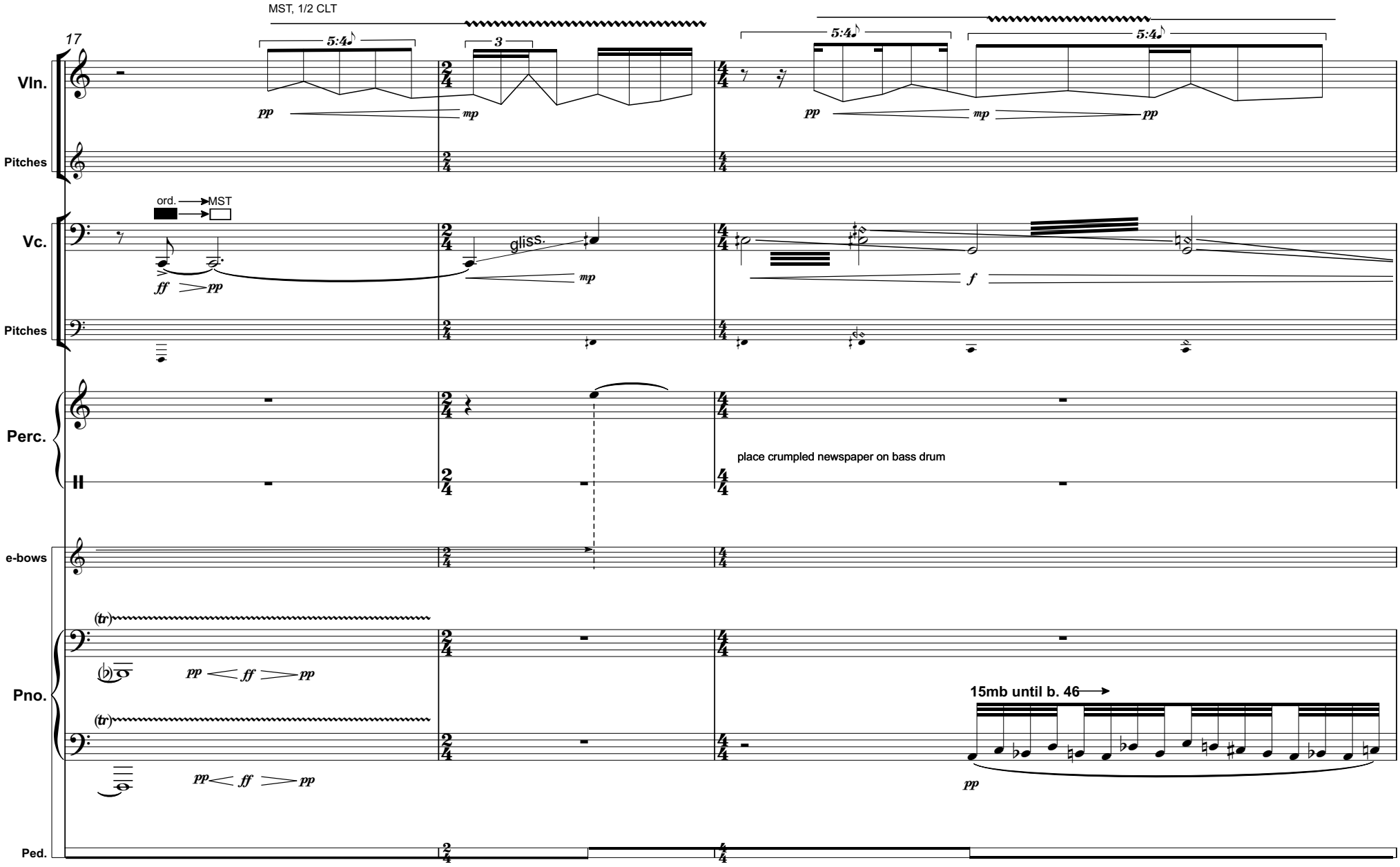
Niki Zohdi

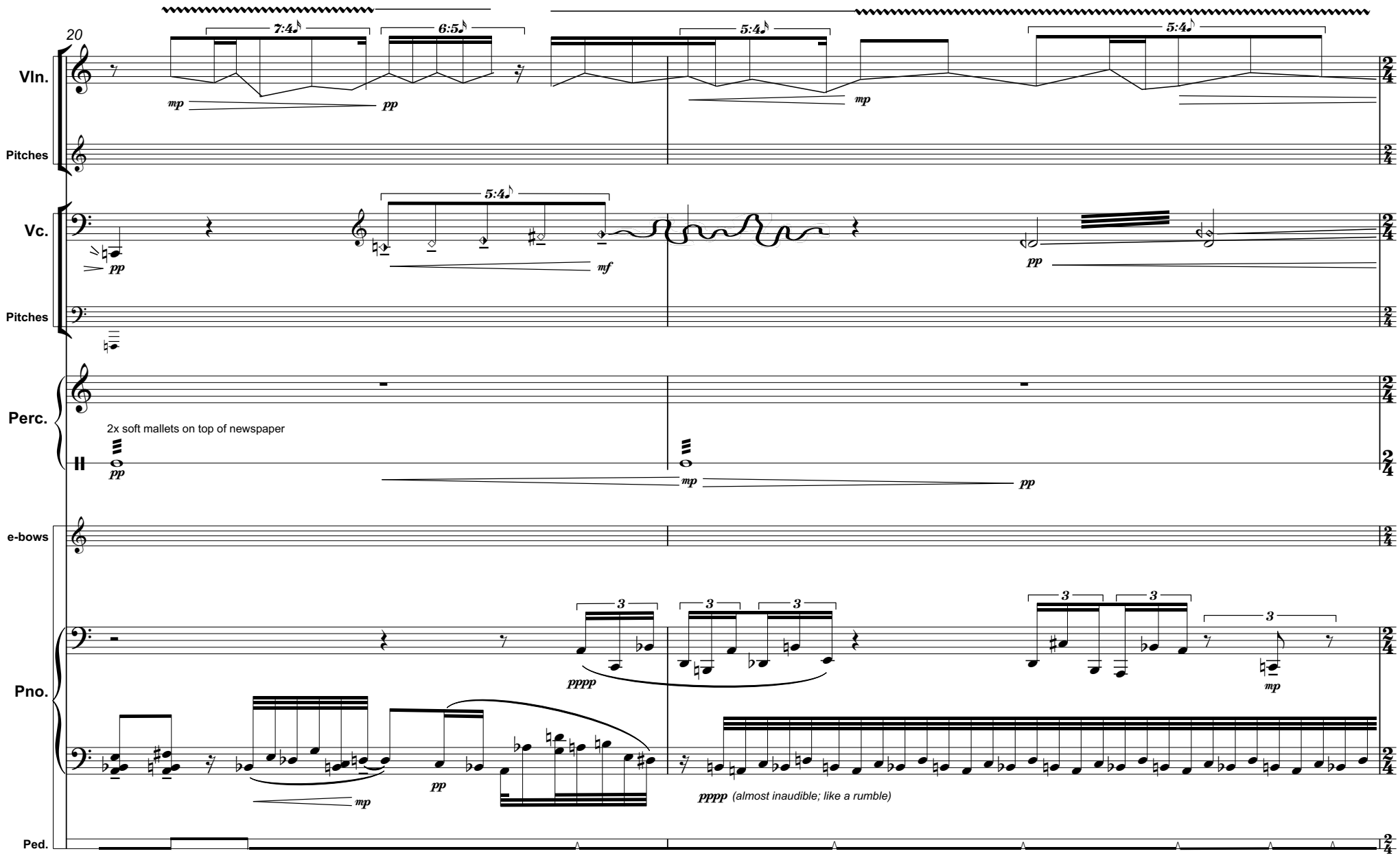


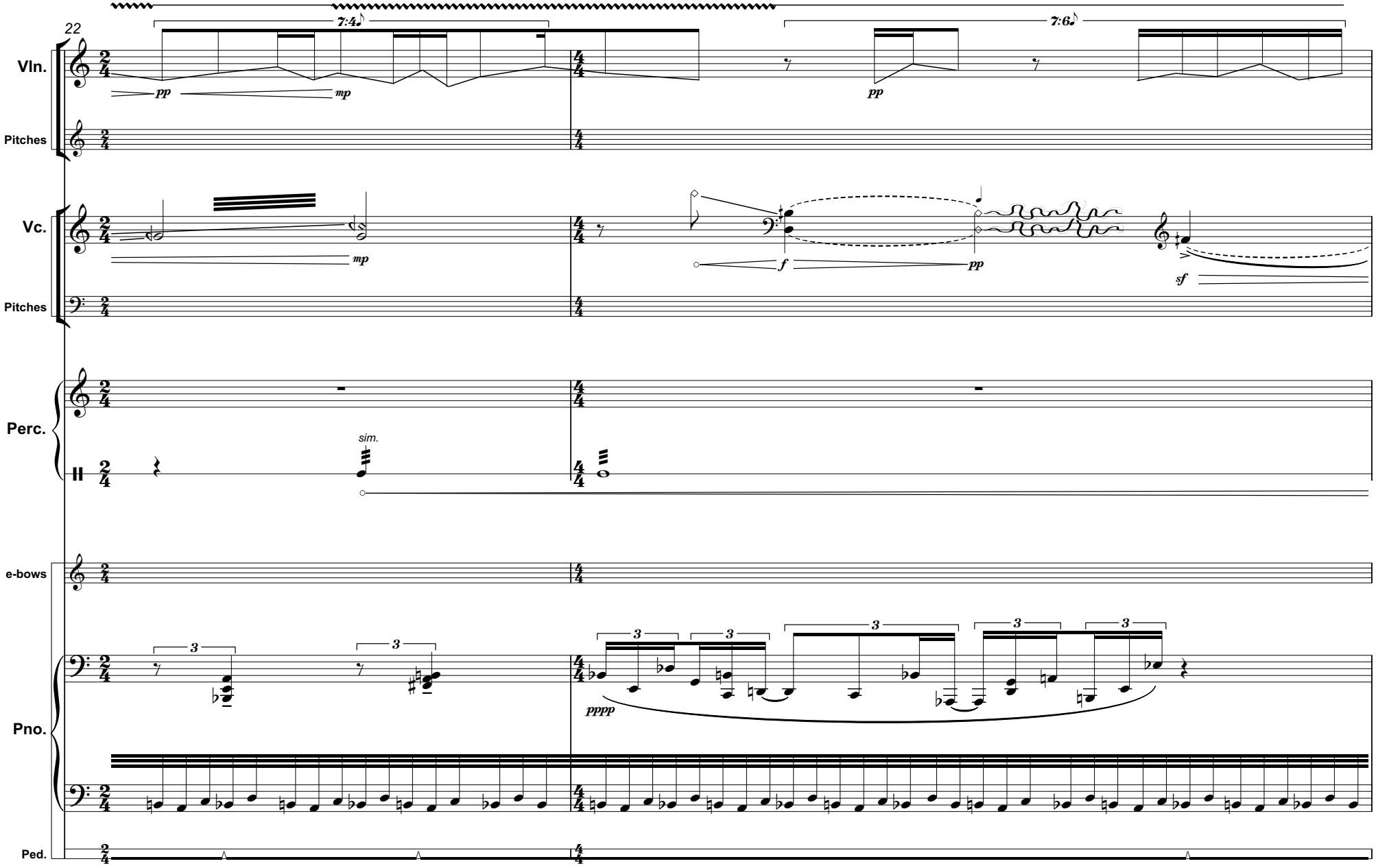

5
Vln.
Pitches
ord.
MST
III
6:5
5:3
MSP
ff
pp
5:4
mp
Vc.
Pitches
(non vib.)
ord.
MST
III
5:4
7:6
7:6
ord.
MSP
mp
pp
ff
mp
Perc.
p
p
ff
(superball)
pp
e-bows
Pno.
take soft mallets
inside: use mallets on low register piano strings
soft mallets
sim.
pp
mp
pp
Ped.

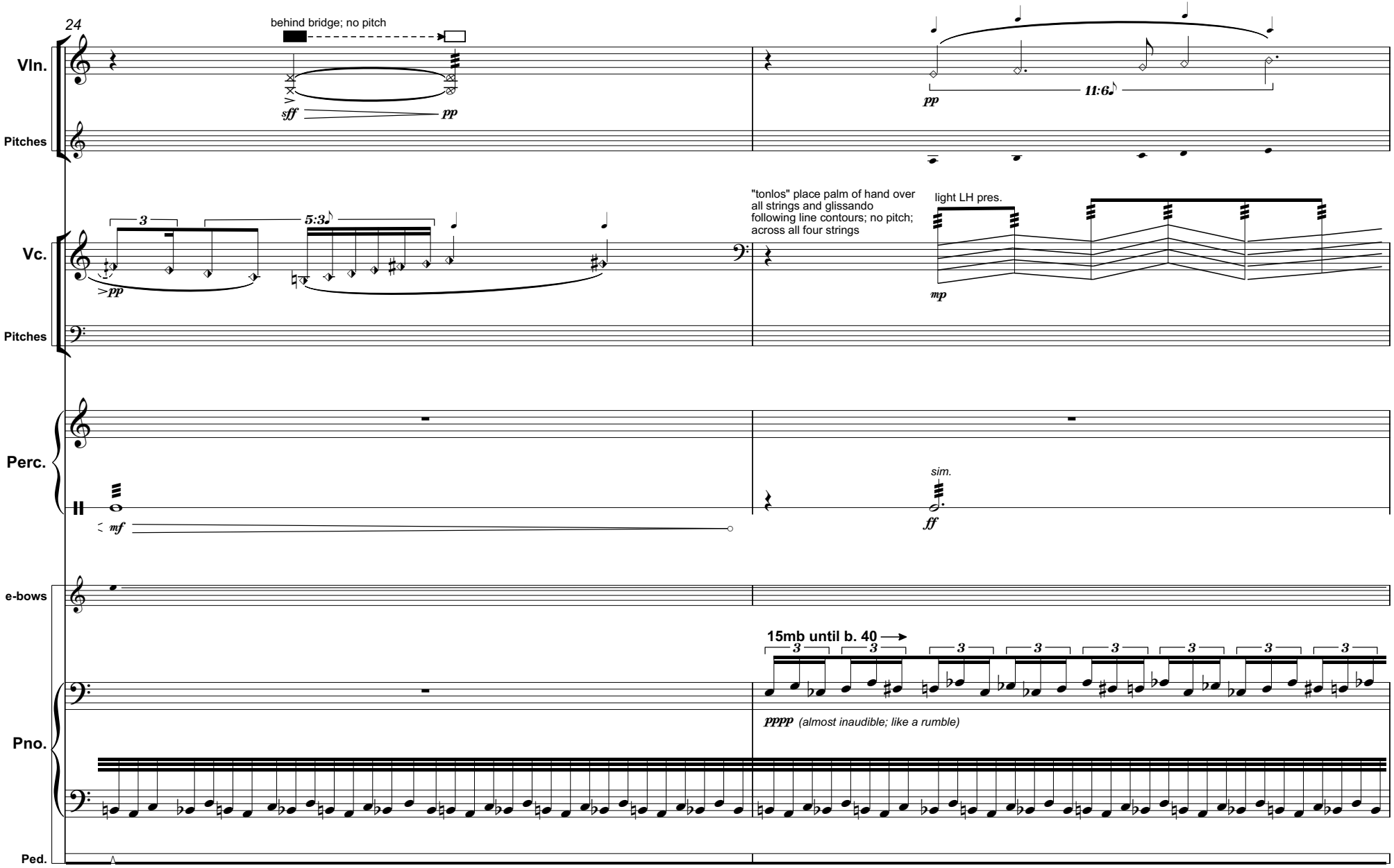

♩ = 52 (♪ = 104)
9
Vln.
Pitches
(IV), ord.
MST
5:4
ff
pp
Vc.
Pitches
(IV), ord.
MST
11:6
ff
pp
Perc.
take medium mallet
ff
e-bows
Pno.
place weight on low
register strings
ff
Ped.

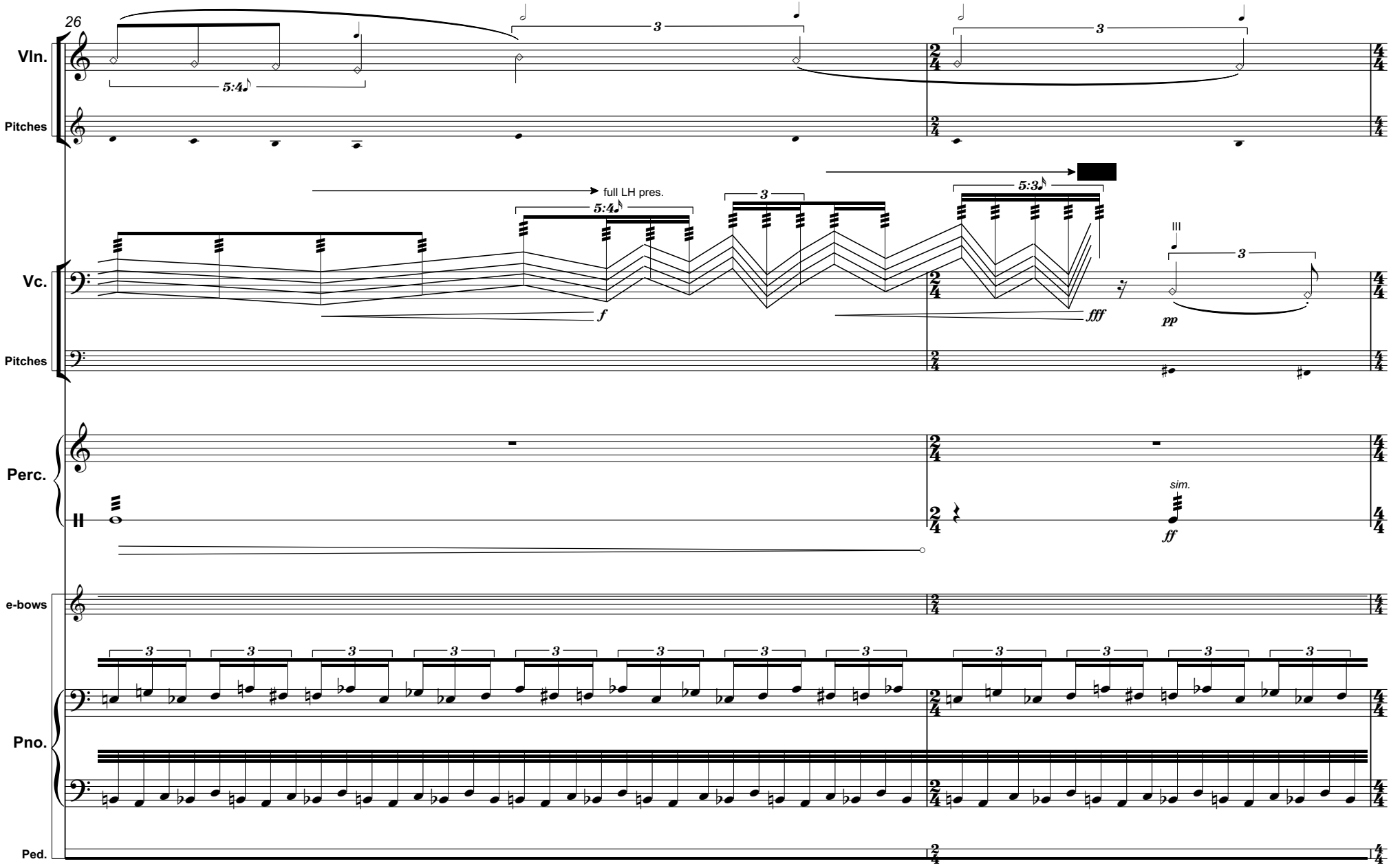

13
Vln.
Pitches
Vc.
Pitches
Perc.
e-bows
Pno.
remove weight
Ped.
(IV), ord.
MST
ord.
gliss.
e-bows

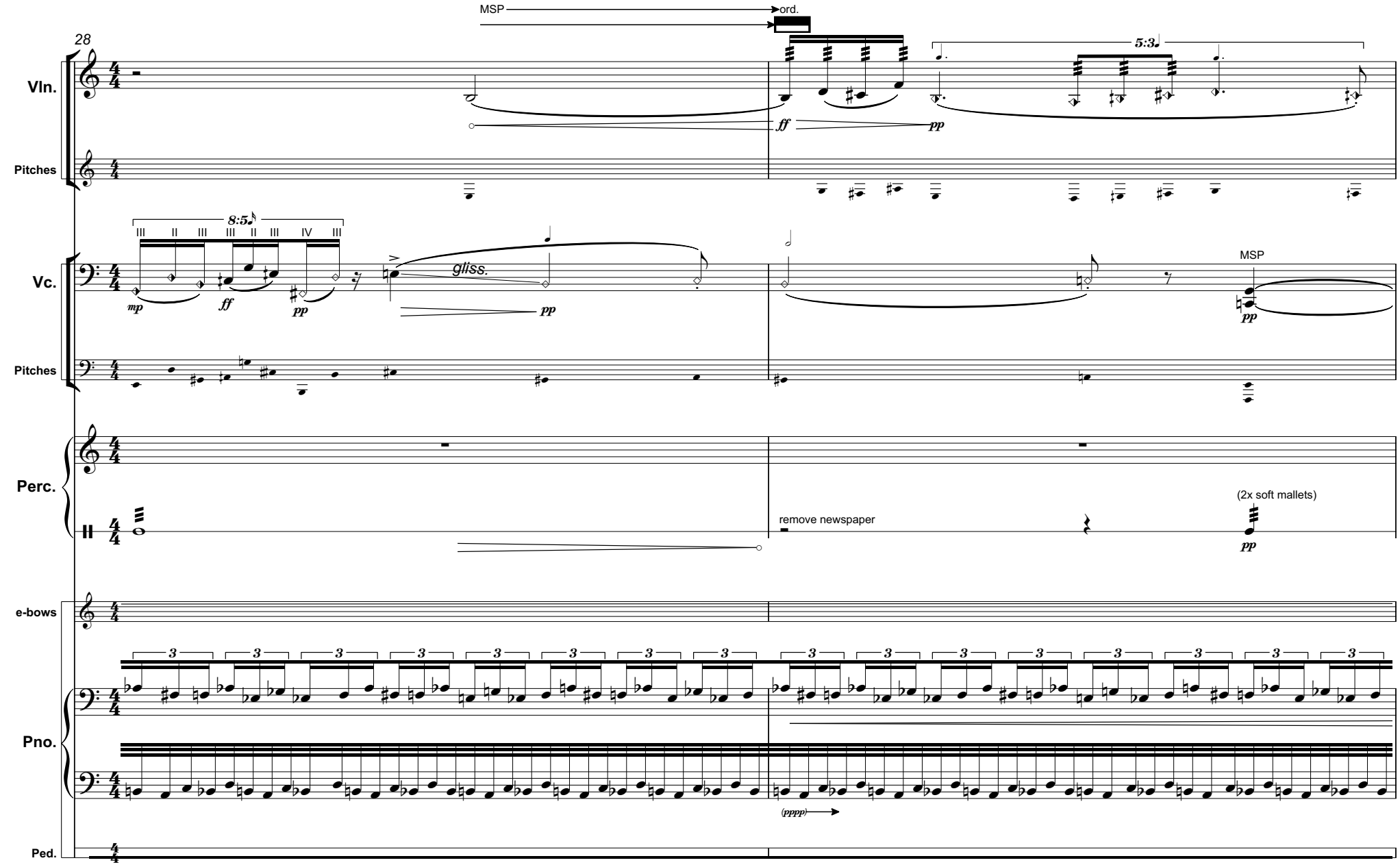

MST, 1/2 CLT
17
Vln.
Pitches
Vc.
Pitches
Perc.
e-bows
Pno.
Ped.
5:4
3
5:4
5:4
pp
mp
pp
mp
pp
ord.
MST
gliss.
ff
pp
mp
f
place crumpled newspaper on bass drum
(tr)
pp
ff
pp
(tr)
pp
ff
pp
15mb until b. 46
pp

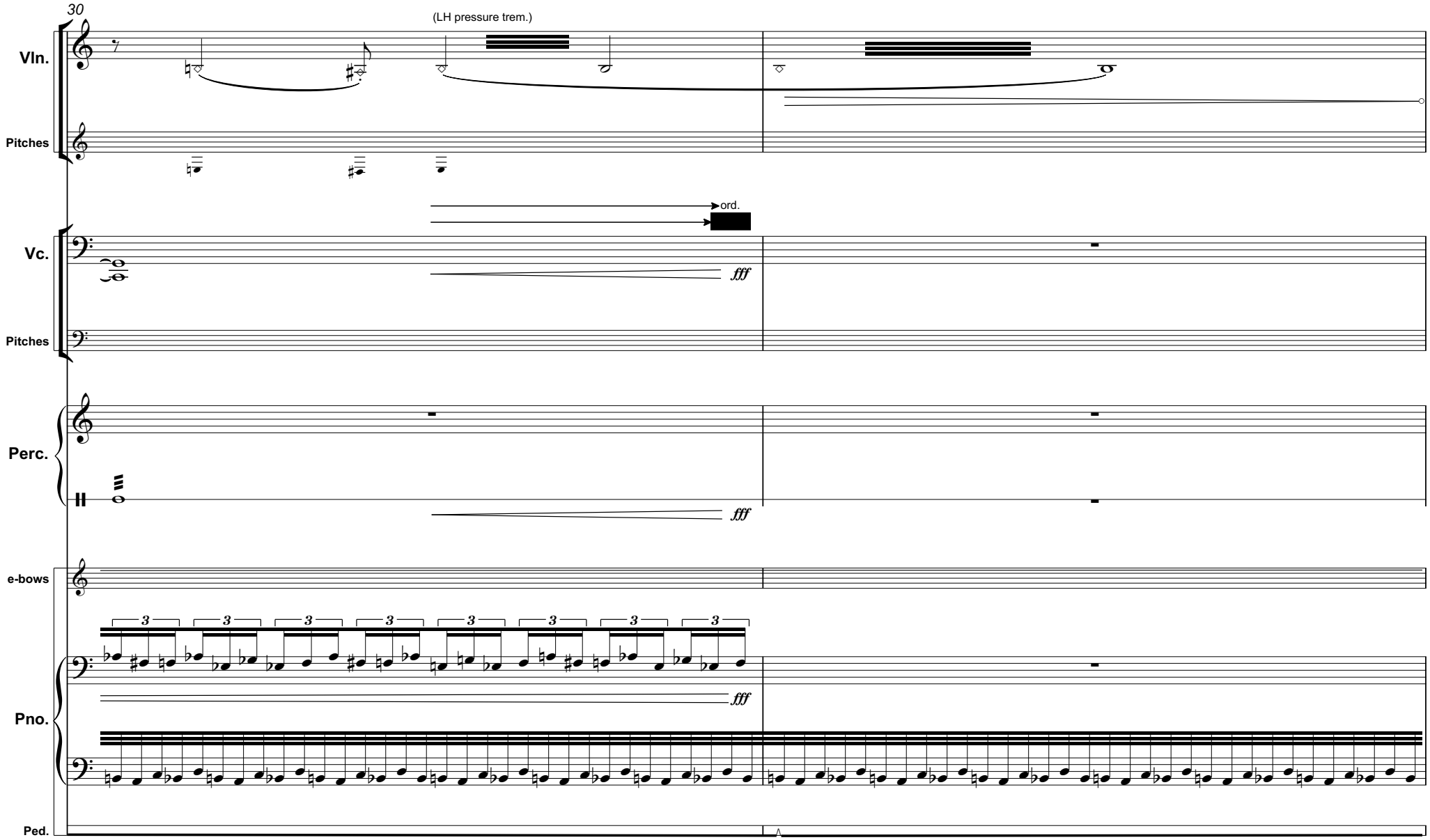

20
Vln.
Pitches
Vc.
Pitches
Perc.
2x soft mallets on top of newspaper
e-bows
Pno.
Ped.
7:4
6:5
5:4
5:4
5:4
mp
pp
mp
pp
mf
pp
pp
mp
pp
3
3
3
3
3
3
pppp
mp
pp
mp
pppp (almost inaudible; like a rumble)

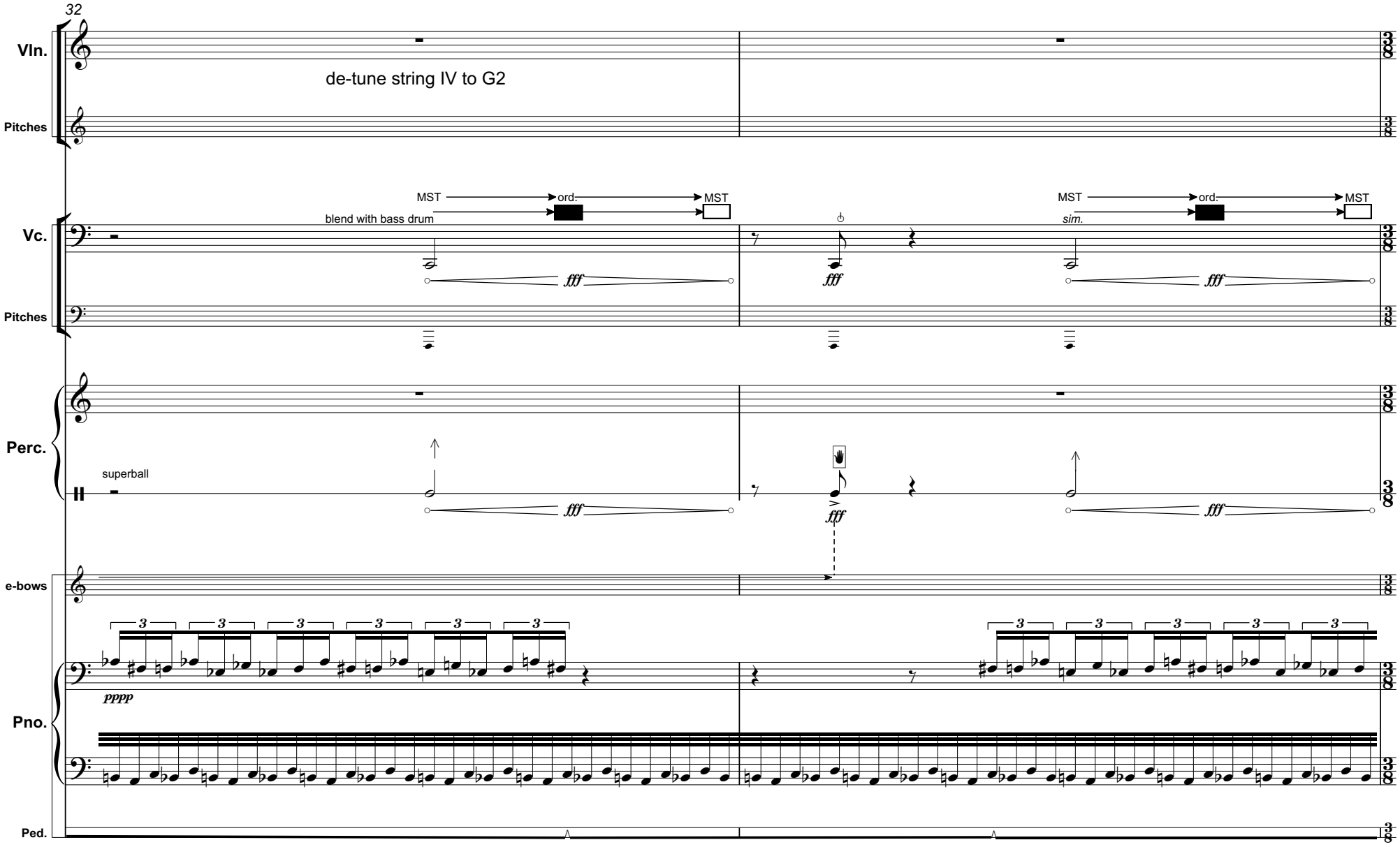

22
Vln.
Pitches
Vc.
Pitches
Perc.
e-bows
Pno.
Ped.
7:4
7:6
pp
mp
pp
mp
f
pp
sf
sim.
3
pppp

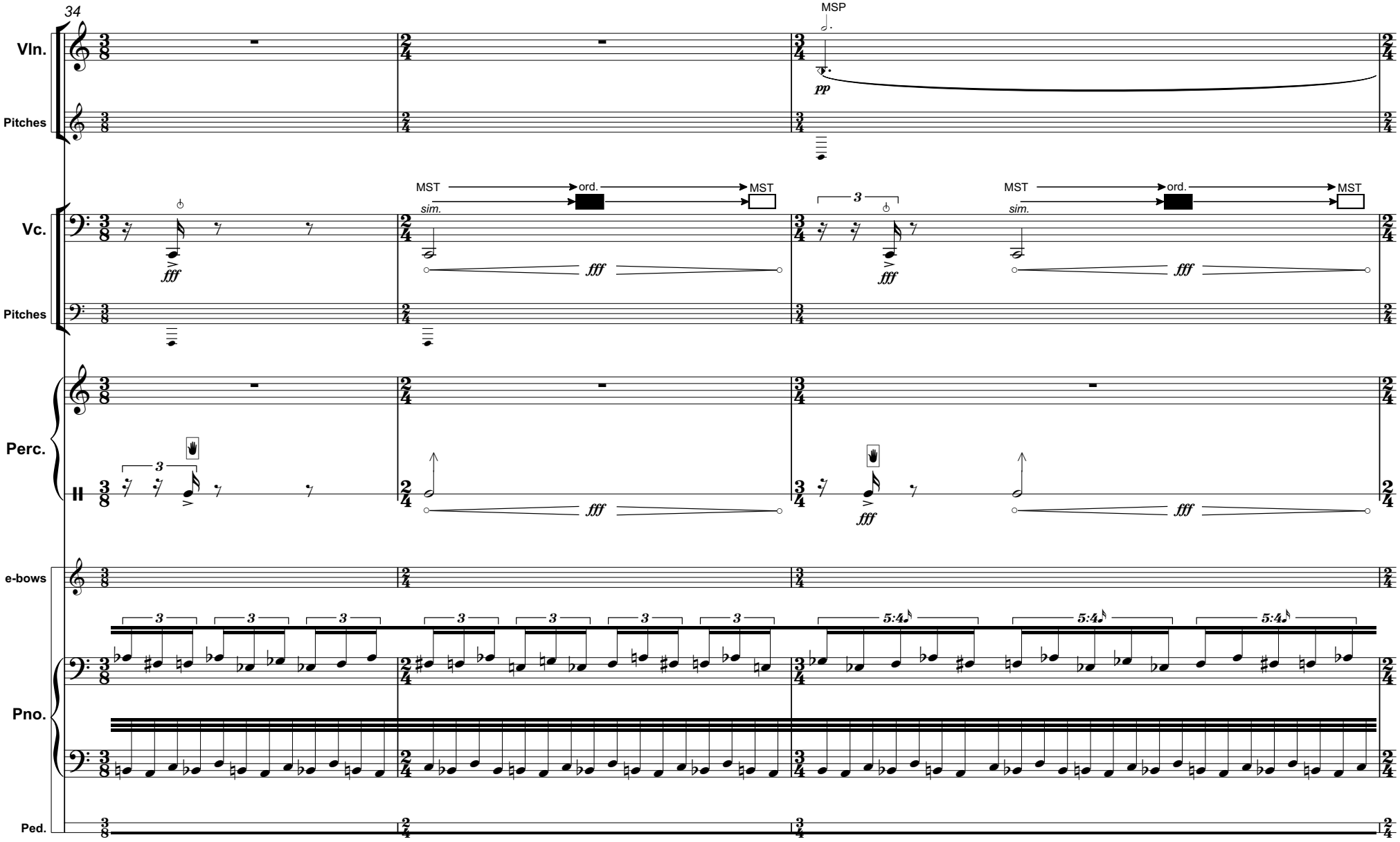

24
Vln.
Pitches
behind bridge; no pitch
sff
pp
pp
11:6
Vc.
Pitches
3
5:3
>pp
"tonlos" place palm of hand over all strings and glissando following line contours; no pitch; across all four strings
light LH pres.
mp
Perc.
mf
sim.
ff
e-bows
Pno.
15mb until b. 40
3
pppp (almost inaudible; like a rumble)
Ped.

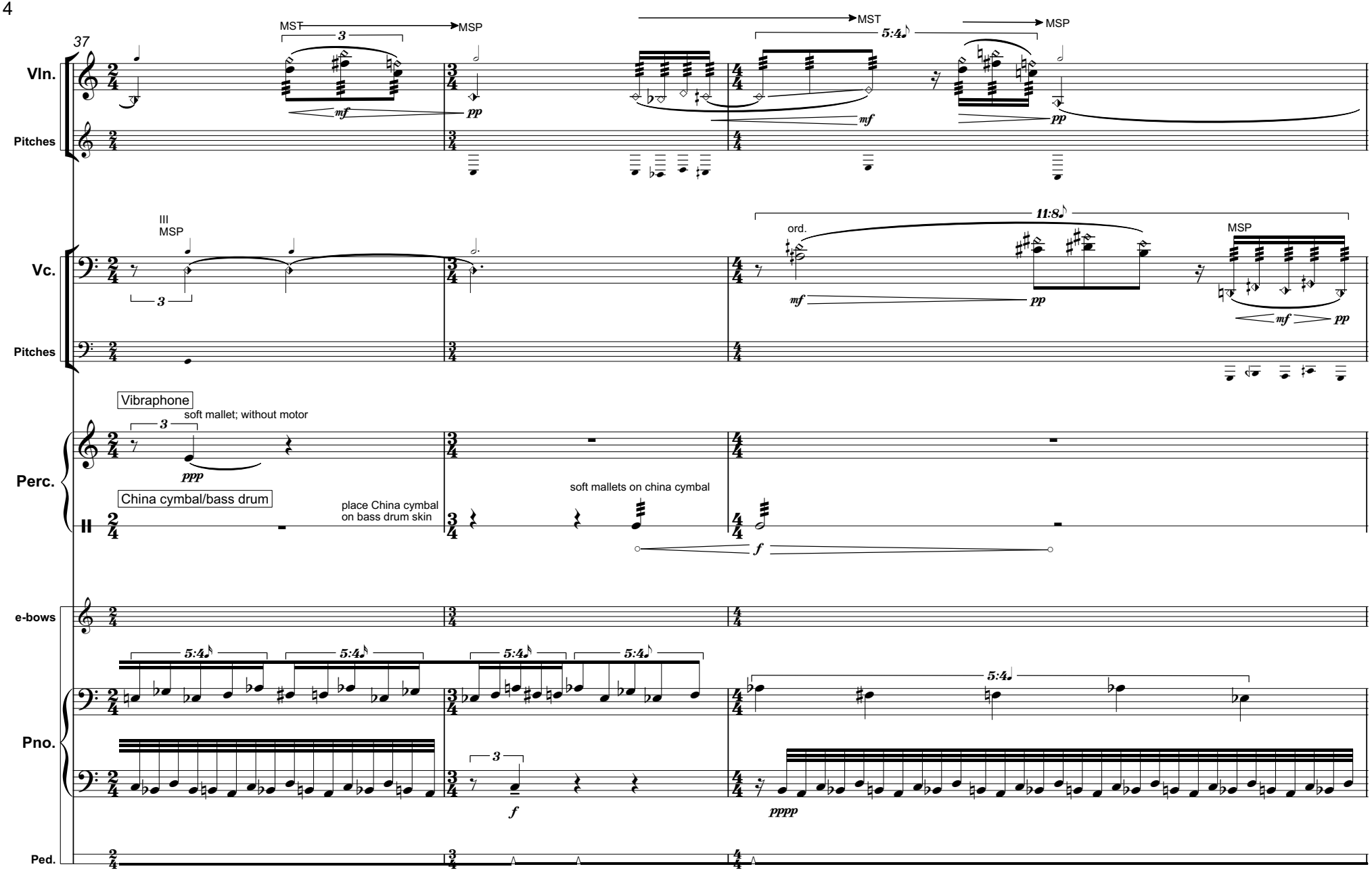

26
Vln.
Pitches
5:4
3
3
Vc.
Pitches
full LH pres.
5:4
3
5:3
f
fff
III
3
pp
Perc.
sim.
ff
e-bows
Pno.
Ped.

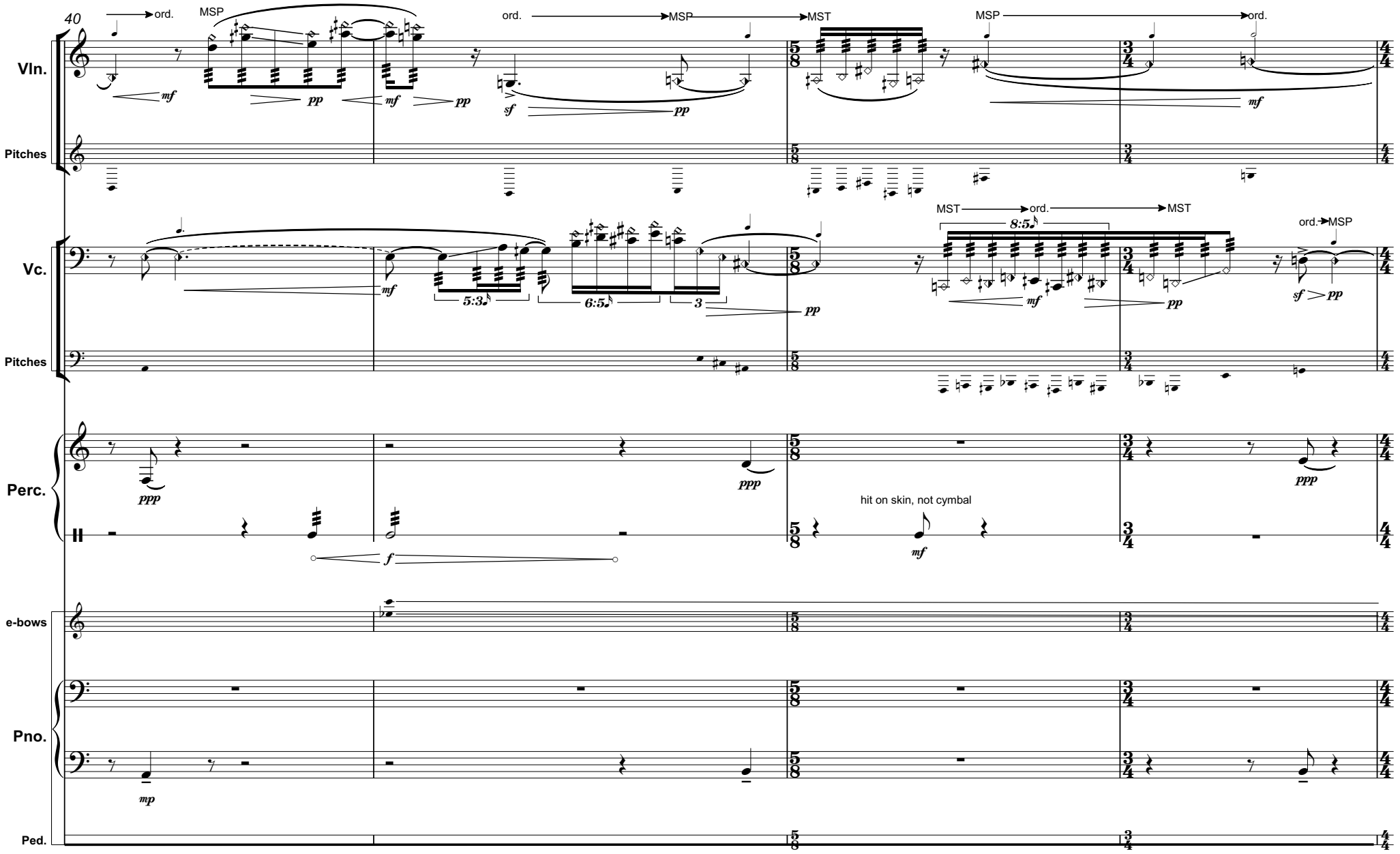

28
Vln.
Pitches
MSP
ord.
ff
pp
5:3
8:5
mp
ff
pp
gliss.
pp
Vc.
Pitches
MSP
pp
Perc.
remove newspaper
(2x soft mallets)
pp
e-bows
Pno.
(pppp)
Ped.

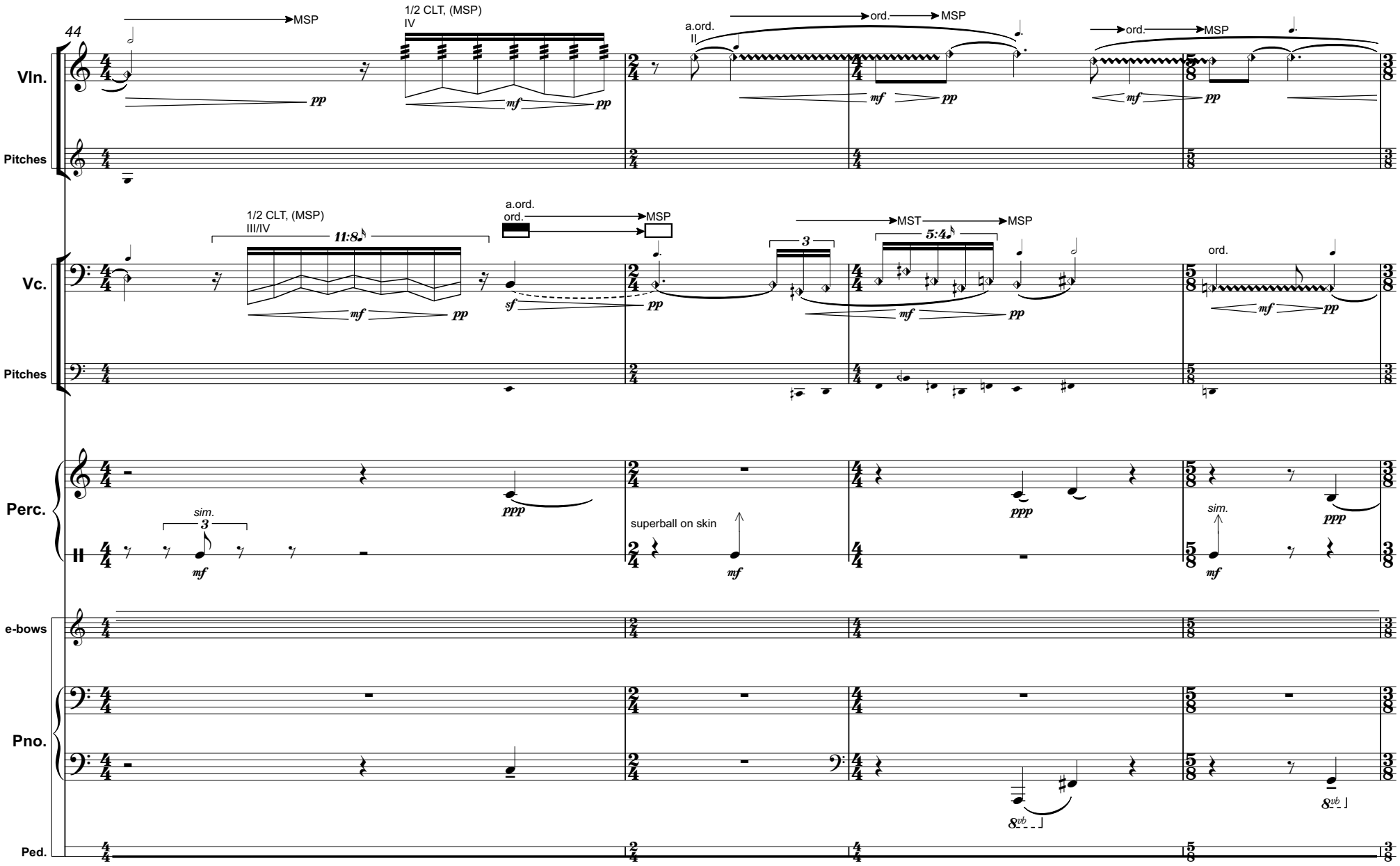

30
(LH pressure trem.)
Vln.
Pitches
ord.
Vc.
fff
Pitches
Perc.
fff
e-bows
3
fff
Pno.
Ped.

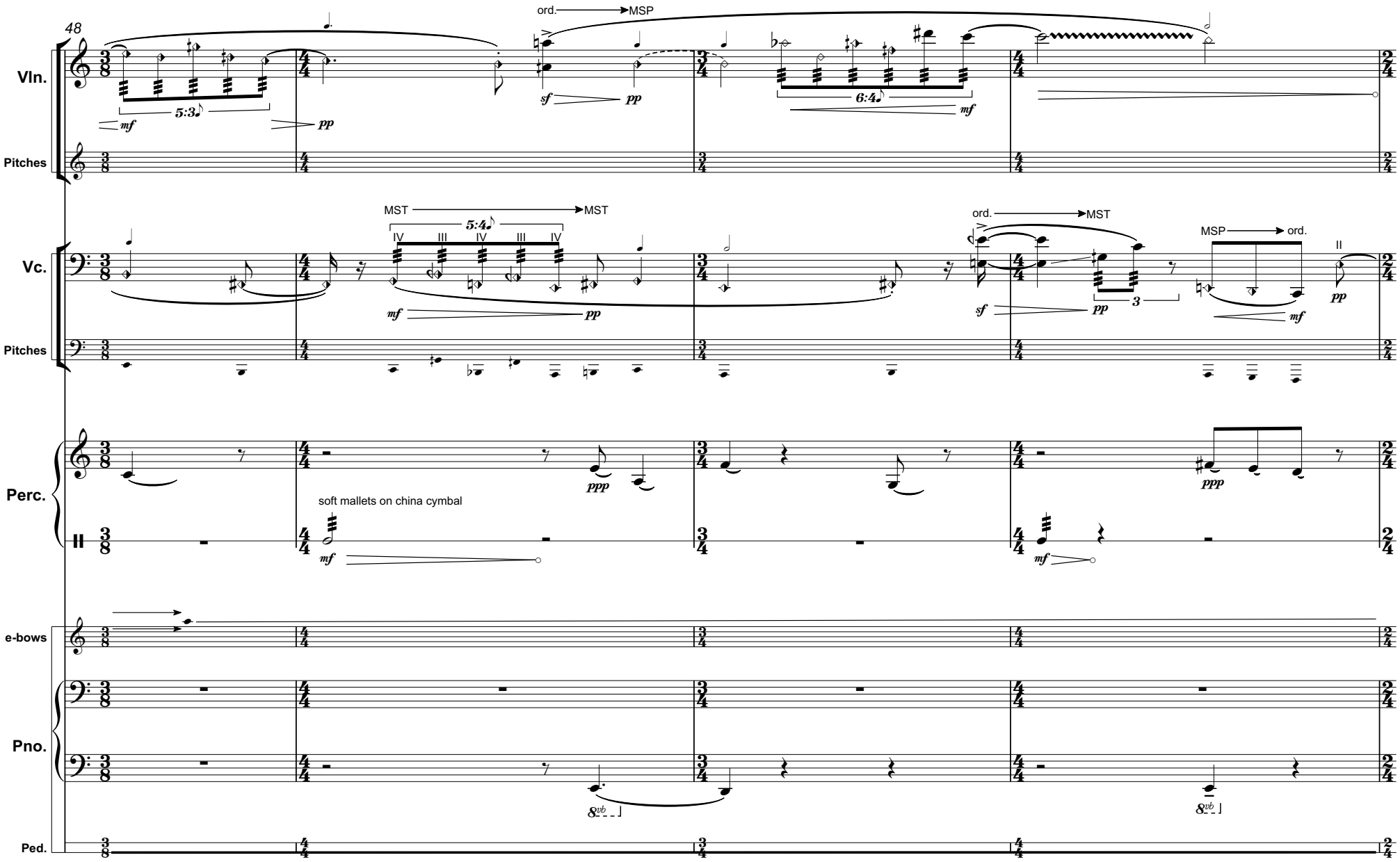

32
Vln.
de-tune string IV to G2
Pitches
Vc.
MST
ord.
MST
blend with bass drum
fff
MST
ord.
MST
sim.
fff
Pitches
Perc.
superball
fff
fff
fff
e-bows
Pno.
pppp
Ped.

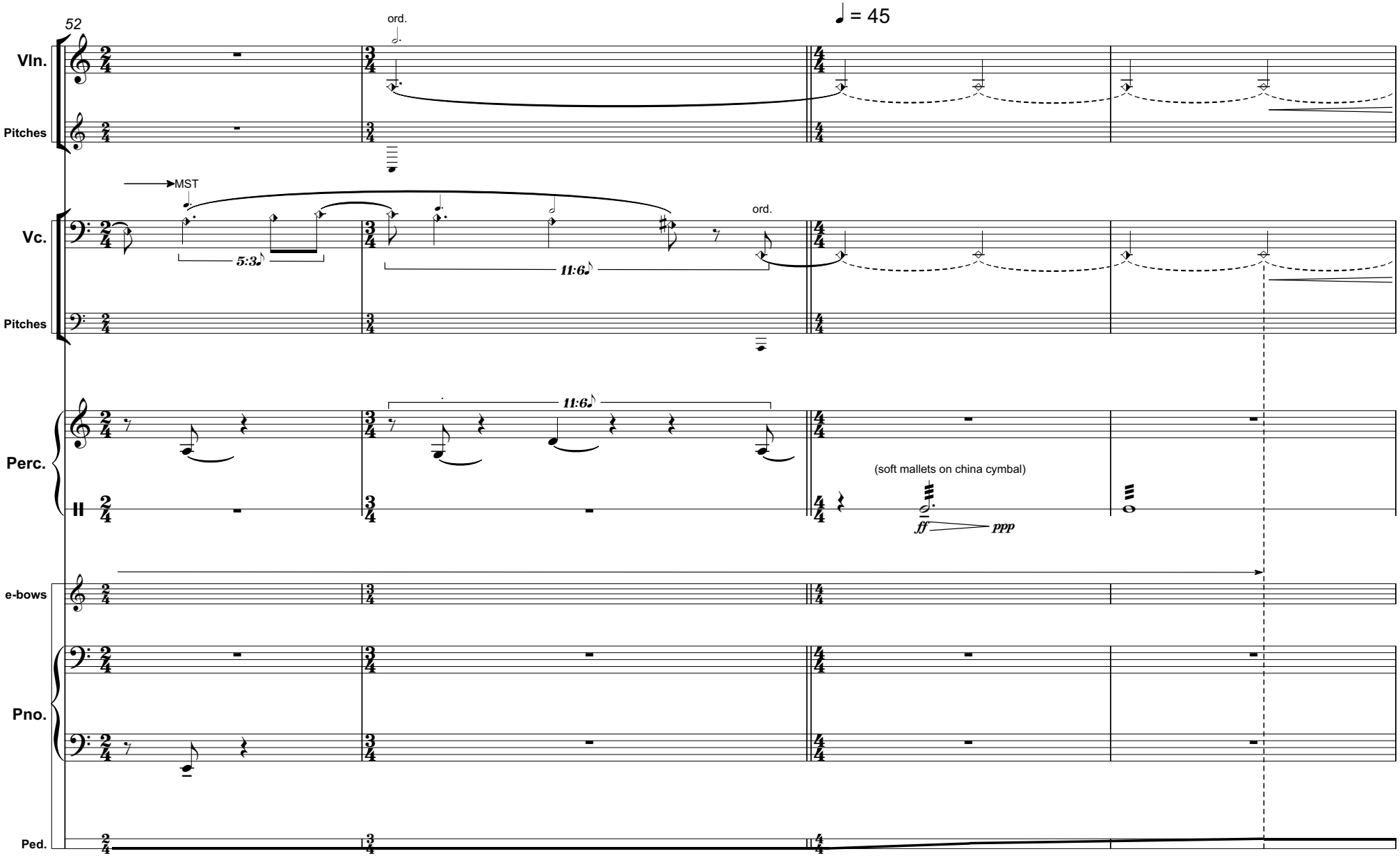

34
Vln.
Pitches
MSP
pp
Vc.
Pitches
MST
ord.
MST
sim.
fff
3
MST
ord.
MST
sim.
fff
Perc.
3
fff
fff
fff
e-bows
Pno.
3
5:4
Ped.

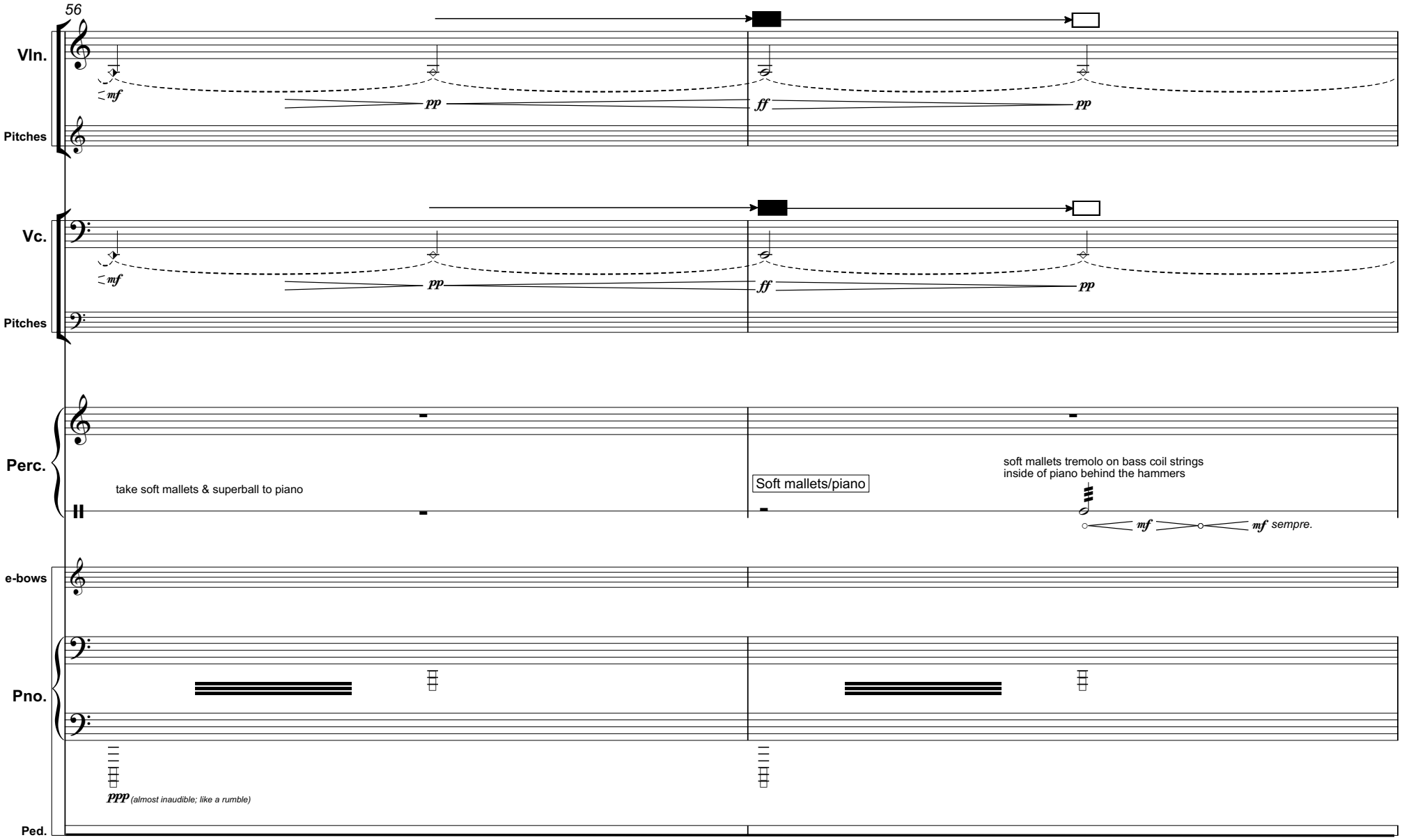

37
Vln.
Pitches
MST
MSP
3
mf
pp
MST
5:4
mf
MSP
pp
Vc.
Pitches
III
MSP
3
ord.
11:8
mf
pp
MSP
mf
pp
Vibraphone
soft mallet; without motor
3
ppp
Perc.
China cymbal/bass drum
place China cymbal
on bass drum skin
soft mallets on china cymbal
f
e-bows
Pno.
5:4
5:4
5:4
5:4
5:4
3
f
pppp
Ped.

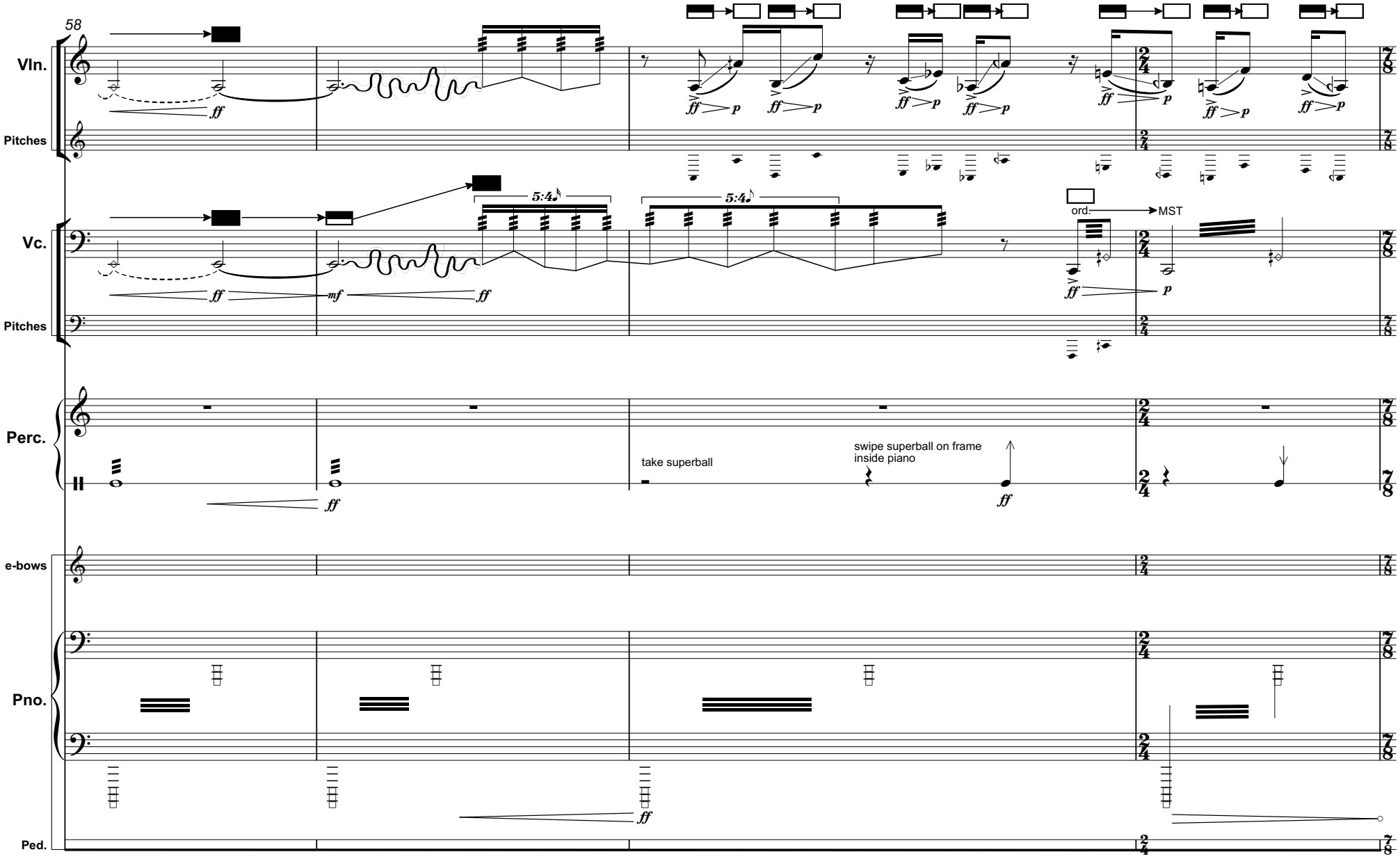

40
Vln.
Pitches
Vc.
Pitches
Perc.
e-bows
Pno.
Ped.
ord.
MSP
MST
ord.
MSP
MST
MSP
ord.
MST
ord.
MST
ord.
MSP
mf
pp
mf
pp
sf
pp
mf
mf
5:3
6:5
3
pp
8:5
mf
pp
sf
pp
ppp
ppp
hit on skin, not cymbal
f
mf
mp

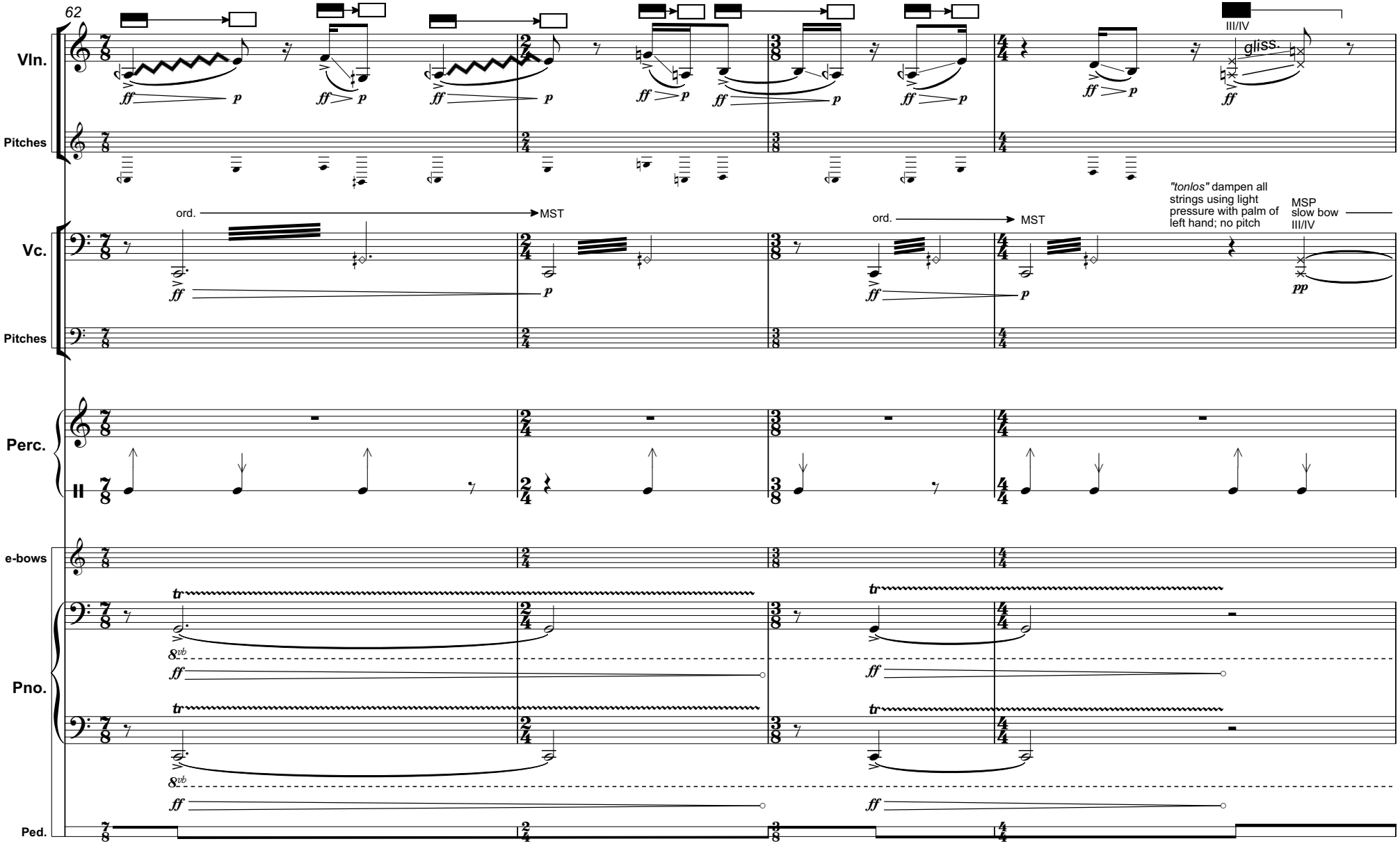

44
Vln.
Pitches
Vc.
Pitches
Perc.
e-bows
Pno.
Ped.
MSP
1/2 CLT, (MSP)
IV
a.ord.
II
ord.
MSP
ord.
MSP
1/2 CLT, (MSP)
III/IV
11:8
a.ord.
ord.
MSP
3
MST
MSP
5:4
ord.
sim.
3
superball on skin
sim.
8vb
8vb

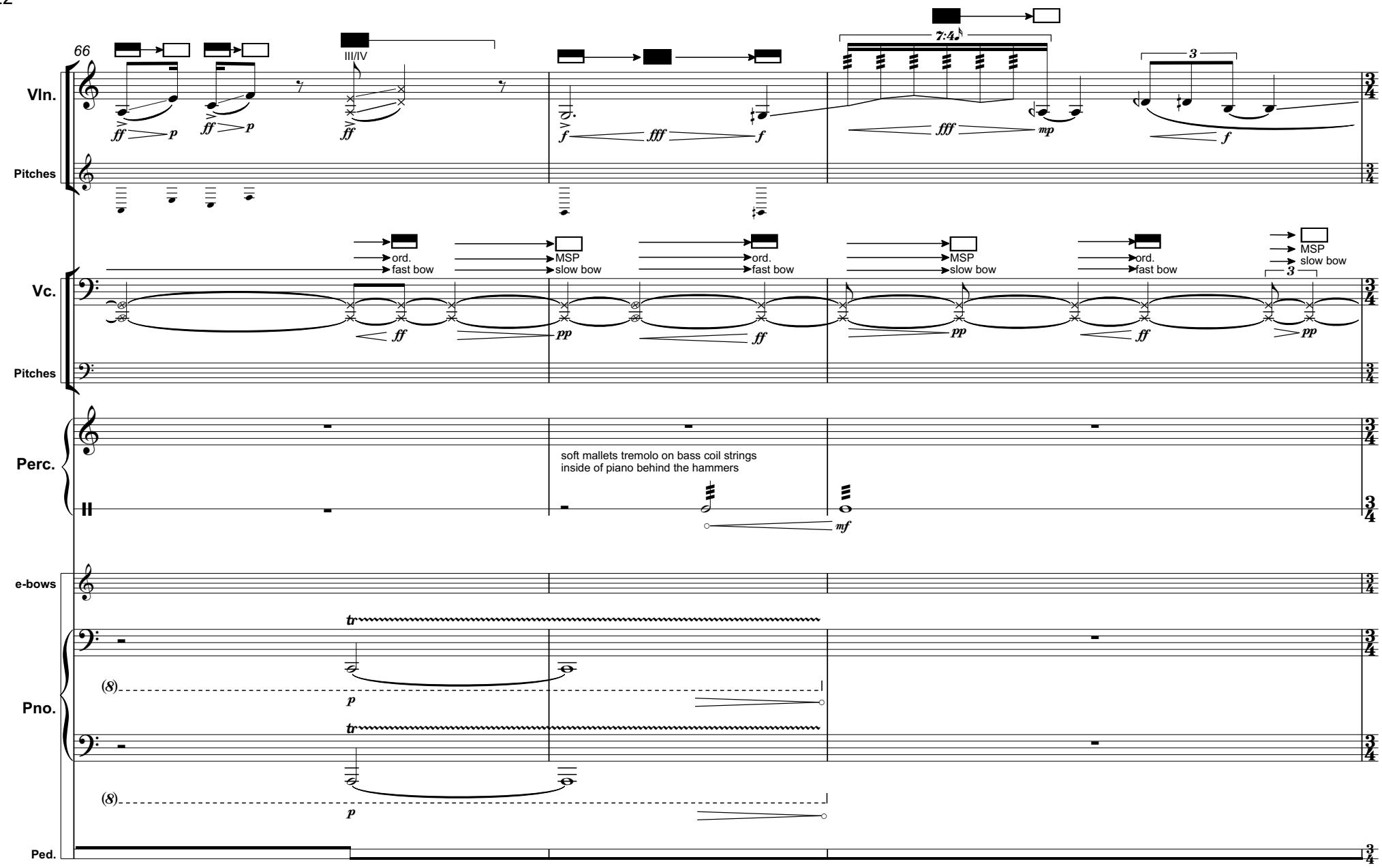

48
Vln.
Pitches
Vc.
Pitches
Perc.
e-bows
Pno.
Ped.
ord.
MSP
MST
MST
ord.
MST
MSP
ord.
soft mallets on china cymbal

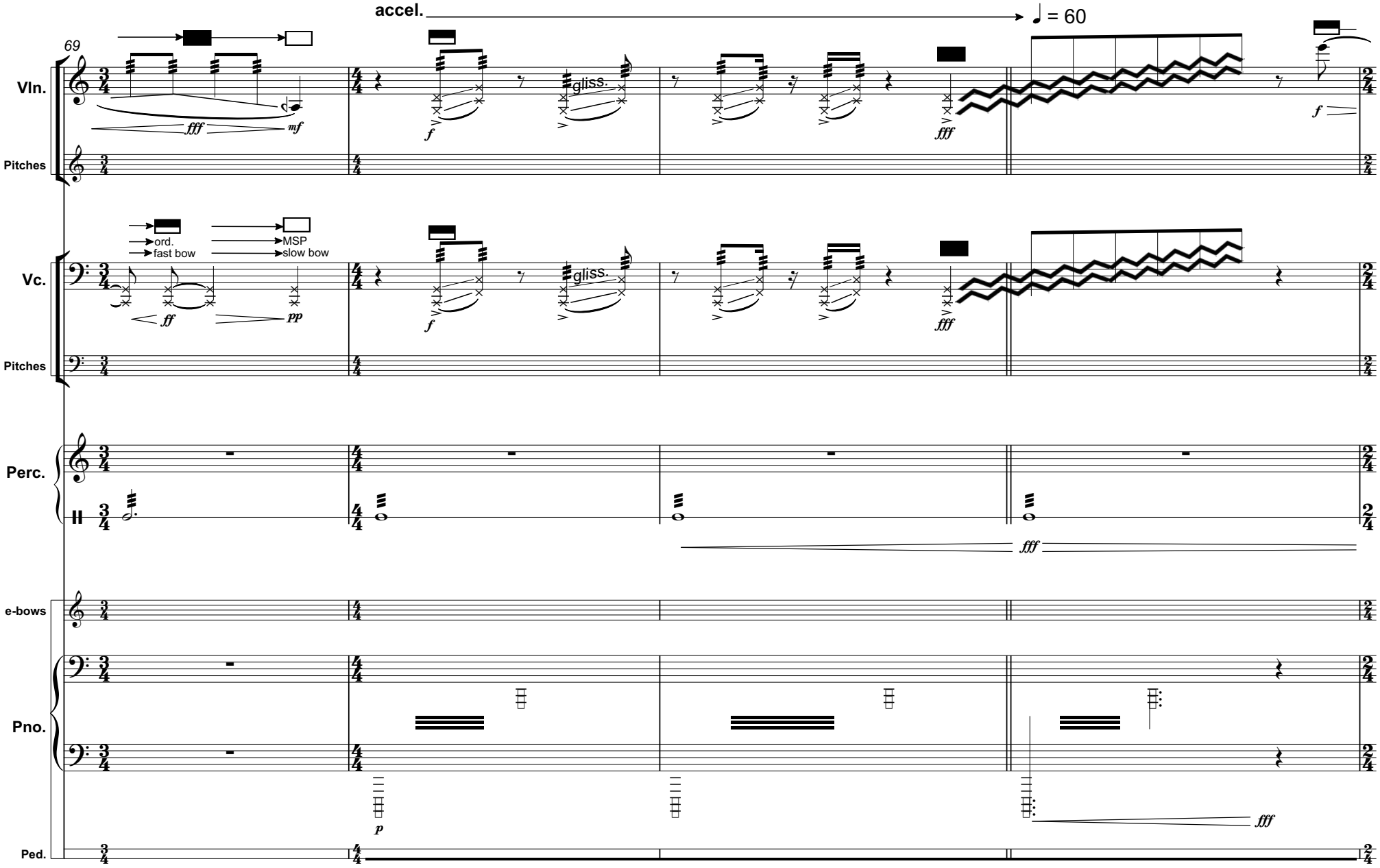

52
ord.
♩ = 45
Vln.
Pitches
MST
ord.
Vc.
5:3
11:6
Pitches
11:6
Perc.
(soft mallets on china cymbal)
ff
ppp
e-bows
Pno.
Ped.

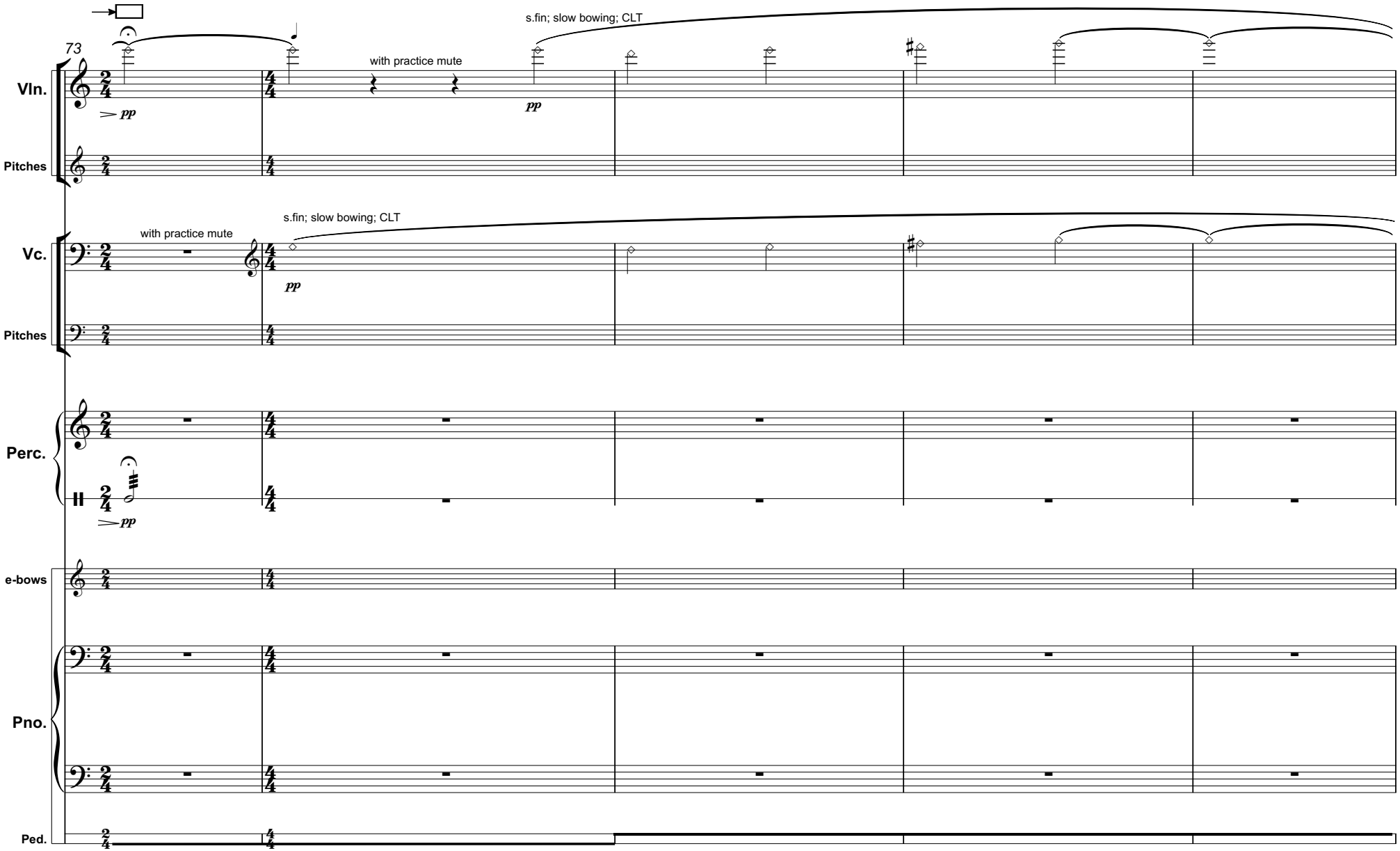

56
Vln.
Pitches
mf
pp
ff
pp
Vc.
Pitches
mf
pp
ff
pp
Perc.
take soft mallets & superball to piano
Soft mallets/piano
soft mallets tremolo on bass coil strings
inside of piano behind the hammers
mf
mf sempre.
e-bows
Pno.
ppp (almost inaudible; like a rumble)
Ped.

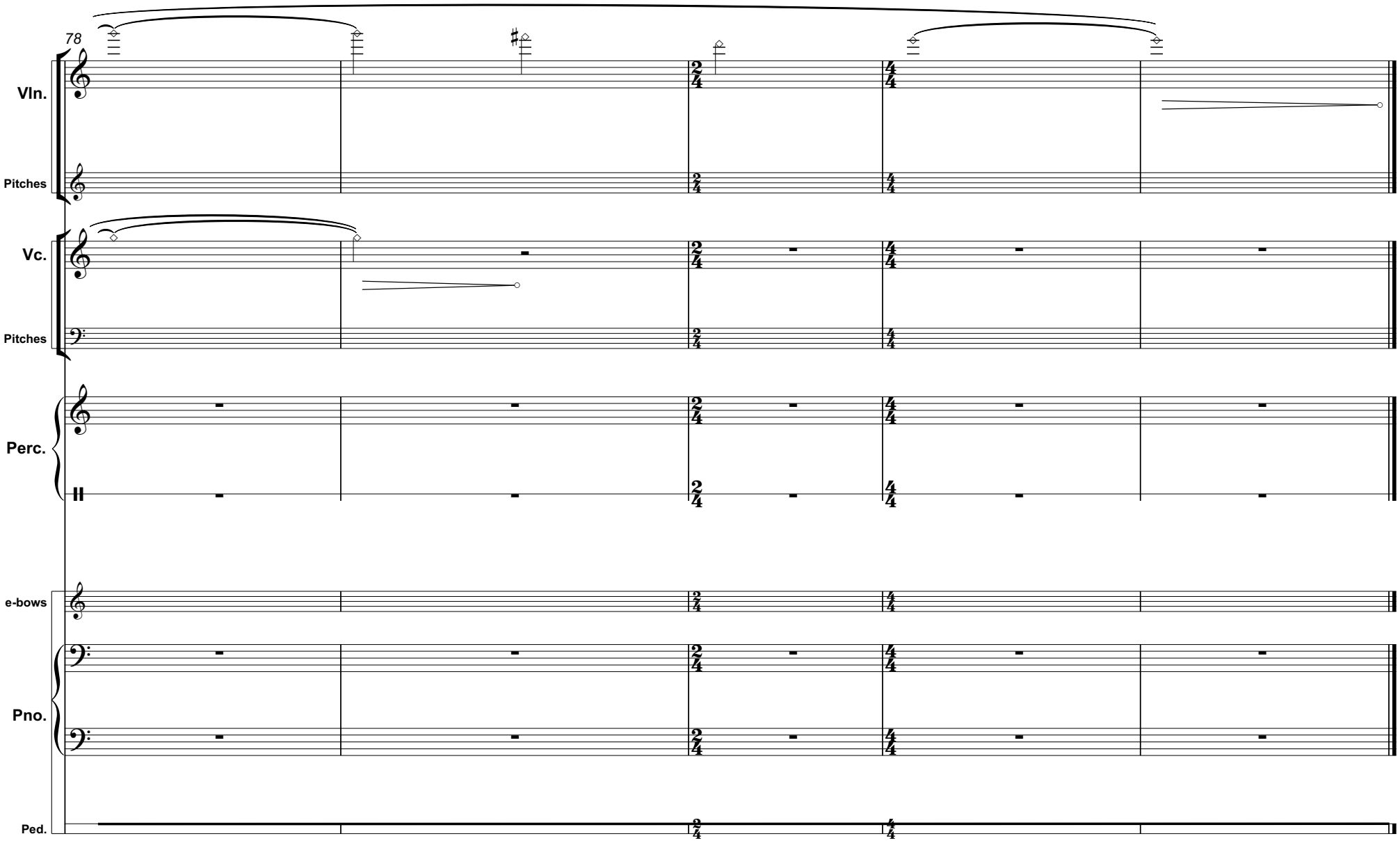

58
Vln.
Pitches
Vc.
Pitches
Perc.
take superball
swipe superball on frame
inside piano
ord.
MST
e-bows
Pno.
Ped.


62
Vln.
Pitches
ord.
MST
Vc.
Pitches
ord.
MST
"tonlos" dampen all strings using light pressure with palm of left hand; no pitch
MSP
slow bow
III/IV
III/IV
gliss.
Perc.
e-bows
Pno.
Ped.


66
Vln.
Pitches
III/IV
7:4
3
Vc.
Pitches
ord.
fast bow
MSP
slow bow
ord.
fast bow
MSP
slow bow
ord.
fast bow
MSP
slow bow
3
Perc.
soft mallets tremolo on bass coil strings
inside of piano behind the hammers
e-bows
Pno.
Ped.


accel.
♩ = 60
69
Vln.
Pitches
Vc.
Pitches
Perc.
e-bows
Pno.
Ped.
ord.
fast bow
MSP
slow bow
gliss.
gliss.
fff
mf
f
ff
pp
f
fff
f
fff
fff
p
fff


73
Vln.
Pitches
pp
with practice mute
s.fin; slow bowing; CLT
pp
Vc.
Pitches
with practice mute
s.fin; slow bowing; CLT
pp
Perc.
pp
e-bows
Pno.
Ped.


78
Vln.
Pitches
Vc.
Pitches
Perc.
II
e-bows
Pno.
Ped.