Full Score

Charlie Barber



for percussion quartet

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Chorda Timpani
for percussion quartet

Instrumentation:
4 Timpani

Duration:
c. 3 minutes

Programme note:

Chorda Timpani is an exploration of rhythm, resonance and musical memory, constructed from fragments of the timpani parts from all nine of Beethoven's symphonies.

The four timpani parts are arranged in pairs: the first and second timpanists play the original material, while the third and fourth follow them like an echo, creating a sense of musical reflection and response. Each player is restricted to a single pitch: D for Timpani 1, A for Timpani 2, B-flat for Timpani 3 and F for Timpani 4. Together, these notes form a striking harmonic structure, with two perfect fourths separated by a major third.

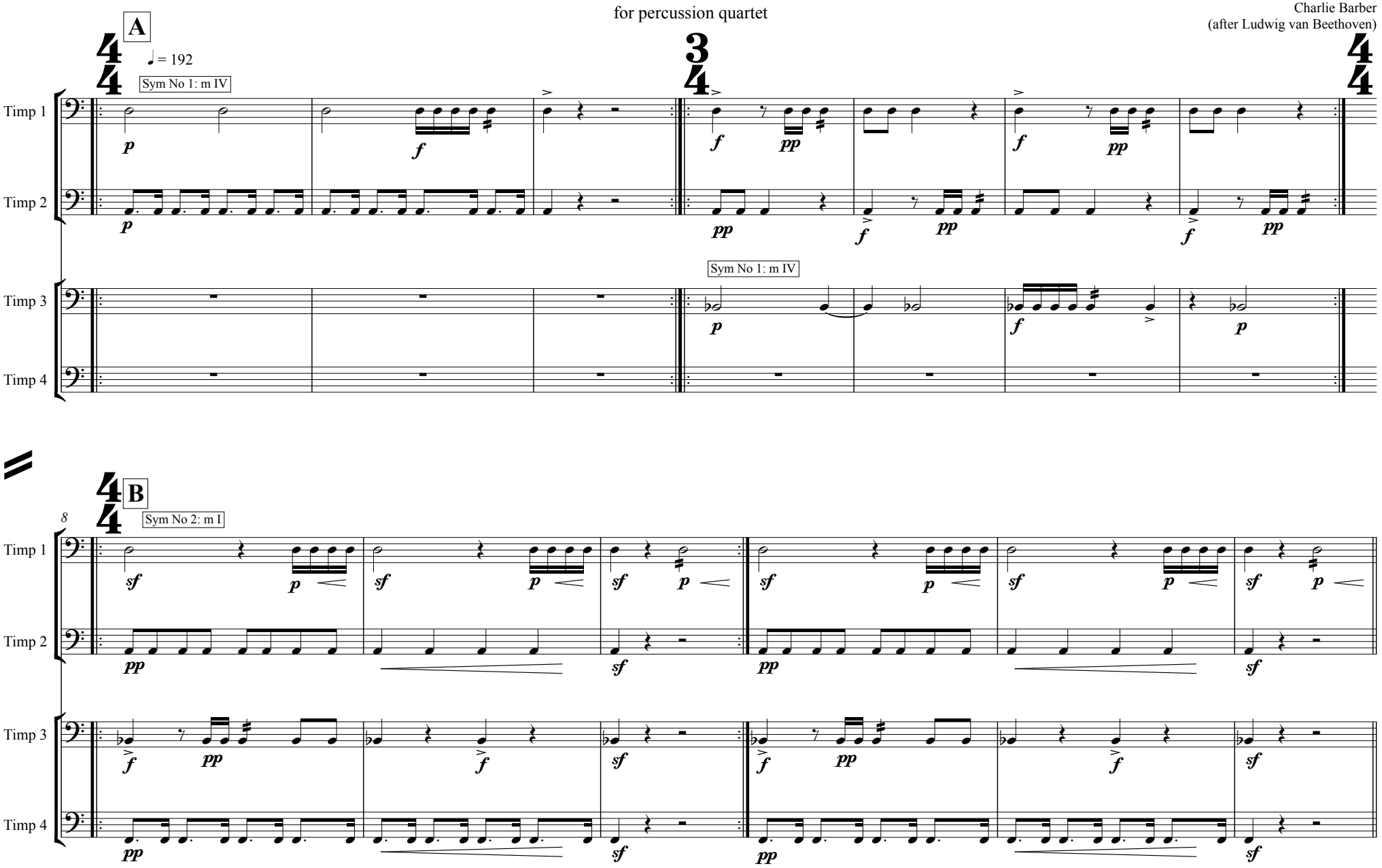
Chorda also refers to a particular type of nerve fibre, while timpani evokes the tympanic membrane of the ear. This brings an especially poignant and ironic dimension to the work's relationship with Beethoven, whose progressive deafness profoundly affected his life and music.

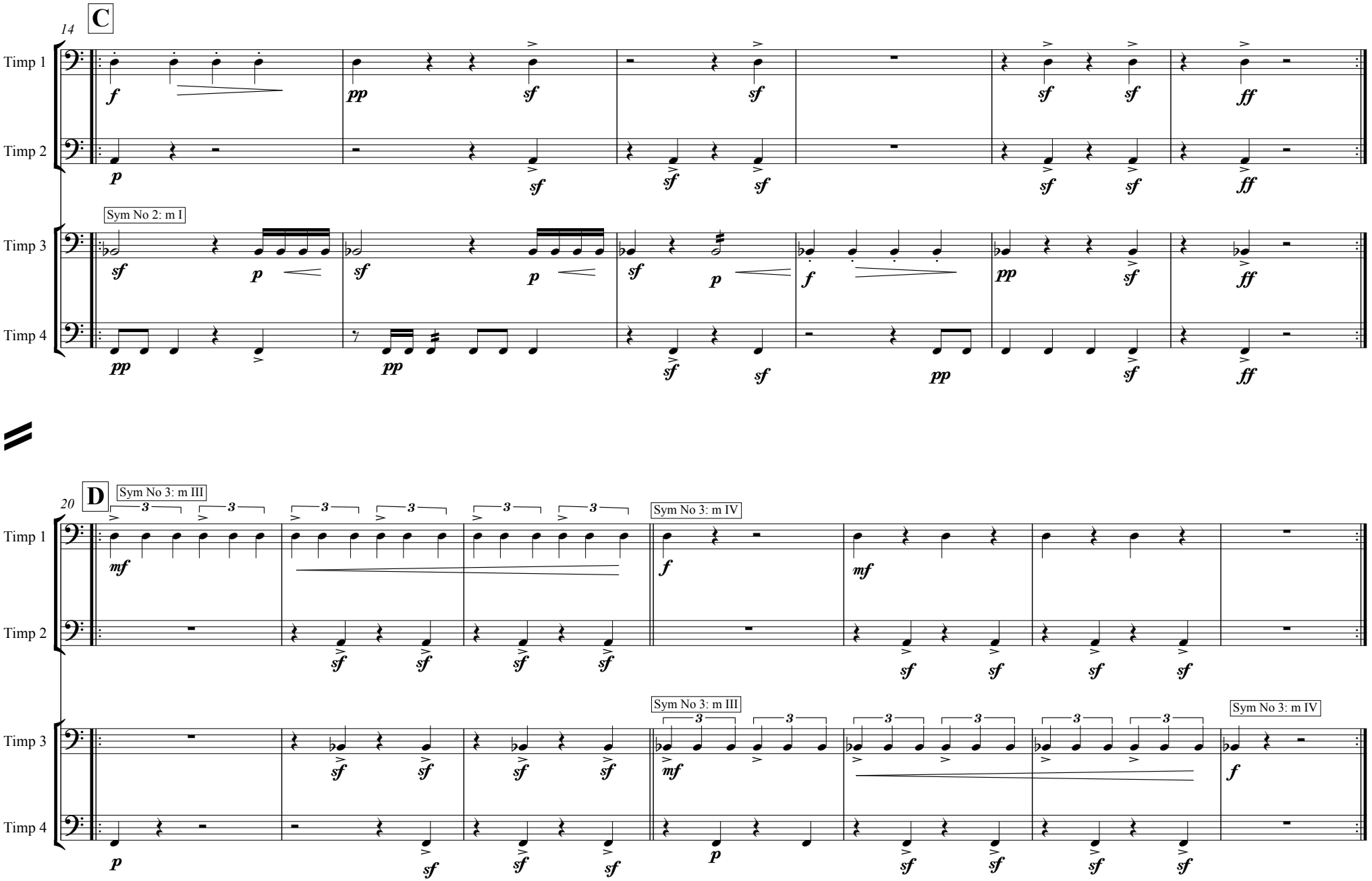
Originally composed for Sound Affairs 'Ludwig' project in 2006, the work was revised in 2026.

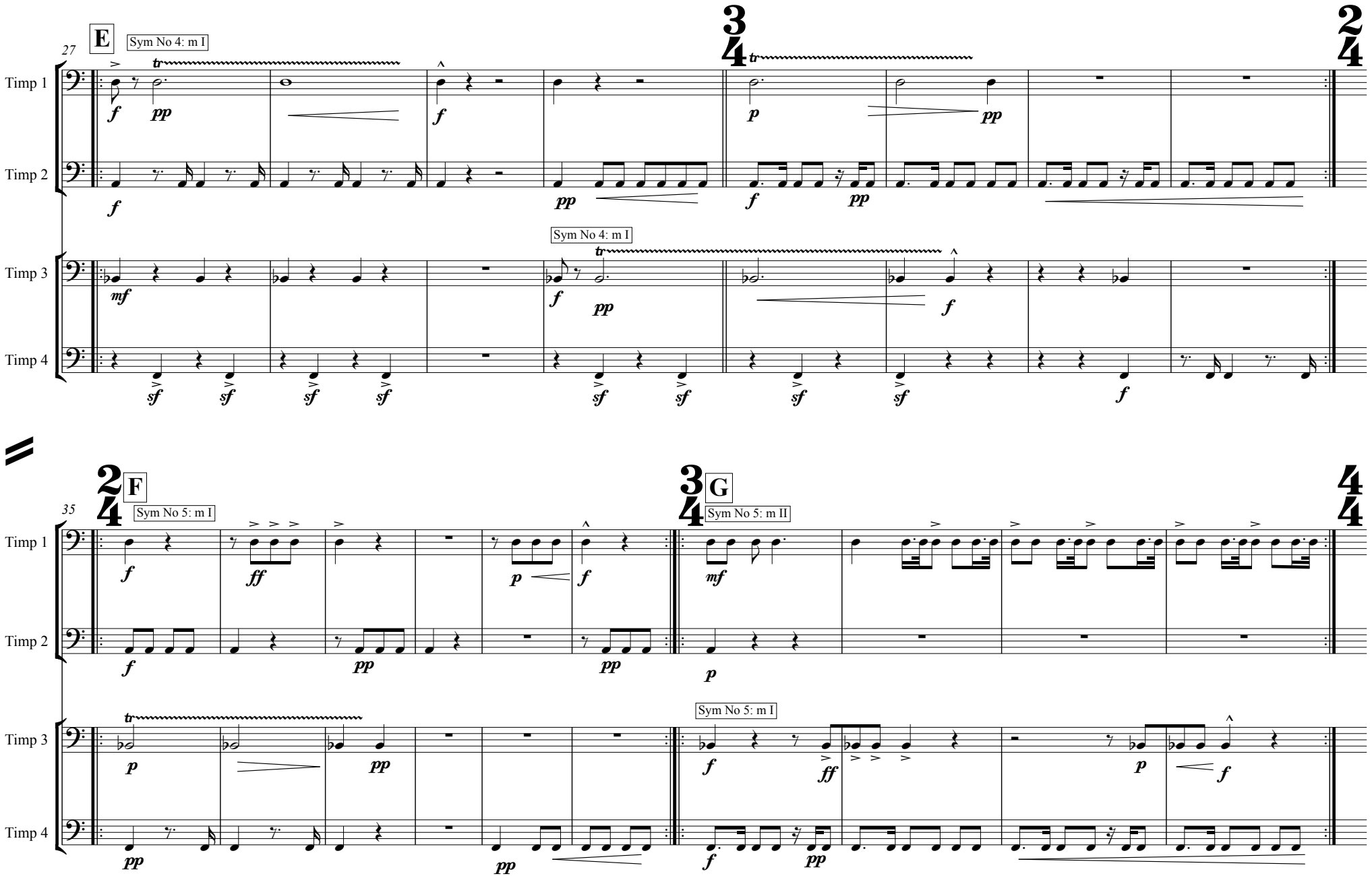
Chorda Timpani

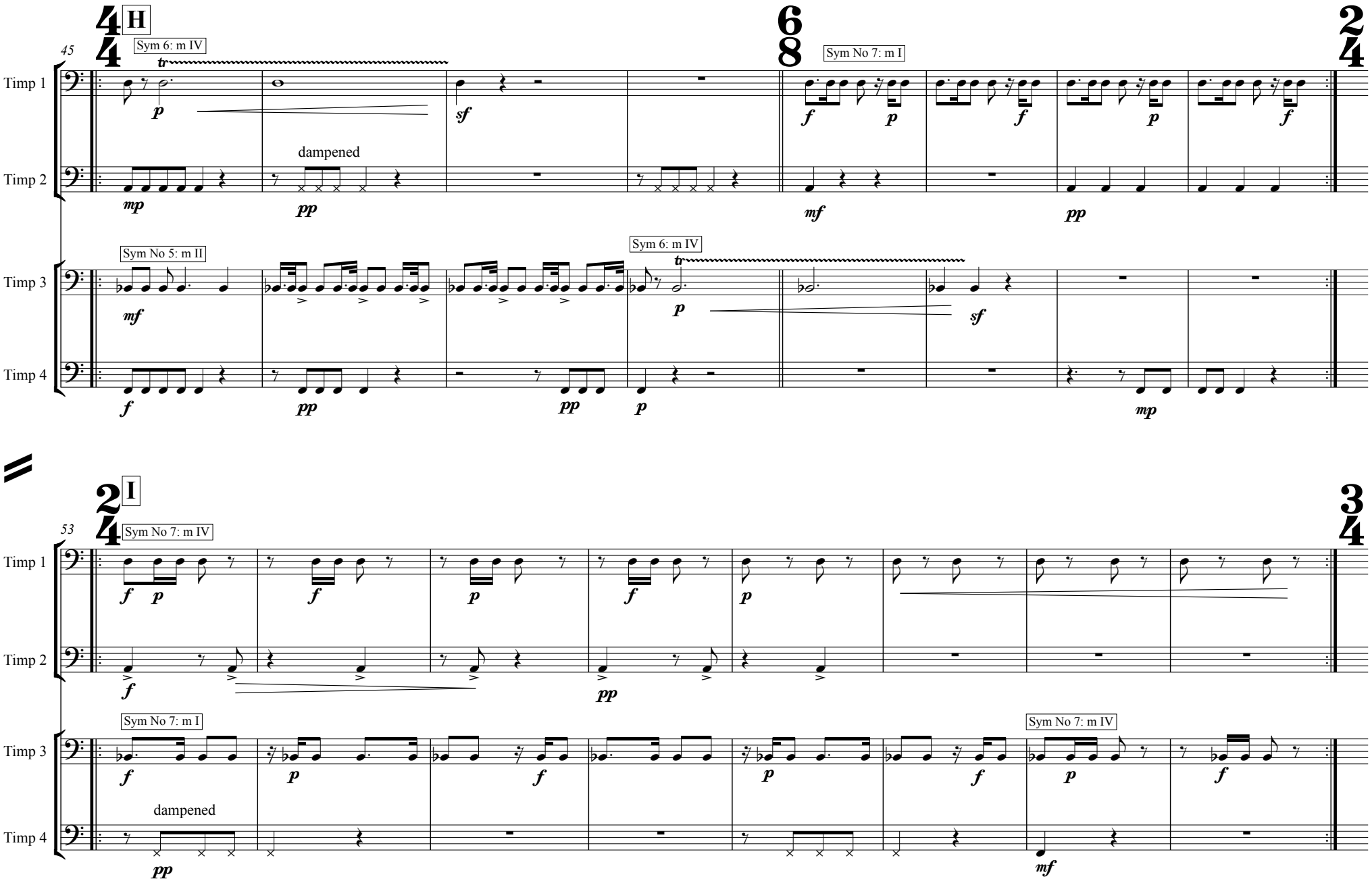
for percussion quartet

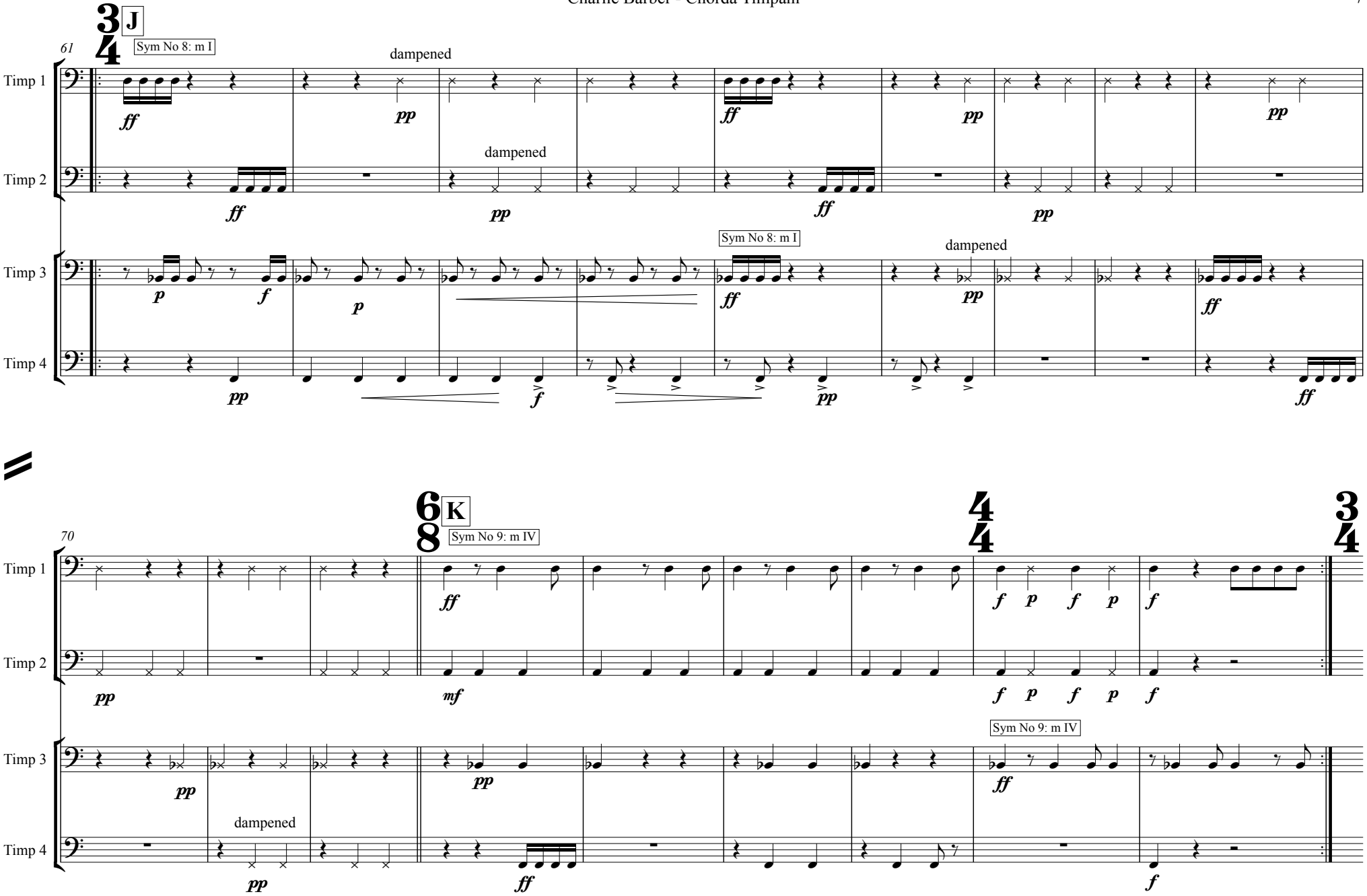
Charlie Barber
(after Ludwig van Beethoven)

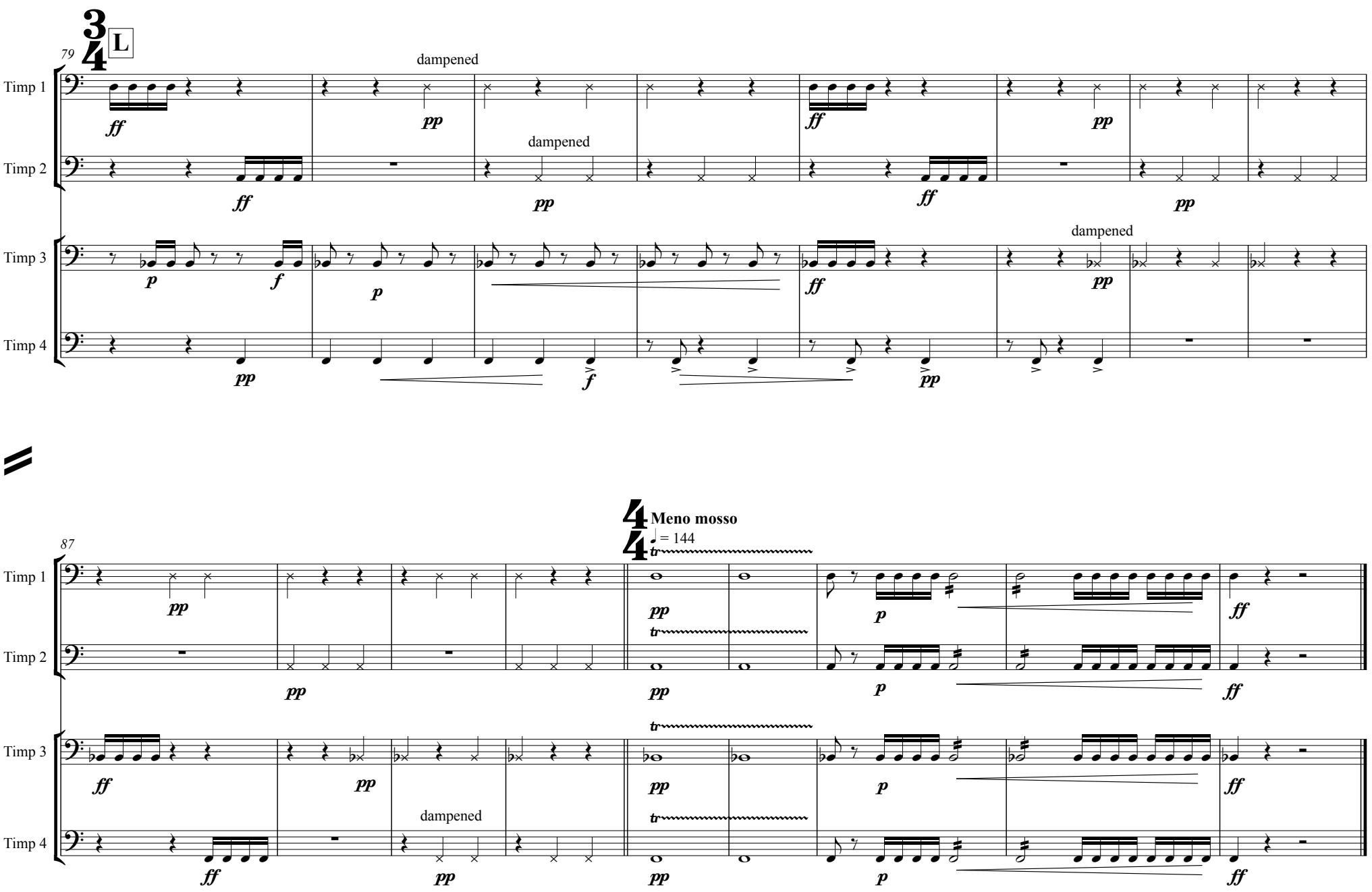



14
C
Timp 1
Timp 2
Timp 3
Timp 4
Sym No 2: m I
20
D
Sym No 3: m III
Sym No 3: m IV


27
E
Sym No 4: m I
Timp 1
Timp 2
Timp 3
Timp 4
Sym No 4: m I
35
F
Sym No 5: m I
G
Sym No 5: m II
Sym No 5: m I


H
45
Sym 6: m IV
Sym No 7: m I
Timp 1
Timp 2
dampened
Sym No 5: m II
Sym 6: m IV
Timp 3
Timp 4
I
53
Sym No 7: m IV
Sym No 7: m I
Sym No 7: m IV
dampened


J
Sym No 8: m I
61
Timp 1
Timp 2
Timp 3
Timp 4
dampened
K
Sym No 9: m IV
70


79
L
Timp 1
Timp 2
Timp 3
Timp 4
dampened
dampened
dampened
87
Meno mosso
♩ = 144
dampened