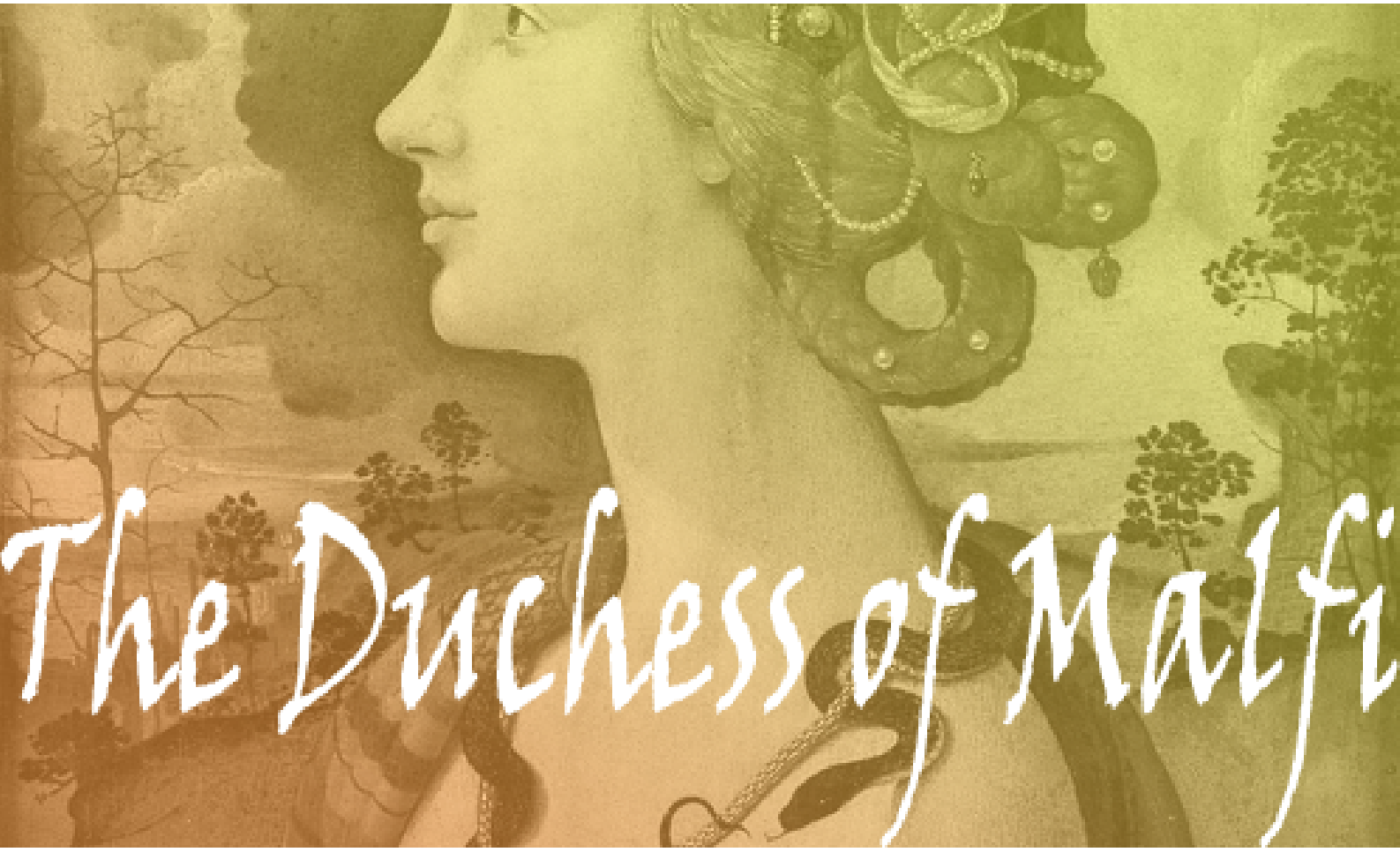
Charlie Barber



for brass ensemble and timpani

© Charlie Barber

Music for John Webster's play *The Duchess of Malfi.*

Instrumentation
Trumpet 1 (+ Piccolo Trumpet in Bb)
Trumpet 2
Trumpet 3
Trumpet 4
Horn in F
Tenor Trombone 1
Tenor Trombone 2
Tenor Trombone 3
Bass Trombone
Tuba

Timpani (+ Tam-tam)

Duration: c.15 minutes

Contents
1. Intonazioni / Lighting the Time to Come
2. A Treasury of Secrets
3. Near Some Great Hill
4. Calculating Aspects of the Astrological Houses
5. Murder Shrieks Out
6. Canzon a Tre
7. Diamonds Cut Diamonds

Programme note

Originally written for Moving Being Theatre Company's production of John Webster's Jacobean revenge tragedy, performed at St Stephen's Theatre Space, Cardiff, in May and June 1990, this music was conceived in close relation to the theatrical space and the dramatic action.

In the original performances, the musicians played from memory, a choice that helped shape both the style and the content of the music. Built around passacaglias, canons and ostinati (repeated musical phrases), the score enabled the musicians to perform processionals in different parts of the former church, allowing the music to move through the space as an integral part of the drama.

The music draws inspiration from two Italian composers working in the same period as Webster: Giovanni Gabrieli, renowned for his antiphonal brass music for St Mark's Basilica in Venice, and Claudio Monteverdi, celebrated for his operas and other works for the stage. Their music provides a historical and stylistic point of reference for the interplay of instrumental colour, repetition and spatial effect.

For this version, the music has been rescored for brass ensemble of ten players and timpani.

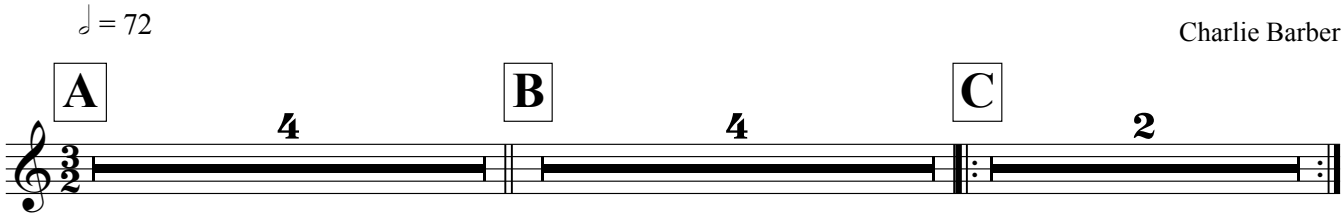
Charlie Barber, October 2026

The Duchess of Malfi

Music for John Webster's Jacobean tragedy

1a. Intonazioni

Largamente e dramatico



Trumpet in B♭

11 **D**

f

E

f

15 **F**

f

1b. Lighting the Time to Come

17 **G** **Maestoso** ♩ = 72

f

21 **H** **Animato**

p

26 **I**

p

31

36 **J**

p

41 **K**

mf

46

mf

50

cresc.
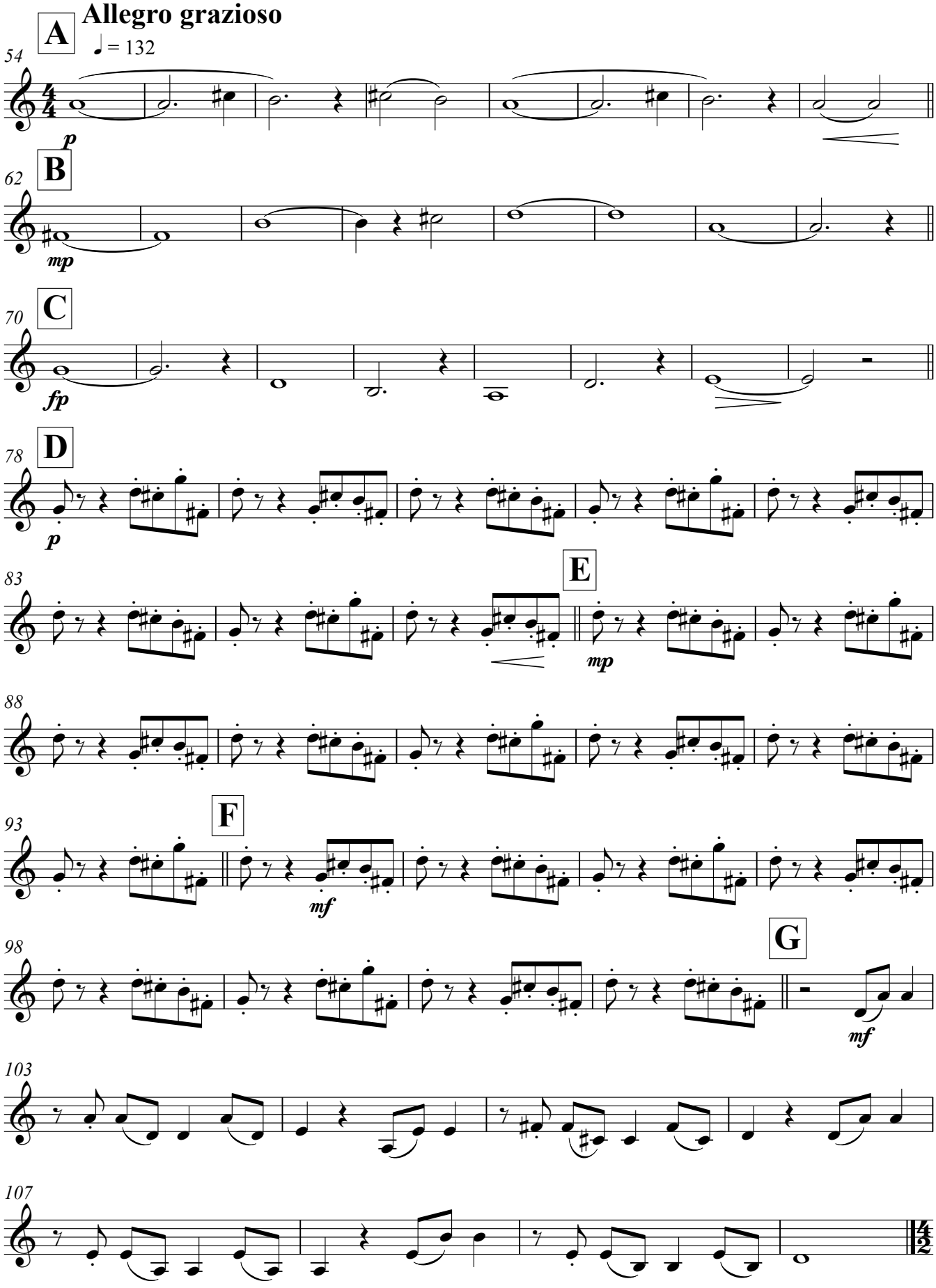
f

ff

Trumpet in B♭

2. A Treasury of Secrets
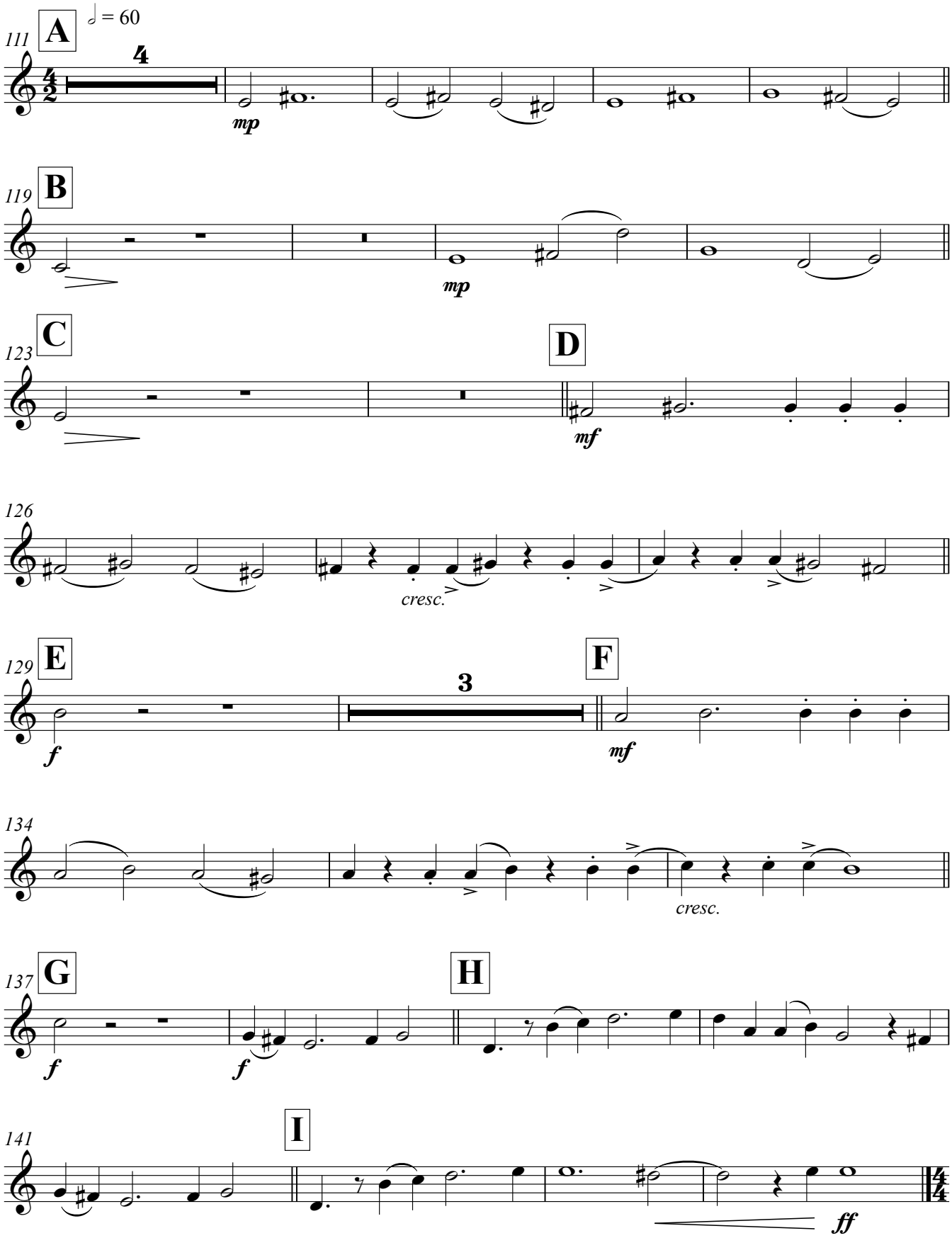
Allegro grazioso



Trumpet in B♭
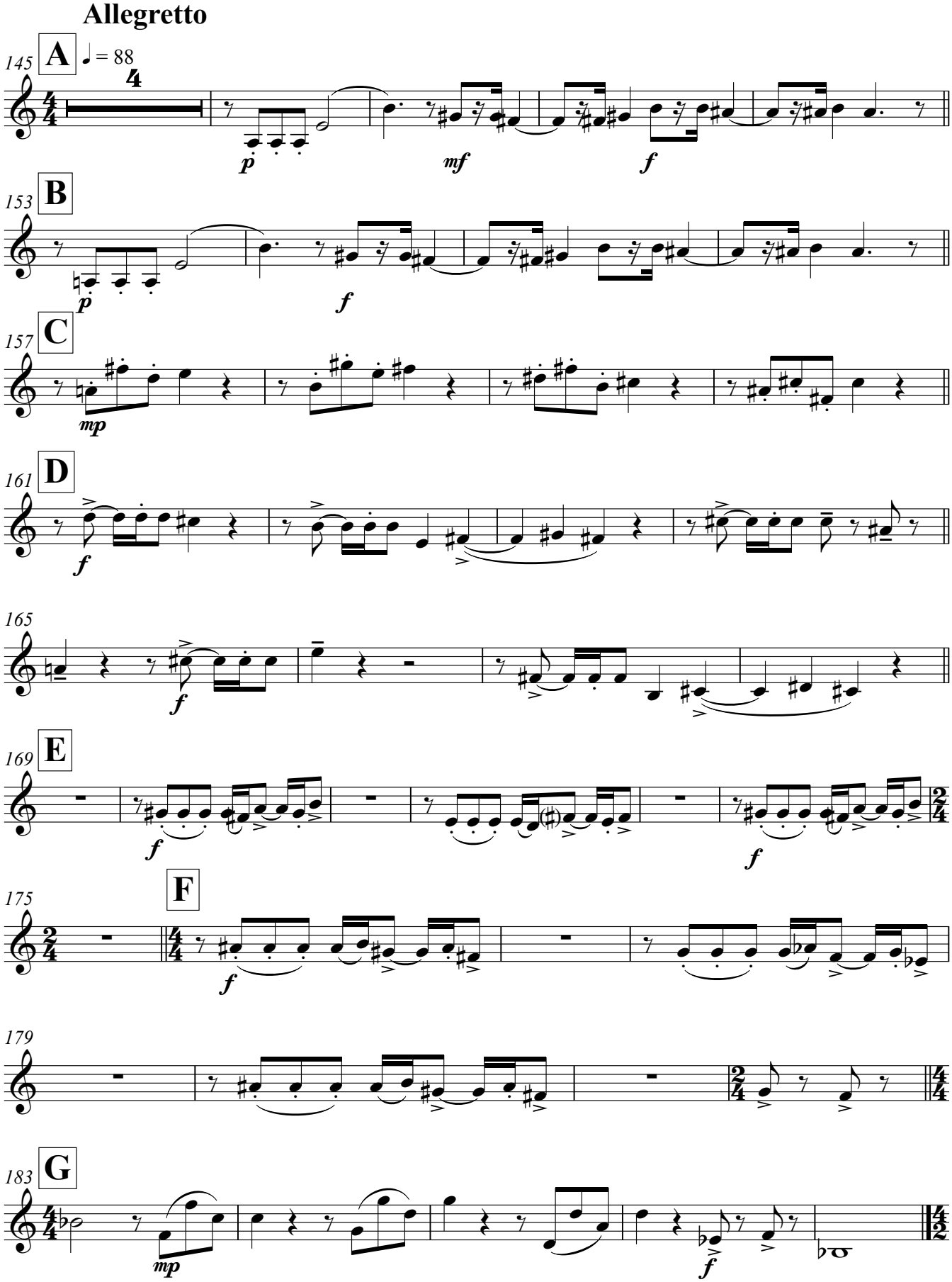
3. Near Some Great Hill

Lento e pesante
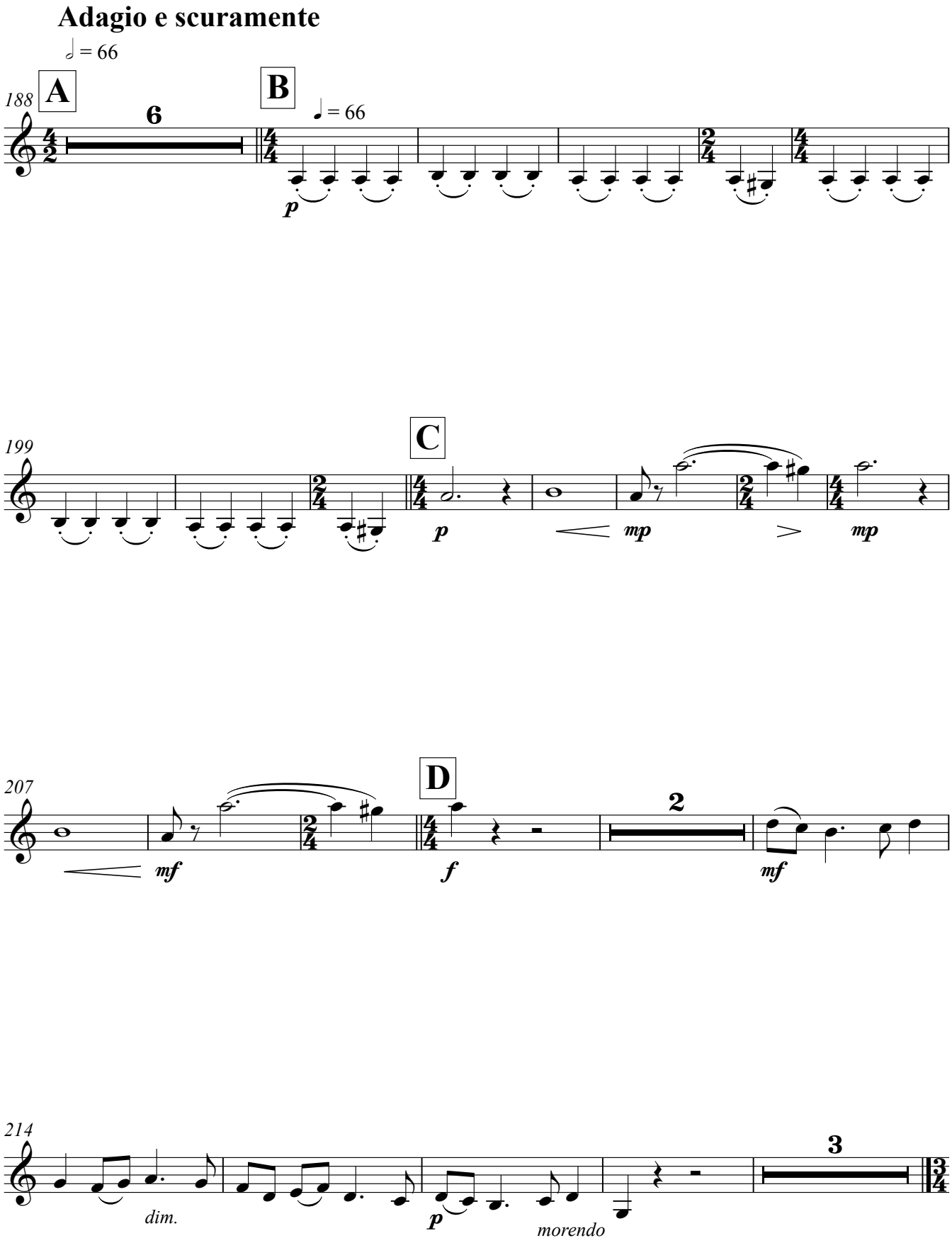


Trumpet in B♭

4. Calculating Aspects of the Astrological Houses



Trumpet in B♭
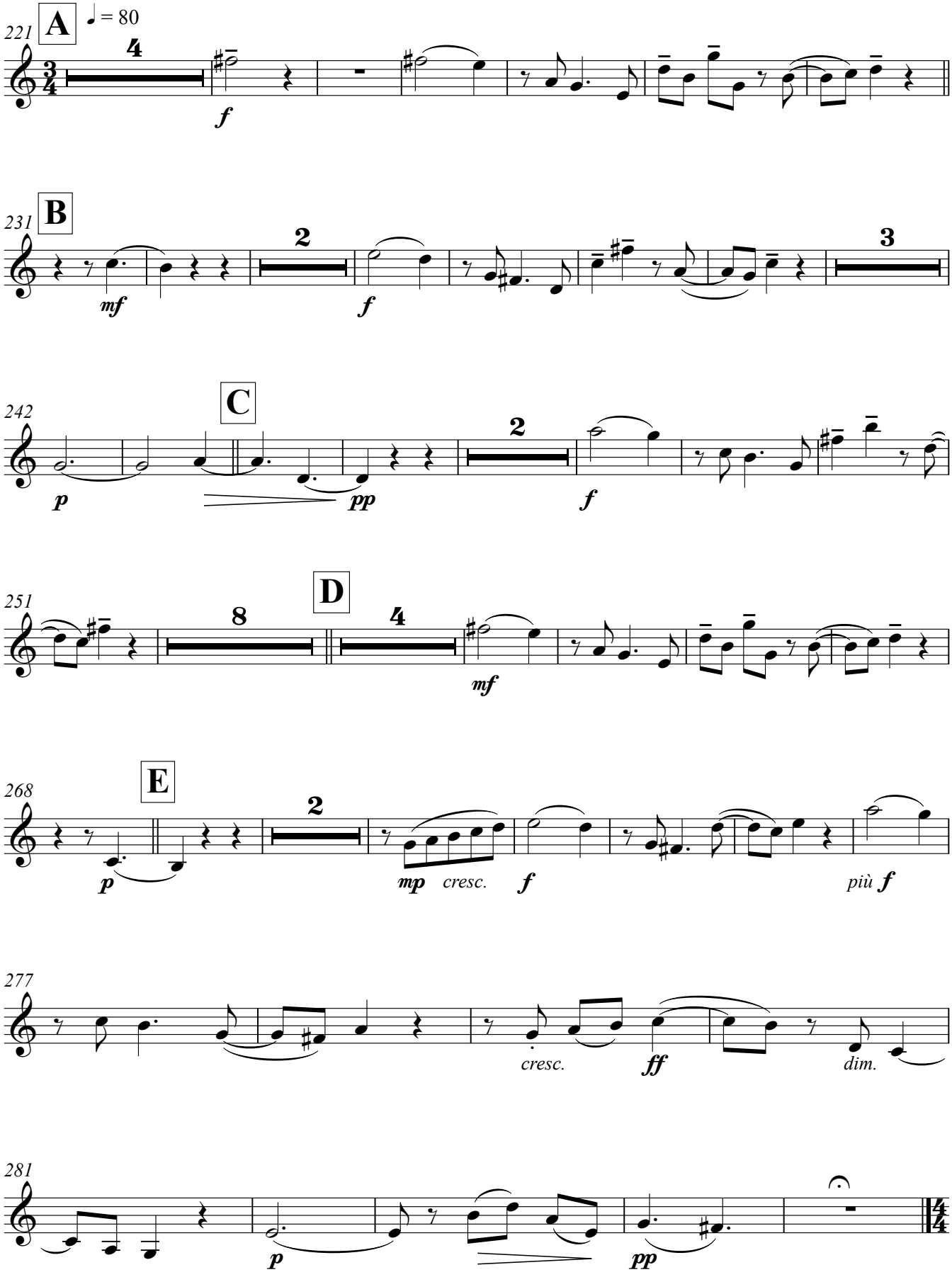
5. Murder Shrieks Out



Trumpet in B♭

6. Canzon a Tre

Tempo comodo



Trumpet in B♭
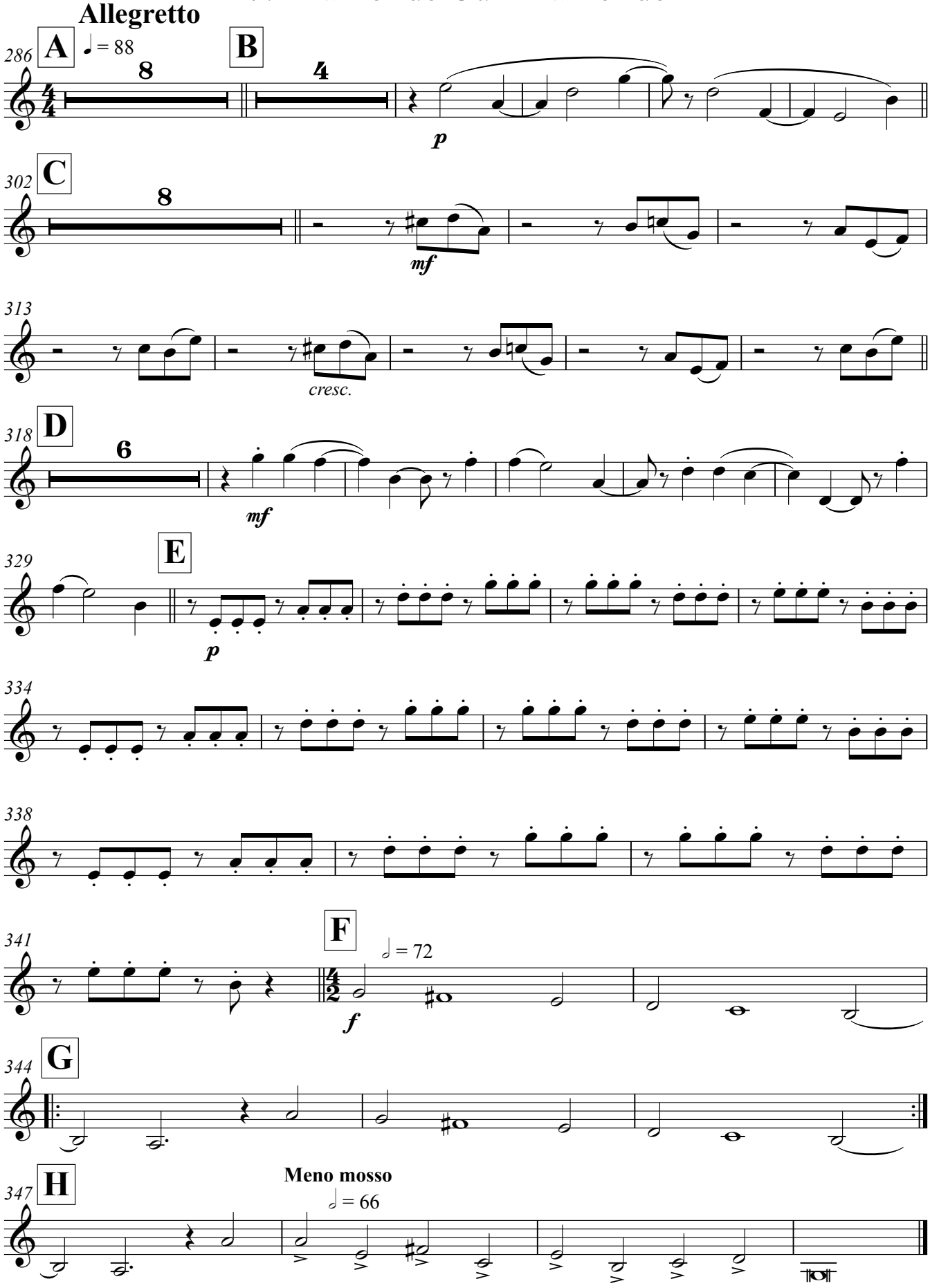
7. Diamonds Cut Diamonds

