Theme with Academic Variations

Traditional

arranged by
Jeffrey S. Bishop

1 Full Score

8 Violin I

8 Violin II

3 Violin III (Viola Sub.)

5 Viola

5 Cello

5 Bass

Extra Part - P3035321

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Program Notes

This piece is designed to showcase the "behind the scenes" of music education and performance. It uniquely demonstrates the amount of work and precision needed to perform a piece of music as perfectly as possible. Written for string orchestra with narrator, Jeffrey has taken the "Twinkle" theme and given it an academic once-over. After introducing the theme, the orchestra then performs "variations" of it: a version with 85% of the notes correct; 93% correct; 100% but with poor musicianship; and finally "as perfect as possible." It's a real eye-opener for parents, community members, and administrators. Give your students an authentic evaluation with this academically stringent (and sometimes hilarious) piece!

About the Composer

Jeffrey S. Bishop is currently the director of orchestras and division coordinator of fine arts at Shawnee Mission Northwest High School in Shawnee Mission, Kansas, a suburb of Kansas City. Jeffrey has presented sessions at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic and the American String Teachers Association National Convention. He is in demand as a clinician, conductor, and composer across the country. He has served as on-line mentor for the Music Educators National Conference Online Orchestra Forum. His articles have appeared in the first three volumes of the GIA Publication "Teaching Orchestra through Performance," the Instrumentalist magazine, and Orchestra News. Orchestras from Shawnee Mission Northwest have consistently earned the highest ratings at KSHSAA State Festivals and regional competitions across the country and have appeared at the Kansas Music Educators Association In-Service Workshop and the ASTA National Orchestra Festival.

Jeffrey studied composition with Dr. Walter A. Mays, Distinguished Professor of Music at the Wichita State University School of Music. An accomplished conductor, Bishop earned his M.M. in Orchestral Conducting from WSU in 1995. He graduated with his B.S. in Music Education from Northwest Missouri State University in 1993.

Jeffrey's compositions for string orchestra, full orchestra, concert band, and choir have been commissioned and performed in the United States, Mexico, and throughout Europe. The recipient of the 1997 National School Orchestra Association Composition Contest Award with his "Symphony for Strings No. 1," Bishop has nearly one hundred pieces published by the Neil A. Kjos Music Company, Wingert-Jones Music, and C-Alan Publications. Jeffrey completes between three and five commissions every year for a divergent range of ensembles, from college/university/civic orchestras to middle school bands and orchestras. Samples of his music can be found online at his YouTube Channel, www.youtube.com/jeffreysbishop. For more information on how to commission a piece for your ensemble, please visit www.jeffreysbishop.com.

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Traditional

Arranged by Jeffrey S. Bishop (ASCAP)

These variations are designed to give your audience the perfect chance to understand what it means to "earn an A" in orchestra class. Too often advocacy efforts focus on the individual advantages that students get from studying music. But what about the audience? Don't they deserve a chance to listen to the very best performance? Through the performance of this work, your audience will experience first-hand what it means for students to perform to their highest ability.

It is suggested that the part of Narrator be given to a principal, superintendent, or other community member that would also benefit from a little music education advocacy. The narration is a guideline and may be altered to fit the needs of your specific situation. And above all else, have fun!

Narration 1: The traditional folk song "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" is as ubiquitous to strings class as reading, writing, and arithmetic are to the "regular classroom." However, there is a great deal of difference in the orchestra classroom, as to HOW the learning takes place and the method of assessment. This piece is designed to show you, our audience, that not only should students in orchestra class earn an "A," in fact, they must earn an A. But first, here's our theme.

Narration 2: From that simple little theme, we get a much larger, orchestrated version that requires all members of the orchestra to not only read each note correctly, but also each indication written above, below, and around the notes. Only by playing everything perfectly do we get a pleasant listening experience.

Narration 3: Unlike other classes, orchestra requires students to perform at their very best. In math, English, science, or social studies, if one student earns a B or C, it doesn't affect the student who has earned an A. Not so in music. Listen now as the orchestra performs the theme, but this time with 85% accuracy.

Narration 4: That is a B in any other class! But surely, an "A" performance will sound significantly better, don't you think? Let's take away half of those mistakes and ask the orchestra to perform at a 93% accuracy rate. A 93% is an "A" in the toughest of academic settings, so I think it will be much better, don't you?

Narration 5: That's better, but would we still call that an "A" performance? Well, you would in most other classes, but not here, not on stage in performance. So, what if we DID play all of the right notes? That makes for an "A" performance, correct? Surely playing all of the correct notes will make for a satisfying listening experience.

Narration 6: As you can tell, playing the right notes isn't enough to create a perfect performance. Only when all members of the orchestra play to the best of their abilities can we create not only an "A" performance, but the most perfect performance possible. We don't expect every student to be perfect in every class, but in orchestra and other music classes, it's a requirement. And it's that pursuit of perfection that makes the end result that much more enjoyable! So, let's put it all together and hear not only an "A" but as perfect an "A" as possible!

At the end: We hope this performance has helped you understand the precision and expression needed for a successful musical performance. It not only benefits students as individual musicians, but also you, our audience. We appreciate your involvement in this very important academic endeavor, and we look forward to your continued support of music in our school.

Duration: ca. 7:15

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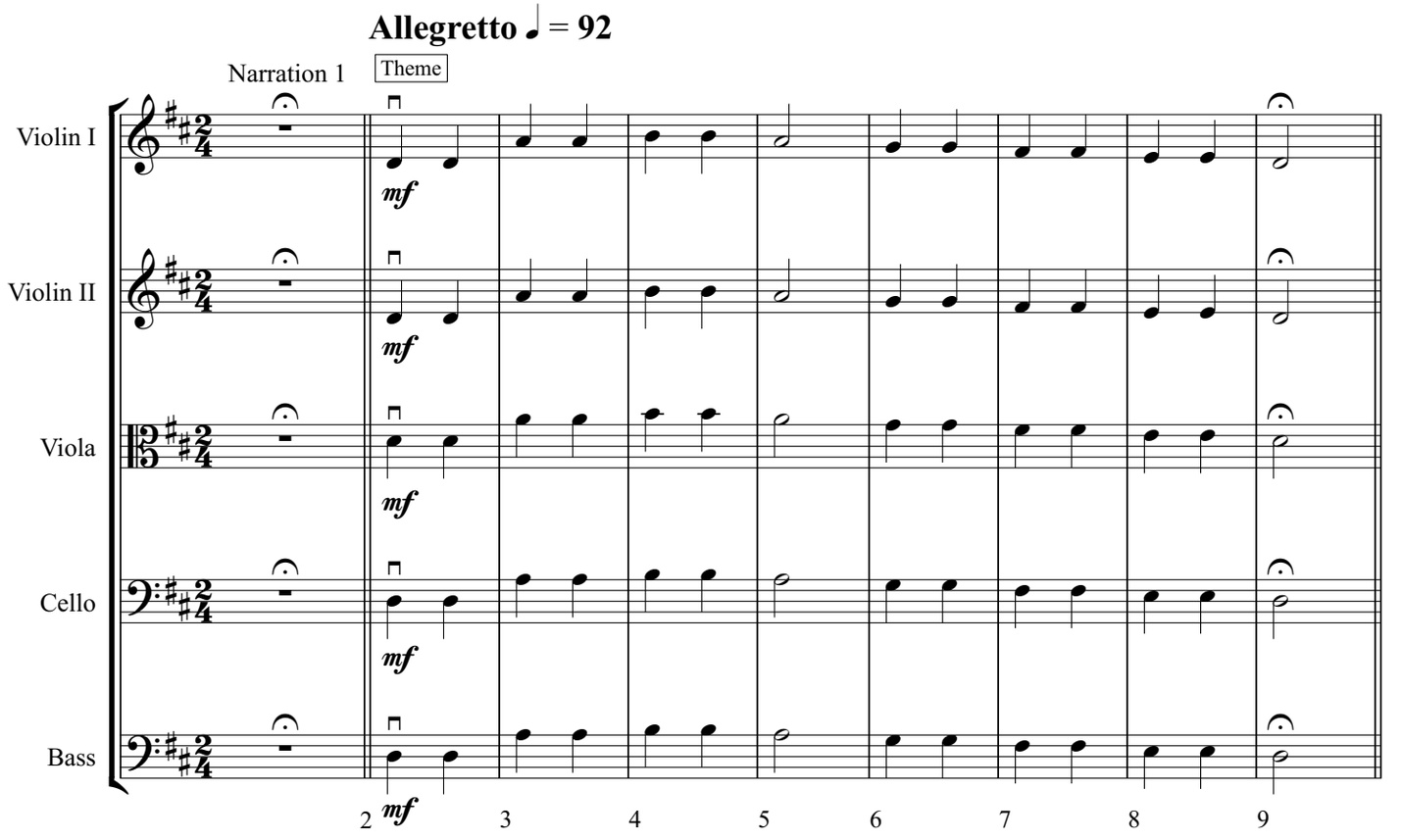

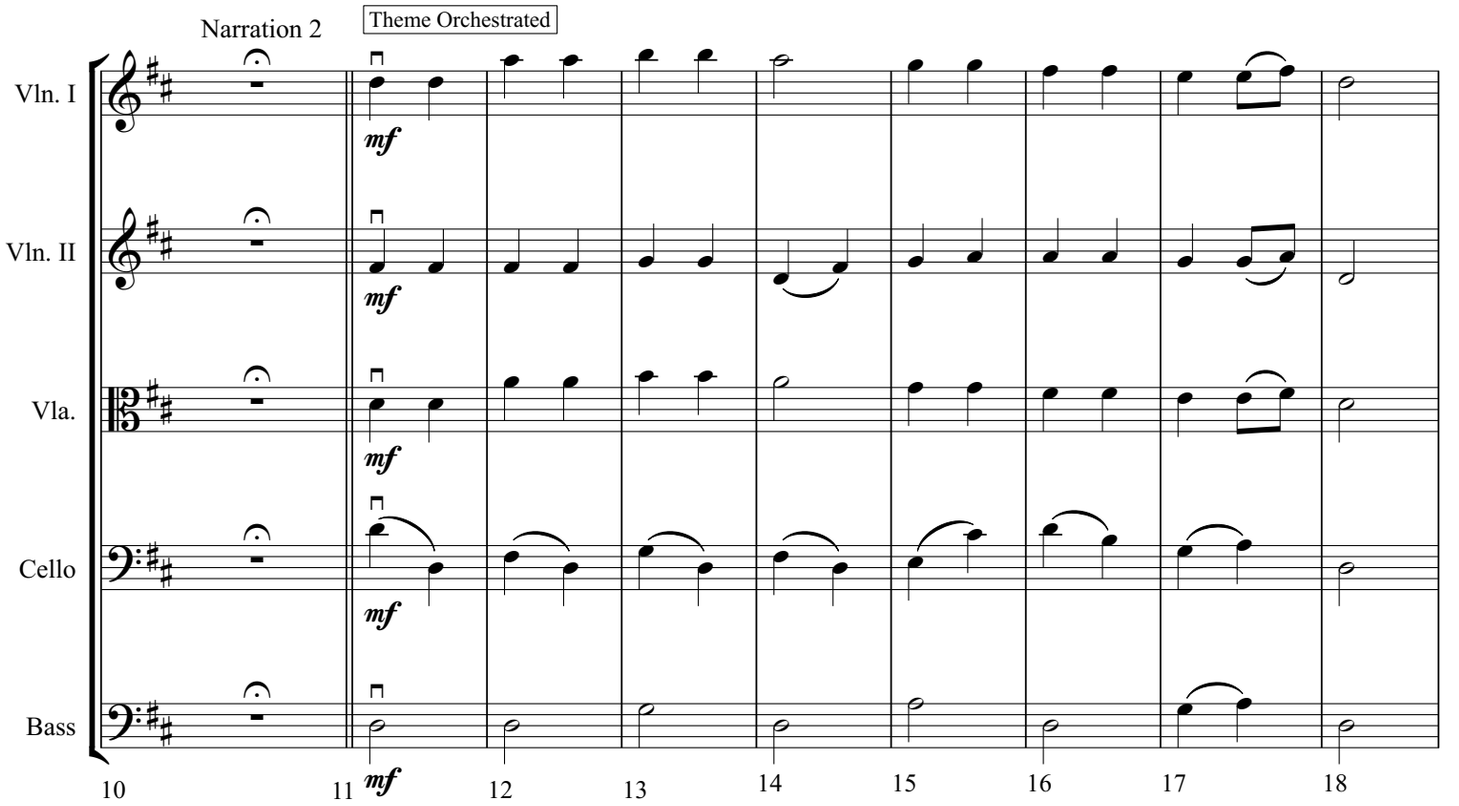

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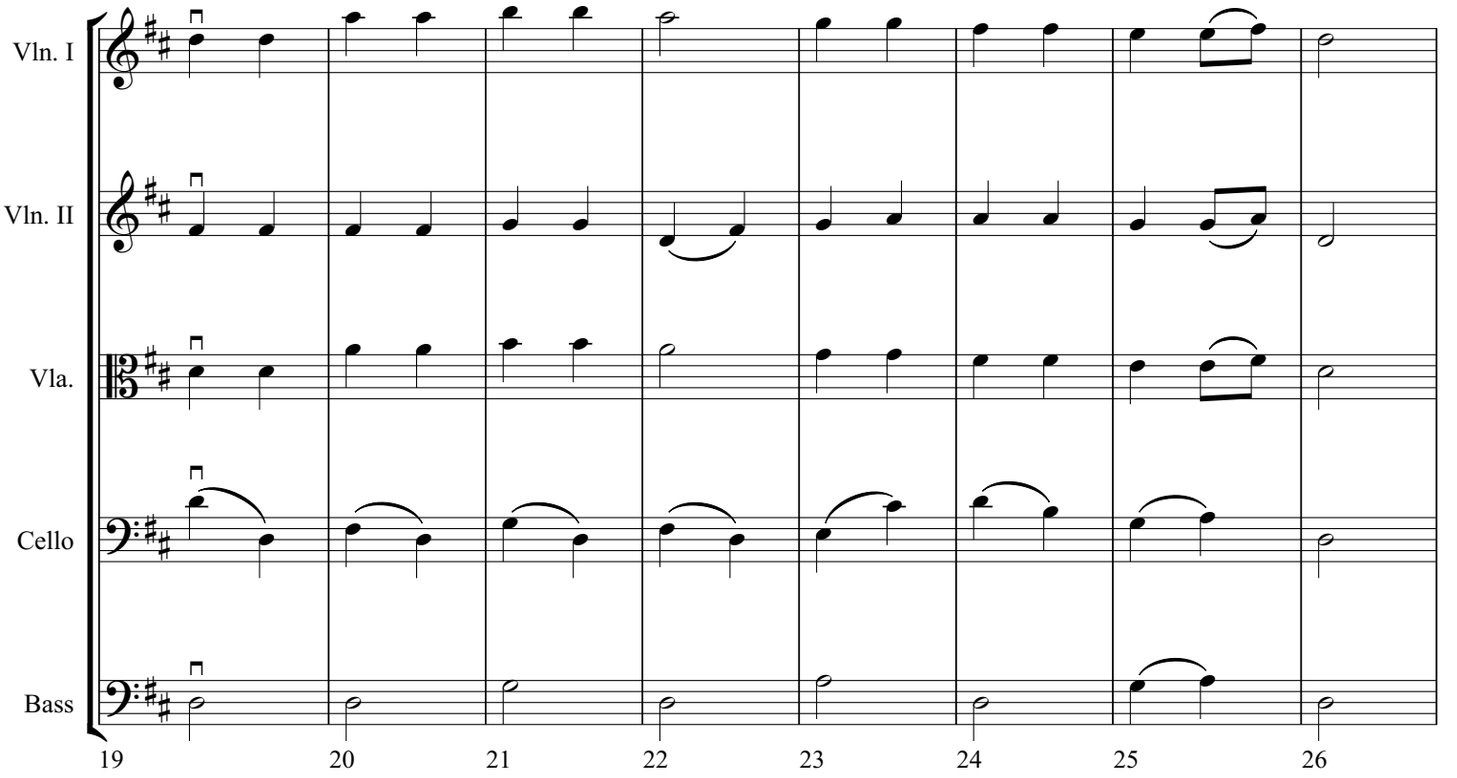
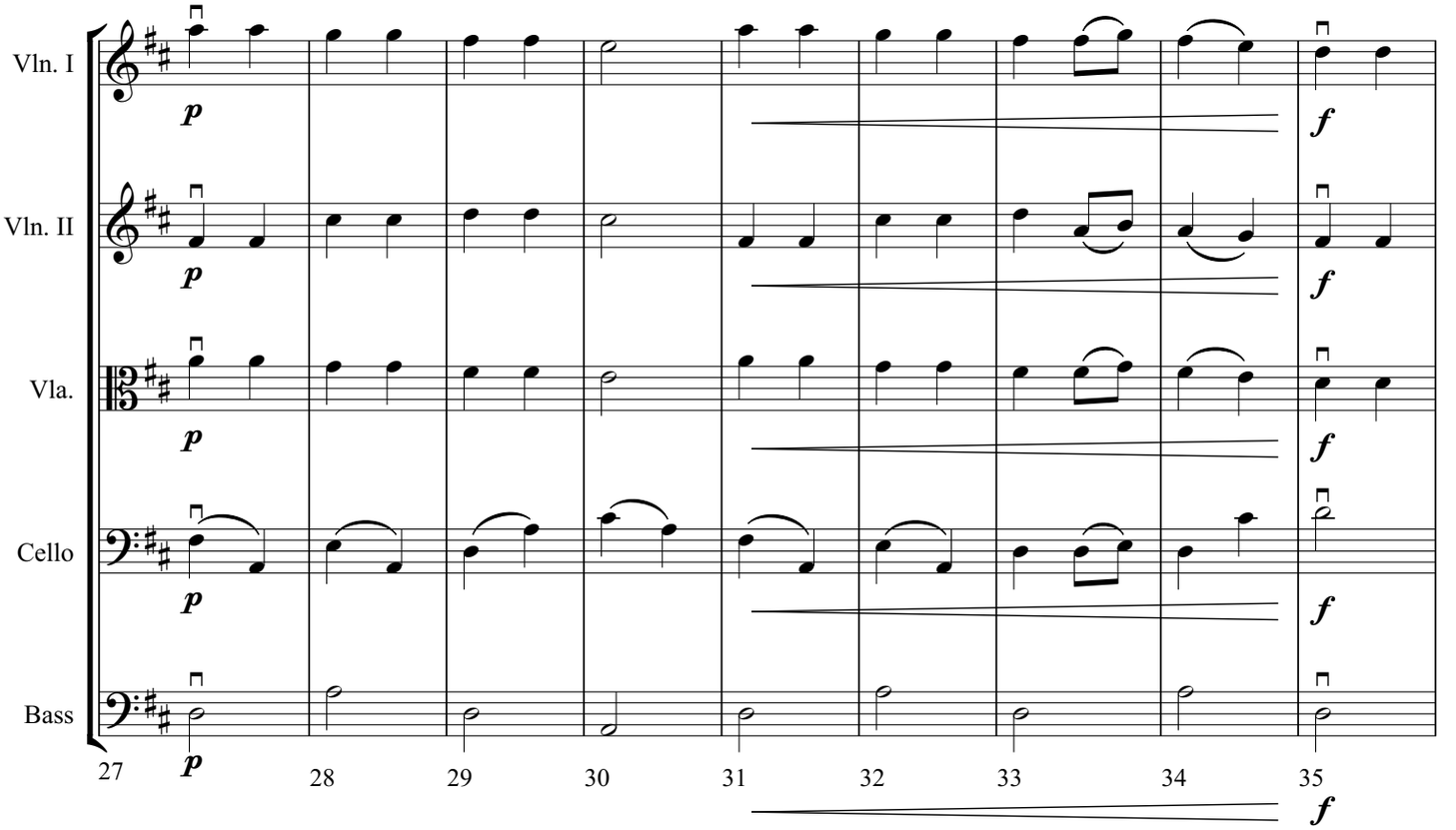
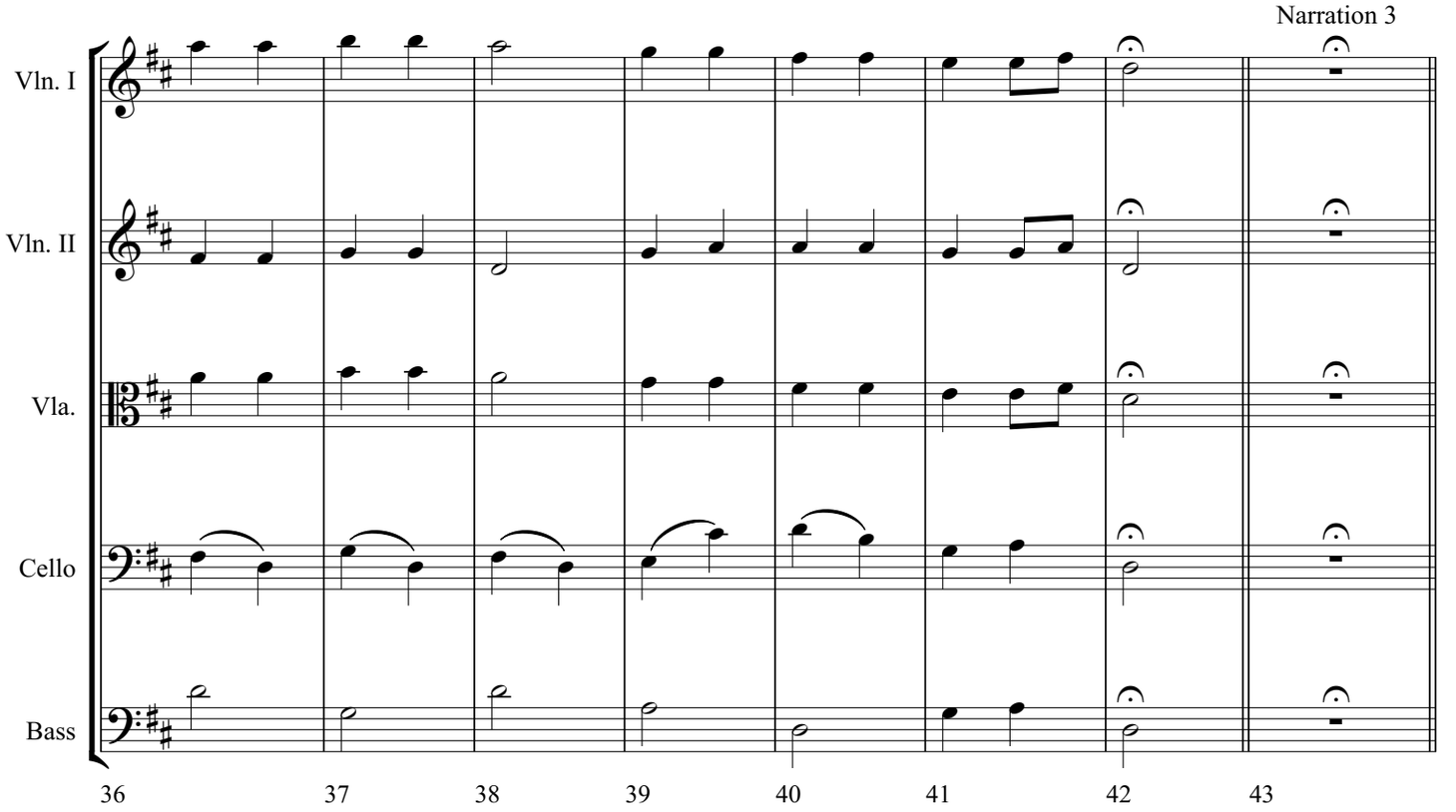
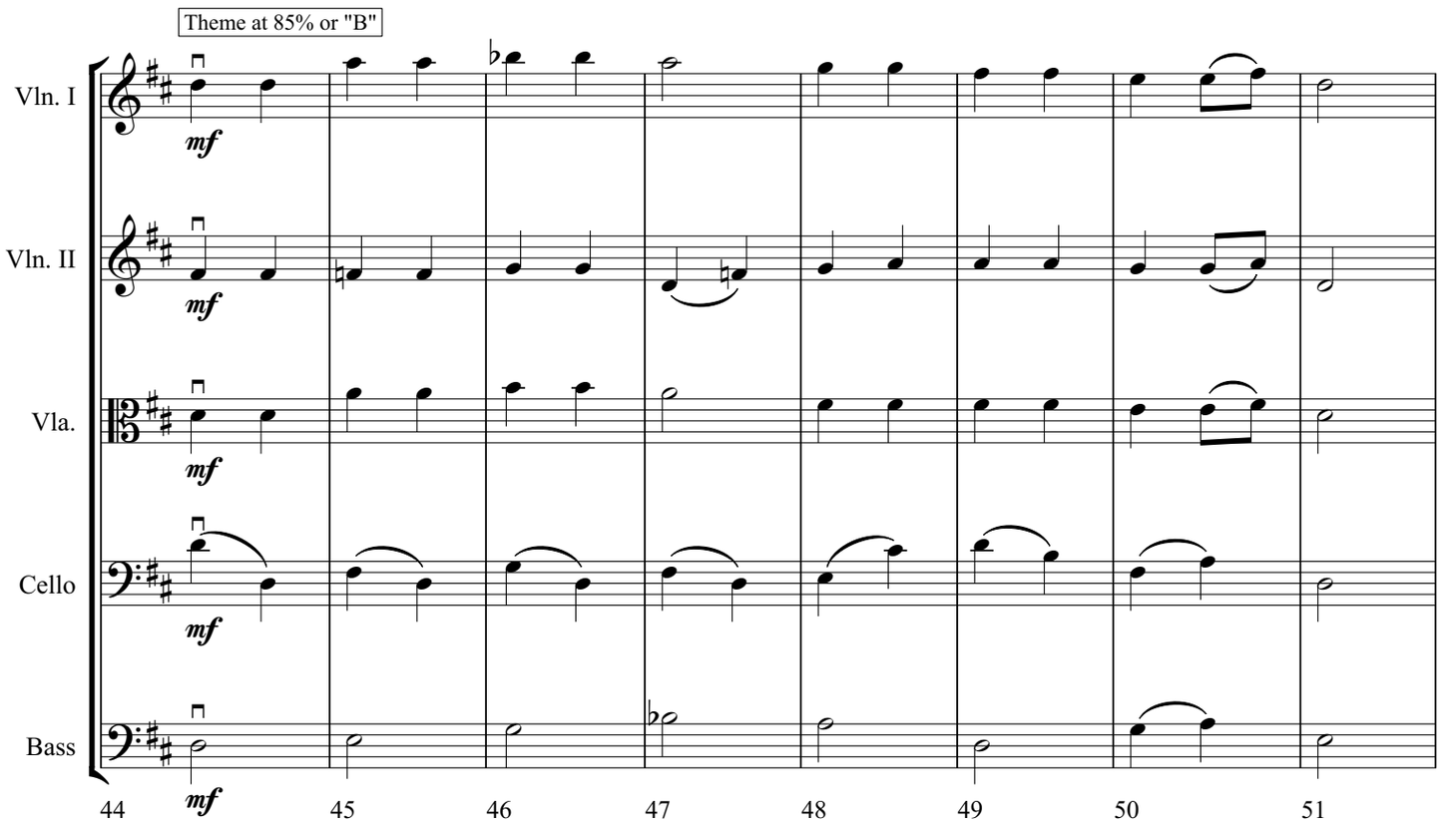
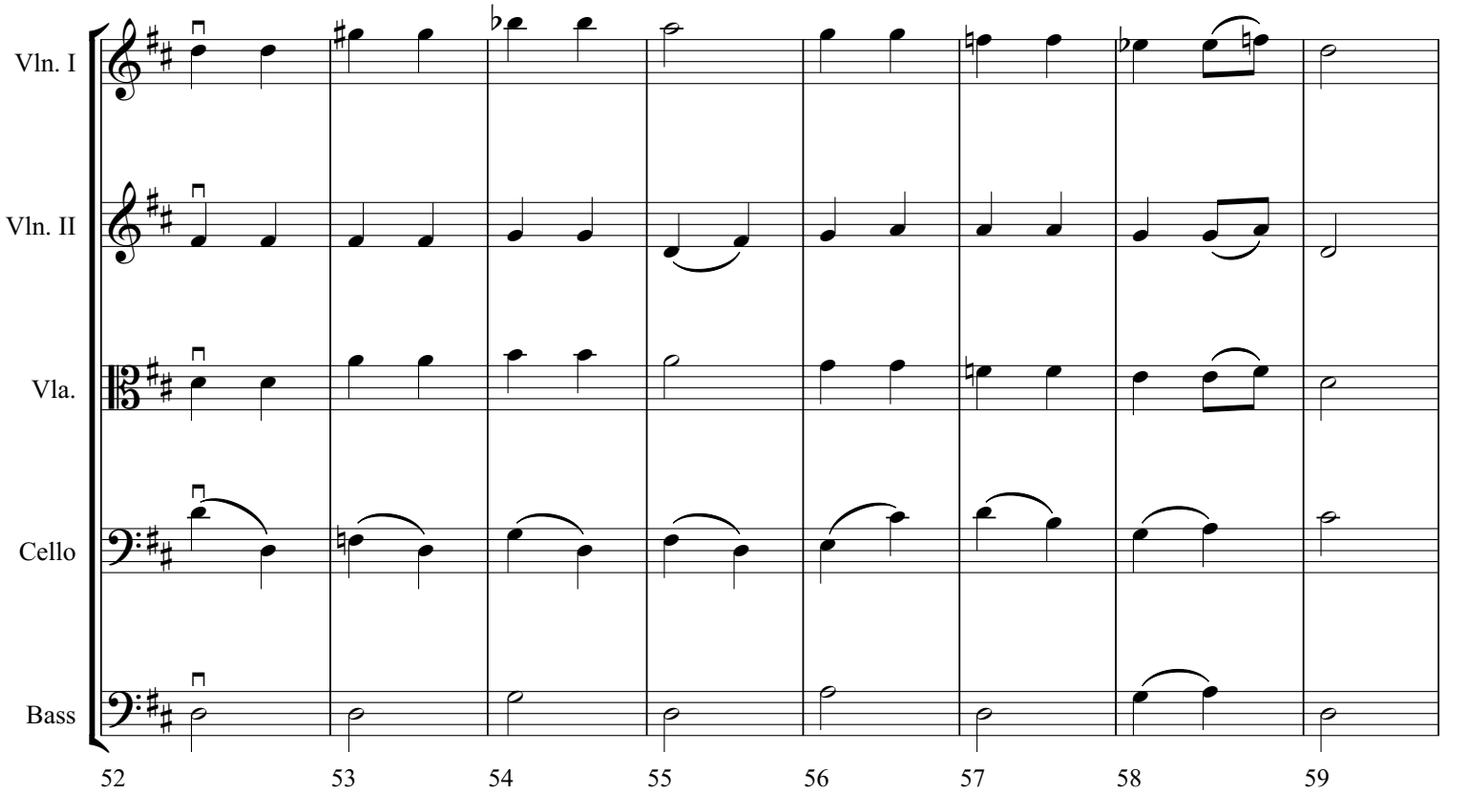
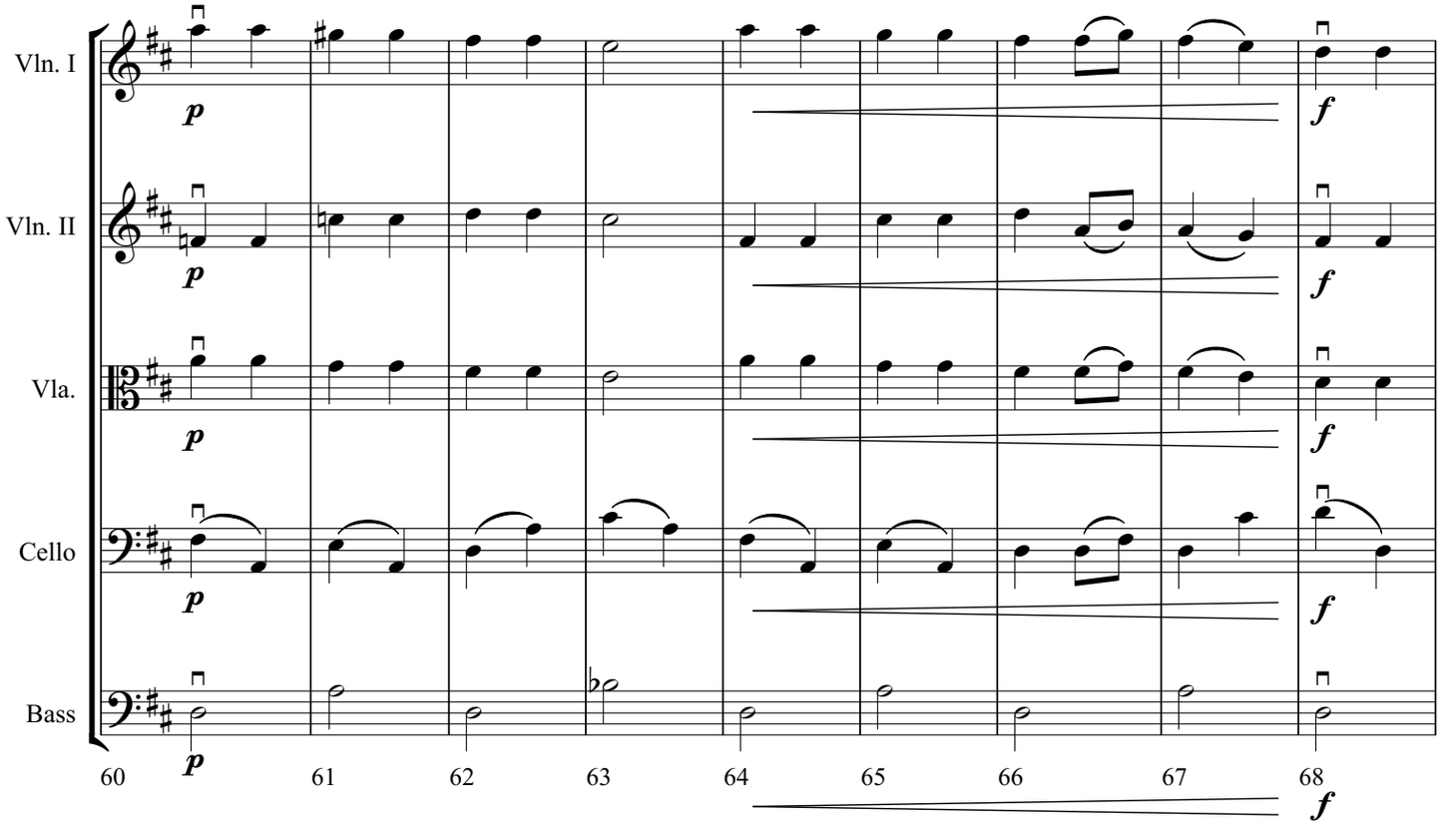

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello
Bass
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26

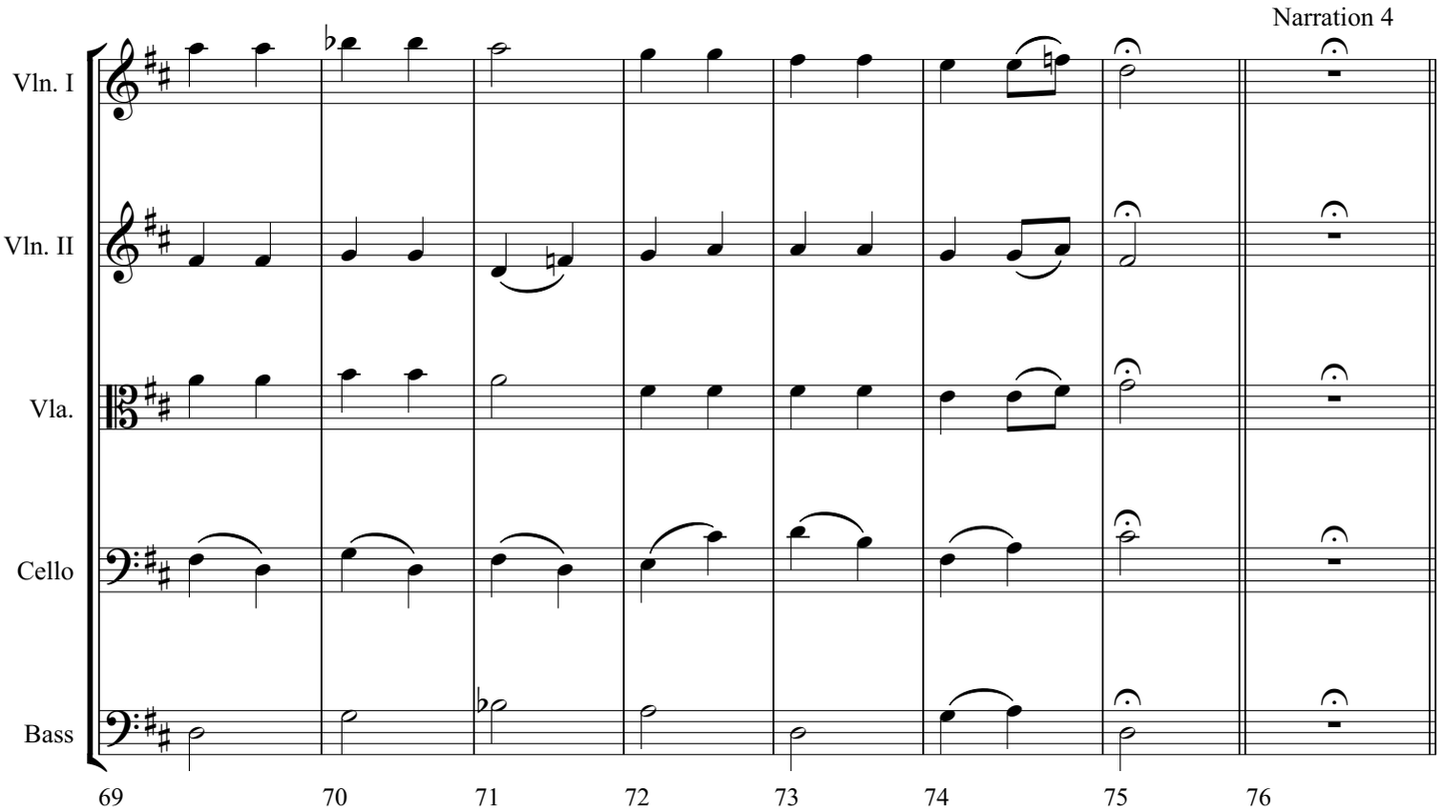

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello
Bass
p
f
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35

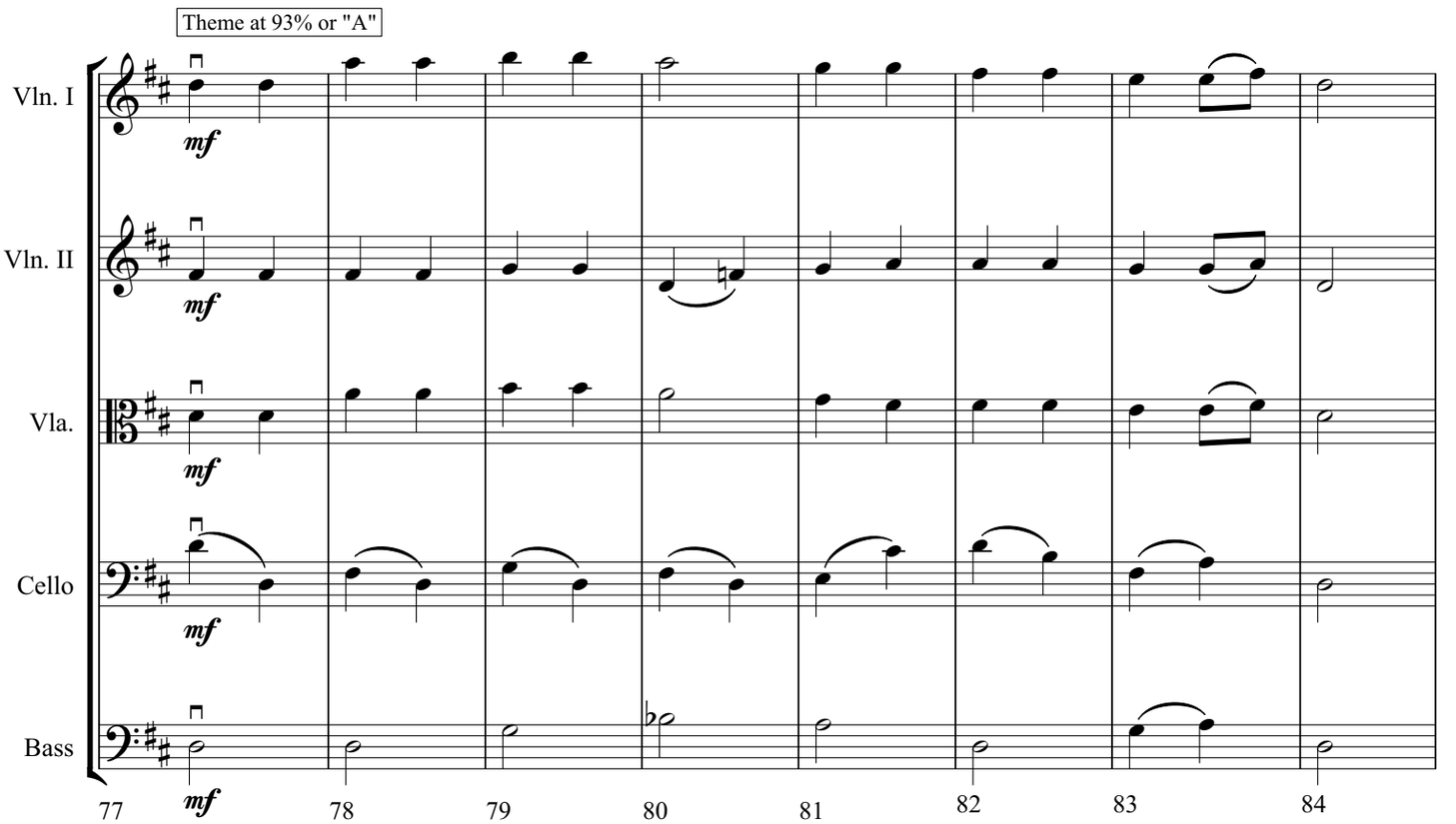

Narration 3
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello
Bass
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43

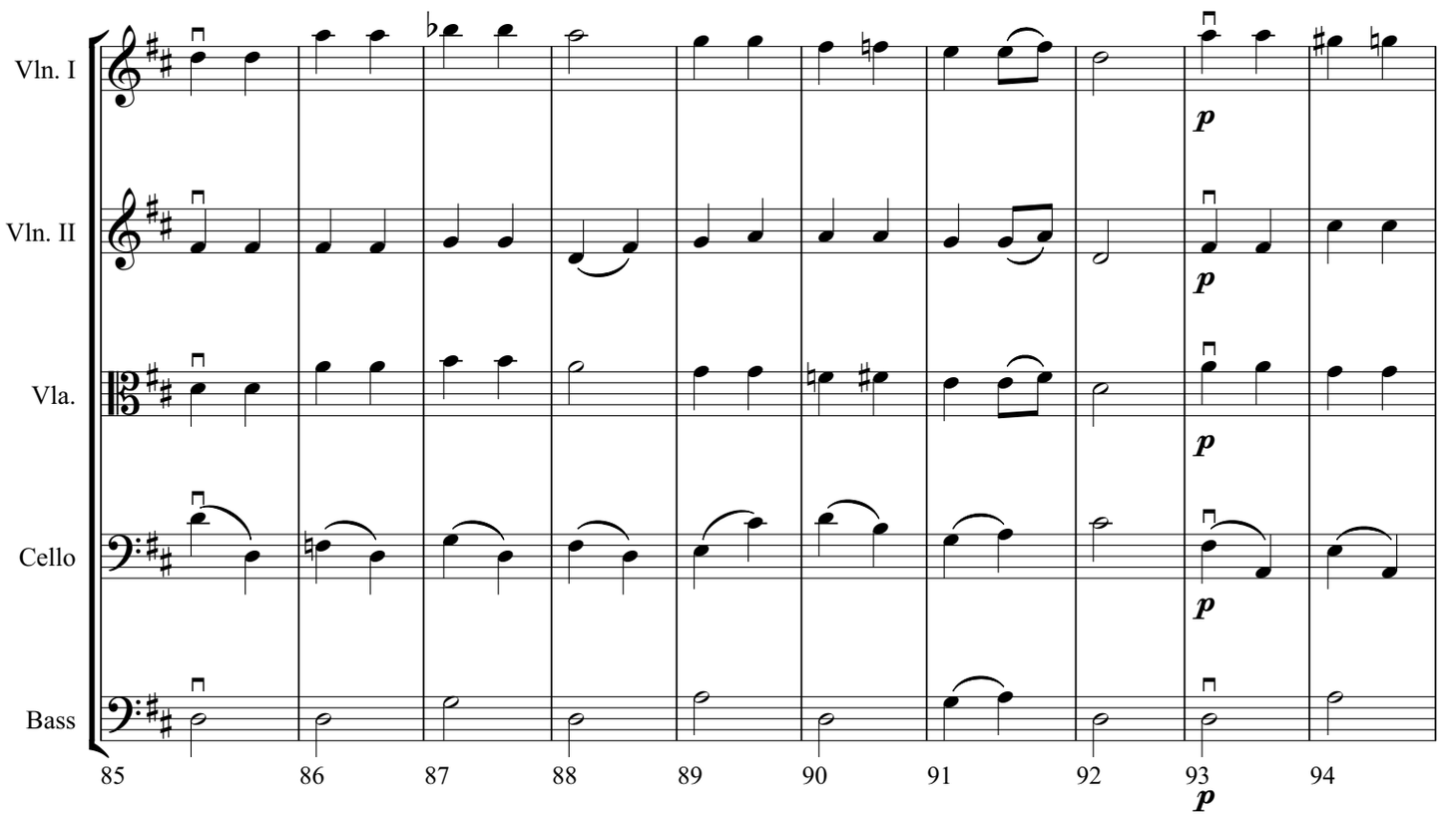

Theme at 85% or "B"
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello
Bass
mf
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51

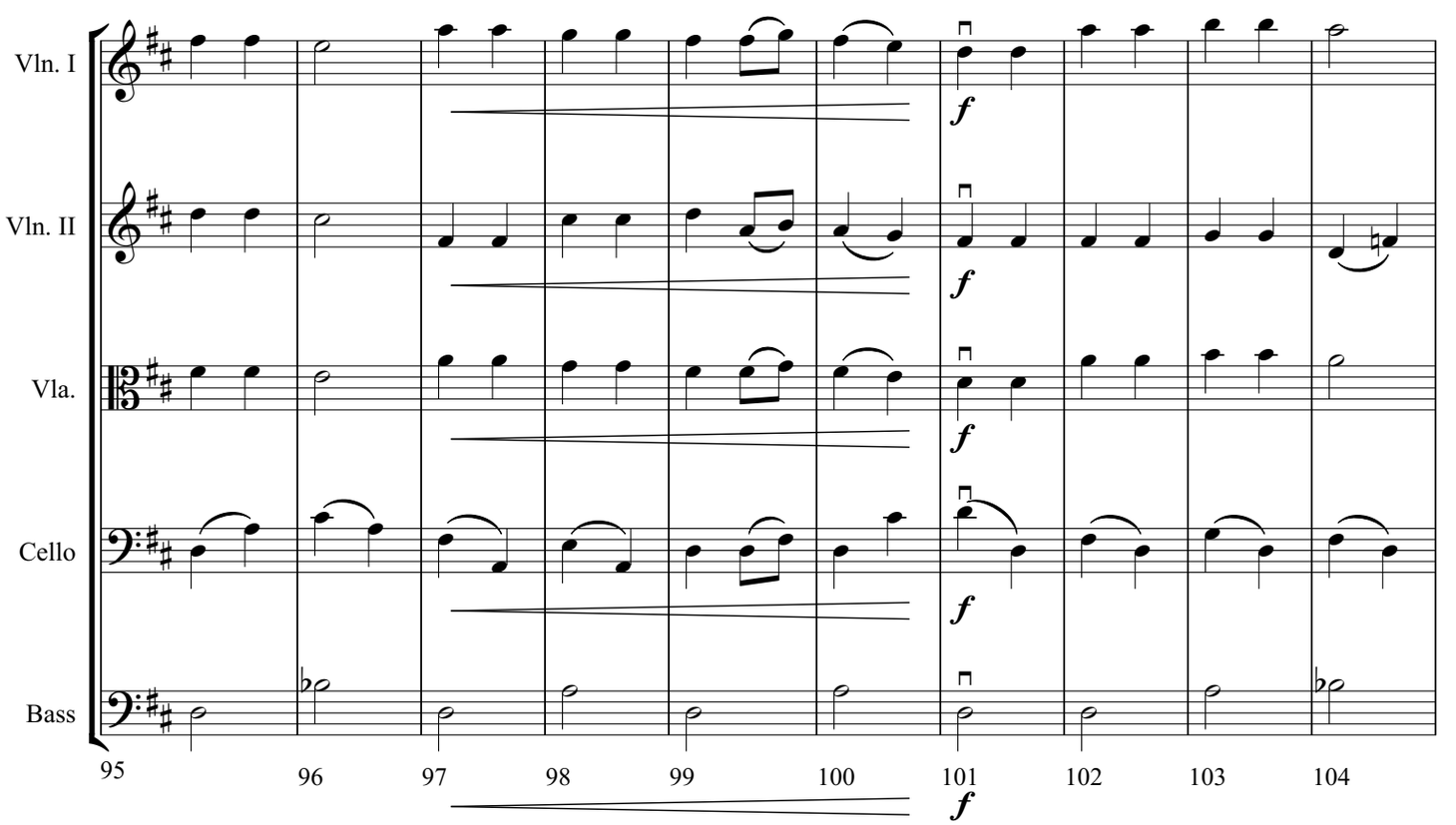

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello
Bass
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59

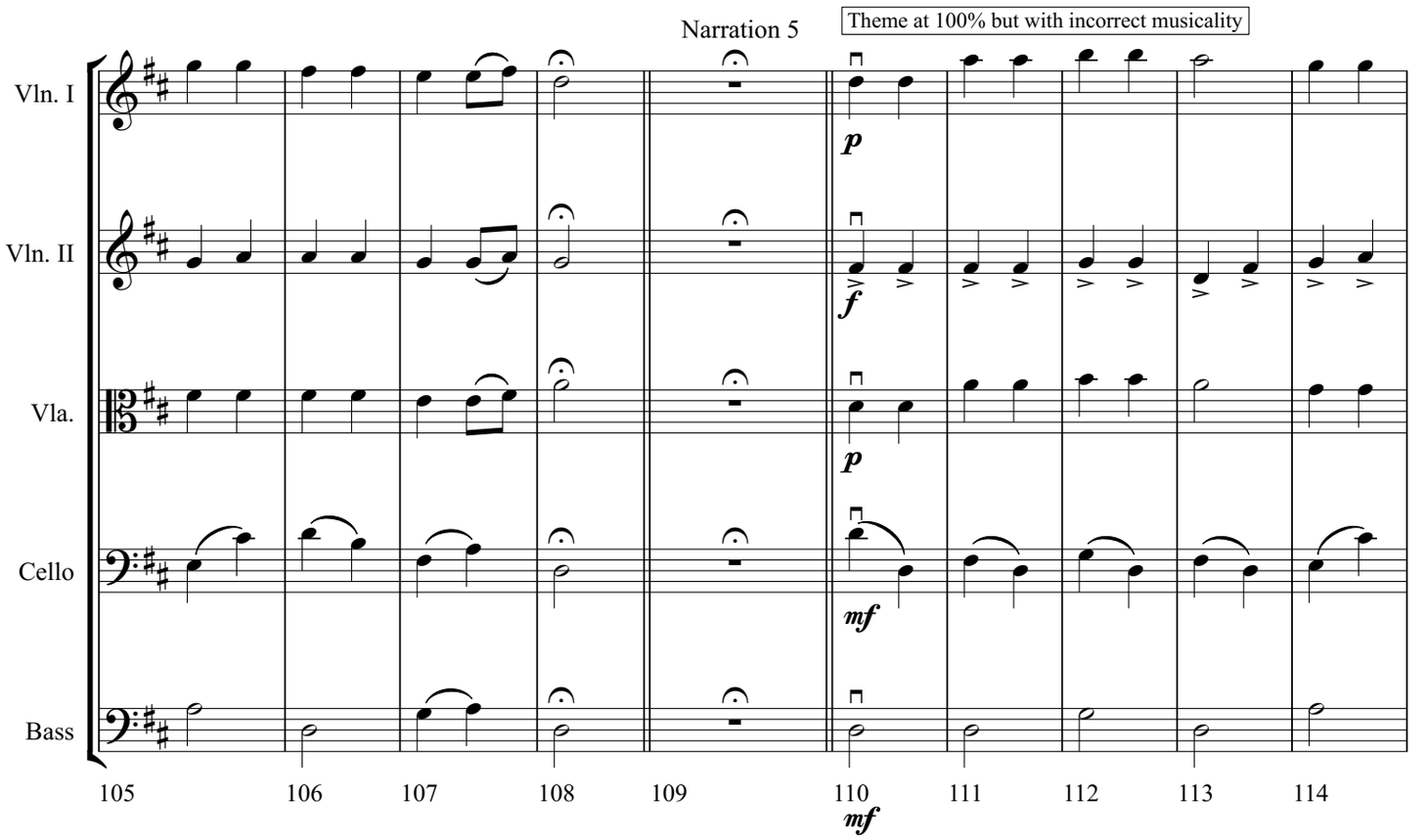

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello
Bass
p
f
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68

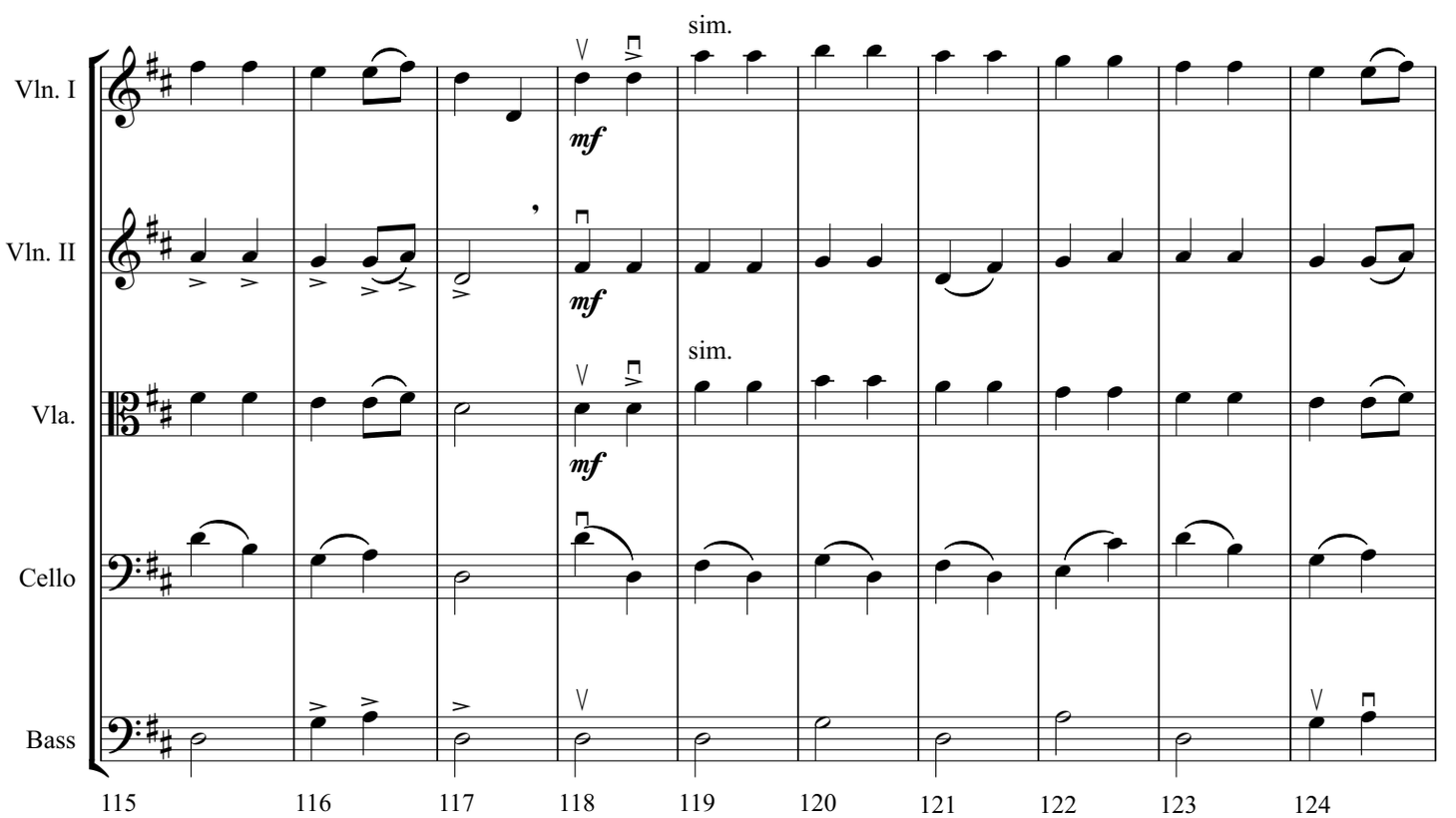

Narration 4
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello
Bass
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76

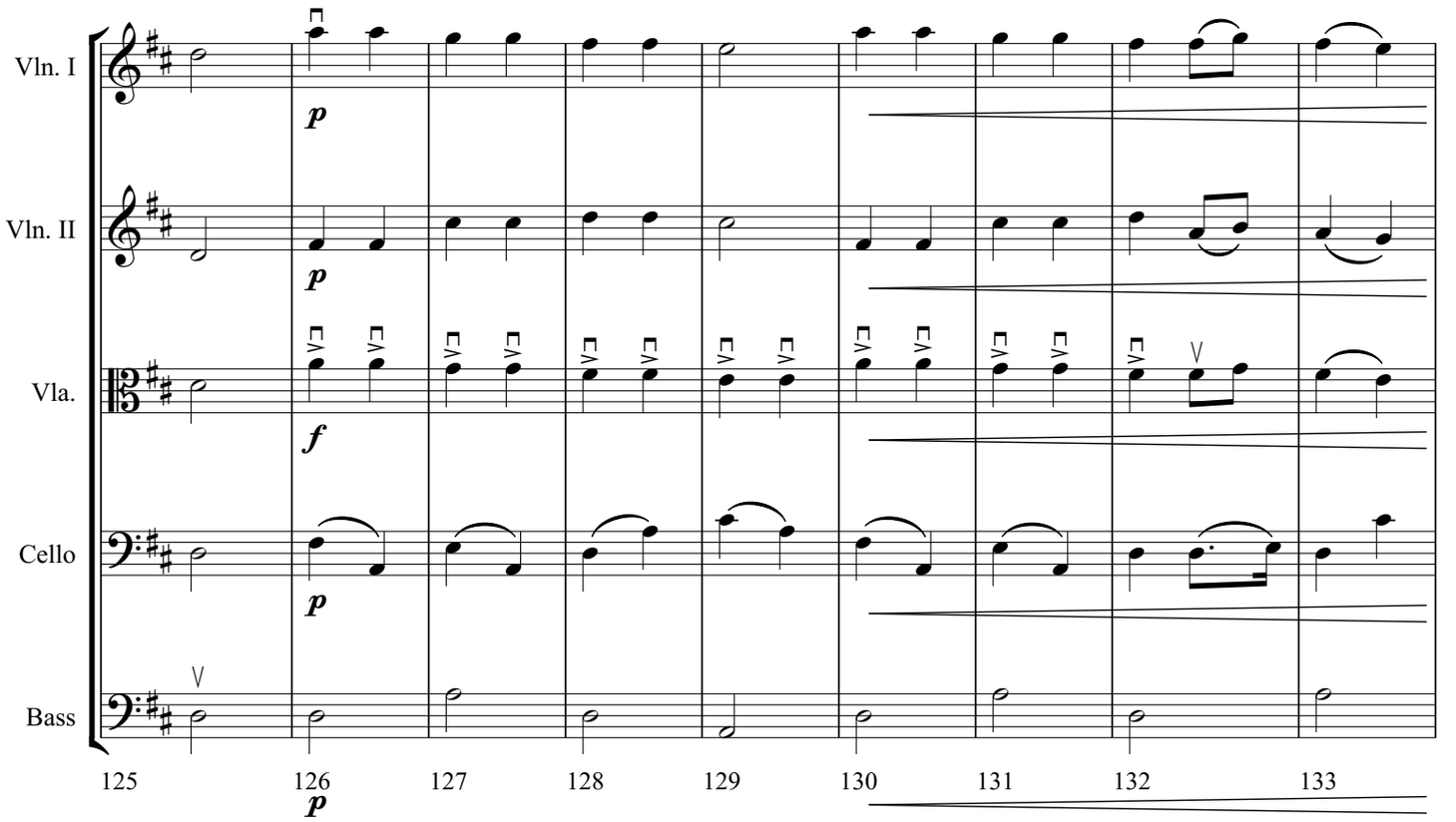

Theme at 93% or "A"
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello
Bass
mf
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84

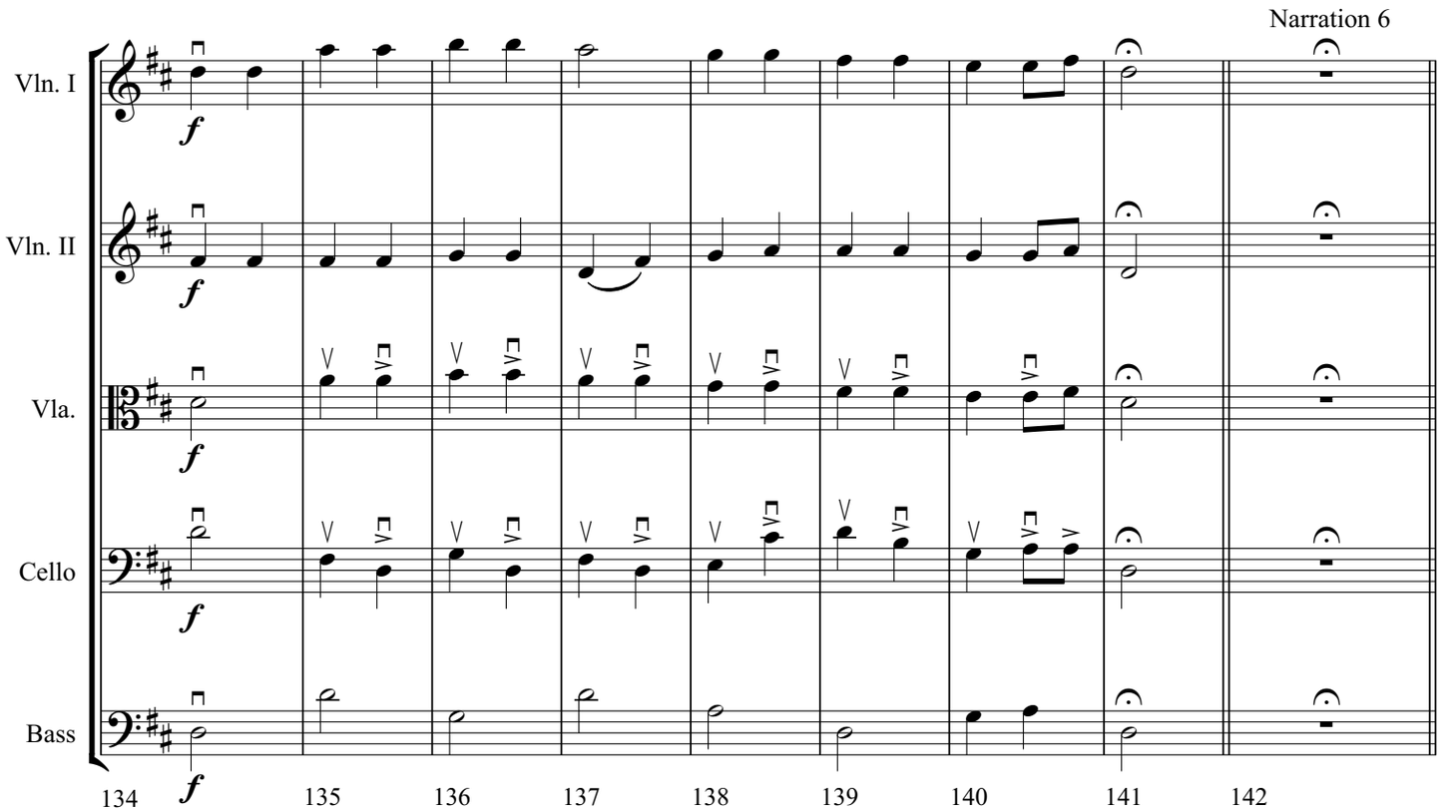

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello
Bass
p
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94


Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello
Bass
f
95
96
97
98
99
100
101
102
103
104


Narration 5
Theme at 100% but with incorrect musicality
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello
Bass
p
f
p
mf
105
106
107
108
109
110
111
112
113
114
mf

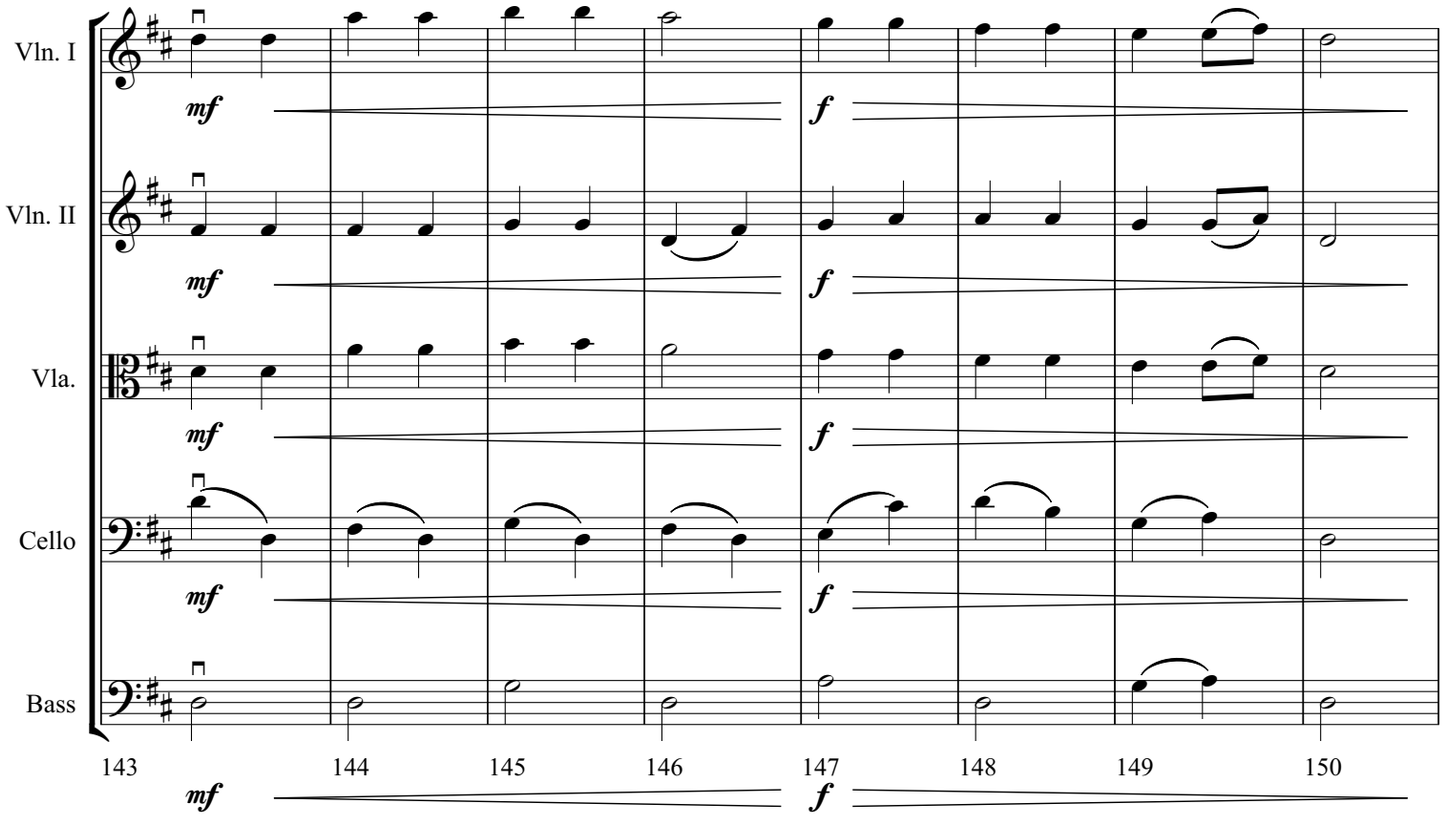

sim.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello
Bass
mf
mf
sim.
mf
115
116
117
118
119
120
121
122
123
124

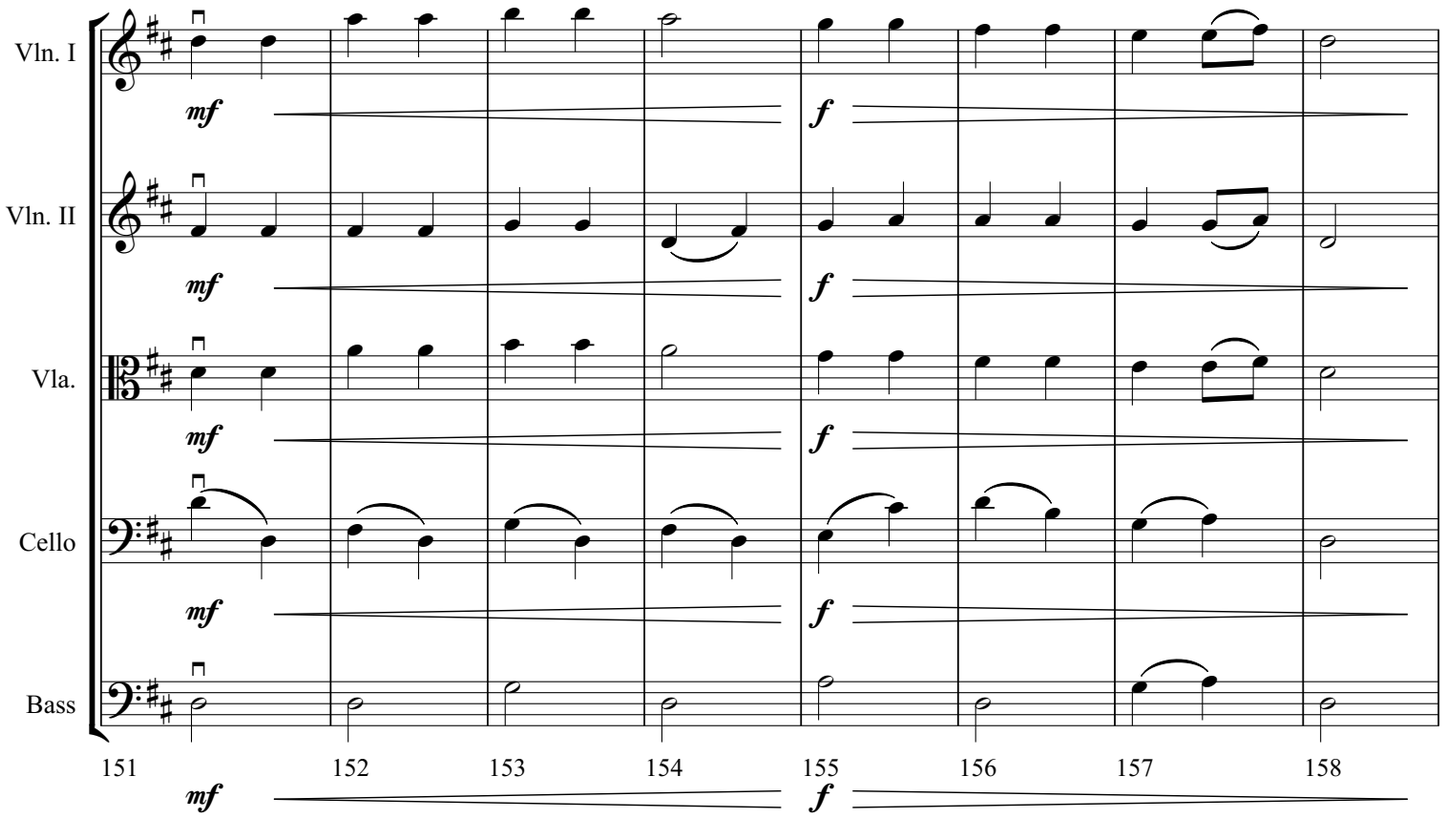

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello
Bass
p
f
125
126
127
128
129
130
131
132
133

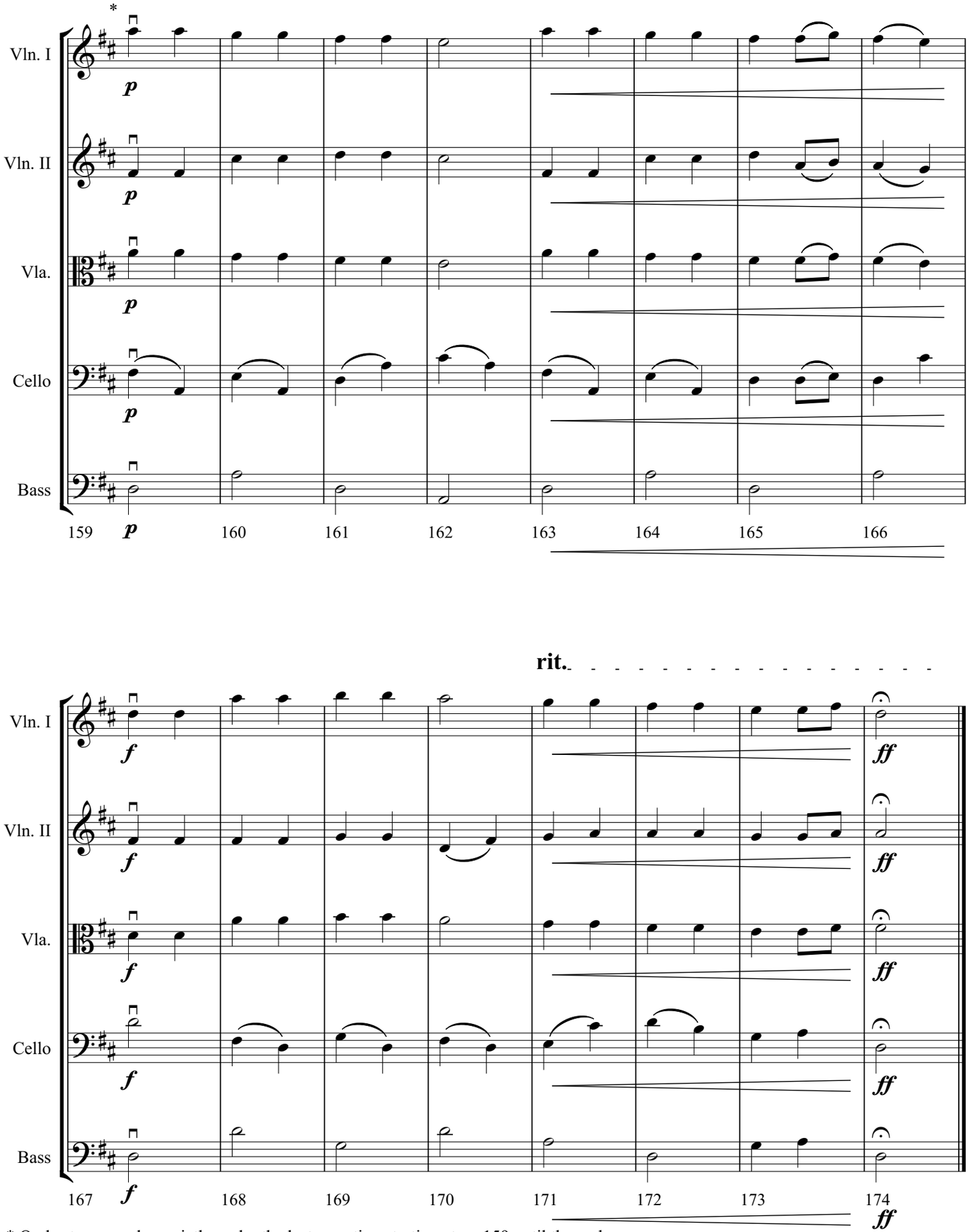

Narration 6
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello
Bass
f
134
135
136
137
138
139
140
141
142

Molto espressivo ♩ = 92

Theme at 100%







* Orchestra may play quietly under the last narration starting at m. 159 until the end.