Movement for string quartet and vocalist (2020)

Jamie Elless (b. 1998)

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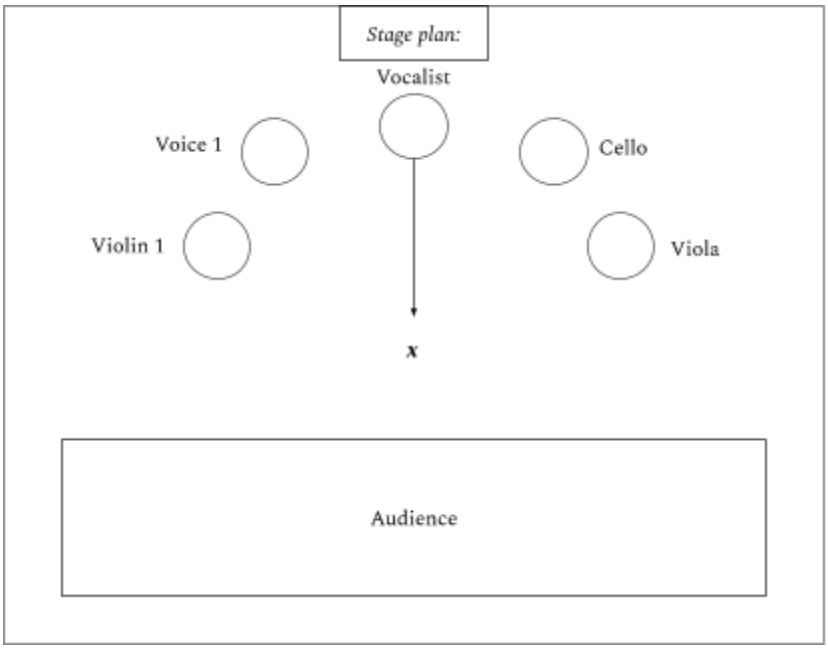
for two violins, viola, cello and vocalist

Notes for performance



Performers are to be arranged as above, seated. When instructed in the score, the vocalist is to stand and walk to the '***x***' marking, where they should remain for the duration of the piece.

Aspects of performance not notated or instructed may be approached at the performers' own discretion. This includes lighting, scenery, props and costume. Experimentation with costume is particularly encouraged. Examples may include: performing in period Baroque dress (with period instruments); gradually adding or removing items of clothing at changes of mood; performing in cumbersome, extravagant, busy clothing; performing in minimal, basic, dull clothing; or using make-up and paint to turn the five performers into mimes or drag artists.

If this piece is to be performed alongside a programme note or other similar document, the following must be copied and included therein exactly as written:

> ***Movement for string quartet and vocalist (2020)***
> J. Elless
>
> True to the rich history of the string quartet, this entertaining piece enchants with its light, enjoyable theatrics, conventional harmony and comfortable exploitation of audience sensibility. Audiences are encouraged to think of Haydn and the 18th century drawing room as they are guided through pleasing textures and measured, regular phrases.

This note is included to wrongfoot audiences, luring them into a false sense of comfort. This comfort is first questioned at the beginning of the piece during the impassioned string chords, then completely shattered when the vocalist directly shouts at the audience.

Duration: c. 6 minutes.
Score in C.

Movement for string quartet and vocalist

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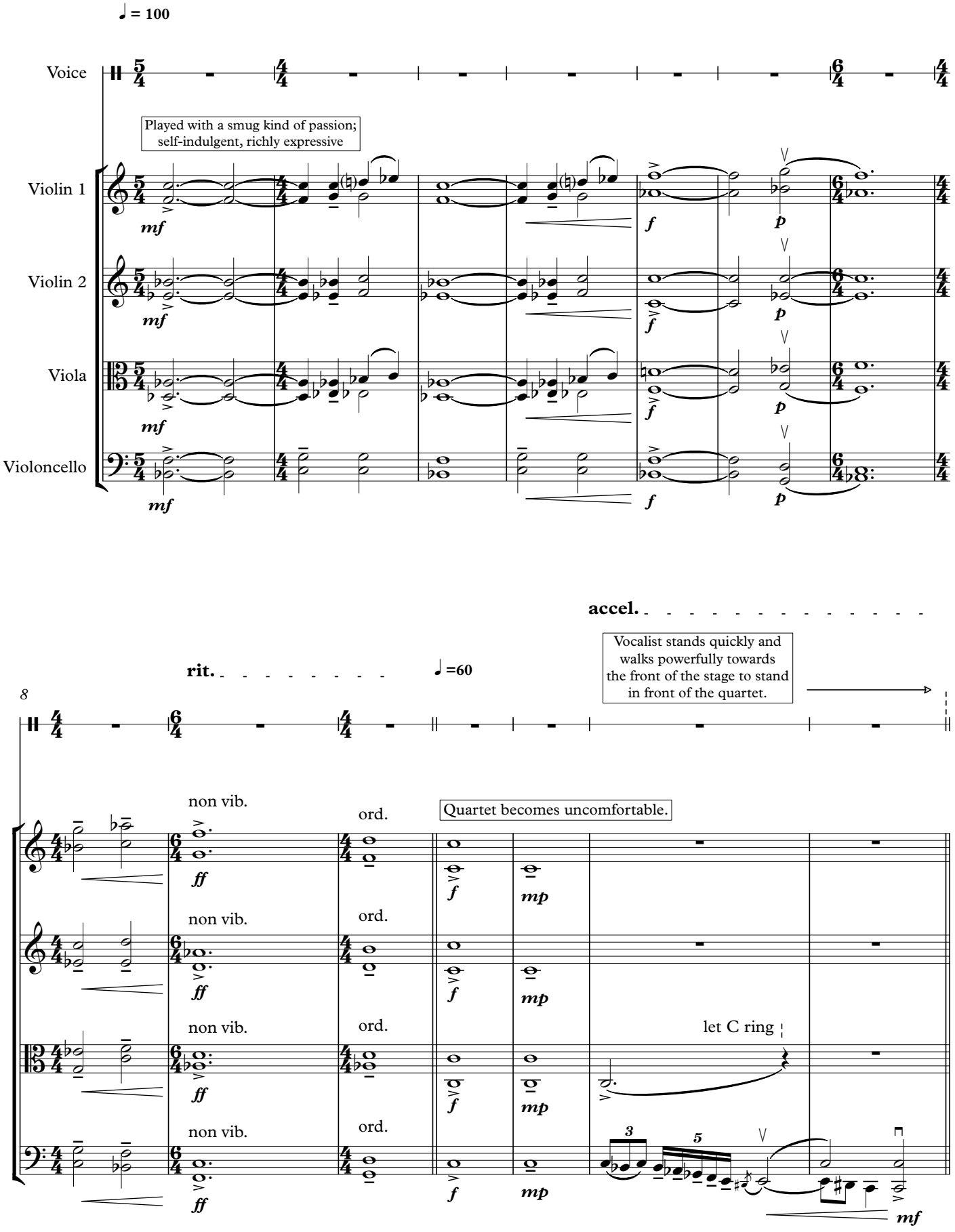
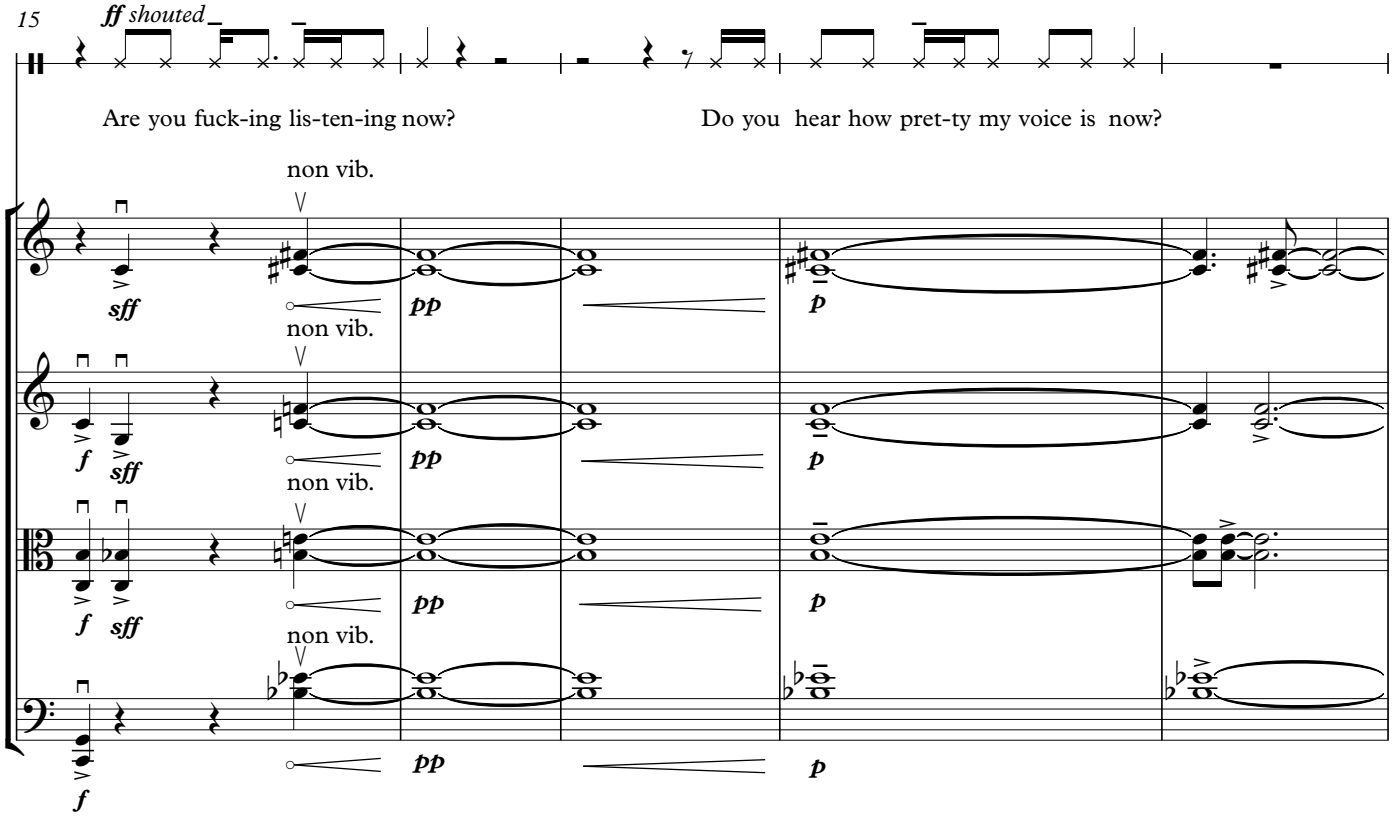
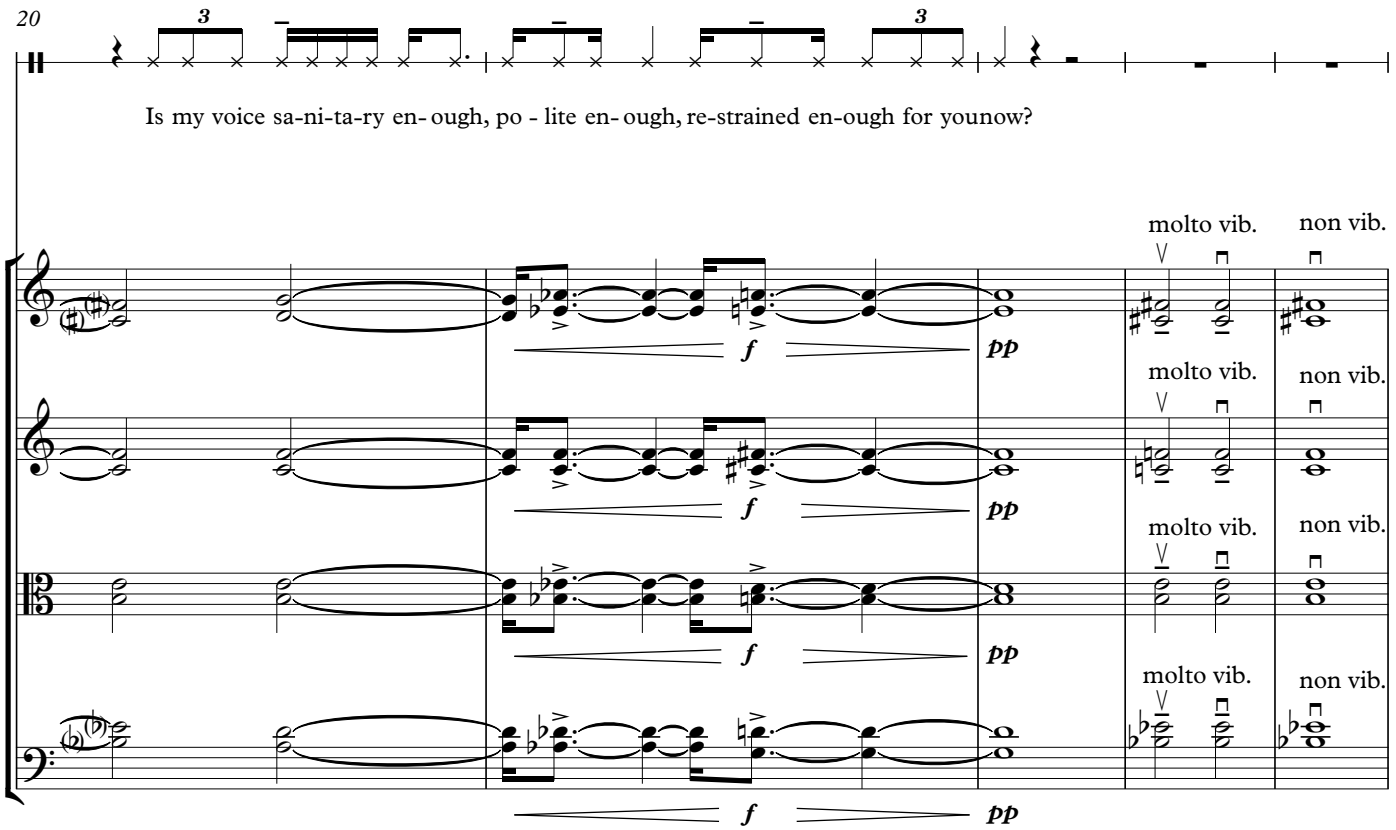


♩ = 110 - **Quartet loses all autonomy, becomes nervous and set in the background; vocalist now owns the space.**





molto rit. ♩ = 90

25

f no longer shouted, but still loud and forceful

loosen up a little

Are you comf 'ta- ble?

Are you sit-ting comf 'tab-ly now?

Quartet visibly and exaggeratedly leans into tempo change and vibrato.

Oddly pretty, still agitated, nervous

molto vib. non vib. molto vib.

mf *p* *pp*

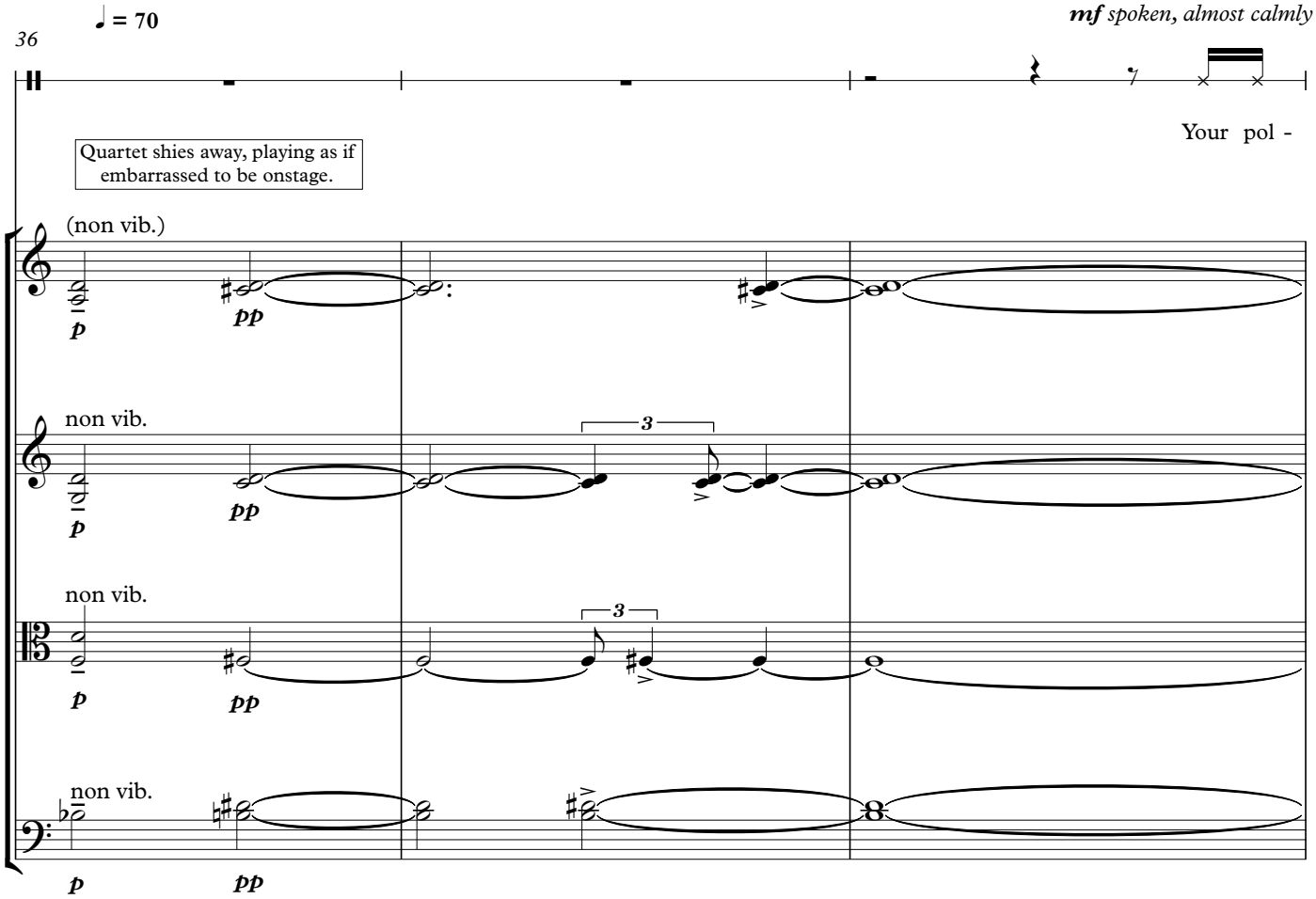
Vocalist begins to dance gently, lilting and slightly conducting for up to 2 bars.

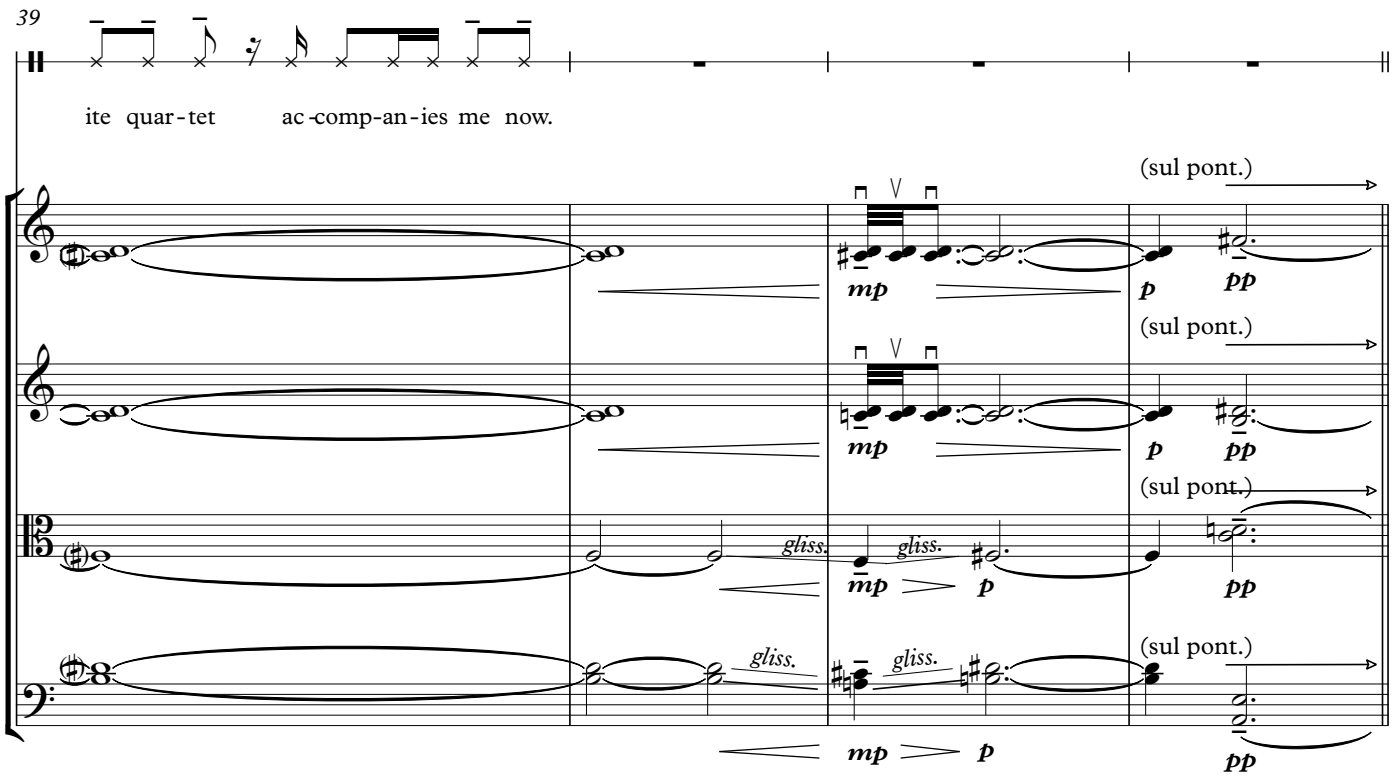
31

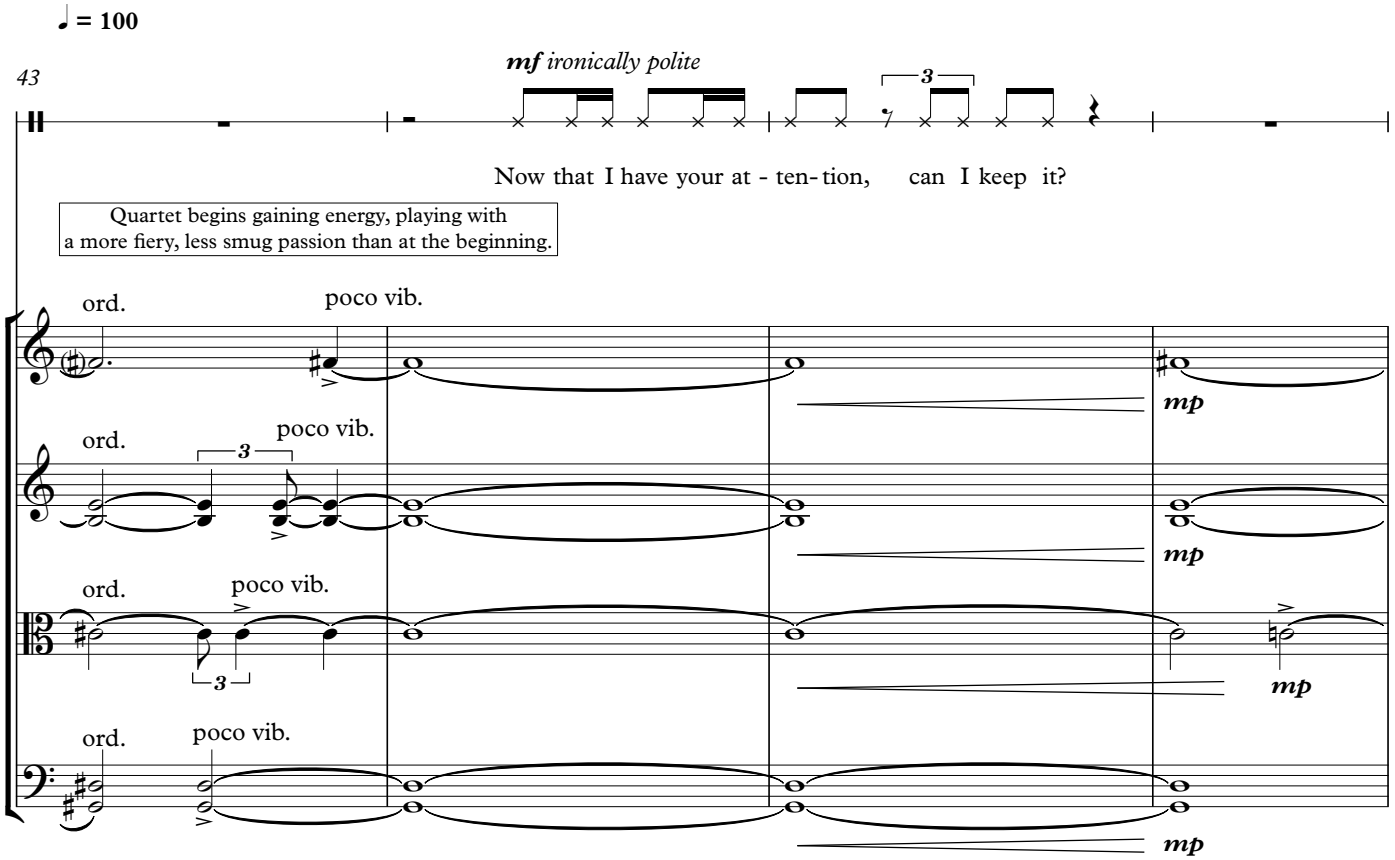
molto accel. molto rit.

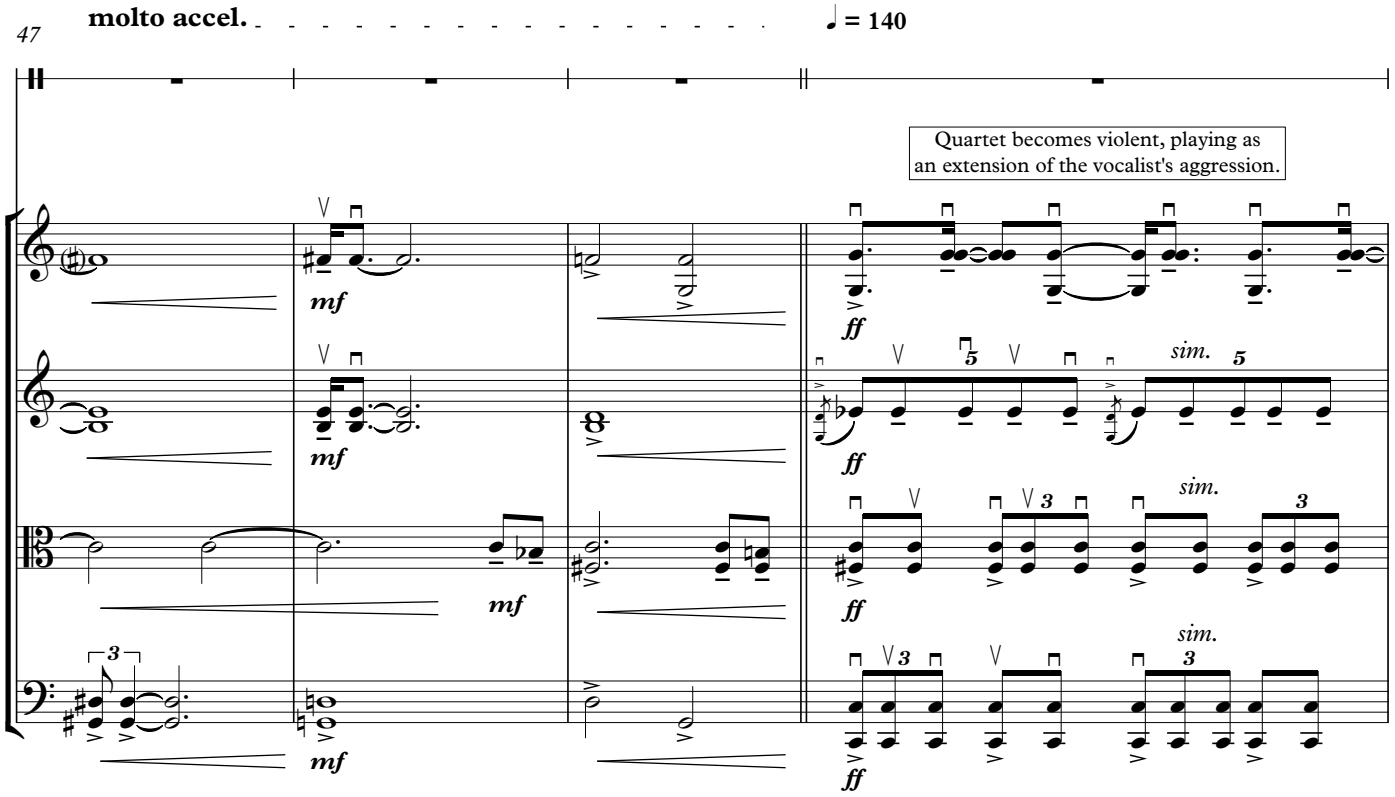
ord. non vib. ord. *molto* sul pont.

p *mf* *pp* *mf*


36
♩ = 70
mf spoken, almost calmly
Your pol -
Quartet shies away, playing as if embarrassed to be onstage.
(non vib.)
non vib.
non vib.
non vib.
p
pp
3

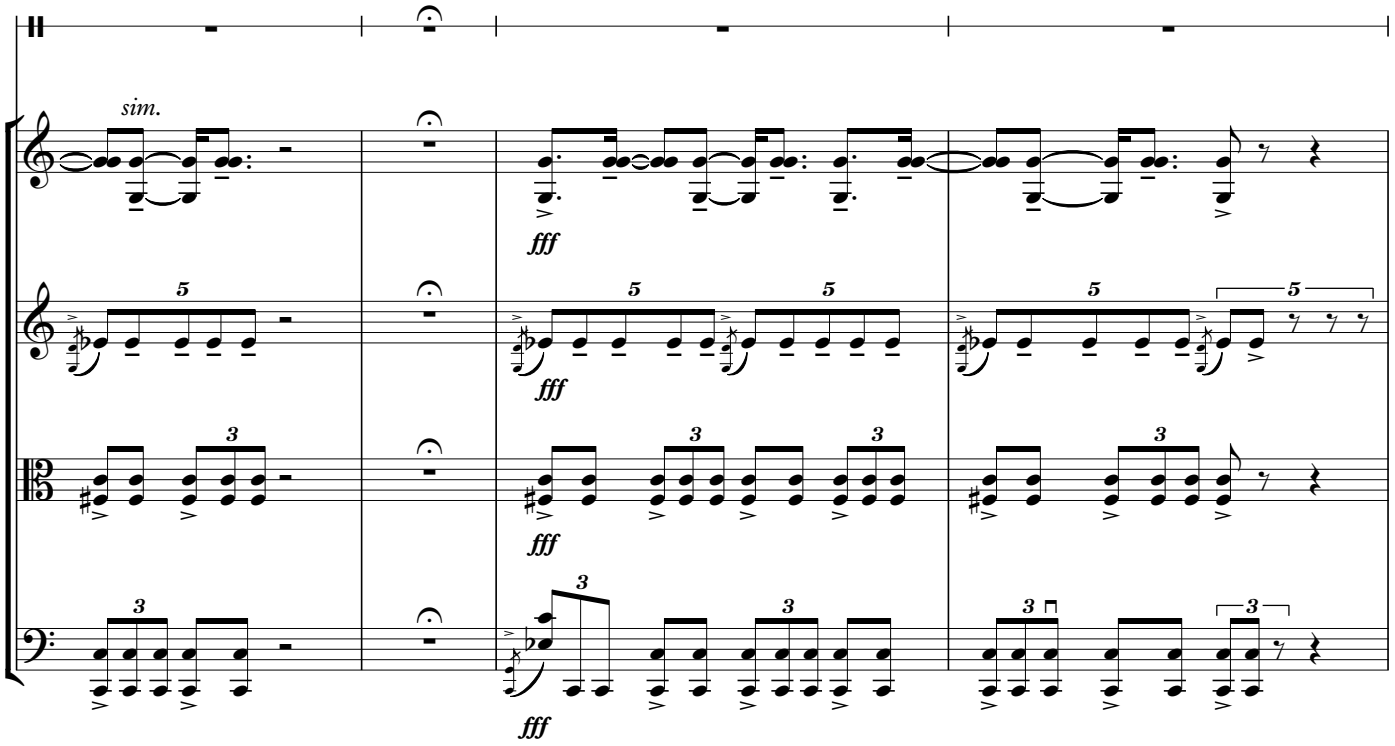

39
ite quar - tet ac - comp - an - ies me now.
(sul pont.)
(sul pont.)
(sul pont.)
(sul pont.)
gliss.
mp
p
pp


♩ = 100
43
mf ironically polite
Now that I have your at - ten- tion, can I keep it?
Quartet begins gaining energy, playing with a more fiery, less smug passion than at the beginning.
ord.
poco vib.
mp


47
molto accel.
♩ = 140
Quartet becomes violent, playing as an extension of the vocalist's aggression.
mf
ff
sim.

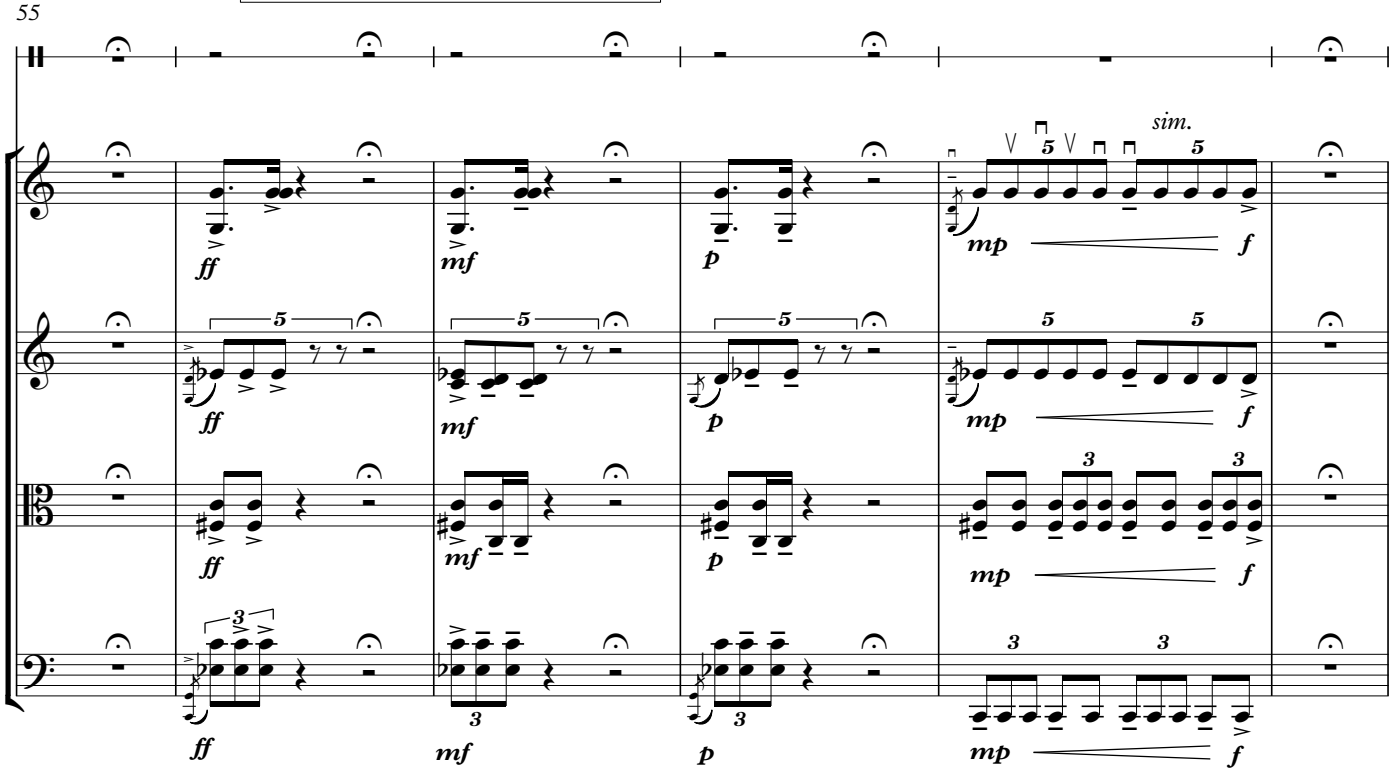
Vocalist fixes their gaze on individual audience members briefly before losing themselves in the sound, gazing upwards and smiling.

51

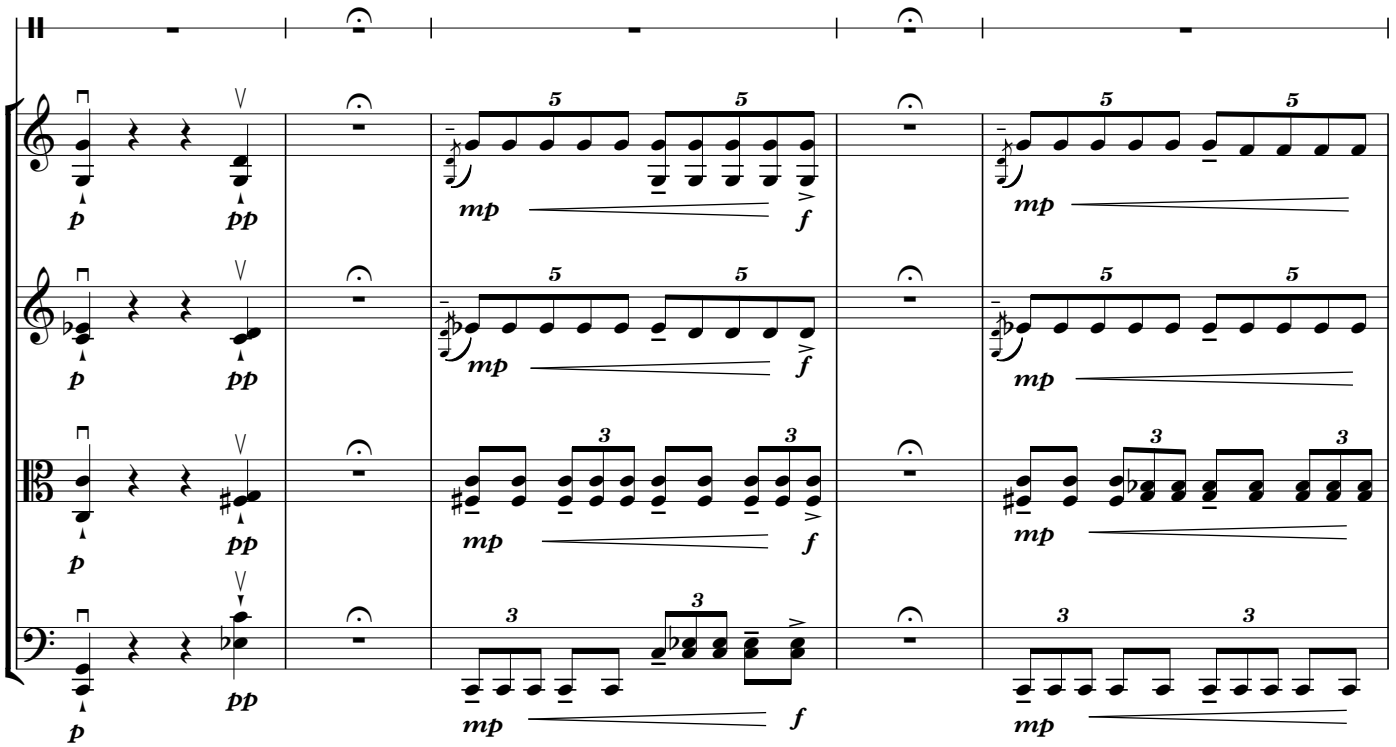


Vocalist may mirror the stabs and pauses of the quartet by moving their head or hands in time, almost like a weird dance.

55



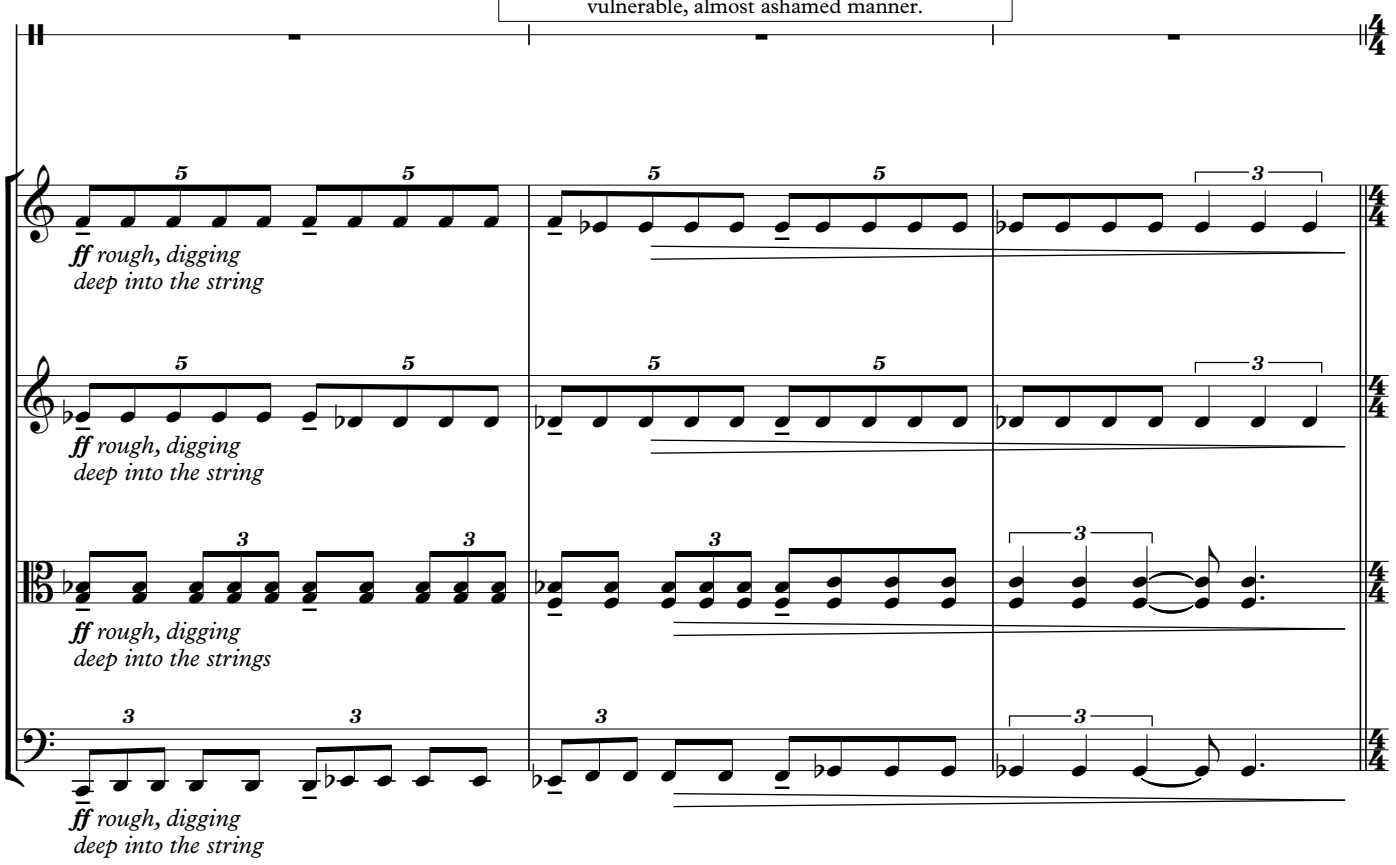
61

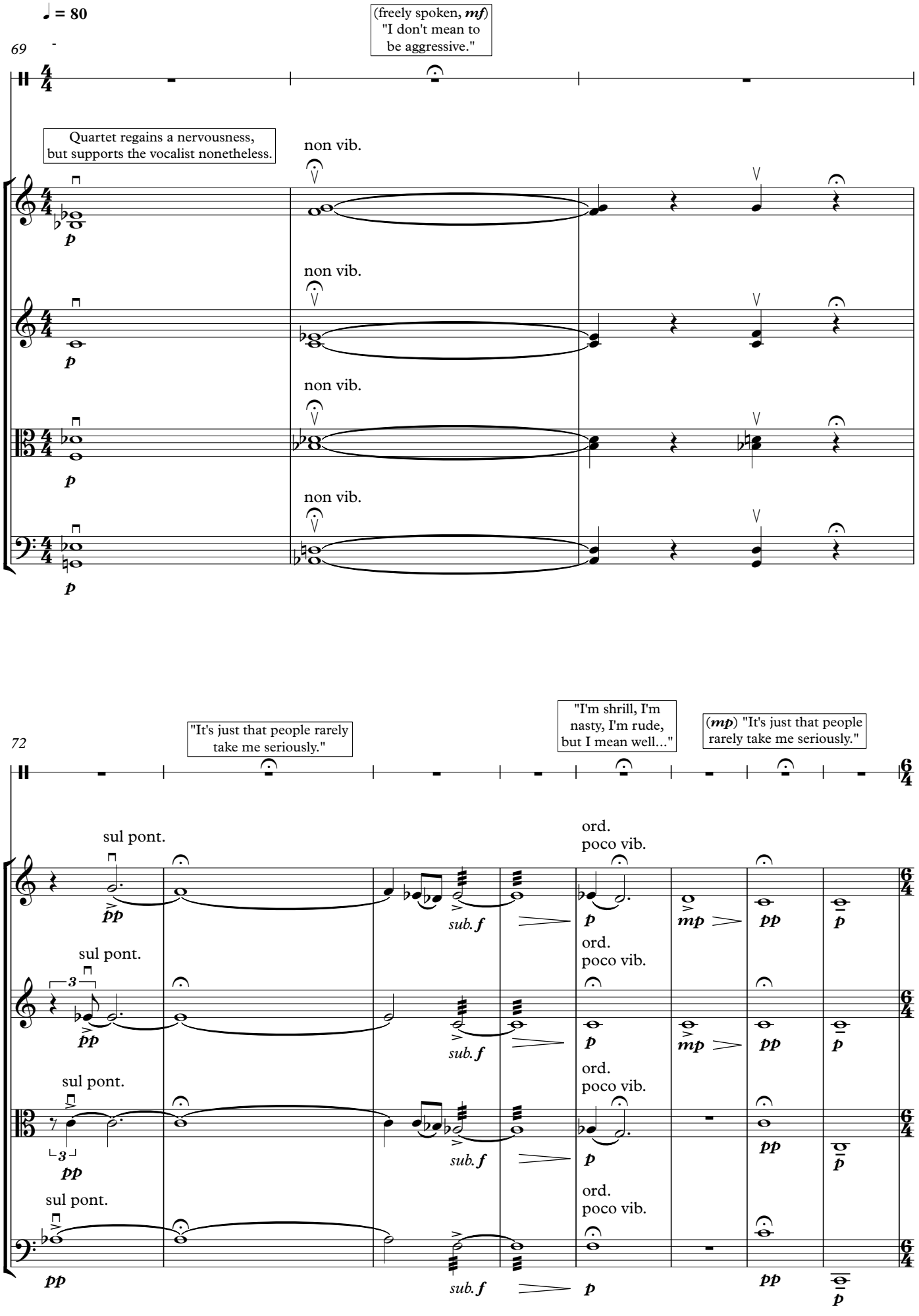


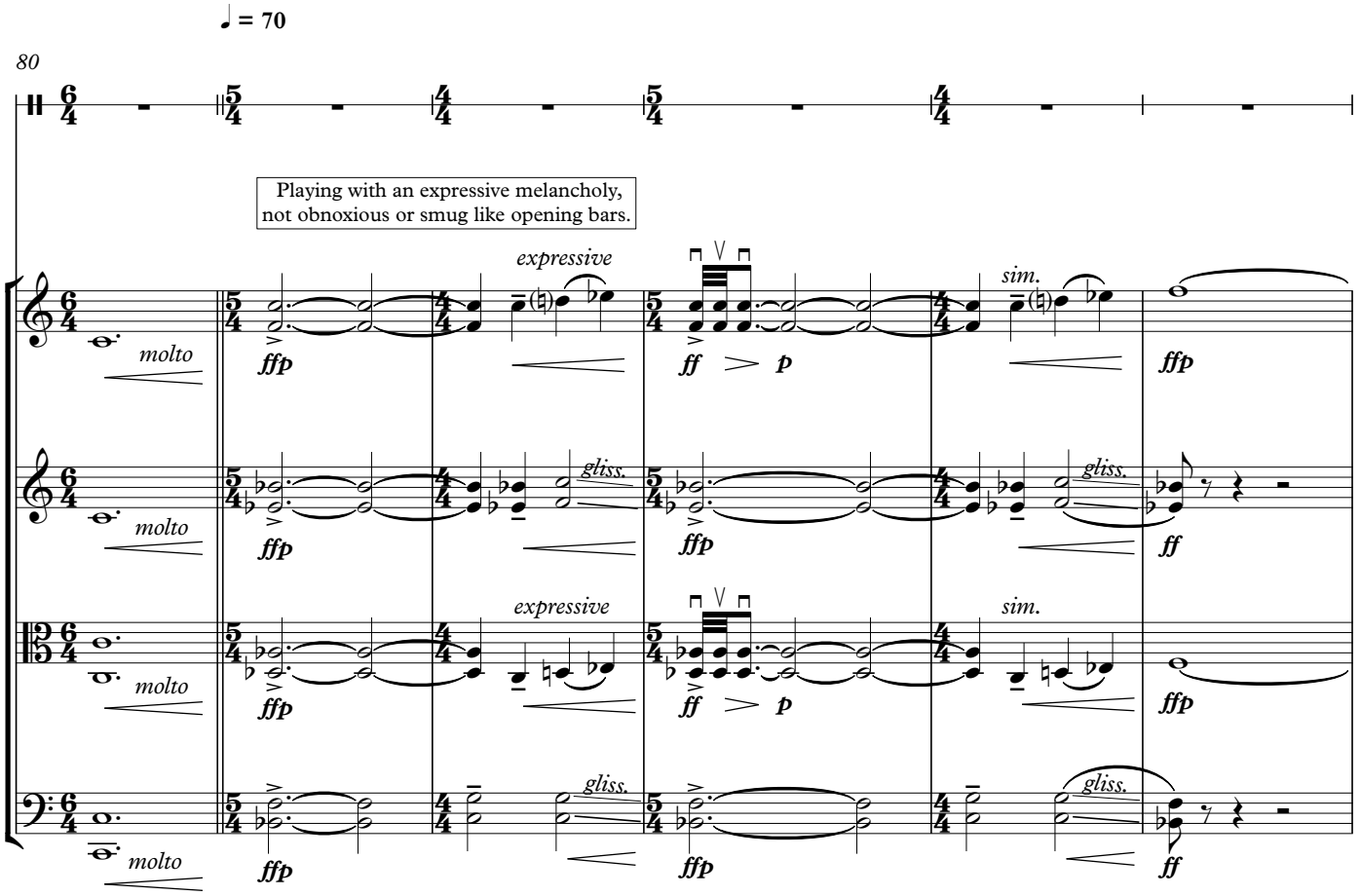
molto rit.

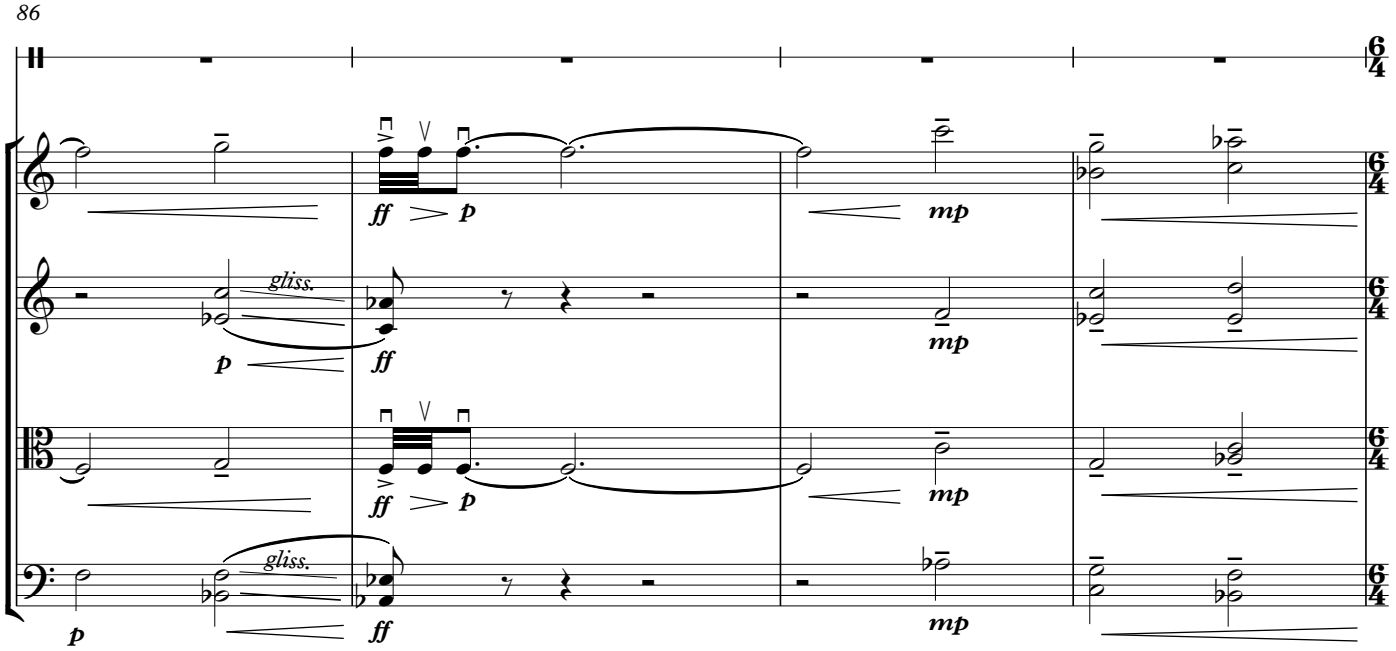
Vocalist returns their focus to their audience,
from here addressing them directly in a more subdued,
vulnerable, almost ashamed manner.

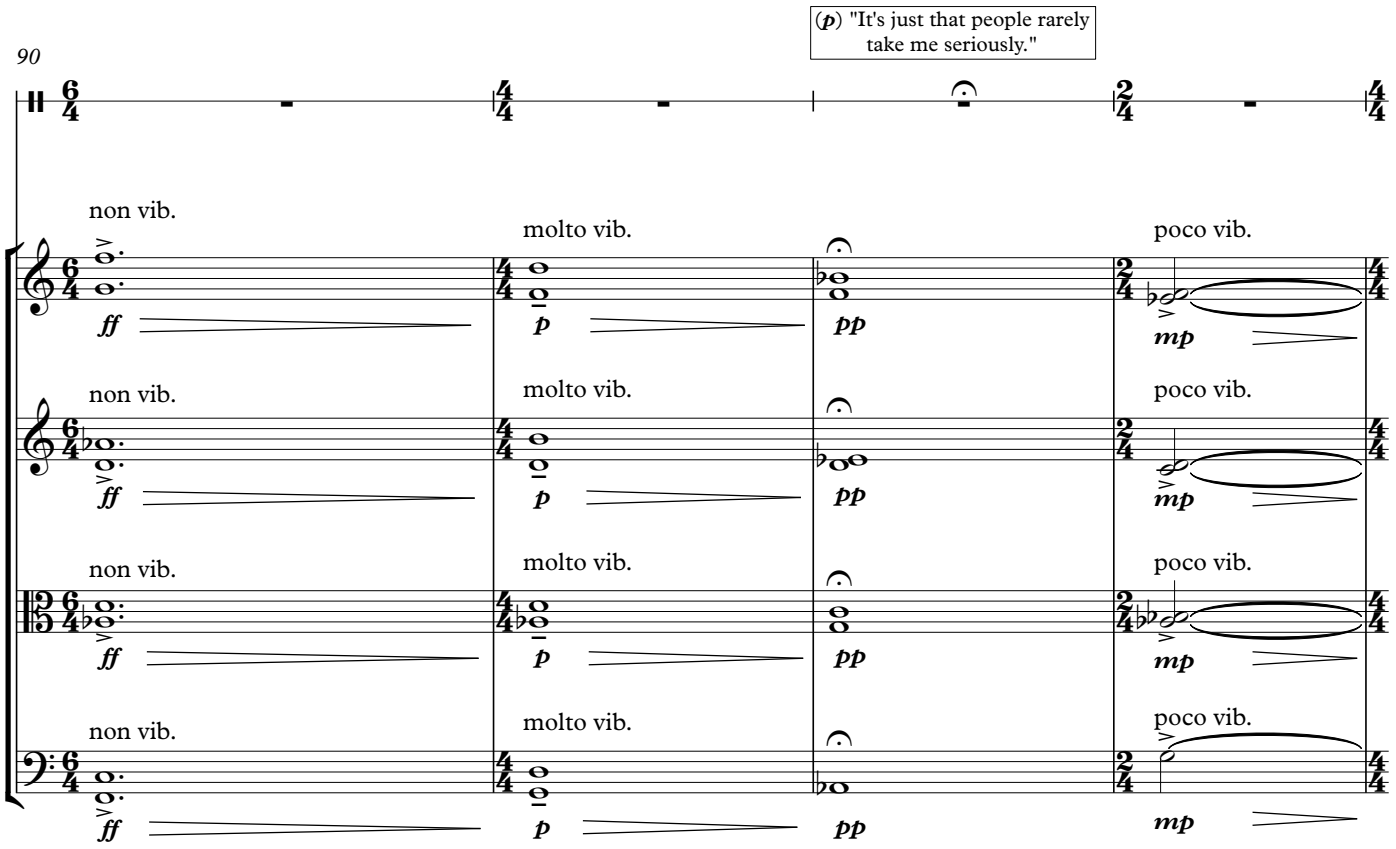
66

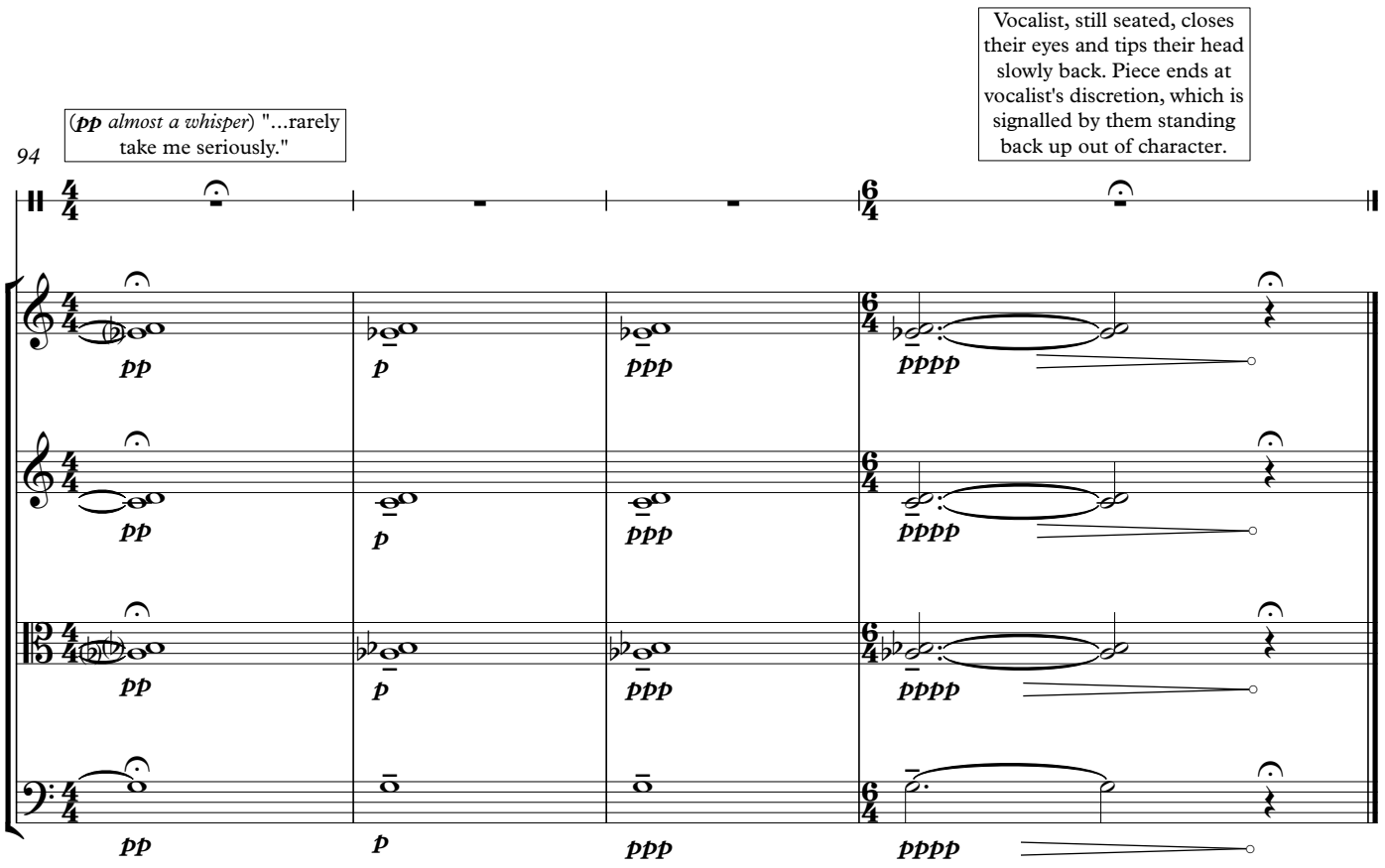



♩ = 80
69
(freely spoken, mf)
"I don't mean to be aggressive."
Quartet regains a nervousness, but supports the vocalist nonetheless.
non vib.
p
72
"It's just that people rarely take me seriously."
"I'm shrill, I'm nasty, I'm rude, but I mean well..."
(mp) "It's just that people rarely take me seriously."
sul pont.
pp
sub. f
ord.
poco vib.
mp


♩ = 70
80
Playing with an expressive melancholy,
not obnoxious or smug like opening bars.
molto
expressive
sim.
gliss.
ffp
ff
p
mp


86
gliss.
ff
p
mp


(p) "It's just that people rarely take me seriously."
90
non vib.
molto vib.
poco vib.
ff
p
pp
mp


(pp almost a whisper) "...rarely take me seriously."
Vocalist, still seated, closes their eyes and tips their head slowly back. Piece ends at vocalist's discretion, which is signalled by them standing back up out of character.
94
pp
p
ppp
pppp