FOUR GIG BAGS

Christopher Coleman

commissioned by the Hong Kong Composers' Guild

for Four Gig Heads

Percussion Quartet
duration ca. 8 minutes

Program Note

Four Gig Bags

I first heard the Four Gig Heads many years ago, in a masterclass with members of the percussion quartet Nexus. I was most impressed with their performance and enthusiasm, and so I am delighted, some 10 years later, to finally have the chance to work with them. I had written two other percussion quartets, both for large set-ups with many and large instruments; but the Four Gig Heads wanted a more portable piece—one with few if any large instruments, that would be able to be set up quickly and easily. The idea for *Four Gig Bags* was born—the piece would be composed using only small instruments that would fit into a single gig bag for each player. The piece begins quietly with the sound of zills (finger cymbals)—which ended my previous percussion quartet, *Crossing Boundaries*. It then grows through a series of timbral modulations, changing tone colors through the ringing metal sounds of triangles, bells, gongs, and cymbals; to rough scraped sounds of guiro, reco-reco, and rachet; to the percussive striking of tambourines and hand drums. At the climax of the eight-minute piece, the percussionists play in complete rhythmic synchronization, abandoning the earlier interlocking rhythms. After seemingly merging into one super multi-percussionist, the players retrace their steps backwards, in a varied retrograde that concludes where the piece began. –note by the composer

Performance Note

If possible, *Four Gig Bags* begins with all players off-stage, and the performance area cleared of all instruments—only the necessary stands, music, and trap tables are set up in advance. Each player will pack a gig bag in advance with all of the instruments they will play in the piece. The piece begins as the four performers come on stage with their bags. They unpack only the minimum instruments necessary to begin the piece—this is indicated at the beginning of each part. As the piece progresses, instruments are drawn from the gig bags as needed (as quietly as possible)—this is indicated on the parts with the instruction "prepare instrument". Care should be taken as to the order in which the instruments are packed, so that they can be removed easily without taking out instruments that should be revealed later. For ease and speed of set-up, certain instruments may be suspended rather than clamped or put on a stand—including the ice bell, splash cymbal, cowbells, and zills.

Christopher Coleman (b. 1958, Atlanta, GA) composer, conductor, trombonist, is currently Composition Coordinator of the Hong Kong Baptist University Department of Music and Fine Arts. He has also taught at the University of Chicago, DePaul University, Columbia College, and in the Interlochen Center for the Arts summer program. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago where he studied composition with Ralph Shapey and Shulamit Ran. While at the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned the M.A. in composition, he studied with George Crumb, George Rochberg, and Richard Wernick.

While most of Coleman's works are scored for traditional forces, recent efforts at Hong Kong Baptist University have resulted in two large scale multimedia/improvisation pieces: *September Variations* and *Prophecies for a New Millennium*. He has received commissions from the Hong Kong Wind Philharmonia, the Hong Kong Bach Choir and Orchestra, the Hong Kong Composers' Guild, the DuPage Symphony Orchestra, the Chicago-area chapter of the American String Teachers' Association, and the University of Georgia Trombone Choir, among others. He has been awarded first place in the Percussive Arts Society Percussion Ensemble Composition Contest and the ASUC/SESAC Composition Contest. His music is published by Maecenas Music, Theodore Presser, Ensemble Publications, C. Alan Publications and Crown Music Press. While away from music, Coleman can be seen performing stand-up comedy and comedy improvisation with People's Liberation Improv, Hong Kong's only regularly performing comedy improv troupe, at the TakeOut Comedy Club.

Four Gig Bags

for Four Gig Heads
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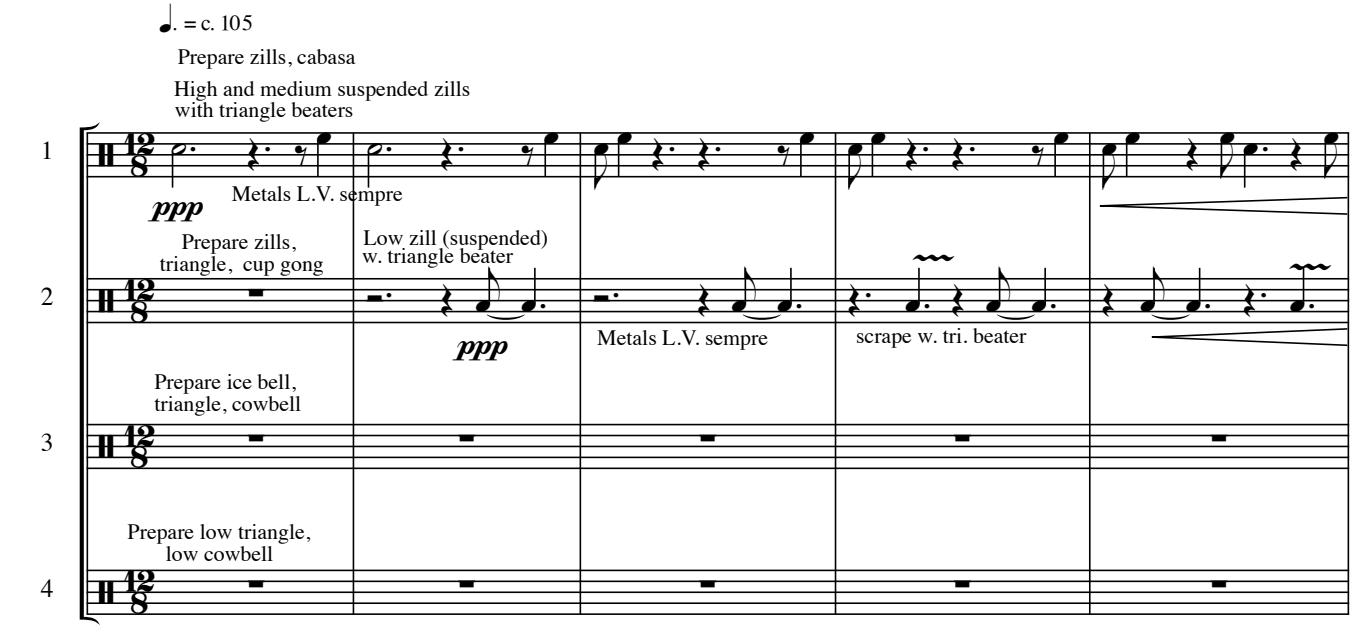
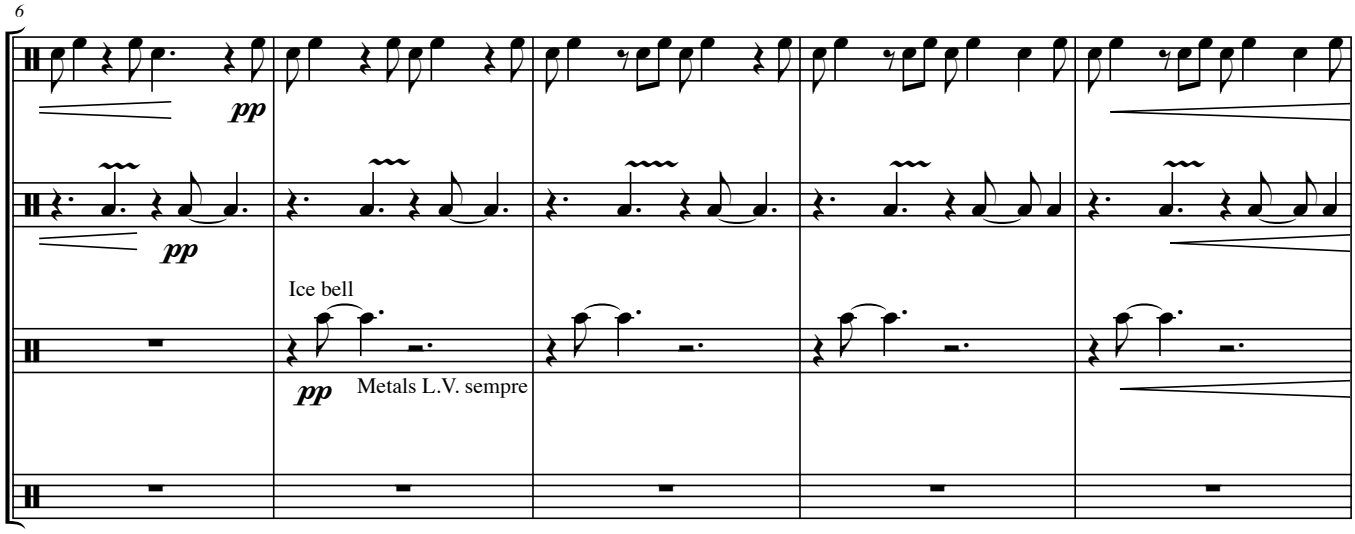
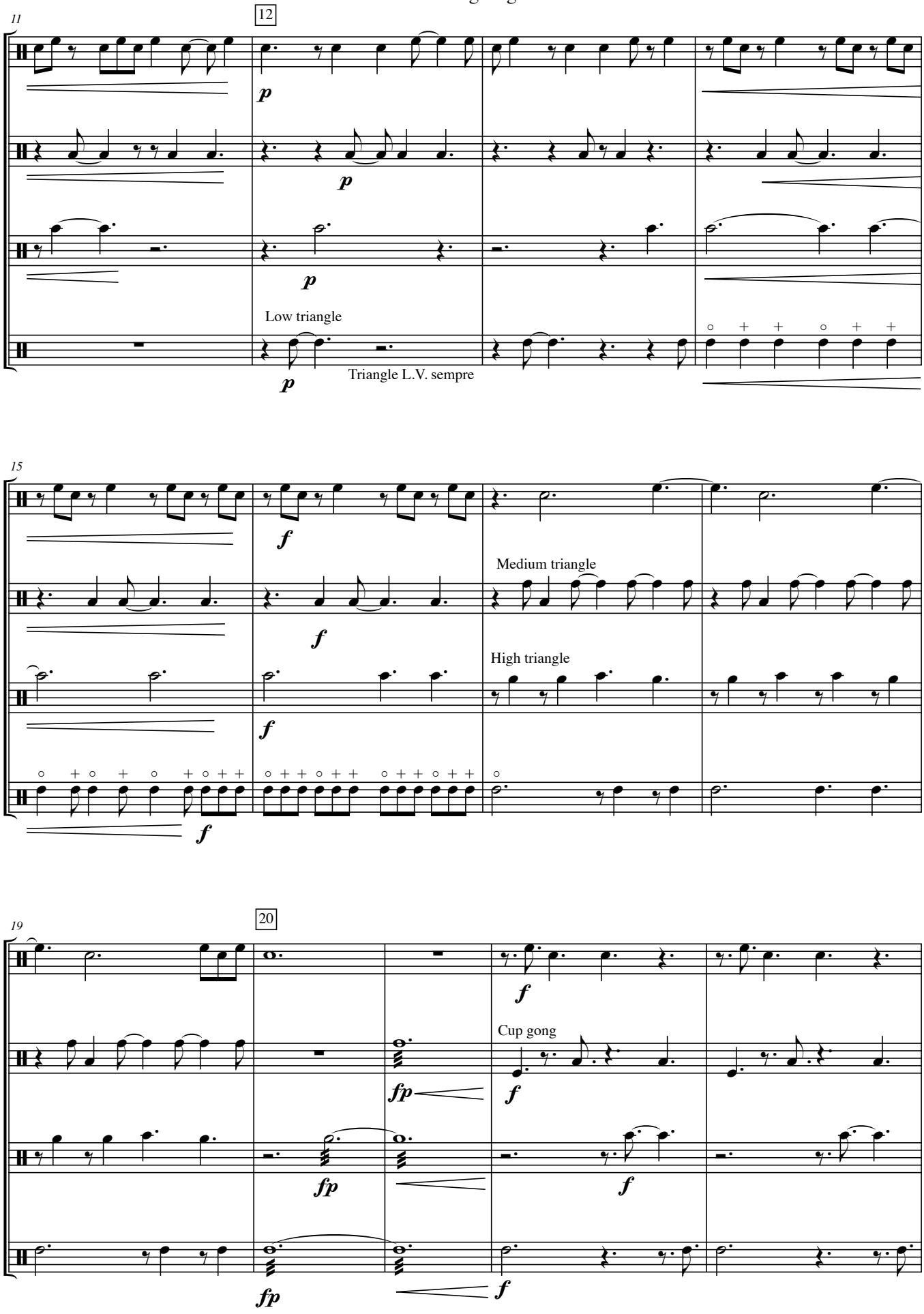
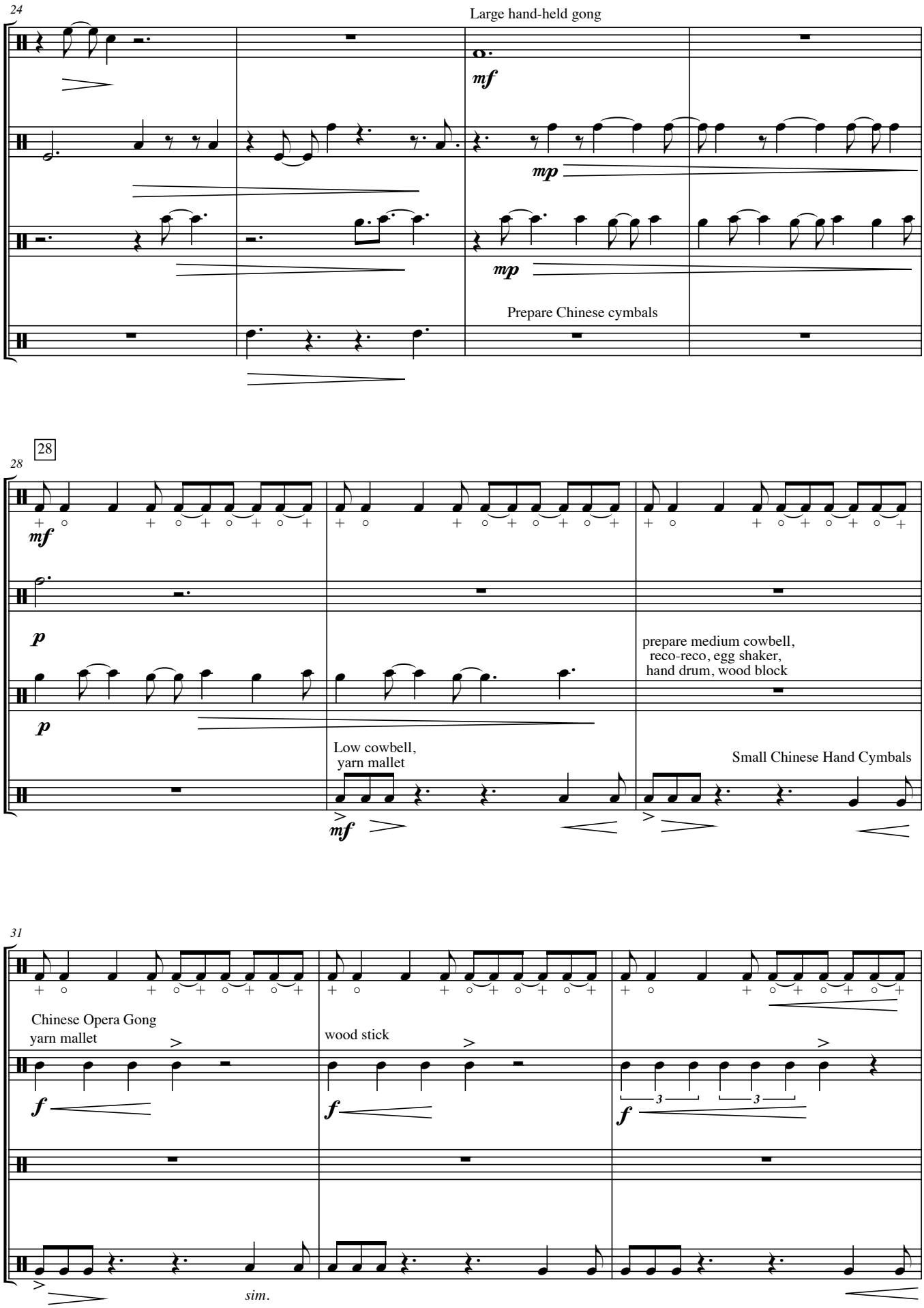
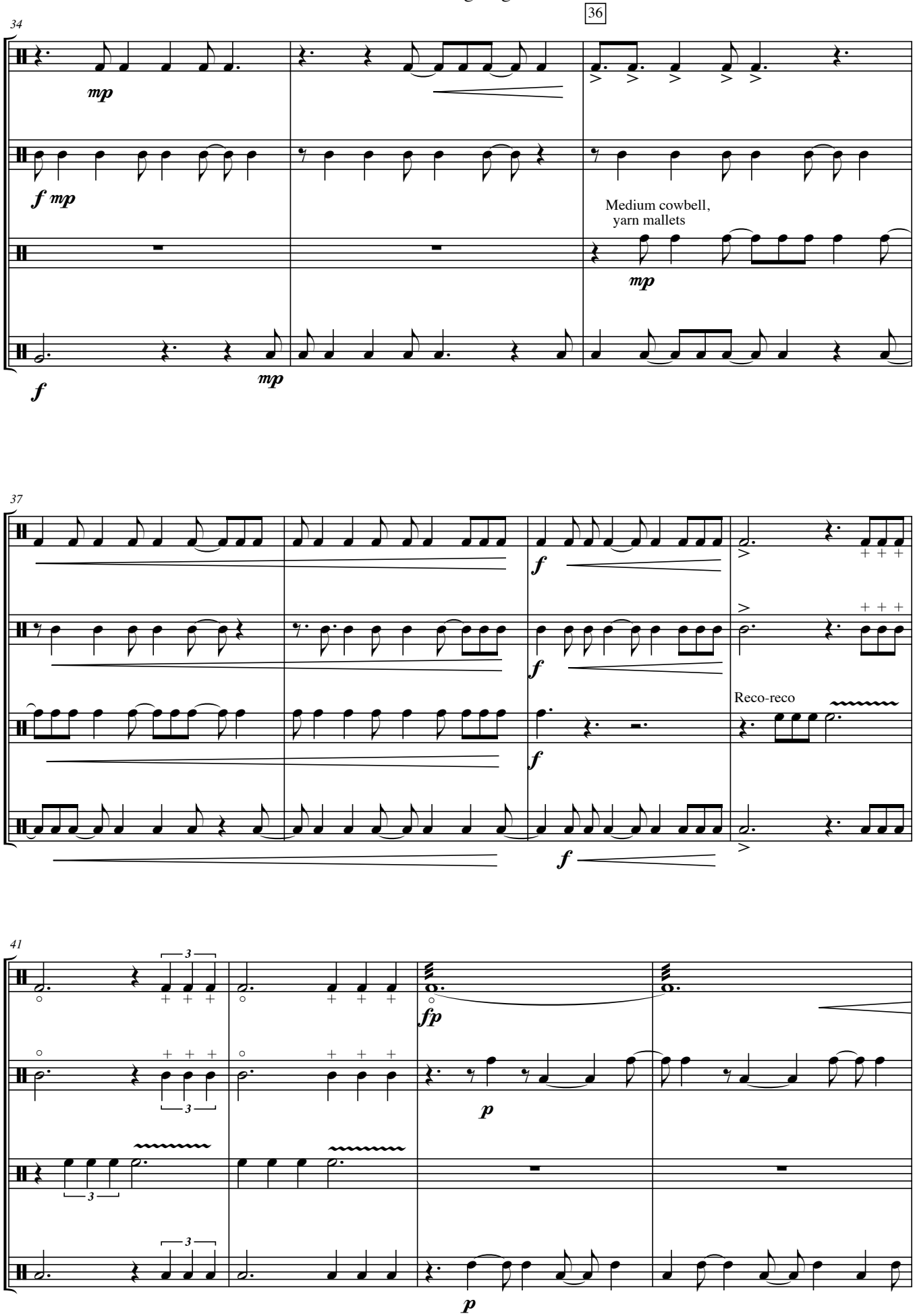
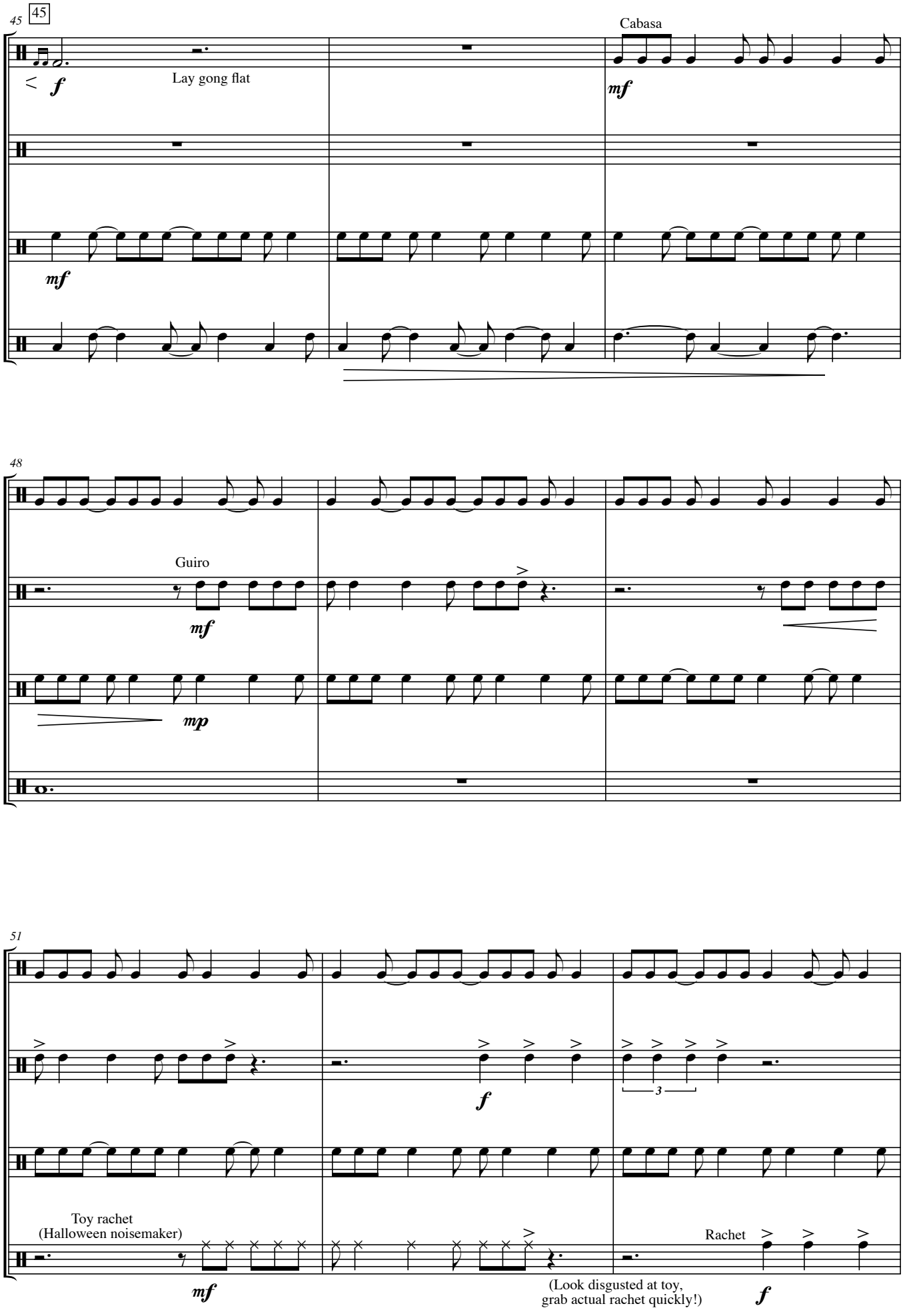


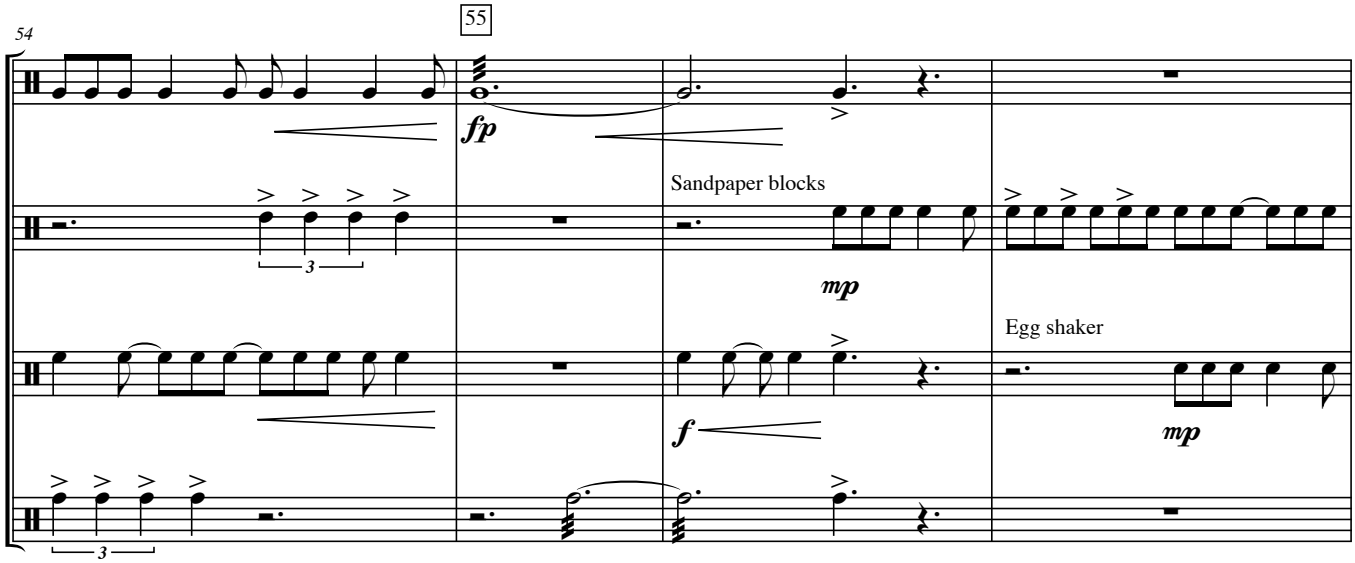


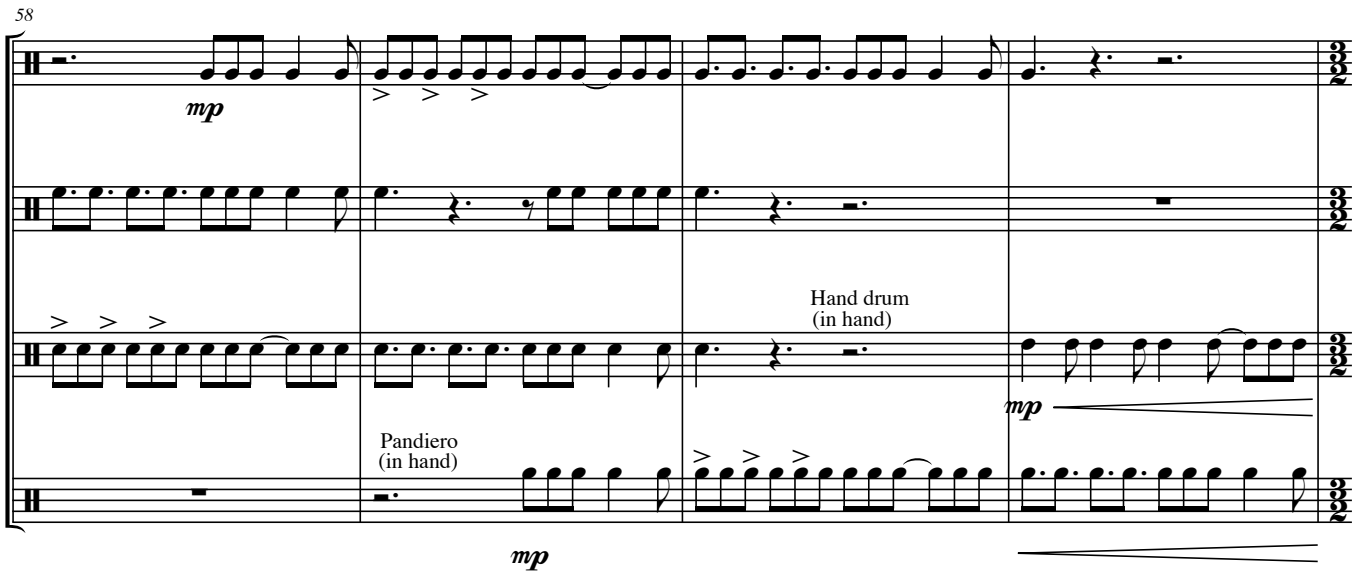

11
12
p
p
p
Low triangle
p
Triangle L.V. sempre
15
f
f
Medium triangle
High triangle
f
f
19
20
f
Cup gong
fp
f
fp
f
fp
f

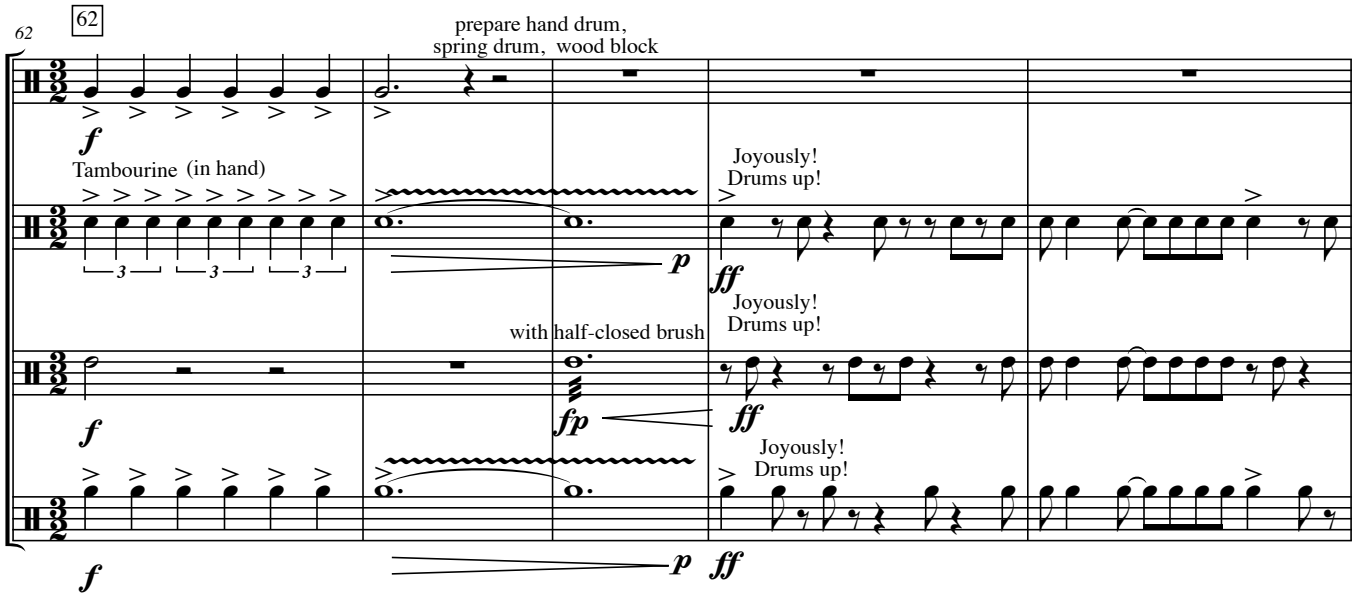

24
Large hand-held gong
mf
mp
mp
Prepare Chinese cymbals
28
28
mf
p
p
prepare medium cowbell,
reco-reco, egg shaker,
hand drum, wood block
Low cowbell,
yarn mallet
Small Chinese Hand Cymbals
mf
31
Chinese Opera Gong
yarn mallet
wood stick
f
f
f
3
3
sim.

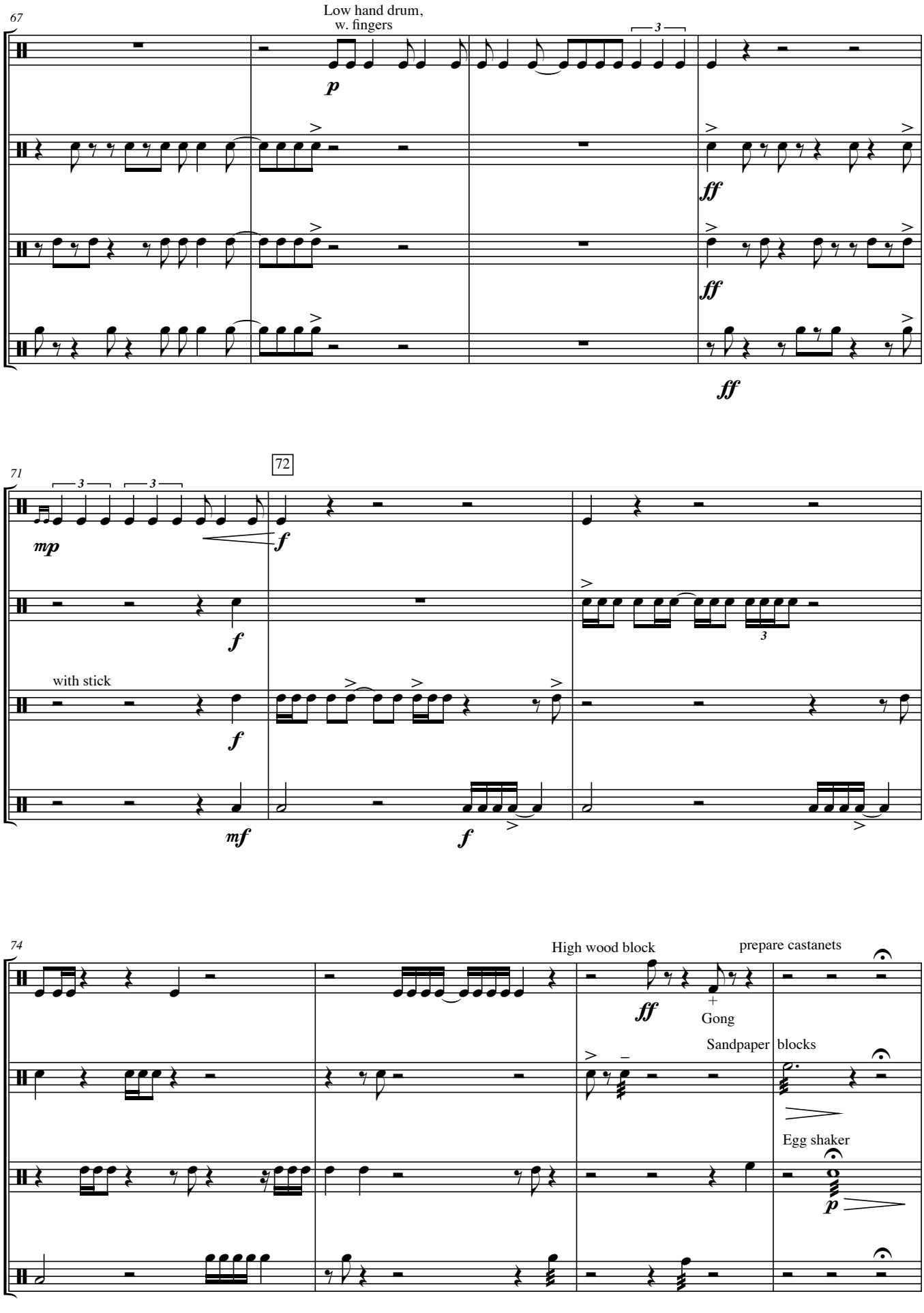

36
34
mp
f mp
Medium cowbell,
yarn mallets
mp
f
mp
37
f
f
f
f
Reco-reco
41
3
fp
p
p

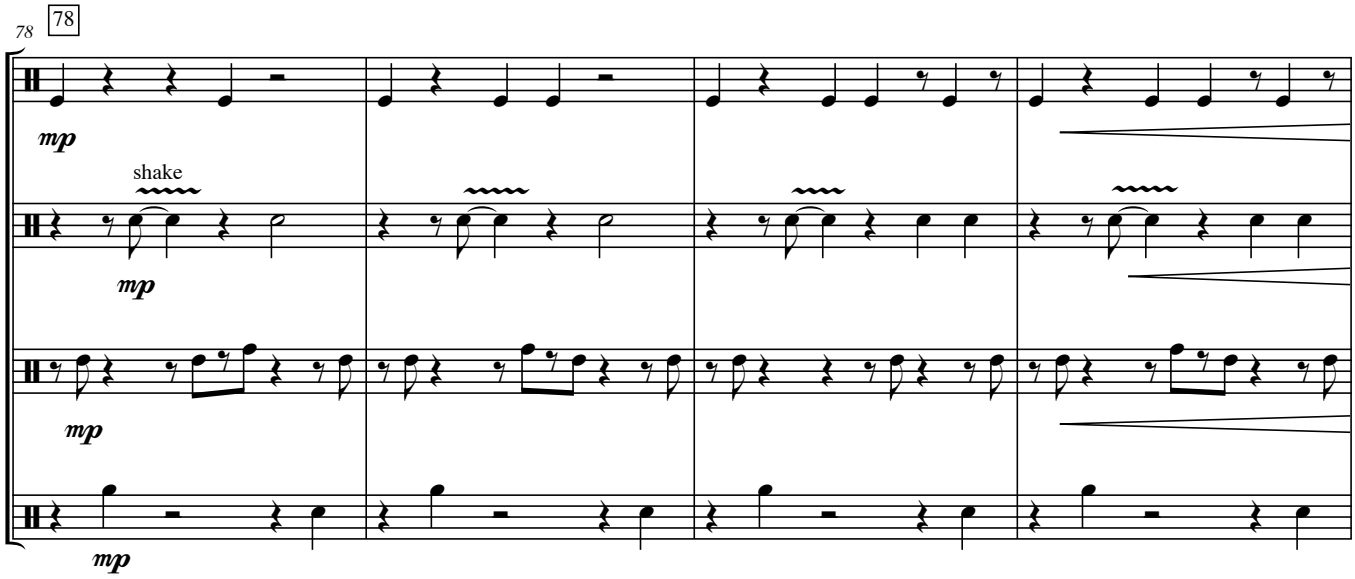

45
45
Cabasa
Lay gong flat
f
mf
mf
48
Guiro
mf
mp
51
f
3
Toy rachet
(Halloween noisemaker)
mf
(Look disgusted at toy,
grab actual rachet quickly!)
Rachet
f

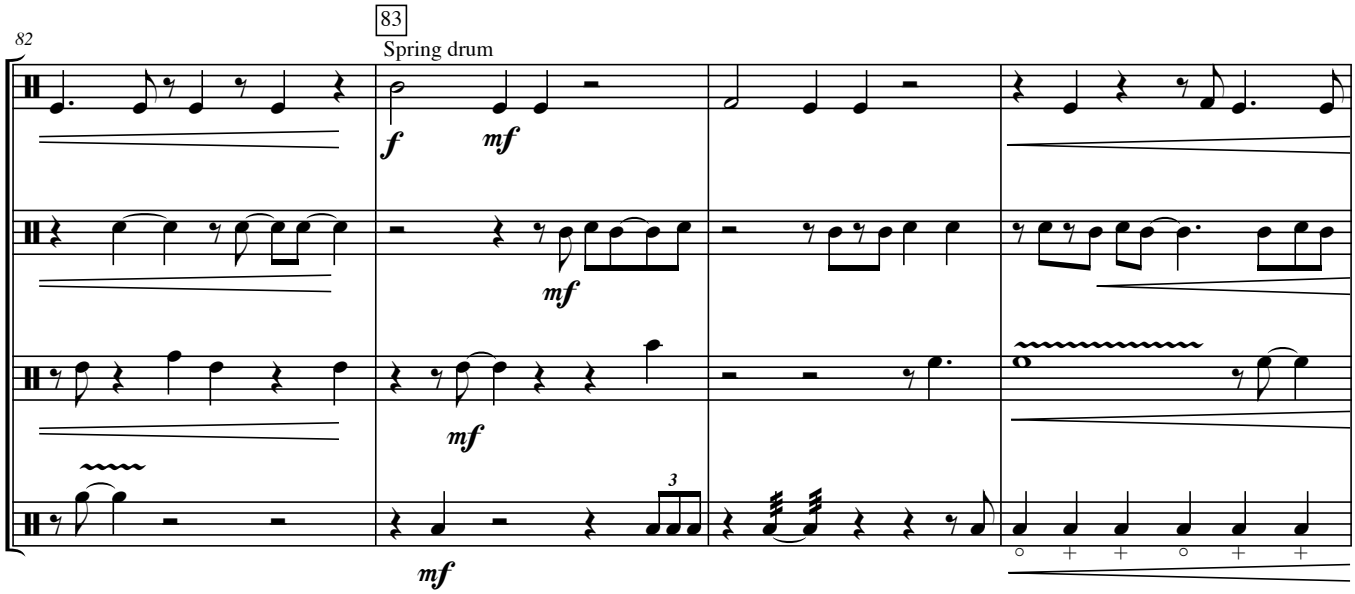

54
55
fp
Sandpaper blocks
mp
Egg shaker
f
mp
3
3

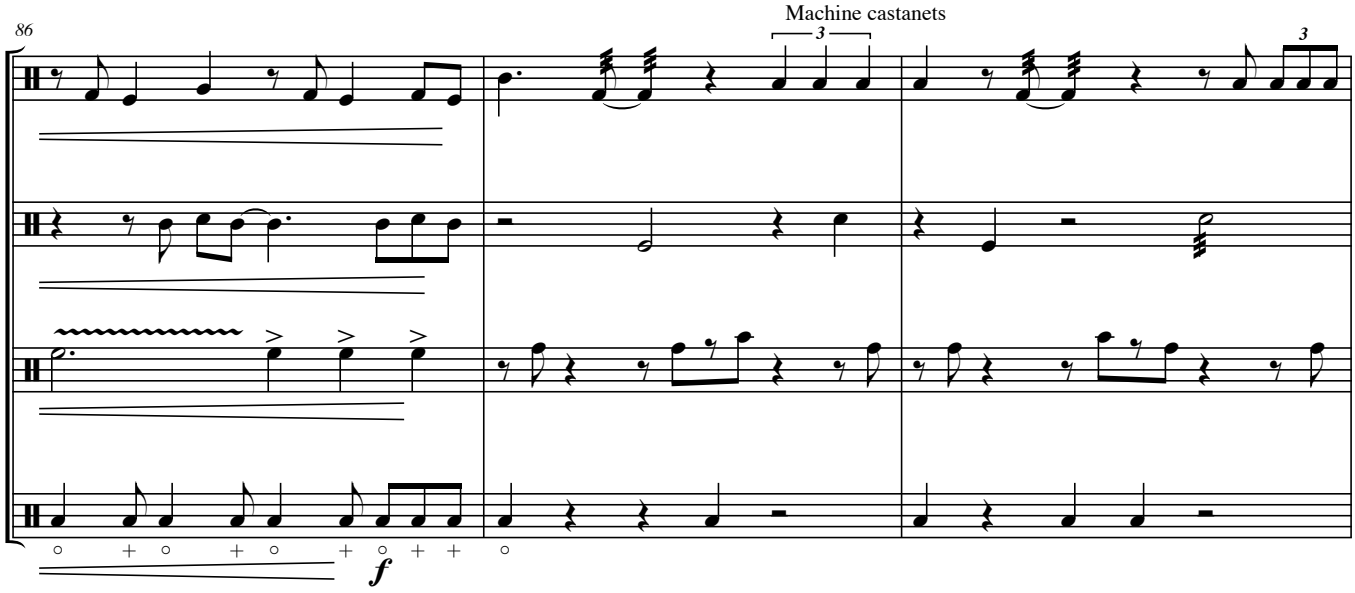

58
mp
Hand drum
(in hand)
mp
Pandiero
(in hand)
mp

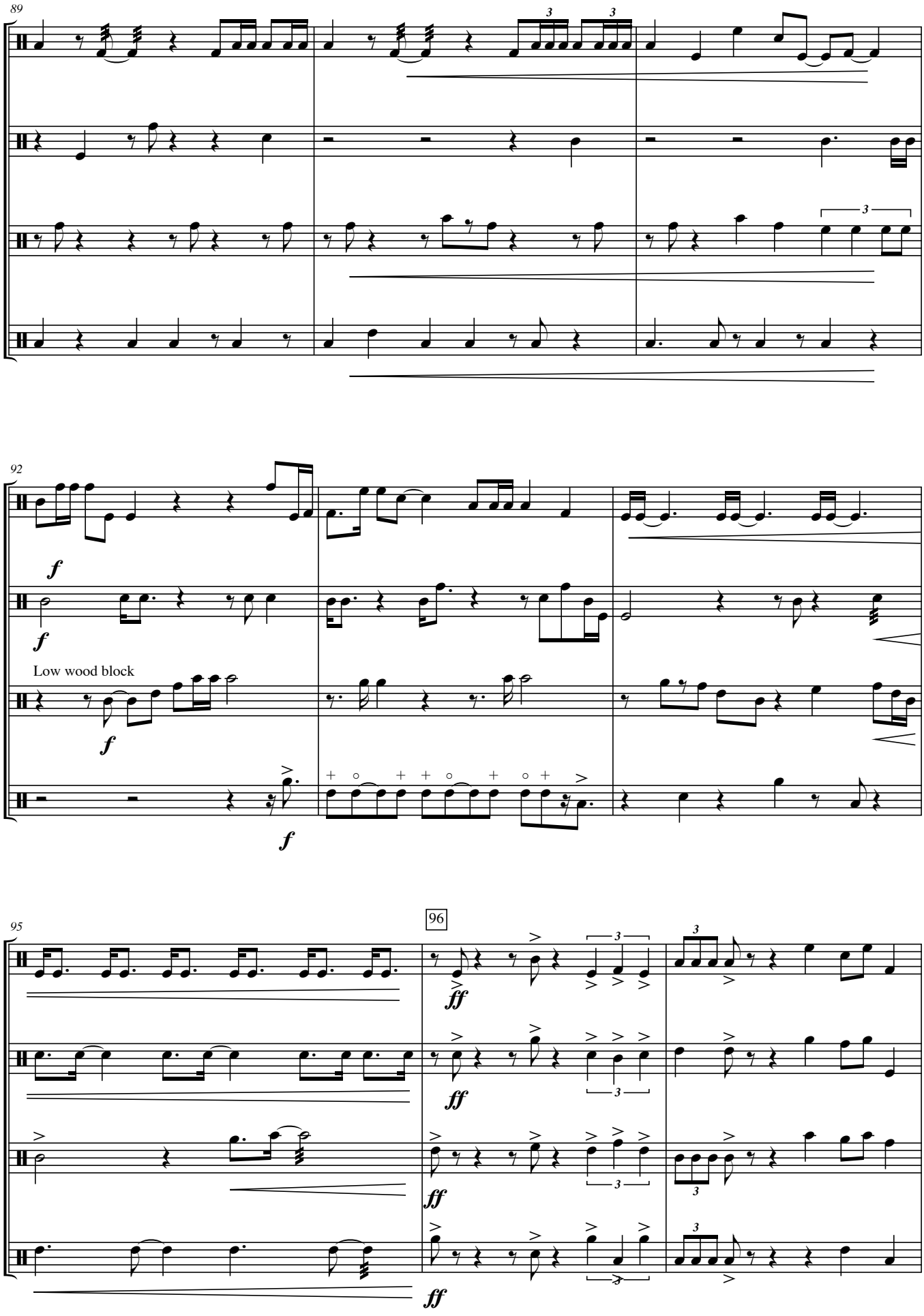

62
62
prepare hand drum,
spring drum, wood block
f
Tambourine (in hand)
p
Joyously!
Drums up!
ff
Joyously!
Drums up!
with half-closed brush
f
fp
ff
Joyously!
Drums up!
f
p
ff
3
3
3

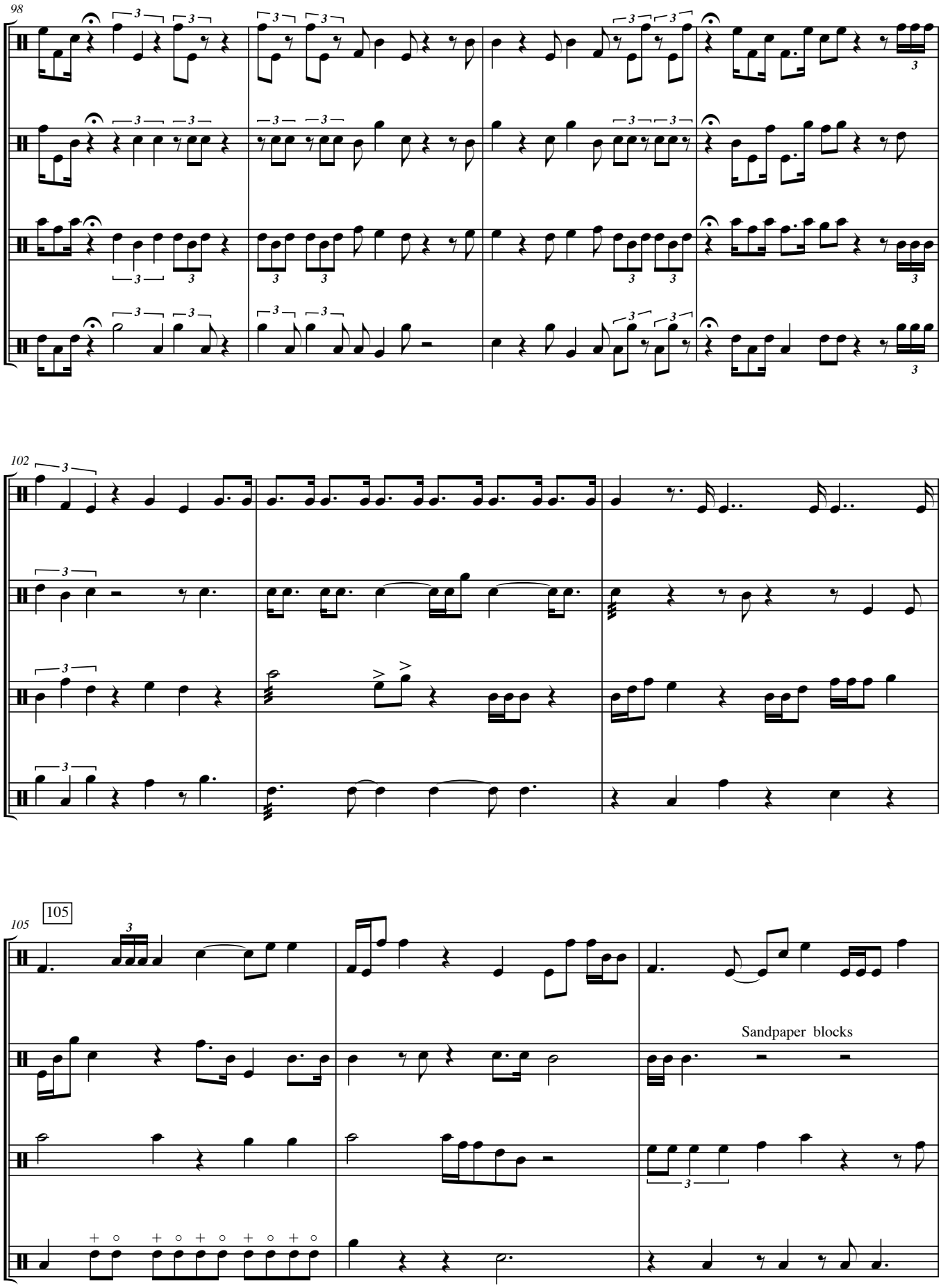

67
Low hand drum,
w. fingers
p
ff
ff
ff
71
72
mp
f
f
with stick
f
mf
f
74
High wood block
prepare castanets
ff
Gong
Sandpaper blocks
Egg shaker
p

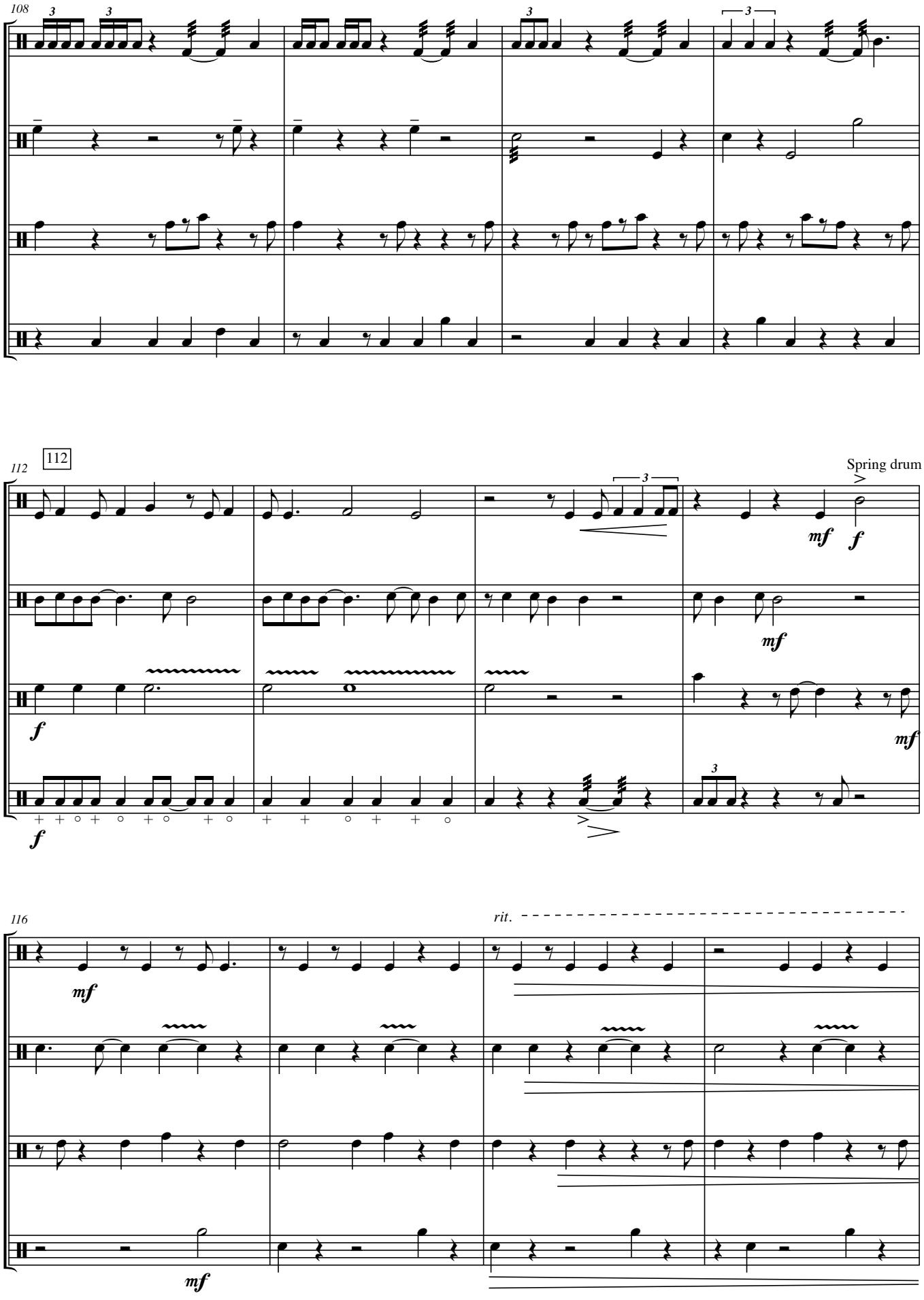

78
78
mp
shake
mp
mp
mp

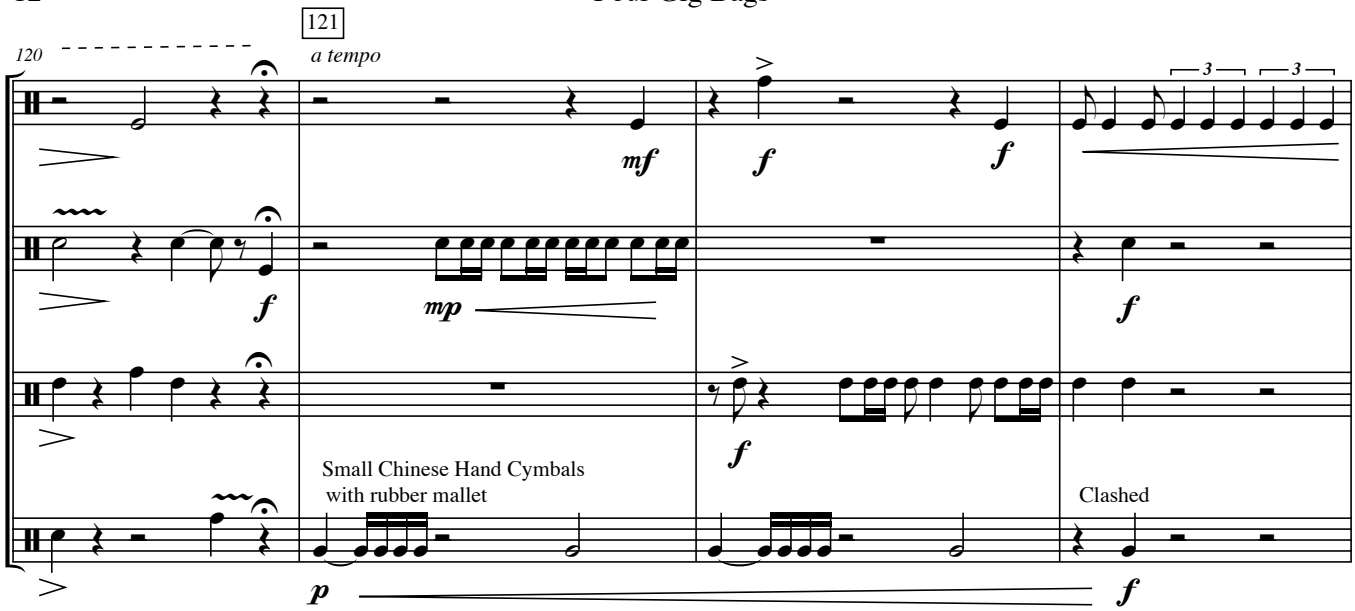

82
83
Spring drum
f
mf
mf
mf
mf
3

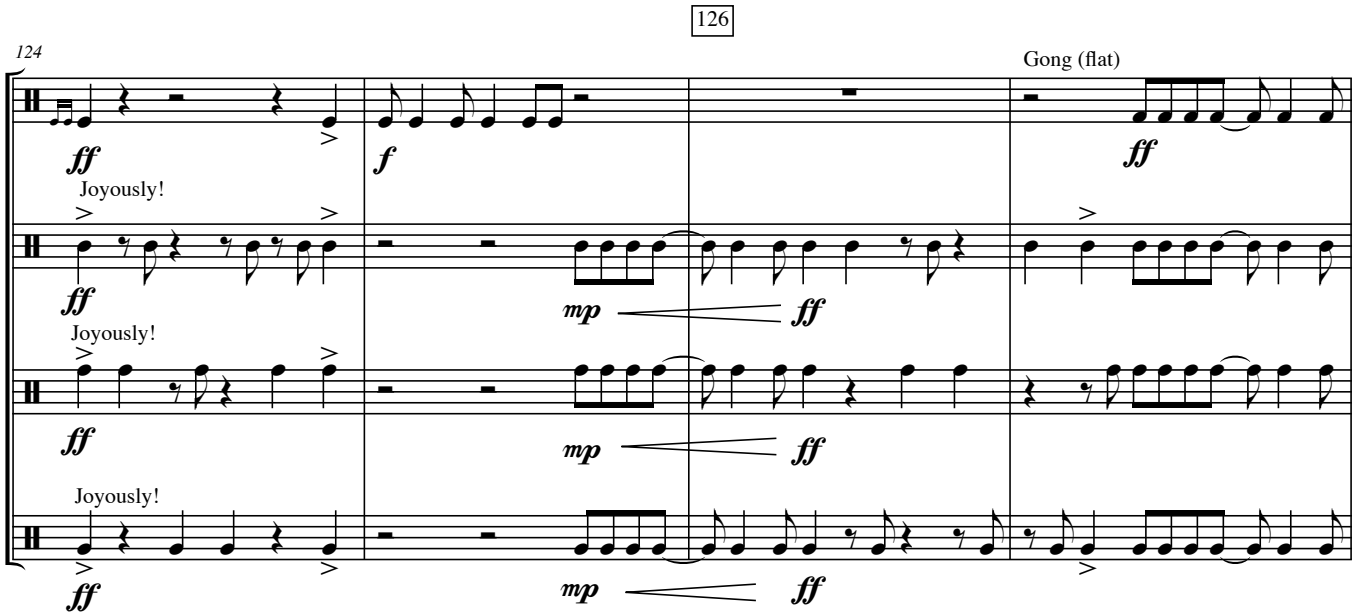

86
Machine castanets
3
3
f

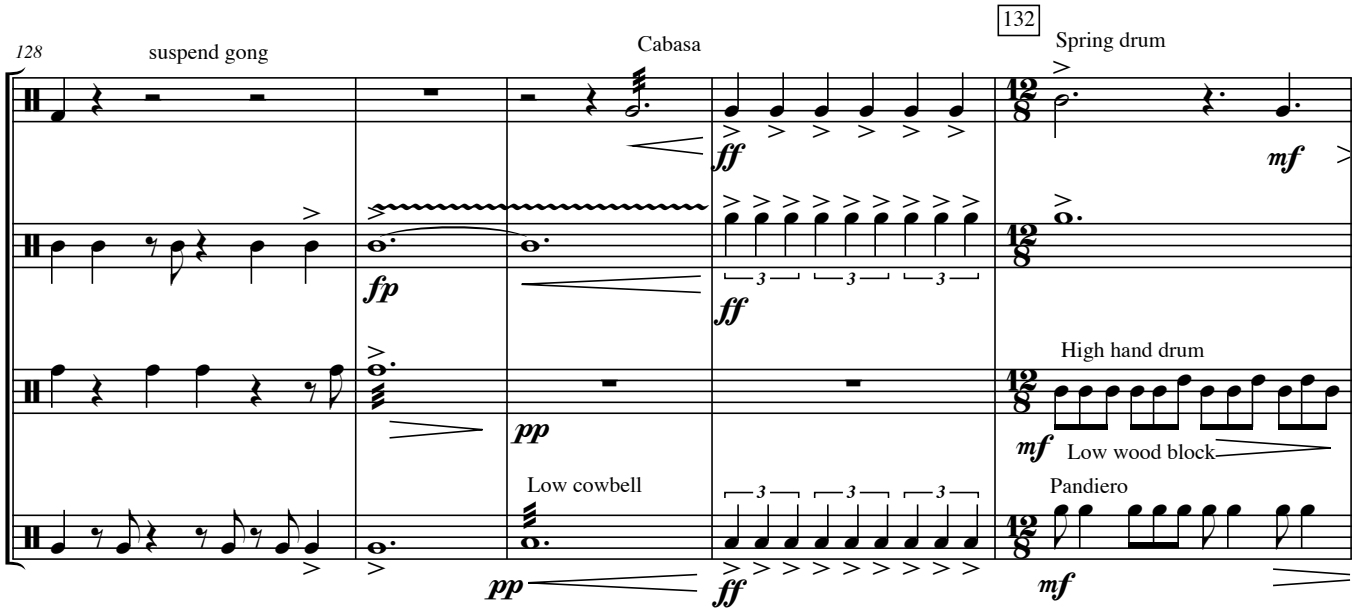

89
92
Low wood block
95
96

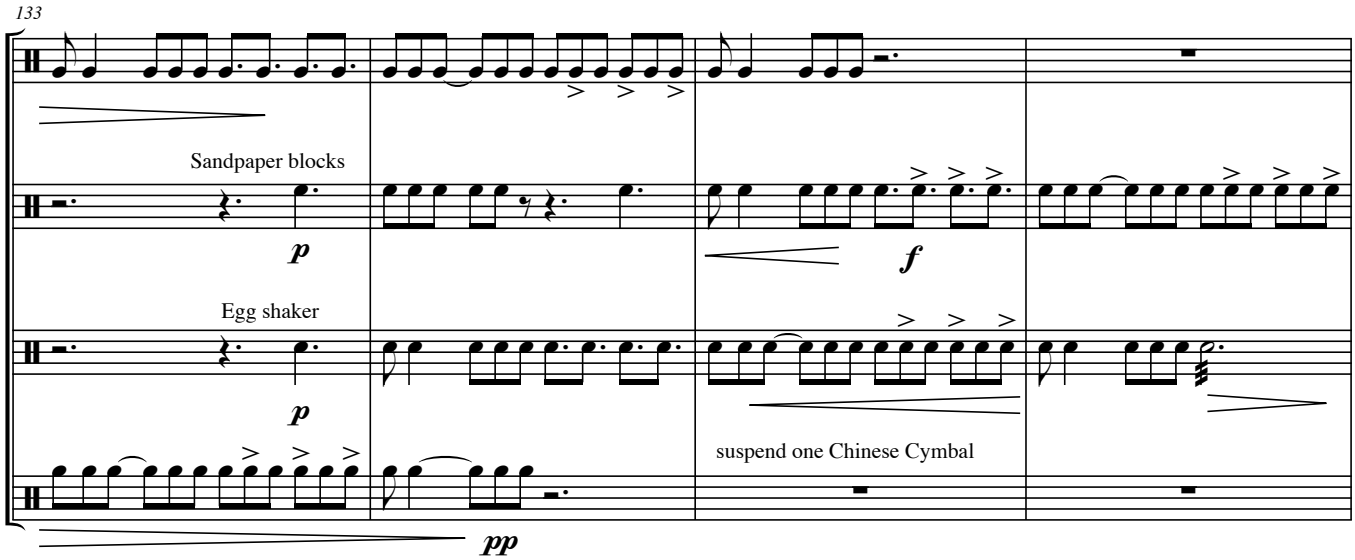

98
102
105
105
Sandpaper blocks

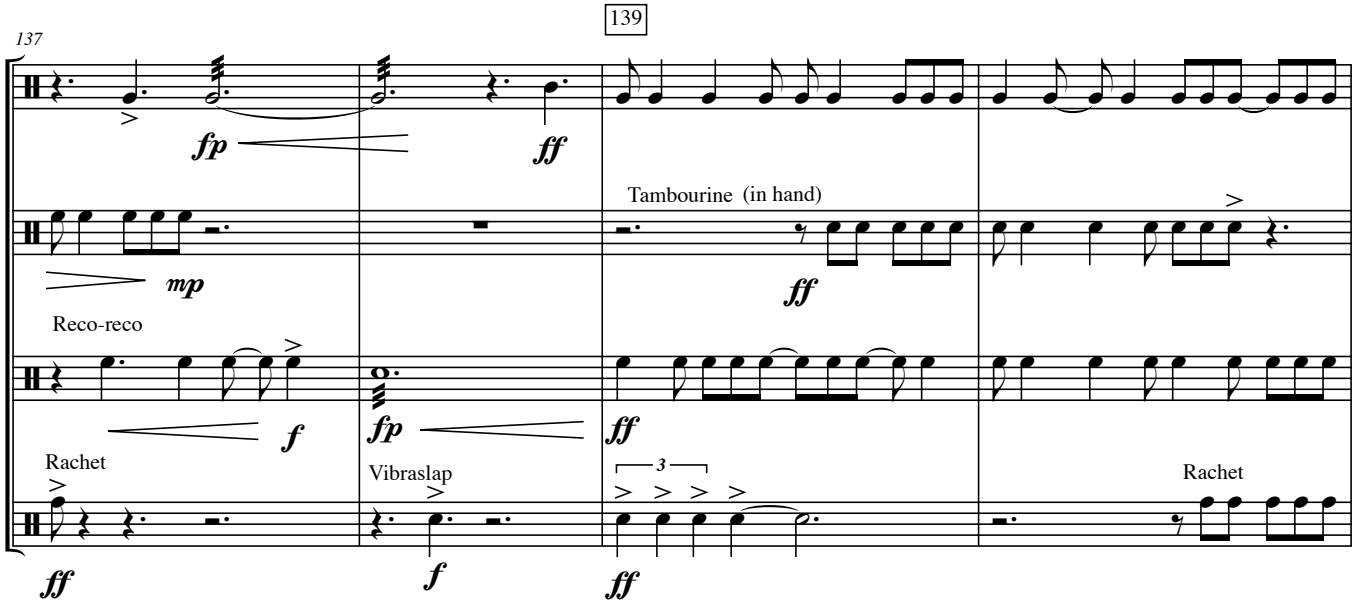

108
112
112
Spring drum
116
rit.

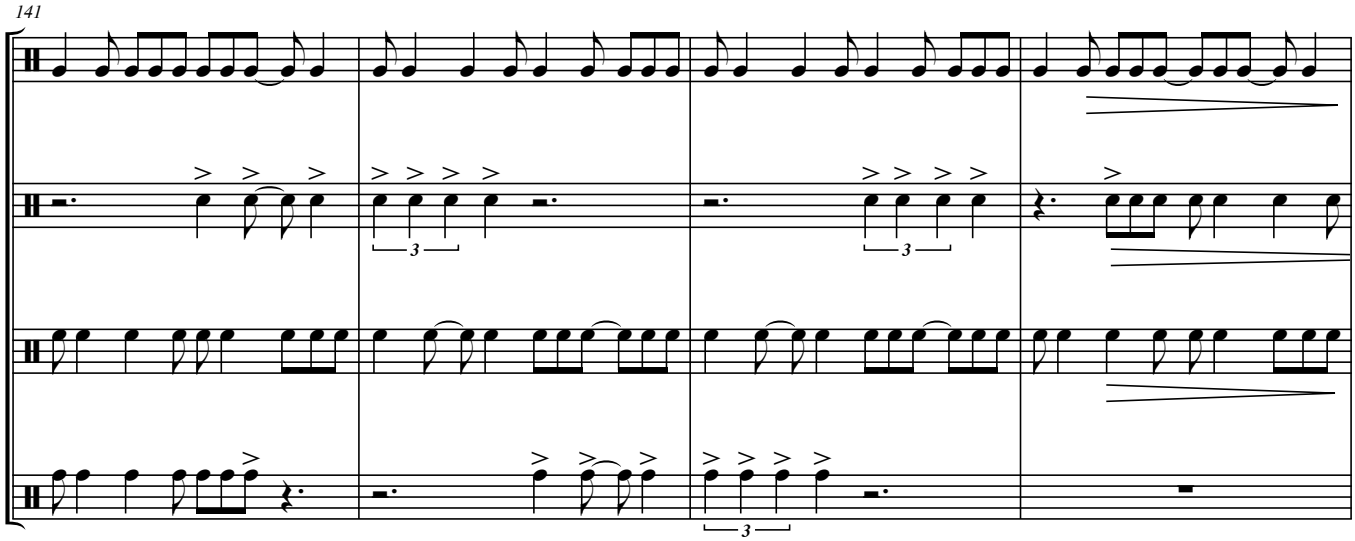

121
120
a tempo
Small Chinese Hand Cymbals
with rubber mallet
Clashed

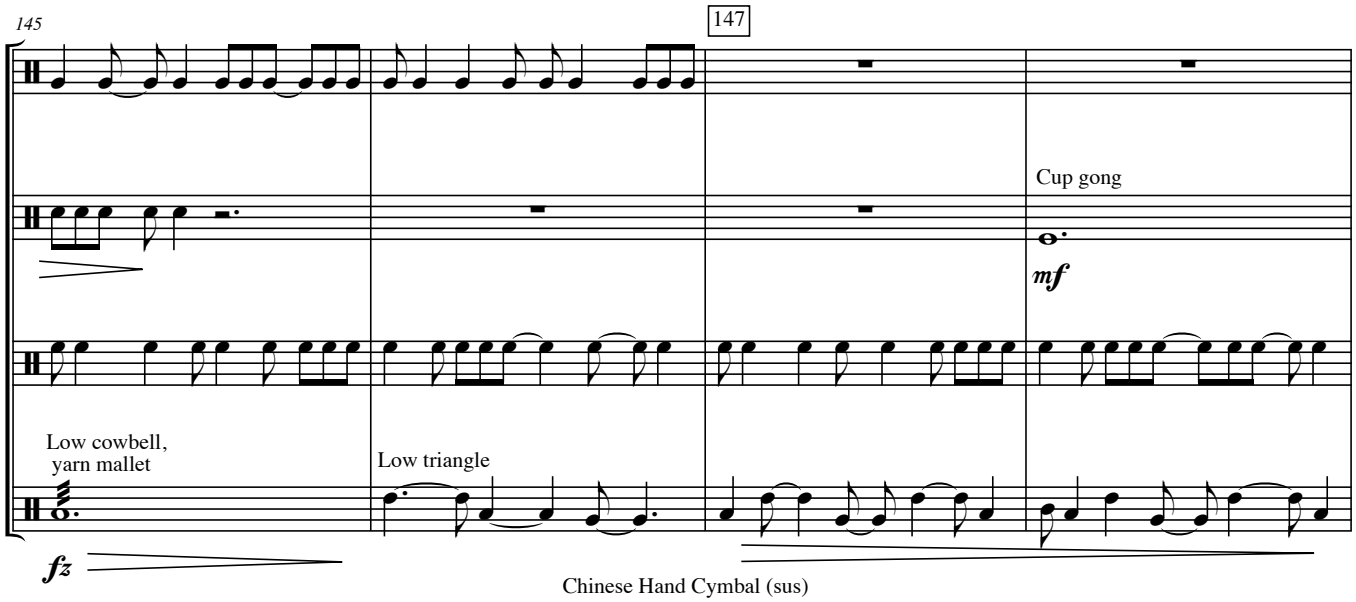

126
124
Gong (flat)
Joyously!
Joyously!
Joyously!

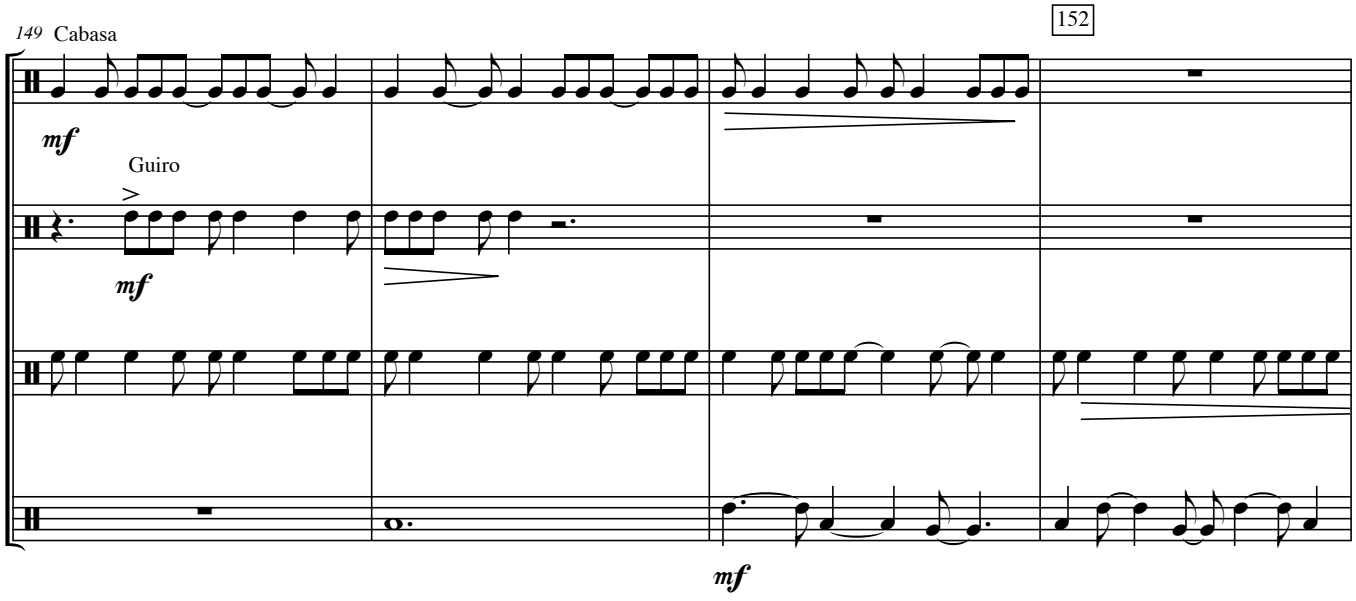

132
128
suspend gong
Cabasa
Spring drum
High hand drum
Low wood block
Low cowbell
Pandiero

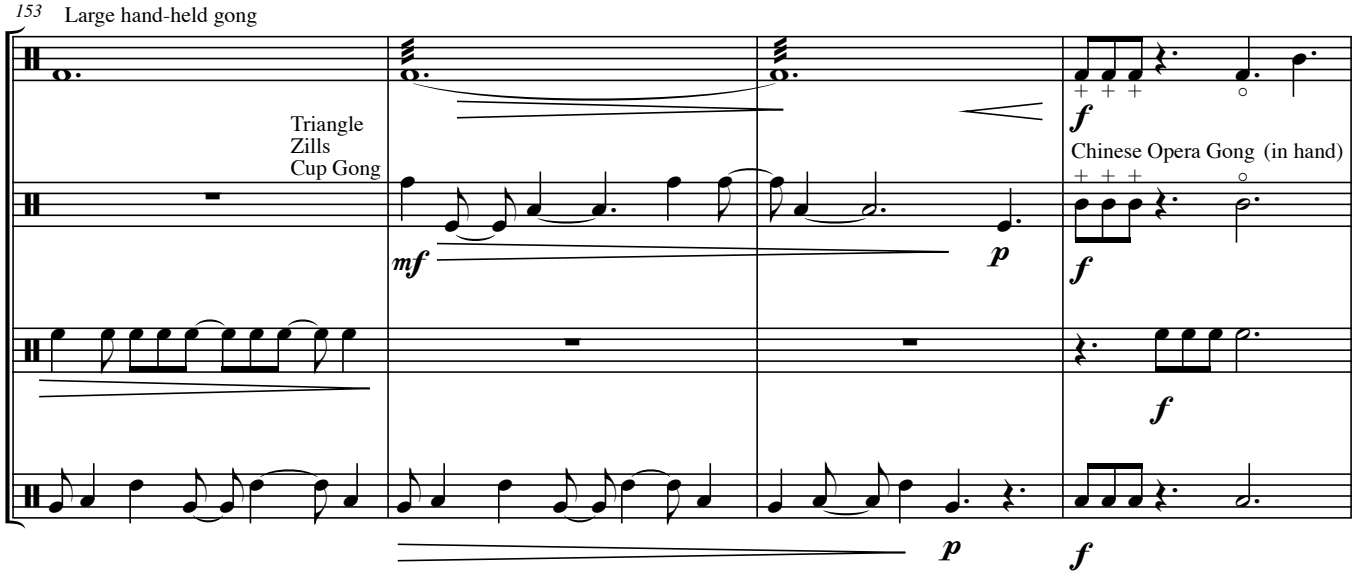

133
Sandpaper blocks
p
Egg shaker
p
suspend one Chinese Cymbal
pp

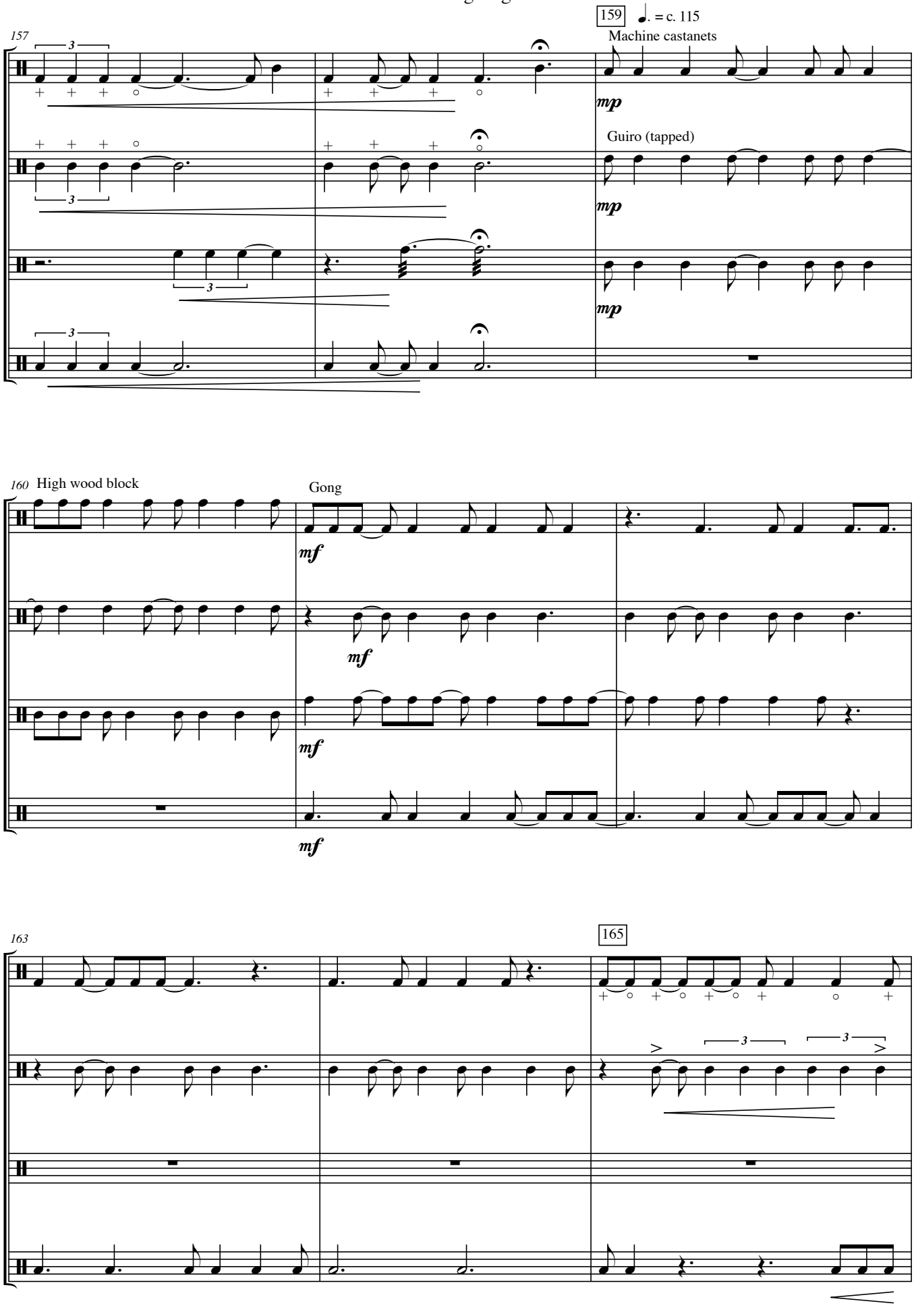

139
137
fp
ff
Tambourine (in hand)
mp
ff
Reco-reco
f
fp
ff
Rachet
Vibraslap
3
Rachet
ff
f
ff

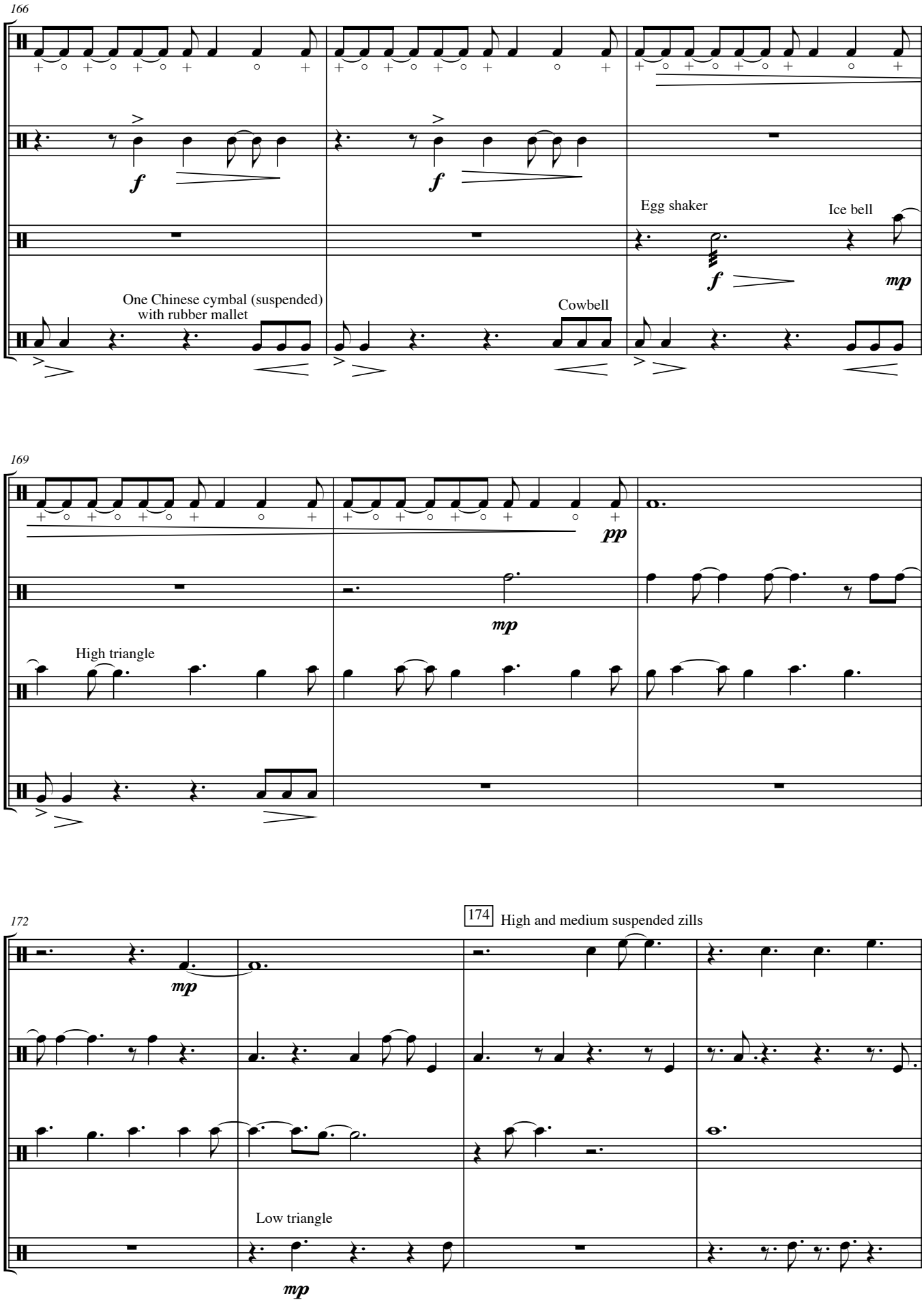

141
3
3
3

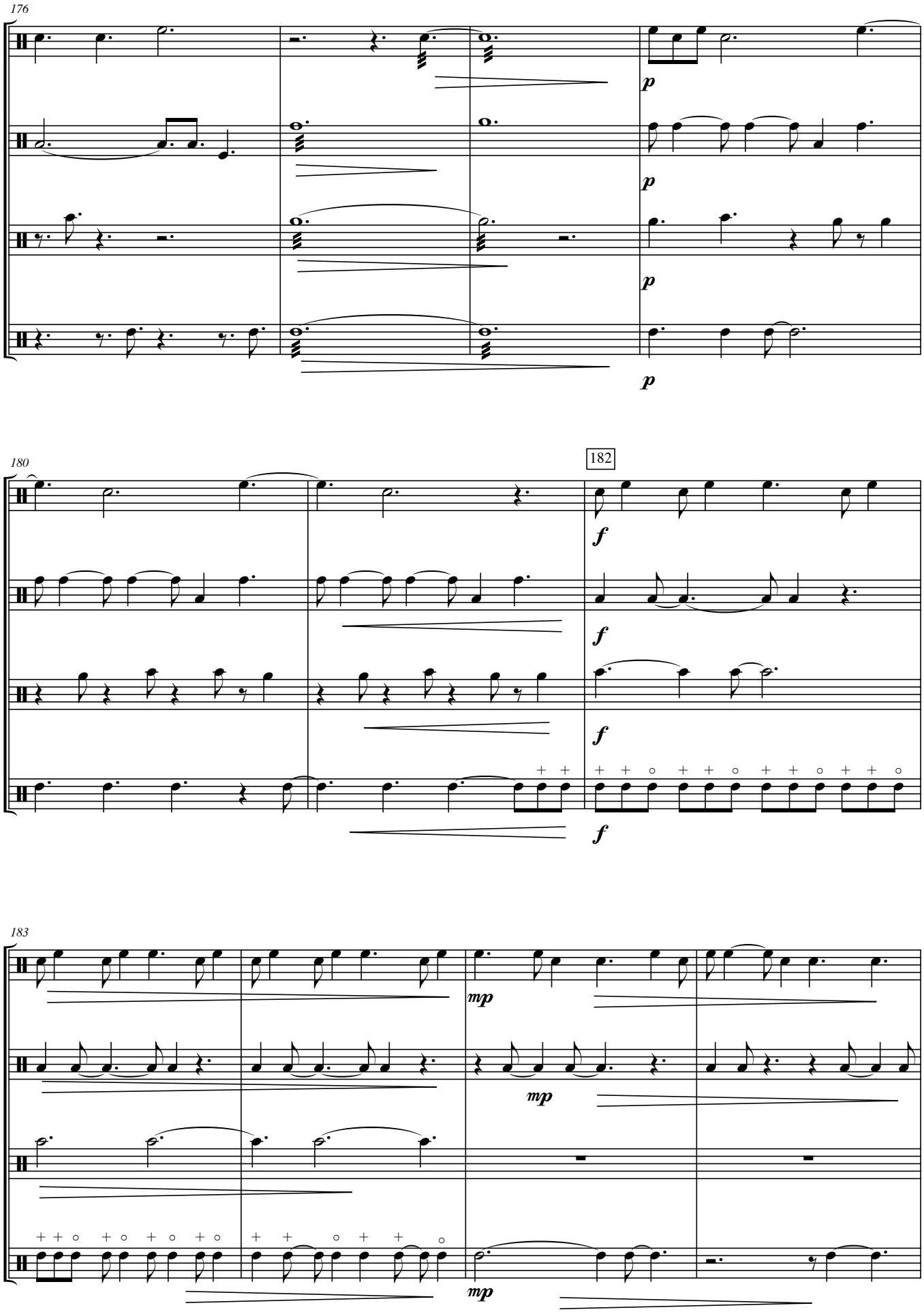

145
147
Cup gong
mf
Low cowbell,
yarn mallet
Low triangle
fz
Chinese Hand Cymbal (sus)

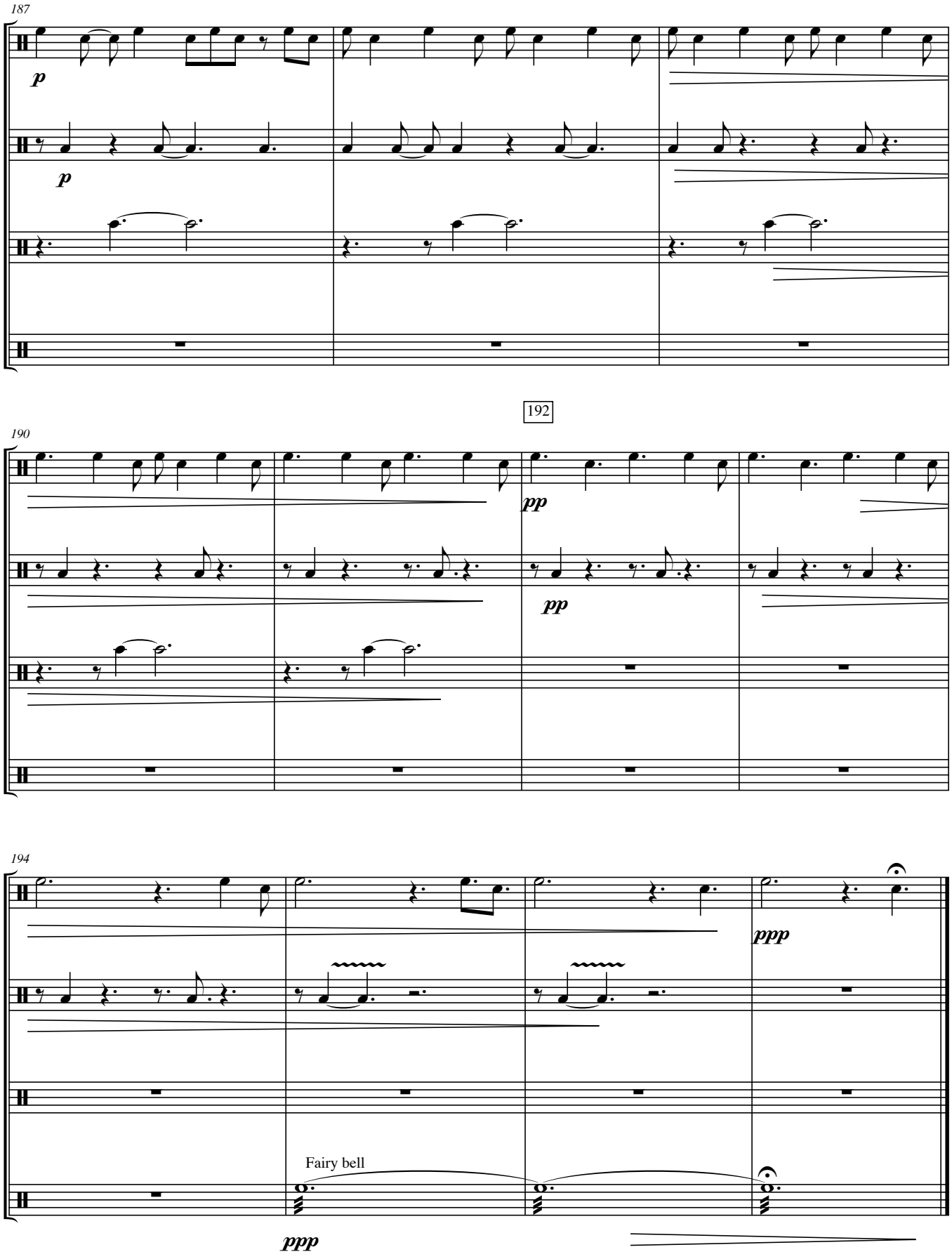

149 Cabasa
152
mf
Guiro
mf
mf


153 Large hand-held gong
Triangle
Zills
Cup Gong
mf
p
f
Chinese Opera Gong (in hand)
f
f
p
f


157
159
♩. = c. 115
Machine castanets
mp
Guiro (tapped)
mp
mp
160
High wood block
Gong
mf
mf
mf
mf
163
165


166
f
f
Egg shaker
Ice bell
f
mp
One Chinese cymbal (suspended)
with rubber mallet
Cowbell
169
pp
mp
High triangle
172
174
High and medium suspended zills
mp
Low triangle
mp


176
p
p
p
p
180
182
f
f
f
f
183
mp
mp
mp


187
p
p
192
190
pp
pp
194
ppp
Fairy bell
ppp