OXFORD ORCHESTRAL SERIES

Edited by W. G. Whittaker

EIGHT SYMPHONIES

by

WILLIAM BOYCE

Transcribed and Edited for Strings and optional Wind by

CONSTANT LAMBERT

No III

SCORE

No 064

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

PREFACE.

WILLIAM BOYCE (1710—1779) does not at the present day enjoy the renown as an instrumental composer that is rightly his as a choral composer, but the neglect into which his instrumental works have fallen is unaccountable for they rank among the finest compositions of their time, not only in England but in Europe. The 8 Symphonies (a word which Boyce uses to describe what would nowadays be considered a concerto grosso) are not only of great technical and historical interest but have a vigour and charm that are rarely found together. One can find no better comment on these works than Burney's statement that 'there is an original and sterling merit in his productions that gives to all his works a peculiar stamp and character of his own for strength, clearness, and facility, without any mixture of styles.' It is hard to assign an exact date to the symphonies. The British Museum catalogue suggests 1750 and Fétis refers to them as among his last works to be published and gives the date 1765. If this is correct, the description "Opera Seconda" which appears on the title page can only be explained by the possibility that they were published many years after their composition (which seems unlikely). There is little doubt, though, that these symphonies were written when the composer had completely lost his hearing.

The original scoring is for strings (with figured bass) and oboes, with the occasional use of bassoon, horns, and trumpets. As the use of the piano with strings is in no way comparable to the peculiar use of the harpsichord in the 18th century orchestra, I have decided to leave out the continuo and, in the very few places where the figuration demands harmonies not already present, I have introduced these into the string parts, taking care in no way to disturb the general style and texture. The wind parts have been left exactly as Boyce wrote them,* but they have been cued in so that it is possible to perform the symphonies on strings alone, and indeed many movements would, in my opinion, gain rather than lose by such a performance. The only movement not completely cued in is the 1st movement of no. 5 which would clearly be impossible of performance without trumpets. For the sake of small orchestras which possess no violas or in which that line is numerically weak, a third violin part is issued. The 8va indications in the score show where alterations are made on account of pitch, but otherwise the part is a replica of the viola line.

The phrasing and nuances are the editor's and may be changed at discretion. Exact tempi are left to the conductor but it is suggested that the minuets (which are clearly more in the nature of a scherzo than of a stately dance) should be taken at a rather faster tempo than is usual with this type of movement.

* The oboe parts in the 1st movement of no. 7 have been simplified.

C. L.

SYMPHONY III

I

WILLIAM BOYCE
Transcribed and edited by
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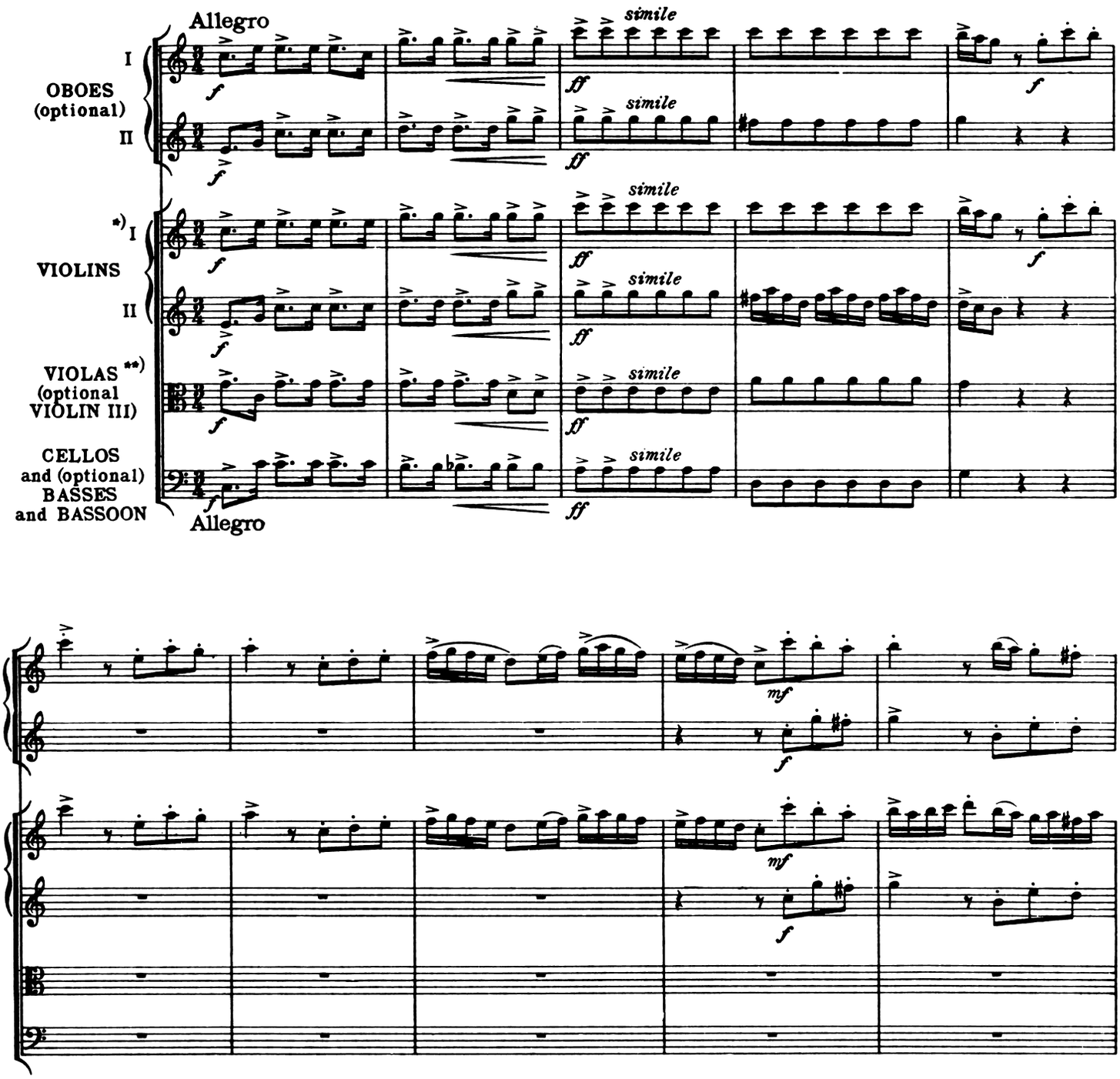

*) When there are no Oboes the small notes should be played by half the Violins
**) The Viola part may be played or supplemented by a third set of Violins (playing the small notes when the Viola part is too low)

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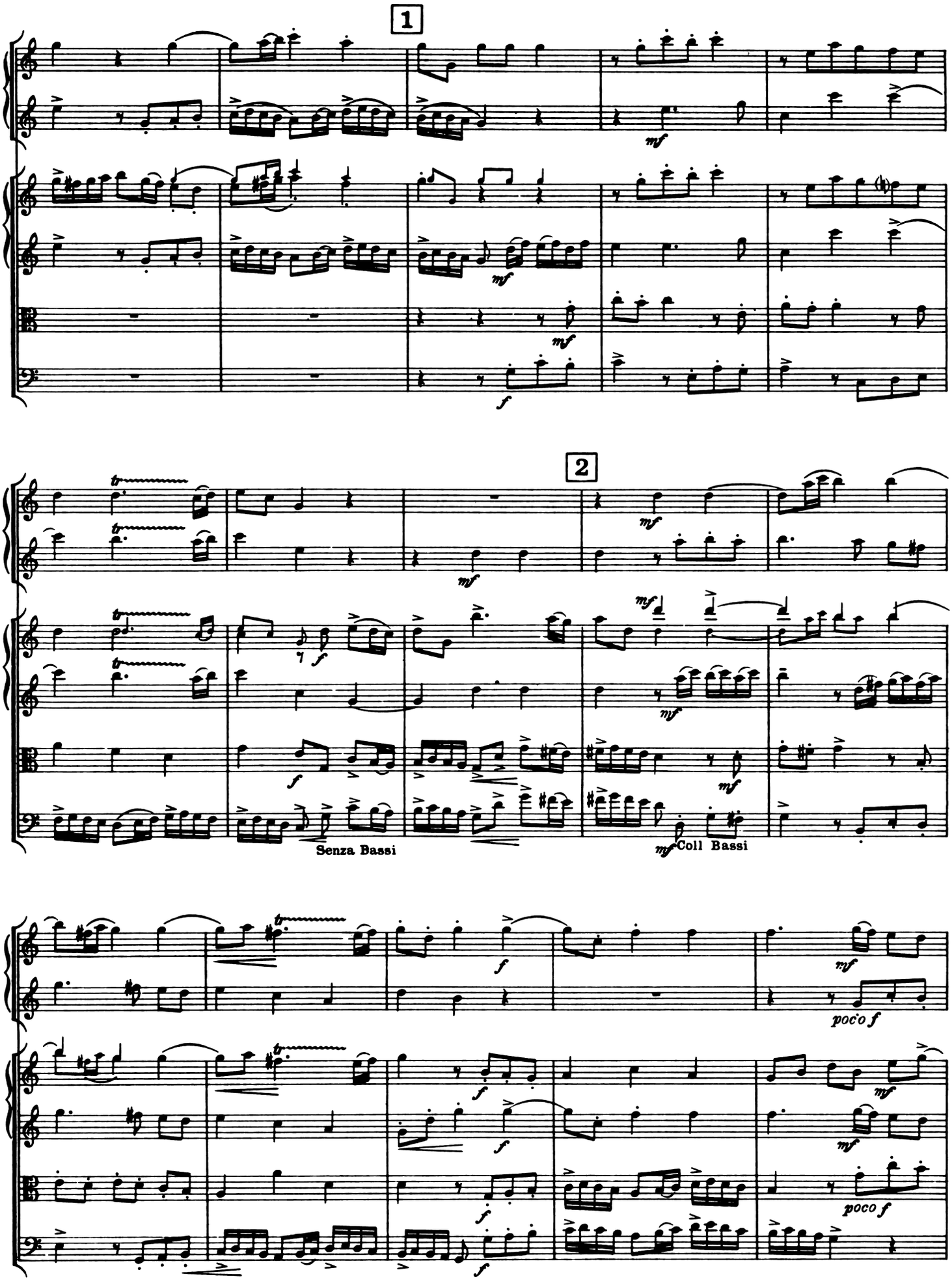
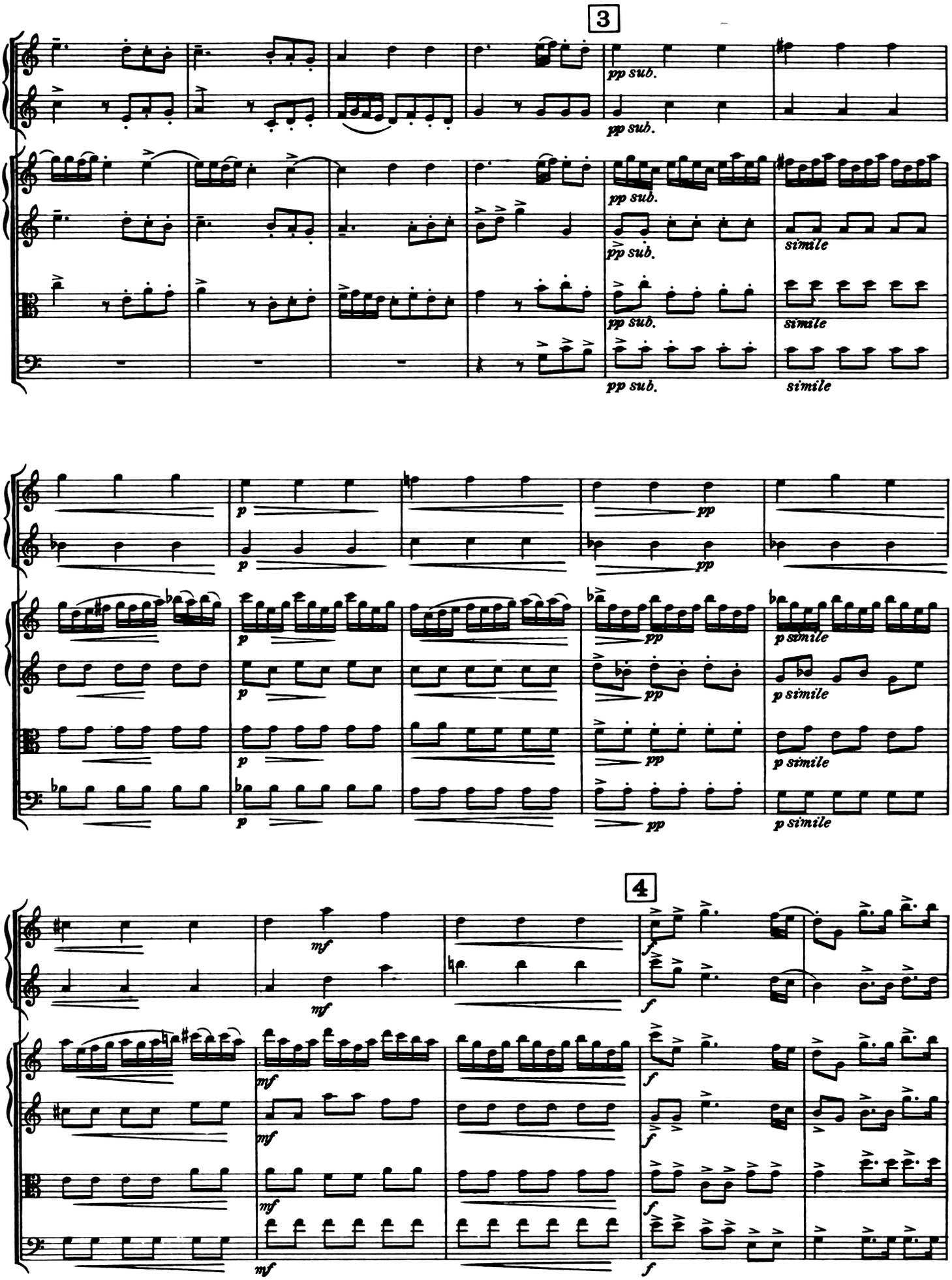
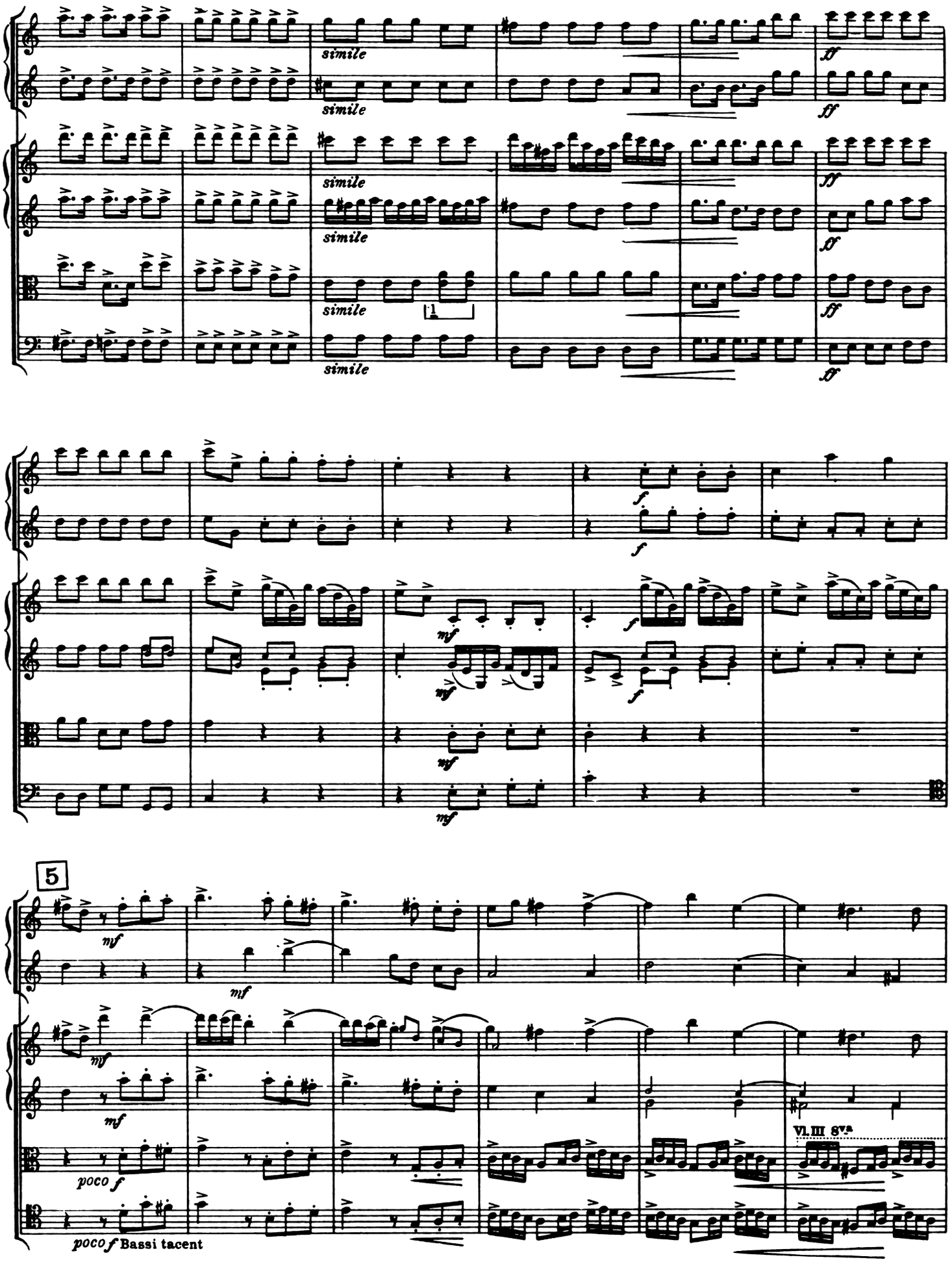
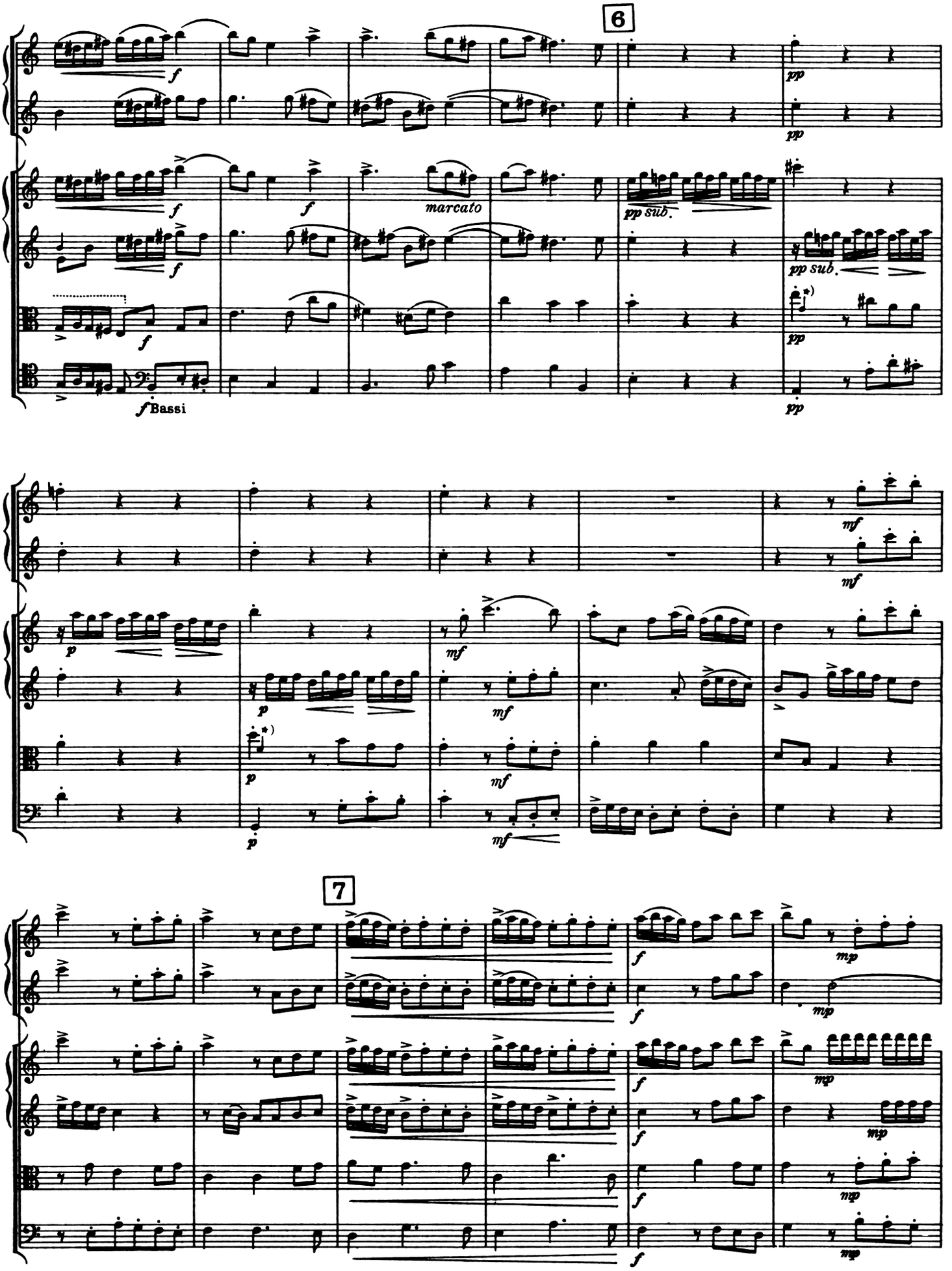
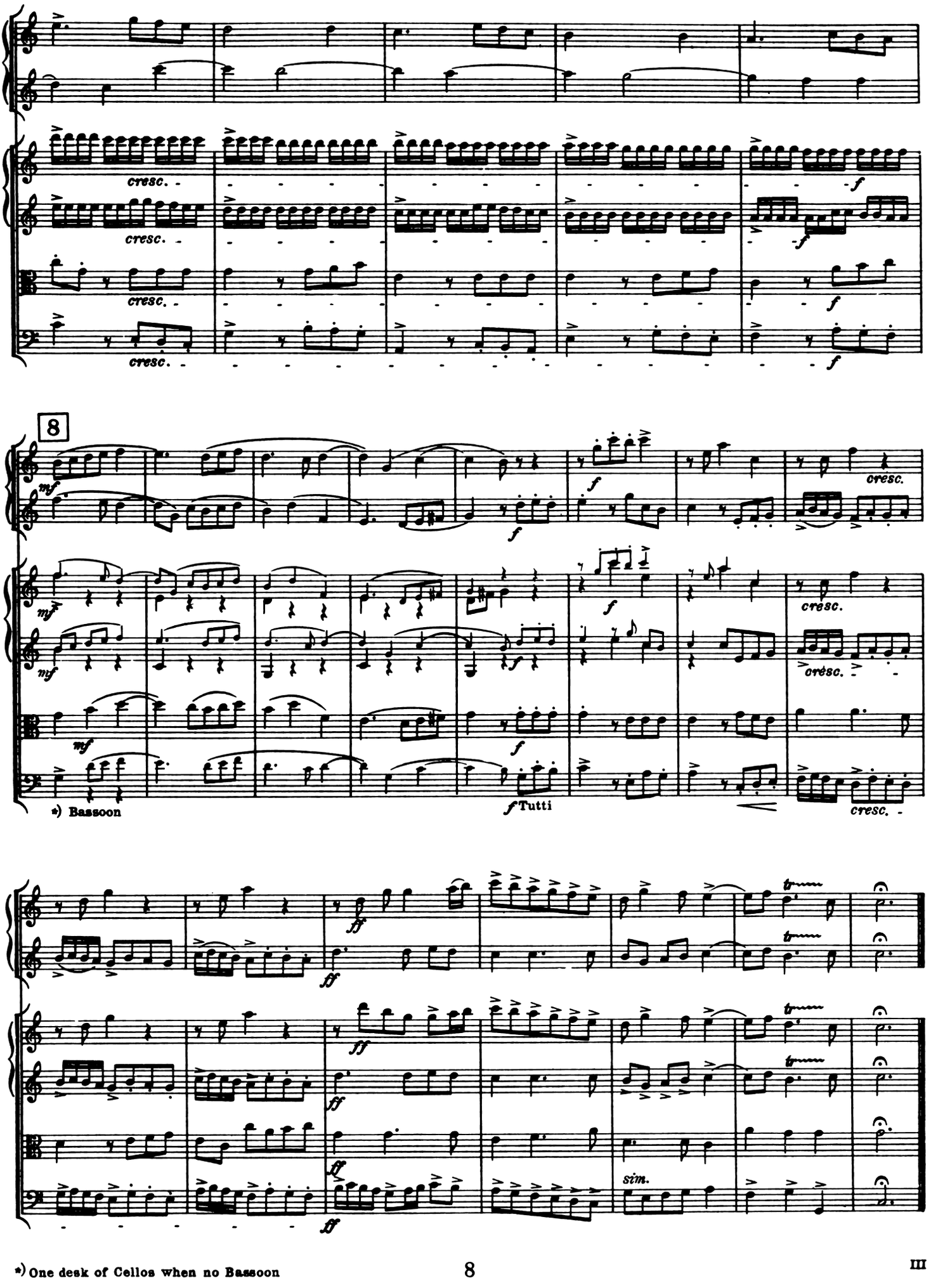

1
2
Senza Bassi
Coll Bassi
poco f
poco f


3
pp sub.
simile
p
pp
p simile
4
mf
f



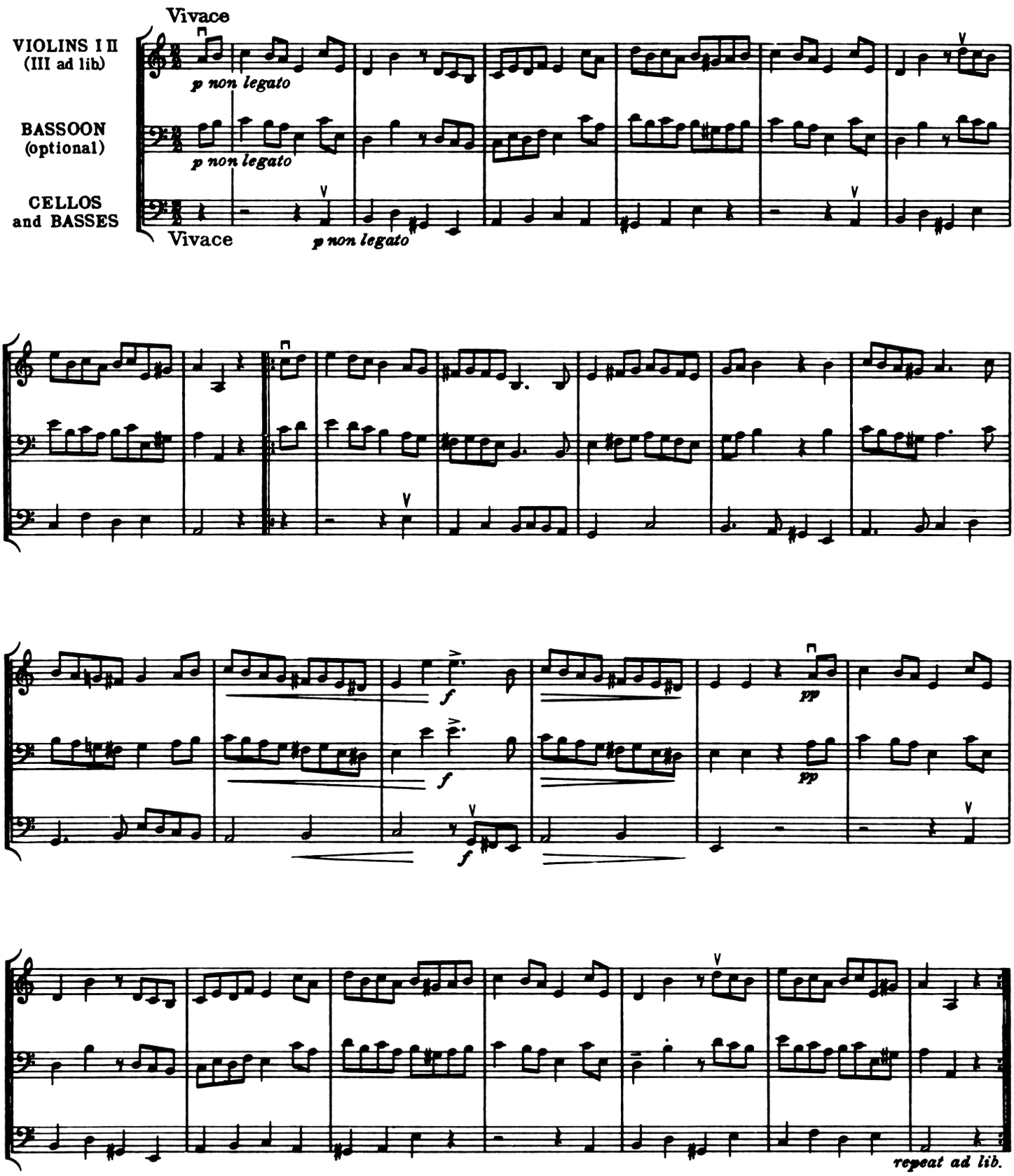
1 No E in orig.


6
7
marcato
pp sub.
Bassi
*)Div. when no Oboes



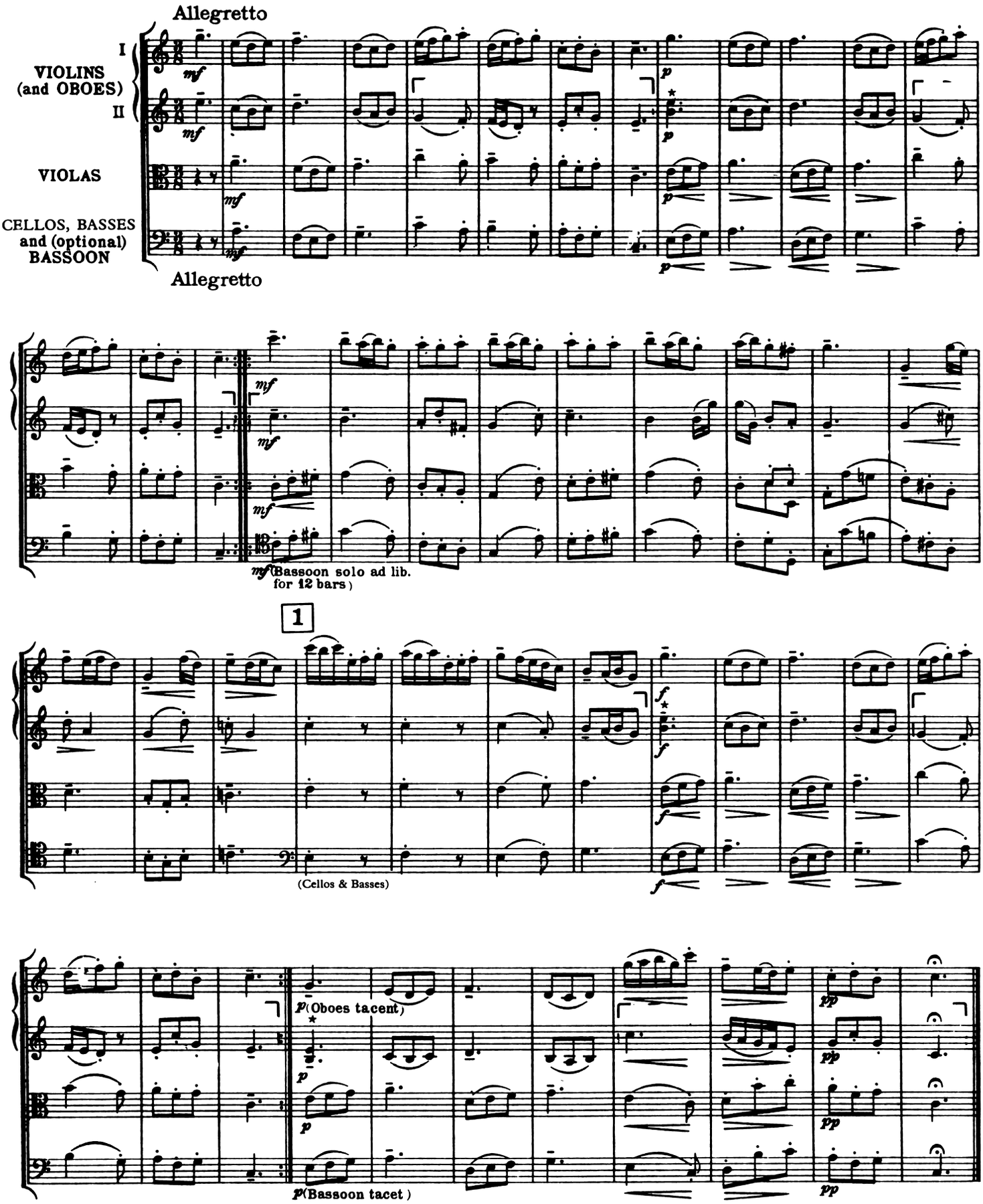
*) One desk of Cellos when no Bassoon

II


Vivace
VIOLINS I II
(III ad lib)
p non legato
BASSOON
(optional)
p non legato
CELLOS
and BASSES
Vivace
p non legato
f
f
pp
pp
repeat ad lib.

III

MENUETTO



Note: In Violin (Oboe) II the passages between ⌜ ⌝ have been provided by the Editor. At the three places marked * Boyce wrote E only and the added B notes have been included to retain the continuo harmony.

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