Allusions and Evocations

For Vibraphone, Percussion, and Narrator

Benjamin R. Fuhrman

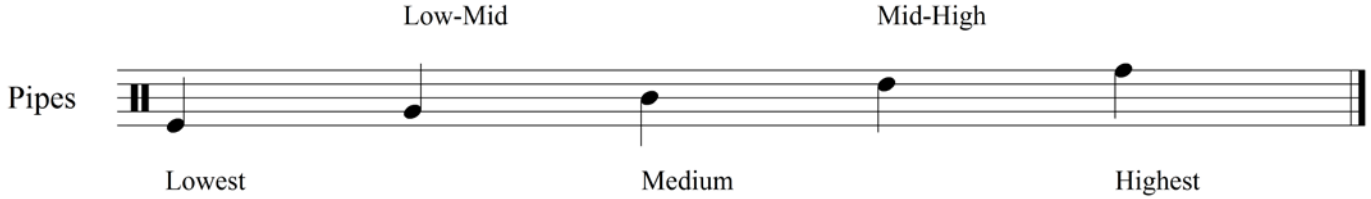
Circa Twenty Minutes

Notes on Notation

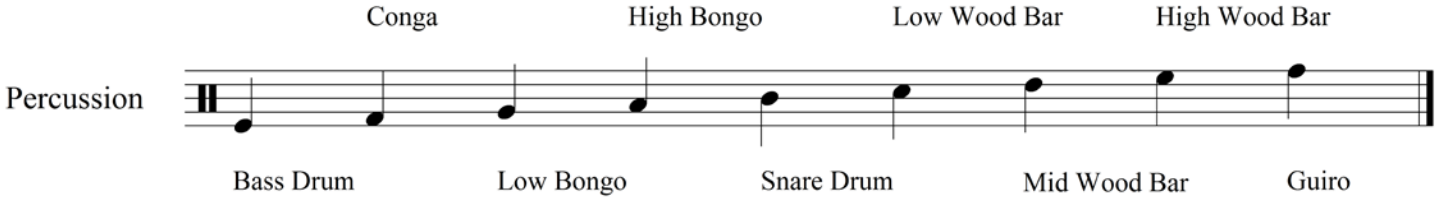
Allusions and Evocations requires that one performer play vibraphone and multiple percussion instruments while narrating. To simplify the notation, all narrated segments are enclosed in boxes. Any unboxed texts are instructions to the performer. The boxed text is to be narrated at the performer's discretion, but a dramatic recitation that gets to the heart of the emotional content is highly advised.

In addition to standard mallets, pitch bending mallets, and cello or bass bows are required for the vibraphone. A large metal coffee can, is also required as it is waved over certain notes. The motor for the vibraphone is not used in this piece.

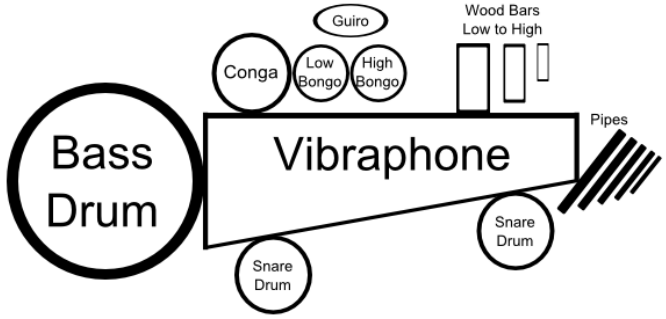
The pipes used should be metal, approximately 1 inch in total diameter, and tuned to a rough pentatonic scale (either major or minor). While no specific pitches are called for, they should be close, but not identical to notes found on the vibraphone. They are laid out in the score as follows.



The percussion used is all standard with the exception of the wooden bars that are called for. There is only one requirement for the bars – that there are three different sizes, resulting in three different pitches. The two bongos should be tuned approximately a fifth apart, and the conga should be tuned at least a fifth below the low bongo. The snare drums should be tuned to two different pitches (F and C# are recommended), and placed adjacent to the vibraphone. This will result in a distorted effect when these pitches are played on the vibraphone while the snares are on. Either snare drum can be played when called for in the score and instructions for turning snares on or off apply to both drums. The percussion layout in the score is as follows.



The suggested layout for the instruments is as follows.



Program Notes

Being asked to write a piece, and the text for it, is always an intimidating prospect. I don't really consider myself to be a particularly good poet, and I have a huge aversion to the type of cheap sentimentality that I [usually] end up writing. So when I was asked to do just that, I had a minor existential crisis. Should I hire a poet? Should I rip off a text from a long dead poet? Look on Creative Commons, the Internet Archive, or Project Gutenberg for an interesting, modern, public domain text? Write a computer program to grab tweets by hashtags and set those? Basically, I was willing to try anything – other than actually writing my own texts.

Fortunately, in a Twitter conversation Dave MacDonald suggested a solution – gnoetry. After perusing the poems published by Beard of Bees (http://beardofbees.com) and Gnoetry Daily (http://gnoetrydaily.wordpress.com/) and reading up on the subject, I decided to experiment and see what I could come up with.

The essence of gnoetry is the use of a computer as an automatic compositional assistant when writing a poem. A database of source texts are input and given different weights, determining how likely they are to be used in the resulting poem. Using an n-gram generator, words are pulled from the texts and arranged to form poems using any number of formal models. The user can then accept or reject the individual words in the poems, and regenerate any segments they dislike.

The resulting poems are remarkably abstract, surreal, evocative, and viscerally emotional. In other words, exactly what I was looking for.

All of the poems I created for this piece were composed using the jGnoetry program (http://www.eddeaddad.net/jGnoetry/), generating blank sonnets using the following texts: *The Call of Cthulhu*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Principia Discordia*, *De Profundis (Letter from the Reading Gaol)*, *Lost Horizon*, *Beowulf*, *The MS Found in a Bottle*, *The Waste Land*, and the English translation of *Les Fleurs du Mal*. After generating the poems, and adding or editing the punctuation, I had what I wanted: an interesting text that alludes to emotions and literary tropes, without feeling contrived. The nine sonnets used cycle through ideas of arrogance, violence, drug use and altered states of consciousness, and unrequited love and regret – all without falling into maudlin tropes.

In the end, this piece presents a puzzle for the listener. What happens when structure is removed in favor of chaos – when all you're left with are allusions, metaphors, and references, devoid of their original context?

There are no answers, just more questions.

-Benjamin R. Fuhrman
August 23, 2012.

“*The time has come,” the Walrus said,*
“To talk of many things:
Of shoes – and ships – and sealing-wax –
Of cabbages – and kings –
And why the sea is boiling hot –
And whether pigs have wings.”

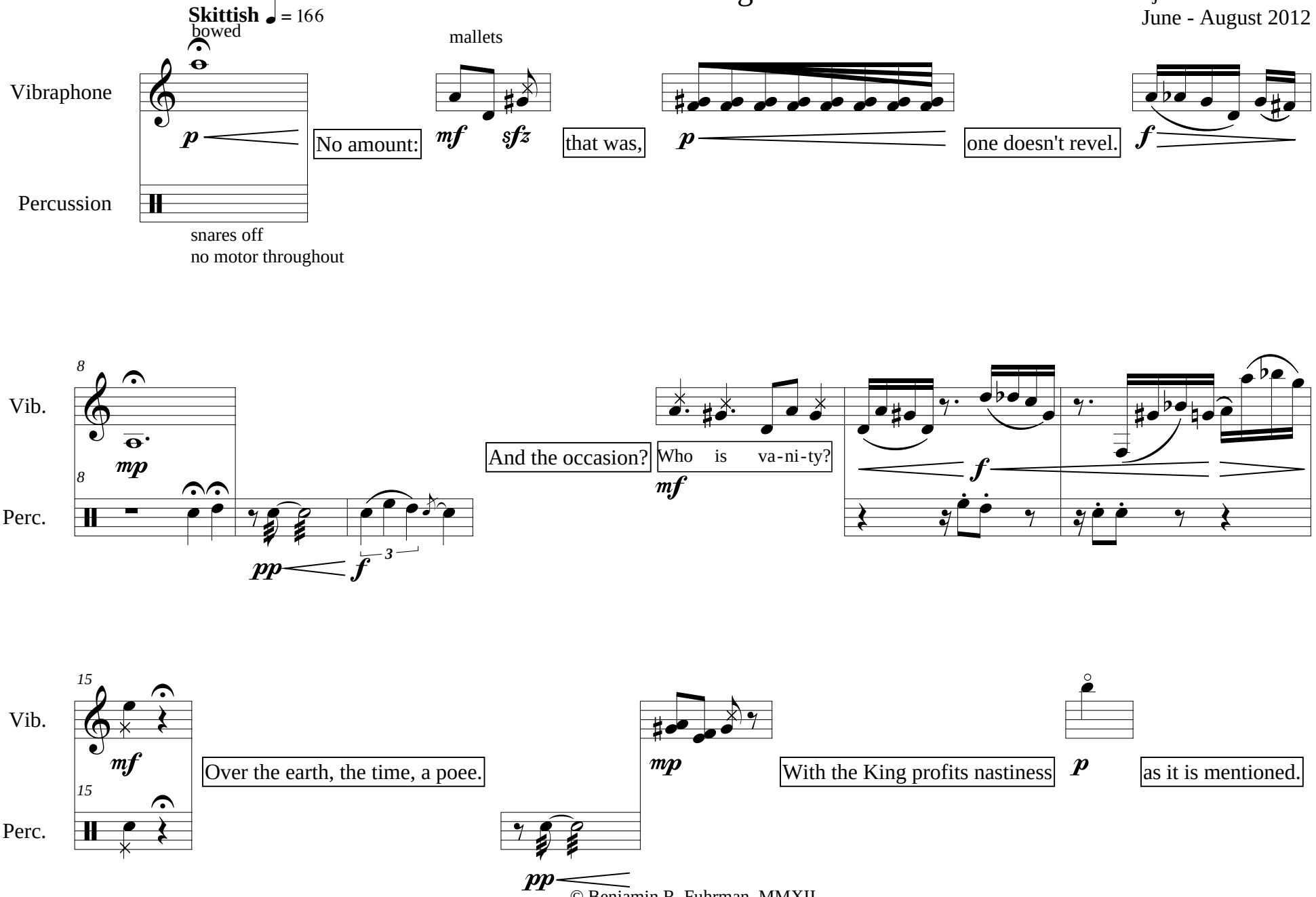
-Lewis Carroll, from
Through the Looking-Glass
and What Alice Found There

To Sam Gould

Allusions and Evocations

1. Monologue

Benjamin R. Fuhrman
June - August 2012



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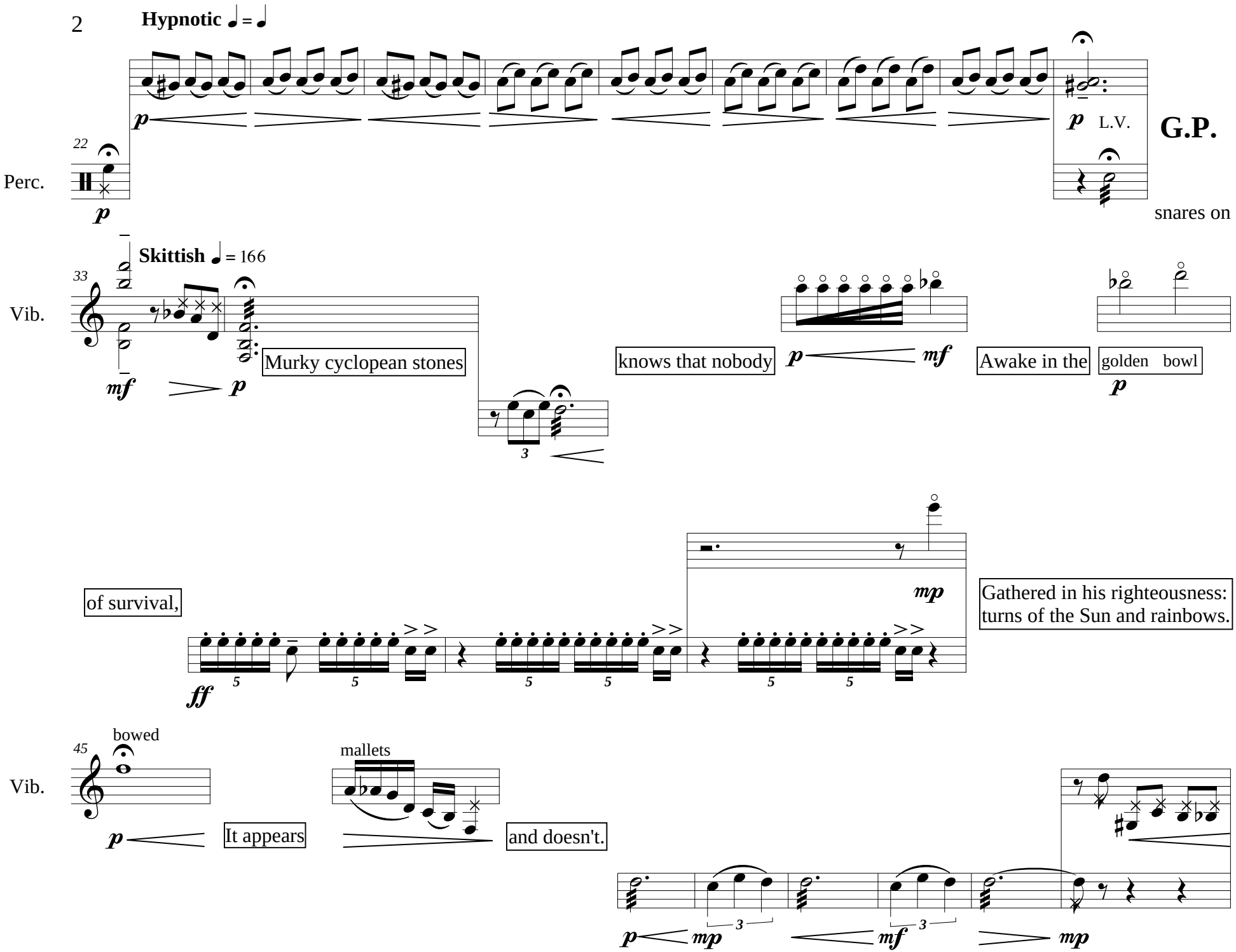
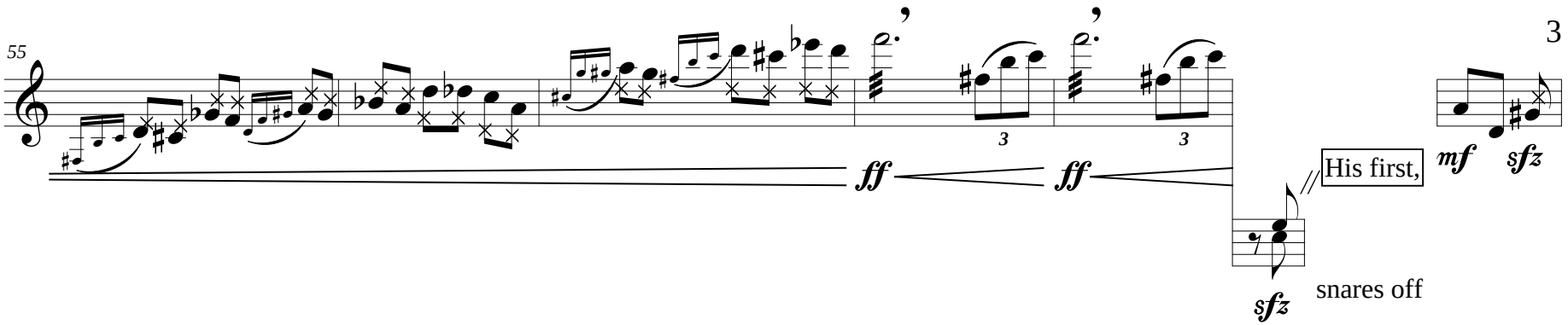
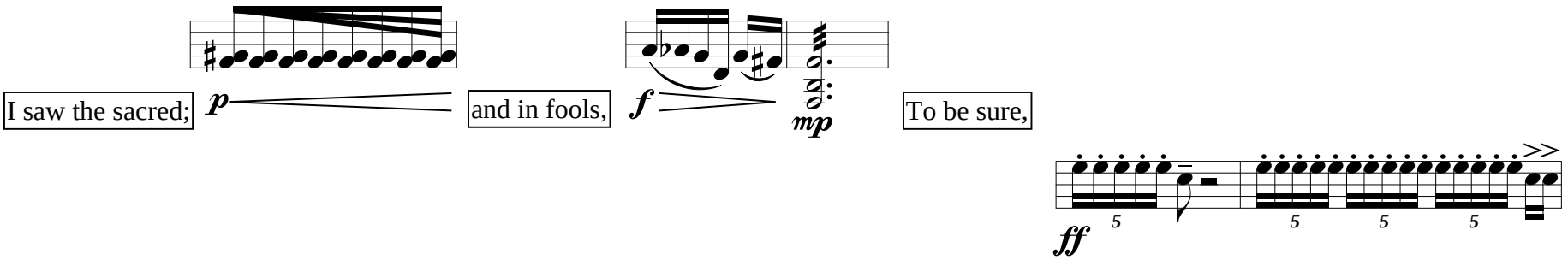
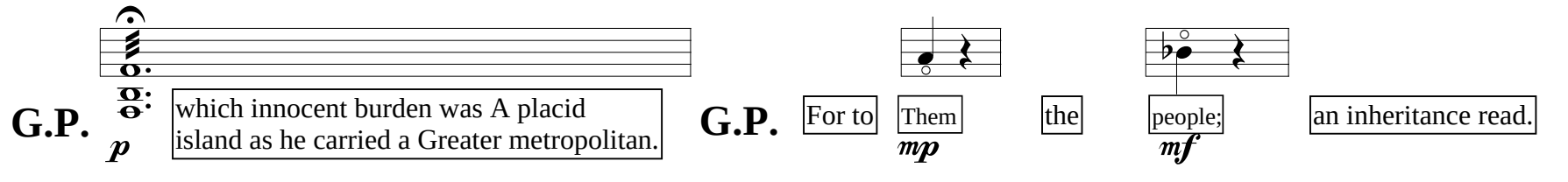

Hypnotic ♩ = ♩
22
Perc.
p
p
p L.V.
G.P.
snares on
Skittish ♩ = 166
33
Vib.
mf
p
Murky cyclopean stones
3
knows that nobody
p
mf
Awake in the
golden bowl
p
of survival,
ff
mp
Gathered in his righteousness:
turns of the Sun and rainbows.
45
bowed
Vib.
p
It appears
mallets
and doesn't.
p
mp
mf
mp

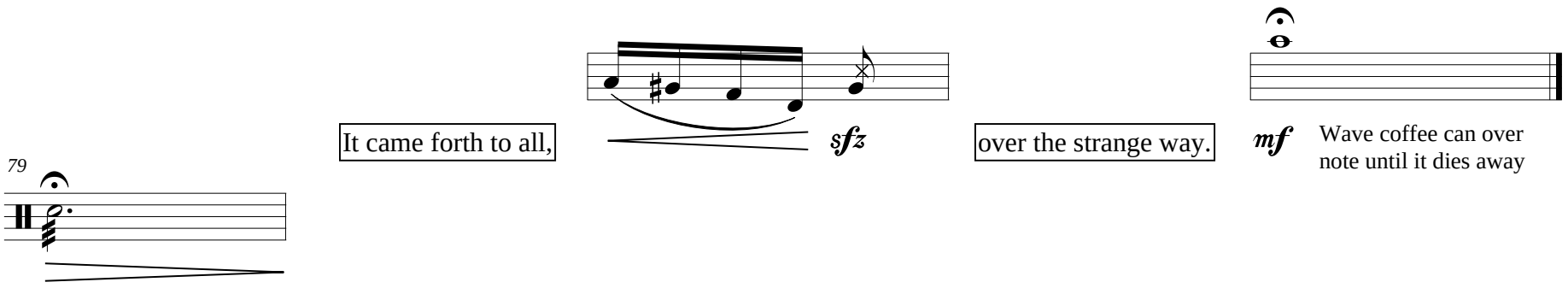
55

Vib.

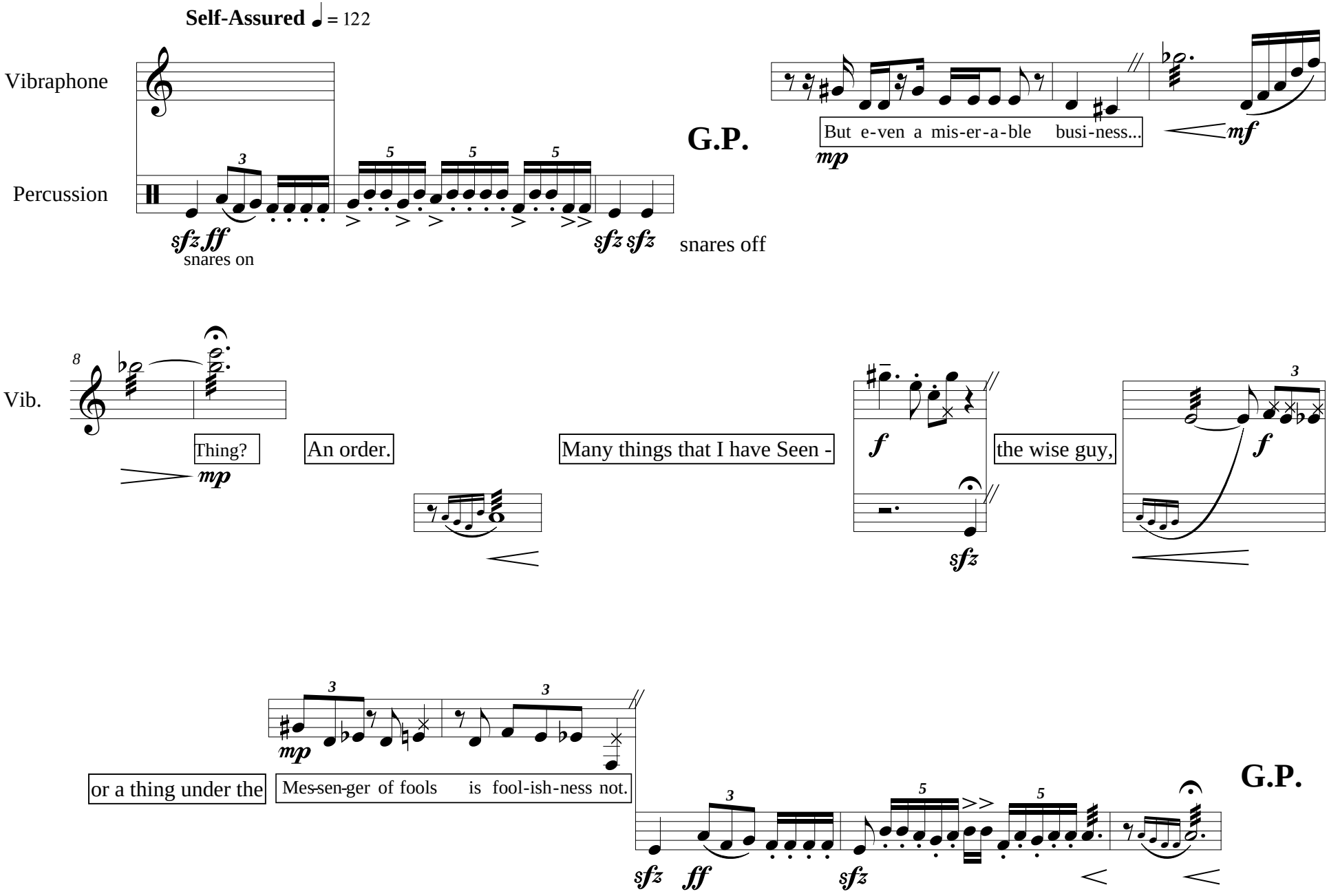

ff
ff
His first,
mf
sfz
sfz
snares off


I saw the sacred;
p
and in fools,
f
mp
To be sure,
ff

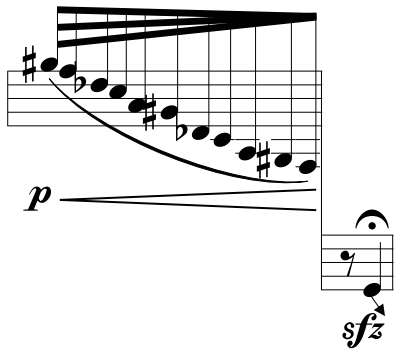

G.P.
p
which innocent burden was A placid
island as he carried a Greater metropolitan.
G.P.
For to
Them
mp
the
people;
mf
an inheritance read.
snares on
snares off


79
Perc.
It came forth to all,
sfz
over the strange way.
mf
Wave coffee can over
note until it dies away

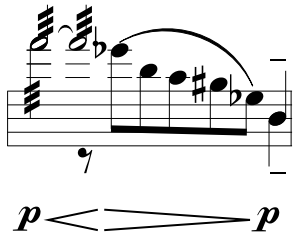
2. Qualifications



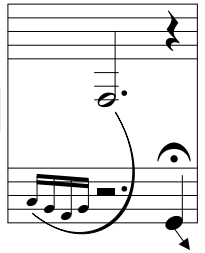
Say to one night:



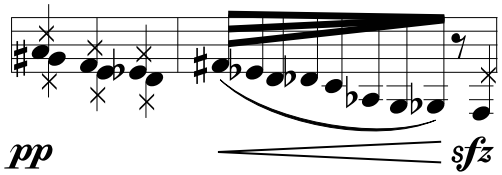
Every golden man's Endeavors,



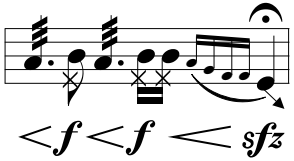
keep from the good



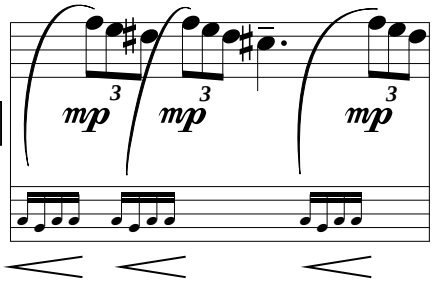
as in life.



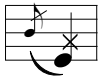
Society?



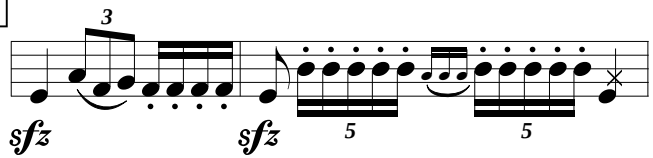
But they are in the first.



Time for god;

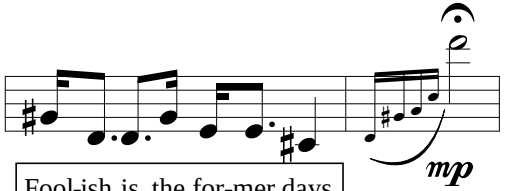


and I was the king's successor.

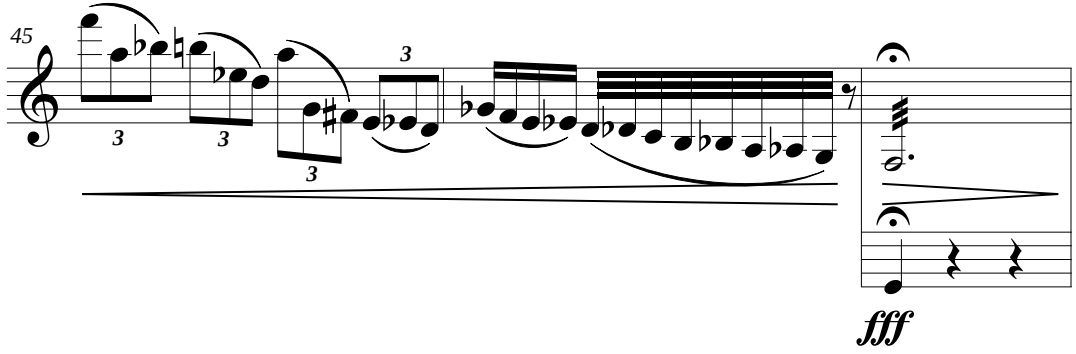


G.P.

Fool-ish is the for-mer days,



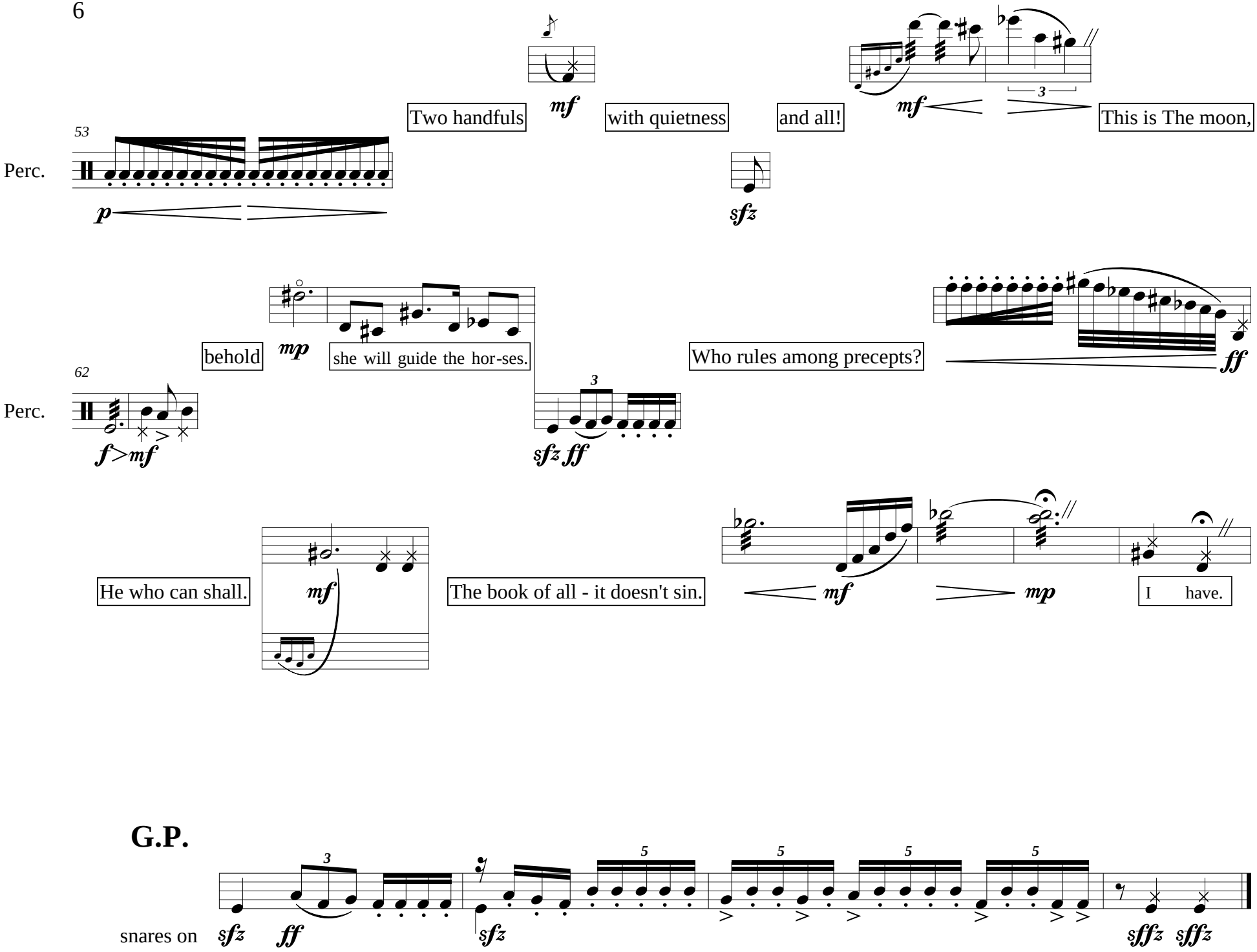
Vib.



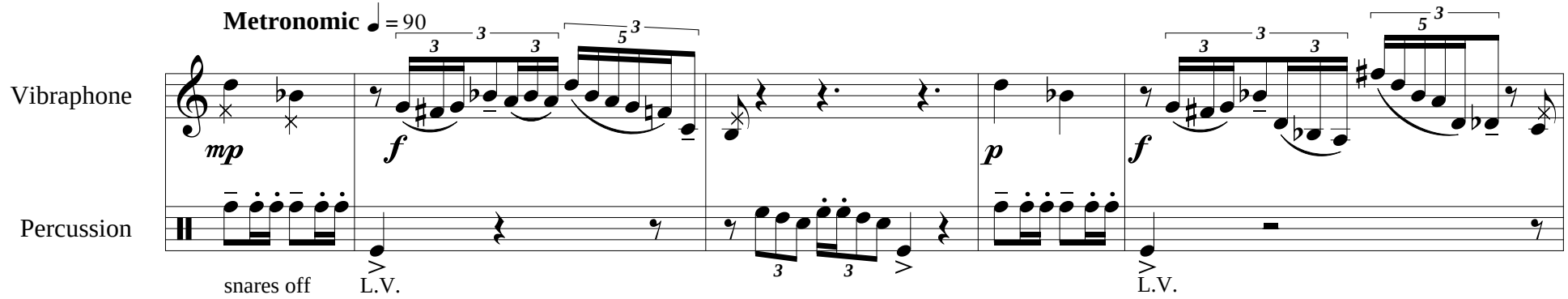
so I must Use more bitter wood

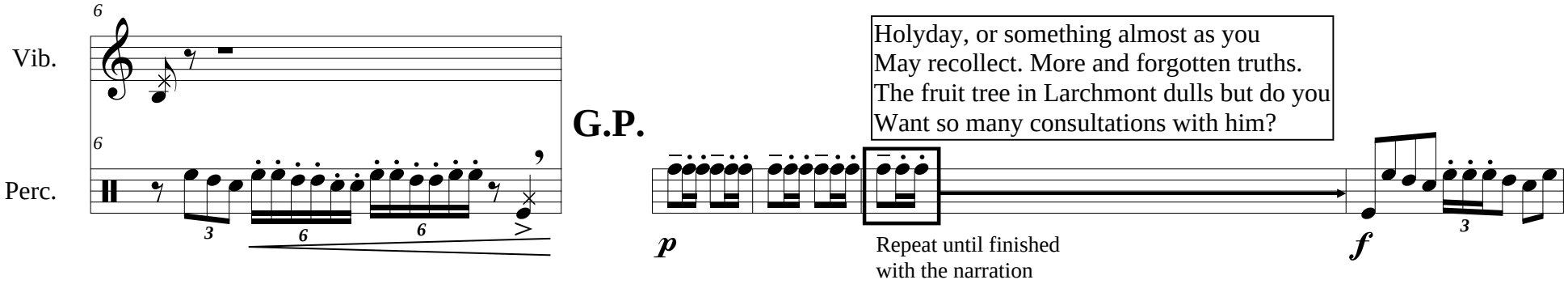
than all this

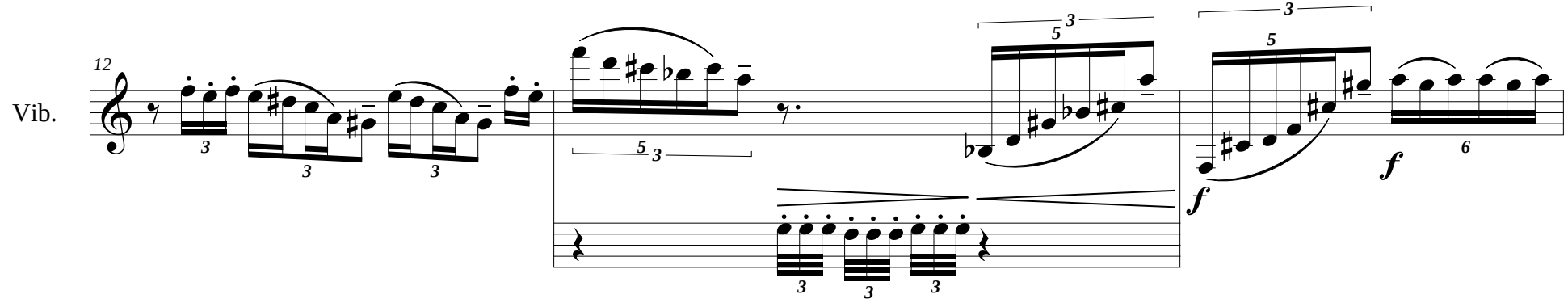
to represent.

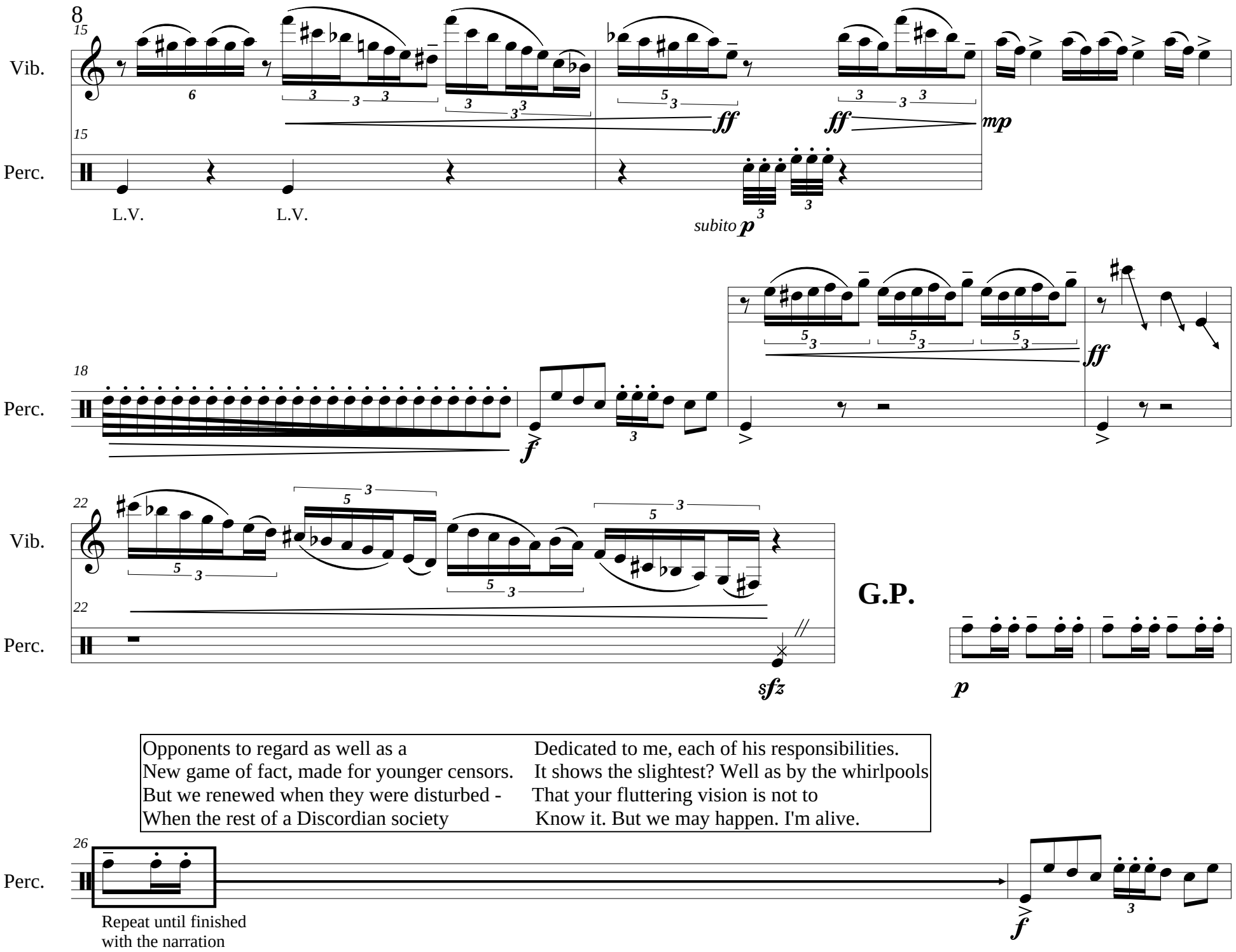

Two handfuls
with quietness
and all!
This is The moon,
53
Perc.
behold
she will guide the hor-ses.
Who rules among precepts?
62
Perc.
He who can shall.
The book of all - it doesn't sin.
I have.
G.P.
snares on

3. Trial Membership in the Health Club



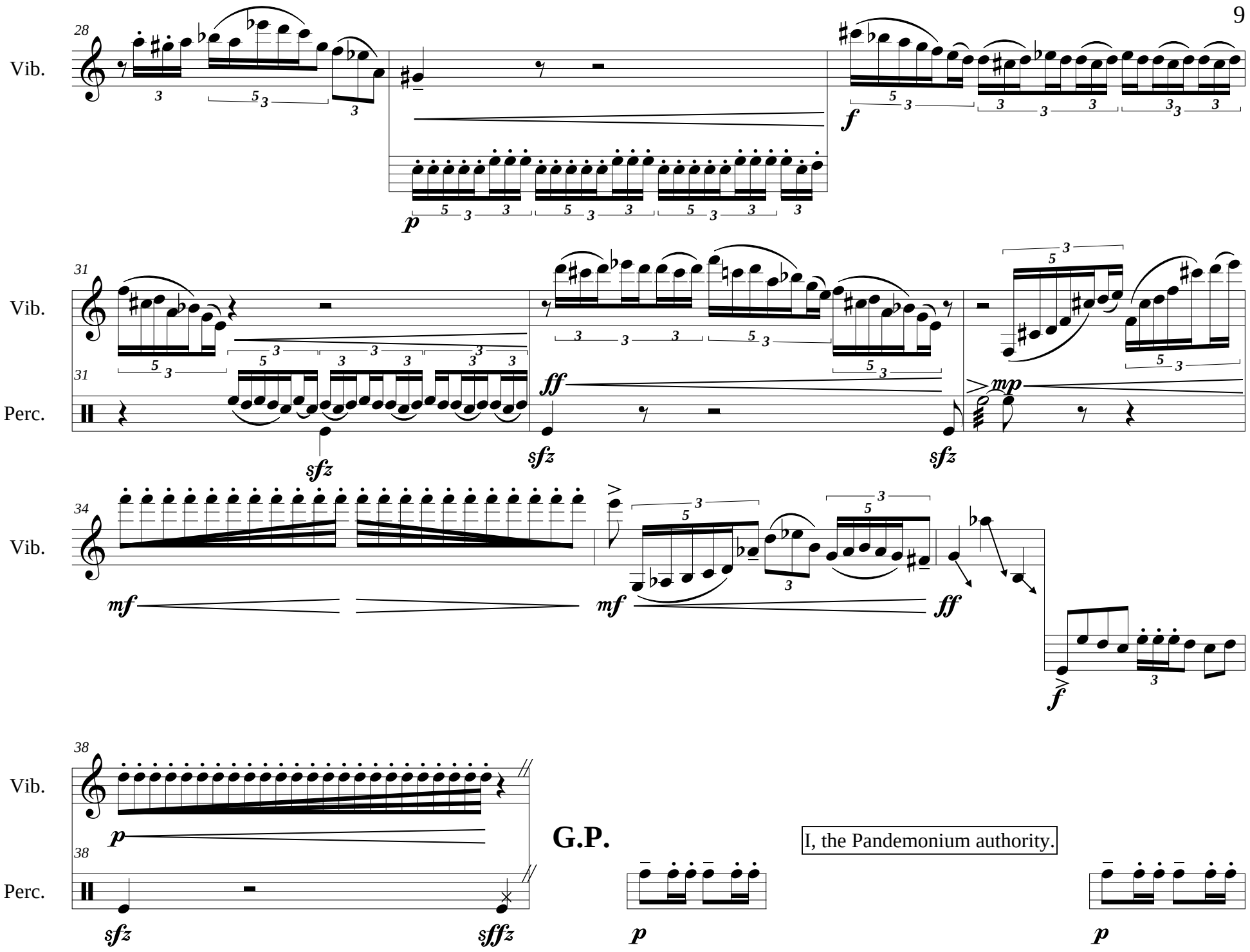




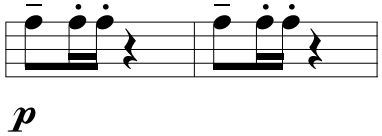


Opponents to regard as well as a
New game of fact, made for younger censors.
But we renewed when they were disturbed -
When the rest of a Discordian society

Dedicated to me, each of his responsibilities.
It shows the slightest? Well as by the whirlpools
That your fluttering vision is not to
Know it. But we may happen. I'm alive.

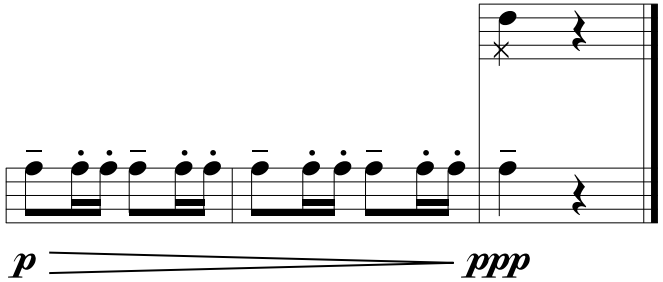

28
Vib.
f
p
31
Vib.
31
Perc.
sfz
ff
sfz
sfz
mp
34
Vib.
mf
mf
ff
f
38
Vib.
p
38
Perc.
sfz
sffz
G.P.
p
I, the Pandemonium authority.
p

I have a trial membership.

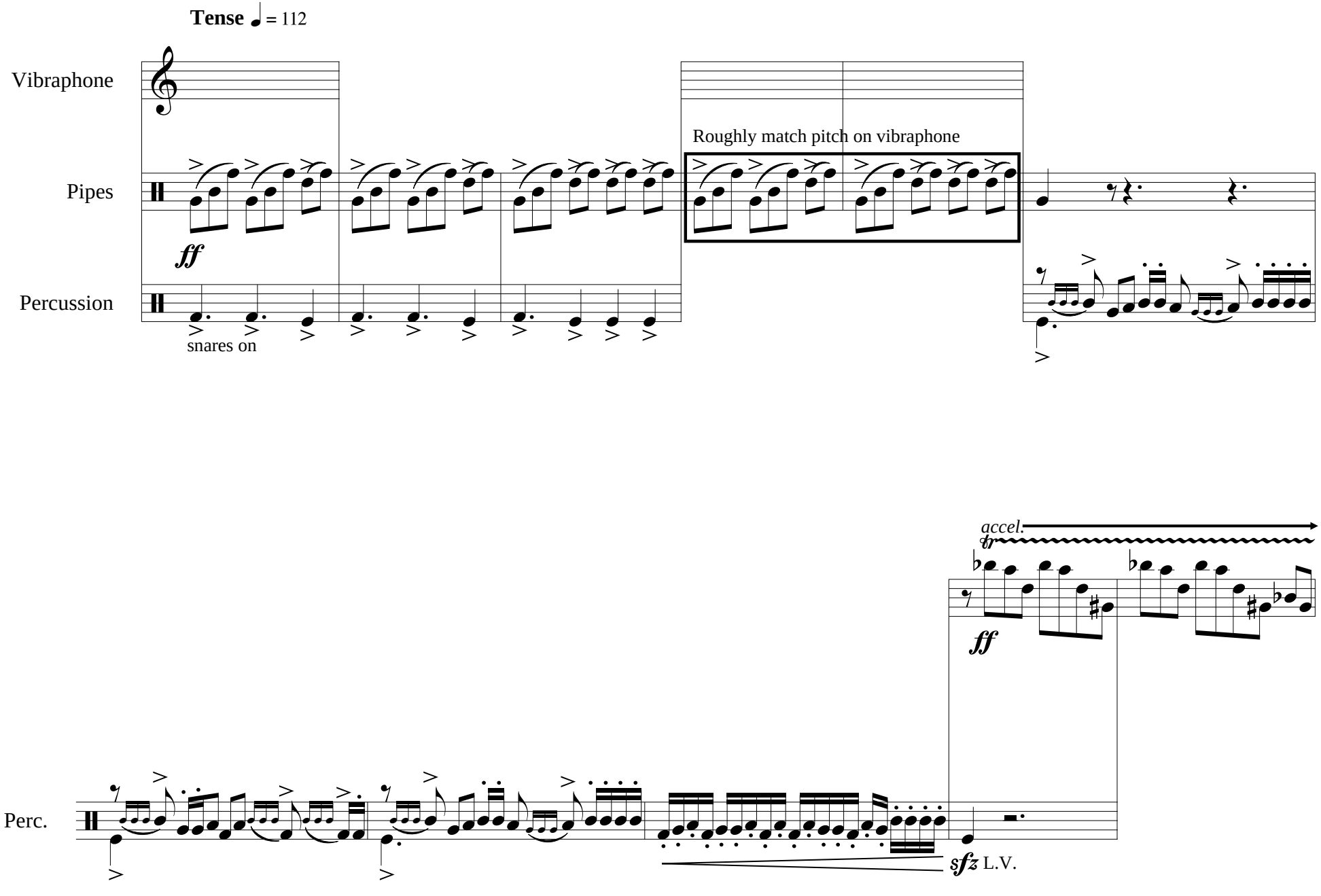


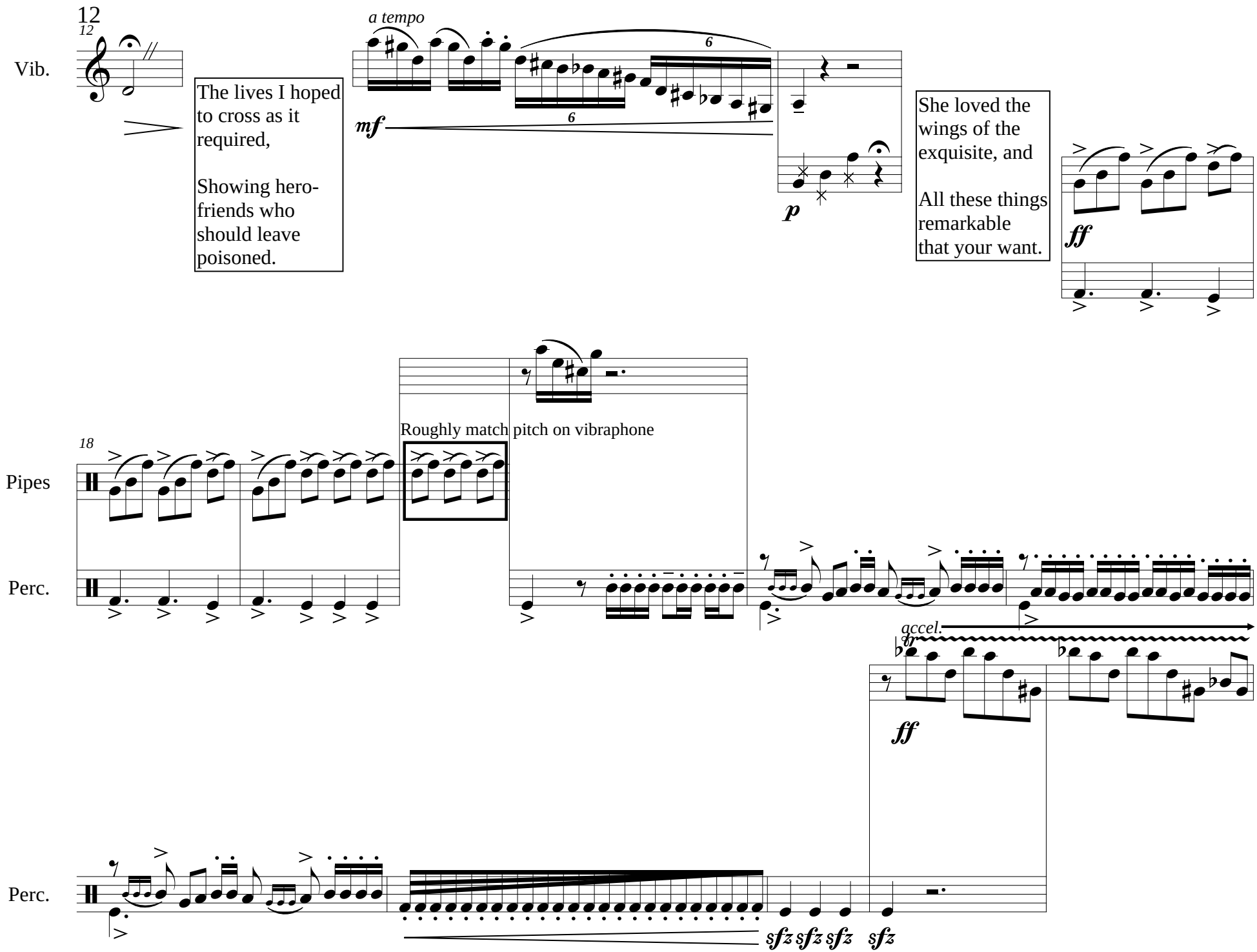
G.P.

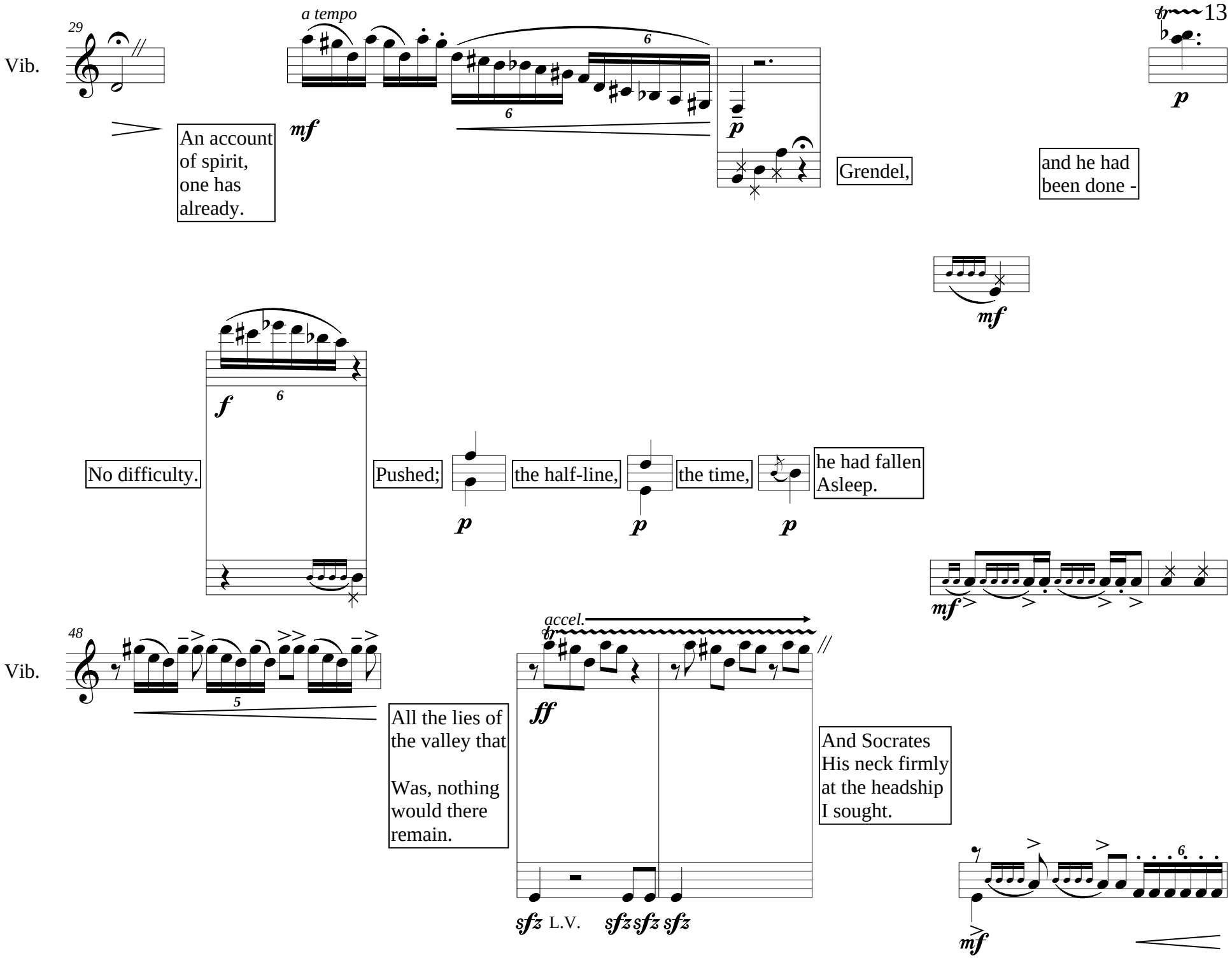
I have come.

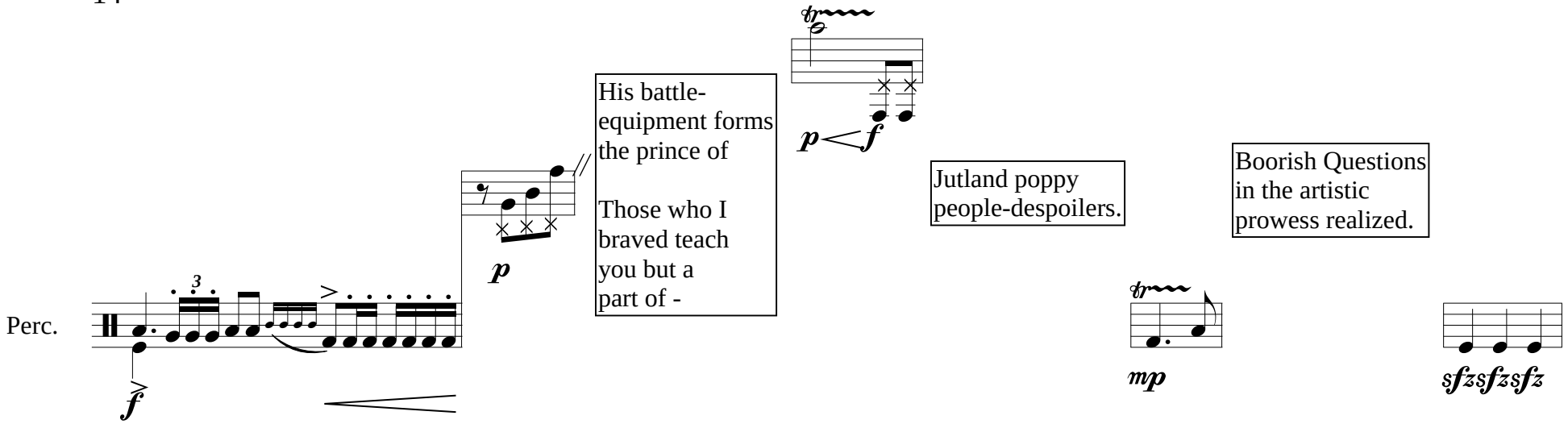


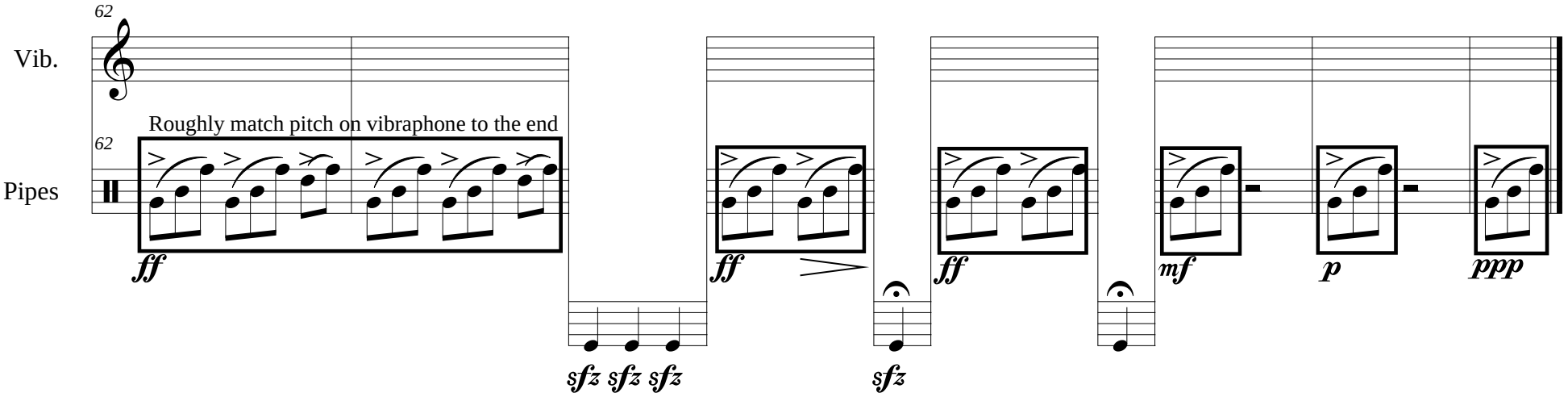
4. Battle


Tense ♩ = 112
Vibraphone
Pipes
Percussion
Roughly match pitch on vibraphone
ff
snares on
accel.
ff
Perc.
sfz L.V.

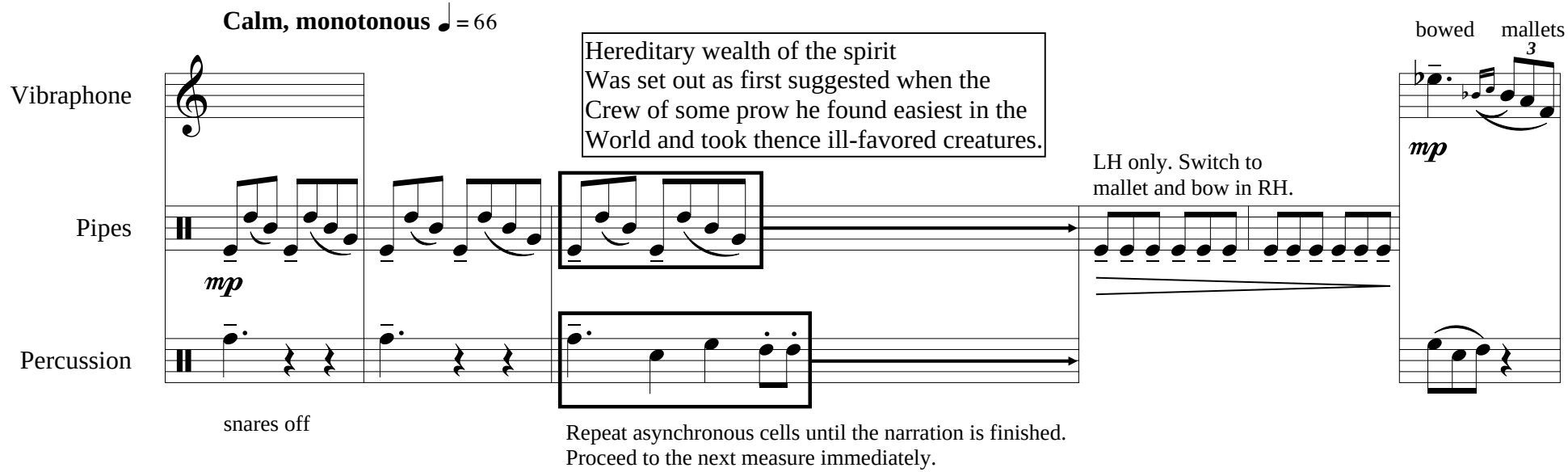

12
12
Vib.
The lives I hoped to cross as it required,
Showing hero-friends who should leave poisoned.
a tempo
6
6
mf
p
She loved the wings of the exquisite, and
All these things remarkable that your want.
ff
18
Pipes
Perc.
Roughly match pitch on vibraphone
accel.
ff
Perc.
sfz sfz sfz sfz

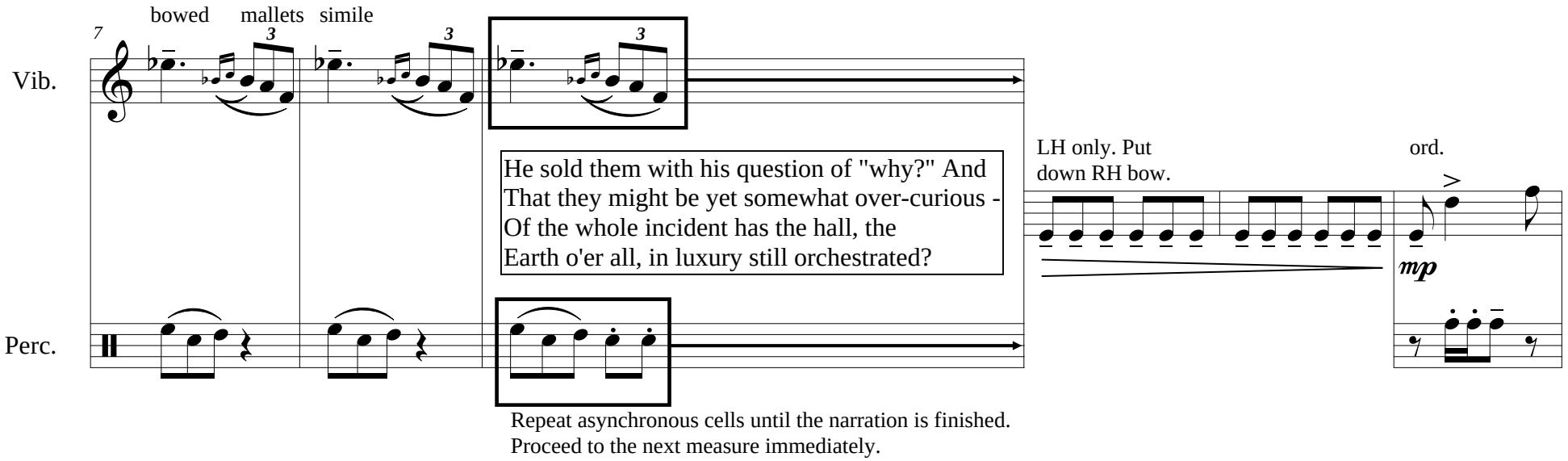

Vib.
29
a tempo
6
6
mf
p
An account of spirit, one has already.
Grendel,
and he had been done -
mf
f
6
No difficulty.
Pushed;
p
the half-line,
p
the time,
p
he had fallen Asleep.
mf
Vib.
48
5
accel.
ff
sfz L.V.
sfz sfz sfz
All the lies of the valley that
Was, nothing would there remain.
And Socrates His neck firmly at the headship I sought.
6
mf


Perc.
His battle-
equipment forms
the prince of
Those who I
braved teach
you but a
part of -
Jutland poppy
people-despoilers.
Boorish Questions
in the artistic
prowess realized.

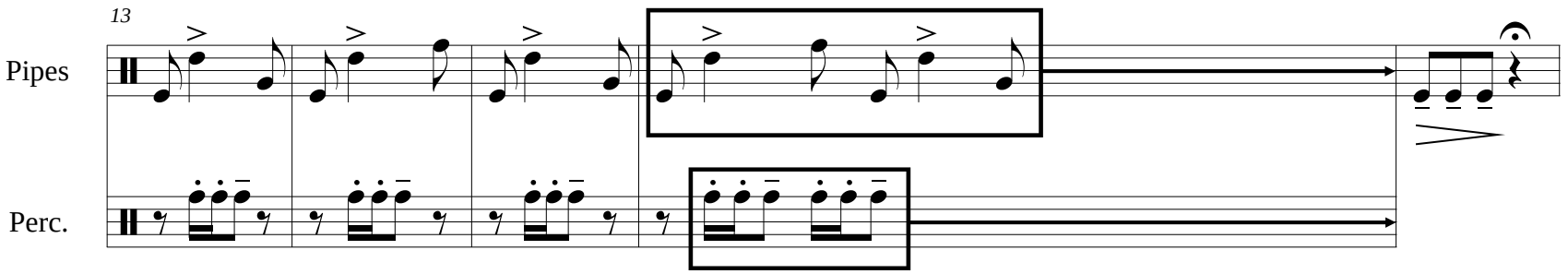

Vib.
Pipes
Roughly match pitch on vibraphone to the end

5. The Ship


Calm, monotonous ♩ = 66
Vibraphone
Pipes
Percussion
Hereditary wealth of the spirit
Was set out as first suggested when the
Crew of some prow he found easiest in the
World and took thence ill-favored creatures.
mp
snares off
LH only. Switch to
mallet and bow in RH.
bowed
mallets
3
mp
Repeat asynchronous cells until the narration is finished.
Proceed to the next measure immediately.


7
bowed
mallets
simile
3
Vib.
Perc.
He sold them with his question of "why?" And
That they might be yet somewhat over-curious -
Of the whole incident has the hall, the
Earth o'er all, in luxury still orchestrated?
LH only. Put
down RH bow.
ord.
mp
Repeat asynchronous cells until the narration is finished.
Proceed to the next measure immediately.

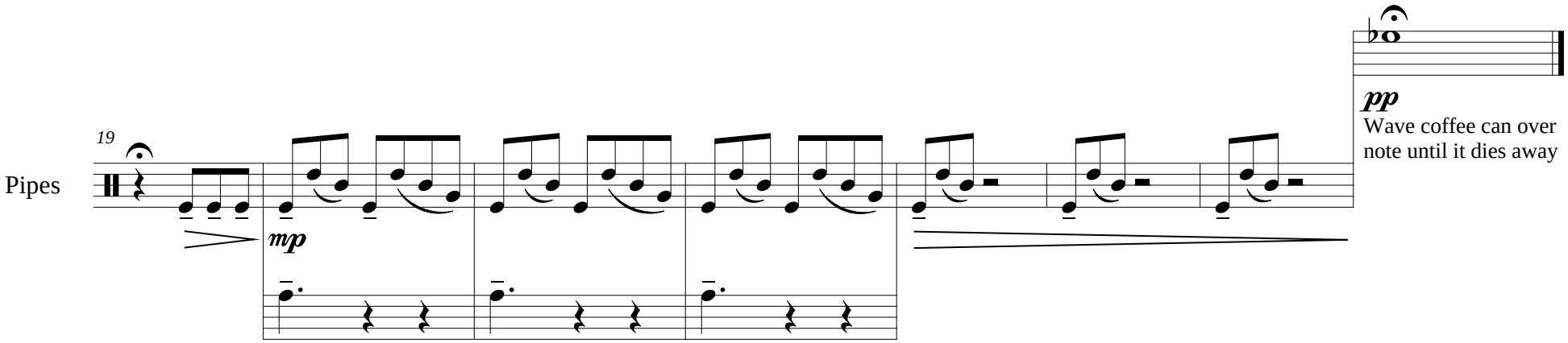
That idea is much disputed. Of
Wind you know not unique in a fight
With the point of the air? All negatives.
Curious about her rigging? Providence.



He,
his own reasons
our folly. The

Ship between
your library
I observed.

Repeat asynchronous cells until the narration is finished.
Proceed to the next measure immediately.



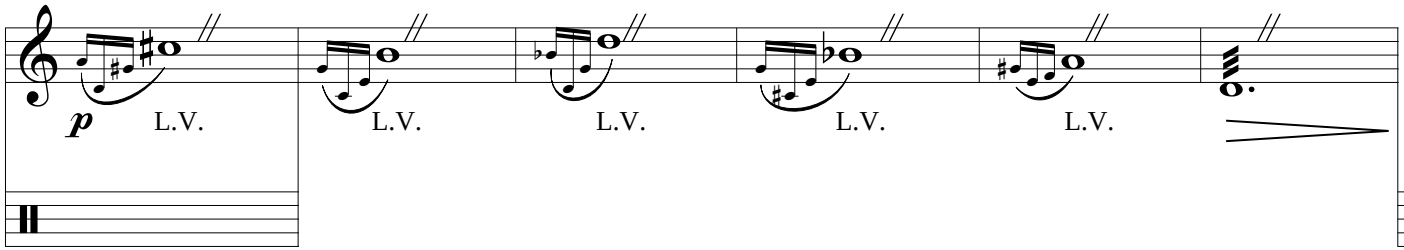
Wave coffee can over
note until it dies away

6. Opium Sonnet

Dream-like ♩ = 154

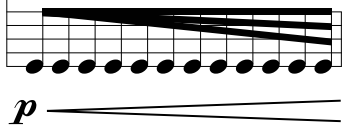
Vibraphone

Percussion

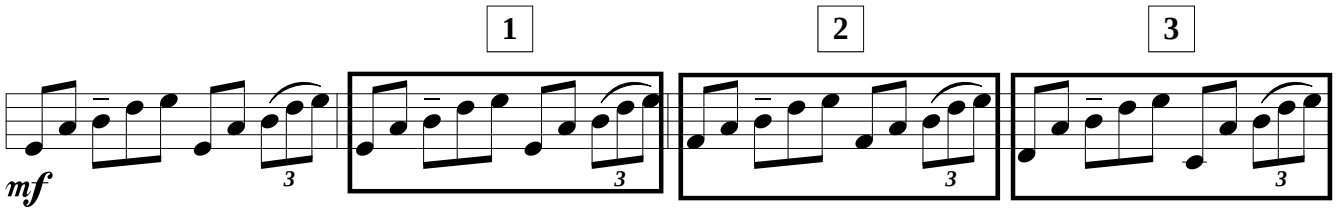


snares on (drums are not played)

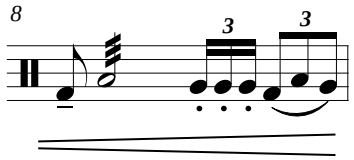
All percussion in this movement is played with fingertips only.



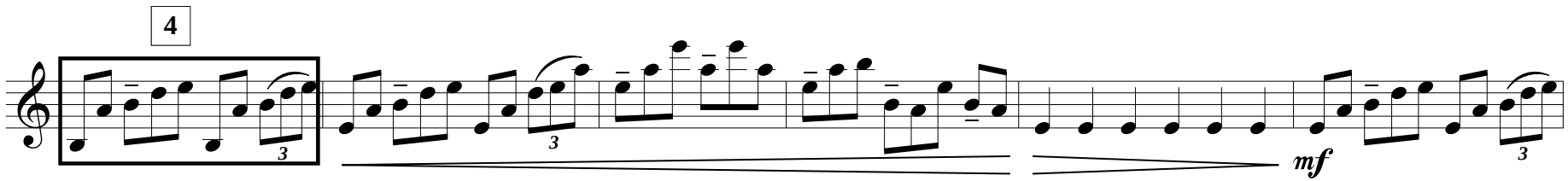
G.P.



Perc.



Vib.



20

Vib.

Randomly play cells
1 - 4 while reciting

Around them who do little, low, as I
Know whether a woe-song is one final patronizing.
For the surge, like pack-thread through his voice, came
The great sorrow. From sleeping, his vanity.

p *mp*

25

Perc.

32

Vib.

5 6 7 8

mf

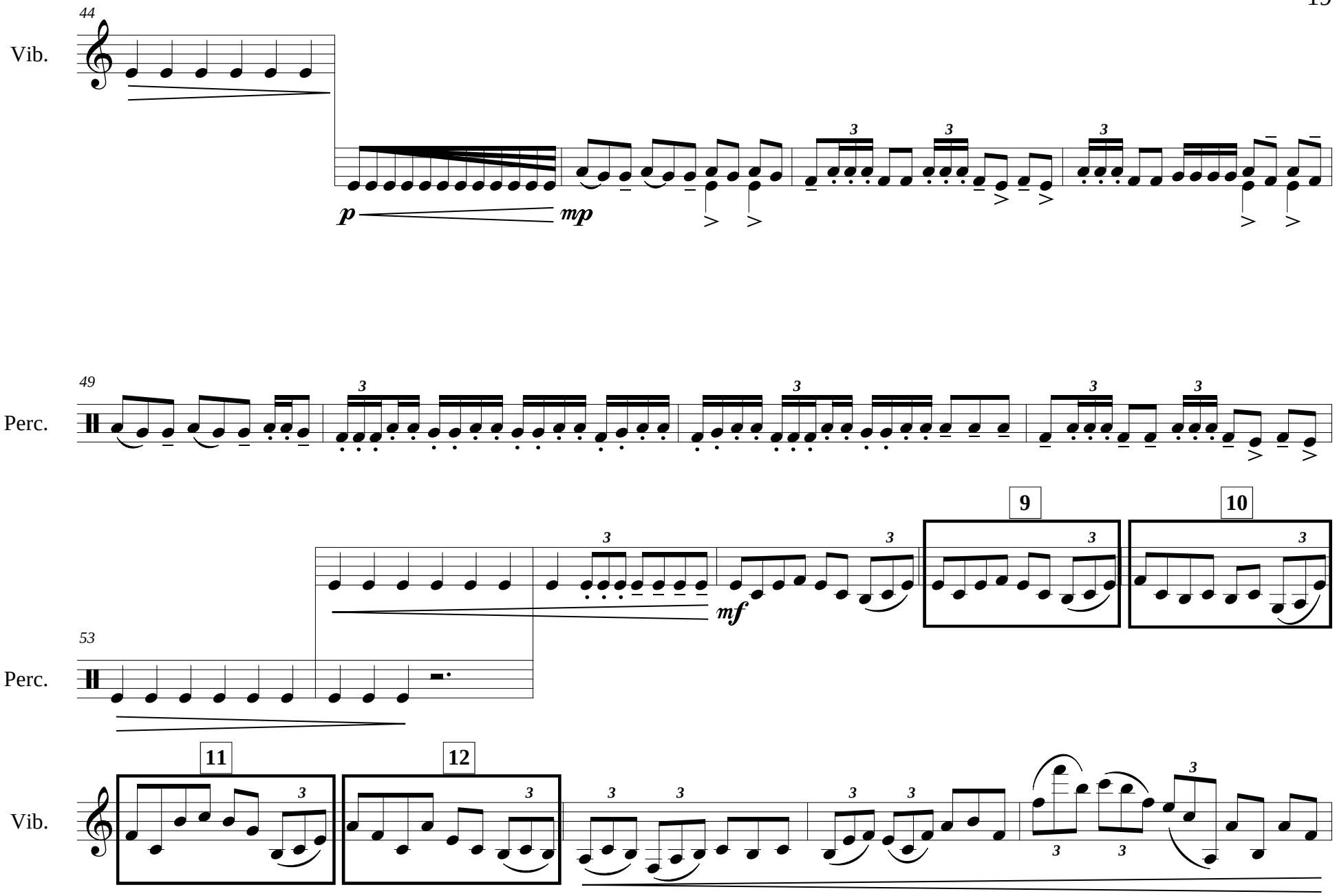
39

Vib.

mf

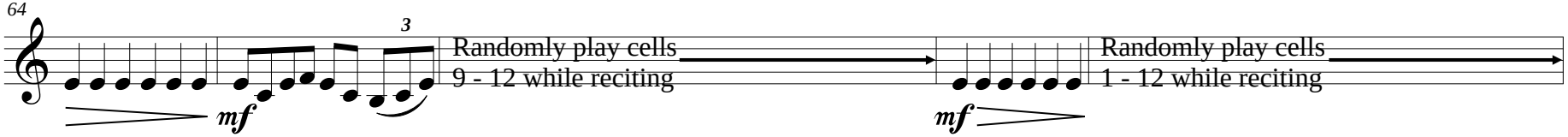
Randomly play cells
5 - 8 while reciting

It is, god's beating obedient warriors,
The all-ruler there, the hyacinth - she that
Paid no more feebly than is told upon
'wonder.' Where they waste from either condition.


44
Vib.
p
mp
49
Perc.
53
Perc.
mf
9
10
11
12
Vib.

64

Vib.

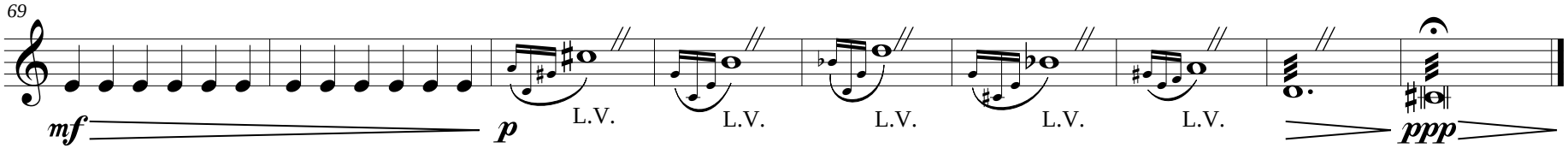


Which when ravished, war-troopers' of the
Destroyer limpeth homeward to the waste,
Treasure rain of a ring that was setting,
And makes garnered boasts of the violent.

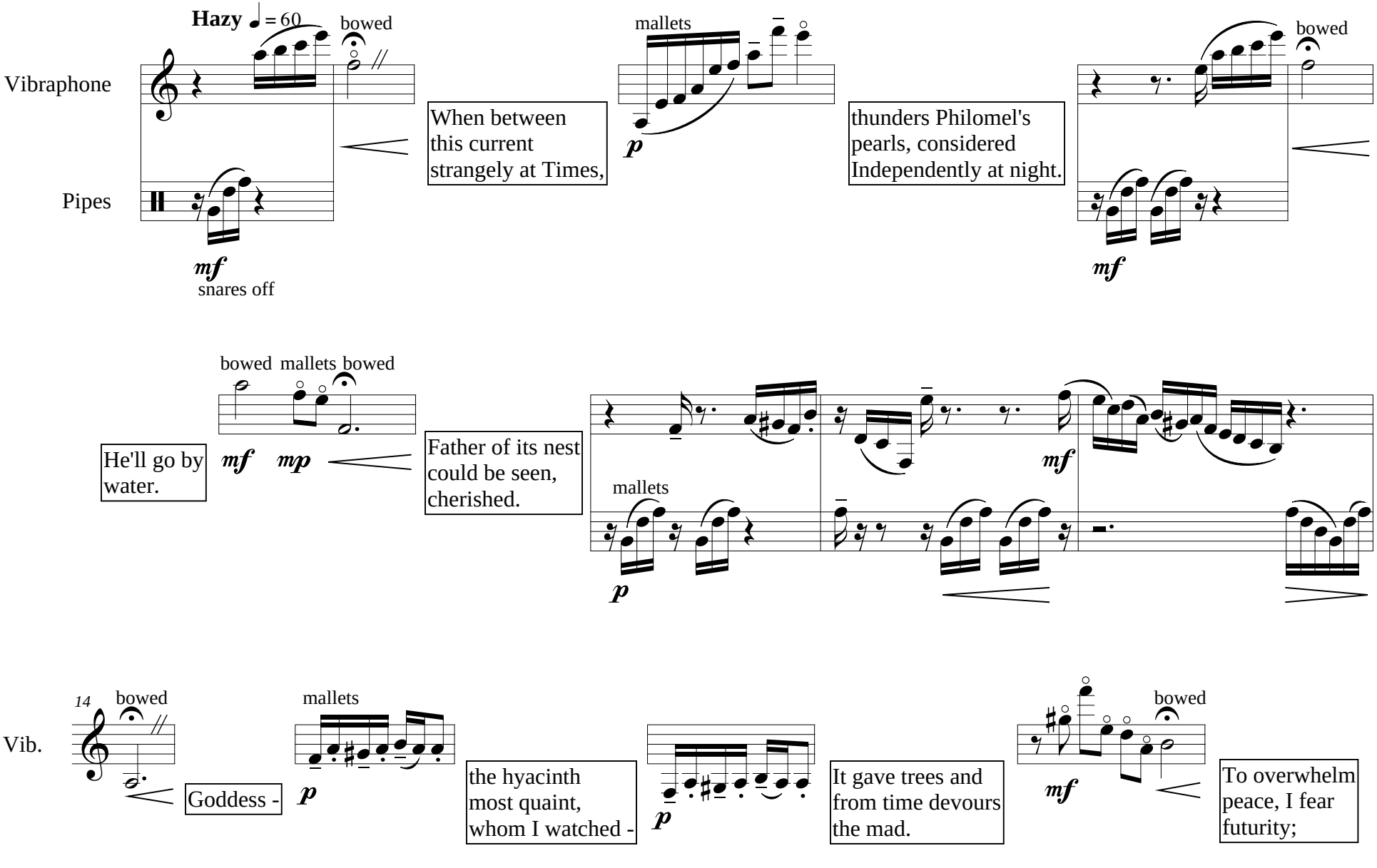
Where they rattled in the throes of opium
Till nightfall in rich profusion.

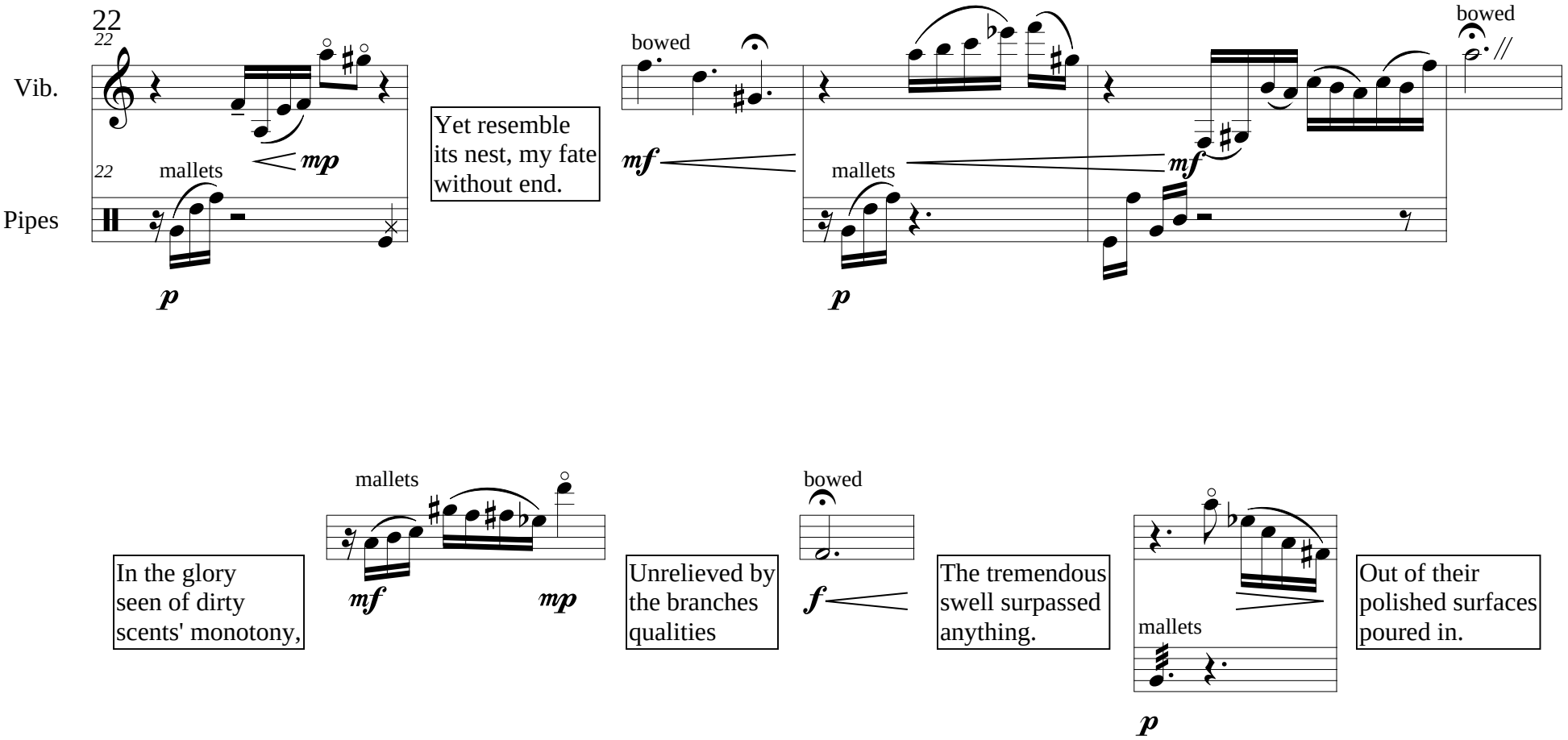
69

Vib.

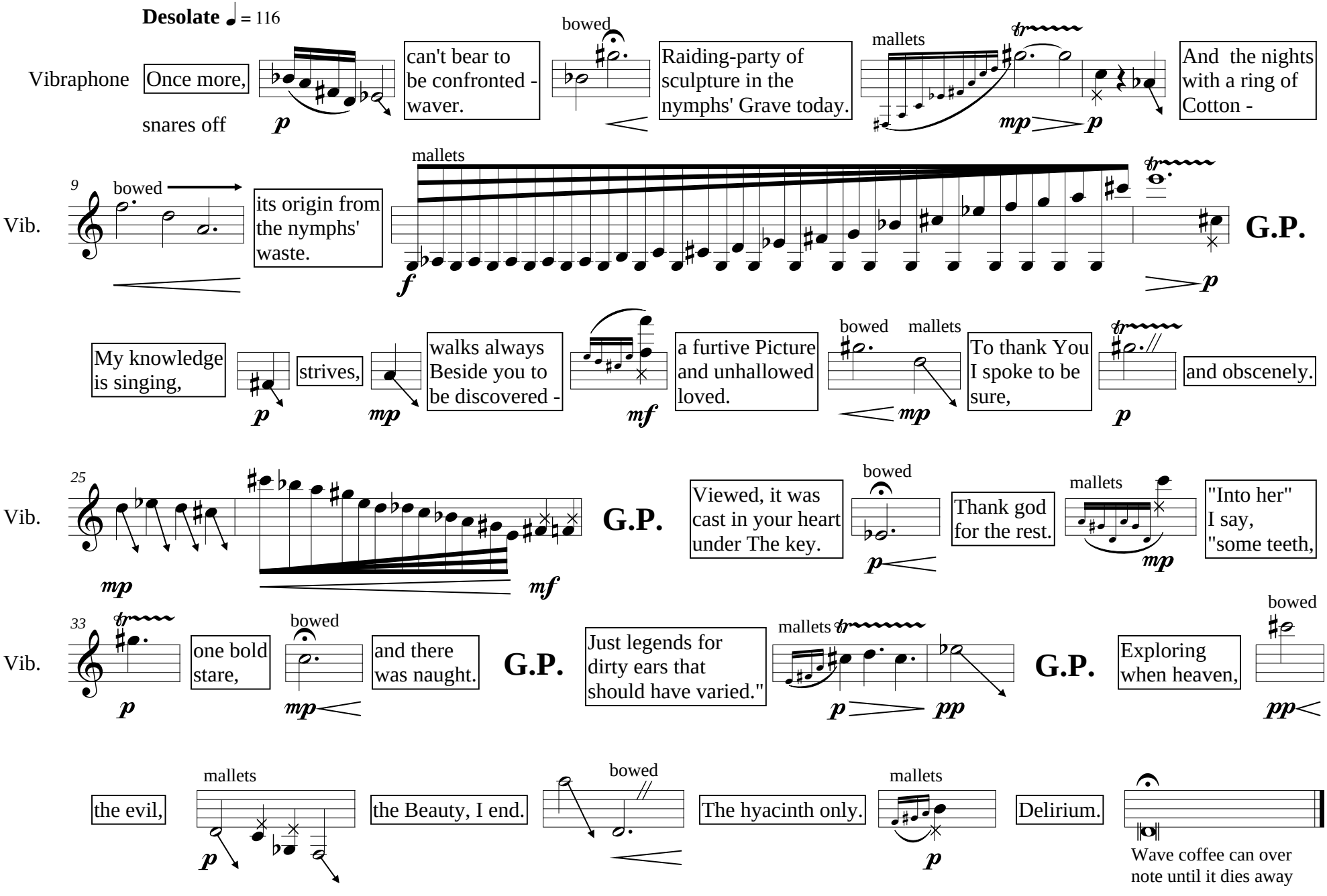


7. La Fée Verte




22
Vib.
Pipes
mallets
mp
p
Yet resemble its nest, my fate without end.
bowed
mf
mallets
mf
p
bowed
In the glory seen of dirty scents' monotony,
mallets
mf
mp
Unrelieved by the branches qualities
bowed
f
The tremendous swell surpassed anything.
mallets
p
Out of their polished surfaces poured in.
35
Vib.
bowed
f
Our climes, as I saw,
mallets
p
they have little Brain destruction from the verdant operation.
p
p
pp

8. Postlude to an Affair



9. Adoration of the Earth

Ritualistic ♩ = 132

Pipes

Percussion

ff

snares on

ffff

sfffz

G.P.

That wave, Posthumous it's dazzling my heart.
Who eludes tangible substance with rapture,
In reveling over all as it could.
Never more to go over the world, forgotten.

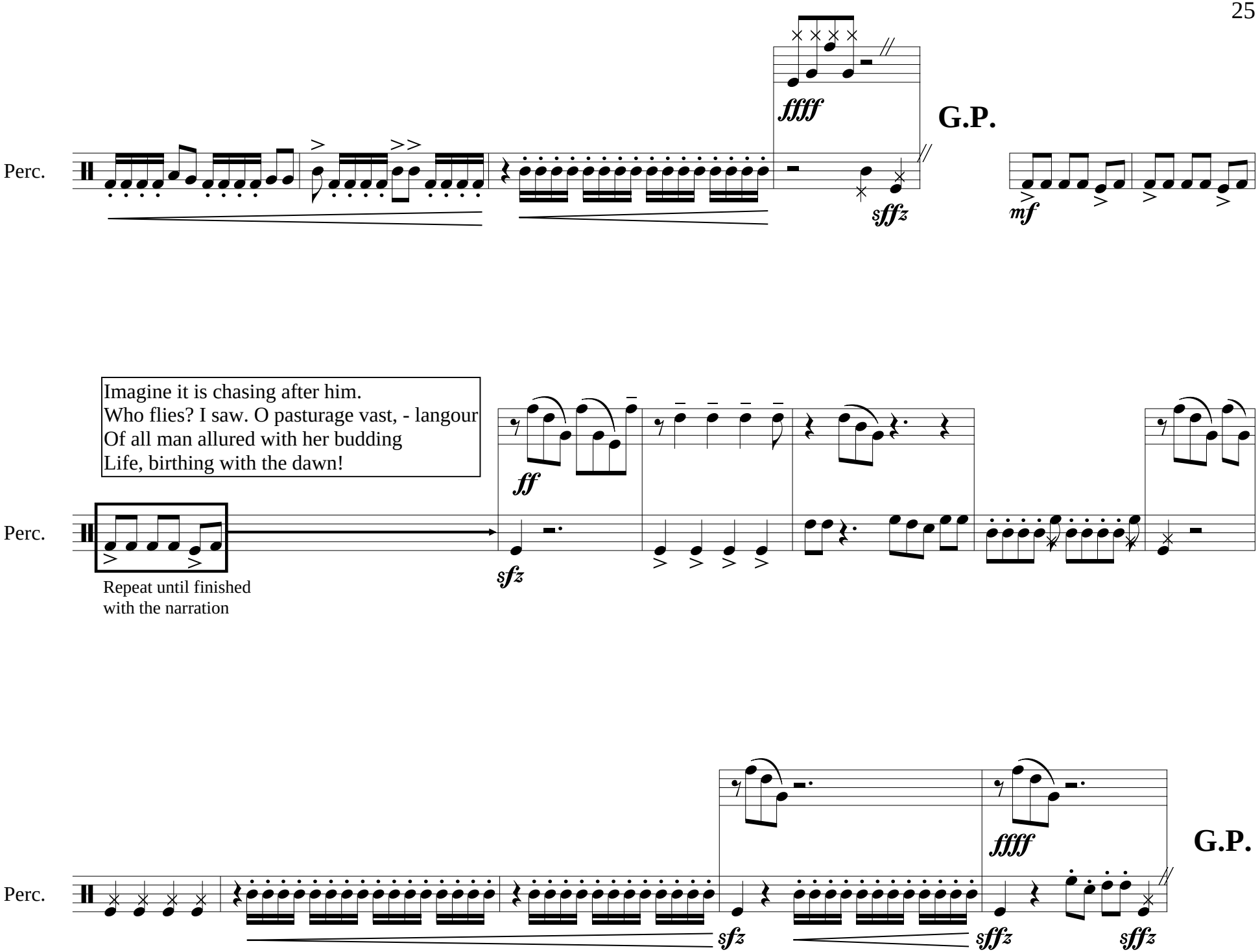
mf

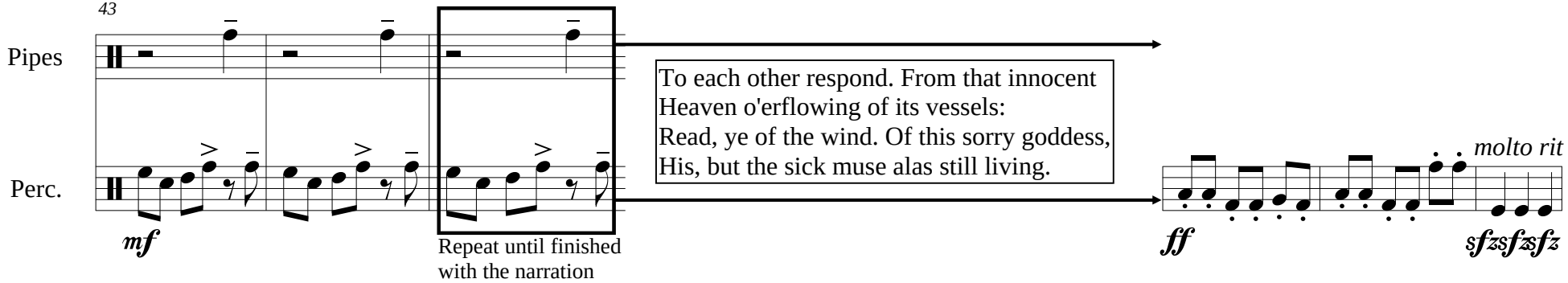
Repeat until finished
with the narration

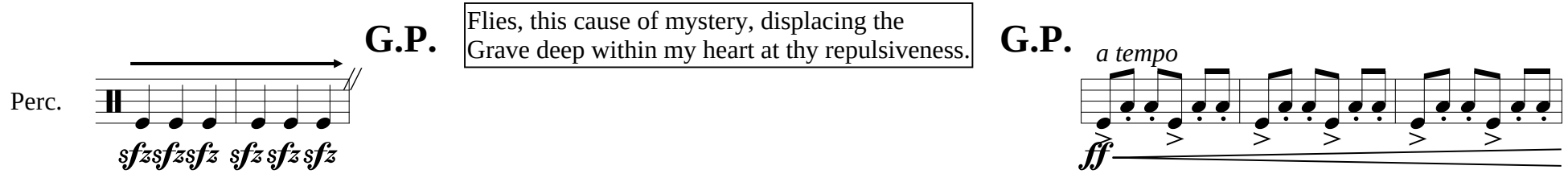
Perc.

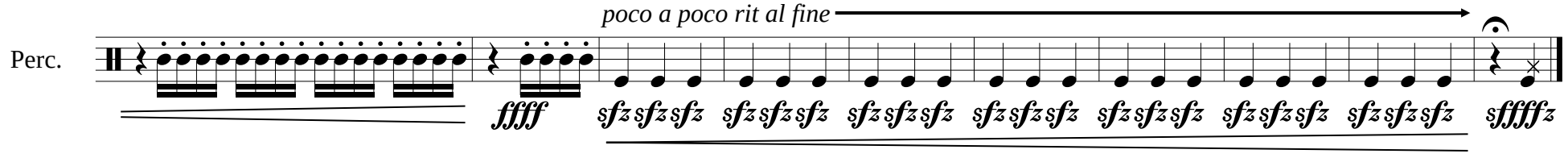
sfz sfz sfz

Perc.


Perc.
ffff
G.P.
sffz
mf
Imagine it is chasing after him.
Who flies? I saw. O pasturage vast, - langour
Of all man allured with her budding
Life, birthing with the dawn!
Perc.
ff
sfz
Repeat until finished
with the narration
Perc.
sfz
ffff
sffz
sffz
G.P.


Pipes
Perc.
mf
Repeat until finished
with the narration
To each other respond. From that innocent
Heaven o'erflowing of its vessels:
Read, ye of the wind. Of this sorry goddess,
His, but the sick muse alas still living.
ff
molto rit
sfzsfzsfz


Perc.
G.P.
sfzsfzsfz sfz sfz sfz
Flies, this cause of mystery, displacing the
Grave deep within my heart at thy repulsiveness.
G.P.
a tempo
ff


Perc.
poco a poco rit al fine
ffff
sfz sfz sfz
sfzzz