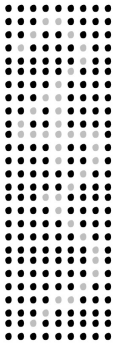
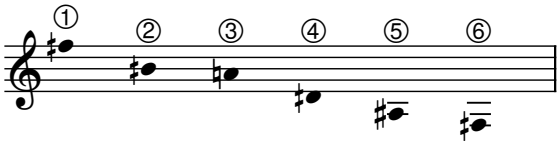


John Abram

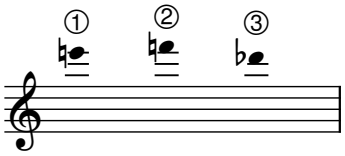
Bagatelles for Prepared Guitar

Preparations

Prep A
Add alligator clips to the strings so that the pitches between the nut and the clip are:



Also adjust so that these notes produce a similar pitch:



Prep B
Add a clip at fret 19 of 4th string

Prep C
Add a clip at fret 20 of 1st string
Add a clip at fret 5 of 6th string

The size and weight of alligator clips makes a difference to the sound—the ones I use measure 3.1cm on the longest edge.

Notes

The first 4 of these pieces were conceived in 1987 and performed a few times by me in the late 1980s. They were sketched out in a very rudimentary manner and improvised in performance. This score is based on the only recording (as far as I know) of one of these performances.
Bagatelle V was newly composed in 2022, after once again being reminded of what an amazing instrument this is.
All harmonics are open strings and are indicated by a diamond-headed note and a string number. Due to the nature of the instrument, some of these are quarter-tone indications.

The guitar should be amplified (preferably using a contact microphone) to be fairly loud in the performance space.

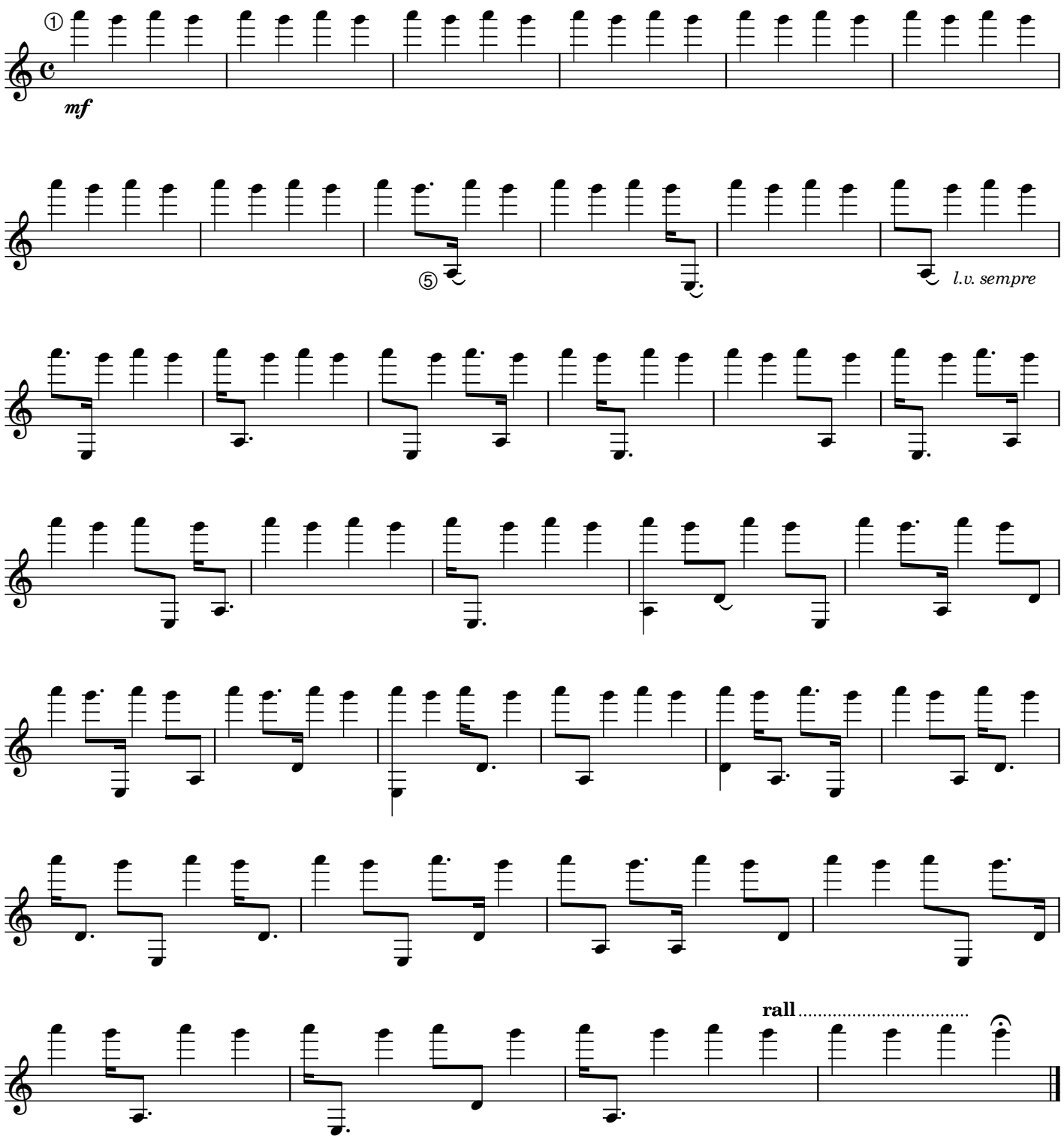
I like to read II and IV without measures, but have made versions with (constantly changing) meters for those who don't. There's not much in the way of dynamic markings: the prepared instrument has limitations in this regard, so let it dictate the dynamics for Bagatelles I and III, and the quiet parts of IV. Snap pizzicati throughout need to be very aggressive, especially in IV.

Bagatelles for Prepared Guitar

John Abram
(b. 1959)

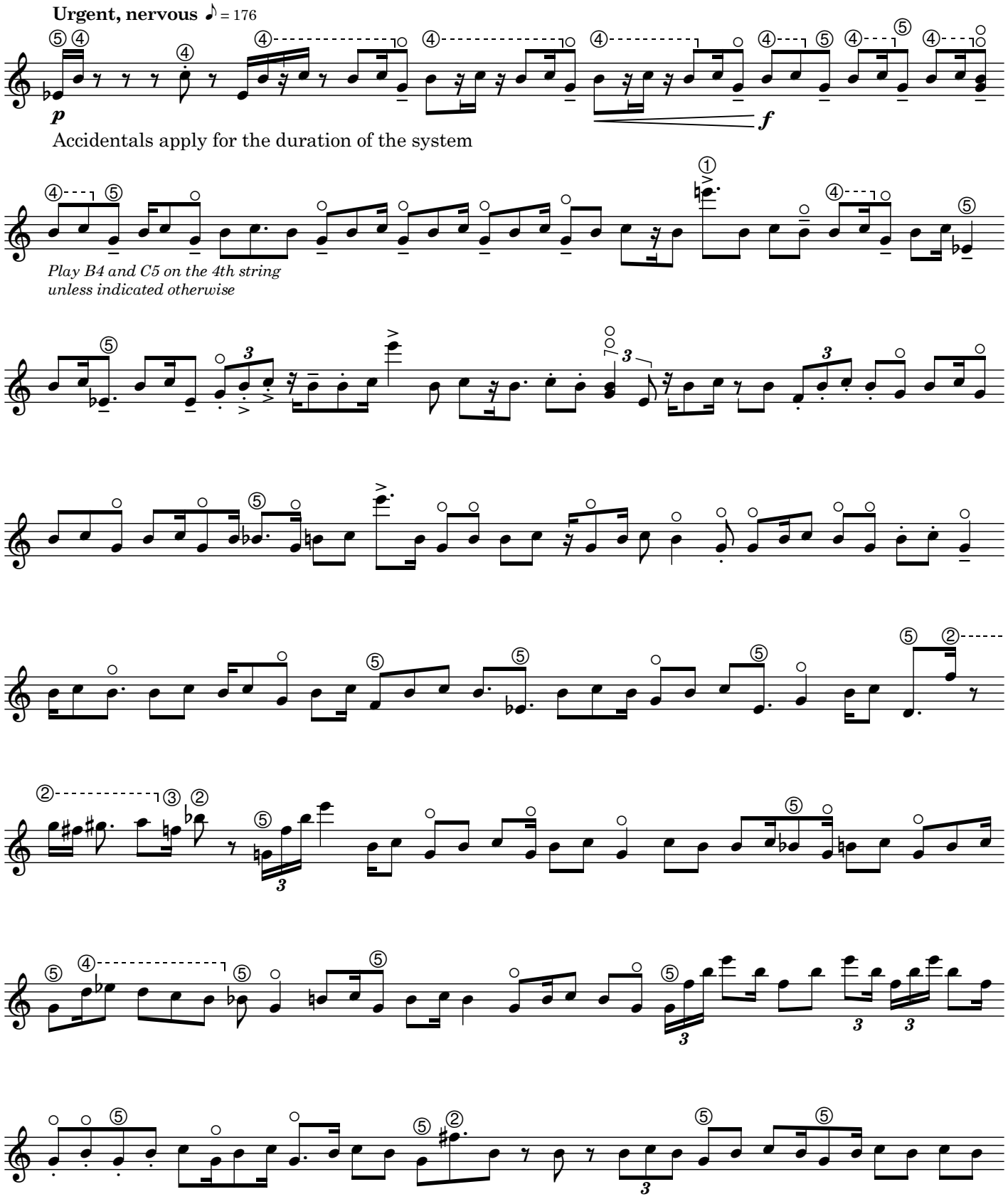
I
(prep C)

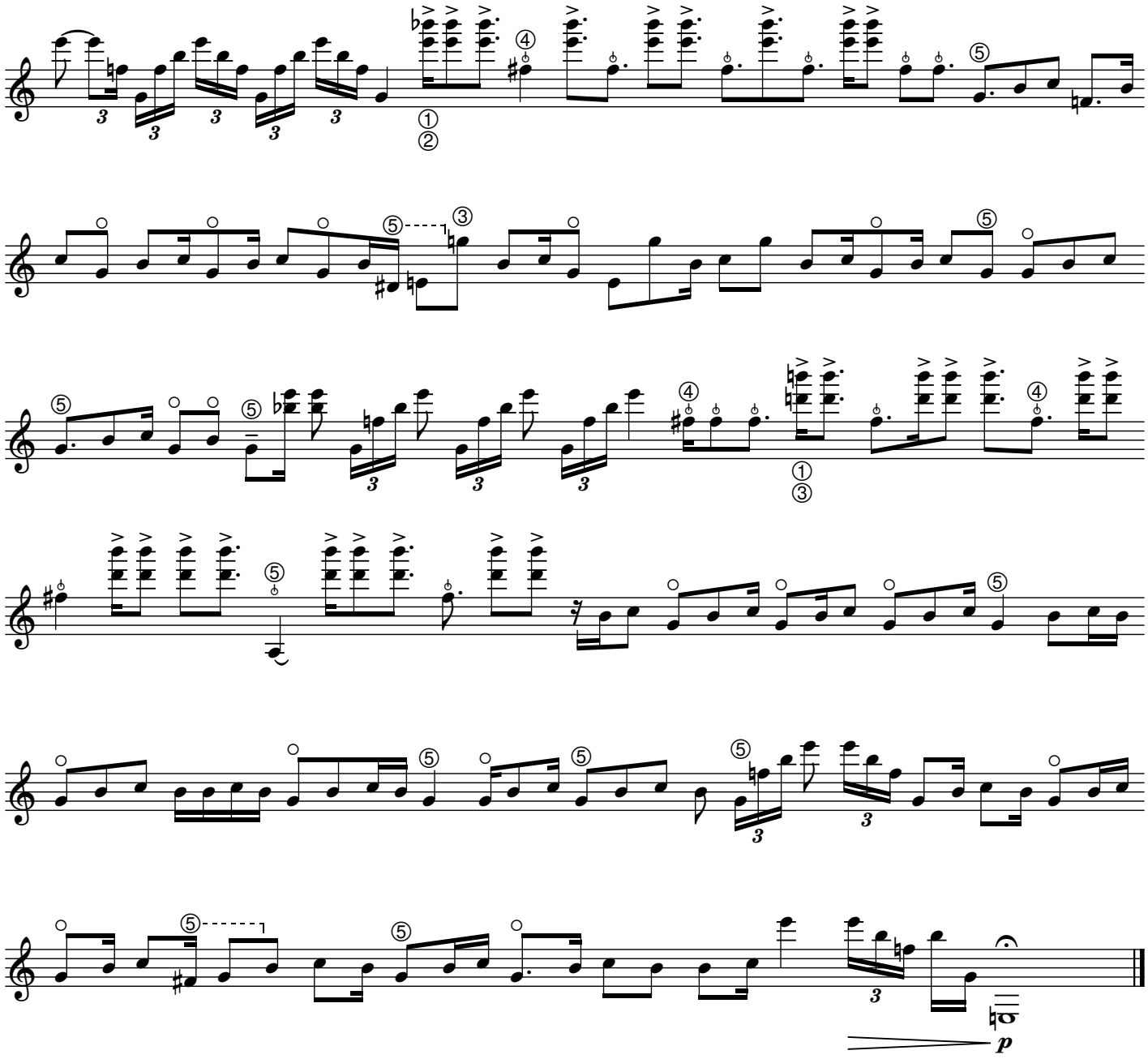
Like a broken clock ♩= 54



© 243 HA! 2022

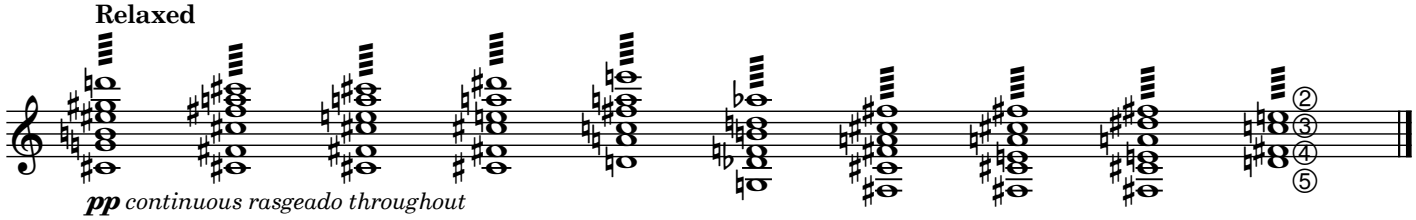
II
(prep A)


Urgent, nervous ♪ = 176
p
f
Accidentals apply for the duration of the system
Play B4 and C5 on the 4th string
unless indicated otherwise



III

(prep A)



pp *continuous rasgeado throughout*

Hold each chord for about 20 seconds

IV
(prep B)

Deliberate, aggressive ♩ = 80

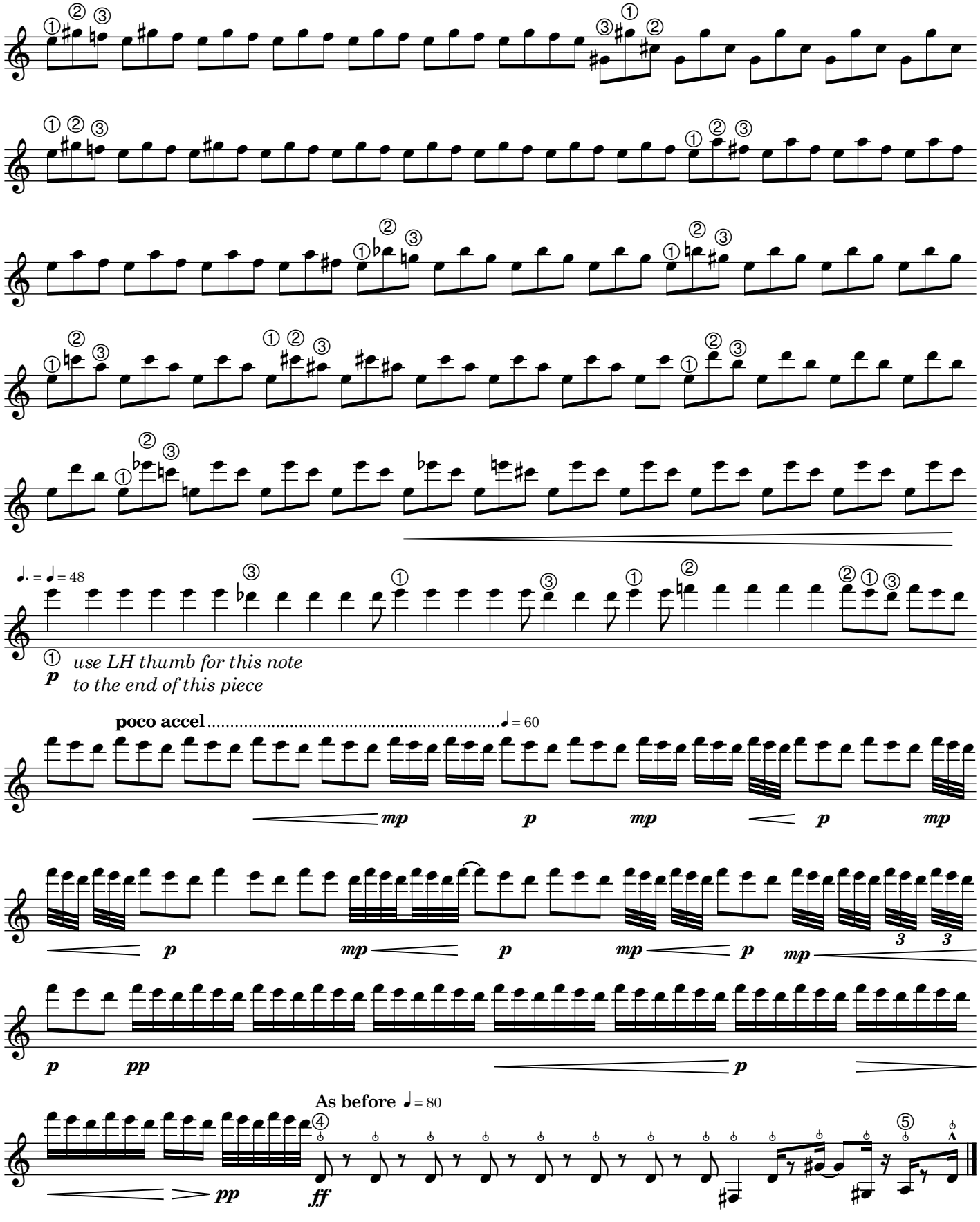
ff

Suddenly calm

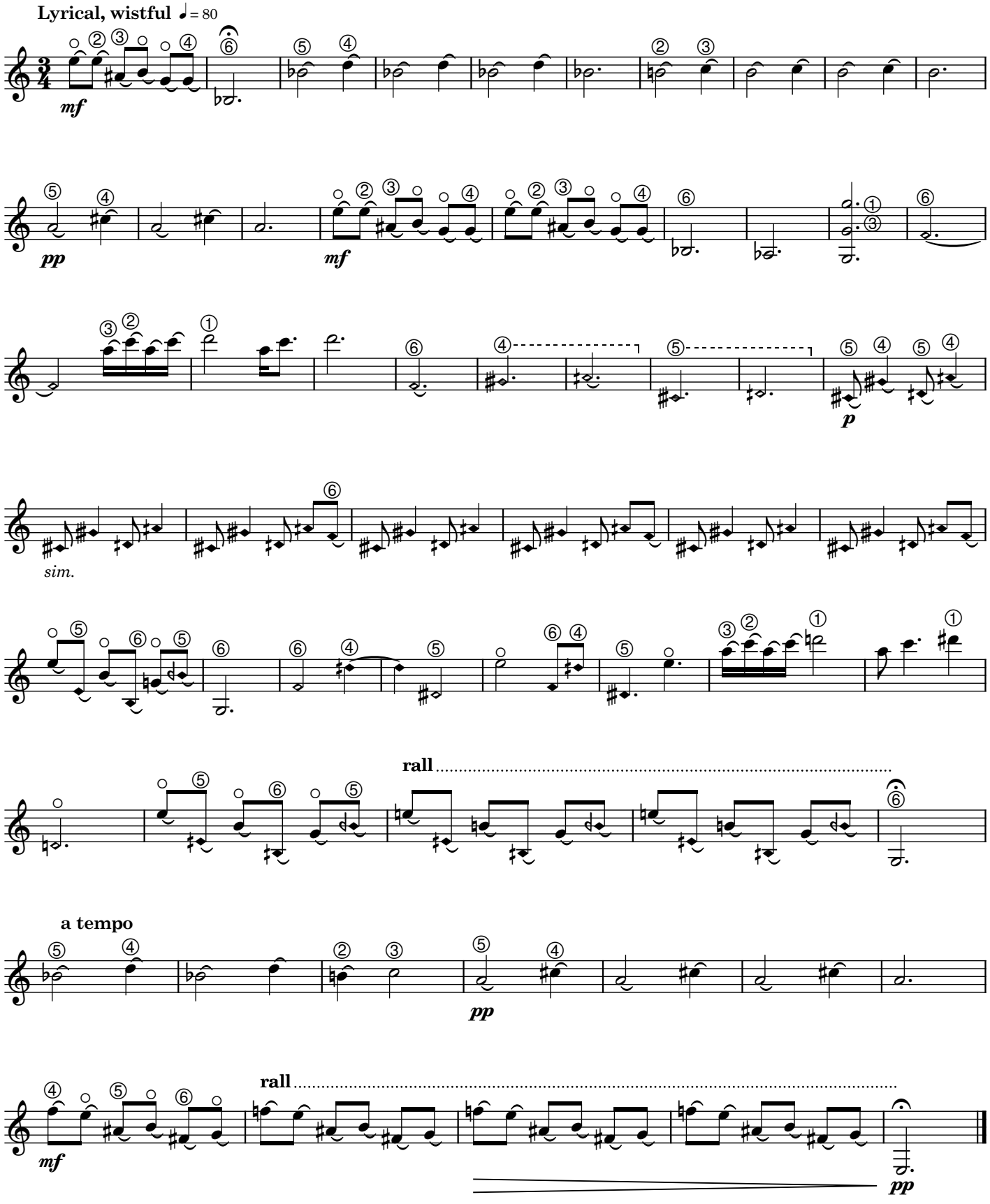
pp

lv sim.

lv sim.


♩. = ♩ = 48
① use LH thumb for this note
p to the end of this piece
poco accel ♩ = 60
mp
p
mp
p
mp
p
mp
p
mp
p
mp
3
3
p
pp
p
As before ♩ = 80
pp
ff

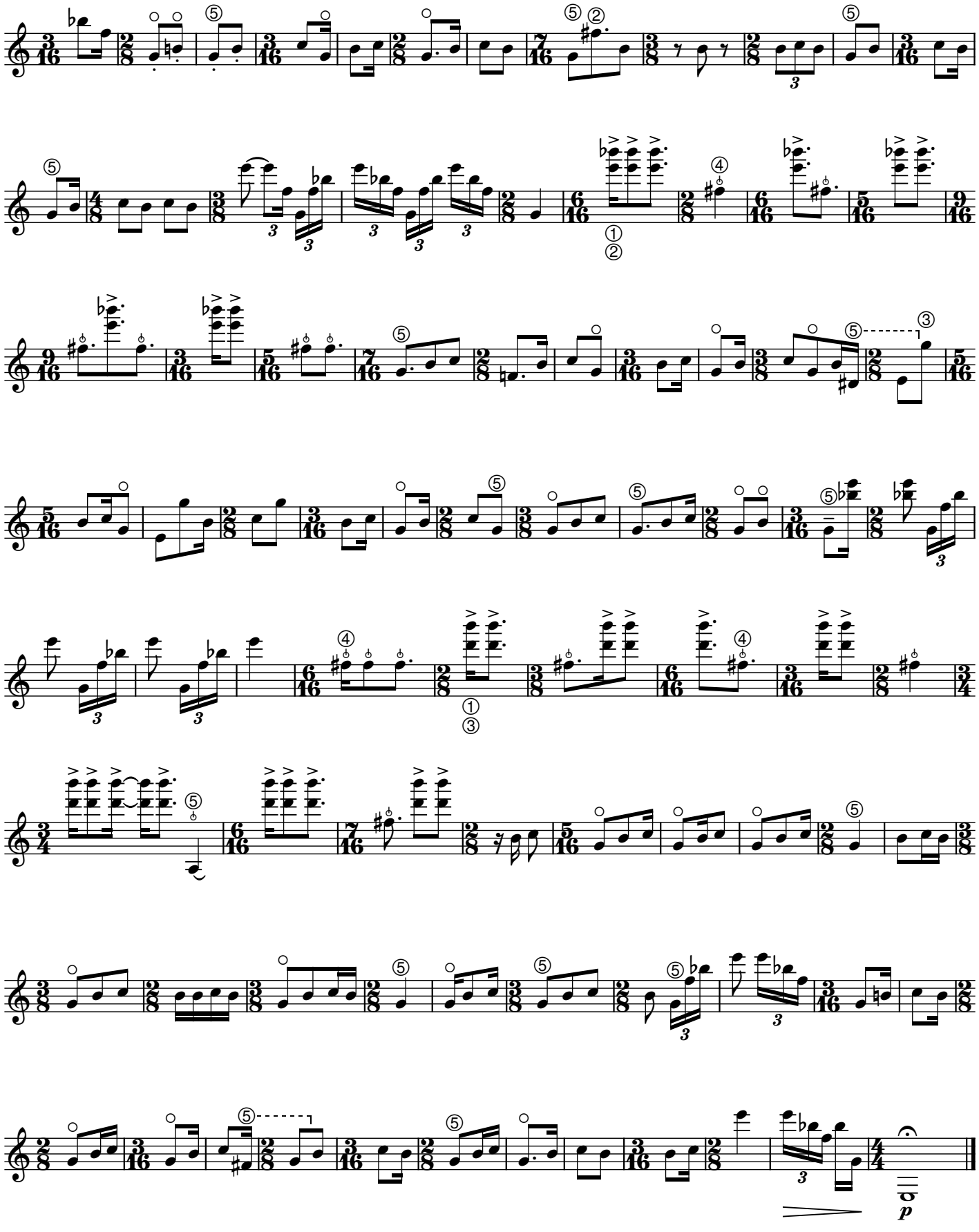
V
(prep A)



II (measured)
(prep A)

Urgent, nervous ♪ = 176

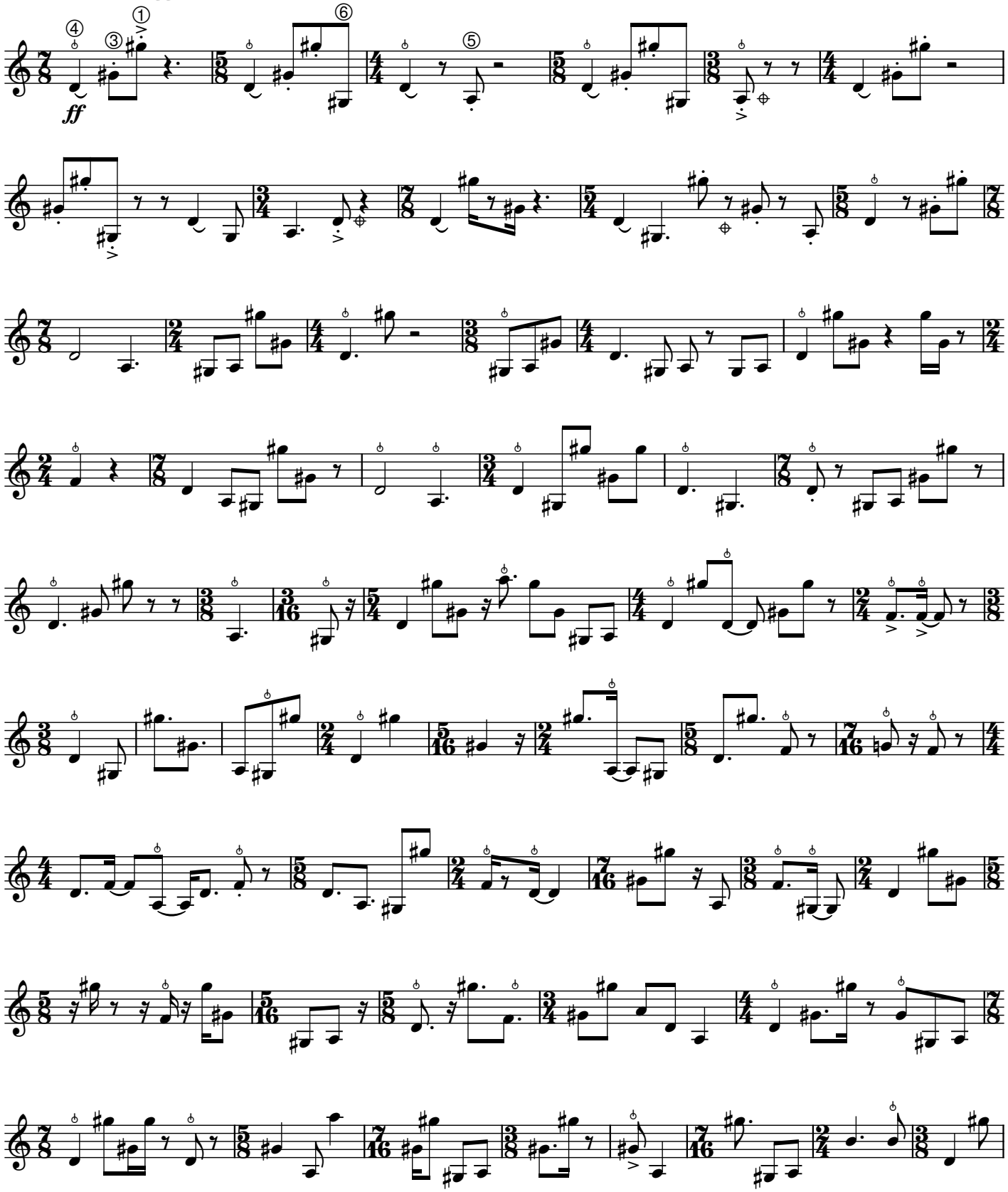
Play B4 and C5 on the 4th string unless indicated otherwise

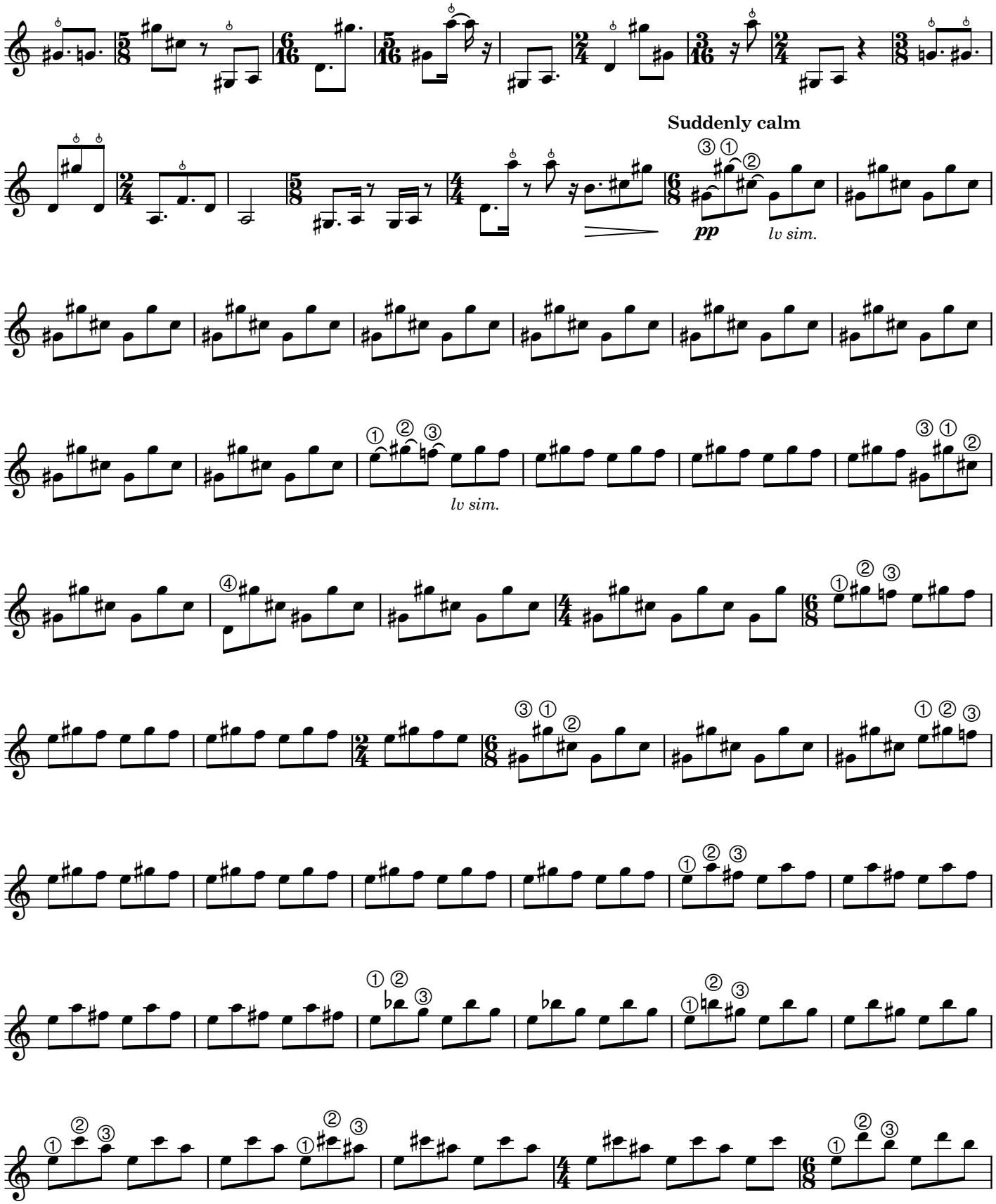


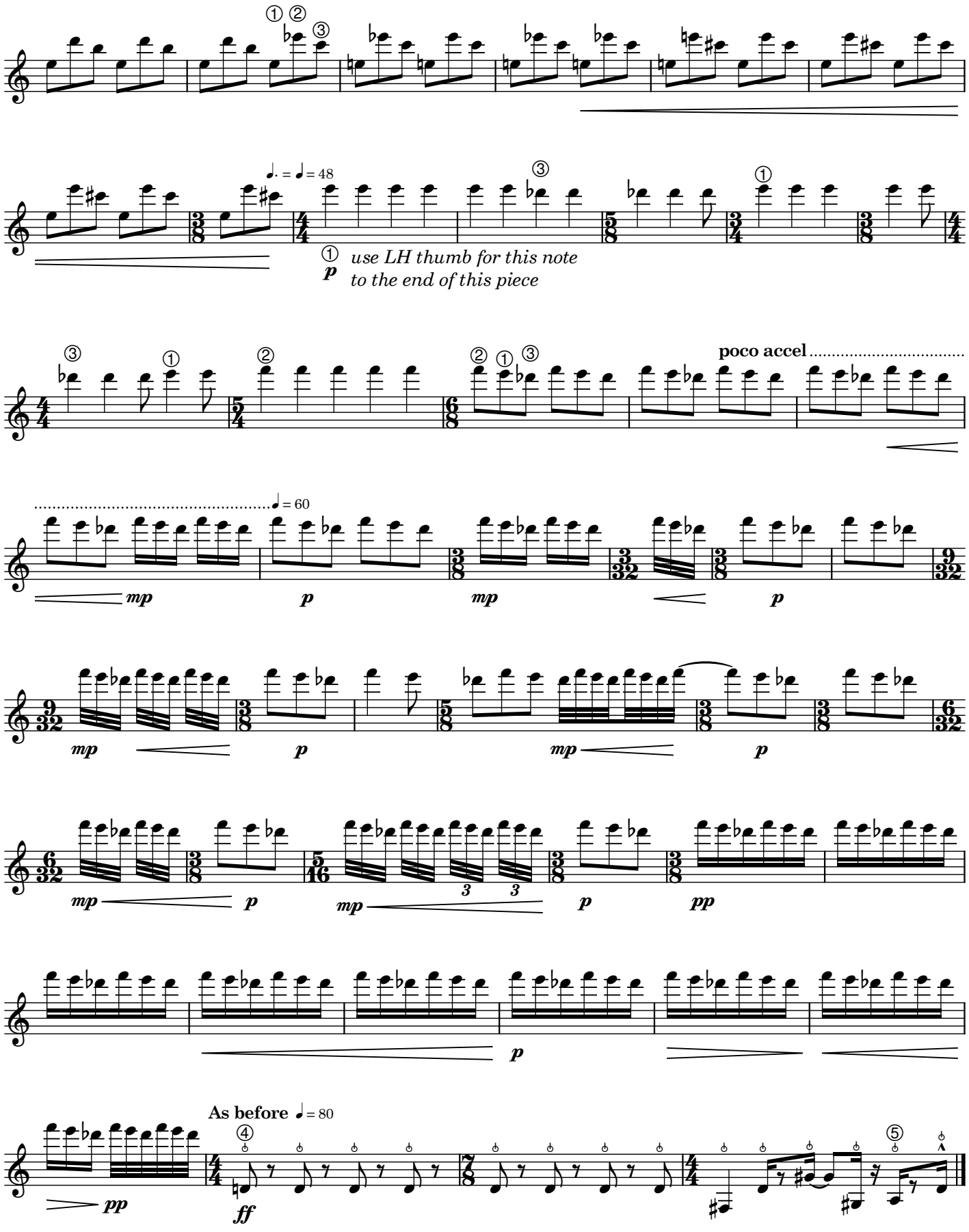
IV (measured)

(prep B)

Deliberate, aggressive ♩ = 80




Suddenly calm
pp
lv sim.
lv sim.


use LH thumb for this note
to the end of this piece
poco accel
As before