Symmetrical Sigils

for vibraphone, piano, and viola

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Letters of any alphabet can take on many different roles. Most commonly they are simply building blocks to make words from, such as the words you are reading on this page. Letters also routinely become symbols. The letter P when encountered on a road sign communicates the idea of a parking lot. The same letter encountered in sheet music communicates the idea of playing softly, *piano*. These symbolic meanings vary from the most mundane to the most mystical (one particularly well known example being the Hebrew alphabet). The letters – or rather glyphs – themselves may inspire great art, as they did in Chinese calligraphy, to give just one example.

The 21 sigils included here form an alphabet. Their performance(s) and use(s) are concepts similar to the ones outlined above.

In most cases, when performing a sigil its last sounds must be allowed to fade out – this is mostly true for piano notes with pedal, a little bit less so for vibraphone notes, and still less for viola, but the principle must be observed with everything except naturally short sounds such as viola pizzicato or vibraphone played with fingertips. If several sigils are performed in sequence, musicians may vary their endings as much or as little as they desire to make a coherent word or a phrase, and the same goes for the duration of pauses between the sigils. As I mentioned above, Chinese characters have inspired a great artistic tradition which, technically speaking, thrived on reimagining the characters' shapes, even distorting them almost beyond recognition; the same may be done with any sigil(s) of this collection, provided that you're aware of your purposes in doing so. It may or may not be of help to first study the symmetries that form the basis of the sigil in question before proceeding with changes.

Dynamics and phrasing are left to the performers to decide on, with just a few exceptions. Any tremolo mark in the viola part only applies for a single note it accompanies. The durations of the vibraphone part must be rendered carefully and precisely, with just a single sigil having motor on and sustaining all of the notes.

N.B. The earlier work *Letter Variations* has no relationship to the sigils here, because as far as letters are concerned, the variations only investigate one side of the concept. So pieces from both *Letter Variations* and *Symmetrical Sigils* may be performed together in any sequence(s).

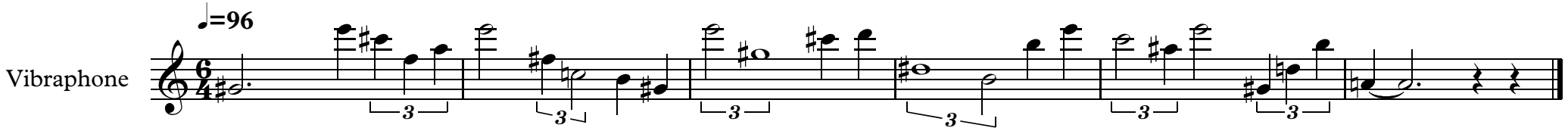
This volume contains the following:

Sigils for solo instrument:
- For solo vibraphone (1)
- For solo viola (1)
- For solo piano (1)

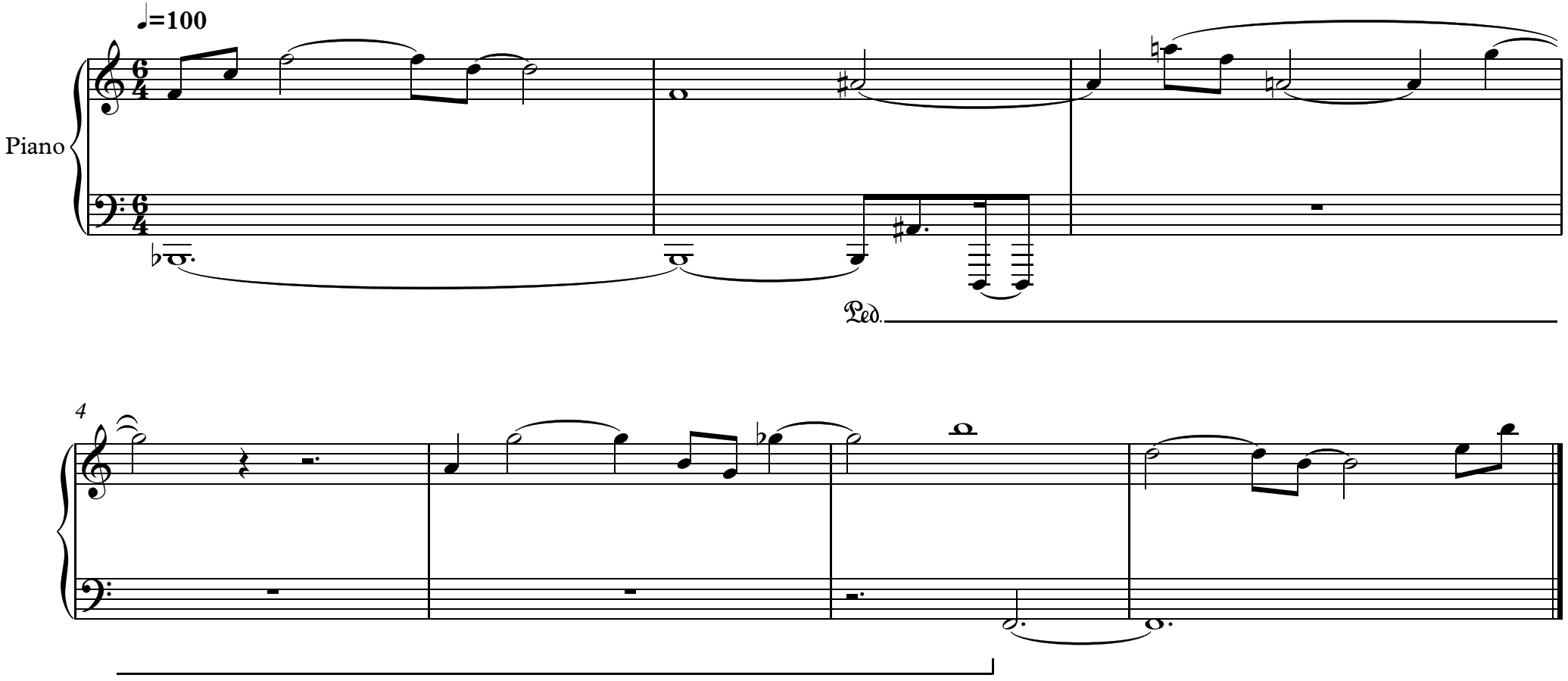
Sigils for two instruments:
- For vibraphone and piano (2)
- For viola and piano (3)
- For vibraphone and viola (9)

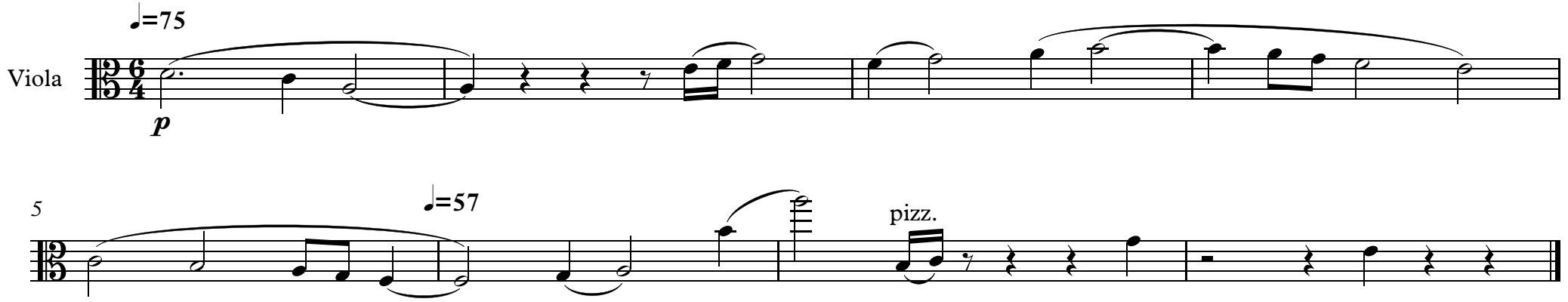
Sigils for three instruments:
- For vibraphone, viola, and optional piano (1)
- For vibraphone, viola, and piano (3)

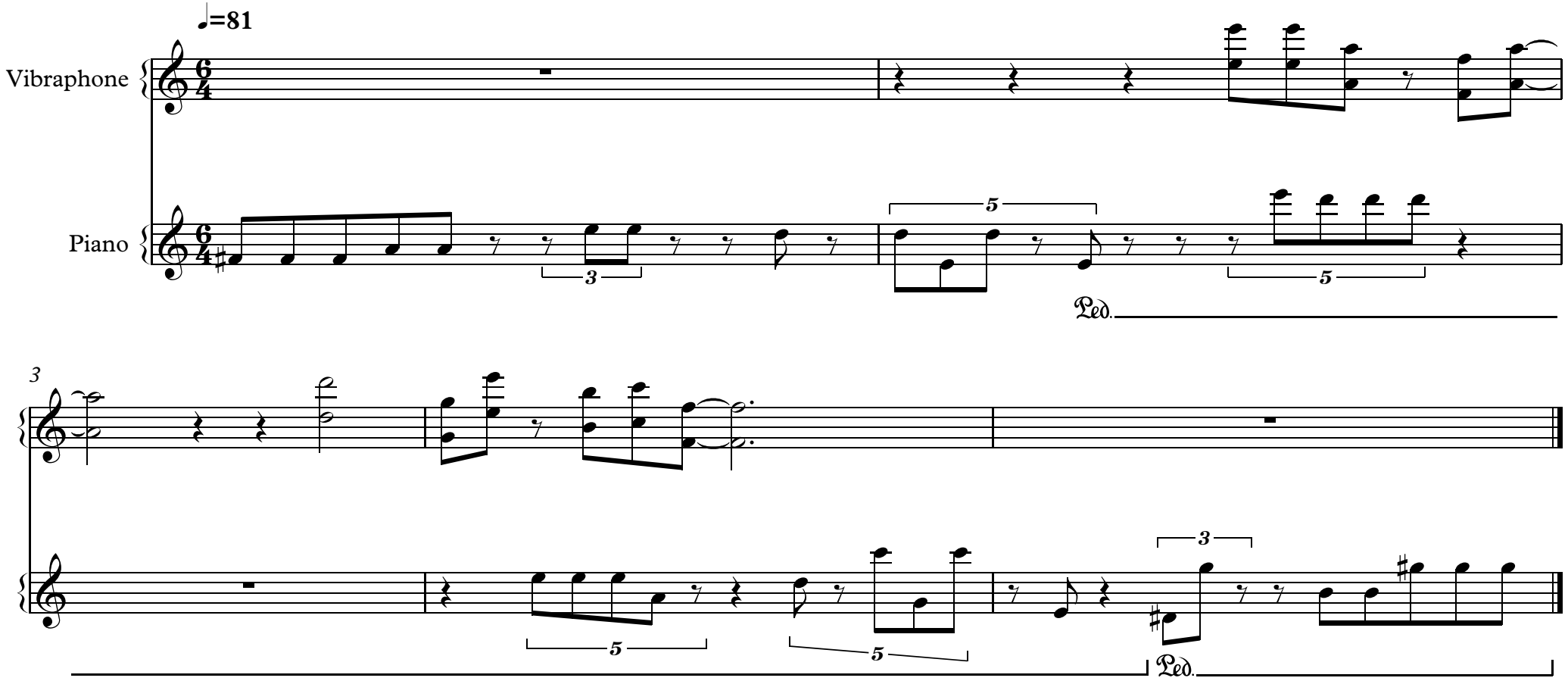
The Almost Invisible Sigil



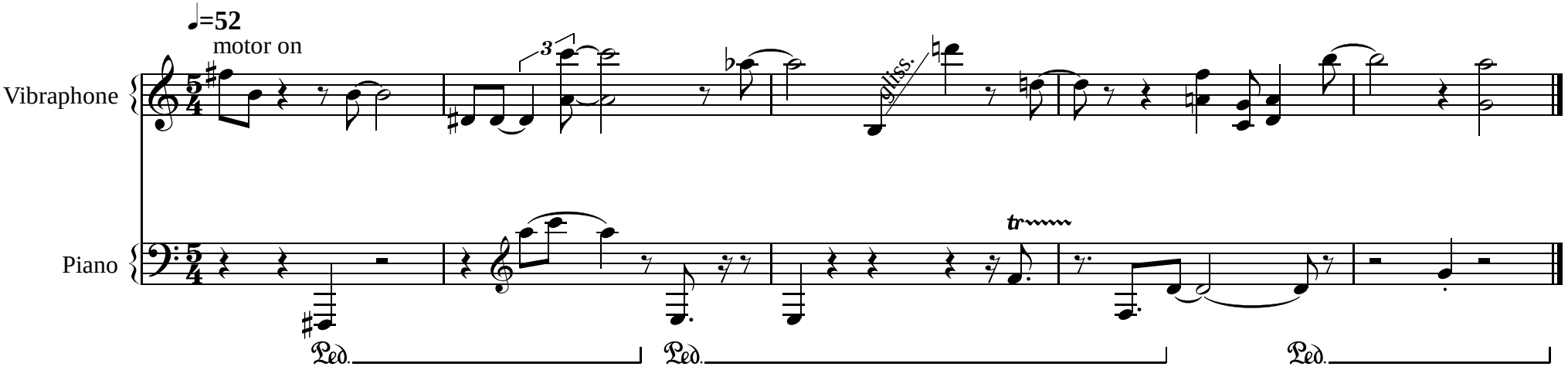
A Change in the Weather

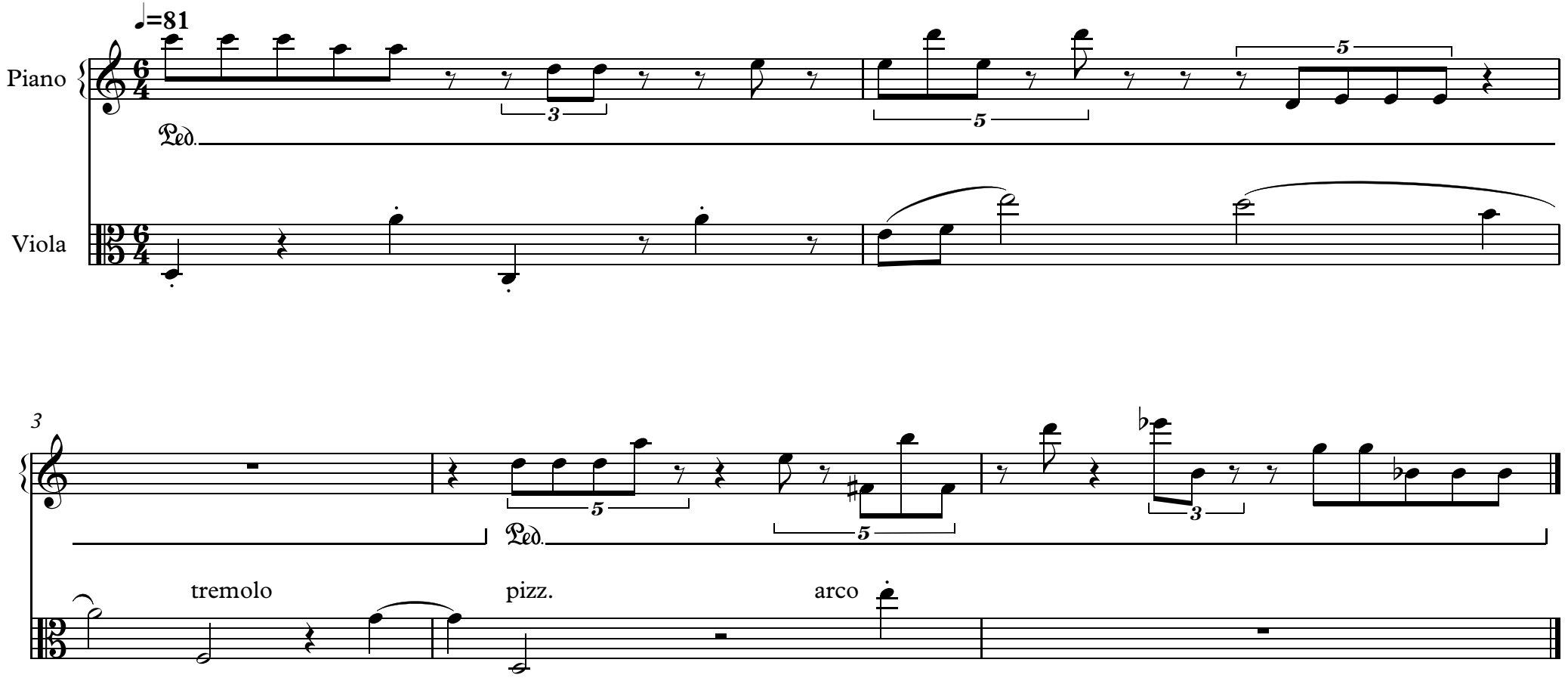



♩=75
Viola
p
5
♩=57
pizz.

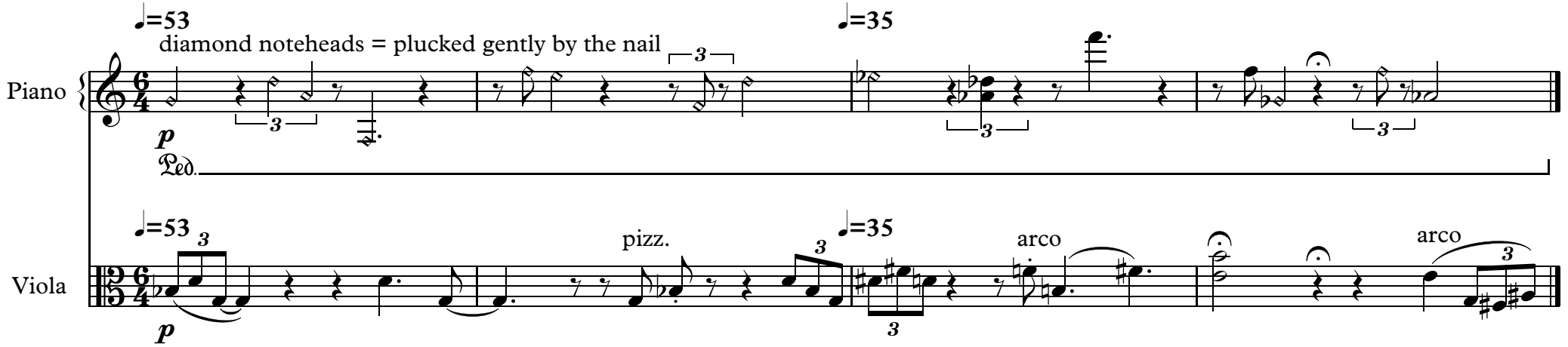

♩=81
Vibraphone
Piano
Ped.
Ped.

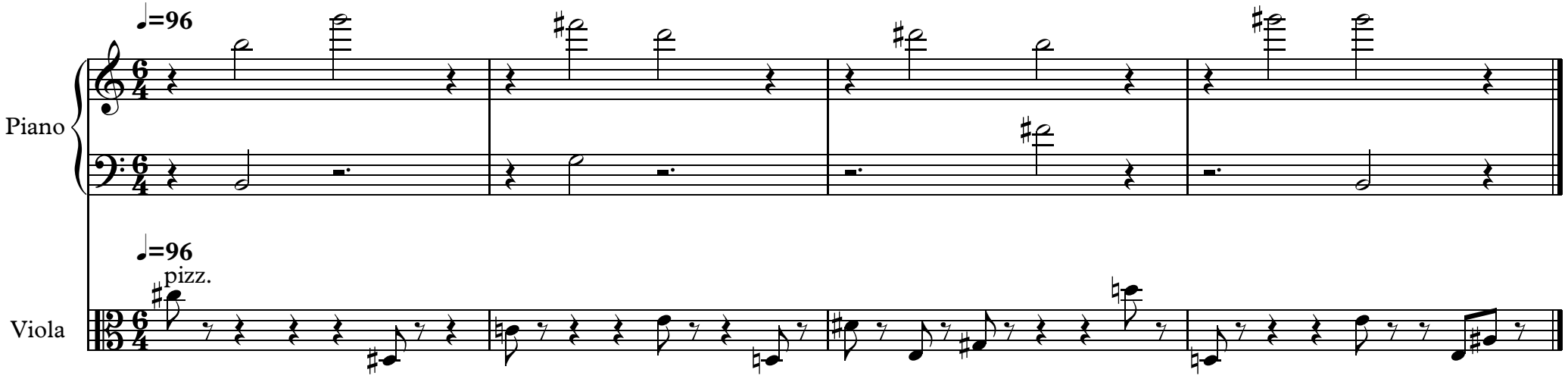
Departure Sigil

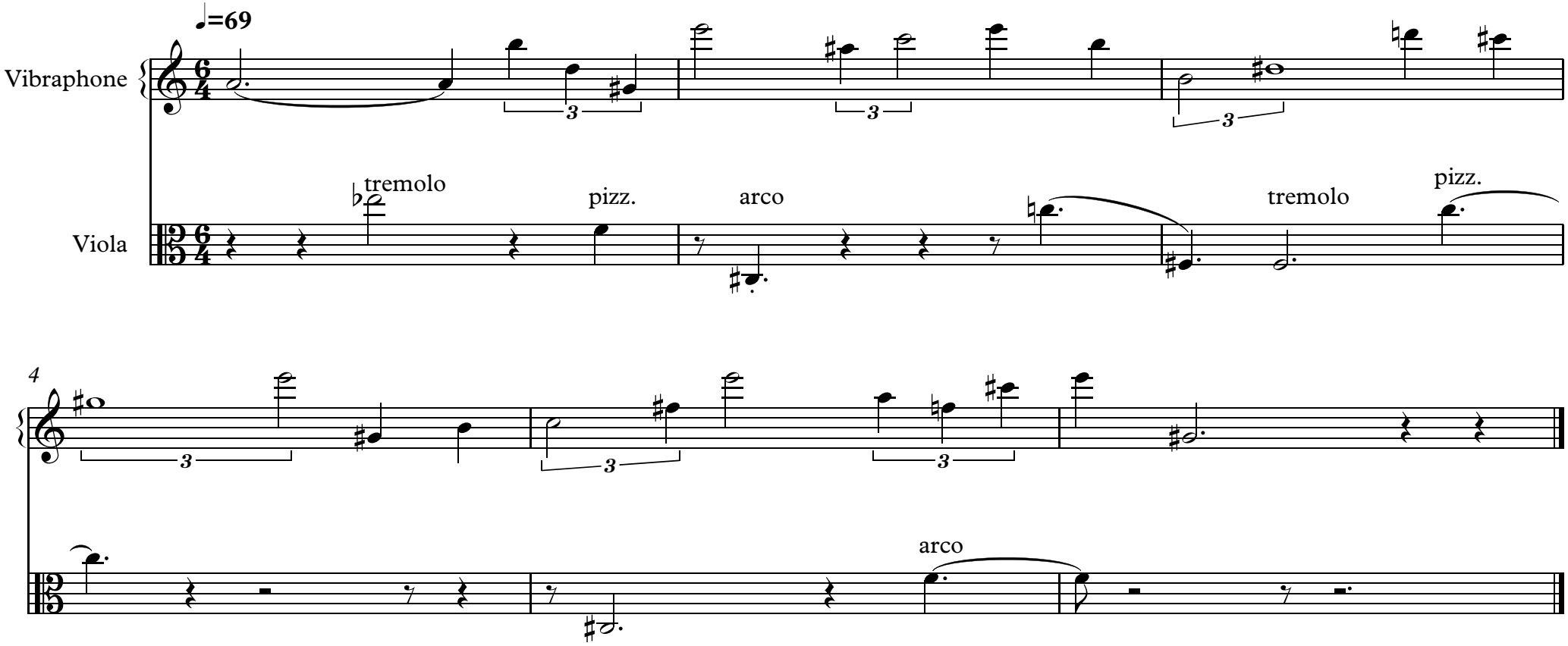


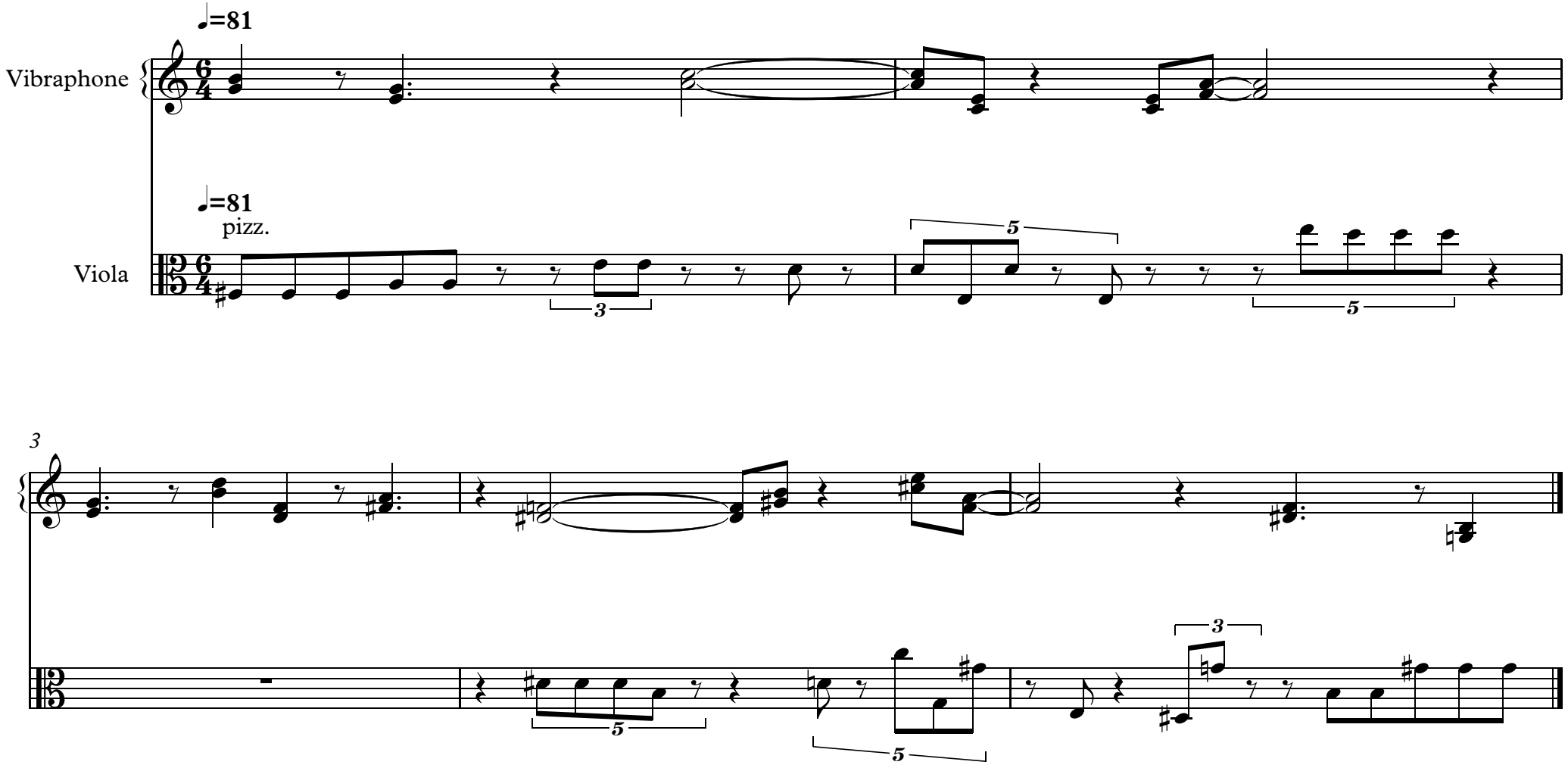

♩=81
Piano
Viola
Ped.
3
tremolo
pizz.
arco

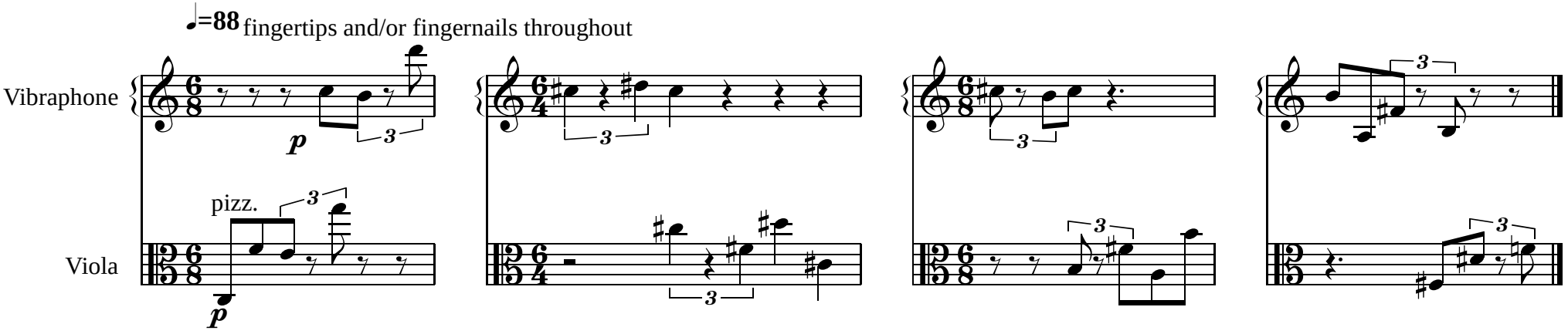
Water Sigil


♩=53
diamond noteheads = plucked gently by the nail
Piano
p
Ped.
♩=35
♩=53
Viola
p
pizz.
♩=35
arco
arco


♩=96
Piano
♩=96
pizz.
Viola

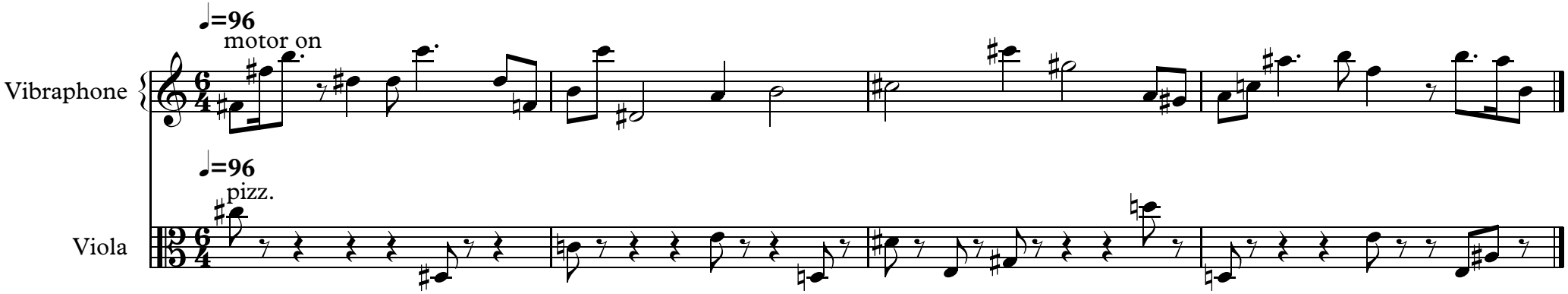

♩=69
Vibraphone
Viola
tremolo
pizz.
arco
tremolo
pizz.
4
arco

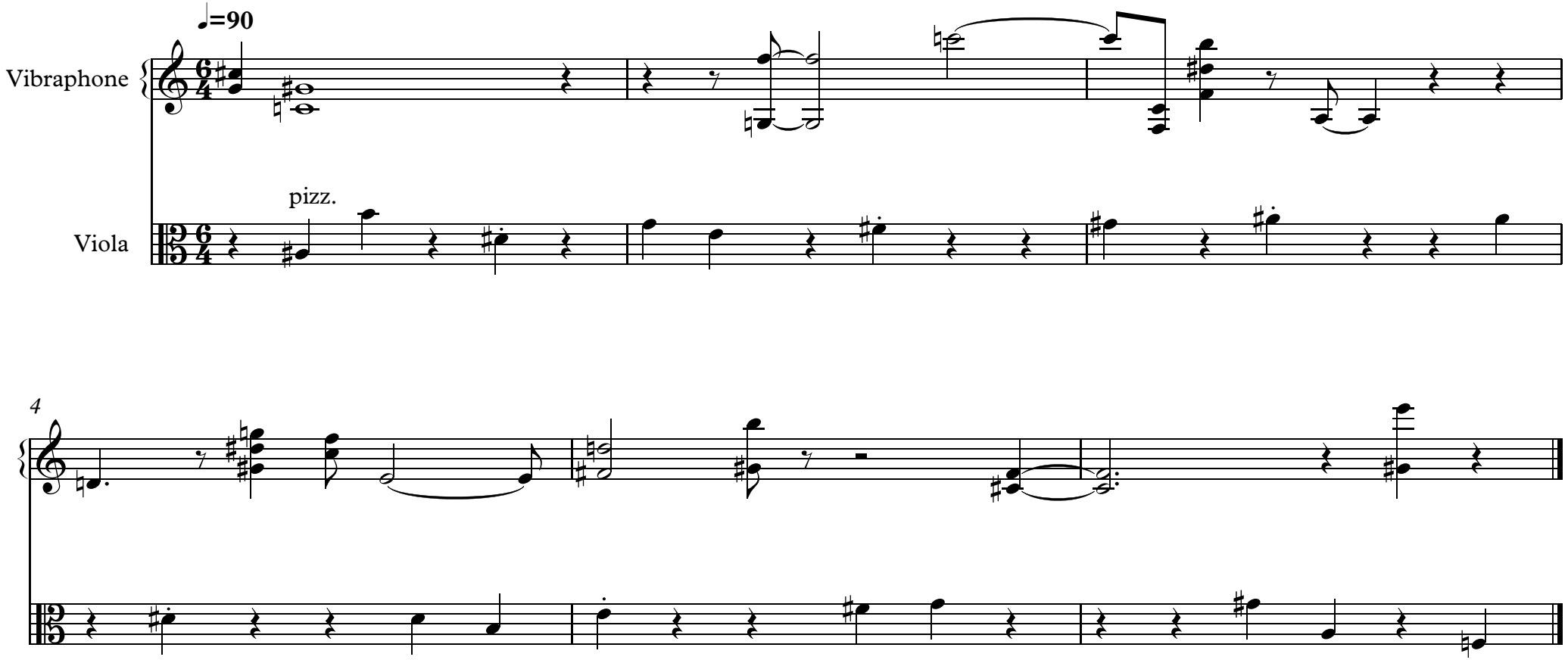

♩=81
Vibraphone
♩=81
pizz.
Viola
3
5
3
5
5
3
5

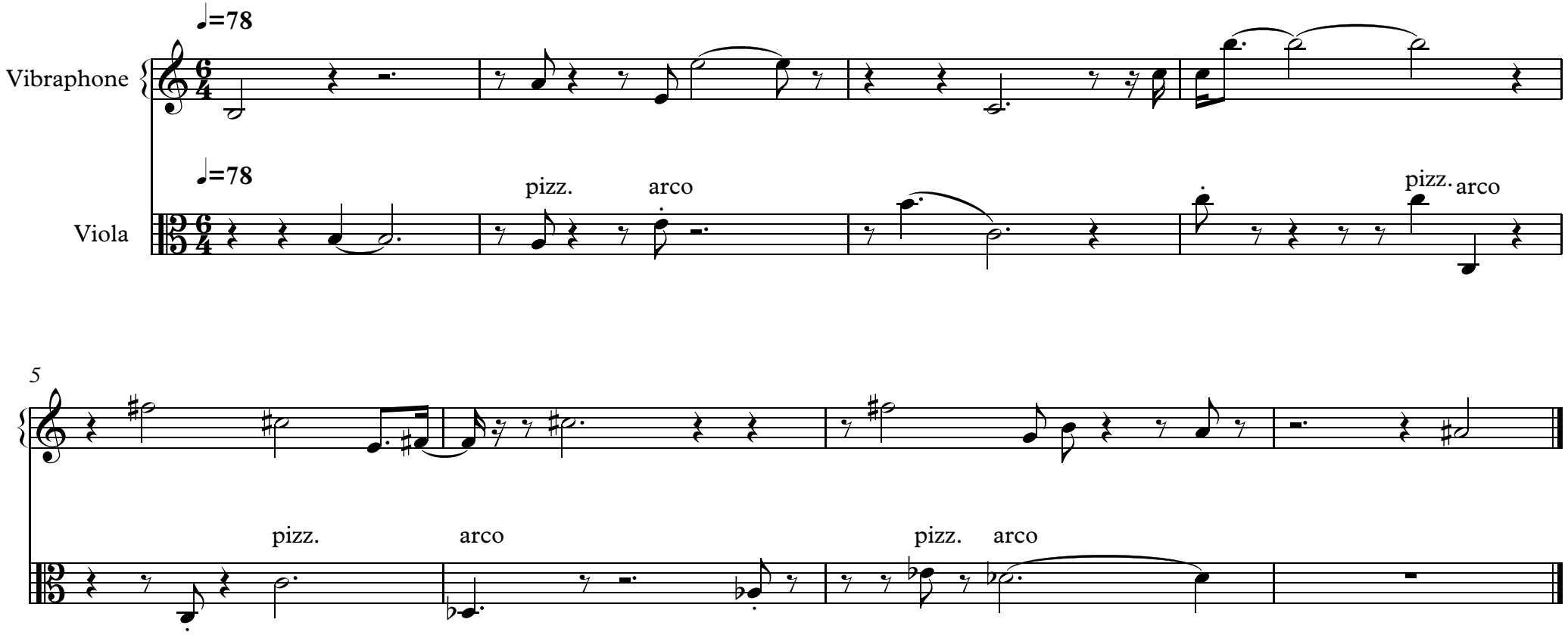


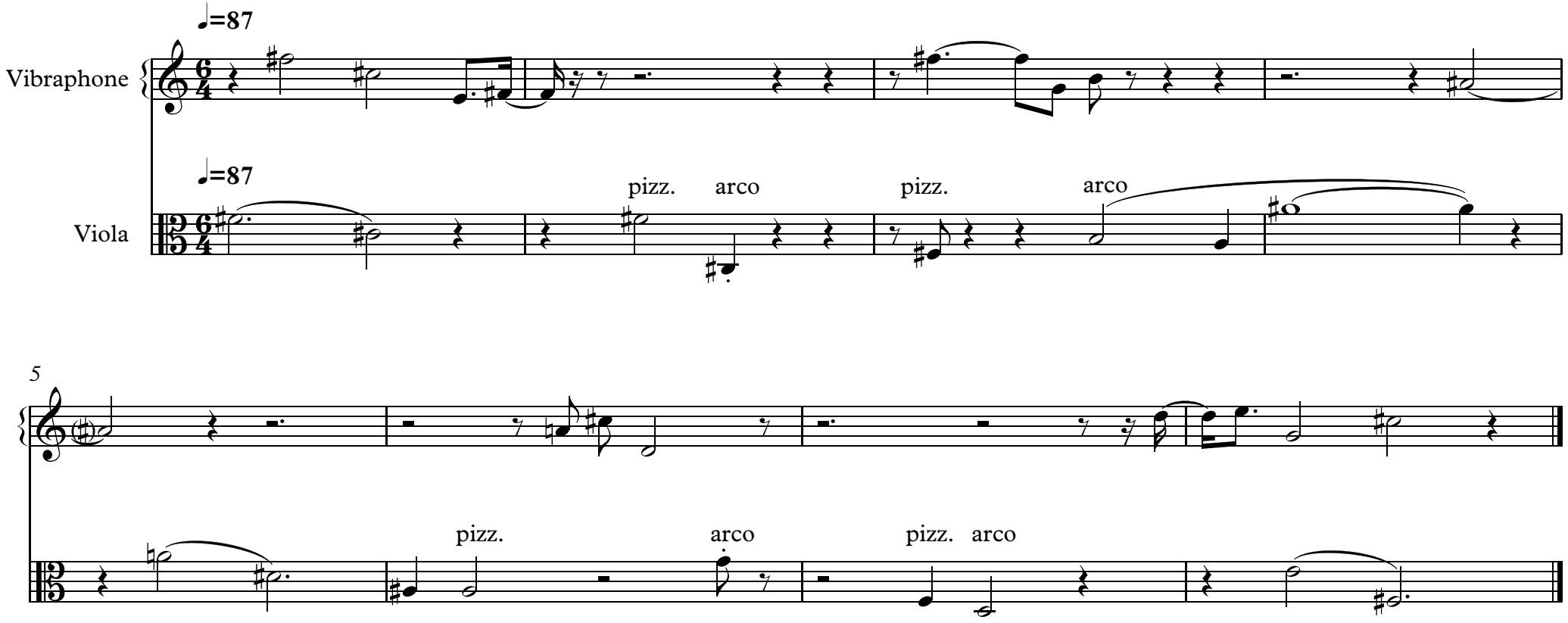
There are 24 ways of performing this sigil: the bars may be played in any order, but each is only played once, and as with the other sigils, the last sound(s) are allowed to fade out whichever they happen to be.

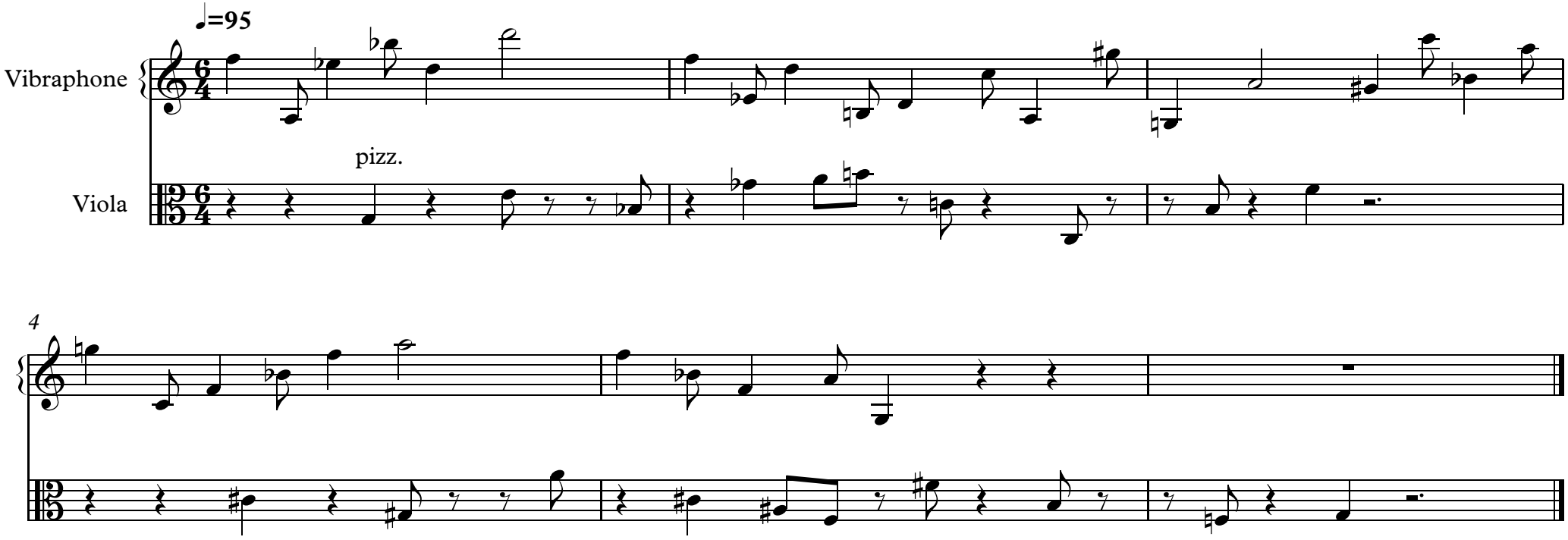
Alternatively, always play as written.

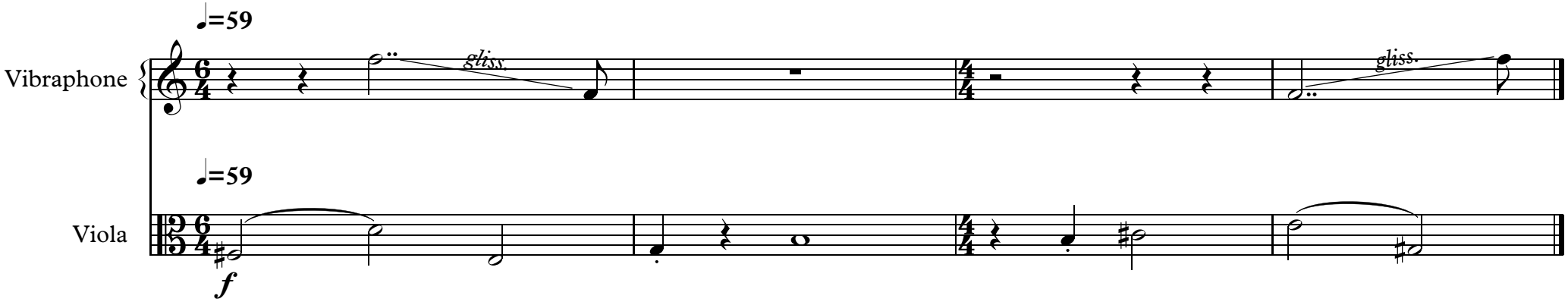

♩=96
motor on
Vibraphone
♩=96
pizz.
Viola

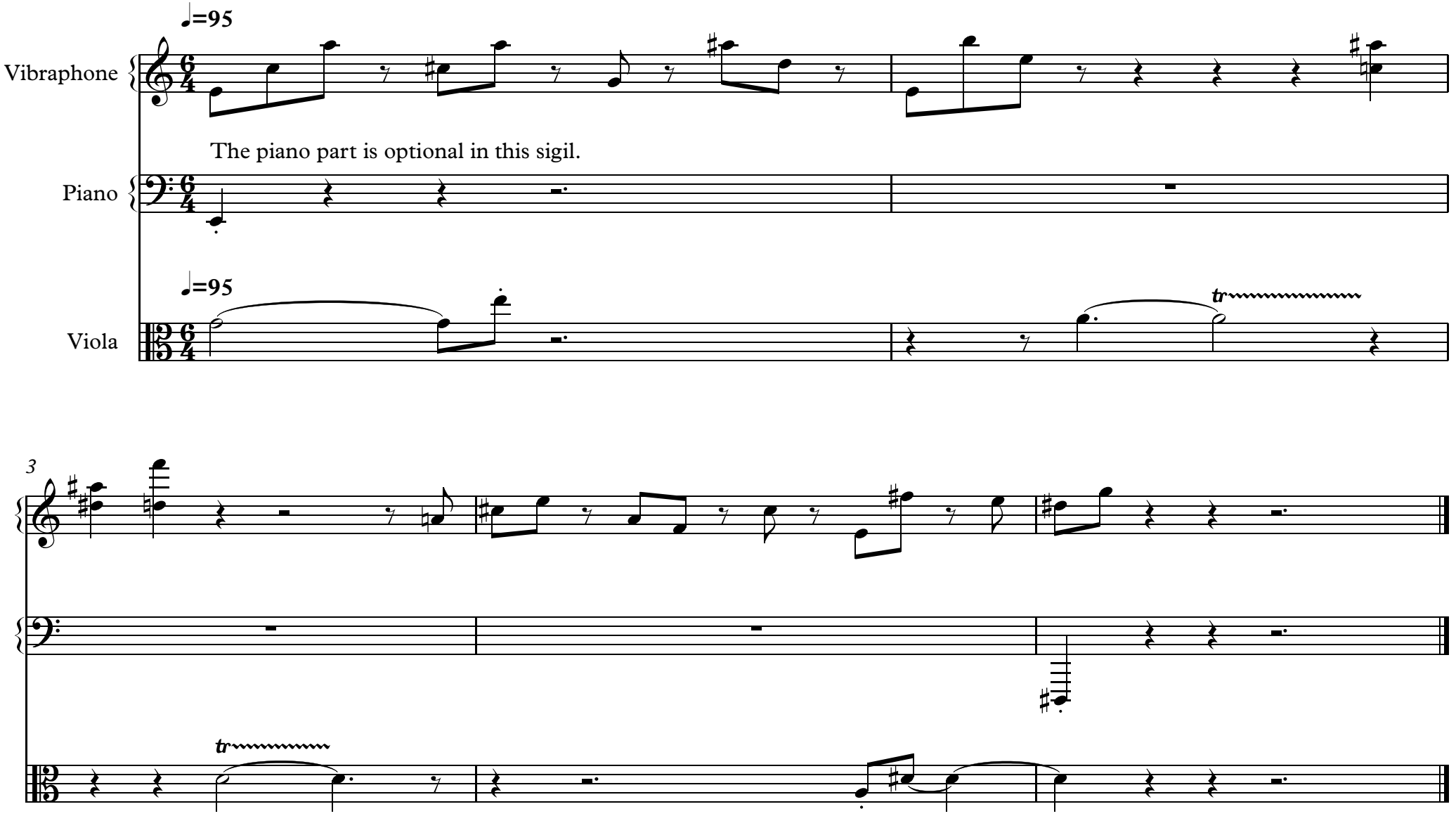

♩=90
Vibraphone
Viola
pizz.
4


♩=78
Vibraphone
♩=78
Viola
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
5
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco

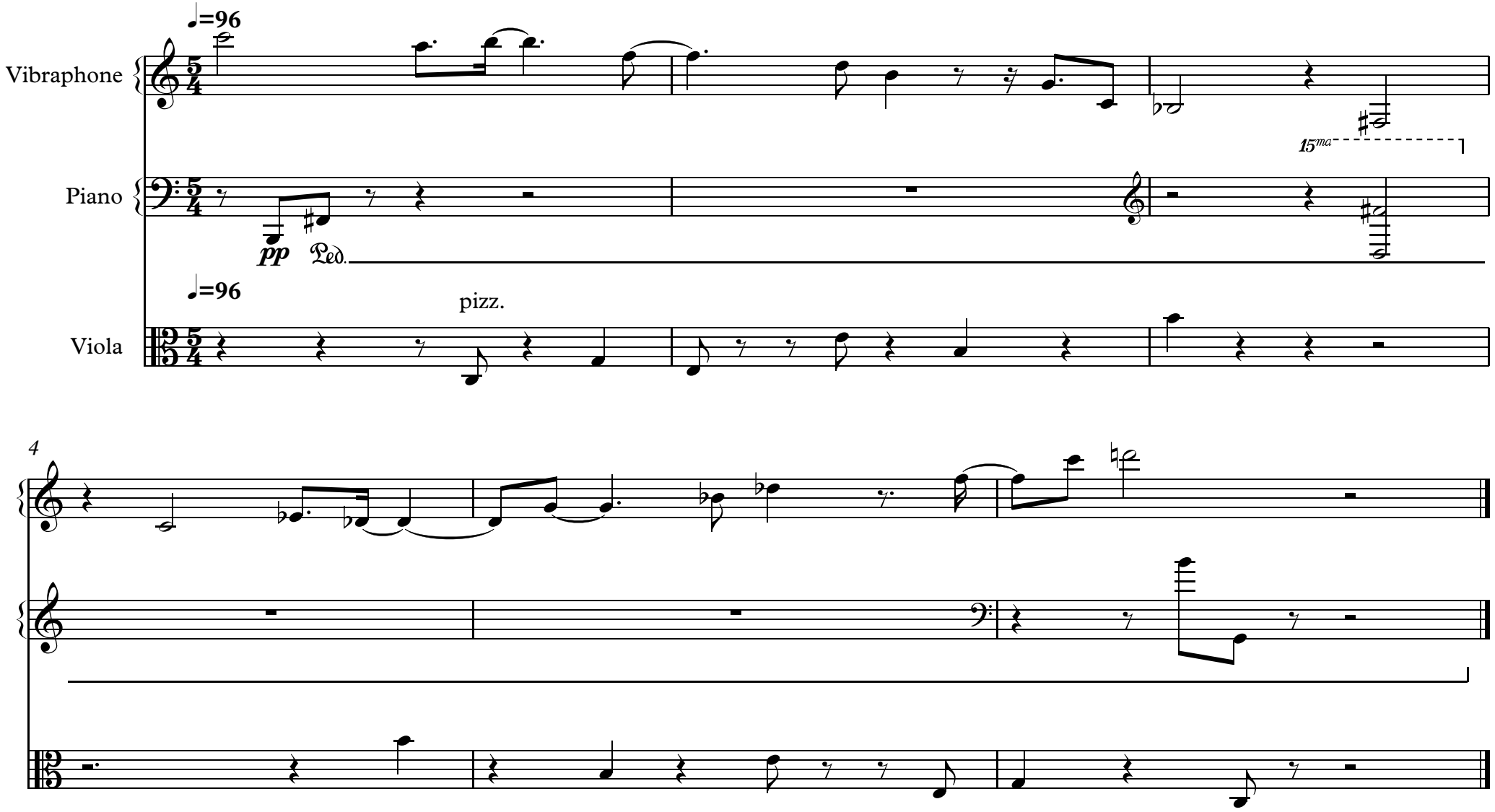

♩=87
Vibraphone
♩=87
Viola
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
5
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco

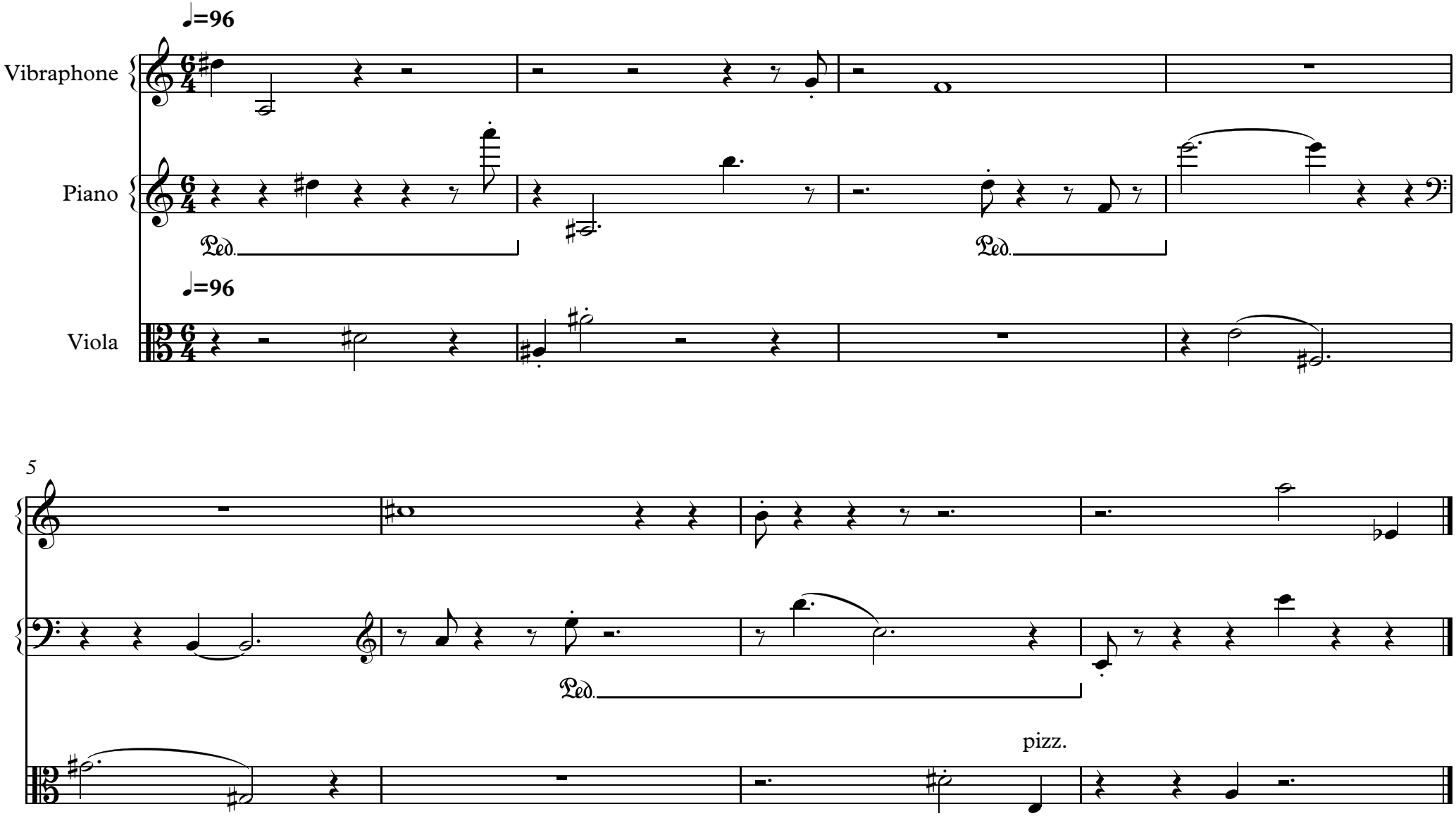

♩=95
Vibraphone
Viola
pizz.
4

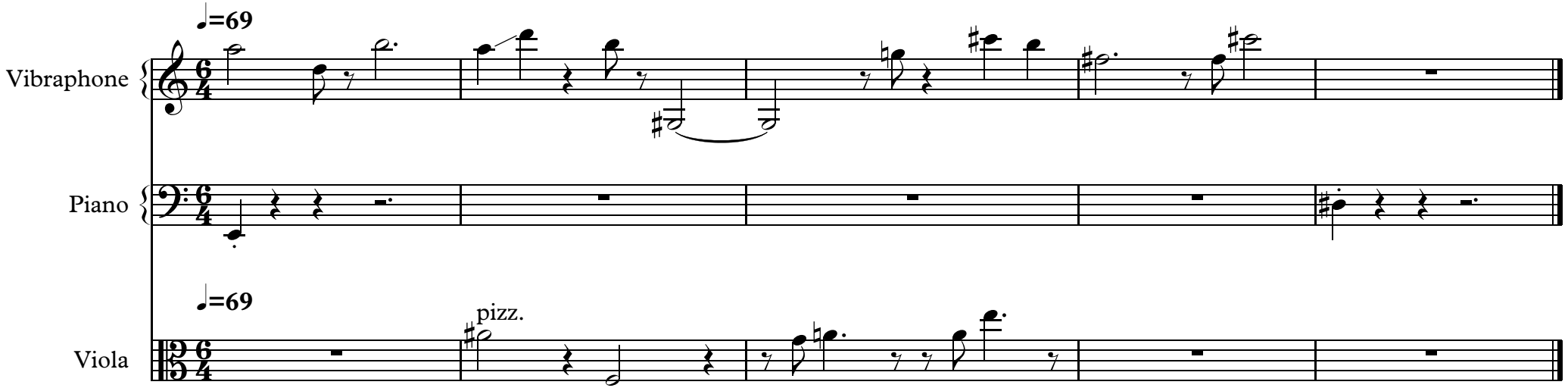

♩=59
Vibraphone
gliss.
gliss.
♩=59
Viola
f


♩=95
Vibraphone
The piano part is optional in this sigil.
Piano
♩=95
Viola
tr
3
tr

The Butterfly Victory Sigil




♩=96
Vibraphone
Piano
Ped.
Ped.
♩=96
Viola
5
Ped.
pizz.


♩=69
Vibraphone
Piano
♩=69
pizz.
Viola