MeiLi Kok

Spring 2018-Spring 2019

Thomas Inferno

Dedicated to all those who suffered the devastation of the Thomas Fire in California (December 4, 2017 - January 12, 2018), and especially for the students of Thomas Aquinas College.

Flutes
Alto Flute
Clarinets in Bb
Bass Clarinets

Horns in F
Trumpets in Bb
Trombones

Timpani
Bass Drum
Tam-Tam
Bongos
Cymbals
Claves
Marimba
Piano

String Orchestra

Inspired by a poem by Nico Silva, a student at St. Thomas Aquinas College

You took our name,
the name of our sanctuary—
Our peaceful pillar high above
the Ojai Valley.
We the young truth-seekers
sat in circles speaking
thoughts theological,
philosophical, scientific,
linguistic, and mathematic.
The wind once whispered
the answers to our wonder,
sifting through the grass
of the soft green hills we
crossed between class.

But that night the wind
wanted to settle all scores,
not content to contend
with us by gentle rapping on
our window panes and doors.
As the stars tried to tuck
the campus into bed,
begging us thinkers to rest
our metaphysically-fazed heads,
You peaked your fiery eyes over
the black hill behind my dorm,
gentle at first, like candles light
the sacred rites priests perform.
Some of us marveled at your
advent, others ignored
you as you lit yellow the black
hills and inched your way toward
our sanctuary dedicated to
liberal arts and our Triune Lord.

That's when you grew stronger,
like a fiery army ready for war.
No longer creeping over red-hued
hills, you now charged forward.
Your menacing hot rays turned
a dreamy campus night to day.
Someone rang the chapel bells
like it could your anger stay.
Alarms. They squealed like
animals about to be slaughtered
as the wind gave your beastly hunger
what seemed like more fodder.
Students sprinting to cars,
books, clothes, personals in hand:
fifteen minutes to save what we can.
As you prepared to devour our
home into your fiery lips
like a scene from St. John's apocalypse,
students who earlier tried to a
semester into their brains cram,
now huddled in the commons
for the school's evacuation plan.
The Dean wanted
everyone to find
a ride with someone
who'd be so kind
to keep their fellow
man in need in mind.
But no one needed the help
nor was in a bind to find ride,
for the students had already
made sure no one would be
left behind.

Our caravan of cars departed
as your flames licked the sky
and pounded the school's
brush-covered property line.
Our alma mater covered in
a demonically orange glow,
and everyone wanted to know
if we'd ever see this our home
again or if you the Thomas Inferno would
try to make this moment a final good bye.
I stared at the Chapel once so white
but now in deadly red light bathed.
I thought of all the things I couldn't
take with me that in my dorm stayed.
I thought of the memories with friends
and moments on this campus made.
I thought of the millions that generous
benefactors had over the decades paid
to in some way our mission of pursuing
the true, good, and beautiful aid.
I drove North away from you, Thomas.

And, as your frightening
visage began to fade
in my rearview mirror,
I swallowed my fear,
remembered my Faith,
and prayed.
I hoped if this was the end
our future was secure,
that the students of this
school would endure.
And like a Phoenix from
the ashes, humbled and purer,
grow stronger from this,
renewed, ever newer.

II. Alarm

17

rit. . . . . Swell

B

C Con moto ♩ = 100

air

soft mallets

rit. . . . . Swell

B

C Con moto ♩ = 100

D

flutter tongue

flutter tongue

flutter tongue

flutter tongue

hard mallets

D

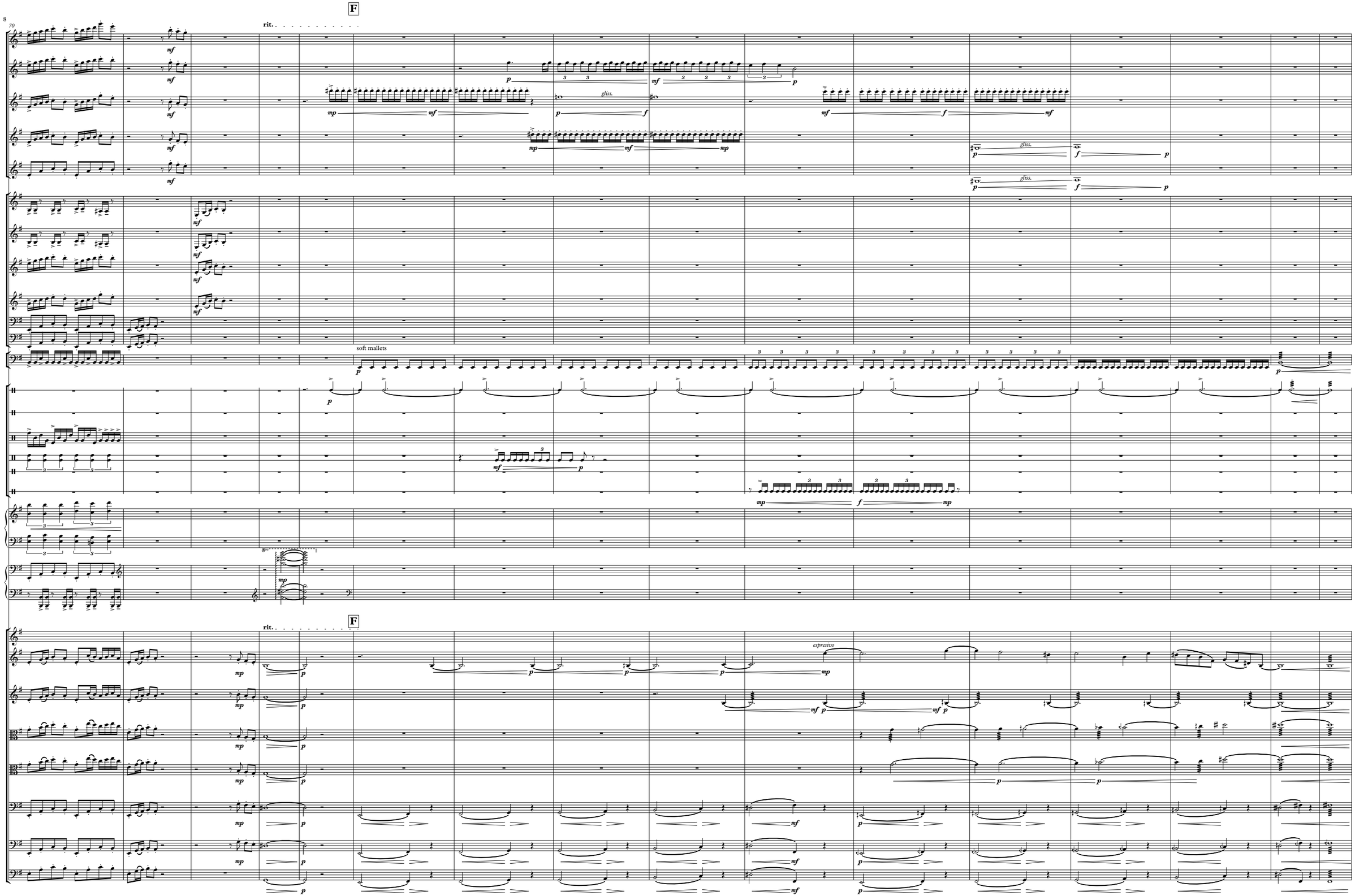
48

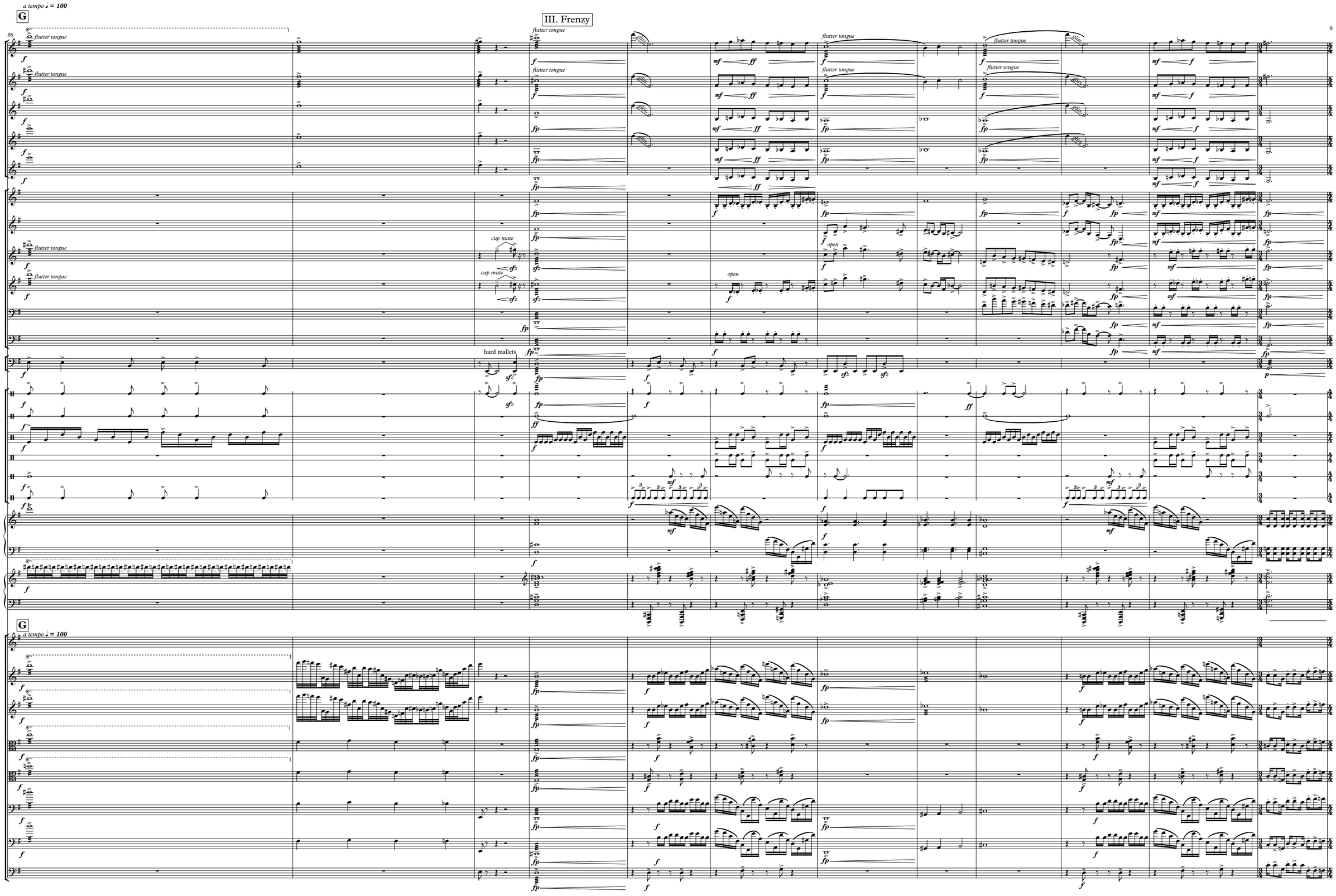
E

flutter tongue

E

f *mf* *fp* open


F
rit.
gliss.
soft mallets
rit.
F
espressivo


a tempo ♩ = 100
G
III. Frenzy
86
flutter tongue
cup mute
open
hard mallets
gliss.
G
a tempo ♩ = 100

98

Much slower

a tempo ♩=100

flutter tongue

mysteriously

cup mute

open

flap tongue

Much slower

a tempo ♩=100

H

flutter tongue

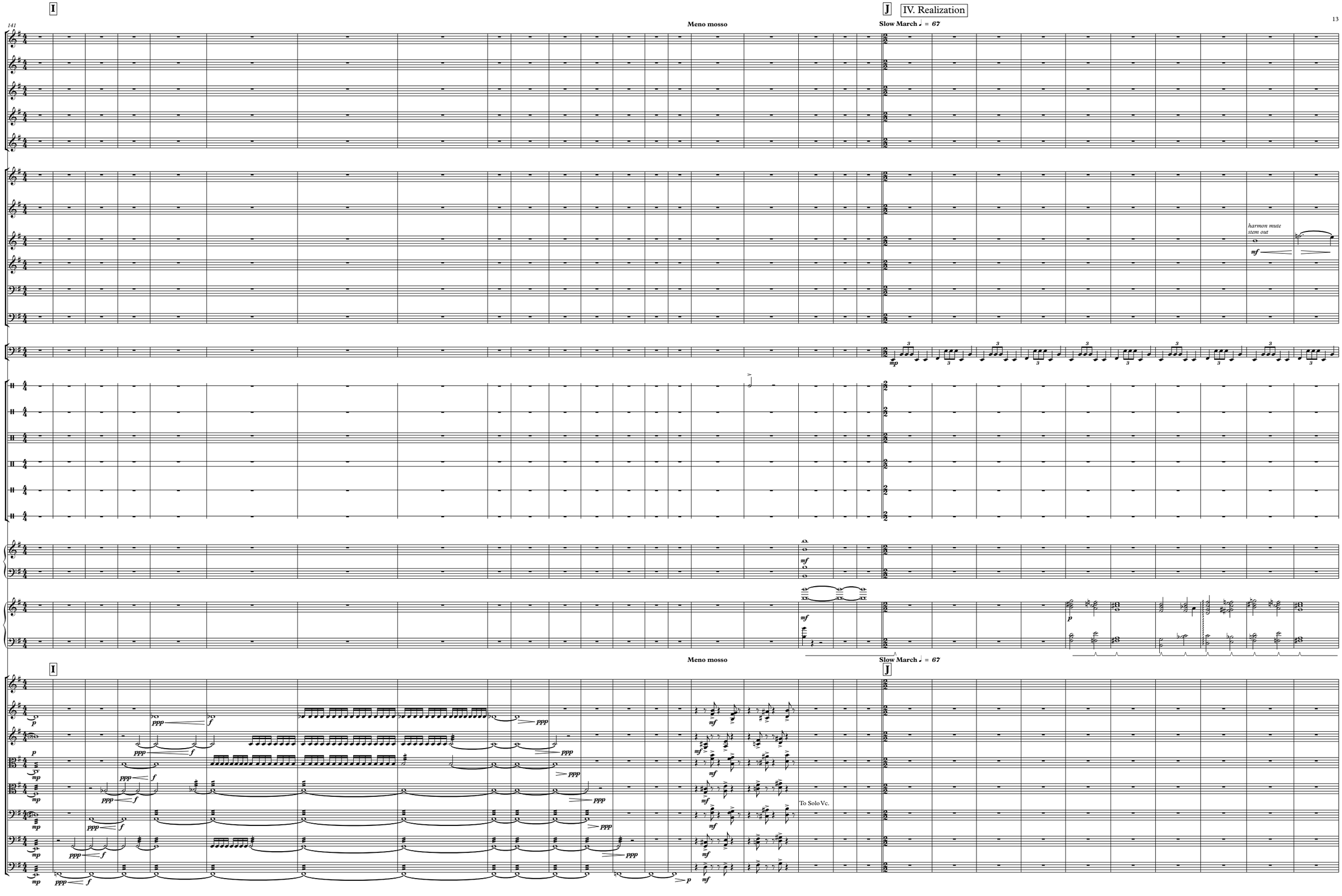
flutter tongue

flutter tongue

flutter tongue

H

126


I
J
IV. Realization
141
Meno mosso
Slow March ♩ = 67
harmon mute
stem out
mf
mp
p
ppp
f
To Solo Vc.